

Theme 2: Skilling Migrants for Employment

Draft Summary Notes

Background Paper

It was developed in a highly participatory environment with IOM as the pen holder and ably supported by the co-chairs Philippines and United Kingdom and Botswana. The contributions to the document came from Governments of Belgium, United Kingdom, The Philippines, Botswana, Bangladesh, Belgium, Germany, Sri Lanka, Venezuela as well as civil society organisations including youth organisations, business mechanism, mayor mechanism and such partners such as ICBD, ILO, IOE, IUTC UNCTAD, FAO, OECD.

The purpose of the paper is to set concepts for the discussion in the roundtable, and it is made of two main parts being;

1. *Presentation of the issues skills, Labour migration, and labour mobility nexus including the overview of the policy debate on skilled migrant work:* The paper started with the overview of the situation, acute needs of the labour markets of the development states and generated the need for effective regulations of supply to ensure productive migration. The paper acknowledges the situation created by the Covid 19 whereby unemployment, labour market mis-balances, and restrictions on mobility reigned supreme. Still, it was quick to point out that the situation demonstrated high inter-dependence of states on labour migration and the importance of mobility to fill labour market gaps and ensure development. The paper extensively discusses the role of governments and particularly recognises the role played by local governments. It further acknowledges the skills at all levels, which was demonstrated by the Covid crisis. The paper also includes the link of skills with modern trends of digitisation, automation, increasing competition for skills and talents, and the acute need for action to address climate change. The relevance of GCM, the need for partners on skills and mobility, training and recognition between governments including local governments, multilateral and multi-stakeholder approaches
2. *Summary of findings, issues and priorities coming from the GFMD consultations:* Second part of the paper on the summary of GFMD consultations demonstrated the following priorities: importance on mapping and analysis of skills, labour market needs and dynamics, to link education training with labour market needs and ensure policy coherence, develop data collection and infrastructure and their effective use, setting up skills and out-skilling and re-skilling opportunities, develop skills at all levels, establish skills categorisation and recognition systems

and cooperation, ensure multiple-stakeholder approach, develop capacity, trustful relations and collaboration between all the stakeholders

The significant part of the paper is dedicated to a list of best practices and approaches, cooperation modalities and tools that have been compiled in the annexe of the document.

Panel I: Skilling Migrants for Employment to 'build back better' at the time of and post Covid-19

This Panel had the following guided questions; 1. What are the positive and possibly few experiences with multi-stakeholder partnerships with skilling migrants for employment, what are the challenges experienced by different stakeholders?

2. How do multi-stakeholder partnerships help overcome existing challenges in matching labour demand and supply as seen in economic recovery more effectively? 3. Are there new actors that should be included and new approaches that should be considered?

The following came out of this discussion:

- It is now clear that the impact of Covid 19 in labour mobility leads to essentials services and basic needs skills shortages. Business supply chains dry up, and migrant workers face difficulties accessing job opportunities and find themselves trapped in countries of destination without work opportunities. To address this problem and example of Belgium, they held training sessions on entrepreneurship for migrants who found themselves without jobs. For the future, it was suggested that countries should have more robust skills framework to recognise and assess skills and to identify essential workers who will need priority in accessing the labour market.
- The discussion also suggested that to recover from the pandemic's economic downturn caused by the pandemic; there is a need to make sure that companies can easily access the skills of all levels.
- It was highlighted that the human dignity and human rights of migrants are important and should be at the centre of the discussion and that, within this context, labour market need and existing skills shortages could be considered for greater stakeholder cooperation.
- Skills mapping: the discussants urged for better alignment and called for Governments policies not to be too rigid. Employers should be allowed to employ the best workers in the market without being impeded by policies.
- Lack of legal pathways: There are limited legal pathways for less-skilled workers. This is a cause for concern because less-skilled employees are also needed in

destination countries. It is important to acknowledge that essential skills are not only higher skills. The pandemic has taught us that all skills are required: doctors, care workers, domestic workers or teachers.

- Recruitment of highly skilled workers on legal pathways was mentioned, but it should be noted that there was minimal regard for these employees' families and social protection for themselves.
- It was also highlighted that mobility restriction, although it is an excellent tool to slow down the disease and manage it, also work against skilling of migrants, so more effort should be put into vaccination of all including migrants.
- The discussion also uncovered that there is also a problem with recognition of qualifications for migrants and lifelong education which leads to undervaluing, under compensating by employers in destination countries. More formalisation and regularisation are needed, better matching skills and skill partnerships should be part of bilateral negotiations.
- An example of Germany-Philippines mobility partnership was given: in this agreement, nurses from the Philippines get training in Germany and are eventually allowed to work there, safeguards against discrimination are included in the agreement as well as monitoring tools which encompass a whole of government approach, as part of the agreement they have full rights, and they are allowed to move with their families.

Panel II: A Holistic Approach to Skills Based Mobility and Migration

In this panel discussion, the following came out of the discussion:

- Funding: although it is rare for international funders to provide funding directly to cities as opposed to national governments in the example given of the city of Freetown sanitation project, it was commendable for the IOM and the EU to fund the city directly, and this resulted in a highly successful project which had a success rate of having only 8000 families in 2018 having access to sanitation
- , and by 2020 the number of families with access to sanitation was 30 000 families.
- Skills recognition also featured prominently in this discussion. The discussants underscored the importance of the migrant skills and qualifications to be recognised both in the country of origin and country of destination.
- Lifelong learning was highlighted as one of the ways that can keep migrants skilled and be competitive.

- The discussion also focused on the importance of technical or hardskills, and the increasing centrality and demand by employers for soft skills. Soft skills also contribute to fostering successful entrepreneurial ventures and promote innovative solutions to economic, social and environmental challenges. They are as important as technical skills, and they need to be mainstreamed in the education system.
- To guard against skills mismatch, the discussion highlighted the importance of working closely with governments and academicians to look for future labour market needs, what skills will be obsolete in the future, and which ones will be needed.
- Lessons learned from the Association for the Integration of Women in Modena, which provides resources to migrant women living in Modena to build the necessary trust between stakeholders can lead to success and sustainability of labour migration programmes.

In conclusion, the topic on skilling of migrants for employment is highly relevant, especially when the world is looking to recover from the economic downturn caused by the Covid 19 pandemic. To move forward with skilling of migrants for employment the following should be considered; data must become transferable with labour market information systems established; there should be more coordination and cooperation at regional and global level; skills and qualification recognition across origin and destination countries must be intensified, and better mapping and understanding of skills and labour gaps at all levels.