

Conclusions and recommendations of the study on changing migration trends: Kyrgyzstan

Assessment of the situation of women and girls from Kyrgyzstan in labor migration

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General information on the situation of Kyrgyz migrants



- Kyrgyzstan is a **country of origin** for a large number of labor migrants.
- According to the Ministry of Labor (MLSSM), as of May 24, 2024, most Kyrgyz migrants are working in:
 - **Russia** - 411,226 people;
 - **Kazakhstan** – 65,000 people;
 - **Turkey** – 60,000 people;
 - **USA** – 36,000 people;
 - **South Korea** – 14,000 people.
- In recent years, Kyrgyzstan has also become a destination country for migrant workers from neighboring countries (Uzbekistan) as well as for migrants from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. As of today, about **24 thousand** citizens from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh are in Kyrgyzstan, according to data from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

General information on the situation of Kyrgyz migrants



In recent years, there has been a diversification of labor markets, which can be seen through the changed volumes of remittances:

- Reduction of the total volume of remittances from Russia since October 2022 - from 98% in 2021 to 94% in 2023;
- Increase in transfers from Germany since 2022 - in March the total amount was \$200,000, and in April 2022 the amount increased 4.5 times to \$900,000;
- Remittances from the U.S. reached \$6.3 million, a 3-year high, in May 2024 - an increase of 42.5% compared to the same month in 2023. Remittances from the U.S. increased by 41.9% to \$27 million in January-May 2024.

Kyrgyzstan is actively working to regulate labor migration:

- In 2024, Kyrgyzstan joined the **Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Legal Migration**;
- The **pre-migration training module** has been approved by the MoLCOM;

Efforts are underway to improve the efficiency of employment of citizens abroad through the CTGR and CHAZ:

- Increase in the number of people employed through CHAZ **from 13.3k people** between 2019-2022 to over **10.7k people** in 28 countries in **the first six months of 2024 alone.**

Portrait of a migrant

- The average migrant is **34** years old;
- **Gender:** the share of male migrants - 64%, the share of female migrants - 58%;
- **Level of education: secondary** education - **44%**, higher education - 28%, specialized secondary education - 15%;
- **29% of respondents' households are on the verge of poverty**, they do not always have enough money for food;
- **Scope of activities (EAEU):**
 - housework 15%,
 - construction 14%,
 - food service 14%,
 - trade 11%,
 - transportation 8%,
 - beauty and health 7%;



Difficulties of migrants in destination countries



- A large number of informally employed migrants - there are no guarantees that their labor rights will be respected. About **34% of labor migrants do not have labor contracts;**
- **Low level of awareness of labor rights of migrant workers** and mechanisms for their protection (45%);
- **Insufficient pre-migration preparation** - risks of forced labor and exploitation in destination countries:
 - 52% are not aware of migration legislation,
 - 58% are not aware of the types of forced labor,
 - 15% of migrants face employers withholding their identity documents.
- **Low level of awareness and trust in public and private employment agencies:**
 - 29% of migrants are aware of CHAZ and 32% are aware of the CTGR (Center for Employment of Citizens Abroad of Kyrgyzstan),
 - 4% of migrants applied to CHAZ and 2.4% to TCHR.

Gender dimension of migration

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There is a feminization of labor migration from Kyrgyzstan. **The share of women in migration is about 58%.**

- **Occupation:** women are significantly more likely to work as domestic workers and in the food service, sales, retail, beauty/health and hospitality industries.
- Only **29%** of respondents in this survey **had received pre-migration training.**
- **Domestic workers in most cases work without an employment contract (78%).**
- **Challenges** faced by women workers in migration:
 - **workers are held in harsh working conditions (54%),**
 - employers **do not fulfill the conditions promised** at the time of hiring **(49%),**
 - female workers **face excessive overtime** through intimidation and threats **(37%),**
 - workers face **physical and sexual violence and harassment (32%);**
- **Diversification of the labor market** for female domestic workers- women often consider employment opportunities in new labor markets.

Migrant workers' union



- Migrant Workers Union was **founded in 2019**;
- Migrant Workers Union **membership is 10,069 (237 ethnic Uzbeks, 5,212 women)**;
- **Directions** of the union's work:
 - Providing **information** on labor rights and the risks of forced labor,
 - Providing **assistance to migrants** facing labor rights violations,
 - Providing **free legal assistance** and support to migrants (on issues of document withholding, non-compliance with labor protection principles, prohibition of movement by the employer, non-payment of wages, issues of legal stay and registration, etc.);
- Lawyers of the Migrant Workers Union provided **more than 5000 consultations over the last year** (30% of the issues were unpaid wages (more than \$ 150,000 in wages and compensations were returned to migrants), 15% were issues of migration legislation).

Activities of "Insan-Leilek"

- For more than **20 years, Insan-Leilek** has been implementing multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral programs aimed at **ensuring safe and legal labor migration**.
- These **goals** include: reducing poverty and improving the lives of vulnerable populations, including migrant workers and migrant women. For more than a decade, Insan-Leilek has been Kyrgyzstan's leading NGO in addressing migration and its impact. Insan-Leilek has made significant recommendations, including **measures to reform the legislative migration framework, to strengthen legal protection for migrants in destination countries, and to develop sustainable return programs**.
- Insan-Leilek is one of the first organizations in Kyrgyzstan to provide potential labor migrants with primary, up-to-date information on migration legislation in host countries. Its main task is to ensure safe and legal labor migration.

Recommendations

- **Strengthening the work of** public authorities and private employment agencies in conducting **pre-migration training**;
- **Considering the possibility of ratifying ILO Convention No. 181** on Private Employment Agencies;
- **Aligning migrant** employment **costs** through PEAs according to the principles of Convention No. 181;
- **Strengthening dialogue between government authorities in countries of origin and destination** to improve the situation of migrants ;
- **Conducting information campaigns** to raise awareness of labor rights among migrants ;
- **Informing workers about legal channels** for **employment abroad**, such as public and private recruitment agencies;
- **Diversification of labor markets**: information about new labor markets and conditions of migration and employment in these countries;
- **Encouraging migrants** to unite, join trade unions, or actively cooperate with diaspora organizations.

**Thank you for
your attention!**

