

MIGRATION PATHWAYS

Enhancing Tunisian Youth Employability through Professional Internships in Belgian Companies

Overview

The program provided six-month internships and apprenticeships in Belgium to Tunisian students and university graduates. Supported financially by the government of Belgium, the project sought to address the dual challenges of high unemployment among young Tunisians and irregular migration to Belgium and the European Union.

Why was it started?

Inadequate labor market opportunities are an important push factor for irregular migration to Europe by young Tunisians. The program was part of a broader plan to support development in Tunisia. The program's ultimate goal was enabling migration as a driver of economic development.

How does it work?

The program identified apprenticeship and internship opportunities and then selected and matched Tunisian candidates with companies, placing 31 young Tunisians at 12 companies in Belgium. Upon return to Tunisia, participants received job-seeking support and additional training to enhance their professional skills. The program was implemented through four main activities: (1) private sector outreach, involving selection and agreement with companies seeking to participate; (2) selection of the interns; (3) monitoring and evaluation of the action (pre-departure survey for interns, evaluation for both interns and companies, final evaluation of the program and post-return survey of interns); and (4) post-return support.



Country of Destination
BELGIUM

Country of Origin
TUNISIA

Skill
NOT SPECIFIED

Skill Level
HIGH

Timeline
**MARCH 1, 2018–
DECEMBER 31, 2019**

Beneficiaries
31

Countries all around the world utilize migration pathways to train and bring over workers with needed skills. The CGD Migration Pathways database documents these pathways to promote innovation in this space. To explore the database, visit GSP.cgdev.org.

What impact has it had?

Almost all participants (93 percent) found jobs, with the other 7 percent continuing to study. Among participants who found jobs, 89 percent found them in Tunisia, 7 percent found them in Belgium, and 4 percent found them in Germany. Eleven out of the 12 Belgium companies that participated in the program reported that they would participate in similar initiatives. Several companies were interested in hiring interns in Belgium before they returned to Tunisia (something that was not possible under this pilot). Four companies indicated interest in investing in Tunisia following their positive experience of the project. Employers' evaluation of the program averaged 6.5 out of 10.

Three main lessons were learned from the project: (1) implementation of labor migration projects can work only if all stakeholders are on board, (2) every stakeholder should take ownership of the project by investing a part of its own resources in the action, and (3) demand and supply should be matched to attain success without causing brain drain in the country of origin.

Further readings

For program descriptions and evaluations, see the website of the [International Organization for Migration \(IOM\)](#).

Di Salvo, M., and N. M. Ndoye. 2020. *Paving the way for future labor migration: A Belgian-Tunisian skills mobility partnership*. CEPS Policy Insights, PI2020-24. September. International Organization for Migration. <https://eea.iom.int/publications/paving-way-future-labour-migration>



MIGRATION PATHWAYS

GSP.cgdev.org

Last updated: July 2021