

Migrants sent half a trillion dollars home last year. These maps show where the money went

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There are now 244 million people living in a country other than the one they were born in, according to [migration figures](#) from the United Nations.

Many of those people went overseas to find work, leaving their families behind. For a growing number of families, the money their relatives send home, known as remittances, is their main source of income. The chart below shows the growth in remittances between 1990 and 2015.

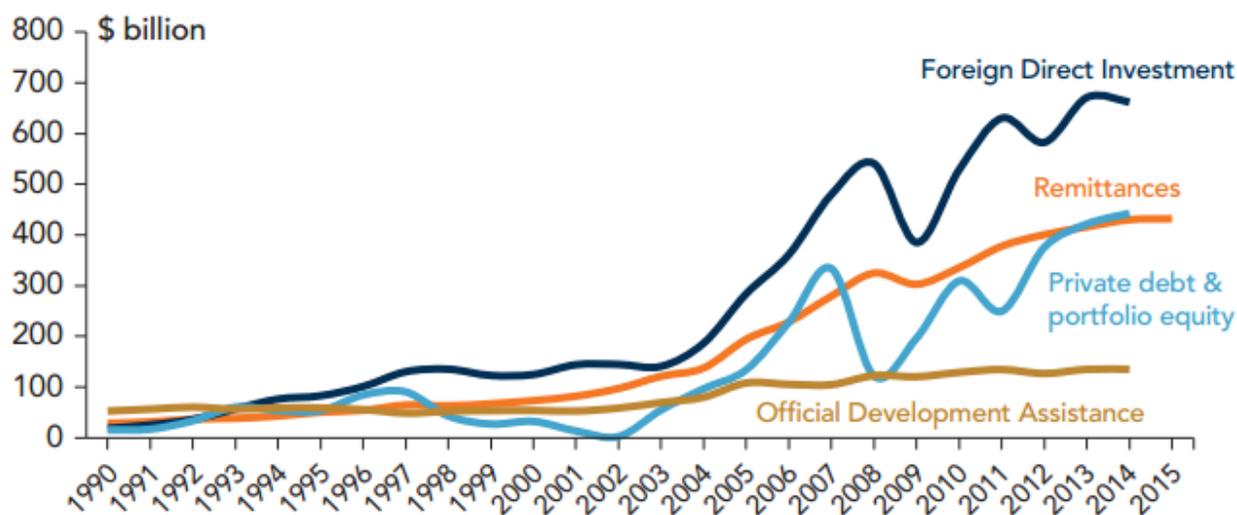


Image: World Bank

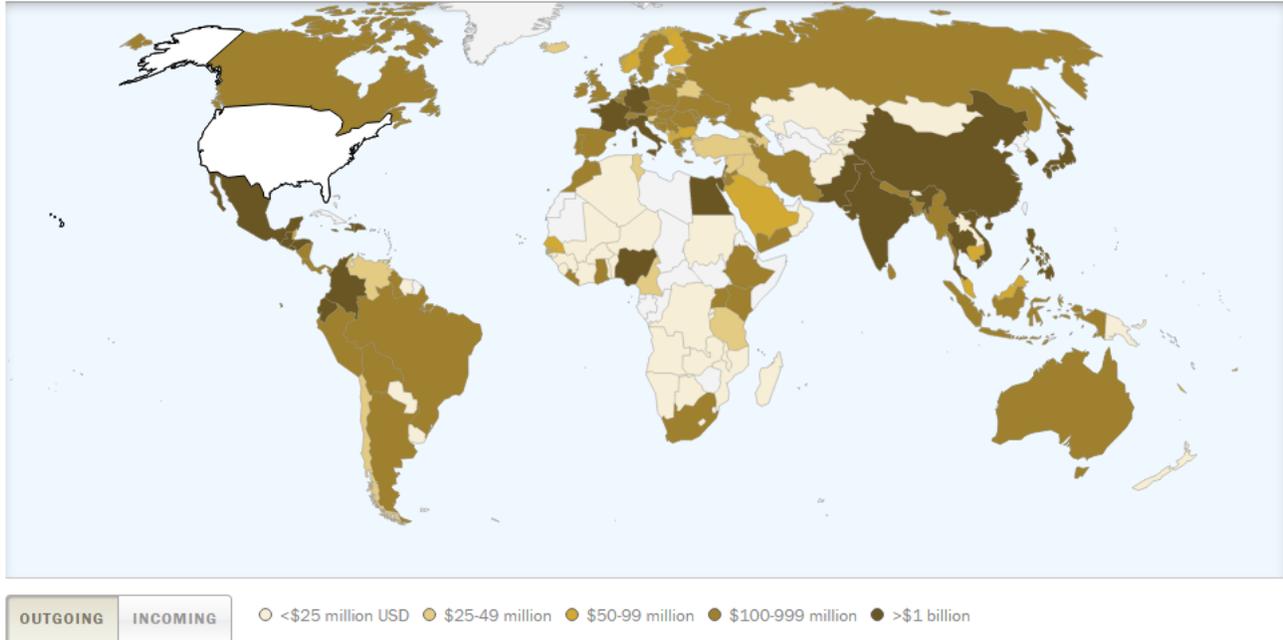
Remittances in 2015 totalled an estimated \$582 billion according to World Bank figures. The [Pew Research Center](#) has used the same figures to create an [interactive map](#) which tracks the huge amounts of money flowing between developed and developing countries.

Mapping remittances

The **United States** is home to 19% of the world's migrants. They sent \$133.5 billion in remittances in 2015.

The biggest recipients were: Mexico, \$24.3 billion; China, \$16.2 billion; and India, \$10 billion.

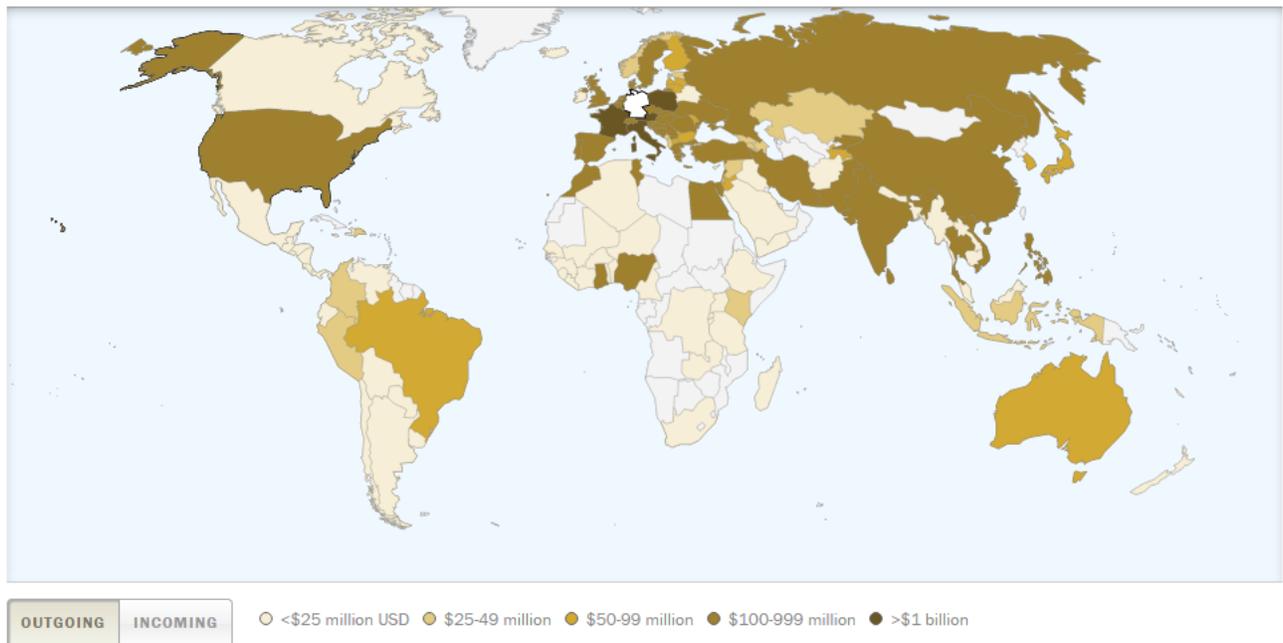
\$133,552,000,000 in remittances was sent from **United States** to other countries in 2015



Germany has the second highest number of migrants. In 2015 migrants sent home \$22.8 billion from Germany, mainly to neighbouring European countries.

The biggest recipients were: Poland, \$2.1 billion; France, \$1.9 billion; and Italy, \$1.3 billion.

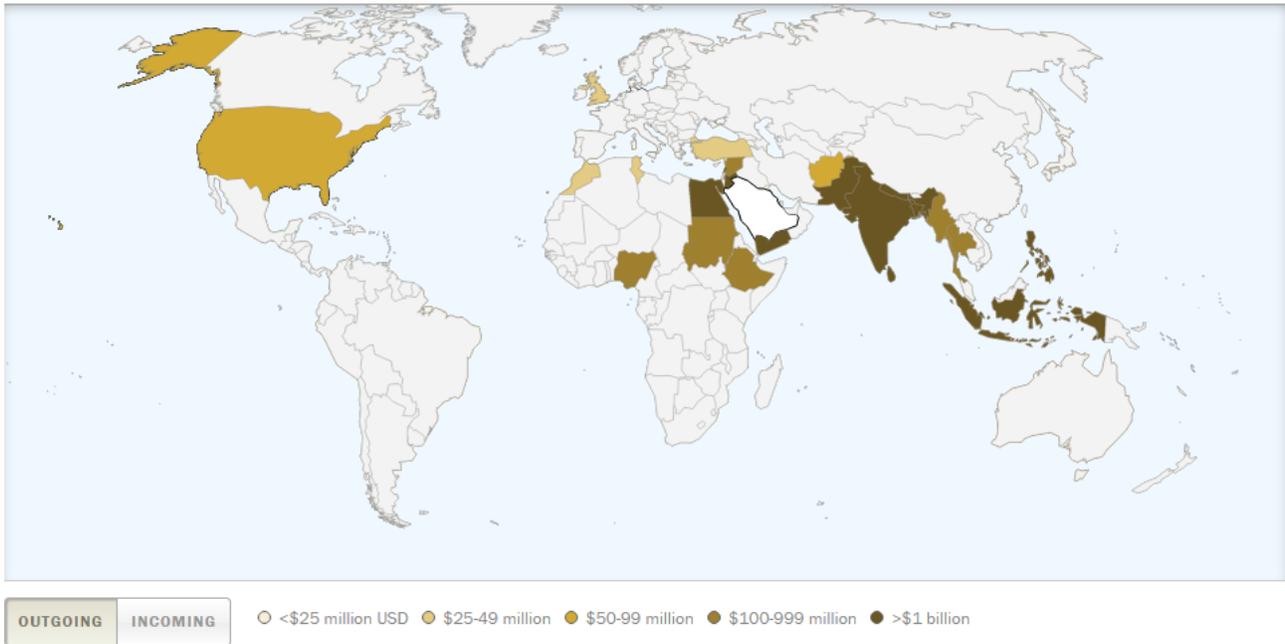
\$22,861,000,000 in remittances was sent from **Germany** to other countries in 2015



Saudi Arabia is home to migrants from very different backgrounds. Thousands of highly educated staff from Western nations are employed in the energy sector. A much higher number of migrants from the developing world work in low-paid domestic jobs and in the construction industry. Between them, they sent home \$45.7 billion in 2015.

The biggest recipients were: Lebanon, \$1.4 billion; Myanmar, \$954 million; and Syria, \$474 million.

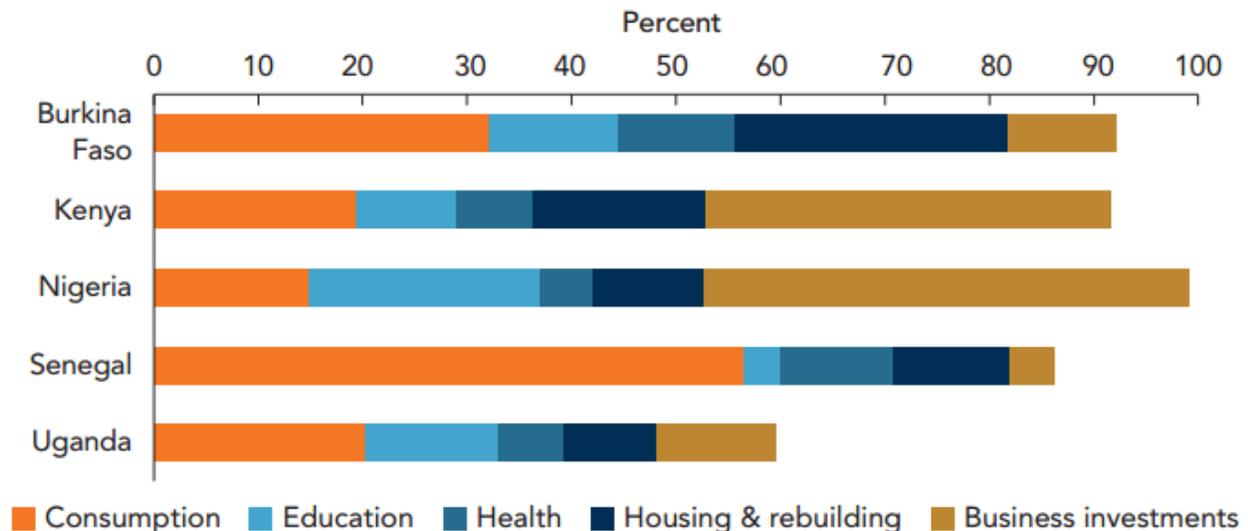
\$45,739,000,000 in remittances was sent from **Saudi Arabia** to other countries in **2015**



Reducing poverty, boosting economies

Remittances have a huge impact in the countries that receive them. World Bank figures show that in 2015, remittances to Egypt were worth four times as much as revenues from the Suez Canal. In Nepal they make up nearly one-third of total GDP.

Much of the money migrants send home is spent on food and immediate household needs. But there is evidence to show that many recipients are using the money to ensure a more secure and healthier future for their families.



Note: Consumption includes food, clothing, rent, marriages and funerals.

Source: Plaza, Navarrete, and Ratha (2011).

The future of remittances

The current mass movement of people is one of the defining challenges facing world leaders. The UN is now formulating a longer term plan to make sure the remittances these migrants send home in the future will have maximum benefit for their families. Under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the UN is calling for the transaction costs of remittances to be reduced.