



Gulf Research Center
Knowledge for All



Gulf Labour Markets, Migration, and Population (GLMM) Programme

Activities Report
January 2023 - July 2024



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GLMM Mission

The Gulf Labour Markets and Migration Programme is an international independent, non-partisan, non-profit programme established in 2010. It is hosted and supported by the Gulf Research Center. The programme provides data, analyses, and recommendations contributing to the improvement of understanding and management of Gulf labour migration, population, and labor markets, engaging with and respecting the viewpoints of all stakeholders.

Period January 2023 - June 2024 in a Nutshell

The period January 2023 - June 2024 has been the first period since the relaunch of the program after its restart in September 2022. Thanks to fundamental financial and organizational support from GRC and building upon over a decade of experience, GLMM has introduced new activities, hugely increased its output, and expanded its networks and strategic cooperation with key partners.

Accomplishments in 2023-2024

Launched research projects focussing on Saudi Arabia alone and another one focussing on Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Qatar as well as Asian and Arab countries of origin of GCC migrants with an initial focus on Highly Skilled Migration

Completed a project in cooperation with and funded by the ILO Regional Office for Arab States (ROAS, Beirut) assessing the labour migration statistics for the 6 GCC and 6 other Arab Mashreq countries, publishing 1 regional report and 12 country reports

Reinforced strategic cooperation with existing partners and established cooperation with new partners in the GCC, countries of origin of migrants, and elsewhere

Reinforced its networks of GCC data producers, GCC data users, and GCC and global researchers

Set up a prestigious international advisory board of eleven members

Welcomed 3 non-resident fellows and 3 non-resident interns

Organized very high quality and well attended workshops at the 13th Gulf Research Meeting (GRM, July 2023) and the 14th GRM (July 2024) each with 18 original papers

Launched very well attended webinars (4 so far)

Launched a new publication: Factsheets (11 published)

Relaunched its Policy Briefs (9 published)

Continued to publish Explanatory Notes and Research Papers (5 published)

Continued to gather, analyze, and republish GCC official documents and data in GLMM's databases

Participated in advisory boards, workshops, and seminars of other organizations

Updated and improved the GLMM website

GLMM Leadership



Scientific Director
Nasra M. Shah



Senior Fellow
Francoise De Bel-Air



Managing Director
Imco Brouwer

People

Advisory Board

The newly established GLMM Advisory Board is composed of eleven GCC and international experts and held its first three meetings on 10 January and 8 June 2023 and 10 June 2024.

Access the webpage of the advisory board [here](#).

Members

- Dr. Mouawiya Al Awad, Professor at Zayed University/Director of the Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER), Dubai
- Prof. Lubna Al Kazi, Professor at the Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Kuwait University, Kuwait City
- Dr. Fahad Al Sharif, Senior Researcher at the King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies (KFCRIS), Riyadh
- Dr. Marla Asis, Director of the Scalabrini Migration Center (SMC) / Former Editor of the Asian Pacific Migration Journal (APMJ), Manila
- Prof. Ibrahim Awad, Director of the Center for Migration and Refugee Studies (CMRS), Cairo
- Mr. Khalil Bohazza, Director of the Labour Affairs GCC Executive Bureau, Manama
- Dr. Ryszard Cholewinski, Senior Migration Specialist at the International Labour Organisation (ILO), Regional Office for Arab States (ROAS), Beirut
- Dr. Jean-Christophe Dumont, Head of the International Migration Division in the Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs, Organisation for Economic Development (OECD), Paris
- Prof. Ray Jureidini, Former Professor at the Hamid Bin Khalifa University (HBKU), Doha
- Dr. Nader Kabbani, Director of Research at the Middle East Council for Global Affairs (MECGA), Doha
- Prof. Gerasimos Tsourapas, Professor of International Relations, University of Glasgow

Senior Research Associate



- Froilan T. Malit, Jr. PhD Politics and International Relations candidate at the University of London-SOAS; Visiting fellow at the American University in Dubai (AUD)

Non-Resident Fellows and Non-Resident Interns

In 2023, for the first time, GLMM welcomed non-resident fellows and non-resident interns: Access the webpage for details [here](#).



Fellows

Dr. Magdalena Karolak, Associate Professor of Humanities and Social Sciences at Zayed University, Dubai, February 2023-present



Dr. Georges Naufal, Associate Research Scientist at the Public Policy Research Institute (PPRI) at Texas A&M University, a visiting Scientist at the Center for Health Data Science and Analytics at Houston Methodist Research Institute, formerly American University of Sharjah, March 2023-present

Dr. Anis Ben Brik, Associate Professor and Founding Director of the Program for Social Policy and Evaluation Research (PROSPER) at the College of Public Policy at Hamad Bin Khalifa University in Qatar, Doha, March-December 2023

Interns

- Mr. Mohammed Javaid, graduate student at the Geneva Graduate Institute, October 2022-July 2023
- Mr. Sharique Umar, graduate student, Gulf Studies Center, Qatar University, April 2023-present
- Mr. Aashish Karn, graduate student at Lancaster University, October 2023-present

Publications

In 2023-2024, GLMM launched a new publication, Factsheets, relaunched its Policy Briefs, and continued to publish Explanatory Notes and Research Reports.

Factsheets

GLMM Factsheet
No. 11, June 2024

Sub-Saharan African Migrants in the Gulf States
Françoise De Bel-Air, Senior Fellow, GLMM

Little is known about migrants from Sub-Saharan African countries in the GCC. Far behind the large numbers of migrants from Asian countries, the 715,000 nationals from Sub-Saharan African countries made up 5.3 percent of foreign populations recorded in the Saudi census of 2022, for instance. In Kuwait, they only constituted 1.2 percent of all residency permit holders in 2023. Nonetheless, the scarce data available on these migrants depict a population of relatively diverse socio-demographic and employment profiles.

Figure 1. Saudi Arabia: Sub-Saharan African populations by country of citizenship and sex (2022)

Country	Males (thousands)	Females (thousands)
Ethiopia	~140	~100
Uganda	~100	~100
Kenya	~80	~100
Nigeria	~60	~60
Other	~40	~40

Qatar and the UAE offer no population data disaggregated by nationality of migrants. While Oman recorded many workers from Tanzania and Uganda in 2022 (11,500 and 11,000 respectively), nationals from Ethiopia dominate numerically in Saudi Arabia (Figure 1), Kuwait, and Bahrain, followed by Kenyans, Ugandans, and Nigerians. However, Figure 1 indicates the diversification of African residents, which now migrate from French-speaking nations (among which are Mali, Niger, Burundi, and Burkina-Faso).

Unlike other nationality groups from Arab and Asian countries, Sub-Saharan African migrants in the GCC are mostly women. Yet, the gender imbalance differs by nationality. Women make up the bulk of nationals from Uganda and Ethiopia, for instance (38 Ethiopian men for 100 women in Saudi Arabia, and only 10 in Kuwait), but Figure 1 points out that other nationalities show a more balanced gender structure (e.g., Nigeria, Somalia). Differentials also exist by country of destination: Kenyan nationals are mostly women in Saudi Arabia (13 men per 100 women), while the gender gap is less acute in Kuwait and in Bahrain (58 Kenyan men for 100 women).

In comparison to other nationalities (Figure 2), African workers are often employed in the domestic sector, by far the largest employment sector of female migrants in the Gulf region. There again, slight differences exist by nationality. In Bahrain, almost all female Ethiopian workers were in domestic services (94 percent), but one third of female workers from Kenya were employed in the governmental and private sectors in 2022. The vast majority of Sub-Saharan African men work in the private sector throughout the region.

However, the existing data does not allow comparisons by origin and destination countries, nor a better analysis of the socio-demographic, employment, residency, or other characteristics of these migrants. Though present in the Gulf states in increasing numbers, African migrants remain too little known, and more publicly available data disaggregated by citizenship is needed.

Figure 2. Kuwait: Sub-Saharan African workers vs. total migrant workers. A comparison of their distribution by sector of employment (Q4 2022)

Category	Government (%)	Private (%)	Domestic (%)
SSA female workers	~10	~10	~80
Total foreign workers	~20	~40	~40
Private Government workers	~10	~10	~80

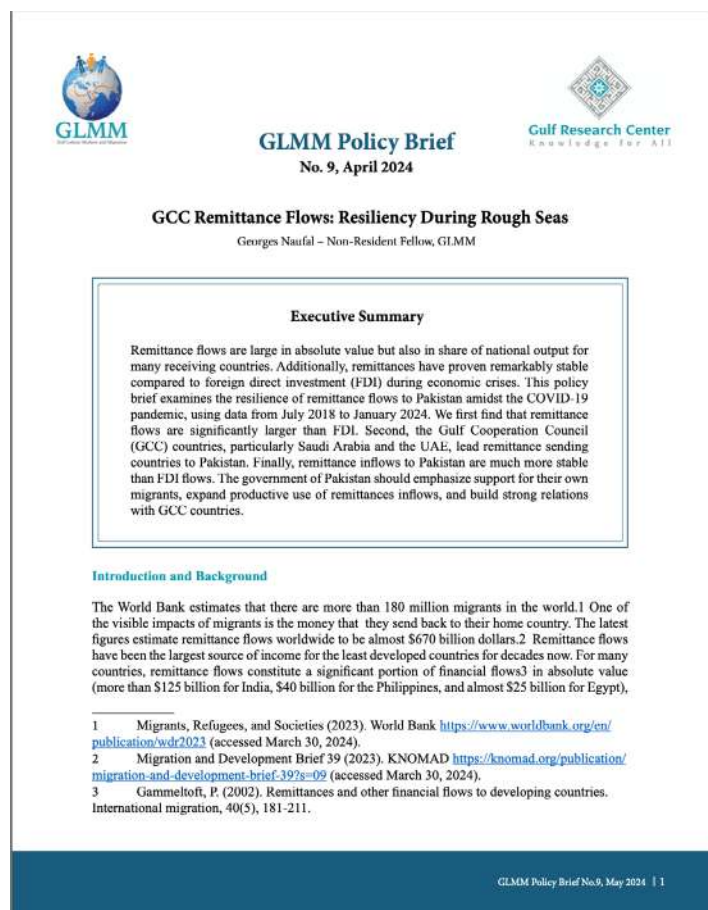
For more details on the data and analysis of this factsheet, visit the GLMM website: <https://glmm.org>.
Gulf Labour Markets, Migration, and Population (GLMM) Programme is an international independent, non-profit, non-partisan, non-ideological research and policy programme funded and supported by the Gulf Research Center (GRC) - Jeddah, Geneva, Cambridge. Visit <https://gulfresearchcenter.org> for publications, data, and legal documents.
The responsibility for the contents of this publication lies exclusively with the author.

- GLMM Factsheet No. 1/2022: [“Explaining the “Demographic Imbalance” in the Gulf States” by Françoise De Bel-Air](#)
- GLMM Factsheet No. 2/2023: [“Saudi Arabia: Changes in Labour Force Structure?” by Françoise De Bel-Air](#)
- GLMM Factsheet No. 3/2023: [“Five Decades of Semi- and Unskilled Labour Migration from Pakistan” by Nasra M. Shah](#)
- GLMM Factsheet No. 4/2023: [“Qataris Make Up Only a Quarter of All Births” by Françoise De Bel-Air](#)
- GLMM Factsheet No. 5/2023: [“Domestic Workers in the GCC: a Diverse Population” by Françoise De Bel-Air](#)
- GLMM Factsheet No. 6/2023: [“GCC: Are Oil Prices No Longer a Driver of Population Growth?” by Françoise De Bel-Air](#)
- GLMM Factsheet No. 7/2023: [“Arab Nationals in Saudi Arabia” by Françoise De Bel-Air](#)

- GLMM Factsheet No. 8/2023: [“International Mobility of Tertiary-Level Students in Qatar” by Sharique Umar, Gulf Studies Center, Qatar University](#)
- GLMM Factsheet No. 9/2024: [Second and Third Generation Foreign Residents Born in Kuwait” by Françoise De Bel-Air](#)
- GLMM Factsheet No. 10/2024: [“Ageing in the Gulf States” by Françoise De Bel-Air](#)
- “GLMM Factsheet No. 11/ 2024: [Sub-Saharan African Migrants in the Gulf States by Françoise De Bel-Air](#)

For all Factsheets, access the web-page [here](#).

Policy Briefs

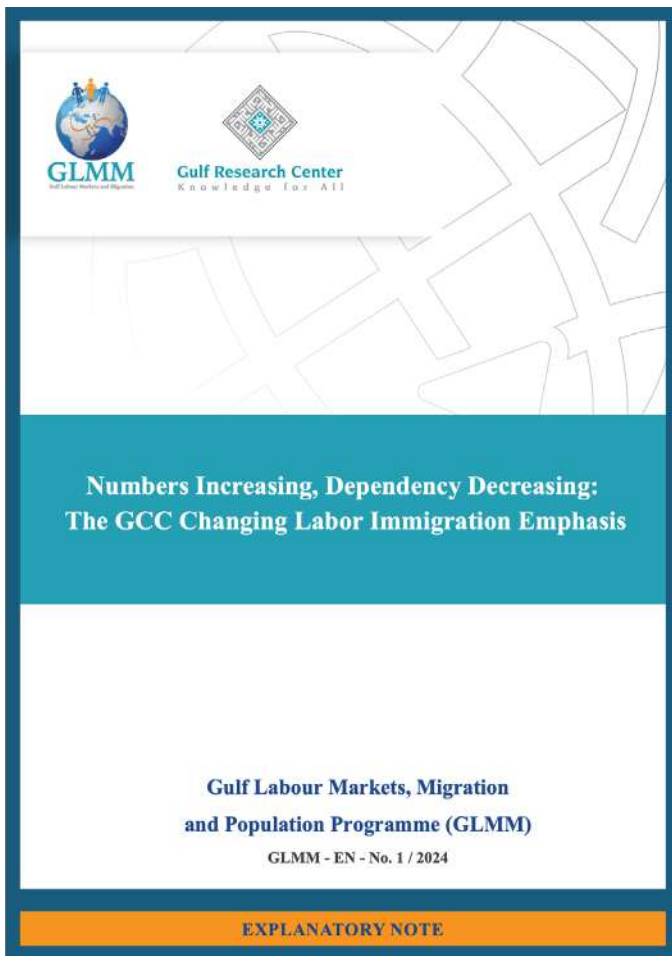


- GLMM Policy Brief No. 1/2023: [“Migratory flows of Russian speaking populations to the UAE: A permanent or a temporary trend?”](#) by [Magdalena Karolak](#), GLMM Non-Resident Fellow
- GLMM Policy Brief No. 2/2023: [“Migration and Climate Change: The Case of the GCC Countries”](#) by [Georges Naufal](#), GLMM Non-Resident Fellow
- GLMM Policy Brief No. 3/2023: [“Major Innovations from the Saudi Census 2022”](#) by [Françoise De Bel-Air](#) GLMM Senior Fellow.
- GLMM Policy Brief No. 4/2023: [“Indians in the Gulf: The Migration Question and the Way Forward”](#) by [S Irudaya Rajan](#), Chair, The International Institute of Migration and Development (IIMAD), Kerala, India and [Divya Balan](#), Assistant Professor, FLAME University, Pune and Senior Research Fellow, IIMAD
- GLMM Policy Brief No. 5/2023: [“The UAE as a Center of Innovation: Towards Attracting Global Talent”](#) by [Magdalena Karolak](#), GLMM Non-resident Fellow

- GLMM Policy Brief No. 6/2023: [“The Power of Micro-Level Data: Improving Precision in GCC Policy Design”](#) by [Georges Naufal](#), GLMM Non-resident Fellow
- GLMM Policy Brief No. 7: [“Interregional Consultative Migration Dialogues and the Abu Dhabi Dialogue in the GCC-Asia Migration Corridor”](#) by [Froilan Malit](#)
- GLMM Policy Brief No. 8: [“Long-Term Residence: GCC Countries Making a Shift Toward Inclusive Social Policies”](#) by [Magdalena Karolak](#)
- GLMM Policy Brief No. 9: [“GCC Remittance Flows: Resiliency During Rough Seas”](#) by [Georges Naufal](#)

For all Policy Briefs, access the web-page [here](#).

Explanatory Notes



- GLMM Explanatory Note No. 1/2024: [“Numbers Increasing, Dependency Decreasing: The GCC Changing Labor Immigration Emphasis Following the Arab Spring.”](#) by Onn Winckler, Professor in the Department of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies at the University of Haifa
- GLMM Explanatory Note No. 1/2023: [“Aspirations and Strategies to Remain in Saudi Arabia: The Case of Middle- Class South Asians.”](#) by Areej Jamal, Doctoral researcher at the University College London, Social Research Institute
- GLMM Explanatory Note No. 2/2024: [“Reforms without Rights: The GCC States’ Blinkered View of Labour Reforms,”](#) by Rima Kalush and Vani Saraswathi, [Migrant-Rights.Org](#)
- GLMM Explanatory Note No. 3/2024: [“What is the Nature of the Employment Challenge in the GCC Countries?”](#) by Wasseem Mina, Department of Economics and Finance, College of Business and Economics, United Arab Emirates University, Al Ain

For all Explanatory Notes, access the web-page [here](#).

Research Papers

- GLMM Research Paper No. 1/2023: [“Measuring the Impact of Covid-19 on Migrant Workers in the GCC and Jordan”](#) by Françoise De Bel-Air

For all Research Papers, access the web-page [here](#).

Click [here](#) for all GLMM publications.

Gulf Research Center Annual Strategic Survey 2024

- GLMM’s Contribution: “ Françoise De-Bel Air, Magdalena Karolak, Froilan Malit, and Sharique Umar, [“Key Developments and Challenges for GCC Labor Markets, Migration, and Populations”](#), pp. 42-46



Data (statistics and documents)

Saudi Arabia: Estimated number of Saudi births by mother's five-year age group (2011-2022)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
15-19	22,337	22,681	22,808	21,431	19,690	19,006	17,947	16,317	13,863	12,203	10,411	7,997
20-24	95,129	94,859	95,798	97,589	94,869	92,822	92,419	80,371	77,157	60,671	63,963	56,042
25-29	128,561	128,426	130,422	134,246	134,088	135,731	136,116	134,680	128,804	124,613	118,559	116,083
30-34	101,280	103,095	105,208	110,369	112,823	116,133	119,828	121,506	118,028	116,075	112,178	115,189
35-39	58,807	59,827	60,333	63,957	66,792	70,205	74,669	79,555	79,411	80,805	79,255	85,096
40-44	19,886	20,555	20,411	20,983	21,250	21,398	22,859	24,807	24,873	25,944	26,447	33,882
45-49	1,761	1,725	1,634	1,753	1,703	1,744	1,832	1,851	1,880	1,882	1,774	3,146
Total	425,961	430,568	435,706	450,239	451,206	457,531	465,670	464,287	444,016	430,393	411,687	417,155

Source: General Authority for Statistics (GASStat)

ANNEXED NOTE

1. Technical Notes and Definitions

The median age shows the age of the individual in a population with 50% of the population being younger and 50% being older than the individual.

The median age for 2022 is calculated on the basis of census 2022' results. Estimates for the years 2010-2021 are calculated using a backcasting methodology (see below).

Saudi census 2022:

Date of reference: 10 May 2022

Population of reference: Families and individual citizens and residents within the Kingdom, regardless of the status of their identification documents. Visitors for Hajj, Umrah and tourism are excluded from the census.

Methodology:

The first phase of the 2020 census began on 3 February 2020 (enumeration of buildings and households). Census 2022 used geospatial data, including satellite images, electricity consumption and mobile phone data, to improve the accuracy and geographic coverage of address canvassing.

The second stage ("actual enumeration") was due to start on the original reference date (17 March 2020), but was suspended by the outbreak of the COVID-19 crisis. This stage was conducted in October 2021.

Since more than a decade GLMM gathers, analyzes, and republishes official data (statistics) related to labour and migration from multiple sources of all 6 GCC states. The continuously updated database contains more than 1,000 tables.

Country tables

- [Bahrain](#)
- [Kuwait](#)
- [Oman](#)
- [Qatar](#)
- [Saudi Arabia](#)
- [United Arab Emirates](#)

GCC regional tables

GLMM also constructs unique GCC regional tables based exclusively on the official country data:

- [Gulf Cooperation Council](#)

Since more than a decade GLMM gathers, analyzes, and republishes also official legal documents related to labour and migration from multiple sources of all 6 GCC states. The [legal database](#) contains several hundreds of documents.

Webinars

In 2023-2024, GLMM organised four webinars.

The first webinar, held on 14 June 2023, was entitled: “GCC Data for Evidence-Based Policymaking.”



Abstract: The webinar focused on the extent to which available data and statistics on labour and labour migration in GCC states allow policymakers, as well as the general public, to monitor and understand the rapid changes affecting GCC states’ labour markets since 2010. The webinar also reviewed recent innovations and improvements in the collection, processing, and dissemination of statistical data on labour, migration, and labour migration in the six GCC states. The webinar also assessed progress made in the use of statistical data for socio-economic and demographic policy making in the region. Finally, the webinar highlighted challenges met by GCC National Statistical Organisations and other statistics producers in the region and reflected on possible ways to overcome these challenges.

Questions:

1. How has the labour market evolved since 2010 in Gulf states?
2. What are the new skills on demand, currently and in the future, especially keeping in mind the objectives of the various Vision 2030/2035 plans?
3. What does this mean in terms of demand for migrant workers, now and in the future?

Speakers:

- Mr. Yusif Al Riyami, Director General for National Statistics, National Centre for Statistics and Information, Muscat
- Dr. Ismail Lubbad, Senior Statistician, Statistics Division, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, Beirut
- Dr. Nader Kabbani, Senior Fellow and Director of Research, Middle East Council on Global Affairs, Doha
- Dr. Georges Naufal, Associate Research Scientist, Public Policy Research Institute, Texas A&M University, Austin

The second webinar, held on 27 November 2023, was titled: “The Future of Labour Demand in the Gulf States: What Skills?”



Abstract: In view of the economic reforms enacted recently in the Gulf states, what is the future of skills demand there, and how will it affect the trends and patterns of labour and labour migration to the region? The webinar will review the changes and innovations in the Gulf States’ economies over the last decade and assess their impact on the actual structure of the workforce, by nationality (national – non-national) and skill level. The webinar will discuss future trends in the demand for skilled labour, highlight the challenges they pose and measures to address these challenges, and reflect on possible scenarios for the future of migration to the region, concerning the number and characteristics of migrants.

Questions:

1. How has the labour market evolved in the Gulf states since 2010?
2. What are the new skills on demand, currently and in the future, especially keeping in mind the objectives of the various Vision 2030/2035 plans?
3. What does this mean in terms of demand for migrant workers, now and in the future?

Speakers:

- Nejla Ben Mimoune, Research Associate and Programs Manager at the Middle East Council on Global Affairs in Doha
- Khalil Bohazza, Manager of Labour Affairs at the Executive Bureau of the Council of Ministers in the GCC States in Bahrain
- Steffen Hertog, Associate Professor in Comparative Politics at the Department of Government in the London School of Economics and Political Science
- Magdalena Karolak, Associate Professor of Humanities and Social Sciences at Zayed University in Dubai
- Froilan Malit, Visiting Fellow at the Department of Political Science in the American University, Dubai, and Ph.D. Politics Candidate at the University of Glasgow

The third webinar, held on 17 January 2024, was entitled: “Gulf-born, second and third generation foreign residents: a resource for Gulf states’ development process.”



Abstract: Gulf-born, second and third generation offsprings of migrants remain foreign citizens in Gulf states and are not able to gain the right for citizenship or permanent settlement. Yet, field studies conducted on these populations emphasize their sense of belonging to the country they were born and raised in. Many of them also pursue higher education in the region, while their transnational upbringing grants them specific competences (languages spoken, cultural adaptability and familiarity with Gulf countries’ social norms, etc.). However, the characteristics of these populations are little known. The webinar will contribute to bridging this gap. It will evaluate the socio-demographic and educational profile of second and third generation foreign residents, analyse policies applied to them in the six GCC countries, discuss the role they could play in GCC states’ labour and economic reforms, and reflect on possible ways to secure the future of these populations in the region.

Questions:

1. What is the socio-demographic and educational profile of Gulf-born, second and third generation foreign residents?
2. What are their specific skills and competences?
3. How could existing policies be adapted, in order to better channel the potential of these residents to Gulf states’ socio-economic development process?

Speakers

- Nasra M. Shah, Scientific Director of GLMM, Professor of Migration and Development, Lahore School of Economics, Pakistan
- Neha Vora, Professor of Anthropology, American University of Sharjah, UAE
- Gennaro Errichiello, SOAS University of London, UK
- Musaab Alkhatib, Research Associate at the Social and Economic Survey Research Institute, Qatar University, Qatar
- Areej Jamal, University College London, Social Research Institute, UK
- Nadeen Dakkak, Lecturer in World and Postcolonial Literatures at the University of Exeter, UK



The fourth webinar, held on 12 June 2024, was entitled: “Emerging Trends in Sub-Sahara African Migration to the GCC” and Co-organised with the Center for International and Regional Studies (CIRS) at Georgetown University in Qatar (GU-Q)



Abstract: Migration from Africa has been a significant topic of scholarly interest for many decades, encompassing both intra-continental movements and migration to other parts of the world. Recent trends have demonstrated notable shifts in migration patterns, particularly the growing migration from Sub-Saharan Africa to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states. The GCC region appeals to many individuals seeking economic and personal advancement, as well as enhanced living standards. In this webinar, experts will explore several important questions concerning migration trends between Sub-Saharan Africa and the GCC region.

Questions:

1. Emerging Trends: What new patterns are we seeing in migration from Africa to the GCC, and what specific characteristics define these trends?
2. Driving Forces: What factors are motivating movements from Sub-Saharan African countries to the GCC?
3. Impact of Global Events: How have recent global events, such as the pandemic, influenced migration trends from Sub-Saharan Africa to the GCC?
4. Skilled Labor Dynamics: What are the primary drivers behind the increase in skilled labor migration from Sub-Saharan Africa to the GCC?
5. Opportunities and Challenges: What are the key opportunities and challenges facing Sub-Saharan African migration to the GCC, and what might the future trajectories look like?
6. Future Trends: What other potential trends could emerge in Sub-Saharan African migration to the GCC? What is the socio-demographic and educational profile of Gulf-born, second and third generation foreign residents?



Speakers:

- Dr Kristian Alexander - Senior Fellow at the Rabdan Security & Defense Institute (RSDI), Abu Dhabi
- Mrs Aida Awel - Chief Technical Adviser, Labour Migration at International Labour Organisation (ILO), Addis Ababa
- Dr Françoise De Bel-Air - Senior Fellow, GLMM
- Mr Lawrence Egulu - Commissioner for Employment Services, Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development of the Republic of Uganda
- Mr Paul Odhiambo - Independent policy analyst, Nairobi
- Prof Lahra Smith - Associate Professor and Director, African Studies Program, Georgetown University

For more details on GLMM webinars visit the website [here](#).

Workshops



The Gulf Research Meeting 2023 Workshop

GLMM organized a workshop in the framework of the 13th Gulf Research Meeting (GRM, Cambridge 11-13 July 2023) on “Recent Labour and Migration Reforms and Policies in the Gulf: Impact on Economies and Societies” directed by Nasra M. Shah and Françoise De Bel-Air.

Workshop description can be accessed [here](#).

52 applications were received, of which 18 were selected.

The chosen 18 papers were presented and discussed during the in-presence workshop:

- Yusra Al-Shanqiti & Froilan Malit: “In Search of Global Skilled Human Capital? Analyzing the GCC States’ Multilevel Domestic Legal and Social Strategies for Attracting and Retaining Skilled Migrants in the Technology Sector”
- Onn Winckler: “Numbers Increasing, Dependency Decreasing: The GCC Changing Labor Immigration Emphasis Following the Arab Spring”
- Nejla Ben Mimoune & Nader Kabbani: “Post-Pandemic Skills Needs in the Gulf. A Comparative Analysis of Oman and Kuwait”
- Wasseem Mina: “GCC Labor Markets and Female Youth Inclusion and Employment”
- Nawafal Shehabi: “Navigating Khaleeji Entrepreneurial Ecosystems: Development Visions, Innovation, and Precarity in the Neoliberal Gulf”
- Noor Alabbas: “Power of Business interest and the reforms of the Flexible Work Permit Scheme in Bahrain (2017-2022)”
- Daryn Howland: “Reproducing the GCC: Interrogating Reforms to the Domestic Work Sector in the UAE”



- Habib Khondker: “The New Domestic Workers Law in the UAE: Context and the Consequences”
- Vani Saraswathi & Rima Kalush: “Reforms without Rights: The GCC States and their Blinkered View of Labour Reforms”
- Sophia Kagan & Ryszard Cholewinski: “Regulation of Platform and ‘Freelance’ Work for Migrant Workers in the Gulf Council Cooperation Countries – A New Challenge or an Old Problem?”
- Kristian Alexander & Froilan Malit: “Transnational Migrant Precarity in the Asia-Gulf Corridor: Informal Labor and Financial Markets and High-Risk Coping Strategies of Low-Income Filipino Migrants in the United Arab Emirates”
- Gennaro Errichiello: “New Visa Schemes and Everyday Integration. Challenges and Practices among Pakistanis in Dubai”
- Bilesha Weeraratne: “Migrant Worker Policies and the Spillover Effects on Educational Outcomes and Employment Aspirations of National Children in the GCC”
- Dalia Abdelnabi: “Migrant Labour and Citizens in GCC States: Kuwait’s System of Migration Governance and Labour Force Nationalisation”
- Justin Alexander: “Enablers or Obstacles? The Roles of Migrant Workers in Gulf Economic Visions”
- Mira al Hussein: “Naturalising Talent: Labour, Migration and Citizenship in the UAE”
- Christina Lowe, Jessica Hagen-Zanker, Caterina Mazzilli, Lea Bou Khater, Luca Pellerano, and Abigail Hunt: “Extending Social Protection to Migrant Workers in the Region of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC): An analysis of Enablers and Barriers”
- Andrew Leber: “Saudization in a ‘Saudi First’ Kingdom”

10 papers have been submitted to the Asian Pacific Migration Journal (APMJ) to constitute a special issue entitled “Recent Labour and Migration Policy Reforms in the Gulf States: Winners and Losers.”

8 papers will be published individually in academic journals or as a GLMM Explanatory Note.

Gulf Research Meeting 2024 Workshop



GLMM organized a workshop in the framework of the 14th Gulf Research Meeting (GRM, Cambridge 9-11 July 2024) on “Migration to the Gulf: Possible Scenarios for the Future. A View from the GCC and from Countries of Origin” directed by Nasra M. Shah and Françoise De Bel-Air.

Workshop description can be accessed [here](#).

55 applications were received, of which 18 were selected.

The chosen 18 papers were presented and discussed during the in-presence workshop:

- Nejla Ben Mimoune: Beyond Oil: GCC Migration Trends in the Era of High-Skilled Labor and Technological Revolution
- Lubna Alkazi: Challenges to Kuwaiti Women’s Integration in the Private Sector
- Maria Dolores Picot: Transformative Labour Reforms in Qatar: An In-Depth Examination of Their Efficacy and Implications for Future Patterns in Labour Migration
- Gokuladas V K: Impact of Educational Needs of the Wards of the Expatriate Community on Migration Decisions: An Empirical Study on the Perceptions of Expatriate Skilled Workers in the Sultanate of Oman
- Sabnam Sarmin Luna and Md Mizanur Rahman: Feminized Migration in the GCC States: The Future of Asian Female Labour Migration to the Gulf
- Bilesha Weeraratne: Changes in UAE Visa Regulations and the Dynamics in Informal Networks in Migration: Evidence from Sri Lanka
- Michael Ewers and Bethany Shockley: Renegotiating the Expatriate Bargain: New Forms of Migrant Bargaining, Belonging, and Inequality with Policy Reform in the UAE
- Mayada Medhat: Future Migration Trends from Egypt to the Newly Secularized Saudi Arabia



- Kailash Das, Mukesh Kumar and Archana K. Roy: Dynamics of Migrants from India to GCC countries: An Overview
- Hessam Habibi Doroh and Javad Heyran-Nia: Iranian Baluch migration to the Gulf: Deciphering the Baluch Mindset on Migration to the GCC
- Noosha Uddin: Decentralized Migration Governance in Migrant-Sending States: Examining Incentives for Advocacy, Refusal, and Reluctance in the Bangladesh-Qatar Corridor
- Anu Abraham: Determinants of the Decision to Migrate and Destination Choice of Labor Migrants from South Asia to the GCC
- Nasra M Shah and Memoona Qazi: Future of Labor Migration from Pakistan to the Gulf Countries: An Overview
- Mohammad Amaan Siddiqui, Manal Nadeem and Neha Vora: Deconstructing Dichotomies: Exploring Contemporary South Asian Emigration to the UAE Beyond Economics
- Burak Yalim: Evolving Patterns of Turkish Migration to the UAE: Dynamics, Policies, and Future Prospects
- Froilan Malit: Multilateral Migration Institutions in the Global South: Institutionalization, Socialization, and Diffusion Processes in the Asia-Gulf Corridor
- Piyasiri Wickramasekara: South Asian Migration to GCC States: Comparative perspectives and possible future scenarios
- Geoffrey Ducanes: Prospects for Post-COVID Labor Migration Flows: the Philippines to the Gulf

GLMM will seek to publish and edited volume possibly including all contributions.

Projects

Vision 2030 and the Socio-Economic Reform Process: The Future of Labour and Migration in Saudi Arabia – 2024-2025



On 7 May 2024 at the GRC Riyadh office, GLMM launched the project with the participation of:

- Mr. Badr Alsharif (economic policy expert) and Dr. Mehmet Soytas (labour economist) who are part of the eight Saudi, Saudi-based, and international experts conducting the research for the project
- Saudi Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development (MHRSD)
- National Labor Observatory (NLO)
- Royal Commission for Riyadh City (RCRC)
- King Abdullah Petroleum Studies and Research Center (KAPSARC)
- UN organizations: IOM, UNHRC, UNICEF, UNODC

The Ministry of Economy and Planning (MEP), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies (KFCRIS), and the International Migration Division in the Direction for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) expressed interest in the project but were unable to attend the meeting.

Objectives of the project

- Enhance understanding of the Saudi labour market, migration dynamics at all skill levels, and population policies and their impact on Saudi Arabia.
- Provide sound background information on the above, and policy advice for Saudi policymakers and economic actors, within the framework of Saudi Vision 2030.
- Foster a network of key Saudi experts, academics, and institutions, as well as international experts on the Saudi labour market, migration dynamics, and population policies and their impact.
- Create the conditions for continued research on the Saudi labour market, migration dynamics, and population policies and their impact on Saudi Arabia.

Process

A foundational element of the project is the active involvement of experts from Saudi institutions, international organizations, academia, and think tanks who exchange knowledge and views on key issues relating to the future of labor markets and migration within the framework of Saudi Vision 2030 in an informal setting operating under the Chatham House Rules. These experts have been and will continue to be fundamental in identifying the most important topics to be researched, reviewing, and discussing draft papers, participating in public events and webinars, and using the acquired knowledge in the definition and implementation of their policies and further research.

Focus of the project

- Saudi citizens' socio-economic characteristics and their possible future trends
- Future labour needs and migration in and to Saudi Arabia
- Challenges and opportunities created by the reforms
- Transversal issue: Data for evidence-based policy making and enhanced knowledge

Phases of the project

1. The project is divided into 3 phases of approximately 10-12 months:
2. Focus on highly skilled labour
3. Focus on Saudi citizens
4. Global changes in the Saudi labour market and society

Activities and output:

Statistical data; Laws, bilateral agreements, and policy documents; Research papers; Policy briefs; Factsheets; Workshop; Outreach meeting for selected stakeholders; Outreach webinar for the wider public.

On 8 May 2024 at the GRC Riyadh offices GLMM met with a delegation of the General Authority for Statistics (GASat) including Dr. Fatima Bint Ali Alwif and Dr. Meshal Aloudah exploring close cooperation on issues of common interest, including participation in the “Vision 2030 and the Socio-Economic Reform Process: The Future of Labour and Migration in Saudi Arabia” project.

Highly Skilled Migration to the Gulf States: How Do GCC Countries Fare in the Global Competition for Talent? A joint project with and supported by the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) May-December 2024



Dr. Françoise De Bel-Air (GLMM/GRC), Mr. Imco Brouwer (GLMM/GRC), Dr. Christian Koch (GRC), and Mr. Philipp Dienstbier (KAS)

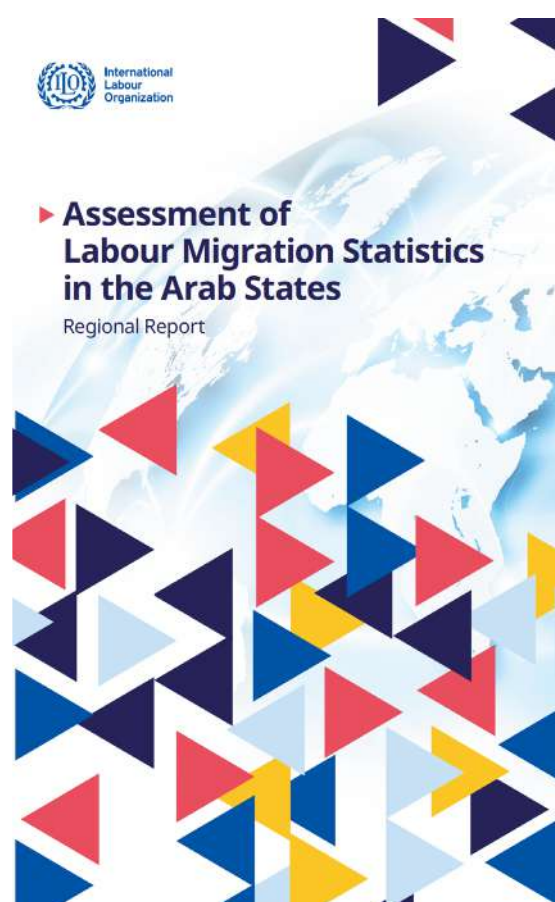
The project aims to provide an in-depth analysis of highly skilled migration trends and dynamics in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region. It examines policies, migration dynamics, and outcomes related to the attraction, recruitment and retention of highly skilled talent from Arab (Egypt, Jordan, Tunisia) and Asian (India, Pakistan, the Philippines) countries of origin to three GCC states: Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.

Activities and output

The project will:

- Gather statistical data
- Gather legal documents
- Gather policy documents
- Produce 9 research reports
- Produce 9 policy briefs
- Produce factsheets
- Organize a workshop
- Organize outreach meetings for selected stakeholders
- Organize a webinar for the wider public

Project: Assessment of Labour Migration Statistics in the Arab States 2021-2023



In July 2024, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) published a regional report and twelve country reports (in English and Arabic) as the results of a joint project of the ILO / Regional Office for Arab States (ROAS) and the Gulf Labour Markets, Migration, and Population (GLMM) programme assessing the labour migration statistics for the 6 GCC and 6 other Arab Mashreq countries: <https://www.ilo.org/publications/assessment-labour-migration-statistics-arab-states> (data gathered and analyzed 2021-2022).

The regional and country reports were drafted by a core team of experts of the GLMM under the auspices of the Gulf Research Centre Foundation (GCRF) in Geneva. The core team comprised: Philippe Fargues, former Robert Schuman Chair and Founding Director of the Migration Policy Centre (MPC), European University Institute (EUI), Florence, and Scientific Director, GLMM; Nasra M. Shah, Professor of Migration and Development, Graduate Institute of Development Studies, Lahore School of Economics, and Scientific Director, GLMM; Françoise De Bel-Air, Researcher and Consultant, Senior Fellow, GLMM; and Imco Brouwer, Managing Director, GLMM. The report was prepared under the overall coordination of Ryszard Cholewinski, Senior Migration Specialist and Nader Keyrouz, former Regional Labour Statistician, ILO ROAS.

Publications (published July 2024; data 2021-2022):

<https://www.ilo.org/media/569581/download>

- Philippe Fargues with the contribution of Françoise De Bel-Air, Regional Report, Assessment of labour migration statistics in Arab states, Beirut: ILO-ROAS, 2023 (AR, EN)
- Françoise De Bel-Air, 12 Country Reports on the GCC: [Bahrain](#), [Kuwait](#), [Oman](#), [Qatar](#), [Saudi Arabia](#), [United Arab Emirates](#) and other Arab Mashreq states: [Iraq](#), [Jordan](#), [Lebanon](#), [Palestine](#), [Syria](#), and [Yemen](#).
- Françoise De Bel-Air, 2 blog posts and 3 infographics



Participations

GLMM senior staff participated in 2023-2024, among others, in the following meetings:

- Nasra M. Shah (online), Françoise De Bel-Air, and Imco Brouwer participated in the Migrations Advisory Group (MAG) of the Fairway Programme of the Regional Office for Arab States (ROAS) of the International Labour Organization (ILO) in Beirut, September 7-8, 2023.
- Nasra M. Shah, Françoise De Bel-Air, and Imco Brouwer participated in two Town Hall Expert Sessions on “Scoping the Challenge on Social Protection and Empowerment of Migrants in the South Asia-Middle East Corridor”, organised by the Swiss Agency for Development Assistance (SDC) on October 25 and November 7, 2023.
- Imco Brouwer participated in a Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) strategy meeting on migration intervention in Africa and the MENA region in Addis Ababa on December 11-12, 2023.
- Nasra M. Shah, Françoise De Bel-Air, Imco Brouwer participated in a workshop the workshop “Labor Migration Patterns and their Role in Economic Diversification and Sustainable Development in Saudi Arabia: Acceptance and the Resistance Towards Achieving Saudi Vision 2030” organised by the King Faisal Centre for Research and Islamic Studies, Riyadh, 18-19 February 2024
- Froilan Malit, Migration Policy Consultant, ILO Regional Office for the Arab States, ‘Matching Labour Mobility with Labour Market Needs in ADD Corridors’ Available [summary here](#).

Publications by Senior Staff

In 2023-2024, GLMM senior staff produced additional Gulf migration publications, including:

- Françoise De Bel-Air, “New Profiles of Demand in the Gulf Cooperation Council and Possible Impact on Labor Migration from Asia,” in: Asian Development Bank Institute, International Labour Organization, and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (Eds.). *Labor Migration in Asia: Changing Profiles and Processes*, Tokyo/Bangkok/Paris: ADBI/ILO/OECD, June 2023, pp. 27-56
- Françoise De Bel-Air, “The Politics of Migration in the Gulf States,” in: AlMezaini, Kh. and Alexander; K. (Eds). *Introduction to Gulf Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming
- Françoise De Bel-Air, “Les Jordaniens dans les pays du Conseil de Coopération du Golfe (CCG),” in Jalal al Hussein, Solenn Al Majali and Kamel Dorai, *Les migrations en Jordanie*, in Napolitano, V., al Hussein, J. and Dubois, S. (Eds). « la Jordanie au présent » Beirut: presses de l’Ifpo, forthcoming
- Françoise De Bel-Air, University of Bremen, CRC 1342, “Global Dynamics of Social Policy,” ImmigSR Project (Immigrant Social Rights Dataset). Contribution on Saudi Arabia, 2023
- Françoise De Bel-Air, ILO-ROAS, “Mapping and analysis of data on stocks and flows of African migrant workers in the GCC,” Background report in preparation for the Doha Dialogue Meeting, 2023
- Nasra M Shah, *Policies and Legislative Frameworks Governing Labor Migration to the Oil-Rich Gulf Countries* in Oxford Handbook of Comparative Immigration Law, 2023
- Imco Brouwer, “Gulf Labor Migration in the GCC: Between Structural Constraints and Political Choices,” in: Tarik M. Yousef, Adel Abdel Ghafar (Eds), *The Gulf Cooperation Council at Forty: Risk and Opportunity in a Changing World*: Brookings, Institution Press, 2023, pp. 146-158.
- Françoise de Bel-Air, “Global Dynamics of Social Policy,” ImmigSR Project (Immigrant Social Rights Dataset). Contribution on Saudi Arabia, 2023-2024, University of Bremen, CRC 1342
- Françoise de Bel-Air, “Mapping and analysis of data on stocks and flows of African migrant workers in the GCC”, Background report in preparation for the Doha Dialogue Meeting (21-22 May 2024), ILO-ROAS, 2023-2024
- Nasra M Shah, edited book entitled “Social Remittances and Social Change: Focus on Asia and Middle East”, Lahore School of Economics 2024
- Nasra M Shah and CIMRAD Team, *Pakistan Migration Report 2024*, June 2024
- Malit, F. and Alexander, K. (2024). “‘Planned’ Migrant Precarity in the Global South: Informal Labour Markets, High Risk Coping Strategies, and Low-Income Filipino Migrants in the United Arab Emirates,” *Asia Pacific and Migration Journal* (accepted, forthcoming this December 2024)
- Malit, Jr. (2024). “Migration Diplomacy during the COVID19 Pandemic: Coercion, Migration, and the United Arab Emirates,” *Mapping and Debating Migration and the COVID19 Pandemic in the MENA Region*. Forthcoming in Routledge.



- Malit, Jr. F. (2024). “Migration Interdependence in the Asia-Gulf Corridor: Domestic Work, Foreign Policy, and the UAE-Philippine Migration Corridor,” forthcoming
- Malit, Jr. F. (2024). “Outsourcing Migration Governance in the Gulf: Public Private Partnership (PPP), Migrant Rentier States, and the United Arab Emirates,” POMEPS Studies on the Politics of Migration and Refugee Rentierism in the Middle East
- Alexander, K. and Malit, Jr. F. (2024). “The Dynamics of ‘Geopolitical Migration’ by Russians to the United Arab Emirates.” The Swedish Institute of International Affairs
- Malit, F. (2024). “Effective Matching of the Demand for and Supply of Migrant Workers Between Abu Dhabi Dialogue Countries of Origin and Destination.” Abu Dhabi Dialogue / International Labour Organization.

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