

In pursuit of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Global Compact on Migration for safe, orderly and regular mobility of persons; Status of migration data on the African Continent: Reflections from Southern Africa.

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Migration as a demographic indicator has never been straight forward. Fertility data, theory and understanding of fertility and how policies can affect it have taken a quantum leap with the World Fertility surveys as well as the Demographic Health Survey programs since 1967, while the field of migration continues to limp in the 21st Century.

Inspired by the recent engagement with the International Migration for Migration in implementing the strengthening migration data pilot in southern Africa, this investigative scholarly piece offers advice on how the African continent can strengthen data collection, analysis, storage and accessibility to inform the objective 1 of the Global Compact on Migration for safe, orderly and regular mobility of persons and in pursuit of the Sustainable Development goals(SDGS).

This paper acknowledges that multi-country surveys exist which are yielding or soon will yield much useful information and results on migration. There is need to evaluate them with more intensive studies carried out on the contribution immigrants in host economies together with determinants and consequences of migration from these new, rich data sets, to inform the development of an Africa wide Migration Survey program. This will help considerably in the development of the survey methodology, and minimize problems in sampling, questionnaire design, training, fieldwork, data cleaning and processing, analysis, publication of results, and deriving inferences for policy (the focus continuing to be on developing countries). Dues to lack of adequate sampling frames as a result incomplete population registers with data on the location of households with migrants, there is need for Africa wide capacity building in the context of south-south cooperation.

The paper recommends taking advantage of the emerging 4th industrial revolution and work on innovative methodologies of data collection storage analysis and dissemination. Improving African government migration related administrative data collection instruments, and adding migration modules to existing large-sample surveys would go a long way in strengthening migration data regime on the continent. Further, implementation of specialized surveys can provide the rich data that, if widely shared and well analyzed, can tell us so much more on migration. With all of the current and growing interest in migration and its linkages to development, it is time to take a step in the same direction for migration, towards a Renaissance in the field. This paper offers a clarion call to explore frontiers of migration data collection knowledge towards a pilot experiment an African Migration Survey akin to the World fertility survey.