



Migrant Inclusion in the Global North and South: Strategies for Sustainable Futures

John CHANG´ACH¹, Rael OGWARI², Titus ROTICH³, Christina VON POST⁴, Helge RÄIHÄ⁵ & Oliver ST JOHN⁶

1 Moi University, School of Education, Kenya, changach65@gmail.com; 2 Moi University, School of Education, Kenya, ogwarirael@gmail.com; 3 Moi University, School of Education, Kenya, tisesko@yahoo.com; 4 Örebro University, Department of Humanities, Education and Social Sciences, Sweden, christina.vonpost@oru.se; 5 Örebro University, Department of Humanities, Education and Social Sciences, Sweden, helge.raiha@oru.se; 6 Örebro University, Department of Humanities, Education and Social Sciences, Sweden, oliver.st-john@oru.se

Abstract

This descriptive paper is based on a desk review to unpack the opportunities and challenges that migrants face in constructing and maintaining meaningful lives in their transition and destination countries. The paper explores factors that affect inclusion and draws insights on the general and targeted support for migrants in their new environment. The findings show that migrants face challenges of being perceived deficient by most stakeholders in migration. Most strategies for inclusion do not factor migrants' involvement and are often designed from the lens of the host

¹ Corresponding Author: John Chang´ach, Moi University, P.O Box 3900 – 30100, Eldoret – Kenya, changach65@gmail.com

governments and the organizations working with migrants. There is more focus on migrants' experience in the destination countries than their experience during transition. It also emerged that migrants' individual characteristics interact with factors in their new environment to affect inclusion. To achieve sustainable futures, the paper recommends interventions that focus on engagement of migrants as resourceful persons in development and enhance their opportunities for inclusion during transition and in the destination countries.

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Key words: Migrant inclusion, Sustainable futures, Technological Inclusion, Multicultural Inclusion, Educational Inclusion, Financial Inclusion

1. Introduction

The first two decades of 21st century have been characterised with the increase of migrants from country to country with more than 119,986 migrants entering Europe (English & Mayo, 2019). In United Kingdom, the number of migrants rose from 3.8 million in 1993 to 8.7 million in 2015. A similar case is witnessed in the united states and other parts of the global north with statistics indicating that majority of migrants originate from the global south (Leblang & Peters, 2022).

Despite the increased rates of immigration, two blocks exist in the global north with one against migration and the other in support of the open migration. The proponents of migration attribute migrants to increased domestic economy. On the other hand, the opponents refer to expected slowdown of domestic wages, increased pressure on the host governments, emergence of populist policies, and increase in social conflict (Leblang & Peters, 2022; Gemi et al., 2013). Other debates align immigration to environmental challenges by openly branding it as an ecological plunder with claims that less responsibility is noted due to lack of belonging and investments on the side of migrants (Turner & Bailey, 2022). In other parts of the world, immigration is seen as a security threat. This threat applies to both countries of origin, seeing migration as an opportunity for regrouping, empowerment and retaliation, and the receiving county viewing migrants as radicals who will bring insecurity issues (Innes, 2010).

This paper tries to unlock such misconceptions with the concept of inclusion in the immigration process. In this aspect, we refer to cohesion in all aspects of living among migrants and natives of the society. According to Major et al. (2014) securing an employment by migrants and asylum seekers was viewed as a key to inclusion with assumptions that migrants get time and opportunities to share with their colleagues and learn new skills. On the other hand, multiple changes in the nature of work due to technological and social economic advancements results into fewer physical interactions with co-workers necessitating that having a job is no longer sufficient for inclusion into the society (OECD, 2020).

Strides have been registered on migrants' protection and well-being in the second decade of 21st century. Mainly, the protection of migrants is rooted in 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (Agenda, 2015), and informed by the Declaration of the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development adopted in October 2013 (Borda, 2006). This signals the importance of the life and way of living for migrants in the global context.

1.1 A Migrant and Migrant Inclusion

Migrant: There is no universal definition of the term migrant but understanding of this concept depends on the contextual analysis. In some contexts, a migrant is a person who moves away from his permanent place of residence within the country or across an international boarder permanently or temporally for several reasons. The Office of the United Nations Commission for Human Rights (UNHCR) refers to an international migrant as person who is outside a country of which he/she is a citizen, national or a state of birth. This definition is similar to that defined by (Koser, 2007) of an international migrant as that person who stays outside their home country. Migrants are categorised according the reasons that caused their immigration for instance work migrants who move for labour purposes. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) defines a migrant for statistical purposes as “any person who changes his or her country of usual residence” (Ingleby, Singleton, & Wickramage, 2020). In simple terms, a migrant is a person who moves from his place or country of residence willingly, or to escape conflict or persecution.

Migrant Inclusion: Migrant inclusion entails a form of psychological and sociological process of adaptation between migrants and host communities in social, economic, cultural and other aspects. The degree of migrants' inclusion depends on the individuals concerned and the context in which adaptation takes place (Bauloz, Vathi, & Acosta, 2019). According to International Organization for Migration (2019), the process of migrant inclusion can be affected by social demographic factors (age, gender, sex, level of education and language ability) and social networking abilities. Inclusion is an experience that differs among groups of migrants (refugees, high- or low-skilled migrant workers, victims of trafficking or migrants' descendants), receiving communities as well as the context.

1.2 Sustainable Futures

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Declaration views economic growth and decent work as mutually reinforcing, and has resolved to create conditions for sustainable, inclusive and sustained prosperity. It is of utmost importance to the significant number of low-skilled migrant workers in often exploitative working conditions and low-waged jobs, particularly in the case of migrant workers in an irregular situation working in the informal economy. **Goal 8:** Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. **Goal 10:** Reduce inequality within and among countries. Agendas is SDG 10 on reducing inequality within and among countries, which contains target 10.7: "facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies." Other goals are also relevant such as: Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere; Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls; Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels; and Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

2. Global Overview on Migration and Migrant Inclusion

Data gathered in 2019 reveal that there are 272 million migrants in the world which equates to 3.5% of the total global population. There has been a rising trend of migrant population with time since 1970s, with a predominant direction of South-North migration, at an average increase of

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approximately 4% annually. By 2019, international migrant population was 119 million more than that of 1990, and increase of 77.8%, and over three times the estimated number in 1970. Similarly, it is noted that migrants within the same country are also increasing tremendously. According to Awad and Natarajan (2018), half of the global migrant population stay in the developed global north and half of the same are in the global south. Despite these noted increasing numbers, it is perceived that the trend of migration is still minor and normal compared to the global population record and less public attention to immigration continue to exist.

Migration is a situation that cannot be avoided internationally, at every point in time migrants are en-route. What we must deal with is taking up opportunities in such situation and putting in place remedies for cohesive and harmonious integration of migrants in the host countries.

The global outlook shows that the global migration burden is shared equally by the global north and global south when it comes to numbers of migrants. This phenomenon should be viewed as an opportunity to contribute to the socio-economic wellbeing of the countries in these regions by empowering the migrants. It is noted that the way of dealing with these rising numbers of migrants does not only determine their future wellbeing, but also the receiving countries' socio-economic development.

The cohesion between immigrations and their receiving association are paramount in the immigration processes. Settling in a new area or country requires adaption to new practices, cultures, customs, social values and new languages. The attitude of receiving communities hence plays a pivotal role to facilitate this adaption.

On top of adaption, migrants are faced with challenges including language barriers, poor housing, poor access to local services, transportation issues, cultural differences, raising children, prejudice, isolation and discrimination, the changes in climatic conditions, and less employment opportunities. The language barrier is the major challenge in this case. Language affects all aspects of life that need communication, be it market places, schools, churches, hospitals, banks, entertainment services as well as places of work (Vassallo, 2021). Receiving communities and the government of destination countries ought to support immigrants to acquire basics of the native language for easy cohesion.

Migrant inclusion is very important in the immigration phenomenon though commonly viewed to be complex due to individual and cultural differences between migrants and receiving communities. Inclusion is the only way we can diversify immigration into a valuable phenomenon. It should be noted that the increase in migrants for the past 50 years possess socio-economic and cultural opportunities. Legislation and policies aiming at ending discrimination among migrant communities and minority group has been made in the global north for example the 1971 Multiculturalism Policy, in Canada, 1975 Racial Discrimination Act, in Australia, Civil Rights Act of 1964 in US among other, but full implementation is important for adequate migrant inclusion (Hyman, Meinhard, & Shields, 2011).

With inclusion of migrants, we build the economy stronger, keep both migrant and societal families living together, progressing well in terms of the economy and reducing on dependence burden since they can as well participate in socio-economic aspects.

In several instances, the private sector should be much active in supporting such inclusion, this is because if these people are well settled in, they can offer private labour as well as offering private employment. Yes, they are migrants but a lot can be exchanged with them in the due course. Take an example of those who come with special skills like engineering, metal works, construction skills, Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and among others. It would be benefiting to the host society to take advantage of such skills which can be easy if they are well included in the society.

3. Dimensions of Migrant Inclusion and Strategies

Studies by (Santilli, Di Maggio, Ginevra, Nota, & Soresi, 2021) describes migrants as the most vulnerable group and outlines migration process as the journey of hope, full of difficulties and dangers. This is associated with unfamiliar environment disabling the migrants from taking advantage of their knowledge, skills and qualification. Vocational guidance and career counselling is seen as a vehicle of inclusion, so as to alienate individual's imagination of self-responsibility and architect of his own future.

3.1 Technological Inclusion of Migrants

Studies done by (Abujarour, Köster, Krasnova, & Wiesche, 2021) looks into the general benefits of ICT in social inclusion and empowerment of migrants, in the migration journey. The paper points out the importance of technology in realizing the maxim of equitable and democratic society, where ICT is seen as the primary gateway for successful integration. Access to multifaceted social services including health, housing, employment, among others is mentioned here to be facilitated by ICT.

The migrants belong to the sending communities permanently and receiving communities temporarily, they still keep in touch with their home countries as well as the receiving countries. Migrants therefore need to be kept abreast with the current technological development. The aspect of technological inclusion directly supports financial inclusion through financial digital transactions and remittances. Gelb and Krishnan (2018) clarified it that digital transactions support financial development for both the sending and receiving countries. This is of course in form of remittance of taxes which are directly credited to two countries.

As we look at the aspect of migrants technological inclusion, we must understand that this is at a higher advantage as (Gelb & Krishnan, 2018) noted. The following benefits are obtained from such inclusion.

- i. Highly-skilled migrants contribute substantially to technology innovation, research and development in destination countries.
- ii. Migrants and diaspora groups are an important channel for transferring technology from destination countries back to origin countries. This may be through knowledge they impart directly, remittances they send home, investments they make in origin countries, and support they provide for enterprise development and research institutions in host communities.
- iii. Technology – particularly the digital connectivity offered by mobile phones – affects every aspect of migration: it provides access to information pre-migration, during journeys and in destination countries; facilitates remittances; and helps migrants stay connected to families.

- iv. Government management of migration relies heavily on technology, both in keeping people out and in processing migrants after they arrive.

All persons have a right to stay in a connected society hence, migrants and communities hosting them have a choice to be in a connected society. According to UNCHR, this eases the raising of their concerns and their voices can easily be heard. This is as well the method of strengthening both migrants and host communities to engage in digital economy as well as technologically supported ways of living.

Technology is very important in increasing productivity on a long term basis (Gelb & Krishnan, 2018). Migrants can utilise technology to establish links between host countries and their countries of origin. Highly skilled individuals within migrants have a chance to apply technology in innovation, research and development. On top of that, technology facilitates the migration process like journeys entry and integration into the host communities.

In order to reap the benefits of digital and technological inclusion, the following actions are recommended to be implemented so as to facilitate the process. These include; Ensuring migrants equitable access to technological tools like phones, laptops and computers; Identifying technologically skilled migrants and supporting them to train their fellows; Affordable technological training to migrants by destination communities; Providing support for connection costs; and Motivating destination communities to get connected with migrants digitally (chat with them, add them to WhatsApp groups, transact with them virtually) this will make them feel part of the host digital community.

Therefore, technology, innovation and productivity are rhythms of the sustainable development goals, and it is noted that migration is a feature of 21st century which contributes to social economic development. To contribute to the sustainable development goals, it is judicious to give sufficient support to migrants on technological advancement.

In the layman's language, we need to give them access to technological knowledge and skills. Those who already have the skills can be supported to exploit them in the host countries. Let's support them with required gadgets and encourage them to adopt to the new technological advancement.

3.2 Multicultural Inclusion of Migrants

Culture is the sum total of a groups' values, norms and attitudes (Verheul, Wennekers, Audretsch, & Thurik, 2002). It is always challenging when you encounter new cultures. People you have never met with, beliefs and customs that you're not familiar with, new ways of living, eating, responding to situations, among others. Usually this is a confusing situation to everyone. In the immigration process, we expect the encounter of two or more different cultures in particular, the culture of immigrants and that of the host community. In this case, differences must appear.

The coexistence of such cultures with differences and without compromising one's original identity is what it entails by multicultural inclusion. There should be a recognition of uniqueness of migrants' cultures and incorporation of their unique cultural features in service provision, governance, business, training and other sectors.

Multi-cultural describes the social characteristics and problems of governance posed by any society in which different cultural communities live together and attempt to build a common life while retaining something of their 'original' identity (Magnusson, 2020)

When we recognise the differences and try to incorporate them, it will reduce the anticipated challenges in multicultural governance and the way of living. In agreement with (Magnusson, 2020) multiculturalism is the key to multicultural inclusion. This is because it brings permanent coexistence of different cultures and customs in the same geographical location with similar rights and privileges.

When we talk of multicultural migrants' inclusion, we advance that migrants ought to be treated fairly with other inhabitants irrespective of their different cultural features. The host communities can learn from them and they can as well learn from the host communities. Fairness and mutual coexistence are all it requires.

3.3 Language Use/ Linguistic Inclusion

Language is a key driver of social inclusion and integration, language increases the abilities of social, political, economic and civic participation. Migrants usually differ with their host

communities in terms of language, and job opportunities for migrants are in several cases tied towards language skills.

Despite the noted importance of language especially to migrants, they pose less acquisition skills in host communities/ countries (Isphording, 2015), and there is an argument that migrants who fail to achieve adequate language proficiency of host country fail to achieve social and economic goals. It is noted that the motivation for migrants to acquire language skills in their host communities is always low. Migrants are only motivated to learn the host language if there are incentives like job opportunities. Helping migrants acquire language skills is a noble cause and supports their general inclusion. If they acquire language skills of their host communities, it will be easier for them to participate in several aspects of the community. On the other hand, in the presence of the common language that both migrants and host communities can use. It is important for both groups to use such language occasionally so that migrants are able to be part of the linguistic community.

In Sweden, adult migrants have a right to participate in state-subsidized basic language training, delivered within Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) programme. This programme was faced by challenges in 2015 due to high number of asylum seekers ([Ahlgren & Rydell, 2020](#)). SFI is seen as the door opener by the immigrants, and at the same time considered to be space for forming the citizen of tomorrow ([Olson & Dahlstedt, 2014](#)). The following, among others are the objectives of SFI; Development of a functional second language and equip migrants with language-based tools to actively participate in daily life, society and work; deliver a verbal and written communicative language proficiency; create a social orientation and knowledge about the Swedish job market; and introduce migrants to different study techniques.

SFI is therefore designed for those who want to acquire fundamental knowledge of the Swedish language. The target migrant population is 16 years of age or older who has received a Swedish personal identity number. These migrants have a lawful right to free SFI studies and can choose which school to attend.

3.4 Inclusion of Migrants in Education Systems

The right to education for all children is a necessity internationally, it is also articulated in international instruments, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention

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on the Rights of the Child. The 2016 New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants reasserts this right to education, for both primary and secondary schooling (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2019). Initially, refugees and migrants' children could attend education in the language and curriculum of the country of origin. After that, *UNHCR Global Education Strategy (GES) 2012-2016 articulated a new approach to the education of refugees: inclusion in national education systems* (UNHCR, 2012, p. 8 as cited in (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2019) this required refugees and migrants children to come together with children of the host countries and attend the same education curriculum and access their government schools.

The December 2017 Djibouti Declaration which was signed by Ministers of Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda advanced for the integration of education for refugees, migrants and returnees into National Education systems of IGAD countries (Dryden-Peterson, 2020).

With the rise of migrant influx in the global north, educational resources were under pressure, and there was need to enhance the facilities to accommodate the new entrants. It was found however that the best and cheapest mode of inclusion of migrants is through free digital learning (Castaño-Muñoz, Colucci, & Smidt, 2018). Technological spaces such as Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) was seen as a remedy, but very small proportion were able to use it due to language barrier, connectivity and lack or little background digital literacy.

It is encouraging that efforts to support inclusion of migrants and refugees in the education sector is already seen. However, more has to be done because it emerges that less efforts are in place to facilitate the transition of migrants whose education was partly obtained from original countries. More so, the quality of education especially in the global south is compromised due to meagre resources to support both national and migrants' children. Inclusion of migrants in education system promote social cohesion between migrants and national children, strengthens partnerships with all education actors for increased access and quality for all, encourages governments to assume their responsibility for migrants' protection and rights. Hence, we cannot keep a blind eye and a deaf ear on migrant inclusion in the education system.

So, one asks, how can we best support migrants' inclusion in our education systems? Supporting the UNHCR mechanisms, it is important to adjust the curriculum, national capacity, national assessment policy we need to ensure collaboration with migrants concerned bodies like UNICEF, UNHCR. According to ([Dryden-Peterson, 2015](#)) it is imperative that migrants and refugees host countries should support migrants' education inclusion in communities where they stay as follows; Establish system to recognize certification and assess/place migrant students by academic level and (avoid placing students in lower levels due to language barrier) ([Guo, 2013](#)); Establish double shift system or construct classrooms to increase school capacity; Train national teachers on migrant background and protection needs, including strategies to address academic, linguistic, psychosocial, and social cohesion issues; Place migrant teachers/teaching assistants in classrooms to support with language/translation needs; Train school administrators on migrant/refugee education policy, documentation waivers, certification, placement, systems to liaise with refugee parents and community; Orient school community (teachers, students, parents) on migrant background and policies, potential benefits of migrant inclusion, and how they can help to support inclusion of migrant learners; and Promote programmes that support both national teachers and students, as well as migrant children and families.

Full implementation of the above points by the host communities, will improve full inclusion of migrants into the education systems.

3.5 Financial Inclusion of Migrants

Financial inclusion is the ability of an individual or business to access financial products and services in a non-discriminatory way ([Ahairwe & Bisong, 2022](#)). Through such financial inclusion, migrants are empowered to meet their personal needs both in the host country and in their country of birth through remittances.

Migrants have less access to financial institutions and services especially in developing countries. This hardens their way of living and negatively affects their economic independence. The restricted access to banks as well as loans limits their participation in the economy of the host communities. Financial inclusion is the rescue in such situation, if they have access to financial economy they can be able to start up empowering projects, small businesses and participate in market economies. This can contribute to social economic development of their host countries as

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well as their countries of origin. In 2019, remittances equalling to 25% of GDP in five countries: Tonga, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Haiti, and Nepal were done. These were important source of foreign currency, overpassing \$20 billion in India, China Mexico, the Philippines, France, Egypt, Nigeria and Pakistan.(Siham & Isabelle, 2020). These remittances were being done by migrants and largely contributed to the economic development of the noted countries. Take an example of the way remittances contributed to the increase in Nepal's Human Development Index (HDI), which has from 0.29 in 1980 to 0.54 in 2014 (GAUDEL, 2016).

Contribution to financial inclusion of migrants not only supports their livelihoods but also grow the host economies and economies of their countries of origin. Because of this, it is necessary to empower the migrants financially through creation of enabling environment, support them to join the financial economy, opening up lending services to them and granting them secured loans so that they can build themselves. This is possible because of their legal status in the host country. Many skilled entrepreneurs need to be supported to turn their skills into a source of income.

4. Conclusion

This research study has made significant analysis and reviews of existing knowledge on migrants' integration challenges and strategies for successful inclusion for the purpose of migrants' empowerment and sense of agency. The study findings showed that the use of technology as a factor of social inclusion is key, as it cuts across all inclusion dimensions. This cannot succeed by itself without the support of education system inclusion, which acts as a means of reducing language limitations, and creating acceptance by the host population. It is also noted that financial inclusion fuels the way into sustainable futures, by reducing the dependence burden and changing the perspective into what the migrants can do for themselves and not what others can do for them. The World Refugee Day 2022 theme: *Anyone can seek protection, regardless of who they are or what they believe. It is non-negotiable: seeking safety is a human right; and the theme: whoever, whatever, whenever. Everyone has got a right to seek safety. One planet, our shared nest*, summarizes the findings of this research.

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