

Lessons Learned from the NIDI-Eurostat Study

Migration from West Africa and the Mediterranean Region to the EU

Need for special migration surveys

Existing data sources do not collect the type of detailed data needed to understand the determinants and mechanisms of migration. Household surveys are needed that use special sampling procedures, are conducted in both sending and receiving countries, and collect data on appropriate comparison groups, i.e.: (1) non-migrant households in selected sending countries, (2) households in those sending countries with out-migrations to particular receiving countries, (3) households in receiving countries who migrated from the same sending countries as entire households, and (4) individuals in those receiving countries who came from the same set of sending countries. Sampling procedures must deal with the fact that households containing international migrants (referred to here as migrant households) are often rare elements in populations, cluster in particular areas, and are not covered adequately in existing data sources. NIDI, EUROSTAT and national institutes implemented migration surveys in EU receiving countries (Italy, Spain) and in sending countries in Africa and the Mediterranean region (Turkey, Egypt, Morocco, Senegal, Ghana)¹. In sending countries, migrant and non-migrant households were sampled and interviewed while in each receiving country immigrants from two origin countries were interviewed.

Need for special sampling procedures

We developed a multi-stage, stratified, two-phase model sample design involving disproportionate allocation of the sample to areas and strata with a high prevalence of international migrants. This involved the following steps:

1. Choose appropriate study regions, and collect demographic and other data on constituting areas (e.g. provinces, districts).
2. Determine desired total sample size, including migrant and non-migrant households, allowing for non-response.

3. For each region, estimate the prevalence of migrant households in each area, based on data from a census, population register, or, key informants; create strata based on prevalence of migrant households and classify areas.
4. Determine numbers of migrant and non-migrant households to sample in each area (use substantive, logistic and costs criteria), and allocate sample to regions and strata such that areas in the high prevalence strata are over-sampled.
5. For each stratum, compute numbers of areas to sample and sample them from a list using systematic selection.
6. Conduct two-phase sampling in each sample area:
 - Phase 1: use a screening questionnaire to identify and list migrant or non-migrant households.
 - Phase 2: sample predetermined numbers of migrant and non-migrant households from the lists by systematic selection, and then interview them.

approach leading to data of sufficient numbers of migrants and non-migrants. In the absence of adequate sample frames, the judgment of key informants was often used initially in sending countries to select the study regions, and then large screening operations were needed to ensure identifying sufficient households with recent migrants. In receiving countries, the rare elements problem was particularly severe, which led to some use of social gathering points and snowball sampling (asking sample immigrants to identify others they know from that group). Various problems led to the objective of achieving regional and national representativeness in sending and receiving countries, respectively, being only partially realized. However, a unique, data set (see the table) was established for countries belonging to the same migration system to study the determinants and mechanisms of migration.

Some lessons learned are: (1) carefully plan all phases of the project, including sample and questionnaire design and the two-phase fieldwork; and secure sufficient funding to minimize the risk of later compromising the design or fieldwork; (2) conduct a pre-project workshop to explain appropriate sampling strategies and how to deal with potential problems; (3) document problems encountered and solutions adopted, and evaluate correspondence between sample design and implementation. The value of applying the model sampling strategy is the potential for covering larger and more representatively distributed populations, making analyses of migration processes from a migration system perspective, more valid.

Results and lessons learned

Each country used some variant of model sampling

Data on sample designs and implementation.

Country	Target sample	Screened households	Interviewed households		
			Migrant	Other	Total
Italy	1,600	n.a.	Egyptian 508 Ghanaian 669	n.a.	1,177
Spain	1,200	n.r.	Senegalese 515 Moroccan 598	n.a.	1,113
Turkey	1,773	12,838	656	908	1,564
Egypt	2,588	27,438	992	949	1,941
Morocco	2,240	4,512	1,061	892	1,953
Senegal	1,971	13,298	711	1,029	1,740
Ghana	1,980	21,504	709	862	1,571

n.a. = not applicable, n.r. = not reported

¹⁾ For details, see: G. Groenewold and R. Bilsborrow. 2004. Design of Samples for International Migration Surveys: Methodological Considerations, Practical Constraints and Lessons Learned from a Multi-Country Study in Africa and Europe (presented at 2nd conference of the EAPS Working Group on International Migration in Europe. Rome, November 2004).

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