

MIGRANT Remittances

EDITORIAL

Improving Access to Remittances Through Technologies

Technology solutions are the current frontier in remittances. Enabling remittance transfers and payments through technologies such as mobile phones holds much promise for increasing access to better and less costly services for remittance senders and receivers, including those in remote or underserved areas.

Services linking technologies in new ways have emerged across the globe, adding new names and competition in a market originally dominated by a few service providers. In many instances, this innovation goes hand in hand with new partnerships, such as those between mobile phone companies and banks.

This issue of *Migrant Remittances* samples what is happening at the intersection of technologies and remittances, both on the retail side (mobile phone and card-based remittance and payments services) and on the backbone side (operational platforms for processing remittance transactions characterized by low value, high frequency, and currency trade).

The great interest in this topic is evident in the growing number of remittance events showcasing technology solutions. A recent workshop on “Technology of Remittances,” for instance, highlighted the range of new services, concluding that technology solutions are the easiest part of realizing the development potential of remittances, and quite readily available. The greater challenges lie in two areas: ensuring that regulations enable financial services and technol-

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Technologies offer exciting opportunities:

- to provide commercially viable first and last mile services (access for senders and receivers to services, even in locations with little or no financial service infrastructure);
- to better integrate remittance services with the financial infrastructure; and
- to reduce the need for cash and full payouts of remittances by making frequent withdrawals easier, keeping received funds in stored value accounts, making electronic payments using mobile phones, or introducing ATM and debit cards.

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Beam It Across: Remittances Via Mobile Phones

Of the new technologies offering improvements to remittance services and reductions in transaction costs, mobile phones hold the greatest promise for Africa and the remote corners of Asia and Latin America. Highly accessible, the technology is inherently suited to remote areas with poor infrastructure and offers low-cost, pre-paid services appropriate for those with an irregular income. In addition, technological literacy is not a great obstacle, as shown by the rate of uptake.

For instance, in Africa, though the absolute number of mobile phones is relatively small, the numbers are growing fast. Less than 3 percent of the population had access to a mobile telephone in 2001, but the number of subscribers is currently expanding at roughly 35 percent a year. Research also indicates that mobile phone use is greater than might be inferred from subscriber numbers alone, because users are not necessarily also owners of mobile phones. For instance, surveys indicate that even in rural areas not covered by mobile telecommunication networks, more than 70 percent of households have made at least one mobile phone call in the last three months, and 45 percent of households have made a call about remittances.

Current Ventures

The technology already exists for mobile phones to deliver remittance services, as illustrated in several countries.

In the Philippines, for instance, SMART introduced SMART Money in partnership with MasterCard in December 2000. SMART Money enables remittance senders to transfer money from a bank account, or—by paying cash to a partner of SMART—to send money to a recipient’s SMART Money account. SMART Money

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ACRONYMS & GLOSSARY

ACH – automated clearing house

ATM – automated teller machine

PIN – personal identification number

POS – point of sale

SIM – subscriber identity module; a smart card placed in a GSM (Global System for Mobile communications) cellular phone that encrypts voice and data transmissions (SIMs also store data, both phone settings and numbers for the user and user ID information for the network)

SMS – short message service, also known as text messaging

SVA – stored value account; a pre-paid account, generally card-based (the card can be used to transfer funds for payment, for example to a merchant at a POS terminal, within the pre-paid balance of the account)

SWIFT – the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication; SWIFT operates a messaging service for financial transactions between 7,000 member financial institutions in 194 countries (www.swift.com)

TCP/IP – transmission control protocol/internet protocol; the basic communication language of the internet, used to connect hosts and transmit data over networks

This quarterly newsletter provides information on migrant remittances with feature articles reporting on debates, news, or innovations in migrant remittances or relevant crosscutting information. It is jointly supported by the U.K. Department for International Development (DFID) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

Subscription to the newsletter is free and suggestions for contributions are always welcome (see contacts on last page). Please ask questions or send stories or information we may feature.

Earlier issues of the newsletter are available at: www.microlinks.org/ev_en.php?ID=5192_201&ID2=DO_TOPIC and www.livelihoods.org/hot_topics/migration/remittancesindex.html#3

MOBILE AND CARD-BASED TECHNOLOGIES FOR REMITTANCE TRANSFERS AND PAYMENTS

Celpay

SIM-based mobile phone payment system

Zambia, Democratic Republic of Congo

www.celpay.com

A Celpay SIM card provides the Celpay menu. Funds are deposited in a Celpay account, using the cell phone to transfer from a bank account or, if the user is unbanked, depositing cash at a partner bank. Purchases can be made via SMS by entering the amount to be paid into the phone and authenticating the transaction with a PIN. The service provider instantly transfers the money to the merchant's Celpay-enabled account. Merchants pay a commission of 3.4 percent of the total transaction amount.

G-Cash

Mobile phone-based money transfer service provided by Globe Telecom (GTel)

Philippines, in partnership with Bahrain, Hong Kong, Italy, Singapore, Taiwan, and U.K.

www.myglobe.com.ph/gcash/about.asp

GTel mobile phone subscribers register via text message. Funds can then be deposited and cashed at G-Cash affiliates and GTel offices throughout the network. Funds transfers (from sender to recipient and from G-Cash account to payout in cash) are communicated via text message. A 1 percent processing fee is charged both to deposit and to receive funds (2 percent total for a remittance transfer).

SMART Money

Mobile phone-based SMS money transfer service and linked debit card

Philippines and 17 partner countries—in the future, users will be able to pay off micro loans through a linkage with the Rural Bankers' Association of the Philippines

www.smart.com.ph/smart

(for a case study, see www.digitaldividend.org/case/case_smart.htm)

SMART Money is provided by SMART, a mobile phone company in the Philippines, in partnership with MasterCard. The service enables users to transfer money from a bank account to a SMART Money account. Subscribers can then use a SMART Money card like a debit card to pay for goods and services at a network of retail stores and restaurants, or to make withdrawals from ATMs. The service also allows users to transfer cash from one SMART Money card to another via SMS. For remittances, workers outside the Philippines can deposit funds at any of the phone company's remittance partners in 17 countries. A text message is sent to the recipient in the Philippines advising of the transfer, which is instantly credited to the recipient's account with the phone company and to the recipient's SMART Money card. A 1 percent processing fee is charged.

No Borders

Stored value card

Currently pilot testing in Ecuador, El Salvador, and Mexico; plans expansion to Asia, Caribbean, East Africa, and South/Central America; signed alliance agreement with Banco Solidario to link payout locations in Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru

www.no-borders.com

Funds from SVA (closed system) cards can be transferred in real time to bank-issued debit (open system) cards, which can be used for ATM withdrawals, signature-based purchases, and card-not-present transactions. Also allows for direct deposit of payroll checks and for bill payment without a bank account.

NTT-DoCoMo i-Mode FeliCa

Cell phones with embedded multi-application smart chips

Service initiated by DoCoMo in Japan in summer 2004

www.nttdocomo.com/corebiz/interconnected/felicaContent.html

Phones are loaded with cash deposits at terminals. The phones can be used as pre-paid electronic cash, credit cards, travel tickets, access control cards, authorizations to access corporate networks, or entry cards such as for club memberships or loyalty programs. Selected information—the remaining electronic cash balance, for example, or transaction records—can be displayed offline on the cell phone. Transactions are completed at POS terminals that deduct the amount of a purchase or read other information from the embedded chip.

Another embedded chip system is Nokia's Smart Shell NFC (Near Field Communication) contactless payment system, compatible with existing contactless payment infra-structures such as Visa's programs and MasterCard's PayPass www.nokia.com/nokia/0,,70851,00.html

ogy providers to roll out new service solutions, and moving from closed platforms or networks to interoperable, open platforms that broaden access and lower costs. (Workshop held in association with the *Eradicating Poverty Through Profit* conference, December 11, 2004, in San Francisco; sponsored by the Inter-American Development Bank/Multilateral Investment Fund and the World Resources Institute).

Articles in this issue provide information on some of the new services and discuss the opportunities and challenges inherent in them. In addition, our regular features provide updates on remittance initiatives, list internet links, and share news on related events and publications.

This is the first issue of *Migrant Remittances* jointly sponsored by the U.K. Department for International Development and the U.S. Agency for International Development. We hope you will again find it informative and useful, and we look forward to your news and contributions for upcoming newsletters.

Cerstin Sander
Editor

Beam It Across continued from page 1

can function as a “virtual wallet,” or be linked to customers’ bank accounts and a MasterCard-enabled debit card. Funds can be withdrawn from ATMs at SMART partner banks or can be collected in cash from agents including fast food restaurants and shopping malls.

In 2003, SMART started to explore services for the “unbanked” with the SMART Buddy mobile commerce technology platform. Called SMART Load, the service enables the electronic transfer of pre-paid airtime via SMS, allowing for payments or remittance transfers.

GTel’s G-Cash program is another Philippine service using SMS messaging to execute transactions and cash centers to pay out funds received. In both G-Cash and SMART Load, text messages are used both to initiate the transfer and to notify senders and recipients of successful transfers.

In Mozambique, MCell has introduced a system of airtime transfer from phone to phone, effectively allowing “trading” in very small denominations. Early this year, a system in the United Arab Emirates offered a “wallet” on the phone to store transactions and manage money.

Where such services are not offered, many low-income users—innovative as ever—have been using airtime as a virtual e-currency by sending the code for a pre-paid card to their relatives or to traders by SMS.

The outreach opportunities for mobile phone-based transfer and payment services are tremendous. In South Africa, for instance, a joint venture of Y’ello Bank with Vodacom and MTN (both mobile communications firms) announced in February 2005 that it is seeking to target unbanked mobile phone users. That network already has close to 20 million subscribers. By comparison, South Africa’s largest retail bank, Absa, has only 6 million customers.

Next Steps

Extending the models of pre-paid mobile phones to include money transfer and redemption is not a difficult step. A phone-to-phone system based on pre-paid “airtime” is a ready possibility. For instance, Encorus (of the same parent company as Western Union) offers software for SVAs on mobile phones and Nokia offers phones with embedded chips. Transfers between phones can then be carried out by secured text messaging. Estimated charges for international transfers on such a system are around 4 percent, and in-country transfers could be as low as the cost of the text message.

The pre-paid business model has several attractions for the poor: it eliminates the need for costly travel to the nearest bank, it can include international as well as domestic transactions, it can reach rural areas, it is a secure and near-instantaneous transfer mechanism, it allows transactions in small denominations, and it is likely to reduce fee charges.

Such a system could easily gain significant market share, and especially in remote areas with weak financial infrastructure, mobile phone-based transfer and payments could offer a relatively low-cost service option.

The key impediments to mobile communications as deliverers of remittance services, however, are security and regulation. Governments must be convinced that transaction processes are secure, both for individual consumers and for the system overall. On the regulatory side, financial service and communications licensing and regulatory requirements tend to create barriers to offering transactional services for payments and transfers using mobile phones.

Sources

- www.ameinfo.com/news/Detailed/51917.html
- <http://free.financialmail.co.za/05/0218/technology/atech.htm>
- www.encorus.com/meta/main.htm
- www.digitaldividend.org/case/case_smart.htm
- www.vodafone.com/article/0,3029,CATEGORY_ID%23D30402%2526LANGUAGE_ID%253D0%2526CONTENT_ID%23D255218,00.html

Backbone Technology: Open Platforms for Greater Outreach And Cheaper Services

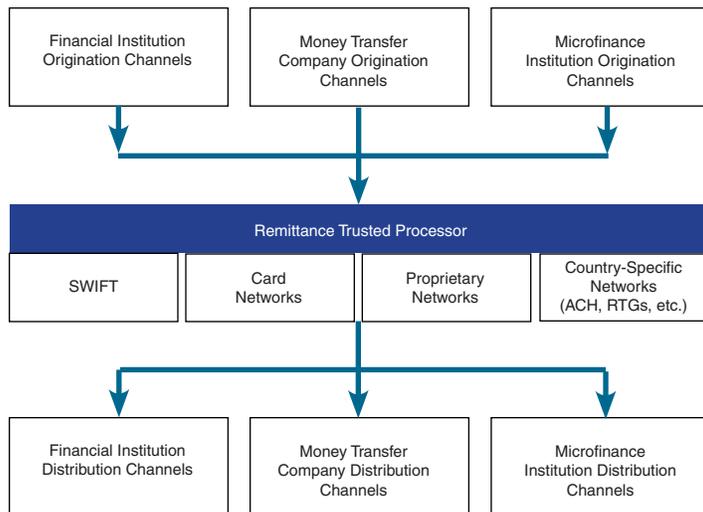
A significant structural impediment to the growth of remittance services is the lack of an integrated operational and technical infrastructure. This infrastructure must include fund collection mechanisms, bank accounting system integration, regulatory compliance, foreign exchange currency conversion, distribution, and settlement.

The remittance industry is composed of money transfer companies, financial institutions, and web portals that operate within closed networks where money transfers are confined to their sending and receiving agents or partners. Much effort and significant financial resources are expended in developing point-to-point relationships for money transfer services.

Banks that have invested in the infrastructure required to launch remittance services suffer from weak distribution because most offer remittance delivery only to banks within their existing correspondent network. Smaller banks have few alternatives for delivery products and use traditional money transfer company partners that lack banking systems integration and distribution beyond their partner agents.

To eliminate these impediments, the international banking industry must address three areas: achieving economies of scale—and thus low-cost remittance services—by consolidating the execution of remittance processes; using an open network or “gateway” to bridge existing remittance channels and increase the number of interlinked origination and delivery endpoints (for example, Unicache’s processor, www.unicache.com, or ingenico’s platform, www.ingenicots.co.uk); and providing a low-cost method of connecting to the gateway.

THE GATEWAY MODEL



Source: Unicache

A gateway would provide a more streamlined and cost-effective method of collecting and distributing remittances than the various mechanisms currently used. Using the remittance instruments that prevail in the current market, an open platform can integrate across existing infrastructures, allowing the connection of branch teller systems and ATMs, bank account systems, wire transfer systems, card networks, and SWIFT systems for instruction acceptance and delivery, funds collection and distribution, and foreign exchange transactions. The investment needed to create such a gateway is relatively low, and with such a system in place, both banks and dedicated money service providers could offer services to an expanding global network and to corridors they had not served before. For users, expanded access reduces the cost of transferring money (by reducing the travel costs associated with collecting remittances, for example) and interoperability facilitates the use of other financial services.

Card-Based Remittance Services

Card-based services are rapidly gaining ground in the money transfer business. In markets with relatively good service networks, senders and recipients do not need to carry large amounts of cash and cardholders are able to use POS terminals and ATMs. Card-based remittance products usually take the form either of funds delivered as a debit or pre-paid card or of funds transferred to and from a card account reloadable at any time by the sender.

REMITTANCES VIA THE INTERNET

A more recent and quickly expanding type of money transfer service uses the internet, offering mostly online-to-offline transactions. The sender processes a transaction over the internet using a credit card or bank account number, and the recipient collects the payout through traditional mechanisms: cash payouts, bank accounts, or debit card accounts. The reach of this type of transfer service will continue to expand but is still limited by the accessibility of the internet and of the financial service infrastructure such as bank branches or ATMs.

Xoom (www.xoom.com) and iKobo (www.ikobo.com) are among the providers offering this kind of service. From a few countries, services such as Western Union transfers can also be effected by internet.

iKobo uses an internet-to-card model. Senders make an online payment using a credit card, and the recipient is sent a free debit card. This “i-Kard” is a reloadable Visa debit card on which funds are received in real time. Recipients can use the card to withdraw cash at ATMs worldwide or to purchase items at any merchant that accepts Visa. iKobo operates in more than 170 countries.

Xoom was developed by the same team that created PayPal, an online payments company. It has the support of investors that started companies such as Google and Yahoo and reflects the emergence of a growing online money transfer market. Online remittance services indicate a push to develop specialized services for niche markets within the money transfer business—a push in turn expected to increase competition and make more complementary services available.

Two of the leading card providers, Visa and MasterCard, are very active in this market. In Latin America, Visa and its member financial institutions offer money transfer services using pre-paid card, card-to-card, and card-to-bank-account transactions. Visa uses partner banks in Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, and Peru, and is promoting the Visa Giro service (giro is Spanish for transfer).

Visa is also working on card-account-to-card-account transfers in Europe and India. Visa has enabled the Visa Money Transfer capability in the European Union and recently launched with IDBI Bank a domestic card-to-card fund transfer facility in India. IDBI Bank customers can transfer money from their bank account or Visa card to any other Visa debit or credit card across the country.

In the United States, banks such as Bank of America (SafeSend) and Wells Fargo (InterCuenta Express™) have made card-based remittances popular. Similarly, Citibank has released a transnational credit card for customers in the United States and Mexico. The U.S.-based party is responsible for the card, receives statements, and makes payments. The relative in Mexico receives the card at Citibank-owned Banamex and uses it in the local market.

Since May 2003, Opportunity International, a global nonprofit microfinance organization, has been working with MasterCard to develop a co-branded card called the Opportunity Card. HSBC has now come on board as the sender bank that will issue the card and provide for the recipient a remittance account from which funds can be withdrawn. The intention is to reduce fees for the sender through cheaper technology. Senders will be given the option to add a small contribution to benefit the recipient's local community in the developing world by assisting education, healthcare, and other social projects. With the Philippines as the pilot for the initiative, the joint program is intended to serve a new client segment by providing card-based products and services to an unbanked sector.

Sources

- www.opportunity.org.uk/mediainfo/newsreleases/MasterCard.html
- www1.worldbank.org/finance/html/amlcft/APEC_Symp_Presentations/p3/p3_yen.ppt

Bank-to-Bank Models Using SWIFT: New Services Promise Lower Costs and Better Availability

Banks in most countries have been processing remittances using SWIFT (www.swift.com). Originally a wholesale system designed to move large sums of money in bulk transactions, SWIFT is a secure platform for processing instructions for funds. This platform is now being adapted to handle individual transfers for small sums.

The current SWIFT system has limitations in terms of its cost, processing time, and the fact that it relies on a network restricted to banks linked to SWIFT.

Cost. On average, banks will charge roughly US\$40 for a transfer using SWIFT, although the cost of an individual SWIFT message is quite low (approximately US\$0.35). The high-cost element is the staff time needed to process the transaction, which makes the low-value, high-frequency transactions typical of remittances especially expensive.

Processing Time. Transfers take between 24 and 48 hours because messages are processed in batches. Spanish and Italian banks, for example, process and send remittance transaction information to paying agents in South America two or three times a day. Processing remittance transfers in an aggregate form, however, is not competitive against services that deliver money transfers in seconds.

Access. Access to SWIFT is a challenge for smaller financial institutions such as credit unions, small local banks, or microfinance institutions in developing countries. Such institutions tend to be more interested than traditional local banks in catering to recipient families and meeting their banking needs by linking remittances with financial services—and on the whole they are better suited to doing so. But their access to a SWIFT platform is impeded by hurdles such as regulatory constraints, the reluctance of hub services to accept them, and high costs.

New Technologies Improve Platform

Released this year, SWIFT Net is a new, nonproprietary version of SWIFT that uses TCP/IP, the protocol used for the internet. TCP/IP lowers maintenance costs and thereby usage costs for banks, making the platform more viable for managing small transactions.

Cross-border, another SWIFT application, enables financial institutions that are related, or part of a group or network, to share access to SWIFT. Accessing the platform requires a lead bank and a one-time joint investment, typically in the range of US\$50,000 to US\$60,000. This model makes it viable for credit unions, small banks, and microfinance institutions working and investing jointly to be part of a bank-to-bank remittances model using SWIFT.

As part of a project financed by the Inter-American Development Bank's Multilateral Investment Fund, Banco Solidario acquired access to SWIFT for transacting remittances from savings banks in Spain to a network of Ecuadoran microfinance institutions that share access to SWIFT. Banco Solidario is now looking to expand access to the platform to other microfinance institutions, such as BancoSol in Bolivia.

Sources

- SWIFT Ecuador and www.swift.com

Initiatives

G8 Action Plan on Remittances

www.g8usa.gov/d_060904a.htm

Task Force on General Principles for International Remittance Systems. The Committee on Payments and Settlement Systems (CPSS, Bank for International Settlements) and the World Bank have assembled a Task Force to develop general principles for remittance systems. Task Force members include senior officials from multilateral banks and from central banks in remitting and receiving countries. The United Kingdom contributes an expert to support the work of the Task Force.

The Task Force held its second meeting in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in January 2005 and reported good progress. Subgroups have been created to prepare detailed papers on four subject areas: market structures in different countries, improving consumer protection and transparency, improving access to—and the integrity of—payment systems infrastructure, and the role of public policy in remittance systems. Another Task Force meeting will be held in Basle, Switzerland, in April 2005. The Task Force's work should be completed and published by July 2005.

Remittance Country Partnerships. G8 members have started work on the following country partnerships:

Canada	India and Jamaica
France	Morocco, Mali, and Senegal
Germany	Turkey
Italy	Morocco
Japan	Philippines and Malaysia
United Kingdom	Bangladesh, Nigeria, and Ghana
United States	Philippines and Mexico

G7 Statistical Working Group

Following through on its commitment to improve remittance statistics, G7 has set up a Statistical Working Group. The first meeting of the group—a technical meeting on measuring remittances—was organized by the World Bank in January 2005. The meeting brought together statistical experts from sending and receiving economies, as well as the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, European Union, and United Nations. The group will clarify the balance of payments definition of remittances and develop methodological guidelines for collecting and compiling the statistics. Core participants are developing a workplan with the goal of reporting to the G7, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, and G20 Finance Ministers by fall 2005.

The group's notional terms of reference can be found at www.worldbank.org/data/Remittances/1bQuinn.pdf, and a summary of the January 2005 meeting at www.worldbank.org/data/Remittances/Summary.pdf

Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP)

China Market Study of Domestic Remittances. This study attempts to characterize the nature of demand for money transfer services among poor migrants and recipients in China. The study will compare this demand with the money transfer options currently available or likely forthcoming. The team has conducted household and focus group surveys of domestic migrants, remittance-receiving households, and financial service providers. The surveys have just been completed; preliminary findings are expected by June 2005.

Southern Africa. In December 2004, CGAP, in cooperation with FinMark Trust, launched a second market study in Southern Africa. The study's aims are similar to the China study. The team has conducted focus groups of domestic and international migrants and relied on secondary data such as that developed by FinMark Trust, South African government sources, and the Southern Africa Migration Project. A draft report should be available by May 2005.

Inter-American Development Bank Multilateral Investment Fund (IDB/MIF)

MIF projects with remittance subcategories are listed at: www.iadb.org/mif/v2/projectsort.asp?Type=Cluster&Param1=73&Param2=77&C=8&Status=3. Currently, 16 projects are underway. Also see references throughout this newsletter.

U.K. Department for International Development (DFID)

U.K. Remittance Products Survey. DFID commissioned a survey of the remittance products available to migrants from developing countries who live in the United Kingdom. The U.K. Remittance Products Survey was launched on March 31, 2005, along with a consumer-focused website containing comparative tables of remittance products: www.sendmoneyhome.org

Remittance Country Partnerships. Following scoping missions to Bangladesh and Nigeria, DFID has initiated customized remittance activity programs with these countries. A mission has also taken place in Ghana and a similar program should be initiated there soon. These remittance country partnerships will encompass policy, technical assistance, and funding measures with the objective of lowering the costs of remittances, improving access for poor and rural remittance recipients, facilitating more effective regulation and monitoring that promotes wider use of the formal sector, and strengthening Anti-Money Laundering and Combating Financing of Terrorism monitoring.

Remittance Household Surveys. Remittance household surveys are planned in selected countries, including Nigeria, Bangladesh, and the United Kingdom. The first surveys will take place among the Bangladeshi community in the United Kingdom and will be completed in April 2005.

Information

Surfing the Web

- “Momentum Is Gaining for Cellphones as Credit Cards,” an article from the *New York Times* by Matt Richtel, January 10, 2005. <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=F30712F6355D0C738DDDA80894DD404482>
- “AMLC Considers Monitoring Mobile-based Remittances,” an article by Keryn Bautista for *ITMatters* magazine, February 2, 2005. http://itmatters.com.ph/news/news_02022005b.html
- “Coming Soon: The Cellphone Wallet,” an article from the fall 2004 issue of *Community Developments* online that was dedicated to technology and the unbanked. www.occ.treas.gov/cdd/cellphonewallet.html
- “FNB’s Mini-ATM Technology Helps Rural Communities Thrive,” a press release by Fleishman Hillard on First National Bank’s website, Johannesburg, January 21, 2005. www.itweb.co.za/office/fnb/0501210848.htm
- “New Internet Service for Remittances to Cuba Inaugurated,” an announcement from Swiss company AWS Technologies SA, from PR Web, December 25, 2004. <http://press.arrivenet.com/bus/article.php/547181.html>
- Migrants and remittances presentations by ICICI Bank India and Citibank at the *Eradicating Poverty Through Profit* conference in San Francisco, December 2004. <http://povertyprofit.wri.org/program/program.html#monday> – scroll down or search for the 2:30 Concurrent Session, Track 2 – Financial Services, Session B: Migrants & Remittances.
- GlobalPlatform, an international, nonprofit smart card association aiming to create technology specifications for interoperable, backwards-compatible, and standards-based smart cards and related systems and devices. www.globalplatform.org
- A website for dialogue and information on remittances and development in Central America, sponsored by GTZ and the Ford Foundation. www.remesasydesarrollo.org
- Destination DC: Migration and Transnational Communities, a website with findings from a collaborative and interdisciplinary research project on migration from El Salvador and the existence of transnational communities in Greater Washington, D.C. www.rci.rutgers.edu/~migrate1/
- The Program on Remittances and Development at the Earth Institute at Columbia University aims to research and promote best practices in remittance transmission in Latin America and to craft policy prescriptions for governments, the financial sector, aid organizations, and civil society. www.earthinstitute.columbia.edu/cgsd/remittances/
- *Migración y Desarrollo*, issues 1 and 2 available. www.migracionydesarrollo.org. Click on “Revista.”

Events

- “SWIFT and International Payment Systems,” February–June 2005 (various locations/countries): www.swift.com/index.cfm?item_id=42636
- “Remittances and Financial Inclusion: Cross Regional Perspectives,” May 19–20, 2005, Brussels, Belgium. Jointly sponsored by the Inter-American Development Bank Multilateral Investment Fund (IDB/MIF) and World Savings Bank Institute: www.savings-banks-events.org/remittances/index.htm
- “The Role of the Private Sector in Shifting from Informal to Formal Remittance Systems,” Second APEC Policy Dialogue, organized by the APEC Initiative on Remittance Systems, Bangkok, Thailand, May 26–27, 2005: www.remittance-initiative.org
- “Caribbean Diasporas and Development Conference Series,” May 30–31, 2005, Montreal, Canada. Sponsored by MIF in cooperation with the Canadian International Development Agency and the Canadian Foundation for the Americas. Will include presentations on Canadian-Haitian and Canadian-Jamaican remittances and innovations in the field to leverage remittances for development.

LATEST DATA

REMITTANCES TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (US\$ billions)				
	1990	2000	2003	2004 (est.)
Total	31.3	76.8	116.0	125.8
Latin America & Caribbean	5.8	20.2	34.1	36.9
South Asia	5.6	16.0	26.7	32.7
East Asia & Pacific	3.2	11.2	19.5	20.3
Europe & Central Asia	3.2	11.0	12.8	12.9
Middle East & North Africa	11.7	13.5	16.8	17.0
Sub-Saharan Africa	1.9	4.9	6.0	6.1

DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WITH HIGH REMITTANCE FLOWS		
	2003	2004 (est.)
India	17.4	23.0
Mexico	14.6	17.0
Philippines	7.9	8.1
China	4.6	4.6
Pakistan	4.0	4.1
Morocco	3.6	3.6
Bangladesh	3.2	3.4
Colombia	3.1	3.1
Egypt	3.0	3.0
Brazil	2.8	2.8

Source: Global Development Finance Report 2005

- “New Partnerships for Innovations in Microfinance,” June 23–24, 2005, Frankfurt, Germany. Jointly sponsored by Agence Française de Développement, the U.K. Department for International Development, KfW, and the Consultative Group to Assist the Poor for the International Year of Micro-Credit: www.kfw-entwicklungsbank.de/EN/Fachinformationen/FinancialS15/Events29/FinancialS3/Inhalt.jsp
- “International Forum on Remittances,” June 28–30, 2005, Washington, D.C. Sponsored by IDB/MIF: www.iadb.org/mif/v2/events.html
- “Unbanked Financial Services Innovation 2005,” September 14, 2005, San Francisco, Financial DNA, LLC. Includes sessions on remittance pricing and delivery trends, remittance processing, and prepaid card services: www.financialdna.com/fdna/site/fdna_conference_2.php

Publications

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MIGRANT REMITTANCES

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Editor: Cerstin Sander, DFID

Editorial Group: Kate McKee, Barry Lennon, Chris Barltrop, and Evelyn Stark (USAID/EGAT); Douglas Pearce and Victoria Seymour (DFID)

The *Migrant Remittances* Team: Cerstin Sander and Victoria Seymour (DFID); Maria Jaramillo (ACCION); Catherine Johnston, Colleen Green, and Rob Vickers (DAI)

Contributors to this issue: Simon Batchelor (Gamos), Randy Gutierrez (Unicache), Ashwin Raj (Visa), Patricio Sanchez (SWIFT Ecuador), and contacts in many institutions—thank you for your contributions

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