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# Migration Contexts

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## #DEFYHATENOW | CHAPTER 1

# MIGRATION CONTEXTS

## Why do people migrate?

The reasons for migration are complex and the decision to migrate is a personal and individual matter. In order to understand migration we need to ask two key questions:

What are the conditions in which people develop aspirations to migrate?  
Under what conditions are they able to realize those aspirations?

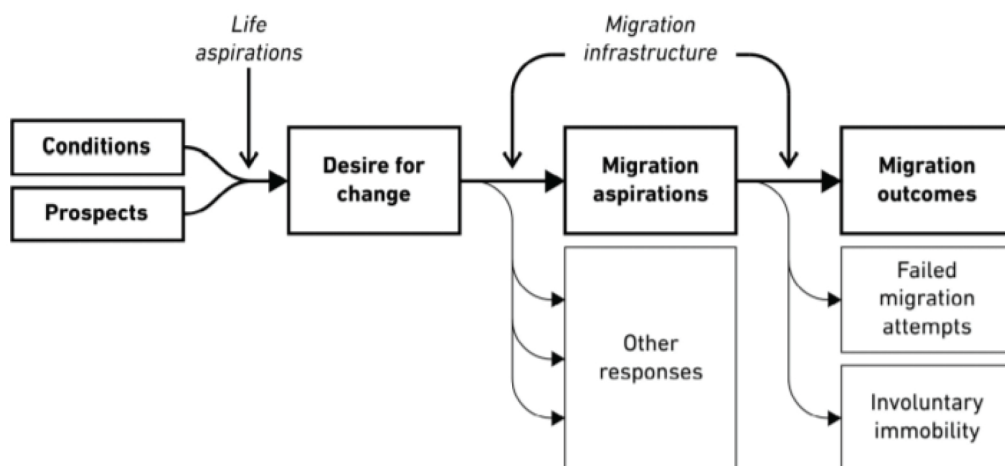
The diagram below indicates that migration is not based on specific push/pull factors but is a process. A process that flows from the life conditions that potential migrants find themselves in, combined with the prospects they have for life at that particular stage.



## MIGRATION ASPIRATIONS

People seek change in many ways, individually or together, sometimes developing migration aspirations. Conflict-threatened civilians, graduates at risk of unemployment, and farmers who have been harmed by environmental degradation may all conclude that their best option is to leave. This is the first step towards actual migration.

The concept of 'migration aspirations' seems to contradict the idea of forced migration. Surely people who are forcibly expelled have no desire to move? They do so in the sense that they have considered the options and considered flight to be the best survival strategy.



A model of the mechanisms that produce migration<sup>3</sup>

When people develop a desire for change in their lives, focusing that desire on migration is only one option, there are other paths that lead to different answers.

Another of the conditions that can lead to migration are the challenges faced by youth, which can result in halting their transition to independent adulthood. The resulting frustrations relate not only to poverty, but also to environmental: social, environmental and political structures that have marginalised young people. Migration is one possible response, but other responses include joining an insurrection or self-help group. The “root causes” of migration are the root causes of other, no less important, phenomena.

The desire for change can be a positive force. The frustrations and energies people direct into migration could potentially be channelled into education or entrepreneurship. However, this presupposes the right conditions. Education must be accessible and have a real impact on employment prospects. The business environment must be conducive to small-scale entrepreneurship. Where people eventually direct their desires for change depends on the relative attractiveness and feasibility of the various possible outcomes.

In the Ghanaian context, there are some structural problems that still need solutions. Many young people are unemployed and the youth doesn't have the chance to gain professional experience during high school with an internship in an enterprise. In spite of this, entrepreneurship is flourishing in Ghana, and access to skills and knowledge has proven to be key to escape poverty. President Akufo-Addo has declared 2019 as the ‘Year of Return for Diasporans.’

“One of the things I normally say is: ‘stay’. What is realistic is that the struggle is there. But what is also realistic is that attempting to go outside of your country, especially through Libya, which is the most popular route, is worse. If a young person didn't get the chance to learn about the journey, once he or she starts planning, it would be very good to listen to responsible authorities. If you stay, you have a lot of opportunities. The very first one is peace of mind. When you have that, no matter what struggle you are facing, you will find a future. I am the only graduate in my entire clan. I did not have people who had money and could give me security to start something after school, nor contact with academics. When I finished school, most people I talked to were very positive about going to Libya. I always asked further to find out what interest those people might have. I decided to stay because no matter what struggle I was facing, I had people who could help me. So even if I had to beg, I would do it from people I know. Even if I had to sleep in the street, I would know the environment. Even though I was desperate to succeed, I didn't pick any chance that came. I saw that there is hope in Ghana and there is still hope. You just need to move, to start something.” Desmond Alugnoa, social entrepreneur and founder of Green Africa Youth Organization

Migration may not initially be an option in people's minds. But it is likely to become the case when many others have already left the same community. One of the strongest predictors of migration are social networks with former migrants. This is an aspect of migration infrastructure, a concept recently introduced into migration theory. Migration infrastructure has an impact on the likelihood that people's desire for change will be directed towards migration efforts. The migration infrastructure consists of human and non-human elements that enable and shape migration, grouped into five dimensions:

- Social networks (migrant networks) and Burgers (returnees in Ghana)
- Regulatory (state apparatus and procedures)
- Technological (communications, transport)
- Humanitarian (non-governmental organisations and international organisations)
- Social networks (migrant networks)

Migration infrastructure plays different roles. Firstly, it influences how people perceive the possibility of migration and whether or not they develop migration desires. Secondly, migration infrastructure influences whether or not such efforts are realized.



## MIGRATION OUTCOMES

Migration aspirations are one step removed from actual migration. And this is a decisive step. For people who develop migration aspirations, there are three possible outcomes:

First, they could succeed in migrating. This does not imply that migration is a ‘success’ for the individual,



but it means reaching the destination. Possibilities for converting migration aspirations into actual migration depend on migration regulations, access to information, social networks, and other dimensions of migration infrastructure. The second possible result of migration aspirations is a failed migration attempt. The most extreme - but not uncommon - form of failure is death. Several thousand people die every year in the attempt to migrate.

Many others are apprehended and returned soon after arriving.

In addition, thousands of migrants manage to leave home, but get stuck on the way. Many Sub-Saharan Africans headed for Europe are trapped in North Africa without the means to make the final leg of the journey, due to extortion by people smugglers and facing the dangers of exploitation or forced labour along the way. Failed migration attempts are a serious burden also for migrants' families and communities of origin.

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## KEY QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

Why do you want to migrate?

How do you imagine your life there?

What other choices do you have?

- Why do you want to migrate to another country?
- How do you imagine life would change there?
- Do you have other choices to improve your life?
- Can I change my life situation or some aspects of it?
- Have I asked somebody to help me with my life situation?
- Can I find ways to have a happy and successful life here?
- Do I feel pressured by other migrants, returnees, friends or family to migrate?
- Am I seeking to gain recognition and respect from my community?
- Is the information I have about Europe mainly coming from people or did I also consider official and maybe more reliable sources of information?
- Am I aware of possible dangers during the journey?

## REGULAR MIGRATION

### Why does a person migrate?

People want a better life

- Further studies / training
- Work
- Highly skilled & Low Skilled
- Family reunion
- Tourism
- A person who needs protection (refugee, humanitarian protection & subsidiary)

### What do you need to migrate? (document/ financial info/ connections)

- You can apply for a visa but high probability your visa will be rejected
- Cost/ease student visa application process
- Work contract
- Scholarships
- Loans
- Self-financed
- Arranged marriage

Responses from Migrant Media Network Workshop, Berlin 2019.

## IRREGULAR MIGRATION

### Why does a person migrate?

People are ignorant of the realities

- Economic / Greener pastures
- High skilled educated people overstaying visa
- No or low skilled workers
- Family reunion
- A person who needs protection (refugee, humanitarian protection & Subsidiary)
- Tourism (eg: regular migration changed to irregular due to tourist visa overstaying)

### What do you need to migrate? (document/ financial info/ connections)

- Connections men are scams (connection men is a name used in Ghana for smugglers.)
- Ghana is considered a safe country asylum approach might not work and it takes time.
- It is not as easy as it seems, only a few people survive
- High probability your asylum will be rejected
- Human trafficking & smuggling
- Duration for visa and permit
- It is in most cases much more expensive
- border control
- Health assistance (psychological)
- Understand host country rules & regulations



## PERSPECTIVES ON MIGRATION ASPIRATIONS

### What would help new migrants to make the journey safer and with dignity?

"First of all, all these people have people they talk to on the ground before they come. Nobody wakes up and decides to come to Germany without knowing anybody or anything. But the question we need to ask is, are people getting the right information? Are they also trying to make them use the proper way of coming with a safe journey?"

They can tell you; okay you can get a tourist visa and when you come to Germany, we will look for a girl to get married to, but at the end of the day this is not the right means.”

“A student can apply for school, get the certificate, get a valid passport and visa, should be financially stable, get a scholarship or family support. Because most people take fake documents, like fake bank accounts, they just collect money from people to their account and submit them to the embassy to get a visa. But the fact is that the money is not theirs, so they are coming here to struggle from zero.

So, to avoid this, one has to prepare very well to be able to sustain yourself maybe a maximum of 2-3 or 4-6 months before you can start to look for a job. For a safe and secure journey, all these processes must be evaluated by the person himself/ herself; before they embark on the journey or the process.



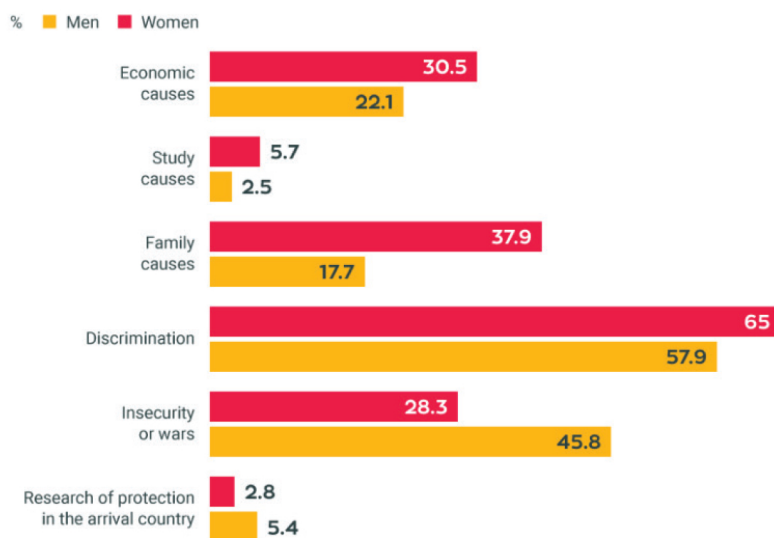
## GHANA MIGRATION PROFILE

About 3% of Ghana's population have emigrated since 2014, mostly to Europe for greener pastures (801,710 Ghanaians).<sup>4</sup> Although the economy has grown impressively over the past years, it has not been able to absorb the rapidly expanding youth labour force, driving high emigration amongst both highly-skilled and unemployed youth.

The majority of migrating Ghanaians are young, male and single. Many feel there aren't any job prospects in Ghana or a realistic chance to legally migrate to Europe if they come from a poor family. They believe that a journey across the desert and the sea is their only option. Often relying on hearsay, their families sell property and acquire debts to finance the journey and entrust their lives to unscrupulous human smugglers who promise to arrange easy access into the country of their choice.<sup>5</sup>

### Reasons to leave, a comparison between genders

Research on socioeconomic profiles of migrants arriving in Italy based on a thousands of interviews realized between April and July 2016 in Cara, Cas and Sprar in different Italian regions



Source: OIM

The 2019 study, “The perception of risk among unauthorized migrants in Ghana”<sup>6</sup> published in the Journal of Risk Research, by Sjoerd van Bommel, has revealed that young men in Ghana who decide to emigrate to Europe tend to perceive themselves as being trapped in a vulnerable position and are convinced that there are no acceptable alternative options that can alter their current situation. This makes them likely to engage in high risk behaviour, hoping “for a radical change of the present circumstances even if the stakes are high or the probabilities for the hope to be realised are relatively low.”

During interviews in this study, all participants displayed a high level of frustration and anxiety about their current living situation in Ghana. Of particular note was the prevalence of the idea that, due to lack of opportunities, it would be impossible for them to progress in life socioeconomically by remaining in their country. Most participants expressed their wish to obtain a ‘small-small job’ in Europe if they were unable to acquire any documents. For some, getting documents was not even a priority. All hoped to be able to work in the shadow economy for several years before returning to Ghana to finally begin the life they had envisioned for themselves.

In Ghana, the returned migrants, called ‘Burger’, are regarded as respectable people and form a distinct social class. Burgers are seen as ‘winners of the ‘European Lottery’. They are role models for many Ghanaian youngsters, since they have been able to establish a respectable life for themselves and are able to fulfil their roles as providers of their family. One aspect that enhances the social status of Burgers is the hardship they had to go through in order to collect the financial means to support their family.

An interviewee stated: “When I picture how Burgers are living ... mostly they suffer in Europe. But they bring back money and manage their money and resources very well.” Burgers show the Ghanaian youth that embarking on a journey to Europe is indeed a serious and viable opportunity, if not the only one, for those trapped in a prolonged involuntary state of youth and longing to break out. Their appearance in Ghanaian society presents the evidence that rewards are high for those who are able to succeed.

In addition, social pressure within the family and in the community is sometimes so great that many young people feel “forced” to leave their country for Europe:

“These days you simply cannot please parents. They constantly compare their children with the children of other families. If they see a young man from another family has made it to Europe and regularly sends money home, then you are berated, by your mother, your father that you don't do anything other than sleep and eat.”<sup>5</sup>

The data shows that mostly migrant women and to a lesser extent men, don't decide to leave their homeland independently, but rather have succumbed to pressure from other members of their community to do so. However, those putting pressure on individuals are often not completely aware of the dangers and challenges that can emerge when migrating, and migration is a life changing experience.

Both Burgers and the diaspora tend to downplay both the dangers that can emerge for irregular migrants during the journey - such as imprisonment, prostitution, rape, financial loss or deportation - and the challenges many have to face once they arrive in Europe and are forced to live clandestinely: no access to basic rights like education, legal work and health; rejection from the host society; difficulties learning the language; loneliness; financial struggle, etc. The lack of awareness of the potential risks, and peer pressure to migrate through irregular channels can cause a lot of damage.





# WHO CAN APPLY FOR ASYLUM IN EUROPE?

**Introduction to European migration laws to give potential migrants an informed perspective for their chances of being granted asylum in the European Union.**

## 1951 GENEVA CONVENTION AND THE 1967 PROTOCOL

The second World War produced more than 30 million refugees. From the experience of the Holocaust and WWII there emerged a post-war frame of openness and redemption, resulting in the creation of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in 1950 and the ratification of the Geneva Convention (1951) and Protocol (1967) on Asylum and the Status of Refugees. The 1951 Geneva Convention is the main international instrument of refugee law. It was initially limited to protecting European refugees from World War II, that is, before January 1951.<sup>6</sup>

In the 1960s, migration became a global phenomenon, as the origin of migrants started to shift from developing countries, fleeing or moving to industrialized nations.<sup>7</sup> The 1967 Protocol broadened the applicability of the first Convention and removed geographical or time limits, including refugees from world regions who acquired this status after 1951. The rights for refugees gained a global dimension after the 1967 Protocol.<sup>8</sup>

## PROTECTION CATEGORIES

### REFUGEE

A person who, owing to well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is owing to such fear, is unable or unwilling to access the protection of that country.<sup>9</sup>

- Persecution can be related to action by the authorities of the State, but may also emanate from non-state agents, such as armed groups, criminal or organized gangs, family members or the general population, where the State is unable or unwilling to provide protection.
- The 1951 Convention protects persons fleeing armed conflict, whether international or internal, and other situations of violence. Armed conflicts and violence may be rooted in, motivated by, or conducted along the lines of race, ethnicity, or religion, or politics, gender or social group.<sup>10</sup>

### SUBSIDIARY PROTECTION

Subsidiary protection can be given to a third country national or a stateless person who does not qualify as a refugee but would face a real risk of suffering serious harm if returning home. Serious harm can include: death penalty, execution, torture or danger of dying due to internal or international conflict.<sup>11</sup>

### HUMANITARIAN PROTECTION

Humanitarian protection is a residual form of protection available to those not eligible for refugee status, who do not have a right to subsidiary protection but cannot be removed from national territory because of objective and serious personal situations. These are related to crisis situations, such as famine or an environmental disaster, and rely on humanitarian assistance in the short term. The permit is valid for two years and can be converted into a residence permit for work.<sup>12</sup>

### DUBLIN III

The Dublin agreement is a mechanism in the European Union, to identify which country is responsible for processing the asylum application of someone belonging to a non-EU country or a stateless person. Usually, the responsible country is the first EU member state where the migrants set foot, which leads to Spain, Greece and Italy taking on the majority of responsibility. One of the main objectives of Dublin III is to avoid someone seeking asylum in the country of their choice (so-called "asylum shopping") or being present in Europe without any country taking responsibility for examining their request ("orbiting").

- When a migrant applies for asylum in another EU country than the country of entrance into the EU, there

are some considerations (family reunion, possession of visa or work permit and particular conditions of the state through which the asylum seeker entered the EU). If none of these apply, the state where the asylum seeker applied for asylum has to take responsibility.

- But if these don't apply, asylum seekers can't decide where to live in the European Union if they are granted refugee status.<sup>13</sup>

### SAFE COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

One instrument of the Dublin III regulation is a list of "safe countries of origin".

In these countries, it can be shown on the basis of the legal and the general political circumstances, that there is generally and consistently no persecution, no torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and no threat by reason of indiscriminate violence in situations of international or internal armed conflict.

The countries included in the list are thus presumed to be safe to live. That means, nationalities included in that list (which differs among EU Nations) have extremely low chances to be granted asylum. Ghana is considered a "safe country of origin". Being considered a safe country of origin and not having any of the circumstances the European Refugee Law take into consideration for giving asylum, Ghanaian people have very low chances to be granted refugee status if they migrate to Europe.<sup>14</sup>

### EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT MIGRATION INFOGRAPHICS

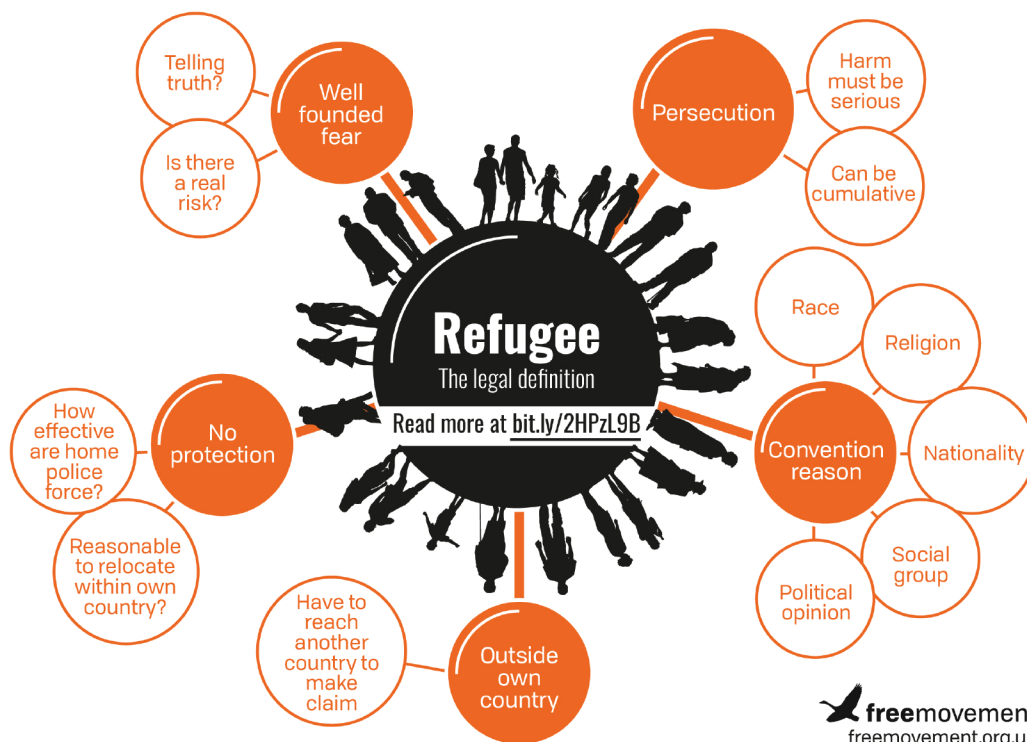
People migrating to the EU are categorised as either: an asylum-seeker, a refugee, a beneficiary of subsidiary protection, an irregular immigrant or a legal immigrant.

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/infographics/migration/public/index.html?page=intro>

### FREE MOVEMENT UK

"What is the legal definition of a refugee?"

<https://www.freemovement.org.uk/what-is-the-legal-meaning-of-refugee/>





## MIGRANT PERSPECTIVES: SAFETY & DIGNITY

### What do you wish you knew before-hand?

"The most important thing for me was to learn the language. I should have known you have to work and pay for everything, you have to have a well-structured life. Although my life was quite structured before I came here, it wasn't as structured as it is back in Ghana. Getting your stuff together, doing things on time, time is actually the key point of interest here. Everything must be done on time. For me it was like you are going abroad, just pack your stuff, get on the flight and get what you need. But there is more to it than just coming. You have to have general knowledge about where you are going, and know the dos and don'ts."

### Do you have any support structure from another fellow Ghanaian community?

"As a student, my University assisted me with most of the basic needs. There is a Ghana student union in Germany. I was introduced to this page by the Ghanaian embassy. I went there to register myself as a student living in Germany. They told me that there is a platform you can join and share your ideas and they can support you, but not financial support. It's a WhatsApp group platform, you can ask a question there at any time, someone will answer your questions and give you directions."



## CASE STUDY: THE MIGRANT PROJECT

Reliable and trustworthy information on migration is very difficult to find. The media, smugglers, and even people from your community who have already migrated can give a false impression of the journey and life in a new country. Smugglers will lie to make a profit. And what was true for a migrants before may be out of date today – laws in destination countries change, and routes can become more dangerous.

They can tell you what the risks are before you start your journey, and what life is really like in common destination countries. They can also help you learn about legal migration options, training or business opportunities closer to home.

**The Migrant Project** uses channels that are easiest to access and most influential among likely migrant communities. That includes talking in person or over the phone to a counsellor in your own language; a website optimised for browsing on a smartphone; social media and facebook page; or informational events hosted in local communities. Look out for their events in your community before making any final decisions about migration. **The Migrant Project** is active on the ground in Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Europe.

<https://www.themigrantproject.org/>  
<https://www.facebook.com/TheMigrantProject>  
Bamako, Mali +22392577414  
Nigeria +2348169229349  
Nigeria +2348061637956



## REGULAR MIGRATION PATHWAYS

Regular migration pathways include labor mobility regimes, sponsorship programs for high-skilled workers, student visas and protection for refugees.



## EXAMPLES FOR SKILLED WORKERS

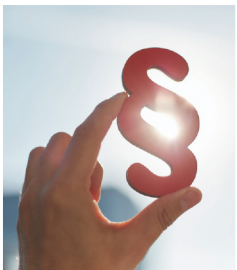
### EU BLUE CARD



CARD

The European Union Blue Card, introduced in 2008, is a work permit that allows high-skilled non-EU citizens to work and live in any country within the European Union, excluding Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom. Who is eligible? People having a degree from an accredited university, highly qualified people in a 'shortage occupation' (engineers, doctors, mathematicians, scientists and IT- skilled workers) and people who have an employment contract in Germany with the amount of €50,800 per year.<sup>15</sup>

### SKILLED IMMIGRATION ACT IN GERMANY<sup>16</sup>



Coming into force in 2020. The Skilled Immigration Act will create the framework under which qualified professionals from third countries can come to work in Germany. The key changes that the Skilled Immigration Act will introduce are as follows:

- Qualified professionals includes university graduates & vocational qualifications.
- They can take jobs for which they are qualified, not necessarily occupations that have a shortage. IT specialists without formal qualifications.
- The new Act does not offer any new opportunities for unqualified or low-skilled workers to gain access to the labour market in Germany.
- Persons with vocational qualifications will be able to come to Germany whilst they look for a job provided that they have sufficient German language skills and are able to sustain themselves financially.
- Opportunities to come to Germany in order to undertake training will be improved.<sup>17</sup>



## MIGRANT PERSPECTIVES - STUDENT NETWORKS

### What support structures do you have? What do you still need?

"I think one thing that I have is my sponsors (scholarship), the university where I study (I always could ask questions and get answers or direction where to get answers). But I would really have loved to have first-hand interaction with the African community here. If the Ghanaian community will have a system when you arrive, to welcome you and give you first-hand information about what you are supposed to do or not to do.

We have a different system from Germany. And when you first come you might still be behaving like you used to back at home which in a way wouldn't be offensive in Ghana, Nigeria, Togo or the other countries that I know, but very offensive here. So, if you have a community that will receive you and tells you some of these things that help. I would have loved to have been introduced to Ghanaian or African community."



## RESOURCES FOR STUDY: INFORMED MIGRATION CHOICES

**Opportunities to study abroad and key visa information:**

### DAAD Ghana - Admission Requirements to study in Germany

The DAAD Information Center Accra offers information on the procedures and requirements involved in the process of gaining admission to a German university.

<https://www.daad-ghana.org/en/study-research-in-germany/eight-steps-to-germany/admission-requirements/>

### Visa information for Ghanaian students to study in Germany

Visa Type D / Residence Permit

If you're a student from Ghana, you'll need the Visa Type D / Residence Permit to study in Germany. Information about the process to help decide what study is right for you.

<https://www.mastersportal.com/visa-info/167-11/students-from-ghana-to-germany.html>

### Study in Germany

Opportunities & Visa Process

[https://www.timelinetrust.com/study\\_in\\_germany.html](https://www.timelinetrust.com/study_in_germany.html)

### After School Africa Scholarships

German scholarships for international students from Africa and developing countries.

<https://www.afterschoolafrica.com/scholarship/by-country/scholarship-in-germany/>



## MIGRANT PERSPECTIVES: LIFE IN GERMANY

**Once you've arrived, how did you start to create a new life in Germany?**

"You wake up in the morning and you have to know what time the train comes and where you pick your train, what time you are supposed to be where you are supposed to be. Then, you have to also mingle with friends because I just couldn't be alone, and you have to move around with friends to know places around, to learn the German culture. I am still trying to adapt to my new life. I'm learning the language, so maybe I will get better. But I'm lucky, my study is sponsored and I have first-hand experience with international communities of students coming from different parts of the world."

"I wouldn't say it is a struggle. It is a process. I wasn't used to many things and I'm still not used to many things. You have to adapt to be able to live. "If you go to Rome you should do what the Romans do". Every single day is a learning stage. We need to learn the culture, tradition, and the way of life. I'm adapting to it and most people can actually adapt to it. Something new to me is to go to school and work. So, for me it was like okay you have to feed yourself, how you feed yourself? You have to pay your bills, to do that you have to take a job, plan your life and schedule, to take up the responsibilities."

**What support structures do you have? What do you still need?**

"The support structure is quite good. At the end of the day, everything is fixed. You have your insurance and