The Governance of Labour Migration in Changing Employment Landscapes

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Overview

1. The evolving landscape of labour migration
2. Governance challenges
3. Moving towards a brighter future
Migrant workers contribute to development

68 million

Are women migrant workers

9%

Increase over four years

11.5 million

Migrant domestic workers

ILO estimates 164 million migrant workers

Migrant workers as a proportion of all workers, 2013 and 2017 (percentage)
Emerging from COVID-19

The spread of Covid-19 may not discriminate. But its impacts do.

- **2.2 billion**
  Workers affected, representing 68% of global labour force

- **1.6 billion**
  Informal economy workers significantly impacted

- **305 million**
  Full time job losses estimated in the second quarter 2020

Migrant workers in essential jobs

- **Care work**
  73% + migrant domestic workers women
  Could create 269 million new care sector jobs if investments in education, health and social work are doubled by 2030.

- **Construction**
  21% -89% jobs in informal economy depending on the country

- **Agricultural production**
  Many countries depend on migrant workers to avoid food shortages
Governance challenges

Decent work deficits growing

- Rising levels of discrimination and xenophobia
- Food insecurity
- Low wages, reduction or non-payment of wages
- Poor and worsening working conditions:
  - Cramped/inadequate living conditions, restrictions on movement
  - Lack of social protection
  - Higher incidence of violence and harassment
  - Forced return of migrants
Rethinking governance for a brighter future

Standards, tools and guidance provide foundation for a rights-based, gender responsive approach

**Global compact on migration**: whole of government/society engagement, recognizing role for stakeholders e.g., cities, business, trade unions, civil society, migrants, academia.

2030 Sustainable Development Agenda calls for advancing decent work in migration governance, importance of gender equality (SDG targets 8.7, 8.8, 10.7).

**ILO standards, fundamental principles, social dialogue**: builds legitimacy, durability, shared prosperity
Investing in fair labour migration frameworks

- Making migration a choice, creating decent work opportunities in countries of origin
- Respecting the human rights, including labour rights, of all migrant workers
- Ensuring fair recruitment practices and equality of treatment of migrant workers
- Investing in skills development, training, and recognition with life long learning
- Advancing cooperation, BLAs, regular pathways, and regional integration
- Promoting universal exercise of fundamental principles and rights at work.
- Fostering social dialogue with Ministries of Labour, workers’ and employers’ organizations.
Investing in policy coherence and skills

Coherence in migration, training/education and employment policies better protects workers rights and raises business productivity

Why invest in skills and life long learning?

Workers: If skills are recognized, workers can access training, compete for jobs and wages commensurate with their skills, and access regular migration channels, jobs in the formal market

- fairer chances in the labour market, including upon return

Employers: If skills are recognized, it is easier to find qualified staff

- fosters fair and effective recruitment, skills and jobs matching

Government: If skills are recognized, skills are formally included in the labour market, guarantee quality, and broaden the choice of employers

- improves productivity, skills use, higher quality product/services
Investing in social protection and portability

Why invest in social protection and expanding social security for migrant workers?

• Helps to fulfill migrant workers human rights, including labour rights, protects their human security, and society’s health and safety
• Facilitates their mobility, productivity and return to home country
• Creates a level playing field (reduces unfair competition) - reduces labour market distortions of recruiting migrant workers as “cheap and unprotected” labour
• Facilitates the formalization of the labour market
• Can improve financial health of social security: migrant workers are often net contributors over their lifetime
• Reduces pressure on tax-funded social protection mechanisms (in origin and destination countries)
• Extends protection for dependent family members remaining in countries of origin
  - builds social cohesion and stability (reducing social tensions)
What practices can best improve labour migration governance in the following areas?

• A human-centred approach to addressing Future of Work opportunities and challenges for migrants.

• Improving the foundations for evidence-based policy making through gathering and sharing data, identifying gaps in migration statistics, and using analytical tools.

• Integrating labour migration policies with national employment strategies to identify skills shortages and enhance regular migration pathways.

• Fostering innovative admission and visa schemes to increase in-market labour mobility and enhance workforce productivity.

• Developing migration policies for attracting high skilled workers.
Selected ILO Resources


- Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97), and Migration for Employment Recommendation (No. 86)

- Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143) and Migrant Workers Recommendation 151
Thank you!

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