



THE IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR  
MIGRATION IN INDONESIA

by

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis is concerned with the understanding and clarification of the impact of international labour migration in Indonesia. Detailed understanding of the impact of this movement on individuals, families, communities and the nation as a whole, is still limited. However, the Indonesian Government has been involved in sending contract workers overseas for two decades and now plans to enlarge the volume and improve the quality of the workers in order to help unemployment problems within the country and obtain foreign exchange to enhance economic growth.

The thesis firstly introduces some significant issues relating to the effects of international labour migration on sending countries, outlines the objectives of the study and the approach adopted in addressing these objectives. It briefly discusses the geographical context of the study and outlines relevant theories of migration and major research findings with respect to the impact of international labour migration. The study then moves on to a case study of a village in West Java which has experienced a significant amount of international labour migration. The patterns and processes involved in that movement are initially analysed as a prelude to the detailed examination of the impacts of international labour migration.

Population mobility as an independent variable, has consequences not only for the migrant him/herself and

his/her family, but also for the community and nation as well. At the micro level, temporary work overseas has benefit for the migrant and his/her family. However, in the long run, the impact depends on how they use their remittances and experiences to improve their life. At the macro level, remittances and experience are two important potential sources of benefit for the community of origin of overseas contract workers, as assets for improving the standard of living of the community. However, the impact depends on the volume of overseas contract workers and the quality of experience (skills) which they have gained.

For Indonesia as a whole the benefits from overseas contract workers are still relatively small, due to the fact that this country has a huge population in relation to the number of overseas workers. However, such mobility of workers across country's boundaries for temporary work has been shown to be important leading to a variety of changes which, if not anticipated, could impede nation building. Therefore, to maximize the benefits accruing from this movement, the Indonesian Government should take more account of this issue, devote greater attention to collecting detailed information about it and develop policies and programs which will maximise the benefits accruing from it and minimise the costs associated with international labour migration.

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