

July – September 2025

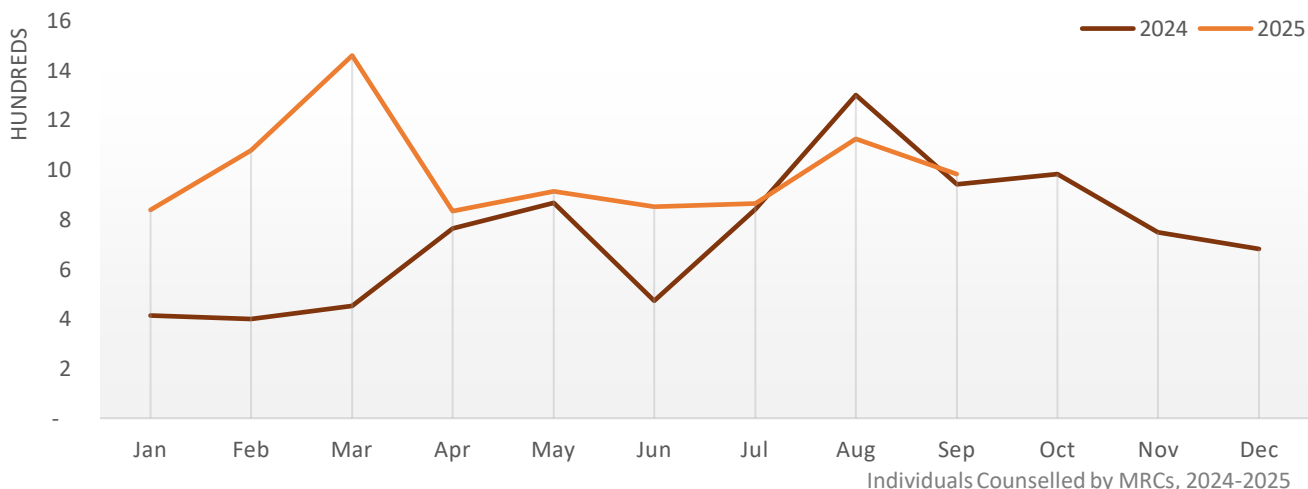
Migration Trends and Analysis: Pakistan

Migrant Resource Centres 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 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

- A **40% increase in pre-departure session participation** was recorded this quarter, highlighting a **notable rise in outgoing emigration** from the country.
- **GCC markets** remained the top destinations, accounting for **33% of total labour migration inquiries** (up from 29% in Q2), mainly in construction, manufacturing, and services.
- **European destinations** attracted **31% of inquiries** (down from 35%), with jobs focused in construction, agriculture, hospitality, and logistics, while **Asian countries such as Japan, South Korea, and China** saw growing interest in technical and skilled roles.
- **Emerging routes** to Central Asia and Africa rose slightly to **36%** this quarter, indicating diversification of migration choices amid rising visa costs and stricter entry rules in traditional destinations.
- Awareness of safe migration practices strengthened, as **legal and procedural inquiries surged from 9% to 21%**, reflecting more informed and responsible migration planning.
- **Rising visa costs in Saudi Arabia** and **stricter entry requirements in the UAE** reported this quarter, while **emigration to Oman declined** amid new nationalisation policy changes impacting foreign employment opportunities.



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

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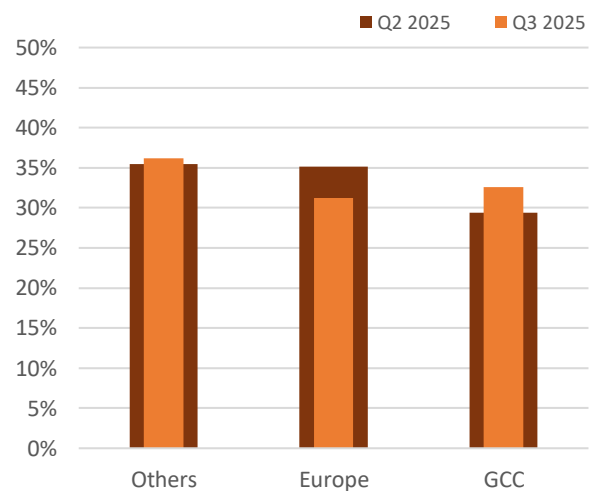


ENQUIRIES AND EMERGING TRENDS

Labour migration remained a key driver of mobility in Pakistan during the 3rd quarter of 2025, with semi-skilled and skilled workers continuing to dominate. During this quarter, the MRCs in Islamabad, Lahore, and Peshawar collectively recorded **2,681 inquiries**, representing a **12% increase** compared to the previous quarter (2,392 inquiries) and a **132% rise** from the first quarter (1,157 inquiries). GCC markets remained the leading destinations for direct employment, accounting for **33%** of total labour migration inquiries this quarter, up from **29%** in the second quarter of 2025. Common occupations span across construction, manufacturing, and service sectors. European destinations such as Greece, Italy, Portugal, Romania, and Germany attracted **31%** of labour related inquiries in this period, compared to **35%** in the previous quarter, with employment concentrated in construction, agriculture, hospitality, and logistics.

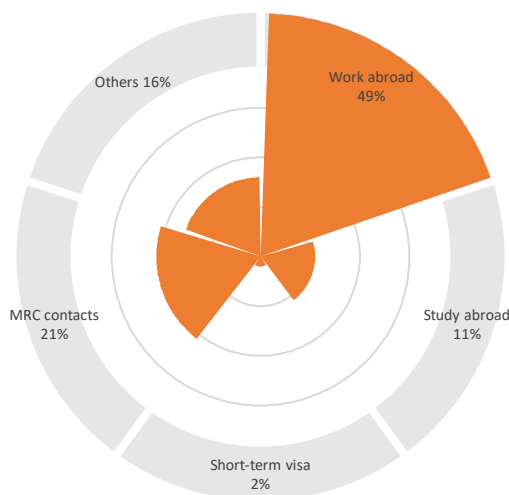
Meanwhile, Asian destinations, including Türkiye, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Japan, and China continued to gain interest, particularly for technical and skilled professions. Notably, Japan, South Korea,

and China saw rising migration preferences, signalling a gradual diversification beyond the GCC's traditional dominance. Inquiries related to emerging routes to Central Asia and parts of Africa, increased slightly to **36% in Q3 2025** from **35% in Q2 2025**, as some migrants began exploring alternative opportunities in Belarus, Sudan, Uzbekistan, Zimbabwe, and Tajikistan. Challenges such as rising visa costs, particularly in Saudi Arabia, and tightening entry requirements in the UAE was also reported during this quarter, further motivating exploration of new migration pathways by prospect emigrants. MRCs also observed that high-skilled emigration becomes more structured through academic and corporate



channels, as steady rise was observed in highly skilled and professional migration towards North America (USA, Canada) and Oceania (Australia, New Zealand) this quarter.

Inquiries related to **study abroad** made up **11%** of the total, where students and young professionals sought information on opportunities such as Chevening (UK), DAAD (Germany), and Erasmus+ (EU), with STEM fields - engineering, computer science, and environmental science - being the



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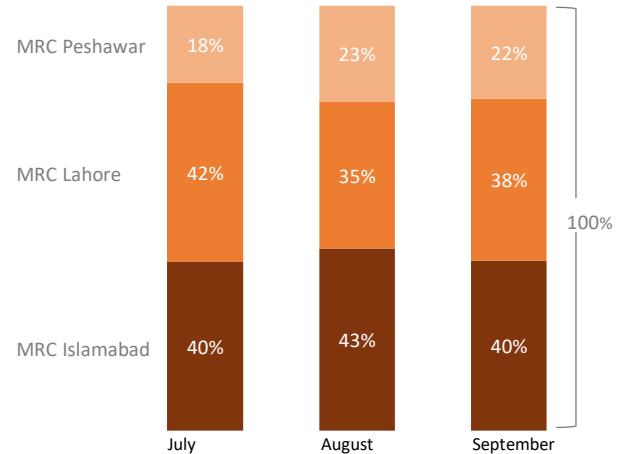


most sought after. Insights from outreach sessions, particularly across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) region, further confirmed this trend, as participants consistently expressed aspirations to pursue higher education in the UK, Germany, France, Italy, Canada, Australia, and Türkiye. Many students were already preparing for international opportunities through English language courses and soft skills training, indicating a proactive approach to improving their competitiveness for scholarships and admissions abroad.

Interest in the **legal and procedural aspects of migration** showed a notable rise during this quarter, increasing from **9%** to **21%** of total inquiries. This growth reflects a deepening awareness among clients about the importance of safe and well-informed migration planning. Individuals increasingly sought guidance on **documentation requirements, legal procedures, and the risks associated with irregular migration**, indicating a shift toward more responsible decision-making.

In this quarter, a total of **30,579 outgoing emigrants** received pre-departure information through 180 orientation sessions (PDOS) conducted across Islamabad, Lahore, and Peshawar. Among the participants, 98% were male and only 2% female, mainly in Islamabad. This marks a **40% increase** compared to the previous quarter, when 21,820 individuals participated in similar sessions, indicating a significant increase in outgoing emigration during this reporting period.

Islamabad led the quarter with **12,469 participants**, accounting for **41%** of the total, while **Lahore** followed closely with **11,714** attendees, representing **38%**. **Peshawar** hosted **6,396** outgoing emigrants, making up **21%** of those reached through PDOS this quarter. These



sessions continued to serve as a critical events for equipping emigrants with essential knowledge on legal migration processes, worker and employment rights, financial literacy, soft skills, ethical standards, and expectations in destination countries, supporting safer, more responsible, and well-informed journeys abroad.

Pre-departure orientation sessions revealed that labour migration remained particularly strong towards traditional destinations such as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Türkiye, UK, and Iraq. At the same time, a gradual rise was recorded in migration to non-traditional destinations, including Hong Kong, Lebanon, China, and Japan, indicating a diversification of migration preferences among Pakistani workers. Due to changes in nationalisation policies of Oman, migration flows to this particular country declined during this quarter. In line with regulatory directives, Protectorate of Emigrants (PoE) offices started collecting two affidavits for migrants traveling to Türkiye and Belarus, one from the emigrant confirming compliance with the Foreign Service Agreement (FSA) and another one from the parent or guardian acknowledging legal accountability in case of absconding. Furthermore, starting 18th October 2025, Soft Skills Training has been made mandatory for all

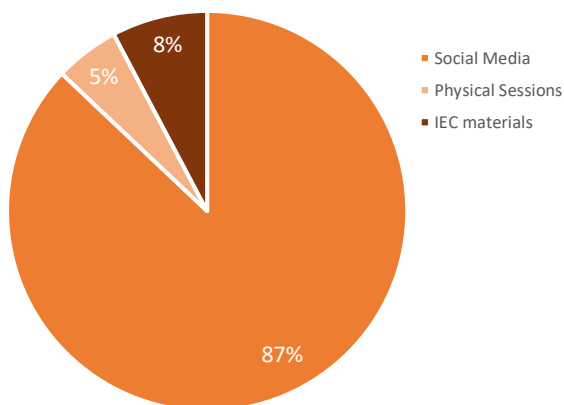


departing migrants through the designated application. These measures, along with ongoing monitoring and interviews at PoE offices, reflect a

REACH

In the third quarter of 2025, MRCs across Pakistan reached **approximately 973,300** individuals through social media campaigns, pre-departure orientation sessions, and on-ground outreach activities, bringing the **total reach for the first three quarters of 2025 to around 2.42 million people**. Cumulatively, the MRCs engaged **2.13 million individuals (88%) through social media platforms** (Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube), reached **157,500 people (7%) through the distribution of IEC materials**, and connected with **over 133,000 individuals (5%) through in-person and partner-supported initiatives**, reflecting a broad and diversified outreach strategy that continues to expand the MRCs' visibility and impact nationwide.

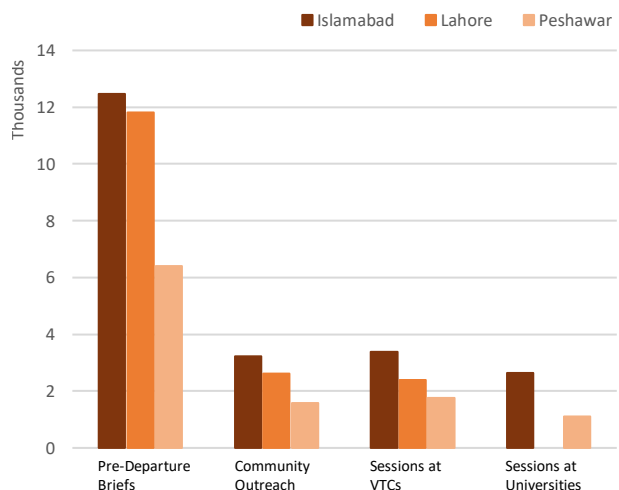
Of the total reach during this quarter, the majority was achieved through digital platforms, with a total of **847,331 (87%) people engaged online** - primarily via Facebook (815,124 - 96%), followed by YouTube (17,038 - 2%), Instagram (11,684 - 1.5%), and WhatsApp (3,485 - 0.5%). In addition, **75,264 individuals (8%)** were reached through the distribution of Information, Education and



comprehensive approach to supporting Pakistani emigrants and tracking evolving migration trends.

Communication (IEC) materials, expanding awareness at the community level.

Through on-ground engagement, MRCs directly reached **50,707 individuals (5%)** this quarter. **Islamabad** recorded the highest outreach with 21,696 participants (43%), followed by **Lahore** with 16,815 (33%), and **Peshawar** with 12,196 individuals (24%).



MRCs also strengthened their community-level outreach, engaging 7,420 individuals - with Islamabad again at the forefront (3,225 participants - 44%), followed by Lahore (2,623 - 35%) and Peshawar (1,572 - 21%).

Orientation sessions at Vocational Training Centres (VTCs) and universities further expanded the reach of safe migration awareness, collectively engaging 7,521 and 3,727 participants, respectively. While university sessions were conducted in Islamabad and Peshawar, MRC Peshawar also led public awareness through stall events, reaching an additional 1,370 participants.

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Robust and multifaceted on-ground outreach effort by the MRCs continued to promote safe and informed migration. A total of **357 outreach sessions** were conducted, consistent with the previous quarter, demonstrating sustained and intensified engagement across multiple channels. These included 77 community outreach events targeting grassroots populations, 78 sessions at TVET institutions aimed at equipping youth entering

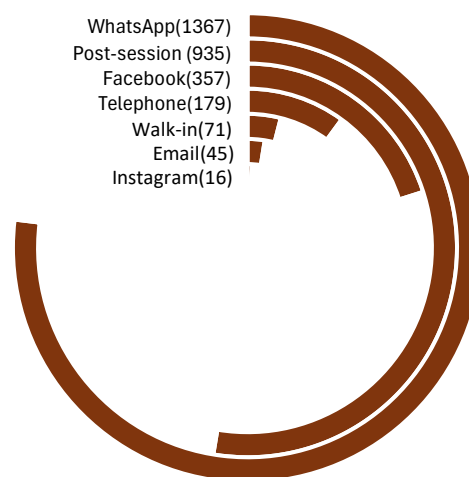
the labour market, and 22 university-based sessions engaging students and young professionals, alongside stall events, particularly in Peshawar. In addition, 180 pre-departure orientation and training sessions were held, providing essential information and guidance to prepare prospective emigrants for safe and successful migration journeys.

Engagement with Emigrants

As for the engagement with emigrants, this quarter MRCs provided one-on-one counselling to **2,970 prospective migrants**, marking a **14% increase** compared to the previous quarter. The majority of counselling sessions were conducted in **Islamabad (53%)**, followed by **Lahore (28%)** and **Peshawar (19%)**. Nearly half of all sessions (46%) were delivered through WhatsApp, enhancing accessibility for remote clients, while 31% took place immediately after pre-departure orientation sessions, ensuring timely and personalised guidance for departing emigrants.

In addition to in-person and online counselling, the MRC **hotlines and digital platforms** continued to serve as an important communication channels. A total of 623 clients contacted the hotline, while 379 individuals listened to pre-recorded messages and 42 left recorded inquiries for follow-up. Moreover, 1,381 people were engaged via WhatsApp and 1,064 through Facebook.

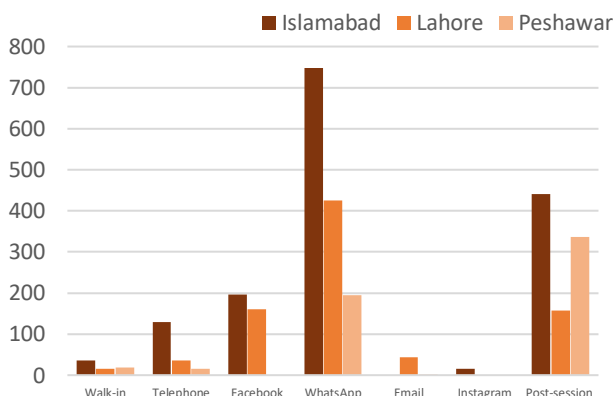
Furthermore, this quarter saw a **30% increase** in verification requests, with **221 cases verified** by MRCs (Islamabad 66%, Peshawar 20%, Lahore 14%). The verifications included 72 job advertisements, 62 job contracts/offers, and 36 visa cases, while 51 Overseas Employment Promoter (OEP) licenses were also processed to



ensure transparency and prevent fraudulent practices - such as the case of a Pakistani IT professional lured to Thailand through a fake online job offer and subsequently forced into online scamming operations - thereby supporting the protection of emigrants. Overall, the rise in verified cases and consistent activity across these categories' highlights strengthened efforts by MRCs to continue promoting safe, fair, and well-regulated labour migration. Moreover, MRCs in Pakistan continued their engagement with Pakistani emigrants and provided support in facilitating legal assistance and repatriation processes, as exemplified by the support provided to 24 migrant workers stranded in Iraq with expired visas and unpaid salaries.



As described above, the country experienced a significant surge in emigration throughout this quarter, continuing a trend that has intensified over the past few years. By mid-September 2025, nearly 2.9 million Pakistanis had left the country since 2023, with [BEOE figures suggesting 525,551](#) so far this year alone.



The emigration wave is also indicative of a broader societal shift, with a growing perception among Pakistanis that opportunities abroad offer better prospects for personal and professional growth. A [Gallup Pakistan survey](#) conducted in August 2025 revealed that 66% of Pakistanis believe that individuals who move abroad are more intelligent, reflecting a societal endorsement of emigration as a pathway to success.

While the emigration trend provides economic relief through remittances, it also poses

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challenges for Pakistan's domestic labour market and human capital development. The outflow of skilled professionals, particularly in sectors like healthcare and engineering, exacerbates the country's brain drain, potentially hindering long-term economic growth and development.



The third quarter of 2025 saw a relatively small number of Afghan individuals, 31 in total, seeking support for refugee-specific concerns. While the government's "Illegal Foreigners Repatriation Plan" remained in effect, MRCs did not experience a large-scale influx of cases during this period. However, the October 2025 announcement regarding the [immediate departure of all undocumented Afghan migrants](#) underscores the ongoing vulnerability of this population and the anticipated increase in requests for information and consultations from this group.

