

UNDERSTANDING THE

PRE-DEPARTURE INFORMATION

ECOSYSTEM IN KAZAKHSTAN,

KYRGYZSTAN, TAJIKISTAN

AND UZBEKISTAN

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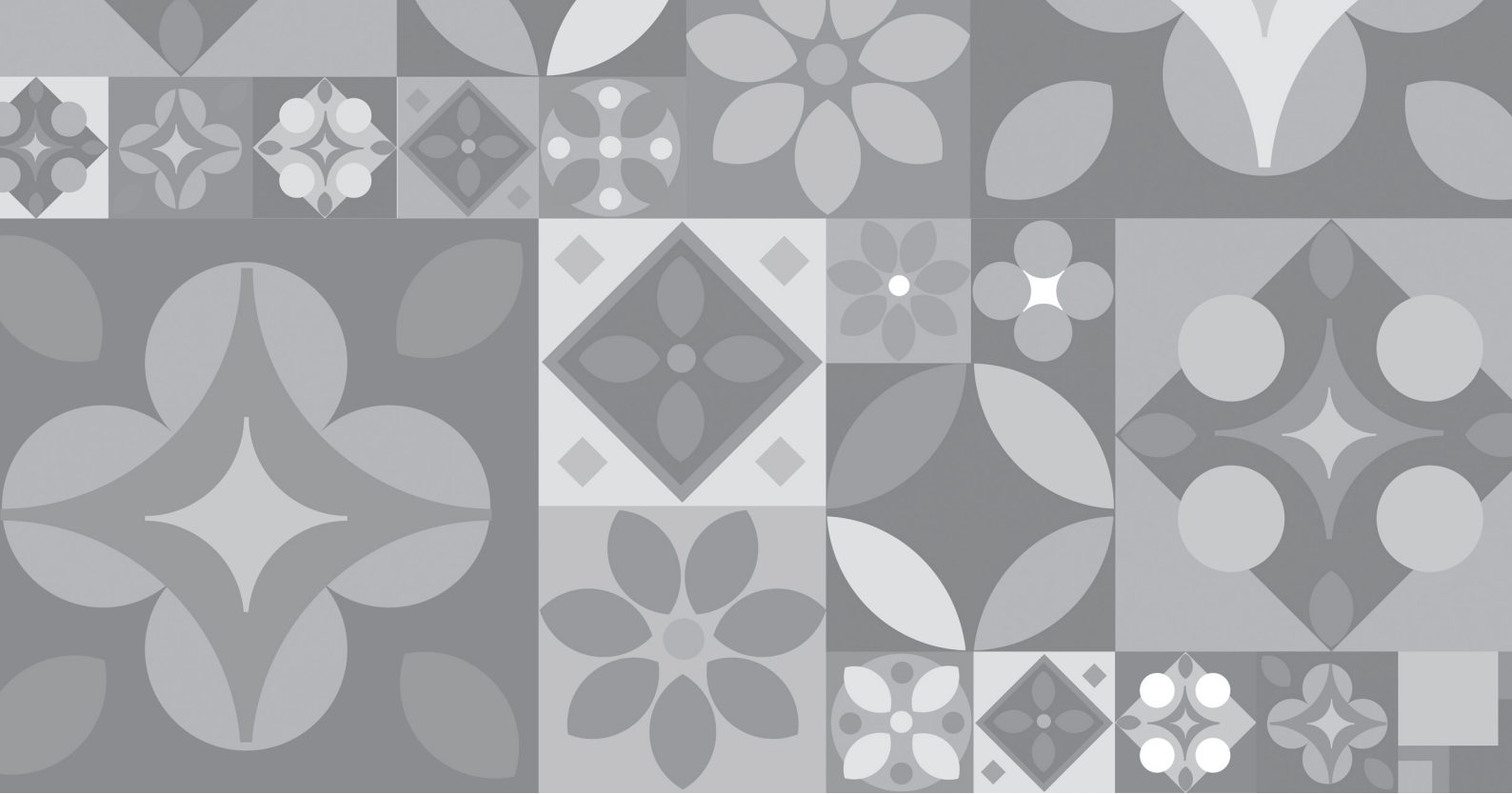
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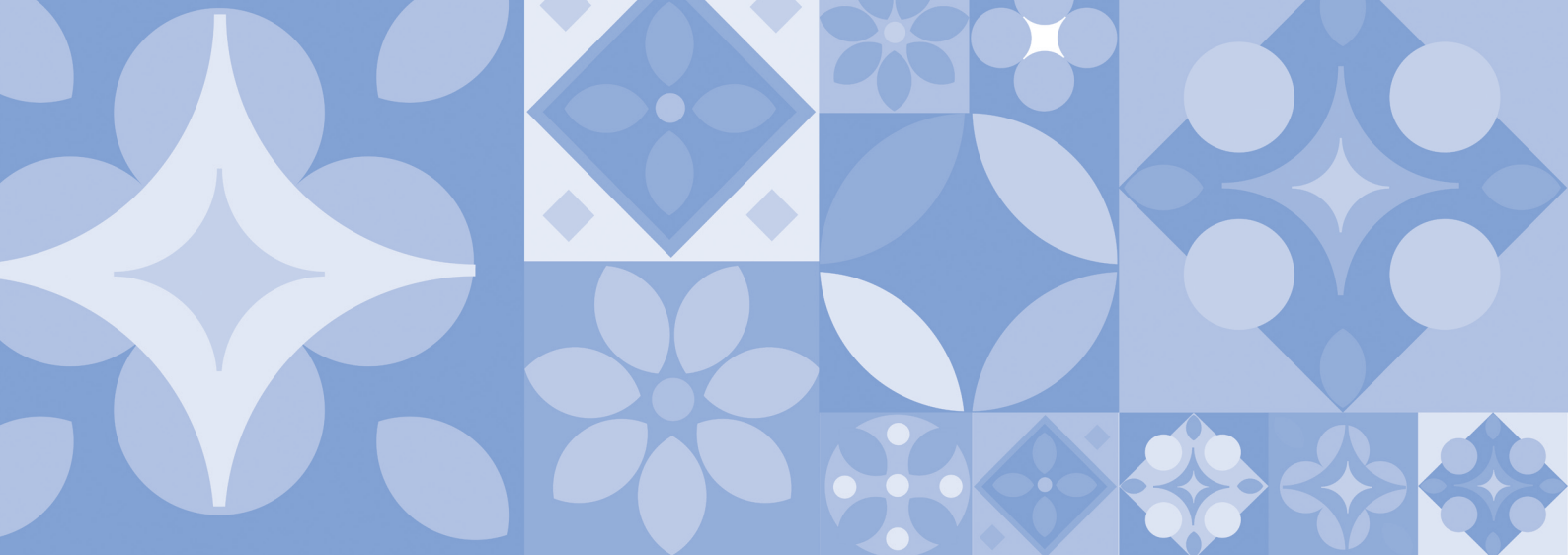
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ACRONYMS

AELM	Agency for External Labor Migration
BOMCA	Border Management Programme in Central Asia
CAT	Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
CBOs	Community-based organizations
CCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
CEA	Center for Employment Abroad
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CERD	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
CESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
CIOP	CIOP Comprehensive Information and Orientation Programme
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSOs	Civil society organizations
CTGR	Centre for employment of citizens aboard
DARYA	Dialogue and Action for Resourceful Youth in Central Asia
EAEU	Eurasian Economic Union
EHoA	East and Horn of Africa
EU	European Union
FBOs	Faith-based organizations
GCM	Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
GLAA	Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority
ICMPD	International Centre for Migration Policy Development
IEC	Information, education and communication
ILO	International Labour Organization
INGOs	International non-governmental organizations
IOM	International Organization for Migration
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
MEPR	Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction
MLSSM	Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Migration
MOELR	Ministry of Employment and Labor Relations
MOLME	Ministry of Labor, Migration and Employment
MRC	Migrant Resource Centre
NDS	National Development Strategy
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
OMWs	Outbound migrant workers
PAO	Post-Arrival Orientation
PDO	Pre-Departure Orientation
PDOCs	Pre-departure orientation centres
PEO	Pre-Employment Orientation
PRAs	Private recruitment agencies
PRO	Pre-Return Orientation
QR	Quick response
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SWS	Seasonal Workers Scheme
TIP	Trafficking in persons
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UAE	United Arab Emirates

GLOSSARY

Country of destination: In the migration context, a country that is the destination for a person or group of persons who have migrated abroad, irrespective of whether they migrate regularly or irregularly.¹

Country of origin: In the migration context, a country of nationality or of former habitual residence of a person or group of persons who have migrated abroad, irrespective of whether they migrate regularly or irregularly.²

Gender: The socially constructed roles and relationships, personality traits, attitudes, behaviours, values, relative power and influence that society ascribes to males and females on a differential basis. Gender is relational and refers not simply to women or men, but to the relationship between them.³

Information ecosystem: Loose, dynamic configuration of different sources, flows, producers, consumers, and sharers of information interacting within a defined community or space.⁴

Migrant worker: A person who is to be engaged, is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a State of which he or she is not a national.⁵

Persons with disabilities: Those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.⁶

Pre-Departure Orientation (PDO): An orientation programme supporting outgoing migrant workers to ensure their departure process is safe while also providing information on the upcoming journey, adjustment period and how to access support and assistance.⁷

Pre-Employment Orientation (PEO): An orientation programme which equips prospective migrant workers with information to support well-informed decision-making processes on foreign employment and provide accurate information on safe and ethical recruitment.⁸

Returning migrant worker: A migrant worker in their country of destination who is voluntarily returning to their country of origin.

Skills development: The full range of formal and non-formal vocational, technical and skills-based education and training for employment and/or self-employment, including: pre-employment and livelihood skills training; vocational education and training and apprenticeships; education and training for employed workers, including workplace training; and employment-oriented and job-related short courses.⁹

Trafficking in persons (TIP): The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.¹⁰

Vocational training: Vocational training is broadly defined as any type of job-related learning that raises an individual's productivity and includes learning in formal vocational and technical school programmes in training centres or institutes, and in the workplace, both on and off the job.¹¹



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

International labour migration not only serves as a crucial source of financial support and foreign exchange for numerous households and governments but also plays a pivotal role in addressing labour shortages, contributing to the economic growth and fostering the development of destination countries. For several decades, migrant workers from Central Asia have consistently sought employment primarily in neighbouring countries. The Russian Federation and Kazakhstan stand out as preferred destinations due to proximity to their home countries, similarities in their language and culture, and relatively simple requirements to obtain a work permit have made it an attractive place for them to seek work. Moreover, the significant number of their citizens residing in these nations provides them with more desirable options for employment, as their established networks can offer valuable support. In the first quarter of 2023, the influx of foreign labourers migrating to the Russia Federation experienced a notable surge, reaching 1.3 million - a 60% increase compared to the same period in 2022. Central Asian labourers continue to constitute a substantial proportion of migrants in the Russian Federation, with 350,000 Tajiks, over 630,000 Uzbeks, and 173,000 Kyrgyz currently employed in the country.¹²

The governments in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan are making efforts by introducing different initiatives to strengthen safe labour migration and support their nationals, including investing in partnership-building with the governments of many countries of destination. One such initiative is providing relevant information at the pre-departure phase to its nationals through various communication channels including pre-departure centres, employment centres, social media and other mediums such as television and radio. To support the governments' initiatives, IOM has launched the regional multi-stakeholder project "Labour Migration Programme in Central Asia" to enhance the management of labour migration and utilize human mobility for development in both countries of origin and destination. As part of this project, an assessment was carried out to contribute to strengthening pre-departure orientation (PDO) in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

This assessment aimed at:

Mapping communication channels.

Identifying barriers that may impact access to information.

Understanding the information needs of outbound migrant workers at the pre-departure stage.

The assessment employed a qualitative and quantitative research design and used both primary and secondary data sources. To set the parameters for this assessment, IOM devised gender-responsive and migrant-centric review criteria. Furthermore, the conceptualization and guidance of this assessment was largely informed by IOM's "Comprehensive Information and Orientation Programme" (CIOP) approach.

A comprehensive desk research review was undertaken to gather secondary data, encompassing reports, policies and statistics released by governments, analytical and thematic publications by international organizations and civil society organizations, newspaper articles, media and pertinent websites directly associated with recruitment actors and other stakeholders. The insights obtained from the desk review played a pivotal role in shaping the design of key informant interview guides, guiding data analyses and framing general discussions. Furthermore, other assessments concentrating on the current resources utilized for information dissemination were consulted for analysis, as the examination and analysis of material content was beyond the scope of this assessment. Primary data collection was conducted between September 2023 - January 2024, engaging 921 migrant workers, 35 per cent of whom were women, along with 40 stakeholders, comprising government entities, UN agencies, civil society organizations and private recruitment agencies.

Utilizing these data collection methods, the assessment extracted significant insights related to current communication channels, identified gaps within these channels and put forth recommendations to address these gaps. The aim is to enhance and strengthen these channels, ensuring the provision of adequate, accurate and timely information to outbound migrant workers during the pre-departure phase of labour migration.

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



1. STRENGTHENING COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Finding 1.1

Outbound migrant workers face challenges using information available on online platforms.

Through this assessment, it has been learned that pertinent information regarding labour migration is accessible on various online platforms and WhatsApp group channels. However, respondents in this assessment indicated that understanding the content can be challenging at times, and there is no avenue to seek clarification for any doubts. Additionally, migrant workers, particularly those from rural areas and women, who have limited access to digital devices such as a smart phone and uninterrupted Internet connectivity, face challenges in accessing information available online.

👍 Recommendation

The availability of information on online platforms ensures maximum outreach. However, recognizing that these communication channels are passive in nature, this assessment recommends considering the addition of features such as a chatbot, audio clips with responses to frequently asked questions, feedback sections or a hotline number to call for further queries; this would increase effectiveness and impact at least for those who can easily access online platforms.

For those who would have limitations in accessing these platforms due to unavailability of digital devices, a decentralized approach could be adopted for future pre-departure orientation programmes. This would involve making information readily available in the vicinity of migrant workers. Private recruitment agencies with rural reach, community-based organizations (CBOs) including faith-based organizations (FBOs), and lower levels of government administration would all play crucial roles in delivering pertinent information to this demographic of migrant workers.

📍 Finding 1.2

Outbound migrant workers lack awareness about the existing communication channels.

One of the gaps identified by this assessment is that many outbound migrant workers in all four countries are not fully aware of the available communication channels in their localities. While many have heard about these channels, they are not completely aware of how to access them. Moreover, there are many who are not aware of these channels at all.

👍 Recommendation

To ensure that these communication channels reach their intended target population, it is important for nationals to be aware of such services. It is recommended that stakeholders inform their nationals about the availability and ways to access these channels. This can be achieved through existing outreach activities, social media, official websites, government offices at the district level and through networks of other stakeholders such as recruitment agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and network of returned migrant workers. Mediums such as TV and radio would be an effective way to reach pre-literate migrant workers. Stakeholders may benefit by integrating with other developmental activities in the communities such as health and education programmes to disseminate information about the availability of communication channels.

Finding 1.3

Outbound migrant workers rely on their network of families and friends for relevant information.

This assessment noted that families and friends continue to be the most trusted sources of information in all four countries. Although some respondents in this assessment expressed that information from these sources is occasionally unhelpful, as it is based on anecdotes, they still play a pivotal role in disseminating information.

Recommendation

Understanding the important role that the network of family and friends, who have migrated, play in disseminating information related to labour migration, this assessment recommends to build capacity of these networks not only to disseminate relevant information but also to empower them as key influencers, actively shaping perceptions and decisions, providing insights into the challenges, opportunities and overall experiences associated with labour migration processes.

One strategic recommendation is to establish a peer educator programme that involves members of these networks. This initiative would help in sustaining information programmes at the grassroots level, leveraging the existing bonds and trust within the community.

Furthermore, it is essential to extend efforts to include experienced returned migrant workers, with a particular focus on women migrant workers. These individuals bring a wealth of knowledge and firsthand experience, making them valuable resources for PDO centres. Involving them ensures that their insights contribute to comprehensive support systems for outgoing migrant workers, addressing the unique challenges faced by women migrant workers in the labour migration process.



2. GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF PDO

Finding 2.1

Common challenges and limitations regarding information dissemination are observed across all four countries. These countries can benefit from each other by further collaboration.

While the countries in this assessment do have some form of communication channels, including PDOs for outbound migrant workers, these channels are either focused on specific sectors and labour migration corridors, such as the Seasonal Workers Scheme (SWS) for farm work in the United Kingdom or exhibit a sporadic approach in disseminating information. This sporadic approach restricts everyone's access to the existing communication channels.

👍 Recommendation

Governments, such as in Kazakhstan that have not yet developed any form of orientation programmes for outbound migrant programmes, should consider leveraging the experience and expertise of countries in the region. They should also explore emerging good practices in the design and development of communication channels for their nationals.

To ensure that outbound migrant workers receive essential information regardless of their sector or country of destination, it is recommended that governments consider establishing mandatory PDO programmes for all individuals travelling abroad for employment. In this regard, governments should collaborate closely with international organizations possessing extensive expertise in the design and development of PDO curricula and programmes. It is recommended to continue policy and advocacy efforts to ensure migrant workers are not burdened with fees to participate in orientation programmes, as this limits accessibility of information provided through various communication channels.

📍 Finding 2.2

Some of the information needs expressed by all stakeholders, including migrant workers, are relevant at the pre-employment phase.

During the assessment, both migrant workers and other stakeholders emphasized the importance of providing information on job opportunities, language development and skills matching during the pre-departure phase. While these topics are crucial, they are more relevant during pre-employment phase considering the time required to accrue skills and consequently match them with available jobs in countries of destination.

As migrant workers at the pre-departure phase are often in a hurry to leave their country for work abroad, information on these topics may be ineffective and possibly untimely.

👍 Recommendation

To better support migrant workers, stakeholders may consider integrating topics identified by migrant workers as relevant to pre-employment into the existing pre-employment phase or any similar initiative. In contexts where such initiatives do not exist, consideration should be given to developing a pre-employment orientation programme. This is the phase where nationals are in the decision-making process and exploring job availabilities, reflecting on their skills, matching jobs with their skill sets and developing necessary skills. Such an orientation programme would provide them with ample time to thoroughly prepare for employment abroad and enhance decision-making for labour migration.

During the pre-departure phase, including details regarding the availability of skills development programmes for migrant workers in destination countries could be beneficial. This addition would assist migrant workers in accessing these facilities to enhance their skills.

Finding 2.3

Outbound migrant workers who live in rural and remote areas find it difficult to access accurate and relevant information on labour migration.

This assessment found that outbound migrant workers in rural and remote locations typically encounter difficulty accessing existing communication channels. While many may lack devices to access information disseminated through these channels, others may struggle to reach existing orientation or Migrant Resource Centres (wherever available). Consequently, they often rely on informal sources, which may not always provide adequate or accurate information.

Recommendation

Stakeholders may consider decentralizing the reach of communication channels and ensuring that relevant information is accessible to all outbound migrant workers, in line with the principle of “leave no one behind”. Given that countries in the region share borders and migration within the region often occurs through these borders rather than directly to the capital city, border points could serve as information delivery points, as suggested by a few stakeholders. Local avenues could be identified to maximize the outreach of information.

Finding 2.4

There is a lack of monitoring and evaluation of existing communication channels.

Acknowledging that monitoring and evaluation are fundamental components of any orientation me, this assessment endeavoured to identify pertinent measures and processes. It revealed a lack of data collection regarding the effectiveness of current communication channels. Consequently, assessing the efficiency of these channels, as well as the information and resources disseminated through them, presents a challenge in such circumstances.

Recommendation

Stakeholders in the region would gain from establishing a monitoring and evaluation system. Such a system would not only track the progress of information dissemination programmes through existing communication channels but also facilitate the efficient allocation of resources. Stakeholders involved in the delivery of information could consider integrating monitoring and evaluation in their existing systems.



PDO AND INFORMATION, EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION MATERIALS

📍 Finding 3.1

Existing information, education and communication (IEC) materials related to employment abroad can be strengthened.

Respondents from all four countries participating in this assessment indicated that they found the IEC materials to be generic and insufficient for their needs. Specifically, individuals intending to migrate to the Russian Federation noted that these materials lack the essential information required for employment in various regions of the country.

👍 Recommendation

IEC materials have proven to be effective tools, serving not only for the dissemination of information but also as resources that the intended targets can refer to at their convenience. This assessment recommends a thorough review of existing IEC materials by thematic experts to ensure that the content, language, illustrations and designs in these materials are user-friendly, gender-responsive and inclusive. Additional attention should be given to addressing the learning needs of those with pre-literacy skills.

Considering the information needs and prioritized topics identified by migrant workers involved in this assessment would be advantageous when crafting PDO and IEC materials. These materials should include information about a contact point for additional inquiries to aid outbound migrant workers in gathering additional information if they wish so.

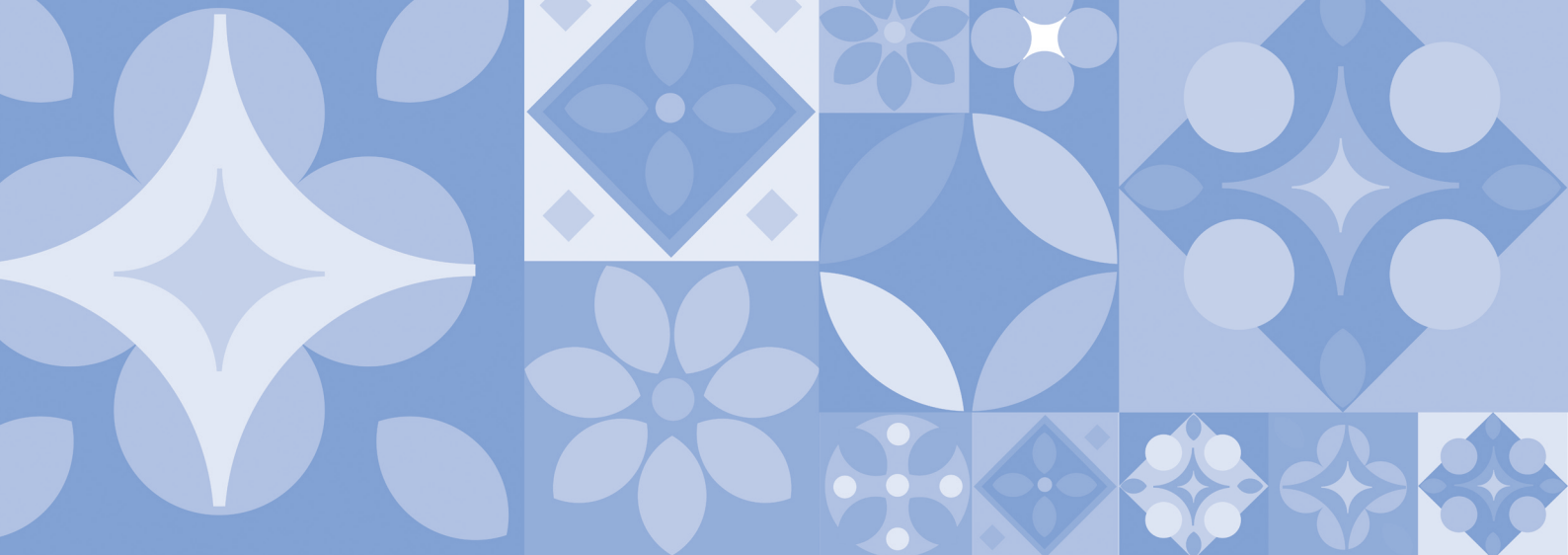
📍 Finding 3.2

There is a growing number of women migrating to other countries for employment.

Data available from various sources indicates that the number of women migrant workers is increasing in the region. Their information needs and access to available communication channels differ depending on their roles and responsibilities within their families and communities.

👍 Recommendation

This assessment recommends considering the information needs of women migrant workers to better cater to their requirements. Special attention should be given to strengthening existing communication channels and their reach, ensuring they are convenient in terms of time and space for women migrant workers. Additionally, the content and language of the information provided through these channels should be tailored to meet their needs.



INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND OF THE ASSESSMENT

IOM has been executing the initial phase of the “Labour Migration Programme – Central Asia” since 2022. This programme operates across the four Central Asian countries Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan with the objective of strengthening oversight of labour migration and utilizing human mobility to foster development in both origin and destination countries. The project involves diverse stakeholders in labour migration, encompassing governments, public and private employment agencies, the private sector and international organizations.

In appreciation of the power of information and knowledge throughout the labour migration cycle, this project includes dedicated activities to support the information landscape at the pre-departure stage. For this, IOM conducted a comprehensive mapping to strengthen the understanding of the current communication channels between governments, States and private recruitment agencies, and migrant workers at the pre-departure stage. This mapping has contributed to identifying good practices and possible gaps and obstacles in communications that could play a role in limiting the access to outbound migrant workers. The findings and recommendations will help in identifying practical measures to strengthen these communication channels, helping to ensure that governments and key stakeholders can effectively provide information to outbound migrant workers at the pre-departure stage.

This assessment has the following aims:

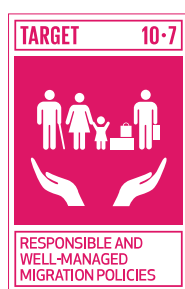
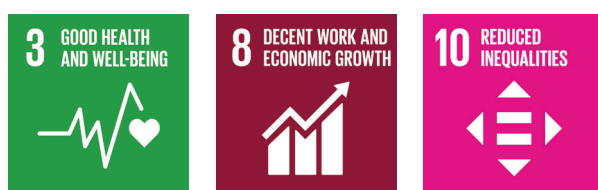
Mapping communication channels.

Identifying barriers that may impact access to information.

Understanding the information needs of outbound migrant workers at the pre-departure stage.

In the analysis and findings, in pursuit of the above-mentioned aims, a gender lens was applied to comprehend how current communication channels are influenced by, shaped by or biased toward the perspectives or experiences of men or women regarding their information needs and access to existing communication channels.

Importantly, this assessment will also contribute to the achievement of national and international commitments with regards to sustainable development and migration goals.



Target 10.7

“Facilitate orderly, safe, and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies”.



GCM Objective 3
“Provide accurate and timely information at all stages of migration”



GCM Objective 6
“Facilitate fair and ethical recruitment and safeguard conditions that ensure decent work”



GCM Objective 7
“Address and reduce vulnerabilities in migration”



GCM Objective 10
“Prevent, combat and eradicate trafficking in persons in the context of international migration”



GCM Objective 16
“Empower migrants and societies to realize full inclusion and social cohesion”

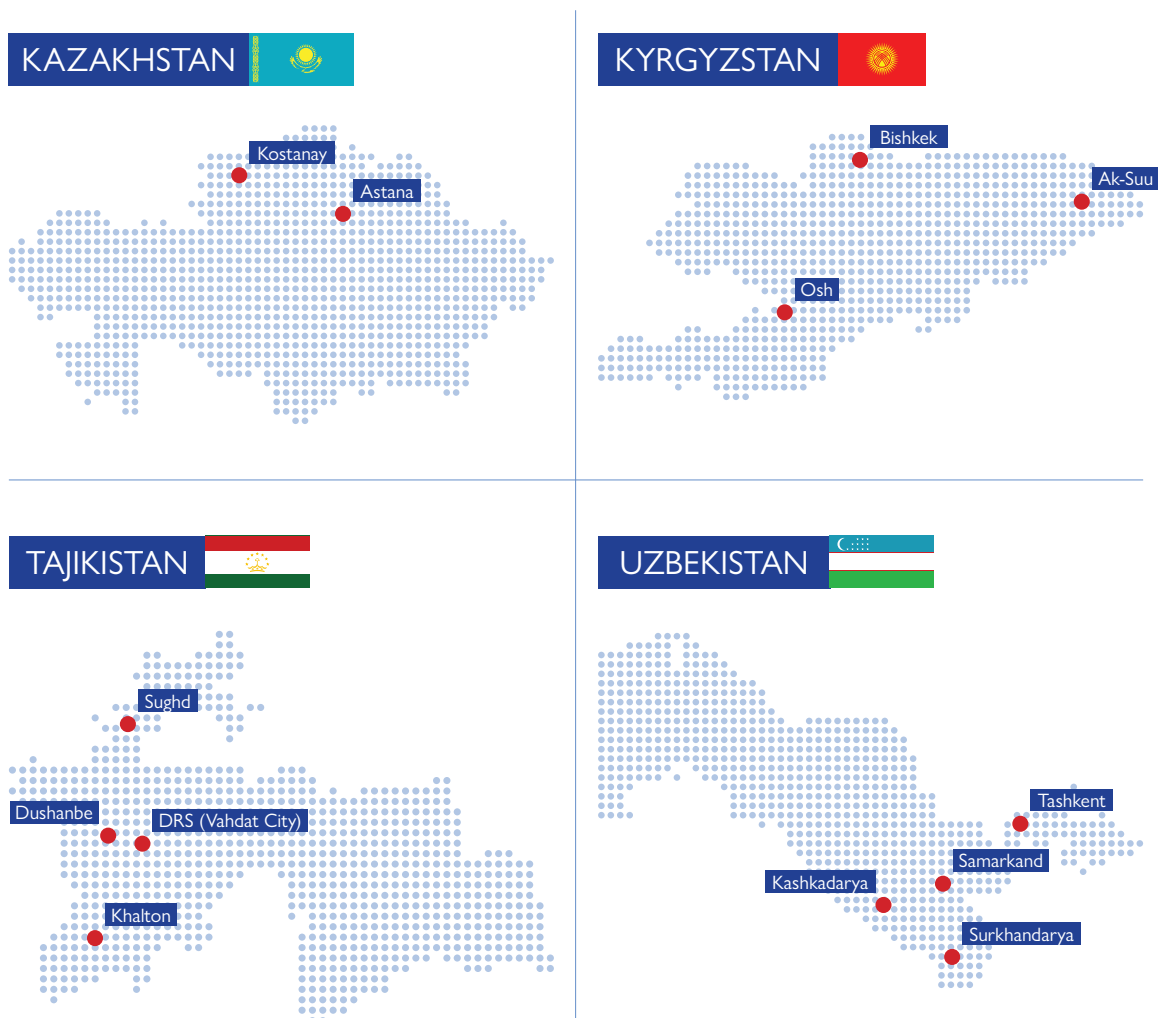


GCM Objective 23
“Strengthen international cooperation and global partnerships for safe, orderly and regular migration”

METHODOLOGY

The data for this assessment was collected in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan using both qualitative and quantitative approaches. In-person surveys, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were carried out with 961 respondents by a team of researchers and the IOM Mobility Tracking Matrix team at different locations, including pre-departure centres, informal settings in communities as well as border points. Primary data was complemented by the completion of a detailed desk review of available publications, reports and statistics produced by governments, research organizations, NGOs and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs).

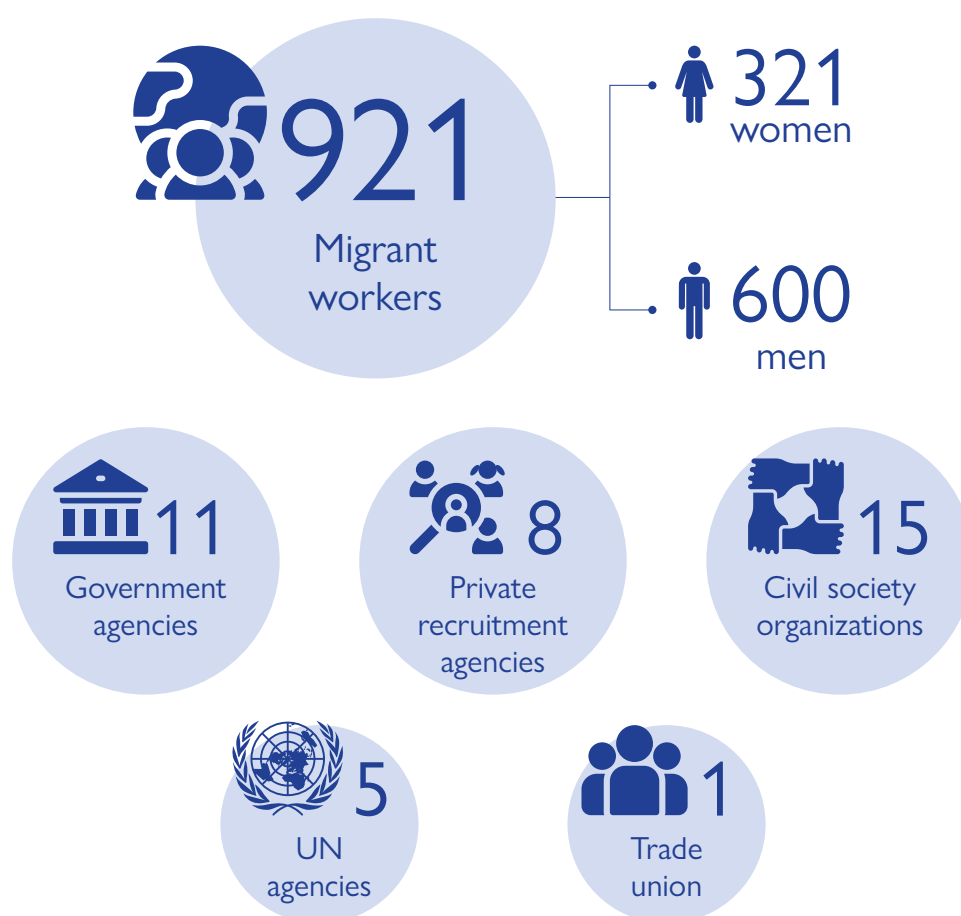
Data collection took place in the following locations:



Targeted primary data collection was conducted between September 2023 and January 2024 with relevant stakeholder groups. Tailored key informant interviews, surveys and focus group discussion guides were devised and both primary and secondary stakeholders were interviewed

to understand the current communication channels, identify good practices and challenges related to the outreach of these channels as well as gather insights to inform current information needs and gaps of migrant workers at the pre-departure phase. Data collectors approached potential respondents using the purposive and snowball method and obtained their informed consent to participate in the assessment. Data collection was conducted with approval and in collaboration with respective and relevant government ministries in all four countries.

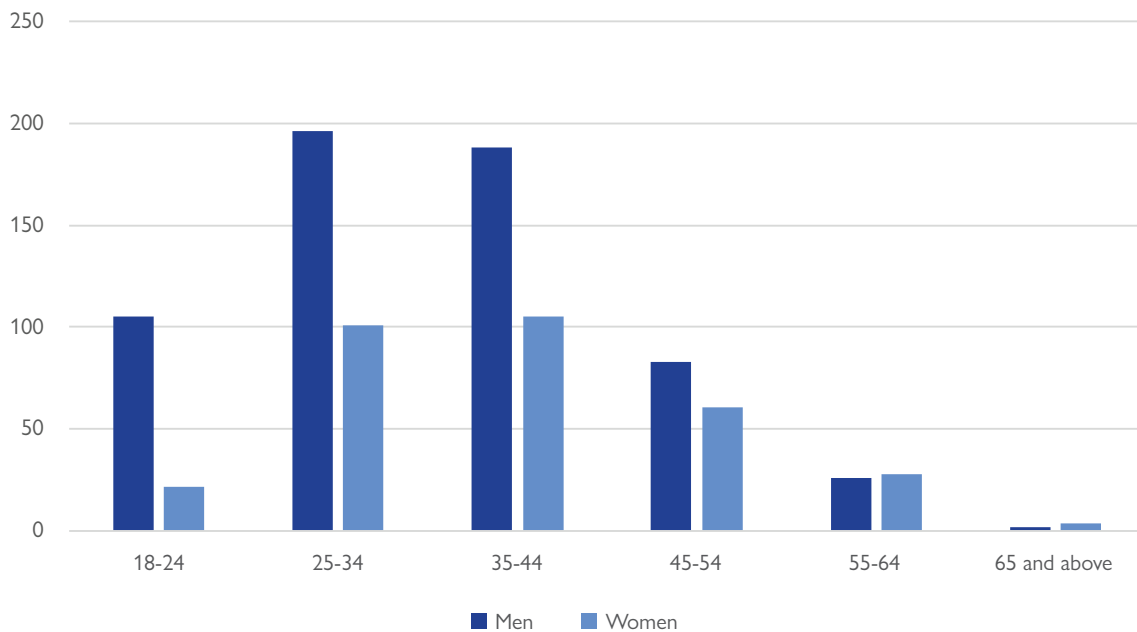
In line with IOM's Comprehensive Information and Orientation Programme (CIOP) approach, this assessment adopted a multi-stakeholder approach, ensuring engagement of a wide range of different actors. The following respondents took part in the assessment:



Acknowledging the growing trend of women participating in labour migration, the methodology established specific parameters to adopt a gender-responsive approach. 35 per cent women migrant workers took part in the assessment. Gender considerations were systematically integrated into the key informant interview guides, with a particular focus on identifying the information requirements of women outbound migrant workers and understanding the challenges they might encounter during the pre-departure phase.

Figure 1 below provides an overview of the participants' age groups who took part in the assessment. It is evident that while men migrant workers, age 18 to 44, migrate the most, women migrant workers in the age groups of 45 to 64 outnumber their counterparts. The secondary data suggests that men migrant workers are typically engaged in physically demanding jobs such as construction, while women are usually employed in the agricultural, domestic or hospitality sectors.

Figure 1. Age groups of participants of this assessment



Limitations

The findings and recommendations outlined in the report are not intended to address all aspects of labour migration; rather, they concentrate specifically on communication channels available during the pre-departure phase. Within this framework, the focus was solely on mapping existing channels and identifying gaps, without assessing the content of current PDO materials and other informational materials. Desk review remained central to the analysis, and for this purpose, various sources were utilized, which (1) may lack updated data due to unavailability on public platforms and (2) may lack gender disaggregated data. The data was collected from September 2023 to January 2024, limiting access to outbound migrant workers in certain locations, as nationals typically do not migrate during the winter season.

THE INFORMATION ECOSYSTEM

DEFINITION

The information ecosystem approach aims to enhance the understanding of the various actors, institutions, channels, policies and programmes involved in the production, dissemination and consumption of information. This encompasses both formal endeavours like government-supported information and awareness campaigns and informal information dissemination through community and family networks, social media and word of mouth. Adopted from fields as diverse as environmental studies, media and public health – and often referred to as “information ecology” – an “information ecosystem” can be defined as a “loose, dynamic configuration of different sources, flows, producers, consumers, and sharers of information interacting within a defined community or space.”¹³

IMPORTANCE OF INFORMATION IN LABOUR MIGRATION

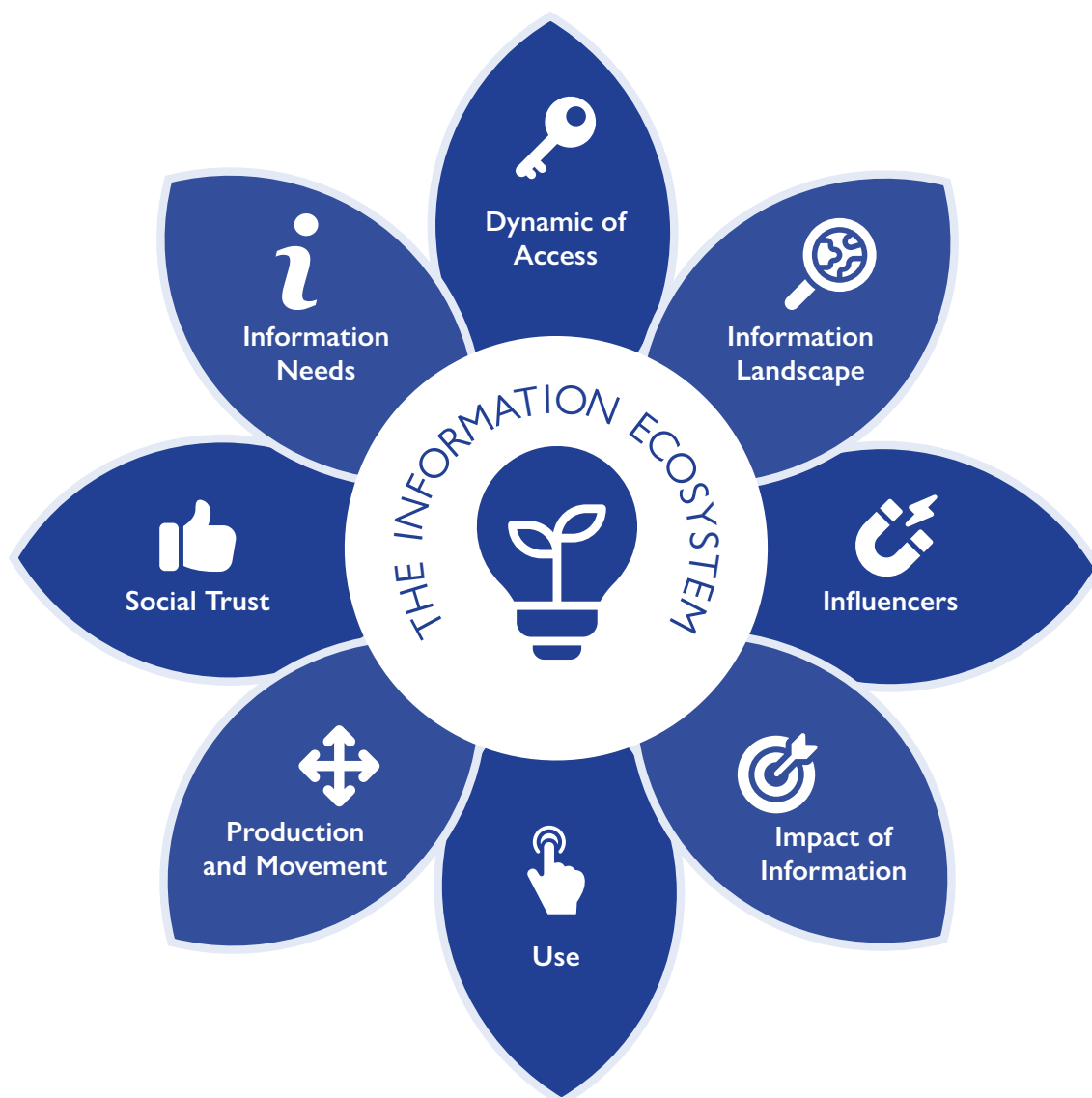
In the realm of labour migration, the significance of information cannot be overstated. Information serves as the cornerstone for informed decision-making and plays a pivotal role in shaping the entire migration process. For both migrant workers and relevant stakeholders, accurate and accessible information is instrumental in navigating the complexities of legal requirements, employment opportunities and cultural nuances in countries of destination. Governments, private recruitment agencies and civil society organizations (CSOs) benefit from well-informed migrant workers who are equipped with knowledge about their rights, responsibilities and available support mechanisms.

Furthermore, effective communication channels facilitate the dissemination of essential information, fostering transparency and trust among all stakeholders involved in the labour migration process. In essence, a well-informed approach to labour migration not only empowers individual migrant workers but also contributes to the overall effectiveness and positive outcomes of labour migration for both countries of origin and destination.

Recognizing the inherently social nature of information, the information ecosystem approach privileges the lived experience of information users; in this case, outbound and returned migrant workers in Central Asia. It seeks to understand the channels through which information flows, and the various ways in which information, or a lack thereof, impacts the well-being of migrant workers. As Susman-Peña et al. note, “Without the ability to access, create, disseminate and share critical information about the world around them, individuals are incapable of understanding the challenges they confront, adapting to an evolving environment, nor ultimately, improving their lives” (2015).

This report uses the information ecosystem approach to understand the existing communication channels at pre-departure, across a few critical dimensions (see Figure 2 on page xxii). They are interconnected, non-static and non-hierarchical in nature.

Figure 2. The information ecosystem



THE CIOP APPROACH

As outlined in the methodology, this assessment is largely guided by the CIOP approach. This section provides more information on the background, rationale and main components of this approach.



It is vital that migrant workers have access to accurate information throughout their journeys from the point of considering work abroad, through to their deployment, departure and return. Over the years, countries of origin and destination around the world have been taking significant steps to provide key information relevant to labour migration, often in the form of orientation programmes or information initiatives. While this is certainly not a new phenomenon, advocating for countries of origin, transit and destination, along with non-government stakeholders, to work together to

harmonize information initiatives, is more recent.

With support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Ministry of Human Resources & Emiratization in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), a multi-stage programme,¹⁴ aims to strengthen labour market integration and enhance the protection of migrant workers by addressing critical information gaps and misinformation among the migrant worker population arriving to Gulf countries from countries of origin in Asia. This project includes carrying out regional mapping and information needs assessments, developing tailored orientation programmes across specific labour migration corridors, training key resource persons as well as rolling out and evaluating CIOP orientation programmes. IOM was and continues to be the management site of CIOP.

To support in the provision of accurate, timely and tailored orientation programmes, IOM, with significant support from different stakeholders, has, and continues to fine-tune the CIOP approach. While accurate information is powerful, research carried out by IOM has documented how inaccurate information and misinformation has the potential to lead migrant workers into difficult and dangerous situations, risking their and their family's health, well-being, financial stability, and even their lives. While combating misinformation is important, the access to correct and relevant information, tailored to a particular stage of the labour migration cycle is of equal importance. This approach to information distribution ensures that information is timely, relevant, focused and meaningful as it helps to promote active and full participation.

CIOP ORIENTATIONS

At its core, the CIOP approach advocates for orientation at four key stages of the labour migration cycle:



Pre-Employment Orientation (PEO): Equips prospective migrant workers with information to support well-informed decision-making processes on whether working abroad is the right decision at that particular time. It provides accurate information on safe and ethical recruitment.



Pre-Departure Orientation (PDO): Supports outgoing migrant workers to ensure their departure process is safe while also providing information on the upcoming journey, adjustment period and how to access support and assistance.



Post-Arrival Orientation (PAO): Provides newly arrived migrant workers in the country of destination, with information regarding national labour laws, sociocultural norms and practices, workplace expectations, onboarding as well as good conduct.



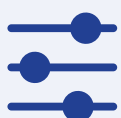
Pre-Return Orientation (PRO): Helps prepare returning migrant workers with useful information to support their access to social protection schemes, skills development opportunities and related resources particularly with economic reintegration and remigration. It also acts provides guidance on accessing grievance and complaints mechanisms.

CIOP GUIDING PRINCIPLES

A series of guiding principles are fundamental within the CIOP approach in steering the design, development, implementation and evaluation of the orientation points. These include:



Harmonized between countries of origin, transit and destination to ensure that the information provided is accurate and relevant.



Tailored to distinct information needs and custom-made for specific labour migration corridors and industries.



Timely to deliver relevant information at the most appropriate point during the labour migration cycle.



Responsive to different learning needs, taking into account gender considerations and dimensions of possible vulnerability.



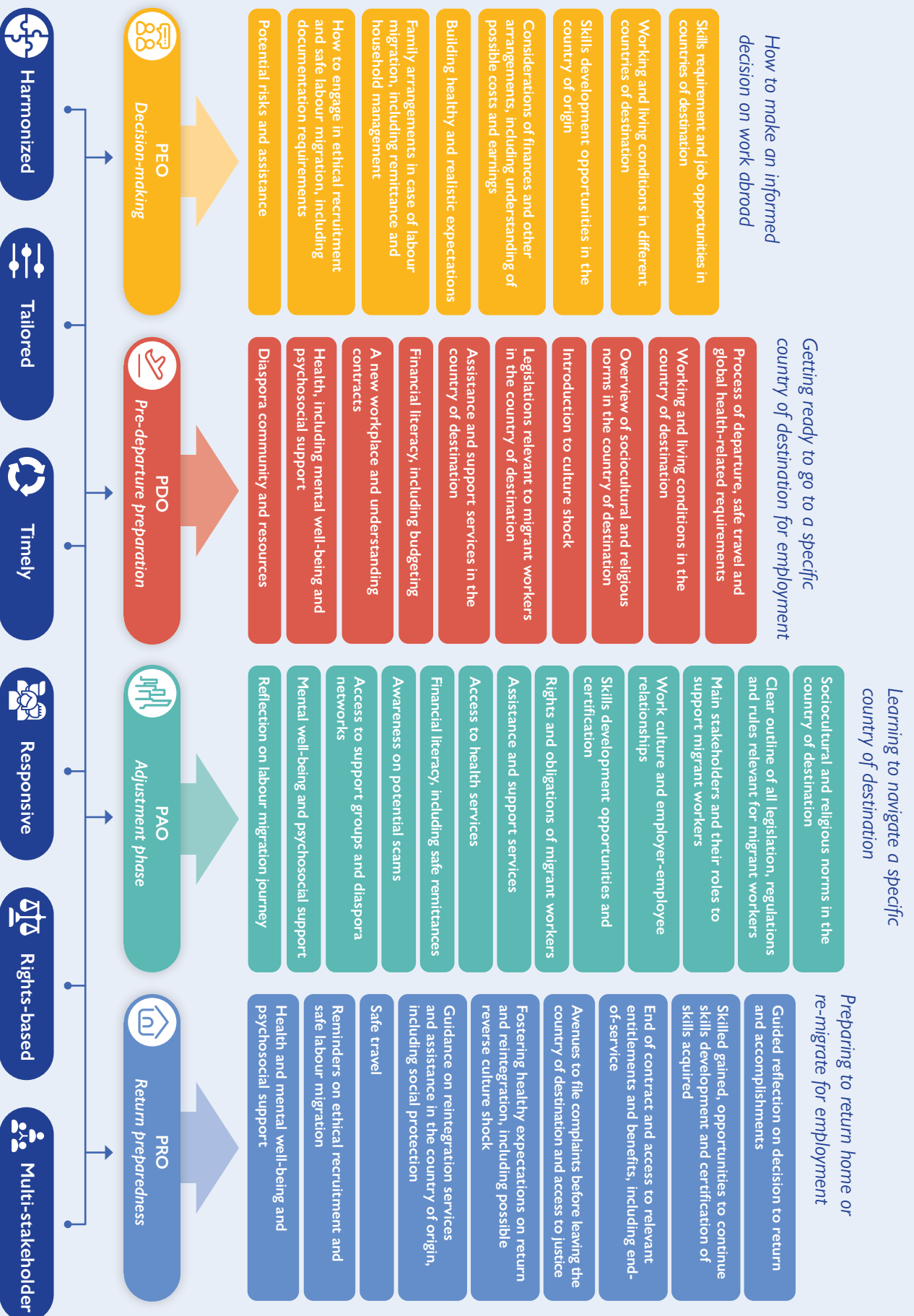
Rights-based approach to systematically integrate human and labour rights principles into all orientation stages of labour migration.



Rooted in a multi-stakeholder approach involving target participant groups, employers, recruiters, training institutions, CSOs, migrant associations and governments of countries of origin, transit and destination.

To bring this approach and the CIOP orientations to life in line with the guiding principles, Figure 3 on page xxv provides a general overview of the possible information distribution throughout the labour migration cycle. It is important to note that this is generalized and therefore should be tailored to fit the information needs of target participants and fully contextualized according to the country, labour migration corridor and industries in focus.

Figure 3. Information distribution throughout the labour migration cycle



UNDERSTANDING THE PRE-DEPARTURE PHASE

The pre-departure phase in labour migration refers to the period leading up to the departure of a national from their country of origin to another country for employment. This phase is for individuals who has more certainty in their trajectory to migrate for work and require various preparatory steps and activities before leaving their country of origin. The pre-departure phase is crucial in facilitating a smooth and safe transition for migrant workers and addressing potential challenges they might encounter upon reaching the country of destination. This phase necessitates cooperation among the countries of origin and countries of destination, employers, recruitment agencies and the migrant workers themselves.

Migrant mindset at pre-departure

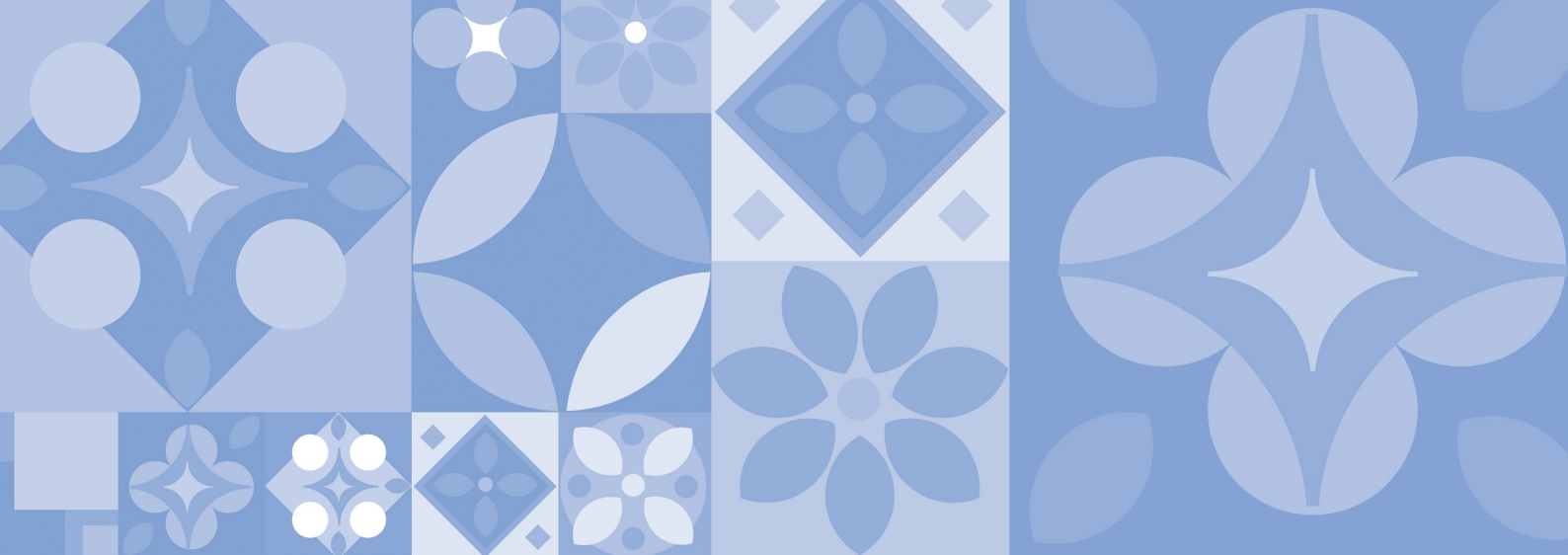
For many, pre-departure is a time of mixed emotions. Based on research conducted by IOM, which delves into various experiences across different contexts,¹⁵ below is a broad summary of some emotions observed prior to departure:¹⁶

- **Excited** to experience a new chapter in a new country.
- **Anxious** about upcoming travel processes, requirements and how they may navigate these processes.
- **Confused** about different information flows coming from multiple sources.
- **Worried** about leaving family behind, and/or about moving to a new country where they feel unsure about their new life.
- **Overwhelmed** with the amount of information and requirements, including documentation and travel procedures.

Although the statements are broad in nature, these emotions are rooted in and shaped by various factors, encompassing individual traits, requirements and experiences across different stages of the labour migration process. Some key considerations include age, gender, diversity, disabilities, educational background, ethnic and religious affiliations, cultural upbringing in the home country, past traumatic encounters, duration preceding departure, financial circumstances and familial ties.

Pre-departure orientations

PDOs are information initiatives targeting outbound migrant workers before they leave their country of origin for work abroad. For governments, PDOs provide critical opportunities to communicate key messages to their nationals before departure. For participants, PDOs can act as an important space to understand their rights and obligations, ask questions, report grievances and start preparing for their time abroad.



1

REGIONAL OVERVIEW

OF LABOUR MIGRATION



LABOUR MIGRATION TRENDS WITHIN AND FROM CENTRAL ASIA

In Central Asia, migration remains a crucial catalyst for the sustainable development of the region. Millions of migrant workers venture to various countries within and beyond Central Asia in search of employment opportunities. Among the numerous migration corridors, the one between the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan stands out as one of the largest and most significant.¹⁷ In 2022, the Border Service of Kazakhstan documented an influx of over 7.5 million migrants into the country. Of these arrivals, almost 6 million were from the Member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The primary source countries for CIS migrants were the Russian Federation (41.1%), Kyrgyzstan (30.4%), Uzbekistan (27.6%), Azerbaijan (0.4%) and Belarus (0.2%). Additionally, 1.6 million arrivals originated from non-CIS countries, including the Republic of Türkiye (40.3%), the UAE (17.6%), China (10.5%), Egypt (8.6%) and Georgia (6.5%).¹⁸

While data related to the actual number of migrant workers in the region varies between different sources, the following estimate in Figure 4 is based on one such source:¹⁹

Figure 4. Labour migration trends

		COUNTRIES OF DESTINATION					
		The Russian Federation	The European Union	The United States of America	Canada	Republic of Korea	Japan
COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN	Kazakhstan	136 208	4 639	332	255	128	102
	Kyrgyzstan	453 702	2 668	13	25	249	119
	Tajikistan	1 179 423	1 146	21	5	28	24
	Uzbekistan	2 107 302	5 680	85	25	5 295	544

Source: Introducing the Central Asia Migration Tracer, 2020

REGIONAL LABOUR MIGRATION FRAMEWORKS

Regarding labour migration in Central Asia, the key framework that brought together the five countries, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, is the [Almaty Process](#).

The Almaty Process aims to overcome various challenges arising from complex migration dynamics and mixed migratory movements in Central Asia and more commonly in the region.

The Almaty Process aims to achieve the following:

- Promote dialogue on international migration and refugee protection;
- Promote the implementation of a coherent, integrated and differentiated policy on people on the move;
- Develop mechanisms for monitoring and resolving issues related to irregular migration;
- Develop an action plan within the framework of the project aimed at strengthening the capacity of States to manage migration and ensure the protection of refugees.

Though the Process covers various aspects of labour migration, there is no specific mention of information provision or orientation programmes. Furthermore, founded under the Czech European Union (EU) presidency in 2009, the [Prague Process](#) serves as an instrument fostering dialogue between the European Union and Central Asia. It is characterized as a progressive initiative aimed at addressing migration issues and fostering migration partnerships across various regions including the EU, Schengen Areas, the Eastern Partnership, Western Balkans, Central Asia, the Russian Federation and Türkiye.²⁰ The primary objectives of the Prague Process are to enhance cooperation in migration management and to develop agreed-upon principles and strategies for establishing close migration partnerships among participating countries. Recognized for its achievements, the Prague Process has made significant contributions to advancing international cooperation on migration.

Among the region's security-focused partnerships is the [Border Management Programme in Central Asia \(BOMCA\)](#), established by the EU in 2002 to bolster security, combat illegal trafficking and facilitate trade. In 2021, it commenced its 10th phase, with the aim of enhancing security, stability and sustainable growth in the region, fostering cross-border cooperation, and improving living conditions for residents in Central Asia's border areas. Another notable recent initiative is the [Dialogue and Action for Resourceful Youth in Central Asia \(DARYA\)](#), launched by the EU in 2022 as a five-year project exclusively dedicated to vocational education, training and skills development.

The [Eurasian Economic Union \(EAEU\)](#) is an international organization of regional economic integration. It has the international legal personality and was established by the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union signed on 29 May 2014. The Union consists of five Member States: The Russian Federation, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Armenia.

At the level of the EAEU, there are no supranational labour regulations or a unified labour law. However, Article 97 of the EAEU Treaty contains provisions on labour migration and a single labour market. The principles enshrined there are quite comparable to the principle of free movement of workers within the European Union. Workers from other Member States of the EAEU do not need a work permit.²¹ This allows workers from Member States the right to freely choose their place of work within the Member States, even if further regulations exist at the national level of each Member State.



KAZAKHSTAN





THE NATIONAL LABOUR MIGRATION LANDSCAPE

TRENDS OF LABOUR MIGRATION

Within Central Asia, Kazakhstan stands out as a prominent destination, especially for its neighbouring countries in the region. As of 2022, Kazakhstan hosted 327,000 migrant workers from CIS Member States. The primary countries of origin for these migrant workers were Uzbekistan (70.4%), the Russian Federation (15.1%), Tajikistan (4.5%), Kyrgyzstan (2.5%) and Azerbaijan (1.1%).²²

According to sources from the Government of Kazakhstan, 548 Kazakh migrant workers travelled to other countries for employment in 2023. The majority, totalling 256, were from the Astana region, followed by 58 from East Kazakhstan, 42 from Abai, 40 from West Kazakhstan and 34 from Almaty City, with the remaining workers departing from various other regions. With regard to the main country of destination for Kazakh nationals, the Russian Federation remains predominant, with 11,720 nationals by the end of 2023 migrated for various reasons, including work. This is facilitated by geographical proximity, the absence of a language barrier, as well as visa-free travel and free movement of labour within the EAEU.

NATIONAL LABOUR MIGRATION POLICIES

Over the years, Kazakhstan has developed a comprehensive legal framework to manage both internal and external migration, with particular emphasis on regulations governing residency conditions and procedures for foreign nationals working within the country. Additionally, a national policy has been established to facilitate the return of Kazakh nationals.

In 2017, the Decree of the Government of Kazakhstan on “The Concept of Migration Policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2017-2021” and the “Action Plan on Implementation of the Concept of Migration Policy for 2017-2021” were approved.

The Concept outlines the strategic goals, objectives and directions of migration policy. It envisions a hybrid migration management system aimed at systematically addressing both external and internal migration flows in support of the country’s socioeconomic development. The plan involves inviting foreign labour to fulfil specific needs in key economic sectors under a liberalized migration policy. Additionally, it aims to reduce irregular employment of foreign labour, including household workers, and establish a modern system for registering migration flows to predict migration processes and implement effective control measures.

The Migration Policy Concept for 2023-2027 (adopted in 2022)

Kazakhstan’s new migration policy is based on the best world practices, adapted to national specifics, and will contribute to the development of the domestic economy through solving the following key tasks:²³

1. Creating conditions for transforming Kazakhstan into a centre of attraction for qualified personnel, providing the opportunity for comfortable integration of a separate, sought-after

- category of immigrants into the Kazakh society, taking into account intra-country imbalances and international obligations of the State;
2. Creation of a system for effective protection of the rights of citizens of Kazakhstan located outside the country;
 3. Introduction of effective tools and mechanisms to regulate accumulated demographic imbalances.

Through this new policy concept, the Government of Kazakhstan is broadening its scope and aiming to support its nationals working abroad. This intention was emphasized by a Government official who participated in the assessment, who said, “Previously, Kazakhstan was a labour-attracting country rather than a sending country. But the demand is growing, and now we need to regulate the issue of employment of our citizens so that they do not get into negative life situations, receive social protection from the employer, and do not violate the laws of other countries.”

It is important to note that the action plan for the implementation of this concept provides detailed information related to each measure, along with year-wise targets. Direction 5.6 under this action plan focuses on labour migration from Kazakhstan, measures to help Kazakh migrant workers find employment and assistance services while abroad. Measure 39 particularly focuses on developing mobile applications for the provision of reference materials for the training of citizens of Kazakhstan going abroad for employment. These materials would include information on legislation, culture, language and paperwork of the countries of destination.”²⁴

INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS

Kazakhstan, having signed the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM), has undertaken various initiatives and measures to fulfil its 23 objectives and proficiently manage migration processes. Additionally, as a member of the Almaty Process, Kazakhstan contributes to this regional advisory platform on refugee protection and international migration, which covers Central Asia.

While Kazakhstan has not ratified the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, certain provisions of the Convention are incorporated into existing national legislation. It has signed and ratified several UN treaties related to labour migrations; some of these are:

C029 - Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29)

C087 - Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87)

C111 - Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111)

C098 - Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98)

C100 - Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100)

C105 - Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105)

RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS

Ministry of Labour and Social Protection

The Ministry, as a State body responsible for migration issues, implements the State policy in the field of migration processes, in particular labour migration and external migration.

According to Article 55.1 of the Law on Migration of the Republic of Kazakhstan, only private employment agencies are authorized to engage in the recruitment of Kazakh migrant workers. In 2022, under the Law on Decentralization of State Bodies, the Ministry was granted the authority to coordinate the rights of migrant workers abroad. Since then, it has developed draft agreements with seven countries – the Republic of Korea, Qatar, Germany, the United Kingdom and the UAE – where migrant workers from Kazakhstan prefer to work.²⁵

Committee of Migration of the Ministry of Interior

The Committee, operating under the Ministry of Internal Affairs,²⁶ serves as the authorized migration authority. Its primary responsibility involves processing documents for temporary residence permits for migrants holding labour permits. However, the Committee does not possess authority over outbound migration matters. In cases where assistance is required, it collaborates closely with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection.

Moreover, the Ministry has entered into bilateral agreements with neighbouring countries to facilitate the exchange of information on labour migration. Within this framework, the Committee has participated in a four-party agreement for the exchange of labour migration data, involving Armenia, Belarus, the Russian Federation and Uzbekistan.

Department of Migration of the Turkestan region Akimat

Under this department, Kazakhstan has developed a pilot project, which is being agreed upon between the Governments of Kazakhstan and the Republic of Korea, to provide Kazakh labour migrant workers going abroad with the necessary skills such as, languages, rights and knowledge of specialties. This initiative follows the models adopted by Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, where organizations have been established to directly engage with employers in the Republic of Korea and negotiate contracts. Kazakhstan is striving to replicate this successful approach.

Additionally, in every district of the Turkestan region, labour mobility centres have been established to address employment-related matters directly.

Study visit to PDO centres in Uzbekistan

The State agencies of Kazakhstan visited the mono-centres in Tashkent and Samarkand, where the pre-departure training for labour migrant workers is organized.

More information available at: www.bomca-eu.org/en/news/bomca-10-organised-a-study-visit-to-uzbekistan-on-external-labour-migration-management-for-the-kyrgyz-and-kazakh-migration-agencies.

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS FOR PRE-DEPARTURE

Currently, the existing communication channels related to labour migration is for foreign nationals migrating or migrated to Kazakhstan for work purposes. The Government provides relevant public service information through its single electronic portal “Electronic Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan” (egov.kz).²⁷

Electronic Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan: This portal is managed and maintained by National Information Technologies JSC. By the end of 2021, 94 per cent of public services in Kazakhstan were accessible to nationals through this e-government portal. The portal provides 18 different types of public services for entering the country and obtaining Kazakh citizenship, and 13 types for travelling abroad.²⁸

Migration Service Committee: Another governmental agency involved in providing services related to migration is the Migration Service Committee of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The website of the Migration Service Committee (gov.kz)²⁹ offers helpful links and information tailored to migrant workers.³⁰

Civil society organizations:

CSOs, such as Meiirim, Rodnik, Korgau, Damytu and Sana Sezim, conduct various activities related to human trafficking. This includes awareness programmes, legal assistance and some provide shelters for victims of trafficking.

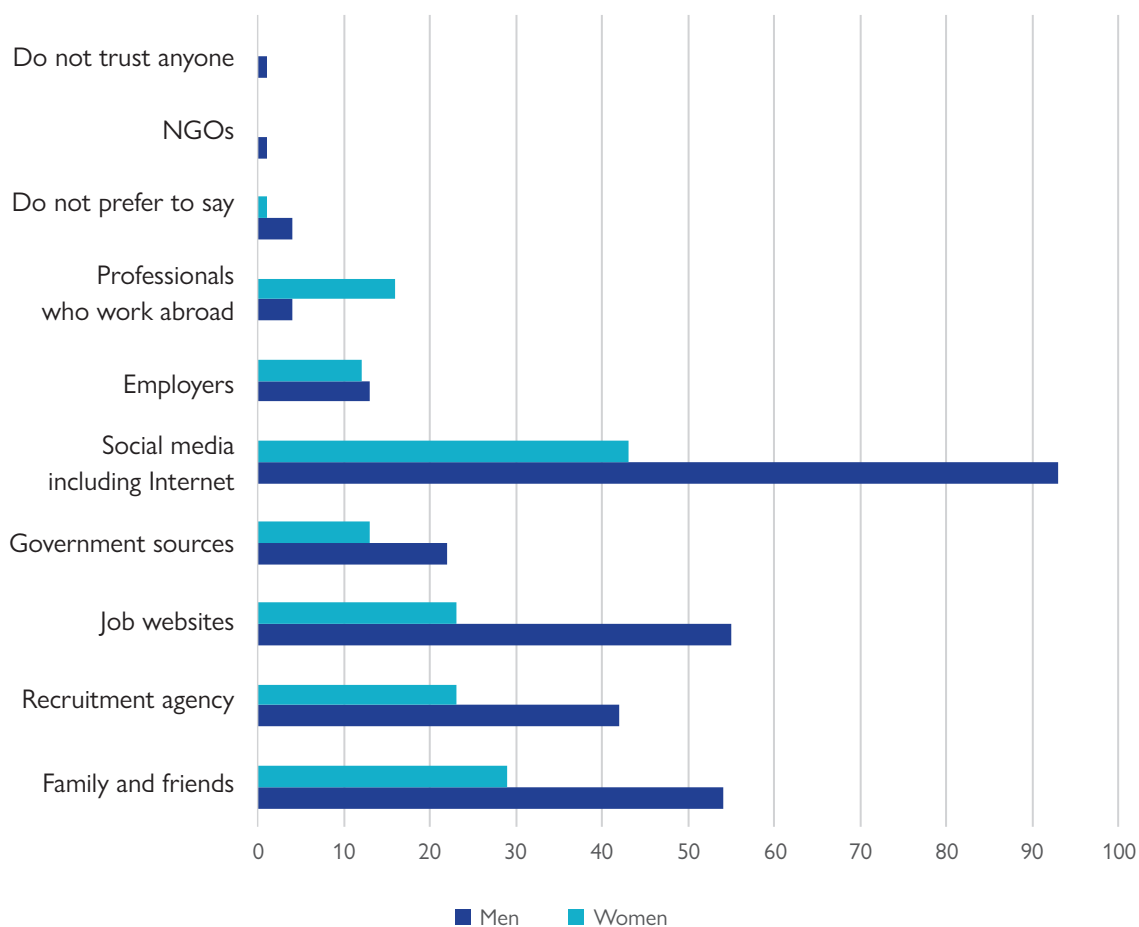
TRUSTED SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The assessment has provided evidence that for most Kazakh outbound migrant workers, social media platforms serve as important sources of information at the pre-departure phase (Figure 5 on page 10). However, this pattern varies notably based on gender, with men migrant workers appearing to utilize social media more extensively than women. This difference could be attributed to the higher possession rate of smartphones among men, accounting for 56.3 per cent, compared to women, which stands at 43.7 percent.³¹

Potential reasons for social media platforms to be most trusted among Kazakh nationals could be due to Kazakhstan’s Internet penetration rate that stood at 90.9 per cent of the total population at the start of 2023.³² The advanced use of social media by Kazakh nationals reached 11.85 million social media users in January 2023, equating to 60.8 per cent of the total population.³³ It is interesting to note how nationals explore information channels that would not only provide them with relevant information but also share practical experiences of working in another country. One such channel is “*Professionals who work abroad.*” These individuals work outside Kazakhstan and are not directly known to migrant workers; rather, they are referred by someone in their community. As indicated in Figure 5 on page 10, women migrant workers turn to such sources to obtain practical information related to working abroad. They connect with these groups either through

their contacts or via social media platforms. Although the assessment did not document the results of such associations or how their authenticity is verified, there is a potential risk of receiving misinformation and falling victim to scams.

Figure 5. Trusted sources of information (Kazakhstan)



While the majority of migrant workers rely on social media, some returning migrant workers mentioned encountering difficulties accessing the information they needed. Due to this, 11 per cent switched to recruitment agencies as an alternate information source. Additionally, 45 per cent of respondents cited problems obtaining information about rights and obligations, the recruitment process, working conditions, insurance, social assistance, safety, employer reliability and overall information reliability.

13 per cent of respondents expressed a willingness to change their source of information for future work opportunities in order to gather needed information. 5 per cent indicated they would consider relying on government sources, as they perceive them to be a trusted source of information.

INFORMATION FLOW DURING THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

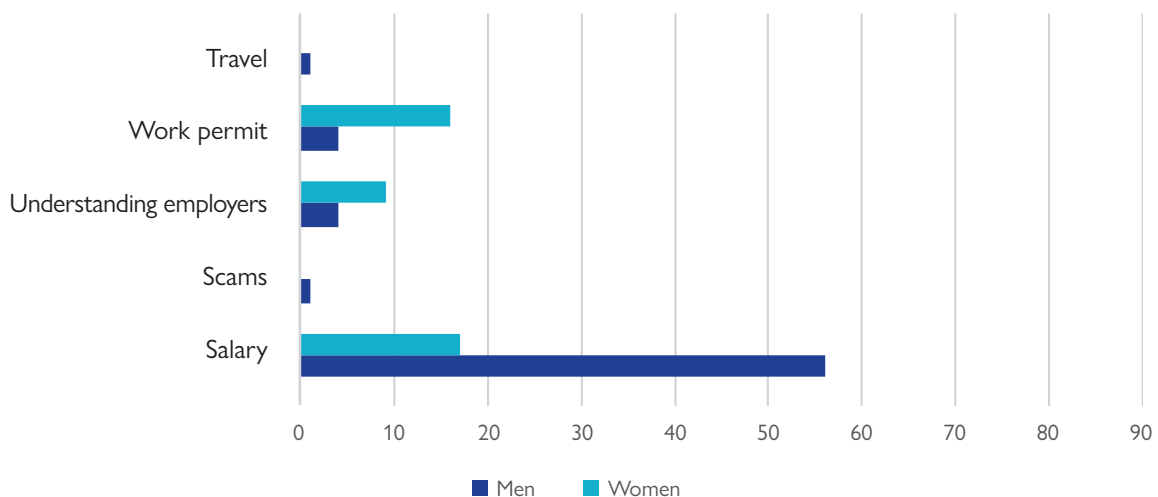
As mentioned in the preceding sections, details pertaining to foreign employment and related matters primarily come from recruitment agencies. In instances where nationals do not engage with the services of recruitment agencies, they depend on either their personal networks or social media. In these diverse situations, tracking the flow of information and comprehending how this flow aids nationals in navigating their pre-departure and departure journeys effectively were challenging during the assessment.

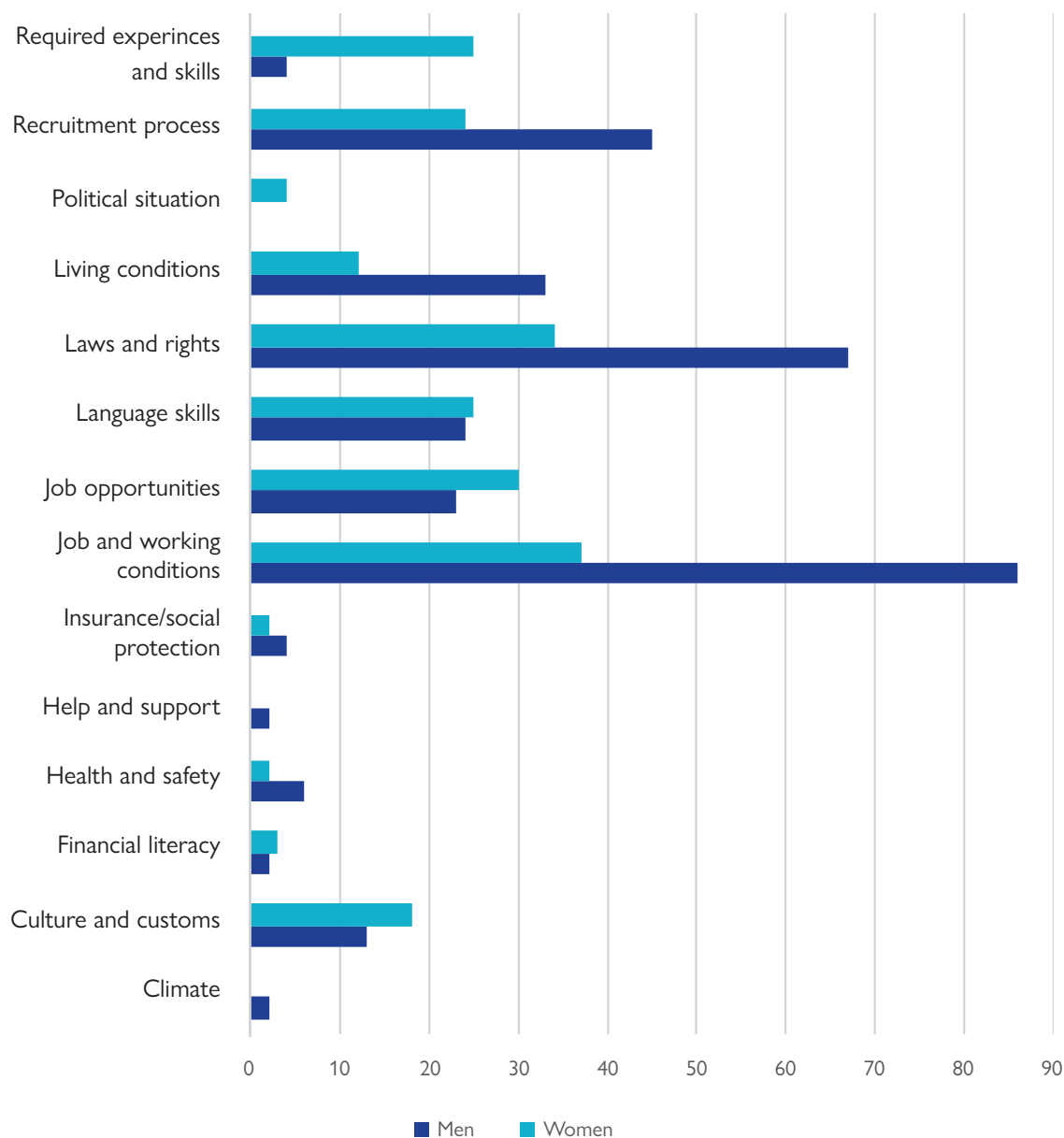
INFORMATION NEEDS

INFORMATION NEEDS OF MIGRANT WORKERS AT PRE-DEPARTURE

During the pre-departure phase, migrant workers have distinct information needs that are crucial for a smooth transition to their country of destination. These needs typically arise from their experiences, expectations and are influenced by factors such as gender. As shown in Figure 6 below, there are notable differences in information needs of men and women. While men focused on knowing more about working conditions, salary, recruitment processes and laws and rights, women migrant workers prioritize topics such as culture and customs of country of destination, job opportunities and required experiences skills and experience. This disparity could be attributed to various factors, including societal norms, gender roles and specific challenges faced by each gender. It is interesting to note that women migrant workers have raised topics such as the political situation in the country of destination, stemming from the recent conflict in the region.

Figure 6. Information needs of migrant workers (Kazakhstan)





INFORMATION GAPS IN EXISTING COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Providing migrant workers with comprehensive information not only empowers them to navigate and make informed decisions but also enhances their pre-departure experience. Currently Kazakhstan does not have an established pre-departure orientation or awareness programmes for outbound migrant workers. Instead, migrant workers heavily rely on social media networks or personal connections with family and friends. While these platforms offer information, there is a higher probability of encountering inaccurate and inadequate information. Representatives of NGOs highlighted that migrant workers from rural areas may experience more difficulties in accessing reliable information. Government officials who participated in the assessments have also identified this issue. They recognize the lack of verified and reliable information on

social media, the associated risks and threats migrant workers may encounter and the potential vulnerability to human traffickers as major information gaps. Additionally, officials note that migrant workers often depart unprepared and unaware of the actual conditions in their country of destination, relying solely on advice from relatives, acquaintances and friends.

“
People who return brag that they have made big money, but what kind of difficulties they have faced, they never tell. A potential migrant takes such bragging as truth and can get into a difficult situation abroad.

Man outbound migrant worker

CONCLUSION

This assessment learnt that existing information platforms primarily cater to foreign migrant workers in Kazakhstan. When it comes to obtaining information regarding labour migration in other countries, Kazakh migrant workers typically rely on social media or their network of families and friends. While the Government is making efforts to formalize information provision through the development of PDO programmes and by enhancing the capacities of their officials, it is crucial to incorporate gender considerations from the outset of these programmes. As demonstrated in the digital data presented earlier, it is imperative to explore delivering pre-departure information through social media, with special attention to ensuring accessibility for women. Information should be disseminated through channels closest to them, taking into account their mobility limitations and access to devices for social media usage.

Furthermore, this assessment has sought to understand stakeholders' perspectives, including those of migrant workers, on improving communication channels for greater effectiveness. It is noteworthy that the majority of migrant workers prefer receiving information through social media networks and expressed interest in in-person meetings. 77 per cent of returned migrant workers stated that they would have attended in-person orientation programme before leaving the country if one existed. NGO representatives emphasized the necessity of enhancing border security efforts to provide information to nationals. The Government representatives highlighted a few key considerations to strengthen and maximize information outreach. These include conducting campaigns for nationals going abroad and installing information terminals at border crossing points.

“
The State should inform citizens, especially through border crossing checkpoints. They should be more informative – banners and QR codes with algorithms of actions.

NGO representative

Stakeholder may consider several actionable recommendations outlined in the section on findings and recommendation on page 47 to strengthen the existing communication channels.



KYRGYZSTAN



THE NATIONAL LABOUR MIGRATION LANDSCAPE

TRENDS OF LABOUR MIGRATION

Approximately 350,000 to 700,000 Kyrgyz citizens are believed to be working abroad. The primary direction of international labour migration is towards the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan, with Kyrgyz migrant workers involved in both manual labour and entrepreneurial endeavours. As per IOM's Mobility Tracking Matrix study on returning migrant workers,³⁴ the top three countries from which migrant workers returned include the Russian Federation (85%), Kazakhstan (7%) and Türkiye (5%). Figure 7 shows the estimated number of Kyrgyz migrant workers migrated to different countries for employment.³⁵

Figure 7. Labour migration trends (Kyrgyzstan)



Countries of destination	Number of migrant workers
The Russian Federation	853 849
Kazakhstan	1 221
Uzbekistan	42
Germany	166
Republic of Korea	184
United States of America	129
Türkiye	1 169
Other CIS countries	44
Other non-CIS countries	742

Source: National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2022

NATIONAL LABOUR MIGRATION POLICIES

The migration policy in Kyrgyzstan aims to stabilize migration processes by implementing State programmes designed to address the adverse factors associated with migration and to facilitate the fullest realization of migration potential for the country's development. This objective is articulated in the Kyrgyz Republic Migration Policy Concept, as approved by Government Resolution #191, titled "On Approval of the Kyrgyz Republic Migration Policy for 2021-2030," dated 4 May 2021.

The implementation of this Concept aligns with State programmes focused on sustainable socioeconomic development in various regions, enhancing living standards and fostering human potential development. Additionally, the necessity to regulate migration processes and establish conditions for safe, orderly and legal migration is underscored in the Kyrgyz Republic's National Development Program until 2026, which is developed as part of the National Development

Strategy until 2040. This approach maintains continuity based on the country's long-term strategic development objectives, prioritizing a human-centered approach and emphasizing the fundamental commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals principle of leave no one behind.³⁶

Kyrgyzstan's legislation on external migration governance reflects the basic structure of the State's legal system, which is mainly directed at the protection and promotion of Kyrgyz migrant workers' rights abroad.

The Kyrgyz Republic's National Development Strategy (2018-2040)³⁷ highlights critical migration policy concerns, such as: 1) safeguarding the ethno-cultural identity of migrant workers; 2) facilitating the voluntary resettlement of ethnic Kyrgyz to the Kyrgyzstan based on principles that foster regional socioeconomic development and address demographic challenges; and 3) enhancing the process of granting immigrant status to foreign citizens arriving with intentions such as scientific work, permanent residence or contributing to the cultural development of Kyrgyzstan.

According to this strategy, the Government of Kyrgyzstan aims to explore diverse labour markets beyond the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan for its labour migrants. It also aims to enhance the competitiveness of Kyrgyz citizens in foreign labour markets such as the United Kingdom, Poland, Germany and other countries and provide legal and economic protection in their country of destination. The strategy emphasizes creating favourable conditions for migrant workers to invest their savings in the Kyrgyzstan's economy, focusing on prospective industries, enterprises and manufacturing sectors within the country.

Following the Kyrgyz Republic Law "On Access to Information Under the Jurisdiction of State Bodies and Local Self-Governments of the Kyrgyz Republic", everyone is guaranteed the right of access to information possessed by State bodies and local self-governments.³⁸

The Law of the Kyrgyz Republic "On External Labour Migration" dated 13 January 2006, No. 4 establishes the departure procedure for nationals considering employment abroad, determines the legal protection norms and regulates the implementation of the migrant workers' activity procedure.³⁹

INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS

Kyrgyzstan has endorsed various international legal agreements, enabling the incorporation of corresponding global standards into national laws. One of these is the UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. This convention requires ratifying nations to actively safeguard the rights of migrant workers. It involves collecting information on emerging issues, analysing them and responding to any violations of the UN Convention.

The CIS Member States adopted the Convention on the Legal Status of Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families in Chisinau in 2008, and Kyrgyzstan ratified it in 2009. This regional convention primarily addresses the protection of the rights of migrant workers and their families within CIS States. For Kyrgyzstan, where most migration is towards the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan, the convention serves as a tool for safeguarding the rights of its migrant workers and their families in the CIS region. Additionally, it facilitates cooperation among parties concerning medical insurance for migrant workers.

With regard to the UN-initiated GCM, the Government of Kyrgyzstan has not yet signed it. However, it has ratified a total of 53 International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions, including the following:⁴⁰

C029: Forced Labour Convention, 1930

C105: Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957

C182: Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999

C097: Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949

RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS

In Kyrgyzstan, currently the authorized State bodies in charge of migration are represented by:⁴¹

- Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Migration (MLSSM);
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- Ministry of Internal Affairs;
- Ministry of Digital Development;
- State Committee for National Security.

The activities of these State bodies allow for the fullest possible provision of safe and regulated migration, while covering all the goals of the GCM. The National Statistical Committee is the final organization processing data according to an approved method. They compile statistics on external migration, breaking it down by the country of destination and origin, migration gain, external migration outflow and external migration rates categorized by ethnic groups.

The Center for Employment Abroad (CEA) within the MLSSM is responsible for swiftly providing information to migrants, regulating migration processes, establishing an effective mechanism within the State power to respond to changes in both domestic and traditional foreign labour markets, and promptly offering employment to the unemployed while safeguarding their rights.

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS FOR PRE-DEPARTURE

The entities currently providing relevant information on labour migration to outbound migrant workers are:

Center of Employment Abroad (CEA)

One of the primary activities of the CEA⁴² is to inform and advise citizens on safe external labour migration. All the necessary information, including details about the main destination countries, can be obtained either by visiting in person or checking the CEA official website (<https://migrant.kg>). In 2021, a total of 28,112 individuals, including 4,367 women, sought advice from the CEA, and the CEA website receives over 10,000 monthly visitors. For information on entering Kyrgyzstan and obtaining permits,

all details can be found on the official website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (<https://mfa.gov.kg>).

Moreover, citizens of Kyrgyzstan have access to over 130 digital services provided by the State through the State e-Services Portal (<https://portal.tunduk.kg>).

UNICEF and IOM assisted CEA in digitizing overseas employment processes by establishing an Automated Information System and linking it to the State e-Services Portal Tunduk. Additionally, the NGO Insan-Leylek and the international organization Solidarity Center created the “Guide for Kyrgyz Citizens Working in the Russian Federation” and the “Kyrgyz-Russian Phrasebook for Migrant Workers”, which are distributed during PDO seminars. The CEA, together with the authorized State bodies of the countries of destination, is working to create a comprehensive system of pre-departure training for migrant workers.

To decentralize information programmes, five rural municipalities of Batken oblast have boards with information and contact details of persons and organizations. These boards provide information about entry rules and legal employment.

As part of the work to reduce vulnerability, information and awareness-raising activities are carried out, information is published on the official websites of authorized State bodies. Additionally, IOM supported the development of a mobile application MigApp, which provides all the necessary information on safe stay in the country of destination.

PDO programme for Seasonal Workers Scheme

IOM supported the Government of Kyrgyzstan in the development of PDO materials and implemented sessions for the Kyrgyz migrant workers going to the United Kingdom under the Seasonal Workers Scheme (SWS) to work at farms. The main purpose of this orientation was to empower outbound migrant workers to understand their working and living conditions at the farm, adapt successfully to the day-to-day demands of their new environment and to better navigate the services in place. As part of this programme, IOM developed and distributed information handbooks to the participating outbound migrant workers.

TRUSTED SOURCES OF INFORMATION

In the context of Kyrgyzstan, where PDO programmes, particularly for the SWS, are in place, outbound migrant workers receive information through the Government channel. However, most interviewed respondents stated that their network of families and friends remains the primary and trusted source of information. The major reason behind this is that families and friends not only provide practical information but also offer support in settling down at work and life in the country of destination. They provide information that cannot be gathered from other sources such as affordable accommodation, managing expenses and saving money. From the assessment, it was evident that men migrant workers tend to explore other information channels

“

If their relatives tell them about the employer, they don't check anything and go.

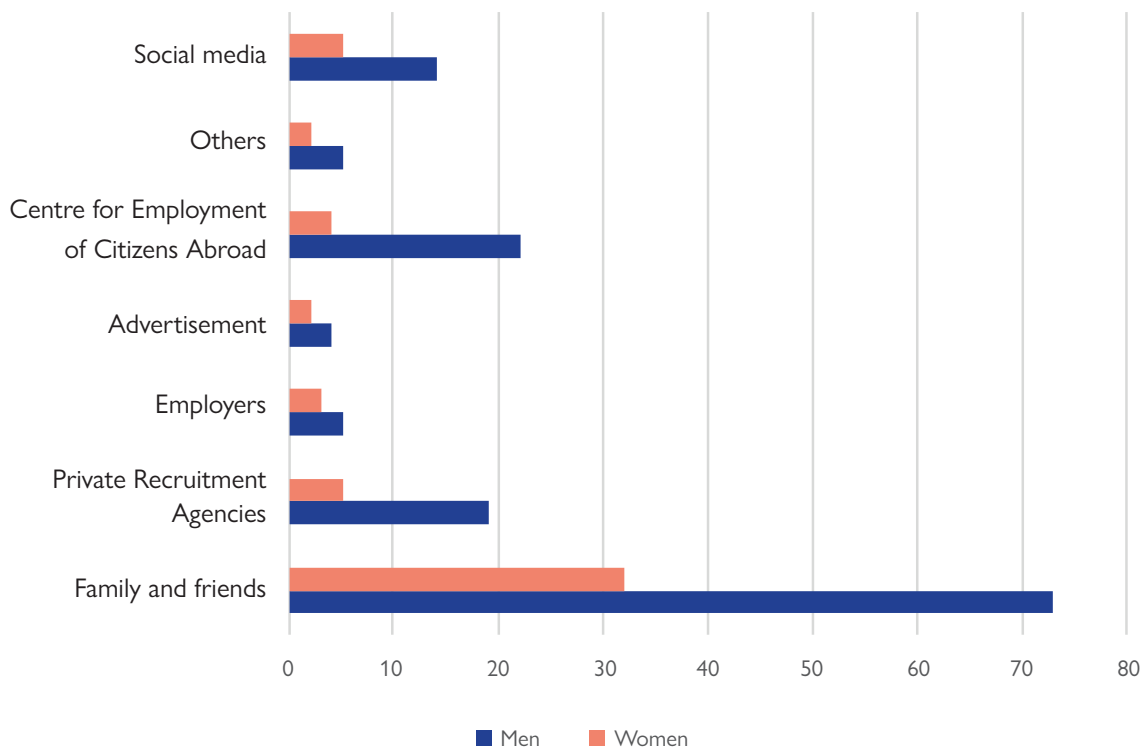
CSO representative

”

besides their families and friends. However, women migrant workers rely completely on their close sources. As stated by some of the respondents “in case of any problem in the country of destination, you could call your family and friends to ask for help and support. This may not be possible if we rely on other channels.”

It is interesting to note that while some migrant workers reach out to the Government only to check if they are blacklisted for travel and not necessarily to obtain relevant information related to their employment abroad, others mentioned that they would use the information services of the Government when planning to work in the United Kingdom. While quantifying the percentage of respondents expressing this sentiment is challenging, this observation clearly indicates that respondents are aware of the available channels and make decisions on when to utilize them. Given that the Russian Federation is a traditional destination for Kyrgyz nationals, they feel confident about their employment and the associated processes. In contrast, for other countries, they are willing to source information from trusted alternatives, such as the Government as illustrated in Figure 8.

Figure 8. Trusted sources of information (Kyrgyzstan)



INFORMATION FLOW DURING THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

The information flow during the recruitment process varies depending on which pathway, destination and industry migrant workers opt for. In the case of State supported recruitments such as the SWVS, information flows in a structured manner wherein outbound migrant workers receive scheme related information before leaving the country. This is different for those who travel through their personal network of families and friends or on their own. It is important to note the timeliness of the information is crucial during the pre-departure phase to ensure that migrant workers are aware of any alterations in labour laws, visa requirements or economic conditions of country of destination that may impact their migration plans.

INFORMATION NEEDS

INFORMATION NEEDS OF MIGRANT WORKERS AT PRE-DEPARTURE

Various topics emerged from the assessment in which respondents prioritized their information needs during the pre-departure phase of labour migration. Both men and women migrant workers emphasized the importance of understanding the laws of the country of destination, as well as being aware of their rights, job duties and workplace conditions. Respondents with prior migration experience stressed the crucial need for a proper understanding of laws and regulations to protect themselves in challenging situations. They added that issues such as late payment of wages or non-payment often arise, and in such cases, having information about their rights would be instrumental in negotiating or accessing the appropriate channels. A few women migrant workers emphasized the importance of learning the language of the country of destination, as it facilitates easy integration within the community and aids in accessing additional support in challenging situations.

Another area of information need emphasized by a few respondents is obtaining information about countries other than the Russian Federation (see Figure 9 on page 22). Although the number of respondents who wanted this information was small, but it indicates that nationals are exploring other labour migration corridors and sectors.

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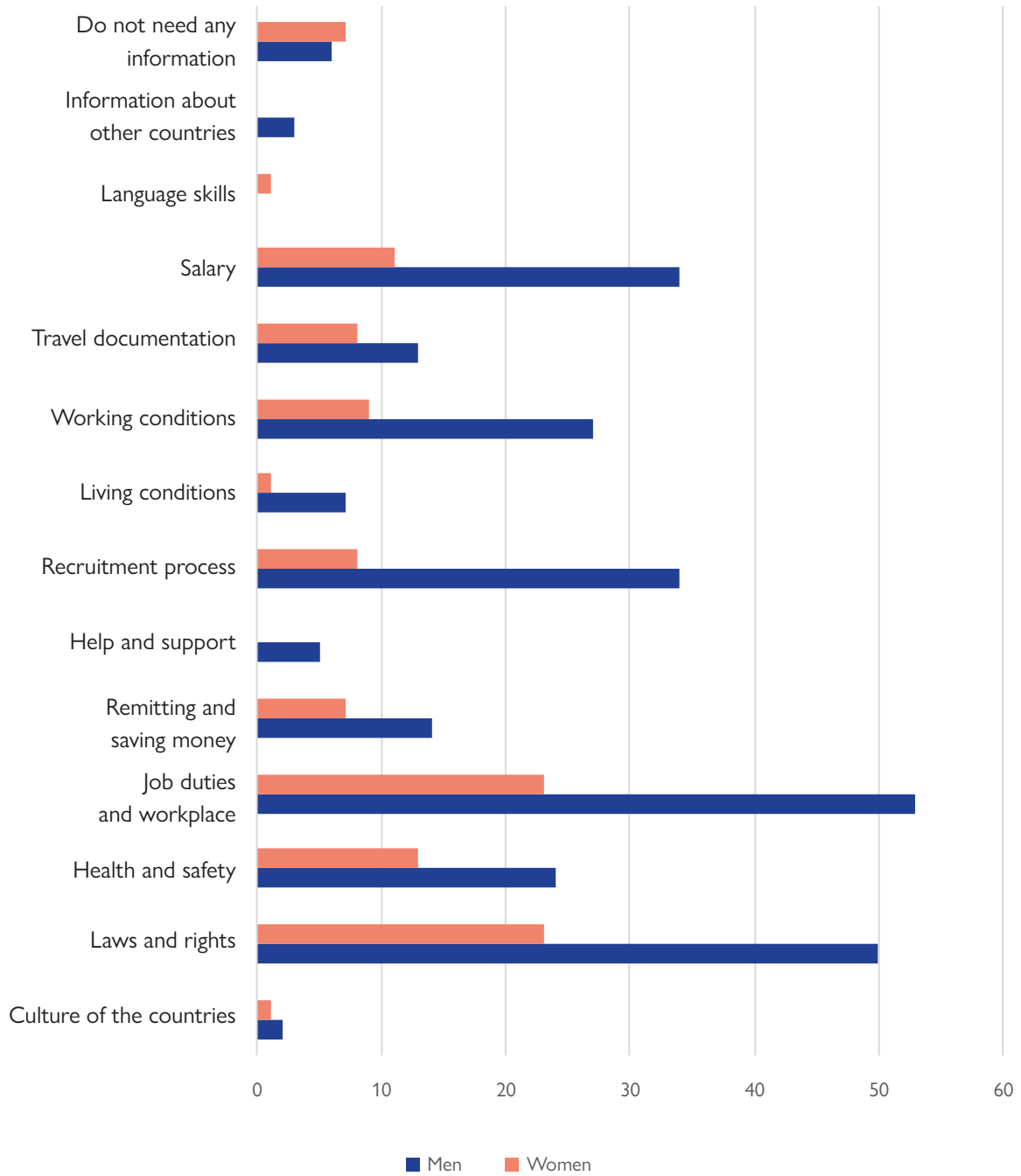
As for working in Russia, there are no problems with access to information. Even if you are in Russia (in Moscow, for example), you can always find a suitable job, because...there are a lot of advertisements on the relevant websites, there are recruitment agencies.

I wanted to get information regarding employment in the USA, but the CTGR does not have such information. Such information is available on the Internet, but he would like to leave legally and get a job legally. Therefore, I filled out an online application for a Green Card.

Men outbound migrant workers

”

Figure 9. Information needs of migrant workers (Kyrgyzstan)



INFORMATION GAPS IN EXISTING COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

This assessment highlights that the major gap in the existing communication channels is in the accessibility of Government and other stakeholder-provided information services. It is important to note that out of the 101 outbound migrant workers interviewed, 41 respondents were aware of the existing Government-provided services such as the centre for employment of citizens aboard (CTGR), and out of them, only 9 respondents reported using this platform to obtain information related to employment abroad. The remaining 32 respondents did not utilize it for the same purpose. The respondents to this assessment stated that the information is usually provided through leaflets and there is limited scope to clarify queries. One respondent said, “*personal meetings and conversations are necessary where you can ask questions and get clear answers.*”

“ *The TGR Center provided brief information regarding travel to England orally. They said that the rest can be viewed and read on the website.*

Man outbound migrant worker

While there are information portals containing relevant labour migration information, Kyrgyzstan’s Internet penetration, at 51.1 per cent of the total population at the start of 2022, may pose

“ *I had difficulties accessing information. Initially, it seems that there is a lot of information, but among them it is difficult to find something suitable for yourself. It often happened that the searches were fruitless – either the conditions were not suitable, or they paid little for hard work. Recruitment agencies also provide only general information, and if you need to find out more details, you already need to pay. But I didn’t have the money for this, and many people don’t. Therefore, many people look for work through their friends.*

Man outbound migrant worker

difficulties for migrant workers in remote rural areas with limited Internet access to utilize these portals. Additionally, the quality and quantity of information were highlighted as gaps in the existing communication channels. Respondents pointed out that the content of existing information materials is overly generic and contains an excessive amount of information. This results in difficulty in prioritizing information based on individual needs.

During the assessment, it was also shared by the respondents that there are some providers, particularly private recruitment agencies, who charge nationals for providing relevant information. This practice hinders access to information services for many.



CONCLUSION

This assessment noted that there are various communication channels available at the pre-departure stage. However, their utilization among migrant workers is limited due to several reasons outlined in the preceding sections. To enhance the effectiveness of these channels, there is a need to develop information materials tailored to specific needs as identified by migrant workers themselves in this assessment, ensuring that outbound migrant workers can access these services. Additionally, exploring avenues beyond online platforms is essential to ensure that migrant workers without necessary devices do not encounter challenges in accessing relevant information. In the Kyrgyzstan context, it is important to consider avenues at the provincial level, such as community-level infrastructure, to disseminate relevant information that can be easily accessed. This approach would not only improve information access for migrant workers in remote areas but also address any information accessibility issues faced by women migrant workers. Although the majority of women migrant workers who participated in this assessment did not report facing access-related challenges, as many travel with their families and have access to digital platforms, representatives from CSOs who participated in the assessment emphasized the necessity of reaching out to women migrant workers in remote areas with limited literacy skills. This is particularly crucial as more and more women are joining the workforce in other countries.

Stakeholders may consider specific actionable recommendations elaborated in the section on findings and recommendation on page 47.



NATIONAL LABOUR MIGRATION LANDSCAPE

TRENDS OF LABOUR MIGRATION

Between 2015 and 2018, about half a million people from Tajikistan went abroad for work each year, mainly during the agricultural and construction seasons in the Russian Federation from April to October. This seasonal migration is facilitated by Tajik citizens having visa-free access to the Russian Federation, allowing them to stay for up to 90 days, including for short-term employment.⁴³

Young men from Tajikistan are often migrant workers, but there is an increasing demand for foreign employment among women. Men typically take low-skilled jobs in construction, while women often work in low-skilled roles in the services sector. Many of these migrant workers come from rural areas and have secondary education qualifications. Economic reasons and the belief that local job opportunities are limited are key factors driving migration. Due to the growing youth population and more people entering the job market, approximately one in every three families in the country has at least one member working outside Tajikistan.⁴⁴ Figure 10 shows the estimated number of Tajik migrant workers migrated to different countries for employment as per in the strategy for Regulation of Migration Processes document 2023.

Figure 10. Number of Tajik citizens who went abroad to work⁴⁵



Year	Number of migrant workers
2014	670 806
2015	552 596
2016	517 308
2017	487 757
2018	484 176
2019	530 883
2020	129 807
2021	373 773
2022	775 578

NATIONAL LABOUR MIGRATION POLICIES RELATED TO PRE-DEPARTURE ORIENTATION

The National Development Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan for the period up to 2030 (NDS 2030) sets out the ultimate goal of improving standards of living for the population through sustainable development. One of the policies for achieving this goal is stated to be the expansion

of productive employment, with a key priority being the diversification of foreign labour migration, explicitly considering gendered perspectives.⁴⁶

To achieve this priority, the following activities are outlined by the NDS 2030:⁴⁷

- Development of a gender-sensitive system of pre-departure training for migrant workers and their families, including legal and information support and short-term vocational and language training based on resource centres;
- Development of labour migration legal and social protection programmes.

The following results are expected by the planned measures:⁴⁸

- Increased awareness and professional skills to work at the foreign labour markets;
- Increased social welfare of migrant workers and their family members.

Closely linked to the NDS 2030 is the Strategy for Regulation of Migration Processes in the Republic of Tajikistan for the period until 2040, which aims to regulate migration governance in the country. Key objectives of the Strategy related to information provision to outbound migrant workers include the following:

- Developing and implementing programmes and activities aimed at regulating the migration processes of the population.⁴⁹
- Regularly informing the population about immigration situation, State of affairs and opportunities of the international labour market, [and] changes in the legislation of the country of entry and stay.⁵⁰

Central to the Strategy is its Action Plan 2023-2025, setting out the key activities for achieving its objectives, which are closely linked to the provision of information to outbound migrant workers.

Finally, the Government of Tajikistan has entered several bilateral agreements on labour migration with countries of destination, including with the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Saudi Arabia and Qatar. Furthermore, agreements on labour migration have been signed between the governments of the Commonwealth of Independent States.⁵¹

INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS

Tajikistan has ratified several key UN human rights treaties. International commitments explicitly linked to Tajikistan's migration strategy is the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. In addition, Tajikistan has ratified a total of 50 ILO Conventions, including the following:⁵²

C097: Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949

C143: Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1974

C029: Forced Labour Convention, 1930

C105: Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957

C182: Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999

C155: Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981

Finally, Tajikistan supported the adoption of the GCM and joined it in 2018.⁵³ In pursuit of its objectives, extensive explanatory efforts were undertaken throughout the country in 2021. Across various regions and districts of the republic, a total of 2,920 meetings and discussions engaged 248,529 citizens. In 2021, the Migration Service and its affiliated units received consultation requests from 38,662 individuals. This marked a notable increase compared to the previous year, when 24,327 individuals sought consultations, with 18,288 in the first half of the year and 6,039 in the second half of 2020.⁵⁴

RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS

There are several stakeholders involved in migration governance and the communication with migrant workers at the pre-departure stage in Tajikistan. These stakeholders, with their roles and responsibilities, are detailed below.

Ministry of Labor, Migration and Employment (MOLME)

The three entities under the MOLME⁵⁵ are responsible for labour migration are as follows:

- **The Migration Department** of the MOLME is responsible for the development of policies and regulations around labour migration in Tajikistan.
- **Migration Services** are responsible for implementing policies and strategies on labour migration which are devised by the Migration Department.
- **The Agency for the Provision of Work Abroad** is responsible for providing employment for Tajik citizens abroad. The Agency promotes employment and skills development, conducts job fairs and advertises overseas job vacancies to prospective migrant workers.

Senior Secondary Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

Senior secondary TVET is provided by a total of 72 technical colleges, including medical and teacher training colleges, which are managed by different ministries and State-owned enterprises.⁵⁶

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS FOR PRE-DEPARTURE

In alignment with the national action plan and dedication to achieving the objective related to information of the GCM, the Government of Tajikistan has initiated measures to disseminate information related to labour migration through diverse communication channels. Following are a few relevant key initiatives elucidated:

Pre-departure orientation centres

The pre-departure orientation centres (PDOCs) are an integral hub of communication between the Government of Tajikistan and outbound migrant workers. As of 2023, four PDOCs have been established, specifically in Dushanbe, Bokhtar, Khorog and Khujand. In 2019, the Dushanbe PDOC was assessed to have the highest staff capacity and quality of facilities.⁵⁷ Information through these is provided through following ways:

- **Counselling and pre-departure services:** Outbound migrant workers can communicate with PDOC personnel and inquire about employment-related matters. A crucial aspect of these consultations involves verifying whether the migrant worker is prohibited from entering the Russian Federation.
- **Pamphlets:** Informational pamphlets tailored primarily for Tajik outbound migrant workers going to the Russian Federation, and to a lesser degree, to Kazakhstan, are accessible at these PDOCs. Additionally, there are general materials applicable to outbound migrant workers heading to any other country of destination. These resources are collaboratively developed by various stakeholders, including IOM, the Migrant Resource Centre (MRC) and destination countries' stakeholders like the Multidisciplinary Migration Center in Moscow, the Russian Federation.
- **In-person sessions:** The only in-person PDO programme is for the SWS in the United Kingdom being delivered by the PDOC. This programme was developed by IOM in 2023 and includes materials consisting of a trainers' manual, participants' handbook and PowerPoint slides.

Digital platforms

Outbound migrant workers also connect to friends and families in countries of destination through mobile apps such as IMO, WhatsApp and Viber to get relevant information. According to a study,⁵⁸ Facebook and Instagram are commonly used to share information on migration. Information related to SWS can be accessed by migrant workers from migrationcentre.tj and the app Telegram.

Civil society organizations

CSOs also provide outbound migrant workers with information at the pre-departure stage. For instance, the MRC was jointly established by the MOLME and the ICMPD to provide outbound migrant workers (as well as prospective and returning workers) with information. Information is delivered through one-to-one support to outbound migrant workers, social media campaigns, online orientation programmes (www.icmpdsilkroutesmodules.com), community outreach programmes and resources available online.

OTHER OUTREACH INITIATIVES

Jamoat and Mahallas

To decentralize the information dissemination, labour migration related information is disseminated at the village/municipality level to maximize the information outreach. As per a study conducted by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in 2018, the majority of migrant workers said that their village or municipality (Jamoat) was the main place of information gathering.⁵⁹

Migration Service consultations

The Migration Services provides consultations to Tajik citizens on migration. In 2021, 38,662 applied for consultation with Migrant Services, which is 10 per cent of the total number of migrants from Tajikistan that year. Out of this number, 95 per cent applied in-person, 4 per cent applied by telephone and 1 per cent applied in writing.

Border crossings

At all border crossing points, there are notice boards with the rules for crossing the border, along with hotline phone numbers for reporting rights violations by border services.⁶⁰

TRUSTED CHANNELS

Family members often act as a primary source of information, offering advice on the country of destination, work conditions and cultural nuances. Friends, especially those who have previously migrated or have knowledge of the migration process, contribute significantly by sharing practical tips and personal experiences. This finding was generated by the assessment, as family and friends were mentioned multiple times by the respondents (see Figure 11 on page 31). Similar observations were made in assessments conducted by JICA and ICMPD. According to a 2018 JICA study involving 189 returnee migrants, the main sources of information during the pre-departure phase were predominantly friends (40.2%) and relatives (30.7%). These findings align with research from the MRC, indicating that migrant workers without prior migration experience heavily rely on relatives with previous exposure to the Russian Federation.⁶¹

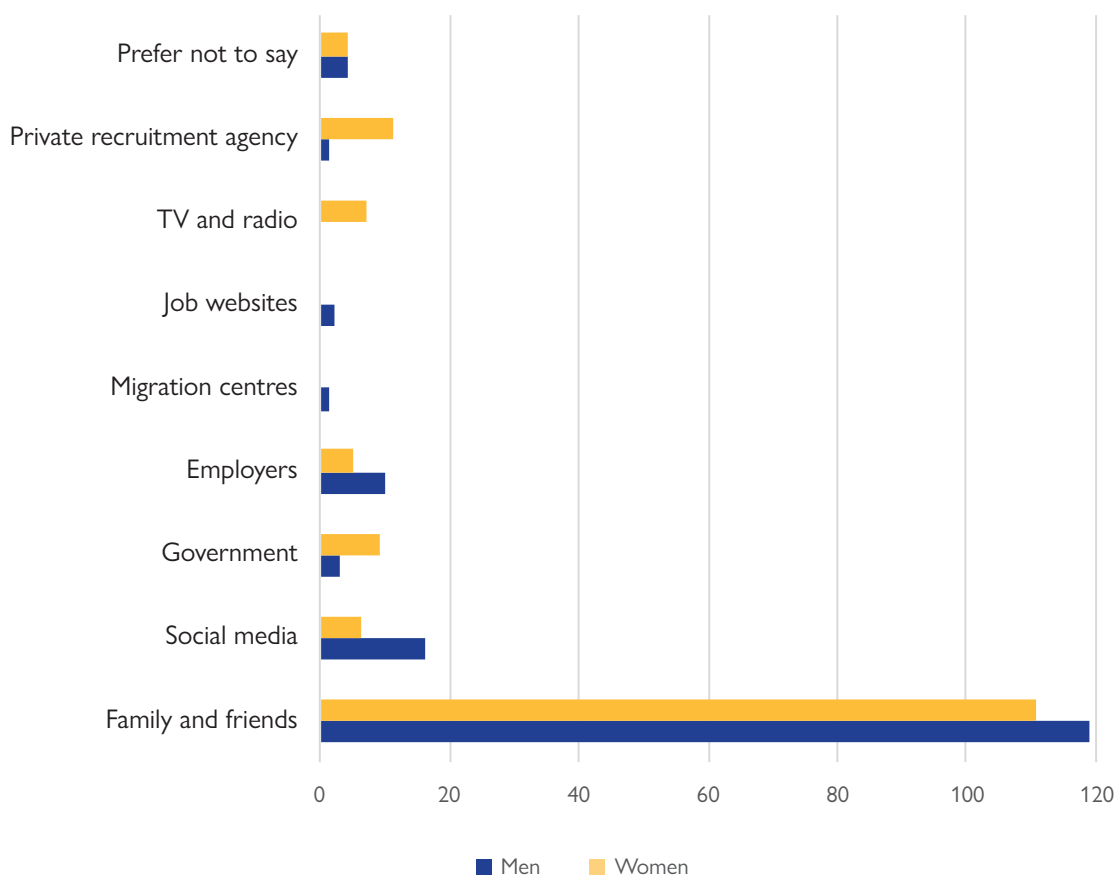
While many respondents of this assessment did share challenges faced when relying solely on this source, they still prefer it as, according to them, there is no other alternative source that will answer all their queries. Additionally, this source helps them find jobs in their countries of destination and provides support in situations where they may face exploitation. Women migrant workers often rely on informal networks, community connections and social media to gather information, as they mostly travel with people known to them such as their relatives or community members.

“
When I left Tajikistan, I was given information about work and wages. Here in Tajikistan, we had good trusting relationships with friends who promised us work; when we arrived at the place, they told us one thing, but there was a completely different job and salary. They praised us here about the working conditions, but when we arrived, in reality it turned out to be completely different.

Man migrant worker

It is noteworthy that Government agencies, private recruitment agencies and mediums such as TV and radio remain trusted sources among interviewed women migrant workers. Stakeholders involved in designing or enhancing communication channels should prioritize building the capacity of these channels to effectively reach women migrant workers.

Figure 11. Trusted sources of information (Tajikistan)



This assessment also noted that the outgoing migrant workers also utilize mobile applications like IMO, WhatsApp and Viber to stay in touch with friends and family in their countries of destination, particularly those who have migrated to the Russian Federation. Likewise, Facebook and Instagram are frequently employed to exchange information about migration.

INFORMATION FLOWS DURING THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

As secondary data suggests, the majority of Tajik nationals who migrate come from rural areas, primarily moving to the Russian Federation for employment. While many adhere to this traditional migration corridor, others explore alternative routes available to them. One such corridor exists between Tajikistan and the United Kingdom, where Tajik nationals are recruited through a SWS to work on farms. The recruitment process under this scheme is relatively streamlined, and relevant information is provided to migrant workers through specific channels, such as the PDO and information provided by recruiters, who are known as the scheme operators. However, this is not the case for labour migration through personal networks, where nationals rely on their connections to find jobs and relevant information. This assessment noted that those employed

through Government processes, such as the SWS, receive information during their recruitment process. Conversely, those who travel through personal networks are largely dependent on these connections. This indicates that migrant workers who do not use a specific migration channel have limited access to accurate information related to their chosen country of destination.

This assessment does not aim to validate the efficiency of the information flows within the SWS without evaluating its impact. Instead, it recognizes that scheme operators and the PDO programme provide pertinent information to outbound migrant workers. In contrast, for migrant workers relying on personal anecdotes within their network, the scope for accurate information is very limited.

“

I encountered the same situation. When I left Tajikistan, I was given information about work and wages. Here in Tajikistan, we had good trusting relationships with friends who promised us work; when we arrived at the place, they told us one thing, but there was a completely different job and salary. They praised us here about the working conditions, but when we arrived, in reality it turned out to be completely different. There the employer says: “I came for myself, if you don’t work, you can leave.” Upon arrival, working conditions changed. Here in Tajikistan, we were promised that you would go to this employer, you would have a job, you would live in one place, help and support would be provided, if you were sick, there would be treatment, food, clothing, a place to live. And when they arrived, they refused the previous agreements.

Experience shared by a Tajik woman migrant worker

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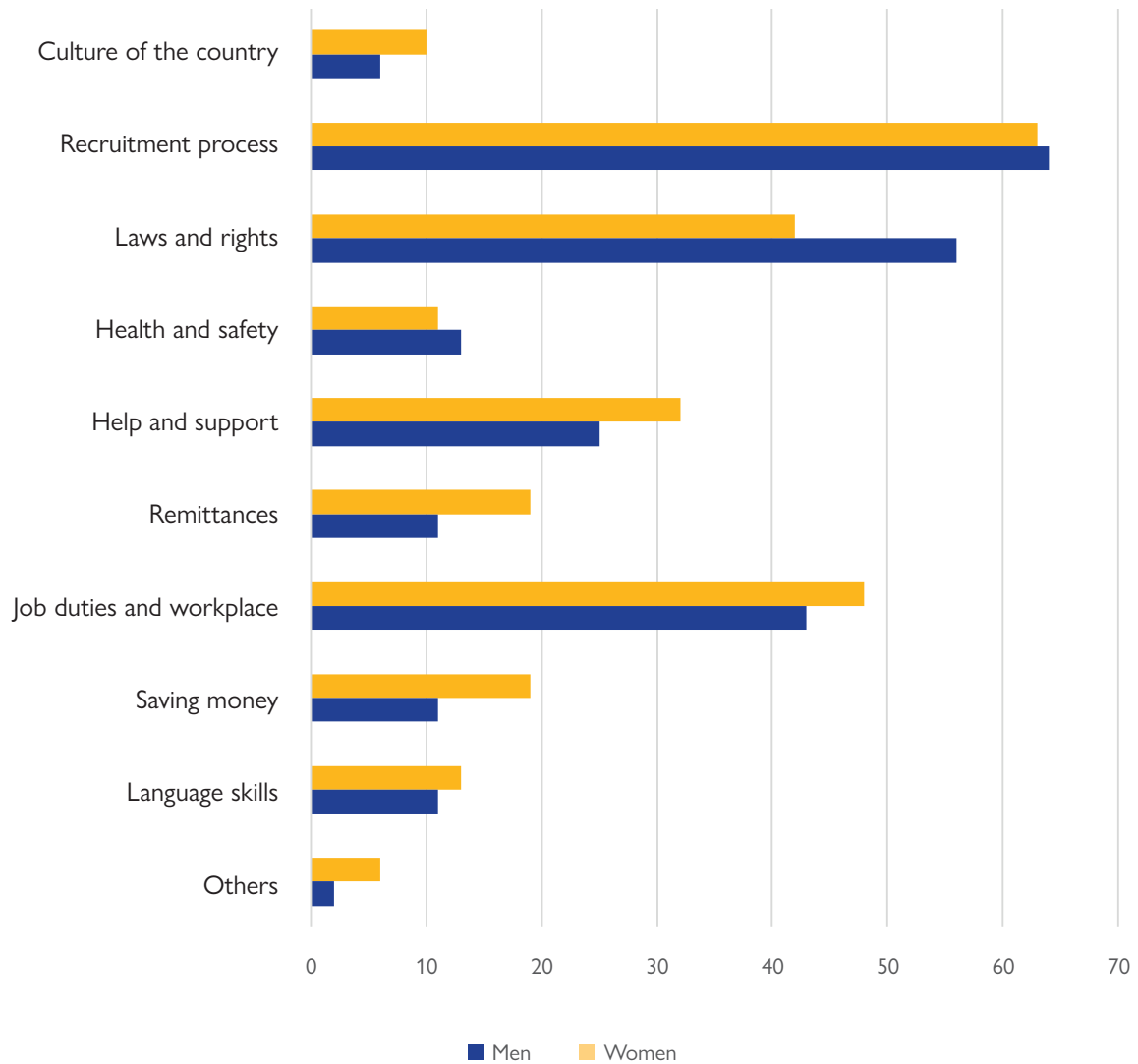
INFORMATION NEEDS

INFORMATION NEEDS OF MIGRANT WORKERS AT PRE-DEPARTURE

At the pre-departure phase, it is crucial to provide outbound migrant workers with the information they need for a smooth transition and improved well-being. As they may face various challenges in pursuing opportunities abroad, it is imperative to equip them with comprehensive information that would support in navigating the pre-departure phase.

This assessment strived to understand the information needs of migrant workers in order to support and develop need-based orientation programmes. Figure 12 on page 33 enumerates the shared topics discussed in the assessment by both outbound and returned migrant workers. By addressing these information needs comprehensively, stakeholders can contribute to fostering a supportive environment for migrant workers, ensuring a more successful and positive migration experience.

Figure 12. Information needs of migrant workers (Tajikistan)



As indicated in Figure 12, the priority area of information for men migrant workers are around recruitment processes, laws about the countries of destination and their rights, and health and safety. Many men migrant workers who took part in this assessment had earlier migration experiences, particularly to the Russian Federation and stated that they now focus on getting updated information on the laws and regulations related to visas, work permits and contractual obligations. Most of the respondents with prior work experience in the Russian Federation expressed concerns about their lack of

“ One needs to be cautious even in this aspect, as patents are also divided into two types: regional and city. Therefore, if a migrants have a city patent (for example, in Moscow), they are only allowed to work within the city limits and are not permitted to work in the Moscow region even. Without knowing this, many migrants find themselves in complex situations and may face deportation.

Experience shared by a man migrant worker.

knowledge regarding the diverse laws and regulations governing the necessity for work permits (patents) in various regions of the country. The respondents who participated in focus group discussions said that “Many only become aware of compliance with a particular law after violating it.” As migrant workers themselves note, only by knowing the legislation and their rights can they effectively protect themselves.

In case of women migrant workers, key information needs shared during the assessment concern remittances and saving money. While generalizations can be challenging, there are certain factors that might contribute to the observation that women migrant workers may show a relatively higher interest in information related to remittances and savings compared to men migrant workers. This assessment noted that women migrant workers often migrate for a temporary period and may, therefore, focus on remitting and saving the maximum amount they can during this temporary period. Additionally, those with financial responsibilities could be more concerned about efficiently managing remittances and ensuring that their families receive the maximum benefit from the funds sent back home.

“ We recently learned that they are going to pass a law that if a migrant goes to work, he should not take his family with him, since due to the labour force alone, the state has to pay for school for their children and provide medicine. We don't know whether this law was adopted or not. So, every day there is something new.

Woman migrant worker

Another important point raised by a few respondents was about updating information available in various platforms on regular intervals. Some respondents highlighted that there is greater need for updating information particularly related to laws and regulations of countries of destination to avoid unintentional violations, leading to legal consequences for migrant workers in the countries of destination.

INFORMATION GAPS IN EXISTING COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Information gaps in existing communication channels can pose significant challenges in disseminating crucial details relevant at the pre-departure phase to the outbound migrant workers. In the assessment locations, both primary and secondary respondents stated that trust poses a significant obstacle in accessing the existing channels.

According to them, the prevalent reasons for this lack of trust stem from:

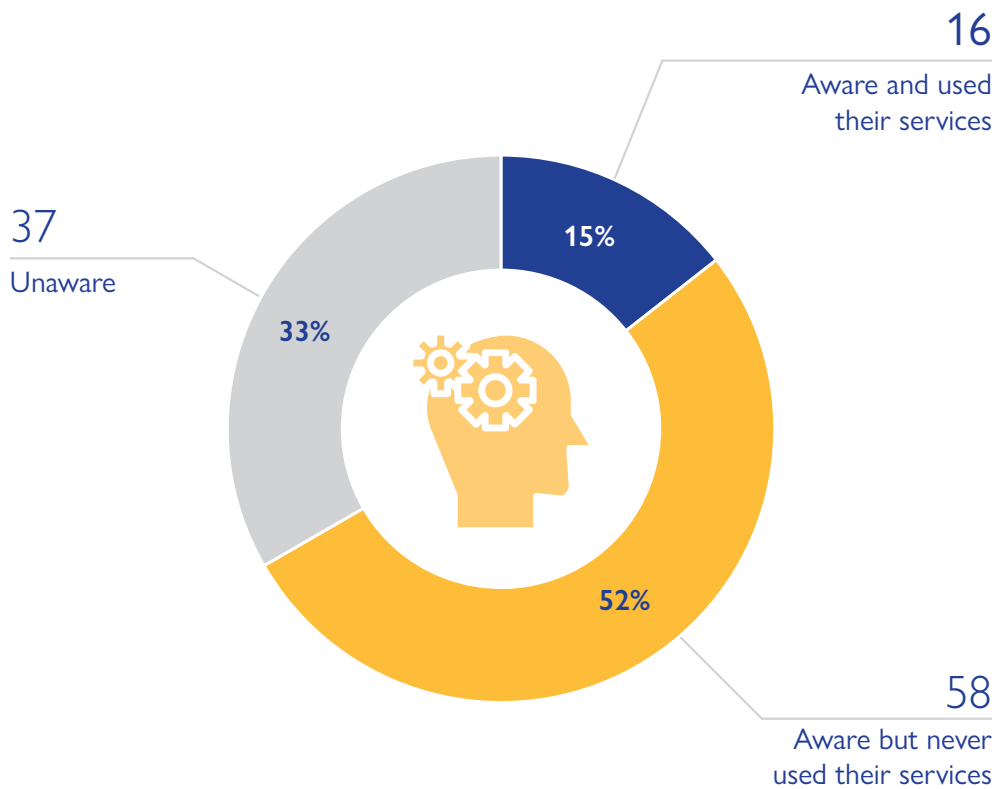
- Encountering inconsistent information;
- Encountering messages that are unclear and challenging to comprehend due to the use of technical language;
- Facing variations in information across different channels, making it difficult to discern accuracy;
- Harboring doubts about the authenticity of the information source, particularly due to reported incidents of scams.

As depicted in Figure 13 on page 35, the majority of interviewed respondents stated that they are aware of the existing channels but have never used their services due to the aforementioned reasons. This trend is observed among both men and women migrant workers. Specifically, women

migrant workers from rural areas heading to the Russian Federation find the use of State or NGO-supported communication channels irrelevant as they typically either travel with their husband or with other relatives. While many of them reported attending information sessions organized by NGOs at the mahalas, they also clarified that these sessions did not influence their migration decisions or help them anyway.

Additionally, an analysis conducted by IOM in 2023 of existing PDO materials reveals that pamphlets are stored in migration centres, leaving it to the discretion of migrant workers to decide which ones to utilize. The lack of clear guidance on which information would be beneficial and assistance in resolving doubts also represents a significant gap in accessing these communication channels.

Figure 13. Knowledge about existing channels (Tajikistan)



CONCLUSION

In Tajikistan, the communication channels available during the pre-departure phase are relatively abundant compared to neighbouring countries in the region. However, this assessment noted that many migrant workers who participated in the study displayed limited interest in gathering relevant information, relying primarily on what they receive from family, friends or acquaintances. It is only after arriving in their country of destination that most begin actively seeking information, driven by necessity rather than foresight. Additionally, many migrant workers reported overlooking advertisements or brochures providing information about labour migration. To address these

issues, one proposed measure suggested by migrant workers themselves is to conduct numerous information sessions involving Government authorities and trusted migrant representatives, such as heads of jamoats/mahallas particularly for improving access of women migrant workers. Given that these provisions are already established but remain underutilized by migrant workers, it may be beneficial to reassess these structures and explore avenues for strengthening them.

This assessment revealed that the existing information materials are produced by multiple organizations that might not have collaborated. The inconsistency in the information, as emphasized by the respondents, could be a reason why migrant workers do not extensively utilize the available materials.

The assessment observed that younger migrant workers typically seek information online, while older migrant workers rely on gatherings with relatives and friends at weddings and mosques, as well as television broadcasts. To accommodate the preferences of both age groups, effective methods for delivering information could include personal meetings, distributing brochures, utilizing various social media platforms and messaging apps as well as collaborating with well-known bloggers.

The assessment noted that aside from the challenges related to accessing available information resources and comprehending available information, it is challenging to identify any other obstacles encountered by women migrant workers. This is because those interviewed from the respective locations usually travel with their family or friends and engage in the same sector. Additionally, many of those interviewed had prior experience migrating to the Russian Federation.

Stakeholders may consider detailed recommendations listed in the section on findings and recommendation on page 47 to address these issues.



UZBEKISTAN



THE NATIONAL LABOUR MIGRATION LANDSCAPE

TRENDS OF LABOUR MIGRATION

The migratory patterns to and from Uzbekistan are significantly shaped by the presence and accessibility of migration corridors. These corridors are influenced by various factors, including cultural, historical and linguistic ties that define and guide movement along them. Moreover, legal frameworks established through bilateral and regional migration and labour agreements play a crucial role. For instance, such agreements facilitate expedited procedures in the Russian Federation for Central Asian migrants and promote free labour mobility among Member States of the EAEU. Beyond these formal arrangements, there are instances of informal employment without proper permits and individuals travelling for work under alternative visa schemes, notably to the Russian Federation.⁶²

As per UN DESA 2021 data, Figure 14 below shows the five main countries of destination for migrant workers from Uzbekistan.⁶³

Figure 14. Labour migration trends of Uzbekistan



Countries of destination	Number of migrant workers
The Russian Federation	1 100 000
Kazakhstan	296 000
Ukraine	223 000
Turkmenistan	67 000
United States of America	63 000

NATIONAL LABOUR MIGRATION POLICIES

As of November 2023, Uzbekistan does not yet have a national migration strategy. Several decrees and law govern labour migration in Uzbekistan. For example, the Decree on Measures to Introduce a System of Safe, Orderly and Legal Labour Migration (2020)⁶⁴ aims to ensure that recruitment processes protect the rights and interests of Uzbek citizens going abroad. Nonetheless, these measures do not necessarily constitute a strategy for implementation. In August 2020, amendments were made to the country's 2008 law on human trafficking, introducing new concepts, preventive measures and a procedure for identifying victims of human trafficking, including minors and their rights.

The national legal framework around migration comprises the following measures:⁶⁵

- Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan (1992)
- Law on citizenship (1992) (last amended in 2020)
- Decree-law on the procedure of entrance, departure, stay and transit of citizens of other States and Stateless persons in the Republic of Uzbekistan of 1996 (last amended in 2019)
- Decree-law on the Agency for External Labour Migration of 2003
- Anti-trafficking Law of 2008 (last amended in 2020)
- Regulation on the procedure for granting political asylum in the Republic of Uzbekistan of 2017

INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS

As of November 2023, Uzbekistan does not yet have a national migration strategy. Several decrees and law govern labour migration in Uzbekistan. For example, the Decree on Measures to Introduce a System of Safe, Orderly and Legal Labour Migration (2020) aims to ensure that recruitment processes protect the rights and interests of Uzbek citizens going abroad. Nonetheless, these measures do not necessarily constitute a strategy for implementation. In August 2020, amendments were made to the country's 2008 law on human trafficking, introducing new concepts, preventive measures and a procedure for identifying victims of human trafficking, including minors and their rights.

Uzbekistan has ratified several key UN human rights treaties, including the following:⁶⁶

CAT	Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
CCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CERD	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
CESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
UN TIP Protocol	Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime

In addition, Uzbekistan has ratified a total of 20 ILO Conventions, including the following:⁶⁷

[C029: Forced Labour Convention, 1930](#)

[C105: Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957](#)

[C182: Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999](#)

[C081: Labour Inspection Convention, 1947](#)

Uzbekistan has not yet ratified the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, the Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97) or the Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1974 (No. 143).

With regards to Uzbekistan's bilateral commitments, the Government has signed agreements to strengthen labour migration coordination with the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, Türkiye, Saudi Arabia, Israel, the Republic of Korea, Japan⁶⁹ and Germany.⁷⁰ More recently, the Government has signed an agreement with the United Kingdom's Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) to strengthen the protections for Uzbek migrant workers in the United Kingdom.⁷⁰

RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS

Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction of the Republic of Uzbekistan (MEPR)

The MEPR is a Government body with the mandate to “implement a unified policy in the field of employment, labour migration and labour relations.”⁷¹

Agency for External Labor Migration of the Republic of Uzbekistan (AELM)

To assist citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan in using their rights to work abroad through effective management and monitoring of organized recruitment processes, the Agency of External Labour Migration (later the Agency) was established under the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan

The Agency for External Labor Migration (AELM), under the MOELR, is the agency responsible for helping citizens of Uzbekistan find work abroad, preparing them for labour migration, while contributing to the protection of their rights and interests abroad.

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS FOR PRE-DEPARTURE

Information to outbound migrant workers is provided through AELM. It has 14 regional branches across Uzbekistan with its headquarters in Tashkent.⁷²

The Agency carries out the following activities, among others:

- Provision of PDO and other pre-departure services (such as medical checks, psychological checks and narcotics checks) for outbound migrant workers;
- Development and implementation of international cooperation in the field of labour migration;
- Collaboration with the relevant authorities in other countries;
- Assistance to Uzbek citizens in searching for jobs abroad;
- Issuance of permits to citizens of Uzbekistan to work abroad.

Official information channels of the AELM have been launched online via social networks, namely Telegram and Facebook.⁷³ The Government website, LaborMigration.uz, provides information on

the working conditions, living conditions and rules of residency and stay in prospective countries of employment to outbound migrant workers.⁷⁴ Information is also available regarding PRAs and the regulations governing contracts with foreign employers. Additionally, migrant workers registered on the platform can utilize the portal to seek assistance from AELM.⁷⁵

Mono-centres

The mono-centres are used to deliver PDO sessions for the outbound migrant workers. The “Ishga Marhamat” mono-centre, based in Tashkent and falling under the MEPR, is a one-stop shop for outbound migrant workers which provide PDO, professional training courses⁷⁶ and language courses. It is a key source of information for outbound migrant workers at pre-departure.

Digital platforms

Currently, two mobile apps are available to outbound migrant workers at the pre-departure stage: Migrant Maslahatchisi and Migrant Uz.

- Migrant Maskahatchisi, an app owned by the Government of Uzbekistan, provides answers to workers’ questions about labour migration in real time, by qualified personnel in ministries. Through real-time questions and answers, users can ask questions, voice concerns and get advice from service providers in the Government, free of charge.⁷⁷
- Migrant Uz is a mobile app which provides information on labour migration, relevant documents needed in the recruitment process, recruitment costs and services for outbound migrants.⁷⁸

Civil society organizations

Several CSOs are involved in providing information to outbound migrant workers at pre-departure. For example, the Social Information Centre “Istiqbolli Avlod” operates an anti-trafficking hotline and runs awareness campaigns on the risks of irregular migration, with nine regional offices across the country.⁷⁹

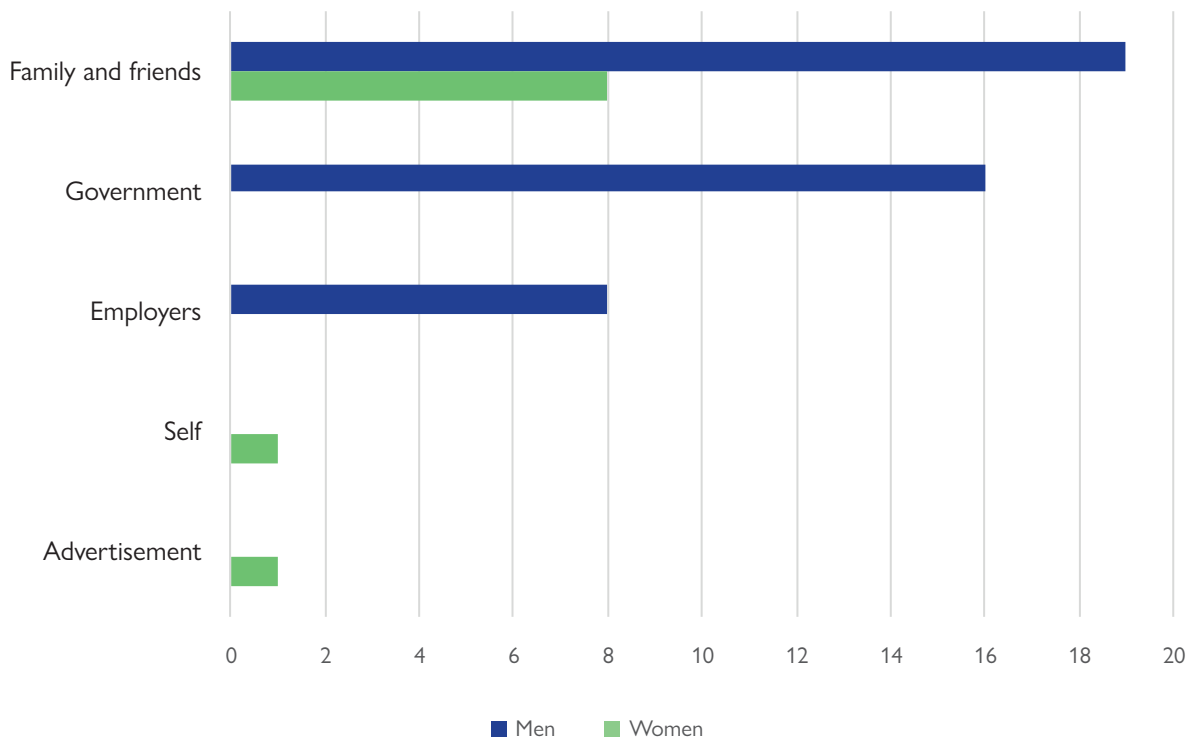
Private recruitment agencies

Registered PRAs provide information to selected migrant workers. Interviewed PRA representatives informed that information is provided through in-person sessions, phone conversions and video conferencing. Additionally, a few PRAs stated that they collaborate with employers to post their vacancies through social media platforms like Telegram, Facebook and LinkedIn, both locally and globally. After users register on their website via Telegram and apply for a job, they communicate with them via phone or in-person to provide details about their services and job opportunities. Most applicants then visit their office for further steps, including discussions on job responsibilities, contract terms, working conditions and personal confirmation of job requirements, followed by the signing of contracts and the commencement of the visa application process.

TRUSTED SOURCES OF INFORMATION

For outbound migrant workers, the network of family and friends remains a highly trusted source of information as indicated in Figure 15. This was also stated by the NGOs and PRAs who took part in the assessment. Among men migrant workers, Government sources are also highly trusted. While migrant workers themselves may not have highlighted social media as a trusted source, NGO and PDO representatives noted that social media, including Telegram channels, are commonly used platforms among migrant workers.

Figure 15. Trusted sources of information (Uzbekistan)



It is important to note that 87 per cent of those who relied on their network of family and friends for information expressed a desire to change their information channel for future migration. Specifically, 72 per cent of respondents indicated a willingness to participate in events if they were organized by the State Agency for External Labor Migration. This suggests that many migrant workers may not be aware of the existing PDO programmes.

INFORMATION FLOW DURING THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

As mentioned in the preceding section, information regarding employment and related matters is accessible across various platforms. For State-managed labour migration programmes like the SWS, PDO centres play a crucial role by offering pertinent information throughout the recruitment and migration journey, in compliance with the mandatory requirements of the scheme. Some respondents in this assessment, who had migrated to work in the construction industry in the Russian Federation, reported taking part in PDO programmes. In self-managed processes, where migrant workers navigate migration through personal networks, information is accessed on an as-needed basis.

INFORMATION NEEDS

INFORMATION NEEDS OF MIGRANT WORKERS AT PRE-DEPARTURE

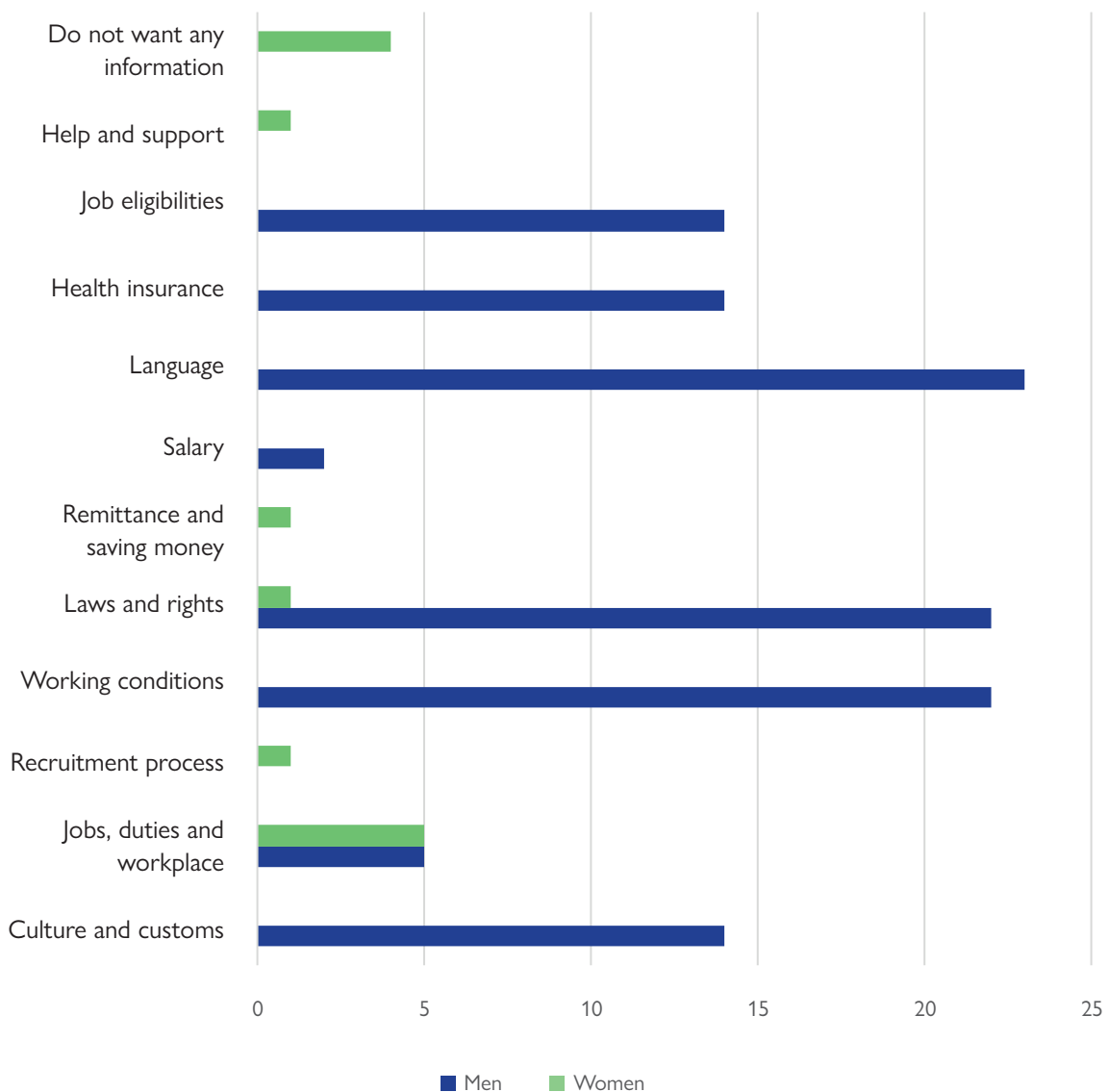
As illustrated in Figure 16 on page 44, the majority of migrant workers have emphasized the need for information regarding working conditions, laws and rights. Notably, migrant workers attribute equal importance to acquiring proficiency in the language of their country of destination. This is particularly crucial because legal documents, including work contracts, are typically in the native language of the country of origin, especially in destinations such as the Russian Federation. NGO and PRA representatives who participated in this assessment echoed this sentiment. According to them, Uzbek migrant workers must possess basic language skills of the destination country to comprehend legal documents and seamlessly integrate into the culture. This highlights the essential role language proficiency plays in ensuring the well-being and successful integration of migrant workers.

Other essential topics that migrant workers prioritize are health insurance, culture and customs as well as job eligibilities. While most topics related to thriving in the workplace and country of destination were raised by men migrant workers, women migrant workers expressed specific needs surrounding their roles in the workplace and the availability of assistance services. This trend is attributed to the fact that many women migrant workers travel with their husbands or men family/community members, indicating a higher dependency on their counterparts. Although this assessment did not delve into the consequences faced by women migrant workers due to this dependency, which may involve dynamics related to information sharing, there is a pressing need to address this issue and work towards empowering women by providing relevant information.

The secondary stakeholders involved in this assessment also prioritized the same topics as the migrant workers. Representatives from NGOs emphasized that migrant workers often only show interest in getting basic information such as the country's name, position and salary, lacking awareness of essential details like the rules in the country of destination, language, employer's identity and workplace location. This lack of awareness exposes them to vulnerability, making it crucial to incorporate these topics into information and orientation programmes.

Another significant aspect to be included is psychological support for migrant workers, helping them cope with the emotional strain associated with labour migration. This support should address challenges such as adapting to a different mentality and culture. Incorporating these themes into information and orientation programmes is vital for offering comprehensive support and destigmatizing psychological well-being, as many individuals may avoid seeking such services due to associated stigma.

Figure 16. Information needs of migrant workers (Uzbekistan)



INFORMATION GAPS IN EXISTING COMMUNICATION MATERIALS

One of the major gaps identified through the desk review is that outbound migrant workers are currently obligated to pay to attend PDO programmes, potentially impacting the accessibility of these crucial orientation sessions. This financial burden may lead some outbound migrant workers

to avoid participating in PDO, resulting in migration without the benefit of essential information.

Furthermore, migrant workers have expressed concerns regarding the inadequacy and lack of updates in the information available on various platforms. These concerns were echoed by trainers in PDO centres, emphasizing the need for regular updates to ensure that resources/materials remain relevant and accurate. This dual perspective highlights the necessity for not only addressing the financial barriers to PDO attendance but also ensuring the continuous improvement and accuracy of information resources/materials for migrant workers.

Both PRAs and NGOs expressed concerns regarding the limited access for migrant workers in remote rural locations, particularly among women and persons with disabilities. These representatives emphasized that online platforms pose challenges for accessibility due to weak Internet penetration in rural areas and

difficult content, particularly legal information particularly for persons with hearing disability. Furthermore, many migrant workers, especially women, do not have smartphones, hindering their ability to access pertinent information. Given that migration in Uzbekistan is predominantly from rural areas, this limitation in access poses a significant obstacle to obtaining the necessary and accurate information during the pre-departure stage. Additionally, another significant gap in obtaining essential information services is the limited awareness among migrant workers about the available services and information portals.

“

Yes, it was difficult to talk through phone, as I have a group-II disability.

Woman migrant worker

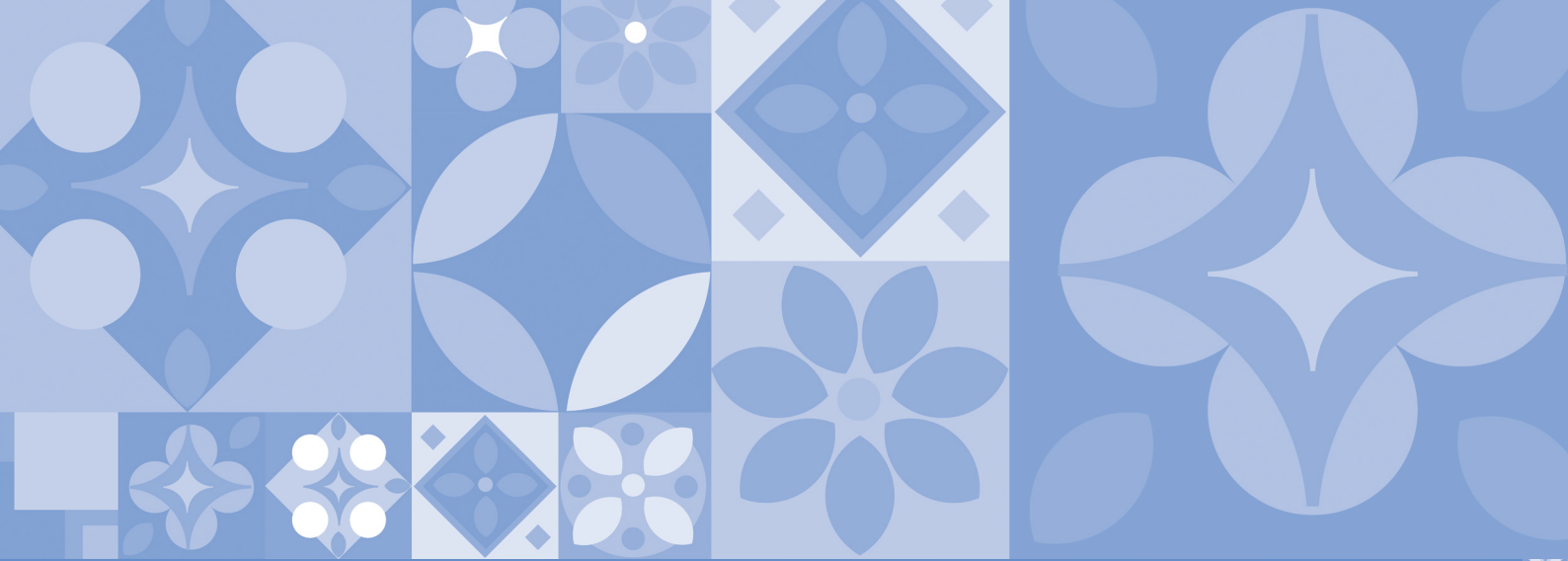
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CONCLUSION

To enhance communication channels, respondents in this assessment emphasized the importance of adopting a decentralized approach, ensuring that migrant workers have easy access to existing orientation programmes. One NGO representative suggested that information campaigns or announcements for PDO trainings should be held in mahallas (communities) for middle-aged individuals, while trainings for younger people could be conducted over a longer period at mono-centres or colleges/schools. Additionally, it was suggested that PDO programmes should be integrated into every course offered at mono-centres or colleges.

NGO representatives emphasized that many migrant workers are unaware of existing information channels. Nearly 72 per cent of returning migrant workers stated that they would have attended a PDO if they had known about it before travelling. It is necessary to enhance visibility by increasing the number of information kiosks in the waiting hall of Termez International Airport and intensifying promotional efforts at the airport. This includes regularly conducting awareness-raising campaigns and various promotions on pre-departure information at ticket sales offices and airport entrances.

Stakeholders may consider specific actionable recommendations elaborated in the section on findings and recommendation on page 47.

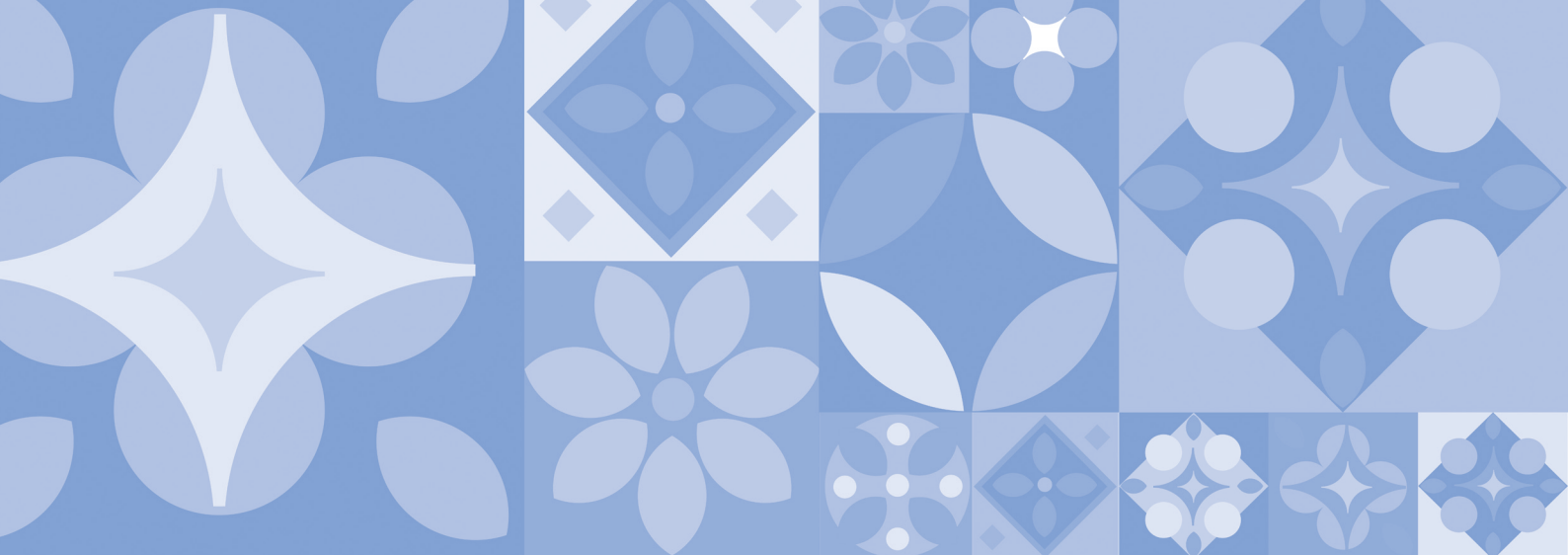


2

KEY FINDINGS AND

RECOMMENDATIONS





Against the backdrop of increasing labour migration from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, this assessment endeavours to map existing communication channels used to provide information to outbound migrant workers. It seeks to understand potential gaps in these channels and offers a series of recommendations for strengthening them.



The analysis of both primary and secondary data provides insight into the measures implemented by governments in each country to inform their citizens about labour migration. Furthermore, it recognizes the collaborative endeavours of CSOs, especially in addressing human trafficking at the grassroots level. These CSOs undertake diverse activities including awareness campaigns, advocacy and skills development. Moreover, the assessment underscores the significant contribution of PRAs in disseminating information to migrant workers, suggesting their potential as vital partners in forthcoming pre-departure initiatives.

In light of these observations, this assessment presents key findings and recommendations, guided by insights provided by primary and secondary stakeholders. This assessment does not intend to provide recommendations related to policies and any other aspects of labour migration programmes. The recommendations focus on strengthening communication channels during the pre-departure phase.

The findings and recommendations are categorized in three broad focus areas of the assessment in line with the assessment objectives:



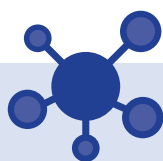
1 STRENGTHENING COMMUNICATION CHANNELS



2 GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF PDO



3 PDO AND IEC MATERIALS



1. STRENGTHENING COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Finding 1.1

Outbound migrant workers face challenges using information available on online platforms.

Through this assessment, it has been learned that pertinent information regarding labour migration is accessible on various online platforms and WhatsApp group channels. However, respondents in this assessment indicated that understanding the content can be challenging at times, and there is no avenue to seek clarification for any doubts. Additionally, migrant workers, particularly those from rural areas and women, who have limited access to digital devices such as a smart phone and uninterrupted Internet connectivity, face challenges in accessing information available online.

Recommendation

The availability of information on online platforms ensures maximum outreach. However, recognizing that these communication channels are passive in nature, this assessment recommends considering the addition of features such as a chatbot, audio clips with responses to frequently asked questions, feedback sections or a hotline number to call for further queries; this would increase effectiveness and impact at least for those who can easily access online platforms.

For those who would have limitations in accessing these platforms due to unavailability of digital devices, a decentralized approach could be adopted for future pre-departure orientation programmes. This would involve making information readily available in the vicinity of migrant workers. Private recruitment agencies with rural reach, CBOs including FBOs and lower levels of government administration would all play crucial roles in delivering pertinent information to this demographic of migrant workers.

Finding 1.2

Outbound migrant workers lack awareness about the existing communication channels.

One of the gaps identified by this assessment is that many outbound migrant workers in all four countries are not fully aware of the available communication channels in their localities. While many have heard about these channels, they are not completely aware of how to access them. Moreover, there are many who are not aware of these channels at all.

Recommendation

To ensure that these communication channels reach their intended target population, it is

important for nationals to be aware of such services. It is recommended that stakeholders inform their nationals about the availability and ways to access these channels. This can be achieved through existing outreach activities, social media, official websites, government offices at the district level and through networks of other stakeholders such as recruitment agencies, NGOs and network of returned migrant workers. Mediums such as TV and radio would be an effective way to reach pre-literate migrant workers. Stakeholders may benefit by integrating with other developmental activities in the communities such as health and education programmes to disseminate information about the availability of communication channels.

Finding 1.3

Outbound migrant workers rely on their network of families and friends for relevant information.

This assessment noted that families and friends continue to be the most trusted sources of information in all four countries. Although some respondents in this assessment expressed that information from these sources is occasionally unhelpful, as it is based on anecdotes, they still play a pivotal role in disseminating information.

Recommendation

Understanding the important role that the network of family and friends, who have migrated, play in disseminating information related to labour migration, this assessment recommends to build capacity of these networks not only to disseminate relevant information but also to empower them as key influencers, actively shaping perceptions and decisions, providing insights into the challenges, opportunities and overall experiences associated with labour migration processes.

One strategic recommendation is to establish a peer educator programme that involves members of these networks. This initiative would help in sustaining information programmes at the grassroots level, leveraging the existing bonds and trust within the community.

Furthermore, it is essential to extend efforts to include experienced returned migrant workers, with a particular focus on women migrant workers. These individuals bring a wealth of knowledge and firsthand experience, making them valuable resources for PDO centres. Involving them ensures that their insights contribute to comprehensive support systems for outgoing migrant workers, addressing the unique challenges faced by women migrant workers in the labour migration process.



2. GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF PDO

📍 Finding 2.1

Common challenges and limitations regarding information dissemination are observed across all four countries. These countries can benefit from each other by further collaboration.

While the countries in this assessment do have some form of communication channels including PDOs for outbound migrant workers, these channels are either focused on specific sectors and labour migration corridors, such as the SWS for farm work in the United Kingdom or exhibit a sporadic approach in disseminating information. This sporadic approach restricts everyone's access to the existing communication channels.

👍 Recommendation

Governments such as in Kazakhstan that have not yet developed any form of orientation programmes for outbound migrant programmes should consider leveraging the experience and expertise of countries in the region. They should also explore emerging good practices in the design and development of communication channels for their nationals.

To ensure that outbound migrant workers receive essential information regardless of their sector or country of destination, it is recommended that governments consider establishing mandatory PDO programmes for all individuals travelling abroad for employment. In this regard, governments should collaborate closely with international organizations possessing extensive expertise in the design and development of PDO curricula and programmes. It is recommended to continue policy and advocacy efforts to ensure migrant workers are not burdened with fees to participate in orientation programmes, as this limits accessibility of information provided through various communication channels.

📍 Finding 2.2

Some of the information needs expressed by all stakeholders, including migrant workers, are relevant at the pre-employment phase.

During the assessment, both migrant workers and other stakeholders emphasized the importance of providing information on job opportunities, language development and skills matching during the pre-departure phase. While these topics are crucial, they are more relevant during pre-employment phase considering the time required to accrue skills and consequently match them with available jobs in countries of destination.

As at pre-departure phase migrant workers are often in a hurry to leave their country for work abroad, information on these topics may be ineffective and possibly untimely.

👍 Recommendation

To better support migrant workers, stakeholders may consider integrating topics identified by migrant workers as relevant to pre-employment into the existing pre-employment phase or any similar initiative. In contexts where such initiatives do not exist, consideration should be given to developing a pre-employment orientation programme. This is the phase where nationals are in the decision-making process and exploring job availabilities, reflecting on their skills, matching jobs with their skill sets and developing necessary skills. Such an orientation programme would provide them with ample time to thoroughly prepare for employment abroad and enhance decision-making for labour migration.

During the pre-departure phase, including details regarding the availability of skills development programmes for migrant workers in destination countries could be beneficial. This addition would assist migrant workers in accessing these facilities to enhance their skills.

📍 Finding 2.3**Outbound migrant workers who live in rural and remote areas find it difficult to access accurate and relevant information on labour migration.**

This assessment found that outbound migrant workers in rural and remote locations typically encounter difficulty accessing existing communication channels. While many may lack devices to access information disseminated through these channels, others may struggle to reach existing orientation or Migrant Resource Centres (wherever available). Consequently, they often rely on informal sources, which may not always provide adequate or accurate information.

👍 Recommendation

Stakeholders may consider decentralizing the reach of communication channels and ensuring that relevant information is accessible to all outbound migrant workers, in line with the principle of “leave no one behind”. Given that countries in the region share borders and migration within the region often occurs through these borders rather than directly to the capital city, border points could serve as information delivery points, as suggested by a few stakeholders. Local avenues could be identified to maximize the outreach of information.

📍 Finding 2.4**There is a lack of monitoring and evaluation of existing communication channels.**

Acknowledging that monitoring and evaluation are fundamental components of any orientation me, this assessment endeavoured to identify pertinent measures and processes. It revealed a lack of data collection regarding the effectiveness of current communication channels. Consequently, assessing the efficiency of these channels, as well as the information and resources disseminated through them, presents a challenge in such circumstances.

👍 Recommendation

Stakeholders in the region would gain from establishing a monitoring and evaluation system. Such a system would not only track the progress of information dissemination programmes through existing communication channels but also facilitate the efficient allocation of resources. Stakeholders involved in the delivery of information could consider integrating monitoring and evaluation in their existing systems.



3. PDO AND INFORMATION, EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION MATERIALS

📍 Finding 3.1

Existing information, education and communication (IEC) materials related to employment abroad can be strengthened.

Respondents from all four countries participating in this assessment indicated that they found the IEC materials to be generic and insufficient for their needs. Specifically, individuals intending to migrate to the Russian Federation noted that these materials lack the essential information required for employment in various regions of the country.

👍 Recommendation

IEC materials have proven to be effective tools, serving not only for the dissemination of information but also as resources that the intended targets can refer to at their convenience. This assessment recommends a thorough review of existing IEC materials by thematic experts to ensure that the content, language, illustrations and designs in these materials are user-friendly, gender-responsive and inclusive. Additional attention should be given to addressing the learning needs of those with pre-literacy skills.

Considering the information needs and prioritized topics identified by migrant workers involved in this assessment would be advantageous when crafting PDO and IEC materials. These materials should include information about a contact point for additional inquiries to aid outbound migrant workers in gathering additional information if they wish so.

Finding 3.2

There is a growing number of women migrating to other countries for employment.

Data available from various sources indicates that the number of women migrant workers is increasing in the region. Their information needs and access to available communication channels differ depending on their roles and responsibilities within their families and communities.

Recommendation

This assessment recommends considering the information needs of women migrant workers to better cater to their requirements. Special attention should be given to strengthening existing communication channels and their reach, ensuring they are convenient in terms of time and space for women migrant workers. Additionally, the content and language of the information provided through these channels should be tailored to meet their needs.

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