

## Migration of Young Indonesian Workers to Australia: Opportunities, Challenges, and an Inclusive Perspective

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### Abstract

*This article discusses the phenomenon of young Indonesian migrant workers to Australia in the context of opportunities, challenges, and an inclusive perspective. The main focus is on how bilateral cooperation between Indonesia and Australia, such as the Colombo Plan Scholarship (CSP) program and the Work and Holiday visa, opens up mobility access for the younger generation to gain work experience and skill enhancement. On the other hand, this phenomenon also poses challenges in the form of potential brain drain, particularly among scholarship recipients who choose to settle and pursue careers in Australia after completing their studies or work period. This study employs a qualitative approach with secondary data analysis from various academic and policy sources. The findings indicate that the diplomatic momentum during the 2024–2026 period provides significant opportunities for skilled Indonesian workers to develop in the global market. Nevertheless, wage gaps, work environment quality, and limited career ecosystems domestically serve as the primary driving factors for workforce retention in Australia. This has the potential to reduce the contribution of superior human resources to national development. In addition, the article highlights the importance of an inclusive perspective, particularly for youth with disabilities, who still face limitations in accessing international mobility programs. Therefore, strategic policies are needed, such as expanding the Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) and strengthening disability inclusion programs, to ensure that the benefits of migration can be felt more equitably while mitigating the negative impacts of brain drain.*

**Abstrak** Artikel ini membahas fenomena migrasi tenaga kerja muda Indonesia ke Australia dalam konteks peluang, tantangan, serta perspektif inklusif. Fokus utama terletak pada bagaimana kerja sama bilateral antara Indonesia dan Australia, seperti program CSP (Colombo Plan Scholarship) dan visa Work and Holiday, membuka akses mobilitas bagi generasi muda untuk memperoleh pengalaman kerja dan

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peningkatan keterampilan. Di sisi lain, fenomena ini juga menimbulkan tantangan berupa potensi brain drain, khususnya bagi penerima beasiswa yang memilih untuk menetap dan berkarier di Australia setelah menyelesaikan studi atau masa kerja mereka. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan analisis data sekunder dari berbagai sumber akademik dan kebijakan. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa momentum diplomatik periode 2024–2026 memberikan peluang besar bagi tenaga kerja terampil Indonesia untuk berkembang di pasar global. Namun demikian, adanya kesenjangan upah, kualitas lingkungan kerja, serta terbatasnya ekosistem karier di dalam negeri menjadi faktor pendorong utama terjadinya retensi tenaga kerja di Australia. Hal ini berpotensi mengurangi kontribusi sumber daya manusia unggul bagi pembangunan nasional. Selain itu, artikel ini juga menyoroti pentingnya perspektif inklusif, khususnya bagi pemuda penyandang disabilitas, yang masih menghadapi keterbatasan akses dalam program mobilitas internasional. Oleh karena itu, diperlukan kebijakan strategis seperti perluasan Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) serta penguatan program inklusi disabilitas agar manfaat migrasi dapat dirasakan secara lebih merata sekaligus memitigasi dampak negatif brain drain.

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## Introduction

The migration of young Indonesian workers to Australia in recent years has shown a significant upward trend, particularly through the Work and Holiday visa scheme. This program has become one of the most attractive pathways for international mobility among Indonesian youth, as it offers a combination of work experience, skills development, and opportunities to expand global networks. Data indicate that the number of Work and Holiday visa recipients increased sharply from 2,984 individuals in the 2022–2023 period to 4,285 in 2023–2024. This surge reflects the high interest of Indonesian youth in working abroad while also signaling new dynamics in the migration patterns of skilled labor.

This increase cannot be separated from structural conditions in both countries. From Australia's perspective, labor demand has risen due to workforce shortages across various sectors, particularly in manufacturing, services, and regional industries. The Australian government has allocated a significant portion of its migration program to skilled pathways in order to address domestic labor market gaps. This creates substantial opportunities for young Indonesian workers to enter the Australian labor market through legal and structured channels. On the other hand, from Indonesia's perspective, limited job opportunities and the high rate of educated unemployment act as push factors encouraging youth to seek employment abroad (Efitra, 2025).

Focusing on the youth age group, particularly those aged 18–30 years, is highly relevant because this group dominates participation in international mobility programs such as the Work and Holiday Visa. In general, Indonesian migrant workers are largely composed of individuals in their productive age, who are in a phase of career exploration and capacity building (Nugroho, 2025). In this context, migration is not only understood as labor

movement but also as an individual strategy to gain global experience, enhance competitiveness, and expand future career opportunities. However, this phenomenon also raises serious challenges, particularly related to the issue of brain drain. Many young graduates, including international scholarship recipients, choose not to return to Indonesia after gaining education and work experience in Australia. This is influenced by factors such as wage differentials, quality of the working environment, and the availability of more promising career opportunities in the destination country. In the long term, this condition may reduce the availability of highly qualified human resources in Indonesia, which are essential for national development.

In addition, the increasingly close bilateral relationship between Indonesia and Australia is an important factor in encouraging the mobility of young workers. Both countries maintain strong cooperation across various sectors, including economic, educational, and labor fields, facilitated through multiple agreements and collaborative programs. In this context, initiatives such as the Colombo Plan Scholarship (CSP) program for the 2025–2029 period emphasize the importance of skilled labor mobility as well as strengthening cooperation in education and training. This collaboration is not only oriented toward enhancing individual capacity but also toward building long-term inter-state relations (Elvara, 2025). Furthermore, an inclusive approach in migration policy has begun to receive attention, particularly regarding the participation of youth with disabilities. To date, access for persons with disabilities to international mobility programs remains relatively limited due to structural barriers and insufficient policy support. In fact, disability inclusion is a crucial component of sustainable development and social justice. Therefore, integrating an inclusive perspective into labor migration policies is an urgent necessity to ensure that the benefits of globalization are distributed more equitably. Thus, the increasing migration of young Indonesian workers to Australia not only reflects the opportunities of globalization but also presents strategic challenges for Indonesia. Comprehensive and balanced policies are required to optimize the benefits of migration while mitigating negative impacts such as brain drain. In this regard, this study is important to analyze the dynamics of youth labor migration more deeply, particularly within the framework of opportunities, challenges, and inclusive perspectives in Indonesia–Australia bilateral relations.

Studies on migration between Indonesia and Australia have generally focused on macro aspects such as trade, investment, and bilateral economic cooperation. Although there are several studies discussing labor mobility, most remain general in nature and do not specifically examine youth as the main actors in contemporary migration dynamics. In fact, young people possess unique characteristics as agents of change, influenced not only by economic factors but also by global aspirations, access to education, and broader social dynamics.

Moreover, there is a significant gap in studies comparing migration experiences between youth with disabilities and those without disabilities. Most of the existing literature still overlooks inclusivity perspectives in international labor mobility, thus failing to provide

a comprehensive understanding of the structural barriers and opportunities faced by persons with disabilities. This issue is particularly important as the global development agenda increasingly emphasizes principles of inclusion and equal access across sectors, including cross-border employment.

1. The lack of specific studies focusing on youth (18–30 years) as the primary actors in migration.
2. The limited comparative analysis between youth with disabilities and non-disabled youth in international mobility.
3. The scarcity of research linking recent diplomatic dynamics between Prabowo Subianto and Anthony Albanese with skilled labor mobility.
4. The limited exploration of non-economic factors, such as meritocracy, in the brain drain phenomenon among scholarship recipients.

On the other hand, recent developments in bilateral relations between Prabowo Subianto and Anthony Albanese have not been widely analyzed academically, particularly in relation to the increasing mobility of skilled labor. This diplomatic momentum has the potential to expand access and cooperation in the labor sector. However, studies that connect high-level policy developments with their impact on youth migration remain limited and not yet comprehensively integrated into existing literature. Furthermore, the issue of brain drain among scholarship recipients, such as those funded by LPDP who pursue studies in Australia, is still rarely explored from a non-economic perspective. Most studies emphasize wage factors and employment opportunities, while aspects such as meritocratic systems, professional work environments, and recognition of individual competencies have not been thoroughly examined. Therefore, this study seeks to fill these gaps by presenting a more holistic and inclusive analysis of the migration of young Indonesian workers to Australia.

The objectives of this study are to identify opportunities for the migration of young Indonesian workers to Australia through bilateral programs such as CSP and Work and Holiday, to analyze the challenges faced, including both economic and non-economic factors such as meritocracy and work environment, to compare the level of inclusion between youth with disabilities and non-disabled youth in accessing international mobility, and to formulate policy recommendations based on CSP cooperation in order to mitigate negative impacts such as brain drain.

## **Literature Review**

### **Youth Migration and International Employment**

The migration of young Indonesian workers to Australia can be understood through the push–pull factors framework, which explains why individuals move from their country of origin to a destination country. Push factors from Indonesia include limited employment opportunities that match qualifications, high levels of job competition, and the phenomenon of educated unemployment among young graduates. Many young people face a mismatch between their educational background and available job opportunities, prompting them to

seek alternatives abroad. In addition, relatively low wage levels compared to developed countries serve as a significant factor reinforcing migration intentions (Amanta, 2022).

On the other hand, Australia as a destination country offers strong pull factors. One of the most dominant is higher wages and a better standard of living. Moreover, Australia is experiencing labor shortages in several sectors, such as agriculture, hospitality, manufacturing, and services, particularly in regional areas. This condition creates opportunities for foreign workers, including Indonesian youth, to fill these gaps. Australia's migration policies, which are relatively open to skilled and semi-skilled workers, further strengthen its attractiveness.

One important instrument facilitating youth migration is the Work and Holiday Visa program, which has been in place since 2009 as part of bilateral cooperation between Indonesia and Australia. This program is designed to provide opportunities for young people aged 18–30 to work while traveling for a certain period. In addition to earning income, the program aims to strengthen cultural exchange and mutual understanding between countries. Through this program, participants gain not only international work experience but also opportunities to develop language skills, cross-cultural adaptability, and professional networks. These benefits provide significant added value for future career development. It is therefore not surprising that interest in this program continues to increase each year, reflecting the strong enthusiasm of Indonesian youth for global mobility (Panorama, 2024).

However, migration is not solely driven by economic factors. The aspirations of young people to gain international experience, improve their quality of life, and explore global career opportunities also play a crucial role. In the context of globalization, youth labor mobility becomes part of an individual strategy to enhance competitiveness in an increasingly competitive labor market (Panorama, 2025). Thus, the migration of Indonesian youth to Australia is the result of a complex interaction between domestic push factors and external pull factors. Programs such as the Work and Holiday Visa serve as an important bridge connecting these factors while opening opportunities for professional and personal development on an international scale.

### **Indonesia–Australia Cooperation: From Partnership to CSP**

Cooperation between Indonesia and Australia has evolved significantly from a traditional partnership into a more strategic and comprehensive collaboration. One concrete manifestation of this development is the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP) framework for the 2025–2029 period, which reaffirms both countries' commitment to strengthening cooperation across various sectors, including the economy, education, and labor mobility.

Within the CSP framework, the economic pillar is a key focus, emphasizing the importance of labor mobility as an instrument to enhance connectivity and shared growth. Labor mobility is not only viewed as the movement of workers but also as a means of

transferring knowledge, skills, and technology between countries (Nufus, 2025). Programs such as the Work and Holiday Visa represent a tangible implementation of this policy, enabling youth from both countries to work while engaging in direct cultural exchange.

In addition, cooperation is strengthened through the recognition of cross-border professional qualifications, such as the Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) for engineers, which has been implemented since 2023. This arrangement allows Indonesian professionals, particularly in engineering, to have their competencies recognized in Australia without undergoing lengthy re-certification processes. This represents a strategic step in enhancing the competitiveness of Indonesian workers in the global labor market while expanding employment opportunities for skilled labor.

Furthermore, the CSP 2025–2029 framework does not solely focus on economic aspects but also integrates inclusivity values into its policies. Issues of gender, disability, and social inclusion are key components of this cooperation. Both countries recognize that sustainable labor mobility must provide equal access for all groups, including women and persons with disabilities. Therefore, various programs are designed to reduce structural barriers and increase the participation of vulnerable groups in international mobility schemes.

This inclusive approach reflects a paradigm shift in international cooperation, from one that is primarily growth-oriented to one that balances economic development with social justice. In the context of youth labor migration, this is particularly relevant because not all individuals have equal access to global opportunities. With more inclusive policies, labor mobility is expected to benefit a broader segment of society.

At the same time, the strengthening of cooperation through the CSP also demonstrates an alignment of interests between Indonesia and Australia in addressing global challenges such as labor shortages, digital transformation, and the need for skilled workers. Australia requires labor to fill gaps in various sectors, while Indonesia has a demographic bonus that can be optimized through overseas employment. Thus, the transformation of Indonesia–Australia cooperation under the CSP framework reflects both countries' efforts to create a more adaptive, inclusive, and sustainable relationship. Labor mobility, particularly among youth, becomes a key pillar in strengthening bilateral relations while opening new opportunities for developing globally competitive human resources.

### **Brain Drain: The Phenomenon of Non-Returning Scholarship Recipients**

The phenomenon of brain drain, or the outflow of highly skilled human resources abroad, is a critical issue in the context of young Indonesian labor migration, particularly among scholarship recipients such as those funded by LPDP. This scholarship program is designed to improve the quality of Indonesia's human resources, with the expectation that recipients will return and contribute to national development. However, in practice, not all graduates return to Indonesia after completing their studies abroad.

Data indicate that hundreds of alumni do not return, with approximately 413 individuals out of a total of 35,536 recipients remaining abroad. This reflects a significant challenge in retaining highly skilled talent. One of the main drivers of this phenomenon is wage disparity between Indonesia and destination countries such as Australia and Singapore. These countries offer significantly higher salaries, more professional work systems, and clearer career pathways.

For many young people, the decision to remain abroad is not solely based on economic considerations but also on quality of life and future prospects. This is reinforced by the availability of scholarship programs and employment pathways in destination countries that facilitate the transition from education to employment. In addition to economic factors, non-economic factors also play a role, such as skills mismatch, which refers to the misalignment between the skills acquired during education and the needs of the Indonesian labor market (Sitompul, 2025). Many graduates feel that their competencies are not optimally utilized domestically, due to limited relevant industries and insufficient innovation ecosystems.

Another important factor is the perception of limited appreciation for educated workers in Indonesia. Some alumni feel that recognition of their competencies, whether in terms of salary, career progression, or professional acknowledgment, remains suboptimal. This creates dissatisfaction and encourages them to seek opportunities abroad. Social influences, such as peers who also choose to stay overseas, further reinforce this decision. This phenomenon highlights that migration is influenced not only by individual factors but also by social networks that shape preferences and career choices.

In the Australian context, the large number of Indonesian students, reaching nearly 13,000 individuals, is also an important indicator in understanding the potential for brain drain. Many of these students choose to continue their careers in Australia after completing their studies due to more open job opportunities and supportive migration systems for skilled workers. This demonstrates a strong link between educational mobility and labor migration, which may intensify brain drain if not properly managed.

### **Youth with Disabilities and Inclusion in Labor Migration**

The issue of disability inclusion in international labor migration is becoming increasingly important in a global context that emphasizes equal access and social justice. In the cooperation between Indonesia and Australia, inclusive approaches have begun to be integrated more systematically, particularly through programs that support the empowerment of persons with disabilities in the workforce.

One notable initiative is the PROAKTIF program, which focuses on capacity building and job training for persons with disabilities to better prepare them for the labor market, including in an international context (Panorama, 2024). This program emphasizes practical skills aligned with industry needs, such as disability support, social services, and other high-demand competencies in Australia. Through such training, youth with disabilities are not only prepared for domestic employment but also gain opportunities to participate in global

labor mobility schemes. This represents an important step in reducing the access gap that has historically affected persons with disabilities in employment.

In addition, within the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP) 2025–2029 framework, disability issues are integrated as part of a broader cooperation commitment. The CSP emphasizes not only economic growth but also social inclusion, including gender equality and the empowerment of vulnerable groups. This integration reflects an awareness that sustainable labor mobility must include all segments of society without discrimination.

However, despite these policy efforts, youth with disabilities still face several challenges in accessing migration opportunities. These include limited access to quality education and training, social stigma, and a lack of information about inclusive international mobility programs. In addition, infrastructure and support systems in destination countries also play a crucial role in determining the successful integration of workers with disabilities.

Compared to non-disabled youth, access to migration opportunities is still not fully equal. Non-disabled youth tend to have more program options, easier administrative processes, and broader support networks. Therefore, a comparative analysis between these two groups is essential to identify existing gaps and formulate more targeted and inclusive policies.

## **Research Method**

### **Research Approach and Design**

This study applies a qualitative approach with a descriptive design. This approach is selected because it enables an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of Indonesian youth labor migration to Australia, particularly in terms of opportunities, challenges, and inclusive perspectives. Qualitative methods allow researchers to explore social dynamics and policy contexts in a flexible and contextual manner. The descriptive design is used to systematically describe the observed phenomena based on available data without manipulating variables. The analysis is conducted using a content analysis approach on various relevant secondary sources.

### **Data Sources and Data Collection Techniques**

The data used in this study are secondary data obtained from various credible sources. These include official government websites such as the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Cabinet Secretariat of the Republic of Indonesia, academic journals such as IJEBAR, and mass media sources such as The Jakarta Post and Tempo. Data collection is conducted through literature review and web-based searches carried out in 2026. The collected data focus on information related to labor migration, bilateral policies, and disability inclusion issues.

## Unit of Analysis and Data Analysis Techniques

The unit of analysis in this study includes policy documents such as the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP), news reports on bilateral meetings between Indonesia and Australia, and reports related to labor migration. The collected data are analyzed using thematic analysis techniques by identifying patterns, themes, and relationships among concepts that emerge from the data. The analysis process is carried out in stages, starting from data grouping, categorization, and concluding with interpretation. This approach enables the researcher to produce a comprehensive interpretation of the phenomenon under study.

## Results and Discussion

### Bilateral Cooperation: Diplomatic Momentum 2024–2026

Bilateral relations between Indonesia and Australia have strengthened significantly during the 2024–2026 period, particularly through a series of high-level meetings between Prabowo Subianto and Anthony Albanese. This diplomatic momentum has not only reinforced political relations but has also had a direct impact on economic and labor cooperation, especially within the framework of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP).

Table 1: Prabowo–Albanese Meetings

Date	Location	Key Outcomes
February 2026	Jakarta	Signing of the Treaty on Common Security and strengthening of CSP
November 2025	Sydney	Discussions on trade, education, and investment
May 2025	Jakarta	First visit after Albanese’s re-election with a focus on economic cooperation

These meetings reflect an increasing intensification of strategic bilateral cooperation. The visit in May 2025 marked an important starting point following the re-election of Anthony Albanese, with a primary focus on strengthening economic collaboration. The subsequent meeting in Sydney in November 2025 expanded discussions to include education and investment, indirectly contributing to the improvement of human resource quality. The peak occurred in February 2026 in Jakarta, where both countries signed the Treaty on Common Security, further reinforcing cooperation across multiple sectors, including employment.

In the context of employment, this diplomatic momentum has significant implications for increasing the mobility of skilled labor. The strengthening of the CSP encourages expanded job opportunities for young Indonesian workers in Australia, including the

potential increase in quotas and access to programs such as the Work and Holiday Visa. This aligns with Australia's labor shortages while providing Indonesia with an opportunity to optimize its demographic dividend. In addition, this cooperation is supported by the implementation of the Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) for engineers, which has been in effect since 2023. The MRA facilitates cross-border recognition of professional qualifications, enabling Indonesian skilled workers to access employment in Australia with fewer administrative barriers. In 2026, additional policies such as the Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) scheme further support the smooth mobility of labor and professionals, particularly in sectors related to trade and industry.

The linkage between bilateral meetings in 2025–2026 and the expansion of labor mobility demonstrates that diplomacy functions not only as a political tool but also as an economic instrument with direct societal impact. In this context, the relationship between Prabowo Subianto and Anthony Albanese plays a crucial role in opening new opportunities for Indonesian workers in the global labor market. Therefore, this diplomatic momentum not only strengthens bilateral relations but also creates a more conducive ecosystem for skilled labor mobility. It shows that well-directed foreign policy can serve as a catalyst for enhancing national workforce competitiveness and expanding access to international labor markets.

### **Brain Drain Phenomenon: Why Do Scholarship Recipients Not Return?**

The phenomenon of brain drain in the context of Indonesian youth migration to Australia is increasingly evident through the growing participation in programs such as the Work and Holiday Visa (WHV). This program is attractive because it offers a combination of work experience and relatively higher income compared to domestic opportunities. In addition, Australia's labor shortages in sectors such as services and manufacturing further enhance its appeal for Indonesian graduates, including scholarship recipients with higher education qualifications. From an economic perspective, wage disparity is a primary factor influencing the decision not to return to Indonesia. The significant difference in salary levels between Indonesia and Australia leads many graduates to perceive working abroad as more financially rewarding. Moreover, economic stability, social security, and higher living standards in Australia also serve as important considerations. These conditions create strong incentives for skilled workers to remain abroad, thereby increasing the potential for brain drain.

However, non-economic factors also play an equally important role. One key factor is meritocracy in the workplace. Many graduates perceive that the work environment in Australia places greater emphasis on individual competence and performance in an objective manner, compared to conditions in Indonesia, where in some cases non-merit factors such as personal connections or seniority still influence career progression. This perception encourages them to pursue careers in environments considered more fair and professional. In addition, the post-scholarship ecosystem in Indonesia is another determining factor.

Limited support for career development after completing studies, restricted access to relevant industries, and inadequate research and innovation facilities pose barriers for graduates seeking to apply their acquired knowledge. These conditions contribute to a skills mismatch, where the competencies possessed by graduates do not align with domestic labor market needs. Social factors also influence individual decisions. Peer influence, particularly from those who have already settled abroad, often serves as a reference point in decision making. A social environment that supports migration creates a domino effect, encouraging more young people to follow similar paths.

### **Disability Inclusion in Labor Migration**

Efforts to promote inclusion in labor migration between Indonesia and Australia show positive progress, particularly through the integration of disability issues within the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP) framework. However, in practice, there remains a significant gap between non-disabled youth and persons with disabilities in accessing international mobility opportunities.

**Table 2. Comparison of Non-Disabled Youth and Youth with Disabilities**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Non-Disabled Youth</b>	<b>Youth with Disabilities</b>
Visa Access	Easier through WHV and MRA schemes	Limited, although supported by proactive programs
Job Opportunities	Manufacturing, aged care, and various service sectors	Disability support and youth work sectors
Bilateral Inclusion	CSP labor mobility framework	Disability inclusion integrated within CSP

In general, non-disabled youth still dominate participation in mobility programs such as the Work and Holiday Visa (WHV) and schemes based on the Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA). Easier administrative access, simpler requirements, and minimal physical and social barriers make this group more prepared to participate in international labor migration. In addition, the range of available job sectors is broader, from manufacturing to services such as aged care, which are in high demand in Australia.

In contrast, youth with disabilities face various limitations in accessing the same opportunities. Although programs such as PROAKTIF aim to improve capacity and employability, access to visas and job opportunities remains relatively limited. Many migration programs are not yet fully designed to accommodate the specific needs of persons with disabilities, both in terms of infrastructure, policy, and social support. As a result, participation of persons with disabilities in international labor mobility remains low. In terms of employment opportunities, individuals with disabilities are often directed toward specific sectors such as disability support and youth work, which, while important, indicate labor market segmentation. This differs from non-disabled youth who have greater flexibility in

choosing employment sectors. These differences reflect structural inequalities that need to be addressed through more inclusive policies.

From a policy perspective, the CSP has emphasized a commitment to integrating disability issues into bilateral cooperation, including in labor mobility. However, from the perspective of the International Organization for Migration, the implementation of such inclusive policies is still not optimal. Many policies remain normative and have not been fully translated into concrete programs that are directly accessible to persons with disabilities. This gap between commitment and implementation indicates that although policy direction is progressive, strategic measures are still required to ensure that disability inclusion is realized in practice. These include expanding access to information, adjusting administrative requirements, and strengthening support throughout migration and job placement processes.

### **Policy Recommendations**

The migration of young Indonesian workers to Australia presents both opportunities and challenges that require targeted and sustainable policy responses. Strengthening bilateral cooperation through the CSP framework is essential to ensure that labor mobility is not only economically beneficial but also inclusive and supportive of national development.

#### **1. Expansion of Professional MRA**

Expanding the Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) to various professional sectors is a strategic step to increase access for Indonesian skilled workers to the Australian labor market. Currently, the MRA is limited to certain fields such as engineering, leaving many professions without optimal benefits. Expanding it to sectors such as healthcare, information technology, and social services would open wider employment opportunities. In addition, harmonization of competency standards and certification systems needs to be strengthened to enable faster and more efficient qualification recognition.

#### **2. Strengthening Scholarship Service Schemes**

Strengthening service obligations for scholarship recipients, particularly those funded by LPDP, is necessary to mitigate brain drain. This policy should go beyond administrative obligations to return to Indonesia and be supported by a conducive employment ecosystem. The government needs to ensure the availability of relevant job opportunities, clear career pathways, and proper recognition of graduates' competencies. This would create strong incentives for scholarship alumni to return and contribute domestically.

#### **3. Development of Disability Training Programs through CSP**

Strengthening job training programs for persons with disabilities should become a priority within CSP cooperation. Programs such as disability support training can be expanded with a more inclusive and labor market-oriented approach. In addition, support in the form of accessible information, mentoring, and adaptive policies is

needed to ensure equal participation of youth with disabilities in international labor mobility. This step is important to reduce the gap between disabled and non-disabled youth.

These policy recommendations emphasize the importance of an integrated approach that combines the expansion of employment opportunities, regulatory strengthening, and enhanced inclusivity. Consistent implementation is expected to create a more equitable, competitive, and sustainable labor migration system.

## **Conclusion**

The migration of young Indonesian workers to Australia is an increasingly prominent phenomenon in the context of globalization and strengthened bilateral cooperation. Through the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP), both countries have opened broad opportunities for labor mobility, particularly for young people in their productive years. Programs such as the Work and Holiday Visa and qualification recognition through the Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) serve as key instruments in facilitating labor mobility while enhancing the global competitiveness of Indonesian human resources. However, alongside these opportunities, there are significant challenges, particularly related to the phenomenon of brain drain. Many Indonesian youth, including scholarship recipients, choose not to return after gaining education and work experience in Australia. Economic factors such as wage disparities, as well as non-economic factors such as meritocracy, professional work environments, and limited recognition of competencies in Indonesia, are major drivers of this decision. If not properly managed, this condition may hinder national development due to the loss of highly skilled talent that could otherwise contribute domestically.

In addition, disability inclusion remains a critical issue in labor migration. Although the CSP has incorporated inclusive principles, its implementation still faces various challenges. Youth with disabilities continue to experience limited access to international mobility programs compared to their non-disabled counterparts. This indicates that existing policies have not fully addressed the needs of vulnerable groups, highlighting the need for further efforts to create a truly inclusive system. Therefore, labor migration should not be viewed solely as an economic opportunity but also as a strategic issue requiring comprehensive policy approaches. Synergy among government, educational institutions, and industry is necessary to create an ecosystem that attracts young talent back to Indonesia while ensuring equal access for all groups in society. Inclusive, adaptive, and sustainable policies are essential to ensure that the benefits of migration are maximized for both countries.

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