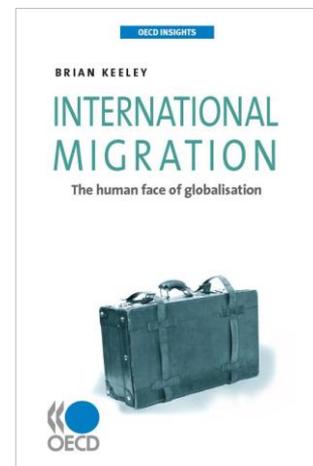


## International Migration: The human face of globalisation

*Summary in English*



- Drawing on the unique expertise of the OECD, this book moves beyond rhetoric to look at the realities of international migration today: Where do migrants come from and where do they go? How do governments manage migration? How well do migrants perform in education and in the workforce? And does migration help – or hinder – developing countries?
- About 190 million people around the world live outside their country of birth. These migrants bring energy, entrepreneurship and fresh ideas to our societies. But there are downsides: young migrants who fail in education, adults who don't find work and, of course, unregulated migration. Such challenges can make migration a political lightning rod and a topic for angry debate.

Few issues excite controversy like international migration, in part because it touches on so many other questions – economics, demographics, politics, national security, culture, language and even religion. That combination only adds to the complexity of designing policies that maximise the benefits of migration for the countries where migrants settle, those they leave behind and for migrants themselves.

Overcoming these difficulties is essential, however, in large part because migration is a constant of human history: People have always sought new and better homes, and will continue to do so. Further, many countries will need to go on attracting immigrants in the years to come as they cope with population ageing and seek to fill gaps in their labour forces. And countries with existing large immigrant communities will also need to find ways to improve the track record of migrants in areas like education and employment. All this is a special challenge for countries in the OECD area: Since the mid-1970s, the share of immigrants in their populations has almost doubled to about 8.3%; by contrast, the share in less developed countries is much lower.

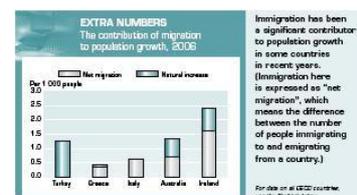
## Numbers and trends

Just under 3% of the world’s population, or about 190 million people, live outside their country of birth. That figure may seem low, but as migrants tend to move to a relatively small number of destinations, they may account for quite large slices of the population within individual countries. In the OECD area, they make up more than 23% of the population in both Australia and Switzerland but only around 3% in Finland and Hungary.

By and large, migration is a story of the movement of people to countries that are relatively wealthier (but not necessarily “wealthy”) compared with their own. This means that as well as people going from developing to developed countries, substantial numbers also go

### Extra numbers

#### The contribution of migration



*between* developing countries. Using the terminology “north” to represent the developed world and “south” for the developing world, we can say that about a third of the world’s migrants travel from north to north; another third travel from south to north; and the final third travel from south to south.

## Managing migration

The nature of migration varies greatly between countries. In some, such as the United States and France, most of those immigrating legally are doing so for family reasons – they are either going to join close relatives who are already living in these countries or to begin married life. In others, such as Switzerland, most immigrants travel because they have a right to work and live in the country. There are other differences: In the traditional “settlement countries,” such as Australia, Canada and the United States, most immigrants are planning to settle permanently. By contrast, in a multi-country free-movement zone like the European Union, migration is more likely to be temporary.

All these factors, as well as countries’ needs for high and low skilled labour, affect how governments seek to manage migration. However, it’s important to note that much migration is not directly controlled by governments. In many cases, people effectively have a right to settle abroad, perhaps because the country recognises an entitlement to family reunion, or because it has made commitments to take in certain numbers of asylum seekers, or because it’s in a free-movement zone. And there’s the phenomenon of irregular – or “illegal” immigration – a contentious issue in many countries and one that has tended to foster public antipathy to even legal migration.

Indeed, the existence of irregular immigration and the perceived failure of migrants to integrate successfully – especially in some European countries – have helped drive a trend in many OECD countries in recent years to make traditional migration more difficult, especially in family migration. There is also a new emphasis on encouraging immigrants to play a bigger role in managing their own integration. Language courses are becoming widespread, as are information programmes that provide practical advice and describe the country’s administrative systems and the formalities to be fulfilled. The flip side of such programmes is that migrants are increasingly likely to be asked to demonstrate that they have the knowledge and skills needed to navigate life in their new homes. At the same time, there are some signs of a shift to so-called “pro-active” migration policies aimed at encouraging skilled migrants to fill particular gaps in the workforce, especially in areas like information technology, medicine, and bioengineering.

## Migration and education

Education plays a key role in helping young migrants to make the most of their lives in their new homes. As well as helping them to learn the local language and giving them some of the skills and competencies they will need throughout their lives, it also provides social and cultural bridges to native communities. However, the extent to which education should encourage young migrants to culturally “integrate” is a vexed issue in many countries, and one that is hotly debated.

In academic terms, how well do young migrants perform in education? The OECD’s PISA programme of student assessment provides some interesting insights. In three of the traditional settlement countries – Australia, Canada and New Zealand – immigrant students did every bit as well as native students in the 2006 round of PISA assessments. In a number of other countries, most notably Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden, they did noticeably less well. In Denmark, only about 1% of second-generation immigrants were top performers, against 7% for natives.

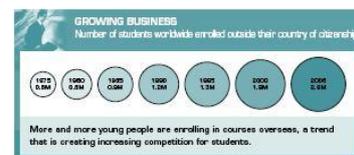
What factors explain such variations? Before answering that, it’s important to state that these numbers represent averages: Just as with native children, migrants are a diverse lot, and even in countries where the average score of migrant children is on the low side, there are plenty of young migrants who do well. As a group, the performance of migrant children is determined by their family backgrounds, language abilities and the capacity of the local education system to support non-native students. The admission policies of the countries where they settle can also be important: In countries that rely more on selection systems to admit migrants, such as Australia, migrants are more likely to be better educated and better off than in other countries, and this is likely to be reflected in a stronger educational performance by their children.

What can education systems do to help young migrants fulfil their potential? Efforts may begin early in pre-school care and education, which can take advantage of young children’s unique language-learning abilities to give them a head start in acquiring the local language. Kindergartens that combine education with care may also bring major benefits to very young children from poorer families at a crucial stage of their development.

Later on, schools may support young migrants with special preparatory classes, although there is much debate over how long these should continue for before children enter mainstream schooling. Similarly, although there is little argument over the benefits of quickly

### Growing business

#### Number of students worldwide enrolled outside their country of citizenship



getting young migrants up to speed in the local language, there is less agreement on how this should be done. For instance, in some countries migrant children may go through a relatively short and separate intensive programme of language learning before transferring to mainstream education. In others, they may attend regular classes in parallel with additional language classes.

As well as migrants in education, it's also worth considering the growing phenomenon of migration *for* education. Since the mid-1970s, the number of students enrolled outside their home country has more than quadrupled to just over 2.7 million. Governments and colleges in many countries would like to see this number go even higher. Why? Firstly, offering places to foreign students can help foster promote international mutual understanding, both between countries and within today's increasingly multicultural societies. Secondly, international students are big business. Third, studying overseas may be just the first step to a longer sojourn in the host country, which can play a longer term role in fulfilling the need for skilled immigrants.

## Migration and work

By and large, governments want to get immigrants working. Sometimes this is driven by economic needs: For instance, some sectors of the economy, such as hotels, restaurants and agricultural, rely heavily on immigrant labour. But there are also benefits for immigrants: Encouraging them into work can reduce the prospects of them and their families being sucked into poverty traps and help them build social and community links.

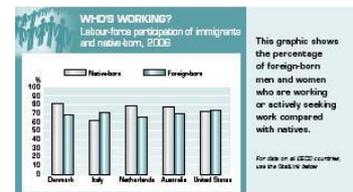
How well do migrants do in the labour market? In terms of their employment rate, in the years before the beginning of the 2008 recession migrants were doing about as well, and sometimes better, than locals in about half of the 24 countries for which the OECD has reliable data. However, in many other countries natives were more likely to be in work than migrants. (The economic slowdown is likely only to exacerbate these problems, as migrants are at special risk of losing their jobs when economies slow.)

But it's also important to look at the sort of jobs migrants do: Far more than natives, migrants are often overqualified for their jobs. There are many reasons for this: Employers may not recognise overseas qualifications or may be unable to establish if they are equivalent to local qualifications. Also, migrants may not speak the local language sufficiently fluently and may lack links with the local community, which can prevent them from finding out about suitable job vacancies. Regrettably, discrimination is also a problem, even though it's now illegal in most countries to refuse to hire people on grounds of ethnicity or nationality.

Whatever the reasons, migrants and the economies of the countries in which they live can both benefit from ensuring that migrants are able

### Who's working?

#### Labour-force participation of immigrants and native-born, 2006



to make the best use of their human capital. That's why governments in many countries have – with varying degrees of success – introduced programmes and initiatives to encourage migrant employment. These include providing language training, establishing mentoring schemes and taking action to recognise overseas qualifications.

## Migration and development

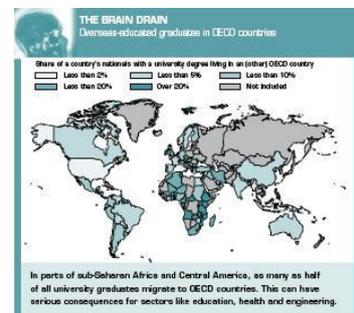
The impact of migrants on the countries in which they settle receives a lot of coverage, but the other side of the coin receives less attention: namely, what is the impact of emigration on the countries and economies that migrants leave behind. For countries in the developing world, migration can be a blessing and a curse: a blessing for providing remittances and overseas contacts and experience; a curse for taking away the brightest and the best.

To look at the negatives first, the loss of highly skilled and professional workers – the “brain drain” – is often regarded as one of the main dangers of migration, even if the risks are sometimes misrepresented. Indeed, arguments can even be made for some benefits, most notably where there is return migration and people who have gone abroad bring home new skills. Nevertheless, in areas such as healthcare especially, the loss of trained staff from developing countries is a matter for concern, even if it is only one aspect of the healthcare problems facing these countries.

On the positive side, remittances can be an important source of overseas revenues for many developing countries. For 2007, the World Bank estimated remittances to developing countries were worth at least \$240 billion (but as much of the money that migrants send home goes through informal channels, the real figure was almost certainly higher). While this number looks set to fall as a result of the global economic slowdown, remittances are likely to go on having an important impact in developing countries in reducing poverty, even if their role in fuelling economic growth is less clear cut.

### The brain drain

#### Overseas-educated graduates in OECD countries



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