



THE CONTRIBUTION OF HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT TO MIGRATION POLICY IN EGYPT



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Foreword

In 2006 the European Training Foundation (ETF) launched a pilot study to investigate how human resources development can contribute to migration policy. Since knowledge on the overall consequences of migration in relation to education/skills and labour markets is limited, the ETF research approach included a review of existing literature, and fact-finding missions and field surveys in five ETF partner countries, namely Albania, Egypt, Moldova, and Tunisia, some of which are new and some traditional sources of migration to the EU.

The ETF is extremely grateful to the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration, in particular the Minister of Manpower and Emigration, H.E. Aisha Abdel Hady, and the First Undersecretary and Head of the Emigration Sector, Mrs Magda Abdel Rahman, as well as to the Egyptian Population Council for their indispensable support.

For the Egyptian part of the study, a local company, Social Planning, Analysis and Administration Consultants (SPAAC), was contracted to carry out the field survey and first level of data analysis. A fact-finding mission to Egypt was carried out between 26 and 31 August 2006 by an ETF team of experts, assisted by an international expert, Professor Richard Black from the University of Sussex, UK. Key national stakeholders in the Egyptian context were visited during the mission: the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration, Cairo Demographic Centre, Population Council, and some local offices of international organisations, namely the League of Arab States, ILO Sub-regional Office, World Bank Cairo Office and International Organization for Migration (IOM) Office.

Based on the datasets produced on potential and returning migrants, analyses were carried out by an ETF team of experts: Natalia Popova, Elena Carrero Perez, Francesco Panzica, Jesús Alquézar and Ummuhan Bardak prepared a report, the findings of which were validated by national stakeholders during an event in Cairo on 2 September 2007.

Executive summary

There is huge demographic pressure on the Egyptian education and training system, with the increase in the numbers of students and graduates being directly related to the increase in the country's population. Between 1994 and 2004, Egypt's population rose from 56.3 to 69.3 million and its student population increased from 14.5 to 18.1 million. Achieving the goal of universal access to education is a priority for the authorities. The expansion in the education system has been spectacular and successful, but quality has become a pressing issue as far as the near future is concerned, the education system having suffered over the past two decades as a result of high population growth, the government's commitment to universal free education (including university education), and constrained resources. University graduates in Egypt – especially those from public universities and those graduating from law, social studies, humanities and commerce programmes – lack the skills necessary to be able to compete in local, regional and international labour markets. These skills include language proficiency, management and planning skills, and computer and Internet skills.

For graduates from the technical vocational education and training (TVET) system, the greatest difficulty is the mismatch between the skills acquired and those required by the labour market. This problem, which has been clearly identified and which is widely debated by relevant stakeholders in Egypt, is reflected in the skills profile of prospective migrants.

It can be concluded that the problems of quality and lack of labour market relevance pervading the various segments of the education and training system are the same for both Egyptian workers who stay in the country and those who migrate. The education and training system suffers from the absence of an overall reform strategy that would integrate its various subsystems. From the perspective of migration, the objectives of improving the quality and relevance of the system and filling skills gaps are equally crucial, particularly in view of the competition that exists in the international labour market.

Based on education and population statistics, Egypt needs to create around 500,000 to 700,000 new jobs each year to absorb graduate entrants into the labour market. New entrants are increasingly relying on informal jobs, although the formal private sector is also increasing its share of first jobs. Although government employment growth seems to have finally slowed down it is still significant at 30% of employment, while economic reforms appear to be having a positive effect on the growth of private sector employment. In this context, migration is still an important source of employment for many Egyptians (mainly men).

In Egypt, activity and employment rates are very low (the labour participation rate and employment rate are 45.6% and 40.6% respectively), mainly because of low female labour force participation (on average 20%). The agricultural sector and the private non-agricultural sectors absorbed around 40% and 30% respectively of employment in 1998. The unemployment rate was 8.3% in 2006, and an analysis of the unemployment pool indicates severe primary unemployment among young people, and especially educated young people. In 2002, unemployment was highest for graduates from technical/vocational secondary schools (32.0%) and university graduates (14.4%). By 2006, however, there was a shift towards higher unemployment rates among university and post-secondary institute graduates.

Most of those who are unemployed are recent graduates from an education system that fails to equip students to compete in the local, regional and international markets. This is an important conclusion in terms of the skills profile of Egyptian migrants, who traditionally migrate to the Gulf countries under temporary work contracts, or, to a lesser extent, to EU countries on a more permanent basis. New social expectations (particularly linked to migration to EU countries) continue to ensure migratory flows that are driven not only by unemployment or severe poverty, but also by an aspiration to improve opportunities and standards of living.

The real pressure now is from the large cohorts of young graduates who leave the education and training system with poor or insufficient skills and with the dream of migrating to countries that potentially offer better economic and social conditions. The legal barriers to working in EU countries and the lack of recognition of qualifications obtained in Egypt are leading to problems of illegal migration and underemployment of migrants, problems which the government is trying to address.

For the ETF survey, a total of 812 potential migrants and 1,000 returning migrants were interviewed. Two structured questionnaires were used, one for potential and one for returning migrants. Given that the prime reason for conducting the survey was to identify the characteristics of people migrating to

Europe, some governorates/villages that were known to send migrants to Europe were over sampled in order to reflect a sufficient volume of migration to Europe. A two-stage cluster sampling approach was used, with six governorates (Daqahliya, Gharbiya, Menoufiya, Fayoum, Port Said and Cairo) chosen to represent the diversity of the country (areas with high and low levels of development and with rural and urban characteristics).

Potential migrants

A sample of 812 respondents (73% men and 27% women) in the 18–40 age group were interviewed as potential migrants. The respondents, 44% of whom were married or engaged, were divided into four age groups: 18–24 (57% of the sample); 25–29 (20%); 30–34 (11%); and 35–40 (12%). In terms of educational level, 15% of the respondents had a low level, 56% had an intermediate level, and 29% had a high level.

Of the 812 potential migrants, 47% expressed a serious intention to go abroad. In order to make a better assessment of the real probability of going abroad, other factors – the likelihood of migrating within the next two and a half years, the ability to finance the move, language knowledge, information about the most likely migration destination, and possession of the necessary documents – were taken into consideration. On this basis, the likelihood of migration fell to 25%.

There was a higher propensity to migrate than not to migrate among those with university education. This was linked to the labour market situation, in which many young graduates have difficulties in obtaining their first job.

Regarding the employment status of the respondents, 60% were currently employed, typically in public administration, petty trade, and the construction and agricultural sectors. The difference between employed and unemployed respondents in terms of their plans to migrate was not large, indicating that having a job was not enough to prevent migration.

The most frequent reason for migration was unemployment, followed by the opportunity to improve their standard of living. Financing education (their own and their children's) was mentioned by just 5.2% of potential migrants. The choice of the destination country depended mainly on the opportunity to gain work with a better income, followed by the presence of friends and/or relatives (migrant networks).

With regard to training prior to migration, 26% of all potential migrants intended to undertake some training. Language training was mentioned most frequently (46%) as a preparation for migration, followed by vocational training (26%). University studies were mentioned as a preparation for migration by 15% of respondents.

A significant number of potential migrants planned to work in public administration, which was a possibility for those going to the Gulf States under employment agreements. In terms of work type, 77% expected to work as salaried workers, followed by 20% as casual workers.

Returning migrants

A total of 1,000 individuals were interviewed as returning migrants. The flow of returning migrants was male dominated (94%), and the majority (90%) were married, with children (88%) (three children on average). The average age was 44 years, and over half of returning migrants were within the 40–49 age group. The average time spent abroad was 7.6 years. Returning migrants were reasonably well educated. The top three migration countries for returning migrants were Saudi Arabia, Libya and Italy.

80% of female returning migrants had a higher level of education. Therefore, although females did not often migrate, those who did were better educated than male migrants.

With regard to the destination by educational level, for high-skilled workers there were significant differences between the EU and non-EU destinations: the percentage of high-skilled workers going to non-EU countries was much higher. This is mainly as a result of the attractiveness of the posts offered in the Gulf countries, where high-skilled Egyptians are able to obtain jobs as professionals or managers. This is not the case in EU countries, where there is a clear mismatch in term of skills for highly educated migrants from Egypt.

The main reasons for migrating were employment, improving living standards and the possibility of obtaining a higher salary. On the other hand, the choice of the first destination country mainly depended on the possibility of obtaining a visa and income opportunities. These reasons varied depending on the area of migration. For returning migrants from the EU, the presence of relatives and/or friends was also important, while the fact of having obtained a visa was mentioned mainly by migrants who went to the MENA region.

Thus, the primary push factor for migration was economic: Egyptians leaving in search of better income and employment opportunities. Many Egyptian migrants, especially those going to Arab/Gulf countries, had identified specific job opportunities before leaving. This was linked to employment agreements with the Gulf States for the recruitment of skilled professionals.

However, around 80% of returning migrants were not aware of any government schemes or private recruitment companies assisting with employment abroad, regardless of destination. For those who knew of such programmes or companies, the main reason for not using these schemes was that they were expensive and not transparent.

Pre-departure training was rarely available and rarely used. This was linked to the fact that there were very few schemes for managed labour migration that offered training (one example is Italy). In total, only 7 females and 57 males in the sample received pre-departure training. Vocational training was the type most often received, followed by language training.

With regard to the type of work performed abroad, those with a low level of education were employed predominantly in construction, followed by manufacturing. Of the less educated migrants, 45% worked as salaried workers and 43% as casual workers; trends for the migrants with intermediate skills were similar. For high-skilled migrants, the predominant area of work was public administration (57%) and the majority of these workers (93%) were salaried workers. As for work sector according to destination, most of the returning migrants from the EU had worked in hospitality and catering, while those returning from other countries had worked in construction and public administration. A clear trend was identifiable for well-educated migrants, who mainly worked in public administration in non-EU countries.

Most returning migrants had worked abroad for the longest time as skilled workers (41%), followed by professionals (27%), unskilled workers (14%), middle management (10%) and top management (7%). There was a strong correlation between the level of studies and the work level abroad: 64% of returning migrants with a high level of education had worked for the longest time abroad as professionals, and very few as skilled (7%) or unskilled (5%) workers. The majority of those with low (73%) or medium (56%) levels of education had worked as skilled workers. As stated above, the most skilled jobs are offered in MENA countries rather than in EU countries.

It can be seen from details of working hours that the returning migrants worked extremely hard during their time abroad, with 22% working 70 hours or more per week.

Less than 10% of all returning migrants had studied or received training abroad. The better-educated individuals seemed to have had more opportunities to undertake training or studies abroad. With regard to the main destination, 46% of those who migrated to the USA undertook studies or received training, compared to 19% for the EU and 8% for the Arab/Gulf countries. On-the-job training was the most frequent type of training.

With respect to the main reasons for return, the family was cited as the most important reason. Nevertheless, there were significant differences between destination countries: 21.0% of migrants to MENA countries mentioned the end of their contract, while this percentage was only 7.3% for EU countries. Indeed, 12.0% of migrants to EU countries said that they came back because they were sent away by the authorities.

It appears that education level also played a relevant role in the decision to return. Returning migrants with a high level of education mentioned more often than others the fact that their contract had ended, and less often that they were sent away by the authorities. All these differences are linked to the characteristics of migration to the EU and MENA countries.

Almost all respondents (99.5%) declared that they had received no information on returning migrant schemes.

The majority (85%) of returning migrants reported being employed since their return to Egypt, with no major differences in terms of education or studies/training. Most of the returning migrants reported that their experiences abroad helped them to find work at home: 56% stated that their general experience

abroad was helpful, and 40% stated that particular skills acquired on the job were of value. On-the-job training was more important for those with less than primary education.

Nearly half of salaried workers abroad became employers after returning home. A close look at this group, which in any case was very small, reveals that these individuals had the following education levels:

- Low – 12%
- Intermediate – 45%
- High – 43%.

Hence, some returning migrants, especially those with intermediate and high levels of education, can potentially contribute to local development and may even create jobs. Further research is required, however, in order to better understand, encourage and facilitate this group.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview of migration history

Egypt occupies the north eastern corner of Africa; it has a population of 76 million and in 2006 its per capita Gross National Income (GNI) was USD 1,350¹. The country's main revenues are tourist receipts (USD 8.374 million in 2006)², remittances from workers living abroad (USD 5,017 million)³, fees for using the Suez Canal (USD 4.17 billion)⁴, and oil exports (USD 5,190 million)⁵. Agriculture is the main economic sector, employing nearly 30% of the labour force⁶ and accounting for 14.9% of GDP⁷ in 2005. The industry sector accounts for some 36.1% of GDP and employs 14.0% of the labour force. The construction sector, which accounts for 9.0% of GDP, is booming as a result of growing regional demand and the devaluation of the Egyptian pound. The services sector accounts for half of GDP.

Egypt has historically been a receiving country for migrants, and became a sending country in the mid 1950s. Egyptian migration has followed different phases linked to changing labour market needs, particularly in the Arab region, and to economic and political factors at home. In the first phase, up to 1974, the mobility of Egyptian citizens was limited by restrictions on labour migration. In the past the state had provided guaranteed employment in the public sector for university graduates. However, this policy was unsustainable as a result of the high rate of population growth, which was not offset by adequate economic and technological development. As a result, in 1971 migration was authorised. Between 1970 and 1974 an estimated 300,000 people migrated⁸.

During the period 1974 – 1984, increased oil prices fuelled demand for foreign labour in the oil-producing Arab countries. In response to this, the Egyptian government further eased migration procedures and created the Ministry for Emigration Affairs (1981). The number of Egyptian emigrants increased to around 2 million by 1980. There was an increasing demand for teachers in Arab countries. Iraq became a favoured destination for unskilled labour.

In subsequent years, following the Iran–Iraq war, the number of Egyptian migrants decreased. The 1990 Gulf War forced around 2 million Egyptian migrants to return.

It is important to note that significant immigration to Egypt has also taken place since 1983 from Sudan and other countries in sub-Saharan Africa as a result of conflict and political instability, with inflows estimated at between 0.3 million and 3 million people (Zohry, 2003). The main refugee communities in Egypt are Sudanese, Palestinian, Somali, Ethiopian and Eritrea.

1.2 Migration destination

Egyptian migration to Arab countries is a male phenomenon. As a result of competition from new streams of cheap labour from Southeast Asia, the share of Egyptian labourers as a proportion of all registered emigrants to Arab countries declined from 43% in 1985 to 26% in 2005. While most workers were employed in construction during the earlier phases of massive labour migration in the mid 1970s, the proportion of those employed as scientists and technicians has increased since the mid 1980s.

¹ Atlas method. Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators database, April 2007.

² Estimates: www.weforum.org/pdf/tourism/Egypt.pdf

³ Estimates: www.worldbank.org/prospects/migrationandremittances

⁴ Suez Canal Authority Report 2006–2007.

⁵ International Trade Centre, UNCTAD/WTO:
www.intracen.org/appli1/TradeCom/TP_EP_CI.aspx?RP=818&YR=2005

⁶ <http://laborsta.ilo.org/>

⁷ World Bank, World Development Indicators database, April 2007.

⁸ Source: estimates of the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS).

Over the past three decades, two distinct destinations have emerged for Egyptian migration. Emigrants have moved to the countries of the Arab Gulf, mainly on the basis of temporary work contracts, with no prospect being able to stay permanently and no right to citizenship privileges. Since the 1960s, growing numbers of workers have been migrating to Europe, North America and Australia with the intention of staying permanently in these destination countries. Official secondment through government authorities on the basis of bilateral contracts was one of the main forms of temporary migration. Travel through official channels has increased over the past two decades as an alternative form of migration.

As a result of differences in information sources and methodologies, there are differences between the Egyptian migration statistics and those of destination countries. CAPMAS figures are estimates drawn from reports of Egyptian consulates in the respective destination countries, records of cross-border flows from the Ministry of Interior, and details of emigration permits from the Ministry of Manpower. In April 2006, CAPMAS announced that the total number of Egyptians abroad at the time of 2006 census (November 2006) was 3.9 million.

Migration to neighbouring Arab countries has well exceeded migration to Europe, North America and Australia. According to CAPMAS, the total number of Egyptian migrant labourers in the Arab countries is around 1.9 million, of whom 48.0% are in Saudi Arabia, 17.4% in Libya, 12.0% in Jordan and 10.0% in Kuwait. In terms of other migration destinations, the majority of migrants are concentrated in five countries: USA, Canada, Italy, Australia and Greece. The rest are mainly in the Netherlands, France, UK, Germany, Switzerland, Austria and Spain. However, the growth in the number of Egyptian migrants to Europe and the USA reflects the stagnation or even reduction of migration to the countries of the Arab Gulf, which is linked to the increasing number of Southeast Asian workers in those countries.

Reasons for migration from Egypt can be divided into three categories. The first and most important is the economic reason. High population growth in Egypt since the Second World War has triggered socioeconomic problems. High rates of unemployment and poverty and inadequate socioeconomic policy responses to these problems became, and remain, the prime 'push' factors for emigration. In this context it is worth mentioning that Lower Egypt (North) is considerably more developed than Upper Egypt (South), the latter being more rural. As a result, Upper Egypt has generated a continuous migration flow of semi-skilled and unskilled labour, not only to the local labour market, but also to neighbouring countries. The oil boom in the Arab Gulf countries constitutes one of the major 'pull' factors.

The second reason for migration relates to political conditions in both the origin and destination countries. The third relates to social factors, such as assistance from networks of family and friends.

Iraq has been the Arab country most likely to accept skilled Egyptians as permanent residents. Iraq has sought agricultural professionals trained in irrigation techniques, and encouraged Egyptian farmers to move to the sparsely populated but fertile lands in the south.

In 2005 Jordan introduced new labour market regulations that require a work contract before entry into the country. Most Egyptian migrants to Jordan are unskilled labourers who work in agriculture or in the informal sector.

Most of the Egyptian workers who migrate to work in the Libyan informal economy do not appear in the statistics of the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration because they are not required to have a work contract before departure. New regulations similar to the Jordanian ones were introduced by the Libyan authorities in September 2007, and these will have a negative effect on the migration of the semi-skilled and unskilled workers from Egypt.

The distribution of Egyptian migrants to the Arab Gulf countries and Libya is well documented and frequently researched, but less is known about the skills profile of Egyptian migrants to the West (North America, Australia and Europe). Although the majority of Egyptian migrants who work in Arab countries are expected to return home eventually, thousands of Egyptian migrants leave for OECD countries each year with the intention of permanently resettling abroad. These emigrants tend to be highly educated professionals, mostly doctors, engineers and teachers. This high-skilled emigration to OECD countries ('brain drain') is mainly attributed to the low return on education in Egypt, and to unemployment.

1.3 Labour market trends

Based on education and population statistics, Egypt needs to create around 500,000 to 700,000 new jobs each year to absorb graduate entrants into the labour market. New entrants are increasingly relying on informal jobs, although the private formal sector is also increasing its share of first jobs. Although the growth in employment in the public sector appears to have slowed down, it is still significant at 30.0% of employment, while private non-agricultural employment represented 46.5% of total employment in 2006. In this context, migration is still an important source of employment for many Egyptians.

According to the CAPMAS Statistical Yearbook 2004, the Egyptian labour force increased from 16.8 million in 1994 to 22 million in 2004, at an average annual rate of 2.2%. These figures are well below the labour force estimates in the World Bank's World Development Indicators 2005, which estimated the figure for 2003 to be 26.7 million.

According to ETF (2007), activity and employment rates are strikingly low (45.6% labour participation rate and 40.6% employment rate). The main explanation for these rates is the extremely low female labour force participation rate: women account for only 20% of the labour force.

Most unemployed people are recent graduates from an education system that fails to equip students to compete in the local, regional and international markets. This is an important conclusion in terms of the skills profile of Egyptian migrants, who traditionally migrate to the Gulf countries under temporary work contracts, or, to a lesser extent, to EU countries on a more permanent basis. New social expectations (particularly linked to migration to EU countries) continue to ensure migratory flows that are driven not only by unemployment or severe poverty, but also by an aspiration to improve opportunities and standards of living.

The real pressure now is from the large cohorts of young graduates who leave the education and training system with poor or insufficient skills and with a dream of migrating to countries that potentially offer better economic and social conditions. The legal barriers to working in EU countries and the lack of recognition of qualifications obtained in Egypt are leading to problems of illegal migration and underemployment of migrants, problems that the government is trying to address.

There is a negative correlation between high educational attainment and the probability of being informally employed. The precarious nature of jobs in the informal sector is in strong contrast to the high degree of job security and social safety linked to jobs in the public and formal private sectors.

The unemployment rate fell from 11.7% in 1998 to 8.3% in 2006. The absolute number of people unemployed also declined, and currently stands at around 2 million. A closer examination of the unemployment pool indicates the severity of primary unemployment among young people, especially those who are highly educated.

Since 1998 the pattern of unemployment by level of education has seen some shifts. The higher unemployment rates for technical/vocational secondary school graduates were replaced by higher unemployment rates for university and post secondary (diploma) institute graduates in 2006. University graduates are in fact the only educational group to have experienced an increase in unemployment between 1998 and 2006. Most unemployed people are new graduates who are not equipped to compete on the labour market.

Does Egypt suffer a shortage of the highly skilled workers needed by the national economy that would substantiate the 'brain drain' hypothesis? No quantitative studies have so far assessed this problem.

1.4 Education and training

The Egyptian education system comprises four levels:

- Elementary (six years);
- Preparatory (three years);
- Secondary (three years);
- Tertiary or higher education (two, four or more years).

The elementary and preparatory levels constitute primary education. At the secondary level, the Ministry of Education administers or regulates technical and vocational education programmes. Higher-level technical and managerial skills are taught in universities, in and technical and commercial

post-secondary institutes (above intermediate, but less than a university degree). Technical institutes offer two-year programmes following general secondary schooling; universities offer five- and seven-year engineering and medical programmes respectively following general secondary, but other university programmes can be completed in four years on average.

The increase in the number of students and graduates reflects the increase in the population. Between 1994 and 2004, the Egypt population increased from 56.3 to 69.3 million people. At the same time, the student population increased from 14.5 to 18.1 million. The pre-university population increased from 13.9 to 16.4 million, while the university population increased from 613,000 to 1.6 million within the same period. Within the past decade, the university population has more than doubled. It is important to note that the total number of university students studying social sciences and humanities is more than three times the number studying sciences. With respect to vocational education, the total number of students increased from 1.6 to 2.2 million for the intermediate level, and from 81,000 to 132,000 for above intermediate level. In general, the population who have below university vocational education is increasing.

Within the last decade, the total number of graduates has increased from 472,000 to 978,000 per year. With respect to pre-university terminal certificates⁹, the number of graduates has increased from 348,000 to 713,000 a year, with commercial education witnessing a substantial increase (96.8%). The number of university graduates has increased from 94,000 to 265,000 a year, most of these being graduates of humanities and social sciences programmes. Based on these statistics and population growth rates, Egypt needs to create around 500,000 to 700,000 new jobs every year to absorb the new graduate entrants into the labour market.

The above data show that demographic pressure has resulted in the objective of universal access to education becoming the priority for the education authorities, above or at the expense of the issue of quality. The expansion of the system has been spectacular and successful, but in the short term the issue of quality is the pressing priority.

As a result of the high population growth rates in Egypt and the government's commitment to provide free education for all, including university education, combined with constraints on resources, the quality of the education system has declined sharply over the past two decades. The quality of education in general and vocational secondary schools, training centres and even universities has been much called into question. University graduates in Egypt, especially graduates of public universities, and of law, social studies and humanities and commerce programmes, lack the qualities required to compete in the labour market, such as language proficiency, management and planning skills, and computer and Internet skills. For TVET graduates the greatest problem is the mismatch between the skills acquired in the education and training system and those required by the labour market. This problem, which is a major preoccupation and focus for discussion among stakeholders in the system in Egypt, has implications for the skills profile of prospective migrants.

It is important to note that main donors such as the EU and the World Bank have invested substantially in their programmes for the reform of education at all levels (primary, secondary and post-secondary). Other bilateral donors such as USAID have also contributed. The Egyptian government, in collaboration with a number of donors, recently published a new Strategy for Education in which the drive towards quality is identified as one of the main objectives. The EU is preparing for a EUR 120 million direct budget support intervention in the field of education. Other donors, such as the World Bank, have also indicated their intention to support the education system in its move from access to quality objectives.

Graduates of 'low profile' vocational education comprise the largest pool of unemployed young people in Egypt. Vocational education covers grades 10–12 in pre-university education, but does not qualify students for university admission. Vocational education includes commercial, industrial and agricultural specialisations. The quality of this type of education is much lower than that of general secondary education, which leads to university admission. Most of the graduates of vocational education experience unemployment and accept jobs in the informal sector that are not relevant to their educational background. The lack of pathways between the different segments of the system is one of the most severe problems for VET graduates, who are trapped in a system that does not allow them to go back to education/training and update their skills. reconsider their options. Another problem is the lack of practical training, which results in inadequate skills to meet the requirements of the labour market and the private sector. This mismatch of skills is often addressed through training arrangements set up by the private companies themselves, though this sometimes results in narrow

⁹ Terminal certificates are certificates that allow their holders to join the labour market.

specialisation. A third important problem is the absence of a national framework for qualifications that could bring transparency into the recognition of qualifications when workers move to other countries.

In an attempt to enhance vocational education, the government of Egypt signed an agreement with the German government to initiate a project called the Mubarak–Kohl Initiative (MKI). The Mubarak–Kohl Project, adopted in 1991 and operating up to the present time, is particularly relevant to the area of curriculum reform, teacher training and the creation of partnerships between the public and private sectors, as well as the setting up of an apprenticeship system for vocational schools. The MKI is now entering in a new programme phase, focusing on young unemployed people and containing important elements such as career guidance at the basis of its logic of intervention.

The EU has channelled its support to the TVET system through the MEDA TVET Reform Programme, a EUR 66 million intervention co-financed by the EU and the Egyptian government under the umbrella of the Ministry of Industry and Trade, which aims to initiate a reform of the TVET system through a bottom-up approach (building sectoral and local partnerships between private sector and public training providers aimed at improving the quality of delivery of TVET and drawing lessons for the reform of the overall system). The World Bank Skills Development Project (SDP) is designed to be in parallel with and complementary to the EU intervention. It aims to develop a more demand-oriented type of training, and pilots different schemes for financing. These programmes, and other interventions, are coordinated by the Industrial Training Council (ITC), a body created in the second half of 2006 with the aim of coordinating national and donor efforts in relation to training. In addition, in 2000 the Egyptian government launched the National Skills Standard project to develop skills standards for more than 100 professions in three sectors (manufacturing, tourism and construction), including the curricula and the training of trainers. ITC and the TVET programme, among others, are currently rehearsing ways to pilot the implementation of these standards at sectoral and national level.

Egypt has 1,019 vocational training centres with 123,000 trainees, managed by 24 different agencies and ministries. Most of these centres are under the aegis of the Ministry of Social Cohesion, and have more of a social remit, hosting school dropouts and less advantaged people. The quality and relevance of the training systems implemented in these VTCs varies widely depending on the sector and their affiliation. VTCs from the Ministry of Industry have in place a type of dual apprenticeship system. Graduates from some lower-level VTCs may not achieve any officially recognised qualification to prepare them for specific professions.

From the above it can be concluded that the problems of quality and lack of relevance to the labour market pervading the various segments of the education and training system are the same for all Egyptian workers, whether they are staying in the country or migrating. Education and training suffers from a lack of an overall reform strategy that would integrate the various subsystems, and from a fragmentation in terms of the number of institutions officially involved in the delivery of education and training. Efforts are being undertaken at government level, with substantial support from donors, to establish building blocks for the reform of the system and its institutional framework. From the perspective of migration, the objectives of improving the quality and relevance of the system and of filling the skills gap are equally crucial, particularly in view of the competition on international markets from workers from other countries with higher levels of skills.

There is a huge demographic pressure on the Egyptian education and training system. The increase in the number of students and graduates reflects an increase in the population. Between 1994 and 2004, Egypt's population rose from 56.3 to 69.3 million and its student population increased from 14.5 to 18.1 million (see Table 1).

Table 1. Enrolment and attainment by level of education (2003/04)

Level of education	Enrolment	Graduates
Elementary (six years)	8,063,043	-
Preparatory (three years)	4,517,017	-
Secondary general (three years)	1,548,723	-
Secondary technical	2,199,480	646,491
Post-secondary non-university (two years)	131,589	66,494
University: humanities	1,261,375	209,249
University: sciences	353,892	68,512
TOTAL	18,048,119	990,746

Source: CAPMAS, *Statistical Yearbook 2004*

Achieving the goal of universal access to education is a priority for the authorities. The expansion in the education system has been spectacular and successful, but quality has become a pressing issue.

For graduates from the TVET system, the greatest problem is the mismatch between the skills acquired and those required by the labour market. This problem, which has been clearly identified and is widely debated by relevant stakeholders in Egypt, has implications for the skills profile of the prospective migrant.

1.5 Legislative framework

The migration sector in Egypt is regulated through the Law on Emigration and Sponsoring Egyptians Abroad, No.111 of 1983¹⁰. The law consists of five chapters covering provisions applicable to all migrants, on the duration of the stay abroad and the rights of migrants (during a temporary or permanent stay abroad) and returnees. It has two main objectives:

- i. to facilitate both permanent and temporary emigration of Egyptian individuals;
- ii. to maintain strong ties with Egyptians abroad.

The law secures the right of any individual to emigrate according to the provisions of the Egyptian Constitution, and outlines the rules and procedures to be followed for emigration. It also stipulates the care and facilities that should be extended to Egyptian emigrants before their actual departure from Egypt, during their stay in host countries, and following their return.

Institutional framework

Several ministries and authorities have a mandate to deal with different aspects of migration in Egypt. These are described below.

Ministry of Manpower and Emigration (Emigration Sector)

The Ministry negotiates labour agreements with different countries.

The Ministry for Emigration Affairs and Egyptians Abroad was created in 1981 (Presidential Decree No.574). In 1996, the Ministry of Manpower and Employment (currently the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration), was created together with the Integrated Migration Information System (IMIS), a database of potential Egyptian migrants to be hired by foreign employers. The Emigration Sector of the Ministry has carried out projects on strengthening institutional capacity for the management of legal migration flows. It has also reinforced the role of civil society organisations representing

¹⁰ Additional rules are set out in the Labour Law No.12 of 2003.

Egyptians abroad. In addition, the ministry has 38 training centres, one of which (Kattamea Training Centre) provides some specialised training courses oriented towards potential migrants.

Higher Committee for Migration (HCM)

Article 4 of the Emigration Law No.11 establishes a Higher Committee for Migration, which is headed by the Minister of Manpower and Emigration. The committee's members include representatives of the ministries and entities concerned with migration.

The tasks of the committee include considering the establishment of professional training centres and the organisation of specialised courses for potential migrants, as well as the provision of services and facilities for migrants before their departure, during their stay abroad, and after their temporary or permanent return to Egypt.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Like those of other countries, Egyptian embassies and consulates provide Egyptian citizens abroad with an array of services such as:

- Free registration on the consulates' records during the first six months of their stay abroad;
- Repatriation of families in an emergency;
- Renewal of passports and other official documents;
- Authentication of formal documents;
- Recording civil events such as births, deaths, divorces and marriages.

The ministry is responsible for cooperating with other government bodies to facilitate migration and to deal with the problems of Egyptian migrants abroad. Its objective is to protect Egyptian migrants from any kind of discrimination. It also cooperates with various bodies to fight illegal migration.

Ministry of Interior

The Ministry of Interior is mainly responsible for managing immigration to Egypt and dealing with foreigners. It monitors migration to and from Egypt, regulates the residence of foreigners in the country and grants work permits to temporary Egyptian migrants prior to their departure, with work contracts legalised by the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration. It also keeps records of all passengers who cross Egypt's borders.

With regard to skills, and as mentioned above in the section on education and training, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry for Higher Education are the main competent authorities in the field of education (including technical and post-secondary education), while there are more than 24 ministries and institutions in charge of training in various sectors and segments. Officially the only body in which all these stakeholders are represented, including representatives from the private sector (Federations and Chambers) and trade unions, is the Supreme Council for Human Resources Development (SCHRD). Although the SCHRD has been inactive during the past four or five years, its membership was upgraded at ministerial level by the Labour Law approved in 2003. Its chairperson, the Minister of Manpower and Emigration, has recently promoted a newly appointed Executive Committee (Prime Minister's Decree) and it is expected that the SCHRD will resume its activities during 2008. In parallel to this, as mentioned previously, the Industrial Training Council (ITC) was set up by the Ministry of Industry in 2006 to coordinate all programmes relating to industrial training. Since this portfolio includes important donor programmes such as the EU TVET Reform Programme and the World Bank SDP, and since its mandate and resources have been increased considerably during its short lifetime, the ITC will also play an important part in the coordination and synergy of HRD efforts.

1.7 Bilateral and international cooperation on migration

Within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument (ENPI), migration is described as one of the key priorities for action in the EU–Egypt Action Plan drafted in June 2007. It stipulates cooperation on the joint management of migration flows (both legal and illegal), equal treatment and social integration for legal migrants, and asylum issues.

Emigration to Arab Gulf countries in the region is well regulated and managed by private recruitment companies: there are more than 500 companies licensed and monitored by the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration.

During the past decade, the Italian government has established a partnership with the Egyptian government for a quota system. This quota has been increased to 7,000 work contracts per year. With effect from 2007, the quota will increase to 10,000. However, the low levels of skills and qualifications among the population have been major impediments to filling the quota.

Two other concrete examples of bilateral cooperation on migration are the projects Integrated Migration Information System (IMIS) and Information Dissemination for the Prevention of Irregular Migration from Egypt (IDOM), funded by Italy and implemented by the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration, in cooperation with International Organization for Migration (IOM). Initiated in June 2001, IMIS is a technical tool and a capacity-building mechanism that supports the Emigration Sector of the ministry. A website for matching potential migrants and employers for job vacancies abroad and the creation of a portal for Egyptian expatriates represent the main outputs of the project.

The IDOM project aims to limit illegal migration and curb its risks. Through the provision of information, it aims to have a positive influence on the choices of potential migrants from Egypt and to allow them to achieve a better understanding of the realities of migration. Within the IDOM project, in 2006 a field survey of 1,552 respondents was carried on the attitudes of Egyptian young people towards migration to Europe. The second phase of the IDOM Plus project started in mid 2007 as an extension of this project, with the same mandate.

2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The following phases have been used to implement the project, based on both qualitative and quantitative methods:

- preliminary desk research;
- fact-finding mission;
- field survey of potential and returning migrants;
- drafting of the country migration profile.

Phase 1: Preliminary desk research

The desk research aimed to provide background information for the country migration profile and review the existing literature on the subject, including statistical data, legislative materials and details of bilateral agreements.

Phase 2: Fact-finding mission

Meetings were held with the main national stakeholders involved in migration issues.

Phase 3: Field survey of potential and returning migrants

The survey consisted of face-to-face interviews with 812 potential migrants and 1,000 returning migrants, and was based on two structured questionnaires. The questionnaires were developed by the ETF and an international expert, Professor Richard Black, Director of the Sussex Centre for Migration Research (UK), and were finalised with the contribution of the local contractor SPAAC. The survey was carried out in November and December 2006.

Although the proposed sample was to be 1,000 potential migrants and 1,000 returning migrants, those returning migrants in the age group 18–40 years who stated during the interview that they would consider migrating again, and who were the only household member eligible for the survey, were also considered as potential migrants. Consequently, these potential migrants who were also returning migrants were deducted from the total of 1,000 potential migrants. As a result, the final sample of potential migrants was 812 respondents, while the sample of returning migrants was 1,000, as originally planned.

Egypt is divided into three regions, the urban governorates (Cairo, Alexandria, Port Said and Suez), Lower Egypt (the Delta governorates north of Cairo) and Upper Egypt (the governorates south of Cairo). A two-stage cluster sample was used in the survey, in which six governorates in Egypt (Daqahliya, Gharbiya, Menoufiya, Fayoum, Port Said and Cairo) were chosen to represent the diversity of the country. Areas with high and low levels of development and with rural and urban characteristics were represented.

With regard to timing, the interviews were conducted so as to include people who were out at work, for example, outside regular working hours.

The procedure for selecting individual interviewees varied for (a) potential migration, and (b) return migration.

(a) Potential migration survey

1. A first step was to calculate the number of households to be contacted in each cluster locality in a way that reflected the proportion of the population living in different regions and areas. Thus, for example, if 15% of the country's population lived in the capital city, 15% of interviews would be conducted in the capital city. Similarly, if 50% of the country's population was from rural areas, 50% of the interviews should be in rural areas. Through this method, it was hoped that a nationally representative sample survey would be approximated.
2. Based on this selection, interviewers were given a total number of households that they needed to contact for the potential migration survey in each locality. This number of households was selected using a process that was either random, or was performed in a systematic way that eliminated any

potential bias. For example, a series of 'routes' for interviewers were selected at random, along which interviewers systematically selected households¹¹ (e.g. every fifth household).

3. Selected households were first asked screening questions in order to identify the presence of potential and returning migrants.
4. The aim was for the potential migration survey to be broadly representative of the young adult population (aged 18–40) as a whole. This was in order to ensure that while interviewing potential migrants, there was a control sample of those in the same age group who were not actively seeking to migrate.

(b) Return migration survey

For the purpose of this survey, returning migrants were defined as anyone who:

- left the survey country aged 18 or over;
- had lived and worked abroad continuously for at least six months;
- came back at least three months ago and within the past ten years;
- was present and available for interview.

Those who returned within the past three months, or more than ten years ago, were not asked about their experiences abroad.

1. If no returning migrant was present, the potential migration survey was administered to one individual in the household who was aged 18–40. Respondents were selected on the following basis:
 - If only one person aged 18–40 was present (i.e. available for interview), he/she was interviewed.
 - If more than one other person aged 18–40 was present (i.e. available for interview), one individual was selected by taking the person whose month of birth fell next after the completion of the interview, or by a similar random method.
 - If birth months were not known, individuals were chosen by lot.
 - If no one aged 18–40 was present or available for interview, the interviewer moved on to the next household, starting again with the screening questions, in order to find a respondent aged 18–40.
2. It was important to eliminate any source of bias in choosing an individual for interview. In other words, it was not always the oldest person, or the most educated, or a man, who was interviewed. In principle, once the 1,000 interviews were completed across the country, the proportion of men and women interviewed, and the proportion with different levels of education, should accurately reflect proportions in the country as a whole for the 18–40 age group.
3. If the screening question (1) revealed that a returning migrant was present, both the potential migration and the return migration survey were used – i.e. two individuals were interviewed in the household.

¹¹ The definition of a household for the purposes of this study is: 'those who live together and have communal arrangements concerning subsistence and other necessities of life, plus those who currently live elsewhere, but whose principal commitments are to the household, and who expect to rejoin (or be joined by) the household in the future'. Thus, children or siblings who have moved away from the household can be considered part of the household, but only if, on return, they can confidently be expected to live again within the original household – sending remittances is not a sufficient condition to be considered part of the household.

4. Only one returning migrant was interviewed per household. If there was more than one returning migrant present, one person was selected as per 1(b) or 1(c) above.
5. If there was only one eligible interviewee in the household, who was both a returnee and aged 18–40, the return migration survey was used, and this interview was taken to count towards the quota of 1,000 interviews for both the potential and returning migration surveys.
6. If no returning migrant was present in the screened household, an additional interview was sought with another returning migrant within the locality in order to meet the quota of return migration interviews.

Margin of error

Assuming a simple random sampling, for a confidence level equal to 95% and $p=q=0.5$, Table 2 shows the margin of error for different numbers of answers¹².

Table 2. Margin of error

Number	1,000	750	500	250	125	100	50
Margin of error	3.1%	3.6%	4.4%	6.2%	8.8%	9.8%	13.9%

- Returning migrants must have been aged over 18 at the time of their last migration in order to be included in the interviews.
- The contractor was asked to keep a record of the number of men and women interviewed in each category, and to outline a process to ensure adequate representation of women (and men) in each sample.

Difficulties encountered in the field

The local service provider tried to ensure that the proportion of men and women interviewed was representative of the targeted population. However, there was a gap between the number of male and female respondents that is linked to the nature of the migration phenomenon in the Egyptian context. There is a widespread belief that migration concerns primarily the (male) head of household, or men in general. Therefore, men were more often respondents to the survey.

The main target for the sampling was migration to the EU. As the EU is not the main migration destination for Egypt, certain areas were intentionally oversampled in order to capture this part of migration. In order to determine the most relevant governorates for the sampling, use was made of the IOM study *Attitudes of Egyptian Youth Towards Migration to Europe*¹³. As Egyptian migration to Europe from Upper Egypt was negligible, it was decided that only Fayoum would represent this region. The urban governorates in the sample were represented by Cairo and Port Said, while Lower Egypt governorates were represented by Daqahliya, Menoufiya and Gharbiya. The sample size among the different governorates was selected in such a way as to be at least 50% rural.

¹² The results of a survey include a statistical margin of error caused by the sampling process. This margin varies according to three factors.

- a. The sample size: The greater the number of respondents to a question, the smaller will be the margin of error.
- b. The result itself: The closer the result approaches 50%, the wider the statistical margin will be. This is what is expressed by ' $p=q=0.5$ '. It represents the highest margin of error, or its upper limit for the answer to a question.
- c. The degree of confidence: In social sciences, the degree of confidence most often used is 95%.

¹³ Ministry of Manpower and Emigration and International Organization for Migration, *Attitudes of Egyptian Youth Towards Migration to Europe*, Cairo, 2006. Available at: <http://www.emigration.gov.eg/idsite/Upload/Researches/72/Attitudes%20of%20Egyptian%20youth%20towards%20Migration%20to%20Europe.pdf>

Phase 4: Analysis of the survey data and validation

The ETF team of experts, with the assistance of Professor Richard Black and SPAAC, drafted a report based on the results of the survey. The findings were presented at a validation conference on 2 September 2007 in Cairo, under the auspices of the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration.

3 FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY OF POTENTIAL MIGRANTS

3.1 Socio-demographic and educational characteristics

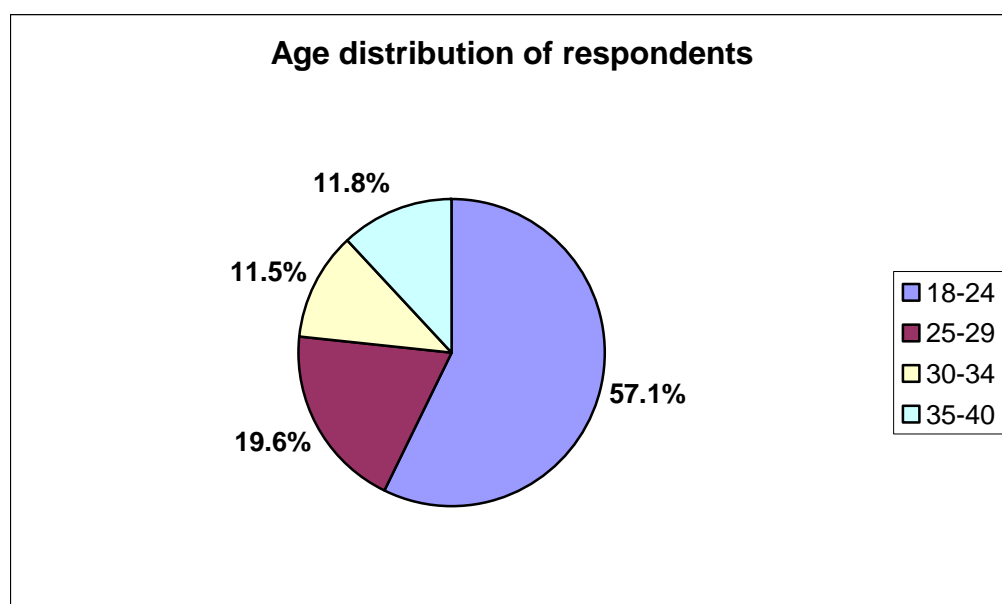
Age, gender and civil status

A total of 812 respondents were interviewed as potential migrants in the age group 18–40. The sample consisted of 73% males and 27% females.

The average age of respondents was 23.33 years. The age composition of the sample was as follows (see Figure 1):

Some 56% of the respondents were single, and 44% of them were married or engaged; 29.2% of the sample had children (an average of 2.23 children).

Figure 1. Age distribution of respondents



N=812 respondents

Language

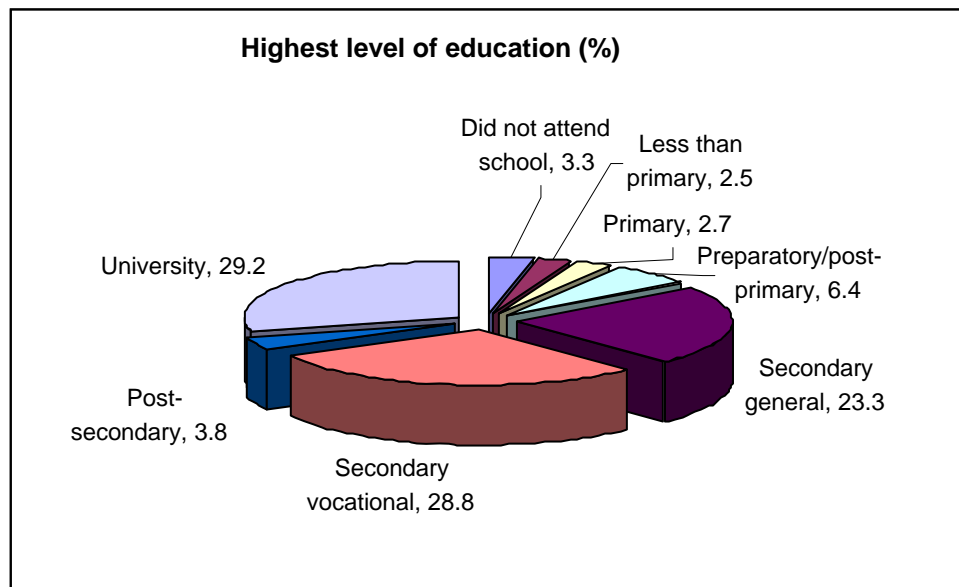
A total of 61.0% of the sample spoke other languages as well as Arabic, mainly English. French was mentioned by 7.8% of the sampled population, while knowledge of other languages (Italian, Russian, Greek) was insignificant¹⁴. A higher percentage of women (67.0%) than men (58.9%) spoke at least one foreign language. The younger and more educated the respondents, the higher the probability of them speaking a foreign language.

¹⁴ Respondents could mention more than one foreign language. For this reason, the total percentage is higher than 100.

Level of education

In terms of educational level, the majority of the sampled population had completed post-secondary or university studies (see Figure 2). According to the ISCED classification¹⁵, this means that 15% of respondents had a low educational level, 56% a medium level and 29% a high level.

Figure 2. Highest level of education (%)



N=812 respondents

There were no significant differences by gender in terms of the level of studies of the sampled population. However, age did make a difference. The younger the respondents, the higher their level of education: 47.2% of those aged 25–29 had a university diploma. This percentage decreased to 38.7% among those aged 30–34 and to 30.2% among those aged 35–40.

The most popular fields of study were social sciences, business and law. The main differences in terms of gender appeared in engineering, manufacturing, construction and agriculture (chosen by proportionally more men than women) and in education and health and welfare (in which a higher proportion of females obtained a diploma).

In the Egyptian education system, students are selected on the basis of the grades they achieve in secondary school. The field of study is also determined by the grade; for example, fields such as medicine are very competitive and require high grades. Therefore, most of the respondents chose their field of study because of the grades they achieved (63.7%). The majority of respondents considered that education helps to improve living standards (86.9%) and that it is important to invest in education (88.8%).

Employment

Regarding employment status, 59.5% of the sample was employed at the time of the survey. The main fields of activity were:

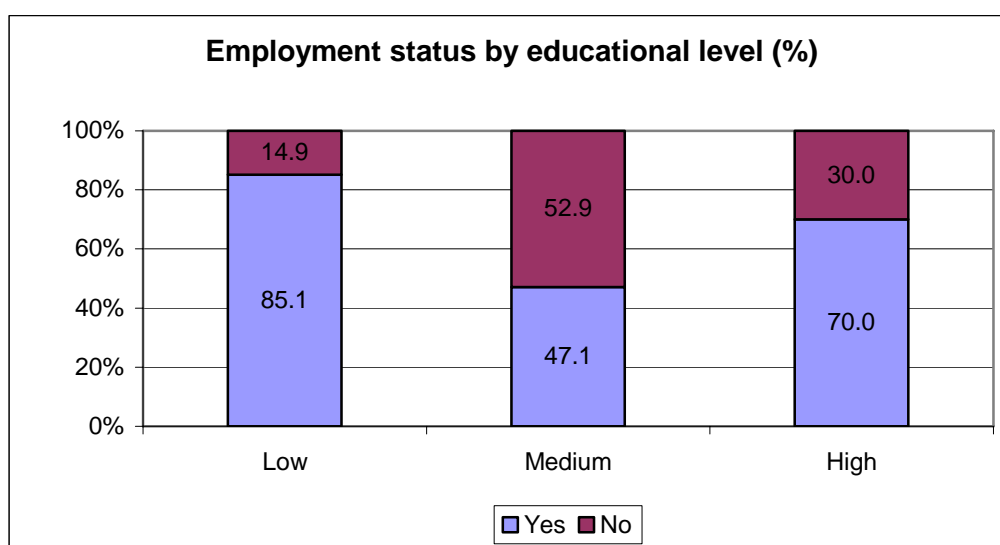
- Public administration: 24.8%;
- Petty trade: 15.0%;
- Construction: 12.1%;
- Agriculture: 9.0%.

¹⁵ Educational levels are classified as 'low' (no schooling, less than primary, primary and post-primary/ preparatory), 'medium' (secondary general, secondary vocational and post-secondary), and 'high' (university and higher) in the sample. This is based on the ISCED 1997 International Standard Classification of Education by UNESCO.

Most were salaried or casual workers. Almost a third of them were skilled workers, 20.6% were unskilled workers and 20.7% were professionals.

The employment rate was higher for men, and there was a correlation between level of education and employment status (see Figure 3). On average, respondents worked 52 hours per week and earned EGP 570 per month¹⁶. The average salary for women (EGP 350) was around half of that for men (EGP 630).

Figure 3. Employment status by educational level (%)



N=812 respondents

Respondents who were not working were asked for the reason. The most common answers were studying (54.1%) and unemployment (40.1%). The impossibility of finding a job was more often expressed by females (57.9%) than by males (29.1%).

3.2. Intentions to go abroad

Some 47.3% of respondents said they were seriously thinking of migrating, and these represent the group of potential migrants that are analysed below. The rest of the group, who did not want to migrate, are 'non-migrants' (52.7%), and these were used as a control group.

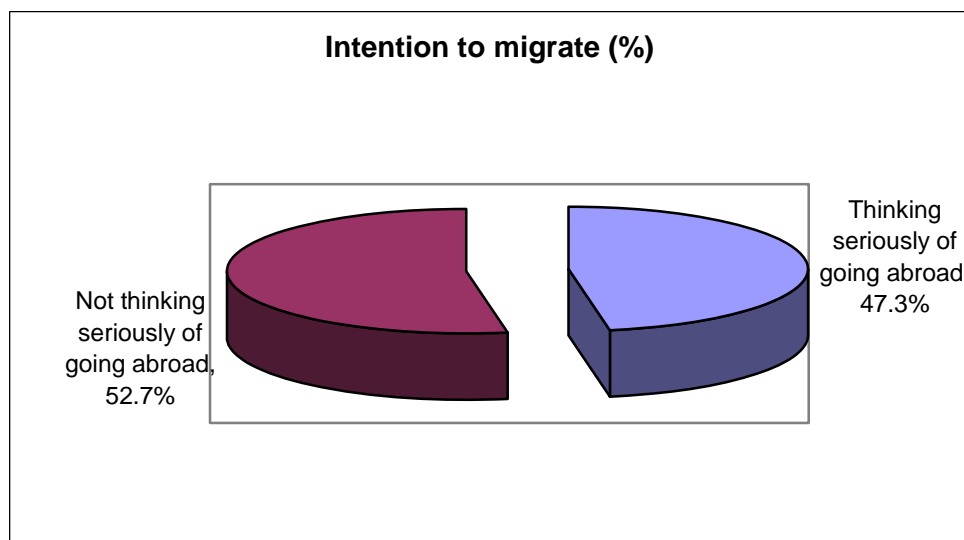
In order to gain a better understanding of the real likelihood of migration, a composite index called 'propensity to migrate' was created, based on the following variables from the survey:

- likelihood of migrating within the next six months or two years;
- ability to finance the move abroad;
- knowledge of the language of the most likely destination (MLD) country;
- information about the MLD country;
- possession of at least four of the six necessary documents (passport, visa, health certificate, work contract, etc.) and with no difficulty in getting the remaining ones.

Those who met at least four of these conditions were considered to be 'prone to migrate'. In the case of Egypt, 25.1% of the surveyed population had the resources to undertake migration, according to this indicator.

¹⁶ EUR 1 = EGP 7.9758 (18 December 2007).

Figure 4. Intention to migrate (%)

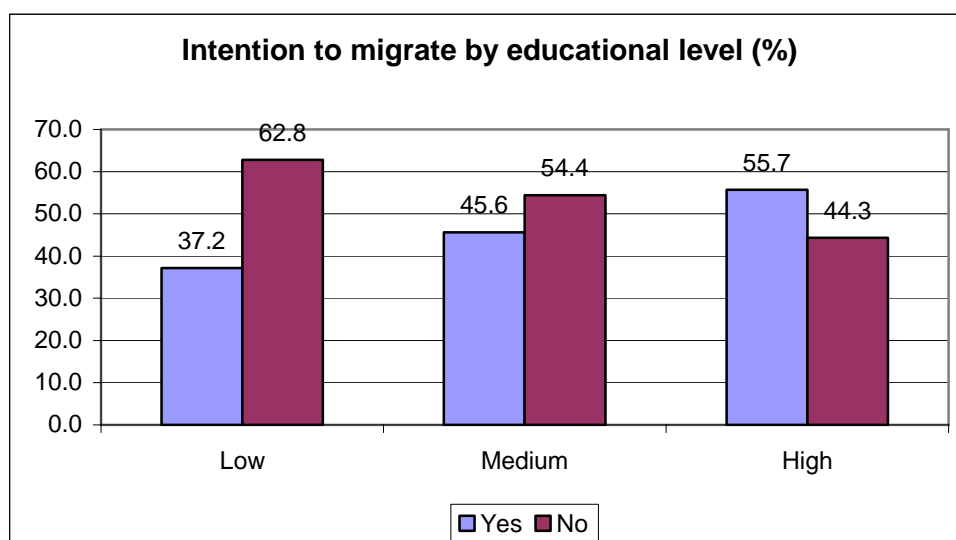


N=812 respondents

The declared intention to migrate varied according to the following factors.

- **Gender:** The majority of men planned to migrate, while only 24.4% of women expressed the desire to go abroad.
- **Marital status:** Single people were more inclined to migrate than married or engaged people.
- **Educational level:** The higher the level of education, the greater the likelihood of an intention to migrate (see Figure 5). One possible explanation for this trend is that those with low levels of education are also poorer and consequently have fewer resources to migrate. In addition, the labour market opportunities, especially in the informal sector, appear to offer survival solutions for low skilled workers, while adequate job opportunities for those with higher levels of education are very limited. This is confirmed by labour market data showing high unemployment among new university graduates in Egypt.

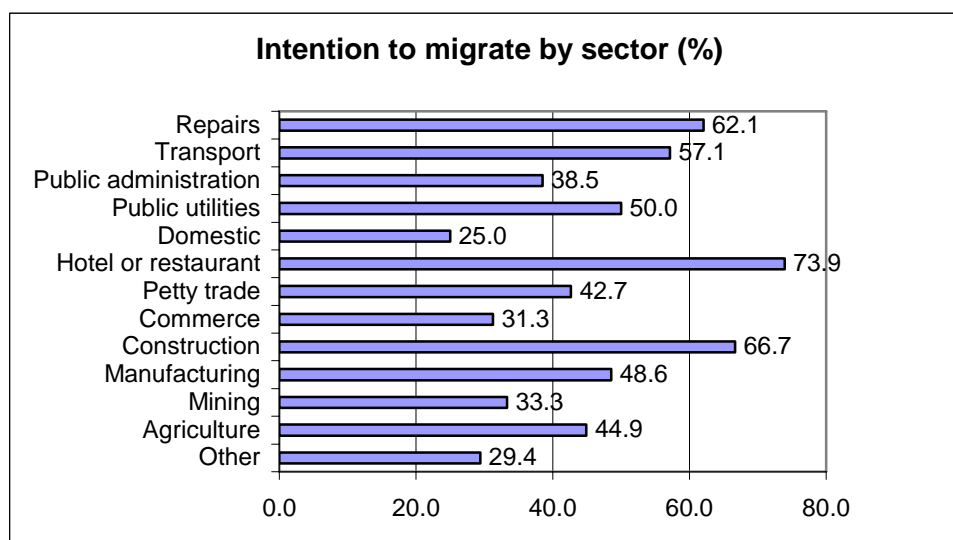
Figure 5. Intention to migrate by educational level (%)



N=812 respondents

- **Sector of activity:** Those who were working in hospitality, construction, repairs and transport demonstrated the highest intention to migrate. More than half of the skilled workers would like to migrate (see Figure 6).

Figure 6. Intention to migrate by sector (%)



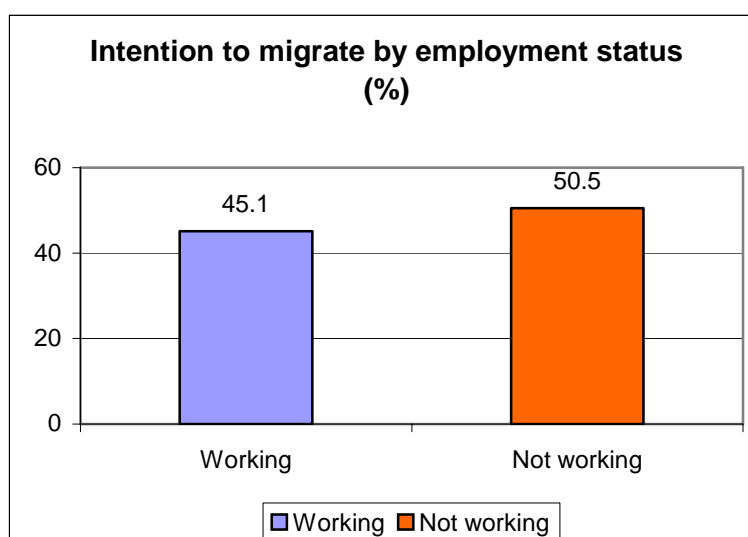
N=554 potential migrants who were employed

- **Region of origin:** The distribution of the sample among the governorates shows that the highest intention to migrate (59.6%) was in Daqahliya, while the lowest (29.3%) was in Cairo.

The intention to migrate did not vary according to the following factors.

- **Employment status:** There was no statistically significant difference between respondents who were working and wished to migrate and those who were not working and wished to migrate (see Figure 7).

Figure 7. Intention to migrate by employment status (%)



N=812 respondents

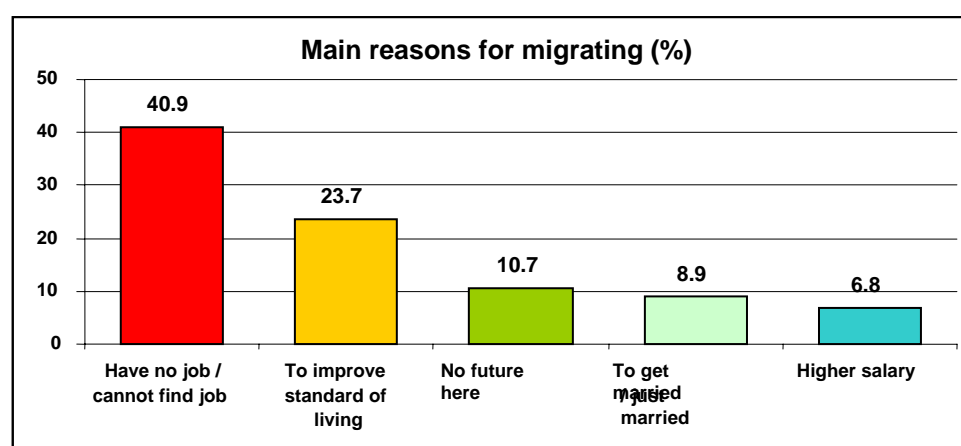
- **Foreign languages.** Of those who intended to migrate, a higher proportion of women (83.3%) than men (58.8%) spoke English. Indeed, only 16.7% of women who wished to leave the country said they did not speak any foreign language, while the figure was 40.9% for men. Thus, the knowledge of foreign languages seems to be an important factor for women who intended to migrate, though not for men.

- **Household size and having family members abroad.**
- **Home ownership and possession of various household items** (such as water heater, radio, TV, washing machine and refrigerator).

3.3 Reasons for migration

Potential migrants were asked about their main reasons for wanting to migrate. The reasons most often quoted include unsatisfactory living and working conditions, and family reasons (see Figure 8). Financing education (their own and their children's) was mentioned by only 5.2% of respondents. Thus, the unsatisfactory economic situation was the main push factor for migration in Egypt.

Figure 8. Main reasons for migrating (%)



N=384 respondents who intended to migrate

There was a clear gender difference in terms of the decision to migrate. Over three-quarters of male potential migrants stated that the decision to migrate would be completely their own, compared to the 70% of females who indicated that the decision would be shared. Only 22.2% of female potential migrants said they took the decision on their own.

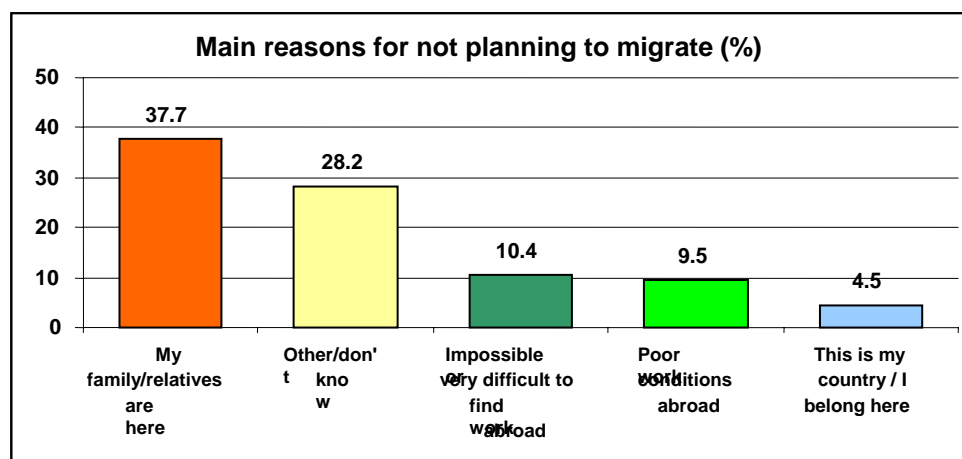
Reasons not to migrate

For non-migrants, the three reasons most quoted were:

- To remain with relatives: 67.5%;
- The difficulty of finding work abroad: 32.5%;
- The poor work conditions abroad: 24.5%.

A significant number of non-migrants could not explain why they preferred to stay in Egypt (see Figure 9).

Figure 9. Main reasons for not planning to migrate (%)



N=422 respondents who did not intend to migrate

The majority of those who wished to stay in Egypt still considered that migration would lead to better work opportunities on return and that returning migrants would be better off or much better off than non-migrants .

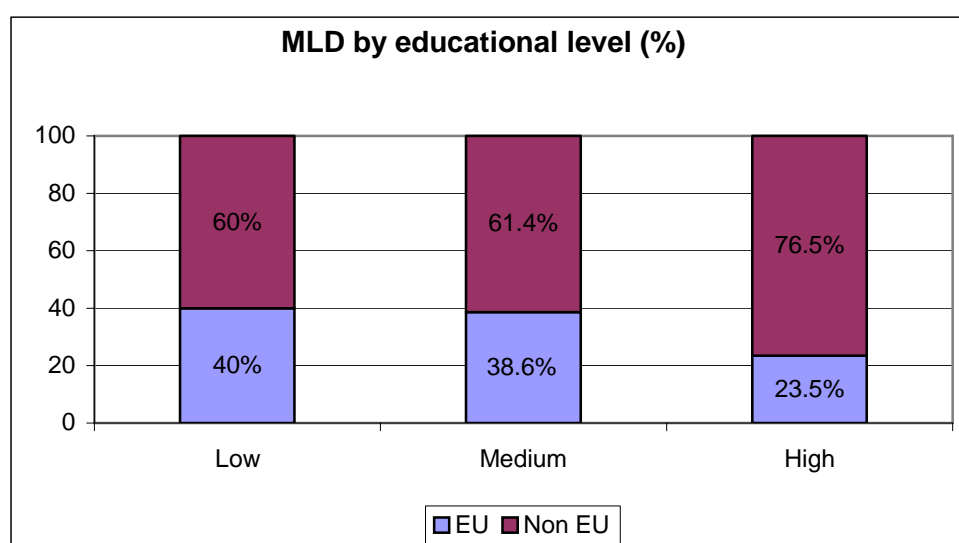
3.4 Most likely destination and conditions facilitating migration

Most likely destination country

When asked about their most likely destination (MLD), 33.6% of potential migrants indicated a European country, 61.7% an Arab country and 4.2% the USA, Canada or Australia. The remaining 0.5% mentioned another destination. These results confirm historical migration patterns in Egypt.

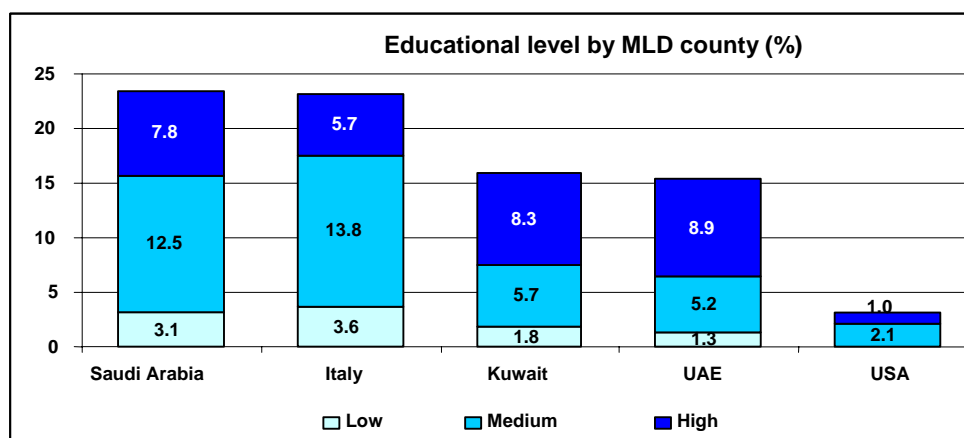
With regard to the educational level by destination countries (see Figures 10 and 11), a higher proportion of medium- and high-skilled migrants preferred non-EU countries (61.4% and 76.5% respectively). For Kuwait, United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Saudi Arabia in particular, university graduates were by far the largest group in the migrant pool. The low educational level of migrants going to Europe is probably explained by the fact that they were mostly illegal and that there are very few opportunities for legal economic migration.

Figure 10. MLD by educational level (%)



N=384 respondents who intended to migrate

Figure 11. Educational level by MLD country (%)



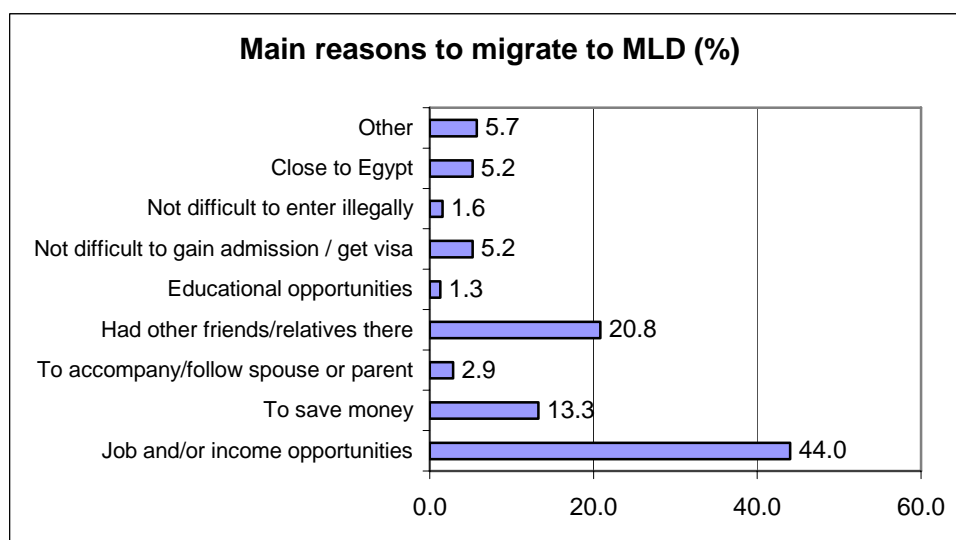
N=384 respondents who intend to migrate

Potential migrants were asked about the main reasons for choosing their destination country (see Figure 12). The most quoted answers were:

- Job/income opportunities: 44.0%;
- The presence of friends or relatives in the country: 20.8%;
- In order to save up some money: 13.3%.

Educational opportunities were mentioned by only 1.3% of individuals.

Figure 12. Main reasons to migrate to MLD (%)



N=384 respondents who intend to migrate

Factors facilitating migration

When potential migrants were asked about their financial resources for covering the costs of their travel abroad, 62% stated that they had sufficient resources. Higher percentages of potential migrants who intended to migrate to non-EU countries (mainly the Gulf) considered that they had enough financial resources to migrate than those who intended to go to EU countries.

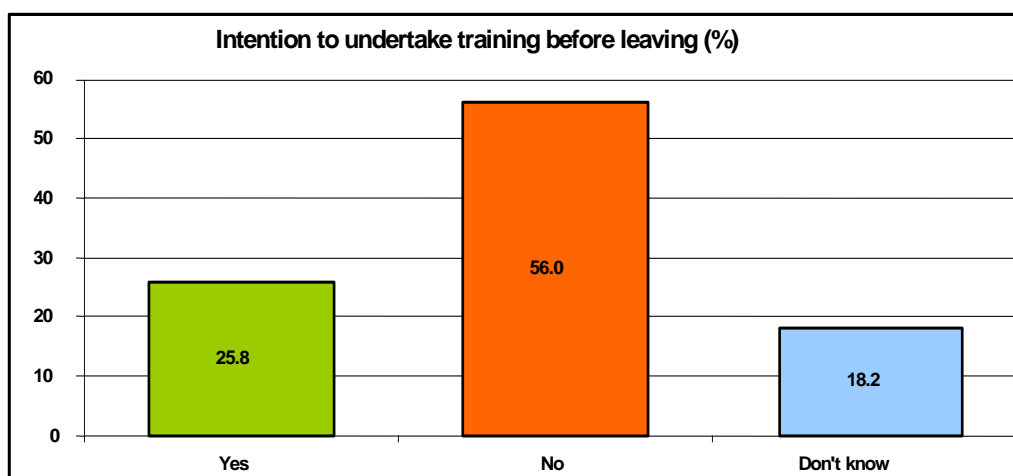
As regards government schemes or private companies that help people to migrate for work, 79% of potential migrants were unaware of the availability of such assistance. Of the few respondents who

were familiar with such opportunities, over half stated that they would not use these channels, mainly because of their high costs and lack of transparency.

Having sufficient knowledge of the destination country is another factor which can facilitate migration. Some 75.5% of potential migrants said they had sufficient knowledge of their destination country. The source of information most often quoted was friends or relatives in the destination and home country, followed by TV/radio, the Internet and newspapers.

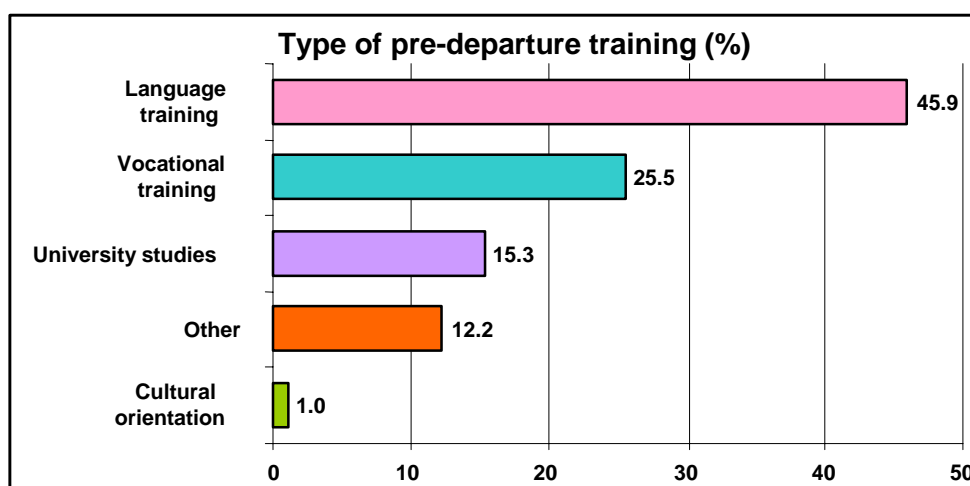
With regard to training, 26% of potential migrants stated they would like to undertake some training before migration, mainly language and vocational training (see Figures 13 and 14). There were no significant differences in terms of gender or educational level.

Figure 13. Intention to undertake training before leaving (%)



N=384 respondents who intend to migrate

Figure 14. Type of pre-departure training (%)

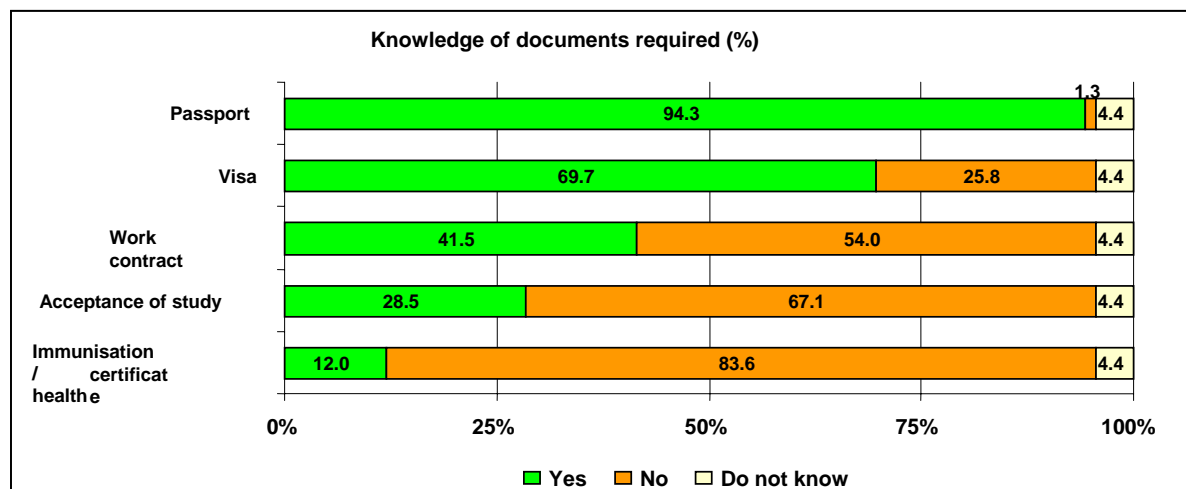


N=98 respondents who wished to undertake training

With regard to proficiency in the language of the destination country, almost three-quarters of the potential migrants who wanted to go to a European country did not speak the language. Only 13.2% could speak the language fluently or fairly well. Women and highly educated people had a better knowledge of the language of the destination country.

Potential migrants were asked about their knowledge of migration-related documents and procedures, such as passport, entry visa, work contracts, vaccinations, health certificates and other documents. Their answers are summarised in Figure 15.

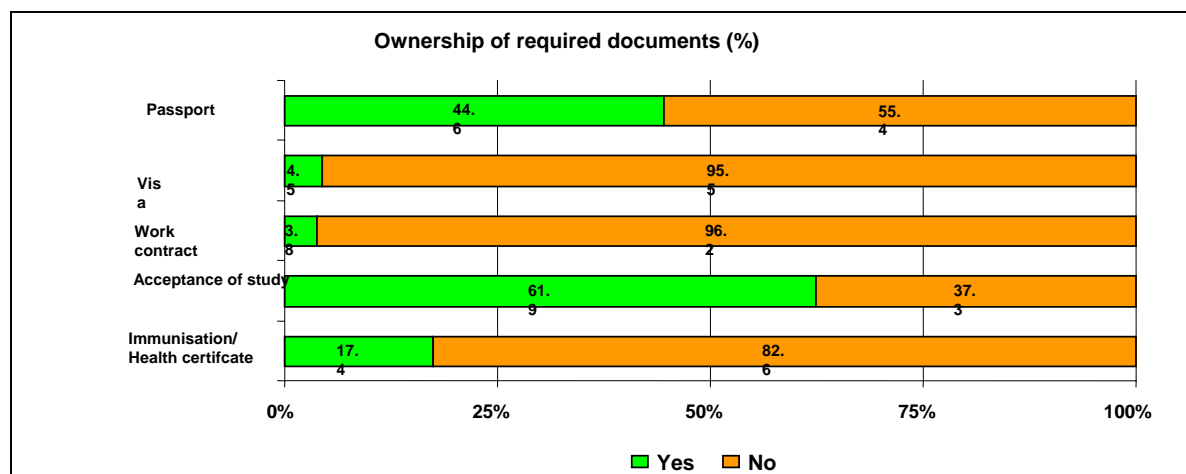
Figure 15. Knowledge of documents required (%)



N=384 respondents who intended to migrate

Concerning the availability of the documents necessary for migration, a small percentage of potential migrants already had the documents (see Figure 16). A third thought that it would be difficult to acquire these documents. Thus, it appears that despite their desire to migrate, the actual proportion of people who had taken concrete steps towards travel was quite low.

Figure 16. Ownership of required documents (%)

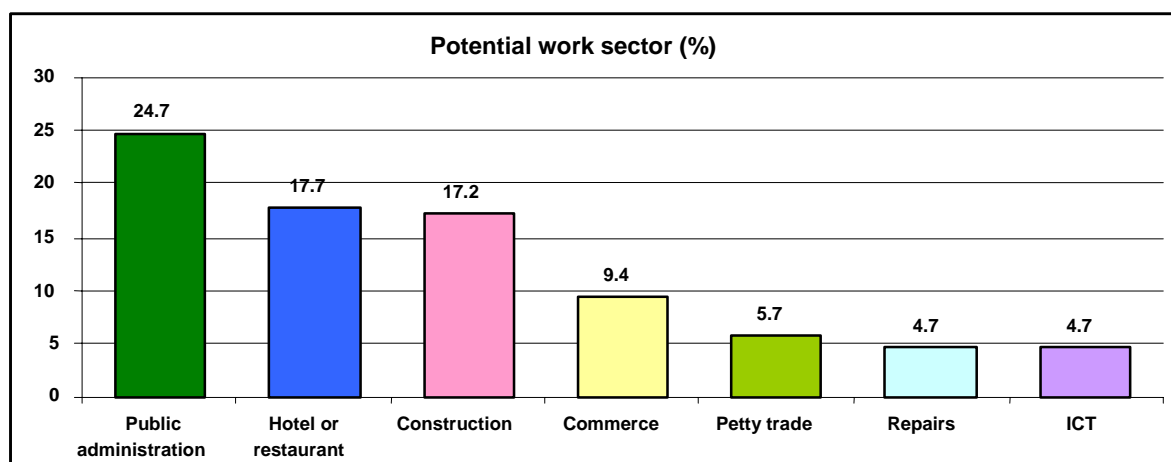


N=384 respondents who intended to migrate

3.5 Expectations for migration

Most potential migrants wished to work in the destination country in public administration, hospitality and catering, construction and commerce (see Figure 17).

Figure 17. Potential work sector (%)



Note: other sectors had less than 4%

N=384 potential migrants

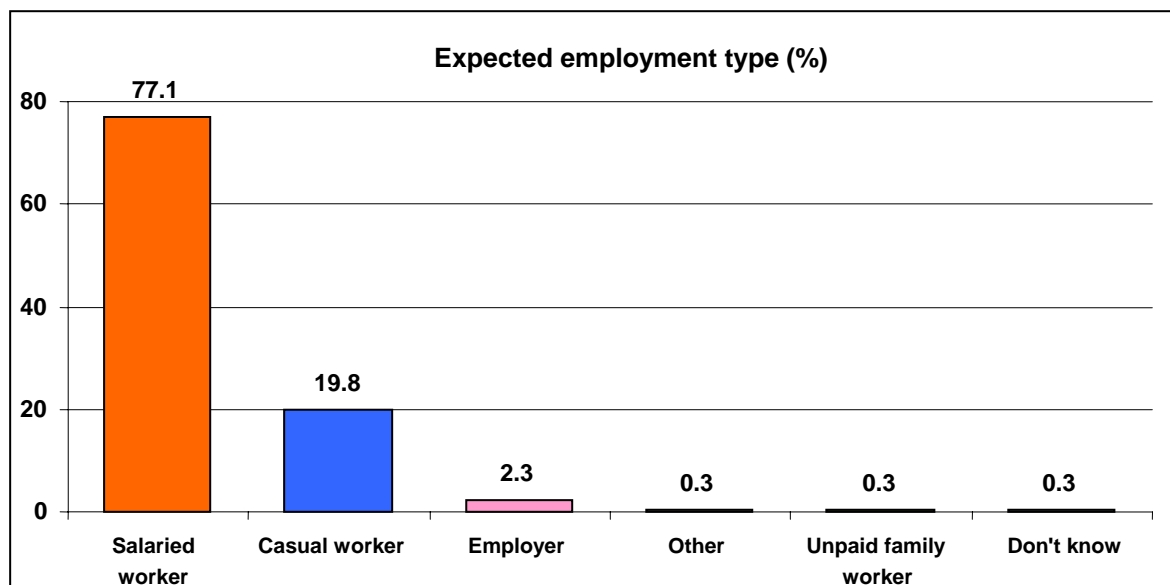
Expected work sector abroad was strongly correlated with the destination country. More than a third of those who intended to migrate to MENA¹⁷ countries wished to work in public administration, while the main sectors for those wishing to go to Europe were hospitality and catering, and construction.

Gender and educational level were strongly linked to the expected job abroad: 44.4% of females who intended to migrate wished to work in public administration, followed by commerce, while men preferred to work in hospitality and construction. In terms of education, 45.5% of highly educated potential migrants wished to work in public administration. Construction and hospitality and catering are the expected sectors most often quoted by potential migrants with medium and low levels of education.

The majority of potential migrants expected to work as salaried workers (see Figure 18). More than a third of those who were thinking of migrating to an EU country (34.9%) considered that they would work there as casual workers. These were exclusively men, and had a low or medium level of education.

¹⁷ Middle East and North Africa (World Bank definition: Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestinian territories, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen).

Figure 18. Expected employment type (%)



N=384 potential migrants

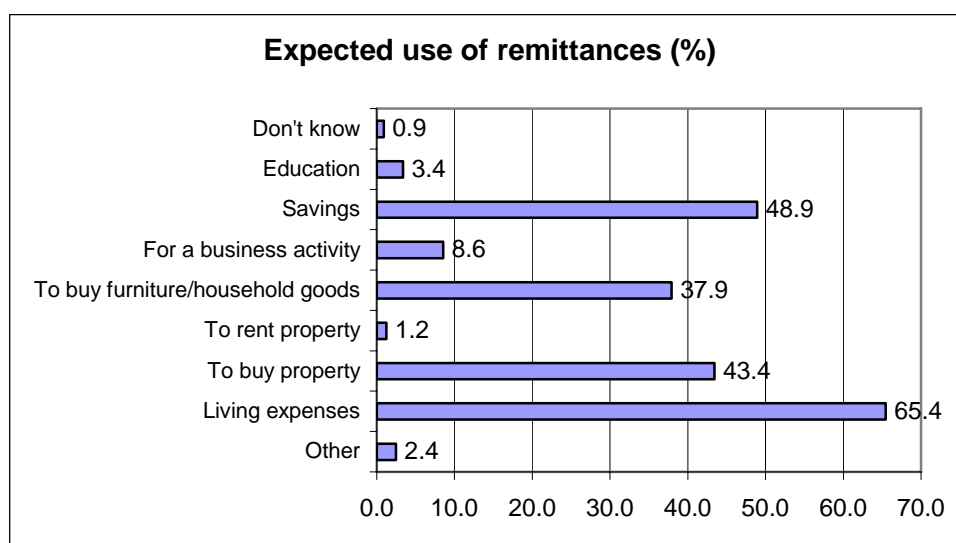
There were substantial differences in expectations depending on destination. A high number of potential migrants expected to have professional and management jobs in MENA countries, while potential migrants to the EU thought that they would find jobs as skilled or unskilled workers. The majority of females who intended to migrate expected to work as professionals or managers.

It is interesting to observe that more than 40% of potential migrants who worked in Egypt as high-level managers, and more than 50% of those involved in middle management, mentioned that they expected to take a less skilled job abroad.

With regard to duration of migration, 44.8% of potential migrants expected to stay abroad for three to five years, while 29.4% planned to stay for six to ten years. Permanent migration was indicated by only 8.4% of respondents. These findings indicate that Egyptian migration is mainly of a temporary nature. There were no large differences in terms of expected length of stay abroad between different destinations. Potential migrants who cited North America and Australia planned the longest stays, but there were too few cases in the survey to extract definitive conclusions. Some 20% of women said they would like to stay abroad permanently, but again, the number of respondents was too low to enable definite conclusions to be drawn.

Sending remittances was considered to be very important for the majority of potential migrants, with 85.4% of them expecting to send money home. More women (13%) than men (3%) said they would not send remittances to Egypt. The possible use of remittances covered living expenses, accumulating savings, purchasing property and buying furniture and household items. Only 8.6% of potential migrants thought that remittances would be used for business activities, and only 3.4% said they would be used for education (see Figure 19). There were no significant differences in the planned use of remittances for different levels of education, nor for the most likely destination. Women were more interested than men in using remittances for investing in business and accumulating savings.

Figure 19. Expected use of remittances (%)



N=384 potential migrants

Regarding the benefits of migration, the overwhelming majority of potential migrants felt that their situation in Egypt following their return would be better or much better (98.4%), and that they would have better work opportunities (81.3%).

4. FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY OF RETURNING MIGRANTS

4.1. Socio-demographic and educational characteristics

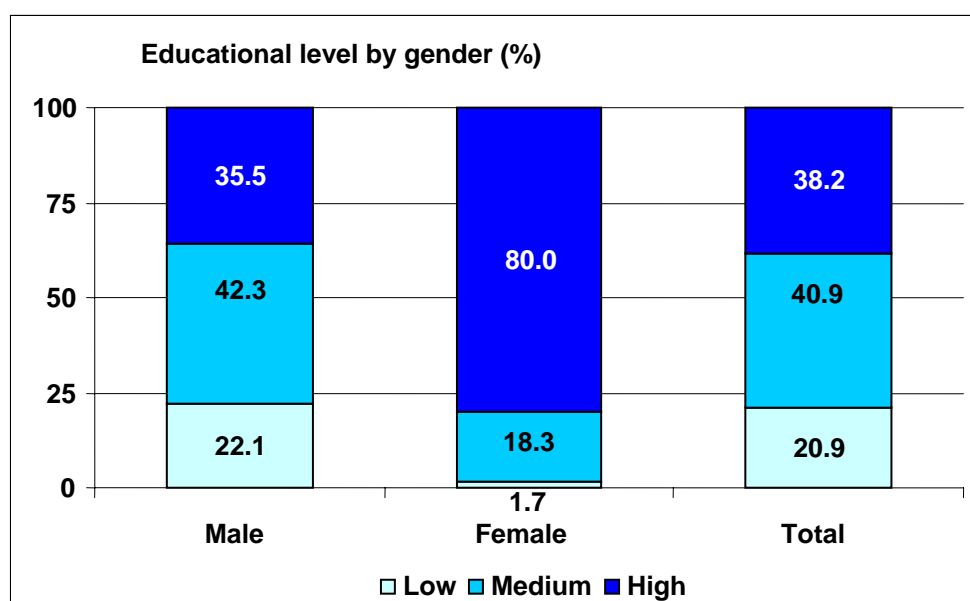
A total of 1,000 respondents were interviewed as returning migrants, with the sample distributed among the governorates of the survey as shown in Table 3. The sample was split evenly between urban and rural areas and between the governorates.

Table 3. Distribution of returning migrants sample by governorate

	Urban	Rural	TOTAL
Total N	499	501	1,000
Governorate	%	%	%
Daqahliya	25.3	15.6	20.4
Gharbiya	20.2	15.6	17.9
Menoufiya	29.9	15.8	22.8
Fayoum	24.6	15.4	20.0
Port Said	---	16.8	8.4
Cairo	---	21.0	10.5

The returning migrants sample was male dominated (94%). The majority of the respondents (90%) were married, and 88% had children (three on average). The average age was 44 years, with over half of returning migrants being in the 40–49 age group. Egyptian returning migrants were relatively well educated: 38.2% had a high level of education, 40.9% a medium level and 20.9% a low level.

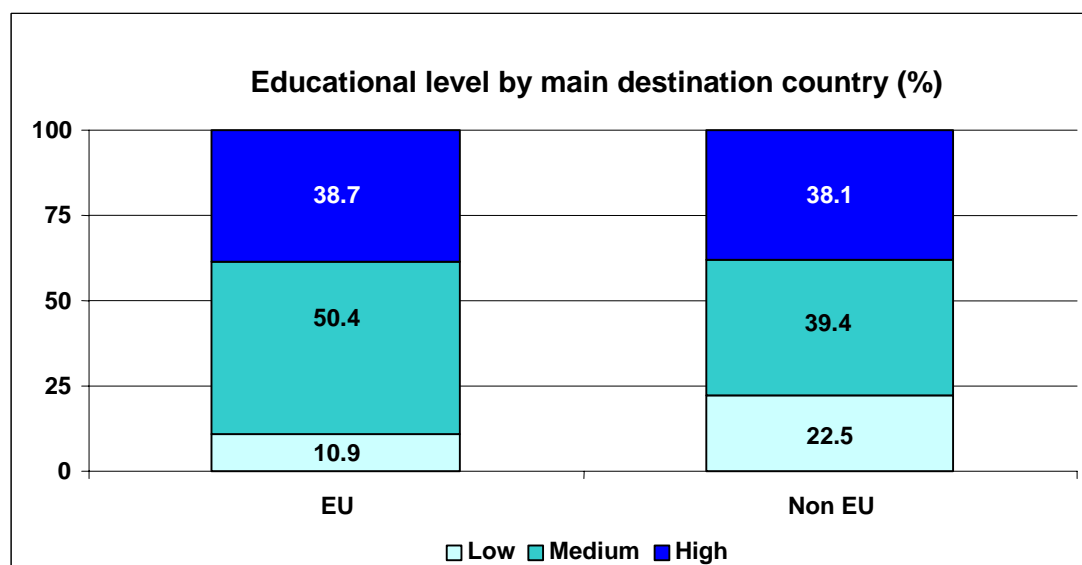
Figure 20. Educational level by gender (%)



Some 80.0% of female returning migrants had a high level of education. It therefore appears that although few females migrate, those who do are better educated than male migrants. Indeed, 87.6% of women spoke at least one foreign language besides Arabic, while 43.4% of male returning migrants said they did not speak any foreign languages.

Most female returning migrants explained that the decision to migrate was taken jointly by them and another person (66.7%). Most of the remainder (28.3%) said that they took this decision alone (the corresponding percentage for men was 80.0%). In general, females migrated with their spouses (61.7%). This percentage was much lower in the case of men (20.4%). This result should be interpreted with caution, since only 60 female returning migrants were interviewed.

Figure 21. Educational level by main destination country (%)



With regard to educational level by destination country, at the high skill level there were no significant differences between EU and non-EU destinations, though it should be stressed that the absolute number of those going to non-EU countries was much higher. Furthermore, in the EU the predominant sectors for work were low and medium skilled. Half of the returning migrants who went to the EU had medium levels of skill, which seems to correspond to the job opportunities found by these migrants.

In terms of language skills, female returning migrants had better language skills than males: only 13% of females spoke only Arabic, compared to 43% of males. English was the predominant foreign language, followed (not very closely) by Italian and French, while very few migrants spoke other languages.

There were also differences between men and women in terms of their fields of study. For men the predominant field of study was business administration, followed by engineering. For female migrants it was educational science, followed by health and humanities. The main reason given for choosing the area of education was personal interest. Factors such as getting a job and being able to migrate did not influence the choice of educational field. The majority of the respondents agreed that education improves living standards, and that investment in education is important.

4.2 Migration history

Unemployment, the wish to improve living standards and the possibility of obtaining higher salaries were mentioned as the main reasons for migration. There were some differences between women and men in terms of the main reason for migration: 11.7% of females said their main reason was they could not find a job in Egypt, as opposed to 33.4% of males. Following a spouse or parent was the main reason for 13.3% of women, though less than 0.5% of men cited this reason.

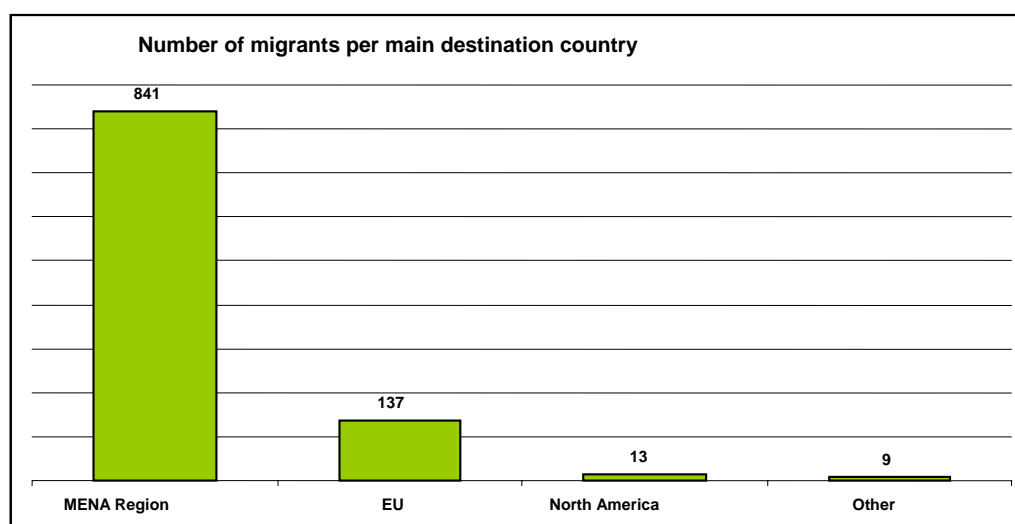
The main reason for migration was also correlated with age groups. Unemployment and the impossibility of finding a job was mentioned as the principal reason by more than half of younger returning migrants (18–34 years old). The older respondents tended to mention more often the wish to improve living standards and the possibility of earning higher salaries.

There was also a correlation between the educational level of returning migrants and their main reason for leaving. The lack of employment was mentioned by 30.6% and 44.3% of those with low and medium levels of education respectively, and by only 19.9% of those with a high level of education. The wish to improve standards of living was the most quoted reason for people with a high level of education (36.4%), followed by the chance to earn a higher salary (30.9%).

Of the returning migrants in the survey, 83% had lived in only one country, and their average duration of stay was 7.6 years. Those who had lived in more than one country accounted for 17% of the total, and their average duration of stay in the first destination country (FDC) was 2.3 years.

Only 13.7% of the returning migrants went to an EU country as their main destination country (MDC) (Italy was the country most often cited), while 86.3% went to a MENA country (see Figure 22 for the absolute figures).

Figure 22. Number of migrants per main destination country



The main reasons for migrating to the EU were job/income opportunities (see Table 4), followed by the existence of networks of relatives or friends, and in some cases the possibility of entering illegally.

The main push factors were economic ones; they were related to income disparities between Egypt and the receiving countries. Many Egyptians, especially in the case of MENA region, had identified specific job opportunities before leaving. This is linked to labour agreements with the Gulf States for the recruitment of skilled professionals.

Pre-departure training was rarely available and rarely used. This is linked to the fact that there are currently very few schemes for managed labour migration that offer such opportunities (Italy being a rare example). In total, only 7 females and 57 males in the sample received pre-departure training or orientation. Vocational training was the type most often received, followed by language training. The majority of male respondents felt that the training was useful; less felt that it was necessary.

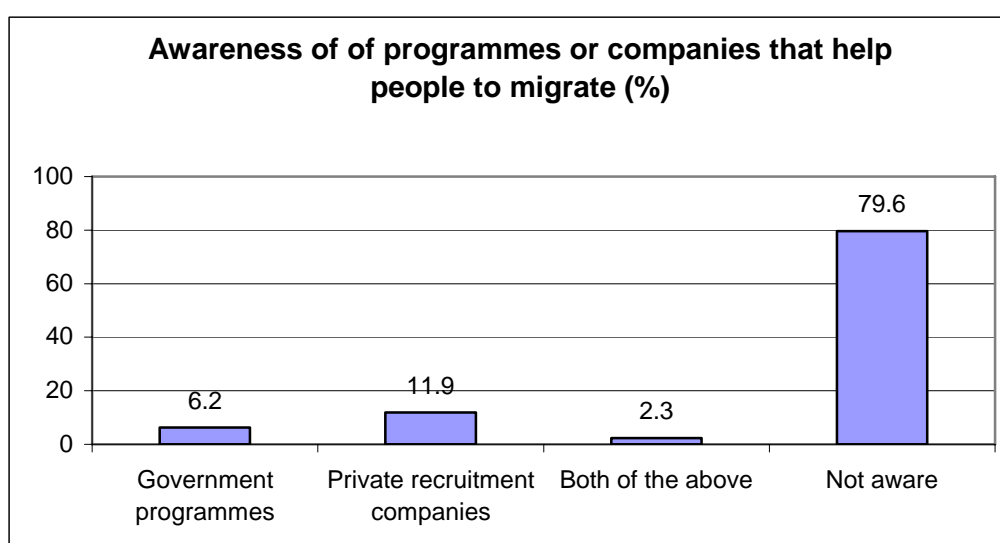
Most returning migrants (79.6%) were unaware of any government schemes or private recruitment companies that could help with obtaining employment abroad (see Figure 23), regardless of their destination. Those who expressed their awareness of such schemes were reluctant to use them. The main reasons for not using such schemes were that they are expensive and not transparent.

Table 4. Main reasons for migrating by destination country

Main reason for migrating	Main destination country				
	EU	MENA Region	North America	Other	Total
Job and/or income opportunities	24	126	2	2	154
To save money	3	28	0	0	31
To accompany/follow spouse or parent	0	11	0	0	11
Had other friends/relatives there	21	52	3	1	77
People are friendly to foreigners there	2	3	0	0	5
Educational opportunities	7	0	1	0	8
Knowledge of language of that country	1	2	0	0	3
Not difficult to gain admission / get visa	9	103	1	0	113
Not difficult to enter illegally	14	24	3	0	41
Received a visa	12	276	0	2	290
Close to Egypt	1	38	0	0	39
High living standards	8	45	1	0	54
Other	2	3	0	2	7
Total	104	711	11	7	833*

*Note: This figure is less than 1,000 (the total number of returning migrants interviewed) because it refers to the number of respondents for whom the First Destination Country is the same as the Main Destination Country.

Figure 23. Awareness of programmes or companies assisting migration (%)



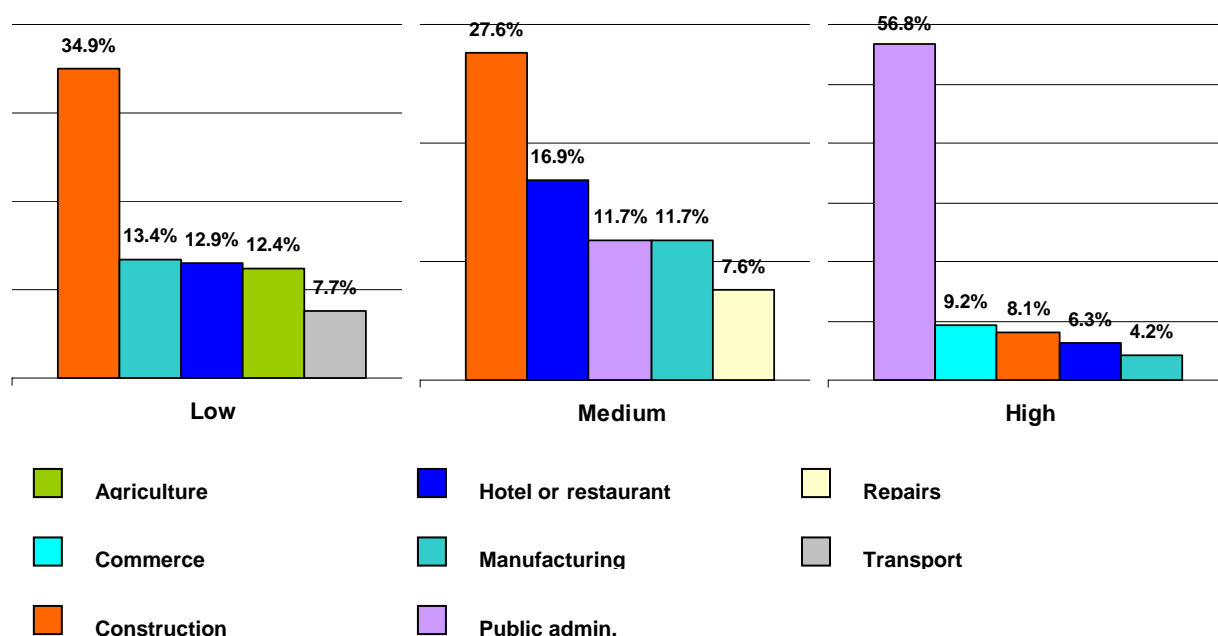
N=1,000 respondents

More than 75% of returning migrants stated that they had left their spouses in Egypt. A higher proportion of returning males in rural areas stated that their wives did not accompany them abroad. It

is very rare for females in Egypt to migrate on their own. Returning males who were not accompanied by their wives indicated as the main reason for this that it was more expensive to migrate with the entire family and that it was better for the children to stay at home.

With regard to the type of work performed abroad, those with a low level of education were employed predominantly in construction, followed by manufacturing. Of the less well-educated migrants, 45% worked as salaried workers and 43% as casual workers; trends for medium-skilled migrants were similar. For high-skilled migrants the predominant area of work was public administration. Most migrants returning from the EU had worked in hospitality and catering, while workers returning from other countries had worked in construction and public administration. The type of work of migrants is linked to labour demand in the receiving countries, as well as to the existence of opportunities for legal migration and of networks of families and friends. The possibilities of migrating legally to the EU are very limited and, in addition, there is a demand for labour in agriculture, construction, domestic work, hospitality and catering. The labour agreements with the Gulf States are mainly for highly skilled professionals, and this explains the large number of highly skilled migrants going to these destinations. This type of migration has been facilitated by the shared language.

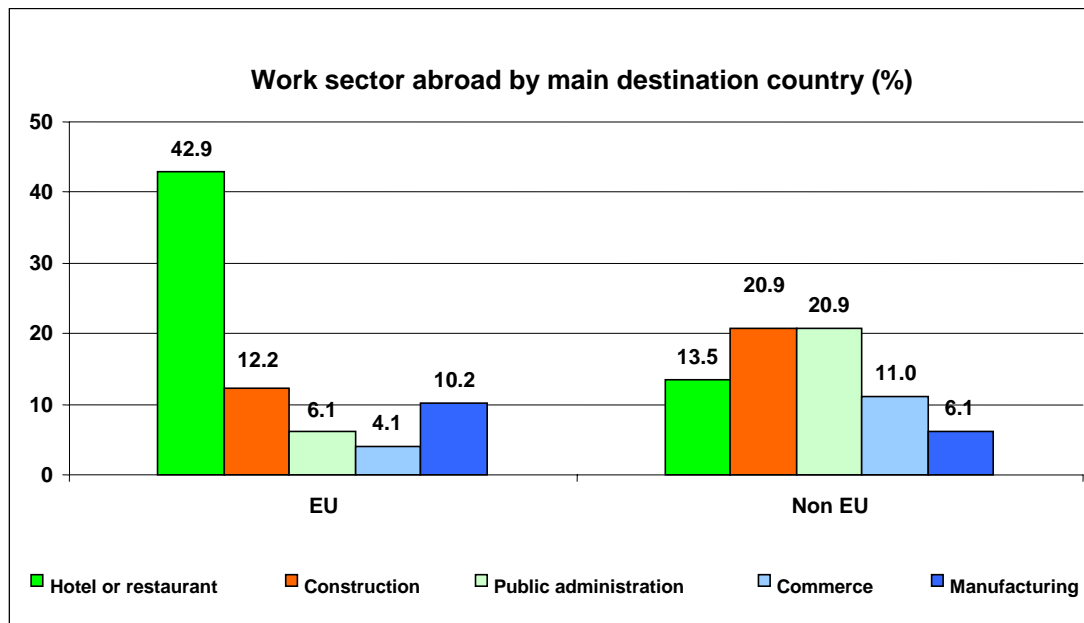
Figure 24. Work sector of longest duration by educational level (%)



Note: The graph shows the five most important answers for each educational level.

N=1,000 respondents

Figure 25. Work sector abroad by main destination country (%)

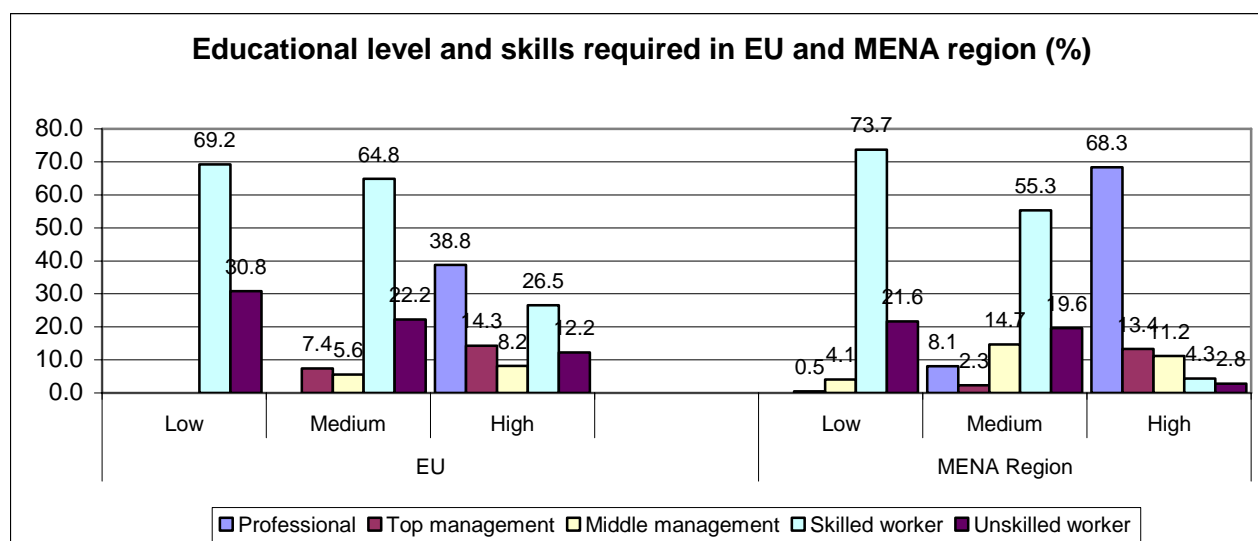


N=1,000 respondents

Most of the returning migrants had worked abroad for the longest period of time as skilled workers (41.1%), followed by professionals (27.3%), unskilled workers (14.3%), middle managers (10.7%) and top management (6.6%). It is interesting to note that there was a strong correlation between the level of education and the work level abroad: 64.1% of returning migrants with a high level of education had worked for the longest period abroad as professionals, and very few as skilled or unskilled workers. The majority of those with low or medium levels of education worked as skilled workers.

The degree of matching between the skills required for the longest job abroad and the educational level of returning migrants varied according to the region of migration. Of those respondents who migrated to MENA countries, 68.3% respondents with a level of high education worked as professionals and 24.6% as middle or top managers. For those who migrated to the EU, the proportions are 38.8% and 22.5% respectively. On the other hand, many more Egyptians with a high level of education worked as skilled or unskilled workers in Europe than in MENA countries (see Figure 26).

Figure 26. Educational level and skills required in the EU and MENA region (%)



N=976 respondents who migrated to EU countries (116) and MENA countries (863)

The average duration of the first job in the host country was 5.7 years. For low-skilled migrants, the average duration was 5 years, for medium-skilled migrants 4.6 years, and for high-skilled migrants 7.3 years. There were significant differences in the time spent abroad according to educational level. Differences in the duration of stay abroad by geographical area of the host country were not significant.

Some 21.2% of all returning migrants reported that they had changed their job while abroad. Change was more often reported by migrants with a medium level of education than by those with low or high levels. More than a quarter (25.7%) of returning migrants who started to work abroad as unskilled workers improved the level of their skills between their first and their longest job. Almost half of them became skilled workers and a quarter of them, middle managers. There was also a certain degree of mobility in terms of skills required for those who started to work abroad as middle managers, and in some cases this meant a 'down-skilling'. There were only 100 respondents in this category, and this result should therefore be interpreted with care. In very few cases had returning migrants who started to work abroad as professionals, managers or skilled workers changed the level of skills of their job.

There appeared to be a shift away from agriculture and manufacturing to jobs in hospitality and catering for those with less than primary schooling and with primary or preparatory education. These sectors are mostly low skilled, and this shift in employment would not usually lead to significant improvements in the income and job status of migrants. However, there were no identifiable trends for the other educational categories. This was not the case for the migrants who left Egypt already in possession of an employment contract to work in the Gulf, which explains the lack of trends for highly educated migrants.

There was a smaller proportion of casual workers among those with less than primary schooling, a primary or preparatory education, or a secondary education. This would seem to indicate that the change of jobs led to more permanent employment. In terms of level of work, for those respondents with secondary education there appears to have been a shift towards jobs in middle management.

It can be seen from the number of hours worked per week that returning migrants worked extremely hard during their time in the Main Destination Country (MDC), with more than a fifth (22%) working 70 or more hours per week. The MDC region in which the highest proportion of returning migrants declared such working hours was North America.

Less than 10% of all returning migrants had studied or received training abroad. The more educated people were, the more opportunities they had to undertake training or studies abroad. By geographical region, 46% of those who migrated to North America studied or received training, as did 19% of those who went to the EU and 8% of those who went to MENA countries. Among those who undertook training, on-the-job training was the most frequent type. Despite the high costs involved, many students go to the USA to pursue higher education, because of the opportunities to obtain grants and also to exercise their profession, which can lead to an improved social status. Fewer students go to

the EU because the legal job opportunities for high-skilled migrants are limited. However, this situation is changing, since more and more EU member states are trying to attract highly skilled migrants¹⁸

Remittances

Some 82% of all returning migrants sent money home, the majority of them being salaried workers. In terms of frequency, 39% reported that they sent money home on a regular basis, at least once a month, mainly from the MENA region. Of those who went to the EU, 42% sent money home at least once a month and 55% at least once per year. Remittances were mainly used to cover living expenses, followed by savings, and investment in education. In the case of the use of savings on return from abroad, again, financing living expenses is the most frequent expenditure, followed by acquiring property and investing in business activity (see Table 5). Hence, Egyptian migration and its associated remittances are regarded as a means of alleviating poverty alleviation and raising the living standards of migrants' families, rather than as a means of investing in business investment.

Table 5. Use of remittances from returning migrants (%)

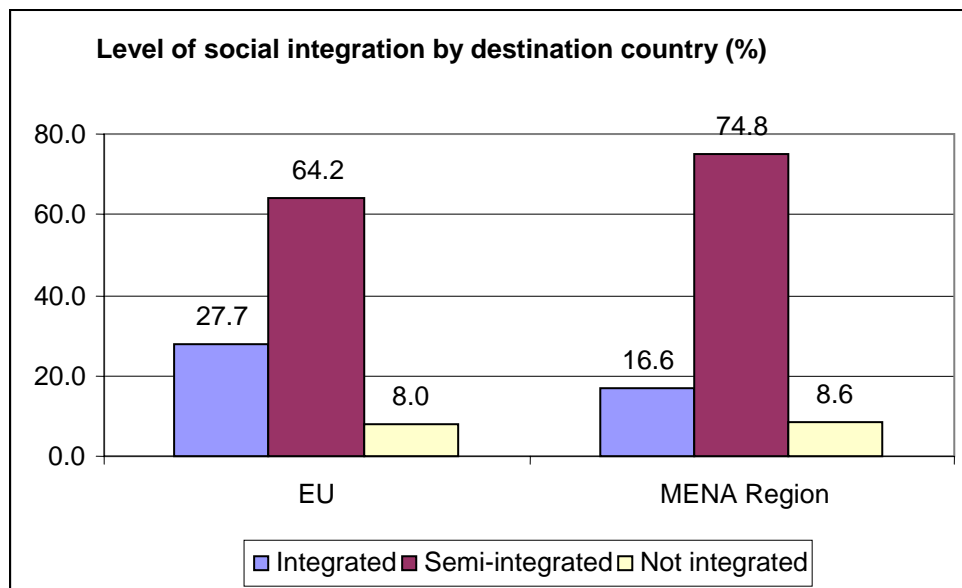
Use of remittances	%
Living expenses	89.4
Savings	34.5
Education	28.5
To buy property	22.8
To buy furniture/household goods	22.6
For a business activity	5.1
Other	1.9
To rent property	1.7

N=824 respondents who sent money at home

An indicator was created to reflect the living area of migrants while abroad, to show whether or not it was populated mostly by local people, and to indicate the frequency of migrants' contacts with them. This indicator demonstrates that 72.8% of the migrants were neither fully integrated nor completely excluded (Figure 27). This information was also compared with the level of education and the employment status of migrants. It appears from the survey that social integration was not exclusively linked to these factors. It should be noted that it is very difficult to define and measure social integration because the data are based on individual perceptions. The percentage of returning migrants who considered that they were fully integrated in the host country was higher among those who lived in the EU than among those who lived in the MENA region. Further studies should be undertaken in order to gain a better understanding of the links between integration and education level.

¹⁸ In order to enhance the EU's attractiveness and to foster careers in research and development (R&D), the European Commission has adopted Council Directive 2005/71/EC, which introduced a 'scientific visa'. The purpose of the directive is to facilitate the access of non-European researchers to the EU.

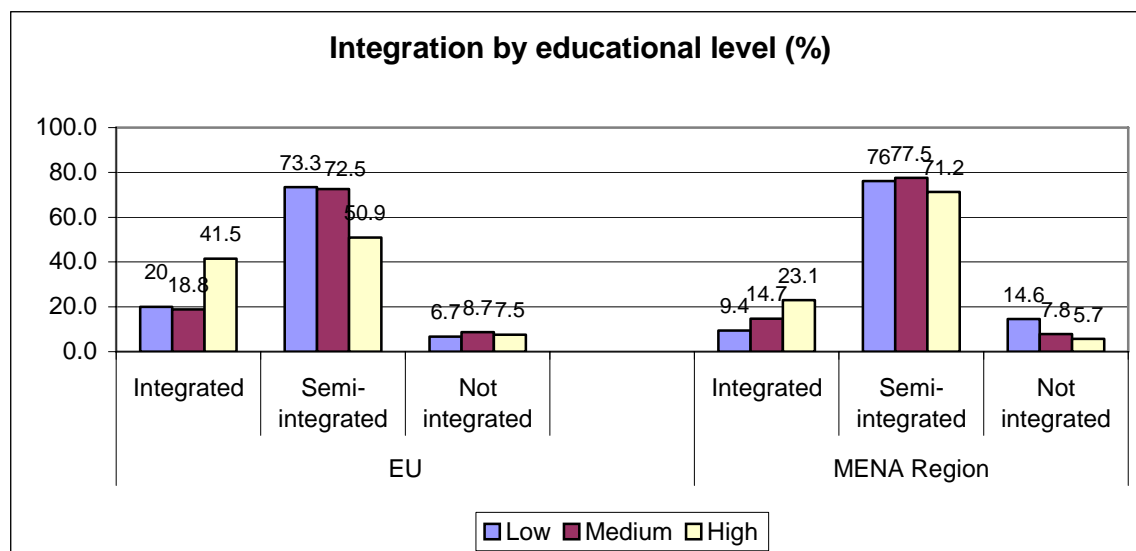
Figure 27. Level of social integration by destination country (%)



N=978 respondents whose main destination country was in the EU (137) or in the MENA region (841)

This information on social integration has also been analysed in terms of the level of education of migrants and the main host country (see Figure 28). It appears from the survey that although social integration is not significantly linked to education in EU countries, it is in the MENA region, albeit not strongly.

Figure 28. Integration by educational level (%)



4.3. Returning migrants' experiences

Reasons for return

With respect to the decision to return, family reasons were the ones most often given (see Figure 29). Irrespective of destination, 19.3% of returning migrants mentioned the end of their employment contract. Most of these were people with high levels of education. The data suggest that the level of education does not play a significant role in the decision to return.

Figure 29. Destination by main reason for return (%)

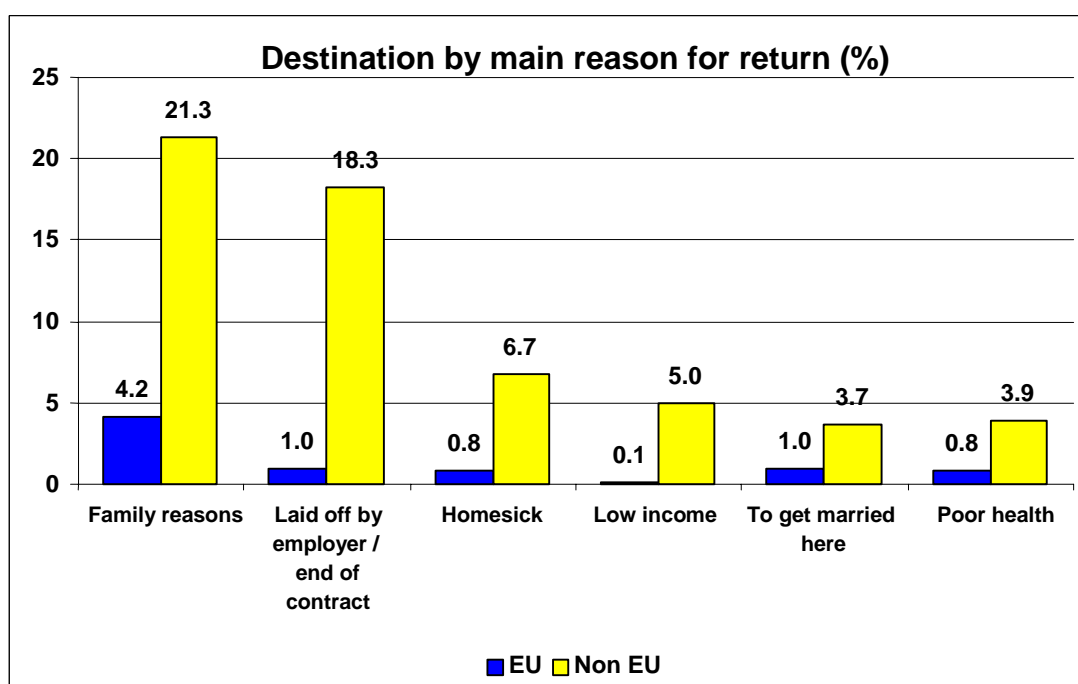
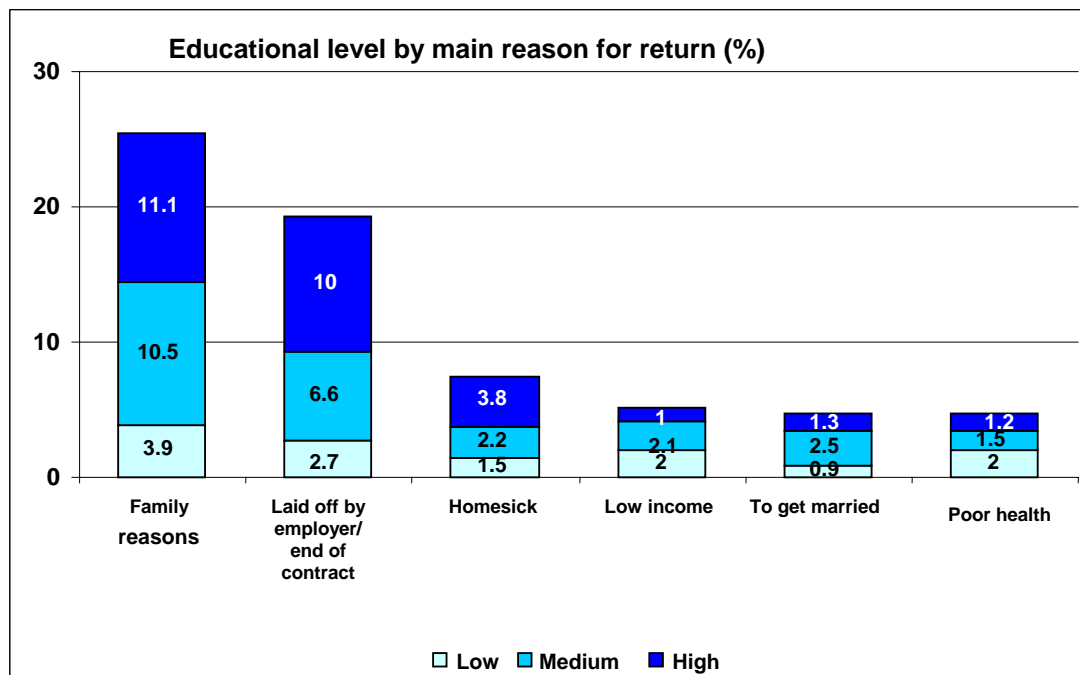


Figure 30. Educational level by main reason for return (%)



Note: There were other reasons for return, which accounted for less than 4%

Return and development

The majority of the returning migrants (85%) reported working since their return to Egypt, with no major difference by level of education or whether or not they studied or received training while abroad. In terms of the way the job was found, there were clear differences in terms of migrants' educational attainment. Almost half of the university graduates who found work (49%) returned to an existing job, i.e. they only took a leave of absence during their migration. This type of leave is common in the public sector, where an employee can keep his/her job while working abroad for an unlimited number of years. Some 29% of the university graduates started their own businesses and 10% found a job through an advertisement; the proportion of those who found work by sending CVs to possible employers was negligible.

With regard to the time invested in finding a job, 67% of returning migrants found employment immediately on their return, the proportion being higher among university graduates and those with less than primary schooling. Some 24% stated that they found work within one to six months, and only 8% reported spending seven months or more looking for a job.

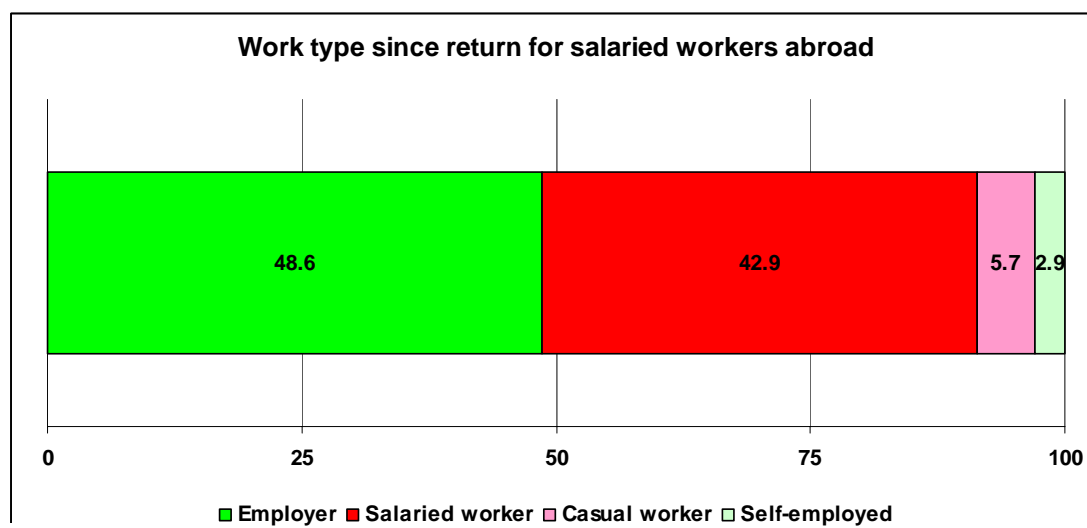
Most returning migrants reported that their experiences abroad helped them to find a job at home: 56% stated that their general experience abroad was helpful, and 40% that the skills learned on the job were of value. On-the-job training was more important for those with less than primary schooling. Returning migrants who did not find their experiences abroad helpful were asked to give reasons. The reason mentioned most frequently was a change in occupation or activity on their return home. This was followed by the fact that they already had the skills for their work in Egypt, or that they went back to the same job that they had before migrating.

Of those who were salaried workers abroad, 48.6% (51 persons) became employers on their return (see Figure 31). An analysis of this group, which in any case is very small, reveals the following educational levels:

- Low: 11.8%;
- Medium: 45.1%;
- High: 43.1%.

That is why, only a tiny proportion of returning migrants is able to contribute to local development by creating jobs. This argument needs further research in order to gain a better understanding of who this group of people is and how this process can be encouraged and facilitated. This is further confirmed by a study on Egyptian return migration and development (Wahba, 2004), which concludes that overseas work experience has a positive impact on the economic development of the country of origin, and that return migration is a potential gain that has not been fully utilised in Egypt.

Figure 31. Work type since return for salaried workers abroad (%)

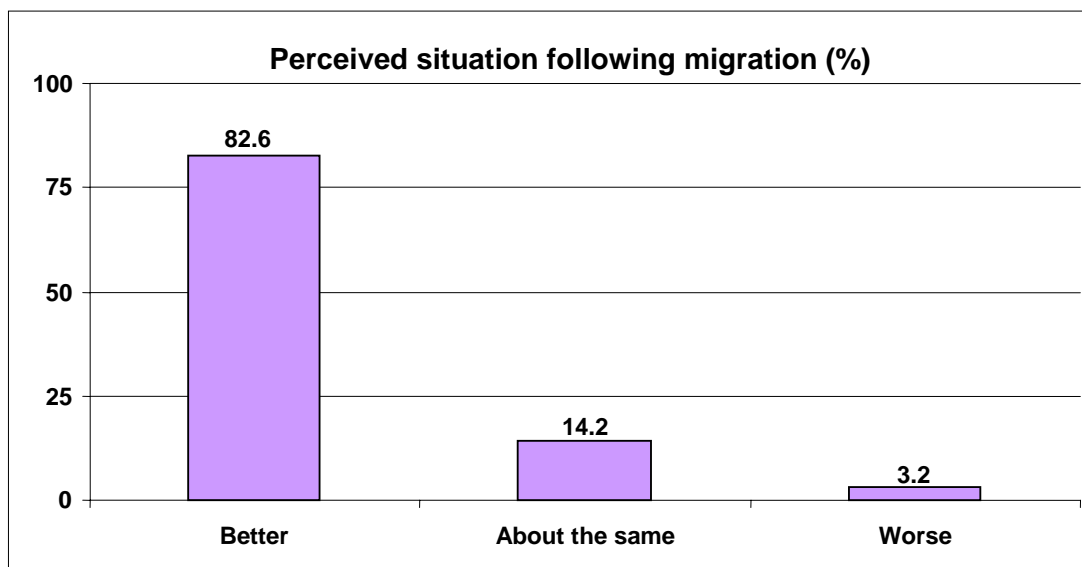


N=106 respondents who were salaried workers abroad

The majority (88%) of the returning migrants did not receive any pension or social benefit while abroad. The main reason given was that there was no system of portability of pensions.

Most returning migrants (82.6%) stated that their situation following migration was better off or much better off. Only 3.2% felt that they were worse off or much worse off as a result of migration, and these were mostly rural males. It can be concluded that migration was definitely viewed as a positive experience, and this did not change by destination.

Figure 32. Perceived situation following migration (%)

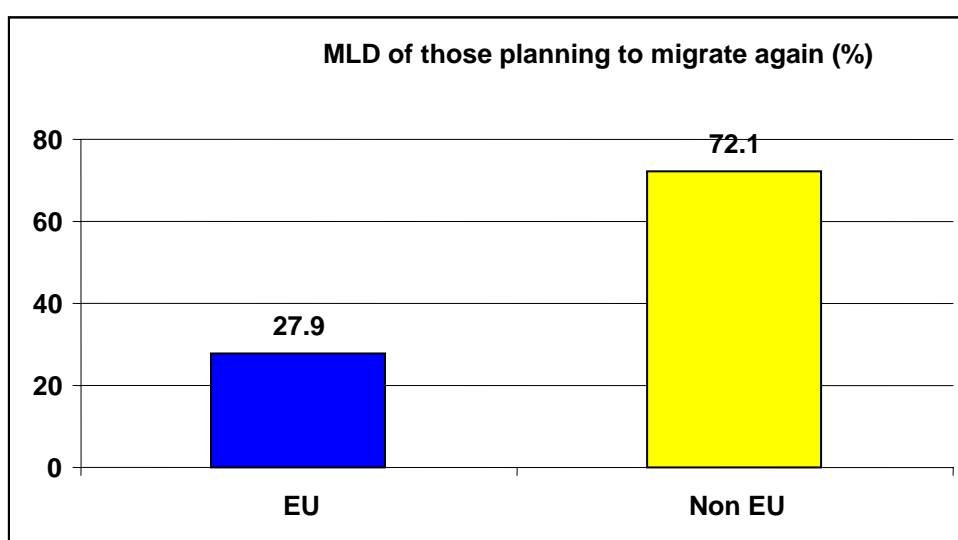


N=1,000 respondents

4.4. Future intentions

With regard to remigration, 23% of returning migrants reported that they were planning to migrate again, which indicates a relatively low propensity (see Figure 33 for their most likely destination). Respondents who were planning to migrate again were then asked what their most likely destination (MLD) would be, and this was then compared to their MDC. The result is that almost half of the migrants would like to go to the same MDC.

Figure 33. MLD of those planning to migrate again (%)

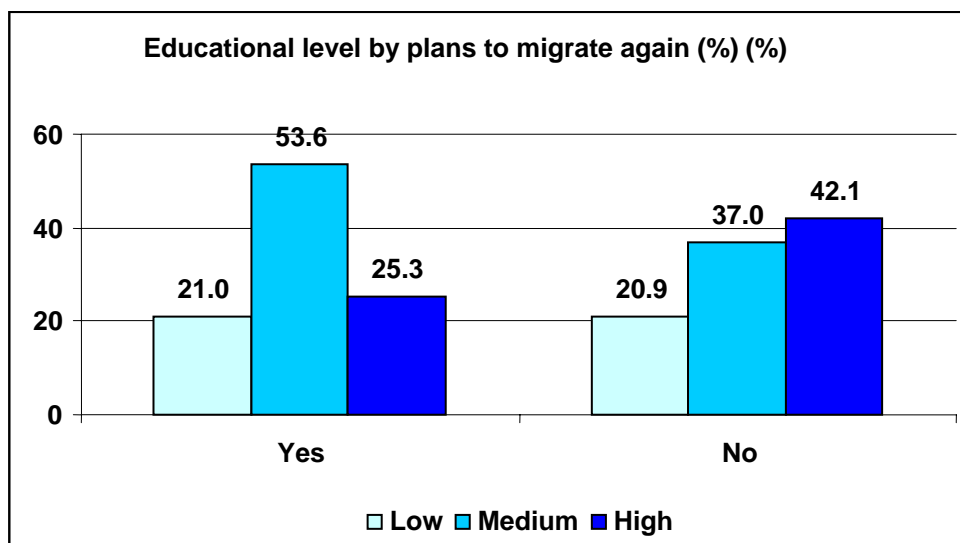


N=233 respondents who would like to migrate again

In confirmation of the previous findings, the most frequently mentioned reasons given for wishing to migrate again were economic: improving living standards and getting a higher salary. Of those planning to migrate again, 79% stated that they would be able to finance the move.

Of those respondents who were planning to migrate again, 52% stated that they were likely or very likely to migrate within the next six months. There were no significant differences in terms of plans to migrate again by education level (see Figure 34). The findings demonstrate that there were no major differences in the intention to migrate again in relation to household size. The same is the case for the correlation between the intention to migrate again and the type of housing or the home ownership. Respondents with sufficient income had a lower propensity to migrate again. This confirms that the main push factor for migration is an economic one.

Figure 34. Educational level by plans to migrate again (%)



5. PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The research confirms that the main push factor for migration is an economic one. Egyptians migrate to search for better income and employment opportunities. However, having a job is not enough to deter migration. Jobs offering good incomes and acceptable working conditions are necessary to keep people in Egypt. This requires parallel investments in the education and training system and in labour market reforms, so as to promote economic development in the country. A closer match between the outcomes of the education and training system and the demands of the labour market is also necessary.

The education and skills dimension is crucial for transforming migration into a win-win scenario for both Egypt and recipient countries. It is important that an informed and evidence-based debate takes place among policymakers on how the education and skills of both potential and returned migrants can best be utilised. This issue becomes even more relevant in relation to the new flows of migration towards Europe, in which levels of education do not match the jobs available for migrants, and young migrants in particular.

This implies that information should be collected on a regular basis on the education and skill levels of migrants, in order to avoid skill mismatches in both the domestic and international labour markets. The role of the Central Agency for Public Mobilisation and Statistics (CAPMAS) is obviously key in this process, but the newly established Egyptian Observatory for Education and Training, hosted by the Information and Decision Support Centre (IDSC) under the Cabinet of the Prime Minister, also has an important role to play. The Observatory put together a task force of the most relevant stakeholders (including representatives of agencies, ministries, projects and the private sector). These representatives are best placed to guarantee, together with CAPMAS, the intelligent and efficient collection and analysis of data, and to establish and maintain databases on education and skill levels, as well as to translate this information into policy advice for the institutions in charge of the education and training system.

Another problem is that skill shortages and oversupply as a result of migration are difficult to quantify. Sectoral analyses also need to be undertaken in order to build better links between the education system and the demands of the local, regional and international labour markets. A joint initiative in 2008 involving the ETF, Italian Cooperation, the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration and other donors is intending to carry out some of these skills assessments for sectors crucial to migration, and to build a policy platform for the discussion of the recommendations arising from these studies.

Developing a proper system of career guidance and counselling, which to date does not exist in Egypt, will also be important. In 2007 a task force was set up jointly by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration to work on the design of such a system, which could also cover issues relating to migration. This work, which is also supported by the ETF and potentially by other donors, will be developed further during 2008.

Another important policy implication is the need to undertake an integrated overall reform of the education and training system, which has until now suffered from the absence of an overall strategy to integrate the various education subsystems. It is also fragmented in terms of the number of institutions involved in delivery. The goal of universal access to education is still a major priority for the education authorities, and although the expansion of the system has been spectacular and successful, the issue of quality needs to be given full priority.

Improving the quality and relevance of training is a concern for both public stakeholders and the private sector. Efforts are being made by the government to reform the system, with the support of donors. This reform is needed primarily to equip Egypt with a workforce that can face the challenges of socioeconomic development and competitiveness.

In addition, the current situation demonstrates that the issue of qualification recognition is acquiring a new significance in the context of the growing attractiveness of the EU as a migration destination. Recognition of qualifications before and after migration remains a real concern, particularly in relation to the validation of previous non-formal and informal learning. There is, therefore, scope for the use of common European instruments to support transparency of skills and recognition of learning (for example, the European Qualification Framework, common principles for the validation of non-formal and informal learning, a learning outcomes approach, Europass, and certificate and diploma

supplements). In particular, participation in the Bologna and Copenhagen processes could provide Egypt with a strong incentive to improve the transparency and quality of its education and training system and to design a National Qualification Framework (NQF).

Concrete work has been ongoing for a number of years on the development of the National Skills Standard Programme (NSSP) and more recently with attempts to implement it through the TVET Reform Programme. Along these lines, in 2007 a task force made up of the most relevant stakeholders from private, public and donor programmes was set up under the auspices of the Minister of Manpower, in her role as Chairperson of the Supreme Council for Human Resources Development (SCHRD), to develop further the concept of an NQF for Egypt. The first results of this work, technically supported by ETF and Italian cooperation, will be presented at the end of 2008. Work will continue on the definition of learning outcomes in 2008. A national Quality and Accreditation Centre for Education and Higher Education was also set up in 2007 by the Egyptian government, while parallel discussions are taking place on the potential establishment of a similar agency for training. All these efforts should be continued in order to increase the opportunities for migrant workers to gain better skills and have their qualifications recognised internationally.

Another finding that has significant policy implications is that legal channels for labour migration are rarely used because of limited opportunities, lack of information, and lack of confidence in the system. The limited opportunities for legal economic migration result in more illegality and an increased likelihood of human exploitation. The creation of more legal channels for labour migration and the provision of adequate information and support for legal migration should be promoted. The current information campaign on the risks of illegal migration should continue.

Experience already exists of managed labour migration, particularly to Italy and the Gulf States. This experience should be carefully assessed and the outcomes taken into account in future labour negotiations. A key component in managed labour migration schemes should be pre-departure training, which needs to be easily available and accessible to potential migrants. Such training this would enable migrants to use their skills fully and would avoid skill mismatches and skill wastage. The system should also be better targeted in order to maximise benefits.

The fact that migration is generally assessed as a positive experience, in terms of the accumulation of both capital and skills, can be exploited in the local context. Ongoing work by the government and international donors aims to improve the use of remittances and skills. These efforts should be linked to an overall improvement in the business environment and investment climate. The best way to encourage return is to combine sensible government policies with a vibrant economy at home. Providing support and incentives for returning migrants to start businesses in Egypt should be a priority. The development of training modules on optimising the use of remittances for communities heavily affected by migration should also be considered.

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