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MIT PLACEMENT OFFICER

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Ms. Eva Konomi evako@mit.edu
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**DOCTORAL
STUDIES**

Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)
PhD, Economics, Expected completion June 2016
DISSERTATION: "Essays on the determinants of international migration"

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE AND REFERENCES

Professor Esther Duflo,
MIT Department of Economics
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Professor Abhijit Banerjee,
MIT Department of Economics
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Professor Benjamin Olken,
MIT Department of Economics
77 Massachusetts Avenue, E17-212
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**PRIOR
EDUCATION**

Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH
A.B. *Summa cum Laude*,
in Economics (High Honors) and Mathematics

2008

CITIZENSHIP

Nepal

GENDER: Male

LANGUAGES

English (fluent), Nepali (native), Hindi (fluent)

FIELDS

Primary Fields: Development Economics
Secondary Fields: Labor Economics

**TEACHING
EXPERIENCE**

14.04 Intermediate Microeconomic Theory
(Undergraduate); Teaching assistant to Professor Juuso
Toikka

Fall 2015

	14.74x Foundation of Development Policy (EdX); Teaching assistant to Professors Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo, and Benjamin Olken	Fall 2015
	14.01 Principles of Microeconomics (Undergraduate); Teaching assistant to Professor Jeffrey Harris	Spring 2015
	14.771 Development Economics: Micro Issues (Graduate); Teaching assistant to Professors Benjamin Olken and Seema Jayachandran	Fall 2014
	14.003/14.03 Microeconomic Theory and Public Policy (Undergraduate/ Graduate); Teaching assistant to Professor David Autor	Fall 2014
	14.73 The Challenge of World Poverty (Undergraduate); Teaching assistant to Professors Abhijit Banerjee and Suresh Naidu	Spring 2014
	14.74/14.740 Foundations: Development Policy (Undergraduate/ Graduate); Teaching assistant to Professors David Donaldson and Esther Duflo	Fall 2013
	14.771 Development Economics: Micro Issues (Graduate); Teaching assistant to Professors Esther Duflo and Benjamin Olken	Fall 2013
RELEVANT POSITIONS	Research assistant to Professor Esther Duflo, MIT	Summer 2012
	Junior Professional Associate, The World Bank Country Office, Kathmandu, Nepal	Sept 2009 – Aug 2011
	Research assistant to Professor Eric V. Edmonds, Dartmouth College	2005-2011
FELLOWSHIPS, HONORS, AND AWARDS	George and Obie Shultz Fund grant	Fall 2014
	J-PAL Incubator fund for graduate students	Spring 2015
	MIT Department Fellowship	2015
	MIT Department Fellowship	2011-2013
	Phi Beta Kappa, Junior year, Dartmouth College	2007
	Nelson A. Rockefeller Prize in Economics, Dartmouth College	2008
	James O. Friedman Presidential Scholar, Dartmouth College	2008
	Rufus Choate Scholar, Dartmouth College	2007-2008
		2006-2007
		2005-2006
		2004-2005
PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES	Referee: <i>American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, Journal of Development Economics</i>	

Seminars: NEUDC 2011, NEUDC 2015

PUBLICATIONS **“You get what you pay for: Schooling incentives and child labor”**
(with Eric V. Edmonds)

Journal of Development Economics, 111, November 2014

“Independent child labor migration” (with Eric V. Edmonds)
in *International Handbook of the Economics of Migration*, ed. by Amelie F. Constant and Klaus F. Zimmermann, 2013

“The impact of minimum age of employment regulation on child labor and schooling” (with Eric V. Edmonds)
IZA Journal of Labor Policy, 1:14, December 2012

**RESEARCH
PAPERS**

“Get rich or die tryin’: Perceived earnings, perceived mortality rate and the value of a statistical life of potential work-migrants from Nepal” (Job Market Paper)

Do potential migrants have accurate information about the risks and returns of migrating abroad? And, given the information they have, what is their revealed willingness to trade risks for higher earnings? To answer these questions, this paper sets up and analyzes a randomized field experiment among 3,319 potential work migrants from Nepal to Malaysia and the Persian Gulf countries. The experiment provides them with information on wages and mortality incidences in their choice destination and tracks their migration decision three months later. I find that potential migrants severely overestimate their mortality rate abroad, and that information on mortality incidences lowers this expectation. Potential migrants without prior foreign migration experience also overestimate their earnings potential abroad, and information on earnings lowers this expectation. Using exogenous variation in expectations for the inexperienced potential migrants generated by the experiment, I estimate migration elasticities of 0.7 in expected earnings and 0.5 in expected mortality. The experiment allows me to calculate the trade-off the inexperienced potential migrants make between earnings and mortality risk, and hence their value of a statistical life (VSL). The estimates range from \$0.28 million to \$0.54 million (\$0.97m - \$1.85m in PPP), which is a reasonable range for a poor population. At this revealed willingness to trade earnings for mortality risk, misinformation lowers migration.

“Death scares: How potential work migrants infer mortality rate from migrant deaths?”

I study how potential work migrants infer mortality rates from incidents of migrant deaths. Using administrative databases on deaths and outflows of work-migrants from Nepal to Malaysia and the Persian Gulf countries, I investigate how death of a migrant from a district affects subsequent migration from the district. After controlling for confounds using district-month, destination-month and district-destination fixed effects, I find two key features of the migration response. First, migrant death lowers migration from the district in the subsequent 12 months. There is limited substitution across destinations as well as spillovers to neighboring districts. Second, the migration response to a migrant death is stronger when there are more

migrant deaths in the recent past. This indicates that the potential migrants over-weight recent deaths in forming their beliefs on mortality rates abroad. I then convert the migration response to change in perceived mortality rate abroad using the earnings elasticity of migration and the value of statistical life from Shrestha (2015). I find that one migrant death increases the perceived mortality rate by 6.7 per thousand for a two-year migration episode. This response is too large to be explained by a model of rational Bayesian learning. Models of learning fallacy, such as belief in the law of 'small' numbers, in conjunction with other heuristic decision making rules, can explain high response to death as well as large observed overestimation of mortality rate.

“Push and pull: A study of international migration from Nepal”

I study migration choices in the presence of liquidity constraints and varying costs of migration. I present a simple theoretical framework that analyzes migration response to both push and pull factors in such settings. This framework implies that a shock to the push factors in the origin leads to differential observed response to migration to various destinations, as they affect different parts of the wealth distribution. I test the implications of this framework in context of international migration from Nepal using a panel of 452 villages observed at three points in the 2000s. I use rainfall shocks and deaths due to conflict as 'push' shocks and growth in manufacturing and construction in destination countries as the 'pull' shocks. I find that a rainfall shock that increases household income by USD 100 increases migration to India by 54 percent but has no effect on migration elsewhere. Increase in conflict, which reduces consumption and amenity of the wealthier more, increases migration abroad, particularly from the urban areas. Increase in demand from the destination countries, particularly the Gulf countries and Malaysia has strong effects on migration to those destinations. These findings are consistent with the theoretical framework, and suggest presence of large liquidity constraints. Increase in income can boost migration to India whereas a reduction in cost of migration might increase profitable migration elsewhere. The responsiveness to 'pull' shocks suggests that households are willing to take advantage of these opportunities.