

Development of sustainable labour migration and skill formation pathways: migrants' perspective

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EMERGING DYNAMICS IN LABOUR MIGRATION

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Object of study and methodology

- **Object of study** - migrants' perspectives on sustainable and just migration and skill formation pathways.
- **Quantitative and qualitative surveys** of voluntary and involuntary migrant workers in Lithuania, Poland, Germany, France, Italy, the UK, Norway, North Macedonia, Türkiye, and Ethiopia, as well as surveys of war refugees from Ukraine.
- **Organisation:** surveys executed in May – November 2025: 2305 migrants participated in the quantitative survey, while 429 took part in the qualitative study.
- **RQs:** The surveys investigated migrants' pathways from immigration to subsequent training and employment in the destination countries by examining their aspirations, skills development opportunities, and perceptions of justice.



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Key findings



- **Perception that employment and skill formation outcomes depend strongly on institutions, not only on migrants' skills:** their employment and integration outcomes are shaped not so by the possessed human capital but by immigration status, qualification-recognition systems, access to education, labour-market institutions and workplace hierarchies.
- **Feeling that skills are widely underutilized:** skill mismatch, occupational downgrading and overqualification prevent destination countries from making full use of migrants' human capital.
- **Noticing implications of migration pathways for employment and skill formation:** opportunities of employment and skill formation vary substantially according to their legal status, migration motivation and family situation.
- Language barriers, difficulties in recognising qualifications, insecure immigration status, discrimination, weak social networks and limited access to appropriate jobs **reinforce one another, creating “bottlenecks” in migrants' integration.**



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Key Findings on Skill Formation

- **Migrants see a recognition of prior skills is a major bottleneck, precluding conversion** of qualifications and professional experience acquired abroad into appropriate employment by complex procedures, high costs, cumbersome documentation requirements and unclear institutional responsibilities, often leading to repeat education or retrain.
- **Migrants criticise disconnection of language training from employment and vocational learning**, when language requirements prevent migrants from accessing even short vocational courses.
- **Migrants highly appreciate work-based learning:** apprenticeships, short-term courses and workplace learning are associated with better employment and integration outcomes; micro-qualifications and employment-oriented training appear especially useful for migrants with interrupted educational trajectories.
- **Migrants declare that they invest in additional skill formation, but these investments often concern acquisition of the local qualifications rather than development of the new skills and competences:** destination countries become a “second education country”, when migrants upgrade, complement or replace their previous qualifications in response to recognition barriers and labour-market requirements.



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Policy implications

- **Clarify migrants' rights and status on arrival** — ensure clear information on employment, qualification recognition and skill formation.
- **Digitalise and simplify migration procedures related to employment and training** — faster, user-friendly residence permit applications and real-time application tracking.
- **Integrate reception and labour-market pathways** — connect skills recognition, language learning, VET and employment from the outset.
- **Expand work-based learning and apprenticeships** — especially for involuntary migrants, with employers, VET providers, NGOs and migrant communities involved.
- **Strengthen occupation-specific language training** — combine language learning with vocational training, digital provision and workplace practice.
- **Mobilise migrant communities and diasporas** — involve them actively in creating and promoting VET and skill-formation opportunities.



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Thank you for your attention.

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