

April – June 2025

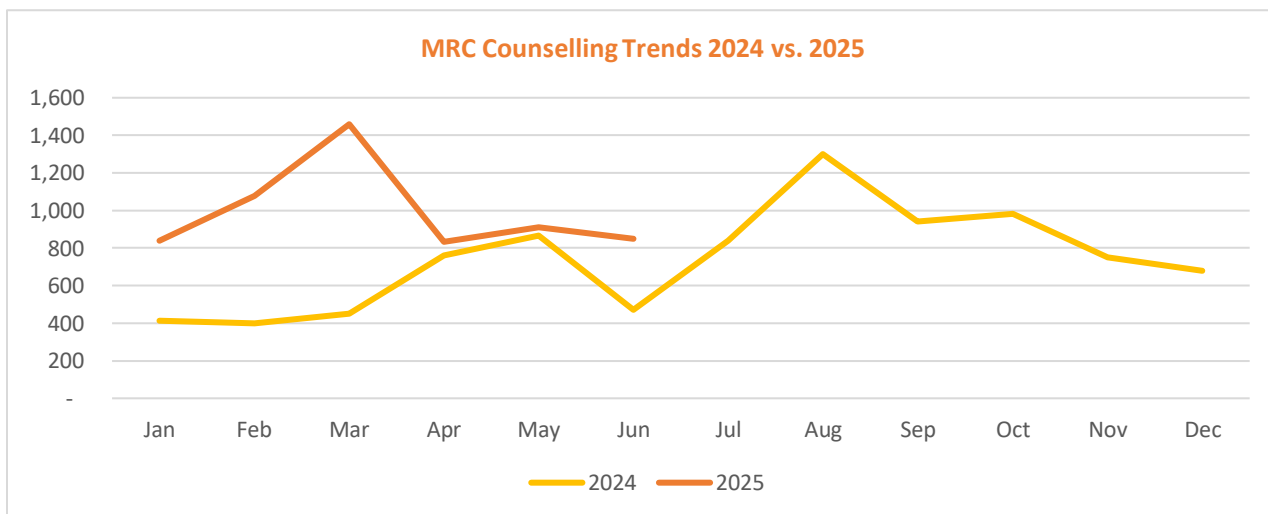
Migration Trends and Analysis: Pakistan

Migrant Resource Centres (MRC) in Pakistan

This migration trends analysis includes analytical considerations from data generated by the [Migrant Resource Centres in Pakistan](#). With over 240 million people, Pakistan is the world's fifth most populous country¹. In terms of migration trends, it is an important country of origin, transit and destination for migrants. This report 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, incorporating references from previous quarters ensuring comparability and providing a comprehensive annual perspective.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Labour migration** remained the primary focus for prospective emigrants, with 58% of the 2,392 inquiries this quarter related to overseas employment - mainly in Europe and the Gulf - while highly qualified professionals increasingly targeted high-income countries through direct employment.
- An emerging trend saw a **rise in labour migration to non-traditional markets like Nigeria and Kyrgyzstan**, as Pakistani workers began tapping into opportunities linked to Chinese-led infrastructure and Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) projects in Central Asia and Africa.
- Nearly **425,000 individuals** were reached by MRCs in the second quarter of 2025 through social media campaigns, pre-departure orientation sessions, and on-ground outreach activities.
- In this quarter **2,595** individuals were provided with one-on-one counselling services with 10% of them being female.
- Of the total reach, **21,820 emigrants** attended **190** pre-departure orientation sessions, with 98% male participants and most females attending in Islamabad, with Lahore accounting for 42% of outgoing emigrants.

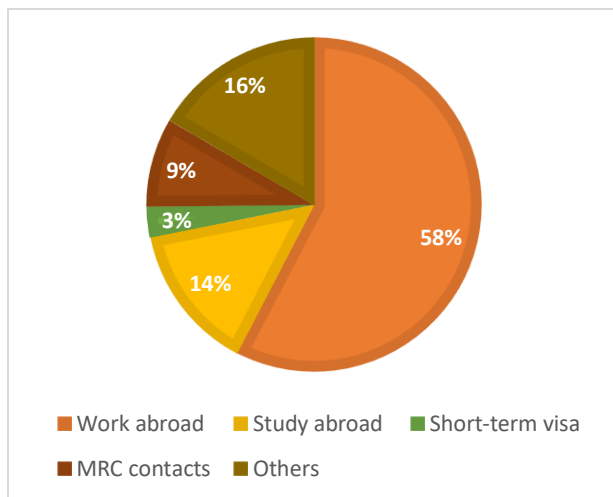


¹ United Nations Population Fund: World Population Dashboard -Pakistan | United Nations Population Fund (unfpa.org)



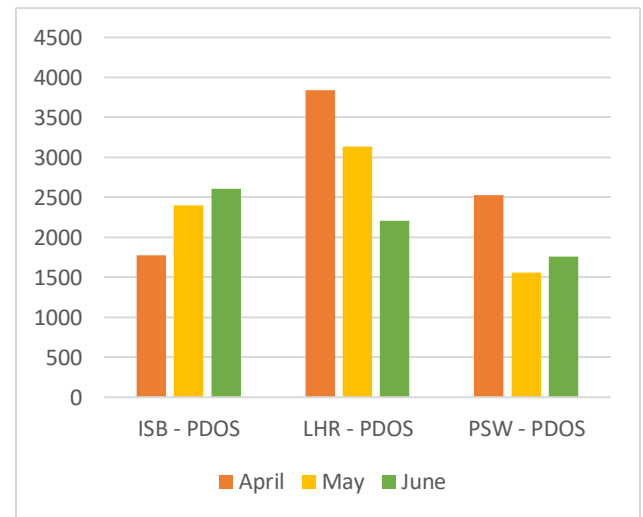
ENQUIRIES AND EMERGING TRENDS

Consistent with previous quarters, **labour migration** remained the leading area of interest among prospective emigrants contacting the MRCs in Pakistan. In the second quarter of 2025, the MRCs in Islamabad, Lahore, and Peshawar collectively recorded **2,392 inquiries**. Of these, **58%** were directly related to **employment abroad**, with the majority seeking opportunities in Europe and the Gulf. Notably, Islamabad accounted for a large share of Europe-focused queries, making up nearly two-thirds of all such inquiries nationwide, while Peshawar showed a stronger leaning toward Gulf countries. Lahore, leaned towards guidance and support, with MRC and miscellaneous queries making up the core of its engagement.



Inquiries related to **study abroad** made up **14%** of the total, reflecting a steady interest in education-led migration, particularly among the youth. Peshawar showed a rather high volume of study-related queries after Islamabad. Meanwhile, only **3%** of inquiries were about **short-term visits** abroad, such as for tourism or business, hinting at limited interest or access in that area.

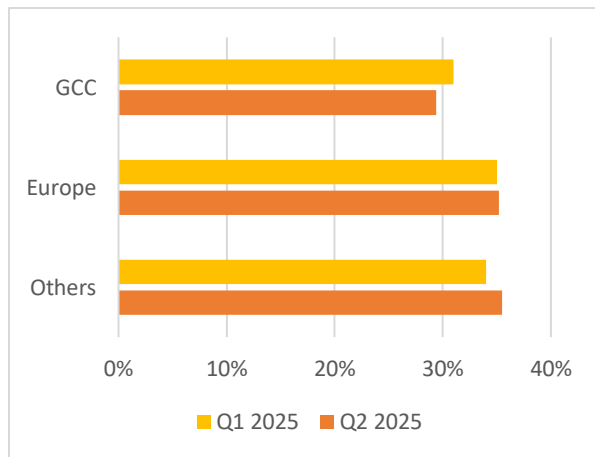
A small but important portion - around **9%** - of visitors were focused on understanding the legal and procedural aspects of migration, including safe migration pathways, documentation, and risks of irregular migration. These types of queries, while fewer in number, indicate a growing awareness of the importance of planning and protection. Islamabad again led in this area, suggesting a more cautious and better-informed profile of visitors compared to other centres.



During this quarter of 2025, a total of **21,820 outgoing emigrants** received pre-departure information through 190 orientation sessions (PDOS) held across Islamabad, Lahore, and Peshawar. Of these participants, 98% were male, with only 2% female, the majority of whom attended sessions in Islamabad. This reflects a slight decrease from the previous quarter, when 24,271 individuals took part in similar sessions. Despite the dip, participation remained strong, particularly in Lahore, which accounted for the largest share with 9,188 attendees, around 42% of the total.

Islamabad followed closely with 6,873 participants, making up 32%, while Peshawar

hosted 5,849 outgoing emigrants, representing 27% of those reached through PDOS this quarter. These sessions continue to serve as a key source for equipping emigrants with essential knowledge about legal migration processes, worker/employment rights, financial literacy, soft skills, ethical standards, and expectations in destination countries, helping to ensure responsible, safer, and more informed journeys abroad.



These sessions revealed several key migration trends that highlight both continuity and subtle shifts in the movement of Pakistani workers

REACH

In this quarter, MRCs across Pakistan reached **424,254** individuals through social media campaigns, pre-departure orientation sessions, and on-ground outreach activities. With **333,950** people reached through social media, it accounts for nearly **80%** of total outreach. Through posts, videos, and interactive content, MRCs have delivered timely, accessible migration information across geographic, economic, and social barriers.

In addition to the digital outreach, face-to-face engagement remained essential for the MRCs across Pakistan. Physical sessions reached **39,689**

abroad. The majority of semi-skilled and skilled emigrants continued to target destinations across Europe and the Gulf, with countries like Türkiye, Greece, Portugal, Italy, and Romania emerging as common choices. Simultaneously, a notable number of highly qualified professionals pursued opportunities in high-income countries such as the UK, Germany, Canada, the USA, and Australia, often through direct employment routes, particularly in technical, academic, and healthcare fields.

A significant and emerging pattern observed this quarter was the increasing number of labour migrants heading to non-traditional markets. Nigeria, for instance, is seeing a growing flow of semi-skilled workers hired for infrastructure and oil-related projects run by Chinese companies. Similarly, Kyrgyzstan continues to attract Pakistani migrants working on Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) projects. These trends suggest that Pakistani workers are slowly diversifying beyond the conventional Gulf and Western destinations toward newer labour markets in Central Asia and Africa, thereby providing more options for labour mobility.

individuals, maintaining a strong level of engagement similar to the previous quarter (43,679) offering opportunities for more personalised interaction and in-depth guidance. **Pre-departure briefings** emerged as the most significant contributor (21,800) and serving as an important final touchpoint before individuals emigrate, offering practical, accurate guidance when it's needed most. Meanwhile, **orientation sessions at VTCs/TVETs and universities** reached **6,736 and 3,636** people respectively, equipping young people with essential information early in their planning. MRC-led **outreach events**, often

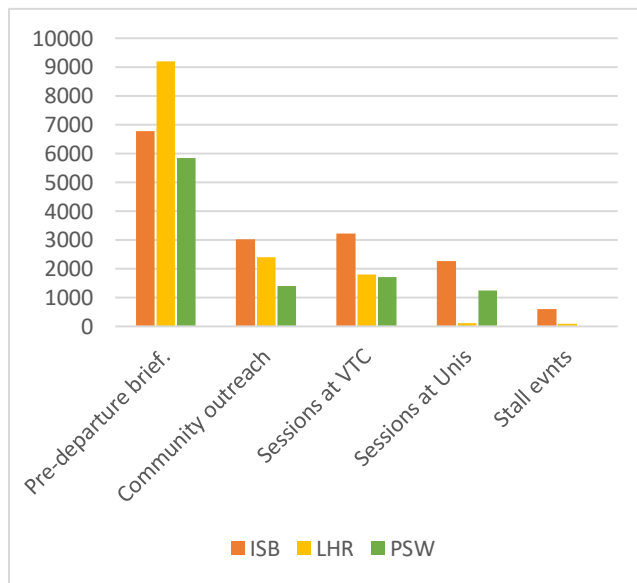
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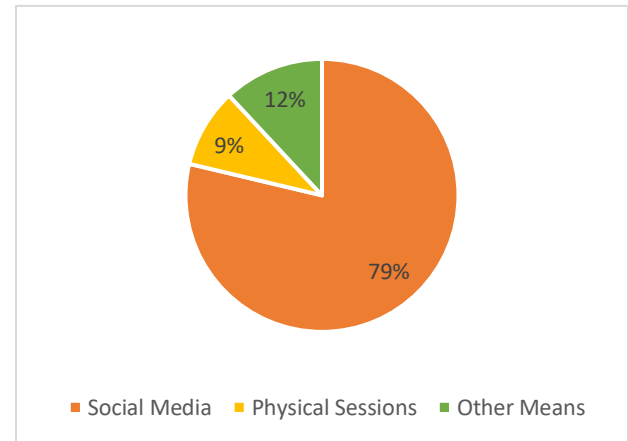
conducted through community-based activities, engaged **6,807** individuals, while stall events, though more modest in scale, still made a visible impact by reaching 690 people. Together, these physical interactions reflect MRCs' continued commitment to personalised, face-to-face engagement alongside their growing digital presence.

Another layer of outreach came through **Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials**, which reached **50,615** individuals (49,559 in the previous quarter). These printed resources remain important, especially in areas with limited internet access or for individuals who prefer information they can take home and read later.



Across the three regions, in-person outreach activities varied in focus and intensity, reflecting each area's unique context and engagement strategy. Lahore led in pre-departure briefings, reaching 9,188 people (42% of all pre-departure briefings), followed by Islamabad with 6,783 (31%), and Peshawar with 5,849 (27%), underscoring Lahore's role as a major migration hub in this quarter, sending a larger number of emigrants

abroad. In community outreach, Islamabad engaged 3,018 individuals (44% of all community outreach), Lahore reached 2,394 (35%), and Peshawar connected with 1,395 (20%), highlighting Islamabad's strong presence in direct community engagement in this quarter. For sessions at vocational training centres (VTCs), Islamabad again took the lead with 3,222 participants (48% of all VTC engagement), while Peshawar and Lahore reached 1,718 (27%) and 1,796 (26%) respectively. In contrast, university sessions showed a different pattern this quarter, with Peshawar reaching 1,250 students (34%), Islamabad 2,266 (62%), and Lahore only 120 (3%), indicating a stronger focus on university-based orientation in Islamabad and Peshawar.

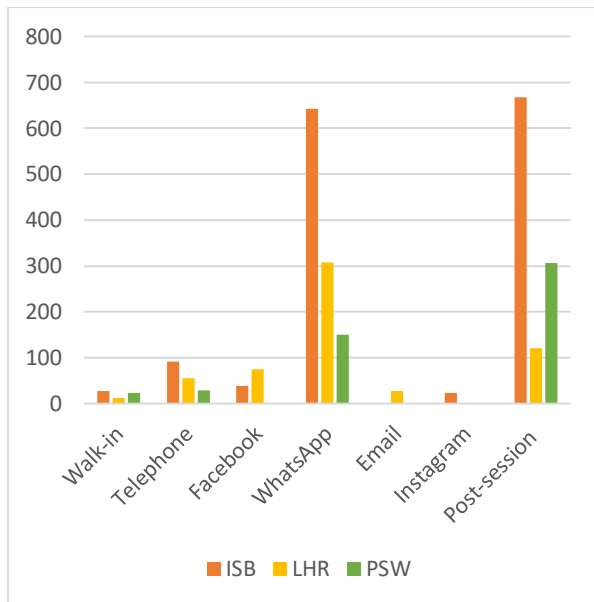


The data from this reporting period highlights a robust and multifaceted outreach effort to promote safe and informed migration. A total of **360 outreach sessions** were conducted, a 108% increase compared to the previous quarter, demonstrating a significant scale-up in engagement activities. These sessions included 72 community outreach events targeting grassroots populations, 65 sessions at TVET institutions aimed at equipping youth entering the labour market, and 33 university-based sessions reaching students and young professionals. Additionally, 190 pre-departure orientation and training sessions were

held to prepare prospective emigrants with essential information and guidance before their departure.

Engagement with Emigrants

During this quarter of 2025, MRCs provided one-on-one counselling to **2,595** prospective migrants this quarter, with 57% of sessions held in Islamabad, 23% in Lahore, and 20% in Peshawar. Of these counselling sessions, 42% were conducted via WhatsApp, while another 42% took place after pre-departure orientation sessions.



All three MRCs solidified their role as a trusted point of contact for individuals seeking reliable guidance on migration. During this period, MRCs across the country have collectively handled a steady flow of job offer and visa-related verifications, with **170 cases processed** through the Pakistan Employment System (PES). These verifications included checking the authenticity of job advertisements, employment contracts, visa offers, and the licensing status of Overseas Employment Promoters (OEPs). The service

continues to be an important safeguard, helping prospective emigrants avoid falling victim to fraudulent schemes.

A number of suspicious cases were successfully identified during this period. In one instance, a medical professional approached MRC Peshawar with a seemingly attractive job offer for a position in Luxembourg with a salary of €5,000. Upon review, the offer turned out to be fraudulent, with a fake recruiter, non-functional contact details, and a demand for an upfront fee. Thanks to the MRC's timely intervention, the client avoided financial loss. Similar alerts were issued in cases involving unauthorised visa processing through travel agents and misinformation about visa fees, reinforcing the importance of MRCs in helping migrants make informed and safe decisions.

Analysis of data from both government and independent sources shows that between January and June 2025, approximately [337,000 Pakistanis](#) left the country for overseas employment. This puts Pakistan on course to reach 700,000 - 750,000 labour emigrants by the end of the year, slightly below 2024 figures, yet still reflecting a persistently high outflow. Labour migration continues to be the primary driver of emigration, consistent with MRC trends, where nearly 60% of all inquiries were related to seeking work opportunities abroad in this period. The Gulf countries continue to be the leading destinations, with Saudi Arabia alone accounting for up to 70% of all outgoing workers, followed by Qatar, Oman, and Bahrain. The UAE's reduced share (4%) reflects [tightening visa regulations](#). Meanwhile,



engagement with emigrants at MRC Islamabad showed a strong focus on Europe, and Peshawar maintained higher interest in Gulf-bound migration, confirming regional preferences highlighted by MRCs.

Additional migration patterns to non-traditional markets like Nigeria and Kyrgyzstan have continued to emerge, often linked to Chinese-led infrastructure and Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) projects. These developments reflect an expanding labour landscape across Africa and Central Asia. While blue-collar roles still dominate (60–75%), there's an evident rise in highly qualified professionals, including doctors, engineers, and IT experts, [seeking direct employment in high-income countries](#) such as the UK, Germany, the USA, Canada, and Australia. This diversification supports earlier findings of an increasing shift toward skilled migration and broader global mobility.

At the same time, Pakistan saw record remittance inflows, with [\\$38.3 billion](#) received in FY 2024–25—up 27% year-on-year—though June saw a post-Eid dip of 8%. These inflows underscore the economic impact of sustained emigration amid a struggling domestic job market as also reinforced by renewed policy support, with the [government allocating Rs 30 billion](#) to remittance subsidies to sustain this vital inflow despite fiscal pressures.

Meanwhile, the repatriation of Afghan nationals continued into the second quarter. Over [60,000 Afghans returned](#) between April and June 2025, bringing the total to around 980,000 since the launch of Pakistan's ["Illegal Foreigners Repatriation Plan"](#) in September 2023. Humanitarian agencies have raised concerns over

the added pressure this places on Afghanistan's already fragile infrastructure. MRCs were approached by some of these individuals' seeking guidance on humanitarian assistance and possibilities for relocation through humanitarian visa channels. These Afghan clients, many of whom expressed concerns about safety and lack of support upon return, inquired about options offered by countries issuing humanitarian or protection-based visas. While MRCs do not facilitate asylum processes, they worked in close cooperation with the MRC for Afghanistan to provide accurate information on available legal pathways and referred individuals to relevant organisations for further support.

At the same time, [risky migration routes](#) persist, particularly via West Africa to Spain's Canary Islands, where several Pakistani migrants have tragically lost their lives. In parallel, the government has tightened migration controls by imposing a [five-year travel ban](#) on deported nationals from foreign countries. Marking the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons under the global theme "Human Trafficking is Organized Crime – End the Exploitation", stakeholders from various international organisations (ICMPD, UNODC, ILO, IOM, SSDO, and IRARA) and the Government of Pakistan reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening collaboration and accelerating efforts to combat Trafficking in Persons as a form of organised crime, with a strong emphasis on justice for victims, inter-agency coordination, and prevention through awareness. These developments collectively reflect both the growing scale and complexity of migration dynamics in and from Pakistan during this period.



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