

Hello from the other side

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Impact paragraph

Have you ever moved to another country for a short or long period? Maybe for your work, as a student, for your family, or perhaps because you were forced to? Or do you know someone who moved abroad? Have you ever thought about the effect it can have on your home country?

Even when residing abroad, people stay connected with their home country. Staying in touch has become much easier over the last decades. We do not need to wait for weeks for a letter from abroad; we can instantly receive emails, messages, or social media updates. We do not get frustrated anymore about defective phone cards or exceeding costs when calling abroad; Skype or Zoom allows us to video call without charges.

Migration is part of human nature, as, throughout history, we always have moved and always will move. And these movements play a vital role in societal changes. Unfortunately, the media mostly focuses on problems related to migration. Less attention has been given to the positive aspects related to migration. For example, migrants send money (also referred to as 'economic remittances') to others, such as family and friends, in their home country. In 2019, migrants sent about \$717 billion to their home country. This money can help pay for education, housing, food security, or the health of family and friends in their home country, which can positively influence a country's development. In this way, migrants can be perceived as change agents.

While the amount and influence of remittances are large, there are downsides. You can do as much until the money is spent, meaning you will need more to achieve common or additional goals. As a consequence, people can get dependent on it. Of course, people do not only send money. By being connected, they also communicate. When you live in a country that might be completely different than your home country, you will have a lot to talk about. Your new experiences and observations, both positive and negative, can be discussed during Skype calls, Facebook posts, or return visits. These discussions can impact network members at origin (NMOs).

Have you ever heard the quote: *'Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day. Teach him how to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime.'*? So, if money already can impact development, imagine the potential of spreading information about new or different ideas, practices, cultures, habits, and values. We do not have much information about these knowledge exchanges and what it does to NMOs. We especially have no idea about the consequences on health.

My findings on this topic revealed that migrants could influence the health of their NMOs by discussing new or different health behaviours – also referred to in this dissertation

as ‘transnational social exchanges’ (TSE). When considering all relevant elements related to TSE-process, a potential quadruple win can be identified for migrants (win #1), NMOs (win #2), origin (win #3), and destination (win #4). Interestingly, I have observed both negative and positive influences of TSE. The extent how migrants’ information can contribute to the health of their NMOs depends on five main components:

- The availability, accessibility, and acceptability of good quality healthcare and health-related information for internal migrants and emigrants at destination locations.
- Possibility for migrants to internalise available health-related information at destination locations.
- The personal characteristics and social environments of the persons involved (migrants and NMOs).
- The existence of transnational connections among network members and their social exchanges within.
- Information processing – depending on the phase of the NMO in the innovation-decision process.

My research can impact YOU, as:

Migrant

Without a doubt, accessing good quality healthcare and health-related information is your right and should be made available to you. My research stresses the importance of receiving this right and the potential benefits to others. My research can push policymakers to implement health for all, including yours. It will also help health professionals understand different relevant components they should consider when providing healthcare to you (e.g., the role of your network members at origin during your health-decision-making and different perspectives on health).

I will summarise my key findings relevant to migrants and translate them into the main languages spoken in the Netherlands. These summaries will be distributed via various channels, starting in the Netherlands, e.g., municipal health services (GGDs) and GPs.

Network member at origin

My research shows that your migrant friends and family members can share information with you that can either positively or negatively can change your health. While some of the information you receive can benefit your health personally, you can also play a role by spreading helpful information you learned and from which you are benefitting with others within your community, by doing this you will create a domino effect on a larger scale.

Policymakers at destination

Did you know development aid is also allowed to be spent on specific target groups within your country? By investing in health for all, you will contribute to the general health and wellbeing of your migrant population. In addition, my research shows that if migrants receive the proper support from their country of destination, they have the potential to contribute to the health and wellbeing of their network members at origin. Your role as a destination country is to actively invest in the availability, accessibility, and acceptability of good quality healthcare and health-related information for your migrant population.

My key findings will be summarised in policy briefs. They will be sent to different ministries, starting with the Ministries of Health, Development Cooperation, and Migration of the Netherlands and Belgium. To enable health for all – especially for migrant populations, the contacted ministries are also urged to attend the WHO Global School on Refugee and Migrant Health.

Policymakers at origin

My research shows the potential of your migrant population for your country. Migrants remain connected to your country by staying in touch with their network members at origin. Your role is to support this connection and interactions between migrants and their network members at origin. Encouraging these interactions will help the exchange of health-related information and, consequently, if migrants have access to the available, acceptable good quality healthcare and health-related information at destination they can discuss this with their network members at origin, which can influence the health and wellbeing of their network members at origin. Important to mention that you are also responsible to invest in accessible, acceptable, and available good quality health facilities to support and enable the implementation of healthy behaviours of your population, including internal migrants. These potential influences on health can even create a domino effect on a larger scale, supporting the overall health outcomes of your country on the long-term.

My key findings will be summarised in policy briefs. They will be sent to different ministries, starting with the Ministries of Health and Migration of Afghanistan and Pakistan. To enable discussions with receiving countries to ensure health for your migrants abroad and your internal migrant, the contacted ministries are also urged to attend the WHO Global School on Refugee and Migrant Health.

Health professional

My research is interesting for you for two main reasons. First, in my systematic narrative literature review (Chapter 2), I analysed the role of the exchanges of information on the health of both migrants and network members at origin. In this narrative review, some observations can be of importance to you when helping migrants. Some examples of the observations and practical recommendations:

- Understand the important role of migrant family members at origin in their health-decision making. During the consult, consider asking about the migrant's family members and possibly include them during a video call to answer questions and make necessary clarifications.
- Recognise possible differences in the interpretation of health and wellbeing between yourself and your migrant patient. During the consult, make sure there is an opportunity to clarify possible different perspectives from both sides. Make use of translators if this will help your conversation.

These and other findings and practical recommendations will be summarised and distributed in cooperation with Pharos and Johannes Wier Stichting voor gezondheidszorg en mensenrechten for training and support. Furthermore, I will also discuss my research with the responsible of the 'terugkomdagen van de coassistenten' (days co-assistances return to reflect on their experiences) from Maastricht University to search for possibilities to include these results in current training for future GPs.

Academic

My dissertation is definitely of interest to you if you are researching the link between migration and health. Chapter 2 will provide you a deeper understanding of the role of transnational networks and the social exchanges within on the health of migrants and network members at origin. In case you are interested in studying the specific link between transnational social exchanges (TSE) on the health of network members at origin (NMOs), I recommend you to read Chapter 3, which discusses the Comprehensive transnational exchange of Health informATion (CHAT)-model. The CHAT-model will support the necessary multi-disciplinary and consistent conceptual approach when studying this topic. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 describe interesting case studies examining TSE and their role on the sexual and reproductive health of NMOs in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

My work will be disseminated among the broader academic world by my publications, conference presentations, and via the Migration Health and Development Research Initiative (MHADRI)-network, for example via the Migration Health Research Bulletins. I hope my dissertation got you as excited about the role of TSE on the health of NMOs as I

am. I am always looking forward to discussions and further collaborations on this topic, so please feel free to contact me (Inez.roosen@maastrichtuniversity.nl).

International Organisation

When discussing the importance of health and migration with the Member States, it is always important to stress how they can benefit from your recommendations. My research demonstrates several benefits on different levels, worthwhile investing in migrant health.

I will disseminate my dissertation together with policy briefs to IOM Migration and Health and WHO Regional Office Europe – Migration and Health. Via the MHADRI-network, I aim to cooperate with IOM Migration and Health to distribute my findings via their Migration Health Research Bulletins. Together with the WHO Regional Office Europe – Migration and Health, I aim to coordinate a training on the role of transnational social exchanges on the health of network members at origin during the WHO Global School on Refugee and Migrant Health.