

Understanding Women and Migration: A Literature Review

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KNOMAD - Gender Cross-Cutting Theme

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Outline

1. **Types and Trends of Female Migration**
2. **Drivers of Female Migration**
3. **Gender Segregation in the Labor Force**
4. **Remittances**
5. **Opportunities and Costs of Migration**
6. **Constraints and Legal Restrictions**
7. **Recommendations**

1. Types and Trends of Female Migration

- **Migration for marriage or family reunification**
- **Increasing migration for economic opportunities**
- **Female migration growing faster than male migration in many countries**

Migrant women approximately half of international migrants

Region	1990	2000	2010	2013
World	48.8	49.1	48.1	48.0
More developed regions	51.2	51.2	51.5	51.6
Less developed regions	46.2	46.1	43.3	43.0
Africa	46.6	47.2	46.1	45.9
Sub-Saharan Africa	47.0	47.6	46.6	46.3
Eastern Africa	48.5	49.0	48.6	47.8
Middle Africa	49.0	48.8	47.1	46.7
Northern Africa	46.7	44.6	42.5	41.5
Southern Africa	38.7	40.9	42.0	42.3
Western Africa	46.3	47.4	46.7	46.7
Asia	45.6	45.4	42.0	41.6



Region	1990	2000	2010	2013
World	48.8	49.1	48.1	48.0
Eastern Asia	49.3	52.7	54.2	53.9
Northern Africa	46.7	44.6	42.5	41.5
Western Asia	41.2	40.0	34.8	34.3
Europe				
Eastern Europe				
Northern Europe				
Southern Europe				
Western Europe				
Latin America and Caribbean				
Caribbean				
Central America	50.5	49.8	50.0	50.0
South America	50.0	50.6	52.8	52.8
Northern America	51.1	50.5	51.2	51.2
Oceania	49.1	50.0	50.2	50.2
Australia and New Zealand	49.4	50.3	50.5	50.5
Melanesia	44.4	44.0	44.1	44.1
Micronesia	44.0	47.9	44.7	44.0
Polynesia	44.1	45.0	46.7	46.8

Source: UN DESA. "Trends in International Migrant Stock." 2013.

2. Drivers of Female Migration

- **Gender norms and expectations**
- **Structural inequalities and discrimination**
- **Social networks can stimulate migration**

3. Gender Segregation in the Labor Force

- “Feminine” positions
 - Low-skilled: domestic work
 - High-skilled: nursing
- Recruitment for gendered labor

4. Remittances

- **Women remit a higher proportion of their income**
- **Women show more stability and frequency in sending remittances**
- **Family welfare improves when women receive or send remittances**

5. Opportunities and Costs of Migration

- Family health and children's education may improve
- More equitable societal norms can improve women's rights, autonomy, and access to resources
- Transnational parenting can put a strain on families
- "Brain drain" can occur when high-skilled migrants leave

6. Constraints

- **Restrictive gender norms**
- **Unemployment**
- **Underemployment**
- **Discrimination**
- **Legal restrictions**

Legal Restrictions

Women restricted from same jobs as men – **100 countries**

Other important restrictions:

- Apply for a passport – **32 countries**
- Be head of household – **30 countries**
- Choose where to live – **30 countries**
- Confer citizenship to children – **22 countries**
- Get a job without permission – **18 countries**

Source: World Bank Group. “Women, Business and the Law.” 2015

Legal Restrictions (continued)

- Travel outside the home – **17 countries**
- Obtain a national identity card – **10 countries**
- Travel outside the country – **6 countries**
- Register a business – **4 countries**
- Open a bank account – **2 countries**
- Sign a contract – **2 countries**

Source: World Bank Group. “Women, Business and the Law.” 2015

7. Recommendations

1. **Ensure migrant women are granted full human rights.**
2. **Provide access to financial institutions and better channels for sending and receiving remittances.**
3. **Increase access and opportunities for women in labor market.**
4. **Regulate domestic work.**
5. **Provide support for migrants before, during, and after migration.**

7. Recommendations (continued)

- 6. Regulate and monitor recruitment agencies and immigration officials.**
- 7. Provide resource centers and access to services, like healthcare.**
- 8. Require training on gender sensitivities and human rights.**
- 9. Revise laws to ease barriers to safe migration for migrant women.**
- 10. Revise discriminatory laws to be gender sensitive and rights based.**

THANK YOU !

www.worldbank.org/migration

www.knomad.org

**For additional information and
questions, please contact:**

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