

October - December 2025

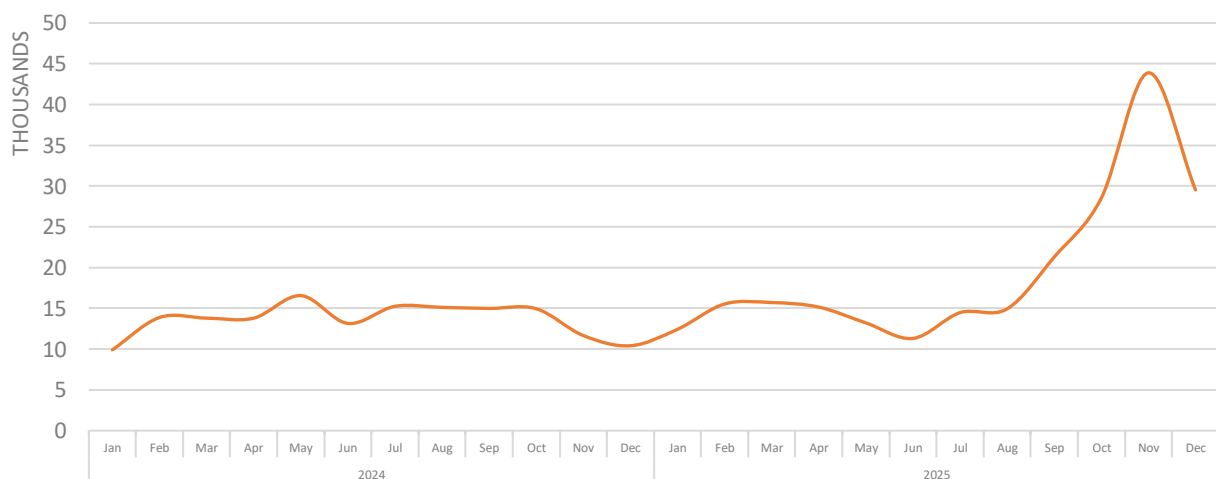
Migration Trends and Analysis: Pakistan

Migrant Resource Centres in Pakistan

This migration trends analysis includes analytical considerations from data generated by the [Migrant Resource Centres in Pakistan](#). With over 240 million people, Pakistan is world's fifth most populous country¹. In terms of migration trends, it is an important country of origin, transit and destination for migrants. This report focuses on highlights and important information on trends/patterns and insights regarding the migration and mobility of potential, current or returning migrants within the covered period, incorporating references from previous quarters ensuring comparability and providing a comprehensive annual perspective. In addition, this version includes a comprehensive analysis of the current year against the previous year, reflecting the MRC's ongoing analytics work and strengthening long-term trend interpretation.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Q4 2025 was a peak period for MRC**, reaching **2.27 million people** through mass digital expansion and intensified on-ground engagement, the highest-performing quarter of the year.
- **Pre-departure briefings led structured engagement**, reaching **121,762 prospective migrants** and establishing MRCs as a central platform for organised migrant preparedness and safe migration awareness.
- **MRCs supported 16% of Pakistan's ~763,526 emigrants in 2025** through direct **pre-departure briefings**, promoting rights-based and informed migration nationwide.
- **This quarter recorded 6,590 enquiries (+146% from Q3)**, 60% for work abroad, with the Gulf leading, followed by Europe.
- **Queries on education pathways more than doubled in 2025**, a 114% increase, amid concerns of misuse of student routes.
- Furthermore, **MRCs provided 15,973 one-on-one counselling sessions**, in 2025, including 7,033 sessions in just October–December.



Reach to Prospect Emigrants by MRCs over the past two years (excluding social media outreach)

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

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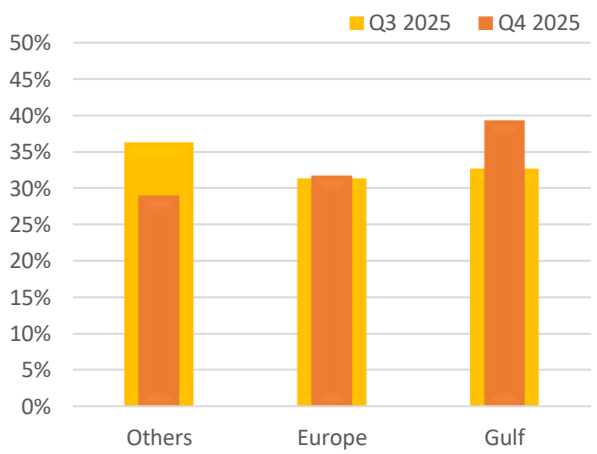
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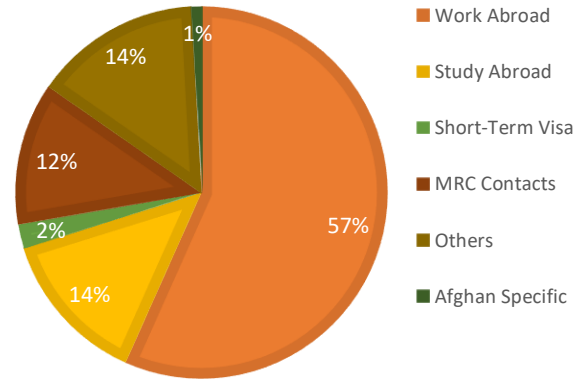
ENQUIRIES AND EMERGING TRENDS

Enquiries during Q4 2025: Mobility in Q4 2025 was dominated by **labour migration**, marked by a sharp surge in overseas employment enquiries. A total of **6,590 queries** were recorded during the quarter, representing a **146% increase** compared to the previous quarter. Of the total, **4,861 queries were geo-specific**, highlighting a strong destination-oriented pattern of mobility. Work abroad pathways continued to dominate overall movement, led by the **Gulf corridor with 1,909 enquiries (39%)**, increasing from **33% in Q3**. This was followed by **Europe with 1,543 enquiries (32%)**, up from **31% in Q3**, while other destinations accounted for **1,409 enquiries (29%)**, declining from 36% in the previous quarter. These shifts clearly reaffirm overseas employment as the primary driver of mobility in the final quarter of 2025, **with growing concentration toward Gulf and European labour markets**.

Education-related mobility remained significant, with **909 study abroad enquiries**, positioning education as the second-largest migration pathway, amid broader European media²



Geo-Specific Enquiries, Q4 2025



Query Categories, 2025

concerns, including in Swedish outlets³, about the misuse of student routes, document fraud, and the integrity of education-based migration pathways.⁴ Institutional engagement also expanded considerably, with **734 MRC information and contact enquiries**, indicating increased reliance on formal migration support services.

There was also **notable growth in safe and legal migration processes (238 inquiries) and skills training and development (303 enquiries)**, reflecting a stronger orientation toward structured, legal, and skills-based migration pathways. Short-term mobility remained limited (**86 short-term visa enquiries**), while **irregular migration and asylum cases remained low (14 enquiries)**. Afghan-specific humanitarian and eligibility-related queries showed localised activity, with 30 humanitarian eligibility cases and 14 Afghan-specific Pakistan-based queries, but remained a small share of overall mobility.

During this quarter, outward migration showed a clear acceleration, driven primarily by the resumption of labour intake in Türkiye and sustained demand in Malaysia, the UAE, and Iraq. Migration flows expanded across labour, semi-

² [The European Conservative](#)

³ [SVT News](#)

⁴ [The Express Tribune](#)

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skilled, and skilled categories, with Türkiye and Malaysia emerging as dominant destinations. At the same time, a gradual diversification toward non-traditional destinations (including parts of Europe – e.g., Spain, Greece, Lithuania, East Asia – e.g., Hong Kong, China, and Africa – e.g., South Africa, Nigeria etc.) indicated a broadening of migration pathways beyond conventional corridors. Institutional responses also intensified: PoE offices increased interview scrutiny and verification procedures due to rising offloading cases, requiring stronger documentation and clearer proof of intent. Alongside these structural shifts, a critical protection gap remained evident, as only 15 - 20% of migrants reached by the MRC through Pre-Departure Orientation sessions had read their employment contracts, underscoring persistent vulnerabilities related to contract awareness and informed migration.

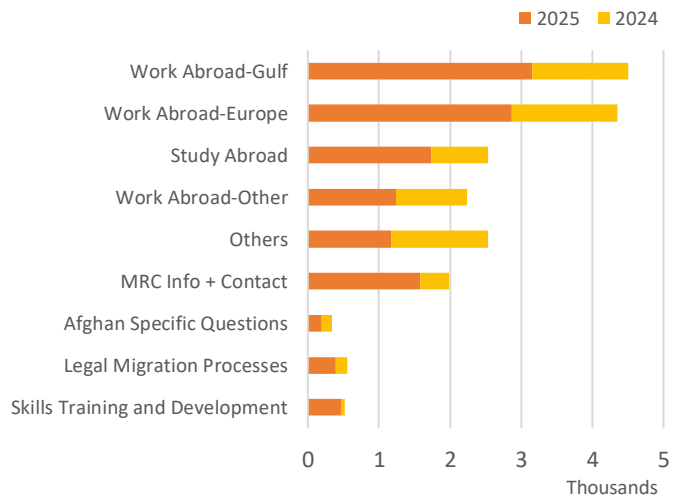
Collective enquiries during 2025: Across 2025, a total of **12,812 enquiries** were recorded, confirming **labour migration** as the central pillar (**57%**) of international mobility in Pakistan. Overseas employment pathways dominated throughout the year, with Gulf destinations leading (3,155 enquiries – 25%), followed by Europe (2,866 enquiries - 22%) and other global destinations (1,240 queries - 10%). Together, these figures highlight sustained demand for external labour markets, particularly in GCC and European corridors.

Study abroad emerged as the second most consistent mobility driver, with **1,731 enquiries (14%)** across the year, reflecting stable interest in international education pathways. Engagement with migration governance and support structures also expanded significantly, with **1,583 MRC information and contact enquiries (12%)**,

indicating growing public reliance on formal advisory services.

A clear structural shift is visible toward safer, regulated, and skills-oriented migration, reflected in 394 enquiries on safe/legal migration processes and 474 inquiries on skills training and development. This trend suggests increasing awareness and demand for compliant migration pathways.

Other mobility streams remained comparatively limited but persistent, including family reunification and settlement (153), short-term visits (269), irregular migration and asylum (105), and medical/financial assistance (60). Irregular migration in 2025 was driven by persistent smuggling networks and risk-taking routes mainly targeting European destinations, with Q4 marked by continued attempts, shifting pathways due to stronger controls, and increased detection and prevention by authorities⁵, with recent cases reported in Poland–Belarus border⁶. Afghan-related queries across humanitarian, readmission, and Pakistan-based categories remained low in proportion to total mobility,



Query Categories, 2024 vs. 2025

⁵ [GlobalVoices](#)

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⁶ [Thenews.pk](#)

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despite large scale return of the Afghan nationals to their country or origin.

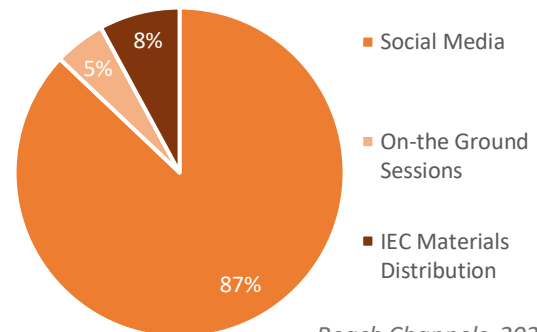
Enquiry trends 2024 – 2025: Over the two-year period, MRC handled **19,566 queries**, with 6,754 in 2024 and nearly doubling to 12,812 in 2025, reflecting a substantial increase in overall outreach efforts, including through the newly set up MRC in Peshawar, as well as the demand for migration-related information and services. The largest growth was observed in work abroad queries, particularly for Europe and the Gulf region. Queries for **work abroad in Europe** rose from **1,488 in 2024 to 2,866 in 2025, nearly a 93% increase**, while **work abroad in the Gulf** jumped from **1,348 to 3,155, a remarkable 134% rise**. Other destinations for work abroad also saw moderate growth, increasing from 996 to 1,240 (25%). **Study abroad** queries more than doubled, from **808 to 1,731**, signalling rising interest in international education. Short-term visit abroad

REACH

Outreach trends in Q4 2025: In the fourth quarter of 2025, MRCs across Pakistan significantly scaled up their outreach through social media campaigns, IEC dissemination, pre-departure orientations, and on-ground outreach activities reaching approximately **2.27 million individuals**, representing a **132.9% increase compared to Q3**. This increase was driven primarily by a sharp surge in digital engagement, with **1.96 million people** reached through online platforms. Facebook emerged as the dominant channel, engaging **1.9 million** users in Q4 alone, while YouTube, Instagram and WhatsApp also recorded notable increases. At the same time, offline reach strengthened considerably, with 153,887 people reached through IEC materials and a further 43,100 through posters and information boards, bringing total non-digital reach in the quarter to nearly 197,000. This combination of mass digital

queries grew modestly, from 234 to 269 (15%), reflecting more limited but steady interest in temporary travel.

Other notable trends include a significant increase in general MRC information and contact requests, which quadrupled from **403 to 1,583**, indicating heightened engagement with the organisation. Skills training and development inquiries surged from 49 to 474, highlighting growing interest in capacity-building initiatives. Queries related to **legal migration processes** also increased substantially, from **163 to 394 (142%)**, suggesting an expanding focus on safe migration channels. In contrast, categories such as family reunification and irregular migration remained relatively stable, with minor decreases or modest fluctuations. Afghanistan-specific queries showed a declining pattern, particularly in Pakistan, from 192 to 144.

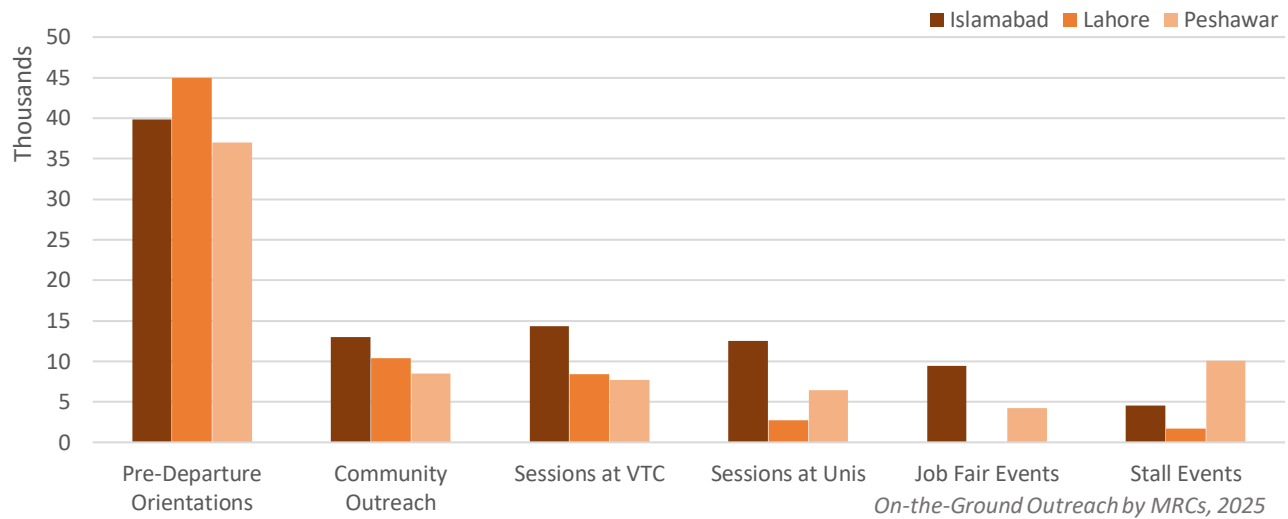


Reach Channels, 2025

dissemination and expanded community-level presence helped the strategic shift toward scale while maintaining grassroots accessibility.

On-the-ground engagement also intensified significantly in Q4, with **102,288 individuals reached through direct outreach activities**, doubling the previous quarter's performance. **Pre-departure briefings** remained the core engagement channel, reaching **45,000 prospective migrants** (47% increase from Q3), reinforcing their central role in preparing workers for safe and informed migration. University-based orientation





sessions expanded sharply to 10,573 participants (+184% from Q3), while TVET/VTC institutions engaged 9,283 youth (+23% from Q3), strengthening linkages between migration awareness and the education and skills development ecosystem. Community outreach activities and MRC stall events also saw substantial growth, reaching 10,813 and 12,558 individuals respectively, reflecting increased public visibility in community and high-footfall spaces. Q4 further marked a qualitative shift in outreach modalities through the introduction of skills development trainings and EU-funded job fairs, which reached 13,711 individuals combined, integrating employment facilitation with safe migration awareness.

Collective outreach trends in 2025: Across 2025 as a whole, MRC outreach demonstrates a clear trajectory of strategic evolution. Cumulatively this year, over 4.09 million individuals were reached through digital platforms, 372,441 through offline materials, and 236,015 through on-ground outreach activities, producing a national footprint that exceeds 4.7 million engagements. Facebook consolidated its position as the primary mass

communication platform, while Instagram and YouTube provided sustained supplementary reach. Pre-departure briefings consistently formed the backbone of on-ground engagement throughout the year, while institutional partnerships with TVETs, universities and community platforms progressively strengthened. By the end of 2025, the MRC programme had transitioned from a primarily awareness-focused model into a scaled, integrated outreach system, combining digital mass communication, community-level engagement, institutional collaboration and labour-market-linked initiatives, significantly enhancing national visibility, credibility and impact.

Within the broader national migration context, where official data indicate that approximately **763,526 Pakistanis emigrated for employment in 2025**⁷, MRC's pre-departure sessions represent a substantial and structured contribution to emigrants' preparedness, covering **around 16% of the estimated annual outflow** through direct orientation sessions and in-person contacts. This highlights the MRC's significant role in the national migration ecosystem, particularly in delivering

⁷ <https://beoe.gov.pk/reports-and-statistics>

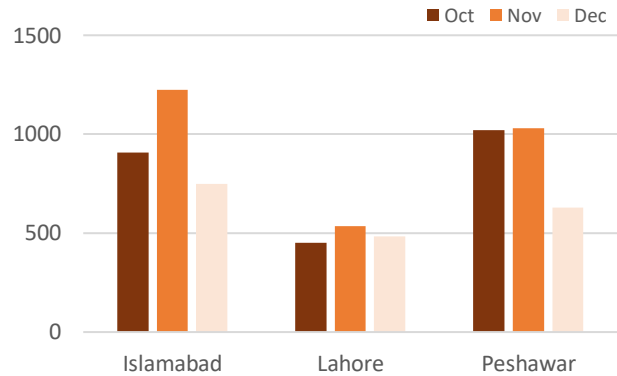
organised, rights-based preparation and safe migration guidance to a large segment of prospective migrants.

Outreach trends 2024 – 2025: During 2024, MRC directly reached over 163,499 prospective emigrants through physical outreach sessions, including pre-departure orientation, representing

22% of the country’s total outflow of 727,381. This figure increased by 44% in 2025, reaching 236,015 prospective emigrants, or 31% of the total outflow of 763,526. These results position MRCs as a key national partner supporting authorities in informing prospective emigrants about their rights, access to services, and making informed migration decisions.

Engagement with Emigrants

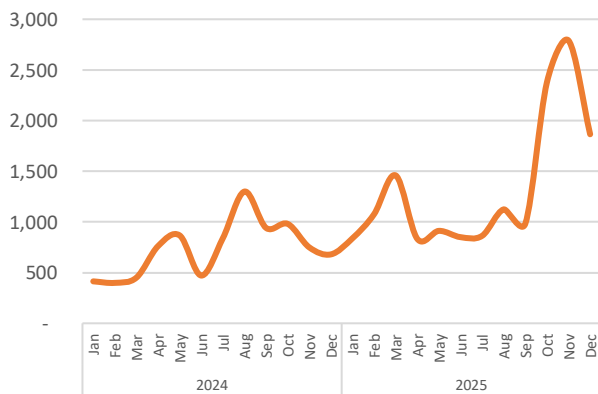
Engagement in Q4 2025: While the previous reporting period (i.e., Q3 2025) recorded 2,970 one-on-one counselling sessions, representing a 14% increase from the preceding quarter, data from this quarter indicates a substantial scale-up, with **7,033 counselling sessions** delivered between October and December alone (+137%). This quarter, Islamabad provided 2,881 sessions (25% women), Lahore 1,471 (16% women), and Peshawar 2,681 (8% women), demonstrating sustained demand for migration counselling services. Monthly outreach peaked in November (2,790 individual counselling sessions), compared to 2,378 in October and 1,865 in December, indicating particularly high engagement mid-quarter. Islamabad consistently accounted for the largest share of counselling services, followed by Peshawar and Lahore. Delivery modalities



Individual counselling by MRCs, Q4 2025

continued to prioritise accessibility and timeliness, with a substantial proportion of sessions conducted remotely and some immediately following pre-departure orientation activities, ensuring personalised and responsive support for prospective and departing migrants.

Furthermore, 194 cases verified by MRCs (Islamabad 73%, Lahore 22%, Peshawar 5%). The verifications included 71 job advertisements, 51 job contracts/offers, and 22 visa cases, while 50 Overseas Employment Promoter (OEP) licenses were also processed to ensure transparency and prevent fraudulent practices, thereby supporting the protection of emigrants, highlighting sustained efforts by MRCs to continue promoting safe, fair, and well-regulated labour migration.



Individual counselling by MRCs, 2024 & 2025

Engagement with emigrants during 2025: In 2025, MRCs delivered a total of **15,973 one-on-one counselling sessions**, reflecting strong and

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sustained engagement throughout the year. Activity was particularly high in the first quarter, peaking in March (1,459 sessions), followed by stable volumes across mid-year. The final quarter showed a sharp rise in demand, with a major surge in October (2,378) and November (2,790), before easing in December (1,865). Overall, 2025 demonstrates consistent service delivery, growing demand, and the capacity of MRCs to scale outreach effectively during peak migration periods.

Engagement with emigrants 2024-2025: Across 2024 and 2025, MRC delivered a combined total of **24,828 counselling sessions** (8,855 in 2024 and 15,973 in 2025), showing a clear upward trajectory in migrant engagement over the two years. The pattern reflects a shift from more modest and fluctuating monthly volumes in 2024 to higher, more sustained levels of service demand and delivery in 2025.

In 2024–2025, Pakistan continued to be a major source of international emigration, driven largely by labour migration and economic factors. In

2024, approximately 727,400 Pakistanis left for work abroad across the year as part of longer-term migration patterns that have seen millions seek opportunities overseas over decades. In 2025, this trend intensified: official figures indicate that around 763,500 Pakistanis emigrated for employment during the year, reflecting continued strong demand for overseas workers in Gulf states, Europe and beyond, with substantial numbers departing in the first quarter and hundreds of thousands more over the full year⁸. At the same time, Pakistan experienced significant outward movement related to the Afghan situation, with hundreds of thousands of Afghan nationals returning from Pakistan amid repatriation and deportation pressures in 2025.

Looking toward 2026, key dynamics to watch include the ongoing demand for Pakistani labour abroad and how global visa and labour market policies evolve; the implications of Afghan returns on regional migration flows and economies, and the impact of domestic economic conditions and factors within Pakistan that may further shape emigration patterns.

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⁸ [BEOE](#)

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