

# Enhancing the Development Impact of the UK's Immigration Pathways

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## Abstract

The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (GCM) calls on countries of destination to both expand regular migration pathways and take steps to increase the development impact of these pathways. Migration can have a positive impact on the economic development of migrants themselves, their families, their countries of origin, and their country of destination, if aspects such as integration, remittances, and skill transfers are prioritised. This paper, produced by the Center for Global Development (CGD) and the UK office of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), outlines lessons for the UK Government to implement if they are to increase the development potential of both their existing and new immigration pathways, particularly in the agriculture, nursing, and green technology sectors.

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## Introduction

In late December 2018, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK), along with 163 other countries, adopted the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (GCM), the first global agreement to establish governing principles for international migration.<sup>1</sup> The GCM has 23 specific objectives that, while non-binding, do provide a menu of policy options for countries to consider in how to best implement the ideas contained within.<sup>2</sup> Since that time, the UK has been an active supporter of the GCM, both at home and abroad. Among other things, they are one of the leading contributors to the Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund, managed through the International Organization for Migration (IOM).<sup>3</sup> This paper, written by the Center for Global Development (CGD) and the UK office of IOM, explores how the UK could best implement those objectives focused on labour migration, bringing benefits to the migrants themselves, their families, their countries of origin, and the UK economy.

Many of the GCM's objectives touch on the issue of labour migration and encourage countries to think about ways to enhance the development potential of that migration. For example, objective 5 aims to “enhance availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration.” These pathways should be created in ways that “facilitate fair and ethical recruitment and safeguard conditions that ensure decent work” (objective 6) and “create conditions for migrants and diasporas to fully contribute to sustainable development in all countries” (objective 19), particularly through remittances (objective 20). Finally, there is a focus on how countries can “invest in skills development and facilitate mutual recognition of skills, qualifications and competences” (objective 18) to build skills needed globally and promote the migration of skilled individuals.

Central to these objectives is the recognition that migration can enhance the economic development of the migrants themselves, their families, as well as their countries of origin and destination.<sup>4</sup> But these benefits will only be realised if the process and experience of migration and integration leads to adequate economic gain for the migrant. For example, for remittances to have a stimulating effect, migrants must have access to financial channels and money to remit; overly restrictive policies, which may undermine migrants' stability and impede circular migration, prevent this.<sup>5</sup> It is in the best interests of a country of destination

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<sup>1</sup>David Donoghue, Marta Foresti, and Helen Dempster (2018) “163 states just approved the Global Compact for Migration. Now what?” ODI blog, December 11, 2018. <https://odi.org/en/insights/163-states-just-approved-the-global-compact-for-migration-now-what/>.

<sup>2</sup>United Nations (UN) (2018) *Global Compact for Safe, Regular, and Orderly Migration*. New York: UN. [https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/sites/default/files/180713\\_agreed\\_outcome\\_global\\_compact\\_for\\_migration.pdf](https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/sites/default/files/180713_agreed_outcome_global_compact_for_migration.pdf).

<sup>3</sup>United Nations Network on Migration (n.d.) “Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund.” <https://migrationnetwork.un.org/mptf>.

<sup>4</sup>Lisa Andersson and Melissa Siegel (2020) “The Impact of Migration on Development in Developing Countries: A Review of the Empirical Literature,” in eds. Glenn Rayp, Ilse Ruysen, and Katrin Marchand, *Regional Integration and Migration Governance in the Global South*. Cham: Springer Nature.

<sup>5</sup>Hein de Haas (2005) “International Migration, Remittances and Development: Myths and Facts,” *Third World Quarterly* 26, no. 8: 1269–1284. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436590500336757>.

like the UK to maximise the economic benefits that their pathways provide, harnessing labour migration to complement development policy. At the local level, remittances are found to provide greater benefits than public cash transfers: facilitating them can have a significant impact upon development.<sup>6</sup> At the macro level, remittances are now more than three times greater than official development assistance (ODA) and have been found to contribute more to economic development than ODA.<sup>7</sup> Migration policy with a development focus can, as this paper will explore, help to:

1. Improve economic development in countries of origin, thereby contributing to stability and security;
2. Create a skilled and sustainable pipeline of talent that can be used to improve the economies of countries of origin and destination alike;
3. Mitigate concerns about ‘brain drain’ that may threaten the future cooperation of countries of origin in the context of migration;
4. Enhance trade and foreign policy relationships with countries of origin by showing that the UK prioritises the benefit they receive from migration;
5. Help the UK meet its goals around the green transition and post-COVID recovery through a sufficient supply of qualified workers; and
6. Ensure that the UK contributes to the objectives of the GCM, 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and other international agreements.<sup>8</sup>

There are a number of ways in which a country of destination like the UK can enhance the development benefit of their immigration pathways. Interventions such as improving remittance flows, implementing skill migration partnerships, focusing on integration, and engaging with the diaspora will all be explored in full below. In particular, this paper focuses on alterations to existing migration pathways and suggestions for the design of new pathways, in ways that are both politically feasible and implementable across the various relevant departments of the UK Government.

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<sup>6</sup>Jessica Hagen-Zanker and Carmen Leon Himmelstine (2014) *What is the state of evidence on the impacts of cash transfers on poverty, as compared to remittances?* ODI Working Paper. London: ODI. <https://cdn.odi.org/media/documents/8903.pdf>.

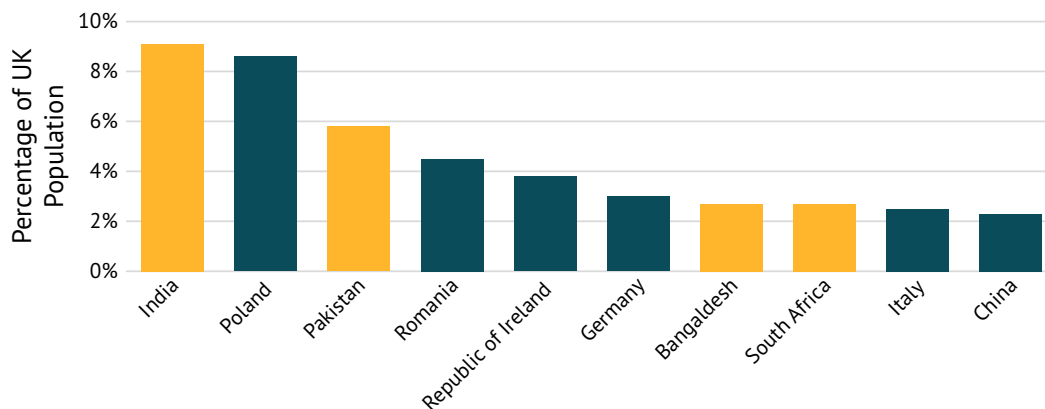
<sup>7</sup>World Bank Group (2021) *Recovery: COVID-19 Crisis Through a Migration Lens*. Migration and Development Brief 35. Washington DC: World Bank. <https://www.knomad.org/event/recovery-covid-19-crisis-through-migration-lens>; and Robert Stojanov, Daniel Němec, and Libor Židek (2017) “Evaluation of the Long-Term Stability and Impact of Remittances and Development Aid on Sustainable Economic Growth in Developing Countries,” *Sustainability* 11, no. 6: 1538. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11061538>.

<sup>8</sup>For example, in designing nursing immigration schemes, the UK needs to comply with the World Health Organization’s (WHO) *Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel* which prioritises development within health care migration partnerships.

## The UK's immigration pathways

There are many ways in which migrants can access a visa that enables them to operate within the UK labour market.<sup>9</sup> The UK's relationship with Commonwealth countries and its Overseas Territories facilitates visa provisions to people from specific countries of origin that are sector- and skill-blind.<sup>10</sup> As Figure 1 shows, four of the top ten migrant countries of origin in the UK are Commonwealth countries. If a migrant is not able to access one of these routes, they must apply under the UK's new Points-Based Immigration System, implemented in early 2021 to manage immigration post-Brexit.<sup>11</sup>

**Figure 1. Top ten countries of birth among migrants in the UK, 2019**



*Source:* Office of National Statistics (ONS) (2021) "Population of the UK by country of birth and nationality." <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/datasets/populationoftheunitedkingdombycountryofbirthandnationality>.

*Note:* Commonwealth countries are highlighted in gold.

As with other high-income countries, the UK draws a distinction between people moving to the country for work permanently or temporarily (Box 1). Anyone wanting to come to the UK for longer than six months must fit within one of four categories: Skilled Workers, Global Talent, Graduate, or Intra-company. The most relevant category for most of the pathways outlined in this paper is the first one. People applying under the Skilled Workers

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<sup>9</sup>These routes all enable people to enter the UK as a whole, regardless of where in the country they end up working. Many other high-income countries have experimented with additional schemes which aim to attract migrants to rural or underserved areas, where there may be large employer demand but little interest from local workers. For example, a 'Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA)' is a formal agreement between the Australian government and a regional, state, or territorial authority, enabling them to bring in more workers than the standard skilled migration program. On the other side of the world, Canada maintains the 'Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot' which provides permanent visas to people willing to move to areas which are struggling demographically.

<sup>10</sup>For example, see UK Visas and Immigration (n.d.) "UK Ancestry Visa." <https://www.gov.uk/ancestry-visa>.

<sup>11</sup>UK Visas and Immigration (2021) "The UK's points-based immigration system: an introduction for employers." <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-points-based-immigration-system-employerinformation/the-uks-points-based-immigration-system-an-introduction-for-employers>.

category must speak English and have a job offer at the required skill level (RQF 3 or above<sup>12</sup>), with a minimum salary of £25,600. If the job offer does not meet the salary threshold, the migrant may make up the ‘points’ needed if they have a PhD or a job offer in a shortage occupation. These shortage occupations are on a specific list and include, among others, nurses, engineers, and scientists.<sup>13</sup> There is a separate Health and Care Visa which enables those with a job offer from the National Health Service (NHS) to get a visa without meeting the minimum salary threshold.<sup>14</sup>

### **Box 1. Permanent vs temporary vs circular migration pathways**

Permanent. Permanent migration pathways allow migrants to settle on a permanent basis in a country of destination. They permit the right to work, and typically entail a path towards citizenship and full access to services. Such schemes encourage full integration and access to social protection, enabling migrant and diaspora communities to transfer resources and skills back to their communities of origin.

Temporary. Temporary migration pathways allow governments to fill gaps in their labour force, and provide migrants with greater incomes than in their countries of origin.<sup>15</sup> They have the potential to offer a ‘triple-win,’ in which countries of destination welcome a targeted labour supply, countries of origin benefit from remittances and increased skills upon migrants’ return, and migrants gain facilitated migration and increased wages and skills.<sup>16</sup> In practice, however, temporary migrants may be more likely to be vulnerable, due (among other reasons) to potentially low health provisions; varying job security; payment for agents’ fees and the possibility of debt bondage; and reliance on onsite accommodation.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>RQF refers to the UK’s ‘Regulated Qualifications Framework.’ The Framework ranks qualifications both on their size (e.g. an award, certificate, or diploma) and difficulty. Ranking qualifications in this way enables comparison across qualifications within the UK and with qualifications abroad. An RQF Level 3 role, for example, requires a secondary school education, while an RQF Level 6 role requires a Bachelor’s degree.

<sup>13</sup>UK Visas and Immigration (2021) “Immigration Rules.” <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigrationrules/immigration-rules-appendix-shortage-occupation-list>.

<sup>14</sup>UK Visas and Immigration (n.d.) “Health and Care Worker visa.” <https://www.gov.uk/health-care-worker-visa>.

<sup>15</sup>Rachel Hesketh, Anastasia Lewis, and Mark Kleinman (2021) *Temporary migration routes, integration, and social cohesion: An assessment of the evidence*. London: The Policy Institute, Kings College London (KCL). <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/policy-institute/assets/temporary-migration-routes-integration-and-social-cohesion.pdf>.

<sup>16</sup>Cora Leonie and Mezger Kveder (2013) *Temporary Migration: A Review of the Literature*. Documents de Travail 188. Paris/Brighton: INED/University of Sussex. [https://www.ined.fr/fichier/s\\_rubrique/19580/document\\_travail\\_2013\\_migration\\_litterature\\_188.fr.pdf](https://www.ined.fr/fichier/s_rubrique/19580/document_travail_2013_migration_litterature_188.fr.pdf).

<sup>17</sup>Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment (2014) *Temporary Migrants as Vulnerable Workers: A literature review*. Christchurch: MBIE. <https://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/fms/Research/ntom/Yuan%20Cain%20and%20Spoonley%202014.pdf>.



Circular. Circular migration pathways are a subset of temporary migration pathways, typically organised between two or more governments with the intention of obtaining a ‘triple-win’ outcome. They entail migration that is temporary; renewable; circulatory; offering full freedom of movement between the country of destination and origin during each stay; legal; respectful of migrants’ rights; and managed to match labour demand with labour supply between participating countries.<sup>18</sup> They are normally found to be developmentally positive.<sup>19</sup> Further aspects, such as efforts to mitigate the negative consequences of ‘brain drain’ or to ensure that migrants’ skills are enhanced, may also be included.<sup>20</sup> However such schemes can be restrictive, typically not allowing for family accompaniment or sufficient integration.

There are also a number of bespoke schemes in place, the most relevant being the various Seasonal Worker schemes. Migrants can access a six-month visa that enables them to work in ‘edible horticulture,’ as a ‘pork butcher,’ in poultry, or drive heavy goods vehicles. The largest of these schemes is that attracting agricultural workers, with 30,000 people eligible to apply for the Seasonal Worker visa route in 2022. This visa is discussed in more detail below.

Unfortunately, the Points-Based Immigration System was launched at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and therefore it is difficult to know the true extent of demand for the various work routes. For example, there were 1,311,732 visas granted in 2021 (both main applicants and dependants), 59 percent fewer than 2019. Of those that were granted, 18 percent were for work.<sup>21</sup> Work-based immigration has recovered strongly in recent months, and the number of non-European Union (EU) citizens applying for such visas has increased.<sup>22</sup> In 2021, Indians made up 40 percent of work visas, with countries like Nigeria, Pakistan, and the Philippines also increasing in importance.<sup>23</sup> Many of these people are being attracted through the immigration pathways described above. Of those applicants issued with a work visa through the above pathways in 2021, 35,718 held a Skilled Workers visa, 31,882 held a Health and Care Visa, and 29,631 held a Seasonal Worker visa. Figure 2 shows that many of these skilled worker visa holders are coming from non-EU countries.

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<sup>18</sup> Philippe Fargues (2008) *Circular Migration: Is it relevant for the South and East of the Mediterranean?* CARIM Analytic and Synthetic Notes 2008/40. Fiesole: European University Institute (EUI). [http://apps.eui.eu/Personal/fargues/Documents/CARIM\\_AS&N\\_2008\\_40.pdf](http://apps.eui.eu/Personal/fargues/Documents/CARIM_AS&N_2008_40.pdf).

<sup>19</sup> Kathleen Newland (2009) *Circular Migration and Human Development*. United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Research Paper 2009/42. New York: UNDP. [https://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdrp\\_2009\\_42.pdf](https://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdrp_2009_42.pdf).

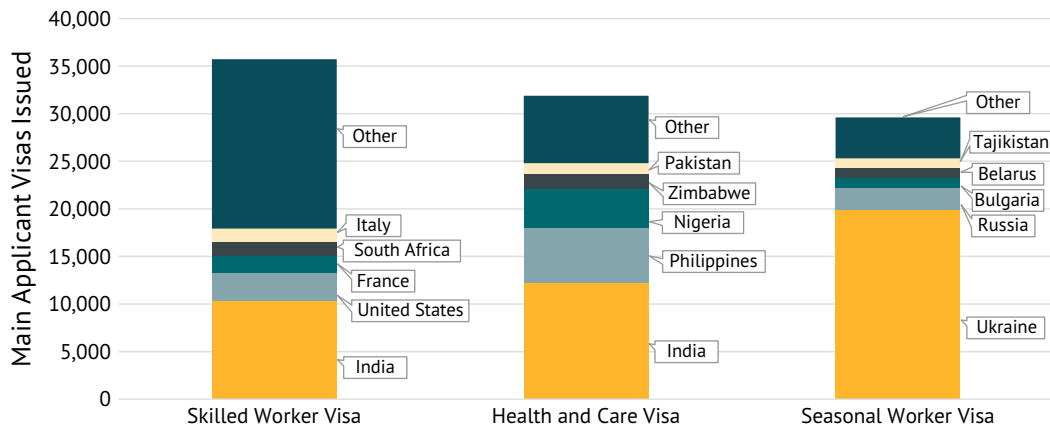
<sup>20</sup> Fargues (2008) *Circular Migration: Is it relevant for the South and East of the Mediterranean?*

<sup>21</sup> UK Home Office (2022) “Summary of latest statistics.” <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-december-2021/summary-of-latest-statistics>.

<sup>22</sup> The Economist (2022) “Britain has entered a third phase of post-war immigration.” April 9, 2022. <https://www.economist.com/britain/2022/04/07/britain-has-entered-a-third-phase-of-post-war-immigration>.

<sup>23</sup> Jonathan Portes (2022) “Immigration after Brexit one year on: changing places?” UK in a Changing Europe blog, February 25, 2022. <https://ukandeu.ac.uk/immigration-after-brexit-one-year-on-changing-places/>.

**Figure 2. Visa entrants under the UK's current immigration pathways, 2021**



*Source:* UK Home Office (2022) “Why do people come to the UK? To work.” <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-december-2021/why-do-people-come-to-the-uk-to-work>.

*Note:* Data includes main applicants to the Seasonal Worker (previously Tier 5) visa route. Only visas that were ‘issued’ are included.

Currently, the UK’s immigration system, particularly its shortage occupation list, is heavily skewed towards migrants that are ‘high’-skilled (particularly those that hold advanced university degrees).<sup>24</sup> Entry for the ‘medium’- and ‘low’-skilled is limited, with the exception of temporary bespoke schemes and pilot projects. The number and duration of such arrangements is increasing, particularly to encourage more targeted immigration from both EU and non-EU countries in the post-Brexit era. The presence of such migration flows is arguably necessary for the flourishing of UK employers and the UK economy, although structuring them as ‘bolt-ons’ to the overall immigration system has a number of pros and cons:

- **Pros.** Such arrangements can be better tailored to the specific needs of the sector, and flexibly respond to changing demand. Research conducted by Labor Mobility Partnerships (LaMP) into Canada’s similar system found that the majority of stakeholders believe that the system is advancing Canada’s federal and provincial interests, while meeting the needs of employers.<sup>25</sup> These arrangements are also more likely to be politically viable; creating a new scheme is usually easier than changing an entire immigration system. In addition, there is an argument to be made that such arrangements can be used to expand the number of immigrants working

<sup>24</sup> Though classifications of migrants’ skill levels are commonplace, classifying people as ‘low’-, ‘medium’-, or ‘high’-skill is problematic and unhelpful. Traditional ranking systems align with patriarchal ideologies, privileging ‘technical skills’ predominant in fields dominated by men and undervaluing skills in sectors where women predominate. For more, see Zuzana Cepla and Helen Dempster (2021) “There’s No Such Thing as a “Low” – Skill Worker.” Center for Global Development (CGD) blog, June 23, 2021. <http://www.cgdev.org/blog/theres-no-such-thing-low-skill-worker>.

<sup>25</sup> While this research is unpublished, more information about LaMP can be found at <https://lampforum.org/>.

within certain sectors, which could be beneficial for integration outcomes and social cohesion.<sup>26</sup>

- **Cons.** These arrangements result in a fragmented system which is confusing for both workers and employers. For the former, the diversity of pathways can make it challenging and costly for workers to identify which is best for them, especially candidates with lower levels of education and language proficiency. For the latter, employers may not understand which pathway they are meant to be recruiting through. This is especially difficult for smaller organisations without professional human resources or legal guidance. Their very nature makes them subject to changes in political priorities; a future political party can easily close down an arrangement, while it may be harder for them to change an entire immigration system. Finally, it is arguable that maintaining such a system is also more difficult and time-consuming for the UK Government, especially the Home Office, to manage.

This focus on prioritising ‘high’-skill immigrants has persisted in the UK, despite widespread support among both the public and politicians for expanded immigration to meet labour market demand across all skill levels. In polling of over 3,000 people conducted by Ipsos in February 2022, 66 percent of respondents said that employers should be able to recruit employees from overseas “for any job where there are shortages in the UK,” and 59 percent said that employers should be able to recruit overseas workers “for lower skilled jobs that are harder to fill by workers in the UK.”<sup>27</sup> Several surveys find that the British public attaches significantly greater importance to skill level than to countries or cultures of origin; while there is a preference for ‘high’-skilled workers, ‘low’-skilled workers are welcomed if recruited for otherwise unfillable roles.<sup>28</sup> Such findings are echoed among politicians. In late 2021, CGD and YouGov asked 88 Members of Parliament (MPs) whether they support expanding migration from low- and middle-income countries, if migrants were trained in skills needed in the UK. Almost two-thirds of them said yes, including over half of Conservatives and almost three quarters of Labour MPs. While understanding labour market demand within specific occupations is challenging, the UK government should prioritise responding to these demands rather than perceptions of support for migrants at relative skill levels.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Shamit Sagar, Will Somerville, Rob Ford, and Maria Sobolewska (2012) *The impacts of migration on social cohesion and integration*. Report for the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC). London: MAC. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-impacts-of-migration-on-social-cohesion-and-integration>.

<sup>27</sup> Ipsos and British Future (2022) *Attitudes towards immigration: Survey conducted in collaboration with British Future*. London: Ipsos and British Future. <https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/news/documents/2022-03/attitudes-towards-immigration-british-future-ipsos-march-2022.pdf>.

<sup>28</sup> Migration Observatory (2020) *UK Public Opinion toward Immigration: Overall Attitudes and Level of Concern*. Oxford: Migration Observatory. <https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/uk-public-opinion-toward-immigration-overall-attitudes-and-level-of-concern>; Elias Naumann, Lukas F. Stoetzer, and Giuseppe Pietrantuono (2018) “Attitudes towards highly skilled and low-skilled immigration in Europe: A survey experiment in 15 European countries,” *European Journal of Political Research* 57: 1009–1030. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12264>; and Alexandra Bulat (2020) “‘High-Skilled Good, Low-Skilled Bad?’ British, Polish and Romanian Attitudes Towards Low-Skilled EU Migration,” *National Institute Economic Review* 248: 49–57. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F002795011924800113>.

<sup>29</sup> Madeleine Sumption (2022) “Shortages, high-demand occupations, and the post-Brexit UK immigration system,” *Oxford Review of Economic Policy* 38, no. 1: 97–111. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxrep/grab046>.

Migration policy is obviously not a panacea. There is a balance to be struck between improving the wages and working conditions present within particular sectors of the UK economy and importing migrants to fill the roles locals are reluctant to do.<sup>30</sup> For example, the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) has been hesitant to recommend the use of migration policy to address challenges with the adult social care workforce, arguing that increased funding is the correct and sustainable way to address workforce issues.<sup>31</sup> As a result, it is important for the UK to insist on structural reforms as and when appropriate, while also recognising that migrant labour will likely be needed within numerous sectors, both in the short- and long-term.

## The links between migration and development

Migration and development have long been closely associated in international processes, but in recent years, their relationship has been more noticeably emphasised. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognised, for the first time, the contribution of migration to sustainable development; migration is highlighted as a cross-cutting issue relevant to all of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).<sup>32</sup> At least 10 of the 17 goals contain targets or indicators that are directly related to migration. The SDGs' central nod to migration is in target 10.7 of goal 10 (to reduce inequality within and among countries) which calls on countries to “facilitate orderly, safe, regular, and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.” Other targets make direct calls to action on specific migration topics such as labour migration (goal 8), international student mobility (goal 4), remittances (goal 10), and migration data (goals 17).<sup>33</sup> Likewise, one of the explicit aims of the GCM is to “create conducive conditions that enable all migrants to enrich our societies through their human, economic, and social capacities, and thus facilitate their contributions to sustainable development at the local, national, regional, and global levels.”<sup>34</sup>

Migration itself contributes to development in a multitude of ways. Though migrants comprise only about 3.4 percent of the global population, they contribute more than 9 percent of global GDP.<sup>35</sup> Migration has economic benefits for both countries of origin

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<sup>30</sup> OECD (2017) *Interrelations between Public Policies, Migration and Development*. Paris: OECD Publishing, <https://www.oecd.org/dev/interrelations-between-public-policies-migration-and-development-9789264265615-en.htm>.

<sup>31</sup> Claire Kumar, Helen Dempster, Megan O'Donnell, and Cassandra Zimmer (2022) *Migration and the future of care: Supporting older people and care workers*. London: ODI and Center for Global Development (CGD), <https://odi.org/en/publications/migration-and-the-future-of-care-supporting-older-people-and-care-workers/>.

<sup>32</sup> Migration Data Portal (n.d.) “Migration Data and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).” <https://www.migrationdataportal.org/sdgs?node=0>.

<sup>33</sup> Marta Foresti and Jessica Hagen-Zanker (2018) *Migration and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. London: ODI, <https://odi.org/en/publications/migration-and-the-2030-agenda-for-sustainable-development/>.

<sup>34</sup> United Nations (n.d.) “Global compact for migration.” <https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/migration-compact>.

<sup>35</sup> Mahmoud Mohieldin and Dilip Ratha (2019) “Migration can support economic development if we let it. Here's how.” World Economic Forum (WEF) blog, March 1, 2019. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/03/migration-myths-vs-economic-facts>.

and destination.<sup>36</sup> Migrants fill shortages at all levels of the labour market in countries of destination, which stimulates the economies of those countries and in turn, creates more jobs and generates more tax revenue.<sup>37</sup> While migrants spend most of their wages in their countries of destination (boosting demand), they also tend to send remittances to support relatives in their countries of origin (see Box 2). These remittances are known to exceed ODA and foreign direct investment (FDI), and directly contribute to economic development.<sup>38</sup> Remittances improve health and educational outcomes, promote productivity, and provide access to financing.<sup>39,40</sup> Moreover, migrants promote trade and investment; transfer skills, knowledge, and ideas; and encourage cultural diversity.<sup>41</sup>

### Box 2. Understanding the impact of remittances

Remittances have risen precipitously: between 1980 and 2010, they are estimated to have increased from US\$47 billion to \$321 billion (in 2011 dollars).<sup>42</sup> In 2021, remittance flows were estimated to total US\$589 billion.<sup>43</sup> They are, however, challenging to leverage and their impact is uncertain.

At the household level, the ability to receive remittances is found to make households broadly more resilient to shocks.<sup>44</sup> This is especially the case among households that have been receiving remittances over longer periods, but these positive impacts are not

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<sup>36</sup> OECD (2014) *OECD Migration Policy Debates: Is Migration Good for the Economy?* Paris: OECD Publishing. <https://www.oecd.org/fr/migrations/mig/OECD%20Migration%20Policy%20Debates%20Numero%202.pdf>.

<sup>37</sup> International Organization for Migration (IOM) (n.d.) *The Contributions of Migrants and Migration to Development - Strengthening the Linkages*. Global Compact Thematic Paper. [https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1486/files/our\\_work/ODG/GCM/IOM-Thematic-Paper-Contributions-of-Migrants-and-Migration-to-Developm.pdf](https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1486/files/our_work/ODG/GCM/IOM-Thematic-Paper-Contributions-of-Migrants-and-Migration-to-Developm.pdf).

<sup>38</sup> Remittances hit a record high of US\$548 billion in 2019, larger than FDI flows of \$534 billion and ODA of \$166 billion. See Mohieldin and Ratha (2019) “Migration can support economic development if we let it;” and KNOMAD (2020) *Phase II: COVID-19 Crisis through a Migration Lens*. Migration and Development Brief 33. Washington DC: World Bank. [https://www.knomad.org/sites/default/files/2020-11/Migration%20%26%20Development\\_Brief%2033.pdf](https://www.knomad.org/sites/default/files/2020-11/Migration%20%26%20Development_Brief%2033.pdf).

<sup>39</sup> Elina Scheja, Sanket Mohapatra, and Dilip Ratha (2011) “How does migration shape economic and social development?” World Bank blog, February 28, 2011. <https://blogs.worldbank.org/peoplemove/how-does-migration-shape-economic-and-social-development>.

<sup>40</sup> Maurizio Bussolo, Peria Maurizio, María Soledad, César Calderón, Yira Mascaró, Mette E. Nielsen, Pablo Acosta, Humberto J. López, Çağlar Özden; Yoko Niimi, Luis Molina, Florencia Moizeszowicz, Emanuel Salinas, Pablo Fajnzylber, and Ma Guadamillas. *Remittances and Development: Lessons from Latin America*. Washington DC: Inter-American Development Bank (IADB). <https://publications.iadb.org/en/remittances-and-development-lessons-latin-america>.

<sup>41</sup> Foresti and Hagen-Zanker (2018) *Migration and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.

<sup>42</sup> Michael Clemens and David McKenzie (2018) “Why Don’t Remittances Appear to Affect Growth?” *The Economic Journal* 128, no. 612: 179–209. <https://doi.org/10.1111/eoj.12463>.

<sup>43</sup> World Bank Group (2021) *Recovery: COVID-19 Crisis Through a Migration Lens*.

<sup>44</sup> Michael Clemens and Timothy Ogden (2019) “Migration and household finances: How a different framing can improve thinking about migration,” *Development Policy Review* 38, no. 1: 3–27. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/dpr.12471>.



guaranteed: households which have seen a member migrate relatively recently may in some circumstances be more vulnerable.<sup>45</sup>

In humanitarian crises, remittances can function as a safety net, although those receiving them may not be the most vulnerable within society. In both humanitarian and development situations, they can be perceived as a complement to aid, ODA, or FDI, but they do not respond to the same incentives: they operate within micro-economic considerations and are targeted to the personal connections of those sending remittances.<sup>46</sup>

Most studies show that remittances can contribute to a reduction in poverty, especially in countries where migrants are concentrated within the lower income deciles.<sup>47</sup> Remittances are less volatile than alternative foreign currency flows such as ODA or FDI and are relatively stable even during periods of business cycle volatility. They aid consumption stability in countries of destination across the business cycle, acting as a valuable stabiliser during financial crises.<sup>48</sup> At the macroeconomic level, remittances contribute most significantly when targeted towards entrepreneurs.<sup>49</sup>

Remittances' impact upon growth is disputed; Sobiech (2019) argues that they contribute most in settings where financial sectors are poorly developed, whereas Bangake and Eggoh (2019) suggest that remittances may only assist growth when financial development has surpassed a given threshold.<sup>50</sup> In a study of North Africa, remittances are found to have a pronounced impact on growth and upon economic freedom; Clemens and McKenzie (2018) warn however that most econometric methods may not be able to adequately detect remittances' impact.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Soumyadeep Banerjee, Richard Black, Arabinda Mishra, and Dominic Kniveton (2018) "Assessing vulnerability of remittance-recipient and nonrecipient households in rural communities affected by extreme weather events: Case studies from South-West China and North-East India," *Population, Space and Place* 25, no. 2. <https://doi.org/10.1002/psp.2157>.

<sup>46</sup> John Bryant (2019) *Remittances in humanitarian crises*, Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG) Working Paper. London: ODI. <https://cdn.odi.org/media/documents/12638.pdf>.

<sup>47</sup> Jessica Hagen-Zanker (2015) *Effects of remittances and migration on migrant sending countries, communities and households*, EPS Helpdesk Request. London: HM Government. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a08999ed915d3cfd000326/Effects\\_of\\_remittances\\_and\\_migration\\_56.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a08999ed915d3cfd000326/Effects_of_remittances_and_migration_56.pdf).

<sup>48</sup> Supriyo De, Ergys Islamaj, M. Ayhan Kose, and S. Reza Yousef (2016) "Remittances over the Business Cycle: Theory and Evidence." Washington DC: World Bank, KNOMAD. <https://www.knomad.org/sites/default/files/2017-07/KNOMAD%20WP%2011%20Remittances%20over%20the%20Business%20Cycle.pdf>.

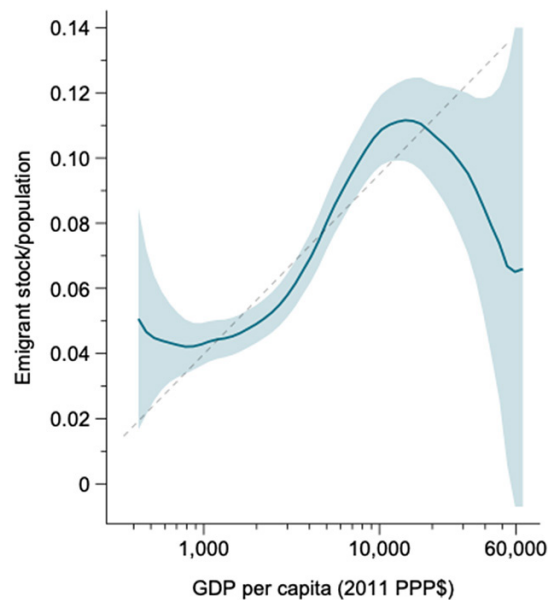
<sup>49</sup> Berrak Bahadir, Santanu Chatterjee, and Thomas Lebesmuehlbacher (2018) "The macroeconomic consequences of remittances," *Journal of International Economics* 111: 214–232. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0022199618300102?via%3Dihub>.

<sup>50</sup> Izabela Sobiech (2019) "Remittances, finance and growth: Does financial development foster the impact of remittances on economic growth?" *World Development* 113: 44–59. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0305750X18303164?via%3Dihub>; and Chryost Bangake and Jude Eggoh (2019) "Financial Development Thresholds and the Remittances-Growth Nexus," *Journal of Quantitative Economics* 18: 425–445. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s40953-019-00188-6>.

<sup>51</sup> Nahed Zghidi, Imen Mohamed Sghaier, and Zouheir Abida (2018) "Remittances, Institutions, and Economic Growth in North African Countries," *Journal of the Knowledge Economy* 9: 804–821. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s13132-016-0377-5#citeas>; and Clemens and McKenzie (2018) "Why Don't Remittances Appear to Affect Growth?"

Governments around the world often seek to reduce emigration from low- and middle-income countries by encouraging and sponsoring economic development within them. However, a large body of literature shows that average emigration rates are higher in countries with sustained increases in gross domestic product (GDP) per capita, rather than in chronically poor countries or established rich countries.<sup>52</sup> The relationship between migration and development can be exemplified by an *emigration life cycle* (also commonly called the ‘mobility transition,’ ‘migration curve,’ ‘migration transition,’ and ‘migration hump’) (see Figure 3).<sup>53</sup> Within this life cycle, emigration rises as GDP per capita rises, slows after roughly US\$5,000 at purchasing power parity (PPP), and then falls after roughly \$10,000.<sup>54</sup> Before the reversal, a 100 percent increase in real GDP per capita has been associated with a 74 percent rise in emigration from low-income to high-income countries. Therefore, migration is not a failure of economic development, but rather a consequence of it.<sup>55</sup>

**Figure 3. The emigration life cycle**



*Source:* Michael Clemens (2020) “Emigration Rises Along with Economic Development. Aid Agencies Should Face This, but Not Fear It.” Center for Global Development (CGD) blog, August 18, 2020. <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/emigration-rises-along-economic-development-aid-agencies-should-face-not-fear-it>.

<sup>52</sup>Michael Clemens (2020) *The Emigration Life Cycle: How Development Shapes Emigration from Poor Countries*. Center for Global Development (CGD) Working Paper 540. Washington DC: CGD. <https://www.cgdev.org/publication/emigration-life-cycle-how-development-shapes-emigration-poor-countries>.

<sup>53</sup>Michael Clemens (2014) *Does Development Reduce Migration?* IZA Discussion Paper No. 8592. <https://ftp.iza.org/dp8592.pdf>.

<sup>54</sup>Clemens (2020) *The Emigration Life Cycle*.

<sup>55</sup>Michael Clemens (2020) “Emigration Rises Along with Economic Development. Aid Agencies Should Face This, but Not Fear It.” Center for Global Development (CGD) blog, August 18, 2020. <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/emigration-rises-along-economic-development-aid-agencies-should-face-not-fear-it>.

To enhance the economic development benefit of migration, it is useful to analyse how different people experience migration. This analysis can and should be done based on migrants' age, gender, skill level, and country of origin. For example, while female migrants have at least the same (if not more) of a development impact on their countries of origin as male migrants,<sup>56</sup> their needs differ vastly. Nearly half (48.1 percent<sup>57</sup>) of the world's migrants are women and they are increasingly migrating on their own or as heads of their households.<sup>58</sup> Yet, migration schemes often do not take this into account; for example, they may neglect to include visa access for dependants.<sup>59</sup> Additionally, female migrants face serious discrimination that their male counterparts do not (or do to a much lesser extent), such as sexual exploitation, trafficking, and gender-based violence.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, female migrants often face barriers to health care—especially sexual and reproductive health care—even after they reach their countries of destination. Female migrants can be pregnant or become pregnant while on the move. This can cause the loss of access to sexual and reproductive health care, family planning, prenatal services, and safe childbirth care.<sup>61</sup> Evidence shows that investing in migrant reproductive health has major economic returns for countries of destination and allows female migrants to enjoy healthier lives and more fully participate in development.<sup>62,63</sup>

Another consideration is migrants' age. Recent trends show that the estimated number of young migrants (aged 15 to 24) is on the rise, currently constituting about 11.3 percent of the world's total migrant population.<sup>64</sup> Younger migrants are less likely to have dependents of

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<sup>56</sup> Anjali Fleury (2016) *Understanding Women and Migration: A Literature Review*. Washington DC: World Bank. <https://www.knomad.org/publication/understanding-women-and-migration-literature-review-annex-annotated-bibliography>.

<sup>57</sup> United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) Population Division (2020) "International Migrant Stock 2020." <https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/content/international-migrant-stock>.

<sup>58</sup> United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) Population Division (2013) *Resolution 2013/1 New Trends in Migration ... - United Nations*. New York: UNDESA. [https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/pdf/commission/2013/documents/CPD46\\_Resolution\\_2013\\_1.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/pdf/commission/2013/documents/CPD46_Resolution_2013_1.pdf).

<sup>59</sup> Robert E. B. Lucas (2005) "International Migration Regimes and Economic Development," in *International Migration and Economic Development*. London: Edward Elgar Publishing. [https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/events/coordination/3/docs/P22\\_AnnexIII.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/events/coordination/3/docs/P22_AnnexIII.pdf).

<sup>60</sup> United Nations Population Fund (2018) "Five Reasons Migration Is a Feminist Issue." United Nations Population Fund News, April 9, 2018. <https://www.unfpa.org/news/five-reasons-migration-feminist-issue>.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2015) *Cost of Exclusion from Healthcare – the Case of Migrants in an Irregular Situation*. Brussels: European Union. <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2015/cost-exclusion-healthcare-case-migrants-irregular-situation>.

<sup>63</sup> United Nations (UN) (2018) *Actions for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development: Monitoring of Population Programmes, Focusing on Sustainable Cities, Human Mobility and International Migration Report of the Secretary-General*. New York: UN. <https://undocs.org/E/CN.9/2018/3>.

<sup>64</sup> UNDESA Population Division (2020) "International Migrant Stock 2020."



their own and more likely to prefer migration schemes that allow for circular migration.<sup>65,66</sup> Circular migration also reduces ‘brain drain’ from countries of origin,<sup>67</sup> allowing young talent to gain skills and experience abroad and put them to use at home.

The specific skill sets of migrants can also impact their migration to a country of destination. A critical factor is skill recognition. Recognising migrants’ skills and qualifications has a positive impact on labour markets, individuals, employers, and economies in countries of destination.<sup>68</sup> It enables migrants to more fully integrate into labour markets and gain employment that is in line with their education and skill set, rather than migrate and become underemployed. Currently, about 25 percent of the world’s migrants are underemployed, compared to 19 percent of native-born workers.<sup>69</sup> Addressing these integration issues is key to maximising the development potential of migration pathways.

## General lessons to enhance development impact

There are many things that countries of destination can do to enhance the development impact of their immigration pathways for their own economy, that of the country of origin, and the migrants themselves. Doing so would also make the pathway more attractive; if a migrant feels they will enjoy good migration outcomes, be well integrated, be able to save and remit home more money, and have their skills development prioritised, they could be more likely to engage in the pathway.

The following section outlines six general lessons that apply to any immigration pathway, regardless of the sector it is being applied in; skill level and country of origin it is being applied to; and type of migration. More specific lessons are outlined in the next section of the paper, as they pertain to the sectors of agriculture, nursing, and green technology.

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<sup>65</sup> Martina Belmonte and Simon McMahon (2019) *Searching for clarity: Defining and mapping youth migration*. International Organization for Migration (IOM) Migration Research Series. Geneva: IOM. [https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/mrs\\_59.pdf](https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/mrs_59.pdf); Kathleen Beegle and Michelle Poulin (2013) “Migration and the Transition to Adulthood in Contemporary Malawi,” *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 648, no. 1. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0002716213481329>; Véronique Hertrich and Marie Lesclingand (2013) “Adolescent Migration in Rural Africa as a Challenge to Gender and Intergenerational Relationships: Evidence from Mali,” *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 648, no. 1. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0002716213485356>; and René Zenteno, Silvia E. Giorguli, and Edith Gutiérrez (2013) “Mexican Adolescent Migration to the United States and Transitions to Adulthood.” *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 648, no. 1. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0002716213481189>.

<sup>66</sup> Klaus F. Zimmermann (2014) “Circular Migration: Why Restricting Labor Mobility Can Be Counterproductive.” IZA World of Labor. <https://wol.iza.org/articles/circular-migration/long>.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Jiří Braňka (2016) *Understanding the potential impact of skills recognition systems on labour markets*. Geneva: International Labour Organization (ILO). [https://www.ilo.org/global/docs/WCMS\\_532417/lang-en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/docs/WCMS_532417/lang-en/index.htm).

<sup>69</sup> Neli Esipova, Julie Ray, and Anita Pugliese (2021) “Globally, Migrants Likely to Be Underemployed, Unemployed.” Gallup, June 11, 2021. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/164681/globally-migrants-likely-underemployed-unemployed.aspx>.

1. **Reflect ethical recruitment practices.** As a general rule, the better protected migrants are, the more likely they are to contribute to development. Temporary or circular migration schemes can contribute positively to development by increasing the potential earnings of migrants and encouraging remittances.<sup>70</sup> However, several aspects of typical temporary schemes could be improved in order to increase the benefits of participation for migrants and their families, including during the recruitment process and placements. These include eliminating the upfront costs borne by workers so that they are not in debt before migration; increasing the transparency of recruitment agencies and intermediaries; and improving the conditions of workers while in the UK to maximise benefits for migrants and their families.
2. **Prioritise remittances and skill transfers.** It is challenging to precisely determine the impact of remittances and skill transfers on both GDP and education levels within a country of origin.<sup>71</sup> Yet numerous studies have shown positive effects; they can increase income and household consumption, allow households to purchase more durable goods, increase standards of living, and improve child schooling.<sup>72</sup> They can even help finance more, and increasingly skilled, migration.<sup>73</sup> Facilitating the ability of migrants to remit money and bring increased skills home should therefore be of paramount importance to the UK Government. Ways to do this include reducing the cost of remittances; engaging with diaspora organisations to explore how to enhance investment in countries of origin through schemes such as diaspora bonds;<sup>74</sup> and reducing the cost of migration overall to widen its accessibility, reduce the risk of debt bondage, and facilitate increased remittances.
3. **Design schemes to fit different demographic profiles.** To obtain the best results, the UK should tailor schemes to fit the specific needs of the migrants they are targeting. Whether it be gender, age, or skill, migrants have varying requirements that must be met in order for a scheme to have the greatest development benefit. When migrants' needs are met, their rights protected, and their skills harnessed, the development impact can be maximised.
4. **Target specific countries of origin.** The UK's general immigration system does not discriminate between different countries of origin, yet specific migration

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<sup>70</sup>John Gibson, David McKenzie, and Halahingano Rohorua (2013) "Development Impacts of Seasonal and Temporary Migration: A Review of Evidence from the Pacific and Southeast Asia." *Asia & the Pacific Policy Studies* 1, no. 1: 18–32. <https://doi.org/10.1002/app5.12>.

<sup>71</sup>Michael Clemens and David McKenzie (2014) *Why Don't Remittances Appear to Affect Growth?* Policy Research Working Paper No. 6856. Washington DC: World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/18352>.

<sup>72</sup>John Gibson and David McKenzie (2014) *Development through Seasonal Worker Programs: The Case of New Zealand's RSE Program*. Policy Research Working Paper No. 6762. Washington DC: World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/18356>.

<sup>73</sup>Gaurav Khanna, Dean Yang, and Caroline Theoharides (2020) "Beyond Remittances: How Migrant Wages Help Communities Back Home." Center for Global Development (CGD) blog, November 24, 2020. <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/beyond-remittances-how-migrant-wages-help-communities-back-home>.

<sup>74</sup>Michael Famoroti (2017) "The Potential of Diaspora Bonds in Africa." London School of Economics (LSE) blog, April 12, 2017. <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/africaatlse/2017/04/12/the-potential-of-diaspora-bonds-in-africa/>.

pathways provide an opportunity to do just that. There are many reasons why the UK may want to encourage migration from a particular country of origin: stimulating development in countries on the left-side of the ‘emigration life cycle’;<sup>75</sup> encouraging mobility from climate-vulnerable countries;<sup>76</sup> or expanding trade, investment, and foreign policy linkages. It could also be easier to promote migration from countries of origin with existing ties to, and a common language with, the UK, such as the Commonwealth. Focusing on countries where economic development is most relevant and required is another way to ensure that the UK’s immigration pathways have the maximum impact.

5. **Focus on building skills in countries of origin that are in need globally.**

There are many sectors, particularly those that are ‘medium’- and ‘low’- skill, which are suffering from a global shortage of labour.<sup>77</sup> The UK therefore has a unique opportunity to invest in building these skills and promoting the migration of some trainees. This approach, referred to as a Global Skill Partnership (see Box 3) would provide both the UK and countries of origin with a sustainable pipeline of educated and skilled talent while improving trade, investment, and foreign policy relationships. This approach holds significant promise and indeed is already being trialled around the world,<sup>78</sup> though careful attention needs to be paid to programme design, cost sharing, and diaspora engagement to increase the development impact of such pathways.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> There is therefore an argument that any migration from Africa should be prioritising low- and middle-income countries in sub-Saharan Africa, rather than North Africa. See Michael Clemens, Helen Dempster, and Kate Gough (2019) *Promoting New Kinds of Legal Labour Migration Pathways Between Europe and Africa*. Washington DC: CGD. <https://www.cgdev.org/publication/promoting-new-kinds-legal-labour-migration-pathways-between-europe-and-africa>.

<sup>76</sup> For example, previous work by CGD and IOM has argued that the UK should target labour migration pathways to climate-vulnerable countries, particularly those in South and East Asia. Remittance flows could then contribute to climate adaptation in countries of origin. See Helen Dempster, Amelia Dal Pra, and Mariam Traore Chazalnoël (2021) *Facilitating Environmental Migration through Humanitarian and Labour Pathways: Recommendations for the UK Government*. CGD Policy Paper 245. London: CGD and IOM. <https://www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/facilitating-environmental-migration-through-humanitarian-and-labour-pathways.pdf>.

<sup>77</sup> For example, in 2018, the WHO estimated that the world needed an additional 5.9 million nurses. 89 percent of that shortage is concentrated in low- and lower-middle-income countries, though the shortages are felt globally. See WHO (2020) *State of the World’s Nursing 2020*. Geneva: WHO. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240003279>.

<sup>78</sup> Center for Global Development (CGD) (n.d.) “Migration that works for everyone.” <https://cgdev.org/bettermigration>.

<sup>79</sup> See Samik Adhikari, Michael Clemens, Helen Dempster, and Nkechi Linda Ekeator (2021) *Expanding Legal Migration Pathways from Nigeria to Europe: From Brain Drain to Brain Gain*. Washington DC: Center for Global Development (CGD) and World Bank. <https://www.cgdev.org/publication/expanding-legal-migration-pathways-nigeria-europe-brain-drain-brain-gain>; Diana Stefanescu (2020) *Partnerships for Mobility at the Crossroads – Lessons Learnt from 18 Months of Implementation of EU Pilot Projects on Legal Migration*. Vienna: International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD). <https://www.migrationpartnershipfacility.eu/news/new-mpf-publication-partnerships-for-mobility-at-the-crossroads-lessons-learnt-from-18-months-of-implementation-of-eu-pilot-projects-on-legal-migration>; and Kate Hooper (2018) *Reimagining Skilled Migration Partnerships to Support Development*. Washington DC: Migration Policy Institute (MPI). <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/reimagining-skilled-migration-partnerships-development>.

6. **Ensure robust monitoring, evaluation, and learning.** As found by Idris (2017), “there is very little evaluation evidence of the developmental outcomes of interventions to support regular migration.”<sup>80</sup> Monitoring and evaluating such schemes is costly, time-consuming, and may not be within the remit of the lead agency (for example, a development department).<sup>81</sup> Yet only by investing in such processes will the UK be able to evidence the development impact of their immigration pathways—on the migrants themselves, their communities, their employers, and their countries of origin and destination—and understand where such pathways could be improved to enhance this impact. Focusing on implementing pilot projects that are robustly monitored, evaluated, and scaled if appropriate provides the best mechanism for doing so.

### Box 3. Skills Mobility Partnerships

In the context of demographic changes, technological development, and growing mobility, there is greater focus being placed on efforts to better link migration and skills development. Such efforts are being trialled across the world using many names and forms—‘global skill partnerships,’ ‘skill mobility partnerships,’ and ‘talent partnerships’—though all aim to improve the skills of people within countries of origin through targeted technical vocational training and education (TVET) and migration.<sup>82</sup> Typically, they involve five components: (1) formalised state cooperation; (2) multi-stakeholder involvement; (3) training; (4) skills recognition; and (5) migration/mobility.<sup>83</sup>

Two efforts are worth mentioning here. Firstly, in 2014, CGD proposed the ‘Global Skill Partnership’ model.<sup>84</sup> In this model, a country of destination like the UK would invest in building targeted skills within a country of origin. The aim would be that half of the trainees (those on the ‘home’ track) would stay within their country of origin and half would move (those on the ‘away’ track) to the UK. Global Skill Partnerships are being piloted by Belgium, Germany, and Australia.<sup>85</sup> Currently, the scale of these partnerships is

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<sup>80</sup> Iffat Idris (2017) *Developmental impacts of interventions to support legal migration*. GSDRC Helpdesk Report. <https://gsdrc.org/publications/k4d110/>.

<sup>81</sup> Sarah Rose, Reva Resstack, Helen Dempster, Elisa Cascardi, and Jeremy Weinstein (2021) *Addressing the “Root Causes” of Irregular Migration from Central America: An Evidence Agenda for USAID*. Center for Global Development (CGD) Policy Paper 243. Washington DC: CGD and Stanford University’s Immigration Policy Lab (IPL). <https://www.cgdev.org/publication/addressing-root-causes-irregular-migration-central-america-evidence-agenda-usaid>.

<sup>82</sup> European Migration Network (EMN) and OECD (2022) *Skills Mobility Partnerships: Exploring Innovative Approaches to Labour Migration*. Brussels: European Commission. <https://www.oecd.org/migration/mig/2022-March-Joint-EMN-OECD-Inform-Skills-Mobility-Partnerships.pdf>.

<sup>83</sup> International Organization for Migration (IOM) (n.d.) *Skills Mobility Partnerships (SMPs)*. Geneva: IOM. <https://eea.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1666/files/documents/Skills-Mobility-Partnerships-Infosheet.pdf>.

<sup>84</sup> Michael Clemens (2014) *Global Skill Partnerships: A Proposal for Technical Training in a Mobile World*. Center for Global Development (CGD) Policy Paper 040. Washington DC: CGD. <https://www.cgdev.org/publication/global-skill-partnerships-proposal-technical-training-mobile-world>.

<sup>85</sup> Center for Global Development (CGD) (n.d.) “GSPs in Action.” <https://gsp.cgdev.org/gsp-in-action/>.

small, and more attention needs to be paid to cost sharing with the private sector if such partnerships are to scale.

Secondly, during the adoption of the GCM in 2018, IOM came together with the International Labour Organization (ILO), UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Organisation of Employers (IOE), and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) to launch the ‘Global Skill Partnership on Migration.’<sup>86</sup> It aims to mobilise the technical expertise of the organisations involved to support governments, employers, workers, training institutions, and other stakeholders to better recognise the skills of migrant workers, promote regular labour migration, and improve the productivity and retention of migrants.

## **Specific lessons for existing and planned immigration pathways**

The following section explores the need for skilled labour within three UK sectors which are experiencing significant labour market demand—agriculture, nursing, and green technology—and the role that migration could and does play to meet these needs. It also outlines ways in which the development potential of these immigration pathways could be enhanced. The immigration pathways for these three sectors are in varying stages of development (currently being implemented, currently being designed, and not yet being designed, respectively) and therefore the specificity of the recommendations vary. That being said, they contain valuable lessons for all UK Government departments interested in implementing skilled migration pathways.

### **Agriculture**

The UK has always been heavily reliant on migrant labour to staff its agricultural sector. From 1945 to 2013, the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Scheme (SAWS) brought in tens of thousands of agricultural workers every year, primarily from Eastern European countries such as Bulgaria and Romania.<sup>87</sup> As a result, even after Brexit there were still large numbers of agricultural labourers from Europe operating on British farms. Yet a combination of this policy shift, the new Points-Based Immigration System, and COVID-19, have led again to significant labour shortages across the food and farming sector.<sup>88</sup> This led to protests

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<sup>86</sup> International Labour Organization (ILO) (2018) “Global Skills Partnership on Migration.” [https://www.ilo.org/skills/pubs/WCMS\\_653993/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/skills/pubs/WCMS_653993/lang--en/index.htm).

<sup>87</sup> Center for Global Development (CGD) “Seasonal Agricultural Worker Scheme (SAWS).” <https://gsp.cgdev.org/legalpathway/seasonal-agricultural-worker-scheme-saws/>.

<sup>88</sup> UK Parliament (2021) “Labour shortages in the food and farming sector.” <https://committees.parliament.uk/work/1497/labour-shortages-in-the-food-and-farming-sector/publications/>.

from the farming industry that it would not be able to find enough local seasonal workers to harvest fruit and vegetables, as well as pick other crops such as flowers.

For this reason, a new iteration of the scheme was started in 2019. The current Seasonal Workers Pilot was originally designed to bring in 2,500 workers per year (increasing to 10,000 from 2020) to undertake seasonal work for up to six months. Two companies (Concordia and Pro-Force Limited) were selected as trusted operators, and two more companies (AG Recruitment and Fruitful Jobs) were added in early 2021.<sup>89</sup> Today, the cap is set at 30,000 people per year.<sup>90</sup> To external observers, the exact governing nature of the scheme is unclear. Certainly, the pilot operates under the T5 (Temporary Worker) Seasonal Worker immigration route, which is managed by the Home Office. Yet the actual organisation of the scheme seems to fall with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) who are responsible for selecting the operators.<sup>91</sup> Whether these operators act under contracts which guarantee minimum working conditions, and whether participants in the scheme can seek recourse for breach of these contracts, is unclear.

The primary countries of origin for workers under the scheme has also shifted over time. The scheme started by recruiting from a small number of countries (in 2019, 91 percent came from Ukraine and 7 percent came from Moldova). In 2021, however, workers came from 52 countries including Barbados, Bosnia, Nepal, Nigeria, Romania, and Tajikistan (Figure 4). The reasons for this diversification are unclear, but may rest on existing and new recruitment networks maintained by the operators, and/or a realisation that the long-term potential of Eastern Europe as a recruitment pool may be limited, due to the economic development of the region. The impact of the war on Ukraine, as the largest country of origin, also remains to be seen.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>89</sup>Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and Home Office (2021) “Seasonal Workers Pilot request for information.” <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/seasonal-workers-pilot-request-for-information/seasonal-workers-pilot-request-for-information>.

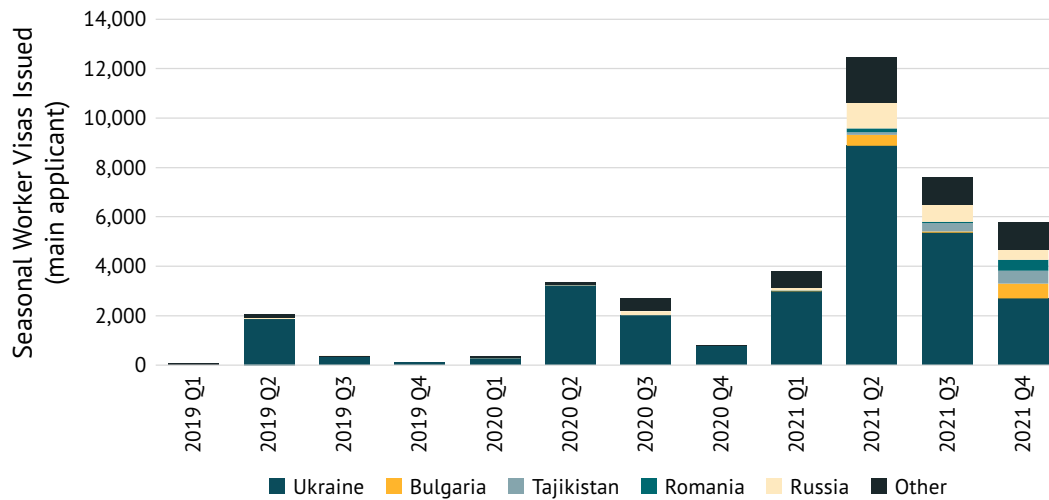
<sup>90</sup>Home Office, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), Kevin Foster MP, and the Rt Hon George Eustice MP (2021) “Industry given certainty around seasonal workers but told to focus on domestic workforce.” <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/industry-given-certainty-around-seasonal-workers-but-told-to-focus-on-domestic-workforce>.

<sup>91</sup>Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and Home Office (2021) “Seasonal Workers Pilot request for information.”

<sup>92</sup>Rob McNeil and Madeleine Sumption (2022) “Ukraine refugees: how displacement could impact farms and families in the UK.” *The Conversation*, February 25, 2022. <https://theconversation.com/ukraine-refugees-how-displacement-could-impact-farms-and-families-in-the-uk-177874>.



**Figure 4. Countries of origin for the Seasonal Workers Pilot, 2019 Q1 to 2021 Q4**



*Source:* Home Office (2021) “How many people come to the UK each year (including visitors)?” Published November 25, 2021. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-september-2021/how-many-people-come-to-the-uk-each-year-including-visitors/>.

*Note:* Data includes main applicants to the Seasonal Worker (previously Tier 5) visa route. Only visas that were ‘issued’ are included. Legend shows the top 6 countries of origin in 2021 Q4, out of 45 countries of origin. Others included Moldova, Kazakhstan, Poland, South Africa, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Rwanda, Nigeria, and India.

The scheme is not without room for improvement. Below we outline five issues inherent within the scheme which limit its development potential.

1. **Migrants must fund their own migration costs.**<sup>93</sup> These costs, including visa fees, travel within their country of origin, and health insurance, can reach at least £500 per person.<sup>94</sup> A recent review of the scheme found that nine percent of workers paid fees to recruiters or recruitment agencies.<sup>95</sup> With few resources on which to draw, many migrants end up having to borrow from friends and family, use essential savings, sell assets, or even rely on unsavoury lenders.<sup>96</sup> This reduces the number of workers (and their families) who can financially benefit from the migration process

<sup>93</sup> Association of Labour Providers (ALP) (2020) *Seasonal Workers’ Scheme: Code of Good Practice Multi-Stakeholder Working Group*. London: ALP. <https://www.labourproviders.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Seasonal-Workers-Scheme-MSWG-Recommendations-June-2020.pdf>.

<sup>94</sup> Focus on Labour Exploitation (FLEX) (2021) *Assessment of the Risks of Human Trafficking for Forced Labour on the UK Seasonal Workers Pilot*. London: FLEX. <https://www.labourexploitation.org/news/new-report-highlights-risks-human-trafficking-uk-seasonal-workers-pilot>.

<sup>95</sup> HM Government (2019) *Seasonal Workers Pilot 2019 Review – Appendices*. London: HM Government. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1040695/Seasonal\\_Workers\\_Pilot\\_2019\\_Review\\_Appendices.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1040695/Seasonal_Workers_Pilot_2019_Review_Appendices.pdf).

<sup>96</sup> Association of Labour Providers (ALP) (2019) *Achieving a successful Seasonal Workers’ Scheme*. London: ALP. <https://labourproviders.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Achieving-a-Successful-Seasonal-Workers-Scheme-ALP-Paper-July-2019.pdf>.

and increases the costs of migration for those who can, with many having to use their first month(s) of income to repay these costs.

2. **Migrants don't have access to the information they need.** A 2019 evaluation of the scheme by the UK Government found that some workers couldn't access a contract in their native language.<sup>97</sup> Many are not provided with guaranteed hours, limiting potential earnings. Worryingly, it also found that only 71 percent of operators were adhering to their contractual agreements. Without accurate information and the ability to understand their rights and seek redress, migrants are likely to miss out on their entitlements, constraining their ability to save and remit money home.
3. **Migrants can encounter sub-standard working conditions.** The same 2019 evaluation outlined above found that workers at a quarter of farms were not provided with the health and safety equipment they were legally required to receive, which they needed to pay for from their salaries. There were numerous other concerning findings regarding the conditions of the accommodation and how migrants were treated by employers.
4. **Migrants can find it hard to change employers.** There are many issues with tying visas to employers, including increased risk of exploitation and abuse. Theoretically workers can change employers within the scheme, but it is not clear how this operates in practice. For example, research by Focus on Labour Exploitation (FLEX) found that 62 percent of the workers who applied for a transfer were refused.<sup>98</sup>
5. **Migrants may not be able to access bank accounts.** The requirements for opening a bank account in the UK often mean that seasonal workers experience difficulty in accessing a basic banking service that allows them to receive their wages, pay necessary bills, save, and remit money to their country of origin.<sup>99</sup> As a result, some of the migrants' earnings could be lost in unnecessary banking and transaction fees.

To enhance the development benefit of the Seasonal Workers Pilot scheme, DEFRA, the Home Office, the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA), and the Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office (FCDO) should come together to:

- **Ensure migrants do not incur costs** that can put them in debt or require high personal investment, including visa, travel, and other fees charged by both operators and intermediaries. This is in line with both the ILO's guidance on recruitment,<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> HM Government (2019) *Seasonal Workers Pilot 2019 Review*.

<sup>98</sup> FLEX (2021) *Assessment of the Risks of Human Trafficking*.

<sup>99</sup> Daniel Tannenbaum (2021) "Concordia and Unizest Join Forces to Help Recruit the Overseas Workers Tackling UK Shortages This Christmas." *TechRound*, November 22, 2021. <https://techround.co.uk/news/concordia-and-unizest-join-to-recruit-overseas-workers/>.

<sup>100</sup> International Labour Organization (ILO) *General principles and operational guidelines for fair recruitment and Definition of recruitment fees and related costs*. Geneva: ILO. [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_protect/---protrav/---migrant/documents/publication/wcms\\_536755.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---migrant/documents/publication/wcms_536755.pdf).



and the ‘employer pays principle,’ for both of which the UK has signalled support.<sup>101</sup> This will require an update to the GLAA licensing standard to ensure it is aligned with the principle and the ILO’s definition of fees and costs. Further, the GLAA’s capacity to carry out regular and systematic inspections in the UK, and in the countries where workers are recruited from, needs to be significantly increased to ensure sufficient compliance.

- **Ensure migrants are afforded fair wages and working conditions, and access to redress.** This includes providing information to migrants in their own language to ensure they are aware of their rights and how to seek remedies in the case of exploitation or abuse, ideally with an independent body. In particular, migrants should be enabled to change employers if they wish and have their hours guaranteed.
- **Enhance remittances.** If migrants are supported with fair wages and do not incur migration costs, they will be able to send more money home. Evidence from New Zealand’s Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme found that remittances could be enhanced if the government and employers paired to seek low-cost and efficient transfer methods.<sup>102</sup> The UK should learn these lessons and seek to implement them within the current pilot.

These efforts need to be undertaken now to improve the current iteration of the scheme, but what does the future hold? The government has already signalled an increase in the cap to 40,000 in 2022, but aims to taper down from 2023 to encourage the sector “to improve pay and conditions” to attract UK workers.<sup>103</sup> This appears to be unrealistic; efforts to recruit domestic workers have not met demand. For example, the ‘Pick for Britain’ campaign, launched by DEFRA in 2020 during COVID-19, found that very few locals actually made it to work on the farms largely due to working conditions.<sup>104</sup> A 2022 report by the House of Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee found that “acute labour shortages” were resulting in the culling of tens of thousands of pigs; major processing shortfalls, resulting in significant income loss; extremely long hours for remaining staff; and large wage inflation in parts, potentially leading to permanent shrinking of the

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<sup>101</sup> Home Office and Victoria Atkins MP (2018) “UK agrees principles for tackling modern slavery in supply chains.” <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-agrees-principles-for-tackling-modern-slavery-in-supply-chains>.

<sup>102</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) and the Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment (MBIE) (2020) *The Remittance Pilot Project: The economic benefits of the Recognised Seasonal Employer work policy and its role in assisting development in Samoa and Tonga*. Wellington: MFAT and MBIE. <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/documents/statistics/remittance-pilot-project-report.pdf>. The recommendations in the report have now been rolled out across the RSE scheme. See New Zealand Immigration (2021) “Making it easier for RSE workers to send money home.” <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/media-centre/news-notifications/making-easier-rse-workers-send-money-home>.

<sup>103</sup> 30,000 visas are guaranteed for 2022, but HM Government has committed to reviewing this if there is demand for more workers (10,000 additional visas could become available). See Home Office et al. (2021) “Industry given certainty around seasonal workers but told to focus on domestic workforce.”

<sup>104</sup> Henry Sandercock (2021) “Pick for Britain scheme for UK-based farm workers scrapped.” *The Grocer*, April 16, 2021. <https://www.thegrocer.co.uk/hiring-and-firing/pick-for-britain-scheme-for-uk-based-farm-workers-scrapped/655189.article>.

agricultural sector.<sup>105</sup> Given the likelihood of ongoing labour requirements in the sector, and recognising the wage gain that migrants can experience (remitting much of this home to their communities), the UK Government should instead focus on addressing issues within the scheme and strengthening its potential for workers and for the national industry.<sup>106</sup>

## Nursing

The National Health Service (NHS) is the UK's biggest employer, with 1.5 million people employed by the English branch alone. Yet the NHS has long suffered from large and widespread staff shortages, particularly of 'medium'-skill roles such as nurses. In September 2021, it was reported that there were almost 40,000 FTE nursing vacancies in England alone, a rate of 10.5 percent.<sup>107</sup> While vacancies are reported throughout the country, the most pressing needs are in London and the Midlands. Additional nurses are required in a range of settings including critical, community, mental, and social care. Older persons' care workers are increasingly required, both within the NHS and the wider social care sector.<sup>108</sup> These shortages have remained relatively constant over recent years. In 2020, the Conservative government pledged to increase nurse numbers by 50,000 over the next five years, offering cash incentives.<sup>109</sup> A combination of this policy and COVID-19 has seen nursing enrolments increase by a third in recent years.<sup>110</sup> Yet it is unlikely that local enrolments will meet this target, nor is 50,000 nurses enough to meet demand.<sup>111</sup>

As a result, the Department of Health and Social Care's (DHSC) Workforce Planning Unit has been exploring ways in which international recruitment could be used to meet these shortages. Non-British nationals already made up almost 15 percent of the NHS workforce, coming from over 200 different countries. Those coming from Asia and Africa are increasing, with many of the former coming from countries like the Philippines and select states in

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<sup>105</sup> House of Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee (2022) *Labour shortages in the food and farming sector*. Fourth Report of Session 2021–22. London: House of Commons, HM Government. <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/9580/documents/162177/default/>.

<sup>106</sup> For example, the 2019 review found that 50 percent of workers earned more than £8,000 over six months, which is three times more than the average wage in Ukraine. In addition, 25 percent of workers left their placements early because they had "reached earnings goal." See UK Government (2019) *Seasonal Workers Pilot 2019 Review – Appendices*. London: HM Government. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1040695/Seasonal\\_Workers\\_Pilot\\_2019\\_Review\\_Appendices.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1040695/Seasonal_Workers_Pilot_2019_Review_Appendices.pdf); and Trading Economics (2021) "Ukraine Average Monthly Wages." <https://tradingeconomics.com/ukraine/wages>.

<sup>107</sup> NHS Digital (2021) "NHS Vacancy Statistics England April 2015–September 2021 Experimental Statistics." <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/nhs-vacancies-survey/april-2015---september-2021-experimental-statistics>.

<sup>108</sup> Kumar et al. (2022) *Migration and the future of care: Supporting older people and care workers*.

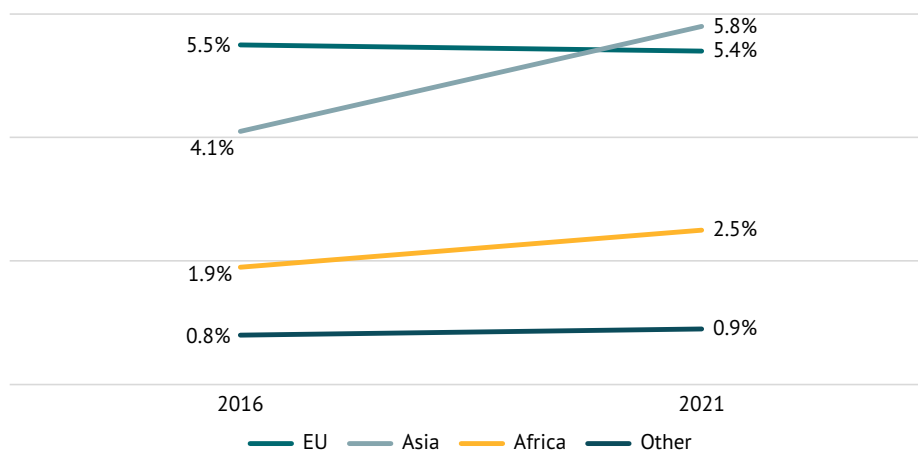
<sup>109</sup> NHS (n.d.) "We are nurses. We are changing lives." <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/we-are-the-nhs/nursing-careers>.

<sup>110</sup> BBC (2021) "Covid-19: Record number of students apply for nursing." BBC, February 18, 2021. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-56111379>.

<sup>111</sup> James Buchan, Jane Ball, Nihar Shembavnekar, and Anita Charlesworth (2020) *Building the NHS nursing workforce in England*. London: The Health Foundation. <https://www.health.org.uk/publications/reports/building-the-nhs-nursing-workforce-in-england>.

India, countries with which the UK has signed memoranda of understanding (MOU) to facilitate the recruitment of nurses and other health workers (Figure 5).<sup>112</sup> Yet it is reasonable to assume that these countries may seek to retain some of their health workers in the decades to come.<sup>113</sup> Consequently, DHSC is looking further afield. In late 2021, the UK signed a bilateral agreement with the Republic of Kenya which aimed to facilitate the recruitment of health workers and similar agreements are being discussed with a number of other countries of origin.<sup>114</sup>

**Figure 5. Overseas staff in the NHS, 2016–2021**



Source: House of Commons Library (2021) “NHS staff from overseas: statistics.” <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7783/>.

Many of these countries have a ‘critical shortage’ of health workers, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). Under their *Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel*, recruitment from ‘critical shortage’ countries must take place under

<sup>112</sup>House of Commons Library (2021) “NHS staff from overseas: statistics.” <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7783/>.

<sup>113</sup>During COVID-19, the Philippine government originally suspended the deployment of nurses, and then moved to instituting an annual cap of 5,000 people, with the justification that nurses were needed to support the pandemic response at home. Later in the pandemic, the Philippines offered to ‘sell’ nurses to countries like the UK and Germany in return for vaccines. See Reuters (2020) “Philippines ends overseas travel ban on healthcare workers.” Al Jazeera, November 21, 2020. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/11/21/philippines-ends-overseas-travel-ban-on-healthcare-workers>; and Neil Jerome Morales (2021) “Philippines offers nurses in exchange for vaccines from Britain, Germany.” Reuters, February 23, 2021. <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-philippines-labour-idUKKBN2AN0WV>.

<sup>114</sup>Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) (2021) *Bilateral agreement between the Government of the Republic of Kenya and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for collaboration on healthcare workforce*. London: DHSC. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bilateral-agreement-between-the-uk-and-kenya-on-healthcare-workforce-collaboration/bilateral-agreement-between-the-government-of-the-republic-of-kenya-and-the-government-of-the-united-kingdom-of-great-britain-and-northern-ireland-for>; and Samik Adhikari, Michael Clemens, Helen Dempster, and Nkechi Linda Ekeator (2021) *A Global Skill Partnership in Nursing between Nigeria and the UK*. Washington DC: Center for Global Development (CGD) and the World Bank. <https://www.cgdev.org/publication/global-skill-partnership-nursing-between-nigeria-and-uk>.

a Ministry of Health-negotiated government-to-government agreement that guarantees ‘mutual benefit.’<sup>115</sup> The country of destination gains health personnel and must provide development assistance back to the country of origin in return. With this condition, the WHO is recognizing that it is not enough to just rely on the remittances from health workers to ensure a development benefit from migration. Instead, the country of destination must provide tangible investments that “sustain and promote health human resource development and training” and “strengthen health systems, including health personnel development.”<sup>116</sup>

Of course, nurses could still migrate from these countries to the UK outside of the scope of a government-to-government agreement. The new Health and Care Visa enables English-speaking people with a job offer at a certain salary from a relevant employer in the health and care sector to enter the country. As a result, any qualified nurse could merely apply to one of the many open NHS vacancies. Yet DHSC is keen to ensure that, as much as possible, nurse migration from Kenya to the UK happens within the government-to-government agreement. They have done this by effectively banning the operation of private recruitment agents within countries which are on the UK’s ‘amber list.’ It appears that DHSC is using that list to channel recruitment through MOUs in a bid to make such migration more ethical and sustainable; for example, Kenya was added to the ‘amber list’ around the same time the MOU was signed.<sup>117</sup>

As the UK looks to expand the international recruitment of nurses to meet staff shortages, how could the development impact of this migration be enhanced? We propose a number of potential actions within the health care space, in addition to the more general considerations outlined above, that the DHSC, Home Office, and FCDO could come together to implement:

1. **Ensure recruitment takes place within a government-to-government agreement.** If nurses are privately recruited, their contribution to development in their country of origin is limited to the impact of remittances. Yet if their recruitment is channelled through a government-to-government agreement, this could lead to a greater development benefit for the country of origin. As such, countries with which a government-to-government agreement is signed, should be placed onto the ‘amber list’ to constrain the number of people who could migrate through other channels. DHSC will need to carefully monitor recruitment agents working in these countries (both UK- and country of origin-based) to ensure they do not seek to bypass these official channels.

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<sup>115</sup>World Health Organization (WHO) (2021) *WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel*. Geneva: WHO. <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/nri-2021>.

<sup>116</sup>Michael Clemens and Helen Dempster (2021) *Ethical Recruitment of Health Workers: Using Bilateral Cooperation to Fulfill the World Health Organization’s Global Code of Practice*. Center for Global Development (CGD) Policy Paper 212. Washington DC: CGD. <https://www.cgdev.org/publication/ethical-recruitment-health-workers-using-bilateral-cooperation-fulfill-world-health>.

<sup>117</sup>NHS Employers (2021) “Active international recruitment to stop from Kenya.” <https://www.nhsemployers.org/news/active-international-recruitment-stop-kenya>.

2. **Provide support to Ministries of Health in potential partner countries.** There are a number of potential partner countries, including those in sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia, who have not (to date) invested in expanding international emigration structures. These countries should be identified through global analyses of nursing training structures and the potential for expanded emigration. The UK could provide technical assistance to support the Ministries of Health in these countries to work with other government departments, nursing schools, and recruitment agents, to explore the potential benefit that could be gained from expanded nurse migration. Much of this is about ‘advertising’ the UK as a potential country of destination for newly graduated nurses.
3. **Consider the priorities of the Ministry of Health in the country of origin.** When deciding what form the ‘mutual benefit’ should take, it is imperative that the UK listen to the priorities of the Ministry of Health in the country of origin. They may want new equipment or infrastructure to train nurses at home; support with developing a health workforce plan; or to better align curricula and qualification requirements between themselves and other countries. These investments should be both tangible and measurable, with financial resources and timelines attached to them, and included within the government-to-government agreement.
4. **Focus on the skills nurses gain after they arrive.** Given staff shortages, it is likely that the UK will want to encourage the long-term temporary or even permanent migration of nurses from abroad. Yet it is inevitable that some will return. As a result, the NHS should carefully consider the skills that foreign nurses gain during their time in the UK, ensuring that those skills gained in the first few years can be applied back in their country of origin. Lessons should be learned from Health Education England’s (HEE) ‘Earn, Learn, Return’ and ‘Global Learners’ programmes, which prioritised skills development for migrant nurses who held temporary and permanent visas respectively.<sup>118</sup>

## Green technology

The UK Government has set ambitious targets to achieve ‘Net Zero’ emissions by 2050. Reaching this goal will require an array of professionals with ‘green skills’ to undertake ‘green jobs’ (see Box 4). The 2021 Net Zero Strategy announced the intention to support up to 190,000 jobs by 2025, and up to 440,000 by 2030.<sup>119</sup> As the document recognises, however, “urgent and emerging skills challenges” exist across the green economy that must be addressed in the short- and long-term.<sup>120</sup> Numerous reports indicate future or current skills gaps:

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<sup>118</sup> Adhikari et al. (2021) *A Global Skill Partnership in Nursing between Nigeria and the UK*.

<sup>119</sup> UK Government (2021) *Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener*. London: HM Government. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1033990/net-zero-strategy-beis.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1033990/net-zero-strategy-beis.pdf).

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 238.

- Biodiversity targets are threatened by a shortage of ecologists.<sup>121</sup>
- Tree planting targets will require an increased skilled workforce for tree planting and maintenance.<sup>122</sup>
- The decarbonisation of the UK’s building stock requires an additional 130,000 workers by 2030, presenting a “major barrier.”<sup>123</sup>
- The targeted installation of one million heat pumps by 2030 requires at least 50,200 further heat pump installers.<sup>124</sup> As of 2021, there were only 800.<sup>125</sup>
- The offshore wind industry is expected to require up to 26,000 additional jobs by 2032, but to be in direct competition for skills with other areas of high-priority green growth. With a UK shortfall of around 20,000 engineering graduates per year, this will present a significant challenge.<sup>126</sup>
- Electric vehicle infrastructure will require large numbers of electricians.<sup>127</sup> A 2019 survey found that across the labour market, 9,000 further electricians and 4,500 new apprentices would be needed by 2024.<sup>128</sup>

#### Box 4. What are ‘green skills’?

The nature of ‘green skills,’ and the definition of a ‘green job,’ remain debated. This makes it hard to accurately measure ‘green’ employment.<sup>129</sup>

The ILO defines ‘green jobs’ as “jobs that reduce the environmental impact of enterprises and economic sectors, ultimately to levels that are sustainable,” while also meeting the

<sup>121</sup> House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee (2021) *Biodiversity in the UK: bloom or bust?* London: House of Commons, p. 6. <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/6498/documents/70656/default/>.

<sup>122</sup> National Audit Office (NAO) (2020) *Achieving net zero*. London: NAO. <https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Achieving-net-zero.pdf>.

<sup>123</sup> House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee (2021) *Biodiversity in the UK*.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>125</sup> Ecuity (2021) *Local green jobs—accelerating a sustainable economic recovery*. Report commissioned by the Local Government Association. London: Local Government Association. [https://gemserv.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Local-green-jobs-accelerating-a-sustainable-economic-recovery\\_final-1.pdf](https://gemserv.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Local-green-jobs-accelerating-a-sustainable-economic-recovery_final-1.pdf).

<sup>126</sup> Energy and Utility Skills Ltd. (2018) *Skills and Labour Requirements of the UK Offshore Wind Industry: 2018 to 2032*. Study undertaken by Energy & Utility Skills Ltd., commissioned by Aura and Green Port Hull. Hull: Aura. <https://aura-innovation.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Aura-EU-Skills-UK-Offshore-Wind-Skills-Study-Full-Report-October-2018.pdf>.

<sup>127</sup> Edward Carr, James Winebrake, and Samuel Winebrake (2021) *Workforce Projections to Support Battery Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Installation*. Wilmington, N.C.: Energy and Environmental Research Associates, LLC. <https://etcommunity.org/assets/files/Workforce-ProjectionstoSupportBatteryElectricVehicleChargingInfrastructureInstallation-Final202106082.pdf>.

<sup>128</sup> Pye Tait Consulting (2019) *The Electrotechnical Skills Partnership: Labour Market Intelligence Research*. Harrogate: Pye Tait Consulting. <https://www.the-esp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/TESP-LMI-Report-2019.pdf>.

<sup>129</sup> Office for National Statistics (ONS) (2021) “The challenges of defining a “green job”” <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/environmentalaccounts/methodologies/thechallengesofdefiningagreenjob>.



criteria for “decent work.”<sup>130</sup> The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy’s (BEIS) Green Jobs Taskforce describes a ‘green job’ as “employment in an activity that directly contributes to—or indirectly supports—the achievement of the UK’s net zero emissions target and other environmental goals, such as nature restoration and mitigation against climate risks.”<sup>131</sup>

‘New’ green jobs typically require higher levels of non-routine analytical skills, often demanding both higher formal education and on-the-job training.<sup>132</sup> They are also catalytic: PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), a consulting firm, estimates that for every green job created, a further 1.4 jobs can be attributed to that job elsewhere in the economy, increasing to three for jobs in sectors more central to the green transition.<sup>133</sup> This positive knock-on effect, however, will be reduced if labour shortages delay green investment projects.<sup>134</sup>

Apprenticeships and domestic reskilling are crucial to meet the demand for green skills in the UK labour market. However, there are not enough apprenticeships currently focusing on creating green skills, and most sectors indicate doubt that reskilling will match demand.<sup>135</sup> This is not unique to the UK: the ILO notes that “skills gaps and shortages are getting worse, posing a challenge to the green transition” in all countries.<sup>136</sup> In most countries, green skills are not part of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) curricula. There are exceptions: some countries—including South Korea, Thailand, and the Philippines—have been conducting specifically ‘green’ training for over a decade.<sup>137</sup>

To better link training, apprenticeships, and jobs, greater accuracy of labour market assessments is required. The MAC assesses job roles grouped into Standard Occupational

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<sup>130</sup> Olina Strietska-Ilina, Christine Hofmann, Mercedes Durán Haro, and Shinyoung Jeon (2011) *Skills for Green Jobs: A Global View*. Geneva: ILO, p. 4. [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms\\_159585.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_159585.pdf).

<sup>131</sup> Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) (2021) *Green Jobs Taskforce: Report to Government, Industry and the Skills Sector*. London: BEIS, p. 15. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1003570/gjtf-report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1003570/gjtf-report.pdf).

<sup>132</sup> Davide Consoli, Giovanni Marin, Alberto Marzucchi, and Francesco Vona (2016) “Do green jobs differ from non-green jobs in terms of skills and human capital?” *Research Policy* 45, no. 5: 1046–1060. [https://econpapers.repec.org/article/eerespol/v\\_3a45\\_3ay\\_3a2016\\_3ai\\_3a5\\_3ap\\_3a1046-1060.htm](https://econpapers.repec.org/article/eerespol/v_3a45_3ay_3a2016_3ai_3a5_3ap_3a1046-1060.htm).

<sup>133</sup> PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) (2021) *Green Jobs Barometer: Monitoring the fair transition to a green economy*. London: PwC. <https://www.pwc.co.uk/who-we-are/purpose/green-jobs-barometer.pdf>.

<sup>134</sup> Nigel Yau, Deiana Hristov, Brian O’Callaghan, Stefania Innocenti, and Cameron Hepburn (2021) “Submission to Environmental Audit Committee—Green Jobs Inquiry [GRJ0057]” <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/21534/html/>.

<sup>135</sup> House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee (2021b) *Green Jobs: Third Report of Session 2021–22*. London: House of Commons. <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/7615/documents/79773/default/>.

<sup>136</sup> International Labour Organisation (ILO) (2019) *Skills for a greener future: A global view*. Geneva: ILO, p. 188. [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/documents/publication/wcms\\_732214.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_732214.pdf).

<sup>137</sup> International Labour Organisation (ILO) (2018) *World Employment and Social Outlook 2018: Greening with jobs*. Geneva: ILO. [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms\\_628654.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_628654.pdf).

Classifications (SOC), determining whether immigration is necessary to fill skill shortfalls.<sup>138</sup> Accurately measuring labour market demands is challenging, and the shortage list is recognised to not be a reliably accurate reflection of labour market trends.<sup>139</sup> The most recent SOC codes may not adequately encompass the range of new green-related roles entering the workforce, making it hard to assess demand for jobs.<sup>140</sup> It could be useful for SOC codes relating to industries under particularly rapid green transition, such as the engineering sector, to be reviewed more frequently to register changes in role and demand.

It is highly likely that, especially during the initial phase of domestic reskilling, the UK's green transition will require immigration to meet growing demand. Dynamic labour markets, allowing geographical mobility of workers, are crucial for the deployment of human capital to the most effective locations. This is hindered, however, by lack of qualifications portability; the harmonisation of skills recognition would significantly expand the development potential of this migration. Such migration must also be managed equitably. The emigration of skilled labour can deter sector transition, as the ILO notes in the case of Guyana.<sup>141</sup> The green economy, and the skills it requires, must become a global public good if the green transition is to succeed.

Given the need for green skills globally, the UK could play an important role in developing these skills in countries of origin and encouraging the migration of some trainees to the UK through a Global Skill Partnership arrangement (as described in Box 3). In other cases, trained workers may remain in situ as an efficient contribution to the global green transition; a form of labour market carbon offsetting. Examples of these arrangements are outlined in Box 5.

#### **Box 5. Lessons to learn from**

SPaKTEN: Sudanese Partnership for Knowledge Transfer by Expatriate Nationals. A diaspora organisation established to address 'brain drain' in Sudan. The initiative recruits Sudanese diaspora experts (from a 215-member network, based in 34 countries) to provide short-term consultancies to different Sudanese sectors, including engineering, agriculture, and the environment. Diaspora organisations have deeper knowledge of networks and possibilities for development partnerships: tapping into and empowering them can help to identify, increase, and maximise available skills.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) (2020) *Review of the Shortage Occupation List: 2020*. London: MAC. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/927352/SOL\\_2020\\_Report\\_Final.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/927352/SOL_2020_Report_Final.pdf).

<sup>139</sup> Sumption (2022) "Shortages, high-demand occupations, and the post-Brexit UK immigration system."

<sup>140</sup> Engenuity (2020) *Written Evidence – Environmental Audit Committee Inquiry into Green Jobs*. London: House of Commons. <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/21339/pdf/>.

<sup>141</sup> ILO (2018) *World Employment and Social Outlook 2018: Greening with jobs*.

<sup>142</sup> European Union Global Diaspora Facility (EUDiF) (2021) *Diaspora engagement initiatives on Green initiatives*. Vienna: EUDiF. <https://diasporafordevelopment.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/EUDiF-green-deal-effective-practices-ENGLISH.pdf>.



MOVE\_GREEN: (E)Co-development for innovation and employment in green and circular economy between Andalusia and Morocco. A circular mobility scheme between Andalusia and Northern Morocco, providing networking opportunities, training, and professional qualifications to several dozen young Moroccans seeking to work in the green economy. The project aims to increase employability and entrepreneurship, and to strengthen cross-border public-private partnerships. Regardless of the scale, such a project could play a valuable role in bilateral skills partnerships in training workers and deepening relationships.<sup>143</sup>

For the development potential of migration and green skills to be maximised, we propose seven specific lessons in addition to the general considerations outlined above relevant to BEIS, DEFRA, and the Home Office in particular:

1. **Recognise that the urgency of the green transition will require immigration.** At COP26 it was recognised that the green transition requires efficient allocation of financial capital; efficient allocation of human capital is similarly crucial.<sup>144</sup> Yet existing efforts, such as the Scottish Government’s Just Transition Commission, haven’t yet engaged with the role of migration in meeting ‘Net Zero’ commitments.<sup>145</sup> The identification of labour market bottlenecks should be improved, potentially by learning from other countries’ emerging green economies and labour market pressures. This would allow better-targeted upskilling in the medium- and long-term, and informed immigration in the short-term. Delays in filling early jobs could have a significant knock-on effect on the development of green industries.
2. **Develop skills mobility partnerships with countries of origin.** An approach modelled on the Global Skill Partnership, with the UK contributing to training in countries of origin, should be adopted. Complementary partnerships could be sought such that the UK shares skills in which it has a comparative advantage while receiving skills of which it has a deficit.
3. **Positively involve diasporas** in both job creation/training efforts in countries of origin, and efforts to bring workers/trainees to the UK. Given the relative ‘newness’ of migration for green technology, there is a unique opportunity to build more inclusive approaches that prioritise integration from day one.

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<sup>143</sup>Migration Partnership Facility (MPF) (2021) “(E)Co-development for innovation and employment in green and circular economy between Andalusia and Morocco (MOVE\_GREEN).” <https://www.migrationpartnershipfacility.eu/mpf-projects/26-e-co-development-for-innovation-and-employment-in-green-and-circular-economy-between-andalusia-and-morocco-move-green>.

<sup>144</sup>Mark Carney (2021) *Building a Private Finance System for Net Zero*. London: HM Government. [https://ukcop26.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/COP26-Private-Finance-Hub-Strategy\\_Nov-2020v4.1.pdf](https://ukcop26.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/COP26-Private-Finance-Hub-Strategy_Nov-2020v4.1.pdf).

<sup>145</sup>Scottish Government (2021) *Just Transition Commission: A national mission for a fairer, greener Scotland*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/transition-commission-national-mission-fairer-greener-scotland/documents/>.

4. **Ensure migrants receive skills on-the-job.** Migrant workers should be able to return to countries of origin with increased skills, contributing to the global green transition.
5. **Lead on increasing international skills recognition.** Bilateral skills recognition would ease access to the UK labour market, making it easier for the UK to fill skills gaps. Wider skills recognition, such as ODA-funded regional skills recognition efforts, would aid the effective deployment of human capital.
6. **Increase scholarships to study green-related UK degrees,** with pathways to subsequent work in the UK. This could increase the flow of necessary skills (especially engineering) into the UK's labour market and increase global green skills. A new 'Green Chevening' award, for example, would set a positive example of the UK's commitment to green development, potentially spurring similar commitments elsewhere.
7. **Proactively pursue reskilling of the UK workforce,** with adaptive evaluation of the labour market informing prioritisation. This will accelerate the UK's green transition (reducing climate impacts elsewhere) and reduce any risk of anti-immigrant sentiment resulting from workers' perceptions of being 'left behind.'<sup>146</sup>

## Conclusion

The new Points-Based Immigration System affords the UK tremendous scope to develop, implement, and target new immigration pathways in specific sectors where there is labour market demand. Doing so is a cross-government effort. While the Home Office and FCDO must be involved in the design of such pathways, there is a specific role for other departments such as BEIS, DEFRA, the Department of Culture, Media, and Sport (DCMS), and DHSC, depending on the sector in question. Financing such pathways will also require the contributions of multiple departments, drawing on both ODA and other financing mechanisms (see Box 6). It is therefore of paramount importance that all departments across the UK Government understand the impact that improving such immigration pathways can have, not just on the UK labour market but on the migrants themselves, their communities, and their countries of origin.

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<sup>146</sup>Ipek Gençsü, Avery Grayson, and Nathaniel Mason with Marta Foresti (2020) *Migration and skills for the low-carbon transition*. ODI Working Paper 584. London: ODI. [https://cdn.odi.org/media/documents/migration\\_and\\_skills\\_for\\_the\\_low-carbon\\_transition\\_final.pdf](https://cdn.odi.org/media/documents/migration_and_skills_for_the_low-carbon_transition_final.pdf).

## Box 6. Using Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) for immigration pathways

ODA is defined by the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) as “government aid that promotes and specifically targets the economic development and welfare of developing countries.”<sup>147</sup> There is ongoing debate as to whether ODA can be spent on projects that also have some benefit to the country distributing the aid.<sup>148</sup> Given that the immigration pathways discussed in this paper are deliberately designed to encourage this ‘triple-win,’ it is necessary to explore whether such pathways can be financed through ODA.

In 2017, the OECD created a new purpose code to capture ODA-eligible migration activities. ODA could be used to assist low- and middle-income countries to facilitate safe, orderly, regular, and responsible migration, but could not be used for “activities that pursue first and foremost providers’ interests.”<sup>149</sup> A Temporary Working Group was created in 2020 to explore this question, though their guidance is still forthcoming.<sup>150</sup> In its absence, it is reasonable to assume that activities that primarily target the economic development and welfare of countries of origin (such as education and skill building, the development of migration management capacity, and sustainable reintegration) can be classified as ODA. Any other activities involved in the set up of immigration pathways (such as implementation and set up costs, physical migration, and the development of migration pathways) presumably cannot.

This paper has attempted to outline a number of lessons that the UK Government could follow when implementing such pathways, in order to maximise the development benefit of these efforts. Some of these lessons apply regardless of the sector: recommendations such as focusing on ethical recruitment; prioritising remittances and skill transfers; designing schemes to fit different demographic profiles; targeting specific countries of origin; focusing on building skills in countries of origin that are in need globally; and ensuring robust monitoring, evaluation, and learning. Specific lessons, as relevant to the agriculture, nursing, and green technology sectors, are also outlined. These lessons apply regardless of the stage of development of these pathways and are integral to ensuring their ultimate positive impact.

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<sup>147</sup> OECD (2020) “Official Development Assistance (ODA).” <https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/official-development-assistance.htm>.

<sup>148</sup> Owen Barder (2018) “Aid in the National Interest: When is Development Cooperation Win-Win?” Center for Global Development (CGD) blog, June 5, 2018. <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/aid-national-interest-when-development-cooperation-win-win>.

<sup>149</sup> OECD (2018) *Proposed New Purpose Code for “Facilitation of Orderly, Safe, Regular and Responsible Migration and Mobility*. DAC Working Party on Development Finance Statistics. Paris: OECD Publishing. [https://www.oecd.org/officialdocuments/publicdisplaydocumentpdf/?cote=DCD/DAC/STAT\(2018\)23/REV3&docLanguage=En](https://www.oecd.org/officialdocuments/publicdisplaydocumentpdf/?cote=DCD/DAC/STAT(2018)23/REV3&docLanguage=En).

<sup>150</sup> OECD (2020) *Brief on the DAC Temporary Working Group on Clarifying the ODA-eligibility of Migration-related Activities (TWG)*. Paris: OECD Publishing. <https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/collapsecontents/brief-dac-twg-migration.pdf>.