

Digital Solutions for Financial Empowerment of Overseas Migrants in Asia

Background

Nearly 90 million international migrants (one-third of the world's total) are sourced from the Asia-Pacific region. About a third of this migration takes place within Asia, and is linked to formal, short-term employment contracts for low-skill work.

Remittances are a very important source of income for transnational families and could enable improved education and health, and socio-economic mobility for large numbers in the source countries. However many gaps remain. Many migrants in Asia remain vulnerable to economic shocks and pressure, struggle to finance their migration, suffer from a lack of job security in the host destination, and remain vulnerable to unscrupulous recruiters and lenders. Financial institutions and public programs often offer only limited products and services to this population, further exacerbating their ability to manage their money and successfully achieve their migration goals and dreams.

Arguably there is room for financial empowerment of these migrants both through education and mentoring, and through the provision of enhanced and innovative tools, products and services. These solutions need to be grounded in the realities of their situation and targeted to the constraints that these migrants face: whether these are constrained access to technology, lack of knowledge and information, lack of motivation to leverage the knowledge, or other social and behavioural constraints. They also need to be grounded in the realities of their daily lives – where employment conditions may not permit them to access financial products at brick-and-mortar financial institutions, and where the pandemic has increasingly moved information dissemination, family communication, money transfers and management online.

About the Workshop

This two-day online workshop aims to bring together researchers, nonprofits and digital service providers to talk about their work that addresses the particular challenges in financial empowerment – including their learning from prior work, and directions for future intervention design and research explorations.

Format

For each 20-minute session, each speaker will give a 15-minute presentation, followed by 5 minutes of Q&A.

Schedule

Last updated: 21 November 2022

1st December - Financial Education

Time: 14:30 to 17:00 (HKT)

Moderator: Sujata Visaria, Associate Professor of Economics and Director of Center for Economic Policy, HKUST

Time (HKT)	Speaker
14:30-14:40	Opening Remarks: Albert Park , Chief Economist, Asian Development Bank
14:40-15:00	Aiko Kikkawa , Economist, Asian Development Bank Presentation Title: <i>Migtech: How Technology is Reshaping Labor Mobility and the Landscape of International Migration</i>
15:00-15:20	Fenella Carpena , Associate Professor at the Oslo Business School, Oslo Metropolitan University

Time (HKT)	Speaker
	Presentation Title: <i>The Causal Mechanism of Financial Education: Evidence from Mediation Analysis</i>
15:20-15:40	Juyoung Jang, Migration Research & Training Centre Presentation Title: <i>Financial Education and Financial Behavior of Overseas Filipino Workers in South Korea</i>
15:40-16:00	Nobuyuki Nakamura , Research Fellow, JICA Ogata Research Institute Presentation Title: <i>How Altruism Works during a Pandemic: Examining the Roles of Financial Support and Degrees of Individual Altruism on International Remittance</i>
16:00-16:20	Jonathan Capal , Founder and Chief of Global Programs, SaverAsia Presentation Title: <i>Building a Financial Education Platform for the Empowerment of Migrant Communities</i>
16:20-16:40	Camille Bethoux , Learning Designer, Uplifters Presentation Title: <i>Financial empowerment of Migrant Domestic Workers in South-East Asia through 100% online education and peer support</i>
16:40-17:00	Moderated Open Discussion & Wrap-up

2nd December - Financial Services

Time: 08:15am to 11:00am (HKT)

Moderator: Aiko Kikkawa , Economist, Asian Development Bank

Time (HKT)	Speaker
08:15-08:20	Opening Remarks: Aiko Kikkawa , Economist, Asian Development Bank
08:20-08:40	Catherine Laws , Programme Technical Officer, International Labour Organization Presentation Title: <i>Financial Education and Platforms for Migrant Workers in ASEAN</i>
08:40-09:00	Aileen Constantino-Peñas , Executive Director, Atikha Presentation Title: <i>Economic Empowerment of Migrants and Families</i>
09:00-09:20	Sujata Visaria , Associate Professor of Economics and Director of Center for Economic Policy, HKUST Presentation Title: <i>Borrowing to Save: Migrant Domestic Workers' Financial Choices and Possible Solutions</i>
09:20-10:20	Panel Discussion Moderator: Aiko Kikkawa , Economist, Asian Development Bank Panelists: 1. Kimberley Wilson , Sr. Lecturer in International Business and Human Security, the Fletcher School, Tufts University 2. Erwin R. Tiongson , Professor of the Practice and Deputy Director of the Global Human Development Program, Georgetown University
10:20-10:40	Moderated Open Discussion & Wrap up

About the Speakers



Camille Bethoux is the Head of Programs and Learning Designer and acting Co-CEO of Uplifters, a Hong Kong-based nonprofit. Camille is a human rights advocate with 15 years of experience supporting and leading human rights campaigns and community empowerment projects, having been based in Europe, Asia, and now Africa. She's also an International Coaching Federation (ICF) coach passionate about the personal and professional growth of change-makers and community leaders. Tapping into her coaching skills and her knowledge of the situation of marginalized groups, she designs Uplifters' educational programs so everyone can access the resources and opportunities to lift themselves and own their life.



Jonathan Capal is the Chief of Global Programs of SaverAsia. He has 17 years' experience leading projects and consulting for the private and public sectors in the areas of remittances, financial literacy and migration. An industry leader and advocate, working with community and diaspora leaders to support migrant-focused development programmes. He has launched and managed eight government and international donor supported remittance and migrant digital platforms since 2006, including the SaverAsia web/app which includes a focus on corridors into and within Asia.



Fenella Carpena is Associate Professor of Economics at the Oslo Business School, Oslo Metropolitan University (OsloMet). She is an applied microeconomist with a particular interest in development economics. Prior to joining OsloMet, she obtained a Ph.D. in Economics (2017) from the University of California Berkeley.



Juyoung Jang is a Policy Researcher at the Migration Research & Training Centre, Seoul. Prior to MRTC, she was an Affiliated Researcher at the Center for Multicultural Research, Hanyang University, Seoul. Ms. Jang obtained her Ph.D. in Family Social Science from the University of Minnesota and master's degree in Family Studies from Seoul National University.



Ms. Catherine Laws is the Technical Officer for the Migrant Workers Empowerment and Advocacy (MWEA) Project and the Improved Migration Governance (IMG) Project in Malaysia. Prior to this role, Catherine worked on the ILO's ASEAN TRIANGLE Project and the subsequent TRIANGLE in ASEAN Project which focused on strengthening the regional labour migration governance framework in ASEAN region in close collaboration with ASEAN institutions and Member States, as well as regional and national workers', employers' and civil society organizations. Prior to the ILO, she worked at the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and several civil society organizations where she covered issues such as labour migration, migration and development, research, capacity building, disaster response, and community building. She holds a Masters in Public Management and a Bachelors in International Relations (major in European Studies; minors in Political Philosophy and Hispanic Studies).



Aiko Kikkawa is an economist at the Economic Research and Cooperation Department of the Asian Development Bank. She covers research portfolio of international migration and remittances, aging and demographic change, and economic analysis of ADB projects in social sectors. Prior to joining ADB, she was with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) where she led technical assistance programs on overseas employment policy, remittances, and disaster relief operations targeting mobile population. Ms. Kikkawa obtained her Ph.D. in Development Economics from the National Graduate Institute of Policy Studies, Japan, and Master's degree in Forced Migration from the University of Oxford, UK.



Ms. Penas is a graduate of Bachelor of Arts in Development Communication at Batangas State University. She is currently enrolled in Masters of Arts in Migration Studies at Miriam College, Quezon City. She has been working with Atikha for seven years. Ms. Peñas helped developed workshops in addressing communication issues of children of migrants and came up with the module on Young Entrepreneurship. She is one of the authors of the books Children's Response to the Challenges of Migration; a Trainers' Training Manual for school-based Migration Realities and Capacity Building seminar and Ang Migrasyong Pilipino: Mga Kaugnay na Kahalagahan at Kagalingang Dapat Malinang sa Kabataan; Mga Teksto at Banghay Aralin.

She has been instrumental in the success of Batang Atikha Savers Club in Batangas and she is working in partnership with the Local Government of Mabini in creating appropriate programs for the OFWs and their families. She is also one of Atikha's trainers/ facilitators in its different seminar and she has been a trainer on Financial Literacy and Psychosocial Intervention Seminar for Overseas Filipinos, Seafarers and their Families conducted by Atikha in the last 4 years.



Nobuyuki Nakamura is a research fellow at JICA Ogata Sadako Research Institute for Peace and Development. His research interests include human capital development and social security in developing countries. His current research focus on the socio-economic impact of migrants in Asian countries, including the remittance behavior. He earned a Ph.D. from International Studies, the University of Tokyo, Japan.



Erwin R. Tiongson is Professor of the Practice and Deputy Director of the Global Human Development (GHD) Program at Georgetown University's Walsh School of Foreign Service (SFS). He previously served as Professor in the Practice of International Affairs, Concentration Chair for International Development, and Deputy Director of the M.S. Foreign Service (MSFS) Program.



Sujata Visaria is an Associate Professor in Economics at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology Business School. She has a Ph.D. from Columbia University, and has previously taught at Boston University and the University of Michigan. Her research studies institutional and behavioural constraints that hamper the outcomes of low-income individuals in developing regions. Some of her recent work studies alternative designs for beneficiary selection for agricultural credit and the financial constraints and choices of migrant domestic workers. She is the director of the Center for Economic Policy at HKUST, and a member of the Standing Panel on Impact Assessment (SPIA) of the CGIAR. She has served on the board of directors of the Asian Migrants Credit Union, the first and only savings and credit cooperative serving migrant workers in Hong Kong.



Kimberley Wilson is a Sr. Lecturer at the Fletcher School of Tufts University. She is a Senior Fellow at the Leir Institute of Migration and Human Security as well as at the Center for Emerging Market Enterprises, both at Fletcher. Prior to 2016, Kim worked as a practitioner and researcher in the domain of financial inclusion. Since 2016, she works exclusively on financial and economic issues of migration. With Daryl Collins she will be co-authoring a book (Princeton University Press) on the Financial Journeys in Long Distance Migration. Her chapter on “Financial Elements of Clandestine Journeys: How you pay your smuggler matters” will appear in 2023 *Global Human Smuggling, Volume III*, Eds. Luigi Achilli and David Kyle, Johns Hopkins University Press. She is on the Board of Advisors of the Gojo Foundation as well as the Hitachi Institute for Technology and Global Affairs (at Fletcher).