# Migration in Nigeria: A Country Profile 2009

by International Organization for Migration (IOM) · Language: EN

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## Overview

Migration in Nigeria: A Country Profile 2009" by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) provides a comprehensive analysis of migration dynamics within, to, and from Nigeria as of the late 2000s. The report meticulously details the historical context, patterns, causes, and impacts of various forms of migration, including internal movements, international emigration and immigration, irregular migration, and forced displacement. It examines the socio-economic and political drivers that compel Nigerians to migrate, such as poverty, unemployment, conflict, and environmental degradation, while also highlighting the significant role of remittances in the national economy and the challenges posed by brain drain and human trafficking. The profile serves as a foundational document for understanding the complex interplay of factors shaping Nigeria's migration landscape.

The book's main argument centers on the multifaceted nature of migration in Nigeria, emphasizing that it is not a monolithic phenomenon but a complex web of movements driven by diverse motivations and yielding varied outcomes. It underscores the critical need for robust data collection, coherent policy frameworks, and effective institutional coordination to manage migration effectively and harness its developmental potential. The report matters significantly because it offers a crucial baseline assessment for policymakers, researchers, and international organizations, informing strategies aimed at protecting migrants' rights, mitigating the risks associated with irregular migration, and maximizing the benefits of well-managed migration for national development. It highlights Nigeria's pivotal role as both a source, transit, and destination country for migrants in West Africa and beyond.

## Key Takeaways

- Migration in Nigeria is a complex phenomenon driven by a mix of economic, social, political, and environmental factors.
- Both internal and international migration play significant roles in Nigeria's socio-economic development, with remittances being a crucial economic contributor.
- Irregular migration, including human trafficking, poses substantial risks to migrants and requires targeted policy interventions.
- Nigeria serves as a major source, transit, and destination country for migrants within the West African sub-region and globally.

• Effective migration governance in Nigeria is hampered by data gaps, policy fragmentation, and insufficient institutional coordination.

• There is a critical need for comprehensive national migration policies that integrate development planning and protect migrants' rights.

• Addressing the root causes of irregular migration, such as poverty and lack of opportunities, is essential for sustainable migration management.

## Chapter Summaries

### Executive Summary

This section provides a concise overview of the report's key findings regarding migration in Nigeria. It highlights the country's complex migration profile as a significant origin, transit, and destination country. The summary touches upon the main drivers of migration, including economic disparities, conflict, and environmental factors, and outlines the socio-economic impacts, both positive (e.g., remittances) and negative (e.g., brain drain, irregular migration risks). It also briefly introduces the existing policy and institutional frameworks for migration management, identifying critical challenges and overarching recommendations for enhancing governance and maximizing the developmental benefits of migration in Nigeria.

### Introduction

The introductory chapter sets the stage for the entire report, outlining its objectives, scope, and methodology. It provides a brief background on Nigeria's demographic size, economic context, and its strategic importance within West Africa, which positions it as a major player in regional and international migration dynamics. This section explains the rationale behind the country profile, emphasizing the need for comprehensive data and analysis to inform evidence-based policymaking on migration issues in Nigeria. It also defines key terms and concepts used throughout the report.

### Overview of Migration in Nigeria

This chapter offers a broad historical and contemporary context of migration patterns within and from Nigeria. It details the various forms of migration, encompassing internal rural-urban movements, regional migration within the ECOWAS sub-region, and international migration to other continents. The section identifies key migration corridors and destinations, such as Europe and North America, and discusses the evolving nature of these movements. It also touches upon the historical roots of migration in Nigeria, influenced by trade, colonial legacies, and post-independence socio-economic and political developments, providing a foundational understanding of the country's migration landscape.

### Drivers and Causes of Migration

This section explores the multifaceted factors compelling Nigerians to migrate, both internally and internationally. It delves into economic drivers such as high unemployment rates, poverty, and the search for better livelihood opportunities. Political instability, conflict, and insecurity, particularly in certain regions, are also identified as significant push factors. Environmental degradation, including desertification and climate change impacts, contributes to displacement and migration. The chapter also considers social factors like the desire for better education, family reunification, and the influence of social networks and remittances in facilitating further migration.

**Migration Trends and Characteristics**

This chapter delves into the specific characteristics of Nigerian migrants, providing a demographic and socio-economic profile. It examines the age, gender, educational attainment, and skill sets of migrants, noting the increasing feminization of migration. The section differentiates between various types of migration, including labor migration, student migration, and family reunification, and discusses the prevalence of both regular and irregular migration pathways. It also analyzes the destinations of Nigerian migrants, highlighting key countries in Africa, Europe, and North America, and the specific sectors they tend to work in.

**Impacts of Migration on Development**

This chapter examines the multi-faceted effects of migration on Nigeria's development, both positive and negative. It highlights the significant contribution of remittances to household incomes, poverty reduction, and national GDP, discussing their utilization for consumption, education, and investment. The section also addresses the transfer of skills, knowledge, and social capital by returning migrants. Conversely, it explores challenges such as brain drain, particularly in critical sectors like health and education, and the social costs associated with family separation, exploitation, and the reintegration of returnees, providing a balanced perspective on migration's developmental nexus.

**Migration Governance and Policy Framework**

This chapter analyzes the existing legal and policy framework governing migration in Nigeria. It reviews national migration policies, relevant legislation, and Nigeria's engagement with international migration instruments and regional agreements, particularly within the ECOWAS framework. The section assesses the effectiveness and gaps in these policies, discussing how they address issues such as border management, labor migration, protection of migrants' rights, and combating human trafficking. It also identifies areas where policy development or reform is needed to align with international best practices and national development goals.

**Institutional Framework for Migration Management**

This section describes the various government agencies, ministries, and non-state actors involved in managing migration issues in Nigeria. It details the roles and responsibilities of key institutions such as the Nigeria Immigration Service, the National Agency for the Prohibition of

Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), the Ministry of Labour and Productivity, and the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI). The chapter also examines the coordination mechanisms among these bodies and the involvement of civil society organizations, international organizations, and diaspora groups in migration governance and service provision.

**Irregular Migration and Human Trafficking**

This chapter focuses on the significant challenges posed by irregular migration from Nigeria and the pervasive issue of human trafficking. It details the common routes used by irregular migrants, often through the Sahara Desert and across the Mediterranean Sea, and the associated risks of exploitation, abuse, and death. The section highlights the factors that make Nigerians vulnerable to trafficking, including poverty and lack of opportunities, and discusses the methods used by traffickers. It also outlines national and international efforts to combat irregular migration and human trafficking, including prevention, protection, and prosecution initiatives.

**Forced Migration and Displacement**

This chapter addresses issues of forced migration and displacement within Nigeria, primarily driven by conflict, particularly the insurgency in the North-East, and communal clashes. It examines the scale and characteristics of internally displaced persons (IDPs), their humanitarian needs, and the challenges in providing protection and assistance. The section also covers the presence of refugees and asylum seekers in Nigeria, primarily from neighboring countries, and the country's response to their protection and integration. It discusses the legal frameworks and institutional responses to managing forced displacement and ensuring the rights of affected populations.

**Diaspora Engagement and Remittances**

This chapter explores the crucial role of the Nigerian diaspora in national development, with a particular focus on remittances. It quantifies the volume and impact of remittances on household incomes, poverty reduction, and investment in various sectors. The section discusses government initiatives aimed at engaging the diaspora, such as policies to facilitate investment, encourage skill transfer, and foster political participation. It also examines the challenges in maximizing the developmental impact of both financial and social remittances, and strategies for strengthening the links between the diaspora and their home country.

**Data and Research Gaps**

This chapter identifies the limitations in available migration data and the pressing need for improved data collection, analysis, and research to inform evidence-based policymaking in Nigeria. It highlights the challenges in obtaining accurate and comprehensive statistics on various aspects of migration, including stocks and flows, demographics of migrants, remittances, and the prevalence of irregular migration. The section points out areas where further study and

disaggregated data are required to understand complex migration dynamics, evaluate policy effectiveness, and develop targeted interventions, emphasizing the importance of robust data for effective migration management.

**Conclusions and Recommendations**

The final chapter summarizes the main findings of the report, reiterating Nigeria's complex and dynamic migration profile. It synthesizes the key challenges and opportunities presented by migration for the country's development. Based on the analysis, the chapter provides actionable recommendations for the Nigerian government and its partners. These recommendations typically cover areas such as strengthening migration governance, improving data collection and analysis, protecting the rights of migrants, combating irregular migration and human trafficking, maximizing the developmental impact of remittances and diaspora engagement, and addressing the root causes of forced migration and displacement.

## Themes

- Migration dynamics
- Socio-economic drivers
- Policy gaps
- Remittances impact
- Human trafficking

## Frequently Asked Questions

**What is Migration in Nigeria: A Country Profile 2009 about?**

This book is a comprehensive report by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) detailing the patterns, causes, and impacts of migration in Nigeria as of 2009. It covers internal, international, regular, and irregular migration, examining socio-economic drivers, policy frameworks, and institutional responses to migration challenges and opportunities.

**Is Migration in Nigeria: A Country Profile 2009 worth reading?**

Yes, for anyone interested in migration studies, Nigerian public policy, or international development, it is highly valuable. It provides a foundational understanding of Nigeria's complex migration landscape, offering data and analysis crucial for researchers, policymakers, and practitioners working in the field.

**Who should read Migration in Nigeria: A Country Profile 2009?**

This profile is essential reading for government officials involved in migration policy, development practitioners, academics and students of migration, international organizations, and NGOs working on migration issues in Nigeria or West Africa. It offers critical insights into the

country's migration context.

**How long does it take to read Migration in Nigeria: A Country Profile 2009?**

Given its nature as a detailed country profile report, it would likely take approximately 3 to 5 hours to read thoroughly, depending on reading speed and the reader's familiarity with the subject matter.

## Questions & Answers

**What is the primary purpose of the "Migration in Nigeria: A Country Profile 2009" report?**

The primary purpose of the IOM's 2009 report is to provide a comprehensive overview of migration trends, patterns, and dynamics in Nigeria. It aims to serve as a baseline document for policymakers, researchers, and practitioners, offering data and analysis on internal, regional, and international migration flows, their drivers, impacts, and the existing governance framework. The report seeks to inform evidence-based policy development and program implementation for effective migration management in Nigeria.

**What are the main categories of migration discussed in the report concerning Nigeria?**

The report discusses several main categories of migration relevant to Nigeria. These include internal migration, driven by factors like rural-urban drift, environmental degradation, and conflict; regional migration, particularly within the ECOWAS sub-region due to free movement protocols; and international migration to destinations beyond Africa, often for economic or educational reasons. It also touches upon irregular migration, forced displacement (e.g., due to conflict or natural disasters), and return migration, providing a holistic view of the country's complex migration landscape.

**According to the report, what were the key drivers of internal migration in Nigeria around 2009?**

Around 2009, the report identified several key drivers of internal migration in Nigeria. Economic disparities, including the search for better employment opportunities and livelihoods in urban centers, were paramount. Environmental factors, such as desertification in the north and flooding in coastal areas, also compelled people to move. Additionally, socio-political issues like communal conflicts and insecurity in certain regions contributed significantly to internal displacement and migration within the country's borders.

**How does the report characterize the scale of international emigration from Nigeria?**

The report characterizes international emigration from Nigeria as significant and diverse, with Nigerians migrating to various destinations globally. While precise figures are challenging to obtain, it indicates a substantial diaspora, particularly in North America, Europe, and other African countries. The scale is driven by factors such as the pursuit of higher education, better

economic prospects, and, in some cases, seeking asylum or refuge. It highlights Nigeria as a major source country for migrants within Africa and globally.

**What role do remittances play in the Nigerian economy, as highlighted by the report?**

The report highlights the crucial role of remittances in the Nigerian economy. It underscores that remittances from the diaspora constitute a significant source of foreign exchange, often surpassing foreign direct investment and official development assistance. These funds are primarily used by recipient households for consumption, education, healthcare, and investment in small businesses, thereby contributing to poverty reduction and local economic development. The report emphasizes the need to leverage remittances more effectively for national development.

**Does the report address irregular migration, and if so, what are its main points?**

Yes, the report extensively addresses irregular migration, identifying it as a major challenge for Nigeria. It points out that many Nigerians, particularly youth, embark on irregular journeys through dangerous routes, often across the Sahara Desert and the Mediterranean Sea, seeking better opportunities abroad. The main points include the risks involved (exploitation, trafficking, death), the lack of legal pathways, and the need for comprehensive strategies combining awareness campaigns, legal migration options, and strengthened border management to tackle the issue effectively.

**What are some of the challenges faced by Nigerian migrants, as identified in the profile?**

The profile identifies numerous challenges faced by Nigerian migrants. These include exploitation and abuse, particularly for those undertaking irregular journeys, often at the hands of smugglers and traffickers. Migrants may also encounter xenophobia, discrimination, and difficulties in integrating into host communities. Other challenges involve limited access to social services, precarious employment conditions, and issues related to documentation and legal status, which can exacerbate their vulnerability abroad and upon return.

**How does the report describe the institutional framework for migration governance in Nigeria?**

The report describes Nigeria's institutional framework for migration governance as evolving but fragmented. It notes the involvement of multiple government ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) with overlapping mandates, leading to coordination challenges. Key institutions include the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants, and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI), the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), and various ministries. The report emphasizes the need for a more coherent, comprehensive, and coordinated national migration policy and institutional structure to effectively manage migration flows and protect migrants' rights.

**What are the main demographic characteristics of Nigerian migrants discussed in the report?**

The report indicates that Nigerian migrants are diverse but often characterized by certain demographics. They are predominantly young adults, seeking economic opportunities or education. While both men and women migrate, patterns can differ, with women sometimes more vulnerable to specific forms of exploitation, such as trafficking. Migrants originate from various socio-economic backgrounds and regions across Nigeria, reflecting the country's diverse population and the widespread drivers of migration.

**What impact does the report suggest climate change or environmental factors have on migration in Nigeria?**

The report suggests that climate change and environmental factors have a significant and growing impact on migration in Nigeria. It highlights how desertification in the northern regions, coastal erosion, and recurrent flooding in other parts of the country displace communities and degrade livelihoods, forcing people to move. These environmental stressors exacerbate existing vulnerabilities and contribute to both internal migration and, indirectly, to international migration, as people seek more stable environments and economic opportunities elsewhere.

**Does the report discuss the phenomenon of 'brain drain' in Nigeria?**

Yes, the report discusses the phenomenon of 'brain drain' in Nigeria, acknowledging it as a significant concern. It highlights that a substantial number of highly skilled professionals, including doctors, engineers, and academics, emigrate from Nigeria in search of better working conditions, higher remuneration, and advanced educational opportunities abroad. While remittances offer some benefits, the report notes that this outflow of human capital poses a challenge to Nigeria's development efforts, particularly in critical sectors like health and education.

**What recommendations does the IOM report offer to the Nigerian government regarding migration management?**

The IOM report offers several key recommendations to the Nigerian government for improved migration management. These include developing a comprehensive national migration policy, strengthening institutional coordination among relevant agencies, enhancing data collection and analysis, and promoting legal migration pathways. It also recommends addressing the root causes of irregular migration, protecting vulnerable migrants, combating human trafficking, and leveraging the diaspora's potential for national development through targeted engagement strategies and investment opportunities.

**How does the report address the issue of human trafficking in Nigeria?**

The report addresses human trafficking as a grave concern, identifying Nigeria as both a source, transit, and destination country for victims. It highlights that women and children are particularly vulnerable, often trafficked for sexual exploitation, forced labor, or domestic servitude. The report emphasizes the need for stronger legislative frameworks, enhanced law enforcement capacity, increased public awareness campaigns, and improved victim identification and

protection services to combat this heinous crime effectively.

**What data sources did the IOM primarily use to compile this country profile?**

To compile the 2009 country profile, the IOM primarily utilized a combination of existing data sources. These included official government statistics from various Nigerian agencies (e.g., National Population Commission, Nigeria Immigration Service), academic research, reports from international organizations and NGOs, and qualitative data gathered through consultations with stakeholders. The report acknowledges the challenges of comprehensive data collection in Nigeria and often relies on estimates and projections where precise figures are unavailable, emphasizing the need for improved data systems.

**What is the report's stance on the contribution of the Nigerian diaspora?**

The report takes a positive stance on the contribution of the Nigerian diaspora, recognizing its immense potential for national development. It highlights that beyond significant financial remittances, the diaspora contributes through knowledge transfer, skills sharing, and investment in various sectors. The report encourages the Nigerian government to actively engage with its diaspora, creating mechanisms and policies to facilitate their participation in national development initiatives and harness their expertise and resources more effectively.

**Does the report cover return migration to Nigeria?**

Yes, the report covers return migration to Nigeria, acknowledging it as an important aspect of the country's migration dynamics. It discusses both voluntary and involuntary returns, highlighting the challenges faced by returnees in reintegrating into their communities, such as economic hardship, social stigma, and psychological distress. The report emphasizes the need for comprehensive reintegration programs that provide support for housing, livelihoods, education, and psychosocial assistance to ensure sustainable returns and prevent re-emigration.

**What are the main challenges in collecting comprehensive migration data in Nigeria, according to the report?**

According to the report, the main challenges in collecting comprehensive migration data in Nigeria include the lack of a centralized data management system, inconsistent methodologies across different agencies, and limited capacity for data collection and analysis. The informal nature of much migration, particularly irregular movements, also makes accurate enumeration difficult. These challenges result in data gaps and inconsistencies, hindering evidence-based policy formulation and effective migration governance.

**How does the report link migration to development in Nigeria?**

The report strongly links migration to development in Nigeria, presenting it as a complex phenomenon with both positive and negative implications. Positively, it highlights remittances as a crucial driver of economic development and poverty reduction, and the diaspora's potential for knowledge and skill transfer. Negatively, it addresses the 'brain drain' and the social costs

associated with irregular migration and family separation. The report advocates for policies that maximize the developmental benefits of migration while mitigating its adverse effects.

**What is the significance of Nigeria's geographical location in the context of regional migration flows, as discussed?**

Nigeria's geographical location is highlighted as highly significant in the context of regional migration flows. Situated in West Africa, it serves as a major hub, a source, transit, and destination country within the ECOWAS sub-region. Its large population and economic influence attract migrants from neighboring countries, while its borders are also crossed by Nigerians moving within the region. This central position necessitates robust regional cooperation and coordinated migration management strategies.

**What specific regions or states within Nigeria are highlighted for significant internal migration patterns?**

The report highlights several regions and states within Nigeria for significant internal migration patterns. Major urban centers like Lagos, Abuja, and Port Harcourt are identified as primary destinations due to perceived economic opportunities. Rural areas experiencing environmental degradation, such as those affected by desertification in the North or coastal erosion in the South, are noted as significant source regions. Areas affected by conflict or insecurity also contribute to internal displacement, leading to migration towards safer zones.