



Report: Nepal's Unique Moment to Create Jobs, End Migration Cycle

Two years after a major earthquake in Nepal killed thousands of people, displaced millions and shocked an economy on fragile foundations, the country struggles to recover. A new report argues that Nepal can turn the challenges it faces into an opportunity to achieve more equitable economic development by building an employment ecosystem where migration for work is a choice rather than a necessity.

The report, "Rebuilding Nepal: Creating Good Jobs Amid Reconstruction and Migration," issued today by JustJobs Network and the Solidarity Center, asserts that Nepal is at a unique moment where it can leverage the reconstruction process to create jobs that protect worker rights, provide family-supporting wages and generate opportunities for economic mobility.

"The disaster is a wake-up call," said Gregory Randolph, the report's principal author and deputy director of JustJobs Network. "It also is an opportunity for Nepal's leaders to pivot from an unsustainable trajectory of increasing dependence on labor migration and embrace a more inclusive vision of economic growth and domestic job creation. In this vision, reconstruction is not merely the replacement of physical assets, but also is the rebuilding of social, economic and physical foundations—placing the creation of just jobs at the center of policymaking."

Like other men and women who seek employment abroad, Nepali migrant workers often are unpaid, receive few benefits, suffer from injuries and disproportionate death rates, and are vulnerable to human trafficking. They take these risks for the same reason as hundreds of millions of others who migrate for work: the lack of quality jobs in their home country.

Meanwhile, poor countries like Nepal have come to rely on migrant workers' earnings instead of developing good jobs that keep workers in their country. This perpetuates a cycle of migration that has become intergenerational. It has even led, the report argues, "to a kind of policy inertia, where the short-run benefits of remittance income disincentivize the adoption of long-term policy solutions to rectify the country's chronic lack of economic opportunity."

"Addressing the absence of decent jobs in Nepal by facilitating labor migration is unsustainable and ignores the contributions that workers can make to the rebuilding of their country," said Timothy Ryan, Solidarity Center Asia regional program director. "If Nepal is to transform its economy and create decent jobs for its people, workers—including migrant workers who have gained skills and experience abroad—must be at the center of the process."