



Infosheet No 6

Migration, inclusion and social cohesion

Migrants' inclusion has always been an important part of the migration phenomenon, but it is a particularly complex issue in today's increasingly globalized world and diverse societies. Chapter 6 introduces the notions of migrants' inclusion and social cohesion and examines inclusion outcomes and obstacles in policy and practice. It also discusses "the situation on the ground" where inclusion primarily takes place through the role played by local actors and migrants themselves. While

recognizing that no one-size-fits-all approach to inclusion exists, this chapter underlines the potential of holistic and inclusive inclusion policies for improving the effectiveness of policy responses adopted to foster migrants' inclusion and social cohesion. It also emphasizes that the important role already played by local actors and migrants calls for further strengthening their involvement in developing and (re-)evaluating national inclusion policies.

KEY FINDINGS

The chapter offers an overview of what migrants' inclusion entails in policy and practice, the factors and obstacles thereto, and how it is approached by different stakeholders. However, it also illustrates the difficulty in addressing the question of migrants' inclusion at the global level, as it intrinsically remains a national and local issue.

Three main policy implications can be drawn from the analysis to foster migrants' inclusion and social cohesion:

1. The adoption of holistic inclusion policies has the potential to improve the effectiveness of policy responses in the field of inclusion. Despite the emphasis sometimes placed on labour market inclusion, the different policy areas are closely interdependent, as inclusion outcomes in one specific policy area will likely impact on others. Conversely, the absence of holistic inclusion policies may be costly for both migrants and receiving societies. Single policy responses in one specific policy area will likely be ineffective in improving migrants' overall inclusion if not complemented by measures

in other areas and supported by a coherent policy strategy. The risk is not only for migrants to end up being excluded and marginalized, but to create social tensions undermining social cohesion in the receiving society.

2. More inclusive policy responses in a wide range of related policy areas leads to deeper and more sustainable inclusion outcomes. While this may sound logical, it is particularly striking with regard to language requirements, political participation and naturalization. By contrast, more restrictive policies have the risk of being counterproductive, especially when used for migration management purposes. Conditions for family reunification that are meant to ensure that reunited family members will integrate in the receiving society, especially pre-entry language tests, can in practice limit the number of migrants benefiting from family reunification at the expense of supporting the inclusion of migrant sponsors and their relatives.
3. The important role already played by local actors and migrants calls for further strengthening their involvement in developing and (re-)evaluating national inclusion policies. Increased involvement and empowerment of cities would help in mitigating tensions between local and national levels, because of discrepancies in how inclusion is approached. As the spaces where inclusion primarily occurs, cities and other local authorities are also the best placed to inform about the challenges of inclusion and good practices that can be implemented. As for migrants, their involvement in policymaking has so far not reflected how active they have been in practice for their own inclusion and that of other migrants. If their voices are increasingly heard today, their inclusion needs and aspirations are yet to be more thoroughly explored and taken into account to improve the effectiveness of inclusion policies.

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