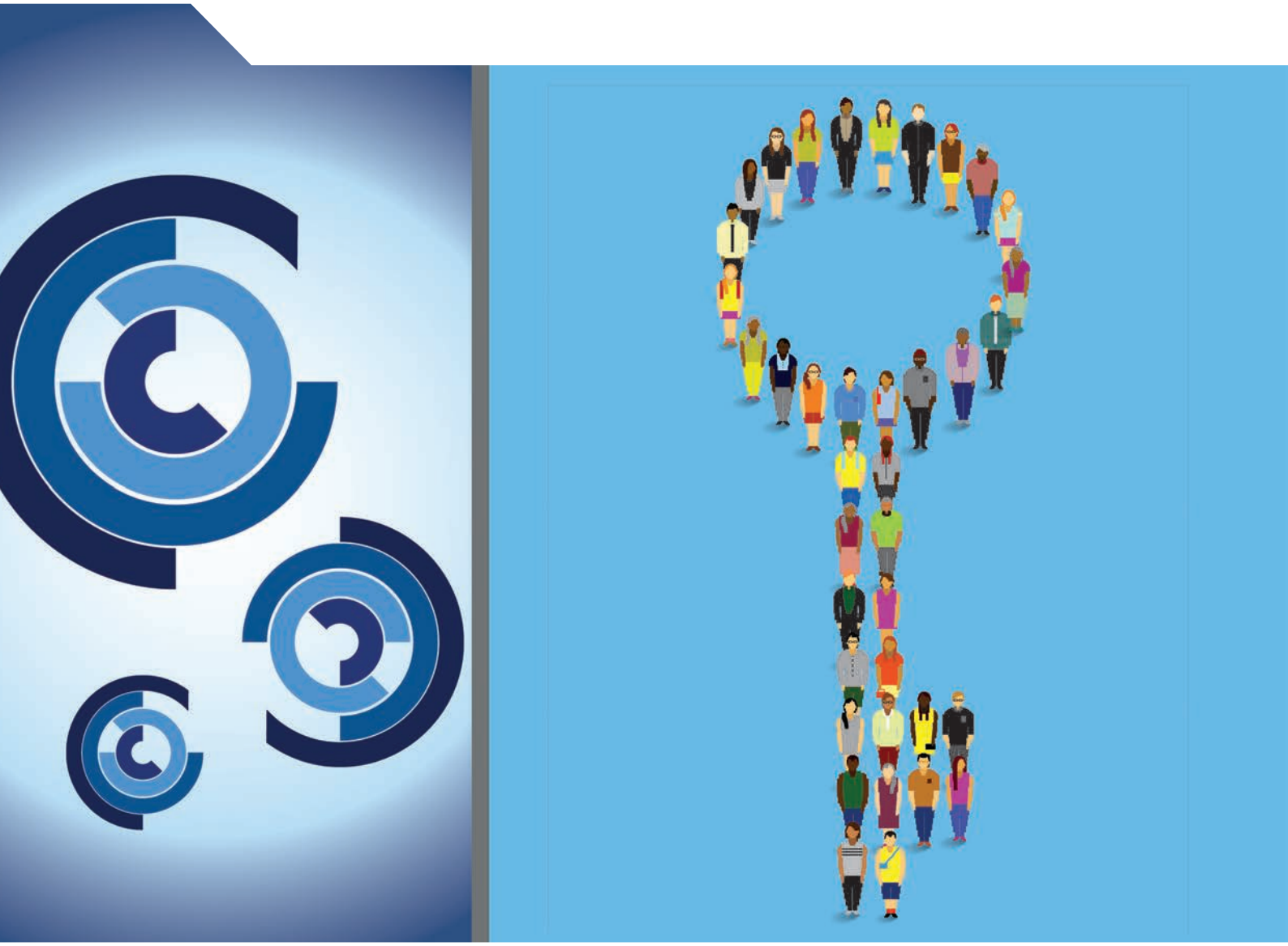
OECD Reviews of Vocational Education and Training

Unlocking the Potential of Migrants

CROSS-COUNTRY ANALYSIS

Shinyoung Jeon



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Shinyoung Jeon

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Foreword

Countries across Europe have welcomed a significant number of migrants, and in particular young humanitarian migrants, over the last five years. This rapid influx has raised questions as to how these countries can best integrate these young migrants and their families into their countries, many of whom are desperate to improve their quality of life in their new homes. Education and training, and resulting labour market opportunities, are crucial to realising these aspirations.

Vocational education training (VET) in particular is a proven and effective tool for transitioning from school to work – and its benefits are even greater for disadvantaged youth. But while VET has been fundamental in the integration of many new arrivals to date, in many cases it has been used sporadically or unsystematically. In addition, due to limited resources and differences in culture, language and skills system, young migrants are often unaware of the VET opportunities available. In the cases where they are aware, many struggle to access the right programmes and lack employer connections.

This report focuses on this untapped potential of using VET as a tool to speed-up and enhance the integration of young migrants in the host country. Realising this potential will require strategies that, rather than making small piecemeal adjustments, aim to re-engineer VET systems for the long-term.

Some OECD countries are at the forefront of innovative approaches to VET and preparatory programmes aimed at migrants and refugees. This report highlights some of these effective and innovative practices, while accounting for individual country circumstances. Just as one of the main recommendations of this report is support for peer-learning and exchange of approaches to common challenges, the hope is that this report presents a learning opportunity for communities, VET institutions, local authorities and governments as well as volunteers and staff that work with humanitarian migrants.

The structure of the report follows the path that a migrant might take, from learning about the opportunities presented by VET, to gaining access to VET systems, to realising their full potential through tailored programmes and work placements. In parallel, the report explores the challenges and opportunities faced by stakeholders along the same path, including government, education providers, and employers.

Ultimately, the key message is that building strong, flexible and inclusive VET systems where migrants and refugees can succeed results in broad benefits – not just for migrants, but also for the wider group of students with disadvantaged backgrounds.

Acknowledgements

This cross-country report was prepared under the project *Unlocking the Potential of Migrants through Vocational Education and Training,* together with a country review of Germany that studies the same theme. It draws on national experiences across OECD countries with focuses particularly on Germany, Italy, Sweden and Switzerland. The European Commission and Switzerland sponsored this cross-country project and the publication of this report.

Shinyoung Jeon from the OECD Centre for Skills drafted this report, with research assistance from Toma Savitki, Rosa Neri and Edoardo Magalini. Benedicte Bergseng and Samuel Lüthi from the OECD Centre for Skills, and Eva Degler and Thomas Liebig from the International Migration Division within the OECD Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs gave valuable input and advice. Jennifer Cannon, Charity Kome and Elisa Larrakoetxea provided valuable administrative support. Lauren Thwaites provided valuable support in the editorial and production process. Pascal Marianna assisted in obtaining official Eurostat data.

Anthony Mann oversaw the preparation of this report as Head of the VET and Adult Learning team within the OECD Centre for Skills. Viktória Kis, Małgorzata Kuczera and Pauline Musset within the VET and Adult Learning team provided additional input. Francesca Borgonovi from the Directorate for Education and Skills, Kim Samuel from the OECD Centre for Skills and Anja Meierkord from the Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs also gave useful comments. Support throughout the project was received from Montserrat Gomendio as Head of the Centre for Skills, Dirk van Damme as Head of the Skills beyond School division in the Directorate for Education and Skills, Andreas Schleicher as Director of the Directorate for Education and Skills, Stefano Scarpetta as Director of the Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs and Ludger Schuknecht, Deputy Secretary-General at the OECD.

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Executive summary

Vocational education training is an essential integration tool

In 2017, there were 59 million young people with migrant backgrounds across OECD countries, representing 27% of young people – an increase of 4 percentage points over the previous decade. Between 2014 and 2017, more than 5.3 million asylum seekers arrived in OECD countries, and over 50% of those arriving in Europe were aged 18-34. Of these, many – though not all – have obtained some form of international protection (i.e. humanitarian migrants, which are mostly referred to as refugees). Previous experience suggests that many young migrants will struggle to integrate. Labour market outcomes for humanitarian migrants in particular are often poorer than both native and other migrant populations.

VET is a recognised means of addressing these challenges. Upper-secondary VET graduates – both native and foreign-born – are more likely to be employed compared to both upper-secondary general education graduates and people without upper-secondary qualifications. The benefits of VET appear to be stronger for disadvantaged students. For example, migrants and refugees are more likely to continue working in the same firm where they did their apprenticeship than their native peers. Evidence suggests that work-based learning, in particular apprenticeship, is one of the most effective ways for young refugees to integrate. Several OECD countries have invested in VET for enhancing integration and responding to skills shortages and ageing populations while at the same time taking the opportunity to improve VET systems for a wider group of students.

The need to integrate young humanitarian migrants has prompted new approaches to VET

Countries have sought to address barriers facing migrant and refugee students while also making VET systems more inclusive and flexible. There are lessons to be learnt from the range of approaches that have emerged.

This report focuses on the channels through which migrants integrate into VET and the labour market, highlighting upper-secondary VET for young migrants and refugees mainly in Germany, Italy, Sweden and Switzerland. The report follows the pathway of students getting informed about VET, getting ready for VET, getting into VET and getting on within VET (Chapter 2-5). Chapter 1 provides an overview, and Chapter 6 discusses issues related to the governance of VET systems.

Young migrants and refugees should be informed about VET opportunities

It is important that host countries are able to collect and manage demographic and skills profiles of humanitarian migrants in order to assess their needs and capabilities and to better engage them with VET. However, much of the available data on humanitarian migrants is collected on an ad-hoc, small-scale basis. Young migrants and refugees are often unfamiliar with or have a poor opinion of VET, sometimes based on experience in origin countries. Addressing this challenge requires proactive provision of personalised career guidance and mentoring services including existing information mechanisms

established for the general population such as schools, career guidance services, public employment services as well as reception centres, social services centres and NGOs.

Appropriate preparation is required to ensure effective pathways for migrants and refugees into and through upper-secondary VET

Even if upper-secondary VET becomes a goal for young migrants, they often face language and academic barriers. Effective preparatory programmes can enable smooth progress into mainstream upper-secondary VET by combining language, vocational and academic learning, engaging social partners, emphasising work-based learning and providing career guidance. Targeted pre-vocational or pre-apprenticeship programmes play particularly important roles. Teacher training for multi-cultural and multi-lingual settings can help teachers to optimise the effectiveness of preparatory and VET programmes.

Countries can facilitate easier access to upper-secondary VET

The share of young migrants entering upper-secondary VET programmes has been rising in recent years, by 6 percentage points (pp) in Germany (2009-17), 5 pp in Sweden (2011-17), and 3 pp in Switzerland (2012-17). However, challenges remain: for example, lower shares of migrants are admitted to upper-secondary VET than native students in Finland, Germany, Norway and Sweden. Specific challenges include relatively weaker skills, lack of relevant social networks, as well as possible discrimination in the apprenticeship market. Countries can reduce entry barriers by offering flexible VET provision, such as modular, shorter or longer programmes. Governments can also provide schools and employers with reassurance by clarifying the legal status of humanitarian migrant students and apprentices and seeking to place refugees with regard to labour market demand. Some countries are promoting intermediary bodies to build contacts between young migrants and employers. Such efforts can challenge discriminatory assumptions while enabling migrants to build social capital and better understanding of employer expectations.

Support should continue during upper-secondary VET both in school and the workplace

Migrant students are less successful in completing upper-secondary VET than their native peers. The completion gap is 8 percentage points (pp) in Finland and Germany, 16-18 pp in Norway and Sweden, and 7-11 pp in Switzerland. Higher dropout rates are linked to socio-economic instability, weaker academic proficiency, difficulty in securing training placements during VET and inadequate connections between school and the workplace. Dropouts are particularly problematic for apprenticeship programmes because the productive value of the apprentice emerges most strongly towards the end of apprenticeship. Work-based learning also tends to take place at the end of VET and early dropouts have less opportunity to apply skills in real workplaces, develop networks and references and position themselves well for transition into work. Personalised support through use of mentors and coaches as well as other support mechanisms to increase connections between schools and workplaces during VET enhances the outcomes of migrant students.

Long-term national strategies will enhance VET management for migrants and refugees

To build strong, flexible and inclusive VET systems where migrants and refugees can succeed, national strategies should align relevant policy measures and programmes. Closer links between preparatory, upper-secondary VET and adult VET programmes enables progression for all learners. Such linkages can have broad benefits, as humanitarian migrants experience similar needs and challenges as the wider group of students with disadvantaged backgrounds. With many stakeholders engaged in designing and delivering VET for humanitarian migrants, coordination and peer learning must be driven at national levels with strong engagement of social partners.

1 Overview: Unlocking the potential of migrants through vocational education and training

This chapter presents an overview of the project Unlocking the Potential of Migrants through Vocational Education and Training (VET). The chapter first provides details on the objective and context of the study. It then highlights the opportunities presented by the arrival of young humanitarian migrants and explains the challenges faced by VET systems in addressing specific barriers, which can be expected to hinder successful progress through VET. The chapter sets out why VET can be a particularly effective approach to integrate migrants, in particular humanitarian migrants. Finally, the chapter summarises the main findings of the report based on an analysis of major OECD countries that have been significantly affected by the recent increase of humanitarian migrants.

Objective, focus and context of this study

Providing advice for VET systems seeking to integrate young migrants and refugees into the host-country labour market

The objective of this study is to provide advice to governments and other stakeholders seeking to use vocational education and training (VET) to integrate young migrants, in particular humanitarian migrants, into the labour market. The study draws on international practices to enrich evidence and help countries to learn from each other (Box 1.1).

The recent significant increase in humanitarian migrants in OECD countries is a challenge, but also an opportunity for many countries. VET systems are commonly tasked with ensuring that all learners, including many migrants, are equipped with skills leading to employment. With its sharp, practical focus on enabling individuals to access skilled jobs, VET is well-placed to enable the integration of migrants into economic life, deepening their social interaction with native communities. But it can only do so if it remains or becomes attractive to both employers and learners. This requires that any adaptations implemented to address specific barriers faced by migrants preventing successful progression through VET must also support, or even improve, high standards and quality of provision.

Box 1.1. The OECD project Unlocking the Potential of Migrants through VET

The project *Unlocking the Potential of Migrants through VET* provides new insights into how VET systems can adapt to more successfully integrate migrants into their host countries, so as to achieve better outcomes for both migrants and for economies as a whole. The project covers two parts: a review of VET in Germany (Bergseng, Degler and Lüthi, 2019[1]) and a cross-country review.

This cross-country study draws on national experiences across OECD countries with focuses particularly on Germany, Italy, Sweden and Switzerland. Many other OECD countries provided responses through a questionnaire that the OECD review team circulated among the OECD Group of National Experts on Vocational Education and Training in 2018. Governments shared information on policy challenges, solutions and innovative approaches regarding migrant integration through VET.

In addition, examples on Germany and Sweden draw heavily on their respective VET reviews (Bergseng, Degler and Lüthi, 2019[1]; Kuczera and Jeon, 2019[2]). The focus of Germany study is also fully on the integration of migrants through VET while with regard to Sweden, one chapter is devoted to this. Examples on Italy and Switzerland are mainly based on their respective country notes (Lüthi, forthcoming[3]; Savitki and Jeon, forthcoming[4]). Collectively, this work intends to serve as a useful tool for policy makers in the countries responding to significant increases in humanitarian migrants.

Areas of focus

This study focuses on young migrants, in particular humanitarian migrants, aged between 15 and 34 and mainly their integration into upper-secondary vocational education and training (VET) systems. Overall, this study encompasses young migrants in general unless the population is specified (Box 1.2). It also partly covers the access to non-formal VET systems among young adults who have no access to upper-secondary VET systems.

Across the OECD in 2017, 27% of people aged 15-34, or 59 million people in total, had a migrant background. This was an increase of 4 percentage points over the previous decade (OECD/EU, 2018[5]). Between 2014 and 2017, more than 5.3 million asylum seekers arrived in OECD countries[1] and over 50% of those arriving in Europe[2] were aged 18-34 (OECD, 2018[6]). Of these, many – though not all – have

obtained some form of international protection and are therefore classified as humanitarian migrants (Box 1.2).

Many of these migrants are potential students and represent a direct and immediate interest to VET systems. However, they may not be aware of the educational and economic opportunities available, or travelled with a specific occupational ambition in mind, appropriate documents to prove their skills and qualification, or with existing networks linking them to prospective employers. Moreover, many have missed out on periods of formal schooling and have a weak understanding of the host country's educational system in general, and the VET system in particular, which varies substantially between countries. Humanitarian migrants also tend to have lower educational attainments and lower labour market outcomes compared to other migrants (Irastorza and Bevelander, 2017[7]; KEK-CDC & B,S,S., 2014[8]; OECD and European Union, 2016[9]; Damas de Matos and Liebig, 2014[10]).

Therefore, in order to ensure that VET systems take advantage of the opportunities presented by humanitarian migrants – and that migrants themselves are in a position to take advantage of attractive opportunities presented by the VET system – it is important to address the barriers preventing smooth entry into, and completion of, VET. These barriers relate to the aspects of skills, social network and country-specific knowledge (Norris, 2011[11]), importantly: i) lack of skills desired by VET employers; ii) lack of social networks linked to VET workplaces; and iii) lack of host-country specific knowledge and understanding, in particular on the VET system and opportunities.

Box 1.2. Focus and definition of migrants in this study

Humanitarian migrants (mostly referred to as *refugees*) refer to people who have been granted some sort of protection.

Asylum seekers are people who have formally applied for asylum, but whose claim is pending.

Migrant is used as a generic term for all persons who move to another country and intend to stay in the country for a certain period of time, regardless of their reason for migration.

Youth with a migrant background include, unless specified: i) foreign-born youth, and ii) native-born youth with both parents who are foreign-born.

Source: OECD (2016[12]), *Making Integration Work: Refugees and Others in Need of Protection*, *Making Integration Work*, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264251236-en.

Context of this study

VET systems across the OECD

Vocational education and training (VET) includes education and training programmes designed for, and typically leading to, a particular job or type of job (OECD, 2010[13]). VET comprises a broad range of approaches and strategies that aim to enable the school-to-work transitions of youth and prepare adults for new career opportunities.

Upper-secondary VET can be composed of both school and workplace learning, such as apprenticeships (Box 1.3 for the definition of work-based learning), and will involve, to degrees which vary between countries, elements of general education, such as literacy and numeracy (OECD, 2018[14]).

For example, Germany's dual VET programmes combine education and training at workplace and in VET schools. Sweden's school-based VET programmes offer courses with strong academic skills and technical training and a minimum 15-week work placement – this highly flexible VET system with a well-developed

individualised approach allows different mixes of VET across transitional, mainstream upper-secondary and adult education systems. In Switzerland, the successful VET system readily encourages disadvantaged students to enter a 2-year VET programme that requires a less demanding level of skills and then can be subsequently continued with the 3-year VET programme of more demanding courses. In Italy, the proven success of work-based training through regional VET provision has driven the national VET system to have more work-based components. The country is aware of the strength of dual system with a strong emphasis on apprenticeship; and in the environment with currently weak social partner engagement, the country has implemented several alternative ways to promote work-based learning.

Over the past decade (2005-16), the OECD average share of students enrolled in upper-secondary VET programmes remained steady at about 45% (Figure 1.1, noting that due to the reclassification from ISCED-1997 to ISCED-2011 as well as the variation of ages of students enrolled in upper-secondary VET across countries, this data should be interpreted with caution).

Looking closer, Germany saw the largest decrease in the share of students enrolled in upper-secondary VET, by 12 percentage points (pp) between 2005 and 2012 (ISCED-97) and another 10 pp between 2013 and 2016 (ISCED-11) – a trend which seems to reflect what is seen in Figure 1.1. With corrected figures by ISCED-11, the share in Sweden also declined by 12 pp between 2005 and 2016, and the share in Italy by 2 pp.[3]

The range of the shares in 2016 is from 73% in the Czech Republic to 9% in Canada. The share of migrant students in the upper-secondary VET also varies, ranging from 8.3% in Denmark (entrants) to 27% in the Netherlands (enrolments) – this is discussed in Chapter 4.

Recently, many young asylum seekers arrived in OECD countries

In Germany, 839 000 or 46% of asylum seekers were aged 18-34 and in Italy, 358 000 or 79%. France (242k), Hungary (148k) and Sweden (133k) received more than 100 000 young people but the recognition rates of asylum seekers vary (Figure 1.2). The influx has had a significant impact on a number of OECD countries. For example, due to the increased inflows of asylum-seekers, the population of low-educated young men is estimated to have grown by 18% in Austria, 16% in Germany, 14% in Sweden and 8% in Switzerland between 2014 and 2017. This relative change in working-age population is the difference between the estimated refugee working-age population accounting for increased inflows since January 2014 and the counterfactual refugee working-age population (i.e. assuming that asylum applications in 2014-20 remain equal to the 2011-13 average), divided by the total working-age population in December 2013 (OECD, 2018[6]).[4]

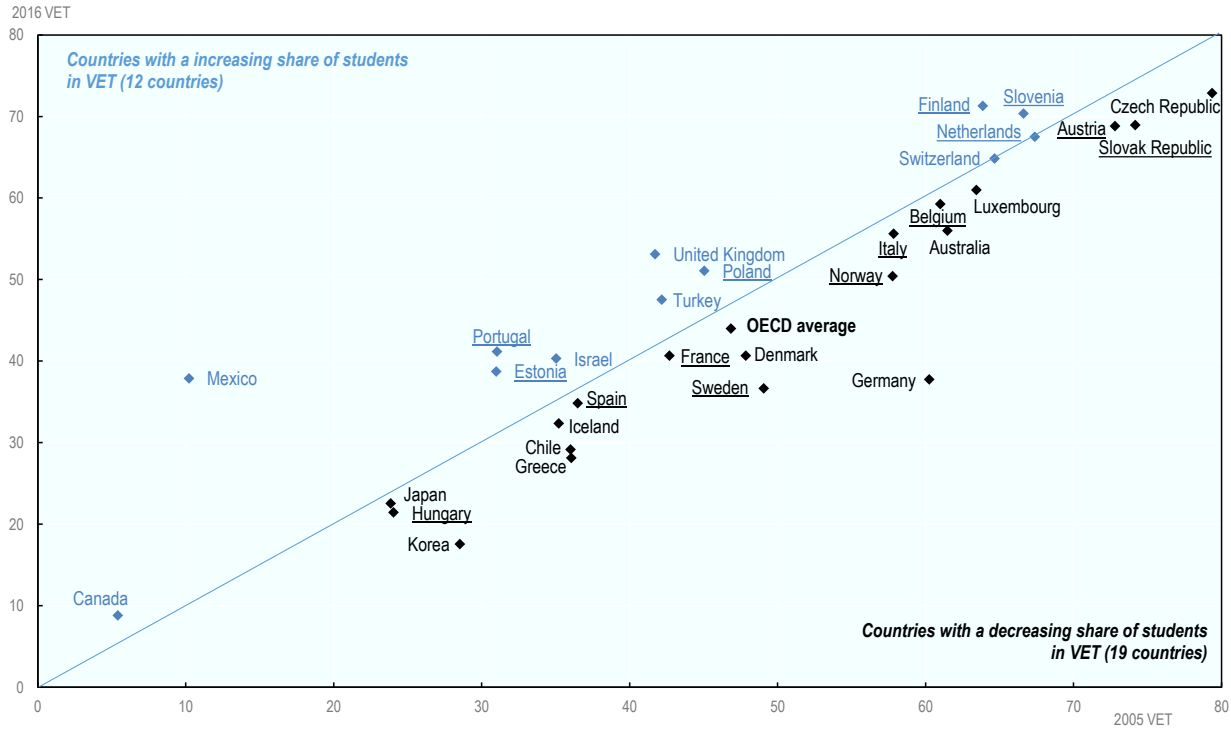
Poor labour market outcomes for humanitarian migrants are commonplace

Available evidence suggests that poor labour market outcomes for refugees are commonplace, with individuals trapped outside of labour market or in low-skilled employment. The employment rates of refugees are often lower than both the native population and other categories of migrants. For example, in Sweden, the employment rates of male refugees (ages 20-64) barely reach 40% 1-5 years after arrival (compared to over 70% for male labour migrants) but catch up to 70% 10 years after arrival (compared to over 80% for male labour migrants) – female refugees show similar gaps, if at much lower rates (Bevelander, 2016[15]). In Switzerland, the employment rates 10 years after arrival goes up to a maximum of about 60%, depending on the legal status of humanitarian migrants (KEK-CDC & B,S,S., 2014[8]).[5] Low rates of labour market participation and employment for this target group ultimately results in elevated social welfare receipts and possibly political unrest (Evans and Fitzgerald, 2017[16]). The difficulties facing refugees in “catching-up” or advancing to the level of other categories of migrants or the native-born is a major concern in some OECD countries (see Chapter 6).

In comparison to other types of migrants, humanitarian migrants often have weak attachments to their host country, lack information on job opportunities, and may have lived through traumatic experiences, which may hinder informed decision-making (Cedefop, 2017[17]). Typically, most of the initial response to the arrival of asylum seekers is geared towards humanitarian help including shelter, health and basic needs. However, following this there is a need to step up support for integrating refugees and those who are likely to stay. VET programmes are effective ways to help connect migrants, and in particular humanitarian migrants, with the labour market, get in touch with the local working culture, develop social networks, and find jobs matching their skills, qualifications and aspirations.

Figure 1.1. Trends in share of students in VET across OECD countries

Share (%) of upper-secondary students enrolled in vocational programmes, 2005 and 2016



Note: 1. The figure includes all age groups, which vary across countries. For example, the share of upper-secondary students enrolled in VET in 2016 for 15-19 year-olds was 19% in Australia and Denmark and 48% in Finland, compared to 56%, 41% and 71% for all ages that are presented in this graph. This is because the enrolment rates of adult population over the age 20 in upper-secondary VET are quite high in these countries.

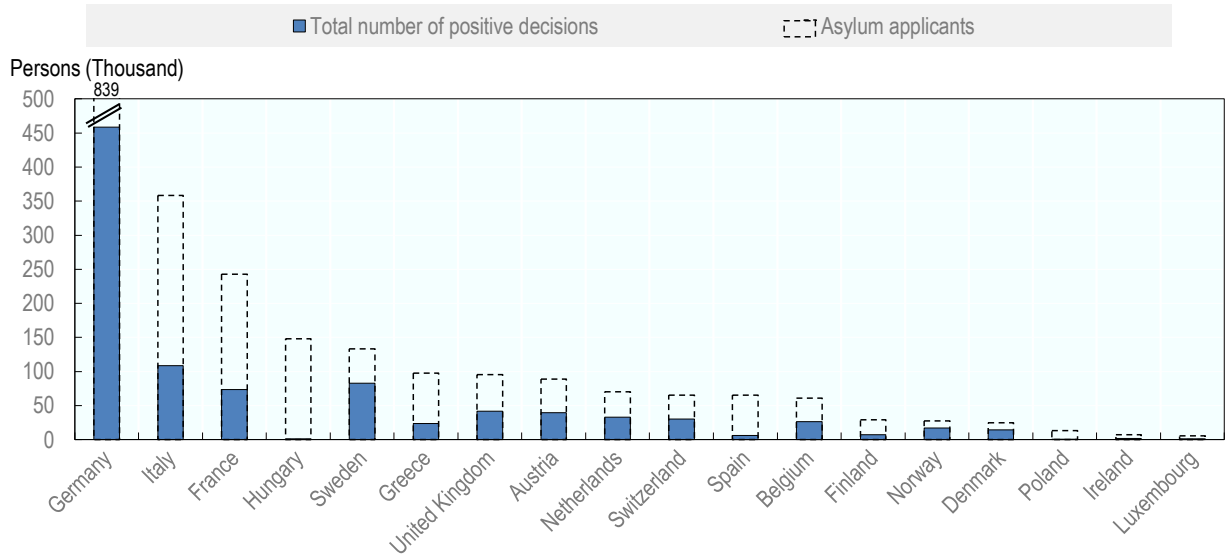
2. 2005 data are based on ISCED-1997 and 2018 data are based on ISCED-2011. Underlined countries have corrected 2005 data according to ISCED-2011. For analysis on the discrepancies in enrolment figures between these data due to reclassification of ISCED, see Cedefop (2018[18]) and endnote 3 of Chapter 1 in this report.

Source: OECD (2018[19]), *Education at a Glance 2018: OECD Indicators*, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2018-en; and OECD (2006[20]), *Education at a Glance 2006: OECD Indicators*, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2006-en.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888933997664

Figure 1.2. Many young people came to seek asylum in EU countries between 2014 and 2018 but recognition rates vary

Cumulative sum of asylum seekers among young people (18-34) in selected EU countries and decisions (2014-18)



Note: "Asylum applicant" means a person having submitted an application for international protection or having been included in such application as a family member during the reference period.[6] Only countries that have a cumulative sum of asylum applicants of more than 5 000 are presented.
The "total number of positive decisions" refers to the sum of decisions granting refugee status, subsidiary protection status, authorisation to stay for humanitarian reasons (for countries where applicable) and temporary protection.
Source: Eurostat, (2019[21]), *Eurostat* (database), https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database, using annual aggregated data (rounded) on asylum applicants [migr_asyappctza], first instance positive decisions on applications [migr_asydcfsta] and final positive decisions on applications [migr_asydcfina] by citizenship and age.

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Poor labour market outcomes for humanitarian migrants are commonplace

Available evidence suggests that poor labour market outcomes for refugees are commonplace, with individuals trapped outside of labour market or in low-skilled employment. The employment rates of refugees are often lower than both the native population and other categories of migrants. For example, in Sweden, the employment rates of male refugees (ages 20-64) barely reach 40% 1-5 years after arrival (compared to over 70% for male labour migrants) but catch up to 70% 10 years after arrival (compared to over 80% for male labour migrants) – female refugees show similar gaps, if at much lower rates (Bevelander, 2016[15]). In Switzerland, the employment rates 10 years after arrival goes up to a maximum of about 60%, depending on the legal status of humanitarian migrants (KEK-CDC & B,S,S., 2014[8]).[7] Low rates of labour market participation and employment for this target group ultimately results in elevated social welfare receipts and possibly political unrest (Evans and Fitzgerald, 2017[16]). The difficulties facing refugees in "catching-up" or advancing to the level of other categories of migrants or the native-born is a major concern in some OECD countries (see Chapter 6).

In comparison to other types of migrants, humanitarian migrants often have weak attachments to their host country, lack information on job opportunities, and may have lived through traumatic experiences, which may hinder informed decision-making (Cedefop, 2017[17]). Typically, most of the initial response to the arrival of asylum seekers is geared towards humanitarian help including shelter, health and basic needs. However, following this there is a need to step up support for integrating refugees and those who are likely

to stay. VET programmes are effective ways to help connect migrants, and in particular humanitarian migrants, with the labour market, get in touch with the local working culture, develop social networks, and find jobs matching their skills, qualifications and aspirations.

Vocational education and training is a recognised solution in many OECD countries

Several OECD countries would like to increase the speed with which humanitarian migrants catch up to the employment or self-sufficiency rates of other population groups. For example, Switzerland, prompted by cantons and other stakeholders concerned by the risks of failed integration, recently decided to triple its investment aimed at the integration of refugees and temporarily admitted persons. While the country's general goal for young people is 95% of those under 25 years old to attain an upper-secondary qualification, including migrants by their fifth year of arrival,[8] the goal for young refugees and temporarily admitted persons (ages 16-25) is 66% within the Swiss Integration Agenda. For adult refugees and temporarily admitted persons, the goal is 50% to be employed by their seventh year of arrival (Swiss Confederation, 2018[22]) – in 2019 the employment rate of refugees and asylum seekers by their seventh year of arrival is 41%, and that of temporarily admitted persons is nearly 50% (Swiss State Secretariat for Migration, 2019[23]).[9] At the heart of this agenda is VET.

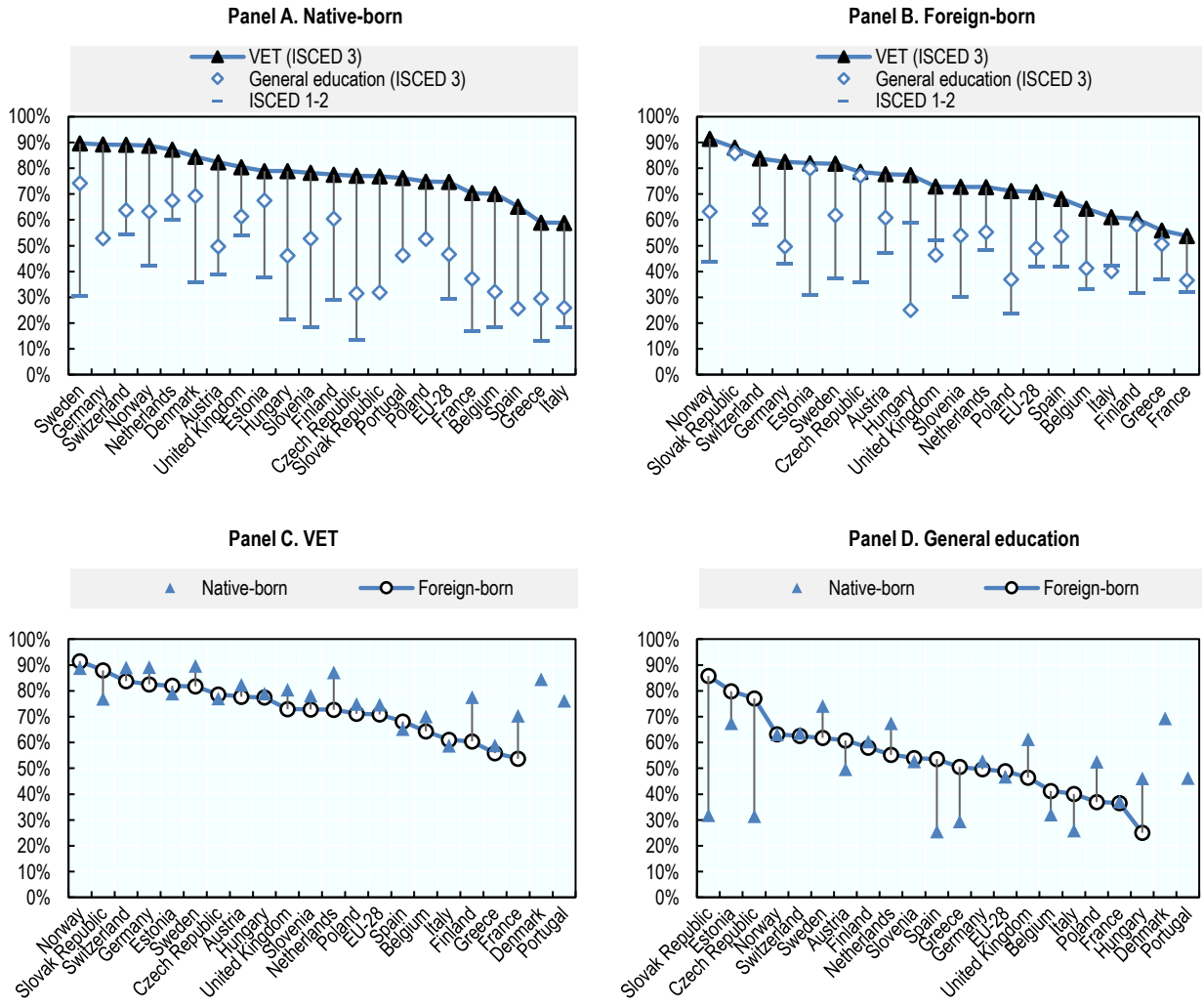
Prompt access to effective VET provision will increase the quality of this potential labour force and reduce the time necessary for labour market entry and eventually social integration of humanitarian migrants (OECD, 2018[6]). International evidence shows that upper-secondary VET graduates have better labour market outcomes compared to people without upper-secondary qualifications or graduates of academic upper-secondary education, at least in the short term (Kuczera, 2017[24]). This also holds true for both native and foreign-born populations (Figure 1.3).

VET can also have an impact on quality of employment. Adult refugees often fill lower-skilled and low-wage jobs to support their families, but these jobs may provide few opportunities for professional or economic advancement. In many cases the opportunities provided are dramatically less attractive when compared to the field for which they were trained, or worked previously, or for which they would have trained if given the appropriate VET opportunity.

VET generally facilitates a smooth transition into the labour market among migrant students. In Germany, the added-value of VET graduation is stronger for students with migrant backgrounds than for native students. Adjusting for personal characteristics, the chance of being employed is 2.4 times higher for natives when they hold a vocational diploma compared to those who do not. For students with a migrant background, the odds are 5 times higher (OECD, 2007[25]). The BIBB Transition Survey (*Übergangsstudie*), conducted in 2006 and 2011, shows that once students with migrant parents have successfully completed VET, they are significantly more likely to continue working in the same firm where they did their apprenticeship (70%) than VET graduates with native-born parents (60%). For those who do not stay at their training company, within two years, around 55% of young people with a migration background have found a job that corresponds to their skill level. The difference with those without a migration background is marginal (Beicht and Walden, 2014[26]). German VET experts also agree strongly that dual VET is the best way for the integration of young refugees – 93% of experts, according to a 2017 survey by the Germany Federal Institute for VET (BIBB) (Ebbinghaus and Gei, 2017[27]).[10]

Figure 1.3. Upper-secondary VET graduates show an outstanding employment outcome

Share of employed young people (15-34 years old), by their highest qualification attained, programme orientation and place of birth, 2018



Source: Eurostat (2019[28]), EU Labour Force Surveys, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/microdata/european-union-labour-force-survey.

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Work-based learning, such as apprenticeships, is a particularly effective solution

For disadvantaged young people, upper-secondary VET is commonly seen as a vehicle for improving labour market outcomes by making school-to-work transitions easier. This is particularly the case for programmes which involve substantial work-based learning, such as apprenticeships (OECD, 2018[14]). Work-based VET interventions, if designed well, ensure that learners develop skills in demand, allowing them to contribute skilled, productive labour as quickly as possible so minimising the net costs of training incurred by employers. Work-based learning also allows learners to practice and develop language skills in real-world settings and provides significant new opportunities for social interaction with native and other migrant colleagues who can provide advice and support and who may include potential future recruiters.

For governments, work-based VET is a means to share the costs of skill development with employers, through apprenticeships or other types of work-based learning integrated into school-based provision.

Sharing effective good practices across countries may help to strengthening the effort

Since 2015, there have been multitudinous policy practices across OECD aimed at better enabling migrant progression through VET. Activity has been at a national, regional and local level, driven by governments (at difference levels), not-for-profit and private enterprises. Much, perhaps most, of new provision has not been formally evaluated, but some programmes have. Others have demonstrated local success in the eyes of participants and stakeholders. It is timely therefore to take stock of activity notably across four key countries to share experiences.

For example, Switzerland's major investment into migrant integration is being channelled to VET with the main goal of raising the employment rates of refugees and temporarily admitted persons (Swiss Confederation, 2018[22]). Switzerland has recently launched a pre-apprenticeship programme to make apprenticeships more accessible for newly arrived youth. Germany is also making strong efforts towards refugee integration through VET through support measures (before and during VET for both migrant and non-migrant learners), with a focus on those who face particularly high barriers that are preventing their successful completion of VET qualifications (Bergseng, Degler and Lüthi, 2019[1]).

Sweden is implementing a number of VET-related instruments to maximise the potential of migrants including *Vocational Packages* in the upper-secondary transitional programmes and adult education programmes – mainly but not exclusively targeting newly arrived migrants – and an approach that effectively combines language and vocational training (Kuczera and Jeon, 2019[2]). Italy has committed to strengthening work-based VET (OECD, 2017[29]), which is employed to better integrate young humanitarian migrants in numerous EU-funded projects.

This study argues that governments are right to maintain or strengthening such approaches – many countries face significant long-term skills shortages, which can be addressed by making VET systems responsive to a broader range of learners, including recently arrived humanitarian migrants.

Box 1.3. Key OECD studies on VET and work-based learning

The OECD project *Learning for Jobs* (OECD, 2010[13]), a synthesis report of country reviews of upper-secondary VET systems, brought VET into policy discussions after having been neglected and marginalised. A following OECD project *Skills Beyond School* (OECD, 2014[30]) revealed the hidden world of professional education and training at the post-secondary VET, often called higher VET.

The most recent OECD work on work-based learning (WBL) was through *Seven Questions about Apprenticeships* (OECD, 2018[14]). In this project, structured WBL schemes are defined as ones that combine learning in workplaces with off-the-job learning (e.g. in schools or colleges) and lead to recognised qualifications. In most countries, such schemes are called apprenticeships or dual VET, but other terms (e.g. traineeships) are also used.

In the present report, WBL covers a broader range of schemes including ones that may not lead to recognised qualifications such as traineeships with or without (formal) off-the-job learning and pre-apprenticeships. This is due to the fact that migrants, in particular humanitarian migrants, have difficulties in accessing to regular VET programmes and in many cases rely on non-formal or informal VET in many cases.

Opportunities and challenges facing VET systems as a result of high inflows of humanitarian migrants

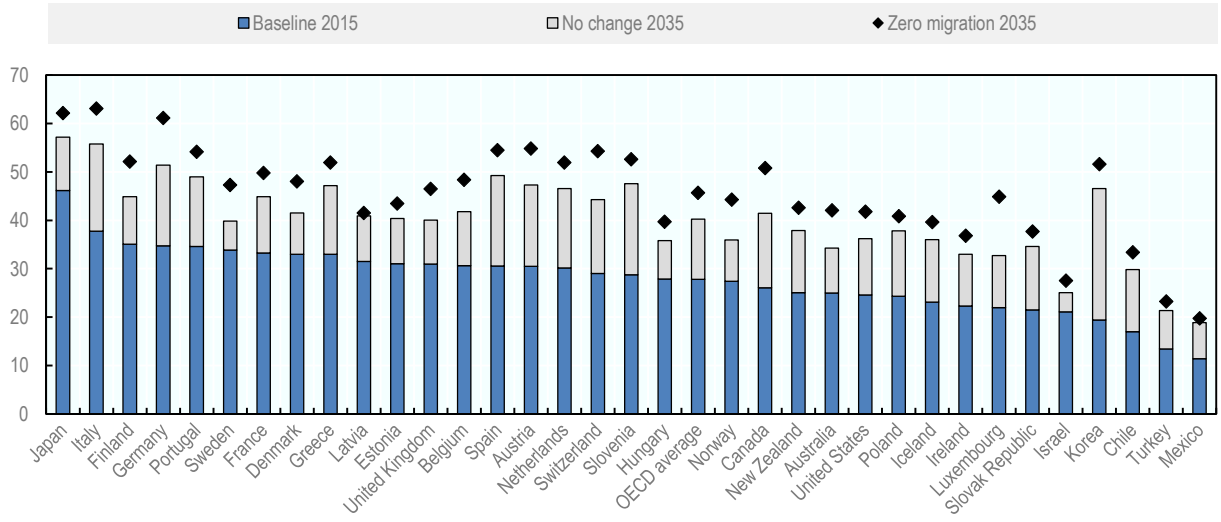
Investing in VET for migrants and refugees in general is a strategic response…

…to an ageing population

A number of OECD countries are currently facing and will continue to face an ageing problem. In OECD countries, the old-age dependency ratio – a ratio of the total population aged 65+ per 100 people to those aged 20-64 – is forecast to reach almost 40% by 2035 at the current pace (Figure 1.4). Without migration, this ratio goes up to 46%, suggesting that migrant skills are a key factor to manage national skills – in particular for Italy, Japan and Germany whose ratios are forecast to reach over 60%. At the same time, out of all asylum seekrs, the share of young people aged 18-34 has been consistently over 40% in European countries. Germany's population is projected to decrease even with a significant influx of new arrivals (German Federal Statistical Office, 2015[31]), highlighting the need to take advantage of opportunities presented by recent arrivals. From another perspective, in the United States, according to New American Economy (2017), 77% of refugees are of working age (ages 25 to 64), compared to 50% of the native-born population and 72% of non-refugee immigrants (Bernstein and DuBois, 2018[32]).

Figure 1.4. Many OECD countries face and will face an ageing population

Old dependency ratio of population aged 65+ per 100 people aged 20-64 in 2015 and 2035 by scenarios



Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, (2017[33]), *World Population Prospects 2017*, https://population.un.org/wpp/DVD/Files/1_Indicators%20(Standard)/EXCEL_FILES/1_Population/WPP2017_POP_F13_B_OLD_AGE_DEPENDENCY_RATIO_2064.xlsx.

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…to skills shortages

Countries are also facing and will continue to face severe skills shortages. In fact, the general challenge is intensifying for VET systems in ensuring that VET is attractive to sufficient numbers of young people. For example, Sweden lacks vocational upper-secondary graduates due largely to falling enrolment rates in VET as well as increasing labour market demand due to an ageing population (Kuczera and Jeon, 2019[2]).

Germany is also in a similar situation: according to one study, by 2040 a shortage of 3.9 million workers is expected, consisting of 2.7 million workers with VET qualifications compared to 1.2 million for university graduates (VBW, 2016[34]). The country is already, and increasingly, facing shortage of demand in apprenticeship positions with a third of apprenticeships being unfilled between 2013 (29%) and 2017 (34%), according to an employer survey by the Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry (DIHK, 2018[35]).[11]

Providing VET for migrants and refugees is worthwhile

Investment in VET for migrants can be worthwhile for many countries, in particular countries facing population decline or an aging population. As refugees are more likely to be of working age than other population groups, providing VET for refugees can be particularly helpful. Several countries recognise the skill potential that refugees and asylum seekers bring with them. Among OECD countries that are experiencing decrease in the share of VET students in the upper-secondary level, Germany and Sweden saw the largest decreases (Figure 1.1). In Germany, the absolute enrolment figures in upper-secondary VET also fell since 2010. In this context, according to a 2017 survey by the German Federal Institute for VET (BIBB), about 80% of VET experts in Germany agree that providing dual VET for young refugees is indispensable for securing the new generation of skilled workers (Ebbinghaus and Gei, 2017[27]). Sweden is also in a similar situation in terms of a shortage of VET graduates, although there was a slight increase in 2017. For example, the health and social care sector is trying to actively attract newly arrived migrants and refugees through modularised VET programmes (Kuczera and Jeon, 2019[2]). Switzerland launched a pre-apprenticeship in 2018 aimed at refugees and temporarily admitted persons to prepare for regular VET in sectors where skills shortage have been identified. Such efforts are mirrored in the United States, where 20% of refugees were working in the manufacturing sector and 14% in health care in 2015 – both sectors face skills shortages.

Significant new investment is available for improving VET systems

Considerable funding has been allocated to humanitarian migrant integration through VET in some countries

In the context of a high influx of humanitarian migrants, governments have tended to allocate more funding for refugee integration – earmarked or not. A major part of this funding is often channelled into VET and subsequent labour market integration measures, given that many refugees are at working-age and low-educated and many stakeholders (as seen for Germany (Ebbinghaus and Gei, 2017[27])) consider that VET is the most effective way to integrate this population.

For example, Switzerland increased federal funding from CHF 6 000 to 18 000 per refugee and temporarily admitted person under the 2018 Integration Agenda, which is tied to different targets, including educational needs (Koordinationsgruppe Integrationsagenda, 2018[36]). The Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture subsidised VET for migrants by EUR 20 million in 2017: 44 education providers received EUR 18.8 million and apprenticeship training received some of the remainder (Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, 2017[37]). Denmark also intensified its integration programme and Danish language courses that facilitate the labour market integration of refugees and migrants by allocating a budget of DKK 6.5 billion (EUR 870 million) in 2016 in comparison to the 2013 budget DKK 2.0 billion (EUR 270 million) (Danish Ministry of Immigration and Integration, 2016[38]). The federal government of Canada announced the Pre-Apprenticeship Programme which will provide CAD 46 million (EUR 31 million) over five years (2018-23) and focus on supporting those that are disadvantaged in the trades, such as women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, and people with disabilities as well as new comers (OECD, 2018[39]).

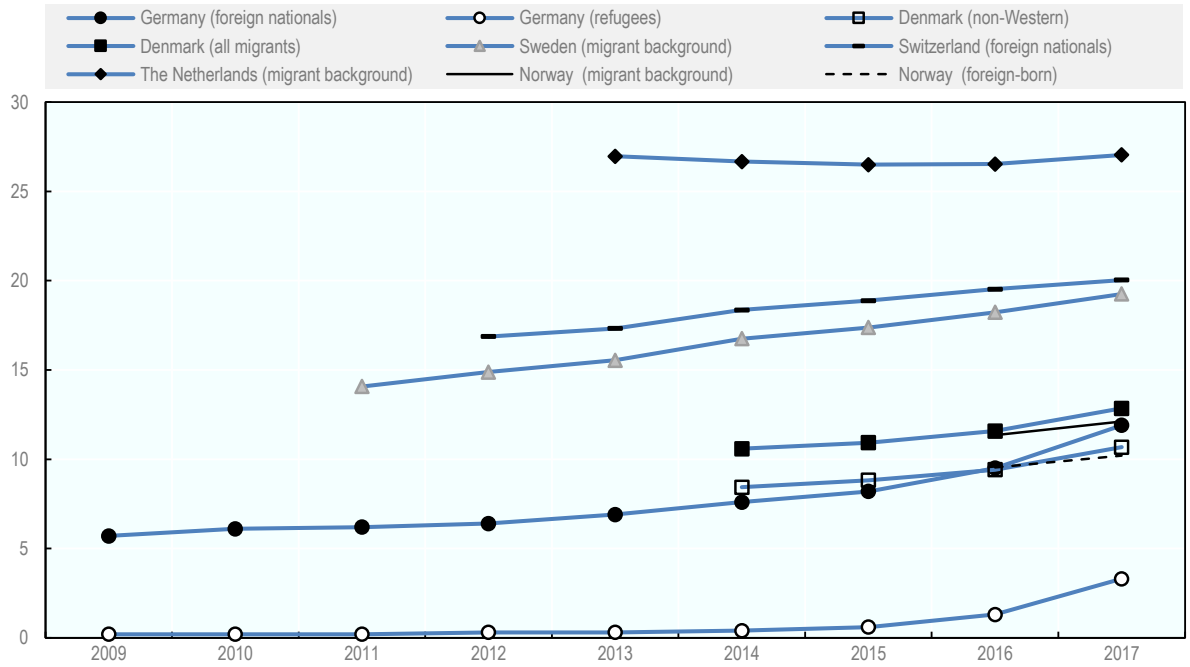
VET providers and employers can take advantage of this situation to review, evaluate, expand and improve VET programmes to be more inclusive with quality, benefiting from different forms of funding that are available for VET for humanitarian migrants.

The diversity among VET students has increased

Migrants are a diverse group (OECD, 2018[40]; OECD, 2018[41]). The degree of diversity is defined by factors including the range of cultures, languages and other characteristics of young migrants, as well as the number of years they have been in the host country, their pathways both to the host country and once residing in the country, and the level of community and family support they receive when they are living in the country (Roberts, 2014[42]).

The diversity among VET students has increased over the past decade. Evidence from countries with available data shows that the diversity of the VET student population has grown in recent years, a trend which can be explained to some degree by the recent increase in young refugees and asylum seekers and the consequently increased share of migrant entrants into VET systems (Figure 1.5), which will be discussed further in Chapter 4.

Figure 1.5. The share of migrant entrants into VET has increased in recent years



Note: For Germany, the share refers to new apprenticeship contracts; foreign nationals include persons with only foreign nationality and refugees include persons from asylum countries (i.e. nationals from Eritrea, Nigeria, Somalia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan and the Syrian Arab Republic).

Source: Germany from BIBB (2018[43]), *Datensystem Auszubildende (DAZUBI) Zusatztabellen. Ausländische Auszubildende in der dualen Berufsausbildung - nach einzelnen Nationalitäten, Deutschland 2008 bis 2017. Ergebnisse auf Basis der Berufsbildungsstatistik*, Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung, Bonn, https://www.bibb.de/de/1868.php. Switzerland from Swiss Federal Statistics Office (2019[44]), *Federal Statistics Office*, https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/en/home/statistics/catalogues-databases.html. The Netherlands from Statistics Netherlands (2019[45]), *MBO; participants, level, learning pathway, migration background*, https://data.overheid.nl/dataset/53971-mbo--deelnemers--niveau--leerweg--migratieachtergrond. Sweden from the Ministry of Education in Kuczera, M. and S. Jeon, (2019[2]), *Vocational Education and Training in Sweden*, OECD Reviews of Vocational Education and Training, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/g2g9fac5-en. Denmark from Student Register, Statistics Denmark (2019[46]), http://dst.dk/ext/uddannelse/Uddannelsestabeller.

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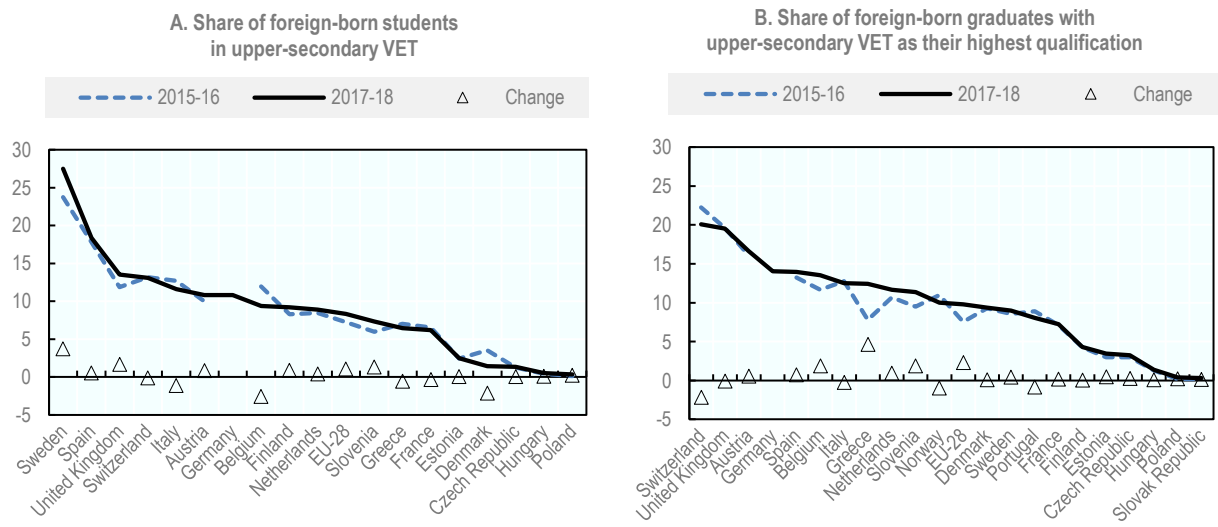
Out of 18 EU countries that have available data, at least 11 countries saw an increase in the share of migrant students aged 15-34 in upper-secondary VET between 2015-16 and 2017-18 (Panel A, Figure 1.6). Out of 21 EU countries that have available data, at least 15 countries saw an increase in the share of young people of the same age group whose highest qualification was upper-secondary VET (Panel B, Figure 1.6; see Annex A for 2009 data).

Figure 1.6. Many EU countries saw an increase in the share of migrant students in VET in recent years

Share of migrant students in upper-secondary VET and migrant upper-secondary VET graduates as highest qualification (population aged 15-34)



Source: Eurostat (2019[28]), *EU Labour Force Survey*, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/microdata/european-union-labour-force-survey.

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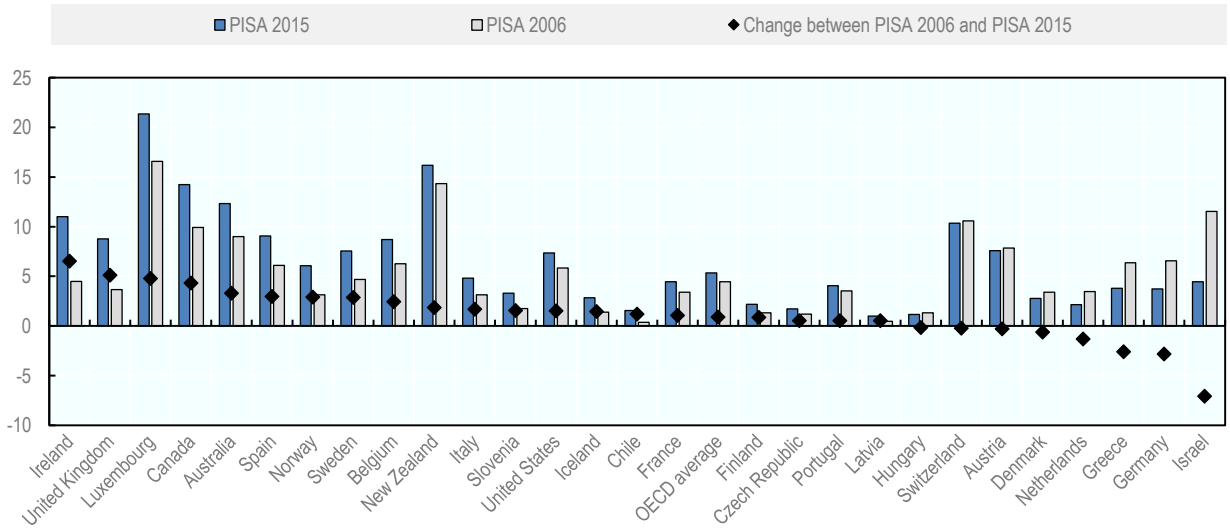
The share of migrants among younger students also grew (Figure 1.7), and it can be expected that this increased share will in turn affect the make-up of upper-secondary VET students. According to the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), the share of students with a migrant background has increased across the OECD countries (OECD, 2016[47]; OECD, 2014[48]). Almost three quarters of OECD countries saw an increase in the share of foreign-born students aged 15 between 2006 and 2015, with the OECD average rising from 4.4% in 2006 to 5.4% in 2015. Ireland, the United Kingdom and Luxembourg saw much higher increases of about five percentage-points over this period. It is reasonable to expect that an increasing share of migrant students in the lower-secondary education system will in turn affect the make-up of VET students.

Figure 1.7. The share of young migrants has increased in most OECD countries

Percentage of 15-year-old foreign-born students and the change between 2006 and 2015, PISA data



Note: Only countries where the percentage of foreign-born students is higher than 1% in 2015 are shown. Results for Germany should be interpreted with caution due to missing rates on the student migrant background.
Source: Table I.7.1 in OECD, (2016[47]), *PISA 2015 Results (Volume I): Excellence and Equity in Education*, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264266490-en.

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Main messages and structure of this study

Lessons can be learned from the range of approaches that have emerged for improving VET systems

It does not appear that the record number of humanitarian migrants who recently arrived in OECD countries has resulted in a major change in upper-secondary VET systems. Reviewing the practices that have been in place since 2014 suggests that much of the provision serving recently arrived humanitarian migrants is based on, linked to or nested within existing VET provision serving the general population – rather than being fundamental changes to VET systems themselves. This is mainly because many young recent arrivals are funnelled into preparatory programmes with the aim of ultimately being integrated into mainstream provision. However, several OECD countries have crafted new approaches and programmes at small scale or as pilots in existing transitional programmes that are connected to VET.

In response in part to the massive number of young humanitarian migrants that Germany, and to a lesser extent Italy, received in a short period of time (Figure 1.2), myriad VET-related programmes and approaches to migrant integration have emerged both from national and regional governments.[12] This rapid growth in programmes went hand in hand with efforts under the European Social Fund that have catalysed the initial phase of many projects (Box 1.4). In both of these countries, regional governments are responsible for providing VET and the integration of migrants and so in some cases, duplication and inefficiencies have emerged between efforts at national and regional levels. In the future, this could be avoided through greater co-ordination in terms of strategic planning.

Sweden has also introduced several new measures, increased flexibility in the VET system and consolidated existing measures that facilitate the early entry of newly arrived to the labour market through

VET (Kuczera and Jeon, 2019[2]). For Switzerland, while the country already has a relatively shorter and less demanding VET programme (2-year EBA) that facilitates the entry of weaker learners, including the newly arrived into mainstream VET, it took an additional step by launching pre-apprenticeship programmes for young refugees and temporarily admitted persons. This new national initiative in 2018 consists of a more organised and expanded nation-wide approach. It directly targets young refugees and temporarily admitted persons who have work experience in order to maximise their potential and to facilitate their entry into the regular VET system.

The lessons learned from these experiences can be valuable as countries seek to strengthen VET systems, to address barriers facing migrant and refugee students, and make them more inclusive and flexible in the face of more diverse populations with different characteristics and needs.

Box 1.4. The role of European Social Fund in offering VET for humanitarian migrants in EU countries

The European Social Fund (ESF) is one of the main instruments for European Union to progress the goals set by the Europe 2020 strategy. Vocational education and training (VET) is one of the core elements in achieving these goals, connecting employment, education and inclusive growth. The ESF promotes VET to boost the adaptability of workers with new skills, improve access to employment including smooth school-to-work transition and help people from disadvantaged groups to get jobs.

Figure 1.8. The number of migrant participants in VET programmes financed by ESF, 2015-17

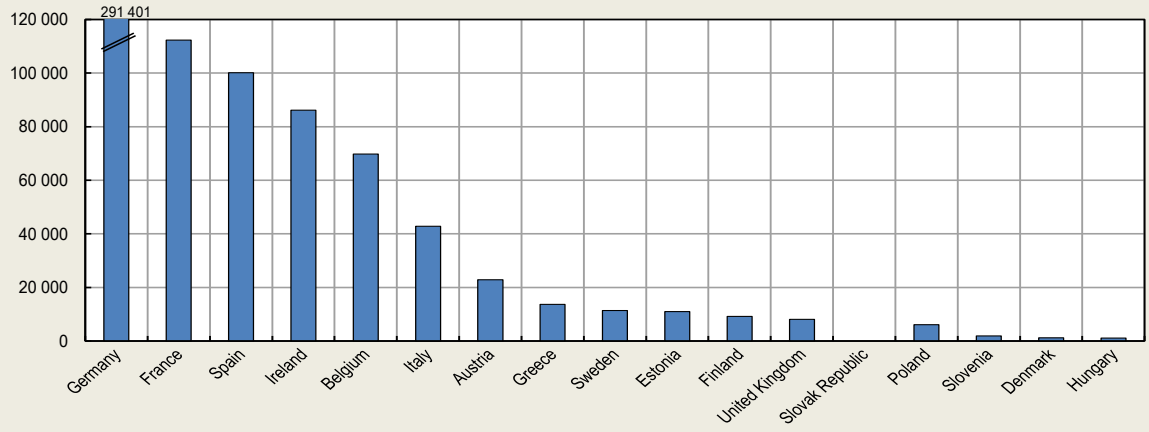

Figure note: The target group includes migrants, participants with a foreign background, minorities (including marginalised communities such as the Roma).
Figure source: ESF Database from European Commission (2019[49]), https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/2014-2020/ESIF-2014-2020-Achievement-Details/aesb-873i

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The ESF supports asylum seekers and refugees for VET actions when allowed by the national legislation. The ESF finances various local, regional and national projects. For instance, Germany uses joint funding through the ESF to provide financial support for early outreach programmes for asylum seekers and, until 2016, to help finance vocational language courses. Italy has implemented various ESF-funded projects to facilitate the transition of young migrants to the labour market through traineeships and other types of VET support, for example projects FORWORK, INSIDE, PERCORSI, Coordinamento Nazionale Nuove Generazioni Italiane, Programma integra. Spain has drawn on ESF support to finance a large programme comprising assessment, recognition and validation of refugee skills, guidance and VET provision.

Source: European Commission (2015[50]), *Background note: Support to Asylum Seekers Under the European Social Fund and the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived*, http://ec.europa.eu/esf/BlobServlet?docId=14499&langId=en. Cedefop, (2017[17]), *Vocational Education and Training: Bridging Refugee and Employer Needs: Results of a 2016 Cedefop-OECD Survey on Integration through Skilling and Qualification*, http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/9120_en.pdf.

What a successful integration through VET might look like

The ultimate goal of migrant and refugee integration is a rapid transition to economic self-sufficiency, and VET can play a crucial role in achieving. On average, VET graduates, in particular apprenticeship graduates, have better outcomes in terms of employment and earnings than comparable peers. They are less likely to be unemployed than those who have not completed upper-secondary education, and have similar chances of being employed as those who graduated from post-secondary programmes (Kuczera, 2017[24]). Apprenticeship graduates earn more on average than similar adults with education below an upper-secondary level, and more than those who graduated from academic upper-secondary education and have no higher qualification (Kuczera, 2017[24]). In addition, one of the reasons why unlocking migrant skills through VET is a desirable policy objective is because VET mobilises private capital through employers to integrate humanitarian migrants. That is, because of the nature of work-based VET, which relies both on public and private funding and benefits firms and productivity (OECD, 2018[14]), VET is an economic way to realise migrant integration.

However, achieving this goal does not come without challenges. Young migrants and refugees are often unfamiliar with, or have a poor opinion, of VET. In general, they have weak language and basic academic skills and lack country-specific knowledge and understanding. Due in part to these shortcomings, the existing requirements for the entry to mainstream upper-secondary VET – either formal or informal requirements – are often unattainable within a short period time for newly arrived migrants. This is particularly the case as they are often dealing with other barriers at the same time. Finally, once they have entered a programme, migrant students are less successful in completing upper-secondary VET. Dropouts from work-based programmes are particularly problematic because both apprentices and employers tend to recoup the bulk of their investment towards the end of programmes. Dropping out before this return on investment is realised may make employers more reluctant to take on apprentices with migrant backgrounds.

Therefore, countries may benefit from young migrants and refugees who are better informed about VET opportunities. Such information can prepare them more strongly for upper-secondary VET in terms of skills and knowledge, enable easier access to upper-secondary VET and actively support them during VET. Ultimately, such actions require building strong, flexible and inclusive VET systems that work not only for young migrants, but also for other disadvantaged and vulnerable groups (see summary of key messages and advice in Box 1.5). This means that countries may need to take different approaches to the systemic design and delivery of the VET system as well as long-term national strategies that set effective and efficient co-ordination and peer-learning mechanisms across relevant stakeholders, in particular social partners. Programmes that can last over the long term and be compatible and closely connected to existing

programmes are more sustainable and efficient, and easier to evaluate, compared to operating short-term, temporary programmes. While it is a valid concern that changes to VET systems may result in confusion and cost, appropriate adjustment for disadvantaged groups including migrants and refugees would ultimately result in a more flexible and inclusive VET system for the benefit of all.

Box 1.5. Summary of key messages: General recommendations for countries

Inform young migrants and refugees about the VET opportunities

- Collect, or build a capacity for collecting, demographic and skills profiles of young migrants and refugees to assess their needs and to better match their profiles with VET programmes.
- Monitor learning progress and particular needs of young migrants and refugees entering and already in the VET system, and evaluate effectiveness of policy interventions.
- Proactively provide career guidance and mentoring services, with personalised approaches, including in the migrants' native languages.

Better prepare young migrants and refugees for upper-secondary VET, including apprenticeships

- Provide targeted, high quality preparatory programmes for young migrants and refugees to build basic skills and train in the host-country language, allowing them to build social networks and familiarity with the host-country education system and the labour market.
- Accelerate the learning process of young migrants and refugees through proven approaches such as combining language and vocational training.
- Prepare the teaching workforce and reinforce their quality to cope with increasing student diversity including strengthened training for teaching in a multicultural or multilingual setting. Provide targeted and additional training for other relevant workers such as career counsellors, skills assessors, case managers, social workers and volunteers.

Enable easier access for young migrants and refugees to upper-secondary VET

- Reduce entry barriers by offering flexible models of VET provision, such as modular, shorter or longer programmes, and by allowing legal flexibility for young migrants and refugees to enter into and complete upper-secondary VET.
- Better match young migrants and refugees to VET opportunities by considering VET and labour market needs and geographical mismatches, while avoiding the concentration of vulnerable young migrants including refugees and asylum seekers in disadvantaged schools.
- Promote intermediary bodies and mechanisms to help build networks and contacts between young migrants and local employers.

Support young migrants and refugees to complete upper-secondary VET

- Support young migrants and refugees during VET to address weaker academic proficiency or relevant skills. Ensure a good learning experience in VET schools through mentors, coaches and other support mechanisms.
- Strengthen support in workplaces during work-based learning both for migrant VET learners, including apprentices, and employers.
- Increase productive connections and interactions between VET schools and training companies.

Build strong, flexible and inclusive VET systems that works for all

- Build a flexible and permeable VET system and programmes, and if needed make adaptions to do so, to build seamless pathways for migrants and refugees between preparatory programmes, upper-secondary VET and adult VET.
- Build long-term national strategies to enhance a whole-of-government approach to VET management for migrants and refugees, considering that integration takes time. Set up measurable goals and conduct monitoring and evaluation in terms of progression.
- Actively involve and co-ordinate relevant stakeholders in the design of the VET system and programmes as well as in the delivery of VET programmes and support services. Engage social partners throughout the integration process through VET. Promote peer learning across all levels of government as well as with other stakeholders.

Structure of this study: Following the journey of migrants and VET systems

Within this context, this report focuses on four of the main channels through which migrants integrate into VET and the labour market (Figure 1.9): getting informed about VET (Chapter 2), getting ready for VET (Chapter 3), getting into VET (Chapter 4) and getting on within VET (Chapter 5).

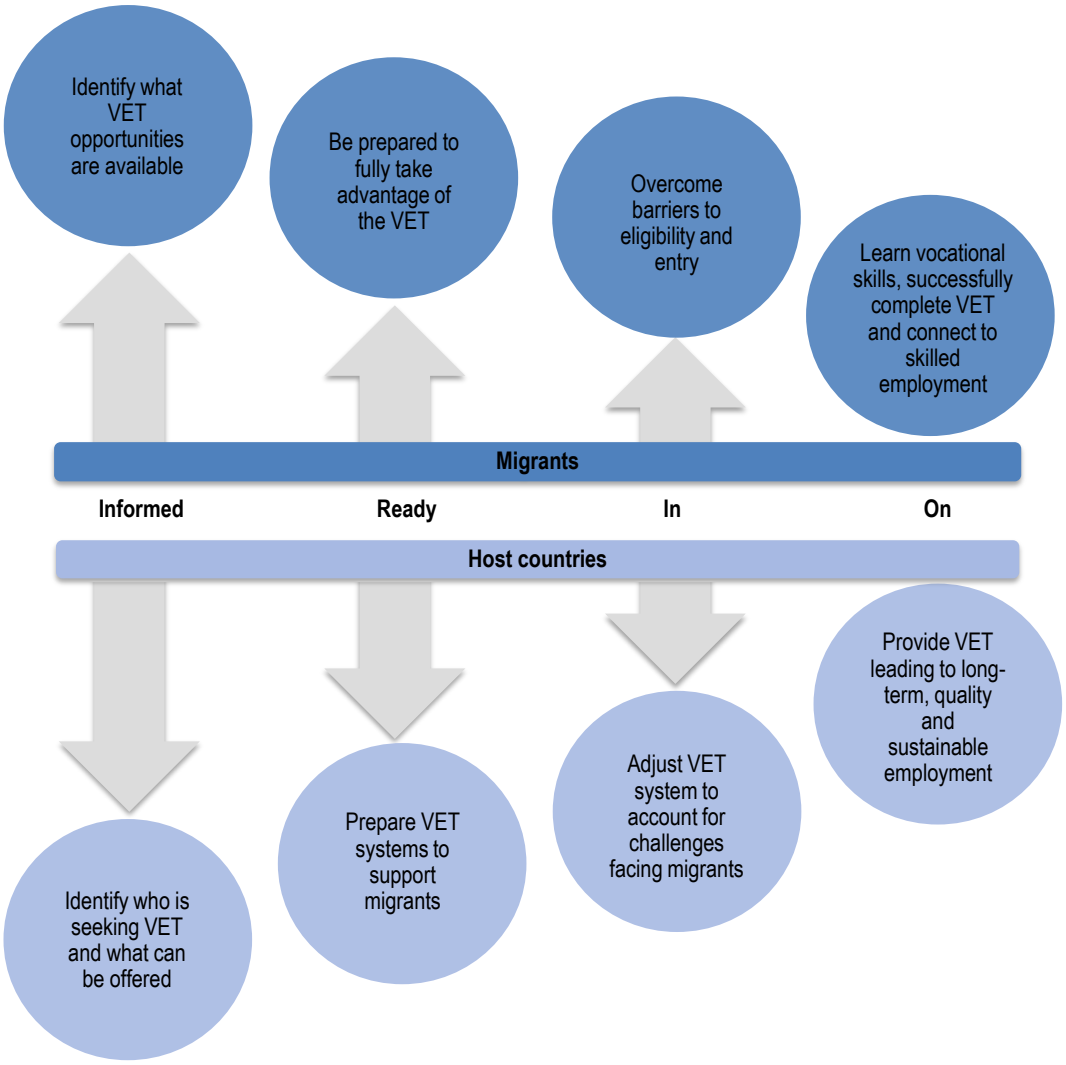
Chapter 1 provides an overview of the report and describes the context of VET as a mechanism for the integration of humanitarian migrants. Chapters 2-5 address challenges and policy responses in relation to both young humanitarian migrants and host country institutions. While migrants should be informed about and ready to take VET opportunities, host countries also need to get informed about the potential of these migrants in regard to VET and prepare not only migrants but also VET institutions, supporting systems and relevant actors. Chapter 6 discusses broader issues related to the governance of VET systems that work for humanitarian migrants.

Methodology

This study followed a four-stage methodology and related sources:

- **An international workshop** was held in Bremen, Germany (March 2018) as part of the project. The workshop gathered about 30 international experts in the field and provided an opportunity to discuss Germany's practices within an international context.
- **An OECD questionnaire** was circulated in 2018 among the OECD Group of National Experts on Vocational Education and Training. Sixteen countries responded to the questionnaire. These responses formed the basis for the desk-based analytical work as well as the preparation for the study visits.
- **Study visits** were conducted in four countries. Visits to Germany and Sweden were undertaken as part of the reviews of VET in each of these countries. Visits to Italy and Switzerland were conducted separately and respective country notes were produced.
- **Desk-based analytical work** reviewing policy and practice across OECD countries on the basis of available evidence, including cross-national data sources, academic literature and relevant activities within the OECD and other international organisations. The analytical work was also built upon insights from earlier OECD work on VET and work-based learning (Box 1.3) and on migration, integration and education (including "Finding the Way", "Working Together" and "Strength through Diversity").

Figure 1.9. Structure of the study



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Notes

[1] European countries received 4 million applications, and about 1.6 million individuals were granted some form of protection in first instance – asylum under the Geneva Convention, subsidiary or temporary protection, including 780 000 Syrians (OECD, 2018[6]).

[2] EU-28 countries, Norway and Switzerland (OECD, 2018[6]).

[3] The discrepancy of the 2005 data between ISCED-97 and ISCED-11 in terms of VET enrolments was less than 2 percentage points (pp) for 15 European countries that have available data. Among these countries, the share of enrolments in ISCED-11 was higher than that in ISCED-97 more than 30 pp in Italy. Reportedly, majority of pre-vocational programmes within ISCED-97 are classified as vocational programmes within ISCED-11 in Italy and this contributes to the increase in the data using ISCED-11 (Cedefop, 2018[18]).

For ISCED-97 data, see “Participation and enrolment in education by sex, students at ISCED level 3-vocational as % of all students at ISCED level 3” [educ_ipart_s]. For the corrected ISCED-11 data, see “Pupils enrolled in upper secondary education by programme orientation, sex, type of institution and intensity of participation” [educ_uoe_enrs04] (Eurostat, 2019[21]).

[4] Up to December 2017, observed data on asylum applications and decisions are used (OECD, 2018[6]).

[5] This case is called ‘hardship cases’ who is granted a permit B depending on financial-, family- and integration-criteria. ‘Hardship cases’ have higher employment rates, mainly due to the selection: employed migrants are more likely to be accepted as hardship case, thus their employment rate is higher by definition.

[6] 'Application for international protection' means an application for international protection as defined in Art.2(h) of Directive 2011/95/EU, i.e. a request made by a third-country national or a stateless person for protection from a Member State. This definition is intended to refer to all who apply for protection on an individual basis, irrespective of whether they lodge their application on arrival at the airport or land border, or from inside the country, and irrespective of whether they entered the territory legally or illegally (see Art4.1 (a) of the Regulation).

Applications submitted by persons who are subsequently found to be a subject of a Dublin procedure (Regulation (EU) No 604/2013) are included in the number of asylum applications. Persons who are transferred to another Member State in application of the Dublin Regulation are reported as asylum applicants also in the Member State where they are transferred to.

[7] This case is called 'hardship cases' who is granted a permit B depending on financial-, family- and integration-criteria. 'Hardship cases' have higher employment rates, mainly due to the selection: employed migrants are more likely to be accepted as hardship case, thus their employment rate is higher by definition.

[8] It is almost reached for native-born population while it is 73% for foreign-born migrants (SKBF-CSRE, 2018[51]).

[9] The goal is that seven years after arrival in Switzerland, 50% of refugees and temporarily admitted persons will be sustainably integrated in the labour market, and for those who meet a sufficient employability level, two third are sustainably integrated five years after arrival in Switzerland.

In 2019, the employment rate of refugees who stayed in the country more than 7 years is 51% while that of temporarily admitted persons is 45% (lower than the seventh year) (Swiss State Secretariat for Migration, 2019[23]).

[10] Labour shortages may have contributed to relatively high retention and transition rates of migrant students as they are overrepresented in VET occupations with shortages (Bergseng, Degler and Lüthi, 2019[1]).

[11] National estimation revealed that the number entering university studies is 40% larger compared to ten years ago whilst 7% fewer young people apply to an apprenticeship (Zimmermann, 2016[52]).

[12] For a discussion of the labour market integration of refugees in Germany, see also (Degler and Liebig, 2017[53]).

2 Getting informed: Understanding the potential of migrants and refugees and vocational education and training

To enable the potential of young migrants through upper-secondary vocational education and training (VET), it is important that, on the one hand, host countries develop a rapid understanding of the potential of migrants, and on the other hand, that migrants themselves gain an informed understanding of what upper-secondary VET has to offer. This chapter discusses challenges such as building migrant profiles and monitoring progress towards VET, and the low reputation and attractiveness of VET among migrants. It then presents effective approaches to inform young migrants about VET opportunities, including skills assessment, skills recognition, career guidance and mentoring.

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.

In order for a country to unlock the potential of young migrants through upper-secondary vocational education and training (VET), two primary circumstances need to be in place. It is important that host countries develop a rapid understanding of the potential of migrants – their academic and technical abilities and experiences – as well as their characteristics, interests and needs. Such understanding will allow for a more efficient targeting of resources to address barriers preventing easy progression into upper-secondary VET and then into the labour market. It is also important that migrants themselves gain an informed understanding of what upper-secondary VET has to offer. It cannot be taken for granted that migrants, especially humanitarian migrants (who travel primarily in search of personal safety rather than economic well-being) will understand VET systems and the employment opportunities to which they act as a gateway. In most of the origin countries of recent humanitarian migrants, upper-secondary VET has a poor reputation. In order to address such information asymmetries, there is need for policy intervention. In this chapter, the challenges facing both VET systems and migrants in becoming informed about one another are addresses.

Getting informed about the potential of young migrants and refugees and VET

The migrant population is heterogeneous

Assessing different demographic profiles and needs of young migrants and refugees

The needs and potential of newly arrived humanitarian migrants are different, especially among sub-populations such as unaccompanied minors and young refugee women. Identifying differences is important for assessing the capacity of relevant training providers in localities and communities where they reside and for mapping the organisations that serve them and determining/enhancing the service capacity.

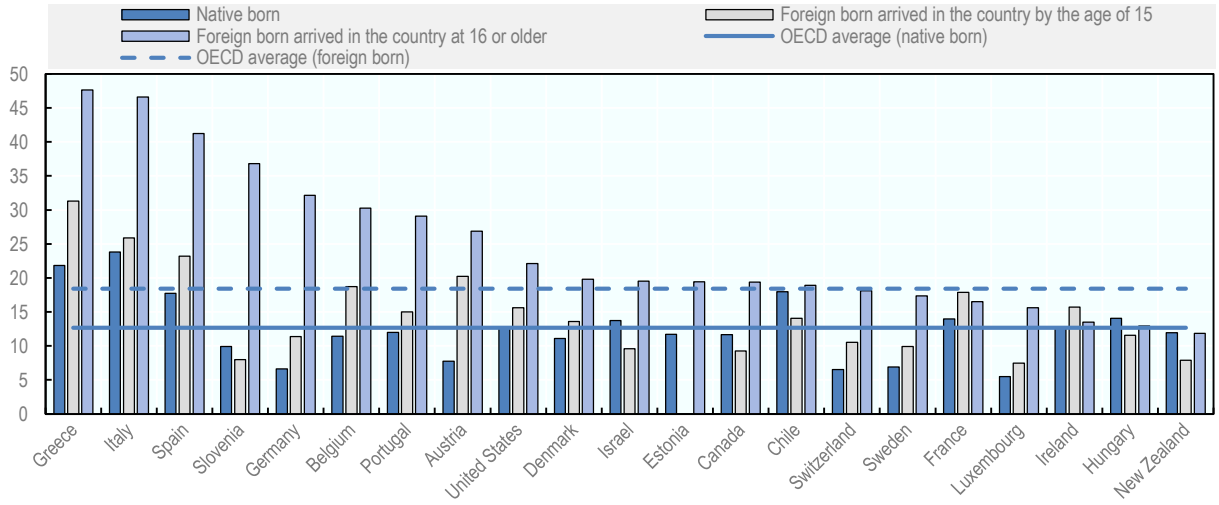
For example, assessing different language profiles and training needs of young migrants and refugees is one of top priorities. In many OECD countries, linguistic diversity among migrants is high (OECD, 2018[1]). In order for VET systems to cope with increasing linguistic and cultural diversity of migrant and refugee students, information of different languages and cultural backgrounds is crucial.

Migrants also differ by the age they arrive in the host country. Age at arrival makes a significant difference for educational attainment among migrants (OECD, 2018[2]). Compared to younger arrivals who are still eligible for compulsory schooling, older arrivals are often penalised in terms of their education and labour market support (Figure 2.1). Ensuring that older arrivals also benefit from upper-secondary VET demands more intense assistance (Kuczera and Jeon, 2019[3]). It has been argued that countries with strong dual system apprenticeships have lower rates of NEET (not in employment, formal education or training) among young people (Quintini and Martin, 2006[4]) – however this does not appear to be the case for foreign-born youth, especially those who arrived when they were aged 16 or older (Figure 2.1).

The transition of migrant students from preparatory programmes to upper-secondary education and the completion of that education clearly shows the impact of age at arrival. In Sweden, four years after entry into a preparatory programme at age 16 or younger, 48% of migrant students had entered a mainstream upper-secondary education programme. This compares to 38% of those who entered the programme at age 17, or only 10% of students who were 17 or over who would be required to undertake upper-secondary provision within adult education (Skolverket, 2018[5]; Kuczera and Jeon, 2019[3]; OECD, 2016[6]).[1] For refugees who arrived younger than age 13 in the United-States, high school graduation rates are similar to the native-born population, but again rates are lower for refugees arriving between ages 14 and 18 (Evans and Fitzgerald, 2017[7]).

Figure 2.1. Age at arrival matters for NEET status

Percentage of native- and foreign-born 15-29 year-old NEETs, by age at arrival in the country (2017)



Source: Adapted from Table A2.3 https://doi.org/10.1787/888933801829 in OECD (2018[2]), *Education at a Glance 2018: OECD Indicators*, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2018-en.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888933997797

Monitoring progress and feedback is crucial, but currently lacking.

Information on young migrants and refugees and their background characteristics, training record and labour market outcomes is crucial if the host country is to be able to help these students succeed and successfully integrate into the country. Although there are national and international data on upper-secondary VET that can be used to monitor policy developments, there is room for improvement on data collection for work-based learning, and apprenticeships in particular (Cedefop, 2017[8]). What is more challenging is that in the established statistics, refugee or asylum status is rarely a separate variable and thus does not link to variables in other policy areas such as education, labour and in particular VET. Data that are available on this target group are largely collected on an *ad hoc*, small-scale basis.

Throughout the study process, several countries emphasised the difficulty they have already experienced in analysing this topic, mainly due to limited data on humanitarian migrants. For example, most of the international literature on the education and labour market integration of migrants does not consider humanitarian migrants specifically or directly, mainly due to data limitations (Anna and Olof, 2017[9]). In addition, no official data on refugees in upper-secondary VET are available in any of the countries under particular consideration in this report and even estimations are not readily available.

For example, in Germany, six different databases have to be consulted to provide even a rough estimate of the number of refugee apprentices and their performance because none of the official data sources were explicitly set up for the purpose of monitoring the participation of refugees in VET (Bergseng, Degler and Lüthi, 2019[10]).[2] There is also no linked information and data between transitional programmes and the dual VET system at the national level, which makes it difficult to assess the effectiveness of various programmes offered to prepare apprenticeship. This highlights how even an advanced data and statistics system on VET can be limited when faced with a specific, emerging issue.

In Sweden, due to the sudden influx of asylum seekers, there was a peak in 2016-17 in the number of students in upper-secondary schools who lacked civil registration information. In some cases, students

were granted temporary social security number prior to obtaining new, regular numbers – an exceptional case which has made it difficult to track them through regular methods. Over 90% of those who lack civil registration information – or only managed to acquire a temporary social security number – went into the Language Introduction Programme, geared towards newly arrived students. For this reason, it was not possible to follow up some of these students in terms of their transitional pathways after starting the programme (Skolverket, 2017[11]).

The difficulty of tracking refugees related to upper-secondary VET is compounded by information protection issues due to security concerns and in some cases equity concerns that seek to avoid discrimination. Difficulties in measuring the effectiveness or outcomes of programmes for migrant students, moreover, are complicated due to potential discrimination by employers: a large part of longer duration of unemployment by migrants is explained by discrimination by employers (Auer, Bonoli and Fossati, 2016[12]) rather than the effectiveness of VET programmes in which migrants participated.

Effective approaches

Building profiles of humanitarian migrants

National statistics on education, training and employment by country of birth can inform a government about specific needs of preparatory programmes and VET courses. These are particularly useful for employers and training providers. More specifically, information about the profiles of refugees and asylum-seekers and their skills should be readily accessible, bearing in mind appropriate data-protection measures. Preferably in the form of a database, such information needs to be managed or at least accessible locally so as to be as useful as possible in linking employers and potential employees (OECD and UNHCR, 2016[13]). With such information on the characteristics of learners and their needs, the VET system is able to prepare for the coming students. Different examples can be found in Box 2.1.

There are many means of collecting information on recent arrivals, assessing their needs in terms of VET and ultimately providing them with relevant information. Assessing if there are sufficient resources and infrastructure in place to collect this information and aligning necessary tools can be the first step. For example, this includes conducting skills assessments on arrival at a reception centre, and assigning systemic student identification numbers, including migrants (Careja and Bevelander, 2018[14]). The goal of these efforts is to ensure educational and career path advancement and enable evaluations throughout that process.

Box 2.1. Publically available databases on the education, training and skills of migrants

In **Finland**, Education Statistics provides detailed information on upper-secondary VET learners by mother tongue, nationality and country of origin – statistics are public although covered by privacy protection.

Sweden produces follow-up studies of students with migrant backgrounds who started in the transitional programmes, in particular the Language Introduction Programme, and provides information on their educational pathways.

In **Turkey**, an education circular in 2014 allowed for refugee students who do not hold residence permits to be enrolled in schools and for their personal and academic data to be entered using a new information management system (e.g. Syrian Education Monitoring and Information System – SEMIS), funded by UNICEF. This is a good example of building a new instrument to adapt to an emerging need.

In the **United States**, public schools report the share of English language learners and inform the need for more language training and at what levels, and which states and areas are in need. The socio-background information of learners is also publically available to help educational providers craft the right didactical approach.

Source: U.S. National Center for Education Statistics (2017[15]), *The Condition of Education 2017*, https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/pdf/Indicator_CGF/coe_cgf_2017_05.pdf; UNICEF/UNHCR/IOM (2014[16]), *Turkey: Rrp6 Monthly Update - September 2014*, https://data2.unhcr.org/fr/documents/download/42380; OECD (2018[17]), *The Resilience of Students with an Immigrant Background: Factors that Shape Well-being*, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264292093-en; Skolverket (2016[18]), *Språkintroduktion [Language Introduction]*, http://www.skolverket.se/publikationer?id=3622, Skolverket (2017[19]), *Uppföljning av språkintroduktion [Follow-up of language introduction]*, https://www.skolverket.se/publikationsserier/rapporter/2017/uppfoljning-av-sprakintroduktion

Better matching young refugee profiles with VET or preparatory programmes

Without knowing migrants' qualifications and skills, it is difficult for any VET institutions to plan and provide appropriate services or to engage employers. For those refugees with skills and work experience who lack documentation for their qualifications from their countries of origin, assessing formal and informal skills gains is particularly important (OECD, 2016[20]). However, assessing and approving skills gained from formal and informal education from other countries is difficult, and in particular within VET because the professions can vary substantially in content and qualification requirement between countries. Nevertheless, developing effective mechanisms for skill recognition is becoming increasingly important, as migration flows are creating a pool of workers with skills that often remain unrecognised. In fact, several countries are engaged in tackling this challenge.

Initial skills assessment

Initial skills assessment enables a host country to assess the variation of existing knowledge and skills among newly arrived. It assesses migrant potential and helps informed decisions to be made about guidance materials, learning pathways and so optimises prospective skills utilisation.

Different service providers are responsible for migrant skills assessments across countries and regions, from reception or career centres and public employment services to integration programme providers and education providers, including NGOs and employers. Their methods, priorities and timings also differ. It is essential for these actors to have appropriate tools for their purposes or to be able to inform migrants where their skills can be assessed and how these skills can be recognised, further developed and matched with employment opportunities as a next step.

Self-assessment (e.g. web-based) and assessment by counsellors are common tools and they serve different purposes. Self-assessment tools are useful for initial screening for a large number of migrants at the same time. Assessment by counsellors is more effective for in-depth assessments and particularly useful when it comes to choosing a pathway, whether that be a job application or an education/training programme. Initial screening tools should be readily available in native languages and the results of such assessments should be taken into account for the integration process. International initiatives can be also helpful for the national or regional use.

Regarding language assessment in particular, standardised testing is typically used but it often only provides a narrow insight into students' language competence and cognitive abilities and does not take into account external factors such as illness or trauma, which can significantly affect student performance.

As a result, students' language difficulties are often mistaken for learning difficulties, which leads to migrant students being disproportionately directed into special or more vocationally-oriented education tracks compared to their native peers. For this reason, it can be complemented by language assessment through observation, which is less structured, but allows for an in-depth and flexible assessment over time (Staring, Day and Meierkord, 2017[21]).

Box 2.2. International skills assessment tools

The EU Skills Profile Tool promoted at the European level is a multilingual, online tool to map and document skills, qualifications and experiences of migrants, in order for them to integrate into the labour market. It has been tested in a significant number of EU countries and regions as part of pilot programmes and other projects. In Italy, for example, it was tested at the national level through the project INSIDE and will be promoted as part of the PUOI project and in the Piedmont Region through the project FORWORK – Fostering Opportunities of Refugee WORKers. Reviews show that the tool has proven very useful in the documenting and mapping of migrant skills and experiences and uptake of the tool is still growing. Several countries reported that the use of the tool remains limited despite its potential usefulness.

OECD Education & Skills Online is an assessment tool designed to provide individual-level results that are linked to the OECD Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) measures of literacy, numeracy, problem solving in technology-rich environments, and reading components (basic reading skills) measures that can be used to compare the test taker's results with the those of others both within the test taker's country and internationally. The assessment includes a background questionnaire to collect information on the test taker's age, gender, education level, employment status, and native country and language. The tool also includes non-cognitive assessments that measure skill utilisation, workforce readiness, career interests, and health indicators. It can be used as a diagnostic tool of skills and learning needs for disadvantaged group such as migrants.

Source: OECD and UNHCR (2018[22]), *Engaging with Employers in the Hiring of Refugees*, https://www.unhcr.org/5adde9904 and European Commission (2019[23]), *EU Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals*, https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1412&langId=en; OECD and European Commission (2018[24]), *Education & Skills Online Technical Documentation*, http://www.oecd.org/skills/ESonline-assessment/assessmentdesign/technicaldocumentation/ESOnline_Technical_Doc_Ch1-8_Oct2016.pdf; OECD (2019[25]), *Education & Skills Online Assessment*, http://www.oecd.org/skills/ESonline-assessment/abouteducationskillsonline.

Recognising refugee credentials

Recognition of skills and qualifications is a mark of a strong and effective VET system as it quickens the pace of skill and qualification achievement without introducing unnecessary costs and steps to either learner or employer. In responding to the challenge of recognising refugee skills, governments have an important opportunity to overhaul their recognition procedures for the benefit of all learners. In general, migrants with foreign qualifications are more likely to be overqualified for the job they do or mismatched. OECD research shows that, in general terms, workers who have the skills, but lack the qualifications, demanded of specific occupation experience a wage penalty, and that those who obtain formal recognition have better outcomes than comparable peers who did not apply to have their skills recognised (Kis and Windisch, 2018[26]; OECD, 2014[27]; Damas de Matos and Liebig, 2014[28]).

The need for qualification recognition for refugees is different from that for native or other migrants as they are often unable to obtain verifiable documents from their native country (OECD, 2016[20]). Therefore, different approaches or new methods are necessary. It should be expected that VET provision will follow after the assessment and recognition of skills. However, identifying ways to weave together skills assessments with a comprehensive understanding of VET pathways and possibilities is often challenging.

Many countries are struggling with the qualification recognition of newly arrived migrants but are nevertheless engaged in tackling the challenge (Box 2.3). For example, Germany introduced a legal entitlement in 2012 to examine the equivalence of foreign qualifications in the Qualifications Assessment Act (*Berufsqualifikationsfeststellungs-gesetz, BQFG*) – while most applicants are Europeans, almost 1 500 were refugees in 2015, an increase of 25% compared to 2014 (BMBF, 2017[29]; Bergseng, Degler and Lüthi, 2019[10]). In addition, the German Federal Ministry of Education (BMBF) launched the *ValiKom* initiative in 2015 with the aim of making transparent vocational skills acquired through work experience for individuals aged 25 and over with no vocational qualifications, including refugees (Kis and Windisch, 2018[26]). Licensing guides for migrant professionals who have no proven license in the host country can be also useful, particularly in countries such as the United States where different skills and qualification requirements are applied in different localities – no single government entity oversees the professional certification process (McHugh and Morawski, 2017[30]; Rabben, 2013[31]).

Within vocational education, there are three primary approaches by which skills developed within work-based learning are recognised (Kis and Windisch, 2018[26]):

- *Access to education or training programme* (e.g. Norway and Switzerland): A person gains admission into the training programme despite not holding the normally required formal entry qualification.
- *Reduced programme duration* (e.g. Australia, Germany, Denmark, Switzerland and the United States): A person may be granted exemption from part of the coursework or on-the-job training. Typically, this means the person follows an adjusted version of a regular programme with reduced coursework requirements or training time.
- *Qualification without a required training programme* (e.g Austria, Norway, Germany and Switzerland): A person earns a full qualification upon demonstrating that they have already realised the targeted learning outcomes. For these purposes the person usually needs to pass a final qualifying examination or prove that they have achieved the targeted learning outcomes in other ways (e.g. through a dossier demonstrating working skills). Coursework is not mandatory, though in practice candidates often take optional preparatory courses.

Box 2.3. Skills assessment and qualification recognition of refugees

In **Austria**, the Public Employment Service (PES) offers 'competence checks' for refugees to assess their skills, qualifications and language knowledge in their mother tongue (e.g. Farsi, Arabic, Russian and French). The scheme provides information on the recognition of qualifications, the Austrian education system and labour market. As part of the programme, the PES organises training days in companies. At the end of the programme, each participant receives a report showcasing existing competences (OECD, 2016[20]).

Denmark took steps to ensure systematic identification and recognition of the qualifications and competences of newly arrived refugees in 2016 – from accommodation centres to municipalities and also during integration programmes. The Danish Agency for Higher Education has set up a hotline to assist accommodation centres and local authorities with fast-track assessments and other advice on foreign qualifications recognition (Danish Ministry of Immigration and Integration, 2016[32]).

In **Germany**, an IT-based system using video technology and filmed sequences assesses and validates skills. This tool requires basic language skills but can process a large number of cases simultaneously as well as provide reliable information on potential labour supply to vocational chambers or employers (European PES Network, 2016[33]). In 2012, the federal government passed the Federal Law on the Recognition of Foreign Qualifications (BQFG), covering both regulated and nonregulated professions. As part of the law, other means can be used to assess the credentials of refugees who lack documents including assessment tests or expert interviews (Loo, 2016[34]). To assess refugees' informal skills, the German PES has developed computer-based skills identification tests ("MYSKILLS"). Developed in co-operation with employers' associations to ensure compatibility with job requirements, the assessment takes around four hours and is done under the supervision of an expert at the public employment service. Testing is currently available in six languages will be rolled out to a total of 30 professions (OECD and UNHCR, 2018[22]).

In **Norway**, municipalities are responsible for the introductory integration programme and thus for skills assessment to determine which tracks participants will follow in the programme. The assessment may consist of a conversation with the migrant, possibly through an interpreter, complemented by language tests (in Norwegian and other languages) (Djuve et al., 2017[35]). In addition, a standardised procedure for refugees was established in 2013.

At the **European level**, Lisbon Recognition Convention defines a legal obligation to develop procedures to assess the qualifications of refugees.[3] In 2015, the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT), together with the United Kingdom's National Agency for the Recognition and Comparison of International Qualifications and Skills (NARIC), proposed European Qualifications Passport for Refugees. A pilot project by NOKUT was launched in 2016 (tested in Greece in 2017 and Turkey and Lebanon in 2018), which led to EQPR scheme (2018-2020) and REACT project 2018-20 aiming to map educational levels, work experience and language proficiency and provide information relevant for employment, internships, qualification courses, access to further studies (Malgina and Skjerven, 2018[36]).

In **Canada**, the World Education Services launched a project to assess the credentials of Syrian refugees to Canada (Global Talent Bridge Programme) in 2016 and plans to implement this in other countries including the **United States**. Combined with surveys and interviews, the programme makes use of trained evaluators with language and country-specific expertise and technical and research capacity to identify fraudulent documents. The programme involves local resettlement agencies, regulatory bodies, academic institutions and caseworkers, and provides contextual information on the educational system in Syria to assist in interpreting results to facilitate entry to licensing, VET and employment. Processing time takes 2-3 weeks but is expected to become shorter as the experience matures (Jillions, 2018[37]).

Informing young migrants and refugees about VET opportunities

Challenges in informing young humanitarian migrants about VET

Humanitarian migrants are often unfamiliar with VET

A common challenge facing upper-secondary VET systems is that vocational education does not appear as an attractive option to many young learners. While this can be a rational decision (in some cases based on a lack of progression opportunities granted by, or the poor reputation of, upper-secondary VET), often it is due rather to ignorance. Across the OECD, a consistent challenge for upper-secondary VET provision is to ensure that prospective learners have easy access to full information before choices are made (OECD,

2010[38]). This is especially important for education systems where young people are expected to opt out of general schooling and join VET at a young age (Musset et al., 2019[39]). Challenges are particularly acute for humanitarian migrants who are often unfamiliar with the host-country education systems in general and in particular with the VET system and its benefits and opportunities. For many young people who have no direct experiences of VET (whether they are migrants or not), VET is an unknown. The costs and benefits associated with training, the range of work-based or school-based courses and qualification options, and subsidy and entitlement regimes often appear complicated and confusing to young people, in particular early school leavers (Dommers et al., 2017[40]).

As addressed in Chapter 4, upper-secondary VET systems are commonly much more complex than general education and VET opportunities often differ across countries, regions and municipalities. In addition, the range of different labour market conditions, sectoral regulations and qualification requirements for training can be overwhelming for those who just arrived in the country; these are often complicated even for native born.

How VET is provided and promoted, and its general reputation, can significantly influence young people's perception of VET and its prospects

Attitudes about upper-secondary VET are influenced by both the host country and the migrant's country of origin – and it is unlikely that many recent humanitarian migrants will bring with them an informed understanding of VET. Major countries of asylum show very low levels of upper secondary VET enrolment, for example the Syrian Arab Republic (Syria) (16%), Afghanistan (1.3%), Iraq (5%), Eritrea (0.6%) and the Islamic Republic of Iran (Iran) (19%) and they are mostly school-based (Stoewe, 2017[41]). In comparison, about 45% of students in OECD countries are enrolled in upper-secondary VET (OECD, 2018[2]). Moreover, the quality of VET provision in these countries of origin is often poor in terms of labour market relevance and outcomes of VET graduates (ETF, 2003[42]). This suggests young humanitarian migrants will be instinctively less likely to choose upper-secondary VET. Moreover, when the host country does not value VET, it is more difficult for migrants to choose this path. Community perceptions and expectations can be regarded as a barrier to make VET more attractive (Dommers et al., 2017[40]).

According to a study in Canada,[4] migrant parents have strong opinions of, attitudes towards, vocational occupations (Deussing, 2019[43]; Deussing, 2019[43]). Indeed, relatively higher shares of migrant students agree that their parents would discourage them from pursuing a career in the trades, a finding that is in line with the fact that migrant students are less likely than their native peers to be interested in such careers (5 percentage points difference), less likely to have positive perceptions in terms of pay, and also less likely to associate trade careers with good grades and good job opportunities.

Despite good employment prospects, migrant students are less likely to choose upper-secondary VET

Education and career choices are often influenced by preferences formed by country or culture of origin or the aspirations of parents and families. In fact, an analysis based on the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) data (OECD, 2018[17]) confirms that compared to native students, students with a migrant background tend to have higher, but less realistic career ambitions than native-born students.5

In most OECD countries, 2015 PISA data show that in general, proportionally more migrant students are enrolled in general education programmes than on pre-vocational or vocational programmes (OECD, 2018[17]).[6] Belgium (24 percentage points), Austria (19 pp), Slovenia (14 pp), the Netherlands (11 pp) and France (11 pp) show relatively large differences, having lower proportions of migrant students in VET. Luxembourg, Switzerland, the Czech Republic and Japan have more than 5 percentage points fewer migrant students in VET compared to native students. This observation is consistent with national

estimations such as in Sweden: migrant students primarily choose the academic track in upper secondary education (Kuczera and Jeon, 2019[3]).

Young migrants may see less value in VET compared to native students or may be more susceptible to systemic factors that influence the education choices. Low value or attractiveness of VET may be affected by perceptions of parents and a lack of information on VET. For example, the VET system may be comparably more difficult for migrant parents to understand than general education, especially if they do not speak the native language. Ultimately, if there is a perception that upper-secondary VET has no easy transition to higher education or other tertiary levels and VET occupations are poorly regarded by learners in general, migrants can be expected to choose the general education track.

Without some intervention, migrant learners are unlikely to enter upper-secondary VET at comparable levels to native populations

Given all of these challenges in terms of perceptions, accessible, understandable and realistically helpful information can make a significant difference to students who have the option of choosing to prepare for and enter upper-secondary VET. Disadvantaged youth are more likely to demonstrate poor understanding of the connections between career ambitions and educational pathways. Concerns are inherently greater for young people from families with weak linguistic abilities and poor cultural understanding of national education systems. Host countries need, consequently, to proactively inform not only migrant students but also their parents about the prospects of upper-secondary VET and support them if they choose to enter the VET system. In Switzerland, analysis has explained the difference in upper-secondary VET education between natives and students with migrant backgrounds by not only gaps in knowledge and skills, but also by differences in tastes, aspirations and incomplete or inaccurate information about the education system (Wolter and Zumbuehl, 2017[44]).

Confident understanding of how an individual will navigate an education system has been seen as a form of cultural capital – it is a resource which shapes decision-making and enables progression. In the absence of useful familial sources of information and insight, public guidance becomes systematically more important (Norris, 2011[45]). In fact, a small-scale qualitative survey in Italy conducted by IOM (not publically available due to data protection) has suggested that for those motivated young migrants who value VET, a well-established regional upper-secondary VET system can be a pull factor for them to choose where to settle.

Evidence from a large-scale randomised trial in France also shows that information targeted at low-achieving students in middle schools can help them to identify tracks that fit both their tastes and academic proficiency. Broadly, information sessions are seen to have changed the overall value that students and their families attach to different options, either because they changed their perception of VET or because they measured more accurately their own chances of performing well. This also results in a significant reduction in grade repetition and dropout rates in high school. This trial was not targeted at migrants but it has clear implication given that parents in general have strong biases against vocational education (Goux, Gurgand and Maurin, 2015[46]).

Effective approaches: Helping newly arrived students understand VET opportunities

Proactive provision of career guidance

Career guidance helps individuals to progress in their learning and into work ultimately. Career guidance services are commonly designed to provide a formative influence on young people's understanding of themselves and the world of work, and can often improve educational, social and economic outcomes (Musset and Kurekova, 2018[47]). Career counselling may provide initial screening and career guidance to match the aspirations and skills of migrants to potential vocational pathways while broadening their

perspective to less well-known occupations and pathways. It can also be followed by skills and qualification recognition if necessary.

A number of studies have highlighted the characteristics of effective career guidance. An OECD analysis (Musset and Kurekova, 2018[47]) has highlighted the need for it to: i) be designed to broaden aspirations, focusing on areas likely to be misunderstood; ii) involve easy access to Labour Market Information; iii) be delivered by trained, impartial advisers; iv) recognise the social and demographic influences on young people's aspirations; v) target the most disadvantaged with the greatest levels of intervention; and vi) involve multiple direct encounters with people in work and workplaces. All these principles also apply strongly for provision aimed at migrants.

For humanitarian migrants, career guidance is even more crucial for several reasons. Migrant students and their parents often have limited knowledge about career opportunities and how best to prepare for them. Formal VET provision is virtually absent in the major countries of asylum such as Afghanistan and Eritrea. While in Syria and Iran upper-secondary VET is available, programmes are school-based, and dual apprenticeships, as predominant in Germany, are unknown. Where apprenticeships in these asylum countries exist, they are associated with informal training in crafts (Stoewe, 2017[41]). Career guidance can help change the perception towards upper-secondary VET.

Research also highlights that career guidance should not be limited to the provision of information, but crucially also include opportunities for migrants to explore for themselves, through career events, job shadowing and work placements. This is particularly important for young people whose families lack first hand insights into careers of interest and how to access them. Information about career pathways can be considered as a resource to which learners have differing access. Compulsory, proactive provision, from a young age, is called for to address the gap in knowledge (Musset and Kurekova, 2018[47]).

Many countries provide a certain form of career guidance service, but not many countries provide tailor-made guidance for refugees or other migrants, not to mention supplementary advice on VET pathways. However, as the need for career guidance grows, especially for migrant students, several countries have reinforced their career guidance and orientation services to assist humanitarian migrants. In addition, given the limited access to information in general, it is important to proactively reach out to these migrants and systemically provide career guidance, for example, through case management systems, given that even with a good provision of career guidance, young refugees often do not reach out to counselling services by themselves, as in the example of Germany (Bergseng, Degler and Lüthi, 2019[10]).

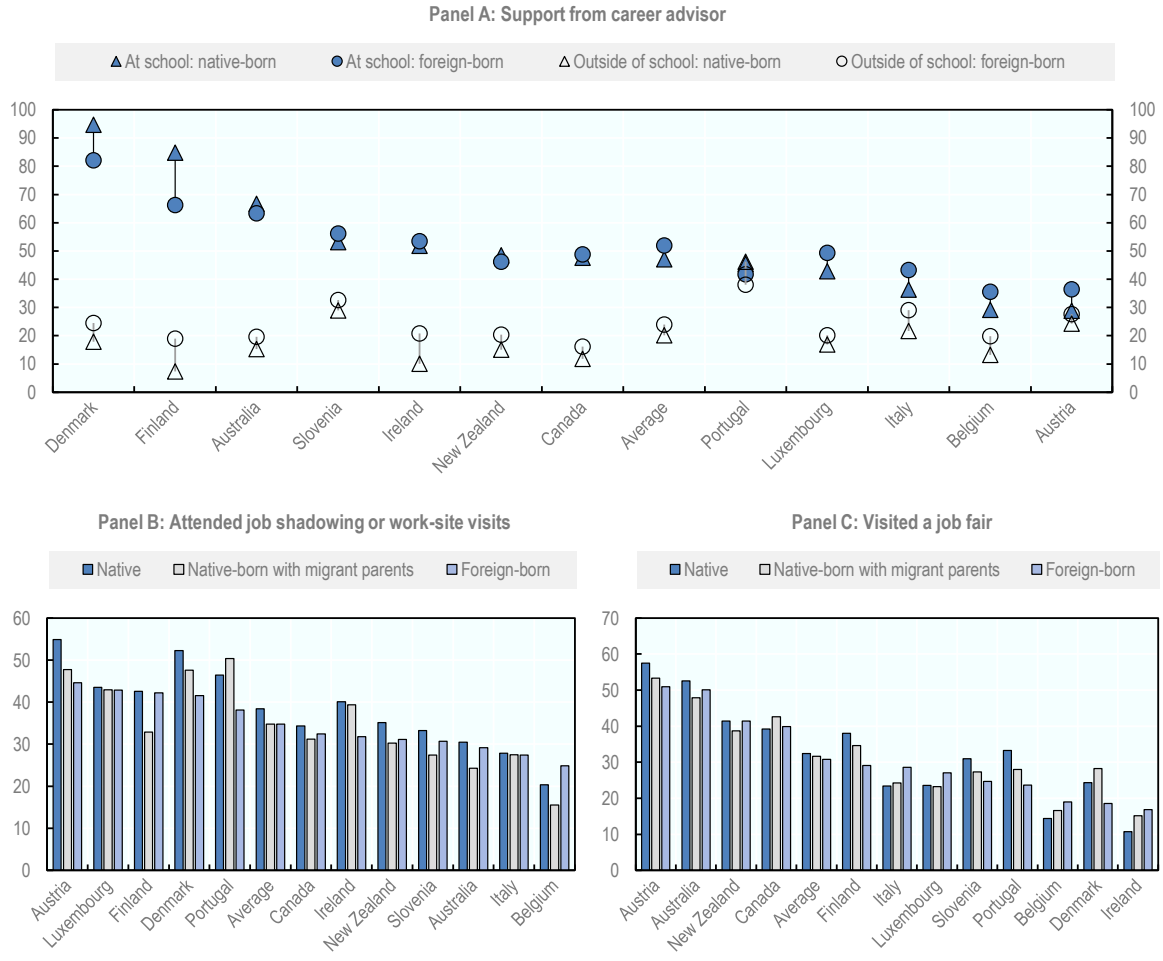
Equity and access to career guidance

In general, disadvantaged students have a lower level of access to career guidance opportunities. Evidence shows that for both activities that engage employers and other stakeholders (job shadowing and careers fairs) and more school-based career guidance activities, advantaged students participate to a greater extent in such activities compared to disadvantaged students (Musset and Kurekova, 2018[47]).

There are distinct differences between the way that native students and students with migrants backgrounds access information about education and career possibilities. For example, according to PISA 2012, while foreign-born students tend to speak to career advisors at school relatively as often as native-born students (except Denmark and Finland), they tend to speak to career advisors outside of school more often (Figure 2.2, Panel A). Moreover, proportionally fewer migrant students attend job shadowing or work-site visits (Figure 2.2, Panel B) and visit job fairs (Figure 2.2, Panel C) compared to native-born students. This is concerning, as these are particularly effective mechanisms in raising aspiration, providing information and developing networks open to migrants.

Figure 2.2. Migrant students tend to benefit less from career guidance provision

Share of students (%) in PISA 2012



Note: Figures present countries with available data at least 30 students and 5 schools.
Source: OECD (2012[48]), *PISA 2012*, (database), https://www.oecd.org/pisa/data/pisa2012database-downloadabledata.htm.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888933997835

Box 2.4. Effective career guidance for humanitarian migrants

In **Sweden**, multi-lingual, online career guides on different occupations help refugees assess their own skills and qualifications against different occupations. The guides were developed together with employers' organisations, and counsellors from public employment services can assist refugees in using the guides.

In **Germany**, migrants have access to all career guidance provisions, which are in general well developed. Career guidance focusing on vocational counselling is an integral part of the curriculum in compulsory school as well as within transitional programmes, often including company visits, internships or vocational workshops. Due to the importance of dual VET in Germany, the Federal Employment Agency with its local Public Employment Services, i.e. Job Centres and the Career Information Centre, are involved in this career guidance, offering counselling regarding apprenticeship training and the labour market. Tailored occupational information based on individual potential assessment is part of such counselling, which also includes educational coaches, preparatory mentoring and support up to the first year of apprenticeship. Support measures during upper-secondary VET begin connecting career guidance from the preparatory phase. For example, Assisted Apprenticeship (*Assistierte Ausbildung*) also includes skills assessment and career guidance. Germany also has targeted services, comprehensively providing career guidance such as Youth Migration Services (*Jugendmigrationsdienste*) (Flach and Imhof, 2017[49]).

Source*:* For Sweden, European PES Network (2016[33]), *Labour Market Integration of Refugees – Key Considerations*, https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=20661&langId=en; OECD (2016[6]), *Working Together: Skills and Labour Market Integration of Immigrants and their Children in Sweden*, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264257382-en.. For Germany, Jenschke, B., K. Schober and J. Langner (2014[50]), *Career Guidance in the Life Course: Structures and Services in Germany*, National Guidance Forum in Education, Career and Employment (nfb), http://dx.doi.org/10.3278/104-014wa, BMBF (2018[51]), *Berufsbildungsbericht 2018*, Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, Bonn, Bergseng, B., E. Degler and S. Lüthi (2019[10]), *Unlocking the Potential of Migrants in Germany*, https://doi.org/10.1787/82ccc2a3-en; OECD (2017[52]), *Labour Market Integration of Refugees in Germany*, https://www.oecd.org/els/mig/Finding-their-Way-Germany.pdf.

Proactive provision of mentoring services

Individual mentoring can also provide additional support to newly arrived immigrant students. Mentoring may consist of tutoring, social and emotional support, and educational and vocational orientation. Mentors can help facilitate the integration of these students into the host community, as they can offer opportunities to acquire or improve local language skills, and can help connect youth to resources, such as public transportation, local libraries, and other programmes. Through such interventions, young migrants can build connections with caring adults who can encourage them in their studies and provide relevant information. The success of mentoring rests on how well mentors have been trained, the extent of schools' co-operation, and the engagement of parents and children (OECD, 2018[17]).

Mentors can be teachers, other school personnel or social advisors. Peer mentors can also help migrant students feel welcome. Mentors are often from the same cultural background as the mentee, so they can use their mother tongue to communicate knowledge about the school and the education system, as well as help migrant students learn the host-country language. Mentoring might be conducted at the homes of the mentees so that mentors can learn about their mentee's family environment and develop a good relationship with their parents (OECD, 2018[17]).

Personalised provision to diverse young migrants leads to a higher demand for professional training

Effective career guidance and mentoring can be a means of recognising the unique characters and backgrounds of young people and in particular, patterns of social disadvantage (Musset and Kurekova, 2018[47]). This recognition can lead to an understanding of unique educational needs that are a consequence of various factors including: different language skills, prior knowledge and skills, attitudes towards upper-secondary VET and legal status as well as country of origin and family backgrounds. Therefore, advice on language learning opportunities and VET opportunities, including career guidance and counselling, should be individualised when possible – and delivered by independent, impartial counsellors.

With increased need for individualised support that takes diversity of the target group into account, several new occupations have emerged or are in high demand, namely, transition co-ordinator, reception advisor, case manager, social worker, career counsellor, inter-cultural mediator and multicultural advisor. Staff who organise group information sessions or individual counselling meetings for newly arrived migrants are also an important part of this workforce. In some cases, these workers need special training to better understand the diversity of the target group, their traumatic experiences, difference in legal status and opportunities depending on that status.

Making the best use of existing information mechanisms and channels

There are many mechanisms that already exist to inform migrants about VET pathways. These include career guidance, counselling, job fairs, skills competitions and websites as well as direct contact with employers. Sweden uses World Skills Sweden as a tool to increase attractiveness of VET including informing migrants about the value of VET. The OECD review team heard that a 2016 campaign as the Year of VET in Sweden engaged government and social partners, and informed students. It highlighted VET within film and social media, and provided an opportunity to discover student talent and skills through counselling. In particular, this campaign led migrant students to become informed about jobs that are accessible through VET. The campaign included radio interviews in Arabic.

In Turkey, provincial and district commissions have been established to increase the access of Syrians under temporary protection into VET. These commissions carry out activities to increase the awareness of Syrian students and their parents of VET and Vocational Education Centres via brochures and posters prepared by the Ministry of National Education in addition to television and radio programmes. The activities also include visits to refugee camps or refugee families and assistance with skills assessments and preparatory education, including language training.

There are other ways to connect eligible humanitarian migrants to VET opportunities, for example by identifying the target group through other existing programmes and facilities such as reception centres and public employment services (Box 2.5). In the United States, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) – a federal programme – provides low-income working families and those who are SNAP programme participants or potential participants, including eligible refugees, with funding and opportunities to participate in training programmes (National Skills Coalition, 2018[53]).[7]

Box 2.5. Key players that inform humanitarian migrants and asylum seekers

1. Reception centres

Reception centres are the first information and knowledge gate for newly arrived humanitarian migrants – about not only social, health and legal information but also VET opportunities. Integrated reception services function as an ultimate intermediary between such migrants and VET institutions and other related VET services.

In **Italy**, the Protection System for Asylum Seekers and Refugees (*Sistema di Protezione per Richiedenti Asilo e Rifugiati*) provided information on legal, social, educational and vocational provision, conducting profiling of both refugees and asylum seekers and making placements in VET.[8] **Norway** recently put in place skills mapping and career advice in reception centres. In **Greece**, refugee education co-ordinators[9] meet with migrants and refugees in accommodation centres and schools to provide information about the Greek educational system and other relevant information. They also facilitate school enrolment for migrant and refugees and co-operate with various actors involved in refugee education. In **Israel**, information brochures are distributed at reception centres and offices of the ministry in charge of migrants.

2. Public employment services

In addition to reception centres, public employment services (PES) and agencies in charge of integration and/or social welfare inform recent migrants about not only VET opportunities (career, jobs and training opportunities), but also social, health and legal information. They play an active role in providing information through various means including counselling, evidenced by **Flanders, Germany, Norway** and **Sweden**. They are also involved in identification of migrants who might be well placed to benefit from VET. In some cases, these bodies collaborate to improve skill-screening processes for allocation of VET provision, which facilitates faster labour market integration. In **Sweden**, PES offers online skills assessment and training tools.

3. Civil society

Civil society also plays an active role in informing migrants. In **Sweden**, due to a lengthy asylum seeking process (averaging 26 months as of June 2018), civil society and municipalities are encouraged to play this role while reception centres focus on reducing the duration of the asylum seeking process. Since 2015, the Swedish Government has allocated additional funding to study associations and *folkhighschools* (both of these are often run by NGOs) for early measures aimed at giving asylum seekers and others Swedish language skills, understanding of Swedish society and other actions to promote integration

Civil society also works together with the PES in **Flanders**.

4. Specialised agencies

Specialised agencies provide counselling and information services for young migrants regarding their integration into education, employment and a new social environment. For example, Youth Migration Services (*Jugendmigrationsdienste*) in **Germany** provide counselling and information services for migrants between the ages of 12 to 27. There are more than 450 agencies in Germany that are financially supported by the Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth.

Source: Countries' responses to the OECD questionnaire.

In such provision, it is important to evaluate responses linked to career guidance activities. While research is clear on the need both for governments to address greater levels of guidance at young people from migrant backgrounds than native and on what the characteristics of effective careers guidance look like (Musset and Kurekova, 2018[47]), there is a need for further evaluation to understand how much more intense provision is necessary.

Ensuring access to information to migrants without host-country language skills

Online information that provides young migrants with relevant information about learning opportunities in their native languages is common in many countries (Box 2.6). These services provide relevant links to inform migrant students, or provide tools for learning host-country language, skills assessment and VET courses. In Flanders, France, Sweden and the United States, for example, multilingual online services inform migrants of study pathways, VET and career and language training as well as housing, financial aid and other issues. In the United States, the Language Access Plan developed by the Department of Homeland Security aims to improve access to services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), including interpretation and translation services as a regular part of conducting programmes and operations, outreach to LEP populations to provide relevant information, identification of current and future needs for language services, as well as providing training and guidance to staff on language access requirements.

Box 2.6. Web portals and online information tools that inform and teach young migrants in terms of language and VET in selected OECD countries

In **Italy,** the Directorate General for Immigration and Integration Policies of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies has created a Web Portal on Integration (www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it) in collaboration with the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Education, University and Research. It is partly dedicated to informing young migrants about access to language courses and providing e-learning tools for language learning. It also provides information on integration services including Italian language programmes, housing, work, health and intercultural mediation. The portal is also the national reference point, linking public administrations (national and local) and private sectors. The Directorate General also publishes a monthly newsletter and disseminates a newsletter with the main news, translated into English, published on the portal. The website also includes a number of short guides in languages frequently spoken by migrants.

Norway's *Skolekassa.no* ("The School Box") provides teaching aids in seven languages and relevant tools in relation to the learning of Norwegian, English, mathematics, science and social studies, at the primary and secondary level. The project Flexible Education (2017-20), organised by the National Centre of Multicultural Education (NAFO), offers online learning tools within the subjects mathematics and science in Arabic, Somali and Tigrinja.

Sweden's *Utbildningsinfo.se* includes search tools for educational paths and providers. The site contains information about possible vocational outcomes, the situation on the labour market in a chosen field, plus funding and information on other important considerations when choosing a study path (Skolverket, ReferNet Sweden, 2016[54]). *Yourskills.se* is offered in six languages. *Informationsverige.se* provides a wide range of information that is necessary for integration in ten languages.

In the **United States**, USALearns.org is a free English language learning website. It was originally an initiative of the Sacramento County Office of Education and now offers service nationally and includes a citizenship course component.

Source: Countries' responses to the OECD questionnaire.

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Notes

[1] This is also partly related to the fact that in the Swedish education system, all residents, regardless of whether they are migrants or otherwise, are only entitled to begin their upper-secondary National Programme up to the end of the spring term in the year they turn 20 years of age. An upper-secondary VET diploma can also be attained through studies in adult education (Kuczera and Jeon, 2019[3]).

[2] These databases include: i) Integrated Training Reporting System; ii) Training Statistics; iii) VET-market Statistics or Applicant Statistics; iv) Employment Statistics; v) Statistics on Assistance Measures; and vi) Statistics on Integration Courses. German Federal Employment Agency Data count registered applicants but no refugee status; German Federal Statistics Office Data count population by country of birth (ibid).

[3] The main entities that work internationally to implement the Lisbon Convention are known collectively as the ENIC-NARIC Networks. The ENIC Network (European Network of National Information Centres on academic recognition and mobility) was formed jointly by UNESCO and the Council of Europe in 1994, while the NARIC Network (National Academic Recognition Information Centres) was set up by the European Commission in 1984. These two networks usually work jointly (and host a joint Web site) and encompass national information centres from each of the Lisbon Convention signatory countries (ibid).

[4] The Youth Attitudes toward the Trades (YATT) questionnaire was included in PISA 2015 (initially in 2012) and administered to a sample of approximately 8 300 students from six Canadian provinces. This questionnaire is unique to Canada.

[5] Students with 'ambitious career expectations' are those who expect to work as a manager, a professional or an associate professional by the age of 30. Students with 'ambitious but realistic career expectations' are those who expect to become managers, professionals or associate professionals and technicians by the age of 30 and who achieved at least PISA proficiency Level 2 in all three core PISA subjects – science, reading and mathematics. See Tables 8.6-8.11 in OECD (2018[17]).

[6] On average in 2015 across OECD countries, and after accounting for students' academic performance, foreign-born students and native-born students with foreign-born parents were four and three percentage points, respectively, less likely to be enrolled in a vocational track compared to native students of similar ability (across EU countries, five and four percentage points, respectively).

[7] Federal SNAP E&T programme funding expands the reach of refugee employment services beyond those associated with Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA). For example, refugees who secure employment after their initial months in the United States through RCA affiliated employment services can access additional employment services via SNAP E&T

after they are no longer receiving RCA benefits, so long as they are eligible for SNAP (Boland and Gaffney, 2017[55]).

[8] Access to SPRAR has been restricted to refugees and unaccompanied minors since December 2018. It has been renamed in SIPROIMI - System of Protection for those with International Protection Status and Unaccompanied Foreign Minors.

[9] The Greek Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs has appointed co-ordinators for refugee education. These co-ordinators are permanently appointed teachers, seconded by the ministry to schools for refugees and migrants in the accommodation centers or in urban schools with refugees and migrants.

3 Getting ready: Ensuring effective pathways into upper-secondary vocational education and training

This chapter discusses how countries can support migrants, in particular humanitarian migrants, in their preparations to enter the upper-secondary vocational education and training (VET) and ensure effective pathways through VET. It describes the main barriers preventing young migrants from entering upper-secondary VET, including language, basic skills, country-specific knowledge and social barriers. The chapter explores strategies for getting young migrants ready for upper-secondary VET, including preparatory programmes, teachers' professional development and social partner engagement.

Why do migrants often need support to prepare for upper-secondary VET?

When newly arrived humanitarian migrants decide to try and access upper-secondary vocational education and training (VET), they face requirements of meeting not only host-country language competency and basic academic skills, but also becoming familiar with the host country's education and skill system – basic skills and hands-on knowledge that migrants commonly lack. This is a significant challenge, because basic skills (literacy and numeracy) are increasingly important in ensuring successful entry into, and progression through, upper-secondary VET and the labour market. In addition, in the work-based learning systems, employers may be reluctant to take on young people who struggle to learn on the job, because they seek to balance costs and benefits when taking on an apprentice.

In the case of apprenticeships, in order to make migrant apprentices attractive to potential employers, it is important that employers feel confident that apprentices have necessary skills which can be developed into productive skills during their apprenticeships. Governments have tried various means to ensure this is the case, and it is apparent that programmes that help build necessary knowledge and skills of learners are more effective than simply making financial incentives available to employers.

Preparatory programmes, in particular, appear to be valuable in this context. These programmes differ from the more standard education pathways followed by native students through public compulsory education. They include building basic skills and host-country language training, as well as developing social network and familiarity of the host-country education system and the labour market. As better-prepared migrant students are more likely to enter and succeed in upper-secondary VET, such preparations are important for their future educational and career progression.

In general, migrant students have weaker basic and language skills than their native peers

Having good host-country language skills is a key determinant for integration, in particular for education and employment. Data from European OECD countries shows that refugees with intermediate or advanced levels of proficiency in the host-country language have employment rates about 40 percentage points higher than those with little or no (self-declared) language skills (Liebig and Tronstad, 2018[1]).[1] Other studies (Brücker et al., 2016[2]) also confirm that participation in language courses is positively associated with asylum seekers and refugees finding work.

A lack of host-country language skills is the biggest obstacle for many refugees and migrants in their path towards upper-secondary VET. According to PISA analysis, migrants routinely struggle to obtain the same literacy levels as their native peers even after controlling for socio-economic status (OECD, 2018[3]). However, migrants who speak the host-country language are more likely to attain baseline proficiency (students who reach at least PISA proficiency level 2 in all three PISA core subjects i.e. maths, reading and science)[2] than non-native-speaking migrants (8 percentage points more for native-speaking migrant students) (OECD, 2018[3]).

Weaker basic skills and country-specific knowledge of migrants are barriers to enter into, and progress through, upper-secondary VET…

Migrants are less successful in getting into upper-secondary VET, in particular apprenticeships (Chapter 4), as well as in completing upper-secondary VET (Chapter 5). The main reason for these challenges is their weak basic skills and lack of country-specific knowledge. This weakness may well be more pronounced in, for example, i) migrants who arrived in the host country when close to, or beyond, compulsory schooling age or, ii) refugees and asylum seekers who have interrupted formal education. These groups are at a disadvantage because they have little time to catch up, in particular in countries where there are age limits for entry into upper-secondary VET.

For example, in Germany, several stakeholders reported during the OECD review, cases where migrant apprentices struggled to follow the regular curriculum in VET schools or failed in the final exam whereas they were successful as apprentices in the workplace. In Norway and Sweden, the grade points of lower-secondary graduates – which determine admission to upper-secondary education – are lower among migrant students. The average of migrant students was 4.6 points lower than other students in Norway in 2017. 16% of migrants among lower-secondary graduates did not obtain any school grade points, as they had not achieved necessary subjects. Among those who migrated to Norway 0-2 years prior to completing lower-secondary education, 57% did not obtain grade points (Thorud, 2018[4]).

In the case of the United States, it is reported that refugee students are often used to a far less participatory learning environment, being more comfortable with one based on teacher lectures and choral response rather than group work or expressing opinions in response to reading or other prompts (Dryden-Peterson, 2015[5]). This is also a common gap observed in other OECD countries. These cases suggest that young migrants should prepare in terms of both language and academic competencies before entering VET, in addition to learning about and adapting to the host-country culture, possibly through supplementary courses and more supports that are specific.

…and are less attractive to training employers

To realise the full potential of apprenticeships for migrants, in particular humanitarian migrants, it is important to ensure that the prospect of taking on a refugee or a person with a temporary protection aligns with the business interests of enterprises. This requires shifting the balance of costs and benefits to employers, to make it more attractive for employers to offer opportunities to this group (Kis, 2016[6]). In countries where apprenticeship is at development stage or where the supply and demand is unbalanced, apprentice wage support or similar financial support for employers may help at least for the short term.[3] Whilst financial incentives are used to promote apprenticeship, adjusting key parameters of apprenticeship schemes such as duration or training time arrangement, remedial courses for basic skills, mentoring, preparatory programmes and support measures are proven to be more helpful (Kuczera, 2017[7]; Kis, 2016[6]). In particular, preparatory programmes speed up the pace of apprentices in contributing to production in the workplace as a skilled productive labour. Such mechanisms for enhancing the skills of apprentices are often more helpful than putting financial incentives for employers to take on an apprentice who may not be ready yet.

Providing quality preparatory programmes for young migrants and refugees is a way to give them more learning time, ultimately reducing the net cost of apprenticeships

Preparatory programmes aim to assist youth-at-risk to make a successful entry or transition into upper-secondary VET (Kis, 2016[6]). In general, there are no specific requirements for entry into transitional programmes, but basic language levels may be required. For example, A2 level in Common European Framework of Reference for Languages is required in Switzerland and the Netherlands (for Level 1 programme in the upper-secondary VET [MBO 1], which is equivalent to transitional programmes). As a result, students with migrant backgrounds are overrepresented in these programmes due to their lack of language skills or basic competences (OECD, 2018[3]).

An increase of newly arrived in transitional programmes

While young migrants tend to attend transitional programmes designed to enable access to upper-secondary VET (mostly hosted within upper-secondary schools) more often than native students do, there is no standard way for accounting enrolments for migrant students in such programmes. In Switzerland, more than 10% of students with foreign nationality attend a transitional programme (SKBF-CSRE, 2018[8]) and more than half of students in these programmes are foreign nationals (Swiss Federal

Statistical Office, 2018[9]). In Sweden, one-third of students with migrant backgrounds (aged 16-20) attend a transitional programme (Kuczera and Jeon, 2019[10]). In Germany, more than a third of new entrants to the transitional programme (35.3%) have a migrant background (Bergseng, Degler and Lüthi, 2019[11]).

In countries where transitional programmes exist, the number of students in those programmes has significantly increased due to recent arrivals between 2014 and 2017. This increase directly reflects the increase of humanitarian refugees and asylum seekers in the student population, although precise data for this population are not available. For example, the share of foreign nationals in the German transition system (*Übergangsbereich*) increased from 20% to 35% over this period (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2018[12]). The number of foreign-born students in the pre-vocational year (*Berufsvorbereitungsjahr*) – the major transitional programme in Germany, making up 73% of all students in transitional programmes in 2017 – increased from 18 000 in the school year 2014/2015 to 81 000 in 2016/2017 and around 70% of this group (55 000) were born in one of the main asylum countries (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2018[12]).[4] In Sweden, more than 70% of students in such programmes were migrant students in 2017-18, an increase from 60% in 2014-15 (Kuczera and Jeon, 2019[10]). Its Language Introductory Programme – the largest transitional programme in Sweden – admitted over 90% more students in 2016-17 than 2015-16 while barely any change was seen in most other programmes (Skolverket, 2017[13]; Skolverket, 2018[14]).

Box 3.1. Transitional programmes: from compulsory to upper-secondary schools

Transitional programmes assist youth-at-risk to make a successful entry or transition into upper-secondary VET (Kis, 2016[6]). These programmes were introduced with specific policy goals such as reducing dropout rates in upper-secondary schools in Sweden (Arreman and Dovemark, 2018[15]) and reducing youth unemployment rates in Switzerland (Landert and Eberli, 2015[16]). While these programmes do not focus solely on humanitarian migrants, they are well suited to serving this population given that migrants face multiple barriers related to knowledge and skills, social networks and cultural orientation.

These programmes can include language training, basic academic programmes, integration courses targeted to migrants, career guidance and pre-vocational programmes including pre-apprenticeships or introductory vocational programmes (Table 3.1). Many preparatory programmes are vocationally oriented and include elements of work-based learning. These programmes are usually intended to facilitate the transition from compulsory into upper-secondary VET provision or potentially progression within general education.

Table 3.1. Overview of preparatory programmes that facilitate the entry or transition to upper-secondary VET

Country	Preparatory programmes	Typical duration	Types and content	Possibility of work-based learning (including apprenticeship)
Australia	Pre-apprenticeship	6-12 months	General employability skills, occupation-specific skills	
Denmark	Basic Integration Education (Integrationsgrunduddannelsen, IGU)* for the ages 18-40 having lived in Denmark for less than five years	2 years	School-based VET with language and vocational competencies. Flexibly combined with other types of education.	20-week of school-based VET with education allowance and paid internship at a company (minimum 25 hours per week).
England (United Kingdom)	Traineeship (youth aged 16-24 qualified below level 3 with little work experience and not in employment)	6 weeks-6 months	Work experience placement, work preparation training, literacy and mathematics if needed	Traineeship
Finland	Preparatory vocational education (ammatilliseen peruskoulutukseen valmentava koulutus or VALMA)*	6-12 months	Basic skills including language training	School-based
Germany	Transitional programmes (*Übergangsbereich)*	6-24 months	- Pre-vocational year (school-based) - Preparatory educational programmes offered by the PES - School-based programmes to obtain a lower-secondary diploma - Preparatory traineeships or EQ (6-12 months) - Preparatory internships for VET in childcare[5]	Internship/ traineeship
Netherlands	Pre-vocational programme (VMBO) MBO 1 (part of regular VET)	1 year		Yes
Sweden	Introductory programmes	1-3 years	Mostly individualised programmes that may contain language training, basic skills and/or upper secondary VET and general subjects depending on the needs of the individual. Each of four Introductory Programmes has slightly different focus. - Individual Alternative - Language Introduction Programme - Programme-oriented Options - Vocational Introduction	Work-based learning is compulsory for *Programme-oriented Options* and *Vocational Introduction*. WBL may be offered for *Individual Alternative* and *Language Introduction*.
Switzerland	Transitional programmes Pre-apprenticeship*	6-12 months	Pre-apprenticeship: basic skills including language training, social, personal and country-specific skills and knowledge, vocational skills, minimum 8 weeks of work, interview preparation	Pre-apprenticeship: Combined with school-based training (Refugees and temporarily admitted persons [ages 16-35])

Note: Programmes with an asterisk sign (*) are targeted at humanitarian migrants or migrants in general.
Source: Adapted from Kis, V. (2016[6]), *Work-based Learning for Youth at Risk: Getting Employers on Board*, OECD Education Working Papers No. 150, https://doi.org/10.1787/19939019; Kuczera, M. and S. Jeon (2019[10]), *Vocational Education and Training in Sweden*, OECD Reviews of Vocational Education and Training, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/g2g9fac5-en; Kuczera, M. and S. Field (2018[17]), *Apprenticeship in England, United Kingdom*, OECD Reviews of Vocational Education and Training, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264298507-en and Cedefop (2019[18]), *Introductory Training: Einstiegsqualifizierung*, http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/ro/toolkits/vet-toolkit-tackling-early-leaving/resources/introductory-training-einstiegsqualifizierung#_ftn1.

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Effective approaches to enhance migrant basic skills on the way to upper-secondary VET

Combining language and vocational training is proven effective

Many OECD countries have put in place more language training opportunities for the increased number of young migrants and refugees and upgraded the quality of that training. These include: i) language training as part of integration courses, or combined with vocational training, mainly for adults;[6] ii) language training within transitional programmes for young people, often combined with vocational subjects (see next section on preparatory courses); and iii) independently-run language training, often offered by private providers and NGOs yet linked to integration courses or transitional programmes and funded by the host-country government.

Among existing approaches, combining language and vocational training is proven effective especially for adults and can facilitate rapid transitions for young people. Evidence suggests that this approach improves language proficiency among migrants as well as their employment outcomes (McHugh and Challinor, 2011[19]). This approach can be also more appealing to migrant students who want to join mainstream education as early as possible (Sharif, 2017[20]; Nilsson Folke, 2017[21]). When such combined courses are available from arrival, it can minimise or avoid lock-in effects, meaning that migrants do not feel stuck or lose too much time only in language classes. In comparison, 'language-first models' (Ahad and Benton, 2018[22]) where access to VET programmes is determined only by a certain level of language skills, present a challenging choice. While teaching only language can rapidly prepare new arrivals to be in a position where they are well-placed to take advantage of VET provision or labour market opportunities, it may also mean retaining them for longer in language education and the education system as a whole. For young people, 'pull-out' programmes where they are taught outside mainstream classes also have disadvantages so evidence indicates that separate classes should be short-term and a smooth transition into mainstream education should be guaranteed to avoid segregation (Fazekas and Litjens, 2014[23]; Nusche, 2009[24]; Staring, Day and Meierkord, 2017[25]).

Vocational training can be combined with language training either from the beginning of the integration process or at later stages. This combined approach is more often used for adults (Box 3.2) but is also increasingly common in transitional programmes for youth.

Box 3.2. Combined approaches for adults: Basic skills including language and vocational training

In **Sweden**, *Swedish for Immigrants* (SFI) and *Swedish as a Second Language* (SVA) help migrants acquire basic (SFI) to advanced (SVA) knowledge of the Swedish language. SFI is combined with vocational adult education in different occupations including apprenticeships (Kuczera and Jeon, 2019[10]). In some municipalities the SFI offer is tailored to particular professions (OECD, 2016[26]).

Denmark takes a 'staircase' model: identification of skills combined with language lessons (4-8 weeks) and trainee placement in an enterprise at no cost to the employer, followed by additional language lessons (26-52 weeks). The country also runs a labour market-oriented Danish course, which must be completed within one and half years of enrolment and can lead to Danish language training for up to three years (Danish Ministry of Immigration and Integration, 2016[27]) (Konle-Seidl and Bolits, 2016[28]) (European PES Network, 2016[29]).

In the **United States**, the *Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training* (I-BEST) programme, implemented at a state level first and then scaled up to the national level, uses a team-teaching approach to combine basic adult education classes with regular, credit-bearing academic or job training

classes so students get through school and into jobs faster. I-BEST students are nine times more likely to earn a workforce credential than students in traditional programs who must complete basic skills first, before training for a job. Also, in Project I-DEA in Washington State, English language learners learn English while gaining skills for college and careers. Like I-BEST, this project uses an integrated, team-teaching approach so students learn English in tandem with college and job skills (Washington's Community and Technical Colleges, 2018[30]).

Seattle's Ready to Work programme for job-seeking refugees and other migrants is organised by the city's Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs and is offered in a community-based setting since 2015. It combines English as a Second Language classes with computer literacy instruction and case management to help immigrants gain job readiness skills. The programme offers contextualised instruction (industry-specific, career-oriented), combined with visits to area apprenticeship trainers or employers, pre-apprenticeship programs, and Human Resources staff from industry partners (Bergson-Shilcock, 1 June 2016[31]).

Personalised approaches such as differentiating the learning and teaching needs is important

As a group, young humanitarian migrants exhibit a broad range of characteristics, and so they naturally have different needs for language training. For example, they may lack basic literacy skills, an understanding of the norms of school culture, or in some cases, academic content that their age-level peers were exposed to in earlier years of schooling. In contrast, newly arrived adults with work experience need language courses that specifically target vocational and technical language training. The necessity of language training is particularly high for refugee women as they tend to have poorer skills in the host-country language upon arrival[7] and the process of acquiring the necessary language skills often takes more time compared to men partly due to lower participation, for example, in introduction courses (Liebig and Tronstad, 2018[1]).[8]

Box 3.3. Effective language training practices for second language learners

Context-based and scenario-based language teaching

Switzerland has developed a framework for the linguistic integration for migrants (FIDE), acknowledging the needs for a curriculum and teaching materials adapted to an increasingly culturally diverse student body. This teaching framework is referred to as a quality assurance mechanism for subsidised language courses for migrants, and emphasises teaching based on individual needs, closely linking to everyday life including a scenario learning approach. FIDE also offers an officially valid language pass, which attests that the student has skills under the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

Differentiating levels

The Council of Europe proposes a classification of four migrant profiles in terms of literacy: pre-literate, illiterate, semi-literate and literate. Countries design different levels of language courses to meet the needs of different target groups. **Switzerland** differentiate migrants with educational qualifications, migrants with more than six years of schooling, migrants with less than six years and illiterates. **Denmark** also offers three-level courses and similarly **Norway** offers three tracks in the integration programme for humanitarian migrants: illiterates with no education background, learners with limited educational background in their country of origin, and learners with sufficient educational background in their country of origin.

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

In the **United Kingdom**, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) is a domain of language learning and teaching where teaching strategies in mainstream, accredited provision are influenced not only by pedagogical and language learning theory but also by policy directives concerning integration, employability and citizenship.

ESOL provision is benchmarked against national standards set by the 2001 Skills for Life national programme (which aimed to improve adult literacy and numeracy skills for all adult learners) and is based on a national Adult ESOL core curriculum. Prior to this, ESOL provision had been informal in nature. Informal non-accredited ESOL courses are also offered through community learning.

In 2016, the United Kingdom Government announced GBP 10 million of funding to boost English language tuition (12 hours a week of tuition, for up to 6 months) for those arriving under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme. This language training is in addition to the language support already provided by local authorities, which is accessed by refugees and their families within a month of their arrival.

Teaching language with age-appropriate content

In the **United States**, the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol model aims to enable English learner students to access grade-level academic content even before they have achieved full English proficiency. Teachers are encouraged to develop strategies that make content more accessible, using visual aids and an appropriate rate of speech.

Approaches of multilingualism and translanguaging – other languages as an asset

Courses can take full advantage of the multilingual nature of many migrant students. For example, multilingual study guidance and mother tongue instruction help recently arrived students reach the learning goals of subjects in the Swedish curriculum. A translanguaging science classroom in **Sweden** benefits from the students' ability to relate to and contextualise science content through prior experience. Although the outcomes of this approach vary depending on many different associated factors, and its effectiveness is debated among linguists, it is contributing to the discussion about the needs to acknowledge diversity in classrooms and promote a more inclusive linguistic climate.

Several OECD countries, including the **United Kingdom** and the **United States**, are exploring how this approach can improve learning and teaching of language as well as other subjects for newly arrived students. **Denmark** has also launched a randomised, controlled trial programme (2013-16) on language immersion in teaching in schools with bilanguage students.

Source: For Sweden, Warren, A. (2017[32]), *Developing Multilingual Literacies in Sweden and Australia* https://su.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1116085/FULLTEXT01.pdf; Torpsten, A. (2018[33]), "Translanguaging in a Swedish Multilingual Classroom", *Multicultural Perspectives*, Vol. 20/2, pp. 104-110, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15210960.2018.1447100; Karlsson, A., P. Larsson and A. Jakob (2018[34]), "Multilingual students' use of translanguaging in science classrooms", *International Journal of Science Education*, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09500693.2018.1477261; and Jaspers, J. (2018[35]), "The transformative limits of translanguaging", *Language & Communication*, Vol. 58, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langcom.2017.12.001. For the United Kingdom, Simpson, J. (2017[36]), *Translanguaging, superdiversity and ESOL: A summary of the 2017 TLang e-seminar*, http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/generic/tlang/index.aspx; Nickson, M. (2013[37]), *Volunteer ESOL Teaching: Local Pedagogy or Teaching Without a Theory?*, http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/fass/events/laelpgconference/papers/v07/Martin.pdf; Foster, D. and P. Bolton (2018[38]), *Adult ESOL in England*, http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/31742/1/CBP-7905%20.pdf.
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Different didactic approaches, targeted or flexible provision (e.g. part-time, flexible venues, childcare for parents) and more tailored courses seem to provide better results (Box 3.3). In many countries, language provision is largely focused on basic language that is the biggest need. However, these could be supplemented or supported by specific programmes for dual language learners, language training for secondary language learners, or programmes that provide VET-specific language courses.

Pre-vocational or pre-apprenticeship programmes prepare specifically well to upper-secondary VET

Pre-vocational programmes are essential to maintaining the integrity, inclusiveness and quality of VET systems. Pre-vocational programmes are proven to be successful in increasing the access to VET of a broader range of learners, because these programmes offer opportunities to connect with potential employers and to improve necessary skills. They are designed to ensure that learners are well placed to succeed when they enrol on upper-secondary VET programmes. Trainees have an opportunity to demonstrate their practical talents and motivation as well as skills that may also be difficult to convey in a regular recruitment process or with weaker language skills. Moreover, pre-apprenticeship provision, one form of pre-vocational programme, can help improving the cost-benefit balance for employers by enhancing the right skill levels of migrant students through work-based programmes and by allowing for a trial period (Kis, 2016[6]). Evidence shows that employers generally have good experiences with taking on asylum seekers and refugees through pre-vocational programmes and are likely to offer the trainees an apprenticeship or job contract after the programme (Degler and Liebig, 2017[42]). Many countries pursue extensive pre-apprenticeship programmes to this end (Kis, 2016[6]; OECD, 2018[43]).

While many young migrants can benefit from generic pre-vocational provision, there may be call for more targeted provision, as examples from Denmark and Switzerland illustrate. In general, key characteristics of successful pre-vocational or pre-apprenticeship programmes are related to:

- *Labour market relevance*: Pre-vocational programmes often aim to help match participants to available placements by offering career guidance, work placements and job search training. Therefore they need to be well articulated to upper-secondary VET provision, which is gateway to skilled employment, and ultimately to labour market demand. Pre-vocational programmes are often developed in areas of labour market shortage, and thus these programmes are more likely to enable ultimate progression into the labour market for youth at risk.
- *Engagement of social partners*: In effective programmes, employers, professional organisations and trade unions are often involved in design and implementation, such as in the case of Denmark and Switzerland (Box 3.4). Social partner engagement helps ensure that provision relates to areas of skill demand. A high level of social partner engagement also helps put emphasis on and provision of work-based learning (WBL).
- *Work-based learning*: Pre-vocational programmes including pre-apprenticeships can help young migrants to connect to employers through WBL. As in Germany and Switzerland, such courses include practical work experience in companies such as a short internship and work shadowing. Preparatory traineeships (*Einstiegsqualifizierungen*) in Germany, pre-apprenticeship (INVOL) in Switzerland and work-based learning including apprenticeship opportunities in preparatory programmes in Sweden serve this purpose (Box 3.4).
- *Strengthening general skills and providing career guidance*: These pre-apprenticeship programmes usually aim to develop the general, vocational and soft skills (including employability skills) that help young people to obtain and successfully complete an apprenticeship. They typically combine education in schools with elements of WBL. Such programmes often offer intensive language training and career orientation. Programmes may provide credit towards a regular apprenticeship.

Box 3.4. Major transitional programmes and pre-apprenticeships

Denmark's Basic Integration Education (IGU)

Denmark offers a Basic Integration Education (*Integrationsgrunduddannelsen*, IGU) programme that aims to enable smooth labour market transitions. It was initiated as a three-year trial scheme by a tripartite agreement in 2016. It lasts two years and is offered for a clear target group: newly-arrived refugees aged 18-40 with a focus on adults with work experience. This programme leads to a certificate of completion but not a formal qualification. It has strong work-based components with financial incentives for both participants and their employers. The training positions that IGU offers are equivalent to regular basic VET programmes (*erhvervsgrunduddannelse*, EGU), i.e. same wage rates and labour rights including unemployment benefits, paid holiday leave and pension contributions (Danish Ministry of Immigration and Integration, 2016[27]). This programme is highly flexible: it can be linked with other programmes and there is also possibility for already-employed people to start IGU with their current employer to get appropriate qualifications (Danish Ministry of Immigration and Integration, 2016[27]). Almost one thousand companies have already hired a refugee for an IGU-position by February 2019 – for a total of over 1 955 IGU courses (Knudsen and Holst, 2017[44]).

Germany's preparatory traineeships (EQ)

Preparatory traineeships (*Einstiegsqualifizierung,* EQ) support young people who did not secure an apprenticeship at the end of lower secondary provision and are designed to increase their chance of securing access to either an apprenticeship or equivalent school-based provision. The Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs designed the measure in 2004 in co-operation with key stakeholders from industry and trade. This measure does not necessarily target migrants but about 40% of participants had migrant parents (2007-10). About 70% of EQ interns managed to find an apprenticeship within half a year after finishing their traineeship, and around 40% of them stayed with the company in which they had interned (Popp et al., 2012[45]). Refugees are even more strongly over-represented in 2017, out of 12 000 new EQ trainees, around 8 000 (40%) came from one of the main asylum origin countries. Generally employers view this measure positively (Degler and Liebig, 2017[42]). A more supportive scheme called "EQ plus" has been introduced, which combines EQ with other vocational or socio-pedagogical support measures such as Training Assistance (abH) or prevention of dropout from training (VerA) (see Box 5.1) (Bergseng, Degler and Lüthi, 2019[11]). The German Federal Ministry of Education (BMBF) has also launched the measure *Berufsorientierung für Flüchtlinge* (BOF). BOF includes intensive vocational career orientation, vocational language training and company visits to prepare for entry into VET. BOF and VerA are parts of the Education Chains initiative by the BMBF, the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and Federal Employment Agency in co-operation with the federal states.

Sweden's Language Introduction Programme

In **Sweden**, the Language Introduction Programme is designed in particular for newly arrived young people who have not met the language qualification required for entry into a national upper-secondary programme. This programme teaches Swedish or *Swedish as a second language* at the compulsory school level, but other subjects can be added based on the student's aspirations or skills. Work-based learning could be included. This programme may be combined with *Swedish for Immigrants* (SFI) or other initiatives that would be helpful for the student's knowledge development (Kuczera and Jeon, 2019[10]).

Switzerland's Pre-apprenticeship for humanitarian migrants (INVOL)

Integration Apprenticeship (*Integrationsvorlehre*) is a form of pre-apprenticeship. The programme is a one-year long preparatory training courses designed to facilitate enrolment in a dual-track VET programme. It combines on-the-job training or traineeships lasting at least eight weeks with the goal of acquiring basic competences in an occupational field and language training to achieve A2 level of Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. It is a pilot programme (800-1 000 positions per year for 2018-21) designed to help the transition of refugees and temporarily admitted persons (aged 16-35) with work experience or training, into VET and then the labour market. Through this programme, the Federal Council collaborates with the cantons, professional organisations and VET institutes. Integration Apprenticeships are developed in sectors where skills shortages are acute and that social partners are supportive.

Finland's pre-vocational programme for migrants (VALMA)

This programme (*ammatilliseen peruskoulutukseen valmentava koulutus* or VALMA) aims to help newly arrived learners to move on to programmes leading to upper-secondary vocational qualifications. It lasts between 6 and 12 months and provides migrants with information and guidance on different occupations and vocational studies. When migrants later apply for an upper-secondary vocational programme through a joint application system, they can receive extra points for completed preparatory education (OECD, 2017[46]).

Getting the teaching workforce ready

Coping with student diversity in the context of teacher shortages

While teachers play a crucial role in student learning outcomes (OECD, 2005[47]), several countries are facing teacher shortages, partly due to the recent increase of migrants, but combined with general trends. On the one hand, language teacher shortages are a worldwide phenomenon (Swanson and Mason, 2018[48]) and on the other hand, some countries find it difficult to recruit high quality VET teachers. In Germany, one out of ten newly hired teachers in 2017 and 2018 had no formal qualification (KMK, 2019[49]) and in Sweden 45% of active VET teachers (*yrkeslärarutbildning*) have no educational college degree (Statistics Sweden, 2017[50]).

In addition, some teachers and trainers are also poorly equipped to teach students with growing diversity in general and newly arrived students in particular because they lack skills and experience in teaching in increasingly diverse classrooms. For example, in Europe, one study shows that 38% of teachers felt a moderate or high level of need for training in teaching in a multicultural or multilingual setting and only 13% had taken part in professional development activities in this area (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015[51]). While this survey was undertaken in lower secondary education, the results may be similar in other levels and types of education.

An increasingly diverse classroom requires more responsive teachers equipped with an understanding of students' diverse cultural backgrounds, of how they construct knowledge, and of the impact of their home and community culture (Zhao, 2010[52]; García et al., 2009[53]). Research shows that teacher performance influences student achievement and that this influence is more pronounced for students with migrant backgrounds (OECD, 2018[3]; Middelkoop, Ballafkih and Meerman, 2017[54]; OECD, 2010[55]). Therefore training teachers about the sensitivity of teaching diverse groups of students is important – in particular for those teachers in language training and VET where students with migrant backgrounds are often overrepresented. For the VET sector, not only VET teachers, but also company trainers at workplaces, will benefit from training in relation to student diversity.

Professional development for more systemic and institutional support for teachers

Several countries have recognised this challenge and are providing additional training for teachers (Box 3.5). In addition to providing formal education for teachers, informal and non-formal teaching materials or support materials for teachers can be provided to aid in preparations for teaching migrants and refugees. For example, the Immigrant Learning Center in the United States runs workshops and provides educator resources including: how to plan lessons including welcoming and ESOL classes; how to better understand migrant and refugee students and motivate them; how to deal with different ethnicities, break down implicit bias, engage parents and families, and share creative teaching ideas and practices.

Box 3.5. Practices for teacher training and support for diversity

In **Austria**, the Federal Center for Interculturalism, Migration and Multilingualism (*Bundeszentrum für Interkulturalität, Migration und Mehrsprachigkeit,* BIMM) is a resource centre for teachers in the field of interculturalism, migration and multilingualism. BIMM organises network meetings among the relevant staff of the teacher-training institutions, and convenes workshops and conferences conferences (Herzog-Punzenberger, Le Pichon-Vorstman and Siarova, 2017[56]).

In **Denmark,** the Retention Taskforce (*FastholdelsesTaskfoce*) provides training for supervisors to guide teachers and other professionals in improving communication with the parents of bilingual pupils and helping parents play a more active role in the children's school attendance (Danish Ministry of Immigration and Integration, 2016[27]).

In **Italy**, the National Plan for Teacher Training (a multi-year project of the Italian Ministry of Education) trains teachers on multiculturalism and methodologies for teaching languages for students with migrant backgrounds, financed by the Asylum, Migration Fund.

In **Norway**, multicultural competence, Norwegian as a second language and multilingualism are topics that are included in the regulations for teacher education. A five-year strategy (Competence for Diversity 2013-2017) was formulated for in-service training to enhance multicultural competences and knowledge of teaching Norwegian as a second language among employees in all levels of education. The last two years of this strategy placed more emphasis on second language acquisition, preventing radicalisation and good reception of refugee children in schools (Thorud, 2018[4]).

In **Portugal**, the *Entreculturas* programme provides teacher training with regards to multiculturalism and diversity and strengthens Portuguese public schools to better serve increasingly diverse student population.

In **Switzerland**, teacher education institutions such as the Swiss Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (SFIVET) offer various modules and one-day courses covering topics such as migration, integration, diversity or ethics for VET teachers and leaders to cope with the increasing complexity arising due to migration.

Due to the acute need for teachers during the high migration influx period, Germany had to rely on alternative means of recruiting teachers, especially for language and vocational training (Bergseng, Degler and Lüthi, 2019[11]). In comparison, Sweden was already experiencing teacher shortages prior to the influx and has since put greater efforts into qualified teacher recruitment while accelerating the pace of recruiting and training teachers with a migrant background (Kuczera and Jeon, 2019[10]). Efforts include Fast-track for Newly Arrived Teachers (OECD, 2016[26]; OECD, 2017[57]; Dryden-Peterson, 2015[5]), Further Education of Migrant Teachers (Bunar, 2017[58]) and the Boost for Teachers Programme (*Lärarlyftet*)[9] (OECD, 2017[57]).

Ultimately, more systemic and institutional supply and support for teachers in regard to student diversity (Cerna et al., 2019[59]) are necessary if education systems are to unlock the full potential of migrant students. Greater awareness and small adjustments to teaching practice can underpin better outcomes for these learners. This should go together with promoting professional development to teachers on issues central to the education of migrant students, ensuring that such professional development activities are regular and compulsory, forming peer-to-peer support networks for teaching migrant students. All of these need to take into account the fact that students have become more diverse in terms of their familiarity with VET and the social networks possessed as well as their knowledge and skills.

Counsellors, skills assessors

There are other parts of the workforce that can play an important role in helping young migrants and refugees to be prepared for and able to succeed in VET. These include career counsellors, skills assessors, case managers, social workers and volunteers. Just like teachers, they are likely to require high quality training on how to communicate with young migrants and refugees and how to support them. They often need additional training in understanding the legal rights of humanitarian migrants based on their status, learning about up-to-date labour market information, dealing with skills and qualification assessment and providing adequate information about schools, training providers and apprentice employers.

In Norway, an e-learning programme for job counsellors on the recognition of foreign skills and qualifications includes relevant cases and examples, and introduces different approaches related to recognition of qualifications from abroad. The main goal is for the counsellors to give adequate and accurate information to migrants in need of this information (European PES Network, 2016[29]).

Volunteers

Language programmes as well as vocationally-oriented integration programmes for newly arrived humanitarian migrants are often offered by non-profit organisations or local authorities. Volunteers are a major part of the provision and they fill the gap in provision for asylum seekers who have limited access to education and training. While finding volunteers who are reliable may be an issue, volunteers still provide a valuable service and can help the organisations meet their needs cost-effectively. Furthermore, using local volunteers helps refugees develop relationships, often strong ones, with individuals who are from different circles, developing social capital. Likewise, volunteers become more aware about the struggles of being a refugee and the challenges a newcomer faces in an unfamiliar country (Mathema, 2018[60]).

The German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) co-ordinates the nation-wide programme ‘Entry German’ (*Einstieg Deutsch*), where over 3 000 volunteers help migrants above school age to learn German, providing language practice opportunities (Bergseng, Degler and Lüthi, 2019[11]). In the United States, preparatory and VET programmes rely on volunteers to deliver the services partly because of resource constraints and also the fluctuating nature of humanitarian migrant inflows (Mathema, 2018[60]).

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Notes

[1] EU-Labour Force Survey ad hoc module 2014. OECD-Europe includes all European OECD countries apart from Germany, Denmark, the Netherlands and Ireland.

[2] Students who attain baseline academic proficiency are those who attain at least proficiency Level 2 in all three core PISA subjects: science, reading and mathematics. At Level 2, students can draw on their knowledge of basic science content and procedures to identify an appropriate explanation, interpret data, and identify the question being addressed in a simple experiment. All students should be expected to attain Level 2 by the time they leave compulsory education.

[3] In some countries, all training enterprises receive a state grant for the training period (e.g. EUR 13 000 per apprentice in Norway to compensate the cost of training). Several projects in Italy that aim at integrating young migrants in the labour market offer financial support not only apprentices but also employers and intermediary bodies.

[4] Data does not distinguish by legal status and citizenship is therefore taken as a proxy for asylum seeker or refugee status. The definition of 'main asylum countries' follows the definition used by the PES and includes the main eight countries of origin of asylum seekers in the past years: Afghanistan, Eritrea, Iran, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Somalia.

[5] Such internships may not be formally part of transitional programmes, but are a mandatory requirement for accessing VET in childcare.

[6] For integration-oriented courses for adults, the government body in charge of migration and integration often takes an active role in providing meaningful access to language training, such as in Germany (BAMF), Switzerland (SEM) and the United States (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, DHS). In Germany, the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) offers language courses through private providers and ensure the quality through comprehensive guidelines, licensing and funding. BAMF is also responsible for the Integration Course for adults and Youth Integration Course (*Jugendintegrationskurse*) for young people aged 16-27. These courses offer mainly language training but also include civic education, VET-related content and information on the education system and the labour market (Bergseng, Degler and Lüthi, 2019[11]).

In other cases, local authorities are responsible for providing basic language tuition for adult migrants, in particular in Nordic countries. In Sweden, *Swedish for Immigrants* is mandatory as part of the Integration Programme that is organised by Public Employment Services (OECD, 2016[61]). In Switzerland, two-thirds of the cantons participate in a four-year pilot project (*Frühzeitige Sprachförderung*) that offers an intensive language course to young asylum seekers who have prospects of remaining in the country. Since 2015, this project aims to provide early language training for asylum seekers who have prospects of remaining in the country, and to help them to reach level A1-A2 through the year-long course. Participating cantons receive federal funding (CHF 2 000 per person).

For young migrants, education ministries (either national or local levels) are often responsible for language training provision through welcome classes or transitional programmes. In Turkey, the Ministry of National Education runs Turkish Language Teaching Programme for Persons under Protection.

[7] Data from the Longitudinal Study of Humanitarian Migrants in Australia (BNLA) show that upon arrival, a higher share of refugee women responded that they could not understand any English, compared with refugee men. Over time, the ability to understand English clearly improved for both refugee women and men; mothers were significantly less likely than both other women and men to be studying and improving English (Australian Department of Social Services, 2017[63]; Australian Department of Social Services, 2019[62]; Liebig and Tronstad, 2018[1]).

[8] Many refugee women do not participate in the introduction course or drop out in Germany. Data from the IAB-BAMF-SOEP survey show that refugee women have, after controlling for a broad range of socio-demographic characteristics, a ten percentage points lower probability to have participated in the introduction courses than their male peers. Their self-assessed improvement in German language mastery since arrival has also been lower (ibid).

[9] This initiative is exclusive for registered teachers with a degree in education, and not directed to teachers with a migrant background in particular.

4 Getting in: Enabling easier access to upper-secondary vocational education and training

This chapter presents what vocational educational training and training (VET) pathways are available for young humanitarian migrants and what barriers are faced by those migrants when entering substantive upper-secondary VET, notably apprenticeships. Barriers are faced by entry requirements that are difficult to attain in a short period time for newly arrived and effectiveness of preparatory measures and financial barriers. For work-based VET in particular, difficulties in connecting to employers and lack of social networks are addressed as well as employer discrimination when securing an apprenticeship. The chapter then lays out how countries and their VET systems can respond to such barriers to facilitate the entry of those migrants across OECD countries.

Challenges facing migrants getting into upper-secondary vocational education and training

Vocational education and training (VET) comprises a broad range of approaches and strategies that aim to enable the school-to-work transition for youth and prepare adults for new career opportunities. It can be composed of both school and workplace learning. In addition, depending on the country and its labour market, a VET system might place more or less priority on apprenticeship, basic skill proficiencies and qualifications (OECD, 2018[1]).

Due to the general lack of data on refugees and asylum seekers, there is very limited knowledge on how many refugees and asylum seekers have entered VET. Nevertheless, countries where relevant data are available provide evidence on how migrant students fare compared to native students in regard to VET entry. The analysis of these countries shows that many young migrants and refugees struggle to achieve necessary pre-conditions such as language, academic proficiency and social network to get into VET, and a number of countries have implemented support measures for these students.

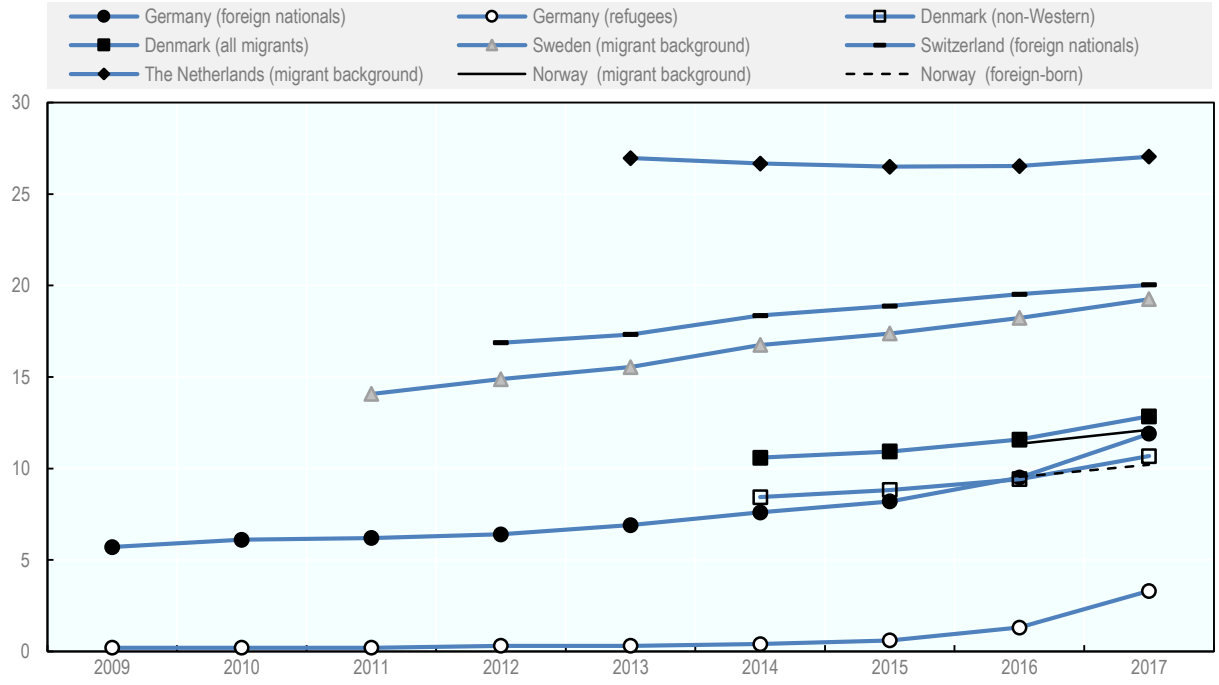
This section presents challenges that migrants face when entering VET and how VET systems across countries respond to those challenges.

Migrants are increasingly applying for, and entering, VET but are less successful in getting into VET, in particular apprenticeships

The share of migrant entrants in VET has increased in recent years in countries that have available data (Figure 4.1) – the definition of migrant students in these countries are different. The share is the highest in the Netherlands, but this is probably because of the high share of migrants in MBO 1 (Level 1 in school-based VET). The MBO 1 programme is roughly equivalent to a transitional programme (seeChapter 3) in the sense that it focuses on young people with a migrant background but without a prior qualification at a lower-secondary level or sufficient Dutch language skills (Cedefop, 2016[2]). The share in Switzerland is comparatively high as 2-year EBA programmes, with lower entry requirements, attract migrant students. In Denmark, the share of migrant entrants to VET has also increased, in parallel with an increase of non-Western migrant students. Norway has seen a similar increase in recent years.

In Germany, the share of new migrant entrants to dual VET increased from 5.7% in 2009 to 11.9% in 2017, and for refugees from 0.2% to 3.3% (Figure 4.1). In Sweden, while the number and share of native entrants in VET has decreased, the number and share of migrant entrants has been increasing in recent years (Figure 4.1). In addition, there has been steady increase of application rates among migrants from 14% in 2011-12 to 18% in 2016-17 (Skolverket, 2017[3]). In Finland, foreign-language students have been choosing VET more often than general upper-secondary education (ReferNet Finland, 2017[4]).

Figure 4.1. The share of migrant entrants in VET has increased in recent years



Note: For Germany, the share refers to new apprenticeship contracts; foreign nationals include persons with only foreign nationality and refugees include persons from asylum countries (i.e. nationals from Eritrea, Nigeria, Somalia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan and the Syrian Arab Republic).

Source: Germany from BIBB (2018[5]), *Datensystem Auszubildende (DAZUBI) Zusatztabellen. Ausländische Auszubildende in der dualen Berufsausbildung - nach einzelnen Nationalitäten, Deutschland 2008 bis 2017. Ergebnisse auf Basis der Berufsbildungsstatistik*, https://www.bibb.de/de/1868.php. Switzerland from Swiss Federal Statistics Office (2019[6]), *Federal Statistics Office*, https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/en/home/statistics/catalogues-databases.html. The Netherlands from Statistics Netherlands (2019[7]), https://data.overheid.nl/dataset/53971-mbo--deelnemers--niveau--leerweg--migratieachtergrond. Sweden from the Ministry of Education in Kuczera, M. and S. Jeon, (2019[8]), *Vocational Education and Training in Sweden* , https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/g2g9fac5-en. Denmark from Statistics Denmark (2019[9]), *Student Register*, http://dst.dk/ext/uddannelse/Uddannelsestabeller.

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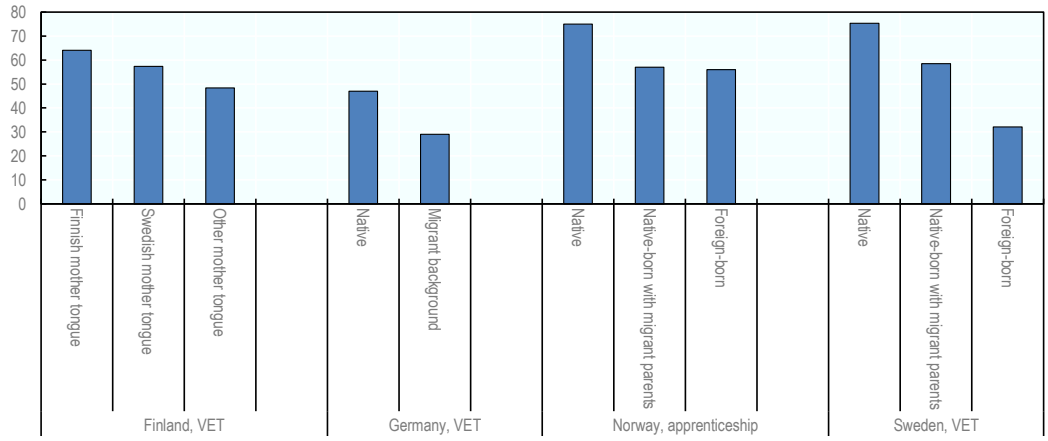
Despite the overall paucity of data, evidence from several OECD countries (Figure 4.2) indicates that the success rates of migrant students getting in VET is much lower compared to native students. In Germany, only 29% of applicants from a migrant background progressed to dual VET as compared to 47% of their native-born counterparts, based on the applicant survey (BIBB, 2016[10]).[1] Importantly, even with the same school leaving qualification, young migrants were much less likely to progress to dual training. Despite considerable endeavours to secure a training place, they were significantly less likely to be invited to interviews or recruitment tests than young people without a migrant background (BIBB, 2016[10]). In Norway, the success rates of migrant students in securing an apprenticeship contract is about 15-20 percentage points lower than that of native students in 2015-17 (Thorud, 2018[11]). The gaps in Sweden's admission rates are slightly larger because the number of applicants include non-eligible persons, but still the gaps are significant. In both Germany and Norway, the gap has been increasing in recent years due to the recent high influx of humanitarian migrants. There is also an indication in England (United Kingdom) that migrants or ethnic minorities are underrepresented in apprenticeship (Chadderton and Wischmann, 2014[12]; Kuczera and Field, 2018[13]).

Figure 4.2. A lower share of migrant students are admitted to upper-secondary VET

Admission rates of upper-secondary VET applications 2016-17



Note: Sweden's admission rates are the number of students admitted to their first choice of upper-secondary provision divided by the number of applicants who sought their respective programmes in the first place. Applicants include non-eligible persons.
Source: Thorud, E. (2017[14]), *Immigration and Integration 2016-2017: Report for Norway*, https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/005e1d69ad5141958451b8770552dab9/immigration-and-integration-20162017.pdf and Thorud, E. (2018[11]), *Immigration and Integration 2017–2018: Report for Norway to the OECD*, https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/fe206a22df754b8792740fb81109a761/immigration-and-integration-2017-2018-report-for-norway.pdf for Norway. BIBB (2016[10]), *Training Chances of Applicants from a Migrant Background – Current Situation 2016 and Development Since 2004*, http://www.bibb.de/veroeffentlichungen/de/publication/show/8331 for Germany. Statistics Gymnasieskolan – Elever – Riksnivå for Sweden. Education Statistics Finland for Finland (ages 15-34).

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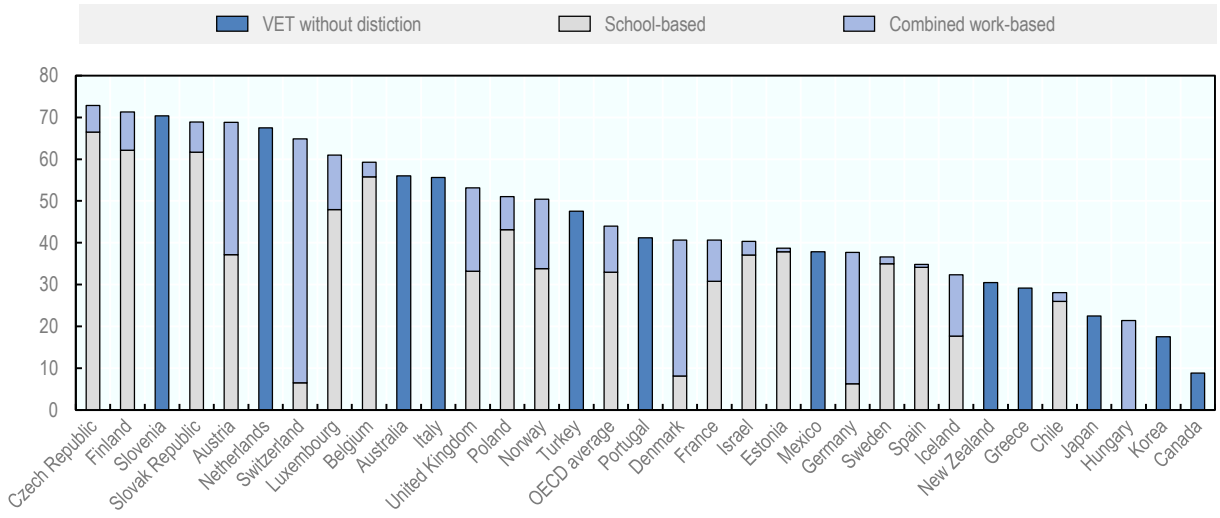
Migrants tend to be more represented in school-based VET than in apprenticeships

Work-based learning is still limited in many OECD countries

Upper-secondary VET systems across OECD countries show a wide range in combining school and workplace learning (Figure 4.3). Between 2005 and 2016, many countries remained relatively stable in terms of work-based programmes whilst Germany, Denmark, the Slovak Republic, the Czech Republic and Estonia saw a large shift towards school-based programmes (OECD, 2018[15]). Though based on limited data, it appears that migrant students tend to experience work-based learning less than native students. According to the EU Labour Force Survey 2016 ad hoc module (Eurostat, 2019[16]), migrant students are more likely to have no work experience while they were in upper-secondary VET (Figure 4.4). Among those who have work experience, migrant students are more likely to have gained work experience outside of the VET curriculum, compared to native students. Even when looking at VET curriculum work experience, apprenticeships are still fairly uncommon for migrant students, except for Austria and Switzerland (Figure 4.5).

Figure 4.3. Work-based learning is still limited in many OECD countries

Share (%) of upper-secondary students enrolled in vocational programmes, 2016



Note: For countries with "VET without distinction", information on combined programmes is missing or the category does not apply. "Combined work-based" VET programmes are defined as those in which 25%-90% of the curriculum is delivered in the work environment. "School-based" VET programmes may include work-based learning but at a lower share.
Source: OECD (2018[15]), *Education at a Glance 2018: OECD Indicators*, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2018-en.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888933997892

School-based VET may be relatively easier to expand and access

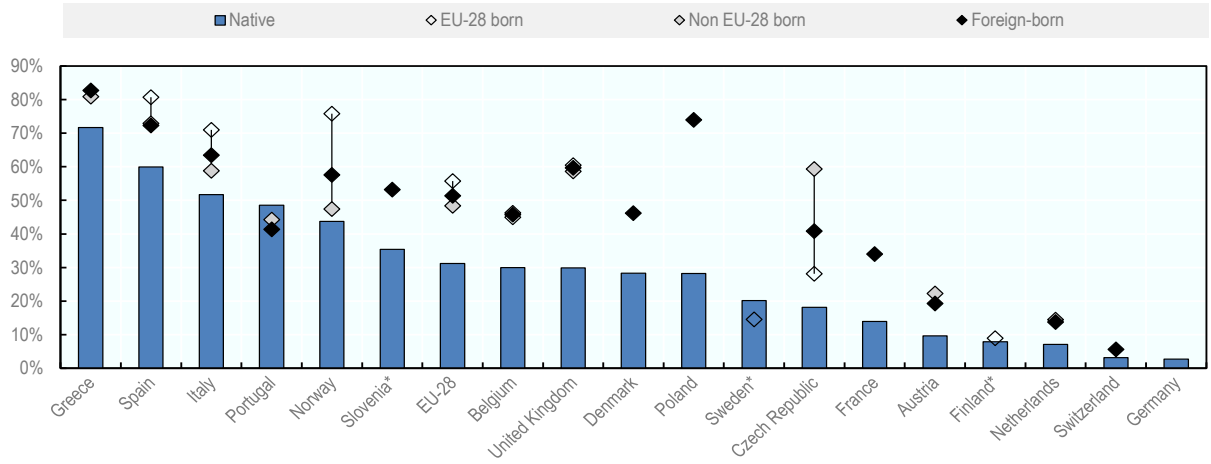
The higher levels of concentration of migrants in school-based VET programmes may be for a number of reasons. These programmes may be easier to expand as is the case in general education. Certain occupational sectors, however, tend to use school-based VET as entry mechanisms and these sectors disproportionately attract migrants, for example, the health and social care sectors in Sweden and Germany – sectors which are experiencing intensifying skills shortages. School-based VET may also be relatively easier to access as it largely depends on individual's ability rather than external factors such as the student's social network, legal barriers to access workplace learning, or overall level of employer engagement or openness in VET for migrant students. For example, in Germany, while asylum seekers and persons with tolerated status[2] require permission to access dual VET or other types of traineeships/apprenticeships from local immigration authorities, this is not necessary for school-based VET.

School-based VET may accommodate migrant students more easily, but are less effective in facilitating school-to-work transitions

In countries with available data, migrant students in VET tend to be overrepresented in school-based programmes compared to work-based programmes, although there is no clear trend (Table 4.1). This is also suggested by other study (Cedefop, 2016[17]). Students in school-based VET often struggle to gain the same levels of hands-on experience of the labour market as enjoyed by students in work-based VET, so they may face more challenges in finding a job. Work-based VET mitigates the difficulties in finding a job, as many employers prefer to hire applicants with work experience. Therefore, without access to certain forms of work-based learning, school-based VET may have limits to facilitate the school-to-work transition.

Figure 4.4. Migrant VET graduates are less likely to have gained work experience during upper-secondary VET

Share of upper-secondary VET graduates who had no work experience during the course of upper-secondary VET, 2016



Note: The sample covers upper-secondary VET graduates whose highest level of education was upper-secondary VET and who had no work experience during the time they enrolled in the upper-secondary VET programme. Data from countries with an asterisk (*) – Slovenia, Sweden and Finland – include those who had work experience outside the curriculum, in addition to those who had no work experience. See Annex A for 2009 data.
Source: Eurostat (2019[16]), EU Labour Force Survey 2016 ad hoc module. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/microdata/european-union-labour-force-survey.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888933997911

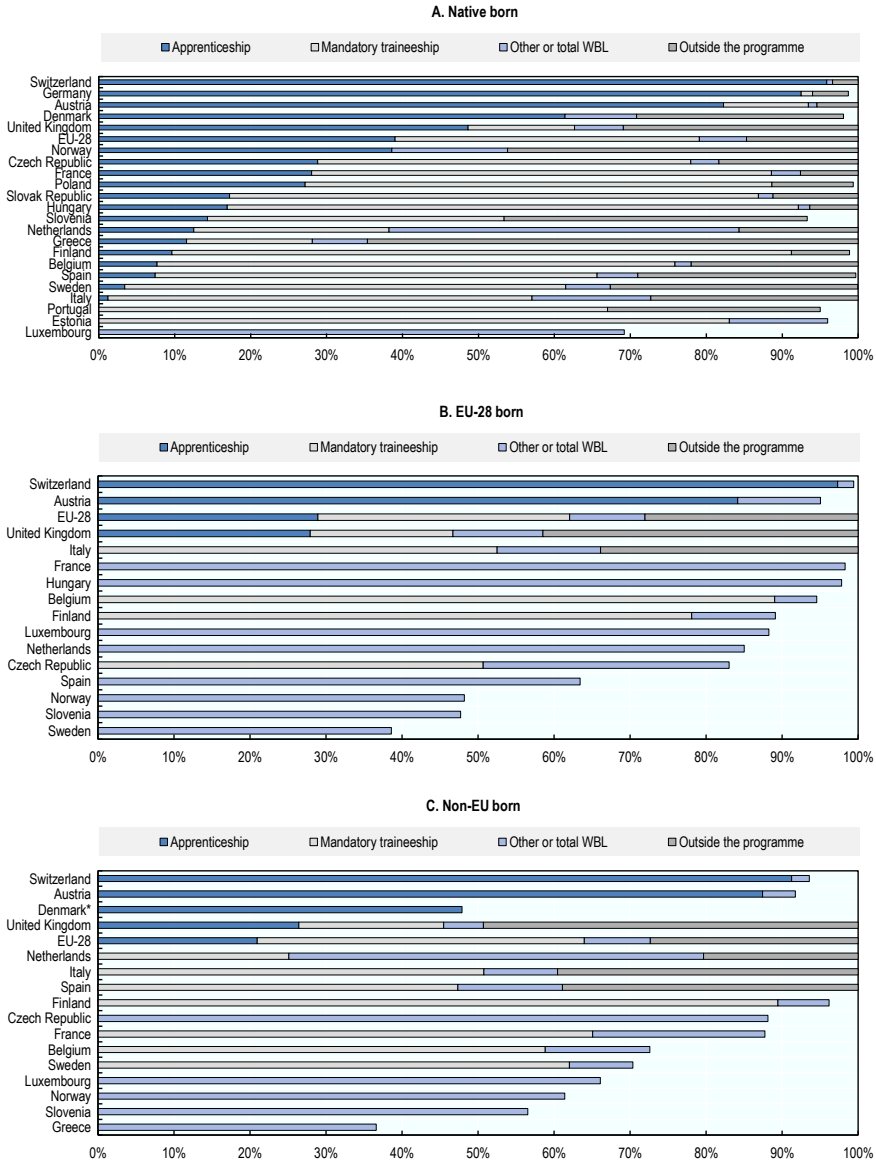
Both demand- and supply-side factors make apprenticeships more difficult to access

In general, the share of apprenticeships in upper-secondary VET is relatively low across countries (on average a quarter of upper-secondary VET students combine work-based learning in OECD countries (OECD, 2018[15])), but it is even lower among migrants. Therefore, increasing the overall availability of apprenticeship positions may improve the access of migrant students to apprenticeship opportunities. For example, lack of apprenticeship places is a common issue in some Nordic countries (Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education, 2016[18]) where apprenticeships largely start after school-based part during VET (which is discussed further in Chapter 5).

In other countries, despite many unfilled apprenticeships, the access to apprenticeship among migrants, in particular refugees, is a challenge due to various other factors. In Germany, 34% of apprenticeships were left unfilled in 2017 due to a shrinking student population and the increasing interest of school leavers in going to higher education, according to a recent survey of over 10 000 businesses, conducted by the Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry (DIHK, 2018[19]).[3] According to a survey by the German Federal Institute for VET (BIBB), about 1 in 10 companies reported that they had offered VET and work placement opportunities for refugees between 2015 and 2016 while one in four companies were approached regarding VET opportunities for refugees (BIBB, 2016[20]).

Figure 4.5. Migrant graduates are less likely to be engaged in work-based learning during VET

Type of work experience undertaken during the course of upper-secondary VET programme (15-34 years old)



Note: The sample covers upper-secondary VET graduates whose highest level of education was upper-secondary VET and who had work experience during the time they enrolled in the upper-secondary VET programme. Apprenticeship is defined as the mandatory work-based learning with a total duration of at least 6 months and paid. The distinction between apprenticeship and mandatory traineeship is based on duration and payment, and when is not possible to make the distinction, then the category of other work-based learning applies. Data for non-EU born in Denmark includes those who had work experience through apprenticeship only.

Source: Eurostat (2019[16]), EU Labour Force Survey 2016 ad hoc module. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/microdata/european-union-labour-force-survey.

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Table 4.1. The presence of migrant students vary across countries and VET systems

Migrant students as share (%) of total upper-secondary VET enrolments/entrants (i.e. natives plus migrants)

	Total VET		Work-based VET		School-based VET		General education
	2016	2017	2016	2017	2016	2017	2016
Denmark, entrants	11.6	12.8	7.9	8.3	12.4	13.8	
Italy, enrolments	11.0		-	-	-	-	4.1
Germany, entrants (all VET)	9.7	10.7	9.7	11.1	10.3	10.4	6.7
Germany, enrolments (apprenticeship)	-	-	7.9	9.4	-	-	-
Sweden, enrolment	17.4	18.2	-	-	-	-	23.8
Switzerland, enrolments	19.5	20.0	-	6.6 (9.6)	-	11.4 (15.4)	20.1
The Netherlands, enrolments		27.0	16.6		29.9	-	-

Note: The variables for migrants differ across countries upon the definition used in their national statistics, for example, Denmark (Western and non-Western: ages 15-34), Germany and Sweden (foreign national). The Netherlands' work-based VET refers to BBL (dual VET) and school-based VET refers to BOL. Transition programmes are not included in this table. For Switzerland, the data for the same disaggregation were not available, so the estimated share is an approximation: share of migrant students in occupations with apprenticeship only and occupations of school-based VET only. The number in brackets refers to the share of migrant students in occupations with higher number of total students in apprenticeship and in school-based VET respectively.

Source: National statistics. Switzerland from the Federal Statistical Office (2018[21]), *Education Statistics 2017*, https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfsstatic/dam/assets/5306746/master and Federal Statistical Office (2019[22]), *Élèves et étudiants: tableaux de base 2017/18*, https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/fr/home/statistiques/education-science/personnes-formation/degre-secondaire-II/professionnelle-initiale.assetdetail.7586317.html. The Netherlands from Statistics Netherlands (2019[7]), https://data.overheid.nl/dataset/53971-mbo--deelnemers--niveau--leerweg--migratieachtergrond. Denmark from Statistics Denmark (2019[9]), *Student Register*, http://dst.dk/ext/uddannelse/Uddannelsestabeller, http://dst.dk/ext/uddannelse/Uddannelsestabeller. Germany from Statistisches Bundesamt (2019[23]), *Statistisches Bundesamt*, https://www.destatis.de/DE/Home/_inhalt.html (integrierte *Ausbildungsberichterstattung, iABE [integrated training reporting])*. Italy is from INAPP (2017[24]), *INAPP. XV Rapporto di monitoraggio delle azioni formative realizzate nell'ambito del diritto-dovere. 2015-2016*, http://www.regione.puglia.it/web/ufficiostatistico/-/inapp-xv-rapporto-di-monitoraggio-delle-azioni-formative-realizzate-nell-ambito-del-diritto-dovere-2015-2016.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888933997949

Box 4.1. Understanding and comparing school-based VET and work-based VET systems

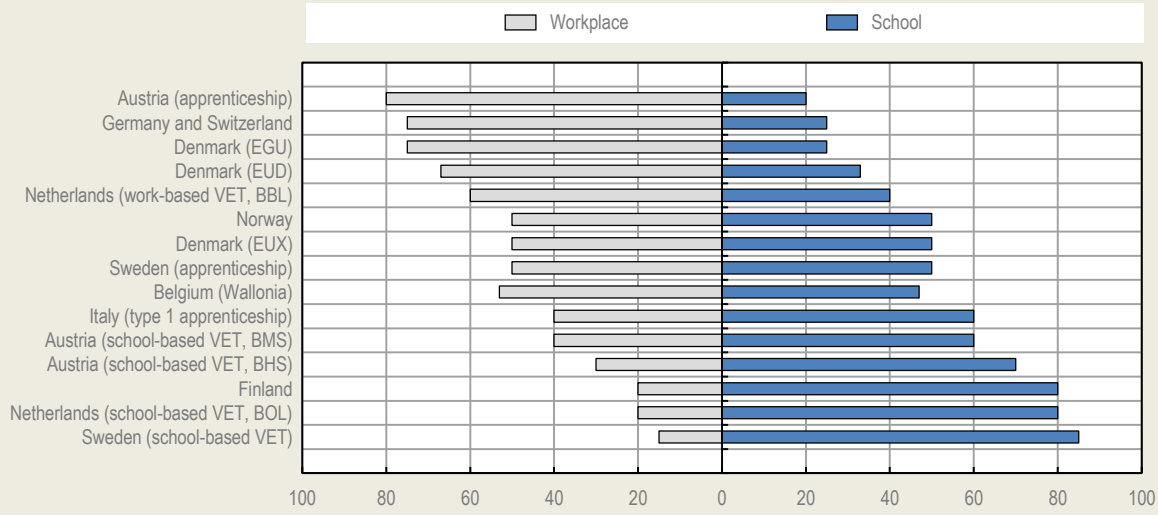
For several reasons, it is not possible to directly compare the share of migrants (entrants and enrolments) between school-based VET and work-based VET.

- *The degree of combining school and workplace learning varies* across countries (Figure 4.6) as well as sectors, occupation, employers' preference and incentives. Italy has 3 to 4-year regional VET that offers a greater proportion of work-based learning (WBL), compared to 5-year national VET programmes that are mainly school-based. Austria and Germany have dual VET that combines work and school, with a strong emphasis on apprenticeship. School-based VET exists in these countries, but is largely concentrated in sectors such as health or early childhood education and care. The overall degree of apprenticeship provision can be very low, which makes difficult to see if there is a significant difference in shares between migrants and natives – for example, Sweden has mainly school-based VET, and apprenticeship has grown recently but is still small at about 3% (Kuczera and Jeon, 2019[8]).

- *Data are not yet readily available* to see whether migrants are overrepresented in a specific form of VET (in the spectrum between school-based and work-based). For example, data from Eurostat are available in terms of work-based learning, but yet on an ad hoc basis (e.g. the EU Labour Force Survey 2009 and 2016 ad hoc module). The EU Labour Force Survey will collect such data starting in 2021.
- *Characteristics of migrant students differ* across countries, which may affect the likelihood of successful entry. They include levels of education and skills including language as well as preferences or perceptions regarding apprenticeship, aspirations and networks (Chadderton and Wischmann, 2014[12]).
- *Attractiveness, role and perception of each type of VET differs across countries.* The available pathways after completion also differ, which may affect the attractiveness of VET for migrants. School-based VET can be offered for low-performing students or for when the student is not able to find an apprenticeship in the place of apprenticeship. Denmark and Norway provide an alternative school-based VET if the student cannot find an apprenticeship, in order to fulfil the student right to upper-secondary education. While this is comparatively more flexible to offer, school-based VET is considered to be lower in quality.

Figure 4.6. Differences in VET systems may affect migrant integration through VET differently

Defined or typical time duration of selected VET programmes, by training place



Note: The duration of WBL varies within each country. For example, in Sweden, 60% of student who studied in 2011/12-2013/14 passed the minimum duration of WBL (15 weeks) and around 30% passed 17-49 weeks. Approximately 5% carried out WBL over 50 weeks, which corresponds to apprenticeship routes and 4% of student did not receive the required WBL (based on a survey carried out among school principals and teachers). For Denmark, the law on VET contains no prescription and time allocation is decided by the social partners for each trade (usually, the ratio is 1 in school and 4 in company).

Source: CEDEFOP (2019[25]), *Apprenticeship Schemes in European Countries*, http://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2801/722857. For France, Ministère de l'Intérieur (2016[26]), *Guide du demandeur d'asile en France*, https://www.immigration.interieur.gouv.fr/Asile/Guide-du-demandeur-d-asile-en-France. For the Netherlands, Norway, Finland, Sweden, see Kuczera, M. and S. Jeon, (2019[8]), *Vocational Education and Training in Sweden*, OECD Reviews of Vocational Education and Training, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/g2g9fac5-en. For apprenticeship programmes in Sweden, see Cedefop (2016[27]), *Spotlight on VET: Sweden*, http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/8095_en.pdf and Kuczera, M. and S. Jeon, (2019[8]), *Vocational Education and Training in Sweden*, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/g2g9fac5-en. For Austria, Cedefop (2018[28]), *Spotlight on VET: Austria*, http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/8127_en.pdf.

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Why are migrant students less successful in getting into upper-secondary VET?

Weaker knowledge and skills against entry requirements to upper-secondary VET may be a hurdle

Wide variation of entry requirements to upper-secondary VET

As seen in Chapter 3, migrant students tend to have weaker knowledge and skills, and for these migrants, requirements for entry into the mainstream upper-secondary VET schools can be barriers. Some countries that have strong adult education system provide courses for young adults to complete upper-secondary VET through adult education (see Box 5.2). Entry requirements in adult education are much more flexible, in particular for cases where the learning approach is more individualised.

Requirements for entry in the mainstream upper-secondary VET schools slightly vary across countries, especially age eligibility, but in general terms, they are similar (Table 4.2). Typically, the completion of lower-secondary education is formally required. When this is not officially required, it is still important as informal criteria in practice. In upper-secondary VET systems where students are required to find an employer, academic competencies (study record, grades, ranking) or work experience are typically an advantage.

In mainly school-based systems, such as in Finland, VET providers decide on student admissions and may use entrance and aptitude tests or interviews, for example, to support their selection (Eurydice). In Sweden, the requirements for young people are restrictive, serving effectively to reduce participation from those with weaker academic records. Such students typically follow an Introductory Programme which is preparatory to participation in continuing education or entry to the labour market. The requirements in adult education are flexible and individualised: for example, passing grades in certain subjects (which are required for the mainstream education) are not required.

More importantly, there are different entry points to mainstream upper-secondary VET across OECD countries and each of these entry points can have different requirements – such as a lower-secondary qualification or the availability of an apprenticeship placement (Figure 4.7). Migrants with weak academic skills can still have access to mainstream upper-secondary VET programmes while receiving support during VET, for example, in the Netherlands (MBO 1), Switzerland (2-year EBA) and possibly Germany. Sweden retains these students in preparatory courses and provide alternative support to transition into upper-secondary VET including adult education. In addition, VET schools in Sweden are responsible for finding a work placement for potential apprentices. For newly arrived migrants, this could be a significant advantage compared to more market-based matching systems.

In the case of dual systems such as in Germany and Switzerland, students must already have a training placement in order to gain access to a vocational programme. In the same way as job-seekers would apply for a job, young learners apply to employers to be taken on as an apprentice. Finding an apprenticeship under a market-based matching system can be challenging. Employer demand will fluctuate with local labour market conditions, meaning that even well prepared students might struggle to find a placement. With hiring decisions driven by a cost-benefit analysis of apprenticeship, work-based VET may serve to work against newly arrived or even established, well-qualified migrants when in competition with native-born peers. Being structurally less likely to have family members with direct personal experience of apprenticeship in the host countries, migrant learners can be expected to possess weaker resources in terms of cultural familiarity and social networks which positively help in securing placements.

In the case of Denmark and Norway, the difficulty in finding an apprenticeship comes later. In these countries, during the full-time school-based basic course (6-12 months for Denmark and 24 months for Norway) students have to find a training placement to be able to continue VET (which is discussed in Chapter 5). This is similar in Italy, but the work-based VET in upper-secondary education is largely linked

to mandatory traineeships (*Alternanza Scuola Lavoro*), which do not lead to a qualification by itself and are not involved in an employment contract as apprenticeships are (Savitki and Jeon, forthcoming[29]).

In Switzerland, those who are not ready to enter the mainstream VET programmes (3-4 year EFZ), including many migrants, can start with less demanding VET programmes (2-year EBA), which is part of formal upper-secondary VET system. Similarly in Italy, completers of 3-4 year regional VET can access to 5-year mainstream VET programmes but also those who complete the third year in the mainstream upper-secondary VET programmes can obtain the same qualification as regional VET (Savitki and Jeon, forthcoming[29]). In the Netherlands, MBO 1 is part of regular VET but functions as a transitional programme. In Sweden, the recently launched Vocational Packages in transitional programme that can be closely linked to the mainstream upper-secondary VET provision as well as adult education are expected to increase flexibility and permeability in the system (Kuczera and Jeon, 2019[8]). Such flexibility and permeability in these countries may allow migrants with weak skills to better access upper-secondary VET and provide wider opportunities to pathways towards becoming skilled workers.

Are entry language requirements realistic?

Most, but not all, OECD countries require specific levels of language proficiency. For example, in Germany, while no formal prerequisites are required to get an apprenticeship, employers often demand that apprentices should reach level B2. In Switzerland, transitional programmes require an A2 level in CFER and an apprenticeship requires a B1 level. In Sweden, to be eligible for upper-secondary VET, students should master Swedish as a Second Language at a compulsory school level in addition to passing grades in English, mathematics and five other subjects, before the year they turn 20 (Kuczera and Jeon, 2019[8]). In the Netherlands, an A2 level is required for Level 1 programme in the upper-secondary VET (MBO 1). This Level 1 programme concentrates young people with a migrant background and weak Dutch language skills. For the higher levels (Level 2-4), a level close to B1 is required.

In the United States, in general many VET programmes accept adult students only after they have reached a certain proficiency level with local variations. For example, in Washington D.C., some public charter schools require ESL learners to reach National Reporting System[4] level Advanced before starting vocational nursing classes (Santa Monica College, 2019[30]). Other programmes require applicants to have the equivalent of a high school degree. Community college programmes use *Accuplacer* (college or technical school placement tests) and TOEFL to place students in VET and concurrent ESL classes.

The newly arrived may take several years to master language to the level of entry requirement for VET. Even if there are no formal entry requirements it may take time for newly arrived to reach a level of language proficiency needed in a learning environment: for example, in Sweden this usually takes between six and eight years (Skolverket, 2011[31]). Ultimately, building closer links between upper-secondary VET and adult education (Chapter 6) can benefit migrants and refugees as they may otherwise miss opportunities to obtain the qualifications they require.

Table 4.2. Mainstream upper-secondary VET requirements/student admissions criteria in selected countries

Country	Legal requirements (age, permit)	Academic and other requirements/criteria	Flexibility of eligibility and financial support
Austria	Entry at 15 onwards Work permit	Completion of nine years of compulsory schooling. No specific school qualification is required.	Asylum seekers below the age of 25 may be granted a work permit for an apprenticeship in shortage occupations. Otherwise the asylum seekers do not have access to VET.
Denmark	Entry at 15-24	Danish 9th grade leaving exams or exam grade average equivalent to 2 or higher in maths and Danish (level G).[5]	Vocational colleges will decide.
Finland	Entry at 15 (minimum 15 – no maximum age)	Completed the basic education syllabus. Admission can be based on academic performance and work experience.	Providers decide to organise an entrance exam or an aptitude test. Students receive financial support.
Germany	Entry at 16-18 and work permit (vary across *Länders*)	No formal requirements but lower-secondary qualifications or language skills are generally required (vary across Länders).	Eligible to receive support for the costs of living for the duration of training or studies under the same conditions as German citizens. Apprentices receive wage.
Italy	Entry at 15-18	First-cycle leaving certificate (8 years of education). Schools establish their own criteria when excessive applications.	Apprenticeship that leads to a vocational qualification and upper-secondary education diploma (for ages 15-25) may apply to upper-secondary VET programmes.
Netherlands	At least 16	No specific requirements for entry Level 1. Admission requirements apply for courses from level 2 upwards: e.g. a school-leaving certificate or completion of a basic VET for level 2 entry.	Asylum seekers do not have a right to financial study aid from the government, but loans for vocational training are made available to beneficiaries of international protection through the Education Executive Agency (DUO).
Norway	Entry at 15-24	Completion of compulsory education (not pass grade but participation).	
Sweden	Entry at 15-20	Pass grade (A-E) in Swedish, English[6] and mathematics and in at least five other subjects.	Migrants with a residence permit are entitled to Swedish student finance (asylum seekers are excluded).
Switzerland	Entry at 15 and work permit (varies by cantons)	Completion of lower secondary level.	Various training companies also require applicants to sit an aptitude test; entrance examination for full-time vocational schools.

Note: Age requirements may differ depending on sector. Academic criteria include equivalents. Denmark and Finland offer VET in English or other languages, in which case an equivalent level of language of instruction is required instead.

Source: Eurydice (2018[32]), *Organisation of Vocational and Technical Upper Secondary Education (various countries)*, https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice for Finland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland. Euroguidance Austria (2014[33]), "The Austrian education system", https://www.bildungssystem.at/en/ for Austria. The Danish Ministry of Higher Education and Science (2017[34]), "Admission to vocational education and training (VET)", https://ufm.dk/en/education/recognition-and-transparency/recognition-guide/admission-vet for Denmark. The Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture (2018[35]), "Qualifications and studies in vocational education and training", https://minedu.fi/en/qualifications-and-studies_vet for Finland. The European Migration Network (2016[36]), *Synthesis Report – Integration of Beneficiaries of International Protection/Humanitarian Protection into the Labour Market: Policies and Good Practices*, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/reports/docs/emn-studies/emn-studies-00_integration_of_beneficiaries_of_international_protection__eu_2015_en_final.pdf. For France, Forum Réfugiés-Cosi (2018[37]), "France: Access to the labour market", www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/france/reception-conditions/employment-and-education/access-labour-market. For the age of compulsory schooling, see (OECD, 2018[15]), *Education at a Glance 2018: OECD Indicators*, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2018-en, and for Italy Cedefop (2017[38]), *Apprenticeship Review: Italy. Building Education and Training Opportunities through Apprenticeships,* https://doi.org/10.2801/63364.

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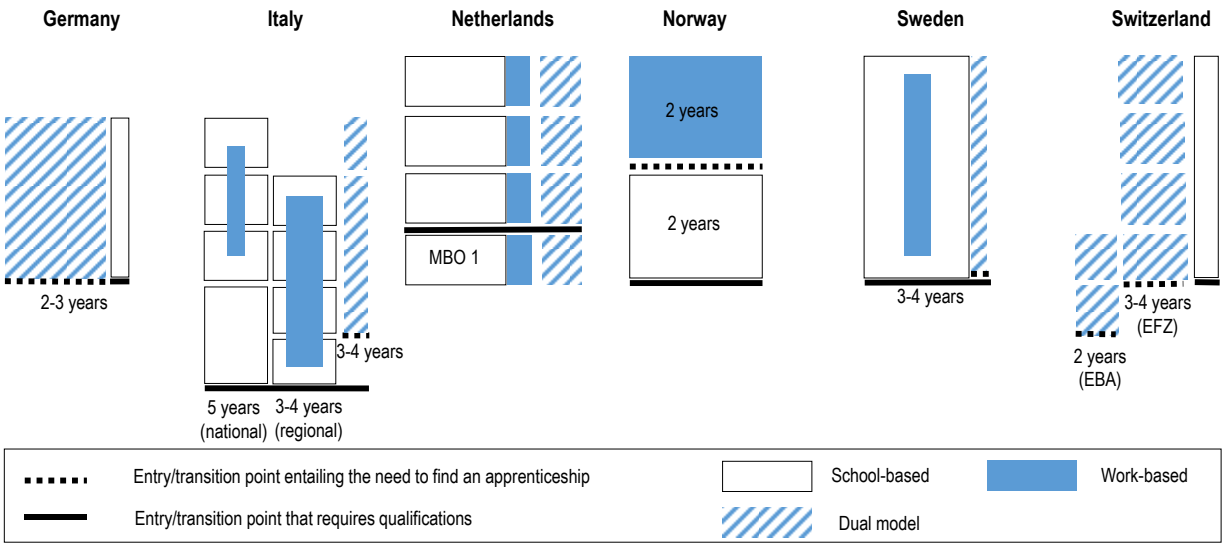
Figure 4.7. Indicative illustration on different entry points and requirements of the mainstream upper-secondary VET systems in selected OECD countries



Note: Size does not accurately reflect the proportion of different programmes and steps.
Source: Author's own elaboration.

Preparatory measures may not be sufficiently effective

As a consequence, many migrants may spend considerable time on transitional courses that do not lead to a formal qualification. Direct comparison regarding the transition rate to mainstream upper-secondary VET programmes across countries is not feasible because of different programme lengths, objectives, content, quality and requirements as well as student composition and pathways to different VET programmes (vis-à-vis general education). Nevertheless, evidence shows that transition to a regular upper-secondary VET programme ranges from 20% to 80%.

For example, in Switzerland, 78% of those in the transition system proceed into VET while 7% proceed into general education (Babel, Laganà and Gaillard, 2016[39]). Under the German dual system, a sub-national transition rate in Bavaria is estimated about 40% in 2016 from a 2-year preparatory programme (Vocational Integration Classes [*Berufsintegrationsklassen*]) to dual or school-based VET, 7% continued with preparatory traineeship, 4% with upper-secondary education and 5% found employment (Schiffhauer and Magister, 2016[40]). For Hamburg, around 30% entered VET, around 8% found employment and another 7% continued with upper secondary education (Hamburger Institut für Berufliche Bildung, 2018[41]). In the Netherlands, following a Level 1 programme in the upper-secondary VET (MBO 1), 60% of students of school-based VET move to Level 2 (the transition rate to Level 2 is 21% for apprentices due to higher employment rates) (Fazekas and Litjens, 2014[42]). In Sweden, although the VET entry requirements are less demanding than the general track, many newly arrived young people find it difficult to meet these criteria within prescribed time limits (Kuczera and Jeon, 2019[8]). In a transitional programme focusing on language training where foreign-born students are overrepresented, about 36% of those students who started this programme in 2011-12 were able to transfer to a mainstream upper-secondary programme within five years; 21% of these students proceeded to a VET programme (Skolverket, 2017[43]). As Sweden has a well-established adult education system where language teaching is often combined with vocational training, 47% of the students continue with adult education. This picture may change for the students starting from 2018 when Vocational Packages were introduced in the transitional programmes (Kuczera and Jeon, 2019[8]).

Preparatory programmes help migrant students to prepare for further education and labour market, there is a wide variety of preparatory programmes and they are largely outside of formal education system thus quality and effectiveness vary and they are rarely rigorously evaluated (Kis, 2016[44]).

Poor social networks between students with a migrant background and employers

Jobs in OECD countries are often filled through networks or informal contacts. Social networks present a form of social capital, connecting job seekers with individuals, whether recruiters or peer workers, with knowledge about economic opportunities. Creating and maintaining such social networks is an area where recently-arrived refugees face difficulty (Liebig and Tronstad, 2018[45]). In Germany, although the difficulty in finding and completing an apprenticeship is a widely present problem regardless of student's migration background, a higher share of students with a migration background have difficulties in securing a traineeship than native-born peers (Beicht, 2017[46]).[7]

From the demand side, many employers who are considering training and hiring refugees see challenges rather than opportunities. While approximately 40% of 2 230 small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) surveyed in Germany regard VET for refugees as an opportunity to ensure the next generation of skilled workers, a similarly high figure did not feel that they were able to offer a clear assessment on this issue, and approximately one in seven of companies surveyed were sceptical about making such a statement. Furthermore, half of the surveyed SMEs felt that the economy would suffer a financial impact because of refugee education training – an impact which could only be managed with government assistance (BIBB, 2016[20]).

Discrimination in the apprenticeship market

A series of experimental studies have shown that migrant students are often vulnerable to discrimination. For example, in an experiment that sent out fictitious, identical applications, it took on average seven applications by young people with a Turkish name to be invited to an interview for an apprenticeship placement versus five with a German name (Schneider, Yemane and Weinmann, 2014[47]). Further studies have shown that discrimination in the application process is particularly pronounced for Muslim applicants (Scherr, Janz and Müller, 2013[48]).

In Switzerland, even among candidates with comparable competence levels and socioeconomic backgrounds, foreign nationals are less likely to get an apprenticeship contract (Haeberlin, Imdorf and Kronig, 2005[49]). In a 2014 study, non-native students in Switzerland had to send twice as many applications as native students to secure an apprenticeship (23 compared to 11) (Imdorf and Scherr, 2015[50]) while in 2017, they sent on average 15.7 applications, compared to 8.8 for Swiss school-leavers (LINK, 2017[51]).

Perceived discrimination might be more common than actual discrimination but that does not diminish its effect – the perception of discrimination can reduce the attractiveness of VET or discourage young people from actively searching for an apprenticeship or a job (Bergseng, Degler and Lüthi, 2019[52]). A survey in 2013 reported that more than half of the refugees in Germany felt that they had experienced discrimination, with the most frequent cases of discrimination occurring the search for employment or apprenticeships (55%) (Antidiskriminierungsstelle des Bundes, 2016[53]). Other evidence from Germany suggests that companies with little migrant experience are typically more likely to discriminate (Barabasch, Scharnhorst and Leumann, 2016[54]).

Discrimination in the apprenticeship market is a difficult problem to tackle as the character of discrimination and effective responses to it are still poorly understood (Avis, Mirchandani and Warmington, 2017[55]). Discrimination may be unspoken and reflect poorly informed attitudes and assumptions related to perceptions over the type of person who would be well-placed to thrive in an apprenticeship, or could reflect

concerns over potential legal barriers preventing employers from reaping the full benefits of investing in an apprentice (Chadderton and Wischmann, 2014[12]).

Effective approaches to enhance migrant entry into upper-secondary VET

Flexible modes of VET provision with varying entry requirements can address barriers to VET entry

Tailored VET programmes benefit both learners and employers as these programmes address the specific needs of both parties. Adjusting key parameters of VET programmes including apprenticeship schemes, such as through changing duration or training time arrangement and providing remedial courses for basic skills and other support measures, helps balance costs and benefits to be well aligned with employers' business objectives (Kis, 2016[44]). There are established means of improving access to VET for youth-at-risk including migrant students.

For example, the 2-year EBA programme in Switzerland, discussed above, presents an important example of the way in which changing the design of apprenticeship programmes can increase access while maintaining attractiveness to employers. Modularising VET provision may also reduce barriers to entry for youth-at-risk. Sweden has recently introduced Vocational Packages (*yrkespaket*)[8] that provide the possibility of obtaining partial qualifications within Introductory Programmes as well as adult education. The Packages may enable those who are not sufficiently qualified for a mainstream upper-secondary programme (in particular, newly arrived) to be able to work with a partial qualification rather than no qualification at all. Vocational Packages are an attractive option for newly arrived students as they offer an alternative way for young people to obtain an upper-secondary qualification or to transition to the world of work as a qualified worker. The packages allow different combinations of existing courses, including work-based learning, delivered at different educational levels, thus can be an efficient and attractive tool for education and career development. Different packages can be combined based on a student's career goal or employer needs. They are developed with employers, industry experts, local authorities and schools, and flexible in terms of skills, requirements, curricula and duration. The packages may decrease time spent at school or training through modularising skills and by delivering qualifications that are in high demand or shortage in the labour market.

Allowing legal flexibility for young migrants and refugees to enter into and complete upper-secondary VET

Legal status and type of permit possessed by migrants and refugees have important repercussions regarding their access to upper-secondary VET and other support services. Uncertain legal status – being defined as an asylum seeker, a person with a temporary protection, refugee or resident – is one of the main barriers preventing employers from taking on apprentices who are migrants and refugees. Without legal certainty, refugees and asylum seekers may not want to engage or fully complete non-compulsory upper-secondary studies or apprenticeships, and equally schools and employers would hesitate to accept these migrants (this is less the case for refugees who have permanent residence and more for other humanitarian migrants and asylum seekers who have temporary or limited status). For employers, offering an apprenticeship is a substantial investment with returns which may not be fully compensated until after the conclusion of the course of training. Even if they take on refugees and asylum seekers as an apprentices as part of their corporate social responsibility activities, it often costs more for employers due to the needs of additional support such as language training and more demanding mentorship. Through providing additional legal flexibilities, Germany and Sweden are encouraging young migrants and refugees to enter the education system, become skilled workers, and integrate more fully into their host countries (Box 4.2). Support measures for employers by clarifying the legal status of migrants such as 3+2 rule in

Germany can help to prevent discriminatory behaviour by reassuring employers. However, there is no data available on how many persons have received a status under these schemes, which renders it difficult to ascertain the impact of such measures.

Box 4.2. Efforts to remove legal barriers for VET and to inform VET employers

Germany introduced the "3+2 rule" to grant rejected asylum seekers, under certain conditions, a tolerated status for three years if they are doing an apprenticeship. They are guaranteed that during their education they will not be deported even if their asylum claim is denied. After completing VET, they can remain in the country for two years more if they find employment corresponding to their skills level. While this rule in principle enhances legal certainty considerably, the implementation of this rule differs across regions.

In **Sweden**, through amendments to the Act on Temporary Restrictions on the Possibility of Obtaining Residence Permit in Sweden in 2017, newly arrived young people are entitled to a temporary residence permit to enable them to complete their upper-secondary education. In 2018, further amendments were made as a temporary measure to enable young people who arrived in Sweden at the latest on 24 November 2015, and who have been negatively affected by lengthy processing times and received a decision on expulsion, a possibility of obtaining a residence permit to enable them to finish their upper-secondary education if they meet certain criteria. These changes in 2018 have also broaden the scope of study pathways eligible for residence permit to include those who attend vocational packages in introductory programmes or adult education.

Source: Bergseng, B., E. Degler and S. Lüthi (2019[52]), *Unlocking the Potential of Migrants in Germany*, https://doi.org/10.1787/82ccc2a3-en for Germany and inputs from the Swedish Ministry of Education and Research for Sweden.

Innovations in matching of migrant skills to VET and labour market needs

Currently, most countries distribute asylum seekers randomly or based on a set of criteria, but rarely based on patterns of labour market demand or VET outcomes. In Switzerland, while currently the distribution of asylum seekers is done randomly among its cantons according to a quota system, the State Secretariat for Migration has placed 1 000 asylum seekers according to a new algorithm within a pilot project which aims to see if more strategic distribution will lead to a meaningful increase in employment success over a three-year period. A control group of equal size will be distributed at random to compare success rates. Switzerland is the first country to test such a data-based placement system, but it may be an attractive model to replicate. Analysis informing the pilot exercise suggests that use of the algorithm could increase employment of asylum seekers by up to 30%. Based on big data gleaned from tens of thousands of people from past and present – focussing on gender, nationality, age, language and other criteria – the algorithm calculates in which canton an asylum seeker would be most likely to find work. It also continuously learns and updates itself according to the situation and placement success of new arrivals, as well as the constantly shifting labour markets in the various cantons (Bansak et al., 2018[56]; ETH Zurich, 18 January 2018[57]).

In addition, countries can also distribute students with a migrant background to avoid their concentration in disadvantaged schools. Schools that struggle to do well for native students might struggle even more with a large population of children who cannot speak or understand the language of instruction. Countries that distribute migrant students across a mix of schools and classrooms achieve better outcomes for these students. A more even distribution also relieves the pressure on schools and teachers when large numbers of migrant students arrive over a short period of time (OECD, 2018[58]).

Intermediary bodies can help to build networks

A strong relationship between organisations serving young refugees and local employers is critical, since refugees themselves have limited or no networks in the host country. The lack of networks means a lack of information about the availability of job or apprenticeship opportunities and the knowledge about required qualifications and other attributes for those opportunities (Mathema, 2018[59]). Institutions that provide preparatory courses including language training can facilitate the smooth transition of humanitarian migrants into VET and the labour market by actively reaching out to employers and building professional networks to connect employers and refugee students.

KAUSA (*Koordinierungsstelle Ausbildung und Migration* [Co-ordination Office for Vocational Education and Training and Migration]) in Germany, a federal initiative, helps apprenticeship market matching by supporting companies that have apprenticeship tradition which are mainly owned by migrants. It also promotes the engagement of migrant entrepreneurs, who are often not aware whether and how they can offer apprenticeships. In addition, the Chamber of Industry and Commerce (IHK) has initiated a programme to support the integration of refugees, where they inform and counsel employers and help refugees to find apprenticeships. Local IHK agencies usually offer information events, individual counselling, firm visits, counselling in VET schools, job fairs and other initiatives (Bergseng, Degler and Lüthi, 2019[52]).

In the United Kingdom, the Bridges Programme matches refugees with employers who offer short (around 12 days) work opportunities. The involvement of this programme ensures that the placement (and possible continuation of work) does not violate immigration or labour law, depending on an individual's status or benefits. While placements are unpaid and there is no obligation to offer a job afterwards, many employers choose to keep refugees as employees (OECD and UNHCR, 2018[60]).

Intermediary bodies can be internet-based, helping to match employers and apprentices. In Switzerland, new initiatives such as LENA[9] (an apprenticeship notification service where one can search apprenticeship places by filtered by places, cantons and occupations) may play such role.

Enhancing direct contact between migrants and employers

Direct contact between migrants and employers has also been observed to be helpful to tackle prejudices and obstacles. For example, transitional courses, pre-apprenticeships, or internships, class visits by employers or VET fairs, discussed in Chapter 3, are effective measures to signal that migrants are ready for apprenticeship that yield high productivity as other candidates. Direct contact can challenge discriminatory assumptions and enable migrants to better understand the broad expectations of employers, including the navigation of recruitment processes (Scherr, Janz and Müller, 2015[61]). Especially for smaller firms, which in many countries are responsible for a large share of apprentices, increasing familiarity is a means of addressing concerns over the potentially perceived risk of higher costs linked to the recruitment of migrant apprentices. The availability of in-work support measures by professional organisations and regional institutions as well as training networks (Box 4.3) is also likely to increase confidence.

Box 4.3. Mechanisms to help students secure an apprenticeship

1. Training company network can help training and hiring migrant students

In **Switzerland**, training networks (*Ausbildungsverbund*) consist of training companies that collaborate to offer training placements. The apprentices typically rotate between the training companies with a period of one year in each company. This initiative increases the supply of training placements and gives apprentices access to the diverse learning environments of multiple firms (Imdorf and Leemann, 2011[62]). When individual training firms become more specialised, a network of training firms can offer the broader range of skills required to be trained in an occupation (Jørgensen, 2015[63]). For instance, in Basel the trade association directly hires commercial apprentices, who then rotate among participating firms. Besides addressing potential discrimination, this approach enhances the engagement of small firms in training activities by taking care of administrative processes.

Training offices (*opplæringskontor*) in **Norway** aim to establish new apprenticeship places, supervise training firms, train apprentice supervisors and deal with administrative tasks. Many training offices organise the theoretical part of training and sign the apprenticeship contracts on behalf of firms. About 70-80% of firms with apprentices are associated with training offices. The offices often take responsibility for recruiting new training enterprises and for training staff involved in the tutoring of apprentices. The institutional support given by the offices is important for the apprenticeship scheme to work.

2. Better information on apprenticeship markets

In **Switzerland**, in addition to training company networks that are developed to share costs and experience of apprenticeship across companies, an "apprenticeship barometer" estimates demand and supply for apprenticeship and identifies mismatches.

In **Germany**, the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) carries out short-term econometric models to forecast the supply and demand for apprenticeship places for the following year.

Source: OECD (2018[1]), *Seven Questions about Apprenticeships: Answers from International Experience*, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264306486-en; OECD (2010[64]), *Learning for Jobs*, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264087460-en for Austria, Germany and Switzerland. OECD (2016[65]), *Getting Skills Right: Assessing and Anticipating Changing Skill Needs*, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264252073-en. Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education (SIU) (Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education, 2016[18]), *Vocational Education and Training in Europe: Norway*, https://cumulus.cedefop.europa.eu/files/vetelib/2016/2016_CR_NO.pdf.

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Notes

[1] Surveys of young people displaying apprenticeship entry maturity and registered with the Federal Employment Agency (BA) as training place applicants (BA/ Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) Applicant Surveys 2004 to 2016) (German Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training, 2017[70]).

[2] People with a toleration status are persons whose deportation is temporarily suspended due to administrative or other obstacles (Degler and Liebig, 2017[70]).

[3] National estimation revealed that the number entering university studies is 40% larger compared to ten years ago whilst 7% fewer young people apply to an apprenticeship (Zimmermann, 2016[70]).

[4] The National Reporting System (NRS) is the accountability system for the federally funded, State-administered adult education program.

[5] For example, FVU (Preparatory Adult Education) level 4, AVU (General Adult Education) Danish as a second language, Danish 3 Exam or the Study Test in Danish as a Second Language (Higher Education Exam).

[6] Pass grade in English could be exempted, for example in the case of newly arrived migrants that do not have any previous knowledge of English. Those students should be offered basic English in upper secondary school.

[7] 26% students with migration background versus 12% of those without reported no problem in finding an apprenticeship. Those with migration background have 14% lower chance to get contract in dual vocational training (ibid).

[8] See Skolverket (2017[68]) and (2017[69]).

[9] https://www.orientation.ch or www.berufsberatung.ch

5 Getting on: Supporting young migrants and refugees to complete upper-secondary vocational education and training

This chapter presents an overview of the experiences of migrant students enrolled in upper secondary vocational education and training (VET) and discusses what challenges they face in successfully completing provision and what support is available for them. Addressing completion is important as resources are wasted due to dropout, which may result in loss of confidence in the system. The chapter also discusses how countries can ensure that young migrants gain necessary and substantial knowledge, skills and experience through VET.

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.

Challenges of young migrants progressing through upper-secondary VET

Vocational education and training (VET), in particular work-based learning, is seen as a vehicle for improving labour market outcomes for disadvantaged young people and adults (OECD, 2018[1]). Personalised support both at schools and in workplaces can increase the speed with which an apprentice can become a skilled, productive worker. Other supportive interventions such as changes to the standard duration of an apprenticeship can also meet the needs of apprentices with different backgrounds. Such measures are particularly important for migrant students as they are less likely to succeed in completing upper-secondary VET even if they were successful entering into a VET programme. This chapter discusses the challenges faced by migrant students and possible measures to address those challenges.

Migrant students are less successful in completing upper-secondary VET

In general, upper-secondary VET completion rates are lower than general education

In general, completion rates of upper-secondary VET (59%) are lower than those of general education (73%), based on available data for 14 OECD countries (Figure 5.1, Panel A). Except Israel and Portugal, those countries with available data exhibit lower completion rates in vocational programmes compared to general programmes. Completion rates of upper secondary education among migrants are also lower than those of native students (Figure 5.1, Panel B).

VET completion rates are even lower among migrant students

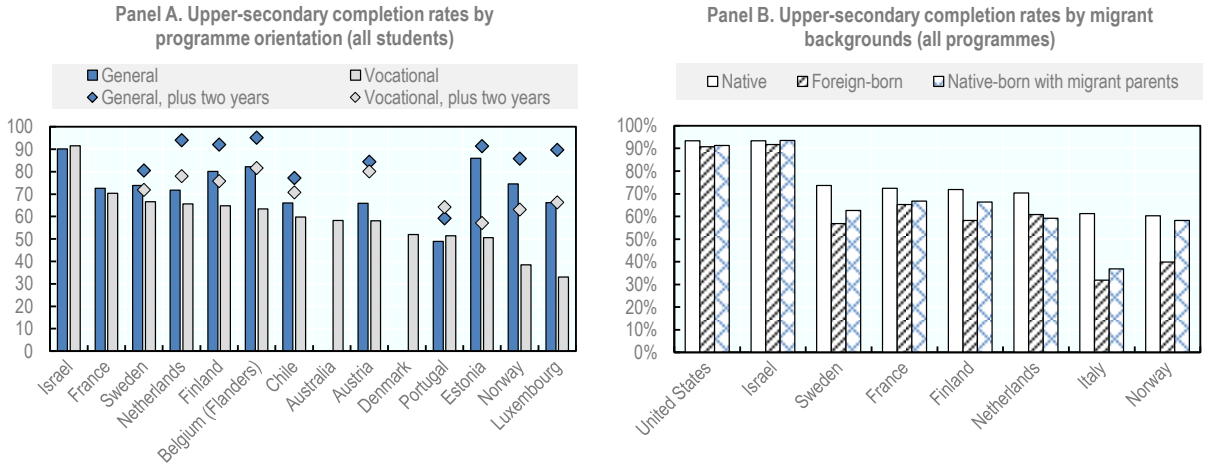
While internationally comparable data on completion rates both by programme orientation and migration backgrounds are scarce, available evidence shows that VET completion rates are even lower among migrant students (Figure 5.2).

In Nordic countries, the gap between native and migrant students ranges from 9 percentage points (pp) in Finland to 18 pp in Sweden. For Germany, dropout rates among foreign-born apprentices are up to 50% higher than among German-born apprentices (Kuczera and Field, 2018[2]). In addition, a survey data in Germany has shown that apprentices with migrant parents are less likely to complete VET within the three-year period (77%) compared to VET students without migrant backgrounds (85%) (Beicht, Granato and Ulrich, 2011[3]).[1] In Switzerland, migrants undertaking 3-4 year apprenticeships (EFZ) are less likely to complete the programme than native peers. They experience higher levels of dropout and contract terminations[2], around one-third of students with a migrant background drop out from apprenticeships, while among Swiss nationals, about one-fifth drop out.

Other evidence also confirms lower completion rates among migrant students in VET, for example in England (Kuczera and Field, 2018[2]), Austria, Belgium (Flemish Community), the Czech Republic, Denmark, Hungary and the Netherlands (Cedefop, 2016[4]). Tracking of students from a preparatory programme to upper-secondary VET completion is rare, but in Sweden, only 8% of students who started a transitional programme focusing on language training in 2011-12 ultimately completed with an upper-secondary VET diploma within five years (Skolverket, 2017[5]).

Figure 5.1. In general, completion rates in vocational programmes and for migrants are lower in upper-secondary education (2015)

Upper-secondary completion rates (%)



Note: In Panel A, completion rates are the shares of entrants who have graduated within the theoretical duration (and plus two years) of the programme in which the student entered. Year of reference for France and Finland are other than 2015.
In Panel B, data from France and the United States are based on longitudinal studies whereas the other countries provided data based on registries. Longitudinal studies would not account for the most recent waves of immigration. Year of reference for Finland (Panel A), France (Panel A and B), Norway (Panel B) and the United States (Panel B) are other than 2015.
Source: OECD 2018 ad hoc survey on upper-secondary completion rate by equity dimension from OECD (2018[6]), *Education at a Glance 2018: OECD Indicators*, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2018-en for migrant backgrounds; OECD (2017[7]), *Education at a Glance 2017: OECD Indicators*, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2017-en for programme orientation. Denmark and Australia (25 years and under) from Dommers et al. (2017[8]) *Engaging Young Early School Leavers in Vocational Training*, https://www.ncver.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/1390700/Engaging-young-early-school-leavers-in-vocational-training.pdf, Jørgensen, C. (2015[9]), *Recent innovations in VET in Denmark – responses to key challenges for VET*, Nord-VET – The future of VET in the Nordic Countries, http://nord-vet.dk/indhold/uploads/report1c_dk.pdf, and OECD (2014[10]), *Education Policy Outlook: Denmark*, http://www.oecd.org/education/EDUCATION%20POLICY%20OUTLOOK%20DENMARK_EN.pdf.

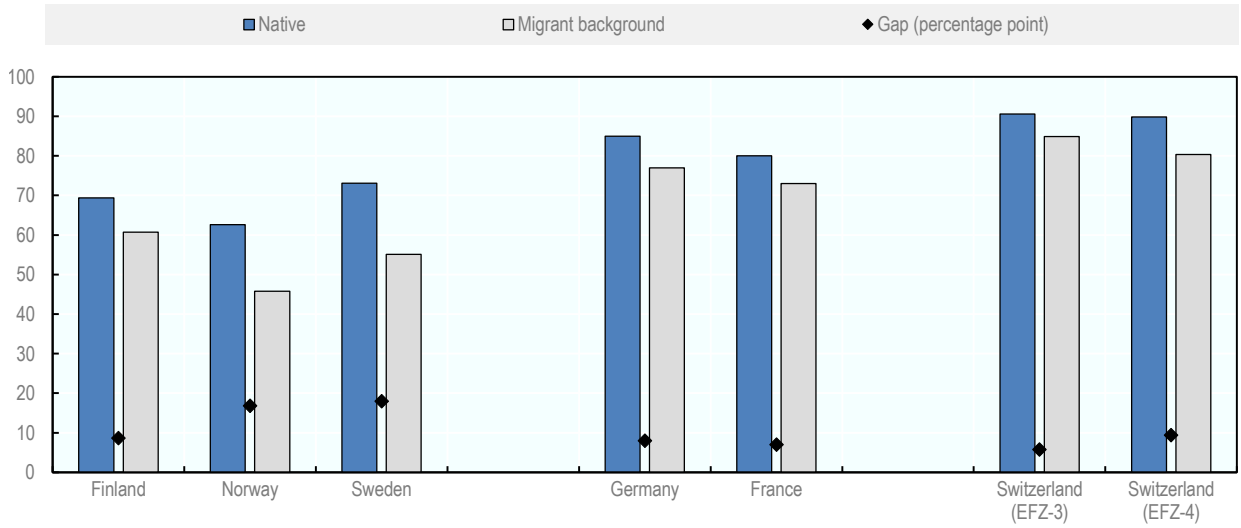
StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888933998006

Higher dropout among migrants is more problematic for work-based provision

Dropout is a particular problem for work-based provision, such as apprenticeship, because skills and productivity develop over time so the productive value of the apprentice emerges most strongly towards the end of apprenticeship. Employers typically invest relatively more at an earlier phase of the apprenticeship and recoup investment at a later phase. Therefore, dropouts cause loss of investment and time for both apprentices and employers. For school-based provision, work-based learning tends to be at the end of programmes of study, those dropped out of the programme at the earlier phase of the VET programme would have much less opportunity to apply skills in real workplaces, develop economic networks and references and position themselves optimally for transitions into work (OECD, 2018[1]).

Figure 5.2. Completion rates in upper-secondary VET are lower among students with migrant backgrounds

Share (%) of students who completed upper-secondary VET with an expected qualification within 3-5 years, cohorts from various years



Note: Data from France (2003-12) refer to school leavers with qualification without distinction of programme orientation. Migrants in Germany refer to apprentices with migrant parents (no information on place of birth). Migrants in Switzerland refer to permanent residents without Swiss citizenship, both native- and foreign-born.

Source: Official Statistics of Finland (2018[11]), "Foreign background especially affected completion of upper secondary level education" (2013 cohort by 2016), http://www.stat.fi/til/opku/2018/opku_2018_2018-03-14_tie_001_en.html. Statistics Norway (2019[12]), "Completion rates of pupils in upper secondary education" (2012 cohort by 2017), https://www.ssb.no/en/statbank/table/11222/. Skolverket, (2017[13]), "Monitoring results of upper secondary schools 2017" (2013 cohort by 2016), https://www.skolverket.se/getFile?file=3766.

Beicht, U., M. Granato and J. Ulrich (2011[3]), "Mindert die Berufsausbildung die soziale Ungleichheit von Jugendlichen mit und ohne Migrationshintergrund?", in Granato, M., D. Münk and R. Weiß (eds.), *Migration als Chance: ein Beitrag der beruflichen Bildung*, W. Bertelsmann Verlag, Bielefeld. Le Rhun, B. et al. (2013[14]), "Origine et insertion des jeunes sans diplôme", *Formations et emploi*, https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/1374351?sommaire=1374357. Swiss Federal Statistical Office (2018[15]), Termination of apprenticeship contract, re-entry, certification status [su-f-15.10.01-06] (2012 cohort by 2017), https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/en/home.assetdetail.6446763.html.

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Why are dropout rates higher for migrants?

Youth at risk develop skills more slowly and thus tend to need more instruction time, which may create higher costs for employers (OECD, 2018[1]; Kis, 2016[16]). The risk of taking a migrant apprentice is higher than a native apprentice, as migrant students are more likely to dropout. These students may struggle with lack of language and other skills, adjusting to both school and workplace environments that are still new to them, and dealing with a variety of other socio-cultural issues. Several reasons may explain this higher dropout rates among migrants and different VET systems exhibit different reasons of dropout.

Low completion rates among migrants are largely due to lack of academic proficiency or relevant skills

Evidence suggests that low completion rates among migrants are explained largely by their lack of academic proficiency or relevant skills. For Switzerland, differences in skills largely explain contract terminations and grade repetitions (Wolter and Zumbuehl, 2018[17]). The above-mentioned survey in

Germany (Beicht, Granato and Ulrich, 2011[3]) has also shown that when controlling for migrant students' generally less advantageous starting positions (such as lower grades and lower likelihood to do VET in their preferred occupation), the likelihood of obtaining a VET degree are comparable with native peers (Bergseng, Degler and Lüthi, 2019[18]).

Difficulty in securing training placements during VET in some countries

While the difficulty in securing an apprenticeship is an issue for VET entry in Germany and Switzerland, it is an issue for continuing and completing VET in Denmark and Norway. In Denmark and Norway, upper-secondary VET is split over two stages, the first school-based lasting one to two years and the second work-based. The majority of young people who enrol on such programmes do not have a training contract beforehand and they face the difficulty in securing a training place during the school-based part of their programmes (see Figure 4.7). Therefore in these two countries, the difficulty in securing a training place during VET may result in dropout in VET (Jørgensen, 2015[9]). With the supply of training placements in companies depending on the vibrancy of the labour market, in times of economic downturn, many students who have completed the first part of the VET programme may struggle to access to a training placement. This includes students with a migrant background, in particular non-Western students (OECD, 2016[19]).

In response to the shortages of work-placements, Denmark offers a school-based practical training (*skolepraktik*) for those students who were unsuccessful in finding a training place with an employer during VET. Nevertheless, labour market outcomes from these school-based programmes are not comparable with those from apprenticeship in terms of employment rates and career prospects, partly due to the fact that these programmes are considered as a second choice option (Jørgensen, 2014[20]).

Discrepancy between workplace and school is exacerbated among newly arrived migrants

In the dual VET system, students often experience a lack of interaction between VET schools and the enterprise employing the apprentice. In an employer survey conducted in Bremen, Germany, 93% of companies reported that they did not or seldom co-operated with the vocational schools of their apprentices (Gessler, 2017[21]).[3] Such lack of collaboration and weak connection between two learning environments could result in discrepancy between the teaching of theory in schools and practice in the workplace (Jørgensen, 2015[9]).

This gap between workplace and school is exacerbated among newly arrived migrants who need to cope with two different environments at the same time. The difficulties encountered by students who alternate schools and workplaces, compounded by differences in environments and learning approaches between the two, may contribute to poor final exam performance at school within the dual system. General improvement of the interaction between schools and training employers may help migrant students better adjust to working between two different environments during VET.

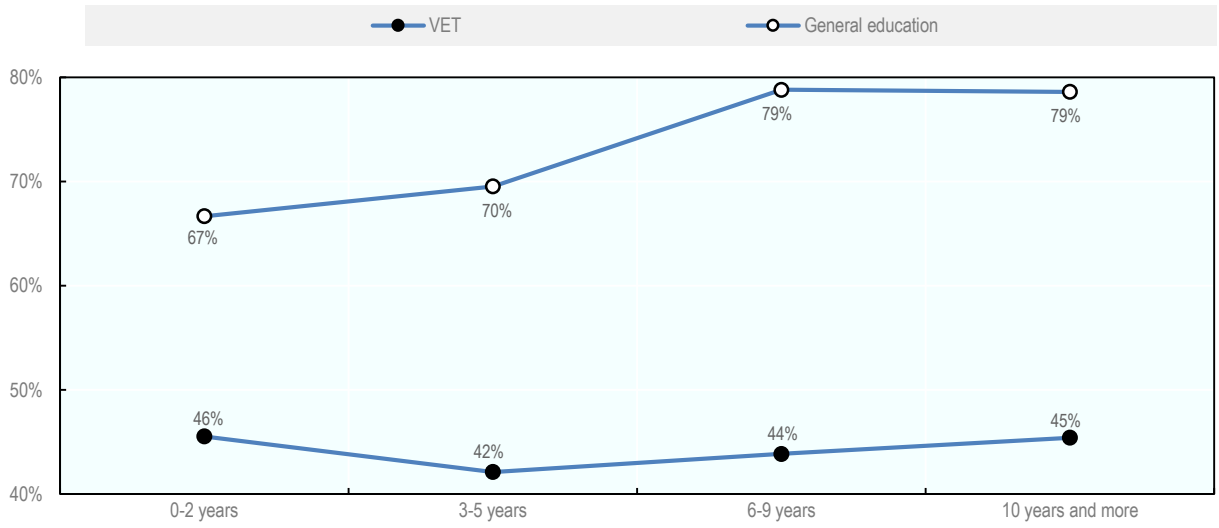
Longer length of residence may not necessarily reduce the chance of dropping out, without appropriate interventions

While in general education and employment outcomes of migrants improve with their length of residence in the host country, Norway's example suggests that the number of years of residence in the host country does not necessarily or only marginally contributes to the likelihood of completing VET. For the case of general education, the longer the length of residence in Norway is, the higher the completion rates are. However, for the case of VET, completion rates remain at similar levels regardless of the length of residence (Figure 5.3). Whilst further investigation may better explain why this happens, this suggests that interventions should be made to address other factors in order to help migrant students succeed in VET.

Research from Norway has shown that children of migrants have greater difficulties in finding apprenticeships (a step that normally takes place after two years of school-based programmes), in particular children of "non-Western origin" (Liebig, 2009[22]; Thorud, 2017[23]; Thorud, 2018[24]). In fact, less than half of the migrant students who begin upper-secondary VET in Norway complete their education, compared to more than half in other countries (Figure 5.2). This means that in the absence of targeted and supplementary social and academic supports (e.g. supports before and after entering into mainstream upper-secondary VET in Germany, Sweden and Switzerland), simply living longer in a host country can often mean a loss of opportunities.

Figure 5.3. Longer length of residence may not contribute to the higher completion of VET without appropriate policy interventions

Completion rates of migrants in upper-secondary education in Norway, by programme orientation in 2017 (2012 cohort)



Note: The total sample size of migrant students in VET (3 452) is larger than in general education (2 554), which include 'completed, in the programme, enrolled but failed exams and not completed'. The size of migrant students under 'completed' category was smaller (1 515 in VET versus 1 884 in general education).
Source: Statistics Norway (2019[12]), "Completion rates of pupils in upper secondary education" in StatBank, https://www.ssb.no/en/statbank/table/11222/.

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There are also other challenges to overcome: health, housing, security, mobility and family care

In particular for humanitarian migrants, socio-economic instability may prevent them from investing time in training. Refugees are in general more prone to health problems than the general population and other immigrant groups, and a considerable share suffer from traumatic and often violent experiences related to their forced migration (OECD, 2016[25]). The Norwegian living condition survey shows refugees who report symptoms of anxiety and depression have considerably lower employment rates, compared with refugees and other migrants without such symptoms (Liebig and Tronstad, 2018[26]). For both preparatory and VET programmes, refugees are often more likely to dropout, especially when they need to go for regular doctor visits, in addition to taking case of children or working full-time (Mathema, 2018[27]).

Lack of access to transportation – whether because of cost or availability – is also a significant barrier for refugees, limiting access to training classes, hospitals, schools, and other programme sites. For this reason, some programmes in the United States provide bus passes in areas where transit is well established, while also teaching their clients to ride buses to help them become independent. In places where transit is not available, they find alternatives, for example carpooling (Mathema, 2018[27]). In Germany, while some *Länders* provide free public transit to refugee and asylum seeking learners, it is only valid within limited hours (e.g. outside of rush hours). The OECD review visit to Germany learned that this restriction limits the choice of courses or other necessary activities.

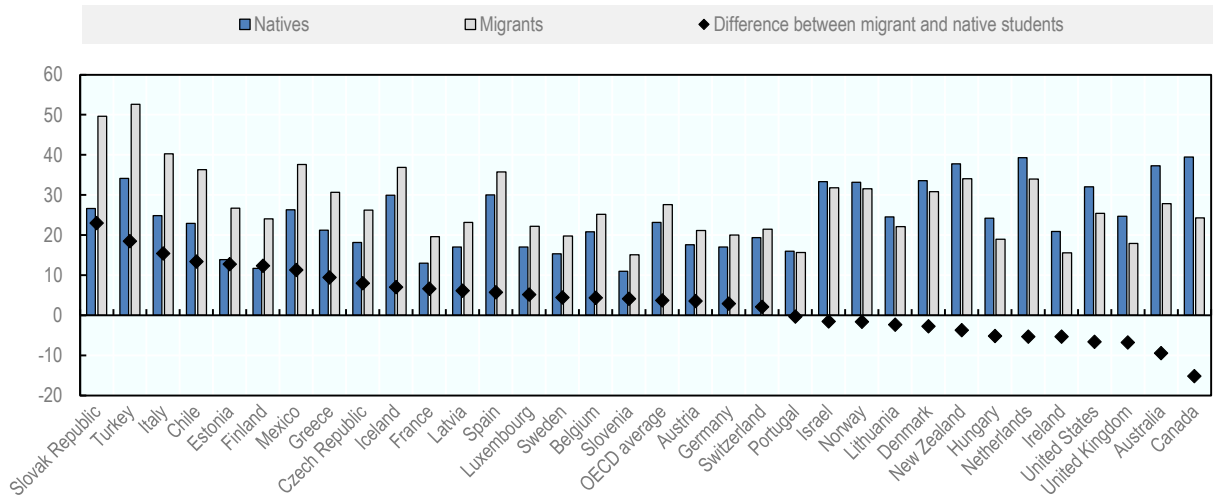
Immediate needs may compel migrant learners to enter work rather than VET

Many of young migrants who arrive around the end of compulsory schooling age are keen to enter the labour force immediately, and indeed, higher shares of migrant students perform paid work than native students in many OECD countries according to 2015 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) analysis (Figure 5.4) and having paid work has negative correlation with academic proficiency (OECD, 2018[28]). In this regard, apprenticeship can be more attractive to young migrants because of the possibility of earning income. It may be more rewarding than academic tracks for those who have desperate need to secure living expenses or to meet other needs such as paying off debts linked to their journey to safety. However, participation in VET has opportunity costs (such as foregone earnings as an unskilled worker). Apprenticeship wages are often lower than low-skilled jobs. Such costs may lead to a situation where refugees lower their potential due to their desperate economic needs. This is an issue not only for migrants but all youth at risk (Kis, 2016[16]).

During VET, migrant students tend to have gained work experience outside of the VET curriculum, compared to native students, rather than benefiting from work-based learning (Figure 5.5). In addition, employment rates are in general lower among migrant VET graduates compared to native VET graduates (Figure 5.6), which may demotivate migrant students to complete VET.

Figure 5.4. Higher shares of migrant students perform paid work than native students in many OECD countries

Shares of migrant and native students performing paid work and the difference between the two groups, PISA 2015



Source: OECD (2018[28]), *The Resilience of Students with an Immigrant Background: Factors that Shape Well-being*, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264292093-en.

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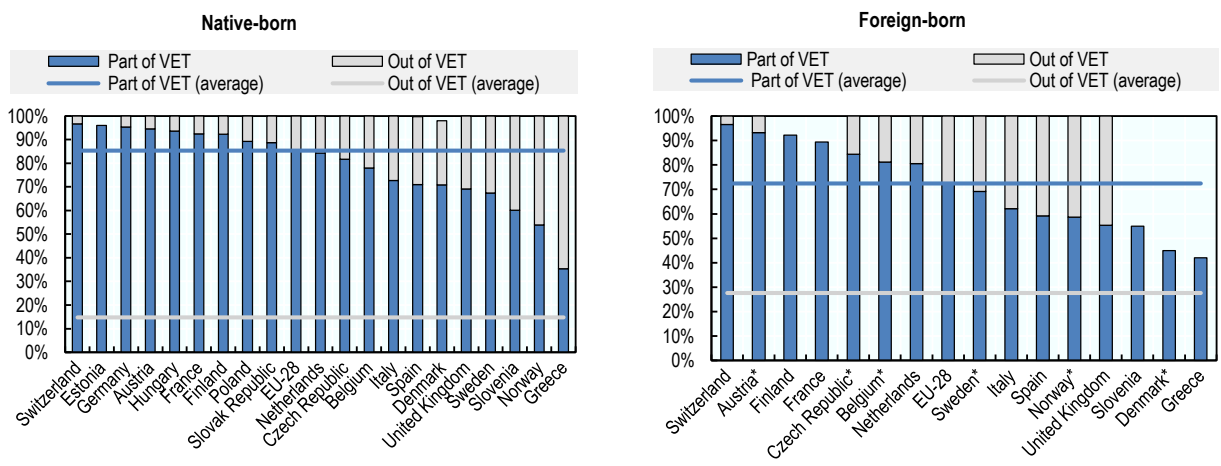
Figure 5.5. Migrant VET graduates are more likely to have gained work experience outside of the VET curriculum compared to native VET graduates

Type of work experience undertaken during the course of the upper-secondary VET and outside of VET, 2016



Note: The sample covers upper-secondary VET graduates whose highest level of education was upper-secondary VET and who had work experience during the time they enrolled in the upper-secondary VET programme. "Part of VET" is sum of work-based learning categories as part of VET and "Out of VET" is work outside the curriculum. Denmark for foreign-born only counts apprenticeship. Data from countries with an asterisk (*) have low reliability issue.

Source: Eurostat (2019[29]), EU Labour Force Survey 2016 ad hoc module. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/microdata/european-union-labour-force-survey.

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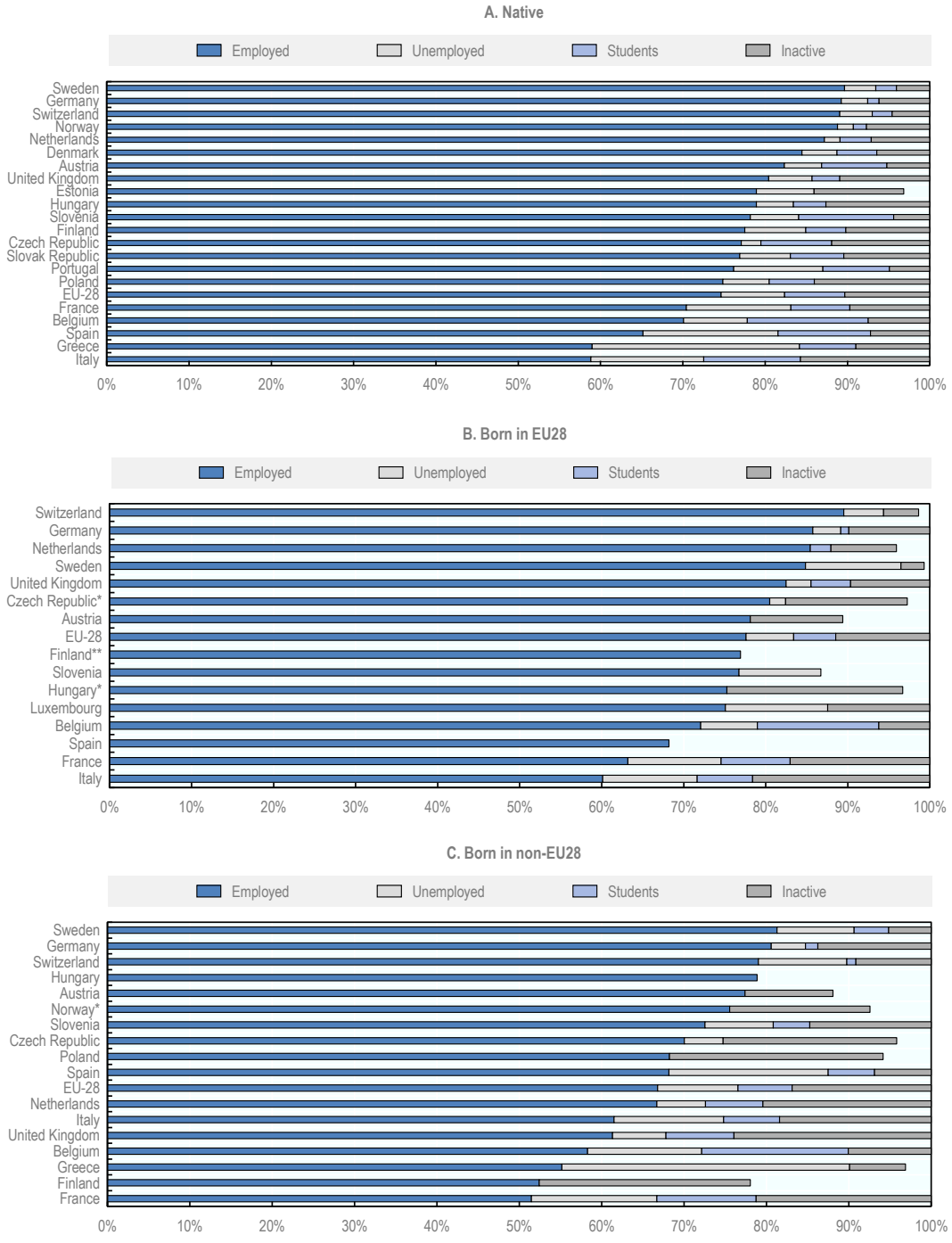
Figure 5.6. Migrant VET graduates are less likely to be employed than their native peers

Share (%) of upper-secondary VET graduates by employment status, 2018



Note: The sample covers upper-secondary VET graduates whose highest level of education was upper-secondary VET. Hungary, the Czech Republic and Norway (*) contain 2017 data and Finland (**) 2016 data.
Source: Eurostat (2019[29]), EU Labour Force Survey. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/microdata/european-union-labour-force-survey.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888933998101

Support at schools and workplaces lead to better VET outcomes among migrant students

Tailored programmes enable migrant students to succeed

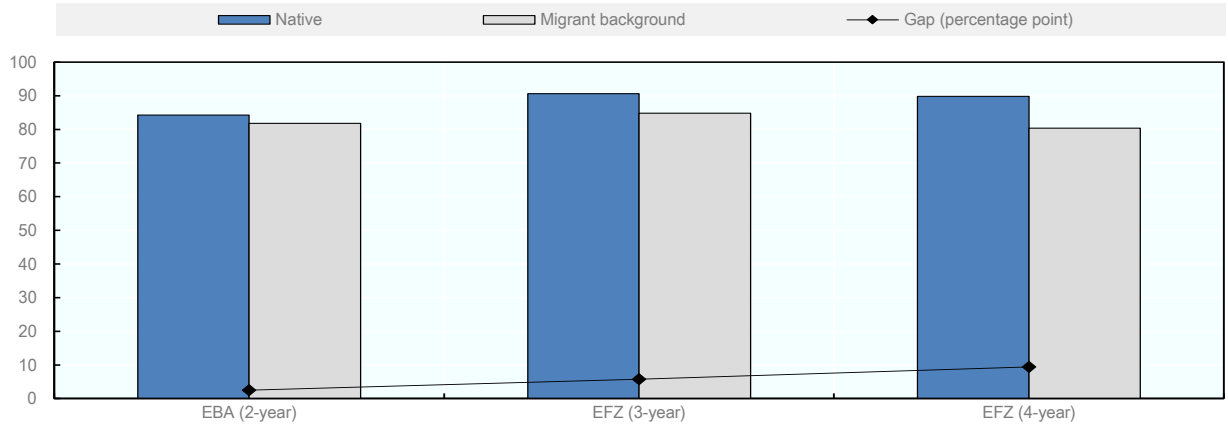
Lower completion rates among migrants illustrate the importance of adequately preparing and continuously supporting migrants who lack the skills necessary to succeed during apprenticeships, in particular language skills, or those who have trouble finding an apprenticeship. This support can take the form of shorter, longer or modular courses, that are better adapted to the migrant context.

Modularised VET courses can involve not only lowering the entry requirements but also less demanding curricular that lead to lower or partial qualifications. This approach can provide a good option for migrants with weak skills, while at the same time responding to labour market needs and providing a stepping stone towards a full qualification.

An example from Switzerland shows that tailored design and delivery of VET may help in reducing the completion gap. In contrast to 3-4 year EFZ programme, the completion rate of migrants in the 2-year EBA programme is not significantly lower compared to that of native Swiss (Figure 5.7). This is probably due to the fact that EBA is designed for lower performing students and provides support measures such as individual tutoring, remedial courses and support from in-company supervisors (Lüthi, forthcoming[30]). In Sweden, Vocational Packages (see Chapter 4) are expected to play a similar role to the EBA. Another example is the pilot 1+3 VET model in Bavaria, Germany, which allows one additional year for intensive language training in addition to the usual three-year apprenticeship (Bergseng, Degler and Lüthi, 2019[18]). This kind of tailored approach could make a significant difference in a migrant student's educational and career path.

Figure 5.7. VET designed for lower performing students with support measures may facilitate completion for migrant students

Share (%) of students who completed upper-secondary VET with an expected qualification, 2012 cohort from Switzerland, 2017



Note: Data refer to 2012 cohort who obtained a vocational training qualification by 2017. Migrants refer to permanent residents without Swiss citizenship, both native- and foreign-born.
Source: Swiss Federal Statistical Office (2018[15]), Termination of apprenticeship contract, re-entry, certification status [su-f-15.10.01-06], https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/en/home.assetdetail.6446763.html.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888933998120

Ensuring a good learning experience in VET schools

Support from schools

VET schools can help overcome learning difficulties for students or apprentices in terms of academic or technical coursework or with preparing for exams, through remedial courses. Mentors or coaches may help apprentices with everyday problems and act as mediators if problems arise between the apprentice and their firm or school (OECD, 2018[1]). As such, some schools and local authorities invest considerable resources to establish systems to identify and respond to newly arrived migrant students' academic and socio-emotional needs. For example, in the United States, school registration is used for schools and districts to set newly arrived students up for success. During this process, migrants' needs assessment by school personnel is conducted to ensure they are placed in an appropriate instructional setting and connected with additional resources and assistance. After the initial welcome phase, schools continue to provide these migrant students with supports through investing additional instruction time for these students as well as home visits, coaching and mentoring, and planning for educational and career paths. Schools may also provide support to newly arrived students' communities and families through adult education and community outreach and, in doing so, empower them to advocate for and support individual students as well as the needs of the community as a whole (Sugarman, 2017[31]).

Individual approaches are in particular helpful for the newly arrived. In Sweden, while individual study plans are common across all levels of education, upper-secondary Introductory Programmes where most newly arrived are enrolled provide counselling to help support individual pathways into mainstream upper-secondary education programmes, including VET, adult education or into the labour market through Vocational Packages. Teachers are not directly responsible for support other than teaching, but municipalities have support system and various state grants are available for assisting migrant students.

Inclusive classroom environment

Analysis from OECD PISA data highlights the importance of student sense of belonging within a school and their academic success. For young people from a migrant background, simple interventions such as buddying schemes, mentoring and student counselling help enrich relationships between teachers and students and across the student body which are in turn associated with better outcomes for learners who may struggle to engage fully in the educational institution (OECD, 2018[28]). An inclusive classroom environment, where students with different characteristics are well supported in the learning process, has been shown to improve learning outcomes in more diverse schools. Some VET schools in Switzerland started to have two teachers in integration classes to cope with the diversity of learners, similar to the team-teaching strategy of the *Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training* (I-BEST) programme, successfully implemented in the United States (see Box 3.2) (Wachen, Jenkins and Van Noy, 2010[32]).

The role of diversity-aware teachers for supporting all learners

Migrant students benefit from teachers who take into account the diversity of their student populations in their instructional approaches (OECD, 2015[33]). Training to teach students with diverse backgrounds could include intercultural training and training for different learner needs. For example, in the French Community of Belgium, intercultural education has been part of teacher training since 2000 (OECD, 2018[28]). In the Netherlands, an understanding of cultural diversity is also a prerequisite for gaining a qualification as a teacher. In Norway, the government introduced a five-year plan in 2013 to improve multicultural competence among teachers, including multilingualism and second-language teaching (see Box 3.5). Initial teacher education in the United Kingdom focuses on standards including those related to equality and diversity (OECD, 2018[28]). However, evaluation of effectiveness of these approaches could be further improved.

Support at the workplace during apprenticeships

Support for learners and employers

Supporting struggling apprentices can benefit both employers and apprentices. As seen above, proportionately more young migrants find completing an apprenticeship challenging compared to their native counterparts. Migrant students tend to need more instruction time, which creates higher costs or fewer benefits for employers. Offering extra support can help apprentices to learn faster and overcome difficulties, resulting in better chances of completion; such support also covers the costs incurred by employers. As a result, employers benefit from better performing apprentices and can reduce the risks of costly dropouts. Approaches which recognise challenges facing more vulnerable learners, regardless of migrant background, are widely viewed as symptomatic of effective VET systems (OECD, 2018[1]).

An effective means to support young people at risk within apprenticeships is to offer support to employers to reduce their costs and to increase the speed at which apprentices develop the knowledge and skills which drive economic outputs (OECD, 2018[1]). There are several countries that provide such support, usually from the preparatory phase (Box 5.1). Targeted training, for example, is offered to apprentice supervisors in a number of OECD countries. Employers and apprentice supervisors can also benefit from easy access to external organisations which help address specific challenges faced by refugees (Mathema, 2018[27]).

Offering personalised services can also increase the effectiveness of apprenticeships

In Germany, proactive measures are in place to prevent dropout, including *VerA* (*Verhinderung von Ausbildungsabbrüchen*) that is initiated by the the German Federal Ministry of Education (BMBF). Within VerA programme, voluntary senior experts (e.g. retired professionals) counsel apprentices who have difficulties and are considering terminating their training. The programme resulted in a high level of completion: about 80% of the participants successfully completed their apprenticeship in 2013 (Borchers et al., 2013[34]) (Huismann, 2018[35]). In addition to such federal initiatives, many *Länder* have developed their own programmes to support apprentices and prevent dropouts. For apprentices struggling to finance their training or preparatory programmes, the Vocational Training Allowance (*Berufsausbildungsbeihilfe,* BAB) offers financial support. Asylum seekers with good prospects of remaining are eligible for this allowance when they are not covered by the asylum support (*Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz*) anymore (BMBF, 2018[36]). In 2017, about 87 000 persons received BAB. The share of foreign nationals among them is rising from 13% in 2016 to about 17% in 2017 (Bundesagentur für Arbeit, 2018[37]) (Bergseng, Degler and Lüthi, 2019[18]).

Support from trade unions

Trade unions can also play a role in building an environment where migrants and refugees can develop social relations and networks through the workplace while at the same time supporting their rights.

For example, the German Trade Union Confederation (DGB) called for a ban on the detention of migrant apprentices for certain immigration offenses under the logic that the government's first priority should be economic security for both migrants and companies. They also called for more legal certainty for young tolerated refugees doing apprenticeships as well as an increased use of the 3+2 regulation to grant vocational training (German Trade Union Confederation, 2018[38]). Beyond VET, trade unions are playing an increasingly important role in education in general. For example, the European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) and the European Federation of Education Employers (EFEE) launched the project "European Sectoral Social Partners in Education promoting effective integration of migrants and refugees in education" in 2017 which will continue until November 2019 (European Trade Union Committee for Education, 2019[39]).

Box 5.1. Support at the workplace during apprenticeships

In **Austria**, integrative apprenticeships (IBA) are upper-secondary VET programmes that target youth at risk of poor outcomes, including dropouts from basic schooling. IBA accounted for 6% of apprentices in 2014. IBA participants receive support both during work placements and at school and can take an additional year or two to complete their apprenticeship, or may choose to obtain a partial qualification. Firms taking on young people in this programme receive higher subsidies than other firms, and public resources cover additional training needed by apprentices and trainers in the firm.

In **Germany**, public employment service (PES) offers Assisted Apprenticeship (*Assistierte Ausbildung*, AsA) and Training Assistance (*Ausbildungsbegleitende Hilfen*, abH) during the dual apprenticeship programmes.

- Assisted Apprenticeship (AsA) is designed to support both apprentices and employers from preparatory programmes to completion of upper-secondary VET (BMBF, 2018[36]). Recent data shows that over 40% of learners benefiting from AsA come from migration backgrounds with almost 17% of new participants in the programme in 2016-17 being humanitarian migrants, more than half of them refugees (Bergseng, Degler and Lüthi, 2019[18]).
- Training Assistance (abH) is available to young people taking an apprenticeship, as well as supporting dropouts seeking to transition into another apprenticeship. Assistance includes remedial education and support with homework and exams, which helps to overcome learning difficulties. Socio-pedagogical assistance (including mentoring) is also available, and this includes support with everyday problems and mediation with the training company, school trainers and family.

In **Switzerland**, apprentices in two-year VET programmes (EBA) are entitled to publically-funded individual coaching and remedial courses, mostly to tackle weak language skills, learning difficulties or psychological problems. Most coaches are former teachers, learning therapists or social workers, and receive targeted training in preparation for their job (e.g. 300-hour training in the case of Zurich).

In **Spain**, the Professional Experiences Programmes (2008-12) in Andalusia (co-funded by the European Social Fund) targeted migrants who lacked adequate educational background or work experience and offered 3-month apprenticeships. A personalised integration pathway and coaching for each migrant during the apprenticeship ensured successful completion, in addition to coaching by an external and dedicated social worker, helping out with personal problems (Metis GmbH, 2016[40]).[4] This programme is running again for 2014-20 with a broader target group (Andalusian Employment Service, n.d.[41]).

Source: For Austria, Germany and Switzerland, OECD (2018[1]), *Seven Questions about Apprenticeships: Answers from International Experience*, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264306486-en. Bergseng, B., E. Degler and S. Lüthi (2019[18]), *Unlocking the Potential of Migrants in Germany,* https://doi.org/10.1787/82ccc2a3-en.

Increase interaction between the workplace and schools

In response to weak connections and co-ordination between the two learning environments addressed above, Denmark introduced a *Practicum*, a third learning space, to connect education and work; financial support for VET teachers to do short internships in training companies to make a better connection between the two learning environments; a stronger link between theory (in the training places) and practice (in school). A *Practicum* involves defining a common project work that connects school and the workplace – a kind of “third learning environment” situated between the vocational school and the training company.

It commits school teachers, workplace trainers and the apprentice to work together to define and solve a work-related problem (Jørgensen, 2015[9]).

Also additional support for catching up theoretical part through workplace learning and for refining technical skills through theoretical training while in school would help. For example, language training in school may focus on key terminologies used in the workplace and at workplace apprentices may practice tasks that link to theories learnt in school. The OECD team met employers in Switzerland who offer extra studying hours for their migrant apprentices and trainees at the workplace. Such gesture would help for migrant apprentices to successfully complete dual VET.

Box 5.2. Alternatives: VET programmes and support for adult migrants and refugees

The recent inflow of adult refugees and asylum seekers without upper-secondary education has made it more important to provide comprehensive educational offerings for adults. In recognition of this importance, countries use different measures to activate vocational skills of young adults who left school or who are not eligible for upper-secondary education. While in countries such as Germany and Switzerland, young adults can still access mainstream upper-secondary VET, in other countries such as Italy and Sweden they are directed to adult VET or other types of VET including introductory integration programmes for newly arrived adults, labour market training programmes or fast-tracks.

Upper-secondary VET provision through adult education

Some countries provide courses for young adults to complete upper-secondary VET through adult education, while other countries offer the mainstream upper-secondary option for young adults. For example, in Sweden, municipalities provide adult education, including *Swedish for Immigrants* (SFI). Any migrant over the age of 16 who lacks basic knowledge of Swedish is eligible for SFI, while migrants over the age 20 are eligible for additional courses including adult VET. Many municipalities organise SFI combined with adult VET (Eurydice, 2018[42]).[5] A modularised approach that grants partial qualifications is expected to facilitate access to VET for adults as well as access to education in general through adult education.

Denmark and Norway offer VET through upper-secondary schooling up to age 24 and through adult education from age 25. Denmark's adult VET provides adults with the same skills and qualifications as VET for young people. Courses and duration vary depending on the adult student's level of work experience, but are generally shorter than those for youth. Participants should have at least 2.0 in both Danish and mathematics, either at the 9th grade, final exam in the 10th grade or equivalent – it can differ based on whether the participant has an internship or relevant work experience in the field. Those who do not meet this requirement can be referred to general adult education.

While Germany has no specific age limit for upper-secondary VET (as it is up to the employer to decide or it is set by *Länders*), the vast majority of VET students start their apprenticeship directly or soon after completing compulsory schooling. For example in 2016, about 80% of apprentices in the dual VET system were 22 or younger.

Labour market training programmes

According to the analysis of 87 programmes, covering 14 countries (1998-2013), including Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland, Switzerland (Bonoli and Liechti, 2018[43]), compared to nationals, migrants are systematically underrepresented in job-creation, wage-subsidy and training programmes.

More recently, countries have made improvements. Migrants and refugees in the *labour market training programmes* are often treated as unemployed or receive additional support and more targeted measures. For example, the German Federal Employment Agency (BA) has developed in co-operation with the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) and employer associations a number of targeted short-term programmes such as "Perspectives for Refugees" (PerF), which include vocational language training, site visits to companies, skills assessment and counselling for asylum seekers and refugees (Konle-Seidl, 2017[44]). Sweden also introduced Vocational Introduction Employments targeting recently arrived migrants and other vulnerable groups (15-24 years old) to combine work and training, and Entry Agreements to enable newly arrived migrants and the long-term unemployed to gain employment (Kuczera and Jeon, 2019[45]).

Moreover, while asylum seekers are usually not registered with the public employment services (PES) or because they are not entitled to PES measures, PES increasingly offer services to asylum seekers even before they obtain protection status, for example in Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden (European Union, 2017[46]). In Finland, the National Board of Education in cooperation with the Ministry of Employment and the Economy organises language training and other integrative training for asylum seekers living in reception centres while waiting for relocation to a municipality. A modularised integration training also aims to inform the Finnish PES offices in validating the qualifications of asylum seekers, and to make integration training more job-orientated. During 2017-18, the Skills Programme for Immigrants (MAO) was created for asylum seekers who arrived in Finland in 2015 to support those with work experience to learn vocational Finnish part of their vocational qualification.

Table 5.1. Examples of introductory integration programmes for adult migrants and refugees

	Name	Duration
Denmark* (ages 18+)	Integration programme for refugees	1 year (up to 5 years)
Belgium (Flanders) (ages 18+)	Custom-made integration course depending on educational, social or professional perspective	
Finland	Integration training	3-5 years
Italy* (ages 16+)	Integration agreements	2 years (can be extended to 3 years)
Norway* (ages 18-55 who need to acquire basic qualifications)	Integration programme for humanitarian migrants (and their family members)	2-3 years (for 2 years, full time: introduction programme [introduksjonskurs])
Sweden* (ages 20+)	Introduction programme (individually tailored)	2 years maximum (full-time)
United States	Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education Programme	Initial six-week entry level course; a three-week supervisory course for incumbent workers, and a bridge/support course for postsecondary hospitality management certification (U.S. Center for Law and Social Policy, 2016[47]).

Note: * is mandatory. Intensity of programmes varies across countries.

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Introduction programmes or introductory integration programmes for newly arrived adults

Introductory integration programmes are usually designed to facilitate a smooth transition to the labour market or provide necessary training programmes for the transition. Main goals of such programmes are to enhance language skills, cultural awareness, civic or social participation and physical and mental health as well as to build local and social networks. These programmes can function as VET but usually as stepping stone for formal VET (e.g.in Norway, participants in these programmes can receive upper-secondary VET) (Norwegian Directorate of Integration and Diversity, 2016[48]).

In general, these programmes are free of charge. Nordic countries offer living costs conditional to the programme participation and completion (Sweden). Denmark offers performance subsidies based on participants' language and employment outcomes. In addition to this, these programmes may provide career guidance, counselling, internship opportunities or employment with a wage subsidy.

Personalised services that address their needs are particularly effective when sufficient resources are available. This includes a co-ordination of the integration path of refugees and cooperation with relevant actors based on their needs. In many countries, PES are responsible for these programmes with various degrees (European Union, 2017[46]).

Supports for highly qualified migrants and refugees

Fast-track approaches are targeted towards highly qualified refugees and refugees with skills and qualifications in sectors with high workforce demand. In these fast-tracks, complementary education for migrants is available only in terms of a small number of occupations. The Swedish PES invites social partners and other agencies to create fast-track initiatives in various sectors with intensive language training. In Norway, a fast-track for refugees was put in place based on an agreement between the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities and the social partners.

With the goal of setting up a fast track in the United States, several attempts and recommendations were made nationally and in different states on reforming state licensing laws, increasing the number of language and transitional programmes, improving adult education and workforce training systems, and enhancing technical assistance to address employer bias (McHugh and Morawski, 2017[49]). For example, Minnesota developed a task force to make strategies to integrate refugees, asylum seekers and other migrant physicians due to expected shortages. Identified challenges include residency, language, hands-on experience in the country and licensing, which would cost about USD 10 000-60 000 per migrant. The task force recommended to develop a standardised and rigorous assessment process to evaluate the readiness of immigrant physicians and create a certificate of clinical readiness and new licensing options for immigrant physicians as well as develop a clinical preparation programme for those needing it and a structured apprenticeship programme (Minnesota Department of Health, 2015[50]). Other example includes a vocational counselling programme under New American Pathways, which provides opportunities for adult refugees to learn industry-specific information, grow networks, familiarise them with employers through mentorships. For example, the programme pairs refugees who are civil engineers with local civil engineers or someone who works with civil engineers (Mathema, 2018[27]).

Source: For Finland and Germany: European Union (2017[46]), *Thematic Paper. Public Employment Services (PES) Initiatives Around Skills, Competencies and Qualifications of Refugees and Asylum Seekers*, http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=18319&langId=en; Demark is from Ministry of Higher Education and Science of Denmark (2019[51]), https://ufm.dk/en/education/recognition-and-transparency/recognition-guide/admission-vet, and Ministry of Education of Denmark (2019[52]), *State education support*, https://www.ug.dk/uddannelser/artikleromuddannelser/oekonomi/statens-uddannelsesstoette-su ;Introductory integration programmes: European PES Network (2016[53]), *Labour Market Integration of Refugees – Key Considerations*, https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=20661&langId=en for Finland, Norway and Sweden. Kuczera, M. and S. Jeon (2019[45]), *Vocational Education and Training in Sweden*, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/g2g9fac5-en and OECD (2016[54]), *Working Together: Skills and Labour Market Integration of Immigrants and their Children in Sweden*, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264257382-en for Sweden.

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Notes

[1] The survey only included students with an intermediate school leaving certificate (*Realschule*), and it is thus not clear if graduation rates may be different among students with a lower-secondary degree. Moreover, no distinction was made whether students were born in Germany or abroad. For refugee students, graduation cohorts are still too small to assess how they fare in their final exams (Bergseng, Degler and Lüthi, 2019[18]).

[2] Termination rates are not exactly the same as dropout rates. A termination of an apprenticeship contract does not always lead to a dropout, since many apprentices simply change their training firm. However, the rates of re-entry after a contract termination are lower among migrants, compared to native students (Swiss Federal Statistical Office, 2018[15]).

[3] An online survey of 2 131 companies offering apprenticeships in Bremen.

[4] A total of 32 602 migrants carried out apprenticeship programmes and a third could be inserted in the labour market after completion.

[5] Other initiatives include: Education and Training Obligation for low-educated migrants (since January 2018); Education Entry Grant to facilitate basic education for low-educated adults; Vocational Introduction Employments targeting recently arrived migrants and other vulnerable groups (15-24 years old) to combine work and training; Introduction Jobs to facilitate labour market entry; and Entry Agreements to enable newly arrived migrants and the long-term unemployed to gain employment (Kuczera and Jeon, 2019[45]).

6 Towards strong, flexible and inclusive VET systems that work for all

The combination of rapidly changing labour market needs and the growing diversity of the learners expected to participate in vocational education and training (VET) calls for strong, flexible and inclusive VET systems. This chapter discusses systemic and institutional issues related to VET in terms of migrant students, including defining strategies and co-ordinating relevant stakeholders. It highlights structural and institutional challenges facing both young humanitarian migrants and the VET system itself, noting that these challenges also apply to youth at risk in general. It lays out overarching elements for success to guide countries in efforts to unlock the potential of migrants through VET.

Vocational education and training (VET) systems are complex, involving a wide range of stakeholders and policies across multiple jurisdictions as well as often multiple levels of government. Adding an additional layer of complexity in terms of provision for migrants and refugees, which can be both logistically and politically complicated, can highlight existing governance challenges while at the same time creating new difficulties that must be addressed.

In that regard, whilst the influx of humanitarian migrants into a host country's upper-secondary VET and preparatory systems may be seen as a short-term phenomenon, the challenges presented by this phenomenon can be an opportunity to institute reforms with long lasting impacts for a much wider group of learners. The result of reforms should be well-shaped national strategies and targets that align relevant policy measures and co-ordinate relevant stakeholders in order to shape VET systems to be more flexible, responsive and inclusive but also stronger. Such an approach is particularly important when considering that humanitarian migrants may have similar needs to a wider group of students with diverse and vulnerable backgrounds.

Prior to this report, there has not been sufficient policy discussion focusing on young migrants and refugees with regard to the integration into and through upper-secondary VET – particularly on the subject on the VET system and governance. Much of the existing literature and policy guidance is geared towards labour market integration, often focused on adults. While this is important, it does not address the importance of VET, in particular early interventions for young people. With this gap in mind, this chapter focuses on the issues of system design, planning and co-ordination of upper-secondary VET systems specifically with regard to young migrants and refugees.

Why is updating the upper-secondary VET system and its governance important in unlocking the potential of young migrants and refugees?

General issues of upper-secondary VET systems: Evolving needs for VET

OECD countries, in particular EU countries (Cedefop, 2015[1]), have made important progress in making VET more attractive, relevant and inclusive. This has included acquainting young people with VET, increasing work-based learning in VET while enhancing basic skills, enhancing flexible access and engaging social partners in VET. However, there is room for improvement in expanding VET opportunities that meet the learning and practical needs of groups at risk; insufficient monitoring of these groups is an obstacle to targeting VET provision better suited to their needs.

While VET systems may have benefited from significant reforms in many countries, the perception of VET has not always changed proportionately. Negative perception towards upper-secondary VET remains a challenge in attracting lower-performing and disadvantaged students, compared to general education. This reflects the overall decline in the attractiveness of and perception on upper-secondary VET among young people, who are increasingly aiming to pursue higher education and the ambition of working in high-skilled jobs (Musset and Mytna Kurekova, 2018[2]). This trend has real world impacts: despite increasing labour market demand for upper-secondary VET graduates, upper-secondary VET enrolments are falling in Germany and Sweden (see Figure 1.1, Chapter 1). This is problematic for these countries and others, which are experiencing acute shortages of medium-skilled vocational graduates.

Technological change, particularly automation, is also tending to promote a shift away from narrowly confined vocational training towards more general education and higher education qualifications (Wettstein, Schmid and Gonon, 2017[3]; OECD, 2019[4]).

In this context of skills shortages within a rapidly changing labour market, VET systems are under pressure to adapt quickly. Together with increasing interest in tertiary forms of VET (e.g. higher VET) as well as a

growing need for and interest in adult education, the need for increasingly flexible and permeable VET systems is gaining attention in several countries (Kuczera and Jeon, 2019[5]).

This demand for VET systems to change continuously and adapt requires strategic approaches in the design and planning of VET systems, the success of which is largely based on a holistic approach and a common understanding among stakeholders committed to co-ordination and information sharing.

Additional issues facing upper-secondary VET systems due to the increase of humanitarian migrants and the increasing diversity of students

Any changes implemented due to the challenges discussed above will need to take into account the increasing cultural and linguistic diversity and other different characteristics and needs of young migrants and refugees. The challenge of increasing the capacity of VET and preparatory systems to upskill this population to the levels that meet employers' demand while also dealing with this diversity issue may be significant in those countries that experienced an increase of migrants and refugees within a short period time.

Targeted measures and additional support, shown in the previous chapters such as targeted pre-vocational programmes and measures that provide mentorship, career guidance or legal flexibility, will be key in supporting these efforts, due to the different needs of the migrant population compared to most young natives. However efforts cannot stop at specific, targeted measures, but must support a smooth transition to mainstream upper-secondary VET and then into the labour market; this requires more flexible provision such as through partial qualifications, modularised courses and a close link with adult education. As mentioned in previous chapters, teachers and other support staff in both VET and preparatory sectors will need to be equipped with skills to deal with student diversity.

Realising these efforts would be a significant step toward meeting the goal of a VET system that can take advantage of opportunities presented by the increased number of refugees and migrants, to maintain or increase the supply of VET graduates to match labour market needs and tackling issues arising from an ageing population.

Responding effectively to the challenge presented by migrants in general, and humanitarian migrants in particular, may require new approaches and more investment

With these increasing challenges and emerging trends, VET systems are being forced to continuously evolve and adapt. This requires that they are designed and delivered to be more receptive and flexible to more diverse groups of young people while remaining, or becoming more, attractive both to employers and learners. The efforts of governments and VET stakeholders to respond to the challenges facing disadvantaged learners have brought innovative ideas, as discussed in the previous chapters, including 1+3 in Germany, Vocational Packages in Sweden, targeted pre-vocational programmes in Switzerland and programme-level innovations in Italy, that may in turn strengthen VET systems and improve the quality of teaching and learning. Ultimately, such responses will underpin enhancements to VET systems of value to all learners, but will require important investment and outcome-oriented quality assurance and evaluation, supported by more disaggregated data collection system, as well as longer term monitoring and tracking.

Better system design to build strong, flexible and inclusive upper-secondary VET systems

Flexible and permeable VET systems accommodate different starting points and learning speeds of migrants and refugees and enable alternative VET pathways

Flexible provision in upper-secondary VET systems increases the accessibility for weaker performers and disadvantaged learners who are not ready to enter mainstream upper-secondary VET programmes. Adding tailored programmes at different levels of skills and qualifications to the system, that can be readily linked to partial qualifications, can give this group of learners easier access, encourage participation and increase rates of completion by giving more time, accelerating learning or meeting different levels of skills needs. Countries may benefit from developing and promoting alternative instruments to allow flexible and permeable VET programmes, however there should be a strong component of work-based learning to be successful and mechanisms to engage social partners in the design and deliver of such programmes.

Examples include Switzerland's two-year upper-secondary VET programmes and Italy's regional upper-secondary VET programmes. These are both shorter and less-demanding compared to mainstream programmes, but still have labour market value. The approach that allows permeability between different levels of programmes – from preparatory VET or upper-secondary VET into adult VET in various forms – is especially effective. This includes permeability between upper-secondary VET programmes. This works because these shorter and less-demanding or partial VET programmes (compared to full diploma programmes) are fully aligned with broader VET pathways.

The flexibility of VET concerns not only expanding capacity in response to high inflows of newly arrived humanitarian migrants, but also being prepared for decreases. For example, in Sweden, the Gothenberg region has a mechanism to guarantee the continuation of service in VET schools even if demand is low. In the United States, funding cuts to programmes that support refugees in the country have encouraged stakeholders to develop flexible strategies to find alternative funding and prepare for decreases in newly resettled refugees (e.g. expanding the services of refugee organisations to the wider community while maintaining specialised services for new refugees) (Mathema, 2018[6]).

Linking preparatory programmes, upper-secondary VET and adult education allows higher flexibility

In effective VET systems, learners have the opportunity to return to education to further develop skills once they have become more settled in the host society. Seamless connections throughout the VET system, including preparatory programmes, upper-secondary VET and adult VET (in various forms, but in particular formal adult education that leads to partial or full qualifications) can facilitate migrants and refugees in beginning and completing VET and obtaining necessary qualifications. This requires alignment of all existing programmes in a coherent VET pathway for each occupation (or across occupations) and that there be close links with the qualification system, ensured by agreed quality standards.

Closer links between preparatory programmes and mainstream upper-secondary VET

Closer links between preparatory programmes and mainstream upper-secondary VET have many benefits. They can help avoid negative perceptions that poor performers attend such programmes. They can also prevent learners from staying in those programmes for too long, which can be inefficient, counterproductive and demotivating for students who may otherwise be highly motivated (OECD, 2018[7]) and want to study in the mainstream education or work as soon as possible. In certain cases it may preferable that migrants and refugees advance as early as possible into the mainstream VET programmes and receive additional support during VET or after being employed. It may take years for newly arrived students to attain entry requirements, and finding an apprenticeship is difficult due to the labour market's negative perceptions of

transitional programmes (or the fact that many migrants attend these programmes). Higher quality teaching as well as combined language and vocational training can be expected to help.

There are examples of this approach. In Denmark, Basic Integration Education (*Integrationsgrunduddannelsen*, IGU) programmes are closely linked to adult education centres (WEU), VET Industry Packages, Integration Programme and other job-training programmes. IGU participants can attend such programmes in parallel with IGU programmes (see Chapter 3). In Sweden, Vocational Packages in the Introductory Programme or in adult education also allow combining courses from compulsory or upper-secondary levels (Kuczera and Jeon, 2019[5]).

Closer links between upper-secondary VET and adult education

Likewise, closer links between upper-secondary VET and adult education have many benefits. Innovative, modular approaches to upper-secondary VET provision and combined language and VET programmes have originated from the success of adult education, in particular (modularised courses are more common in adult VET but are increasingly being adopted by upper-secondary VET). This leads to more flexible VET provision, building on both regular upper-secondary VET courses and adult VET courses. By offering provision such as Vocational Packages (Sweden) and IGU (Denmark) that provides flexible means to link courses between preparatory programmes, upper-secondary VET and adult VET, learners have more opportunities to progress in VET and obtain necessary qualifications.

Preparatory programmes provide a good basis to improve the flexibility of VET systems

Preparatory programmes are designed with flexibility in mind. They aim to meet individual needs and respect the different educational pathways of each student. IGU programmes from Denmark, introduced above, are flexible and can link with existing institutions. For example, adult education centres (WEU) provide guidance on IGU curriculum content and refer students to relevant training providers. IGU can be attended in parallel with the Integration Programme and Danish language training and other job-training programmes. All VET Industry Packages can be included in the school-based part of IGU but some are specially developed for IGU (Danish Ministry of Immigration and Integration, 2016[8]).[1]

In general, there are no standard means of offering transitional courses. Content, length, curriculum or resources depend on the decisions of local authorities (or schools) and thus quality varies across localities. Seeking to address this issue, the Swedish government recently allocated SEK 300 million (approximately EUR 29 million) per year for 2018-20 to reinforce transitional programmes in order to enhance the transition to upper-secondary or other educational programmes. The Swedish National Agency of Education is currently working with developers of transitional programmes to better support municipalities in terms of provision of these programmes (Kuczera and Jeon, 2019[5]).

The arrangement of training and qualifications in transitional programmes can be also adjusted depending on rates of success. For example, in Sweden, Vocational Packages that lead to partial qualifications were introduced for students in transitional programmes who face difficulties in transitioning to mainstream upper-secondary programmes. In Denmark, those students in basic VET courses who were not able to find apprenticeships are offered the opportunity to continue in school-based VET, which can be considered a transitional programme in the context of Denmark's dual system.

Different levels of flexibility in VET systems are reflected in the management of preparatory measures. For example, Germany and Switzerland have put substantial effort into preparatory measures, focusing on entry into the regular VET system. In contrast, Sweden and Finland are looking at the possibility of making their preparatory programmes function as a quality employment path – not just as a transitional path – for those who face difficulty in entering mainstream upper-secondary programmes. Two instruments make this possible: partial qualifications in flexible transitional programmes and strong adult education systems that offer a second chance education. In Sweden, skills and qualifications acquired through Vocational

Packages are nationally or regionally recognised and are designed for learners to be able to top up their skills and qualifications based on labour market needs and their career aspiration. A remaining challenge for these countries is to build seamless pathways between programmes preparing for partial qualifications and upper-secondary VET programmes and/or higher-level programmes and to strengthen co-operation between upper-secondary schools and municipal adult education (Kuczera and Jeon, 2019[5]).

Enhancing governance to build strong, flexible and inclusive VET systems

Building national strategies may enhance a whole-of-government approach to VET management for migrants

One key aspect of successful VET governance is formulating planning and implementing a strategy (Gasskov, 2000[9]). A national strategy is an important policy tool that can enable setting common goals and mobilising necessary resources and stakeholders. It can also help to set policy priorities and make it easier to find effective and efficient ways to implement those policies. Effective national strategies and targets promote coherence and co-ordination across regions and across ministries. Successful links between local autonomy and responsibilities, and national co-ordination and funding can be formalised through a national strategy. These strategies can create an environment for governments to share knowledge and innovations across regions and local authorities and to facilitate peer learning. They can also help to articulate data requirements from across the country, to establish mechanisms for sharing relevant information, to strengthen capacity, and ultimately to determine what works, what to scale up and what to abandon. Many of these elements have been addressed through OECD National Skills Strategies (OECD, 2019[10]).

More fundamentally, a clear, overarching and long-term national strategy enhances a whole-of-government approach, which is crucial to unlocking the potential of migrants through VET as this issue involves a complex policy web including migration, education and labour market policies as well as social, economic and welfare policies. This policy web implies significant inter-ministerial and multi-stakeholder collaboration and co-ordination. A national strategy should make sure that objectives, information, data and good practices are shared across relevant stakeholders, and that policy measures and their implementations are co-ordinated.

Recent VET reforms or initiatives include elements that can help integration of migrants and refugees through VET

At a glance, many OECD countries appear to have strategies to integrate humanitarian migrants through measures relevant to education, training and labour market. Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, and the United States have specific VET programmes targeting refugees and other beneficiaries of international protection. Germany, Sweden and Switzerland provide early support for asylum seekers (mostly with a high possibility of being accepted) mainly consisting of language training. In the case of Norway, integration through VET has been under consideration since the country moved the responsibility of migrant integration from Ministry of Justice and Public Security to the Ministry of Education (status as of June 2018). Greece has run a pilot programme to better integrate migrant students in a small number of VET schools since 2018 and expects to later apply this programme to all VET schools.[2]

In particular, Switzerland has responded to the recent increase of humanitarian migrants with a coherent national strategy. The strategy builds on Cantonal Integration Programmes (*Kantonale Integrationsprogramme*, KIP)[3] (2014-21 in two phases) that cover skills assessment, counselling and career guidance, language training and VET, and was developed into the 2018 Integration Agenda with five concrete targets including language skills, upper-secondary enrolments including VET, and labour market integration.[4] It is important to note that the integration of migrants was the responsibility of cantons

and no national strategy existed until 2014. More proactively, Vocational and Professional Education and Training (VPET) 2030 agenda launched a project, *Optimisation de la Gouvernance,* in order to critically examine existing processes and steering bodies within VET and to adapt them as necessary and analyse the forms of collaboration between the VET partners among others.

In Finland, the 2018 reform of the VET system is underway with the purpose of increasing flexibility and permeability within the system and enabling seamless pathways through it (Eurydice, 2019[11]; Koukku and Paronen, 2016[12]).[5] In addition to the EUR 20 million invested in VET for migrants, such reform will facilitate easier access to VET among migrants. Allowing the application for VET throughout the year may also enhance newly arrived migrants' access to VET as they can access to VET whenever they are ready. A trial of fast-track employment of migrants is also being implemented in 2016-19 to try out new employment and training models for accelerating employment of migrants and to facilitate the combination of training and work in a flexible way. The target is the employment of 2 500 migrants within four months of starting the trial. Applying the social impact bond (SIB) model, the trial will be financed completely with funding from private investors. If migrants are employed better using the SIB model, those who have invested in the SIB model will be paid a proportion of the savings arising to the government from more rapid entry into employment (OECD, 2018[13]; Finnish Ministry of Finance, 2017[14]).

Strategy and objectives should be long-term because integration takes time

In general, the gaps in employment rates of migrants and refugees vis-à-vis native peers reduces by duration of residence. While the labour market integration pathway of refugees is different across countries, the general trend shows that employment rates of migrants and refugees improve with time and it may take long time to see the intended result although VET may accelerate the process.

Co-ordination and co-operation across relevant stakeholders and coherence across policies

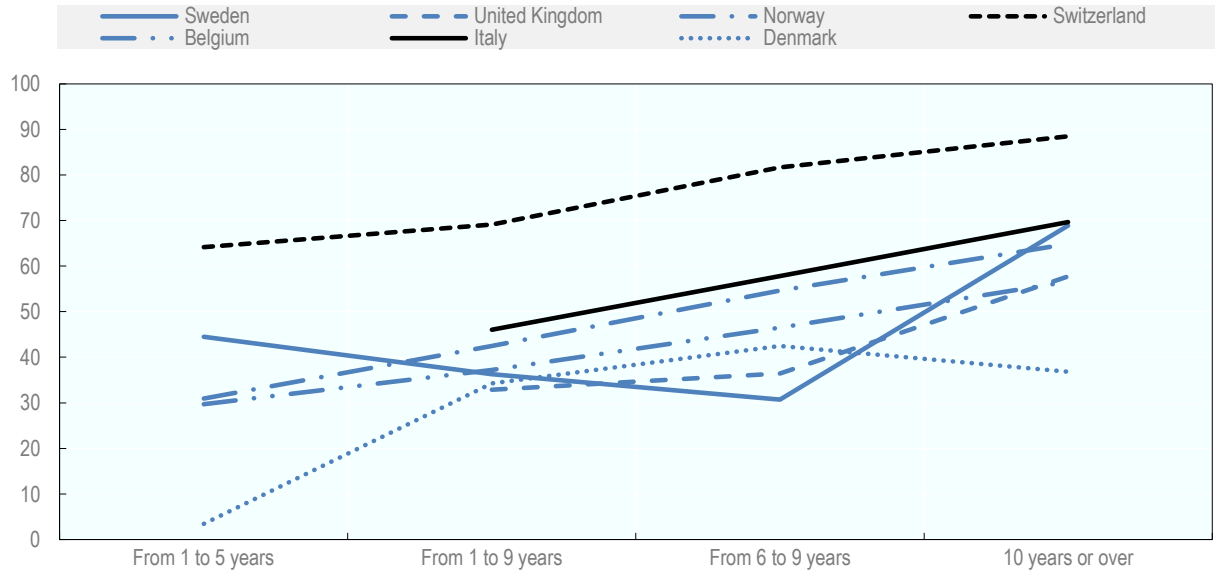
Design and delivery of VET provision for migrants and refugees requires co-ordination among stakeholders

Governance of a VET system is often split between a diverse constellation of actors, making it difficult to scale up good practices, harmonise requirements and data collection, and implement comprehensive reforms (Ahad and Benton, 2018[15]). This is even more the case when it comes to migrant integration through VET as additional actors are involved, ranging from reception centres where humanitarian migrants first arrive and immigration authorities to representative groups linked to migrant communities, which all are not traditionally associated with VET. Responsibilities for VET are distributed differently depending on the governance structure (from school to local, regional to national), so government across different levels (both vertical and horizontal) should be well co-ordinated and consulted in order to deliver quality and timely service for the target group.

For example, VET approaches for migrants and refugees that combine different skills (e.g.basic skills including language and vocational skills) or provide additional language training in VET require additional co-ordination between different institutions and policies. Career guidance for migrants and refugees is another example of a service that requires significant co-ordination, particularly as it is often embedded in another institution such as secondary schools, transitional programmes, or programmes run by Public Employment Services. The embedded nature of this service can increase its chances of success, by increasing opportunities for close co-ordination with education and employment service providers in determining when and how to implement guidance effectively – not only for the students but also for their families.

Figure 6.1. Employment rates of refugees improve with time

Employment rates of refugees (%) by length of stay (2014, except Denmark)



Note: This is based on cross-sectional data, rather than following the same people over time. Therefore, in particular those with very long duration of residence may have come from different countries. Nevertheless, results from cross-sectional data show consistent patterns as longitudinal analysis, see Liebig, T. and K. Tronstad (2018[16]), "Triple disadvantage? : A first overview of the integration of refugee women", *OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers*, No. 216, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/3f3a9612-en. Denmark data are based on Statistics Denmark [1999-2013] for ages 25-64: 1st year, 5th year, 10th year and 15th year of arrival.

Source: Based on Eurostat (2019[17]), *EU-Labour Force Survey ad hoc module 2014,* https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/microdata/european-union-labour-force-survey (Employment rate of first generation of immigrants by sex, age, years of residence and reason for migration [lfso_14l1empr]). For Denmark, Schultz-Nielsen (2016[18]), *Arbejdsmarkedstilknytningen for flygtninge og indvandrere, Rockwoolfondens Forskningsenhed [Labour market attachment of refugees and immigrants],* https://www.rockwoolfonden.dk/app/uploads/2016/05/Arbejdsmarkedstilknytningen-for-flygtninge-og-indvandrere.pdf (see Table 9).

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888933998158

Box 6.1. European strategy to build a strong, flexible and inclusive VET systems

As part of the Europe 2020 Strategy and the Strategic Framework for European Co-operation in Education and Training, the 2012 Council Conclusions on the Employability of Graduates from Education and Training recognises the importance of strengthening youth employability and how VET plays a role in the transition from education and training to employment. The conclusions aim to achieve, on average across the EU, an 82% share of employment among 20-34 year olds who graduated within the past three years; this target has almost been met for recent VET graduates. This goal is in addition to the goal of having less than 10% of all 18-24 year olds leave education and training early.

In line with this, the Framework for European VET Policy (2011-20) set quantitative benchmarks (such as at least 6% of 18 to 34 year-olds with an initial VET qualification have a related study or training period that includes work placements) and qualitative priorities (such as attractive, inclusive, flexible, permeable and easily accessible VET that is highly relevant to labour market needs). The period 2015-20 will focus on five deliverables as defined in the Riga Conclusions that are agreed by VET ministers, social partners, and the European Commission and supported by VET providers' associations :

- Promote work-based learning in all its forms, with special attention to apprenticeships.
- Further develop quality assurance mechanisms in VET.
- Enhance access to VET and qualifications for all through more flexible and permeable systems.
- Further strengthen key competences in VET curricula and provide more effective opportunities to acquire or develop those skills through VET.
- Introduce systematic approaches to, and opportunities for, professional development of VET teachers, trainers and mentors in both school and work based settings.

Source: Council of the European Union (2012[19]), *Council conclusions on the employability of graduates from education and training*, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/130142.pdf. European Commission (2015[20]), *Riga Conclusions 2015,* https://www.eqavet.eu/Eqavet2017/media/Policy-Documents/Riga-Conclusions-2015.pdf?ext=.pdf. Cedefop (2017[21]), *On the way to 2020: data for vocational education and training policies. Country statistical overviews – 2016 update*. Cedefop research paper; No 61, http://dx.doi.org/10.2801/414017. Cedefop (2015[1]), *Stronger VET for better lives: Cedefop's monitoring report on vocational education and training policies 2010-14*, Cedefop Reference series; No 98

Co-ordination among stakeholders often defines the success of a policy measure

Co-ordination and information sharing across stakeholders is important in any policy area. Policies that focus only on a specific group without regard for other target populations, or are designed without appropriate consultation with a broad variety of stakeholders, can have unintended consequences. In the best cases, such policies can have poor or inefficient outcomes, in the worst cases, such policies can have negative consequences.

For example, funding has been available since 2017 for placing German as Second Language teachers in VET classes in Bavaria. However, a VET school in Bavaria reported to the OECD review team that due to a lack of information on the number of migrant students who required language support, they faced difficulties in terms of actually recruiting and allocating these teachers. By the time schools receive such information they have already hired language teachers because the recruitment should done well in advance through a public tender. Hiring freelance teachers is also not an option, as all teachers are required to have secure employment status. Effective co-ordination in this kind of case often requires a change of legislation, but at a minimum requires information sharing and co-ordination between a range of groups including reception centres and the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), stakeholders involved in teacher training and recruitment, and schools and employers.

Another example from Sweden illustrates the unintended consequence of otherwise rational policies. Migrant students enrolled in compulsory education in Sweden are often concentrated in certain schools partly due to the freedom to choose what school to attend. Parents with resources tend to send their children to the best school available while options are more limited for disadvantaged, immigrant families who are forced to choose schools based on location and availability of financial aid. However, as a result of these factors, there are large geographic variations in the share of pupils eligible for at least upper-secondary VET: the gap in these shares was at least 22 percentage points between districts. The large influx of asylum seekers in recent years has further aggravated the level of school segregation – asylum seekers may organise living conditions by themselves,[6] which does not encourage a more

equitable distribution across districts. Addressing this challenge requires efforts that encourage parents of migrant students to choose schools in other areas or measures that set a minimum or maximum share of disadvantaged students in each school (OECD, 2018[22]).

Information transfer in relation to humanitarian migrants is another co-ordination issue. For example in Sweden, newly arrived are often moved around due to their insecure legal status and registration issues. For those under the age 18, they can start schooling even if the settlement is not confirmed – this is understandable, but it can cause a complication for tracking in the education system if the students have to move for a permanent accommodation after having started a school already. This is a challenge for schools and municipalities in providing education for them. For this reason, some migrant students are moved several times and have to restart at new schools, with new teachers, fellow students and curricula. The Swedish National Agency of Education has noted that administrative and academic information is not passed smoothly between schools and institutions when newly arrived students change schools or municipalities. This is partly due to a lack of an established system of transfer (or alignment of registration system) and the fact that transitional programmes are designed differently across municipalities (Skolverket, 2018[23]; Kuczera and Jeon, 2019[5]).

Systematic co-ordination between existing skills assessment tools can avoid inefficiencies. This requires co-operation among relevant actors, effective information sharing and transfer, and clear definition of skills needs and pathways to acquire equivalent qualifications. For example, the development of instruments to record and track migrant skills could be useful for sustainable integration including for skills development and use at a later phase of integration. Unfortunately, skills and credentials screening, assessment and recognition processes and systems are often fragmented, and more so in the case of migrants and refugees. When skills gaps are identified, a migrant must find a way to complete supplementary coursework. However, depending on the field and the missing skill or qualification, this can prove impossible, since stand-alone courses that cover the material needed are often not available to students outside a full programme. In the worse-case scenario, a skilled migrant missing a single course may have no option other than to repeat an entire programme before applying to become licensed or re-entering their field. Accessing hands-on training can prove even more difficult than filling gaps in academic coursework.

Co-ordination between central and local government lowers regional disparities

One of key elements for effective co-ordination is finding the right balance between a central government, which has a broad overview and desire for a coherent approach, and local governments, which have more flexibility and decision making power.

In countries where local authorities are often responsible for the provision of upper-secondary VET, successful entry and completion of upper-secondary VET depends largely on local actors. In Sweden, for example, the quantity and quality of career guidance services depends upon local decisions and allocation of resources (Hertzberg, 2017[24]). Regional and local authorities in Sweden (and in some cases in Germany) are also responsible for transitional programmes and the quality varies between regions. In this regard, national government needs to ensure that each local government has sufficient capacity to deliver the service, ensure coherent quality across regions and distribute resources and information accordingly. This is particularly important in countries with significant regional disparities.

Horizontal co-operation across regions is also important. Inter-municipal co-operation in public service delivery in Sweden allows specific courses to be offered to newcomers that could be difficult to arrange in every municipality (e.g. vocational training with language support, mother tongue tuition) and allows new arrivals to access such provision regardless of which municipality they live in – in case they move on to another municipality within the region – and to continue to benefit (OECD, 2018[22]).

Box 6.2. Examples of alignment and co-ordination across public sectors

Explicit co-ordination mechanisms that proactively engage relevant stakeholders can help to ensure that necessary co-ordination and co-operation is undertaken. For example, in **Sweden**, the Swedish National Delegation for the Employment of Young People and Newly Arrived Migrants (DUA) was established to increase dialogue between schools, municipalities, PES and social partners to the benefit of refugees, asylum workers and youth. The DUA aims to consolidate and co-ordinate existing measures (e.g. joint skills assessment) from both PES and municipalities and build local agreements with compulsory elements (Local Job Track). Needs and requirements are defined by local companies. However, this is so far a temporary arrangement and the involvement of municipalities is on a voluntary basis.

In **Turkey**, multi-stakeholder support ensures VET access for Syrian migrants and provincial and district commissions have been established to increase access to VET for Syrians under temporary protection. These commissions involve provinces, VET schools, VET programme co-ordinators or Temporary Education Centre co-ordinators, school counsellors, teachers, social partners and employment agencies.

In the **United States**, multiple stakeholders are involved in the delivery of programmes for humanitarian migrants, such as Seattle's Ready to Work Programme (see Box 3.2) that combines language training and VET. For example, Seattle's Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs works with the community, NGOs, adult education providers, colleges, workforce development groups and employers.

Source: Countries' responses to the OECD questionnaire.

Good practice needs to be promoted through peer learning and upscaling

Regional and local bodies are often better suited to make appropriate decisions based on local labour market needs, apprenticeship demand and supply and school resources (Mosely, 2008[25]). Local actors have a particularly key role to play when there is a lack of tailor-made strategies within a national policy framework, such as for recent humanitarian migrants (OECD, 2018[26]). Moreover, given the potential of humanitarian migrants to bring relevant skills to a host region or municipality, local authorities are often keen to take initiatives to handle skills shortages by providing training for newly arrived and facilitating the entrance of skilled refugees into local sectors and occupations that are experiencing shortages.

For example, in Germany, Bavaria has put in place one of the country's most accommodating VET programmes (partly due to well-established preparatory VET programmes) for migrants allocated to the *Länder*. Measures include raising the age of compulsory education for asylum seekers and refugees to 21 and the possibility of educators applying for an extension to keep migrants in school until the age of 25. Bavaria has also spent substantial resources in hiring more teachers to teach German to young refugees. In 2018, Bavaria allocated EUR 938 million for integration efforts, more than any other *Länder* (though it should be noted Bavaria has the highest budget surplus in Germany) (Nasr, 2018[27]). A chamber of commerce in Bavaria also developed the 1+3 VET pilots for refugee students where one year of intensive language courses is combined with 3-year regular VET.

However, approaches from local actors may result in inefficiencies and duplication if appropriate co-ordination, peer-learning and capacity building mechanisms are absent. To avoid this, in Switzerland, the confederation plays a role in terms of peer-learning across cantons. While taking into account the difference between French, German and Italian-speaking regions, it takes responsibility for scaling up successful programmes nationally.

Incentive mechanisms or flexibility can promote good and effective practices at regional and local levels and scale up those practices to national levels. One widely known example of upscaling is Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) in the United States, which effectively combines basic skills and vocational skills (Box 3.2). The success of this programme can be attributed partly to the significant autonomy of states in terms of how they allocate federal budgets to target groups. For instance, VET budgets under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) can be used for refugee training if states decide to do so.

Measurable goals, monitoring and evaluation

Rapid changes in labour markets mean that national VET systems are in constant need of upgrades (Gasskov, 2000[9]), which in turn requires strategic planning and management, up to and including regular reviews of the entire national VET policy framework. This need to review and upgrade is clearly recognised, as it is apparent when looking at VET mission statements across countries that have ever broader objectives requiring more funds, built on a more developed system and well-ordered strategies.

For example, Switzerland has set clear goals to achieve for migrants, as mentioned in Chapter 1, aiming for 66% of young humanitarian migrants to attain an upper-secondary education by their fifth year of arrival – and 50% of humanitarian migrants to be employed by their seventh year of arrival. Switzerland comes closer to the goals, compared to other countries, due to a strong VET system, a solid integration agenda that brings additional funding, and evaluation of migrant potential under the strategic plan for integration.

In Denmark, the goal is to see 50% of refugees and reunified relatives (25-64 years old) placed in a job (for now, 28% obtained a job after three years of participation in integration programmes) (Danish Tripartite Negotiations, 2016[28]). In Norway, since 2010, one of the integration goals has been for 70% of Integration Programme participants to be in paid employment and/or education within one year of completing the programme (Djuve et al., 2017[29]). Similarly in the United States,[7] employment and career development services funded through Refugee Social Services and Targeted Assistance Programme provided by the Office of Refugee Resettlement are geared towards helping humanitarian migrants become economically self-sufficient within 120 to 180 days for the former and within one year for the latter, although these services focus less on VET and more on employment-focused language or computer training, career development, cultural orientation and employment services.

Setting success indicators based on outcome-oriented (or mixed) approaches would lead to more effective outcomes and more focused implementation rather than input-oriented approaches. Clear, feasible and measurable targets enables better evaluation and monitoring not only regarding effectiveness and efficiency but also equity and quality.

Tracking and monitoring is particular important, as the integration of migrants is a long-term process that requires long-term planning. For example, Sweden provides reports on the destination of VET graduates as well as the transition paths of students in preparatory programmes. This was started on an ad hoc basis, but in 2012 the Swedish government decided to produce such reports regularly and more systematically (Cedefop, 2015[1]).

Monitoring and evaluation may require a more contextualised approach when the VET system allows for more flexibility and permeability. For example, the overall basic skills, including language skills, may appear low when accounting young migrants and refugees who were able to enter into the VET system through a modularised VET course. Such context needs to be taken into account when monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness and outcomes of VET programmes.

Engage social partner throughout the integration process through VET

Social partner engagement is a mechanism for ensuring labour market relevance both in the design and delivery of VET programmes and optimising ultimate outcomes while addressing strategic skills shortages

(OECD, 2018[30]; Kis, 2016[31]; Kuczera, 2017[32]). Consequently, their role is even more important when it comes to young newly-arrived humanitarian migrants, including from the preparatory phases to labour market integration. Countries that have strong VET systems typically exhibit a higher level of social partner engagement, in particular with employers, sectoral and occupational bodies. These stakeholders play essential roles in ensuring the relevance and attractiveness of VET provision. In Switzerland, occupational associations are responsible for defining VET content and creating apprenticeship positions. These associations are important for encouraging contributions to VET from companies, representing members' interests in the national arena, and working together with public authorities to design and implement VET policies (Baumeler, Engelage and Strebel, 2018[33]). Countries with strong social partner engagement in VET involve social partners from the preparatory phase. Preparatory traineeships (*Einstiegsqualifizierung,* EQ) in Germany and pre-apprenticeship for humanitarian migrants (INVOL) in Switzerland were designed in co-operation with key stakeholders from industry and trade. In the case of INVOL, the role of professional organisations in sectors where skills shortages are acute was critical to consolidate the initiative at the national level.

Provide employers with easily accessible and practical information related to training refugees and asylum seekers

In order to engage employers in the integration of migrants and refugees through VET, easily accessible and practical information on successful cases for training and hiring refugees and asylum seekers and guidance on existing support initiatives are helpful (OECD and UNHCR, 2016[34]). For employers, information needs will differ depending on the size of the potential employer, the sector in which the employer operates, and geographical location. In order to meet the information needs of employers, a network of Danish corporate leaders (*Virksomhedsforum for Socialt Ansvar,* VFSA) developed a brochure for employers. The 2017 document, *Virksomheder integrerer flygtninge* (Companies Integrate Refugees), offers concrete experience from participating companies to give practical guidance to companies considering training and hiring refugees and asylum seekers. More transparent and more accessible information on refugees' right to work, the recognition of foreign qualifications and the availability of training support for refugees, including through one-stop shops and hotlines also help employers to engage. Active research and public support on this area of work will enhance and maintain the level of social partner engagement: an example is 'Vocational and Professional Education and Training (VPET) governance' in Switzerland (Box 6.3).

Ensure that employers understand the skills levels involved with programmes, tests and qualifications

The assessment of migrant skills should ideally be done in co-operation with employers. For example, Skills Norway, which is responsible for the course curricula of the Norwegian language tests, ensures that employers correctly understand the skills levels involved with the test, in order to avoid exclusion of applicants due to unnecessarily high language requirements.

Box 6.3. An example of governance practice for VET that enhances the understanding of social partner engagement and other important issues of governance

GOVPET Leading House in Switzerland is working on decentralised co-operation for VET

The GOVPET Leading House, launched in 2015 and financially supported by Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation, is jointly hosted by the University of St. Gallen, the University of Lausanne, the Swiss Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training in Zollikofen, and the University of Cologne. The GOVPET research programme focuses on the governance of vocational and professional education and training in Austria, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland.

More concretely, it focuses on two central, connected research questions. First, how decentralised co-operation in skill formation is made possible given the ever-present threat of co-operation breakdown and what stakeholders can do to encourage private actors to co-operate. Second, how public policies can encourage private actors to consider societal goals in decentralised co-operation that are not necessarily in the interest of these private actors using the case of the inclusion of disadvantaged labour market participants in the systems of (initial and continuous) vocational and professional training.

The analyses of Vocational and Professional Education and Training (VPET) systems in Austria, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland show: i) how private actors maintain co-operation; ii) how a dual-track VET system can be adapted in response to new challenges and how interests of different actor groups can be furthered through VET system Reform; and iii) how states can get these private actors to consider societal interests in their decentralised co-operation.

Almost 20 research papers on this issue have been published each year since 2015.

Source: University of St. Gallen (2019[35]), *The Leading House on Governance in Vocational and Professional Education and Training*, https://gce.unisg.ch/en/govpet.

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Notes

[1] See also Bendixen (2017[39]), Preisler (2016[36]) and Kvam (2017[40]).

[2] The pilot project is entitled "A new beginning with the Vocational Lycea (*Μια νέα αρχή στα ΕΠΑΛ/ΜΝΕΑ*)". Young refugee and migrant students (aged 15-18) are offered options to enrol in upper-secondary VET (Vocational Lycea, which offers reception classes). The project covers various social groups including Greek expatriates, foreign-born students, Roma and other vulnerable groups.

[3] For more information, see Programmes d'intégration cantonaux (2019[37]).

[4] (1) All refugees have a basic knowledge of one national language three years after arrival, at least at A1 level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CFER).

(2) 80% of refugee children aged 0-4 are able to communicate in the language spoken at their place of residence by the time they start compulsory schooling.

(3) Two-thirds of refugees aged 16-25 are in an upper-secondary education (including VET) five years after arrival.

(4) Half of adult refugees are sustainably integrated in the labour market seven years after arrival.

(5) All refugees are familiar with the Swiss way of life and have contact with Swiss people seven years after arrival.

[5] The Finnish VET reform was driven by the budget cuts in 2017 and it unifies financing system and legislation (Eurydice, 2019[11]). VET for young people and adults will be combined into a single entity and be planned individually. This may facilitate the transition between different VET programmes and institutions.

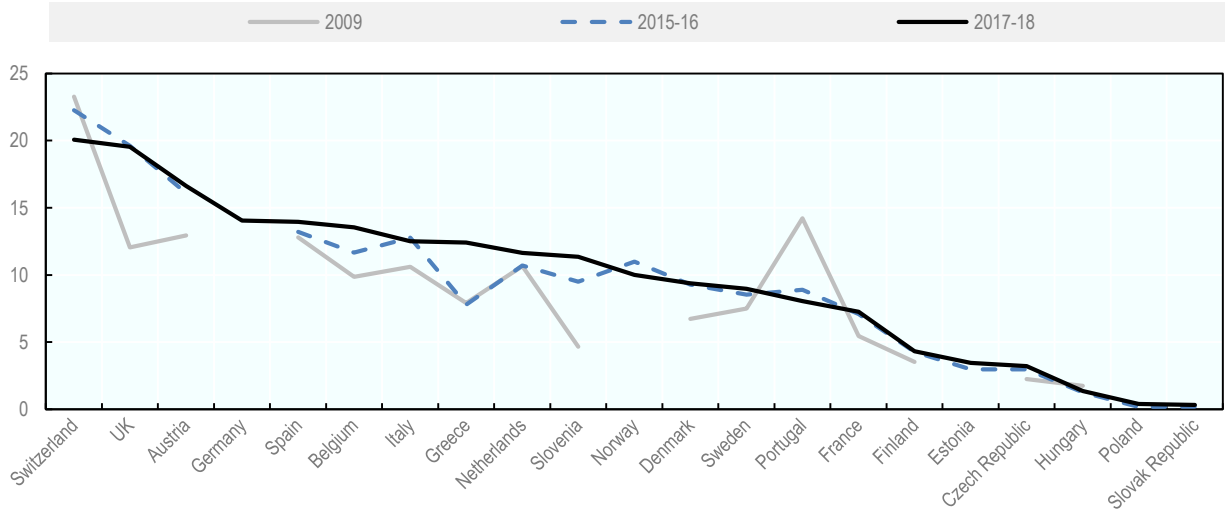
[6] In June 2019, the Swedish government presented a proposal that includes changes that seek to steer asylum seekers who organise their own living conditions away from areas with social problems (Johansson and Pleiner, 2019[38]).

[7] Refugees get employment authorisation as soon as they arrive and can apply for permanent residence one year after arrival.

Annex A. Additional figures on foreign-born vocational education and training graduates

Figure A A.1. Share of migrants among VET graduates (15-34 years-old), 2009-2018

Share (%) of foreign-born graduates among those with upper-secondary VET as their highest qualification

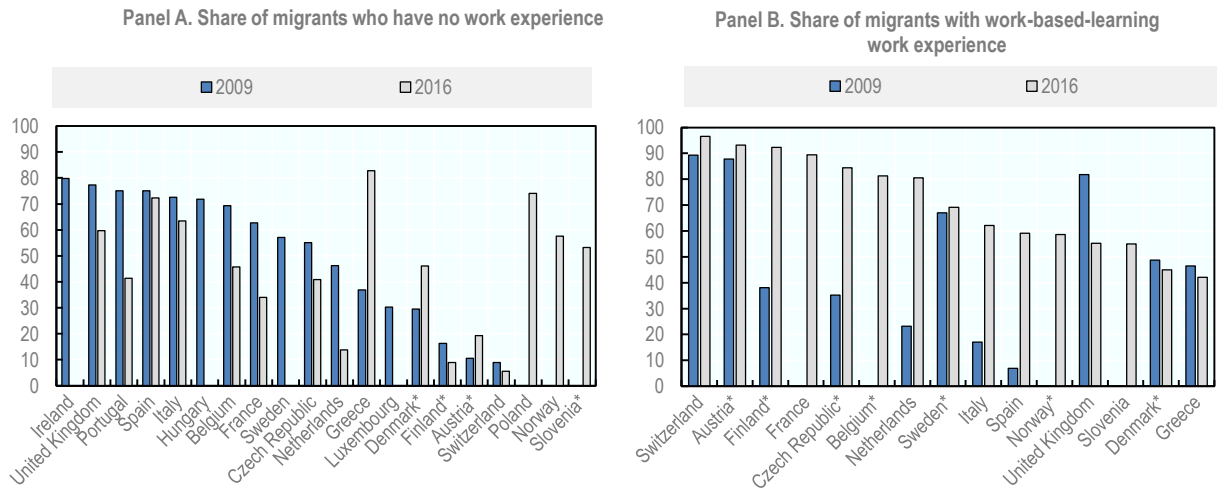


Note: See Figure 1.5 in Chapter 1.
Source: Eurostat (2019[1]), 2009 EU Labour Force Survey ad hoc module and 2015-2018 EU Labour Force Surveys. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/microdata/european-union-labour-force-survey.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888933998177

Figure A A.2. Migrant VET graduates by type of work experience

Share (%) of foreign-born upper-secondary VET graduates (15-34 years-old), by type of work experience



Note: 1) In Panel A, 2009 data from Austria and Denmark are derived from those who have work experience. 2016 data from Slovenia and Finland include those who had work experience outside the curriculum, in addition to those who had no work experience.
2) In Panel B, 2009 data from Finland and Sweden are derived from those who have work experience not based on work-based learning. 2016 data from Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Norway and Sweden have low reliability issue.
3) For the related 2016 data, see Figure 4.4 in Chapter 4 and Figure 5.5 in Chapter 5.
Source: Eurostat (2019[1]), 2009 and 2016 EU Labour Force Survey ad hoc modules. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/microdata/european-union-labour-force-survey.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888933998196

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Unlocking the Potential of Migrants

CROSS-COUNTRY ANALYSIS

Among the millions of asylum seekers who recently arrived in OECD countries, the majority are young people who may be able to take advantage of vocational education and training (VET) opportunities to help them enter skilled employment. This report provides advice to governments and other stakeholders who are seeking to use VET to promote integration, in particular for young humanitarian migrants. While the study draws particularly on policy and practice observed in Germany, Italy, Sweden and Switzerland, it also highlights other international practices.

The report focuses on the main channels through which migrants succeed in VET. It is essential that migrants are fully informed about the opportunities VET provision offers and that they have access to high quality preparatory programmes enabling access to upper-secondary VET. Once in such provision, targeted support should help them to complete VET programmes successfully. OECD countries are putting in place innovative measures to achieve better outcomes for both migrants and for economies as a whole. Ultimately this report argues that VET systems can become stronger, more flexible and more inclusive, when working better for all students, including those with diverse and vulnerable backgrounds.

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