

# Understanding the migration – vocational education nexus. Constraints and potentials

## Conference

Migration has become a controversially debated issue and a policy priority, and this is also true for the field of international development. Recent years have seen the booming of 'tackling the root causes' policy approaches in an effort to deter emigration with foreign aid. Education and technical and vocational education (TVET) have been identified as part of the policy toolkit. In fact, policy discourse assumes that TVET in developing countries contributes to employment and growth as the basis for improved livelihoods and decreased motivation to emigrate. By contrast, existing research identifies higher levels of education as one of the major push factors for emigration. In short, the underlying relation between education/TVET and migration is highly complex and far from being straightforward.

The conference aims at bringing together researchers and practitioners in the realm of TVET, migration and development in order to facilitate an in-depth discussion on the potential role of TVET in mitigating migration pressure. It will seek to analyse the economic, social, political and cultural conditions that shape the relationship between TVET and migration. In addition, it will also discuss lessons of experience and draw conclusions for the policy level.

The conference aims at contributing to enhanced reflection on the migration-development nexus, to increased awareness about its complexity and social embeddedness as well as to more evidence-based policy approaches.

**Registration: [registration@oefse.at](mailto:registration@oefse.at)**

*By participating this event you consent to the publication of photographs and film footage that are produced by the organizers during the event.*

Conveners:

**OFSE**   
Österreichische Forschungsstiftung  
für Internationale Entwicklung

and

  
Technische  
Universität  
Berlin

WITH FUNDING FROM  
 AUSTRIAN  
DEVELOPMENT  
COOPERATION

## Understanding the migration – vocational education nexus. Constraints and potentials.

Conference

January 21, 2020, 09.00-16.00

C3 – Centre for International Development  
Sensengasse 3, 1090 Vienna

**OFSE**   
Österreichische Forschungsstiftung  
für Internationale Entwicklung



## Speakers:

**Marian Benbow Pfisterer** is heading the IOM Country Office for Austria and is thus responsible for office activities and the overall coordination of the mission. Prior to her current post, she was Head of Project Management/Liaison in Nuremberg.

**Gudrun Biffel** was holding the chair for migration research at the Donau Universität Krems from 2008 until 2017, where she founded and directed the Department for Migration and Globalisation. She is a member of the OECD expert council for migration as well as of the Austrian expert council for integration. She currently chairs the Austrian statistics council.

**Michael Fanizadeh** has been project manager at VIDC dealing with Migration and Development, Antidiscrimination and the Middle East since 2008. Since 2012 he heads the working group Migration & Development at the AG Globale Verantwortung.

**Bettina Fellmer** is working for GIZ in Bonn as the manager of the global project „Skills for reintegration” with pilot applications in Niger, the Gambia, Kirgizstan and Mexico. Since 2001, she has worked in different positions for GIZ with geographical focus on Eastern Europe, the Mena Region and Africa.

**Ali Ahmed Safi** is currently pursuing his PhD at the Danube University Krems, Centre for Migration, Integration and Security. He has worked as a researcher and journalist in Afghanistan. Since 2014, he has provided consultancy for the VIDC on political, security and social issues on Afghanistan.

**Matthias Themel** is advisor for education and science in the Austrian Development Agency, where he is responsible for project cycle management and quality control with focus on higher and vocational education. Matthias Themel has worked for NGOs, UNICEF and the European Commission in many countries including Kosovo, Rwanda, Jordan, Palestine and India.

**Edith Vasilyev** is head of the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Unit at IOM Austria. She is responsible for the supervision of the unit's projects and employees and develops project proposals. Prior to her assignment with IOM, she was employed at the Austrian Integration Fund.

**Volker Wedekind** is Deputy Head of School and Director of Research and Knowledge Exchange in the School of Education, University of Nottingham, where he also coordinates the UNEVOC Centre. His research focuses among others on TVET policy in Africa and TVET's role for migrants. He is Migration Theme Lead for the UNESCO UNEVOC Bridging Innovation and Learning in TVET (BILT) project.

**Stefan Wolf** is associate professor at the Technical University Berlin in the field of vocational education and senior consultant with the Sustainum e.G. Prof. Wolf has completed several research and development projects in a multitude of countries. He has also worked as a teacher in vocational schools and as a trainer in industrial mechanics.

## Programme:

08.30 Arrival and registration

09.00 Welcome and conference opening

Werner Raza (ÖFSE)  
Stefan Wolf (TU Berlin)

09.15 Key note

**What do we know about the relationship between TVET and migration? Perspectives from educational sciences**

Volker Wedekind (University of Nottingham)

10.00 Comment

**What do we know about the relationship between education/TVET and migration? Findings from research on migration**

Gudrun Biffel, Donau-Universität Krems

10.15 Q&A Session

10.30 Coffee break

11.00 Parallel sessions

**Lessons from practical interventions I: What is the effect of return migration programmes**

Input: Bettina Fellmer (GIZ, Bereich Flucht, Migration, Rückkehr), Edith Vasilyev (IOM Austria)

**Lessons from practical interventions II: TVET in fragile contexts – potential and limitations**

Input: Stefan Wolf (TU Berlin), Ali Safi (Donau Universität Krems & VIDC)

13.00 Lunch break

14.30 Panel discussion and synthesis:

**What implications for TVET and development policy?**

Marian Benbow Pfisterer (IOM), Michael Fanizadeh (VIDC), Matthias Themel (Austrian Development Agency), Volker Wedekind (University of Nottingham)

16.00 Closure of the conference

*Facilitation: Margarita Langthaler (ÖFSE)*