

Headline English

2011, week 24 *Learn English through reading on current world affairs*

1 **Migration**

2 original at

3 <http://www.economist.com/node/18741382>

4 Migration creates losers as well as winners. For instance, when a
5 Bangladeshi man goes to work on a construction site in the Middle East,
6 his wife typically moves in with her husband's family. Not all wives enjoy
7 this. They sweat in a strange kitchen, take care of a bossy mother-in-law
8 and see their husbands only for a few weeks each year. And although
9 their husbands send home plenty of money, they often send it to their
10 parents, not their wives.

11 But the gains of migration vastly outweigh the losses. If rich countries
12 were to admit enough migrants from poor countries to expand their own
13 labour forces by a mere 3%, the world would be richer, according to one
14 estimate, by \$356 billion a year. Completely opening borders would add
15 an astonishing \$39 trillion over 25 years to the global economy. That is
16 more than 500 times the amount the rich world spends on foreign aid
17 each year. Migration is the most effective tool yet devised for reducing
18 global poverty.

19 The same worker can earn 15 times as much if he or she moves from say,
20 Yemen to the United States. The wage gap between rich and poor
21 countries is far wider than it was a century ago, during the great age of
22 migration from Europe to America. And the emotional costs of leaving
23 home, though still hefty, are much lighter than they were. A 19th-century
24 Russian emigrant might never see or speak to his family again. A 21st-
25 century migrant can Skype them in the taxi from the airport. Small
26 wonder that the number of international migrants has doubled in the past
27 quarter-century, to more than 200m.

1 Questions

- 1) Does the article give the wives of Bangladeshi migrant workers as an example of the “winners” of migration? What features of the text can be used to back your answer?
- 2) What does the pronoun ‘their’ in line 12 refer to?
- 3) Could you come up with some synonyms (words having roughly the same meaning) for ‘mere’ (line 13)?
- 4) According to the article, is the net global economic effect of migration positive?
- 5) Does the article argue that the **current** economic effect of migration is greater than the effect of development aid?
- 6) What factors are behind the surge in migration in the last 25 years or so?
- 7) What is your opinion on migration? Would you be willing to resettle to a different country to get the job of your dreams? Would you be ready to leave your friends and family just for an uncertain prospect of economic ascent? Do you think migration is a force of good for the Czech Republic or should we be afraid of migrants stealing our jobs?

Vocabulary

take care (line 7) – to look after someone or something, watch over; be responsible for

estimate (line 14) – a calculation of the amount of something

say (line 19) – for instance, for example

hefty (line 23) – big, strong, powerful, forceful

You can find additional explanation and more examples to help you understand and use English words and phrases at <http://dictionary.reference.com/>, <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/>, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/> or <http://www.ldoceonline.com/>

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