LABOR MIGRATION IN ASIA

COVID-19 IMPACTS, CHALLENGES, AND POLICY RESPONSES

ADBInstitute

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BETTER POLICIES FOR BETTER LIVES

International Labour Organization

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACRF	ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CBSL	Central Bank of Sri Lanka
COVID-19	coronavirus disease
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
Lao PDR	Lao People’s Democratic Republic
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OFW	Overseas Filipino Worker
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
OWWA	Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (Philippines)
PPE	personal protective equipment
PRC	People’s Republic of China
ROF	returning overseas Filipino
RT-PCR	reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SLBFE	Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment
SOCSO	Social Security Organization (Malaysia)
SSW	Specified Skills Worker (Japan)
SWADES	Skilled Workers Arrival Database for Employment Support (Japan)
TESDA	Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (Philippines)
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UK	United Kingdom
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
US	United States
VBM	Vande Bharat Mission (India)
WHI	World Health Organization

FOREWORD

International migration is a difficult megatrend to predict. Yesterday, the COVID-19 pandemic; today, the Ukrainian refugee crisis; these have had and will have unpredictable long-lasting impacts on the international cross-border movements of tourists and migrant workers.

After two years of a global pandemic, the world is still in the midst of a disruption of migration patterns. The cascade of border closures and the wild swings in economic activity upended predictions about labor migration. Deployment from the 12 main origin countries in Asia fell by 44% between 2019 and 2020. Only a few countries saw deployment rebound in 2021, and none to the 2019 level. Remittances to Asian countries declined in 2020, but less than worker outflows, and recovered in 2021. Meanwhile, the mobility of migrant workers and related remittance flows have deviated from the previous trends.

Asian labor migrants have been among the most affected, both in terms of their opportunities for employment and in terms of the health conditions they face due to their workplace and residential conditions. The pandemic has certainly complicated the lives of migrant workers: unexpected loss of income and early and unplanned repatriation, and restrictions on departure. Similarly, it has raised challenges for policy makers in both origin and destination countries, who have had to deal with declines and shifts in demand, organization of repatriation and new travel protocols, and expanded policy focus on epidemiological dimensions of international labor mobility, such as testing, quarantine, and supervision of lodging.

The interruption in ordinary practices gives governments a chance to restart labor migration with a new impetus for improved governance. Since 2011, the Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the International Labour Organization (ILO) have been collaborating to organize an annual Roundtable on Labor Migration in Asia. In the depths of the pandemic, in April 2021, the 11th Roundtable was held online, on the theme “Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic and Building Back Better”.

ADBI, the OECD, and the ILO also prepare this joint publication. The 2022 edition, *Labor Migration in Asia: COVID-19 Impacts, Challenges, and Policy Responses*, has three chapters and two statistical annexes providing the most complete comparative data on international labor mobility in Asia. The joint publication includes major outcomes and key takeaways from the 11th Roundtable on Labor Migration in Asia. It also provides up-to-date information on the developments in deployment trends related to the COVID-19 pandemic and the policy responses in origin and destination economies.

Chapter 1 reviews labor migration and remittances trends in Asia and migration flows from Asia to OECD countries. It examines the persistent impact of the pandemic on flows and remittances, connecting them to policy responses in origin and destination economies. It looks at the gender distribution of Asian labor migrants and provides the first-ever comparative analysis of trends in skill distribution of migrant workers from major Asian origin economies.

Chapter 2 reviews the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the health, workplaces, housing, and access to social protection of migrant workers. It examines the measures taken in destination countries to resume labor migration, including testing and quarantine requirements, and the implications of these new costs for migrant workers.

Chapter 3 covers the return, repatriation, and reintegration of migrant workers in the course of the pandemic. It presents the available statistics and information on different return flows and repatriation programs, and the policies put in place to support the reintegration of returning migrant workers. The challenges these programs have faced are used to draw lessons and formulate a set of recommendations for dealing with similar shocks in the future.

As countries chart a policy course to emerge from this period of upheaval and look to recovery, this publication is meant to provide guidance and reference. We hope that this publication will be of use to policy makers and practitioners in and outside governments in Asia and in OECD countries. Our sincere thanks go to the team which continues to organize the Annual Roundtable on Labour Migration and the authors of this year's timely publication.

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This report partly draws on the discussions that took place at the 11th Annual ADBI–OECD–ILO Roundtable on Labor Migration: Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic and Building Back Better, held virtually on 7–8 April 2021. In response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and its ongoing impacts, the publication provides best practices and policy recommendations to ensure the effective management of labor migration for the post-pandemic recovery. Both the Roundtable and this report were organized and coordinated by a team consisting of Pitchaya Sirivunnabood from the Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI), Jean-Christophe Dumont and Jonathan Chaloff from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and Nilim Baruah from the International Labour Organization (ILO).

This publication comprises contributions from a number of authors: Jonathan Chaloff, Lauren Matherne, and Yumi Saito of the OECD, and Pitchaya Sirivunnabood of ADBI prepared Chapter 1; Rebecca Napier-Moore and Nilim Baruah of the ILO prepared Chapter 2; and Piyasiri Wickramasekara of Global Migration Policy Associates prepared Chapter 3. Each chapter benefited from peer reviews by the authors of the other chapters and the organizing team.

Finally, Adam Majoe, ADBI, coordinated the publication of the report, with editing by Ainslie Smith and typesetting by Aileen Magparangalan.

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CHAPTER 1

Trends in Labor Migration in Asia

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1.1 Introduction

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, with its resulting border closures and disruption of international mobility in 2020 and 2021, drastically shifted labor migration trends worldwide, creating the need to dedicate significant efforts to mitigation and adaptation. The global economic downturn depressed demand for labor migrants in 2020, but the main barrier to migration was concern over viral spread. Many countries maintained strict entry rules, although a few also introduced measures to authorize migrants already in destination countries to remain. Quarantine and improved testing protocols allowed cross-border movements to resume progressively in the second half of 2020 and 2021, but many uncertainties remain.

Throughout 2021, labor migration movements remained at significantly reduced levels relative to pre-pandemic flows. In many countries, there are signs of increased skills shortages and demand for foreign workers, and many of the push factors that influence Asian migrants to seek work abroad remain unchanged. Although the pandemic sparked discrimination against individuals of Asian backgrounds, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries remain the most popular destination for migrant workers and students from Asian countries. It does not follow, however, that labor migration will rebound fully in the coming years. The economic conditions and policy orientation of destination countries, particularly regarding travel restrictions, remain complicated by the pandemic. Even as countries have begun to lift pandemic restrictions, there has been little sign of global consensus on how to emerge from pandemic reactivity to build resilient new migration management systems.

The most recent statistical information available on labor migration allows us to see 2020 and 2021 more clearly and to reflect on the likely medium-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. In assessing this situation, this chapter begins with the latest data on migration trends within and from Asia during 2020–2021. While full 2021 data are not yet available, early results are already informative. This chapter discusses labor migration flows to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and selected Southeast and East Asian countries. It draws on data from OECD countries to describe inflows to the OECD and trends in skilled work. Special attention is paid to the Asian female foreign worker migration notably in specific sectoral impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The chapter also includes a brief overview of international student mobility in and from Asia and a discussion on trends in remittances.

1.2 Changing Migration Trends in Asia—Short- and Medium-term Trends

The year 2020 was a shock to the international migration landscape that led to a sharp immediate decline of labor migration from Asian countries and to Asian destination countries. After slightly increasing in 2019, total deployment for the main 12 Asian countries of origin fell by 44% in 2020 to 2.7 million workers (Figure 1.1). Declines in immigrant flows to OECD countries were similarly stark. Large-scale repatriation efforts, as well as individual returns, also contributed to the decrease of migrant stocks in some countries. In contrast, in some other countries, the facilitation of stay and obstacles to return migration have contributed to reduced departures and the mitigation of the effect of the pandemic on net migration and migrant stocks. The stock of foreign-born migrants actually increased between 2019 and 2020 in Japan (from 2.7 million to 2.9 million) and the Republic of Korea (from 1.95 million to over 2 million).

The analysis of annual (Table 1.1) and monthly (Figure 1.2) deployment data by country of origin reveals the scope of the shock on migration trends. For example, overseas deployment from the Philippines was 78% lower than in 2019—the greatest decline by percentage observed in Asia. India registered 94,000 emigrants in 2020, compared to 368,000 in 2019, a decline of 74%. Sri Lanka (–72%) and Bangladesh (–69%) also recorded significant drops. In 2020, Indonesia saw a 59% decline from 2019, when 276,600 workers were deployed.

Table 1.1: Outflows of Workers from Selected Asian Countries, 2010–2020 (‘000)

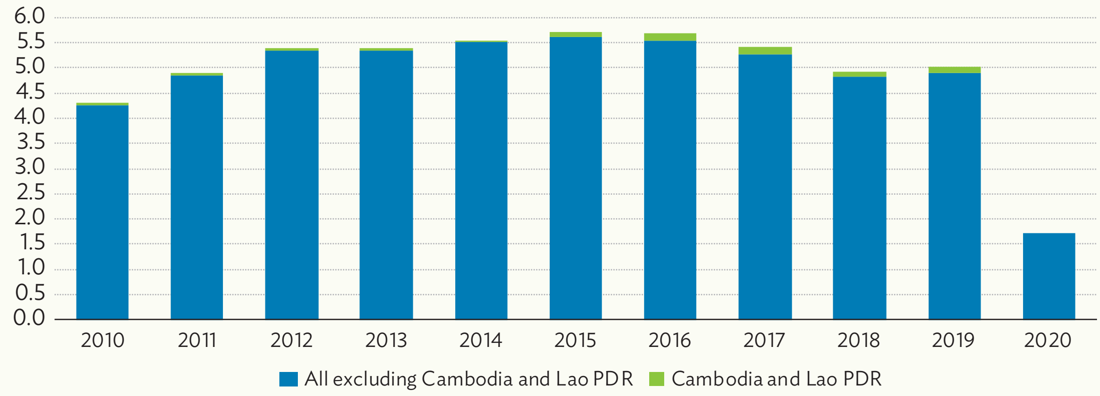
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2019/20 % change
Philippines	1,124	1,319	1,435	1,469	1,431	1,438	1,670	1,595	1,525	1,516	332	–78%
PRC	411	452	512	527	562	530	494	522	492	487	301	–38%
Pakistan	358	453	635	620	752	947	839	496	382	625	225	–64%
Bangladesh	391	568	608	409	426	556	758	1,009	734	700	218	–69%
Nepal	294	355	385	451	520	499	404	383	354	236	191	–19%
Indonesia	567	594	460	469	430	276	235	262	284	277	113	–59%
India	641	627	747	817	805	781	521	391	340	368	94	–74%
Viet Nam	86	88	80	88	107	116	126	135	143	153	79	–48%
Myanmar	5	18	68	67	65	95	146	162	238	238	77	–68%
Sri Lanka	268	263	282	293	301	263	243	212	211	190	54	–72%
Thailand	106	109	134	131	120	117	114	115	116	114	41	–64%
Cambodia	30	26	35	23	25	41	85	96	69	68		–
Lao PDR	19	34	7	23	8	51	58	49	49	49	-	–

Lao PDR = Lao People’s Democratic Republic, PRC = People’s Republic of China.

Note: Missing cells indicate no data available.

Source: National authorities.

Figure 1.1: Total Outflows of Workers from Selected Asian Countries, 2010–2020 (million)

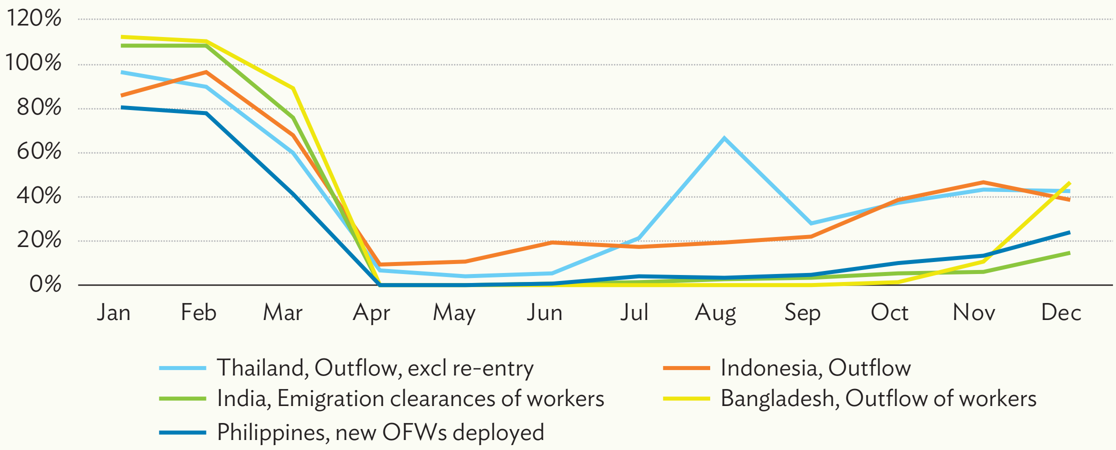


Lao PDR = Lao People's Democratic Republic.

Note: Total of the 13 countries presented in Table 1.1. No data on Cambodia and the Lao PDR for 2020.

Sources: National authorities.

Figure 1.2: Monthly Outflows of Workers in 2020, as a Percentage of the Same Month in 2019, Selected Asian Countries



OFW = overseas Filipino worker.

Sources: Official data from national authorities (Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand).

Outflow numbers from 2021 indicate that, while migration from Asia has resumed to some extent, recovery has been slow, with flows remaining close to 2020 numbers. Bangladesh has made an impressive recovery, particularly in the fourth quarter (Q4) of 2021, with deployments in 2021 (at 617,209) reaching 88% of total deployments in 2019. For all other countries from which data are available (Figure 1.3), overseas labor migration is significantly below pre-pandemic levels. Sending countries are working actively to resume deployments, but it is clear they remain subject to border control fluctuations.

Viet Nam's Department of Overseas Labor announced in January 2021 that it expected to deploy 90,000 workers in 2021, an increase of 12,000 workers from 2020, but far below the 153,000 deployed in 2019. Viet Nam fell well short of this goal, deploying only 46,058 workers in 2021. The number of deployed workers from Indonesia in 2021 was actually lower than the number sent abroad in 2020, reaching only 72,646. A rare exception, Sri Lanka initially expected deployment of labor migrants to reach pre-pandemic levels in 2021. However, in the first 11 months of 2021, about 96,000 workers departed for foreign employment, less than half the 2019 number.

The stock of People's Republic of China (PRC) workers overseas began to decrease substantially in February 2020, reflecting both returns and a decline in outflows. At the end of the year, only 623,000 workers remained abroad, compared to 992,000 in December 2019. Outflows of workers from the PRC declined by approximately 38% from 2019 to 2020. In the first half of 2021, flows recovered slightly. They slowed again in Q3 and Q4, with total flows in 2021 remaining 34% below those of 2019. By the end of 2021, the stock of PRC workers overseas had decreased further to 592,000.

Figure 1.3: Worker Outflows, Deployments from Selected Origin Countries, 2019–2021

PRC = People's Republic of China, Q = quarter.

Source: See Annex 1.

1.2.1 Labor Migration Flows from Asia to Non-OECD Countries

Inflows to GCC countries fell sharply during 2020. While in 2018, flows of Asian workers to the GCC countries had declined, the trend had reversed in 2019, with Asian worker deployment to GCC countries increasing by 24%. This increase was largely driven by a spike in recruitment in Saudi Arabia. However, in the first three quarters of 2020, Saudi Arabia issued 706,000 work visas in total to nationals of all countries—Asian and non-Asian—less than half than during the same period in 2019. Most (80%) were issued in the first quarter of 2020. Looking at deployment figures from origin countries, the majority of workers arriving in Saudi Arabia in 2020 were from Bangladesh (161,726), followed by Pakistan (136,339) and India (44,316). Saudi Arabia remains the main destination for workers from these countries. The United Arab Emirates suspended issuance of work permits from March through October 2020, resulting in the issuance in 2020 of only 30% of the number in 2019. Flows to Qatar continued their already steep decline. Bahrain, which was relatively stable through 2018–2019, also experienced a significant drop (Table 1.2).

The GCC region is an important destination for many countries, and policy changes have a significant impact. In Sri Lanka, for example, the Middle East region accounts for 82% of total departures. In 2020, however, departures to the region declined by 74.5% compared to 2019 (Central Bank of Sri Lanka). In addition to COVID-19 restrictions, GCC countries have increasingly introduced workforce nationalization policies designed to restrict immigration in favor of encouraging domestic employment. As these economies try to recover from the impacts of the pandemic, some have requested deployment countries to facilitate repatriation of large numbers of migrants.[1] Economic recovery and rising oil prices may serve as a counterweight to these policies in the coming years, although these have recently been subject to fluctuations that could in turn amplify the decline.

The member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) remain important destination countries for Asian workers, although huge drops along major corridors in 2019 (for example, Bangladesh and Nepal to Malaysia and Cambodia to Thailand) led to an overall decline. Restrictions

Table 1.2: Flows of Workers to GCC Countries, 2020 ('000)

	Philippines	India	Pakistan	Nepal	Sri Lanka	Bangladesh	Indonesia	Total
	2020	2020	2020	2019/20	2020	2020	2020	2020
Saudi Arabia	87	44	136	40	9	162	2	480
United Arab Emirates	51	18	54	52	11	1	0	186
Qatar	24	7	7	30	10	4	0	81
Oman	6	7	10	-	3	21	0	47
Kuwait	11	8	0	9	8	2	0	38
Bahrain	5	4	8	-	1	0	0	18
Total GCC 2020	**183**	**89**	**216**	**131**	**42**	**189**	**2**	**851**
Total GCC 2019	*922*	*353*	*600*	*230*	*163*	*538*	*9*	*2,815*

GCC = Gulf Cooperation Council.

Note: Missing cells indicate no data available.

Source: International Labour Organization and national authorities of origin countries.

[1] GCC countries have officially requested repatriation of undocumented Bangladeshi workers (UNDP 2020).

in 2020 exacerbated a trend a trend of precipitous decline in Nepalese deployment to Malaysia. The 2020/21 Nepali fiscal year (which carried from July 2020 to July 2021) had only 107 Nepali migrants entering Malaysia (Table 1.3).

Table 1.3: Flows of Workers to ASEAN Countries, by Origin and Destination, 2020

Origin	Philippines	Indonesia	Nepal	Bangladesh	India	Pakistan	Thailand	Sri Lanka	Myanmar	Viet Nam
Destination	2020	2020	2020/21	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020
Singapore	32,379	4,474	28	10,100	..	..	1,078	762	86	537
Malaysia	5,826	14,630	107	125	1,709	7,800	3,185	522	10,636	..
Thailand	2,305	..	2	..	7	..	..	..	58,642	..
Brunei Darussalam	2,433	1,202	5	530	..	..	281	3		..
Total 2020	42,943	20,306	142	10,755	1,716	7,800	4,544	1,287	69,364	537
Total 2019	*220,972*	*104,666*	*39,373*	*54,002*	*10,657*	*11,592*	*12,847*	*5,437*	*317,330*	*757*

ASEAN = Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Notes: Missing cells indicate no data available. Viet Nam deployments to ASEAN in 2019 are an estimate. Nepal is fiscal year 2020–21.

Source: National authorities of origin countries.

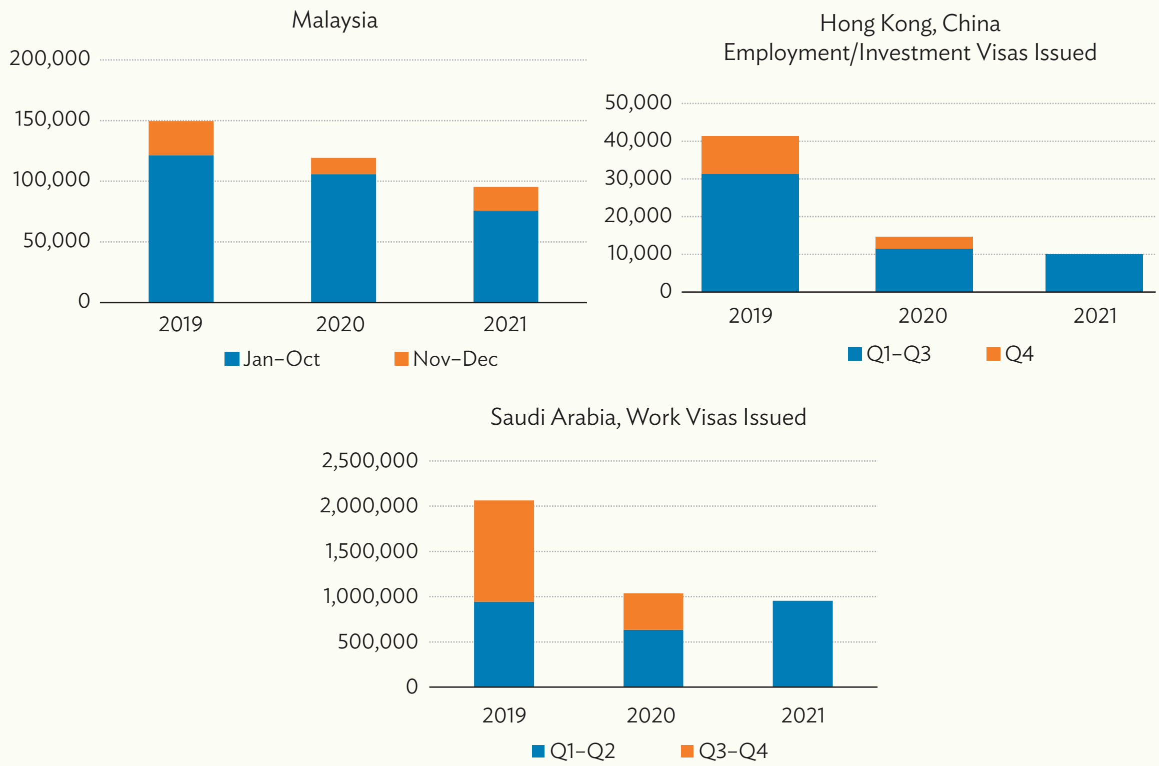
By the end of 2020, however, migration to the main non-OECD receiving countries resumed to varying degrees. Malaysia barred the admission of foreigners in April and May 2020 but gradually relaxed restrictions through the year for skilled workers and their dependents. In December 2020, the number of expatriate visas issued reached 91% of the same month in 2019. Overall, 119,000 expatriate visas were issued by Malaysia in 2020, 80% of the 2019 figure (Figure 1.4). New country-specific travel bans were instated in April and May 2021, covering India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal, and Sri Lanka (Immigration Department of Malaysia 2021; Mandal 2021). As a result, visa issuance continued to decline. New visas issued by Hong Kong, China remain low. For the first three quarters of 2021, 1,401 fewer visas were issued than over the same period of 2020. Saudi Arabia's work visas rebounded significantly in the first half of 2021, actually exceeding issuances from the same period of 2019 by 10,000 visas. Notably, however, this reflects global issuances and is not disaggregated by origin region of the applicant.

On the receiving side, both Thailand and Indonesia increasingly seek to attract workers from nearby countries to respond to increasing unmet labor demand. While Thailand has programs for workers of different skill levels, Indonesia is largely focused on skilled workers. In 2021, Indonesia introduced a series of new regulations designed to ease the process of hiring foreign workers by clarifying document requirements and waiving certain pre-approval utilization plans (Republic of Indonesia Government Regulation Number 34 of 2021).[2] The number of foreign workers in Indonesia fell from a record 110,000 at the end of 2019 to 94,000 in 2020.

Thailand closed its borders to nonresident foreigners in March 2020, but foreigners with valid work permits were still allowed to enter the country, provided they could present a health certificate and proof of health insurance (ILO 2020). Over the year, the country issued approximately 585,000 visas, including renewals, 50% of its 2019 number. In November 2020, there were 2,323,124 registered migrant

[2] Such policies remain subject to periodic COVID-related travel restrictions that will delay any impact from their implementation. Indonesia tightened restrictions on foreign worker arrivals on 23 July 2021 to curb viral propagation (Septiari 2021).

Figure 1.4: Inflows of Workers to Selected Non-OECD Destinations, 2019–2021



OECD = Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Q = quarter.

Notes: Malaysia includes only employment pass (higher-skilled workers). Hong Kong, China is issuances of employment and/or investment visas. Saudi Arabia does not report the origin region for work visa recipients.

Source: National authorities of origin countries.

workers in Thailand. As of June 2021, the number had decreased to 2,162,863. In Singapore, the stock of foreign workers decreased by 76,000 (5%) between the end of 2019 and June 2020. Singapore closed its borders to foreign travelers in March 2020, except for work pass holders who received approval before entering Singapore. The total foreign workforce continued to decline, and by June 2021 was 230,000 fewer (–16%) than in December 2019 (Figure 1.11).

1.2.2 Migration Flows from Asia to OECD Countries

In OECD countries, permanent migration fell by more than 30% in 2020, the largest drop on record. Inflows of seasonal workers to OECD countries decreased by only 9%, but the year otherwise marked a significant decline in temporary migration. All OECD countries (except Poland) recorded large drops, notably in the United States (37%), Australia (37%), Canada (43%), Japan (66%), and the Republic of Korea (57%). Prior to the global outbreak of COVID-19, migration from Asia to OECD countries had increased continuously since 2012. In 2019, an estimated 2.3 million people from Asian countries migrated to an OECD country. The main country of origin of Asian migrants to OECD countries remains the PRC, from which over 572,000 migrants entered the OECD in 2019. Migration from India and Viet Nam increased by 14% and 16% respectively in 2019 with the United States as top destination country. The sharpest increases in migration in 2019 came from Cambodia (39%) and Bhutan (59%). The disruptions caused by the pandemic have stalled this growth, especially in the top OECD receiving countries for Asian migrants: Japan and the Republic of Korea.

In March 2020, Japan barred entry of all nonresident foreigners, only loosening restrictions for nonresidents in September of the same year. From April to August, only 627 labor migrants were able to enter the country, less than 1% of entries during the same period in the previous year. The pandemic also hindered the uptake of the Specified Skills Worker (SSW) program, launched in 2019. By June 2020, 5,950 people held the status of SSW, far below 2019's goal of 47,550. There were some late signs of recovery: in December 2020, 26,000 labor migrants entered Japan, compared to 23,000 the previous year. About 46.6% of workers from Viet Nam traveling abroad in the fourth quarter of 2020 were to Japan. Still, in total, 124,000 new foreign workers entered the country in 2020, 59% fewer than in 2019 (Figure 1.5). In January 2021, rising positive COVID-19 rates in the months prior to the Tokyo Olympics led the country to suspend the "Phased Measures for Resuming Cross-Border Travel" and close its borders again to nonresident foreigners. These restrictions, in place for the majority of 2021, will have a significant impact into 2022.

Figure 1.5: Labor Migration from Asia to Key OECD Destinations, 2019–2021

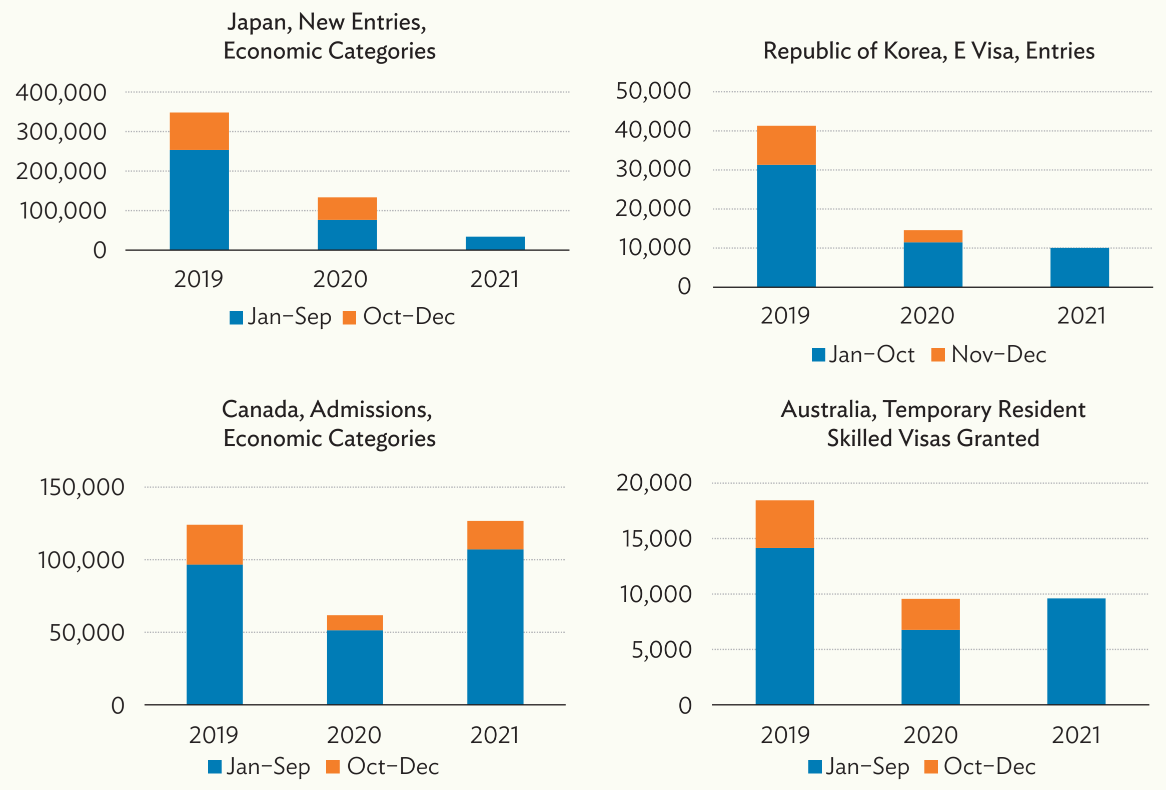


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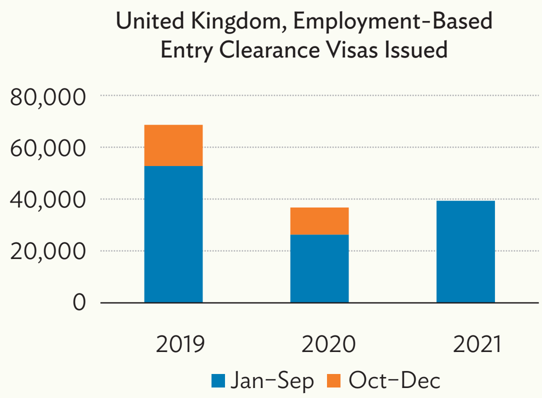
Figure 1.5 *continued*



OECD = Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Notes: The Republic of Korea includes all E-visa holders. Japan is entries of foreigners holding a status of residence on employment-related grounds, excluding re-entries. Canada includes all employment-related admissions for permanent residence. For Canada, 2021 fourth quarter data only account for the month of October. Both United Kingdom and Australia are visas granted to primary and/or main applicant only.

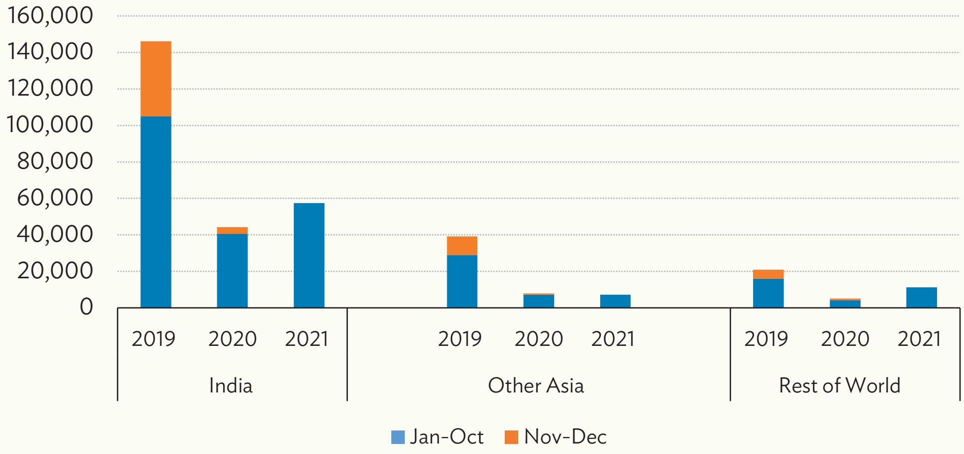
Sources: Official data from national authorities.

In 2020, admissions of employment visa holders to the Republic of Korea were 70% below 2019 levels, totaling 79,500. In 2020, the number of new nonprofessional workers entering under the E-9 visa stood at less than 7,000, one-eighth of the 2020 quota for new workers set before the pandemic. Unlike other destinations, there was no substantial uptick in later months of 2020: monthly flows for December 2020 were only 8.8% of the same month the previous year. The Republic of Korea also reduced quotas for nonprofessional workers under the E-9 visa from 56,000 (2020) to 52,000 for 2021.

The United States is another major OECD destination for Asian migrants. Indian nationals overwhelmingly take up its quota of H-1B visas for skilled temporary workers.[3] With the onset of the pandemic, new recipients and renewals of the H1-B visa fell dramatically, with only 49 visas issued in April 2020. A June 2020 executive order temporarily suspending the H-1B program further contributed to the reduction. Altogether, H-1B visa issuances decreased by 72% in 2020. The decline was slightly less for Indian recipients (–70%) but greater for other Asian recipients (–80%). The order expired on 31 March 2021 and was not renewed. Resumption of visa issuance has been slow. The health situation in India deteriorated rapidly in early 2021, which was followed by a travel ban in April. H-1B visas issued between January and October 2021 were about half the number issued in the same period of 2019 (Figure 1.6). To address the significant backlog in processing caused by the executive order and by reductions in processing capacity due to embassy closures and other restrictions, the United States Department of State authorized waivers of in-person interviews for H-category and other visas in December 2021. The measure is expected to last throughout 2022.

[3] Migrants from Asia also hold a significant number of European Union Blue Cards for skilled workers, although the share is less significant. In 2019, Indians made up 25% of Blue Card holders, while 16% went to migrants from other Asian countries.

Figure 1.6: H-1B Visa Issuance by the United States, by Country of Nationality of Recipient, 2019–2021



Note: Includes H-1B and H-1B1 visas.

Source: United States Department of State.

Beginning in March 2020, Australia instituted strict border closures. As a result, arrivals remained low throughout the year, with fewer than 3,000 labor migrants from Asia entering the country from April to December 2020. Australia reported substantial net reductions in migration in 2020–21 from the PRC, followed by India. However, for Asia and all other countries of origin, Australia recorded the arrival of 28,110 temporary visa holders in 2020–21 (ABS 2021). In terms of visas issued, Australia granted 40% more primary applicants of Asian origin between July and September 2021 than it did during the same period in 2020 (Figure 1.5). Because of entry restrictions, not all visa recipients are able to migrate to Australia.

The United Kingdom did not institute a strict ban on visa issuance in 2020, rather periodically loosening and tightening restrictions throughout the year according to the evolution of the health situation. About 1,200 entry clearances for Asian migrants under work stream visas were granted during the second quarter of 2020, only 4% of the same period the year before. By the fourth quarter, visa issuance had returned to 78% of the same period in 2020. The United Kingdom's post-Brexit immigration changes could allow a greater share of immigrants coming from Asia, even if uncertainty around the policy and challenges related to implementation may delay any such increase in the short term. The newly implemented points-based system, instituted in January 2021, has no country caps and prioritizes migrants with employment offers, English ability, and higher salary. In the first half of 2021, the United Kingdom granted 70% of the work stream visas issued to Asian migrants during the same period of 2019. In 2021 Q3, however, the United Kingdom issued 33,965 work stream visas, a 70% increase over the same period in 2020 and notably, a 15% increase over Q3 of 2019. Issuances to immigrants from the PRC remained low in 2021, but India has largely rebounded. In the first three quarters of 2021, the United Kingdom issued 46,134 work visas to Indian nationals, compared to 50,338 for the same period in 2019.

Year on year, between 2019 and 2020, Canada's permanent admissions of Asian migrants for employment fell by almost half. Canada's smallest monthly intake was in April 2020, with only 3,000 Asian migrants gaining permanent residency through the employment stream. However, monthly admissions remained above 20% of the previous year's levels throughout much of the year, peaking in June before declining again. Canada announced an increase in targets for permanent resident admissions in 2021 (401,000) to compensate for the 2020 shortfall. Preliminary data for 2021 show that Canada has successfully resumed its admissions of labor migrants. In Q1–Q3 of 2021, Canada doubled its 2020 admissions under employment categories and even exceeded 2019 admissions by approximately 10 500 for the same period. In October 2021, Canada admitted 19,550 migrants from Asia and has already surpassed 2019 admissions (Figure 1.5). After exceeding targets in October 2021, Canada's immigration minister indicated openness to increasing the 2022 target, currently set at 411,000 (for all countries of origin).

1.3 Gender and Occupational Characteristics of Asian Migrants

1.3.1 Significant Gender Differences Exist across Sending Countries

Globally, about half of all migrants are women and half are men. Historically, however, the gender composition of migrants from Asian countries has varied widely (Figure 1.7). Thailand is the only origin country in Asia from which women comprise more than 60% of the migrant stock. Women from several countries, notably Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, and Pakistan are less than 40% of migrant stock in 2020. Moreover, the share of women from these countries has been steadily declining.

Figure 1.7: International Migrant Stock by Country and Region of Origin and Gender, 1990–2020
(female migrants as % of stock)

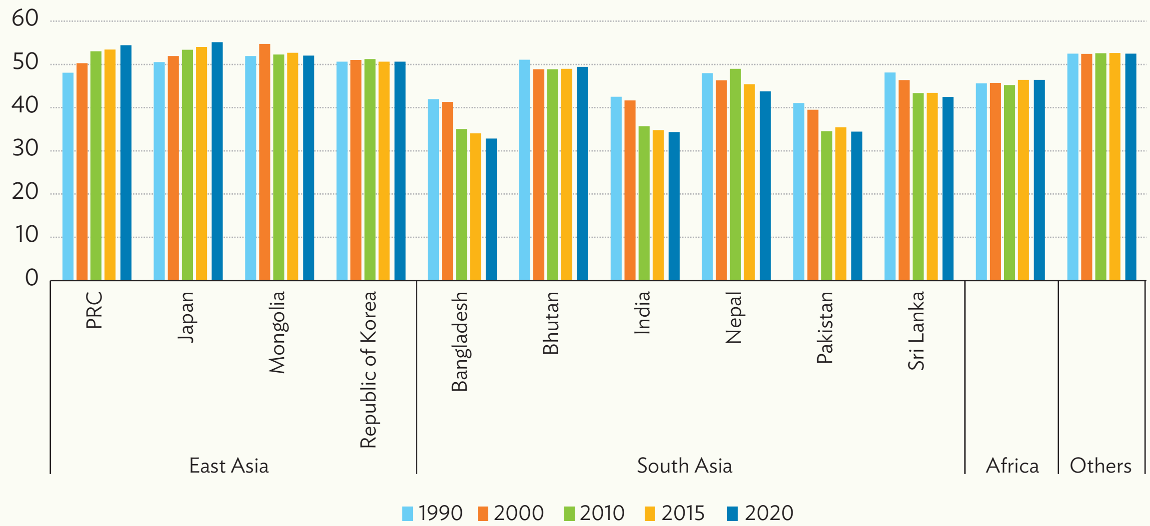


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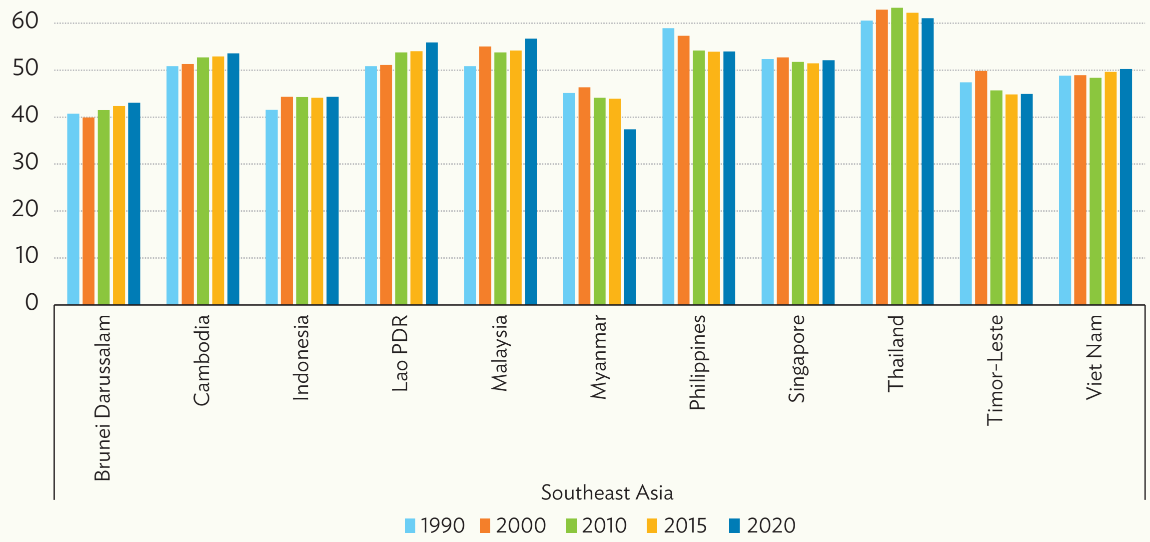
Figure 1.7 *continued*



Lao PDR = Lao People's Democratic Republic, PRC = People's Republic of China.

Source: UNDESA (2020).

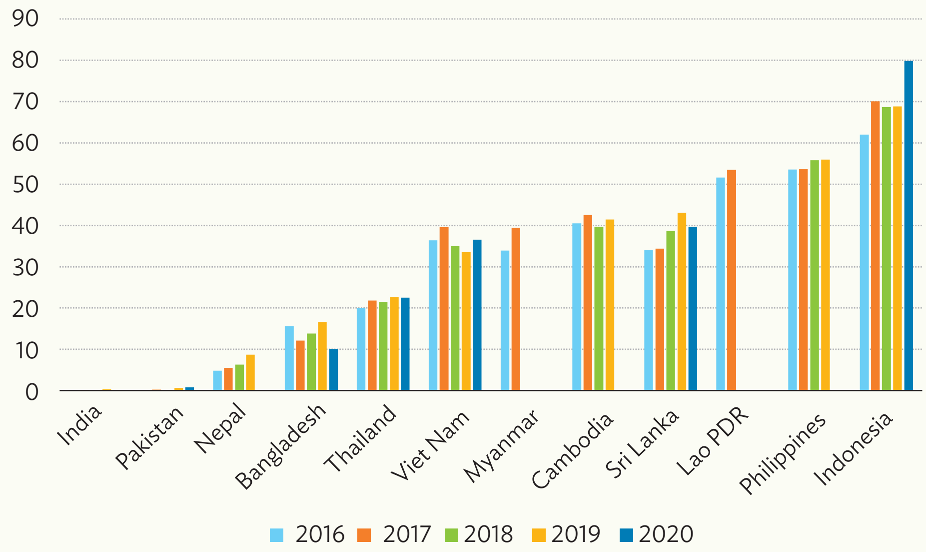
Migrant women are, however, predominant in some employment sectors, and in some countries, regulations on deployment treat men and women differently. Nepal, for example, has renewed proposals to restrict migration by women under the age of 40, designed to prevent labor trafficking.[4] Almost all deployed workers from India and Pakistan are men, whereas labor migrants from Indonesia, the Lao PDR, and the Philippines have skewed heavily female. In 2020, the share of women among labor migrants from Indonesia increased by 10% over 2019. On the other hand, Bangladesh experienced a similar swing in the opposite direction, with women now only comprising 10% of overseas deployments (Figure 1.8). Since deployment figures do not capture most skilled labor migration to developed OECD countries, however, these figures do not represent the full picture of women's labor migration from the countries covered.

The gender balance in migration from Sri Lanka has been fairly stable since 2018 (and prior to that, even experienced a slight increase in the percentage of women). The 2020 decrease in outward migration did not significantly affect the percentage of women from 2019 to 2020. Thai migration was down 64% in 2020, with men and women nearly equally effected. In Pakistan, while only 1,727 women were registered for overseas employment in 2020, the share of women actually slightly increased from 2019 to 2020, from 0.65% to 0.8%. This is likely due to a significant decrease in demand in top job categories for male migrants from Pakistan, who are overwhelmingly focused in the construction sector.[5] The

4 Policies to reduce lower-skilled migration in highly feminized sectors have come under scrutiny given the potential to drive women into corrupt recruitment schemes or irregularity. Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Bangladesh all saw such impacts of their restrictive female labor migration policies. (Khadka 2021; Shivakoti, Henderson, and Withers 2021; Weeraratne 2021a; Napier-Moore 2017). Today, it is estimated that a significant proportion of Bangladeshi women overseas are working in irregularity.

5 Demand in the top job category—laborer—declined 60.9% from 2019 to 2020. Sharpest declines were for steel fixers (86.3%), carpenters (76.7%), and mechanics (75.7%).

Figure 1.8: Share of Women Among Labor Migrants by Origin Country, Selected Asian Countries, 2016–2020
(%)



Lao PDR = Lao People's Democratic Republic.

Sources: Official data from national authorities; ILO (2018), for the Philippines, data refer to flows of overseas Filipino workers.

majority of Pakistani women registered for overseas employment are doctors and nurses (26.5%), domestic workers (15.8%), and managers (9%).

Certain sectors, particularly nursing and care, are highly gendered. Recognizing this gender impact, sending countries have developed policies taking into account the disparity, some seeking to protect the place of female migration and others seeking to reduce it. In January 2021, Israel and Nepal signed the implementation protocol of an agreement on deployment of care workers. Of the 1,000 positions contemplated under the agreement, 70% are set aside for women (Nepali Times 2021). The Sri Lankan government has made efforts to reduce the number of migrants in its domestic worker category (defined in Sri Lankan national data as "housemaid"), which is 100% female (Weeraratne 2021a).[6] In 2016–2017, the category made up only 26.6% of foreign deployments. However, recently, the share has slowly begun to increase (comprising 29.9% on average over 2018–2020). Visa and migration facilitation in these sectors are likely reasons that, while reports have indicated the pandemic disproportionately affected female migrants (ILO 2021a), this impact is not clearly visible in migration flows. Merely in terms of numbers of deployments, COVID-19 does not appear to have consistently affected women over men. In some cases, such as in Indonesia and Viet Nam, the share of women deployed actually increased. At the same time, it can be expected that women are most affected by COVID-19-related policies designed to restrict labor migration in the health sector as sending countries sought to cover their own care gaps (discussed below) or by protectionist policies (which often have the unintended effect of driving women to use irregular and unsafe channels) (Napier-Moore 2017).

[6] In contrast, by agreement, Bangladesh sends only male domestic workers to Kuwait.

On the receiving side, in the European Union, the share of female migrants among first permits for employment has been stable year over year. In 2020, 33.2% of first permit holders were women. The percentage of female first permit holders from India hovers at 19%, while the share of women from the PRC (35.9%) is closer to the share for the rest of Asia (36.3%) and the share for the rest of the world (Table 1.4).

Table 1.4: First Permits Issued for Employment Purposes, European Union, by Nationality and Gender of Recipient, 2018–2020

	India	PRC	Other Asia	Rest of World
Women	19.0%	35.9%	36.3%	32.1%
Men	81.0%	64.1%	63.7%	67.9%
Total inflows (annual average 2018–2020)	40,151	17,260	58,122	823,816

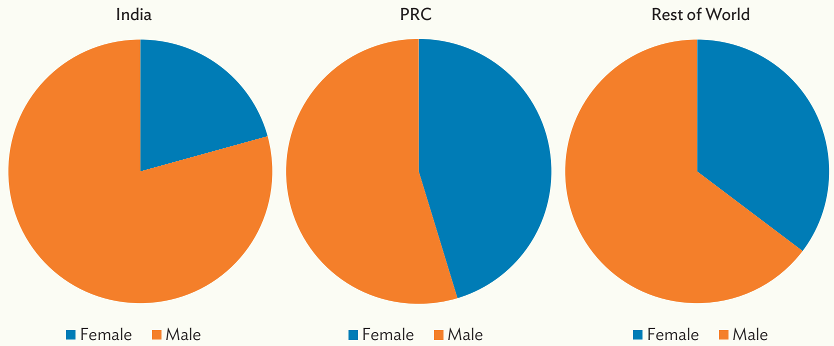
PRC = People's Republic of China.

Source: OECD analysis of Eurostat data (migrfas – employment).

In the United States, skilled temporary work visa holders are predominately male. Indians comprise about three-quarters of H-1B recipients, and 79% of H-1B recipients from India were men (Figure 1.9). The PRC nationals account for one in eight. The gender division is slightly more balanced among migrants from the PRC, at 55%. However, among the top 10 sending countries for H-1B visas, the Philippines is the only country that sends more than 50% women (USCIS 2021a). While an important metric, issuance of H-1Bs does not reflect the entire universe of women accessing the skilled labor market in the United States. Indian women hold the large majority of accompanying spousal visas (H-4) in the United States. Once an H-1B spouse is sponsored for residency, H-4 visa holders become eligible for work authorization. The average year from 2015 to 2020 saw 25,340 new H-4 employment authorizations issued.[7] Nearly 92% of initial applicants are from India and 6% are from the PRC. H-4 visa holders are highly skilled in their own right. Partial data from the Department of Labor indicate that 90% of H-4 visa holders being sponsored for residency hold at least a bachelor's degree and that nearly two-thirds of employment-authorized H-4s are employed in computer and math occupations (US DOL).

[7] The maximum length that an H-4 employment authorization document is valid is 3 years and the minimum is 1 year, so the number of H-4 work authorization holders is between 52,138 (renewals and initial in 2020) and 153,024 (the last 3 years of initial and renewals) (USCIS 2021b). Based on the large number of H-4 holders who have been in the backlog longer than 6 years, the actual number of work authorization holders may fall in the middle of the range—perhaps 100,000.

Figure 1.9: **United States H-1B Visas Delivered (Initial and Continued Employment), by Gender and Origin, 2018–2020 average**
(%)



PRC = People's Republic of China.

Notes: Data reported here are for both initial H-1Bs and continued employment. The United States reported gender data for initial H-1B visas delivered in fiscal year 2020. Because India is overrepresented in continued employment, a shift in gender balance is evident. In 2020, 33.6% of all initial H-1Bs were issued to women (India – 29%, PRC – 47%, and the rest of the world – 36%). The United States approved 426,710 H-1B visas for highly qualified migrants in fiscal year 2020, 319,494 (74.9%) of which were granted to Indian migrants. 51,597 visas (12.1%) went to migrants from the PRC.

Source: USCIS (2021a).

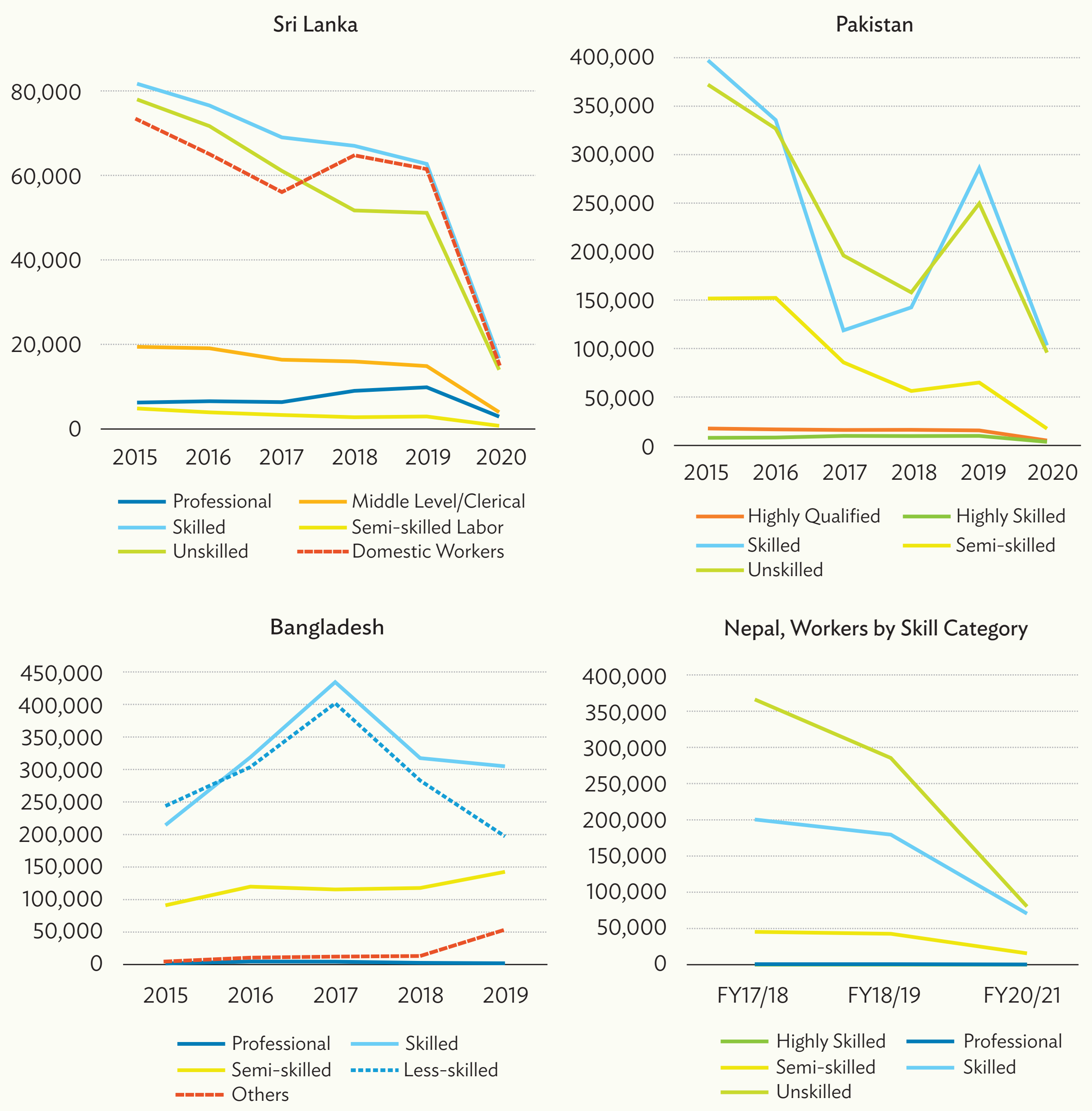
1.3.2 Asian Migration Declined Across Skill Level

The majority of Asian countries do not release data about the qualifications of migrants they send abroad, but those that do share several characteristics. Among countries that track deployments by skill level, very few report sending large numbers of highly skilled or professional workers abroad, a trend that has remained consistent over the long term. This is partly due to a well-known under-coverage of high-skilled migration, which generally occurs independently of the efforts of the countries of origin to regulate movements.[8] Available data show that all countries demonstrated a rapid decline across all skill categories in 2020 (Figure 1.10), with semi-skilled and unskilled workers severely impacted.

The Philippine Overseas Employment Administration tracks deployments by specific professional categories and subcategories that reveal significant differences across receiving countries. For example, in 2020, 94% of Filipinos deployed to the United Kingdom were healthcare workers. Canada, Japan, and the US receive a more diverse workforce. About 35% of workers in the United States are in healthcare. In Canada, 30% of Filipinos are employed in domestic work and 28% work in food or textile

[8] Highly-skilled workers deployed to OECD countries are typically not reflected in these statistics, exacerbating the appearance of underrepresentation as a proportion of deployments. Asian migrants in the OECD are more likely to be highly educated than other migrants, and they hold a significant proportion of the skilled labor visas granted by OECD countries. For some origin countries, such as India, skilled workers are explicitly exempted from exit controls and monitoring.

Figure 1.10: Workers by Skill Category, Selected Sending Countries, 2015–2020



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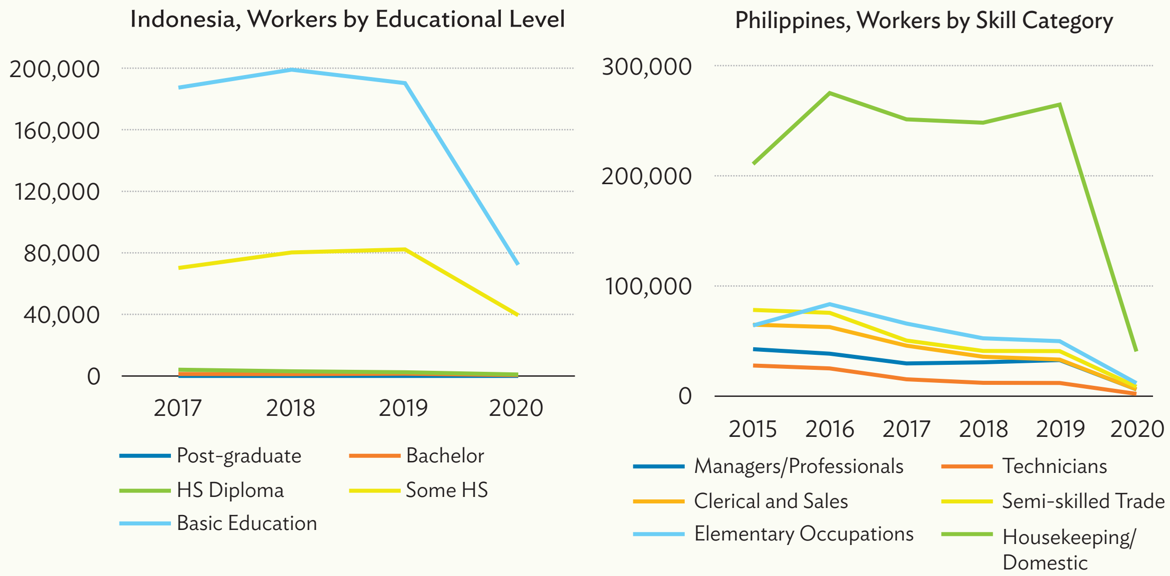


HS = high school.

Notes: Numbers for 2020 for Sri Lanka are provisional. Middle-skilled and clerical categories are considered separately in Sri Lankan national data. For Indonesia, basic education includes junior high and primary school. Categorizations are those reported in national data, except for the Philippines, which is an author preparation based on ISCO-08.

Sources: National data.

processing. In Japan, 20% work in legal and/or social fields, 13% are metalworkers, 12% are in building and trade, 3% in science and engineering, and 3% in teaching (POEA 2020).

In many ways, data from destination countries are more conducive to analysis of the skill composition of migration from Asia. In OECD countries, migrants account for substantial shares of employment in both high- and low-skilled sectors (OECD 2020a). Throughout 2020, a sharp increase in labor demand in certain sectors (i.e., healthcare) and reductions in labor supply in other key sectors (i.e., agriculture and care) drove policies of continuing to allow migration in these key sectors to maintain essential economic activities and public services.

OECD countries took specific steps to facilitate entry for healthcare professionals throughout 2020 and into 2021, accelerating processing times for visas and exempting these workers from restrictions on travel. Some European Union countries even removed the work permit requirement for workers in the medical sector (OECD 2021). In many OECD destinations, including Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States, agricultural workers were exempt from entry bans and had work hour restrictions relaxed (OECD 2020b, EMN/OECD 2020). Australia announced a new temporary agricultural work visa in August 2021, building on existing Pacific labor mobility programs. Subject to quarantine arrangements and anticipated agreements with partner countries, this program should offer more opportunities for such work in Australia for workers from countries such as Timor-Leste.

Deployment countries have long participated in programs intended to meet demand in the healthcare sector. Germany's Triple Win recruitment program, for example, has sought qualified foreign nurses from countries including the Philippines since 2013 (GIZ 2020). Germany has also recently signed new similar agreements with both India (Kerala) and Indonesia. The government of Kerala, India reported a sharp increase in recruitment of nurses in 2020 and 2021 (Chandna 2021).[9]

The pandemic has increased demand for care and healthcare workers, but not only in destination countries. The Philippines imposed a moratorium on deployment of healthcare workers in April 2020 to respond to the state of emergency. In December 2020, the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration lifted the suspension of deployment of new healthcare workers but instituted an annual cap of 5,000 for 2021 to avoid problems meeting any potential pandemic-related domestic demand. That cap was reached by June 2021 and was subsequently raised to 7,000. The high demand for Filipino healthcare workers abroad continues to act as a counterweight to existing government restrictions.

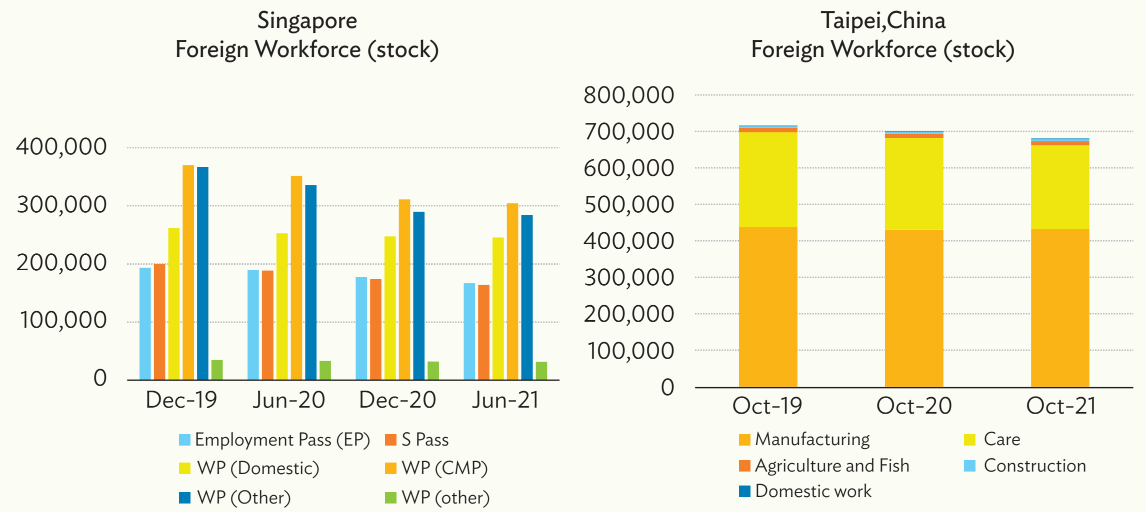
The Indonesian government sought to increase deployments of nurses in 2021 through a series of planned agreements with destination economies. In spite of having a surplus of qualified nurses, the country has deployed relatively few to date. From 2015–2020, only 6,393 nurses were placed overseas (Kurniati et al. 2020). The most popular destinations are Taipei,China, then Japan, followed by GCC destinations. In 2020, only 85 nurses were deployed due to restrictions (a 63% decrease from 2019).

Domestic service is another key sector for Asian foreign workers. Within Southeast Asia, the predominant countries of destination for domestic workers are Thailand, Singapore, and Malaysia. Historically, the main countries of origin are Indonesia, the Philippines, Myanmar, and Viet Nam (ILO 2018). The Philippines has also been the second-largest source of domestic workers to Kuwait behind India. Deployments were halted in January 2020 following the death of a Filipina migrant worker, but the ban for returning workers was lifted as talks on the rights of Filipino domestic workers progressed in March 2020 (Shivakoti, Henderson, and Withers 2021). In June 2020, 150,000 domestic workers from the Philippines remained in Kuwait (along with 325,000 Indians, together 70% of Kuwait's migrant domestic worker stock). Following COVID-related restrictions, Kuwait reopened to Filipino, Indian, and Sri Lankan domestic workers in January 2021. However, deployment of new Filipino workers awaits the finalization of a new agreement. Kuwait is also negotiating new agreements with Ethiopia, Indonesia, and Nepal.

Singapore observed labor shortages in specific sectors due to pandemic-related closures. The stock of domestic workers remained stable (Figure 1.11), whereas the stock of foreign workforce declined across all other categories. Measures have been taken to preserve previously approved work passes in the construction, marine shipyard, and process sectors until March 2022 for those migrants as-yet unable to enter Singapore. For those migrants already residing in the country, the government has also created a job-matching scheme in the construction sector (Yang 2021). Taipei,China observed slight, but steady, declines in the total foreign workforce in the same month of 2019, 2020, and 2021. At the same time, the stock of construction workers has actually increased. Manufacturing declined by 2% in October 2020 versus October 2019, but in October 2021 had largely rebounded. Domestic workers were most significantly impacted. Between October 2019 and October 2020, the stock declined 8%. Between 2020 and 2021, the decline was 11%. The stock of care workers experienced a 9% drop between 2020 and 2021, where it had been relatively mildly impacted the year before. Inflows were low due to the introduction of a quota necessitated by quarantine requirements. This suggests care needs in the earliest period of the pandemic may have blunted the decline, but that COVID-19 may have multitiered impacts on migrant workers.

[9] Kerala sent 253 nurses abroad in February 2021, over six times its pre-pandemic monthly number.

Figure 1.11: Stock of Foreign Workforce by Category, Non-OECD Destinations
(monthly comparisons)



OECD = Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Notes: The Singapore Employment Pass (EP) is for highly-skilled professionals and has a minimum salary requirement. The S Pass is for mid-level skilled staff with salary requirement. The Work Permit (WP) covers unskilled foreign workers from certain improved countries and sectors (CMP is construction, marine shipyard, process sectors) and has no salary requirement. Both EP and WP are tied to job offers. The Work Pass covers Letter of Consent (LOC), pre-approved LOC, Training Work Permit, and Training Employment Pass.

Sources: National data.

The private sector in Thailand recently called on the government to speed the signing of a memorandum of understanding with Myanmar, the Lao PDR, and Cambodia, noting a "drastic shortage" in workers in elementary occupations, particularly in the agriculture, livestock, construction, hospitality, and garment sectors. A Thai Department of Employment study found that Thai businesses needed 256,029 workers from Myanmar, 130,138 from Cambodia, and 38,536 from the Lao PDR (Theparat 2021).

1.4 International Student Mobility to and from Asia

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of foreign students enrolled in higher education programs had been growing steadily, exceeding 6 million in 2019. In OECD countries alone, the number of international students present in 2019 was approximately 3.7 million. Among these, 60% of holders of study permits came from Asia, particularly the PRC (25%), India (9%), and Viet Nam (3%).

Border and embassy closures in 2020 led to a significant drop in student numbers. In the United States, the overall number of first permits to international students fell by nearly 70% from 2019 (388,839 to 121,205). Smaller but significant drops occurred in other receiving countries (Canada—36%, European Union—24%).

With Asia being the main region of origin of international students in OECD countries, the impact on arrivals from this region was particularly severe. The overall number of students from the PRC studying in American universities (both continuing and new students, previously approximately 370,000) fell by around 15% in 2020. This includes students enrolled in online courses, but was largely driven by a decline in new registrants.

In contrast, the United Kingdom imposed a quarantine but otherwise kept its borders mostly open to international students.[10] The number of students from the PRC seeking to enter undergraduate studies actually increased by 30% in 2020 and by 17% in 2021. Although destination countries have taken a variety of steps to allow international student mobility, with most now processing visas and facilitating entry, any rebound is likely to be slow. Challenges remain—for example, in the United States, visa processing faces significant backlogs and international students are not eligible for a student visa if their program is fully online. Here, as in many countries, the new Omicron variant of COVID-19 introduces new uncertainties. Australia has kept borders shut to most foreign students, with roughly half studying online from outside the country.

The PRC's border closures in March 2020 have prevented more than half a million international students from entering the country. The country is unlikely to ease the border shutdown until late 2022. However, a mutual agreement between the PRC and the Republic of Korea led to the resumption of visa processing for students from the Republic of Korea in July 2020.

Japan had a backlog of over 147,000 foreign students waiting for visas when it announced an easing of entry restrictions on 8 November 2021 (Shimokawa and Shimazaki 2021). However, on 30 November 2021, the Japanese government renewed the suspension of entry of all foreign visitors in response to the new COVID-19 variant. Uncertainty surrounding the lifting of restrictions has led many foreign students to cancel plans to study in Japan, many choosing more open countries such as the Republic of Korea, which has kept its border open to foreign students. The Republic of Korea admitted more than 68,000 foreign students in 2020. The government reported that around 34,000 international students entered the Republic of Korea in the first half of 2021, down 82% from 185,000 in the first half of 2019.

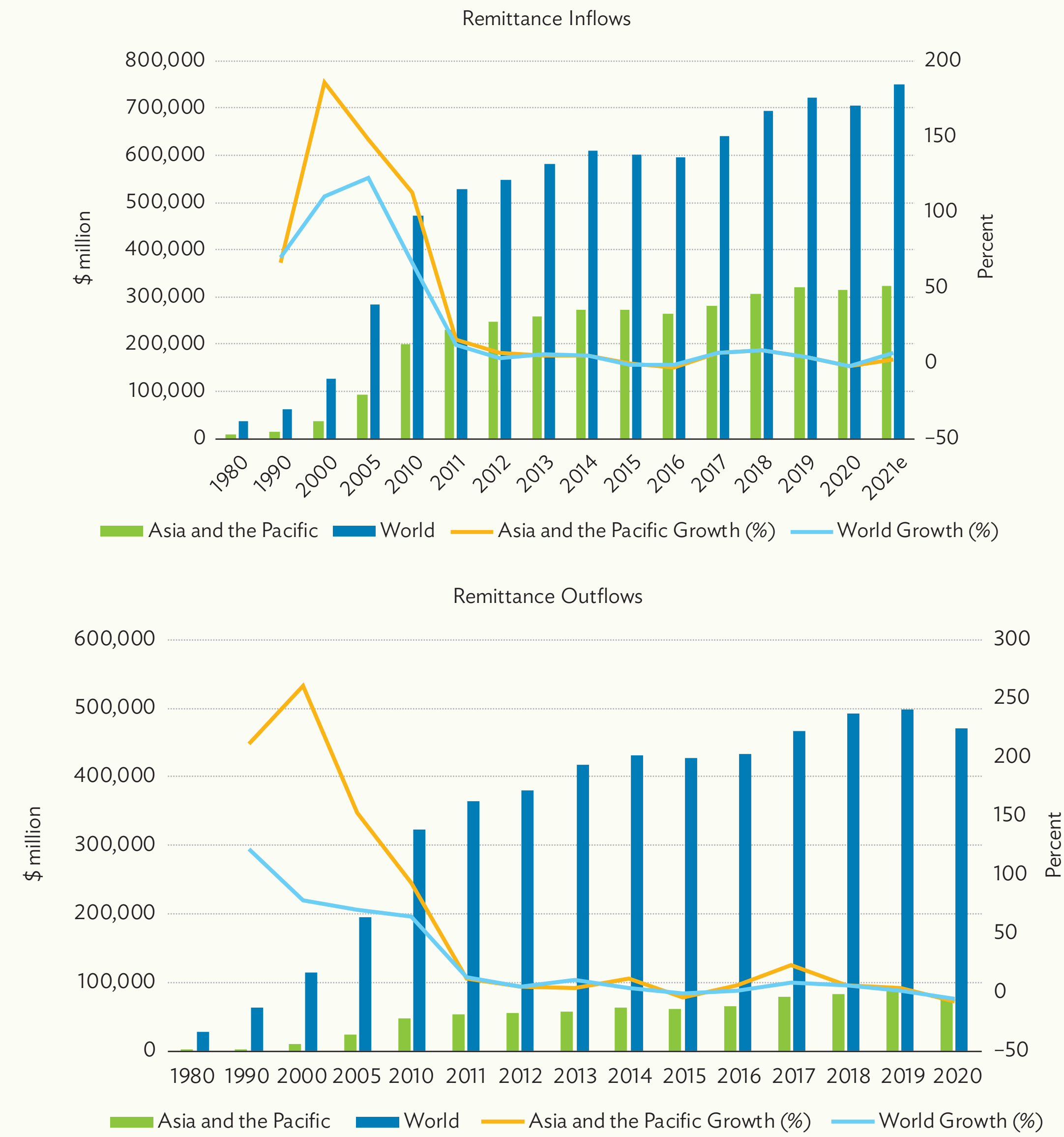
Malaysia also has been accepting international students, although not from countries on a restricted list. On 30 November 2021, the government announced the postponement of entry of international students and foreign workers from countries categorized as being at a high risk of Omicron variant infections. The land border connecting Singapore and Malaysia closed in March 2020 but reopened for vaccinated travelers in November 2021. This enabled many Malaysians to resume their pre-pandemic commute to Singapore for work and school. Singapore and the Republic of Korea launched mutual Vaccinated Travel Lanes (VTL) in November 2021 (MOT 2021). This is a long-term strategy of the government of Singapore to reopen its borders. Visitors under the VTL scheme, including international students, are not subject to quarantine but must be vaccinated and take polymerase chain reaction (known as PCR) and antigen tests.

1.5 Remittance Flows to Asia and the Pacific

Although the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the mobility of workers, domestically and internationally, remittance flows have shown remarkable recovery from 2020. Globally, migrant remittance inflows recorded growth from 2017 until COVID-19 hit in 2020. Remittance inflows dropped by 2% to $705 billion in 2020. However, once final data are available, global remittance inflows are expected to have recovered, with growth of 6.5%, to approximately $751 billion in 2021. The World Bank (2021a) projected the remittances to low- and middle-income countries to have grown at 7.3%, reaching $589 billion, in 2021 as strong growth of remittances was registered in most regions. For outward remittance flows, a similar trend was observed in 2020. The world's remittance outflows declined by 5.5%, compared to the previous year (Figure 1.12).

[10] Post-study work requirements were also relaxed and the post-graduation job-seeking period extended (OECD 2021).

Figure 1.12: Global Remittance Flows, 1980–2021e



Source: KNOMAD.

The Asia and Pacific region has accounted for 40%–45% of the world's remittance inflows since 2010. Despite fluctuation, the growth of remittance inflows has been evident, with average growth of 5.5% in the past 10 years. Due to COVID-19, remittance inflows dropped by 2% to $314 billion in 2020 from $321 million in 2019. Most remittance flows during the pandemic were due to migrants' willingness to support their families back home to survive the economic turmoil of the pandemic (Kikkawa et al. 2021). Remittances thus played an important role to alleviate economic impacts of the crisis, beyond the instant fiscal subsidies provided by governments. Outward remittance flows from Asia, on the other hand, show a smaller proportion of 15%–17% of the world's total remittance outflows. Despite this lower percentage, outward remittance flows have continuously increased in the past decade in Asia and the Pacific.

In line with the global trend, remittances are projected to have recovered in Asia and the Pacific in 2021, with a 2.5% growth of remittance inflows (KNOMAD 2021). Table 1.5 shows selected countries in Asia and the Pacific that are the top regional remittance recipients in nominal value.

Table 1.5: Migrant Remittance Inflows in Selected Countries

Country	2021e ($ million)	Share of Total Regional Inflows	Growth from 2020
India	87,000	27%	5%
PRC	53,000	16%	–11%
Philippines	36,240	11%	4%
Pakistan	33,000	10%	26%
Bangladesh	23,000	7%	6%
Viet Nam	18,060	6%	5%

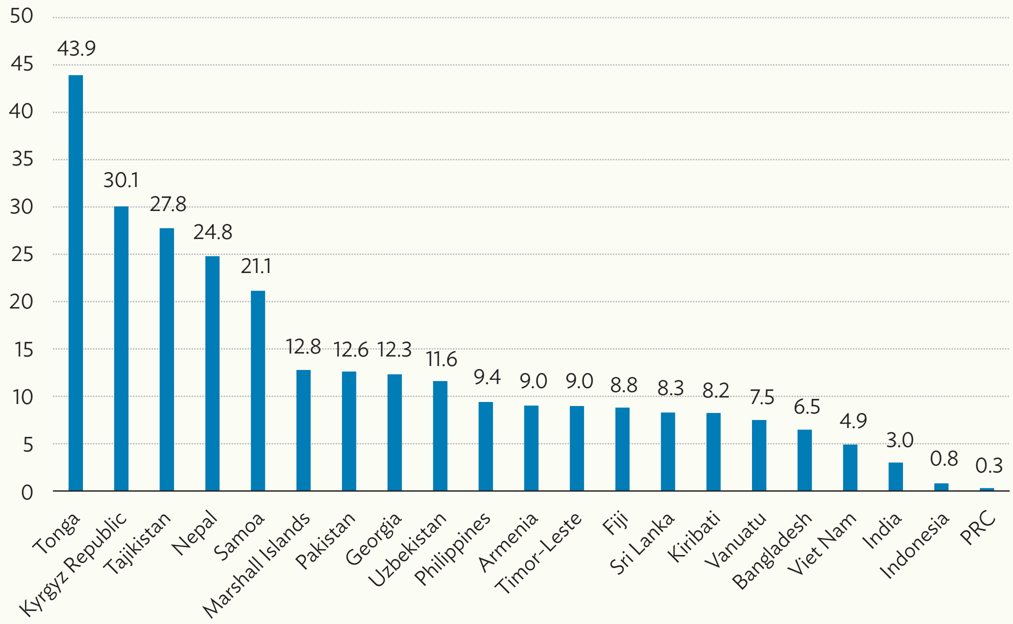
PRC = People's Republic of China.

Source: KNOMAD.

India, which has consistently held the biggest share of remittances in Asia and the Pacific, should account for 27% of total remittance inflows to the region in 2021, followed by the PRC, and the Philippines. Despite regional growth, the PRC is among the countries that are expected to demonstrate a decline in inward remittances. Bangladesh, on the other hand, is expected to show a considerable growth of inward remittances at 26% in 2021. The growth of remittance inflows to South Asia was facilitated by government measures in countries such as Bangladesh and Sri Lanka to support migrant workers to send larger remittances back home during the pandemic (Kikkawa et al. 2021).

In terms of the remittance inflows as a share of GDP, Tonga is expected to lead other countries in the region again at approximately 44% in 2021. Figure 1.13 shows that many smaller countries in the Pacific, e.g., Samoa (21.1%) and the Marshall Islands (12.8%), as well as many countries in Central and West Asia, e.g., the Kyrgyz Republic (30.1%), Tajikistan (27.8%), Georgia (12.3%), Uzbekistan (11.6%), and Pakistan (12.6%), rely heavily on remittances for economic growth and development. On the other hand, in bigger economies like the PRC, India, and Indonesia, remittance inflows are a much smaller portion of their gross domestic product.

Figure 1.13: Remittance Inflows as a Share of Gross Domestic Product, 2021e (%)



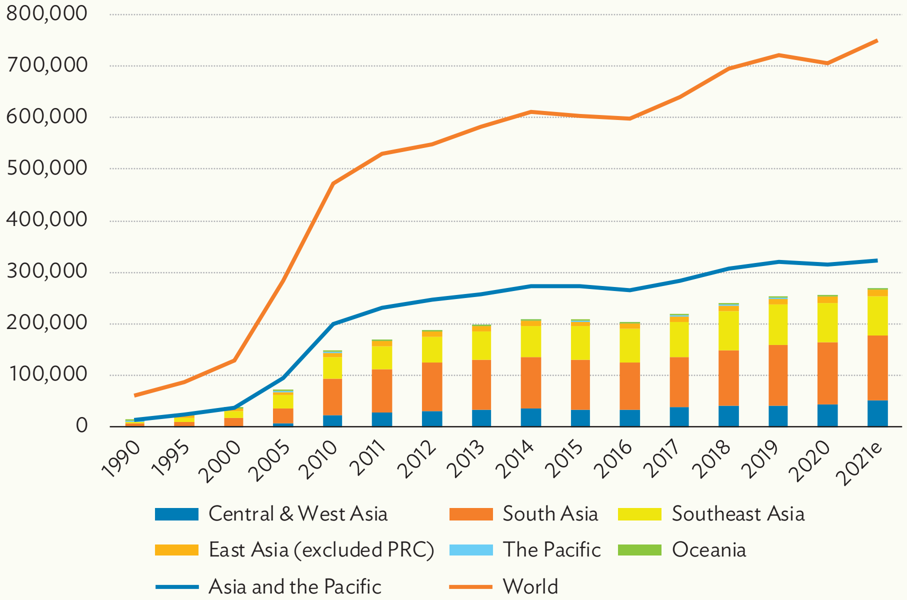
PRC = People's Republic of China.

Source: KNOMAD.

1.5.1 Subregional Remittance Trends

Looking at the subregional trends for remittance inflows (Figure 1.14), South Asia has continued as the lead recipient of remittances, followed by Southeast Asia and East Asia (including the PRC). In 2020, remittance inflows to South Asia accounted for 38% while Southeast Asia and East Asia represented 24% and 21%, respectively. A slight change is projected for 2021: South Asia's share of inward remittances should increase to 39%, and Southeast Asia's should remain constant, while the share for East Asia is expected to decrease by 2% due to a decline in remittance inflows to the PRC. Despite being described as the top remittance recipient in terms of gross domestic product per capita, the Pacific held the smallest share of total regional remittance inflows in 2020 and 2021 (estimated), respectively (Figure 1.15).

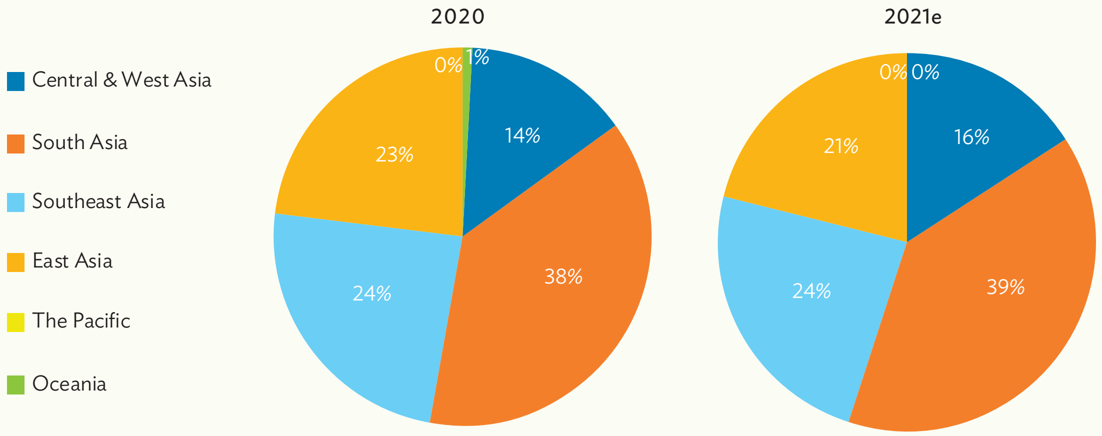
Figure 1.14: Migrant Remittance Inflows by Subregions
($ million)



Notes: Oceania is Australia and New Zealand. The Pacific includes Fiji, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

Source: KNOMAD.

Figure 1.15: Share of Remittance Recipients by Subregions, 2020

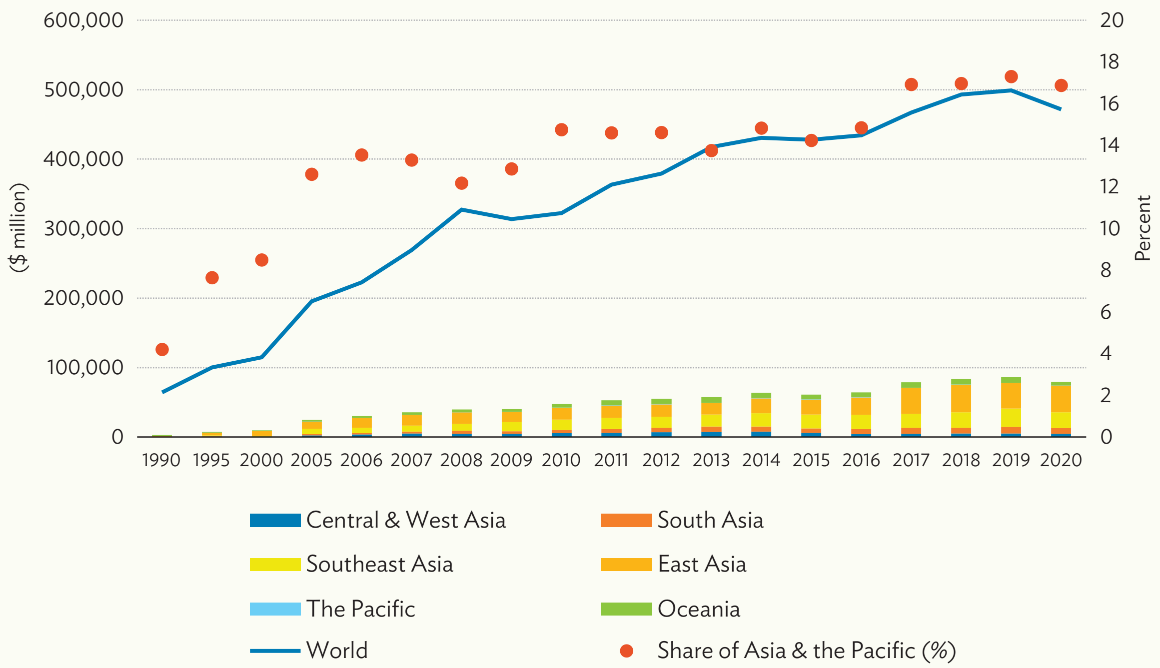


Notes: Oceania is Australia and New Zealand. The Pacific includes Fiji, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

Source: KNOMAD.

The global share of outward remittance flows from Asia and the Pacific is smaller compared to other regions. The share has stayed constant at 17% of total world's outward remittances since 2017 (Figure 1.16). East Asia, particularly the PRC, Japan, and the Republic of Korea, has led other subregions as a remittance sender, accounting for 49% of total remittance outflows from the region in 2020. Notably, Southeast Asia was recorded as the second highest subregion for remittance senders in Asia and the Pacific at 28% in 2020. This covers remittance data from Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand; however, data from Singapore are not available.

Figure 1.16: Migrant Remittance Outflows by Subregions



Notes: Oceania is Australia and New Zealand. The Pacific includes Fiji, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

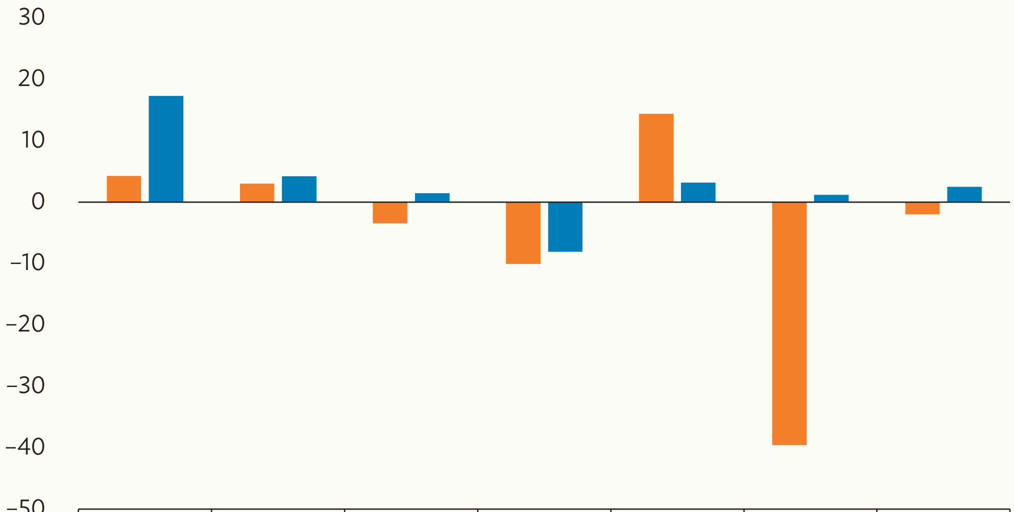
Source: KNOMAD.

1.5.2 COVID-19 Affects Remittance Inflows to Asia and the Pacific

Many countries and subregions in Asia and the Pacific were affected by COVID-19 and related restrictions and lockdown measures. Remittance inflows to Oceania dropped by 40%, followed by East Asia (10%) and Southeast Asia (3%) (Figure 1.17). Two countries had significant impact on subregional trends, and they are expected to have done so again in 2021. Removing Pakistan from the Central and West Asia subregion would reverse the rare positive subregional growth seen in 2020.[11] Additionally, excluding the PRC from East Asia, the subregion actually recorded 6% growth of remittance inflows in 2020.

In 2021, remittances grew in all subregions in Asia and the Pacific, except East Asia (KNOMAD 2021). As stated, remittance inflows to Asia and the Pacific are expected to show 2% growth in 2021. By subregion, remittance inflows to Central and West Asia are expected to have grown at the highest rate (17%). On a country level, Pakistan's growth leads at 26%. Without Pakistan, the subregion would be expected to gain only 4% growth of remittance inflows. East Asia will show a decrease in inward remittances at 8% in 2021, mostly from a significant decline of the remittances to the PRC. Excluding the PRC, the East Asia subregion would have grown at 4% in 2021. According to Kikkawa et al. (2021), the substantially different pathways toward post-COVID-19 recovery taken by destination countries—developed economies such as the United States and the European Union—and developing and least developing countries will likely restructure remittance patterns in the short- and medium-term future. The vaccine rollouts in advanced economies have facilitated the reopening of cross-border and economic transactions, but the health and economic situations in South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Central and West Asia remain unstable due to slow vaccine rollouts and faster transmission of new COVID-19 variants. Further viral spread will likely suppress economic growth, as the outlook of most affected sectors, i.e., tourism, services, and hospitality remains adverse.

Figure 1.17: Growth of Remittance Inflows by Subregion (%)



	Central and West Asia	South Asia	Southeast Asia	East Asia	The Pacific	Oceania	Asia and the Pacific
2020	4	3	−3	−10	14	−40	−2
2021e	17	4	1	−8	3	1	2

Notes: Oceania is Australia and New Zealand. The Pacific includes Fiji, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

Source: KNOMAD.

[11] Including Pakistan, the Central and West Asian subregion recorded 4% growth in remittances in 2020. Excluding Pakistan, the subregion would show an 11% decline in remittances, driven by the economic slowdown caused by COVID-19 and the wave of returning migrants from the Russian Federation (Kikkawa et al. 2021).

Kikkawa et al. (2021) forecasts that, in line with the global trend, remittance inflows to Asia and the Pacific are expected to recover at 5.8% growth. A strong recovery of remittances can be explained by the robust economic recovery in remittance source countries, i.e., developed economies, which stimulates the inflows to developing countries. Nonetheless, this outlook remains subject to uncertainty caused by the spread of the new COVID-19 Omicron variant. By subregion, the recovery will vary. The strongest recovery is projected in South Asia (7.2%), followed by Southeast Asia (5.9%) and East Asia (4.3%). The PRC is expected to deliver 4.3% growth in 2022. Central Asia, however, is projected to show negative growth at 0.1%. The United Kingdom, the United States, the European Union, and the Middle East remain the key sources of remittance recovery for all the recipient subregions (Kikkawa et al. 2021).

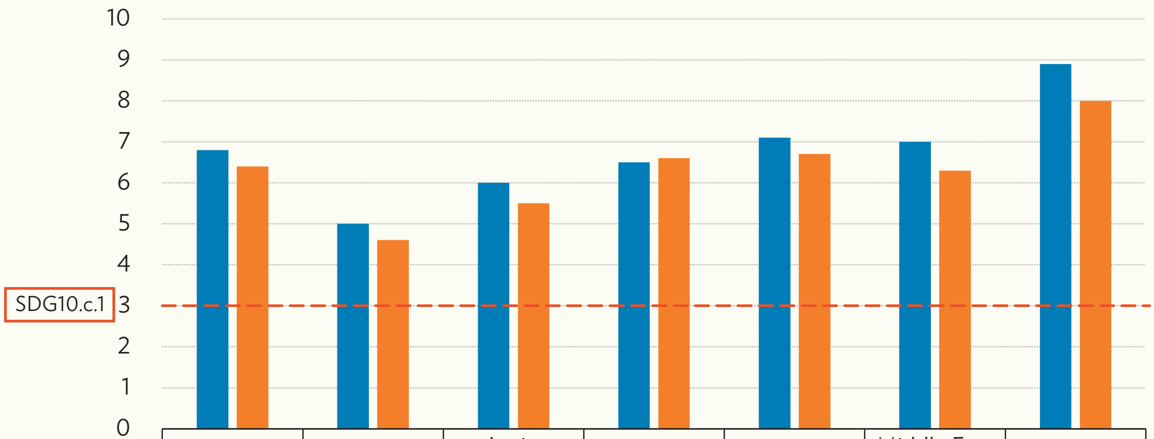
The impact of declining remittances is evident for example in Sri Lanka, where foreign remittances have proven particularly unstable over the past 2 years. According to the Central Bank of Sri Lanka (CBSL), remittances fell to $375 million in April 2020 but quickly recovered, reaching approximately $700 million in July 2020. However, in 2021, formal remittances began to sharply decline, falling 9.3% in September 2021 compared to the same period in 2020 and further falling to $271.4 million in November 2021. This imbalance is linked to a series of economic problems, notably tied to significant debt undertaken by the government to cope with the pandemic. Economic recovery in mid-2021 led to a rapid spike in inflation. The CBSL simultaneously printed money to cover budget deficits, triggering parallel markets (Weeraratne 2021b). In early September 2021, with the weakening of the Sri Lankan rupee, the CBSL fixed the SLR/$ rate at 200. However, currency pressures caused by the expanding trade deficit and concerns around debt repayments resulted in the SLR/$ reaching 255–265 via informal channels. The Sri Lankan government, in a bid to increase foreign currency reserves depleted by loss of tourism, has taken measures to tamp down on informal channels for remittances, including barring banks from buying dollars above the exchange rate and threatening use of anti-money laundering laws against those who avoid the formal system. At the same time, it offered an incentive for remittances through formal channels, adding SLR8 to the dollar to the existing Incentive Scheme on Inward Workers' Remittances of SLR2 to the dollar, for the months of December 2021 and January 2022 (CBSL 2021).

1.5.3 Costs of Remittances

The cost of remittances remains a challenge. Sustainable Development Goal 10.c.1 aims to reduce the cost of remittances to 3% of the sending amount of $200 by 2030. According to the World Bank (2021b), the global average costs of sending money across international borders continued to stay high at 6.4% in Q1 2021. The costs of remittance transfer, however, vary across the regions (Figure 1.18). Comparing the first quarter of 2020 to the same quarter of 2021, a decrease trend is evident. The cost in South Asia remained lower than other regions at 4.6% in Q1 2021. However, the remittance cost through official channels in South Asia is still expensive compared with informal channels. As mentioned above, a number of governments in South Asia have implemented cost-reducing policies to assist migrant workers during COVID-19. For East Asia and the Pacific, the average cost of sending $200 to the region fell to 6.7% in Q1 2021 compared to 7.1% in the same period of a year earlier. The average remittance costs ranged from 2.7% to 15%, with the transfer cost to the Philippines being the lowest.

To reduce the cost of remittances, digitalization plays an important part, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the travel restrictions and social distancing rules, digital payments and transfers have become crucial. World Bank data show that the cost of sending money across international borders via bank transfer tends to be higher than those sent through digital channels or through money transmitters offering cash-to-cash services (World Bank 2021a). According to the Remittance Prices Worldwide Report (World Bank 2021b), the global average cost of digital remittances was 5.1% in Q1 2021, while digital services accounted for 26% of all services collected by the report in Q1 2021.

Figure 1.18: Remittance Costs by Subregion
(%)



	Global Average	South Asia	Latin America and Caribbean	Europe and Central Asia	East Asia and Pacific	Middle East and North Africa	Sub-Saharan Africa
Q1 2020	6.8	5	6	6.5	7.1	7	8.9
Q1 2021	6.40	4.6	5.5	6.6	6.7	6.3	8

Q = quarter, SDG = Sustainable Development Goal.

Source: World Bank (2021b).

Internet banking and mobile remittances deliver a more convenient and cheaper option, particularly for smaller and more frequent remittance transactions. However, migrant workers need to own or open a bank account to perform these transactions, as digital remittances are typically linked to bank accounts. Many migrants do not have a bank account in their destination countries. The complexity of opening a digital service account can further hinder the process, given requirements of ID verification, usually through face-to-face interaction, and the interoperability between telecommunication companies and financial institutions. Potential risks have emerged in the form of cybersecurity, financial fraud, use of cryptocurrencies, and migrant workers' lack of financial literacy. Policymakers and financial authorities must consider these issues when designing policy measures and supervisory regulations that promote cross-border remittances with lower remittance costs.

1.6 Summary

While migrants were more significantly impacted than native-born workers in many countries, demand for foreign labor is returning gradually to pre-pandemic levels. By the end of 2020, migration to the main non-OECD receiving countries resumed to varying degrees. Migrants who remained in destination countries benefited from a variety of policy instruments to extend their status. OECD countries took specific steps to facilitate entry for healthcare professionals throughout 2020 and into 2021, but visa numbers for most other categories of workers remained significantly reduced. Some sending countries, such as Indonesia, the Lao PDR, and the Philippines, provided repatriation support to those migrants who returned (in some cases, with international support) (ILO 2021b).

As the main region of origin of international students in OECD countries and a major recipient of remittances sent from overseas, the initial impact of COVID-19 on Asia was particularly severe. Many host countries enacted measures to support international students, in some cases introducing exceptions to visa restrictions. Remittance flows to Asia and the Pacific declined by 2% in 2020 due to the COVID-19 impact, but they are expected to have fully recovered in 2021, when final data are available.

Notably, widespread suspension of visa issuance and increased delays in visa processing has created large backlogs of potential migrants in many countries. Some analysts predicted a "migration spike" as new migrants set out at the same time as migrants who delayed their trips for a year, leading to an increase in migration in the months and possibly years after travel normalizes (O'Brien and Eger 2020). This has not materialized yet, notably because the pandemic continues to disrupt international mobility. Early numbers from 2021 indicate that flows remain close to 2020 numbers. Recent travel restrictions in response to continued circulation of the coronavirus cast doubt on the speed at which international mobility from and to Asia will recover. For some categories of high-skilled workers, international telework and videoconferencing has reduced the need for international travel. Availability of online tertiary education programs has also experienced significant growth. The long-term impact of the pandemic on migration flows remains to be seen, but there are likely to be tensions between demand for foreign labor, which remains high, and the ability to bring workers from abroad. It is reasonable to expect that destination countries will at least temporarily try to meet labor demands with native-born workers to reduce uncertainty due to travel restrictions. Some geographical reorientation of low-skilled economic migration is also possible as migrants are prevented from travel to countries with stringent entry requirements. Most likely, destination countries will shift toward increasing exemptions to enable categories of foreign workers to travel. Global migration at the end of 2021 is at an inflection point. It may be that the world can soon return to business as usual, but it is also possible the face of global migration will emerge significantly changed.

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CHAPTER 2

Labor Migration Challenges and Policy Responses in Asia During the COVID-19 Pandemic[1]

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2.1 Introduction

Throughout the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, disproportionate numbers of migrant workers in Asia have been infected with COVID-19. In addition, migrants have faced job losses and a lack of social protection. Given situations where prolonged border closures have locked out incoming migrant workers, several destinations have allowed for visa extensions or regularization "amnesties" to allow migrant workers already in the country to stay. During the pandemic occupational safety and health has been needed urgently to avert the spread of infection and reduce risk to migrant workers, yet COVID-19-related personal protective equipment (PPE) has not always been freely or comprehensively provided to migrant workers by employers or governments. Many migrant workers have also been left without access to healthcare or vaccines, much less livelihoods or social protection. The lack of adequate housing for many migrant workers also became apparent.

Countries in the region took early COVID-19 policy responses aiming for zero COVID. This resulted in the closing of borders. In the case of infections, there was a sealing off workplaces and accommodation in "bubbles". As migrant-reliant employers have been hard-hit by closed borders and are pressuring governments to allow migration, tentative resumption of labor migration has begun. This comes at a time of better vaccination coverage. Policy trends more generally in the region have had to adapt to the COVID-19 Delta and Omicron variants upending aims for zero COVID, and instead measures are being built around giving more importance to economic recovery.

While policies in 2021 have continued to respond to immediate challenges arising from the pandemic, governments are also beginning to consider and commit to longer-term recovery plans. At the International Labour Conference in 2021, government, employer, and worker delegates from Asia and beyond unanimously adopted a "Global call to action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient" (ILO 2021e).

2.1.1 Job Losses Among Migrant Workers

In Asia and the Pacific, the International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that 8.2% of working hours were lost in 2020, relative to the baseline at the end of 2019 (ILO 2022a). After some significant gains in the second half of 2020, recovery in working hours stalled during 2021. Asia and the Pacific

[1] The following ILO studies informed this chapter: Rough Seas: The Impact of COVID-19 on Fishing Workers in South East Asia, Recovery and Labour Migration in the Post-Pandemic Future: Thematic background paper for the 14th ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour, and Home Truths: Access to Decent Housing for Migrant Workers in the ASEAN Region. Information in this chapter related to the fishing sector comes primarily from the Rough Seas study. Further country-specific information was provided by Sophia Kagan, ILO; Assistant Director Dongyeong Won, International Cooperation Division of the Republic of Korea's Ministry of Employment and Labour; the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Japan; the Ministry of Human Resources, Malaysia; and the Ministry of Manpower, Singapore.

specifically has not closed the pre-crisis benchmark, with a gap of 3.2% remaining as of the fourth quarter of 2021 (ILO 2021f) (Table 2.1). This “labor market slack” remains significant in many countries through the region. Young people, especially young women, continue to face greater employment deficits. ILO estimates that globally there will be 13 million fewer women in employment in 2021 compared to 2019, while men’s employment will have recovered to 2019 levels. In Asia and the Pacific in 2020, the pandemic decreased women’s employment by 3.8%, compared to a decline of 2.9% for men (ILO 2021a). Pre-COVID-19, women-dominant jobs were characterized by low wages, long working hours, exposure to occupational health and safety risks including violence and harassment, and limited opportunities for skilling or advancement. Given this persistent systemic inequality during the pandemic, women workers, including women migrant workers, were at particular risk of worsening working conditions, in addition to having heightened burdens of family care (ILO 2021a).

Table 2.1: Quarterly Estimates of Working Hours in Asia and the Pacific (percentage change and full-time equivalent jobs rounded to the nearest 100,000)

Period	Change in Working Hours Relative to 2019 Q4 (adjusted for population aged 15–64)	Equivalent Number of Full-time Jobs (48 hours/week)
Q1 2020	–6.4%	–113,200,000
Q2 2020	–17.2%	–306,200,000
Q3 2020	–5.6%	–100,700,000
Q4 2020	–3.5%	–61,700,000
Q1 2021	–3.2%	–57,800,000
Q2 2021	–4.8%	–86,700,000
Q3 2021	–4.6%	–83,100,000
Q4 2021	–3.2%	–57,200,000

Q = quarter.

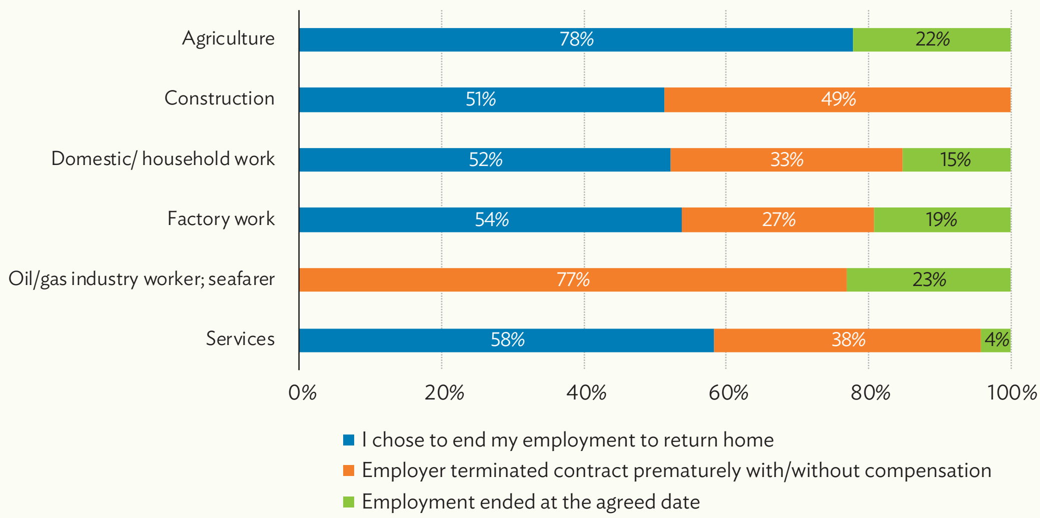
Source: ILO (2021f).

Looking at job losses in one subregion, in 2021 in ASEAN, 9.3 million fewer workers are projected to be in employment than expected in the absence of the pandemic, compared to 10.6 million fewer workers in 2020 (ILO 2021c).

Migrant workers’ job losses are not comprehensively measured by every country in the region. At the end of October 2020, despite the pandemic, Japan saw a 4% year-on-year increase of migrant workers (lower however than the 13.6% increase in 2019) (Asahi Shimbun 2021). Two months later, however, in early December 2020, Japan’s Immigration Services Agency reported that the Technical Intern Training Program had halted for 51,000 migrant workers either due to COVID-19 related bankruptcies or layoffs (The Mainichi 2020). Data in the Republic of Korea suggest the unemployment rate of migrant workers was 7.6% in 2020, amounting to a rise of 2.1 percentage points, or an increased 70,000 unemployed migrant workers compared to 2019 (KOSTAT 2021). Relatedly, the Republic of Korea saw a year-on-year decline of 3.4% of migrant workers entering for “nonprofessional employment” by May 2020 (KOSTAT 2021). Data from the Republic of Korea further showed 2020 COVID-19 related trends where the unemployment rate among women migrant workers rose by more than men migrant workers, and migrants with secondary or higher degrees experienced higher job losses than those with less than middle school education (KOSTAT 2021, cited in Kim 2021).

An ILO rapid assessment of COVID-19 impacts on migrant workers in the ASEAN region as of end 2020 captured reasons for job losses, including related to premature termination of contracts during the pandemic. Figure 2.1 shows data by sector of work among migrant worker returnees to Myanmar and the Philippines, showing men-dominated oil and gas, seafaring, and construction industries hardest hit by early contract terminations.

Figure 2.1: Reason for Employment Termination of Returnees to Myanmar and the Philippines, by Sector, Q4 2020 (n=195)



Q = quarter.

Source: ILO (2021e).

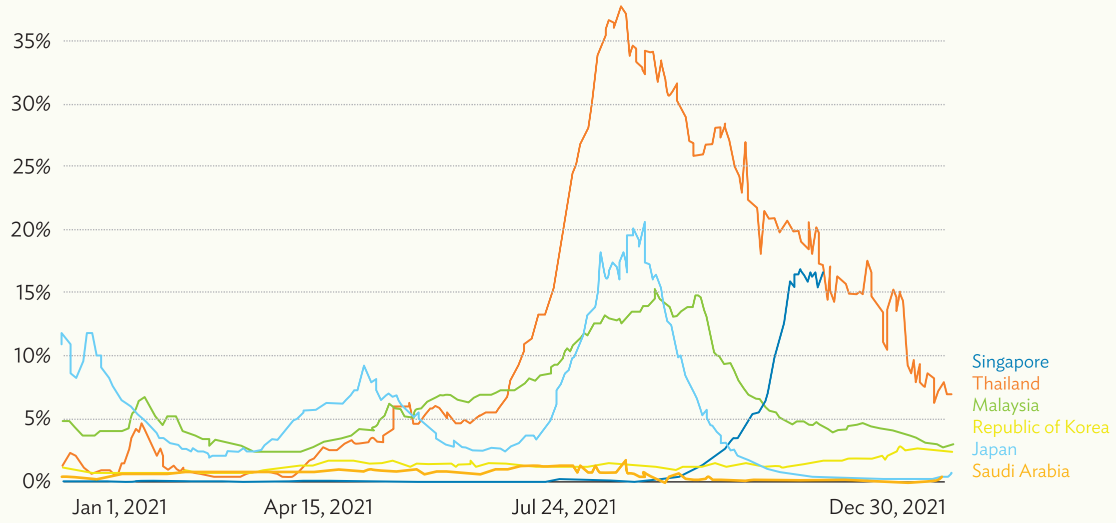
2.2 Access to Health

Experiences during COVID-19 have demonstrated that protecting the health of migrant workers benefits not only individuals' health, but the public health and well-being of communities (ILO 2020b). Migrant workers who do not have access to COVID-19-related testing, healthcare, and vaccinations as well as paid sick leave are placed in situations of risking their own health as well as contributing to continued community transmission. If migrant workers, irrespective of status, are not able to access healthcare, the result will be a prolonged pandemic with continuing health, social, and economic inequalities.

2.2.1 COVID-19 Infection Among Migrant Workers

During the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Asian region became a global epicenter of the pandemic, with high numbers of infections and deaths, and deep impacts on the health and livelihoods of its people and economy. COVID-19 positive test rates in major migrant destinations both in Asia and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) destinations are shown in Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2: Share of COVID-19 Tests That Are Positive, Daily Positive Rate, in Selected Asian and GCC Migrant Destinations, 2021



COVID-19 = coronavirus disease, GCC = Gulf Cooperation Council.

Notes: Rolling 7-day average is shown. Comparisons of testing data across countries are affected by differences in the way the data are reported. Daily data are interpolated for countries not reporting testing data on a daily basis. Some Singapore data for late 2021 not available on the database.

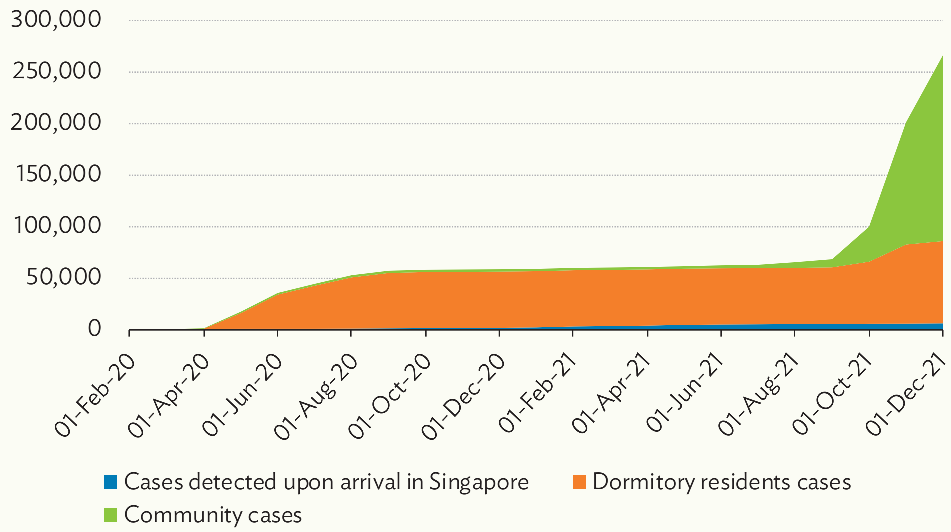
Source: Our World in Data, CCBY. Data Source: Johns Hopkins University CSSE COVID-19 Data.

Migrant workers have faced high COVID-19 infection rates due to various factors, including lack of access to quality preventative and responsive healthcare, overcrowded housing, and employment in informal sector jobs and jobs with limited possibility of physical distancing (ILO 2021j; APHR 2021; UN 2020). High rates of COVID-19 cases and deaths have been found in migrant worker communities in Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and GCC countries (APHR 2021; Illmer 2020). In Singapore, close to half (47%) of the migrant worker population was infected with COVID-19 during the first 9 months of the pandemic (Illmer 2020). By mid-February 2021, more than 90% of the total number of COVID-19 infections (59,800 cases) were of migrant workers living in migrant dormitories (Singapore Ministry of Health). Cases in migrant dormitories made up the majority of cases in Singapore until early October 2022 (Figure 2.3). High rates of infection have been linked to overcrowded housing conditions, including shared facilities and sleeping areas, which increase the risk of contracting the virus (APHR 2021).

In Thailand, as of 31 July 2021, at least 14% of infections were among migrant workers from Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), and Myanmar, with another 10% of infections among migrants from other countries, totaling 24% of persons with COVID-19 in Thailand being migrants. In mid-2021, COVID-19 cases among migrants from Cambodia, the Lao PDR, and Myanmar were at least three times higher (24 per 1,000 persons) compared to Thai nationals (7 per 1,000 persons) (WHO 2021a). By November, while the percentage of Thai nationals remained steady, migrants' share from Cambodia, the Lao PDR, and Myanmar declined among the total number of migrants with COVID-19 (Figure 2.4). Migrants from Cambodia, the Lao PDR, and Myanmar were then only two times as likely as Thais to contract COVID-19, at rates of 51 per 1,000 persons compared to 26 per 1,000 persons for Thais (Figure 2.5).[2]

[2] Thai Ministry of Public Health, 23 November 2021.

Figure 2.3: COVID-19 Infections, Singapore, as of End of December 2022

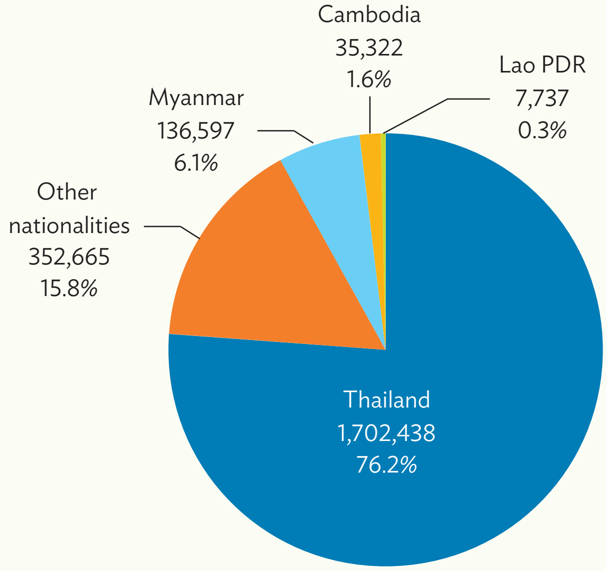


COVID-19 = coronavirus disease.

Notes: Community cases include migrant work permit holders not in dormitories. Infections detected upon arrival in Singapore termed as "imported" cases by the Singapore Ministry of Health.

Source: Singapore Ministry of Health.

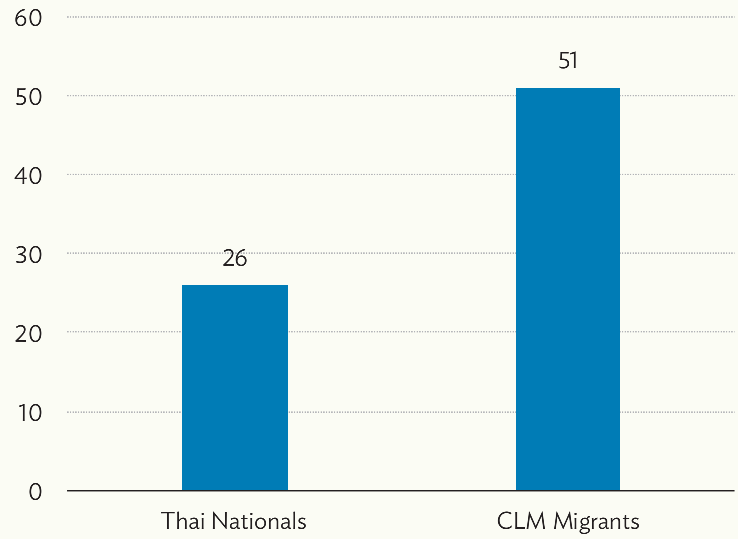
Figure 2.4: COVID-19 Infections by Nationality in Thailand, as of 23 November 2021



COVID-19 = coronavirus disease, Lao PDR = Lao People's Democratic Republic.

Source: Thailand Ministry of Public Health 2021 in World Health Organization presentation, 24 November 2021.

Figure 2.5: COVID-19 Cases per 1,000 Persons, Thailand, as of 23 November 2021



CLM = Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar; COVID-19 = coronavirus disease.

Notes: The Thai population figure as 65,228,120 from the Ministry of Interior, March 2021. CLM registered migrants in May 2021 numbered 2,090,060. The World Health Organization (WHO) has given an estimate of migrants with irregular status as 1,400,000.

Source: Thailand Ministry of Public Health 2021 in WHO presentation, 24 November 2021.

In the GCC region migrants were disproportionately affected by COVID-19 cases at the start of the pandemic. In Saudi Arabia, expatriates made up 37% of total residents, but in April 2020 had 73% of the country's confirmed COVID-19 cases (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia MOH 2020). In Oman, where migrants are 40% of the population, they made up 64.2% of COVID-19 cases recorded between 24 February and 17 April 2020 (Khamis et al. 2020). In Kuwait in mid-June 2020, non-nationals, who compose 70% of residents, made up 86% of the cases recorded (Kuwait Corona Statistics Index). Estimates indicate that excess deaths rose among migrants by 71%, and among Kuwaiti citizens by 32% (Alahmad et al. 2021). With adjustment for age and certain comorbidities, non-Kuwaitis had a two- and three-fold increase in odds that they would be admitted to intensive care units of hospitals, or die, respectively (Hamadah et al. 2021).

On the other hand, migrants in other Asian countries or subregions may not be infected at rates any higher than nationals. For example in the Republic of Korea, international migrant infection rates have been proportionate for their share of population; 4.6% of international migrants were infected as of 2 October 2021, corresponding with the figure of 4.9% of migrants among the total population in the Republic of Korea (Kim 2021; Korea Times Weekly 2020).

2.2.2 COVID-19 Testing and Treatment

Despite high rates of COVID-19 infection, some migrant workers in the region are still unable to access affordable testing and treatment for COVID-19, mainly because of practical barriers even in cases where national laws and regulations guarantee them access. Barriers include movement restrictions or concerns about detention and deportation, particularly if migrants have irregular status. Information on healthcare has not consistently been translated to migrant languages in the region, or translations have taken a long time and are not ready when healthcare measures are being rolled out. At the beginning of 2021, testing was primarily available only at hospitals, although over the course of the year rapid tests for purchase at pharmacies have been made available in the region. While tests have come down in price, for a low-paid migrant worker, these can remain prohibitive. For workers without access to quality health insurance, and particularly for those who had recently lost their jobs and became unexpectedly stranded, the costs of not only testing but importantly also COVID-19 treatment in the region can be significant, resulting in migrants not seeking healthcare when ill.

As per the Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97), governments are to maintain appropriate medical services for migrant workers. Per the convention, government medical services are also responsible for ensuring that migrant workers and their families enjoy adequate medical attention and good hygienic conditions at the time of departure, during the journey, and upon arrival (ILO 2021g). Below are select national examples of testing and treatment policies related to migrant workers in the region.

In Singapore, while employers remain responsible for covering migrants' healthcare for other illnesses, all migrant workers are entitled to free testing and treatment for acute respiratory illness at regional medical centers (Singapore MOM 2021). In June 2021, the Ministry of Manpower issued a Request for Proposal for the provision of primary healthcare services to migrant workers to strengthen the existing (and largely reactive) healthcare available to migrant workers. The revised healthcare system for migrant workers has organized healthcare services into six regions providing comprehensive medical care, including mobile clinics and telemedicine, from November 2021. It is mandatory that healthcare providers can communicate in major migrant worker languages (Xiang and Ying 2021).

Thailand extended financial protection for health expenses to both nationals and foreign residents, through granting access to the Universal Coverage for Emergency Patients to all COVID-19 patients. This measure enabled COVID-19 patients to seek treatment at their nearest private or state hospital free of charge (ILO and UNESCAP 2021). In practice, however, access to COVID-19 testing and care during 2021 was challenging for migrant workers due to insufficient hospital capacity, especially during the third COVID-19 outbreak that began in April 2021 and peaked only in August, with numbers still not returning to pre-April levels as of end 2021. The Ministry of Public Health operates active COVID-19 testing, which initially covered all migrant workers regardless of legal status. However, due to difficulties associated with reimbursement and the high costs involved in Thailand's initial policy of mandatory 14-day hospitalization, healthcare providers were reported to be avoiding testing migrant workers.

The Malaysian government has had differing policies during the pandemic regarding migrant workers' access to testing and treatment for COVID-19. Migrant workers, including those with irregular status, were initially provided with free testing and treatment for COVID-19; however, this policy was reversed on 29 April 2020. On 4 May 2020, the government announced mandatory COVID-19 tests for migrant workers prior to returning to work, with the cost paid by their employers. However, following objections from the Malaysian Employers Federation, the government announced that the costs could be covered by the Social Security Organization (SOCSO) for contributing (that is, with regular status) migrant workers (ILO 2021m), but employers would still need to pay for tests if the workers had irregular status (The Star 2020). Importantly, as of June 2021, domestic workers—including migrants—are now covered under the SOCSO and the Employment Injury Scheme and Invalidity Scheme (Daim 2021). Migrant workers with irregular status, as well as others not contributing to SOCSO, remain excluded from the subsidized COVID-19 tests (ILO 2021m).

Migrants in Taipei,China could receive COVID-19 tests with valid National Health Insurance cards. Without valid cards, newly arrived migrant workers, irregular migrants, workers between jobs, and fishers in Taipei,China's distant-water fleet were excluded (HRWG 2020). Migrant fishers in the coastal fishing industry should be enrolled in public health insurance by employers, but half of the coastal fishing industry's workforce are not enrolled in public insurance (Chiang and Rogovin 2020). For those who are enrolled, migrant workers describe employers not approving time off work to go to hospital (Aspinwall 2021).

In several GCC countries free healthcare services are available to all migrant workers irrespective of their status (Equidem 2021). The United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman, and Bahrain provided free tests and free treatment for COVID-19 to migrant workers. Migrants in Saudi Arabia and Qatar had access to treatment irrespective of their migratory status (ILO and IPC-IG forthcoming). Saudi Arabia issued a royal decree that extended access to free emergency services and COVID-19 testing and treatment to migrant workers with irregular status (ESCWA, ILO, and UNHCR 2020). In Qatar, all residents could get free testing and treatment, without needing a health card or Qatar ID (ILO and IPC-IG forthcoming). However, some migrant workers interviewed in GCC countries reported that they had trouble accessing healthcare or had to pay out of pocket (Equidem 2021).

On the other hand, in some Asian countries, migrant workers received a disproportionate share of testing, in cases where governments have mandated testing primarily of migrant workers and not nationals. While testing is a positive public health measure, such targeting was seen as amounting to a discriminatory policy measure.

In the Republic of Korea, the government required all migrants be tested for COVID-19 in March 2021 and assured migrant workers whose visas had expired that their identities would not be disclosed (Choon 2021). This policy came under criticism from the diplomatic community, with the United Kingdom's ambassador to the Republic of Korea asserting that the policy was discriminatory (Choon 2021).

Similar policies were put in place in Hong Kong, China, where the government mandated around 370,000 migrant domestic workers undergo mass testing and vaccination, following positive tests of only two migrant domestic workers for COVID-19. No other job sectors, nor the employers of domestic workers, were tested (Le 2021). Diplomats from the Philippines and Indonesia applied pressure, and migrant domestic workers unions in Hong Kong, China protested outside the government complex. While mandatory vaccination was dropped, nonetheless, after three more migrant domestic workers tested positive, again all 370,000 migrant domestic workers were slated for testing (Le 2021).

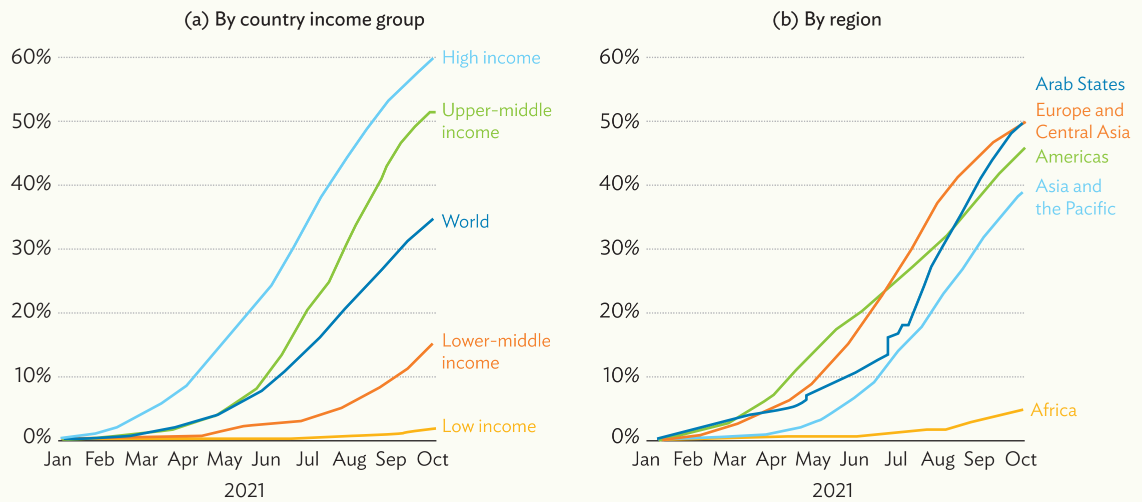
As a broader pandemic response across the Asia region, countries increased the funding of national health systems in response to the pandemic. In countries of origin, these investments benefited migrant workers who had returned to countries of origin during the pandemic in much greater numbers than in previous years. In Cambodia, the Ministry of Health covered the costs of COVID-19 testing and treatment for nationals and non-nationals (ILO 2021m). The Government of Viet Nam covered costs associated with quarantine, testing, and treatment of COVID-19 (ILO 2021m). The Philippines increased funding for social protection of vulnerable workers, and the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation allocated $583 million to certified hospitals to strengthen their capacity to treat COVID-19 patients (ILO 2021m).

2.2.3 Access to COVID-19 Vaccines for Migrant Workers

As of October 2021, Asia and the Pacific lagged behind all regions globally, aside from Africa, in vaccinating its population (Figure 2.6). In early 2021, WHO conducted a review of 104 national deployment and vaccination plans for COVID-19 vaccines submitted to COVAX. Of these vaccination plans, 72% did not explicitly include migrants. Of the 28% that included migrants, only 17% explicitly included migrants with irregular status (WHO 2021b).

The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, WHO, the UN Network on Migration, and other international bodies have called for fair and equitable access to vaccines for migrant workers, irrespective of their status (UN CESCR 2020; WHO 2021b; UN Network on Migration 2021). Under Sustainable Development Goal target 3.8, countries aim to "Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and *vaccines* for all" (emphasis added).

Figure 2.6: Share of Population Fully Vaccinated Against COVID-19 by Country Income Group and Region
%



COVID-19 = coronavirus disease.

Note: Total number of people who received all doses prescribed by the vaccination protocol, divided by the total population of the country.

Source: Our World in Data; International Labour Organization estimates (ILO 2021f).

The inclusion of migrant workers under national vaccine programs in Asian migrant worker destinations varies, a variation that is partly related to migration status and partly related to government policy and vaccine supply. In Singapore, by mid-November 2021, fully 98% of migrant workers in dormitories were vaccinated, allowing for continued easing of movement restrictions (Singapore Government 2021).

In Thailand, at the beginning the vaccine rollout, vaccine registration was available to nationals and those with Thai ID numbers, effectively excluding migrant workers. However, migrant workers living and working in identified outbreak areas were vaccinated as part of targeted vaccination drives. Other migrant workers were only able to access vaccines if they held regular status; covered by Social Security under Section 33 (for formal economy workers); and their employers were able to register them for the vaccination, or had access to alternative vaccine programs. Women migrant domestic workers were notably left out of vaccine programs in Thailand, neither covered by social security, nor having employers with access to alternative vaccine programs. Language barriers further hinder many migrant workers' access to vaccines, as mobile phone applications and websites for registration have not been available in migrant workers' languages (Charoensuthipan 2021).

In Malaysia, immigration enforcement efforts have been at odds with universal vaccination efforts (HRW 2021). To combat this, a walk-in vaccine program and a public–private partnership allow vaccination in migrant-dominant sectors (Box 2.1).

Box 2.1: Initiatives to Vaccinate Migrant Workers in Malaysia

On 11 February 2021, the Malaysian government announced that all non-nationals residing in Malaysia, including migrant workers with irregular status, would receive free coronavirus disease (COVID-19) vaccines. Six days later, the coordinator of Malaysia's COVID-19 vaccination program announced that migrants with irregular status would not be arrested when receiving the vaccine. This decision was, however, overturned on 29 May 2021 by the Home Ministry, announcing that migrants with irregular status would be located and arrested. The government conducted a number of raids detaining more than 530 migrant workers in June 2021.

The immigration enforcement drives on migrants deterred some non-nationals from getting the COVID-19 vaccine. To reverse this trend, a number of different initiatives are operational in Malaysia.

For example, a walk-in vaccination program for individuals hesitant to register for the COVID-19 vaccine, such as migrant workers with irregular status and refugees, was initiated on 1 August 2021 in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor. The administration of vaccines is to be handled by nongovernment organizations to increase trust among migrant worker and refugee communities. Community leaders have, however, noted that many migrants will continue to avoid receiving the vaccine due to fears of arrest, despite government assurances of safe passage. This underscores the need for migrant community organizations and government to build positive relationships prior to future crises.

The United Nations (UN) Resident Coordinator, the World Health Organization, the International Organization for Migration, and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees are also operating the COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout for Vulnerable Non-citizen Groups program, which aims to create migrant-friendly vaccination registration processes and vaccination centers, as well as to engage with migrant communities to disseminate information and address fears and misinformation related to the vaccination. The initiative is also supported by the ILO TRIANGLE in ASEAN program.

Another initiative is a public–private partnership between the federal government and companies in prioritized sectors. Companies are required to pay a small administrative fee for each worker in order to participate in the partnership and receive vaccines. As a result, migrant workers are starting to receive the COVID-19 vaccine in Malaysia.

Sources: HRW (2021); Bernama (2021); Maelzer (2021) in ILO (2021o).

In Japan, all migrants are able to get the vaccine (Live Japan 2021), and in the Republic of Korea, while offering vaccines to all migrants, the government has had to contend with fears among undocumented workers, issuing communications that it will not enforce deportation if people come forward for vaccines. Temporary vaccination centers were set up in areas with higher numbers of migrants (Korea Herald 2021). In GCC destinations, all countries now include migrant workers in vaccination schemes, although some, such as Oman and Kuwait prioritized nationals (Migrant-Rights.org 2021b; Debre 2021). In Oman, migrants with regular status have primarily only had access to private sector vaccines, with for instance the Pfizer vaccine costing migrants $120, while this is provided free of charge to citizens (Migrant-Rights.org 2021b). In Kuwait, English and Arabic only information meant that workers particularly from some Southeast Asian countries faced practical barriers to vaccine registration (Debre 2021). Bahrain has been a notable exception (Migrant-Rights.org 2021c) in allowing official vaccine access for migrants with irregular status. This followed intervention from the UN Network on Migration (IOM, ILO, and WHO), as well as campaigns by civil society and trade unions.

Countries of origin are also rolling out programs to vaccinate migrant workers. Indonesian migrant workers are entitled to receive two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine before departure as well as COVID-19 insurance for the duration of their migration. Indonesia's Ministry of Manpower has also prioritized vaccination of returnees during their quarantine period on return. Flexibility has been given for migrant workers to use their passport as ID rather than national ID cards, which some migrant workers do not have. However, returnees without any documentation face procedural difficulties obtaining the vaccine. Recognized vaccine certification is an emergent problem, with the Ministry of Manpower and civil society reporting that migrant workers' certificates have not been recognized in various destinations including Kuwait; Hong Kong, China; and Taipei,China. Certificates were initially only in Bahasa Indonesia but are now also available in English to facilitate recognition. It must also be noted that because vaccines are not free for non-nationals in Indonesia, barriers exist related to (non-reciprocal) negotiations for free vaccinations for Indonesian citizens abroad.[3]

Similar efforts are underway in the Philippines, with outbound migrant workers recategorized as a vaccination priority group on 21 May 2021 (Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases 2021). Further, the Philippines government has been able to offer vaccines to nationals in Myanmar through the Philippines Embassy. The Department of Health gave virtual training to embassy staff, contracted providers, and supplied 2,000 vaccine doses to Philippines citizens in Myanmar.[4]

2.3 High-risk Work Settings and Occupational Safety and Health Deficiencies

Throughout the pandemic there have been sectors of work deemed "essential" and "frontline," where workers in healthcare and other care jobs, transport, emergency and other public services, agriculture, food retail, etc., keep working when other sectors are closed or working from home. In Asia as elsewhere, migrant workers comprise a large number of workers in these essential and frontline sectors notably in agriculture and care, with women making up majorities in care work, particularly nursing, elder care, childcare, and other domestic work. There is agreement that we need their services, and that they are to be lauded for risking contraction of COVID-19 as they work during the pandemic.

[3] Tripartite discussion and presentations at the ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour Indonesia National Tripartite Preparatory Workshop, 25 August 2021.

[4] Philippines Department of Health presentation at Philippines National Tripartite Preparatory Workshop, 19–20 August 2021.

Given the high-risk nature of many work settings during COVID-19, attention is turning to national Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) laws, and the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155). Now more relevant than ever, OSH standards include the protection of workers from risks to their health, according to the principle of prevention as the highest priority; the importance of taking technical and organizational OSH measures; the necessity of providing personal protective equipment at no expenditure to the worker; the indispensability of adequate training and information; and the fundamental importance of assessing occupational risks (ILO 2021d).

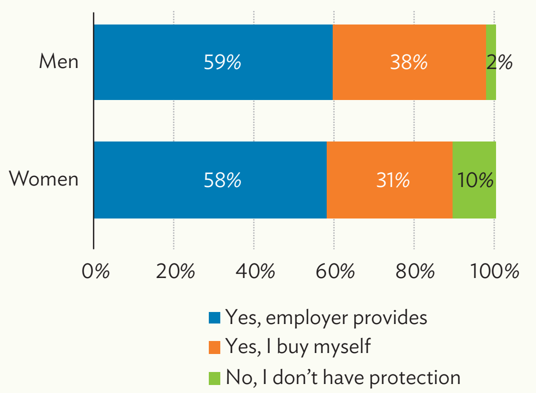
Pre-COVID-19, OSH deficiencies were already prevalent among migrant workers (Lee, McGuinness, and Kawakami 2011) and in the region generally with the ILO estimating that 1.1 million people die from occupational accidents or work-related disease in Asia and the Pacific every year (ILO n.d.).

2.3.1 Migrant Workers' Access to Personal Protective Equipment and Social Distancing

With regard to COVID-19 specific OSH protection and gaps, in an ILO survey of migrant workers in the ASEAN subregion, fully 94% of respondents reported having personal protective equipment (PPE), including masks, gloves, and hand sanitizer, in their current or most recent jobs (ILO 2021g). A small majority of women migrant workers (58%) and men migrant workers (59%) said that their employer provided PPE, and around one-third of respondents reported purchasing their own PPE (Figure 2.7). The gendered differential in Figure 2.7 reflects that the migrant workers reporting not having any PPE were predominately women employed in the domestic work sector (ILO 2021d).

The ILO survey found that a majority of migrant worker respondents (95 out of 121) had sufficient space at work for COVID-19 preventative social distancing, leaving a sizable minority vulnerable. Only half of the respondents had enough space for social distancing in their accommodation, and about one-third had enough space during transport to and from work. For many workers in the region, accommodation

Figure 2.7: Migrant Workers Provided with PPE in Destination, ASEAN, by Gender (n=247)



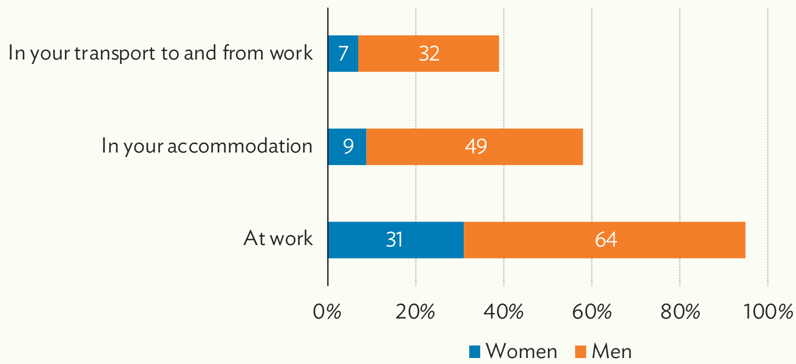
ASEAN = Association of Southeast Asian Nations, PPE = personal protective equipment.

Note: Percentages have been rounded. Migrant workers and returnee migrant workers of diverse nationalities interviewed in Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand.

Source: ILO (2021e).

and transportation are employer provided, and part of the world of work as defined in ILO Convention No. 190. Women are disproportionately affected by a lack of adequate space for distancing (Figure 2.8). The majority of women surveyed worked in domestic work, where social distancing is difficult due to the nature of the work often requiring close proximity to members of households (ILO 2021d). Further, these homes and workplaces can be unventilated and enclosed. Confined spaces for migrant domestic workers also increase the risk of violence and harassment, that may have increased further during lockdowns, as they are often living in isolation with their employers (ILO and UN Women 2020).

Figure 2.8: Migrant Workers with Enough Space to Practice Social Distancing in Destination, ASEAN, by Gender (n=121)



ASEAN = Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Note: Of the total, 47 responses were from women and 74 from men. Migrant workers and returnee migrant workers of diverse nationalities interviewed in Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand.

Source: ILO (2021d).

While OSH deficiencies have affected essential and frontline workers in many sectors, a stream of media exposés coupled with buying bans from key export markets have highlighted that essential sector migrant workers, particularly in Malaysian safety equipment factories, are themselves not all safe. The United States (US) found indicators of forced labor in several Malaysian glovemaker companies' supply chains and issued Withhold Release Orders against the companies and subsidiaries, resulting in import bans (Rubenfeld 2021). Following the US, Canada halted its own imports from one company, and the United Kingdom (UK) government began an investigation of the Malaysian supplier of the UK National Health Service's rubber gloves, also citing allegations of forced labor (Reuters 2021; Campbell 2021). As one analyst notes, "Pandemic-era growth has exacerbated existing forced labor issues in the industry" (Rubenfeld 2021). The PPE industry sanctions have also given way to investigations or "no buy orders" into other export-oriented supply chains in rubber tire manufacturing and palm oil production in Malaysia (Chu and Ananthalakshmi 2021; Straits Times 2021a).

2.3.2 General Policies Aiming to Prevent Cases of COVID-19

Policies in the region to prevent COVID-19 in workplaces range in how much onus is placed on employers and how restrictive they are for workers. With the aim of preventing and mitigating COVID-19, most countries in Asia introduced COVID-19 specific OSH guidance, as well as broad lockdown measures, including movement restrictions and border and workplace closures.

While international OSH standards give employers responsibility for provision of free PPE, many migrants, and indeed workers generally, have had to buy it themselves (Figure 2.8). In some places such as Thailand, distribution of PPE in migrant areas by nongovernment organizations has been crucial. In Taipei,China as well as in Hong Kong, China, the government arranged availability of fixed-price or free PPE for people including migrant workers who hold valid identity or health cards. Those without valid cards, such as migrants with irregular status or those whose employers have not registered them for cards, have been left without easy access to masks or unprotected (HRWG 2020). In the Republic of Korea, early on in the pandemic buying masks was rationed, as supply was limited. Migrants with alien registration cards or medical insurance cards could purchase two masks per week, on par with nationals; however, international students or migrant workers with seasonal agricultural work permits for less than 6 months and no trade license were not eligible for either medical insurance or to buy masks at all (HRWG 2020), a problem that was alleviated when supply rose. At the end of 2021, if there were confirmed cases at a workplace, the government's Response Guidance for Business would be applied equally to migrant and Korean workers. Workers of any nationality must stay at home, report to their supervisors, visit a hospital, or self-isolate.[5]

In 2020 in Malaysia, the government released several industry-based guidelines to assist employers to put in place procedures to prevent and respond to COVID-19 at workers' accommodation and transportation. However, these guidelines were not legally enforceable, and employers may have seen them only as suggestions (HRWG 2020). Similar types of guidance were introduced in nearly all migrant destination countries in Asia and the GCC. The Bahrain Ministry of Labour and Social Development, for instance, set out the responsibilities of employers and workers, to ensure a reduced number of workers per room in accommodation, physical distancing, and sanitation facilities standards. However, research with workers indicates that there is a significant level of non-compliance by Bahrain's employers with many of these initiatives and regulations (Equidem 2021).

2.3.3 Workplace Closures, "Bubble and Seal" Measures, and Other Movement Restrictions

As the pandemic progressed, some governments increased containment measures through introduction of targeted "bubble" measures that confine workers to their workplace (including for sleep) or only permit travel between housing and workplaces.

In Thailand, the bubble and seal method has been used for migrant-reliant sectors such as manufacturing and construction. In general, workplaces, accommodation, and transportation are controlled by the employer and workers must remain within these controlled bubble areas. Some workplaces built accommodation on-site to make a clear seal, out of which no one is allowed (The Star 2021). On 1 August 2021 in Thailand, all factories and construction camp sites, regardless of infection had to follow the bubble and seal approach. Workers and family members living at the work site, regardless of infection, were sealed off and faced food shortages. The government went to great lengths to restrict movement, even installing barbed wire around the Sri Muang Apartment, which housed many shrimp workers (MWG 2021). Workers reported not being allowed to leave for food, water, or medical treatment, as well as being confined in congested spaces with poor sanitation (Apisitniran 2021; Wiriyapong 2021). In the manufacturing sector, a "factory sandbox" scheme (playing on the name for alternative beachside quarantine for holidaymakers in Phuket) was created to build investor confidence by preventing outbreaks that disrupt export supply chains. Thailand's factory sandbox is to include manufacturing plants with at least 500 workers, an isolation facility, a field hospital, and capacity to test workers every 7 days (Straits Times 2021b). Key industries were allowed to remain open under the scheme.

[5] Correspondence, International Cooperation Division of the Korean Ministry of Employment and Labor, 18 November 2021.

Almost all seafood processing factories, for instance, remained open and operational due to the bubble and seal policy, despite detection of COVID-19 cases among workers.

In March 2021, Malaysia also put in place a Safe@Work Bubble Initiative in the manufacturing sector. Its aim was "to empower employers to be accountable for containing the pandemic among their workers" and "to allow close contact workers to continue working" (MITI 2021).

Similar methods have been employed in Singapore where migrant worker dormitories were sealed on 21 April 2020 to contain outbreaks among the migrant working population. If positive cases were found, migrant workers were confined to dormitories for long periods until the dormitory was declared clear of the virus.

In Kuwait, there were specific lockdowns in neighborhoods populated by migrant workers. In April 2020, Kuwait enforced a 3-month lockdown on Mahboula and Jleeb Al Shuyoukh "in order to examine and treat the residents there as well as to contain the spread of COVID-19 in other parts of the country."[6] The two neighborhoods, predominantly populated by migrant workers, were completely closed with nobody entering or exiting without a valid permit issued by the government. The closure remained for 3 weeks after there were zero cases recorded in Mahboula. There were reported issues with food security, extreme poverty, and psychological trauma (Al Mulla 2021).

Bubble and seal measures were imposed with a view to contain the virus but were poorly implemented in some cases and had ramifications. The pervasive employer control over workers' lives necessitates labor inspections ensuring that workers' rights are met, including freedom to leave the job and freedom from exploitative or coercive work. Freedom of movement on par with nationals is paramount. Within the domestic work sector, ad hoc decisions or expectations of employers have resulted in some workers working without pay or for longer and more intense hours as official restrictions have kept them confined to the homes of their employers (ILO 2021h).

Movement restrictions were sometimes discriminatory or had a differentiated impact of migrants. For example, in 2020 migrant domestic workers in Hong Kong, China were told to stay at home and/or work on their days off and not use public transport or go to public places, while nationals were only told to reduce social contact (Labour Department 2020a, 2020b). In another example of unequal treatment, the Transport Company (the operator of intercity bus services) banned those without Thai ID cards from their buses in Thailand (Burton 2020). While these measures may have contributed to curbing transmission, they are examples of discriminatory treatment between migrant workers and nationals.

2.4 Substandard and Crowded Housing[7]

As we have seen magnified during the pandemic, the lodgings for many migrant workers are not adequate. Decent housing is integrally linked to migrant workers' overall standard of living and welfare and other human and labor rights. Many migrant workers live in inadequate lodgings, under living conditions that do not favor or even allow social distancing. Dense living conditions have led to, or at least significantly contributed, to the spread of the virus in migrant dormitories. In Singapore, as of 13 August 2020, migrant workers living in dormitories comprised 90%, or 52,516, of the country's total COVID-19 cases (ADBI, OECD, and ILO 2021). In Malaysia, the health director-general pointed

[6] Kuwait state media KUNA, as reported in Al Mulla (2021).

[7] This section draws from two reports: ADBI, OECD, and ILO (2021) Labor Migration in Asia Impacts of the COVID-19 Crisis and the Post-Pandemic Future (2021); and ILO (2022) Home Truths - Access to Decent Housing in the ASEAN Region.

out in May 2020 that cramped and congested living conditions for foreign workers could have led to the spread of COVID-19 among them (ADBI, OECD, and ILO 2021). An earlier ILO publication (ILO 2016) described the substandard living conditions of migrant workers in the construction sector in Thailand. Many migrant domestic workers are required by law or by contract requirements to live in the residence of their employer, even though there may be no designated private space for them (ILO 2022b). Where migrant workers are left to organize their own accommodation, they may still face low-standard housing and overcrowding due to the cost of renting on a low wage.

In Malaysia, revisions made to the Workers' Minimum Standards of Housing and Amenities Act (Act 446) in 2019 sought to improve workers' housing standards and expanded the Act's reach to all labor sectors that provide housing or accommodation to workers, either by the employer or through centralized accommodation providers—that is, it applies to both dormitory and non-dormitory accommodation. The four-part regulations of the Act 446 were published at the end of August 2020, and the government sought rapid enforcement in the context of rising infection rates, including a spike among migrant workers in dormitory accommodations. In addition, in February 2021, the government published the Emergency (Employees' Minimum Standards of Housing, Accommodations and Amenities) (Amendment) Ordinance. Labour Department inspections had found that over February to July 2021 there was a non-compliance rate of 63.54%—14,104 employers out of 22,189 inspected over this period, covering a total of 126,047 accommodations (ILO 2022b).

ILO standards require States to establish minimum housing standards that relate the minimum allowable space in terms of reasonable proportions per person or per family (ILO Recommendation No. 115). All three States in recent ILO research have set minimum space criteria, but the allocations, especially in centralized housing, are low (Table 2.2). In the region, the Republic of Korea's standards are also low, and a recent civil society organization report to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to Adequate Housing has highlighted issues around accommodation (Committee on Death by Industrial Accident of Migrant Worker 2021).

Table 2.2: Selected Standards Regarding Minimum Floor and/or Personal Space per Worker

Source of Standard	Minimum Floor or Personal Space per Worker
Malaysia (2020)	3 square meters (m^2) (dormitories) or 3.6 m^2 (other accommodation) sleeping space per worker
Singapore (pre-pandemic standard)	3.5 m^2 (dormitories) minimum living space per resident
Singapore (2021)	Temporary quarters during COVID measures: At least 6 m^2 (sleeping quarters space, excluding toilets) for construction temporary quarters or temporary occupation license quarters Revised standards (September 2021): At least 4.2 m^2 living space per resident in new dormitories
Thailand – construction sector (2016), extended to all employer-provided worker housing in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic	3 m^2 The minimum width of accommodation should be no less than 2.5 meters with the total area of no less than 9 square meters and the height shall be no less than 2.4 meters
Republic of Korea (1997, updated 2011)	The area of dormitory bedrooms shall be not less than 2.5 m^2 per person
Sphere Association (2018)	Minimum 3.5 m^2 of living space per person, excluding cooking space, bathing area and sanitation facility (4.5–5.5 m^2 of living space per person in urban settings where internal cooking space and bathing and/or sanitation facilities are included). Internal floor-to-ceiling height of at least 2.6 meters in hot climates at the highest point
New Zealand	For one person: 6 m^2 of floor space, increasing to 9 m^2 for two people For larger groups: 9 m^2 for the first two people and 4.5 m^2 for every extra person

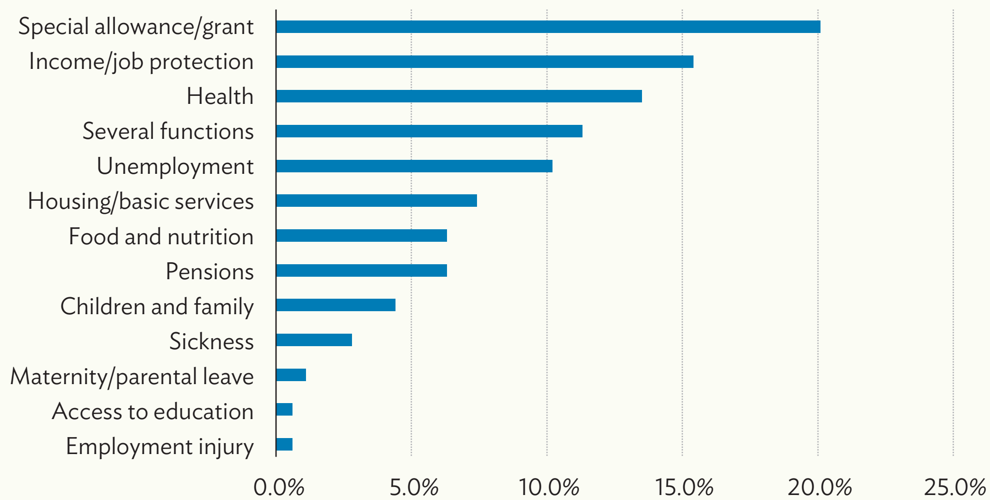
Source: ILO (2022b). The Sphere Association has produced minimum standards in humanitarian response. Information for the Republic of Korea is from https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/56136/74080/F1641602619/KOR56136%20Eng.pdf

2.5 Access to Social Protection Measures, Including Unemployment Insurance and Other COVID-19 Related Income Support

As of May 2021, 87% of countries in Asia and the Pacific had implemented COVID-19 related social protection measures—a total of 363 measures across the region, including special allowances and/or grants, income and/or job protection, and health measures (Figure 2.9). In the region, spending to support both social protection and other economic injections amounted to 12.4% of GDP in the first three-quarters of 2020 (ILO 2020).[8] Interventions have included financial lending support to businesses and households, employment and income protection schemes, and cash transfers to sustain household consumption. Yet, migrant workers have been among the least supported by these (ILO 2021h). Of the 224 social protection responses mapped by the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth, in Asia alone, only 5% (6% in East Asia and 5% in Southeast Asia) allow non-nationals to register (Figure 2.10, IPC-IG 2021).

By mid-2021, 26 countries in Asia had implemented employment protection support schemes some of which supported firms and some of which supported workers directly. Where employers of migrants have been given support, migrant workers have been reached indirectly. These resulted in lower working hour losses overall (ILO 2021b). In places like Singapore, the government provided employers

Figure 2.9: Social Protection Responses to COVID-19 in Asia and the Pacific, Distribution of Measures, by Function

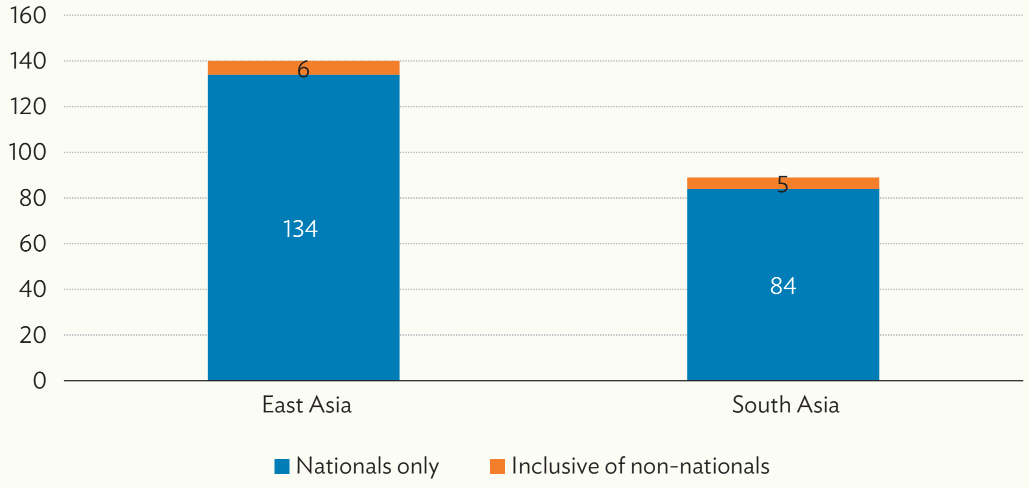


COVID-19 = coronavirus disease.

Source: ILO (2021k).

[8] The estimated median fiscal policy response calculation includes expenditure announcements as of 16 September 2020 for (i) liquidity support, (ii) credit creation, (iii) direct long-term lending, (iv) equity support, (v) government support to income and revenue, and (vi) other expenditures without breakdowns but excludes announcements of international assistance provided to other economies.

Figure 2.10: Non-nationals' Access to Registration in Asian Social Protection Responses to COVID-19



COVID-19 = coronavirus disease.

Note: Data as of June 2021 for East Asia. Data as of November 2020 for South Asia.

Source: IPC-IG (2021).

of quarantined workers with S$100 ($68.5) per day. Through Singapore's Leave of Absence Support Programme, workers quarantined continued to receive their wages and their employers received a subsidy during the migrant's quarantine.[9] Eligible employers were also entitled to receive a levy waiver while migrant workers were on leave of absence in quarantine (Singapore MOM 2020).

With an effect of exacerbating structural inequalities, migrant workers have not themselves been first priority direct beneficiaries for destination government social protection during COVID-19 (Figure 2.9). The Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102) lays down the principle of equality of treatment between national and non-national residents in respect of social security. In most social security systems, equality of treatment is only guaranteed to migrants with regular status, however, and generally migrant workers have long been among the least covered populations in the region in terms of social protection (Marius 2018). And women among migrant workers are more often in the informal sector, resulting in added gender inequalities (ILO 2020b). The COVID-19 crisis has offered a stark demonstration of migrant workers unable to access unemployment benefits or other forms of income relief and wage subsidy schemes (ILO 2021m). Without income relief or social protection, a majority of migrant workers in the ILO ASEAN survey indicated having inadequate finances to cover healthcare (79%), housing (77%), personal needs (69%), and food (67%) (ILO 2021g).

In Thailand migrant workers in the formal sector are entitled to a range of benefits, including unemployment insurance. However, many migrant workers are excluded from government assistance, and all were notably not included in a mid-2021 COVID-19 related pay-out only for Thai national workers of B2,500 ($74) (Bangprapa 2021, see also Box 2.2).

[9] E-mail correspondence of author with Ministry of Manpower, Singapore dated 9 April 2020.

Box 2.2: Migrant Workers' Eligibility for Social Security in Thailand

The social security status of migrant workers in Thailand is linked to their migration status, the duration of their employment, and the economic sector in which they are employed. The Social Security Act (1990) requires all employees 15 to 55 years of age to be insured in the Social Security Fund. Agricultural workers and workers in a few other sectors (including forestry, fishery, and animal husbandry) are excluded from coverage unless they work on a full-year basis; while domestic workers and workers hired by street-vending employers are fully excluded (regardless of contract duration). These eligibility provisions apply to both Thai and migrant workers, although notably most of these sectors are ones in which many migrants are hired.

Inclusion in the Social Security Fund provides a range of benefits, including for injury or sickness, unemployment, maternity, old-age, children, invalidity, pension, and death. In a non-pandemic situation, most benefits are accessible to migrant workers. However, limited portability of pension benefits means workers are unable to claim these benefits unless they come back to Thailand at the age of 55. Claiming unemployment benefits is particularly difficult, as the regulation governing migration requires migrant workers to find new employment within 30 days to maintain legal residency in Thailand. However, in response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, an extension of unemployment benefits due to force majeure was made available to workers in businesses forced shut due to lockdown measures. Migrant workers have faced challenges accessing these unemployment benefits.

Further, throughout the pandemic, the Thai government has approved various economic stimulus packages to support workers. In June 2021, the government approved a stimulus package worth B140 billion ($4.5 billion) to cover the latter half of 2021. However, the financial aid is conditional and requires that workers meet three criteria:

- registered under section 33 of the Social Security Act (that is, in the case of migrants, documented migrant workers in the formal sector who are registered for social security and whose employers are duly paying into the scheme for at least 6 months);
- employed in one of the red or dark red zone provinces (with high COVID-19 caseloads); and
- employed in one of the following sectors: construction; accommodation and food services; arts, entertainment, and recreational activities; other services as stated by the Social Security Office; transportation and warehouses; wholesale and retail businesses; administration and service support; science and academic activities; and information and communications.

As many migrant workers are not registered under section 33 of the Social Security Act, they are not eligible, despite working within the qualifying zones and sectors. Migrant workers eligible for unemployment benefits in previous rounds have also faced access challenges, as they were required to physically visit the Social Security Office because the online system required a Thai ID number. Some migrant workers received support from nongovernment organizations to navigate the social security system.

According to statistics provided by the Ministry of Labour,* in 2020, a total of 103,785 insured migrant workers (65,178 from Myanmar, 12,663 from Cambodia, 7,282 from the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) , and 92 from Viet Nam) received benefits under the Social Security Fund. During the January to July 2021 period, a total of 62,343 migrant workers (38,847 from Myanmar, 3,895 from Cambodia, 3,051 from the Lao PDR, and 31 from Viet Nam) received benefits. This is a small number of even those registered in the country. As noted in Figure 2.4, there were a total of 2,090,060 migrants from Cambodia, the Lao PDR, and Myanmar in Thailand in May 2021. But unlike other Southeast Asian destination countries, this coverage, although limited, was provided.

* Statistics provided during the ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour preparatory meeting for Thailand, 26 August 2021.

Sources: Marius (2018), Bangprapa in ILO (2021m).

In Japan, in April 2020, the Prime Minister announced that all Japanese nationals would receive a universal cash transfer of ¥100,000 ($881) in one-time aid. Three days later, after criticism from civil society, eligibility criteria were amended to include anyone who had resided in Japan for more than 3 months with registered residency, regardless of nationality or immigration status (Equidem 2020). However, irregular migrants were excluded from this in practice because registering residency is not possible in local governments for migrants with irregular status (Choi 2021). No-interest loans of up to ¥200,000 ($1,762) for living expenses were also available with a 2-year repayment period, including for migrants (Yoshikawa 2021). Finally, migrant workers on the Technical Trainee Intern Program were granted the ability to change jobs and visa type during the pandemic; however, an unintended effect has been the emergence of brokerage for migrant job switching within Japan (Asato 2021).

In the Republic of Korea, migrant workers were largely excluded from initial government relief programs. Migrant workers are eligible for unemployment insurance benefits on par with nationals; however, their eligibility varies by their status and registration type (mandatory or voluntary).[10] In May 2020, the government distributed COVID-19 relief funds of W1,000,000 ($839) to households. Non-nationals were ineligible unless married to Korean citizens or holders of permanent residency visas (Hyun-ju 2020). As of May 2020, the government also established an Emergency Employment Stability Subsidy to support small business owners who suffered a drastic drop in sales as well as workers from small and medium-sized enterprises on unpaid leave with W500,000 per month for 3 months. The Republic of Korea's officials noted that, in principle, this subsidy was designed to be provided only to nationals, but it was exceptionally provided to migrant workers of the Republic of Korea's small and medium-sized enterprises with fewer than 50 workers, who were registered for employment insurance and were on unpaid leave for a certain period during March–May 2020.[11]

In Taipei,China, the government offered migrant workers to find new jobs or be granted visa extensions without having to leave the country. The government's relief program offered vouchers of NT$3,000 ($108) to all citizens that they could purchase for NT$1,000 ($36). These were available to migrants married to nationals; however, all other migrants were excluded (Marschke et al. 2020).

In major GCC destinations for Asian migrant workers, a few COVID-19 related social protection schemes covered migrant workers. In Kuwait, migrant workers who lost jobs and/or were in quarantine could receive cash and in-kind assistance from the Ministry of Social Affairs and national charities (ILO and IPC-IG forthcoming). Further, in Kuwait salaries for public sector national and non-national staff were fully paid during lockdown (ILO and IPC-IG forthcoming). Qatar issued a directive that companies should pay wages of migrant workers in quarantine and when being treated for COVID-19. This is to be paid no matter whether the workers are entitled sick leave or not. The government established a fund of over $800 million to support companies to fulfil this obligation. However, there is evidence many migrant-employing companies are not complying with this directive (Equidem 2021). Thus, even when comprehensive legislation and adequate funding to support employers are in place, ensuring compliance can falter due to limited inspections, lack of migrant workers' awareness, as well as lack of protection to demand these wage payments (ILO and IPC-IG forthcoming).

Due to limited access to social protection, many migrant workers rely on emergency assistance and humanitarian aid disseminated by UN organizations, civil society organizations, and trade unions. In Japan, some migrants who had been in detention were released to go back to countries of origin, but could not, due to border closures. The released migrants were largely supported by civil society

[10] Correspondence, International Cooperation Division of the Korean Ministry of Employment and Labor, 18 November 2021.

[11] It also covered immigrants married to nationals (including the family's children aged over 15) under the Multicultural Families Support Act. Correspondence, International Cooperation Division of the Korean Ministry of Employment and Labor, 18 November 2021.

organizations (Asato 2021). In Thailand, the Migrant Working Group and its partners, with support from the ILO Ship to Shore Rights South-East Asia program, provided assistance to migrant workers and their families affected by COVID-19, including food and hygiene kits (ILO 2021i). In Singapore, the COVID Migrant Support Coalition has provided food and other essentials such as toilet paper and soap to migrant workers isolated in worker dormitories (Phua 2020).

Several countries of origin in ASEAN, including the Philippines and Viet Nam, have migrant welfare funds or other emergency funds intended to respond to migrant worker needs in emergencies. Migrant welfare funds are a self-sustaining mechanism that enables the governments of countries of origin to provide welfare benefits and services to their migrant workers in destination, using a fund grown from a fee to employers, recruitment agencies and/or migrant workers. They may also be used to fill gaps in the social security coverage of destinations, a need that has been made abundantly clear during the COVID-19 pandemic. While not all funds were used to support stranded or returning migrant workers during COVID-19, in the Philippines the government established an emergency fund providing displaced migrant workers, regardless of their formal or informal status, with a one-time payment of $200 (Philippines DOLE 2020).

In Nepal, without a statutory unemployment benefit as social protection, the government has been utilizing the Prime Minister's Employment Programme that aims at providing 100 days of waged employment to the unemployed generally. Returnee migrant workers and those who have not been able to depart because of border restrictions have been explicitly included (ILO 2021l). Workers who could not depart for work abroad due to the pandemic have been able to register at local level employment service centers and provided with work through local bodies. They are also eligible for a subsidized loan if they would like to start a business. Further, the Government of Nepal has committed its diplomatic missions to trying to ensure that migrant workers who are abroad are paid wages and benefits in destination.[12] In other countries of origin with social protection schemes, returnee migrants face high barriers to access them. In Cambodia, a 2020 United Nations Population Fund survey found that, though a majority of migrant returnees during the pandemic had no means of earning a living, only 25% of returnees had an ID poor card enabling them to access COVID-related emergency cash support (UNFPA 2020).

2.6 Resuming Labor Migration[13]

Responding to labor shortages and employer requests, as vaccination rates in origin and destination pick up, and more countries focus on economic recovery, labor migration flows) have resumed to some extent (see Chapter 1) and is likely to further increase in 2022. However, pre-pandemic labor migration levels may not be reached as the timeline of the pandemic and its eventual abatement is still uncertain. Key sectors in many regional economies remain dependent on a migrant workforce. Labor migration has picked up although with health protocols in place.

Each GCC country has made it mandatory for all incoming migrants to be vaccinated (Migrants-Rights.org 2021d). Those who are not vaccinated must undergo quarantine, which is prohibitively expensive (Migrants-Rights.org 2021d). For a number of reasons labor migration has not reached pre-pandemic levels. Most GCC countries do not publish inflow data by nationality, but there are some examples.

[12] Council of Ministers Decision Implementation Action Plan, 2076 to provide relief facilities for the areas affected by COVID-19, 13 March 2020.

[13] Country-specific information is from Assistant Director Dongyeong Won, International Cooperation Division of the Ministry of Employment and Labour, Republic of Korea; Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Japan; Ministry of Human Resources, Malaysia; and Ministry of Manpower, Singapore. The information is as of November 2021 with the exception of Japan (December).

In Kuwait, labor migration (newly granted residencies) from Asian countries (for private and public sector employment and domestic work) fell from more than 20,000 in 2019 to less than 8,000 in 2020 (Kuwait Central Statistical Bureau 2020). In Bahrain, total new work permits for all countries of origin fell from 184,000 (Q2 2019–Q1 2020) to 140,000 (Q2 2020–Q1 2021) (Bahrain Labor Market Regulatory Authority 2021).

Similar to the GCC countries, entry restrictions for migrant workers have been eased in the Republic of Korea for migrant workers who are fully vaccinated. In addition, a negative polymerase chain reaction or PCR test is required within 72 hours of departure. Upon entering the country, migrant workers are required to do another PCR test. In case of a positive test, quarantine is required and costs to be paid by entrants. As of October 2021, a total of 7,041 Employment Permit System workers had entered the country compared to 51,365 workers in 2019 before the pandemic. In 2020, there were 6,688 entrants. The numbers are expected to rise in 2022 compared to the previous year.

Following the spread of the Omicron variant, Japan has suspended the entry of foreign nationals until the end of 2021. Prior to this suspension, testing costs for migrant workers at the airport was borne by the government and further testing on arrival by the employer. The waiting or quarantine period (ranging from 10 to 14 days depending on vaccination and test result status) facilities are to be provided by the host (e.g., employer). The inflow of foreigners with a new employment-related status of residence in Japan in 2019 was 348,000 in 2019, which fell to just 134,000 in 2020. In 2021 (January to September), it was just 34,000 (see Chapter 1).

Following the decision of the Thai Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) to reopen Thailand on 1 November 2021, the CCSA approved the Ministry of Labour (MOL) guidelines on how to implement the memorandum of understanding (MOU) process with measures to contain COVID-19, on 12 November.[14] According to the MOL, it would take another 30 days for the MOU to be resumed in practice. The process is currently due for discussion with the Immigration Bureau, the Foreign Affairs Ministry, the Public Health Ministry, and the Internal Security Operations Command before labor migration can formally re-commence.

The 12 November 2021 MOL Guidelines make it clear that the MOU channel will continue to be the official channel for migration into Thailand. These guidelines outline a seven-step process, adding a set of COVID-19 related steps and costs to the regular MOU process. The MOL has announced that all COVID-19 related costs must be borne by the employers (and not be passed onto workers). The COVID-19 steps and costs are as follows:

- COVID-19 tests: Two Covid-19 tests, at the beginning and end of quarantine in Thailand (B2,600) ($78).
- Quarantine: All migrant workers need to undergo quarantine while waiting for the results of their COVID-19 tests. Migrants with two doses of COVID-19 vaccine need to quarantine for 7 days, while those with only one dose needs to quarantine for 14 days (between B3,500–14,000) ($105–420).
- Insurance: A specific COVID-19 health insurance needs to be purchased (B990) ($30).

The quarantine costs, even if charged to employers in both policy and practice, are likely to be a disincentive to labor migration. Moreover, while quarantine for fully vaccinated tourists and other travelers from Cambodia, the Lao PDR, and Myanmar (deemed low-risk countries by Thailand) has

[14] Note prepared by Anna Engblom, ILO, November 2021.

been otherwise reduced to a day, the continuation of 7-day quarantine requirements for migrant workers under the MOU is an anomaly.

In a parallel process, and with the aim of addressing the labor shortages in Thailand, on 28 September 2021, the Cabinet passed a resolution allowing employers of undocumented migrant workers to register them for work permits and formalize their status. This covers all undocumented migrant workers, including those that have never been registered with the authorities and those that were registered but failed to renew their work permits. The MOL notification under this resolution stated that workers must come together with their employers and be registered latest by 30 November 2021. The resolution also required that these workers had been present in Thailand prior to 28 September 2021. So far, the numbers of migrant workers entering under the MOU since the reopening have been small.

In Malaysia, the Ministry of Human Resources has drafted a Standard Operating Procedure on the entry of foreign workers. This has been approved by the COVID-19 Pandemic Management Special Committee. All entrants are required to be fully vaccinated before arrival. Even then a 7-day quarantine period is required. PCR tests are required prior to departure and on arrival (on day 2 and 5). The cost incurred for the quarantine period, COVID-19 testing, and local transportation are borne by the employer. In 2019, a total of 1,999,559 visit passes (temporary employment) were issued (81% men and 19% women), compared to 1,483,380 in 2020 and 1,138,370 (80.5% men and 19.5% women) in 2021 (as of 31 October). These numbers represent renewals of work permits of migrant workers already in the country as there has been a moratorium on entries of workers in elementary occupations since June 2020. As a result of the moratorium, there has been a steep fall in the issue of visit passes. However, the Ministry of Human Resources expects more demand for workers in 2022 from industry with higher economic growth.

In Singapore, travel health control measures apply to all entrants in a standardized manner depending on the risk category of the country of origin. In addition migrant workers entering on a work pass must be vaccinated. Travelers from Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Viet Nam fall in category II (as of 6 December) and are required to serve a 7-day stay at home notice on arrival. PCR tests are required before and after arrival (although a rapid antigen test before travel is also accepted). Bangladesh falls in category III and a 10-day stay at home notice is required. The costs incurred are to be borne by the employer.

Unusually, healthcare workers in Singapore, many of whom are migrant workers (doctors, nurses, and related) were not allowed overseas leave until October 2021. Welcoming the announcement, a junior doctor said in Singapore: "[M]y hospital has a lot of foreign doctors who have not seen their families for about 2 years" (Straits Times 2021c).

2.7 Conclusions

Responding to labor shortages and employer requests, and as vaccination rates in origin and destination pick up, and more countries prioritize economic recovery over lockdowns, labor migration has resumed to some extent, and is likely to further increase in 2022. However, pre-pandemic levels may not be reached as the timeline of the pandemic and its eventual abatement is still uncertain.

Subject to the vagaries of the pandemic and possible emergence of new variants, fully vaccinated migrant workers should not be made to undergo paid quarantine of more than 1 day as this significantly increases migration costs. This practice (of quarantine exemption and/or stay at home for vaccinated migrant workers) is in fact being followed in a few countries including the GCC countries, the Republic of Korea, and Singapore. Also, there should be no difference between other entrants and migrant workers regarding health entry requirements. In this regard, it is noted that Thailand is making a distinction (as of November 2021) and the ILO has advocated for its removal. The additional migration costs (testing, quarantine, health insurance) should not be borne by migrant workers. This is indeed the policy in countries such as Japan, Malaysia, and Thailand. But effective enforcement is needed, particularly to ensure that costs are not passed on to the workers.

Experiences in Asia and the Arab States (where many Asian workers are employed) have demonstrated that migrant workers, while playing an essential role in keeping economies functioning, were among the most vulnerable groups during the COVID-19 pandemic for a variety of reasons. This chapter has described the challenges and policy responses with respect to access to health, including access to vaccines, occupational safety and health, accommodation and housing, social protection, and the resumption of labor migration.

Improvements have been made with respect to minimum standards in accommodation as a direct result of the pandemic, although the standards remain low. The importance of social security and the gaps as far as the coverage of migrant workers is concerned (with respect to unemployment benefits and income support) were underlined during the pandemic. Occupational safety and health (OSH) became even more critical during the pandemic, particularly for essential and frontline workers, many of them migrants. However, workers in other sectors were exposed as well due to deficiencies in OSH. With the aim of preventing and mitigating COVID-19, most countries introduced specific OSH guidance as well lockdown measures. Research and media reports have revealed instances of non-compliance by employers. Bubble and seal measures, while allowing production to continue (and workers earn wages), had ramifications on workers, particularly when poorly implemented. With respect to access to health, several GCC countries provided free testing and healthcare services to all migrant workers irrespective of their status. Singapore also provided free testing and treatment, and Thailand extended financial protection for health expenses. Nevertheless, during outbreaks, there were practical barriers. In the critical area of access to vaccines, challenges are faced with reaching out to undocumented workers, while groups like domestic workers who are not registered under social security in Thailand were left out. Language barriers are a further hindrance in navigating websites for registration. There are also success stories—for example in Singapore by mid-November 2021, 98% of migrant workers in dormitories were vaccinated.

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CHAPTER 3

Return and Reintegration Challenges and Policy Responses in Asia Following the COVID-19 Pandemic

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3.1 Introduction

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic that emerged in the first quarter of 2020 has had profound implications for international labor migration and migrant workers in Asia. Migrant workers were exposed first to a health crisis followed by an economic crisis. With lockdowns and mobility restrictions, and economic downturns, many migrant workers had a hard time in destination countries or returning to their home countries. The return process was far from normal or smooth during the pandemic with some migrant workers stranded in destination countries without jobs and incomes and limited options to return home. Moreover, migrant workers had to undergo quarantine and testing for COVID-19, often at their own cost. Workers were returning to economies already grappling with the health and economic crises wrought by the pandemic. The objective of this chapter is to highlight the return and reintegration process of Asian migrant workers, identify challenges encountered, and policy responses.

3.2 Methodology

3.2.1 Notes on the Methodological Framework

The notion of a triple crisis—health crisis, economic crisis, and migration crisis—is useful in reviewing the situation triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic (Wickramasekara 2021). The fast-spreading coronavirus has created a health crisis by affecting all citizens and workers including migrant workers. It has led to an economic crisis and reduced growth in both countries of origin and destination resulting from restrictions in mobility and lockdowns in most sectors leading to business closures, decline in economic activity, virtual stoppage of tourism and travel, and higher unemployment, among others. This, in turn, led to a migration crisis where migrant workers were the first to be laid off, subject to nonpayment of wages, and also stranded in destination or transit countries due to travel restrictions (Baruah et al. 2021; Shah 2021). Migrant workers were affected in a disproportionate manner given their living conditions in substandard and crowded accommodation, limited scope for social distancing at work or in housing, and poor access to healthcare or social protection in general in destination countries. They were often excluded from relief measures and social safety nets available to national workers (Wickramasekara 2021; Shah 2021; Baruah et al. 2021; ILO 2021a). The worst affected were temporary migrant workers, those with high debt burdens, and workers with irregular or precarious immigration status who were often put into detention centers or deported (Wickramasekara 2021; World Bank 2020). The COVID-19 crisis itself caused some regular workers to fall into irregular status due to termination of jobs or failure of employers to renew work permits (Wickramasekara 2021).

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The gender dimension is a crosscutting issue for the analysis. Women migrant workers have suffered disproportionately during the pandemic. In addition to the issues discussed above, the gendered division of labor has placed women migrant workers in sectors such as nursing, social care, and cleaning at the frontline of the pandemic as essential workers. At the same time, women migrant domestic workers were subject to higher restrictions on mobility, longer working hours because of lockdowns, and harassment (D'Cunha 2021). Their access to social protection is limited, which is a serious concern given the health risks involved.

Return and reintegration in the context of the pandemic pose special challenges compared to a pre-pandemic situation. Returning migrant workers have limited or no savings and also may carry debt burdens compared to pre-pandemic times. The origin countries also face a challenge in mobilizing resources to deal with reintegration measures and support given the fall in remittances and the demand from all sectors for support in the context of the economic crisis.

The analysis will be guided by international and regional guidelines on return and reintegration. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Secretariat adopted a set of guidelines for effective return and reintegration (ASEAN Secretariat 2020) in 2019 before the onset of the pandemic with the support of the International Labour Organization (ILO). The steps outlined in the ASEAN guidelines are still useful in developing reintegration programs and services during a crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic (ILO 2021f). At the same time, there are other international and regional frameworks to be considered (see list in Appendix). The ILO Resolution on "A Global Call to Action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient" adopted at the 109th session of the International Labour Conference on 17 June 2021 is also highly relevant (ILO 2021b).

3.2.2 Definitions

Since this chapter deals with return and reintegration issues, it is important to define relevant concepts and terms. More details can be found in the ILO report on Effective Return and Reintegration of Migrant Workers in ASEAN (Wickramasekara 2019).

Return migration

This is a catchall term that can apply to a whole range of situations, but in general, it refers to the return of migrant workers from a country of destination back to the country of origin (Wickramasekara 2019). The 2018 ILO guidelines on migration statistics state: "return international migrant workers are defined as all current residents of the country who were previously international migrant workers in another country or countries" (ICLS 2018).

Repatriation

This is a major theme of the present chapter. In popular jargon, it can mean that a person is being sent back or brought back by a third party—destination country or origin country authorities or another organization (e.g., the International Organization for Migration, IOM). The term "repatriation" has previously been used mostly in regard to refugees and asylum seekers. It has also been used in Asian and African bilateral labor migration instruments with the Gulf countries to refer to the return of migrant workers at the end of their contracts to the origin country (Wickramasekara 2018). A distinction is made between voluntary and involuntary or forced repatriation. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Master Glossary of Terms defines it as follows:

> *Voluntary Repatriation:* The free and informed return of refugees to their country of origin in safety and dignity. Voluntary repatriation may be organized (i.e., when it takes place under the auspices of the concerned States and/or UNHCR) or spontaneous (i.e., when refugees repatriate by their own means with little or no direct involvement from government authorities or UNHCR).[2]

During the pandemic, repatriation can be mainly driven by either the origin or the destination country government or both.

Reintegration

There is no universally agreed definition of the concept of reintegration. Unlike return migration, reintegration is a multidimensional concept which is not easily measurable (OECD 2020). It can be observed at several levels: individual, family, community, economy, and society as a whole (Wickramasekara 2019). The UNHCR's 2004 Handbook for Repatriation and Reintegration Activities stated that "the 'end state' of reintegration is the universal enjoyment of full political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights" (UNHCR 2004). The ASEAN guidelines define: "Effective reintegration means successful reintegration of returning workers into their families, communities, the economy and society" (ASEAN Secretariat 2020).

3.2.3 Scope of the Study

The study covers major countries of origin in South Asia and Southeast Asia that have experienced large-scale returns of migrant workers during the pandemic. As defined for the study, these countries are:

- South Asia: Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka
- Southeast Asia: Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), Myanmar, Philippines, and Viet Nam

Some workers have returned from destination countries within ASEAN and East Asia, while others have returned from the Middle East (Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] countries), Jordan, and Lebanon.

For elaboration of some issues, the study decided to focus on four countries: Bangladesh and Sri Lanka in South Asia, and Indonesia and the Philippines in Southeast Asia. However, logistical issues constrained access to information from Indonesia. Instead, more attention was paid to the situation in Nepal.

3.2.4 Information and Data Gathering

The study is primarily a desk review based on an extensive survey of literature and available data sources including ILO and IOM surveys and publications. The data available were supplemented to some extent through information volunteered by ILO migration focal points in a few countries.

[2] UNHCR. Master Glossary of Terms. https://www.unhcr.org/glossary/

3.3 Dimensions of Return and Repatriation Due to the Pandemic

3.3.1 Limited Information on Return and Repatriation

It would be expected that return and repatriation figures be better during the pandemic. This is because repatriation became a priority for most origin countries during the pandemic. Special repatriation programs such as the Vande Bharat Mission (VBM) in India are well documented. Several other governments also introduced registration systems of nationals desiring repatriation for undertaking phased repatriation. Similarly, most governments may have registered returnees during repatriation and quarantine or reintegration programs. Digital technology has also offered wider scope for such registrations. But further probing showed the limited nature of these exercises.

There are several challenges in estimating return and repatriation to Asian countries. Most countries do not monitor return or have mechanisms for monitoring returns in normal times. Unlike outflows that follow a standard registration and recording system for documented workers, returns are ad hoc and sporadic. Usually, origin country authorities do not keep records when people return voluntarily or return on leave from their employers. Another issue that affects comparability of data across countries is the fact that some countries report different figures as returns or repatriation. These can be arrivals of nationals who have been abroad for an extended period, returns through arranged charter flights, returns of workers who had left through regular channels, and assisted repatriation. Those returning via land borders may not have been consistently captured by countries. Such data rarely capture migrant workers separately.

The available data mostly refer to total citizens being repatriated, not necessarily to migrant workers. For example, the Indian repatriation under the VBM is for all Indian citizens overseas. The distinction drawn between "Repatriated Overseas Filipinos" and "Repatriated Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs)" in Philippine government policy highlights this. Nevertheless, repatriated persons from GCC countries can be assumed to be mostly migrant workers and their families. Another problem in estimation is phased repatriation, which makes it difficult to get consistent data on returns.

There were forced returns (deportations of undocumented migrant workers or visa overstayers) carried out by countries such as Kuwait, Malaysia, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) during the pandemic. Kuwait, the UAE, and Thailand, however, implemented amnesty programs for workers with irregular status as well.

3.3.2 Reasons for Return of Migrant Workers

There are several limitations in compiling information on reasons for return by migrants. Such reasons can be gathered through field surveys only. The scope of these surveys conducted by the government or other organizations (e.g., ILO and IOM) differs among countries with some based on small samples and snowballing techniques hardly representative of the general situation. Moreover, most surveys were undertaken in 2020 or collected information on the return situation during 2020. Some tabulated survey results do not provide gender-based information separately. In some cases, there may be overlapping reasons when persons quoted "COVID-related" reasons. The survey findings also do not distinguish between return reasons provided by low-skilled and/or low-wage workers and skilled workers who had probably moved with their families.

Table A3.1 in the Appendix shows compiled information available from different sources on reasons for return.

From the overall pattern of responses, there was a high degree of correspondence among causes for return. The following key trends emerge.

a. End of normal contract

The return of some migrant workers was not related to the pandemic, for example when worker contracts ended at the time. About 14% of Filipino migrants surveyed by the IOM mentioned that they were scheduled to return to the Philippines regardless of the pandemic (IOM 2021c). The ILO's first assessment of impact of COVID-19 on ASEAN migrant workers found that 27% women and 22% men mentioned the end of contract as the reason for return. The ILO's second assessment reported ending of the contract on the agreed date for 11% of respondents (women 5%; men 6%). But the responses do not indicate whether these workers were able to return as scheduled before travel restrictions set in.

b. COVID-19 related return

In general, respondents have attributed their return to COVID-19 developments. According to the IOM's rapid assessments conducted in Bangladesh, Cambodia, the Lao PDR, Myanmar, and the Philippines in 2020, most return migrants highlighted the COVID-19 pandemic (IOM 2021a) as the direct or indirect cause of their return. This reason is probably not mutually exclusive with other reasons such as job loss, fear of COVID-19, and compulsory leave, because these can also be related to the pandemic. A survey of Kerala in India by Rajan and Pattath (2021) distinguished three types of returns:

- Normal return emigrants—return was not related to the pandemic
- Distressed return emigrants—these were affected in some manner by the pandemic
- Remigrating return migrants—those who came on leave with the intention of remigration but held up due to travel and other restrictions

c. Termination and nonrenewal of contracts

In some cases, employers asked migrant workers to leave because of COVID-19. It also emerges as a main reason in findings of most surveys. For example, out of 800 migrants surveyed in Nepal, 25% reported being furloughed by their employers as the reason for returning to Nepal (IOM 2021b). This reason—loss of jobs—is a subset of reason b—COVID-related reasons.

d. Workers decided to terminate the contract prematurely and return

The ILO ASEAN COVID impact assessment survey cited this as a major reason to return. About 44% of women and 49% of men in the 2020 survey chose to end their employment voluntarily (ILO 2020a). In the second assessment covering Myanmar and Filipino returnees, 51% (women 26%; men 25%) opted to end employment and return (ILO 2021a).

e. Provide support to the family

Providing support to the family and family pressures were mentioned as factors prompting return. For example, this was cited in the cases of Bangladesh, Cambodia, Myanmar, Nepal, and Viet Nam, among others (Table A3.1, Appendix). Many female migrants (35%) in Nepal reported primarily returning to support their family and to fulfil household and domestic duties (IOM 2021b). This reason probably overlaps with the decision to return voluntarily as well (reason d above).

3.3.3 Estimates of Return Numbers

Tables A3.2 and A3.3 in the Appendix summarize estimates for ASEAN and South Asian countries, respectively.

Salient features of repatriation estimates

- It is difficult to get comprehensive or consistent estimates of return for either 2020 or 2021 for most countries. There are better estimates for 2020, while the coverage of 2021 figures seems incomplete. This may be partly due to the fact that the 2021 estimates were only partially available at the time of the study.[3] Another reason may be that several agencies involved in the logistics of return made it difficult to get consistent estimates. Land-based returns may be more difficult to monitor due to porous borders between destinations and origin countries (India with Bangladesh and Nepal; Malaysia with Indonesia; Cambodia, the Lao PDR. and Myanmar with Thailand).
- Gender-based estimates of return and repatriation are not available for most countries including India and the Philippines. Published data on repatriated overseas Filipinos and OFWs are not disaggregated on the basis of gender in the Philippines. Women returnees are important in returns from Thailand to Cambodia, the Lao PDR, and Myanmar. In Sri Lanka, of the 16,025 persons registered by the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment (SLBFE) in quarantine centers at the end of October 2021, women formed about 30% of the returnees.
- The ministries of foreign affairs have taken a lead role in the repatriation process in most countries. This is because the government had to deal with a large number of destination countries at diplomatic levels. A good practice is the "whole of government" approach to the issue of repatriation given the complex nature of the pandemic-related returns. Other key players in Asian countries have been the civil aviation authorities, the ministries of health given the health issues involved, the ministries of labor, or dedicated migration ministries because of repatriation of migrant workers and local governments (the central and state governments [India], provincial, and district governments). Most countries appointed special coordinating mechanisms to deal with the complexity of the repatriation process, and health and reintegration issues of the crisis brought about by the pandemic.
- Many Asian countries arranged repatriation on a phased basis. This could be attributed to several reasons.
  (i) Lack of capacity to accommodate large numbers for testing, quarantine, or treatment.
  (ii) Limited number of flights available and travel restrictions imposed by both origin and destination countries.
  (iii) Risk of importing COVID-19 from the destination country. This was a real threat as several countries found out subsequently.
  (iv) Need for more intensive checking of credentials and documentation of return applicants.
  (v) Lack of financial resources to pay for airfares by migrant workers.

The largest repatriation exercises in the region were by India and the Philippines. These are discussed in section 3.3.2.

- Where data on destination countries are available, the Middle East countries accounted for large numbers of people repatriated reflecting the large presence of workers from South Asia and the Philippines in the region.

[3] The report was completed in December 2021.

3.3.4 Examples of Repatriation: Philippines, India, Indonesia, and Nepal

In Southeast Asia, the Philippines handled the largest numbers of repatriated persons, while India accounted for the largest repatriation in South Asia. This was the largest ever repatriation for both countries since the repatriation during the Gulf crisis of 1990, which was much smaller. There is no gender breakdown in the published data for both India and the Philippines.

Philippines

Following the first Wuhan repatriation flight in February 2020, the Philippines Department of Foreign Affairs successfully carried out 105 chartered flights paid for by the Assistance-to-Nationals or ATN fund. The combined flights from the Middle East destinations (Kuwait, Lebanon, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE) accounted for 63 of the 105 chartered flights (DFA 2021).

According to Table 3.1, the Philippines had assisted the repatriation of 728,831 returning overseas Filipinos (ROFs) by the end of December 2020. Among them, 598,655 were OFWs (55% land-based OFWs) (NDRRMC 2021a). During 2021 (January to 21 December), total ROFs constituted 1.1 million, of whom 74% were OFWs with land-based workers constituting 45% of the total ROFs (NDRRMC 2021b).

Table 3.1: Repatriation Numbers in 2020 and 2021: Philippines

Item	23 April 2020 to 21 December 2021* (cumulative)	23 April to 31 December 2020** (cumulative)	From January to 21 December 2021*** (cumulative)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Total returning overseas Filipinos (ROFs)	1,915,568	734,090	1,181,478
Overseas Filipino workers (OFWs)	1,477,939	598,655	879,284
Land-based	864,088	331,451	532,637
Sea-based	613,851	267,204	346,647
Non-OFWs	432,193	133,032	299,161
Deceased OFWs	5,436	2,403	3,033
Total assisted ROFs to return to home provinces	900,431	380,511	519,920

Sources: Based on NDRRMC (2021b); ** NDRRMC (2021a); *** Estimated as column (2) minus column (3).

India

India fielded one of the most ambitious and largest repatriation exercises globally in the context of the pandemic—the VBM. The VBM was launched in May 2020 for the safe repatriation of Indian nationals back to India. It is directed at all nationals including their families and children, and not only migrant workers, and covers both inbound and outgoing nationals. This repatriation mission is jointly coordinated by the Ministries of External Affairs, Home Affairs, and Civil Aviation, as well as state governments. As of 12 February 2022, the VBM was in the 16th phase with over 9.6 million Indian citizens repatriated home by 30 October 2021. The data do not provide a gender breakdown.

The first phase of the mission was carried out from 7 to 15 May 2020. While consistent data are not easy to come by, ministerial responses submitted to the two Houses of the Indian Parliament (Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha) convey the best sources of information. According to these, about 4 million Indians were repatriated at the end of 2020 by the VBM with 90% arriving by air.[4] Of this, repatriation by air consisted of 3.6 million persons. The GCC countries accounted for 72% of the total repatriation numbers.

By 30 April 2021, 6.1 million had been repatriated with almost 92% arriving by air using 29,026 flights. Crossings by land border from Bangladesh and Nepal, among others, were 8.2% of the total. Only about 0.1% arrived by sea (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2: Details of Arrivals under the Vande Bharat Mission as of 30 April 2021

Service	No. of Flights and/or Ships	No. of Repatriated Persons	Share of Total Persons
Air India and Air India Express	12,076	1,879,968	30.9%
Deportee	17	2,591	0.0%
Amnesty	56	7,344	0.1%
Chartered	16,844	3,692,216	60.6%
Other Foreign Carriers	33	4,007	0.1%
Total By Air	29,026	5,586,126	91.7%
Naval Ships	8	3,987	0.1%
Land Border Crossings		502,151	8.2%
Total	29,034	6,092,264	100.0%

Note: It is not possible to get a detailed breakdown for more recent data.

Source: Answer by S. Jaishankar, Minister of External Affairs to Question No. 234 on Indian Citizens Stranded Abroad, Lok Sabha, 4 August 2021 (https://www.mea.gov.in/lok-sabha.htm?dtl/34096/QUESTION+NO234+INDIAN+CITIZENS+STRANDED+ABROAD).

The total number repatriated by air up to 30 October 2021 under the VBM was 9,562,570 persons according to information provided to Raja Sabha by the Minister for Civil Aviation on 29 November 2021 (Ministry of Civil Aviation 2021). If we include land and sea repatriation, the total would be over 10 million. Delhi accounted for the highest number of repatriated persons (2.8 million), followed by Kerala (2.4 million) and Maharashtra (1 million). As regards the sharing of costs of repatriation, it needs to be understood that the operations under the VBM were both commercial and noncommercial operations. The government assisted about 166,000 distressed and stranded Indian nationals through Indian missions abroad drawing upon the Indian Community Welfare Fund. The total expenses incurred for assisting the above were ₹410 million (Ministry of External Affairs 2021). But the rest of the repatriated had to pay for their own repatriation.

[4] Answer to Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 334, Annexure 1, Country wise Number of Repatriated Indians up to 20 January 2021.

As per the government's estimates, as many as 716,662 workers returned to India from the six Gulf countries—the UAE (330,058), Saudi Arabia (137,900), Kuwait (97,802), Oman (72,259), Qatar (51,190), and Bahrain (27,453)—under the VBM (Business Standard 2021; Economic Times 2022).

Indonesia

The National Board for the Placement and Protection of Indonesian Overseas Worker (BNP2TKI) has compiled detailed data on the return of migrant workers during 2020 and 2021. Table 3.3 provides a summary of this information. What is interesting is the compilation of information under gender and regular and non-regular modes. The latter breakdown is rarely found in other Asian country statistics.

Total returnees under both categories amounted to 214,078 in 2021. Female workers constitute about two-thirds of regular returnees. The non-procedural category may include mostly undocumented workers, trafficked persons, and visa overstayers. Males account for 70% to 73% of the returnees in this case (Table 3.3). It is also a good practice in Indonesia that the non-procedural returnees also receive the same support from the government regarding quarantine facilities and reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) testing.

Table 3.3: Return and Repatriation of Indonesian Migrant Workers, 2020–2021

	Regular*	% of Total	Nonregular**	% of Total
	2020			
Male	25,206	32.6	41,428	73.7
Female	52,000	67.4	14,432	25.7
Others***			508	0.9
Total	**77,206**	**100.0**	**56,188**	**100.0**
	2021			
Male	47,741	34.2	51,859	69.6
Female	91,806	65.8	22,097	29.6
Others***			575	0.8
Total	**139,547**	**100.0**	**74,531**	**100.0**

Notes: *Data of arrival/reintegration for the Indonesia migrant worker (regular and end of contract or on leave); **Data of arrival/return for the Indonesian migrant worker—non-procedural or having problem and/or issues; ***Others—probably cases where gender information is missing.

Source: Information supplied to International Labour Organization Jakarta by the National Board for the Placement and Protection of Indonesian Overseas Worker (BNP2TKI), Government of Indonesia.

Nepal

By September 2020, a total of 63,347 Nepali citizens had returned home via rescue flights coordinated by the Government of Nepal with more than 200,000 estimated to be awaiting immediate repatriation (IOM and NIDS 2020). The COVID-19 Crisis Management Centre highlighted that a total of 562,571 Nepalis had been repatriated by 15 September 2021, but there is no separate information on the gender dimension or the share of migrant workers. The bulk of the repatriation numbers were from the following countries, which also host large numbers of Nepalese migrant workers: India (46,642 by air only), Malaysia (62,074), Qatar (149,064), Saudi Arabia (52,761), Singapore (7,041), the Republic of Korea (4,057), and the UAE (159,968). There is no reliable estimate for numbers who crossed the border from India. According to Indian and Nepalese legislation, Nepali citizens working in India are not considered as migrant workers given free mobility of persons and labor between the two countries.

3.4 Modalities of Repatriation and Registration

Return and repatriation under COVID-19 posed new challenges for governments and migrant workers: diplomatic negotiations with destination countries, arranging transportation home, internal transportation to and from quarantine centers, mandatory quarantine periods, RT-PCR testing, and the need for personal protective equipment and vaccinations as a condition of entry.

3.4.1 Special Considerations for Return and Repatriation under COVID-19

An important issue is how repatriation under the pandemic is different from normal return and repatriation. Under normal conditions, migrants may return on their own volition at the end of a contract or before that due to specific reasons. But the pandemic creates a situation where persons have limited choice in arranging their return. Their dependence on the origin country government would be greater in this period due to the need for emergency assistance, support for redress for lost jobs and wages, nonavailability of flights, and lockdowns and mobility restrictions, among others. In this sense, the voluntary nature of repatriation is largely eroded.

The pandemic has also given rise to a special category of “stranded migrants.” These are migrant workers who have lost their jobs, and sometimes accommodation without access to means of survival, but are unable to return due to lack of flights, mobility restrictions, or lack of means to pay for return.

The cost of repatriation has been much higher than in normal times as explained below.

Women migrant workers, especially domestic workers, were affected given their dependence on precarious employment, isolation in private households, vulnerability and reliance on private household employers for assistance, and care in the context of the pandemic.

Repatriation is not only for migrant workers but for all nationals of an origin country who are in need. Most countries requested their nationals requiring repatriation to register themselves online or at embassies in destination countries.

At the same time, priority was accorded to nationals in distress or in risky situations (Table 3.4).

Table 3.4: Examples of Priority Groups Identified by Selected Countries

Country	Priority Groups Identified
India	Compelling cases in distress, including migrant workers and/or laborers who have been laid off, short-term visa holders faced with expiry of visas, persons with medical emergency, pregnant women, the elderly, those required to return to India due to death of family member, and students. (Ministry of Home Affairs Order No. 40-3/2020-DM-I (A) dated 5 May 2020 on Standard Operating Protocol for movement of Indian nationals stranded outside the country)
Indonesia	Vulnerable groups prioritized in the return: elderly people, pregnant women, and children
Nepal	Employment terminated due to COVID-19 outbreak with no access to cash, nutritious food, safe accommodation, and health facilities with physical distancing provided by the employer on-site. Those with no promise of re-employment after lockdown restrictions
Philippines	Medical patients (those with no insurance); pregnant women in their third trimester (those with no insurance); families with children; and those with expired or expiring visas (joint advisory from the Philippine Embassy in the United Arab Emirates and the Philippine Consulate in Dubai)
Sri Lanka	Priority criterion for selection of passengers for the flights was based on the vulnerability, i.e., pregnant women, senior citizens, people with serious medical complications, those with expired visas, and unemployed or on unpaid leave

Sources: Web sources and information from International Labour Organization offices.

3.4.2 Types of Repatriation

Repatriation processes during the pandemic many be classified in terms of several criteria.

a. Voluntary repatriation: this has been defined in section 3.2.2.
b. Forced repatriation: Migrant workers do not have any choice in repatriation. Countries of destination often deport workers in irregular status. During the COVID-19 pandemic, even legally admitted workers may have fallen into irregular status due to termination of jobs or nonrenewal of work permits and visas.
c. Phased repatriation: In view of the large numbers of citizens and migrant workers requesting repatriation, many Asian governments adopted a phased approach. For instance, India's Vande Bharat Mission was in its 16th phase in February 2022.
d. Modes of repatriation: By air, land, and sea. All three were utilized by India and the Philippines, although repatriation by air formed the bulk. The Philippines also used all three modes in returning OFWs to their home provinces.

In the initial stages, the primary focus in South Asia was on repatriation of citizens from various destination countries. Migrant workers and their families were not given immediate priority in some South Asian countries (Nepal, India, and Sri Lanka). Press reports of hardships of stranded migrant workers, public outcry, and Parliament and court decisions compelled governments to accord higher priority to migrants (Parliament of Sri Lanka 2021; Prasain and Mandal 2020; Rajan and Arokkiaraj 2021; Weeraratne 2020, 2021).

3.4.3 Types of Migrant Workers Repatriated

The circumstances under which migrant workers returned or were repatriated is important for targeting relevant services and reintegration support. Analysis of repatriated migrant information reveals the following types (Table 3.5).

Table 3.5: Types of Returnees, Repatriated, or Stranded Workers

Type	Remarks
Workers who returned due to expiry of their contracts	They were not directly influenced by the pandemic although it may have been a factor in not seeking renewal of contracts when there was an option.
Workers returning because job terminated by employer, or employers asked them to leave because of COVID-19	Not all may be able to return immediately; wage and benefit arrears a major issue for them.
Workers wanting to return home but cannot do so because of lack of funds or flights	Stranded workers—can include laid off workers, those who want to leave because of pandemic, and others who suffered lower working conditions.
Workers returning before end of the contract due to fear of the pandemic	They may voluntarily terminate contracts.
Workers who returned on short-term leave from their jobs before the pandemic but currently unable to return due to travel restrictions	Employers may not hold their jobs beyond a certain period. Origin country governments are negotiating with destination countries for extensions.
Workers who returned temporarily to migrate to new jobs but unable to join due to mobility restrictions	Employers may terminate jobs.
Undocumented workers	May be given amnesty to leave (Kuwait, Saudi Arabia) or deported as in the case of Malaysia.
Newly-arrived migrant workers in destination countries whose contracts were cancelled	They may have reached the country of destination on the eve of the pandemic and got stranded; they may face problems of return and financial issues (no income and high debt burdens).

COVID-19 = coronavirus disease.

Source: Compiled based on International Labour Organization and International Organization for Migration surveys.

3.4.4 Agencies Responsible for Return and Repatriation

Unlike in normal times, the need for greater coordination among government authorities in arranging repatriation and quarantine was apparent. This inter-agency coordination can be considered a good practice. Table 3.6 summarizes the available information on institutions involved for Asian countries. Given that repatriation involved negotiations with different countries and embassies, ministries of foreign affairs had to take a lead role. The health implications of repatriation in the context of COVID-19 meant that ministries of health were bound to play a key role following arrival of returnees. The involvement of ministries of labor or the ministry responsible for migration was because a sizable number of returnees were migrant workers.

Several countries created special task forces or coordination teams among these different ministries and agencies to deal with pandemic-related return issues.

Table 3.6: Ministries and Agencies Responsible for Return and Repatriation, Quarantine, and Testing

ASEAN	
Cambodia	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Interior's General Immigration Department, Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training General Labour Department, Ministry of Health, local governments
Indonesia	Ministry of Manpower, National Authority for the Placement and Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Law and Human Rights, Ministry of Transportation (for seafarers), Ministry of Health, Ministry of Woman Empowerment and Child Protection, local governments (at the provincial and district levels)
Lao PDR	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Public Security, local governments
Myanmar	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Home Affairs particularly General Administrative Department, civil society organizations, and UN agencies (UN Core Group)
Philippines	Department of Foreign Affairs, Department of Labour and Employment, Philippine Overseas Labour Administration, Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, Department of Health and its attached agencies (Bureau of Quarantine), Department of the Interior and Local Government, and the Inter-Agency Task Force
Viet Nam	Ministry of Foreign Affairs lead role, Ministry of Public Security, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, local authorities
South Asia	
Bangladesh	Ministry of Expatiates' Welfare and Overseas Employment, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Social Welfare, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, local government institutions at all levels, Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training, Prabashi Kallyan Bank, Wage Earners Welfare Board
India	Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Civil Aviation, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Ministry of Home Affairs, state governments
Nepal	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security, Ministry of Health and Population, provincial and local governments
Pakistan	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis & Human Resource Development, Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment, Overseas Pakistanis Foundation, provincial and local governments
Sri Lanka	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, State Ministry of Foreign Employment Promotions & Market Diversification, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Civil Aviation, Presidential Task Force on COVID-19 established on 26 March 2020, Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment

ASEAN = Association of Southeast Asian Nations, COVID-19 = coronavirus disease, Lao PDR = Lao People's Democratic Republic, UN = United Nations.

Source: Compiled by the author based on government websites and discussions with International Labour Organization offices.

3.4.5 Registration of Returnees and Related Matters

Given the sudden onset of the pandemic, many Asian countries were not well prepared to deal with the ramifications of its impact on their nationals abroad, including migrant workers. The major bottleneck in arranging repatriation and return was the absence of a comprehensive database of nationals abroad, especially temporary migrant workers. Therefore, a registration exercise was a logical step to address the challenge of repatriation and support of nationals abroad.

The analysis of the experience of Asian countries reveals that the registration processes were not systematic. In most cases, registration was done through embassies and consulates of the countries of destination. At the same time, the authorities also provided for online registration. The registration was open to all nationals including students, tourists, and migrant workers and their dependents in different countries who desired to be evacuated. Both these avenues meant that registration was voluntary and on the initiative of the nationals themselves. This could lead to underestimation since some temporary migrant workers particularly in the GCC countries may not have had access to the embassies or online registration. For example, 46% of Overseas Filipino Workers surveyed by the IOM reported that they did not register or access government reintegration assistance (IOM 2021c).

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka launched a web portal for the registration of aspirants for repatriated persons. Since its inception on 26 March to the end of June 2020, 86,613 Sri Lankans had registered in the portal of which most sought repatriation facilities (Aryasinha 2020).[5]

Sri Lankan authorities went through another process to identify migrant workers. For the purpose of assessment of further assistance to migrant returnees and to collect their data for possible reintegration programs, the SLBFE through its website and the press invited returnees to register with the web portal using forms in Sinhala and Tamil languages. These forms were also disseminated among the returnees who were undergoing compulsory quarantine at designated centers. By the end of October 2021, 16,025 had registered with the program, of whom 11,353 were males and 4,667 were females (Interview with Manager, IT Division, SLBFE; Ruhunage 2021).

Indonesian information on return migrant workers is comprehensive covering gender, origins, migratory status (regular or non-procedural), and previous jobs. The Philippines also provides a good example in this respect where the registration system provided for separate identification of migrant workers (Overseas Filipino Workers, land-based and sea-based) among all returnees—returning overseas Filipinos.

Faced with the prospect of spontaneous return of large numbers across the land border, the Myanmar government asked migrant workers in Thailand to inform their plan of return through registration by online G forms at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. This was to buy time for planning of quarantine and related facilities.

In some cases, the registrations applied to all nationals desiring return and therefore, migrant worker information could not be separately identified. This is the case in India and Nepal.

Table A3.4 in the Appendix provides summary information on return modalities for ASEAN and South Asian countries based on available sources. These are discussed below.

Table 3.7: Modes of Transport Used in Repatriation from Overseas, Selected Countries

Mode	India (30 April 2021) *	Philippines**	Bangladesh***
Air	91.7%	96.4%	71%
Land	0.1%	3.6%	29%
Sea	8.2%		

Sources: * Table 3.2; **Table 3.1; *** IOM (2020) (based on survey).

[5] The Ministry of Labour, Sri Lanka, abruptly withdrew 84 of its welfare officers from 16 of Sri Lanka's diplomatic missions abroad, mostly in the Middle East in 2020 in the middle of the pandemic, citing budget constraints. This created a major vacuum in missions in dealing with affected migrant workers (Weerasinge 2021).

3.4.6 Mode of Repatriation

The three modes of repatriation of nationals are by air, land, and sea. As Tables 3.7 and 3.8 (and Table A.3.4) show, the most common mode has been air transport. Two of the largest repatriation exercises—India and the Philippines—relied mostly on air transport. India carried out flights by Air India and its partners and by chartered flights to bring home 9.6 million Indian nationals by 30 October 2021. The available records do not give a gender breakdown.

Table 3.8: Modes of Transport: Myanmar and Filipino Returnees

		n=199
Airplane	95	47.7%
Boat	11	5.5%
Bus/car	85	42.7%
Other	8	4.0%
		100.0%

Source: International Labour Organization Second Assessment Survey (ILO 2021a).

Most migrants from Myanmar returned by land from the People's Republic of China, the Lao PDR, and Thailand. But Thai migrant workers in detention in Malaysia were brought back by sea in March 2021. A limited number were repatriated by relief flights from various destination countries. The ILO second assessment survey (ILO 2021a) has provided some estimates on the mode of transport for Myanmar and the Philippines. Air and land routes are equally important given the large numbers crossing the land border of Thailand into Myanmar.

Nepal distinguishes among internal migrants, cross-border migrants from India, and migrant workers from other destinations. Return migrant workers and their families from India were held up on the Nepal border due to border closure and travel restrictions in Nepal (ILO 2020b). However, the Nepal Supreme Court issued an interim order to the government on 15 June 2020 to bring all the Nepali citizens stranded at the Indian border, who were willing to come home, and put them under quarantine (Prasain and Mandal 2020).

Indonesia also used both air and sea routes to repatriate nationals.

There were limited data on the repatriation process based on gender. According to the ILO Second Assessment Survey of returnees in Myanmar and the Philippines (ILO 2021a), 11% of women (out of 194 surveyed) reported being treated differently or facing specific problems during the repatriation process. The survey has, however, did not probe into the nature or impact of this differential treatment. In any case, 89% of the women surveyed did not experience differential treatment or problems.

Two-thirds of female returnees surveyed in Bangladesh (n=323) reported that they did not undergo any registration (Islam and Dey 2021). The Bangladesh government provided all returnee migrants with Tk5,000 (about $58) each as an internal transport allowance due to the nonavailability of regular transport at the time. The Ministry of Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment set up a counseling service at the airport and provided kits to incoming migrants in collaboration with civil society organizations (RMMRU 2021).

3.4.7 Cost of Repatriation

Repatriation costs were largely self-financed by returnees in most countries except in a few instances.

Some survey data can be used to assess the payment of repatriation costs. It should be stressed that these are small samples often using snowballing techniques, and therefore cannot be expected to be representative of the overall situation in the countries.

According to the ILO second assessment survey, the two origin countries—Myanmar and the Philippines—reported the following situation. Nearly half of the overall returnees (49%) paid for the return journey themselves, with the share of women who paid for their own journey being slightly higher (55%). For about 40% of origin country respondents, the return journey was either paid for by their employer or their origin country's government. Employer-paid repatriation was common for men (59%), while government-paid journeys were more common for women (56%). A majority of Myanmar returnees paid for the journey themselves (76%) but only 22% of the Philippines returnees paid for themselves (ILO 2021a). Approximately 75% of the journeys were paid either by the employer or the government. However, most Myanmar workers may have returned by land at much lower cost, whereas Filipino workers must have returned by air. Employment contracts may have provided for payment of the return journey by the employer in most cases (Table 3.9).

Table 3.9: Who Paid for the Return Journey?

	Myanmar	Philippines	Total
A nongovernment organization	3%	0%	2%
Employer	3%	41%	22%
I did	76%	22%	49%
My country's government	7%	34%	21%
My family	7%	1%	4%
Other	4%	2%	3%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Source: International Labour Organization Second ASEAN Assessment Survey (n=200).

An IOM survey of returned workers in the Philippines showed that 16% of all OFWs bore the costs of the return journey, with females being more likely to finance and arrange the return journey themselves at 20% compared to 13% of males (IOM 2021c).

In Bangladesh, an IOM survey of 1,486 international returnees indicated that 83% of returnees paid for the journey themselves, while the employer paid for 17% of returnees. Family and friends paid for 7% of the returnees, while the government paid for only 2% of them (IOM 2020).

The immediate evacuation from Wuhan, the People's Republic of China—the epicenter of COVID-19—was arranged as a humanitarian mission by several countries including Sri Lanka. Some countries made special concessions to distressed nationals and migrants.

The majority of return migrants (81%) self-organized their return to Nepal at their own expense; 15% were financially supported by their employer, and only 2% were financially supported by the recruitment agencies. Out of the 800 survey respondents interviewed, only one reported returning to Nepal with financial assistance from the Government of Nepal (IOM 2021b).

In the case of Sri Lanka, the Parliamentary Committee on Public Enterprises of Sri Lanka meeting on 22 January 2021 directed that the Bureau of Foreign Employment repatriate migrant workers affected by the COVID-19 situation using funds owned by the Bureau (Parliament of Sri Lanka 2021). This was a recognition by the government of the contribution of migrant workers to the economy and also to the migrant welfare fund. A total of 34,721 workers who lost their jobs had already requested the Bureau of Foreign Employment to repatriate them at the time. While this enabled stranded migrant workers to return free of charge, those who were repatriated in 2020 had to shoulder the costs of repatriation themselves.

Under the amnesty offered by the Government of Kuwait, the two governments facilitated the repatriation of Sri Lankan nationals. The general amnesty enables those out of status to leave with no consequences, and also to return to Kuwait for work in a legal manner. While this was a good practice, the lack of any prior testing procedures before repatriating them was found to be a problem as 219 out of the 466 who had left Kuwait on 19 May 2020, were diagnosed with COVID-19 on their arrival in Colombo (Colombo Times 2020).

Unreasonably high levels and non-transparency about repatriation airfares charged were raised in the case of India (Rajan and Arokkiaraj 2021; Mitra 2021). It has been pointed out that the one-way ticket price was unusually high, almost as much as the cost of a round trip. Some even queried whether Air India, the national career, was trying to exploit the situation as a fund-raising exercise for the airline. Members of the Parliamentary Panel on External Affairs criticized the "exorbitant prices" for flight tickets under the Vande Bharat Mission (Jigeesh 2020). Mitra (2021) is critical of unreasonable fares imposed on female returnees. However, authorities have pointed out that the fare band under the VBM was fixed by the Indian government. VBM flights to the Gulf region and Southeast Asia were subsidized (*News Minute* 2020). Repatriation flights also incur extra costs for COVID-19-related operational procedures and protection measures and also, they may go empty one way to pick up passengers.

Similar charges have been levelled against Sri Lankan Airlines for Gulf and other flights for charging almost double the normal fare (Weeraratne 2020). Low wage migrants in the Middle East found it difficult to pay for the high airfares and the repatriation packages (Daily FT 2020). The government has defended high fees based on cost factors such as having to charter flights, fly empty flights on the way to pick up Sri Lankans, and higher airport fees during the pandemic (Weeraratne 2020). Sri Lanka's pandemic-related repatriation program has drawn criticism due to lack of transparency (Weeraratne 2020) and "handpicked agents" are selling packages (flights, PCR testing, and hotel quarantine) for exorbitant amounts (Wijedasa 2020).

A similar situation was reported from Bahrain where the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs admitted that the exorbitant cost of airfares prevented many from booking flights to the Philippines. The embassy, using the Assistance-to-Nationals fund, bore the costs of the return journey of most of the passengers after negotiating with Gulf Air for a lower fare (Tamayo 2021).

The Nepal government announced a chartered airfare list for 25 destinations, but migrant workers and activists have criticized it as being three times the normal rate (Prasain and Mandal 2020). The Supreme Court issued an interim order to the government to use the foreign employment welfare fund to repatriate Nepali workers living abroad in highly vulnerable conditions in June 2020. The Bench pointed out: "It's the responsibility of the government to rescue the stranded migrant workers and send them to their respective destinations when they arrive in Nepal. Nepalis go abroad to work not only for their personal economic gains; they also make huge contributions to the country's economy" (Prasain and Mandal 2020).

Recruitment agencies have played varying roles depending on the countries concerned. They have collaborated to some extent in arranging return and providing support to migrant workers in countries like Cambodia, the Lao PDR, Nepal, and the Philippines. Asis (2020) has highlighted the role of Philippine recruitment agencies in assisting the repatriation of OFWs and in monitoring the condition of workers deployed by them in partnership with concerned Philippines Overseas Labor Offices.

3.4.8 Major Challenges Faced by Countries

Given that the repatriation was caused by a health crisis, governments had to make coordination arrangements between concerned ministries and agencies such as ministries of health at the central and provincial levels.

- The absence of comprehensive information the exact number of women and men migrant workers in countries of destination was a major challenge. Voluntary registrations did not fill this gap fully.
- The presence of undocumented workers from origin countries in various destinations were a problem in targeting assistance as well as in repatriation. Malaysia placed them mostly in detention camps and origin countries had to arrange their repatriation. There were large deportations by destination countries such as Malaysia, which added to the burden of origin countries such as Indonesia.
- Registered nationals had long wait times due to the shortage of flights and limits on passenger numbers to be carried in the first few months. The situation improved in later months with streamlining of operations.
- Coordination between countries of destination was also a challenge given that destination countries were preoccupied with the COVID-19 crisis in their own countries. This was especially the case for handling repatriation of undocumented workers. While the Kuwait amnesty was a good practice, Malaysia has placed undocumented workers in overcrowded detention camps for eventual deportation almost unilaterally.
- While private recruitment agencies could play a role in the repatriation process by identifying and facilitating workers placed by them, these agencies also suffered under the pandemic with loss of business, and business closures were common (ILO 2021c; 2021d). In the case of the Philippines, recruitment agencies are legally required to monitor the situation their deployed migrant workers.

3.5 Return and Quarantine Procedures and Challenges

3.5.1 Quarantine and Testing of Migrants and Their Families

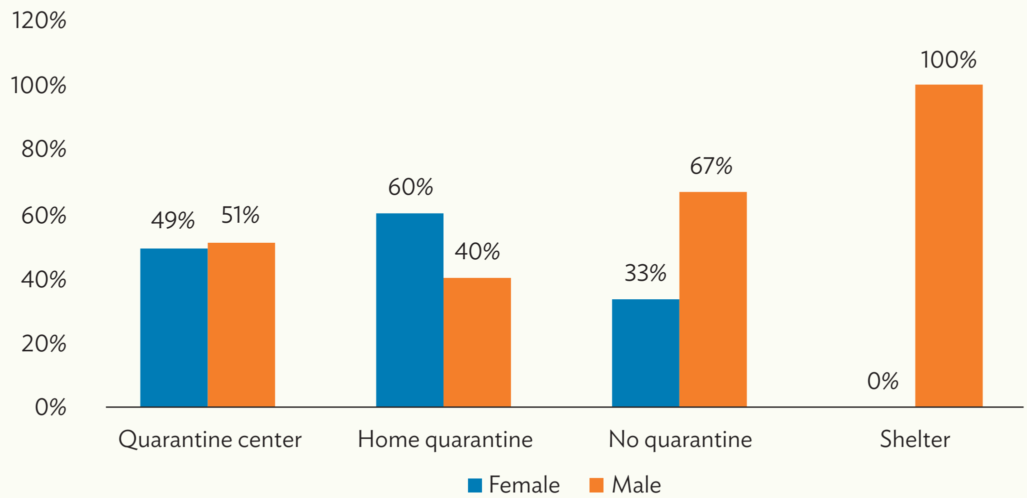
Quarantine procedures have been used for a long time to minimize the spread of infectious diseases. According to the World Health Organization (WHO): "The implementation of quarantine implies the use or creation of appropriate facilities in which a person or persons are physically separated from the community while being cared for... Possible settings for quarantine include hotels, dormitories, other facilities catering to groups, or the contact's home" (WHO 2020).

The relevant issues are the type of quarantine, selection criteria, coordination, duration of quarantine, settings, transport, and costs. Many Asian countries imposed guidelines and pre-conditions for admission of returning nationals in consultation with national health authorities such as health declaration forms and medical certificates of negative COVID-19 test results.

3.5.2 Type of Quarantine Facilities

In general, national authorities in various countries have used a combination of designated hotels and special quarantine centers for returning nationals including migrant workers. Quarantine centers were put up by authorities quickly to cater to increasing numbers. For instance, the Myanmar government set up 7,000 quarantine facilities around the country with the mass return of workers, particularly from Thailand in 2020 (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1: Quarantine Type, by Gender, Myanmar (n=84)



Source: ILO (2020a).

Several surveys show the following situation relating to quarantine arrangements.

- Cambodia mandated a 14-day quarantine and established an estimated 75 state-supervised quarantine facilities in line with WHO protocols and requiring physical distancing and appropriate hygiene (ILO 2021f).
- In the Philippines, return migrants are required to take three COVID-19 tests and remain in quarantine facilities until receiving health clearance. They are also provided psychosocial counseling and full medical and transportation assistance. The Philippine authorities also facilitate their return to hometowns on completion of quarantine requirements (ILO 2021f).

- In the Lao PDR, the report mentions that close to 140,000 returnee migrant workers were quarantined between 20 April 2020 and 18 July 2021 (ILO 2021g). It doubled the quarantine period at its state quarantine centers from 14 days to 28 days after it detected cases of COVID-19 community spread by those leaving quarantine. There were 1,647 government-led quarantine centers for returning migrant workers established across all 18 provinces, managed by local authorities (ILO 2021g). The government has provided several quarantine centers at the provinces that has borders with Thailand, which was convenient for migrant workers who chose to cross the border.
- Most return migrants (85%) had to be in quarantine facilities for 14 to 16 days on arrival in Nepal. 61% respondents reported to be "satisfied" with their access to health services within the quarantine facilities (IOM 2021b). The federal government advised the provincial and local units to establish quarantine centers for returnee migrants given the high demand on central facilities. Most local centers were makeshift arrangements in school buildings while others were in designated hotels. Table 3.10 shows the forms of quarantine used by surveyed return migrants by gender. Males and females mostly used local government centers, while females also accessed federal government prescribed centers and health institutions.

Table 3.10: Forms of Quarantine of Return Migrants: Nepal

	Female	Male
Own house	15%	15%
Health institution	10%	
Federal government prescribed	29%	15%
Local government prescribed	46%	55%

Source: IOM (2021b).

India

The Standard Operating Protocols for movement of Indian nationals stranded outside the country and of specified persons to travel abroad clearly state that PCR and quarantine costs must be borne by the traveler.[6] Quarantine arrangements are the responsibilities of the central government and respective states. State quarantine regulations differ, and quarantine periods range from 7 to 14 days in institutional quarantine and 7 to 14 days in home quarantine with some exceptions.[7]

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka's quarantine centers or camps mostly operated by the army were provided free and catered to those who could not afford hotel facilities. Those who arrived had to undergo a compulsory quarantine period of 14 days either in a government-run camp free of charge or in a hotel designated for the purpose paying a rental of SLRs7,500 per day (about $37) for a single room (Ruhunage 2021). All guidelines

[6] Before boarding, all travelers shall give an undertaking that they would undergo mandatory institutional quarantine for a minimum period of 14 days on arrival in India, at their own cost. Annexure to Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) Order No. 40 -3/2020-DM-I (A) dated 5th May 2020 (https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/4MHASOPs05052020.pdf).

[7] See Ministry of Civil Aviation. State wise quarantine Regulations. https://www.civilaviation.gov.in/sites/default/files/State_wise_quarantine_regulation-converted.pdf

and circulars regarding COVID-19 and quarantine issued by the Epidemiology Unit of the Ministry of Health can be found at the link given in the footnote. [8]

3.5.3 Costs of Quarantine and Testing

In some countries, the government took over the cost of quarantine and tests (Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao PDR, and the Philippines), but in other countries returnees had to pay for the costs. For example, in Sri Lanka, persons who chose to stay in hotels had to pay for the tests and accommodation and return transport themselves. But the hotel rates were subsidized and below normal rates. India also made it clear that quarantine and testing costs were the responsibility of the returnees.

In the ILO second assessment survey, only a few returnees in Myanmar and the Philippines reported paying for COVID-related tests (Table 3.11).

Table 3.11: Who Paid for the Test, If You Were Tested: Respondents in Myanmar and Philippines

	Female	Male	Total
Employer, government, or insurance	73	76	149
Self	4	2	6
Grand Total	77	78	155

Source: ILO (2021a).

3.5.4 Challenges

The registration of incoming nationals and channeling them to compulsory quarantine was a problem especially those workers who were in undocumented status in destination countries, and land crossings for Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Nepal.

Problems with quarantine centers

All Asian countries of origin established quarantine centers for returning migrant workers. ILO rapid assessment survey interviews with 122 returnees found that 93% of migrant workers were quarantined either in a government facility or at home following their return.

In the 2020 first ILO assessment, most returnees reported the absence of any problems in quarantine. In Cambodia and Myanmar, about one-quarter of respondents reported problems (Table 3.12).[9] While some respondents appreciated the quarantine centers, others experienced food shortages, high temperatures within the facilities, shared drinking glasses, and crowded sleeping areas. Others reported difficulty sleeping and other impacts on their mental health.

[8] Refer to Epidemiology Unit, Ministry of Health. http://www.epid.gov.lk/web/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=230

[9] Since the Philippines had only three respondents, the response cannot be considered reliable.

Table 3.12: Any Problems in Quarantine?

	No	Yes	Total
Myanmar	77%	23%	100%
Cambodia	76%	24%	100%
Philippines	100%	0%	100%
Total	77%	23%	100%

Notes: n=93; Myanmar=53, Cambodia=37, Philippines=3.

Source: ILO (2020a).

Among the Lao PDR and Myanmar returnees—mainly from Thailand—many said quarantine conditions could be improved. Provincial and community facilities provided for stay in mixed gender rooms where 14% reported feeling uncomfortable. Some provincial quarantine centers did not have access to water and sanitation facilities. Myanmar returnees reported additional needs for personal protective items (29%), food supplies (11%), and space for quarantine facilities (14%) (IOM 2021a).

Major humanitarian needs have also been observed in quarantine facilities on return. Several governments in countries of origin have sought ILO and United Nations (UN) assistance to deliver basic needs in quarantine to returning migrant workers, indicating, among others, a lack of resources to support humane quarantine processes (ILO 2021g).

Quarantine capacity was a major issue for many countries at the beginning, which delayed repatriation or led to phased repatriation (e.g., Myanmar, the Lao PDR, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka). In August 2021, the Lao PDR Prime Minister instructed the southern provinces to improve and open more quarantine centers and hospitals to handle the expected inflow of more migrant workers from neighboring countries (The Star 2021). Sri Lanka requested nationals in the GCC countries to postpone their return to ensure timely quarantine facilities.

Returning migrant workers faced stigma and discrimination in some of the countries as carriers of the coronavirus, among others. Migrant workers who returned home have also experienced new forms of discrimination.

While some Lao PDR workers crossing from Thailand were quarantined in centers near the border, this caused problems later since some were from far away towns and provinces and sending them back became an issue due to lack of public transport and poor financial position of the migrants.

3.5.5 Good Practices

The assitance provided by the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) of the Philippines is a good practice. The OWWA provided comprehensive assistance to returned Overseas Filipino Workers providing quarantine, testing, and return to home regions all free of charge. The OWWA assisted 802,538 OFWs from March 2020 to 23 November 2021 and 829,067 persons including before March (OFW Kalinga – care to OFWs) (Table 3.13). However, the Overseas Workers Welfare Fund came under severe strain with the high volume of assistance provided (Ordinario and Medenilla 2021).

Table 3.13: OWWA COVID-19 Related Assistance to OFWs

Assistance	Total	2020	2021
OFWs returned to home regions	802,538 (March 2020 to 23 November 2021	391,709	410,829
OFW Kalinga	829,067 (January to 23 November 2021)	367,287	461,780

OFW = overseas Filipino worker, OWWA = Overseas Workers Welfare Administration.

Source: OWWA (https://owwa.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/update.jpg).

The interventions by Philippine government agencies are a clear example of a whole-of-government approach (Opiniano 2021). Many countries appointed special task forces or coordination mechanisms bringing in all the relevant ministries and agencies together as shown in Table 3.6.

The whole-of-society approach was less visible, however, in repatriation exercises in some countries such as India and Sri Lanka. In the Philippines, the overseas recruitment sector, and civil society groups have also been providing much-needed help to affected OFWs (Opiniano 2021). In Nepal also, recruitment agencies assisted in the repatriation process. The Bangladesh Post-Pandemic Strategic Roadmap for the Labour Migration Sector has proposed "whole-of-society" and "whole-of-government" approaches for all interventions in the immediate term [2021] and medium-term [2021-25, 8 Five Year Plan] (MOEWOE 2021).

Indonesia provides free medical treatment to all (including expatriates) regardless of their registration in the national health insurance scheme (BPJS Kesehatan). The financing for the government quarantine activities and facilities is sourced from the Ready-to-Use Fund of the National Disaster Management Agency and/or other national central government, state budget, or local government state budget sources. The Indonesian Ministry of Manpower has also prioritized vaccination of returnees during their quarantine period on return.

3.6 Reintegration—Challenges and Policy Responses

3.6.1 Reintegration and International and Regional Frameworks

The International Convention on Migrant Workers in its Article 67 (2) calls for interstate cooperation "to promoting adequate economic conditions for their resettlement and to facilitating their durable social and cultural reintegration in the State of origin." Objective 21 of the Global Compact for Migration reads: "Cooperate in facilitating safe and dignified return and readmission, as well as sustainable reintegration." The ASEAN Secretariat developed the ASEAN Guidelines on Effective Return and Reintegration of Migrant Workers (ASEAN Secretariat 2020) before the pandemic. But the guidance provided is highly relevant to reintegration issues in the pandemic period (ILO 2021f).

The unprecedented nature of the pandemic and its impact on return and repatriation has led to the development of special guidelines for return and reintegration at international and regional levels. These are listed in the Appendix. They highlight policies and measures that focus on inclusion, rights-based and gender-sensitive approaches, shared responsibility among countries, social dialogue and the evidence base (ILO 2020c, 2021b; United Nations 2020; UNNM 2021). The ASEAN Consensus on the

Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers states: "The Sending State will develop a comprehensive reintegration programme for returned migrant workers and their families as well as an employment programme for returned migrant workers taking into account their skills obtained overseas." (ASEAN 2017, p. 16). At the ASEAN level, ASEAN Labour Ministers issued a "Joint statement of ASEAN Labour Ministers on response to the impact of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) on labour and employment" on 14 May 2020 (ASEAN 2020a). The ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF) (ASEAN 2020b) and the associated Implementation Plan (ASEAN 2020c) also provide detailed guidance. The 13th and 14th meetings of the ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour focused on protection and reintegration of migrant workers and recovery from COVID-19 (ILO 2021f, 2021g).

3.6.2 Labor Market Status and Aspirations of Returnees

Return is an integral part of the temporary migration cycle of low wage migrant workers to the Middle East and Asian destinations. In normal conditions, reintegration of migrants is influenced by the timing of returns (with long or short stay), motives of return, and nature of return (voluntary or forced). Return in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic was sudden, unplanned, and often involuntary due to loss of jobs or visa status and fear of COVID-19 infection. There was no space for return preparedness on the part of affected migrant workers. These created serious challenges for migrant workers and the governments in regard to reintegration. First, migrants returned with limited or no savings due to job losses and unpaid wages, and high costs of repatriation, and some were returning with unpaid debt burdens (Baruah et al. 2021). At the same time, the origin country governments were grappling with a serious health and economic crisis due to lockdowns, business closures, loss of export and tourism revenues, and decline in remittances.

Table A3.5 in the Appendix summarizes survey information on the current labor market status, aspirations, and support expected from the governments for a few countries for which data are available. Unemployment is high both for women and men migrant workers. In the ILO second assessment survey, only 19% of those interviewed (Myanmar and the Philippines) were employed compared to 42% for Myanmar. A larger survey of Filipino return migrants by IOM (2021c) found that 83% of OFWs were still unemployed three months after return (females – 84%; males – 82%). In Bangladesh, 68% of international returnees were unemployed at the time of the IOM survey (IOM 2020). High unemployment among returnees creates a serious challenge to the national authorities to formulate and implement reintegration measures.

Various surveys have also ascertained aspirations of migrants. Most would like to get self-employment or insertion in the labor market. Returnees also expect assistance in terms of financial aid, employment opportunities, access to credit, and skilling, among others. Remigration was also considered a major option by some respondents. In the case of Nepal, returnees from India were waiting for borders to reopen and the pandemic to subside to go back to the same destination. In Sri Lanka, out of about 10,000 profile information of returnees collected by the SLBFE, 7,600 had specifically mentioned their career interests: 2,861 for local waged employment, 2,286 for remigration to the same workplace, 1,074 remigration for a different job, and 1,397 for self-employment.[10]

About 48% of all OFWs in a survey of the Philippines indicated that they plan to remigrate abroad in the future and just 2% had an interest in internal migration. Meanwhile, 34% stated they would like to remain home and just under 15% stated they were undecided. Overall, males and land-based OFWs were much more interested in remigrating internationally (IOM 2021c).

[10] Information supplied by the Colombo ILO Office.

Women migrant workers who return to local communities may be required to reassume care responsibilities, especially in the context of the pandemic. The women returnees are handicapped in reintegration efforts because they generally earned lower wages than their male counterparts in destination countries. It is, therefore, crucial to ensure their access to gender-responsive support services and reintegration support (ILO 2021g).

Reintegration measures need to consider these ground realities such as lack of decent work opportunities, low wages and family pressures.

3.6.3 Reintegration Measures for Migrant Workers Affected by the Pandemic

There are two types of policies and practices in regard to dealing with reintegration during the pandemic period.

a. All Asian origin countries had some forms of reintegration policies and practices before the pandemic. These could be adapted to some extent to deal with the pandemic.
b. Policies and measures introduced during the pandemic.

We shall deal only briefly with major measures adopted by selected countries. These relate to policy and legislative frameworks, economic reintegration policies and practices (including labor market insertion, livelihood and enterprise development programs, skills development and recognition and access to credit), social integration and social protection, psychosocial counseling and advice, establishment of information and database systems on returnees, promoting remigration options, and resource mobilization, among others. Box 3.1 on the Philippines highlights a combination of some measures adopted. The Post Pandemic Strategic Roadmap for the Labour Migration Sector of Bangladesh has also proposed a range of measures from immediate to medium-term sustainable responses for reintegration of returnees and their families (MOEWOE 2021).

Overall policy and legal framework and institutional mechanisms

Reintegration services for returning migrant workers have been mandated by legislation and policies in several countries. Article 29 of the Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Migrants Act of 2013 29 states: “Right to return home. — (1) A migrant worker, especially a worker detained or stranded, or otherwise is in situation of distress overseas, shall have the right to return to Bangladesh and to receive necessary assistance from the Bangladesh Mission in the concerned foreign country.” As Box 3.1 shows, the Philippines had incorporated reintegration into national legislation and institutional frameworks governing overseas labor migration. Sri Lanka also developed a national Sub policy and National Action Plan on Return and Reintegration in 2016 as guided by the National Labour Migration Policy of 2008.

Several countries have developed emergency plans to respond to the crisis imposed by the pandemic. The Sri Lanka government has prepared a “National COVID-19 Response Plan for Migrant Workers” consisting of measures required at five stages (Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment 2020). These stages are: (i) measures to be taken at country of destination; (ii) measures to be taken for return to Sri Lanka; (iii) measures to be taken at point of entry and immediate post arrival; (iv) measures to be taken in Sri Lanka for reintegration; and (v) measures to be taken for remigration. But this lacks medium- and long-term perspectives and measures for the new normal and post-pandemic situation. The Ministry of Expatriates’ Welfare and Overseas Employment of the Government of Bangladesh prepared a “Post-Pandemic Strategic Roadmap for the Labour Migration Sector” with ILO support (MOEWOE 2021), which addresses post-pandemic situations focusing on migrant workers in countries of destination, returnee migrants, and aspiring migrants.

The Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment (SLBFE) formed a working group in April 2020 comprising members from the SLBFE, IOM, and the ILO to formulate a National COVID-19 Response Plan for migrant workers for consideration by the government (Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment 2020). The draft plan identified some actions to be taken in an immediate, short-, medium-, and long-run basis, such as sheltering assistance to vulnerable returnees with special attention to women, collection of data of returnees' future aspirations, providing psychosocial support, providing livelihood guidance and relief packages through the SLBFE welfare program, targeting entrepreneurship programs, and redeployment of returnees in foreign jobs, among others. Some of these components have already been put in place, and others put on hold due to lack of resources.[11] The Sri Lanka National Labour Migration Policy (2008) identified the SLBFE as the main institution responsible for return and reintegration of migrant workers. Within the SLBFE, there is a reintegration unit to support the implementation of the Sub Policy and National Action Plan on Return and Reintegration.

The Government of Nepal is developing a comprehensive and standardized guiding framework for sustainable reintegration of returnee migrant workers (Government of Nepal 2021). While it does not directly deal with the COVID-19 context, it has identified relevant policy frameworks, key stakeholders, major challenges and good practices from abroad, among others. The next logical step is to develop an action plan based on this guiding framework.

Box 3.1: Philippines—Good Practices in Reintegration Interventions for Migrant Workers Affected by COVID-19

The 1995 Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act made supporting returning migrants part of its policy priorities. It also defined the role of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) to provide social services for the welfare and protection of its overseas worker members and their families including the reintegration of returning workers. The Republic Act No. 10022 of 2010 provided for the establishment of a National Reintegration Centre. The 2016 Overseas Workers Welfare Administration Act (Republic Act No. 10801) declared OWWA as a national government agency attached to the Department of Labor and Employment. It is playing a major role e in reintegration of returning workers since it can access government funding in addition to migrant contributions.

Since 23 April 2020 up to 21 December 2021, more than 1.5 million overseas Filipino workers (OFWs)—both land-based and sea-based—have returned home.

The Department of Labor and Employment has provided financial assistance to OFWs affected by the pandemic through the Abot Kamay ang Pagtulong Program (AKAP), with beneficiaries receiving a one-time cash payment of ₱10,000 ($200). Some ₱5.2 billion were released under the AKAP for some 520,000 OFW beneficiaries by August 2021 (Crisostomo 2021).

Other initiatives are job-matching, competency assessments and certification, skills development, identification of e-commerce-friendly jobs, as well as increased financial and livelihood assistance to e-commerce, agriculture, and entrepreneurial activities.

The Philippines Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) has supported OFWs with free online training courses (TESDA Online Program, TOP) for upskilling and reskilling during the pandemic. TESDA Secretary Isidro Lapeña led the launching of "TESDA Abot Lahat ang OFWs" program that aims to help upskill OFWs who are being affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. TESDA data showed that a total of 163,750 OFWs and their dependents registered in the TOP from March 2020 to August 2021 (TESDA 2021).

Source: Updated and modified by the author from Box 8 in (ILO 2021g).

[11] Interview with the Deputy General Manager (Foreign Relations), SLBFE.

Labor market insertion

The economic crisis resulting from the pandemic has led to a decline in economic activities and thereby reduced the employment generation potential in various sectors for all workers. It is difficult for migrant workers to find employment opportunities in the local labor market in this situation. However, "access to decent work should be a priority of socioeconomic and labour market reintegration plans, as having a job is key to sustainable reintegration into the home country" (UNNM 2021). The profile of return migrants varies depending on their educational attainment, language skills, skills acquired formally or through non-formal and informal learning, and professional experience. These can be factored into facilitating their reintegration into the labor market. While public employment services should play a key role in matching returnee skills with labor market needs, these institutions are generally weak in most countries.

According to surveys, some returnees have indicated a preference for daily wage work. The Indonesian government is encouraging returned workers to take up jobs in construction. The Public Works and Housing Ministry will work with the Foreign Ministry to employ former Indonesian migrant workers who previously worked in Malaysia in the ministry's labor-intensive infrastructure projects by launching a series of projects in regions where migrant return workers are concentrated, especially those who were repatriated as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic in Malaysia (Parama 2020).

The Government of Nepal in its annual budget of fiscal year (FY) 2020/21 has committed to creating 700,000 jobs, and allocated NRs4.34 billion to provide training to support returnee migrant workers. The Prime Minister's Employment Program, initially introduced in FY 2018/19, aims to provide unemployed persons between the ages of 18 and 51 with wage employment for a minimum of 100 days. While migrant workers can access this program, the workdays available have been too limited to generate adequate incomes.[12]

Enterprise development and livelihood support

Surveys have revealed a high preference for self-employment such as starting a business or a livelihood project. The support required here would consist of financial grants, access to credit and training in running or improving a business. While females may be interested in self-employment, their capacity to do so would be hindered by their weak financial status having earned low wages than males in destination countries. In the IOM survey of Filipino returnees, although just under half of all OFWs expressed intent to start a business, only 27% reported having the capital required to do so (IOM 2021c).

The Philippines offers several options for returning OFWs including those affected by the pandemic. Returning OFWs can benefit from regular OWWA programs such as the Enterprise Development and Loan Program, Department of Labor and Employment–OWWA Tulong-PUSO Program (a one-time financial grant to support the proposed business plan for both start-up and expansion of the OFW groups) and Balik Pinas! Balik Hanapbuhay! Program for repatriated distressed OFWs (livelihood support to provide immediate relief up to ₱20,000.00 as start-up or additional capital).

In Sri Lanka, the SLBFE aims to provide in-kind assistance for up to SLR25,000 (around $125) for those interested in self-employment per returnee to support their start-ups (Weeraratne 2021).

The Government of Nepal has introduced a scheme to encourage returnee migrant entrepreneurs by subsidizing interest rates for loans up to NRs1 million. The scheme is being implemented by the Foreign Employment Board in coordination with Nepal Rastra Bank, the country's central bank. The

[12] Consultation with the ILO Office for Nepal: Chandan Kumar Mandal (Mandal 2020).

Central Bank launched the Subsidized Loan Procedure 2018, targeted at returnee migrants, among others, whereby six different soft loan schemes are to be made available to prospective entrepreneurs. However, critics have questioned the status of implementation and the effectiveness of such policies and schemes (Subedi 2021).

In Bangladesh, the government is offering Tk300,000 loans without collateral and up to Tk500,000 with collateral, for creation of income generation activities for returnee migrants. But the offtake has been limited as migrants are not interested in securing reintegration loans from banks. The Wage Earners' Welfare Board has set up a reintegration project for returnee migrants of Tk4.25 billion from the World Bank and government sources. The program will be launched in 30 districts initially and will include counseling. Those who would come for counseling will get cash incentive of Tk12,000 (about $140) (RMMRU 2021). As a pilot scheme the Bangladesh government has donated 950 sewing machines to returnee female migrants to help them reintegrate (MOEWOE 2021).

Skills recognition, reskilling and upskilling, and skills development

Most returning workers including low wage workers acquire new occupational and social skills during work abroad. Yet, there is no streamlined system for skill certification and recognition by employers in destinations countries or by the origin country on return. Reintegration is facilitated by skill recognition and matching skills to labor market needs. The ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers called upon ASEAN Member States to "Establish and implement human resource development programmes and reintegration programmes for migrant workers in their countries of origin" (ASEAN 2017). The skills profile and skills gained overseas can obviously help in reintegration efforts of migrant workers at home. On the one hand, there is a need to recognize the skills acquired by migrant workers informally. On the other hand, workers should be able to improve their skills or acquire new skills during the pandemic. The initiative of TESDA mentioned in Box 3.1 is a good example of the transfer of skills through online training to returned migrant workers. The skills training should extend to the employment options of returnees. Thus, they should cover basic training in financial awareness and literacy, entrepreneurship, and livelihood programs.

India offers a good example of establishment of a database of skills of returning workers during the pandemic. The Indian government launched the Skilled Workers Arrival Database for Employment Support (SWADES) to conduct skill mapping of Indian nationals returning under the Vande Bharat Mission. It is a joint initiative of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, the Ministry of Civil Aviation, and the Ministry of External Affairs. The aim is to create a database of qualified citizens based on their skill sets and experience to meet the demand of Indian and foreign employers. It facilitates the reintegration of migrant workers into the local labor market. For sharing information for matching of skills supply and demand, SWADES registrations have been integrated with Skill India's Aatmanirbhar Skilled Employee Employer Mapping portal launched on 10 July 2020. All data regarding Indians returning under the Vande Bharat Mission were also shared with relevant state governments on a real-time basis.[13]

Sri Lanka has taken several steps for skills provision and recognition. The Sri Lanka Skills Passport[14] launched in July 2020 as an initiative of the Tertiary and Vocational Educational Commission, the Employers' Federation of Ceylon, and the ILO provides a solid basis for documenting and certifying returnee skills, but there is no information on how it has been applied during the pandemic.

[13] http://www.nsdcindia.org/swades/#:~:text=Government%20of%20India,Skill%20Card%20below

[14] http://www.nsp.gov.lk/

With the support of the Government of Japan, the ILO and IOM in Sri Lanka are coordinating a 2-year technical cooperation project titled "Skilling Sri Lankan Migrant Workers affected by COVID-19 for Employment and Entrepreneurship." The lead agency is the State Ministry of Foreign Employment Promotions and Market Diversification. Target beneficiaries are those returnees due to the COVID-19 -19 situation and their communities, undocumented migrant workers, and victims of trafficking. The main components are: enhancing skills development for future employment opportunities, improving capacity of government institutions concerned through digitalization processes, delivering online training programs including entrepreneurship skills, upgrading training equipment at vocational training centers, and promoting recognition and certification of prior learning.

The first priority group of the project was those who opted self-employment—552 persons (102 female) and admitted for entrepreneurship skills development under the Start and Improve Your Business program (349) and Small Enterprise Development Division (203). After a technical training needs analysis, the project has selected 224 people for formal training. Out of 185 returnees guided for skills recognition and/or development (through the Sri Lanka Nidahas Sevaka Sangamaya[15] program), 117 were females. Out of 24 young aspirant migrant workers referred to maritime sector training (at Mahapola Center), three were females.[16] These training courses are conducted by the National Apprenticeship and Industrial Training Authority, the National Vocational Training Authority, the Sri Lanka Youth Corps, and the Bureau of Foreign Employment.

The Department of Manpower and Employment of the Ministry of Labour (which operates the Public Employment Service in Sri Lanka) submitted a proposal to identify 5,000 returnees and support them with career guidance, soft-skills development (through National Youth Corps), employer linkage (through Public Employment Services Centers) and self-employment promotion (through the Small Enterprise Development Division). The ILO has approved the proposal for funding assistance.[17]

The Parliamentary Committee on Public Enterprises had commented that a formal methodology for identifying training needs should be developed in line with the current job market and that an action plan for the next 5 years should be prepared and submitted (Parliament of Sri Lanka 2021). There is no information on follow up by the concerned agencies.

The Ministry of Labour in Cambodia, the ILO, and the government of New Zealand aim to address pressing needs to create jobs and provide skills development in remittance dependent communities in Siem Reap and Battambang provinces in Cambodia—targeting returned migrants and vulnerable households—to mitigate the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. About 2,500 job opportunities and 60,000 workdays will be created (in 2021/22) through employment-intensive rural infrastructure works (thereby improving livelihoods and climate resilience. Simultaneously, blended (online and face to face) technical and vocational education and training will be developed and upgraded in related construction skills and in other sectors in demand by the labor market.[18]

Remigration options

Various surveys have shown that many return migrants expressed a desire to remigrate once the situation improves. Thus, government support may be needed in preparing them for remigration through reskilling, upgrading of skills, recognition of skills, facilitating travel, and bilateral negotiations with

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[15] Sri Lanka Nidahas Sewaka Sangamaya (SLNSS) – a trade union, recognized by ILO Colombo Office as a key constituent, under the Decent Work Country Program.

[16] Information provided by the ILO Colombo Office.

[17] Information provided by the ILO Colombo Office.

[18] Information provided by the ILO Decent Work Team, Bangkok.

destination economies. This is already taking place with migration doors being opened in the Middle East, Malaysia, the Republic of Korea, and Taipei,China. Workers from Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam are now benefiting from the resumption of admissions in Taipei,China. A broader range of Asian countries will be able to resume sending workers to the Republic of Korea under the Employment Permit System.

The Ministry of Manpower of the Government of Indonesia enacted Decree No. 294 of 2020 concerning the Implementation of the Placement of Indonesian Migrant Workers during the Period of Adaptation to New Habits (Normal) in July 2020.[19] The objective is to accelerate national economic recovery amid the COVID-19 pandemic by reopening opportunities for prospective Indonesian migrant workers to be placed and work in countries of destination while continuing to promote and protect the rights of migrant workers with regard to health protocols. The previous Decree No. 151 of 2020 placed a temporary suspension of placement of Indonesian migrant workers due to COVID-19. Indonesia is also reopening previously stalled negotiations on the memorandum of understanding on migrant workers placement with Malaysia which lapsed in 2016 (Tempo.co 2021). Bangladesh and Malaysia have signed a memorandum of understanding for the recruitment of Bangladeshi workers to various sectors including plantation, agriculture, manufacturing, services, mining and quarrying, and construction (Mahmud and Palma 2021).

Given the pressures to remigrate among returnees, it is important to enforce fair recruitment practices to prevent exploitation of aspirant migrant workers.

A positive development in Sri Lanka is the relaxation of some conditions of the Family Background Report to expedite the recruitment process of women migrant workers. Under the revision, prospective woman migrant workers can now apply for departure clearance by submitting an affidavit that she does not have children less than 5 years of age without going through the previous long bureaucratic process of approvals from the local and central levels.

The Philippines included Overseas Filipino Workers who will be deployed in the next 4 months as part of the highest priority group A1 in vaccination drives. Sri Lanka also gave priority to prospective migrant workers in the vaccination drive, providing free internationally recognized COVID-19 vaccines to those registered with the SLBFE and ready to migrate for employment.

Experiences of Bangladesh Returnee Female Migrant Workers

Box 3.2 summarizes the experiences of a sample of women migrant worker returnees in Bangladesh, which illustrate many of the issues highlighted earlier.

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[19] See 13th AFML background report for more information on this decree: Box 8. Government of Indonesia Decree (ILO 2021f).

Box 3.2: Example of Issues Faced by Bangladesh Returnee Female Migrant Workers

A survey by the Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies covered a representative sample of 323 returnees out of 3,644 returnee female migrant workers in the project sites

- For over 81.4%, the return cost was less than Tk50,000 ($585) each.
- 22.6% of female returnee workers returned before the end of 1 year in the destination country and are in a more precarious situation.
- 60.4% of them are unemployed or in housewife roles since return.
- 31% of female returnee migrant workers claim that their respect in society has decreased after the return.
- Two out of every three female returnees claim they did not go through any registration process after the return—described by them as the number one challenge.
- Remigration: For some returnees, remigration is their only dream—27.2% express a desire to remigrate for reasons such as poverty (61.4%), debt burden (45.5%), and no work (27.3%).
- Conclusion of the study: "… for most of the returnee female workers, it is a story of negative reintegration and pain and sorrows. Many of them have returned unwilling or of being forced only after a couple of months without a minimum preparation. Mostly, they are unemployed. The majority have no savings. Many of them could not yet repay the loan that they had taken previously for migration. Many of them are completely broken at least mentally. Few of them have caught a permanent physical inability. The family didn't accept them. … It is like a waste of life, with full of negligence they are passing through."

Source: Islam and Dey (2021).

Recommendations

Most of the recommendations made here are addressed to governments of origin countries at different levels. However, the governments need to involve and establish partnerships with other stakeholders including social partners, civil society organizations, and migrant worker organizations, among others. All policies and measures should take into account protection of the rights of migrant workers and gender concerns. While short-term measures are needed to address immediate priorities, longer-term perspectives are also needed to promote sustainable policies.

Formulate and implement crisis/disaster and emergency preparedness plans at regional levels

The COVID-19 crisis has underlined the need for disaster preparedness and contingency planning at all levels from embassy, national, bilateral and regional levels in countries of destination and origin. The background report to the 13th ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour (AFML 2020a) highlighted the need for emergency preparedness planning for migrant workers at national, bilateral and regional levels. ASEAN Labour Ministers in their Joint Response on Response to the Impact of COVID-19 (ASEAN 2020a) tasked the ASEAN Senior Labour Officials to undertake joint efforts to promote preparedness of labor and employment policies to address the adverse impacts of potential pandemics, economic crises, or natural disasters in the future. There is no information on follow-up to this. Labor ministers of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) region, however, do not seem to have addressed the issue of emergency preparedness in the pandemic context. The Government of India hosted a Workshop on "COVID-19 Management: Experience, Good Practices and Way Forward" on 18 February 2021 where all South Asian countries participated. The key proposals made by the Indian Prime Minister were on a special visa for health workers, the creation of a regional platform for studies on forecasting future pandemics, and a regional network for promoting technology assisted epidemiology (DD News 2021).

The two regional consultative forums (the Colombo Process and the Abu Dhabi Dialogue) should give high priority on their agendas for developing crisis and pandemic preparedness plans for migrant workers.

Formulate and implement crisis and emergency preparedness plans at the national level

It is important for countries to formulate crisis response plans covering crisis preparedness, emergency responses and post crisis action as highlighted in the Migrants in Countries in Crisis Guidelines (MICIC 2016). While some countries have prepared emergency response plans at national level, COVID-19 response plans should be forward-looking in addressing short-term needs and medium- and long-term requirements. The Bangladesh Post-Pandemic Roadmap includes provisions for an immediate response in 2021 and a sustainable response extending from July 2020 to June 2025 (MOEWOE 2021). All stakeholders should be consulted in formulating and implementing of these plans.

Build up robust information and database on migrant returnee population

The absence of comprehensive information on the overseas migrant population and their profiles has been a major constraint in planning repatriation and subsequent support endeavors. The lack of gender disaggregation of the returnee population is another major gap in the existing information base. The India VBM does not provide gender information. The Philippines OFW Assistance Information System has been identified as a good practice (Asis 2020). The scope of such exercises should be broadened to build up profiles and needs and aspirations of returnee migrant workers and their families. Use of digital technology can help in regular updating of information and sharing across and cross referral mechanisms with due regard to privacy of information. The SWADES database of India offers a promising example of building a skills database of returnees for eventual matching with the needs of employers. At the same time, it is important is to build up a system for monitoring return migration regularly in the future, not only during crisis situations.

Streamlining repatriation processes

As highlighted above, the availability of a good database on the profile of the diaspora and migrant population abroad is one of the prerequisites for an effective repatriation program. The experience during the pandemic has provided important lessons in this direction. The origin country authorities need to establish a system of priorities for repatriation based on vulnerability and need. Information sharing on the repatriation process by the lead ministry/agency with other relevant ministries and agencies is very important. Transparency in airfares and repatriation packages is needed, and concessionary rates should be offered to stranded and vulnerable and low-income women and men migrant workers.

Quarantine and testing procedures

It is important to disseminate information about COVID-19 to migrant workers through accessible and appropriate channels and languages and in a gender-responsive manner. This requires issuing of clear and transparent guidelines on quarantine procedures and testing (the locations and costs) to be developed and widely disseminated to returnees before arrival.

All returnee migrant workers should have access to emergency medical care, including COVID-19 testing and treatment as required irrespective of their migratory status. Women returnees should be provided with separate facilities that respect their privacy.

Minimum standards need to be established for quarantine centers in line with WHO guidelines. The government should allocate adequate resources to local authorities to build the capacity of quarantine and testing centers, and staff managing them.

Information and assistance to all migrants—current, returnee, and aspiring

International instruments emphasize the provision of reliable and timely information and assistance to migrant workers and their families for them to make informed choices. The pandemic has shown various gaps in this regard. This information has to be provided at the provincial, district, and community levels for better effectiveness, and women workers should be provided equal access.

- A complete inventory of the services that are currently offered to returnee migrants by various government agencies and nongovernment organizations needs to be compiled and disseminated.
- Information of COVID-19 related migration, labor, health, and safety policies in languages understood by them.
- Support services for recovery of lost wages and benefits.
- Provide information on available employment opportunities including at district and community levels.
- Information on programs for reskilling, upskilling, and skill recognition including online options.
- Information on services and organizations providing support and services to migrant workers, especially women and men returnee migrants, and their contacts: government agencies, migrant worker associations social partners, civil society organizations, migrant resource centers, and labor and welfare officers in consulates and embassies.
- Information on remigration options.

Counseling services

Surveys have reported stigma and discrimination of returnees in their own communities and families because they returned in a COVID-19 context with hardly any savings, high debt burdens, and some may have experienced traumatic situations and forced return from destination countries. Migrant women may experience additional stigma when their migration may be associated with sexual work, violence and abuse. It is important assess the needs of returnee migrants for access to psychosocial support and specialized medical care as needed to overcome these unfortunate experiences. At the same time, awareness-raising campaigns need to be conducted to eliminate social stigma and discrimination against returning migrants, and to enable them to access community networks and support.

Counseling support is needed on the available programs and services, including skills training, job market options, credit and loan facilities, and responsible institutions and agencies.

Reintegration programs

Reintegration measures adopted relate to labor market insertion, livelihood and enterprise development programs, skills development and recognition, and access to credit, among others. It is important to review and update existing reintegration policy frameworks and plans in line with overall national employment and labor market policies and strategies, and specific concerns arising from the pandemic-related issues. Country experiences showed that some measures have been undertaken in an ad hoc manner given the emergency nature of the responses. The needs of diverse groups of returnees need to be considered in reintegration planning. It is important to identify priority groups according to levels of support needed. Special attention should be placed on providing equal opportunities for women as several surveys have revealed that the needs of female returnees were not adequately addressed. Another gap to be addressed is the lack of awareness on the part of migrant workers and their families on available reintegration measures.

Most countries have faced resource constraints in supporting reintegration measures since repatriation and quarantine services programs absorbed substantial resources. It is necessary to strengthen these programs with adequate resources, greater coordination among supporting agencies, market research, and corresponding reskilling and upskilling for participants to carry out livelihood and business activities.

Program administrators should monitor and evaluate what works and what does not and modify programs accordingly.

An active public employment service is essential for jobseekers to finding employment through job-search assistance, counseling, advice, labor market information, and job-matching (ILO 2020d). In developed countries, they have carried out active labor market policies during the pandemic to deal with unemployment and layoffs. However, the capacity of public employment services is limited in the Asian context and need to be strengthened. In the Philippines, however, Public Employment Service Offices provide support and assistance to repatriated OFWs and services—especially where Migrant Resource Centers are not available. Among others, they help in organizing the local transfer of repatriated OFWs (in coordination with OWWA), offer training programs (in coordination with TESDA), and help OFWs in preparing documents to apply for government programs.[20]

Countries of destination should consider supporting reintegration programs as part of their development cooperation and technical assistance programs.

Multi-stakeholder cooperation for "whole-of government" and "whole-of-society" approaches

The pandemic saw the emergence of a whole-of-government approach in dealing with complex issues of impacts on health, economies, and migration. This cooperation should be promoted in the future by formalizing and expanding such coordination mechanisms with clearly identified focal points. It needs to be emphasized that the repatriation process resulting from the pandemic is still not over, and lessons learned should guide in dealing with it.[21]

What is missing in some countries is a whole-of-society approach with social partner, civil society, and private recruitment agency participation, although there have been some examples in provision of emergency support to stranded migrants and distressed returnee populations. Consultations with migrant workers' associations, trade unions, employers' organizations, women's organizations,

[20] Information provided by Marla Asis, Director of Research, Scalabrini Migration Centre, Manila.

[21] This is clear from existing backlogs of those waiting to be repatriated and continuing deportations of undocumented migrant workers by countries such as Malaysia.

private recruitment agency associations, and civil society are key to ensure cohesive and responsive policies and plans.

Decentralized provision of support and services

One lesson of the pandemic-related responses is that support and services need to be extended to the local and community levels. Local level authorities have gained valuable experience in supporting returnees through quarantine and testing services and related logistics. Information on returnees and their profiles can be shared and improved at the local level for better targeting of reintegration support. This is already happening to some extent in Indonesia with the migrant village concept, in Nepal with decentralized services at local level, in Sri Lanka with divisional councils reaching out to migrant workers, and through the migrant resource centers established in some local government units or through the more widely available Public Employment Service Offices (in the Philippines). But the central government needs to provide more resources, technical advice, quality assurance, and capacity building at the local and community levels for better impact.

Ensuring gender-sensitive and gender-responsive approaches

The ILO Recommendation, Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience, 2017 (No. 205) recommends a gender perspective in all crisis prevention and response design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation activities. All pandemic- and crisis-related preparedness should thus be based on gender-responsive protection of migrant workers and their families. Women migrant workers and their families should have equal access to repatriation programs, COVID-19 prevention and protection measures, and reintegration programs.

The ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF) (ASEAN 2020b) noted: "... gender specific impact of the pandemic must be recognised in all response and recovery efforts to safeguard human security." It called for mainstreaming gender equality throughout the recovery scheme and actions of ASEAN. The ACRF Implementation Plan (ASEAN 2020c) and the Action Plan of the ASEAN Consensus on Migrant Workers (2018–2025) (ASEAN 2020d) both include "Development of ASEAN voluntary and non-binding guidelines on protection of migrant workers in crisis situations including health pandemics that is gender sensitive." The Joint Declaration of the Abu Dhabi Dialogue (ADD) Sixth Consultation has identified "integrating gender into employment promotion policies" as one of the five thematic priorities along with addressing COVID-19 challenges (Abu Dhabi Dialogue 2021). The declaration proposed that the Abu Dhabi Dialogue research agenda focus on current and future labor market demand for women workers in technology-related, technology-facilitated, and other relevant sectors, and mapping and analysis of good practice to enhance the employability, mobility, and labor force participation of women workers in ADD corridors (Abu Dhabi Dialogue 2021). The protection needs of women migrant workers should be explicitly incorporated and addressed in both research themes.

Given the observed tendencies for greater household responsibilities and gender-based violence for returnee women migrant workers, action should be taken at central, local, and community levels for their protection and access to income-earning opportunities and remuneration on par with male workers (ILO and UN Women 2020). They should also receive equal access to remigration options and related support.

Role of regional-level mechanisms

At the regional level, there are two mechanisms which can take a lead in addressing the pandemic impact on member states and support reintegration and remigration plans.

i. Regional integration areas or regional economic communities: ASEAN and SAARC
ii. Regional consultative processes: the Colombo Process and the Abu Dhabi Dialogue forums

Regional economic communities

ASEAN: As noted above, ASEAN has already issued regional guidelines for effective return and reintegration of migrant workers in ASEAN Member States. These guidelines developed in 2019 need to be updated in the light of COVID-19 developments. Similarly, the Implementation Plan of the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework of 2020 (ASEAN 2020c) has proposed following up on the study on portability of social security rights of migrant workers between ASEAN Member States in the post-pandemic phase.

South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC): It has established a COVID-19 Emergency Fund based on voluntary contributions from all the SAARC member countries. The fund is to be used in any of the partner countries to meet the cost of immediate actions, but it is not related to migrant workers or repatriated persons. The latest information on the fund is on pledged member state contributions amounting to $21.6 million as of 14 April 2020.[22] SAARC has not provided any update on the fund or its uses if any since then. The SAARC migration agenda needs to be proactive if it is to address issues of women and men migrant workers in the region affected by the pandemic.

Regional consultative processes

Both forums present important platforms to address COVID-19 related labor migration and migrant workers in the Asian region. The Abu Dhabi Dialogue Sixth Consultation held on 27 October 2021 issued a Joint Declaration (Abu Dhabi Dialogue 2021) where addressing COVID-19 challenges formed one of the five thematic priorities for the joint program among member states. In the elaboration of this thematic priority, however, the intervention is limited to exploring possibilities for developing platform(s) for sharing information on health requirements for the admission and return of migrant workers in ADD corridors. The crucial need for developing short-term and longer-term strategies for dealing with the epidemic and future crises, and related issues of protection of migrant workers and expanding social protection, seem to be completely missing. There is no indication that the Colombo Process has undertaken any initiatives related to COVID-19 impacts on migrant workers. The last ministerial meeting and the Kathmandu Declaration was held in 2018 well before the pandemic.

Facilitating remigration to relieve domestic labor markets with safeguards for migrant health

In view of the employment challenges facing origin countries, facilitation of remigration options may form part of a comprehensive strategy. This is also consistent with the preferences of returned migrant workers who find it difficult to integrate into the local labor markets or find adequate incomes. All Asian origin countries have accorded priority to facilitating remigration. However, it is important to address structural factors leading to precarious employment conditions of migrant workers in destination countries in building back migration flows.

[22] See COVID-19 Emergency Fund webpage at http://covid19-sdmc.org/covid19-emergency-fund

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Table A3.1: Reasons for Return as Ascertained Through Various Surveys

Country	Reasons	Source
Selected ASEAN origin countries (Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Philippines, Viet Nam)	• Chose to end my employment (women 44%; men 49%) • End of contract (women 27%; men 22%) • Premature termination of contract by employer (women 14%; men 10%)	ILO Triangle in ASEAN First Rapid Assessment 2020; N=148 ILO (2020a)
Myanmar and the Philippines (origin countries)	• Chose to end employment my employment to return – 51% (women 26%; men 25%) • Contract terminated by employer without compensation – 28% (women 12%; men 16%) • Contract terminated by employer with compensation – 9% (women 8%; men 3%) • Employment ended at agreed date – 11% (women 5%; men 6%)	ILO Triangle in ASEAN Second Rapid Assessment: N=204 workers; 50% female workers ILO (2021a)
Cambodia (main reasons)	• Personal or family concerns about COVID-19 (38%) • Could not find work/lost job (22%) • I was told the border was closing due to COVID-19 (11%)	Asia–Pacific Migration Data Report 2020 IOM (2021a)
Cambodia (multiple responses)	• Fear of COVID-19 – 51.7% • Personal/family reason – 47.0% • Loss of job/closure of workplace with – 27.8% • Expiry of work permit – 7.1% • (Similar pattern of responses among men and women returnees)	Total respondents – 1,108 persons (men – 504; women – 604) UNFPA (2020)
Lao PDR (main reasons)	• Personal or family concerns about COVID-19 – 50% • I was told to leave by employer because of COVID-19 – 11%	IOM (2021a)
Myanmar (main reasons)	• Personal or family concerns about COVID-19 – 34% • Could not find work/lost job – 37% • Other COVID related – 17% • Unrelated to COVID-19 – 20%	IOM (2021a)
Bangladesh (five top reasons)	• Told to leave the country by the employer – 29% • Returned due to worry about COVID-19 – 23% • My family wanted/asked me to come back – 26% • Came home on temporary holiday – 14% • (Multiple answers possible)	IOM (2020) Bangladesh IOM Survey - International returnees – sample of 1,486 with 6% females
Bangladesh – RMMRU survey	• Survey of 300 returned migrants • Annual leave – 38% • Loss of job – 41% • Death/other immediate emergency to family members – 8% • Employment visa expired/cancelled – 6% • To be close to the family in crisis situation – 3% • Health concerns – 2% • Released from prison – 3%	RMMRU (2021)
India (Kerala State)	• 1,751 distressed return migrants due to COVID-19 • Lost job/laid off – 54.5% • Scared due to COVID-19 – 26.3% • Expiry of contract – 5.1% • Poor working conditions – 4.9%	Rajan and Pattath (2021)

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Table A3.1 *continued*

Country	Reasons	Source
Nepal	• Sample of 501 current migrants (still in destination country wanting to return) • Cessation of employment in the company – 28.3% • Contract over – 21.3% • Regular leave – 14.3% • Due to fear of COVID-19 – 8.9% • Compulsory leave – 4.3% • Family pressure – 3.1% • Others – 19.8%	IOM and NIDS (2020)
Nepal (main reasons only)	• To support their family and to perform household or domestic duties – 35% (female migrant workers) • Sent on compulsory leave (furloughed) by employers – 25% (male migrant workers) • Expiration of visas – 8%	IOM (2021b) Sample 800 – 400 return migrants (14% women)
Pakistan	• Limited sample of 38 returnee migrant workers • Scheduled leave – 13%–34% • Premature termination of contract by employer – 12%–32% • Sent on forced leave – 11%–29% • Resigned and returned voluntarily due to COVID-related family pressure – 2%–5%	ILO (2021e) Rapid Assessment: The Impact of COVID-19 on Labor Migration Governance, March–November 2020
Sri Lanka	• (Sample of 72 returned workers) • Employer terminated contract – 38.9% • Employment ended at agreed date – 23.6% • Chose to end employment – 19.4% • Other reasons – 18.1%	Jayatilaka et al. (2021)
Sri Lanka	• Sample of 100 returnee migrants • Due to COVID-19 outbreak – 54% • Closing of the workplace – 4% • Loss of job – 11% • End ofcontract – 5% • Visa expired – 6% • Other issues – 20%	Lawyers Beyond Borders Sri Lanka and Migrant Forum in Asia (2021)
Viet Nam	• Sample of 71 return migrants from different countries • Expiry of contract – 37% • COVID-19 pandemic – 28% • Private/family reasons – 24% • Financial difficulties – 8%	IOM Viet Nam (2020)

ASEAN = Association of Southeast Asian Nations, COVID-19 = coronavirus disease, Lao PDR = Lao People's Democratic Republic.
Source: Compiled by author based on indicated sources.

Table A3.2: Returns and Repatriation in ASEAN Countries

Country	2020	Period	Source	2021	Period	Source
Cambodia	Over 102,200 (46% women) Cambodian migrant returnees	March 20–December 2020	ILO Office, Cambodia Triangle Briefing Note Cambodia Q3	122,800 migrant workers (46% women) migrant workers	1 January to 21 August 2021	ILO Office, TRIANGLE Briefing Note Cambodia Q3
Indonesia	123,122 Indonesian migrant workers returning to the country through official channels since January. Unknown numbers of migrant workers are returning through unofficial channels (IOM Indonesia 2020)	January–December 2020	IOM Indonesia (2020). COVID-19 strategic preparedness and response plan, February–December 2020, IOM, Jakarta	Total of 236,000 Indonesians known to have returned to the country	November 2021: during the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 70% of them were returning from main destination economies, such as Hong Kong, China; Malaysia; and Taipei,China	Indonesia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs per November 2021 (cited by IOM) https://indonesia.iom.int/news/5370-returning-and-prospective-indonesian-migrant-workers-will-receive-hygiene-kits-prevent
	In Indonesia, an estimated 175,000–180,000 Indonesian migrant workers returned home in 2020	2020	Development Dialogues 2021 (https://developmentdialogues.org/migration-and-covid-19-including-migrants-and-communities-in-socio-economic-recovery/)			
Lao PDR	156,167	2020	ILO TRIANGLE in ASEAN	61,274	March–April 2021	Department of Skill Development and Employment, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
Myanmar	Due to the impact of COVID-19, more than 167,000 Myanmar migrant workers have returned from Thailand, the People's Republic of China, and Malaysia through official checkpoints	22 March to 21 October 2020	ILO TRIANGLE in ASEAN Quarterly Briefing Note: Myanmar (July–September 2021), International Labour Organization	On 9 September 2021, government stated that 74,955 migrants returned from the People's Republic of China, the Lao PDR, and Thailand	June–September 2021 during the recent wave of COVID-19	Diplomatic briefing session, the information minister of the de facto authority
	From 22 March to 21 October, a total of 167,798 migrants (75,852 women, 47,478 men) returned to Myanmar from Thailand, the People's Republic of China, and the Lao PDR 18,921 returned via government-assisted relief flights from 8 April to 4 October.	Different periods from March to October 2020	IOM Myanmar (2020). COVID-19 Response Situation Report 12 IOM, Myanmar, 26 October 2020			

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Table A3.2 *continued*

Country	2020	Period	Source	2021	Period	Source
Philippines	791,623 returning overseas Filipinos (ROFs): 481,305 were land-based; 308,332 were sea-based; and 1,986 were transferees from Sabah. 327,511 OFWs (land-based workers – 231,537, and sea-based workers – 95,974)	2020	National Task Force Coronavirus Disease-2019: Situational Report No. 275 (NDRRMC, 2021a)	Total ROFs: 1,849,189 OFWs – 1,433,235 (831,543 land-based and 601,692 sea-based)	2020 to 11 December 2021 (cumulative)	National Task Force Coronavirus Disease-2019: Situational Report No. 620 (NDRRMC 2021b)

ASEAN = Association of Southeast Asian Nations, COVID-19 = coronavirus disease, Lao PDR = Lao People's Democratic Republic.
Source: Compiled by author based on indicated sources.

Table A3.3: Returns and Repatriation in South Asia, 2020–2021

Country	2020	Period	Source	2021	Period	Source
Bangladesh	Total 408,408 Males – 358,484 (87.8%) Females – 49,924 (12.2%)	1 April–31 December 2020	Probashi Kalyan Desk (Migrant Welfare Desk) at airport	Total 72,656: Males – 67,750: Females – 4,906. (Includes only returnees using outpass (one-way travel document) and excludes returnees with regular passports.	Probashi Kalyan Desk (Migrant Welfare Desk) at airport	1 January–25 December 2021
India	Total by air –3,610810 by sea –3,987 by land – 397,106	By 20 January 2021	Annexure-I to Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 334 on 20 January 2021	9,562,570	Inbound repatriation by air up to 31 October 2021	Ministry of Civil Aviation Press Release (https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1776091)
Nepal	63,347 Nepalis had returned home via rescue flights coordinated by the Government of Nepal	January–September 2020	IOM and NIDS (2020)	562,571 Nepalis repatriated: UAE (159,968) Qatar (149,064) Saudi Arabia (52,761) India (46,642 by air only) Malaysia (62,074) Singapore (7,041) Republic of Korea (4,057)	15 September 2021	COVID-19 Crisis Management Centre in Nepal, Government of Nepal (information provided by ILO Office, Kathmandu)
Pakistan				Males – 93,742 Females – 1,540 Total registered overseas returnees – 95,282	Since the beginning of the pandemic in 2020 to December 2021	Overseas Employment Corporation, Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (https://oec.gov.pk/)
Sri Lanka	40,000 repatriated	Up to November 2020	Weeraratne (2020)	At end of October 2021, 16,025 had registered with the program of whom 11,353 were males and 4,667 were females)	End of October 2021 (cumulative)	Interview with Manager, IT Div. SLBFE (Ruhunage 2021)

UAE = United Arab Emirates.
Source: Compiled by author based on indicated sources.

Table A3.4: Repatriation Modes, Registration Costs, and Transportation

Region/Country	Registration Process	Mode of Transport	Costs
ASEAN			
Cambodia	No systematic registration; registered following arrival for services	Mostly by land by taxi/bus through border check points from Thailand; some returns not registered	Transport cost mostly borne by workers and families; High transport costs by Thai operators cited
Indonesia	Ad hoc central government and regions	Mostly by air; some by sea from Malaysia	Mostly paid by returnees
Lao PDR	Registration only at quarantine centers	Mostly by land (bus) from Thailand at border points. Some crossed the river (unauthorized)	Mostly paid by returnees
Myanmar	Initially no registration; later registration at embassy	Mainly by land from Thailand, the People's Republic of China, and the Lao PDR: A few stranded by air	At own cost. Normally costs low for Thai border but complaints that Thai authorities charged.
Philippines	Registration in embassies/consulates	By air (main), sea, land	At own cost except for identified vulnerable persons
Viet Nam	No formal registration	Mostly by air	Own cost unless exempted
South Asia			
Bangladesh	Registration at missions and online and on arrival	By air mostly	At own cost
India	Registration at embassies/missions and online and on arrival	Mostly by air (92%); by land (8%) and by sea	Mostly at own cost except a few cases. Vande Bharat Mission coordinated repatriation; Ministry of External Affairs lead with Ministry of Civil Aviation
Nepal	No formal registration system	From India – by land Other destinations – by air	Own cost mostly. Some employers and private recruitment agencies
Pakistan	No formal registration system before arrival?	Mostly by air from the Gulf Cooperation Council countries	At own cost
Sri Lanka	Registration thru embassies coordinated by COVID Task Force and Ministry of Foreign Affairs: web portal "Contact Sri Lanka" Ministry of Foreign Affairs, SLBFE registration of migrant workers at quarantine centers, Ministry of Foreign Employment and Ministry of Foreign Affairs obtaining estimates from overseas missions.	Mostly by air	Initially repatriation from Wuhan and Kuwait paid by government at own cost. Others at own cost; Later Parliament committee directed stranded migrants to be paid from the SLBFE welfare fund

ASEAN = Association of Southeast Asian Nations, COVID-19 = coronavirus disease, Lao PDR = Lao People's Democratic Republic, SLBFE = Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment.

Source: Compiled by the author based on limited available information.

Table A3.5: Employment Status, Aspirations, and Support Needs—Migrant Returnees in Selected Countries

Country	Employment Status	Aspirations	What Support Needed
ASEAN survey – I Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Philippines, Viet Nam (ILO 2020a)		Short-term plans (n=128) Stay at home/rest – 52% Get job/ family farm/ business – 20% No plans – 16% Remigrate – 5% Other – 7% Myanmar returnees (n=89) Remigrate – 28% No plan to remigrate – 58% Undecided – 13%	
ASEAN survey – II Myanmar and Philippines (ILO 2021a)	Employed Myanmar – 42% Philippines – 19%		Philippine returnees (n=95) To set up business – 88% Financial capital – 48% Job opportunities – 15% Myanmar returnees (n=82) Financial capital – 34% Job opportunities – 32% Set up business – 22% Community participation – 16% Skills development – 15%
Philippines IOM survey of 6,643 land-based workers (female 53%; 47% male). October–December 2020 (IOM 2021c)	83% of OFWs still unemployed 3 months after return females – 84% males – 82%	35% Remigrate overseas 35% Remain at home 15% Undecided 2% Migrate internally	Post-arrival and reintegration assistance from the government • 51% of OFWs either registered or were eligible • 46% of OFWs did not register or access government assistance • 3% unsure whether eligible • 26% received assistance (female – 21%; male – 29%) Preferred forms of support • 75% of OFWs – cash assistance • 14% assistance for business and livelihood
Bangladesh IOM Survey – International returnees – sample of 1,486 with 6% females (IOM 2020)	Private and public sector – 4% Daily wage employment – 16% Self-employed and/or business – 9% Unemployed – 68%	To be self-employed – 32% Work in the private sector – 30% Work for daily wages – 28% Remigrate – yes, internationally – 75% No – 17% Internally – 1% Don't know – 7%	
Nepal (IOM and NIDS 2020)	No information on current employment status of returnee migrants collected in this survey	Aspirations for work locally: Farming – 37% of return migrants Self-employment – 31% Job – 18% Daily wage work – 7% Remigrate – 64% (female – 51%; male – 66%) Preferred destinations: India – 59% (female – 31%; male – 63%) Gulf countries – 32% (female – 55%; male – 28%) Other countries – 4%	Expected help from the government by returnee migrants • 40.2% financial aid • 34% conducive environment (appropriate law, policy, and easy procedures) • 9% network development for business and entrepreneurship

ASEAN = Association of Southeast Asian Nations, IOM = International Organization for Migration, OFW = overseas Filipino worker.

Source: Compiled by the author from sources indicated.

ANNEX 1

ECONOMY-SPECIFIC NOTES

BANGLADESH

KEY INDICATORS

	Population (million)	GDP per capita (constant 2015 $)	GDP growth rate (annual, %)	Labor market indicators (2020, %)	
2010	147.6	973	5.6	Employment / population ratio (15+, total)	52.8
2020	164.7	1,626	3.5	Unemployment (% of total labor force)	5.3

Immigrant population in Bangladesh

	Stock of foreign-born population (0+)			Foreign-born population, 15 years old and over			
	Total ('000)	% of population	% women	% 15–24	% 25–64	% low-educated	% high-educated
2000	988	0.77	46	17.8	68.4	n.a.	
2015	1,423	0.91	47	15.3	65.2		
2019	2,186	1.34	49	13.5	57.1		

Stock of foreign workers by sector	**Total**
Number of foreign workers ('000)	85.5
% of total employment	

Stock of international students ('000)	**2009**		**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**
	1.6		2.2	1.9	2.1	2.1	2.3	2.4	2.2

Inflows of foreign workers ('000)	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**
								4.7	4.3

Emigration from Bangladesh to OECD countries

	2000			2015/16		
Stock of persons born in Bangladesh living in OECD countries	**Men**	**Women**	**Total**	**Men**	**Women**	**Total**
Emigrant population 15+ ('000)	161.9	123.6	285.5	390.4	295.9	686.3
Recent emigrants 15+ ('000)	33.0	24.4	57.4	18.4	24.5	21.0
15–24 (% of population 15+)	17.2	23.1	19.7	9.6	11.0	10.2
25–64 (% of population 15+)	78.2	73.3	76.1	85.5	84.0	84.9
Total emigration rates (%)	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.7	0.5	0.6
Emigration rates of the high-educated (%)	2.7	2.0	2.4	4.0	6.5	4.8

Legal migration flows to OECD (5 main destinations, '000)	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**
Total	**49.7**	**41.5**	**43.3**	**48.6**	**50.8**	**50.9**	**51.6**	**53.8**	**53.2**
United States	16.6	14.6	12.0	14.4	13.4	18.4	14.6	15.6	15.0
Italy	10.3	10.1	10.5	12.7	12.4	10.7	14.6	13.4	11.8
Rep. of Korea	2.3	1.9	2.5	2.3	2.9	2.9	2.7	3.3	2.8
Canada	2.7	2.6	3.8	2.2	3.3	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.4
Japan	0.6	0.8	1.2	1.8	2.0	2.5	2.5	2.6	2.7
Stock of international students (3 main destinations, '000)	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**
Total	**16.6**	**16.8**	**18.1**	**20.6**	**21.2**	**23.0**	**24.6**	**27.1**	**24.5**
United States			3.8	4.8	5.4	6.5	7.0	7.4	8.1
Australia			3.6	3.9	4.4	4.7	5.0	5.8	6.2
United Kingdom			1.6	1.8	1.9	2.0	2.2	2.3	3.7

Emigration to non-OECD destinations

Stock of workers overseas (5 main destinations, '000)	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**
Total									
Saudi Arabia									
United Arab Emirates									
Malaysia									
Kuwait									
Oman									
Flows of workers deployed (5 main destinations, '000)	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**
Total	**607.8**	**409.3**	**425.7**	**555.9**	**757.7**	**1,008.5**	**734.2**	**700.2**	**217.7**
Saudi Arabia	21.2	12.7	10.7	58.3	143.9	551.3	257.3	399.0	161.7
Oman	170.3	134.0	105.7	129.9	188.2	89.1	72.5	72.7	21.1
Singapore	58.7	60.1	54.8	55.5	54.7	40.4	41.4	49.8	10.1
Jordan	11.7	21.4	20.3	22.1	23.0	20.4	9.7	20.3	3.8
Qatar	28.8	57.6	87.6	124.0	120.4	82.0	76.6	50.3	3.6

Net migration rate (per thousand)	**1985–1990**	**1990–1995**	**1995–2000**	**2000–2005**	**2005–2010**	**2010–2015**	**2015–2020**	**2020–2025**	**2025–2030**
	–0.45	–1.49	–1.19	–2.24	–4.54	–3.04	–2.30	–2.07	–1.88

Remittance inflows (current $ million)	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**
	14,120	13,867	14,988	15,296	13,574	13,502	15,566	18,364	21,750

CAMBODIA

KEY INDICATORS

	Population (million)	GDP per capita (constant 2015 $)	GDP growth rate (annual, %)	Labor market indicators (2020, %)	
2010	14.3	891	6.0	Employment / population ratio (15+, total)	79.1
2020	16.7	1,375	−3.1	Unemployment (% of total labor force)	0.3

Immigrant population in Cambodia

	Stock of foreign-born population (0+)			Foreign-born population, 15 years old and over			
	Total ('000)	% of population	% women	% 15–24	% 25–64	% low-educated	% high-educated
2000	146	1.2	46	22.5	32.8		
2015	74	0.5	47	17.3	71.7		
2019	79	0.5	49	13.3	74.1		

Stock of foreign workers by sector, 2015	Total	Agriculture, forestry, and fishing	Manufacturing	Construction	Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	Accommodation and food service	Administrative and support service activities	Other
Number of foreign workers ('000)	49.2	18.7	2.6	5.5	12.5	2.4	1.2	6.2
% of total employment	0.1							

Stock of international students ('000)	2006	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020

Inflows of foreign workers ('000)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018

Emigration from Cambodia to OECD countries

	2000			2015/16		
Stock of persons born in Cambodia living in OECD countries	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Emigrant population 15+ ('000)			239.1	130.1	162.2	292.3
Recent emigrants 15+ ('000)			15.2	5.9	8.8	7.5
15–24 (% of population 15+)			11.8	5.8	5.0	5.3
25–64 (% of population 15+)			81.1	76.7	78.2	77.5
Total emigration rates (%)			3.2	2.5	2.9	2.7
Emigration rates of the high-educated (%)			52.7	16.7	29.0	21.0

Legal migration flows to OECD (5 main destinations, '000)	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total	**12.3**	**15.0**	**16.4**	**16.4**	**17.1**	**19.6**	**20.1**	**18.8**	**20.7**
Rep. of Korea	6.4	9.5	10.5	9.5	9.6	10.2	9.5	8.7	9.9
Japan	1.1	1.1	1.3	2.3	3.7	4.2	4.8	5.0	6.3
United States	2.6	2.4	2.5	2.4	1.8	3.0	3.9	3.1	2.6
Australia	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.8	0.6
France	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4
Stock of international students (3 main destinations, '000)	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**
Total			**2.7**	**3.1**	**3.2**	**3.5**	**4.0**	**4.2**	**4.4**
Australia			0.6	0.7	0.8	0.9	1.1	1.3	1.7
United States			0.4	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.7	0.7
Japan			0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.6

Emigration to non-OECD destinations

Stock of workers overseas (5 main destinations, '000)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total							**1,165.2**		
Thailand							1,134.2		
Malaysia							30.1		
Singapore							0.9		
Hong Kong, China							0.1		
Saudi Arabia							0.0		
Flows of workers deployed (5 main destinations, '000)	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**
Total	**34.8**	**22.6**	**24.7**	**40.8**	**85.5**	**96.3**	**68.6**	**68.0**	
Thailand	26.4	13.5	15.8	31.0	76.4	87.9	60.3	57.8	
Rep. of Korea	8.1	8.5	7.4	7.5	7.4	6.0	4.9	5.9	
Japan	0.1	0.1	0.5	1.4	1.6	2.3	3.0	3.9	
Singapore	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.1	
Malaysia	0.2	0.1	0.5	0.8	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	

Net migration rate (per thousand)	1985–1990	1990–1995	1995–2000	2000–2005	2005–2010	2010–2015	2015–2020	2020–2025	2025–2030
	−1.87	8.34	6.11	−0.55	−4.29	−2.01	−1.86	−1.74	−1.64

Remittance inflows (current $ million)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	855	1,003	1,103	1,185	1,199	1,287	1,431	1,525	1,272

HONG KONG, CHINA

KEY INDICATORS

	Population (million)	GDP per capita (constant 2015 $)	GDP growth rate (annual, %)	Labor market indicators (2020, %)	
2010	7.0	38,090	6.8	Employment / population ratio (15+, total)	54.9
2020	7.5	41,644	−6.1	Unemployment (% of total labor force)	5.8

Immigrant population in Hong Kong, China

	Stock of foreign-born population (0+)			Foreign-born population, 15 years old and over			
	Total ('000)	% of population	% women	% 15–24	% 25–64	% low-educated	% high-educated
2000	2,669	40.40	54	7.2	49.3		
2015	2,839	39.50	61	7.0	63.1		
2019	2,942	39.57	61	7.6	61.8		

Stock of foreign workers by sector	Total
Number of foreign workers ('000)	
% of total employment	

Stock of international students ('000)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	10.3	18.0	21.1	26.7	30.0	32.0	32.0	34.3	37.3	42.6	47.3

Inflows of foreign workers ('000)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	28.6	28.4	31.7	34.4	36.0	40.0	41.6	41.3	14.6

Emigration from Hong Kong, China to OECD countries

	2000			2015/16		
Stock of persons born in Hong Kong, China living in OECD countries	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Emigrant population 15+ ('000)	188.5	199.9	388.4	291.8	332.7	624.5
Recent emigrants 15+ ('000)	6.3	7.7	14.0	7.2	7.1	7.2
15–24 (% of population 15+)	24.8	20.7	22.7	11.5	8.3	9.8
25–64 (% of population 15+)	69.7	73.7	71.8	74.4	77.9	76.2
Total emigration rates (%)	6.5	6.6	6.6	8.8	8.7	8.7
Emigration rates of the high-educated (%)				16.7	17.0	16.9

Legal migration flows to OECD (5 main destinations, '000)	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total	**7.2**	**5.6**	**9.4**	**6.7**	**6.9**	**13.8**	**17.4**	**17.3**	**15.2**
United Kingdom	2.0	0.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	5.0	8.0	8.0	8.0
Japan	0.6	0.9	0.9	1.1	1.3	1.6	2.3	2.2	2.3
United States	2.3	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.1	2.5	2.4	2.1	0.0
Australia	0.8	0.9	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.7	1.8	1.9	1.7
Canada	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.6	0.6	1.2	1.3	1.5	1.5
Stock of international students (3 main destinations, '000)	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**
Total			**32.8**	**34.3**	**35.8**	**36.7**	**35.9**	**35.8**	**33.2**
United Kingdom			12.9	14.7	16.2	16.7	16.6	16.3	16.3
Australia			9.2	9.1	8.8	9.3	9.2	9.6	9.7
United States			8.6	8.5	8.5	8.0	7.5	7.0	6.7

Emigration to non-OECD destinations

Stock of workers overseas (5 main destinations, '000)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total									

Flows of workers deployed (5 main destinations, '000)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total									

Net migration rate (per thousand)	1985–1990	1990–1995	1995–2000	2000–2005	2005–2010	2010–2015	2015–2020	2020–2025	2025–2030
	8.04	5.30	11.84	1.94	2.61	2.12	3.99	3.15	4.62

Remittance inflows (current $ million)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	367	360	372	387	399	437	425	451	458

INDIA

KEY INDICATORS

	Population (million)	GDP per capita (constant 2015 $)	GDP growth rate (annual, %)	Labor market indicators (2020, %)	
2010	1,234.28	1,244.37	8.5	Employment / population ratio (15+, total)	43.0
2020	1,380.00	1,797.76	−7.3	Unemployment (% of total labor force)	7.1

Immigrant population in India

	Stock of foreign-born population (0+)			Foreign-born population, 15 years old and over			
	Total ('000)	% of population	% women	% 15–24	% 25–64	% low-educated	% high-educated
2000	6,411	0.61	48	7.1	57.8	73.1	3.0
2015	5,241	0.40	49	9.3	64.9		
2019	5,155	0.38	49	9.8	64.8		

Stock of foreign workers by sector	Total
Number of foreign workers ('000)	
% of total employment	

Stock of international students ('000)	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	27.5	28.3	34.4	39.0	42.0	44.8	46.7	46.1	47.4	49.3

Inflows of foreign workers ('000)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018

Emigration from India to OECD countries

	2000			2015/16		
Stock of persons born in India living in OECD countries	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Emigrant population 15+ ('000)	1,027.6	943.0	1,970.6	2,545.0	2,280.6	4,825.6
Recent emigrants 15+ ('000)	264.2	226.6	490.8	27.0	26.9	26.9
15–24 (% of population 15+)	10.2	11.0	10.6	9.3	7.6	8.5
25–64 (% of population 15+)	80.0	77.7	78.9	79.1	78.8	79.0
Total emigration rates (%)	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.5
Emigration rates of the high-educated (%)	2.9	3.8	3.2	2.7	3.7	3.1

Legal migration flows to OECD (5 main destinations, '000)	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total	**245.5**	**228.5**	**241.0**	**286.9**	**270.8**	**276.0**	**310.0**	**353.5**	**407.2**
Canada	27.5	30.9	33.1	38.3	39.5	39.8	51.7	70.0	85.6
United Kingdom	61.0	36.0	30.0	46.0	36.0	35.0	50.0	62.3	92.0
United States	67.4	64.7	67.3	76.3	62.8	63.0	59.1	58.9	53.8
Germany	15.4	18.1	19.5	22.4	26.1	27.7	29.5	33.7	39.1
Australia	21.9	27.8	38.1	39.6	34.7	38.6	40.0	33.1	32.6
Stock of international students (3 main destinations, '000)	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**
Total	**181.6**	**168.3**	**144.5**	**169.3**	**218.8**	**256.6**	**285.0**	**311.1**	**305.3**
United States			74.8	82.2	112.7	135.7	142.6	135.9	133.3
Australia			16.2	25.6	36.9	46.3	52.0	73.3	93.3
Canada			13.6	15.7	16.3	19.9	32.6	34.8	74.3

Emigration to non-OECD destinations

Stock of workers overseas (5 main destinations, '000)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total					**10,401.2**		**10,453.2**	**13,459.2**	
Saudi Arabia					3,050.0	3,253.9	2,812.4	2,592.2	
United Arab Emirates					2,800.0	2,800.0	3,100.0	3,419.9	
Kuwait					921.7	918.0	928.4	1,028.3	
Oman					795.1	783.0	688.2	779.4	
Qatar					600.0	697.0	691.5	745.8	
Flows of workers deployed (5 main destinations, '000)	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**
Total	**747.0**	**817.0**	**805.0**	**781.0**	**520.9**	**391.0**	**340.2**	**334.0**	**94.1**
Saudi Arabia	357.5	354.2	329.9	306.0	165.4	78.6	72.4	161.1	44.3
United Arab Emirates	141.1	202.0	224.0	225.5	163.7	150.0	112.1	76.1	17.9
Kuwait	55.9	70.1	80.4	66.5	72.4	56.4	57.6	45.7	8.1
Qatar	63.1	78.4	76.0	59.0	30.6	24.8	34.5	31.8	7.4
Oman	84.4	63.4	51.3	85.0	63.2	53.3	36.0	28.4	7.2

Net migration rate (per thousand)	1985–1990	1990–1995	1995–2000	2000–2005	2005–2010	2010–2015	2015–2020	2020–2025	2025–2030
	0.01	−0.12	−0.14	−0.34	−0.45	−0.37	−0.40	−0.33	−0.30

Remittance inflows (current $ million)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	68,821	69,970	70,389	68,910	62,744	68,967	78,790	83,332	83,149

INDONESIA

KEY INDICATORS

	Population (million)	GDP per capita (constant 2015 $)	GDP growth rate (annual, %)	Labor market indicators (2020, %)	
2010	241.8	241.8	6.2	Employment / population ratio (15+, total)	63.7
2020	273.5	273.5	−2.1	Unemployment (% of total labor force)	4.1

Immigrant population in Indonesia

	Stock of foreign-born population (0+)			Foreign-born population, 15 years old and over			
	Total ('000)	% of population	% women	% 15–24	% 25–64	% low-educated	% high-educated
2000	290	0.1	43	20.9	42.8	33.0	46.0
2015	338	0.1	42	26.6	55.1		
2019	353	0.1	42	22.4	62.5		

Stock of foreign workers by sector, 2020	Total	Agriculture, forestry, and fishing	Industry	Services
Number of foreign workers ('000)	93.8	2.4	38.1	53.3
% of total employment	0.1			

Stock of international students ('000)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	6.4	..	7.2	..	..	7.3	7.7	7.8	7.7		

Inflows of foreign workers ('000)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	60.7	70.1	73.6	77.1	80.4	86.0	95.3	109.5	93.8

Emigration from Indonesia to OECD countries

	2000			2015/16		
Stock of persons born in Indonesia living in OECD countries	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Emigrant population 15+ ('000)	162.3	177.3	339.6	159.8	205.2	365.0
Recent emigrants 15+ ('000)	22.0	26.4	48.4	15.0	14.8	14.9
15–24 (% of population 15+)	13.7	11.3	12.4	14.7	8.9	11.4
25–64 (% of population 15+)	65.4	61.8	63.5	57.4	62.2	60.1
Total emigration rates (%)	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Emigration rates of the high-educated (%)	3.2	4.2	3.6	0.9	1.1	1.0

Legal migration flows to OECD (5 main destinations, '000)	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total	**28.8**	**30.6**	**36.3**	**35.3**	**34.7**	**38.8**	**39.1**	**47.6**	**53.3**
Rep. of Korea	8.4	9.3	9.6	11.8	14.3	16.8	19.6	23.2	28.8
Japan	8.1	8.3	11.8	10.5	8.5	9.0	6.9	10.7	9.8
United States	2.0	2.2	2.8	2.5	2.5	2.7	2.6	3.0	3.0
Australia	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.2	1.6	2.1	2.7
France	2.9	2.5	2.5	2.4	2.1	2.1	1.9	1.8	1.4
Stock of international students (3 main destinations, '000)	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total	**24.5**	**25.4**	**26.9**	**29.1**	**31.9**	**32.9**	**34.4**	**35.2**	**34.7**
Australia			9.5	9.5	10.2	10.7	11.0	12.2	13.9
United States			8.2	8.6	8.9	9.3	8.8	8.5	8.0
Japan			2.2	2.4	2.5	2.9	3.6	4.2	4.7

Emigration to non-OECD destinations

Stock of workers overseas (5 main destinations, '000)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total			**3,256.0**	**4,300.0**	**4,900.0**				
Thailand			1,500.0						
Malaysia			917.9						
Singapore			146.2						
Hong Kong, China			140.6						
Saudi Arabia			106.0						
Flows of workers deployed (5 main destinations, '000)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total	**494.6**	**512.2**	**429.9**	**275.7**	**234.5**	**262.9**	**283.6**	**276.6**	**113.2**
Thailand	45.5	41.8	35.1	15.3	14.4	69.2	73.9	70.8	53.2
Rep. of Korea	81.1	83.5	82.7	75.3	77.1	62.8	72.4	79.6	34.4
Japan	134.1	150.2	127.8	97.6	87.6	89.0	90.6	79.7	14.6
Singapore	41.6	34.7	31.7	20.9	17.7	13.4	18.3	19.4	4.5
Malaysia	40.7	45.4	44.3	23.0	13.5	6.5	5.9	7.0	1.8

Net migration rate (per thousand)	1985–1990	1990–1995	1995–2000	2000–2005	2005–2010	2010–2015	2015–2020	2020–2025	2025–2030
	0.30	−0.04	−0.07	−1.05	−1.14	−0.36	−0.37	−0.38	−0.34

Remittance inflows (current $ million)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	7,212	7,614	8,551	9,659	8,907	8,990	11,215	11,666	9,651

JAPAN

KEY INDICATORS

	Population (million)	GDP per capita (constant 2015 $)	GDP growth rate (annual, %)	Labor market indicators (2020, %)	
2010	128.1	32,942	4.1	Employment / population ratio (15+, Total)	60.5
2020	125.8	34,366	−4.6	Unemployment (% of total labor force)	3.0

Immigrant population in Japan

	Stock of foreign-born population (0+)			Foreign-born population, 15 years old and over			
	Total ('000)	% of population	% women	% 15–24	% 25–64	% low-educated	% high-educated
2000	1,686	1.32	53	15.7	66.6		
2015	2,232	1.74	53	15.7	67.4		
2019	2,499	1.97	52	9.3	74.4		

Stock of foreign workers by sector, 2019	Total	Construction	Manufacturing	Information and communications	Wholesale, retail	Hospitality, restaurants	Education	Health and welfare	Services, N.E.C.
Number of foreign workers ('000)	1,658.8	93.2	483.3	67.5	212.5	206.5	70.9	34.3	266.5
% of total employment	2.4	1.9	4.7	3.0	2.0	4.6	2.2	0.4	5.9

Stock of international students ('000)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	150.6	135.8	132.7	132.0	143.5	164.3	182.7	164.3	182.7	202.9	

Inflows of foreign workers ('000)	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
	130.9	144.1	142.0	160.3	190.0	208.8	237.5	278.6	306.8

Emigration from Japan to OECD countries

	2000			2015/16		
Stock of persons born in Japan living in OECD countries	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Emigrant population 15+ ('000)	215.6	348.7	564.3	266.5	437.5	704.0
Recent emigrants 15+ ('000)	68.4	93.5	161.9	25.9	18.0	21.1
15–24 (% of population 15+)	15.0	12.7	13.6	13.3	8.3	10.2
25–64 (% of population 15+)	81.0	73.3	76.2	74.8	73.1	73.8
Total emigration rates (%)	0.4	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.8	0.6
Emigration rates of the high-educated (%)	0.7	1.0	0.9	0.8	1.2	1.0

Legal migration flows to OECD (5 main destinations, '000)	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total	**34.1**	**36.1**	**36.4**	**33.4**	**36.4**	**34.7**	**29.4**	**28.7**	**29.7**
Germany	6.8	6.6	6.8	6.7	6.9	7.0	6.9	7.1	7.2
Rep. of Korea	5.5	5.8	5.9	4.7	4.6	4.7	4.5	5.2	5.1
United States	6.1	6.0	5.8	5.5	5.3	5.1	4.6	4.3	4.5
France	1.6	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.5
Netherlands	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.5	1.4	1.5	1.7
Stock of international students (3 main destinations, '000)	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total			**27.2**	**28.1**	**27.6**	**28.4**	**28.4**	**28.6**	**27.1**
United States			16.0	15.5	15.1	15.4	14.8	14.9	14.7
Australia			1.7	1.8	1.7	1.7	2.2	2.4	2.9
United Kingdom			3.1	3.1	3.1	2.9	2.8	2.7	2.7

Emigration to non-OECD destinations

Stock of workers overseas (5 main destinations, '000)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total									

Flows of workers deployed (5 main destinations, '000)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total									

Net migration rate (per thousand)	1985–90	1990–95	1995–00	2000–05	2005–10	2010–15	2015–20	2020–25	2025–30
	−0.48	0.07	−0.16	0.26	0.43	0.56	0.56	0.52	0.38

Remittance inflows (current $ million)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	2,540	2,364	3,734	3,325	3,830	4,443	4,369	4,389	4,875

LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

KEY INDICATORS

	Population (million)	GDP per capita (constant 2015 $)	GDP growth rate (annual, %)	Labor market indicators (2020, %)	
2010	6.2	1,582	8.5	Employment / population ratio (15+, total)	76.6
2020	7.3	2,546	0.5	Unemployment (% of total labor force)	1.0

Immigrant population in the Lao People's Democratic Republic

	Stock of foreign-born population (0+)			Foreign-born population, 15 years old and over			
	Total ('000)	% of population	% women	% 15–24	% 25–64	% low-educated	% high-educated
2000	22	0.41	47	19.7	55.9	49.5	8.2
2015	46	0.68	36	15.3	71.5		
2019	48	0.67	36	11.9	75.1		

Stock of foreign workers by sector, 2019	Total	Agriculture	Industry	Services
Number of foreign workers ('000)	22.3	2.3	12.0	7.9
% of total employment				

Stock of international students ('000)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	0.7	0.8	0.6	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5

Inflows of foreign workers ('000)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
							6.9		

Emigration from the Lao People's Democratic Republic to OECD countries

Stock of persons born in the Lao People's Democratic Republic living in OECD countries	2000			2015/16		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Emigrant population 15+ ('000)	132.8	131.4	264.1	122.3	131.7	253.9
Recent emigrants 15+ ('000)	4.4	5.8	10.2	2.4	6.0	4.2
15–24 (% of population 15+)	13.8	13.7	13.8	2.4	3.2	2.8
25–64 (% of population 15+)	81.2	79.0	80.1	84.6	82.2	83.4
Total emigration rates (%)	8.3	8.1	8.2	5.1	5.4	5.2
Emigration rates of the high-educated (%)	23.8	29.2	25.9	9.5	13.4	11.1

Legal migration flows to OECD (5 main destinations, '000)	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total	**2.5**	**2.5**	**2.5**	**2.2**	**2.6**	**2.6**	**2.6**	**2.8**	**3.2**
Japan	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.7	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.2	1.4
United States	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.7	0.9	0.8
Rep. of Korea	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.5
France	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Australia	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0

Stock of international students (3 main destinations, '000)	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total	**0.73**	**0.73**	**0.73**	**0.78**	**0.76**	**0.86**	**0.97**	**0.99**	**1.06**
Australia			0.19	0.22	0.21	0.23	0.25	0.30	0.33
Japan			0.22	0.20	0.19	0.19	0.20	0.20	0.21
United States			0.05	0.05	0.05	0.06	0.08	0.09	0.09

Emigration to non-OECD destinations

Stock of workers overseas (5 main destinations, '000)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total						**110.0**			

Flows of workers deployed (5 main destinations, '000)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total	**7.4**	**22.5**	**8.3**	**50.7**	**58.3**	**49.4**	**120.5**	**54.1**	
Thailand		13.6					89.8	53.8	
Rep. of Korea							0.1	0.2	
Japan							0.1	0.1	

Net migration rate (per thousand)	1985–1990	1990–1995	1995–2000	2000–2005	2005–2010	2010–2015	2015–2020	2020–2025	2025–2030
	0.01	−2.66	−5.30	−5.35	−3.68	−3.46	−2.10	−1.95	−1.84

Remittance inflows (current $ million)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	203	170	188	189	189	243	240	297	237

MALAYSIA

KEY INDICATORS

	Population (million)	GDP per capita (constant 2015 $)	GDP growth rate (annual, %)	Labor market indicators (2020, %)	
2010	28.2	8,248	7.4	Employment / population ratio (15+, total)	61.3
2020	32.4	10,617	–5.6	Unemployment (% of total labor force)	4.6

Immigrant population in Malaysia

	Stock of foreign-born population (0+)			Foreign-born population, 15 years old and over			
	Total ('000)	% of population	% women	% 15–24	% 25–64	% low-educated	% high-educated
2000	1,464	6.31	44	22.6	54.6	91.3	5.9
2015	2,417	10.84	39	26.9	62.9		
2019	3,430	10.74	39	26.6	62.4		

Stock of foreign workers by sector, 2019	Total	Agriculture, forestry, and fishing	Mining and quarrying	Manufacturing	Construction	Wholesale, retail; vehicle repair	Accommodations, food and beverage	Administrative and support services	Activities as households as employers
Number of foreign workers ('000)	2,236.6	491.3	5.1	575.8	287.2	272.6	253.0	122.3	89.4
% of total employment	14.8	31.9	5.6	21.5	22.5	10.5	16.3	15.2	85.7

Stock of international students ('000)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	64.7	63.6	56.2		99.6	111.4	124.1	100.8	122.8	82.0	

Inflows of foreign workers ('000)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
	62.7	79.3	69.8	79.8	77.8	70.7	45.6		40.3

Emigration from Malaysia to OECD countries

	2000			2015/16		
Stock of persons born in Malaysia living in OECD countries	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Emigrant population 15+ ('000s)	98.6	115.7	214.3	152.6	179.2	331.8
Recent emigrants 15+ ('000s)	16.9	18.8	35.7	23.1	20.6	21.8
15–24 (% of population 15+)	23.9	19.0	21.2	17.9	14.7	16.2
25–64 (% of population 15+)	71.2	75.3	73.5	69.3	70.4	69.9
Total emigration rates (%)	1.2	1.5	1.4	1.3	1.6	1.5
Emigration rates of the high-educated (%)	5.7	6.7	6.2	4.5	5.6	5.0

Legal migration flows to OECD (5 main destinations, '000)	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total	**17.5**	**20.0**	**22.9**	**19.2**	**21.0**	**14.1**	**16.8**	**16.6**	**14.9**
Rep. of Korea	0.6	0.7	1.0	1.2	1.3	1.5	3.8	4.1	3.3
Australia	4.9	5.4	5.6	4.5	4.0	4.1	4.2	3.4	2.5
Japan	2.2	2.5	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.5	2.7	2.9	2.9
New Zealand	1.7	1.5	1.4	1.6	1.6	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.9
United States	1.6	1.5	1.6	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.4	1.3	1.4
Stock of international students (3 main destinations, '000)	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**
Total	**46.7**	**46.1**	**47.4**	**52.1**	**53.5**	**54.5**	**54.6**	**53.7**	**46.7**
Australia			15.5	15.4	15.0	15.3	15.1	15.7	16.1
United Kingdom			13.3	15.6	17.0	17.4	16.4	15.0	14.1
United States			7.4	7.3	7.9	8.4	8.5	8.6	7.7

Emigration to non-OECD destinations

Stock of workers overseas (5 main destinations, '000)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total									

Flows of workers deployed (5 main destinations, '000)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total									

Net migration rate (per thousand)	1985–1990	1990–1995	1995–2000	2000–2005	2005–2010	2010–2015	2015–2020	2020–2025	2025–2030
	5.06	3.04	4.73	5.49	5.65	1.71	1.60	1.50	1.32

Remittance inflows (current $ million)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	1,423	1,580	1,644	1,604	1,649	1,686	1,638	1,597	1,432

MONGOLIA

KEY INDICATORS

	Population (million)	GDP per capita (constant 2015 $)	GDP growth rate (annual, %)	Labor market indicators (2020, %)	
2010	2.7	2,659	6.4	Employment / population ratio (15+, total)	60.2
2020	3.3	4,078	−4.6	Unemployment (% of total labor force)	4.3

Immigrant population in Mongolia

	Stock of foreign-born population (0+)			Foreign-born population, 15 years old and over			
	Total ('000)	% of population	% women	% 15–24	% 25–64	% low-educated	% high-educated
2000	8	0.34	44	14.1	72.8		
2015	20	0.66	33	8.9	71.4		
2019	21	0.66	33	11.8	69.8		

Stock of foreign workers by sector, 2019	Total	Mining and quarrying	Education	Wholesale, retail; vehicle repair	Manufacturing	Administrative and support services	Construction	Agriculture
Number of foreign workers ('000)	4.6	1.8	1.0	0.8	0.3	0.2	0.2	4.6
% of total employment	0.39	3.3	1.0	0.5	0.3	0.8	0.3	0.01

Stock of international students ('000)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.5	1.5	1.6	2.3	

Inflows of foreign workers ('000)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018

Emigration from Mongolia to OECD countries

	2000			2015/16		
Stock of persons born in Mongolia living in OECD countries	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Emigrant population 15+ ('000)	1.8	2.6	4.4	15.6	24.0	39.7
Recent emigrants 15+ ('000)				55.1	55.6	55.4
15–24 (% of population 15+)			27.2	27.6	18.4	22.1
25–64 (% of population 15+)			70.3	71.5	80.9	77.2
Total emigration rates (%)		0.3	0.3	1.5	2.1	1.8
Emigration rates of the high-educated (%)		1.5	1.3	2.8	3.0	2.9

Legal migration flows to OECD (5 main destinations, '000)	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total	**8.9**	**10.5**	**8.9**	**9.3**	**14.8**	**14.9**	**20.1**	**20.0**	**19.0**
Rep. of Korea	4.3	5.7	4.3	4.0	8.3	8.2	11.8	10.2	8.7
Japan	1.3	1.5	1.5	2.0	2.3	2.5	3.2	3.7	4.1
Czech Republic	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.6	0.7	1.2	1.5	1.3
Sweden	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.6	0.9	0.7
Germany	0.5	0.5	0.6	1.0	1.3	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8
Stock of international students (3 main destinations, '000)	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**
Total		**6.6**	**6.2**	**8.3**	**8.4**	**8.9**	**9.5**	**10.9**	**11.8**
Rep. of Korea			2.5	2.2	2.1	2.3	2.7	3.4	4.6
Japan			1.1	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.4	1.6	1.9
United States			1.4	1.5	1.5	1.4	1.3	1.4	1.3

Emigration to non-OECD destinations

Stock of workers overseas (5 main destinations, '000)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total						**44.0**	**50.0**		
Rep. of Korea							6.7		
Czech Republic							4.0		

Flows of workers deployed (5 main destinations, '000)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total									

Net migration rate (per thousand)	1985–1990	1990–1995	1995–2000	2000–2005	2005–2010	2010–2015	2015–2020	2020–2025	2025–2030
	0.00	−7.89	−4.47	−1.22	−0.84	−0.30	−0.27	−0.25	−0.24

Remittance inflows (current $ million)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	324	257	255	261	260	273	441	561	549

MYANMAR

KEY INDICATORS

	Population (million)	GDP per capita (constant 2015 $)	GDP growth rate (annual, %)	Labor market indicators (2020, %)	
2010	50.6	839	10.1	Employment / population ratio (15+, total)	55.6
2020	54.4	1,218	3.2	Unemployment (% of total labor force)	1.8

Immigrant population in Myanmar

	Stock of foreign-born population (0+)			Foreign-born population, 15 years old and over			
	Total ('000)	% of population	% women	% 15–24	% 25–64	% low-educated	% high-educated
2000	98.0	0.20	47	25.1	70.0		
2015	73.3	0.10	45	21.2	71.6		
2019	76.0	0.10	45	19.7	72.6		

Stock of foreign workers by sector	**Total**
Number of foreign workers ('000)	
% of total employment	

Stock of international students ('000)	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	0.1	0.1						0.5		

Inflows of foreign workers ('000)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018

Emigration from Myanmar to OECD countries

	2000			2015/16		
Stock of persons born in Myanmar living in OECD countries	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Emigrant population 15+ ('000)				106.5	113.0	219.6
Recent emigrants 15+ ('000)				29.8	31.6	30.7
15–24 (% of population 15+)				15.3	13.8	14.5
25–64 (% of population 15+)				74.0	74.3	74.2
Total emigration rates (%)				0.6	0.6	0.6
Emigration rates of the high-educated (%)				1.8	1.5	1.6

Legal migration flows to OECD (5 main destinations, '000)	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total	**28.7**	**32.9**	**26.6**	**26.3**	**31.4**	**33.4**	**34.5**	**29.6**	**25.6**
United States	21.5	23.0	16.2	14.2	17.1	17.0	17.3	11.1	6.4
Japan	1.1	1.5	2.1	3.3	5.2	6.1	7.6	8.1	11.6
Rep. of Korea	2.6	4.1	4.6	5.1	5.2	6.7	6.3	7.4	5.9
Australia	1.6	2.5	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.3	2.2	1.9	0.3
New Zealand	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3
Stock of international students (3 main destinations, '000)	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**
Total			**3.5**	**4.5**	**5.0**	**5.4**	**6.1**	**7.4**	**8.4**
Japan			1.1	1.2	1.2	1.6	1.8	2.6	3.3
United States			1.0	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.5	1.7	1.9
Australia			0.7	0.7	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.3

Emigration to non-OECD destinations

Stock of workers overseas (5 main destinations, '000)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total			**2,021.9**						
Thailand			1,418.5						
Malaysia			304.0						
Singapore			79.7						
People's Republic of China			92.3						
Japan			7.6						
Flows of workers deployed (5 main destinations, '000)	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**
Total						**161.9**	**234.0**	**330.3**	**75.1**
Thailand						148.9	198.0	238.1	58.6
Malaysia						3.3	24.8	78.8	10.6
Rep. of Korea						5.7	6.1	4.8	0.7
Singapore						0.4	0.5	0.5	0.1
Japan						3.3	3.9	6.7	4.7

Net migration rate (per thousand)	1985–1990	1990–1995	1995–2000	2000–2005	2005–2010	2010–2015	2015–2020	2020–2025	2025–2030

Remittance inflows (current $ million)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	275	1,644	1,808	1,934	2,255	2,453	2,673	2,553	2,250

NEPAL

KEY INDICATORS

	Population (million)	GDP per capita (constant 2015 $)	GDP growth rate (annual, %)	Labor market indicators (2020, %)	
2010	27.0	732	4.8	Employment / population ratio (15+, total)	73.8
2020	29.1	1,028	−2.1	Unemployment (% of total labor force)	4.4

Immigrant population in Nepal

	Stock of foreign-born population (0+)			Foreign-born population, 15 years old and over			
	Total ('000)	% of population	% women	% 15–24	% 25–64	% low-educated	% high-educated
2000	718	3.00	66	20.4	59.5		
2015	509	1.89	69	16.1	69.8		
2019	491	1.72	70	12.8	74.7		

Stock of foreign workers by sector	Total
Number of foreign workers ('000)	
% of total employment	

Stock of international students ('000)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
		0.1									

Inflows of foreign workers ('000)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018

Emigration from Nepal to OECD countries

	2000			2015/16		
Stock of persons born in Nepal living in OECD countries	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Emigrant population 15+ ('000)			23.9	171.6	136.0	307.6
Recent emigrants 15+ ('000)			8.7	36.8	41.2	38.8
15–24 (% of population 15+)			24.0	25.5	24.0	24.8
25–64 (% of population 15+)			75.0	72.5	73.6	73.0
Total emigration rates (%)			0.2	1.6	1.2	1.4
Emigration rates of the high-educated (%)			2.2	12.3	20.8	15.0

Legal migration flows to OECD (5 main destinations, '000)	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total	**26.9**	**29.0**	**34.5**	**39.0**	**43.1**	**46.2**	**47.0**	**49.4**	**48.0**
Japan	3.5	4.8	8.3	11.5	13.4	14.1	14.5	13.0	13.1
United States	6.7	6.9	8.8	8.6	9.3	10.2	9.5	9.9	8.8
Rep. of Korea	4.3	6.9	6.0	6.8	6.5	8.7	8.6	9.8	8.8
Portugal	0.4	0.5	0.8	0.9	1.4	1.3	1.7	4.2	5.0
Australia	2.1	2.5	4.0	4.4	4.2	5.1	4.4	3.0	3.8
Stock of international students (3 main destinations, '000)	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**
Total			**30.7**	**33.9**	**38.8**	**47.5**	**62.0**	**78.8**	**76.8**
Australia			7.2	9.2	11.8	14.7	21.1	32.9	41.9
Japan			2.4	3.1	5.1	8.4	12.8	14.5	15.0
United States			8.7	7.6	7.9	9.9	12.3	14.4	14.1

Emigration to non-OECD destinations

Stock of workers overseas (5 main destinations, '000)	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total									

Flows of workers deployed (5 main destinations, '000)	2012–2013	2013–2014	2014–2015	2015–2016	2016–2017	2017–2018	2018–2019	2019–2020	2020–2021
Total	450.9	519.6	499.1	403.7	382.9	354.1	236.2	190.5	72.1
Saudi Arabia	96.9	86.6	96.8	134.8	72.9	41.0	46.1	39.3	23.3
Qatar	103.9	128.6	124.0	127.9	121.1	103.2	75.0	29.8	22.1
United Arab Emirates	58.6	55.4	53.1	52.1	57.9	60.2	62.8	52.1	11.6
Malaysia	158.7	210.0	196.2	59.0	95.2	104.2	10.0	39.2	0.1
Kuwait	17.4	20.2	9.6	9.9	13.1	17.6	16.0	9.0	0.0

Net migration rate (per thousand)	1985–1990	1990–1995	1995–2000	2000–2005	2005–2010	2010–2015	2015–2020	2020–2025	2025–2030
	−2.42	0.75	−4.08	−6.22	−7.37	−15.11	1.49	5.07	0.44

Remittance inflows (current $ million)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	4,793	5,584	5,889	6,730	6,612	6,928	8,287	8,244	8,108

PAKISTAN

KEY INDICATORS

	Population (million)	GDP per capita (constant 2015 $)	GDP growth rate (annual, %)	Labor market indicators (2020, %)	
2010	179.4	1,239	1.6	Employment / population ratio (15+, total)	47.9
2020	220.9	1,466	−0.9	Unemployment (% of total labor force)	4.7

Immigrant population in Pakistan

	Stock of foreign-born population (0+)			Foreign-born population, 15 years old and over			
	Total ('000)	% of population	% women	% 15–24	% 25–64	% low-educated	% high-educated
2000	4,182	2.94	46	7.7	60.4		
2015	3,507	1.76	47	7.0	60.0		
2019	3,258	1.50	47	7.8	65.8		

Stock of foreign workers by sector	Total
Number of foreign workers ('000)	
% of total employment	

Stock of international students ('000)	2003	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020

Inflows of foreign workers ('000)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018

Emigration from Pakistan to OECD countries

	2000			2015/16		
Stock of persons born in Pakistan living in OECD countries	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Emigrant population 15+ ('000)	375.0	293.7	668.7	806.7	620.5	1,427.2
Recent emigrants 15+ ('000)	79.8	60.4	140.2	20.4	19.6	20.0
15–24 (% of population 15+)	13.9	15.4	14.5	12.4	11.8	12.1
25–64 (% of population 15+)	80.3	78.2	79.3	79.9	79.9	79.9
Total emigration rates (%)	0.9	0.7	0.8	1.2	1.0	1.1
Emigration rates of the highly educated (%)	3.1	3.6	3.3	7.3	9.2	8.0

Legal migration flows to OECD (5 main destinations, '000)	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total	**102.9**	**83.7**	**72.3**	**79.5**	**99.4**	**96.0**	**92.1**	**91.5**	**97.4**
United States	15.8	15.0	13.3	18.7	18.1	19.2	17.0	15.4	13.6
Italy	7.5	8.8	7.8	9.6	11.4	14.7	15.0	13.2	9.9
United Kingdom	43.0	19.0	10.0	11.0	8.0	11.0	15.0	9.9	16.0
Germany	5.4	6.5	8.0	9.5	24.5	12.2	9.0	9.8	10.1
Canada	7.5	11.2	12.6	9.1	11.3	11.3	7.7	9.5	10.8
Stock of international students (3 main destinations, '000)	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**
Total	**27.3**	**28.1**	**27.1**	**30.7**	**32.9**	**36.3**	**37.5**	**40.4**	**35.7**
Australia			4.8	6.3	8.2	10.0	10.1	11.3	12.2
United States			4.6	4.8	5.2	6.1	6.9	7.4	7.6
United Kingdom			7.2	6.6	6.1	5.5	5.2	5.6	6.5

Emigration to non-OECD destinations

Stock of workers overseas (5 main destinations, '000)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total	**6,449.8**	**7,072.5**	**7,825.0**	**8,771.6**	**9,610.9**	**10,107.2**	**10,489.6**	**11,114.8**	
Saudi Arabia	3,323.8	3,594.3	3,906.8	4,429.5	4,892.1	5,035.5	5,136.4	5,469.1	
United Arab Emirates	1,934.6	2,207.8	2,558.3	2,885.3	3,180.9	3,456.4	3,665.0	3,876.2	
Oman	517.4	565.2	605.0	652.7	697.8	740.2	767.4	795.8	
Kuwait	180.9	181.2	181.3	181.5	182.2	183.0	183.5	183.6	
Qatar	94.5	102.6	112.6	125.4	135.1	146.7	167.7	187.0	
Flows of workers deployed (5 main destinations, '000)	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**
Total	**638.6**	**622.7**	**752.5**	**946.6**	**839.4**	**496.3**	**382.4**	**625.2**	**224.7**
Saudi Arabia	358.6	270.5	312.5	522.8	462.6	143.4	100.9	332.7	136.3
United Arab Emirates	182.6	273.2	350.5	327.0	295.6	275.4	208.6	211.2	53.7
Oman	69.4	47.8	39.8	47.8	45.1	42.4	27.2	28.4	10.3
Qatar	7.3	8.1	10.0	12.7	9.7	11.6	21.0	19.3	7.4
Malaysia	2.1	1.3	2.0	20.6	20.2	10.6	7.2	11.3	7.8

Net migration rate (per thousand)	1985–1990	1990–1995	1995–2000	2000–2005	2005–2010	2010–2015	2015–2020	2020–2025	2025–2030
	0.28	−1.77	0.71	−0.86	−0.40	−1.14	−1.11	−0.87	−0.70

Remittance inflows (current $ million)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	14,007	14,629	17,244	19,306	19,819	19,856	21,193	22,252	26,105

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

KEY INDICATORS

	Population (million)	GDP per capita (constant 2015 $)	GDP growth rate (annual, %)	Labor market indicators (2020, %)	
2010	1,337.7	5,647	10.6	Employment / population ratio (15+, Total)	63.5
2020	1,410.9	10,431	2.3	Unemployment (% of total labor force)	5.0

Immigrant population in the People's Republic of China

	Stock of foreign-born population (0+)			Foreign-born population, 15 years old and over			
	Total ('000)	% of population	% women	% 15–24	% 25–64	% low-educated	% high-educated
2000	508	0.04	50	13.5	61.9	n.a.	n.a.
2015	978	0.07	39	14.1	59.3		
2019	1,031	0.07	39	14.5	60.1		

Stock of foreign workers by sector, 2020	Total
Number of foreign workers ('000)	444.3
% of total employment	

Stock of international students ('000)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	71.7	79.6	89.0	96.4	108.2	123.1	137.5	157.1	178.3	201.2	225.1

Inflows of foreign workers ('000)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
									336.0

Emigration from the People's Republic of China to OECD countries

Stock of persons born in People's Republic of China living in OECD countries	2000 Men	2000 Women	2000 Total	2015/16 Men	2015/16 Women	2015/16 Total
Emigrant population 15+ ('000)	976.3	1,089.8	2,066.1	2,057.5	2,562.6	4,620.1
Recent emigrants 15+ ('000)	217.0	250.7	467.7	28.0	27.5	27.8
15–24 (% of population 15+)	12.3	11.4	11.8	17.4	16.2	16.8
25–64 (% of population 15+)	73.1	73.4	73.3	68.6	70.9	69.9
Total emigration rates (%)	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.5	0.4
Emigration rates of the high-educated (%)	1.5	2.3	1.8	1.2	1.8	1.5

Legal migration flows to OECD (5 main destinations, '000)	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total	**527.9**	**505.3**	**549.2**	**555.9**	**545.1**	**551.6**	**563.0**	**565.8**	**571.9**
Rep. of Korea	149.2	127.3	178.6	192.9	177.0	165.5	156.8	169.3	138.7
Japan	100.4	107.0	93.0	98.6	100.6	103.3	109.8	114.9	131.6
United States	87.9	82.4	72.1	75.9	74.4	81.9	71.8	65.6	62.3
United Kingdom	45.0	41.0	46.0	39.0	43.0	35.0	58.0	55.9	74.0
Canada	28.5	33.0	34.1	24.6	19.5	26.9	30.3	29.7	30.2

Stock of international students (3 main destinations, '000)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total	**580.5**	**624.8**	**629.1**	**690.2**	**731.2**	**771.4**	**826.2**	**886.1**	**859.7**
United States			231.9	266.1	291.1	309.8	321.6	333.9	340.2
Australia			88.0	90.2	97.4	112.3	128.5	143.3	155.6
United Kingdom			81.8	86.2	91.5	89.3	96.5	107.8	122.1

Emigration to non-OECD destinations

Stock of workers overseas (5 main destinations, '000)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total	**853.0**	**1,006.0**	**1,027.0**	**969.0**	**979.0**	**997.0**	**997.0**	**992.0**	**623.0**

Flows of workers deployed (5 main destinations, '000)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total	**512.0**	**527.0**	**562.0**	**530.0**	**494.0**	**522.0**	**492.0**	**487.0**	**301.0**

Net migration rate (per thousand)	1985–1990	1990–1995	1995–2000	2000–2005	2005–2010	2010–2015	2015–2020	2020–2025	2025–2030
	−0.08	−0.13	−0.06	−0.30	−0.32	−0.22	−0.25	−0.26	−0.24

Remittance inflows (current $ million)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	57,987	59,491	62,332	63,938	61,000	63,876	67,414	68,398	59,507

PHILIPPINES

KEY INDICATORS

	Population (million)	GDP per capita (constant 2015 $)	GDP growth rate (annual, %)	Labor market indicators (2020, %)	
2010	94.0	2,433	1.4	Employment / population ratio (15+, total)	55.1
2020	109.6	3,270	6.0	Unemployment (% of total labor force)	3.4

Immigrant population in the Philippines

	Stock of foreign-born population (0+)			Foreign-born population, 15 years old and over			
	Total ('000)	% of population	% women	% 15–24	% 25–64	% low-educated	% high-educated
2000	209	0.41	49	15.8	53.4	54.8	11.9
2015	212	0.21	48	12.5	52.7		
2019	219	0.20	48	12.7	52.9		

Stock of foreign workers by sector, 2014	Total
Number of foreign workers ('000)	91.4
% of total employment	0.1

Stock of international students ('000)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
		4.3	3.3								

Inflows of foreign workers ('000)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
	14.3	17.1	21.0	22.7	24.3	28.4	42.0	45.3	54.2	158.7

Emigration from the Philippines to OECD countries

	2000			2015/16		
Stock of persons born in the Philippines living in OECD countries	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Emigrant population 15+ ('000)	745.8	1,192	1,938	1,349	2,200	3,549
Recent emigrants 15+ ('000)	107.5	168.8	276.4	16.4	16.3	16.3
15–24 (% of population 15+)	13.9	9.6	11.3	12.3	7.5	9.3
25–64 (% of population 15+)	75.7	80.5	78.6	73.6	76.7	75.5
Total emigration rates (%)	3.1	4.8	3.9	3.9	6.1	5.0
Emigration rates of the high-educated (%)	5.3	8.1	6.8	11.8	16.2	14.3

Legal migration flows to OECD (5 main destinations, '000)	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total	**162.6**	**160.8**	**153.3**	**162.1**	**183.2**	**173.3**	**175.3**	**168.5**	**171.4**
United States	57.0	57.3	54.4	50.0	56.5	53.3	49.1	46.9	45.6
Canada	36.8	34.3	29.5	40.0	50.8	41.8	40.9	35.1	27.8
Japan	13.6	15.4	16.4	19.9	24.0	26.2	29.6	31.3	34.7
Australia	10.7	12.8	11.0	10.3	11.9	12.0	12.1	10.9	9.2
Rep. of Korea	9.6	9.9	12.0	10.7	9.9	9.5	9.0	10.1	9.1
Stock of international students (3 main destinations, '000)	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**
Total	**9.8**	**10.3**	**9.9**	**11.8**	**12.8**	**14.3**	**15.1**	**16.3**	**17.5**
Australia			2.8	4.2	4.4	5.1	5.2	6.0	9.3
United States			3.3	3.2	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.3	3.4
Canada			0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.9	0.9	1.6

Emigration to non-OECD destinations

Stock of workers overseas (5 main destinations, '000)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total	2,220.0	2,285.0	2,320.0	2,447.0	2,240.4	2,338.6	2,299.1	2,202.0	
Saudi Arabia	457.3	505.0	575.4	604.4	533.2	594.0	558.4	493.2	
United Arab Emirates	330.8	351.9	361.9	379.3	356.2	357.8	361.1	290.7	
Hong Kong, China	122.1	118.8	116.0	144.4	125.5	152.0	143.8	165.2	
Kuwait	93.2	105.1	123.0	141.9	143.4	156.7	131.7	136.5	
Taipei,China	86.6	100.5	111.4	110.1	116.5	88.9	125.4	147.5	
Flows of workers deployed (5 main destinations, '000)	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**
Total	1,435.2	1,469.2	1,430.9	1,437.9	1,669.5	1,595.4	1,524.5	1,648.7	332.4
Saudi Arabia	330.0	382.6	402.8	594.0	460.1	433.6		412.5	86.8
United Arab Emirates	259.6	261.1	246.2	227.1	276.3	265.5		269.9	50.8
Singapore	172.7	173.7	140.2	141.5	171.0	162.2		163.5	32.4
Hong Kong, China	131.7	130.7	105.7	85.7	116.5	144.5		159.1	32.3
Qatar	104.6	94.2	114.5	133.2	141.3	122.6		121.8	23.5

Net migration rate (per thousand)	1985–1990	1990–1995	1995–2000	2000–2005	2005–2010	2010–2015	2015–2020	2020–2025	2020–2025
	−1.08	−2.12	−2.57	−3.03	−3.44	−1.70	−0.63	−0.59	−0.61

Remittance inflows (current $ million)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	24,610	26,717	28,691	29,799	31,142	32,810	33,809	35,167	34,913

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

KEY INDICATORS

	Population (million)	GDP per capita (constant 2015 $)	GDP growth rate (annual, %)	Labor market indicators (2020, %)	
2010	49.6	25,451	6.8	Employment / population ratio (15+, total)	60.1
2020	51.8	31,265	−0.9	Unemployment (% of total labor force)	4.1

Immigrant population in the Republic of Korea

	Stock of foreign-born population (0+)			Foreign-born population, 15 years old and over			
	Total ('000)	% of population	% women	% 15–24	% 25–64	% low-educated	% high-educated
2000	244	0.52	41	26.8	66.4		
2015	1,143	2.25	44	18.6	76.5		
2019	1,164	2.27	44	12.9	80.2		

Stock of foreign workers by sector, 2019	Total	Agriculture, forestry, and fishing	Mining and quarrying	Manufacturing	Construction	Wholesale and retail, food, lodging	Electricity, transportation, telecommunication, finance
Number of foreign workers ('000)	863.2	52.1	0.3	399.1	95.0	164.5	14.0
% of total employment	3.2	3.7	2.0	9.0	4.7	2.8	0.4

Stock of international students ('000)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	59.2	62.7	59.5	55.5	52.5	54.5	61.9	70.8	84.7	98.9	

Inflows of foreign workers ('000)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018

Emigration from the Republic of Korea to OECD countries

Stock of persons born in the Republic of Korea living in OECD countries	2000			2015/16		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Emigrant population 15+ ('000)	628.9	817.2	1,446.1	766.3	1,020.4	1,786.7
Recent emigrants 15+ ('000)	88.0	105.3	193.3	14.8	13.3	14.0
15–24 (% of population 15+)	16.8	15.4	16.0	12.4	9.3	10.6
25–64 (% of population 15+)	74.6	74.9	74.8	71.5	72.7	72.2
Total emigration rates (%)	2.2	2.9	2.6	3.6	4.6	4.1
Emigration rates of the high-educated (%)	2.9	4.8	3.7	3.8	5.9	4.8

Legal migration flows to OECD (5 main destinations, '000)	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total	**71.7**	**71.2**	**75.2**	**70.9**	**66.0**	**73.2**	**73.4**	**76.0**	**79.8**
Japan	23.4	25.7	24.2	21.1	22.6	25.6	28.0	32.4	33.9
United States	22.6	20.7	23.0	20.2	17.0	21.7	19.0	17.5	18.3
Germany	4.8	4.9	5.5	6.3	7.2	7.7	8.2	7.9	7.7
Canada	4.6	5.3	4.5	4.5	4.1	4.0	4.0	4.8	6.1
New Zealand	2.7	2.2	2.1	2.5	2.6	3.1	2.9	2.7	3.0
Stock of international students (3 main destinations, '000)	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**
Total			**108.0**	**105.2**	**99.5**	**96.2**	**95.1**	**91.6**	**84.8**
United States			70.5	67.6	64.0	60.5	56.2	52.4	49.6
Japan			16.5	15.0	13.5	13.0	13.1	13.2	14.3
Australia			6.8	6.6	6.2	6.1	8.3	8.4	8.6

Emigration to non-OECD destinations

Stock of workers overseas (5 main destinations, '000)	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total									

Flows of workers deployed (5 main destinations, '000)	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total									

Net migration rate (per thousand)	1985–1990	1990–1995	1995–2000	2000–2005	2005–2010	2010–2015	2015–2020	2020–2025	2020–2025
	0.82	0.32	0.69	0.34	−0.64	1.60	0.23	0.39	0.59

Remittance inflows (current $ million)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	6,589	6,475	6,574	6,464	6,524	6,526	7,125	7,166	7,413

SINGAPORE

KEY INDICATORS

	Population (million)	GDP per capita (constant 2015 $)	GDP growth rate (annual, %)	Labor market indicators (2020, %)	
2010	5.1	48,669	14.5	Employment / population ratio (15+, total)	66.0
2020	5.7	58,057	−5.4	Unemployment (% of total labor force)	5.2

Immigrant population in Singapore

	Stock of foreign-born population (0+)			Foreign-born population, 15 years old and over			
	Total ('000)	% of population	% women	% 15–24	% 25–64	% low-educated	% high-educated
2000	1,352	33.55	55	14.2	65.7		
2015	2,544	45.49	56	11.5	71.5		
2019	2,156	37.14	56	11.9	71.0		

Stock of foreign workers by sector, 2019	Total	Manufacturing	Construction	Services
Number of foreign workers ('000)	1,231.5	209.0	288.5	838.2
% of total employment	34.2	46.4	71.4	29.8

Stock of international students ('000)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	48.6	47.9	53.0	48.9			53.1	53.2	51.8	53.0	

Inflows of foreign workers ('000)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018

Emigration from Singapore to OECD countries

	2000			2015/16		
Stock of persons born in Singapore living in OECD countries	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Emigrant population 15+ ('000)	48.5	58.1	106.6	66.4	90.0	156.4
Recent emigrants 15+ ('000)	9.1	10.8	19.9	19.6	18.1	18.7
15–24 (% of population 15+)	19.3	17.0	18.0	21.2	15.3	17.8
25–64 (% of population 15+)	76.2	78.0	77.2	70.7	71.1	71.0
Total emigration rates (%)	3.0	3.6	3.3	2.7	3.7	3.2
Emigration rates of the high-educated (%)	8.6	11.3	9.9	2.9	4.2	3.5

Legal migration flows to OECD (5 main destinations, '000)	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total	**9.4**	**9.8**	**8.3**	**9.2**	**7.4**	**7.4**	**12.6**	**12.5**	**12.3**
United Kingdom	4.0	4.0	2.0	3.0	1.0	1.0	6.0	6.0	6.0
Australia	1.5	1.8	2.0	1.9	1.9	1.7	1.6	1.4	1.2
Japan	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.9	1.0
United States	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8
Rep. of Korea	0.4	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.6
Stock of international students (3 main destinations, '000)	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**
Total	**19.2**	**20.0**	**21.4**	**22.1**	**23.0**	**23.3**	**22.1**	**21.8**	**20.6**
Australia			9.1	8.8	8.8	8.9	7.9	8.0	7.8
United Kingdom			5.9	6.8	7.3	7.5	7.3	7.0	6.8
United States			4.5	4.6	4.7	4.5	4.4	4.2	4.1

Emigration to non-OECD destinations

Stock of workers overseas (5 main destinations, '000)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total	**200.0**	**207.0**	**212.2**	**212.5**	**213.4**				

Flows of workers deployed (5 main destinations, '000)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total									

Net migration rate (per thousand)	1985–1990	1990–1995	1995–2000	2000–2005	2005–2010	2010–2015	2015–2020	2020–2025	2025–2030
	8.38	18.22	17.03	4.47	30.71	11.83	4.72	4.53	4.38

Remittance inflows (current $ million)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020

SRI LANKA

KEY INDICATORS

	Population (million)	GDP per capita (constant 2015 $)	GDP growth rate (annual, %)	Labor market indicators (2020, %)	
2010	20.3	2,950	8.0	Employment / population ratio (15+, total)	48.7
2020	21.9	4,053	–3.6	Unemployment (% of total labor force)	4.8

Immigrant population in Sri Lanka

	Stock of foreign-born population (0+)			Foreign-born population, 15 years old and over			
	Total ('000)	% of population	% women	% 15–24	% 25–64	% low-educated	% high-educated
2000	40	0.21	45	3.6	63.1	41.8	13.4
2015	39	0.19	48	19.0	36.5		
2019	40	0.19	48	20.0	40.3		

Stock of foreign workers by sector, 2017	Total
Number of foreign workers ('000)	30.6
% of total employment	

Stock of international students ('000)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
		0.4	0.4	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.5	1.3

Inflows of foreign workers ('000)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
							13.7	16.9	15.1

Emigration from Sri Lanka to OECD countries

	2000			2015/16		
Stock of persons born in Sri Lanka living in OECD countries	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Emigrant population 15+ ('000)	169.2	147.7	317.0	353.5	329.0	682.5
Recent emigrants 15+ ('000)	26.7	30.5	57.2	13.9	16.4	15.1
15–24 (% of population 15+)	14.6	15.2	14.9	8.6	6.6	7.6
25–64 (% of population 15+)	79.8	76.8	78.4	81.9	82.3	82.1
Total emigration rates (%)	2.4	2.1	2.3	4.3	3.8	4.0
Emigration rates of the high-educated (%)	27.2	28.7	27.7	8.2	6.0	7.0

Legal migration flows to OECD (5 main destinations, '000)	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total	**35.9**	**34.3**	**29.9**	**30.4**	**31.0**	**29.9**	**27.0**	**24.6**	**25.0**
Japan	1.4	1.5	1.5	2.2	3.1	4.7	5.6	4.0	3.3
Rep. of Korea	5.9	4.7	5.3	4.8	5.5	7.1	3.9	3.9	4.1
Italy	6.8	7.1	6.3	5.3	4.8	4.0	3.7	3.4	4.1
Australia	4.5	5.7	5.3	4.5	3.9	3.8	3.2	2.7	2.7
France	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.3	2.5	2.3	2.2	2.1
Stock of international students (3 main destinations, '000)	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**
Total	**13.4**	**13.2**	**13.3**	**14.2**	**14.7**	**15.9**	**17.7**	**20.8**	**22.7**
Australia			4.0	4.4	4.9	6.1	7.0	8.8	11.3
Japan			0.7	0.8	0.9	1.1	1.8	2.9	4.3
United States			3.0	2.9	2.8	3.0	3.2	3.2	3.2

Emigration to non-OECD destinations

Stock of workers overseas (5 main destinations, '000)	2008	2009	2010		2016	2017	2018	2019	2019
Total	**1,792.4**	**1,831.4**	**1 932.2**						
Saudi Arabia		600.0							
Kuwait		200.0							
United Arab Emirates		150.0							
Qatar									
Lebanon									
Flows of workers deployed (5 main destinations, '000)	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**
Total	**282.4**	**293.2**	**300.4**	**263.4**	**242.8**	**212.2**	**211.5**	**203.2**	**53.7**
Kuwait	44.2	42.7	43.6	38.5	32.4	37.4	46.9	43.1	8.0
Qatar	57.5	80.7	84.6	65.1	59.5	56.6	50.8	40.8	9.7
Saudi Arabia	98.0	80.9	80.5	74.9	63.3	37.9	35.9	35.5	9.4
United Arab Emirates	38.3	48.5	50.3	43.7	40.1	36.7	32.8	32.9	10.7
Oman	4.9	5.3	5.8	7.1	9.7	8.9	8.3		2.7

Net migration rate (per thousand)	1985–1990	1990–1995	1995–2000	2000–2005	2005–2010	2010–2015	2015–2020	2020–2025	2025–2030
	–1.64	–2.88	–4.99	–4.69	–5.23	–4.71	–4.63	–4.03	–3.77

Remittance inflows (current $ million)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	6,000	6,422	7,036	7,000	7,262	7,190	7,043	6,749	7,140

TAIPEI,CHINA

KEY INDICATORS

	Population (million)	GDP per capita (constant 2015 $)	GDP growth rate (annual, %)	Labor market indicators (2019, %)	
2009	23.1	16,933	−1.6	Employment / population ratio (15+, total)	57.0
2019	23.6	25,893	2.7	Unemployment (% of total labor force)	3.7

Immigrant population in Taipei,China

	Stock of foreign-born population (0+)			Foreign-born population, 15 years old and over			
	Total ('000)	% of population	% women	% 15–24	% 25–64	% low-educated	% high-educated
2000	400	1.8	52				
2010	474	2.0	62				

Stock of foreign workers by sector, 2019	Total	Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and animal husbandry	Manufacturing	Construction	Social welfare (nurses and home-maids)
Number of foreign workers ('000)	718.1	12.5	439.7	4.4	261.5
% of total employment	6.2	2.2	14.3	0.5	

Stock of international students ('000)	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	10.1	11.6	12.6	14.1	15.8	17.8	21.2	28.4	31.8	

Inflows of foreign workers ('000)	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019

Emigration from Taipei,China to OECD countries

Stock of persons born in Taipei,China living in OECD countries	2000 Men	2000 Women	2000 Total	2015/16 Men	2015/16 Women	2015/16 Total
Emigrant population 15+ ('000)	191.6	238.3	429.9	226.9	318.9	545.9
Recent emigrants 15+ ('000)	42.5	54.0	96.4	15.3	15.7	15.5
15–24 (% of population 15+)	22.4	17.4	19.6	11.1	9.3	10.0
25–64 (% of population 15+)	73.7	78.5	76.4	74.1	77.9	76.3
Total emigration rates (%)	2.2	2.7	2.4	2.2	3.0	2.6
Emigration rates of the high-educated (%)	5.3	7.0	6.0	4.6	6.4	5.4

Legal migration flows to OECD (5 main destinations, '000)	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total	**18.1**	**17.6**	**22.0**	**18.2**	**21.7**	**26.0**	**27.8**	**30.1**	**32.5**
Japan	5.6	6.6	6.6	7.7	10.8	12.2	13.7	14.9	16.3
United States	6.2	5.5	5.4	4.7	4.9	5.1	4.9	5.2	5.8
Rep. of Korea	1.6	1.6	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.3	2.5	2.8	2.7
Germany	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7	1.9	2.0	2.1
Australia	0.8	0.8	1.0	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.1	1.2
Stock of international students (3 main destinations, '000)	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total								**67.7**	**71.5**
United States					21.1	21.5	22.5	22.9	23.7
Australia								18.2	18.4
Japan								10.3	9.6

Emigration to non-OECD destinations

Stock of workers overseas (5 main destinations, '000)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total	**698.0**	**717.0**	**726.0**	**724.0**	**728.0**	**736.0**	**737.0**	**739.0**	
People's Republic of China	430.0	430.0	427.0	420.0	407.0	405.0	404.0	395.0	
United States	90.0	80.0	86.0	92.0	99.0	101.0	95.0	92.0	

Flows of workers deployed (5 main destinations, '000)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total									

Net migration rate (per thousand)	1985–1990	1990–1995	1995–2000	2000–2005	2005–2010	2010–2015	2015–2020	2020–2025	2025–2030
	0.80	−1.43	−2.31	1.84	2.18	1.46	1.27	1.01	1.00

Remittance inflows (current $ million)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020

THAILAND

KEY INDICATORS

	Population (million)	GDP per capita (constant 2015 $)	GDP growth rate (annual, %)	Labor market indicators (2020, %)	
2010	67.2	5,164	7.5	Employment / population ratio (15+, total)	65.4
2020	69.8	6,199	−6.1	Unemployment (% of total labor force)	1.0

Immigrant population in Thailand

	Stock of foreign-born population (0+)			Foreign-born population, 15 years old and over			
	Total ('000)	% of population	% women	% 15–24	% 25–64	% low-educated	% high-educated
2000	1,258	2.00	49	30.8	47.0	84.7	9.9
2015	3,487	5.07	50	16.6	67.8		
2019	3,635	5.22	50	13.9	70.0		

Stock of foreign workers by sector, 2019	Total, 2019	Agriculture	Manufacturing	Construction	Mining and quarrying; electricity, gas, and water supply	Trade, transportation, accommodation and food, and business and administrative services	Public administration, community, social, and other services and activities
Number of foreign workers ('000)	1,130.6	133.7	516.8	73.5	3.7	330.2	72.6
% of total employment	3.0	1.1	8.2	3.6	1.5	2.7	1.5

Stock of international students ('000)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	19.1	20.2	20.3				31.6				25.1

Inflows of foreign workers ('000)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
	79.8	91.2	107.7	117.9	120.6	125.1	129.0	193.4	

Emigration from Thailand to OECD countries

	2000			2015/16		
Stock of persons born in Thailand living in OECD countries	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Emigrant population 15+ ('000)	90.8	180.0	270.8	171.1	438.7	609.8
Recent emigrants 15+ ('000)	15.8	33.9	49.7	17.6	21.2	20.2
15–24 (% of population 15+)	38.7	21.8	27.5	23.3	9.9	13.7
25–64 (% of population 15+)	59.6	76.3	70.7	69.4	82.8	79.0
Total emigration rates (%)	0.4	0.7	0.6	0.6	1.5	1.0
Emigration rates of the high-educated (%)	2.4	3.1	2.8	1.4	2.9	2.2

Legal migration flows to OECD (5 main destinations, '000)	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total	**48.9**	**53.8**	**58.6**	**84.8**	**60.3**	**65.0**	**108.5**	**118.3**	**92.4**
Rep. of Korea	10.3	13.8	18.3	48.3	20.1	28.5	71.5	80.3	53.3
Japan	13.6	15.4	15.4	14.3	14.5	15.4	16.4	17.1	17.9
Germany	3.2	3.3	3.2	3.1	3.2	3.4	3.4	3.9	3.7
United States	5.2	4.4	4.6	4.0	4.1	4.4	4.0	3.9	4.5
Australia	2.5	2.7	3.1	2.7	2.5	2.8	2.7	2.5	2.3
Stock of international students (3 main destinations, '000)	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**
Total	**23.8**	**23.2**	**21.3**	**21.7**	**23.9**	**24.7**	**27.4**	**28.3**	**25.5**
Australia			3.2	2.9	4.8	5.7	7.4	7.8	7.7
United Kingdom			6.0	6.2	6.1	6.0	6.1	6.2	6.3
United States			7.0	7.1	7.1	6.9	6.4	6.4	6.0

Emigration to non-OECD destinations

Stock of workers overseas (5 main destinations, '000)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total	**1,039.0**				**153.3**	**168.4**	**154.9**	**149.5**	
Taipei,China					74.2	77.0	71.8	68.6	
Malaysia						3.5		3.3	
Singapore						4.3	3.5	2.7	
Hong Kong, China						2.7		1.8	
United Arab Emirates						3.1		1.4	
Flows of workers deployed (5 main destinations, '000)	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**
Total	**134.1**	**130.5**	**119.5**	**117.3**	**114.4**	**115.2**	**115.7**	**113.8**	**44.4**
Taipei,China	39.1	34.6	37.1	34.7	35.0	35.2	33.5	29.2	13.7
Japan	8.6	6.9	7.6	7.7	8.6	9.2	9.2	9.6	4.8
Sweden	5.6	6.6	2.9	4.2	3.5	3.2	5.1	6.2	3.2
Malaysia	4.4	3.9	3.2	3.3	3.3	7.1	8.2	7.9	3.2
Rep. of Korea	10.4	11.8	9.8	189.0	12.6	12.6	12.5	12.5	3.1

Net migration rate (per thousand)	1985–1990	1985–1990	1990–1995	1995–2000	2000–2005	2005–2010	2010–2015	2015–2020	2020–2025
	1.86	−2.09	2.34	1.17	0.18	0.49	0.28	0.28	0.27

Remittance inflows (current $ million)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	5,657	6,585	6,524	5,895	6,270	6,720	7,466	8,162	8,257

VIET NAM

KEY INDICATORS

	Population (million)	GDP per capita (constant 2015 $)	GDP growth rate (annual, %)	Labor market indicators (2020, %)	
2010	88.0	1,648	6.4	Employment / population ratio (15+, total)	73.9
2020	97.3	2,656	2.9	Unemployment (% of total labor force)	2.3

Immigrant population in Viet Nam

	Stock of foreign-born population (0+)			Foreign-born population, 15 years old and over			
	Total ('000)	% of population	% women	% 15–24	% 25–64	% low-educated	% high-educated
2000	57	0.07	42	21.0	50.5		
2015	73	0.08	42	14.0	68.0		
2019	76	0.08	42	12.9	68.6		

Stock of foreign workers by sector, 2020	Total	Agriculture	Manufacturing	Construction	Trade/transport/hospitality/business services	Pub. ad, comm/social/other services/activities
Number of foreign workers ('000)	68.3	19.2	13.4	3.2	28.8	3.8
% of total employment	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Stock of international students ('000)	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	3.7	4.0	3.6	2.5	2.9	5.6	4.2		7.3	8.6

Inflows of foreign workers ('000)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
	55.4	56.9	74.0	78.4	76.3	83.6			

Emigration from Viet Nam to OECD countries

	2000			2015/16		
Stock of persons born in Viet Nam living in OECD countries	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Emigrant population 15+ ('000)	747.4	768.6	1,515.9	1,016.5	1,179.2	2,195.7
Recent emigrants 15+ ('000)	63.0	86.1	149.1	8.7	12.3	10.6
15–24 (% of population 15+)	12.5	12.1	12.3	9.4	8.2	8.8
25–64 (% of population 15+)	81.1	79.9	80.5	76.5	76.6	76.5
Total emigration rates (%)	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	3.1	3.0
Emigration rates of the high-educated (%)	17.1	19.8	18.2	9.9	10.8	10.4

Legal migration flows to OECD (5 main destinations, '000)	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total	**94.1**	**93.1**	**101.8**	**125.3**	**151.7**	**184.7**	**213.9**	**243.0**	**281.5**
Japan	13.9	19.5	31.7	43.0	65.9	77.5	98.6	123.3	148.2
Rep. of Korea	27.9	24.7	22.2	28.0	30.2	40.1	48.0	56.0	61.3
United States	33.5	27.6	26.5	29.4	30.4	40.1	37.9	33.4	39.2
Germany	4.2	3.9	4.1	5.1	6.1	7.0	7.0	8.5	8.8
Australia	4.8	4.8	5.7	5.2	5.1	5.4	5.5	5.2	5.5
Stock of international students (3 main destinations, '000)	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**
Total	**41.3**	**46.3**	**52.1**	**57.2**	**63.7**	**77.3**	**89.1**	**102.4**	**112.5**
Japan			4.2	6.1	10.6	19.2	26.8	34.3	40.6
United States			17.7	17.9	19.3	22.2	23.2	25.6	26.0
Australia			12.4	12.9	13.1	14.5	15.3	16.1	17.4

Emigration to non-OECD destinations

Stock of workers overseas (5 main destinations, '000)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total							**580.0**	**650.0**	
Taipei,China						200.0	206.2		
Malaysia		74.8			70.0				
Russian Federation									
Lao People's Democratic Republic				30.0					
Saudi Arabia									

Flows of workers deployed (5 main destinations, '000)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total	**80.3**	**88.2**	**106.8**	**116.0**	**126.3**	**134.8**	**142.9**	**152.5**	**78.6**
Japan	8.8	9.7	19.8	27.0	39.9	54.5	68.7	82.7	38.9
Taipei,China	30.5	46.4	62.1	67.1	68.2	67.0	60.4	54.5	34.6
Rep. of Korea	9.2	5.4	7.2	6.0	8.5	5.2	6.5	7.2	1.3
Romania								3.5	0.9
Saudi Arabia									0.8

Net migration rate (per thousand)	1985–1990	1990–1995	1995–2000	2000–2005	2005–2010	2010–2015	2015–2020	2020–2025	2025–2030
	−1.03	−1.10	−0.56	−1.59	−1.86	−0.89	−0.84	−0.94	−0.86

Remittance inflows (current $ million)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	10,000	11,000	12,000	13,000	14,000	15,000	16,000	17,000	17,200

GENERAL NOTES

1. All tables with top three/five destinations are ranked by decreasing order of frequency for the last year available.
2. Data on remittances for 2016 are estimates.
3. "n.a." data not available.
4. Educational attainment levels are defined according to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 1997).
   "Low-educated" persons have completed at best lower secondary education (ISCED 0/1/2).
   "Medium-educated" have completed at best post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED 3/4).
   "Highly-educated" persons hold at least a first stage tertiary degree (ISCED 5/6).
5. The definition of non-citizen students was only used for the economies for which no data on nonresident students were available.
6. Data on international students in the Asian economies are only for degree programs (undergraduate and upward) and do not include short-term language courses.
7. Stock of foreign workers in economy by sector reports figures for the four largest employers of foreign workers.

DATA SOURCES

Data	Source
Key indicators	World Bank, World Development Indicators
Immigrant population in [economy]	
Total immigrant population 0+ (thousands)	United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2019). International migrant stock: The 2019 revision
% of total population 0+	United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2019). International migrant stock: The 2019 revision
Age structure (2000, %) (population 15+):	United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2019). International migrant stock: The 2019 revision
Education (2000, %) (population 15+):	DIOC-E 2000
Stock of international students	UIS Education database unless otherwise specified. Break in series in 2013.
Inflows of foreign workers	ILO-ILMS
Emigrant population: persons born in [economy] living in OECD countries	DIOC-E 2000, DIOC 2000, DIOC 2010, DIOC 2015, Barro and Lee (2010) and Lutz et al. (2010)
Legal migrant flows	OECD International Migration Database (IMD)
International students from [economy] in OECD countries	OECD Education and Skills database
Net migration rate	United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019). World Population Prospects: The 2019 Revision, custom data acquired via website.
Remittance inflows	World Bank, Migration and Remittances Data

METADATA		
Emigration to non-OECD destinations	**Comments**	**Source**
Bangladesh		
Stock of workers overseas in non-OECD countries		Population and Housing Census 2011
Flows of workers deployed to non-OECD countries	All totals include OECD countries and the category "others"	Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET)
International students	Public and private universities summed	University Grants Commission, UNESCO UIS
Inflow of foreign workers ('000)		Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA)
Cambodia		
Stock of workers overseas in non-OECD countries		Policy on Labour Migration for Cambodia, ILO and Department of Employment and Manpower Cambodia, June 2010 (original source: Community Welfare Attaché of the respective Middle East country), country presentation at ADBI-OECD roundtable
Flows of workers deployed to non-OECD countries	All totals include OECD countries	ILO ILMS
Hong Kong, China		
Emigrant population living in OECD countries	Some destination countries, such as Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States, are not included	
Stock of foreign workers		
Inflow of foreign workers ('000)	Annual report, Immigration Department (https://www.immd.gov.hk/eng/press/press-publications.html)	
Stock of workers in non-OECD countries		
Flows of workers deployed to non-OECD countries		
India		
Stock of workers overseas in non-OECD countries	Non-Resident Indians. Includes all NRIs, whether workers or not. Series break from "Non-resident Indians" from "overseas Indians"	Ministry of External Affairs (Annual Reports)
Flows of workers deployed to non-OECD countries		Ministry of External Affairs, Department of Overseas Employment database, emigrate.gov.in; Country wise Emigration Clearances (ECs) obtained by RAs and Direct Recruitment by Fes, 2015-2016 Emigrate (https://emigrate.gov.in/ext/home.action)
Indonesia		
Stock of foreign workers	Trade includes wholesale and retail trade, hotels and restaurants	Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration
Stock of workers in non-OECD countries		World Bank presentation "Malaysia-Indonesia Remittance Corridor;" news reports.
Flows of workers deployed to non-OECD countries	All totals include OECD countries and the category "others"	BNP2TKI (Placement and Protection Agency)
Japan		
Stock of foreign workers		Status of reporting on the employment of foreign workers, and Labor Force Survey, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare
Inflows of foreign workers		Statistics on Legal Migrants, Immigration Bureau of Japan

Lao People's Democratic Republic		
Stock of foreign workers		IOM
		"Lao PDR Labour Force Survey 2017," Lao PDR Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Planning and Investment, June 2018
Inflows of foreign workers	Number of work permits issued in 2011	Department of Skills Development and Employment, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
Flows of workers deployed to non-OECD countries		ILO-ILMS
		LAOSIS (Laos Statistical Information Service)
Malaysia		
Stock of foreign workers	Figure for agriculture includes plantation	Department of Statistics Malaysia
Mongolia		
Stock of foreign workers		National Statistics Office of Mongolia
Myanmar		
Flows of workers deployed to non-OECD countries	Adjusted from Myanmar fiscal year to calendar year using quarterly data	Central Statistical Organization of Myanmar
Stock of workers in non-OECD countries		Central Statistical Organization of Myanmar
Nepal		
Flows of workers deployed to non-OECD countries	Excludes re-entries. All totals include OECD countries	Department of Foreign Employment, for Nepalese Fiscal Years (mid-July to mid-July)
Pakistan		
Stock of workers in non-OECD countries	Figures are for stocks of Pakistanis overseas (including workers, students and other categories). We assume that for the Gulf countries, most of this figure represents migrant workers. All totals include OECD countries	Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment
Flows of workers deployed to non-OECD countries	All totals include OECD countries	Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment
People's Republic of China		
Stock of foreign workers	Residents for purpose of employment, 2020 Census (preliminary)	National Bureau of Statistics
Emigrant population living in OECD countries	Some destination economies such as Germany and United States include Taipei,China and Hong Kong, China data	
International students in OECD countries	Figures include those for Taipei,China	UNESCO UIS
Stock of workers in non-OECD countries		Ministry of Commerce
Flows of workers deployed to non-OECD countries		Ministry of Commerce. Brief Statistics on China's Overseas Labor Service Cooperation

Philippines		
Inflows of foreign workers	New permits delivered to foreign workers	ILO-ILMS, Department of Labor and Employment
Stock of workers in non-OECD countries		The Philippine Statistics Authority
Flows of workers deployed to non-OECD countries	All totals include OECD countries, new and repeat deployments	ILO-ILMS, Philippine Overseas Employment Administration
Republic of Korea		
Stock of foreign workers		Korean Statistical Information Service
Singapore		
Stock of foreign workers		Ministry of Manpower
Sri Lanka		
Inflows of foreign workers		Issuance of residence visas for private and public sector employment, Board of Investment and construction
Stock of workers in non-OECD countries		Institute of Policy Studies (2008): "International Migration Outlook, Sri Lanka" (original source: Bureau of Foreign Employment); "Sri Lanka country Study" by Judith Shaw (original source: SLBFE 2005); "Policy on Labour Migration for Cambodia," ILO and Department of Employment and Manpower Cambodia, June 2010.
Flows of workers deployed to non-OECD countries	All totals include OECD countries	Bureau of Foreign Employment, country presentation at ADBI-OECD roundtable Central Bank of Sri Lanka
Taipei,China		
Key indicators		National Statistics
Stock of foreign workers		Ministry of Labor
Stock of international students		Ministry of Education, UNESCO UIS
Emigrant population living in OECD countries	Some destination countries such as Australia, Germany, and United States are not included	
International students in OECD countries	Number of students obtaining visas from foreign nations	Ministry of Education, UNESCO UIS
Stock of workers in non-OECD countries	All totals include OECD countries	Directorate-General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics (People's Republic of China includes Hong Kong, China and Macau, China)
Thailand		
Stock of foreign workers	Only total is the number of 2018	ILO-ILMS
Stock of workers in non-OECD countries	Includes "illegal workers"	ILO-ILMS, Overseas Employment Administration Division
Flows of workers deployed to non-OECD countries	All totals include OECD countries. Includes New and Re-entries	Overseas Employment Administration Division
Viet Nam		
Stock of foreign workers		MOLISA
Stock of workers in non-OECD countries		MOLISA, country presentation at ADBI-OECD-ILO roundtable
Flows of workers deployed to non-OECD countries		MOLISA

ANNEX 2

COMPARATIVE TABLES

Table A2.1: Inflows from Asia to the OECD by Economy of Origin (‘000)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Afghanistan	17	20	15	13	13	16	15	11	13	18	24	29	35	34	45	139	153	105	103	101
Azerbaijan	1	2	5	4	4	4	5	3	3	3	6	4	4	4	5	6	23	28	30	34
Bangladesh	23	24	19	22	30	37	42	34	40	50	50	50	42	43	47	51	51	52	54	53
Bhutan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	9	14	13	11	9	7	5	7	5	3
Brunei Darussalam	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cambodia	4	5	5	5	6	7	11	9	10	9	10	12	15	16	16	17	20	20	19	21
People’s Republic of China	282	334	335	322	367	438	503	518	530	460	508	531	504	547	555	541	553	563	566	572
Georgia	1	2	7	7	8	11	10	9	8	8	8	9	10	11	12	14	19	22	24	30
Hong Kong, China	10	12	13	12	10	8	10	8	8	6	9	7	6	9	7	7	14	17	17	15
India	113	151	161	145	192	213	206	213	215	227	253	243	229	241	263	268	278	310	354	407
Indonesia	29	32	33	31	27	35	30	27	31	22	25	29	31	36	35	35	39	39	48	54
Japan	34	38	39	35	36	42	34	32	29	34	32	34	37	37	34	37	35	29	30	31
Kazakhstan	5	4	17	15	12	9	8	7	7	7	8	9	7	9	11	12	19	25	31	32
Republic of Korea	59	69	62	54	57	66	68	72	79	78	76	71	71	75	70	65	73	73	77	81
Kyrgyz Republic	1	1	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	4	11	14	15	16
Lao People’s Democratic Republic	2	2	2	1	2	2	4	4	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3
Malaysia	11	14	12	13	16	11	12	20	24	20	22	17	21	23	19	22	16	17	17	15
Maldives	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mongolia	6	6	4	7	8	11	15	15	15	9	10	9	10	9	8	15	15	20	20	19
Myanmar	2	3	3	3	3	5	11	10	10	23	19	24	27	23	23	27	29	34	30	26
Nepal	4	3	5	6	8	9	14	17	19	23	25	30	33	39	42	47	49	47	50	49
Pakistan	54	59	49	47	73	74	83	74	76	77	100	106	84	73	78	99	96	92	91	97
Philippines	165	188	195	192	211	192	173	169	158	164	168	161	160	152	158	181	173	175	169	171
Singapore	6	6	6	5	6	7	7	7	7	5	7	9	9	8	9	7	7	13	13	12
Sri Lanka	23	21	22	24	23	28	28	21	33	33	41	36	35	30	29	31	30	27	25	25
Tajikistan	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	4	5	4	6
Taipei,China	16	21	21	15	20	17	32	33	22	24	20	18	17	22	18	22	26	28	30	32
Thailand	32	35	34	35	36	47	51	48	47	47	50	53	59	61	87	64	68	109	119	93
Timor-Leste	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
Turkmenistan	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	0	1	9	21	36	81
Uzbekistan	8	6	8	11	8	9	11	12	20	13	16	16	19	19	21	21	33	45	43	58
Viet Nam	52	60	64	55	66	78	82	88	98	76	87	95	94	102	125	152	186	214	243	282
Total Asia	**960**	**1,117**	**1,139**	**1,083**	**1,245**	**1,379**	**1,470**	**1,465**	**1,511**	**1,449**	**1,593**	**1,621**	**1,578**	**1,645**	**1,734**	**1,896**	**2,038**	**2,154**	**2,265**	**2,420**

OECD = Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.
Source: OECD International Migration Database.

Table A2.2: Outflows of Workers from Asian Economies, by Destination

	Bangladesh									
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Gulf Cooperation Council countries										
United Arab Emirates	215,452	14,241	24,232	25,271	8,131	4,135	3,235	3,318	1,082	29,202
Saudi Arabia	21,232	12,654	10,657	58,270	143,913	551,308	257,317	399,000	161,726	457,227
Oman	170,326	134,028	105,748	129,859	188,247	89,704	72,504	72,654	21,071	55,009
Kuwait	2	6	3,094	17,472	38,188	49,604	27,637	12,299	1,744	1,848
Bahrain	21,777	25,155	23,378	20,720	72,167	19,318	811	133	3	11
Qatar	28,801	57,584	87,575	123,965	120,382	82,012	76,560	50,292	3,608	11,158
Other Middle East										
Jordan	11,726	21,383	20,338	22,093	23,017	20,449	9,724	20,347	3,769	13,816
Lebanon	14,864	15,098	16,640	19,113	15,095	8,327	5,991	4,863	488	235
Iraq	359	7,456	13,627	13,982	4,738	3,819	19,567	9,266		5
Israel										
Asia, OECD										
Japan	420	41	55	99	165	145	163	229	142	3
Rep. of Korea	1,447	2,121	1,748	2,359	1,980	1,829	2,287	1,647	208	108
Asia, non-OECD										
Singapore	58,657	60,057	54,750	55,523	54,730	40,401	41,393	49,829	10,085	27,875
Malaysia	804	3,853	5,134	30,483	40,126	99,787	175,927	545	125	28
Taipei,China										
Thailand										
Hong Kong, China										
Macau, China										
Maldives										
Brunei Darussalam	5,038	5,971	6,633	6,354	5,836	8,587	4,480	3,628	530	12
Indonesia										
India										
People's Republic of China										
Other Destinations										
Mauritius	5,421	5,961	5,938	4,753	4,679	5,942	6,608	7,576	2,014	215
Romania										

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Table A2.2 *continued*

	India									
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Gulf Cooperation Council countries										
United Arab Emirates	141,138	202,016	224,033	225,718	163,731	149,962	112,059	76,112	17,891	10,844
Saudi Arabia	357,503	354,169	329,937	308,380	165,356	78,611	72,399	161,103	44,316	32,845
Oman	84,384	63,398	51,318	85,054	63,224	53,332	36,037	28,392	7,206	19,452
Kuwait	55,868	70,072	80,419	66,579	72,402	56,380	57,613	45,712	8,107	10,158
Bahrain	20,150	17,269	14,220	15,623	11,964	11,516	9,142	9,997	4,175	6,382
Qatar	63,096	78,367	75,935	59,384	30,619	24,759	34,471	31,810	8,907	49,579
Other Middle East										
Jordan	1,819	1,462	2,133	2,047	2,742	2,341	1,941	3,941	317	2,386
Lebanon	288	281	313	341	316	110	109	160	21	54
Iraq	925	6,553	3,054	1	0	0	0	162	759	935
Israel										
Asia, OECD										
Japan										
Rep. of Korea										
Asia, non-OECD										
Singapore										
Malaysia	21,241	22,388	22,926	20,908	10,604	14,002	16,370	10,633	2,435	36
Taipei,China										
Thailand	9	15	53	10	1	0	6	24	10	1
Hong Kong, China										
Macau, China										
Maldives										
Brunei Darussalam										
Indonesia	11	38	29	6	1	10	10	0	1	0
India										
People's Republic of China										
Other Destinations										
Mauritius										
Romania										

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Table A2.2 *continued*

	Indonesia								
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Gulf Cooperation Council countries									
United Arab Emirates	35,571	44,505	17,962	7,619	2,575	1,667	726	578	117
Saudi Arabia	40,655	45,394	44,325	23,000	13,538	6,471	5,894	7,018	1,793
Oman	8,836	10,719	19,141	6,766	1,014	1,085	749	471	65
Kuwait	2,518	2,534	1,714	310	987	1,162	1,172	782	74
Bahrain	6,328	5,384	5,472	2,570	123	125	86	130	
Qatar	20,380	16,237	7,862	2,460	1,355	1,037	587	217	42
Other Middle East									
Jordan	106	0	0	103	65		7	48	
Lebanon									
Iraq									
Israel									
Asia, OECD									
Japan	3,293	3,042	2,428	468	279	538	458	486	749
Rep. of Korea	13,593	15,374	11,848	5,501	5,912	3,728	6,905	6,193	641
Asia, non-OECD									
Singapore	41,556	34,655	31,680	20,895	17,700	13,379	18,324	19,354	4,474
Malaysia	134,023	150,236	127,827	97,635	87,616	88,991	90,671	79,663	14,630
Taipei,China	81,071	83,544	82,665	75,303	77,087	62,823	72,373	79,574	34,415
Thailand	1,035	1,041	717	90	6	6	11		
Hong Kong, China	45,478	41,769	35,050	15,322	14,434	68,103	73,917	70,840	53,206
Macau, China									
Maldives							322	292	73
Brunei Darussalam	13,146	11,269	11,616	9,993	8,152	6,623	5,707	5,639	1,202
Indonesia									
India	535	409	203	68	97				
People’s Republic of China	1,967	2,055	915	108	65	84	22		
Other Destinations									
Mauritius	982	1,017	838	144	5				
Romania							25	34	34

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Table A2.2 *continued*

	Nepal									
	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Gulf Cooperation Council countries										
United Arab Emirates	34,503	58,586	55,426	53,094	52,793	57,887	60,244	62,776	52,085	11,611
Saudi Arabia	68,103	96,903	86,613	96,887	138,529	72,892	40,962	46,080	39,279	23,324
Oman	1,884	3,931	3,952	3,470	3,059	3,066	3,059	2,722	1,996	1,556
Kuwait	9,165	17,376	20,196	9,634	10,049	13,134	17,555	15,995	8,974	2
Bahrain	3,100	4,255	4,418	4,168	3,146	3,911	4,862	4,633	3,305	3,146
Qatar	44,883	103,932	128,550	124,050	129,038	121,128	103,179	75,024	29,835	22,131
Other Middle East										
Jordan	558	520	440	385	1,232	2,745	1,944	1,458	2,374	930
Lebanon	2	181	447	181	167	146	22	11	5	2
Iraq										
Israel	7	0	0	0	189	132	118	58	14	1
Asia, OECD										
Japan					3,844	2,238	761	959	939	553
Rep. of Korea					80	90	27	22	50	16
Asia, non-OECD										
Singapore					89	148	127	206	85	28
Malaysia	96,272	158,663	210,009	196,497	60,979	95,244	104,209	9,999	39,167	107
Taipei,China					–					
Thailand					21	26	31	30	5	2
Hong Kong, China	140	143	139	163	360	175	175	88	91	
Macau, China	359	318	391	484				739	572	0
Maldives	7	25	104	45				1,974	887	1,008
Brunei Darussalam					150	158	144	143	121	5
Indonesia					6	1	5	1	13	1
India										
People's Republic of China					181	186	269	448	151	66
Other Destinations										
Mauritius								90	74	46
Romania	71	35	14	1				1,178	1,930	1,912

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Table A2.2 *continued*

	Pakistan									
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Gulf Cooperation Council countries										
United Arab Emirates	182,630	273,234	350,522	326,986	295,647	275,436	208,635	211,216	53,676	27,442
Saudi Arabia	358,560	270,502	312,489	522,750	462,598	143,363	100,910	332,713	136,339	155,771
Oman	69,407	47,794	39,793	47,788	45,085	42,362	27,202	28,391	10,336	38,349
Kuwait	5	229	132	164	770	773	493	126	15	54
Bahrain	10,530	9,600	9,226	9,029	8,226	7,919	5,745	8,189	7,843	12,977
Qatar	7,320	8,119	10,042	12,741	9,706	11,592	20,993	19,327	7,421	37,985
Other Middle East										
Jordan	279	345	328	321	282	285	170	205	54	334
Lebanon	23	15	57	33	42	24	27	12	1	7
Iraq	32	951	1,041	709	543	599	756	2,306	1,177	2,819
Israel										
Asia, OECD										
Japan	62	44	69	82	102	153	258	391	356	17
Rep. of Korea	7	12	46	13	17	9	13	25	15	28
Asia, non-OECD										
Singapore	47	42	76	68	33	544	65	82	37	21
Malaysia	1,309	2,031	20,577	20,216	10,625	7,174	9,881	11,323	2,296	106
Taipei,China										
Thailand										
Hong Kong, China	17	20	38	29	38	54	57	60	52	52
Macau, China										
Maldives										
Brunei Darussalam	74	67	48	85	85	212	225	187	32	7
Indonesia										
India										
People's Republic of China	220	155	254	355	482	457	854	1,252	298	607
Other Destinations										
Mauritius										
Romania										

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Table A2.2 *continued*

	Philippines							
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2019	2020
Gulf Cooperation Council countries								
United Arab Emirates	259,546	261,119	246,231	227,076	276,278	265,498	269,921	50,759
Saudi Arabia	330,040	382,553	402,837	406,089	460,121	433,567	412,521	86,817
Oman	16,048	16,577	15,880	22,274	27,579	25,399	25,364	5,904
Kuwait	75,286	67,856	70,098	86,019	109,615	107,604	125,457	11,083
Bahrain	22,271	20,546	18,958	21,428	21,429	21,388	20,887	5,021
Qatar	104,622	94,195	114,511	133,169	141,304	122,619	121,832	23,513
Other Middle East								
Jordan	3,025	2,223	3,393	7,253	9,970	7,063	7,758	1,524
Lebanon	1,227	2,874	3,010	3,694	3,959	4,179	3,886	734
Iraq				487	525	521	1,066	71
Israel	4,582	4,385	4,590	2,288	6,392	6,879	7,748	1,717
Asia, OECD								
Japan	9,947	10,936	12,815	14,161	21,363	21,924	32,844	10,579
Rep. of Korea	8,979	11,664	11,958	11,418	13,592	13,479	14,221	3,121
Asia, non-OECD								
Singapore	172,690	173,666	140,205	141,453	171,014	162,223	163,546	32,379
Malaysia	38,407	34,088	31,451	26,199	33,178	33,194	30,871	5,826
Taipei,China	41,492	41,145	58,681	62,598	65,364	69,235	71,132	16,113
Thailand	9,204	8,659	6,653	7,204	9,321	10,405	12,719	2,305
Hong Kong, China	131,680	130,686	105,737	85,704	116,467	144,535	159,093	32,261
Macau, China				9,756	14,088	17,790	24,941	3,624
Maldives				1,214	1,492	1,404	1,881	485
Brunei Darussalam	14,907	17,000	11,478	14,088	10,099	14,925	13,836	2,433
Indonesia	5,166	5,489	5,007	3,880	5,302	4,984	5,014	1,840
India				466	581	386	279	58
People's Republic of China	9,969	9,829	6,229	6,564	9,166	9,369	10,040	1,171
Other Destinations								
Mauritius				37	53	51	15	8
Romania				249	229	278	608	156

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Table A2.2 *continued*

	Sri Lanka								
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Gulf Cooperation Council countries									
United Arab Emirates	38,234	48,502	50,347	43,666	40,124	36,667	32,836	32,866	10,708
Saudi Arabia	97,993	80,887	80,480	74,894	63,389	37,745	35,866	35,478	9,402
Oman	4,889	5,317	5,759	7,082	9,748	8,865	8,345	9,016	2,714
Kuwait	44,229	42,740	43,552	38,473	32,415	37,410	46,951	43,089	8,036
Bahrain	4,533	4,547	3,979	3,722	3,222	3,002	2,922	3,017	1,047
Qatar	57,478	80,724	84,622	65,139	59,527	56,637	50,774	40,785	9,651
Other Middle East									
Jordan	10,387	7,060	6,197	4,809	3,870	3,925	4,163	4,611	955
Lebanon	3,945	3,537	3,058	2,604	2,640	2,408	2,229	1,902	537
Iraq				110	171	162	262	183	
Israel	1,768	1,944	2,010	1,986	2,274	2,498	2,033	1,559	
Asia, OECD									
Japan	112	118	88	106	144	402			
Rep. of Korea	5,629	5,402	6,686	6,967	8,609	5,807	5,409	6,207	1,292
Asia, non-OECD									
Singapore	980	1,265	1,470	1,461	1,840	1,795	1,917	2,124	762
Malaysia	2,691	3,297	3,312	3,239	2,916	1,996	2,455	3,296	522
Taipei,China									
Thailand	2				11	16	30	31	
Hong Kong, China	449	513	468	493	573	636	584	624	216
Macau, China									
Maldives	4,044	3,485	4,511	4,813	6,116	6,279	7,298	7,767	2,383
Brunei Darussalam	11	15	12	9	14	9	8	17	3
Indonesia					20	21			
India	97	11	136	121	187	157			
People's Republic of China	6	3	5	11	6	10	12	17	
Other Destinations									
Mauritius	273	382	149	196	250	140	195	91	31
Romania				128	139	225	482	2,315	

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Table A2.2 *continued*

	Thailand								
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Gulf Cooperation Council countries									
United Arab Emirates	7,245	5,495	5,038	4,623	4,014	3,270	2,326	1,931	541
Saudi Arabia	517	509	446	36	358	297	220	199	40
Oman	298	280	260	245	370	288	295	306	75
Kuwait	1,792	1,729	1,626	2,448	1,265	1,703	1,917	1,391	189
Bahrain	1,106	969	888	853	904	807	641	601	148
Qatar	2,623	2,392	2,449	2,273	1,562	904	554	482	111
Other Middle East									
Jordan						13	17	16	3
Lebanon						42	35	33	5
Iraq									1
Israel	5,126	8,393	7,618	7,144	8,629	7,494	8,260	9,122	2,547
Asia, OECD									
Japan	8,596	6,904	7,614	7,705	8,610	9,196	9,180	9,600	4,778
Rep. of Korea	10,393	11,758	9,835	189	12,609	12,609	12,476	12,529	3,130
Asia, non-OECD									
Singapore	11,864	10,728	8,191	7,265	5,843	5,399	4,553	3,819	1,078
Malaysia	4,441	3,852	3,237	3,318	3,263	7,141	8,182	7,919	3,185
Taipei,China	39,128	34,631	37,105	34,738	35,027	35,199	33,546	32,204	13,707
Thailand									
Hong Kong, China	2,533	2,225	2,209	2,185	2,160	2,296	2,028	1,770	36
Macau, China									61
Maldives									45
Brunei Darussalam	2,697	2,489	1,944	1,846	1,461	1,299	1,109	1,109	281
Indonesia	2,480	3,210	3,103	2,538	1,967	1,724	1,636	1,355	353
India	2,480	3,210	3,103	1,860	1,646	1,468	1,432	1,391	372
People's Republic of China	923	1,169	725	405	261	398	287	231	36
Other Destinations									
Mauritius									
Romania									18

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Table A2.2 *continued*

	Viet Nam								
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Gulf Cooperation Council countries									
United Arab Emirates	1,731	2,075	831	286	136				
Saudi Arabia	2,360	1,703	4,191	3,975	16			1,375	
Oman	154	25	57	86					
Kuwait	440	31	30	54	40	9			
Bahrain	11	16	9						
Qatar	105	206	850	455					
Other Middle East									
Jordan	20	0	0						
Lebanon									
Iraq									
Israel	210	141	484	268	250				
Asia, OECD									
Japan	8,775	9,686	19,766	27,010	39,938	54,504	68,737	82,703	38,891
Rep. of Korea	9,228	5,446	7,242	6,019	8,482	5,178	6,538	7,215	1,309
Asia, non-OECD									
Singapore	107	149	92	31	29				537
Malaysia	9,298	7,564	5,139	7,354	2,079	1,551	1,102	454	
Taipei,China	30,533	46,368	62,124	67,121	68,244	66,926	60,369	54,480	34,573
Thailand	0	0	0	0		0			
Hong Kong, China	0	0	0		11	0			
Macau, China								401	
Maldives									
Brunei Darussalam	74	18	0	0		0			
Indonesia	0	0	0	0		0			
India									
People’s Republic of China	0	4	0		7	0			594
Other Destinations									
Mauritius									
Romania								3,478	924

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Table A2.2 *continued*

	Myanmar								
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Gulf Cooperation Council countries									
United Arab Emirates	39	0	14	77	271	127	214	323	83
Saudi Arabia									
Oman									
Kuwait	1	0	0	0		0	0		
Bahrain									
Qatar	10	77	15	0	73	135	87	116	19
Other Middle East									
Jordan						0	296	1,115	164
Lebanon									
Iraq									
Israel									
Asia, OECD									
Japan	0	36	518	1,678	2,384	3,331	3,889	6,690	4,680
Rep. of Korea	3,669	4,003	4,482	4,475	5,731	5,676	6,105	4,756	738
Asia, non-OECD									
Singapore	452	791	501	431	707	355	504	467	86
Malaysia	26,921	25,905	25,892	35,022	33,920	3,305	24,773	78,781	10,636
Taipei,China									
Thailand	37,347	36,029	33,188	53,578	102,722	148,942	198,017	238,082	58,642
Hong Kong, China									
Macau, China						6	9	9	0
Maldives									
Brunei Darussalam									
Indonesia									
India									
People's Republic of China									
Other Destinations									
Mauritius									
Romania									

continued on next page

Table A2.2 *continued*

	Cambodia								
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Gulf Cooperation Council countries									
United Arab Emirates									
Saudi Arabia									
Oman									
Kuwait									
Bahrain									
Qatar									
Other Middle East									
Jordan									
Lebanon									
Iraq									
Israel									
Asia, OECD									
Japan	102	111	518	1,399	1,562	2,280	3,002	3,945	
Rep. of Korea	8,132	8,820	7,671	7,073	7,371	5,967	4,870	5,938	
Asia, non-OECD									
Singapore	0	111	190	99	87	138	287	135	
Malaysia	180	90	470	807	123	27	53	69	
Taipei,China									
Thailand	26,390	13,468	15,839	16,163	76,433	87,909	60,333	57,823	
Hong Kong, China									
Macau, China									
Maldives									
Brunei Darussalam									
Indonesia									
India									
People's Republic of China					0	15			
Other Destinations									
Mauritius									
Romania									

Source: National sources.

Table A2.3: Migrant Remittance Inflows in Asian Economies, 2000–2021
($ million)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021e
Afghanistan	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	90	141	378	179	219	347	253	349	628	823	804	829	789	628
Azerbaijan	57	104	163	156	204	623	790	1,268	1,518	1,255	1,410	1,893	1,990	1,733	1,846	1,270	643	1,133	1,226	1,275	1,403	1,500
Bangladesh	1,968	2,105	2,858	3,192	3,584	4,315	5,428	6,562	8,941	10,521	10,850	12,071	14,120	13,867	14,988	15,296	13,574	13,502	15,566	18,364	21,750	23,000
Bhutan	..	..	..	..	..	..	2	3	4	5	8	10	18	12	14	20	34	43	58	57	83	58
Brunei Darussalam	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Cambodia	103	113	123	128	147	164	184	186	188	142	557	611	855	1,003	1,103	1,185	1,199	1,287	1,431	1,525	1,272	1,175
People's Republic of China	758	1,209	2,354	4,620	6,640	23,626	27,565	38,395	47,743	41,600	52,460	61,576	57,987	59,491	62,332	63,938	61,000	63,876	67,414	68,398	59,507	53,000
Georgia	206	219	226	248	359	446	627	883	1,065	1,112	1,184	1,547	1,770	1,945	1,986	1,459	1,521	1,794	2,034	2,258	2,110	2,200
Hong Kong, China	136	153	121	120	240	297	294	317	355	348	340	352	367	360	372	387	399	437	425	451	458	500
India	12,883	14,273	15,736	20,999	18,750	22,125	28,334	37,217	49,977	49,204	53,480	62,499	68,821	69,970	70,389	68,910	62,744	68,967	78,790	83,332	83,149	87,000
Indonesia	1,190	1,046	1,259	1,489	1,866	5,420	5,722	6,174	6,794	6,793	6,916	6,924	7,212	7,614	8,551	9,659	8,907	8,990	11,215	11,666	9,651	9,168
Japan	773	1,250	1,127	811	774	905	1,177	1,384	1,732	1,595	1,684	2,132	2,540	2,364	3,734	3,325	3,830	4,443	4,369	4,389	4,875	5,108
Kazakhstan	68	85	111	42	57	62	84	143	126	198	226	180	283	341	401	294	384	560	618	506	374	390
Republic of Korea	4,524	4,516	5,135	5,875	5,935	5,200	4,850	5,155	6,978	6,000	5,854	6,602	6,589	6,475	6,574	6,464	6,524	6,526	7,125	7,166	7,413	7,746
Kyrgyz Republic	2	5	30	70	179	313	473	704	1,223	982	1,266	1,709	2,031	2,278	2,243	1,688	1,995	2,486	2,689	2,411	2,423	2,450
Lao People's Democratic Republic	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	6	18	38	42	110	203	170	188	189	189	243	240	297	232	213
Macau, China	..	..	47	48	53	53	55	54	52	48	47	48	47	49	37	40	28	25	23	22	19	22
Malaysia	342	367	435	571	802	1,117	1,365	1,556	1,329	1,131	1,103	1,211	1,294	1,423	1,580	1,644	1,604	1,649	1,686	1,597	1,432	1,538
Maldives	2	2	2	2	3	2	3	8	6	5	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	5	4
Mongolia	1	27	69	79	203	177	155	178	225	200	266	250	324	257	255	261	260	273	441	561	549	535
Myanmar	102	116	105	84	117	129	115	81	55	54	115	127	275	1,644	1,808	1,934	2,255	2,453	2,673	2,553	2,250	2,235
Nepal	111	147	678	771	823	1,212	1,453	1,734	2,727	2,983	3,464	4,217	4,793	5,584	5,889	6,730	6,612	6,928	8,287	8,244	8,108	8,500
Pakistan	1,075	1,461	3,554	3,964	3,945	4,280	5,121	5,998	7,039	8,717	9,690	12,263	14,007	14,629	17,244	19,306	19,819	19,856	21,193	22,252	26,108	33,000
Philippines	6,924	8,760	9,735	10,239	11,468	13,733	15,496	16,437	18,851	19,960	21,557	23,054	24,610	26,717	28,691	29,799	31,142	32,810	33,809	35,167	34,913	36,240
Singapore	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Sri Lanka	1,154	1,170	1,296	1,423	1,574	1,976	2,167	2,507	2,925	3,337	4,123	5,153	6,000	6,422	7,036	7,000	7,262	7,190	7,043	6,749	7,140	6,700
Tajikistan	..	..	79	146	252	564	976	1,514	2,278	1,566	2,021	2,722	3,222	3,698	3,384	2,259	1,867	2,237	2,183	2,322	2,187	2,250
Taipei,China	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Thailand	1,697	1,252	1,380	1,607	1,622	1,187	1,333	1,635	1,898	3,808	4,433	5,256	5,657	6,585	6,524	5,895	6,270	6,720	7,466	8,162	8,257	7,664
Turkmenistan	..	..	..	..	..	..	14	30	50	34	35	35	37	40	30	16	9	4	2	1	1	1
Uzbekistan	..	..	..	..	..	..	-	-	-	-	3,438	4,910	6,090	6,443	6,815	4,843	5,795	7,130	7,610	8,546	6,980	7,600
Viet Nam	1,340	1,100	1,770	2,100	2,310	3,150	3,800	6,180	6,805	6,020	8,260	8,600	10,000	11,000	12,000	13,000	14,000	15,000	16,000	17,000	17,200	18,060
Total	35,417	39,479	48,394	58,787	61,906	91,076	107,588	136,310	170,900	167,653	194,831	226,065	241,142	252,120	266,018	266,812	259,871	276,568	301,620	315,276	309,848	317,857

Note: All numbers are in current United States dollars.

Source: World Bank.

Table A2.4: Net Migration Rate
(per 1,000 population)

	1985–1990	1990–1995	1995–2000	2000–2005	2005–2010	2010–2015	2015–2020	2020–2025	2025–2030
Afghanistan	−25.1	40.3	−8.9	6.4	−7.6	3.3	−1.7	−1.5	−1.4
Azerbaijan	−4.6	−3.1	−2.8	0.9	1.2	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.0
Bangladesh	−0.5	−1.5	−1.2	−2.2	−4.5	−3.0	−2.3	−2.1	−1.9
Bhutan	0.6	−22.0	0.1	2.0	−3.3	0.1	0.4	0.4	0.4
Brunei Darussalam	3.1	3.4	2.7	0.2	−1.2	−0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Cambodia	−1.9	8.3	6.1	−0.6	−4.3	−2.0	−1.9	−1.7	−1.6
People's Republic of China	−0.1	−0.1	−0.1	−0.3	−0.3	−0.2	−0.2	−0.3	−0.2
Georgia	−1.6	−22.8	−28.0	−6.9	−5.8	−4.7	−2.5	−2.5	−2.6
Hong Kong, China	8.0	5.3	11.8	1.9	2.6	2.1	4.0	3.1	4.6
India	0.0	−0.1	−0.1	−0.3	−0.4	−0.4	−0.4	−0.3	−0.3
Indonesia	0.3	−0.0	−0.1	−1.1	−1.1	−0.4	−0.4	−0.4	−0.3
Japan	−0.5	0.1	−0.2	0.3	0.4	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.4
Kazakhstan	−8.4	−17.9	−16.4	0.6	−0.4	1.9	−1.0	0.0	0.0
Republic of Korea	0.8	0.3	0.7	0.3	−0.6	1.6	0.2	0.4	0.6
Kyrgyz Republic	−6.1	−12.4	−1.2	−6.9	−2.9	−3.3	−0.6	−1.5	−1.4
Lao People's Democratic Republic	0.0	−2.7	−5.3	−5.3	−3.7	−3.5	−2.1	−2.0	−1.8
Macau, China	21.3	12.0	13.7	20.3	16.6	14.9	8.0	7.4	7.0
Malaysia	5.1	3.0	4.7	5.5	5.7	1.7	1.6	1.5	1.3
Maldives	−2.5	−2.6	−0.8	11.6	10.5	28.4	22.8	−16.3	−8.7
Mongolia	0.0	−7.9	−4.5	−1.2	−0.8	−0.3	−0.3	−0.3	−0.2
Myanmar	−1.0	−3.3	−2.4	−5.1	−5.4	−2.0	−3.1	−0.7	−0.3
Nepal	−2.4	0.8	−4.1	−6.2	−7.4	−15.1	1.5	5.1	0.4
Pakistan	0.3	−1.8	0.7	−0.9	−0.4	−1.1	−1.1	−0.9	−0.7
Philippines	−1.1	−2.1	−2.6	−3.0	−3.4	−1.7	−0.6	−0.6	−0.6
Singapore	8.4	18.2	17.0	4.5	30.7	11.8	4.7	4.5	4.4
Sri Lanka	−1.6	−2.9	−5.0	−4.7	−5.2	−4.7	−4.6	−4.0	−3.8
Tajikistan	−1.3	−8.4	−7.9	−4.5	−4.1	−3.4	−2.2	−2.0	−1.8
Taipei,China	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Thailand	1.9	−2.1	2.3	1.2	0.2	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.3
Timor-Leste	0.0	0.0	−18.9	−5.9	−7.3	−4.9	−4.3	−3.6	−3.3
Turkmenistan	−2.3	2.2	−3.0	−5.4	−2.5	−1.9	−0.9	−0.6	−0.6
Uzbekistan	−3.7	−3.0	−2.0	−1.9	−1.0	−0.4	−0.3	−0.3	−0.2
Viet Nam	−1.0	−1.1	−0.6	−1.6	−1.9	−0.9	−0.8	−0.9	−0.9

n.a. = not available.

Source: World Population Prospects: The 2019 Revision (UNDESA). https://population.un.org/wpp/DataQuery/ (accessed 1 December 2020).

Table A2.5: International Students in OECD Countries by Economy of Origin

	Number of international tertiary students enrolled			Of which at master's and doctoral level	As a percentage of total tertiary	Number of graduates at master's and doctoral level
	2018	2019	% change	2019	2018	2019
Afghanistan	7,638	8,519	12	3,660	43	667
Azerbaijan	20,962	23,309	11	7,071	30	1,384
Bangladesh	24,596	24,281	–1	17,448	72	3,511
Bhutan	1,916	2,670	39	1,496	56	397
Brunei Darussalam	1,784	1,537	–14	251	16	127
Cambodia	3,724	4,361	17	1,548	35	636
People's Republic of China	869,363	840,871	–3	403,929	48	125,371
Georgia	3,720	3,474	–7	2,348	68	597
Hong Kong, China	35,709	33,144	–7	6,213	19	2,924
India	298,972	293,120	–2	223,879	76	40,147
Indonesia	33,291	34,632	4	13,254	38	4,831
Japan	27,007	25,568	–5	8,972	35	2,152
Kazakhstan	11,014	10,988	–0	4,500	41	1,282
Republic of Korea	90,641	84,046	–7	29,269	35	3,675
Kyrgyz Republic	3,070	3,229	5	1,285	40	298
Lao People's Democratic Republic	962	1,054	10	465	44	180
Malaysia	48,574	45,477	–6	8,115	18	4,081
Maldives	462	476	3	181	38	98
Mongolia	9,661	10,909	13	5,001	46	1,128
Myanmar	6,739	8,131	21	1,945	24	648
Nepal	67,586	76,749	14	23,657	31	6,613
Pakistan	36,217	35,554	–2	22,740	64	6,449
Philippines	15,560	17,473	12	5,360	31	1,542
Singapore	21,525	20,632	–4	5,401	26	2,584
Sri Lanka	18,626	21,988	18	8,629	39	1,900
Tajikistan	1,314	1,272	–3	447	35	78
Taipei,China						
Thailand	26,310	25,416	–3	10,978	43	4,645
Turkmenistan	12,732	18,147	43	999	6	109
Uzbekistan	7,693	10,482	36	3,211	31	502
Viet Nam	100,745	111,502	11	21,777	20	6,895
Total	**1,808,113**	**1,799,010**	**–1**	**844,029**	**47**	**225,451**
Rest of the world	2,127,722	1,946,169	–9	885,884	46	254,002
All origin economies	**3,935,834**	**3,745,179**	**–5**	**1,729,913**	**46**	**479,453**
Share of Asia (%)	46	48		49		47

OECD = Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.
Note: Data for graduates in Japan, the Republic of Korea, and the United States are not available.
Source: OECD. Online Education Database. www.oecd.org/education/database.htm (accessed 1 December 2017).

LABOR MIGRATION IN ASIA

COVID-19 IMPACTS, CHALLENGES, AND POLICY RESPONSES

Labor Migration in Asia: COVID-19 Impacts, Challenges, and Policy Responses analyzes labor migration trends in Asia and puts them in the context of economic and policy developments as well as the changes caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. It provides an overview of the labor migration trends to and from different Asian economies and looks at policy settings in major origin and destination economies of labor migrants. Chapter 1 reviews the recent regional trends, including evidence on the impact of the pandemic on flows and remittances. Chapter 2 looks at the available data on migrant job losses and COVID-19 infections, as well as policy responses to the pandemic in the key areas of access to health, occupational safety and health, housing, social protection, and the resumption of labor migration. Chapter 3 focuses on the return and reintegration challenges and policy responses in the wake of the pandemic.

This report draws on the discussions that took place at the "11th ADBI-OECD-ILO Roundtable on Labor Migration: Impacts of COVID-19 Pandemic and Building Back Better," held virtually in April 2021. The event, co-organized by the Asian Development Bank Institute, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and the International Labour Organization, brought together regional experts and policy makers.

The report provides up-to-date comparative statistics on labor migration flows in, to, and from Asia. Two statistical annexes offer detailed economy fact sheets and coverage of intra-Asia and cross-regional migration flows.

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International Labour Organization

The ILO is a specialized United Nations agency with a constitutional mandate to protect migrant workers, and it does so as part of its overaching goal of advancing social justice and promoting decent work. Its objectives are to promote rights at work, encourage decent employment opportunities, enhance social protection, and strengthen dialogue on work-related issues. Its tripartite structure provides a unique platform for promoting decent work. Making fair migration a reality is high on the ILO agenda, at the global level and in the Asia-Pacific region. The ILO has 187 member states.

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