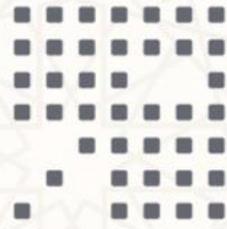


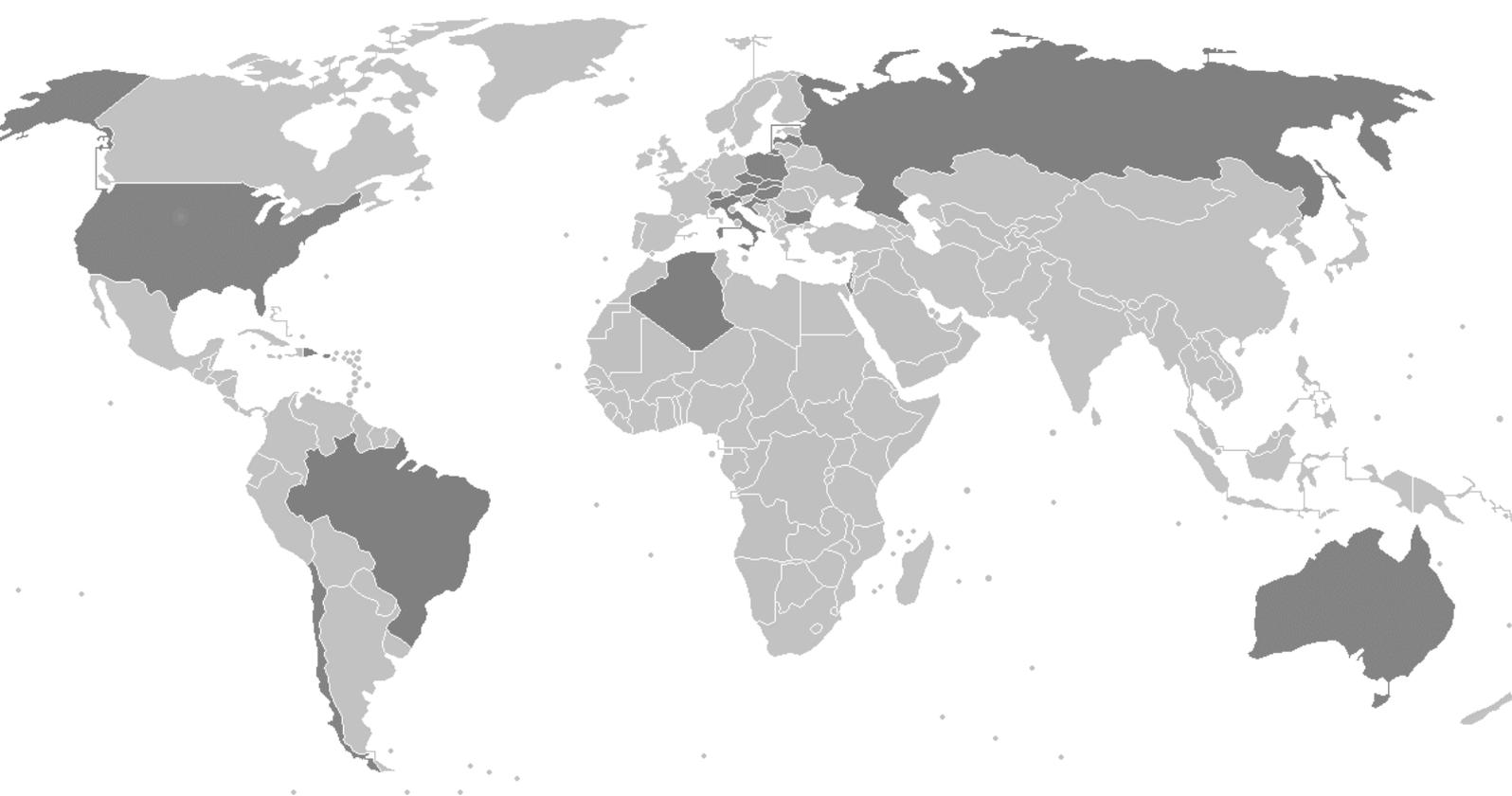
مائیکرنٹ  
ریسورس سنٹر



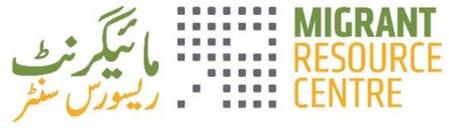
**MIGRANT**  
RESOURCE  
CENTRE

# Third party evaluation of Migrant Resource Centres

Islamabad and Lahore



Islamabad and Lahore



Third Party Evaluation of Migrant Resource Centres

Islamabad and Lahore

## Third Party Evaluation of MRCs in Islamabad and Lahore – Pakistan

Published by:

Dynamic Consulting Services (DCS)

Apartment – 04, Block 11, PHA G-7/1

Islamabad

Pakistan

URL: [www.dconsulting.pk](http://www.dconsulting.pk)

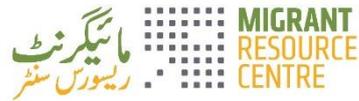
Email: [mail@dconsulting.pk](mailto:mail@dconsulting.pk)



in collaboration with:

International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)

The information and interpretations of the facts expressed in the study are those of DCS and do not necessarily reflect the views of ICMPD or any other organization. Reproduction is authorized provided the source is acknowledged but except for commercial purposes.



## Table of Contents

TABLE OF FIGURES	3
LIST OF TABLES	4
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	5
ACRONYMS	6
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	7
SERVICES PROVIDED	7
SECTION – 1 INTRODUCTION	10
BACKGROUND	10
PURPOSE OF THE STUDY	12
SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY	12
METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY	12
SCHEME OF THE REPORT	15
LIMITATIONS	15
SECTION – 2 FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS OF DATA (BENEFICIARIES OF MRC)	17
DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILING	17
GENERAL PERCEPTION ABOUT MIGRATION AND MRC	19
COUNSELING SERVICES	24
ORIENTATION AND OUTREACH SESSIONS	28
FGDS AT ISLAMABAD	30
FGDS AT LAHORE	30







## List of Tables

Table 1: Time Frame for the Survey activities conducted	14
Table 2: Respondents Profile	19
Table 3: Awareness on issues of migration before visiting MRCs	22
Table 4: Agenda of the Counseling Session	25
Table 5: Will you recommend MRC Counseling to potential migrants	27
Table 6: List of Institutions for FGDs	28
Table 7: Response of entities to which intending migrants are referred	33
Table 8: Level of Coordination between MRC and Administrative Authorities	36

# Acknowledgements

Dynamic Consulting Services (DCS) wishes to acknowledge and thank all the people for their contributions and invaluable support. The research was led by Mr. Muhammad Yaqub *Principal Consultant, DCS* who provided the necessary research design and insightful analysis for this study. This study would not have been possible without the generous support of MRCs and ICMPD Pakistan. We are grateful to Ms. Hina Maqsood, ICMPD Pakistan for her vital role in supporting this research and the subsequent support provided throughout the course of this research. This study and publication would not have been possible without the unflinching support provided by MRC staff and our colleagues from ICMPD Pakistan. We truly appreciate their contribution to this research. We would also like to extend our gratitude to the Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment (BEOE), Government of Pakistan for facilitating the study.

# Acronyms

BEOE	Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment
DoL	Department of Labor
DCS	Dynamic Consulting Services
EU	European Union
FIA	Federal Investigation Agency
FGD	Focus group discussions
HEC	Higher Education Commission
IEC	Information, Education, Communication
ICMPD	International Centre for Migration Policy Development
KII	Key Informant Interviews
MoP&HRD	Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRC	Migrant Resource Centre
NADRA	National Database and Registration Authority
NAVTTTC	National Vocational and Technical Training Commission
OEP	Overseas Employment Promoters
PAC HTO	Prevention and Control of Human Trafficking Ordinance
POE	Protectorate of Emigration
POEPA	Pakistan Overseas Employment Promoters Association
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TEVTA	Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

# Executive Summary

## Background

Emigration is an important issue for Pakistan, which is ranked as one of the top ten emigration countries in the world and the second among South Asian nations for the spread of its own nationals across the globe. Key destinations for Pakistani nationals include the Middle East (particularly the Gulf Cooperation Countries (GCC)), as well as North America and Europe. There have been clear benefits for Pakistan in terms of remittances sent: The 2019 financial year (July 2018 – June 2019) already indicates that Overseas Pakistanis send remittances surpassing US\$18 billion<sup>1</sup>, according to data released by the State Bank of Pakistan. Nonetheless, there are also important risks for Pakistani migrants, including labor exploitation and those risks inherent to migrant smuggling and human trafficking.

In order to promote accurate information on migration and support migrants in the migration process, two Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs), one in Islamabad and one in Lahore, were established under the auspices of the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (MOPHRD) in Islamabad and Department of Labor (DoL), Punjab in Lahore in 2016. The intrinsic aim of establishing these MRCs is to provide accurate and timely information on safe and legal migration, referral and counseling, as well as raising awareness on irregular migration and the related serious risks.

This report presents the findings of Third-Party Evaluation of MRCs commissioned by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) to Dynamic Consulting Services (DCS). This study aims to examine and analyze the services provided by MRCs in Islamabad and Lahore from three different standpoints, i.e. **beneficiaries, MRC staff and other stakeholders, including government entities**. MRCs provide different services to potential migrants in Pakistan that include **counseling, pre-departure briefing, referral facilitation, outreach and orientation sessions**.

## Services provided

Overall it can be said, that the Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs) in Islamabad and Lahore are doing a tremendous job in providing essential firsthand information to the potential migrants.

The majority of potential migrants that approached MRCs are youth. **55% of the respondents reached are between 18 to 25 years of age** and 32% between 26 to 35 years of age. The study furthermore shows that **people who intend to migrate for the first-time approach MRC more often** for collection of information related to migration, rather than returnees intending migration for the second time.

The responses of the primary questionnaires focused on counseling services, as the MRC database provided the contacts of the beneficiaries for this service. **The vast majority of the respondents are satisfied by the service delivery at MRCs with 98% fully or moderately satisfied**. 71% of potential migrants shared that counseling sessions are very effective (27% noted moderately effective) in terms of providing guidance and assistance in migration. Most of the beneficiaries

---

<sup>1</sup> State Bank of Pakistan, (2019) Statistics and DWH Department.

(71%) appreciate the skill level of MRC Counselors to be highly skilled and 28% evaluated the skill level as moderate. **The vast majority of the respondents (92%) reported that they would recommend the MRC services to someone else.**

During the study, it was observed that the most effective medium for publicity of MRCs and its services has been internet and social media.

The study furthermore shows that 98% of respondents are not contacted again by the MRC for a follow-up or feedback mechanism. ICMPD confirmed that the MRCs so far had not been tasked to follow-up with their counselled clients. However, **as recommended in the later part of the report, a proper referral mechanism could add value to the MRC services.**

Besides survey questionnaires, focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted in Technical Training Institutes, where MRC outreach sessions were carried out. The FGDs were conducted as the primary data source for the evaluation of the orientation and outreach sessions. FGDs at Lahore highlighted the need for including video content in the orientation sessions whereas **accessibility of MRC to potential migrants such as the location of the MRC has been one of the findings of the FGDs in Islamabad.** The FGDs helped in extracting significant data regarding the effectiveness of MRC Orientation Sessions and its importance as awareness tool against irregular migration. During FGDs the respondents shared that **MRCs need to extend the outreach to remote areas and should utilize internet and social media as mean to reach the maximum possible people.**

The staff of MRC Islamabad conducts pre-departure briefings at the Protectorate's of Emigrants Office in Rawalpindi on daily basis. However, this task is not delegated to the MRC staff in Lahore by the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (MOPHRD). The study suggests that **pre-departure briefings should be expanded to a two-day mandatory briefing session for everyone leaving abroad** and a mandatory Pre-Departure Orientation certificate for all the intended migrants.

The data collected through questionnaires and FGDs was substantiated and validated through a number of key informant interviews (KIIs). **For all stakeholders interviewed with in-depth knowledge of MRC activities, they positively evaluated the MRC's work and outreach with migrants.** Stakeholders interviewed also identified a number of key issues limiting the outreach of MRCs. The **location of both MRCs (Islamabad and Lahore), as well as engagement with other stakeholders and issues in outreach of MRCs surface as some of the major challenges MRC face.** These challenges were always described as hampering the positive work and outreach possible through MRCs, without which MRCs' impact would be exponentially increased. In all cases, these challenges were echoed by one or both MRCs. MRCs are thus well aware of their limitations, and they usually highlighted steps taken as needed to maximize their outreach despite these hindrances.

The responses from MRC staff regarding the number of beneficiaries referred is mixed, as four out of eight respondents<sup>2</sup> stated that 50 or more potential intending migrants are referred to different government entities annually, compared to the average 322 potential migrants reaching for counseling services only. It is pertinent here to mention that **referral to relevant institutions or services is an intrinsic part of counseling.**

---

<sup>2</sup> Double response received from one respondent at MRC Islamabad

## Recommendations

Based upon the findings of the study, a diverse set of actions is recommended which, if implemented, would contribute toward effective, relevant and impact-oriented service delivery for MRCs. The study highlights the limitations in terms of outreach activities, as well as the need for an awareness raising campaigns. It has been recommended that MRCs need to develop a **publicity plan and outreach policy encompassing social media campaigns**, which are the most effective media for outreach according to the findings of this report. Similarly, building liaison with local press, representatives of various TV channels, print media and cable TV would go a long way in ensuring maximum outreach. The report also suggests that MRCs shall **strengthen the coordination with relevant service providers** by extending MOUs and Letter of Understandings, and develop SOPs, guidelines and document referral pathway to improve the referral facilitation. The study has identified that the lack of MoUs with different stakeholders particularly for service delivery is one of the factors that slow down the work of MRC. Similarly, it will not be possible for the MRCs to address most of the challenges faced by potential migrants in Pakistan without **creating an effective synergy between the technical and administrative interface for service delivery**. Therefore, the study emphasizes on the importance of initiating policy engagement with the federal and provincial governments/Ministries to persuade them to **ensure political and administrative support for the activities conducted by the MRCs**.

Moreover, the study shows that the location of both MRCs has severely reduced their ability to outreach regularly to the potential migrant community, hindering both general awareness of the MRCs and also access to their services. The study recommends that the current location of both MRCs must be changed to a location near a marketplace or area with more foot traffic or to a location near services migrants need to access prior to departure, for example near the POE or visa office, attestation office, passport office or NADRA office. It is also recommended that the MRCs should expand and launch services in a number of new locations to cater to the needs of potential migrants from different areas such as Sialkot, Gujrat, Gujranwala, Mandi *Bahauddin*, Rahimyar Khan, Bhawalpur, Peshawar and Karachi, which are known as regions of origin for emigration, particularly irregular migrants.

Most stakeholders, as well as MRC staff, in both Islamabad and Lahore, highlighted the need to engage and outreach to migrants already before they have decided to migrate and contacted sub-agents, described as the “pre-awareness phase” rather than the “pre-departure phase”. This was considered important as the MRC is free of charge and could ensure against common defrauding of migrants by sub-agents, as well as potentially deter unsafe irregular migration. The study suggests furthermore that the MRC needs to enhance its coordination with different stakeholders. Advocacy and engagements at policy level are needed to streamline the scope and domain of activities conducted by MRC. It has been observed during the course of research that MRC is doing an incredible job by conducting pre-departure briefings at PoE in Rawalpindi. It is highly recommended that the Bureau of Emigration (BoE) delegate these briefings to MRC in Lahore too. It is also recommended that the briefings are made mandatory for anyone migrating abroad. Increasing the duration of the briefings will also help in enabling the migrants to tackle difficult situations in the host countries.

# Section – 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

Migration is considered to be one of the defining global issues of the early twenty-first century, as more and more people are on the move today than at any other point in human history<sup>3</sup>. Migration is also particularly important in the Pakistani context. **Pakistan being a strong emigration country is ranked as one of the top ten countries in the world and the second among South Asian nations** for the spread of its own nationals across the globe<sup>4</sup>. With estimates ranging from 8 to 10 million people, the global Pakistani diaspora accounts for about 4 per cent of the country's population, estimated at 185 million<sup>5</sup>. According to the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Pakistan has the 6<sup>th</sup> largest diaspora in the world<sup>6</sup>. Key destinations for Pakistanis include the Middle East, as well as North America and Europe. Pakistanis in Europe are also scattered across many countries beyond, including Italy, Greece, Spain, France, Germany, Norway and Denmark; destinations in Asia include China, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Thailand. Migration from Pakistan can be categorized geographically by destination, as well as by temporal perspectives<sup>7</sup>. Pakistani migration to the Middle East comprises temporary labor migration, usually on two- or four-year fixed-term contracts, and more permanent migration. The Pakistani diaspora communities in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates comprise the largest diaspora hubs world-wide. Migrants who go to the Middle East to work are typically men whose levels of education are above the national average. Many returns within four or five years<sup>8</sup>. Cross-border mobility with Iran and Afghanistan, where local residents have visa-free mobility, present another dimension to migration in Pakistan. As of 2016, Bureau of Immigration Statistics reports that the number of registered emigrants has increased to almost five times over the previous decade and over 946,000 legal workers have left the country in the year 2015 alone<sup>9</sup>. In 2017, Overseas Pakistanis sent remittances amounting to ₨2137 billion (US\$20 billion)<sup>10</sup>, according to data released by the State Bank of Pakistan.

While emigration creates some positive prospects for the country, it also raises issues related to vulnerability towards human traffickers and exploitation. Pakistan has remained a destination, transit, and source country for smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons. To combat this menace of human trafficking, Pakistan promulgated the Prevention and Control of Human Trafficking Ordinance also known as (PACHTO) in 2002, the "Prevention of Trafficking in Persons

---

<sup>3</sup> Pildat (2008), "Overseas Pakistani Workers; Significance and Issues of Migration"

<sup>4</sup> ILO (2006), "Strengthening Labor Migration Governance in Pakistan"

<sup>5</sup> Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), (2015) "Pakistan as a Return Migration Destination"

<sup>6</sup> Service, Tribune News. "India has largest diaspora population in world: UN". The Tribune. Retrieved 16-03-2019

<sup>7</sup> Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), (2015) "Pakistan as a Return Migration Destination"

<sup>8</sup> Arif, G. M., (2009). Recruitment of Pakistani workers for overseas employment: Mechanisms, exploitation and vulnerability. Geneva: International Labor Organization.

<sup>9</sup> BEOE, (2016), –Statement Showing Number of Pakistani workers Registered for Overseas Employment Through Bureau of Emigration & Overseas Employment. || available at <http://www.beoe.gov.pk/files/statistics/country-wise2016.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> State Bank of Pakistan, (2017) Statistics and DWH Department.

Act" and " Prevention of Smuggling of Migrants Acts" in 2018 as well as establishing Anti-Human Trafficking Units and Circles under the jurisdiction of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA). However, migrant smuggling and human trafficking still remain issues of concern<sup>11</sup>.

In the above context, the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) is striving for making migration and mobility of people orderly, safe and regular. For this purpose, two Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs), one in Islamabad and one in Lahore were established under the auspices of the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (MOPHRD) in Islamabad and Department of Labor (DoL), Punjab in Lahore in 2016. The intrinsic aim of establishing MRCs is to provide accurate and timely information on safe and legal migration, referral and counseling, as well as raising awareness on irregular migration and the related serious risks.

MRCs provide information and counseling to intending migrants on safe migration and raise awareness on irregular migration and the related serious risks, in order to empower potential migrants and encourage them to make informed choices. The following are the services provided by the MRCs:

- a) **Counseling:** Counseling is one of the core services offered at the MRCs provided to aspiring migrants who approach the MRCs. Clients can benefit from one-to-one consultations at MRC's premises, but they can also choose to consult MRC's Counselors over the phone, skype or email.
- b) **Pre-departure Briefings:** Pre-departure briefings are important for the protection of migrants and migrant workers in the host country. These briefings are conducted with the migrants who are about to leave for abroad. Pre-departure briefings provide basic information to departing migrants to ease their transition into the country of destination and empower them with necessary and useful information to maximize the benefit of their overseas employment experience.
- c) **Orientation Sessions for Intending Migrants and Students:** MRCs provide orientation to intending migrants such as, workers, professionals and students. MRCs emphasize on informing people about safe migration whether it is for employment, settlement or education. The orientation sessions highlight the benefits of regular migration and expose the hazards and consequences associated with irregular migration.
- d) **Referral Facilitation:** The MRCs have established a referral system with government and private institutions to facilitate the migration process based on individual needs. MRC Counselors can assess the needs of intending migrants and refer them to relevant institutions to get necessary documentation, trade testing, certifications, verification of advertised jobs by overseas employment promoters and register their grievances.

Since its inception, the MRCs have reached more than 110,000 outgoing, intending and potential migrants through direct information sessions<sup>12</sup>. In addition, at least 1.5 million individuals were reached through an information campaign on TV, radio, SMS, print media, and social media.

ICMPD has been actively advocating for making the activities of the MRCs more efficient and efficacious for potential migrants in Pakistan. To this end, ICMPD collaborated with Dynamic Consulting Services (DCS) in an effort to evaluate MRC activities in terms of its relevance and

---

<sup>11</sup>UNODC (2013) - Recent trends of human trafficking and migrant smuggling to and from Pakistan

<sup>12</sup> ICMPD, 2018

effectiveness, efficiency of implementation, its methodology of service delivery and impact on stakeholders and target beneficiaries. The study informs about the roles and contribution of MRCs for provision of support to Pakistani potential migrants. It also offers strategic and procedural level recommendations for improvement in services of the MRCs.

## 1.2 Purpose of the Study

The study aimed to examine and analyze the services provided by MRCs in Islamabad and Lahore from three different standpoints, i.e. the points of view of beneficiaries, MRC staff and other stakeholders, regarding the services provided by MRC. **It reviews the existing service delivery mechanisms of MRCs and their effects/impacts on potential migrants as well as creating awareness regarding legal migration among general public.** Additionally, the report examines and highlights the **key challenges in the administrative and service delivery structure of MRCs.** The study aims to provide an analysis of the efficiency and effectiveness of MRC activities in Islamabad and Lahore and offers strategic and procedural level recommendations for its improvement.

## 1.3 Scope and Methodology of the Study

The current study by Dynamic Consulting Services (DCS) analyzes the existing administrative and service delivery structure of MRC in Islamabad and Lahore. DCS adopted beneficiary-centered, impact-oriented, transparent, result driven, gender sensitive and rights-based approach and methodology in achieving the deliverable. The evaluation is focused on:

- **Relevance:** The study identified the extent to which MRCs is contextually relevant to the priorities and needs of the potential intending migrants and their families.
- **Effectiveness:** The study looked into the MRCs activities as to how the MRCs outputs have evolved throughout the project time, how beneficiaries have perceived these MRCs and to what extent the stakeholders are aware of the possibilities to make use of MRCs outputs. Besides the stakeholders' awareness the evaluation looked into the effectiveness of stakeholders actually making use of the MRCs outputs and how the outputs can be improved.
- **Impacts/Outcomes:** The evaluation also identified the intended and unintended outcomes which have been achieved and to what extent the stakeholders perceive the benefits from MRCs outputs and what real difference has been made/observed for the target group.

## 1.4 Methodology of the Study

Dynamic Consulting Services (DCS) kept more focus on primary data for the evaluation of the activities as primary data brings indicators that measure the activities with objectivity. In view of

the previous experience with surveys clearly indicating that identifying eligible respondents is a foreseeable challenge, DCS used its institutional linkages and networks in the target areas to identify and engage with the respondents. The study was undertaken through identifying and **surveying 292 beneficiaries who availed counseling service from MRC in Islamabad and Lahore** (92 beneficiaries from MRC Lahore and 200 beneficiaries from Islamabad). The pre-identification of beneficiaries was based on the available database with the MRCs. It is worth mentioning that DCS strived to reach 50 percent beneficiaries from each MRC (Lahore and Islamabad) however according to database provided we could reach only 92 beneficiaries from MRC Lahore. Efforts were made to encourage diversity among respondents in terms of possible factors, which may affect the nature of experience such as respondent age, domicile of residence, education level and gender. Despite diligent efforts, the DCS team was able to identify and reach only 5 out of 54 eligible female respondents from the beneficiaries, which represents 9.2 percent of the total female beneficiaries on the database.<sup>13</sup> Due to some limitations such as singular contact details, many of which are out of date, DCS was able to reach 12 female beneficiaries out of which five beneficiaries agreed to respond to our questionnaire. It makes 42 percent female response rate for the study. This actually represents a fairly high response rate, comparatively to male respondents. Similarly, out of 72 participants of FGDs conducted for Orientation Sessions at Lahore and Islamabad, the teams were able to identify and reach only 8 female respondents.

All necessary steps were ensured to follow ethical research protocols. A team of researchers engaged with the identified respondents and informed them about the purpose, scope and objectives of the study and their willingness to participate in the study was sought.

The methodology for the report included, documentary review, meetings with Stakeholders and Orientation Sessions, Surveys, and Data Analysis.

*a.* Desk Review & Data Extraction:

The desk review included collection and review of key relevant documents and data available on MRCs activities in Islamabad and Lahore. The review included, but was not limited to include available relevant literature, the MRC database, reports, government census data, and relevant research studies.

*b.* Meetings with Stakeholders and Orientation Sessions:

A series of meetings were conducted with the relevant stakeholders and project staff of MRCs and ICMPD. These meetings helped in understanding the organization's implementation strategy in respect of target indicators achieved against planned target, achievements made, challenges faced, and lessons learned that may help ICMPD in improving future interventions. During these meetings, secondary data was shared by ICMPD in the form of reports etc. Orientation meetings were conducted with the management of MRC and ICMPD.

*c.* Surveys, interviews, focus group discussions (Primary Data):

The DCS team conducted a comprehensive survey by employing qualitative and quantitative tools for the collection and analysis of data with the help of survey

---

<sup>13</sup> The database contained only 54 female beneficiaries, out of whom only 5 responded to our survey. It is 9.2% of the total female beneficiaries on the database.

questionnaire comprised of open and closed-end questions, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). Timeframe for these activities is as under;

Activities	Implementation	Venue
Orientation Meeting with MRC and ICMPD	December 2018	MRC Islamabad
Conduct Brainstorming Session at MRC Islamabad	December 2018	MRC Islamabad
Implement questionnaires with MRC staff and beneficiaries	February – March 2019	Islamabad and Lahore
Conduct Focus Group with clients at Islamabad and Lahore	February – March 2019	04 FGDs at Islamabad and 02 at Lahore
Interview of relevant stakeholders –conducted by ICMPD	March – April 2019	Islamabad and Lahore
Interviews with MRC Coordinators (Lahore and Islamabad)	February 2019	Islamabad
Interview with Project Officer MRC	March 2019	Islamabad

*Table 1: Time Frame for the Survey activities conducted*

Following tools were used for this purpose;

- I. **Questionnaires:** The survey team designed two detailed questionnaires (one each for beneficiaries and MRC staff). The questionnaire for MRC staff was responded by a total of eight respondents<sup>14</sup> (three responses from MRC Islamabad and four responses from MRC Lahore). The purpose of the staff questionnaire was to extract maximum information regarding the administrative structure and service delivery mechanisms of MRC. It also focused on identifying legal/regulatory lacunas that exist in the current structure of MRC’s administration. Similarly, the questionnaire for beneficiaries was responded by a total of 292 respondents (92 beneficiaries for MRC Lahore and 200 beneficiaries for MRC Islamabad). The questionnaire designed for beneficiaries mainly focused on the efficiency and effectiveness of the activities of MRC for potential migrants and general public at large.
- II. **Key Informant Interviews (KIIs):** The data collected through questionnaires was duly validated and substantiated with a number of Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). Three interviews with MRC staff (one each with coordinator from MRC Islamabad and Lahore and Project Officer MRC) were conducted by DCS. Similarly, 15 Key Informant Interviews were conducted from February to April 2019 with relevant national and international stakeholders engaged with the MRCs, including with MRC Coordinators and staff<sup>15</sup> in both Islamabad and Lahore<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> Double response received from one respondent at MRC Islamabad

<sup>15</sup> One-on-one interviews with the two coordinators were conducted by DCS, and a group interview with the MRC teams was conducted by ICMPD’s Research Unit representative.

<sup>16</sup> Conducted by DCS

Interviews were conducted based on a semi-structured qualitative interview guideline and adapted as per the experience and engagement of each stakeholder with the MRCs. These interviews were conducted either by DCS or an ICMPD researcher, in Islamabad, Lahore, or by Skype, and analysis of these interviews was duly coordinated for this evaluation.

- III. **Focus Group Discussion:** Six Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were carried out with a total of 72 beneficiaries of Outreach and Orientation Sessions in Islamabad and Lahore. Four FGDs were conducted in Islamabad with a total number of 50 participants whereas two FGDs were conducted in Lahore with a total number of 22 participants. These FGDs were conducted in Technical and Vocational Training Institutes where the MRCs had already conducted Orientation Session. The FGDs helped in extracting significant data regarding the effectiveness of MRC Orientation Session and its importance as awareness tool against irregular migration.

d. **Data Analysis:**

All data collected via the various research tools with beneficiaries, MRC staff and relevant stakeholders, regarding MRC service provision, coordination and outreach, was collected, analyzed and triangulated. Focus was placed particularly on the strategies and initiatives employed for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of MRC activities. Data analysis for the survey was carried out using Microsoft excel. Keeping in view the nature of the exercise, DCS evaluated each activity as stand-alone activity, although through the process of the evaluation it became clear that the referral mechanism in fact acts as an integrated activity to the others. Therefore, while it is analyzed here separately, its work should be seen as part of the other services.

## 1.5 Scheme of the Report

The report consists of five sections. First section provides background to the study, its purpose, methodology, scheme of report and limitations. The second section presents an analysis of MRC activities where each activity was analyzed upon set indicators and developed tools. The analysis section is limited to the standpoint of beneficiaries alone. Third section presents the inputs received from MRC staff and the fourth section presents the perspectives of national and international stakeholders. The last section concludes the study and provides recommendations for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the existing service delivery mechanism of MRC based on the results of the data collection.

## 1.6 Limitations

DCS encountered a variety of challenges in the implementation of this evaluation, not least in the data collection phase. These challenges and limitations related to data collection are detailed as followed:

Firstly, while a database was available for beneficiaries of counseling sessions, contact details or information for beneficiaries of other services (e.g. pre-departure briefings, orientation sessions) were not available. Therefore, DCS was only able to contact counseling beneficiaries from prior to the evaluation. In this case, those beneficiaries contacted through the database were those who were still present in Pakistan. Thus, those beneficiaries who are currently migrants abroad are not represented in the sample. For other services, DCS used focus group discussions for beneficiaries identified during services (e.g. orientation and outreach sessions) conducted during the evaluation implementation. This limit both the time relevance of the data (i.e. beneficiaries of orientation and outreach sessions prior to the evaluation time period), as well as the number of potential beneficiaries who could be reached for this evaluation.

Secondly, the DCS team was not allowed by the Protectorate of Emigrants Office (PoE) to conduct FGDs with beneficiaries of the pre-departure briefings held by the MRC Islamabad. These pre-departure briefings are held on daily basis at the PoE in Rawalpindi. Therefore, the DCS team analyzed data from Key Informant Interviews with MRC staff (including the coordinators) in Islamabad and Lahore, the MRC Project Officer and other stakeholders with knowledge of the topic. Pre-departure briefings are not yet implemented in Lahore, thus all findings related to pre-departure briefings apply only to MRC Islamabad.

Thirdly, as discussed in the analysis below, the lack of a Memorandum of Understanding poses a number of limitations to MRC work. It also affected the evaluation due to the unavailability of most government officials for an official interview on the MRC work. This quite clearly impacts the scope of the evaluation, as government institutions are the main counterparts for MRCs and all work should be coordinated with them. However, DCS and an ICMPD researcher still conducted interviews with a wide range of relevant stakeholders, including a representative from the Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment (BEOE), which still provided analysis of MRCs work since their launch.

Similarly, during the course of research it has been observed that referral facilitation is actually an intrinsic part of one on one counseling as well as in orientation sessions and pre-departure briefings. Beneficiaries approach MRC with their issues, the MRC counselor then takes the client through the labor migration mechanism, and if need be “referring” him/her to the various institutions and offers help in case the client needs help along the way. If they do not approach MRC again, it is assumed that the issue has been solved. If the same beneficiary calls again, a new record is made of this phone call and people are guided through their issue. However, to treat referral facilitation as a stand-alone activity, the survey team acquired limited information regarding referral facilitation through three interviews conducted with MRC Coordinators at Lahore and Islamabad and Project Officer MRC. The results of the interviews are integrated with the responses received through staff questionnaire. The staff questionnaire was responded by total seven staff members of MRC (four from MRC Lahore and three at MRC Islamabad), although eight responses were received. This itself presents a limitation to the MRC staff results, as a duplicate response was received.

It is worth mentioning that DCS strived to reach 50 percent beneficiaries from each MRC (Lahore and Islamabad) however according to limitations related to the database (e.g. singular contact details, many of which are out of date) we could reach and survey only 92 beneficiaries from MRC Lahore and 200 beneficiaries from MRC Islamabad. Similarly, despite efforts, the survey teams were able to identify and reach only five out of 54 eligible female respondents from the provided database. It is 9.2 percent of the total female beneficiaries on the database. Due to some limitations such as singular contact details, many of which are out of date, DCS was able to reach 12 female beneficiaries out of which five beneficiaries agreed to respond to our questionnaire. It makes 42 percent female response rate for the study, which is quite a high response rate comparatively. Out of 72 participants of FGDs conducted for Orientation Sessions at Lahore and Islamabad, the teams were able to identify and reach only eight female respondents.

# Section – 2 Findings and Analysis of Data (Beneficiaries of MRC)

This section presents results for the respondents of counseling services of MRCs. The total number of respondents in the survey is 292. The survey team could reach only 92 respondents from MRC Lahore whereas 200 beneficiaries for MRC Islamabad were reached. In order to better understand the findings of the study, it remains important to understand the limitations of the respondent experience. For this purpose, some key variables were examined. A brief analysis of these variables has been presented below:

## Demographic Profiling

Official data on the profile of Pakistani emigrants is not readily available. A number of studies have attempted to use different source to gather data on emigrants' profiles. A study by UNODC in 2012 profiled Pakistani migrants with a majority of single men of 30 year of age on average with an origin from Punjab (mostly North Punjab), KP and Karachi in Pakistan. Euro stats largely confirm the similar age and sex bracket for the irregular migrants in EU<sup>17</sup>. DCS has tried to ensure that the research sample used for evaluation study is representative.

The data collected during research shows that 55% of the respondents reached are between 18 to 25 years of age, this shows that majority of migrants that approached MRCs are youth. As the age ascends from 18, a declining trend can be seen in the number of migrants reached. The data shows that 32% of the respondents are between 26 to 35 years of age, eight percent between 36 to 45 years, two percent of the respondents are below 18 years. In the age of 45 to 55 years the percentage of respondents is two percent and one percent of respondents were above 55 years of age.

Similarly, the migration remains highly male dominated with about 94% irregular immigrants from Pakistan were found to be males<sup>18</sup>. The population was widely Muslim, with low education, belonging to the rural areas. The illiteracy rate was found to be much higher (13.8%) than average from other immigrant groups (9.2%), among the literate the largest groups had primary school qualification (30.6%). The analysis of gender as an indicator is quite difficult keeping in view the fact that only five women were reached during data collection out of 54 female beneficiaries available in the provided database.

---

<sup>17</sup> Eurostats: Non-EU citizens found to be illegally present in the EU-28, by sex and age, 2008 and 2014; available at [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/File:F3\\_Non-](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/File:F3_Non-)

<sup>18</sup> Yousef 2013. –The vicious circle of migration from Pakistan to Greece and back to Pakistan”

### Age and Gender

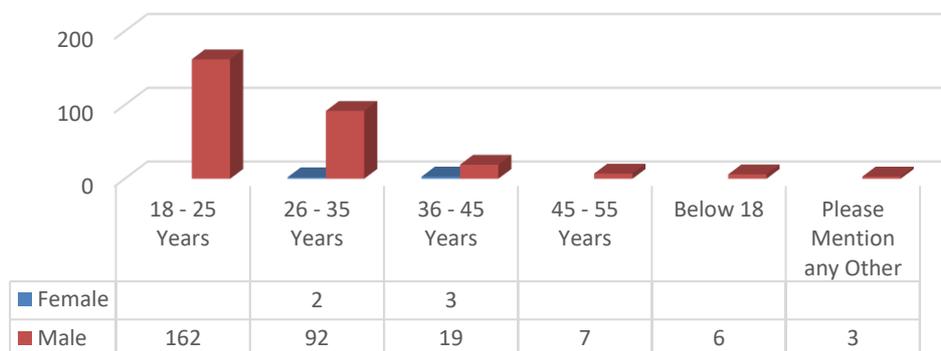


Figure 1: Age and Gender

Keeping in view the academic qualification of the respondents, data shows that majority of the respondents are educated with 46% university graduates and 26% with 12 years of formal education.

### Academic Qualification

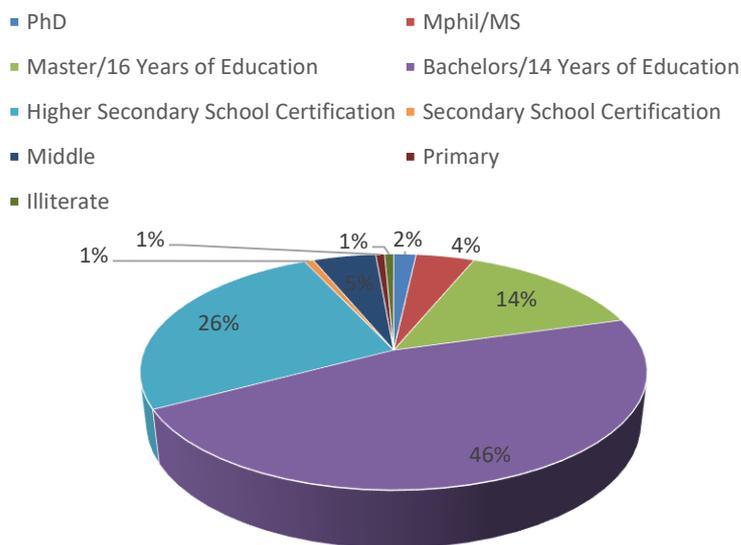


Figure 2: Academic Qualification

During the survey, the respondents reached were from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, Sindh, ICT and Gilgit Baltistan as shown in Table – 2.

S. No	Province	Number of Respondents
1	KP	31
2	Punjab	40
3	Sindh	2
4	ICT	217
5	Gilgit Baltistan	2

Table 2: Respondents Profile

## General Perception about Migration and MRC

The survey questionnaire was designed to analyze general perception regarding MRCs and migration. This section shows why potential migrants intend to migrate, what they are expecting from MRCs, their priorities for migration and how potential migrants approached MRCs.

### Reasons to approach MRCs

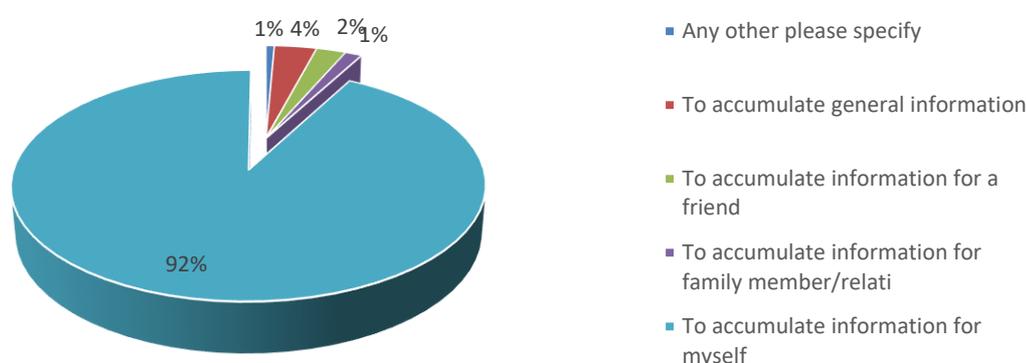


Figure 3: Reasons to approach MRCs

Enquiring what were the reasons that potential migrants approached the MRCs, 92% of the respondents showed their interest in accumulation of information for themselves. This is a clear indication that the MRCs have been reached by potential migrants with clear objectives and are aware of the scope of MRCs. Only 4% of respondents shared that they have reached MRCs for general information and two percent of the respondents approached to acquire information for friends. Meanwhile the study also shows that 99% of potential migrants have intention to migrate for the first time and one percent are returnees. The study shows that people who intend to migrate for the first-time approach MRC more often for collection of information related to migration, rather than the returnees intending migration for the second time.

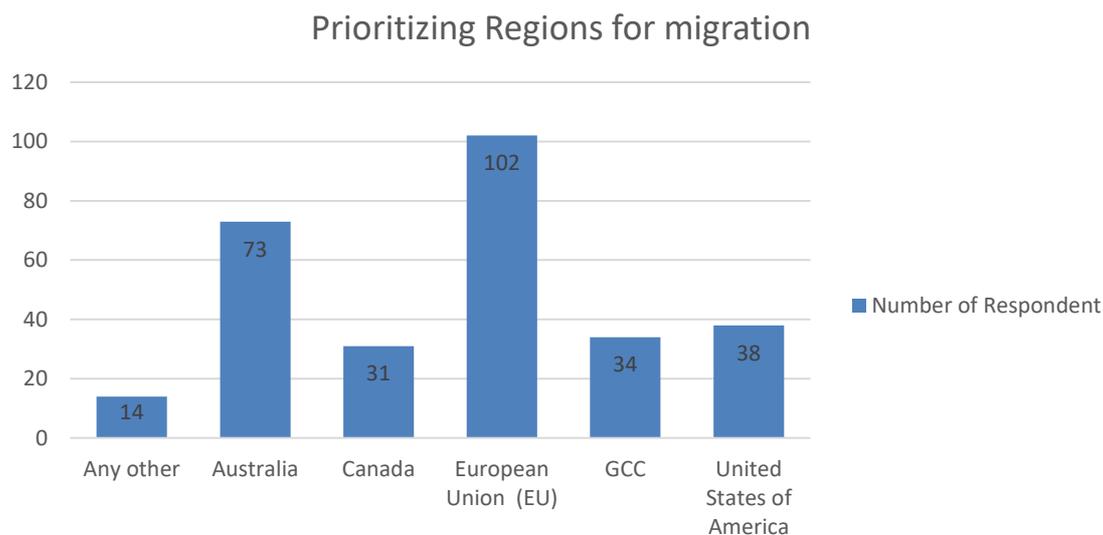


Figure 4: Prioritizing Regions for migration

The study shows that a plurality (102) of the respondents intend to migrate to Europe while 73 respondents shared their interest for migration to Australia.

Upon asking the questions when the respondents approached MRCs, 70% of respondents shared that they have approached MRC two years ago, 10 percent shared that up-to one and half years ago while the same percentage responded that they have approached MRCs six months ago.

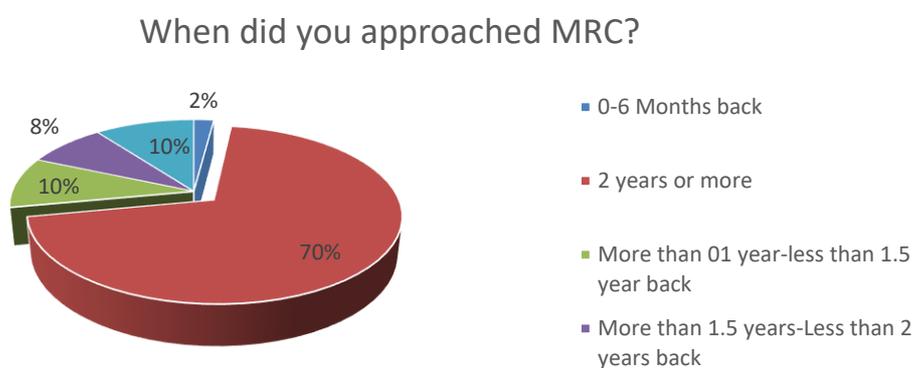


Figure 5: When did you approached MRC?

### Medium of Publicity

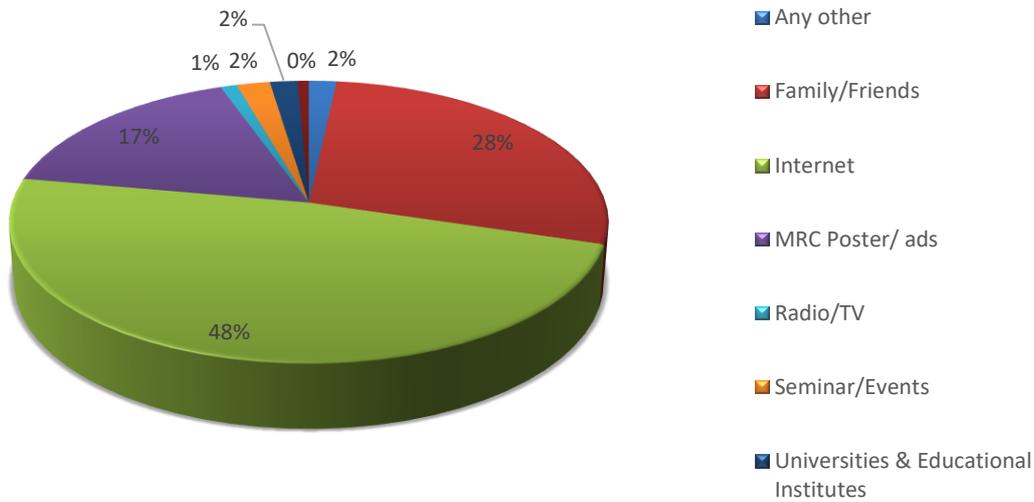
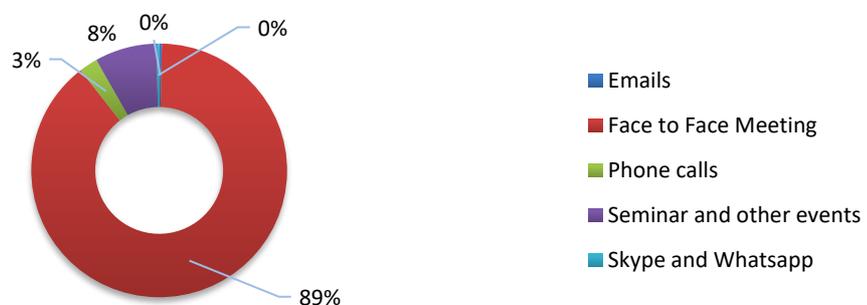


Figure 6: Medium of Publicity

During the study it was observed that the most effective medium for publicity of MRCs and its services has been internet and social media. 48% of respondents shared that they came to know about MRCs and its services from internet and social media, 28% shared that their family and friends told them about MRC and its services while 17% came to know about MRC from posters and print advertisements. MRC had radio shows and TV shows running as well however, only one percent of the respondents shared that they came to know about MRCs through these radio and TV campaigns. This means that MRC needs to revisit its radio/TV campaign policy. Similarly, this trend definitely can be linked with the education and literacy level of the target beneficiaries of the MRCs. For instance, because the campaigns have primarily been in written form, this has perhaps affected who received the information and thus availed MRC services. Thus, social media and online engagement strategy is needed to be focused and improved for better publicity.

Upon enquiring what medium was used in service delivery 89% of respondents shared that they had one on one interaction with MRC staff during the beneficiary’s visit to MRC, eight percent opted for seminars and three percent of respondents opted for telephonic interaction.

### Medium used for service delivery by MRC



Among all these interactions with potential migrants 92% interactions were carried out with potential migrants who have reached MRC for one interaction only, while six percent of the potential migrants contacted MRCs for second interaction or service delivery. When asked about,

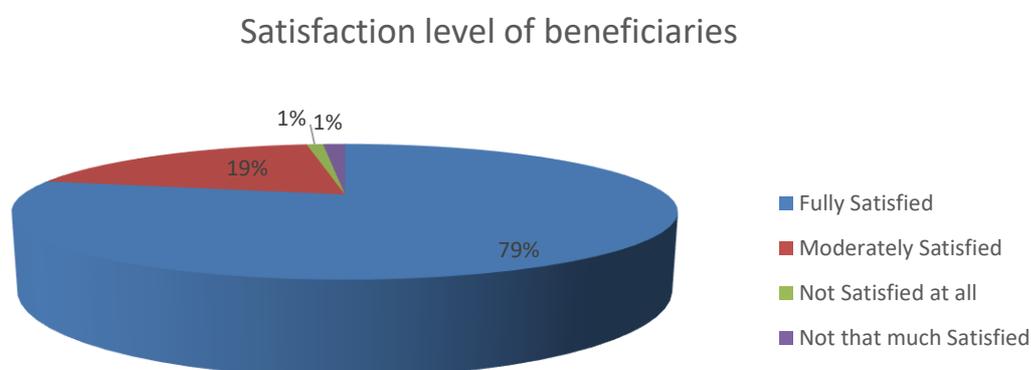
were they aware of specific issues before visiting MRC, 37% responded for all of the options including emergency response at host countries, irregular migration and human trafficking, issues in migration process, job and study opportunities abroad, labor laws of the host countries and legal technicalities related to migration. The highest response to a single specific issue was 36% for job and studies opportunities abroad. This shows that potential migrants from Pakistan are interested in migrating to avail of better prospects of jobs and education.

Awareness on issues of migration before visiting MRCs	# of Respondents
Job and Studies opportunities abroad	36%
Issues in Migration Process	15%
Labor Laws of host Countries	6%
Legal Technicalities related to Migration	4%
Emergency Response at Host Country	2%
Irregular Migration and Human Trafficking	0%
All of the above issues	37%

Table 3: Awareness on issues of migration before visiting MRCs

MRCs provide different services to potential migrants in Pakistan that include counseling, pre-departure briefing, referral facilitation, outreach and orientation sessions. The responses of the primary questionnaires were limited to counseling as the database provided to contact the beneficiaries for the survey questionnaire was limited to counseling. However, it is important to mention here that the beneficiaries are referred to various relevant departments on need basis in the course of counseling sessions, making referral an intrinsic part of counseling. However, despite diligent efforts, the DCS teams were not able to identify and reach any eligible respondent for referral facilitation.

Upon enquiring the satisfaction level of beneficiaries, 79 percent were found fully satisfied by the service delivery at MRCs, 19% were observed to be moderately satisfied while only one percent of respondents not satisfied at all.



*Figure 7: Satisfaction level of beneficiaries*

The dissatisfaction of the respondents from MRC services can be correlated to the fact that 70 percent of the total respondents used the services more than two years ago. However, upon probing the dissatisfaction of the respondents about 60% of the unsatisfied respondents perceive that:

- Lack of information as staff is not equipped with more information about specific countries.
- MRC staff asking to conduct market survey for more information
- No follow-up mechanism available, MRCs need to contact them again
- MRC did not provide proper guidance
- MRC failed to solve respondent's problem
- MRC has less options as per respondent's request

Referring to the one percent (seven individuals) of respondents in the table above who responded, "not satisfied at all", different reasons were provided for dissatisfaction. Two of dissatisfied respondents are of the view that there is lack of professionalism in MRC Staff, one of respondents perceive MRC staff to be unfriendly, one of respondents was observed dissatisfied due to provision of irrelevant information, one of respondents perceived that there has been an insufficient delivery mechanism while two of respondents shared that the staff of MRC is unskilled and is insufficient.

As per economic survey of Pakistan, 1.3 million skilled people and 1.26 million unskilled workers went abroad from 2013 to 2016. During 2016, the highest number of workers went abroad were from Punjab 446,566, followed by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 206,929<sup>19</sup>. With over 4 million youth entering the job market every year, Pakistan needs to create 1.5–2.5 million decent jobs annually to accommodate them. Similar findings have been observed in the study that **with limited economic opportunities in Pakistan university graduates and youth between age group 26 to 35 are more eager to know about migration to other countries for exploring economic opportunities**. This is also reflected in the survey findings as **92% of the beneficiaries have approached to accumulate migration related information to countries with more economic opportunities like European Union (EU) and Australia**, with approximately half of the beneficiaries browsing for such opportunities accessed MRCs through internet. The survey finds that beneficiaries have approached at least once to receive services of MRCs in the past two years. The data coherence can be validated as **36% of respondents shared that they have visited MRCs for job and study opportunities, 15% visited for knowledge about how to migrate and 6% particularly visited to know about labor laws of the host countries**. This shows that the objective of migrants is prominently to explore economic opportunities.

---

<sup>19</sup>Ministry of Finance, Government of Pakistan, *Economic Survey of Pakistan 2016-17* retrieved on 17-03-2019 [http://www.finance.gov.pk/survey/chapters\\_17/Pakistan\\_ES\\_2016\\_17\\_pdf.pdf](http://www.finance.gov.pk/survey/chapters_17/Pakistan_ES_2016_17_pdf.pdf)

## Counseling Services

For detailed analysis of effectiveness of service provision, the survey questionnaire included indicators about frequency, duration of service provided, content, satisfaction level and needs addressed. It is pertinent to mention here that MRC Lahore in particular has re-launched activities with a new staff as of end of 2018. Therefore, the responding beneficiaries for MRC Lahore are mostly those who were served by the previous staff.

The counseling sessions were analyzed keeping in view duration, content and how effective these sessions were designed to provide guidance and assistance. The responses for both the MRCs (Lahore and Islamabad) regarding counseling were almost identical. However, on the question of why counseling is not helpful, the responses from Lahore slightly differ from Islamabad. Most of the responses from Lahore reports insufficient information to be the major reason behind counseling being not helpful. The report however gives a combined data analysis of both the MRCs.

When asked about the duration of the counseling sessions, **60% of respondents reported that the duration of the session was 15 to 30 minutes**, 18% of respondents shared that the session was about one hour, while 14% of respondents reported that the session was conducted for less than 15 minutes. The duration of the sessions mostly depends upon the information that is acquired by the clients. However, it has been observed that 48 percent of the respondents who reported that the session ended in less than 30 minutes were not fully satisfied.

Duration of the counseling Session

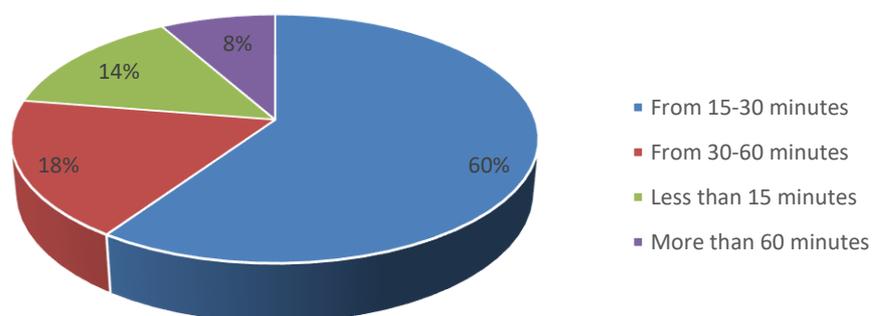


Figure 8: Duration of the counseling session

Keeping in view the content and agenda of the sessions a mixed response was observed, 40% of the respondents shared that all the mentioned contents provided in below *Table - 4* were included in the session. 38% of respondents shared that the session was more focused on job and study opportunities abroad, and 12% respondents shared that the session was focused on issues in migration process.

Agenda of the counseling Session	# of Respondents
Job & Study opportunities abroad	38%
Issues in Migration process	12%
Legal Guidance	5%
Visa Policies	2%
Emergency Response at Host countries	2%
Labor Laws of the host countries	1%
Irregular Migration & Human Trafficking	0%
All of the above	40%

Table 4: Agenda of the Counseling Session

When asked about the effectiveness of counseling session in terms of providing guidance and assistance in migration **71% of the respondents shared that it was very effective, 27% respondents rated it to be moderately effective** and one percent rated the effectiveness to be low and non-existent each.

### Effectiveness of Counseling session in terms of guidance and assistance

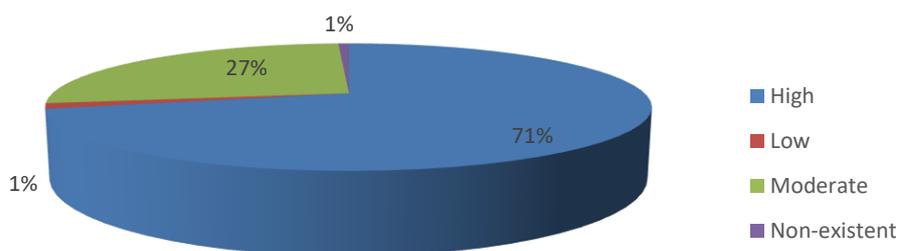


Figure 9: Effectiveness of Counseling session in terms of guidance and assistance

### Was the counseling session helpful?

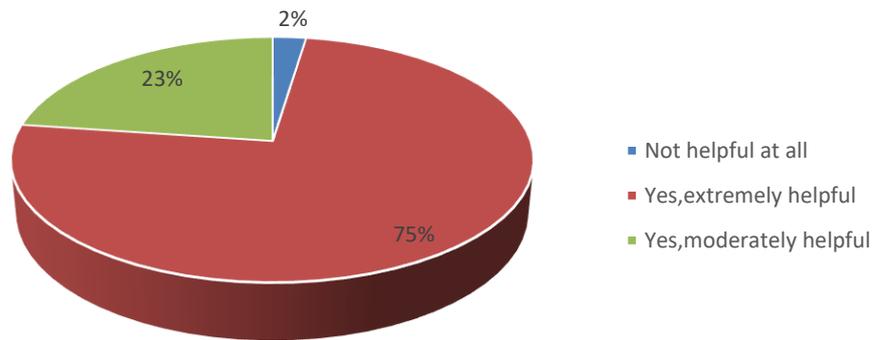


Figure 10: Was the counseling session helpful?

When asked how much these counseling sessions were helpful in guiding you in respect of migration 75% of the respondents shared that yes, these sessions were extremely helpful, 23% shared that the sessions were moderately helpful while only two percent rated these sessions to be less helpful for assistance and guidance. It is worth mentioning that the duration of a counseling session mostly depends upon the information that is acquired by the clients. However, it has been observed that 48 percent of the respondents who reported that the session ended in less than 30 minutes were not fully satisfied.

### Why Counseling Session was not helpful

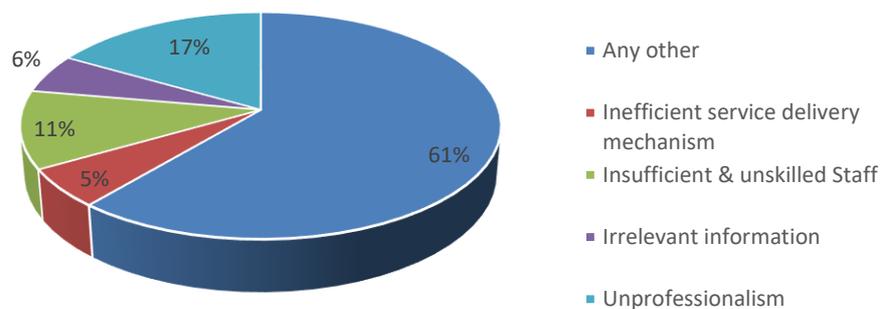


Figure 11: Why Counseling Session was not helpful

Of those who shared that the session was not extremely helpful (i.e. respondents noting, it was moderately helpful or not helpful that is 25% of the total respondents), 61% of respondents shared that the counseling session was not helpful because the counselor lacked information about new rules in different countries, particularly for Australia, and that they never did any follow-up for any update and have incomplete information. 17% shared that the session was not helpful because of unprofessionalism of staff while 11% shared that the session was not helpful because counselor had insufficient knowledge of the subject matter and was unskilled.

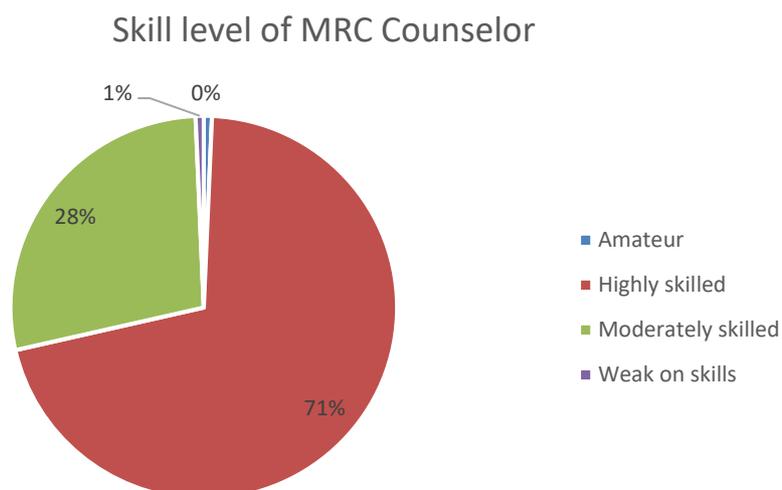


Figure 12: Skill level of MRC Counselor

When asked how the respondents rate the MRC counselor 71% shared that they were highly skillful, 28% responded that the counselors were moderately skilled while one percent shared that counselor’s skills were weak.

Will you recommend MRC counseling session to any potential migrant?	# of Respondents
Definitely Yes	92%
Might recommend	7%
Not at all	1%

Table 5: Will you recommend MRC Counseling to potential migrants

When asked about, will you recommend MRC counseling session to any potential migrant 92% respondents were positive for recommendation while seven percent shared that they might recommend it to potential migrants. It is worth mentioning here that **even though a 21 percent of the respondents were not totally satisfied with the services, the vast majority (92%) report that they would recommend to someone else.**

As shared in the analysis of general perception section, majority of the beneficiaries have visited MRCs at least once to receive MRCs’ services, this can also be validated by the number of beneficiaries receiving counseling services at MRCs. The study finding shows that 95% of beneficiaries have visited at least once to receive the counseling services, while only four percent of the beneficiaries have approached MRCs for second interaction.

The agenda of the counseling session is usually based on the query of the beneficiary. With this in mind, the majority of the beneficiaries reported that the counseling services provided by the MRCs are used by beneficiaries to learn about job and study opportunities abroad. This also validates that, as in the general perception and demographic profiling section majority of beneficiaries have approached MRCs to accumulate information related to economic opportunities abroad. These counseling sessions have been found effective as **71% of beneficiaries are perceiving the sessions to be highly effective in provision of relevant counseling and information, and 75% of the beneficiaries have ranked these sessions as extremely helpful in planning to migrate to host countries.** Among the beneficiaries two

percent have shared that these counseling sessions did not served its purpose and were not helpful, upon probing why these sessions did not serve its purpose majority of those respondents shared that the counselor lacked information about new rules in different countries, particularly about Australia. They also shared that the information provided were incomplete. This can be correlated with the findings of prioritizing countries for migration where **25% of the respondents have showed interest in migration to Australia being the second prioritized host country for migration MRC.**

Majority of the beneficiaries have ranked that skill level of MRC counselor to be highly skilled and it can be linked with the findings that more than 70% of beneficiaries have found these sessions effective and helpful as shared earlier. The survey findings show that as the services offered to potential migrants are effective, helpful and beneficiaries are satisfied as they have ranked the skill level of MRCs counselor to be highly skilled therefore these beneficiaries have also shared that they will recommend these sessions to any potential migrant. The findings show that 92% of beneficiaries are recommending these services to their acquaintances who are intending to migrate abroad. Keeping in view the findings of survey **it can be concluded that MRCs at Islamabad and Lahore are providing counseling services that are addressing the counseling and information related needs effectively.**

## Orientation and Outreach sessions

Orientation and Outreach sessions are conducted to spread awareness regarding safe migration with a special focus on student of Technical and Vocational Institutes. Each session is participated by more than 100 people, which makes it quite difficult for the MRC to maintain a database. Keeping in view the unavailability of a database for beneficiaries, Focus Group Discussions were carried out for data collection. The focus group discussions carried out were the primary data source for the evaluation of the orientation and outreach sessions. The data provided by MRC shows that a total of 120 sessions have been carried out during three years in 64 educational institutions. On average 39 orientations and outreach sessions were conducted per year. A total of 16,480 students in educational institutions have been reached through these orientation sessions.

Six Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were carried out with the beneficiaries of outreach and orientation sessions in Islamabad and Lahore (four in Islamabad and two in Lahore). The details of the FGDs conducted are as under:

S/No.	Institute	Venue	No. of Participants
1	Government College of Technology	Rawalpindi	12
2	Vocational Training Institute	Rawalpindi	12
3	Faizul Islam Technical Institute	Rawalpindi	13
4	Government College of Technology	Attock	13
5	Governor House	Lahore	13
6	PVTC Township	Lahore	09
Total Number of Participants			72

*Table 6: List of Institutions for FGDs*

The FGDs were conducted with a total number of 72 beneficiaries. Four FGDs were conducted in Islamabad with a total number of 50 participants whereas two FGDs were conducted in Lahore

with a total number of 22 participants. The FGDs at Lahore were participated by both male and female participants (14 male and 8 female). These FGDs were conducted in Technical Training Institutes, where MRC outreach sessions were carried out. **The FGDs helped in extracting significant data regarding the effectiveness of MRC orientation session and its importance as awareness tool against illegal and irregular migration.**

Upon enquiring in FGDs about the frequency and number of sessions conducted by MRCs, respondents shared that MRCs have held various orientation session in our college, the last session recalled were held in January 2019<sup>20</sup>. “In these sessions, we were given ample information regarding the issues related to the risks of irregular migration and detailed mechanism of legal migration”.

The respondents shared that “due to these awareness sessions, we have come to know about the MRC is working for the facilitation of migrants”. The information shared in session was focused on the main questions of: How to travel abroad? What are the procedures and processes? How can the Government of Pakistan help overseas migrants and what type of departments are working for the welfare of expatriates. These sessions also included the fatal consequences and life risks involved in illegal migration. The respondents shared that they have attended the session for information about rules and regulations of migration, and to enhance awareness on any opportunities available abroad.

The respondents were positive and shared that the orientation session was very helpful and that they learned so many new things regarding migrating abroad. They also reported that **before these sessions, irregular migration was not considered as a dangerous misadventure by the respondents. Respondents shared that these orientation sessions were very helpful in enhancing awareness on difficulties and risks of illegal migration through video documentary.** The video content in the orientation session is clear and helpful, respondents shared that “we watched with deep concentration. The information shared in orientation session was very supportive and beneficial”.

When asked about what kind of information must be included in orientation sessions to make these more efficacious for potential migrants, **the majority of the respondents suggested that more video content should be included in the session.** The video should be dramatized on the success stories of beneficiaries of MRC living successfully abroad. One respondent said, “Video should be based on the service delivery mechanisms of MRC and local travel agents. MRC need to create a platform to link potential migrants with MRCs, as only two MRCs are working and are not easily accessible”.

Upon the communication style of MRC staff and how the communication can be rated in orientation and outreach sessions, the majority of respondents shared that the communication was clear, but that the presentation was designed in English, they suggested that the presentations should be in Urdu for better comprehension. Respondents shared that for effective sensitization and outreach advertisement on televisions and electronic media is needed.

When asked about any recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of the outreach sessions, respondents shared that the MRCs should also enhance awareness on how to secure jobs abroad in this regards the overseas jobs should be advertised by the MRC because potential migrants will trust reliable sources and it will also eliminate the frauds committed by various travel agents. They shared that the MRCs need to database the reliable travel agents so that potential migrants

---

<sup>20</sup> The FGD was held on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2019.

may be assisted, if possible, the travel agents providing job opportunities abroad should be registered with MRCs.

During FGDs respondents also shared that social media campaigns are very essential for awareness. Secondly, respondents suggested that MRC need to extend its outreach in remote areas of Pakistan. In the rural areas the lack of awareness regarding irregular migration, drives young people towards irregular migration in the hope of better future. *“I am from Mandi-Bahuddin, the locals of this area are earning abroad and most of us are interested to go abroad. Such detailed information should be very beneficial at community level”* (Respondent). Another participant said, *“Website and Mobile application is very important in the current scenario. MRC needs to improve its website and develop a mobile application for intending migrants”*.

The FGDs concluded that orientation and outreach sessions conducted by MRCs are effective in extending the outreach. The sessions were attended by students for accumulating information related to jobs and educational opportunities abroad. Based on the above responses it can be concluded that the awareness needs extensive outreach by developing a proper awareness and outreach plan and modify the session delivery mechanism particularly inclusion of awareness videos and local language as session delivery media.

### FGDs at Islamabad

The four FGDs conducted with 50 participants have almost the same findings as in Lahore. However, during the course of conducting the FGDs at Islamabad, accessibility of MRC to potential migrants came under discussion. **The respondents shared that the MRC Islamabad is located in a government building and is not accessible especially to potential migrants who are not residents of Islamabad.**

Respondents from ICT particularly in Islamabad shared that during these sessions MRC representatives besides conducting awareness session, distributed printed guidelines and IEC (Information, Education, Communication) material. Further, **the respondents of Islamabad were concerned about travel agents involved in scams, who tricks young people with false hopes. They shared that MRC and government should take action against such travel agents.** They also suggested that MRC should tell us the method and technique of how to apply for immigration to other countries or how to search job from outside country. Respondents from Islamabad were also found to be more inclined towards social media and internet and suggested that an online application shall be developed that could facilitate potential migrants by accessing the services online.

### FGDs at Lahore

FGDs at Lahore highlighted the need for including video content in the Orientation Sessions and were more concerned about the delivery method of the session. They suggested that the language used shall be Urdu for all the content shared or medium of session delivery. Furthermore, the participants reported that the session should also include information on how to apply for studies and search jobs abroad. **The representative of MRC or facilitator of the sessions should have ample information and is able to answer our question. The language of session delivery was stressed to be Urdu only.**

The respondents of Lahore were of the view that the MRCs needs to take action against illegal travel agents involved in promoting irregular migration, upon probing they shared that the major issue in migration at rural areas of Punjab are the presence of actors (not only travel agents) who are engaged in irregular migration. They shared that, these actors at first are more accommodative but when they receive hefty amount of fee either disappear or hides away. They

respondents shared that the contents of sessions shall also include how to differentiate between real and fake visas and job advertisements.

## Pre-Departure Briefing

As discussed in Chapter 1 of this study, the DCS team made use of the database available with MRC for reaching maximum, diversified and eligible respondents. The latest available database unfortunately, does not represent the beneficiaries of Pre-Departure Briefings<sup>21</sup>. The survey team had planned to use FGDs for data collection on pre-departure briefings with beneficiaries of pre-departure briefings at Protectorate Office (PoE) Rawalpindi. However, **on reaching the PoE Rawalpindi for FGDs, the DCS team was not allowed by the PoE (Director Immigration) to conduct FGDs with beneficiaries of the pre-departure briefings held by the MRC Islamabad.**

Therefore, the survey team has acquired significant information about Pre-Departure Briefings from the interviews conducted with MRC staff (Coordinators in Islamabad and Lahore and Project Officer MRC) and other relevant stakeholders. The results of these interviews are integrated with the responses received through staff questionnaire. The staff questionnaire was responded to by a total of seven staff members of MRC (three from MRC Islamabad and four from MRC Lahore), although eight responses were received. It is imperative to mention here that MRC Lahore do not conduct any pre-departure briefings as of now, therefore the results in this section primarily reflect the pre-departure briefings in Islamabad.

Some of the findings are as under:

Almost all the interviewees and respondents of the questionnaire are of the view that pre-departure briefings are extremely important for any intending migrants as according to them it is a tool for equipping the intending migrants with necessary information. Similarly, one of the senior officials at PoE Rawalpindi proclaimed that *“The Briefings conducted by MRC team at Protectorate Office are very helpful not only for beneficiaries but for us too as we are short on staff and other resources. The task of conducting briefings is delegated to MRC team at Rawalpindi Protectorate Office”*.

The staff of MRC Islamabad conducts these briefings on almost daily basis. However, this task is not delegated to MRC staff in Lahore. In Lahore the Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment (BEOE) is mandated by the law to conduct the pre-departure briefings and the MRC has no role in conducting these briefing for now. When the interviewees were asked about any suggestions for improving the current pre-departure briefing it was reported by almost all the respondents from both MRCs (Islamabad and Lahore) that the government needs to duly recognize MRCs and its activities. Moreover, most of the interviewees particularly for MRC Islamabad said that there is a dire need for making joint efforts of MRCs and relevant Ministries for developing a formalized system for pre-departure briefings. However, when the same question was asked from the respondents of questionnaire, i.e. migrants themselves, the main types of responses received focused on the need for:

- **A Pre-Departure Orientation certificate** should be mandatory for all the intended migrants
- Create a dedicated desk for pre-departure briefings at PoE which is run exclusively by MRC

---

<sup>21</sup> Since the pre departure briefings are conducted a day before the departure, therefore, even if the database had been made available, migrants would already have migrated, and so probably wouldn't have been reached.

- Pre-Departure Briefing becomes a two-day mandatory training for every Pakistani who is going abroad for work

One stakeholder interview in Islamabad, as well as MRC Lahore, highlighted the **need to improve and lengthen pre-departure briefings for departing migrants**. Both interviews highlighted that an orientation of several days would be desirable, in order to appropriately cover all relevant issues related to information on the country of destination, i.e. (labour) laws of the country of destination, terms of reference of their foreign service agreement, service structure, overtime, working hours, how to behave, what not to do, etc.

## Referral Facilitation

Despite diligent efforts, the survey teams were not able to identify and reach any eligible respondent on the topic of referral facilitation. This is due to the fact that, during the course of research, it has been observed that referral facilitation is actually an intrinsic part of one on one counseling as well as in orientation sessions and pre-departure briefings. Beneficiaries approach MRC with their issues, the MRC counselor then takes the client through the labor migration mechanism, and if need be “refers” him/her to the various institutions and offers help in case the client needs help along the way. If they do not approach MRC again, it is assumed that the issue has been solved. If the same beneficiary calls again, a new record is made of this phone call and people are guided through their issue. Therefore, results related to Referral Facilitation should be considered in conjunction with those from counseling and should not be treated as stand-alone activity during the process of evaluation.

The survey team acquired limited information regarding referral facilitation through three interviews conducted with MRC Coordinators at Lahore and Islamabad and Project Officer MRC. The results of the interviews are integrated with the responses received through staff questionnaire. The staff questionnaire was responded to by total seven staff members<sup>22</sup> of MRC (four from MRC Lahore and three at MRC Islamabad).

Number of Migrants Referred Annually

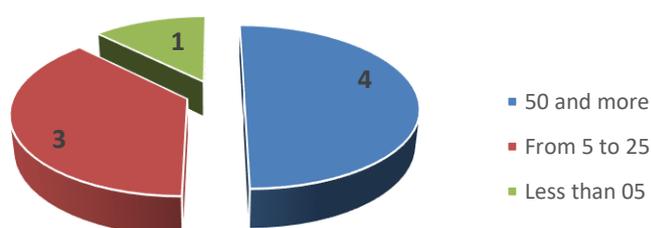


Figure 13: Number of Migrants Referred Annually

---

<sup>22</sup> Double response received from one respondent at MRC Islamabad, thus eight responses.

The responses of MRC staff differ significantly on the question of number of potential migrants referred annually. Four of the respondents stated that 50 or more potential intending migrants are referred to different government entities annually. Whereas three respondents stated that from 5 to 25 intending migrants are referred. One respondent claimed that less than five intending migrants are referred to different entities annually.

Response of entities to which intending migrants are referred?	# of Respondents
Highly Responsive	02
Moderately Responsive	01
Not Much Responsive	05

Table 7: Response of entities to which intending migrants are referred

On probing into the response of government entities and other stakeholders, towards the individuals who are referred by MRC, it was learnt that two of the respondents found that the entities to which migrants are referred to by MRC are highly responsive towards the referred individuals. One respondent said that the entities are moderately responsive whereas five respondents were of the opinion that the response of the entities to which intending migrants are referred to, is not satisfactory. The MRC staff particularly at MRC Islamabad also reported that lack of formal MoU with different government entities is one of the main reasons for inadequate response from the government departments where migrants are referred.

### Efficiency of MRC Referral Facilitation System

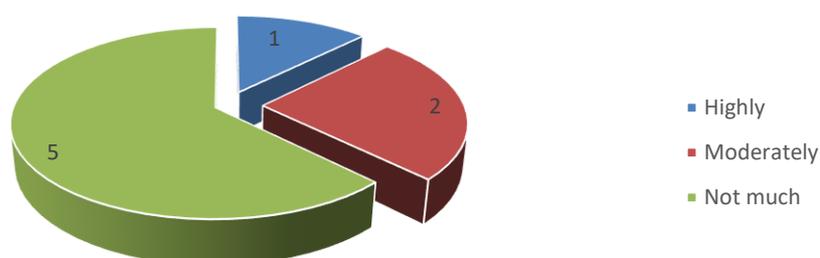


Figure 14: Efficiency of MRC Referral Facilitation System

Only one of the respondents from Islamabad thinks that the current referral facilitation system is highly efficient. Two respondents think that it is moderately efficient whereas five of the respondents are of the opinion that the current referral system is not much efficient. Similarly, mixed responses were received when the respondents were asked about how the current system can be improved. Some of the responses are as follows

- Better coordination between all stakeholders is essential for solving problems faced by potential/intending migrants
- By having designated a focal person in the relevant departments that would be based on ICMPD MOU with MOPHRD
- We [MRCs] are not very well known so that is a big hurdle

The responses from the beneficiaries show that it can be improved by better coordination between all the stakeholders and designated focal persons at referral partners. This can also be validated by the responses of MRCs staff as majority of MRC staff have shared that lack of MoUs with stakeholders particularly with government and referral partners poses the main obstruction in swift and efficient operations of MRC.

## Section 3: Inputs from MRC staff

We understand that the input of MRC staff is equally important for evaluating the MRC activities. Thus, a separate questionnaire was developed for the MRC staff. The purpose of the staff questionnaire was to extract maximum information regarding the administrative structure and service delivery mechanisms of the MRCs. It also focused on identifying legal/regulatory lacunas that exist in the current structure of MRC's administration. Eight responses were received for the staff questionnaire, by a total of seven staff members of MRC (four each at Lahore and Islamabad<sup>23</sup>).

The survey questionnaire was designed to acquire first-hand information about the administrative structure of MRCs and the anomalies that exist in the overall operating and service delivery mechanisms. It also focuses on the lacunas, which hamper or slow down the working of the MRCs. The inputs from MRC staff proved to be an essential source of information for this study.

There seems to be lack of clarity on part of the MRC staff regarding work targets, which can hamper their work/effectiveness. All the responses from MRC Lahore deny having received any work targets from ICMPD. This is probably because of the fact that the staff at MRC Lahore is new and they lack clarity of what actually is required of them.

During the course of research, the survey team learnt that all the staff members are provided with a standard set of targets in the start of every year, which are reviewed periodically. In addition, a quarterly work plan for each MRC is established and presented to MOPHRD and DoL Punjab every three month. The MRC staff also set their own weekly and monthly targets, which are mentioned in the weekly and monthly progress report submitted to ICMPD and the relevant Ministry. These targets aim to contribute to the quarterly work plan and annual personal targets set.

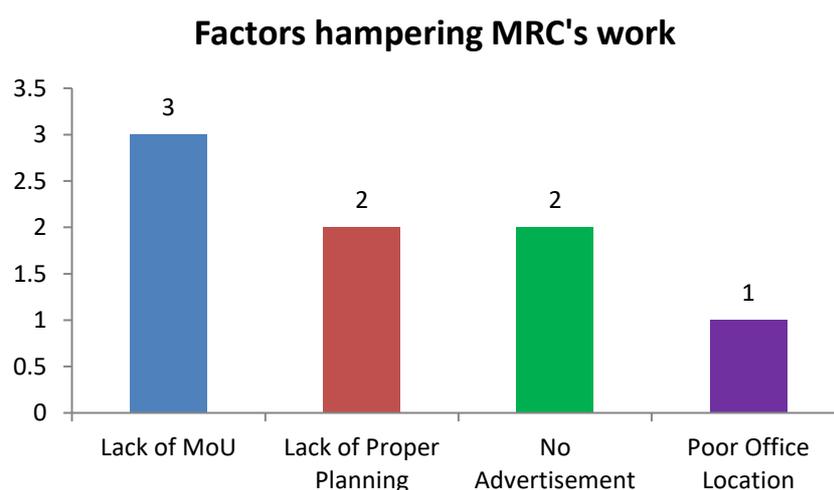


Figure 17: What hampers / slows down the working of MRC

<sup>23</sup> Double response received from one respondent at MRC Islamabad

According to MRC staff, lack of Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) with different stakeholders specially government entities pose the main obstruction in swift and efficient operations of MRC. Three of the respondents (two responses from Islamabad and one from Lahore) see the unavailability of MoUs or any other legal binding as a hurdle in the working of MRC. Two of the respondents (one each from Islamabad and Lahore) responded that lack of proper planning from ICMPD is the main problem whereas another two respondents blame the poor advertisement /outreach policy as a hurdle for MRC in reaching its full capacity in service delivery. Similarly, only one respondent from MRC Lahore thinks the current office location of MRC is not suitable for clients to visit easily and thus is a hurdle in the swift operations of MRC.

<b>Level of Coordination between MRC and its Administrative Authorities</b>	<b># of Respondents</b>
Low	02
Medium	05
High	01

*Table 8: Level of Coordination between MRC and Administrative Authorities*

There is continuous coordination between MRC, ICMPD and MOPHRD in Islamabad and DoL in Lahore. Mixed responses were received when the respondents were asked about the level of coordination. Five respondents said that there is medium level of coordination between MRC and its administrative authorities. Two respondents said that the level of coordination is high, however only one respondent thinks that administrative authorities of MRC are in low coordination with MRC, which can affect the efficiency of MRC and its activities and this response was received from MRC Islamabad.

The MRC staff is all convinced that the work of MRC for spreading awareness and facilitating the potential migrants at different levels of Migration process is extremely important. However, there is always room for improvement. Mixed responses were received when asked about how the working of MRC can be improved. Some of the responses along with the location of MRC from which these responses were received are as under:

- The MRC working can be improved by creating awareness through extensive outreach at community level (Islamabad)
- By making MRC more accessible to walk in clients (both Islamabad and Lahore)
- Increase awareness campaigns through social media and local advertisement (Islamabad)
- MRC shall become one stop like in Nepal. Owned by Government, fully equipped, in touch with all stakeholder. With government ownership MRC can fully facilitate intended/potential migrants and MRC can become one stop shop which should be easily accessible to public (Islamabad)
- ICMPD shall open more MRCs at district level (Islamabad and Lahore)

The MRC staff shared that they have satisfactory level of coordination between MRC and its administrative authorities and this affects the efficiency of MRC and its activities. Their recommendations on improving the MRC working is mostly based on coordination between MRC and government agencies and lack of proper monitoring and evaluation framework. The MRC staff have suggested strengthening of the coordination with government agencies and stakeholders, and have given a number of concrete suggestions, including the conclusion of MoUs for the

functioning of the MRC. **The MRCs currently working at Islamabad and Lahore cannot address the needs of potential migrants from far-flung areas of Pakistan.**

# Section – 4 Analysis of interviews

Key Informant Interviews conducted with national and international stakeholders highlighted a number of successes and challenges to the MRCs' work since their launch – and also highlighted some opportunities for future avenues of work. This section will focus particularly on the lessons learned expressed by these stakeholders, through both the successes and challenges encountered.

Of note is that stakeholder knowledge of and engagement with the MRCs varied quite widely, from little knowledge to in-depth knowledge. This can be attributed to a number of issues: participation of less relevant stakeholders in the interviews (although this is unlikely), low engagement between MRCs and those stakeholders (which could itself be attributed to a number of issues and will be discussed further below), and finally high staff turnover in relevant institutions engaging with the MRCs. In fact, it was rare for interview counterparts to have maintained knowledge of and engagement with MRCs since their launch in 2016 (three years previous). This is significant as it has clear repercussions on the efficacy of MRC action and coordination with relevant stakeholders.

## Successes

For all stakeholders interviewed with in-depth knowledge of MRC activities, they positively evaluated the MRC's work and outreach with migrants. Indeed, those stakeholders often rated MRC work as good or excellent – and for that reason emphasized the need to expand and enhance their activities even more, to capitalize on the momentum of MRC work. Suggestions in this regard ranged from reactive – as related to the challenges encountered, described in the next section – to proactive. In the latter case, suggestions included establishing the MRCs as a “centre of excellence” for support and capacity building of national institutions and concretely expanding the MRCs, including to relevant emigration regions (districts and rural areas).

Stakeholders also reported on the **proactive and regular nature of MRC staff coordination with government and international stakeholders**. Moreover, four interviews with non-governmental or international stakeholders (in Islamabad and Lahore) highlighted a **desire for collaboration or joint activities**, as expressed by them due to the added value of MRCs and their established position in the field, as well as the possibility for synergies across similar activities.

For the three interviews with stakeholders who were familiar with the MRC's work at their inception in 2016, they all highlighted that MRCs were responding to an important need in Pakistan: that **their mandate clearly matched with a gap in services provided to date**. From these stakeholders' perspective, awareness of and knowledge of migration issues, processes and how to access relevant institutions was lacking and was something to which MRCs responded.

MRC staff in Islamabad and Lahore also reported on a wide range of activities, highlighting a wide range of activities regularly implemented despite the limitations described below. Lahore in particular has re-launched activities with a new staff as of end of 2018, and therefore their outreach in the first quarter was particularly remarkable. For both Islamabad and Lahore, efforts have focused on **outreach to a diverse target group via orientation sessions, i.e. at technical and trade institutions, universities, and education expos**. These target groups were not reached

with such briefings prior to the MRCs so has been a clear **improvement as compared to before**. Both MRCs are also looking into ways to expand their outreach to those areas and regions where they could be most effective, through awareness campaigns or potential expansion of activities, if feasible. MRC Islamabad reported the positive impact of the prior awareness raising campaign implemented in the first half of 2017, as a potential for replication. For MRC Islamabad, as they are able to conduct pre-departure briefings at the POE, they also reported positive feedback and outreach through those activities. In Lahore, the MRC has adopted a tripartite approach to their outreach with relevant authorities – MRC, provincial and local authorities, which **reflect the need for differentiated approach between MRCs**. Both MRCs also reported ad hoc complaint facilitation, referral of migrants to relevant government stakeholders as needed, and verification of Overseas Employment Promoters (OEPs) when requested. Activities and target groups therefore have been differentiated as much as possible, and both MRCs have examined and implemented approaches to maximise their outreach to intending or potential migrants.

## Challenges

Stakeholders interviewed identified a number of key issues limiting the outreach of MRCs. These challenges were always described as hampering the positive work and outreach possible through MRCs, without which MRCs' impact would be exponentially increased. In all cases, these challenges were echoed by one or both MRCs. MRCs are thus well aware of their limitations, and they usually highlighted steps taken as needed to maximize their outreach despite these hindrances.

### Location

The location of both, MRC Islamabad and MRC Lahore (in government buildings in isolated areas and/or areas far from both every-day and emigration-related activities) has been emphasized and re-emphasized by nearly all interviews as a main issue and hindrance. MRC staff in both Islamabad and Lahore also highlighted this issue, and it was equally important for both locations. **Their locations have limited their outreach significantly in three main ways: 1) limited foot traffic, 2) less educated migrants may be less likely to avail of services in such a building due to mistrust, 3) mismatch in terms of desired target group** (i.e. lack of location within migrant-sending districts). The location thus has severely reduced their ability to outreach regularly to the potential migrant community, hindering both general awareness of the MRCs and also access to their services.

Stakeholders often highlighted potential solutions to this issue. Firstly, stakeholders strongly suggested moving MRCs to a **location near a marketplace or area with more foot traffic**. Secondly, **stakeholders strongly suggested connecting or locating the MRC near services migrants need to access prior to departure**, for example near the POE or visa office, attestation office, passport office or National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) office. Three stakeholders referenced “one window” operations or **“one stop shops”, with MRCs in the same location as a number of other services**, as a potential solution to improve the outreach and awareness of MRCs. Finally, often the location was linked to the need to additionally outreach more to the grassroots and district level, through centres located in migrant-sending districts. These were also solutions echoed by the MRC staff themselves.

### Government engagement

Together with location, the issue of government engagement with MRCs was the top issue emphasized by nearly all interviews, particularly those stakeholders familiar with the MRCs

experience engaging with government counterparts. The challenge in this instance is multiple: first, the **lack of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), highlighted by nearly all interviews**; second, **distrust of MRCs from the government, stemming from a misunderstanding that MRC work would encroach on their mandate**; and third, **regular government staff changes and bureaucratic obstacles**.

This was expressed in both Islamabad and Lahore, and indeed the lack of MoU had an impact on the research implementation itself, as well as this evaluation (see section above on Limitations). Moreover, this challenge has meant that MRC services cannot function as they should. For example, as described by the MRC Islamabad staff, the referral mechanism currently functions based on personal connections, as no formal arrangement currently exists that could facilitate referrals. This negatively impacts the sustainability of the work. Another example, from Lahore, is the lack of conducting of pre-departure orientation sessions as is done in Islamabad, due to the lack of an MoU. This severely limits the MRCs' outreach and information provision to migrants.

In terms of staff changes, one interview highlighted this as a clear hindrance to the MRC's work, as there is a lack of sustained engagement and cooperation between MRCs and their government counterparts. This was also observed during the evaluation, as only one interview (non-MRC staff or Project Officer) was conducted with someone who could share knowledge of the MRCs' work from the start of the process until today.

Potential solutions offered by stakeholders vary, and are strongly related to the practicability of such solutions as related to the challenge. In terms of lack of an MoU, the obvious solution is the need for negotiation with the Government of Pakistan and the speedy resolution of this agreement. In terms of staff changes, this means in practice the need to re-engage with and re-invest in government counterparts regularly to ensure support. Finally, in terms of mistrust, stakeholders highlighted that regular coordination and interaction with government counterparts has already been effective in allaying such fears, and should continue. Capacity building of state institutions was also highlighted as a potential tactic, to highlight the MRC's supportive and complementary role. **Trust-building is key, and from the point of view of stakeholders interviewed, the responsibility for this lies with the MRCs and ICMPD as partner.**

## **Awareness of MRCs**

Many stakeholders in Islamabad and Lahore, including both MRCs, highlighted the challenge of **lack of sufficient awareness of MRCs by the target group** (intending and potential migrants). This challenge is related to the issues outlined above related to location as well as government engagement but is more connected to the need for concrete awareness-raising action. In both Islamabad and Lahore, many stakeholders (six interviews) and MRC staff highlighted the limitations they have in terms of outreach activities, as well as the **need for an awareness raising campaign potentially including social media, visits to institutions or community centres, radio and SMS**. Two of these interviews highlighted the need to **include more information and outreach activities in local languages** as well. An additional interview highlighted the need to **expand outreach beyond those migrants intending migration to GCC countries, to migrants intending on irregular migration to Europe**.

Potential solutions to this challenge were also very concrete: one, developing a targeted information campaign focused on migrant-sending districts, including in local languages; and two, expanding MRC activities to the grassroots- and district-level, where they can engage more with potential migrants prior to their decision to migrate.

## “Pre-awareness” phase

Most stakeholders, as well as MRC staff, in both Islamabad and Lahore, highlighted the need to engage and outreach to migrants already before they have decided to migrate and contacted sub-agents, described as the “pre-awareness phase” rather than the “pre-departure phase”. This was considered important as the MRC is free of charge and could ensure against common defrauding of migrants by sub-agents, as well as potentially deter unsafe irregular migration.

Various stakeholders offered different solutions based on their perspective, of where the MRC could best situate their services in this phase, such as:

- Providing (access to) information to potential migrants on local opportunities, i.e. **advice against migration** (highlighted by two stakeholders);
- Supporting **district-level databases** where migrants can provide their CVs and registered OEPs can then access the pool of candidates directly;
- Integrating information on migration into NGO social welfare activities on other issues (e.g. NADRA registration, financial literacy, etc.)
- **Establishing district-level and mobile MRCs to outreach** more effectively to the grassroots level, prior to decision-making. This was echoed by many stakeholders interviewed;
- **Moving MRCs to other locations with more foot traffic** so the “common man” can access and spread information by word of mouth as well. This was also echoed by many stakeholders interviewed;
- **Initiating and expanding awareness raising campaigns**, via social media, radio, other means. This was also echoed by many stakeholders interviewed;
- **Training of trainers** (“change makers” at the grassroots level to conduct awareness raising sessions based on updates from MRCs and to connect potential migrants to the MRCs if needed);
- Conducting briefings for OEPs and developing stronger links with them in order to support and inform migrants using their services;

Focusing on the “pre-awareness phase” was also highlighted by two stakeholders as an important means to demonstrate to government counterparts that the MRCs’ work is complementary to theirs and does not aim at encroaching on their mandates.

## OEP engagement

Both MRCs highlighted the difficulty of engaging with OEPs, due to distrust of MRCs and misconception that MRC work will undercut their business model. Nonetheless, engagement with OEPs is considered crucial in order to ensure that migrants are well-informed prior to emigration.

Concrete solutions were not offered but should likely involve regular communication with OEPs – through the Pakistan Overseas Employment Promoters Association (POEPA), the OEP association, in particular – on MRC activities, and support to them as needed (e.g. in providing information to migrants’ pre-departure). OEPs also consider problematic to their business model both the use of defrauding sub-agents and failed migration (as they must pay for repatriation). **MRCs should identify ways to undercut those challenges and to highlight the benefits of cooperation to OEPs.**

## Gender outreach

MRC Lahore highlighted the need to better consider the needs and how to outreach to potential and intending female Pakistani migrants. The evaluation process itself demonstrates that the

**majority of migrants reached through counseling services are men**, although likely others are reached through other services (pre-departure briefings, orientation sessions). While the vast majority of emigrant overseas workers are male, issues related to irregular migration – including trafficking in persons – have dire impacts also on women, and **outreach in the “pre-awareness phase” could counter certain risk factors by providing accurate information**. Secondly, women as siblings, daughters and wives of intending and current migrants could be useful to further disseminate information on MRCs to migrants. For this reason, it would be important to consider how to best outreach to women.

# Section – 5 Conclusion and Recommendations

This section summarizes the key findings of the study regarding the contextual relevance of MRC activities to the priorities and needs of the potential intending migrants and their families. It focuses on the effectiveness and impacts of MRC's services on potential migrants. It also identifies constraints and opportunities in MRC activities and recommends potential solutions.

## 5.1 Summary of Key Findings

The Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs) in Islamabad and Lahore are doing a tremendous job in providing essential firsthand information to the potential migrants. The intrinsic aim of establishing MRCs is to provide accurate and timely information on safe and legal migration, referral and counseling, as well as raising awareness on irregular migration and the related serious risks. This study informs about the roles and contribution of MRC for provision of support to Pakistani potential migrants.

The key findings of the study are essentially based on the responses received during data collection through questionnaires, FGDs and interviews with intending migrants, MRC staff and relevant stakeholders engaged with MRCs. Diligent efforts have been made to validate and substantiate the data through counter/secondary questions in the questionnaires and interviews. Service wise key findings include the following:

- **The most effective medium of publicity for MRC is internet and social media.** The majority of the respondents shared that they came to know about MRC and its services from Internet and social media. Only a small number of respondents heard about MRC in seminars and other such events, which means that MRC need to revisit its outreach policy.
- **Unavailability of MoUs or any other legal binding between MRC and other stakeholders is one of the major hurdles** in the working of MRC. Similarly, poor advertisement /outreach policy and poor/unsuitable office location of MRC are some of the hurdles in the swift operations of MRC.

### Counseling

- Among those participating in MRC Counseling sessions, the European Union remains the preferred destination, followed by Australia.
- Majority of the potential migrants being educated and skilled have come to know about MRC via internet and social media. Social media and internet can be very helpful in publicity and outreach campaign.
- The duration of a counseling session mostly depends upon the information that is acquired by the clients. However, it has been observed that **48 percent of the respondents who reported that the session ended in less than 30 minutes**

were not fully satisfied. Similarly, beneficiaries who received counseling services in face to face meeting seems more satisfied than those receiving counseling through telephone, as 83% of beneficiaries receiving counseling service in face to face meeting show higher satisfaction compared to 43% beneficiaries whom same services were provided via telephone.

- 25 percent of the respondent shared that the counseling sessions were moderately helpful or less helpful for assistance and guidance. Of those who shared that the session was not extremely helpful (i.e. respondents noting it was moderately helpful or not helpful), 61% of respondents shared that the counseling session was not helpful because the counselor lacked information about new rules in different countries, particularly for Australia and have incomplete information.
- **The counseling session would be recommended by almost every respondent** to his/her acquaintance, which shows the importance of counseling carried out at MRC. It is actually an exercise of providing firsthand information to potential migrants.

## Orientation Session

- Orientation and Outreach Session can be a tool for building awareness among the potential migrants and general public. However, it is observed that the **outreach of these sessions is limited to a certain fraction of society, i.e. the students of technical/education institutes**. Most of the respondents of questionnaire, who come from different social backgrounds, have not heard of orientation sessions at all.
- It was learnt that the beneficiaries wanted MRC to conduct the **orientation sessions** in local languages such as **Urdu at the technical and vocational training institutes** and other native languages at community level in order to make these sessions more helpful for the community.
- The orientation sessions must be backed by an extensive media campaigns otherwise its impacts are too little on too small fraction of our diversified community.

## Pre-Departure Briefings

- The staff of MRC Islamabad conducts Pre-Departure Briefings on almost daily basis at protectorate Office (PoE). However, this task is not delegated to MRC staff in Lahore. In Lahore the Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment (BEOE) is mandated by the law to conduct the pre-departure briefings and the MRC has no role in conducting these briefing for now.
- The importance of pre-departure briefings cannot be denied as it is a mandatory whole day exercise in most of the South Asian countries<sup>24</sup>. Unfortunately, in Pakistan, it is shortened to only one hour briefing which is insufficient for getting the desired results.
- In order to maximize the benefits for migrants, the **duration of the briefing needs to be increased to at least two days**. Government needs to make sure about the certification of Pre-departure briefing.

---

<sup>24</sup> Maruja M.B. Asis and Dovelyn Rannveig Mendoza, September 2014, *Strengthening Pre-Departure Orientation Programmes in Indonesia, Nepal and the Philippines*

## Referral Facilitation

- During the course of research, it has been observed that referral facilitation is actually an intrinsic part of one on one counseling as well as in orientation sessions and pre-departure briefings.
- The referral facilitation is carried out without any legal and regulatory backing which again undermines its credibility as a service.

## 5.2 Recommendations

This study was aimed to evaluate service provision of MRCs in Islamabad and Lahore. It reviews the mechanism and its impact on potential migrants. A diverse set of actions is required to contribute toward effective, relevant and impact-oriented service delivery for MRC. An effective and progressive information system for MRC is the corner stone for adequately addressing the huge challenges faced by potential migrants in Pakistan. The study while taking account of the identified challenges and opportunities in service delivery mechanisms of MRC provides following recommendations aimed at informing the debate on enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness in service provision of MRCs:

### 1. Outreach Policy

Many stakeholders in Islamabad and Lahore, including both MRCs, highlighted the challenge of **lack of sufficient awareness of MRCs by the target group (intending and potential migrants)**. In both Islamabad and Lahore, many stakeholders (six interviews) and MRC staff highlighted the **limitations they have in terms of outreach activities, as well as the need for an awareness raising campaign** potentially including social media, visits to institutions or community centres, radio and SMS.

MRC needs to develop a publicity plan and outreach policy encompassing social media campaigns, which are being the most effective media. **Besides social media, webinars and online support will enhance the outreach of the MRCs throughout the country.** Similarly, the timely use of **print and electronic media** can prove very important in this regard. Dissemination of information regarding legal migration through national and local print/electronic media would ensure maximum outreach. Moreover, **media stories, which portray the perils of irregular migration** and incentivize safe migration, can attract good attention from general public. Therefore, it is important for MRC to **build liaison with local press**, representatives of various TV channels, print media and Cable TV to ensure maximum outreach. These representatives of print and electronic media can be invited to cover outreach sessions conducted by MRC in local communities. Similarly, presenting of **MRC success stories in local print and electronic media can highlight the efforts** MRC has been making in the dark for building awareness against irregular migration. The study suggests developing **context specific publicity and outreach campaign to extend the outreach.** During the study it has been observed that social media and internet remained the top most media for outreach and awareness, thus it is suggested that social media integration and android application shall be introduced to extend the outreach.

MRC Lahore also highlighted the need to better consider the needs and how to outreach to potential and intending female Pakistani migrants. The evaluation process itself demonstrates that the majority of migrants reached through counseling services are men, although likely others are reached through other services (pre-departure briefings, orientation sessions). While the vast

majority of emigrant overseas workers are male, issues related to irregular migration – including trafficking in persons – have dire impacts also on women, and **outreach in the “pre-awareness phase” could counter certain risk factors by providing accurate information**. Secondly, women as siblings, daughters and wives of intending and current migrants could be useful to further disseminate information on MRCs to migrants. For this reason, it would be important to consider how to best outreach to women.

## 2. Referral Mechanism

Referral facilitation is one among four domains for service delivery at MRCs. During the study it was observed that referral mechanism should be improved. For the purpose to provide **better and effective referral services MRCs shall strengthen the coordination with relevant service providers by extending MOUs and Letter of Understandings**, further MRC shall also **develop SOPs, guidelines and document referral pathway** to improve the referral facilitation.

## 3. Work Targets and Monitoring of Activities

There seems to be a lack of clarity on part of the MRC staff regarding work targets, which can hamper their work/effectiveness. All the responses from MRC Lahore deny having received work targets from ICMPD. This is probably because the staff at MRC Lahore is recently inducted and they lack clarity of what actually is required of them.

During the course of research, the survey team learnt that all the staff members are provided with a standard set of targets in the start of every year, which are reviewed periodically. In addition, a quarterly work plan for each MRC is established and presented to MOPHRD and DoL Punjab every three month. The MRC staff also set their own weekly and monthly targets, which are mentioned in the weekly and monthly progress reports submitted to ICMPD and the relevant Ministry. These targets aim to contribute to the quarterly work plan and annual personal targets.

Clear guidelines by ICMPD should be given to keep MRCs on track, measure the progress, evaluate the interventions and plan for future. Similarly tracking progress and reporting of activities conducted needs to be enhanced for each staff member to have a clear picture of his/her performance. Meanwhile it is suggested that for effective management of resources the monitoring framework developed during the study shall be consulted with relevant stakeholders for proper implementation.

## 4. Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs)

The study suggests that lack of MoUs with different stakeholders particularly for service delivery is one of the factors that slow down the work of MRC. This was also expressed in interviews with stakeholders in both Islamabad and Lahore. ICMPD originally submitted a renewed MOU in October 2017, but unfortunately MOPHRD has been able to sign it. This challenge has meant that MRC services cannot function as they should. For example, as described by the MRC Islamabad staff, the referral mechanism currently functions based on personal connections, as no formal arrangement currently exists that could facilitate referrals. This negatively impacts on the sustainability of the work. Another example, from Lahore, is the lack of conducting of pre-departure orientation sessions as is done in Islamabad, due to the lack of an MoU. This severely limits the MRCs' outreach and information provision to migrants. In terms of staff changes, one interview highlighted this as a clear hindrance to the MRC's work, as there is a lack of sustained engagement and cooperation between MRCs and their government counterparts.

We understand that it will not be possible for MRC to address most of the challenges faced by potential migrants in Pakistan without creating an effective synergy between the technical and

administrative interface for service delivery. It will be important to **initiate policy engagement with the federal and provincial governments/Ministries to persuade them to ensure political and administrative support for the activities conducted by MRC**. Similarly, it is recommended that the MRCs initiate an informed engagement with Higher Education Commission (HEC), Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA) and National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC) to secure MoU for conducting Orientation and Outreach Session in Universities and Technical/Vocational Institutes on regular basis.

#### 5. Updating Information

The study shows that the information disseminated by MRC through counseling is generic in nature and is often not country specific<sup>25</sup>. It has been observed during the course of research that there is no systematic mechanism for MRC to update its organizational memory with the passage of time. The content of the pre-departure briefings and Orientation Sessions at educational/Technical institutes remains the same for most of the times irrespective of the needs of the audience. It is recommended that **a system be developed where the MRC staff is required to share the content (presentations) of their activities with ICMPD where outdated information is replaced**. Moreover, **regular trainings and professional guidance for MRC staff is imperative** as it would go a long way in ensuring the effectiveness and relevance of the information provided by MRC to the potential migrants. The study also suggests that **MRC shall update the information provided on the website on regular basis**, as it has been evident that majority of the beneficiaries of MRCs are educated and as presented in the findings that internet and social media remained the top medium among other publicity media. **Integrating social media with the website will contribute to effective outreach and publicity**.

#### 6. MRC Locations

The location of both MRC Islamabad and MRC Lahore (in government buildings in isolated areas and/or areas far from both every-day and emigration-related activities) has been emphasised and re-emphasised by nearly all interviews as a main issue and hindrance. MRC staff in both Islamabad and Lahore also highlighted this issue, and it was equally important for both locations. **Their locations have limited their outreach significantly in three main ways: 1) limited foot traffic, 2) less educated migrants may be less likely to avail of services in such a building due to mistrust, 3) mismatch in terms of desired target group** (i.e. lack of location within migrant-sending districts). The location thus has severely reduced their ability to outreach regularly to the potential migrant community, hindering both general awareness of the MRCs and access to their services. It has also been observed that **MRCs are facilitating a huge number of potential migrants despite functioning at only two locations** (Islamabad and Lahore). The MRC offices at Islamabad and Lahore are unable to cater for the ever-increasing number of potential migrants. Moreover, the current location of MRC provided by Government in Islamabad and Lahore is not ideal from marketing point of view besides posing accessibility challenge for potential migrants.

During the course of research, it has been learnt that **70 percent of the beneficiaries of MRC are either from Lahore or Islamabad**. The least number of beneficiaries are from Karachi, newly declared districts of FATA and Gilgit Baltistan which are major areas of origin for Pakistani

---

<sup>25</sup> Of those who shared that the session was not extremely helpful, 61% of respondents shared that the counseling session was not helpful because the counselor lacked information about new rules in different countries, particularly for Australia and have incomplete information

irregular migrants<sup>26</sup>. A study in Greece also identified irregular migrant population mostly from northern Punjab, predominantly from Gujrat<sup>27</sup>. Unfortunately, these are the regions where MRCs are not available. ICMPD has allocated funding for the expansion of the MRCs in a minimum of five cities in Punjab (Gujrat/Gujranwala, Mandi Bahuddin, Jhelum, Rahimyarkhan and Bahawalpur). The approval for the expansion is however still pending with the Government of Pakistan.

Stakeholders often highlighted potential solutions to this issue. Firstly, stakeholders strongly suggested **moving MRCs to a location near a marketplace or area with more foot traffic**. Secondly, stakeholders strongly suggested connecting or **locating the MRC near services migrants need to access prior to departure, for example near the POE or visa office, attestation office, passport office or NADRA office**. Three stakeholders referenced “one window” operations or “one stop shops”, with MRCs in the same location as a number of other services, as a potential solution to improve the outreach and awareness of MRCs. **Finally, often the location was linked to the need to additionally outreach more to the grassroots and district level, through centres located in migrant-sending districts**. These were also solutions echoed by the MRC staff themselves. In such backdrop, **it is highly recommended that MRC must start functioning from a number of new locations such as Sialkot, Gujrat, Gujranwala, Mandi Bhauddin, Rahimyar khan, Bhawalpur, Peshawar and Karachi which are known as the origin of most irregular migrants**.

#### 7. Follow-up mechanism

A regular follow up always gives beneficiaries a chance to be heard and engage effectively besides making a positive impression of MRC on beneficiaries. Unfortunately, there is no effective follow-up mechanism in practice for MRC. **It is highly recommended that MRC develop an effective need-based follow-up mechanism**. For instance, the counseling form, which is filled by beneficiaries who receive counseling at MRC, lacks a feedback column, which needs to be added to it. A registration sheet needs to be designed for the participants of orientation and outreach session, which would allow MRC to maintain database of all the beneficiaries who attend these sessions, and which can be used for follow-ups afterwards. This would help MRC in keeping track of the beneficiaries who are referred to different departments to make sure that the outstanding issue of the potential migrant has been resolved.

#### 8. Coordination with different Stakeholders

The study suggests that MRC needs to enhance its coordination with different stakeholders. Advocacy and engagements at policy level are needed to streamline the scope and domain of activities conducted by MRC. It has been observed during the course of research that MRC is doing an incredible job by conducting pre-departure briefings at PoE in Rawalpindi. It is highly recommended that the Bureau of Emigration (BoE) delegate these briefings to MRC in Lahore too. **It is also recommended that the briefings are made mandatory for anyone migrating abroad. Increasing the duration of the briefings will also help in enabling the migrants to tackle difficult situations in the host countries**. However, MRC, ICMPD and relevant Ministries need to debate upon an efficient and cost-effective system for this arrangement.

Similarly, owing to MRC successes in this domain, BoE must enter into trust-based relationship with MRC, which culminates in the creation of combined complaint cell to address the issues

---

<sup>26</sup> UNODC (2012) “Migrant Smuggling in Asia: A Thematic Review of Literature”, op. cit., p.13

<sup>27</sup> Yousef 2013. “The vicious circle of migration from Pakistan to Greece and back to Pakistan”

facing potential migrants. **All the relevant Ministries and Government entities must get on board with MRC on the subject of facilitating potential migrants. Moreover, the government should create dedicated desk or assign focal persons of MRCs in all the relevant Ministries/departments to facilitate potential migrants as well as overseas Pakistanis.** The difficulty of engaging with OEPs was highlighted by both MRCs, due to distrust of MRCs and misconception that MRC work will undercut their business model. Nonetheless, engagement with OEPs is considered crucial in order to ensure that migrants are well-informed prior to emigration.

It was suggested that MRC should involve regular communication with OEPs – through POEPA, the OEP association, in particular – on MRC activities, and support to them as needed (e.g. in providing information to migrants’ pre-departure). OEPs also consider problematic to their business model both the use of defrauding sub-agents and failed migration (as they must pay for repatriation). MRCs should identify ways to undercut those challenges and to highlight the benefits of cooperation to OEPs.

## 9. Pre-Awareness Phase

Most stakeholders, as well as MRC staff, in both Islamabad and Lahore, highlighted the need to engage and outreach to migrants already before they have decided to migrate and contacted sub-agents, described as the “pre-awareness phase” rather than the “pre-departure phase”. This was considered important as the MRC is free of charge and could ensure against common defrauding of migrants by sub-agents, as well as potentially deter unsafe irregular migration.

Various stakeholders offered different solutions based on their perspective, of where the MRC could best situate their services in this phase, such as:

- Providing (access to) **information to potential migrants on local opportunities**, i.e. no need to migrate (DOL Lahore) (highlighted by two stakeholders);
- **Supporting district-level databases** where migrants can provide their CVs and registered OEPs can then access the pool of candidates directly;
- Integrating information on migration into NGO social welfare activities on other issues (e.g. NADRA registration, financial literacy, etc.)
- Establishing district-level and mobile MRCs to outreach more effectively to the grassroots level, prior to decision-making. This was echoed by many stakeholders interviewed;
- **Moving MRCs to other locations** with more foot traffic so the “common man” can access and spread information by word of mouth as well. This was also echoed by many stakeholders interviewed;
- **Initiating and expanding awareness raising campaigns**, via social media, radio, other means. This was also echoed by many stakeholders interviewed;
- **Training of trainers** (“change makers” at the grassroots level to conduct awareness raising sessions based on updates from MRCs and to connect potential migrants to the MRCs if needed);
- **Conducting briefings for OEPs** and developing stronger links with them in order to support and inform migrants using their services;

Focusing on the “pre-awareness phase” was also highlighted by two stakeholders as an important means to demonstrate to government counterparts that the MRCs’ work is complementary to theirs and does not aim at encroaching on their mandates.

# Bibliography

1. Pildat 2008, "Overseas Pakistani Workers; Significance and Issues of Migration"
2. ILO 2006, "Strengthening Labor Migration Governance in Pakistan"
3. IOM (2018), "Global Migration Indicators 2018"
4. UNDP (2009), "Human Development Report 2009"
5. IOM (2018), "Migration and the 2030 Agenda"
6. Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), (2015) "*Pakistan as a Return Migration Destination*"
7. IOM (2017), "Socio Economic Outlook 2017"
8. Ministry of Finance Government of Pakistan, *Economic Survey of Pakistan 2016-17* at [http://www.finance.gov.pk/survey/chapters\\_17/Pakistan\\_ES\\_2016\\_17\\_pdf.pdf](http://www.finance.gov.pk/survey/chapters_17/Pakistan_ES_2016_17_pdf.pdf)
9. Service, Tribune News. "India has largest diaspora population in world: UN". The Tribune. Retrieved 16-03-2019
10. BEOE, 2016, –Statement Showing Number of Pakistani workers Registered for Overseas Employment Through
11. Bureau of Emigration & Overseas Employment. || available at <http://www.beoe.gov.pk/files/statistics/country-wise2016.pdf>
12. UNODC (2012) –Migrant Smuggling in Asia: A Thematic Review of Literature||, op. cit., p.178
13. UNODC (2013) - Recent trends of human trafficking and migrant smuggling to and from Pakistan
14. Migration futures in Asia and Africa: economic opportunities and distributional effects – the case of Pakistan by PRISE
15. Haris Gazdar. A review of migration issues in Pakistan
16. Immerman C, Hossain M, C W. "*Human trafficking and health: a conceptual model to inform policy*", intervention and research. Social Science & Medicine
17. David Anda (2015) "Back to Square One - Socioeconomic Integration of Deported Migrants".
18. Yousef 2013. "The vicious circle of migration from Pakistan to Greece and back to Pakistan"
19. IOM (2017) "Mapping and Assessment of Services Provision for Returnees"
20. Maruja M.B. Asis and Dovelyn Rannveig Mendoza, September 2014, Strengthening Pre-Departure Orientation Programmes in Indonesia, Nepal and the Philippines

Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs) provide clear, accessible and understandable information to potential, intending and outgoing migrants on possibilities for safe, regular and orderly migration as well as information on the risks and dangers associated with irregular migration. A team of counsellors provide relevant guidance during the pre-migration/planning phase, conduct pre-departure orientations, and provide information on work / study opportunities and living conditions abroad. The counsellors can also guide you on the rights and obligations of migrants abroad, recruitment processes, legal and cultural practices in destination countries and support services for the readdressal of complaints.

The two Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs) are operational under the auspices of the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (MOPHRD) in Islamabad and the Labour and Human Resource Department, Punjab (LHRD) in Lahore.

### **MRC Islamabad**

Mezzazine Floor,  
Shaheed-e-Millat Secretariat,  
Blue Area,  
Islamabad.

 + 92 51 9219617

 mrcislamabad

### **MRC Lahore**

Industrial Relations Institute,  
Adjacent Rescue 1122, Near  
Chandni Chowk, Township,  
Lahore

 + 92 42 99262132

 mrc.lahore

 + 92 300 011667

 MRC Pakistan

 info@mrc.org.pk

The project is funded by the European Union

Implemented by

Under the Auspices of



**IMPROVING MIGRATION  
MANAGEMENT** IN THE SILK ROUTES

