



# POST-ARRIVAL

Information Needs of Migrant Workers in  
the East and Horn of Africa-Gulf Corridor

BACKGROUND REPORT



The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The designations employed and the presentation of material throughout the publication do not imply expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of IOM concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning its frontiers or boundaries.

IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an intergovernmental organization, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to: assist in meeting the operational challenges of migration; advance understanding of migration issues; encourage social and economic development through migration; and uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	iv
ACRONYMS .....	vi
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	vii
<b>BACKGROUND .....</b>	<b>1</b>
Introduction .....	2
Information .....	2
The CIOP Approach .....	4
The Information Ecosystem Approach .....	6
Methodology .....	7
Structure of the Report .....	8
<b>PART ONE: LABOUR MIGRATION BETWEEN THE EAST AND HORN OF AFRICA AND THE GULF STATES .....</b>	<b>9</b>
Introduction .....	11
Challenges Faced by Migrant Workers in the East and Horn of Africa-Gulf Corridor .....	18
Bilateral Relations .....	20
The Role of Information .....	21
<b>PART TWO: THE INFORMATION ECOSYSTEM .....</b>	<b>22</b>
Introduction .....	23
Information Needs .....	25
The Information Landscape .....	28
Social Networks .....	39
Conclusion .....	42
<b>PART THREE: KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>ANNEX: INFORMATION AND AWARENESS MATERIALS .....</b>	<b>53</b>



## ACRONYMS

ADD	Abu Dhabi Dialogue
AUC	African Union Commission
BLA	Bilateral labour agreements
CDA	Community Development Authority
CIOP	Comprehensive Information and Orientation Programme
CSOs	Civil society organizations
EHoA	East and Horn of Africa
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GFMD	Global Forum for Migration and Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
JLMP	AU-ILO-IOM-ECA Joint Programme on Labour Migration Governance for Development and Integration in Africa
LMAC	Labour Migration Advisory Committee
LMRA	Labour Market Regulatory Authority
MFA	Migrant Forum in Asia
MOHRE	Ministry of Human Resources & Emiratisation
MPFA	Migration Policy Framework for Africa
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
OFW	Overseas Filipino Workers
PAO	Post-Arrival Orientation
PAOS	Post Arrival Orientation Seminar
PCLA	Permanent Committee of Labour Affairs
PDO	Pre-Departure Orientation
PEA	Private Recruitment Employment Agencies
PEO	Pre-Employment Orientation
PRO	Pre-Return Orientation
REC	Regional Economic Communities
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
WPS	Wage Protection System

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## BACKGROUND

Against the backdrop of increasing numbers of migrant workers arriving in the Gulf States from the East and Horn of Africa (EHoA),<sup>1</sup> this report aims to better understand the information ecosystem in which migrant workers find themselves, and the information gaps they currently contend with in the post-arrival stage of their labour migration journey. To do so, this report builds on the findings of the *Background Report on Post-Arrival Orientation in Abu Dhabi Dialogue Countries* – which focused on post-arrival orientation for Asian sending countries – to assess the particular information needs of newly arrived EHoA migrant workers in the Gulf States of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Qatar. This report presents an overview of existing information and awareness programmes, initiatives, good practices and common challenges, and puts forward targeted evidence-based recommendations.

This report is designed to be a resource for designing and developing future orientation programmes for newly arrived migrant workers, and its findings will be of interest to a wide range of stakeholders in the EHoA-Gulf labour migration cycle, including Regional Economic Communities (RECs), governments, embassies, civil society organizations (CSOs), private employment agencies and migrant workers themselves in both countries of origin and countries of destination. Research for this report was conducted in tandem with a mapping and needs assessment of the pre-departure information needs of Gulf-bound migrant workers in the EHoA.

As countries both in the EHoA and the Gulf take steps towards labour migration reform, migrant workers from the EHoA continue to arrive in growing numbers. While these migrant workers can be vulnerable to a range of exploitative practices, at the heart of the challenges they could face in coming to the Gulf for employment is a lack of information, and in many cases, misinformation. Research has shown that the provision of accurate, comprehensive and timely information can not only serve to mitigate a range of risks that migrant workers face over the course of the labour migration cycle but can also serve to empower migrant workers and contribute to their overall well-being and that of their families. Furthermore, a lack of information, or in many cases, misinformation, profoundly informs migrant workers' decision-making; with some knowingly and other unknowingly bypassing formal recruitment processes and engaging in irregular migration.

This report is informed by an information ecosystem approach that seeks to better understand the range of actors, institutions, channels, policies and programmes through which information is produced, disseminated and consumed. This includes formal initiatives such as post-arrival orientation or state-supported awareness campaigns, but also informal information flows, through community and kin networks, social media and word of mouth. This report argues that a healthy information ecosystem – within which accurate, accessible and actionable information flows freely between stakeholders – is a necessary precondition for the protection, empowerment and success of migrant workers abroad.

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<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of this report, EHoA comprises the following countries from the subregion that were included in this mapping: Burundi, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda.

## COMPREHENSIVE INFORMATION AND ORIENTATION PROGRAMME

This report is framed by the Comprehensive Information and Orientation Programme (CIOP) approach of harmonizing the information migrant workers receive at four key stages of the labour migration cycle:



**Pre-Employment Orientation (PEO):** Equips prospective migrant workers with information to support well-informed decision-making processes on foreign employment and provide accurate information on safe and ethical recruitment.



**Pre-Departure Orientation (PDO):** Supports outgoing migrant workers to ensure their departure process is safe while also providing information on the upcoming journey, adjustment period and how to access support and assistance.



**Post-Arrival Orientation (PAO):** Provides newly arrived migrant workers in the country of destination with information regarding national labour laws, sociocultural norms and practices, workplace expectations and good conduct.

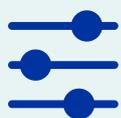


**Pre-Return Orientation (PRO):** Helps prepare returning migrant workers before leaving the country of destination, with useful information to support their access to social protection schemes, skills development opportunities and related resources.

Within the CIOP approach, this report is informed by key guiding principles for harmonized and tailored orientation:



**Harmonized** between countries of origin and destination to ensure that the information provided is accurate and relevant.



**Tailored** to distinct information needs and custom-made for specific labour migration corridors and industries.



**Timely** to deliver relevant information at the most appropriate point during the labour migration cycle.



**Responsive** to different learning needs, taking into account gender considerations and dimensions of possible vulnerability.



**Rooted in a multi-stakeholder** approach involving prospective and current migrant workers, employers, training institutions, civil society organizations, migrant associations and governments of countries of origin and destination

## REPORT STRUCTURE

This report is structured into three parts:

### PART ONE:

Labour Migration between the EHoA and the Gulf States provides an overview of labour migration trends between the EHoA and the Gulf States, focusing in particular on the countries of destination.

### PART TWO:

The Information Ecosystem assesses how information flows by providing an overview of recent awareness and information initiatives in the Gulf, and underlining the importance of social networks and informal flows of information.

### PART THREE:

Key Findings and Recommendations provides key findings and tailored evidence-based recommendations that target a wide range of stakeholders, including governments, embassies, international organizations and civil society in both countries of origin and countries of destination.

Our research found that while newly arrived EHoA migrant workers share the same information needs as those from Asian sending countries, due to a range of factors – including the comparatively recent history of EHoA communities in Gulf cities, the lack of formal PAO (and in most cases, formal pre-departure orientation), high levels of irregular migration and gaps in consular support – newly arrived EHoA migrant workers are often unable to access timely and accurate information and can find themselves vulnerable to a range of deceptive practices such as contract substitution, wage theft and discrimination. Compounded by the intersecting variables of gender, nationality and, at times, irregular status, and often with less access to their communities due to the nature of their workplace, women migrant domestic workers often find themselves in situations of heightened vulnerability.

Key information needs of newly arrived EHoA migrant workers in the Gulf focus on the following themes (elaborated on [Page 25](#)):



#### 1) RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES AT WORK

- Terms and conditions of employment
- National labour laws and reforms
- Rights and responsibilities
- Rules around absconding



#### 3) LIVING IN THE GULF

- Living conditions
- Financial management
- Cultural norms and customs
- Language



#### 2) THE LABOUR MIGRATION PROCESS

- Ethical recruitment
- Immigration policies and visa rules



#### 4) SUPPORT & ASSISTANCE

- Sources of support and assistance
- Social protection
- Grievance and redressal mechanisms
- Education and training opportunities

## KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS (ABRIDGED)

The following abridged key findings and recommendations build on those presented in the Background Report on *Post-Arrival Orientation in Abu Dhabi Dialogue Countries*, and speak in particular to the challenges that migrant workers from the EHoA face in the Gulf. They are also informed by, and complement, the recommendations presented in the *Background Report on Pre-Departure Informational Needs of Migrant Workers in the East and Horn of Africa-Gulf Corridor*. Please see [Page 43](#) for fully elaborated key findings and recommendations.

### Key Finding: Critical data gaps exist in the EHoA-Gulf labour migration corridor



**Recommendation:** Both countries of origin and destination should prioritize strengthening data collection in the labour migration corridors between the EHoA and the Gulf States. This should include building national capacity to collect, manage and disseminate official migration statistics.

### Key Finding: There is a lack of post-arrival orientation programmes in the Gulf States



**Recommendation:** To ensure standardization of information, Gulf governments should consider making PAO mandatory for all newly arrived migrant workers, and should continue working on developing formal PAO programming in partnership with key stakeholders.

### Key Finding: Formal top-down information and awareness campaigns in Gulf States are yet to leverage social networks and informal information flows



**Recommendation:** Top-down information campaigns should be complemented by a multi-stakeholder strategy that empowers and enables partners such as EHoA diplomatic missions, community organizations, diaspora networks, religious institutions and leaders to leverage informal social networks to ensure information needs of EHoA communities are met.

### Key Finding: EHoA consular and diplomatic missions in the Gulf often lack the adequate resources and technical capacity to address the information needs of their community



**Recommendation:** EHoA countries of origin should consider mobilizing resources to assist diplomatic missions in the Gulf to be better positioned to support their nationals with welfare and information services.

**Key Finding: A consensus has emerged around the critical importance of harmonizing labour migration between the EHoA and the Gulf States**



**Recommendation:** Countries of destination and countries of origin should consider closely collaborating to ensure synergy and accuracy of information over the course of the labour migration cycle.

**Key Finding: There is limited monitoring and evaluation of the impact of information on labour migration outcomes**



**Recommendation:** Governments, CSOs and all stakeholders involved in the dissemination of key information should incorporate a rigorous monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning system to better understand the information needs of EHoA migrant workers and the impact of ongoing efforts to disseminate accurate and actionable information.

**Key Finding: Information and awareness initiatives in the Gulf tend to focus on obstacles at the expense of opportunities**



**Recommendation:** In addition to assisting migrant workers to overcome the obstacles they face in the Gulf, PAO programmes, and information and awareness efforts more broadly, should incorporate a focus on opportunities for migrant workers to develop themselves, both personally and professionally.

**Key Finding: Employers are an important but often overlooked stakeholder in the information ecosystem**



**Recommendation:** Dedicated information and orientation sessions should be designed and developed for employers, with tailored sessions organized for employers of migrant domestic workers.

**Key Finding: The provision of timely and accurate information is an essential component of ethical recruitment**



**Recommendation:** The principles of ethical recruitment should inform the design and development of orientation sessions and the provision of information should be informed by the principles of transparency, fairness and decent work.

**Key Finding: Women migrant domestic workers from the EHoA experience acute information asymmetry due to a lack of strong social ties**



**Recommendation:** Governments in countries of destination should consider investing in specific PAO programmes for migrant women domestic workers that are tailored to the particular challenges they could face, the particular skillset they need and the particular resources that they can avail of.

# BACKGROUND

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## INTRODUCTION

Against the backdrop of increasing numbers of migrant workers arriving in the Gulf States from the EHoA, this report aims to better understand the information ecosystem in which migrant workers find themselves and the information gaps they currently contend with in the post-arrival stage. To do so, this report builds on the findings of the *Background Report on Post-Arrival Orientation in Abu Dhabi Dialogue Countries* to assess the particular information needs of newly arrived EHoA migrant workers in the Gulf States of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar. This report presents an overview of existing information and awareness programmes, initiatives, good practices and common challenges, and puts forward targeted evidence-based policy recommendations. Its findings will be of interest to a wide range of stakeholders in the EHoA-Gulf labour migration cycle, including governments, embassies, CSOs, private employment agencies and migrant workers themselves in both countries of origin and countries of destination.

Information asymmetry is among the most pressing challenges that migrant workers from the EHoA face in migrating safely to the Gulf States for employment (Fernandez 2013, Malit and Naufal 2016). Insufficient access to key information serves to heighten existing vulnerabilities for migrant workers, who often arrive in the Gulf with little or no information about their rights, responsibilities, labour laws, cultural norms, and in many cases, even their places of employment or residence. Research has shown that the provision of accurate, comprehensive and timely information can not only serve to mitigate a range of risks that migrant workers face over the course of the labour migration cycle but can also serve to empower migrant workers and contribute to their overall well-being and that of their families.

The *Background Report on Post-Arrival Orientation in Abu Dhabi Dialogue Countries* highlighted the challenges and information needs of migrant workers from countries of origin within the Abu Dhabi Dialogue (ADD) in the Gulf States. As the report noted, despite the relatively strong consular support and the existence of some form of formal PDO in most cases, nationals from ADD countries of origin may still contend with deceptive recruitment practices, contract substitution, confiscation of personal documents, poor occupational and workplace safety, and, in the case of women migrant domestic workers in particular, gender-based violence and sexual harassment. In many ways, migrant workers from the EHoA face these same risks. Due to a range of factors, however – including the relative absence of formal PDO, high levels of irregular migration, and, perhaps most importantly, the comparatively recent history of migration from the EHoA to the Gulf States – migrant workers from the EHoA are often unable to access timely and accurate information and find themselves vulnerable to a range of deceptive practices. This vulnerability is in part at least a by-product of the lack of timely, transparent and accessible information at critical points throughout the labour migration cycle. This report will focus on the post-arrival stage.

**Note:** For the purpose of this report, EHoA comprises the following countries from the subregion that were included in this mapping: Burundi, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda.

## INFORMATION

For decades now, PAO initiatives have facilitated the labour market integration of migrant workers, asylum seekers and refugees into host communities (Al Hashemi and Habib 2018). Often facilitated by government counterparts in countries of destination or embassies of countries of origin, there are dozens of examples of PAO programmes around the world. Malaysia mandated PAO for migrant workers as early as 2004, while Singapore has a long-running one-day *Settling-In Programme* for first-time migrant domestic workers. This orientation session is conducted by accredited private sector partners in the migrant workers' native language, and the cost is borne by the employer. Migrant domestic workers are not able to begin working

until they have attended this orientation. Topics covered include: adapting to working and living in Singapore, conditions of employment, working safely and relationship and stress management.

The Philippines too has been a pioneer, in particular since the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995, and the roll-out of its Post Arrival Orientation Seminar (PAOS) through embassies around the world. These orientation sessions are targeted at newly arrived Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs), and in some cases, migrant domestic workers in particular. PAOS sessions typically cover labour laws, rights and responsibilities and available consular support.

The central importance of the provision of timely and accessible information in the labour migration cycle then has long been recognized. In addition to governments around the world developing innovative approaches to disseminating and making readily available key information for migrant workers at different points of the labour migration cycle, information itself has emerged as a key theme in international migration discourse. The *ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration (2006)*,<sup>2</sup> for example, highlights the importance of:

- Providing information to employers' and workers' organizations concerning the rights of migrant workers (10.9).
- Disseminating information on trafficking to warn potential victims of its dangers and raise public awareness on the issue (11.8).
- Facilitating migrant workers' departure, journey, and reception by providing, in a language they understand, information, training and assistance prior to their departure and on arrival concerning the migration process, their rights and the general conditions of life and work in the destination country (12.1).

More recently, the *Global Compact on Migration (2018)*<sup>3</sup> dedicated one of its 23 objectives to the theme of information. Five actions are laid out under Objective 3 – *Provide accurate and timely information at all stages of migration* – including:

- (a)** Launch and publicize a centralized and publicly accessible national website to make information available on regular migration options, such as on country-specific immigration laws and policies, visa requirements, application formalities, fees and conversion criteria, employment permit requirements, professional qualification requirements, credential assessment and equivalences, training and study opportunities, and living costs and conditions, in order to inform the decisions of migrants.
- (b)** Promote and improve systematic bilateral, regional and international cooperation and dialogue to exchange information on migration-related trends, including through joint databases, online platforms, international training centres and liaison networks, while upholding the right to privacy and protecting personal data.
- (c)** Establish open and accessible information points along relevant migration routes that can refer migrants to child-sensitive and gender-responsive support and counselling, offer

<sup>2</sup> ILO, *Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration; Non-Binding Principles and Guidelines for a Rights-Based Approach* (Geneva, 2006).

<sup>3</sup> Resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 19 December 2018 (A/RES/73/195)

opportunities to communicate with consular representatives of the country of origin, and make available relevant information, including on human rights and fundamental freedoms, appropriate protection and assistance, options and pathways for regular migration, and possibilities for return, in a language that the person concerned understands.

**(d)** Provide newly arrived migrants with targeted, gender-responsive, child-sensitive, accessible and comprehensive information and legal guidance on their rights and obligations, including on compliance with national and local laws, obtaining of work and resident permits, status adjustments, registration with authorities, access to justice to file complaints about rights violations, as well as access to basic services.

**(e)** Promote multilingual, gender-responsive and evidence-based information campaigns and organize awareness-raising events and pre-departure orientation training in countries of origin, in cooperation with local authorities, consular and diplomatic missions, the private sector, academia, migrant and diaspora organizations and civil society, in order to promote safe, orderly and regular migration, as well as to highlight the risks associated with irregular and unsafe migration.

The critical importance of orientation programmes has also been advocated for in Africa. In 2018, for example, African governments adopted the *Migration Policy Framework for Africa (MPFA)* and its *Plan of Action (2018 – 2030)*. One recommended strategy for African countries to fulfil commitments under the MPFA is to **“provide access to accurate information on labour migration at pre-departure and post-arrival stages, including terms and conditions of work, remedies and access to legal advice in the event of violations”**. And more recently, in January 2021 at the *Global Forum for Migration and Development (GFMD)*, the African Union, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia announced a collaboration on implementing a dedicated orientation programme for African nationals coming to the Gulf for employment.<sup>4</sup>

As dialogue on the critical importance of information and orientation continues to occupy a prominent place in regional platforms such as the AU-ILO-IOM-ECA Joint Programme on Labour Migration Governance for Development and Integration in Africa (JLMP) and the AU Labour Migration Advisory Committee (LMAC), there is a growing recognition of the need to develop orientation programmes throughout key stages of the labour migration cycle.

## THE CIOP APPROACH

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is a strong advocate for the provision of accurate, timely and relevant information and has extensive experience in developing orientation programmes for migrant workers in different contexts. Since 2017, and building on its over 70 years providing tailored migrant orientation at the request of governments, IOM has been managing the implementation of the *Comprehensive Information and Orientation Programme (CIOP)*, tailored for Member States of the Abu Dhabi Dialogue (ADD), which include countries in Asia and the Gulf. The CIOP was designed to strengthen the labour market integration and protection of migrant workers by addressing critical information gaps and misinformation among the migrant worker population arriving to the Gulf from ADD-participating countries of origin. To

<sup>4</sup> Hassan Bashir, *Major new partnerships announced as UAE's Global Forum on Migration and Development Summit closes*. 27 January 2021. Available at [www.wam.ae](http://www.wam.ae)

accomplish this, CIOP takes a whole-of-cycle approach (hereafter referred to as the CIOP approach) of harmonizing the information migrant workers receive at four key stages of the labour migration cycle:



**Pre-Employment Orientation (PEO):** Equips prospective migrant workers with information to support well-informed decision-making processes on foreign employment and provide accurate information on safe and ethical recruitment.



**Pre-Departure Orientation (PDO):** Supports outgoing migrant workers to ensure their departure process is safe while also providing information on the upcoming journey, adjustment period and how to access support and assistance.



**Post-Arrival Orientation (PAO):** Provides newly arrived migrant workers in the country of destination, with information regarding national labour laws, socio-cultural norms and practices, workplace expectations and good conduct.



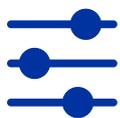
**Pre-Return Orientation (PRO):** Helps prepare returning migrant workers before leaving the country of destination, with useful information to support their access to social protection schemes, skills development opportunities and related resources.

To harmonize this information, the CIOP approach makes an investment in ensuring that the information provided along the labour migration cycle is based on evidence and is tailored to the specific technical and administrative needs of the migrant workers and both the countries of origin and destination.

### Guiding principles for CIOP



**Harmonized** between countries of origin and destination to ensure that the information provided is accurate and relevant.



**Tailored** to distinct information needs and custom-made for specific labour migration corridors and industries.



**Timely** to deliver relevant information at the most appropriate point during the labour migration cycle.



**Responsive** to different learning needs, taking into account gender considerations and dimensions of possible vulnerability.



**Rooted in a multi-stakeholder approach** involving prospective and current migrant workers, employers, training institutions, civil society organizations, migrant associations and governments of countries of origin and destination

## THE INFORMATION ECOSYSTEM APPROACH

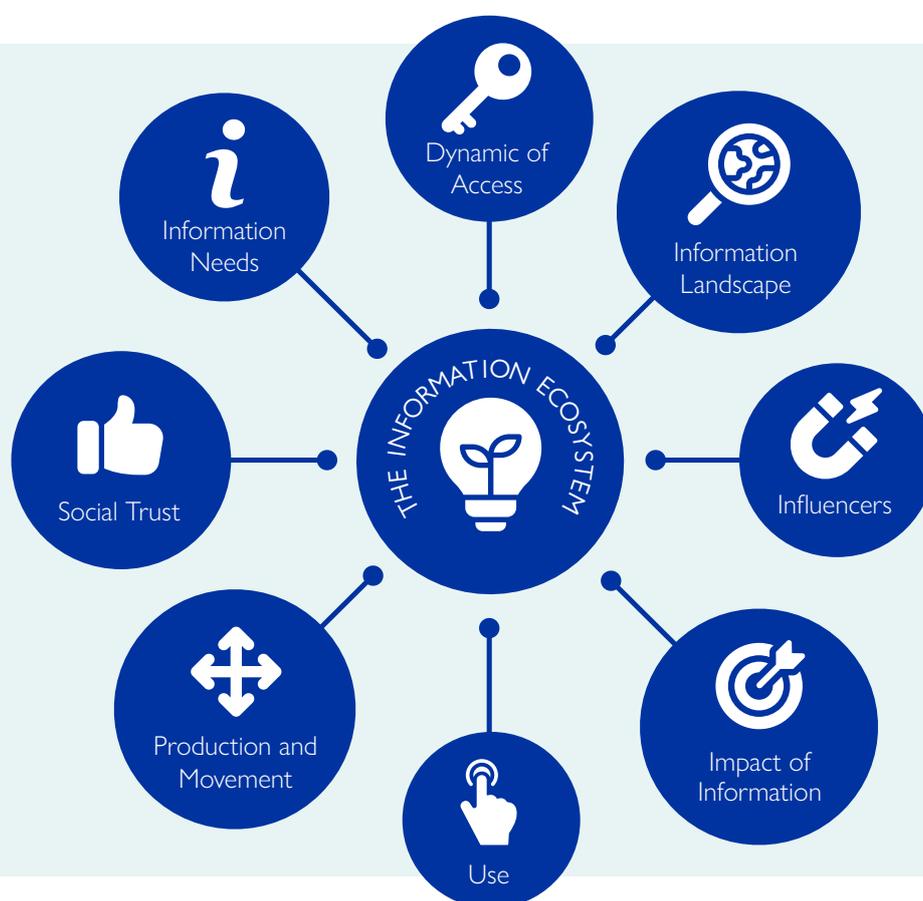
This report is informed by an information ecosystem approach that seeks to better understand the range of actors, institutions, channels, policies and programmes through which information is produced, disseminated and consumed (see Figure 1). This includes formal initiatives such as post-arrival orientation or state-supported information and awareness campaigns, but also informal information flows, such as community and kin networks, social media and word of mouth. Adopted from fields as diverse as environmental studies, media and public health – and often referred to as ‘information ecology’ – an ‘information ecosystem’ can be defined as a **“loose, dynamic configuration of different sources, flows, producers, consumers, and sharers of information interacting within a defined community or space”** (Susman-Peña et al. 2015).

“  
Information is inherently social  
and has meaning only in social  
context

Susman-Peña et al. (2015)

Recognizing the inherently social nature of information, the information ecosystem approach privileges the lived experience of information users; in this case, EHOA migrant workers. It seeks to understand the channels through which information flows, and the various ways in which information, or a lack thereof, impacts the well-being of migrant workers. As Susman-Peña et al. note, **“Without the ability to access, create, disseminate, and share critical information about the world around them, individuals are incapable of understanding the challenges they confront, adapting to an evolving environment, nor ultimately, improving their lives”** (2015).

Figure 1: Information ecosystem



An information ecosystem can be understood in terms of eight critical dimensions, several of which will be elaborated throughout this report:

- **Information Needs**  
Information needs of the target community
- **Information Landscape**  
The organizations and infrastructures that underpin information production and flow
- **Impact of Information**  
The effect of information on individual and community well-being and its potential to foster positive change
- **Dynamic of Access**  
The range of power structures and dynamics that inform migrant workers' access to critical information
- **Production and Movement**  
The variety of types and sources of information available
- **Use**  
The factors that inform how relevant information is and how information is applied
- **Social Trust**  
Influence of social dynamics and trust networks on the flow and use of information
- **Influencers**  
The range of actors and institutions that influence how information is circulated and used

## METHODOLOGY

This report employed a qualitative research design, focusing primary data collection on in-depth semi-structured interviews with a wide range of stakeholders involved in the labour migration cycle between the EHoA (Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda) and the Gulf States of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar. A total of 26 key informant interviews were undertaken with a range of stakeholders in the Gulf States, including embassy officials, private sector employers, recruiters, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), CSOs, community leaders and migrant workers themselves, including women migrant domestic workers. Primary data collection took place in Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, while desk reviews were undertaken for all six Gulf countries of destination. Desk reviews included analysis of labour laws, migration policies, bilateral labour agreements and recent labour migration trends and developments between the Gulf States and the EHoA. Social media analysis was undertaken to better understand how online information flows inform, and in some cases, shape, the wider information ecosystem. The research in the Gulf was complemented by simultaneous data collection for the *Background Report on the Pre-Departure Information Needs of Migrant Workers in the East and Horn of Africa-Gulf Corridor*, which included more than 61 key informant interviews across all 10 countries in the EHoA. This research applied a gender-sensitive lens in terms of both the methodological approach and the substantive analysis undertaken, endeavoring to understand the particular challenges and information needs of women migrant workers in the Gulf. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, key informant interviews were undertaken virtually. Limitations included gaps in disaggregated data on migrant workers in the EHoA-Gulf corridor.

## STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

# 1

**Part One: Background** provides an overview of labour migration trends between the EHoA and the Gulf States, focusing in particular on the Gulf countries of destination.

# 2

**Part Two: The Information Ecosystem** assesses how information flows by providing an overview of recent awareness and information initiatives in the Gulf and underlining the importance of social networks and informal flows of information.

# 3

**Part Three: Key Findings and Recommendations** provides key findings and tailored evidence-based recommendations that target a wide range of stakeholders, including governments, embassies, international organizations and civil society in both countries of origin and countries of destination.

PART ONE

# LABOUR MIGRATION BETWEEN THE EAST AND HORN OF AFRICA AND THE GULF STATES

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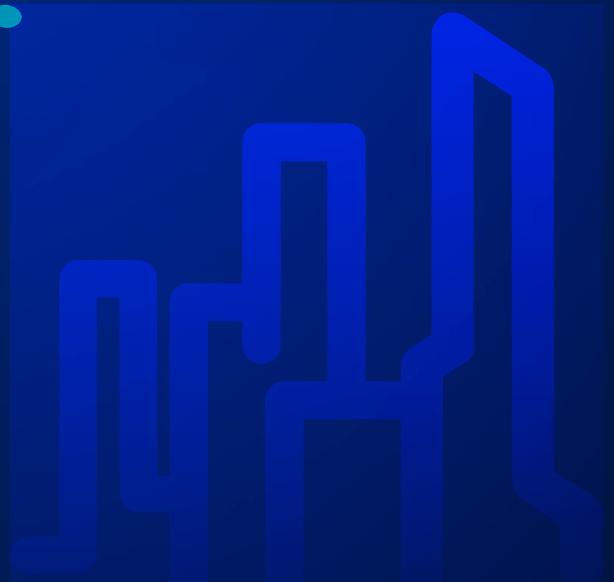
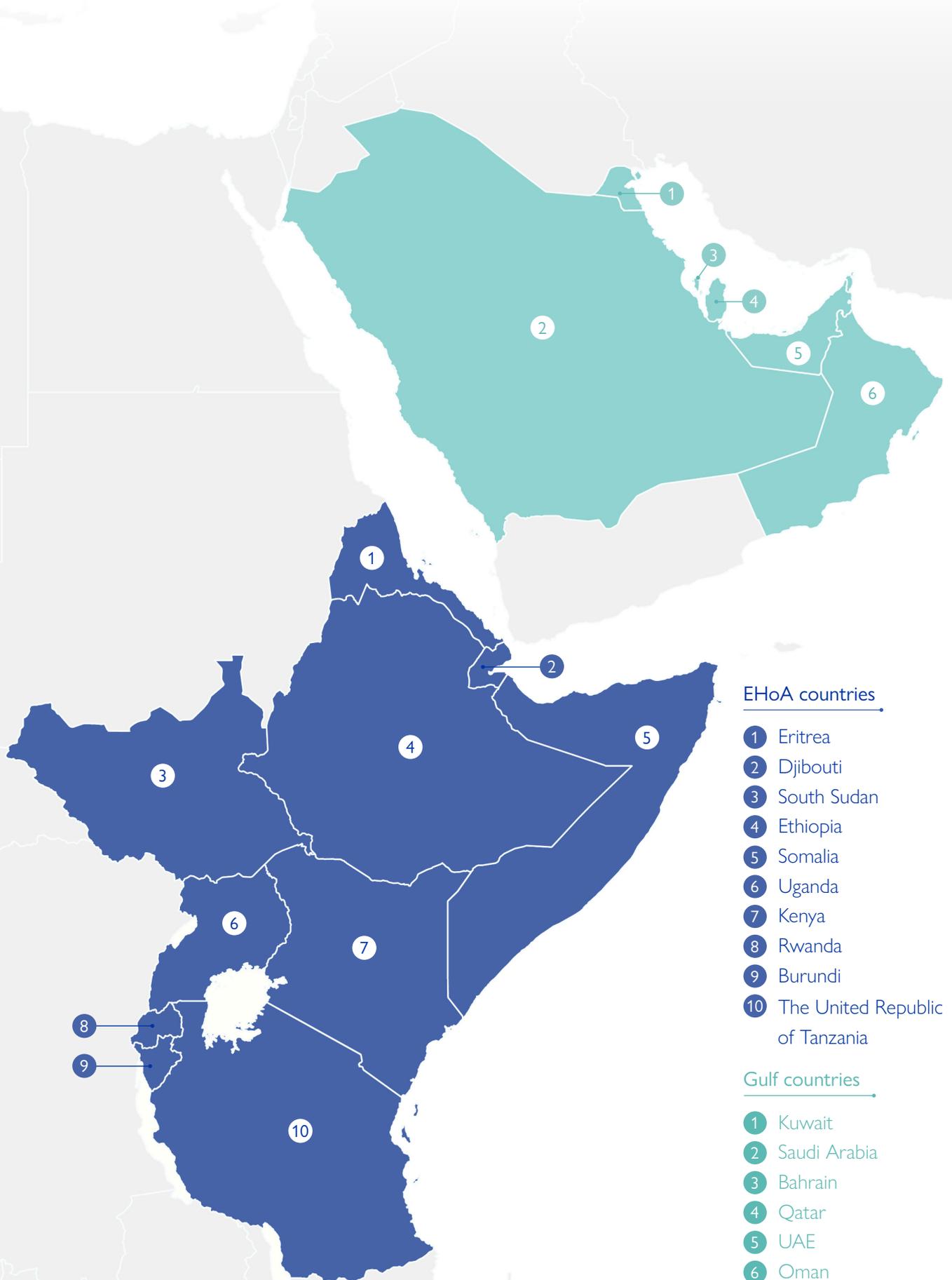


Figure 2: Map of the East and Horn of Africa and Gulf States

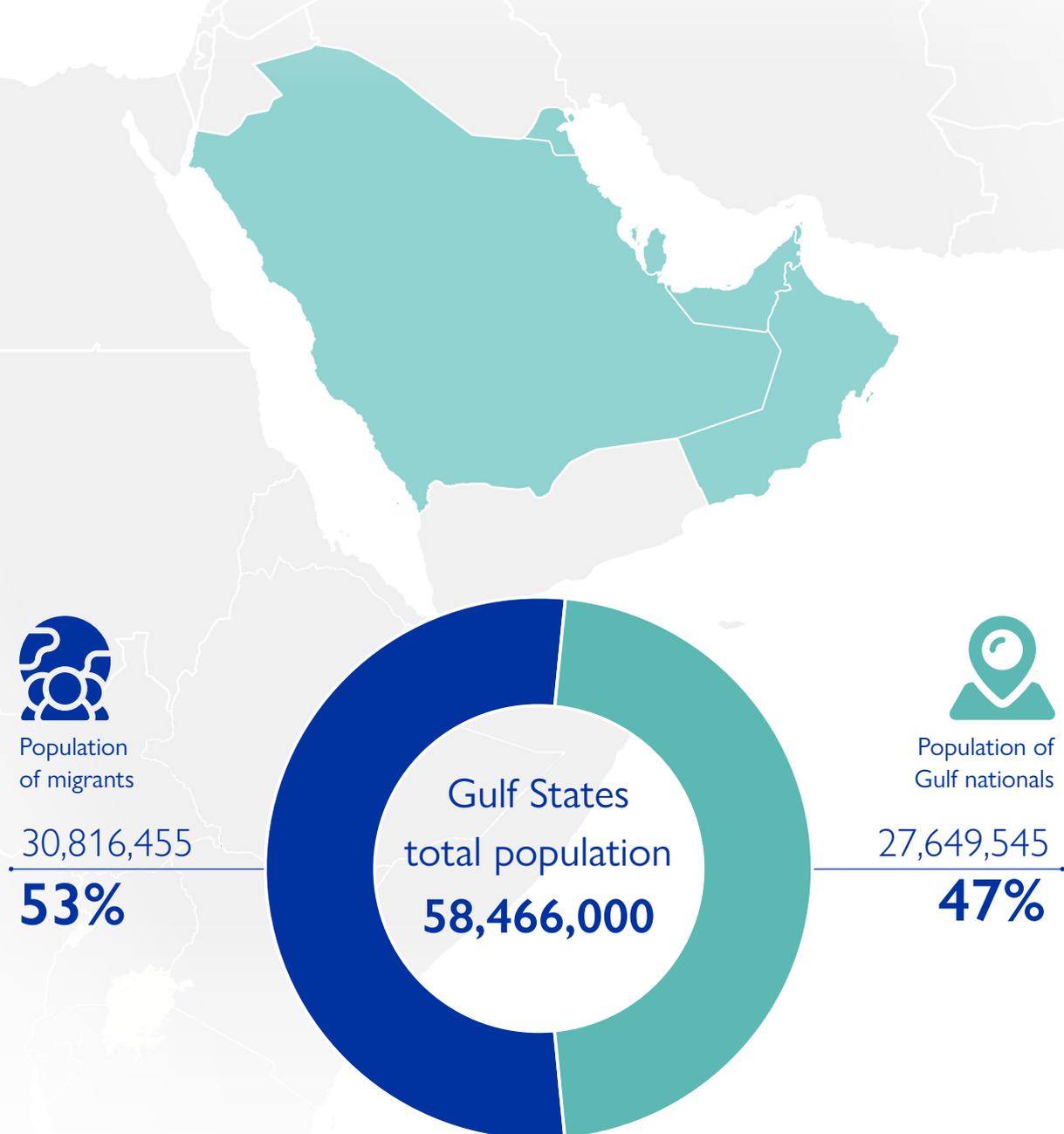


Note: This map is for illustration purposes only. Names and boundaries on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.

## INTRODUCTION

Since the discovery of oil in the 1930s, the six Gulf States— Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) — have depended heavily on imported labour. Through decades, and across sectors, migrant workers have been the backbone of Gulf economies (see Figure 3). Today, the Gulf States are home to approximately 31 million migrants, representing more than half of the region's total population and 8.3 per cent of global migrant workers (ILO 2021).

**Figure 3: Proportion of migrants in Gulf States (2020)**



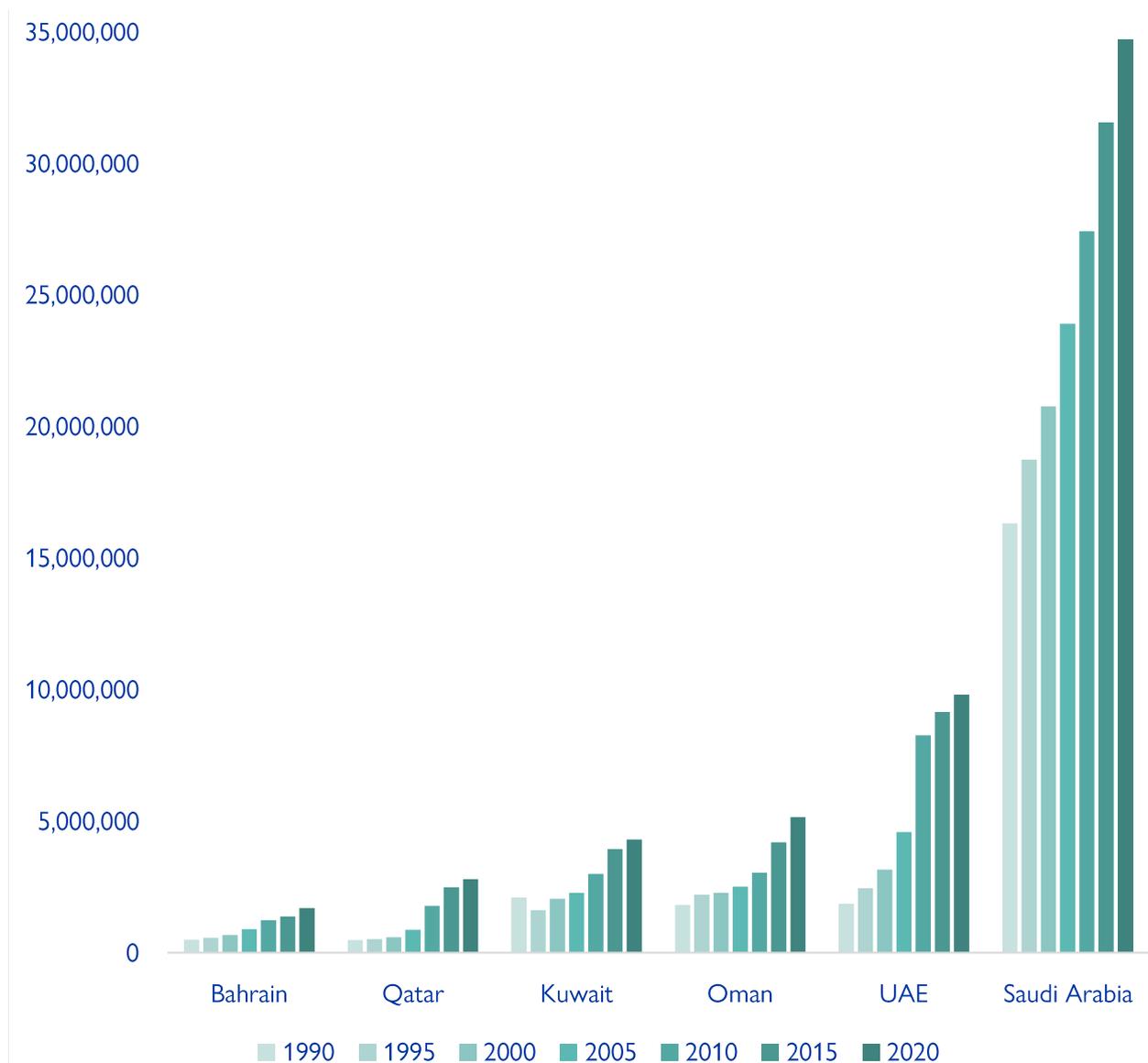
Source: UN DESA

Note: This map is for illustration purposes only. Names and boundaries on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.

Migrant workers make up the majority – and in some cases, the overwhelming majority – of the Gulf States' total labour force. Representing more than half of the population in each and every Gulf State, migrant workers make up as much as 89 per cent in the United Arab Emirates. In 2019, migrant workers in the Gulf sent home USD 115 billion in remittances; the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia are two of the three top remittance sending countries globally.<sup>5</sup>

The influx of migrant workers to the Gulf can be traced back to the oil boom of the 1970s, since when there have been several waves of migration (see Figure 4, Figure 5 and Figure 6). While earlier waves came from surrounding Arab States, the 1970s and 1980s marked a shift towards growing numbers of Asian migrants; a trend that has held until today. While the vast majority of migrant workers today are from Asian sending countries – such as India, Bangladesh and the Philippines, for example – since the 2000s, smaller but growing numbers began arriving from Africa.

**Figure 4: Gulf States total population growth in the past 30 years**



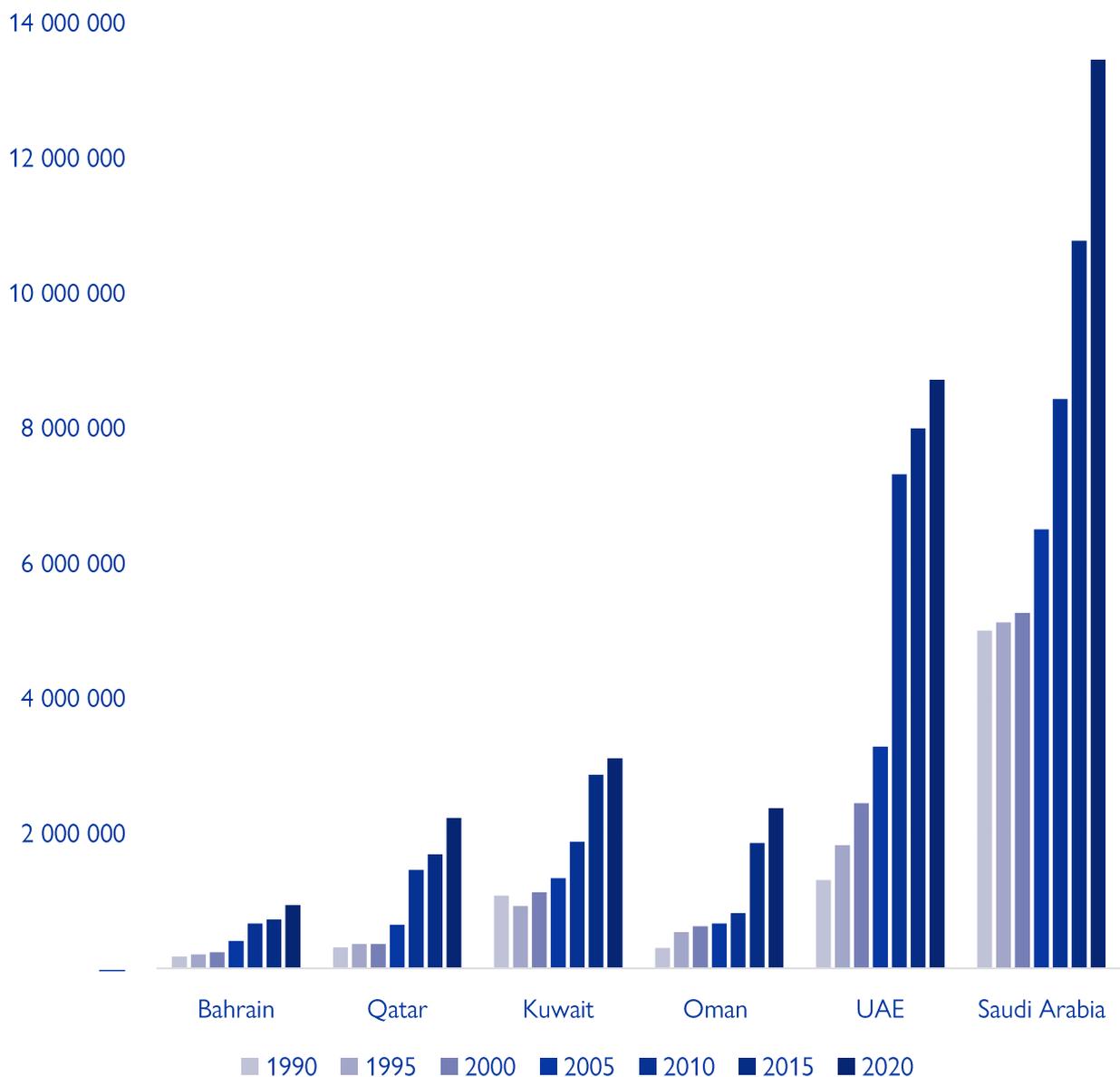
Source: UN DESA

<sup>5</sup> World Bank Migration and Remittances Data.

Throughout the EHoA, factors such as youth unemployment, underdeveloped healthcare systems; the effects of climatic shocks that increase vulnerability of agrarian communities; and other types of shocks like political instability and conflict, are driving migration. Across our interviews with EHoA migrant workers, there was a common explanation as to why EHoA migrant workers are choosing to make the journey to the Gulf. As one informant from the Kenya Diaspora Welfare Association in the UAE shared with us, **“everybody is looking for greener pastures”**.

While African sending countries such as Egypt and Sudan have traditionally seen the most migrants making the journey to the Gulf, recent trends have seen higher numbers of migrants from the EHoA, and countries like Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda in particular (IOM 2020). Among other factors, this trend can in part be ascribed to the growth of the domestic sector, which also accounts for increasing numbers of women migrants.<sup>6</sup> This trend has been furthered by a shift in demand away from domestic workers from Asian sending countries due to rising wages (Zewdu 2018).

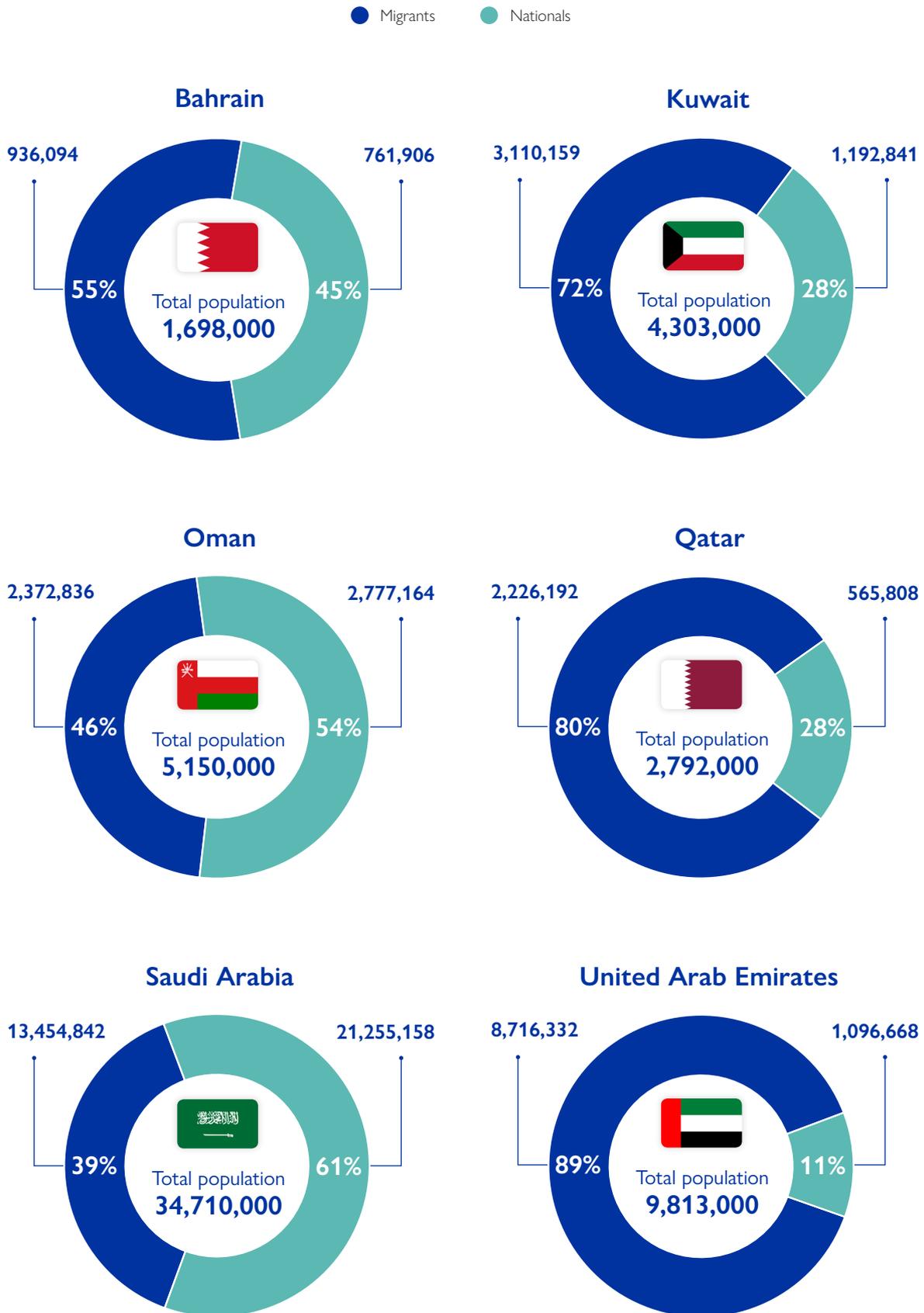
**Figure 5: Gulf States migrant population growth in the past 30 years**



Source: UN DESA

<sup>6</sup> Despite an upward trend, IOM reported a 73 per cent drop in migration from East Africa towards Gulf States during 2020, largely due to COVID-19 and the drop in numbers crossing via Yemen from the Horn of Africa region

Figure 6: Demographic breakdown of Gulf States (2020)



Source: UN DESA

According to ILO (2021), there are an estimated 6.6 million domestic workers in the Arab States.<sup>7</sup> In Saudi Arabia alone, there are over 3.7 million domestic workers. Today, domestic workers account for more than 12 per cent of total employment in the region. Driven by increasing child and elder care needs, and underpinned by regional demographics and cultural norms, demand for home-based care and domestic workers is set to continue growing (Tayah and Assaf 2018), with increasing numbers coming from the EHoA. While progress has been made in recent years, domestic workers are yet to be fully included in the region's most progressive legislation and remain highly vulnerable to some of the worst forms of precarity and exploitation (Laiboni 2019).

**According to the recently published ILO report on *Making Decent Work a Reality for Domestic Workers (2021)*:**



**8.7%**

of global domestic workers are employed in the Arab States

Six countries in the region rank among the ten countries with the

**TOP 10**



**highest proportion**

of domestic workers among the employed population.



Domestic workers account for

**12.3%**

of total employment in the region, making it the region with the highest percentage of domestic workers as a share of total employment

The country with the highest share of domestic workers in the world is Saudi Arabia, where domestic work represents about



**28%**

of total employment.



In Saudi Arabia, between 2007 and 2017, the total number of domestic workers **increased** from 830,000 to 2.42 million

In Bahrain, the sector **more than doubled**

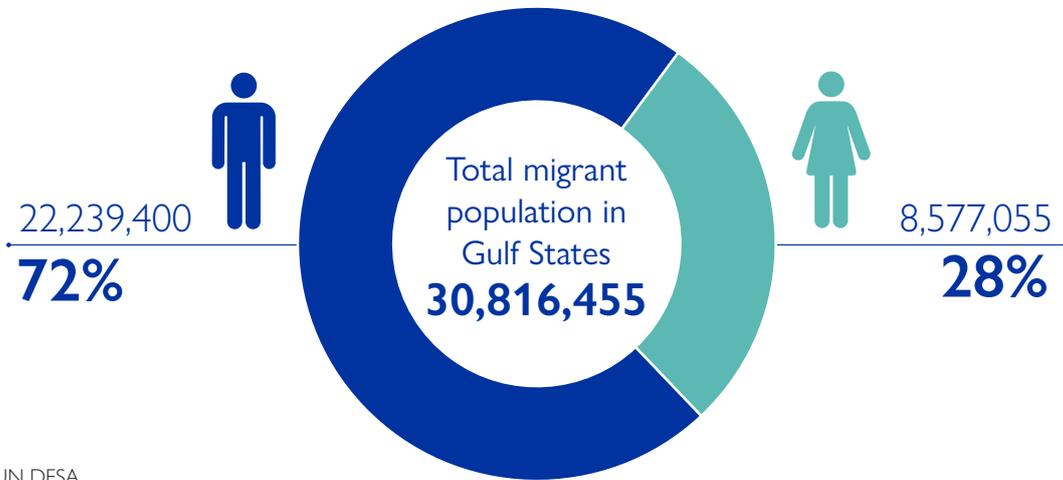
**2x**

from 50,000 to 111,000, between 2005 and 2016

<sup>7</sup> For the purpose of the ILO statistics included in this section, the Arab States include Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Occupied Palestinian Territory and Yemen, in addition to the Gulf States. However, the Gulf States – Saudi Arabia in particular – account for the region's most pronounced trends.

In the past couple of decades, trends indicate an increasing number of women migrant workers arriving in the Gulf for employment (see Figure 7 and Figure 8).

**Figure 7: Proportion of men and women migrants in the Gulf States (2020)**

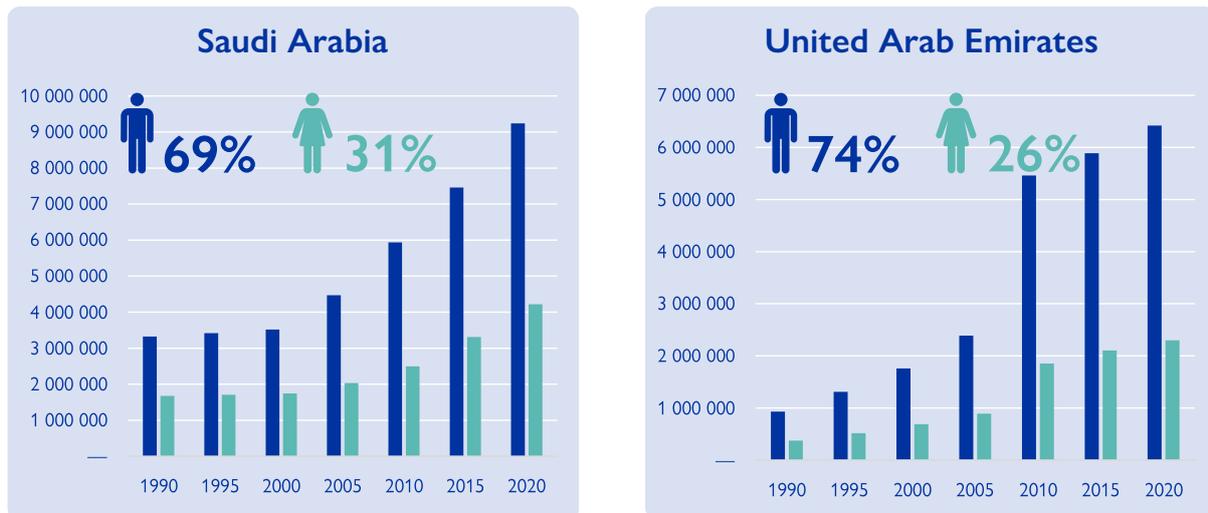


Source: UN DESA

**Figure 8: Number of men and women migrants in the Gulf States**



Source: UN DESA



Source: UN DESA

Critical data gaps remain, however, and figures are often derived from estimates. According to the Government of Kenya, for example, there are 100,000 Kenyans in the Gulf; with other sources estimate three times that number at 300,000 (Bisong 2021). Several embassies in the Gulf lack data on numbers of their own nationals and many pointed out that challenges around data are made more difficult still by the scale of irregular migration. According to IOM, for example, at least 400,000 Ethiopians have taken irregular – and often hazardous – routes to Saudi Arabia since 2017. The Ethiopian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs estimates that only 30-40 per cent of all Ethiopians in the Gulf States arrive via regular migration routes (IOM 2020).

While EHoA migrant workers in the Gulf often share similar stories and challenges, and are for the most part referred to collectively for the purpose of this report, it is important to take note that there are distinctions to be made, in terms of both countries of origin and countries of destination. Some EHoA migrant workers, including those from South Sudan and many from Djibouti, for example, have the benefit speaking Arabic and can therefore communicate easily on arrival. Others do not speak Arabic, or English, and so might struggle to communicate. Some migrant workers will have come through pre-departure orientation programmes in their country of origin (for example, in Kenya, Ethiopia and Uganda) while others will have arrived with very little information about working in the Gulf.

There are very different paths to take. Most migrant workers interviewed for this report came through private employment agencies and recruiters. Others who have come via the Eastern route through Yemen will have in most cases have had to endure a much more hazardous journey.<sup>8</sup> The experience of migrant workers from Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda in the Gulf States of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, then, should not be taken as homogenous, and labour migration outcomes depend on a range of factors, from the macro-level (labour migration policies in countries of origin and destination, national labour laws and social protection) to the individual level (gender, industry, recruitment process, regular/irregular status and so on). While this report speaks for the most part to the collective information needs of EHoA migrant workers in the Gulf, further research is needed to better understand the range of factors that inform, inhibit and facilitate better labour migration outcomes for the diverse EHoA populations in the region.

<sup>8</sup> IOM, *The Desire To Thrive Regardless of Risk: Risk Perception, expectations and migration experiences of young Ethiopians migrating along the Eastern Route towards the Arabian Peninsula* (Geneva 2020).

## CHALLENGES FACED BY MIGRANT WORKERS IN THE EAST AND HORN OF AFRICA–GULF CORRIDOR

Migrant workers make the journey from the EHoA to the Gulf to seek out opportunities not typically available to them in their home countries, to find ‘greener pastures’. In many cases, they are able to earn higher salaries and have a positive experience, contributing to their own and their families’ well-being. However, many also face significant challenges throughout the labour migration cycle; from recruitment through to return. From learning about job opportunities in the Gulf through recruitment agencies and private employment agencies, brokers and even family and friends, to preparing for departure, and managing post-arrival adjustment, migrant workers from the EHoA can face exploitation, abuse and discrimination during their journey, particularly those who migrate through irregular channels. This exploitation is often enabled by both a critical lack of information and an abundance of misinformation throughout the labour migration cycle.

### Common abuses include:

- Deceptive recruitment practices
- Contract substitution
- Confiscation of passports and personal documents
- Hazardous living and working conditions (including overcrowded accommodation)
- Poor occupational and workplace safety
- Wage theft (including unpaid overtime and arbitrary deductions)
- Sexual harassment and gender-based violence
- Xenophobia and discrimination
- Lack of social protection (particularly evident during the COVID-19 pandemic)

Migrants in irregular situations typically face heightened vulnerabilities due to a range of factors. They lack comprehensive legal protection and rights, and are therefore at a higher risk of exploitation or mistreatment by unscrupulous actors. There is also widespread hesitancy among migrants in irregular situations to seek support or redress for fear of consequences. Due to a less established infrastructure upholding safe and regular labour migration systems from the EHoA – largely owing to the relatively recent history of labour migration from the EHoA – there is a significant number of EHoA nationals who embark in irregular migration or find themselves in irregular situations after arrival in the countries of destination. A lack of timely and accurate information and support early on in the labour migration cycle, then, often has profound consequences for the opportunities and outcomes a migrant worker can expect from their migration journey.

As is the case globally, women migrant workers, and women migrant domestic workers in particular, often find themselves in situations of extreme precarity, and are vulnerable to acute exploitation, sexual abuse and gender-based violence (OECD 2021). The vulnerability of women domestic workers in irregular situations from the EHoA in the Gulf is compounded by the intersecting variables of gender, nationality and irregular status. As domestic migrant workers tend to be physically and socially isolated due to their workplace typically being confined to private households, they often lack access to social networks, and importantly, to key information and peer support. Their inclusion in the region’s most progressive labour reforms would be pivotal in enhancing their well-being and protection.

“

*I spent three years doing domestic labour, and the door was locked on me. They rarely go outdoors unless I'm with them, so I've never gone out alone and met anybody. Later, I persuaded my mother to get me a phone, and I began to rely on social media and other sites for information*

*Ethiopian woman migrant domestic worker, reflecting on her experience in the Gulf*

”

Since early 2020, migrant workers in the Gulf, as elsewhere, have also had to contend with the additional health and social risks brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. For many, due to shared living accommodations, there has been difficulties in practicing social distancing as well as navigating public health policies that restricted movement. As in many countries, low-skilled and low-income migrant workers bore the biggest brunt of the restrictions put in place to contain COVID-19, facing job loss, reduced wages and insecurity in income, housing and food. In addition, stigma towards migrant workers was reported across the region. The pandemic has exacerbated pre-existing vulnerabilities and highlighted the precariousness of migrant workers' situation in the Gulf States (Aboueldahab 2021).

Stakeholders have long called for reforms of the kafala system – the system of sponsorship throughout the Gulf States that binds migrant workers to their employer (or sponsor, *kafael*). These legal requirements and administrative regulations create the foundation for an imbalanced relationship between employers and migrant workers, often leaving the former vulnerable to exploitation, discrimination and abuse. The kafala system itself has been at the heart of recent state efforts to champion reform. To take just a few examples:

- Qatar has introduced significant labour reform in 2020, which allowed migrant workers to change jobs before the end of their contract (without the need for consent from their employer) and set a minimum wage for migrant workers.
- Saudi Arabia's Labour Reform Initiative introduced in 2021 has taken similar steps, allowing migrant workers to change jobs before the end of their contract and leave or re-enter the country without the consent from their employer.
- Following Bahrain's implementation in 2021, all Gulf States now have established some version of a *Wage Protection System* (WPS).

Such reforms are aimed at promoting sustainable economic development and fostering a business climate attractive for foreign direct investments. Enhancing internal labour mobility, cultivating a dynamic skilled workforce and putting additional protections in place may serve to mitigate some of the vulnerabilities migrant workers face. While the Gulf reform initiatives have been recognized for providing key support to workers in the private sector, the inclusion of domestic workers is paramount as one of the most vulnerable groups in the region.

## BILATERAL RELATIONS

Amidst widespread criticism, several African countries, including some in the EHoA, have imposed bans on labour migration to the Gulf States; for example, Kenya (2012-2013), Ethiopia (2013) and Uganda (2016). These bans often focus in particular on domestic workers; for instance, private recruitment agencies were banned by the Government of Kenya from sending domestic workers to the Gulf States between 2014 and 2017. In fact, as recently as September 2021, the Kenyan Ministry of Foreign Affairs recommended a temporary ban on Kenyan domestic workers traveling to Saudi Arabia for employment. On the other side, in 2019 Kuwait banned the recruitment of domestic workers from 23 African countries and two Asian countries, including six EHoA countries (Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda). Bans like these, while intended to better protect migrant workers, often have the unintended consequence of dramatically increasing irregular migration.

In recent years, however, EHoA governments and Gulf States have developed closer labour migration relationships, as is reflected in the increasing number of bilateral labour agreements (BLAs). The Government of Kenya has also appointed labour attachés in Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates to monitor labour agreements and the well-being of Kenyan nationals. Developments such as these are important steps towards broader efforts to create an enabling environment within which migrant workers can thrive.

In addition to wide-ranging reform in the Gulf and strengthening labour migration agreements, and as the number of EHoA migrant workers continues to grow in the Gulf, a consensus has emerged around the critical importance of harmonizing labour migration between the EHoA and the Gulf States. In October 2019, the AU-ILO-IOM-ECA *Joint Labour Migration Governance Programme for Regional Development and Integration in Africa (JLMP)* gathered African ambassadors in Addis Ababa to discuss labour migration to the Gulf States. During this meeting, discussions were held on the need for a more integrated approach. Following the *High Level Regional Ministerial Forum on Harmonizing Labour Migration Policies in East and Horn of Africa* in January 2020, a *Communique and Call to Action Priorities (2020-2023)* was signed. Included in this important communique were some emerging priorities that resonate with the key findings and recommendations of this report:

- Advocate for cooperation on diplomatic, consular and labour attaché services in key labour destination countries.
- Strengthen national statistical institutions and data collection mechanisms as well as cooperation on exchange and analysis to inform policies and labour migration governance, including for effective development, drafting, negotiation and implementation of BLAs and their monitoring and evaluation.
- Improve remittance data and leverage the potential impact of remittances on social and economic development.
- Establish interstate collaboration on diplomatic and consular assistance for migrant workers in particular in countries where some States don't have diplomatic representation; while at the same time promote and support the role of diasporas in assisting migrant workers and protecting their rights in vulnerable situations.
- Cooperate towards establishing a common platform for engagement with the Gulf Cooperation Council on labour migration.

- Promote access to justice by strengthening consular services and posting labour attaches, for effective protection of human rights of migrant workers in destination countries, as part of addressing impunity, providing remedies and ensuring the rule of law.

A year later, as we have already seen, the *Global Forum for Migration and Development (GFMD)* emphasized the importance of coordination between countries of origin and countries of destination, looking to the Abu Dhabi Dialogue, and in particular the Comprehensive Information Orientation Programme (CIOP) as good practices (Bisong 2021).

## THE ROLE OF INFORMATION

As countries both in the EHoA and the Gulf take steps towards reform and closer bilateral and multilateral engagement, migrant workers from the EHoA continue to arrive in growing numbers. At the heart of the challenges migrant workers face in coming to the Gulf is a lack of timely information that they could use to prepare and protect themselves throughout the labour migration cycle and to gain the most benefit out of their work experience. Limited access to accurate information, often coupled with an abundance of misinformation, leaves migrant workers vulnerable to predatory recruitment practices. This in turn informs migrant workers' decision-making; with some knowingly, and others unknowingly, bypassing formal recruitment processes and engaging in irregular migration (Fernandez 2017). The timely provision of comprehensive information related to safe and ethical recruitment can serve to support the empowerment of migrant workers to avoid dangerous and unethical recruitment actors and practices that would increase their risk to exploitation, abuse and trafficking.

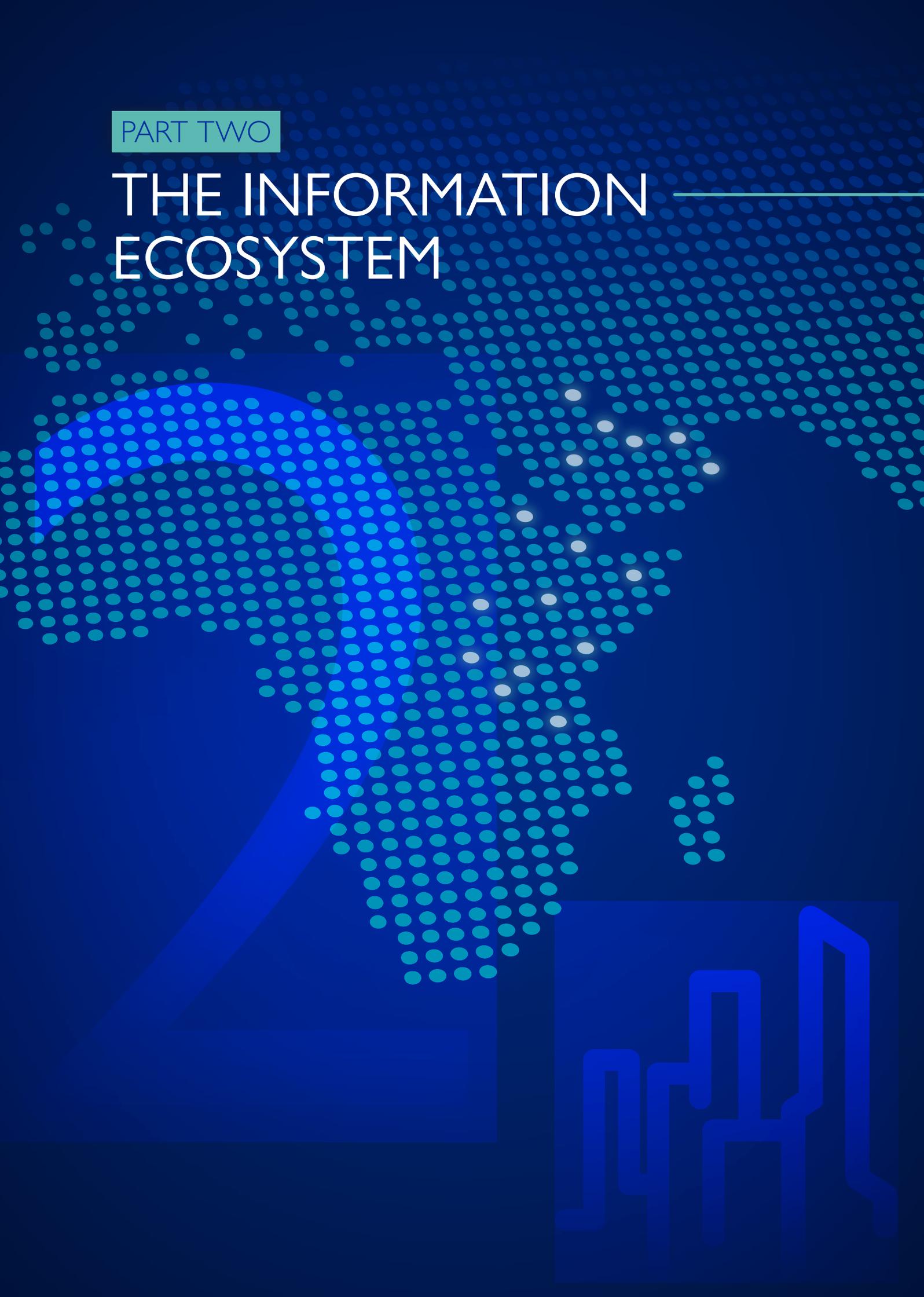
At the post-arrival stage, particular information gaps around terms and conditions of employment, national labour laws, rights and responsibilities and cultural norms are common. Several of the migrant workers interviewed for this report, clearly expressed that the problem is not just a lack of information, but an abundance of misinformation. As this report will detail, filling information gaps and fighting misinformation requires not just making accurate information available but making it pervasive and accessible to those who need it most.

To explore the theme of information further, **Part Two** expands on the concept of an information ecosystem, provides an overview of post-arrival awareness and information in the Gulf, and underlines the importance of social networks and informal information flows. **Part Three** provides key findings and tailored evidence-based recommendations that target a wide range of stakeholders in the EHoA-Gulf labour migration cycle, including governments, embassies and CSOs in both countries of origin and countries of destination.

PART TWO

# THE INFORMATION ECOSYSTEM

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## INTRODUCTION

The vast majority of EHoA migrant workers who travel to the Gulf for work lack key information. While some PDO programmes exist in countries such as Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia, most migrant workers from the EHoA do not have access to a formal PDO and often have little knowledge of the country of destination when they arrive. Migrant workers in the Gulf have to contend with information asymmetry, whereby they must depend on other stakeholders in the labour migration process – such as countries of origin, countries of destination, recruitment agencies and employers – for key information. These stakeholders are referred to in an information ecosystem as influencers, ‘the people, organizations, and institutions that influence how different types of information flow’ (Susman-Peña et al. 2015)<sup>1</sup>. Over the course of the labour migration cycle, different influencers can shape the flows of information in different ways.

### IN THE COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN:

- The **Government** can play an important role in developing or mandating pre-departure programmes and information and awareness campaigns for prospective or outbound migrant workers.
- **Private employment agencies** (including recruiters, subagents, brokers etc.) play a key role in facilitating the migrant’s journey from their home country to the country of destination and are often the first and last point of contact for a migrant worker departing for the country of destination. While they are well placed to champion principles of ethical recruitment and provide clear and transparent information, many private employment agencies fail to equip migrant workers with the information they need to make an informed decision, and in many cases, deliberately deceive migrant workers by withholding information or providing misinformation.
- **Civil society organizations** (including NGOs, social enterprises and international organizations) can provide some forms of PDO, and can contribute meaningfully to disseminating key information to migrant workers. They can also be very well positioned to serve as effective service providers with access to different communities.
- A prospective migrant worker’s **social network** – composed of typically strong ties like friends, family, neighbours and colleagues – is an often overlooked, but critical factor in migrant workers’ decision-making processes. A lot of migrant workers learn about opportunities from close friends and family, and are convinced to travel abroad for employment based on informal conversations. While information flows through social networks, however, so does misinformation, and it is often the case that migrant workers are deceived by their closest friends and family.
- **Social media** is playing an increasingly prominent role in labour migration, as migrant workers often learn about opportunities abroad online. While online platforms have the potential to fill information gaps, they have also become an important recruitment tool for private employment agencies and recruiters, many of whom leverage the power of social media for exploitation. Online platforms then have become central hubs of both information and misinformation.

### IN COUNTRIES OF DESTINATION:

- The **Government** can play an important role in developing or mandating PAO programmes and information and awareness campaigns for newly arrived migrant workers and working with countries of origin to enhance PDO programmes.

- **Employers** can ensure that all incoming employees are provided a dedicated orientation or onboarding, and have ongoing access to information and updates on labour laws and grievance mechanisms. Employers can also advocate and/or invest in orientation programming before arrival at their workplace. This can be in the form of pre-employment orientations and recruitment fairs which can result in more informed decision-making, improved skills-matching and enhanced preparedness of incoming employees.
- **Employers of domestic workers** are particularly important and sometimes overlooked actors in the labour migration cycle. They are uniquely well placed to ensure the safety and well-being of their employees, and ensure that they are not subjected to any forms of exploitation or abuse. Employers of domestic workers can ensure that their employees are kept abreast of updates to the national labour laws, and have an essential role to play in ensuring they have access to key information and opportunities for personal and professional development, including upskilling, education and training.
- **Embassies** and consular representation in the country of destination are an important source of information, support and assistance for migrant communities, and can work closely with national governments, civil society organizations and community leaders to ensure that important information is disseminated widely within their community. Diplomatic missions are encouraged to work closely with host governments to support the development and evaluations of post-arrival orientation programmes managed by relevant national authorities, and support broad participation among their community.
- **Private employment agencies** are well placed to provide clear and transparent information to incoming and newly arrived migrant workers and ensure they are well informed about national labour laws and grievance mechanisms, however, often have little incentive to do so. As governments, migrant workers and the private sector more broadly are seeing the social and economic benefits of ethical recruitment, private employment agencies can commit to ethical recruitment practices, beginning with the provision of timely and accurate information.
- A newly arrived migrant worker's **social network** - sometimes including friends and family, and other migrant workers - can be an important source of information and support. When migrant workers need information or advice, they often first turn to other migrant workers, and so it is crucial to ensure that accurate and accessible information targets migrant communities at the grassroots level. Particular consideration needs to be paid to migrant domestic workers who often face difficulty in accessing their social networks and building social ties.
- **Civil society organizations** (including community organizations, church groups, NGOs, social enterprises and international organizations) are another key resource, and along with social networks, represent perhaps the most trusted sources through which information flows. In different contexts, civil society organizations can be key service providers for post-arrival information for different migrant communities.
- **Social media** has become increasingly important, particularly since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, during which migrant workers often bore the brunt of restrictions designed to mitigate the spread of the virus, and communicated important updates online. In one sense an extension of the various nationality-based community organizations in the Gulf (which themselves have found a strong footing on platforms like Facebook), social media has also allowed migrant workers to efficiently share important information and offer each other advice and support.

## INFORMATION NEEDS

A recurring theme over the course of our interviews with key stakeholders in the labour migration cycle, including EHoA migrant workers in the Gulf, was a lack of information. From learning about employment opportunities in countries of origin all the way to living and working in the Gulf, migrant workers typically struggled to access key information. As one Kenyan migrant worker in Bahrain, for example, shared with us, **“We were never told anything about this place, we just came”**. In other cases, migrant workers struggled with misinformation; having been convinced to travel to the Gulf with misleading claims and false promises.

There are a wide range of key areas in which EHoA migrant workers lack access to useful information. The following list – although not exhaustive - captures some essential information needs that emerged during conversations with migrant workers:



### 1) RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AT WORK

#### Terms and Conditions of Employment

Most EHoA migrant workers are not fully aware of the terms and conditions of their employment, and what implications those terms and conditions have on their daily lives and their prospects for supporting themselves and their families back home. Migrant workers are typically unaware of what must be included in a standard employment contract, for example:



*I do not get any information about the job that I am going to work in the country of destination. I do not know whether I am going to become a housemaid, nanny for a baby, or whether I will become a janitor.*

*Ethiopian woman migrant domestic worker*



#### National Labour Laws and Reforms

Newly arrived migrant workers are not familiar with the national labour law or policy reform efforts (for example, a wage protection system), and what implications such efforts have on the rights and responsibilities of both employer and employee. As Gulf countries undertake widespread reforms, migrant workers face the additional challenge of keeping up to date with evolving labour laws and regulations. EHoA migrant workers – and domestic workers in particular – are also often misinformed about the consequences of absconding and often face charges of theft for trying to run away from their sponsor.

#### Rights and Responsibilities

Upon arrival, EHoA migrants lack awareness around what is expected of them and what they are entitled to as employees. For instance, migrant workers are typically unaware of rules around working hours, periods of rest and annual leave.



## 2) THE LABOUR MIGRATION PROCESS

### **Ethical recruitment**

Many EHoA migrant workers who arrive in the Gulf are not aware of the processes that underpin their own recruitment or the obligations of various stakeholders throughout the cycle and are therefore unable to identify whether or not they have been, or could be, victims of unscrupulous recruitment practices. Even though it is typically illegal to charge a migrant worker a recruitment fee, for example, almost all the migrant workers interviewed had to pay recruiters. Migrants typically lack information before and after arrival to identify ethical recruiters and effectively report grievances associated with unsafe recruitment.

### **Common forms of exploitation and abuse**

In addition to broader considerations around ethical recruitment, newly arrived EHoA migrant workers are typically unaware of the common forms of exploitation and abuse, and in many cases only learn that they themselves were victims months or years after the fact, and too late to seek redressal. This contributes to the culture of impunity in the recruitment sector, and results in a certain acceptance among migrant workers themselves that these abuses are part and parcel of the labour migration journey.

### **Immigration policies and visa rules**

Although some EHoA migrant workers choose to deliberately circumvent visa rules, many make the journey to the Gulf without fully understanding the rules and regulations around visas and residency. It is not uncommon for migrant workers to arrive without the necessary documentation, or to get hired on a temporary visa, only to subsequently fall into irregularity through no fault of their own.



## 3) LIVING IN THE GULF

### **Cultural norms and customs**

Newly arrived EHoA migrant workers often have little understanding of cultural norms and customs in the Gulf. While those who arrive from countries with large Muslim populations might have more insight into religious customs, many EHoA migrant workers struggle at first with 'culture shock'. This is very common but many lack the information and tools to support their adjustment to a new culture and way of life. Domestic migrant workers in particular face a steep learning curve, as they are forced to learn, typically on their own, in the homes of Gulf nationals.

### **Language**

The difficulty EHoA migrant workers face in adapting to a new cultural and new customs is compounded by language barriers. Migrant workers from the EHoA often lack either English or Arabic language skills and feel particularly isolated in the first few months of their arrival. Basic language skills are particularly important for domestic workers.

### **Financial management**

EHoA migrant workers typically lack useful information around opening a bank account, available banking services, budgeting and modes of remittance transfer. Despite the fact that migrant workers are often assumed to have low financial literacy, several key informants pointed to the fact that migrant workers are typically very financially literate and must budget well to support (often extended) family back home. What they lack, rather, is information about and access to financial services.

“

*The Government should teach basics of Arabic languages for labour migrants before letting them go. If you have a language skill and communicate, things would be less difficult and express yourself. I am lucky to some extent in learning the language quickly since I was spending much time taking care of children. Information could had been given about the living and working condition, about the culture. But these was not given neither by the government or the recruiting agency*

*Ethiopian woman migrant domestic worker, reflecting on her experience in the Gulf*

”



#### 4) SUPPORT & ASSISTANCE

##### **Sources of support and assistance**

In most cases, EHoA migrant workers are not familiar with available support and assistance in the country of destination, including consular services provided by their embassy (including updating personal documents or legal assistance, for example) or community support and assistance provided by NGOs or community organizations.

##### **Social protection**

EHoA migrant workers have little awareness about available social protection measures in the Gulf, provided either by the country of origin or destination. Clear information on social insurance, healthcare coverage or emergency assistance, for example, is not readily available to all. This information gap has become increasingly apparent in the wake of widespread unemployment, loss of earnings and the acute need for healthcare assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic.

##### **Grievance and redressal mechanisms**

EHoA migrant workers are for the most part unfamiliar with grievance and redressal mechanisms, and typically learn about them through their social networks. Awareness is particularly low among those in more remote settings, such as farm workers or some domestic workers, who typically have weaker ties with their communities and often have sporadic access to the Internet.

##### **Education and training opportunities**

Newly arrived EHoA migrant workers are largely unaware of the educational and training opportunities provided by embassies, community-based organizations, or in some cases, the private sector.

## THE INFORMATION LANDSCAPE

With these information needs and information gaps in mind, it is important to understand the information landscape; the organizations and infrastructures that underpin information production and flow. What, in other words, are the sources through which information flows, and who are the influencers that inform its circulation? In the Gulf, while information and awareness campaigns are often conceived through a top-down model of dissemination from an official source, as we will see, information often circulates through informal, grassroots social networks that are increasingly moving into digital spaces.

### GOVERNMENT

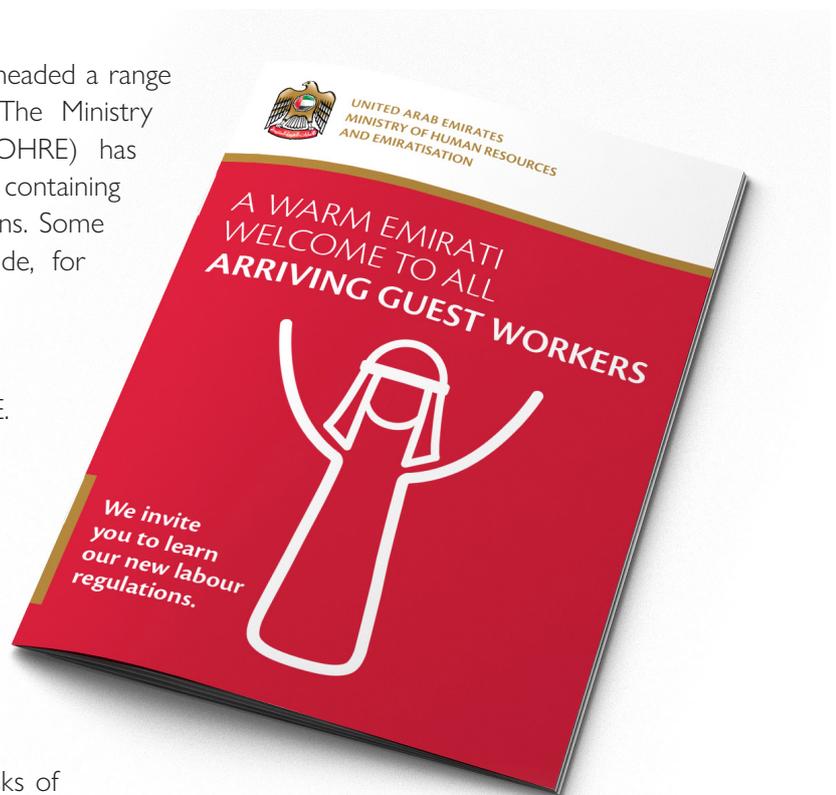
While PAO initiatives are seen around the world, they are less common and less standardized in the Gulf States. Despite the relative dearth of formal PAO programmes, however, a variety of stakeholders, including government ministries and civil society organizations throughout the Gulf, have invested in information and awareness campaigns and initiatives aimed at filling what are perceived to be critical information gaps among migrant workers.<sup>11</sup> Governments are increasingly investing in developing information interventions with the aim of eventually making it mandatory for all newly arrived workers.

Often under the banner of 'Know Your Rights', information and awareness campaigns in the Gulf typically cohere around the rights and responsibilities of migrants workers; detailing regulations around contracts, recruitment and wage protection, for example. These campaigns are geared towards tackling the most common forms of exploitation and abuse, including contract substitution, wage theft and sexual harassment.

The **UNITED ARAB EMIRATES** has spearheaded a range of information and awareness campaigns. The Ministry of Human Resources & Emiratisation (MOHRE) has developed a booklet for migrant workers containing important information about labour regulations. Some of the '10 Important Things to Know' include, for example (addressing migrant workers):<sup>12</sup>

- Your employer must pay for your recruitment costs and travel to the UAE.
- Your employer must pay for your Residency Permit.
- Your contract must match your job offer.
- You are entitled to keep your personal identification documents with you at all times.

This information is aimed at mitigating the risks of contract substitution, confiscation of passports and wage theft, among other abuses.



<sup>11</sup> Please refer to the [Background Report on Post-Arrival Orientation in Abu Dhabi Dialogue Countries](#) for a mapping of post-arrival orientation and awareness initiatives in the Gulf.

<sup>12</sup> Annex 1: Extract from Ministry of Human Resources & Emiratisation (MOHRE) booklet for migrant workers (UAE)

The MOHRE also ran a campaign called ‘*Know Your Rights*’ that highlights rights, duties, pre-arrival and post-arrival tips, for example:

- You must ensure having a work permit, and working only for the employer specified in such permit.
- The employer must provide you with an accommodation and three meals every day.
- If the employer asks you to wear a certain uniform during work, the employer must provide such uniform.
- The employer is liable to pay the costs of your medical treatment, when needed.
- You will get your monthly payment within a period not exceeding (10) days from its due date.

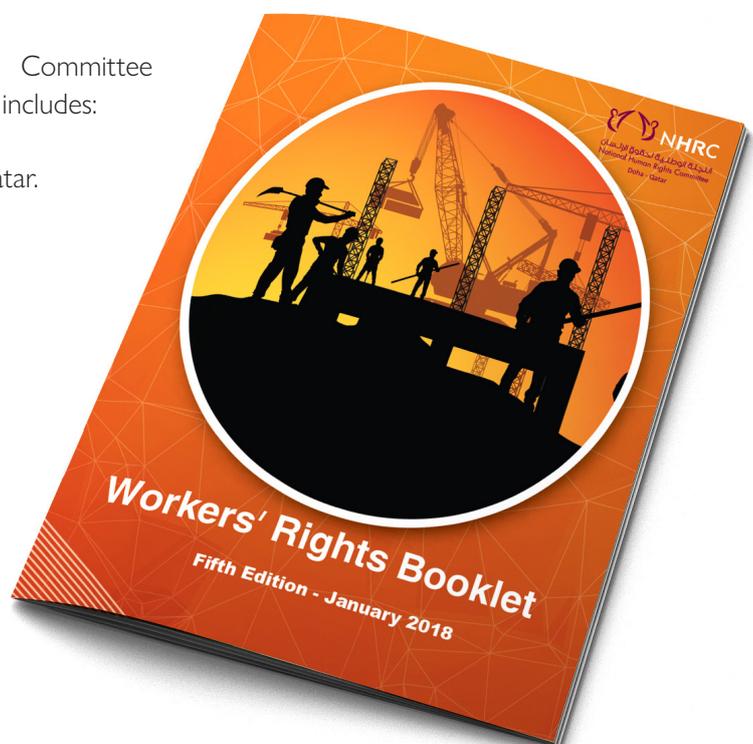
The UAE MOHRE runs a popular Facebook group that is very responsive to complaints and grievances, providing useful information, or in some cases directing migrant workers towards dedicated sources of support.

Since 2016, the Permanent Committee of Labour Affairs (PCLA) has also undertaken several innovative campaigns aimed at ‘**educating workers over their rights and obligations according to the UAE laws and legislations, introducing them to the culture of the Emirati Society, and enhancing their knowledge with regard to the health and safety standards to be followed at their workplaces according to the UAE laws**’.<sup>13</sup> Efforts have included the installation of smart kiosks in labour camps in Dubai and awareness sessions in the Jebel Ali Free Zone. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the PCLA also distributed COVID-19 awareness guides to migrant workers and employers.

As elaborated in the *Background Report on Post-Arrival Orientation in Abu Dhabi Dialogue Countries*, the UAE has also established dedicated Tawjeeh centres. Licensed by the MOHRE, Tawjeeh centres were conceived to provide special awareness and orientation for both employers and employees on a range of topics, including national labour laws. The UAE is currently piloting CIOP with the Governments of Sri Lanka and the Philippines, with a focus on hospitality workers.

In **QATAR**, the National Human Rights Committee published a **Workers’ Rights Booklet**,<sup>14</sup> which includes:

- Basics before coming to the State of Qatar.
- Types of contracts.
- Wages.
- Working Hours.
- Domestic Workers.
- Occupational Safety, Health and Social Welfare.
- Rights and Duties.



<sup>13</sup> Hassan Bashir, Major new partnerships announced as UAE's Global Forum on Migration and Development Summit closes. 21 January 2020. Available at [www.wam.ae/en/details/1395302904917](http://www.wam.ae/en/details/1395302904917).

<sup>14</sup> Annex 2: Workers' Rights Booklet (Qatar).

In **BAHRAIN**, the Labour Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA) has developed an **Expatriate Employees' Guide**,<sup>15</sup> which includes:

- Pre-departure advice (on documentation, information about authorized medical centres).
- Advice on avoiding paying illicit recruitment fees (for a work permit, or to transfer to another employer, for example).
- Advice on retaining personal documents (including passports).
- Information on transferring to another employer.
- Contact information (for LMRA).

The guide is available 12 languages - including Hindi, Tagalog, Bangla and Chinese, but to date no African languages. This is not uncommon in the Gulf as the majority of migrant workers are from Asian countries of origin. As the numbers of African migrants increases, however, there is a growing need to ensure that African language versions of these resources are produced.

A further initiative by the LMRA is to provide migrant workers with printed material at the airport. This includes details on responsibilities and rights while working in Bahrain, as well as information cards with anti-trafficking hotline numbers and grievance redressal and protective services offered by LMRA, such as express services and shelter. In addition, all migrant workers coming to Bahrain with a work visa are provided with a sim card on arrival at the airport. This is particularly important for women migrant domestic workers who may be at more risk of physical and social isolation.

### After arrival into the Kingdom of Bahrain:

To avoid any penalties and legal issues or cancellation of your work permit, and to determine your stay in the kingdom legally please follow these steps:

1. Work only the job you are assigned in your work permit and no other job.
2. Work only in the location of the site mentioned in your work permit, or other branches of the same employer and same job.
3. Cooperate with the LMRA inspection officers when they ask for verification of fingerprints or documents.
4. Stick to the rules of your employment contract.
5. Your request for transfer will prevent your employer from renewing your work permit or registering you as absent from work.
6. Do not pay any amount in return for a work permit, or to renew your work permit or to transfer to another employer.
7. Abide by all Kingdom of Bahrain laws and respect the traditions and culture of the country.
8. Do not be absent from work for more than 15 continuous days without notifying your employer or his permission, or any other reason not mentioned in the law.
9. If you have any dispute with your employer please refer to the labour courts at the Ministry of Justice and Islamic affairs.
10. You can check status of your work permit by mobile service at any time send a message with your ID card number add your personal number (CPR XXXXXXXXX) to the following number Batelco 90168, Zain 77070 or Viva 98690.



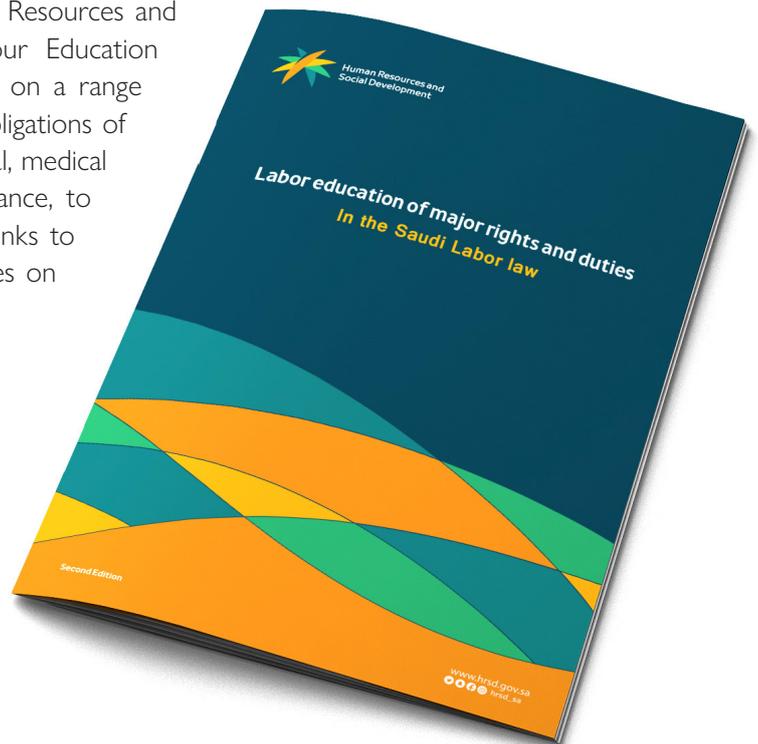
15 Annex 3: Extract from the LMRA Guide (Bahrain).

In **SAUDI ARABIA**, the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development has developed a Labour Education [website](#)<sup>16</sup> aimed at disseminating information on a range of topics, including labour laws, duties and obligations of employees and the employer, contract renewal, medical care, and information on support and assistance, to name but a few. The website also contains links to a range of information booklets and guidelines on themes like:

- Rights and duties of domestic workers
- Wages
- End of service benefits
- Health Insurance
- Business Ethics

While the website contains a lot of useful information, it is in Arabic and English, and so is more geared towards employers than employees.

Like the UAE, Saudi Arabia is also currently piloting CIOP with the Government of Bangladesh, focusing on commercial drivers. With support from IOM, both Governments work together on the development of harmonized orientation programmes across PEO, PDO and PAO. As part of this pilot, master trainers will be trained and deliver orientation sessions to migrants in line with the CIOP approach. Subsequently, IOM will carry out an extensive evaluation to understand the impacts of this approach for migrant workers.



16 [Annex 4](#): Extracts from the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development's Labour Education [website](#) (Saudi Arabia).

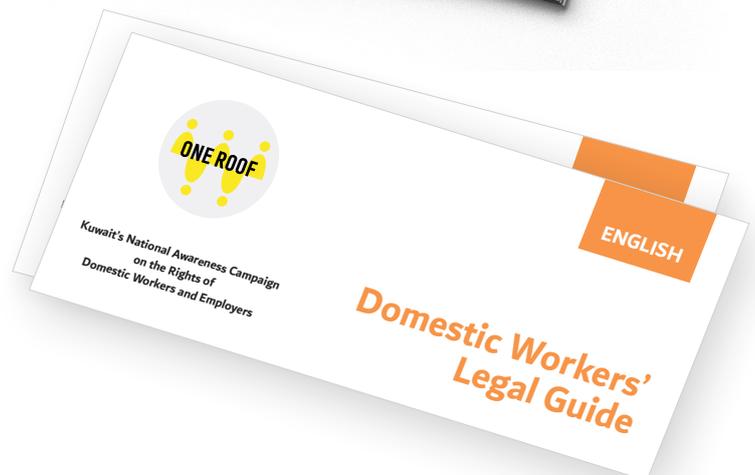
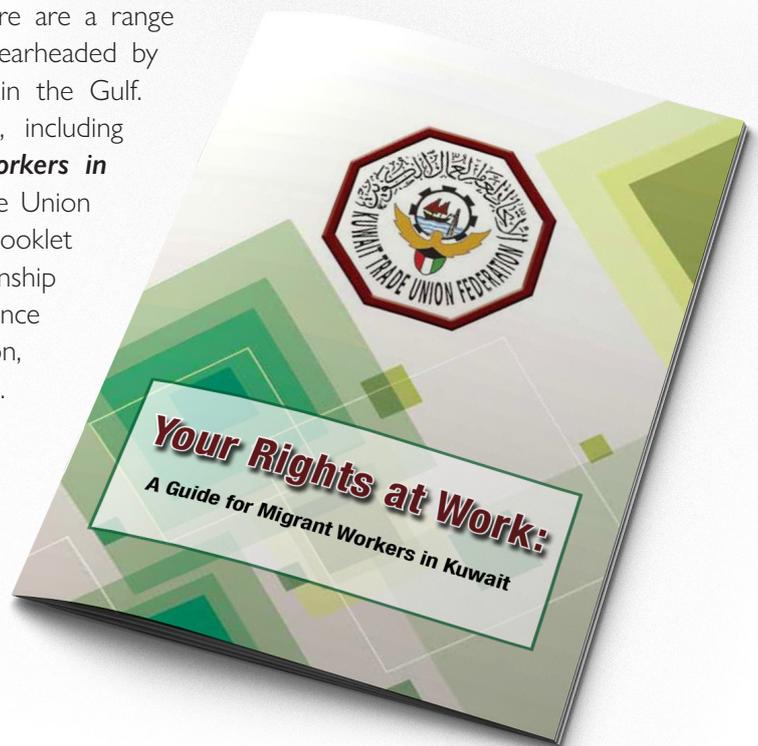
## CIVIL SOCIETY AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

In addition to government-led initiatives, there are a range of information and awareness campaigns spearheaded by civil society and international organizations in the Gulf. There are several examples in **KUWAIT**, including the ***Your Rights: A Guide for Migrant Workers in Kuwait*** booklet<sup>17</sup> produced by Kuwait Trade Union Federation for Immigrant Workers. This booklet contains information on labour rights, citizenship and sponsorship laws, information on grievance redressal, absconding laws, wage protection, employment contract and contact information.

A similar guide was also developed for domestic workers by the 'One Roof' campaign, a collaboration between the Social Workers Society, Human Line Organization and the Ministry of Interior. ***The Domestic Workers' Legal Guide***<sup>18</sup> was made available at hospitals, police stations, recruitment agency offices, and includes key information on:

- Financial Matters
- Living Conditions
- Types of Residency
- Legal Advice
- Deportation & Absconding
- Shelter
- Laws

The Domestic Workers' Legal Guide is available in 15 languages, including Amharic.



<sup>17</sup> Annex 5: Extract from *Your Rights: A Guide for Migrant Workers in Kuwait*.

<sup>18</sup> Annex 6: Extract from the *Domestic Workers' Legal Guide* (Kuwait).

In addition to information products developed by governments and CSOs in the Gulf, international and civil society organizations have also worked towards disseminating key information on rights and responsibilities. The International Labour Organization (ILO) has produced a range of guides for specific labour migration corridors. The *Travel Smart* guides include targeted information for migrant workers from select South Asian countries (migrating to particular Gulf countries), including, for example, on rights, responsibilities, contract, documents, end of service, compensation, travel, recruitment fees and irregularity.



While most information products target migrant workers themselves, several guides have also been produced by civil society organizations for employers; in particular employers of domestic workers. Published by faith-based *Project Bridges* (a partnership between the NGO Hivos and Migrant-Rights.org), the *Employing a Migrant Domestic Worker* series in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait and United Arab Emirates includes sections on, for example:<sup>19</sup>

- Pre-employment considerations.
- Recruitment process.
- Rights and obligation of domestic workers.
- Employer's rights and obligations.
- Calculating working hours.
- Creating a healthy employment relationship and good working environment.



<sup>19</sup> Annex 7: Extract from *Your Guide to Employing a Migrant Worker in Saudi Arabia*.

Initiatives targeting employers – and employers of migrant domestic workers in particular – are less common but are increasingly being recognized as a good practice. Employers play a crucial role in the information ecosystem as key providers of information. Furthermore, while post-arrival orientation and awareness campaigns more broadly tend to target employees, it is also important to ensure that employers are well informed on the rights and obligations entailed in the employer-employee relationship.

## DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS

Diplomatic missions representing Asian countries in the Gulf have often engaged proactively to enhance the protection of nationals. In Oman, for example, the embassy of India offers monthly open houses. In Saudi Arabia, the embassy of India has developed Guidelines for Indian Nationals in Saudi Arabia, covering a range of topics, including the labour law, grievance and redressal mechanisms and how to access welfare schemes while abroad. The embassy of Pakistan in the United Arab Emirates has run a range of information and orientation campaigns, including on financial literacy, for example, while this report has already touched upon the important role that the embassy of the Philippines plays in running the Post-Arrival Orientation Seminar (PAOS), which lasts approximately 1.5 hours.

Compared to Asian countries of origin – that often have dedicated labour attachés,<sup>20</sup> community welfare attaches (Pakistan), and social welfare attaches (Philippines) – EHoA embassies in the Gulf often still lack the resources to provide the same level of support and assistance to their nationals (see Figure 9). This is unsurprising, given the much longer history of labour migration in the Asian corridors, and the relatively recent influx of African migrant workers in the Gulf States. Although many migrant workers told us that they would turn to their embassy or consular representation in the case of an emergency, many also noted a preference for seeking support within their community or with CSOs or official government authorities. This was particularly the case where there was no consular representation inside the country's borders.

There are important exceptions, however, and some EHoA embassies in the Gulf have already developed and currently offer important welfare services. The embassy of Uganda in Riyadh, for example, provides a list of accredited recruitment agencies to support the regular labour migration of Ugandans to the Kingdom. It also has a grievance redressal mechanism and a helpline for migrant workers in need of assistance. Like several embassies in the region, the embassy of Uganda in Saudi Arabia uses social media effectively to disseminate important information to the Ugandan community. Many embassies work very closely with their communities, often through authorized community liaison volunteers, who are critical sources of support and assistance.

A number of embassies interviewed emphasized the importance of, and expressed a keen interest in, exploring a PAO programme. Many, however, pointed to a range of challenges, including a lack of funding, resources and technical capacity. Furthermore, it was noted during several interviews that they faced acute challenges due to the number of migrants in irregular situations in the country of destination, making assistance with grievance redressal all the more difficult, for example.

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<sup>20</sup> There are a growing number of EHoA labour attachés in the Gulf, including at the Kenyan embassies in Saudi Arabia, UAE and Qatar, for example.

Figure 9: East and Horn of Africa diplomatic missions in the Gulf States

● Available in countries of destination    ● Available in neighbouring Gulf country

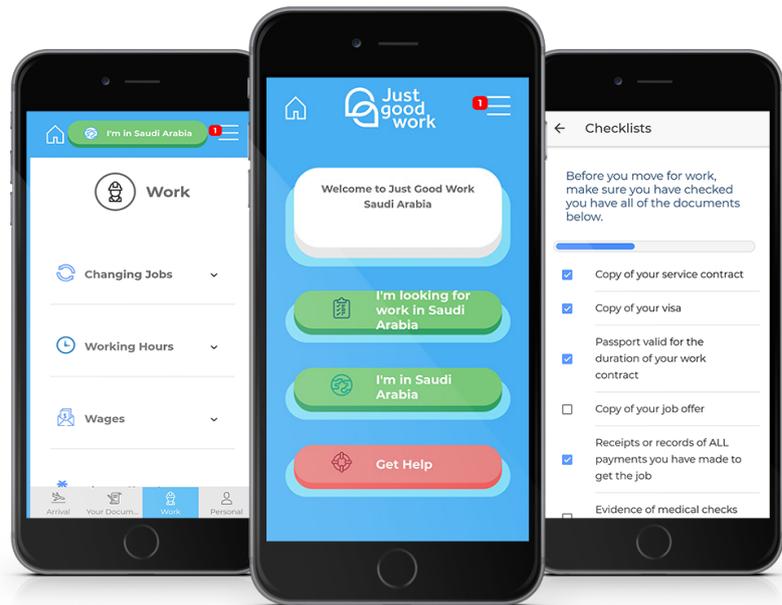
	 Bahrain	 UAE	 Oman	 Saudi Arabia	 Kuwait	 Qatar
 Burundi	● Embassy of Republic of Burundi (Riyadh)	● Consulate General of Republic of Burundi (Dubai)	● Embassy of Republic of Burundi (Riyadh)	● Embassy of Republic of Burundi (Riyadh)	● Embassy of Republic of Burundi (Riyadh)	● Embassy of Republic of Burundi (Riyadh)
 Djibouti	● Embassy of the Republic of Djibouti (Riyadh)	● Embassy of the Republic of Djibouti (Abu Dhabi)	● Embassy of the Republic of Djibouti (Riyadh)	● Embassy of the Republic of Djibouti (Riyadh)	● Embassy of the Republic of Djibouti (Kuwait City)	● Embassy of the Republic of Djibouti (Doha)
 Eritrea	● Embassy of Eritrea (Riyadh)	● Embassy of Eritrea (Abu Dhabi)	● Embassy of Eritrea (Abu Dhabi)	● Embassy of Eritrea (Riyadh)	● Embassy of Eritrea (Jabriya)	● Embassy of Eritrea (Doha)
 Ethiopia	● Consulate of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (Manama)	● Embassy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (Abu Dhabi)	● Embassy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (Muscat)	● Embassy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (Riyadh)	● Embassy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (Kuwait City)	● Embassy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (Doha)
 Kenya	● Embassy of the Republic of Kenya (Kuwait City)	● Embassy of the Republic of Kenya (Abu Dhabi)	● Embassy of the Republic of Kenya (Muscat)	● Embassy of the Republic of Kenya (Riyadh)	● Embassy of the Republic of Kenya (Al Zahra)	● Embassy of the Republic of Kenya (Doha)
 Rwanda	● Embassy of the Republic of Rwanda (Abu Dhabi)	● Embassy of the Republic of Rwanda (Abu Dhabi)	● Embassy of the Republic of Rwanda (Abu Dhabi)	● Embassy of the Republic of Rwanda (Abu Dhabi)	● Embassy of the Republic of Rwanda (Abu Dhabi)*	● Embassy of the Republic of Rwanda (Doha)
 Somalia	● Embassy of the Federal Republic of Somalia (Riyadh)	● Embassy of the Federal Republic of Somalia (Abu Dhabi)	● Embassy of the Federal Republic of Somalia (Muscat)	● Embassy of the Federal Republic of Somalia (Riyadh)	● Embassy of the Federal Republic of Somalia (Kuwait City)	● Embassy of the Federal Republic of Somalia (Doha)
 Uganda	● Embassy of the Republic of Uganda (Abu Dhabi)	● Embassy of the Republic of Uganda (Abu Dhabi)	● Embassy of the Republic of Uganda (Abu Dhabi)	● Embassy of the Republic of Uganda (Riyadh)	● Embassy of the Republic of Uganda (Riyadh)	● Embassy of the Republic of Uganda (Doha)
 The United Republic of Tanzania	● Embassy of the United Republic of Tanzania (Kuwait)	● Embassy of the United Republic of Tanzania (Abu Dhabi)	● Embassy of the United Republic of Tanzania (Muscat)	● Embassy of the United Republic of Tanzania (Riyadh)	● Embassy of the United Republic of Tanzania (Kuwait City)	● Embassy of the United Republic of Tanzania (Doha)
 South Sudan	● Embassy of South Sudan (Riyadh)	● Embassy of South Sudan (Abu Dhabi)	● Embassy of South Sudan (Abu Dhabi)	● Embassy of South Sudan (Riyadh)	● Embassy of South Sudan (Kuwait City)	● Embassy of South Sudan (Doha)

\* The Kenyan embassy in Kuwait also provides some consular services for Rwandan nationals.

In addition to brochures, booklets and dedicated websites, there are several innovative digital initiatives that aim to disseminate key information to migrant workers at critical junctures in the labour migration cycle. Mobile applications are becoming increasingly popular and point to an underexplored information channel in the labour migration cycle. While digital tools hold particular appeal in the wake of COVID-19, since when in-person orientation sessions have been increasingly difficult to organize safely, they should be understood as complementary to, rather than a replacement for, in-person orientation sessions. Digital channels can certainly better solve challenges of scale and outreach, but their widespread use will depend on enhanced digital literacy and accessibility among migrant workers (Unwin, Harindranath & Ghimire 2021). Furthermore, while smart phones are widely used, it should not be assumed that all migrants have easy access to the Internet through their mobile devices.

## JUST GOOD WORK

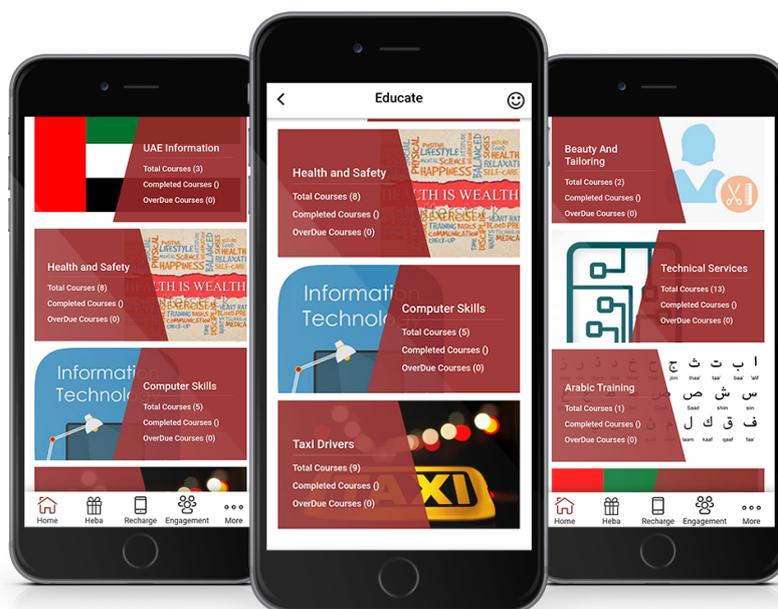
*Just Good Work* is a free mobile application designed specifically to give migrant workers critical information on different stages of the labour migration process. Supported by Fifty Eight - an organization based in the United Kingdom that fights trafficking and advocates for ethical recruitment - the *Just Good Work* app was created by a Kenyan migrant worker in Qatar in 2018, who himself had experienced exploitation, and covers everything from recruitment to employment and life in the country of destination. The app guides outbound migrant workers through managing their documents and provides key information on labour legislation, common forms of exploitation to avoid and tips on preparedness and succeeding abroad. *Just Good Work* has tailored content for different migration corridors. In the EHoA, it currently has content for corridors between Uganda and Kenya on the sending side and Saudi Arabia, UAE and Qatar, on the destination side. Content is also being developed for the United Republic of Tanzania, Bahrain, Kuwait and Oman.



## SMART LABOUR

In the UAE, *Smart Labour* is another ‘**educational & engagement platform aimed at making millions of blue-collar workers happier, smarter and more productive**’. The app provides a wide range of multilingual courses targeted at low-income workers, including, for example:

- Health
- Computer Skills
- Driving Rules & Safety
- Emirati Culture



## EDUCATION & TRAINING

While top-down information and awareness campaigns address a critical need, and serve to fill important information gaps, their focus on the obstacles migrant workers face at times serves to sideline important information needs around opportunities for personal and professional development. *Smart Labour* is a good example of an innovative digital tool designed to educate and empower low-income migrant workers; it is also a good example of the growing attention being paid to education and training.

Much effort has been invested in recent years to produce and disseminate multilingual guides, brochures and literature containing key information for both employers and migrant workers (often targeted specifically at migrant domestic workers). Such efforts represent important steps in improving the health of the broader information ecosystem and should be applauded and built upon. While focusing on rights, responsibilities and grievances is much needed, however, migrant workers in the Gulf also face critical information gaps around opportunities for personal and professional growth. Migrant workers travel abroad for employment in the hope of accessing opportunities that are typically not available to them back home. Beyond higher salaries, however, migrant workers are also keen to improve their skills, and enhance their prospects, both in the Gulf and upon their return to their home countries. Most migrants interviewed for this report spoke about their desire to improve their language skills, for example; both English and Arabic were highlighted, but in the case of migrant domestic workers, there was a strong preference for Arabic. In addition to digital skills and soft skills such as communication, networking and problem-solving, an enhanced focus on upskilling, training and education will not only benefit migrant workers themselves, but in creating a more skilled workforce will also benefit employers and indeed the broader economy.

While the information ecosystem that migrant workers in the Gulf find themselves in typically centres on a range of themes at the intersection of rights and responsibilities, a range of initiatives that attempt to empower migrant workers through education, training, upskilling and improving financial literacy have emerged in recent years:

- **Tadbeer centres** were created (following Federal Law No. 10 of 2017 on Domestic Workers) after the Ministry of Human Resources & Emiratisation assessed the conditions of recruitment agencies and attempted to tackle issues with recruitment systems, as well as streamline the recruitment process for domestic workers, including related costs and skilling. Privately owned, but monitored and regulated by the MOHRE, Tadbeer centres are conceived as a one-stop centre for recruitment, training and employment of domestic workers. Upskilling modules can be paid for by the employer and include pediatric first aid, food and beverage preparation, improving household practices, early years childhood education (storytelling, games, activities for children), among many others.
- **The Housekeeping Institute** was established in 2015 in Dubai to provide education and training to migrant domestic workers. It offers dedicated courses on early years education, pediatric first aid, elderly care, special needs, food hygiene and household management. In 2021, it opened the UAE's first residential training centre for domestic workers.
- **Sandigan** is an NGO in Kuwait that works towards promoting the general welfare of migrant workers and offers a range of trainings, on CPR, sewing and financial literacy, for example.
- **The Danube Welfare Centre** is a not-for-profit initiative based in Dubai headed by the Danube Group and licensed by the Community Development Authority (CDA). It offers programmes catering to the needs of migrant workers, which cover, for example, communication, language and interview skills.
- **Smartlife Foundation** is a not-for-profit organization/NGO based in Dubai that focuses on providing services and training for blue collar workers, centering on soft skills such as language (Arabic), literacy and computer literacy.
- **Injaz Al-Arab** partnered with **HSBC** and **ZoEasy** on *Saving for Good*, an initiative aimed at providing low-income workers in the UAE, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait and Egypt with financial literacy skills, including how to open a bank account, how to budget and save for the future.
- **Go Rise** is a fintech platform in the UAE that has partnered with a range of financial and insurance partners to provide migrant workers (the majority of whom are domestic workers) with access to key services, including no minimum salary bank accounts.

## SOCIAL NETWORKS

Although information and awareness campaigns in the Gulf are often conceived of as top-down and spearheaded for the most part by government ministries, our research for this report made it clear that migrant workers themselves tend to also seek out and share information through hyper-local social networks. Ethiopians in Saudi Arabia tend to seek out information and advice from other Ethiopians in Saudi Arabia. Kenyans in Qatar reach out to other Kenyans in Qatar. This is particularly the case for domestic workers. As one community leader in the Gulf told us, referring to the fact the migrant domestic workers do not browse government websites, **“Trust me, someone who’s working 18 hours in a house...waking up at 4am...or 6am...and sleeping around 1am the next day will never have the time to read what’s going on...”**

While this may not be surprising, it does have important implications for how we understand the broader information ecosystem, and how information and awareness efforts are conceived, if they are to successfully reach the intended target audience. Identifying the trusted individuals and institutions through which information flows is key to a healthy information ecosystem. This requires a more grounded understanding of how information is produced, disseminated and consumed.

It has long been noted that social networks are a migrant worker’s first port of call for information (Christ 2012, Malit and Naufal 2016, Atong, Mayah and Odigie 2018, Pourmehdi and Al Shahrani 2021). Relatives, friends, neighbours and colleagues are the most trusted sources of information for migrant workers, both in countries of origin and countries of destination. Throughout the Gulf, the growing numbers of EHoA migrants have resulted in strengthening communities and the proliferation of community organizations and groups. Examples include:

- **The Kenya Diaspora Welfare Association (KEDWA) in the UAE**  
KEDWA is a voluntary organization that serves the needs of Kenyans in the UAE. In addition to social and cultural activities, KEDWA provides counselling and supports Kenyans in need of assistance. During the COVID-19 pandemic, KEDWA ran a food bank to support Kenyans in the UAE who had lost their jobs and helped to repatriate over 5,000 migrant workers.
- **The Ugandan Community in Qatar (UGACOQ)**  
UGACOQ is a non-profit formal association comprised of persons living in Qatar, the core goal of which is to support the well-being of all Ugandans living in Qatar. UGACOQ circulates community announcements, celebrates national holidays and disseminates information, including updates on the labour law. The UGACOQ has a strong virtual presence, which includes active Facebook and Twitter feeds, and a dedicated YouTube channel that hosts live discussions on a range of topics, including:
  - Updates to Qatar’s labour law
  - Sponsorships and jobs
  - Passports and minimum wage
  - COVID-19
- **The Ethiopian Community Dubai & Northern Emirates**  
The Ethiopian Community Dubai & Northern Emirates is a non-profit organization that provides training, education, social activities and counselling for Ethiopians in the UAE, with a particular focus on newly arrived and low-income migrant workers. It also assists with consular services and supports vulnerable Ethiopians in the case of a medical emergency

or imprisonment, for example. They have a strong social media presence (over 50,000 on Facebook).

In addition to, and often overlapping with, these nationality-based community groups in the Gulf, are church communities.<sup>21</sup> Originating from Christian-majority countries such as Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, Burundi, Eritrea, South Sudan and Rwanda, EHoA migrant workers are quick to seek out churches upon arrival in the Gulf and frequently gather for church services, typically on Friday mornings. Beyond immediate spiritual needs, church gatherings serve a critical social function through which strong ties are forged, social networks are built, and advice and information are exchanged. Social settings like these are the lifeblood of the information ecosystem.

While social networks like those forged at church groups across the Gulf have become important features of the information ecosystem, however, several interviewees pointed out that the information that circulates in informal social circles is not always accurate. In one community leader's words, the advice of friends and social contacts **"may be well intended, but not very well informed"**. Another migrant worker echoed this sentiment: **"some friends will lead you, some friends will mislead you"**. Social networks then can be a source of information, but also a source of misinformation.

“

*Migrant workers should be aware that some Ethiopians seek to profit from their own compatriots by incorrectly urging them to flee. In reality, these individuals are involved in human trafficking for a variety of reasons. As a result, I warn them to be wary of Ethiopians. Furthermore, I tell them not to send money through persons who ask them for money as they travel back home, as these people may deceive them.*

*Ethiopian woman migrant domestic worker, reflecting on her experience in the Gulf*

”

Our research found that while social trust is key to identifying influencers in the information ecosystem, it is important not to equate social trust with social support. Although social networks – and friends and family in particular – were often cited as the most important source of information throughout the labour migration cycle, we were also told of a lot of instances where social trust was itself the catalyst for deception. In one case, we spoke to a Kenyan housekeeper in the Gulf, who had to pay for her own recruitment, was not given a contract before leaving, ended up earning less money and having to work longer hours than promised. The person who recruited her was her cousin. Unfortunately, this fits into a broader pattern and again speaks to the pervasive problem of misinformation.

<sup>21</sup> The Catholic, Anglican and other Christian denominations across the Gulf often work hand in hand to advocate on a range of issues, such as human trafficking. Regional Ecumenical Consultation convened by the Anglican Alliance & Mission to Seafarers, Safe Migration into the Gulf. January 2020. Available at <https://files.anglicanalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/04163640/Safe-Migration-into-the-Gulf-%E2%80%93-FINAL.pdf>.



While Facebook is often the platform of choice for EHoA migrant workers in the Gulf, other platforms such as TikTok have also become popular for the dissemination of key information and the formation of networks of solidarity among migrant workers. Following similar trends in Singapore, and among Asian migrant workers in Dubai, EHoA domestic migrant workers are turning to TikTok, a mobile app designed around short user-drive video content. While some use the app to share information and advice, others have amassed huge online followings by producing humorous videos on living and working conditions that have garnered hundreds of thousands of views. These videos are often quite polarizing with people both criticizing what are perceived to be human rights abuses, on one hand, and defending the treatment of domestic workers in the Gulf, on the other. Strict cyberlaws in the Gulf mean migrant workers producing content on social media run the risk of legal consequences.

While social media then has become an important dimension of the broader information ecosystem, and has served to better inform migrant workers on a range of issues, it also has a darker side. In 2021, unlicensed agents were found to have created what has been described as an Instagram 'black market' through which migrant domestic workers, many of whom had been trafficked, are advertised online. Without contracts, and often without a work visa, these migrant workers are particularly vulnerable and find themselves with little to no choice as to where they end up working, and under what conditions.

## CONCLUSION

Although PAO for EHoA migrant workers is not yet widespread in the Gulf States, in recent years Gulf governments and other stakeholders have invested much energy into targeted awareness campaigns that aim to educate migrant workers about their rights and responsibilities. These efforts have featured prominently in the information landscape and represent important steps towards enhancing the protection of the Gulf's expatriate workforce. These campaigns address a range of challenges around workers' rights and responsibilities, the labour migration process, living in the Gulf and support and assistance.

While traditional approaches to disseminating information tend to assume a top-down approach that centres on influencers like government ministries, our research has found that in fact EHoA migrant workers tend to turn to more grassroots sources such as community organizations and social networks to fulfill their information needs. While governments, embassies and official stakeholders certainly have an important role to play in disseminating information, more attention needs to be paid to the sometimes informal, but trusted, channels through which migrant workers themselves get their information. This is not to say that top-down approaches to information dissemination should be replaced by bottom-up approaches; rather, formal PAO programmes, and information and awareness campaigns more broadly, should be conceived in terms of a whole-of-society approach that leverages both the authority of government institutions and the social trust of community networks. Such multi-stakeholder partnerships are key to fostering a healthy information ecosystem.

The health of an information ecosystem is not simply a measure of how much information is circulating, but rather of how readily accessible accurate and actionable information is for those who need it most. Understanding the broader ecosystem requires understanding the range of actors, individuals, and channels through which information flows. In 2021, that means taking social media and digital access seriously, and leveraging innovative means of disseminating information to engage with target audiences.

PART THREE

# KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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## KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following key findings and recommendations build on those presented in the *Background Report on Post-Arrival Orientation in Abu Dhabi Dialogue Countries*, and speak in particular to the challenges that migrant workers from the EHoA face in the Gulf. They are also informed by, and complement, the recommendations presented in the *Background Report on Pre-Departure Informational Needs of Migrant Workers in the East and Horn of Africa-Gulf Corridor*.

### Key Finding: Critical data gaps exist in the EHoA-Gulf labour migration corridor

Due in part to the scale of irregular migration, but also a lack of migration data capacity, critical data gaps exist in the labour migration corridors between the EHoA and the Gulf States. Countries of both origin and destination are often forced to rely on estimates of numbers of EHoA nationals in Gulf countries. These data gaps could serve to undermine bilateral and multi-lateral efforts to strengthen labour migration policy, and therefore heighten the vulnerability of EHoA migrant workers in the Gulf.



**Recommendation:** Countries of both origin and destination should prioritize strengthening data collection in the labour migration corridors between the EHoA and the Gulf States. This should include building national capacity to collect, manage and disseminate official migration statistics and develop dedicated migration data strategies targeting labour migration corridors between the EHoA and the Gulf States. Better partnerships between countries of origin and countries of destination on data collection could lead to more effective evidence-based PAO programming. Keeping in mind the principle of ‘leaving no one behind’, migration data strategies in these corridors must include irregular migration.

### Key Finding: There is a lack of PAO programmes in the Gulf States

Although PAO is a regular feature of the labour migration cycle in other countries of destination, such as Malaysia or Singapore, for example, it is relatively uncommon in the Gulf States. While Gulf governments are exploring innovative modalities to provide PAO and information, and some PAO is available through diplomatic missions representing Asian migrant workers, EHoA migrant workers often lack this kind of support and therefore often lack access to key information.



**Recommendation:** Countries of destination in the Gulf should continue working on developing formal PAO programming in partnership with key stakeholders. To ensure standardization of information, governments should consider making PAO mandatory for all newly arrived migrant workers. Informed by global good practices and the principles of accessibility, relevance and impact, Gulf countries may wish to leverage existing resources and programming to tailor PAO to their national contexts. This should incorporate the key information needs of EHoA migrant workers, including but not limited to: **rights and responsibilities at work** (terms and conditions of employment, national labour laws and reforms, rights and responsibilities), **the labour migration process** (ethical recruitment, immigration policies and visa rules, and common forms of exploitation and abuse), **living in the Gulf** (living conditions, financial management, cultural norms and customs and language) and **support and assistance** (sources of support and assistance, social protection, grievance and redressal mechanisms, and education and training opportunities).

**Key Finding: Formal top-down information and awareness campaigns in the Gulf are yet to leverage social networks and informal information flows**

Whereas information and awareness campaigns in the Gulf are often conceived of as top-down and spearheaded by official stakeholders, such as government ministries, EHoA migrant workers typically tend to seek out and share information through informal social networks. Making information available is not the same thing as making it accessible, and a healthy information ecosystem depends on the free flow of information from multiple sources and through multiple channels.



**Recommendation:** Information and awareness campaigns should be informed by an information ecosystem approach that centres on information users and accounts for the range of actors, institutions, channels, policies and programmes through which information is produced, disseminated and consumed. Top-down information campaigns should be complemented by a multi-stakeholder strategy that empowers and enables partners such as EHoA embassies, community organizations, diaspora networks, religious institutions and leaders to leverage informal social networks to ensure information needs of EHoA communities are met, and materials are made available in migrant workers' native language, taking into consideration varying levels of literacy. Communication strategies should recognize the importance of social media in engaging target audiences and disseminating accessible and actionable information.

**Key Finding: EHoA consular and diplomatic missions in the Gulf often lack the adequate resources and technical capacity to address the information needs of their community**

Compared to Asian countries of origin such as India, Pakistan and the Philippines, which have a long tradition of labour migration to the Gulf, labour migration from the EHoA is a relatively recent phenomenon. Whereas Asian sending countries often have dedicated labour attachés, community welfare attaches (Pakistan), and social welfare attaches (Philippines), EHoA diplomatic missions often lack adequate resources and capacity to address the information needs of nationals. However, diplomatic missions are an important and trusted source of information for migrant workers and have a critical role to play in the provision of timely and accurate information.



**Recommendation:** EHoA countries of origin should consider mobilizing resources to assist diplomatic missions in the Gulf to be better positioned to support their nationals with welfare and information services. This could ensure the availability of timely and accurate information through the collaborative development and provision of post-arrival orientation sessions for newly arrived migrant workers. Where applicable, EHoA consular and diplomatic missions can support formal PAO sessions in the country of destination as well as provide tailored information to their communities. Embassies should play an active role in ensuring that all official materials are translated in the native language(s) of migrant workers, and that consular support and assistance is easily accessible.

### **Key Finding: A consensus has emerged around the critical importance of harmonizing labour migration between the EHoA and the Gulf States**

As the number of EHoA migrant workers continues to grow in the Gulf, a general consensus has emerged around the need for enhanced collaboration between countries of origin and countries of destination, in particular to ensure information needs are met over the course of the labour migration cycle. Platforms like the *Global Forum for Migration and Development* (GFMD) have emphasized the importance of coordination between countries of origin and countries of destination, and the need to collaborate on implementing dedicated orientation programmes for African nationals coming to the Gulf for employment.



**Recommendation:** Countries of destination and countries of origin should consider closely collaborating to ensure synergy and accuracy of information over the course of the labour migration cycle. Orientation programmes across all four stages of the labour migration cycle – PEO, PDO, PDO and PRO – should be designed and developed by key stakeholders in both countries of origin and countries of destination so as to ensure that information provision is harmonized and responsive to the needs of migrant workers.

### **Key Finding: There is limited monitoring and evaluation of the impact of information on labour migration outcomes**

In recent years, governments and CSOs have paid increasing attention to the provision of key information to migrant workers throughout the migration cycle. This is a positive development. However, little is known about the impact of information and awareness campaigns on the labour migration outcomes for migrant workers. Do migrant workers who are exposed to PAO fare better over the course of their stay in the Gulf? Do information and awareness campaigns mitigate the risks of exploitation faced by migrant workers? How effective are classroom sessions, brochures or booklets compared websites, mobile applications or social media, in terms of knowledge retention? A lack of rigorous monitoring and evaluation of dissemination efforts risks missing important opportunities to enhance the well-being of migrant workers.



**Recommendation:** Governments, CSOs and all stakeholders involved in the dissemination of key information should incorporate a rigorous monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning system to better understand the information needs of EHoA migrant workers and the impact of ongoing efforts to disseminate accurate and actionable information. Such a system should include a set of tools, including regular and targeted information needs surveys, pre- and post-PAO surveys and interviews with information users. Information and awareness campaigns should be monitored on a regular basis and enhanced based on insights gained from continuous evaluations.

### **Key Finding: Information and awareness initiatives in the Gulf tend to focus on obstacles at the expense of opportunities**

As this report has shown, information and awareness initiatives in the Gulf typically focus on a core set of themes that include rights and responsibilities, national labour laws and grievance mechanisms. These are crucially important and should be a central feature of any PAO session. However, migrant workers are not just victims or potential victims. They did not leave their families to undertake the often expensive and arduous journey to the Gulf just to survive. They came to the Gulf to thrive, and to provide for themselves and their families back home. They are as concerned with professional and personal development as those in white-collar professions and are keen to seek out opportunities for education, training and upskilling.



**Recommendation:** PAO programmes, and information and awareness efforts more broadly, should incorporate a focus on opportunities for migrant workers to develop themselves, both personally and professionally. This might involve highlighting opportunities for education, training and upskilling in PAO sessions and printed media, and also circulating widely through online platforms, including social media and in cooperation with the private sector. Employers should be incentivized to make such opportunities available to their workforce, and workers should have their skills, certificates and training recognized and rewarded. In addition to technical skills, the importance of soft skills should be recognized.

### **Key Finding: Employers are an important but often overlooked stakeholder in the information ecosystem**

Information and awareness campaigns in the Gulf typically target employees, while paying less attention to employers, overlooking the critical importance of ensuring that employers are well informed on the rights and obligations entailed in the employer-employee relationship. Employers, however, and employers of migrant domestic workers in particular, are key stakeholders in the information ecosystem, and can contribute meaningfully to improving labour migration outcomes.



**Recommendation:** Employers should ensure that all incoming employees are provided with a dedicated orientation or onboarding, have ongoing access to key information and updates on labour laws and grievance mechanisms, and are made aware of opportunities for personal and professional development, including upskilling, education and training. Dedicated information and orientation sessions should be designed and developed for employers, with tailored sessions organized for employers of migrant domestic workers. Furthermore, as key stakeholders in the information ecosystem, and standing to benefit from an upskilled workforce that underwent job-related skills development, employers should be engaged in the design and development of PAO.

**Key Finding: The provision of timely and accurate information is an essential component of ethical recruitment**

Labour migration outcomes are profoundly informed by the kinds of information (or misinformation) provided to or withheld from migrant workers early on in the labour cycle, in particular during the recruitment phase. A lack of awareness around the recruitment process itself enhances vulnerability and can define the trajectory of a migrant worker's experience, entailing long-lasting consequences for them and their family's well-being. As governments, civil society and the private sector in countries of both origin and destination forge partnerships around ethical recruitment, there is a unique opportunity to leverage multi-stakeholder commitments to ensure the timely provision of key information to empower migrant workers and ensure better labour migration outcomes.



**Recommendation:** Stakeholders should promote engagement around ethical recruitment as a key vehicle in disseminating information throughout the labour migration cycle. The principles of ethical recruitment should inform the design and development of orientation sessions and the provision of information should be informed by the principles of transparency, fairness and decent work. Private sector actors – including both employers and private recruitment agencies – should be incentivized to embrace the principles of ethical recruitment, and good practices should be recognized.

**Key Finding: Women migrant domestic workers from the EHoA experience acute information asymmetry due, in part, to a lack of strong social ties**

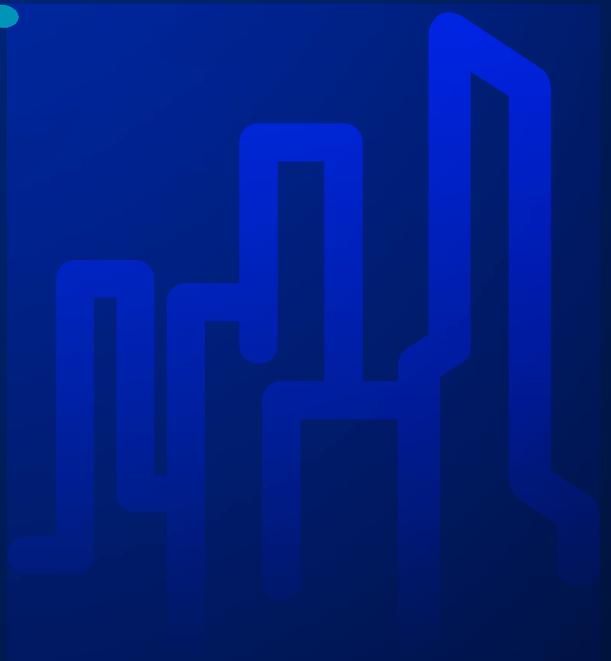
A range of intersecting variables - including gender, nationality and in many cases, irregular status - mean that women migrant domestic workers from the EHoA in the Gulf States can be highly vulnerable to some of the worst forms of precarity and exploitation, and in some cases, gender-based violence and sexual harassment. As their workplace is restricted to private households, women migrant domestic workers can become physically and socially isolated, creating significant challenges in accessing key information and building social ties with their communities.



**Recommendation:** Governments in countries of destination should consider investing in specific PAO programmes for migrant women domestic workers that are evidence-based and tailored to the particular challenges they could face, the particular skillset they need and the particular resources that they can avail of. Tailoring information to specific industries and occupations could provide a key junction to provide practical recommendations and guidance that participants may find useful in navigating their workplace and responsibilities. Countries of both origin and destination should prioritize women migrant domestic workers in their outreach, and should explore innovative ways of ensuring they have access to social support and key information, particularly around updates to respective domestic workers laws.

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ANNEX

# INFORMATION AND AWARENESS MATERIALS

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## Annex 1: Extract from Ministry of Human Resources & Emiratisation (MOHRE) booklet for migrant workers (United Arab Emirates)

# 10 IMPORTANT THINGS FOR YOU TO KNOW



Your employer must pay for your recruitment costs and travel to the UAE



Your employer must pay for your Residency Permit



Keep the receipts for anything you are asked to pay for



Keep a copy of your signed job offer



Your contract must match your job offer



Keep a copy of your signed contract in a safe place

03



You're entitled to keep your personal identification documents with you at all times



No work upon arrival? You are not receiving your wages on time and in full? Report to the Labour Office



You have the right to leave your job at any time but be aware of your contractual obligations



If you need help, you always have a friend in the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation.  
**We're here to support you!**

04



Source: Ministry of Human Resources & Emiratisation (MOHRE) booklet for migrant workers (United Arab Emirates).

## Annex 2: Extract from *Workers' Rights Booklet (Qatar)*

### **Q8- How do you prove your work for the employer if there is no contract between you and him?**

If you do not have a written contract of employment, you may prove the employment relationship, and your rights, by all means of proof, such as:

- Transfer of salary to the bank
- Signature of receipt of the wage.
- Request for the testimony of co-workers, and other methods of proof permitted by law.

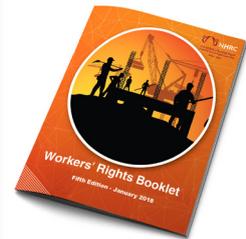
### **Q9- What should the basic employment contract include?**

The contract of employment shall be in writing and certified by the Department and shall be issued in three copies; a copy shall be delivered to each party and the third to be deposited with the Department.

The contract of employment shall specify the provisions concerning the work relationship between the two parties, and shall include in particular the following data:

- Employer's name and place of work.
- The worker's name, qualifications, nationality, profession,

7



Source: *Workers' Rights Booklet (Qatar)*.

## Annex 2: Extract from *Workers' Rights Booklet (Qatar)*

place of residence, and what is necessary to prove his identity.

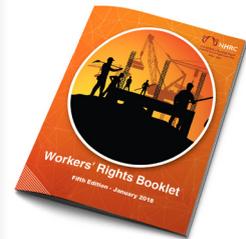
- The date of conclusion of the contract.
- Nature and type of work and the place of contracting.
- Date of commencement of work.
- The duration of the contract if it is a fixed period.
- The agreed wage and the method and date of payment.

**Important Note:** When signing a new contract (for the second or third time), the contract must provide the date on which the first contract had commenced.

**Q10- When a dispute between you and your employer arises regarding the determination of your dues, is it calculated as per the date of the contract or on date of commencement of the actual work?**

The date of commencement of the actual work shall be valid; not the date of the contract, noting that the contract of employment shall not provide otherwise.

**Example:** If the date of the beginning of your contract is



### Annex 3: Extract from the Labour Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA) Guide (Bahrain)



#### Transfer to another employer

A worker has the right to transfer to another employer, as per the provisions of the LMRA resolution no 79 for 2009 regulating the transfer process as follows:

##### 1. Transfer without consent of employer:

- Complete one full year with the current employer before starting transfer process.
- Notify the current employer of your intent to transfer via a registered letter and retain the notification of receipt of the same from the post office, within the time fixed in the employment contract and not exceeding 3 months notice period.
- Then follow up with the new intended employer for application submission and LMRA requirements for transfer.

##### 2. Transfer with consent:

- In coordination with first employer the 2nd employer applies for the worker at LMRA meeting all the requirements.
- In the LMRA system the first employer allows transfer for the worker and the transfer is done after the second employer pays the necessary fees.

##### 3. Transfer in case of expired work permit or other reasons

- Inform the LMRA of your intention within 30 days before expiry of your work permit or within 5 days of your knowledge of cancellation of your work permit, by coming personally to the LMRA.
- You are given **30 days** period to transfer and within this period you are not allowed to take up any form of employment .

#### Contact us:

In order to communicate with LMRA , you may provide your mobile number and email via the expat portal

<http://expat.lmra.bh> or by visiting our client services at LMRA or via the call center on 17506055 or visit your embassy.

To view the LMRA services you may visit the LMRA guide <http://lmra.bh/portal/en/page/show/214>.

For more information call 17506055 or visit us on [www.lmra.bh](http://www.lmra.bh).

**We hope you have a pleasant stay in Kingdom of Bahrain**

Source: Expatriate Employees' Guide.

## Annex 4: Extract from the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development's Labour Education website (Saudi Arabia)

The screenshot displays the 'Labor Education' section of the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development's website. The page features a dark blue header with navigation links and a search bar. Below the header, there are tabs for 'All', 'Employers', and 'Laborers'. A search bar is also present with the placeholder text 'You can search here ...'. The main content area is a grid of 15 article cards, each with a title, a 'Details' button, and a 'Last Update' date.

Article Title	Last Update
Entering into a Work Contract	28 December 2020
Domestic Labor	28 December 2020
Daily and weekly rest	28 December 2020
Medical Care	28 December 2020
CONTRACT RENEWAL	19 August 2020
END OF SERVICE AWARD	28 December 2020
Obligations of Domestic Workers	28 December 2020
Duration of Maternity Leave	28 December 2020
Medical care for pregnancy and childbirth and the rest period after...	28 December 2020
Care Center for worker s children	28 December 2020
Husband s Death Leave EDDAH	28 December 2020
WORK LICENSING CERTIFICATION	28 December 2020
Employment Contract and Term	07 January 2021
INCURRING FEES AND RE ENTRY VISA TICKET COST	28 December 2020
Costs of preparing the body of the deceased	28 December 2020

Source: Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development's Labour Education website (Saudi Arabia).

## Annex 4: Extract from *Labor education of major rights and duties in the Saudi Labor law* (Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development)



### EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT

#### For the worker and employer

##### Employment contract?

An employment contract is a contract concluded between an employer and a worker, whereby the latter undertakes to work under the management or supervision of the employer in consideration of a salary.



The employment contract must be executed in duplicate, one copy per each party.



The employment contract must be of a fixed term (for a non-Saudi), and if it is not specified then the work permit is the term of the contract.



A contract is valid even if it is not written. In this case, the worker alone may prove the contract and the rights resulting from it by all means of proof. Each party may request writing of the contract at any time. As for workers of the government and public institutions, the appointment decision issued by the competent authority will be considered "in loco" contract.

### THE EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT CONTAINS

The employment contract must be in accordance with the standard form of the employment contract formulated by the Ministry, and the parties may add other provisions in a manner that does not contradict with the provisions of the Labor Law, its regulations and issued executive decisions.



**01**  
Name and place of the employer



**03**  
The document necessary to prove the worker identity



**02**  
residence address



**04**  
Name and nationality of the worker



**05**  
Name and nationality of the worker



**07**  
Agreed wage, benefits and allowances



**06**  
Type and place of work



**08**  
Date of Joining

Source: Labor education of major rights and duties in the Saudi Labor law.

## Annex 4: Extract from *Rights and duties of domestic workers* (Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development, Saudi Arabia)

### Domestic service worker's duties

-  The domestic service worker shall perform the work agreed upon, with good care.
-  The domestic service worker shall follow the orders and instructions of the employer and their family members for the implementation of the work agreed upon.
-  The domestic service worker shall protect the property of the employer and their family members.
-  The domestic service worker shall not do harm to the family members, including children and the elderly.
-  The domestic service worker shall maintain the secrets of the employer, the family members and the people who are at home, which such a domestic service worker gets acquainted with during or because of work, and not divulge and give away such secrets to others.
-  The domestic service worker shall not refuse to work or leave the service without a valid reason.
-  The domestic service worker shall not work for his own interest and benefit.
-  The domestic service worker shall not violate the dignity of the employer and the family members, and shall not interfere in their affairs.
-  The domestic service worker shall respect Islam, abide by the laws in force in the Kingdom, the customs and traditions of the Saudi society, and shall not engage in any activity that harms the family.

#### Article (6) of Regulations of Domestic Service Workers



Source: Rights and duties of domestic workers (Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development, Saudi Arabia)

## Annex 5: Extract from *Your Rights at Work: A Guide for Migrant Workers in Kuwait*

### Your Rights at Work

Labor rights are fundamental human rights, and no matter where a worker travels in the world, their rights travel with them. Global standards around labor rights are elaborated in many international agreements, including the 1998 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work of the International Labor Organization, of which Kuwait is a member state. The purpose of this booklet is to highlight those worker rights that are covered by national law in the State of Kuwait, and to aid both workers and employers in their application.

### Chapter 1 : Basic Labor Rights

The Private Sector Labor Law of Kuwait (Law No. 6 of 2010) covers the labor rights of all private sector workers regardless of citizenship or nationality. In Kuwait, migrant workers are protected by either the Private Sector Law, Oil Sector Law, Civil Service Law (government sector workers), or Domestic Worker Law. Rights of domestic workers are covered under (Law No. 85 of 2015)<sup>1</sup>. This booklet focuses on the Private Sector Law which applies to the majority of migrant workers in Kuwait.

### Working Hours and Breaks

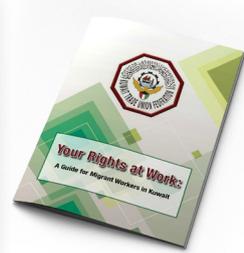
Working hours are limited to eight hours a day or 48 hours a week. During the month of Ramadan, working hours shall equal 36 hours per week for all workers.

Workers are entitled to a one hour break after every five consecutive working hours. This hour is not included as a working hour.

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1 - Summary by Kuwait Society for Human Rights:  
[http://kuwaithr.org/files/dwl/the\\_domestic\\_worker\\_law\\_en.pdf](http://kuwaithr.org/files/dwl/the_domestic_worker_law_en.pdf)

2



Source: *Your Rights at Work: A Guide for Migrant Workers in Kuwait*.

## Annex 5: Extract from *Your Rights at Work: A Guide for Migrant Workers in Kuwait*

### Employment Contract

Workers are entitled to copies of their written contract in Arabic language that includes the following information:

- The date of signature and the date it entered into force;
- Contact details/personal data of worker and employer;
- Wages and job description;
- The term of the contract if it is for a specific period (if not specified, the term shall not be less than one year or more than five years).
- The period of the annual leave;
- The daily working hours;
- The probation period of the worker, which is not to exceed 100 days (during the probation period, either party may terminate the contract without notice);
- Insurance against work injuries;
- End of service benefit;
- The applicable labor law and the competent court to resolve any dispute;
- The signature of both parties

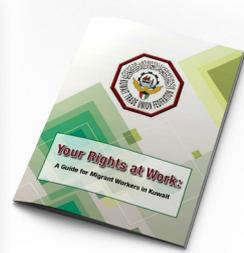
The contract shall be made in three copies; one for the employer, one for the worker, and the third shall be lodged with the Public Authority for Manpower. Some embassies take the responsibility to attest the contracts of their citizens.

Contracts may be prepared in additional languages but it is not required and the Arabic language document is the valid document in the case of any dispute.

### Wages and Payment

Kuwait has a national policy for minimum wage that applies to every worker of any nationality. As of 2017, the monthly minimum wage in the private sector is 60KD. In addition, some embassies have established wage scales for specific job classifications, which they may make publicly available.

3



Source: *Your Rights at Work: A Guide for Migrant Workers in Kuwait*.

## Annex 6: Extract from the *Domestic Workers' Legal Guide* (Kuwait)



Financial Matters	Clause	The Right	Article
	<p><b>Salary and Deduction</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Overtime</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The paid salary should be identical to that specified in the contract</li> <li>The salary is paid at the end of every month</li> <li>The salary is calculated from the actual work start date</li> <li>Salary deduction is not permitted</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The worker is entitled to receive overtime payments that are no less than double the rate for the same period of his/her work, if assigned additional work outside normal working days or hours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Article 7 Domestic Workers Law</li> <li>Article 8 Domestic Workers Law</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Article 28 Domestic Workers Law</li> </ul>

4

Sanction	Report to	Evidence	Financial Matters
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The worker is entitled to compensation in the sum of 10 K.D. for every month the payment of their salary is delayed</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compensating the worker for his/her overtime</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Domestic Employment Department</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Domestic Employment Department</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not having salary receipts or transfers</li> <li>Incompatibility of salary receipts or salary transfer receipts with the actual working period</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reporting Incident</li> <li>Witnesses</li> </ul>	

5

Source: Source: Domestic Workers' Legal Guide (Kuwait).

## Annex 7: Extract from *Your Guide to Employing a Migrant Domestic Worker in Saudi Arabia*

### Section 1 | Before You Decide to Employ

#### *How does one know what's legal and what's not?*

In Saudi Arabia the relationship between the employer/sponsor and domestic worker is regulated by Decision No. 310 of 1434 on Domestic Workers. Working hours, payment of wages, repatriation and other rights and responsibilities of the parties are stipulated in this Decision.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

##### *According to the law in Saudi Arabia:*

- » The employer cannot assign the worker work other than the work agreed upon.
- » If the employer is forced by necessity to assign work other than what was agreed upon, then the work assigned cannot differ substantially from the original work.
- » The employer cannot assign work that can risk the worker's health and safety.
- » The employer cannot lease the worker nor allow the worker to be self-employed ([www.musaned.com.sa/en](http://www.musaned.com.sa/en)).

#### *How is a migrant domestic worker recruited? Who is eligible to recruit a domestic worker?*

The legal way to recruit domestic workers is through Musaned, a service launched by the Ministry of Labor and Social Development. This service is accessible through the Musaned website. The website has easy-to-follow pages that let an employer apply to recruit a domestic worker electronically. **Not everyone is eligible to employ a domestic worker. Non-married males for example do not qualify. The eligibility criteria is listed in the Musaned website.**

#### DID YOU KNOW?

The contracting process between the employer and the recruiting offices can be managed through the E-Tawasut System hosted by [www.musaned.com](http://www.musaned.com).



Source: *Your Guide to Employing a Migrant Domestic Worker in Saudi Arabia*.

## Annex 7: Extract from *Your Guide to Employing a Migrant Domestic Worker in Saudi Arabia*

Section 2 | Conditions of Work

### IS IT NECESSARY TO HAVE A CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT? WHAT MUST THE CONTRACT INCLUDE?

Yes, a contract of employment is mandatory. The law in Saudi Arabia requires that *“The work relationship between the domestic labor and the employer shall be regulated by a written contract.”*

According to the law, the “core elements” of this contract include, but are not limited to, the type of work the migrant domestic worker is contracted to perform, the wages, the rights and duties of the parties, duration of the probation period, and the duration and termination of the contract. This standard contract is available on the Musaned website.

While this standard contract of employment applies to most sending countries (i.e. countries workers come from), some countries such as India and Niger have introduced a specific contract of employment through bilateral agreements with the government of Saudi Arabia. **See Appendix A for contract for Indian workers.**

**For other contracts visit <https://www.musaned.com.sa/electronic-forms-en.html>**

#### Informing the migrant domestic worker of the terms and conditions of employment in an easily understandable manner before her departure:

- » Help give her a clear understanding of the work she is expected to do.
- » Remove many miscommunications that may otherwise arise between you and her.



Source: Your Guide to Employing a Migrant Domestic Worker in Saudi Arabia.

