

# PILOT STUDY: SKILL DEVELOPMENT AND JOB CREATION IN SAUDI ARABIA: AN ASSESSMENT OF KING ABDULLAH SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

## Abstract

A highly skilled workforce able to perform complex tasks and adapt rapidly to the needs of a globalized knowledge-based economy is essential to the Saudi labor market. One important agent in supporting the development of such a workforce and addressing overdependence on foreign labor is national scholarship programs for study abroad. This pilot study aims to assess both the intended and unintended effects of the King Abdullah Scholarship program (KASP), which sponsors Saudi students for study abroad, on labor market outcomes, as well as its real and potential contribution to the goals of job creation and Saudization of the skilled labor force.

## Expected Impact

Lay the groundwork for a full randomized controlled trial that offers a comparative assessment of KASP and other strategies pursued by the Kingdom. This can help guide resource allocation and improve the effectiveness of agencies and programs tasked with bridging the skill gap.

## PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS

- **King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies**  
Abdul Ghaffar Mughal  
Fahad Alsharif
- **University of Massachusetts Amherst**  
Ina Ganguli



**HARVARD Kennedy School**  
*Evidence for Policy Design*



Ministry of Labor  
and Social Development  
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



صندوق تنمية الموارد البشرية  
HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT FUND