OECD HIGH-LEVEL POLICY FORUM ON MIGRATION 2014

MOBILISING MIGRANTS’ SKILLS FOR ECONOMIC SUCCESS

Paris, 1-2 December 2014

Issues for Discussion
In these eventful times, marked by significant demographic changes, geopolitical shocks and economic uncertainties, migration movements within and to the OECD area are shifting in composition and scale. In Europe, successive waves of EU enlargement have also contributed to reshape the international migration landscape. Migration and integration policies sometimes struggle to keep pace with all these simultaneous shifts.

One difficulty is that the need to adapt policies in the short-term can sometimes conflict with long-term policy objectives. For example, the global economic crisis has led to an increase in unemployment in many countries. Immigrants were often disproportionately affected by the crisis, raising integration needs at a time when budget pressures make investing in integration difficult. Although labour migration has declined, other migration categories are more decoupled from labour market conditions. Indeed, there is high inertia in migration flows and the recruitment of migrant workers today might induce more settlement migration tomorrow, through family reunification. And family migrants have, in all countries, more difficulties in finding employment.

Another example for trade-offs between short-term and longer-term objectives that policy makers encounter in the field of migration policy relates to the role of economic migration in responding to labour market needs. Labour migration is sometimes used as a “quick fix” for urgent labour market needs. Yet making it too easy to recruit from abroad risks reducing the incentives to develop more structural responses at the firm level or at the national level. Conversely, in the context of less favourable labour market conditions, short-term considerations may justify tightening the rules and conditions for granting new work permits even as rapid population ageing and the global competition for talents would call for more pro-active and open policy responses.

Beyond labour market considerations, there are growing uncertainties with which policy makers must deal, including the implications of conflicts in key origin regions such as the Near and Middle East, but also in Africa. These have already led to an unprecedented increase in asylum seekers in many countries as well as to major, and recurrent, human tragedies. Sudden surges in the inflow of unaccompanied minors have also been recorded in a number of countries. Not only are immediate and co-ordinated policy responses needed to address these challenges, but also longer-term or more structural actions may be required.

In light of such changes and uncertainties, management systems and integration policies have not stood still, but policy changes have taken different forms from one country to another. Some countries have mostly adjusted the parameters of existing tools while others went through major reforms.

The objective of this session is to discuss the most important policy changes that have taken place recently in your country with regards to labour, family or humanitarian migration, but also with regards to integration issues, illustrating how it has been possible to balance short-term constraints with longer-term objectives.
Evolution and composition of permanent immigration flows to OECD countries, 2007-2012

Source: OECD International Migration Database.

Share of foreign-born in the population in OECD and selected non-OECD countries, 2013

Note: The data for Korea and Japan refer to the stock of foreign nationals.
Source: OECD International Migration Database.

The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

Questions for discussion

• What are the most salient changes recently made to your immigration system? How did you balance short-term contraints with longer-term objectives?

• How can long-term objectives be identified in the light of increasing uncertainty?

• How can migration policy respond flexibly to economic and geopolitical shocks?

• To which extent, and under which conditions, can mobility of labour within free-mobility areas foster economic convergence?
The development of the service economy has a profound impact on migration management in many ways. It does not only shape labour needs but also presents challenges for admission policy where multiple and often conflicting objectives have to be reconciled between foreign affairs, trade, migration and employment.

The expansion in services such as information and communication technology, as well as finance and business services, is increasingly associated with a global labour market for the highly-skilled. Changes in business models and technological advances also contribute to this process. At the same time, demand for migrant workers in service occupations such as care, domestic services or hotels and restaurants continues to be high and is becoming one of the main drivers for less-skilled labour migration. Indeed, immigrants are over-represented in such occupations in most OECD countries.

There are significant, and often positive, links between migration and trade. Bilateral, regional and global trade agreements increasingly include provisions for facilitating labour migration in the service sector. In particular, as the delivery of some services requires direct contact between the supplier and the consumer, service provision may involve cross-border movements of either the consumer of services or of the supplier. Export education, tourism or international movements of natural persons as service providers are obvious examples. This raises questions about the impact on and relation with the host-country labour market, particularly with respect to the wages and working conditions that should govern these cross-border movements. Indeed, the line between trade-related service provision and labour migration is sometimes difficult to draw, which may be one of the reasons why trade liberalisation in this domain is still lagging behind compared to other areas.

In relation to trade agreements, labour migration can also become subject to bargaining between countries, especially when origin countries have an objective of increasing their “exports” of labour and skills. In trade agreements, regional economic integration and security co-operation accords, labour migration is increasingly mentioned. For example, the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) includes a number of commitments by countries regarding facilitating migration in certain service areas, such as minimum numbers of highly-skilled (H1-B) visas for the United States. Other examples in a bilateral context include working holiday schemes and youth mobility schemes. These are typically negotiated in the context of foreign relations, including trade.

This special session will give participants the opportunity to hear the perspective of Mr. Pascal Lamy (former Director-General of the WTO) on these issues and to interact with him through an open Q&A session.
From September 2005 to August 2013, Pascal Lamy served for two consecutive terms as Director-General of the World Trade Organization (WTO). A committed European and member of the French Socialist party, he was Chief of Staff for the President of the European Commission, Jacques Delors, from 1985 to 1994. He then joined Credit Lyonnais as CEO until 1999, before returning to Brussels as European Trade Commissioner until 2004. Mr. Lamy holds degrees from HEC School of Management, the Institut d’Etudes Politiques (IEP) and the Ecole Nationale d’Administration (ENA).

He currently shares his activities between the think tank Notre Europe – Jacques Delors Institute, the presidency of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics, the presidency of the Oxford Martin School Commission for Future Generations, the vice-presidency of the Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS), his participation to the Global Ocean Commission and UNAIDS as well as different subjects related to international affairs. He is also President of the Board of Directors of the Musiciens du Louvre of Grenoble MDLG (Orchestra of Marc Minkowski), member of the Board of Directors of the Fondation nationale des Sciences politiques and the Thomson Reuters Founders Share Company, member of the Advisory Board of Transparency International and member of the board of Transparency International France, affiliate Professor at HEC and Strategic Advisor of the Simone Veil Governance Center for Europe (Humboldt-Viadrina Governance Platform, formerly Humboldt-Viadrina School of Governance, Berlin).

Pascal Lamy is author of various books and reports on global governance, Europe and international trade. His latest publications are: “Now for the long term” (Oxford Martin Commission, 2013); “The Geneva Consensus” (Cambridge University Press, 2013); “Quand la France s’éveillera” (Odile Jacob, 2014)

In a recent poll casted by the British magazine Prospect (April 2014), Pascal Lamy is in the top 50 of the world’s leading thinkers.

**Percentage of foreign-born among employees in selected service occupations, selected OECD countries, 2012**

![Percentage of foreign-born among employees in selected service occupations, selected OECD countries, 2012](image)

Source: European Labour Force Surveys (Eurostat) 2012 except Malta in EU27 (2011) and Turkey (Q1-Q3 2012); non-European countries: Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries (DIOC) 2010/11.

**Questions for discussion**

- What are the expected future trends regarding the international mobility of workers in the service sector?
- What are possible implications for labour migration management?
- To what extent are trade in services and mobility of workers substitutes?
- How can international co-operation in this area be strengthened?
International migration is a sensitive issue in most countries. One of the reasons is that it touches upon the very notion of the nation state. Changes in the rules regarding who can enter or stay legally, who can settle with his or her family, who can obtain citizenship or can vote have implications for the composition of the host-country society and its institutions.

Although the global economic crisis has left labour markets in many countries with a lot of slack, limiting immediate needs, many countries expect that there will likely be a need for additional labour migration in the future, in part because of demographic trends. Yet, largely independently of the current economic situation, public opinion in many countries does not seem to readily accept more labour immigration, as evidenced by the rise of anti-immigration parties.

In this context, it is important to signal that things are under control. This requires tackling the challenges of irregular migration and illegal employment of migrants. It also means that opening up to more labour migration needs to be accompanied by appropriate safeguards. Demonstrating control may, however, be difficult in situations where isolated events dominate the public debate and perception.

Scepticism regarding immigrants’ willingness to integrate into the host society is another challenge to be tackled. Integration outcomes of migrants who have arrived previously may indeed be taken as a marker for success or failure of current migration policies.

The challenge with respect to public opinion is not to obtain a consensus on immigration and integration issues, but rather to limit false preconceptions and to differentiate between past and present. The focus in the public debate on migration issues tends to obscure positive facts and accounts, for example that immigrants take up many jobs that cannot be readily filled with the native-born, either because the latter do not want them or because the necessary skills for these jobs are not available in the domestic labour market. Likewise, recent migrants tend to be more educated than settled migrants in many countries, which is associated with a better integration outlook, particularly for their children.

Hence factual evidence on the nature of migration, on integration outcomes and on the costs and benefits of migration is important. For example, there is a strong connection between a person’s views on the fiscal impact of migration and the willingness to accept additional immigration flows. In all countries, persons who think that immigrants are net contributors are more willing to accept additional immigration flows than those who think the reverse.

At the same time, OECD work on the fiscal impact of migration has shown that in most countries, the fiscal impact of migration is small. In addition, one can generally expect a more positive fiscal contribution from persons who have arrived as labour migrants – which is the main group over whose admission policy makers have discretion.

Common beliefs on the costs and benefits of migration not only influence the acceptance of additional immigration in the societies of OECD countries but may also crucially impact the
integration of already resident immigrants, as well as their children. Ambivalent messages with regard to immigration risk encouraging discriminatory attitudes. These may in turn affect the behaviour of immigrants themselves and may lead to disaffection with host countries, rendering anxieties about immigration self-fulfilling prophecies.

Finally, another key challenge is to develop a well-defined and robust migration policy while maintaining the ability to respond to unexpected events. Both in the area of migration policy and with respect to integration, the OECD countries that tend to have the most advanced policies are also continuously adapting their policies. Recent history has confronted countries with migration shocks over which there is little discretionary policy control. Geopolitical crises can produce a sudden influx of migrants or asylum seekers, as witnessed currently by many OECD countries. Other events such as enlargements of the European Union also had a profound impact on migration flows. To visibly remain in control of the situation, migration policies must be able to adapt to such shocks.

This session will offer the opportunity to share experiences with regard to how best to communicate on migration issues and how to build support for policy changes and reforms in this domain.

**Public opinion on immigrants’ impact on the employment prospects of the native-born, selected OECD and non-OECD countries in 2012/13, percentages**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Immigrants take jobs that native-born want</th>
<th>Immigrants take jobs that native-born don't want</th>
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<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>India</td>
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<td>Colombia</td>
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<td>Slovenia</td>
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Note: Responses “do not know” and refusals explain the values missing to 100%. Source: Gallup World Poll 2012/13.

**Questions for discussion**

- What are the measures you are taking to reinforce public confidence in migration policies?
- From your perspective, what can be the role of the various stakeholders (media, migrants’ associations, social partners, etc.) in this process?
- If you have implemented significant reforms regarding migration management or integration, or you plan to do so, how did you ensure public support?
Employers face continuous labour needs and have to make recruitment decisions accordingly. Most of the needs are met through the local labour force, including immigrants already in the country. For some of these needs, however, employers might recruit internationally. Identifying and selecting skills from abroad can be a cumbersome, costly and risky process.

Several innovative tools have been developed in this respect, such as employer sponsorship schemes, which provide fast-track channels to recruit foreign workers. To obtain sponsorship status, the employer must meet specific conditions relating to his/her capability to apply fair recruitment processes. Criteria used include employers’ annual recruitment numbers in the past, human resource and training systems, history of compliance with employment and immigration laws as well as efforts to recruit and train local workers. The capacity to ensure compliance and limit the risk of abuse is, however, crucial to guarantee the integrity of these programmes and the support from other stakeholders. One further challenge with this approach is to make sure that preferential schemes do not overly favour large employers and to keep a level-playing field for small- and medium-sized companies.

More generally, workplace enforcement mechanisms play an important role in fighting the illegal employment of foreign workers. The use of new technologies and co-operation with social partners are crucial in this respect, especially at a time when limited public resources make it difficult to expand controls.

The social partners are key stakeholders also in the integration of immigrants already in the country. For example, employers are often in a better position than public authorities to judge to which degree the qualifications and work experience obtained abroad in specific occupations are useful in the host country. As they have regular workplace interaction with immigrant workers, employers and unions are in a unique position to also promote migrants’ integration beyond the labour market, and in particular to follow up over time on issues that had been identified as obstacles to their integration and well-being.

This session will bring together policy makers and high-level representatives of employers and unions to discuss the role of social dialogue in the field of migration as well as how best to balance the interests of the different stakeholders involved. To this session, representatives of the Business and Industry Advisory Committee and of the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD have been formally invited to participate in the discussions.

Questions for discussion

- How to identify and respond to employers’ skill needs?
- How to ensure the enforcement of labour legislation and limit the risk of abuse?
- How to avoid that migration induces wage and social dumping?
- What are the best practices for encouraging diversity in the workplace?
- How to promote social dialogue in the field of migration?
Engagement with the social partners – emerging practices from OECD countries

In many OECD countries, engagement of migration policy makers with the social partners, in particular with employers, has been strengthened in recent years. Particularly in Europe, employers are the main gatekeepers for migration, as an offer of employment is typically a precondition for acceptance as a labour migrant.

In the OECD countries that have large managed labour migration programmes and that have traditionally allowed labour migrants to arrive without an employment offer, in particular Australia, Canada and New Zealand, being offered a job is also gradually becoming a precondition for admission and employers are increasingly involved in helping the government in the selection of migrants. Matching tools have been developed to bring employers in contact with migrant candidates abroad, such as the “Skills Finder” in New Zealand by which registered employers may get in contact with candidates abroad that have provided the database with information about their skills.

In the United Kingdom, sponsorship is at the heart of the labour migration management system. By tying requirements to the employer, the United Kingdom aims to improve compliance with its immigration system and reduce abuse. Compliance is also a factor in Korea’s temporary labour migration system, which links employers’ possibility to recruit foreign workers with past employment practices.

Initiatives in continental Europe have mainly focused on employer involvement in integration. In Flanders in Belgium, through the Jobkanaal project, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and several employers’ associations draw on job consultants to promote the recruitment of immigrants and other disadvantaged groups on the labour market, by soliciting vacancies for which candidates from the target groups are considered eligible. These vacancies are accessible exclusively to candidates from target groups during a period of three weeks. Third parties such as the employment services, temporary employment agencies, migrant associations, etc. refer persons to the database. In addition, the three main unions employ diversity consultants to introduce and promote the notion of diversity and proportional participation in the labour market to the local union representatives, with a view to fostering openness of co-workers to disadvantaged labour market participants. Other countries have seen strong employer engagement in mentorship programmes, such as in Austria and Norway. In Denmark, both employers and unions are engaged, jointly with the public employment services, in a tripartite assessment of immigrants’ competences.

Dialogue with the social partners at the OECD

The OECD has regular exchanges with the social partners through two Committees. The representation of employers’ interests is the Business and Industry Advisory Committee to the OECD (BIAC), an international business network with a global membership, advocating open markets and private sector-led growth. The members of BIAC are major employers’ confederations from OECD member countries as well as from selected non-OECD countries.

The representation of employees’ interests is the Trade Union Advisory Committee (TUAC) to the OECD, an interface for trade unions with the OECD. It is an international trade union organisation that has consultative status with the OECD and its various committees. TUAC’s affiliates consist of over 58 national trade union centres in OECD member countries.
PARALLEL SESSION A. ATTRACTING, SELECTING AND RETAINING SKILLS: WHAT ROLE FOR MIGRATION POLICIES?

OECD countries, and increasingly also emerging economies, are competing for talents. The challenge here is a triple one, as talent must first be attracted to the host country, then selected, and ultimately integrated and retained.

These talents are not only highly skilled people with tertiary diplomas from elite universities but also workers with specific technical skills, notably in occupations related to science, technology, engineering and mathematics. With the attraction of talent comes the challenge to be open and welcoming while maintaining compliance. Attracting skilled workers often means offering a welcome package for the workers and their families, as well as providing them with a favourable and stable status, including full labour market access for the family members. Subsidised language training is also often offered to this group, particularly in countries whose language is not frequently spoken elsewhere. Some countries have also tried more far-reaching measures, such as tax incentives, although the impact appears to have been limited.

One group that has received growing attention in recent years are international students. As destinations have diversified, competition on the international student market has increased. A growing number of countries consider international students as a source of labour migration, and many have specific pathways for students to seek employment in the country after graduation. International students, upon graduation, have a domestic tertiary degree that is easily “recognised” by employers. There is thus, at least in principle, no uncertainty regarding the degree’s actual value or other recognition issues. Facilitating student mobility is also often seen as an important element in a broader strategy to promote skills development and mobility.

In a number of destination countries, retention is a further challenge, both with respect to highly skilled immigrants and with respect to the native-born. Retention is a concern notably where countries invest significant resources into skills development, and where tertiary education is highly subsidised. In this context, the possibility to tap into skilled expatriate communities is drawing increasing policy attention. In most OECD countries, however, there are more highly qualified immigrants than highly qualified native-born living abroad.

This session will discuss the efficiency of the various policy tools that countries have put in place to attract and select foreign skills as well as policy options to retain or re-attract skilled native-born.
Number of international students in OECD countries and selected non-OECD countries, 2004 and 2012

Note: * indicates that the data refer to foreign students. Finland, France, Germany and Switzerland: 2008 instead of 2004.
Source: OECD Education Database.

Highly educated immigrants and emigrants in OECD countries, 2010-11
Source: Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries (DIOC) 2010/11.

Questions for discussion

- What are the specific actions your country is taking to improve attractiveness and retention of skilled migrants, international students or foreign investors?
- Should the skills of accompanying spouses/children be an element to consider in assessing the applications of principal applicants?
- How can governments facilitate international mobility and at the same time address the issues of brain drain/brain gain?
PARALLEL SESSION B. MAKING BETTER USE OF EXISTING SKILLS: HOW TO STRIKE THE BALANCE BETWEEN SPECIFIC AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES?

Among the various challenges for integration, perhaps the most important challenge is releasing the full skills potential of immigrants and their offspring. Skills of immigrants that are not used represent a wasted resource at a time when economies are increasingly less able to afford such waste and can also become a threat to social cohesion.

While the majority of immigrants and their descendants are in employment, they still often exhibit lower labour market participation and higher unemployment than native-born without a migration background. In addition, when employed, they are found more often in jobs that would require lower qualifications than they actually possess.

Making better use of the skills of immigrants and their descendants starts with taking stock of the skills that they possess. Foreign-born adults bring skills to their new country of residence that have been obtained in a labour market and education context that is often quite different. Employers, the public and indeed immigrants themselves may be uncertain about the value of these skills. Such a stock-taking is a helpful way to start the integration process and ultimately place immigrants in jobs that are appropriately matched to their skills and qualifications. In addition to facilitating the recognition of qualifications that new arrivals attained elsewhere, assessment of the skills of newcomers can help to identify needs for integration support.

In some cases, immigrants face obstacles that are related to the migration experience itself. A key obstacle is generally the lacking proficiency in the host-country language, although other factors, such as lack of networks and knowledge about labour market functioning, are also important. In addition, there is the issue of discrimination against immigrants, which is an often underestimated impediment. Such immigrant-specific obstacles call for well-targeted policies, and language training is generally the single most important targeted integration expenditure.

In other cases, the factors are similar to those responsible for the weak education and labour market outcomes of other disadvantaged groups. Here, general policies are more appropriate although there may still be some need for additional intervention. For example, some general employment policies, especially those generating work experience and more generally contacts with employers, have proven particularly effective in helping immigrants into employment, yet immigrants are often under-represented in these programmes.

Key facts

- There are now about 115 million immigrants in the OECD, accounting for 10% of the population.
- The number of immigrants has grown in virtually all OECD countries over the past ten years.
- On average, 23% of high-educated immigrants are not in employment and a further 30% are over-qualified for their jobs, compared with 15% and 20%, respectively, of the high-educated native-born.
Migrant-specific programmes tend to be limited in scope and are often not sufficiently focused on labour market integration. Striking the balance between general and specific measures is not easy, especially when specific policies may be perceived as “positive discrimination” – that is, favouring immigrants over native-born – by the general public or when general policies are designed in such a way that immigrants effectively have more limited access to a programme.

There is also a time dimension involved. Integration is a process that occurs over time, as immigrants acquire host country-specific human capital. As such, most countries focus their targeted measures on new arrivals, and mainstream services take over after the introduction period. However, some obstacles may remain beyond that horizon, calling for some supplementary direct or indirect targeting.

This session will focus on policies aimed at better assessing and recognising migrants’ skills and on measures aiming at a successful integration of immigrants in the labour market.

**Percentage over-qualified for their job or not in employment among the highly-educated native- and foreign-born aged 15-64, selected OECD countries in 2013**

Note: Highly educated corresponds to tertiary education. They are considered over-qualified if the job is classified as ISCO 4 to 9.

Questions for discussion

- What are the main impediments for a better use of the skills of resident migrants and newcomers and how can these impediments be overcome?
- What can be done to remedy the under-representation of immigrants and their offspring in effective general policies, both from the side of immigrants and of service providers and employers?
- How can specific policies be evaluated and their cost-effectiveness enhanced?
PARALLEL SESSION C. DEVELOPING SKILLS: HOW TO PROMOTE LANGUAGE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND SUCCESSFUL INTEGRATION OF IMMIGRANTS’ CHILDREN INTO THE SCHOOL SYSTEM?

Policies focussed on skills development aim at ensuring that the supply of skills in the labour market is sufficient, in both quantity and quality, to meet current and emerging needs. Among other measures, supply can be ensured by developing the right mix of skills through education and training.

Policies to develop immigrants’ skills are often presented in the language of ‘deficit’, whereby immigrants are assumed to be in need of extensive (re-)training and assistance. This is often inaccurate and indeed counterproductive for the parallel goal of ‘recognising’ – and thus valuing – the skills of immigrants. That notwithstanding, data from the OECD’s Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) show that immigrants have, on average, lower literacy skills than the native-born in virtually all OECD countries. Much of this seems due to language and other host-country specific skills. Obviously, learning trajectories will differ depending on immigrants’ educational background and also on the linguistic distance to their native language.

The challenge is to make investments in developing immigrants’ skills that accelerate rather than delay labour market integration. This may mean that, at a certain point, immigrants will develop their skills more efficiently if learning moves out of the school and into the workplace.

Migrants are often under-represented in general training and professional orientation programmes for many reasons, including lack of information, limited entitlement, and more limited financial resources. As with language training, investment in development of immigrants’ skills should focus on those who are likely to remain in the country, but this group is not always easy to identify.

Some migrants even lack the most basic skills to integrate successfully into the host country labour market and society. The challenge here is to make significant investment now even if the return will only occur in the distant future. Early intervention also seems to generate the best results for migrants’ children. These tend to be less successful in the school system, although the gap is smaller for those who arrived at younger ages.

Key facts

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- Immigrant children tend to be less successful in the school system, although the gap is smaller for those who arrived at younger ages

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This session will discuss the various approaches to language skills development and requirements as well as the role of education and integration policies regarding the integration of children of immigrants in the school system.
Mean literacy scores of persons aged 16-64, by country of residence and place of birth, selected OECD countries in 2012

Source: Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) 2012.

Mean PISA reading scores by parents’ place of birth in selected OECD and non-OECD countries, 2012

Source: OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2012.

Questions for discussion

• Should immigrants be trained (whether pre- or post-arrival) for jobs that exhibit a lack of suitable applicants?

• Should all migrants get access to the full education/training package? And if not, according to which criteria should access be granted?

• How best to involve non-labour migrant groups such as family migrants and refugees in skills strategies and up-skilling policies?

• What works best in the integration of migrants’ children in the education system?
PARALLEL SESSION D. PROVIDING EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES: WHAT WORKS IN THE INTEGRATION OF YOUTH WITH A MIGRATION BACKGROUND?

Youth with a migration background are now entering the labour market in greater numbers, at a time when labour market conditions have become difficult for new labour market entrants in many countries.

Of particular concern to policy makers are those who, as young adults, are both low-educated and neither in employment, education nor training. The percentage of immigrant youth who find themselves in this group is well above the figure for native-born youth. This is partly attributable to lower education outcomes of immigrant youth. But lower labour market outcomes are observed even for high-educated native-born youth of immigrant parents. This raises the question of structural obstacles to their full labour market integration and, more generally, the issue of equal opportunities.

There are several reasons for lower labour market outcomes of youth with a migration background, including lack of access to networks and less knowledge about labour market functioning (e.g. how to write a CV and motivation letter, how to perform well in a job interview, etc.). One key challenge in this respect is to support the youth concerned, while avoiding stigmatisation.

Tackling the issue of discrimination is another one – one that is often underestimated but difficult to come by. Test findings show that it is not uncommon that immigrants and their offspring have to regularly send out more than twice as many applications before they secure a job interview. In European OECD countries, native-born children of immigrants report feeling discriminated against more often than immigrants themselves. The contrast is stark with non-European OECD countries that have been settled by migration, where the reverse is the case.

This session will look at the specific situation of migrant youth and young native-born with a migration background in the labour market and in society and will discuss possible policy responses.
Share of youth who are not in employment nor in education or training (NEET) and low-educated among the total youth (15 to 24) by place of birth, selected OECD countries, 2012-13


Share of children who have two foreign-born parents among the children aged 15, OECD and selected non-OECD countries, 2012 compared with 2003

Source: OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2003 and 2012.

Questions for discussion

- What are the specific challenges faced by youth with a migration background in your country?
- How can the problems of specific groups – such as youth arriving at the end of mandatory schooling and of school drop-outs – be tackled best?
- How can governments ensure that these youth fully participate in the host-country society?
- What can policy makers do to reduce the risk of discrimination in the labour market?