

MIGRADAPT

Making Migration Work for Adaptation to Environmental Changes. A Belgian Appraisal

DURATION

01/01/2017 – 15/04/2021

BUDGET

634.442 €

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Introduction and context

Environmental changes are increasingly part of migration journeys, and count amongst the factors that call into question the distinction made between migrants and refugees. Additionally, in the international negotiations on climate change, migration is increasingly perceived as a possible adaptation strategy to the impacts of climate change. But only few studies exist on how migration could actually work for adaptation, and none of them address migration in Belgium. **MIGRADAPT aims to fill this gap by analysing how migration can support the adaptation and resilience of communities, building on its appraisal of the migration-environment nexus in Belgium.** To achieve this goal, the project is divided into two parts.

Objectives and research questions

First, MIGRADAPT seeks to understand the **role of environmental disruptions as drivers for migration to Belgium.** The guiding research questions include: *How do migrants perceive the environment to have influenced their migration journey? To what extent has the environment impacted upon the other drivers of migration? How do they perceive current environmental disruption in their countries of origin?* Second, MIGRADAPT seeks to understand the **effects and perceived effects of migration on the adaptation of the communities of origin.** This is a key innovation of the project as it will consider the outcomes of migration for the communities of origin rather than just for the migrants themselves. The key research question guiding this analysis is: *How (under which conditions) can migration to Belgium support the adaptation of communities affected by environmental changes?*

Methodology

MIGRADAPT engages in a **transnational, multi-sited primary data collection process** through **qualitative in-depth interviews.** Three countries of origin have been selected for this study: **Democratic Republic of the Congo, Senegal and Morocco.** This choice is based on existing migration flows between these countries and Belgium, their environmental profile, and their development partnerships with **Belgium.** In Belgium, the study targets individuals from each selected country of origin. All legal migration categories such as family, economic, studies and training, and humanitarian (including asylum seekers) will be considered alongside irregular migrants. In the three countries of origin, communities affected by both environmental change and migration will be selected. Interviews will be conducted in each country with migrant-sending households. Non-migrant interviewees will be selected when possible by following up with the families of migrants interviewed in Belgium.

Expected results

The evidence provided by MIGRADAPT should allow society at large to reconsider the often non-linear representations around environmental migration drivers and impacts whilst providing an understanding of the importance that the environment has in shaping migration and adaptation patterns. Also, it should allow policy makers to tailor and mainstream the environmental component of migration into legally recognised categories of migration whilst consistently considering this crucial aspect in new and pre-existing migration policies, asylum applications and bilateral migration agreements as well as to inform climate policies in Belgium in how to best incorporate migration. Moreover, an understanding of how perceived or actual environmental shocks in origin communities affect migrants' decisions in terms of socio-economic remittance sharing should allow to better channel investment in adaptation and resilience through conducive policies and economic incentives.



MIGRADAPT

Publication and dissemination activities

The results of the project will be presented in **articles in peer-reviewed journals** and **other scientific and non-scientific publications** (e.g. newsletters). Topics could include: analysing the perceptions of migration by the communities of origin, the determinants of immobility, and the mobilisation of migrants' networks and remittances. Moreover, **policy briefs** shall be produced for each of the countries researched (including an additional **comparative policy brief**), including policy recommendations that can help migration policies and development policies make better use of the transnational connections between migrants and their communities of origin in order to strengthen their adaptive capacities to environmental changes. Whenever possible, **panels and presentations will be organised in academic conferences and policy forums**. A final conference will be organised at the end of the project. Lastly, a **booklet** will be produced, including some of the migrants' stories and testimonies and a map of their journeys to make the broader public more aware of migrants' fragmented journeys.

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LINKS

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