

2nd Migration Trends Analysis for Pakistan

August - September 2023

This migration trends analysis includes analytical considerations as well as data generated by the [Migrant Resource Centres in Pakistan](#). It focuses on highlights and important information on trends/patterns and insights regarding the migration and mobility of potential, current or returning migrants within the covered period.

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Dependants visa increase:** An increase was seen in outgoing migrants at the Protectorates of Emigrants Office, where a verification process of an intending emigrant and his/her paperwork leads to a protector¹ being stamped in their passports. In the past two months, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of applicants registering as “dependents” for a work or study visa. Some of these dependents were requesting a protector in the “job seeker category” for countries where they specifically were entitled to work if travelling as a dependent.
- **Job seeker special visa for emigrants going to Australia increase:** An increase has been noted in young emigrants, engineers mostly, going to Australia on a “**476 subclass job seeker visa**”. This visa allows recent engineering graduates to live, work or study in Australia for up to 18 months. They must have completed a degree or

higher qualification from a specified institution within the past 2 years and be under 31 years old.

- **Irregular crossing by boat from Gwadar:** A irregular migration route used by migrants through Balochistan has been highlighted to the MRC counsellors during outreach sessions by community members in Gujranwala and Sialkot. This route goes from the port of Gwadar through the Gulf of Oman and onwards to Iran and Türkiye².

ENQUIRIES AND EMERGING TRENDS

Enquiries made to MRCs are a good indicator of possible trends. This is particularly relevant when it comes to topics of enquiry (and interest) as well as countries of interest. In addition, a lot of enquiries on processes and procedures highlight the importance of information sharing and awareness raising on regular pathways for migration, and what does not fall in that category.

Geographical related trends and enquiries: countries of interest

*Enquiries related to specific regions and countries provide a good basis of interest and emerging trends. The **most common countries to travel to for work are the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries**. However, there is an increase in travel and interest to Europe and other countries. As per the flash trend in August, there has been a substantial increase in travel to Malaysia from Pakistan on visit visa as of August 2023. (Source for the below: <https://beoe.gov.pk/reports-and-statistics> and MRC counsellors).*

¹ The Protector is a stamp that is put in the passport to prove an intending migrant has been allowed to leave Pakistan to work in a foreign country. It also allows the authorities to have access to emigrant’s data and also provides life and accidental insurance coverage. Pakistani airport personnel will not allow an intending migrant to leave Pakistan without a Protector stamped in their passport.

²Additional reference:

<https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2023/07/24/unveiling-the-hidden-realities-the-controversial-influx-of-pakistani-illegal-immigration-to-europe/>)



Figure 1: Number of Pakistani nationals registered for foreign employment by country (January-September 2023)



Source: BEOE

- **Middle East:** Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain and Kuwait are the common destinations (and listed from most to least popular). The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia sees substantially more Pakistanis registered for employment abroad (Figure 1).
- **European destinations:** Cyprus, Germany, Greece, Italy, Romania, Spain and the UK
 - **United Kingdom:** A trend of outgoing migrants going to the UK on a care worker visa through direct employment after securing jobs through online applications, specifically women.
 - **Greece:** Many requests on how to obtain work permit for Greece and generally travel and find work regularly in Europe are occurring.
 - **UK and Greece:** Another commonly observed trend is migrants going to UK and Greece as butchers on direct employment.

- **Other countries:** Australia, Canada, China, Iraq, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, South Korea, Türkiye
 - **Canada and Australia:** Many questions raised on the immigration processes to Canada and Australia, including documentation, criteria for selection and other information.
 - **Australia:** A new trend is observed whereby many migrants were going to Australia on a jobseeker visa as well as enquiring on dependant/spouse visa.
 - **Malaysia:** An increase in migrants travelling to Malaysia on visit visas.

The BEOE data corroborate data gathered from the MRCs, that suggest an increasing trend in the number of queries from Pakistani nationals related to employment in the Gulf countries (Table 1). The top three enquiries received by the MRCs in the months of June through September relate to (1) employment in Europe, (2) employment in the Gulf countries and (3) study abroad. In the months of August and September, there was a 52% increase in the number of people enquiring about employment in the Gulf countries.

Table 1: Top three enquiries from clients counselled (June-September 2023)

Top three queries	June & July	Aug & Sep	% change
Work abroad - Europe	208	267	28%
Work abroad - Gulf	160	243	52%
Study abroad	147	189	29%

Occupation trends

When analysing trends related to emigration, focus can either be on the area of origin, the future destination, or the type of emigration and profession sought or endorsed in the

country of work. Separating emigrants in the type of work they will do in the country of destination, whether less-skilled or in elementary occupations³ (no formal education required), medium-skilled (limited or secondary education required, Skill level 2 of [ILO International Classification of Occupations](#)) or highly skilled (university degree or equivalent required, Skill levels 3 and 4). The section below highlights migration based on the type of emigration.

Table 2: Emigrants from Pakistan from Jan – Sept 2023 per skill categories through OEPs/ BEOE and OEC

Skill Categories	Jan - Sept 2023	%
Highly Qualified	17,058	2.7%
Highly Skilled	35,414	5.6%
Skilled	232,933	36.8%
Semi Skilled	65,922	10.4 %
Low skilled	281,781	44.5%
Total	633,108	100%

Source: BEOE

- There has been a **steady increase in less and medium skilled migration** from Pakistan to the GCC countries namely, KSA, UAE, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman. The top two categories for less and medium -skilled migration for 2023 as per the BEOE are driver and labourer.
 - Other than GCC countries, low-skilled migrants are also bound for Greece, Iraq, Romania, Malaysia and to Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan on visit visas.
- Trends of **highly skilled emigrants** focus mainly on the following countries: Austria, Australia, Canada, Germany, Italy, UAE, UK, and the USA.
 - Qatar and UAE attracts both low and high skilled emigrants such as doctors.

³ <https://ilostat.ilo.org/resources/concepts-and-definitions/classification-occupation/>

- Highly skilled workers like doctors and engineers are going on work visa towards UK (for doctors and nurses on care giver visas) and Australia.
- There has been an increase in the number of women going to UAE through direct employment with job offers such as marketing manager and operational manager.
- Migrants (Engineers mostly) are going to Australia on **476 subclass job seeker visas**. **These migrants did not have job offers, yet they registered for the job seeker visas with the POE.**

Emigration-related enquiries

The Protectorate of Emigrants Offices are the main counterpart when enquiring about emigration. Usual enquiries include re-application for a rejected visa and other passport-related enquiries. However, there has been a recent trend with **an increase in the registration of migrant workers' dependents are seen, since they are accompanying the emigrants**. This trend was observed at pre-departure briefings in the Protectorate of Emigrants Offices. These migrants were accompanying family members who were emigrating on job or study visas. Since these dependents were accompanying family members to countries where they might potentially be allowed to work, they were opting for visas in the job seeker category.

Student mobility

Studying abroad remains one of the main opportunities for young people in Pakistan to move regularly and have opportunities to get a job abroad after their studies. Recent enquiries focus specifically on:



- university admissions
- scholarship programmes
- opportunities to support oneself through part-time work during studies
- financial and visa requirements
- education options in different countries

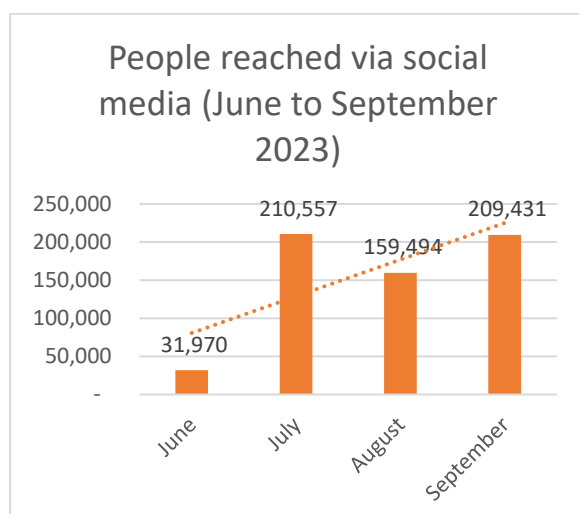
REACH

Through the Migrants Resource Centres, there is a wide and varied reach to potential migrants which are presented into four categories: social media outreach, community/university outreach and counselling.

Social media outreach

The MRCs continued to reach Pakistani and Afghan nationals via a myriad of social media platforms. In August and September, the MRCs reached a total of 368,925 people through the combined platforms of Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter and WhatsApp. In comparison to the months of June and July, there was a 52% increase in the number of people reached via social media. Facebook continues to be the platform through which most people are reached. In August and September for example, Facebook accounted for 97 % of the people reached.

Figure 2: Number of people reached via social media (June-September 2023)



Community/university outreach

The MRCs conducted outreach sessions in communities, universities and vocational training centres, and at the Protectorate Offices, reaching a total of 52,597 people from June until September, of which 8% were women. Compared to the months of June and July, the MRCs registered an increase of 91% in the number of people reached via these events in the months of August and September. Pre-departure briefing sessions registered the highest attendance, accounting for 71% of the people reached through in-person activities in August and September.

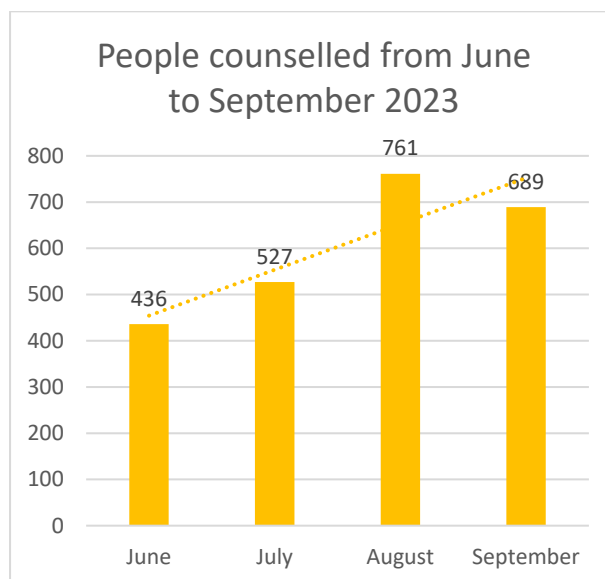
Table 2: Number of people reached via in-person outreach events (June-September 2023)

Type of in-person outreach	June & July	Aug & Sep	% change
MRC-led outreach	1,601	4,184	161%
Outreach to educational institutes / TVETs	1,905	5,989	214%
Pre-departure briefings	14,571	24,347	67%
Total	18,077	34,520	91%

Counselling

In addition to in-person outreach, MRCs also individually counsel potential migrants on various emigration-related topics. These migrants typically reach out after hearing about the MRC through its social media campaign or after attending an MRC outreach event. From June to September, the MRCs counselled a total of 2,413 people, of which 8% were women. The number of people counselled in August and September was 51% higher than the people counselled in June and July.

Figure 3: Number of people individually counselled (June-September 2023)



ZOOM IN: a training programme and a testimonial

A two-day skills development training took place at the Beaconhouse School System, a renowned educational institution in Islamabad. The main objective of the training was to provide students with the necessary skills to find employment and to be successful in applications to foreign universities, while discouraging irregular migration. The training was well received and a clear example of the importance of providing relevant information on opportunities for work and study abroad to school students.

The main aspects of the training programme included:

- how to prepare CV and a comprehensive motivational letter
- preparatory requirements for job interviews
- searching for a foreign university and selecting the right discipline at university
- safe and informed migration and dangers of irregular migration

Testimonial

A student from Vocational Training Institute (VTI) in Lahore who recently attended MRC awareness raising session contacted the MRC concerning his uncle's situation in KSA. His uncle had a work visa but got into a dispute with his sponsor over salary issues. Because of the dispute, the sponsor refused to renew his residency permit. The uncle decided to return to Pakistan and requested the sponsor to arrange his return. However, the sponsor involved the police and falsely accused the uncle, resulting in his detention. His family in Pakistan approached MRC for help and MRC contacted the relevant Community Welfare Attaché, who in turn linked them with Pakistan consulate representatives in the city (Jazan, KSA) where the uncle was held by police. Upon learning of these actions, the sponsor withdrew his complaint, and the student's uncle safely returned to Pakistan with a valid exit visa. The family expressed their gratitude for MRC's assistance and for providing them with crucial contacts in KSA.

Contacts

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