



Voices of critical skilled migrants in South Africa A case study of Gauteng province

KEY POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- South Africa needs to recognise that there is global competition for critical skills, which requires a strategic response. South Africa must market itself based on its attractive pull factors and address factors that are likely to adversely affect its global competitiveness in attracting, recruiting and retaining critical skills needed for growth and development.
- Critical Skilled migrants are attracted to South Africa because of the quality of higher education infrastructure, opportunities for further intellectual development, economy, proximity to home country (in Africa), institutional quality, the advantage of a politically neutral career and future prospects. Factors that make South Africa unattractive are the low level of openness to foreign back African cultures, xenophobic attacks, social unrests/volatile society, high level of crime, black African discrimination, general dislike for foreigners whether critical skill or not, complicated documentation processes and a reactionary immigration policy stance.
- South Africa needs to transition from a reactionary to a proactive stance in its migration policy related to critical skilled migrants. A few mechanisms South Africa could use are online assessment systems, outreach programmes, university collaborations and dissemination strategies aimed at reaching specifically targeted groups.
- South Africa must design and implement programmes to integrate critical skilled migrants into society and sensitise society to different cultures and peoples. This will enhance openness to foreign cultures, especially from Africa.
- The Department of Home Affairs needs to improve application processes – shorten application turnaround times, advertise visa regimes to target groups, address information asymmetries from top to bottom in its service delivery and enhance coherence between policy and practice.
- Market entry barriers for foreign businesses trying to invest in South Africa should be reviewed, especially the minimum capital requirements – too high. Efforts should rather be focussed on ensuring that incoming businesses comply with technical criteria and job creation requirements in South Africa.
- The Department of Home Affairs must keep a current database of critical skills and all information relevant to them. Their data can be updated periodically like the FICA details by Banks. That way applications for Permanent residence will not require the critical skilled migrant to start from scratch since his information will already be on DHA database and systems.