



<Labour migration, recruitment and skills recognition and certification: how to maximize outcomes for migrant workers as well as countries of origin and destination? >

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Some facts and questions

- World LF is currently increasing by over 40 million per year; although the size of this annual increase is projected to diminish, some 470 million new jobs will be needed between 2016 and 2030
- Over 200 million people will be unemployed this year, and this is expected to rise by another 3 million in 2014; 900 million working poor
- 232 million migrants in the world today, of whom over 50 per cent economically active. Demographic and economic inequalities, alongside skill mismatches, will add to migratory pressures
- Internalization of labour markets is increasing competition among countries for the same pools of highly-skilled workers, but demand for less-skilled workers will not fade away



Some facts and questions

- How to improve responsiveness of migration policies and systems to meet genuine labour market needs?
- How to enhance transparency and fairness in recruitment for better job-worker matching and better outcomes for migrant workers?
- How to best assess potential for skills recognition and standards across countries in order to overcome obstacles to labour market integration?

The ILO and migrants

- Mandate to protect migrant workers; interest in migrants as workers; promote fair treatment of migrant workers (equality of treatment)
- ILO's goal: creation of productive employment and decent jobs for all in all countries. Lack of jobs or poor working conditions are oftentimes at the origin of migration
- ILO has adopted a number binding (e.g. Conventions No. 97 and 143) and non-binding instruments, e.g. the Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration, for the sound governance of labour migration ; they define what protection mechanisms should apply when migration takes place
- ILO has a tripartite governance system where representative workers' and employers' organizations decide along with governments; decisions reflect the realities of the world of work
- ILO has a two-fold intervention strategy: the employment and labour market side of migration warrants attention, as well as the protection of migrant workers and equality of treatment.





Identifying labour market needs: some key questions

- Is there a need for migrant labour? Are there alternative policy responses to migration (e.g. investment in capital equipment and re-organization of production; increase labour force participation of under-represented groups, such as older workers, women; improve wages and working conditions to attract local workers)? Constraints and incentives
- Should priority be given to short-term or long-term needs? Data sets and methodologies differ
 - Given the political sensitivities linked to migration and shifts in business and demand for labour, short-term planning may prevail regardless of reliability of projections
- Would a focus on better functioning labour markets be more promising than a focus on labour shortages?

Identifying labour market needs: the importance of data for analysis

- Common measures: change in wages, employment, underemployment (e.g. US Bureau of Labour Statistics 1999) and vacancy rates, hard-to-fill vacancies, etc. (e.g. Catalogue of Occupations Difficult to Cover (COOD) in Spain)
 - Growing reliance on employers' hiring intentions: from "trust the employer attestation" to "carefully-check-employer-certification" approaches. Risk of discrimination and excess of credentials
 - Relying on expert advice and the social partners and combining "top-down" with "bottom-up" indicators: the UK's Migration Advisory Committee (MAC)
 - No single formula for skill needs analysis, but combination of qualitative analysis (e.g. case studies, focus group discussion, Delphi method) and quantitative data (e.g. surveys, skill audits, econometric models) has proven useful
- What does the ILO do?
- Building capacity in Ukraine and Moldova to, among others, analyse the skills shortages and over supply resulting from migration; balance migration flows and return with national needs and EU Member States skills needs; strengthen PES capacity ; proposal of system for validation of informal learning; guide on skills matching and qualification recognition and design of Occupational Profiles



Types of admission policies

- Demand-side policies (employer driven)
- Supply-based (e.g. points systems): bringing in migrants who possess the skill profile desired at a particular point in time regardless of job availability (high-skilled/talented workers)
- Increasingly, systems are mixed, i.e. some reliance on employer demands and some on migrants' profiles (e.g. EU Blue Card)
- Temporary migration schemes: have expanded avenues for legal migration, but risks of "distortion" and "dependence" remain. "Permanently temporary workers"? How "temporary" are certain labour market needs?
- Regularisation/"earned adjustments": change of legal status for migrant workers who "have proven themselves"; large numbers of irregular immigrants undermines the credibility of legal migration policy/system
- Policy bias against low-skilled admissions: needed, but not wanted (e.g. levy systems)



Recruitment or worker-job matching: the main issues

- Recruitment is increasingly performed by private employment agencies, and employers themselves
- In most migration corridors, the recruitment of migrants is concentrated at the top and the bottom ends of the education ladder
- Most lower-skilled workers find jobs abroad through for-profit-recruiters who can make poor worker-job matches and overcharge workers; recruitment cost (human, social and financial cost and possible breaches to immigration systems) is considerably higher regarding workers with fewer skills

Recruitment or worker-job matching: the main issues (cont.)

- Governments in both origin and destination countries are enacting legislation and other means of regulating the activities of intl. recruiters, e.g. joint liability of recruiters and foreign employers (Philippines and Ethiopia); admissions allowed only through arrangements between PES, (e.g. Korea, bilateral agreements including standard employment contracts); minimum wages for migrant domestic workers (e.g. Saudi Arabia and the Philippines)
- Groups representing the recruitment industry (e.g. CIEET) have developed codes of ethical conduct, in line with Convention No. 181 (“no fees” rule)
- What does the ILO do?
 - Help reduce recruitment cost through the creation of Migration Resource Centers that provide correct information on labour migration process, wages and working conditions in destination countries, and employment opportunities (Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam and Penang, Malaysia -- joint ILO/IOM effort)
 - Recent DIFD-ILO project seeks to promote "no fee" migration corridors as part of efforts to combat forced labour



The challenge and the cost of a failure to recognize and certify qualifications/skills across borders

- Serious mismatch between qualifications of workers and needs at work (25 per cent of skilled migrants inactive, unemployed or in jobs for which they were overqualified, OECD 2007)-**triple loss**
- Problems with measurement of skills: formal qualifications inadequate; on-the-job training and soft skills increasingly important
- For middle/low-skilled workers the challenge is recognizing skills/competencies acquired on the job/informally
- Recognition of qualifications constitute an open issue both for potential and returning migrants
- Limited recognition of qualifications discourages mobility, as does limited portability of social security entitlements for both high-skilled and low-skilled migrants

How to improve credentials and skills recognition?

- Avoid brain waste, see Immigrant Employment Council of British Columbia (IECBC) which offers a database to employers with information on immigrants looking for jobs and reflecting their language and experience
- National Qualification Frameworks: an effective policy tool? They seem not to offer quick-fix solutions nor to have improved substantially the links between education, training systems and labour markets (Allais, 2012)
- Mobility of highly skilled workers, and eventually less skilled workers, recognized as key to fostering economic growth and employment in many regional areas of economic integration (e.g. CARICOM, ASEAN SADC), but little progress in easing constraints on migration.

How to improve credentials and skills recognition? (cont.)

- Also in the EU, mobility policies somehow challenged by regional/structural development policies and programmes

- What does the ILO do?
 - ILO strives to embed measures of recognition of qualifications and certification in the wider context of training and educational systems
 - Improving governance of migration of professionals and skilled personnel in the health sector (Philippines, Vietnam and India) through the development of a system for skills testing and certification for main countries of destination in the EU
 - Improving regional collaboration on labour migration in SADC through tripartite consultations; development of regional labour migration policy which will also guide national policies.



Should the ILO:

- Develop job descriptions and training requirements for low-skilled occupations for inclusion in bilateral or multilateral agreements, building upon ISCO-08?