



The MED-HIMS Research Programme: Scope and Methodology

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Abstract

The objective of his paper is to outline the scope and methodology of a new regional programme of specialized household surveys on international migration known as the ‘Mediterranean Household International Migration Survey’ (MED-HIMS). The MED-HIMS is a joint initiative of the European Commission, The World Bank, ILO, IOM, UNFPA, UNHCR, and the League of Arab States, in collaboration with the National Statistical Offices of the Mediterranean Arab countries. The main objective of the MED-HIMS is to study the determinants and consequences of international migration, and the inter-linkages between migration and development, in participating countries. The MED-HIMS aims to establish internationally validated guidelines for the design and implementation of specialized household surveys on international migration. The MED-HIMS Model Questionnaires (MQs) provide a holistic framework for searching the large decision space of possible migration and mobility options through the collection of data that are multi-topic, multi-level, retrospective and comparative. The target population includes four groups: out migrants, return migrants, prospective migrants, and forced migrants. Among the topics covered are: the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of migrants and non-migrants; behaviours, attitudes, perceptions and cultural values of people with regard to international migration; migration histories and the migration experiences and practices; the processes leading to the decision to migrate; motives for migration; migration networks and assistance; the cost of migration; admission documents; work history and the impact of migration on labour dynamics; migration of highly-skilled persons; irregular migration; type and use of remittances and their impact on socioeconomic development; the skill-level of return migrants; the overall awareness of migration issues and practices; migration intentions; reproductive patterns and migration; general health and migration; mixed migration (migration asylum nexus) and secondary movement of refugees; situation of refugees in the host country; asylum applications and refugee status determination; and prospects and intentions of forced migrants. Information on socio-economic status of the household and on characteristics of local communities in sample areas will also be gathered. In addition to the Model Questionnaires, a series of manuals, guidelines and computer systems, covering the different phases of the survey, has been developed to provide countries with guidance on the design and implementation of the survey.

Keywords: Out migrants, return migrants, prospective migrants, forced migrants

1. Introduction

The Arab countries of the Middle East and North Africa are going through dramatic demographic shifts. Demographic transition is occurring in all countries in the region at varying rates. Currently, the Arab region has the world’s second-fastest growing population, after sub-Saharan Africa. The region’s current growth rate represents a doubling time of population of 35 years compared with a doubling time of 61 years for the world’s population.

One consequence of the region’s recent demographic trends is an increasingly notable youth bulge. One in every three people living in the region is between ages 10 and 24 and around one in five people



in the region is between the ages of 15 and 24—the age group defined as “youth.” The increase in the proportion of 15-to-24-year-olds in the total population, referred to as the “youth bulge,” combined with the rapid growth in the overall population, has resulted in the most rapid growth in the number of young people in the region’s history. This young population needs training and jobs and also provides momentum for continued population growth in the region, even with declining fertility. The Arab countries are not creating jobs fast enough to match this increase in the working-age population. Absorbing the youth bulge in the Arab region will be a challenge especially with the region’s high unemployment rates.

International migration flows and potential migration from and within the Arab region have increased in magnitude and complexity over the past few decades. Diverse migration flows have been experienced by the Arab region and several of the region’s countries are currently both countries of origin and destination. The Arab region also hosts and produces large numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), while also accommodating a sizeable stateless population. Complex mixed-migration flows are also prevalent in the region. Because of its geographical proximity to Europe, Northern Africa has become a region of transit for unauthorized migration to Europe. As a result, migration has become an important policy issue for both the sending and the main destination countries.

One of the fundamental requirements of the establishment of international migration interventions and for ensuring that they are culturally sensitive and acceptable to people is the availability of basic data on demographic, socio-cultural and economic characteristics of migrants and those intending to migrate. Data are also required on factors that control people’s attitudes and practices which affect their decision to migrate. At the same time, information on life circumstances and needs of the youth is known to promote better understanding of social, cultural, legal, economic and psychological factors that affect their decision to migrate.

Unfortunately, comprehensive, scientific data regarding the determinants, dynamics and consequences of international migration and the migration intentions of the rapidly increasing young people in the Arab region are not available. In fact, many of the countries in the region which have significant numbers of their citizens working abroad are precisely those lacking adequate sources of information on international migration.

The objective of this paper is to outline the scope and methodology of a new regionally coordinated research programme known as the ‘Mediterranean Household International Migration Survey’ (MED-HIMS), which is a joint initiative of the European Commission, the World Bank, ILO, IOM, UNFPA, UNHCR, and the League of Arab States, in collaboration with the National Statistical Offices of the Mediterranean Arab countries.

The main objective of the MED-HIMS Programme is to study the recent trends, causes, determinants, dynamics and consequences of international migration and mobility, and the inter-linkages between migration and development. This is achieved through the collection of nationally representative data that are multi-topic, multi-level, retrospective and comparative. The target population includes four groups: out migrants, return migrants, prospective migrants, and refugees. The MED-HIMS has been implemented in Egypt in 2013 (Farid et al., 2015, 2016) and Jordan in 2014.

2. The MED-HIMS Instruments

The MED-HIMS includes a programme of specialized national household surveys that aims to capture current and recent developments in international migration and mobility in the Mediterranean Arab countries. For all participating countries, the MED-HIMS will provide the following manuals:

Manual 1: MED-HIMS Model Questionnaires

Manual 2: Design and Organization of MED-HIMS



- Manual 3: Instructions to Supervisors
- Manual 4: Instructions to Interviewers
- Manual 5: Sample Design
- Manual 6: Editing, Coding and Recode Specifications
- Manual 7: Guidelines for Country Report and Model Tabulation Plan

The Model Questionnaires (MQs) provide the core set of questions needed to obtain population-based estimates of the determinants and consequences of international migration. The MED-HIMS MQs consist of the following seven questionnaires:

- MQ-1. Household Questionnaire
- MQ-2. Individual Questionnaire for Out Migrant
- MQ-3. Individual Questionnaire for Return Migrant
- MQ-4. Individual Questionnaire for Non Migrant
- MQ-5. Individual Questionnaire for Forced Migrant
- MQ-6. Household Socio-economic Characteristics Questionnaire
- MQ-7. Community Characteristics Questionnaire

The MQs are designed as a series of self-contained modules, with each module dealing with a particular migration-related topic. The MED-HIMS new research lines are thus strategic in two senses: they pertain to issues crucial for policy-making in both sending and receiving countries, and they offer a theory-based design in which both the participating countries and future new participants will implement new research within a shared framework.

3. Main Topics Covered in MED-HIMS Questionnaires

The following is a list of the main topics covered in each of the MED-HIMS model questionnaires.

MQ-1. Household Questionnaire

Eligibility: For every household in the main sample.

- Age, sex, relation to head, place of birth, citizenship & dual nationality;
- Education (persons aged 6 years & over);
- Migration status;
- Members of the household who are currently abroad;

For persons aged 15 & over:

- Marital status;
- Work status & occupation;
- Smoking status;
- Prevalence of chronic conditions and medication.

MQ-2. Individual Questionnaire for Out Migrant

Eligibility: For every person who used to live in the sample household and who is currently abroad and aged 15 years or more. This questionnaire gathers data directly from the migrants themselves if they happen to be in the survey country during the fieldwork period or indirectly from (proxy) respondents who are asked to provide information about persons who have moved from their household, to whom they are usually related.

- Demographic & socio-economic characteristics of out migrant;
- Education, and for the highly skilled: country awarding higher degrees;
- Knowledge of languages;
- Who and where: age at migration, who migrates where, choice of destination, migration trajectories;



- When: year of migration;
- Persons who accompanied migrant on leaving country of origin and persons who joined later;
- Length of migration;
- Why: motives for first migration, migration decision-making;
- How: the migration process: pre-migration contact with recruiters, type of recruiter contacted, means of contacting recruiter, pre-migration provision of written contract, compliance of employer at destination with pre-migration contract, payment to facilitate the migration, financing the migration;
- Admission documents and compliance with regulations;
- Migration networks and assistance: presence of relatives or friends in current destination at time of migration, and types of assistance provided by relatives or friends at arrival;
- Employment status and occupation before and after migration, source of help in getting the first job, labour force participation in current destination, economic activity, benefits provided to migrant by current employer;
- Migration intentions: intentions about staying/leaving current destination and reason, timing of intended plan to leave, intended next country of residence;
- Transnational ties;
- Perceptions of current migrant about the migration experience;
- Remittances: money taken or transferred to support the migration, remittances sent by out migrant and amount in last 12 months, channels used most by out migrant to send money to country of origin, uses and importance of remittances, goods sent by out migrant and value;
- Family formation patterns: marital status at first migration, current marital status, age at first marriage and nationality of spouse, marital stability, prevalence of remarriage and nationality and place of residence of spouse, polygyny, migrant's children ever-born and living, by gender, and their place of residence, and children left behind.

MQ-3. Individual Questionnaire for Return Migrant

Eligibility: For every member of the household who last returned from abroad to the survey country since (START DATE OF REFERENCE PERIOD, e.g., 1/1/2000) and who was 15 years of age or more on last return.

- Demographic & socio-economic characteristics of return migrant;
- Education, and for the highly skilled: country awarding higher degrees;
- Knowledge of languages;
- Motives for moving abroad and migration decision-making;
- Migration History: age at first, last migration and at return, employment status & last occupation before first migration, number of moves, contact with recruiters, possession of legal documents allowing entry to first destination, financing first migration, length of residence in last destination;
- Migration networks and assistance: presence of relatives or friends in country of last destination at time of migration, and types of assistance provided by relatives / friends at arrival in last destination;
- Work history: job situation upon arrival in country of last destination, work conditions in last job in country of last destination, benefits provided to return migrant by last employer before returning, first & last occupation in last destination, current labour force participation, current occupation, benefits provided to return migrant by current employer;
- On the job training in last destination;
- Return migrant's visits to country of origin;
- Motives for return migration;
- Remittances: money taken or transferred at time of move to last emigration, remittances sent by return migrant, channel used most by return migrant to send money to country of origin, importance of money sent by return migrant to those receiving it, goods sent by return migrant in the 12-month



period before returning, amount and uses of money brought back, pension from abroad and/or country of origin;

- Perceptions about the migration experience: relative subjective well-being of household at time of first migration, current living standard compared with that in last country abroad, perceptions of return migrant's experience about country of last residence;
- Problems faced by return migrant since returning;
- Migration intentions: preferences for future place of residence, main reason for preference to stay in country of origin, intended destination of return migrant having a preference to move abroad & time of intended migration;
- Family formation patterns: marital status at first migration, current marital status, age at first marriage and nationality and place of residence of spouse, marital stability, prevalence of remarriage and nationality of spouse, polygyny, return migrant's children ever-born and living, by gender, and their place of residence;
- Reproductive preferences: desire for more children, ideal number of children, gender preferences;
- Family planning: ever use of family planning, first use of contraception, current use of family planning by specific method, future use of family planning, reasons for planning not to use, fertility preferences and contraceptive use, fertility preferences and contraceptive intentions, needs for family planning services;
- Smoking tobacco: smoking status, age at starting smoking and number of cigarettes smoked per day, quit-smoking attempts, passive smoking;
- General health status: health insurance coverage, seeking medical care, use of health services, cost of medical care.

MQ-4. Individual Questionnaire for Non-migrants

Eligibility: One non-migrant is selected at random from among members of the household who are currently aged 15-59 years and:

- (i) who never moved to another country;
- (ii) or have last returned from abroad to survey country before start date of reference period;
- (iii) or have last returned from abroad to survey country since the start date of reference period but was under 15 years of age on last return.

- Demographic & socio-economic characteristics of non-migrant;
- Education, and for the highly skilled: country awarding higher degrees;
- Knowledge of languages;
- Migration intentions of non-migrant;
- Demographic characteristics of potential migrant;
- Economic characteristics of potential migrant;
- Motives for intended migration;
- Planned time for intended migration;
- Preferred destination;
- Intended migration decision-making;
- Previous attempts to move abroad;
- Family formation patterns: current marital status, age at first marriage and nationality of spouse, marital stability, prevalence of remarriage and nationality of spouse, polygyny, children ever-born and living, by gender, and their place of residence;
- Reproductive preferences: desire for more children, ideal number of children, gender preferences;
- Family planning: ever use of family planning, first use of contraception, current use of family planning by specific method, future use of family planning, reasons for planning not to use, fertility preferences and contraceptive use, fertility preferences and contraceptive intentions, needs for family planning services;



- Smoking tobacco: smoking status, age at starting smoking and number of cigarettes smoked per day, quit-smoking attempts, passive smoking;
- General health status: health insurance coverage, seeking medical care, use of health services, cost of medical care.

MQ-5. Individual Questionnaire for Forced Migrant

Eligibility: For every non-citizen residing in the survey country who is identified as potential 'Forced Migrant' and is currently 15 years of age or more. A non-citizen residing in the survey country is considered to be a 'forced migrant' if the main reason for leaving country of origin was one of the following: insecurity/war in country of origin, persecution related reasons, transit to another country, trafficking/coercion, or to obtain asylum/refugee status.

- Demographic & socio-economic characteristics of refugee;
- The migration process: main reason for leaving country of origin, persons who accompanied refugee on leaving country of origin, migratory route decision-making, the journey to host country, means of transportation, year of arrival in host country, reason for moving onward from first country of asylum, difficulties encountered during migration journey, financing the migration journey;
- Situation of forced migrant in host country: main reason for coming to host country, asylum applications, refugee status determination, identity documents, assistance received since arrival by source, work status, reason for not working, assistance needed to find work/increase income, attitude of local population, money received from anyone living in another country & its importance, money sent to anyone in country of origin & its importance, knowledge of foreign languages;
- Prospects and intentions: plans for the future, conditions for moving back to country of origin, intention of family members left behind to move to host country, advice to relatives back home regarding moving abroad;
- Smoking tobacco: smoking status, age at starting smoking and number of cigarettes smoked per day, quit-smoking attempts, passive smoking;
- General health status: seeking medical care, use of health services, cost of medical care, whether told by a doctor of having a psychological problem, duration of condition & treatment.

MQ-6. Household Socio-economic Characteristics Questionnaire

Eligibility: For every household in the main sample in which an individual questionnaire for one or more of the four target groups in the survey is successfully completed.

This questionnaire gathers data on housing characteristics, ownership of objects and household assets, transfers to non-household members residing abroad, and remittances received from non-household members residing abroad.

MQ-7. Community Characteristics Questionnaire

The migration intentions and behaviour of people may be affected by their personal characteristics, and by the social milieu in which they live, or by some interaction between the individual and the group characteristics. It is therefore recommended to include in the MED-HIMS questionnaires a module to collect community-level data, particularly in rural areas. This questionnaire gathers data on the location of the community, social development indicators, principal economic activities, general migration patterns in the community including common attitudes and intentions.

References

Further information on the MED-HIMS Programme is available on the following Eurostat website:

<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/european-neighbourhood-policy/enp-south/med-hims>