

People on the Move: Threat or Opportunity?

Consider two areas where technological advances over the past century have fundamentally changed the human experience: transportation and communication. In regard to transportation, the 'jet age' has made our planet much smaller: a journey from Europe to Australia that used to take months can now be completed in less than 24 hours; a trip from London to New York takes less than 8 hours where it used to take days. Not long ago, it was a long journey to leave one's home country or even city, let alone travel and explore the world. This in a time where we've also made transformational advancements in communication. Our parents sent letters or postcards via the post; now we Facetime or Skype real-time across continents. We have supercomputers in our pockets that can give us almost anything we're looking for in seconds, and the pace of change continues to accelerate. The talent pool is no longer limited by geographic vicinity, and those looking for opportunities have more information at their fingertips than ever. Studying or working abroad is becoming commonplace and is in many cases considered desirable by younger generations.

As our world becomes increasingly accessible and connected, the natural progression to a more diverse, international, and heterogenous labor market will continue to develop in industrialized countries. But there are geopolitical headwinds: populism in the US and Europe, protectionism and the like. And while talent remains equally distributed across the globe, opportunity remains unequally distributed based on political, economic and other barriers.

The new mobility that we've enjoyed over the last 100 years, fueled by transportation and communication advances, give us choices that we've never had before. But it also creates new considerations for governments, employers, universities. Your task is to think through the new paradigm described above and find some interesting and groundbreaking solutions.

Please explore two dimensions:

- (a) which policies could break down the barriers described above and create the conditions for attracting the 'best and the brightest' while improving economic standards at large (minimizing the risks that certain groups are 'left behind');
- (b) then consider, which strategy could bring this to the most competitive edge for your/any organization. Describe in four steps.

Themes to consider could (but don't have to) include: how can governments and companies break down barriers to enable swift and seamless mobility of workers? Who wins and loses when this happens? And how can the 'losses' be mitigated? How can governments and companies fully realize the economic benefits of migration (skilled and/or unskilled) while addressing needs/concerns of the local population? How can unskilled workers avoid being 'left behind' in an eventual transition from a manufacturing/production-based economy to a service and technology-based economy?