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Against the backdrop of global labour shortages where globally **77 per cent of employers** have difficulty in finding workers with the right skills, the skills dimension of labour migration becomes increasingly more relevant to address global labour needs along with needs for inclusion, entrepreneurship and development of origin and destination communities. This is further emphasized in the [World Migration Report](#) and the [World Development Report 2023: Migrants, Refugees and Societies](#), which highlights that when migrants are able to contribute to communities with their skills and abilities, the benefits of migration outweigh the costs - regardless of the driver, skill levels, or legal status of migrants.



SKILLS-BASED MOBILITY

In the context of regular labour migration pathways, skills go well beyond the traditional skills development aspect and, crucially, also includes skills anticipation, matching, transfer and recognition, with an important role for diaspora among other actors. Skills Mobility Partnerships (SMPs) form one model that facilitates skills-based mobility and includes these different aspects. SMPs provide the platform upon which stakeholders in the countries of origin and destination collaborate to invest in the training of workers for both labour markets. Under SMPs, some trained workers will join the local labour market, while others will migrate for employment abroad. In this way, SMPs support both countries of origin and destination to increase their human capital and further develop a competitive workforce. By design, SMPs are demand-driven, centred around skills development and the creation of value for all involved countries and stakeholders.

Additionally, it is increasingly important to make skills-based pathways more accessible to, and inclusive of, people in need of international protection (e.g. displaced people, refugees, others). By adapting skills-based pathways through *complementary labour pathways*, it is possible to facilitate the movement of people who cannot make use of their skills in countries of first asylum to safe third countries where their skills are in demand.

SKILLS & IOM STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2028

Objective 3:

“Facilitating Pathways for Regular Migration”

Skills form are part of IOM’s approach to regular pathways and are present throughout the whole pathway process. As IOM’s strategic plan quotes:

“IOM will enhance technical assistance to private sector and government-led **skills mobility initiatives that connect migrants to decent work opportunities.**”

“IOM programmes will also contribute to successful labour migration by **equipping migrants with skills** and knowledge for the twenty-first century workplace.”



SKILLS, INTEGRATION AND INCLUSION

Education, training, cross-cultural skills and other skills-building and application efforts are a key factor that promotes the social and economic integration and inclusion of migrants. Education can provide migrants with the necessary skills, knowledge and competencies to access opportunities and participate in social and economic life, while also contributing to the economic growth and social cohesion of host communities. At the same time, many migrants face barriers to access and benefit from high-quality education and training, including language difficulties, lack of recognition of prior education, skills, legal and administrative hurdles and cultural differences. The multiple dimensions and types of skills that migrants possess beyond technical skills are often undervalued, yet are crucial for thriving societies and economies, and transferable across jobs and cultures. Examples of these skills include resiliency, cross-cultural communication, adaptability, multilingualism, negotiation and navigation between communities, among others.

The integration process starts in the pre-departure stage of the migration process, where the digital learning opportunities, technical and vocational education training (TVET) and resources for community orientation can be made available. Pre-arrival support should be complemented by post-arrival information and orientation sessions that support migrants to learn the local language, apply to find employment and navigate their new community, among other aspects, which all further increase the success of integration. Migrant Resource Centers (MRCs) or other community-led support services are examples that could help migrants to build and apply skills in their new communities and remove systemic barriers that may foster exclusion and make it more difficult to access services and employment.

In line with this, the need for a holistic approach on skills for integration that includes connections between pre-departure and post-arrival support is key. Tailored interventions based on local contexts will be necessary to address the diverse needs of migrant groups such as age, gender, education level, and cultural background.



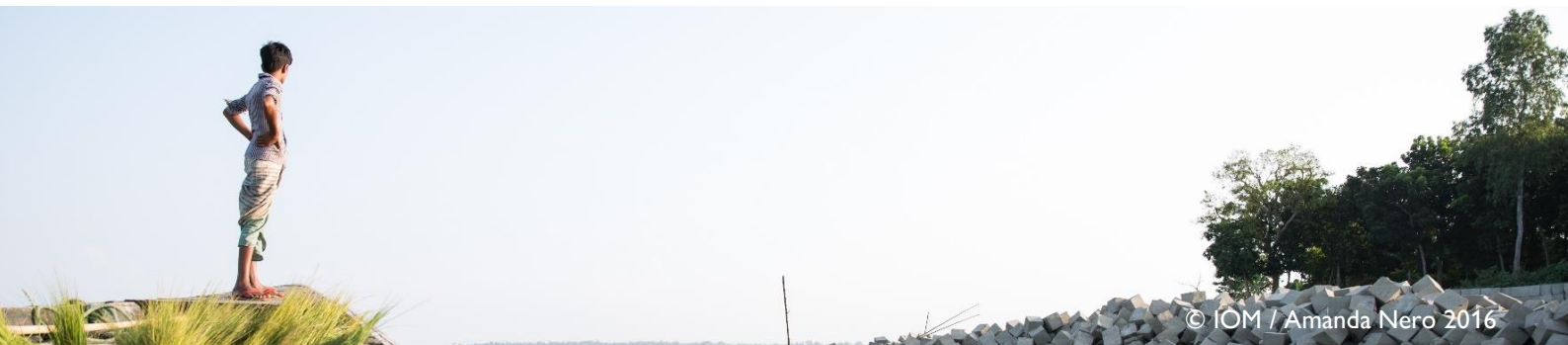
DIASPORA AND SKILLS

Diaspora are active agents in driving innovative and sustainable solutions in both home and host communities. Through mentorships, transnational networks and educational exchanges, diasporas serve as vital human capital with diverse expertise spanning various sectors. Diasporas facilitate the circulation of skills, knowledge, and experience, enriching communities and advancing global development agendas. Harnessing the full potential of their talents, diasporas can fuel greater resilience and inclusivity for all.

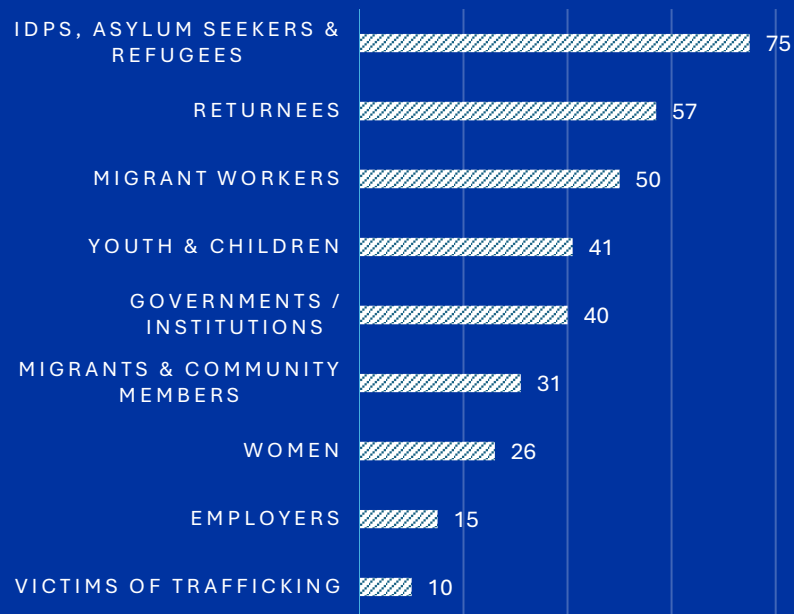


IOM'S WORK ON SKILLS

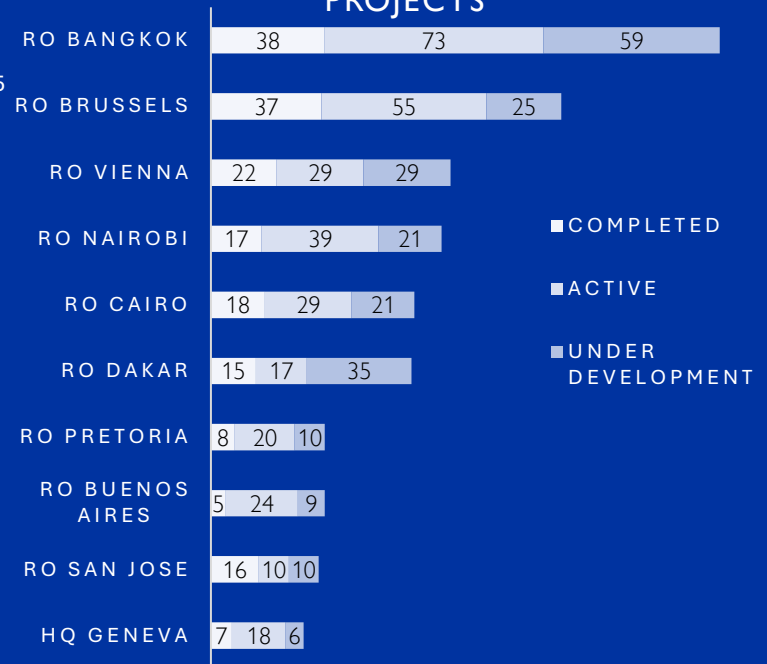
IOM has been working actively with governments, training and educational institutions, employers and other stakeholders to facilitate labour and skills mobility and promote the sustainable integration of migrants and refugees. This includes policy development, designing and piloting innovative solutions to capacity building, facilitating public-private partnerships and regional cooperation and providing direct training for various groups of migrants and local community members. Key strategic areas of IOM's engagement on skills development, skills mobility and migrant integration include data, policy development and implementation, the development and scaling up of innovative models, partnerships, and a people-centred approach.



NUMBER OF SKILLS PROJECTS WITH BENEFICIARY TYPES



REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF SKILLS PROJECTS



IOM SKILLS PROJECTS

At the beginning of 2024, IOM has implemented almost 500 projects which included various skills components, with another 200 projects under development. Two-thirds of these projects focus on direct delivery of trainings activities. Projects supporting policy development, skill recognition and certification and skill matching are less common and constitute about 12 per cent.

IDPs, asylum seekers and refugees are the main beneficiaries for skills development (about 25% of skills projects). Returnees and migrant workers are the other two main beneficiaries, accounting for 19% and 16%, respectively, whereas approximately 10% of the skills projects include local community members as beneficiaries. A significant proportion directly target youth and, to a lesser extent, women, highlighting the need for tailored yet diverse approaches to leave no one behind.

While almost half of the skills projects (46%) aim to enhance vocational and employment skills, one in every four (27%) focus on building cultural, practical and resilience skills and about 14% of skills projects have multiple components. As above, the importance of building and acknowledging a person's holistic skill set is crucial for success on the migration journey.

RESOURCES AND TOOLS

SKILLS MOBILITY PARTNERSHIPS

- ▶ SMP Guidance & Recommendations
- ▶ Example - PROMISE Thailand
- ▶ Example - THAMM+ Labour Migration in Italy and North Africa

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INCLUSION

- ▶ IOM - Migrant Integration and Training
- ▶ Migrant E-nclusion Resource Hub
- ▶ DISC Initiative Core Resources

DIASPORA SKILL TRANSFER

- ▶ iDiaspora - Connect, Learn, Contribute
- ▶ Online Learning Opportunities | iDiaspora
- ▶ Diaspora Mapping Toolkit | iDiaspora