The Future of Domestic Work in the Countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council

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Foreword

Acknowledgements

Executive Summary

In 2016, the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) hosted **around 3.77 million domestic workers**. Based on data from the past 10 years, the sector is growing at an annual average growth rate of 8.7 per cent (or 35,970 new domestic workers every year).

The consistent demand for household paid care and domestic work in the countries of the GCC **is driven by two trends**:

❖ <u>Explanation A:</u> Increasing care pressures on national households due to higher female labour force participation rates (FLFPRs) combined with growing child and elderly care needs in national contexts where care is traditionally the responsibility of women in the family and where intergenerational households (i.e., care by extended family members) are being replaced by nuclear households.

❖ <u>Explanation B:</u> A growing population of dual wage-earning expatriate families with child care needs and a demand for professional housekeepers who require little supervision.

The familial care policies of the GCC have transformed domestic work into an essential component of care provision in households, with domestic workers providing care themselves or relieving employers from household chores so that they, in turn, can provide care. More attention needs to be paid to the socio-demographic changes in the GCC and to their implications for the management of human resources. **The organization of the sector, as it progresses from housekeeping to home-paid care, must take into consideration how the long-term demand in the sector will be structured and what this demand structure will mean for labour matching.**

Skills and skills' recognition are an important aspect of labour matching.

<u>Employers</u> in the UAE have expressed a preference for hiring skilled domestic workers. **Vocational skills** (technical know-how especially in the area of child care), **transversal skills** (e.g., ability to read and write English; maturity to "manage internally" the multiple exclusions of domestic work) **and skills that reduce the transaction costs of recruitment and the emotional cost of parting with the worker** (e.g., experience working with children of different age categories to accompany the child as his/her developmental needs change; ability to adapt time management and upgrade vocational skills when employers move to larger homes) **are valued among employers**.

<u>Workers,</u> on the other hand, lament the lack of appropriate guidance from the side of governments, recruitment agencies and employers and admit to finding themselves in situations where they do not have the appropriate skills. **Skill deficits according to workers** are linked to certain **employment arrangements** (like on-demand work); the **use of modern household appliances and detergents**; **cooking**; working with **household beneficiaries** like children, elderly, special needs children; and, their ability to **cope** with workplace conflicts (including with other

workers), stress, compassion fatigue from caring arrangements and nostalgia due to family dislocation.

Domestic workers gain new skills on the job that allow them to transition from *low-waged, closely-supervised, live-in employment arrangements in large households* to *higher-waged, housekeeping or nanny-only live-out arrangements where they are rather autonomous* in carrying out their functions. **Recognizing workers' employment history and providing opportunities for mobility within the sector will be important to capitalize on workers' experience for the benefit of workers and employers both**.

Labour recruiters are not keeping up with the growing demand for skilled and professional workers. **Recruiters' labour matching "systems" are skill-blind** and largely informed by recruiters' individual experience with the sector and cognitive shortcuts. **Thus, employers avoid the intermediation of labour recruiters when the demand for skilled workers is more pressing**. They prefer recruitment through word-of-mouth where they can verify a workers' references.

To keep up with the sector's development, an overhaul and reorganization of the sector would require:

- reflecting on what the longer-term demand in the sector means for a **labour admission** system for domestic workers;
- developing **national benchmarks or occupational standards** that capture the segmentation within the sector;
- **developing, assessing, and recognizing workers' skills against a national benchmark** to better match employer expectations with worker qualifications and to improve the quality of the services delivered to employers, especially those related to child, elderly and post-operative care where developmental, safety and hygiene protocols are paramount.
- **promoting workers' mobility within the sector** (from lower to higher complexity tasks) in accordance with these same benchmarks; and,
- progressively **moving away from the nationality-based wage differentials** to a waging system modelled after the benchmarks.

B. Suggestions for the way forward

- ❖ **Linking wage increases to complexity** in the sector and tying labour admission to skill certification or to recognition of prior learning (RPL) systems.
- ❖ **Developing regional competence standards (RCS)** to recognize the regional mobility of domestic workers and to transition from the logic of "facilitating market access based on nationality" to the logic of "harmonized, transparent and efficient labour matching."
- ❖ **Tying RCS to regional skills passports for domestic workers** to recognize the experience of workers who are mobile within the GCC and progressively promote the recognition of these passports for returning domestic workers (in the GCC-Asia or GCC-Africa migration corridors).

❖ **Expanding the discussion on RCS (and corresponding wage levels) to organizations representing relevant interest groups** (e.g., groups and government agencies representing the interests of families, the elderly, women, migrant workers, children, and people with disability) to garner support for these standards and to revise and adjust them in light of local economic factors and the needs of migrant domestic workers and their families.

Acronyms

ADD	Abu Dhabi Dialogue among the Asian labour-sending and receiving countries
ASEAN	Association of South Asian Nations
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
FLFPR	Female Labour Force Participation Rate
HKCTU	Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
IDWF	International Domestic Workers Federation
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ITUC	International Trade Union Confederation
MOHRE	Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation
MRA	Mutual Recognition Agreement
NOS	National Occupational Standards
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development
QCC	Abu Dhabi Quality and Conformity Council
RCS	Regional Competence Standards
RMCS	Regional Model Competency Standards
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TESDA	Technical Education and Skills Development Authority
TSC	Tadbeer Service Centers
UAE	United Arab Emirates
WHO	World Health Organization

1. Future of work, future of domestic work

A. Review of the global debates

Multilateral institutions[1] are facilitating global discussions about the "future of work" or "future of jobs" to examine the impact of artificial intelligence and automation on jobs, skills, and wages. While jobs will be terminated in many sectors, the demand for care work will grow, creating 50 million to 90 million jobs globally, mainly in occupations such as childcare, early-childhood education, cleaning, cooking, and gardening (McKinsey Global Institute 2017, 60-61). Caring jobs require social interaction, empathy and judgment and therefore cannot be automated (World Bank 2018, 12-13).

Across the world, the governance of the domestic work sector is being revisited from the perspective of the care economy, primarily because the growing share of the world's population aged over 65 has created a spike in the number of people in need of long-term care. Conjointly, the world is facing an ever-expanding shortage of health care professionals (e.g., doctors, midwives, nurses). The deficit was estimated at 7.2 million health care workers in 2013 and is expected to reach 12.9 million by 2035 (WHO 2013).

The result is that out-patient care in private homes is taking primacy over service provisioning in hospitals, especially in the case of long-term and post-operative care. Further, (care)site-shifting is leading to task-shifting, with migrant domestic workers taking on the role of unregulated nurses (Kofman and Raghuram, 2013, p. 113) – administering drugs, changing gavage feeding tubes, cleaning post-operative wounds, bathing and taking the blood pressure of long-term care patients – while specialized nurses take on the role of doctors, "supervising others who give essential physical, emotional and psychological care" (Pearson 2003, 626). Growing female labour force participation rates further contribute to the demand for household paid care.

The site-shifting of long-term care arrangements and growing pressure on dual-wage earning households to provide child care will be felt more strongly in contexts where care is traditionally the responsibility of families and where there is a cultural reluctance to outsourcing care to publicly and/or privately-funded institutions. The demand for migrant women from poorer countries to shoulder the burden of care in middle-to-high-income countries will be sustained owing to a number of "migration push factors" in countries of origin such as poverty, limited or no access to education, gender discrimination, inequalities in access to employment opportunities, violence, land dispossession, and conflict (Tayah 2016, 26).

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[1] Among others, the World Bank, International Labour Organization, World Economic Forum, and the International Monetary Fund.

Figure 1. The succession of global trends that is reorganizing domestic work

| Growing female labour force participation rates + Demographic transformations: longer life expectancy, lower fertility and a growing old age dependency ratio. | → | Growing share of people in need of paid (professional and non-professional) long-term care. | → | An ever expanding deficit in health care workers. Deficit was 7.2 million in 2013. Expected to reach 12.9 million by 2035. |

| Out-patient care in private homes, especially in the case of long-term and post-operative care. | → | Care *site-shifting* has lead to *task-shifting*: specialized nurses assume the role of doctors. Domestic workers assume the role of unregulated nurses. |

Domestic and care work is gendered with women performing the majority of related functions, both paid and unpaid. Unpaid work amounts to USD 10 trillion per year, approximately equivalent to 13 percent of global GDP (McKinsey Global Institute 2017). Investment in the care industries would have a direct effect on expanding women's employment in the care economy and would enable more women to enter the labour force (McKinsey Global Institute 2017, 60-61; ITUC 2017). If two per cent of gross domestic product was invested in the care industry of the countries of the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), 2.4 – 6.1 per cent increases in overall employment would be generated.[2] Female employment would increase 3.3–8.2 percentage points, and that of men would increase by 1.4–4 per cent (ITUC 2016). In non-OECD countries, 24 million new jobs would be created in China, 11 million in India, nearly 2.8 million in Indonesia, 4.2 million in Brazil, just over 400,000 in South Africa and 63,000 in Costa Rica (ITUC 2017).

Investment in care is therefore important for realizing the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially goals one (ending poverty), five (achieve gender equality and empower women and girls), eight (promote decent work and economic growth), and ten (reducing inequalities). The domestic work sector's significance in sustaining reproductive labour and enabling the integration of women in lucrative employment make it a cornerstone of the care economy (Tayah 2016, 23). Delivering quality care thus goes hand in hand with ensuring decent working conditions for domestic workers.

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[2] That is, 13.0 million new jobs would be created in the United States, 3.5 million in Japan, 2 million in Germany, 1.5 million in the United Kingdom, 1.0 million in Italy, 600,000 in Australia, and nearly 120,000 in Denmark.

B. Where do the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) stand from these transformations?

While the GCC region remains relatively young in comparison with Europe, North America and East Asia, it is predicted that by 2050 all GCC countries will achieve sub-replacement fertility levels.[3] Average life expectancy in almost all the GCC countries will be 75 years in 2025 and 80 years in 2050 (Khan, Hussein and Dean 2017, 475). The old age dependency ratio will increase in all GCC countries leading to an increased burden for young wage earners and the government, therefore putting the sustainability of the family-based care model to the test. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) will have the highest ageing index; it is estimated that in 2050, the UAE will have 147 elders for every 100 persons younger than 15 years old (Khan, Hussein and Dean 2017, 476).

At the same time, the female labour force participation rate (FLFPR) among nationals in the GCC has increased by more than 10 percentage points over the past decade to represent 31 per cent of total national employment in 2016. In countries like Kuwait, the FLFPR was 40 per cent among nationals in 2016. Further, support traditionally provided by intergenerational households[4] is dissipating with a growing move towards nuclear family households (Crabtree 2007). These trends combined place greater care pressures on women, traditionally the primary caregivers in GCC households, who in turn, shift the burden of care to migrant domestic workers from Asia and Africa.

In light of global and regional transformations, more attention needs to be paid to the socio-demographic changes in the countries of the GCC and to their implications for the management of human resources. Domestic workers are an important cogwheel in the GCC countries' demographic transition, now amounting to 3.77 million in 2016. The organization of the sector, as it progresses from housekeeping to home-paid care, must take into consideration how the long-term demand in the sector will be structured and what this demand will mean for skills, their certification and recognition in the GCC countries and across migration corridors for returning domestic workers.

Against this background, this report revisits the meaning of "domestic work" in the countries of the GCC. It is structured as follows:

- An examination of the size and composition of the sector at national and GCC levels;
- A discussion of the demand in the sector, distinguishing between the demand among nationals and expatriates;

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[3] TFR = 2.1 births per woman.
[4] Intergenerational households are families consisting of more than two generations living under the same roof. This arrangement allows elderly parents to provide assistance to adult children and/or grandchildren and children and grandchildren to provide care to elderly parents.

- An analysis of the current state of affairs in employer-domestic worker matching using the Emirates of Abu Dhabi and Dubai as case study (interviews with labour recruiters and interviews and focus groups with employers and domestic workers focused on labour matching in the pre-Tadbeer Service Center (TSC) phase); and,
- A reflection on human resource decisions concerning the domestic work sector in the countries of the GCC.

Findings are based on a statistical analysis of demographic and employment trends at the national and regional levels; in-depth interviews with 10 TSC operators in Abu Dhabi and Dubai; in-depth interviews with 82 domestic workers and focus groups with domestic workers in Abu Dhabi and Dubai; in-depth interviews with employers in Abu Dhabi and Dubai; and, a focus group with employers in Abu Dhabi.

The findings of this report will be discussed during the Abu Dhabi Dialogue Senior Officials' Meeting in May 2018.

Box 1. Recent transformations in the governance of domestic work in the GCC and in the UAE

- ❖ A greater realization of the size and dependence on domestic workers has led to a number of legal and institutional reforms aimed at improving the governance of the sector in Bahrain (in 2012 and 2017), Saudi Arabia (in 2013), Kuwait (in 2015, in 2018), the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Qatar (in 2017). These reforms include the transfer of the mandate of domestic work from Ministries of Interior to Ministries of Labour, new domestic worker laws and corresponding standard unified contracts, wage protection mechanisms for domestic workers and recruitment reforms providing for more government oversight.

- ❖ In 2018, the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation (MOHRE) of the UAE issued 40 licenses for Tadbeer Service Centers (TSC). Franchisees provide services on behalf of the Ministry through a corporate partnership between the Ministry and the private sector. TSCs offer comprehensive services related to recruiting foreign domestic workers according to the rules and regulations stipulated by the Ministry. TSCs will replace all existing recruitment agencies by the end of 2018.

- ❖ The Abu Dhabi Quality and Conformity Council (Abu Dhabi QCC) is developing national competence standards for domestic work and job description for the occupations making up the sector were discussed with TSC operators.

- ❖ The UAE is developing an electronic system for labour admission that streamlines labour recruitment, with a view to ensuring compliance with international standards, and the proposed elements of a skill acquisition, certification and mutual recognition systems, including for domestic workers.

2. Domestic work is a significant sector of the GCC economy and growing

In 2016, GCC countries hosted around 3.77 million domestic workers, 1.65 million of whom (or 44 per cent) were women. Of the remaining 1.54 million male domestic workers, 73 percent were employed, mainly as drivers, in Saudi Arabia.

However, these numbers represent significant underestimates owing to the concentration of domestic workers in informal employment and among migrants in irregular situation. In some countries of the GCC, at least half of the migrants in an irregular situation are domestic workers (Shah and Al-Kazi 2017).

Figure 2. Number of domestic workers in the GCC countries by sex, 2016
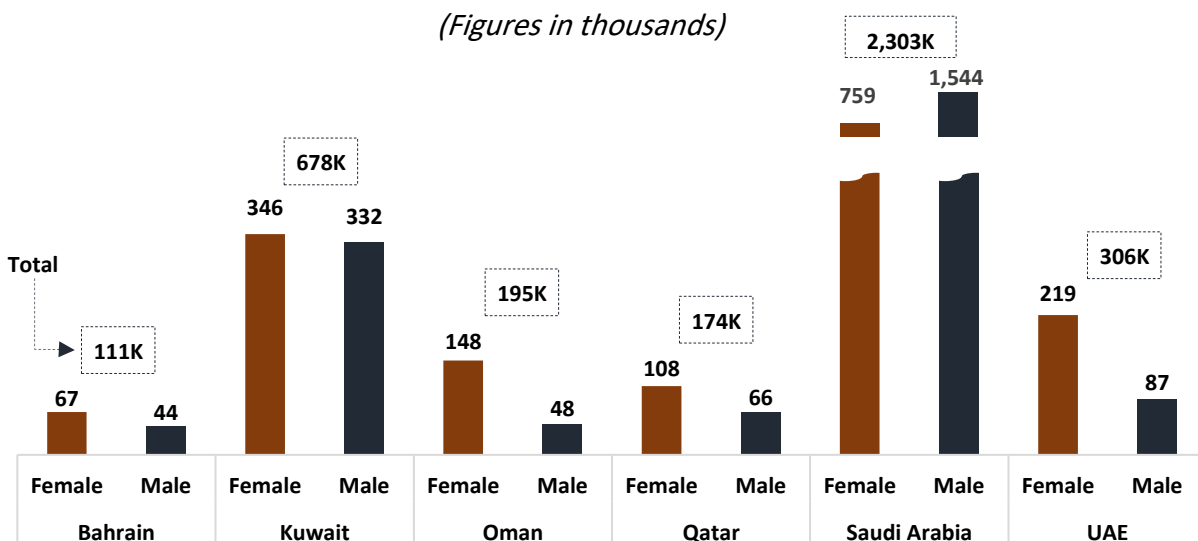
Source: National statistical offices.
Note: In the case of the UAE, data were only collected for Abu Dhabi and Dubai. The number of domestic workers in 2016 is estimated based on the growth rate in the number of domestic workers between 2008 – 2011 for Abu Dhabi and 2000 – 2011 for Dubai. Data for Kuwait are form 2017.

Unlike in other sectors, the demand for domestic work has proven resilient to economic downturns, including to the 2008 global financial crisis (Thimothy and Sasikumar 2012, 3) which has seen many migrant workers taking long home leaves, losing their jobs or staying in an irregular situation in the Gulf (Irudaya and Narayana 2010). In fact, of the 3.77 million migrant domestic workers in the GCC today, 2.06 million domestic workers have arrived in the last 10 years. The majority of domestic workers have entered the sector in Saudi Arabia (733,000) which was undergoing a fiscal deficit in recent years. The sector's resilience to economic downturns

corresponds to trends in non-GCC countries. In Italy, for example, the domestic work sector was unaffected by the European recession (Castagnone, Salis and Premazzi 2013, 2).

Based on data from the past 10 years, the annual growth rate in the number of domestic workers is 8.7 per cent (or 35,970 domestic workers). If we exclude Saudi Arabia, the annual growth rate in the number of domestic workers is 8.2 per cent (or 11,400 domestic workers).

Figure 3: Annual increase and annual average growth of domestic workers by country, 2008-2017
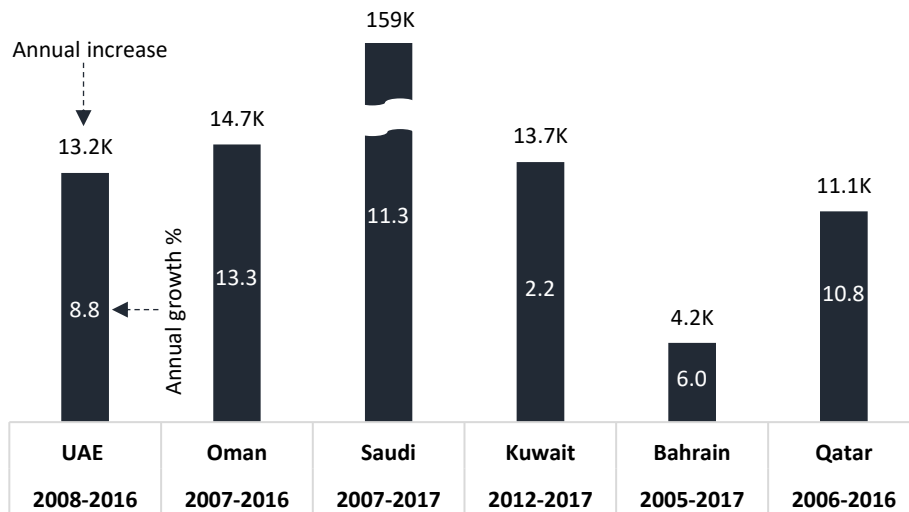
Source: National statistical offices.

Note: For Kuwait the increase in the number of domestic workers is based on data for the years 2012-2017. Data for earlier years were not available.

Women domestic workers account for the bulk of total female migrant employment in the GCC (62 per cent). In Saudi Arabia, 77 per cent of women migrant workers are domestic workers, while 16 per cent of men migrant workers are domestic workers. In Abu Dhabi, 83 percent of women migrant workers are domestic workers. In Kuwait, the domestic workforce represents almost 30 percent of total expatriate employment with women domestic workers accounting for 67 per cent of employment among expatriate women.

Figure 4: Domestic workers as percentage of non-national employment, 2016

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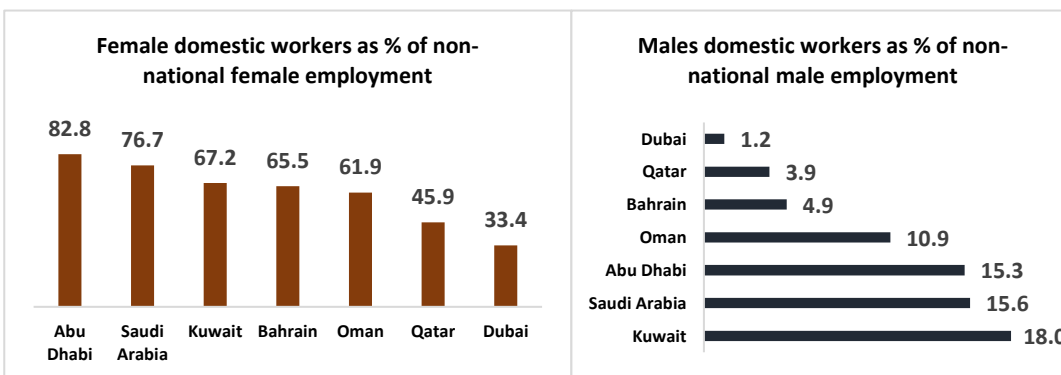
According to 2013 estimates, the Middle East, primarily the countries of GCC, hosted the largest number (or 27 per cent) of the 11.5 million international migrant domestic workers in the world (ILO 2015).

Figure 5: Distribution of migrant domestic workers, by broad sub-region (%), 2013
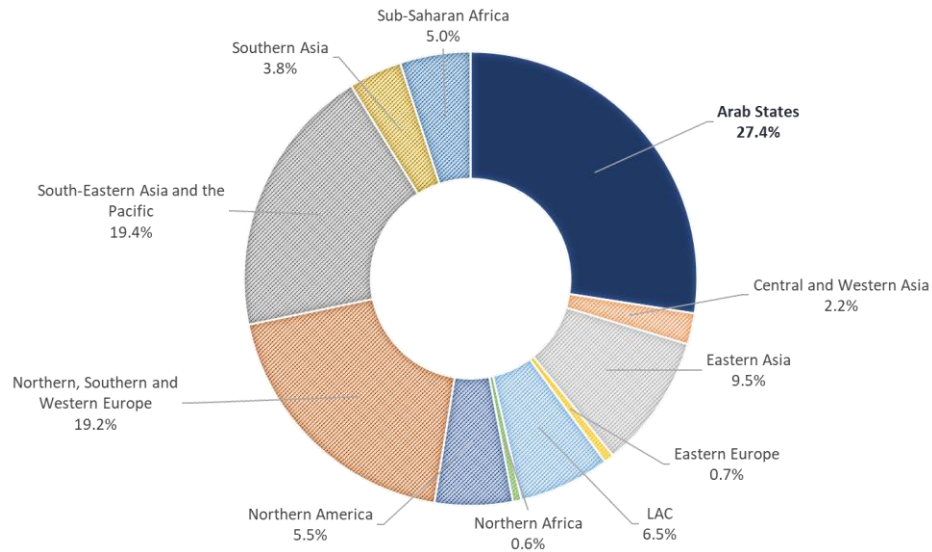
Source: ILO 2015

Statistical country profile – Domestic Workers in Saudi Arabia[5]

❖ In 2017, 2.42 million domestic workers were working in Saudi Arabia.
❖ Drivers (men) accounted for 58 per cent (1.39 million) and "cleaners" (mostly women) for around 40 per cent of the total domestic worker population.
❖ The total number of domestic workers increased from 830,000 in 2007 to 2.42 million workers in 2017 with an annual average growth rate of 11.3 per cent.

Figure 6: Number of Domestic workers in Saudi Arabia, 2016-2017
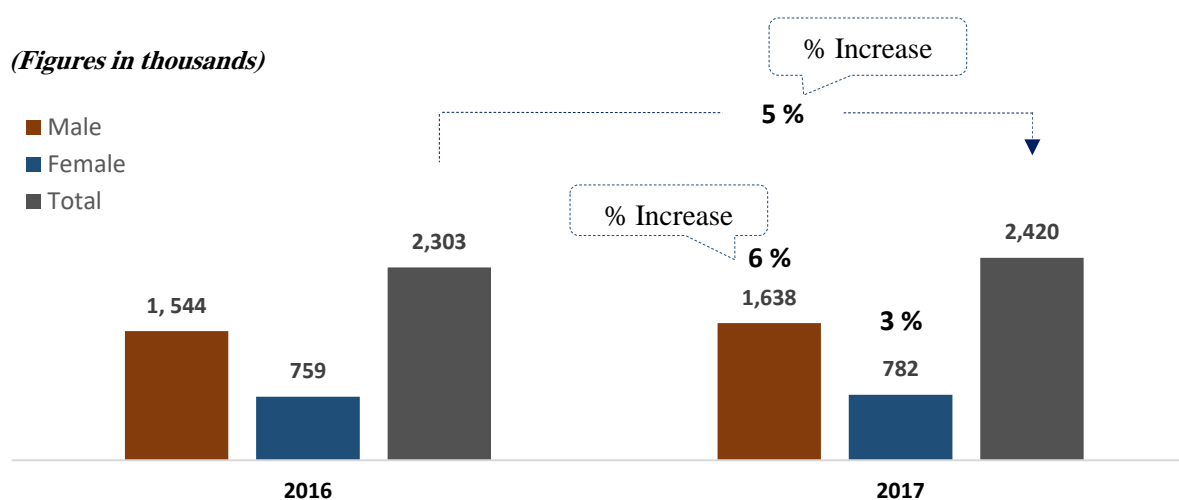
Source: General Authority for Statistics, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Table 1 : Migrant domestic workers by sex and occupation in Saudi Arabia, 2017						
	Number of domestic workers			% of total		
Occupation	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
Housekeeper	1,740	1,096	2,836	0.1	0.1	0.1
Driver	1,393,801	0	1,393,801	85.1	0.0	57.6
Cleaner	186,738	773,566	960,304	11.4	99.0	39.7
Cook	16,110	3,014	19,124	1.0	0.4	0.8
Guard	34,908	0	34,908	2.1	0.0	1.4
House farmer	3,067	0	3,067	0.2	0.0	0.1
Home-based dressmaker	856	1,468	2,324	0.1	0.2	0.1
Home-based nurse	529	2,313	2,842	0.0	0.3	0.1
Home tutor	439	182	621	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	1,638,188	781,639	2,419,827	100	100	100

Source: General Authority for Statistics, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

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[5] This and following statistical profiles are based on data available through official national statistical sources.

Statistical country profile – Domestic workers in Kuwait

- ❖ 678,000 migrants were registered as domestic workers in Kuwait in 2017.
- ❖ Women accounted for 51 per cent of the total domestic work population.
- ❖ Between 2015-2017, the number of women domestic workers declined by 8.2 per cent from 377,000 to 346,000 women workers. The population of men domestic workers increased by 19 per cent reaching 332,000 workers in 2017.
- ❖ Kuwait hosts a large number of domestic workers relative to the size of its population; Domestic workers in Kuwait accounts for 22 per cent of the total working age population.

Figure 7: Number of domestic workers in Kuwait, 2015-2017
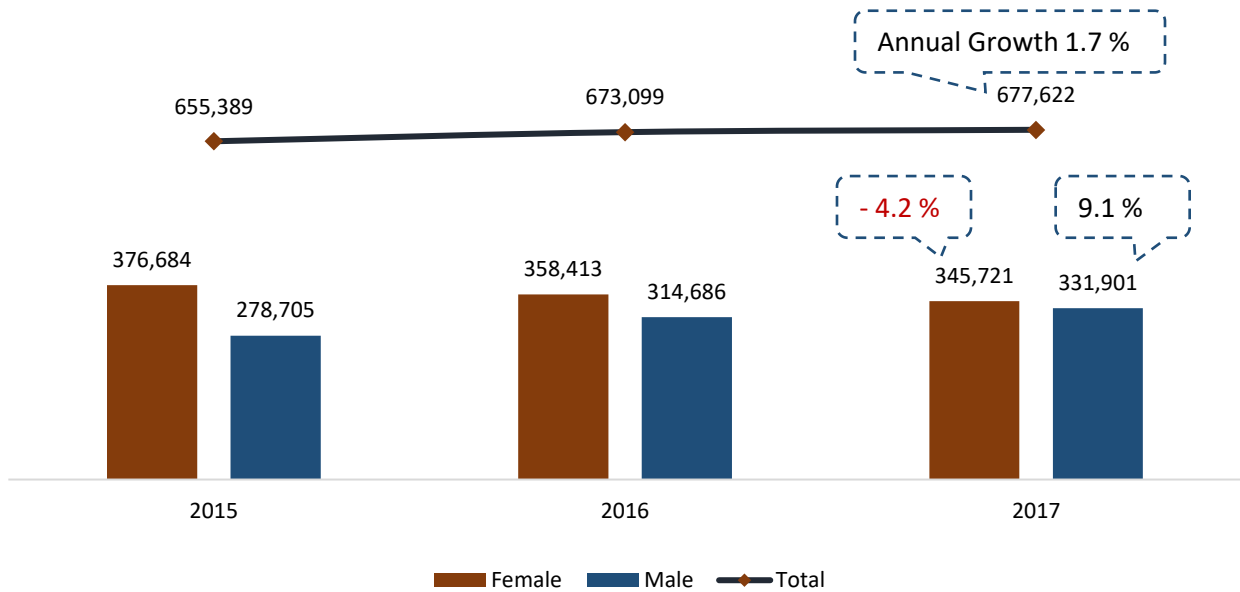
Source: Kuwait Central Statistical Bureau, Labor Market Information System

❖ 90 per cent of domestics working in Kuwait are from India, the Philippines, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.
❖ While the majority of domestic workers from India and Bangladesh are men, domestic workers from the Philippines and Sri Lanka are primarily women.
❖ 224,000 Indian men were employed as domestic workers in 2017, accounting for 77 per cent of the overall number of Indian workers in the sector.
❖ Only 1.4 per cent of the 81,000 Bangladeshi domestic workers were women in 2017.
❖ From the 164,000 Filipino domestic workers, less than 1,000 were men in 2017.
❖ Sri Lankan women domestic workers accounted for 75 per cent of total Sri Lankan employment in domestic work in Kuwait in 2017.
❖ Domestic workers from Nepal, Ethiopia, Madagascar and other countries working in Kuwait were primarily women in 2017.

Table 2: Distribution of domestic workers by top nationalities and sex, 2017					
	Percentage (%)			Number		
Nationality	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male
India	43.0	19.6	67.4	291,572	67,876	223,696
Philippines	24.1	47.1	0.3	163,631	162,691	940
Bangladesh	12.0	0.3	24.1	81,170	1,130	80,040
Sri Lanka	10.0	14.7	5.0	67,451	50,904	16,547
Nepal	3.6	6.6	0.5	24,377	22,703	1,674
Ethiopia	2.8	5.1	0.4	18,964	17,720	1,244
Madagascar	0.9	1.7	0.0	5,944	5,930	14
Ghana	0.7	1.2	0.1	4,484	4,187	297
Indonesia	0.5	1.0	0.0	3,640	3,622	18
Cote d'Ivoire	0.4	0.7	0.1	2,747	2,508	239
Other	2.0	1.9	2.2	13,642	6,450	7,192
Total	100	100	100	677,622	345,721	331,901

Source: Kuwait Central Statistical Bureau, Labor Market Information System

Statistical country profile – Domestic workers in Bahrain

❖ The size of the domestic workforce in Bahrain has increased from around 50,000 in 2005 to 111,000 workers in 2016 (an increase of 124 per cent).
❖ Annually (between 2005-2016), the domestic workforce was increasing by 7.6 per cent.
❖ Women represented 60 per cent of the total domestic workforce in 2016.
❖ Domestic workers account for 13 per cent of the total migrant population in Bahrain.

Figure 8: Number of domestic workers in Bahrain by sex (2005-2016)
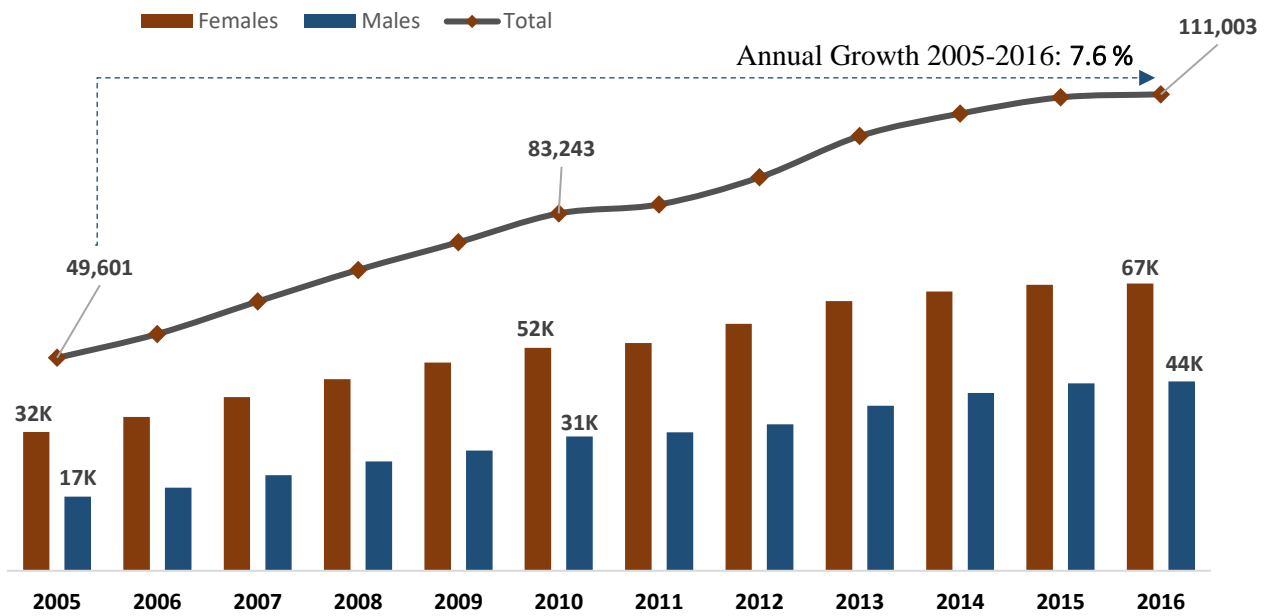
Source: Bahrain Labour Market Regulatory Authority, Labour Market Indicators

Statistical country profile – Domestic workers in Qatar

❖ There were over 174,000 domestic workers in Qatar in 2016.
❖ The category of domestic workers covers domestic personnel such as "maids, cooks, waiters, valets, butlers, laundresses, gardeners, gatekeepers, stable-lads, chauffeurs, caretakers, governesses, babysitters, tutors, secretaries etc."
❖ The total number of domestic workers in Qatar has increased by nearly three times (178 percent) since 2008.
❖ On average, the sector has sustained an annual growth of 11 percentage points between 2006 and 2016.
❖ Women migrant domestic workers account for 62 per cent of the total domestic workforce. The number of women domestic workers increased by 228 per cent which is equivalent to an annual average growth of 12.6 per cent between 2008-2016.
❖ The number of men domestic workers, accounting for 38 per cent of those employed in the sector, has increased by 122 per cent which is equivalent to an annual average growth of 8.3 per cent between 2008-2016 (from 30,000 in 2006 to 66,000 in 2016).
❖ Monthly average wage for workers in the sector increased from USD 453 in 2006 to USD 800 by 2016.

Figure 9: Number of domestic workers in Qatar by sex (2006-2016)
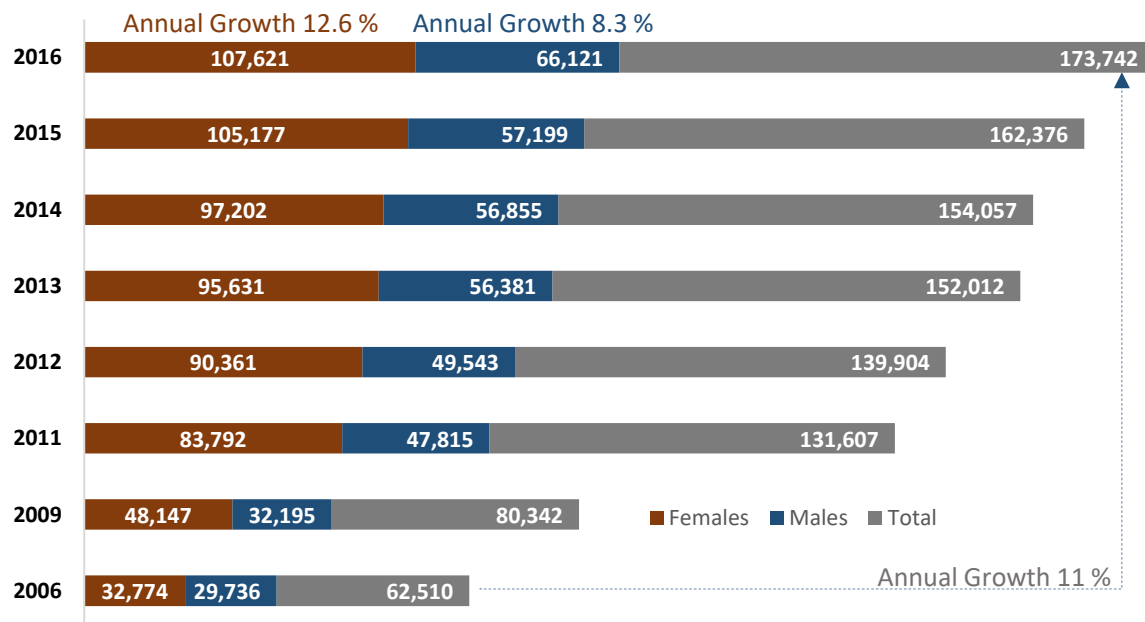
Source: Qatar Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics

Statistical country profile – Domestic workers in Oman

- ❖ Across the six GCC countries, the domestic work sector has witnessed the most significant growth (207 per cent) in Oman, increasing threefold since 2008.
- ❖ Oman's domestic workforce has increased from 63,000 in 2007 to 195,000 in 2016.
- ❖ Women account for 75 per cent of those who are employed in the sector. The number of female domestic workers increased from 41,000 in 2007 to 148,000 in 2016.
- ❖ The number of men domestic workers has more than doubled since 2007, increasing from 23,000 in 2007 to 48,000 in 2016 (112 per cent point increase).

Figure 10: Number of domestic workers in Oman by sex, 2010-2016
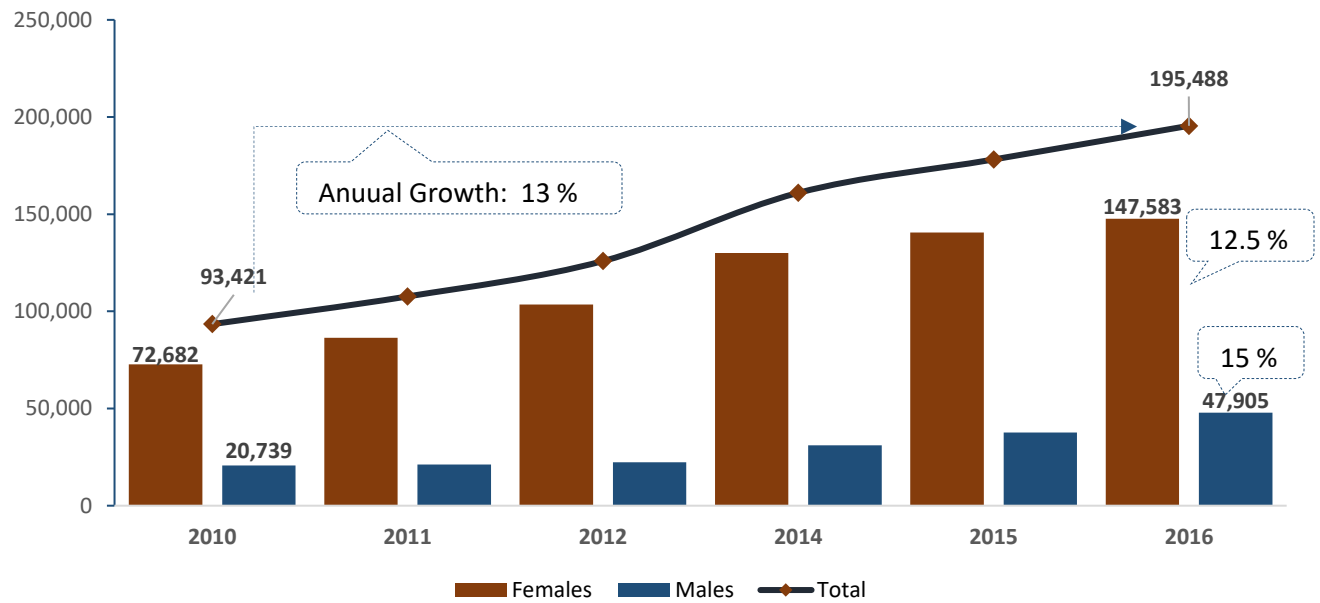
Source: National Center for Statistics and Information, Sultanate of Oman

Statistical country profile – Domestic workers in the UAE (Abu Dhabi and Dubai)

❖ In Abu Dhabi and Dubai, the number of domestic workers has increased from 156,000 in 2008 to 306,000 in 2016 (by 96 per cent). The annual growth rate is 8.8 per cent.
❖ Women constitute 72 per cent of all domestic workers in Abu Dhabi and Dubai.
❖ In 2016, total compensations for domestic workers reached USD 1.34 billion in Abu Dhabi. This is equivalent to USD 545 per domestic worker monthly.
❖ Data are not available for the remaining emirates. Non-official sources estimate that 750,000 domestic workers live and work in the UAE and that almost 65 per cent are based in Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Sharjah.[6]

Figure 11: Number of domestic workers in Abu Dhabi and Dubai by sex, 2008-2016

(Figures in thousands)

■ Female ■ Male ■ Total

	2008	2012	2014	2015	2016
Female	112.7	150.8	181.7	199.5	219.0
Male	43.3	58.2	71.0	78.5	87.1
Total	155.9	209.0	252.7	278.1	306.1

Annual growth: 7.6 % — 10 % — 10 % — 10 %
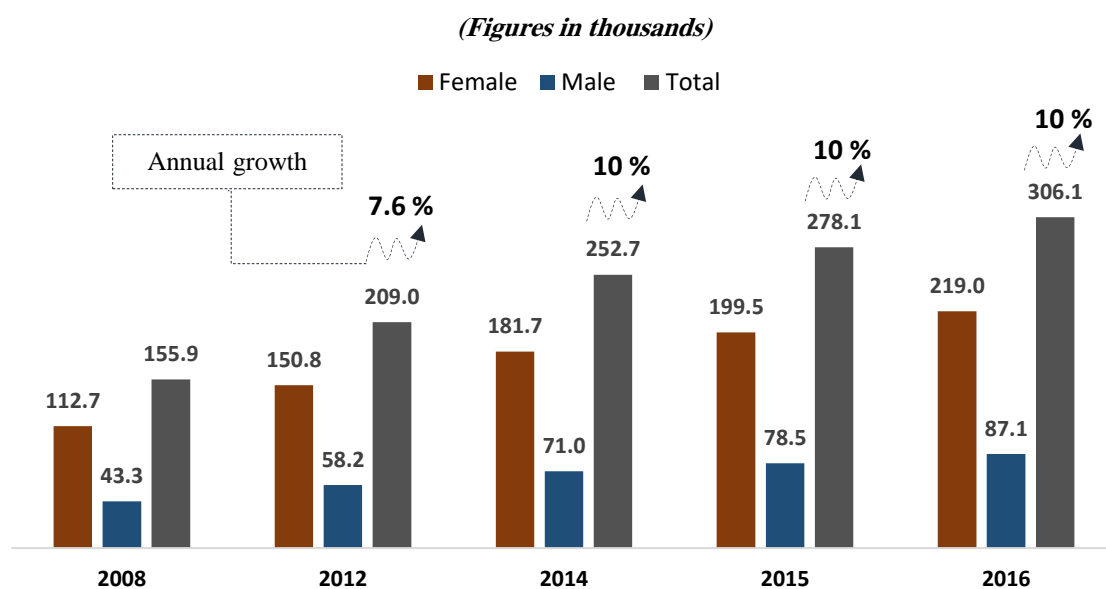
Source: Abu Dhabi Statistics Centre; Dubai Statistics Centre
Note: Figures cover number of domestic workers in Abu Dhabi and Dubai only. The number of domestic workers in 2016 is estimated based on the growth rate in the number of domestic workers between 2008 – 2011 for Abu Dhabi and 2000 – 2011 for Dubai.

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[6] *Tadbeer centres to recruit domestic workers*, available at: http://gulfnews.com/news/uae/society/tadbeer-centres-to-recruit-domestic-workers-1.1998797 [Accessed on 2 January 2018].

Figure 12: Compensation of domestic workers in Abu Dhabi, 2005-2016

(Million AED)

Year	Value
2005	913
2010	1,572
2012	2,084
2013	3,216
2014	4,052
2015	4,502
2016	4,918
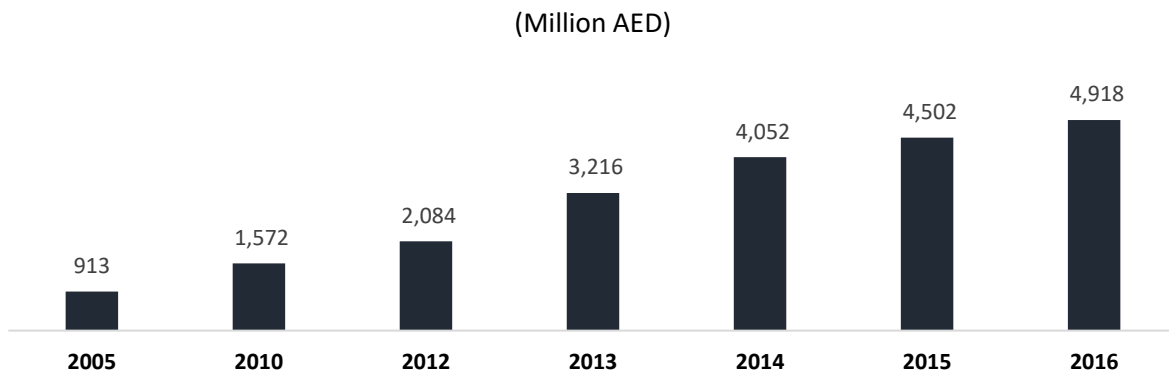
Source: National statistical offices.

3. Explaining the demand for domestic workers in the countries of the GCC

According to the literature, the demand for home-based non-professional paid care and domestic work in the countries of the GCC is generally linked to a number of interacting factors, among them:

(a) an increase in the employment of national women and the transformation from single to dual wage-earning families (Kapiszewski 2006; Rutledge, Al Shamsi, Bassoon and Al Sheikh 2011; Malit and Ghafoor 2014): higher education levels among women and nationalization schemes have enabled national women to enter the labour market and subsequently triggered a demand for migrant domestic workers to address child care needs.

(b) a sizeable population of dual wage-earning expatriate families with child care needs;

(c) demographic transformations such as longer life expectancy, lower fertility and a growing old age dependency ratio (Sibai, Rizk and Kronfol 2014; Shah, Badr and Shah 2012; Hussein and Ismail 2016): longevity means that more people will need support and care in their old age. Low fertility means that less people are able to provide care.

(d) a tradition of family-based care and a culture that frowns upon placing an ageing relative in elderly care institutions (Shah, Badr and Shah, 2012; Hussein and Ismail 2016): although state-sponsored initiatives exist, families are increasingly opting for support from live-in domestic workers to provide long-term care;

(e) large households (Shah et al. 2002; Tayah and Hamada 2017): the physical size of the housing unit (i.e., number of rooms, bedrooms, and bathrooms) and its type (for example, a villa with a garden) and the number of family members are positively associated with the number of domestic workers;

(f) higher income levels and aspirations to higher social status (Shah et al. 2002; Fernandez and de Regt 2016); and,

(g) until recently in Saudi Arabia, *a dependence on male domestic workers to act as drivers* on behalf of women who were not permitted to drive.

In fact, households may employ more than one worker. According to 2013 estimates, each household in the UAE employed, on average, three domestic workers (ILO 2013, 33). In Kuwait, 43 percent of households counted two or more domestic workers in 2002 (Shah et al. 2002, 253). The decision to hire one or more domestic workers is based on the following considerations: (a) the number of the family members (including extended family members) who occupy the house; (b) the level of dependency of these members on the worker (the children, elderly, sick and disabled are more dependent on the services of the worker than are adults); (c)

the number of rooms and their type; and, (d) the number of domestic workers who are working in the house, their occupational profiles (cooks, gardeners, cleaners, nannies etc.) and work-sharing arrangements (Tayah and Hamada 2017).

Figure 13. Interacting factors contributing to the demand for household paid-care and domestic work in the GCC

- Large households
- High fertility and growing Life expectancy among nationals
- High income levels
- Tradition of family-based care
- Increasing education and economic participation of national women
- Sizeable population of dual wage-earning expatriate families with child care needs
- Until recently in Saudi Arabia dependence on male domestic workers to act as drivers
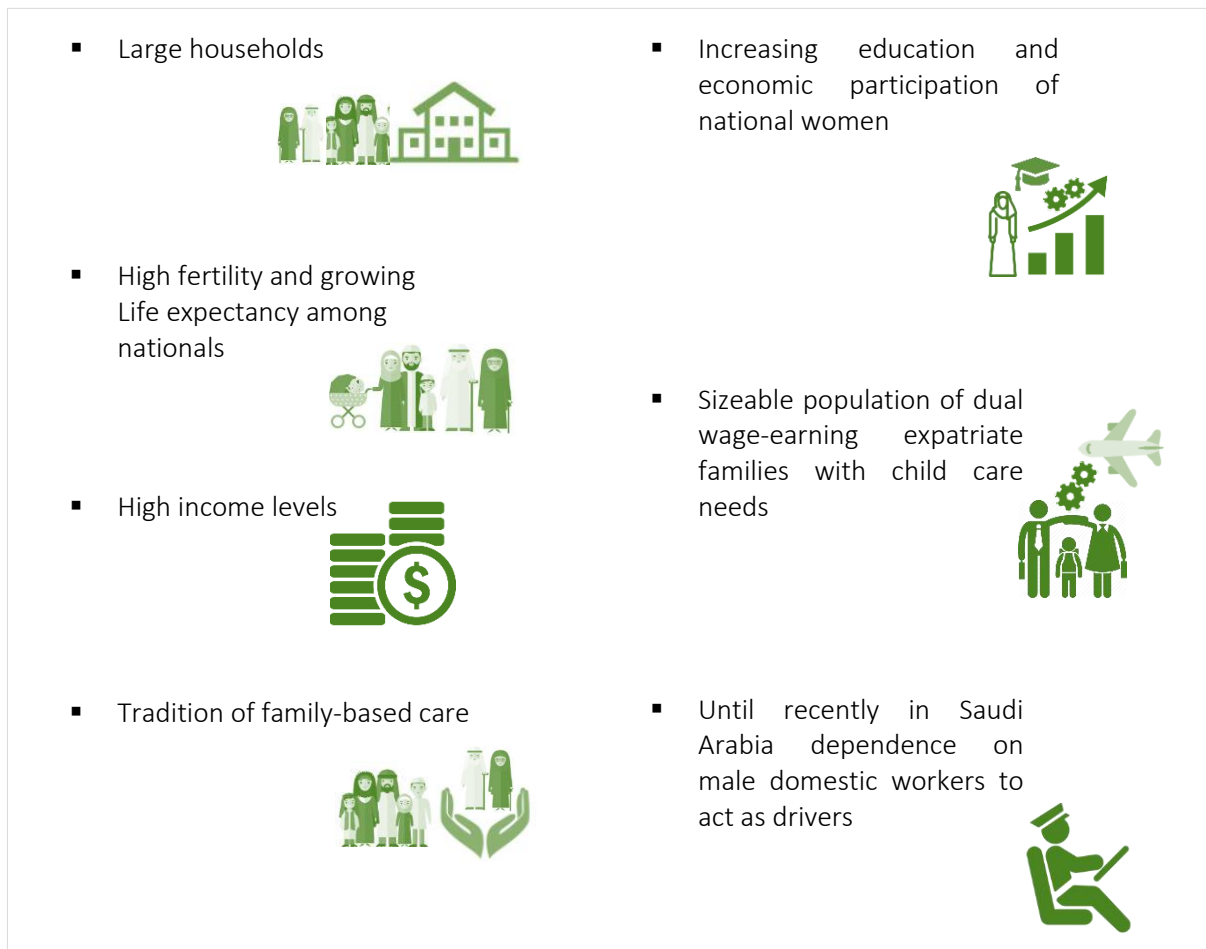
Overall, these factors can be distilled into two main explanations of the growing demand for domestic workers in the countries of the GCC; one concerning national employers and the other concerning the significant population of expatriate employers in these countries. We outline them below.

❖ Explanation A: Increasing care pressures on national households due to higher FLFPRs combined with growing child and elderly care needs in national contexts where care is traditionally the responsibility of women in the family and where intergenerational households are being replaced by nuclear households.

❖ Explanation B: A growing population of dual wage-earning expatriate families with child care needs and a demand for professional housekeepers who are autonomous / requiring little supervision.

Increasing care pressures on national households due to higher FLFPRs combined with growing child and elderly care needs in contexts where care is traditionally the responsibility of the family and where intergenerational households are being replaced by nuclear households

We may think of care provision in any society as a **care diamond** comprising of the family, market, the public sector and the not-for-profit sector (Razavi 2007).

The concept of **familialism** was developed to describe societies where families/private households are an important resource of care provision as opposed to the market, public and not-for-profit sectors. Some governments explicitly attempt to increase care responsibilities among family members (familializing policies), others relieve families from care responsibilities (de-familializing policies), and several regimes do not intervene at all or apply a mixed strategy (Leitner 2003).

The decision to **"familialise" or "de-familialise" care** reflects societies' "institutional legacy, their ideological commitment to state or market, and their range of alternatives to state provision" (Chan, Soma and Yamashita 2011). Table 3 summarizes Leitner's (2003) typology of familiarizing and de-familializing policies in the areas of child and elderly care.

Table 3. Familializing and de-familializing care policies		
	Child care	Elderly care
Familializing care policies *(providing incentives for care by the family)*	*Time rights*: such as parental leave or care leave. *Part-time work* *Long leaves* (negative influence on reintegration into the labour market). *Cash benefits*: survivor's pension or free membership of the spouse's health insurance plan; parental leave benefits or care leave benefits.	
De-familializing care policies *(de-incentivizing care by the family)*	**Day care:** long and flexible opening hours, easy access to care facilities (high supply and low costs), and a high quality of care provision.	*Residential or partially residential care facilities* *Dense network of ambulatory care services.*
Source: Adapted from Leitner 2003.		

In the GCC, where the notion of familial care applies, the wide majority of child care policies are familializing and generally in the form of time rights, part-time work and long leaves. De-familializing child care policies are now effective in the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait; UAE government institutions with 50 or more Emirati women employees or where Emirati women employees collectively have more than 20 children must set up workplace crèches. In Saudi Arabia, a company employing 50 women or more should offer childcare facilities, including babysitters, for children under 6 years. In Kuwait, companies employing 50 women or 200 men are required to set up a day care for children under four years.

Table 4. Familializing child care policies in the GCC	
Time rights:	- 60-day paid maternity leave and three-day paid paternity leave according to federal UAE law but 90-day paid maternity leave in Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah and Ras-al-Khaimah.[7] - 50-day paid maternity leave in Oman for up to three times during service with one employer. An employee is entitled to an additional period of six months' unpaid leave in the event of pregnancy or delivery-related complications. - 60-day paid maternity leave in Qatar.[8] Up to two leaves for a maximum of three years at a time for Qatari women caring for a child with disability under the age of six. - 10-week maternity leave and three-day paternity leave in Saudi Arabia. One-month paid and one-month unpaid leave after maternity leave for Saudi women caring for a child with disability. - 70-day paid maternity leave in Kuwait. Four months with full salary followed by six months with half salary for Kuwaiti women suffering from maternity or delivery related complications or disabilities (in addition to the maternity leave).[9] - 60-day paid maternity leave in Bahrain and 15-day unpaid maternity leave. One-day paid paternity leave.
Part-time work	- Two-hour daily nursing break for four months after maternity leave; one year in Abu Dhabi and six months in Sharjah. - Two-hour daily nursing break for one year after maternity leave in Qatar. - One-hour daily nursing break in Saudi Arabia. - Two-hour daily nursing break for six months after maternity leave in Bahrain. Two-half-hour breaks daily for one year.
Long leaves	- Bahraini women are entitled to unpaid leave not exceeding six years for a maximum of six months each time and not more than three times. - Unpaid leave for a period not exceeding four months in Kuwait and Dubai.

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[7] Woman working the private sector in the UAE are entitled to a 45-day maternity leave including the time before and after delivery. She is entitled to full pay during maternity leave after completing one year of continuous employment with the same employer; otherwise, she is entitled to half pay. Women are entitled to two additional nursing breaks each day, with each break not exceeding half an hour. The woman is entitled to such breaks for 18 fully-paid months following the date of delivery.

[8] Fifty days for the private sector.

[9] "A disabled employee deserves a special leave with full salary not deducted from her other leave days if she was pregnant and the competent technical committee recommends that her condition requires that. The disabled employee in public and private and oil sectors also deserves a 70-day pregnancy leave with full salary and maternity leave following the pregnancy leave for four months with full salary followed by six months with half salary according to what is recommended by the competent technical committee."

Conversely to child care policies, elderly care policies are seemingly de-familializing (based on Leitner's 2003 typology) usually in the form of a dense network of ambulatory elderly care services.

- *UAE*: UAE Ministry of Health and Prevention dispatches mobile clinic services to remote areas.[10] The UAE Ministry of Community Development provides primary healthcare and support to elderly nationals. Abu Dhabi offers home care services to all UAE nationals[11] and Abu Dhabi's Rehabilitation Centre provides specialized elderly care. Al Ain municipality provides mobile unit services to households at the request of the elderly. Dubai and Sharjah provide home care services to the elderly;
- *Oman*: The Taqdeer program of Oman's Ministry of Social Development offers social, health and home care to the elderly;
- *Bahrain*: The Ministry of Social Development dispatches mobile units consisting of a specialized team to elderly peoples' homes;
- *Saudi Arabia:* The Ministry of Health in Saudi Arabia dispatches "mobile units" to provide home care to the elderly.

Nonetheless, ambulatory elderly care services are not viewed as a replacement for the family but only a last resort to be used in the case of elderly people without relatives (see box 2). Elderly care provision in GCC households is the responsibility of family members. A survey of UAE families found that men and women wish to be cared for by their adult children and that institutional care is viewed as sign of family neglect and stigmatized (Crabtree 2007, 585). Similarly, a recent survey of elderly care provision in Saudi Arabia indicated that the majority of the elderly population reported relying on a family number, whereas only 10 per cent (19,000) reported relying on a nurse to support them in their activities and three per cent on the support of friends and relatives (see box 3).

Box 2: Oman's position on elderly care provision
"The elderly in the Sultanate of Oman are given great attention and recognition by their relatives and community members as they are considered a source of the correct advice due to the experience, wisdom and vision in perceiving issues. Rather, the family abides by their orders and pieces of advice giving them the leading role in any gathering and a symbol of its status in the society. **In this regard, no problems emerged to call for the establishment of any care institution to shelter the elderly, albeit there is a Care Home in case there were some individual cases of the elderly who have no relatives at all and need sheltering care, but the Home receives very view and rare cases**."
Source: Oman Ministry of Social Development: The Elderly's Affairs, available at: www.mosd.gov.om/index.php/en/social-care-3/the-elderly-s-affairs [accessed on 30 April 2018].

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[10] The services include medical care, rehabilitation, natural treatments, preventive measures, dental, optical, dermatological and diabetes treatments.
[11] Sheikh Khalifa Medical City in Abu Dhabi city and Al Tawam Hospital in Al Ain.

Box 3: Demand for daily assistance among the elderly in Saudi Arabia, 2016

The share of the elderly increased from 3 to 4.2 per cent between 1992 and 2016 in Saudi Arabia. Life expectancy also increased from 69 to 75 years between 1990 and 2016. According to the 2016 Saudi Elderly Survey, 497,000 elderly people required daily assistance in one or more daily activity. Around 14 per cent needed daily assistance in eating and drinking, 31 per cent in mobility and movement, 31 per cent in personal care activities and 25 per cent in taking their medicine.

Saudi population (65 Years and over) by age groups and Type of daily assistance, 2016					
Age Groups	daily assistance				
	Eat and drink	Mobility and movement	Personal care	Taking medicine	Total
65 - 69	10,265	28,799	22,451	20,796	82,311
70 – 74	12,295	33,029	25,487	26,012	96,823
75 – 79	11,456	28,728	23,502	22,744	86,430
80+	34,742	63,076	80,832	53,080	231,730
Total	68,758	153,632	152,272	122,632	497,294

Around 188,000 individuals provided support to the elderly in their daily activities in 2016. The majority of the elderly population reported relying on a family number, whereas only 10 per cent (19,000) reported relying on a nurse to support them in their activities and 3 per cent on the support of friends and relatives. Domestic workers were not included as a category in this survey but could have likely been considered by respondents under the category of "other relatives" or "family members."

Saudi population (65 Years and over) by age group and those who help them in their daily needs, 2016				
Age Groups	Assistance Provider			
	Nurse	Friends\Other relatives	Family member	Total
65 – 69	2,094	1,776	31,660	35,530
70 – 74	1,984	1,318	38,415	41,717
75 – 79	4,859	618	29,588	35,065
80+	10,328	2,484	62,849	75,661
Total	19,265	6,196	162,512	187,973

Source: Elderly Survey 2016, General Authority for Statistics

In the context of familial care regimes (and policies that further familialization) domestic work becomes an essential component of household care provision, with domestic workers providing

care themselves or relieving employers from household chores so that the latter can, in turn, provide care. In Kuwait, 28 per cent of households with men above the age of 70 and 58 per cent of households with women above the age of 70 hired a migrant domestic worker (Shah et al., 2012).

Box 4: Domestic or care work?

Domestic work is "work performed in or for a household or households within an employment relationship" (Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189).

Care work: is broadly defined as "looking after the physical, psychological, emotional and developmental needs of one or more other people. It spans both public and private spheres and is to be found in a variety of settings and across formal and informal economies. Care work involves a wide range of actors. Children and older persons are often both unpaid caregivers themselves, as well as recipients of care (conditional on their dependency)" (Maybud, 2016).

All domestic work is care work (Razavi and Staab 2017):
- <u>Direct care</u>: Paid services in/for households to sustain and develop the **physical, cognitive and emotional health** of individuals (e.g., children, elderly, people with disabilities).
- <u>Indirect care:</u> **household upkeep and maintenance** tasks which are **preconditions for personal caregiving**.

Domestic work can be an expressed component of familializing care policies, an ad hoc (non-policy) household care solution, or an expressedly avoided policy option (see box 5). Judging from the number of domestic workers in GCC countries, domestic work is an *ad hoc* non-policy solution to supplement familializing care policies.

Box 5: Domestic work as an intended or unintended component of care familialization		
Domestic work as a policy/non-policy care choice	Examples	Outcome
Domestic work is an aspect of care provision policies and programmes <u>(but only one aspect).</u>	*Demand side incentives:[12]* Vouchers for domestic employment; tax reductions for employing a domestic worker (Belgium, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong and Malaysia). *Supply side incentives:* Exemptions from social security contributions for people employed as caregivers. *Other (non-domestic work-related) provisions include:* *Monetary and social security benefits, employment-related measures, in-kind services or benefits.*	*Formalization of the sector* *Quality and dependability of services* *Affordability of services*
Domestic work is an ad hoc (non-policy) care solution	Lebanon Spain Greece	*Informal employment* *Undocumented migrants* *Information asymmetry*
Domestic work is avoided as a care option	Japan (until very recently)	*Care deficit, relocation of pensioners to other countries with their ageing relatives, robots as caregivers (emotional and cognitive development suffer)*

The early social development of young children is traditionally the domain of mothers and her female kin in the GCC (Crabtree 2007, 578). According to gender norms, women are the primary caregivers while fathers are primary providers (Barakat, 2005). The move towards greater

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[12] Monetary and social security benefits: Cash payments, social security and pension credits, tax allowances; Employment-related measures: Paid and unpaid leave, career breaks, severance pay, flexi-time, reduction of working time; In kind services or benefits: Home help and other community-based support services, childcare places, residential places for adults and children (Daly 2001, 38).

education and employment for women will mean that their ability to manage work/education—care balance single handedly will suffer (Crabtree 2007, 578).

The educational attainment of national women and their labour force participation rates have increased over time. In many GCC countries there are more females than males in tertiary education. In some countries such as Kuwait and Qatar, women's enrolment rate is nearly two-thirds higher than that that of men (ILO 2012, 82). As a result, the FLFPRs among nationals have increased by 10 percentage points over the past decade, reaching 31 per cent in 2016.

Figure 14: Female labour force participation rate by GCC country over time
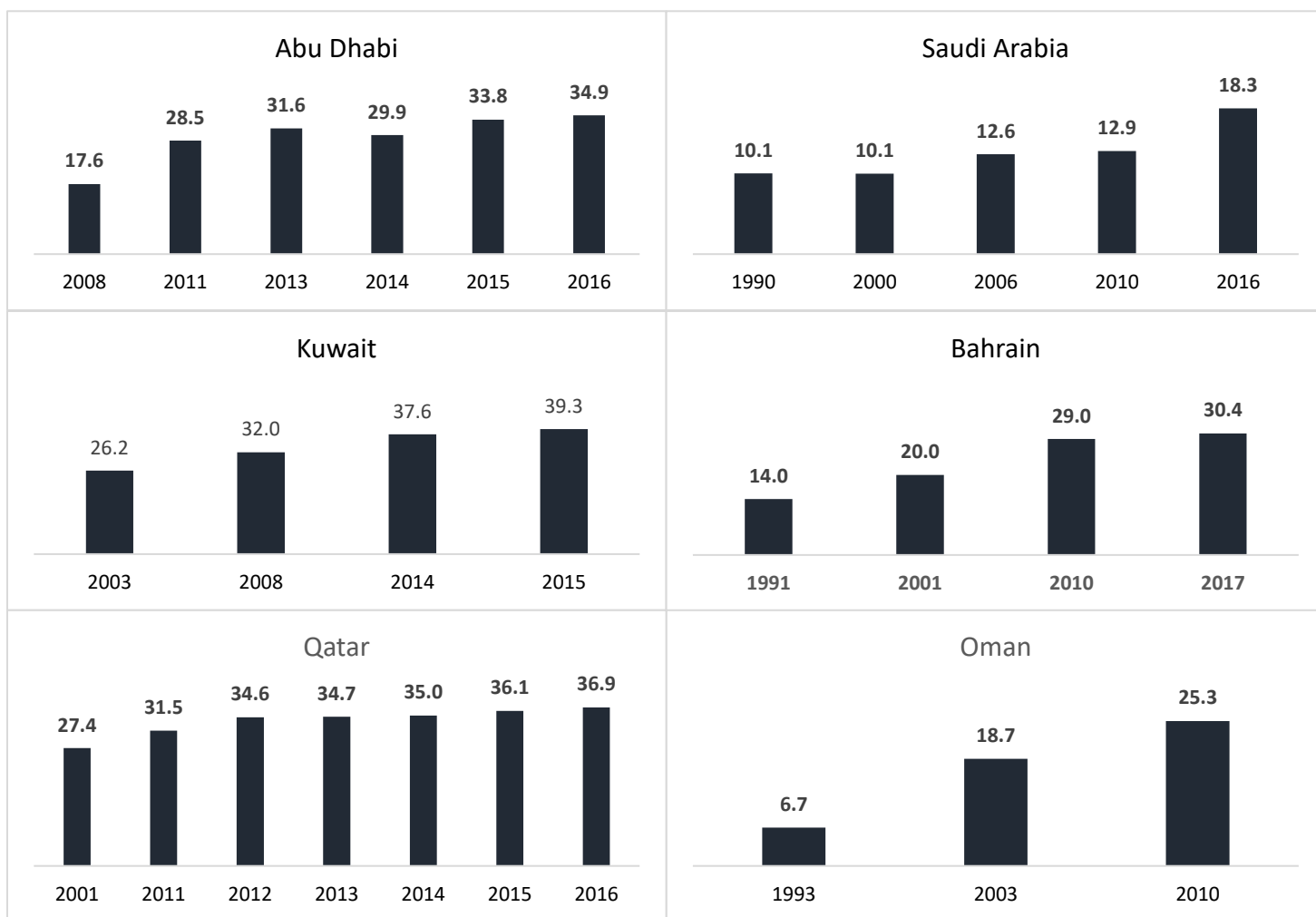
Source: National statistical offices.

At the same time, the support, traditionally provided by intergenerational households is dissipating. Due to modernization, the extended family, in which several generations can be found living under one roof, is replaced by nuclear arrangements, in which grandparents live separately (Crabtree 2007, 579).

How is the care demand structured in the households of GCC nationals?

The following are figures and charts depicting demographic trends among nationals, generally pointing to the need for domestic workers to aid households in child and elderly care functions.

Demand for child care:

- ❖ **Fertility rates remain significant**: Fertility rates among national women (3.3 on average) have declined over time yet continue to rank higher than the world average (2.5) (see figure 18). As a result, the young dependency ratio among nationals (56 per cent), despite declining significantly except in Oman, is still very high compared to world (40 per cent) and regional averages (see figure 15, 17 and 18).
- ❖ **The share of children is significant:** Despite declining over time, the share of children (30 per cent) among national population is high. Children (ages 0-14) – those who are in need of care – constitute 34 per cent of the total national population (see table 5).

Demand for elderly care:

- ❖ **Life expectancy in the GCC is growing**: For example, life expectancy for Abu Dhabi citizens has increased significantly since 1970. An additional 28.2 years were added to the average longevity of citizens. In Dubai life expectancy increased four-fold between 2010 and 2016. In Qatar, life expectancy increased by more than 6 years since 2001, reaching 80.5 years for Qatari nationals. Between 50-70 per cent of people over the age of 65 will require long-term care services at some point in their life; meaning they will need assistance with at least one activity, such as eating, dressing, or bathing, and possibly even a higher level of care (see figures 17 and 18).
- ❖ **The growth in the working age and elderly population is higher than growth in the children and youth population**. The national elderly population was growing by 5 per cent and the working age population by 3.4 per cent annually during the past 10 years. Children and youth population were growing by 2 per cent and 1.4 per cent annually during the same period. Currently, the working age population constitutes 62 per cent of the total GCC national population. The elderly population accounts for about 4 per cent of the total population (see table 5).

Figure 15: Young dependency ratio among nationals in GCC countries, 2007-2016
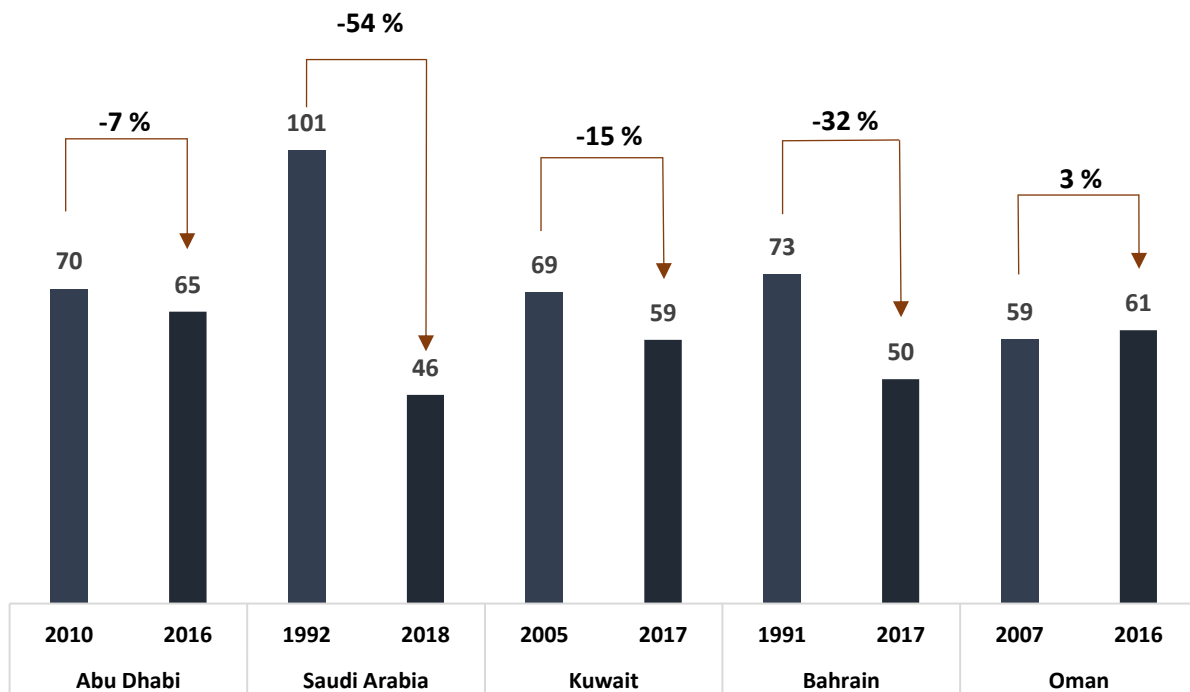
Source: National statistical offices.

Figure 16: Old age dependency ratio among nationals in GCC countries, 2007-2016
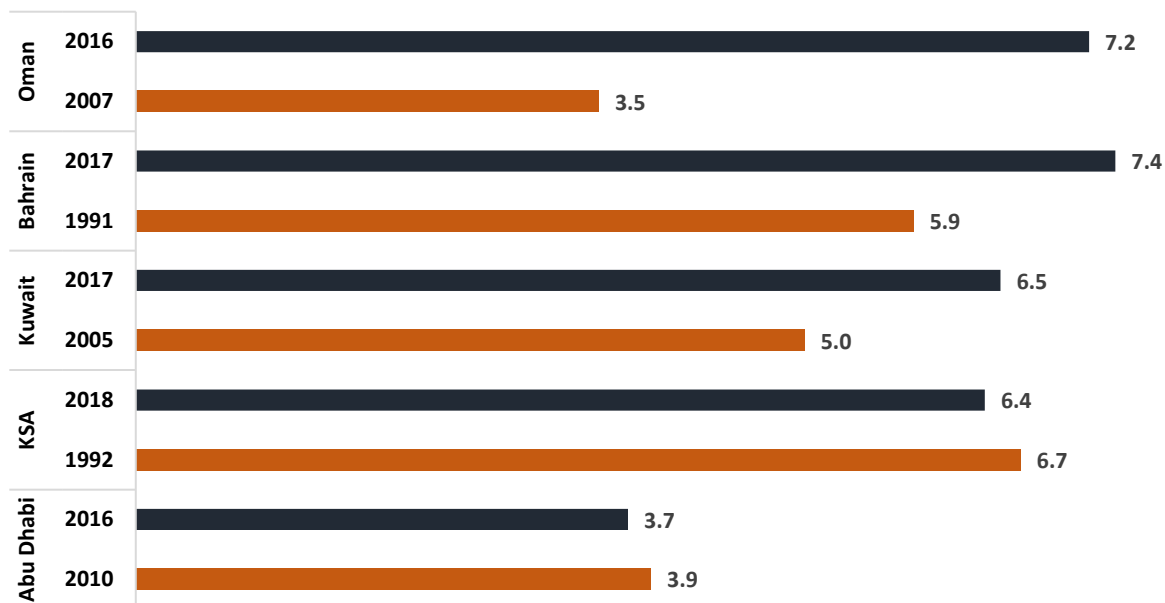
Source: National statistical offices.

Table 5: National population by age groups (the elderly population is growing faster than the population of children)

Abu Dhabi	2010	2016	Annual growth (%)	% of total population	
			2010-2016	2010	2016
Children (0-14)	174,508	212,067	3.3	40.2	38.5
Youth (15-24)	100,836	108,031	1.2	23.2	19.6
Working Age (15-64)	249,576	327,310	4.6	57.5	59.3
Elderly (65+)	9,704	12,158	3.8	2.2	2.2
Total	433,788	551,535	4.1	100	100
Saudi Arabia	1992	2018	Annual growth (%)	% of total population	
			1992-2018	1992	2018
Children	6,060,657	6,298,475	0.1	49.2	30.3
Youth	2,377,105	3,873,316	1.9	19.3	18.6
Working Age	6,018,883	13,598,990	3.2	48.9	65.5
Elderly	401,861	871,162	3.0	3.3	4.2
Total	12,310,053	20,768,627	2.0	100	100
Kuwait	2005	2017	Annual growth (%)	% of total population	
			2005-2017	2005	2017
Children	341,651	450,703	2.3	39.7	35.5
Youth	178,161	247,639	2.8	20.7	19.5
Working Age	493,757	769,309	3.8	57.4	60.6
Elderly	24,916	50,189	6.0	2.9	4.0
Total	860,324	1,270,201	3.3	100	100
Bahrain	1991	2017	Annual growth (%)	% of total population	
			1991-2017	1991	2017
Children	132,085	214,748	1.9	40.9	31.7
Youth	61,952	120,559	2.6	19.2	17.8
Working Age	180,621	430,910	3.4	55.9	63.6
Elderly	10,599	31,848	4.3	3.3	4.7
Total	323,305	677,506	2.9	100	100
Oman	2007	2016	Annual growth (%)	% of total population	
			2007-2006	2007	2016
Children	695,804	877,433	2.6	36.2	36.1
Youth	532,720	462,284	-1.6	27.7	19.0
Working Age	1,185,467	1,446,377	2.2	61.7	59.6
Elderly	41,426	104,015	10.8	2.2	4.3
Total	1,922,697	2,427,825	2.6	100.0	100.0

Source: National statistical offices.

Figure 17: GCC nationals have very high life expectancy and fertility rates
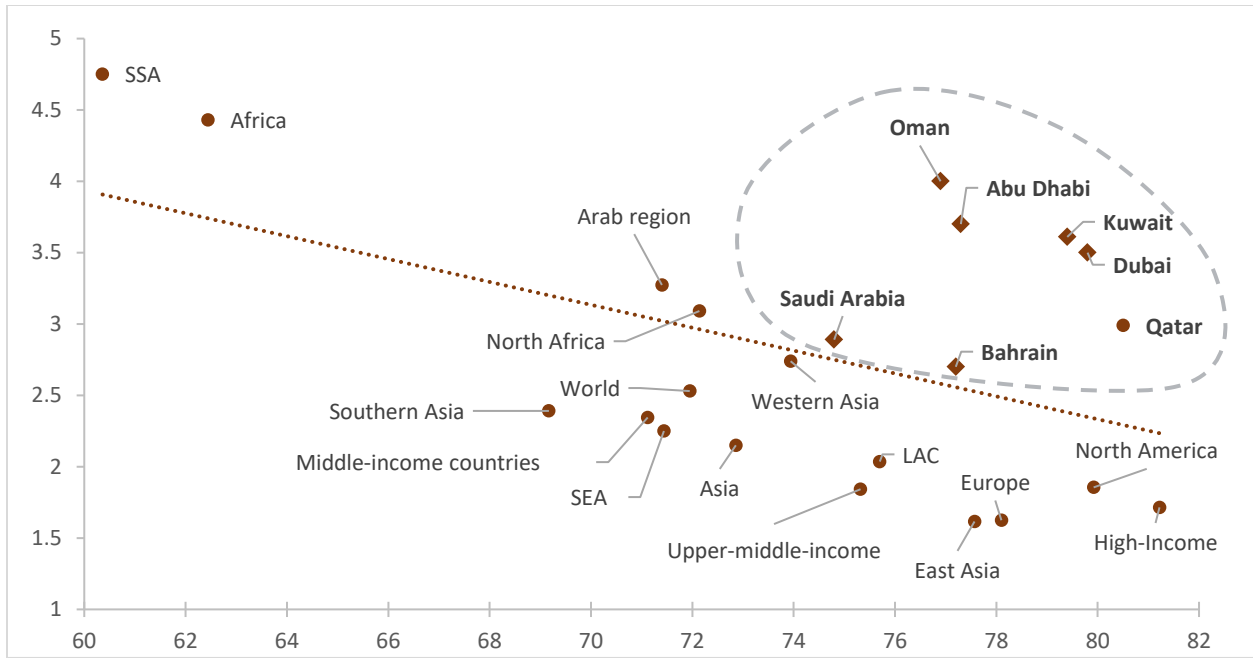
Source: For GCC countries, data are from national statistical office for 2016 (or the most recent date). For regional averages, data are based on estimate for 2015-2020 by the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2017).

Figure 18: Fertility rates among nationals in GCC countries, 1990-2016

Saudi nationals
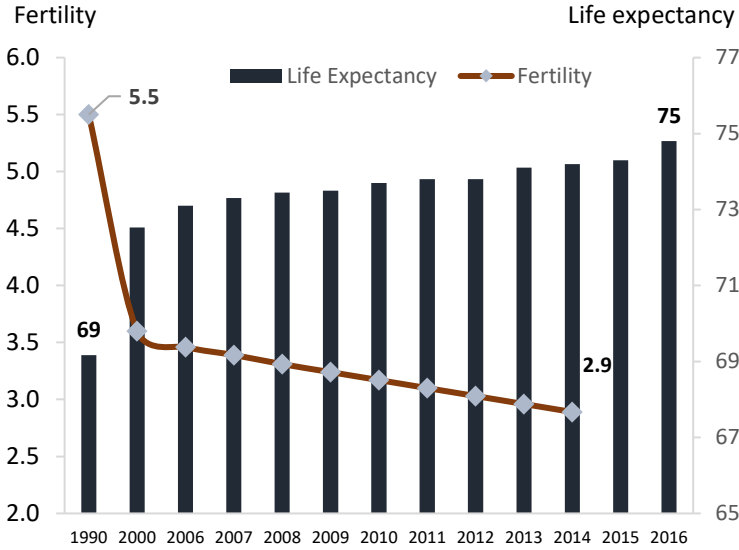
Bahraini nationals
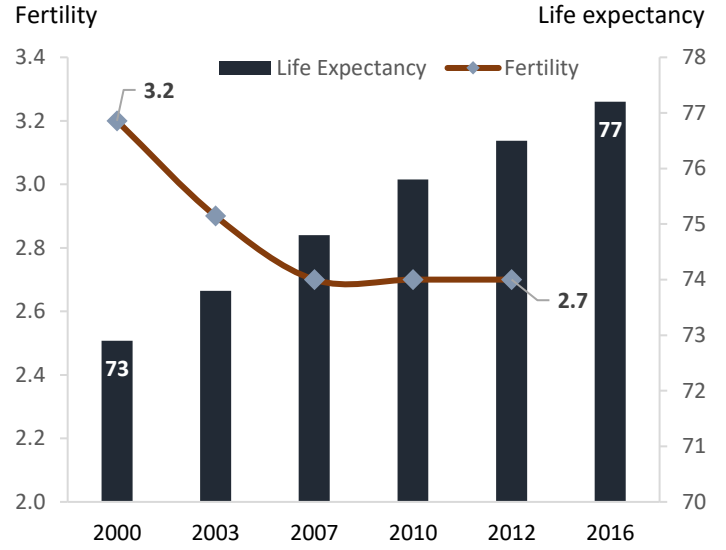
Omani nationals
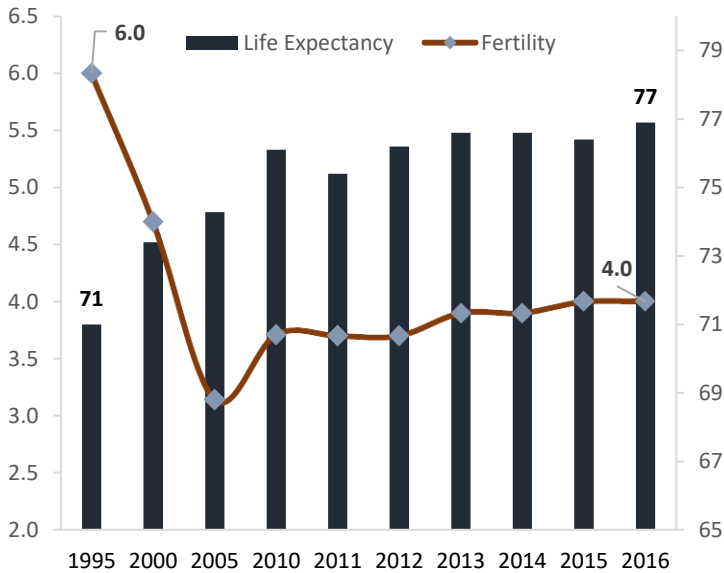
Qatari nationals
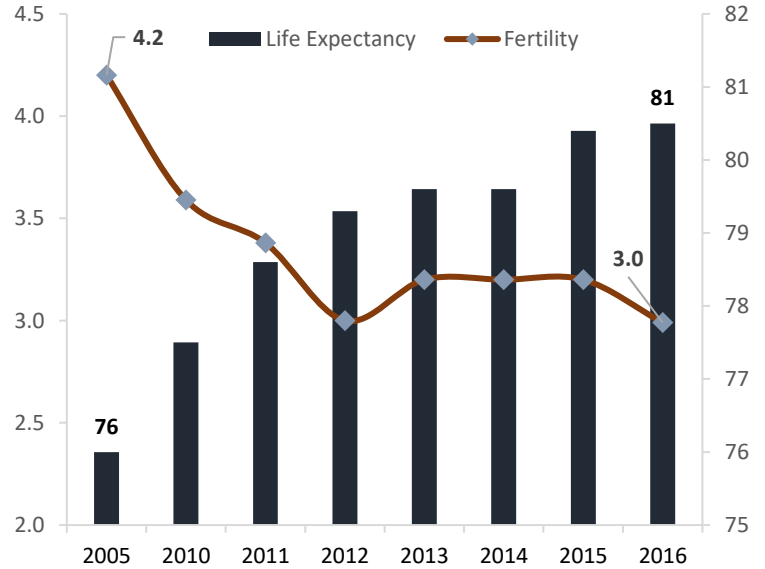
Dubai nationals
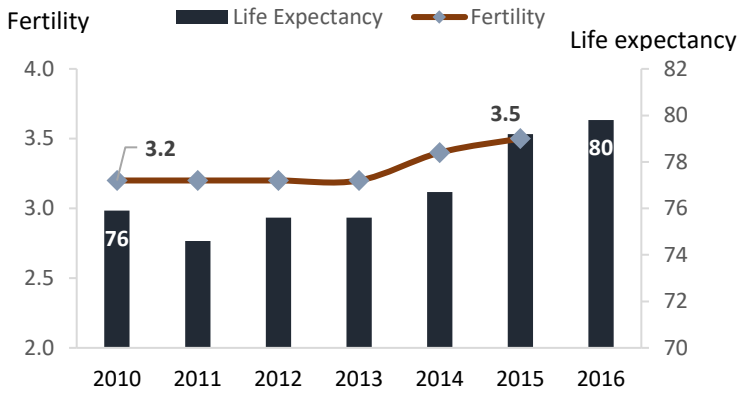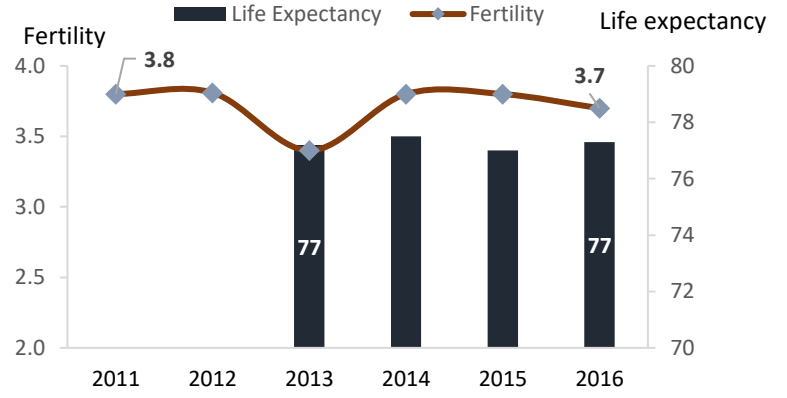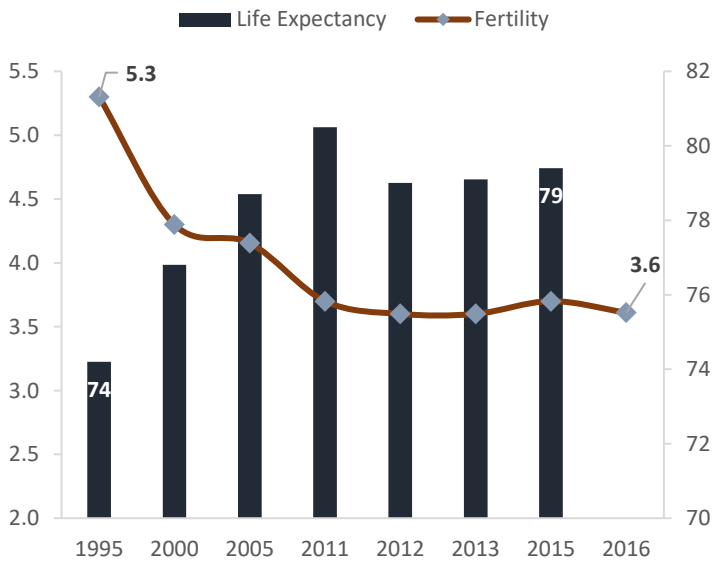
Fertility   ■ Life Expectancy   ◆ Fertility   Life expectancy

- **3.2**
- **3.5**
- **76**
- **80**

2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016

Abu Dhabi nationals

Fertility   ■ Life Expectancy   ◆ Fertility   Life expectancy

- **3.8**
- **3.7**
- **77**
- **77**

2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016

Kuwaiti nationals

■ Life Expectancy   ◆ Fertility

- **5.3**
- **3.6**
- **74**
- **79**

1995 2000 2005 2011 2012 2013 2015 2016

B. A growing population of dual wage-earning expatriate families with child care needs and a demand for professional housekeepers who are autonomous (requiring little supervision).

Over the past decade, the total population of the GCC countries has increased by 51 per cent (by 18 million) or by 4.2 per cent annually. Qatar and the UAE have experienced the highest population growth rates, growing by 9.6 and 8 percentage points annually between 2006-2016 respectively. The total population in Saudi Arabia experienced an annual average growth rate of 2.8 per cent. By way of comparison, the average world population growth rate per annum between 2010-2015 was 1.2 per cent.

Table 6: Total population by country, 2006-2016 (in millions)				
	2006	2016	Increase	Annual Growth %
Saudi Arabia	24.1	31.8	7.7	2.8
United Arab Emirates	4.2	9.1	4.9	8.0
Oman	2.6	4.4	1.8	5.5
Kuwait	2.5	4.1	1.6	4.7
Qatar	1.0	2.6	1.6	9.6
Bahrain	1.0	1.4	0.4	3.9
Total	35.4	53.4	18.0	4.2

Source: GCC National statistical offices.
Note: For Kuwait, data covers the period 2005-2016

On average, the national GCC population increased by 2.7 per cent annually.[13] Excluding Qatar where data on national population are not available, the GCC national population reached 26 million in 2017,[14] with Saudi nationals accounting for 79 per cent of the total GCC national population.

Figure 19. National population growth by country, 2005-2017
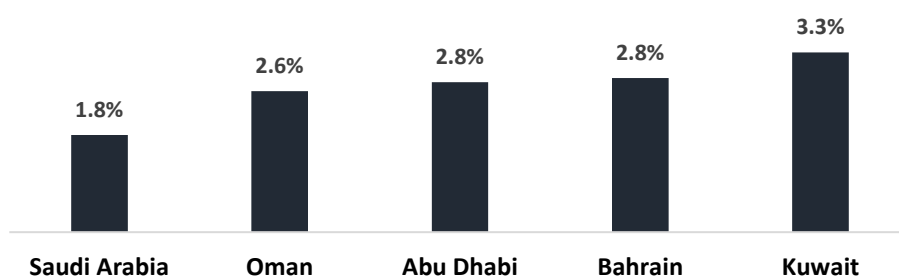
Source: GCC National official statistics offices and centers.
Note: Data of national population is not available for Qatar. For the UAE, national population data are only available for Abu Dhabi.

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[13] Data of national population is not available for Qatar.
[14] Latest data for UAE is for 2016.

Accordingly, the population growth is driven by the number of expatriates of whom a significant number are dual wage earners who need and can afford the services of domestic workers to perform child care, tutoring, housekeeping and cooking functions.

Table 7: Average monthly household income in GCC countries (USD) [15]				
	National	Non-Nationals	Total	Year
Qatar	24,235	6,707	11,430	2013
Dubai	19,671	7,656	..	2014
Kuwait	11,148	3,126	6,448	2013
Bahrain	4,728	3,838	4,421	2015
Saudi Arabia	3,629	..	2,859	2013
Oman	3,049	1,693	..	2012

Source: National Household expenditure and income national surveys.

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[15] Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Qatar Household Income and Expenditures surveys for the year 2013; Oman Household Income and Expenditures surveys 2011; Bahrain Household Income and Expenditures surveys 2015; Dubai Household Income and Expenditures surveys 2014.

Figure 20: GCC national population growth by country, 2005-2017
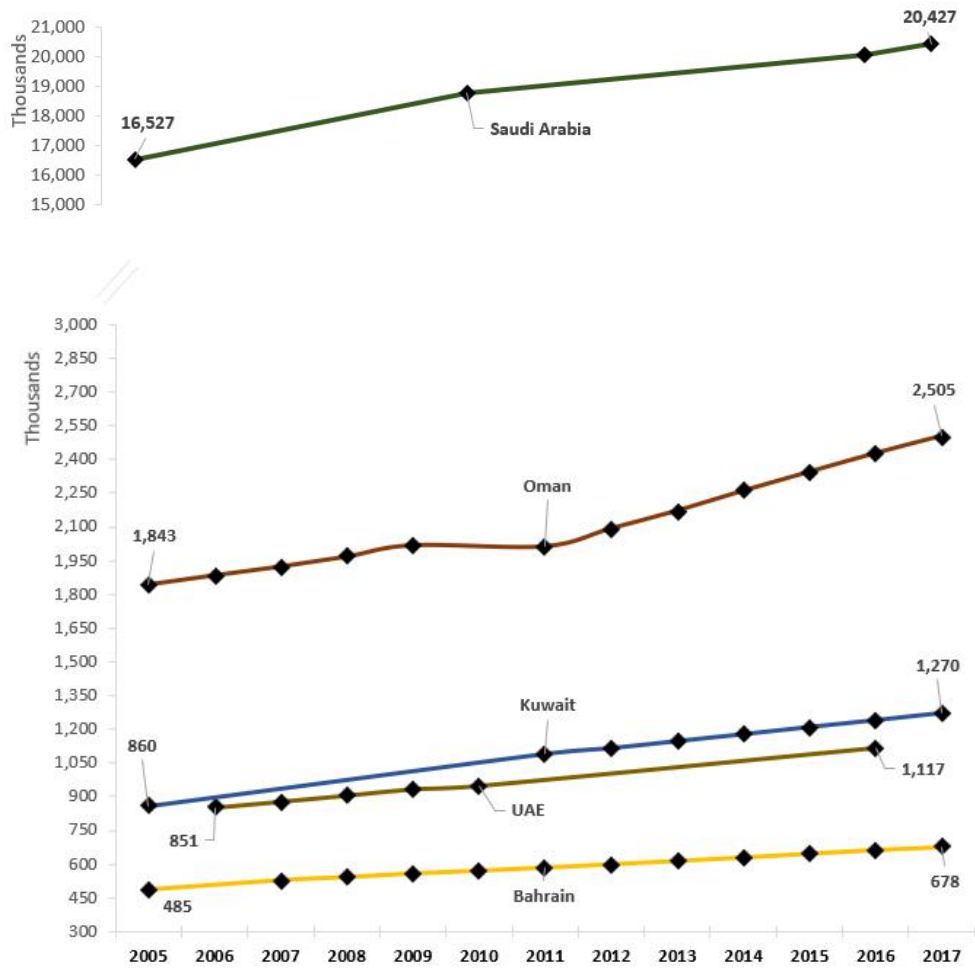
Source: National statistical offices.

Figure 21: GCC expatriate population growth 2005-2017
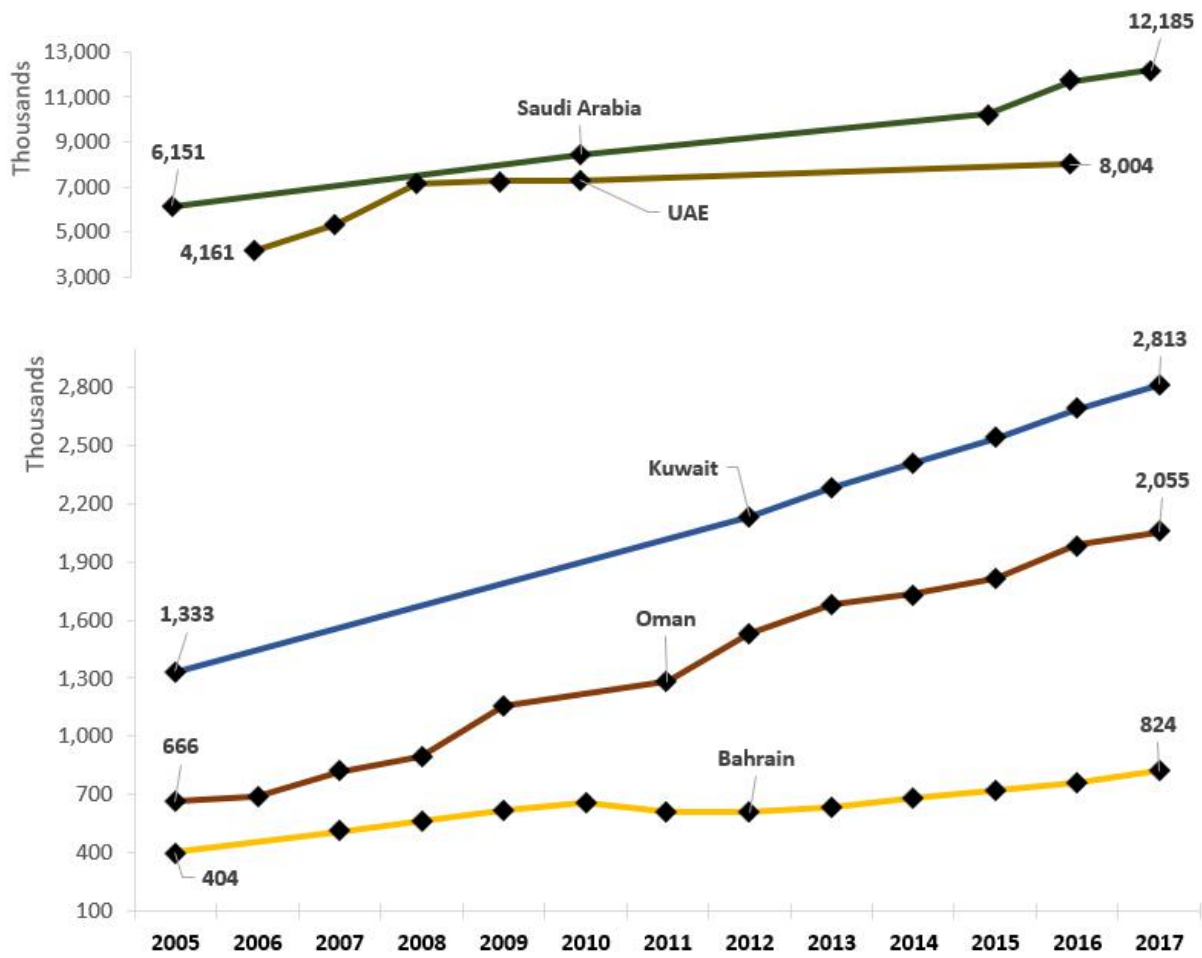
Source: GCC National statistical offices.

4. Employer-Domestic worker matching: The current state of affairs (the UAE as case study).

In many countries, domestic work is not treated like other labour market activities. This is due to the association of domestic work activities with the unpaid activities that are typically undertaken by women in the household (Rustagi 2016). This view is reinforced by women themselves who, upon entering the labour market, shift the burden of care onto women from poorer countries or to historically disadvantaged groups instead of negotiating work-sharing arrangements with other family members (Tayah 2016).

The ability to perform in the sector is therefore thought to derive from women's natural abilities, discounting the value of their experience and core employability competencies like communication, predisposition towards work and interpersonal skills. Consequently, skills' development, skills' matching and skills' recognition are not 'common speak' in the sector although national occupational standards (NOS) for domestic work and mutual skills' recognition frameworks are now under discussion in a number of countries.

The absence of NOS occults the segmentation of jobs within the sector and thereby contributes to poor matching and unrealistic expectations by both workers and employers. It also results in employment termination and in occupational safety and health deficits. NOS are a pre-requisite for the mutual recognition of skills and qualifications in the sector and promote efficiency, transparency and protection for workers in the recruitment process as well as prevent brain waste and deskilling (see ILO General principles and operational guidelines for fair recruitment).

In the previous section, we established that a variety of trends are interacting to create a growing but also a differentiated demand for domestic workers across a number of occupations among national and expatriate households in GCC countries. This differentiated demand for skills in the sector has promoted the Abu Dhabi QCC to initiate the development of national competence standards for domestic work and MoHRE to pilot, on the basis of these standards, an electronic system for labour admission for domestic workers which would, among other interventions, tie labour admission to skill certification.

The following are the findings of a rapid assessment of the current state of affair in labour matching in the sector in the Emirates of Abu Dhabi and Dubai. The assessment was guided by the following three priorities: (a) to map how the market is structured in the UAE; (b) examine modalities of employer-domestic workers matching among placement agencies in the UAE; and (c) assess the demand for skilled workers among employers and the need for skills' training among domestic workers in the UAE. The information relates to the pre-TSC phase.

The assessment is based on interviews with 10 TSC operators, 82 domestic workers from the Philippines and Sri Lanka, and interviews and focus groups with national and expatriate employers in Dubai and Abu Dhabi. Table 8 outlines the main interview and focus groups questions.

Table 8: Interview and focus group axes of discussion		
Employers	Workers	Recruiters
- What were the exact needs that prompted you to hire a domestic worker (occupation(s) and employment arrangement)? - Describe the process through which you recruited a domestic worker - In the absence of agency criteria (or when the recruitment was done through informal channels), what matching (selection) criteria did you set in the process of recruitment? - What was the determining factor in your decision to recruit the domestic worker who is now in your employ? - While interviewing a nanny, did you ask candidates any of the questions listed below? - What types of conflicts have emerged in the course of your employment relationship? *Prompting questions:* 1. *Physical development:* for example, is the worker familiar with different age categories that mark significant changes in children's diet? Can she develop menu plans based	- Employment history (following details were asked about each of the workers' employment relationships: nationality of the employer, size of the household, family size, occupation, work-sharing arrangements where more than one domestic worker is employed by the household and their nationalities) - Define your job and the skills you think are required for the job - Were you confronted with situations on the job where you did not know how to respond or behave? - How do you cope with family dislocation, nostalgia and stressful events in your country and in your own family? - If you were given the opportunity to choose employers, what profile employers would you select and why? - How do you deal with conflict (with your employers, other workers)?	- Years of experience working in the sector - Profile of clientele - Profile of domestic workers sought by clientele - Their views about the occupational segmentation in the sector and the valuing of different occupations - What system have you developed to match workers with employers (matching criteria and process) - How do you assess workers' prior learning and skills? - Nature of the complaints emerging from workers and employers, both

on age category? Can she engage in activities with the child that develop the motor skills of infants, toddlers, pre-schoolers? Is she cognizant of the hazards that could be attached to each of the activities proposed and precautions to be taken to avoid accidents? Is she familiar with the common daily activities to maintain the personal hygiene of the child? Is she aware of the common illnesses among children and their symptoms? allergy signs that tell you that a child needs medical attention? 2. *Cognitive development:* For example, is the worker knowledgeable of the different age categories that mark significant changes in children's cognitive development?) **3.** *Emotional development*: for example, is the worker aware of the different age categories that mark significant changes in children's emotional development and corresponding activities to develop these emotional skills; what are her strategies for disciplining children?		

A. How is the demand for domestic workers structured?

According to UAE Federal Law No. 10 of 2017, domestic work encompasses 19 occupations – namely; housemaids, private sailors, watchmen and security guards, household shepherds, family chauffeurs, parking valet workers, household horse groomers, household falcon care-takers and trainers, domestic labourers, housekeepers, private coaches, private teachers, babysitters/nannies, private PRO, household farmers, gardeners, private nurses, private agriculture engineers and cooks.

Table 9 summarizes the demand structure in the sector in Abu Dhabi and Dubai. The summary is based on in-depth interviews with TSC operators ranging between 45 minutes to two-and-a-half hours in length depending on the extent of the operator's experience with the sector.

The views of TSC operators are mediated by the nature of their experience with the recruitment industry; some TSC operators have been involved in the recruitment of domestic workers between 5-30 years, others with 'labour supply' but in sectors other than domestic work, and others' experience is limited to similar public private partnerships (PPPs) relating to the orientation of workers (Tawjeeh) or job typing services (Tasheel). TSC operators' experience is also mediated by whether they are nationals only (generally catering to a national constituency in largely traditional areas) or nationals collaborating with Western or Arab expatriates (both men and women). Their market niche tends to be focused on catering to expatriate employers or nationals, very seldom to both. Some TSCs are familiar with the concept of ethical and fair recruitment, others not. Some TSCs have experience with 'sourcing' from countries of origin, others only with placing workers who are already in the local market.

Despite the diversity of TSC operators and their experience, there is general consensus among them that the demand is highest for "housemaids" (who are also nannies and cooks), followed by nannies and then cooks. Nannies are the highest paid category (USD 500) among the three, followed by uncertified cooks (USD 400) and housemaids (USD 320-408).[16] The demand was less significant for the remaining categories (tutors, private nurses, gardeners, watchmen, family drivers, housekeepers, personal assistants and farmers) because employers generally recruit them directly without the intermediation of labour recruiters. The latter are higher-skilled occupations and, in the absence of NOS, certification and proper matching processes, employers prefer recruitment through informal networks where they can verify candidates' references (in the case of informal education) and credentials (in the case of formal education).

Farmers and camel trainers, for example, are a sought-after category of domestic workers. However, recruitment is done via informal networks and training is administered through these same informal networks. Farmers and camel trainers are in the employ of families for 20-30 years and will recruit and train their own replacements or assistants (usually relatives).[17]

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[16] Wages refer to the pre-TSC phase. Since, MOHRE has introduced a different price structure (according to nationality in the case of live-in arrangements and by the hour in the case of on-demand services).

[17] In the case of farmers and camel trainers, TSCs will only act as job typing centers but will seldom be involved in 'sourcing' and matching.

Table 9. Occupational segmentation within the sector in Dubai and Abu Dhabi			
Occupation	Gender	Nationalities	Wages[18]
Highest demand			
Housemaid (cleaning, washing and ironing)	Women	Philippines, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Ethiopia	320 – 408 USD depending on skills and nationality (almost synonymous)
Nanny	Women	Philippines, Indonesia	USD 500
Cook	Women and men	Sri Lanka, Indonesia	USD 400 and above depending on skill-level
Tutor (Math, English and Science)	Women and men	Arabs and Filipinas (live-in and live-out)	USD 600-800 and above
Lady driver	Women	Philippines, Indonesia, Sri Lanka	Demand is high, and supply is low. Anywhere between USD 500 to 680 especially if they have a UAE driving license.
Private nurse (for the elderly, for people with disability, midwives)	Men and women depending on the beneficiary's gender, condition and weight.	Philippines, Indonesia, India	USD 545
Gardner	Men	From all nationalities	USD 326-400
Watchmen	Men	From all nationalities	USD 326-400
Family driver	Men	From all nationalities	USD 500
Housekeeper / house manager	Men and women.	From all nationalities	USD 1,000-3,000 (depending on experience and education)
Personal assistant	Men and women	From all nationalities	USD 2000 and above

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[18] In addition, households will pay for food, accommodation, health insurance, phone and sim card.

B. What are the modalities of employer-domestic worker matching among placement agencies?

In the pre-TSC phase, labour recruiters employed "matching systems," largely emanating from their interest in disseminating information about the roster of available workers. These methods ranged from using social media platforms like WhatsApp or Facebook (see box 6), online lists of matching criteria mixing identity and occupational identifiers which employers can use to shortlist potential candidates (see box 7), interviews with the workers (usually unidirectional, with the employer interviewing the worker), direct selection by labour recruiters without employer input or based on earlier intake with employers.

Box 6. Example of video content circulated by placement agencies via social media applications
Placement agencies circulate videos via social media. These are short videos (under two minutes) during which a recruiter asks a domestic worker the following questions (verbatim):   • "Your name   • Age   • Are you married? Do you have children?   • What is your employment history? (*Usually referring to countries she has worked in as domestic worker before arriving in the UAE*).   • Can you clean?   • Can you cook? What meals can you cook?   • Can you "hold" a baby?   • Can you prepare deserts? Which?"

In the absence of a proper skills' matching system, labour recruiters in the pre-TSC phase used three categories of shortcuts in the matching process; personal and physical attributes, experience, and family status.

Table 10. Composite index of labour matching dimensions among recruiters	
Personal/physical attributes	- Nationality. - Religion. - Age: According to recruiters, 40-50 is the most desirable age category because workers have fewer family responsibilities and are less distracted by personal issues. Second best performing age category, according to recruiters, is women aged 30-40 because they possess the level of maturity required for the job. - Height and weight are determining factors in the case of elderly caregivers or caregivers for people with disabilities.
Experience	- Ability to cook a certain style of food (Western, Asian, Mediterranean…). - Caring for special needs child (especially violent autism). - Pet minding skills.

	- Post-natal care skills, especially in the case of twins. - Caring for the elderly.
Family status	- Marital status (a recent divorce or separation are viewed as distracting and therefore divorcees are avoided by labour recruiters). - Mothers with children below the age of 7 are also avoided by recruiters. They are thought to affect worker retention and focus on the job. - Mothers with children are sought-after for childcare arrangements because of their experience in raising children of different age categories.

Box 7. Agency criteria that employers are invited to select in order to shortlist workers for interviews
These are the matching criteria used by one of the placement agencies, now a TSC. They include a number of the matching categories in the composite index in table 10. "Please tell us about yourself. You have: • A preference for a Filipino maid • A requirement for a Muslim maid • A cat • A dog • Fondness for western food • A preference for an Ethiopian maid • A special needs child • Fondness for Arabic food • Fondness for Asian food • An infant (new-born to 2 years) • A child between 2 and 16 years • An elderly parent"
Source: Maids.cc Tadbeer Service Center.

Employers avoid the intermediation of labour recruiters when the demand for skilled workers is more pressing. When hiring nannies who require limited supervision, employers prefer recruitment through word-of-mouth where they can verify her references or rely on eye witness accounts (usually by other nannies and neighbours) of the worker's performance with children. Further, some employers have emphasized the importance of observing the candidate interacting with the child prior to contracting her. When employers want skilled cooks and caregivers for their ailing mothers and fathers, they have a preference for workers who are recruited locally or have worked in other Middle Eastern countries and can therefore understand the local culture and speak Arabic.

Assessment of workers' prior learning and skills

Recruiters were all in agreement that workers' CVs (shared by recruiters in the countries of origin) are not reliable, neither are pre-departure trainings. These programmes do not match the requirements of modern UAE household and few workers attend these programmes in the first place in view of their prohibitive cost, the cost of transportation to the city for the training, the cost of residing in the city during the training and the cost of foregone employment during this time.

Instead, labour recruiters employ pre-departure checks, organize on-arrival pre-placement trainings, encourage on-arrival trial-and-error placement, and promote on-the-job trainings to ensure that workers possess the qualifications required for the job.

Table 11. Timing and type of agency skills' assessment and skilling interventions	
Timing of intervention	Type of intervention
Pre-departure checks	This is achieved via interviews in the country of origin and through the verification of their Facebook chatter. Previously, labour recruiters set up "training camps" to train domestic workers pre-departure. Training camps were an "opportunity to weed out workers who did not demonstrate the skills and competence required for the job before deployment." These programmes have now been replaced by national programmes.
On-arrival, pre-placement trainings	Only two of the labour recruiters interviewed provided trainings in "UAE model villas" before placing workers. Training is limited to housekeeping and cooking.
On-arrival trial-and-error placement	Most recruiters consider trial periods and, in the words of two labour recruiters, "endless worker replacement possibilities," a solution to poor matching.
On-the-job trainings	One labour recruiter is providing custom-made trainings in employers' household (for an employer-paid fee). The "Training and Management package" lasts 12 months and is divided into 12 weekly testing modules, offering three hours of in-house training each month.

Hidden dimensions of domestic worker-employee matching

These approaches to labour matching are not commensurate with the growing demand for skilled domestic workers in the UAE. The system requires a structured and harmonized matching process that reflects how the demand in the market is organized and where job descriptions and skills' certificates and trainings are an important guarantee for employers as well as a passport for workers' occupational mobility.

Matching in domestic work in the UAE (like elsewhere) is mediated by stereotypes and assumptions by (a) employers about work performed by women from different nationalities; (b) workers about employers from different nationalities and religious backgrounds; (c) workers about other workers from different nationalities; (d) labour recruiters about employers from different nationalities; and, (e) labour recruiters about domestic workers from different nationalities.

Here, we focus on two important cognitive dimensions that permeate the matching process and that are widely responsible for inefficiencies in the recruitment process in the UAE and likely in other GCC countries.

First, Western expatriates from cultures based on 'cleaning after oneself ideals'[19] may experience class guilt when recruiting domestic workers and prefer employing domestic workers that require zero to no supervision, thereby releasing them of the angst of giving instructions to domestic workers, an act that they view as a form of human exploitation. This attitude is common in many Northern European countries and was discussed by Kindler, Kordasiewicz and Szuleka (2016) who described the lack of acceptance among Polish employers of the class gap that separates them from domestic workers.

> *"I personally like to do things myself; I also do not like the idea of a person depending on me…what happens when my children grow older and I have to terminate her contract"* (American employer in Abu Dhabi).

> *"I am not comfortable telling her (the domestic worker) what to do, so I just let her be"* (German employer in Abu Dhabi).

Second, employing a domestic worker clashes with family values in Arab countries, especially when domestic workers are tasked with caregiving functions. This tension prompts national and Arab expatriate employers to compensate for their need to "outsource" caregiving with close supervision. Domestic workers view close supervision as "crippling micromanagement." This dynamic is also common to southern European employers (also familial cultures) who are described as "care managers" who emphasize the importance of job supervision and management (Ambrosini 2015).

> *"Nationals and Arab expatriates are micro-managers. They monitor us closely. We prefer to work with Western expats. They trust us with the work and let us manage our time"* (Focus group with domestic workers in Dubai; also confirmed in Abu Dhabi).

> *"Parents do not want to admit to hiring a nanny because it is their job and do not want to be judged by relatives for delegating their caregiving responsibilities"* (Labour recruiter in Dubai).

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[19] The expression of "cleaning after oneself ideals" was used by Kristensen in "A fair deal: Paid domestic workers in social democratic Norway" (in Marchetti, S. and Triandafyllidou, A. 2015. Employers, agencies and immigration: Paying for care (Farnham and Burlington, Ashgate) to describe the class guilt that employers experience when hiring domestic workers in Northern European cultures.

"Parents never assume that that they will rely on the worker for proper nanny functions, but soon discover that they have little options but to do so and start complaining about how the worker does not know how to handle children" (Labour recruiter in Dubai).

Box 8. Advertisement by a TSC catering to a market of dual wage earning expatriate households

Dual wage-earning expatriate families with child care needs need professional housekeepers who are skilled. This is for two reasons:

- Dual wage earning expatriates toil long shifts and have busy social lives. Skilled domestic workers require little to no supervision.
- Western expatriates coming from cultures based on 'cleaning after oneself' ideals may experience class guilt when recruiting domestic workers and prefer employing domestic workers that require zero to no supervision.

Recruiters catering to the expatriate market capitalize on skills and skills' certification.

Free Training and Certificates for all Domestic Workers.

Source: Housekeeping Co. Tadbeer Service Center

C. Is there a demand for skilled workers among employers and/or a need for skills' training among domestic workers?

Employers: A demand for vocational and transversal skills but also for skills that reduce the transaction cost of recruitment and the emotional cost of parting with the worker

The literature distinguishes between the demand among employers for two broad categories of skills: vocational and transversal skills. **Vocational skills** are specialized skills demonstrating knowledge or know-how needed to perform specific duties or tasks like cleaning the house, using household appliances and taking care of the elderly. **Transversal skills** are core employability skills and evoke a person's ability to learn, communicate well, engage in teamwork and demonstrate a problem-solving aptitude. **Attitudinal skills** are a subset of transversal skills. **They indicate** a domestic worker's individual's attitude towards work such as reliability and flexibility (both time and functional) in responding to employers' demands (Tayah 2016, 73-76).

Demand for vocational and transversal skills is evident in the demand for professional child caregivers among employers in the UAE.

Table 12. Skill requirements among employers in the UAE: Child care	
Vocational skills (child development needs)	
Physical development Child caregivers play an important role in promoting the physical development of children through (a) promoting healthy nutrition and eating habits among children of different age groups, (b) identifying, preventing and treating common illnesses among children, and (c) developing the small and large motor skills of children through active play.	In their words, employers look for domestic workers who: - Are non-smokers; - Prioritize hygiene; - Prioritize the child's safety; - Have basic knowledge of activities that encourage the development of kinetic skills; - Can identify allergy symptoms and respond accordingly; and, - Cook suitable and nutritious meals for the children.
Cognitive development Cognitive development refers to the development of intelligence, thinking, problem-solving capacity and the acquisition of social skills. Games, toys and books are important in facilitating the socialization and intellectual development of children.	In their words, employers look for domestic workers who: - Can play educational games with children; and, - Exhibit energy and enthusiasm and can suggest activities to keep the children in their care entertained.
Emotional development Emotional development refers to an	In their words, employers look for domestic workers who:

individual's capacity to experience, recognize, and express a range of emotions. It also signals people's ability to adequately respond to emotional cues in others.	- Have a significant experience caring for children of different age categories; - Like small children and can be a 'pal' to a growing child; and, - Are empowered enough to enforce discipline without allowing children to push them over.

Transversal skills
In their words, employers look for domestic workers who: - *Can read and write in a common language* (mostly English) so as to leave written notes/instructions, send text messages, ensure workers' ability to read for children (an important cognitive development needed among children whose mothers are absent for the most part of the day), ability to follow recipes, and read the ingredient labels of food items in the case of children with allergies;   - *Are mature* and can "manage internally" the multiple exclusions of domestic work (migration, gender, and class); and,   - *Demonstrate time flexibility* and can pull extra shifts to attend to a sick child.

Skills related to reducing the transaction costs of recruitment and the emotional cost of parting with the caregiver
In their words, employers look for domestic workers who: - *Have experience working with children of different age categories*: "we did not want to hire a new worker in two years when our children's developmental needs changed" (American employer in Abu Dhabi).

Transversal skills are often ignored but can make or break the employment relationship. These skills are hard to articulate by employers, yet can make or break an employment relationship. Employer complaints, according to labour recruiters, are abstract and mediated by their "perception and mood." Examples of these complaints include:

*"She is **stubborn**. She does not listen."*

*"She is **not friendly** with children."*

*"She is **distracted** always looking at her phone and checking family photos."*

*"Worker is **not responsive to pleasantries**. She does not return greetings like good morning."*

*"Worker is **moody**, she is loud, and **does not respect personal physical space**"*

One labour recruiter has recently announced to clients that his agency will no longer resolve complaints of this nature and promised a "constant supply of replacement workers." Another hired a psychiatrist to develop and administer personality tests to workers, which in his view will lead to better matching and job retention.

Whereas previous research demonstrated the importance of vocational and transversal skills in domestic work, this research points to a new category of skills; **Employers look for domestic workers with skills that can reduce the transaction costs of (multiple) recruitment and the emotional cost of parting with the worker.**

We pointed earlier to one example of the transaction cost-reducing skills in relation to child care (i.e., employers look for domestic workers with experience working with children of different age categories so as not to hire a new work when the children's developmental needs change). In relation to housekeeping, employers seek workers who can adjust their time management and upgrade their vocational skills when they move to larger homes with fancier finishing, furniture and household appliances, usually entertaining at a higher frequency. (As background, expatriates in the UAE are economically mobile, moving upwards between income categories during the course of their residence).

Workers: A need for skills relating to employment arrangements, self-preservation skills and vocational skills

Domestic workers interviewed in the course of this research lamented the lack of appropriate guidance from the side of governments, recruitment agencies and employers and admitted to finding themselves in situations where they do not have the appropriate skills to follow employer instructions. Skill deficits according to workers are linked to certain employment arrangements (like on-demand work); the use of equipment and detergents; cooking; dealing with household beneficiaries like children, elderly, special needs children; and, coping with workplace conflict (including with other workers), stress, compassion fatigue from caring arrangements and nostalgia due to family dislocation.

> *"They [labour recruiters] recommend us as skilled workers and the Madame's expectations are not commensurate with our skills. We get in trouble a lot. In fact, we are confronted with a variety of situations in the course of which we lack the skills required"* (Filipina domestic worker, Dubai).

> *"Female employers are not patient. They provide no supervision. The expectation is that newly placed workers will measure up to the performance levels of previous workers. Underperformance is viewed as an act of resistance or defiance and lack of intent to work"* (Labour recruiter, Dubai).

Self-identified skill deficits relating to employment arrangements:

Whereas on-demand work is still outlawed in many countries of the region, on-demand cleaning services (usually four-hour or eight-hours shifts on a daily, weekly, monthly and yearly basis) are a key feature of TSCs. According to domestic workers, on-demand workers require additional skills to those required of live-in 'housemaids'. They require skills to: (a) adjust to different households of different sizes, with different dynamics and work-sharing arrangements each time (sometime during the same day); (b) manage relationships with multiple employers of different nationalities and distinct household cultures; (c) manage their time better (they do not have the luxury of parsing out the tasks over a full day or week); (d) manage stress and work pressures to

avoid burnout; and, (e) develop strategies to deal with repetitive movements which can cause muscle strain injuries.

> *"As on-call housekeepers, we clean and tidy-up. We must manage our time well to complete our tasks in four hours. We first start the laundry and dish washer, then move to tidying-up the bedrooms and sweeping and we might have to juggle 30 minutes with the baby while mothers run errands, to finally take the clothes out from the laundry, iron them and reorder the plates and cutlery where they belong. Then, we must do it all over again in another house in the afternoon"* (Noemi, on-demand domestic worker in Dubai).

Self-identified skill-deficits relating to the use of equipment, detergents and cooking:

Domestic workers expressed a number of skill-deficits relating to the use of household appliances, detergents and to cooking.

> *"The automatic washing machines and microwaves are different from one house to the next. How do you clean vacuum cleaners, for example?"* (Domestic worker, Dubai).

> *"I am not sure which clothes to launder, which to wash by hand and which to send to the laundry. I also confuse towels. I am not sure which are the guest bathroom towels, bedroom or kitchen towels. Why can we not use color-coded towels?"* (Domestic workers, Dubai).

> *"I find it hard to tell which soap and detergent to use with different tiling. I am also not sure how to mix them and what the right mix is"* (Domestic worker, Abu Dhabi).

> *"What are the basics of cooking local food? I don't know"* (Domestic worker, Abu Dhabi).

> *"What is a gluten-free diet? What does it consist of and what are recipes I can prepare?"* (Domestic worker, Abu Dhabi).

Self-identified skill-deficits relating to dealing with household beneficiaries:

Table 13: Self-identified skill deficits in dealing with household beneficiaries	
Children, including special needs children	In the workers' own words: - *"The child in my care has seizures. I am never sure when to call the doctor or take him to the emergency room? How does one perform first aid in the situations?"* (Domestic workers, Dubai) - *"My employer's son is autistic. He can be very violent. I can never tell what he wants, if I am doing something wrong. I want to help him but I don't know how to"* (Domestic workers, Dubai / This same concern was expressed by two other domestic workers). - *"Sometime it is impossible to manage. What can I do when*

	the two children are crying at the same time?" (Domestic worker, Abu Dhabi).
	- *"How should I respond when the child hits me, or when he is not very nice to me? Children lie a lot. I don't know when I should or should not discipline them."* (Domestic worker in Dubai / this same concern was expressed by a large number of workers in Dubai and Abu Dhabi).
Elderly	In the workers' own words:
	- *"The elderly gets irritated and violent with me, sometimes taps me on the writs. I can never sleep. He wakes up at 2 am and starts calling on me. I think he is senile."* (Domestic worker in Dubai / this same concern was expressed by a large number of workers in Dubai and Abu Dhabi).
	- *"I was fired two months into my contract. I was hired as housemaid but asked to change the grandmother's diapers and (intravenous) drip. I cannot bring myself to doing it or even know how to"* (Domestic worker in Abu Dhabi).
Pets	In the workers' own words:
	- *"I have never been around pets. I don't know what and how to feed them, when to walk them or bathe them…when to be afraid of them. I am not sure when the employers prefer to walk them and when they would rather I do so"* (Domestic worker in Dubai).

Self-identified skill deficits: attitudinal skills and skills for self-preservation

Table 14. Self-identified skill deficits: attitudinal skills and skills for self-preservation	
Interpersonal relationships	*"We find it hard to communicate with the employers. Not all westerners are fluent in **English** like Americans and British. Some have problems speaking it"* (Domestic worker in Dubai).
	*"**Nanny-to-nanny jealousies** are a problem. We fight with other nannies all the time. No one tells us that we will be working with another nanny"* (Focus group discussion with domestic workers in Dubai). [20]
	*"I don't like dealing with **extended family members**. The children are in my care. I don't want to go to jail because grandma feeds chicken bones to a 6-month old child or allows the three-year-old to run around the balcony and down the stairs unsupervised"* (Domestic worker, Dubai).

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[20] TSC operators have almost all identified nanny-to-nanny jealousies in one household as a major complaint category. This is in line with focus group discussions conducted in the course of an IOM and UN Women study in Kuwait (Tayah and Hamada, 2017).

	"The employer leaves her son with me and expects me to also sweep and tidy up the bedrooms. How can I do both?" (Domestic worker, Dubai).
	*"We cannot **confront male employers who proposition us**. Who do we go to? Their wives will blame us for their advances"* (Domestic worker, Dubai).
Coping with stress and preoccupations	*"We have concerns of our own – our children are far away, in different time zones, and we are concerned when they are sick. We don't want to tell the employer because we don't want them to think that we are unprofessional. We are always homesick. Holidays are the worse. Christmas and Easter are the hardest. …How do we relieve the worries? How do we cope? We take it out on the furniture, we scrub harder to relax (she laughs) …Some housemaids go crazy. They cannot cope with the stress"* (Focus group discussion with domestic workers in Dubai).

Recognizing workers' employment history and providing opportunities for mobility within the sector

Domestic workers in the UAE gain new skills on the job that allow them to move from low-wage closely-supervised live-in employment arrangements in large households to higher-waged housekeeping or nanny-only live-out arrangements where they are rather autonomous in carrying out their tasks. These skills are not formally recognized under the current system. The transition depends on the worker's social network among employers, communication skills and individual bargaining capacity. Workers who are unable to transition through employer networks, sign up for on-demand cleaning employment arrangements through labour recruiters hoping to find in the process a suitable employer who will provide them with the *higher wage, lower workload, more autonomy, live out employment arrangement* that they strive for.

The summary in table 15 is based on trends in the employment history of 82 domestic workers in Abu Dhabi and Dubai who are working for nationals and expats, who are live-in or live-out, providing on-demand cleaning services or having multiple employers, paid by the hour or monthly.

Table 15. Summary of trends in the employment history of domestic workers	
Their employment history	Key observations
Number of years in service total and nationality of the employer	- The workers interviewed have spent between 1 and 16 years in the UAE. - The experience of many is limited to the UAE whereas at least 20 had worked in one or more countries of the Middle East (Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar or Lebanon). - Many dream of relocating to Europe and Japan.

	- Workers move between three to five employers over the course of their working experience in the UAE. - There is a general progression from live-in arrangement with Emirati employer or Arab expats to live-out arrangements with Western expats.
Occupation; Number of domestic workers and work-sharing arrangements	- Workers progress from cook only, caregiver only or housemaid only employment arrangements (where they share the workload with other domestic workers) to multifunctioning single-domestic worker arrangements but where they are paid higher wages (either by the hour or a flat rate).
HH size and composition	- Workers move from large houses (size) with large families counting a total of 7 to 9 members to smaller houses with small families (a maximum of two children). - The number of domestic workers is commensurate with household size (room numbers) but also with the number of household members. In the word of three recruiters, the general ratio is one domestic worker to five family members.

See annex for the employment history of a cross-section of 15 domestic workers who were interviewed.

5. Conclusion and the way forward:

A. Summary of the main points

In 2016, the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) hosted **around 3.77 million domestic workers**. Based on data from the past 10 years, the sector is growing at an annual average growth rate of 8.7 per cent (or 35,970 new domestic workers every year).

The consistent demand for household paid care and domestic work in the countries of the GCC **is driven by two trends**:

❖ Explanation A: Increasing care pressures on national households due to higher female labour force participation rates (FLFPRs) combined with growing child and elderly care needs in national contexts where care is traditionally the responsibility of women in the family and where intergenerational households (i.e., care by extended family members) are being replaced by nuclear households.

❖ Explanation B: A growing population of dual wage-earning expatriate families with child care needs and a demand for professional housekeepers who require little supervision.

The familial care policies of the GCC have transformed domestic work into an essential component of care provision in households, with domestic workers providing care themselves or relieving employers from household chores so that they, in turn, can provide care. More attention needs to be paid to the socio-demographic changes in the GCC and to their implications for the management of human resources. **The organization of the sector, as it progresses from housekeeping to home-paid care, must take into consideration how the long-term demand in the sector will be structured and what this demand structure will mean for labour matching.**

Skills and skills' recognition are an important aspect of labour matching.

Employers in the UAE have expressed a preference for hiring skilled domestic workers. **Vocational skills** (technical know-how especially in the area of child care), **transversal skills** (e.g., ability to read and write English; maturity to "manage internally" the multiple exclusions of domestic work) **and skills that reduce the transaction costs of recruitment and the emotional cost of parting with the worker** (e.g., experience working with children of different age categories to accompany the child as his/her developmental needs change; ability to adapt time management and upgrade vocational skills when employers move to larger homes) **are valued among employers**.

Workers, on the other hand, lament the lack of appropriate guidance from the side of governments, recruitment agencies and employers and admit to finding themselves in situations

where they do not have the appropriate skills. **Skill deficits according to workers** are linked to certain **employment arrangements** (like on-demand work); the **use of modern household appliances and detergents**; **cooking**; working with **household beneficiaries** like children, elderly, special needs children; and, coping with workplace conflict (including with other workers), stress, compassion fatigue from caring arrangements and nostalgia due to family dislocation.

Domestic workers gain new skills on the job that allow them to transition from *low-waged, closely-supervised, live-in employment arrangements in large households* to *higher-waged, housekeeping or nanny-only live-out arrangements where they are rather autonomous* in carrying out their functions. **Recognizing workers' employment history and providing opportunities for mobility within the sector will be important to capitalize on workers' experience for the benefit of workers and employers both**.

Labour recruiters are not keeping up with the growing demand for skilled and professional workers. **Recruiters' labour matching "systems" are skill-blind** and largely informed by recruiters' individual experience with the sector and cognitive shortcuts. **Thus, employers avoid the intermediation of labour recruiters when the demand for skilled workers is more pressing**. They prefer recruitment through word-of-mouth where they can verify a workers' references.

To keep up with the sector's development, an overhaul and reorganization of the sector would require:

- reflecting on what the longer-term demand in the sector means for a **labour admission system for domestic workers**;
- developing **national benchmarks or occupational standards** that capture the segmentation within the sector;
- **developing, assessing, and recognizing workers' skills against a national benchmark** to better match employer expectations with worker qualifications and to improve the quality of the services delivered to employers, especially those related to child, elderly and post-operative care where developmental, safety and hygiene protocols are paramount.
- **promoting workers' mobility within the sector** (from lower to higher complexity tasks) in accordance with these same benchmarks; and,
- progressively **moving away from the nationality-based wage differentials** to a waging system modelled after the benchmarks.

B. Suggestions for the way forward

Linking wage increases to complexity in the sector and tying labour admission to skill certification or to recognition of prior learning (RPL) systems

To capture the growing complexity and multifunctionality of domestic work and the occupational niching within the sector, countries are developing competence standards and corresponding skills programmes for domestic workers. These programmes aim to provide specialized and quality services for employers, structure wages according to workers' skill and competency levels, and recognize the skills of workers with a view to promoting their professional mobility within and outside the sector (Tayah 2016, see chapter on skills).

Depending on the context, these programmes can be funded by governments, the private sector, employers' associations, recruitment agencies, individual workers, and/or workers' organizations. These programmes are more effective when linked to national qualification frameworks (or model competency standards for domestic workers) and to corresponding national wage setting categories that reflect workers' skill and competency levels. In the GCC, where domestic workers' wages are currently negotiated bilaterally between the countries of origin and destination, **on-arrival skills programmes or tying labour admission to skill certification and RPL systems may be an alternative to nationality-based wage differentials**.[21]

Table 16: Skills programmes for domestic workers: Modalities, structure, and corresponding wage categories.	
Hong Kong, SAR	
The Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions (HKCTU) offers a skills programme for domestic workers (128 hours) and a job matching service. Trainees receive 90 training hours in job skills (e.g., cleaning, laundry, care, cooking) and 36 training hours in life skills (e.g., professional ethics, communication skills, job search and interview skills, occupational safety and labour laws).	Current wage categories for domestic workers in Hong Kong SAR, China: • General cleaning: 10 USD/hour. • Special / intensive cleaning: 14 - 16.6 USD/hour. • Post-natal care: 2,250 USD/month (Tang 2017).

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[21] The majority of countries of origin in Asia and countries of destination in the Middle East have ratified the ILO Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111) which speaks against tying working conditions (e.g., wages) to national origin.

Since 1996, the job matching centre has placed over 40,186 trainees (Tang 2017). The programme is subsidized by the Government of Hong Kong, SAR. HKTUC works jointly with its affiliate, the Domestic Workers General Union (DWGU) to campaign for wage standards based on skill level and promote the use of employment contracts (HKTUC 2017).	
Italy	
The ACLI Colf/Family Collaborators, a "movement" organization counting 25 local associations of domestic workers in Italy supports a skills programme for carers and domestic workers. The programme is funded by trade unions and employers' associations. It is tied to the collective bargaining agreement of 2013, guaranteeing wage increases (above the minimum wage) in accordance with workers' skill level (Villavert 2017).	Job classification of workers according to the national collective agreement on domestic work, 2013: • Level A: domestic workers with no experience • Level B: assistants to self-sufficient individuals • Level C: individual assistants to non-self-sufficient individuals, unskilled. • Level D: individual assistants to non-self-sufficient individuals, trained and skilled. Level D is the highest earning category. For the subcategories to A, B, C, and D, please refer to the full text of the sectoral national collective bargaining agreement.[22]
Argentina	
Argentina's vocational training for domestic workers is nested within a broader legislative context where qualified domestic workers are entitled to wage increases above the general minimum wage based on occupation. The programme was launched in 2006. It was **developed and funded by the Ministry of**	Job classification of workers according to the collective bargaining agreement for private household personnel in Argentina, 2013: • Supervisors: personnel hired to coordinate and supervise the tasks of two or more domestic workers. • Cooks: personnel hired exclusively to

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[22] Contratto collettivo nazionale di lavoro sulla disciplina del rapporto dei lavoro domestico (2013-2016), available at: http://www.colfebadantionline.it/images/ccnllavorodomestico2013-2016.pdf [Accessed on 3 January 2018].

Labour, Employment and Social Security, and implemented by local governments, NGOs and domestic worker union-affiliated training schools. According to 2016 statistics, more than 19,000 domestic workers were trained since the programme's establishment. The programme is structured according to three occupational fields: (a) domestic work; (b) elderly care; and, (c) child care (METSS/ILO 2015). Domestic work is a five-module course consisting of 61 lessons and 128 course hours (METSS/ILO 2015a). Elderly care is a five-module course consisting of 52 lessons and 104 course hours (METSS/ILO 2015b). Child care is a five-module course consisting of 49 lessons and 98 course hours (METSS/ILO 2015c).	cook. • Caseros/as: live-in personnel performing tasks for the preservation of the dwelling. • Caregivers: personnel providing non-therapeutic assistance and care to children, elders, the sick and people with disability. • Personnel for general tasks: personnel hired to perform a number of household tasks such as cleaning, washing, ironing, maintenance, preparing and cooking meals. Supervisors, cooks and caregivers are the highest earning categories (in that order).

Labour admission can be tied to skills even where the worker has not received a formal training. Through RPL, competencies and skills gained by worker in her country of origin or abroad can be assessed and certified. Most RPL systems have established a "recognition authority" that can assess and certify formal, informal and non-formal learning outcomes against standards used in formal education and training (ILO 2017, 16-17). For example, the HKCTU has developed a Standardized Assessment & Competency Card to assess and recognize domestic workers' prior learning against a set of standards developed by HKCTU in coordination with the Hong Kong Department of Labour.

Developing regional competence standards (RCS) to recognize the regional mobility of domestic workers and to transition from the logic of "facilitating market access based on nationality" to the logic of "harmonized, transparent and efficient labour matching" in the sector.

Qualification frameworks can also be regional in scope when they receive the support of regional economic commissions or intergovernmental political and economic unions, thereby facilitating

the regional positioning regarding the sector and promoting the mobility of domestic workers across borders within one region.

This is especially important and feasible in the GCC because:

- population and employment statistics (see section two of this report) point to a similar sectoral demand structure across GCC countries;
- domestic workers are known to move between GCC countries (knowledge of the Arabic language, of the "GCC household culture" and of the local cuisine are highly prized skills among national employers in the region);
- GCC countries are engaged in bilateral agreements with countries of origin in Asia and Africa. These agreements reinforce stereotypes about the value of the work performed by women from certain nationalities and promote nationality-based wage discrimination. Wage discrimination on the basis of nationality leads to a race to the bottom in the working and living conditions of all workers in the region and in the quality of care provided to employers across the region; and,
- The ADD is an opportunity to discuss, develop and adopt such RCS.

Bangladesh, Cambodia, Hong Kong (China), India, Indonesia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand have contributed to the development of Regional Model Competency Standards (RMCS) for domestic workers in ASEAN.[23] The RMCS template is an adaptive tool, composed of six functional areas: (a) core competencies; (b) domestic cleaning and basic housekeeping; (c) cooking and food handling; (d) caring for infants and children; (e) caring for elderly people; and (f) caring for household pets and plants (ILO 2014). A similar RMCS could be considered for the GCC and would form the basis for labour admission policies in relation to countries of origin in Asia and Africa.

Table 17. Regional Model Competency Standards for Domestic Work in ASEAN	
Core competencies	A1. Communicate effectively in a domestic work environment; A2. Work in a socially and culturally diverse workplace; A3. Maintain health, safety and security in a domestic work environment; A4. Plan, organize and manage own work; A5. Undertake calculations relevant to domestic work; and A6. Use a language other than the local language to communicate in a domestic work setting.
Domestic cleaning and basic housekeeping	B1. Apply basic cleaning principles to perform cleaning tasks; B2. Clean and maintain bedrooms and living areas; B3. Clean and maintain bathrooms and toilet facilities; B4. Wash cloths, linens and fabrics; and B5. Iron and store laundered items.

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[23] The RMCS were not adopted.

Cooking and food handling	C1. Clean and maintain food preparation, storage and service areas; C2. Follow basic food safety practices; C3. Organize and prepare basic food in a domestic setting; and C4. Serve food and beverages.
Care for infants and children	D1. Work effectively with families to provide care and support for infants and children; D2. Provide care and support for the infants and/or toddlers in a household; and D3. Provide care and support for children in a household.
Care for elderly people	E1. Provide support to elderly people to meet personal care needs; and E2. Assist client with medication.
Care for household pets and plants	F1. Provide care for pets in a household; and F2. Provide care for plants in a household.

Source: ILO 2014.

> **Tying RCS to regional skills passports for domestic workers** to recognize the experience of workers who are mobile within the GCC and progressively promote the recognition of these passports for returning domestic workers (across the GCC-Asia or GCC-Africa migration corridors)

At destination, migrant workers acquire new skills and competencies. The integration of returning migrants and the recognition of their work experience is important to increase their employment prospects while avoiding deskilling. Mutual (skills) recognition agreements (MRAs) for migrant domestic workers are hard to establish because of the difficulty of demonstrating equivalencies across borders.

MRAs for domestic workers' skills within the GCC can be concluded using RCS for domestic workers as benchmark. Regional skills passports for domestic workers can help document workers' experience and learning to facilitate domestic workers' mobility within the sector in the GCC (and progressively with countries of origin).

Examples of regional passports include the European Skills Passport (or EuroPass) and the European Qualification Passport for Refugees. The EuroPass is an electronic portfolio providing a comprehensive picture of EU citizens' skills and qualifications. Individuals create and update their "European Skills Passport online to gather documents such as Language passport, Certificate/Diploma supplement, copies of degrees or certificates, attestations of employment, etc."[24] The EuroPass uses the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) as benchmark to validate individual's knowledge, skills and competences, regardless if acquired within or outside the formal education system.

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[24] What is the European Skills Passport, available at: https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/europass-support-centre/general-questions-europass/what-european-skills-passport [Accessed on 2 May 2018].

Another example is the UNHCR and Council of Europe-supported European Qualifications Passport for Refugees, a system that assesses refugees' education level, work experience and language proficiency in absence of full documentation. This passport describes the refugees' qualifications in a format that allows the use of the assessment both within and outside the host country.[25]

Regional skill passports in the GCC can help countries of origin better manage the skills development and reintegration of returning migrants where these efforts are already in place. For example, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) of the Philippines maintains a database to link the experience and competencies of returning migrants to prospective employers, and provides support services through the Permanent Returning Overseas Filipino Workers Network (ILO 2010). The Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment recognizes skills through the "Recognition of Prior Learning" scheme and certification of returning domestic workers (Tayah 2016, 80-81).

> **Expanding the discussion on RCS (and corresponding wage levels) to organizations representing relevant interest groups** (e.g., groups and government agencies representing the interests of families, the elderly, women, migrant workers, children, and people with disability) to garner support for these standards and to revise and adjust them in light of local economic factors and the needs of migrant domestic workers and their families.

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[25] European Qualifications Passport for Refugees: integration through education and employment, available at: http://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2018/3/5aba426d4/european-qualifications-passport-refugees-integration-education-employment.html [Accessed on 2 May 2018].

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- Labor Market Information System Central Statistical Bureau, State of Kuwait
- Labour Market Regulatory Authority, Kingdom of Bahrain
- Bahrain Central Informatics Organization, Kingdom of Bahrain
- Bahrain Open Data Portal, Information and eGovernment Authority, Kingdom of Bahrain
- National Centre for Statistics and Information, Sultanate of Oman
- Statistics Centre Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates
- Dubai Statistics Centre, United Arab Emirates
- Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Authority, United Arab Emirates
- Saudi Arabian Monetary Authority (SAMA)

Annex - Employment history of 15 domestic workers (sample)

	Number of years spent with employers, their nationalities and employment arrangement	Size of family and composition	Size of HH and composition	Number of DWs and work sharing arrangements
Worker 1				
1	4 years - Emirati family - Live-in / full time	7 children - Couple	- Villa 6 bedrooms 6 bathrooms	1 Sri Lankan DW: ironing, cooking 1 Filipina DW: child care 1 Ethiopian DW: cleaning, doing the laundry 1 driver *No problems between workers.*
2	2 years - American-Pakistani family - Live-out (9 am – 7 pm shift)	1 child - Couple	- Flat 2 bedrooms 2 bathrooms	1 Sri Lankan DW (multitasking)
3	3 years - Indian-American - Live-out (9 am – 5.30 pm)	1 child - Couple	- Flat 3 bedrooms 2 bathrooms	1 Sri Lankan DW (multitasking)
Worker 2				
1	2 years - Emirati family - Live out	2 children - Couple	- Flat 3 bedrooms 3 bathrooms	1 Filipina DW: child care; cooking 1 Sri Lankan DW: ironing; cleaning 1 driver Frictions reported between workers: One of the workers

				bosses the other workers around to emphasize her seniority in the household.
2	- 10 years - American family - Live out / part time (4 hours twice a week) *At the same time:* - 10 years - Bulgarian family	- 2 children - Couple *At the same time* - Couple - Live-out (4 hours twice a week)	- Flat - 2 bedrooms - 2 bathrooms *At the same time*: - Villa	- 1 DW: cleaning, cooking, ironing. *At the same time:* - 1 DW: clean; iron
Worker 3				
1	- 5 years - Emirati family - Live in	- 2 children - Couple	- 4 bedrooms - 4 bathrooms	- 1 DW (multitasking)
2	- 2 years - Colombian family - Live-in	- n/a	- 3 bedrooms - 3 bathrooms	- 1 DW (multitasking)
3	- Australian family - Live-out (full-time)	- 2 children - Couple	n/a	- Babysitter working by the hour
4	- Lebanese Ukrainian family - Live-out (part-time)	- 2 children - Couple	n/a	- 1 DW (multitasking)
5	- Pakistani family - Live-out (part-time)	- 2 children - Couple	- Flat - 2 bedrooms - 2 bathrooms	- 1 DW (multitasking)
Worker 4				
1	- 2 years - Singaporean family - Live-in	- Older couple - Daughter / single mom - Grandson	- 3 bedrooms - 5 bathrooms - 3 maid rooms	- 1 Filipina DW (cooking) - 1 Filipina DW (cleaning) - 1 Filipina DW (elderly caregiver) - 1 DW (gardening) - 1 DW (responsible for maintenance and upkeep, including of the swimming pool)

				Domestic worker performing cleaning tasks, is jealous of the remaining workers who are performing higher complexity and less arduous tasks.
2	- 2 years - Indonesian family - Live-in	- 1 baby - Couple	- Flat - 2 bedrooms - 2 bathrooms - 1 nanny room	- 1 DW (multitasking)
3	- Lebanese/American family - Live-out	- Twins - Couple	- 3 bedrooms - 2 bathrooms	- 1 DW (child caregiver)
Worker 5				
1	- 4 years - Emirati family - Live in	- 7 children - Couple	- 6 bedrooms - 5 bathrooms	- 1 Filipina DW (cleaning, assistant cook) - 1 Filipina DW (cooking)
2	- 3 years - British-Pakistani family - Live-in	- 2 children - Couple	- 3 bedrooms - 4 bathrooms	- 1 DW (multitasking)
3	- American-Jordanian family - Live-out	- 2 children - Couple	- 4 bedrooms - 3 bathrooms	- 1 DW (multitasking)
Worker 6				
1	- 1 year - Iraqi family - Live-in	- 1 child - Couple	- 3 bedrooms - 3 bathrooms	- 1 DW (multitasking)
2	- Company cleaner - Accommodation with the company			
3	- Egyptian-American family - Live-out	- 2 children	- 2 bedrooms - 2 bathrooms	- 1 DW (multitasking)
Worker 7				
1	- 12 years - Emirati-Syrian family	- 6 children - Couple	- Villa - 6 bedrooms - 6 bathrooms	- 3 Filipina DWs (share cooking, housekeeping, ironing and "some" child care functions). - 2 drivers
2	- 3 years	- 7 children	- Villa	- 1 DW

- Emirati family	- Couple	- 8 bedrooms - 8 bathrooms	(housekeeping and cooking) - 1 DW (child care) - 1 Driver
Worker 8			
- 6 years - Emirati family	- Elderly - Couple - Married son and wife - Grandson	- Villa - 7 bedrooms - 8 bathrooms	- 1 Filipina DW (cooking) - 1 Filipina DW (child care) - 1 Filipina DW (housekeeper for the first floor) - 1 Filipina DW (housekeeping for the second floor) - 4 Drivers
Worker 9			
- 5 years - Emirati family	- 1 Child - Couple	House 1: - Villa - 5 bedrooms - 5 bathrooms House 2: - Flat	- 1 DW (multitasking)
Worker 10			
- 2 years - Emirati family	- 2 children - 1 couple	- Apartment - 5 bedrooms - 5 bathrooms	- 1 DW (multitasking)
Worker 11			
- 4 years - New Zealand family	- 1 child - Couple	- Villa - 4 bedrooms - 7 bathrooms	- 1 DW (multitasking)
Worker 12			
- 4 years - Emirati family	- 6 children - Couple	- Villa	- 1 Filipina DW (cooking and ironing) - 1 Filipina DW (Housekeeping)
Worker 13			
- 10 years - Emirati family	- Grandmother - 1 daughter, 1 son - 1 grandson	- 6 bedrooms - 6 bathrooms	- 1 Filipina DW (elderly care) - 1 Filipina DW (cooking and housekeeping) - 1 Filipina DW (assistant

			cook and housekeeper) - 1 driver
Worker 14			
- 9 years - French family	- 2 children - Couple	- 7 bedrooms - 5 bathrooms	- 1 DW (multitasking, including gardening).
Worker 15			
- 4 years - American family	- 3 children - 1 couple	- Villa - 8 bedrooms - 9 bathrooms	- 1 Filipina DW (childcare) - 1 DW (housekeepin g)