

Labour migrants in the Netherlands: Language skills

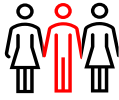
Data collection and response

Survey date: 18 April to 5 June 2023

Response: 1,553 labour migrants

Contact with and use of Dutch

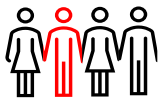
Labour migrants mainly encounter Dutch during contact with institutions in the Netherlands (the municipality, other government organisations etc.). They are less likely to encounter Dutch at work, in their spare time or when interacting with their neighbours.



1 in 3 labour migrants **rarely or never** encounter Dutch on the work floor



1 in 3 labour migrants **rarely or never** encounter Dutch in their spare time







1 in 4 labour migrants **rarely or never** encounter Dutch in and around the home


Which language is spoken and when?



English in official situations:


- Visiting the doctor 
- At work 
- During contact with landlord 
- During contact with the municipality 

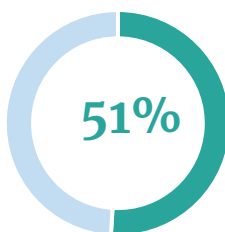
Native language at home:

- With children 
- With partner
- With friends

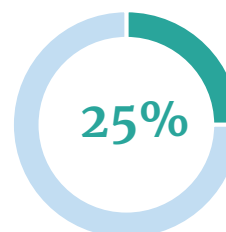
Dutch in informal situations:

- At sports clubs 
- When talking to neighbours 
- During volunteer work 
- At school of children 

Labour migrants who live in temporary accommodation (in a hotel, holiday village or their employer's premises etc.) are the most isolated group 



Contact
51% **rarely or never** encounter Dutch in and around the home



Use of native language
25% **mainly use their native language** when interacting with neighbours and at work, and rarely use Dutch

Initiator of the survey

The survey was carried out by I&O Research on behalf of the Kenniscentrum Arbeidsmigranten (Knowledge Centre for Labour Migration). The Kenniscentrum Arbeidsmigranten is an independent organisation that develops, collects and shares up-to-date knowledge about labour migrants. The Share My Voice labour migrant panel, which is an integral part of the work programme, studies the broader housing, work and living situation of labour migrants.



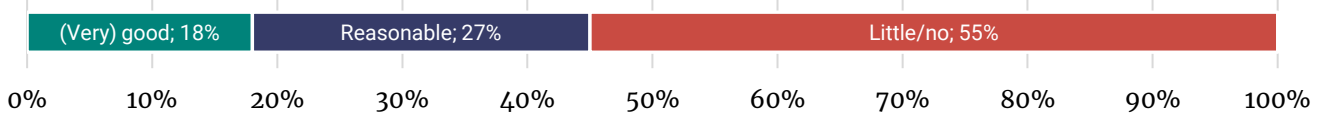
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(Self-)evaluation of Dutch language skills



1 in 5 labour migrants rate their Dutch language skills as (very) good.

Over half of all labour migrants say that they have little or no knowledge of Dutch



On a scale from 1 (none) to 5 (very good), labour migrants rate themselves as follows:

High-skilled labour migrants from Central and Eastern Europe are the most positive about their command of Dutch. Average **3.0**

High-skilled Central and Eastern Europe



High-skilled US, Canada and Oceania



Low-skilled rest of Europe



High-skilled rest of Europe



High-skilled rest of the world



Low-skilled rest of the world



Low-skilled Central and Eastern Europe



Low-skilled labour migrants from Central and Eastern Europe are the least positive about their command of Dutch. Average **2.2**

Reasons for learning Dutch



Employment opportunities or **social contact** are the main reasons why labour migrants who want to learn Dutch actually learn the language



Reasons low-skilled labour migrants

For their current job or to find a new job: **55%**

Intend to stay in the Netherlands: **52%**

To become more self-sufficient: **41%**

Increased social contact with Dutch people: **37%**

Reasons high-skilled labour migrants

Increased social contact with Dutch people: **57%**

Intend to stay in the Netherlands: **52%**

Desire to understand Dutch culture and politics better: **39%**

To become more self-sufficient: **36%**

Low and high-skilled labour migrants

This survey makes a distinction between labour migrants in high-skilled and low-skilled jobs. This distinction is made based on the work carried out in the Netherlands and the salary they receive for that work. High-skilled jobs include upper management, intellectual or professional jobs, and generally have a gross monthly salary above €5,008. Low-skilled jobs include low-qualified and low-paid jobs, which generally have a gross monthly salary below €5,008.

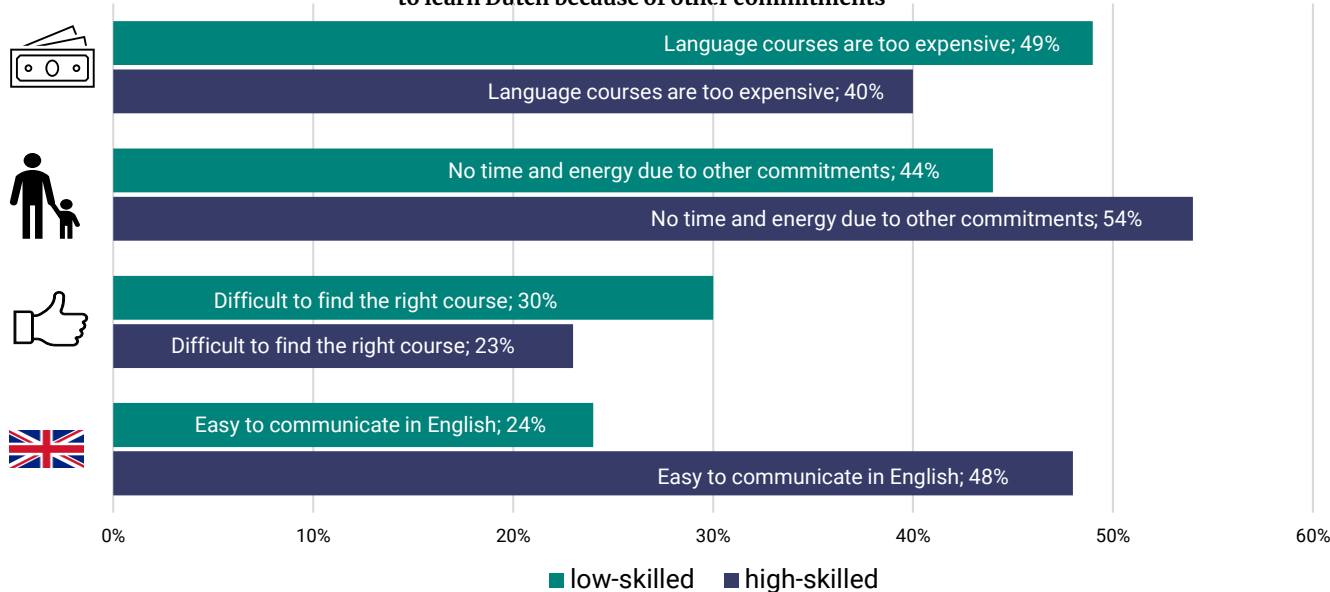


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Obstacles

1 in 2 low-skilled labour migrants in the Netherlands that have an interest in learning Dutch find the language course too expensive

1 in 2 high-skilled labour migrants in the Netherlands that have an interest in learning Dutch do not have enough time to learn Dutch because of other commitments



Problems

Which problems do labour migrants encounter because they lack language skills?

6 in 10 are unable to find relevant information, **4 in 10** received a written rental agreement in a language they do not understand.

Low-skilled labour migrants are more likely to postpone medical assistance.

High-skilled labour migrants are more likely to receive an employment contract in a foreign language

	Problem 1	Problem 2	Problem 3	Problem 4
Low-skilled	Unable to find relevant information (58%)	Employment contract in a foreign language (40%)	Postponing seeking medical assistance (38%)	Rental agreement in a foreign language (36%)
High-skilled	Unable to find relevant information (57%)	Rental agreement in a foreign language (45%)	Postponing seeking medical assistance (26%)	Employment contract in a foreign language (24%)

Reason for the survey and what the results mean in practice

Although labour migrants are very important to the Netherlands, their opinions, feelings and experiences are rarely taken into consideration. *Share My Voice* was founded to resolve this omission. It is an independent research panel that consists of, and serves the interests of, labour migrants. The results of this survey will be distributed in publications and the media and presented during meetings with stakeholders and experts from government ministries, sector organisations, housing organisations, care institutions and other bodies. The goal is to better inform companies, governments and other organisations about labour migrants, so they can make better decisions about measures including programmes aimed at developing the language skills of labour migrants.

