

Migration

INTEGRATING REFUGEES AND OTHER MIGRANTS INTO EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- ▶ The gap in learning outcomes between immigrant and non-immigrant students in Germany remains high.
- ▶ Germany needs to speed up access to quality education, training and work supports to achieve better and faster integration.
- ▶ If Germany improves the responsiveness of education and training to the needs of refugees and other migrants, it will also improve integration outcomes.

What's the issue?

Over the last 20 years (1994-2013), net migration was on average 175 000 per year. But with the surge in refugees, net migration increased from 128 000 in 2010 to around 600 000 in 2014 and exceeded 1 million in 2015. Such sharp increases in the number of migrants pose challenges to the capacity to quickly and effectively assist migrants to navigate and access education, training and labour market opportunities.

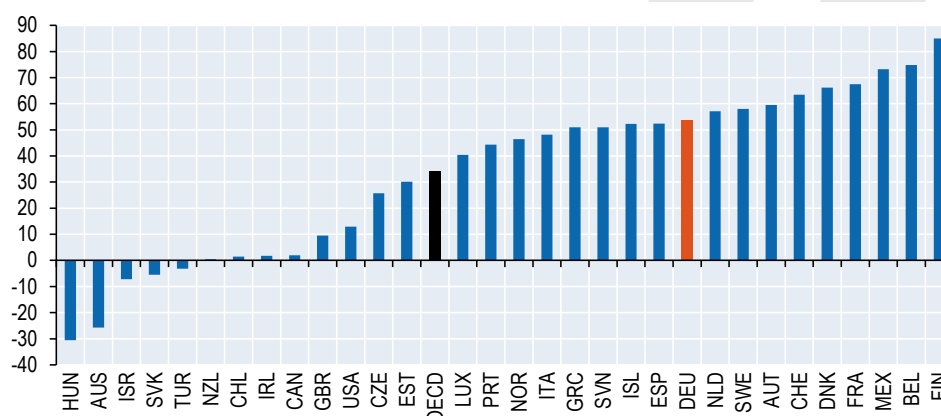
While Germany has reduced the level of inequity in education for students with migrant backgrounds, further improvement is possible, as shown by a number of other countries that have also had large inflows of migrants (see Figure). The proportion of 15-year-old immigrant students scoring below the baseline proficiency Level 2 in mathematics in PISA is more than double the proportion of non-immigrant students at that level (31% versus 14%). Some 39% of first-generation immigrant students and around 29% of second-generation students perform below that level. Amongst adults, foreign language immigrants in Germany tend to also have lower literacy skills than the native born who have spoken German

from birth. The difference in literacy proficiency between foreign-language immigrants and native-born Germans is 39 points in the OECD Survey of Adult Skills. While this is close to the cross-country average (37 points) it is much higher than in leading countries such as the Czech Republic (6 points).

Many of the new migrants lack knowledge of the systems and processes that operate in Germany. It can be difficult, for example, for them to find answers to questions such as how to help their children to quickly develop the language of the host country, how to find out which school their children can go to and how to make this decision, what options there are to further develop professional or occupational skills, and how to get one's qualifications recognised. Providing migrants with sound and timely information on such questions can hasten the process of integration.

▶ The gap in learning outcomes between immigrant and non-immigrant students remains higher in Germany than in many other OECD countries

Difference in mathematics PISA score between non-immigrant and immigrant students, 2012



Source: OECD (2013), PISA 2012 Results, Excellence through Equity, Giving Every Student the Chance to Succeed, OECD Publishing, <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/keyfindings/pisa-2012-results-volume-ii.htm>.

Why is this important for Germany?

Migrants who engage and succeed in education and the labour market of their host country are more quickly integrated into both the social and economic spheres of the country. The longer this process of engagement and integration takes, the greater the risks of migrants or their children becoming alienated from the host countries' culture and values, and the more difficult it is to achieve positive integration outcomes. The gap between migrants and natives in both unemployment and education remains larger than in best performing OECD countries, which shows scope for improvement in integration. This is particularly true for the language skills of immigrant students who arrive after the age of 12. These students lag much farther behind students in the same grade in reading proficiency than immigrants who arrived at younger ages.

The educational, social and emotional success of immigrant students differs widely across countries, including for students from the same country of origin and the same socio-economic status. Thus, there is a body of "best practice" that countries can learn from to improve outcomes for migrant students. In Germany the parents of immigrant students also hold much higher educational expectations for their children than the parents of similarly disadvantaged non-immigrant students. This is true even when comparing students who perform similarly at school.

What should policy makers do?

- ▶ Provide refugees and other migrants with sound and timely information about education and skills development opportunities, and administrative guidance to hasten the process of integration.
- ▶ Ensure refugees with no documentation about their previous education or training receive a quick but precise assessment of their skills and, if not granted recognition in the form of a degree or allowance to perform the job for which they have some relevant skills, are enrolled in a modularised and affordable training programme to gain the missing skills - ideally on the job.
- ▶ Provide sustained language support for refugees and other migrant students who need it, within regular classrooms.
- ▶ Encourage the participation of children with migrant backgrounds in high quality early childhood education programmes, at the earliest possible ages.
- ▶ Build the capacity of all schools to respond effectively to refugees and other migrant students.
- ▶ Avoid concentrating students with migrant backgrounds in disadvantaged schools.



Further reading

OECD (2015), *Helping Immigrant Students to Succeed at School and Beyond*, OECD Publishing. <http://www.oecd.org/education/Helping-immigrant-students-to-succeed-at-school-and-beyond.pdf>

OECD (2015), *Immigrant Students at School: Easing the Journey towards Integration*, OECD Publishing. <http://www.oecd.org/edu/immigrant-students-at-school-9789264249509-en.htm>

OECD (2015), *International Migration Outlook 2015*, OECD Publishing. <http://www.oecd.org/migration/international-migration-outlook-1999124x.htm>

OECD (2014), "Labour Market Integration of Immigrants and Their Children: Developing, Activating and Using Skills", Chapter 2 of *International Migration Outlook 2014*, OECD Publishing. http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/international-migration-outlook-2014_migr_outlook-2014-en