Sustainable Recruitment of Nurses (Triple Win)

The challenge

Germany’s nursing sector is already feeling the impact of a significant shortage of nurses today. At present, vacancies outnumber the amount of qualified job seekers on the job market. According to expert estimations, the nursing sector will need 150,000 new nurses by 2025. Demographic changes in the country will exacerbate this situation in the medium and long term.

By contrast, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and the Philippines, there is a surplus of qualified experts that cannot be absorbed by the local labour markets. This has resulted in a high level of unemployment among nurses in these countries.

Goal

The recruitment of qualified foreign nurses is alleviating the nursing shortage in Germany and reducing unemployment in the nurses’ countries of origin. The migrants’ remittances and the transfer of know-how contribute to development in the countries of origin.

Our approach

The BA’s International Placement Services (ZAV) and GIZ have established a joint project for the placement of qualified nurses with German companies. The migration from the participating countries of healthcare personnel who can demonstrate a suitably high standard of training presents a wide range of opportunities for everyone involved and generates threefold benefits (‘triple win’):

1. Pressure is eased on labour markets in the countries of origin.
2. Migrants’ remittances provide a developmental stimulus in their countries of origin.
3. The shortage of nurses in Germany is alleviated.

Migrating in this way provides the nurses with the chance to improve their future prospects. The project cooperates with the employment agencies in the partner countries as well as with ZAV, to select and assess nurses, provide them with preparatory language and professional courses, and then place them in work. It provides them with support in their country of origin, upon arrival in Germany and during their stay there.

GIZ supports the process with its international field structure, focusing on the promotion of the nurses’ German language skills, their professional preparation for the placement, and encouraging their integration after their arrival in Germany. GIZ also coordinates the recognition process for the qualifications acquired abroad. The other contributor to the project, ZAV, is responsible for placing the candidates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Triple Win nurses – Sustainable Recruitment of Nurses from Four Countries</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commissioned by Countries</td>
<td>Employers in Germany, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, The Philippines, Tunisia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lead executing agency</td>
<td>Employment agencies in the partner countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>since 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project value</td>
<td>14.24 million Euros</td>
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</tbody>
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Left to right:

Bosnian and Herzegovinian nurses who have been placed in Germany at work in a hospital in Frankfurt

Photos: © GIZ
The project is based on placement agreements that have already been concluded between ZAV and the employment agencies in the partner countries. This means that after their foreign credentials have been recognised in Germany, the nurses who have been placed can take up employment commensurate with their qualifications and in the medium term will be entitled to a settlement permit.

In selecting partner countries, the project takes into consideration those countries which have a surplus of well trained nurses. This is intended to prevent brain drain. In other words, placing nurses in Germany must not create a shortage of nurses in the countries of origin. Furthermore, the high standard of the nurses’ qualifications means that they can integrate more effectively when in Germany. In the light of these considerations, the project plans to include Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Philippines and probably Tunisia as partner countries. The standard of training in these countries is nearly the same as in Germany, and some nurses already have a good command of German.

The cooperation between ZAV, GIZ and the employment agencies in the partner countries permits the well coordinated management of the labour migration in a spirit of partnership. The project promotes development and labour policy objectives, while at the same time observing a culture of welcome and appreciation.

Results

From the beginning of the project until now (2012 to October 2018), more than 2,000 nurses have been placed with German employers, in clinics, geriatric care homes and out-patient services. Of these 620 have already started working in Germany, while 290 are still undergoing their preparations in their home countries. Another 284 Triple-Win positions have yet to be filled. The demand continues to grow, both among the nursing staff and on the part of the employers. Project monitoring has verified that the selected nurses possess a high level of professional qualification. The employers were highly satisfied with the international nurses.

The experience gleaned from the pilot project has made it possible to address the needs of the employers, the nurses and the countries of origin in a more targeted fashion – a promising situation with advantages for all three sides.