

Shifting Focus: Policies to Support the Labor Market Integration of New Immigrants in France

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▶ **To cite this version:**

Mirna Safi. Shifting Focus: Policies to Support the Labor Market Integration of New Immigrants in France. [Research Report] Migration Policy Institute. 2014. hal-03460220

HAL Id: hal-03460220

https://sciencespo.hal.science/hal-03460220

Submitted on 1 Dec 2021

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SHIFTING FOCUS
Policies to Support the Labor Market Integration of New Immigrants in France

By Mirna Safi



A Series on the Labor Market Integration of New Arrivals in Europe: Assessing Policy Effectiveness

THIS PROJECT IS FUNDED BY
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Mirna Safi

October 2014

This project is funded
by the European Union

MIGRATION POLICY INSTITUTE

Acknowledgments

This study relies on several experts' interviews conducted with diverse public service officers and local and associative actors involved in immigrants' integration programs in France. The author thanks them for their time and insights. She is also grateful to Mireille Clémençon, who assisted in gathering official reports and exploring websites that also constitute an important resource for this work.

This report is part of a project conducted by the Migration Policy Institute and the International Labour Office called "The Labor Market Integration of New Arrivals in Europe." The project examines immigrants' trajectories into skilled employment in the initial years after arrival, as well as the policy interventions that seek to support their economic integration. The project includes case studies of the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. This research was undertaken for the European Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs, and Inclusion.

This report has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. The views expressed herein can in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of the European Union.

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Cover Design: April Siruno
Typesetting: Rebecca Kilberg, MPI

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Suggested citation: Safi, Mirna. 2014. *Shifting Focus: Policies to Support the Labor Market Integration of New Immigrants in France.* Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute and International Labour Office.

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Executive Summary

Immigrants in France are more likely to be unemployed or in low-skilled jobs than are their native-born peers. Disparities in levels of education do not entirely explain these labor market gaps. Immigrants have difficulties signaling their human capital (especially for qualifications acquired abroad), face discrimination, are concentrated in suburban neighborhoods with limited jobs or transport links, have more limited professional networks, and are more likely to be passed over for promotion. Moreover, the French labor market is structurally unfavorable to new entries, whether for youth or migrants. Moreover, the French administration formally blocks foreign nationals from outside the European Union (EU) from many public- and private-sector jobs (equivalent to about one-fifth of the labor market).

Despite these obstacles and outcomes, getting newcomers into jobs has not been a major policy priority. Integration policy in France was traditionally framed as urban policy, targeting disadvantaged neighborhoods (that often happen to have a high concentration of immigrants and their children) rather than immigrants themselves. Although there have been significant changes to integration policy since 2000, especially in relation to "new arrivals" (defined as those in receipt of their first residence permit, regardless of when they entered the country), the focus of reforms has been cultural, rather than socioeconomic, integration. The flagship program for new arrivals is the reception and integration contract (RIC). Other than students and some categories of economic migrants, all new arrivals from outside the European Union are required to sign their agreement to the values of the republic, and to commit to learning a basic level of French. But efforts to get new arrivals into jobs have been somewhat of an afterthought—with some perverse consequences. For instance, the level of French proficiency that language training for new arrivals works toward is too low to access some of the most promising training programs in sectors with demand for labor. Linguistic requirements are thus symbolically framed in a normative stance rather that used as an integration instrument. Moreover, only when immigrants have reached this level are their occupational skills assessed (superficially, critics would say), in an approach that may effectively delay labor market entry.

In theory, many features of France's mainstream workforce development system allow newcomers swift access. By virtue of a universalist, difference-blind approach, France enables foreign nationals to access all benefits and services. For example, upon arrival migrants are entitled to use the public employment service, Pôle emploi, which provides services such as career counseling, information about training, and job search assistance. Although few adaptations specific to new arrivals exist (such as translation services or smaller caseloads), the service as a whole seeks to account for individual needs and barriers, whether they stem from mobility, health, or child-care responsibilities. Moreover, recent changes that link data from the RIC skills assessment to the computer systems of Pôle emploi promise to improve how advisors respond to migrants' needs.

Such positive developments aside, migrants are excluded from the more prestigious elements of France's workforce development system. For example, they are less likely to benefit from the well-funded vocational training system. Despite requirements for employers to spend a certain portion of their payroll on training, disparities in vocational training opportunities across sectors and occupations are considerable. Low-skilled workers, migrants, and employees in sectors with high volumes of foreign nationals are much less likely to benefit from vocational training than French nationals and those with higher skill levels. One potentially positive reform relates to language training, which since 2004 has been officially recognized as a type of vocational training. Although this vocational language training does not specifically target migrants, it seems to be prompting the development of a number of sector-specific language programs in sectors such as construction and cleaning. Migrants who are out of work could also benefit from other available programs, such as short-term apprenticeships for disadvantaged adults. However, data on whether migrants are regularly accessing such programs is lacking; relevant studies indicate that migrant jobseekers are in general less likely to benefit from vocational training than natives.

In today's political and economic landscape, opening up the labor market—and employment services and educational opportunities—to migrants is low on the policy agenda. Nonetheless, a number of small changes could help France gain more benefit from its immigrant workforce. Such changes include improving coopera-

tion across departments and agencies and with civil society and experts, considering migrants as a disadvantaged group in need of special employment support (and thus setting aside the government commitment to not differentiate by national origin), and building better bridges between targeted and mainstream services. Most importantly, making it a priority to help all immigrants into jobs could enable France to capitalize upon their skills and talents.

I. Introduction

A popular narrative that holds immigrants responsible for many of France's social and economic problems has been gaining ground for the past several decades, alongside growing political support for the extreme right. While immigration and integration policy has evolved rapidly in France in recent years, in line with a general trend among European Union members—and driven in part by European Commission recommendations—the French political context has not been conducive to framing immigrants' employment as a policy priority. Instead, most policy efforts focus on social and cultural aspects of integration.

A major change since the 2000s has been the introduction of a new category—"newly arrived migrants"—and a host of policies that target this group. New arrivals from outside the European Union are required to sign a reception and integration contract (RIC). This move may mark a turning point in French integration policy, which is traditionally "blind" to difference (that is, populations are not to be distinguished on the basis of national, religious, cultural, ethnic, or racial characteristics).[1]

While immigration and integration policy has evolved rapidly in France in recent years...the French political context has not been conducive to framing immigrants' employment as a policy priority.

This report examines how well these new integration policies—alongside mainstream employment policies—support migrants' integration into the labor market. It analyzes the effectiveness of policies to help migrants find jobs, and middle-skilled jobs in particular. First, the report provides an overview of immigrants' progress in the French labor market. It then analyzes recent French immigration policy and the relevant aspects of employment policy, language and vocational training, and antidiscrimination programs. Finally, the report proposes some policy recommendations.[2]

II. Immigrants and the French Labor Market

France has the largest immigrant population in Europe after the United Kingdom and Germany. In 2010 France had 5.5 million foreign-born residents—around 8.5 percent of the total population—of whom 3.8 million were foreign citizens.[3] About one-third came from the European Union, 43 percent from Africa, 14

1 France generally embraces politics and policies in line with its unique republican model, according to which there is no ethnic or racial differentiation in French society. The French model rejects ethnicity, culture, and religion as bases for political organization, benefits, or even categories for official statistics. See Mirna Safi, "The Immigrant Integration Process in France: Inequalities and Segmentation," *Revue française de sociologie English Issue* 49 (2008): 3–44; Patrick Simon, "Nationalité et origine dans la statistique française," *Population* 53 (1998): 541–67; Patrick Simon, "Challenging the French Model of Integration: Discrimination and the Labor Market Case in France," *Studi Emigrazione* 152 (2003): 717–45.

2 The study draws on academic literature, written materials (official reports and publications, websites, booklets, etc.), and seven expert interviews conducted with officials and other actors involved in integration.

3 For an overview of recent trends in French international migration, see Yves Breem, *Immigration et présence étrangère en France*

percent from Asia, and the remainder from elsewhere. The immigrant population is considerably older in France than elsewhere in Europe, as a result of very limited migration from the 1970s to the 2000s. As of 2006, 21 percent of immigrants who participated in the labor market had been in the country fewer than ten years compared with 25 percent in Germany and 46 percent in the United Kingdom.[4]

Immigration flows have again increased since 2000. New arrivals hail from increasingly diverse countries, have higher levels of education, and are more likely to come for work. Yet family reunification remains the main route of entry. Of the 193,031 arrivals in 2011, around 45 percent arrived through family channels, 34 percent to study, 9 percent for work, and 9 percent for humanitarian reasons.[5]

Immigrants in the Labor Market

In 2012, 2.8 million migrants ages 16 and over participated in the labor market in mainland France, equivalent to one-tenth of the active population. Immigrant men are more likely to be active than native-born men, but immigrant women's activity rate is lower for some groups (particularly Turkish and North African).[6] Immigrants also have higher unemployment rates—16.9 percent in 2012, 8 percentage points higher than natives. These gaps are greater for immigrants with university diplomas (twice as likely to be unemployed as natives with the same educational level). Non-EU immigrants (with an unemployment rate of around 20 percent) are also more likely to be unemployed than those coming from Europe.[7] And gaps between natives and immigrants appear to be widening.[8]

Immigrants and ethnic minorities are more likely to live in disadvantaged urban areas, where jobs suited to their skills are rare.

These poor employment outcomes have been linked to a number of socioeconomic factors, including lower educational levels, difficulties getting foreign skills and experience recognized, and limited language proficiency, coupled with a labor market that is not open to foreign-language speakers, poor social networks, and discrimination by employers. Moreover, immigrants and ethnic minorities are more likely to live in disadvantaged urban areas, where jobs suited to their skills are rare.[9] Formal barriers to getting work also play a substantial role in France. About one-fifth of the French labor market is off-limits to migrants from outside the European Union because of nationality requirements.[10] And whether they already live in France

en 2011 (Paris: Rapport du SOPEMI pour la France, 2013); National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (Insee), *Immigrés et descendants d'immigrés en France* (Paris: Insee, 2012). Useful statistics are also directly accessible on INSEE website. See, for example, Insee, "Population étrangère et immigrée par sexe et âge en 2011," www.insee.fr/fr/themes/tableau.asp?reg_id=0&ref_id=NATTEF02162; Insee, "Répartition des immigrés par pays de naissance en 2011," www.insee.fr/fr/themes/tableau.asp?reg_id=0&ref_id=immigrespaysnais.

4 For more details, see Table 1 in Georges Lemaitre, "Dossier: Les immigrés et le marché du travail en Europe," *L'emploi, nouveaux enjeux—edition 2008* (Paris: Insee, 2008), www.insee.fr/fr/ffc/docs_ffc/ref/EMPLOIR08j.PDF.

5 For more details, see Ministère de L'Intérieur, "L'admission au séjour—les titres de séjour," July 10, 2014, www.immigration.interieur.gouv.fr/Info-ressources/Documentation/Tableaux-statistiques/L-admission-au-sejour-les-titres-de-sejour.

6 For a detailed overview of the labor market integration of newly arrived migrants in France, see Patrick Simon and Elsa Steichen, *Slow Motion. The Labor Market Integration of New immigrants in France* (Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2014), www.migrationpolicy.org/research/slow-motion-labor-market-integration-new-immigrants-france.

7 Insee, *France, Portrait Social* (Paris: Insee, 2013), 176.

8 In a recent Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) publication, countries were ranked according to their foreign-born unemployment rate. France held the 18th position over the period 2001-06. Moreover, the same study indicated a widening gap between the employment rates of immigrants and the native born over the same period. See OECD, "Immigrants and the Labour Market," in *International Migration Outlook 2008* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2008), Table I.12.

9 For more details see Laurent Gobillon, Thierry Magnac, and Harris Selod, "The Effect of Location on Finding a Job in the Paris Region," *Journal of Applied Econometrics* 26 (2011): 1079–112; Laurent Gobillon, Harris Selod, and Yves Zenou, "The Mechanisms of Spatial Mismatch," *Urban Studies* 44, no. 12 (2007): 2401–428.

10 About 20 percent of the French job market is not accessible for non-European citizens because of nationality conditions. This is the case in the public service, in some major public firms, and for diverse professional or self-employed positions. See Groupe d'études et de lutte contre les discriminations (GELD), "Une forme méconnue de discrimination: les emplois fermés

or not, foreign workers need a work permit issued by the local employment services,[11] which are required to check that the principle of "national preference"[12] is respected.

Immigrants are also highly concentrated in certain sectors and occupations such as construction, hotel trade, restaurants, cleaning, security, health care, and personal services. Across all sectors, immigrants are most often in unskilled jobs. One 2008 study found that around 38 percent of immigrants were blue-collar workers, compared with 19 percent of natives.[13] And a 2013 study found that migrants with no more than a high school degree, female migrants, and non-Europeans have particularly low chances of entering middle- or high-skilled positions—and these chances do not seem to increase with their length of stay.[14] Immigrants' occupational segregation is also along gender lines—women are more likely to work in the cleaning and personal services sector, and men in the construction industry—and varies considerably across ethnic groups. Finally, immigrants are more likely to be in a part-time job (6 percent of men and 16 percent of women, compared to 3 and 9 percent, respectively, of French natives with no immigrant background).[15]

Evidence also suggests that immigrants are less likely to be promoted.

Evidence also suggests that immigrants are less likely to be promoted. In 2008 only 23 percent of working immigrants (and 15 percent for non-European immigrants) said they had been promoted during the past five years, compared to 37 percent of the native born.[16]

Finally, the French government has recently established the category "new legal migrants" and begun to study the outcomes of this official migrant category (see Table 1). While only a small minority of migrants report being unemployed in their country of origin, one-third are unemployed a year after getting a residence permit, falling to 24 percent a year later. The impact of migration on unemployment seems to be especially pronounced for women. Some women who enter France after marriage give up work on arrival.[17] Studies find a positive trend in employment outcomes with length of stay, although longitudinal data are rare. Moreover, gaps do not seem to disappear over time; even after ten years of residence, unemployment is still much more common among non-European migrants, who are also over-represented in unskilled occupations.[18]

aux étrangers," Notes du GELD, Paris. The latest list of restricted jobs can be found at Observatoire des inégalités, "5,3 millions d'emplois demeurent fermés aux étrangers non européens," September 17, 2011, www.inegalites.fr/spip.php?article1480. All in all, 5 million to 7 million jobs are *de facto* restricted to nationals whether because of nationality or educational status. Some sparse efforts have been made to alleviate these obstacles (a public transport corporation, RATP, that abolished the nationality criterion in its hiring policies in 2002 is among the most noteworthy). There have also been recent attempts to open some protected sectors/professions (doctors, pharmacists, architects) Fougère and Safi showed that naturalization enhances immigrant employment in France most probably through opening access to the entire job market. See Denis Fougère and Mirna Safi, "Naturalization and Employment of Immigrants in France (1968-1999)," *International Journal of Manpower* 30 (1999): 83–96.

11 Since 2010 diverse local employment public administrations have been grouped in the *Directions Régionales des Entreprises, de la Concurrence, de la Consommation, du travail et de l'Emploi* (DIRRECTE), which became the main local contact of firms and other economic players. For more details, see DIRRECTE, "La Direccte : un interlocuteur unique pour les entreprises," http://direccte.gouv.fr/la-direccte-un-interlocuteur-unique-pour-les-entreprises.

12 More precisely, employment services are required to check whether a jobseeker already resident in France, whether native or legally present immigrant, could perform the job before granting a work permit.

13 Olivier Monso and François Gleizes, "Langues, diplômes: des enjeux pour l'accès des immigrés au marché du travail," *Insee Première* 1262 (2009).

14 Simon and Steichen, *Slow Motion*.

15 Insee, *Immigrés et descendants d'immigrés en France*, 202.

16 Ibid, 204–06.

17 The dramatic increase of the unemployment rate upon migration is in part explained by the significant share of immigrants who were students before migrating (13 percent) and also to a considerable proportion of the employed shifting to inactivity upon migration (14 percent, mainly women). The data nonetheless highlight that the most frequent transitions remain from employment in the origin country to unemployment in the host country.

18 For a detailed overview of the labor market integration of newly arrived migrants, see Simon and Steichen, *Slow Motion.*

Table 1. Unemployment Rate for Migrants Granted their First Legal Residence Permit in 2009, by Length of Stay, 2010-11

Length of stay	Before Migration	2010	2011	Share (%)
Less than 2 years	8	47	30	48
Between 2 and 5 years	6	36	28	16
5 years and more	8	19	17	36
Total recent legal residents	**8**	**33**	**24**	**100**

Source: Florent Domergue and Virginie Jourdan, "L'intégration sur le marché du travail des signataires du Contrat d'accueil et d'intégration en France en 2009," *Immigrés et descendents d'immigrés en France*, édition 2012 (Paris: Institut national de la statistique, 2012), www.insee.fr/fr/ffc/docs_ffc/ref/IMMFRA12_c_D1_integ.pdf.[19]

III. Recent Trends in Immigration Policy in France: Recent Reforms in an Unstable Administrative Context

Although France has long been a destination for immigrants, its integration policy is relatively new. In the postwar period and until the 1970s, immigration policy was limited to organizing and regulating the entry of temporary guest workers.[20] Debate about immigrant integration began in the 1990s, when the government defined the French model of integration and created a council to deliberate on integration and the values of the republic (Haut Conseil à l'Intégration). But the past decade has seen the most dramatic changes to integration policy. Since the 2000s, five laws and countless ministerial circulars have been issued to transform the public services and organizations involved in immigrant integration.[21]

Three trends in immigration and integration policy are especially relevant to the labor market integration of new arrivals. First, recent years have seen an increase in the length of residence required for naturalization, as well as hardened conditions for family reunion and, more recently, refugee admissions. Meanwhile, enforcement efforts directed at unauthorized immigrants have increased. The emphasis on the security and regulatory aspects of immigration policy is thought to have made relations between government and civil society more fraught.

Second, the government has sought to increase skilled migration, with mixed results. It improved the monitoring of labor migration, introduced selective work visas (the "skills and talents" program), and developed measures to facilitate professional mobility.[22] These policies have had limited effect, with only around 200 "skills and talents" permits issued each year, for instance.[23] While this strict official definition of labor migrants does not account for all labor migration, and other categories of migrants participate in the labor market, characteristics of the French labor market may be responsible for these surprisingly low numbers. Hiring foreign workers remains costly, as foreign workers need a work permit before being able

19 Elipa is a longitudinal survey that the Ministry of Interior conducted on a sample of "new legal migrants" over the age of 18, i.e non-EU migrants who obtained their first French legal permit before December 2009. The survey covers many aspects of migrants' lives during their first months of settlement: administrative procedures, labor market incorporation, language proficiency, and other aspects of everyday life. Respondents were surveyed in 2010, 2011, and 2013.

20 The main governmental actors are the Office National de l'Immigration (ONI), created in 1945, and the Office Français de Protection des Réfugiés et Apatrides (OFPRA), created in 1952.

21 Patrick Simon, "Les revirements de la politique d'immigration," *Cahiers français* 369 (2012): 86–91; Catherine Wihtol de Wenden, "Accueil, l'état de la France," *Projet* 311(2010): 38–47. See the Appendix for an overview of several key actors involved in immigrant integration policy in France and mentioned in this study.

22 More information can be found on the website of the Office français de l'immigration et de l'intégration (OFII), "Pour la promotion de l'immigration profesionnelle."

23 See Ministère de l'Intérieur, "La carte de séjour "compétences et talents," April 24, 2014, www.immigration.interieur.gouv.fr/Immigration/L-immigration-professionnelle/La-carte-de-sejour-competences-et-talents.

to legally work once selected for a job position.[24] Meanwhile, any official discourse on being open to labor migration may have been contradicted by an emphasis on efforts to reduce immigration.

Finally, recent years have seen the introduction of targeted integration policies at the national level for the first time. Widespread public discourse about the supposed failure of immigrant integration, exacerbated by the riots in the *banlieues* in 2005,[25] lay behind a shift in integration strategy in 2006 toward the reception of newly arrived migrants. French integration policies had historically been cross-cutting, with an emphasis on urban and social affairs and "difference-blind" programs (such as training and assistance in accessing housing and health services) that targeted disadvantaged neighborhoods, where unemployment and poverty were high, rather than immigrants per se.[26] The RIC represents the first coordinated central government integration policy.

This shift in integration policy has also brought changes in the organization of integration. In 2007 the Ministry of Immigration and National Identity was created, although its remit was transferred to the Ministry of Interior (MoI) shortly after. A department within the Ministry handles the social and economic aspects of integration alongside immigration control (Direction de l'Accueil de l'Accompagnement de l'Étranger et de Nationalité, DAAEN), and an agency supervised by the Ministry of Interior (Office Français de l'Immigration et de l'Intégration, OFII) oversees arrival and settlement (see the Appendix for more details). One drawback of this centralized structure is the loss of the skills and knowledge of many governmental actors and public organizations that once delivered employment, social, and urban services.[27]

Recent years have seen the introduction of targeted integration policies at the national level for the first time.

The budget for integration and naturalization was about 65 million euros in 2013. This budget covers four actions: migrants' reception and language training (18 percent of the budget), legal migrants' integration (56 percent), naturalization (2 percent), and refugees (23 percent). Within "legal migrants' integration," 3.2 million euros are earmarked for intracorporate transfers, and the remainder is for local language and civic training, migrant housing, and cultural aspects. In addition to this funding for integration and naturalization, indirect funding comes from other MoI departments (immigration control or/and asylum) or other ministries (mainly the Ministry of Social Affairs). In total, immigrant integration funding expected for 2014 is around 86 million euros.[28] The European Union also provides specific immigrant integration funding—65 million euros for the 2007-13 period.[29]

24 Employers have to handle administrative issues to get labor migration permits or work permits for migrants who already live in France but are not allowed to work (mainly students). They also have to pay taxes as high as 50 percent of the migrant worker's monthly wage.

25 See Haut Conseil à l'Integration (HCI) reports in the early 2000s and more recently, *Intégrer dans une économie de sous-emploi, Rapport Annual 2012*, vol. 2, Tome 1 (Paris: La Documentation française, 2012). For a critical note on the role of the HCI, see Danièle Lochak, "Le Haut Conseil à la (dés)integration," *Plein droit* 98 (2011), 12-15.

26 A circular of April 10, 1991 explicitly refers to "the integration of the foreign population" as a major concern of urban policies.

27 The Fond d'Action Sociale (FAS) for instance, loosened a great deal of its public funding all through the 2000s and transformed into the Agence Nationale pour la Cohésion Sociale (Acsé), whose integration role is limited to social action in disadvantaged neighborhoods.

28 For more details, see Ministry of Interior, "PLF 2014 – Extrait du bleu budgétaire de la mission: Immigration, asile et intégration," October 1, 2013, www.performance-publique.budget.gouv.fr/sites/performance_publique/files/farandole/ressources/2014/pap/pdf/DBGPGMPGM104.pdf.

29 The European Commission recently published a final report of EU indicators of immigrant integration; European Commission, *Using EU Indicators of Immigrant Integration: Final Report for Directorate-General for Home Affairs* (Brussels: European Commission, 2013). An updated list of indicators can be found on the Eurostat link: Eurostat, "Employment and Social Policy Indicators," updated November 27, 2013, http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/employment_social_policy_equality/migrant_integration/indicators. In France INSEE publishes a national report exclusively dealing with immigrant and immigrant integration. It includes EU indicators since 2012; Insee, *Immigrés et descendants d'immigrés en France*.

IV. Mainstream Employment Policies

The French labor market has been characterized by high unemployment for some decades, reaching 10 percent in 2014.[30] Prospects are especially poor for labor market entrants: young people who just finished their studies find it increasingly hard to get jobs, secure stable positions, and progress toward middle- and upper-skilled jobs. Some research documents declining mobility across generations.[31] These labor market barriers are even more pronounced for disadvantaged populations in poor neighborhoods, where immigrants are concentrated.[32]

Newly arrived immigrants face particular obstacles. They are more likely to be young and to have lower education levels, and they may difficulties signaling their human capital.

Education is a significant determinant of whether someone will find a secure, well-paid job; labor market inequality is starkly drawn along the lines of the less and more educated.[33] Between 15 and 20 percent of new immigrants leave school without credentials, and the unemployment rate of these groups can reach 40 percent. Even those young people who find employment often find themselves trapped in unstable jobs with few prospects. Career progression and upward social mobility are thought to be rare among the most disadvantaged workers.[34] For example, a study of unskilled workers found that five years after an initial survey (in 1998), 17 percent were unemployed, 39 percent had the same position, 64 percent had a similar unskilled position, and only 19 percent had been promoted.[35]

Newly arrived immigrants face particular obstacles. They are more likely to be young and to have lower education levels, and they may difficulties signaling their human capital, especially when their education is achieved abroad. Moreover they frequently lack job-relevant social connections and face legal and illegal discriminatory obstacles.

While no employment policy action specifically targets migrants, they may benefit from a set of mainstream employment policies that have been designed over the past few decades to benefit the most disadvantaged categories of workers (mainly youth, the low-skilled, the long-term unemployed, and to a lesser extent women and the elderly). All employment programs, meanwhile, are open to migrants; the French welfare system has no basis on nationality or origin.

A. Employment Services

Employment services in France include the administration of unemployment benefits, career advice and information about training, and job search assistance. Employment services in France are run at both

30 The only exception is during the 2000-07 period, when the unemployment rate reached 7.4 percent—the best performance in 30 years.
31 Louis Chauvel, *Le destin des generations* (Paris: Puf, 2010); Camille Peugny, *Le déclassement* (Paris: Grasset, 2009).
32 Mahrez Okba, "Habiter en Zus et être immigré: un double risque sur le marché du travail," *Premières Synthèses* 48 (2009).
33 François Dubet, Marie Duru-Bellat, and Antoine Vérétout, *Les sociétés et leur école. Emprise du diplôme et cohesion sociale* (Paris: Le Seuil, 2010).
34 Thomas Amossé and Olivier Chardon, "Les travailleurs non qualifiés: une nouvelle classe sociale?" *Economie et Statistique* (2006): 203–29; Olivier Chardon, "Les transformations de l'emploi non qualifié depuis 20 ans," *Insee Première* (Paris: Insee, 2001).
35 Amossé and Chardon, "Les travailleurs non qualifiés: une nouvelle classe sociale?" 268.

the national and local level, known collectively as DIRRECTE. The agencies comprise a highly centralized employment state agency (Pôle emploi) that administers benefits alongside assisting jobseekers; a joint national body in charge of the financial management of the unemployment benefits system (Union Nationale Interprofessionnelle pour l'Emploi dans l'Industrie et le Commerce, UNEDIC), and the main public professional training body (Association Nationale pour la Formation Professionnelle des Adultes, AFPA). The French public policy audit agency (la Cour des comptes) estimates the overall cost of employment policies at around 50 billion euros (including unemployment benefits and vocational training).[36]

Because the French unemployment welfare system was traditionally based on insurance payments, access to benefits corresponds to the length of time previously in work (or more specifically the size of workers' tax contributions). As a result, the system benefits the most advantaged workers, i.e., those who are well paid and who have been employed for a long period. New arrivals are therefore at a distinct disadvantage. That said, unemployment benefit coverage is also quite generous in France. The minimum time claimants need to have been in work is only four months (this is generally six or 12 months elsewhere), and the maximum period of coverage is quite high (28 months for those with considerable work history).[37]

Despite their traditional reluctance to target particular national or ethnic groups, employment services have been increasingly concerned with the specific needs of migrant populations and, specifically, new arrivals.[38] For example, Pôle emploi provides more sustained follow-up and more extensive individual assistance to migrant jobseekers than to the native born (about a 5 percentage point difference).[39] Moreover, Pôle emploi has been moving toward a holistic approach to employment support that seeks to address all forms of socioeconomic disadvantage (whether housing, the need for child care, access to transportation) by providing specialized support for disadvantaged groups from 2015 onward.

Despite their traditional reluctance to target particular national or ethnic groups, employment services have been increasingly concerned with the specific needs of migrant populations.

Since the 1980s employment policies have mainly focused on reducing unemployment. A number of programs seek to create incentives for firms to hire disadvantaged categories of jobseekers, mainly through tax exemptions. These overwhelmingly target jobseekers who are entitled to the lowest welfare benefits (social assistance) and young and low-skilled workers. Yet evaluations conclude that the degree to which these tax reductions encourage hiring is uncertain, especially for the most disadvantaged categories of workers.[40]

Another significant pillar of employment policy is the use of "subsidized jobs" (*contrats aidés*) to facilitate labor market entry for those who have "particular difficulties in gaining access to employment." These difficulties are defined as "social or professional," in line with France's color-blind paradigm, a definition that is rather vague.[41] The number of subsidized jobs grew throughout the 2000s and is now approaching 1 million in total.[42] In 2014 the government budgeted 3.6 billion euros for 400,000 *contrats aidés*, equivalent to one-third of the overall employment policy budget.

36 Cour des comptes, "Le marché du travail face à un chômage élevé, mieux cibler les politiques," *Rapport Public Thématique,* Paris, 2013.
37 Dares, "L'indeminisation par le régime d'assurance chômage en 2010," *Dares Analyses*, 2012.
38 For instance, employment services very rarely publish statistics about migrant beneficiaries.
39 Observatoire de l'ANPE, *Les demandeurs d'emploi étrangers* (Paris: L'observatoire de l'ANPE, 2005), 18.
40 Cour des comptes, "Le marché du travail face à un chômage élevé, mieux cibler les politiques."
41 See Emploi.gouv.fr, "Contrats aidés," www.emploi.gouv.fr/thematiques/contrats-aides.
42 Cour des Comptes, "Les contrats aidés dans la politique de l'emploi, Communication de la commission des finances, de l'économie générale et du contrôle budgétaire de l'Assemblée nationale," 2011, www.ccomptes.fr/Publications/Publications/Les-contrats-aides-dans-la-politique-de-l-emploi.

Since migrants are not specifically targeted by the *contrats aidés* policy, its effectiveness in supporting foreign workers is unclear. However, a recent Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques (INSEE) study found that foreigners are under-represented among beneficiaries of subsidized contracts both in the corporate and nonprofit sectors (in 2010, 4.4 percent and 5.5 percent, respectively, of people with subsidized contracts were foreign citizens). Moreover, these subsidized jobs were less likely to lead to stable employment for non-European foreigners than for natives.[43] Since there are fewer job opportunities in the nonprofit sector overall,[44] the fact that non-European foreigners are more likely to benefit from subsidized contracts within the nonprofit sector may indicate the contracts' limited effectiveness.

Other mainstream employment programs that may indirectly benefit migrants include those that focus on specific locations. Targeted tax-reduction incentives were established in 1997 in "sensitive areas"—defined by the government on the basis of unemployment and poverty rates— with the aim of encouraging firms to settle in these so-called *zones franches*. Their number has now reached 100, at a cost of more than 500 million euros. The few existing attempts to evaluate the *zones franches* program find only small, short-term effects on the employability of these areas' inhabitants.[45] Since the proportion of immigrants in disadvantaged areas is typically large, these actions may indirectly enhance migrants' employment (although no study specifically measures this).

B. The Vocational Training System

French vocational training is fairly new, having been established in 1971, but attracts considerable spending—equivalent to 1.7 percent of gross domestic product (GDP). Numerous actors are involved, including the government (which contributes 16 percent of expenditure on vocational training), the regions (14 percent), and—most significantly—private economic players such as firms (40 percent).[46]

One of the main defining features of the system is therefore its strong private-sector involvement. Professional associations are structurally involved in quality assurance, curricula development, and workplace training. Employers help fund both the initial and continual vocational training systems, through a training tax and mandatory funding of on-the-job training (see below). As a result of the different actors involved, vocational training is rather fragmented: 40 percent of vocational training is provided by the corporate sector, 35 percent by the nonprofit sector (associations and civil-society actors), and 25 percent by public vocational training organizations (mainly AFPA, Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers, GRoupement d'ETAblissements, and French universities). The government is more active in youth training; local authorities target the unemployed, and firms largely control training for workers.

Vocational training in France can be divided into initial vocational education and training (IVET), and continued vocational education and training (CVET). Following the completion of lower secondary school, young people have a number of vocational options, including a vocational aptitude certificate (CAP) or an apprenticeship. While 25 is the upper age limit for an apprenticeship, most other vocational options, including the CAP, are fully open to adults through GRoupement d'ETAblissements (GRETAS), networks of adult learning bodies that also provide career advice and help tailor programs to the needs of individuals. They do so by adjusting the length of the course depending on previous education, and validating prior experience to smooth career changes.[47]

43 Insee, *Immigrés et descendants d'immigrés en France*, 199.
44 Less than 40 percent of workers with a subsidized contract in the nonprofit sector are employed six months later, while the proportion is around 70 percent in the corporate sector.
45 Pauline Givord, Roland Rathelot, and Patrick Sillard, "Place-based Tax Exemptions and Displacement Effects: An Evaluation of the Zones Franches Urbaines program," *Regional Science and Urban Economics* 43 (Carmichael and Hamilton, 2013): 151–63.
46 Cour des comptes, *La formation professionnelle tout au long de la vie* (Paris: La Documentation française, 2008); Yves Urieta, "40 ans de formation professionnelle: bilan et perspectives," *Avis du Conseil économique, social et environnemental*, 2011. Other funding come from the public administration (around 20 percent) and household taxes (4 percent).
47 European Center for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP), European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, "Navigating difficult waters: learning for career and labour market transitions (Research paper no. 42, European Commission, Luxembourg, 2014), www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/5542_en.pdf.

Most CVET is provided through employers; companies are required to invest a considerable share of their payroll in vocational training, depending on their size (up to 1.6 percent for those with more than 20 workers). While this means that firms often play a substantial role in organizing their workers' training, they need not pay for it but instead can choose to pay what is effectively a tax that is then aggregated by fund-collecting agencies, known as Organismes Paritaires Collecteurs Agrées (OPCA).[48]

1. The Effectiveness of Vocational Training

Despite considerable financial investments, the French vocational training system has been criticized extensively over the past several decades. Critics list several major deficiencies: the complexity and fragmentation of actors, poor integration with the mainstream educational system, weak returns on employment and professional mobility, and the system's role in reproducing social, educational, and labor market inequalities.[49]

Although in principle the French system offers a number of opportunities for those who have not been through initial vocational education in France, in practice migrants are unlikely to benefit from vocational training because of their high unemployment rates and concentration in lower-status jobs and unstable careers. Blue-collar workers are, for instance, three times less likely to access training than are engineers and managers. Although evidence on migrants' access to training is scant, what exists finds significant gaps between the access rates of migrants and natives. A survey of self-reported experiences of vocational training found that immigrant workers are only half as likely to access vocational training. Moreover, the gap is greater in sectors with high concentrations of immigrants: only 7 percent of immigrant workers benefit from vocational training in the construction sector (compared to 24 percent of natives), 20 percent in the tertiary sector (compared to 39 percent of natives), and 20 percent in the industrial sector (compared to 36 percent of natives).[50]

Migrants are unlikely to benefit from vocational training because of their high unemployment rates and concentration in lower-status jobs and unstable careers.

For those who are able to access training, evidence of its impact on occupational progression is mixed. According to one study, the most noticeable effect is that workers are more likely to keep their jobs but not necessarily progress. Fewer than 10 percent of vocational training programs lead to a promotion. However, findings also suggest that training undertaken by migrants tends to be longer and more likely to lead to a qualification. Nonetheless, the specific training needs of these populations are unlikely to be met, since vocational training is not tailored to migrants or adapted to their linguistic needs. Returns on vocational training are thought to be weak for people both in and out of jobs, and for the disadvantaged in particular.[51] Vocational training is overwhelmingly short term and rarely leads to a recognized credential.

But recent reforms may improve the situation for migrants. The government is seeking to improve the system by (1) bridging the gap between the educational system and the vocational training system (through a commitment to lifelong learning) and (2) building more flexibility and individualization into vocational training.[52] Efforts to require employers to specify the aim and potential outcome of their workers' training programs may also improve the quality of vocational training. From 2015 the system will shift from a focus

48 Claude Dubar, *La formation professionnelle continue* (Paris: La Découverte, 2004).
49 Claude Dubar, "Les changements possibles du système français de formation continue," *Formation Emploi* (2008): 101, 167–82.
50 Didier Gélot and Claude Minni, "Les immigrés accèdent moins à la formation professionnelle continue," *Formation-Emploi* 94 (2006): 93–109.
51 Jean-Loius Dayan and Jenny Eksi, "A quoi sert la formation professionnelle continue?" *Centre d'Analyse Stratégique,* Paris, 2007.
52 Ibid.

on firms' compulsory fiscal contributions to those of the individuals in need of training. Each worker will have a training account, and may accrue training hours every year that they may take with them when they change jobs.

2. Targeted Vocational Training Programs and Vocational French

In 2009 a joint national agreement led to the creation of the Fond Paritaire de Sécurisation des Parcours Professionnels, which introduced targeted vocational training designed to provide youth and the unemployed with recognized skills and eventual access to stable jobs. The program comprises vocational job contracts (*contrats professionnalisants*)—a combination of work and training—alongside tax exemptions for employers. In 2012, 156,000 of these contracts were signed in France in sectors such as metal work, construction, trade and distribution, cleaning services, and banking. These policies have not yet been rigorously evaluated, but preliminary evidence indicates that they have benefited middle- and highly skilled workers in particular (for instance, 37 percent of workers who signed a vocational job contract in 2011 have a university degree).[53] Although the economic sectors that are the most concerned with these types of job contracts include a considerable share of migrants, evidence is lacking on whether immigrants systematically access these programs.

Although no specific vocational training program targets migrants in France, the government decided in 2004 to recognize French language training as vocational training, which means employers can fulfill their training obligations by providing language training. This change may have helped immigrants in work access language courses; it has also meant that institutions traditionally engaged in teaching French to international students (such as the Alliance Française) are moving into the vocational training field.[54] A number of vocational training organizations have also tried to target this new market. Moreover, an increase in research on work-relevant language training has fuelled debate on professional oral and written communication, and technical language skills for various sectors (tourism, services, etc.) and occupations.

While there is no rigorous evidence on the efficacy of vocational language training, it nonetheless seems plausible that this law has improved the relevance of language instruction.

Moreover, the Ministry of Interior supports work-relevant linguistic programs in sectors with a high concentration of migrants. The cleaning industry has, for instance, implemented vocational training programs to improve the ability of staff to communicate with customers, notable in a profession traditionally regarded as having few required competencies. The construction sector, characterized by an extremely low use of vocational training, has been especially proactive in implementing workplace language training, possibly because of the importance of understanding health and safety regulations.

While there is no rigorous evidence on the efficacy of vocational language training, it nonetheless seems plausible that this law has improved the relevance of language instruction, at least compared with traditional training methods. It is also likely to have facilitated immigrants' upward mobility, since those with language proficiency are more likely to gain access to supervisory positions.

53 Dares, "L'indeminisation par le régime d'assurance chômage en 2010," *Dares Analyses*, 2013.

54 Labeled "professional French" (le Français Langue Professionnelle, FLP). See Hervé Adami, "La formation linguistique des migrants adultes," *Savoirs* 29 (2012): 9–44; Hervé Adami and Véronique Leclercq, *Les migrants face aux langues des pays d'accueil: Acquisition en milieu naturel et formation* (Paris: Septentrion, 2012); Jean-Marc Mangiante, *L'intégration linguistique des migrants: État des lieux et perspectives* (Arras: Artois Presses Université, 2011); Florence Mourlhon-Dallies, *Enseigner une langue à des fins professionnelles* (Paris: Didier, 2008).

V. Employment and Work-Relevant Policies Targeting Immigrants

Targeted programs to get migrants into jobs and develop their skills fall under the remit of the Ministry of Interior.

A. The RIC Program

The flagship integration policy is a systematic reception program for newly arrived immigrants. New arrivals from outside the European Union (with the exception of students) are required to enter into a formal agreement with the French government when their first residence permit is issued. The reception and integration contract (RIC) was introduced in the *2006 Immigration Act* and made compulsory in 2007.[55] It aims to establish a "relationship of confidence and mutual obligation" between the French government and the immigrant, and places emphasis on the migrant's personal responsibility. The initial duration of the contract is one year, but it can be extended for an additional year if necessary. Failure to comply with the conditions of the contract can lead to the denial of residence permit renewal.[56]

The RIC acts as the main platform for immigrant integration policies, which are coordinated by DAAEN within MoI. Language training, employment, and naturalization are the three main domains of DAAEN actions. They are monitored by three distinct bureaus.

The flagship integration policy is a systematic reception program for newly arrived immigrants.

Upon the delivery of the first residence permit, each migrant is given an appointment at the local OFII agency to sign the RIC. During this appointment, officials present the main clauses of the contract and evaluate the immigrant's language proficiency, and prescribe compulsory language training if required. Immigrants also participate in a civic information session on major French political institutions and republican values (such as gender equality, secularism, rights, and freedom), as well as one on "life in France" that deals with practical issues (such as administrative procedures, public services, housing, child care, and finding a job). The main labor market element is an individual skills assessment of all migrants without jobs. For those immigrants who are required to take the language courses, this session is provided after they have reached A1.1 level (a very basic level of spoken French).

As it stands currently, the RIC does little to facilitate access to the labor market. First, it is not particularly orientated toward employment; less than 10 percent of the total RIC budget is for work-related efforts.[57] The contract was implemented in a political context where immigrant integration problems were framed as being mainly "cultural." Thus the wording of the RIC explicitly requires the migrant to embrace French republican values, notably those of secularism and gender equality. Second, the definition of "new arrivals" may be overly narrow to adequately address the diversity of integration needs in the immigrant

55 Although the members of this administrative category are commonly referred to as "newly arrived" or "new" migrants, it should be noted that this is not strictly defined by arrival date criterion. The category includes all migrants who have recently acquired their first legal residence permit (including migrants waiting for an asylum decision, or irregular migrants recently regularized). Some of them may, therefore, have arrived years back (but only recently been regularized or obtained a stable refugee status).

56 More than 700,000 migrants have signed the RIC since its implementation; this is about 100,000 each year. The rate of endorsement is around 97 percent; women form the majority of endorsers (around 53 percent) and the average age is 32.

57 Ministry of Interior, "PLF 2014 – Extrait du bleu budgétaire de la mission: Immigration, asile et intégration."

population. By confining integration programs to new arrivals, the policy ignores longer-term issues. In fact, employment may become more important as time goes on. Vulnerable migrants are sometimes in need of housing and access to health services on arrival and only ready to seek work after some time. Indeed, almost all RIC employment programs complain about the difficulty of recruiting newly arrived migrants.[58]

Since the RIC program is supervised by a unique public administration (MoI), performance data are relatively easy to gather and publish. Table 2 summarizes various program efforts and displays the number and share of beneficiaries over the 2007-12 period.

Table 2. An Assessment of the RIC Program, 2007-12

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Migrants assessed	101,770	104,336	99,402	103,574	105,109	104,401
Migrants required to sign contract	101,217	103,952	97,736	101,355	102,254	101,368
Share required to sign contract	99.5%	99.6%	98.3%	97.9%	97.3%	97.1%
Migrants enrolled in civil training	99,705	102,441	95,720	97,252	95,252	99,632
Migrants enrolled in language training	26,121	22,338	21,802	24,068	24,358	24,365
Share of contract signatories enrolled in language training	25.8%	21.5%	22.3%	23.7%	23.8%	24.0%
Migrants enrolled in the informative training "Vivre en France" (6h)	38,858	37,660	35,185	37,079	32,653	33,807
Share of contract signatories enrolled in "Vivre en France"	38.39%	38.2%	36%	36.6%	31.9%	33.4%
Migrants given Skills Assessment (SA) (6h)	nd	nd	55,618	62,095	60,035	61,065
Share of migrants given SA	nd	nd	62.1%	61%	58.7%	60.2%
Migrants with SA exemption	nd	nd	33,829	39,260	42,219	40,303
Migrants receiving social support	6,900	4,558	3,127	2,710	2,591	2,700
Share of migrants receiving social support (among RCI contractors)	6.82%	4.4%	3.2%	2.7%	2.5%	2.7%

Note: 'nd' denotes no data.
Source: Office Français de l'Immigration et de l'Intégration.

Some RIC evaluation tools have been developed, including a quantitative survey financed by the Ministry of Interior and carried out by a private institute. The Longitudinal Survey on the Integration of Recently Arrived Migrants (Enquête Longitudinale sur l'Intégration des Primo-Arrivants, ELIPA) was given to 6,000 RIC beneficiaries in 2010, 2011, and 2013. It allowed for the tracking of migrants' early labor market and housing outcomes. It also collected some subjective information about migrants' perception of the efficacy of RIC actions. ELIPA was used for a series of MoI publications.[59] ELIPA is the only longitudinal survey of new

58 HCI, *20 ans au service de l'intégration, 1990-2010* (Paris: La Documentation française, 2012).
59 See Florent Domergue, "Diplômes et formations professionnelles des nouveaux migrants," *Infos Migrations* 37 (2012); Florent Domergue and Virginie Jourdan, "L'intégration sur le marché du travail des signataires du Contrat d'accueil et d'intégration en

arrivals in Europe, hence is a positive step toward improving the monitoring of integration in France. The 2013 results are due to be published in 2014.

B. *Language Training: A Rapidly Expanding Action*

Language training is the main emerging action within the French integration policy landscape. It has flourished since the 1990s, across diverse frameworks and programs. Language training accounts for around 40 percent of the integration budget and is divided into three main types, as follows.

1. Compulsory Language Training for RIC Signatories

Language training is compulsory for migrants who fail the primary language test held during the RIC signature interview. This training may reach up to 400 hours—depending on the migrant's original language, and general educational level—over a period of two (and in exceptional circumstances, three) years. One advantage of this program is that it is designed to accommodate those with a full-time job (with evening and Saturday courses).[60] But the instruction is also thought to be rather basic and generic.[61] Only one-quarter of RIC signatories are assigned to language training.[62] Moreover, the training is orientated toward the level A1.1, which is too low to foster access to many employment and training programs.[63] On average, migrants receive only 260 hours of training. The French Senate estimates the average cost per person to be 1,450 euros.[64]

This language training is designed to prepare migrants for a test resulting in a qualification, and success in this test is a prerequisite for a residence permit renewal (although in practice this sanction was rarely enforced).[65] The test assesses only oral, not written, proficiency in French.[66]

That said, a flourishing market in French language training may have raised overall standards. While OFII prescribes language training, it contracts provision to local and national public and private institutions. In each French *département* language training is carried out by official service providers selected from within a national public market monitored by MoI. This has led to providers becoming more professional as they seek to comply with official requirements in order to maintain funding. In 2011 the quality label "French Integration Language" (*Français Langue d'Intégration*, FLI) was introduced alongside a linguistic integration framework that maps onto the Common European Framework of Reference for Language. Yet, once again, this quality label stresses cultural aspects. It states that it provides training that "enhances the acquisition of the tools for good integration (including knowledge of the uses, principles, and values of our society)".

OFII also offers language training for immigrants that arrived in France before the establishment of the RIC

France en 2009," in *Immigrés et descendants d'immigrés en France* (Paris: Insee références, 2012); Gérane Le Quentrec-Creven, "L'aisance en Français des primo-arrivants," *Infos Migrations* 28 (2011). Elisabeth Algava and Marilyne Bèque, "Nouveaux détenteurs et détentrices d'un titre de séjour: des trajectoires familiales et professionnelles contrastées," in *Femmes et Hommes—Regards sur la parité* (Paris: Insee Références, 2008).

60 In an online RIC booklet, it is stated that training sessions are provided within a reasonable distance from the migrant's location, that they will adapt to each immigrant's needs (with literacy-specific training or more advanced foreign language training), and that they should also adapt to personal constraints (ranging from six to 30 hours per week and with the possibility of taking the training in the evening or on Saturday). For more details, see Agence nationale de l'accueil des etrangers et des migrations (ANAEM), "Livret d'accueil: Vivre en France," 2011, www.nationspresse.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/livretaccueil2.pdf.

61 In July 2014, the French government expressed an interest in increasing migrants' language requirements.

62 But new arrivals are more likely to be prescribed language training: 71 percent of RIC migrants assigned to language training arrived less than two years ago, while their share is around 48 percent of total RIC endorsers. For more details about the characteristics of RIC language training programs, see Gérane Le Quentrec-Creven, "L'offre de formation linguistique dans le cadre du CAI," *Infos Migrations* 33 (2012).

63 For instance, the Fondation Agir Contre l'Exclusion (FACE) program that provides employment support for new arrivals (discussed below) requires that applicants reach the B1 level.

64 For more details, see French Senate, "L'office français de l'immigration et de l'intégration: pour une politique d'intégration réaliste et ambitieuse," updated July 15, 2014, www.senat.fr/rap/r12-047/r12-0479.html.

65 Diplôme Initial de Langue Française (DILF) was created in 2007 (level A1.1). This credential is gradually being replaced by the new label "Français langue d'intégration," created in 2011.

66 The tests consist of only a few basic questions such as "quel est votre prénom?" ("what is your first name?").

on a voluntary basis. In 2011 some 20,187 migrants benefited from these training programs. EU nationals who wish to become French citizens can also access these courses; however, third-country nationals receive priority.

In July 2014, the French government announced a number of reforms to the RIC, which are expected to be debated in the legislature later this year. These proposals include extending the duration of the contract to five years, increasing the level of language courses,[67] and modifying incentives for reaching this level.[68] While these changes may increase the efficiency of language training policies, it appears unlikely that they will make much of a difference to labor market outcomes.

2. Predeparture Language Policies

The government has raised language proficiency requirements for migrants seeking to come to France to unite with family members. Those migrants who wish to join their families must take a language test in their origin of country.[69] They are required to access language training that is provided for free but has to be finished within a two-month period. Family reunification migrants also take a test to decide whether they need further training in the values of the French republic. Both of these programs are organized mainly through international OFII offices or consular services. While getting a visa is conditional on enrolling in training, it is not affected by the final test results. Those immigrants whose language level is still insufficient have to continue with language training upon arrival in France.

The proposals announced in June may put an end to predeparture language training, which is described as not cost-effective. Instead, predeparture services will be geared toward information on life and the labor market in France.

3. Neighborhood Language Policies

Language training is also provided by diverse public, private, and civil-society actors—such as nonprofit organizations, associations, and social centers—separate from the RIC program. It is particularly common in disadvantaged neighborhoods, and thus does not target newly arrived migrants (although some programs target women or second-generation children). Some of these programs are directly funded by the Ministry of Interior within the sociolinguistic workshop program (*ateliers socio-linguistiques*); others are funded through urban policy programs, mainly by the social cohesion body L'Agence Nationale pour la Cohésion Sociale (Acsé). Local actors also play an important role in funding various providers of language training.

4. The Effectiveness of Language Training

While evaluations of language courses are rare, a recent study published by MoI sought to trace the outcomes of three groups: trained, nontrained, and a control group.[70] This analysis found that post-RIC training had limited effects. Migrants' country of origin, rather than training, did more to explain their language proficiency. Entry status also played an important role (language proficiency being lower for refugees and those who came to reunite with family members). Of those who participated in training, 70 percent said that the training was inadequate to learn to write in French, and 62 percent to learn to speak in French.

67 The equivalent of moving from A1 (basic; breakthrough) to A2 (basic; waystage) in the Common European Framework of Reference for Language.

68 From nonrenewal of the residence permit, a sanction severe it is hardly ever used, to a positive incentive of a longer period of renewal (five years instead of one). See Ministry of Interior, "Les projets de loi relatifs au droit des étrangers," July 23, 2014, www.immigration.interieur.gouv.fr/Info-ressources/Actualites/L-actu-immigration/Les-projets-de-loi-relatifs-au-droit-des-etrangers.

69 With a required level supposed to be equivalent to the DILF, although some official reports point to more heterogeneity. See, for instance, French Senate, "L'office français de l'immigration et de l'intégration."

70 Gérane Le Quentrec-Creven, "L'impact des cours de français pour les nouveaux migrants," *Infos Migrations* 55 (2013).

That said, an INSEE study found a clear upward trend in the take-up of language and professional training among immigrants. For instance, immigrants who arrived in the 1990s were 10 percentage points more likely to access language training than those who arrived in the 1980s, and 4 percentage points more likely to benefit from other professional training, since improvements predated the urban policy programs. However, the study does not provide any information on the impact of language training on migrants' labor market outcomes. In fact, RIC language training is not conceived as a tool to promote labor market integration and is therefore not evaluated as such. The normative assumption that migrants should learn French to assimilate emphasizes the cultural dimension of language acquisition rather than the socioeconomic one.

Table 3. Numbers of Migrants Who Benefited from RIC Language Training and Employment Action over the Past Several Decades (thousands)

Arrived during	...1960s	...1970s	...1980s	…1990s	...2000s	All
Underwent professional training (but not language training)	8	11	12	16	17	14
Underwent language training	16	14	20	30	34	25
Accessed employment services	10	9	17	24	27	19
N (thousands)	*477*	*490*	*529*	*588*	*767*	***2,851***

Note: Immigrants ages 18 to 74 who arrived before 2006.
Source: INSEE, Labor Force Survey, 2008.

C. *Skills Assessment*

Since 2009 all immigrants ages 18 to 55 have been asked to undergo a skills assessment unless they already have a job. The assessment occurs after they have signed the RIC and acquired an acceptable level of language proficiency. Operated by OFII, the three-hour assessment covers migrants' education and work history, and how they can leverage their educational and professional assets in the job-search process. Almost 60 percent of RIC signatories (and more women than men) were recommended for a skills assessment, but enrollment was substantially lower than this (see Table 4). In 2012, three months after being assessed, 23 percent of migrants were employed, increasing to 30 percent after six months, suggesting some positive effects (although these figures lack a control group).

However, the assessment procedure suffers from significant drawbacks. Three hours are hardly enough time to affect employment outcomes, especially since the assessment consists mainly of generic information. Some migrants, especially women who are not seeking work, appear reluctant to undergo a skills assessment. Immigrants who are enrolled in language training express some dissatisfaction with the program, most probably because it takes place without a translator and they may thus face some linguistic difficulties.[71] Finally, it is unclear if migrants who are assessed necessarily gain a better understanding of the job search process.[72] It is nonetheless through the skill assessment procedure that the link between OFFI and Pole Emploi is established.

71 Corinne Régnard and Florent Domergue, "Les nouveaux migrants en 2009," *Infos Migrations* 19, March 12, 2013, www.immigration.interieur.gouv.fr/Info-ressources/Documentation/Publications/Numeros-parus-en-2011/Enquete-ELIPA-Les-nouveaux-migrants-en-2009.
72 HCI, *Intégrer dans une économie de sous-emploi,* 34–35.

Table 4. Skills Assessment (SA) Beneficiaries, 2010-12

	2010	2011	2012
Number of RICs	101,355	102,254	101,368
Number of recommended SA sessions	62,095	60,035	61,065
Number of effective SA sessions*	48,888	46,683	36,519
Share of SA sessions recommended to women	65.4%	65.3%	64.1%
The educational levels of migrants recommended for SA			
Percent, no diploma	37.7%	32.3%	17.5%
Percent, high school	21.7%	29.4%	47.8%
Percent, vocational diploma	8.6%	8.0%	7.9%
University diploma	24.0%	25.4%	26.8%
Share of effective SA recipients registered at the National Employment Agency	23.8%	26.0%	27.5%

*Effective SA refers to SA sessions that actually took place.
Source: Ministry of Interior.

D. Other Ministry Employment Programs Targeting Migrants

Other employment interventions that target migrants include partnerships between public and private actors that aim to facilitate information exchange and improve awareness of the specific needs of migrant jobseekers.

The most notable example is the partnership between the Ministry of Interior (and more specifically OFII) and the French public employment service (Pôle emploi). After long negotiations and difficulties mainly linked to differences in social roles and institutional cultures, an agreement was signed in 2010 to improve new migrants' access to Pôle emploi services. One major provision was the establishment of a shared server between OFII and Pôle emploi, to facilitate information sharing between the two institutions and better tailor employment support to migrants' needs. Employment advisors can now access information about migrants' skills assessments and migration and work history. The agreement moreover envisages cooperation on the institutional framing of professional migration and joint efforts to better align the demand and supply of labor.

In sectors that employ large numbers of immigrants, partnerships between employers' associations and MoI have introduced tailored employment programs. Partners include, for example, the cleaning corporate federation and the union of hotel professions. One of the most successful partnerships is with the Fondation Agir Contre l'Exclusion (FACE), which provides training, interview coaching, networking, and assistance in the job-search process.[73] But this program is very small scale and undersubscribed. Large corporations such as the Coca-Cola Co., Vinci, and Manpower provide job coaching and information about work opportunities (the partnership with Coca-Cola, for instance, comprises specific training sessions provided by the company and mock job interviews). Yet these initiatives cannot be thought of as comprehensive employment programs, as they are still somewhat experimental. Moreover, they tend to give priority to relatively high-skilled migrants (usually those who completed high school or have some university education).

73 FACE action involves around 100 migrants.

The involvement of the private sector may be understood as an alternative policy strategy in France, since the politicization of immigration issues makes central government action difficult. However, this strategy may also lead to fragmented services that vary widely by area, and that benefit only a minority of migrants.

Finally, migrant—and specifically foreign—entrepreneurs have been recently targeted by business incentives. While migrants are more likely to be self-employed than their native-born peers, they often face additional barriers to accessing credit or public services. The Ministry of Interior has a number of partnerships with private and civil-society actors involved in entrepreneurial activities, such as the agency for start-ups—Agence pour la Création d'Entreprise—that supports foreign nationals wishing to set up a business in France.

E. Credential Recognition

The French system for recognizing foreign qualifications is known for being complex and bureaucratic. Since 2008 a central public organization (ENIC-NARIC) has been the main clearinghouse for skills recognition. However, the center only processes requests it receives by mail. Moreover, there is no framework to compare credentials obtained abroad with those gained in the French educational system. Instead, ENIC-NARIC only delivers an attestation of the level of education achieved, rather than signaling equivalence.

France lags behind some other immigration countries that have streamlined their skills recognition policies.

The credential recognition process in France lacks transparency and is rather fragmented. Various institutions are involved, depending on the level of qualification, country of study, and occupation. The process is also fairly costly and takes a considerable amount of time. As such, France lags behind some other immigration countries that have streamlined their skills recognition policies and lowered costs and processing time. But one major improvement since 2009 is that migrants can request an "education comparability assessment," which describes their educational skills and tries to draw parallels with equivalent French educational tracks. However, this does not lead to a truly equivalent credential and little is known about the extent to which employers value such an assessment.

Barriers to transferring human capital put migrants at a distinct disadvantage in the labor market. Few migrants have their foreign qualifications recognized. For example, one study found that only 13 percent of immigrants who arrived after the age of 18 had obtained their highest educational credential in France (34 percent among university graduates).[74] But only 8 percent of those whose highest educational degree was obtained abroad accessed credential recognition (22 percent of university graduates). The study found that most immigrants did not think that this recognition would help them find work. Moreover, half who applied for recognition were denied (37 percent for those with a degree). These findings are especially surprising given that the educational level of recent migrants to France has been rising. It suggests that many new arrivals accept jobs for which they are overqualified, rather than seeking a way to practice their previous occupation.[75]

74 Monso and Gleizes, "Langues, diplômes: des enjeux pour l'accès des immigrés au marché du travail." This study was based on the 2008 Labour Force Survey module on the labor market outcomes of the foreign-born population.

75 According to 2011 Eurostat figures, the overqualification rate among the foreign born in France was about 27 percent (for workers ages 20 to 64), compared with 20 percent in the total population. This rate reached 30 percent for those born outside the European Union.

F. Diversity at the Workplace, and Antidiscrimination Policies

Considerable evidence of ethnic inequality in the labor market has emerged in the past decade.[76] For example, paired difference tests find evidence of large-scale discrimination against ethnic minorities in the hiring process.[77] This evidence has contributed to raising political awareness of discrimination and its role in hampering the employment opportunities of ethnic minorities in France.

Although France's first antidiscrimination law is old compared to those of other European countries,[78] proactive antidiscrimination policies were limited before the 2000s. In 2001 a central antidiscrimination public agency was created to receive complaints about all forms of legal discrimination (based on gender, ethnicity, race, disability, age, etc.), but this agency has since been dissolved for political reasons. Most complaints were related to the workplace.

Other antidiscrimination initiatives stem from the private sector.[79] The initiative of influential CEOs, a "diversity charter" was established in 2004 and attracted swift government support. The charter represented a commitment to pursue antidiscrimination policies in human resources. Today, more than 3,400 public or private organizations have signed the charter.

Considerable evidence of ethnic inequality in the labor market has emerged in the past decade.

More recently, the diversity charter was developed into a more ambitious project called the "Diversity Label." Created in 2008, this is a government-issued label granted after an audit by a commission composed of representatives of the government, unions, employers, and diverse experts. In order for an organization to acquire the label, it must prove that its antidiscrimination actions and practices meet an extensive set of requirements such as transparent recruitment procedures. More than 350 organizations have been labelled since 2008, including seven ministries.

While both the diversity charter and label have significant symbolic influence, their effectiveness in alleviating discrimination is thought to be limited. Implementing antidiscrimination policies has proved to be difficult because firms are not allowed to collect data on ethnicity, as a result of France's difference-blind policy. Other targets such as gender equality and the representation of disabled workers make up a larger share of firms' antidiscrimination efforts, at least in part because they are much easier to assess.[80]

76 See Romain Aeberhardt, Denis Fougère, Julien Pouget, and Roland Rathelot, "Wages and Employment of Second-Generation Immigrants in France," *Journal of Population Economics* 23, no. 3 (2010): 881–905; Romain Aeberhardt, Roland Rathelot, and Elise Coudin, "Les écarts de taux d'emploi selon l'origine des parents: comment varient-ils avec l'âge et le diplôme?" in *France, Portrait Social* (Paris: Insee, 2010); Alain Frickey and Jean-Luc Primon, "Jeunes issus de l'immigration: les diplômes de l'enseignement supérieur ne garantissent pas un égal accès au marché du travail," *Formation-Emploi* 79 (2002): 31–49; Alain Frickey and Jean-Luc Primon, "Une double pénalisation pour les non-diplômées du supérieur d'origine nord-africaine?" *Formation-Emploi* 94 (2006): 27–43; Dominique Meurs, Ariane Pailhé, and Patrick Simon, "Persistance des inégalités entre générations liées à l'immigration: l'accès à l'emploi des immigrés et de leurs descendants en France," *Population* 61, no. 5-6 (2005): 763–802; Pascale Petit, Emmanuel Duguet, Yannick L'Horty, Loïc Du Parquet, and Florent Sari, "Discrimination à l'embauche des jeunes franciliens et intersectionalité du sexe et de l'origine: les résultats d'un testing" (working paper 141, CEE Sciences Po, Paris, February 2011), www.cee-recherche.fr/publications/document-de-travail/discriminations-lembauche-des-jeunes-franciliens-et-intersectionalite-du-sexe-et-de-lorigine.

77 Eric Cediey and Fabrice Foroni, *Discrimination in Access to Employment on Grounds of Foreign Origin in France: A National Survey of Discrimination Based on the Testing Methodology of the International Labour Office* (Geneva: International Labor Organization, 2008).

78 The first French antidiscrimination law goes back to 1972, incriminating racial discrimination for the first time. Other laws followed, adding other types of discrimination (gender, disability, sexual orientation, etc.).

79 Pierre-Yves Verkindt, "Les discriminations dans les politiques d'emploi: Pour un rôle accru des partenaires sociaux," *Informations sociales* 148 (2008): 96-105.

80 See Laure Bereni, "Faire de la diversité une richesse pour l'entreprise. La transformation d'une contrainte juridique en catégorie managériale," *Raisons politiques* 35 (2009): 87–105; Laure Bereni and Alexandre Jaunait, "Usages de la diversité," *Raisons politiques* 35 (2009): 5–9; Milena Doytcheva, "Réinterprétations et usages sélectifs de la diversité dans les politiques des

Other antidiscrimination actions include pilot programs supporting anonymous job applications, public antidiscrimination campaigns, and public financing for associations involved in antidiscrimination initiatives, such as awareness training. For example, Acsé carries out antidiscrimination training programs and indirectly funds many such actions. It also trains officials, caseworkers, counselors, and politicians in relevant issues.

VI. Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

Integration policies have been of major concern in the French political debate since the 1990s. Initially, they mainly consisted of color-blind employment, linguistic, and other social support designed by the employment and urban services and implemented by local public agencies and associations. These programs were mainly active in disadvantaged neighborhoods and thus indirectly benefited immigrants and their children. In the late 2000s new integration policies emerged that explicitly targeted new arrivals, defined by the government as beneficiaries of a first legal permit. These policies emphasized migrants' individual responsibility for their integration process and highlighted the importance of cultural values such as societal norms and republican principles. Yet, these also placed considerable emphasis on the French language, by making the renewal of the residence permit conditional on a certain level of proficiency.

The context of the French labor market can make it difficult for migrants to access jobs and move upward in their careers, especially if they display other indicators of disadvantage.

It is difficult to rigorously assess the effectiveness of either of these waves of integration policy. Very few provisions for evaluation accompanied policy implementation. For some programs, evaluation is almost absent or consists only of some statistical publications about enrollment rates. Moreover, since evaluations are rarely broken down by target group, there is little knowledge about how policy affects the disadvantaged, including immigrants. Nonetheless, conditions have been slowly but steadily changing in response to national and European pressure to evaluate public policies in general and migrant integration policies in particular.

Immigrant integration policy in France may be characterized as mainstreamed. While official sources often mention women, the elderly, or youth as priority groups, they rarely focus on immigrants as a category. Particularly vulnerable migrants are rarely targeted, with the exception of asylum seekers. This trend can be attributed to the historical French reluctance to pursue population-specific policies related to national, religious, or ethnic origin. Yet some argue that targeting groups by country of origin could help address linguistic barriers, overqualification, or employment discrimination issues, especially since official documentation often highlights the particular disadvantage faced by African migrants.

The context of the French labor market can make it difficult for migrants to access jobs and move upward in their careers, especially if they display other indicators of disadvantage (youth, low education, limited work experience, etc.). Recent mainstream employment policies that targeted disadvantaged workers may indirectly benefit migrants; however, many such policies are thought to be ineffective. Meanwhile, other initiatives to get migrants into jobs—such public-private partnerships—are still in their early stages and are fairly small scale.

entreprises," *Raisons politiques* 35 (2009): 107–23; Milena Doytcheva, "Usages français de la notion de diversité: permanence et actualité d'un débat," *Sociologie* 1, no. 4 (2010): 423–38.

Policymakers in France lack the financial or political capital for large-scale actions to promote immigrant entry into the labor market. Recognizing immigrant employment as a major integration policy target may be difficult in the context of high unemployment overall and ongoing pressure to curtail immigration.

This overview of French immigrant integration policies suggests a number of avenues for stakeholders to explore:

- ***Adopt a work-focused approach for nonlabor migrants too.*** Employment is an important dimension of integration for all migrants, not just labor migrants. Government efforts to bring together employers and migrants should be extended to other immigrant categories very early in the migratory trajectory. This implies a certain distance from the dominant restrictive policy on immigration control.

- ***Work toward detoxifying the narrative.*** Softening the tone of political discourse about immigrant integration would benefit all actors. Policymakers and politicians might acknowledge that integration is a two-way process that requires the adaptation of both migrants and the host society, and frame integration policies accordingly.

- ***Improve cooperation across government departments and bodies.*** Cooperation between public services at the central government level in the design and implementation of integration policies could help leverage distinct and complementary competencies (urban, employment, social, cultural, etc.). In all countries that engage in large-scale integration programs, the integration agenda cuts across the entire spectrum of economic, political, civic, and social life. New collaborative structures could also provide an opportunity to gain the insight of academics and other experts.

- ***Target migrants within mainstream services.*** Employment services could be designed to better serve migrants' needs, for example, by identifying migrants as a disadvantaged group in need of special support, and ensuring that their outcomes are assessed in publications and official statistics.

- ***Integrate targeted and mainstream services.*** Rethinking integration policy in the long run may require more robust bridges to be built between policies explicitly oriented toward new arrivals and broader policies that may affect disadvantaged immigrants and their children, or the population in general.

- ***Identify and overcome barriers.*** Alleviating concrete obstacles that hinder immigrants' socioeconomic trajectories could be a positive step in rethinking the approach to integration. Integration policies should seek to level the playing field in relation to access to resources and services. As part of this approach, improving skills recognition and encouraging naturalization could be two areas with especially positive effects on employment. Local actors also have an important role in alleviating these obstacles but might consider more targeted actions, such as to benefit women, refugees, youth, and immigrants from specific countries of origin.

Appendix

French Immigration Policy: The Main Actors (since the 2000s)

1. Governmental Actors

Ministry of Immigration and National Identity *(2007–10)*

The French Ministry of Interior (MoI) is the main governmental actor in charge of the immigration and integration policy. Within MoI, the Direction Générale des Etrangers en France (DGEF since August 2013; formerly called Direction de l'Accueil, de l'Intégration et de la Citoyenneté, DAIC) is the department that directly manages all aspect of these policies. More specifically, the Direction de l'Accueil, de l'Accompagnement des Étrangers et de la Nationalité (DAAEN) is in charge of migrants' integration and naturalization actions.

Office Français de l'Immigration et de l'Intégration, OFII *(since 2009)*

Directly supervised by MoI, OFII is the main administrative contact of recently arrived migrants. It carries out all aspects of the accommodation and integration program individually with each migrant (or migrant family) endorser. OFII also governs the entire public market of migrant language training since 2009.

Interministerial Committee of Integration *(created in 1989)*

Chaired by the prime minister, this committee gathers more than 20 ministers and is in charge of the definition and animation of French integration policies oriented toward first- and second-generation immigrants "with respect for republican values."

Interministerial Committee of Immigration Control *(created in 2005)*

Chaired by the prime minister, this committee includes seven ministers and is in charge of the orientation of immigration control policies. It annually publishes a parliamentary report on the "orientations of governmental immigration policies."

Haut Conseil à l'Intégration, HCI *(1989–2012)*

HCI is a governmental consulting agency specialized in immigration and integration policies. It played a major role in defining the French republican model of integration in the early 1990s and directly influenced political action in this domain over the past decades.

2. Urban Actors

Fond d'Action Sociale, FAS, FASTIF, FASILD *(1958–2006)*

Originally oriented toward social assistance offered to Algerian guest workers, this public organization successively widened its activities to the integration of immigrants and broad antidiscrimination actions. It merged into Acsé in 2006.

Agence Nationale pour la Cohésion Sociale et l'Egalité des Chances, Acsé *(since 2006)*

Acsé is a governmental agency supervised by urban public services (*politique de la ville*), in charge of the application of urban policy, crime prevention, and antidiscrimination actions. These actions are conducted in officially defined disadvantaged neighborhoods (called "priority neighborhoods").

3. Cultural Actors

Cité Nationale de l'Histoire de l'Immigration, CNHI *(created in 2006)*

CNHI is an administrative, cultural, and scientific public institution supervised by diverse ministers involved in integration policy. Its mission is to gather and protect the immigration history in France and to highlight the integration trajectories of the immigrant population. It aims to provide symbolic cultural recognition of immigration in French society through historical expositions, diverse scientific activities, and seminars. It also works with local and associative partners in order to promote public recognition of immigrant heritage.

4. Local Actors

Programmes régionaux d'intégration des populations immigrées, PRIPI

Initially conceptualized in the 1990s, these regional programs have been made compulsory since 2005. They are supervised by the regional prefects and involve diverse ministerial and local participants. They are in charge of identifying local needs and checking the availability of necessary public services. They are also encouraged to sketch policy targets in terms of health services, schooling, employment, vocational training, housing, etc. These local entities have been reinforced since 2010 and completed when needed by similar entities at the departmental level (PDI).

Municipalities, Regional Authorities, and Decentralized Public and Governmental Services

Many local actions managed by these different local entities benefit from public decentralized funding (within the budget program 104) and European Integration Funding (FEI). Their integration activities mainly consist of proximity language-training programs and housing services.

5. Some Associative Actors

Association Service Social Familial Migrants, ASSFAM *(created in 1951)*

Originally developing social assistance actions toward North African migrants and their families, this association has gradually played an important role in the accommodation of migrant families and raising awareness of the cultural dimension of immigration.

Association pour l'Enseignement et la Formation des Travailleurs Immigrés et de leurs familles, AEFTI *(created in 1971)*

AEFTI is a national associative network specialized in anti-illiteracy actions oriented toward migrants and their family. It also develops training and skill-enhancing actions and promotes education and employment actions.

Entreprendre pour la cité, IMS

IMS is a firm network created in 1986 and counting more than 230 members today. IMS promotes the social role of firms and economic actors, namely in terms of equal access to employment through proactive diversity programs. IMS carried out the Diversity Charter project in 2004 and played a major role in the establishment of the Diversity Label in 2007.

Fondation Agir Contre l'Exclusion, FACE

FACE is a firm network created in 1993 initiated by 15 firms and reaching more than 4,000 firms today. It carries out general employment-enhancing activities with some specific programs catering to recently arrived migrants.

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