

BBC Learning English
6 Minute English
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Going where the work is



Rob: Hello, I'm Rob and this is 6 Minute English and I'm joined this week by Jennifer. Hello Jennifer.

Jennifer: Hello Rob.

Rob: This week we're discussing **global migration** – that's the movement of people around the world and particularly those who are moving abroad to look for new work. Is this something you have done Jen?

Jennifer: Yes, when I was a student I moved to France to teach English for a while.

Rob: A very good job but luckily for us, you came back to live in the UK. Many people are forced to **emigrate** – or leave their home country – to go and work abroad and they never return home. We'll talk more about that shortly and also look at some of the language associated with migration. But let's start with today's question.

Jennifer: And this is a question for me to answer?

Rob: Of course it is! So, according to figures from the United Nations, which one of these countries has the largest number of immigrants as a percentage of its national population? Is it:

- a) United States of America
- b) Qatar
- c) Turkey

Jennifer: I think this is an easy one. I think it will be a) The United States of America.

Rob: Well, I'll let you know the answer at the end of the programme. Now let's talk more about global migration. It's something the BBC has been looking at following research by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). We know people move from country to country for all kinds of reasons – to join other members of their family, because of war in their own country, or just to find a better lifestyle.

- Jennifer:** But the biggest reason is to find work – people who do this are called **economic migrants**. Their profession – or area of work they specialise in – may not be needed where they live. Or the pay may not be very good but their skills might be in demand in another part of the world, so they are forced to move there to get a job and earn more money.
- Rob:** This is a problem for developing countries because it means skilled people are leaving to work in richer countries – this is what is called **a brain drain**. Around 214 million people are international migrants – people living and working in a different country from the one in which they were born. So what kind of work are we talking about?
- Jennifer:** All kinds of things. We know that people in healthcare often move abroad to places like the UK and Australia to work as dentists, doctors or nurses. In other countries, such as Belgium, there is a need for chefs. And in countries like Norway, there is a demand for psychologists.
- Rob:** I've also heard that in countries that have been affected by the financial crisis, such as Ireland and Greece, there is a need for accountants. And countries such as Brazil and France are on the lookout for electronic engineers.
- Jennifer:** But these are all highly-skilled jobs that require **qualified** people – people with specialist training and qualifications. Sometimes people with such skills take on a job where they are **overqualified**, such as doing a cleaning job or serving in a cafe.
- Rob:** So many of the immigrants' skills are just going to waste and, as we have mentioned, their home country is losing skills that could have helped improve the local economy there.
- Jennifer:** However, there is evidence that many migrants are working abroad to send money to family back at home – these are called **remittances**. They are seen as an important source of funds for economic development. In fact, official figures show that last year \$US400bn of this money was being sent back to developing countries.
- Rob:** It must be hard for people **to uproot** – or move from their home – leave the family behind and go overseas. And it can also be a challenge to get permission to work abroad.
- Jennifer:** Yes, you mean getting **a working visa** – that's a stamp in your passport that allows you to work in a certain country. In Australia for example, points are awarded to

people with skills that are needed in the country; those who get the right amount of points are allowed in.

Rob: This system allows a country to adapt to the changes in skills needed to keep the economy growing. Other countries only issue a working visa if someone has been offered a specific job.

Jennifer: Of course, migrants may hope that the new country's **streets are paved with gold** – or that they think it's an easy place to get rich – but if it's not, they can at least get some work experience that will benefit them when they get home: a sort of brain gain!

Rob: Hmm, how's your brain Jen? It's time now to reveal the answer to today's question. Earlier I asked you, according to figures from the United Nations, which one of these countries has the largest number of immigrants as a percentage of its national population?

Jennifer: And I said a) The United States of America.

Rob: And you are wrong. The answer is Qatar. Around 75% of its population are immigrants – so that's people who have moved there but were not born there. The USA has many more immigrants but they only make up around 12% of the population. OK, well, it's almost time to go but before we do, Jennifer could you remind us of some of the words we have heard today.

Jennifer: Yes. We heard:

global migration
emigrate
economic migrants
a brain drain
qualified
overqualified
remittances
to uproot
a working visa
streets are paved with gold

Rob: Thanks Jennifer. Well, that's all we have time for today. Please join us again soon for 6 Minute English from bbclearningenglish.com.

Both: Bye.

Vocabulary and definitions

global migration	the movement of people around the world
emigrate	leave your home country to permanently live somewhere else
economic migrants	people who go to work in another country because there is better work and /or pay
a brain drain	a situation where many highly skilled people leave a country to go and work somewhere else
qualified	having the correct training to do a specific job
overqualified	having too much training and knowledge for the job you are doing
remittances	an amount of money that is sent to someone
to uproot	(in this context) to leave your home and move somewhere else
a working visa	a stamp in your passport, or piece of official paper, allowing you to work in a country
the streets are paved with gold	(an idiomatic description of) a place where people think they will easily become rich

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