

Sending money back home: What happens when people are squeezed at both ends?

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A [new report](#) from Queen Mary University of London and collaborators based at SOAS and UCL reveals lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic period about people's remittance practices through times of crisis and

what happens when people are squeezed at both ends.

Researchers on Queen Mary's Connecting During COVID project undertook in-depth research in London, Glasgow and Cardiff with people from Brazilian, Indian and Somali diasporas, to explore pandemic experiences and remittance practices. The report documents how many migrants continued to remit during the pandemic while others began to remit in the face of escalating need in home countries.

While supporting families and friends was a source of great pride for many with one participant noting "if we send less they eat less," the report also points to the significant burdens that remittance sending put on some people who were adversely impacted by the pandemic.

The findings show how capacities to remit were underpinned by various factors, including migrant integration and determination to adapt, stability in some jobs, and [government support](#) for some. One participant described the crucial role they play in provision of financial support to their mother back home, saying, "We always paid the bills at my mother's house because she is retired, and she can barely survive with her pension. If we don't help, there's no way."

Lead researcher Professor Kavita Datta, Professor of Development Geography and Director of the Queen Mary Center for the Study of Migration, says, "Remittances kept moving through the COVID pandemic, it is clear from our research that U.K. residents responded to escalating needs in countries of origin or heritage, however some people also experienced significant stress around remitting—whether because they were struggling to send, or feeling ashamed that they could not."

These diverse experiences are captured in an animation produced in collaboration with PositiveNegatives which depicts experiences of job loss for some while exclusion from state support such as furlough meant

that others continued to work—sometimes as key workers—despite heightened risks of infection. Resulting food and [housing insecurity](#), loneliness and isolation led to greater reliance on [community support](#). The role of settled diasporic communities in the U.K. and third sector organizations as "first responders" to this heightened need among migrant communities is notable.

Dr. Anna Lindley, co-investigator, SOAS University of London, concludes, "It is crucial to reflect on what we can learn from the [pandemic](#) about people's remittance practices during times of crisis. The conversation about impact of the rising cost-of-living on people living in the U.K. would benefit from being broadened, to consider how this connects, through migration, to wider global perspectives."

Provided by Queen Mary, University of London

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