

Transcript: Our Story of Migration

Are you sitting comfortably?
Then this story is not for you.
This is a story about the fleers, the flyers, the seekers, the movers, the migrants.
This is the story of the inequalities that explain why people move,
And that shape their journeys and lives across the world.

This is a different kind of story of migration to the one you may have seen in the media, or heard from the mouths of politicians.
Our story is more complicated.
It is a story written from the perspective of those living and working in the Global South
Involving more than 100 researchers,
And thousands of migrants and their families.
So let's spread our wings and visit some of the characters we've met along the way.

Far across the sea in Haiti
Paul sits watching the ocean.
All his life he has swum against the current.
Paul came from a peasant farming family,
But has always managed to make a living through hard work and determination.

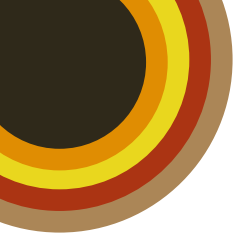
Haiti was the first country in the world to abolish slavery in 1804.
But here Paul faces inequalities in his access to education and work.
He dreams of migrating to Brazil where he can build a better life for his family.
On the radio he hears an old song
About how the quest for a better life can ultimately destroy one's life.

Songs written by Haitian musicians contain the voices and stories of hundreds of migrants from across generations.
But, despite the warnings of danger,
Paul believes the living conditions in Haiti are riskier.
His resolve to migrate to Brazil is strengthened.
Like a fish he must swim his way out.
And so he leaves.

Now we journey across the Atlantic to Burkina Faso
Where, on a rickety bus, we join a hopeful 15 year old boy named Kaboré.

He has not had an easy life.
His father, a construction worker, was often away from home and his mother could not support his studies.
And soon these inequalities began to affect his school results and he had to drop out.
Kaboré blamed his parents
And driven by this anger he stole his grandmother's money box
And jumped on a bus to Cote d'Ivoire.

He had heard tales of this promised land as a country paved with gold and seeped in chocolate.
Here he found work in a cocoa farm.



In the forest Kaboré worked hard,
Collecting cocoa for chocolate bars he would never be able to afford.
Dangerously cutting cocoa pods with machetes until the moon rose in the sky.

Eventually he was able to send money back to his family,
So his siblings could go to school
and have the opportunities he never had.

Now we journey to Malaysia to this busy street,
through this unmarked door, and up these narrow stairs.

Here, in this hidden restaurant, you'll find Myra - a migrant worker from Nepal.
She sits over her plate of thaali and momos,
deeply inhales the scent of her home and dreams of the family back home in Nepal.

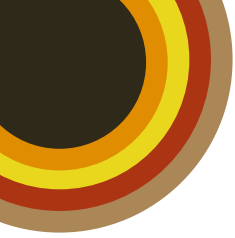
On the day she arrived in Malaysia her employers gave her food packed in plastic,
which in her country means you have fallen on hard times.
But today Myra's meal is served on copper plates,
And given for free by the kind-hearted owner.

Restaurants like these are not just somewhere to eat but places of comfort,
a home away from home and a temporary family.
These simple actions build and strengthen connections between communities,
Reducing the inequalities that migration often brings.

In Ethiopia, Abraham, a young man, is returning home at long last
to finally rest deep down in the soft soil of his motherland.
But the impact of his journey lives on longer than his body.

Abraham's own father would have had a simpler funeral,
Where the community shared the mourning and the material burden.
Coming together to support the bereaved
by cooking, fetching water and digging the burial site.

But today, Abraham's body arrives with all of the money he made migrating to South Africa.
His coffin is gold plated,
His tombstone is made of marble.
Thousands of bottles of water are brought
and 5 oxen are slaughtered to feed the mourners for weeks.
A man cannot take his gold with him to the afterlife. But he can certainly scatter it by his graveside.
In Southern Ethiopia, migration has changed funeral practices.
And across the world, migration has changed the way people live,
for good and for bad.



We have learnt that migration under the right conditions has the potential to reduce inequalities. But it can also deepen them.

These are just some of the stories that we have heard on our journey.
We are MIDEQ, the Migration for Development and Equality Hub
We are a network of more than 30 partners
who have spent 5 years conducting research across 12 countries in the Global South
on the complex relationships between migration and inequality.

We have examined inequalities between people, places and the opportunities for migrants to make a life.
By challenging dominant political and media narratives
We've changed the story of migration.
Putting humans at its heart.
Our Story of Migration is a story about love and hope, food and music.
Yes, there is pain, but there is also aspiration and opportunity.
We need to remember the inequalities that drive migrants to move and shape their futures
And to bring humanity to the story of migration once more.