GS4S Newsletter
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https://GS4S.eu

In the Digital/IT, Construction, and Care Industries
A Global Strategy for Skills, Migration, and Development

Funded by the European Union

GS4S seeks to better understand global skills shortages in selected sectors (Digital, Care and Construction) and strengthens evidence-based and multi-level policies on labour migration governance. The project provides new knowledge on alternative and equitable ways for addressing skills shortages in six regions (EU, EEA, Western Balkan, Middle East and Northern Africa, West Africa, and South/South-East Asia). In this edition of the GS4S quarterly newsletter, we explore four working papers presented as deliverables; these are available for download from the GS4S website and at Zenodo, an open-access repository supported by the Horizon OpenAIRE project that allows researchers to store, share, and preserve research outputs, including datasets, software, reports, and publications.

GS4S Series of Working Papers

The GS4S series of working papers aims to provide evidence-based insights to inform policymaking at the intersection of skills, migration, and development. By examining key trends, challenges, and opportunities, these papers contribute to a deeper understanding of how migration influences labor markets, human capital formation, and socio-economic progress. Through rigorous research and policy-driven analysis, working papers seek to support governments, institutions, and stakeholders in crafting responsive and inclusive policies that maximize the benefits of migration while addressing its complexities.
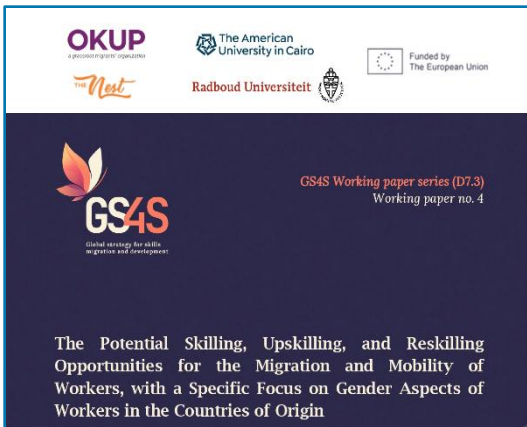

Working Paper #3 - Locating shortages in migrants' origin countries: a big data approach

Author: Friedrich Poeschel, Ph.D., Senior Research Fellow, Migration Policy Centre of the European University Institute

The third GS4S Working Paper documents a data collection on vacancies published online, which is being implemented by web scraping online platforms in selected non-EU countries. The data collection aims at locating labour or skill shortages in important origin countries of migration to the EU. Where the shortages coincide with shortages in EU countries, a skill partnership could address both shortages simultaneously. The potential of the web-scraped data are explored based on the initial wave of the data collection. The note concludes by outlining how the data collection can be transformed into measures of shortages at the level of occupations and skills. A database on vacancies in selected non-EU countries accompanies this working paper, available at Zenodo.

Working Paper #3 Download: GS4S.eu and Zenodo

The Potential Skilling, Upskilling, and Reskilling Opportunities for the Migration and Mobility of Workers, with a Specific Focus on Gender Aspects of Workers in the Countries of Origin

Working Paper #4 – The Potential Skilling, Upskilling, and Reskilling Opportunities for the Migration and Mobility of Workers, with a Specific Focus on Gender Aspects of Workers in the Countries of Origin

Authors:
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This working paper examines the intersection of skilling, reskilling, upskilling and migration in three countries of origin - Egypt, Bangladesh and Nigeria - offering a comparative analysis of their socio-economic contexts, policy landscapes and skilling initiatives. The analysis highlights commonalities across the countries, such as persistent skills mismatches, gender disparities and inequities in access to skilling programs especially in rural areas. Additionally, barriers including fragmented policies and limited data on labor market outcomes constrain the effectiveness of these existing initiatives. Each country presents unique insights:

➜ Egypt's strategic reliance on remittances highlight the significance of migration, yet issues hindering progress include lack of female labor force participation and insufficient coordination across skilling initiatives;

➜ Bangladesh made significant progress in vocational training aligned with GCC country labor demand, albeit skills mismatches remain;

➜ Nigeria's dynamic digital sector is promising to address global labor market needs, but infrastructure and policy fragmentation remain barriers.

The paper concludes with actionable recommendations for policymakers, educational institutions, and development agencies. It advocates for aligning skilling programs with labor market needs, promoting inclusivity through gender-sensitive and regionally equitable policies, expanding legal migration pathways and adopting data-driven approaches to enhance program evaluation. Addressing the challenges, the countries of origin can better harness the potential of skilling and migration to support sustainable development, reduce inequalities and strengthen their global competitiveness.

Working Paper #4 Download: GS4S.eu and Zenodo

Working Paper #5 – Engaging the Private Sector in Global Skills Partnerships: Exploring the Potential of International Business-to-Business Approaches

Authors:
• Friedrich Poeschel, Ph.D., Senior Research Fellow, Migration Policy Centre of the European University Institute
• Colleen Boland, Ph.D., Post-Doctoral Researcher, Radboud University Centre for Migration Law/RUNOMI
• Tesseltje de Lange, Ph.D., GS4S Co-Principal Investigator and Director, Radboud University Centre for Migration Law
• Martin Ruhs, Ph.D., Deputy Director, Migration Policy Centre of the European University Institute
• Ayse Saka Helmhout, Ph.D., Chair, Comparative Management and Professor of Strategy, Radboud University Nijmegen School of Management

Global Skills Partnerships (GSPs), or bilateral labour mobility/migration agreements between country of origin and destination, where the country of origin trains workers in skills needed in both countries, were initially envisioned as public-private endeavours. Various GSPs have since been implemented, albeit mostly in pilot form. These pilot programmes have encountered challenges in engaging employers and the private sector, as well as in sustaining and scaling up the number of participants. To remedy this, this paper asks how private sector actors in comparable settings are operating in terms of training and attracting workers, and if they are leading or managing structures similar to GSPs with other businesses already. The goal of this exercise is to understand how business-to-business (B2B) partnerships may be designed to function well as a GSP, such that it culminates in beneficial outcomes for all stakeholders: not only the businesses involved but also workers themselves, as well as the countries of origin and destination. The paper establishes some important factors and policy levers to keep in mind when designing or regulating a B2B partnership, for audiences ranging from EU policy makers to NGOs, training centers, and businesses considering B2B approaches to GSPs. In Section 2, the paper first highlights the potential involvement of businesses in skills-based migration schemes, pointing to the literature's limited evidence to date on business involvement. To evaluate concrete B2B setups for GSPs, Section 3 outlines a list of criteria. Section 4 conducts a SWOT analysis of various B2B setups. Finally, Section 5 presents implications and concluding observations, including for policy-making and current debates. As an initial thought piece on the advantages and drawbacks of GSPs implemented as B2B setups, this work serves as a springboard for future studies.

Working Paper #5 Download: GS4S.eu and Zenodo

Working Paper #6 – What Role Can Mobility Schemes Play in Addressing Skills Shortages in Europe?

Authors:
• Kate Hooper, Senior Policy Analyst, Migration Policy Institute International Program, Labor Migration
• Jasmijn Slootjes, Ph.D., Associate Director, MPI Europe

This working paper assesses the recent evolution of mobility schemes and partnerships in the European context, exploring the implications for using these initiatives to address skills shortages. Taking recent academic literature that has focused more on skills development and training as a starting point, this paper generates a typology that reviews mobility schemes based on the skills needs they are trying to address and the type of mobility they seek to support, ranging from short-term visits to long-term training or work placements. Building off this typology, the paper also includes short case studies of recent/ongoing mobility schemes, examining how they approach mobility and skills development and their outcomes to date.

Working Paper #6 Download: GS4S.eu and Zenodo

Working Paper #7 – Migration vs. Automation as an Answer to Labour Shortages: Firm-Level Analysis for Austria

Authors:
• Maryna Tverdostup
• Mahdi Ghodsi
• Sandra M. Leitner
The Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies

Labour shortages in Europe have led firms to adopt two key strategies: automation and the employment of migrants. This study empirically examines the relationship between robot adoption and immigrant labour (differentiated by region of origin and education level) in Austrian firms using a novel dataset linking firm-level survey data on robotics adoption from Austria's Information and Communication Technologies (IKTU1) surveys (waves 2018, 2020 and 2022) with registry-based employment records. Employing Poisson pseudo-maximum likelihood (PPML) estimations, we analyse firm-level employment decisions while controlling for firm characteristics, industry and region.

Working Paper #7 Download: GS4S.eu and Zenodo

October 6-7 2025

Provides an in-depth presentation of GS4S' primary research findings, including interview data, offering a comprehensive view of on-the-ground realities of skills, migration, and development in three targeted sectors:


Digital

Construction

Care

We will share key policy insights by engaging with stakeholders, governments, and international organizations. These discussions will help shape practical tools that build on existing knowledge while generating new perspectives.

Audience: This workshop will bring together representatives from academia, government officials, legal experts, policy analysts, NGOs, researchers specializing in skills, migration, and development, as well as private sector representatives.
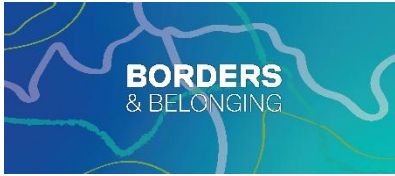
Connecting with our Horizon Sister Project, Link4Skills

GS4S Co-Principal Investigator, Prof. Tesseltje de Lange, made a guest appearance on the award-winning podcast Borders and Belonging, "Skills Shortages, AI and the Future of Work". Listen to the podcast here

Amplifying Insights / Shaping the Conversation

Migration Observatory 9th Annual Conference
"Immigrant Exploitation and Policy-Induced Uncertainty"

The Ninth Migration Observatory's Annual Conference, co-sponsored by GS4S partners Centro Studi Luca d'Agliano and FIERI, and hosted by Collegio Carlo Alberto in Turin, Italy, featured presentations on various topics, including:

- Migrant mobilization against labor exploitation, by Gemma Dipoppa (Columbia University)
- Consumer preferences for migrant and native workers, by Paolo Falco (University of Copenhagen)
- Worker shortages and local immigration support, by Daniel Auer (Fondazione Collegio Carlo Alberto)
- The effect of regularization on labor market efficiency, by Anthony Edo (CEPII, ICM, and IZA)
- The effect of regularization on migrant labor exploitation, by Elia Benveniste (Universitat Pompeu Fabra)
- The post-Brexit immigration system, by Mariña Fernández-Reino (CSIC and University of Oxford).

Furthermore, Tommaso Frattini (University of Milan, Centro Studi Luca d'Agliano, and CEPR) presented the Migration Observatory's 9th Annual Report on "Immigrant Integration in Europe", and took the opportunity to showcase the GS$S dashboard on immigrants' overeducation to the audience of academics and stakeholders. Camilla Borgna (University of Turin and Fondazione Collegio Carlo Alberto) closed the conference discussing the main policy implications. The event was attended by around 40 people in person and 25 online.

Global Strategy for Skills, Migration, and Development

In three focused industries:

IT/Digital * Construction * Care

https://gs4s.eu – Email: info@gs4s.eu

About GS4S

From January 1st 2024 to December 31st 2026, the Horizon Europe project '*Global Strategy for Skills, Migration, and Development*' (GS4S) will seek to better understand global skills shortages in Digital, Care, and Construction sectors. GS4S proposes multi-level policies on labour migration governance, and develops alternative ways for addressing skills shortages in six regions: EU, EEA, Western Balkan, Middle East and Northern Africa, West Africa, and South/South-East Asia. To achieve these ambitious objectives, the interdisciplinary GS4S consortium led by senior researchers at Radboud University (The Netherlands) conducts innovative analyses using mixed-methods research. A particular emphasis in the project is paid to capturing business strategies for filling skills shortages, and skilled (migrant) workers' experiences with skilling, upskilling and reskilling in EU and non-EU regional contexts.

All project deliverables are accessible on Zenodo and the GS4S website **here**.

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