

Irregular migration dynamics from Pakistan and the role of information campaigns

Final Report



The PARIM Project

The PARIM project seeks to provide information and raise awareness among potential migrants in Pakistan through a series of campaigns communicating balanced information about the **dangers and consequences of irregular migration**, options for **legal migration**, and the legal, social and economic **realities of life in Europe**.

Research conducted under PARIM

- Background report
- Survey among potential migrants in Pakistan
- Diaspora mapping report
- Stakeholder mapping
- Validation meetings
- Final research report

The PARIM Research Final Report

The PARIM final report is a **synthesis document**, integrating the major findings and lessons from all the different research strands to guide the campaign design.

The PARIM research analyses potential (irregular) migrants' **information needs and gaps**, their migration **intentions, motivations and decision-making processes**, and **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, and is based on primary data collected in the six PARIM districts: Faisalabad, Gujrat, Gujranwala, Mandi Bahauddin, Jhelum and Sialkot.

What drives irregular migration from Pakistan?



- **Profile:** Potential irregular migrants from Pakistan tend to be **young, male, unmarried, working on daily wage or self-employed**, with an education between primary and secondary level, an average household income of less than PKR 50,000 (EUR 255), and are slightly more likely to be from rural areas.
- **Aspirations:** 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.
- **Europe as a destination:** The main **pull factors** towards **Europe** are availability of jobs, the likelihood of getting citizenship in Europe, availability of investment and business opportunities, and presence of friends and family.
- **Irregular migration:** The main reasons for choosing irregular migration are that it is perceived to be **cheaper, more common and a quicker** mode of migration to reach Europe. Those from lower educated and lower income groups consider irregular migration as the only way to migrate.

How do potential irregular migrants prepare for their journeys?



- Potential irregular **migrants rely heavily on migration agents** for making migration arrangements for them.
- However, **finding a trustworthy agent** is 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 largely depend on their **parents or siblings for covering the cost of migration**. Those from lower income groups rely more on extended family and friends for covering their costs, which often puts them under significant debt.
- 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.

Lessons for designing an effective migration information campaign



- Effective migration information campaigns are difficult to achieve. Most people already have some level of **prior information about migration** and will be suspicious of information provided by a campaign, especially if they sense that the campaign wants to stop them from leaving. This is why institutional sources are often less trusted.
- Campaigns are most effective if they **target people while they are still searching for information**, and therefore motivated to listen.
- Simply providing accurate information is not sufficient. Research shows that information needs to be emotional to be effective.
- Information campaigns are more effective when they package content so 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).
- Those who provide information to potential migrants (messengers) should be selected based on their perceived **expertise, trustworthiness, and goodwill** among the campaign audience.
- The choice of **channel of communication** for the campaign should depend on the **accessibility, usage and trust** in the channel for migration related information.
- One on one interactions, such as in-person counselling, hotline conversations, social media chats, etc., appear to have the most optimal impact, while **broad outreach** (via social media or traditional mass media) can be used to funnel interactions towards one-on-one exchange.

All research findings from the PARIM project are available at: <https://www.budapestprocess.org/our-work/parim>

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