



Engaging Diasporas in Information Campaigns on Migration

PARIM DIASPORA MAPPING REPORT

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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
- PARIM final research report

The PARIM Diaspora Mapping Report

The PARIM Diaspora Mapping Report examines the potential for engaging diaspora members as Ambassadors of Change in information and awareness-raising campaigns related to irregular migration.

Acknowledging the important role of social networks in migration decision-making, this report explores the potential of engaging diaspora members in information campaigns for improving effectiveness.

The report presents an overview of the Pakistani diaspora community in Europe, particularly in the four PARIM countries of research: Austria, Bulgaria, Greece, and Italy, through a detailed mapping of Pakistani migrant associations in these countries.

Where is the Pakistani diaspora in Europe?

- Pakistan has the 10th largest diaspora population in the world with 6.3 million people settled abroad, of which 15% are in Europe.
- Flow of Pakistanis to Europe started in the 1960s and 1970s and was premodinantly for economic reasons.
- First generation of Pakistani migrants to Europe comprised of semi or non-skilled labour, largely uneducated. The second and third generation is highly educated and employed in information technology, and health, among other skilled professions.
- The confluence of large social networks in Europe but few legal opportunities to migrate to Europe, along with high domestic unemployment rates and security issues within Pakistan, gave rise to the trend of irregular migration from certain “migration prone” districts of Pakistan.

How do migrant associations support potential and new migrants?

- Diaspora mapping identified 54 migrant associations in the four PARIM countries (AT, BG, GR, IT). Among them, nine migrant associations were interviewed for this research, in addition to the four Pakistani missions in these countries.

- The number and formality of migrant associations in a country depend on the size of the community. Associations vary in terms of their mandate, area of interest, and membership base. All associations have more than one focus area as part of their activities.
- Migrant associations primarily act as mediators and provide guidance to potential migrants, rather than any financial or material assistance, unless a potential migrant is personally known to a member.
- Migrant associations provide post-arrival support to new migrants such as assistance with accommodation, job placement, guidance about arranging documents, translation and interpretation services, guidance about access to host country services etc.

How does the diaspora influence irregular migration decision-making

- Friends and family in the diaspora influence migration decision-making through their narratives, the impressions they create when they visit or through their social media activities, and the materials they send back home from host countries often depicting financial and material success.
- Social networks abroad are one of the key sources for information about the journey and the conditions in the destination countries.
- Transnational social networks have been associated with lower financial, social, and emotional costs for newly arrived migrants.
- While migrants may facilitate migration based on kinship and community ties, they may also act as “gatekeepers” of information (due to concerns of competition or to hide their living conditions fearing “shame”).


How can diaspora associations be engaged in information campaigns in Pakistan?


- Potential migrants rely greatly on information and support from friends and family in the diaspora as trusted sources. However, they may not trust individuals/associations that are not personally known to them.
- Potential migrants may be more receptive to positive messaging about migration, sharing avenues of legal and safe migration, compared to an information campaign designed to discourage irregular migration through scare tactics
- The outreach and influence of social media “stars” (YouTubers and TikTokers) is quite strong for sharing information on the journeys and lives of irregular migrants in Europe, particularly those interested in settling in or transiting through Greece and Italy.
- The profile of selected diaspora members must resonate with the potential migrants in Pakistan. 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.

Findings from this PARIM diaspora mapping report have been incorporated in the final report that synthesises the research component of the project and serves as a reference document to guide the PARIM campaign design.

Contact Information

For more information please contact: Katharina Hahn-Schaur, Ayesha Qaisrani
International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)

 Gonzagagasse 1, 5th floor
1010 Vienna, Austria

 katharina.hahn-schaur@icmpd.org
ayesha.qaisrani@icmpd.org

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