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EWA MARKET INSIGHTS

-KSA



The Global Need for **Access to Credit**

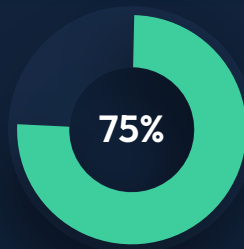
Access to credit and financial services is a fundamental driver of economic growth and individual well-being.

Yet, globally, millions of people remain excluded from the formal financial system. According to the World Bank, half of the world's adults, **around 2.5 billion people, do not use formal financial services**, while **75% of poor households remain unbanked**. More recent estimates show that **1.7 billion people, nearly 30% of the global population, still lack access to affordable and reliable financial services**.

This lack of financial inclusion directly impacts their ability to save, borrow, and access credit in times of need, forcing individuals to rely on informal lenders or high-interest borrowing mechanisms that often trap them in cycles of debt.



2.5B adults
excluded



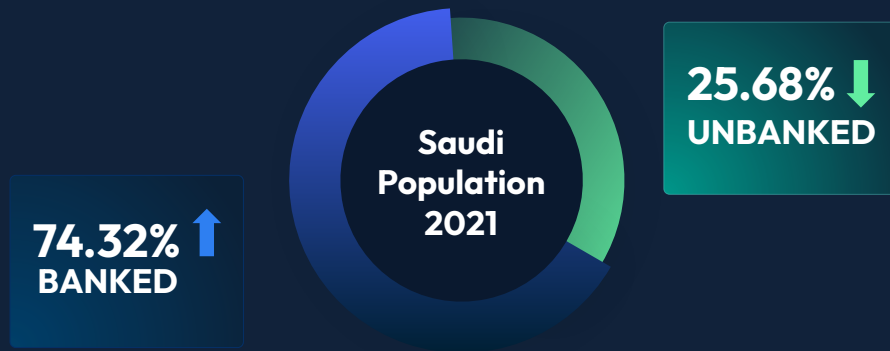
75% of the poor
are unbanked



1.7B lacking financial
inclusion

Financial Inclusion in Saudi Arabia

In Saudi Arabia, financial inclusion has significantly improved in recent years, aligning with the country's Vision 2030 goals of building a diversified and digitally-enabled economy.



This exclusion disproportionately affects vulnerable groups such as low-income workers, expatriates, and blue-collar employees, many of whom struggle with limited access to affordable credit or digital payment solutions. At the same time, SMEs, representing the backbone of the Saudi economy, face financing gaps that hinder their ability to scale and sustain growth.

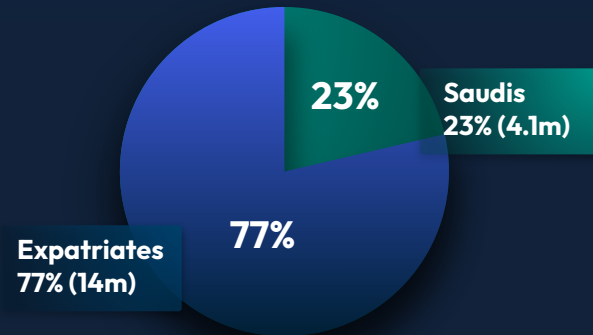


Financial Challenges Faced by Employees in Saudi Arabia

While Saudi Arabia has made significant progress in financial inclusion, the reality on the ground reveals pressing financial challenges for its workforce, particularly expatriates and blue-collar workers who make up the majority.

As of 2025, Saudi Arabia's workforce stands at **18.1 million people**, with expatriates making up nearly **77% (14 million)**. This heavy reliance on foreign labor creates unique financial dynamics, particularly when combined with wage disparities across different segments of the population.

For Saudi nationals, the minimum wage is set at **4,000 SAR** in the private sector and **3,000 SAR** in the public sector, while expatriate workers face no mandated minimum. Domestic staff, often among the most financially vulnerable, earn as little as **1,500 SAR** per month.

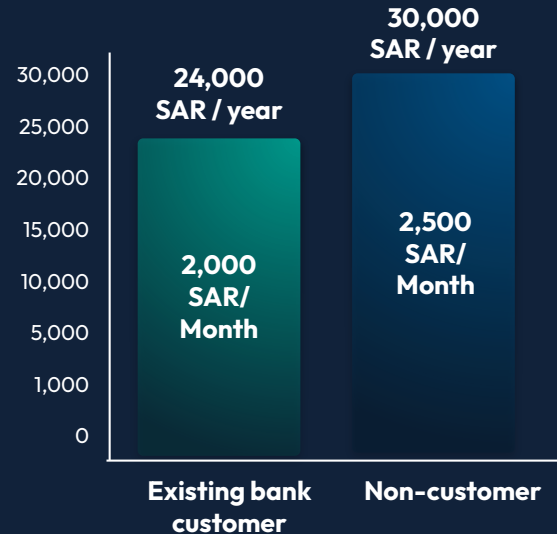


Saudi Arabia's workforce
18.1 million people



Financial Challenges Faced by Employees in Saudi Arabia

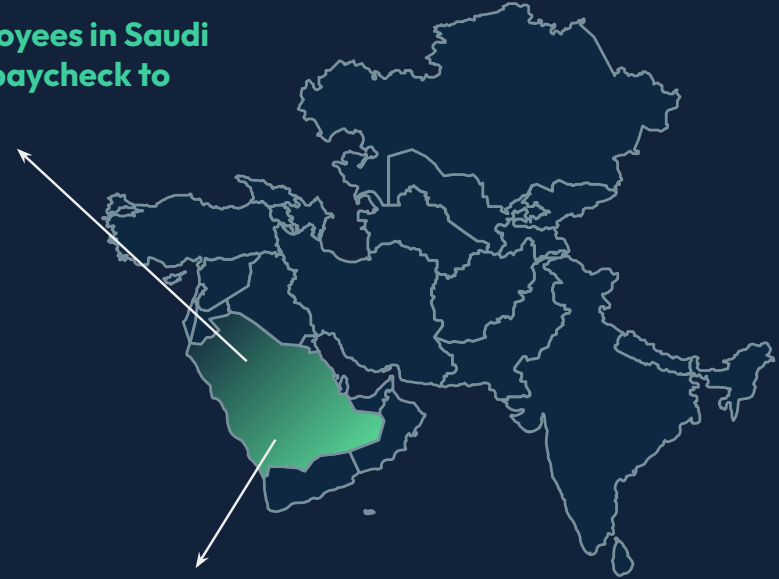
These income levels present clear challenges when paired with stringent credit access requirements. Under regulations from **SAMA**, employees must earn a minimum annual salary of **24,000 SAR (2,000 SAR per month)** if they are existing bank customers or **30,000 SAR (2,500 SAR per month)** for non-customers, to qualify for a credit card. As a result, millions of low-income workers, particularly expatriates and domestic staff, remain excluded from the formal credit system.



Financial Challenges Faced by Employees in Saudi Arabia

The implications of these barriers are significant. Today, **79%** of employees in the Kingdom live paycheck to paycheck, underscoring the extent of financial vulnerability across the workforce. This pressure directly impacts businesses as well, contributing to a turnover rate of **14.1%**, the highest in the GCC. For employers, this translates into rising recruitment and training costs, while employees face cycles of financial stress that limit productivity and stability.

79% of employees in Saudi Arabia live paycheck to paycheck,



an annual turnover rate of 14.1%, the highest in the GCC



Introducing **Earned Wage Access**

What is EWA?

Earned Wage Access (EWA) is *a financial solution that allows employees to access a portion of their earned wages before their scheduled payday*. Instead of waiting weeks for salaries, **employees can withdraw the money they have already worked for**, providing them with financial flexibility when they need it most.

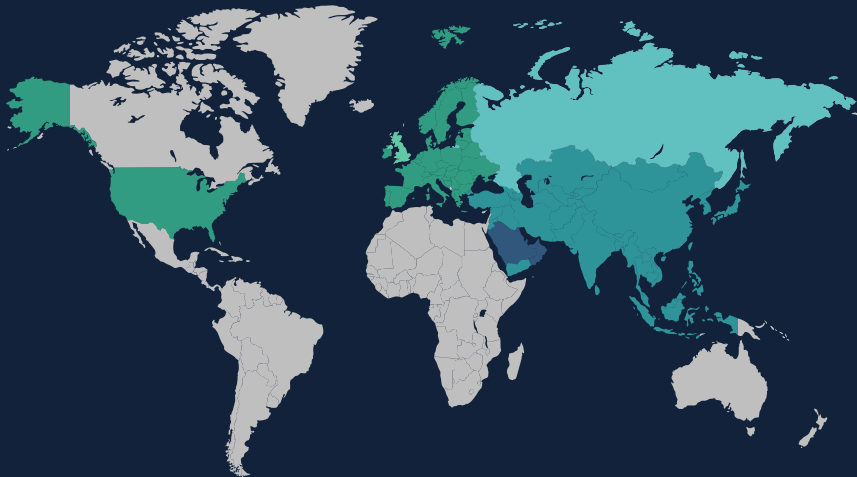
Unlike payday loans or traditional salary advances, **EWA is not a loan**. Employees do not incur debt, nor are they charged high interest rates. Instead, **EWA integrates seamlessly with payroll systems, enabling safe, compliant, and instant access to wages** without adding administrative burden on employers.



Global Adoption Trends

EWA has rapidly grown into one of the fastest-expanding segments of fintech worldwide. In markets such as the United States and Europe, large employers, including Walmart, Amazon, and Uber, have rolled out EWA programs to millions of workers. In Asia and Africa, EWA adoption has accelerated in sectors dominated by blue-collar and gig economy workers, where access to traditional credit is limited.

*The global EWA market is projected to reach **USD 20 billion+ in transactions by 2030**,* highlighting both the scale of demand and the role of EWA in bridging financial gaps for workers worldwide.



(US, Europe, Asia, GCC)



Market Players **Across Regions**

COMPANY	LOCATION
Daily Pay	USA
Flexx Pay	UAE
Khazna	Egypt
Refyne	India
Abhi	Pakistan, UAE, KSA, Oman
Xerpa	Brazil
My Pay Now	Australia



EWA Adoption In Different Sectors

EWA has proven particularly impactful in industries with large workforces, high turnover, and time-sensitive financial needs:



Retail & FMCG

Reduces attrition in high-churn environments.



Construction & Blue-Collar Labor

Provides stability for migrant workers supporting families abroad.



Healthcare

Helps shift workers and frontline staff manage financial emergencies.



Gig Economy & Logistics

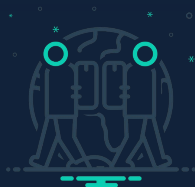
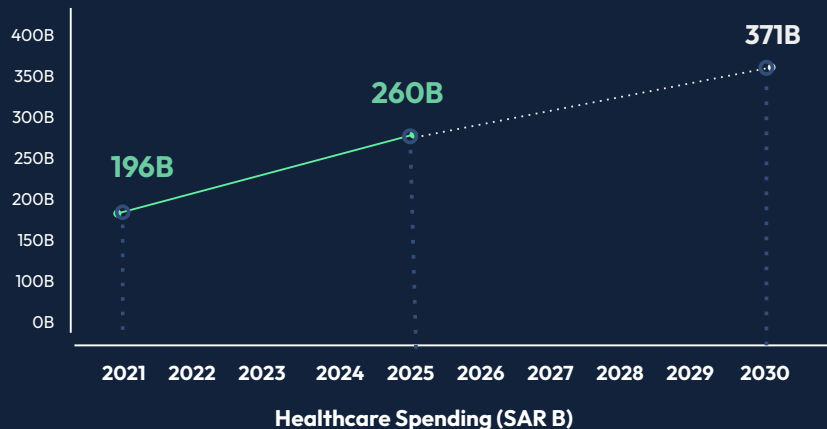
Platforms like Uber and Deliveroo use EWA to support flexible pay cycles for drivers and riders.

For Saudi Arabia, these sectors represent some of the largest employers of expatriates and nationals alike, making EWA a natural fit for the Kingdom's labor market.

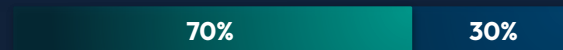
Use Case: Healthcare Sector

Saudi Arabia's healthcare sector is at the core of Vision 2030, undergoing major transformation through increased investment, workforce expansion, and privatization.

But beyond budgets and infrastructure, the true foundation of this system is its people, doctors, nurses, and frontline caregivers.



Workforce target
175,000
by 2030



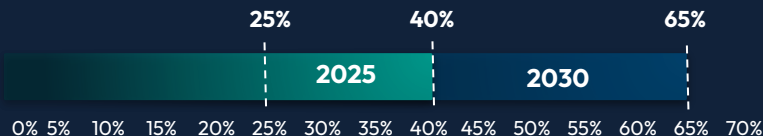
0-70% of nurses working in Saudi Arabia are expatriates

Use Case: Healthcare Sector

Unlike other industries, the stakes in healthcare are uniquely human. **When caregivers face financial stress, it doesn't just affect them personally, it impacts the quality of care patients receive.** Many nurses and expatriate staff live paycheck to paycheck, often supporting families abroad through remittances. This **financial vulnerability fuels stress, lowers job satisfaction, and contributes to high turnover.**

The government aims to increase the private sector's share of healthcare provision through privatization of **over 290 hospitals and 2,300 primary healthcare centers.**

Increase in Private Sector of Healthcare Provision



Number of facilities moving to private sector



290+
Hospitals



2,300
Primary healthcare
centers

Use Case: Healthcare Sector

Earned Wage Access (EWA) offers a practical solution. By giving healthcare workers instant access to their earned salaries, hospitals and clinics can



**Ease Financial
Stress**



**Improve
Retention**



**Support Expatriates
in Sending Timely
Remittances.**

Happier, financially secure caregivers deliver better care, strengthening not just the workforce, but the health outcomes of the Kingdom.



Benefits of **Earned Wage Access**

EMPLOYEES



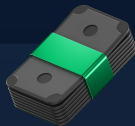
Financial flexibility

access earned wages instantly for emergencies



Debt avoidance

reduces reliance on payday loans or credit cards



Remittance support

expatriates can send money home more regularly, helping families abroad.



Reduced stress

better financial well-being improves mental health.



Empowerment

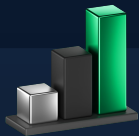
gives employees a sense of control over their income

EMPLOYERS



Reduced turnover

lower attrition in high-churn sectors.



Increased productivity

employees focus better without financial worries



Attractive HR perk

helps attract top talent in competitive job markets.



Alignment with ESG goals

shows commitment to social responsibility.



Cost savings

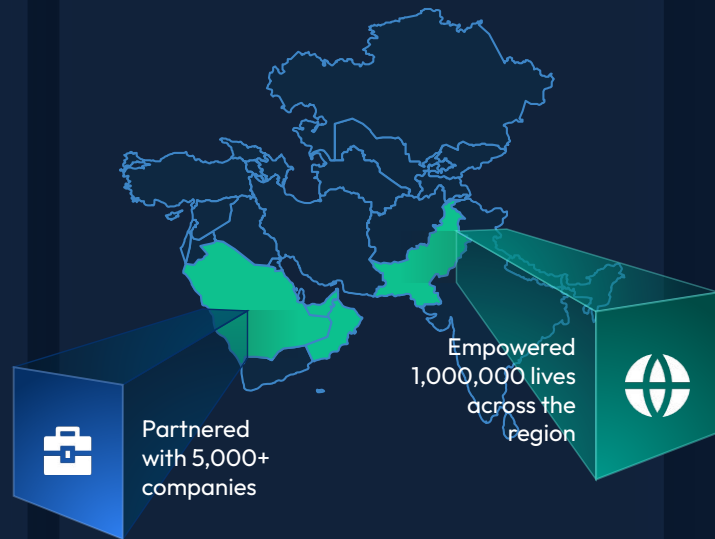
reduced recruitment, absenteeism, and payroll stress.



ABHI, a Neobank of the Future

Founded in 2021 with the vision of making financial access a right, rather than a privilege, ABHI, a neobank of the future, promotes financial inclusivity across emerging markets. What began with Earned Wage Access (EWA), empowering employees to access their earned salaries instantly, has evolved into a comprehensive suite of finance solutions, including Payroll Processing, Payroll Financing, and SME Financing.

In just **four years**, **ABHI has grown** from addressing a critical gap in **Pakistan's financial accessibility** to partnering with **over 5,000+ companies** and **empowering 1,000,000 lives across the region**. The company has **expanded into the UAE, KSA, and most recently, Oman** through a partnership with Daud Group of Companies, a milestone that further strengthens **ABHI's mission to make financial wellness inclusive and accessible across the MENAP region**.





ABHI, a Neobank of the Future

Further solidifying its impact on Pakistan's financial sector, **ABHI, in partnership with TPL**, has acquired **FINCA Microfinance Bank**. This acquisition marks a transformative step towards expanding microfinance services and deepening financial inclusion in the country.

Global Recognition:

- World Economic Forum Technology Pioneer (2023)
- Future 100 UAE List
- Hub71 & Endeavor network member



Regulatory Alignment Mudad & WPS



Step 1: WPS (via Mudad)

- Ensures salary protection
- Timely disbursement
- Worker rights safeguarded

Foundation established

Step 2: ABHI EWA Integration

- Payroll integration
- On-demand wage access
- Financial flexibility for employees

Enhanced impact

Step 3: Vision 2030 Alignment

- Digital transformation
- Workforce empowerment
- Financial inclusion at scale

The Kingdom has already made significant strides in streamlining payroll and ensuring compliance through the Wage Protection System (WPS), overseen by Mudad, the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development's digital payroll platform. WPS ensures timely salary disbursements and protects workers' rights, creating a strong foundation for financial inclusion.

EWA, powered by ABHI, builds on this foundation. By integrating with payroll systems, ABHI enhances WPS compliance while offering employees the added flexibility of on-demand wage access. This positions EWA not as a disruption but as a natural evolution of payroll in Saudi Arabia, aligned with Vision 2030's goals of digital transformation and workforce empowerment.

Conclusion & Future Outlook: EWA and the Road to Vision 2030



As economies across the MENAP region transform, the future of financial services lies in accessibility, inclusivity, and adaptability. Earned Wage Access (EWA), once an emerging concept, is now becoming a mainstream solution, shaping how employees experience financial security and how businesses engage their workforce

Alignment with Saudi Vision 2030

Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 is built on three pillars: a vibrant society, a thriving economy, and an ambitious nation. EWA directly contributes to these pillars by:

- Empowering individuals with on-demand access to their earnings, reducing reliance on debt, and increasing financial well-being.
- Strengthening businesses through improved employee productivity, retention, and engagement.
- Enabling financial innovation in alignment with the Kingdom's ambition to diversify its economy and foster fintech growth under the Financial Sector Development Program (FSDP).

As the Kingdom advances toward a cashless, digitally driven society, EWA is positioned as a key enabler of financial resilience, digital payments adoption, and workforce empowerment.

Future of Embedded Finance in MENAP

The next phase of EWA goes beyond salary access. It paves the way for a broader ecosystem of embedded finance solutions:

Payroll Financing to ease business liquidity challenges.

SME Financing to accelerate entrepreneurship and job creation.

Integrated financial wellness platforms offering savings, insurance, and credit-building opportunities.

**THANK
YOU**

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Appendix: References & Data Sources

Primary Data Sources

- Abhi Internal Research and Transaction Data (2024–2025)
- Employee Financial Wellness Survey, KSA (Abhi, 2025)
- Partner Payroll and Usage Reports (Aggregated and Anonymized, 2024–2025)

Industry Reports

- PwC Middle East – The Future of Earned Wage Access (2023)
- Visa Middle East – The Rise of Digital Payments in the GCC (2024)
- McKinsey & Company – The Financial Inclusion Opportunity in Saudi Arabia (2023)
- World Bank Global Findex Database (2021)
- IMF MENAP Regional Economic Outlook (2024)

Government & Policy Documents

- Saudi Vision 2030 – Financial Sector Development Program (FSDP)
- Saudi Central Bank (SAMA) – Financial Inclusion Strategy 2025
- Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development (MHRSD) – Wage Protection Program (WPP)
- General Authority for Statistics (GASTAT) – Labour Force Survey Q1 2024

Supporting References

- Arab News – “80% of GCC workers live paycheck to paycheck” (2023)
- Reuters – “Saudi Arabia's drive toward a cashless economy” (2024)
- Gulf Business – “The growing fintech ecosystem under Vision 2030” (2024)

Note: All third-party data sources have been cited where available. ABHI has used anonymized partner and