

## 7. Promote educational excellence and role modelling

### WHAT and WHY?

Youth with migrant parents need to be able to excel in the educational system. They are often very motivated and have high aspirations for their education and career – higher than youth with native-born parents (OECD, 2018<sup>[2]</sup>). They are 8 percentage points more likely than students with native-born parents of similar socio-economic status and academic performance to aspire to complete tertiary education, and 11 percentage points more likely to expect to pursue a high-status career, such as working in managerial and professional occupations (OECD, 2015<sup>[17]</sup>).

Yet, native-born children with low-educated immigrant parents in many European countries are less likely to complete upper secondary school, compared with their native-born peers at similar levels of parental education (OECD, 2017<sup>[3]</sup>). Regarding tertiary education, the picture is more diverse. In many countries, including in OECD Europe, youth with migrant parents are more likely to attend university than their peers with native-born parents who have a comparable socio-economic status (Aydemir, Chen and Corak, 2013<sup>[69]</sup>; Kristen, Reimer and Kogan, 2008<sup>[70]</sup>; Richardson, Mittelmeier and Rienties, 2020<sup>[71]</sup>). On the other hand, there are strong differences between groups of youth with parents from different countries, with some experiencing barriers to pursue higher education (Camilleri et al., 2013<sup>[72]</sup>). There is also a notable underrepresentation of youth with migrant parents in access to the most prestigious universities (Shiner and Noden, 2014<sup>[73]</sup>; Boliver, 2013<sup>[74]</sup>).

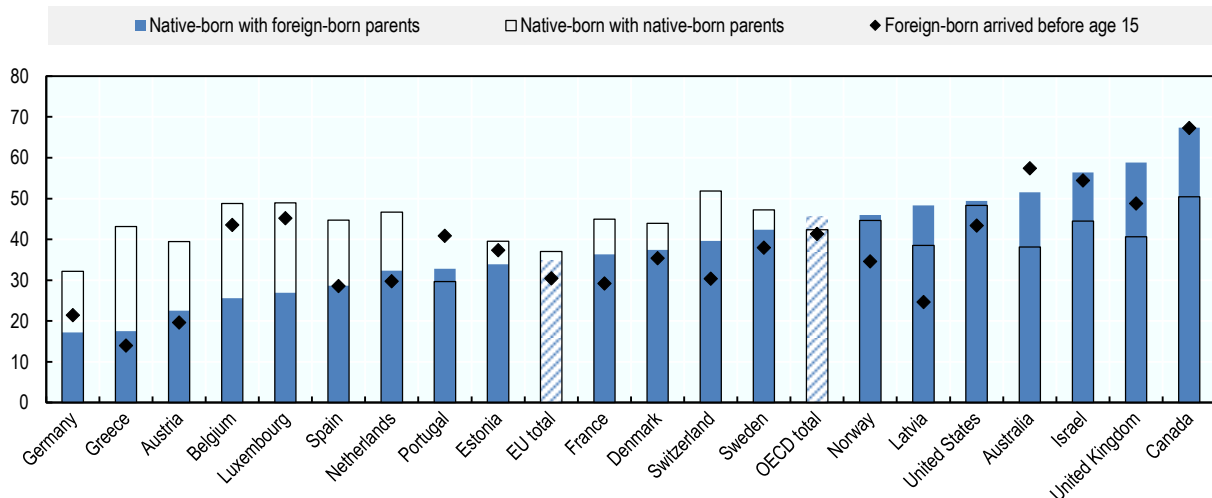
A key element to support young people's development are role models. However, for effective role modelling, individuals must perceive role models to be similar to themselves. This similarity regards not only their aspired education and career path but also their social background and migration history (Valero, Keller and Hirschi, 2019<sup>[75]</sup>; Karunanayake and Nauta, 2004<sup>[76]</sup>; Zirkel, 2002<sup>[77]</sup>; Buunk, Peiró and Griffioen, 2007<sup>[78]</sup>). A longitudinal study with 12 to 14-year-old students in the United States, for example, found that having at least one ethnic- and gender-matched role model was associated with improved academic performance (Covarrubias and Fryberg, 2015<sup>[79]</sup>).

### WHO?

Role models are particularly relevant for native-born youth of immigrant parents in situations where negative stereotyping or discrimination prevail.

**Figure 7.1. Highly educated by parents' place of birth**

Percentages, 25- to 34-year-olds not in education, around 2017



Source: OECD/EU (2018<sup>[1]</sup>).

## HOW?

Increasing the representation in prestigious education pathways and in the public domain can occur in several ways:

- Encouraging higher education institutions to attract youth with migrant parents into their programmes
- Providing students with migrant parents with role models, for example via peer-mentoring schemes
- Using the public sector as a role model by pro-actively promoting recruitment of candidates with migrant parents and encouraging immigrants and their children to apply to public-sector jobs

Various OECD countries *encourage universities and other higher education institutions to attract youth with migrant parents* into their programmes. An example is Australia, where the state Government has implemented targeted measures to increase the acceptance and participation of children of immigrants in higher education. The Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre, for example, runs a Special Entry Access Scheme that grants students from a non-English speaking or refugee background. In Finland, the government implemented targeted measures to design student-selection processes that account for the specific circumstances of youth with migrant parents, made efforts to develop open higher education institutions and provides funds for student guidance for this group. Besides, higher education institutions can apply for state support in the form of study vouchers to assist students in improving their Finnish language proficiency (OECD, 2018<sup>[2]</sup>). In many other countries, including Germany and France, certain prestigious higher education institutions and scholarship programmes have specific initiatives to attract youth with migrant parents.

*Mentoring programmes* are an effective way to provide children of immigrants with role models. In such schemes, students in higher education or young professionals with migrant parents coach and support younger students. These schemes often feature regular training for mentors, structured joint activities for mentors and mentees and a focus on parent involvement as well as formulated programme objectives. Where they have been implemented, such programmes often proved highly effective (OECD, 2010<sup>[80]</sup>).

An example is the ‘Young Role Models’ (*Junge Vorbilder*) peer mentoring scheme, which operates in the German city of Hamburg. The programme brings together lower secondary school students with migrant parents and university students of the same parental language for tutoring, socioemotional support as well as educational and vocational orientation. Mentoring can take the form of group sessions in secondary schools, or it can be conducted individually at the mentees’ home. Mentors receive ongoing training and benefit from information about education-related topics, including scholarship and internship opportunities. Similarly, the Nightingale Mentoring scheme in Sweden pairs up university students with 8 to 12-year-old children from countries where participation in higher education is very low. Mentors and mentees build a personal relationship meeting every week for one school year. The goal is to improve social skills, school performance and ultimately raise the child’s likelihood of applying for university. Started in 1997, the scheme has since been implemented in Austria, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Norway, Spain and Switzerland.

The public sector, in particular, can play an essential role in promoting the integration of immigrants and their children by employing young adults with migrant parents. Public sector employment of youth with migrant parents generates several benefits. First, the presence of civil servants with migrant parents enhances diversity within public institutions, making them more representative of the communities they serve. Second, how the wider public perceives immigrants and their children depends in part on their ‘visibility’ in public life and the contexts in which they become ‘visible’. Teachers, police officers, or public administrators with migrant parents, can also act as role models.

Yet, despite rising political awareness about the benefits of diversity in the public sector, youth with migrant parents remain underrepresented in public sector jobs in most countries, especially in longstanding European immigration destinations and in Southern Europe. The only exceptions are the United Kingdom, Australia and Norway, where native-born youth with immigrant parents are at equal shares as their peers with native-born parents (OECD/EU, 2018<sup>[1]</sup>).

Efforts to promote public sector employment among immigrants and their children have increased in several OECD countries over recent years. As a first and crucial step, remaining legal restrictions preventing foreign nationals from taking up public sector jobs have been lifted in most OECD countries since the beginning of the millennium. Several OECD countries have not only removed legal barriers, but actively promoted public sector recruitment of candidates with migrant parents – especially at the local and regional level. In Norway, the Anti-Discrimination Act outlines the obligation for government agencies to invite at least one applicant with migrant parents for an interview, provided the person is qualified for the position in question, a practice also implemented in a number of municipalities.

Austria, for example, has encouraged recruitment of applicants with migrant parents into the Viennese police force in the framework of the ‘Vienna needs you’ project. The initiative launched targeted information campaigns in co-operation with migrant communities, associations and schools. Finland offers targeted preparatory training, and professional education offers to encourage youth with migrant parents to start a teaching career. German cities and federal states aim to augment the share of public sector trainees with migrant parents through initiatives such as the ‘Berlin needs you’ and ‘We are Hamburg’ campaigns. Norway has gone a step further and introduced legal requirements for the public sector to invite a certain number of candidates with migrant parents for interviews. The country has also established diversity recruitment plans, set diversity targets and provides diversity training for recruitment staff in the public sector.

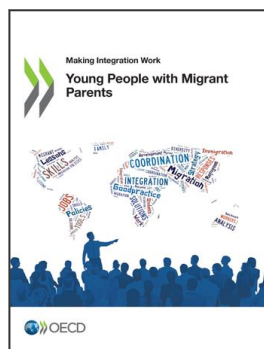
**Table 7.1. Policies to promote participation of young people with migrant parents in the public sector in OECD countries, 2016**

	Programmes to promote participation in the public sector	
	Yes/No	Instruments used
Australia	No	/
Austria	Yes (but not systematic)	<i>Wien braucht dich</i> (Vienna needs you): Pilot project by Viennese police to recruit applicants with migrant parents through Informing migrant communities with the help of the municipal department on integration and diversity (MA17) Kick-off and information events in migrant communities, associations and schools organised jointly by police and MA17 Tandem-Veranstaltungen (Polizei-MA17) in den Communities, Vereinen, Schulen
Belgium	Yes (but not systematic)	<i>Equal Opportunities and Diversity Plan</i> : Workforce diversity targets for cities in Flanders
Canada	Yes (not specific for public sector)	Short term work placements within participating public and private sector organisations for a specified period of time built on partnerships and it delivered with over 20 immigrant serving organisations in three locations across Canada
Chile	No (but pilot project for intercultural social mediators and mediation workshops in co-operation with migrant populations)	/
Czech Republic	No	/
Denmark	Yes	Equity benchmark for state and municipal governments (e.g. target setting; regular monitoring of employment statistics; small financial incentives)
Finland	Yes	<i>Specima projects</i> (2009-15): Preparatory training and continuing professional education for teaching occupations in various educational levels targeted at youth with migrant parents • Initiatives to increase the share of foreign language people in municipal administration • Specific recruitment initiatives for migrants from Somalia
Estonia		
France	No (but targeted recruitment of youth with social difficulties)	(Targeted recruitment of low-educated young people)
Germany	Yes	Advertisement encouraging migrant youth to apply for careers in the public sector
Greece	No	(no specific programmes)
Hungary	No	/
Iceland		
Israel		
Ireland	No	/
Italy	No	/
Japan		
Korea		
Latvia	No	/
Lithuania	n.a.	n.a.
Luxembourg	No	/
Mexico	No (except for migrant-specific programmes)	( <i>Community Leaders</i> : Young persons with migrant parents are recruited as 'community leaders' for a programme on prevention and care of unaccompanied children and adolescent migrants)
Netherlands	Yes (but not systematic)	<i>Amsterdam's Programma Diversiteit</i> : Setting workforce diversity targets
New Zealand	Not systematic	/
Norway	Yes	<i>Anti-Discrimination Act</i> Obligation for government agencies to invite at least one applicant with migrant parents for an interview, provided the person is qualified for the position in question (also implemented in a number of municipalities) Obligation for employers to make active, targeted and systematic efforts to promote

	Programmes to promote participation in the public sector	
	Yes/No	Instruments used
		equality and prevent discrimination in their undertakings and to report the equality measures that are/have been implemented Prohibition of direct and indirect discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, national origin, descent, skin colour, language, religion or belief
Poland	No	/
Portugal	Yes	<i>Choices Programme</i> (working groups "New Citizens" and "More Leaders") Reflexion about difficulties and problems that young new Portuguese citizens can face with their new citizenship Sessions in Democratic Institutions, Rights and Duties, Justice, Media and Global Citizenship for young adults from Cape Verde
Slovak Republic	No	/
Slovenia	No	/
Spain	No (but programs for all youth regardless of migrant parents)	/
Sweden	Yes	Affirmative action-type policies on ethnic and religious grounds
Switzerland	No	/
Turkey		
United Kingdom	Yes (but not specific for youth with migrant parents)	General affirmative action and employment equity policies
United States	Yes (but not specific for youth with migrant parents)	General affirmative action and employment equity policies

Note: n.a. = information not available.

Source: OECD questionnaire on the integration of young people with migrant parents 2016.



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