

Version May 2020

VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND MIGRATION

WORKING TOOL FOR PRACTITIONERS IN DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION INCLUDING HUMANITARIAN AID

Purpose of the tool

Vocational Skills Development (VSD) is for SDC a broad concept, that encompasses all support aiming at assisting the development of technical, social and personal competences¹. VSD fosters the social^a and economic development of individuals, their integration into labour markets and/or into education and further training. It can therefore be a powerful approach to support both societies and migrants including refugees, internally displaced persons, and other groups^{2b}. VSD can be used as a tool to address both opportunities and challenges related to migration. The better educated and trained migrants are, the better they can take advantage of the opportunities migration offers them. This will also benefit society and the economy, mainly in host countries, but also in countries of origin.

The working tool aims to support SDC:

- to check, adapt and design **VSD projects** to take into consideration populations of migrants incl. refugees as part of the target group or as the main target group of the intervention; and
- to add or make better use of **VSD as an instrument** for economic and social integration and development in other SDC projects on migration^c, humanitarian aid etc.

International and SDC mandates to link VSD with migration

International mandates

Migration is one of the defining features of the first decades of the 21st century, as it has been throughout history. Today, migration is understood as a major force in reducing poverty and inequalities, and in contributing to prosperity, innovation and sustainable development, and as such is key to achieving the **Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs). The SDGs address migration specifically under targets 10.7 (safe migration), 8.8 (labour migrants' rights and working environments), 10.c (remittances) and 16.2 (child trafficking).^d At the same time, migration is sometimes seen as a major challenge of our time, since, for various reasons, worldwide migration flows due to conflict, displacement, climate change or human rights violation continue to grow. How migration is perceived depends closely on the type of migration concerned as well as its magnitude.

Interrelations between migration flows and development are complex as there is not a direct causality between these two variables. Hence, in the short term, development cooperation can help to address the root causes of flight and displacement, improve the living conditions of displaced persons and protect refugees in their first host countries.

In the medium term, development cooperation can help to reduce irregular migration and find the best possible solutions for the integration of migrants and displaced persons in developing countries. In the long term, development cooperation

Who are migrants?

There is *no* universally accepted definition of a migrant; the UN convention on the rights of migrants only suggests a definition of migrant workers. We opt for a broader definition that includes all types of migrants, including migrant workers, refugees, internally displaced persons, family migrants, and any others. For practical reasons, we use the term '*migrants including refugees*' in this paper as a general term indicating that we apply a broad definition. We might use more specific terms where indicated.

Source: *Global Compact for Migration glossary, SDC Global Programme Migration and Development Strategic Framework 2018-21, Glossary*

¹ See the definition in the box below, page 3.

² Thereafter, we will use the term "migrants incl. refugees" in the text. See definition in box "who are migrants?".

addresses the underlying causes of irregular migration such as poverty, insufficient access to basic services, armed conflicts, poor governance or the consequences of climate change.^e

SDC's mandate

The Swiss Parliament asked the SDC to strengthen the relevance of its engagement in general, not only on the level of international policy-making and advocacy, but also in concrete terms, by creating stronger links between its portfolio and the migration issue in broad terms. The SDC is aware of the importance, opportunities and challenges of migration, and it acts on it, based on the Dispatch 2017-2020, and even more on the Dispatch 2021-2024.^f The ***SDC's policy on migration*** is aligned with the SDGs.

According to the ***strategic framework of SDC's Global Programme for Migration and Development (GPMD)***, the SDC strives to “make migration useful for all, ensure safe and regular migration and improve framework conditions to unlock migrants’ potential to contribute to sustainable development and inclusive growth. [...] The SDC aims to shape the governance and architecture of migration and development, to create enabling framework conditions throughout the migration cycle and in all contexts, and to create more knowledge, expertise and collaboration in migration and development.” However, the SDC does not aim to change basic migration patterns or flows, but addresses migration as a fact with the aim of reducing social and economic costs for those being left behind and for those receiving migrants.^{g,h} In doing so, the GPMD strategic framework identifies VSD as a powerful instrument for creating opportunities for migrant populations. It therefore foresees a stronger engagement in the VSD-migration nexus in the years to come.

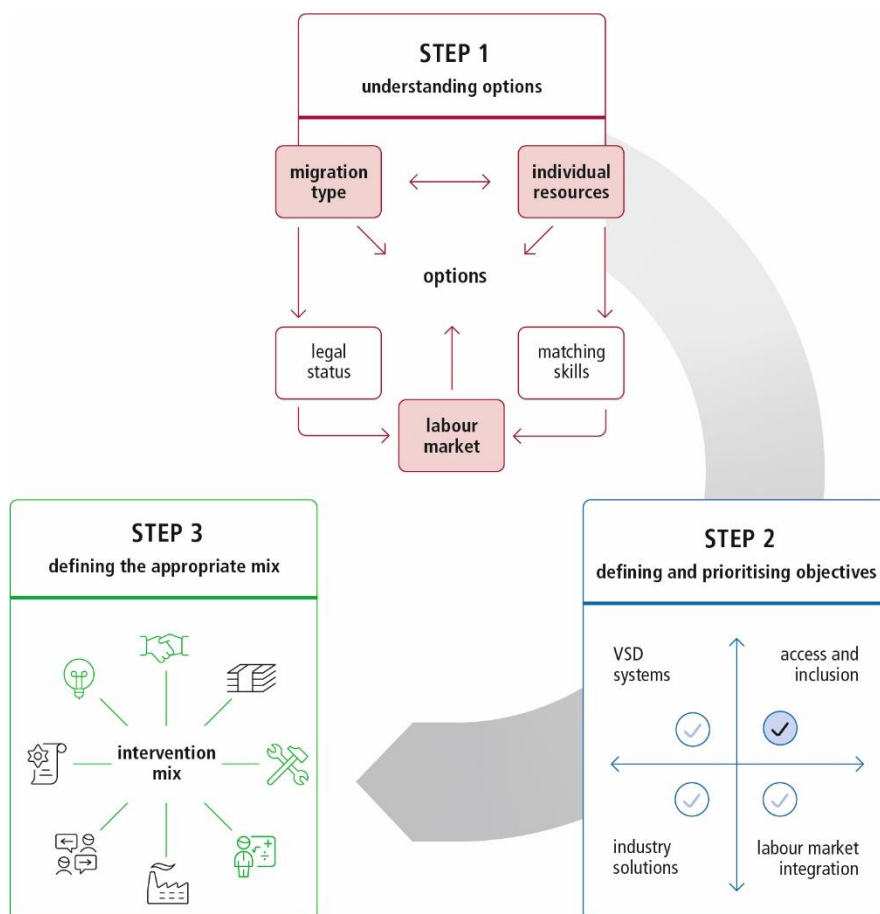
The SDC's ***Education Strategy*** considers VSD to be a powerful tool to enhance social cohesion and conflict transformation, economic development and empowerment, resilience, and sustainable development in general. It favors inclusion and creating opportunities for those affected by forced displacement or economic migration. Therefore, the SDC also commits to intersectoral collaboration and to strengthening the nexus between development cooperation and humanitarian aid.ⁱ The importance given to VSD as an intervention in migration contexts reflects, again, its high potential.

The VSD & Migration working tool

The logic of the tool

The working tool on VSD and migration offers a **three-step analytical process** (see graph 1) to support you in checking, adapting or designing your VSD interventions in the context of migration, and it offers some explanatory examples. It provides more detail on each analytical step and **key questions** for you to consider when defining appropriate interventions.

- *Step 1* supports you to better understand the context, the actors, the rules and regulations, and the opportunities and challenges regarding the options available for migrants incl. refugees.
- *Step 2* supports you to define and prioritise your objectives and change strategy, according to the options identified in step one.
- *Step 3* supports you to define your appropriate mix of interventions to maximise the relevance and impact of your programme for the target groups.



VSD is at the intersection of the education and the employment system. Combining VSD with basic education approaches, content and instruments, and with private and financial sector development approaches and instruments on the employment side, can increase its development potential. Therefore, we refer to such accompanying instruments where and if appropriate.

The working tool aims to complement the existing supporting instruments of SDC's quality assurance (basic planning and evaluation instruments) and of SDC's thematic network Employment and Income.¹ The tool does not replace nor challenge these instruments and is not conceptualised as a standalone tool for planning and designing projects or policy interventions in the field of VSD and migration.

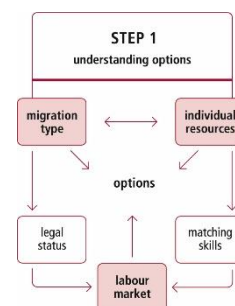
What is Vocational Skills Development?

"The broad concept of VSD [applied by SDC] encompasses all organised learning processes for the development of technical, social and personal competencies and qualifications that contribute to the sustainable long-term integration of trained people in decent working conditions in the formal or informal economy, either on an employed or self-employed basis. VSD usually combines theory and practice and can take place in schools or technical institutes, workshops or at the workplace in enterprises. According to the concept of lifelong learning, VSD can take place at all education levels, from lower-secondary to tertiary, and be acquired throughout an individual's economically active life. It includes formal and non-formal VSD offers."
 Source: SDC (2017), Education Strategy, p.15.

Step 1: Understanding options

The first step is about *identifying the options to support the social and economic integration of migrants incl. refugees target groups*. We analyse the options along the categories of political economy, considering regulatory, structural and individual factors:

- The *drivers and type of migration* (which also define the status of migrants incl. refugees target groups) including a situation and actors' analysis;
- The *labour markets* and other sources of revenues available to migrants incl. refugees;
- The *individual resources*³ of the migrants incl. refugees and their status within the group.

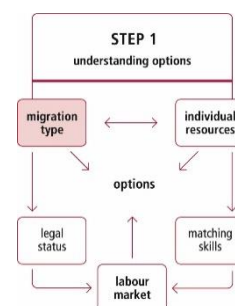


Answering the key questions to step 1 in the boxes below will enable you to understand the context and the target groups you are dealing with. You will be better prepared to define your target groups and the objectives you can realistically aim for (step 2). Please note that this step assumes that you have already decided to include migrants incl. refugees either as a broad target group or for activities that shall be opened and adapted to migrant incl. refugee target groups based on criteria not elaborated here.

Step 1a) Analysing the migration type

Understanding the **drivers** of migration and hence the **types of migration** provides a better orientation for all further analytical steps.

The first question is **why** migration takes place at all. It is about identifying the drivers for migration, the structural (long-term contextual, formal and non-formal rules and regulation) reasons and the framework in which migration takes place, as well as the overall push and pull-factors for migration. This includes an analysis of the actors (individuals, organisations), their interests and their power (influence) on the overall and individual migration situation. As the issue of migration is often highly politicised or politically sensitive, a political risks and power analysis based on typical **political economy analysis tools** should always be part of your first step.^k



In terms of migration types, one usually distinguishes between two forms of migration against the background of the dimensions of migration movements:

- economically motivated migration*
- all other forms of migration* such as family-bound migration, internal and cross-border (external) displacement, and others.^l

These two very broad types have variations regarding the following most common criteria:

temporal	→	long vs. short
geographical	→	internal vs. international/cross-border
character	→	circular vs. permanent
cause	→	voluntary vs. forced, structural vs. individual, push- vs. pull-factors
legal	→	regulated vs. unregulated
individual economic and educational status	→	low vs. high skilled, poor vs. wealthy, knows the local language vs. not able to communicate in the new environment
living situation	→	camp vs. no camp

In all contexts it is most important to understand whether people are *leaving from* a (unfavourable) situation or *leaving for* something new or better. Important push-factors often include poverty and income, but also inequalities and lacking opportunities or perspectives. However, these types sometimes overlap and we find conceptual hybrids combining push- and pull-factors. Often, groups consist of a wide range of very different needs groups which may be differentiated by factors such as age, sex, family status, social status, education and ethnic group. Drivers of migration as well as motivations for migration may differ.

Key questions to be asked when analysing **drivers and types of migration**:

- Why do people in my target group migrate, where from and where to? Are there typical patterns?
Distinguish between:
 - > Push factors: Escape/leave from a situation for diverse reasons.
 - > Pull factors: Enter diaspora communities, income opportunities and better basic services such as education, health and security.
- Who has what interest in and influence on the migration process?

³ A set of individual resources defines by and large what people can do, and aim to do: language, age, sex, family situation, social status, general education and skills training already received, financial resources, migration history, etc. See chapter 1c further below.

- What is the role of skills (competencies, qualifications) in migration, in countries of origin or locations of origin (internal migration), and in countries of destination?
- Where are the target groups living and under what conditions (camps, other)? What the size of the target groups?

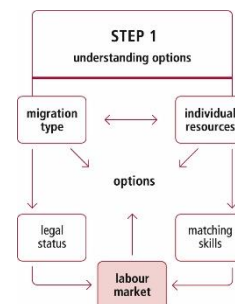
The migration type defines the **status of migrants incl. refugees**: migrant incl. refugees populations differ from other target groups in that their status in the country of destination is specific and defines their opportunities, for instance regarding training, working and thereby creating income. Sometimes, internal migrants, including internally displaced persons, also have a distinct status (legal and/or social). Even when their status might not be defined officially, the target groups might be confronted with non-formal rules on how to deal with them. To develop any intervention, it is key to clarify who has which rights and perspectives.

Key questions to be asked when analysing the status of migrants, including refugees:

- What legal status do people have? Do they have one at all? Why is this the case (interests) and is there an option and drivers for change (actors, influence)?
- What does their legal status allow them to do in the given situation?
 - > Do they have access to education and training and supporting measures (e.g. counselling, orientation, etc.)? Do they have the right de jure or de facto?
 - > Do they have access to work? If yes, when (waiting period after immigration), to which labour markets and under what specific restrictions? Do they have the right de jure or de facto?
 - > Do they have access and rights to social security/insurance?
- How does the social status of migrants, including refugees, affect access to education, employment, income, social security and other basic services?
- Are there non-formal, traditional rules regarding the target groups that seem important for the way forward?

Step 1b) Analysing the labour market options

VSD aims primarily to support target groups in accessing the labour market and, consequently, generating income. This includes employment and self-employment opportunities in the current places or in third places (depending on the target group and context, the targeted labour market might not be where these people are at the moment of analysis, but in third countries or in the countries of origin). Even though access to employment and income seems to be a commonly shared aim among actors, access to work – and thereby to income – is often hindered deliberately for varying reasons. Training is only one measure among others for granting access to employment, and is not always and in any situation the most appropriate, efficient and effective one. Sometimes other educational, livelihood, security, legal or private sector development measures are more important. Quite often, it takes a blend of measures to enable change (see step 3 of the tool).



Access to the labour market is the common main challenge of migrant incl. refugees target groups. Access is often hampered by regulatory and factual barriers.

The following **typology of labour markets** may be helpful to clarify the labour market options at hand for the target groups:^m

- Non-existent or transitory*: typical camp or short-term solutions for refugees or internally displaced persons (IDPs), may be geographically and ethnically / socially isolated, and people may face labour market restrictions; also includes illegal migration;
- Nationally-segmented*: typical limitations on rights to work or sectors/occupations open to migrants, access depends on status granted to migrants incl. refugees;
- Nationally-integrated*: little distinction between the rights to work of different types of workers, including migrants;
- Transnational*: along production chains, typically for highly qualified workers, but may also include low-skilled workers (e.g. garment industry, maritime industry, new digital work opportunities).

Access to one of these labour market options depends on their legal status, as given above, but also on other important factors namely:

- regulatory barriers*: status, labour market access limitations, non-recognition of prior training/education, etc.;
- individual resources limitations*: language barriers, personal/family situation, psycho-social challenges (trauma), lacking financial means, etc.;
- structural challenges*: insecurity, non-existence of any relevant job offer, poor working situations, etc.

Some migrant incl. refugees target groups do not face major access barriers at first sight, e.g. in some cases nurses, care personnel or construction personnel in typical cyclical labour migration contexts. However, such target groups often face **hidden access barriers**, namely regarding access to better working situations (e.g. insurance, housing, security, labour regulations, etc.). Some groups might therefore not focus on long-term labour market integration at their current place, but somewhere else, be it back home or in a third country (country of destination). This has to be considered when designing the interventions (steps 2 and 3).

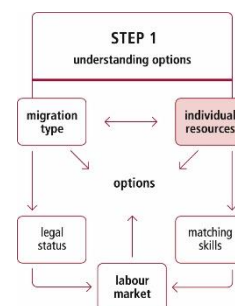
A detailed analysis of access barriers is a key prerequisite to defining a meaningful and realistic impact logic and to defining and designing the most appropriate interventions to improve migrant groups' access to employment and income.

Key questions to be asked when analysing labour markets for migrants, including refugees:

- What labour market opportunities, or opportunities to create income and employment, exist for the target groups – and where?
 - Are migrants' and refugees' education, competencies and (labour market) experiences accepted, and do they enable them to access education and work?
 - Where and how can countries of destination or residence benefit from granting access? Where do they need competencies which are available among migrant communities?
 - What do migrants including refugees aim for in terms of employment (geographically and sector)? To what extent does this match the opportunities available in the country of destination or residence?
 - What kind of support is available for them to access the labour market?
 - Is lack of skills a major obstacle to taking advantage of available employment opportunities?
 - Could a labour market be developed with specific support measures such as employment promotion or private sector development programs ?
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Step 1c) Analysing the individual resources of the migrants, including refugees

Along with structural factors like migration and labour market regulations, individual resources are obviously key in defining the options one has when it comes to accessing skills training and creating (self-)employment and income. A **set of individual resources**⁴ defines by and large what people can do, and aim to do: language, age, sex, family situation, social status, general education, and skills training already received, financial resources, migration history, etc. Analysing these resources – and limitations – is an essential step in any situation, in order to clarify what a realistic impact might be and to define appropriate measures. In combination with the labour market analysis, conclusions can be drawn as to the extent to which the available individual resources support access to the labour market and which measures may be necessary at the level of individual resources in order to increase the fit (**matching skills**). An analysis of the options and offers of the education system, the vocational training system and the instruments of the labour integration and social integration systems can be appropriate here.



Depending on age, general compulsory schooling (basic education) is mandatory.. Yet, we find that in many conflict-affected situations where humanitarian aid responses are in place and where the state services are either limited or not catering for specific groups, the age group from around 14 years of age and above do often lack proper education or training solutions.⁴ Often, the involved actors prioritise their resources to younger age groups and do not provide for elder youth groups. In quite some situations, we find groups that do not qualify for basic education programs are not yet permitted to access training programs if such are available at all. Quite often, these groups would need a good blend of VSD combined with basic education elements.

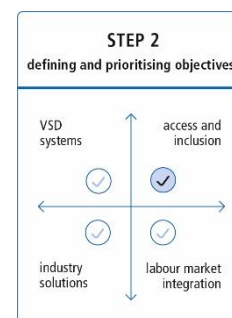
Key questions to be asked when analysing individual resources of migrant incl. refugees target groups:

- What individual resources do people have for training and for working?
 - What are their major limiting factors (e.g. insecurity, health (also mental health), family situation, other)? What could be done about them?
 - Do their skills match specific labour market needs – for wage and/or self-employment?
 - What are the skills development offers available in the VET, education and labour market integration systems?
 - Do we have age or other groups that are not covered by the system for any reason?
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⁴ Please note that according the SDC Education Strategy (2017: 19) the main focus should be on basic education until the aged of 15 and VSD programs should not start before that age. VSD components could be part of basic education programs before, however.

Step 2: Defining and prioritising the objectives

Based on the analysis under step 1, your understanding of the context, the situation, the actors and the options available for your target groups, the second step is about *clarifying your objectives and change strategy*. Based on a broad thematic understanding and the SDC's *VSD typology: orientation and impact of VSD^o* we suggest doing so along the following four options:



Objectives	Target Groups	Typical Partners
a) VSD systems: Improving VSD systems performance and readiness for migrants incl. refugees;	Migrants and refugees with an opportunity chance or need to access the formal or non-formal VSD system and to benefit from what it offers.	Public bodies regulating and financing formal and/or non-formal VSD provision as well as VSD providers (both private and public) and specialised agencies/bodies within the VSD system. They may also include public bodies dealing with migration regulation and inclusion.
b) Access and inclusion: Granting access of migrants incl. refugees to VSD.	Specific needs groups and people facing structural or individual challenges to access formal VSD.	Public structures responsible for VSD, social affairs and migration, and NGOs in the respective fields.
c) Labour market integration: Creating direct employment and income outcomes for migrants incl. refugees.	Migrants incl. refugees with the need of targeted support to entering the labour market.	Actors of active labour market policy who have access to the financial resources (taxes or specific schemes) and instruments. For migrant target groups, this often includes labour offices, migration offices and/or social services. In many situations, however, such measures are organised by camps or INGOs/NGOs specifically, without the aim of systemic integration.
d) Industry solutions: Providing competent workforce for industries.	Migrant incl. refugees target groups especially in sectors where employers face difficulties in recruiting qualified staff or where the local population prefers not to opt for the opportunities of the sector.	Industry (associations, companies, clusters, business parks, etc.), but also public bodies that regulate labour market access and supervise labour conditions.

The four options differ considerably in terms of outcomes, direct target groups, cooperation partners, and time implications. While options a) and b) take longer to create tangible effects for target groups and a more stable context, options c) and d) are comparably rather fast-track options. Option a) depends on a working vocational education and training system and can rather not be aimed for in highly fragile contexts or situations of (protracted) crisis. Option d) is very diverse and can be rather fast and simple or rather systemic and complex.

An important part of step 2 is also to reflect on *realistic impact expectations*. A good qualitative analysis of the situation and options (step 1) provides the necessary basis for such this. Building on this analysis, participatory and inclusive planning approaches and the involvement of the target groups and powerful actors help to produce realistic planning. Any assumptions underlying the change considerations should be made explicit and critically reviewed. Especially in unstable contexts, a repeated reflection of the chosen approaches is also recommended.

Finally, it seems important to bear in mind that interventions should have no negative impact on the target group itself, on a situation (e.g. intensification of conflict), on the local population or on other groups. For this purpose, instruments of conflict-sensitive planning are recommended.^p

Key questions regarding the objectives and change strategy:

- What are the most realistic options for your target groups and how could you best support them to make use of them? How does your support/intervention relate to interventions of other actors?
- Based on your step 1 context and situation analysis, do you rather opt for quick wins or for structural changes at system level? Is a VSD intervention appropriate or rather not? Is it enough?
- Who are your partners? What is their task in the system? What are their interests, resources and contributions?
- What impact expectations exist (your own and third party, including beneficiaries) and are these realistic? How can you best address and shape these expectations? What are your assumptions? Are they realistic?
- How does your intervention affect non-target groups? How do you assure the acceptance of your intervention or support for specific migrant incl. refugees target groups among authorities, resident communities and within other migrant/refugee groups? How do you control unintended effects?
- How do you ensure that your intervention is conflict-sensitive and that it maximises positive impacts and minimises negative impact on target groups, societies and conflict?

Step 3: Defining the appropriate mix

Step 3 is about *defining the concrete interventions* to reach the defined objectives for your target group.

VSD offers a set of instruments that can be useful in working towards the defined aim of a project or programme, including one specifically for migrants and refugees. Typically, several of the instruments given below (and others) are combined within an intervention; it will rarely be only a training course that will make the difference in accessing employment and income, but also other VSD measures, measures on the level of policy dialogue and lobbying and advocacy, and often also basic education instruments and interventions from private and financial sector development. To achieve a project's goals, it is important to find the appropriate mix of interventions which matches the specific needs of the target groups and countries of origin and/or destination, their resources and the opportunities available – while keeping the programme simple and adapted to the contextual possibilities (realistic expectations).



Objectives	Target Groups	Partners	Typical VSD and related instruments include ⁵ :
a) VSD systems: Improving VSD systems performance and readiness for migrants incl. refugees;			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - policy dialogue - awareness raising campaigns, advocacy - systems design (i.e. the development of structures and the provision of resources that are capable of dealing with mixed groups of students), - qualification of teachers and trainers to work with migrants incl. refugees as part of their learner groups - organisational development of VET providers to deal with additional students with differing backgrounds and challenges (diversity management) adaptation of curricula and teaching and learning modalities - adaptation of assessment criteria and procedures
b) Access and inclusion: Granting access of migrants incl. refugees to VSD.	See above	See above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Career guidance and counselling, incl. assessment of resources and competences, information on educational opportunities, coaching - catch-up education/second chance programmes to fill possible gaps (e.g. language, basic education competencies, social norms) - VSD preparation offers (e.g. bridging courses, VSD readiness courses) - learner support measures incl. counselling and coaching (psycho-social counselling), safe child care - bursaries, training vouchers - quota systems - transport arrangements and specific course scheduling - recognition of prior learning and qualifications of migrants including refugees
c) Labour market integration: Creating direct employment and income outcomes for migrants incl. refugees.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - employment promotion measures such as assessment of resources and competences, labour information, placement/matching services for migrants (including refugees), and temporary wage subsidies; - temporary employment organised as specific programmes for migrants, including refugees; - short training courses designed for direct labour market integration; - promotion of self-employment/entrepreneurship promotion - Business coaching and start-up support - financial support measures
d) Industry solutions: Providing competent workforce for industries.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - specific (re-)training programmes to prepare migrants for work (language skills, social skills and technical skills) - industry certification - recognition of prior learning

Key questions regarding the mix of interventions:

- What instruments do you need to achieve your intended sustainable impact and therefore to meet the needs of your beneficiaries – migrants incl. refugees?
- Is training needed at all to generate relevant employment and income? Are other measures more efficient, appropriate, promising, and more sustainable?
- Which measures already exist, and which are missing? What resources, provided by the system or by other organisations, are available for the target group? What is missing but needed – and should therefore be developed?
- How can you best combine instruments to achieve your aim? Do you need to associate measures from basic education, private or financial sector development? Are there options to engage with the private sector?

⁵ This is a non-exhaustive list which, in the authors' view, identifies particularly relevant instruments.

- Does your intervention mix still fit the impact logic? Is it manageable and realistic in terms of expected results? Are all assumptions clear and realistic?
 - Does our plan comply with international standards e.g. for Education in Emergencies?⁹
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Typical interventions

The following examples provide insight and evidence on how VSD can support migrants including refugees and/or societies in benefiting from migration or in improving situations and conditions for those migrating. Each of the examples uses a specific mix of VSD and other instruments to achieve its goals, depending on contextual factors and the resources and options of its target groups.

✓ Conflict-induced forced displacement – the Kakuma case in Kenya

Situation analysis (step 1)	The Kakuma refugee camp is hosting many refugees mainly from Somalia and South-Sudan. The camp is situated in a rather rural and remote setting, outnumbering the local communities largely. The skills of host communities and refugees are rather similar. The camp offers limited labour market opportunities and access to the labour market outside the camp is strictly regulated. The crisis situation is protracted, the duration of stay is long years and the options to move on are very limited.
Objectives and change strategy / Approach (step 2)	The SDC focuses on improving the livelihoods of the refugees in the camp and selected host communities, thus has a very clear employment and income focus in a very specific camp labour market. Given the poor and almost inexistent structural resources in the remote camp, the programme develops and implements the offers without aiming to develop a lasting structure.
Intervention mix (step 3)	The programme has developed specific short course trainings in the camp that cater the local and camp labour market. The trainings cover technical and business skills that enable the refugees to create their own small business or by access a job. The offers developed are gender-sensitive (selection of trades, side-measures such as child care and training modalities) and involve the local host communities in order to improve acceptance and co-habitation. The courses apply simple and rather informal learning methods that are aligned with the competencies of the target groups. The offers are continuously re-viewed applying the rapid-labour market appraisal method in order to avoid over-supply.
Information	Go to http https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home.html > countries > Kenya > projects

✓ Circular labour migration – the Nepal case

Situation analysis (step 1)	Unregulated and partly regulated but widely accepted migration flow (estimated at 1,500-2,000 Nepalese daily, 13% of whom are women) to the gulf countries. Young men mainly work in the construction sector, whereas women work often in the care/domestic sector. The migration type is cyclical and the Nepali migrants often do have very limited or no accepted qualifications at all. Risks for exploitation during recruitment and employment are high and little guarantee are in place as regards on-the-job safety or respect for the rights of the migrant workers.
Objectives and change strategy / Approach (step 2)	The SDCs approach intervenes at system and individual level along the full migration cycle in the country of origin and the countries of destination. It combines skills acquisition with improved information, financial support, systems development (recognition of prior learning, skills testing), advocacy and political dialogue. The approach does not aim to stop migration, but to make it safe and migrants and their families to benefit more from their migration investment.
Intervention mix (step 3)	To reap the benefits of migration, SDC Nepal initiated a set of interventions at two levels: <i>At system level:</i> to increase labour market mobility (in-country or abroad) the Nepal Vocational Qualifications System (NVQS) project has worked towards cross-border skills recognition by developing competency standards and a qualification system compatible to the regional and international frameworks. In order to enable returnee migrants to enter into the labour market, their competencies are assessed through the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) system. The migrants can use RPL certificates to get jobs or to access loan from banks to start their own enterprises or to enrol in a higher level of training in the country. <i>At individual level:</i> to promote skills for potential migrant workers, the Safer Migration (SaMi) project provides skills training to migrants together with other information on safe departure. SaMi also offers financial literacy classes to family members – mainly women - left behind. Through the classes, they learn how to put the money sent home to best use, as well as better understanding the “do’s” and “don’ts” of migration. Bridging the information gap between the migrant and those at home is an important part of making migration a success for the household. For those who have been cheated, deprived or traumatized, including returnee migrants, SaMi offers legal / and paralegal services and psychosocial counselling.
Information	Go to http https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home.html > countries > Nepal for project descriptions.

✓ **Circular labour migration – the Sri Lanka case**

Situation analysis (step 1)	Similar to the Nepal case above, we also find unregulated and partly regulated but widely accepted migration flows from Sri Lanka to the gulf countries and, to a lesser extent, the south Asia countries and Australia. The migration type is cyclical and the Sri Lanki migrants (slightly more of whom are men than women) often do have very limited or no accepted qualifications at all. The main sectors include construction and personal services (health care, childcare, etc.). The main problem is the ignorance of the effects and risks of unskilled migration among the migrants themselves and the desire to earn money as quickly as possible. An accessible and affordable training offer exists in and of itself and recognition mechanisms exist as well.
Objectives and change strategy / Approach (step 2)	The Safe Labor Migration Project (SLMP) of SDC Sri Lanka approaches this challenge together with the Government offices in all 25 districts of the country in order to protect migrants and their rights as workers abroad. The SLMP approach focuses on a targeted strategic intervention, career guidance. The assumption is that a better-informed target group makes better decisions regarding migration and that a much better migration situation and return on investment can be achieved by means of targeted training prior to migration.
Intervention mix (step 3)	So-called "Occupation Guidance Counselling" structures are developed together within regional governmental structures. Field level trained counsellors interact with potential and returning migrant workers (and their families) and help them to identify their individual aspirations, skills at their disposal, assess market demand and enable them to make decisions on their career and skill development plans. They create awareness of the positive outcomes of small and targeted skills development investments for them and their families. One of the courses targets for example the so-called "financial illiteracy" of those left behind, where counsellors learn to teach migrants' families how to handle cash flows from abroad.
Information	Go to http https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home.html > countries > Sri Lanka for project descriptions.

✓ **Internally and regionally displaced persons – the Lebanon case**

Situation analysis (step 1)	The context in Lebanon is characterized by surrounding conflicts (Palestinian conflict, Syrian war) and by high internal and political instability. This situation leads to very high youth unemployment and lack of prospects, which in turn feeds the ground for problematic social developments. For many displaced and vulnerable young people, the fact that they have not been able to complete their schooling or vocational training is an additional factor. They have large gaps in their knowledge and often also, marked by the long-lasting conflicts and their living conditions, unfavourable learning and development conditions in every respect.
Objectives and change strategy / Approach (step 2)	Within the framework of the European Regional Development and Protection Programme for Refugees and Host Communities in Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq (RDPP), which is co-financed by Switzerland, so-called "accelerated vocational education and personal development programmes" are offered to vulnerable and marginalised young people. These are short, 3-4-month programmes that provide comprehensive preparation for entering the labour market. The programmes are defined together with the local private sector and are therefore labour market oriented.
Intervention mix (step 3)	The programmes do not only teach vocational skills. They also fill gaps in general education and promote personality development. The programme helps young people to develop conflict management strategies and to develop independent life plans in order to promote their resilience towards adverse living conditions.
Information	Go to http https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home.html > countries > Lebanon for project descriptions. Or go to https://rdpp-me.org/

Selected lessons learned

The conclusions formulated here attempt to formulate statements of general validity, beyond specific contexts, across the entire spectrum of VSD as an intervention instrument in humanitarian crisis and development contexts. These statements must be contextualised in the given case and must not be misunderstood as rigid instructions. They complement the tool but do not aim to repeat or even replace the above insights. The order in which they are mentioned makes no statement about the importance of the learnings formulated here.

- ✓ **Migrants incl. refugees are a very diverse target group – which calls for specific answers**
Migrants incl. refugees, like everyone else, are people with different resources, personalities and needs. The aim is to identify them according to their situation – which has a strong influence on options at hand – and objectives, and to find the best possible solutions against the background of political analysis. When analysing the context, make sure you distinguish between voluntary and involuntary migration, as people usually face a totally different situation and opportunities, and as they have a strongly differing migration history to deal with. Also make sure you distinguish facts from myths - and base your conclusions on facts rather than myths. In some situations, this will result in interventions on a very informal and low-key level, in a fast-delivery approach, and in others this might result in a complex and rather long-term systems development and structural change approach. The instruments for realising these approaches are known and good practice exists, once you are clear about the situation and the objectives.
- ✓ **Demand-oriented offers are key: Develop solutions together with the migrant incl. refugees target groups, the host communities, and the labour market-actors**
In order to be effective and accepted, solutions must always be defined together with the target groups, the host population and the host authorities. Make sure the VSD offers are aligned with the individual resources and interest of the migrants incl. refugees, the labour market options and demand there is, and the regulations that are in place for them. Sometimes this leads to interventions that would not have been a priority from the donor's point of view, but which are feasible for all involved parties, accepted and therefore as effective as possible.
- ✓ **A simple and appropriate mix of interventions is key – training is often not enough and sometimes not even appropriate**
To achieve a project's goals, it is important to find the appropriate mix of interventions which matches the complexity of the situation and the needs of migrants incl. refugees. This calls for a simple yet diversified and adapted, need-oriented measures that nicely interplay. VSD can be part of the mix when the aim is employment and income, but does not need to be, as developed in this tool.
- ✓ **Work with the existing education and training system – private and public**
If vocational skills development provision in the broad sense is part of the intervention, then it is advisable to clarify whether and how existing structures can be used and how recognition of educational qualifications achieved can be ensured in the local education and training system and, where appropriate, in the education and training system of the home or target country.
- ✓ **Concrete interventions that benefit the migrants incl. refugees should be combined with policy dialogue and advocacy**
All concrete interventions in favour of groups of migrants incl. refugees, host societies and their institutions (e.g. training centres) should be complemented by advocacy and political dialogue on the issue of migrants. This is because the positive use of migration resources is often hindered by unnecessary structural hurdles that can only be tackled by changing framework conditions.
- ✓ **Consider the full migration cycle**
Migration movements are often - although not always - cyclical. They always have a starting point and usually different destinations. In projects that use vocational skills development as an instrument, it is therefore central to know the labour market needs and obstacles in the countries of destination. One should shape it's interventions with the involvement of these countries' actors knowing their interests. This applies in particular to the competences to be acquired and certification. For returnees it is of central importance that their competences acquired abroad are recognised in their country of origin (diploma recognition, recognition of prior learning).
- ✓ **Work on the positive dynamics of migration**
Migration is a constant in human history and an opportunity for many people. Therefore, and in addition to combating illegal and unsafe migration, it is important to focus on the positive aspects of migration, both on an individual, social and economic level, and to enforce and support these dynamics.

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^a As understood by the World Bank Group <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/social-inclusion> [22.11.2019] and the SDC <https://www.shareweb.ch/site/DDLGN/topics/governance/socialinclusion/SitePages/Home.aspx> [22.11.2019]

^b Terms and definitions are important when working on migration issues. We refer to the International Organisation on Migration IOM and their glossary on migration terms: <https://www.iom.int/key-migration-terms> [22.11.2019] and the UNHCR for this purpose: <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/asylum-and-migration.html> [22.11.2019]; <https://www.refworld.org/docid/56e81c0d4.html> [22.11.2019]

^c Especially those focusing on access to safe and decent work, improved livelihoods and employability and gainful employment in the country of destination or origin as given by the priorities of the dispatches on international cooperation 17-20 and 21-24.

^d For the nexus between migration and the SDGs, please consult the following publication: Overseas Development Institute (2017), *Migration and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.*

^e For the impact expectations of development cooperation, please see also the explanatory report on international cooperation, 2.5.2019, page 16. Please consider also the Global Compact for Migration, which is, however, not adopted by Switzerland as of End of 2019, considers education and skills development as important means in the context of migration, both for improving opportunities for those who migrate, whether internally or internationally, and also in supporting countries of origin and countries of destination to manage migration and to benefit from it. See <https://www.iom.int/global-compact-migration> [08.10.2018].

^f See <https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home/sdc/strategy/legal-bases/message-international-cooperation-2017-2020/focal-areas-priorities.html> [20.7.2018].

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^j E.g. Understanding and analysing VSD: an introduction; Impact areas of VSD: a typology tool; Common outcome indicators; and other. All of these can be found on the SDC E+I shareweb site, see

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^k Please consider the SDC instruments on the Democratisation, Decentralisation and Local Governance Shareweb of the SDC: <https://www.shareweb.ch/site/DDLGN/topics/politicaconomy/SitePages/Home.aspx> [22.11.2019]. You might also consult the UNDP Institutional and Context Analysis Guidance Note:

https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/oslo_governance_centre/Institutional_and_Context_Analysis_Guidance_Note.html [22.11.2019]

^l See for example Swisscontact (2016), *The Nexus Between Skills Development and Migration & Development. Concept Paper*, or the GIZ Sector Project Migration and Development and Centre for International Migration and Development www.cimonline.de [15.2.2019] and <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/62318.html> [15.2.2019]

^m See Swisscontact (2016), *The Nexus Between Skills Development and Migration & Development. Concept Paper*, pp. 10ff.

ⁿ Individual resources as used are covering the human, social and partly physical and financial assets as given by the livelihood asset concept used in humanitarian aid. See: DFID. (1999). Sustainable Livelihoods Guidance Sheets. London: Department for International Development. A helpful guide on applying the framework is provided by the UN development programme: UNDP (2017). Guidance note. Application of the sustainable livelihoods framework in development projects.

^o See newly revised fourth edition, as of March 2019,

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^p SDC standard tools include the do-no-harm work package and the leave-no-one-behind (LNOB) guidance.

^q The inter-agency network for Education in Emergencies defined standards for use in crisis response in a range of situations. The standards can largely also be applied for VSD interventions, but might need some contextualisation in parts: <https://inee.org/standards> [22.11.2019]