



Fostering Migrants Employment in the Construction Sector

MITRUST

PR1 National Report – Cyprus

FOSTERING MIGRANTS' EMPLOYMENT IN THE CONSTRUCTION SECTOR



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rationale of the MITRUST Project

Construction is one of top 10 principal sectors of employment for migrants in EU and globally, since migrant workers can be found in considerable numbers in construction domains and thus their contribution to construction industry is important worldwide. However, according to the latest report of European Construction Sector Observatory (2020) there are several specific barriers to the training of building workers, which are linked with the lack of new technologies that support the access of migrant workers in training. Cultural and linguistic barriers may also pose a difficulty for attending training.

Thus, low-skilled migrant workers are at the risk of losing their jobs.

According to CEDEFOP, globalization and technological changes have affected the EU construction and building workers forced them equipped with new skills (technical, soft, language skills). For this reason, there is more need for VET support on this sector, while establishing partnerships between sectorial companies and VET providers is another important issue. However, as CEPS indicates there is still a lack of investment in skills training by construction companies, due to a variety of reasons (market failures, unaffordable costs, etc.). One more challenge should concern the construction industry is the informal experience migrant workers and their prior learning recognition.

Last, but not least, language learning of construction terminologies was happening on-the-job place and time until now. However, COVID19 impact has affected this type of learning due to the demand of keeping social distancing and working as remotely as possible.

The purpose of MITRUST project is to develop and deliver an innovative digital tool with the intention to support migrants who would like to work in the Construction Sector to acquire the necessary language competences, soft skills and proper behaviors in the construction site. the project focuses on targeted open and distance learning opportunities which will offer better career perspectives to migrants who want to be transferred in an EU country and to enter in construction industry labor market away from social exclusion and marginalization. Besides, access to learning offerings and enhancement of employability is one of the most efficient ways for Migrants' successful integration into the recipient EU societies.



1.2 Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study is to develop a sound and updated insight of the Construction sector, based on the analysis of the construction industry, and the identification of the construction related job positions where migrants fit better. The study's objective is to investigate the actual employability or potential working opportunities within the sector and to provide a comprehensive and updated analysis in terms of the necessary language competences and skillset that meets market demand and current trends. Through an approach which examines construction specialties where migrants are mostly needed, and an analysis of soft and technical skills required by migrants, the study will define what kind of "intervention" is required (on language/soft or technical skills) improvement. The latter will build a strong basis for the identification of the User Specification Requirements that will guide the design and development of the Open Educational Resources tool in terms of learning and education offerings. Therefore, the study intends to map the existing context of the construction sector, to identify the skills gaps of TCNs and potential skills mismatches.

We will seek to verify and enrich our conclusions by inviting insights and feedback from a range of the target group in order to get a balanced, comprehensive and up-to-date overview. For this purpose, a comprehensive research methodology has been designed and implemented, combining both desk and field research.

The purpose of this document is to highlight the findings and results of both desk and field research that has been conducted in Cyprus.



2. DESK RESEARCH IN CYPRUS

2.1 Brief analysis of the current situation of the Construction sector in the country

The broad construction sector in Cyprus consists one of the most important sectors of economic growth together with tourism and international services. The construction contributes by 5% on average to the total GDP and has a much greater impact, considering the related services required for its operation. This sector employs around 40 thousand people (7.4% of total employment)¹.

Based on the latest European Construction Sector Observatory - ESCO report for Cyprus² for 2021 “two main issues hinder the development of the Cypriot construction sector. First, although companies in the sector often have overqualified workers, the sector still faces a shortage of workers with the required skillset, meaning that there might be a mismatch between the level of skills that the workforce currently possesses and the companies’ needs. Around 7.5% of firms in the construction sector reported a labour shortage in 2019, the highest among all sectors. Secondly, the persisting issue of late payments has had an unfavourable impact on the construction sector. As per the Survey on the Access to Finance of Enterprises 2020 report, around 13.2% of SMEs in Cyprus reported facing late payment issues on a regular basis...”

The construction sector is also affected from a variety of external political and economic factors that have direct impact to its output as well as on employment demand and needs. From 2008 to 2015, the construction sector in Cyprus shrank due to the economic crisis, lack of liquidity and the restrictive credit policy of Cypriot banks. However, from the beginning of 2015 onwards, the negative trend was reversed and the construction activity in the Cypriot market began to revive until the outbreak of the covid-19 pandemic.

In 2020 and after, there is a new a recession wave. Political developments such as the sudden termination of the Cyprus Investment Scheme for EU citizenship – the so called “golden passports” – caused additional problems in a special category of constructions activities, the luxury residential properties.

Based on the data acquired by of the Cyprus Statistical Services³, the number of people employed in the construction industry have increased from 2015 onwards.

The NACE F⁴ category includes both managers and qualified executives and administrative staff as well as the main Mitrust target group, namely the craftsmen and workers.

¹ Average before the Covid-19 pandemic <https://www.kathimerini.com.cy/gr/oikonomiki/oikonomia/poso-prosferei-sto-aep-o-kathe-tomeas-tis-oikonomias>

² https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/construction/observatory/country-fact-sheets/cyprus_en

³ <https://www.cystat.gov.cy/en/>

⁴ NACE is the statistical classification of economic activity in the European Union. It is the acronym for “**Nomenclature statistique des activités économiques dans la Communauté européenne**”

The category F covers all economic activity of the construction sector.



TOTAL	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
NACE F	24,304	26,248	30,187	34,398	37,700	38,742	39,561

Regarding the economic activity NACE (Rev 2), listed according to (a) a set of individual activities, (b) the number of companies and (c) the number of employees in each activity, the Cyprus Statistical Services has released the most updated detailed data (2020) as follows:

Economic Activity NACE	NACE_Description	Number of Enterprises	Number of Persons Employed
41102	Private firms of land development	527	1637
41201	Construction of all types of buildings (private sector)	2113	14847.4
42111	Construction of streets and roads (private sector)	53	916.6
42211	Construction of utility projects for fluids (incl. canals and water mains)	11	120.2
42214	Water well drilling	27	36.5
42223	Construction of utility projects for electricity and telecommunications	11	78.1
42911	Construction of water projects (including dams, marinas)	18	87.3
42991	Construction work of other civil engineering projects n.e.c. (incl. outdoor sports facilities, land subdivision)	17	122.9
43111	Demolition of buildings and other structures	12	36.1
43121	Earth moving	563	1238.2
43131	Test drilling and boring	8	14.9
43211	Electrical installations	766	3593.5
43212	Other installations	152	625
43213	Other building installation	13	18.4
43221	Plumbing installations	495	975.5
43222	Central heating installations	122	782.5
43223	Air conditioning installations	180	605.6



43291	Lifts and elevators installation services	45	417.8
43292	Water-proofing, heat insulation or sound-proofing in buildings or other structures (incl. installation of blinds)	86	305.9
43311	Plastering	53	149.7
43321	Installation of non-self-manufactured doors, windows, kitchens, frames and the like of wood or other materials	97	193.4
43331	Floor and wall covering with parquet, carpets, linoleum coverings, ceramic, etc. (incl. Wall paper, marble-polishing and furred ceiling)	505	1575.4
43341	Painting of buildings	888	1846.9
43342	Installation of glasses	10	127.1
43391	Other building completion	105	170.3
43911	Erection of roofs and roof covering	23	78.1
43991	Insulation work of roofing activities, de-humidification of buildings	48	86.9
43992	Structural iron erection	290	1008
43993	Reinforce cement moulders	480	1763.6
43994	Concrete construction contractors	10	27.4
43995	Other specialized construction activities n.e.c.	1535	2796
43996	Renting of construction or demolition equipment with operator	13	30.2
43997	Installation, maintenance, and repair of private swimming pools	53	220.5
TOTAL		9329	36532.9



2.2 Employment of TCNs in the Construction Sector

Labor distribution

Based on the annual Labor Force Survey of the Cyprus Statistical Services for 2021, the distribution of employees in the construction sector

(a) by Occupation

and

(b) by Citizenship (Cypriots / EU nationals / Third-country nationals), reflected as follows:

OCCUPATION ISCO-88	TOTAL	Cypriots	E.U. Nationals	TCNs (Third Countries Nationals)
TOTAL	100.0	67.9	16.6	15.5
1 Legislators and Managers	4.2	3.1	0.1	1.0
2 Professionals	6.4	6.0	0.1	0.3
3 Technicians	8.0	7.4	0.3	0.2
4 Clerks	8.3	7.7	0.4	0.2
5 Services and Sales workers	0.6	0.3	0.2	0.1
7 Craft and related trade workers	54.4	33.9	11.4	9.1
71 - Craft workers of buildings except of electricians	44.4	25.1	10.3	8.9
72 – Craft metal workers	0.8	0.7	0.0	0.1
74 – Electricians	9.2	8.0	1.0	0.2
8 Plant and machine operators	6.0	5.2	0.6	0.1
9 Elementary workers	12.1	4.3	3.4	4.4

Based on the above data of year 2021, Third Country Nationals (TCNs) labor force occupy 15.5% of the total jobs of category F. The TCNs are mainly employed as production craftsmen (9.1%) and most of them are building craftsmen (8.9%). Secondly, they are unskilled workers (4.4%). At the same time, a similarly significant percentage of jobs in respective sectors are occupied by European citizens - ie Nationals from other EU countries (16.6%). The rest of the craftsmen and workers are Cypriots (67.9%).



It is noted that very few TCNs and European citizens occupy managerial and administrative positions or qualified professions in the construction sector.

There are no specific data on the qualifications of the TCNs in the construction sector.

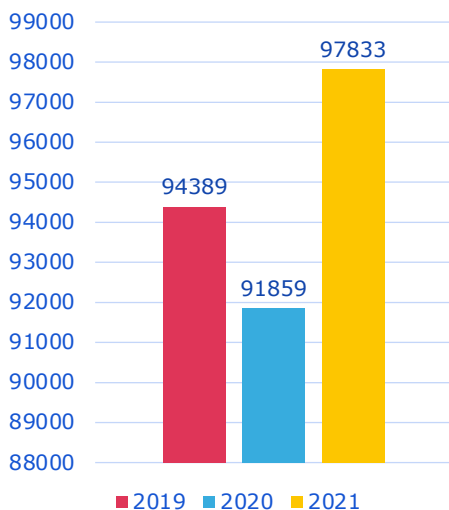
TCNs' population statistics in Cyprus

The Statistical Service has announced⁵ the preliminary results of the Census of Population and Housing 2021. According to the preliminary results, the population in the Government controlled areas of Cyprus on the 1st of October 2021 was 918.100, recording an increase of 9,2% compared to the results of the Census of Population 2011 (840.400). The total number of foreign nationals amounts to 193.300 and corresponds to 21,1% of the total population. No further information was provided pending the announcement of final results.

According to the official records of the Civil Registry and Migration Department – Ministry of Interior almost 100 thousand TCNs' are residing in Cyprus with a valid residence permit.



Valid residence permits - TCNs



Top nationalities - 2021
Russia
China
Syria
Philippines
India
Nepal
Sri lanka
Ukraine

⁵ Press release of CYSTAT 18 May 2022

<https://www.census2021.cystat.gov.cy/Announcements/18%20May%202022%20CENSUS%20OF%20POPULATION%20-%20PRELIMINARY%20RESULTS.pdf>

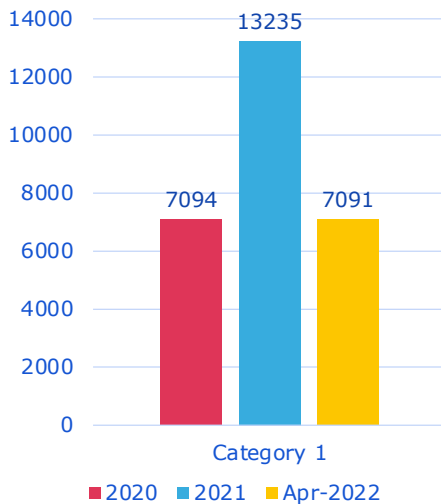


An estimated number of 12 thousand people have been granted the status of the recognized refugee under international protection. These people are allowed to have full access to labor market and enjoy similar rights as the EU citizens. Most of them are coming from Syria.

Additional to this community under international protection, a considerable number of TCNs are asylum seekers. The number of those asylum seekers has increased rapidly from 2016 onwards and reached approximately 32 thousand people⁶. More than 80% of them are crossing the UN buffer zone of 200 km splitting Cyprus into 2 parts – north and south - since 1974. The southern part is under the effective control of government of Cyprus and EU law and rules apply, including the Asylum procedures. The northern part is under the control of Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot administration. No asylum procedures apply. There is hot debate in Cyprus for several years how to address huge challenges arose due to the increasing influx of irregular migration from the north, mostly coming to Cyprus via Turkey.



Asylum applications



Top nationalities - 2020

Syria
India
Cameroon
Bangladesh
Pakistan

Top nationalities - 2022

DR Congo
Nigeria
Syria
Pakistan
Bangladesh

Access of TCNs to labor market

The policy of the Cyprus government regarding the employment of TCNs is very restrictive and prohibits employers to directly recruit them in the constructions sector. This policy is regulated by the Ministry of

⁶ Latest figures provided by the Ministry of Interior officials before the Parliament
<https://cyprus-mail.com/2022/07/07/barbed-wire-along-buffer-zone-proving-divisive-mps-hear/>



Labour which “examines applications from employers for the employment of TCNs, for the satisfaction of pressing, short term needs in the labour market, in certain economic fields and occupations”. It is underlined that “the basic precondition for the granting of permit for the employment of foreign workers is the absence of prospects to meet the specific needs of the employer by local labour force (Cypriot or European citizens), which will be ascertained following an investigation of the competent service of the Department of Labour...”⁷

The Cyprus government issued 2 additional executive degrees to allow TCNs students⁸ and asylum seekers⁹ to work in specific fields and occupations, but none of them makes specific reference for the construction sector.

Those working in constructions are basically employed as unskilled workers.

TCNs Integration policy in Cyprus

In recent years there has been a confusion in government policy on migration, especially towards TCNs. On the one hand, there is a shortage of working force - especially in hotels and constructions, which are very important areas of economic activity - but on the other hand, restrictions for TCNs access to work remain in force.

The same is true of TCNs integration policy. The implementation of the integration policy until 2020 was mainly depended by the EU funding through the Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund. From 2020 onwards, important programs related to learning Greek and supporting TCNs to enter the labor market have been suspended. TCNs continue have access to health and educational system for minors, but no comprehensive and cohesive integration policies apply.

Recently, the National Plan for the integration of TCNs¹⁰ reached the final stage of approval by the Council of Ministers after 18 months of public consultation. But it was canceled for "political reasons" by the Minister of Interior which gave no further explanation.

Employers are requesting relaxation of restrictions to meet their demands for skilled technicians in constructions and professionals in HoReCa.

The valuable contribution of migrant workers to Cyprus economy was underlined by a study¹¹ published by the University of Cyprus back in 2007, in a period of economic booming.

⁷ Ministry of Labor

http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/dl/dl.nsf/page5a_en/page5a_en?OpenDocument

⁸ Ministry of Labor (in Greek): http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/dl/dl.nsf/page5h_gr/page5h_gr?OpenDocument

⁹ Ministry of Labor degree (in Greek)

http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/dl/dl.nsf/page5h_gr/page5h_gr?OpenDocument

¹⁰ Cyprus National Plan for the Integration of Migrants <https://tcnintegration.com.cy/en/>

¹¹ Study of the University of Cyprus

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/227355741_The_Impact_of_Foreign_Workers_on_the_Labour_Market_of_Cyprus



2.3 Construction Market Skills Demands-Cyprus

The Human Resources Development Authority in Cyprus ANAD¹² is the public authority that undertook the task of carrying out long-term forecasts for employment needs in Cyprus. In this context, ANAD completed in 2017 the latest valuable forecasting for employment needs¹³ in sectors of economic activity and professions of the Cypriot economy which cover the decade 2017-2027.

Based on the full report¹⁴ 2017 - 2027 of ANAD forecasts¹⁵ shows that the employment (NACE 2 – F) needs will grow in the Construction sector by approximately a 1000 people every year.

More specifically¹⁶

- (a) The average annual percentage of development needs is 1.4 – 1.5% and creates demands of around 500 workers per year, while
- (b) The average number of people who retire or withdraw (health, other reasons) is around 500 workers per year

¹² ANAD in Greek ANAD Αρχή Ανάπτυξης Ανθρώπινου Δυναμικού <https://www.anad.org.cy/>

¹³ According to ANAD, an updated forecast report couldn't be utilized due to the data reversal of covid-19 consequences. A new report is about to be released by the end of 2022. But again, the forecasts are affected by the impact of the Ukrainian War.

¹⁴ ANAD Forecasts of Employment needs in the Cyprus Economy 2017-2027 full report in Greek https://www.anad.org.cy/wps/portal/hrda/hrdaExternal/researchAndStudies/studies/trendsandforecasts/topicitem/trendsandforecasts_treeview_group1/trendsandforecasts_treeview_group12/forecasts_of_employment_needs_in_the_cyprus_economy_2017-2027_october_2017_greek_only!/ut/p/z1/tZPLboMwEEW_CM0Yv_ASAg1NHxRIQvEmclNckQKJqir5_bpVVSmLmEWEN5aI4zN3RhrQ8Ap6MKeuNV_dYTB7-6612KRpGqYqw2dU9xzrLwL2DyOOGVQ_QJ45YQI2v1_DXVkJFe2DMA2V6Ut-nqx9zINkxNSURWjG2CCuIEsZn-AK7Ez86OA2gaW15uSUJ265gyr4fDZ2xmWP8bjtnuHWhkIDTbE4zu69VgimacEpd4bkw2hzEdKA0hxpMLCv7HCiJ5Mqo9wWv20w4n4hPriJWc36hdiC1fN_tdNEzi2q0EUSRGcl7uPtt88JZRfXvwwGzRiZos!/dz/d5/L2dBIS9nQSEh/

¹⁵ ANAD Forecasts of Employment needs in the Cyprus Economy 2017-2027 - summary in English https://www.anad.org.cy/wps/wcm/connect/hrda/55433cf4-63d7-490f-a1a0-8571138cfab7/Forecasts+of+Employment+Needs+in+the+Cyprus+Economy+2017-2027+-+Summary.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CONVERT_TO=url&CACHEID=ROOTWORKSPACE.Z18_HHHAH9O0NGE980A7L632QJ0000-55433cf4-63d7-490f-a1a0-8571138cfab7-ntoYXHN

¹⁶ https://www.anad.org.cy/wps/wcm/connect/hrda/ca1ced3b-af07-4ff5-bfa9-fa985117d623/F.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=ROOTWORKSPACE.Z18_HHHAH9O0NGE980A7L632QJ0000-ca1ced3b-af07-4ff5-bfa9-fa985117d623-nB.x7C8



The ANAD survey showed the following employment demands¹⁷ in main categories of occupations:

ISCO 08 7 Craft and Related Trades Workers	% in Cyprus Construction	Total Employment Demand 2017 - 2027	Description – Skillset required
7.1. Building and Related Trades Workers (excluding Electricians) Occupations in this sub-major group are classified into the following minor groups: 711 Building Frame and Related Trades Workers 712 Building Finishers and Related Trades Workers 713 Painters, Building Structure Cleaners and Related Trades Workers (7.1. Τεχνίτες Οικοδομών)	76%	723	Building and related trades workers construct, maintain and repair buildings; erect and repair foundations, walls and structures of brick, stone and similar materials; shape and finish stone for building and other purposes. Competent performance in most occupations in this sub-major group requires skills at the second ISCO skill level.
7.2. Metal, Machinery and Related Trades Workers Τεχνίτες μετάλλου και μηχανημάτων	5%	275	Metal, machinery and related trades workers cast, weld, forge and, by other methods, form metal; erect, maintain and repair heavy metal structures; engage in machine-tool setting as well as in fitting, maintaining and repairing machinery including engines and vehicles; or they produce tools and various non-precious metal articles. Competent performance in most occupations in this sub-major group requires skills at the second ISCO skill level.
7.4 Electrical and electronics trades workers (Τεχνικοί ηλεκτρολογίας και	46%	349	Electrical and electronics trades workers install, fit and maintain electrical wiring systems and machinery and other electrical

¹⁷ ANAD Projections graphics (in Greek) https://www.anad.org.cy/wps/wcm/connect/hrda/3b6132e8-4814-43c8-b64f-f7c0536e8890/7.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=ROOTWORKSPACE.Z18_HHHAH9O0NGE980A7L632QJ0000-3b6132e8-4814-43c8-b64f-f7c0536e8890-nBFOWLp



ηλεκτρονικοί)			apparatus, electrical transmission and supply lines and cables, and electronic and telecommunications equipment and systems. Competent performance in most occupations in this sub-major group requires skills at the second ISCO skill level.
9. Labourers in Construction Building construction labourers perform routine tasks in connection with building construction and demolition work. (Ανειδίκευτοι εργάτες)	8%	2597	Tasks include - (a) cleaning used building bricks and doing other simple work on demolition sites; (b) mixing, pouring and spreading materials such as concrete, plaster and mortar; (c) digging and filling holes and trenches using hand-held tools; (d) spreading sand, soil, gravel and similar materials; (e) loading and unloading construction materials, excavated material and equipment and transporting them around construction sites using wheelbarrows, hods and hand trucks; (f) cleaning work sites and removing obstructions. Examples of the occupations classified here: - Bricklayer's assistant - Construction labourer (building work) - Demolition labourer - Hod carrier

Source ANAD

Cyprus National Qualifications Framework¹⁸

Investment in education and training in Cyprus is among the highest in the EU except at pre-primary level. However, the rate of early school leaving is on the rise (9.2% in 2019, up from 7.8% in 2018) and is below the EU average of 10.2%. In some areas the high level of spending per student does not translate into comparable education outcomes. The basic skills levels of Cyprus' students lag behind those of other EU countries, thus addressing underachievement and students' well-being remains a priority for the country. Measures are being taken by the government to improve outcomes in response to the results of the Programme for international student assessment (PISA), as well as to integrate the growing number of

¹⁸ CEDEFOP Report/Skills Panorama on Cyprus <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/countries/cyprus#3>



migrants into the education system. Immigration to Cyprus, especially since 2016, has increased the number of asylum seekers.

Data and literature on TCN skillsets are very limited in Cyprus. Most of the collected information comes from Constructors Business Associations and Trade Unions, as well as from NGOs who have engagements with TCNs mostly coming from Syria. After the eruption of the civil war in 2010 a considerable number of Syrian refugees move to Cyprus, and they were granted the international protection status (recognized refugees and of subsidiary protection). In fact, several dozen used to work in Cyprus during the construction booming of the previous decades. They were very skilled craft workers and builders in stone technics. After long presence in Cyprus as refugees, some of them have establish their own business.

An effort to establish a profiling mechanism of TCNs in Cyprus – mainly refugees and asylums seekers – took place in the framework of a co-funded project by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund. The project “First Step” was implemented for a period of 18 months for the first time to provide vocational training to TCNs¹⁹. More than a thousand TCNs (90% were asylum seekers) took part in the “First Step” project raising the expectations that more opportunities will be given to TCNs to access labor market. Based on research conducted during the implementation of the project, participants proved high levels of adaptability, knowledge foreign languages

Another valuable source of information is the initiative “Help Refugees Work”²⁰, an online Platform establish by the Refugee Council, an NGO supported by UNHCR in Cyprus to promote job opportunities for refugees.

There was no further comprehensive effort or approach by the Cyprus authorities to formulate a labor integration policy. The prevailing attitude among the government officials is to continue a restrictive policy to keep TCNs in professions of unskilled laborers and, manual laborers. Nevertheless, there is huge demand from employers for the relaxation of these restrictions.

¹⁹ “First Step” Vocational Training for TCNs www.firststep.com.cy

²⁰ Help Refugees Work (Cyprus) <https://www.helprefugeeswork.org/>



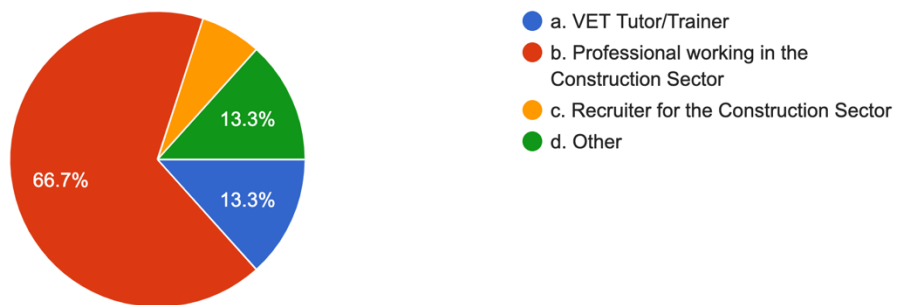
3. FIELD RESEARCH IN CYPRUS

3.1 Results from the online questionnaire for professionals

A total number of 15 Professionals took part in the online survey most (2/3) of them professionals / owners of a construction company with high level of education and 53% of them with experience of working with TCNs.

1. I am (please select one)

15 responses

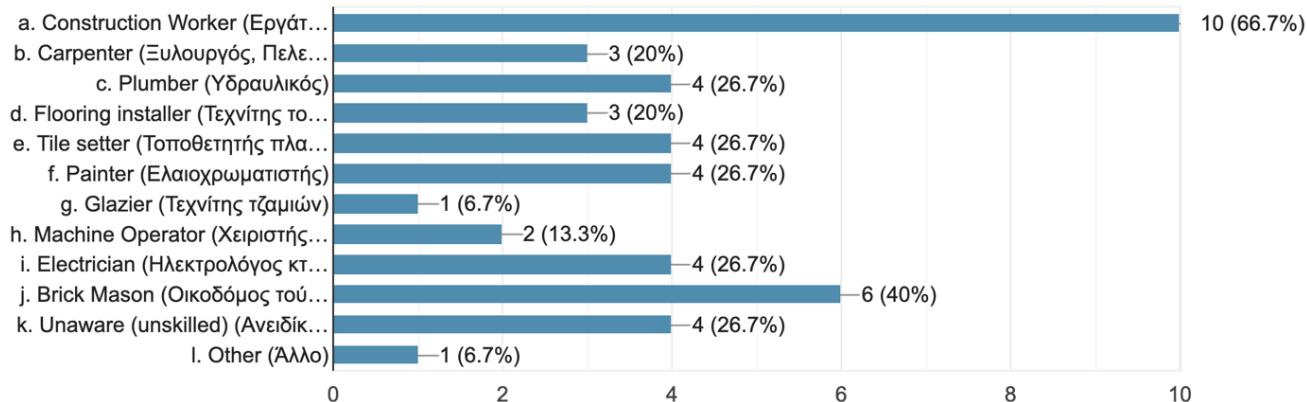


Professionals have clearly defined the demand for workers especially the constructions builder and brick mason that require skills and experience.



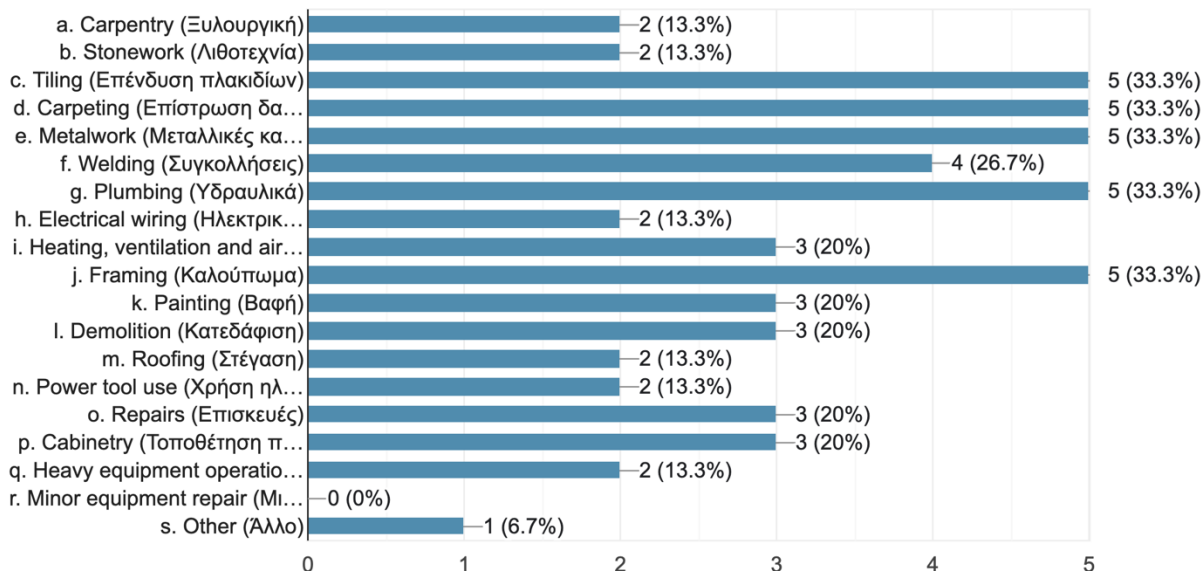
7. For which of the indicatively below mentioned specialties of the Construction sector is there a demand at the moment?

15 responses



9. Which technical skills are most required for the above-mentioned specialties?

15 responses



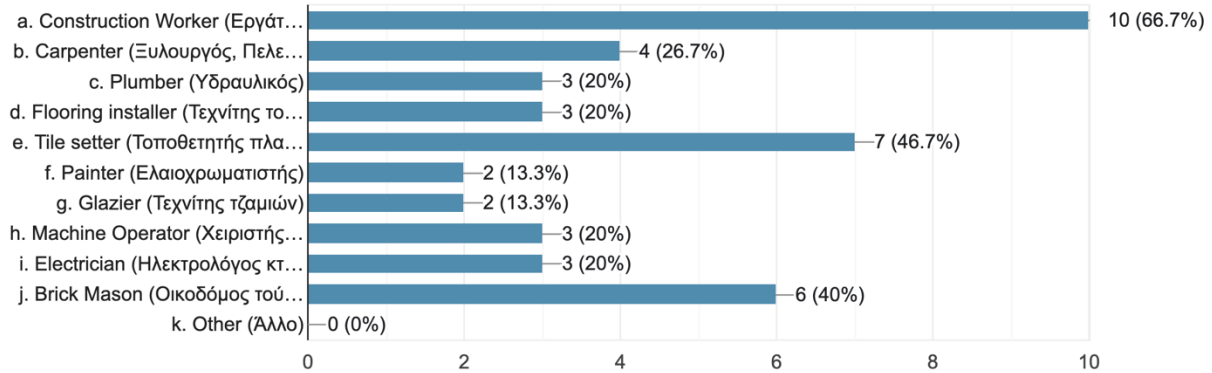
Most of them (67%) consider VET education in constructions as very valuable will soft skills are also required, mainly teamwork and communication.

The Professionals have clearly identified shortages for builders, tile setters and brick masons, flooring installers, plumbers.



12. According to your knowledge, which are currently the skills' shortages in the Construction Sector?

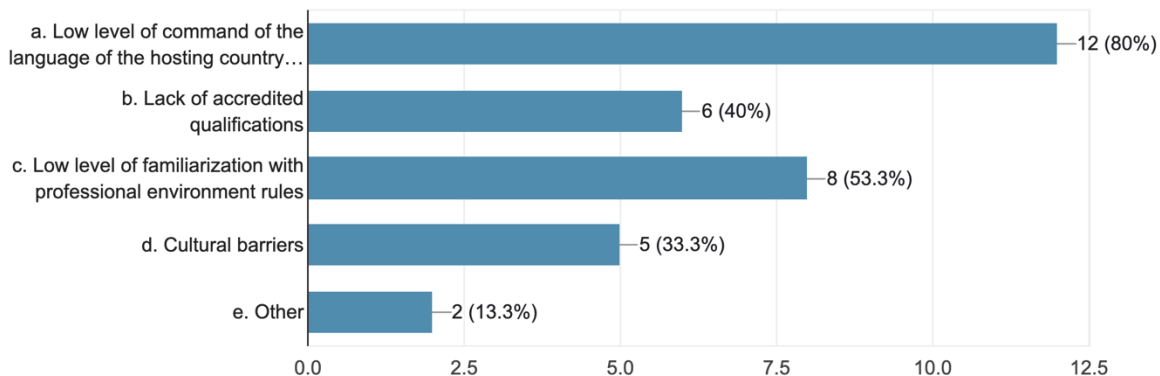
15 responses



They have also identified the main obstacles the TCNs are facing in the sector: language, lack of familiarization with rules, accredited qualifications.

14. Which of the following do you consider as the main obstacles for TCNs working in the Construction sector?

15 responses

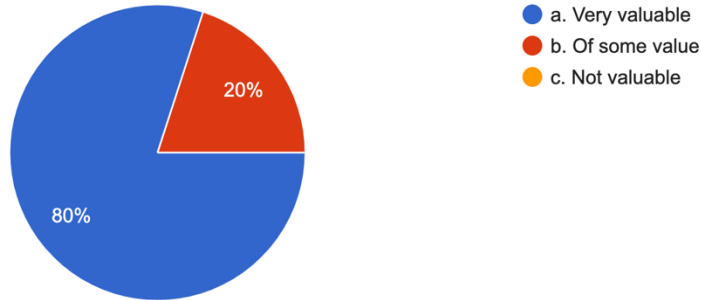


The participant Professionals consider that the TCNs require guidance in general but also more training on wood work for doors, cabinets, plumbing, safety and hazards in working places, plumping, the usage of some material. The linguistic capacity of TCNs is considered as very important.



16. How valuable do you consider the linguistic capacity for TCNs (migrant workers) in working in the Construction Sector?

15 responses

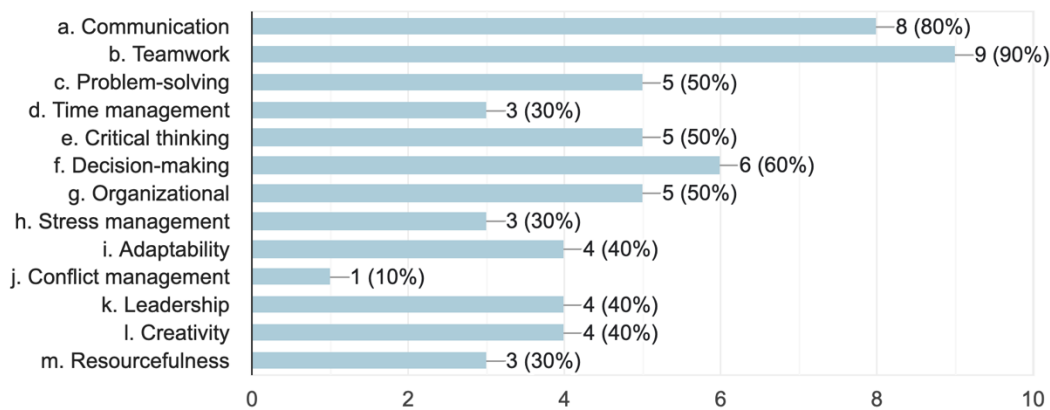


3.2 Results from the online questionnaire for TCNs

The online survey for TCNs showed that there is certain demand for jobs among asylum seekers, who came to Cyprus during the last 1 – 5 years. Ten TCNs took part, all young people mostly of tertiary education coming from African countries with professional background in constructions (70%). They have performed mainly as laborer workers (60%) while the rest have additional technical skills. They consider themselves as capable in teamwork and communication.

11. Which of the following skills you consider yourself as capable? Select all options that apply.

10 responses

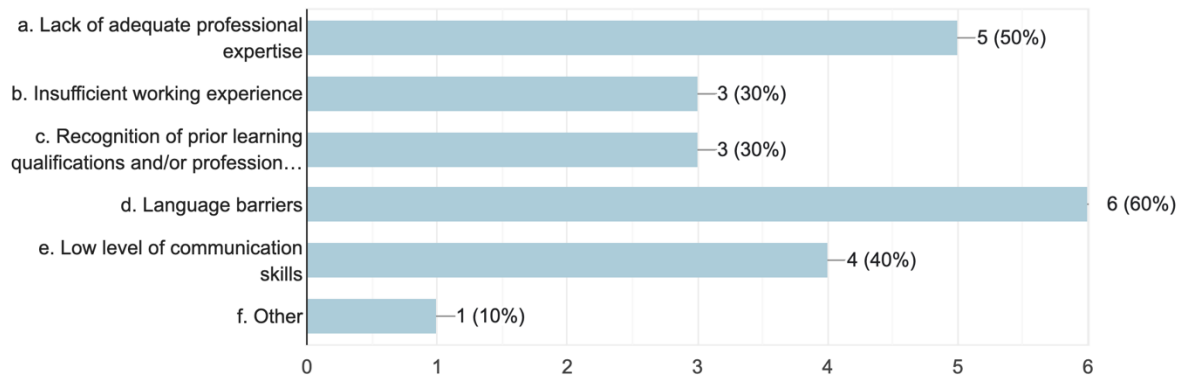




Language barrier is considered as a major obstacle associated with the lack of adequate professional experience.

12. Which of the following, you consider as the most significant obstacle to be recruited in the construction sector?

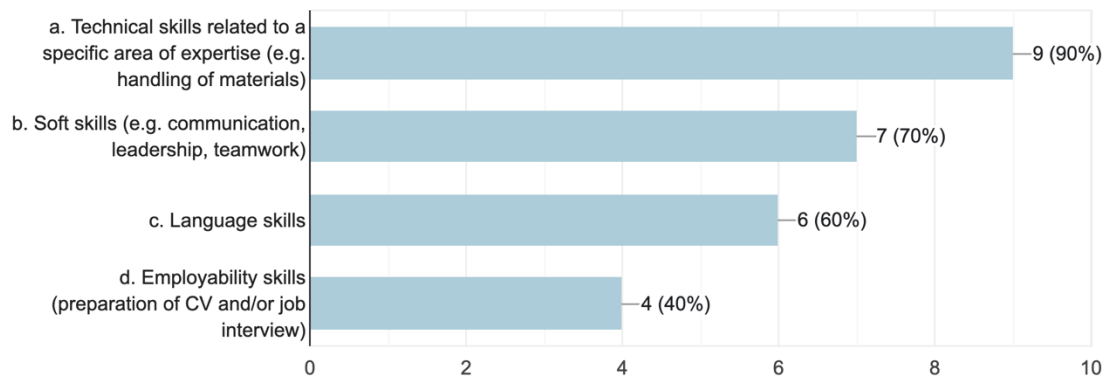
10 responses



They are asking to be trained or develop technical skills and communication and language skills.

13. What skills you would like to develop/be trained on?

10 responses

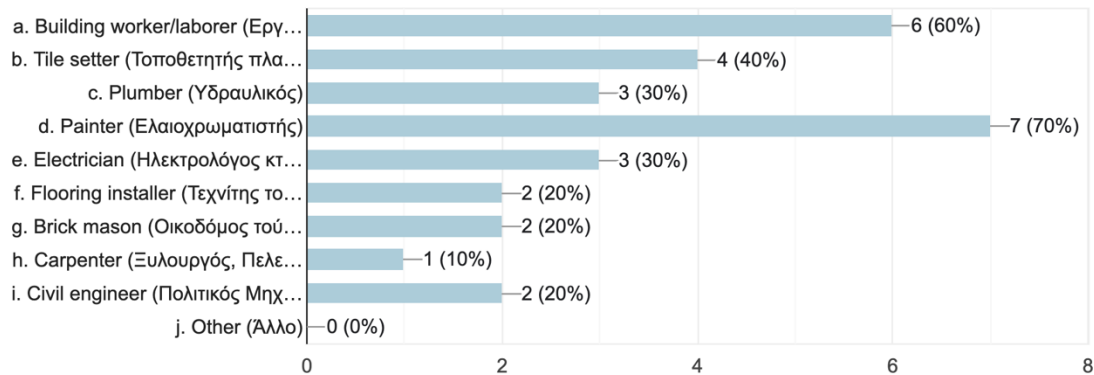


They give priority to technical skills and terminology in compare with language and soft skills. They best match with painters, building workers and tile settlers.



15. What is the construction position you feel that would be a best match for you?

10 responses

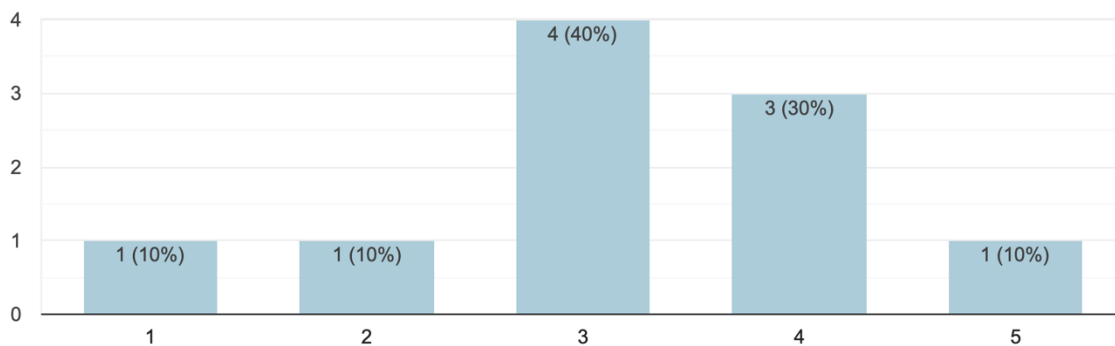


They consider that they will have to improve their technical skills such as using tools and machinery, mechanical knowledge, and automatic systems. They admit an average or low command of the local language, but they are doing much better with English.

Recognized refugees are eligible to work in any sector they can and there is a considerable number working in the constructions or even own a small company. But for those with the status of the asylum seeker in Cyprus there is the additional obstacle that they are not allowed to work in specific jobs related to the constructions sector other than a cleaner unskilled worker. All participants showed great interest and willingness to work in the constructions sector.

18. What is your command of the local language :

10 responses

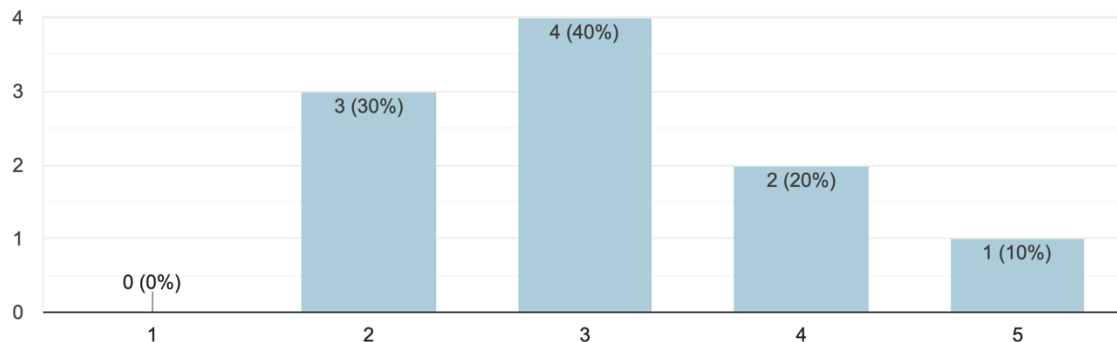


They are not aware of the professional environment, and they get information for jobs only via friends and the internet.



d. I am not aware of the professional environment and the behavioral rules of the specific sector

10 responses



3.3 Results from the focus groups/interviews with professionals

Three Professionals took part in the Focus Group and all three showed great interest on the subject – the shortages of technicians in construction. Participant A is a Director of a Construction Company, Participant B owned a small technical company, and the latter is a VET provider, all with long experience in the construction sector.

All three shared the view of the importance of upskilling and specific training opportunities for construction workers.

Participant A said:

“unfortunately we cannot find technicians, we are depended from veterans who are providing training by exercise at work. We do not have training structures, we cannot find Cypriots technicians anymore and we have to look for TCNs or other Europeans...”

Participant B said:

“we need to address the issue of the language as well with their skills. Sometimes the TCNs say that they know a lot of things but in practice they lack skills and experience, how rules apply, how we make use of various materials ...”

Participant C said

“TCNs have to learn about the “rules for health and security and they have to participate in prior or parallel to work seminars. But will they be allowed by their employers;”.

Participants A and B have experience in working with TCNs and provided very valuable information.

Participant A said:



“Some of them are very good technicians, some other are not. There are a lot without legal residence and working permit. Many of them have the status (asylum seekers) that does not help them. All need good guidance and training to have the best outcome. There are different rules that apply in their country...”

Participant B noted:

“It is difficult for us to get them for work because many times they are not allowed to work in the specific sector. We cannot assign them in specific work but only in general positions. I know a TCN who finally got married with a Cypriot lady, he is a very good technician, but he is the exception...”

Participant C said that he knows

“a Syrian TCN who works here in Cyprus, who had the experience from his own country – a very good builder. But again, who is going to certify his professional skills;”

On the issue of the working and professional environment (at all levels),

Participant A said that TCNs face similar problems with EU Citizens coming from another member state:

“They have communication problems, lack of high technical standards and rules that apply in Cyprus but not in their country. They even face problems with the usage and the mixture of material or the methodology we build. They need to be trained to be able to read an architectural or civil engineer drawing. There are issues of technical skills they lack...”

Participant B agreed by saying that “first and most is the linguistic problem, then it is the standards, some of our advanced tools and the methodology we use in construction. TCNs need time to get the familiarization we need. We have even problems of Cypriot clients (owners) who do not accept them...”

Participant C said that “they need to go through various steps of training, but I have to admit that TCNs learn fast” ...

The three participants briefly described the main challenges and barriers faced by TCNs (migrant workers) regarding their entrance and incorporation into the construction sector labor market:

“Language and communication, training of unskilled workers, familiarization with rules and standards, methodology and usage of material...”

They had been asked to provide for some good examples and replied positively.

Participant said: “ I know some EU people who are now awarded and established their own business...”

Participant said: “I Know the Syrian who got married to a Cypriot lady...”

Participant C : “I know a Syrian he is doing perfectly with roofing...”

All 3 were asked to share their thoughts about the ways TCNs (migrant workers) could be more competitive in the construction sector labor market.

Participant A:



“I believe they could improve themselves; they have the skills and they want to work, but do they have these opportunities? Most of the time they are temporarily employed. We need the state to organize training courses and channels to send them to work. If they are unskilled workers they should have more training and incentives...”

Participant B:

“The TCNs need time to get the necessary working experience. If they send them away, it a loss for the company as well...” Participant C: “TCNs need to have training opportunities to improve his working position...”

The participants describe the training gaps and areas of improvement for workers in the field of constructions they consider most important:

“We need them in all subcategories, we cannot find Cypriots anyway. Older technicians retire and they are not replaced with other skilled workers”.

“They need to get Greek lessons and upgrade their skills including the use of machinery...”

On ways to foster the incorporation of TCNs into the construction sector participants replied by saying:

“TCNs need to feel that they are part of the group, they belong there, and they have opportunities to improve their lives through work and get certified”.

“The state shall change its policy to give them chance to work and abandoned the allowances. Work and language are the 2 keys for integration”.

“We have to promote the certification of such professions”

More job opportunities have been identified by the 3 participants namely:

“Brick Mason, carpenter, plumber, flooring installer, tile setter, frame worker...”

3.4 Results from the focus groups/interviews with TCNs

Six TCNs took part in the Focus Group all TCNs coming from Gambia, Bangladesh, and Cameroon. Four of them are working in constructions: in metal works construction as a metal cleaner, machine operators, constructions worker assemble. The other two were unemployed at the time of the interview, but both have experience of previous work in constructions as painters and unskilled workers.

Three of them are in Cyprus for 5 years, 1 for 3 years and 2 – the unemployed - are in the island for almost a year.

Talking about their lives in Cyprus and the obstacles they face to find a job they inter alia said:

“I was a challenging moment language burriers and job to find”

“I used to work in hospitality sector at the beginning, I shift in the construction and get more knowledge...”

“I cannot understand Greek, I knew only English”.

“I got some Greek lessons from the government projects, but I learn more from the working environment”.

“I can recognize at some level, basics in Greek so I can communicate, but I use English to better understand “



Another participant who is unemployed said:

“Life is very challenging trying to find job, language barriers, lack of employment, lack of jobs, no response I applied many times, in many sectors, but no response...”

They spoke also other barriers they face:

“My status as asylum seekers. Certain jobs require status of recognize refugee or connected to the social insurance system. Asylum seekers do not have this access that’s why companies are hesitating to hire asylum seekers”.

A third participant said:

“Salaries also, we are not eligible as asylum seekers to get the salary in compare with a TCNs with working visas...”

On working conditions, they said inter alia:

“We wake up very early and work from the morning until night 10 hours at least”.

“Work, home eat, sleep and again”.

“Day off only on Sunday. On Saturday we work until 2.30 afternoon. No real personal life...” “We are paid for extra time. We need to work, as there is a lot of work and we need the money”.

“We are hired as unskilled workers, but we are working as skilled workers. We use cranes and metal cutting machines.”

“Employers are paying according to experience and productivity. No discrimination with Europeans mostly from Romania. Of course, in managerial positions there are Cypriots only”

Talking about relationships the participants said:

“There is no real relationship with Cypriots, only with TCNs community”.

“People are very good in Cyprus but they see you different because of your color (black)...” “Very limited personal live or time for entertainment ...”

One participant used to live in another EU country and said:

“They give you the chance to work if you have the capacity. They were more open, but not in Cyprus. You can see more TCNs in various sectors. We pay our social insurance but they do not give you the chance to improve your job opportunities”.

On negative aspects of the working environment the participants said:

“The companies are afraid to hire in high profile areas because we will be paid higher, but the status does not allow us...”

“Positive part it is very good to work, and they give us the opportunity to work in higher profiles. They saw we can do it, but this is not recorded in the system. We get higher knowledge even we did not have any experience before.... I give the best of my service to prove it!”

Another said:



“We get experience. The more you are in Cyprus you need to know more about Cyprus. We keep developing skills. It is positive our managers force us to have all protective measures (gloves, masks, Personal Protective Equipment)”.

Asked about negative experiences he said:

“They expel us if our asylum application is rejected. Why they do not give us help to be legalized with work permission?”

In questions related to the skills they have, participants replied inter alia:

“I can do it with the machinery I use. It requires computer skills and the operation of a crane. I can assemble according to the drawings of the architects. We correct the angle of the metal. I am learning from this and I take my knowledge to higher levels”.

Another participant said that he matches his skills with building

“I am working in main blocks mixing cement in the machines, starting from the foundations of a building. I can do it with painting also...”

On issues related to key elements such as skills and qualifications to find a job, a participant said:

“My employer saw to exploit his good skills on computers and computers apply in constructions machinery. I do my best and I tell employers:

“Even if knowledge and skills are not enough take me and I will learn and do new things”

But they said that

“EVERYTHING is related to your status (asylum seeker, work permit etc) and the eligibility to get a job...”

Participants showed great interest to get trained and upgrade their skills.

They said:

“I would choose to be trained in the machinery aspect to operate machinery in the advanced levels. If you can work there you can have more experience and deliver better services and have a better career”.

Another said:

“I would like to be trained as architect and draw houses; I didn't have the chance to study but I wish very much” and added: “maybe a second solution can be assistant of supervisor in construction” A third said: “I would like to learn different aspect of the constructions work such as metal welding, carpentry, tile installation. It is more creative...”

“I am a fitter, every day I learn something new. They give us the drawings at the beginning with simple structure. Now I can work with more complicated drawings prepared by architects and civil engineers...” “I am an electrician, but also a forklift driver, a crane operator and welding oxygen worker, and painting...”

Talking about the **working environment in Cyprus and the rules that apply, the participants responded by saying inter alia:**

“I have no real knowledge of the environment but only through some friends who work there... Now I know the payment rules, we have an hourly rate and extra payment with the same rate for overtime and weekends...”



“I pay social insurance according to the company obligations to the state but I do not know whether we can transfer our social contributions to another country or to our country if and when back”. “We follow the rules for health and protection, health insurance covers accidents occur during the work but if we need a seek leave, there is no payment...”

On a question related to the further training they replied positively:

“More training in welding and fitting, machine operator, metal masonry for more professional skills (assembling)...”

And they added:

“they (the employers) lack so many people in these fields...”

Addressing their linguistic capacity, the TCNs admitted:

“It is an obstacle and a big challenging”.

They expect “to get more lessons and more communication of the speech language to the spoken words” (the local Cypriot dialect).

“Sometimes my colleagues have very strong accent and I cannot understand the terminology”. They usually switch to English “It is difficult to communicate if they (the other workers) do not speak English result to zero communication”.

Another said:

“The language we use is english, all the job done is in English, second language can be Greek..”

Participants named several tools they use in Greek or even Cypriot dialect such as:

σφυρί, σωλήνα, πασαμάννα, πλάκα, εργαλεία, τραπανάκι, αρίδα, σφυρίλιο, σφυχτήρα, γωνία, μπογιά, βίδες, μούττη, πένσα, τέλι, τέλλα, φάδυ, μοίρες, μολύβι, μπάρα, κτλ)

They admit the importance of learning the local language (Greek) for “better job opportunities”.

In conclusion remarks the TCNs said inter alia:

“We are skilled, but we can not apply their skills. If they give us the chance its gonna be good.

The employers are well aware of the importance of TCNs skills and should do something to allow them get a working permit and a visa. Now the limitation of access to work it’s a problem for both...”



4. Final Recommendations: Needs analysis

In Cyprus there is much to be done to bridge the gap between the existing policies and the real demands of the labor market. Professionals (Employers, contractors, SMEs, VET providers) in Construction Industry are very much interested in attracting TCNs and TCNs are eager to get a job and get their skills upgraded.

The Professionals are fully aware of the significant shortage of skilled workers.

- They give priority for employment of TCNs who have experience and skills in construction.
- They consider it as a necessity to provide the TCNs additional training to become familiar with the methods and usage of the tools and materials as well as the working environment of Cyprus.
- They recognize the need to develop training programs to upgrade both the professional skills and the personal skills of TCNs workers.
- They pay particular attention to the acquisition of local language skills and knowledge of the terminology they use in Cyprus.
- They urge the state to organize such training programs and change existing regulations to allow the employment of TCNs in technical professions.
- They see a clear linkage between the acquisition of working skills by TCNs with the improvement of their productivity, efficiency and personal life.

The TCNs recognize the importance of acquiring further professional skills to have more employment opportunities, but also a better life and integration into Cypriot society.

- They recognize the need to overcome the obstacles they encounter in relation to language and terminology.
- They want to have many more opportunities to be trained in specialized fields as craftsmen and not just assistant workers. They are confident that they can learn and prove their skills.
- They consider that everything depends on their status in Cyprus and their rights to access work in the specific professions.
- In particular, only recognized refugees have the opportunity to work in any field of construction. The TCNs with working permit and asylum seekers are significantly limited to assistance work (unskilled cleaners). Even though they are often given the chance to work with advanced machinery and tools.
- They need to learn more about the working environment and laws applied
- They strongly believe that their employers would like to be able to utilize their skills in more specialized positions.



Annexes

Annex 1: Questionnaire for TCNs data

Annex 2: Questionnaire for Professionals data

Annex 3: Consent forms and attendance sheets from focus groups/interviews with TCNs

Annex 4: Consent forms and attendance sheets from focus groups/interviews with professionals



Annexes

Annex 1: Questionnaire for TCNs data

Dear respondent,

We kindly invite you to participate in the research conducted as part of the MITRUST project, which is co-funded by the European Commission under the framework of Erasmus+ Programme.

The main objective of this questionnaire is to identify the vocational and educational needs of TCNs who wish to be employed in the Construction sector.

Please mind that the survey is anonymous and all collected information will be used only for the research purposes of the MITRUST project.

We thank you in advance for your participation!

1. I am (please select one)
 - a. Third country national
 - b. Other (please specify)

2. What is your level of education?
 - c. Less than primary
 - d. Primary education
 - e. Secondary education
 - f. Tertiary education
 - g. Bachelor's or equivalent
 - h. Master's or equivalent
 - i. Doctoral or equivalent
 - j. Adult Education/Continuing Education
 - k. Other

3. Are you currently employed?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No



If yes, please also answer to the following questions:

A. What is your job title?

Answer: _____

B. How long have you been working?

- a. Less than 1 year
- b. From 1 year to 5 years
- c. From 5 years to 10 years
- d. Over 10 years

4. I have been living in this country

- a. Less than a year
- b. From 1 to 3 years
- c. From 3 to 5 years
- d. More than 5 years

5. What is your age group?

- a. 18 to 24
- b. 25 to 39
- c. 40 to 60
- d. 60 plus

6. What is your gender?

Prefer not to answer

7. What is your nationality?

Answer: _____

8. In which sector are you employed/wish to be employed?

- a. Building construction
- b. Infrastructure construction
- c. Industrial construction

9. Do you have a professional background in the Construction Sector?

- a. Yes
- b. No

10. If you have selected YES, please indicate the type of work you performed:



- a. Construction worker/laborer/material handler
- b. Builder
- c. Tile setter
- d. Plumber
- e. Painter
- f. Electrician
- g. Other: Please describe: _____

11. Which of the following skills you consider yourself as capable? Select all options that apply.

- a. Communication
- d. Teamwork
- e. Problem-solving
- f. Time management
- g. Critical thinking
- h. Decision-making
- i. Organizational
- j. Stress management
- k. Adaptability
- l. Conflict management
- m. Leadership
- n. Creativity
- o. Resourcefulness

12. Which of the following, you consider as the most significant obstacle to be recruited in the construction sector?

- a. Lack of adequate professional expertise
- b. Insufficient working experience
- c. Recognition of prior learning qualifications and/or professional skills
- d. Language barriers



- e. Low level of communication skills
- f. Other: Please describe: _____

13. What skills you would like to develop/be trained on?

- a. Technical skills related to a specific area of expertise (e.g. handling of materials)
- b. Soft skills (e.g. communication, leadership, teamwork)
- c. Language skills
- d. Employability skills (preparation of CV and/or job interview)

14. What kind of training you consider more important to engage in? Please select all options that apply.

- a. Training in Manual Skills: metal, wood, tapestry, painting, electricity
- b. Computer training
- c. Learning of native language
- d. Learning of an additional language (English)
- e. Learning of professional terminology

15. What is the construction position you feel that would be a best match for you?

- a. Building worker/laborer
- b. Tile setter
- c. Plumber
- d. Painter
- e. Electrician
- f. Flooring installer
- g. Brick mason
- h. Carpenter
- i. Civil engineer
- j. Brick mason
- k. Other: Please describe: _____

16. How would you assess your technical skills?

Ability to operate tools and machinery

- a. Excellent knowledge
- b. Very Good knowledge



- c. Average knowledge
- d. Below average knowledge
- e. Poor knowledge

Building and Engineering

- a. Excellent knowledge
- b. Very Good knowledge
- c. Average knowledge
- d. Below average knowledge
- e. Poor knowledge

Experience with Technology and automatized systems

- a. Excellent knowledge
- b. Very Good knowledge
- c. Average knowledge
- d. Below average knowledge
- e. Poor knowledge

Mechanical knowledge

- a. Excellent knowledge
- b. Very Good knowledge
- c. Average knowledge
- d. Below average knowledge
- e. Poor knowledge

17. Would you wish to be further trained in this construction sector position?

- a. Yes
- b. No

18. What is your command of native language:

- a. Excellent
- b. Very good
- c. Average
- d. Below average



e. Poor

19. What is your command of English language:

- a. Excellent
- b. Very good
- c. Average
- d. Below average
- e. Poor

20. To what level do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the Construction sector (in your region): (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree)

- a. I have the resources to work in the construction sector, but I do not command the language at an adequate level
- b. My command of language is very good, but I feel I would need more training to develop my technical skills
- c. I have the technical skills, but I lack interpersonal skills that impede me from finding a job in the construction sector
- d. I am not aware of the professional environment and the behavioral rules of the specific sector

21. How do you get information about potential job opportunities? Please select all options that apply.

- a. Internet
- b. Friend
- c. Newspaper
- d. Tv
- e. Radio
- f. Other

22. Which of the following technical sectors would you be interested in? Please select all options that apply below or add your own.

- a. Construction Worker
- b. Carpenter
- c. Plumber
- d. Flooring installer



- e. Tile setter
- f. Painter
- g. Glazier
- h. Machine Operator
- i. Electrician
- j. Brick Mason
- k. Other (please specify) : _____

23. Do you have any further comments?

Annex 2: Questionnaire for Professionals data

Dear respondent,

We kindly invite you to participate in the research conducted as part of the MITRUST project, which is co-funded by the European Commission under the framework of Erasmus+ Programme.

The main objective of this questionnaire is to identify the vocational and educational needs of TCNs who wish to be employed in the Construction sector.

Please mind that the survey is anonymous and all collected information will be used only for the research purposes of the MITRUST project.

We thank you in advance for your participation!

1. I am (please select one)
 - a. VET Tutor/Trainer
 - b. Professional working in the Construction Sector
 - c. Recruiter for the Construction Sector
 - d. Other (please specify): _____

2. . What is your level of education?
 - a. Secondary education
 - b. Tertiary education
 - c. Bachelor's or equivalent
 - d. Master's or equivalent
 - e. Doctoral or equivalent
 - f. Adult Education/Continuing Education
 - g. Other



3. What is your job title?

Answer: _____

4. What is your age group?

- a. 18 to 24
- b. 25 to 39
- c. 40 to 60
- d. 60 plus

5. . What is your gender?

Answer _____

Prefer not to answer

6. Have you ever worked with TCNs?

- a. Yes
- b. No

7. For which of the indicatively below mentioned specialties of the Construction sector is there a demand at the moment?

- a. Construction Worker
- b. Carpenter
- c. Plumber
- d. Flooring installer
- e. Tile setter
- f. Painter
- g. Glazier
- h. Machine Operator
- i. Electrician
- j. Brick Mason
- k. Unaware
- l. Other (please specify) : _____

8. What level of technical skills these specialties require?

- a. Excellent knowledge of technical skills
- b. Very good knowledge of technical skills
- c. Average knowledge of technical skills
- d. Below knowledge of technical skills
- e. Poor knowledge of technical skills
- f. Other:(please specify) _____



9. Which technical skills are most required for the above-mentioned specialties?
- Carpentry
 - Stonework
 - Tiling
 - Carpeting
 - Metalwork
 - Welding
 - Plumbing
 - Electrical wiring
 - Heating, ventilation and air conditioning
 - Framing
 - Painting
 - Demolition
 - Roofing
 - Power tool use
 - Repairs
 - Cabinetry
 - Heavy equipment operation
 - Minor equipment repair
 - Other (please specify) :
10. How valuable is the vocational training for individuals wishing to work in the Construction Sector?
- Very valuable
 - Of some value
 - Not valuable
11. Which of the following soft skills do you consider more important for an individual working/wishing to work in the Construction sector? Select all options that apply.
- Communication
 - Teamwork
 - Problem-solving
 - Time management
 - Critical thinking
 - Decision-making
 - Organizational
 - Stress management
 - Adaptability
 - Conflict management
 - Leadership
 - Creativity
 - Resourcefulness



12. According to your knowledge, which are currently the skills' shortages in the Construction Sector?
- a. Construction Worker
 - b. Carpenter
 - c. Plumber
 - d. Flooring installer
 - e. Tile setter
 - f. Painter
 - g. Glazier
 - h. Machine Operator
 - i. Electrician
 - j. Brick Mason
 - k. Other: _____
13. Please indicate the specialties within the construction sector where migrant construction workers are mostly needed? Please fill three specialties allocated based on priority.
- a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
14. Which of the following do you consider as the main obstacles for TCNs working in the Construction sector?
- a. Low level of command of native language
 - b. Lack of accredited qualifications
 - c. Low level of familiarization with professional environment rules
 - d. Cultural barriers
 - e. Other (please specify)
15. For which type of skills do you consider that further vocational training would be valuable for TCNs working or wishing to work in the Construction Sector? Please fill three skills below, allocating them on by priority.
- a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
16. How valuable do you consider the linguistic capacity for TCNs (migrant workers) in working in the Construction Sector?
- a. Very valuable
 - b. Of some value
 - c. Not valuable
17. Do you have any further comments?

