

International Mobility: acquiring, developing and sharing skills



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The migration of Tunisians is important for companies seeking to orient their activities internationally. In order to ensure socio-economic development, it is fundamental to emphasize the usefulness of migration in the context of globalization.

The conditions of the Tunisian labor market are characterized by an imbalance between supply and demand and a high unemployment rate, which are pushing Tunisians to work abroad. Indeed, in order to improve the economic and social conditions of Tunisians, well-ordered emigration can function to improve the country's production system.

Amira Mamouchi, a Master's candidate, carried out research on the research on the reintegration of Tunisian expatriates as part of IOM Tunisia's Summer School on Migration. She received a scholarship from IOM Tunisia to carry out first hand research. We speak with Amira about her findings below.

Can you talk about the migration of Tunisians to the energy sector and why the return of expatriates is important?

In Tunisia, migration plays a crucial role in the energy sector. An example of this can be seen in the Tunisian company Electricity and Gas International Services (STEG-IS) which works on several projects in countries across Africa and the Middle East.

STEG-IS has an information system and a quality management system that allow the preservation of individual and organizational performance. STEG-IS is active in many fields in Africa and the Middle East. Its business focuses not only on electricity and gas but also on training, skills development and industrial maintenance.

The return of expatriates is important because it allows employees to come back to their companies with new knowledge, skills and field experiences needed to promote human potential and organizational success. The transfer of international skills now seems to be the driving force behind sustainable development of companies.

You focus on south-south migration. Which are the destination countries for Tunisians? And what skills do they bring back?

Living and working abroad serves as a learning opportunity not only for the expatriate but also for the entire organization. During the migration period, expatriates acquire new skills abroad. There are different types of skills that constitute capital not only for the expatriate

but also for the company. These are skills that correspond to cultural, technical, managerial and interpersonal knowledge, and include knowledge through networks built abroad. These skills promote professional and social learning for individuals and improved organizational performance for companies.

What are the obstacles faced by expatriates and their companies when they return to Tunisia?

In the framework of the international management of human resources, good management of international mobility is a necessity for the successful emigration of workers and the return of skilled migrants.

The return of employees is usually the most complicated phase for both the expatriate and the company in the country of origin. The expatriate is confronted with obstacles that may prevent the transfer of skills and experience acquired abroad.

Dissatisfaction in professional and daily life can hinder successful reintegration. For one, positions offered to expatriates returning to their companies in origin countries often do not require the knowledge and skills which were acquired abroad. Secondly, the structures and procedures of the organization can hinder the sharing of skills acquired abroad. In addition, expatriates may face obstacles to reintegration within their own families.

How can companies better utilize the skills of returning expatriates?

To manage the skills of expatriates returning to the country, companies must implement solutions that facilitate the reintegration of the expatriates into the environment of the country of origin upon their return.

Companies should improve opportunities for career development while valuing the new skills and resources acquired by the employee internationally. Moreover, they should maintain contact with and support the expatriate throughout the migratory process and especially during the return.

At STEG-IS, cross-cultural training, preparation and establishment of a return agreement, flexibility as well as the development of an exchange network and organizational support are key factors to promote the success of migration in general and more precisely the transfer of skills acquired abroad.

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