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Editorial

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The World Bank's latest brief on migration and development launched in October 2017 revealed that remittances to developing countries comprising three quarters of the total global remittance flows are set to grow about 4.8% to reach $450 billion. This is seemingly a reflection of the economic growth recorded in Europe and North America. Therefore not surprising to see the receiving countries in this period will be the migrant sending countries to these destinations. Hence India continues to be the top recipient.

As we have analysed in the case of remittances from the UK (See Sirkeci and Privara, 2017), cost of sending money to the poorest parts of the world is the most expensive while overall remittance costs remain very high in contrast to the target of 3%, the Sustainable Development Goal. The World Bank brief pins the high cost down to exclusive deals between post offices and money transfer operators in certain countries and the security concerns resulting in higher processing costs for the operators and banks. This is very relevant to the discussions presented in this issue of *Remittances Review* investigating Hawala system in the Gulf countries and the use of virtual currencies in cross border money transfers. Both trends are benefiting from high costs of traditional money transfer methods via banks and money transfer operators.

The articles included in this issue of *Remittance Review* cover an array of themes from irregular remittances to urban to rural community-oriented remittances. Froilan T. Malit, Mouawiya Al Awad, and George Naufal draw our attention to the whys and hows of migrants using informal channels (i.e. the hawala or hundi in this case) Their work is of particular importance because of its focus on

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low-income Pakistani migrants in Dubai. In a way, they show how crucial this particular types of transfers for low income immigrants and their left-behind families and communities while also providing adequate account to question the pressures over these informal and commonly used channels.

When looking into cross border transfer of small amounts of money using virtual currencies, Gongpil Choi, Meeyoung Park, and NaEun Park argues that despite promotion and incentives, the development of Fintech start-ups remained very limited. They examine the regulatory environment in relation to these start ups.

Ayşegül Kayaoğlu takes on collective remittances drawing on a fieldwork carried out in a hometown association (HTA) in Istanbul, Turkey. While she shows how these collective remittances are spent on non-productive infrastructure in the village, more interestingly she points to the fact that these remittances do also contribute to the socio-economic integration of immigrants in Istanbul. She concludes that remittances somehow fills the void left by a weak welfare state in rural areas.

Final paper in this issue brings fresh data from a survey carried out in Eastern Uttar Pradesh in India. Imtiyaz Ali, Ram B Bhagat, and Sabiha Mahboob examine the internal dynamics of "federated families" in 8 villages and argue that remittances received from abroad was a reason for separation of families within the federated family system.

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