

What ‘drives’ migration?

Migration is a complex phenomenon which depends on the interaction of multiple factors. Referred to as the ‘drivers of migration’, these factors influence migrants’ decisions to migrate, from departure from the country of origin to arrival in the destination country.

These drivers are diverse and often overlap in reality. **Technology** also acts as a driver facilitating migration, especially through information-sharing.

These drivers entail different degrees of freedom in the decision to migrate. As a result, migrants, including refugees, are to a greater or lesser extent agents of their own migration.



Labour

The pursuit of economic opportunities has long been a source of migration, informing the migration trends around the world and at all sectors or class of society.

The latest available estimates indicate that:

- ⇒ There were **around 164 million migrant workers** in the world in 2017, representing 64% of all international migrants.
- ⇒ The primary migration corridor for economic opportunities goes to **high-income level countries**, where 68% of migrant workers reside.

Family

Family is one of the most important drivers of migration. The family may play a role in one’s decision to migrate and may even be the main reason for migrating. Migration on family grounds includes:

- ⇒ Family formation: Migration of an individual who marries a resident of the destination country.
- ⇒ Family reunification: Migration of family members who are reuniting with a migrant in the destination country.

Did you know?



The main type of migration to OECD countries is for family purposes. In 2017, family-related migration represented **35% of all migration entries in these countries.**



Inequality and uneven development

Inequality and uneven development are key drivers of migration as people primarily migrate from poorer to wealthier places in search of higher income and, more generally, better living conditions.

In 2019, nearly 65% of all international migrants were in high-income countries, compared to less than 5% in low-income countries.



Education

Education impacts the decision to migrate in two main ways:

- ⇒ A higher level of education increases the probability for one to migrate; and
- ⇒ Some people migrate specifically for better educational opportunities for their children or themselves.

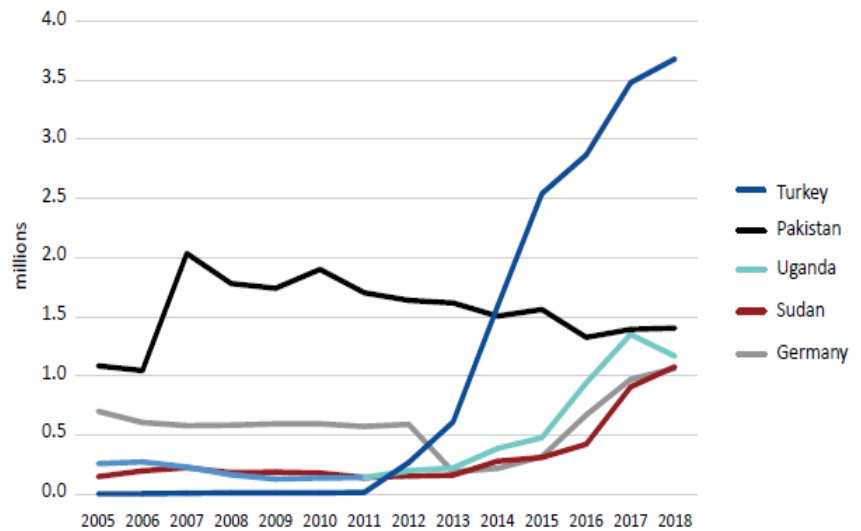


Armed conflicts, violence and human rights violations

Armed conflicts, generalized violence and human rights violations have displaced millions of individuals worldwide. Some of them are refugees because the risk of persecution they face in their country of origin.

In 2018, there was a total of 25.9 million refugees globally, with Turkey, Pakistan, Uganda, Sudan and Germany as the top 5 host countries.

Number of refugees by top 5 host countries as of 2018



IOM, World Migration Report 2020



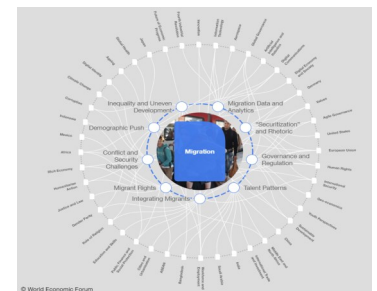
Environmental and climate change

Sudden or progressive environmental and climate changes may lead individuals to migrate either temporarily or permanently.

At the end of 2018, 17.2 million new internal displacements were recorded due to disasters, such as floods, storms, droughts or wildfires.

WEF-IOM Migration Transformation Map

Click [here](#) to learn more about the drivers of migration



Find out more!

IOM Research – www.iom.int/migration-research

World Migration Report – www.iom.int/wmr/

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