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Migrants

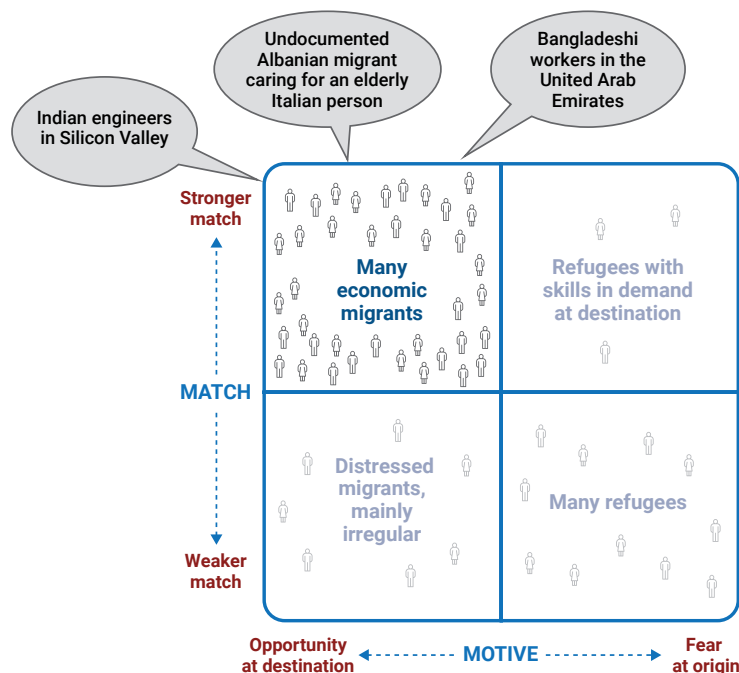
Prospering—and even more so with rights



Key messages

- International migration has proved to be a powerful engine of poverty reduction for people in low- and middle-income countries.
- When migrants' skills and attributes strongly match the needs of their destination society, they reap significant benefits (figure 4.1). Many migrants earn higher wages and enjoy access to better public services in the destination country than in their country of origin.
- Formal access to the labor market—documented status, the right to work and to change employers, recognition of professional licenses and qualifications—leads to better outcomes for migrants. Undocumented migrants fare significantly worse, and they are more vulnerable to exploitation.
- Migration is often not a one-way move; return migration is a significant phenomenon. Migrants who return voluntarily typically fare better than before they left—and better than nonmigrants.

Figure 4.1 When migrants' skills and attributes match the needs of destination societies, the gains are large



Source: WDR 2023 team.

Note: *Match* refers to the degree to which a migrant's skills and related attributes meet the demand in the destination country. *Motive* refers to the circumstances under which a person moves—whether in search of opportunity or because of a “well-founded fear” of persecution, armed conflict, or violence in their origin country.