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## Exploring Links between Post-Arrival Initiatives and Labour Market Outcomes of Migrants

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edited by Philippe Fargues and Nasra M. Shah

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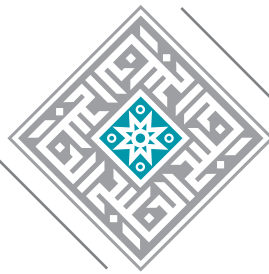


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## About the Gulf Research Center

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# About the Gulf Labour Markets, Migration, and Population (GLMM) Programme

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The Gulf Labour Markets, Migration, and Population (GLMM) Programme (<http://gulfmigration.eu>) is an independent, non-partisan, non-profit joint initiative of a major Gulf think tank, the Gulf Research Center (GRC - Jeddah, Geneva, Cambridge), and a globally renowned university, the European University Institute (EUI - Florence). GLMM provides data, analyses, and recommendations contributing to the understanding and management of labour migration in the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, engaging with all stakeholders.



## IV

### Exploring Links between Post-Arrival Initiatives and Labour Market Outcomes of Migrants

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**Abstract:** The general surge in international migration and the issue of how to best accommodate the large groups of new arrivals and make use of their skills in the labour market through integration and mobility is a matter that is gaining increasing attention. Germany, Singapore, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), with their varying institutional contexts of migration, have adopted policies and launched initiatives which aim to support their large diverse migrant populations. While Germany advocates the adoption of comprehensive labour market and social integration focused initiatives for asylum seekers and refugees for long-term employment gains, Singapore has a nationwide skills development strategy wherein investment in the workforce is seen as a path to economic growth. The UAE, and in particular the Emirate of Dubai, focuses on legal and cultural orientation as an Emirate-wide strategy to promote coexistence and facilitate mobility and mediation in employment disputes. In light of these examples, can the use of such strategies actually have an impact on labour market integration or mobility of migrants?

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This chapter explores the diverse post-arrival policies and initiatives directed at migrants that Germany, Singapore, and the UAE have recently implemented and studies whether they point to a possible improvement of migrant labour market outcomes in relation to integration in Germany and mobility in Singapore and the UAE. The chapter identifies both long-term and short-term strategies used and why each is directed at specific groups of migrants. The chapter also explains in what way a short-term strategy can transition into a long-term one in the case of the UAE following completion of the Expo 2020.

## **Introduction**

Successful labour market integration of migrants, it has been proven, raises the overall economic productivity of the receiving country as they become active participants in the economy. Many studies by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) report on the positive impact of migration, which is enhanced by more employment opportunities and labour market participation of migrants. In turn, this results in an increase in labour market flexibility, higher contributions to the economy in taxes, and technological and skills development. The benefits of labour market integration and mobility of migrants are countless, and examples of efforts to reform laws to better provide support to them in the employment context can be seen in various OECD country policies in the recent decades.

Enhancing skills, providing support programmes, and offering technical, language, and thematic orientation training to migrants in the host country within “equal opportunity” projects has been endorsed by various international organisations such as International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the World Bank, International Labour Organisation (ILO), and OECD, among others. Additionally, several European countries including Sweden, Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, and Norway have national programmes to enhance the skills needed for the host country labour market and provide opportunities for further education for migrants that may translate into employability and upward mobility. Better technical and profession-specific language training opens up opportunities for employment and improves knowledge of the job market. Additionally, recognising origin country educational and professional experience helps in providing individualised support as knowledge gaps can be identified, thus improving access to the labour market once training is provided. Offering orientation programmes would facilitate a smoother transition into the host country, improve the ability to connect with others, and aid migrants in their ability to resolve problems and face on the job challenges.



Whether such programmes are adopted depends on national migration policies and the historical and institutional context of migration. Socio-economic factors also come into play, and migrant profiles, skills, and potential residency periods shape the strategy and whether or not it is likely to be a long-term or short-term one.

In the German context, the history of migration to and from the country has changed a multitude of times. Between the 1950s and 60s, Germany witnessed an inflow of labour migrants from various parts of the world under their “Gastarbeiter” (guest worker) policy to complement shortages in the labour market post-World War II. Additionally, formation of the European Union (EU) allowed for free movement of European citizens within European borders. The crisis following the Arab Spring in 2011 led to a mixed inward flow of migrants from the Middle East and Africa seeking asylum, or merely attempting to find work. In 2015, Germany received a total of one million asylum seekers and refugees. Faced with an ageing working population, low fertility rates, and a shifting socio-economic and demographic context, Germany began directing its overall national strategies to labour market integration and social integration of the young arrivals to reap the benefits they may bring through two broad approaches: Providing the assessment and skills training needed to participate in the labour market; providing opportunities for social integration through language and cultural orientation, which, in turn, was also expected to promote labour market participation for those who were primarily expected to obtain permanent residency and eventually citizenship thereafter.

On the other end of the spectrum, non-immigration<sup>1</sup> countries such as Singapore and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are unique in the way they sourced labour migrants when immense structural developments and industrialisation were taking place. Both countries witnessed an economic, demographic, and social boom, during which they consciously created labour market space for new arrivals, only as and when it was demanded by the market. The main features of this migration model were temporary legal migration status, restriction to providing citizenship or permanent residence to migrants, and a careful selection of those joining the labour market, preconditioned on skills and industry requirements. By and large, social and cultural integration was not encouraged.

In Singapore, demand for foreign labour grew exponentially following its independence from Malaysia in 1965. As the country launched extensive

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1. Non immigration countries, owing to their temporary migration models and restriction to providing access to citizenship and permanent residence status.

development plans, labour migrants of all skillsets became contributors to the economic development of Singapore. The country also faced demographic challenges of an ageing population and low birth rates, which further exacerbated its reliance on foreign workers to sustain the economy and ensure continued prosperity. Singapore's general migration policy became a demand-driven system whereby migrant workers filled the employment gaps that the locals could not fill. Foreign workers' numbers surpassed the numbers of their local counterparts, placing Singapore as one of the largest labour migrant receiving countries in the world. Today, the total population of Singapore stands at 5.61 million comprising residents and non-residents, and the top five countries of origin, as reported in United Nations statistics in 2013, are Malaysia, China, Indonesia, India, and Pakistan. As of 2017, the Singapore Ministry of Manpower estimated the number of foreign workers at 1.4 million. Singapore's dependence on labour migration for its transformation into one of the most developed countries in the world represents a unique illustration of the importance of migration for development. Importing labour for a temporary period of time and keeping them mobile in the labour market was key for change; however, a strategy shift to sourcing and retaining the highly-skilled took place, and thereby an investment in capacity building, because upskilling as a longer-term strategy was needed to sustain the economy.

Following the discovery of oil in the 1950s, the UAE witnessed an economic and demographic boom and a shift from dependence on the fishing and pearl industries. The urgent need for development, a small local population, and a requirement for low and high skills in the country led to a heavy reliance on foreign workers to transition the economy into what is now a regional trading and tourism hub. At a record rate, the seven Emirates, and especially Abu Dhabi and Dubai, began their modern transformation and soon focused on diversifying from an oil and gas industry-based economy to a knowledge-based one. In 2014, foreigners were estimated to be 7.8 million of a total population of 9.5 million, making the UAE one of the largest migrant receivers in the world. In 2013, Dubai won the right to host Expo 2020, a significant international exposition where millions of visitors are expected. Dubai's residents were estimated at 2.3 million in 2014 and grew by another 100,000 to reach approximately 2.4 million the following year. Large numbers of low-skilled foreign workers, especially in the construction field, embarked on the Expo 2020 development projects, expecting short-term employment prospects. Hence, the government of Dubai, through a local government body, initiated a strategy which aimed at cultural and legal orientation for the newcomers, mainly low-skilled construction worker groups, to promote coexistence and better knowledge of rights

and responsibilities in relation to the labour law to resolve problems and challenges on the job.

This chapter will present the cases of three unique host countries of migrants, Germany, Singapore, and the UAE in the context of their initiatives to promote post-arrival strategies and programmes to support their varying migrant populations. The chapter does not attempt to compare these contexts, but the authors will explore a possibility of associating the post-arrival initiatives in these countries with the outcomes of migrants in the labour market in relation to their integration or mobility. All three countries have shown an ability to absorb large young migrant populations in the last few decades. This poses two questions: Can the strategy by Germany really promote labour market integration, and can Singapore and the UAE promote labour market mobility? In what ways are the strategies relative to the status, profiles/skills, and expected residency period of the migrant?

The chapter identifies “post-arrival strategies/initiatives” hereon, as any programme which aims to support migrants in the destination country to prosper, develop, or have a facilitated life. It will consider only government-led post-arrival initiatives and will refer only to some of the more recent developments due to the long history of migration and changes within each country’s context and due to space restriction. Although it is an important element of the analysis, the chapter will not examine discriminatory practices in the labour market.

We divide the chapter into three sections; Germany, Singapore, and the UAE (Dubai). In each section, we first briefly identify the government-led initiatives, which will then help us to decipher why such programmes were chosen and implemented, and how it is dependent on the migration context and migrant profiles. We then attempt to study the prevailing conditions of the labour market in relation to the programmes implemented to attempt to draw out a possible link between them and the labour market conditions of the target migrants and whether or not such programmes may benefit the migrants or strengthen their labour market integration or mobility.

With Dubai being the main focus of the study, we review a series of facilitation initiatives taken by various authorities to support foreign workers, in addition to a post-arrival orientation programme implemented in 2016. We also offer a short description of the programme contents and of the likely benefits on workers; however, we do not offer an evaluation at this stage as it seems too soon at this point. The authors have found two general common patterns within the cases: post-arrival strategies to enhance skills were for long-term migrants and cultural and legal orientation programmes were for temporary migrants. Finally, the study

puts forward recommendations to the Dubai government on how the programme may be expanded to further promote upward mobility of workers, which would eventually prove beneficial for the UAE.

## **Post-Arrival Initiatives and Potential Labour Market Outcomes**

### ***The Case of Germany***

Previously, labour market integration of asylum seekers and refugees was thought to promote further immigration and was hence discouraged; however, the German government slowly amended policies to utilise the mixture of skills in the labour market and began to view their new guests as an opportunity to fill both skilled and unskilled labour shortages. The country's focus seems to be on two main broad policies: labour market integration; and social integration of the new arrivals by exposing them to interrelated post-arrival initiatives. Many of the initiatives are taken by the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, in partnership with the private sector. In this section, efforts toward labour market integration of refugees and asylum seekers in Germany, rather than labour migrants, will be outlined in light of the recent refugee crisis.

At the Federal level, following the announcement of the open-door immigration policy in 2015, the government also introduced a new “Integration Law” in 2016, outlining a set of rights and responsibilities of asylum seekers. This specified compulsory language training and cultural integration courses for those whose asylum applications were successful, resulting in their gaining access to the labour market. This language training was expected to enhance their social interactions with locals. Familiarising them with social norms would strengthen their social and professional networks, which would facilitate labour market participation through the connections gained. The integration and language courses remained in high demand; in the first months of 2015, approximately 1,400 language course providers conducted more than 8,000 courses—a 15 per cent increase from the same period in 2014. In 2016, the German government supplied more than 600 hours of language training to newcomers, which, studies prove, have directed migrants to the higher quality or highly-skilled labour market and is likely to improve employability in the medium and long term seeing the dependency on the German language. The 2016 law also allowed the creation of an additional 100,000 low wage jobs (one Euro jobs or “mini jobs”) for low- and unskilled migrants that were filled up, and which, studies confirm, have aided in migrant country-specific human capital and language skills and, hence, permanent transition into employment.

Early skills screening and qualifications recognition was also introduced through the “Recognition Act” of 2012. Applicants received a certificate of equivalency through an evaluation of the qualifications acquired abroad within three months. Newcomers were encouraged to work harder at integrating through language learning and employment and that constituted a right for them to move and work freely within Germany. This focus on assessment and recognition of skills has shown to lead to higher employment and better jobs, according to OECD studies in 2014, which also contributed towards their chances at receiving permanent residency within a shorter time frame if proven they were able to provide for themselves.

Partnerships with private sector businesses encouraged training, hiring, mentoring, and providing business advice to refugees in order to understand the German job market and gain knowledge on business norms. Furthermore, the government enhanced communication using new media and social media platforms seeing the rise in the use of technology and the likelihood of migrants communicating through them further facilitating social interaction.

Internships and industry specific skills training were provided to link to professional work experience when transitioning to the labour market, private sector tailored curriculums and specified the skills needed according to market requirements. This allowed a solid growth in migrants’ careers in relation to market demands and a possibility to extend employment. Various industries opened up for refugees and asylum seekers, and what conditioned their participation was generally skill level and German language proficiency.

In general, Germany has high records on the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX). In 2014, it entered the top 10 in a list of 38 countries on favourable integration policies. Labour market mobility of migrants increased from a value of 75/100 in 2007 to 86/100 in 2014, according to the MIPEX score of EU countries. A study by the German Institute for Economic Research found that within the current patterns, economic impacts of migrants will show positive results within 5-10 years, outweighing their cost through their contributions, eventually becoming a long-term gain for the German economy.

Another study by OECD showed that overall, Germany’s labour market conditions are favourable, and unemployment rates in 2016 stood at 3.9 per cent—the second lowest in the OECD. The study also reported a marked improvement in immigrant labour market integration over the past decade. Considering the large presence of migrants in Germany, this constitutes very positive labour market outcomes.

Germany has made strides in positively embracing migration and sets a successful example among its European counterparts, of how strengthening such policies reaped multiple benefits; long-term strategies focused on skills, technical, and language training, which targeted those who were expected to settle for extended periods of time because it was both in the government's and migrants' interest in the long and intermediate terms. This broad policy, that is more prevalent in the context of receiving asylum seekers and refugees, provided legitimate paths to permanent residence and citizenship.

### **Initial Orientation Programmes for Asylum Seekers with Low Recognition Rates**

In contrast to the long-term strategies identified previously, an interesting finding is that Germany also offers programmes for asylum seekers with low recognition rates, i.e., low prospects of staying in Germany in the long run, and “whose time-limited residence status precludes any entitlement to attend an integration course” (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees). These are initial “orientation” programmes consisting of six modules mainly aiming to expand knowledge on everyday life in Germany and learn the basics of the language. Compulsory modules include ‘Values and Social Co-existence’ detailing the “fundamental values underpinning life in Germany and how these are manifested in everyday life.”<sup>2</sup> It is also interesting to note that this initial orientation programme is voluntary, while integration and language courses for high recognition rates are compulsory.

### ***The Case of Singapore***

Although Singapore attempted to slow down the rate of migration, the demand-driven system ensured that consistent labour market integration of migrants—conditional upon a temporary work contract was encompassed in the broad government strategy. Social integration of migrants and learning the local language is not highly promoted. However, a recent shift to encourage longer-term settlement of the highly-skilled through offering benefits to them has allowed limited opportunities to apply for Permanent Residency which may (under strict circumstances) allow for Singaporean citizenship.

Singapore stratifies its population into a) Singapore citizens, i.e., those born and raised or naturalised in Singapore b) Permanent residents, i.e., non-citizens; long-term employed residents, with a stake in Singapore, and an opportunity to

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2. Ibid.



apply for citizenship c) Non-residents, or temporary workers with a limited term residency period. The Ministry of Manpower manages foreign workers in Singapore, and in affiliation with them, the 'Workforce Singapore' agency offers programmes through private training institutions that fall under the purview of the ministry.

In 1979, Singapore implemented a Skills Development Levy Act and established a Skills Development Fund imposing levies on employers for each of their workers (excluding some categories). Both workers and employers can tap into the fund to finance skills training, retrain retrenched workers, or upgrade business operations and technology. Thereby, the Singapore government shifted to a workforce retention strategy, especially focused on maintaining highly-skilled migrants through incentivising them to stay for longer periods of time in the country to ensure a consistently higher quality of knowledge-based talent. Since then, the government's efforts have turned to capacity building to drive Singapore's next phase of development towards an advanced economy. After Singapore created avenues to begin sourcing from within the available talent pool, migrants circulated for longer periods within the country, so investing in their upskilling was seen as the new path to development.

In 2014, the government of Singapore announced a new master plan for the workforce called "Continuing Education and Training" (CET 2020), initially launched in 2008, to promote life-long education, training, and employment through upskilling. The government facilitated accessibility to training courses for employers and employees, and ensured quality of the training providers and efficacy of the contents through a training measurement system. This provided an ongoing opportunity for workers in Singapore to catch up with labour market demands as well as ensure salary increments throughout their career. Programmes were technical industry-specific and also provided soft skills needed to perform job related tasks, for upward mobility, or even to obtain new interests irrespective of the field.

Workers across all sectors are encouraged to apply for the training programme under the CET strategy. However, only citizens and permanent residents (i.e., those staying for the medium and long term) may avail of government funding grants to encourage those who are more likely to stay, to enjoy a higher standard of living, and to maximise professional and personal potential.

As evident from this example, skills development was transformed into a national strategy to attract foreign investment as a prerequisite for economic development. Meeting the demands of investors through up-skilled personnel by focusing on long-term human resource development as well as short and medium-

term vocational skills eventually resulted in a higher flow of skills in the country across most industries.

Raising the competitiveness of the workforce is acknowledged to be one of the causes for the economic development witnessed in Singapore in the last decades. Since then, training and skills upgrading has become an influential ‘industry’ in itself, placing a larger emphasis on improving labour market mobility across all industries.

In the first quarter of 2016, Singapore reached one of the lowest unemployment rates globally for both residents and citizens, estimated at only 1.9 per cent of the total employable population, according to a report published by the Manpower Research and Statistics Department in Singapore in association with the Singapore Ministry of Manpower.

According to the revised CET 2020 plan, the government of Singapore predicts that nearly 60 per cent of the resident workforce will have at least a diploma qualification by 2020, compared to only 36 per cent in 2007. Investment funding for this project has exceeded \$3 billion since 2008.

Indicators were developed to measure the effectiveness of the programmes, including how the skills learned were utilised in the workplace and how they helped in translating to salary increments. The result indicated generally that the scheme is a positive step towards improving labour market mobility and in promoting life-long learning.

### *Orientation Programmes for Low-Skilled Non-Residents*

For the short-term non-residents of Singapore, especially the lower-skilled categories such as domestic workers, the government offers “orientation” sessions to enhance knowledge of Singaporean labour laws and specific health and safety standards.

In 2017, the Ministry of Manpower introduced a mandatory “Settling In” programme for more worker categories arriving in Singapore, and it is expected to be fully implemented in 2018. The aim of the programme is to teach new arrivals in specific sectors about social norms, laws, and help avenues. The programme, similar to the domestic workers’ sessions, mainly targets low-skilled workers in the construction, marine, process, manufacturing and services sectors with the aim of increasing productivity and curbing violations that workers are subjected to by employers.



### *The Case of Dubai*

In Dubai, there is a heavy dependence on low-skilled personnel, and especially construction workers, for completion of the Expo 2020 projects. The increase in both the low- and highly-skilled diverse population exposed the country to a number of difficulties as it sought to handle this massive influx, especially in the last decade. In their efforts to integrate these people of various educational, professional, and cultural backgrounds in the labour market while aiming for fast economic growth, the attention of the government turned toward reforming its laws to cope with such demographic, economic, and social changes.

On the federal level, the UAE reformed existing laws and introduced new processes to support and facilitate the massive numbers of migrant labour in the country. In 2009, the Wage Protection System was introduced to protect the monthly wages of workers in the private sector through transferral under a government-monitored electronic system. The government also amended the Labour Law in 2016 to eliminate contract substitution or variations from the origin country. Under this law, workers may notify and transfer employers after a number of legal steps, which aimed to facilitate greater labour mobility across the country.

To cope with the diverse population and to promote coexistence, the government introduced an Anti-Discrimination Law in 2015, criminalising all forms of verbal and non-verbal discrimination in and outside the workplace. “The law is intended to provide a sound foundation for the environment of tolerance, broadmindedness and acceptance in the UAE and aims to safeguard people regardless of their origin, beliefs or race, against acts that promote religious hate and intolerance” (*The National*, 2015).

In Dubai, many initiatives were launched for workers’ support. In 2005, the Executive Council in Dubai established the Permanent Committee of Labour Affairs (hereon PCLA), under the Executive Council Resolution (3) for the year 2011. PCLA is a unique Dubai-based government entity comprising high ranking government officials from various departments including the General Directorate of Residency and Foreign Affairs in Dubai, Dubai Police, and Dubai Courts, among others. Its main focus is foreign workers’ related issues, and its duties include: inspection of workplace and accommodation health and safety, investigation of company’s contractual compliance, responding to and investigating labour complaints, launching humanitarian and healthcare programmes for low-income workers, and promoting awareness and educational initiatives among workers and employers in Dubai.

The committee engages with workers and employers through labour inspection sessions as well as through field research. Therefore, it is able to identify workers at risk and companies in violation of health and safety standards, and wage delays or non-payment, and sometimes acts as a mediator when workers raise disputes against employers.

### *Orientation Programmes for Low-Skilled Workers*

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration (2006) highlighted the importance of providing information to migrants on their rights as well as assisting them on defending their rights. In 2016, the committee launched a post-arrival orientation programme for low-skilled foreign workers in Dubai which aimed to support workers' knowledge on their rights and promoted concepts of co-existence and cultural understanding. It was based on discussions and recommendations made at various Abu Dhabi Dialogue (ADD) ministerial meetings,<sup>3</sup> which were endorsed by ministers of member states. The initiative complemented a nationwide launch of the "Know Your Rights" campaign that was started by the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation.

The programme material was drafted by the PCLA and implemented in collaboration with other government and private entities including the Dubai Health Authority, construction companies, and a private research and training institute.

The programme is given in the three languages understood by workers in the Emirate—Urdu/Hindi, English, and Arabic—and covers four main topics.

1. *Cultural Awareness and Living Conditions in the UAE*: To understand values, how to adapt to the surroundings, dos and don'ts, and social and cultural freedoms and limitations.
2. *Residency Rules and Regulations in the Emirate*: Introduction to the legal procedures of issuing a residency permit, undergoing medical fitness tests, and issuing an Emirates Identity Card and direction to designated authorities.
3. *Labour Law (8) of 1980*: Introduction to laws pertaining to work and workplace under the UAE Federal Law No. (8) of 1980 and its amendments, employer to employee contractual obligations, introduction to criminal law, and other Emirate-specific policies.

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3. The ADD is an initiative between various origin and destination countries to promote positive discussions on labour migration.

4. *Basic Health and Safety Regulations According to the Laws of the Emirate:* Understanding the employer's responsibility to offer health and safety standards at the workplace and gaining access to government help channels and labour complaints procedures in Dubai.

The programme covered the Emirate of Dubai in its initial phases as the receiver of more than 4.4 million foreign workers accounted for in 2014. This number is expected to rise in the coming years not only because of the Expo 2020, but also due to the Emirate's economic diversification, business and housing development projects, as well as its development as a booming tourism and technology hub. Dubai represents the complexity of the foreign worker population profile in the UAE, as close to 200 different nationalities currently residing in the country are represented in Dubai.

Low-skilled workers, employed in the construction industry, were estimated at over one million in Dubai alone as of 2017. The large majority of these workers originates from small towns and rural areas within the Indian subcontinent and has lower levels of education and legal awareness. Recruitment tends to take place in masses to fill the requirements of private sector companies arranging for construction projects, and in such a process, knowledge acquired about employment in the UAE may or may not be passed on by the recruiting party or other government channels. This exacerbates an environment whereby the destination country employer has the upper hand in providing or obstructing knowledge of employment standards and policies in the country.

Hence, both newly arriving workers and those who have resided in Dubai for longer periods were targeted through the programme. The PCLA also disseminated printed material, including manuals and booklets in multiple languages, outlining the programme's contents in line with the UAE Labour Law (8) of 1980.

The initiative taken in 2016 witnessed several phases. Firstly, in the pilot phase, it targeted workers in the construction sector through partnerships with the private sector which supplied the workers. In 2017, the second phase began with a much larger scope through partnerships with the Dubai Health Authority, simultaneously linking the training to a medical fitness examination to gain a larger presence. Smart kiosks were installed across labour accommodations to test the use of smart technologies to disseminate the information. The third phase of the programme began in 2018 with further expansion, covering multiple locations, and reaching a larger audience.

As the orientation programme is fairly new, only an expectation of its likely benefits on workers will be given, as it is not possible to estimate its direct effects on their outcomes, as was done in the cases of Germany and Singapore.

Firstly, in total, around 20,000 workers have been trained since the inception of the programme in 2016, and workers were awarded certificates from PCLA as an appreciation of attendance. The programme is also endorsed by various Dubai authorities. But how can this type of programme lead to improved labour market mobility of workers, and can it indeed do so?

The orientation programme helps improve the knowledge of social and cultural aspects, and residency and living conditions in the UAE, which is deemed imperative especially in large scale corporations where many different nationalities are both working and living together (in labour accommodations). The contents promote coexistence and reinforce policies of non-discrimination, equality, and religious tolerance, as well as respect for women.

For example, one of the surprising things that workers found during the training session was the diversity of nationalities that exist in Dubai.<sup>4</sup> The knowledge that 200 nationalities live and work in the UAE, and individuals may practice their religion freely without unreasonable restrictions, and that the government and people were accepting of different religious practices as well as provide places of worship may encourage the workers' feelings of coexistence at the workplace and in their personal lives. It will also prevent them from acting in a culturally offensive manner, which may penalise them if the matter is taken to the authorities.

Employers as actors in the migration process do not necessarily prioritise giving access to legal information to the migrant lest it would hinder their round the clock expansion plans or empower the migrant to act against the employer when disputes arise. Instructing workers on their rights and making them aware of the legal procedures according to the labour law is expected to aid them when facing work-related problems. This would include an understanding of the importance of complying with the law and their rights, such as the right to obtain wages on time through WPS, and steps needed to reach authorities. Another point they need to know is that the law entails at least a day's rest and annual leave.

Additionally, this section of the programme may promote higher labour market mobility, where workers are instructed on the legal steps to notify and change employers within the job market, as well as the types of indemnities

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4. Statistics and comments on the programme were obtained from the PCLA firsthand.

they should expect, and the conditions to obtain them, should their contracts end. Challenges faced throughout their employment would be resolved through understanding government department roles, along with the details and contact numbers of grievance channels. This type of information is expected to provide a safe and secure channel to reach the designated authorities within the destination country, rather than approaching diplomatic missions in the UAE. Since avenues for labour complaint mechanisms have been defined, and authorities have facilitated the procedures for complaints resolutions through complaints centers and specialised courts, such details would not only allow the worker to understand that their rights are fully protected, but also raise the overall knowledge on rights and improve competitiveness of the workforce as their confidence levels are raised, which may improve their mobility chances in the labour market and within their current positions.

Through this programme, the government can ensure that workers have undergone the mandatory training for health and safety aspects and that they are aware of general health issues such as the importance of hydration while working and obtaining and using their safety gear. This is an important step especially when it comes to workers who are employed by small and medium sized corporations that may bypass safety regulations and are not in compliance with the midday break law at work sites, exposing the worker to hazards.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

It is interesting to note that throughout the study the authors have identified similarities between Germany, Singapore and the UAE in their efforts to offer “orientation” classes to the evidently temporarily residing low-skilled categories of workers as in the case of Singapore and the UAE, and migrants with low recognition rates in Germany. In all three cases, migrants are given orientation sessions when they are not expected to stay within the country for longer periods. Meanwhile, a clear pattern noticed was that skills development and capacity building strategies are, in contrast, considered privileges that only the longer residing migrant may avail, and these strategies are expected to offer higher benefits and positive returns for the labour market and the economy, as well as the migrants.

Generally, labour market participation and mobility of migrants in a host country reveals how active governments are in their overall efforts to support migrants and is a key indicator of the long-term development of the economic and social conditions of the host country. Additionally, Bilgili (2015) states that “immigrants who are not familiar with destination country labour market and

working conditions, culture, and whose academic and professional skills and experiences may not be directly recognized may face severe challenges to find the right kind of jobs for themselves,” concluding that it is necessary and beneficial to develop targeted policies that improve labour market outcomes for migrants.

In the German context, a focus on integration policies and programmes as a path to obtain permanent residence and citizenship is the broad country strategy. Successful labour market integration is crucial for the success of the German economy in its ability to tackle its shrinking working age population, and to curb unemployment and crime hotbeds. In the case of Singapore, where temporary migration is encompassed in the legal framework and a path to naturalisation is complicated, a focus on “lifelong learning” to improve the quality of the skills within the existing pool of talent has allowed the country to position its human capital investment as a central national strategy. Shifting the focus to upskilling has given Singapore a chance to promote constant upward mobility to attract foreign investment.

In Dubai, the strategy of providing cultural and legal awareness and rights-based information to construction workers fits within the Dubai temporary labour migration sourcing model, and competitive market. This sustains Finegold and Soskice’s argument (1988) that “competitive capital markets and short-term profit goals prevent firms from making longer-term decisions” given the more short-term focus on the bottom line. This applies to the UAE and its private sector which may not view upskilling or skills development as a current, immediate priority while the country is in rapid preparation for Expo 2020.

However, seeing the positive outcomes on migrants’ positions in the labour markets of Germany and Singapore in recent years allows space for recommendations to the UAE to: a) embed the programme in the national policies to further strengthen its visible outreach and impact on workers b) slowly expand the existing programme and its training scope to encompass human capital, technical and soft skills, and basic language development following the Expo 2020, and c) develop clear indicators in the next implementation phases of the training to measure its potential effects on labour market mobility and other intended benefits on the target migrants. In this sense, policy reforms to promote capacity building can raise the general quality of skills in the country to better prepare the economy for the time when a higher flow of skills is needed to continue the momentum following the Expo. This would also provide a chance to improve labour market outcomes for temporary workers and enhance their quality of life for when they return home following their employment period in the country. It may be difficult, however,

to predict further investment in skills and capacity building in the UAE for the purpose of high skill retention due to the rising nationalisation policies.

The relatively new post-arrival policies and initiatives described in this chapter makes the direct impact evaluation of labour market outcomes of migrants due only to the initiatives taken extremely complicated, given the many other factors involved. Generally, there is an abundance of policy studies and a lack of impact studies on the topic, which prevents an accurate evaluation of the impact of strategies on the labour market outcomes of migrants, and if their outcomes may be improved by a higher focus (and larger budget) given to such efforts. Further studies should be conducted by identifying clear indicators to measure the programmes and their links to an improved quality of life of migrants. However, in conclusion, it is safe to speculate that there is a link present between the two, and it is indeed positive.



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## **Migration to the Gulf: Policies in Sending and Receiving Countries**

International migration is a ubiquitous reality in the Gulf states where foreign citizens are a majority in the workforce as well as in the total population of several states. Migration is instrumental in the Gulf nations' prosperity and at the same time regarded as a challenge to their identity. For many countries of origin in Asia, the Arab world and East Africa, migration to the Gulf is an integral part of the daily lives of tens of millions and a constitutive element of economies and societies.

On the sending side, there is a widespread view that emigrants serve the prosperity of their nation, through financial remittances, enhanced skills, and enlarged business networks, and that they must be protected in the countries where they live. State institutions have been created to look for migration opportunities and to defend the rights of their expatriate nationals in terms of living and working conditions. Fair recruitment and decent work have become an integral part of their agenda. Emigration is now regarded as a resource for national economies in the same way as trade, and a matter for external policies and politics.

On the receiving side, Gulf policies must address the challenge of admitting contract workers needed by ambitious development programmes and welfare goals, while tackling a number of migration-related imbalances: too much dependency on foreign labour; too few women in the labour force; too much unused education and wasted skills among nationals; too much money flooding out of the country in the form of workers' remittances; and too rigid regulations ending up in high levels of irregularity.

This book is about policies designed to regulate migration and protect the migrants and enable them to contribute to the prosperity of the Gulf and the development of their home countries. It brings unique knowledge to all those striving to improve current systems, from a state's as well as a migrant's perspective.

