

<b>Institution:</b> University of Portsmouth		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> UoA14: Geography and Environmental Studies		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Improving the wellbeing of international women migrants and their families in Indonesia		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2013 - 2017		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Saseendran Pallikadavath	Professor in Demography and Public Health	01/04/2007 - date
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> February 2016 - 31 July 2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> N		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b>		
<p>Research led by <b>Pallikadavath</b> on the impact of international female migration on 'left-behind' families has directly contributed to changes in international policies and programmes that have benefited over 500,000 female migrants and their dependents in Indonesia. These changes include extensions to the scope of individual rights and duration of protection and support, improvements to national and regional pre-departure training programmes to support integration on departure and return, and the creation of women's self-help groups and youth centres to support families and returning migrants. The Portsmouth-Brawijaya Centre for Global Health, Population and Policy, established in 2015, has also enhanced international capability and capacity in collaborative research on intractable development issues across South East Asia.</p>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b>		
<p>There are approximately 1,300,000 women from Indonesia working abroad, mainly in the Middle East and South East Asia (<a href="#">BPN2TKI, 2019</a>). The primary impetus for this female international migration is economic, but, as women play a pivotal role in caring for children, husbands and elderly parents, the departure of women to work abroad may negatively affect the 'left-behind family'. <b>Between 2015 and 2017, Professor Saseendran Pallikadavath, University of Portsmouth (UoP), led a programme of research in East Java, Indonesia that examined the impacts of female international migration on the economic and social wellbeing of the 'left-behind family'.</b></p> <p>This project brought together <b>Pallikadavath's</b> established experience in researching the effects of demographic variables on global health and social inequalities with that of Professor Keppi Sukesni, University of Brawijaya (UoB), Indonesia, on gender and migration policies. <b>Pallikadavath</b> had previously led participatory research programmes with the Centre for Development Studies in India (<b>G1, G2</b>). These combined multi-level modelling of national statistics with thematic analysis of qualitative data to investigate inequalities of health care (<b>R1</b>) and the impacts of fertility status on women's autonomy (decision-making, employment, education and mobility) (<b>R2</b>) and educational and skill development (<b>R3</b>) to inform the development of national health and social care policies. In 2015, a British Council Award to <b>Pallikadavath</b> and Sukesni (<b>G3</b>) supported primary research in Indonesia that examined the social implications of migration on married and unmarried women, and the socio-economic impacts of international female migration on all four key elements of the family: left-behind husbands, children, parents and the migrant women themselves. At this time, the Government of Indonesia 'Regulation Concerning Placement and Protection of Indonesian Overseas Workers' (39/2004) focussed exclusively on the 'placement' of migrants in destination countries: it did not include provision for the left-behind family nor for re-integration of the migrant worker on return to Indonesia. The research was conducted in the Malang and Ponorogo Regencies in East Java, which have the highest densities of female migrant workers in Indonesia, and combined data from the Indonesian Family Life Survey, 178 household surveys and 71 semi-structured interviews.</p> <p>Research findings confirmed the short-term economic benefits of international female migration but identified that any early economic advantage was outweighed by social disadvantages borne by the left-behind family, and the migrant women themselves. These included: increased workloads and diverse impacts on left-behind parents, strongly influenced by the marital status of</p>		

the migrant daughter (**R4**); and left-behind husbands becoming socially isolated as they assumed domestic and childcare responsibilities, misusing or becoming dependent upon remittances or husbands embarking on extra-marital affairs, leading to marriage dissolution (**R5**). The research also identified the need to equip prospective international female migrants with adequate knowledge about their jobs, potential work environment, social, political and legal systems in the destination countries, and to teach them how to use wages effectively and save for their return (**R4**). Finally, the research highlighted significant barriers to re-integration of returning migrants with their family and community, the effect increasing with duration of migration. Mother and children relationships were difficult to re-establish, particularly when the mother had been absent during a child's teenage years. Left-behind children suffered from mental health issues, such as loneliness, neglect, drug and alcohol use, and adolescents, particularly girls, experienced stress during hormonal changes without support from their mothers (**R6**).

In August 2020, the Portsmouth-Brawijaya team were awarded funding to extend this work to assess the socio-economic and health impacts of Covid-19 on international female migrants and left-behind families in East Java (**G4**).

### 3. References to the research

#### 3.1. Research outputs

- R1. **Pallikadavath, S.**, Singh, A., Ogollah, R., Dean, T., & Stones, W. (2013). Human resource inequalities at the base of India's public health care system. *Health & Place*, 23, 26-32. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.healthplace.2013.05.003>
- R2. **Pallikadavath, S.**, Rajan, I., Singh, A., Ogollah, R., & Page, S. (2015). Post-sterilization autonomy among young mothers in South India. *Journal of Biosocial Science*, 47(01), 75-89. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S002193201300059X>
- R3. **Pallikadavath, S.**, Irudaya Rajan, S., & Wilson, C. (2016). Impact of low fertility and early age at sterilisation on women's formal education and skill development in South India. *Journal of Population Research*, 33(3), 199-220. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12546-016-9167-y>
- R4. Aminuddin, F., **Pallikadavath, S.**, Kamanda, A., Sukesi, K., Rosalinda, H., & Hatton, K. (2019). The social and economic impact of international female migration on left-behind parents in East Java, Indonesia. *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, 28(1), 97-114. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0117196818815512>
- R5. **Pallikadavath, S.**, Kamanda, A., Hatton, K., Sukesi, K., Aminuddin, F. and Rosalinda, H. (2016). What is the impact of international female labour migration on the left-at home husband and fathers in East Java, Indonesia? European Population Conference, Mainz, Germany. <https://epc2016.princeton.edu/papers/160546>
- R6. Rosalinda, H., **Pallikadavath, S.**, Sukesi, K., Aminuddin, F., Kamanda, A. & Hatton, K. (2017). The social and economic impact of international female labour migration on left-behind children in East Java, Indonesia. British Society for Population Studies, Liverpool, UK. Available on request.

#### 3.2. Evidence for the quality of the research

Underpinning research programmes are original research studies employing robust design and appropriate techniques, data analysis, and interpretation, supported by competitively awarded, peer-reviewed funding (**Pallikadavath** as PI). Outputs R1-R4 are published in relevant peer-reviewed academic journals: R2 is returned to REF2 with Output ID 11696342.

#### 3.3. Related grants

- G1. **Pallikadavath, S.** Women's social benefits of early sterilisation and low fertility in South India. Funded by the British Academy, November 2009 - October 2011 (GBP72,041)
- G2. **Pallikadavath, S.** (PI), Irudaya Rajan, S., and Wilson, C. Post-Transitional fertility in developing countries: causes and implications. Funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, April 2011 - July 2013 (GBP17,431)
- G3. **Pallikadavath, S.** (PI), Sukesi K, and Rosalinda, H. What happens to the family when women migrate? An international collaborative programme on the impact of female international

migration on poverty, children, elderly, spouse and fertility in East Java. Funded by the British Council, 01 April 2015 - 31 March 2017 (GBP81,269)

G4. **Pallikadavath, S.** (PI), Sukeesi K, Sujarwoto, S. and Aminuddin, F. GCRF\_NF154: Socio-economic and health impact of Covid-19 on international female migrants and their left-behind families in Indonesia. Funded by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council, August 2020 - February 2022 (GBP179,381).

#### 4. Details of the impact

Research in East Java, Indonesia, led by Pallikadavath, identified the impacts of international female migration on the left-behind family and made the following recommendations:

- mental health screening, counselling and sexual and reproductive health education for left-behind adolescents;
- recreational and creative activities for left-behind children and young people;
- provision of child care facilities for the families of migrant workers;
- provision of skills development training for returning female migrants;
- a monthly allowance to husbands to overcome any dependency on wives;
- educating husbands about sexually transmitted diseases.

As well as co-developing and co-delivering the research with local communities, the UoP-UoB team adopted a variety of mechanisms to promote the policy implications of their research findings. These included a series of Policy briefs in local languages, summarising the recommendations for left-behind parents, children and husbands separately, and a short film, '[My lost dream](#)', describing the impacts of female international migration on a 'real' family.

Between December 2016 and July 2017, the UoP-UoB research team hosted 18 impact-led dissemination events at which the research results and policy recommendations were presented and discussed. These events were held at National (Jakarta) and Provincial (Malang and Ponorogo) levels and were attended by over 400 participants, including: delegates from key national policy defining organisations (e.g. the Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, National Board for the Placement and Protection of Indonesian Overseas Workers (BNP2TKI), National Family Planning Coordinating Board (BKKBN), Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection); international charities (Migrant Care); organisations representing migrants nationally (Indonesian Migrant Workers Union) and internationally (UN International Labour Organisation); Village Officers from the research sites; returning migrants; and local activists. The British Council invited the team to present their project at the UK Education Showcase in Surabaya in March 2017.

#### Changes in international policies to improve the rights of female migrant workers and their families

*As a consequence of the extensive influencing activities by the UoP-UoB research team, the recommendations of the research have been incorporated into national Indonesian policies. In 2016, Pallikadavath and Sukeesi were invited by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and of Manpower to participate in a number of high-level discussions to revise Regulation 39/2004. Based on their research, they highlighted the importance of protecting the left-behind family: this contributed to the inclusion of State obligations 'to improve the entire protection system for Indonesian migrant workers and their families ...before, during, and after working' (S1). As well as extending the scope and period of protection of migrant workers and their families, the revised [Indonesian Regulation Law No 18/2017 on the Protection of Migrant Workers](#) (Law No 18/2017): charged the village government with protecting the legal, economic and social rights of the migrant family: extended the roles and responsibilities of sub-national government (at central, provincial, regency and village levels) and worker placement agencies; and extended the rights of migrant families to obtain information about, and communicate with, the worker whilst they were abroad, and to receive their possessions if they were to die there (S2). Since adoption, a total of 568,281 female migrants have been placed overseas ([BNP2TKN data 2017-2019](#)) and they, and their families, have directly benefitted from this change in regulation. Additionally, the UoP-UoB research contributed to the incorporation of female migration as a component of the Indonesian National*

Population and Family Planning Board's (BKKBN) 'rights based family development' programme (S3, S4), with a potential influence on 260 million Indonesians.

In November 2016, Pallikadavath presented research findings from the Indonesian project at the 13th International Inter-Ministerial Conference on Population and Development 'Priority Population and Development Challenges in the Context of SDGs', Dakar, Senegal. Pallikadavath subsequently made a direct contribution to, and is acknowledged in, the WHO report on 'Women on the Move: Migration, Care work and Health', 2017. This report explicitly calls for a focus on, and international policy coherence for, the health and care of families left behind by international female migrants (S5).

### **Changes to pre-departure training programmes to better protect and prepare female migrants on departure and return**

Pre-departure vocational training in Indonesia is provided by regional governments and by private recruitment/placement agencies. Regulation 18/2017 called for an enhanced programme of pre-departure training, to include knowledge and skills to equip the worker in the destination country, as well as financial planning for return. At the beginning of 2017, and directly informed by R4, the UoP-UoB research team developed a training curriculum that included modules on foreign culture, health, banking and legal arrangements, social structure, education systems, disaster management and communication. This training programme was adopted by four large private agencies and two return-migrant cooperatives (Sukowilangun and Sumber Rejeki) in 2017 and, by 31 July 2020, a total of 7,700 women had been trained by these organisations.

### **Community initiatives to improve the well-being of left behind young people and returning migrants**

As a result of being involved in the research programme, village communities expanded and started new, local initiatives to support migrant families. These were initially supported directly by the UoP-UoB research team and with government funding, invested in response to the enhanced profile of the community through hosting policy dissemination events as part of the research project. More specifically, a youth centre was opened in 2017 in one of the research villages, Sukowilangun, Malang (S6): this hosts 30 children at a time and offers leisure/sports activities, a library and educational activities. The youth centre provides a vital element of peer-support for left behind children, and counselling services are available. The research team delivered workshops on literacy, use of the internet and social media to children in August 2017: the centre subsequently started a blog to which children contribute and share their stories. Funded by the Indonesian government, this initiative has expanded across the Malang Regency, with the opening of a youth centre in Glangang Village, Pakisaji in 2018, and in Sitarjo Village in 2019, each for 30-40 children (S7). Students from the UoB continue to provide support for these youth centres as part of their higher education community service activities. Local communities in villages where the original research was conducted have also set up women's self-help groups. In 2015, a self-help group was established by returning female migrants in Sukowilangun, initially with 20 members (S6).

This group supported returning migrants and their families by: providing child-care for parents and husbands who may be struggling with additional responsibilities; monitoring left-behind families for signs of difficulty or hardship; offering counselling for migrants and their families; supporting families to access ancillary services, such as medical and police; creating social activities; upskilling returning migrants for employment; and creating a website to support female entrepreneurship: <https://sukowilangun.wordpress.com/>. Due to the success of this model, in Sukowilangan alone, there are now 4 groups with 20 members in each and, since 2016, women's self-help groups have been set up across the Malang province (S7).

### **Enhancing global health research capacity in South East Asia**

The South East Asia region consists of 11 countries with a total population of 640,000,000. It is the highest source of international female migrants globally (~7,000,000) and has an increasingly ageing population (> 10% of 65+). In 2015, the [Portsmouth-Brawijaya Centre for Global Health, Population and Policy](#) (PB Centre) was created as a UoP-UoB strategic collaboration, initially

supported by Newton Institutional Link funding (**G4**). Since its inception, and led by Pallikadavath, the PB Centre has established itself as a regional centre of excellence for policy-relevant research. The PB Centre has enhanced research capability and capacity in Indonesia, and across South East Asia, through:

- incorporation of international female migration into the UoB Global Health and Population academic curriculum in 2016. The curriculum includes field research on the impacts of female migration and a period of community service with youth centres and self-help groups in villages. A total of 792 students from across the region have registered on the Global Health and Population course (to 31.07.2020);
- signing of an MoU with the BKKBN that underpins research collaborations and training of government researchers (ca. 40 p.a.) in academic publishing and mixed methods research for health and social care;
- supported by funding from UoP, delivery of international research capacity development workshops for academic and government department delegates from Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia and Myanmar on healthy ageing (University of Philippines, September 2018) and international female migration (PB Centre, Indonesia, April 2019); and
- hosting the first [South East Asia Conference on Population and Health](#) (November 2018), attended by 250 participants from Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, Vietnam, Timor Leste, Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar, Brunei and Thailand. Jointly sponsored by the UoP, UoB and the National Population and Family Planning Board, Indonesia, this event established the South East Asia Consortium on Population and Health that has underpinned research programmes, publications and funding applications (to British Council, NIHR, MRC and the British Academy) to address regional population health and migration issues.

#### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

S1. Email statement from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia, confirming the alignment of the UoP-UoB research with the policy changes in the National Regulation on Migration (Regulation 18/2017) (15 March 2021)

S2. Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 18 of 2017 on Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers, 2017

S3. Email statement from [text removed for publication], National Population and Family Planning Board of Indonesia (BKKBN) confirming the contribution of research by the UoP-UoB team to the 2017 'Rights-based Strategy' (16 March 2021).

S4. A Rights-based Strategy for Accelerating Access to Integrated Family Planning and Reproductive Health Services to Achieve Indonesia's Development Goals. United Nations Population Fund Indonesia, 2017

S5. WHO Report (2017): '[Women on the move: Migration, care work and health](#)'. ISBN: 978-92-4-151314-2. Acknowledgement of contribution by Pallikadavath, Page 7

S6. Statement from the [text removed for publication] confirming formation of youth centre and self-help groups for return migrants as a result of the UoP-UoB project on international female migration (26 February 2021)

S7. Statement from the Department of Women Empowerment and Child Protection, Malang Regency, confirming expansion of youth centres and self-help groups (24 February 2021).