Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs) help people make informed decisions when considering to migrate.

- MRCs provide outgoing, intending and potential migrants with information and counselling on possibilities for safe, legal and orderly migration, as well as rules and regulations, including relevant pre-departure information. This includes information on:
  - overseas employment, protection mechanisms, work and living conditions abroad, rights and obligations.
  - national skills development and vocational training programmes as well as access to education abroad.
  - return processes and referral to reintegration support upon return.
- A team of MRC counsellors also raises awareness on the benefits of safe and regular migration and the dangers and consequences of irregular migration, and provides counselling in person, and via phone and skype.
- MRCs do not only provide information to the general public and migrants but also for governmental and nongovernmental stakeholders who are directly or indirectly involved in the facilitation or communication of migration related issues.
- MRCs conduct information sessions at relevant national institutes, such as vocational and technical training schools, universities, colleges and schools as well as with the communities and during conferences and other events.

Who is responsible for and who funds the MRCs?

The Migrant Resource Centres are established and managed jointly by the responsible government authority and the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD). They are funded by the European Union and implemented by ICMPD from August 2017 to July 2021. Migrant Resource Centres should eventually be fully incorporated in the government structures once the project is over. The MRCs are operated by one coordinator and a minimum of two counsellors.
WHERE WE WORK

MRCs are located either in the capital or a major city of the Silk Routes countries. There are currently two MRCs in Pakistan, one in Afghanistan, and two in Baghdad, Iraq. The establishment of two MRCs in Bangladesh as well as an expansion of the MRCs in Pakistan is under way.

WHERE IT ALL STARTED:
MRCS IN PAKISTAN AND WHAT THEY HAVE ACHIEVED

The Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (MOPHRD), Labour Department Punjab and the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) operate two Migrant Resource Centres (MRC) in Islamabad and Lahore. Within the first three years of their existence, the MRCs have served nearly 150,000 outgoing and potential migrants. More outreach is needed at district level and the extension of the MRC network is ongoing.

MRCs inform the public and youth about study, work and living conditions abroad, recruitment processes, rights and obligations, migration laws and policies, legal and cultural practices in destination countries, and risks and dangers associated with irregular migration. Engaging various stakeholders lies at the core of the MRC work, including with government counterparts, NGOs, international organisations, communities and educational institutes and change to MRCs conduct awareness raising sessions in schools and universities on a weekly basis. These awareness raising session target semi-skilled and skilled workers who could potentially become migrants. Both MRCs conducted 138 information sessions at educational institutes in one year. Pre-departure training for outgoing Pakistanis are provided by the MRC Islamabad on a daily basis at the Protectorates of Emigrants (PoE) in Rawalpindi. The training takes place while the outgoing migrants are waiting for their PoE stamp, which allows them to leave the country.
Since its official launch in July 2018, the Migrant Resource Centre in Kabul, Afghanistan, has established itself as an increasingly well-known and trusted resource for information on migration-related topics. Among its main features are a toll-free number serving several thousand clients each month; it is operational since early 2019. Furthermore, the MRC staff conduct outreach activities in schools, universities and training institutions, and reach out increasingly via social media.

Here are a few key figures showing the total outreach:

**Total Outreach 95,354**

- Participants of orientation in educational institutions: 11,000
- No of callers seeking advice from counsellors: > 14,000
- No of callers leaving an account of their migration experience: 1,900
- No of callers listening to pre-recorded messages: > 49,000
- No of callers counselled via Viber, WhatsApp, FB Messenger, Skype, sms & emails: 570
- No of callers listening to pre-recorded messages: > 49,000

The hotline was established in 2018 through local partners and EC funding and has since 2019 been integrated with the MRC. The total number of people who called the toll free number 5588 for migration advice in ten months of operation exceeded 65,000. The majority of callers are young men from the Kabul area; fewer calls are received from women and from the provinces. So who exactly calls the hotline?

**Who calls 5588?**

- Total 65,000
  - Male 18-25: 80.72%
  - Male 26-35: 4.17%
  - Male 36+: 11.00%
  - Female 18-25: 12.99%
  - Female 26-35: 0.82%
  - Female 36+: 0.14%

**From where?**

- Total 65,000
  - Kabul: 46.5%
  - All other provinces: 53.2%
  - Bamyan & Mazar e Sharif, Jalabad together: 0.3%
  - Badakhshan, Baghlan, Farah, Parwan together: 0.2%
  - Herat: 1.0%

**WHAT ARE THE PLANS FOR THE FUTURE?**

It is planned to expand the MRCs through additional offices with MORR as well as the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA) to provide pre-departure trainings for outgoing labour migrants and increase outreach at provincial level. The MRC is preparing a needs assessment study to get a better understanding on the communication channels and types of information needed outside of Kabul with regards to migration.
IRAQ

A first Migrant Resource Centre (MRC) has been established in Baghdad. It is placed
with the Ministry of Migration and Displaced and a second MRC office will be placed
with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in Baghdad.

The MRC provides a wide range of services including:

- Clear, accessible and understandable information for Iraqis on the risks, dangers and consequences of irregular
  emigration, signs of exploitation and ways of protection from human trafficking. In this context, the MRC also focuses on
  vulnerable groups and internally displaced people.
- Information to outgoing, intending and potential migrants on possibilities for safe, legal and orderly migration, as well as
  rules and regulations.
- Pre-departure orientation and information on work and living conditions abroad, their rights and obligations, access to
  protection mechanisms and information on return processes.
- Referral to services related to the return process, such as assistance for reintegration in Iraq, provision of technical/
  vocational training, etc.
- Post-arrival assistance to labour migrants coming to Iraq, providing them with information on their right and obligations
  in the country.
- MRCs also provide information for governmental and nongovernmental stakeholders who are directly or indirectly
  involved in the facilitation or communication of migration related issues.
- MRCs conduct information sessions at vocational and technical training schools, universities, colleges and schools as well
  as with communities and during conferences and other events.

COMING UP:
MRCs IN BANGLADESH

Due to the increasing number of Bangladeshi migrant workers and growing
complexities of working in other coun-
tries, migrants face various issues; some of them include lack of or insufficient
access to information and support networks.

ICMPD, together with the Ministry of Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Em-
ployment (MEWOE), will establish Migrant Resource Centres (MRC) in Dhaka
and Kumilla in 2020. They will be closely integrated with Bangladesh’s Bureau
of Manpower, Education, Training and the District Manpower and Employment
Office. The MRCs will provide a wide range of services including:

- conducting pre-departure orientation seminars for outgoing migrant workers on all migration-related topics.
- providing access to protection mechanisms and information on onsite programmes and return processes.
- informing the public about work and living conditions abroad, recruitment processes, rights and obligations, migration laws
  and policies, legal and cultural practices in destination countries, and risks and dangers associated with irregular migration.