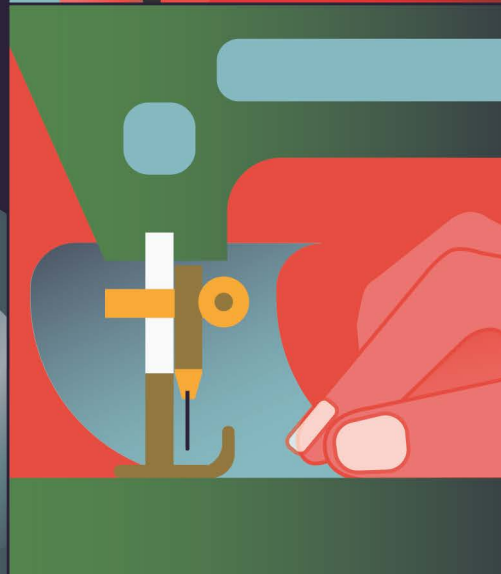
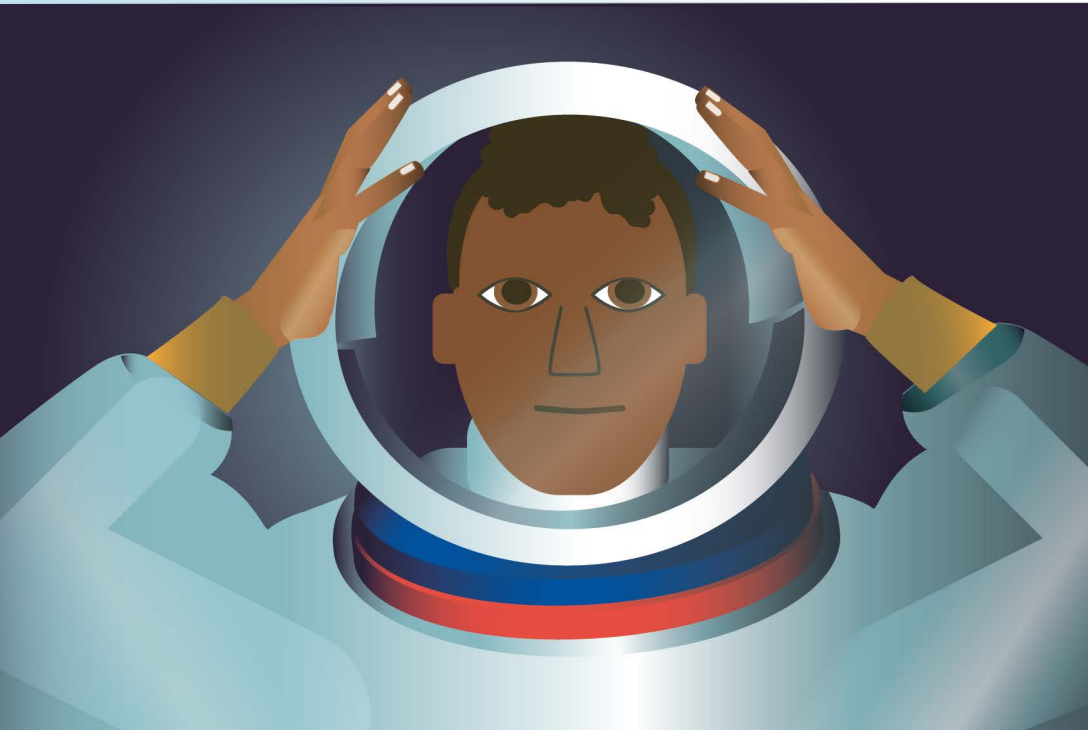
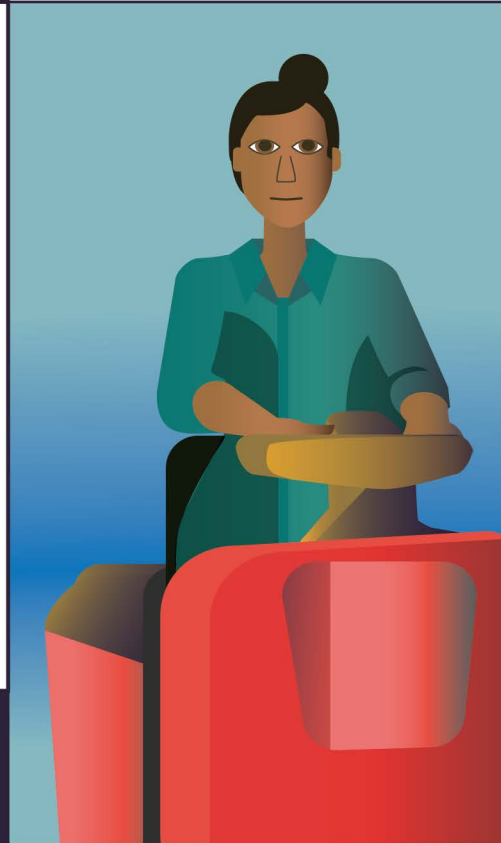


International
Labour
Organization



SKILL DIMENSIONS OF LABOUR MIGRATION

TO PROMOTE DECENT EMPLOYMENT FOR ALL



Recognition of skills is a key factor for the smooth transition to decent work for migrant workers and refugees. Work to improve skills identification and matching should be combined with broader efforts to enhance coherence between employment, skills and migration policies, with the active participation of government institutions and the social partners. These coordinated efforts will also result in a better information exchange between the education system and the labour market, thus providing the basis for up-to-date skills information and anticipation.



Skills are the best asset for people to thrive, contribute to their society in every sense, and achieve their career aspirations. Without skills, enterprises would not function: we would not have roads, buildings, artwork, music, mobile phones, etc.

The skills-related components of labour migration policies and programmes include the following:



Skills anticipation and matching;



Transparency, recognition and portability of skills;



Skills development and employment measures;



Skills mobility and partnerships for development.

ILO's **Convention no. 143 on migrant workers** (Art. 14) mention the recognition of occupational qualifications as a **prerequisite to migrant workers being capable of competing on equal terms with national workers in the labour market**.

Portability of skills contribute to enlarge individual workers' choices and capabilities, and help workers to make full use of their talents and skills by promoting their economic and social inclusion.

ILO's **Recommendation no. 195 Concerning human resources development: education, training and lifelong learning** (2004) urges international cooperation to promote recognition and portability of skills nationally and internationally.

It defines portability of skills as:

- a. Employable skills which can be used productively in different jobs, occupations, industries;
- b. Certification and recognition of skills within national and international labour markets.

Recommendation no. 151 Art. 2. mentions that migrant workers and members of their families lawfully within the territory of a Member State should enjoy effective equality of opportunity and treatment with nationals of the Member concerned in respect of:

- a. access to vocational guidance and placement services;
- b. access to vocational training and employment of their own choice on the basis of individual suitability for such training or employment, account being taken of qualifications acquired outside the territory of and in the country of employment.

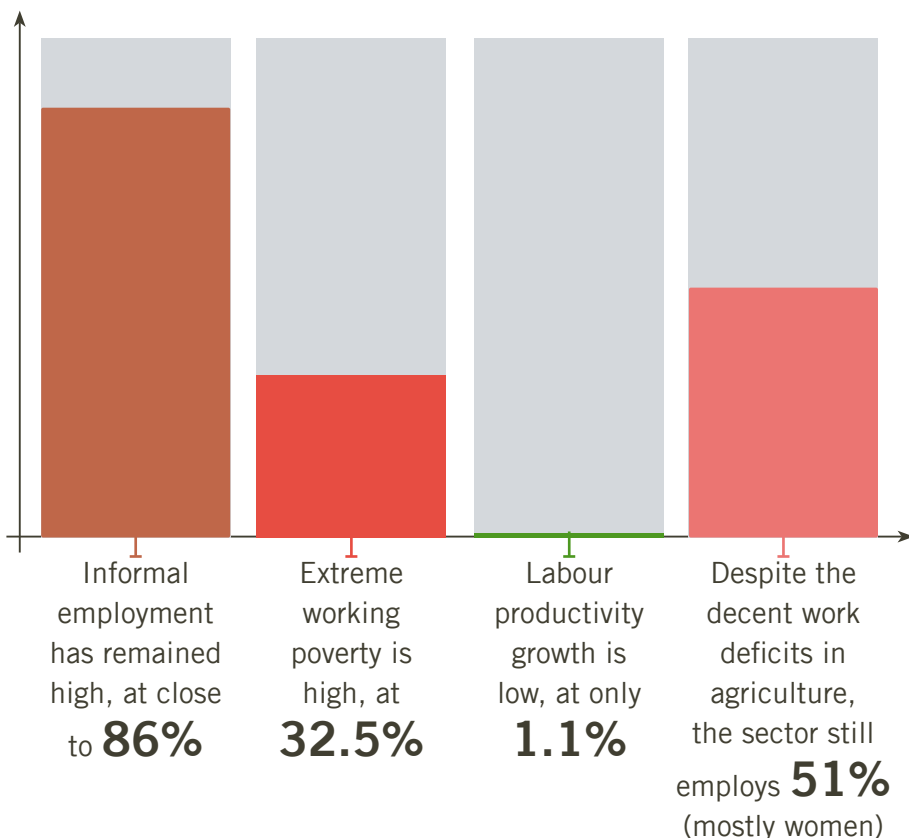
ILO'S MULTILATERAL FRAMEWORK ON LABOUR MIGRATION

An orderly and equitable process of labour migration should be promoted in both origin and destination countries which include policies “promoting the recognition and accreditation of migrant workers’ skills and qualifications, and where that is not possible, providing a means to have their skills and qualifications recognized”

3 Types of Recognition Mechanisms

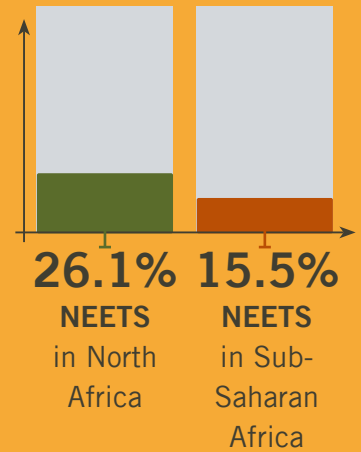
1. **Unilateral Recognition Mechanisms** - most common form of assessing migrant workers’ skills and competencies. National recognition authorities determine full or partial equivalence of foreign qualifications or prior learning within the country’s national qualifications system.
2. **Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRA’s)** - formally agreed between sending and receiving countries and focus on reciprocal recognition of certifications and competences. Professional associations are key players.
3. **Regional Integration Agreements** - concluded in the context of regional integration processes which encourage the development of mutually acceptable standards and criteria for licencing and certification and to provide recommendations on mutual recognition.

Skills development and partnerships should be understood in light of the following labour market statistics for Africa:



NEETS: Not in Education, Employment, or Training

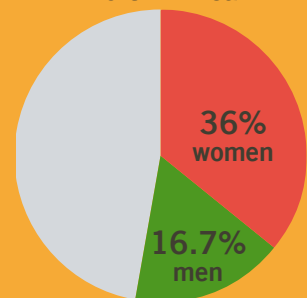
Current share of youth NEETS:



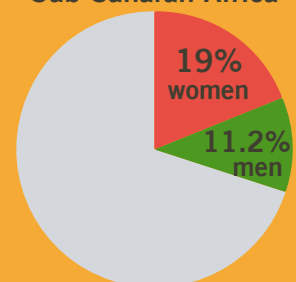
But there is more to it: there are more female NEETS than male NEETS.

Following is the share of NEET women and men amongst the youth of:

North Africa



Sub-Saharan Africa



These dynamics in the labour markets partly explain the reason people migrate in search of better opportunities. Migration is therefore among the key drivers of change in Africa, affecting the future of work. The availability of workers at all skills levels to fill available jobs will determine whether countries develop.

The International Labour Conference that adopted the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work at its 108th session in Geneva in June 2019 declared that the ILO must direct its efforts to:

Promoting the acquisition of skills, competencies and qualifications for all workers throughout their working lives as a joint responsibility of governments and social partners in order to:

- a. address existing and anticipated skills gaps;
- b. pay particular attention to ensuring that education and training systems are responsive to labour market needs, taking into account the evolution of work; and
- c. enhance workers' capacity to make use of the opportunities available for decent work;





GLOBAL SKILLS PARTNERSHIP ON MIGRATION

Recently a “Global Skills Partnership on Migration Initiative” was launched involving the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Employers Organization (IOE), and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC).

Indeed, our institutions are all joining forces to forge a Global Skills Partnership to mobilize our constituencies, pool expertise, and build platforms to assist national and migrant workers (including those who return) to maximize synergies and leverage comparative advantages. The Global Skills Partnership on Migration Initiative is paying particular attention to low- and medium-skilled migrants and will be underpinned by skills partnerships at national, sub-regional and continental levels.

The Global Skills Partnership Initiative aims to mobilize technical expertise towards supporting governments, employers, workers and their organizations, educational institutions and training providers, and other stakeholders to develop and recognize the skills of migrant workers with a particular focus on women and youth. It thus aims to contribute to:



Successful as well as sustainable labour market outcomes and integration in countries of origin and destination, and progressive career development and well-being of migrant workers;



Regular labour migration, including in the framework of bilateral and multilateral labour arrangements, based on skills demand and relevant, quality training provisions for potential and return migrant workers;



Improved productivity and retention of migrant workers leading to better economic outcomes and performance of enterprises.

In Africa, Skills Partnership work involves the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the G5 Sahel, and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and is covering mainly the following 6 Central and 11 Western African countries: Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Cameroon, Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Republic of the Congo for Central Africa; Senegal, Benin, Ghana, Togo, Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Chad and Mali for West Africa.

In a 2019 consultative process with tripartite constituents from 14 countries across those two regions¹, five different areas of interventions for skills partnerships on migration have been identified:

- a. partnerships on the collection and sharing of labour market information;
- b. partnerships on information, guidance and counselling for migrant workers;
- c. skills development partnerships in both countries of origin and destination;
- d. partnerships for the mutual recognition of competencies or harmonization of skills standards; and, (e) partnerships on the recognition of prior learning.

The consultations furthermore resulted in the identification and action planning for 10 concrete ideas for skills and migration partnerships. Over the course of the next 10 years, the partners should gradually move to implementation of these partnerships, to allow the ILO to showcase its competitive advantage and value on the new topic of “skills partnerships on migration”.

Skills partnerships are a new form of collaboration between countries affected by migration, usually between countries of origin and of destination and that are of benefit for all involved. There are many options of what this partnership could mean and how two or more countries can come together to form a skills partnership.

¹ Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Mauritania, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Togo.



“Migrant Workers’ Skills portability in Africa at Regional Economic Community and Continental level- Guidance towards an African Qualifications Framework?” sheds light on the issue of portability of skills of migrant workers in RECs and at the continental level in Africa.

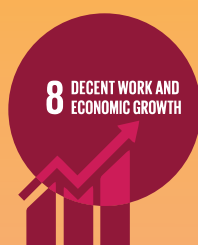
Skills partnerships work respond to the following SDGs related to Goal 4, 8 and 10:



Goal 4.3 “Equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university”.

Goal 4.4 “Increasing the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship”.

Goal 4.7 “Promote education and training for sustainable development, ... a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development”.



Goal 8.8 “Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment”.



Goal 10.7 “Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies to reduce inequality between countries”.

Mandate of the Global Skills Partnership on Migration:

Skills partnerships, including the role of social partners therein, are an innovative mechanism for sharing the benefits of migration for both countries of origin and destination, as well as migrant workers themselves.

The urgency of a Global Skills Partnership on migration has been recognized in intergovernmental consultations that led to the development of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. The Global Compact devotes objective 18 to the issue of investing in skills development and facilitating recognition of skills, qualifications and competences, calling for the establishment of skills partnerships.

What are the benefits of Skills Partnerships on Migration?

- › Workers benefit from new skills that allow them to find decent jobs and develop their careers;
- › Countries of origin benefit if more skills development happens in their countries, as domestic and international labour markets form ties with countries of destination, knowledge exchange, remittances, and in particular when people return with new skills;
- › Countries of destination benefit if migrant workers contribute to the skills pool in the country, and if skills shortages are filled;
- › Employers benefit if they find the right talent for their operations, no matter where workers come from.

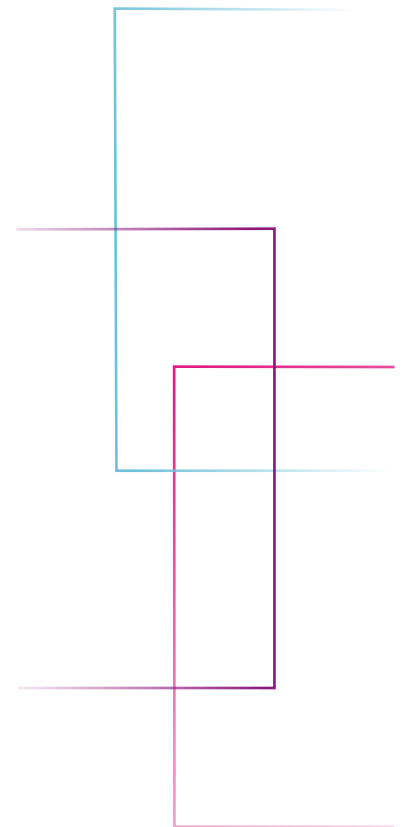
Skills partnerships can contribute to reaping migrants' potential more effectively, being an innovative mechanism for maximising brain gain and sharing the benefits of migration between origin and destination countries. The urgency of such partnerships has been recognized in intergovernmental consultations that led to the development of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

To ensure the context sensitive design and genuine grounding of the GSP at the country, corridor and regional level, the ILO in collaboration with the partners and with the support of the Norwegian Government is supporting Governments, social partners and regional economic communities and organizations in Central and Western Africa, namely ECOWAS, the Sahel G5, and ECCAS, to formulate skills partnerships on migration.

In two tripartite consultations, constituents have discussed the identification, formulation and implementation planning of tailored interventions based on a solid evidence base of regional migration patterns, national skills systems and existing collaboration that could be developed into skills partnership.

Migration is already a reality, and West Africa and the Sahel, along with the East African Community, are the regions with the highest share of migrant workers – compared to all other regions in Africa. We speak about 6.7 million people. What is more, migration within West Africa and the Sahel is much higher than migration to destinations outside the region.

Within the broader programme of the African Union on Skills Initiative for Africa (SIFA), the ILO is leading a component on “Skills Anticipation”. The ILO supported Skills Anticipation Component is operational across three regional communities of East African Community (EAC), Economic



Community for West African States (ECOWAS), and Southern African Development Community (SADC). The Project interventions include capacity building of national experts to integrate skills anticipation into national labour market information systems and to institutionalize implementation of national level skills anticipation activities. The Project is set to conduct more targeted interventions in Gabon and Tanzania and light-touch interventions in Eswatini, Ethiopia, Mali, Mauritania, Ghana, Equatorial Guinea, Tunisia, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

At the same time, the Joint Labour Migration Programme is advancing work in “Supporting the development of regional mutual recognition arrangement in African Union identified sectors and occupations”.

The gender aspect

In international migration, women are more likely to be affected by « brain waste” and de-skilling (employed below their skill level) and therefore have a high potential to gain from enhanced portability of skills and recognition of diplomas and qualifications.

- › Across all countries, women migrant workers are over-represented in jobs and tasks that require fewer and lower value skills, are lower paid and offer restricted career prospects.
- › In most countries, women (nationals as well as migrants) account for the majority of workers in the informal economy, which implies greater job insecurity, as well as lack of access to training & social protection.
- › Indeed, there is a significant overlap between being a woman, a migrant, working in the informal economy and being poor.
- › Another gender-related issue to take into account is that mid-career migrant women returning to work (after raising a family) have specific skill and retraining requirements.
- › In addition, they can have less legal migration opportunities than men or have migrated accompanying partners without a work-permit
- › If these needs are not met, women, particularly migrant women, re-entering the labour market may easily experience downward occupational mobility.



“Education and training in Africa have seen major improvements in recent decades, however, it is also evident that much can still be improved, inter alia, purposive skills development with a keen focus on new sectors and occupations, accompanied by the creation of social protection systems for vulnerable groups.

Many of the continent’s skills systems suffer from low involvement by the social partners, leading to supply-driven skills development, misaligned with development aspirations of the country, and creating barriers to sustainable funding mechanisms. Developing better performing skills systems through active social dialogue at national, sectoral and local levels, and improving their alignment with economic development and employment creation, is key.”

- Guy Ryder², Director-General, ILO



² ILO: *Advancing Social Justice: Shaping the future of work in Africa, Report of the Director-General, 14th African Regional Meeting, Geneva(2019), p. 14.*



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<https://www.ilo.org/africa/areas-of-work/labour-migration/lang--en/index.htm>

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