

Executive Summary

Migration has been at the centre of policy debate across the OECD in recent years. Policy responses aimed at supporting and facilitating the integration of immigrants have been polarising in many countries. Policy makers, civil society organisations, schools and citizens in OECD countries all contribute to support newcomers.

Migration flows can create some challenges for host communities, but they also represent an opportunity for countries that face an ageing native-born populations to overcome the associated threat of labour and skills shortages. Education and training systems can play a key role in ensuring that countries are able to effectively tackle the challenges associated with migration and unlock migration's benefits. Education and training systems have a unique role to play if new arrivals are to be able to develop and use their skills, participate in the labour markets of host countries, contribute to welfare arrangements, and feel a sense of belonging in their communities.

However, a lack of coordination between different actors and a lack of knowledge on what strategies work can reduce the effectiveness, reach and suitability of policies aimed at supporting immigrant and refugee students. Education and training systems not only enable immigrants to acquire skills necessary for entering the labour market, they also help immigrants understand the culture and traditions of the country of destination and can ensure that native populations have the cognitive and affective skills that are necessary to be open to diversity and change.

The Road to Integration. Education and Migration identifies eight policy pillars that can sustain and support the effectiveness of policy conception, design, and implementation in education.

Consider the heterogeneity of immigrant populations

Individuals with an immigrant background are a highly heterogeneous group. Characterising individuals by their immigration background can help target service delivery and, as a result, support integration processes. However, grouping individuals based on their immigration background can create barriers within communities and hide other important dimensions that are more critical for their personal development, overall well-being and their long-term integration. Individuals with an immigrant background should receive support to help them achieve their potential, but care should be taken if and when targeted initiatives are implemented to avoid stigmatising individuals because of their background.

Develop approaches to promote the overall well-being of immigrants

Important differences remain not only in the skills immigrants have, but also in the levels of social and emotional well-being they report, which are equally important for immigrants' successful integration. Examining different sets of vulnerabilities that accompany direct

and indirect displacement and the fact that they might affect students' sense of themselves is imperative to design effective education policies. While education and training systems clearly can and should play a role in promoting the overall well-being of immigrants, their role should be seen in light of a broad and co-ordinated effort encompassing the education, health, social and welfare systems, and potentially involving partnerships among schools, hospitals, universities and community organisations.

Address the unique needs of refugee students

Refugee children often face a wide array of unique challenges including the need to overcome interrupted or limited schooling and trauma. Schools and education systems can address the multiple needs of refugee children by adopting a holistic model that ensures access to education with a strong support for academic, social, physical and psychological development, integrates early assessments with individualised development plans, allows for flexibility to account for non-standard learning pathways and builds professionalism among the teaching community.

Ensure that motivation translates into a key asset for immigrant communities

Many immigrant students and their families have high levels of learning motivation and hold the ambition to obtain high levels of educational qualifications in order to enter professional occupations. By strengthening migrants' skills (so that their motivation and ambitions can be realised), ensuring that individuals can build on their ambitions, providing career and education guidance, and helping individuals and their families develop realistic short-, medium- and long-term plans, education systems can ensure that individual migrants and their host communities capitalise on such motivation and ambition.

Provide comprehensive language support

Effective communication depends on language abilities. Providing comprehensive language support so that migrants master the language that is spoken in their host communities is crucial if immigrants are to be able to integrate in their host communities and benefit from education and training opportunities. At the same time, language is a key vehicle for migrant communities to maintain their identity and cultural roots. Education systems can support migrant communities by promoting plurilingualism in schools and offering mother tongue tuition, offering targeted language support, supporting opportunities for informal language learning and making use of assessments to monitor and improve language skills and building the capacity of teachers to work in linguistically diverse classrooms.

Organise resources to reduce the influence of socio-economic status on the outcomes of immigrants

Many immigrants have a low socio-economic status and attend schools in socio-economically disadvantaged classrooms. Deprivation explains differences in the academic performance, skills accumulation and some aspects of general well-being between individuals with and those without an immigrant background in different OECD countries. Moreover, socio-economic status often exacerbates other forms of disadvantage associated with having an immigrant background. In order to ensure that immigrants are not held back by a relatively disadvantaged socio-economic condition, education systems should

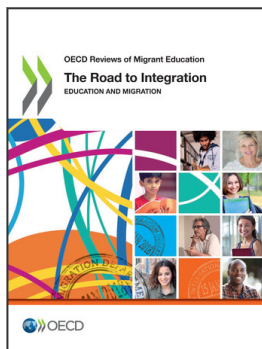
consider how institutional and governance aspects of education policy can be used to reduce the influence of socio-economic status on the outcomes of immigrants.

Build the capacity of teachers to deal with diversity

Teachers are key actors in supporting immigrant students reach their full potential. However, as a broad array of social and demographic changes increase the diversity in schools and classrooms, teacher capacity to support the individual needs of all students should be strengthened. For example, teachers need to receive initial teacher training and professional development opportunities to respond to the specific needs of diverse populations, including immigrants, and adapt their teaching practices to more diverse classrooms. Hiring professionals that reflect the student body, integrating diversity and inter-cultural topics into initial teacher education, offering continuous professional development in diversity, supporting teachers in diverse classrooms and preparing school principals for diversity in schools can all ensure that teachers are better equipped to promote the integration of all students, including immigrant students.

Break down barriers to social cohesion while ensuring effective service delivery

This pillar requires the identification of innovative ways to ensure that the learning needs of immigrants are catered for in the most cost-effective way but also that they enjoy plenty of opportunities to be with non-immigrants. Organising effective service delivery is necessary not only to ensure the academic and broader well-being of individuals with an immigrant background, their long-term integration prospects, but also to promote positive public attitudes towards migration among native populations.



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