

## Gender lens required to review migration policies and processes

All development work and government policies should be assessed through the gender lens, as female migrants face different challenges and problems than male migrants throughout the process. Gender blindness worsens the already underdeveloped migration policies and programme for female migrants.

In most cases, people who aspire to migrate to another country are from the poor socio economic cluster of the society having lesser access to basic needs of life. This scenario is even worse when it comes to women. Therefore, with the rise of Bangladeshi women looking for overseas employment opportunities, the urgency of amending policies and processes of migration keeping gender inclusivity as priority is clear.

IID organised a Policy Forum for the second time at Kalia Upazila of Narail District on February 15, 2018 to understand migration related problems and identify plausible solutions from gender perspective. The Policy



Forum was organised in partnership with 'Bangladeshi Ovhibashi Mohila Sramik Association (BOMSA)', as a part of IID's policy advocacy initiative to promote fairer labour migration through PROKAS project of the British Council.

### 10,000+ installations of Bibhui Android app within a month

IID developed Bibhui application to provide Bangladeshi labour migrants with necessary migration information. Following its test launch in February 2018, it has been already proven to be a success among the migrant workers. Bibhui has been downloaded by 10,000 users in less than a month of its test launch.

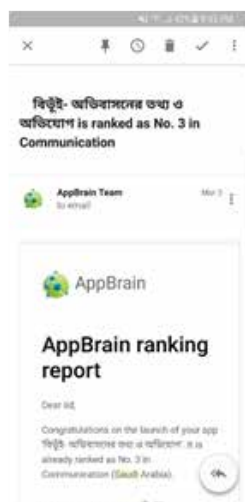
The location of the app users are major destination countries for Bangladeshi migrants, including Saudi Arabia, Oman, UAE, Qatar and Malaysia.

Due to high number of downloads within a very short



period of time, Bibhui app was ranked number 3 top trending app in Saudi Arabia under the communications category of AppBrain's user-driven app.

While there are other apps currently in the market that provides labour migration related information, Bibhui received positive feedback and praise upon initial review especially for its offline content availability and easy user interface.



## Exposure visit to BMET, Jessore for #MigrantFirst social media campaign

IID visited BMET on 14th February 2018 in Jessore to collect one-on-one stories of migrants as a part of 'Migrants First (প্রবাসীপ্রথম) social media campaign. IID captured plights and pleas of migrants in videos and written interviews.

Migrants First (প্রবাসীপ্রথম) is an online community targeted towards Bangladeshi labour migrants living abroad; It serves as a platform to share their experience where migrants help each other by sharing their own experiences (See: [www.fb.com/probashiprothom](http://www.fb.com/probashiprothom)). Aspiring and current migrants in the group ask questions and existing migrants usually answer them. During the exposure visit at BMET, IID discussed about its social media campaign and asked the trainees consisting of aspiring and returnee migrants, about their experience regarding the process of migration, the service provider and the middlemen.



## Work collaboratively to end modern slavery

Slavery, which is thought to be abolished legally hundreds of years ago, still persists in the form of modern day slavery across the globe. Modern slavery, also known as contemporary slavery, refers to the prevalence of slavery that continue to exist in the present day as forced



labour in various forms. Someone is considered to be in slavery if they are forced to work through mental or physical threat; owned or controlled by an 'employer', treated as a commodity or bought and sold as 'property' and have restrictions placed on their freedom of movement. While millions of people are enslaved today, collective actions are required to end this deeply entrenched practice in the society.

To identify the potential areas for action in modern slavery, IID in collaboration with the British Council hosted a consultation meeting as part of PROKAS (Promoting Knowledge and Accountable Systems) project on January 31, 2018.

## All development initiatives should internalise a gender guideline

Every development initiatives should be implemented following a gender guideline.

Gender equality and social inclusion are seen not only as a fundamental aspect of human rights and social justice, but also as a precondition to improve the development



process by putting social concerns at the forefront of interventions. In such context, implementation of any development initiative process, should be concerned about gender and social inclusion.

IID shared its Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Strategy (GESI) guideline while moderating a session at the 4th quarterly workshop of PROKAS. Discussion started with a presentation on how IID has been trying to follow GESI in its organisational policies and development initiatives to ensure gender balance and equal participation of all groups. The objective of the session was to know the existing practices of gender and social inclusion, based on which a GESI guideline for all the partner organisations will be prepared.

## Availability of government information on migration could not address public knowledge on migration

About 50% people are unaware of the information and support services for safer migration provided by the Government or NGO's. This was revealed from a survey conducted by IID from 1st to 13th December 2017 in Narail, Chittagong, Tangail and Comilla along with a series of KII and FGDs. The study tried to explore the issues migrants face due to information gaps and tried to delineate the true cost of migration.

Survey result also showed that only 17% of the people are informed on how the migration act can protect them from being scammed and protect their rights as citizens. Subsequently, 73% of people seek information from their relatives or neighbours for going abroad and thus 45% of them had a known person as their middleman.

Given the positive impact of migration on poverty, unemployment and on overall economy; migrant wellbeing should be given topmost priority for policy intervention.



## Government cooperation can ease the labour migration process

The latest session of Hello MP adopted a new concept in order to reach remote places of Chittagong and to connect local people with Parliamentary Member.

Roksana Yasmin Suty, MP— a member of the parliamentary caucus on migration, talked to the people of Rangunia, Chittagong district as part of IID's fairer



labour migration campaign on 23rd September 2017. Different issues including migration scamming to visa procedure difficulties were addressed in this session of Hello MP. The most pressing issues in the program were cooperation from Bangladeshi foreign missions, upgraded passport and medical centre services and the need to establish a help-line for ex-migrants at the destination countries.

## Bridging the information gap for fairer labour migration

Lack of information has been a major disadvantage to most aspiring migrants for fairer labour migration. This was the focus issue of IID's Policy Forum held at Kalia Upazila of Narail District.

The forum was held on 13 August, 2017 in partnership with Bangladeshi Ovivashi Mohila Sramik Association (BOMSA).



Participants of the forum included local political leaders, returnee migrants and their family members, aspiring and NGO representatives. During the discussion, participant's spontaneously identified the deceitful phases of migration process.

The forum ended with discussion on prevention measures for migration scams and steps to be taken if someone falls victim of scamming”.

## Fairer labour migration demanded through Hello MP

Local citizens complained about the harassment by middlemen and demanded fairer labour migration during a video conference through IID's latest Hello MP session.

Roksana Yasmin Suty MP, who is also a member of the parliamentary caucus on migration, talked to the citizen



of Kalia, Narail district as part of IID's fairer labour migration campaign.

During the event that took place on 13th August 2017, participants shared their concerns and queries regarding safe migration with the honourable MP Roksana Yasmin Suty. Many demanded proper assistance from government's end. Honourable MP promised to present the issue on next parliamentary meeting.

She also promised to visit local passport office as some participants raised concerns regarding fair practices at some service providing centres. (Later on, the MP paid a sudden visit to the local passport office and spoke to the aspirant migrants about their experience with the passport offices).

## Model High Commission focusing on migrants

Bangladesh High Commission in the destination countries need to provide services with a “migrant First” (Probashi-Prothom) approach. This issue was suggested by the participants of Policy Forum on Migration held at Tangail. IID, in partnership with RMMRU, organised this Policy Forum as part of its series of policy advocacy initiatives to promote fairer labour migration.

The forum was attended by the local political leaders,



aspirant and returnee migrants, brokers, NGO activists, local CSOs, youth group representatives, UNO and fairer labour migration project local partners.

Several issues regarding migration loan, establishing medical centres at sub-district level, skill training, broker dealing, proper documentation and awareness for safe migration was also discussed by the participant in this forum.

## About



Institute of Informatics and Development (IID) is a public policy institute promoting evidence-informed inclusive policy. IID is registered as a nonprofit institute in Bangladesh under Section 28 of the Companies Act 1994.



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