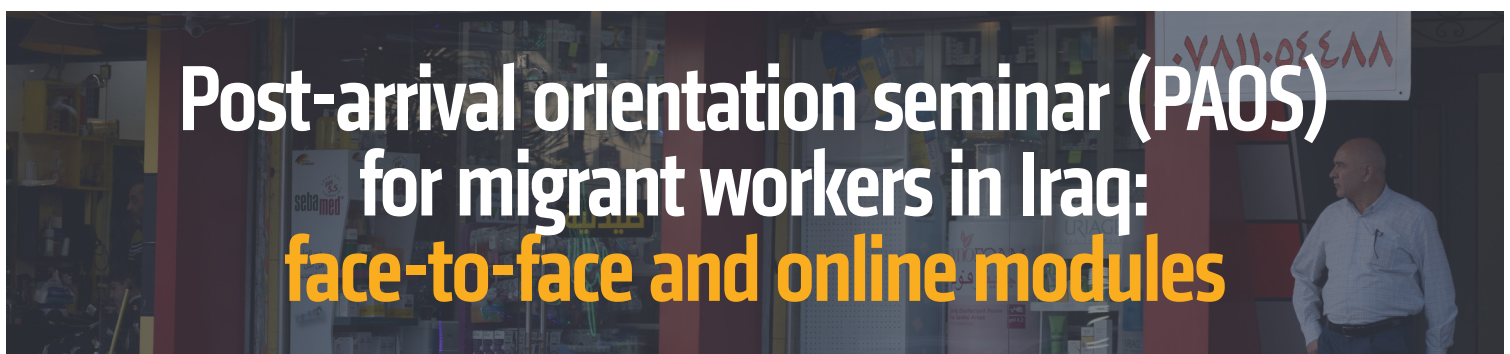


IMPROVING MIGRATION MANAGEMENT IN THE SILK ROUTES



Funded by the European Union

Implemented by



**Post-arrival orientation seminar (PAOS)
for migrant workers in Iraq:
face-to-face and online modules**



This module is prepared by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development as part of the project Improving Migration Management in Silk Routes supported by the European Union.

This module is an evolving document that will be expanded when new information, policy, programmes or services are available as relevant for Iraq.

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A. INTRODUCTION



What is post-arrival orientation seminar (PAOS)?

Post-arrival orientation seminars and services (PAOS) are provided to migrants or migrant workers upon arrival in the countries of destination and job-site to inform them about and facilitate their settlement in the new country of residence or work, in a short, medium or long-term timeline. The reasonable period is for PAOS to be provided within two months from the date of arrival in the destination country.

Who can provide or implement PAOS?

In general, the providers of PAOS are the diplomatic and consular missions of the countries in the destination countries or job sites, with resource persons from various government agencies, CSOs and private sector such as the employers. The missions can conduct it by themselves or in partnership with other service providers. Civil society organisations, support networks, migrant organisations and training institutions also conduct PAOS. When available, the Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs) are the best equipped structure to be able to provide PAOS.

In some countries, the host governments through accredited institutions are also conducting PAOS. Examples of these are Canada, Australia, South Korea, Malaysia, United Arab Emirates and select European countries. In other areas, the employers themselves provide the PAOS, especially when they are big companies or institutions employing a larger number of migrant workers.

If Migrant Resource Centres are both present in origin and destination countries of migrants, a twinning arrangement between the MRCs can be arranged in the sense that those who attended the pre-migration or pre-departure orientation seminars in the origin countries through the MRC will be referred by the MRC to its partner MRC in the destination countries for the PAOS.

In Iraq, PAOS can be initially conducted by the MRC located in Baghdad under the supervision of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA). CSOs working on migration as well as the employers can be trained by MRC to conduct PAOS in others parts of Iraq and accredited by MOLSA.

The modules can be done in one day at best, half day at the least.



Are there modules or materials available for use in the PAOS?

The International Centre for Migration Policy Development has prepared the modules for PAOS in coordination with MOLSA, Migrant Resource Centre in Iraq and other relevant stakeholders. ICMPD will provide the training to the MRCs, MOLSA and other service providers regularly to enable them to appropriately, timely and responsibly conduct the PAOS.

What are the benefits of the PAOS?

In addition to providing newly-arrived migrants with updated and more comprehensive information about their new place of residence and work, the PAOS:

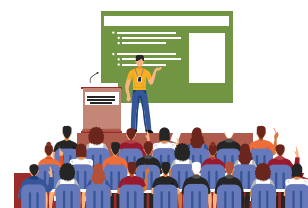
1. Facilitates the registration of arriving migrants in the destination countries through the Embassies, Consulates or Missions (particularly if registration is required by the origin country). This will strengthen the mapping or data banking of the origin country of its nationals in other countries.
2. Provides more comprehensive information on the destination country's profile and demographics; policies, laws and regulations; culture, norms, practices and language; and other relevant and important information for the migrant workers.

3. Guides migrant workers in the performance of their functions and responsibilities in accordance with their employment contract and employer's expectations.
4. Supports migrants in their adjustment (and potentially, integration) in host countries in the short, medium and long-term period, and help facilitate easier and better working and living conditions for them.
5. Provides platform for newly-arrived migrants to be familiar with other members of their community and with the officials of the Embassies and Missions. This will encourage community organisation, networking or socialisation among them.
6. Informs them of means, platforms or support networks that will provide them with updates or assistance in case of needs or emergencies.

How and where is PAOS conducted?

PAOS can be conducted through:

1. Face to face (akin to a classroom style) where newly-arrived migrants will personally appear at the PAOS venue and have face-to-face discussions with the PAOS trainer. The venue can be the MRC premise, the Embassy or Consulate of the country where the migrants come from, CSO's office or other public places which are accessible, secure and convenient for the migrant workers.



For Iraq, MOLSA will negotiate with the employers and private employment and recruitment agencies to have the PAOS within the worksite or place of work following these conditions:

- Worksite is located outside of Baghdad
- Employers will provide the venue free of costs
- Employers will provide a session where they can present their company rules and regulations, but will not interfere in the other sessions

In this case, MRC and MOLSA officials will travel to the worksite for the PAOS on a schedule agreed upon with the employers.

A schedule is pre-determined and disseminated for the compliance of arriving migrant workers. PAOS can be conducted at least once a month, on the rest day for most migrant workers. Depending on the number of migrant workers in the country and the capacity of the provider, PAOS can also be conducted bi-weekly.

2. Online where the newly-arrived migrants are given access to the PAOS portal. How to create an account and take the online PAOS is described in the introductory part of the modules below. In online platform, the migrant worker can take the PAOS at a time and place that is most convenient for him/her, provided that internet connection is available. However, the online version has a series of examinations that the migrant worker has to pass in order to get the certificate. The certificate is also issued online.

What are the conditions in conducting PAOS?

The PAOS should be provided to the migrant workers free of charge; i.e. the actual participation, information materials provided and other activities conducted in line with the PAOS is provided for free. The costs of going to the venue and back is, however, borne by the migrant worker. For Iraq, MOLSA will negotiate with the employers and private employment and recruitment agencies that the employers will shoulder the transportation costs of the migrant workers attending the PAOS as part of their commitment to protecting the rights and promoting the welfare of migrant workers.

A certificate will be issued by the MOLSA together with the MRC and other service providers. Copies of this certificate will be compiled and recorded by the employers and private employment and recruitment agencies and shall form part of their regular reports for submission to MOLSA in line with its supervisory and monitoring function. MOLSA can suspend the operation of the private employment and recruitment agency or blacklist an employer should they fail to comply with the requirements.



What are the topics covered in PAOS?

Module 1 – Getting settled immediately: sample tips and advice

- a. Registering with or informing authorities or diplomatic missions about your arrival in the country of destination
- b. Being reminded of the “do’s and don’ts” in the destination country; roles, rights and responsibilities of the migrant workers in the work place
- c. Knowing and understanding further your work, employer, workplace and co-workers
- d. Reviewing your standard employment contract, your duties and responsibilities, rights and opportunities, including the grievance mechanisms
- e. Understanding more comprehensively destination country’s profile and demographics; policies, laws and regulations; culture, norms, practices and language; and other relevant and important information for the migrant workers.
- f. Memorising emergency numbers of medical facilities, fire and police departments
- g. Familiarising transportation and emergency routes
- h. Checking location of grocery stores, shops, hospitals, clinics, banks, remittance centers, etc.; minding security and safety issues
- i. Managing work, schedule, stress, conflict, etc.
- j. Coping with isolation, loneliness, xenophobia, boredom and other challenges
- k. Sending remittances back home, communicating with family members, buying sim cards and other needs
- l. Taking care of yourself – physically, emotionally, psychologically and financially

Module 2 – Programmes and services of origin and destination countries

- a. Learning about the programmes and services for migrant workers by the destination countries as well as the diplomatic and consular missions (and of origin country, if available)
- b. Case management, redress of grievances, dispute resolution and amicable settlement in both destination and origin countries
- c. Support networks: trade union, shelters and safe houses, legal and counseling groups, financial inclusion and literacy trainers, skills centres, etc.

Module 3 – Getting settled medium term: sample tips and advice

- a. Improving self, work and skills
- b. Finding additional jobs or sources of income (if allowable in the destination country)
- c. Locating and enrolling in language centers
- d. Locating and enrolling in training courses (e.g. computer literacy, vocational skills, culinary, financial literacy, work and stress management)
- e. Operationalising the return and reintegration plan (link with pre-departure orientation seminar or PDOS): savings, financial management, getting into investment or business, etc.
- f. Exploring interesting, historical and cultural places in the country, and understanding other people, culture, lifestyle, norms, etc.
- g. Engaging with civic work or organisation

Module 4 – Getting settled long-term (as applicable, depending on the country or category of migrants): sample tips and advice

- a. Finding pathways to integration, residency or citizenship (if allowable in the destination country)
- b. Finding future employment (if allowable) or safe, regular and orderly pathways to other forms of migration
- c. Engaging with civic work or organisation both in origin and destination countries

B. MODULE FOR THE PAOS

PART I. REGISTRATION PROCESS AND CREATING YOUR ACCOUNT (the registration will only be applicable for online module; for the face-to-face/classroom style, you can proceed directly to Part II: Module 1 after the introduction)

1. ¹ Registration (please fill up the following accurately)

- First, middle, last name
- Birthdate
- Place of residency
- Nationality
- Email address (where all notifications will be sent such as password verification, certificates, etc. It will also serve as the log-in name.)
- Password
- Repeat password

[Once done, you will be prompted to check the email sent to the email address that was indicated in the registration. Click the link in the email. The link will lead you to the log-in page. Please log-in using your email address and password.]

1 Refer to the slide/page that will appear in the online module

2.a. How to go through the modules – ONLINE

Step 1:

The outline of the modules are indicated below. Go through the modules one by one and one step at a time. You have to complete one module and pass the exercises in each module before you can proceed to the next module. Complete the exercises as available and pass the mini-examinations at the last part before going to the next step. There are 4 modules in this Step 1.

Step 2:

Once Step 1 is completed, you will be asked if you prefer to get a certificate and will be prompted to a page where you will fill up the form. Once finished, you will be issued a certificate which will also be emailed to you. You can print the certificate for your file which you may use in the future.

2.b. How to go through the modules – FACE-TO-FACE

The PAOS officer will present the following prior to the formal modules presented in Part II:

1. Introduce himself/herself (and the other resource persons) and the organisation he/she belong to
2. Present the outline of the PAOS
3. Discuss the time allowed for the PAOS
4. Discuss the expectations from the participants
5. Present administrative matters (e.g. issuance of information materials and certificate upon completion, emergency exits and routes, contact information and other reference materials)

PART II.

GOING THROUGH THE MODULE

Module 1 – Getting settled immediately: sample tips and advice

You have arrived in a new country which may have different culture, practices, laws, regulations, practices, etc. compared to your origin country. For you to adjust well, it is important to be reminded of some tips and advice that will help you get settled immediately upon arrival. By settling properly, you can focus on work and perform well.



1. Registering with or informing authorities or diplomatic missions about your arrival

One of the important things to do upon arrival, in addition to informing your family and recruitment agency and settling in your new house or accommodation, is to register with or contact your Embassy or Consulate to inform them of your arrival and provide details of your work. Some Embassies or Consulates require personal registration especially if you are within the city or vicinity of their offices; others may accept phone calls or email. Sometimes, you are requested to provide them with a copy of your work contract, especially if there is a Labour or Community Welfare Attaché posted in the Embassy.

This is important so that the Embassy is aware of your presence in the country and that in times of crisis, emergency or distress situation, you can call them for help and they can assist you.

The handbook or information materials that may have been provided to you during the PDOS will include the contact details of the Embassy. Some Embassies have hotline or 24/7 emergency numbers.

If you do not have Embassy or Consulate, check whether there is an Honorary Consulate or another foreign embassy in which your country is affiliated to in Iraq.

2. Being reminded of the “do’s and don’ts” in the destination country; roles, rights and responsibilities in the work place

One of the first things you need to know are the rules and regulations in your workplace. The usual order of business in companies or employment for newly-arrived workers is to have a thorough induction and orientation. Some of the topics discussed are the profile of the company/employer, its work and operations, different units/divisions/offices, financial



and HR procedures and guidelines, etc. Make sure that you attend this and understand the presentation carefully.

If there is no formal induction or orientation, meet with the finance and HR divisions to know more about the guidelines. Sometimes, companies have their own handbook for this purpose. Have specific sessions with your employer, boss or supervisor to discuss your duties and responsibilities and what are their expectations of you. Do not hesitate to inquire and meet with relevant people in your company if this would help you perform your job properly and responsively.

3. As general rule and practice, every company or employer expects his/her employees of the following:

- Report to office or work regularly and on time
- Perform your tasks diligently and properly
- Use office premises and resources properly
- If there are problems, consult with your supervisor immediately, or talk to HR, a colleague or your family, or to the Embassy or Attaché
- Learn new skills or things that will help you perform better at work
- Respect your employers, supervisors, colleagues, officemates regardless of their status or background

- Be mindful of their needs and situation
 - Respect country's culture and the company's ethics and practices
 - Do no harm to any person or property
 - Never involve in any illegal activity such as gambling, drinking, dealing prohibited drugs, etc.
 - Be cautious of the expiry dates of your documents such as the visa and work permits; if nearing their expiration, be sure to renew them immediately to avoid problems
4. The next important thing is to know more about the laws of the country, especially those affecting labour or migrants. The handbook or information materials provided to you during the PDOS will include some information on applicable labour laws. Some of these are country or region specific such as the regulations on iqama and sponsorship or kafala, exit clearance, and non-transferability to other employers.

For more information, you may check the website and regularly contact the MRC if there are questions or additional information needed:

<http://www.molsa.gov.iq/index.php?name=Pages&op=page&pid=118>



5. These are examples of laws and regulations for migrant workers in Iraq:

Labour Law of 2015 (Chapter 5, Articles 30-36)

Resolution of Council of Ministers No. (8) 2013 on issuance of visa, entry and residence permits

Mechanism of Housekeepers Recruiting and others as of 2013

Residency Law as of 2017

Instructions Establishing Private Employment Agencies as of 2018

Conditions and Regulations of Establishing and Performance of Private. Employment Agencies in accordance with article (4/ thirdly) of the regulations of establishing private employment agencies No. (1) 2018

Additional laws and regulations can be downloaded through
<https://www.moj.gov.iq/iraqmag/>

6. Generally, migrant workers, especially those who are hired through recruitment agencies, are exempted from paying taxes in the host countries. If your income is taxable, this should be clearly indicated in the contract. The usual practice is also for the employer to deduct the taxes from your salary so that you will receive the net amount and you do not need to pay personally the taxes.

Your income as a migrant worker is also generally exempted from taxes in your origin country. The remittances you sent to your family is also exempted from taxes. In other countries, there is a documentary stamp tax imposed on remittances. Check with the MRCs for additional information on this matter.

7. Please avoid the informal transfer modes such as the hundi or hawala system whereby the remittances are sent by hand or informal money changer or agent. They may be fast or convenient but they are costly and often not reliable. It is advised to get a bank account, if allowable, in order to secure your salary, help you save, reduce your costs and build your credit history.

Similar to the advice on managing your resources or finances, make sure that you remit money that is within your salary or capacity. Avoid borrowing money for remittance, unless it is an emergency.

8. The transmittal charges or fees vary depending on the amount and the denomination. There are banks that offer free transmittal. The average charge is US\$ 8 for every US\$ 200-300 of remittance. The turn around time to receive remittance can be from 10 minutes (if cash to cash or if using the same bank) to maximum of 48 hours (for account to account, especially if different banks).

Here are example of accredited banks or remittance agents in Iraq:

Trade Bank of Iraq	https://tbi.com.iq/
Bank of Baghdad	https://www.bankofbaghdad.com.iq/
Audi Bank	https://www.bankaudigroup.com/iraq

9. On the insurance, check with your employer if the monthly dues will be paid by him/her (which is the general case). There are some instances where the employee or migrant worker also shares or pays a certain percentage of the insurance costs, provident fund or other fees. These should be clearly indicated in your work contract. In Iraq, all workers, including the migrant workers, are mandated to be enrolled in the Retirement and Social Insurance Law. The employers are bound to enroll the migrant workers in this RETirement and Social Insurance Law.



10. As a migrant, you have duties and responsibilities but you also have rights. Among these are:

- You have the right to keep the original of your personal documents such as your passport, visa, employment contract, and residence or working permits.
- Your working hours are regulated; there are only specific times of the day or number of hours where you are required to work and any overtime work demands for overtime pay.
- You have the right to have at least one hour of rest for every four straight hours of work and at least one full day rest within a week.
- You have the right to receive your salary within the time indicated in your contract.
- You have the right to take a medical leave and annual leave.
- After your probationary period (if it is indicated in the contract), you cannot just be dismissed by the employer; in case of dismissal, you have the right to know the reason and contest it through proper proceedings.

11. Reviewing your standard employment contract, including the grievance mechanisms

Please ensure that you have a copy of your standard terms of employment (STOE) or the Foreign Service Agreement (FSA) or however they are called in Iraq, and that they are signed or approved, as much as possible before your departure. If not, it should be signed and provided to you immediately upon arrival. It is the agreement between the employer and employee (migrant workers) on what are the terms and conditions of the employment, what are the duties, responsibilities and rights of both the employer and employee, and what are the other related matters that govern the employment of migrant worker abroad.



They are standard contracts because they set the minimum requirements for overseas employment in order to ensure the protection of migrants while in their work place and to also make them responsible and compliant with their duties and responsibilities. Same goes with the employer.

Any provision or inclusion that undermines the minimum standards are not allowed. The employer, however, may provide other benefits and remuneration above and beyond the minimum salary and incentives provided under international or national laws.

12. Know and understand fully your work contract specially items related to the following:

- Details of your employers and job site
- Your roles, duties and responsibilities



- Duration and validity of your contract, including items on renewal or termination
 - Your salaries and other benefits
 - Items related to accommodation, transportation, health and other insurance, etc.
 - Leaves and rest days
 - Other important items
13. The contracts are mostly written in two languages: yours and that of your employer so that both of you fully understood its content. If there are items not clear to you or you do not agree with, always get in touch with the government authority or the MRC. You may also use <https://translate.google.com/> as it is easy to translate Arabic to English online.
- Ensure that there are at least 3 copies of the documents mentioned above: one for you, one for your trusted friend or family member, and one with the appropriate government agency (which should be the Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment if coming from Pakistan or the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment and Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training if coming from Bangladesh).
14. It is good to understand more comprehensively your destination country's profile and demographics; policies, laws and regulations; culture, norms, practices and language; and other relevant and important information for the migrant workers.

15. Some tips that will help you fit or adjust to a new working environment are:

- Get to know your employers, supervisors and co-workers
- Learn their basic language and respect their culture and norms
- Be honest and kind with them
- Try not to align your self with any specific group especially if you discover that there are factions or group dynamics; however, do not isolate yourself either
- Do not engage with office gossips, politics, conflicts, etc.
- Engage with company events or activities
- If allowed and if it will not compromise your work and status, join a union or employees' association

16. Memorise the local emergency numbers of the following in Iraq:

- Medical facilities: **122** for ambulance and **404** for medical advice
- Fire department: **115**
- Police department: **104**
- Airport BIAP: **8130000**



17. Be familiar with the various transportation routes such as buses, trains, metros and other available transportation. Avoid using taxis whenever possible because they are generally expensive. In some countries, the price of tickets for buses and others are reduced when you purchase tickets that combine different transport or for a longer period such as 6 months or one year. Depending on your contract, the employer/company provides for transportation to and from workplace.

Be familiar also with the emergency exits and routes in and from your place of residence and work place. You may also check with the employer or the Embassy and Consulate on security measures in place.

18. Check location of nearest or most accessible grocery stores, shops, pharmacies, hospitals, clinics, mosques or churches, banks, remittance centers, etc. Be mindful of the security and safety measures when you go to some places.

19. It is advised that you have a roaming phone number before you leave the country so that you can be immediately reached or contacted upon arrival or should there be some problems. You can choose to discontinue later with your roaming phone number once you already have a local phone number. If none yet, there are several options for roaming provided by telecommunication companies. Check which one offers the best and arrange for this prior to leaving. You may consult your employer, co-workers and friends.



20. If you have an international driver's license, check whether this is recognised in the destination country. Some countries still require you to take exams or pass some requirements before your international driver's license can be validated overseas. At times, you have to get a new one in the destination country.
21. Sending remittances back home: In most cases, the employer is responsible in opening a bank account for you in the destination country especially if the salaries will only be provided through banks (i.e. no salary in cash). Get to know the terms, conditions and benefits of the bank account. Check if they have remittance facilities. If not, get more information or seek tips and guidance from friends and colleagues on which money transfer company is the most reliable, cost-friendly and convenient.

Advice your family on this remittance facility. If you or the head of your family do not yet have a bank account in the origin country, it is advised to open one before you leave so that you and your family already have the details.

If you have a bank account already and you wish to also use this while abroad, check whether it has international features; i.e. that you can transact (deposit or withdraw or others) while abroad either through partner banks or through ATM.

22. It is still possible to send money back to your family even if you do not have a bank account. You can send through authorised money changer or money transfer agent but they are costly and not at all times reliable. It is advised to still get a bank account, if allowable, in order to secure your salary, help you save, reduce your costs and build your credit history.

23. Here are some tips and advice in coping with isolation, loneliness, xenophobia and boredom as well as in managing work, schedule, stress, conflict, etc.

Engage in some hobbies like exercise, gardening, learning new language, visiting historical or interesting sites, etc.

Maintain good physical and mental health

Focus when it is work time so that your rest time is also maximised for doing other things

Prepare your calendar of activities in advance; ensure that you stick to your schedule

Become a member of existing migrant groups or organisations

Participate in Embassy or Consular events

Communicate regularly with friends and family

Find new friends outside your work; meet other nationalities; do not limit your friends to your own nationality

Write your thoughts, views, etc.; make your diary

Know more about the culture, practices, laws, etc. of other nationalities working with you or you encounter regularly, especially of your employer

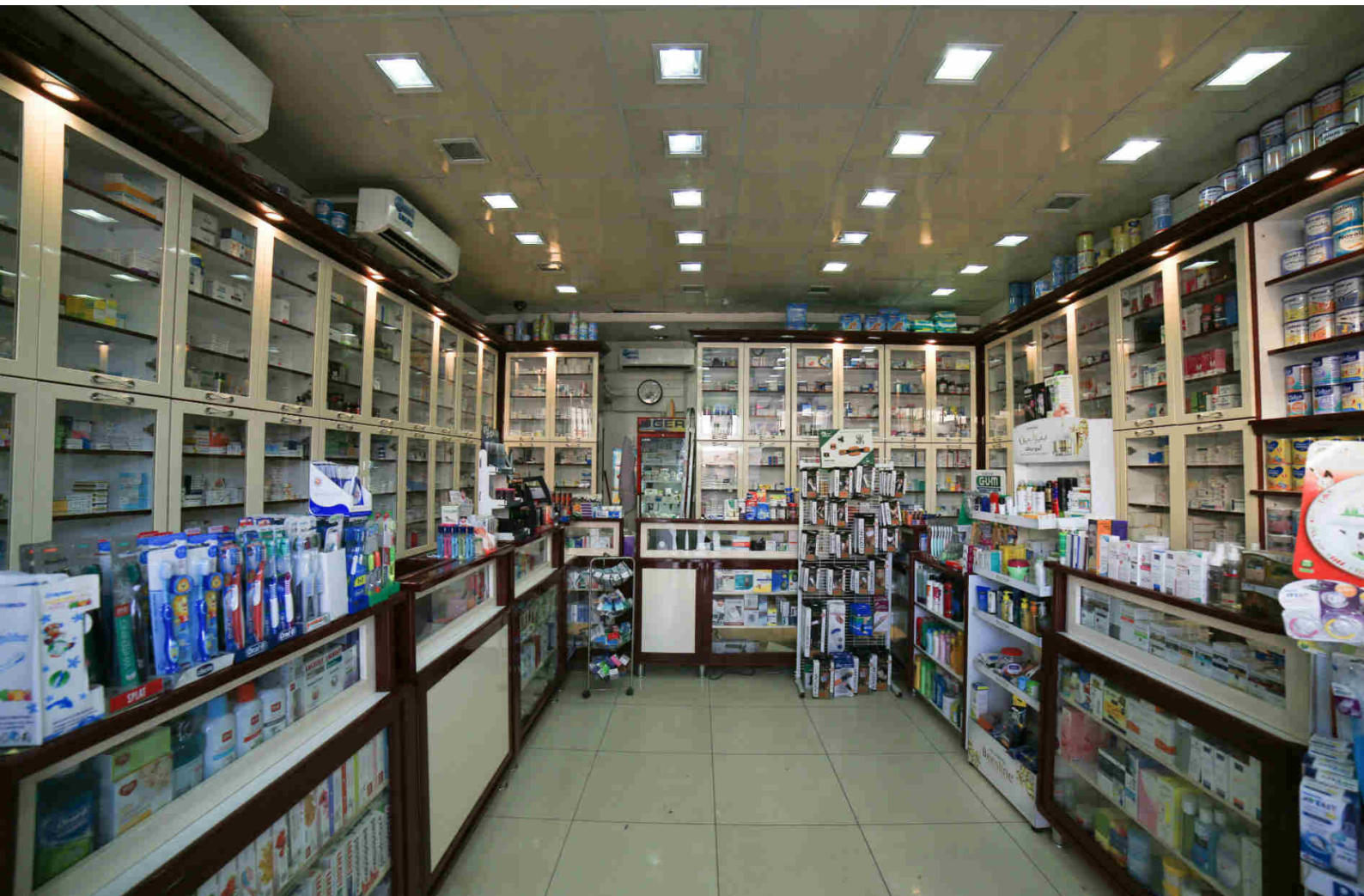
24. Taking care of yourself – physically, emotionally, psychologically

A worker who is not physically, psychologically and emotionally fit will not be able to perform his or her duties and responsibilities well. If you incur frequent absences and tardiness, you will not be able to complete your work and this may irritate or anger the employer. If persistent, it may cause your dismissal or non-renewal of your contract.

Exercise regularly. Sleep well. Drink lots of water. Eat healthy food. Take vitamins. Avoid unhealthy habits such as smoking and drinking frequently or heavily. Visit the doctor regularly. Rest well. Practice some hobbies.

25. Taking care of your self physically is not enough, you also have to address emotional and mental health and cope up with homesickness, boredom, discrimination or xenophobia, or depression which are the potential consequences of being in a new environment and work-place and being away from your family.

At times, you will also worry too much of the situation of your family back home. You are worried if they are safe, healthy, etc. Advise your family members to also exercise their duties of care and not rely on you at all times for their needs and emergencies. The family members should also be empowered to be able to take care of themselves in the absence of the migrant worker. This way, you as a migrant worker can also focus on your work and be at peace while abroad.





26. The following are some tips and advice in order to avoid abuse or exploitation:

Maintain close relations with your employers and his/her family while at the same time, secure and protect your privacy

Ensure that you have your own private space within the house (this becomes more important if you are a domestic worker or if you are from the opposite sex or if you reside in the same place along with your employer)

Do not allow your employer to go to your own private space especially in unholy hour or when you are alone

Do not tolerate unnecessary physical touches or approaches

Be respectful and cautious of the cultural sensitivities associated with sex, gender, etc. in a given country; e.g. do not go out or be in public places in shorts or skimpy dresses, avoid speaking foul/sexist remarks or language

Do not borrow money or other valuables from your employer as it triggers potential financial abuse when it becomes regular; if it is unavoidable to borrow because of emergency, pay at once

Focus on your work during official time but also free yourself from work-related thoughts during your break, leave or holidays

Avoid shouting back at your employer; if he/she does this often, discuss with him/her on how to avoid this; if it happens again or if it is not addressed, report to the Embassy, migrant organisation or civil society

Module 1 Examinations

Please identify whether the following statements are true or false.

[You have to answer majority of the questions correctly or 50% in order to pass the examinations and proceed to the next module. In a face-to-face or classroom PAOS, the examinations are optional, and if conducted, participants need not answer correctly at least half of the questions.]

	true	false
a. Be cautious of the expiry dates of your documents such as the visa and work permits. If the documents are nearing their expiration, be sure to renew them immediately to avoid problems.		
b. Any provision or inclusion in the standard employment contract that undermines or are below the minimum standards are not allowed. The employer, however, may provide other benefits and remuneration above and beyond the minimum salary and incentives provided under international or national laws.		
c. Please avoid the informal remittance transfer modes such as the hundi or hawala system whereby the remittances are sent by hand or informal money changer or agent. They may be fast or convenient but they are costly and often not reliable.		
d. A migrant worker who is not physically, psychologically and emotionally fit will not be able to perform his or her duties and responsibilities well. If you incur frequent absences and tardiness, you will not be able to complete your work and this may irritate or anger the employer.		
e. Advise your family members to also exercise their duties of care and not rely on you at all times for their needs and emergencies. The family members should also be empowered to be able to take care of themselves in the absence of the migrant worker.		
f. Be respectful and cautious of the cultural sensitivities associated with sex, gender, etc. in a given country. For example, do not go out or be in public places in shorts or skimpy dresses. Avoid speaking foul/sexist remarks or language.		
g. It is advised to still get a bank account, if allowable, in order to secure your salary, help you save, reduce your costs and help you build your credit history.		
h. Employment contracts are written in one language only – English.		

Module 2 – Programmes and services of origin and destination countries

- Both origin and destination countries have programmes and services for migrants while they are on-site or working and living abroad. In some countries, especially if you are a member of their welfare fund or insurance scheme, even your family members can avail of some services such as housing, scholarships, and financial assistance.
1. The lists below are examples of programmes and services for migrant workers provided by the destination countries as well as the origin countries through their diplomatic and consular missions. ²

Basic Assistance	Legal Service	Labour Service
• Repatriation, particularly of irregular/undocumented migrant workers • Shipment of remains and personal belongings • Blood money negotiations² • Verification of whereabouts and conditions • Assistance in criminal cases • Assistance in immigration cases • Assistance to victims of Illegal Recruitment and Trafficking in Persons • Assistance to kidnapping and hostage victims	• Assistance to detained or convicted migrant worker • Provision of services of lawyer or counsel • Prison and hospital visitation, court hearings, and consular mission • Basic information to walk-in clients on the host country's laws, and criminal and legal procedures • Conciliation proceedings, amicable settlement • Preparation of affidavits or sworn statements • Translation of documents • Counselling during preliminary investigation and hearings	• Assistance in employment related complaints • Compliance with work contracts, payment of wages, other benefits • Work permits: application, renewal, expiration • Ascertaining whereabouts, runaways, and other similar grievances • Death benefits, end-of-service benefits, and insurance and other benefits arising from the employer-employee relationship • Counselling on non-performance of employment obligations

² Also known as *diyat*, *diya* or *fidyah* in Arabic, blood money is a financial compensation paid to the victim or heirs of a victim in the cases of murder, bodily harm or property damage. It is an alternative punishment to *qisas* (equal retaliation). In Arabic, the word means both blood money and ransom, and it is spelled sometimes as *diyah* or *diyeh*.

2. Here are other programmes and services. It is good to know which ones are applicable and useful for you or your family. Check with existing programmes for both origin and destination countries.

Social Welfare Services	Health Services	Others
• Psycho-social services • Counselling • Psycho-social processing • Stress debriefing • Value inculcation/ Emotional healing • Play therapy • Pre-marriage and marriage Counselling. • Assistance to Individuals In Crisis Situations: • Food assistance • Clothing assistance • Temporary shelter • Provision of hygiene supplies • Transportation assistance • Local transportation assistance	• Medical support • Services coordination, referral to hospitals and clinics • Medical emergency assistance • Medical missions, as necessary	• Police assistance • Transport assistance to residence • Capability building activities • Alternative parental care services (adoption, foster care, legal guardianship) • Social protection services for women and children in need of special protection, and other vulnerable groups • Referral services to concerned agency of host government, non-government organisations, or other individuals or groups

3. Additional services are listed below. You may contact the Embassy, Consulate or the MRC to get more information.

Economic, Return and Reintegration Services	General
• Job placement, referral to local and overseas employment • Competency assessment and certification of skills and training • Entrepreneurial, livelihood skills training • Hands-on business mentoring and support • Business loan assistance • Financial assistance for daily subsistence • Payment of immigration and deportation fees	• Passport application/renewal/extension • Authentication of documents, attestation and notary services • Marriage application and solemnisation • Report of birth, report of marriage, report of death • Issuance of travel documents • Labour documentation • Issuance of overseas employment certificates or IDs or SMART Card • Welfare fund membership enrolment/ renewal • Information and education such as post-arrival orientation

4. In Iraq, the following are the important government agencies in which you may need to apply for some documents:

Residency permits – Ministry of Interior

Extension of work visa – Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

Medical examinations – Ministry of Health

Skills certification – Technical and Vocational Training Centre

Social security – Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

Tax office – Ministry of Finance

5. If you encounter some issues, especially related to your work, please report this immediately to the Embassy or the Labour Attaché as well as with other migrant organisations and civil society groups or to the police or authorities.
- Seek guidance from them on the best approach against the employer or recruiter.
 - Have a medical or physical examination. The medical report will be useful in claiming damages from your employer.
 - File formal criminal or civil charges against the employer or the abuser/exploiter. Before doing this, make sure that you have discussed first the issue with your employer and find other amicable resolution.
 - Secure all documents that will support your claim. Have duplicate copies of these so that you have back-up copies.
 - If needed, seek counseling or psycho-social assistance from CSOs or migrant organisations.
6. Any person who is affected by or has witnessed or knowledge of any forms of abuses, exploitation or contract violation can report such incidents to the authorities, Embassy, employer or other support network. The immediate the reporting is, the better in order not to aggravate or prolong the situation. There are emergency hotline numbers especially if the situation demands immediate response from the police or hospital or for rescue. As such, memorise these emergency or hotline numbers, or keep a copy of these numbers which you can easily access.

In filing formal complaints, however, depending on the remedial laws or procedures of the country, only the victims or the affected party/person may file a case. The others may issue an affidavit either as witness or have personal knowledge of the incidents.

7. As a general rule, any additional work that is not included or in line with the standard employment contract is either a violation or substitution of contract, both of which are not allowed and are with corresponding sanctions or penalties. If you are affected by any of these, you can immediately report to the authorities or file a complaint.

If the violations are gradual or done in bits or pieces, it is advised that you document these incidents either through your personal notes in your diary or through messages you send out to friends, family or colleagues. If you report these to the employer or recruitment agencies, do not delete or destroy them. These documentation will substantiate or support your complaints and may serve as your evidence when you claim damages or payments.

Please note that even if the violation is done gradually or in bits or pieces, it does not exempt the culprit or violator from any liability or penalty.

8. If you do not like your work because you are not used to it, take time to learn and adjust to it. Living and working in another country with a different environment, people and regulation is not always easy. It will take time to adjust to the new routine, learn new work, adjust to new colleagues, etc. Do not give up at once. Talk with other co-workers as they might be experiencing the same.

If you do not like the work because it is abusive, exploitative or violative of your rights and welfare, then report immediately to the authorities or to the Embassy or Labour Attaché.

9. If you do not like the work because it is demanding or difficult, discuss this with your employer or supervisor and recommend options to make the work environment better for you without also compromising productivity and other factors, especially your co-workers. Talk as well to other co-workers who have gone through the same experience and they might give you advice or coping mechanisms.

If this does not work, reach out to the Embassy, support networks, migrant organisations, etc. as they might help in easing the workload by encouraging you to participate in socio-cultural events.

10. If the problem persists or recurs, then have a self-analysis and weigh the pros and cons of staying with your work or going back to home. Some factors you might think about are:
 - Can I find other jobs which may have lower salary but have less work demands?
 - If yes, will I still be able to pay my loans?
 - If yes, will I still be able to support my family?
 - Where can I find more happiness, peace and satisfaction in my work and life in general?
 - Am I willing to risk a lot for this job?

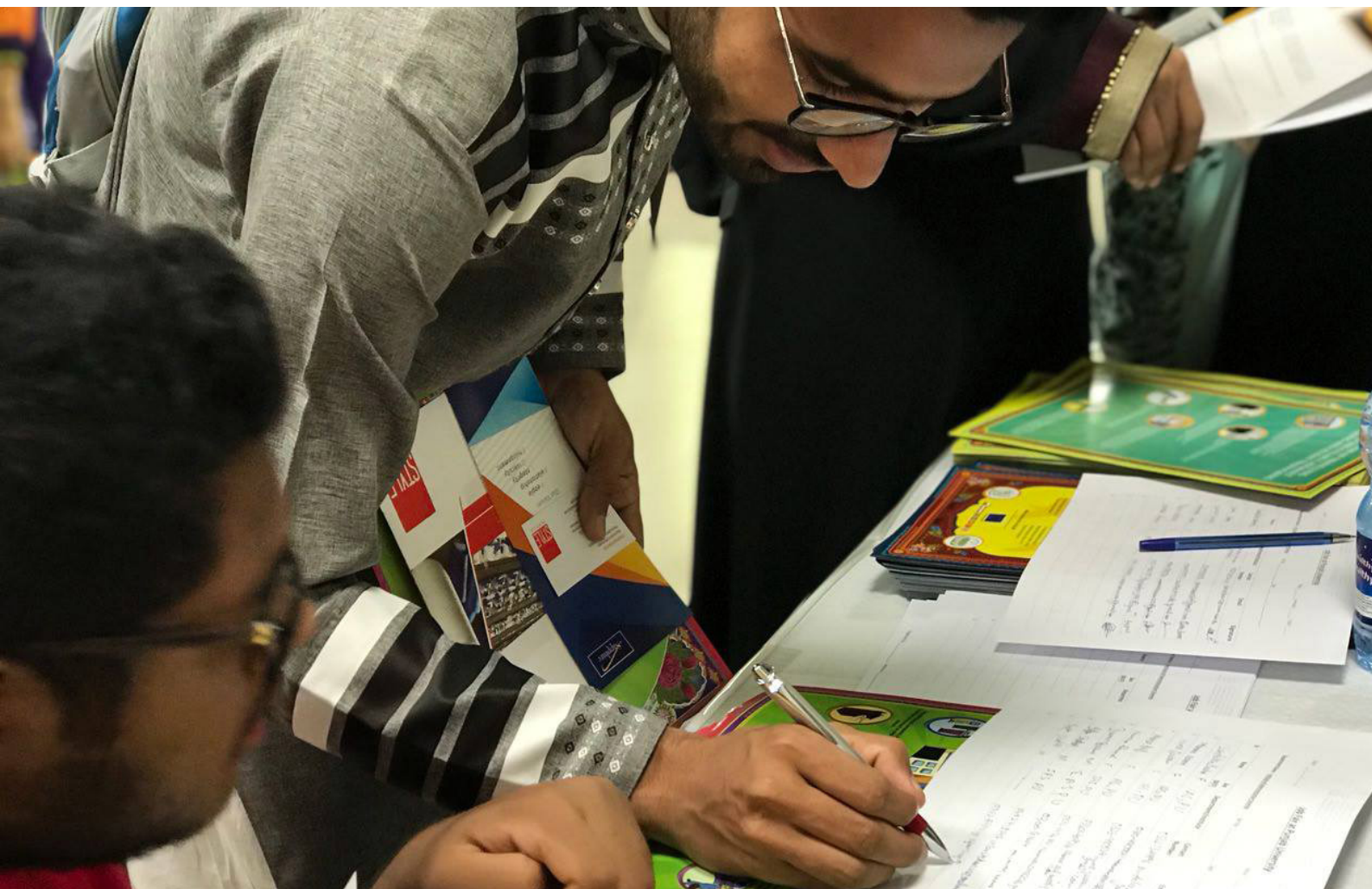
11. Support networks:

A trade union is an organisation of workers who have joined together to achieve common goals such as better working conditions, higher pay, social protection and occupational safety. The trade union negotiates with the employer on behalf of the members or the workers in order to improve the working conditions and uplift the lives of workers. Other tasks of a trade union include the following: negotiate for wage increase, help create an enabling working environment, rationalise rules and processes in the selection, hiring, promotion and dismissal of workers, promote occupational safety and security, organise fair and just complaint mechanism, etc.

It is an independent entity where officers generally are elected by the members for a given term or purpose such as collective bargaining. The members pay registration fees for the operation and activities of the trade union.

12. If this is allowed in the country where you are working, it is good for you to join a trade or employees' union. If not available, then join a formal/registered or informal/unregistered migrant organisation. They have a lot to offer but the most basic of which is that you have a support network. They will not be able to address all your issues or give you the best solution to a problem at all times but the emotional and psychological support they can offer can ease out your problems and issues.

Please note that there is a restriction or limitation to take part in any trade union activities as a migrant worker in GCC or Middle East countries.



Module 2 Examinations

Please identify whether the following statements are true or false.

[You have to answer majority of the questions correctly or 50% in order to pass the examinations and proceed to the next module.]

	true	false
a. Programmes and services for migrant workers provided by the destination countries as well as the origin countries through their diplomatic and consular missions range from economic to social, and from legal to financial.		
b. The government programmes and services are exclusive for regular migrants or those paying the welfare fund.		
c. If you encounter some issues, especially related to your work, please file a case with the police immediately before reporting this to the Embassy or the Labour Attaché.		
d. As a general rule, any additional work that is not included or in line with the standard employment contract is either a violation or substitution of contract, both of which are not allowed and are with corresponding sanctions or penalties.		
e. Living and working in another country with a different environment, people and regulation is not always easy. It will take time to adjust to the new routine, learn new work, adjust to new colleagues, etc. Do not give up at once. Talk with other co-workers as they might be experiencing the same.		
f. A trade union is an organisation of workers who have joined together to achieve common goals such as better working conditions, higher pay, social protection and occupational safety.		
g. There is a restriction to take part in any trade union activities as a migrant worker in GCC countries.		
h. If you do not like the work because it is demanding or difficult, discuss this with your employer or supervisor and recommend options to make the work environment better for you without also compromising productivity and other factors, especially your co-workers.		

Module 3 – Getting settled medium term: sample tips and advice

Once you are able to settle immediately upon arrival, it is time to look for other opportunities so that you can enhance your skills or adjust better to your environment.



1. Improving your education, skills and qualifications (e.g. computer literacy, vocational skills, culinary, financial literacy, work and stress management)

Participating in training or seminar not only expands your knowledge and enhances your skills and qualifications, it will also help you know better your colleagues and co-workers, and expand your social networks. Take all the possible opportunities to participate in trainings, workshops or seminars so long as it will not affect your work or schedule. Your company or the Embassy, host government or private sector may offer these. Some are offered online which you can take at your own time and pace.

2. Try to look for courses or trainings that are free or with minimal costs. If you believe the training is related to your work, submit a proposal and discuss this with your employer or supervisor as they might pay for the costs or they might allow you to do the training while on official or working time.

For vocational courses, check these:

http://www.tevta.gop.pk/vocational_edu.php

<http://www.academicinfo.net/online-courses/career-vocational-training>

<https://digiskills.pk/>

For Iraq, here are other sources of vocational courses:

- i. British Council in Iraq
- ii. DRC Iraq - Vocational Training & Internship
- iii. National Center for Administrative Development and Information Technology - Ministry of Planning
- iv. Training and recruitment office - MOLSA : Provides training courses for the unemployed as well as helps them build their projects by giving small loans.
- v. Vocational courses in Basra - South of Iraq: includes various courses such as electricity/electrician/electrical engineering, oil equipment maintenance and IT

Other examples of online vocational training (via website or mobile application)

- vi. Swedish Academy for training : Mechanics for Heavy Automotive Equipment and English Language
- vii. IBS Training Academy : online courses and certification on PMP for Iraqis
- viii. Udemy: low cost online vocational courses for Iraqis
- ix. AMIDEAST programs : American programs and services for vocational training

3. For language courses, check these free online courses. There are times that the government or Embassy also offer basic language course.

<https://www.duolingo.com/>

<https://www.rosettastone.com/>

<https://www.coursera.org/browse/language-learning>

For Iraq, here are other online sources of language courses:

- i. AMIDEAST – programs for learning English language
- ii. British Council
- iii. English language schools in Iraq
- iv. The Open University

Websites and Apps for learning English:

- v. Z American English Learning
- vi. Hello English
- vii. Johnny Grammar's Word Challenge

4. It is important that you also manage your resources or finances, save for your future while at the same time supporting your family. The following are some tips and advice:



- Make a financial plan. This includes information on what is your goal, how much you should earn in order to achieve this goal, how much do you actually earn, how much you should save and spend, etc. The plan should be for you as a migrant worker and for your family, either jointly or separately. MRC can provide you with a sample of a financial plan if you need it.
- Your financial plan should include not only a computation of what you earn and spend but also on the need to secure your future such as payment of insurance, provident fund, savings, and other forms of social protection. These should be factored in first before you plan on how and where to spend your income on other needs.
- The plan will also include how long you intend to stay abroad and work. This will help determine your spending patterns. Please note that you cannot be a migrant worker forever because of several reasons, foremost of which is that your contract is usually for a limited period of time. As such, prepare for your eventual return and reintegration in advance.

5. Here are other tips and advice to help achieve your financial goals.

- Prioritise spending on your needs rather than wants and other non-essential items.
- Pay your debts and loans on time. Do not borrow money in order to pay another debt.
- Invest some of your income in business either through you directly (passive investment) or your family members who can be more actively engaged if they do not have other jobs.

6. There are online courses on financial literacy and inclusion that offers information on:

- Better management of remittances
- Effective savings techniques
- How to get out of debt
- Where to invest your money
- How to become a business owner

The MRC in Pakistan offer special session on financial literacy, which the MRC in Iraq and Bangladesh will soon conduct too, once they are fully operationalised. You may inform your family members and encourage them to participate in the sessions. They can contact the MRCs through <https://www.mrc.org.pk/en/>



7. Finding additional sources of income (if allowable) will also be helpful, especially if it will engage your family members. They can put up a business, livelihood or entrepreneurial activities using some of the remittances you provided them.

You can also directly invest some of your income on passive investments such as stocks, bonds and treasury bills. These options for investments and businesses are presented during the financial literacy sessions and training.

8. Operationalise your return and reintegration plan (which you may have prepared when you attended the pre-departure training). The return and reintegration plan ideally will include your plan on saving, getting into investment or business, having emergency fund, regularly paying insurance, provident fund or retirement plan, etc.

The importance of having a reintegration plan is to save and prepare for your future so that when you return home after several years, you have money to help you and your family live accordingly. You need not immediately work. Operationalising the plan will also help you in times of crises or emergency or when you are suddenly repatriated or in difficult medical condition. If you do not yet have this reintegration plan, it would be good to start now, either by attending financial literacy training or reaching out to the MRCs.

9. If you went through the regular process of getting employment abroad, most likely you have a welfare fund and insurance.



To properly use and maximise the benefits of your insurance:

- Know and understand very well its provisions, contents, benefits and coverage (these are country-specific and depends on the premium and coverage)
 - Pay the fees regularly and timely (if the insurance is paid by the employer, check regularly if it is timely paid; if not, report to the employer or recruiter)
 - Secure copies of the forms that will be used if you avail of the benefits
 - Know the contact information of the nearest office where you can submit your claims
 - Keep duplicate copies of any medical results, doctors' prescriptions, receipts or invoice, etc.
10. While you are abroad primarily to work, it will also be important for you to explore interesting, historical and cultural places in the country, and understanding other people, culture, lifestyle, norms, etc. This is one way of fighting boredom or homesickness, and at the same time immersing yourself into your new residence.
11. Generally, the Embassy or the community will have at least one cultural event in a year, usually to celebrate your country's national day. Depending on how active the migrant or diaspora community is, there will be other cultural and social occasions to celebrate various festivals or historical events, fund-raising, sports competition, educational trip, tours, etc.

The Embassy or the community/diaspora/migrants may also have additional civic work such as “Embassy on wheels” or “mobile services” where Embassy or Consular activities are done outside the official premises, usually in other far cities or provinces in order to reach out and cater to the needs of the migrants. Examples of these activities are renewal of passports, certification or verification of documents, legal assistance, etc. You can volunteer in these activities.

Other groups conduct medical missions, legal clinic, counselling, etc. in which you can also participate or if you have the qualifications, volunteer.

12. Engaging with civic work or organisation

There are various kinds of migrant organisations in the destination countries, with members either from one nationality only or from various nationalities. They do various works such as:

- Political, social, cultural, professional, sports, geographical-related activities
- Humanitarian assistance, relief operations and emergency support
- Aid for the development of their country

- Health, educational or housing services for the migrant community in host countries
- Medical and social services to migrants
- Advocacy and lobbying (e.g. portability of Medicare, insurance, voting rights, etc.)

You can choose which ones to join that suits your needs and interests. Some may require membership fee or contribution. Some may be registered formally with the host country while others are informal organisations. There are a lot of benefits if you join these organisations; not only can they be your support network but they can also be your source of information, advice and guidance.

13. Try to join as many possible events as you can to help you adjust and cope up with homesickness. Make sure, however, that your participation in the activities will not compromise and negatively impact on your schedule, work and focus.

Be cautious, however, of some migrant organisations who do illicit activities such as money trading, illegal recruitment and unauthorised collection and misuse of funds. Make sure as well that your membership in the organisations and participation in the activities will not compromise and negatively impact on your schedule, work and focus.

These links will provide you additional information:

<http://gcmigration.org/members/>
<https://www.ituc-csi.org/about-us>
<http://mfasia.org/about-us/membersandpartners/>
<http://idwfed.org/en/affiliates>

14. You also have to be prepared for crisis or emergencies as these are becoming common in both origin and destination countries and have impact and consequences on the working and living conditions of migrants. Example of these crisis or emergencies are natural calamities, war or conflict, political unrests, xenophobic attacks, and health scare/medical emergencies such as contagious diseases that affect migrants due to their mobility.

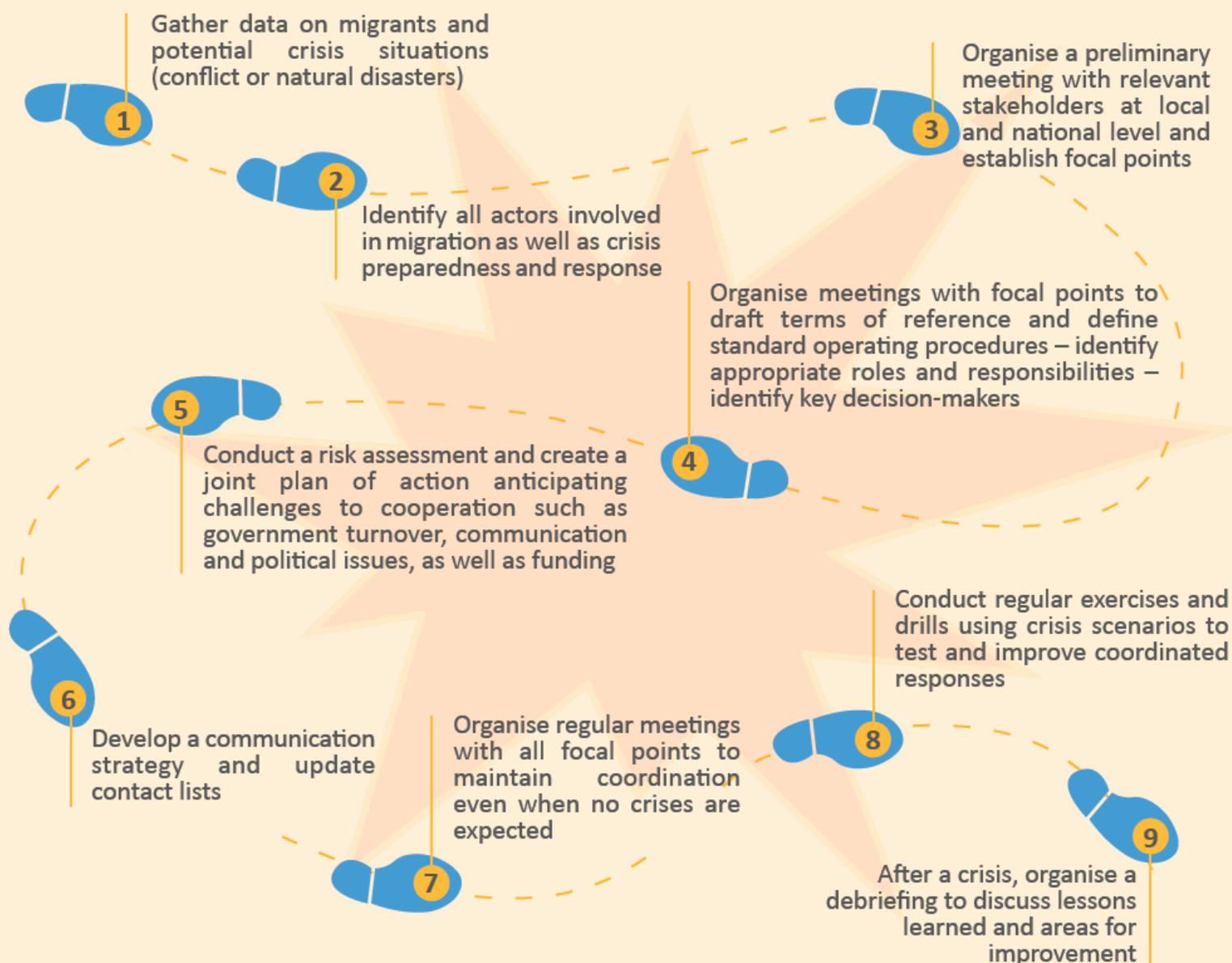


15. The following are some tips and advice in times of emergencies:

- Do not panic
- Be ready with your emergency bag (containing necessities such as water, food, medicines, essential documents and communication equipment, and some clothing) for eventual evacuation or relocation especially in earthquake-prone areas
- Know your exit routes and ways going to the Embassy, Consulate or other support network (police, hospital, shelter, etc.)
- Communicate immediately with friends, family and other colleagues

Other tips will depend on the nature of the emergencies. For example, in earthquake-prone areas, always be ready with your emergency bag which contains essential clothings, food, flashlight, whistle, and documents in water-proof container. As such, participate in trainings or drills, know the various evacuation procedures, get regular updates and advice from authorities, and keep calm.

KEY STEPS TO STRENGTHENING MULTI-STAKEHOLDER CRISIS COORDINATION



Source: MICIC

Module 3 Examinations

Please identify whether the following statements are true or false.

[You have to answer majority of the questions correctly or 50% in order to pass the examinations and proceed to the next module.]

	true	false
a. It is important that you also manage your resources or finances, save for your future while at the same time supporting your family.		
b. There are various kinds of migrant organisations in the destination countries, with members either from one nationality only or from various nationalities. They do various works such as political, social, cultural, professional, sports, geographical-related activities		
c. While you are abroad primarily to work, it is not important for you to explore interesting, historical and cultural places in the country, and understanding other people, culture, lifestyle, norms, etc. You can learn about these online.		
d. Since you are working mostly in developed countries, there is no need to prepare for emergencies as the country is fully equipped and responsible for this.		
e. To properly use and maximise the benefits of your insurance, pay the premium and monthly dues on time.		
f. The return and reintegration plan ideally will include your plan on saving, getting into investment or business, having emergency fund, regularly paying insurance, provident fund or retirement plan, etc.		
g. The remittances you send to your family is sufficient. There is no need for them to find additional sources of income.		
h. Take all the possible opportunities to participate in trainings, workshops or seminars so long as it will not affect your work or schedule. Your company or the Embassy, host government or private sector may offer these. Some are offered online which you can take at your own time and pace.		

Module 4 – Getting settled long-term: sample tips and advice

Depending on the country or category of migrants, there are options for longer-stay or to settle on a more permanent basis in the destination countries. It would be good for the migrant workers to know more about these options and also plan for their and their family's future.



1. Finding pathways to integration, residency or citizenship

Whenever allowable, find out what opportunities are available for you in the host countries for longer stay such as acquiring permanent residency or citizenship. Know what are the requirements and procedures and if it is allowable for you and should you desire, plan and prepare for this. For example, you can acquire permanent residency after two and seven years of working legally in Singapore and Hong Kong, respectively. In countries such as New Zealand, you can “petition” or bring along your qualified family members after two years of regular work.

Here are examples of other options or pathways towards safe, regular and orderly migration:

2. Finding future employment (if allowable)

There are country-specific rules and regulations in changing employment or employer. In countries that practice the Kafala system, you cannot change employer within your contract and if you do so, you have to get permission or “no objection certificate” from your Kafeel, employer or sponsor. In same countries, such limitations in changing employers are relaxed after two years of continuous work.

In countries with more open labour policies and available markets, migrant workers have more opportunities to look for other work on their own or through job portals and agencies. If you do so, please ensure that you follow the requirements and procedures such as complying with the time requirements for resignation, updating your visa status, and reporting on your new employment to the appropriate authorities.

3. Supporting development efforts in your country of origin: When you have extra resources, you may participate in development, charity or humanitarian work in your origin country in various forms: through financial contribution, by volunteering, by sharing your talents or skills or technology, etc.

The Embassy or the migrant community themselves usually solicit development or humanitarian assistance or raise funds through various strategies such gala dinner, raffle, competition, etc. There are migrant organisations whose main work is to also do fund raising to support diaspora philanthropy.



The development work can be: providing scholarships, supporting capital for livelihood and social entrepreneurship, relief and calamity efforts, medical assistance and donation to charitable institutions.

4. Voting rights or political participation in origin country: This is a country specific policy but generally, migrants are allowed to participate in national elections. They can cast their votes in the Embassy or Consulate or by mail or online.

In some countries, there are special seats reserved for migrant representation in the legislative branch or parliament.

5. Voting rights or political participation in destination country: This is generally not allowed unless you have acquired a status such as residency or citizenship that will already entitle you to participate in political or democratic exercise in the destination country.

Module 4 Examinations

Please identify whether the following statements are true or false.

[You have to answer majority of the questions correctly or 50% in order to pass the examinations and proceed to the next module.]

	true	false
a. As migrant, it is important to also support development efforts in your origin country whenever you have the means.		
b. Once you sign a contract with an employer, it is mandatory that you finish it regardless of the time frame.		
c. As a migrant worker, the general rule is that you are only allowed to stay and work in the destination country within the timeframe of your contract and visa.		
d. There are options to bring along family members if they are qualified to the destination countries.		
e. Same political rights offered in origin countries apply to a migrant worker while he or she is in the destination country.		
f. Depending on the country or category of migrants, there are options for longer-stay or to settle on a more permanent basis in the destination countries.		
g. Part of the adjustment and integration in host countries is to plan for long-term stay.		

CONGRATULATIONS! You completed the modules for the Post-Arrival Orientation Seminar. Your certificate will be issued asap. The organisers will get in touch with you for this purpose.

We hope that you learned a lot and will be able to apply what you have learned and understood in your daily living and working life in Iraq. If you have any question or clarification, please feel free to contact the Migrant Resource Centre in Iraq through: info@mrciraq.iq

We wish you all the best!

