



## Descriptive study of the dynamics of young immigrant workers in Algeria

دراسة وصفية لديناميات العمال المهاجرين الشباب في الجزائر

Étude descriptive des dynamiques des jeunes travailleurs immigrés en Algérie

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### ملخص

تواجد الشباب الأجانب في الجزائر للعمل ليس جديداً، بل هو ظاهرة قديمة وتاريخية. كانت الجزائر منذ فترة طويلة بلداً للهجرة، حيث استقبلت فئات اجتماعية-مهنية مختلفة بطرق قانونية ومسموح بها، وبطرق أخرى غير قانونية ومحظورة. وفقاً لإحصاءات الأمم المتحدة، يُقدر نصيب هؤلاء الشباب في العالم بـ 12٪ من إجمالي عدد المهاجرين. ما هي حقيقة أرقام الشباب المهاجرين في الجزائر؟ ما هي العوامل التي تقف وراء هجرتهم؟ هل تلخصت دوافعهم ببساطة في البحث عن عمل لائق، أم أنها مرتبطة بعوامل وأفاق أخرى؟ الكثير من الأسئلة تنتاب أذهاننا وتستحق التطرق إليها في هذه المقالة بهدف: تحديد الملامح السوسيو-ديموغرافية للشباب العمال المهاجرين في سوق العمل الجزائري:

- فهم خصائصهم الاقتصادية في مكان العمل،

- معرفة تصورهم وموقفهم تجاه استقرارهم في الجزائر.

النتائج المقدمة في هذه الدراسة، التي أجريت في عام 2022 في إطار استبيان من طرف CREAD مستهدياً 5 ولايات عبر التراب الوطني، تكشف أن 48.9٪ من عيّنتنا تتكون من شباب تتراوح أعمارهم بين 15 و35 سنة وفقاً لتعريف الميثاق الأفريقي للشباب للاتحاد الأفريقي. الكلمات الدالة: الشباب؛ العمال الأجانب؛ ملامح المهاجرين؛ القوة العاملة الجزائرية؛ المهاجرون الشباب.

### Abstract

The presence of young foreigners in Algeria for work is not new, but a traditional and historical phenomenon. For a long time, Algeria has been a country of immigration, receiving different socio-professional categories in

a legal and authorized manner, as well as through illegal and prohibited means. According to UN statistics, the stock of these young people around the world is estimated at 12% of the total number of migrants. What is the reality of the number of young immigrants in Algeria? What are the factors behind their migration? Is their motivation simply the search for decent work, or does it relate to other factors and perspectives? So many questions occupy our minds and deserve to be developed in this paper, with the aim of: i) determining the sociodemographic profile of young migrant workers in the Algerian labour market, ii) understanding their economic characteristics in the workplace, iii) knowing their representation and attitude towards their settlement in Algeria. The results presented in this study, conducted in 2022 as part of a survey by CREAD targeting 05 Wilayas across the national territory, reveal that 48.9% of our sample is young, falling within the age range of 15 to 35 years according to the definition of the African Youth Charter of the African Union.

**Keywords:** youth; foreign workers; profile of immigrants; Algerian workforce; young immigrants.

### Résumé

La présence de jeunes étrangers en Algérie pour travailler n'est pas nouvelle, mais constitue un phénomène traditionnel et historique. Depuis longtemps, l'Algérie est un pays d'immigration, accueillant différentes catégories socio-professionnelles de manière légale et autorisée, ainsi que par des moyens illégaux et interdits. Selon les statistiques des Nations Unies, la proportion de ces jeunes dans le monde est estimée à 12% du nombre total de migrants. Quelle est la réalité des chiffres des jeunes immigrants en Algérie ? Quels sont les facteurs derrière leur migration ? Leur motivation se résume-t-elle simplement à la recherche d'un travail décent, ou est-elle liée à d'autres facteurs et perspectives ? Tant de questions tourmentent nos esprits et méritent d'être développées dans cet article, dans le but de :

- déterminer le profil sociodémographique des jeunes travailleurs migrants sur le marché du travail algérien,
- comprendre leurs caractéristiques économiques sur le lieu de travail,
- connaître leur représentation et leur attitude envers leur établissement en Algérie.

Les résultats présentés dans cette étude, menée en 2022 dans le cadre d'une enquête du CREAD ciblant 05 wilayas à travers le territoire national, révèlent que 48,9% de notre échantillon est composé de jeunes, entrant dans la tranche d'âge de 15 à 35 ans selon la définition de la Charte africaine de la jeunesse de l'Union africaine.



**Mots-clés:** les jeunes; travailleurs étrangers; profil des immigrés; main-d'œuvre algérienne; jeunes immigrants.

## Introduction

Algeria, as a country located at the crossroads between Africa and Europe, has historically been a place of migration for many foreign workers. Over the years, young migrants have continued to flock to the country, often in search of better economic opportunities and a better life. Unfortunately, this professional category is often faced with unique challenges and difficulties, particularly in terms of adapting and integrating into a new culture and work environment.

Notably, the COVID-19 health crisis has significantly impacted migratory movements and international mobility, causing a slowdown in travel worldwide. Faced with an embarrassing and imposed situation, host countries for foreign labour have decided to limit access to their territories. In Algeria, this situation has undoubtedly affected the migratory dynamics and opportunities available to young immigrant workers.

The purpose of this article is to take a closer look at the challenges and opportunities faced by young immigrant workers in our country. Indeed, the survey carried out in 2022 by CREAD, targeting five Wilayas in Algeria, characterized by a high concentration of migrant workers, allowed us to obtain this result. Remarkably, the study examines in parallel and in depth the profile of young workers in the Algerian economic market in its socio-demographic and socio-economic dimensions.

The logic of this study is based on a new perception that recognizes that Algeria is not just a country of departure for emigrants but also a recipient country for 108 nationalities of immigrants, according to the data from the National Employment Agency. Additionally, the study seeks to explore the future of young immigrant workers from various destinations who choose to work in Algeria, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on migratory movements.

Our reflection begins by addressing the theoretical tool of the study, focusing on the main migration theories addressing the dimension of work. This is followed by a methodological section dealing with the positioning of the research problem, the research hypotheses, and some major concepts, namely young migrants and migrant workers. Before presenting the main



results, a methodological framework will be developed to capture the study's instruments.

Then, we will present the research results, divided into three aspects: the socio-demographic profile of young migrant workers, their socio-economic characteristics in the economic labour market, and the main perspectives of installation or return of the immigrant to their country of origin. Interestingly, the study shows that the age of immigrants is a determining and explanatory indicator of the migration of workers and any changes that occur during their migration experience in Algeria.

Finally, this article will be devoted to discussing the main results of the study and a conclusion raising prospects for future developments to be explored in future studies. Undoubtedly, this study sheds light on the challenges and opportunities faced by young immigrant workers in Algeria, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on migratory dynamics.

### **1. Research context**

According to the International Labour Organization, the current international context is characterized by a strong acceleration of the globalization of the economy (International Labour Organization), a situation that was increasingly favouring the increase in migrant workers in host countries in various ways, formal or informal, before the health crisis. There is a distinction between genders, with men being more likely to migrate than women, with a gap of 11 million in 2020 (McAuliffe & Triandafyllidou, 2021). Moreover, the economic situation in countries of origin after 2010, marked by an increase in unemployment rates and high poverty, is pushing more and more workers to seek employment in another country. The numbers indicate that 73% of these immigrants were established workers before leaving their country of origin. The ILO counted 150 million migrant workers in 2013, representing 4.4% of the world's workforce (BIT, 2017).

From a theoretical point of view, several approaches attempt to understand this migratory phenomenon. Overall, there are about twenty theories that contextualize it. Some of the flagship models include Lewis's economic vision of the reallocation of the workforce between two sectors: rural agricultural and urban industrial (Lewis, 1954). According to this model, when the modern sector develops, it attracts workers from the traditional sector, resulting in a migration of labour. The migration is beneficial for workers as



it allows them to access better-paying jobs than those left behind in their country of origin, while also improving their standard of living in the host country. However, it is detrimental to the areas of origin, as these departures result in a shortage of labour and disruptions in the labour market.

After a decade, Everett S. Lee proposed the Push and Pull Factors theory in 1966 to understand labour migration (Lee, 1966). Lee proposed the idea that workers migrate to maximize their income and improve their socio-economic situation. Several factors influence this decision to migrate to another country, grouped into three categories: personal, social, or structural. The decision to migrate is driven by one cause: their unsatisfactory economic situation. The solution lies in their departure to join another country characterized by attractive factors that encourage immigration.

In the same period, Todaro's model in 1969 saw the migrant as a rational agent who calculates the wage difference between the "rural" departure zone and the "urban" arrival zone before deciding to migrate (Todaro, 1969). According to this model, workers decide to migrate if they believe that the income, they expect to earn in the urban area is higher than what they currently earn in the rural area, while also calculating the costs of this migration. Almost from the same perspective, Sjaastad, in his model, treats the migratory phenomenon by calculating the future incomes of migrants while taking into consideration the human capital in each region: departure and arrival (Sjaastad, 1962).

The New Economics of Migration (NEM) approach views labour migration from a regulatory aspect. This approach recognizes that labour migration is beneficial for the economy unless it is regulated to prevent abuse and exploitation of foreign labour in host countries. This vision is present in the early work of Stark and Levhari in 1978 and Levhari in 1982, who hypothesize that individual migration is a means of protecting against risks (Stark, 1978) (Stark & Levhari, 1982). Stark and Bloom in 1985 added another hypothesis related to the comparison of migrant incomes with those of the reference group (Stark & Bloom, 1985).

Another model, initiated mainly in the same period as the previous one, focuses on networks. Taylor in 1987 and Massey et al. in 1987 saw the presence of networks in destination countries as a factor encouraging worker migration and reducing its risk costs (Massey & Garcia España, 1987). Family

and social ties are often factors that influence these migrants in choosing their destination. Workers may be more inclined to stay in a region where they have connections and relationships.

Various conceptual models, including that of circular migration, are employed to conceptualize the intrinsic dynamics of migratory flows through the iterative movements of individuals between distinct localities. In alignment with the economic-political approach to migration articulated by Michael J. Piore in 1979 in his work "Birds of Passage," this perspective explores economic determinants, particularly the pursuit of seasonal or temporary employment within sectors subject to fluctuations in labour demand. An alternative, the accumulation approach, envisions the migrant as an accumulator of economic, social, and cultural resources in the host country, prior to their return to the country of origin (Chaney, 1989). In addition to these considerations, the approach stemming from the works of Alejandro Portes (1999) examines social and economic ties beyond national borders. It elaborates on the concept of transnationalism to analyze connections maintained by individuals and communities, even while residing in the destination country.

## 2. Problem Statement

Work immigration in Algeria is not new, but it dates back to a pre-colonial period where the presence of Spaniards, Italians, and French colonizers was recorded (Musette & Khaled, 2012). At the Maghreb level, Algeria has always been a country that receives workers from neighbouring countries, which is often described as proximity and approximation. In circumstances marked by a pandemic, Algeria, like other neighbouring countries, decided to close its borders to this professional category since 2020, except for those holding an authorization. Faced with this management policy, our country has experienced a slowdown in formal immigration. However, our economic market in some sectors is still supplied by the presence of immigrant workers of different nationalities and from several destinations, despite the current regulations. This situation is worrying and beyond any state responsibility; it questions the policy of welcoming and employing migrants. Therefore, the policy of their integration into the economic market invites a review (Yacoub, 2019).

Young immigrant workers constitute a significant proportion of the established workforce in Algeria. They are often motivated by the search for a better quality of life than the one they experienced in their country of



origin, and this involves looking for decent employment in the host country. During exploratory interviews, some immigrants attested that their professional trajectory in the Algerian labour market is often characterized by substantial obstacles, including the manifestation of discriminatory phenomena, exploitation, and even exclusion.

Statistical data on occupational categories are almost inaccessible, except for some global figures provided by public institutions to shed some light on the issue, such as the number of job placements made by the National Employment Agency (ANEM) and the number of commercial registers established by foreigners at the national level, as reported by the National Trade Register Center (CNRC).

In Algeria, the social and cultural integration of young immigrant workers is not guaranteed, a situation that can have consequences on their psychological well-being and even their future prospects in this country. These young migrants have had to face many challenges in Algeria. During an investigative period, interviews were conducted with these foreign individuals, unanimously affirming that their professional conditions are particularly challenging due to their involvement in jobs characterized by precariousness. Moreover, their informal status in the host country has made them vulnerable to economic exploitation, with very low wages. Finally, the absence of effective public policies has hindered, in particular, their integration in Algeria. It is essential to understand the dynamics and reality of these young workers by addressing the following questions:

- What are the sociodemographic and socio-economic profiles of young immigrant workers employed in Algeria?
- How is their professional situation characterized, and what difficulties do they face in the host country's labour market?
- To what extent are the future prospects of young immigrant workers in Algeria affected by their migratory status and previous professional experience?

To answer these questions, three hypotheses are deduced from the initial observations:

- The profile of young immigrant workers employed in Algeria is determined more by their origin from sub-Saharan countries and being mostly single, arriving with a level of education not exceeding secondary school and intending to leave the country to join Europe;



- Young immigrant workers face particular difficulties in the labour market: non-affiliation to social security, lack of experience, and unsatisfactory financial situation characterize their socio-economic profile;
- The future prospects of young immigrant workers in Algeria are limited due to the search for opportunities in another country, rejoining their families in their country of origin, or difficulty adapting to the host country split into two factors: these young workers do not have a residence permit nor access to housing.

Two concepts need to be clarified for a deeper understanding: first, young migrants, referring to the African Youth Charter of the African Union, and second, migrant workers, based on the International Labour Organization's work (ILO).

### **2.1 Young migrants**

Referring to the African Youth Charter, adopted in July 2006 at the seventh ordinary session by the African Union, a young migrant is a person aged between 15 and 35 who leaves their country to settle temporarily or permanently in another host country. This migration is often motivated by economic, social, political, and cultural reasons, or a combination of several factors. These young migrants can be refugees, asylum seekers, migrant workers, foreign students, members of the diaspora, or they can be people making an internal displacement within their country. The African Charter, as promulgated, recognises the right of young people to protection, assistance, and enjoyment of their fundamental rights in their country of origin or in their host country (African Youth Charter, 2006).

### **2.2 Migrant workers**

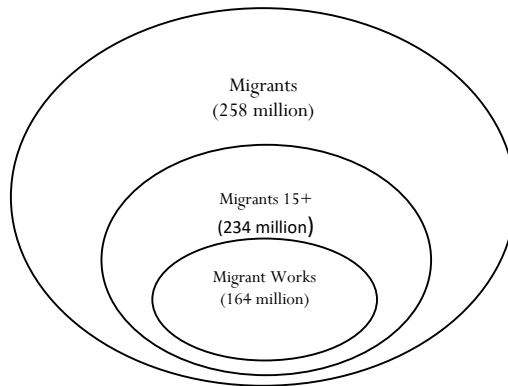
Migrant workers are people who leave their country of origin to work in another country, usually to seek better job opportunities or to escape difficult economic conditions in their home country. Reasons for migration may also include providing for family needs. It is difficult to define this migratory category clearly. Based on the ILO guidelines in the 20th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS), this migratory category may include international migrant workers, international migrants coming to work, or returning migrant workers. It should be noted that this study focuses only on the first two categories: migrants who were already established workers before coming to Algeria or migrants who come to Algeria but are looking for temporary, seasonal, contractual, or permanent employment. This category of migrants may also work in various





sectors such as agriculture, construction, healthcare, hospitality, among others. (Figure 1 summarises the stock of migrants).

**Figure 1: Stock of international migrants, migrant workers**



Source: (ILO, 2018)

### 3. Methodology of the survey

Before presenting the results of our research on immigrants in Algeria, it is crucial to describe the methodology used to conduct this field survey. Firstly, five Wilayas were selected for the survey: Algiers, Oran, Tamanrasset, Bejaia, and Tlemcen. These regions were chosen based on their representativeness and geographic diversity, in order to cover the entire Algerian territory. The study sample was constituted using a probabilistic, stratified random technique, evenly distributed among the five Wilayas, and each individual had an equal chance of being selected among the survey participants. The five Wilayas selected for the survey were chosen based on the availability of the investigators, while ensuring a balanced geographical distribution among the different regions of Algeria, namely the East, West, capital, and South. This approach allowed obtaining a representative sample of the targeted population.

The questionnaire developed for the survey included 55 questions, intended for 309 respondents in total. The data analysis focused on the control variable of young immigrants, which resulted in nearly half of the respondents, or 151 observations in total, belonging to the age group between 16 and 35 years old.

Overall, the rigorous methodology followed for this survey allowed obtaining reliable and representative results of the targeted population. The conclusions drawn from this survey can be useful in shedding light on

the immigration management policy in Algeria and help policymakers to review the country's migration policy.

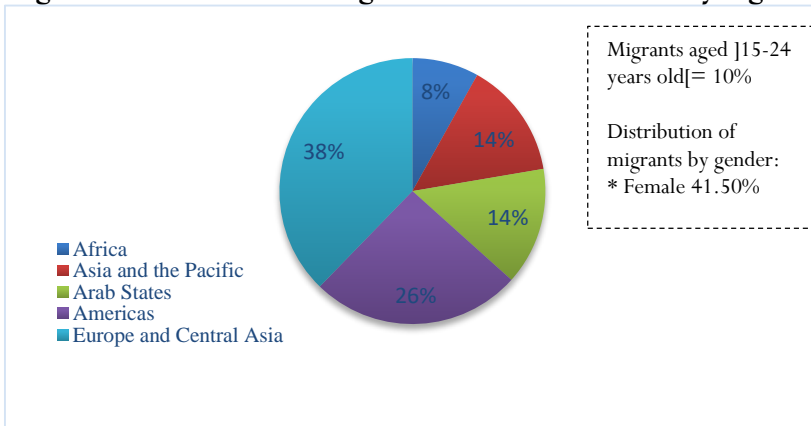
#### 4. Research results

The findings of our survey provide a general overview of the migratory reality and dynamics of young people in Algeria, as well as their future prospects in their host country. Before delving into the sociodemographic, socio-economic details, and future prospects, it is important to present some global statistics on this migratory category, referring to data from the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Labour Organization (ILO). At the local level, we will also present the figures provided by the National Employment Agency (ANEM) and the National Trade Register Center (CNRC).

##### 4.1 Global migrant workers data

Based on the latest data on international migration, the IOM published a report in 2020 that identified more than 281 million migrants worldwide, which represents around 3.6% of the global population. Regarding labour migration, the ILO published a report in 2021 that identified more than 169 million workers in 2019, representing a proportion not exceeding 5% of the global active population. However, this proportion represents 69% of international migrant workers of working age (above 15 years old). (The figure 2 illustrates the distribution of these migrant workers by continent).

**Figure 2 : Distribution of migrant workers worldwide by region.**



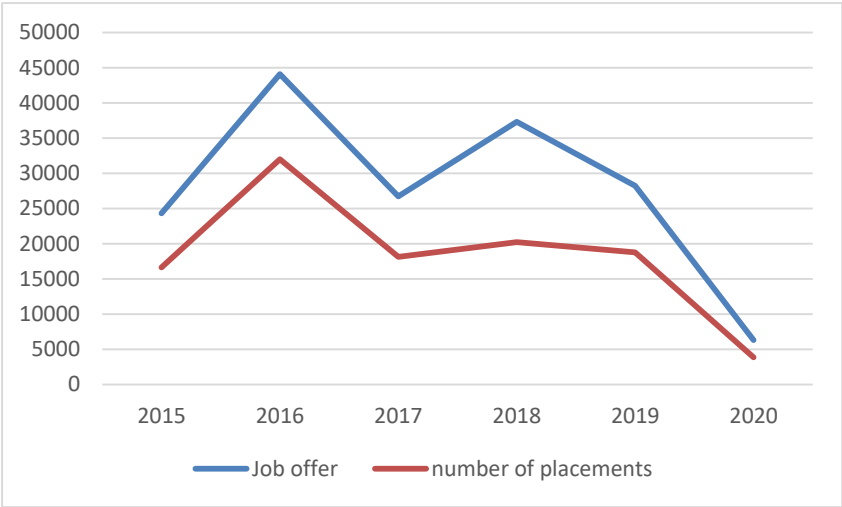
Source: ILO, 2021, In: Migration data portal



### 4.2 Immigrant workers in Algeria, state in figures

After an exploratory phase on data relating to the presence of immigrant workers of working age in Algeria, it was found that 72.8% of this population was between the ages of 20 and 64, establishing a trend consistent with the Algerian state's policy of prioritizing granting visas and residence permits to workers. By examining data provided by different professional devices on these immigrant workers, two databases prove particularly relevant for analysis purposes, namely those of ANEM and CNRC, in order to extract the migratory flow present in Algeria in recent years. Based on data from ANEM, the figure below summarizes the number of jobs offers launched from 2015 to 2020, as well as the number of placements it made in favour of these foreign workers over the same period. (Figure 3 shows the number of jobs offers and placements made by ANEM).

**Figure 3: Total job offers and placements made by ANEM**



*Source: summarized data from the official website of ANEM.*

In 2015, the number of job placements carried out by ANEM (National Employment Agency in Algeria) on the national territory exceeded 16,600. This number doubled one year after before experiencing a slowdown for a period of three years. At the beginning of the health crisis, the Algerian State launched restrictions for both nationals and foreign visitors to the country. Moreover, the number of placements provided by ANEM did not exceed a quarter of the number achieved in 2015.



In another investigation of institutional statistics, we present the data provided by CNRC (National Center for Trade Registry) in 2020, related to the granting of trade registers for the 108 foreign nationalities present in Algeria. These data reveal a modest frequency, with only 0.71% of the total trade registers issued, or 14,942 registers out of a total of 2,097,283. The following table summarizes them by Wilaya (province).

**Table 1: Distribution of trade registers granted to immigrants by CNRC.**

Wilaya	Natural Person	Legal entity	Total	Wilaya	Natural Person	Legal entity	Total
Adrar	08	22	30	Constantine	118	323	441
Chlef	55	79	134	Médéa	21	40	61
Laghouat	36	28	64	Mostaganem	23	96	119
Oum elBouaghi	34	55	89	M'sila	20	42	62
Batna	42	81	123	Mascara	26	35	61
Bejaia	40	146	186	Ouargla	12	179	191
Biskra	30	62	92	Oran	305	1099	1404
Bechar	35	18	53	El Bayadh	15	10	25
Blida	185	597	782	Illizi	2	4	6
Bouira	20	53	73	B.B.A	25	97	122
Tamanrasset	26	7	33	Boumerdes	46	388	434
Tébessa	22	42	64	El Tarf	54	69	123
Tlemcen	28	95	123	Tindouf	18	3	21
Tiaret	21	32	53	Tissemsilt	6	17	23
Tizi Ouzou	25	77	102	El oued	22	40	62
Alger	777	6927	7704	Khenchela	15	33	48
Djelfa	40	38	78	Souk Ahras	29	22	51
Jijel	15	55	70	Tipaza	47	185	232
Sétif	84	311	395	Mila	15	46	61
Saida	24	11	35	Ain defla	26	48	74
Skikda	11	107	118	Naama	27	8	35
Sidi bel Abbes	73	69	142	Ain Temouchent	48	41	89
Annaba	49	398	447	Ghardaia	38	40	78
Guelma	12	37	49	Relizane	37	42	79

*Source: Number of trade registers granted by CNRC (official website).*

## 5. Sociodemographic profile of young migrant workers

In this section, we present the data from our survey, including four main variables: gender, country of origin, marital status, and the method of arrival of the respondents in Algeria, while keeping in mind a control variable,



which is the age of the respondents. It should be noted that this "age" indicator- between 16 and 35 years- is taken into consideration at the time of the survey, rather than projecting it onto a longitudinal study by examining their initial age at the time of their arrival in Algeria. The analysis of the profile of young migrants requires age as a basic indicator for any data processing.

The minimum age of our respondents at the time of data collection is 16 years old, which is not yet the legal age to work, and they are considered minors until the age of 19. The oldest migrant reached 70 years old at the time of the survey, which means that the retirement age is not necessarily respected in the labour market. The average age slightly exceeds 35 years old, as shown in the table 2.

**Table 2: Average Age of Respondents**

Age		
N	Valid	309
Mean		35,46
Minimum		16
Maximum		70

*Source: Result of the survey CREAD (2022), Algiers.*

**By gender:** The age gap between young immigrant males and females is quite significant; 82% of male workers immigrated to work in Algeria compared to only 18% of young females. These young male workers are more likely to work with fixed-term contracts, as seasonal workers, or even in the informal sector. On the other hand, young female immigrants who have arrived in Algeria within the last 10 years are more actively seeking employment and are more inclined towards independent work, if given the opportunity. This trend is also observed among young Algerians, who are more likely to work in the informal sector than adults.

**Country of origin:** The young immigrants present in the Algerian labour market hail from 26 different nationalities, grouped into four indicators: Sub-Saharan Africans (SSA), Arab countries, Asians, and a final category that combines observations from European and American countries. More than 51% of these immigrants arrived during the COVID-19 pandemic. In terms of nationality, a majority of these young immigrants are from African countries, with a rate of 55.33%. Sub-Saharan African workers who arrived during the COVID-19 pandemic are estimated to make up 67.46% of the total immigrant population.

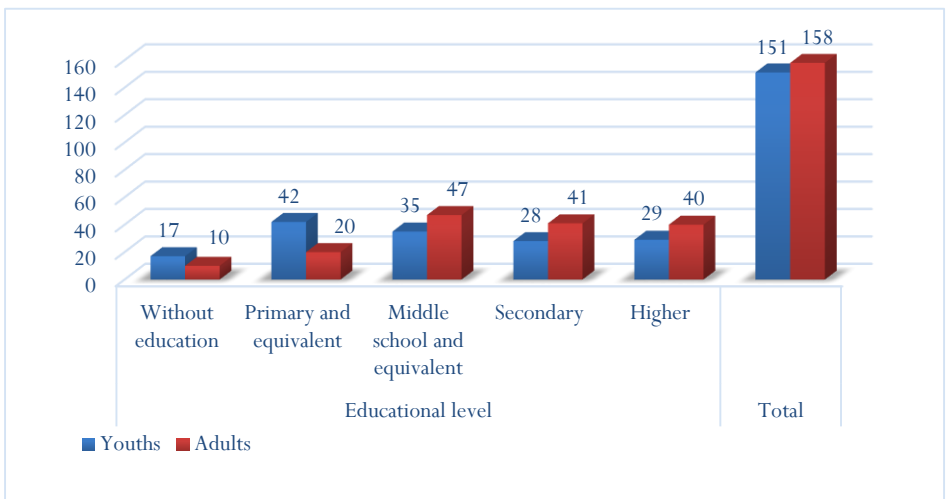


**Family situation:** When comparing young and adult immigrants, 72% of young immigrants are single, while only 28% have started a family. In contrast, 26% of adult immigrants are single, 66% are married, and a minority of 7% have experienced separation, divorce, or the loss of a spouse. Among young immigrants present in the Algerian labour market who are married, 79% have children in their country of origin and 25% of them have managed to reunite their families in Algeria.

**Immigrant arrival:** The network of immigrants in the host country represents their resource before departing. A good network helps facilitate the arrival of these workers. According to our survey, more than 65% of young immigrants arrived alone in Algeria. The remaining 35% of immigrants arrived with either their family members or friends. Algeria is seen as an opportunity for work because it is easy to access, offers better incomes, and because their family or friends were already there before they arrived.

**Immigrant education:** The level of education of immigrants before coming to Algeria is an indicator that distinguishes the age groups of the respondents. Young immigrant workers are less educated than adults upon arrival. 80% of young immigrants did not attend university and 11% are illiterate. Only 19% of these young immigrants have pursued advanced studies. Upon arriving in the host country, few young immigrants have undergone vocational training, with a rate of 38% compared to adults. As for the others, almost 62% state that they have not undergone any training in the host country. (Figure 4 outlines the educational level of respondents).

**Figure 4: Level of education of the respondents**



Source: Result of the survey CREAD (2022), Algiers.



**Immigrant housing in Algeria:** There is a significant difference between the type of housing that immigrant workers in Algeria occupy based on their age. Young foreigners occupy less safe and less comfortable housing compared to adults. Survey data shows that 54% of young immigrants, who are mostly of Sub-Saharan African nationality, occupy shacks and precarious housing, garages, construction sites, and other places confirming their instability. Other young immigrants, with a lower frequency compared to adults, occupy apartments and studios. No immigrant worker lives in a villa. (The following table outlines this distribution of residences according to age).

**Table 3: Distribution of respondents by type of residence and age**

		Age group		Total
		Youths	Adults	
Type of housing where you currently live	Apartment	30,41	46,15	38,49
	Villa	0	3,21	1,64
	Studio	15,54	21,15	18,42
	Shack and other precarious housing	27,70	17,31	22,37
	makeshift living space created	4,73	6,41	5,59
	Others	21,62	5,77	13,49
<b>Total</b>		<b>100 %</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>100 %</b>
Gender	Male	82,12	88,61	85,44
	Female	17,88	11,39	14,56
<b>Total</b>		<b>100 %</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>100 %</b>
Nationality	SSA	55,63	21,52	38,19
	Arabs	32,45	44,30	38,51
	Asians	11,26	24,05	17,80
	Others	0,66	10,13	5,50
<b>Total</b>		<b>100 %</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>100 %</b>
Family situation	Single	71,52	26,58	48,54
	Married	28,48	65,82	47,57
	Separated/Divorced / Widowed	0	7,59	3,88
<b>Total</b>		<b>100 %</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>100 %</b>
Arrived alone in Algeria	Yes	65,56	62,03	63,75
	No	34,44	37,97	36,25
<b>Total</b>		<b>100 %</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Source: Result of the survey CREAD (2022), Algiers.

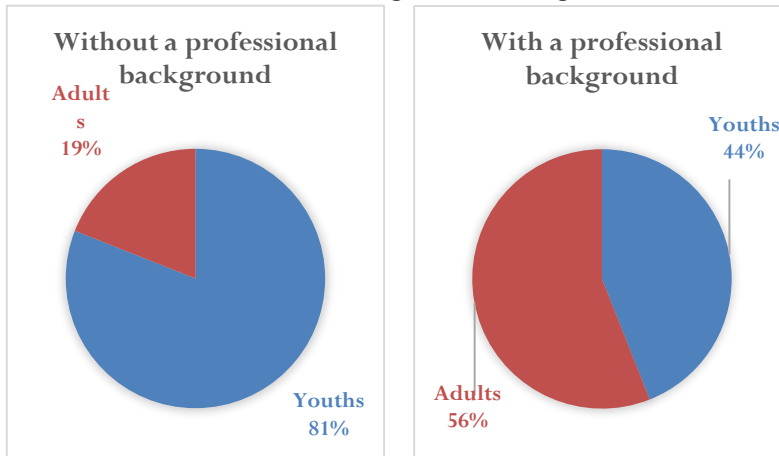


### 6. Socioeconomic characteristics of young immigrants

Socioeconomic characteristics are captured through ten indicators, distributed by age group to determine the modalities of variation between young immigrant workers and adults.

**Professional background:** Work experience in the home country is an indicator that explains the future of workers in the host country. Almost 44% of young immigrants had a previous job, compared to 56% of adults. This experience allowed them to find job opportunities easily in Algeria. 23% of young respondents in our survey stated that the position they currently hold in the host country is their first job without any previous work experience, a rate that is almost four times higher than that of adults. (See figure 5, which outlines the distribution of respondents by age and professional background).

**Figure 5: Distribution of respondents by professional background and age**



Source: Result of the survey CREAD (2022), Algiers.

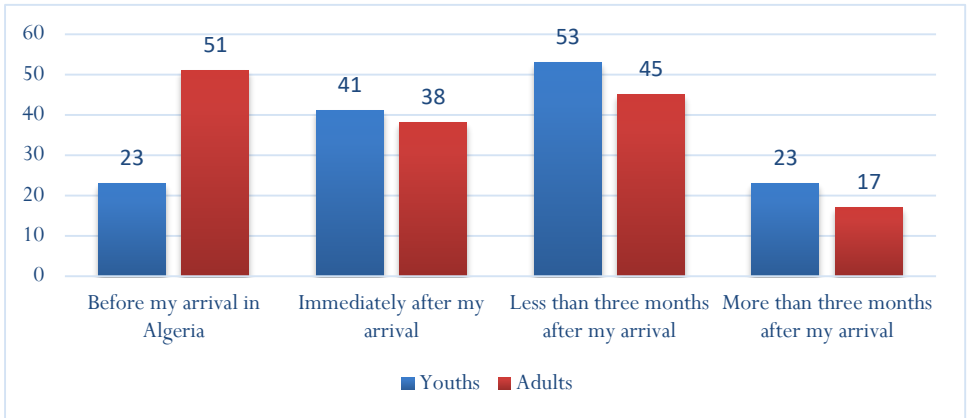
**Work experience:** At the time of the survey, all immigrants were active, including those who arrived in Algeria during the survey year. The results show that young immigrants rely less on their network in Algeria to find a job before their arrival. In contrast, adults adopt this proactive job search approach. Adults prepare their ground from the home country by mobilizing their friends and family members to place them in job positions. Few immigrants exceed three months in the job search, which is easy for them, as most find job opportunities either immediately upon arrival or within a period not exceeding three months after their arrival. Young immigrants are much more opportunistic in finding a job than adults, with





a considerable gap of 5%, as this search begins in the host country. (See Figure 6 which distributes the duration of finding the first job in Algeria).

**Figure 6 : Duration to find the first job in Algeria by age**



Source: Result of the survey CREAD (2022), Algiers.

**Professional status in Algeria:** Upon arrival, young workers are much more likely to be registered as unemployed, part-time workers, seasonal workers, students, occupying fixed-term jobs, or as homemakers. In contrast, adults are more likely to have permanent employment, be employers, work in fixed-term jobs, or be regular or irregular self-employed workers.

**Field of activity:** Immigrants established in Algeria are registered in several sectors of activity. The construction and building sector has the highest rate of employment, with 56% of workers, distributed as 51% young immigrants and 49% adults. Young immigrants are also identified in the service and commerce sector with a lower rate compared to adults, at 39% and 61%, respectively. The industrial sector employs the fewest immigrants, with only 4%, due to the requirement of "residence status" in Algeria. Our respondents are satisfied with their current positions, with 84% stating that their skills correspond to what they currently do in Algeria, with a gap of 8% for adults.

**Affiliation to insurance:** Affiliation to social insurance is another indicator that demonstrates the variation by age of the respondents. Young immigrants are less likely to be registered in the insured files, given their informal situation in Algeria. This is a risk factor that excludes any compensation in case of a work accident. 58% of our young

respondents state that they are not affiliated with social insurance, compared to 42% of adults. As for those who are affiliated, they represent generally 35%, distributed as 68% adults and 32% young immigrants.

**Professional situation:** The work of immigrants in the host country is an indicator that allows us to measure the stability situation of foreigners in Algeria. There is a gap between age categories in terms of employment status. Adults are either employees or self-employed, and few of them create jobs in Algeria. Young immigrants experience more instability compared to adults, and they are more identified in the category of active job seekers.

**Financial situation:** This is another indicator for measuring the satisfaction of immigrant workers in the host country. 24% of workers are living well, 41% are in an average financial situation, and almost 35% of immigrants are in an unsatisfactory financial situation. The distribution of financial situation data by age confirms a gap between young immigrants and adults. The former live more in precariousness and financial dissatisfaction, while the latter are more likely to have an average or comfortable financial situation. Living in Algeria has allowed immigrants to improve their financial situation in general, as attested by 80% of respondents, with a gap in favour of adults across age categories. As for the degradation of the financial situation, only 2.5% confirm it, distributed equally between age groups. 12% of immigrants report no change compared to what they left in their home country.

**Immigrant salaries:** 85% of interviewed immigrant workers receive a salary higher than the SNMG (national minimum wage) in Algeria. Only 15% receive a monthly salary of less than 20,000 DZD, distributed equally between young and adult age categories. 21% of workers receive between 20,000 to 40,000 DZD, with a gap of 6% for young immigrants. Almost 40% of respondents earn a salary exceeding 40,000 DZD, a rate recorded more among adults. Young immigrants, on the other hand, are much more financially unstable, as they work as daily workers in the informal sector, especially in the construction and building sector.



**Table 3: Socioeconomic profile of immigrant workers, distributed by age**

		Age group		Total Youths
		Youths	Adults	
First professional status upon arrival in the country	Employment with no fixed term	12,67	14,01	13,36
	Fixed-term employment	24	45,86	35,18
	Part-time employment	8,67	6,37	7,49
	Seasonal worker	12	5,73	8,79
	Employer/business owner	2	4,46	3,26
	Regular self-employed worker	2	4,46	3,26
	Irregular self-employed worker	4	9,55	6,84
	Family caregiver	1,33	1,91	1,63
	Unemployed active job seeker	24	2,55	13,03
	Student	4	1,27	2,61
	Homemaker	4,67	3,18	3,91
	Retired or pensioner	0	0,64	0,33
	Other	0,67	0	0,33
<b>Total</b>		<b>100 %</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>100 %</b>
In which sector	Agriculture	16,52	6,21	10,77
	Industry	11,30	11,72	11,54
	Building and construction	43,48	50,34	47,31
	Service/Commerce	28,70	31,72	30,38
<b>Total</b>		<b>100 %</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>100 %</b>
The job position corresponds to professional skills	Yes	79,71	89,04	84,51
	No	20,29	10,96	15,49
<b>Total</b>		<b>100 %</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>100 %</b>
Affiliation with a social insurance in DZA (CNAS, CASNOS, Mutual Insurance)	Yes	23,18	47,47	35,60
	No	76,82	52,53	64,40
<b>Total</b>		<b>100 %</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>100 %</b>
Professional situation	Employee	36,91	51,90	44,63
	Employer	4,03	6,33	5,21
	Self-employed	32,89	39,24	36,16
	Actively looking for a job	22,82	0,63	11,40
	Other	3,36	1,90	2,61
<b>Total</b>		<b>100 %</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>100 %</b>



**Table 4(suite): Socioeconomic profile of immigrant workers, distributed by age**

		Age group		Total Youths
		Youths	Adults	
Financial situation in your country	Very good	3,97	5,70	4,85
	Good	12,58	24,68	18,77
	Average	35,76	46,20	41,10
	Not good	31,79	12,66	22,01
	Very bad	15,23	10,13	12,62
	No opinion	0,66	0,63	0,65
<b>Total</b>		<b>100 %</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>100 %</b>
Current financial situation	Greatly improved	9,27	15,19	12,30
	Improved	63,58	70,89	67,31
	Unchanged	15,89	8,86	12,30
	Decreased	2,65	2,53	2,59
	No opinion	0,66	1,90	1,29
	Missing value	7,95	0,63	4,21
<b>Total</b>		<b>100 %</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>100 %</b>
Monthly income	Less than 20,000 DZD	14,48	14,77	14,63
	Between 20,000 and 40,000 DZD	24,83	18,12	21,43
	Between 41 000 and 60 000 DZD	15,17	28,19	21,77
	More than 60,000 DZD	11,03	26,17	18,71
	Without regular income	34,48	12,75	23,47
<b>Total</b>		<b>100 %</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Source: Result of the survey CREAD (2022), Algiers.

## 7. Prospects of settling in Algeria or returning to the country of origin

Deciding to settle in Algeria or return to their country of origin can be a difficult decision, especially for immigrants who have spent a long period of time in their host country. However, several survey respondents want to leave Algeria for various reasons, such as reconnecting with their family and friends or for nostalgic reasons: to rediscover their cultural values from their country of origin. For some immigrants, Algeria offers opportunities to either earn a better living or acquire migration experience that facilitates



their transit to other countries. For others, this host country presents only challenges to overcome, starting with access to housing.

In this section, we present some selected indicators from the CREAD survey questionnaire (2022) regarding the future prospects of young immigrant workers.

**Intentions of immigrants before departure:** all immigrant workers had intentions before leaving their country of origin. 38% wanted to settle in Algeria, while 27% were considering temporary work with a contract. 26% hoped to return to their country of origin after the end of their work contract in Algeria. The rest hoped to transit through Algeria to reach Europe. The distribution of these intentions differs from one age group to another: adults were looking for stability in the host country through this migration, whether by settling in this country or obtaining a work contract. However, young people were thinking about their future, either by settling down or earning money and returning to their country, or by performing a double migration by passing through Algeria and then joining Europe.

**Reasons for migration:** in analysing the reasons behind the migration of workers, eight modalities were identified for coming to Algeria. The improvement of living conditions was the first reason with a rate of 62%, with a 10% difference between age groups in favour of adults. The search for a better income in Algeria is also a motivating factor for immigrant workers to leave their country of origin, equally for young people and adults. Other reasons such as job search, improvement of employment conditions, or even to pursue studies were the motivations cited by young people to come to Algeria. As for adults, the order of their reasons differs from that of young people and is ranked as follows: obtaining a job offer, searching for a better job, or seeking better conditions. Finally, some adults, with a modest rate, are also interested in pursuing studies.

**Immigrant's relationship with Algerian institutions:** To evaluate the future prospects of immigrants in Algeria, it is essential to examine their relationship with the country's public institutions, as this will have an impact on their quality of life. 73% of workers did not encounter major problems during their stay in Algeria, whether they were young or adults, although older people confirmed this rate slightly more. 26% of these immigrants described their relationship with the institution as good or very



good, while 27% encountered at least one institutional problem related to bureaucracy.

**The dilemma of immigrant workers:** to stay or leave Algeria: another indicator from the CREAD survey questionnaire (2022) is the future of immigrant workers in Algeria. Nearly 57% of the respondents plan to leave Algeria sooner or later, either to return to their country of origin or to attempt another migration. Young people are the most inclined to make this decision, with a proportion 3% higher than adults. On the other hand, 24% of foreigners strongly wish to remain in Algeria, with a slight preference in favour of adults. The remaining 19% have not yet made a decision, either because they are newly arrived in the host country or because they have not found better opportunities than what is currently available in Algeria.

**Reasons for the departure of immigrants from Algeria:** five reasons are recorded as factors that push immigrants to leave the host country, starting with: family or personal reasons, the end of their work contract or low profitability, the presence of a new opportunity in another country, adaptation problems in Algeria, or the absence of prospects for advancement in the country. It should be noted that 66% of respondents stated their intention to leave Algeria, while others concern immigrants who have not yet made a decision about their future in the country. Apart from the modality of the end of the work contract, young people are more likely to advance these reasons for departure, with a 7% difference compared to adults.

**The challenges faced by immigrants upon arrival:** Almost 96% of survey respondents answered this question, which allowed us to highlight the differences in the challenges they face depending on their age. Upon their arrival in Algeria, immigrant workers, particularly young people, have faced several difficulties, including: obtaining a residence permit, housing, work permits, education, healthcare, and access to public institutions. However, adults have encountered fewer difficulties than young people, except for obtaining a professional card, given that they are in an advanced age group.

**The difficulties encountered during their stay in Algeria:** This indicator is the last to be analysed regarding the perspectives of immigrant workers in Algeria. Eight difficulties are identified as obstacles faced by immigrants, especially young immigrants. Access to housing, which is a



constraint not only for foreigners but also for local citizens, is one of the challenges. Instability in the job position or irregular status, often advanced by "Haraga" who illegally occupy a job, is another challenge. Discrimination and racism are also difficult problems that affect the well-being of immigrants in Algerian neighbourhoods. Administrative harassment is a challenge to be overcome, especially for adults more than young people. The difficulty of adaptation and integration into the Algerian society leads this migratory category to make the decision to leave the country. Dissatisfaction with salary, the healthcare system, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, and adult access to training are also factors that pose difficulties to be overcome by immigrants.

## 8. Discussion of results

The results of our survey, categorized into three levels of analysis, initially sought to delineate the profile of young immigrant workers in Algeria. Two axes were developed for this purpose: the first to gather information on their presence in the country, and the second to capture data on their activity in the Algerian economic market. Additionally, a concluding section was incorporated to comprehend their future prospects within the host country.

Focusing specifically on professionals aged 16 to 35, the study revealed a demographic skew with only 18% being female, while 82% were male workers. Originating from 26 different countries, predominantly sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) with a rate of 55.33%, over 67% arrived recently, primarily during the period of COVID-19.

Regarding family dynamics, 72% of young workers are single, while 28% have started families. For married young immigrants, the majority have children in their home countries, with only 25% successfully reuniting their families in Algeria. Most young arrivals entered Algeria alone (65%), perceiving the country as an opportune location for work due to accessibility and higher income, as indicated by the survey.

Educationally, young immigrants exhibited lower levels of education upon arrival compared to adults, with 80% lacking university attendance and 11% being illiterate. Only 19% pursued advanced studies. In terms of vocational training, 38% received it upon arrival, while nearly 62% did not undergo any training.

The housing situation for young immigrants revealed challenges, with 54% residing in less safe and comfortable accommodations than adult workers.



Predominantly from sub-Saharan Africa, they inhabited precarious dwellings like shacks, garages, or construction sites. Although they also occupied apartments and studios, this occurred at a lower frequency than their adult counterparts.

Analyzing the socio-economic profile of established immigrant workers further demonstrated distinctions between age categories. Young people, in general, possessed less work experience (44%) than adults, making it easier for them to secure job offers. Approximately 23% occupied their first positions in Algeria without prior experience, displaying a 5% opportunistic edge compared to adults. Nevertheless, upon arrival, young workers were more likely to face unemployment, part-time work, seasonal employment, student status, or temporary roles, as well as homemaking for female workers.

Examining social insurance affiliation as an indicator revealed that nearly 58% of young people lacked affiliation. Furthermore, these individuals were more prone to residing in an unsatisfactory or precarious financial situation compared to adults, estimated at nearly 35%.

Finally, the analysis delves into the future prospects of young immigrant workers in Algeria, showcasing that 38% intended to settle there before departure, while 26% aspired to return to their countries of origin at the end of their work contracts. Young people displayed a higher likelihood of seeking employment in the host country before returning to their countries of origin. Notably, the results indicated that this demographic was most inclined to attempt a double migration by transiting through Algeria temporarily to access other European countries.

The study's findings unveil the challenges faced by young immigrant workers in Algeria and introduce elements that align with the theoretical framework of circular migration. The initial perception of Algeria as a country offering employment opportunities is nuanced by the realities of precarious housing conditions and administrative hurdles, influencing long-term decisions. Distinct migratory patterns emerge, with a significant portion of young individuals initially inclined to settle in Algeria but contemplating a return to their countries of origin upon the conclusion of their employment contracts. This aligns with the principles of circular migration theory, where individuals seek to maximize opportunities through repeated movements between their countries of origin and host countries.





The frequency of young migrants considering dual migration, transiting through Algeria to access other European countries, reflects the dynamic nature of circular migration. This may indicate a desire to diversify professional experiences while maintaining significant ties to their countries of origin.

Challenges inherent in their experiences, such as access to housing, administrative hurdles, discrimination, and other factors, serve as significant incentives for considering circular migration. The rotation between the country of origin and Algeria can be perceived as a strategic approach for young immigrant workers to capitalize on economic opportunities while circumventing challenges in their current places of residence.

From a comprehensive academic perspective, this analysis through the lens of circular migration aligns with the conceptual framework developed by renowned scholars in the field of international migration, such as Castles and Miller (2009) on transnational migration dynamics and the contributions of Portes and DeWind (2009) on circular migration theory. These works provide essential theoretical foundations for understanding observed patterns and motivations among young immigrant workers in Algeria.

In conclusion, this in-depth analysis, supported by established academic concepts, sheds light on the behaviours and motivations of young immigrant workers in Algeria, emphasizing the need to incorporate this complex dynamic into the formulation of policies and strategies aimed at supporting and integrating this specific population (Castles & Miller, 2009; Portes & DeWind, 2009).

## **Conclusion**

The topic of labour migration in Algeria has received little attention within the scientific and academic community. The theme of young migrant workers is rarely discussed in published works to date, mainly due to the lack of access to administrative and statistical sources, which motivated the present survey conducted by CREAD. The results of this study offer an overview of the migratory profile of this professional category, examining their migratory experiences upon arrival in Algeria and deepening our understanding of their trajectory as workers. Additionally, this study allows us to understand their future perspectives in Algeria, whether they intend to stay, return to their country of origin, or attempt a new migration.



The results of this study revealed previously unknown information about young migrant workers, including their origin, marital status, level of education, financial situation before departure, and choice of Algeria as a destination. The field data also allowed for a better understanding of their migratory trajectory, arrival in Algeria, professional status, employment stability, and improved living conditions.

Finally, the results concerning the future perspectives of these young migrants showed that they are inclined to consider returning to their country of origin or attempting a new migration to reach Europe. In this context, Algeria is considered as a transitional country allowing them to acquire experience that will facilitate their future migratory trajectory.

The results of this research highlight the importance of deepening our knowledge of this category of workers, especially those who work in irregular jobs in the Algerian economic fabric. The current challenge is to integrate this young population while offering them decent employment in low-demand job positions that most local citizens avoid.

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