

***Draft paper for the Africa Knows! Conference; panel D16a
Innovations, new paradigms and knowledge development in North
Africa***

***Tanja DEDOVIC, Case studies of successful skills mobility partnerships
from Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt***

Abstract

As transforming labour markets, shifting workforce demographics and the growing mobility of workers urge new skills and labour requirements, more than ever, there is a need for a global approach to skilled migration. While skilled migration is not a new phenomenon, it has not always been to the benefit of all involved parties, that is migrants, states, employers, training and education institutions and communities. In particular, traditional approaches to skilled migration tend to benefit labour markets and employers in destination countries. Origin countries, in turn, often bear the costs associated with the emigration of skilled workers, who then might be missing in the local labour market. Against this backdrop, policymakers have increasingly turned to an all party-benefiting alternative: Skills Mobility Partnerships (SMPs). Rooted in SDG 4, 8 and 10, and expressly called for in Objectives 5 and 18 of the Global Compact for Migration, SMPs offer an innovative tool that is centered around worker's skills formation and development, while placing special emphasis on multi-stakeholder collaboration. When implemented effectively, SMPs can help destination countries meet skill shortages and labour market needs, improve migrant's skills sets, and thereby career prospects, and not least contribute to country of origins' development through a better trained workforce according to international qualification standards, remittances, capacity building and skills transfer. By design, SMPs consider participant's previously earned degrees, qualifications and competences at all skill levels. Through cost sharing and joint program conduct between stakeholders, the expenses for training local workers and future migrants are kept low. Having completed a training which meets the needs also of the local labour market, trained workers now have the choice of whether they will join the local labour market, or go for deployment abroad, where they will be placed in jobs corresponding to their skill level. Upon completion, migrants' skills and experiences are recognized, and accordingly certified, by all parties of the Partnership. IOM will present case studies of successful skills mobility partnerships from Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt in this panel to illustrate how knowledge development in North Africa can be innovated and done in true partnership between countries of origin and countries of destination.

Biography

Lead author : Ms. Tanja Dedovic is the Regional Thematic Specialist on Labour Mobility and Human Development at the Regional Office of IOM in Cairo, Egypt, overseeing 17 countries of the MENA region.

Ms. Dedovic has been with IOM for 24 years, having acquired vast experience working on issues related to Labour Migration, Entrepreneurship and diaspora engagement in the Western Balkans, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, Turkey and recently in the MENA region. She holds a licentiate in Political Economy from the University of Fribourg, Switzerland.

Co-author: Ms. Marie Stella Ndiaye is project officer on Migration and sustainable development at Country Office in Algiers, Algeria.

Ms Ndiaye has been with IOM for 8 years mainly working on labour migration, youth employment and entrepreneurship, diaspora engagement, environment and climate change in West Africa and recently in Algeria. She holds a master's in political science and geostrategy from University of Montreal, Canada and a bachelor's in law from University of Lille2, France.

Background and concept

The skills dimension of migration governance has evolved from one-sided migration schemes for skilled workers at all levels to skills partnerships more closely linked to the labour market needs of participating countries and involving all stakeholders. If the one-sided schemes tend to benefit communities and employers at destination, it will definitely create deficits in certain labour market sectors in the country of origin, with a negative impact on development. Communities of origin may be affected by service and skills shortages, while migrant workers in destination countries may face deskilling, misuse of their competences, underpayment and even exploitation.

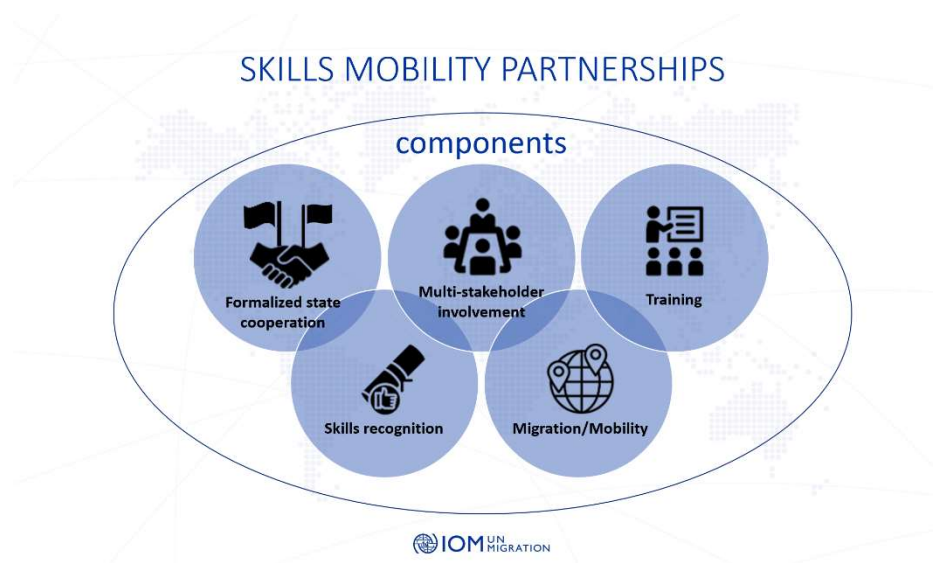
This has prompted policymakers to turn increasingly to an alternative – skills mobility partnerships (SMPs) – that is beneficial for all stakeholders. SMPs typically take the form of bilateral or multilateral agreements between States. They vary in terms of forms, modalities, and level of stakeholder involvement, but all focus on skills development. They are distinct from the traditional approach to skilled migration, whereby migrant workers already have skills acquired in their country of origin and there is little or no cooperation between the parties, including on training or education of prospective migrants and non-migrants. Under an SMP, training may be

dispensed in the country of origin or destination, or even in a third country, and the trainees acquire skills that are recognized and valued by both parties. Previously obtained degrees, qualifications and competences at all skill levels are taken into account. Some of the trained workers move for employment to the country of destination; others remain in the country of origin and join the local labour market. Once their period of employment in the country of destination has ended, migrant workers may return home, bringing with them their experience and innovative ideas. Many SMPs are solidly based on student mobility programmes, cooperation between training and educational institutions, dual certification, and apprenticeship and internship programmes.

SMPs therefore promote multidimensional cooperation between States. They require a better understanding of labour market needs, drive investment in skills formation, and boost human capital. Under SMPs, skills development is demand-driven via national assessments; it draws on various sources to optimize the employability of workers in formal labour markets both at destination and origin. SMPs contribute to the success of national assessment mechanisms, provide raw material for data collection and analysis, and promote interaction and cooperation. They bring national educational systems closer, raise work standards, and increase the productivity and mobility of skilled workers.

The economic rationale for SMPs is even higher when skills development takes place in the country of origin. An important added value is that labour markets at origin and destination see the supply of skills go up and labour deficits shrink. Moreover, under SMPs, migrant skills and competences are not underutilized, and the involvement of employers promotes rights protection and decent work.

Under the overarching principle of migrant well-being, all SMPs have the following five components: formalized State cooperation, multi-stakeholder involvement, training, skills recognition and migration/mobility.

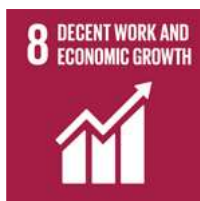


Frameworks and prerequisites

SMPs are mainly underpinned by two global frameworks. Under the Sustainable Development Goals, SMPs will contribute to better development outcomes in respect of



4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship



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



10.7 Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies

The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, contains two objectives of direct relevance to SMPs:

- **Objective 5** sets the framework for enhancing the availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration;
- **Objective 18** contains detailed considerations on demand-driven skills development and the facilitation of mutual recognition of qualifications and competences. It addresses the need to optimize migrant employability in formal labour markets in countries of origin and destination, as a means of transitioning from informality.

IOM considers that a number of prerequisites must be met to make such partnerships operational and sustainable. In addition, gender issues must be a core consideration in all aspects – education, labour and migration, human and labour rights of migrant workers.

- *Long- and mid-term planning*: Labour migration policy planning must focus on the long- and medium-term horizon. It needs to be synchronized with the relevant Sustainable Development Goals and set corresponding indicators. It must involve the private sector, and educational and training institutions. If required, the needs of all stakeholders in policy planning and coherence must be defined and supported through capacity development. Factors such as the future of work, its new forms, aspects relating to the globalization of labour markets, automation and digitalization, and the impact thereof on policies and partnerships must be analyzed and incorporated into planning.
- *Multi-stakeholder approach and policy coherence*: The multi-stakeholder approach is key for SMPs, even though the stakeholders may differ in each case. The broad cooperation that the approach calls for has advantages that are hard to overestimate. Primarily, it allows consideration of all the aspects of a mechanism as complex as an SMP. It also ensures better understanding of the situation at national and regional level, of existing migration corridors and of the trends informing policy and law. It serves to ensure rights and access to protection for migrant workers, and equal benefits for origin and destination communities, States and the private sector. Governments as well as educational and training institutions must take care to cooperate closely with the private sector, in order to ensure that the training and skills development proposed are relevant. The priority at national and inter-State level must be policy coherence on, for example,

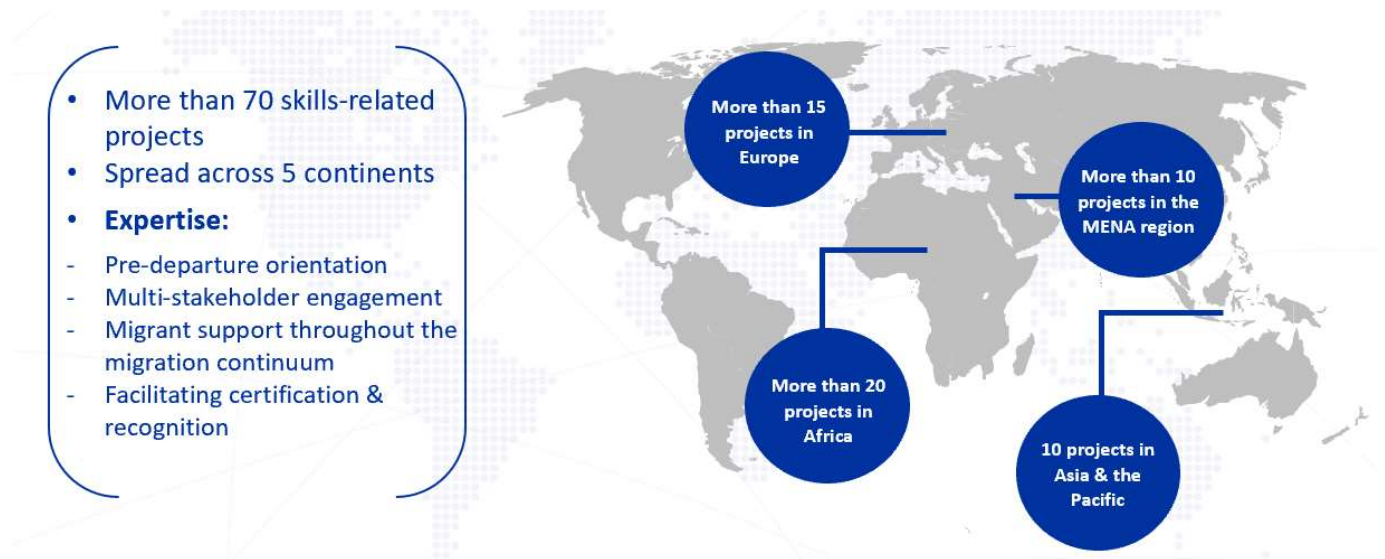
migration, education and the related cooperation (on recognition of degrees and diplomas, interinstitutional cooperation, student exchange programmes, etc.), employment and job creation, entrepreneurship, trade and investment. All may need to be mapped to ensure better interlinkages and synergy.

- *Data for evidence-based policy:* Sustainable schemes require evidence-based policy. Decisions must be based on comprehensive and real-time data from various sources, and on analyses of policy, labour markets and employer demand. An SMP might involve multiple countries of origin and destination, but they all must have a clear understanding of their human capital, educational systems, demographics, employment structures and so on. Migratory routes and corridors, trends, migration laws and policies, migrant profiles, diasporas and other issues must be analyzed in depth.
- *Local development and job creation:* The Global Compact proposes that skills development systems be based on local labour market needs, which in turn requires job creation that will spur the demand for workers trained locally under the SMP and ensure the latter is effective and sustainable.
- *Skills classification and recognition at national level and beyond:* All skills classification, standardization and recognition systems need to operate primarily at the local level, but pursuant to any regional and international agreements. The next step is to align national systems. It is crucial to document skills and degrees, and to engage in inter-State cooperation on their recognition and legal certification. To that end, States need to facilitate document recognition processes and accede to the relevant international or regional instruments.
- *Address the social aspects of employment and mobility:* The social aspects of migration and mobility, namely people's aspirations, plans, personal and family circumstances, must be addressed if the global skills partnership and SMPs are to be successful. Partnerships, especially complex ones, need a good level of flexibility and risk management. They must also pave the way to more opportunities in the country of origin – both pre-departure and on return – including employment opportunities, and ensure diaspora engagement and mobilization, and effective remittance management and facilitation. SMPs must also encompass return and reintegration, and facilitate mobility through simplified procedures for mutual visits, stay and temporary and permanent residence. Other

solutions that can be considered to leverage potential “losses” in origin countries, including of human capital, involve simplified registration and de-registration in national registry systems, double taxation agreements, facilitated inter-State banking and financial transfers, customs waivers, and cooperation on social and health insurance mechanisms. Proper information for and communication with migrant and non-migrant workers will ensure that SMPs and the Global Skills Partnership have an even higher chance of success.

- *Incorporate migration considerations:* The role of national migration agencies must be given due consideration and incorporated into the Global Skills Partnership system and SMPs as of the planning stage, so as to ensure that migration procedures are in line with SMP objectives and that they are reasonable and transparent. SMPs must also take account of migratory corridors and synchronize with the migration cycle where its integral parts – education and training, preparation for departure, migration, employment abroad and return or other pathways – are specified in inter-State agreements and implementation procedures.
- *Cost reduction and sharing:* The cost of worker training and mobility must be fairly distributed among all benefitting stakeholders. When training takes place in countries of origin, the fact that the costs are lower does not preclude contributions from other stakeholders, such as other benefiting States, employers, investors and the ultimate beneficiaries. This requires careful analysis of, for example, private sector stakeholders in supply chains.

IOM experience



IOM has a wealth of experience, acting on its own and in cooperation with its partners, in helping States to manage skills-based mobility cooperatively and in developing capacity in skills and mobility. It has worked extensively within the regional consultative processes, notably the Colombo Process, to support consultations and cooperation, to analyze recognition systems along migratory corridors, and to map skills assessment procedures, certification standards and equivalences, labour market trends and data collection systems.

IOM also has extensive experience of drawing up and implementing national skills development policies and frameworks. It provides technical support to, and develops the capacity of, national institutions collecting data from administrative sources in destination and origin countries for labour market and mobility analysis, and for the recognition of prior learning and certification of occupational training. In 2019, for example, IOM compiled best practices for the collection and analysis of labour market and migration-related data to formulate labour migration and cooperation policies, which led to the development of a capacity-building strategy for Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation economies. As part of regional integration and economic cooperation processes, IOM strives to strengthen the skills dimension of labour migration, promotes pilot skills mobility initiatives (e.g. within Africa and between Africa and Europe), helps reduce skills shortages, and supports the development and recognition of skills and qualifications. IOM helps develop vocational training in market-driven skills programmes to improve employability,

working with businesses and other stakeholders to ensure the skills acquired are competitive and correspond to employer requirements.

Three case studies shall serve to illustrate how SMPs have been put in practice in Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia:

ENHANCING TUNISIAN YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY THROUGH VOCATIONAL APPRENTICESHIPS AND PROFESSIONAL INTERNSHIPS IN BELGIUM AND TUNISIA

Duration: 18 months

Target: 20 young Tunisians registered within the Vocational Education and Training system

10 young Tunisians who have recently completed their university studies and are searching for work opportunities

partners: Immigration Office, Government of Belgium, Ministry of Social Affairs of Tunisia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Tunisia, Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment of Tunisia, Ministry of Education of Tunisia, Ministry of Higher Education of Tunisia, Universities and academic institutes in Tunisia and Belgium, Vocational education and training schools, Relevant private sector organizations in Belgium, Relevant private sectors in Tunisia

This project aims at supporting Tunisian youth's employability and skills enhancement through the provision of apprenticeships and internships in Belgium and Tunisia. The project will be implemented in three steps:

- 1) creation of a network of companies (in both public and private sectors) in Tunisia and Belgium and identification of apprenticeships/internships opportunities in the two countries;
- 2) provision of six-month internships in Belgium, based on the profile of the selected beneficiaries;
- 3) provision of five-month support to each beneficiary upon return to Tunisia for an internship, job placement or start-up business.

The project will result in an enhancement of the beneficiaries' skills and improvement of their chances to find appropriate job opportunities and/or start their own business in Tunisia. It will also contribute to the implementation of the national action against unemployment and the enhancement of regular migration towards Europe.

Many IOM initiatives include pre-departure orientation and training for the purpose of equipping migrant workers with basic social and soft skills to facilitate their future integration and employment.

YOUTH GENERATION AS CHANGE AGENTS (SBM BETWEEN SPAIN AND MOROCCO)

Duration: 19 months

Target: 100 Moroccan students

Partner: Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities

The project is framed in the need to create alternative channels of regular migration, promoting well-managed mobility and maximizing the impact of migration on development.

IOM seeks to support the implementation work of the Spanish Service for the Internationalization of Education (SEPIE) in the project "Young Generation as Change Agents", whose aim is to develop a short-term mobility plan between Morocco and Spain for university students allowing them to improve and strengthen their skills through a master's degree in Spain. These students will have to develop project ideas that they can implement upon their return to Morocco, thus contributing to the development of key social and economic sectors in Morocco, which will have been selected at the beginning of the project.

The project will be carried out in three phases in which IOM will intervene through the following actions:

- 1) Pre-departure in Morocco: In this phase the beneficiaries will receive the necessary preparation for better integration in Spain through cultural orientation courses. In this phase the IOM will offer assistance and guidance in obtaining the necessary travel documents to all selected students.
- 2) Mobility Phase: The IOM will take care of the logistical organization of the trip to Spain.
- 3) Reintegration phase of the students in Morocco: IOM will take care of the logistical organization of the return trip to Morocco. In this phase of the project, an award program is planned to support a maximum of 10 students to implement the best work developed in the final master's thesis. IOM will be part of the Awards Selection Committee to assess the feasibility of the projects in the Moroccan context. Likewise, all beneficiaries will receive assistance for reintegration, obtaining a job or starting a business.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR EGYPTIAN YOUTH IN FAYOUM GOVERNORATE: ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE REGULAR MIGRATION AND POSITIVE ALTERNATIVES

Duration: 18 months

Target: local students

Partner: Ministry of Family and Population/National Council for Motherhood and Childhood

The overall objective of this action is facilitate regular labour migration from Egypt to Italy by enhancing local education and training opportunities, whilst supporting migrant communities and, in particular, Egyptian youth to become agents for development through their active and effective participation in the country's socio-economic growth. More specifically, this project will aim to:

- create new education and training opportunities for vulnerable Egyptian youth to enhance their employability in Egypt and abroad, through the establishment and operation of a vocational training centre in Fayoum Governorate and orientation/counseling for local students;
- To promote the importance of education and training as a pathway conducive to socio-economic integration in key destination countries and raise awareness on the activities of the center, through a comprehensive information campaign on a national and local level.
- Further socio-economic development and help alleviate youth unemployment in rural Egypt, through implementation of various complementary activities at the community and central level.

By the end of the project the main achievements were:

- **Upgrade of the school's system and curricula** based on the Italian model and according to the international standards
- Renovation of School's **facilities** and laboratories
- **Traineeships for 5** outstanding students in Italy
- Development of the **school Webpage**
- Development of teacher's **skills** (60 nationwide)
- Social and cultural events and training services activated for the community

Lastly, IOM actively supports policy and legislation development, self-assessment and guidance for the development of bilateral labour migration agreements, and training and capacity-building for governments, the private sector and non-governmental stakeholders.

IOM, together with the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the International Organization of Employers and the International Trade Union Confederation, has instituted the Global Skills Partnership for Migration (GSPM). The GSPM is tasked to mobilize resources, pool expertise and build platforms to help all involved stakeholders develop sustainable mobility schemes, such as Skills Mobility Partnerships.

IOM is currently starting a global project called “Towards Sustainable Integration of Skills into Migration Governance”. The project will focus on mapping of global initiatives of various stakeholders in the area of skills development and mobility, elaboration of policy recommendations, guidelines and methodologies on effective management of skills-based mobility through partnerships. The project will also allow elaborating a capacity development tool, primarily for the governments, but also other stakeholders, on skills mobility partnerships. This will also enable the private sector to access and use tools and best practices in the area of skills development, classification and recognition. Finally, IOM will set up an experience sharing platform through which key actors will be invited to participate. The Platform will make the capacity development tools more functional and practical, and international partners will be able to contribute to the Platform including the Global Skills Partnership on Migration initiative mentioned above to further foster cooperation and ensure holistic and participatory approach to skills and mobility projects.

Conclusion

Skills mobility partnerships are becoming an integral component of any effective national or regional labour migration system. Therefore, IOM has been working to develop an approach to, and essential prerequisites for, a Global Skills Partnership and SMPs, with a view to tackle well-identified challenges, build on advantages and strengthen the economic benefits of skills-based migration. IOM will continue to help address human rights, labour rights and gender issues, to ensure that all stakeholders benefit fully and that SMPs move from pilot and ad hoc projects to more sustainable and well-established models. In cooperation with its partners, IOM will continue to take initiatives at global, regional and national level to support State efforts to set up SMPs on the way to a global skills partnership. In North Africa, SMPs, as the new paradigm of knowledge development, can be a good practice of migration management and, more importantly, a development model to promote cooperation with an inclusive approach to skills mobility.