



حوار أبوظبي بين الدول الآسيوية المرسلات والمستقبلة للعمالة
Abu Dhabi Dialogue among the Asian Labor-Sending and Receiving Countries

Pilot Project on Skills Development, Certification and Recognition: Phase II Outline (Pakistan)

The Governments of Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates are currently piloting Phase II of the Pilot Project on Skills Development, Certification and Recognition, building on the lessons learned from Phase I in India to enhance project implementation, monitoring and assessment of methodologies. Through this pilot program, aspiring migrant workers from Pakistan are provided skills training before their departure for the UAE. This document outlines the key objectives, research questions and additional information relating to Phase II piloting.

The main goals of the evaluation are to investigate whether the acquisition of new skills by low-skilled migrant workers through an accredited training program has an impact on various outcomes of migrant workers in the destination country; provide confidence in the mechanisms for the testing and certifying of workers, through the deployment of NOSS frameworks; and to appraise the benefits to both workers and employers of skills development, certification and joint recognition of skills. The study uses statistical and econometric analyses to shed light on the determinants and outcomes of labor migration to the UAE. As indicated below, the controls added to the project will enable one to answer in a unique manner how much better off people are when given the opportunity to migrate to the UAE from Pakistan.

There are a number of key areas where lessons learned from India will be applied to the implementation of Phase II of the pilot project in Pakistan.

These lessons include:

- Working with a maximum of two employers in the UAE, in order to enhance project management and enable stronger oversight over the implementation of the project
- Working with Government-owned and managed recruitment agencies, to ensure that there an alignment of interests between the key stakeholders
- Working with a single 3rd party assessor to assess the capacity of training centres, overseeing the development of training manuals and ensuring the compliance of testing services
- Using employer-applicable NOSSs, to enhance the relevance of the training



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Research questions

1. What is the impact of international migration opportunities on the outcomes of migrants and their households? While previous evaluations have already been conducted on this topic, our proposed evaluation is much larger in scale and exclusively focuses on low-skill workers. Furthermore, we will combine our treatments with administrative data on migrants in the UAE and Pakistan. We will also consider outcomes that have not been examined in similar studies including the subjective (evaluated and experienced utility, fairness) and non-financial well-being of migrants.
2. How do the skills acquired through the training program affect the outcomes of Pakistani migrants in the UAE, including their wages, subjective well-being, and the probability that they remain in the UAE?
3. What kind of spillover effects might skill acquisition have on the migrants' coworkers who receive the training program? Are these effects positive or negative, and do they vary by network composition of co-workers? Finally, do these spillover effects help justify the cost of the training program?

We will answer these questions through a carefully designed survey process. We will conduct baseline surveys during the recruitment phase in Pakistan, prior to migration. A year later, we will conduct follow-up surveys with the workers who migrated to the UAE and those who remained in Pakistan. The data collected through these interviews will allow us to answer our research questions.

Study groups and sample size

To conduct an evaluation of the program, migrants are divided into three groups:

1. A treatment group of workers being trained under the Pakistan government skills program, and arriving in the UAE;
2. A first control group of workers not getting trained in Pakistan, but arriving in the UAE;
3. A second control group of people who do not get training and do not go to the UAE

The optimum size is 1,000 – 1,500 workers, evenly divided across the three groups above. It is likely the actual sample size will be different from what is listed above, depending on the



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recruitment requirements of the firms. However, we are confident that this sample is large enough to enable robust statistical analyses at sufficient statistical power, while maintaining the different groups at a manageable size.

Current and future activities

To answer the research questions, we will conduct surveys with all workers applying for employment in the UAE with the firms involved in this study. The survey questionnaire will largely resemble that used during the India phase of the study.

We are working on identifying a survey firm that will be able to conduct these interviews.

Governance

The pilot project will be overseen by a Scientific Committee, including:

- Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratization (UAE)
- Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (Pakistan)
- 2 Employers (UAE)
- 6 Training Centres (Pakistan)
- Recruitment Agency (Pakistan)
- 3rd Party Assessor (TBC)
- Scientific Oversight (NYUAD)