



International
Labour
Organization



Funded by
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MIGRATION MANAGEMENT
PROJECT

Importance of
labour migration governance
to employers' organizations



1. Introduction

The importance of labour migration to individual employers and to employers' organizations is evident. At both ends of the international migration process, employers have an important stake in what kind and in how much labour migration takes place. **Employers in countries of destination** have a primary interest in accessing a pool of workers with the skills they need. Labour migration can bring relief to labour shortages, help stabilize costs and maintain competitiveness. **Employers in countries of origin** also have an interest in labour migration governance. They have a stake in ensuring that there is no excessive loss of their own skilled workers, technicians and professionals in whose training they may have invested heavily. They will find it difficult to compete with foreign employers and will be under pressure to raise wages to keep their workers.¹

The problem may end up being only minor or it could have serious implications, depending on how large the labour demand and supply is. In a situation of surplus labour, employers may see the benefits of increased employment abroad and remittances and may support policies encouraging labour migration. Remittances from migrant workers increase consumption and have expansionary effects on the whole economy, raise potential fiscal revenues of the State and contribute to foreign exchange earnings. Remittances are usually spent on domestically produced goods; hence, they can contribute much to the growth of the local economy. At the same time, returnee migrant workers may also bring expertise and experience that enrich the national pool of skilled human resources.²

¹ ILO: **Labour migration policy and management: Training modules**. International Migration Programme and Subregional Office for East Asia, Bangkok, International Labour Office, 2005.

² Op. cit.

THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF EMPLOYERS (IOE)

The International Organization of Employers (IOE) “Position Paper on Labour Migration” in identifying why is Labour Migration relevant for business, mentions that efficient migration systems should respond to labour market needs. It describes the following “Employers regard migration as a vehicle for fulfilling personal aspirations; for balancing labour supply and demand; for sparking innovation; and for transferring and spreading skills. All employers benefit from clear, transparent, and efficient national immigration laws and policies that permit the movement of workers when and where they are needed. Overly complex and sometimes frequently changing systems hinder compliance with national laws and threaten labour market protections. The current trend of using migration as a political tool may prove to be harmful for business expansion and economic growth.”

2. Employers’ organisations in both Countries of Origin and Destination

In both countries of origin and destination, employers’ organisations could contribute to improving labor migration governance through the following:

- Ensuring corporate social responsibility by applying ILO’s Decent Work principles, the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and the UN Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration;
- Supporting non-discrimination in employment and occupation of migrant workers and promoting good practices through publications and training;
- Promoting the adoption of Codes of Conduct by enterprises and industries to encourage fair and effective labour migration practices;
- Fostering the application of the General Principles and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment of national and migrant workers and engaging in dialogue with the government for an effective but not unduly restrictive regulatory framework and effective enforcement so as to eliminate malpractices in the recruitment industry;
- Preventing and eliminating forced labour, child labour and trafficking linked to labour migration processes;
- Drawing employers’ attention to the human and labour rights violations associated with irregular migration;
- Ensuring the social protection of nationals abroad and of migrant workers at home;
- Investing in the acquisition of workers’ new skills to improve their employability and ensure the recognition of migrant workers’ newly acquired skills abroad;





- Identifying industry's skill gaps and requirements not being met by planned investments in education and training;
- Promoting long-term human resources development planning among member companies;
- Training and educating employers' organisations in relevant laws.

EMPLOYERS IN COUNTRIES OF DESTINATION

- Promoting multi-ethnic workforces by showing its strengths and advantages;
- Encouraging and promoting integration of migrant workers through: training of personnel managers to manage a multi-ethnic workforce, offering migrant workers with upskilling and reskilling opportunities, preparing health and safety notices in languages understood by migrant workers and providing language courses, etc.
- Promoting the principle of equal pay for work of equal value among member enterprises;
- Participating in social dialogue on Catalogues of occupations difficult to cover, establishing quotas/ceilings and migrant labour schemes (e.g. temporary migration programmes) and other national policy dialogues which might impact on other labour migration policy issues;
- Complying with vacancy/labour market tests and other Government requirements;
- Respecting the application of procedures for visas and work permits; Ensuring employer responsibilities in reporting on the employment of migrant workers;
- Ensuring respect for terms and conditions of employment, particularly for working and living conditions;
- Supporting Government policies on the regularization of migrant workers (e.g. amnesties) and engaging in dialogue with the other two tripartite partners on measures that need to be taken for the removal of the root causes of irregular migration.
- Employers' organizations need to participate in collective bargaining to determine fair conditions of work for migrant workers.

EMPLOYERS IN COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN

- Considering raising the minimum wage to reduce emigration propensities;
- Ensuring to find concrete solutions (e.g. job creation) to unemployment, informal economy and lack of decent jobs' challenges.