

Migration: skills and the job market

Fact Sheet

Lesson 2: Who do you think they are?

Net immigration – when there is a greater number of immigrants (in-migrants) than emigrants (out-migrants)

Net emigration – when there is a greater number of emigrants (out-migrants) than immigrants (in-migrants)

There are an estimated 200 million international migrants in the world today and the **Worldmapper resource sheet** clearly highlights countries which are experiencing net immigration and net emigration. Areas that are experiencing net immigration include North America (Canada has the highest per capita rate of net immigration in the world), the UK, parts of Europe, Australia and Japan. Likely causes of this can be attributed to better economic opportunities (although given the current global financial climate this is under some debate and the maps can be used again when discussing this plenary question) higher standard of living and better social opportunities. These can all be regarded as **pull factors** and conversely will be the **push factors** that lead to high levels of net emigration in areas like Southeast Asia, South America and Russia.

After Poland's entry into the EU in 2004 it was estimated that 375 000 Poles had migrated to the UK by 2007 and today that figure could be as high as 750 000. It is worth noting however, that due to the financial situation in the UK a number of these Poles are now returning to Poland rather than permanently settling in the UK. In the last 8 years there has also been an influx of Filipino workers into the UK, especially in the health care sector where 47% of work permits are issued. Estimates vary but there could be between 50 000 – 60 000 Filipino migrants living and working in London and 90 000 to 110 000 across the rest of the UK. It is also estimated that 65% of these are women. These are just two groups of people who've had an impact both socially and economically on the UK and through the **fact file task**, students have the opportunity to research the **advantages** and **disadvantages** for the individual as well as for the **source** and **destination** countries.

With the recent announcement that Britain is officially in a recession and the ever increasing global financial problems, how the current global financial crisis might affect global migration is, at this stage, a case of speculation. However, a number of predictions can be made. It is likely that migrants who came to the UK for economic reasons will return home as job opportunities decrease and the Pound is not as strong as it once was.

Remittances are also likely to decrease as a result of the less favourable exchange rate and the migrant needing more money to pay for rent, heating and other essentials. There could be possible '**brain drain**' from countries like the UK where companies and their young professionals move to more economically stable countries or tax havens like Switzerland or in countries where the financial situation leads to growing social unrest, there may be more international migration as people migrate for social and economic reasons. Whatever happens, it is very likely that the economic crisis will affect migration, it is just difficult at this stage to predict to what extent. It is however the perfect time for students to join the debate and formulate their own speculations.