

DELIVERABLE D9.1 COMMUNICATION & DISSEMINATION PLAN AND COMMUNICATION OUTPUTS

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STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

This deliverable contains original unpublished work except where clearly indicated otherwise. Acknowledgement of previously published material and of the work of others has been made through appropriate citation, quotation, or both.

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Introduction

The deliverable D9.1 Communication & Dissemination Plan and Communication outputs includes activities that are delivered at different moments in the project. In the first half of 2025, the FAiR consortium has delivered seven op-eds.

Deliverable 9.1, Task 9.6 Public Engagement, calls for 14 op-eds or interviews. As of 31 July, the FAiR consortium has produced 7 opinion pieces published in Italian media, by Professor Maurizio Ambrosini from the University of Milan. Below is the 2nd translated opinion piece, along with their original publishing link, as well as the English translated link to the FAiR website.

Opinion: Remittances from emigrants: more help or countries of origin

Originally posted in Italian news: [Emigrants' remittances: the most help for countries of origin - Welforum.it](#) – Translated by Google Translate

[Maurizio Ambrosini, University of Milan - FAiR consortium partner](#) | **28 March 2024**

Giorgia Meloni's recent visit to Cairo, together with Ursula von der Leyen and other European leaders, has revived attention on development as an alternative to emigration, and in the Italian case to the Mattei Plan initiative. In essence, the attempt to implement the well-known slogan "let's help them at home".

In reality, according to research on the subject, the economic development of a territory in a first and not short phase gives rise to new departures: more people have access to the economic resources to leave, to education, which favors mobility, to new aspirations and lifestyles that do not find answers locally. But there is another serious reason that keeps people abroad and pushes others to leave: the importance of migrants' economic remittances for the living conditions of families and local communities. In other words, it is the emigrants who help their homes, much more than the international institutions or the governments of developed countries.

Remittances help to improve nutrition and housing conditions, provide access to quality education, which in much of the world is private, and to medical care if necessary, which is also mostly private. They supplement or replace the retirement of the elderly. They elevate the image and social status of the families who receive them.

We are talking about a flow of \$791 billion for 2021, an estimate of \$831 billion for 2022, an estimate of \$840 billion for 2023, and \$858 billion for 2024 (Immigration Dossier 2023). Moreover, these figures relate only to official channels, not to the sums that emigrants send informally by courier or other means, or take with them when they return home for a visit or a holiday. From Italy, remittances reached €8.2 billion in 2022, €473 million more than in 2021 and +62% compared to 2016. The first country to benefit from this is, somewhat surprisingly, Bangladesh, which is not among the top nationalities in terms of number of residents in our country. It received almost €1.2 billion. Pakistan follows with about 700 million, while in third place are the Philippines, with 623 million, then other historical components of immigration to Italy, namely Morocco, Romania and Senegal.

Remittances are particularly substantial when emigrants leave alone, leaving their spouse and especially their children at home. On the contrary, the departure is motivated mainly by the aspiration to offer them a better life, or more dramatically by the need to provide for their



essential needs: for example, in the case of single mothers, who separate from their children out of love for them. When family reunifications take place, the flow of remittances decreases: the family reunited here involves much greater expenses, while the number of those at home who expect help from the emigrated parent decreases, or their entitlement to receive it decreases, since they are relatives towards whom the obligations are less binding: parents, sisters, brothers, nephews... Moreover, when women emigrate alone, they usually have a certain autonomy in their decisions regarding remittances: they are mainly committed to supporting their children, to rewarding those who may take care of them (especially their mothers), but otherwise they have the possibility of choosing, at least to a certain extent, who to help among their relatives. In reunited families, on the other hand, the flows of remittances usually go in the direction of the husband's family. On the women's side, they are reduced to occasional mailings, especially in the form of gifts, or to the delivery of some sum that the wives manage to save and send mainly to their mothers.

This complex and varied map of remittances reveals the underlying meanings of remittances: they are above all restitutions, when they reach those who replace distant parents by taking care of their children. They are characterized as moral obligations, when they are addressed to elderly parents, and especially to mothers. They are conceived as gifts, when they take on a more occasional character and linked to some event (a wedding, the birth of a child) or a holiday (Christmas, the end of Ramadan). They can also take on the sense of an investment, when emigrants send money to buy a house, the most typical form of use of their savings.

Tensions can also arise between those who send and those who receive or would like to receive aid. Emigrants often complain that relatives back home do not understand the effort required to set aside sums to be sent, they make exorbitant demands, they even invent stories of illnesses or catastrophic events to have money sent to them: they feel like the "money tree" in the eyes of family members. On the other hand, relatives are inclined to accuse emigrants of avarice, insensitivity, and selfishness. They would be reluctant to share the well-being they have gained. They therefore justify the exaggerations and even the stories told as a legitimate way to urge these ungenerous family members to open their wallets and share in their affluence.

Another interesting profile of remittances is their social effects. Emigrants do not only transfer money or gifts to their homeland, but also photographs, stories, examples of what they have encountered, learned, and suffered while living abroad. Even just the way we dress, the way we do our hair, the way we speak, the way we relate to others, can convey a change in mentality. This is referred to as "social remittances". A first strand refers to normative structures: that is, new ideas about the world, political visions, ethical values. For example, a different conception of women, of their role, of their rights. Or a new configuration of fatherhood and the relationship between fathers and sons.

A second dimension concerns social practices, i.e. the translation of newly acquired ideas into actual behaviour. So, to go by the examples introduced, more sharing of household tasks, more time spent with children by fathers.

A third fallout of remittances involves the prestige and position of the families who receive them in local contexts. As already mentioned, having relatives abroad and receiving remittances raises reputation, allows access to more qualified relationship circuits, can even facilitate access to local public offices or allow you to arrange marriages with partners of a higher social and economic level. In Mexico, we speak of the "remittance bourgeoisie": a bourgeoisie based on remittances.

This last point calls into question the ambivalence and also the negative effects of remittances. Receiving money from abroad finances consumption, but rarely translates into productive



investment, capable of generating jobs and local development. Leaving aside the discussion of what is productive and what is not, we create a segment of the population that is dependent on external aid and therefore poor in autonomy. Also in Mexico, the constant concern of many families in which the father has emigrated to the United States is that they will be abandoned, that they will no longer see money coming from the North. The history of migration, already in the past and even more so today, is full of troubled family events, in which those who emigrate form a new family in the place of destination, and by choice or necessity begin to neglect and may end up abandoning their wives and children left behind in their homeland. If this is a risk, it is practically certain that inequalities in the country of origin will worsen: those who receive remittances increase consumption, make the local economy run a little more, but also induce an increase in prices. If the emigrants build themselves a house, they make the construction industry work, but they increase the costs of materials and land. The gap between those who can access remittances and those who are excluded from them is therefore increasing, with the effect, among other things, of encouraging new departures.

Then we must consider the other side of remittances, often left in the shadows by those who leave, but well present and even emphasized by those who remain: what emigrants receive from family members who have remained at home. This is referred to as "reverse remittances". They have material and other symbolic components. First of all, those who emigrate are often helped to leave thanks to the funds collected within the family, sometimes extended to wider networks of kinship. Some emigrants, such as students, continue to receive financial aid even afterwards. Others solicit and obtain them in times of difficulty.

Another form of reverse remittance is the care of family members left behind and in need of care: children, in the case of transnational mothers, and increasingly elderly relatives. Those who take care of them in place of the emigrants, allowing them to leave, to look for work and to try to build a better life abroad, implement a transfer of emotional energy, time and work in their favor.

In other respects, reverse remittances have a primarily symbolic value. They translate into the sending of photographs, small gifts, food and drink from the motherland, sacred images: objects that recall the absent, make those who are far away feel remembered and loved, keep the relationship alive despite time and distance.

A final phenomenon to remember is that of collective remittances: that is, the collection of money or materials, for example medicines, to be sent home. Above all, immigrant associations and religious communities are the protagonists: actors capable of bringing people together, generating trust, and channeling the desire to help their community of origin in the financing of socially useful projects. Especially in the event of disasters, the collection of aid among migrants is a widespread and generously implemented practice.

In conclusion, sending remittances is an action that connects migrants with their places of origin and keeps family and social ties alive. It makes emigrants present in their places of origin and motivates them in their work commitment, in the sacrifices they have to face, in the loneliness they experience when they find themselves alone abroad. For those who receive them, remittances make it possible to improve living conditions and try to compensate on a material level for the emotional loss due to separation from those who have left. Remittances are also a factor of tension, of mutual recriminations, of the production of inequalities. Certainly, in any case, replacing them with public aid and development support will not be an easy task, nor will it be short-lived.

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Link to article on FAiR website: [Opinion: Remittances from emigrants: more help for countries of origin - Fair Return \(fair-return.org\)](https://www.fair-return.org/en/opinion/remittances-from-emigrants-more-help-for-countries-of-origin)