

Evaluation of a Pilot Program to Recruit Foreign Nursing Aides

Bilateral Agreements between the Government of Israel and the Governments of Nepal and Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Background

In 2017, approximately 50,000 foreign nursing aides were employed in Israel. The Foreign Workers Law of 1991 does not stipulate mechanisms for recruitment, and employers in Israel have been using employment agencies to bring workers into the country. Under this arrangement, it has been difficult to supervise the quality of nursing aides arriving in Israel and to prevent agencies from taking illegal payment from potential workers in their country of origin to enable them to enter Israel. In light of this, the government decided to set out the terms for bringing foreign nursing aides to the country, through bilateral agreements between the government of Israel and the governments of the nursing aides' countries of origin.

To this end, the government launched a pilot program to bring foreign nursing aides to the country without the mediation of private agencies. The pilot program included training the nursing aides in their own country and raising their professional level, while preventing fraudulent acts such as charging illegal payments. It was planned that the pilot program would bring 100 nursing aides to Israel under bilateral agreements with Nepal and Sri Lanka. As part of the pilot program, the Center for International Migration and Integration (CIMI) commissioned the Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute to conduct an evaluation to examine various aspects of the pilot program, such as the recruitment process, the substance and quality of the training, the reception and placement of the workers in Israel, the satisfaction of the employers, workers, and local agencies, and a mapping of the key issues of the arrangement as perceived by the parties involved.

Study Goal

The study goal was to learn from the implementation of the pilot program and gain insights in order to help prepare for more extensive recruitment and training of foreign nursing aides in the future under the terms of bilateral agreements.

Method

The study was based on several sources of information. In order to learn about the pilot program thoroughly, we conducted a survey of employers and nursing aides after they had been employed for a

certain amount of time. In addition, we analyzed two sources of administrative data: 1. Data received from the Population and Immigration Authority on the length of time the nursing aides had been employed and the number of different employers they had had; 2. Data from CIMI on the number of referrals to the hotline. In-depth interviews were carried out with the partners (PIA, local agencies, CIMI, and others) in order to obtain different perspectives on the subject.

Findings

The pilot program managed to recruit nursing aides with a suitable professional background and designed a training program geared to working in Israel. All the nursing aides participated in the training and most of them reported that it considerably helped them perform their work in Israel. Most of the employers reported that they did not think that anything had been left out of the training.

Most of the employers expressed high satisfaction with the professional and interpersonal aspects of the nursing aides and most of the nursing aides reported high satisfaction with their work in Israel as well.

There was no indication from any source that the nursing aides had paid any more money than the amount specified in the agreement.

Conclusion

The pilot program succeeded in achieving its main goals and creating a new format for bringing nursing aides to Israel through bilateral agreements. However, the pilot program was conducted on a small scale and there were delays in the rate at which the nursing aides arrived. The number of nursing aides and the speed at which they arrive are important contributory factors to the successful implementation of the project on a national scale. Hence it is important to give thought to ways of increasing the number of nursing aides coming into the country and shortening the process so as to speed up their arrival.