



## SUMMARY NOTE

### SKILLS PARTNERSHIPS FOR DEMAND-DRIVEN LABOUR MIGRATION WEBINAR



ILO, in collaboration with the AUC and AUDA-NEPAD, hosted a webinar on **Skills Partnerships for demand-driven Labour Migration** in April 2024. The webinar explored the growing focus on skills partnerships and their potential to benefit all stakeholders involved in labour migration, from countries of origin and destination to migrants themselves and employers.

The webinar was moderated by **Mr. Albert William Okal**, Regional Technical Specialist, Skills Development for Labour Migration, and **Ms. Zipho Tshapela**, the Technical Advisor, Skills Initiative for Africa at GIZ.

The opening remarks by **Mr. Albert William Okal** introduced the audience to the topic and highlighted the challenges of labor market mismatches and the limitations of traditional migration approaches. Skills partnerships offer a promising solution by aligning skills supply with labor market needs in both origin and destination countries. This collaborative effort, involving governments, employers, workers' organizations, training institutions, and more, can lead to a win-win situation for all.

Through a presentation, Mr Albert laid out the key essentials of a successful skills partnership.

A crucial first step is identifying the carrying out skills needed to ascertain the demand for



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the current and future labour market at home and overseas. This information then guides the development of a partnership that in turn informs targeted training programs in origin countries. He also highlighted bridging the gap between education systems is essential for successful integration.

In addition, Skills partnerships may work towards establishing mechanisms that recognize and value qualifications acquired in origin countries. This translates to a smoother entry into the destination country's labor market, reducing barriers and fostering equal opportunities for migrant workers. Investment in pre-departure training is critical for migrant success. Skills partnerships prioritize equipping potential migrants with the essential tools that they need, to thrive in a new environment.

Finally, Mr. Albert spoke about recognizing the value returning migrants bring back to their home countries, these partnerships establish support systems to help them leverage their acquired skills and experiences.

**Dr. Wanjiru Kariuki**, representing Kenya's State Department for Labour and Skills Development, outlined the country's multifaceted approach to strengthening skills partnerships for labor migration. This strategy emphasizes empowering migrants through education and training programs that equip them with the necessary skills and prepare them for working abroad. Targeted career guidance services are also being established to ensure individuals have accurate information and can make informed decisions about seeking foreign employment.

She also addressed the importance of enhancing safe migration practices. This includes capacity-building initiatives that provide training for all stakeholders, including government and recruitment bodies, to ensure adherence to safe and legal migration procedures. Additionally, mechanisms are being developed to raise awareness and combat unethical recruitment practices to protect migrants from exploitation.

To effectively connect Kenyan workers with international opportunities, Dr. Kariuki highlighted the importance of marketing Kenya's workforce. This involves developing strategic marketing campaigns to showcase Kenyan workers' skills and qualifications to potential employers in destination countries. To ensure the sustainability of these initiatives, reliable funding sources are also being identified and a policy framework is currently being developed to guide skills development strategies for labour migration .

Looking towards the future, Dr. Kariuki emphasized the need for "futureproofing" skills development. By integrating skills anticipation into the education system, Kenya aims to



ensure training programs align with the evolving labor market demands, both domestically and in potential destination countries.

**Mr. Pita Foliaki Lokotui**, the Vanuatu Liaison Officer for the [Pacific Australia Labour Mobility \(PALM\) Scheme](#) based in Australia, shared experiences from the Pacific Australian Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme between Australia and the Pacific Island. He highlighted some of the strength and emerging good practices on the impact the scheme is having on migrant workers' economic progress. The PALM scheme allows eligible Australian businesses to hire workers from Pacific Island countries and Timor-Leste to fill labor shortages.

The PALM scheme was established in 2018 to address critical labor shortages in Australia's rural and regional areas, particularly within the horticulture and related food manufacturing sectors. Before the PALM scheme, these industries struggled to attract a consistent and reliable workforce, hindering productivity and growth.

The PALM scheme tackles labor shortages in rural and regional Australia, as well as across the nation's agriculture and related food manufacturing sectors. It achieves this by connecting employers with a reliable and productive workforce from Pacific Island countries and Timor-Leste.

The scheme offers flexibility for businesses, allowing them to hire workers for short-term stints of up to 9 months or longer-term roles lasting between 1 and 4 years. These roles typically fall within the unskilled, low-skilled, and semi-skilled categories.

The PALM scheme primarily targets the horticulture sector due to the high demand for skilled workers in this area. Farms across Australia require reliable labor for planting, tending to crops, harvesting, and packing various fruits, vegetables, and other horticultural products.

Through a partnership with the [Australia Pacific Training Coalition \(APTC\)](#), PALM scheme workers can access fully subsidized micro-credential courses, allowing them to upskill and enhance their employability.

The program also places a strong emphasis on ethical recruitment practices. Employers are thoroughly vetted to protect the rights and well-being of workers. The overall goal is to improve worker skills, increase productivity for employers, and equip migrants with valuable skills that benefit both them and their communities upon return. As the scheme expands, and more benefits the Skills development partnership is currently being integrated by merging the Australia Pacific Training Coalition (APTC) programme.



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**Key Takeaways** from the webinar include; Skills partnerships offer a powerful solution by aligning skills development with the needs of origin and destination countries. This collaborative approach, involving governments, businesses, workers, and training institutions, can bridge the skills gap and create a win-win situation for all parties.

A crucial first step is identifying the in-demand skills in destination countries. By understanding the specific needs of the labor market, training programs can be tailored to equip migrants with the right skills. This proactive approach ensures a smooth integration into the workforce and avoids skills mismatch, a situation where migrant workers lack the specific qualifications needed for available jobs.

Skills recognition is another key element for successful integration. When destination countries acknowledge the qualifications and experience gained by migrant workers, it fosters a sense of value and belonging. This recognition process streamlines job placement and ensures that migrant workers can contribute their full potential to the economy.

The benefits extend beyond immediate labor needs. Skills partnerships can empower returning migrants to contribute significantly to their home countries' economic development. The knowledge and experience gained abroad can be leveraged to drive innovation, entrepreneurship, and overall growth back home.

This creates a virtuous cycle where skills development benefits not just one country, but fosters shared prosperity across borders.

[ASPYYE](#) was identified as a centralized hub that provides a space for ongoing discussion, resource sharing, and collaboration among stakeholders committed to advancing the field. The [ASPYYE platform](#) is a continental knowledge-sharing platform that enables practitioners and policymakers across the African continent to share, collaborate and engage with each other. The participants were requested to register on the ASPYYE platform and join the Community of Practice (COP) to create a space for discussion on labour mobility and skills related topics.