

# Irregular migration dynamics from Pakistan and the role of information campaigns

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PARIM Final Report

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## List of Acronyms and abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AHTC	Anti Human Trafficking Circle
AVRR	Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme
BEOE	Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CWA	Community Welfare Attaché
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Areas
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FIA	Federal Investigation Agency
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GIZ	German Development Agency, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH
GLOACT	Global Action against Trafficking in Persons and the Smuggling of Migrants
IBMS	Integrated Border Management System
ICMPD	International Centre for Migration Policy Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
I-SAPS	Institute of Social and Policy Sciences
KII	Key Informant Interview
KP	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoI	Ministry of Interior
MOPHRD	Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development
MRC	Migrant Resource Centre
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OEP	Overseas Employment Promoter
OPF	Overseas Pakistanis Foundation
PARIM	Awareness Raising and Information Campaigns on the Risks of Irregular Migration in Pakistan Project
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime



## Executive summary

Recently, migration information campaigns have become a popular policy tool for European policymakers to influence irregular migration flows. However, the extent of effectiveness of such campaigns is often disputed, and evidence on how information may influence irregular migration decision-making is often scarce for certain contexts, such as Pakistan. Nevertheless, available scholarly work confirms that information campaigns do have certain limited impact on decision-making and migration behaviour, provided that the campaign is designed based on well-defined objectives and goals.

The PARIM project seeks to design an information campaign aimed at providing awareness to potential irregular migrants in six districts of Pakistan (Faisalabad, Gujrat, Gujranwala, Mandi Bahauddin, Jhelum and Sialkot) about the risks and consequences of irregular migration, the realities of life in Europe for irregular migrants, and safe and legal channels for migration. To guide the design of the campaign, multiple strands of research were conducted to understand not only the effectiveness of migration information campaigns, but also to identify the target audience, their information gaps and needs, credible messengers, and pertinent channels of communication for migration-related information.

The following **key lessons** are drawn from the PARIM research:

The PARIM research confirms the general **profile** of potential irregular migrants drawn from previous research studies. From our research, we find that potential irregular migrants from Pakistan are young, male,

unmarried, working on daily wage or self-employed, with an education between primary and secondary level (five to ten years of formal education), and an average household income of less than PKR 50,000 (EUR 255). Potential irregular migrants are slightly more likely to hail from rural areas as compared to urban areas of the six study sites

Migration is a product of human aspirations. For most respondents, migration is a means to achieving **economic aspirations** such as wealth, steady income, and status. However, it is also common to have migration as an aspiration in and of itself, especially among those with lower education and income levels. The main **drivers** of migration are also economic in nature, with poor standard of living, poor business development opportunities, and financial problems and debts as the top three factors driving migration. Similarly, the main **pull factors** towards Europe as perceived by respondents are availability of jobs, the likelihood of getting citizenship in Europe, availability of investment and business opportunities, and presence of friends and family. Social networks, in Pakistan and abroad, as well as migration agents (smugglers or “travel agents”) are considered important **facilitators** of the migration process. Friends and family in Pakistan and abroad are key sources of financial support, assistance in document management and linkages to migration agents.

The main **reasons for choosing irregular migration** are that it is perceived by potential migrants in these districts to be cheaper, more common and a quicker mode of migration to reach Europe. It is more common among the

lower educated and lower income groups to consider irregular migration as the only way to migrate.

Potential irregular migrants who plan to migrate within the next two years were found to have low levels of **preparations** such as getting a passport, applying for a visa, or booking tickets. However, they are more likely to be looking for a migration agent or having paid one, implying the high reliance on agents as migration intermediaries. Finding a trustworthy agent is also among the top challenges that potential irregular migrants foresee, among other difficulties such as arranging documents and finding information on jobs in intended countries of destination.

Potential irregular migrants' motivation to consume and be receptive to **information** on migration is also an important factor that determines the effectiveness of campaigns. When potential irregular migrants perceive that they already have high levels of information on the migration process and risks, they may be less receptive to information campaigns. In the PARIM survey, potential irregular migrants self-reported to have a fairly **low general awareness of risks** associated with migration, yet, this limited awareness was coupled with a high intention to migrate irregularly. This reflects that potential irregular migrants may value the outcomes of migration more than the risks experienced in the process. For information campaigns, research has demonstrated that information on the risks of irregular migration would have to be coupled with heuristics and cues that **invoke relevant emotions** in order to create a longer-lasting impact on irregular migration intentions.

In this vein, the PARIM research further finds that irregular migrants may benefit from **balanced information** provided via campaigns, rather than a sole focus on highlighting the risks associated with irregular migration. The PARIM research finds that information campaigns are more **effective** when they package content in a way that **negative** messaging (aimed at triggering fear, anxiety or worry by highlighting risks) is **followed by positive** content (legal pathways, job opportunities abroad) and/or neutral information (alternatives to migration, domestic job opportunities). Such an approach improves reception of information by potential migrants. While potential migrants in the PARIM survey reported their desire for more information on legal migration channels and a low desire for information on the risks of irregular migration, potential migrants may not themselves be the best judge of what information might effectively change intentions to irregularly migrate. For this reason, this study also triangulates information from other sources, while information campaigns need to test and evaluate their messages in order to fine-tune what is effective. For instance, information on maximum fees agents are allowed to charge seems to be quite abstract and low priority for respondents, yet other research findings (such as from stakeholder interviews) indicate that it is a major problem that needs addressing.

The choice of **messengers** who can provide relevant information on migration to potential migrants is pivotal in an information campaign. Messengers should be selected based on their **perceived expertise, trustworthiness, and goodwill** among the campaign audience. The PARIM survey shows that **returnees** are the

most common source of migration-related information among potential irregular migrants, however, **friends and family** in Pakistan and abroad also play an important role in supporting the migration process. Engaging diaspora members who are personally known to potential irregular migrants is likely to have a higher impact than unknown migrants abroad who just share a common country of origin. Moreover, community elders, religious leaders, local level influencers, including high school and university teachers, social media celebrities, etc. are examples that emerged from the research who could be considered as credible messengers. Institutional sources of information such as government institutions, NGOs and Migrant Resource Centres were found to be less popular among the potential irregular migrants surveyed.

The choice of **channel of communication** for the campaign should depend on the **accessibility, usage and trust** in the channel for migration-related information. The PARIM research advocates for a range of communication channels to be used for different audience segments. Among the channels, those that employ methods for one on one interaction are expected to have the most optimal impact such as in-person counselling, hotline conversations, social media chats, etc. Within social media options, Facebook is most popular among potential irregular migrants, and it also has had a high outreach based on previous experiences of Migrant Resource Centres in Pakistan. Yet, the study finds that broad outreach via social media or traditional mass media would be most effective when used to funnel interactions towards one-on-one exchange.

These findings have been drawn from the following **research activities**:

- i. **Background research** that analyses the key assumptions behind migration information campaigns and identifies the key drivers of irregular migration at micro, meso, and macro levels through an in-depth review of relevant state-of-the-art literature.
- ii. **Theoretical analysis** of the impact of information campaigns on migration decision-making and migration behaviour, based on desk review of recent literature on the topic.
- iii. A **quantitative survey** among a sample of 1200 potential irregular migrants in six districts of Pakistan that have high rates of irregular migration: Faisalabad, Gujrat, Gujranwala, Mandi Bahauddin, Jhelum and Sialkot. The survey explored the information needs of potential irregular migrants, their aspirations, motivations and decision-making processes, and the key influencers and channels likely to reach them.
- iv. A **stakeholder mapping study** in the above-mentioned six districts to identify potential campaign partners who also provided qualitative input on the culture of irregular migration from these areas for contextual background and highlighted the main needs, aspirations and decision-making processes of potential irregular migrants.
- v. A **diaspora mapping study** to understand the potential of engaging with Pakistani diaspora members in information campaigns. The study drew from theoretical research on engagement with diaspora members, as well as qualitative





interviews with Pakistani migrant associations and government counterparts to better understand the potential and challenges in the Pakistani context.

- vi. **Validation meetings** with relevant stakeholders at the national, provincial and district levels to understand to take into account their experiences and knowledge about the context of irregular migration from the project study sites and from Pakistan overall.

This report synthesises the findings of all the above research strands to comprehensively inform the design of the campaign in terms of target audience selection, content and message framing based on potential irregular migrants' aspirations and information needs, key influencers and credible messengers, and channels of communication likely to reach potential irregular migrants. Where relevant, research findings have been disaggregated based on demographic characteristics of potential irregular migrants to support a more

tailored approach to campaign design and implementation. There are several methodological limitations common to research on potential irregular migrants, such as sampling challenges. These have clearly been defined in the report.

The research phase of PARIM has produced important findings not only for the design and implementation of the PARIM information campaign, but also for a general understanding of how information campaigns may influence decision-making. Although numerous migration information campaigns have been conducted in Pakistan, there is limited publicly available information on their scope and effectiveness. To date, there is also limited empirical research on irregular migration dynamics from Pakistan. This report seeks to fill these evidence gaps and provide input for potential future migration information campaigns implemented in Pakistan.



## 1 Introduction

Every year, thousands of young Pakistanis, mostly men, enter Europe irregularly to fulfil their dreams, making Pakistan one of the top countries of origin for irregular entries in Europe. Between 2017 and 2020, about 21,405 Pakistanis have been detected entering the European Union through irregular means, averaging at 5% of the total share of irregular entries in 2017 to about 2% of the total share in 2020.<sup>1</sup> Despite stricter border control, low success rate of their asylum applications and the high risks and costs of the journey, the trend of irregular migration from Pakistan to Europe continues (although the rates have drastically dropped since the peak in 2015<sup>2</sup>). In response, the European policymakers employ a number of control measures to dissuade such irregular flows, one of which is migration information campaigns in the countries of origin.<sup>3</sup>

Migration information campaigns are generally framed as both, a migration management and a humanitarian intervention, to protect and deter potential irregular migrants from the risks involved in an irregular journey by influencing their behaviour and decision-making through the provision of information. This is based on the assumption that the potential migrants lack accurate and complete information needed to make the migration decision. Research shows that while migrants and their families are generally aware of risks of irregular migration, their information is often incomplete and they lack concrete information, limiting their capacity to prepare properly.<sup>4</sup> A Needs Assessment Study conducted for Pakistan also highlighted certain areas in which potential Pakistani migrants lack concrete information, such as risks involved during the journey and on arrival at the destination, right of migrants etc.<sup>5</sup> However, the extent to which these information gaps can be filled with information campaigns is inconclusive. The success of information campaigns, depending on their objectives, not only relies on the content of the information shared, but also the emotions that the information provided evokes, the channels and messengers through which the message is delivered, and how well the target group is identified.<sup>6</sup> Although scholars question the true extent of the effectiveness of such campaigns, recent evaluation studies have found a certain (limited) impact, conditional on the design and objectives of the campaign.<sup>7</sup>

Against this background, the PARIM project seeks to design a series of information campaigns aimed at providing balanced information and raising awareness among potential irregular migrants in Pakistan about the dangers and consequences of irregular migration, options for legal migration,

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<sup>1</sup> FRONTEX, “Risk Analysis for 2021” (Warsaw, 2021).

<sup>2</sup> FRONTEX.

<sup>3</sup> Katharina Hahn-Schaur, “Leveraging Migration Information Campaigns for State and Migrant Security Lessons Learned and Open Questions,” 2021, 1–13.

<sup>4</sup> Anahi Ayala Iacucci and Rose Foran, “Lost in Translation: The Misinformed Journey of Migrants Across Italy,” 2017; Jasper Tjaden, “Assessing the Impact of Awareness- Raising Campaigns on Potential Migrants – What We Have Learned so Far,” in *Migration in West and North Africa and across the Mediterranean*, ed. F. Fargues and M. Rango (Geneva: IOM, 2020), 426–34.

<sup>5</sup> Dynamic Consulting Services, “Needs Assessment Study: Information Needs of Intending Migrants in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan” (Islamabad: ICMPD, 2019).

<sup>6</sup> Tjaden, “Assessing the Impact of Awareness- Raising Campaigns on Potential Migrants – What We Have Learned so Far.”

<sup>7</sup> Katharina Hahn-Schaur, *Awareness Raising and Information Campaigns on the Risks of Irregular Migration from Pakistan: Background Report* (Vienna: ICMPD, 2021); Tjaden, “Assessing the Impact of Awareness- Raising Campaigns on Potential Migrants – What We Have Learned so Far.”



awareness on government services and resources for legal migration from Pakistan, costs associated with migration, right of migrants, and the legal, social and economic realities of life in Europe. Specifically, the project has the following objectives:

- i. To empower prospective migrants and their key influencers to make informed decisions on migration by communicating trusted, factual, balanced information about the dangers and consequences of irregular migration, alternative options for legal migration, and the legal, social and economic realities of life in Europe and in transit countries, including with regard to asylum procedures and return.
- ii. To empower key influencers and credible voices (in Pakistan and selected European countries of destination Greece, Italy, Austria and Bulgaria) in countering smugglers' narratives, enabling these influencers to support prospective migrants' informed decisions on migration with balanced information about dangers and consequences.
- iii. To enhance the capacity of different groups of stakeholders in Pakistan (at provincial and district level among governmental, civil society, community leaders, diaspora and other relevant stakeholders) to raise awareness on the dangers and consequences of irregular
- iv. To enhance the sustainability of communication activities and results of the campaigns

Preceding the campaign implementation is rigorous research conducted through a variety of dedicated research strands aimed at understanding the context under which the migration information campaign would be implemented. The research employs a mixed methods approach comprising of:

- i. To understand the context of irregular migration in Pakistan, and state of the art literature on the effectiveness of information campaigns, a detailed review of existing scholarly literature and evaluation studies on migration information campaigns was conducted in the Background Report.<sup>8</sup>
- ii. For a deeper understanding of how information campaigns may influence migration decision-making, the project also undertook a background study on theoretical frameworks related to decision-making with respect to migration information campaigns.<sup>9</sup>
- iii. To assess the potential of engaging diaspora groups in migration information campaigns, the project mapped migrant associations in PARIM countries in Europe and analysed their objectives, past and current projects to evaluate the scope of engaging them in information campaigns.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Hahn-Schaur, *Awareness Raising and Information Campaigns on the Risks of Irregular Migration from Pakistan: Background Report*.

<sup>9</sup> Sandra Morgenstern, "Theoretical Models and Empirical Results Supporting Migration Information Campaigns. Background Note for the PARIM Project." (Vienna: ICMPD, 2021).

<sup>10</sup> Ayesha Qaisrani and Jelena Jokic, "Engaging Diasporas in Information Campaigns on Migration" (Vienna, 2021).



- iv. To understand relevant actors and resources at the district level and a contextual understanding of irregular migration trends, a mapping of local stakeholders in the six PARIM districts (Faisalabad, Gujrat, Gujranwala, Jhelum, Mandi Bahauddin and Sialkot) was conducted.<sup>11</sup>
- v. A quantitative survey was conducted in the six sending districts to understand the information needs and characteristics of potential irregular migrants, including an understanding of their motivations, aspirations, risk awareness.<sup>12</sup>

Together, these research strands elucidate the potential (irregular) migrants' information needs and gaps, their migration intentions, motivations and decision-making processes, their key influencers and channels likely to reach them. The research conducted under PARIM builds on ICMPD's existing practical experience in migration awareness campaigns in Pakistan through the "Migrant Resource Centres" (MRCs) in Islamabad and Lahore. The MRCs have been engaged in awareness raising and counselling for potential migrants since 2016. The knowledge gained through this experience will inform the campaign design and lead to campaign activities with pre-tested messages tailored to the local context.

This report is a synthesis document, integrating the major findings and lessons from all the different research strands to guide the campaign design. The report sets out by discussing the trends of irregular migration from Pakistan (specifically focusing on the PARIM study districts) and the institutional mechanisms that exist to manage these flows (Chapter 2). Chapter 3 reviews the existing evidence on migration information campaigns and discusses the factors that may influence decision-making and migration behaviour through campaigns. This chapter also summarises the lessons learned from some of the migration information campaigns implemented in Pakistan recently. Chapter 4 focuses on the methodological aspects of PARIM research, introducing the various research strands that have contributed to this report and the scope of this report's analysis. It also defines the limitations of the analysis and the challenges encountered at various stages of the research. Chapter 5 focuses on describing the micro, meso and macro drivers of irregular migration. Micro drivers comprise of the demographic profile of potential irregular migrants, their aspirations, emotions, awareness levels, risk appetites and confidence levels; meso drivers focus on the facilitating and inhibiting factors in the irregular migration decision-making, and; macro drivers refer to the structural factors that may encourage irregular migration. Based on these analyses, Chapter 6 then offers practical lessons for the design of the information campaign, focusing on the content based on the needs of the target audience, the key influencers who can be engaged as credible messengers, and the channels of communication best suited to the select target group. Finally, Chapter 7 summarises the whole discussion, draws conclusions and offers practical recommendations for the design and framing of the information campaign.

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<sup>11</sup> I-SAPS, "Stakeholder Mapping Report: Awareness Raising and Information Campaigns on the Risks of Irregular Migration in Pakistan," 2021.

<sup>12</sup> I-SAPS, "Awareness Raising and Information Campaigns on the Risks of Irregular Migration from Pakistan: Survey Report," 2021.



## 2 Migration from Pakistan: Trends and institutional mechanisms

For setting the context, this chapter elucidates the existing trends of irregular migration from Pakistan towards Europe, the main drivers of migration from specific migration hotspots drawn from the existing literature, and the institutional framework that exists to manage irregular flows from Pakistan. This chapter explains the culture of migration prevalent in certain irregular migration hotspots in light of the historic trends as well as socioeconomic transformations of sending and receiving areas. Against this information, understanding the institutional architecture that relates to managing and restricting irregular migration in Pakistan depicts the policy space in which information campaigns and other measures related to discouraging irregular migration may operate. A deeper understanding of the context in which the information campaigns would be implemented is a prerequisite to tailor the design of the campaign accordingly.

### 2.1 Irregular migration trends from Pakistan and selected districts

Irregular migration from Pakistan is not a new phenomenon, although one of rising policy concern for the Government of Pakistan as well as the governments of receiving countries. Pakistan is one of the top sending countries in the world with regard to labour migration, with an outflow of 11.1 million registered labour migrants between 1971 and 2020.<sup>13</sup> Although the scale of labour migration is high in terms of numbers of migrants, legal migration corridors are limited to a few destinations and in a few sectors. A strong institutional set-up is in place that guides labour migration flows geared towards promoting legal migration, directing remittances through formal channels, and protecting migrant rights.<sup>14</sup> International labour migration from Pakistan has largely been concentrated towards the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and other Middle Eastern countries, which remain the biggest recipients of Pakistani labour exports since the 1970s, particularly filling the low-skilled labour demand in sectors such as construction (as masons, carpenters, and electricians) and transport (as drivers and mechanics).<sup>15</sup>

In parallel, irregular migration flows from Pakistan have risen over the years, with flows primarily directed to the Gulf and Europe, followed by Southeast Asia and Australia, and to a smaller extent, North America.<sup>16</sup> Over the past decade, Pakistan has been continuously ranked among the top five countries of origin for irregular migrants arriving at European borders. While an accurate and updated number of irregular migrants from Pakistan is not known at a global scale, some indicators reflect the extent of this activity, such as the number of irregular Pakistanis detected in Europe. Between 2012-14, the number of irregular Pakistani migrants detected irregularly entering the European Union were

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<sup>13</sup> Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment, "Labour Migration Report," 2020.

<sup>14</sup> Silk Routes Facility, "National Emigration and Welfare Policy for Overseas Pakistanis: Processes, Challenges, and Responses for Action," 2020.

<sup>15</sup> Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment (BEOE), "Labour Migration Report," 2020.

<sup>16</sup> UNODC, "Smuggling of Migrants from Pakistan: Reasons, Routes, and Risks," 2016.



around 4,600 each year.<sup>17</sup> In terms of irregular arrivals, the flow peaked in 2015 when 43,310 irregular migrants from Pakistan were detected crossing the border irregularly, and since then have declined.<sup>18</sup> In 2019, before the onset of COVID-19, the number of irregular border crossings by Pakistanis had gone down to 3,799, which further declined to 2,603 in 2020.<sup>19</sup> As per Eurostat data, the number of Pakistanis found to be illegally<sup>20</sup> staying in Europe was at its peak in 2015 with over 70,000 over stayers, which has reduced to just over 20,000 by 2020.<sup>21</sup>

Mediated by a strong and extensive network comprising of migrants' social network (friends and family, both within Pakistan and in the diaspora) and in some cases also connections with smugglers,<sup>22</sup> irregular migration is rampant in certain specific migration-hubs of Pakistan, specifically in districts of Central Punjab, including both urban and rural areas. Interestingly, these districts, often collectively referred to as the 'migration belt' of Pakistan also have some of the highest legal migration outflows from Pakistan. Among the top 20 sending districts of Pakistan which account for 50% of total labour outflows (between 1981- 2021), 13 districts are situated in Punjab, six are located in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), and one is in Sindh (Karachi).<sup>23</sup> Although a little dated, a UNODC study based on data from the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) states that central and south Punjab and the Newly Merged Districts of KP (formerly Federally Administered Tribal Areas - FATA) are the main sources of irregular migrants.<sup>24</sup> The trend remains the same to date, as confirmed by an FIA official through a bilateral discussion.<sup>25</sup>

The PARIM project focuses on six districts in central Punjab, all also included in the top 20 sending districts of legal labour migration. These include Sialkot, Gujranwala, Faisalabad, Gujrat, Mandi Bahauddin, and Jhelum. These districts have strong historical linkages to Europe through migration, initiating well before the independence of Pakistan in 1947, but reinforced through labour migration trends post-independence (Table 1 gives a contextual overview of the six districts). The Pakistan Migration Report<sup>26</sup> identified three distinct streams of migration of Pakistanis, specifically from this 'migration-belt', towards European countries:

- i. The post-World War II labour flows towards Europe to fill the labour demand for reconstruction during the 1960s and 1970s.

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<sup>17</sup> FRONTEX, "Risk Analysis for 2016" (Warsaw, 2016).

<sup>18</sup> FRONTEX, "Risk Analysis for 2020" (Warsaw, 2020).

<sup>19</sup> FRONTEX, "Risk Analysis for 2021."

<sup>20</sup> Terminology used in Eurostat.

<sup>21</sup> EUROSTAT, "Third Country Nationals Found to Be Illegally Present – Annual Data (Rounded," 2021, [https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr\\_eipre&lang=en](https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr_eipre&lang=en).

<sup>22</sup> Optimity Advisors, ICMPD, and ECRE, "A Study on Smuggling of Migrants - Characteristics, Responses and Cooperation with Third Countries. Final Report." (Brussels, 2015).

<sup>23</sup> Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment (BEOE), "Workers Registered For Overseas Employment By Bureau Of Emigration & Overseas Employment During The Period 1981-2020 (Up to December), District Wise" (Accessed on 28/01/2021, 2021).

<sup>24</sup> UNODC, "Smuggling of Migrants from Pakistan: Reasons, Routes, and Risks," 2016.

<sup>25</sup> Personal communication with FIA official in Islamabad.

<sup>26</sup> Nasra Shah et al., "Pakistan Migration Report," 2020, <https://www.gids.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Migration-Report-2020-Complete-Grayscale-1.pdf>.

- ii. A policy-driven labour demand to cater to the demographic changes in the European Union in the 1990s. Italy and Spain were considered the main destinations due to their liberal visa and regularisation policies.
- iii. Irregular migration post 9/11 coordinated by a strong network of smugglers, and mostly undertaken by people who have strong social connections in Europe.

These six districts share a similar culture and language (Punjabi). Faisalabad is the largest among the six in terms of population, while Jhelum is the smallest (Table 1 below). The land in this region is mostly fertile, largely irrigated, and agriculture is the most common livelihood activity in these districts and the largest employment sector for labour. These districts have some of the lowest poverty incidence in Pakistan (Figure 1 below). However, among the six districts, Mandi Bahauddin has the highest incidence of multidimensional poverty,<sup>27</sup> while Jhelum has the lowest. Table 1 below highlights some key demographics relevant for the six districts.

**Table 1: Demographic context of PARIM project districts**

District	Population (million) <sup>28</sup>	Multi-dimensional Poverty Headcount Ratio <sup>29</sup>	% of Urban Population <sup>30</sup>	% of population (age 10+) with higher education (graduate and above) <sup>31</sup>	Average Household Size <sup>32</sup>	Unemployment rate <sup>33</sup>
Sialkot	3.8	14.0%	29%	8.0%	6.70	1.8%
Gujranwala	5.0	14.0%	59%	7.8%	6.63	1.7%
Faisalabad	7.8	19.4%	47%	8.8%	6.42	1.6%
Gujrat	2.7	18.4%	30%	6.9%	6.20	2.1%
Mandi Bahauddin	1.5	31.5%	20%	5.7%	6.27	1.8%
Jhelum	1.2	8.5%	29%	7.2%	5.88	2.7%

Some of these districts also have the most active industries of Pakistan, which may explain their better economic status among other districts of Pakistan. Sialkot has a thriving industry for sports equipment, Gujrat and Gujranwala are known for their electric and home appliances industrial units, and

<sup>27</sup> Multidimensional poverty is a measure of acute deprivations experienced in the dimensions of education, health and living standard. A multidimensional poverty score reflects not only the incidence of poverty, but also the intensity of poverty, and offers an alternative to income-based poverty estimates.

<sup>28</sup> Government of Pakistan, "Population Census of Pakistan," 2017.

<sup>29</sup> Ministry of Planning development & Reform, "State of Multidimensional Poverty," 2018.

<sup>30</sup> Ministry of Planning development & Reform.

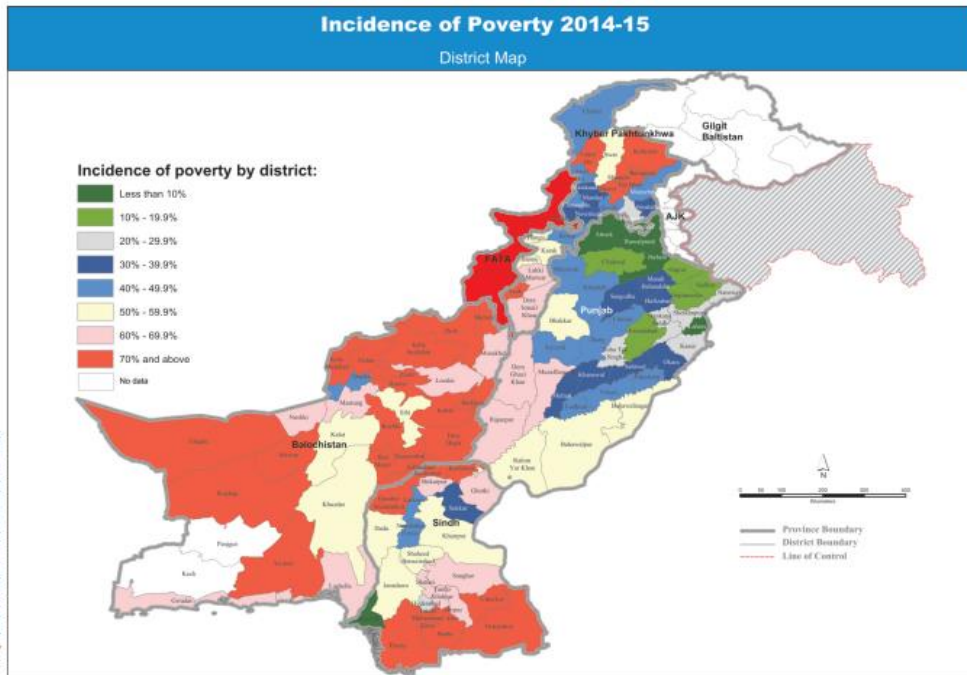
<sup>31</sup> Government of Pakistan, "Population Census of Pakistan."

<sup>32</sup> Government of Pakistan.

<sup>33</sup> Government of Pakistan.

Faisalabad is the hub of the textile industry in Pakistan. In the official district profiles of Jhelum, Sialkot and Faisalabad, overseas migration is cited as a key occupation among others such as armed forces, civil service, farming, trade and industry.<sup>34</sup>

**Figure 1: Multidimensional poverty map of Pakistan**



Source: UNDP and Government of Pakistan<sup>35</sup>

The trends of high irregular migration from these districts towards Europe can be explained in terms of economic, political, and social factors, with each driver dominating the migration trend in a certain era, reinforced by the other two factors. For instance, economic forces (filling the labour demand in Europe through the large labour supply from these districts, primarily from Jhelum to the United Kingdom, and from Gujrat to Norway) were the main drivers initially in the 1950s and 1960s. Following this trend, a stream of regular and irregular migrants headed towards Europe, many driven by political and social repression of the late 1970s and 1980s during the period in which martial law was imposed in the country.<sup>36</sup> After that, and to date, the dominant driving force behind migration towards Europe from these districts is social connections, combined with economic and political pressures.<sup>37</sup> These macro dimensions through a historical lens are important to consider when devising interventions to address the ‘root causes’ of irregular migration from these regions. Understanding that root causes

<sup>34</sup> Government of Punjab, “District at a Glance: Jhelum,” 2021, [https://jhelum.punjab.gov.pk/district\\_profile](https://jhelum.punjab.gov.pk/district_profile).

<sup>35</sup> Ministry of Planning development & Reform, “State of Multidimensional Poverty.”

<sup>36</sup> Haris Gazdar, “A Review of Migration Issues in Pakistan,” *Migration, Development and Pro-Poor Policy Choices in Asia*, 2003, 31.

<sup>37</sup> Shah et al., “Pakistan Migration Report.”



are dynamic, building on previous patterns and trends, and shaped by current circumstances may help avoid reductionist approaches and interventions to deter (irregular) migration towards Europe.

Against this background, the PARIM Background Report<sup>38</sup> identified three main factors that may give an overall picture of the drivers of (irregular) migration from these migration-prone districts. Inspired by the conceptual framework put forth by Black et al. (2011),<sup>39</sup> the Background Report categorised individual and household characteristics as micro drivers, intermediary factors (obstacles and facilitators) as meso drivers of migration and structural factors as macro drivers of migration. While a detailed discussion of these factors for the context of Pakistan is given in the Background Report based on a comprehensive literature review, and the Diaspora Mapping Report,<sup>40</sup> a short overview is given in Table 2 below to set the context. There are close connections between the drivers contributing to regular and irregular migration from Pakistan, and hence many factors may be overlapping for the two scenarios.

**Table 2: Summary of (irregular) migration drivers from Pakistan**

<b>Migrant profile (Micro drivers)</b>	<b>Intermediary factors (Meso drivers)</b>	<b>Structural factors (Macro drivers)</b>
Gender (predominantly male); <sup>41</sup> smuggled women are often accompanied by a male partner or children <sup>42</sup>	Legal frameworks (limited legal migration corridors) <sup>43</sup>	<b><u>Push factors</u></b> Limited employment opportunities in areas of origin <sup>44</sup> Wage differentials between sending and receiving countries <sup>45</sup> Debt and financial burden <sup>46</sup> Poor quality of education <sup>47</sup>
Age (young: 18-35 years) <sup>50</sup> An increasing trend in arrivals of unaccompanied minors on European borders <sup>51</sup>	Access to migration facilitators/smugglers <sup>52</sup>	

<sup>38</sup> Hahn-Schaur, *Awareness Raising and Information Campaigns on the Risks of Irregular Migration from Pakistan: Background Report*.

<sup>39</sup> Richard Black et al., "The Effect of Environmental Change on Human Migration," *Global Environmental Change* 21 (2011): S3–11, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2011.10.001>.

<sup>40</sup> Qaisrani and Jokic, "Engaging Diasporas in Information Campaigns on Migration."

<sup>41</sup> IOM, "Pakistan: Survey on Drivers of Migration - Migrants in Europe during Covid-19," 2021.

<sup>42</sup> UNODC, "Smuggling of Migrants from Pakistan: Reasons, Routes, and Risks," 2016.

<sup>43</sup> World Bank Group, "A Migrant's Journey for Better Opportunities: The Case of Pakistan" (Washington, D.C, 2018), <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/30272>.

<sup>44</sup> IOM, "Pakistan: Survey on Drivers of Migration - Migrants in Europe during Covid-19."

<sup>45</sup> ILO, *The Cost of Migration: What Low-Skilled Migrant Workers from Pakistan Pay to Work in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates*, 2016.

<sup>46</sup> IOM, "Pakistan: Survey on Drivers of Migration - Migrants in Europe during Covid-19."

<sup>47</sup> IOM. 2020.

<sup>50</sup> Dynamic Consulting Services, "Needs Assessment Study: Information Needs of Intending Migrants in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan," 2019.

<sup>51</sup> UNODC, "Smuggling of Migrants from Pakistan: Reasons, Routes, and Risks," 2016, <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2014-136s1>.

<sup>52</sup> G M Arif, "Recruitment of Pakistani Workers for Overseas Employment: Mechanisms, Exploitation and Vulnerabilities" (Geneva, 2009).

Income group (lower middle income group) <sup>53</sup>	<p><b><u>Cost of migrating</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- High costs of legal migration option for first-time migrants, as recruiters often overcharge<sup>54</sup></li> <li>- Perceived lower cost of irregular migration<sup>55</sup></li> </ul>	Culture of migration in certain areas; migration is considered rite of passage <sup>48</sup> Family feuds <sup>49</sup>
Marital status (mostly unmarried) <sup>56</sup>	<p><b><u>Social networks and diasporic links</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chain migration<sup>57</sup></li> <li>- Positive role (support with finances, documents, extended networks, provision of information)<sup>58</sup></li> <li>- Negative role (deception from friends and family, misinformation,<sup>59</sup> family pressure</li> <li>- Returned migrants as smugglers<sup>60</sup></li> </ul>	
Education level (mostly having up to 12 years of education) <sup>61</sup> Trend is also increasing for less educated people <sup>62</sup>	Exploitation of migrants during the migration process (violation of contracts, overcharged fees, fraud, violence and other forms of exploitation)	

<sup>53</sup> Kashif Majeed Salik et al., "Migration Futures in Asia and Africa : Economic Opportunities and Distributional Effects – the Case of Pakistan," *Pathways to Resilience in Semi-Arid Economies*, 2017, 1–60.

<sup>54</sup> Arif, *Recruitment of Pakistani Workers for Overseas Employment: Mechanisms, Exploitation and Vulnerabilities*.

<sup>55</sup> Sarfraz Khan, "The Impact of Migration on Education and Health (A Case Study of Karriawala Village, District Gujrat, Pakistan)" (Islamabad, 2017).

<sup>48</sup> Ali Nobil Ahmad, "The Romantic Appeal of Illegal Migration: Gender, Masculinity and Human Smuggling from Pakistan," in *Illegal Migration and Gender in a Global and Historical Perspective*, ed. Marlou Schrover et al. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008), <https://doi.org/10.5117/9789089640475>.

<sup>49</sup> Sarfraz Khan, "The Impact of International Migration on Children's Education in Rural Gujrat, Pakistan," *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity* 6, no. 3 (2016): 226–39, <https://doi.org/10.7763/ijssh.2016.v6.647>.

<sup>56</sup> IOM, "Snapshot of 2018 Arrivals in Europe from Pakistan," 2018.

<sup>57</sup> Kleopatra Yousef, "The Vicious Circle of Irregular Migration from Pakistan to Greece and Back to Pakistan," IRMA Background Report: Migratory System 3 (Pakistan) (Athens, 2013).

<sup>58</sup> IOM, "Pakistan: Survey on Drivers of Migration - Migrants in Europe during Covid-19."

<sup>59</sup> Ali Nobil Ahmad, *Masculinity, Sexuality and Illegal Migration. Human Smuggling from Pakistan to Europe* (London: Routledge, 2011), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315594200>.

<sup>60</sup> Damla B Aksel et al., "Study on Smuggling of Migrants: Characteristics, Responses and Cooperation with Third Countries. Case Study 3: Pakistan – Turkey – Greece," *European Migration Network Report*, 2016.

<sup>61</sup> IOM, "Pakistan: Survey on Drivers of Migration - Migrants in Europe during Covid-19."

<sup>62</sup> Jessica Hagen-Zanker et al., "Migration from the Margins: Mobility, Vulnerability and Inevitability in Mid-Western Nepal and North-Western Pakistan Report 5," 2014, [www.securelivelihoods.org](http://www.securelivelihoods.org).



Skill level (skilled and semi-skilled, experience of de-skilling in destinations) <sup>63</sup>	<p>Internet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Social media is less relevant than social ties<sup>64</sup></li> <li>- Social media used for connecting with friends, family and smugglers/facilitators<sup>65</sup></li> <li>- Limited role compared to in-person interactions<sup>66</sup></li> <li>- Inequality in access to internet<sup>67</sup></li> </ul>	
Encouragement by friends and family <sup>68</sup>		
Psychological and emotional factors (risk tolerance, desire for adventure, jealousy, shame, inspiration by success of other migrants, desire to gain autonomy) <sup>69</sup>		<p><b><u>Pull factors</u></b></p> <p>Remittances for household resilience,<sup>70</sup> to pay off debt<sup>71</sup></p> <p>Job opportunities<sup>72</sup></p> <p>Better education opportunities (and availability of scholarships in the EU and Turkey)<sup>73</sup></p>

Source: Compiled by authors based on literature review conducted in PARIM Background Report

There are three common routes used for irregular migration from Pakistan to enter Europe: i) the Eastern Mediterranean Route (arrivals through Greece, Cyprus and Bulgaria); ii) the Western Balkan Route (Macedonia, Serbia, and Croatia to Hungary or Slovenia and on to Austria); and iii) the Eastern Balkan Route (Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, and on to Austria).<sup>74</sup> The journey of irregular Pakistani migrants towards Europe follows various combinations of regular and irregular migration modes for different legs of the route, including the use of both authorised and fraudulent documentation at various points of the journey and varied modes of travel (by air, land or sea).<sup>75</sup> This is important to highlight as the choice of route and mode of travel may depend on the micro factors (profile of irregular migrants) as well as the meso factors (the strictness of border enforcement determining the permeability of the border). For instance, the economically better off irregular migrants may choose to enter by air, often with legal documents, but may then overstay the authorised duration of the visa. They are also able to afford better quality forged documents, which may further enable their entry into Europe. Similarly, regarding meso factors, the opening and closure of various borders along the Eastern and Western Balkan routes impacted and displaced migrant smuggling trends via this route

<sup>63</sup> Hahn-Schaur, *Awareness Raising and Information Campaigns on the Risks of Irregular Migration from Pakistan: Background Report*.

<sup>64</sup> IOM. 2020.

<sup>65</sup> Optimity Advisors, ICMPD, and ECRE, "A Study on Smuggling of Migrants - Characteristics, Responses and Cooperation with Third Countries. Final Report."

<sup>66</sup> Rianne Dekker et al., "Smart Refugees : How Syrian Asylum Migrants Use Social Media Information in Migration Decision-Making," *Social Media + Society* 4, no. 1 (2018): 1–11, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305118764439>.

<sup>67</sup> Dekker et al.

<sup>68</sup> Salik et al., "Migration Futures in Asia and Africa : Economic Opportunities and Distributional Effects – the Case of Pakistan."

<sup>69</sup> Ahmad, "The Romantic Appeal of Illegal Migration: Gender, Masculinity and Human Smuggling from Pakistan," 2008.

<sup>70</sup> Salik et al., "Migration Futures in Asia and Africa : Economic Opportunities and Distributional Effects – the Case of Pakistan."

<sup>71</sup> Hagen-Zanker et al., "Migration from the Margins: Mobility, Vulnerability and Inevitability in Mid-Western Nepal and North-Western Pakistan Report 5."

<sup>72</sup> IOM, "Pakistan: Survey on Drivers of Migration - Migrants in Europe during Covid-19."

<sup>73</sup> IOM.

<sup>74</sup> UNODC, "Smuggling of Migrants from Pakistan: Reasons, Routes, and Risks," 2016.

<sup>75</sup> Aksel et al., "Study on Smuggling of Migrants: Characteristics, Responses and Cooperation with Third Countries. Case Study 3: Pakistan – Turkey – Greece."



over the course of 2015 and 2016.<sup>76</sup> Referring specifically to the pull factors towards European countries, the narrative in tabloids and populist remarks often state that the asylum support provided to irregular migrants in terms of accommodation, work rights, and protection against refoulement etc. in Europe attracts irregular flows from Pakistan. However, as a UNODC study<sup>77</sup> notes, there is no conclusive evidence for such claims and many irregular migrants have limited awareness about the rights and services to which they are entitled in destination countries.

## 2.2 Institutional context

Pakistan is classified as a source, transit, and destination country for irregular migration. Although still in its infancy, Pakistan's institutional framework<sup>78</sup> related to (irregular) migration has gained strength in terms of 'identifying, documenting, and curbing' irregular population movements.<sup>79</sup> This framework involves a network of institutions comprising of federal ministries including the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (MOPHRD), Ministry of Interior (MoI), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), Ministry of Law and Justice, and Pakistani diplomatic missions abroad. These government agencies often collaborate on this topic with development agencies and international organisations such as United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), International Organization for Migration (IOM), International Labour Organization (ILO), Interpol, and German development agency GIZ.

The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) operating under the MoI serves as the prime institutional body responsible for monitoring and curbing irregular migration from Pakistan. It has several dedicated departments focused on addressing irregular population movements including the Anti Human Trafficking and Smuggling Wing, the five FIA Zonal Offices and 18 special local level monitoring units called Anti Human Trafficking Circles (AHTCs) that are responsible for the collection, consolidation and collation of data from provincial police, border security forces, law enforcement agencies and human rights, women welfare, labour welfare, child protection departments.<sup>80</sup> The FIA works in collaboration with federal and provincial departments such as Provincial Police, Social Welfare Departments, Women Development Departments, Provincial Department of Labour, Child Protection Bureau, Pakistan Coast Guards, Pakistan Maritime Security Agency, and Rangers etc.<sup>81</sup> FIA also operates the Integrated Border Management System (IBMS) which monitors the flow of incoming and outgoing individuals across the external borders of Pakistan through land, air and sea routes, through the help

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<sup>76</sup> FRONTEX, "Frontex: Number of Migrants Arriving in Greece Dropped 90% in April," News and Press Release, n.d.

<sup>77</sup> UNODC, "Smuggling of Migrants from Pakistan: Reasons, Routes, and Risks," 2016.

<sup>78</sup> The focus of this discussion is narrowed to the scope of outflow of irregular migrants from Pakistan, and hence the discussion does not delve into the institutional setup related to the irregular migrants within Pakistan.

<sup>79</sup> Shah et al., "Pakistan Migration Report."

<sup>80</sup> Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), "Anti-Human Trafficking Unit," n.d., <https://fia.gov.pk/htsw>.

<sup>81</sup> UNODC, "Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling Newsletter (July - September 2020)," 2020, [https://www.unodc.org/documents/pakistan//2020.1.14\\_FIA\\_Newsletter\\_ISSUE\\_13.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/pakistan//2020.1.14_FIA_Newsletter_ISSUE_13.pdf).



of an Inter-Agency Task Force specifically created for the purpose. More recently, FIA has also partnered with local CSOs to provide post arrival assistance to forced returnees.

MOPHRD in collaboration with MOFA has appointed 19 Community Welfare Attachés (CWAs) in 16 diplomatic missions abroad, with plans to increase the number of CWAs to 24 in the near future.<sup>82</sup> The CWAs are appointed in countries with a large Pakistani population, and among other responsibilities related to the welfare of Overseas Pakistanis, have the duty to provide counselling and protection services to Overseas Pakistanis, including those held in foreign detention centres (estimates indicate that 11,000 Pakistanis are currently in foreign jails and detention centres).<sup>83</sup>

The network of these institutions operates within the ambit of a few policy and legal stipulations. Until recently, the concepts of human trafficking and migrant smuggling were used interchangeably in the policy and legislative narrative in Pakistan, with the term trafficking often used to refer to migrant smuggling as well. In 2002, the Prevention and Control of Human Trafficking Ordinance was formulated, followed by a National Action Plan for Combatting Human Trafficking in 2009.<sup>84</sup> The legislative framework was further strengthened in 2018 as Pakistan passed two new laws pertaining to human trafficking and migrant smuggling (the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act, 2018 and the Prevention of Smuggling of Migrants Act, 2018). These laws were complemented by the respective Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Rules, 2020 and Prevention of Smuggling of Migrants Rules, 2020, along with Victim Identification, Support and Assistance, and National Action Plan 2021-2025. In terms of international treaties and regional consultative processes, Pakistan ratified the UN Convention on Transnational Organised Crime in 2010, and is a participant in the Budapest Process and the Colombo Process.

Relevant to the theme of irregular migration is also the context of return and repatriation of irregular migrants. This is an area which has received more policy focus in recent years, including in cooperation with governments of destination countries, international organisations and development agencies, particularly IOM, UNODC, European development agencies (GIZ, Swiss Development Cooperation), the Australian Government etc. Indeed, the upcoming National Emigration and Welfare Policy for Overseas Pakistanis has a section on return and reintegration, and there are further considerations of developing a standalone return and reintegration policy for Overseas Pakistanis.<sup>85</sup>

In this vein, in 2010, Pakistan and the EU entered into the EU Readmission Agreement, which serves as the framework for the return of Pakistanis residing in the EU countries without authorised documentation.<sup>86</sup> Pakistan also signed a bilateral agreement with Norway in 2017 for the readmission of Pakistani nationals, however, it does not have a bilateral agreement with any of the four PARIM

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<sup>82</sup> Migrant Resource Centre (MRC), "Community Welfare Attaches," n.d., <https://www.mrc.org.pk/en/migration-network/community-welfare-attaches>.

<sup>83</sup> Ikram Junaidi, "11,000 Suffering in Foreign Jails: JPP Study," *Dawn*, April 2019.

<sup>84</sup> Shah et al., "Pakistan Migration Report."

<sup>85</sup> Silk Routes Facility, "National Emigration and Welfare Policy for Overseas Pakistanis: Processes, Challenges, and Responses for Action," 2020.

<sup>86</sup> EUR-LEX, "Agreement with Pakistan on Readmission," 2010.



research countries on return and/or migration. IOM's Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) programme has been operational in Pakistan for more than a decade.<sup>87</sup> More recently GIZ partnered with the Overseas Pakistanis Foundation (OPF) to establish the Pakistan German Facilitation and Reintegration Centres in Islamabad and Lahore to support returnees in their reintegration.<sup>88</sup> The centre is mandated to support voluntary returnees specifically from Germany, but is now also catering to returnees from other destinations.

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<sup>87</sup> IOM Pakistan, "Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration," n.d., <https://pakistan.iom.int/assisted-voluntary-return-and-reintegration-avrr>.

<sup>88</sup> Overseas Pakistanis Foundation (OPF), "Pilot Project: Establishment of Facilitation and Reintegration Centre for Pakistani Migrant Workers," 2019, <https://www.opf.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/combinefrc-1.pdf>.



### 3 Information and awareness raising measures

#### 3.1 Migration information campaigns and factors influencing their effectiveness

Migration information campaigns constitute a significant field: individual EU Member States and the European Commission commissioned over 100 migration information campaigns in countries of origin and transit during the period 2014-2019 alone.<sup>89</sup> Migration information campaigns have arisen in particular as a means to address issues related to irregular migration. Most campaigns target countries of origin (often those most relevant for the donor country in terms of migration flows), with some campaigns also conducted in transit countries or across entire regions.<sup>90</sup> This section will provide a general overview into the existing evidence regarding the effectiveness of migration information campaigns, explaining *who* influences migrants' decision-making and *how* a campaign can intervene in this process.<sup>91</sup> This will include a review of communications and psychological research into which factors can be beneficial or detrimental with regard to effective information processing. The consecutive section delves into Pakistan-specific campaigns.

Migration information campaigns can firstly be differentiated by the target groups they address. Aside from potential migrants, campaigns also address migrants en route, victims of trafficking or forced labour, families of (potential) migrants, or even entire communities, including community or religious leaders, or traffickers and smugglers themselves. Anti-trafficking campaigns more often target women, while anti-smuggling campaigns tend to target men. Since so many different actors can be influential in decision-making on irregular migration, campaigns often aim to reach more than one target group.<sup>92</sup> Campaign messaging can cover a wide range of topics deemed important for migrant decision-making and protection, and differ based on the target group selected. Anti- trafficking campaigns differ from (pre-) irregular migration campaigns in that they have a broader spectrum of target groups, for instance in aiming to raise awareness among the general public in destination countries, employ demand-side<sup>93</sup> or market-based approaches<sup>94</sup> and span across the many facets of exploitation, including child sexual exploitation, forced labour, or sex trafficking. Since the focus of PARIM is on

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<sup>89</sup> According to a 2019 mapping by the EMN Working Group on information and awareness raising. Presentation of EMN INFO Working Group Co-Chair, Annual EMN Conference Vienna 2019.

<sup>90</sup> EMN, "EMN Ad-Hoc Query on COM AHQ on Migration Information and Awareness Raising Campaigns in Countries of Origin and Transit," 2016.

<sup>91</sup> For an overview of migration information campaigns and lessons learned, see also Katharina Hahn-Schaur, "Leveraging migration information campaigns for state and migrant security Lessons learned and open questions," Policy Brief, ICMPD (Vienna, 2021)

<sup>92</sup> Jasper Tjaden, Sandra Morgenstern, and Frank Laczko, "Evaluating the Impact of Information Campaigns in the Field of Migration: A Systematic Review of the Evidence, and Practical Guidance," Central Mediterranean Route Thematic Report Series (Geneva, 2018).

<sup>93</sup> Norbert Cyrus and Dita Vogel, "Learning from Demand-Side Campaigns against Trafficking in Human Beings: Evaluation as Knowledge-Generator and Project-Improver June 2017 DemandAT Working Paper No 9," no. 9 (2017).

<sup>94</sup> Hannah Lerigo-Stephens et al., "What Works to End Modern Slavery? A Review of Evidence on Policy and Interventions in the Context of Markets" (Delta 8.7 and Rights Lab, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.21754.41921>; Natalia Szablewska and Krzysztof Kubacki, "Anti-Human Trafficking Campaigns: A Systematic Literature Review," *Social Marketing Quarterly* 24, no. 2 (2018): 104–22, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1524500418771611>.



general irregular migration and not on anti-trafficking aspects, this report will generally follow this topical approach.

Information campaigns generally aim to intervene in migrants' decision-making processes regarding (irregular) migration, by changing potential migrants' awareness or knowledge, their perceptions or attitudes towards migration, their intention (to migrate), or their actual behaviour (i.e. choosing staying over leaving). There is only limited evidence of whether campaigns can achieve these aims. While policy-makers continue to believe in and fund campaigns, key assumptions underpinning past campaigns have been questioned by migration scholars.<sup>95</sup> The absence of conclusive evidence of one side over the other is due to a number of factors: The inherent difficulty in verifying changes in irregular migration flows (due to their clandestine nature), the fact that most campaigns do not make their results public, and frequent flaws in campaign design (such as a lack of clear goals, target groups or a "theory of change") preventing the drawing of any clear conclusions.<sup>96</sup> A DG HOME-commissioned report systematically reviewed recent AMIF-funded migration information campaigns and found that "campaigns have the potential to change beneficiaries' knowledge, attitudes and behaviours. However, few campaigns were well-designed to achieve and prove it."<sup>97</sup>

A few recent rigorous studies and evaluations demonstrate that campaigns can have a certain impact.<sup>98</sup> For instance, IOM impact evaluations of campaigns found that 10-30% of participants had changed their intention to migrate after taking part in a campaign event.<sup>99</sup> Such results are also in line with findings from other public communication campaigns, such as on health<sup>100</sup>, showing that only a portion of participants can actually be influenced. Some of the more detailed results seem puzzling. For instance, while migration intentions among IOM campaign participants had changed, the results on knowledge retention are much lower. Understanding the dynamics behind such results requires a

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<sup>95</sup> D Schans and C Optekamp, "Raising Awareness, Changing Behavior? Combatting Irregular Migration through Information Campaigns," 2016, 1–39, [www.wodc.nl](http://www.wodc.nl); Céline Nieuwenhuys and Antoine Pecoud, "Human Trafficking, Information Campaigns, and Strategies of Migration Control," *American Behavioral Scientist* 50, no. 12 (2007): 1674–95, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764207302474>; Ceri Oeppen, "Leaving Afghanistan! Are You Sure? European Efforts to Deter Potential Migrants through Information Campaigns," *Human Geography* 9, no. 2 (2016): 57–68, <https://doi.org/10.1177/194277861600900206>; Charles Heller, "Perception Management - Deterring Potential Migrants through Information Campaigns," *Global Media and Communication* 10, no. 3 (2014): 303–18, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1742766514552355>; DIIS, "Migration Risk Campaigns Are Based on Wrong Assumptions," no. May (2015).

<sup>96</sup> This is the case for both this is the case for both anti-human trafficking related and more general irregular migration-related campaigns. See Tjaden, Morgenstern, and Laczko, "Evaluating the Impact of Information Campaigns in the Field of Migration: A Systematic Review of the Evidence, and Practical Guidance"; Cyrus and Vogel, "Learning from Demand-Side Campaigns against Trafficking in Human Beings : Evaluation as Knowledge-Generator and Project-Improver June 2017 DemandAT Working Paper No 9"; Raffaella Pagogna and Patrick Sakdapolrak, "Disciplining Migration Aspirations through Migration-Information Campaigns: A Systematic Review of the Literature," *Geography Compass* 15, no. 7 (July 1, 2021): e12585, <https://doi.org/10.1111/GEC3.12585>.

<sup>97</sup> Seefar and ECORYS, "Study on Best Practices in Irregular Migration Awareness Campaigns" (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2021).

<sup>98</sup> Felipe Alexander Dunsch, Jasper Tjaden, and William Quiviger, "Migrants as Messengers: The Impact of Peer-to-Peer Communication on Potential Migrants in Senegal. Technical Annex," no. September (2019): 80; Jasper Tjaden and Felipe Alexander Dunsch, "The Effect of Peer-to-Peer Risk Information on Potential Migrants – Evidence from a Randomized Controlled Trial in Senegal," *World Development* 145 (September 1, 2021): 105488, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2021.105488>; Sandra Morgenstern, "Political Information & Migration" (University of Konstanz, 2020). See also PARIM Background Report

<sup>99</sup> Tjaden, "Assessing the Impact of Awareness- Raising Campaigns on Potential Migrants – What We Have Learned so Far."

<sup>100</sup> L. B. Snyder et al., "A Meta-Analysis of the Effect of Mediated Health Communication Campaigns on Behavior Change in the United States," *Journal of Health Communication* 9, no. S1 (2004).





closer look at *who* is relevant for migrants' decision-making and *how* a campaign can influence migrants' plans.

Figure 2 summarises migrants' "key influencers" and in what way they can potentially misguide potential migrants – an aspect of migration decision-making which has already been elaborated in the PARIM Background Report<sup>101</sup>. Deciding about migration is not a linear process. People seemingly decided on migration might still change their minds, weighing different sources of information, a process that is also prone to various biases of the human mind, such as confirmation bias<sup>102</sup> or flawed risk calculation<sup>103</sup> (see also PARIM Background Report). For campaigns, this implies that information commonly provided by these stakeholders should be analysed and addressed or (in the case of misinformation) corrected by campaign messaging. "Key influencers" may also form relevant secondary target groups of campaigns. As Carling notes, "*few things predict migration as much as social networks with past migrants.*"<sup>104</sup> Migration aspirations and intentions are shaped by established migration networks or "cultures of migration" in which migration spreads as an idea, and becomes more feasible.<sup>105</sup> Social networks play a crucial role to proceed from intention to actual migration, including social contacts with migrants who have already "made it", or friends or family who have returned.<sup>106</sup> Employers abroad are searching for migrants and intermediaries who interact between employers and potential migrants, including recruitment organisations, agents, and smugglers.<sup>107</sup> While social networks and recruiters/smugglers enable migration, research also shows that they can defraud them for the fees.<sup>108</sup> In addition, while some friends or relatives may be of genuine help, social networks have also been shown to be complicit in exploitation of (potential) migrants. Information shared by social networks may not be correct.<sup>109</sup> Migrants who are already abroad also contribute to information asymmetries because they very often feel that they have to "put on a brave face" and not share the truth about their sometimes dire circumstances with those at home.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Hahn-Schaur, *Awareness Raising and Information Campaigns on the Risks of Irregular Migration from Pakistan: Background Report*.

<sup>102</sup> Ida Marie et al., *Does Information Save Migrants' Lives?*, 2021.

<sup>103</sup> María Hernández-Carretero and Jørgen Carling, "Beyond 'Kamikaze Migrants': Risk Taking in West African Boat Migration to Europe," *Human Organization* 71, no. 4 (2012): 407–16; Sjoerd van Bommel, "The Perception of Risk among Unauthorized Migrants in Ghana," <https://doi.org/10.1080/13669877.2018.1517376>, no. 1 (January 2, 2019): 47–61, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13669877.2018.1517376>.

<sup>104</sup> Jørgen Carling, "How Does Migration Arise?," in *Ideas to Inform International Cooperation on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration*, ed. M. McAuliffe and M. Klein Solomon (Geneva: IOM, 2017), 19–26; see also Maryam Aslany et al., "Systematic Review of Determinants of Migration Aspirations," *QuantMig Project Deliverable D2.2*. (Southampton, 2021).

<sup>105</sup> Black et al., "The Effect of Environmental Change on Human Migration"; Stephen Castles et al., *Irregular Migration: Causes, Patterns, and Strategies*, 2012, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-4110-2\\_9](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-4110-2_9).

<sup>106</sup> IOM, "Migration Flows from Afghanistan and Pakistan towards Europe: Understanding Data Gaps and Recommendations," 2016.

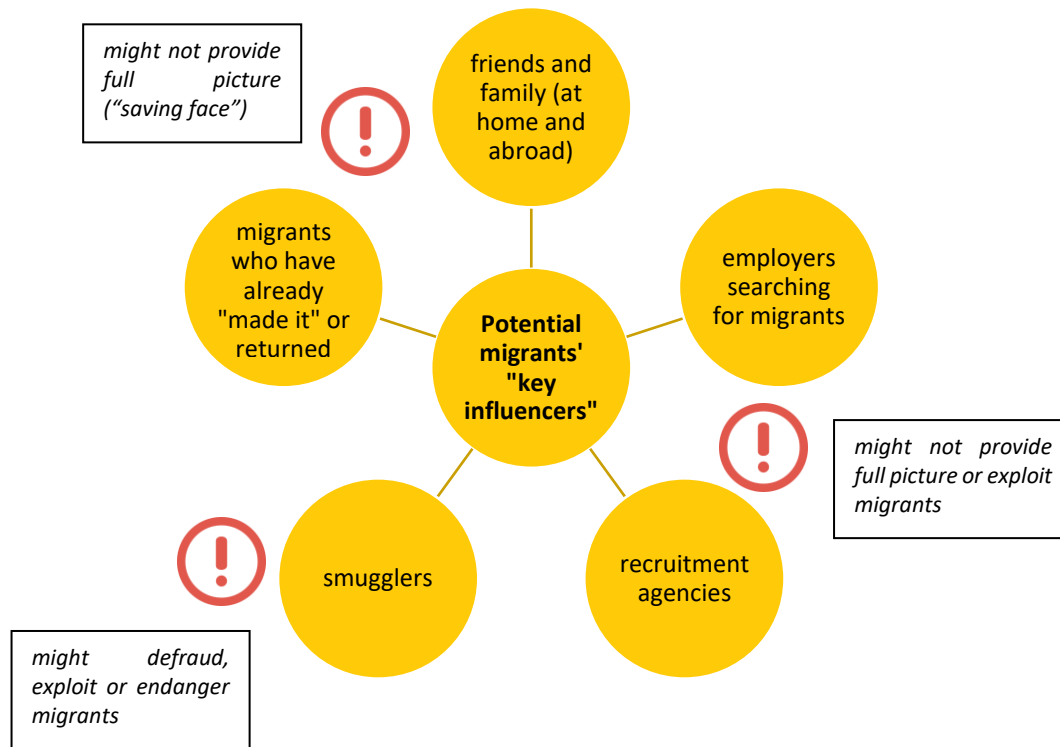
<sup>107</sup> Stephen Castles, Hein de Haas, and Mark J. Miller, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*, 5th ed. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Optimity Advisors, ICMPD, and ECRE, "A Study on Smuggling of Migrants - Characteristics, Responses and Cooperation with Third Countries. Final Report."

<sup>108</sup> Aksel et al., "Study on Smuggling of Migrants: Characteristics, Responses and Cooperation with Third Countries. Case Study 3: Pakistan – Turkey – Greece."

<sup>109</sup> Gabriella Sanchez et al., "A Study of the Communication Channels Used by Migrants and Asylum Seekers in Italy, with a Particular Focus on Online and Social Media," 2018.

<sup>110</sup> Hagen-Zanker et al., "Migration from the Margins: Mobility, Vulnerability and Inevitability in Mid-Western Nepal and North-Western Pakistan Report 5."

**Figure 2: Potential migrants' "key influencers"**



Source: Authors

*How* can potential migrants' decision-making process be influenced through a campaign? Although it is evident that potential migrants benefit from the receiving of constructive and timely information, existing research highlights the difficulty in influencing a potential migrant's intentions to (irregularly) migrate. Accounts of practitioner experience and academic studies alike agree that tailoring target groups, channels, messengers and message content and framing as precisely as possible is key for effective campaigns – this will be addressed in consecutive chapters. For the remainder of this section, we seek to discuss more intricate challenges to be tackled by campaign design, which relate to the setting in which campaigns operate, and migrants' individual characteristics. Here, communications and psychological research can provide some insights into which factors can be beneficial or detrimental with regard to effective information processing.<sup>111</sup>

<sup>111</sup> Because of the already noted lack of empirical evidence, the following elaborations are still largely theoretical and have not been extensively tested in practice – the already quoted studies by Dunsch/Tjaden and Morgenstern form the main current sources of evidence.



**Table 3: Factors influencing campaign effectiveness**

Factors influencing campaign effectiveness		
Beneficial	Detrimental	Can campaigns address this factor? (high – medium – low)
Strong intrinsic motivation (e.g. participants already searching for information re. migration)	No intrinsic motivation (e.g. general audience)	High – design target groups and channels accordingly
Low to medium prior knowledge (participant has no or limited awareness of content presented)	High prior knowledge (participant already aware of content presented)	Medium – design target groups and messaging accordingly
Lower education (participant may be easier to convince)	Higher education (participant may be more likely to dismiss campaign content)	Medium – design target groups and messaging accordingly
Agreeable, conscientious, risk-averse character traits (less likely to migrate, more likely to absorb campaign content)	Extraverted, highly confident, risk-seeking character traits (most likely to migrate, but least likely to absorb campaign messages)	Low – difficult to filter target groups accordingly (if even desirable)

Source: Authors

The first factor relates to the presence or absence of intrinsic motivation on the side of campaign participants. In general, there are two systems for information processing: with no prior interest in the information present, the default system for information processing is quick, efficient, and simple to influence from the outside; however, information processing is rather short-term and less likely to lead to intention or behaviour change. It can be expected that this system will be in place if people are asked to participate in a campaign event without necessarily being interested in migration (e.g. town hall events targeting the general population). The second system is triggered whenever people have an intrinsic motivation. Applied to campaigns, this would be potential migrants already searching for information, reaching out to participate in a campaign event. In such a context, information is expected to have a stronger impact, including on attitudes, intentions and behaviour, and the effect to be more long-term.<sup>112</sup>

Relatedly, the impact of campaign messages is expected to be higher if the information presented is new to participants, i.e. if participants have low prior knowledge, or if it addresses misinformation. (These different information processing systems might also be able to explain IOM evaluation results mentioned above – lack of knowledge increase, yet change in intentions.) These factors can be addressed by campaigns by adjusting target groups and campaign messages (see also section 6.1.). Furthermore, research shows that there are certain tools (heuristics, i.e. mental shortcuts, and cues) which can be employed in campaign communication to mitigate these factors, such as particularly credible or trustworthy messengers and emotions triggered through the campaign (see also section

<sup>112</sup> Morgenstern, “Political Information & Migration.”



6.2). Participants with low intrinsic motivation might then not have a significant knowledge gain, but their intentions could still be affected if campaigns use such tools effectively.<sup>113</sup>

Thirdly, the education level of participants can have an influence on campaign effectiveness: lower educated participants may be easier to convince (and may be more susceptible to cues and heuristics), while more educated participants may be quicker to dismiss campaign content. Therefore, campaigns might aim to target less educated potential migrants specifically (who in the PARIM survey are also more likely to choose irregular migration, see chapter 5.2). On the other hand, more educated potential migrants may have more specific (e.g. educational) goals that could be addressed by a campaign, as well as alternatives to migration, in mind.

Fourthly, participants' personality traits can impact campaign effectiveness. More agreeable, conscientious and risk-averse characters<sup>114</sup> are less likely to migrate. Because of these character traits, they are also more likely to absorb campaign content and therefore change their intentions to migrate. Extraverted, highly confident, risk-seeking characters are most likely to migrate, but least likely to be influenced by campaign messages.<sup>115</sup> To illustrate, studies show that migrants can dismiss information provided by a campaign, if they perceive that the underlying intention is to prevent them from migrating altogether;<sup>116</sup> if they see the information as not relevant for them, because they put the foreseen consequences down to individual bad luck or inadequate decision-making<sup>117</sup>; or if risky behaviour actually seems appealing to them.<sup>118</sup> For instance, in the context of Pakistan, a study speaks of the "romantic appeal" of irregular migration for young men, including because of the (envisioned) danger.<sup>119</sup> Morgenstern discusses that the empirical evidence on whether those who decide to migrate irregularly are not aware of the risks, or are just risk-takers despite having the information, is inconclusive.<sup>120</sup>

This final factor – that some potential migrants are simply too over-confident and risk-seeking to be convinced otherwise – seems to explain the high rate of potential migrants which can *not* be influenced by campaigns, as identified by the studies reviewed above. However, campaigns can hardly address this factor. It is practically impossible to filter target groups according to character traits. As for education, it might still be advisable to attempt to influence those most bent on migration, being aware that only a share might be swayed. Existing studies note that campaigns should engage with concrete assumptions potential migrants have about risk,<sup>121</sup> by comparing irregular migration risks to other

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<sup>113</sup> Morgenstern.

<sup>114</sup> Based on and expanding the common understanding of 5 core personality traits: extraversion (outgoing / energetic vs. solitary / reserved), agreeableness (friendly / compassionate vs. critical/ rational), openness to experience (inventive / curious vs. consistent / cautious), conscientiousness (efficient / organized vs. extravagant / careless), neuroticism (sensitive / nervous vs. resilient / confident).

<sup>115</sup> Morgenstern, "Political Information & Migration."

<sup>116</sup> Hernández-Carretero and Carling, "Beyond 'Kamikaze Migrants': Risk Taking in West African Boat Migration to Europe."

<sup>117</sup> Jacob Townsend and Chrystal Ooman, *Before the Boat: Understanding the Migrant Journey - EU Asylum towards 2020* (Migration Policy Institute, 2015).

<sup>118</sup> ARK DMCC, "Grey Noise : Migration and Strategic Communications," no. December (2018). 21

<sup>119</sup> Ahmad, "The Romantic Appeal of Illegal Migration: Gender, Masculinity and Human Smuggling from Pakistan," 2008.

<sup>120</sup> Morgenstern, "Theoretical Models and Empirical Results Supporting Migration Information Campaigns. Background Note for the PARIM Project."

<sup>121</sup> ARK DMCC, "Grey Noise : Migration and Strategic Communications."



risks, to (imagined) rewards (such as the legal and economic realities of living in Europe), and other feasible options.<sup>122</sup>

### **3.2 Migration information campaigns in Pakistan**

Existing measures and campaigns on irregular migration awareness raising can provide important lessons learned that PARIM can build on. Although it can be assumed that numerous migration-related campaigns have been conducted in Pakistan, there is little public information available, an issue that is plaguing the evidence-building around migration information campaigns in general. Among currently ongoing campaigns, the “Global Action against Trafficking in Persons and the Smuggling of Migrants” (GLO.ACT) has assisted the Government of Pakistan in developing and implementing comprehensive national counter-trafficking and counter-smuggling responses and focusing on prevention and protection. GLO.ACT also launched awareness raising actions on human trafficking and migrants smuggling in Pakistan.<sup>123</sup> The “Global Action to Improve the Recruitment Framework of Labour Migration: RE-FRAME”, implemented by ILO, aims at reducing abusive practices and violations of human and labour rights of migrants during the recruitment process and maximize the protection of migrant workers in the recruitment process and their contribution to development. (See PARIM Background Report for further details.)

Furthermore, ICMPD operates Migrant Resource Centres in Islamabad (in cooperation with the MOPHRD) and in Lahore (in cooperation with the Department of Labour Punjab<sup>124</sup>, with the goal of raising potential migrants’ awareness on the benefits of safe and regular migration and the dangers and consequences of irregular migration.<sup>125</sup> Their work is particularly relevant to PARIM because their mandate is to provide information to potential (regular and irregular) migrants, who are also the focus of the project; they collaborate with relevant Government institutions and CSOs who regularly interface with potential migrants; and they have extensive practical experience in communication and outreach which PARIM can build on.

MRCs work with multiple target groups and a range of different communication channels. The main target groups are aspiring or intending migrants. As of October 2021, the MRCs reached over 387,059 potential migrants through counselling, outreach sessions and pre- departure briefings. Through a team of counsellors, the MRCs provide one-on-one counselling, pre-departure orientation (including in cooperation with MOPHRD and the Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment, BEOE), community education on migration, and conducts information campaigns. The work is implemented

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<sup>122</sup> Optimity Advisors and Seefar, *How West African Migrants Engage with Migration Information En-Route to Europe* (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2017). 45-46

<sup>123</sup> UNODC, “Final Independent In-Depth Evaluation Global Action against Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants (GLO.ACT)” (Vienna, 2019).

<sup>124</sup> The centres are supported by the EU funded projects “Support to the Silk Routes Partnership for Migration” (2015 – July 2017) and “Improving Migration Management in the Silk Routes Countries” (Aug 2017- Jul 2021). In 2019-2020, outreach activities were furthermore supported by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs through the project “Awareness raising on migration in Iraq and Pakistan” (MARIP).

<sup>125</sup> This section is largely based on ICMPD internal (donor) reporting, including project reporting and annual reports.



both through physical walk-in offices, through various workshop formats, online and via phone and via offline channels including rickshaws, TV and radio.<sup>126</sup> Secondly, the MRCs provide capacity building for various stakeholders (government, academia, civil society, OEPs, etc.), collaborate with academic institutions on research or conferences, and collaborate with CSOs. (See PARIM Background Report for further details.) According to internal MRC records, 95% of clients are male and overwhelmingly come from Punjab province. A 2019 independent evaluation of the MRCS, based on a client survey, showed that MRCs mainly reach a young, highly educated audience, who are interested in migrating to Europe, Australia, the US and Canada.<sup>127</sup> Also in 2019, a needs assessment based on a survey among potential migrants in Punjab and KP, key informant interviews and focus group discussions was conducted.<sup>128</sup> The findings are integrated throughout this report.

During May 2021, an impact assessment of all of ICMPD’s MRCs was conducted by an independent consultant.<sup>129</sup> It was based on a repeated cross-sectional methodology randomly allocating clients into pre- (control) and post-activity groups, who were administered the same survey. Types of activities included telephone counselling, online counselling, pre-departure sessions, and outreach at technical and vocational colleges. 666 clients in Islamabad and Lahore MRCs participated. Results show that participation in MRC activities increases emigration intentions overall, while reducing irregular migration intentions. Participants reported being significantly more aware of safe migration options, and more aware of government entities supporting migrants while abroad. MRC Islamabad showed “particularly strong positive effects on awareness of safe options (the joint highest of any MRC) and government entities (the highest of any MRC)”<sup>130</sup> based on the Technical and Vocational College outreach sessions and telephone counselling sessions conducted during the assessment. For Lahore MRC, respondents showed the highest results of any MRC with regard to increased awareness of safe options (based on pre-departure sessions, Technical and Vocational College outreach sessions, and telephone counselling conducted at the time).

Further lessons learned based on project documentation, internal monitoring and social media analysis is analysed in Table 4 below (see PARIM Background Report for further details).

**Table 4: Lessons learned from MRC outreach activities**

Activity type	Description	Result	Implementation period
Facebook	Facebook is the most important online channel for MRCs, with currently over 87,300 followers. A targeted social media	Among the video content created for the campaign, those with a more negative message (highlighting the risk of	Ongoing 2020 (video campaign)

<sup>126</sup> <https://www.mrc.org.pk/en/about/migrant-resource-centre>

<sup>127</sup> Dynamic Consulting Services, “Third Party Evaluation of MRCs in Islamabad and Lahore, Pakistan” (Islamabad, 2019).

<sup>128</sup> Dynamic Consulting Services, “Needs Assessment Study: Information Needs of Intending Migrants in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan,” 2019.

<sup>129</sup> James Dennison, “Impact Assessment of the Budapest Process’s Migrant Resource Centres,” 2021.

<sup>130</sup> Dennison.



	campaign in 2020 resulted in an increase of over 50,000 followers. The content shared has generated engagement of 951,000 people to date (likes, comments, re-shares).	the irregular journey, losing money to an agent) received less engagement than those with more positive messages (personal success stories).	
Other social media channels	Other social media channels complement Facebook for campaigns.	YouTube and Instagram are currently the online channels receiving the least audience interest. WhatsApp was introduced as an additional channel in 2020 and has been well received. Twitter was started in 2020 and has been used for targeted campaigns on International Migrants Day, Human Trafficking day, etc. #MRC Pakistan trended second in Pakistan on International Migrants Day, 18 December 2020. In 2020-2021 (to date), #MRC Pakistan received 4,568,009 impressions.	2020 - ongoing
Text messages	SMS campaigns are mainly used to promote other MRC channels, such as the hotline. To date, 3,396,765 potential and outgoing migrants as well as other community members have been reached through SMS campaigns.	SMS campaigns promoting the hotline had a significant (short-term) effect in terms of generated follow-up on other channels in 2019 (over 10,000 calls within a month, with a sharp decline afterwards), but not in 2020 (380,000 SMS led to approx. 800 immediate calls).	2019, 2020, 2021
Rickshaw	Rickshaws are a popular and cost-effective form	A 2019-2020 rickshaw campaign with each 300 rickshaws showing posters with migration-	2019, 2020, 2021

	of advertising in rural areas.	related messages, conducted in Gujranwala and Faisalabad, had a high impact compared to cost (797 calls and increased walk-in clients). In December 2020, a new campaign with 1200 rickshaws in four cities (Gujranwala, Gujrat, Faisalabad and Lahore) also generated a high response, with 1,935 clients contacted MRC through hotline and WhatsApp after seeing rickshaw ads. In 2021, 3600 posters were pasted on Rickshaws in Lahore, Gujranwala, Sialkot and Rawalpindi. Over 1500 clients were provided counselling onWhatsApp and over 950 clients contacted the MRC through the Hotline.	
TV and radio	TV and radio are high in budget, but found to be less effective.	In 2016-2017, MRC Pakistan initiated a TV daram “DalDal”, and migration talk show. In 2020, three public service message were aired on four TV channels. Although they were popular and had enormous reach, they did not receive an equivalent response. This is in line with existing research which shows that mass media is useful only for long-term messaging (rather than affecting individual intentions) <sup>131</sup> or to reach remote	2016-2017, 2020, 2021

<sup>131</sup> Optimity Advisors and Seefar, *How West African Migrants Engage with Migration Information En-Route to Europe*.





		audiences. <sup>132</sup>	
Theatre performances	Nine theatre performances in three districts of Punjab in 2019, attended by 2,040 people, had a more mixed audience, as women were deliberately targeted as potential key influencers of migrants.	The performances had a noticeable effect on hotline follow-up, as it received 750 calls from the targeted districts within the same two weeks.	2019
Outreach sessions with a community partner	70 virtual and on-ground community outreach sessions on safe and regular migration and the dangers of irregular migration, reaching out to 9,562 intending migrants and their families.	Pre- and post-intervention tests show that knowledge and awareness among the audience had significantly increased. During pre-test, 57% of the audience were not fully informed about the regular migration process, while this increased to 100% during post-test. 36% of attendees knew and understood the terms migrant smuggling and irregular migration, while 95% showed knowledge of the term during post-test.	2020
Film screenings with Q&a sessions	Migration documentaries screened in five districts of Punjab in 2019, with overall 19 screenings and a total attendance of 1,010 people.	While screenings were conducted, the MRC hotline received 3,000 calls from target districts.	

The independent evaluation<sup>133</sup> conducted in 2019 showed high satisfaction with MRC services. 98% were fully or moderately satisfied, with content and skill level of counsellors similarly highly evaluated.

<sup>132</sup> Seefar and ECORYS, "Study on Best Practices in Irregular Migration Awareness Campaigns."

<sup>133</sup> Dynamic Consulting Services, "Third Party Evaluation of MRCs in Islamabad and Lahore, Pakistan."



92% would recommend the MRCs to others. The evaluation also highlighted a need to reach remote areas better (beyond locations in Islamabad and Lahore). The study noted that MRCs have mostly reached their clients (48%) through online engagements, followed by family and friends (28%) and posters/print advertisement (17%). Only one percent had learned about MRCs through radio or TV shows. Stakeholders interviewed for the evaluation reflected positively on the Centres' work but recommended that outreach would need to be further expanded to be effective, including to rural areas – as foreseen for the PARIM project. Following the evaluation and also due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the MRCs have focused more intensely on virtual channels since 2020, including 18 joint “live” sessions with CSO partners on social media, and a radio session.



## 4 Research design

### 4.1 Research strands

Understanding that effective information and awareness campaigns are built on strong background research, the project conducted a series of empirical studies to develop a knowledge base for the design and implementation of the campaign. These research strands include the following, all of which feed into the current report:

- i. **Background Research**<sup>134</sup>: The background research is the first of the research strands building the evidence base of PARIM. It analysed the key concepts and assumptions behind migration information campaigns and reviewed them against relevant evidence on migration patterns from Pakistan. It drew key lessons from previous campaigns in the field of migration and identified factors that improve the effectiveness of information campaigns.
  - i. Based on state of the art scholarly literature on the subject, evaluation reports of information campaigns, including those contracted by ICMPD on MRC activities, and grey literature including reports by campaign implementation agencies, the main focus under the background research is to explore the drivers of irregular migration in the context of Pakistan that need to be taken into account by a migration information campaign, including macro-level (structural), meso-level (facilitating) and micro-level (individual) factors driving migration. It also sheds light on the information needs and gaps of potential migrants, their motivations, and “key influencers” that may impact their decision-making.
  - ii. Within the background research, a separate strand of research explored the effectiveness of migration information campaigns.<sup>135</sup> This research helped in understanding the decision-making process and how information imparted through campaigns could influence the decision and behaviour to migrate. It engaged with existing literature on the subject to highlight the factors that amplify or undermine the impact of information and offers practical lessons to inform the PARIM campaign.
- ii. **Survey**<sup>136</sup>: To develop a context-specific evidence base, ICMPD in cooperation with an external service provider, the Institute of Social and Policy Sciences (I-SAPS), implemented a survey to provide a robust empirical framework for the campaign. The sampling strategy of the survey was categorically designed to target potential irregular migrants. Based on a sample of 1,200 potential irregular migrant respondents (200 per district), the survey was conducted in the

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<sup>134</sup> Katharina Hahn-Schaur, Awareness Raising and Information Campaigns on the Risks of Irregular Migration from Pakistan: Background Report (Vienna: ICMPD, 2021).

<sup>135</sup> Morgenstern, “Theoretical Models and Empirical Results Supporting Migration Information Campaigns. Background Note for the PARIM Project.”

<sup>136</sup> I-SAPS, “Awareness Raising and Information Campaigns on the Risks of Irregular Migration from Pakistan: Survey Report.”



target regions of the campaign (six migration-prone districts in Punjab including Faisalabad, Gujrat, Gujranwala, Jhelum Mandi Bahauddin, and Sialkot). The survey was designed in English, then translated to Urdu and piloted among 10 respondents in districts Gujrat and Jhelum. Although irregular migration is largely undertaken by young men in Pakistan, prior experience through MRC activities and background research explained the influential role that women can play in the process. For this reason, the sample includes 10% female representation from each district, leading to the engagement of 120 women in the research to understand their motivations and perceptions about irregular migration from Pakistan.

Recognising that the sample universe is rather unknown (no official district-wise data exists for irregular migration), random sampling was not feasible for this survey. A snowball sampling approach was employed to identify potential irregular migrants through a point-based criteria.<sup>137</sup> The criteria, covering aspects such as migration intention, identification by self or community, age, education, and income was devised based on the profile of potential irregular migrants from Pakistan drawn from existing literature in the Background Report. Those individuals who fulfilled the criteria and scored a total of 10 points were engaged in the survey. The survey team identified the first group of respondents through referrals by community members and civil society organisations in the district, following which each respondent was asked to refer to at least four more people who may be considering irregular migration. In this way, a sample of 200 was reached in each district. Fieldwork was conducted during June and July 2021. The survey was carried out in Urdu after careful translation of the field instruments (see Annex I and II for detailed survey methodology and survey questionnaire). Data collected by the survey was cleaned and analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The survey covers potential (irregular) migrants' information needs and gaps, their migration intentions, motivations and decision-making processes, their key influencers and channels likely to reach them for further refining the campaign messages and implementation.

- iii. **Stakeholder Mapping**<sup>138</sup>: Complementing the survey findings is a study on stakeholder mapping, identifying key actors in the project districts that can be engaged for the campaign. The mapping sought to identify three types of stakeholders:
  - i. Institutions/stakeholders that are currently working on migration issues at the districts
  - ii. Institutions/stakeholders that have concluded projects and activities on migration issues and/or information campaigns

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<sup>137</sup> As per the point-based criteria below, respondents who acquired more than 10 points in total were selected in the sample:

Self-identification as a potential irregular migrant (7 points)

Community-identification as a potential irregular migrant (7 points)

Previous or future plans for migration to Europe (5 points)

Age 18-28 years (3 points)

Lower-Middle to Upper-middle economic group (i.e. average money household income 50,000 to 100,000 (3 points)

10-12 years education with no or limited professional skill training (3 points)

<sup>138</sup> I-SAPS, "Stakeholder Mapping Report: Awareness Raising and Information Campaigns on the Risks of Irregular Migration in Pakistan."



- iii. Institutions/stakeholders not yet active on migration issues and/or information campaigns but have the potential to be involved as partners during the campaign.

Based on the above criteria, a total of 249 stakeholders were mapped and 33 key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted in June 2021 with a diverse range of stakeholders across the districts. These included government departments, international non-governmental organisations, local civil society organisations (CSOs), media representatives, local influential leaders (e.g. religious leaders, political leaders), as well as private actors (recruitment agents, travel agents, etc.) in the respective six districts. Qualitative information received from the interviews was helpful in contextualising and triangulating the findings of the survey.

- iv. **Diaspora Mapping**<sup>139</sup>: For engaging diaspora groups in the information campaign as foreseen in PARIM, the research team conducted a rigorous diaspora mapping exercise between May and July 2021. As representatives of diaspora members, migrant associations run and managed by Pakistani diaspora in the four PARIM research countries (Austria, Bulgaria, Greece, and Italy) were mapped. Based on the mapping of 54 migrant associations across the four countries, an additional research output was developed to understand the role of diaspora members as credible messengers for information campaigns, with specific focus on the Pakistani context. For this, KIIs were conducted with nine migrant associations in the four countries, along with KIIs with representatives of the Pakistani Embassy in each country, which were then triangulated with the existing literature to offer contextualised lessons for diaspora engagement in information campaigns.
- v. **Validation meetings**: Three validation meetings were held with relevant federal, provincial, and district level stakeholders to confirm the survey findings and collect feedback. One meeting was held in Islamabad on October 7, 2021 with relevant stakeholders at the national level, including government officials, international organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and think tanks, and two meetings were organised in Lahore on October 13 and 14, 2021 with relevant provincial and district level stakeholders. These meetings proved to be useful interactions with relevant stakeholders who not only endorsed the results of the survey, but also shared valuable insight from personal and professional experiences that added nuance and depth to the analysis.

## 4.2 Scope

Based on the above mentioned research strands, this final report serves as the synthesis document, incorporating key lessons drawn from each of the above mentioned research outputs to serve as a reference document for guiding the information campaign. This report triangulates the findings generated through PARIM research, including the Background Report, Diaspora Mapping Report,

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<sup>139</sup> Qaisrani and Jolic, "Engaging Diasporas in Information Campaigns on Migration."



stakeholder mapping report, survey and validation meetings, with existing knowledge products of ICMPD such as the Needs Assessment Study,<sup>140</sup> the Impact Evaluation of MRCs,<sup>141</sup> and MRCs' database of relevant stakeholders in study sites.

Drawing on the array of research outputs produced under PARIM, this final report sheds light on the following aspects:

- i. The key irregular migration trends in the selected six districts, elaborating on micro, meso, and macro factors that play a role in the migration decision-making. Focusing on the profile of potential irregular migrants, their motivations and aspirations for migration, and understanding their support system that enables irregular migration, the final report attempts to understand the decision-making process of irregular migration, and identifies the key information gaps and needs of potential irregular migrants. It offers comparative information for the six study districts, highlighting any differences across gender, age, educational and economic background, and geographic region. This allows for identifying the target group (hereby referred to as potential irregular migrants) for the information campaign and the content for information campaigns (see sections 5 and 6 for detail).
- ii. For information campaigns to be fruitful, messaging needs to be communicated using effective communication channels and messengers, tailored for the requirements of the target group. The role of diaspora groups as credible messengers in information campaigns is also elaborated. The focus is on ensuring that content of the campaign is communicated to the right target audience with the right kind of communication channel and messengers to achieve maximum impact (see section 6 for more detail).

### **4.3 Challenges and limitations**

Findings and conclusions drawn from the PARIM research should be interpreted considering the following caveats:

- i. There is a lack of published literature on the effectiveness of information campaigns in general, and even more so for the context of Pakistan. Moreover, evidence from other regions and contexts shows that most information campaigns are evaluated within the time frame of the intervention, a few exceptions evaluate months or a year after, but there are no long-term studies, raising serious questions about the sustainability and long-term effectiveness of such campaigns (see section 3.1 above and the PARIM Background Report). Additionally, it is important to highlight that information campaigns conducted

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<sup>140</sup> Dynamic Consulting Services, "Needs Assessment Study: Information Needs of Intending Migrants in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan," 2019.

<sup>141</sup> Dennison, "Impact Assessment of the Budapest Process's Migrant Resource Centres."



in countries of origin do not necessarily address the demand side of irregular migration.<sup>142</sup> The relevance of migration information campaigns compared to other interventions such as immediate improvement of livelihoods in origin countries has also not been assessed.<sup>143</sup>

- ii. The sample obtained through the mapping of stakeholders and diaspora groups do not represent the whole population, as the sample universe is largely unknown.<sup>144</sup> Moreover, for the diaspora mapping activity, since not all mapped associations were contacted, knowing which of the mapped associations are still active was not possible in this exercise.
- iii. The survey is primarily designed to set the evidence-base for research, rather than as a baseline report for evaluation. Adhering to time and resource constraints, the survey has only been carried out with potential irregular migrants, and the sample is not representative of the whole population of potential irregular migrants. Moreover, the snowball sampling approach can also be perceived as a caveat as the sample is not randomly selected, and generalisations should be made with caution about potential irregular migrants as the sample may not be representative. There is also a chance of sampling bias through this approach, however, due to the sensitive nature of subject, referral-based approach is the most appropriate sampling technique.

Additionally, even though the sample selection methodology only focuses on potential irregular migrants through the snowball sampling approach, a direct question was also asked regarding the respondents' motivation to consider migrating from Pakistan in the near future (see Annex II, Question C12) and irregularly from Pakistan (see Annex II, Question C24). This was done to identify the extent of social desirability bias as respondents may have the tendency to not admit their intentions to migrate irregularly. About 97% of the sample stated considering migrating from Pakistan in the near future, and 63% admitted to considering migrating irregularly. To address the social desirability bias, respondents were ensured that their responses would be used anonymously and would not be linked to their personal information, and all the information they share will be confidential. In addition, the questionnaire started an icebreaker section with general questions about the aspirations and motivations of youth in their areas, rather than asking direct questions about their own motivations. Moreover, since the survey was administered in districts where irregular migration is very common, it was not too difficult to gather responses on questions related to irregular migration intentions. The survey also used the colloquial term for irregular migration (*dunkey*), which may have helped in reducing the stigma to discuss the topic of irregular migration.

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<sup>142</sup> Katharina Hahn-Schaur, "Leveraging Migration Information Campaigns for State and Migrant Security Lessons Learned and Open Questions."

<sup>143</sup> Hahn-Schaur, *Awareness Raising and Information Campaigns on the Risks of Irregular Migration from Pakistan: Background Report*.

<sup>144</sup> Jirka Taylor et al., *Mapping Diasporas in the European Union and United States Comparative Analysis and Recommendations for Engagement* (California: RAND Corporation, 2014).



The survey is also conducted at an individual level rather than the household level, which may limit the understanding of migration as a household decision. Moreover, the survey does not include non-migrants, and potential migrants planning to go through legal channels. This may be seen as a shortcoming for comparison and evaluation purposes. However, the research acknowledges that migration decisions can be fluid so the choice of means of migration (regular or irregular) may change for migrants.

- iv. In certain instances, analysis has been conducted with a smaller sub-sample (e.g. for those who categorically stated an intention to migrate irregularly, for those with Europe/UK as a destination etc.). Such an analysis may change the sample composition and size across the districts. While such granular evidence offers deep insight about the trends and patterns across the districts, the change in sample composition may introduce some bias i.e. some districts may be represented higher than others. In such instances, the analysis should be read with this caveat in mind.

Lastly, due to COVID-19 restrictions, some KIIs had to be conducted online instead of in-person (specifically with the migrant associations) and activities such as Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with potential irregular migrants, community members, and relevant stakeholders had to be cancelled.





## 5 Migrant profile (campaign target group)

### 5.1 Background

Clear definitions of and in-depth knowledge of target groups are crucial to the success of migration information campaigns. Although an average profile of (potential) irregular migrants from Pakistan is known, this group still differs by demographic characteristics such as age, gender, income or education. Their motivations behind irregular migration, existing preparation steps taken, and attitudes, can similarly diverge. Studies agree that in order to be effective, migration information campaigns need to tailor their channels, messengers and messaging based on defined target groups,<sup>145</sup> subgroups that should be narrowed down as far as possible. A recent best-practice report suggests that target subgroups should be selected based on who is likely to benefit most from campaign activities.<sup>146</sup> Especially campaigns aiming for behavioural change (beyond awareness/knowledge raising) can benefit from target group segmentation.<sup>147</sup> Specific characteristics, such as high confidence and high-risk tolerance, can also make it more difficult for campaigns to have an impact (see section 3.1). This chapter provides an in-depth overview of PARIM research findings on the drivers of (irregular) migration from Pakistan, following the general model provided by Black et al.<sup>148</sup> outlined in the PARIM Background Report. The first section addresses the micro (individual) level and presents potential irregular migrants' characteristics, followed by meso level (obstacles or facilitators) and macro-level (structural) drivers. It then provides more detailed analysis on the risk awareness profiles and decision-making processes in the Pakistani context, as identified by PARIM research. This chapter brings together results from PARIM background research, the PARIM survey, the stakeholder and diaspora mapping and the validation meetings. In order to gain an in-depth understanding of potential target group segmentation for the PARIM campaign, results are analysed comparatively across districts and various demographic factors.

### 5.2 Characteristics of target audience (micro drivers)

For the PARIM information campaign, identifying the profile of potential irregular migrants is necessary to define the target audiences. As mentioned in the PARIM Background Report, the degree of effectiveness of an information campaign depends on how well the campaign is tailored with respect to content and channels of communication, taking into consideration the profile of the potential irregular migrants. This section would set the context for the general profile of irregular migrants in

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<sup>145</sup> Tjaden, "Assessing the Impact of Awareness- Raising Campaigns on Potential Migrants – What We Have Learned so Far"; Tjaden, Morgenstern, and Laczko, "Evaluating the Impact of Information Campaigns in the Field of Migration: A Systematic Review of the Evidence, and Practical Guidance."

<sup>146</sup> Seefar and ECORYS, "Study on Best Practices in Irregular Migration Awareness Campaigns."

<sup>147</sup> Seefar and ECORYS.

<sup>148</sup> Black et al., "The Effect of Environmental Change on Human Migration."

the PARIM project districts which would guide the selection of the target audiences for the information campaign.

The selection criteria developed for the PARIM survey sample, based on background research<sup>149</sup> as well as experiences of MRCs, already predetermines the general profile of the respondents, as mentioned in the methodology (section 4.1). As a further verification, the questionnaire also explicitly asked if respondents considered leaving Pakistan through irregular means. In general, the profile of those who admitted to an intention to migrate irregularly is similar to the overall sample (which was already targeted at potential irregular migrants), confirming the relevance of the full sample as the target audience for the campaign. The direct question regarding irregular migration (see Annex II, Question C24) is helpful to identify the extent of social desirability bias, which is not surprising considering the nature of the topic. Where relevant, any deviations in the profile of those who admitted to an intention to migrate irregularly (n=761) with the overall sample (n=1200) are discussed in the following paragraphs to fine-tune the target audience<sup>150</sup> (Table 5).

**Table 5: Summary of basic characteristics of potential irregular migrants**

Profile of overall sample (n=1200)	Deviations from overall sample for those who admitted an intention to migrate irregularly (n=761)	District-specific results for potential irregular migrants	Other relevant characteristics
<b>Locality:</b> 52% of the overall sample lives in urban areas, 48% lives in rural areas	51% live in rural areas and 49% live in urban areas	Jhelum has more respondents from urban areas, urban-rural ratio of respondents almost equal in all other districts	More people in rural areas are “certain” about their intention to migrate irregularly.
<b>Gender:</b> 10% of the sample is female by sampling design	Majority is male but 24% of women in the sample intended to migrate irregularly	Intention to migrate irregularly among women is noted in Gujrat, Mandi Bahauddin, and Jhelum.	Women intending to migrate irregularly are more likely to be between the ages of 26-30 years, and have either a high school or bachelors degree
<b>Age:</b> Majority (43%) is between the age of 18-25; and 35% are between the ages of 18-30.	Same age profile as overall sample	In Sialkot, the percentage of respondents between the ages of 26-30 is	The sample excludes minors (below the age of 18) although there is a high tendency among

<sup>149</sup> Hahn-Schaur, *Awareness Raising and Information Campaigns on the Risks of Irregular Migration from Pakistan: Background Report*; Dynamic Consulting Services, “Needs Assessment Study: Information Needs of Intending Migrants in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan,” 2019; International Organisation for Migration (IOM), “Pakistan: Survey on Drivers of Migration - Regional Evidence for Migration Policy and Analysis,” 2020.

<sup>150</sup> The target audiences will hereby be referred to as potential irregular migrants for this report.



		higher than 18-25 year olds.	underage youth (from the age of 14) to migrate irregularly.
<b>Education:</b> Majority has 5-10 years of formal education (48%), followed by those between high school and bachelors (33%)	Same education profile as overall sample	Mandi Bahauddin has the highest proportion of respondents with less than primary level of education; Faisalabad has the highest proportion of respondents with a master's degree.	Higher the education level, more likely for participants to dismiss campaign information. Lower education groups are more likely to choose irregular migration
<b>Income:</b> Majority of the overall sample has less than PKR 30,000 (EUR 155) per month as average household income	Equal likelihood for those with income less than PKR 30,000 (EUR 155) and those between PKR 30,000 – 50,000 (EUR 156-255)	Jhelum has the highest proportion of respondents with household incomes less than PKR 30,000 (EUR 155); Faisalabad has the highest proportion with more than PKR 50,000 (EUR 255) per month	Those with less incomes are more likely to have a personal aspiration to live and work abroad
<b>Employment Status:</b> Majority work as daily workers (28%), followed by self-employed (23%)	Same employment profile as overall sample	Unemployment is reported highest in Sialkot. Daily wagers are least in Faisalabad, and self-employed are least in Sialkot	Dissatisfaction with current nature of employment or income level is more likely to lead to irregular migration, rather than unemployment
<b>Marital Status:</b> 54% unmarried; 45% married	51% unmarried, 48% married	Gujrat and Faisalabad have higher percentage of married respondents. Proportion of unmarried respondents in Gujranwala (72%) is significantly higher than married (22%).	The higher likelihood of being unmarried may be related to the age group of potential irregular migrants
<b>Household size:</b> The majority has 4-6 household members (50%), followed by 7-9 members (37%)	Same profile for overall sample.	In Gujrat and Jhelum, the majority have 7-9 household members	As the majority of the respondents earns less than PKR 50,000 (EUR 255), larger the household size, higher the poverty rate, which may push youth to



			consider irregular migration
<b>Destination choice:</b> Europe/UK (69%), reflecting also sampling strategy	65% of those intending to go to Europe/UK intend to migrate irregularly	Europe/UK highest in Jhelum	The higher the education and the income, the higher the desire to go to Australia or North America (and accordingly, the lower the desire to go to Europe)
<b>Personal aspirations:</b> wealth, steady income, status; followed by migration as an aspiration in itself	<i>Not analysed</i>	Gujrat and Gujranwala show more diverse personal aspirations	Migration as an aspiration in itself more prevalent, the lower the education and the lower the income
<b>Emotional characteristics:</b> some indications of social pressure or jealousy (because my friends are migrating), attachment (friends/family abroad), and sense of adventure (“more exciting life”, “always wanted to go there”)	<i>Not analysed due to low sample size</i>	“always wanted to go there” among top 3 motives in Jhelum for specific destination	“More exciting life” more prevalent among higher incomes, and the higher the education level

Based on the descriptive statistics of the survey, a typical profile of a potential irregular migrant with an intention to migrate to Europe is as follows: a male between the ages of 18 – 25 years, likely to be unmarried, with education level between primary and secondary (5 – 10 years of formal education), working as a daily wager or self-employed, earning less than PKR 50,000 (EUR 255) and living in a household of four to six members. He is slightly more likely to be from rural areas, but may also come from an urban area of a migration-prone district. The intention to migrate to Europe/UK is highest in Jhelum (90% of those intending to migrate) among the PARIM survey, and lowest in Faisalabad (51% of those intending to migrate). Intention to migrate irregularly was recorded highest in Mandi Bahauddin, and lowest in Gujranwala.

Table 5 above summarises the basic characteristics of the potential irregular migrants. Drawing on this profile, the survey also reveals some deeper insights regarding the target group’s aspirations, intentions, awareness levels, and their planning and preparation levels. In general, as will be discussed in the following paragraphs, while the majority of the respondents reported considering irregular migration in relatively short-term (in the next one to two years), they are found to be largely



unprepared in terms of taking concrete steps for actualising their migration decision. This is rather counter intuitive, as even irregular migration requires a certain level of planning and making arrangements in terms of finances, agents, arranging (fraudulent) documents etc. Perhaps one reason for the general unpreparedness of the respondents could be the ambiguity in planning introduced by COVID-19-related restrictions. This can also be assumed as 20% of the respondents reported that their timeframe for migration is unspecified. Nevertheless, the following paragraphs highlight some of the key characteristics of the potential irregular migrants based on PARIM survey.

As the sample selection is referral based, the distribution between **urban and rural areas** could not follow a select ratio accurately, however, the sample is roughly equally divided among urban and rural areas (52% urban and 48% rural overall, as well as by district, except for Jhelum where urban population is higher than rural). Overall, there are very few strong differences among the profiles of potential irregular migrants in urban and rural areas. The almost equal distribution of the sample across urban and rural areas shows that migration is a common phenomenon in these hotspot districts regardless of the type of area.

In terms of awareness regarding the migration process and the risks associated with migration, urban and rural level analysis shows similar trends: the majority in both localities reported having awareness “to some extent”, followed by those who reported knowing “sufficiently”. One of the main differences to consider is that a higher percentage of people in rural areas are “certain” about their intention to migrate irregularly as compared to those in urban areas, while a higher proportion of respondents reported “very likely” in urban areas than in rural areas. Those who chose “maybe” are almost equal in both urban and rural areas, although slightly higher in rural areas (52%) than in urban areas (48%). Reasons for considering irregular migration are also largely similar, with a slightly higher percentage of respondents in urban areas reporting that their family wants them to leave. Similarly, in rural areas, the percentage of respondents considering migrating in the next one year and two years are equal, while in urban areas, the percentage of population considering migrating in the next two years is higher than those considering it in the next one year. Between the rural and urban areas, the percentage of population that has reported “unspecified time” for migration is higher in the urban areas (23%) than in the rural areas (16%). This may reflect the uncertainty in travel plans introduced because of the COVID-19 restrictions, as mentioned above. Respondents in rural areas are also more likely to sell off property (6%) to finance their migration as compared to urban areas (3%).

With regard to **age**, the survey purposefully focused on the age range of 18-28 years, in line with previous research that confirms this as the usual pattern.<sup>151</sup> The profile of those who stated an intention to migrate irregularly (maybe, very likely, certain) is similar to this profile, with the majority in the age range of 18-25 years, followed by 26-30 year olds. In Sialkot, the percentage of respondents

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<sup>151</sup> IOM, “Pakistan: Survey on Drivers of Migration - Migrants in Europe during Covid-19”; IOM, “Snapshot of 2018 Arrivals in Europe from Pakistan”; Hahn-Schaur, *Awareness Raising and Information Campaigns on the Risks of Irregular Migration from Pakistan: Background Report*; Dynamic Consulting Services, “Needs Assessment Study: Information Needs of Intending Migrants in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan,” 2019.



within the age bracket of 26-30 year is higher than the age group of 18-25 years, which is in contrast to other districts.

Respondents do not exhibit substantial differences in the survey findings in terms of migration preparation level, challenges expected to be experienced during the migration process, and steps needed for making migration safer with respect to age. However, when asked what would be required to make them stay in Pakistan, “better quality of education for myself” is mentioned less by respondents between the age of 36 and 40, and “better quality of education for my children” is noted less by those between the ages of 18-25, as expected. In other aspects, the percentage of responses largely remained consistent over the age groups for factors that would convince them to stay. In terms of how to make migration safer for youth, less percentage of respondents in the age range of 36-40 years mentioned the need for more information on migrants’ rights, migrants’ duties and obligations in the country of residence, while they are more interested to get information on authentic overseas employment promoters and maximum fees agents are allowed to charge. While the sample only focused on respondents who are over the age of 18, insights from the validation meetings revealed that in reality, children as young as 14 years of age are increasingly dropping out of school and attempting irregular migration. Indeed, estimates show that just in 2020, there were 1,770 first time asylum applications from underage migrants from Pakistan in Europe.<sup>152</sup> More specifically, about 582 unaccompanied children (95% boys; 5% girls) arrived in South Eastern Europe from Pakistan.<sup>153</sup> This also relates to Khan’s finding that in district Gujrat, boys have lower education outcomes as they lose interest in education in anticipation of migration.<sup>154</sup>

As highlighted by relevant stakeholders in the stakeholder mapping exercise, as well as through the experience of MRCs, women play an important role in influencing the migration decision of men in their family either as motivators and facilitators or as gatekeepers. Although the rate of irregular migration from Pakistan by women is low, there is a slight rise in the trend.<sup>155</sup> The survey also confirmed the relevance of involving **women** as target audience. The sample purposefully consisted of women who have some intention to migrate as per community identification. Of the 120 women included in the sample, all but one women in the sample mentioned the consideration of migration in the near future, 28% of women reported considering emigration as a means to achieving their aspirations, and 23% women in the sample admitted to considering irregular migration between the range of maybe, very likely, and certain. Women from Gujrat (55%), Mandi Bahauddin (65%), Jhelum (20%) and Sialkot (10%) reported considering irregular migration, with the highest intentions in Gujrat and Mandi Bahauddin. Of relevance here is to note that the age range of majority of the female respondents who reported considering emigration as a means to achieving aspirations is between 25 to 30 years (slightly higher than men considering migration). This could also be interpreted in view of the legal constraint in women’s labour migration in Pakistan where women under the age of 35 are

<sup>152</sup> EUROSTAT, “Asylum Applicants by Type of Applicant, Citizenship, Age and Sex - Annual Aggregated Data (Rounded),” 2021.

<sup>153</sup> UNHCR, “South Eastern Europe - Mixed Movements by Country of Origin,” 2021.

<sup>154</sup> Khan, “The Impact of Migration on Education and Health (A Case Study of Karriawala Village, District Gujrat, Pakistan.”

<sup>155</sup> I-SAPS, “Stakeholder Mapping Report: Awareness Raising and Information Campaigns on the Risks of Irregular Migration in Pakistan.”



not legally allowed to migrate (but this stipulation is generally for domestic workers going to the Gulf).<sup>156</sup> Moreover, in the sample, the majority of women considering migration have 11 to 14 years of formal education (high school or graduation) as compared to majority of men who generally have education between primary and secondary levels (29% women also reported pursuing education as a means to achieving their aspirations). The majority of women mentioned Europe/UK as their preferred destination area.

With regard to the awareness level of women respondents on the migration process, 16% reported having no information at all, reflecting a clear need for information campaigns to target women as well. In terms of planning, 18% of women respondents have taken no preparatory steps (as compared to 14% men), while a higher percentage of women reported getting a passport (33% women vs. 17% men), and learning the relevant foreign language (20% women vs. 10% men). None of the women reported “learning relevant business skills”, which may either reflect a lack of interest of women in business activities, or lack of access to such opportunities. The survey reveals that the biggest challenge that female respondents perceive in their migration preparation is “managing documents”, followed by “finding information on finding job opportunities abroad”. This is also useful to know as ICMPD through its MRC work continues to engage with women in their campaigns, and the Stakeholder Mapping Report identifies them as important influencers on the migration decision.

With regard to **education**, potential irregular migrants have some basic education between primary and secondary (5 – 10 years of formal education) followed by those with high school or graduate degree (10 – 14 years of formal education) (Figure 3). A similar trend is observed for those who shared an intention to migrate irregularly, and this trend held consistent across the six districts. These results differ from other recent studies that found a higher level of education among potential irregular migrants. While studies reporting higher educational backgrounds agree that migrants often experience de-skilling once they arrive in Europe, lower education levels are consistent with the notion that young males in migration-prone districts are less inclined and motivated to acquire higher education as they consider emigration as a more attractive option from a young age.<sup>157</sup>

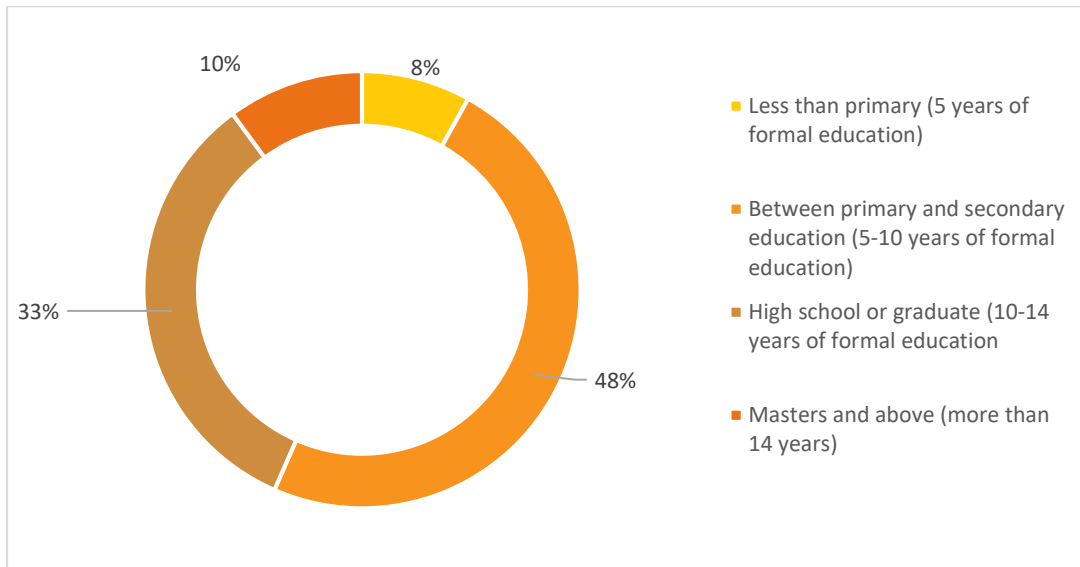
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<sup>156</sup> ILO, “Female Labour Migration from Pakistan: A Situation Analysis” (Geneva, 2020).

<sup>157</sup> Khan, “The Impact of Migration on Education and Health (A Case Study of Karriawala Village, District Gujrat, Pakistan.”



**Figure 3: Education level, (Question B10, n=1200)**



The survey reveals that those with less than primary level of education are more likely to report not being informed of the migration process as well as the risks involved in migration. This group may be most vulnerable not only to exploitation during the journey by agents<sup>158</sup>, but may also find acquiring employment in the destination country difficult, unless equipped with relevant skills. Among those with less than primary level of education, the majority showed an inclination to migrate within the next year, while for all other education levels, the more common response was “within the next two years”. Also interesting to note is that more people with less than primary education mentioned that nothing can change their mind about their migration intention, compared to other groups (although the percentage may itself be considered small i.e. 2.4% among those with less than primary education). On the other hand, among those with higher than graduate level of education (more than 14 years of formal education), the aspiration to live and work abroad was slightly lower as compared to respondents of lower education levels. This reflects that perhaps for this group, migration may be more of a means to achieve certain other needs and aspirations, as compared to an end in itself.

Regarding **type of employment**, our findings confirm the profile in other studies that majority of potential irregular migrants are daily wagers, followed by those that are self-employed.<sup>159</sup> The proportion of unemployed respondents ranked fourth, following those working on contractual basis. Variations across districts show that the proportion of self-employed respondents is highest in Faisalabad and lowest in Sialkot (Figure 4). On the other hand, the percentage of unemployed respondents is highest in Gujranwala, followed by Mandi Bahauddin. It may be assumed that while the majority of potential irregular migrants are not unemployed, they may be employed in vulnerable jobs, with limited job security and social safety net to fall back on in case of a crisis. Indeed, in the 2019 IOM

<sup>158</sup> In Pakistan, it is common for people to refer to smugglers and fake recruiters as agents.

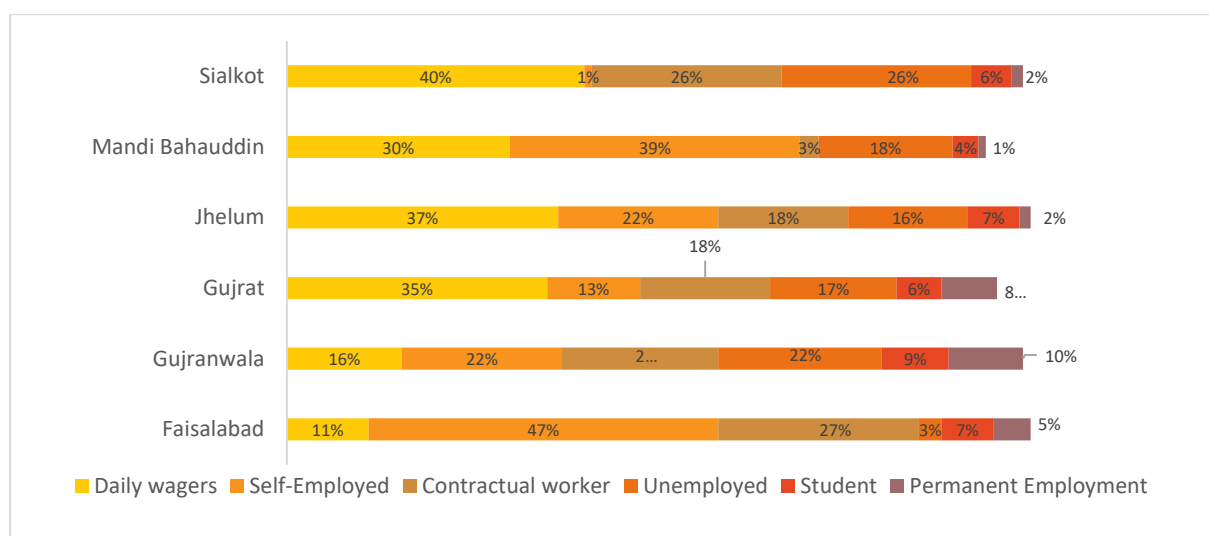
<sup>159</sup> IOM, “Pakistan: Survey on Drivers of Migration - Migrants in Europe during Covid-19.”





survey, one of the primary challenges experienced in Pakistan was “lack of sufficient income”.<sup>160</sup> The propensity of daily wagers and self-employed respondents to opt for irregular migration reflects dissatisfaction with their current nature of employment (and perhaps income level), and hence a desire to migrate.

**Figure 4: Employment status across districts, (Question B12, n=1200)**

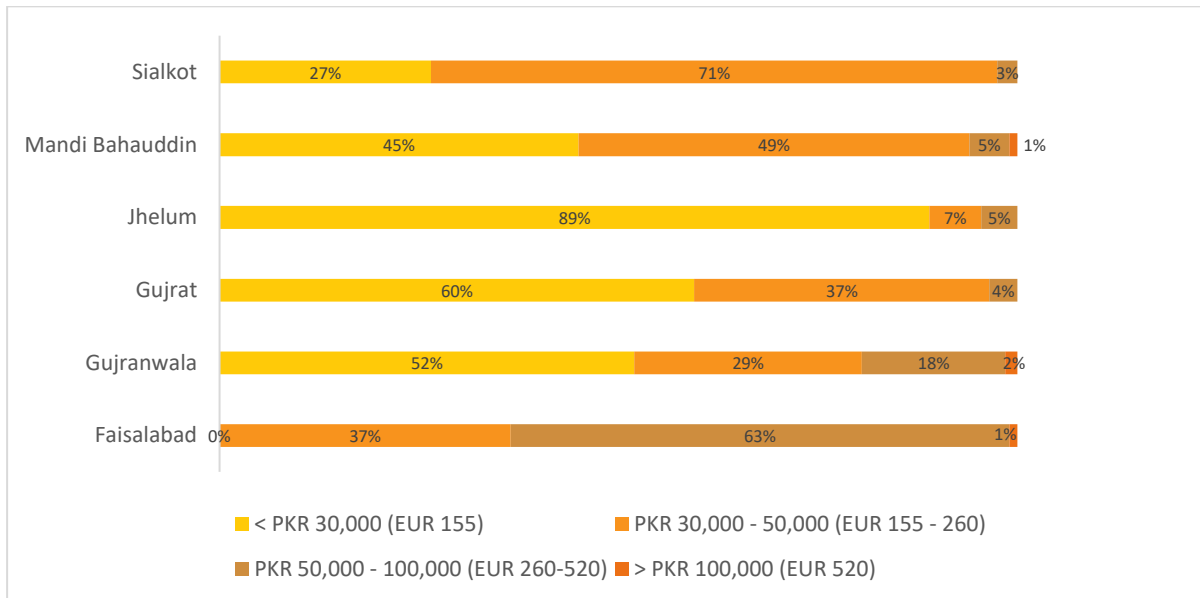


Indeed, if employment status is considered in relation to **the income groups**, the majority of the respondents belong to households with less than PKR 30,000 (EUR 155) income per month, followed by those earning between PKR 30,000 and 50,000 (EUR 155-255) (Figure 5). Based on those who shared an intention to migrate irregularly, the likelihood of irregular migration is the same for those belonging to households with less than PKR 30,000 (EUR 155), and those earning between PKR 30,000 and 50,000 (EUR 155-255) per month (41% respectively). Across the districts, Jhelum has the highest proportion of respondents with the least income (< PKR 30,000; EUR 155), and Faisalabad emerged as the most economically better off district, with 63% respondents having average monthly household income between PKR 50,000 – 100,000 (EUR 255-500) (Figure 5). Faisalabad’s status is also in line with the district level multidimensional poverty incidence, as mentioned in section 2.1. The proportion of respondents with more than PKR 100,000 (EUR 500) income per month is miniscule in the overall sample.

<sup>160</sup> IOM, “Pakistan: Survey on Drivers of Migration - Migrants in Europe during Covid-19.”



**Figure 5: Income group across districts, (Question B6, n=1200)**



Living and working abroad as an aspiration has a negative correlation with the income level, i.e. those with lesser income are more likely to report this as a personal aspiration as compared to those with higher income. Those with income levels above PKR 50,000 (EUR 255) are less inclined to migrate irregularly as compared to those with lower income groups. Regarding awareness levels, those with incomes between PKR 50,000 - 100,000 (EUR 255-500) are less likely to report having no information about the migration process or the risks associated with migration. Similarly, those with higher incomes are less likely to list financial problems and debts, and the lack of employment in the current place of residence as the main push factors for the migration decision. However, those with household incomes between PKR 50,000 – 100,000 (EUR 255 - 500) are more likely to mention the wage differential (“I think I can earn more money through migration”) as a factor driving migration, when compared across different income groups. Respondents with household incomes between PKR 50,000 – 100,000 (EUR 255-500) are also more likely to mention that they see this as a chance for a more exciting life.

In terms of timeframe of migration, the survey shows that those with average household incomes less than PKR 30,000 (EUR 133) are more inclined to migrate within the next one year, while the rest of income groups are more inclined to migrate within the next two years. A higher percentage of respondents with incomes between PKR 50,000 – 100,000 (EUR 255-500) reported the preference to migrate within the next five years as compared to other income groups.

Regarding the **marital status**, the survey shows that majority of the respondents are unmarried (54%), while 45% are currently married. The proportion of widowed, divorced, and married more than once is altogether miniscule (1% altogether). The trend is similar across all the districts, except for Gujrat and Faisalabad, where the proportion of unmarried respondents is lower than married. The low



percentage of married respondents in the overall sample could be because of the young age of potential irregular migrants, and perhaps higher propensity to take risks of irregular migration.<sup>161</sup>

**Household sizes** are generally medium (four to six members) to large (seven to nine members), reflecting that income sizes may be insufficient to have a good standard of living for the household. Indeed, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) estimates that about 13% of the employed population in Pakistan lives below \$1.90 a day.<sup>162</sup> Although the minimum wage in Pakistan was recently raised from PKR 17,500 (EUR 90) per month to PKR 20,000 (EUR 100) per month in the latest budget, it is still insufficient to meet the expenses of medium to large families that also tend to have high dependency rates.<sup>163</sup> Moreover, the annual inflation rate in Pakistan has also shown an upward trajectory since 2015 when it was 2.59%, rising to a peak of 10.57% in 2019, and slightly declining in 2020 to 9.74%.<sup>164</sup> Slight variations are observed across districts with respect to household sizes. Besides Gujrat and Jhelum, where the majority households comprised seven to nine members, the rest of the districts had majority household size of four to six members.

Regarding their preferred choice of destination, a significant majority of the respondents cited Europe/UK (69%), followed by North America (12%), reflecting the sampling strategy as well. The Middle East and the Gulf, where the majority of registered labour migrants from Pakistan migrate,<sup>165</sup> is only cited by 5% of the respondents (see Figure 6 below). The higher the education and the income, the higher the desire to go to Australia or North America (and accordingly, the lower the desire to go to Europe). District-wise as well, the preference for Europe dominated over other destination choices. Across the districts, Jhelum had the highest percentage for the choice of Europe/UK. The high preference for Europe indicates the presence of a specific trend in this region for migration towards Europe, which has its root in legal migration flows common in decades of 1950s and 1960s.<sup>166</sup> These initial migrants were usually less-skilled and filled the labour demand in the construction and mining sectors in Europe. However, considering the current scenario where legal pathways of migration for labour migration to Europe are limited, especially for youth with limited skillset and educational qualifications, like the ones in PARIM sample, they often resort to irregular pathways to migrate.

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<sup>161</sup> Hahn-Schaur, *Awareness Raising and Information Campaigns on the Risks of Irregular Migration from Pakistan: Background Report*.

<sup>162</sup> Asian Development Bank, "Select Poverty Indicators in Pakistan," 2019.

<sup>163</sup> Samaa TV, "Budget 2021-22: Minimum Wage Increased from Rs17,500 to Rs20,000," n.d.

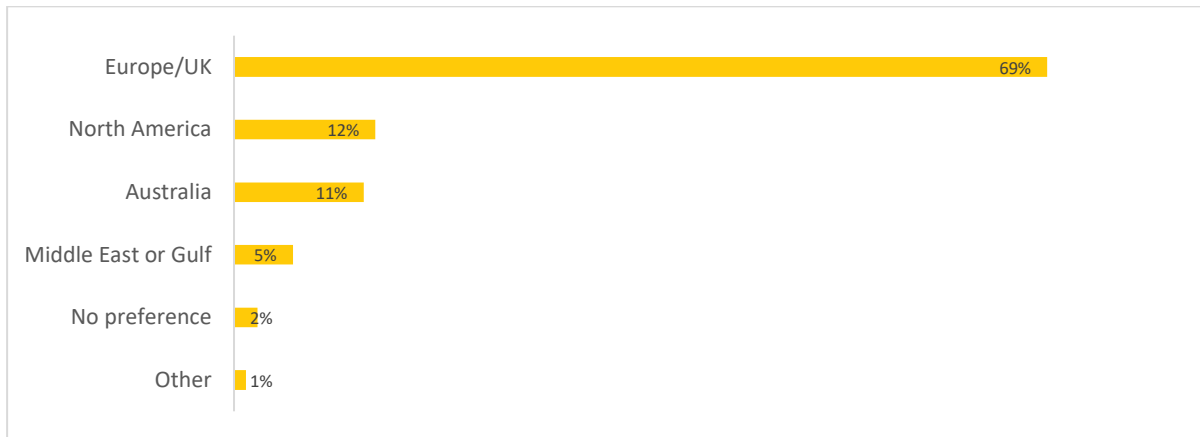
<sup>164</sup> World Development Bank, "Inflation, Consumer Prices (Annual) Pakistan," World Development Indicators, 2020.

<sup>165</sup> World Bank, "Inflation, Consumer Prices (Annual) Pakistan," World Development Indicators, 2020, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/FP.CPI.TOTL.ZG?end=2020&locations=PK&start=2010>.

<sup>166</sup> Fareeha Zafar, "The Pakistan-Europe Corridor," in *The Pakistani Diaspora: Corridors of Opportunity and Uncertainty*, ed. Rashid Amjad (Lahore: Lahore School of Economics, 2017), 75–90.



**Figure 6: Destination choice (Question C15, n=1160)**



The survey can furthermore provide insights with regard to more intangible characteristics of potential migrants, such as their **personal aspirations, and emotions** known to be relevant for migration decision-making processes, such as shame, guilt, jealousy (including of other migrants' wealth), fear, (lack of) hope or frustration.<sup>167</sup> Personal aspirations form an important-individual-level driver of migrations decisions. Aslany et al. theorise that aspirations are shaped by material as well as non-material needs including economic, cultural, social and psychological factors.<sup>168</sup> Migration aspiration may be influenced by general societal values, norms, culture, impressions from friends and family, films and media or comparisons with others' living conditions.<sup>169</sup> Confirming this, 63% of respondents believed that success stories of relatives abroad are behind the common aspiration to migrate (second most common reason after good living and working conditions abroad) and 26% believed that films or media are a further driver of aspirations.

Pursuit of wealth, status and steady income are identified by respondents as the most predominant *general* aspirations of youth in their community. Respondents' *personal* aspirations showed similar trends. Based on multiple options, respondents reported wealth (79%), steady income (60%) and status (58%) as top aspirations, followed by migration (55%) (see Figure 7 below). For those with higher income, steady income and status are even more important than for those with lower income, while those with lower income are more likely to indicate "good family life" as a personal aspiration. The lower the education, the more important wealth, and those with lowest income are also significantly less likely to report "steady income" as aspiration. Across districts, Gujrat and Gujranwala show more diverse personal aspirations. In the overall sample, about 96% respondents across the districts confirmed that they would consider migration from Pakistan in the near future when directly asked. These results also indicate that migration is not only considered as a means to achieving other life goals

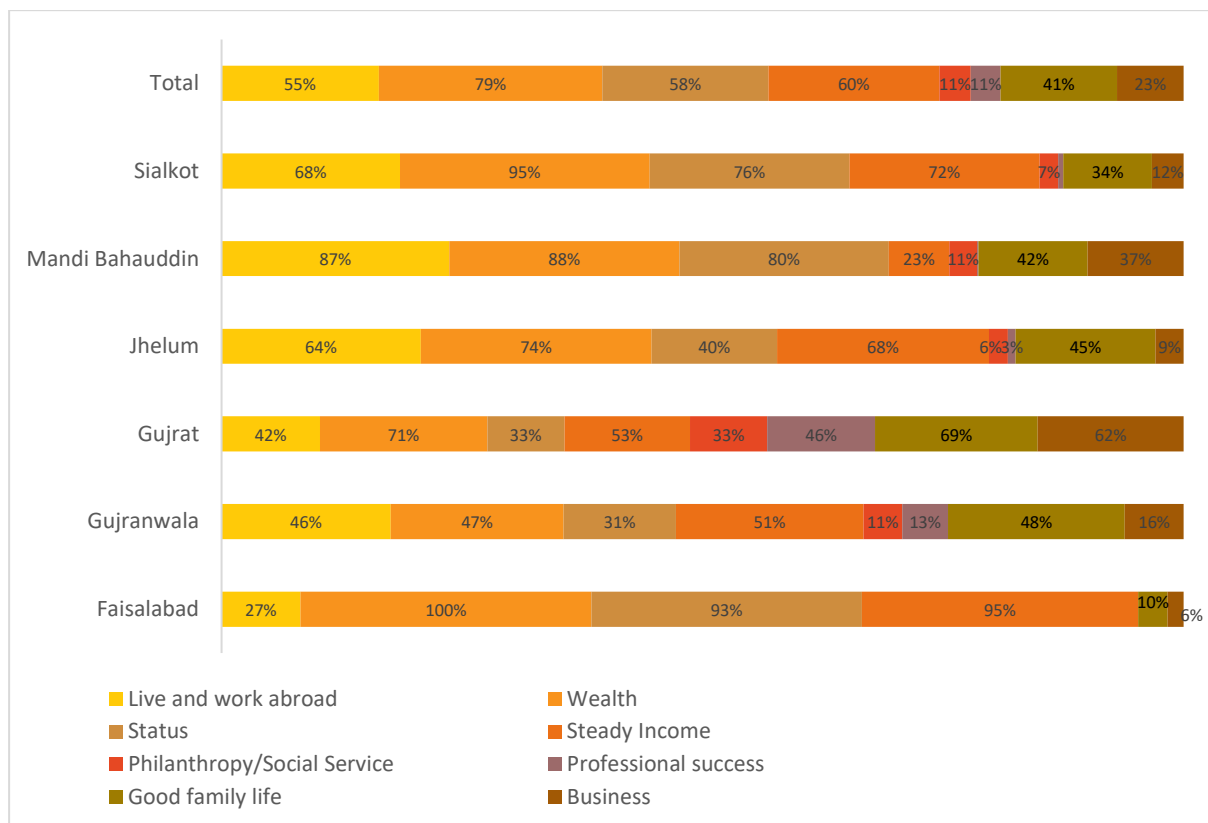
<sup>167</sup> Jessica Hagen-Zanker and Gemma Hennessey, "What Do We Know about the Subjective and Intangible Factors That Shape Migration Decision-Making? A Review of the Literature from Low and Middle Income Countries" (Oslo, 2021); Ahmad, "The Romantic Appeal of Illegal Migration: Gender, Masculinity and Human Smuggling from Pakistan," 2008.

<sup>168</sup> Aslany et al., "Systematic Review of Determinants of Migration Aspirations."

<sup>169</sup> Mathias Czaika, Jakub Bijak, and Toby Prike, "Migration Decision-Making and Its Key Dimensions," no. 870299 (2021).

(wealth, for instance), but is also considered as an end in itself as a life aspiration by many youth. According to the PARIM survey results, migration as an aspiration in itself is more prevalent the lower the education and the lower the income. Ahmad<sup>170</sup> also highlighted this aspect that often in certain districts of Pakistan, “migration is itself the ultimate product and status symbol”.

**Figure 7: Personal aspirations, by district (Question C5, multi option, n=1200)**



Emotions and feelings have been shown in the literature to play a vital role in migration-decision making and interlink with economic motives, including shame or guilt (e.g. of not being able to provide an income), jealousy (including of other migrants’ wealth), fear, (lack of) hope or frustration.<sup>171</sup> Participants in PARIM Validation Meetings also highlighted that some agents make use of the emotional side of migration motives to convince their potential clients to leave, for instance by showing them mansions of their previously migrated clients (thereby invoking envy). Previous research also highlighted the link between irregular migration and notions of masculinity.<sup>172</sup> Young men can be under social pressure from their peers to migrate, as was also pointed out during PARIM Validation Meetings. In the PARIM survey, the strong prevalence of wealth and status aspirations may speak to

<sup>170</sup> Ahmad, “The Romantic Appeal of Illegal Migration: Gender, Masculinity and Human Smuggling from Pakistan,” 2008.

<sup>171</sup> Hagen-Zanker and Hennessey, “What Do We Know about the Subjective and Intangible Factors That Shape Migration Decision-Making? A Review of the Literature from Low and Middle Income Countries”; Ali Nobil Ahmad, *The Romantic Appeal of Illegal Migration: Gender, Masculinity and Human Smuggling from Pakistan*, ed. Leo Lucassen Marlou Schrover Joanne van der Leun and Chris Quispel, Migration (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008).

<sup>172</sup> Ahmad, *The Romantic Appeal of Illegal Migration: Gender, Masculinity and Human Smuggling from Pakistan*, 2008.

some of these emotions. Asked to rank their top 3 motives behind emigration, 3% of respondents replied that they wanted to emigrate because they had friends or family abroad (more prevalent in second and third rank motives), and another 3% replied that it was because their friends were migrating or had migrated (see Figure 14 further below). Friends and family abroad play an important role as facilitators of migration (see section 5.3 and 5.4 below); seen through the lense of emotions, this emigration motivation might also be connected to feelings of attachment or love, but also jealousy. Another 3% replied that they see migration as a chance for a more exciting life (again more prevalent in second and third ranks), pointing to an emotional aspect and possibly also a certain risk attitude (see section 5.5. below). This motivation was more prevalent among higher incomes (from PKR 50,000/EUR 255), and the higher the education level. When asked for motives for the specific destination they had chosen, 27% replied that they had “always wanted to go there” (sum of all ranks, ahead of motives such as asylum and education opportunities). This motive was more prevalent, the lower the education level. Both a wish for an “exciting life”, and a motivation of having “always wanted to” go, point to highly individual, emotionally driven emigration motivations which go beyond the typical economic reasons.

### 5.3 Meso drivers: obstacles or facilitators in migration from Pakistan

**Table 6: Meso drivers - Summary**

Meso driver	Qualification of results	District results	Other characteristics
Perceived <b>lower cost</b> of irregular migration	Strong facilitating factor, as expected	Particularly pronounced in Sialkot, Jhelum and Gujrat	Somewhat more prevalent among lowest income group
Irregular migration quicker and “ <b>only way</b> ”	Strong facilitating factor	Respondents from Mandi Bahauddin and Gujrat more likely to perceive irregular migration as “the only way”	Education and income levels correlate with perception of “quickness”; lowest education and income groups more likely to perceive migration as “the only way”
<b>Networks</b> of family and friends in Pakistan and abroad	Strong facilitating factor, as expected, including through financing of migration; However, few indicate that they wish to migrate <i>because</i> of family/friends	Reliance on family/friends in the intended CoD <sup>173</sup> most common in Gujranwala, least in Faisalabad. Limited support from family/friends overall in Jhelum	Indications of weaker social networks among lowest education groups; lower income groups can draw less on personal savings (greater financial risk)

<sup>173</sup> Country of destination



<b>Returnees</b>	Stronger than expected	More prevalent in Gujranwala	Those in urban contexts and those with lowest income are more likely to have received support from a returnee.
<b>Village Elders</b>	Small role as “most support”, but important role as information source	Somewhat more prevalent in Faisalabad and Gujrat	Older respondents more likely to consult elders
(Irregular) migration agents or smugglers	Small role as “main support”, but top concern among potential challenges, as expected	Concern over selection of agent more prevalent in Faisalabad and Jhelum (74%), and least in Gujranwala (26%). Concern re. defrauding by agents strongest in Mandi Bahauddin and Jhelum and weakest in Gujrat	The higher the education level, the less likely are concerns over selection of a good agent and fear of being cheated by agent

As anticipated by the PARIM Background Report, the **(perceived) lower cost is the most dominant aspect** facilitating irregular migration in PARIM survey results (see figure 8 below). This links up with previous research that found that regular migration channels are, in fact, particularly costly for Pakistan<sup>174</sup> and that irregular migration can be perceived as cheaper.<sup>175</sup> Among the respondents who plan to migrate through irregular means, cost (“It is cheaper than other options”) ranked as the primary motive. The PARIM Validation Meetings also confirmed this result. Participants elaborated that agents may charge in instalments (charging separately for separate legs of the journey), thus making irregular migration for feasible and allowing people to make final payments after reaching the intended destination. Cost also ranked prominently as a factor in the 2019 MRC needs assessment.<sup>176</sup> While the middle higher income group (between PKR 50,000 – 100,000/EUR 255-500) has overall the strongest inclination towards irregular migration, this is mostly based on “maybe” replies. Those with a lower income (below 30,000 PKR/EUR 133 and between 30,000-50,000 PKR / EUR 133-255) have a stronger tendency to be “certain” about opting for irregular migration, and they are also somewhat more likely to indicate the cheaper cost motive behind their irregular migration desire. The cost motive is spread evenly across rural-urban and education groups, and particularly pronounced in Sialkot (49% as first

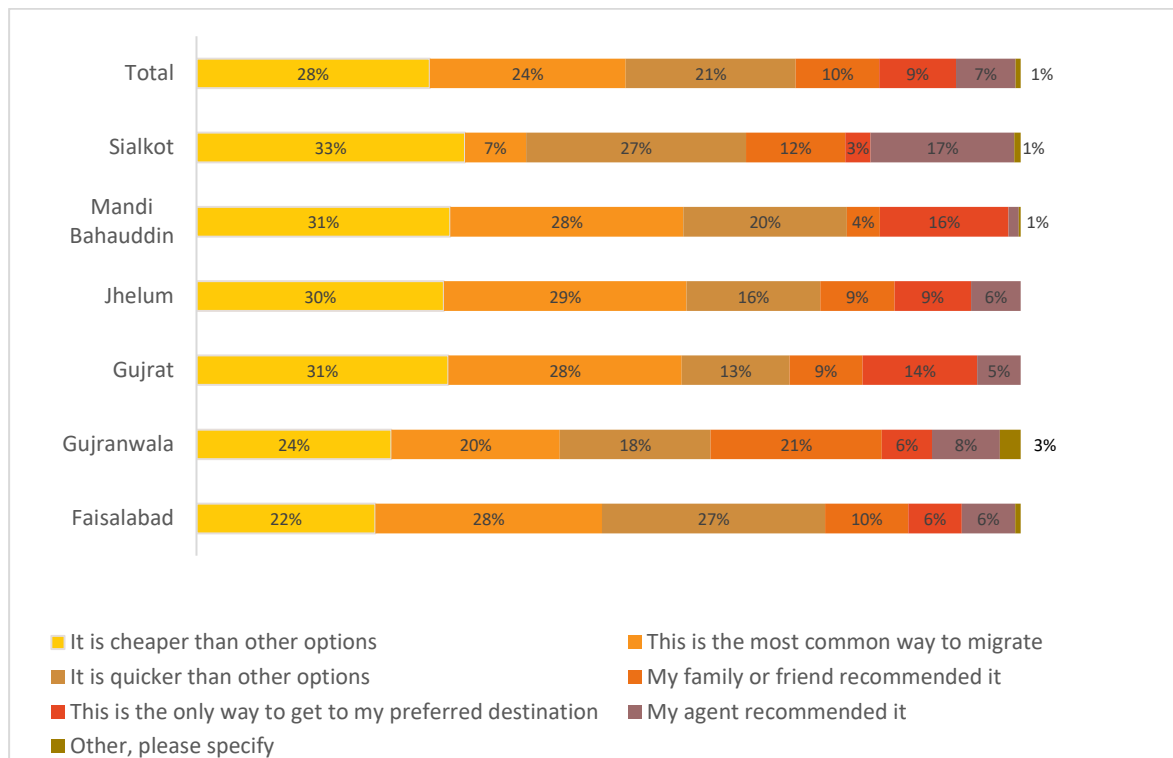
<sup>174</sup> ILO, *The Cost of Migration: What Low-Skilled Migrant Workers from Pakistan Pay to Work in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates*.

<sup>175</sup> Khan, “Impact of Migration on Education and Health. A Case Study of Karrianwala Village, District Gujrat, Pakistan,” 68–73.

<sup>176</sup> Dynamic Consulting Services, “Needs Assessment Study. Information Needs of Intending Migrants in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.”

rank motive), followed by Jhelum (46%) and Gujrat (43%), which on average show lower income in the PARIM sample (see section 5.2 on characteristics).

**Figure 8: Main motives behind irregular migration, by district (Question C25, sum of all ranks, n=761)**



Furthermore, respondents frequently replied that they considered irregular migration **quicker** than other options (third after cheaper and common practice) and as the only way to get to the desired destination (fifth) (see Figure 8 above). The higher the education and income levels of respondents, the more likely they are to have the perception of “quickness” of irregular migration, while the lowest education and income group, as well as respondents from Mandi Bahauddin and Gujrat, were more likely to perceive irregular migration as “the only way”. Perceiving irregular migration as quick or the only way also confirms the findings of the PARIM Background Report that **regular channels** are (perceived or actually) **difficult** to access.<sup>177</sup> During the validation meetings, local stakeholders shared that since there are hardly any jobs advertised for European countries by the registered Overseas Employment Promoters (OEPs), people often resort to illicit agents to achieve their migration goals. As highlighted during one of the PARIM Validation Meetings with stakeholders in Islamabad, potential migrants and often times their families are not too concerned with the “regularity” or “legality” of the

<sup>177</sup> Optimity Advisors, ICMPD, and ECRE, “A Study on Smuggling of Migrants - Characteristics, Responses and Cooperation with Third Countries. Final Report,” 54–55.





journey or the process, as long as it results in reaching the desired destination and earning income in a foreign currency to send back remittances.

Confirming this and in line with previous research<sup>178</sup>, **government agencies** also play a small role as an information source (2% overall yet somewhat more likely in Faisalabad and Mandi Bahauddin at 4% each) and only 5 respondents said that government agencies supported them “the most” in their arrangements (0.4%) (see also Figure 9 below). This could also be because relevant government departments lack representation at district level, or because respondents are not aware of them when they do exist, as was pointed out during PARIM Validation Meetings. “I don’t know how to arrange documents for migration” is also the second most concern for potential migrants when thinking of potential challenges. Those who do *not* wish to migrate irregularly still are substantially more likely to be concerned about this – pointing to an important knowledge gap a campaign might address. Getting charged by corrupt officials is a concern for 14% of respondents.

**Social networks** are a crucial facilitating factor of (irregular) migration<sup>179</sup>, including for information and financing<sup>180</sup>. In the PARIM survey (as well as in PARIM Stakeholder Mapping and Diaspora Mapping Report), networks of family and friends overwhelmingly are the most important sources of support in preparing for migration: 64% replied that family/friends in *Pakistan* were their strongest support, followed by 14% who indicated family/friends in the *intended country of destination* and 9% who were most supported by family/friends in *another country* abroad. Respondents in Gujranwala are most likely and those in Faisalabad district are least likely to have support from family/friends in the intended country of destination, although they indicate strong support from family/friends *in Pakistan*. Support by family/friends in the intended country of destination is similar across all destination regions, although slightly more prevalent for Europe/UK 13% indicated “having family/friends” there as their motive for choosing Europe as destination (fourth most common motive behind choosing this destination, after jobs, business opportunities and citizenship).

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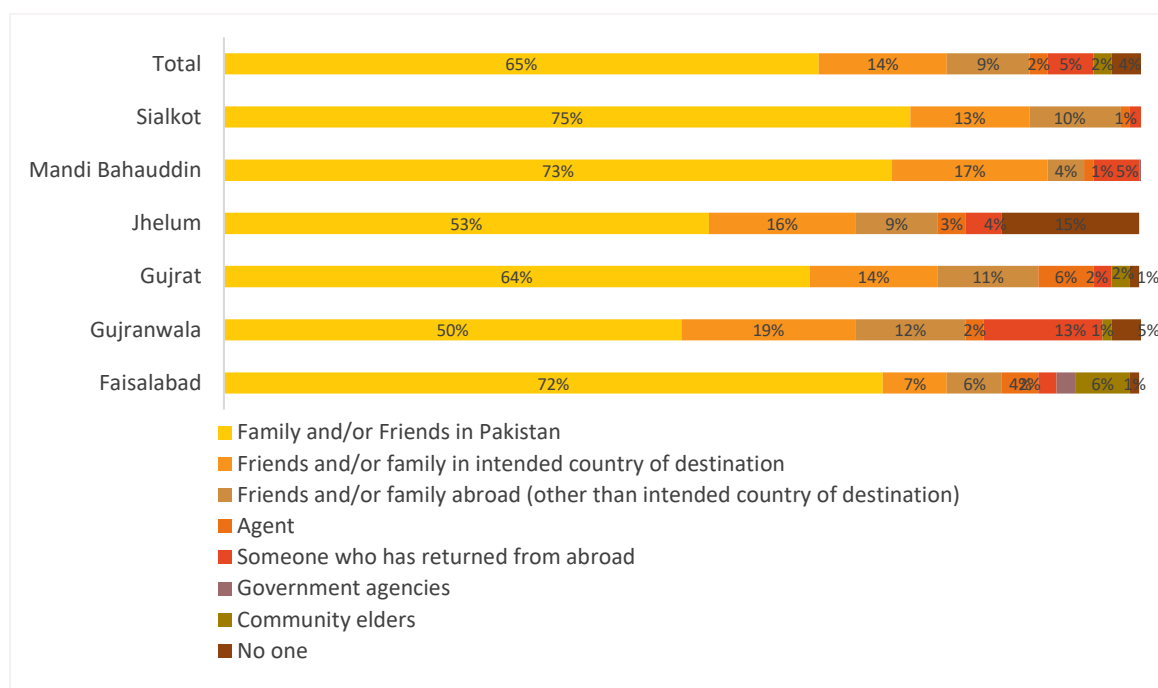
<sup>178</sup> Hagen-Zanker et al., “Migration from the Margins: Mobility, Vulnerability and Inevitability in Mid-Western Nepal and North-Western Pakistan Report 5,” 24.

<sup>179</sup> IOM, “Pakistan: Survey on Drivers of Migration”; World Bank Group, “A Migrant’s Journey for Better Opportunities: The Case of Pakistan”; Black et al., “The Effect of Environmental Change on Human Migration”; Jørgen Carling, “How Does Migration Arise?,” in *Ideas to Inform International Cooperation on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration*, ed. M. McAuliffe and M. Klein Solomon (Geneva: IOM, 2017), 19–26.

<sup>180</sup> World Bank Group, “A Migrant’s Journey for Better Opportunities: The Case of Pakistan”; IOM, “Pakistan: Survey on Drivers of Migration - Migrants in Europe during Covid-19.”



**Figure 9: Major sources of support in migration preparation (Question C19, n= 1160) <sup>181</sup>**



“My family or friend recommended (irregular migration)”, ranks fourth (10%) when comparing total replies of reasons behind irregular migration (see Figure 9). When comparing education groups, such a recommendation by family/friends is substantially lower for the lowest educated, potentially pointing to weaker social networks (2% of respondents in this group, compared to 10 - 14% among others). The support question similarly shows that those in the lowest education group are least likely to have support by family/friends abroad (intended destination or other) and they are also more likely to indicate “no one” supports them (7% compared 0-2% in other income groups). Respondents in Jhelum are least likely to indicate support from family/friends overall and most likely to indicate “no one” supports them.

**Financing** migration is another crucial facilitator or obstacle in which social networks play a major role (see Figure 10 below), as also identified by the PARIM Stakeholder Mapping Report. The PARIM survey confirms a common finding of migration research that migration is often financed by households pooling their resources.<sup>182</sup> “Parents and/or siblings will cover the cost” is the most common reply (72%), followed by personal savings (61%). Another total 58% cover the cost through (a gift or a loan from) extended family or friends, either in Pakistan (the overall more common option) or abroad.<sup>183</sup>

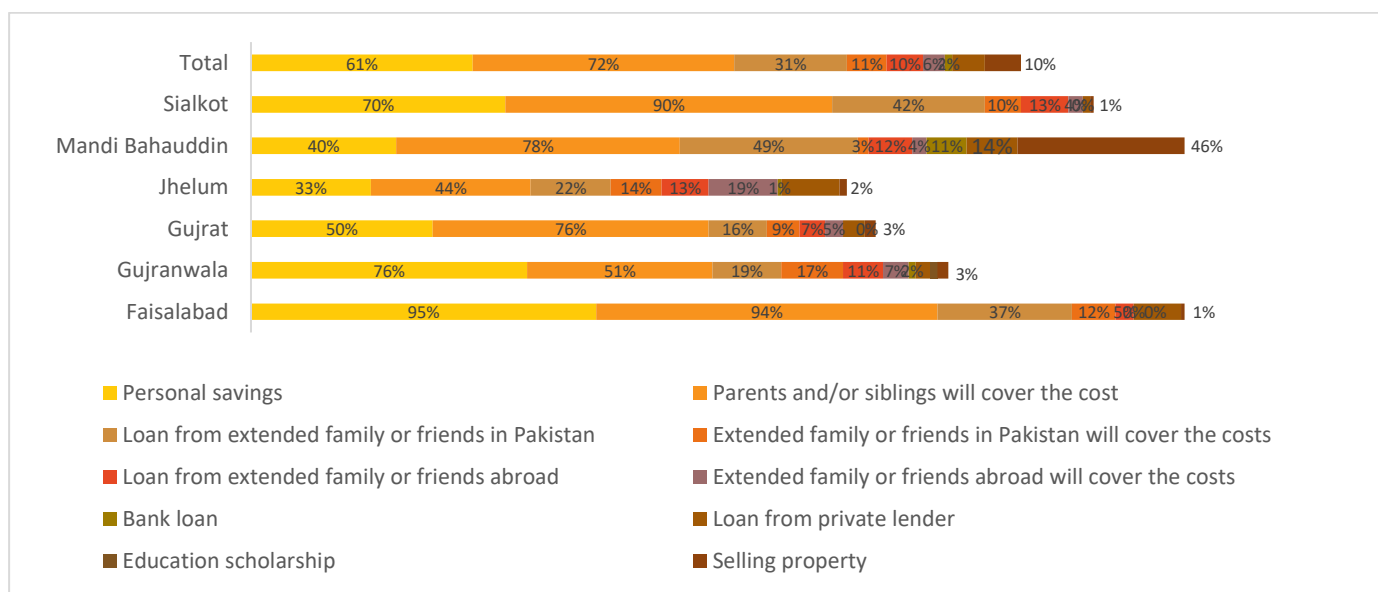
<sup>181</sup> The options of NGOs and MRCs have not been included in the Figure because of zero responses

<sup>182</sup> Kashif Majeed Salik et al., “Migration Futures in Asia and Africa: Economic Opportunities and Distributional Effects – the Case of Pakistan” (Islamabad, 2017); Hagen-Zanker et al., “Migration from the Margins: Mobility, Vulnerability and Inevitability in Mid-Western Nepal and North-Western Pakistan Report 5.”

<sup>183</sup> Considering that this was a multiple option question, respondents may have (or plan to) collect finances for migration through multiple means.

These patterns vary strongly by region (see Figure 10 below). Differentiated by income, those with lowest income and those intent on irregular migration tend to be less able to draw on personal savings and tend to rely more on extended family and friends (either abroad or in Pakistan). Supporting this result, the lowest income group is also more likely to indicate financial problems and debts, and not being able to find a job where they live, as a migration motive. In line with previous research<sup>184</sup>, those who need a loan vastly borrow from family or friends, either abroad or in Pakistan, while bank loans and private lenders are generally less common.

**Figure 10: Sources of migration financing (Question C22, multi option, n=1160)**



These results point again to the importance of the cost factor for irregular migration decisions; financing migration can create significant debt which needs to be paid off. If lower income groups can draw less on personal savings, this means their financial risk is greater, confirming the results of previous studies in Pakistan.<sup>185</sup> The higher the education level, the higher the tendency to have personal savings to draw on. Selling property is more likely in rural areas, among the lowest education group, and substantially more likely for those intent on irregular migration. (No such pattern can be seen with regard to income).

The vast majority (98%) of respondents have discussed their plans with **family** already, and most families reacted by wishing to support respondents in their endeavour (52%, see Figure 11 below). Some families have questions (12%), followed by those who are worried (12%). Family support is most

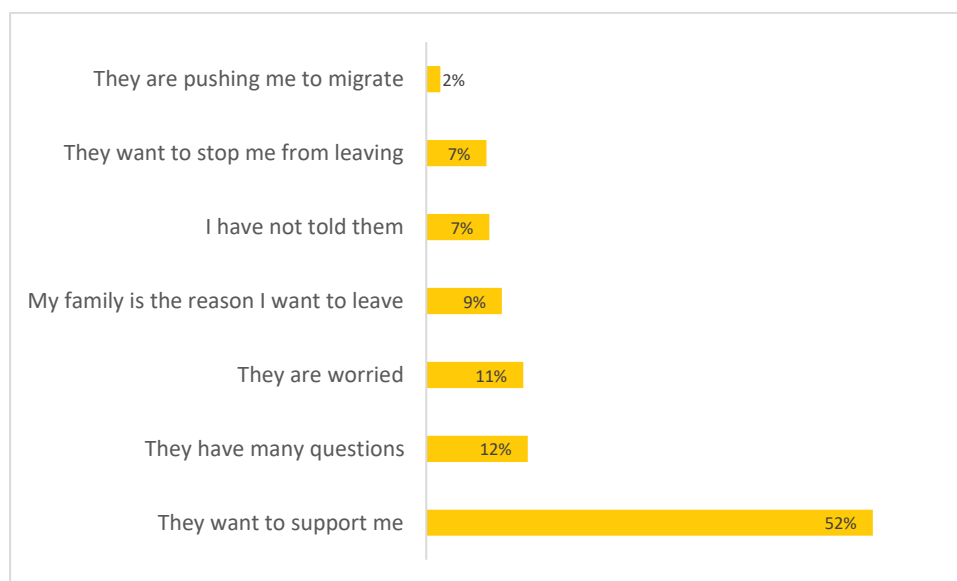
<sup>184</sup> ILO, *The Cost of Migration: What Low-Skilled Migrant Workers from Pakistan Pay to Work in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates*, 19.

<sup>185</sup> Hagen-Zanker et al., "Migration from the Margins: Mobility, Vulnerability and Inevitability in Mid-Western Nepal and North-Western Pakistan Report 5"; Salik et al., "Migration Futures in Asia and Africa: Economic Opportunities and Distributional Effects – the Case of Pakistan."

pronounced in Faisalabad, while families in Gujrat are least supportive of and most likely to be worried about migration. 7% said their family is trying to stop them to leave.

Furthermore, a few respondents said their **family is the reason they want to leave** (9%, see Figure 9 below) Such a motive, potentially pointing to forced migration, is particularly pronounced in Jhelum (30%), followed by Mandi Bahauddin (12%), and more prevalent in urban compared to rural areas. A study conducted in an (irregular) migration-prone village in Gujrat district indeed highlights conflicts based on family feuds as a common motive behind emigration, aside from the predominant economic drivers.<sup>186</sup> However, in the PARIM survey, only a few respondents outright said their family is pushing them to leave (1.7%). Those in the lowest income group are less likely to have supportive reactions from their families, are more likely to have family who wants to stop them from migrating, more likely not to have told their family at all, and more likely to say that their family is the reason they want to leave. As mentioned previously, those with a lower income (below 30,000 PKR/EUR 133 and between 30,000-50,000 PKR/EUR 133-255) also have a stronger tendency to be “certain” about opting for irregular migration.

**Figure 11: Family reactions to migration plans (Question C18, n=1157)**



Aside from friends and family, **returnees** also feature quite prominently among social contacts. They are the top source of information on migration and related risks (76%), more important than online sources and family/friends (see section 6.2 for further details). This is although the majority (64%) of respondents believe that the forcibly returned<sup>187</sup> are generally considered as a source of shame in the community. For 5% of respondents, “someone who has returned from abroad” is even the most important source of support in migration arrangements (fourth most common reply, after

<sup>186</sup> Khan, “Impact of Migration on Education and Health. A Case Study of Karrianwala Village, District Gujrat, Pakistan,” 70.

<sup>187</sup> In Pakistan, the common term used is deportees.



friends/family in Pakistan or abroad, see Figure 9 above). Such support from a returnee is more prevalent in Gujranwala district (13% of Gujranwala respondents). Those in urban contexts, those younger (aged 18-30) and those with lowest income are more likely to have received support from a returnee.

**Village elders**, as another form of social contact potentially facilitating migrants, played a smaller (compared to personal networks), but still important role, as also confirmed by the stakeholder engagement exercise and the validation meetings with local representatives. While only 2% indicated them as having supported them “the most”, 18% reported relying on community elders for migration-related information. Elders as a support source is somewhat more prevalent in Faisalabad (6%), and as an information source they are most widespread in Gujrat (41%), and the lowest in Jhelum (4%). Reliance on community elders also correlates with age – older respondents reported getting migration-related information from community elders more than younger respondents.

In the case of Pakistan, **smuggling networks** often work in similar fashion as social networks do. In fact, potential irregular migrants trust the information from the “well-reputed” smugglers and agents the same way they trust information from friends and family.<sup>188</sup> Even in the PARIM survey, the high reliance on agents emerged at various instances. **Agents** facilitating migration rank as primary sources of support only after family and/or friends in Pakistan (64%) or abroad (23%), and returnees (2%). This reply is more common in Gujrat district (6% of Gujrat respondents), and least likely in Sialkot and Mandi Bahauddin (0.5% respectively). Despite this small role as the “most important” source of support, when asked about the level of preparation of potential irregular migrants at the time of the survey, 45% of those with an intention to migrate reported “looking for an agent”.

The importance of selecting a good agent is also the top concern for respondents when thinking about potential challenges in their migration process (59%, see Figure 12 below). This result reflects existing research on migrant-smuggler relations, which points out that migrants choose smugglers carefully, but do so under difficult conditions, such as power asymmetries and difficulty in confirming reputations (see also PARIM background report).<sup>189</sup> Research on migrant-smuggler relations shows that migrants collect information based on word-of-mouth (family and friends), verifying their trustworthiness through multiple sources, negotiate for guarantees (split payments) and hold incriminating information as a bargaining chip.<sup>190</sup> Furthermore, this can be a concern for both regular and irregular migration: As mentioned in the Background and Survey Reports, potential migrants can find it difficult to distinguish between registered agents and smugglers because they can use similar tactics to reach potential clients, especially in rural areas.

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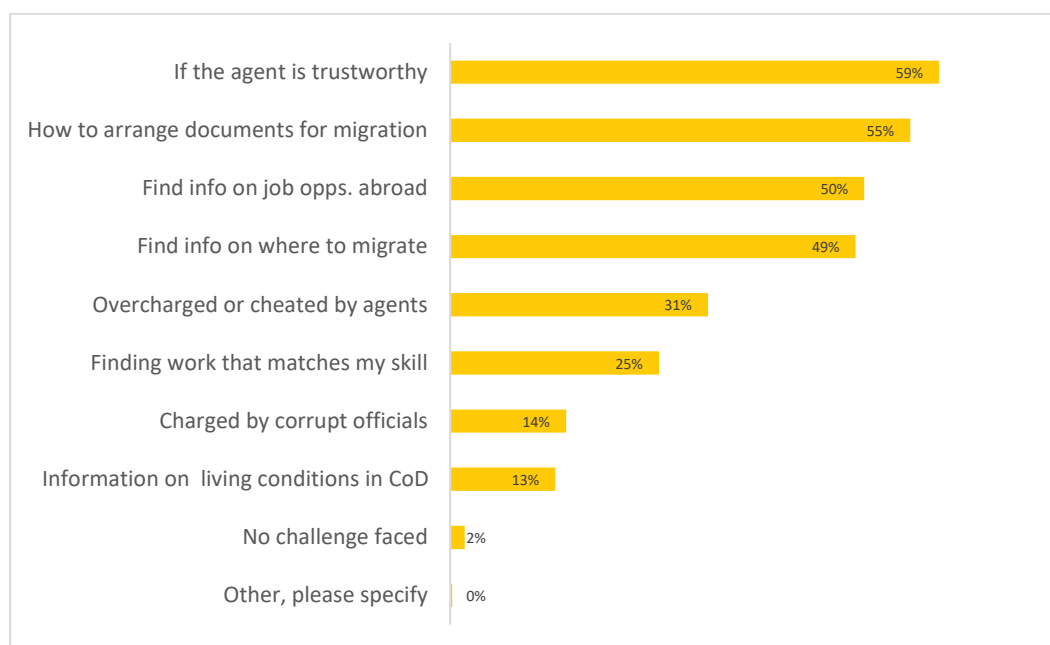
<sup>188</sup> Michaela Marouf and Hara Kouki, “Migrating from Pakistan to Greece: Re-Visiting Agency in Times of Crisis,” *European Journal of Migration and Law* 19, no. 1 (2017): 77–100, <https://doi.org/10.1163/15718166-12342116>.

<sup>189</sup> Paolo Campana and Loraine Gelsthorpe, “Choosing a Smuggler: Decision-Making Amongst Migrants Smuggled to Europe,” *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research*, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10610-020-09459-y>; Ilse Van Liempt and Judith Zijlstra, “Smart(Phone) Travelling: Understanding the Use and Impact of Mobile Technology on Irregular Migration Journeys,” *International Journal of Migration and Border Studies* 3, no. 2–3 (2017): 1, <https://doi.org/10.1504/ijmbs.2017.10001444>.

<sup>190</sup> Campana and Gelsthorpe, “Choosing a Smuggler: Decision-Making Amongst Migrants Smuggled to Europe.”



**Figure 12: Potential challenges in migration preparation (Question C21, multi option, n=1160)**



This concern about trustworthy agents is similar across income groups, but decreases by level of education. It is more prevalent in Faisalabad (77%) and Jhelum (74%), and is least commonly reported in Gujranwala (26%, which is also the district where the fewest people report an intention to irregularly migrate in the PARIM survey). “I think I will be overcharged or cheated in the migration process by agents” is a further concern for 31% of respondents, with the lowest education spectrum again more likely to indicate this response. Respondents in Mandi Bahauddin are most likely to give this reply (59%), followed by Jhelum (46%). Gujrat respondents are least likely to be concerned about overcharging by agents (6%; incidentally, Gujrat respondents are also *most* likely to be concerned about corrupt officials). Furthermore, when asked about what type of support they have received from their sources of support, “finding someone to help (me) migrate” is indicated by 37%. This reply is more prevalent among the lowest income and lowest education groups, more prevalent in Mandi Bahauddin (54%), Jhelum (52%) and Gujranwala (44%), and least prevalent among Faisalabad respondents (13%).

## 5.4 Structural drivers of migration from Pakistan

**Table 7: Structural drivers - Summary**

Structural drivers	Qualification of results	District results	Other characteristics
<b>Economic</b> – including low standard of living, lack of job opportunities, financial problems as	Top drivers, as expected	Similar patterns across districts, with more diverse aspirations and motives in Gujranwala	Financial motives are most predominant among the least educated;



well as corresponding aspirations			job availability also top motive for choosing Europe
<b>Seeking education</b>	Lower priority driver than expected, possibly due to sample (fewer respondents in higher education and income groups) But a high priority when asked what would need to change to stay in PK	Similar patterns across districts	More prevalent among highest income and higher (11+ yrs) of education
<b>Macro social factors</b> such as common expectations, “cultures of migration”	Strong driver, as expected	More pronounced in Gujranwala (having friends or family abroad in third rank) and Gujrat (perception of irregular migration as the “only way” and “the most common way”)	Recommendation of irregular migration by family/friends is significantly lower for the lowest educated (potentially pointing to weaker social networks); while “this is the most common way to migrate” ranks much higher among lowest educated
<b>Rule of law, security, human rights</b>	Significant but less dominant driver, as expected	Stronger motive in Sialkot and Faisalabad	Similar patterns across demographics

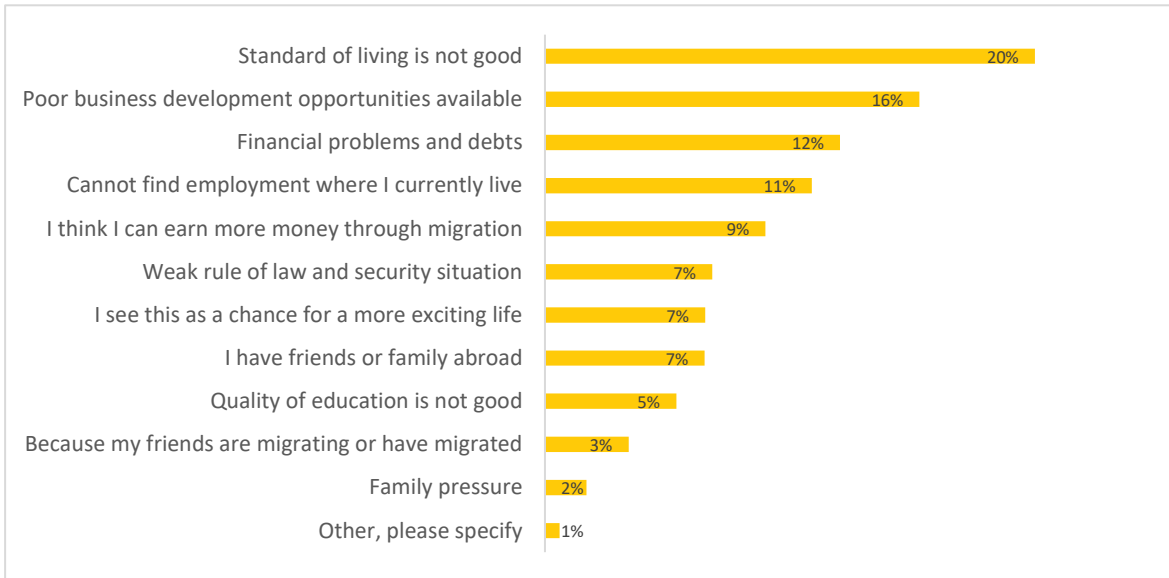
Economic drivers are predominant in Pakistan according to previous research<sup>191</sup>, and this is also confirmed by the PARIM survey. As mentioned already, acquiring wealth is generally the top life aspiration of respondents (79%), followed by 60% who wish to have a steady income. This trend is especially pronounced in Faisalabad district, with 100% of respondents aspiring to wealth and 95% desiring steady income (where irregular migration intentions are also highest), and least pronounced in Gujranwala, where aspirations appear more diverse (47% wealth, 51% steady income) and irregular migration intentions are lowest. This driver is also reflected in the motives of those wishing to emigrate (see Figure 13 below): 20% wish to leave because the standard of living is not good, 16% because of a lack of business opportunities, 12% because of financial problems and debt, and 11% because they cannot find employment where they currently live. When asked to rank, economic aspects predominated all ranks. The younger the respondents, the more important standard of living. Comparing by education level, financial motives are the most predominant among the least educated

<sup>191</sup> IOM, “Pakistan: Survey on Drivers of Migration” (Bangkok/Islamabad, 2020); Dynamic Consulting Services, “Needs Assessment Study. Information Needs of Intending Migrants in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.”

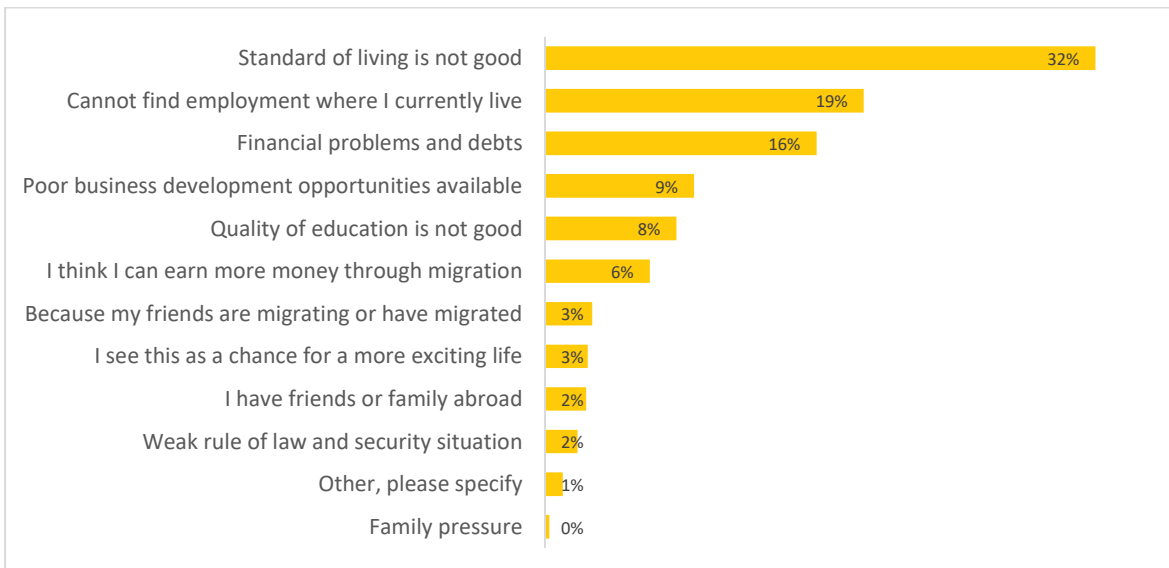


(less than 5 years of education) and decrease with each 5 years of additional education. For instance, those with 14+ years of education show substantially lower results for financial problems and debts (4% of those with 14+ years, compared to 16% among those with less than 5 years).

**Figure 13: Emigration motives (Question C13, sum of all ranks, n=1160)**



**Figure 14: Emigration motives (Question C13, Rank 1, n=1160)**



The top answer to the question “what would need for you to change in order to stay in Pakistan” in the PARIM survey is again better job opportunities, with similar results across income groups,





education levels and districts. This is also in line with existing research.<sup>192</sup> Among those going to Europe, the most common motive for choosing this destination is also economic (job availability, followed by being able to get citizenship there and investment and business opportunities). This is in contrast to the 2019 IOM survey, which found educational scholarships as the major motive for choosing Europe/Turkey, although again that survey had a higher representation of (highly) educated respondents among their sample, and especially among those going to Europe/Turkey.<sup>193</sup> (See also Box 1 for a more detailed analysis of pull factors to Europe.)

Seeking education is another macro driver highlighted in previous research<sup>194</sup> (see Figures 13 and 14 above). When asked about their motives for migration, respondents indicated educational motives only after financial motives (quality of education as reason to leave; fifth most common reason out of 11 possible answers in first rank, and 5% of replies among all replies). This somewhat lower priority (compared also to other studies such as the 2019 IOM survey<sup>195</sup>) is possibly due to sample characteristics, since there are fewer respondents in the higher education and income groups (and a previous study found that education as a migration pathway can seem unattainable to those less educated<sup>196</sup>).

Those with above 11 years of education are also more likely to indicate this motive than those with lower education. When asked for their motive for choosing a particular destination (see Figure 15 below), respondents ranked availability of educational scholarships similarly low, again with an increased tendency for those with more years of education. As mentioned above, also among those wishing to go to Europe, the motive is not substantially more prevalent. However, when asked what would need to change for respondents to stay in Pakistan, better quality of education “for myself” or “for my children” together rank in third place (67%), after better job opportunities and better standard of living. Better education “for myself” is more important for younger compared to older respondents, while “for my children” became more prevalent, the higher the age of respondents (as mentioned in section 5.2).

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<sup>192</sup> IOM, “Pakistan: Survey on Drivers of Migration,” 23.

<sup>193</sup> IOM, 8.

<sup>194</sup> IOM, “Pakistan: Survey on Drivers of Migration.”

<sup>195</sup> IOM, 3.

<sup>196</sup> Sarfraz Khan, “Impact of Migration on Education and Health. A Case Study of Karrianwala Village, District Gujrat, Pakistan” (Islamabad: Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad, 2017).



**Figure 15: Motives behind destination choice (any destination country, Question C16, sum of all ranks, n=1160)**



Migration is also driven by social factors such as expectations from families to have another source of income, established migration networks or “cultures of migration”.<sup>197</sup> The presence of friends and family in the destination country as a pull factor has also been noted in previous studies on the topic including the Needs Assessment<sup>198</sup>, the 2019 IOM survey<sup>199</sup> and IOM’s profile of returnees<sup>200</sup>. In fact, Townsend and Ooman state that in migrant decision-making, social capital in the country of destination plays a more important role than asylum and admission policies of countries.<sup>201</sup> This driver is also evident in the PARIM survey - firstly, in that 100% of respondents acknowledged a general trend for emigration to Europe among youth in their respective communities (reflecting also sampling strategies). Furthermore, social factors are evident in reasons provided behind the decision for irregular migration (see Figure 16 below). Following the cheaper (perceived) cost (28% by sum of all ranks), the second most common reason provided is that it is the most common way to migrate (24%) – clearly a result that points to the established character of irregular migration. Such a dynamic is also reflected in “other” replies to this question, like “some relatives and friends migrated this way”, “lots of friends already used this way”, etc. The pattern is similar for those going to Europe. A similar reply,

<sup>197</sup> Black et al., “The Effect of Environmental Change on Human Migration”; Hagen-Zanker et al., “Migration from the Margins: Mobility, Vulnerability and Inevitability in Mid-Western Nepal and North-Western Pakistan Report 5”; Sarfraz Khan and Sajid Mahmood Awan, “Case Study of Irregular Migration From Pakistan To Europe : Reflections on the Contemporary Trends,” n.d., 24–38; Anke Fiedler, “From Being Aware to Going There: On the Awareness and Decision-Making of (Prospective) Migrants,” *Mass Communication and Society* 23, no. 3 (2020): 356–77, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15205436.2019.1666992>.

<sup>198</sup> Dynamic Consulting Services, “Needs Assessment Study: Information Needs of Intending Migrants in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.”

<sup>199</sup> IOM, “Pakistan: Survey on Drivers of Migration - Regional Evidence for Migration Policy and Analysis.”

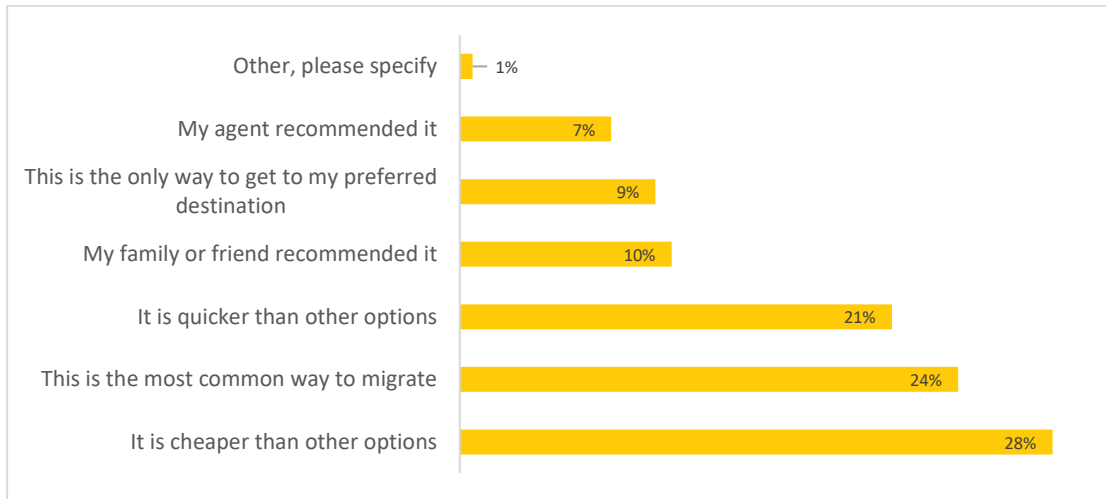
<sup>200</sup> IOM, “Comprehensive Profile of Pakistani Returnees 2016,” 2016.

<sup>201</sup> Townsend and Ooman, *Before the Boat: Understanding the Migrant Journey - EU Asylum towards 2020*.



“This is the only way to get to my preferred destination”, also ranks fifth among respondents with an intention to migrate irregularly.

**Figure 16: Main motives behind irregular migration (Question C25, sum of all ranks, n=761)**



When comparing districts, such macro social factors are more pronounced in Gujranwala district, where the third most common motive behind general migration intentions is having friends or family abroad (while economic drivers prevail in other districts). In Gujrat district, the perception of irregular migration as “the most common way” ranks second and the third most common answer is that it is the “only way” to migrate, while for other districts the “cheaper, quicker, most common” answers prevail. “This is the most common way to migrate” ranks higher in the lowest education group than others (18% compared to between 10%-6% of others). The lowest education and income group are more likely to perceive irregular migration as “the only way”.

**Box 1: Pull factors of Pakistani migration to Europe**

Among those respondents who reported Europe/UK as their preferred destination countries, the top rated motives were the availability of jobs (61%), ease of getting citizenship in Europe (51%), the opportunities for business and investment (43%), and the presence of friends and family in European countries (40%). Considering that the main drivers are largely economic (see above), the perceived availability of jobs in Europe is not surprising. This was the top rated reason for all the other destinations as well.

However, some aspects are more specific for Europe as a choice of destination compared to GCC and the Middle East. For instance, the GCC countries, where the majority of registered labour migrants from Pakistan are employed, follow the kafala system which does not allow permanent migration, and only offers temporary work permits to labour migrants, treating them as guest

workers.<sup>202</sup> There is no scope of acquiring citizenship in these countries. Only recently, UAE has opened up citizenship opportunities for “talented foreigners” including investors, doctors, engineers, and artists.<sup>203</sup> Majority of the labour migrants from Pakistan are low-skilled and less-educated, thus making this option unattainable for them. Conversely, while the opportunities of legal labour migration to Europe are limited, the prospect of acquiring a foreign citizenship seems attractive, despite the irregular means and the risky journey undertaken by many to acquire it. As mentioned by Erdal, Pakistanis prefer a European passport (in the case of her study, a Norwegian passport) over the Pakistani citizenship for practical purposes as it offers more flexibility, ease of travel, and entitles them to certain state benefits in their host countries.<sup>204</sup> Erdal reflects how this desire is also rooted in the distrust that migrants have in their state institutions of their home countries. In the same vein, as 51% of the PARIM survey sample have stated that their choice of Europe as a destination is based on the possibility of acquiring citizenship, it may be a reflection of their hopelessness and distrust in the social welfare system within Pakistan, and a desire to benefit from the public services offered by European governments to their citizens. It may also just be a desire to acquire more acceptance in the international world, in terms of travel and accessing European labour markets.

Similarly, the preference of Europe by 43% of the respondents due to the business and investment opportunities that it offers is also telling. As per the kafala system, labour migrants are highly dependent on their employers for immigration and employment.<sup>205</sup> This leaves little freedom to benefit from self-employment opportunities in these countries. Moreover, the fact that work permits only allow temporary residence in these countries may also dissuade many from starting any enterprising activities. On the other hand, Europe’s business environment appears to these potential migrants as more conducive and the prospect of attaining permanent residence in European countries may also contribute to higher preference of these countries for self-employment ventures.

Thirdly, the high preference of European destinations due to the presence of friends and family offers valuable insight. As discussed above and section 2.1 the presence of friends and family is associated with the lowering of financial, social and emotional costs for migrants during the journey as well as on arrival.<sup>206</sup> When considering the six PARIM survey districts, the specific culture of migration to Europe can be easily traced back to the initial movements of people to Europe several decades ago.<sup>207</sup> These initial migrants from central Punjab continue to exert influence over their hometowns through remittances, but also through charitable investments and donations to build

<sup>202</sup> International Labour Organisation, “Reform of the Kafala (Sponsorship) System,” 2019.

<sup>203</sup> BBC News, “UAE to Offer Citizenship to ‘Talented’ Foreigners,” n.d.

<sup>204</sup> Marta Bivand Erdal, “Juxtaposing Pakistani Diaspora Policy with Migrants’ Transnational Citizenship Practices,” *Geoforum* 76 (2016): 1–10.

<sup>205</sup> Kali Robinson, “What Is the Kafala System,” Council on Foreign Relations, n.d.

<sup>206</sup> Kara Somerville, *Strategic Migrant Network Building and Information Sharing: Understanding Migrant Pioneers in Canada* (IOM, 2011).

<sup>207</sup> Nadia Mushtaq Abbasi, “The Pakistani Diaspora in Europe and Its Impact on Democracy Building in Pakistan” (Islamabad, 2010).



mosques, hospitals and schools.<sup>208</sup> Return visits of the “pioneers” back home, and big mansions that they built through their earnings in Europe also send a message about Europe as the land of opportunities.<sup>209</sup>

Against these pull factors (among others), the avenues of legal migration for low-skilled and less-educated young men belonging to lower-middle income households (a typical profile of potential irregular migrants from PARIM survey) towards Europe are quite limited. In fact, as discussed by Ahmad (2008), the restrictions and the difficulty in accessing Europe may actually contribute to the attraction towards Europe as many young men are lured by the desire to see and experience the “forbidden”.

Finally, a perception of weak rule of law and adverse security situation also features among macro drivers, although clearly behind a number of economic motives (see Figure 13 above). This factor was reported more in Sialkot (third rank among motives to choose a particular destination) and Faisalabad (improved human rights and rule of law as a reason to stay in Pakistan). While this was a stronger motive reported by respondents in these districts, this does not necessarily mean that the security / law and order situation in these districts is factually worse.

## 5.5 Risk awareness and confidence

Understanding potential migrants’ existing awareness of risks involved in (irregular) migration is relevant firstly since it allows addressing the most likely knowledge/awareness gaps through campaigns in a more targeted and therefore effective way. It is more likely that information will be retained if it is relevant, because it addressed misinformation, or even is new to the target audiences.<sup>210</sup> At the same time, research shows that information provision can be undermined if participants are over-confident in their existing awareness or knowledge<sup>211</sup> (see also section 3.1). This implies that campaigns need to go beyond the provision of neutral or accurate information and engage with concrete assumptions potential migrants have about risk,<sup>212</sup> by comparing irregular migration risks to other risks, to (imagined) rewards (such as the legal and economic realities of living in Europe), and other feasible options.<sup>213</sup> Secondly, research shows that migrants have a general risk awareness and that especially those who are more confident in knowing the risks may decide to migrate irregularly despite this awareness (see also section 3.1 and PARIM Background Report). Recent studies show that

<sup>208</sup> Abbasi.

<sup>209</sup> Ana Ballestoras, “How the Pakistani Diaspora in Barcelona Established Itself in the Heart of the City,” Dawn, accessed October 8, 2021, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1376378>.

<sup>210</sup> Morgenstern, “Political Information & Migration.”

<sup>211</sup> Morgenstern.

<sup>212</sup> ARK DMCC, “Grey Noise: Migration and Strategic Communications,” 21.

<sup>213</sup> Optimity Advisors and Seefar, *How West African Migrants Engage with Migration Information En-Route to Europe*, 45–46.

potential migrants can have levels of risk knowledge, but do not necessarily think that these apply to them personally.<sup>214</sup> Some of the PARIM survey results also point in this direction.

An important caveat to be kept in mind: A recent study cautions that (potential) migrants' replies in a survey may not best reflect which messages are actually effective because of a methodological bias inherent in asking people's opinion about approaches – the difference between what people *say* they do, or think they might do, and what they *actually* do. The study therefore strongly emphasise the need to test messages, and especially risk-related messages.<sup>215</sup> For instance, according to PARIM survey results, information on maximum fees agents are allowed to charge could be considered a low priority. However, our findings in the PARIM Background Report, as well as the PARIM Validation Meetings indicate that it is a major problem that needs addressing, although it might seem rather abstract to an average respondent.

This section will therefore shed light on risk awareness and confidence profiles of Pakistani potential migrants, in order to provide an understanding of potential pitfalls the PARIM campaign can avoid and gaps it can actively address. A number of questions in the PARIM survey pertain to these issues. They will be analysed by comparing (irregular) migration intentions and variations across districts and various demographic factors, in order to provide further information for potential target group segmentation.

**Table 8: Risk awareness and confidence - summary**

Aspect	Results	District results	Other characteristics
General knowledge and awareness of migration	Most respondents are cautious ("to some extent" informed to advise someone else on the migration process)	Those in Jhelum most confident, those in Gujrat least confident in their knowledge	Confidence higher among highest educated, and somewhat higher ("sufficiently informed") for those intent on irregular migration
General knowledge and awareness of migration risks	Most respondents are cautious ("to some extent" informed)	Those in Jhelum most confident, those in Gujrat least confident in their risk awareness	Confidence somewhat higher ("sufficiently informed") for those intent on irregular migration
Knowledge of irregular migration risks	Highest awareness about violence (74%), lack of food (71%) and witnessing death (70%) –	Awareness of risk of death substantially lower in Gujrat	Those considering irregular migration substantially less likely to expect to witness death

<sup>214</sup> Seefar and ECORYS, "Study on Best Practices in Irregular Migration Awareness Campaigns"; Hernández-Carretero and Carling, "Beyond 'Kamikaze Migrants': Risk Taking in West African Boat Migration to Europe"; Schans and Optekamp, "Raising Awareness, Changing Behavior? Combatting Irregular Migration through Information Campaigns"; Jessica Hagen-Zanker and Richard Mallett, "Journeys to Europe: The Role of Policy in Migrant Decision-Making," *ODI Insights*, ODI Insights (London, 2016), <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.1.1640.4246>.

<sup>215</sup> Seefar and ECORYS, "Study on Best Practices in Irregular Migration Awareness Campaigns," 2021, 65.

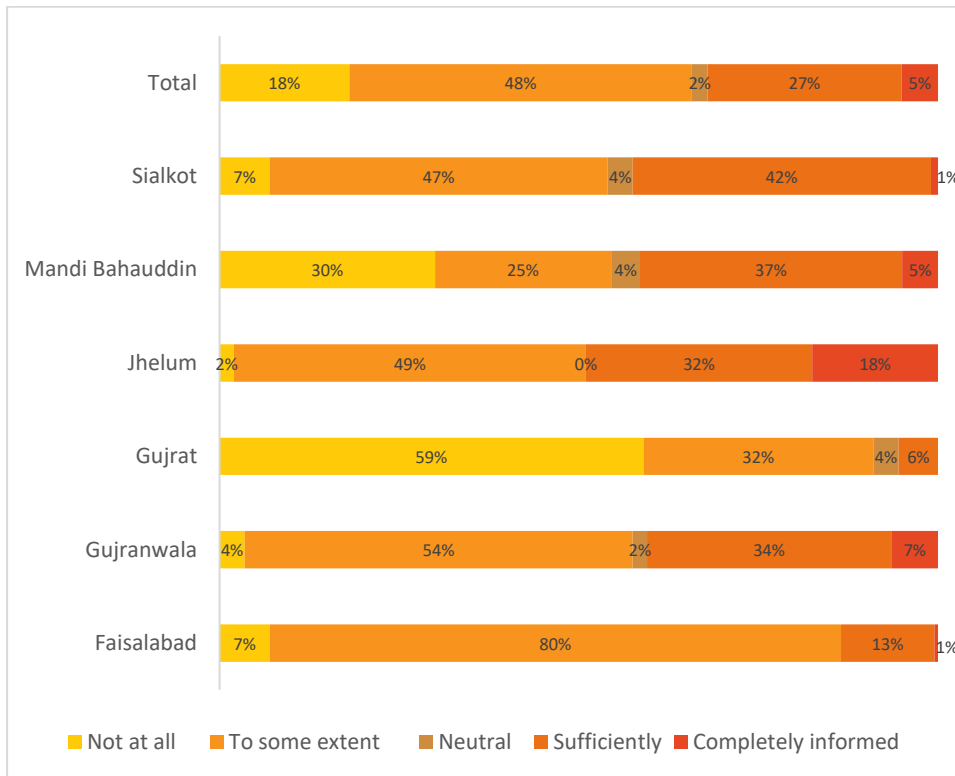


	verifies general risk awareness, as expected; awareness of the risk of forced labour overall lowest		
Personal irregular migration risk assessment	Similar results as above	Jhelum and Faisalabad most confident risks would not apply to themselves; Sialkot and Gujranwala most likely to say any risks was “likely” or “very likely”	Those considering irregular migration substantially less likely to expect deportation, psychological stress, physical injury, witnessing death, losing all money, forced labour
Fear of mistreatment by agents	Fear of mistreatment by agents is widespread; verifies general risk awareness, as expected	Fear of untrustworthy agents most widespread in Faisalabad and Jhelum; Fear of overcharging or being cheated by agents most prevalent in Mandi Bahauddin and Jhelum	Those with higher education have lower fear of mistreatment by agents; Those intent on irregular migration expect mistreatment by agents, implying this does not deter them.

Starting with general knowledge and awareness of migration, when asked whether they have enough information and knowledge about migration to advise someone else, most respondents are cautious and replied that they were “to some extent” informed (48%), followed by those who think they are “sufficiently” informed (27%). Replies for those going to Europe/UK followed similar patterns. Respondents from Gujrat mostly replied that they are “not at all” sufficiently informed (59%), while those in Jhelum are the most confident to be “completely informed” to advise someone else (see Figure 17 below). Those in the lowest income group are substantially more likely to say they are not at all informed to advise someone else (41%). Those in the highest education group are substantially more likely to say they are “completely informed” (19%). Those with an irregular migration intention (reporting maybe, likely or certain) are somewhat more likely to say they are “sufficiently” informed about migration to advise someone else. The greater the certainty of desiring irregular migration, the more prevalent is the attitude to have “sufficient” information.



**Figure 17: General knowledge and awareness of migration, by district (Question C8, n=1200)**

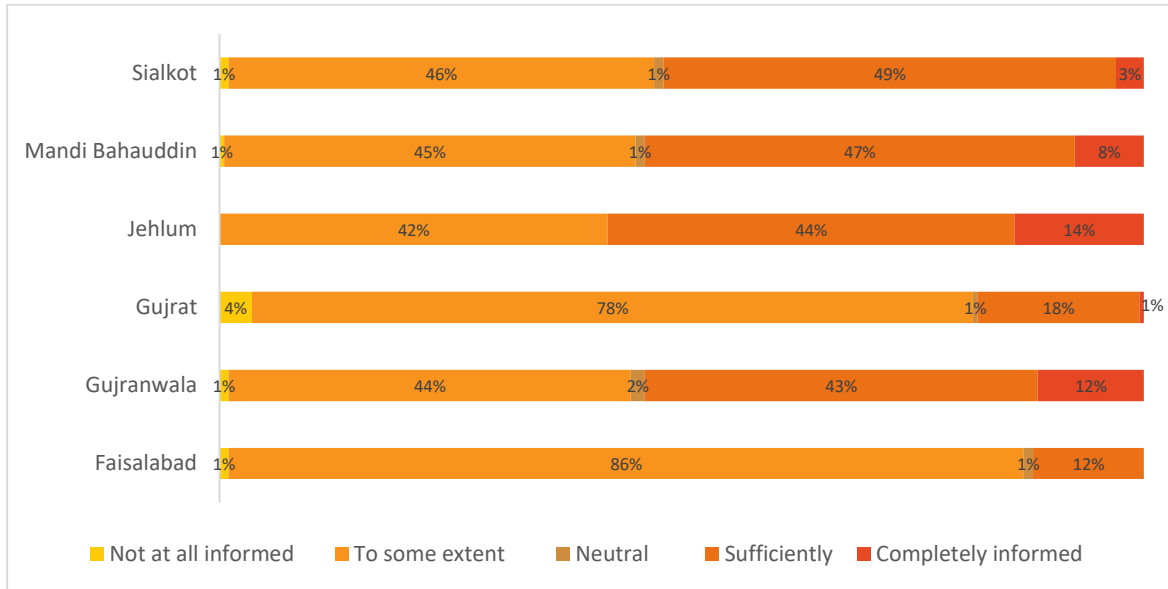


When asked to what extent respondents think they are aware of the *risks* involved in migration, most (57%) replied that they are “to some extent” aware. Respondents in Jhelum again tended to be more confident in their risk awareness. Those who consider irregular migration (maybe, likely or certain) generally show a similar awareness of migration risks as others, although those who are “certain” to migrate irregularly are again somewhat more likely to consider themselves “sufficiently” informed. As was pointed out before, those with a lower income (below 30,000 PKR/EUR 133 and between PKR 30,000-50,000 / EUR 133-255) also have a stronger tendency to be “certain” about irregular migration. This points to potentially problematic confidence patterns as expected from the literature. At the same time, a significant portion of those who are “certain” to migrate irregularly also say they are only aware of risks “to some extent”, highlighting potential information gaps or misperceptions about the journey, or the destination, a campaign might address.

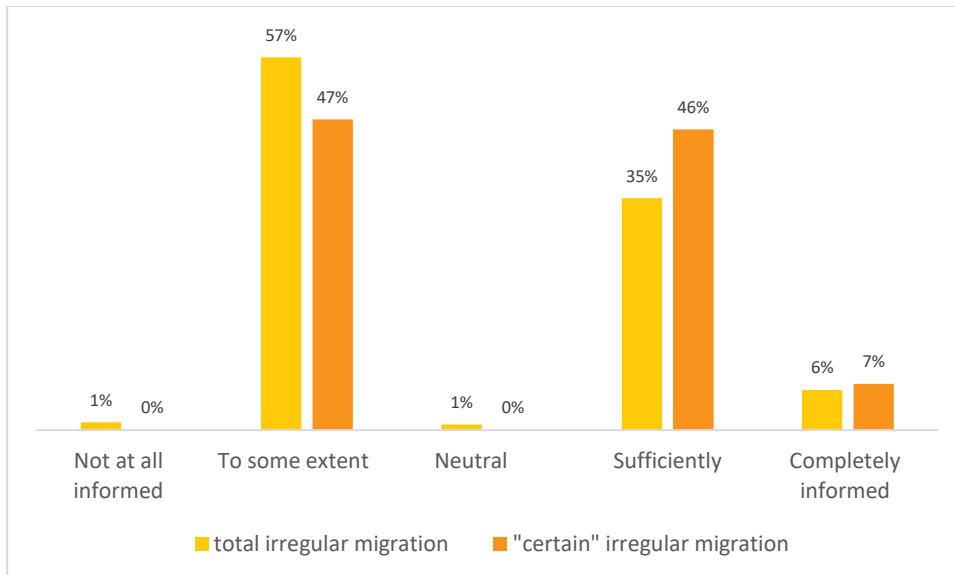




**Figure 18: General knowledge and awareness of migration risks, by district (Question C9, n=1200)**



**Figure 19: General knowledge and awareness of migration risks, by “certain” irregular migration (Questions C9, C24, n=1200/761)**



Regarding respondents’ knowledge of specific risks involved in irregular migration, they showed the highest awareness about violence (74%), lack of food (71%) and witnessing death (70%), pointing to a general awareness regarding irregular migration risks among respondents, as expected from previous



research.<sup>216</sup> Fear of death is substantially lower in Gujrat (37%). Awareness of the risk of forced labour is overall lowest (27%), potentially highlighting this as a specific topic to be addressed by campaigns. Those who are considering irregular migration (maybe, very likely, certain) are less likely to expect people to witness death on an irregular migration journey. Stakeholders interviewed for the study mentioned that risk of death might be an effective message for potential irregular migrants; the survey results allow no concrete conclusion here, pointing again to the importance of message testing.

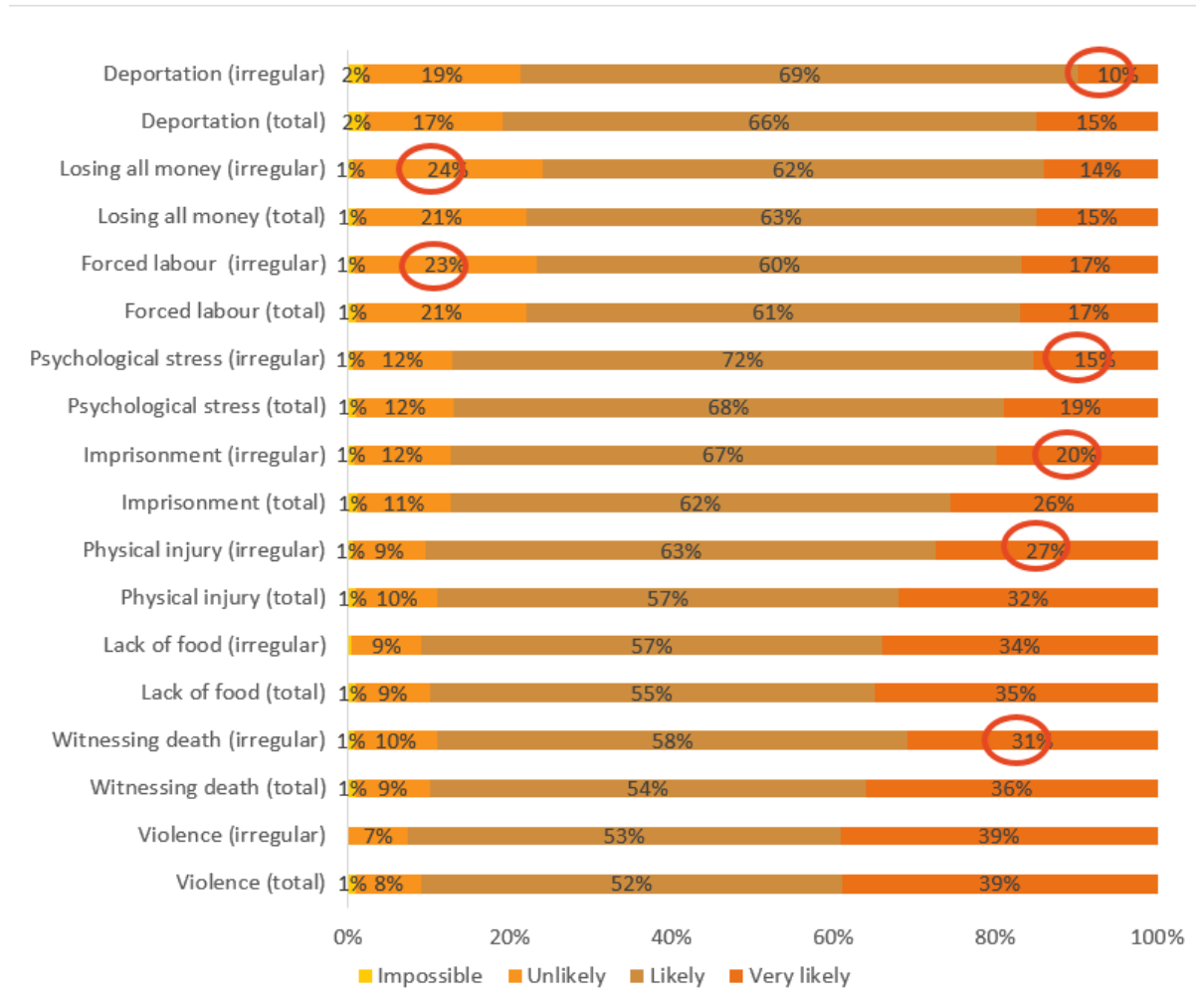
When asked which risks could affect them *personally* (see Figure 20 below), respondents again found violence, witnessing death and lack of food most likely (top three), and psychological stress, losing all money and imprisonment “likely” (top three). The top result for an “impossible” risk is deportation, and the top replies for “unlikely” are losing all money, forced labour, and deportation. The patterns for those intent on irregular migration are overall similar to those of other respondents: They expect most risks to be likely or very likely, which could imply that they intend to leave through irregular means despite knowing the risks they face.<sup>217</sup> They have substantially lower risk expectations with regard to deportation, psychological stress, physical injury, and witnessing death (lower “very likely” score) and losing all money, forced labour (higher “unlikely” score; see highlights below). Across the districts, Jhelum again emerged as the district with the highest number of people responding “unlikely” to most of these risks, while Faisalabad respondents were generally most likely to say any risk to themselves was “impossible” and least likely to pronounce a personal risk “very likely”. Mandi Bahauddin showed similar patterns. Respondents in Sialkot and Gujranwala are most likely to say of any of these risks that it was “likely” or “very likely”.

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<sup>216</sup> Hernández-Carretero and Carling, “Beyond ‘Kamikaze Migrants’: Risk Taking in West African Boat Migration to Europe”; Schans and Optekamp, “Raising Awareness, Changing Behavior? Combatting Irregular Migration through Information Campaigns,” 17; Hagen-Zanker and Mallett, “Journeys to Europe: The Role of Policy in Migrant Decision-Making,” 26.

<sup>217</sup> Additional questioning would be necessary to better interpret these results, e.g. whether a potential migrant thinks they can manage/handle a particular risk.

**Figure 20: Irregular migration risk awareness, by irregular migration intention (maybe, very likely, certain) (Questions C23/C24, n=1160/761)**



Complementing these results, when asked about potential challenges respondents intent on migration foresee while preparing for migration (see Figure 20 above), a fear of untrustworthy agents is the most common reply (20%), again pointing to a general awareness regarding irregular migration risks, as well as to the important role of agents (see also section 5.3 on meso drivers). The higher the certainty of respondents in their irregular migration decision, the higher the prevalence of this reply. The higher the education of respondents, the less prevalent this response, potentially pointing to an overconfidence in higher educated respondents of not being cheated. This reply is more prevalent in Faisalabad (77%) and Jhelum (74%), and least in Gujranwala (26%, which is also the district with lowest reported irregular migration intentions in the PARIM survey). Fear of “overcharging or being cheated by agents”, more specifically, is less prevalent, but still a concern of 31% of respondents. Fear of overcharging or being cheated is most prevalent in Mandi Bahauddin (59%) and Jhelum (46%), and least in Gujrat (29%). The higher the education level, the lower - again - the prevalence of this reply.



And again, the higher the certainty of respondents in their irregular migration decision, the higher the prevalence of this reply. These patterns again point towards some of the irrational risk behaviour that can be expected from previous research: those with highest education are more confident that they will not encounter challenges with or be cheated by agents, and are at the same time substantially more likely to say they are completely informed about migration (to advise someone else). Those most bent on irregular migration similarly wish to leave despite a high awareness of risk. This finding does validate the notion that migrants are “risk-takers”. The perceived worth of the chance of success from irregular migration appears to dominate the fear of experiencing the risk.

When asked what could be done to make migration safer for young people, providing risk information comes second (after information on legal pathways). This reply is more prevalent among those with higher income (from PKR 50,000/EUR 255), and the higher the age of respondents. Those in the highest age group (36-40) also see more need for information on authentic overseas employment promoters, as well as the maximum fees agents are allowed to charge, pointing towards a different awareness of specific risks among different age groups.

## 5.6 Decision-making process

Having identified the typical profile of potential irregular migrants, along with the key drivers of migration in the previous sections, this section focuses on the decision-making and preparation process of the irregular migration. In order to do so, this section explores what factors work in combination to influence a potential migrant to consider irregular migration as an option. While aspirations are important to guide behaviour, a number of factors influence this transition from migration aspiration to migration decision and migration behaviour.<sup>218</sup>

The shift from migration aspiration to migration decision, and migration action (or inaction) takes place in different phases. Information plays a crucial role at each of these stages, and also contributes to the shift from aspiration to decision and to migration action. In the decision-making process, the switch from aspiration to decision may reflect more active information seeking on part of the potential migrant and a cognitive assessment of the risks involved in the journey. This search for and assessment of information may include an inquiry about the available opportunities, possible destination countries, costs of migration, type of routes, and assessing risks and uncertainties of different types of migrations.<sup>219</sup> This may manifest in the shape of the aspiring migrant to take action to draw relevant information. For instance, contacting friends and family with the purpose of seeking migration related information, getting information from returnees, reaching out to an agent, learning more about the migration process and the destination country through the internet and other sources etc.

Along with information collection, the switch from migration aspiration to migration decision-making may also involve taking preparatory steps such as collecting the funds to migrate, making

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<sup>218</sup> Sandra Morgenstern, “Theoretical Models and Empirical Results Supporting Migration Information Campaigns. Background Note for the PARIM Project.” (Vienna: ICMPD, 2021).

<sup>219</sup> Czaika, Bijak, and Prike, “Migration Decision-Making and Its Key Dimensions.”



arrangements for the journey, and arrival in the destination country. At this stage, the social networks in the intended country of destination may play an integral role. Moreover, this is also the stage when the reliance on agents may start increasing not only for information provision, but also for making arrangements for departure.

While these aspects are important to consider when understanding the decision-making process for irregular migration, it is difficult to ascertain the timeline of the decision-making process and identify trigger points for the decision within the scope of this survey. This means that factors that contribute to the irregular migration decision may not be linear, and thus not easy to identify chronologically. However, judging from the timeline for migration intention, some assumptions can be drawn. For instance, tangible steps such as getting a passport, getting a visa, finding an agent or paying an agent were not common replies across the PARIM respondents. Reply patterns are also not substantially different among those who said they are planning to migrate within the next year or the next 2 years. Among those who intend to migrate in the next five years, the majority (19%) has done no preparation yet, followed by those who reported learning about the destination country (18%), and contacting friends and family abroad (15%). This may indicate towards the “information gathering” phase. Surprisingly, a higher percentage among those who indicated an intention to migrate in the next five years reported getting their passports (12%) than those intending to migrate within the next one (8%) or two years (11%).

On the other hand, those who intend to migrate within the next one year responded least in preparatory steps that may indicate regular migration. For instance, those intending to migrate within the next one year reported lowest on bureaucratic aspects such as getting their passport, obtaining visa for destination country, obtaining visa for transit country, and booking travel tickets lower. The same category reported the highest for preparatory steps such as making payments for the journey to a migration agent (although the percentage is not too high in absolute terms), and along with those intending to migrate within the next two years, they have the highest response for “looking for a migration agent”. Majority of those with “certain” intentions of migrating irregularly (n=199) responded that they are considering to migrate within the next one year (48%) and two years (28%). It can be deduced from these findings that perhaps those intending to migrate irregularly have a shorter decision-making timespan than those who may consider migrating through regular channels. Irregular migration may also be quicker and appear to be a cheaper option to potential migrants, hence decision-making time is shorter. This can also be validated by the fact that among those who may consider migrating irregularly, 24% (third highest response) stated that it is a quicker way to migrate.

Those who are more confident in their migration knowledge (“sufficiently” or “completely” informed about migration to advise someone else), are more likely to have paid an agent to go abroad, have booked tickets, have a transit visa, have contacted people abroad and have learned languages of the destination country. Those who are more confident in their risk awareness (sufficiently” or “completely” informed about migration risks) are less likely to have obtained a passport. Otherwise, their reply patterns are quite similar to those less confident, i.e. they have not taken more or less



concrete steps towards migration. This may indicate that their knowledge about risks may not necessarily convince them to avoid irregular migration.

However, this analysis has its limitations as the data gathered under PARIM survey deals with potential irregular migrants, who can still broadly be categorised as migrant “aspirants” who have not actually realised this aspiration yet (intention-behaviour gap). Moreover, due to social desirability bias, some respondents may not have responded clearly about their migration intentions, and preparation levels. Therefore, to understand the process more deeply, information on who among the sample actually end up migrating would be important to make further inferences about the decision-making process.



## 6 Messaging, messengers and channels

### 6.1 Background

Adjusting channels, messengers and messaging is a key requirement for information campaigns in order to achieve optimal effectiveness in changing potential migrants' awareness, knowledge, intentions or behaviour, as is highlighted by numerous publications on campaign design and verified by empirical research.<sup>220</sup> Research from psychology and information processing shows that one main factor for long-term and effective information processing is intrinsic motivation on the side of campaign participants (see section 3.1). Aside from this aspect (which may sometimes be difficult to influence), campaigns can apply heuristics and cues shaped through the sender of the information, the communication tool used, and the message itself (its content and the emotions it triggers) in order to achieve stronger and longer-lasting impact of information. The respective target group needs to be clearly defined in order to achieve this. It can be assumed that if these factors are ideally aligned, campaigns will have an optimal impact.<sup>221</sup> This section will summarise some of the key existing research findings.

### 6.2 Messaging

#### 6.2.1 Background

There are three main aspects of message content which can influence the effectiveness of a campaign: the perceived credibility, the emotions triggered in the audience (i.e. "framing"), and cultural appropriateness. Aside from the already discussed messenger, perceived credibility of the message is shaped by its perceived truthfulness and unbiasedness<sup>222</sup> (which are important from an ethical point of view). A perception of bias can be avoided by providing a variety of information. From a psychological perspective, information is expected to be judged as more credible when it is not purely positive or not purely negative (since this is taken as a hint for unbiasedness by the human mind). This aspect is connected to emotions triggered in a campaign.

In general, what can be called "negative messaging" is on the one hand effective, i.e. creating feelings of fear, anxiety, making a wrong judgement etc. For instance, a forthcoming study simulating an information campaign among Nigerian students shows that triggering of anxiety leads to a stronger decrease in irregular migration intentions compared to a campaign not triggering any particular emotion.<sup>223</sup> Such a framing of messages can also address what is known about emotional aspects of migrants' motivations, such as jealousy of others' success or wealth, or shame or guilt over not being

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<sup>220</sup> James Dennison, "How to Perform Impact Assessments: Key Steps for Assessing Communication Interventions" (Malta, 2020).

<sup>221</sup> Although this has not yet been thoroughly tested through studies (i.e. studies only exist for some of these factors).

<sup>222</sup> Jørgen Carling and Cathrine Talleraas, "Root Causes and Drivers of Migration" (Oslo, 2016).

<sup>223</sup> Sandra Morgenstern, "Governmental Information Campaigns and the Migration Decision: Evidence from Two Field Experiments," 2022, submitted for review.



able to provide an income<sup>224</sup> (see also PARIM Background Report). If such negatively framed information is followed up by a more neutral or positive aspect like alternatives to irregular migration, this could offset the potential perceived bias.

Understanding and appropriately addressing the target group is again key: the review study of recent EU-funded campaigns found that the most effective messages are those tailored to the individual, including based on their risk attitudes and prior knowledge about migration alternatives.<sup>225</sup> Studies show that migrants can dismiss information if they perceive that the underlying intention is to prevent them from migrating altogether<sup>226</sup>; if they see the information as not relevant for them, because it is not tailored to their context (e.g. inaccessibility of scholarships or other alternatives presented)<sup>227</sup> or because they put the foreseen consequences down to individual bad luck or inadequate decision-making<sup>228</sup>; or if risky behaviour actually seems appealing to them. According to Seefar guidance, the attitudes towards the risk just described should be concretely addressed through “sustained engagement”, talking through the way risks around (irregular) migration compare to other risks, to (imagined) rewards (such as the legal and economic realities of living in Europe), and options that potential migrants have taken into consideration.<sup>229</sup> Message effectiveness is further mediated through cultural appropriateness, e.g. the inappropriateness of using youth slang if the message is coming from a government context.

Finally, effectiveness depends on context and the actual impact of a message cannot always be predicted. Recent publications emphasise the need to test message content in all its dimensions (channels, message, messengers), since their effect can be quite different than expected (as they depend not only on objective factors, but also on the subjective perceptions of the audience) and can also quickly change.<sup>230</sup> To illustrate, migration information campaigns (particularly for the Central Mediterranean route) often seek to highlight the high death rate in order to deter migrants. However, a study found that potential migrants would have estimated the death much higher than it is in reality. A campaign providing death toll information might thus paradoxically promote irregular migration.<sup>231</sup> Another example relates to an emphasis on the hardship of the migration process, which might trigger unforeseen biases, (“even if the effort is great, the outcome can be worth it (even more)”) depending on how it is framed.

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<sup>224</sup> Hagen-Zanker and Hennessey, 17–24; for Pakistan, see also Ahmad 2008

<sup>225</sup> Seefar and ECORYS, “Study on Best Practices in Irregular Migration Awareness Campaigns,” 2021, 45.

<sup>226</sup> Hernández-Carretero and Carling, “Beyond ‘Kamikaze Migrants’: Risk Taking in West African Boat Migration to Europe.”

<sup>227</sup> Seefar and ECORYS, “Study on Best Practices in Irregular Migration Awareness Campaigns,” 2021, 76.

<sup>228</sup> Townsend and Oomen, “Before the Boat: Understanding the Migrant Journey.”

<sup>229</sup> Seefar, “3E Impact. Ethical, Engaged & Effective. Running Communications on Irregular Migration from Kos to Kandahar,” n.d.

<sup>230</sup> Seefar and ECORYS, “Study on Best Practices in Irregular Migration Awareness Campaigns,” 2021, 65.

<sup>231</sup> Tijan L. Bah and Catia Batista, “Why Do People Migrate Irregularly? Evidence from a Lab-in-the-Field Experiment in West Africa,” *Working Paper of the Helen Kellogg Institute for International Studies* 2020, no. 435 (2020): 1–40.





## 6.2.2 Lessons for PARIM campaign

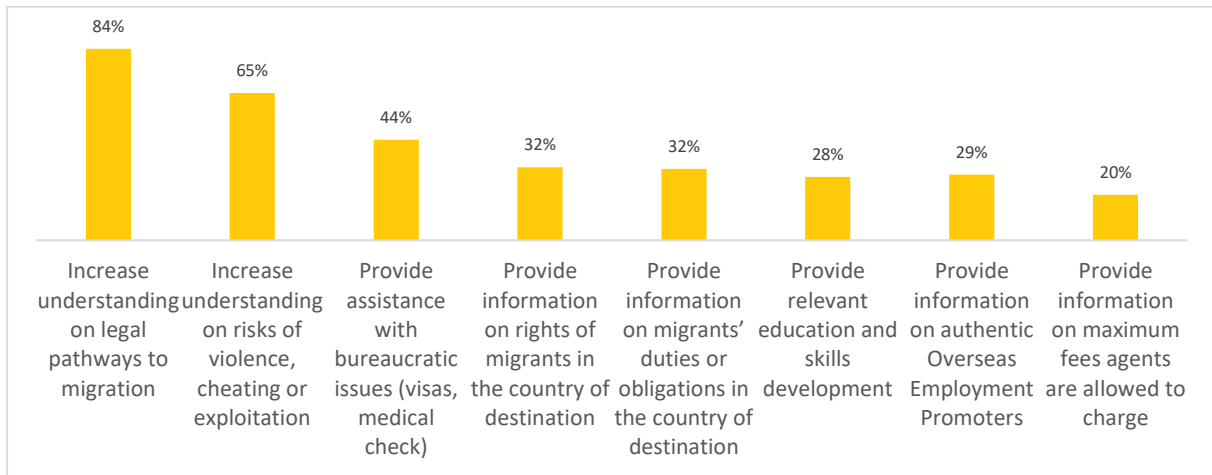
Content to be included in the information campaign depends on the objectives of the campaign.<sup>232</sup> For PARIM, the objective is to empower potential irregular migrants with balanced information on the risks of irregular migration, the realities of life in Europe, and the opportunities of safe and regular migration that exist to enable potential migrants to make informed decisions. In order to provide unbiased information, the various research strands employed for PARIM show that the key messages developed to be delivered through the communication campaign should strike a balance between negative message with appropriate positive and neutral element to follow a negative piece of information as mentioned above. This, of course, means that a balanced set of information has to be provided to the potential irregular migrants, customised to their needs, and offering them choices and alternatives rather than just giving information that aims to deter migration. The survey reveals some insights into what aspects the intended audience would like to know more about. However, as mentioned earlier (section 5.5), potential irregular migrants may not themselves know what kind of information they need for their migration journey. Recognising this caveat, the information campaign should also not overlook aspects that have not been rated high by the target audience during a survey. The PARIM survey reveals that the majority (84%) of the target audience voted for the need of better understanding on the legal pathways to migration (positive messaging), followed by increased understanding on the risks of violence, cheating or exploitation (65%) (negative messaging) (see Figure 21 below). Overall, the sample rated positive messaging more than content that would discourage an individual from migrating. However, as noted above, for message to be effective for decision-making, the flow from sharing negative content to sharing positive or neutral content is expected to be more effective.

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<sup>232</sup> Seefar and ECORYS, “Study on Best Practices in Irregular Migration Awareness-Raising Campaigns” (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2021).



**Figure 21: What is needed to make migration safer? (Question C27, multi-option, n=1200)**



**Negative messaging** is usually concerned with information that may discourage migration awareness on risk, threats, and the danger of the journey and life after migration, including physical, financial, and emotional stress and anxiety producing content. In the above Figure 21 increased understanding on risks, violence and exploitation, and information on migrants’ duties and obligations in the host country may be categorised as negative messaging. Drawing from the information on the risks that potential irregular migrants are aware of, it appears that awareness of risks such as physical violence, lack of food, witnessing death etc. and expectations of experiencing those risks is generally high (as majority rated most options as “likely” to happen to them). However, certain aspects such as losing money, forced labour, and psychological stress had higher proportion of “unlikely” responses (see section 5.5). The probability and nature of such experiences could be made part of the negative content for the campaign.

However, a caveat to consider here is that there is limited information available about the actual likelihood of such risks being experienced on the journey due to the clandestine nature of the journey. IOM’s Missing Migrant Project offers some regional statistics on the deaths and disappearances of migrants on the journey, however, the data is not segregated by country of origin and destination yet.<sup>233</sup> As per the latest estimates, between 2014 and May 2021, about 1,227 missing migrant have been recorded in Western Asia and 22,845 missing migrants have been recorded in the Mediterranean region. The communication strategy could extract relevant information from the Missing Migrants Project’s data portal for statistics.

As mentioned earlier, agents (often smugglers) play an integral role in the migration process. Finding a trustworthy agent is rated highest among the challenges foreseen by respondents in the migration preparation. The awareness campaign could include information on the ways with which fake and illicit agents exploit potential migrants and their families before, during and even after the journey. Experts

<sup>233</sup> IOM, “Missing Migrants Project,” accessed November 11, 2021, <https://missingmigrants.iom.int/data>.



emphasised the need for having a database or information repository of fake agents accessible at the district government and local level in order to warn communities to beware of them. This would only be possible based on if fake agents are identified and complaints are filed against them with the relevant authorities.

More so in the scope of this project would be to set certain identifying parameters for real vs. fake agents to inform potential migrants - a finding that also emerged from stakeholder mapping and validation meetings. In this regard, the role of government registered agents should be highlighted and their contact information be made accessible for the potential migrants. The campaign could also inform potential migrants about the relevant authorities where they can report fake agents or file a complaint about corruption by officials. The relevance of this is also highlighted as 30% of those with an intention to migrate mentioned that they fear that agents will cheat or overcharge them, and 14% mentioned that they fear they will be charged by corrupt officials. Stakeholders during the validation meeting also shared that messages that related to loss of money may be more effective for certain population groups than messages related to injury to oneself as potential irregular migrants from Pakistan often prioritise financial aspects over health and physical safety.

In terms of irregular migration related risks, while the confidence (or perception of probability of risk occurrence) was generally low for psychological stress, those with more than 14 years of education reported a higher confidence for psychological stress compared to other groups, and a lower confidence (or likelihood of occurrence of risk) for physical injury compared to respondents with other education backgrounds. Moreover, counterintuitively this group also highlighted the need for assistance with bureaucratic procedures more compared to respondents of other education levels. It may simply be because they are more aware of such procedural requirements than the less educated. Oftentimes, it may also be the case that the potential irregular migrants themselves are unaware of legal implications of their decision to migrate irregularly. During one of the validation meetings, stakeholders also mentioned that the campaign could include information on the legal repercussions for attempting to be smuggled out of the country.

Moreover, in the vein of negative content, information on the lived experiences of irregular migrants in destination countries could also be relevant, as mentioned by 13% of the potential migrants. Another aspect could be information on the job prospects in the country of destination reported by 25%. While this could also be included in positive messaging if the content discusses opportunities available, content on the lack of job prospects for the specific profile of potential migrants could be included as negative messaging. Additionally, and of particular relevance when diaspora members are engaged for experience sharing is to make the potential migrants understand that border security control along the irregular migration route towards Europe has tightened over the years, and accurately depict how the conditions of irregularly migrating has become more complicated and dangerous.

**Positive messaging** could focus on aspects that do not blatantly discourage migration of people, rather, focus on making the process of migration easier, and safer for individuals considering



migration. In the above figure, increased understanding of legal pathways, assistance with bureaucratic issues, information on rights of migrants, provision of relevant education and skills, increased understanding of OEPs and legal cost of migration can all be framed as positive messaging. Offering information on job opportunities available in different destination countries (as reported by 49% of respondents) can also be included in the campaign to direct potential migrants towards labour markets that need workers that fit their profiles. Such messaging could also focus on the skill demand in the intended country of destination to encourage potential migrants to build relevant skills before embarking on the journey.

The top three reasons mentioned by respondents for considering irregular migration are that it is the most common way of migrating, it is the cheaper option (as migrants can pay in instalments at different stages of the journey), and it is a quicker option, followed by those that reported that it is the only way of migrating to their desired destination. To counter such myths and practices, the information campaign could focus on explaining the safety and security of the legal pathways of migration, and sharing verified and updated information on the financial and time costs of reaching different destinations legally. This would provide potential migrants with a comparison benchmark with which they could compare the costs and processing time against irregular migration option, while considering other more harmful consequences and ramifications of irregular migration. The need for such a service is also highlighted during the validation meetings in Islamabad and Lahore.

The content of the campaign can also be framed as per the pull factors of the potential migrants (see Table 9 below). Slight differences are observed across the education levels based on the main pull factors to the destination. It was noted that among respondents with less than primary level of education, availability of jobs and availability of business opportunities were ranked equal, however, those with more than 14 years of education prioritised availability of jobs over other factors. Similarly, those with 11 years and above (high school and above) gave higher weightage to better security situation in the destination country, the availability of educational scholarships, and the access to social services than those with lower levels of education.

The level of education is also observed to have a negative relationship with the choice of destination for acquiring asylum – i.e. those with lesser education mentioned the prospect of getting asylum in the destination more compared to those with higher education. A similar relationship is also observed for choosing the destination because the agent recommended it. This reflects the higher reliance of those with lesser education on agents, thereby emphasising the need for awareness on distinguishing between fake and real agents. Also interesting to note is that more people with less than primary education mentioned that nothing can change their mind about their migration intention, compared to other groups (although the percentage may itself be considered small i.e. 2.4% among those with less than primary education). This group may be giving more value to the expected rewards of migration than the risks, based on their current levels of information. For such individuals, information shared on risks of the journey and realities of life in Europe may be useful.

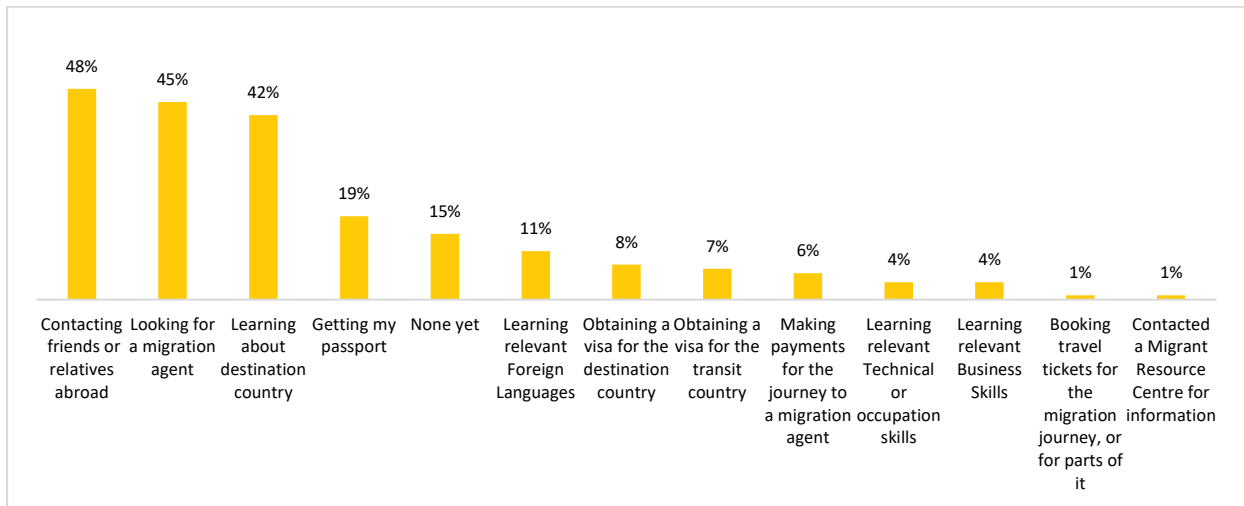


Similarly, with regard to income groups a clear distinguishing trend in terms of information needs could not be observed as responses are largely similar, however, a slightly higher percentage of respondents within the income group of PKR 30,000 – 50,000 (EUR 155-255) listed the challenge of not finding information on where to migrate. This income group (PKR 30,000 – 50,000) is also less likely to mention the fear of being overcharged by agents. When asked what would be needed for them to stay in Pakistan, the differences in choices across the different income groups is not that pronounced. Similarly, the weightage given to different choices for making migration safer is about the same across the different income groups. Of relevance to note is that those with incomes between PKR 30,000 - 50,000 are more likely to suggest to provide more information on the rights, as well as duties and obligations of migrants in the country of destination compared to other income groups. In addition, as mentioned in section 5.2, middle income potential migrants tend to be more motivated by “excitement” for a life abroad, and thus for them, messaging may be framed differently than for those who seek migration as a livelihood strategy. For them, the information campaign could highlight what the financial, emotional, and perhaps physical cost of seeking “excitement” would be for them and their families, and share testimonials to portray whether the aspects of life in Europe that excites them are a reality or not.

Drawing from the preparation levels of the respondents mentioned in the survey, responses on aspects such as getting a passport, obtaining a visa for transit and/or destination country, learning relevant languages, learning relevant occupational and business skills are rated low as compared to other preparatory steps such as contacting friends and family, and looking for an agent (see Figure 22 below). The low ranking of these aspects may also indicate the low awareness of the necessity of these preparatory steps for migration. The campaign could develop content based on these aspects to encourage safe and regular migration. Moreover, outreach campaign could also encourage potential migrants and their families to get in touch with the MRCs to receive customised and credible information on migration prospects.



**Figure 22: Preparation levels of potential migrants (Question C17, n=1160)**



Another type of content that could be included in the campaign is offering information on **alternatives to migration**. This may be categorised as neutral messaging to balance out the negative content. Drawing from a survey question that asked respondents to share what would they need to stay in Pakistan, it was found that the majority wanted to have better job opportunities within the country (83%), better standard of living (81%), better business opportunities (63%), improvements in law and order situation (40%), improved respect for law and order (37%), better quality of education for the respondent (34%), and better quality of education for the respondents' children (33%) (although education is not rated high as a key push factor). While influencing these aspects, most of which are quite macro in nature, is out of the scope of this project, information on opportunities and avenues available on these aspects would be useful to allow people to better evaluate their decision to migrate. In this regard, counselling sessions and one on one discussion should focus on a portfolio of options, including domestic and legal migration opportunities that fit the profile of those who seek migration-related information. Regardless of the nature of the message, it is imperative that the information content is impartial, unbiased and based on facts rather than too sensationalised for achieving the intended objectives of the campaign. Therefore, the utmost responsibility of the campaign designers is to ensure that the campaign content is based on facts and is delivered in an objective, neutral, and ethical way.<sup>234</sup>

<sup>234</sup> Seefar and ECORYS.



**Table 9: Content by potential migrants' needs**

Target audiences (potential irregular migrants)	Risk awareness and confidence level	Information Needs/Challenges foreseen (see section 5.2)
Younger potential migrants (18-30 years)	More likely to be informed to "some extent". Less confident than older groups	Information on job opportunities abroad and in Pakistan, managing documents for legal migration
Older potential migrants (30 - 36 years)	More likely to report "completely informed" about the migration process and associated risks	Education opportunities for children in Pakistan, finding a trustworthy agent, challenge of corrupt officials
Women	16% reported having no information on the migration process	Managing documents, finding information on job opportunities abroad, specific risks for women during the journey and on arrival
Less educated (below secondary level of education)	Less educated had less information on the migration process, but high awareness of risks such as imprisonment, violence, lack of food.	Awareness on financial risks during the journey, psychological stress, and risk of forced labour; probability of success/failure of asylum applications
Better educated (high school and above)	Higher awareness on psychological stress than other education groups (for those with 14+ years of education)	Lower awareness on risk of physical injury; difficulty in managing documents and finding job opportunities, need for information on job availability reported higher by the better educated respondents
Income group	Awareness about migration risks was lower in higher income groups as compared to lower income groups (< PKR 30,000)	Finding a job that matches the skill was more of a challenge for the middle income group (PKR 50,000 - 100,000). Fear of being charged by corrupt officials is more prevalent among lower income groups
Locality	High awareness of risks such as witnessing death among urban, physical injury, and losing all money	Fear of being charged by corrupt officials and issue of skill matching is reported higher in urban areas. Challenge of managing documents, and not knowing where to migrate are reported higher in rural areas.
Timeframe of migration	Those moving in the next one and two years are more aware of	Those moving in next one and two years are comparatively less aware



	violence, lack of food, witnessing death	of deportation, losing money, psychological stress, and forced labour.  Biggest challenge experienced: fear of untrustworthiness of the agent and difficulty in managing documents
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Source: Authors

### 6.3 Credible messengers

Who delivers what kind of messages influences the overall impact of the campaign. Prior evidence from information campaigns<sup>235</sup> as well as surveys conducted in Pakistan, including the Needs Assessment study, show that potential migrants rely on information from trusted sources. Trust or credibility is not only dependent on the factuality of the message, but also on whether the potential migrant perceives the messenger to be reliable and familiar.<sup>236</sup> The most important aspect of the messenger is their perceived credibility. There are three aspects of credibility:<sup>237</sup>

- i. *Expertise* indicates whether the messenger can provide the information related to the specific topic – in this case irregular migration,
- ii. *Trustworthiness* positively signals the senders’ appropriate motivation for providing information, and
- iii. *Goodwill* indicates that the messenger is willing to give accurate information.

A recent study on migration information campaigns in the context of Nigeria shows that locals are perceived as more credible as messengers than migrants.<sup>238</sup> Echoing this scientific finding, local, trusted organisations or “influencers” have been identified as effective partners, according to a review of recent EU-funded campaigns.<sup>239</sup> There is evidence that returnees can be effective as messengers, as discussed in section 3.1 already. An IOM campaign in Senegal which that asked returnees to record their own unscripted messages achieved a relevant impact with this approach.<sup>240</sup> The effectiveness of

<sup>235</sup> Optimity Advisors and Seefar, *How West African Migrants Engage with Migration Information En-Route to Europe*.

<sup>236</sup> Dunsch, Tjaden, and Quiviger, “Migrants as Messengers: The Impact of Peer-to-Peer Communication on Potential Migrants in Senegal. Technical Annex.”

<sup>237</sup> James C McCroskey and Jason J. Teven, “Goodwill: A Reexamination of the Construct and Its Measurement,” *Communication Monographs* 66, no. 1 (1999): 90–103; Sandra Morgenstern, “Strong & Longlasting Attitude and Intention Change? Causal Field Evidence on Sender Credibility,” 2022, submitted for review.

<sup>238</sup> Morgenstern, “Strong & Longlasting Attitude and Intention Change? Causal Field Evidence on Sender Credibility.”

<sup>239</sup> Seefar and ECORYS, “Study on Best Practices in Irregular Migration Awareness Campaigns,” 2021, 42.

<sup>240</sup> Dunsch, Tjaden, and Quiviger, “Migrants as Messengers: The Impact of Peer-to-Peer Communication on Potential Migrants in Senegal. Technical Annex.”





such an approach may have been further enhanced through the additional Q&A sessions with actual returnees featured in the campaign, contributing to credibility. Nevertheless, returnees (and especially forced returnees) can also be stigmatised by communities and not perceived as credible by potential migrants. Seefar concludes that returnees can be trusted messengers as long as they are not perceived as “having failed” at migration.<sup>241</sup> The PARIM survey confirms a general negative perception of forced returnees among potential migrants in Pakistan, although a substantial share of respondents also find returnees highly important support (see section 5.3 on meso drivers). The impact of campaign participation on returnees’ lives, and the potential re-traumatising effect of recounting their experiences, should also be kept in mind. For any messenger to be involved, be they local, diaspora or returned migrants, more than focusing on their background it may be relevant to keep in mind their motivation, their status in the community, relevance of their experience and skills as communicators.<sup>242</sup>

Gauging from responses in the survey, the combined percentage of respondents who relied on institutional sources of information (NGOs, Government, MRCs) is negligible, which may reflect either the inaccessibility to these sources, unawareness that these institutions may provide relevant information, or mere distrust in the information received from such sources. This implies that if potential irregular migrants are to be guided through some institutional efforts, for instance through the activities of the MRCs, there is a need for identifying certain “credible messengers” who can redirect potential irregular migrants towards the relevant institutions.

While institutional stakeholders seem to be dismissed as potential sources, returnees emerged as the highest rated source of migration-related information (76%) in almost all districts (except Gujrat and Jhelum, where internet and social media are the most cited sources of migration information). Among those who stated an intention to migrate irregularly, 80% mentioned getting their migration related information from returnees. It can be assumed that returnees are trusted as they are seen to have practical information about the opportunities and risks of migrating and living abroad. The familiarity with the process and probable experiences of the journey make them relevant sources of information. It is observed that reliance on returnees for migration-related information is slightly less for respondents with more than 14 years of education.

However, when engaging with returnees to share migration-related information, the campaign should keep in mind that by being a returnee does not necessarily mean that they will be willing to help in deterring irregular migration. Returnees may also be acting as facilitators or enablers of migration by sharing strategies to avoid risks and providing connections for enabling irregular migration. Anecdotes shared during validation meetings suggest that although engaging with returnees is beneficial in conveying the message more effectively, oftentimes returnees are themselves planning to re-migrate,

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<sup>241</sup> Seefar, “3E Impact. Ethical, Engaged & Effective. Running Communications on Irregular Migration from Kos to Kandahar,” n.d., 49.

<sup>242</sup> Seefar and ECORYS, “Study on Best Practices in Irregular Migration Awareness Campaigns,” 2021, 49–50.



depending on the age and experience of returnee in their previous attempt. Moreover, the reason for return may also impact the trust and credibility that the target audience may place in them.

Returnees who have returned voluntarily may be given higher credibility than those who were forcibly sent back. In the PARIM survey, 64% of the total respondents reported that forced returnees are perceived as a source of shame in the society, and another 27% reported that they are considered a source of discouragement for potential migrants. Some qualitative input in “other” category also show that potential migrants think that forced returnees are not truthful about their negative experiences abroad, which may misguide potential migrants. Interestingly, 12% of the sample also reported that forced returnees are a source of pride and another 3% reported that they are perceived as an inspiration in the community. The notion of forced returnees as a source of pride emerged more in Faisalabad, Gujranwala and Sialkot than other districts, while their perception as sources of inspiration is highlighted most in Gujranwala. Thus, while there is evidence that returnees are hailed as credible messengers for migration information, how returnees are perceived in the society based on their reason of return may influence their credibility.<sup>243</sup>

Moreover, returnees with the relevant information and experience should be engaged, that is those who have attempted irregular migration.<sup>244</sup> Thus, understanding the aspirations and intentions of the returnees, as well as their reason for return, are important to be taken into account before engaging them in information campaigns. Additionally, ethical considerations warrant that returnees are not pushed towards sharing their traumatic experiences if they trigger trauma or are generally not comfortable in sharing some negative experiences. Psychological support may be provided to returnees who are triggered by recalling traumatic experiences of the past.

Furthermore, at various instances during the survey, the importance of the support and involvement of family and friends in Pakistan emerged for the migration preparation. For the majority of the respondents, family and friends in Pakistan are the most important supporters of migration arrangements for potential irregular migrants. Therefore, ensuring that family and friends in Pakistan are engaged as credible messengers has value as potential irregular migrants are not only dependent on them for information, but also for financial and material support to aid their migration intentions.

The role of friends and family abroad also came up numerous times in the PARIM Background Report, the survey, the diaspora mapping and the stakeholder mapping exercises. Friends and family abroad are observed to be the biggest supporters of migration preparations (after family and friends in Pakistan) by providing financial support, as well assistance with making arrangements in terms of travel, documents, networks, accommodation, and employment. Diaspora have a high credibility in general and could therefore be engaged for knowledge or awareness-raising.<sup>245</sup> However, the perception of diaspora by potential migrants can also be ambivalent, since deterrence or risk messages

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<sup>243</sup> Morgenstern, “Governmental Information Campaigns and the Migration Decision: Evidence from Two Field Experiments.”

<sup>244</sup> Seefar and ECORYS, “Study on Best Practices in Irregular Migration Awareness-Raising Campaigns.”

<sup>245</sup> Morgenstern, “Strong & Longlasting Attitude and Intention Change? Causal Field Evidence on Sender Credibility.”



given by someone who has “made it” might not be credible (pointing to lack of trustworthiness and/or goodwill).<sup>246</sup> Therefore, they can be expected to be potentially less for influencing migration intentions or behaviour.<sup>247</sup> The PARIM Diaspora Mapping Report<sup>248</sup> was conducted to analyse the effectiveness of engaging diaspora members in information campaigns, lessons from which are summarised in section 6.4 below.

The important role of community elders, including local influential actors is highlighted not only during the survey, but also through the stakeholder engagement exercise and the validation meetings with local representatives. According to the survey, 18% reported relying on community elders for migration-related information, among which the highest response is recorded in Gujrat (41%), and the lowest in Jhelum (4%). Reliance on community elders is also observed to have a correlation with age – older respondents reported getting migration-related information from community elders more than younger respondents. Reliance on community elders is also higher among those in urban areas (7%) as compared to rural areas (5%). During the validation meetings, the role of middle school, high school and university teachers was also highlighted for sharing migration-related information to target the age group most prone to resorting to irregular migration. Similarly, the potential of local religious leaders could also be explored as they have a wide outreach, as per the discussion during the validation meetings. Even though a study in West Africa found limited impact of involving religious leaders, but the impact of involving religious leaders has not been assessed for the context of Pakistan. Both teachers and religious leaders could also play a role by directing or signposting potential irregular migrants towards relevant institutions such as the MRCs, local NGOs and CSOs, and government departments (including district labour departments and social welfare departments). They have wide outreach and influence over youth, and depending on the context, they may be engaged as key messengers, or for signposting to relevant sources such as the MRCs or PARIM events/activities.

The PARIM Stakeholder Mapping Report provides further information on relevant local stakeholders that would be helpful for engaging the right organisations/individuals for delivering the messages of the campaign. The stakeholder mapping allows an understanding of which organisations/individuals are working in the local communities with what expertise to determine synergies in work. Capacities of these local stakeholders could also be built with updated information about the migration processes. Additionally, a network of relevant organisations including CSOs and NGOs could be formed whose capacity is enhanced on migration information to keep providing relevant information beyond the life of the project. This was also emphasised during the validation meeting in Lahore where experts highlighted the need for developing the capacities of the local influencers and local government representatives at the district level to enable them to guide potential migrants who approach them for information. Thus, the campaign can include them as indirect audiences for their capacity building on migration related aspects.

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<sup>246</sup> Seefar and ECORYS, “Study on Best Practices in Irregular Migration Awareness Campaigns,” 2021, 49–50.

<sup>247</sup> Morgenstern, “Strong & Longlasting Attitude and Intention Change? Causal Field Evidence on Sender Credibility.”

<sup>248</sup> Qaisrani and Jokic, “Engaging Diasporas in Information Campaigns on Migration.”



## 6.4 Channels of communication

This section reviews the PARIM survey results on preferred communication channels for different groups. For campaigns to be effective, it is important to determine who delivers what kind of message, to whom and through what channels. In this context, the appropriate medium of communication is imperative in order to achieve the desired impact of the information campaign. Channels should be selected and designed based on the frequency of usage, access to the channel for the potential migrants and the trust in the channel for the provision of credibility of the information.<sup>249</sup> Based on research on general information campaigns, channels with any form of social contact (smaller workshops, one on one counselling, hotlines, social media as chat function) achieve higher attention and impact on intention and behaviour change.<sup>250</sup> Such communication channels appear to have higher credibility and information can be tailored to the individual, therefore being more effective.<sup>251</sup> According to a recent review of EU-funded campaigns based on practitioners' assessments, mass media is less effective in this regard, but can potentially spread awareness and information, especially in order to reach rural audiences without internet access.<sup>252</sup> According to the same report, larger events are most relevant as a supporting channel in addition to more tailored formats; they can contribute to introducing the campaign, building credibility and reaching secondary audiences. The most effective events are found to be smaller, interactive formats with an entertainment element, such as film screening with a small group of participants or sports event with some discussion on migration on the side.<sup>253</sup> As already discussed extensively in the PARIM Background Report, social media (as platforms) can be a cost-effective way to spread campaign content particularly among a young audience, but comes with drawbacks (discussed below). Further, more granular evidence on specific tools (counselling, video, Q&As, etc.) and their respective effectiveness is not currently available.

One major understanding from the various research strands conducted for PARIM is that an array of channels would need to be used for different audiences and perhaps for different messaging. While the survey attempts to understand the common leisurely activities of the potential irregular migrants, these activities do not necessarily determine whether the channels based on them would be the most effective for migration information. When deciding on the best channel of communication, lessons should also be drawn from previous experiences of MRCs, which may not always be aligned with these findings. For instance, watching TV news programmes emerged as a common leisurely activity among the target audience (26% as first rank, 13% as sum of all ranks). Zooming in on those who shared an intention to migrate irregularly, those who responded "maybe" and "likely" reported higher on watching TV than those who were "certain" to migrate irregularly. Watching TV is most commonly reported in Faisalabad (48% first rank, 19%, sum of ranks) and least common in Gujranwala (10% first

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<sup>249</sup> Seefar and ECORYS, "Study on Best Practices in Irregular Migration Awareness-Raising Campaigns."

<sup>250</sup> Morgenstern, "Political Information & Migration"; Szablewska and Kubacki, "Anti-Human Trafficking Campaigns: A Systematic Literature Review"; Seefar and ECORYS, "Study on Best Practices in Irregular Migration Awareness Campaigns."

<sup>251</sup> Seefar and ECORYS, "Study on Best Practices in Irregular Migration Awareness Campaigns," 2021, 40.

<sup>252</sup> Seefar and ECORYS, "Study on Best Practices in Irregular Migration Awareness Campaigns," 2021, 44.

<sup>253</sup> Seefar and ECORYS, "Study on Best Practices in Irregular Migration Awareness Campaigns," 2021, 41.



rank, 6.3%, sum of ranks). Watching TV news programmes also has a positive correlation with age and education of the respondents - lesser the age and education, lesser is the response on watching TV news programmes. However, based on MRC's past experiences, TV is found to be the least effective for migration messaging and the most cost-intensive (see section 3.2). Watching TV news programmes as a leisurely activity does not guarantee that potential migrants trust this source for migration-related information. Mass media campaigns are found to be more useful for influencing longer-term attitude and perceptions change of masses, rather than individual behaviour and for outreach to remote audiences. Hence, information campaigns should only use TV as a channel of communication when either signposting the audience towards specific information sources or for reaching out to audience that are difficult to access otherwise. As suggested by stakeholders during the validation meeting, TV broadcast may have more impact when a discussion on the topic of safe migration and risks of irregular migration are conducted over a talk show, rather than broadcast pre-made messages on the television.

The use of social media<sup>254</sup> is also found to be high across the respondents in the survey. The survey shows that in the first rank of leisurely activities of the overall sample, social media calling/instant messaging apps such as Whatsapp/Viber/Telegram were rated high (10%) as compared to apps such as TikTok/Snapchat (6%) and Facebook/Instagram/Twitter (5%). Focusing only on those who verbalised their intention to migrate irregularly, 41% mentioned Facebook/Instagram/Twitter as the most common leisurely activity. In fact, using social media for Facebook/Instagram/Twitter was the top-rated response of those "certain" to migrate irregularly, while among the social media options, calling and instant messaging apps such as Whatsapp/Viber/Telegram were most common for those who responded "maybe".

Even for migration specific information, about 57% of those who shared an intention to migrate irregularly mentioned gathering information about the migration process and risks from social media. Across the sample, use of social media as a source of migration information is rated higher in urban areas than rural areas, and is recorded to be more popular among the youngest age group (18-25 years) as compared to others (although still rated high). Use of social media for migration information is also more popular among the lowest income group and lowest education group. The gender difference in use of social media for migration information is not found to be substantial. The use of social media for migration information is highest in Mandi Bahauddin (79%) and least in Sialkot (28%). This summary is useful to understand that while the popularity of different social media apps may vary across the sample, it is an important source of migration information across the target group. Previous experience of MRCs also show that Facebook has been highly effective in reaching out to new audiences and spurring engagement with the content, while among the other social media apps YouTube and Instagram were found to be least effective for migration information, and Whatsapp and Twitter were found to be somewhat effective (see section 3.2).

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<sup>254</sup> Social media apps were categorised into three dimensions: Calling Apps (Whatsapp/Viber/Telegram); Networking/Informational Apps (Facebook/Instagram/Twitter), and Entertainment Apps (TikTok/Snapchat). These categorisations are made for ease of analysis.



Based on review of existing literature and other campaign experiences, the use of social media for migration information campaigns comes with certain caveats. Social media is found to be less relevant than social ties for migration information, and is often used to extend one on one interactions with friends and family.<sup>255</sup> Findings of the Diaspora Mapping Report also confirm this. Existing studies question the access to social media and internet for different social stratified groups such as across urban/rural localities.<sup>256</sup> However, evidence from the PARIM survey shows that access to internet is not much differentiated across urban and rural areas. Across the districts, internet usage is found to be high, with more than 80% respondents having access to internet in all districts except Sialkot, where internet usage is reported to be used by 41% of the respondents. Insight from validation meetings confirms that this discrepancy may just reflect lower reporting of internet usage in Sialkot as compared to the actual usage, as stakeholders revealed that internet usage is quite high in the district, especially amongst the youth. The difference in internet usage is not significant across urban and rural localities. About 52% respondents in urban areas and 48% respondents in rural areas have internet access. In the same vein, digital divide across gender is also negligible, with 82% men and 80% women reporting some sort of internet-based activity (see Table 10 below).

Use of internet as a leisurely activity can also be drawn from the percentage of respondents reporting surfing on the internet on their phones (13% as third rank and 7% sum of ranks), and using internet at an internet cafe (12% as second rank and 5% as sum of ranks). Using the phone to surf the internet is reported highest among those who shared an intention to migrate irregularly (12% “maybe” and 10% each for “very likely” and “certain” respectively). Internet cafes are overall ranked very low across the districts (below 5% in all three ranks), while surfing the internet on phone is found to be highest in Jhelum (23% sum of ranks) and lowest in Sialkot (6% sum of ranks). Using internet on the phone is more popular among older and better educated respondents, while going to the internet cafe was use of internet was not popular across any age or education group.

Using the phone to be in touch with friends and family is rated 11% (sum of ranks) and is popular across all the districts (more popular in second ranking; and low variation across urban/rural localities). It is most popular among the lowest education group and among those earning between PKR 30,000 - 50,000 (EUR 155-255). Older respondents reported higher usage of phone for being in touch with friends and family. Moreover, as highlighted during the validation meetings as well, the high frequency of phone usage indicates that perhaps a targeted SMS-campaign for counselling in the project districts may be useful for sharing short awareness messages written in Urdu.<sup>257</sup> Drawing on previous MRC experience, a toll-free hotline would also be useful to answer potential migrants’ questions and offering guidance.

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<sup>255</sup> Katharina Hahn-Schaur, Awareness Raising and Information Campaigns on the Risks of Irregular Migration from Pakistan: Background Report (Vienna: ICMPD, 2021).

<sup>256</sup> Dekker et al., “Smart Refugees : How Syrian Asylum Migrants Use Social Media Information in Migration Decision-Making”; Martin Emmer, Marlene Kunst, and Carola Richter, “Information Seeking and Communication during Forced Migration : An Empirical Analysis of Refugees’ Digital Media Use and Its Effects on Their Perceptions of Germany as Their Target Country,” 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1742766520921905>.

<sup>257</sup> Punjabi is more relevant when spoken/heard, while for reading, Urdu is preferred



Participation in community events is also found to be a popular leisurely activity in some districts. About 6% respondents (sum of ranks) reported participation in community events, with the highest popularity in Sialkot (27%) and lowest in Faisalabad (<1%), with slightly higher usage reported in urban areas than in rural areas. It is also positively correlated with age and education i.e. older and more educated respondents are more likely to participate in community events. Those who responded “very likely” to migration intention have the highest response on community events (12% sum of ranks), compared to the rest of the sample. Community events are also rated high during the stakeholder meetings and validation meetings. However, stakeholders suggested that community events, such as seminars, theatre plays, workshops etc. could be used as a medium to introduce the potential migrants to the more targeted awareness raising mechanisms such as the availability of the nearest counsellors, the hotline as well as dedicated social media platforms for relevant and credible migration-related information.

Other leisurely activities that require in-person interaction are somewhat ranked low. For instance, urban travel is overall ranked low (<3% sum of ranks) for those with an intention to migrate irregularly. It is observed to be more popular in certain districts such as Sialkot (21%), and Gujranwala (17%) for the overall sample. Shopping is ranked quite low overall (below 2% as sum of ranks and <5% across districts) but is reported higher in rural areas than urban areas. Participation in religious activities is low overall (<4% sum of ranks among those who admitted to irregular migration intention), but across the sample relatively higher in Sialkot than in other districts (higher in urban areas). Playing sports and/or going to the park is medium for those with who responded “maybe” and “very likely” but low for those who said “certain”. In the overall sample, it is relatively high in Gujrat (14% sum of ranks) and higher in urban areas than rural areas. Snooker and/or gaming clubs are rated low overall, but relatively higher for those who mentioned “very likely” and “certain” than the rest of the sample. Across the districts, it is low except for Jhelum (7% sum of ranks).

Among all the leisurely activities reported, reading newspaper and listening to the radio are least popular with percentages below 1%.



**Table 10: Lessons for communication channels**

Common Leisurely activities	Popularity across those who states an intention to migrate irregularly (n= 761)	Demographic differences (n=1200)	District information level (n=1200)	Lesson for effective channel of communication
TV news programmes	Medium to high  High popularity among those who responded “maybe” and “likely”  Medium popularity among those who responded “certain”	More popular among higher age groups and better educated respondents	Highest usage in Faisalabad; lowest in Gujranwala. No substantial urban/rural differences	Low- to medium relevance for PARIM campaign - more effective for TV talk shows for interactive session or for influencing long-term attitude and perceptions change
Social media	High Facebook/Instagram/Twitter most popular among those “certain” to migrate irregularly  Calling apps (WhatsApp/Viber/Telegram) most common social media for those who said “maybe” to irregular migration	Most popular among the youngest age group (18 - 25 years); no significant differences based on gender	Highest usage in Mandi Bahauddin; lowest in Sialkot.  WhatsApp/Viber/Telegram more popular in urban areas; other social media apps more popular in rural areas (minor variations)	Social media (particularly Facebook) has high outreach. High relevance for campaign - may be more effective with interactive sessions, than mass sharing of information
Using phone to surf the internet	Medium 10-12% of those with an intention to migrate irregularly	Higher usage among older respondents and those with higher education	Highest usage in Jhelum; Lowest in Sialkot; Higher usage in urban areas	Medium relevance for PARIM campaign. Internet-based campaign can be used to redirect potential migrants towards targeted counselling channels such as the MRC hotline





Play sports or go to the park	Medium popularity among those who responded “maybe” (11%) and “very likely” (12%)  Low popularity among those “certain” (7%)	More popular among younger and more educated respondents	High popularity in Gujrat. More popular in urban areas	Medium relevance for PARIM. Communication activities could be organised around parks and sports ground for MRC services
Participate in community events	Medium for those who responded “very likely” (12%)  Low for those who responded “maybe” (6%) and “certain” (6%).	More popular among older and more educated respondents	Most popular in Sialkot and Gujrat. Slightly more popular in urban areas	High relevance for PARIM campaign. Could be used to introduce the available MRC services for potential migrants. Relevant for indirect audience (family members, returnees etc.)
Go to urban centres	Low among those who admitted to irregular migration intention (<4%)	Most popular among older groups, lowest income groups, those with high school or graduate education	More popular in Sialkot and Gujranwala. Slightly more popular in urban areas	Medium to high relevance for PARIM. Rickshaw campaign could be extended to districts such as Sialkot (rickshaw campaign already popular in Gujranwala)
Participation in religious activities	Low among those who admitted to irregular migration intention (<4%)	More popular among older respondents. Negligible differences in other demographics	Relatively more popular in Sialkot. More popular in urban areas	Medium relevance for PARIM. Engaging religious leaders rated high by stakeholders for one on one counselling and sermons. Could be used to inform indirect audience
Play snooker at gaming clubs	Low to medium Higher response for those who responded “very likely” (7%) and “certain” (5%)	More popular among 26-35 year olds. More popular among lower income, and among those with 5-10 yrs	High in Jhelum and Sialkot	Relevant for displaying posters, information material, and other communication activities



	compared to the rest of the sample	of education		
Go shopping	Low (below 2% among those who admitted to irregular migration intention)	More popular among youngest (18-25 yrs), more educated and lowest income	Slightly more popular in Gujrat	Low relevance. Could be used for rickshaw campaign
Using internet at an internet cafe	Low (below 4% ranking in all ranks)	Slightly higher usage among older respondents and those with high school or graduate education	Highest in Faisalabad (4%); lowest in Sialkot (<1%)	Low relevance for PARIM. Display posters and information material at internet cafes.
Reading newspapers	Very low (<1% sum of ranks)	Reported higher by 31-35 yr old with high school or graduation education	3% readership in Faisalabad	Low relevance for PARIM
Listening to the radio	Very low (<1% sum of ranks)	<1% reports across all demographics	<1% in all districts	Low relevance for PARIM

Moreover, triangulation of the survey with the validation meetings and the stakeholder mapping exercise also shows that underage potential irregular migrants seek migration-related information from the internet and their friends abroad. During the validation meetings, district level stakeholders shared that boys as young as 14 are attempting irregular migration from these districts, and are heavily influenced by their friends who have attempted it. To target them, interventions at the schools and university levels are suggested to be most relevant by the stakeholders. Some stakeholders even suggested integrating awareness on safe migration routes in the coursework of high school students. Short videos in local/regional language could also be disseminated in schools, colleges and universities raising awareness on safe migration.

Regardless of the channel used for communication, another important aspect that emerged particularly during the validation meetings is the language in which the message is transmitted. Stakeholders emphasised the need for adapting the content and the messaging of the campaign in the local language (in case of PARIM survey districts – Punjabi), rather than English or the national language, Urdu.

As mentioned earlier, while analysing leisurely activities is necessary to understand the channels that are mostly commonly used by potential irregular migrants, it can also be gauged that specifically for



migration-related information, potential irregular migrants may prefer acquiring information through one on one interactions. For instance, the most common source of migration information are returnees in the survey, perhaps owing to their personal experience as well as knowledge on the subject, and the ability to ask questions in an interactive manner. This aspect was highlighted during the validation meetings as well that one on one interaction with an informed migration counsellor may prove to be the most effective method of awareness raising regarding migration and that owing to the lack of access to informed counsellors within their communities, potential migrants may be seeking information from returnees. It was also highlighted that mechanisms developed for such one on one interactions should be longer-term rather than one-off events to create trust among the community members.

## 6.5 Engagement of diaspora abroad

An important theme that emerged from the survey as well as the extensive literature review in the Background Report was the role of social networks, especially friends and family abroad, as sources of credible information for potential irregular migrants. In fact, existing literature reveals that among the meso factors, social networks abroad play a more important role than any other factor in facilitating migration.<sup>258</sup> Indeed, as explained in detail in the Diaspora Mapping Report,<sup>259</sup> social networks in the diaspora, including friends, family and acquaintances, play a vital role in influencing irregular migration, both intentionally and unintentionally, at all phases of the journey: pre-departure, in transit, and on arrival in the receiving country. The underlying finding is that potential irregular migrants trust the information received from their personal connections abroad, even in instances when friends and family share misinformation through wrongful impressions and inaccurate details.<sup>260</sup> Their role is quite often observed to be facilitative through the impressions they create of life abroad,<sup>261</sup> sharing of relevant and trust-worthy information, and support in terms of finances, employment and accommodation.<sup>262</sup> However, in some cases, friends and family in the diaspora may play a negative or discouraging role as well by gatekeeping information, often based on feelings of competition from co-nationals (this finding is not specific to the Pakistani context and is based on a wider study).<sup>263</sup>

When it comes to engaging diaspora members in an information campaign aimed at deterring irregular migration, there are two important aspects to consider:

- i. The assumptions on which diaspora engagement is based on for information campaigns.

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<sup>258</sup> Jacob Townsend and Chrystal Ooman, *Before the Boat: Understanding the Migrant Journey - EU Asylum towards 2020* (Migration Policy Institute, 2015).

<sup>259</sup> Ayesha Qaisrani and Jelena Jokic, "Engaging Diasporas in Information Campaigns on Migration" (Vienna, 2021).

<sup>260</sup> Gabriella Sanchez et al., "A Study of the Communication Channels Used by Migrants and Asylum Seekers in Italy , with a Particular Focus on Online and Social Media," 2018.

<sup>261</sup> Ahmad, "The Romantic Appeal of Illegal Migration: Gender, Masculinity and Human Smuggling from Pakistan."

<sup>262</sup> Dynamic Consulting Services, "Needs Assessment Study: Information Needs of Intending Migrants in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan," 2019.

<sup>263</sup> Sanchez et al., "A Study of the Communication Channels Used by Migrants and Asylum Seekers in Italy , with a Particular Focus on Online and Social Media."



- ii. The timing of such an intervention in the decision-making phase of the potential irregular migrant.

### 6.5.1 Assumptions of diaspora engagement in information campaigns

In PARIM information campaign, the purpose of diaspora engagement is to provide balanced information to potential irregular migrants about the dangers and consequences of irregular migration, and the realities of life in Europe, especially for those who adopt irregular channels to reach Europe. The foremost finding from the dedicated study on diaspora engagement is that engaging diaspora members in an information campaign may not provide the most effective results. Primarily, the reason for this is that information campaigns are based on an assumption that potential irregular migrants trust the information received from diaspora members already in the intended destination countries, regardless of the lack of any personal connection with them. States, donors and implementing agencies assume that diaspora members will share testimonials of their real experiences in an attempt to deter further irregular migration. However, as concluded in the PARIM Diaspora Report, diaspora members are “imperfect proxies” for friends and family abroad. Various global studies,<sup>264</sup> as well as those conducted in the context of Pakistan,<sup>265</sup> highlight the important role of friends and family in the diaspora by providing support in the form of information, financial sponsorship, job placement, accommodation etc. However, the point of emphasis in all these studies, including the ones conducted for PARIM<sup>266</sup> is that potential irregular migrants trust their own personal connections and contacts in the diaspora, not *any one* in the diaspora.<sup>267</sup> The credibility of the information is only established based on the level of trust the potential irregular migrant already has in the person in the diaspora, as well as judgement on their expertise on the subject and the goodwill or intention for sharing the information.<sup>268</sup> This is an important point to consider when designing an information campaign aimed at deterring irregular migration.

Related to the above point is another important caveat to consider: in general, diaspora members have been associated with “facilitating” the migration process, and may not necessarily be willing or suitable to act as “gatekeepers” of information or deterrents of irregular migration (although there is plenty of evidence to show that sometimes diaspora members may be the source of misinformation among potential migrants<sup>269</sup>).<sup>270</sup> They may also not be very open to sharing their negative experiences as it

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<sup>264</sup> Optimity Advisors and Seefar, *How West African Migrants Engage with Migration Information En-Route to Europe*; Dekker et al., “Smart Refugees : How Syrian Asylum Migrants Use Social Media Information in Migration Decision-Making.”

<sup>265</sup> Dynamic Consulting Services, “Needs Assessment Study: Information Needs of Intending Migrants in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan,” 2019; Katharina Hahn-schaur, “Awareness Raising and Information Campaigns on the Risks of Irregular Migration in Pakistan: Background Report,” 2021; Qaisrani and Jokic, “Engaging Diasporas in Information Campaigns on Migration.”

<sup>266</sup> Hahn-Schaur, *Awareness Raising and Information Campaigns on the Risks of Irregular Migration from Pakistan: Background Report*.

<sup>267</sup> European Commission, “Study on Best Practices on Irregular Migration Awareness Campaign: Interim Report Phase II,” 2021.

<sup>268</sup> Qaisrani and Jokic, “Engaging Diasporas in Information Campaigns on Migration.”

<sup>269</sup> Hein de Haas, “The Internal Dynamics of Migration Processes: A Theoretical Inquiry,” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 36 (2010): 1587–1617; Sanchez et al., “A Study of the Communication Channels Used by Migrants and Asylum Seekers in Italy , with a Particular Focus on Online and Social Media.”

<sup>270</sup> Katie Kuschminder, “The Role of the Diaspora in Knowledge Transfer and Capacity Building in Post-Conflict Settings : The Temporary Return of Qualified Nationals to Afghanistan IS Academy Migration Policy Report No . 1,” *International Migration* 52, no. 1 (2011): 1–25,



damages their own reputation in the communities of origin and mars the rosy picture they often prefer to portray to friends and families back home.<sup>271</sup> Thus, there is limited scope in engaging with diaspora members in general (those not personally known to target beneficiaries of information campaign), especially for sharing negative messaging aimed at deterring irregular migration. Unless sufficient time and resources are devoted at targeting the social network of beneficiaries in the destination countries, provided those diaspora members are also willing to engage in a campaign designed to discourage irregular migration, there may be limited impact on behaviour of potential irregular migrants.<sup>272</sup>

### 6.5.2 Timing of diaspora intervention

The PARIM Diaspora Mapping Report<sup>273</sup> finds that the timing of the diaspora intervention in the decision-making and planning process of potential irregular migrants is crucial for impact. Considering that potential irregular migrants rely on their interpersonal connections in the diaspora differently at different stages of their migration decision, it may be useful for information campaigns to consider at what stage such an intervention would be most useful. For instance, at the pre-decision stage, potential irregular migrants may be most receptive to information from diaspora members who are not personally known to them. In other words, this is the stage at which they may be most receptive and impressionable to negative messaging aimed at deterring irregular migration as they have not finalised their decision and are merely considering the pros and cons of opting for irregular migration.

On the other hand, once the decision to migrate irregularly has been finalised, potential irregular migrants may already have reached out to their own personal connections in the diaspora to acquire relevant information. At this stage, reliance on other co-nationals in the diaspora may only take place if the potential migrants do not have personal connections in the intended destination country.<sup>274</sup> Moreover, once the decision to migrate irregularly has been made, information campaigns may be seen (and disregarded) as “biased propaganda” when implemented by institutions.<sup>275</sup> Hence, after a certain level of planning has been reached for migration, interventions such as information campaigns in general, and diaspora engagement in particular, may prove to be less effective in deterring irregular migration.<sup>276</sup>

Recognising that potential irregular migrants may be apprehensive towards negative messaging that discourages their intent to migrate, especially coming from institutionalised perspectives (including migrant associations), the PARIM information campaign may consider engaging with social media influencers in the campaign. Some social media influencers (such as certain YouTubers and Vloggers

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<http://i.unu.edu/media/unu.edu/publication/27080/PR01.pdf>5Cnhttp://unu.edu/publications/policy-briefs/the-role-of-the-diaspora-in-knowledge-transfer-and-capacity-building-in-post-conflict-settings-the-temporary-return-of-qualified-nationals-to-afghanista.

<sup>271</sup> Yordanos Seifu Estifanos, *Social Networks, Dreams and Risks: Ethiopian Irregular Migrants into South Africa* (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and Social Development Policy Division, 2017).

<sup>272</sup> European Commission, “Study on Best Practices on Irregular Migration Awareness Campaign: Interim Report Phase II.”

<sup>273</sup> Qaisrani and Jokic, “Engaging Diasporas in Information Campaigns on Migration.”

<sup>274</sup> European Commission, “Study on Best Practices on Irregular Migration Awareness Campaign: Interim Report Phase II.”

<sup>275</sup> Hernández-Carretero, María, and Jørgen Carling. “Beyond ‘Kamikaze Migrants’: Risk Taking in West African Boat Migration to Europe.” *Human Organization* 71, no. 4 (2012): 407–16.

<sup>276</sup> European Migration Network, “Migration and Communication : Information and Awareness-Raising Campaigns in Countries of Origin and Transit,” 2019, 1–6.



identified in the Diaspora Mapping Report) are already creating awareness on the consequences of irregular migration by recording testimonies of irregular migrants in destination hotspots such as Greece and Italy, and showing the advantages and disadvantages of being undocumented in destination countries (see Diaspora Mapping Report for more detail). In that sense, they are already engaged in offering “balanced” information to potential irregular migrants. Their huge social media following determines the extent of their outreach and influence over those interested to acquire more information on these aspects. This creates a favourable avenue of collaboration with these social media activists to spread customised content for potential irregular migrants and signpost them towards MRCs.

That said, the limited number of objective evaluations of information campaigns that have engaged diaspora members (and/or returnees), and lack of sufficient information on how diaspora engagement in information campaigns impact knowledge, perceptions, and behaviour of potential irregular migrants may inhibit conclusive evidence on such interventions.

### **6.5.3 Lessons for PARIM Information Campaign**

Building on available evidence on diaspora engagement in information campaigns, and based on KIIs conducted with migrant associations and Pakistani Embassies in PARIM countries (Austria, Bulgaria, Greece, and Italy), a targeted set of recommendations have been devised to guide diaspora engagement in the PARIM information campaign. The recommendations are summarised below (for more information, see PARIM Diaspora Mapping Report<sup>277</sup>):

- i. As a starting point, the campaign design should not assume high levels of trust between the diaspora members engaged in the campaign and the target beneficiaries of the information campaign. Understanding the limitations of such campaign designs from the start is useful to manage expectations about impact that should be incorporated in key performance indicators for evaluation later.
- ii. In line with the results of the other research strands, considering that potential irregular migrants may already be apprehensive of information coming from “strangers” in the diaspora, diversifying the content of information campaigns between positive and negative messaging would be helpful in this context as well.
- iii. If the campaign aims to involve migrant associations, engaging them on a long-term basis, rather than one-time engagement, would support trust-building with them as collaborators.
- iv. Messages and content that focus on negative elements to discourage irregular migration, for instance, through testimonials and experience sharing, should focus on individual diaspora members, ideally those known to potential irregular migrants rather than

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<sup>277</sup> Qaisrani and Jokic, “Engaging Diasporas in Information Campaigns on Migration.”



associations for the audience to be more receptive to the content. Collaboration could also be sought with independent activists such as social media influencers with a large following (including Vloggers and Tik Tok users).

- v. In line with the discussion on communication channels in section 6.3 above, information campaigns could use wider platforms and channels to signpost towards relevant individuals in the diaspora to guide them. For instance, social media pages of organisations such as MRCs and migrant associations could share more personalised and interactive sources of information such as “live” discussions on Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram by relevant individuals to allow potential migrants to engage with them in a real-time.
- vi. The Diaspora Report includes some information on migrant associations that are already organising or engaged in projects aimed at discouraging irregular migration from Pakistan. PARIM information campaign could also build on existing initiatives of some of these migrant associations who are already working on relevant subjects to dissuade irregular migration and promote regular migration (e.g. TV series, vloggers mentioned above). Donors can piggyback on these efforts and help in customising and increasing the outreach of such initiatives through capacity building and sponsorship.
- vii. Ensuring that the profile of selected diaspora members to be engaged resonates with the potential migrants is important, as emphasised in the Background Report. It is likely to be more fruitful to engage a first-generation migrant who has experienced and is fully aware of the irregular migration procedure to share with potential migrants. The age group of the diaspora members, their socioeconomic background, district of origin, mode of arrival to Europe, etc. may be selected to match the general profile of potential irregular migrants.
- viii. Diaspora members or associations could be engaged not just for conveying the “message” but also in “designing” the message and shaping the content. With more direct access to those who have chosen the irregular migration route, migrant associations and individual diaspora members may be in a position to contribute valuably to the messaging and design of the content.
- ix. Recent (irregular) migrants could also be asked to identify influential community members in the sending district (among the six PARIM districts) who could also be engaged in the awareness campaign.



## 7 Summary of findings and recommendations

Building on the knowledge generated through the different research strands of the PARIM project, this section summarises the key lessons and conclusions to inform the design of the PARIM information campaign for the specific case of the six target districts in Punjab, Pakistan. Existing work on this subject recommend designing the campaign considering the characteristics, knowledge, confidence and information gaps of the intended target audience. The research components of PARIM offers the following conclusions for developing the information campaign. While these findings reflect the broader inferences drawn from the research, please refer to the respective sections in this report for more detailed analysis contextualised for the study districts.

- i. The profile of potential irregular migrants from the six districts of Punjab that defines the target audience for the campaign largely aligns with the characteristics described in previous research in terms of gender, age, marital status, household income, and nature of employment; however, it varied slightly in terms of their education level. For most, migration is a means to achieve economic and status goals, for some it is an aspiration in itself (section 5.2).**
  - a. Potential irregular migrants with an intention to migrate irregularly to Europe are overwhelmingly male, generally young (18-25 as per the survey, but may also be as young as 14 years old), more likely to be unmarried, working as a daily wager or self-employed and belonging to a lower middle income household with income less than PKR 50,000 (EUR 255) per month. Potential irregular migrants are slightly more likely to hail from rural areas as compared to urban areas of migration prone-districts, except in Jhelum. For the campaign, the selection of target audience should be based on these characteristics.
  - b. In contrast to existing literature that shows that potential irregular migrants may have higher than average education levels, PARIM research concludes that potential irregular migrants tend to have education between primary and secondary level (5-10 years of education). Those with less education might be easier to convince through information campaigns and less likely to dismiss new information.
  - c. Although the percentage of women stating an intention to migrate irregularly is low, still in certain districts (Gujrat, Mandi Bahauddin, and Jhelum), it may be of value to engage women between the ages of 26-30 years in the campaign as potential irregular migrants. Women are more likely to pursue migration with a motivation of getting education than men.
  - d. An overwhelming majority of the respondents have Europe/UK as the preferred destination. Those with lower incomes and education tend to choose Europe/UK, while those with higher incomes and education levels tend to indicate North America or Australia as a preferred destination.



- e. While economic aspirations, such as wealth, steady income, and status emerge strongly through the PARIM research, there is a strong tendency to have migration as an aspiration in itself, especially among those with lower education and household income. Those with higher incomes and education levels tend to opt for migration for a more “exciting life”. The campaigns should take into account the varying aspirations, along with the emotional aspects that relate to those aspirations such as jealousy, shame, excitement etc., and the factors that influence such emotions such as social pressure, comparison with those who have migrated., etc.
  - f. Research from psychology and information processing shows that one main factor for long-term and effective information processing is intrinsic motivation on the side of campaign participants (see section 3.1). Aside from this aspect (which may sometimes be difficult to influence), campaigns can apply heuristics and cues shaped through the sender of the information, the communication tool used, and the message itself (its content and the emotions it triggers) in order to achieve stronger and longer-lasting impact of information. The respective target group needs to be clearly defined in order to achieve this. It can be assumed that if these factors are ideally aligned, campaigns will have an optimal impact.
  - g. Another intrinsic factor that may contribute to making information campaigns more effective is low prior knowledge. When participants already have knowledge about the topics included in the campaign, they may be less receptive to the content shared during the campaign. In this regard, offering risk comparisons with rewards and outcomes, addressing misinformation may prove to be effective.
  - h. Finally, among other intrinsic factors, the inherent nature and character traits of the person also plays a role. More agreeable, conscientious and risk averse individuals are more likely to absorb campaign content and be discouraged to choose irregular migration, while extraverted and risk-seeking individuals are less likely to be receptive to the campaign messages. However, these traits are beyond the scope of an information campaign to influence.
- ii. **In terms of drivers of migration, irregular migration from the target districts is largely motivated by economic and macro social factors, along with a long history of migration flows towards Europe, which together form the “culture of migration” (section 5.3 and 5.4).**
- a. Low standard of living, poor business development opportunities, and financial problems and debts are the top factors driving migration. The pursuit of education as a driver is only observed for those with higher than 11 years of formal education. Gujrat and Gujranwala showed more diverse personal aspirations as compared to other districts.
  - b. Main pull factors to Europe include availability of jobs, the likelihood of getting citizenship in Europe, availability of investment and business opportunities, and



presence of friends and family. The presence of friends and family abroad was most pronounced in Gujranwala as a key pull factor towards Europe.

- c. The perception of irregular migration as a cheaper, common, and quicker way are the factors behind choosing this option. The lowest income and education groups, and respondents from Mandi Bahauddin and Gujrat, are more likely to consider irregular migration as the only way to migrate, reflecting not only the established character of irregular migration, but also the need for more information on the differences between legal and irregular means. Perceived lower cost of irregular migration is most pronounced in Sialkot, Gujrat and Jhelum. The importance of the cost factor reflects the prevailing economic motivations driving irregular migration.

**iii. While the majority of potential migrants plan to migrate within the next or two years, the level of preparedness, measured from the steps taken in preparation of their anticipated migration, is low. Social networks and agents are confirmed as important facilitators of (irregular) migration (section 5.3. and 5.6).**

- a. Those who indicated an intention to migrate within the next two years are less likely to have a passport, apply for a visa for the destination or a transit country, and/or book travel tickets. However, the probability of them having paid an agent or looking for an agent is highest. Even those who reported being sufficiently or completely informed about migration risks are less likely to have obtained a passport.
- b. The financial costs of migration are most likely to be covered by parents or siblings, followed by personal savings and a gift or a loan from friends and family in Pakistan. The lower income group has less capacity to rely on personal savings, implying a higher financial burden and risk (in case of failed migration) for them.
- c. Social networks, in Pakistan and abroad, are an important facilitator of the migration process. The majority of respondents received the most support from their friends and family in Pakistan, followed by friends and family abroad. The nature of support varied, however, receiving financial support, assistance with managing documents, and looking for an agent are the top responses.
- d. The role of agents emerged strongly through the research. Amongst the top challenges, respondents reported the fear of the agent being untrustworthy as highest (especially in Faisalabad and Jhelum), reflecting the high reliance of the potential irregular migrants on agents and the high vulnerability of being exploited by them. The fear of untrustworthy agents is lower for the higher educated and is found to be lowest in Gujranwala among the districts. Information campaigns can use this paradox of strong reliance on agents but low levels of trust by sharing characteristics of fake or illicit agents. Other top challenges included difficulty in arranging documents, and difficulty in finding information on job opportunities abroad.



- iv. Despite an understanding of the risks associated with migration, respondents' high intention to migrate irregularly reflects that knowledge of risks does not deter them. The perceived worth of the chance of success from irregular migration appears to dominate the fear of experiencing the risks. This may undermine the effectiveness of the campaign, unless coupled with content that invokes relevant emotions, and engages with nuanced information on the potential rewards and (positive as well as negative) outcomes of the risky behaviour (section 5.5 and 6.1).**
- a. For the majority, awareness levels about the migration process and the associated risks are limited (most responded being informed "to some extent"). Those in Jhelum are most confident about their knowledge about the migration process, while those in Gujrat are least confident. However, confidence levels are high for those who intend to migrate irregularly, i.e. the greater the certainty of desiring irregular migration, the more prevalent is the attitude to have "sufficient" information about migration and risks. This is problematic because people who are (or consider themselves) already informed or are generally unaware of the realities of life in Europe are less likely to listen to new information.
  - b. Confidence levels of potential migrants are higher among the highest educated, and somewhat higher ("sufficiently informed") for those who stated an intention to migrate irregularly. Women tend to have lower awareness levels regarding the migration process and risks, as compared to men.
  - c. Awareness is highest regarding risks such as violence, lack of food, and witnessing death. Awareness of forced labour as a risk is lowest.
  - d. Potential migrants expect to personally witness risks such as violence, lack of food, and witnessing death, however, those with a stronger intention to migrate irregularly are substantially less likely to expect to witness death, reflecting higher confidence levels. The potential migrants consider forced return (deportation) as the most improbable risk, while losing all money, forced labour, and deportation are considered unlikely, reflecting higher confidence levels about these risks.
- v. The content of the information campaign should be tailored to migrants' individual context in order to appropriately address their information needs. Due to information gaps and limited awareness of requirements of legal migration, potential migrants may not themselves be the best judge of what information they require. Hence, the campaign should also not overlook the aspects that have not emerged strongly from the survey (section 5.5 and 6.1).**
- a. If potential migrants consider themselves sufficiently informed, and/or have low intrinsic motivation to take in campaign content, this is detrimental to the potential effectiveness of a campaign, as research has shown. However, such effects can potentially be offset by triggering strong emotions, delivered through credible messengers and suitable channels. Strategically packaging the content in a way that negative messaging (aimed at triggering fear, anxiety or worry by



- highlighting risks) shall be followed by positive content (legal pathways, job opportunities abroad) and/or neutral information (alternatives to migration, domestic job opportunities) seems to be optimal to offset perceived bias and carry messages effectively.
- b. Potential irregular migrants are likely to dismiss the message if it is solely focusing on highlighting risks without offering any other options, or discussing risk in a more tangible manner. Existing research highlights the importance of talking through the way risks around (irregular) migration compare to other risks, to (imagined) rewards, and options that potential migrants have taken into consideration.
  - c. Recognising the important role played by agents in (irregular) migration, the content should focus on improving the differentiation between fake and registered agents and inform the potential migrants about the relevant authorities where they should be reported. The legal repercussions for them as irregular migrants should also be conveyed to them.
  - d. The campaign could also focus on dispelling the myths about irregular migration being the only way to migrate. The assumptions of irregular migration being cheaper and quicker should be compared with the financial, physical, and legal ramifications of irregular migration.
  - e. Lastly, whenever feasible, the content should speak directly to the information needs of the individual based on their demographic, aspirations, awareness levels, risk attitudes and capacities, including through the results provided throughout this report.
- vi. **For effective reception of the information, credibility of the messengers, defined by their expertise, trustworthiness, and goodwill, is of utmost importance. Individuals with high level of influence over potential irregular migrants should not only been engaged as messengers, but may also be considered as “indirect audiences” to improve and/or update their knowledge of the migration process and the associated risks (section 6.2.3)**
- a. Interestingly, the PARIM respondents’ biggest source of migration-related information are the returnees. Based on their relevant experience and familiarity with the process of migration, reliance of potential irregular migrants on them for information is high, especially among the less educated. The choice of which returnees to engage in the campaign is important as successful returnees may not want to act as deterrents of migration, while “failed returnees” or forcibly returned individuals may not have the same level of “credibility” amongst the potential migrants, and are likely to be associated with a sense of shame in the society. A recent best practice study suggests focusing on their actual motivation, community influence, relevant experience and competence as communicators.<sup>278</sup>

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<sup>278</sup> Seefar, *Study on Best Practices in Irregular Migration Awareness-Raising Campaigns*, European Commission (Brussels, 2021).



- b. Friends and family in Pakistan and abroad emerged as the biggest supporters of migration planning and thus their engagement as credible messengers is likely to be useful. However, our research also highlights the disconnect with this population and the wider "diaspora" sometimes considered for engagement (see point (viii) below).
  - c. The campaign should also engage with community elders (more popular in Faisalabad and Gujrat), as well as religious leaders and local level influencers, including high school and university teachers, social media celebrities, boys' scouts etc., depending on their sphere of influence. This may be more useful for increasing outreach and signposting potential migrants towards credible sources of migration information.
  - d. Institutional sources of information such as government institutions, NGOs and MRCs are less popular and/or trusted among the potential irregular migrants. This could perhaps be because of the lack of dedicated departments with local level presence. In this regard, building or reinforcing the capacities of local entities for information provision could support their outreach in a sustainable way.
- vii. A well-designed information campaign should select relevant channels based on the ease of access for the intended target audience, the frequency of usage, as well as the trust in the channel most appropriate for the kind of the message. The PARIM research shows that the campaign should use an array of channels for message testing and reaching the most relevant audience (section 6.2.4).**
- a. The most effective channels for influencing intentions and behaviour change are those with one on one interaction between the messenger and the intended audience. These may include counselling sessions, social media with chat/direct message function, smaller workshops, hotlines etc.
  - b. Channels with high outreach should be used for introducing the campaign and signposting individuals towards the relevant sources of information, rather than as the main medium of communication. For example, one-off or occasional community events, and informational sessions in schools could be organised for informing the audience about the credible sources of migration information in their vicinity. Even though watching television news programmes is found to be a common leisurely activity (more popular among older and better educated respondents in the sample), existing research and experience of the MRCs in Pakistan have found it to be an expensive and less effective channel of communication.
  - c. Social media is confirmed as an important channel of communication, especially for youth. Internet access is high among the potential migrants in the PARIM sample, with minor variations across the rural-urban areas, gender, and income groups. Sialkot, in particular, had low social media and internet usage among the districts. Within social media, Facebook has been found to be effective for



outreach by MRCs, and is one of the most common leisurely activities reported by the respondents. Even on social media, focus should be on one on one interactive exchange of information, rather than mass sharing of information (although again this can be used for signposting). The use of calling and instant messaging apps such as WhatsApp/Viber/Telegram is higher for those who are still not sure about the irregular migration decision (and hence more likely to be influenced by new information).

- d. In order to reach potential irregular migrants outside of social media, communication activities could be organised where social gatherings take place or areas that are frequented by relevant target audiences. For instance, sports grounds or parks are visited more by the younger and more educated and are popular in Gujrat, community events are more popular among older and more educated individuals and frequented in Sialkot and Gujrat, going to urban centres is found to be more popular among the lowest income groups and in Sialkot and Gujranwala, and attending religious gatherings are more common among older age groups and again relatively more popular in Sialkot.

**viii. Finally, the engagement of diaspora members as credible messengers to share the realities of life in Europe should be planned carefully, with consideration on whom to engage with in the diaspora, with what message, through what channel and at what time of the decision-making process (as is true for any other messenger as well) (section 6.3).**

- a. Diaspora members who are personally known to the potential migrants are likely to have a higher influence than unknown people abroad. Potential migrants may also be more receptive to information received from individual diaspora members rather than those representing institutions, especially for negative messaging.
- b. The campaign should focus on building a rapport with migrant associations and individuals that already have some relevant work in the field of information campaigns. For instance, some social media celebrities in the diaspora have high outreach and already produce the relevant content based on real-time experiences of irregular Pakistani migrants in Europe. The PARIM campaign could piggyback on initiatives started by these migrant associations to increase outreach.
- c. Interactive sessions with opportunities for potential migrants to ask questions and discuss with the diaspora members would prove to be effective. Social media could be used as a platform for hosting “live chat” sessions.



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## Annex I: Methodological note

### Sample selection

Potential irregular migrants do not constitute a separate segment of the society that is easily distinguishable. As such, a well-defined sampling universe or database of potential irregular migrants is not available to draw a statistically representative random sample. Considering this challenge, the survey identified certain benchmark criteria for sample selection based on the profile of potential irregular migrants defined in the PARIM Background Report. The points-based criteria generally draws on the profile of potential irregular migrants based on their gender, age, education levels and economic background in the six districts of PARIM project. The PARIM Background Report identifies that potential irregular migrants from Pakistan, especially those attempting to migrate to Europe, are generally young, male, unmarried, with low levels of skills and education, and belonging to middle income households. In addition to these qualifiers, the criteria also includes the aspects of self or community identification as a potential irregular migrant as literature and available data confirms the high rate of irregular migration from the selected districts. Moreover, those with any previous or future plans for migration to Europe (regular or irregular) were also included in the criteria. Together, these qualifiers were helpful in selecting a sample of potential irregular migrants for the survey. As per the point-based criteria below, respondents who acquired more than 10 points in total were selected in the sample:

- i. Self-identification as a potential (irregular) emigrant. (7 points)
- ii. Community-identification as a potential irregular emigrant. (7 points)
- iii. Previous or future plan for migration towards EU. (5 points)
- iv. Age: 18-28 years. (3 points)
- v. Lower-Middle to Upper middle economic class. (3 points).
- vi. Low skill and educational background. (3 points)

For men, only those individuals were approached for consent for the survey who scored at least 10 points based on the above criteria. Additionally, the questionnaire (Annex II) also contained a direct question asking the extent to which the respondent would consider irregular migration (i.e. travelling without papers) in the near future with responses ranging from “not at all, unlikely, maybe, very likely, and certain) (Question C24).

As mentioned earlier, the survey also targeted women who had been identified by the community to consider irregular migration. The above selection criteria was not applied to female respondents, as the above has been developed based on literature available on predominantly male irregular migration trends from Pakistan. While irregular migration from Pakistan is predominantly attempted by men, KIIs with relevant stakeholders and PARIM Background Report highlight women’s influential role in the



decision-making process of family members intending to migrate, as well as the observation that more women are attempting to migrate irregularly themselves as well, even though the overall rate is quite low compared to men. Thus, those women who were identified by the community were included in the study where they agreed to participate.

### **Referral methodology**

As mentioned in the report, sample selection followed the snowball sampling approach, combined with purposive sampling. These are non-probabilistic sampling techniques, useful when a well-defined sampling universe or database of potential irregular migrants is not available to draw a statistically representative random sample.

For sample collection, the field team initially identified 15 potential irregular migrants from each of the six districts through referrals from community elders or institutions engaged for the stakeholder mapping (e.g. CSOs working in the area) that met the criteria. In the second stage, the first cohort of potential irregular migrants were asked to refer at least 4 potential irregular migrants that they were aware of, hence reaching to 60 respondents in the first two cohorts. Then the second cohort of respondents were asked to refer to three or four potential irregular migrants to be contacted for the survey, thus, reaching to a sample of 200 respondents in each district. The snowball sampling approach within each district is illustrated in the figure below: