

Migrant Resource Centres in Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan: Client Knowledge, Intentions, and Awareness of Regular and Irregular Migration

Funded by The European Union



Co-funded by Austria, Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, Germany and Greece



Acknowledgements

This report was prepared by Dr. Jacqueline Berman, in partnership with the staff of the Migrant Resource Centres in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan. The report benefitted from the review of ICMPD MRC teams, including Golda Roma, Hina Maqsood, Saad Rehman Khan, Samim Ahmadi, Xenia Pilipenko, as well as Phil Marshall.

For more information, please contact

International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)

Rothschildplatz 4

1020 Vienna, Austria

Tel: +43 1 504 46 77 0

Email: mrc@icmpd.org

ICMPD 2025. All rights reserved. The MRCs are funded by the European Union, Austria, Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, New Zealand, Norway, and Sweden and implemented by ICMPD. The views expressed in the publication are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the ICMPD or donors.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since 2016, around eight national and local government authorities and the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) have partnered to set up and operate Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs) in South and Central Asia. This includes MRCs in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Iraq, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Tajikistan. These Centres work to reach and inform potential migrants about the (1) dangers and risks associated with irregular migration, (2) opportunities for safe, orderly, and regular migration, (3) means of increasing their safety while in transit and at their destination, and (4) their rights, duties, and obligations in countries of destination. This information seeks to influence potential migrants' knowledge, attitudes, and intentions towards irregular and safe migration as well as increase their awareness of resources available along the migration pathway, which in turn can influence their decision-making and behaviours related to migration. Thus, by providing both timely and accurate information and needed services and referrals, the MRCs aim to contribute to increasing the protection of migrants while decreasing irregular migration.

Since 2024, MRCs across Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan actively reached an estimated 12.8 million potential migrants about key migration-related topics. Potential migrants engaged with or brought specific questions to the MRCs in-person, in groups, by phone, through traditional media, and across various social media platforms. This survey-based study assesses the influence of MRCs on potential migrants' knowledge, intentions, and awareness (KIAs) about migration *after* interacting with one of the MRCs via one of their robust set of channels. It thus (1) provides an analysis to MRC partners and stakeholders about MRCs' influence on potential migrants' KIAs, and (2) delivers key information that MRCs can use to further target and strengthen their on-going activities. In addition, it will (3) serve as a high-level comparison for an independent comparison group study of potential migrants' knowledge, attitudes, and intentions currently underway in Pakistan and Iraq.

The study involved data from two key sources: (1) a post-MRC engagement survey administered by MRC counsellors directly after interacting with one of the MRCs via online counselling, telephone counselling, outreach sessions, or technical and vocational education and training (TVET) group informational sessions; and (2) a short follow-up survey with a 5 percent sample of those clients who completed a post-MRC engagement survey also administered by the MRC counsellors in October and November 2024.¹ Both collected information about various aspects of participants KIAs after interacting with an MRC in some way (N = 8,214 post survey and N = 465 follow-up survey or 5+ percent).

The study found *after interacting with an MRC in 2024*, potential migrants reported several key changes, including, for example:

- A notable **93 percent of potential migrants** surveyed reported “high” or “very high” **improvement in their knowledge of legal migration options.**
- Some **95 percent** of clients surveyed reported that a person would be “likely” or “very likely” **to face exploitation when travelling without legal papers** (i.e., irregularly).

¹ The mode MRC counsellors use to administer the survey after engagement with the MRC varies by site and activity. In Afghanistan, where the MRC functions as a virtual resource only, the MRC counsellors leave a survey for the potential migrant to complete in the social media channel the potential migrant used to contact them and asked them to complete the survey. In the other MRCs, the counsellors survey the potential migrant directly after one-on-one counselling. For those engaging via a TVET group event, the MRC counsellors sample participants and ask them to complete the survey directly after the event.

- Only **about 4 percent** of the sample were “likely” or “very likely” to use informal (irregular) channels to migrate.
- About **73 percent** of the sample were **aware of available migration-related services at home or abroad**.

These findings suggest that the **MRCs’ strategy of delivering potential migrants with targeted, accurate information from reliable sources across a myriad of channels contributed to improving their knowledge, intentions, and awareness of (i) safe and regular options for migration; (ii) the dangers and risks of irregular migration; and (iii) resources and services available to them at home and abroad able to inform and protect them.** The MRCs’ ability to influence these KIAs also suggests that the MRC strategy can influence safer migration behaviours over time, which in turn, can contribute to improved protection of migrants and reduced irregular migration. Towards this end, ICMPD is conducting a robust and targeted field survey-based study of potential migrants in 2025. This study uses a comparison group design to explore differences in knowledge and attitudes towards migration between target groups in areas *receiving* MRC services versus in areas *not receiving* them (but with similar rates of out migration).

INTRODUCTION

Over the past several years, the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) has set up, in partnership with national governments, several MRCs in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Iraq, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Tajikistan. These MRCs are funded by the European Union, Austria, Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, New Zealand, Norway, and Sweden.²

The MRCs’ aim to support informed decision-making among potential, departing, current, and returning migrants at the personal, family and community level throughout the full migration cycle. The MRCs included in this assessment operate in Pakistan (Islamabad, Lahore, Peshawar), Afghanistan (virtual), and Iraq (Baghdad), where, in most cases, they are located in government buildings and are jointly supervised by ICMPD and the partner governments to ensure strong local ownership and support sustainability over time.³

Their work focuses on providing accurate and impartial information about migration to potential migrants via social media information campaigns, in-person outreach events, pre-departure briefings, and group orientation sessions in communities, universities and Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutes as well as individual counselling services in-person, on social media (for example, via WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Telegram, among other social media and messaging platforms), via email, and hot lines to address individual questions. They also provide information via traditional media, including news articles, TV, and public service announcements.

With clear and neutral messaging, the MRCs are thus working to raise awareness and increase knowledge among potential and outgoing migrants about (1) the dangers of irregular migration, (2) opportunities and pathways for safe, regular and orderly migration and (3) means of increasing their safety when in transit or at their destination. This awareness and knowledge will, in turn, assist

² MRC-related activities are structured into three ICMPD-led projects: PROTECT (2023-2026), PARIM II (2023-2025) and MIRAMI (2023-2025).

³ MRC Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Sri Lanka opened in 2024 and thus are not included in this analysis. Their results will be included in the impact assessment of MRCs in 2025.

intending and potential migrants in making informed decisions about migration and encourage them to engage in safe migration behaviours.

To understand what is changing with those migrants reached, the MRC counsellors ask a sample of them *after* interacting with an MRC, to report on their:

- Knowledge of options for regular migration,
- Knowledge of the risks associated with irregular migration,
- Intentions regarding informal (i.e., irregular) migration, and
- Awareness of available government services at home or abroad.

This report provides an analysis of their responses to illustrate the influence of MRC activities on potential migrants' (also referred to as MRC 'clients') knowledge, intentions, and awareness (KIAs) of these key topics – topics that correlate with informed decision-making and resilience among potential, departing, current, and returning migrants.

The remainder of this report explains how this assessment was conducted (Section II), shares a set of findings about potential migrant's knowledge, intentions, and awareness of key migration topics after interacting with an MRCs in 2024 (Section III), and concludes with short assessment of study findings overall, as well as a description of MRC expansion in 2024 and 2025 and a look ahead at additional, robust comparative analyses of MRC's influence on potential migrants planned for 2025 (Section IV)

ABOUT THIS ASSESSMENT

This assessment is based on data collected by MRC counsellors from Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan between January and November 2024. It captures potential migrants' self-reported knowledge, intentions, and awareness of key migration-related topics *after* interacting with an MRC as framed by four primary research questions:

- Are potential migrants more informed about safe options for legal migration?
- Are potential migrants more informed about the risks associated with irregular migration?
- Are potential migrants less likely to migrate irregularly?
- Are potential migrants informed about the availability of migration-related services in their country of residence or abroad?

Data sources. Data collection for the assessment relied on two survey instruments: (1) The regular pre/post survey administered by MRCs from January to November 2024, and (2) a short follow-up survey administered in November to December 2024. The sampling approach for both instruments was purposive: for the pre/post survey, every tenth MRC client was selected from among the total number of MRC clients, while for the follow-up survey every third client was selected from the list of the most recent respondents who had previously participated in the post surveys.

Study sample. Potential migrants who completed a post-MRC interaction survey (N = 8,214), who were then sampled for a follow-up survey (5+ percent or N = 465) included those exposed to the MRCs' campaigns, events, and counselling services in 2024. Among those exposed to the MRCs' activities, the sample had two specific criteria for inclusion: all potential migrants who (1) interacted with an MRC through any of its activities (social media- or hotline-based counselling, pre-departure/post arrival briefing, TVET session, community outreach, etc.) in 2024, and (2) provided data that was

entered into the pre/post survey forms in 2024. To capture additional information about MRC influence on their intentions and awareness, MRC counsellors also conducted a short follow-up survey in October and November 2024, asking about potential migrants fitting these criteria about (3) their intentions to migrate informally, and (4) awareness of government services available to them in their current location or abroad (excluded for MRC Afghanistan) following interaction with an MRC.⁴

Table 1. Study sample size and distribution⁵

MRC location	Post survey sample size	Follow-up survey sample size ⁶
1. Islamabad, Pakistan	2,332	117
2. Lahore, Pakistan	3,950	201
3. Peshawar, Pakistan	1,026	45
4. Afghanistan (virtual)	356	73
5. Baghdad, Iraq	550	29
TOTAL	8,214	465

Analytic approach. For the analysis, post-survey and follow-up survey data collected by MRC counsellors in excel were extracted by site (MRC location) and cleaned. Cleaning involved (2) excluding respondents with missing data, and (2) correcting variable details, for example misspellings like “femail,” which was corrected to “female”. Data were then structured for analysis in a separate excel sheet to calculate frequencies and crosstabs by gender and location for each survey question using excel pivot tables. The resulting analyses/findings are presented by question, response, gender and location in tables (Section IV).

Limitations. Although this study provides evidence of the MRCs’ influence on the self-reported knowledge, intentions and awareness of potential migrants interacting with MRCs, it was descriptive in design, and as such, the results are neither directly attributable to the MRCs’ activities nor generalisable to all potential migrants in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iraq. Further rigorous research is needed to attribute and generalise impacts. Despite these limitations, however, the study provides insights into the results of MRCs’ activities in 2024, most especially with regard to their influence on potential migrants’ knowledge and intentions after interacting with one of the MRCs included.

ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

⁴ The mode MRC counsellors use to administer the survey after engagement with the MRC varies by site and activity. In Afghanistan, where the MRC functions as a virtual resource only, the MRC counsellors leave a survey for the potential migrant to complete in the social media channel the potential migrant used to contact them and asked them to complete the survey. In the other MRCs, the counsellors survey the potential migrant directly after one-on-one counselling. For those engaging via a TVET group event, the MRC counsellors sample participants and ask them to complete the survey directly after the event.

⁵ The follow-up survey sample aimed to reach 5 percent (N = 411) of the total number of potential migrants completing a post-MRC interaction survey in 2024 (N = 8,214). It ultimately reached a bit over the intended sample size (N = 465). It is important to note that the MRCs interacted with and provided support to a far larger number than 8,214 potential migrants in 2024. In Afghanistan, for example, MRC counsellors have received an estimated 29,000 queries from potential migrants; only 356 of them completed a post-survey that the MRC counsellors left for them on social media to complete. This is quite understandable, given the complex situations potential migrants from Afghanistan face.

⁶ Originally targeted as 5 percent of the post-MRC engagement survey sample (N = 411), MRC counsellors collected a larger group (N = 465), representing a slightly larger sample of about 6 percent.

This section presents the study’s analytic findings about the knowledge, intentions, and awareness of potential migrants interacting with the MRCs in 2024. The data indicate that MRC activities are contributing to improving client knowledge of legal migration pathways, discouraging informal or irregular migration, and increasing awareness of available migration-related services at home and abroad.

Knowledge

To understand potential migrants’ knowledge about legal migration options (research question 1), MRC counsellors regularly ask their clients about any changes in their knowledge after interacting with the MRC, asking to what extent they think their knowledge of legal migration options has improved post-MRC interaction.⁷

In 2024, a notable **93 percent of potential migrants surveyed reported “high” or “very high” improvement in their knowledge of legal migration pathways after interacting with an MRC.** About 82 percent of females and 94 percent of males in the total sample reported high or very high improvement. MRC Iraq had the highest proportion of females in the sample that reported this level of improvement (about 35 percent of the total sample) and MRC Islamabad for males (about 76 percent of the total sample) (Table 2).

Table 2. Post-MRC interaction knowledge of legal migration options, by location and gender

Following your session/interaction with the MRC, to what extent would you say your knowledge on legal migration options for your country has improved?						
	Afghanistan	Iraq	Islamabad	Lahore	Peshawar	TOTAL
Female	20.51%	47.42%	18.37%	25.24%	21.93%	24.65%
Very high improvement in knowledge	9.4%	23.6%	11.5%	18.9%	14.0%	16.4%
High improvement in knowledge	9.0%	11.7%	5.8%	5.4%	6.6%	6.3%
Fair improvement in knowledge	1.6%	6.5%	0.9%	0.7%	1.2%	1.3%
Little to no improvement in knowledge	0.2%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%
Prefer not to answer	0.0%	1.4%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
Don't know	0.2%	2.2%	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.3%
Male	79.49%	52.58%	81.63%	74.76%	78.07%	75.35%
Very high improvement in knowledge	33.6%	20.6%	46.7%	57.8%	33.6%	48.0%
High improvement in knowledge	34.1%	15.7%	29.7%	16.0%	34.4%	22.5%
Fair improvement in knowledge	10.6%	9.3%	4.2%	0.9%	8.0%	3.8%
Little to no improvement in knowledge	0.2%	2.2%	0.3%	0.0%	0.3%	0.3%
Prefer not to answer	0.5%	2.4%	0.3%	0.0%	0.5%	0.3%
Don't know	0.5%	2.4%	0.4%	0.1%	1.3%	0.5%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

⁷ As noted, the number of potential migrants surveyed and asked this question varies by MRC location and activity type. In some cases, all clients are asked this question using a standardised survey tool (e.g., after one-on-one counselling) while in other cases, a sample of clients are asked (e.g., at group TVET sessions) using the same tool, among other modes of data collection.

As proxy for the risks associated with irregular migration (research question 2), MRC counsellors regularly ask a series of questions about the likelihood of facing a variety of risks. For example, they ask about the likelihood of facing exploitation, theft or extortion, and/or access to facilities in the destination country. Across all MRC sites, some **95 percent of all clients surveyed after interacting with an MRC reported that a person would be “likely” or “very likely” to face exploitation when travelling without legal papers** (i.e., irregularly). This included 97 percent of all females and 94 percent of all males who understood this, indicating a significant understanding of this risk after interacting with an MRC (Table 3).

Table 3. Post-MRC interaction understanding of the risks of exploitation by gender

If a person is travelling outside your country without legal papers, how likely is that person to face the following risks?	
Exploitation	Post-MRC interaction
Female	29.1%
Very likely	22.4%
Likely	5.3%
Somewhat likely	0.8%
Not likely	0.5%
Don't know	0.3%
Male	70.9%
Very likely	51.5%
Likely	15.0%
Somewhat likely	2.8%
Not likely	0.8%
Don't know	0.7%
TOTAL	100.0%

When it comes to the risk of theft and/or extortion when traveling without the legal papers/irregularly, some **85 percent reported that it was “likely” or “very likely” to occur**. By gender, 93 percent reported this likely or very likely, while 84 percent of males reported the same (Table 4). This also indicates that MRC clients had a clear understanding of the risks of irregular migration after interacting with an MRC in 2024, with some difference by gender

Table 4. Post-MRC interaction understanding of the risks of theft and/or extortion by gender

If a person is travelling outside your country without legal papers, how likely is that person to face the following risks?	
Theft and/or extortion	Post-MRC interaction
Female	29.1%
Very likely	18.9%
Likely	7.5%
Somewhat likely	1.9%
Not likely	0.3%
Don't know	0.5%
Male	70.9%
Very likely	38.5%
Likely	19.7%
Somewhat likely	7.5%

Not likely	2.8%
Don't know	2.3%
Grand Total	100.0%

Taken together, these two proxies suggest that in 2024, potential migrants were highly informed about the risks of irregular migration after interacting with one of the MRCs.

Intentions

As established in previous research, the intention to migrate or not plays a notable role in any decision and behaviour related to migration.⁸ To understand potential migrants' intentions toward migration, MRC counsellors regularly surveyed their clients about their intentions to emigrate in general. Among those surveyed, about **11 percent of the total female sample** and about **62 percent of the total male sample** reported that they were 'likely' or 'very likely' to migrate after interacting with an MRC (Table 5). This question does **not**, however, indicate **how** they intend to migrate, i.e., with a regular option or irregularly. Table 6 suggests that only a **very small percentage intends to migrate informally**, i.e., irregularly.

Table 5. Post-MRC interaction likelihood to emigrate to another country

How likely is that you will emigrate to another country?						
	Afghanistan	Iraq	Islamabad	Lahore	Peshawar	TOTAL
Female	13.7%	48.3%	9.4%	22.4%	26.7%	19.8%
Very likely	5.5%	10.3%	5.1%	8.0%	13.3%	7.5%
Likely	1.4%	0.0%	1.7%	5.0%	2.2%	3.0%
Neither likely nor unlikely (neutral)	1.4%	3.4%	0.0%	6.5%	8.9%	4.1%
Unlikely	1.4%	10.3%	1.7%	1.5%	0.0%	1.9%
Very unlikely	1.4%	20.7%	0.0%	1.5%	2.2%	2.4%
Don't know	2.7%	3.4%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%
Male	86.3%	51.7%	90.6%	77.6%	73.3%	80.2%
Very likely	38.4%	3.4%	29.1%	52.7%	42.2%	40.4%
Likely	21.9%	3.4%	40.2%	14.4%	20.0%	21.9%
Neither likely nor unlikely (neutral)	15.1%	6.9%	2.6%	9.0%	4.4%	7.7%
Unlikely	0.0%	10.3%	9.4%	1.0%	4.4%	3.9%
Very unlikely	5.5%	27.6%	2.6%	0.5%	2.2%	3.7%
Don't know	5.5%	0.0%	6.8%	0.0%	0.0%	2.6%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

To address the issue of intention to migrate irregularly, MRC counsellors followed-up with a sample of their 2024 clients to ask about their likelihood to migrate using informal channels.⁹ This follow-up helped assess the influence of the MRCs on potential migrants' intentions to emigrate irregularly (research question 3) – and thus face increased risks. The survey found that after interacting with an MRC, **only about 4 percent of the sample were "likely" or "very likely" to use informal channels to migrate** (1 percent of women in the total sample and about 3 percent of men). Across Pakistan, no

⁸ See literature review in Dennison, James (2022) *Impact assessment of the Migrant Resource Centres in the Silk Routes Region*, ICMPD.

⁹ Potential migrants were asked about "informal channels" to decrease bias, i.e., when asked, most survey respondents will deny any intention to engage in irregular or illegal behaviors. Asking about "informal channels" gives a permission structure to respondents for articulating their intentions regarding migration.

women (0 percent) and nearly no men (0.9 percent) intended to use informal channels to migrate (Table 6).

This comparatively lower level for Pakistan correlates with MRC persistence, that is, two of the MRCs in Pakistan were established in 2016 (Lahore and Islamabad; Peshawar in 2024) and have had more time to diversify their services, messages, and channels to reach and inform potential migrants about the risks of irregular migration, when compared to Iraq (established in 2021). That said, those “likely” or “very likely” to migrate via informal channels was low (about 1 percent) across all potential migrants after interacting with any of the MRCs.

Table 6. Post-MRC interaction likelihood to migrate informally, by location and gender

Compared to before, how likely are you to migrate through informal channels after interacting with MRCs?						
	Afghanistan	Iraq	Islamabad	Lahore	Peshawar	TOTAL
Female	13.7%	48.3%	9.4%	22.4%	26.7%	19.8%
Very likely	0.0%	10.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%
Likely	1.4%	3.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%
Neither likely nor unlikely (neutral)	0.0%	6.9%	1.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%
Unlikely	4.1%	0.0%	2.6%	2.5%	0.0%	2.4%
Very unlikely	2.7%	27.6%	5.1%	19.9%	26.7%	14.6%
Don't know	5.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%
Male	86.3%	51.7%	90.6%	77.6%	73.3%	80.2%
Very likely	6.8%	0.0%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%
Likely	8.2%	3.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.5%
Neither likely nor unlikely (neutral)	8.2%	6.9%	8.5%	0.0%	0.0%	3.9%
Unlikely	26.0%	3.4%	18.8%	8.5%	4.4%	13.1%
Very unlikely	26.0%	37.9%	59.0%	68.7%	68.9%	57.6%
Don't know	11.0%	0.0%	3.4%	0.5%	0.0%	2.8%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Awareness

Governments and NGOs’ migration-related services available to potential migrants both at home and abroad can play a key role in protecting potential migrants and their rights, as well as in reducing irregular migration. As noted, across all MRCs, the MRC staff provide extensive information on migration services available to potential migrants in their home countries, in transit, and in countries of destination via individual counselling, social media, TV, news articles, group information sessions, and pre-departure briefings.

To assess potential migrants’ awareness of these key resources after they have interacted with an MRC, MRC counsellors asked a sample of their 2024 clients about their awareness of these services (research question 4). They found that on average, about **73 percent of potential migrants were either “somewhat aware” or “very aware” of available migration-related services at home or abroad** (Table 7). This awareness was notably lower among females in the total sample (14 percent, compared to 59 percent of males in the total sample). Females who engaged with MRC Peshawar (27 percent of females in the sample) were most aware of these services, while those engaging with MRC Afghanistan were least aware (1 percent).

Table 7. Post-MRC interaction awareness of migration-related services, by location and gender

Are you aware about migration-related services provided in your country of residence or abroad by any organization (e.g. government, NGOs, international organizations)?						
	Afghanistan	Iraq	Islamabad	Lahore	Peshawar	TOTAL*
Female	12.50%	48.28%	9.40%	22.39%	26.67%	19.61%
Very aware	1.39%	6.90%	1.71%	16.42%	22.22%	10.34%
Somewhat aware	0.00%	10.34%	1.71%	3.98%	4.44%	3.23%
Neither aware nor unaware (neutral)	6.94%	10.34%	3.42%	1.49%	0.00%	3.23%
Somewhat unaware	1.39%	10.34%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.86%
Very unaware	1.39%	3.45%	2.56%	0.00%	0.00%	1.08%
Don't know	1.39%	6.90%	0.00%	0.50%	0.00%	0.86%
Male	87.50%	51.72%	90.60%	77.61%	73.33%	80.39%
Very aware	4.17%	3.45%	32.48%	67.16%	37.78%	41.81%
Somewhat aware	13.89%	10.34%	29.91%	8.96%	35.56%	17.67%
Neither aware nor unaware (neutral)	15.28%	20.69%	6.84%	0.50%	0.00%	5.60%
Somewhat unaware	11.11%	10.34%	5.98%	0.00%	0.00%	3.88%
Very unaware	23.61%	3.45%	13.68%	0.50%	0.00%	7.54%
Don't know	19.44%	3.45%	1.71%	0.50%	0.00%	3.88%
TOTAL	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

*Total of the full sample, i.e., ~20% of the total sample was female and ~80% was male.

As noted above, that **95 percent** of clients surveyed **reported** that a person would be “likely” or “very likely” **to face exploitation when travelling without legal papers** (i.e., irregularly) also suggests a high level of awareness of not only the supports and services available to them during the migration cycle, but also increasing awareness of the conditions associated with irregular migration – knowledge, per the theory of change, able to influence their decision-making about if and how to migrate.

CONCLUSION

This study found that in 2024, the MRC’s information campaigns and services had a positive influence on potential migrants’ knowledge, intentions, and awareness after interacting with them. Specifically, those interacting with one of the MRCs and surveyed post-interaction reported **very high levels of improved knowledge of regular options for migration** (about 93 percent) and **very low levels of intentions to migrate irregularly** (about 4 percent), with the majority reporting **awareness of available services to them when in transit or abroad** (about 73 percent).

In 2024, national governments in partnership with ICMPD established additional MRCs in Erbil, Kyrgyzstan, Sri Lanka, and Tajikistan. In 2025, they will expand to additional sites in Uzbekistan as well as Sulaymaniyah and Basra in Iraq. This is a notable doubling of those fully operational in 2024 (three sites in Pakistan, one site in Iraq, one virtual centre for Afghanistan). This expansion of the MRC model across countries and sites suggests both a keen interest among countries of origins in partnering and MRCs as an evidence-informed approach to increasing protection of migrants and decreasing irregular migration. As noted, ICMPD is currently conducting a comprehensive, descriptive study of MRC contributions to potential migrants’ knowledge and attitudes in partnership with two independent survey firms in Pakistan and Iraq. Using a comparison group design and collecting data from similar groups receiving versus not receiving MRC services, these studies will deliver information about these

MRCs' influence on potential migrants' orientation towards migration – and thus contribute to the evidence base on MRC effectiveness.