

**A study on:
“Best practices in assisting labor migrants from
Kyrgyzstan in Russia”¹**

Prepared by D.V. Poletaev

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Table of Contents

Abstract	3
Introduction	4
Problem description	8
Policy options	23
Conclusions and recommendations	29
Bibliography	32
Annexes	33

ABSTRACT

This is the first study to analyze the situation of assistance to labor migrants from Kyrgyzstan in Russia and the role of various parties and organizations in such assistance, to suggest options for policy changes to improve such assistance and assess the prospects for the development of special measures to protect labor migrants from Kyrgyzstan in Russia.

The analysis of the current state of affairs and proposed changes are based on data from already available research as well as on expert interviews with professionals working with labor migrants from Kyrgyzstan in four different regions of Russia. These interviews are structured to measure awareness of existing practices of labor migrants' support, as well as determine actual and potential actions to increase such assistance in Russia and develop and modify measures on addressing the problems of labor migrants. Due to the limited scope and compressed timing the research is not intended to be comprehensive to all existing best practices of assistance to labor migrants from Kyrgyzstan living in Russia, but it gives a description of basic trends. This includes a description of aid organizations' operating conditions, the degree of involvement of various stakeholders and best practices in providing assistance, health services for migrants and forms of remuneration for migrants' work. There is also an analysis of the efforts of Kyrgyzstani diaspora organizations to assist Kyrgyz labor migrants in Russia and of trade unions (both migrant and Russian), NGOs and public organizations, humanitarian organizations, medical organizations and religious and international organizations engaged in migrant protection, as well as of the role of business structures and informal migrant networks and the policies of the Governments of Russia and Kyrgyzstan towards labor migrants.

Three options are considered for addressing assistance policies for labor migrants from Kyrgyzstan in Russia and the possible contribution and the role of all actors working to address the problems of labor migrants from Kyrgyzstan are evaluated. The first is to continue as is, the second is to change policies and the third is to make more far-reaching changes. The study concludes that the first option of continuing current policies is inefficient and that there is a need to implement the second option of establishing policy changes. The research determines that the comprehensive option, the third option, that would include increasing cooperation between Kyrgyzstan and Russia in the field of migration policy in relation to labor migrants is not feasible if taken prior to the implementation of the second of the proposed options and instead is offered as a long-term goal.

The current study has been conducted within a research project titled "Protecting the Rights of Kyrgyz and other Central Asian Migrants: Utilizing policy analysis, public outreach, and stakeholder dialogue to mobilize action toward reform" implemented by the Tian Shan Policy Center at the American University of Central Asia and funded by Open Society Foundation. Views and opinions contained in the study may not express views and opinions of TSPC AUCA or OSF. Any use of materials from this study shall be properly cited.

INTRODUCTION

The context of the policy issues

The significant level of labor migration from Kyrgyzstan to Russia is explained by a strong gap in the standard of living and high unemployment in Kyrgyzstan as well as tensions resulting from lack of available land for its population. In 2011, there were 212,400 thousand registered unemployed². In 2012, some 700 thousand Kyrgyzstanis were living outside the Kyrgyz Republic, primarily in Russia and Kazakhstan³. A significant portion of the Kyrgyz natives living in Russia does not have the necessary papers to make their work legal. The Kyrgyz Government is promoting employment of its citizens outside the territory of the Republic; a special body – the Ministry of Labor, Migration and Youth - was created in 2013 to support these efforts.

According to the experts interviewed, labor migration from Kyrgyzstan can be estimated at 25% of the nation's workforce.⁴ In terms of migrant remittances as percentage of GDP, Kyrgyzstan is ranked third in the world. According to the World Bank, in 2011, the list was headed by Tajikistan (47% of GDP), followed by Liberia (31%), and then Kyrgyzstan (29%).⁵

Definition of the policy issues

The non-systematic policy of assistance to labor migrants from Kyrgyzstan in Russia needs to be changed. Despite the significant amount of labor migration from Kyrgyzstan to Russia, support and assistance to migrant workers from Kyrgyzstan is very limited. For example, when looking for work, labor migrants make little use of related specialized services (private employment agencies or employment services)⁶. In this context, non- state actors, such as the Kyrgyz diaspora take the main role in protecting the rights of labor migrants from Kyrgyzstan. But the Kyrgyz diaspora primarily focuses on cultural activities, and mainly works with natives of Kyrgyzstan and the Kyrgyz SSR who have long settled down in Russia, or the diaspora works as intermediaries in commercial activities.

However, a significant part of Kyrgyzstan's citizens living in Russia - ordinary labor migrants - remain outside of the Kyrgyz diaspora's activities and receives their support on an ad hoc basis (e.g. when falling victim to a crime, or in a gross violation of their human rights or labor rights). Basically all of the work to protect the interests of labor migrants is conducted by a small number of Russian NGOs and labor migrant trade unions that provide legal information and assistance to all migrants, regardless of their nationality, as well as by the labor attaché of the Embassy of Kyrgyzstan in Russia, through a network of representatives and individual enthusiasts in the diaspora who deal with specific instances of rights abuse. The work of other actors is mostly in providing paid services to migrants and, with rare exception, is simply comprised of commercial services in the area of legalization. However, there exist major differences even in the commercial services market for migrants as there are organizations that provide a comprehensive set of services for labor migrants and there are organizations that provide services in just a small number of the most profitable areas that do not require highly qualified employees.

² <http://kant.kg/2013-01-18/uroven-bezrobotitsyi-kyirgyzstane/>

³ Madyuev, A. The migratory policy of the Kyrgyz Republic: current state and prospects, Presentation at the MIPAL Video Bridge, March 14, 2013.

⁴ According to expert A. Ryskulova, at the "Migration Policy: International Practices" Conference, See "Migration from Kyrgyzstan exceeds the norm more than twofold", KirTAG, December 18 <http://demoscope.ru/weekly/2013/0537/panorm01.php>

⁵ Kyrgyzstan is one of the world leaders in the GDP's share of remittances from migrants <http://demoscope.ru/weekly/2013/0537/panorm01.php>

⁶ According to the Center for Migration Studies only 14% of women labor migrants in 2010 used PEAs and employment services for job search. See: Female migrants from CIS countries in Russia| ed. by Tyuryukanova, E.V. – M.: MAKS Press, 2011, p. 28; in 2009, only about 3% of labor migrants in Russia used the state-run employment offices (mainly in the countries of origin) to find work. See: Migration and the demographic crisis in Russia. Edited by J.A. Zaionchkovskaya, E.V. Tyuryukanova. Series: Migration barometer in the Russian Federation. – M.: MAKS Press, 2010. p. 39

Statement of intent

Goal: Determine the best strategy for assisting labor migrants from Kyrgyzstan in Russia

Tasks:

1. Identify the most successful methods and strategies for assisting Kyrgyz labor migrants in Russia and actors who are actively implementing such assistance.
2. Assess differences in provision of assistance in Russia by region, and differences in urban and rural areas.
3. Analyze the possibility of involving all existing actors in the process of active assistance to Kyrgyz labor migrants in Russia and their possible cooperation.
4. Anticipate the possible avenues for the development of assistance to labor migrants from Kyrgyzstan in Russia and define the potential role of the Governments of Russia and Kyrgyzstan in such assistance development.

The proposed project supports the need for change in the assistance policy for labor migrants from Kyrgyzstan in Russia as part of a general change in the migration policies of Kyrgyzstan and Russia, in particular with respect to labor migration and its gradual planning.

The author puts forward the following hypotheses:

1. The most successful practices for protecting labor migrants from Kyrgyzstan are produced not by the Kyrgyz diaspora associations but rather by the NGOs in Russia working to help all migrant workers.
2. The current situation of assistance to labor migrants from Kyrgyzstan is determined largely by the lack of flexibility within Russia's migration policy and the lack of a systematic approach to labor migration by both Kyrgyzstan and Russia.
3. Developing common services for all labor migrants in Russia is more promising than focusing on specific assistance to Kyrgyz migrants.

The methodology and limitations of the study

Temporal and geographic scope:

The study was conducted in Russia, in the cities of Moscow, Yekaterinburg, Orenburg, Krasnodar and Novosibirsk from February 1 to March 31, 2013.

The study focuses on the general trends in the system of assistance to labor migrants from Kyrgyzstan and, due to time and resource limitations, can only detect key trends; no claims are made as for its comprehensiveness and completeness.

Methods of collecting information:

A flexible methodology based on a combination of expert interviews and secondary information was selected for this project.

Semi-structured interviews with experts were employed as the principle method of primary data collection (Nine interviews in five regions of Russia).

The main objectives of the expert survey were to see how various parties provide assistance to labor migrants from Kyrgyzstan in Russia, how widely migrants are covered by such assistance, how much demand there is for this assistance, what options for assistance to labor migrants exist and what groups can most efficiently implement such assistance.

The guidelines used to conduct the interviews (the Guide), allowed the interviewer to direct the conversation, and adjust questions to match the scope of the experts' work and professional experience. The collected interviews were recorded on tape and transcribed into text files. Five interviews with experts were conducted via Skype.

The qualitative characteristics of the study allow for an open approach with the possibility of subsequent clarification and modification of projected hypotheses and assumptions.

Sampling scope: Nine interviews

Language: Russian.

Selection of respondents:

For *expert interviews*, experts were selected from various organizations and associations providing assistance to labor migrants from Kyrgyzstan in Russia.

Experts sampling covered (for the full list of experts see Annex 3):

- ▶ Official representatives of Kyrgyzstan in Russia;
- ▶ Migrant organizations in three regions;
- ▶ NGOs;
- ▶ Migrants' service hot lines;
- ▶ Kyrgyz diaspora organizations.
- ▶ Labor migrants' trade unions.

The document's roadmap

The introduction discusses the context of policy issues, a definition of policy issues, a statement of intent, the aims and objectives of the research and the research methodology and limitations.

The problem description section examines the role of actors supporting labor migrants from Kyrgyzstan. Prospects for setting up international integration centers, the specifics of work in rural areas and the main directions for the formation of Kyrgyzstan's programs of assistance to its labor migrants in Russia are all described.

The policy options considered relate to the activities of the most important actors relevant to migrants from Kyrgyzstan (the Government of the Russian Federation, the Government of Kyrgyzstan, NGOs, Russian trade unions, migrants' trade unions, informal communities of Kyrgyzstanis, the Kyrgyz diaspora, international and humanitarian organizations, religious organizations, Russian businesses and medical establishments providing services to migrants.)

Assistance policy is linked to the migration policies of Russia and Kyrgyzstan and to the formation of NGO and diaspora networks that use the experience of international organizations in their own coordination. Which practices of assistance to labor migrants have been already worked out and who can best assist migrant workers and how the mechanism of interaction within the Kyrgyz labor migrants' assistance system can be set up on the part of different actors are discussed.

The conclusions and recommendations section gives specific proposals for including all stakeholders in the labor migration support system and for their interaction therein.

PROBLEM DESCRIPTION

The role of actors in assisting labor migrants from Kyrgyzstan

Trade unions of migrants and Russian trade unions

The study showed that existing trade unions in Russia play a varied role in the protection of the rights of labor migrants from Kyrgyzstan. Trade unions that cater to labor migrants are either helpful or neutral, while regular Russian trade unions are hostile. The Labor Migrants' Trade Union⁷ in Moscow acts as an intermediary organization that provides quality services to migrants, providing information and consulting while using, just like non-governmental organizations, grant funding for its operations. Its activities are not limited to intermediary services only: they publish a "News of Labor Migration" newspaper, try to inform migrants and their leaders about the latest legislative developments and related news and even conduct awareness campaigns for migrants on train routes.

There is a separate organization under the Migrants' Trade Union which is engaged in commercial activity, but it also conducts work similar to that of NGOs: providing seminars and meetings on legal advice - all having, according to the experts, a 'strong academic component'. The Union's staff members have minute details at their disposal – such as what year which agreement was made in - and they keep track of whether such agreements are still valid and working. Their seminars are useful for ordinary migrants because they are well attuned to changes in migration legislation and they invite members of the Federal Migration Service (FMS) to provide clarification. The Trade Union's strength is in being able to show that a trade-union format of work with migrants is possible. But, unfortunately, this structure has not been able so far to involve a large number of labor migrants in trade unions. The Trade Union is an interregional public organization that has regional organizations- the Professional association of labor migrants of the Moscow region and the Saratov Regional Trade Union organization. There was also a trade union in Irkutsk, but it stopped functioning. These different divisions were created with the assistance of the Labor Migrants' Trade Union and they are included in its structure.

There have been attempts to create other structures similar to that of the Labor Migrants' Trade Union. But, according to the interviewed experts, in the Urals region for example, these attempts ended badly: one reason is because there are a sufficient number of already existing intermediary organizations in the region, and another reason is because it is difficult to achieve consolidation of diaspora organizations around a Union, since each of them has its own interest, primarily financial. In 2008 there was an attempt in Arkhangelsk to organize the work of a regional trade union organization that employed local migrant workers. However, according to data from the "Sova" Center, the local government opposed the work of the trade union and it in fact ceased to exist.

Migrant trade unions can be strong, weak, or nonexistent depending on the state. There are countries that do not permit the existence of trade unions or disperse and close such organizations. For instance, in South Korea, the trade union of migrants was dispersed.⁸ There is the Ukrainian Trade Union of Labor Migrants in Ukraine and Abroad⁹ that works with its members living and working outside of Ukraine. And there is the potential to create such a trade union in Uzbekistan.¹⁰

According to the staff of the Labor Migrants' Trade Union in Russia, registering the union and getting the approval of the Ministry of Justice (which took place in 2007) was not easy. According to the experts, while it easier for trade unions to work with government officials, it is much more difficult in the

⁷ <http://www.profmigr.com/>

⁸ см. Депортация лидеров Корейского профсоюза мигрантов 14.12.2007

http://www.iuf.org/cgi-bin/dbman/db.cgi?db=default&uid=default&ID=4751&view_records=1&ww=1&ru=1

⁹ <http://migrant.org.ua/>

¹⁰ В Узбекистане создадут профсоюз для трудовых мигрантов

http://www.rosbalt.ru/exussr/2013/04/18/1119394.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3Arosbalt+%28%D0%98%D0%BD%D1%84%D0%BE%D1%80%D0%BC%D0%B0%D1%86%D0%B8%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B5+%D0%B0%D0%B3%D0%B5%D0%BD%D1%82%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B2%D0%BE+%D0%A0%D0%BE%D1%81%D0%B1%D0%B0%D0%BB%D1%82%29

regions because the government officials in the regions are more conservative and the creation of any trade union there is very complicated, especially the creation of a migrants' trade union.

Russian trade unions tend to act as opponents of labor migration, arguing that migrants are not in fact needed and trying to work through inter-ministerial commissions to reduce the numbers of external migrants. Such trade unions are difficult to consider as partners in protecting labor migrants from Kyrgyzstan - migrants do not join such trade unions, the trade unions have not established good relationships with migrants and their employers, and it is difficult for the trade unions to attract migrants as clients while charging fees in the form of union contributions. Perhaps this is the reason for their position as de facto opponents of cooperation with migrants.

Kyrgyz diaspora organizations

The Kyrgyz diaspora in all regions of Russia is a sporadic rather than systemic support system. This was well illustrated in late 2012 by the Congress of the Kyrgyz diaspora which was unable to rally the diaspora itself¹¹.

There are many registered Kyrgyz diaspora organizations and they take a number of different forms such as public organizations, national and cultural associations and foundations. In the opinion of the experts we surveyed, much of their activity is in intermediary and commercial activities. While it is difficult for Russian intermediary commercial entities or Russian NGOs to gain the trust of migrants, it is easy for the diaspora organizations to do so. They speak with migrants in their own language, which makes it easier for them to transform a potential client into an actual customer. If such diaspora organizations deal with the social problems of migrants and defend their rights, then they achieve success, protecting the labor migrants from unscrupulous employers, helping them to break out of labor slavery and return to their own country, etc. But, unfortunately, many of these organizations, even those registered as NGOs, provide intermediary services that exploit and make money off the migrants. According to the experts, migrants are more likely to place their trust in representatives of these organizations because they speak their native language, who then can take advantage of them, involving them in black market legalization schemes. The experts said that many members of the diaspora are interested in promoting paid commercial assistance to migrants, through entities that have emerged under the diaspora.

The diaspora organizations that attempt to provide free social services for migrants can only work when they have funding, such as grant support. When funding has been exhausted, such work comes to naught, their activity slows down, and other organizations trying to occupy the niche of the main representative of the Kyrgyz diaspora in the region quickly push the former activists aside. In the struggle for leadership and customers within the diaspora itself, those who have made the best contacts with the Consulate of Kyrgyzstan and the Russian power structures have the advantage and this interferes with the solidarity of the diaspora.

Due to the fact that the diaspora has established entities engaged in commercial intermediary activities pursuing their own financial interest that attempts to unite diaspora organizations have not brought any palpable results so far. Another impediment to unification of migrants and organizations working to help migrants is the separation of the communities of Southern and Northern Kyrgyzstan.

The work of providing free assistance in finding employment for migrants, resolving documentation problems, walking the corridors of power offices and defending the rights of individual migrants is carried out in the diaspora quite haphazardly and poorly. In addition, many of the diaspora organizations do not use lawyers in their work on a permanent basis. Because the main work is done by a leader who negotiates with the authorities and speaks at conferences, it is difficult for diaspora organizations to conduct systematic advocacy work to assist labor migrants from Kyrgyzstan. However, we can take the work of the Zamandash Association as a positive example of an effective organization. The members of this association successfully negotiate with unscrupulous employers who do not pay wages to labor migrants in the pretrial order, and

¹¹ The All-Russian Congress of the Kyrgyz- <http://kgcongress.ru/>

address the issue of wage payment, compensations, and preparation of certificates for repatriation of migrants to their home country in cities where there is no official representative of Kyrgyzstan. It is clear that the Kyrgyz labor migrants rely more on the diaspora organizations than on NGOs or trade unions, but practice shows that it is impossible to solve the problems through the diaspora alone.

Independent non-commercial organizations,¹² which mostly represent Kyrgyz people in the different regions of Russia, organize cultural events or create businesses that pivot around migration. These organizations focus on those Kyrgyzstanis who have already become stable in Russia, including those with Russian citizenship. The experts cited the example of two "old Diasporas" that have actively worked in the Urals for many years: the Armenian diaspora, with its Sunday schools and television broadcasts, and the Azerbaijani diaspora. These communities have respected and wealthy leaders. But Kyrgyz people, like the migrants from Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, have few such powerful organizations. However, they are able to accomplish some projects, for example the diaspora organizations in Kazan, Moscow and other cities support the work of Sunday schools.

During the interviews with experts, it became clear that the key to determining the capability of a diaspora organization is whether or not it has an office and the quality of its staff members. In this regard it is necessary to monitor the diaspora along the standard parameters: the number of employed, their specific occupations, what kinds of activities are being carried out, the availability of an office, amount of experience, and availability of periodic and detailed reporting on the organization's activities.

It is obvious that protection of and assistance to Kyrgyz migrants requires different diaspora organizations, including everything from active diaspora members, to organizations that operate on grant support and the Embassy of Kyrgyzstan. Commercial organizations that make money off migrants should not be part of systemic efforts to protect the rights of migrants from Kyrgyzstan: their work hardly compares with the efforts of the diaspora in helping and protecting labor migrants from Kyrgyzstan in Russia.

The Kyrgyz diaspora is young compared to most other diaspora from CIS countries in Russia, having been formed around the beginning of 2000.¹³ This relative youth contributes to its limitations in its ability to protect and assist labor migrants from Kyrgyzstan in Russia.

Business structures and progressive entrepreneurs and managers

There are commercial organizations and initiatives, such as RUPASS and Pillar of Friendship, which carry out elements of social work and have the potential to provide quality services to migrants. For example, Pillar of Friendship provides free computer classes and Internet access to migrants on weekends. However, other organizations such as Business Russia and the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs are still far away from providing services and help for labor migrants.

Figure 1. Computer room at Pillar of Friendship. Computer courses for migrants are held there and on weekends migrants can communicate for free with friends via Skype.

¹² Independent nonprofit organization — a non-membership non-profit organization founded by citizens and / or legal entities on the basis of voluntary property contributions to predostavleniyauslug in education, health, culture, science, law, physical culture and sports and other uslug.sm. A.1 Article 10 of the Federal Law "On noncommercial organizations" of 12.01.1996 № 7-FZ..

¹³ See, eg, How many still really active NGOs of Kyrgyzstan in Russia? <http://kgcongress.ru/congress-chronicles/58-important-question>



Source: Photo from the personal archive of D.V. Poletaev

Migrant communities and organizations: informal networks of migrants and local residents

Informal communities of migrants from Kyrgyzstan in Russia in fact assume the job of providing informational support and assistance to help labor migrants adapt to their new residence.

Social migrant networks or the informal communication of migrants with one another can be considered an informational resource. Through word of mouth people disseminate information on best practices for survival and on assistance providers that may be available in the region as well as the type, availability and quality of such assistance. Interviewed experts from NGOs and hotlines noted that their clients have found them, as a rule, through informal migrant networks rather than from advertising leaflets. It is information about actual available assistance that gets spread the quickest.

When migrants cannot find a solution within their diaspora, or they are unsatisfied, they turn to NGOs. With every migrant who has received some sort of help from NGOs, the circle of information expands. A social network can work both from Kyrgyzstan and from migrants from other countries. For example, a migrant calls home, talks about his problems, his relatives turn to local NGOs or, more often of course, to their acquaintances, and eventually give him a lead to an NGO in Russia. It is impossible, for example, to find a highly paying job, but it is possible to find a job as such. That's how the social network operates.

The websites V kontakte, Odnoklassniki and Facebook are used as a rule by people who regularly have free time and have access to the Internet. According to the interviewed experts, such people are currently rare among labor migrants from Kyrgyzstan.

It is interesting to note a new initiative in the social networking market: in Russia, there is a new social network for migrants called "They expect you here" with the slogan "They expect here anyone who comes to or lives in Russia for work, study, development or communication" (the address of the site is <http://www.tutjdut.com>). Once registered, people can access the following services through the website's menu: "People", "Advertisements", "Activities", "Work", "Actions", "Favorites" and "Success Stories". The project is still under development and it is unclear how well it will fare but we can say that it is innovative and could be a great success.

Of all Internet services, migrants most often use Skype and email as these greatly reduce the cost of communication with their relatives in Kyrgyzstan. Migrants also often use the Internet to watch movies or read news about their home country. As a rule, the longer a migrant lives in Russia, the more proficient an Internet user he becomes, whereas newly arrived migrants often need assistance. Therefore if we consider the Internet as a channel of communication for labor migrants from Kyrgyzstan, we should bear in mind that the access will be mainly for those migrants who have already been in Russia for a while and have adapted to some degree.

In a noteworthy project, Tajik organizations are working with labor migrants through establishing ongoing communication with compatriots from one village to create a village network. In this initiative, the organization helps to select a knowledgeable member of such a network as a liaison for the legal center "Migration and Law". He can then be a resource for the community and the NGO which can distribute useful information through this "senior" in the network.

Tajikistan's experience can be useful for informal networks of labor migrants from Kyrgyzstan who also maintain informal communication within their micro-communities in their spare time. For example circles of close acquaintances come together periodically to observe holidays. The composition of such a group is of a "floating" type, and not all of its members come together all the time, however, there is always an exchange of information and each one knows what others are doing and what problems they are facing.

Problems could be addressed through the leader of such a micro-community and such communities can materially assist their members in cases of extreme need by collecting money among themselves. If such grassroots self-organization were to be reinforced it would also be easier for the Embassy of Kyrgyzstan to help its citizens.

It is important to note that all of this is difficult to achieve if such communication loops are not comprised of fellow villagers. But leaders of the groups may join to form communities by districts, and, at a later point, upgrade to citywide and regional associations. In fact, it is about creating communities of fellow villagers, as opposed to diaspora organizations which provide little help to labor migrants while focusing on the "established" members of the diaspora or on commercial interests.

Religious organizations

Assistance to migrants from Islamic communities and mosques is hindered, among other things, by the fact that there are only a few regions in Russia where there are enough mosques to meet everyone's needs.

Moreover, the experience of NGOs shows that while assistance to migrants from Islamic clerics is possible,¹⁴ it is only under conditions of secrecy. Representatives of mosques, fearing accusations of fostering extremism, have been reluctant to engage in public affairs. There is also a certain lack of understanding of the issue of labor migration among the Muslim communities themselves.¹⁵

According to the interviewed experts, the Russian Orthodox Church has no systemic program for interaction with organizations providing assistance to labor migrants, although, for example, in Ukraine, there already exists such an initiative based on the cooperation of the IOM with the Ukrainian Orthodox Church¹⁶. As one expert said, "Strange as it may be, the Church is far from being homogeneous" - therefore, if or how the church works with labor migrants depends on the parish in question.

In general, representatives of all faiths have only limited experience working with NGOs to help labor migrants, and experts see the role of the Church only as humanitarian¹⁷.

According to the experts, although some individual religious leaders may support the idea of providing non-reimbursable assistance to labor migrants, in general it is not supported and sometimes evokes openly hostile reactions from the most conservative representatives of religious circles.

¹⁴ See, for example, A study on the participation of the Moldavian diaspora in the protection of the rights of migrant children in the Republic of Moldova Terre de homes, CMS, Tajikistan, M. 2011

¹⁵ See, for example, Migrants child labor exploitation in Russia (Moscow), CMS, M. 2012

¹⁶ A conference "Ukrainian Orthodox Church's participation in counteracting human trafficking" took place in Kiev, <http://www.orthomed.ru/news.php?id=14143&print=1>

¹⁷ The only possible exception could be the case of Caritas, an organization that operates in Russia under the auspices of the Catholic Church and works with migrants.

However, in 2011, the Russian Orthodox Church began to receive a presidential grant to work with migrants, and a speech by priests at a conference at St. Tikhon's University showed that such work has already begun¹⁸.

The Government of the Russian Federation

According to the interviewed experts, the general approach of the law enforcement and migration control agencies of the Russian Government is aimed at controlling, rather than integrating, labor migrants in Russia. Officials or the police can be forced to be more flexible with migrant protection organizations only through direct orders of their superiors or directives that come from the top: If there is an order to support the diaspora or public organizations in protecting the rights of labor migrants or in some concrete cases to prevent violations of migrant's rights, then such an interaction take place.

However, gradual liberalization is appearing in the migration sphere. This is clearly expressed in the new Migration Concept Policy up to 2025,¹⁹ which states that in order for further progressive development of the Russian economy it is necessary to attract foreign workers with professional qualifications in specific priority areas. Furthermore it states that "...a system of attraction of temporary labor migrants and determination of requirements for foreign labor needs to be improved..." and "...the migration processes accelerate socio-economic development and ensure the increase of the population's welfare. To implement the positive potential inherent in migration processes, the entire management system in the Russian Federation should be modernized...". This inspires hope for eventual improvement of situation of the protection of labor migrants' rights.

However, this is made more complicated by the fact that while the actual work to protect labor migrants and mitigate violations of their rights is needed immediately, the Russian budget for actual projects is only in the planning stage²⁰.

The Government of Kyrgyzstan

The research showed that the system of regional representatives (43 in Russia) interacting with the Embassy of Kyrgyzstan through its Labor Attaché is not working because of lack of funding. The interviewed experts believe that effective operation of any regional office relies upon the availability of a permanent office, staff and open accountancy regarding their activities. Otherwise, regional representatives may be turned into ordinary intermediaries who exploit their fellow countrymen, providing services for cost like a commercial organization. According to the experts, regional representatives' practices have already included cases where they have betrayed trust placed on them. In addition, unexpected difficulties constantly arise for want of emergency assistance funds, and the Embassy staff has had to help their compatriots in urgent situations using money that comes from their personal funds. Of course, such situations are unacceptable and it is necessary to create a special program that has permanent financing to resolve emergencies and related situations.

Reorienting the already existing and functioning network of regional representatives to work with international migration centers across Russia will be conducive to effective information exchange.

The issue of building a simpler system of recruiting migrant workers - which is extremely complicated right now due to the high cost of intermediaries' services and the lengthy time for the official registration of papers – can only be resolved at the intergovernmental level through the simplification of bureaucracy including reducing the time needed to process the documents. Kyrgyzstan can and should undertake joint special activities with the Russian power structures to improve this situation.

The experts also proposed creating a special center for organized recruitment in Bishkek that would be involved in the selection of jobs for migrants and securing acceptable living and labor conditions. It

18 In the Russian Orthodox Church it is suggested not to be afraid of migrants News Ru from April 8, 2013. <http://www.newsru.com/religy/08apr2013/migrants.html>

¹⁹See, Text of Migration Policy Concept up to 2025. - http://demoscope.ru/weekly/knigi/koncepciya/koncepciya_migr.html

²⁰ See, The budget money is allocated for migrants' acclimation. <http://izvestia.ru/news/544539#ixzz2R0fg3FPv>

would be helpful for migrant workers to have a special line of credit available for short-term low-interest loans, which could be repaid in affordable installments, to cover tickets and other costs associated with travel.

International Organizations

Informing and advising, initiating discussions in the society and the academic community about the situation of labor migrants and the assistance they need, exchanging best practices in the field of migrants' rights protection between Russian and foreign experts - all of this great work is being carried out in Russia and Central Asian countries by international organizations including the International Organization for Migration (IOM), International Labour Organization, (ILO) UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the Red Cross and the Red Crescent. Much has been done by the international organizations over many years, however because of their status, while they can influence the processes for formation of systematic protection of labor migrants' rights and the improvement of enforcement practices, they cannot participate in them directly. Therefore, their role is important but limited.

Furthermore, as shown by the survey of experts, the work of international organizations is felt mainly in the capitals and major cities, while in the regions their efforts only reach the most active participants within the migrant community.

Preventing difficult and complicated situations is more effective than dealing with problems once they arise. Therefore, the IOM's existing practice of disseminating information, including for example the direct distribution of information kits to migrants on trains, should be continued. It is safe to say that providing information to labor migrants before their arrival and not only during the time of their transition (using video or radio programs on board the train or the plane) is important and serves as a good basis for the work of international organizations in conjunction with NGOs.

But international bodies work best as facilitators of migration policy and as consultants engaged in support of NGO networks, producing analytical papers on current issues in Russia and Kyrgyzstan. Acting as coordinators of the new initiatives and disseminating best practices, they will be very effective in building a systemic approach to the provision of assistance for labor migrants from Kyrgyzstan in Russia.

They can also undertake initiatives to advance solutions to the most difficult problems, such as those related to human trafficking (organization of shelters) and labor slavery. Moreover, by spreading best practices already established by human rights organizations, NGOs, commercial companies and diaspora organizations of Kyrgyzstanis, international organizations will help in shaping the patterns of interaction and spreading them throughout Russia.

Non-commercial organizations

The limited number of NGOs providing necessary assistance to migrants free of charge results from both the underdevelopment of civil society and the lack of sufficient public funding of such non-governmental organizations, including those doing research. Grants from charitable funds and the temporary projects of international organizations are too weak and irregular a resource to support NGO performance and development. In addition, civil society institutions including volunteering and social responsibility have not yet developed sufficiently. However, there is clearly desire to consolidate and unify the efforts of NGOs. As examples, one can mention both the establishment of special networks of NGOs and public organizations (Migration and Gender²¹, Media and Migration, Migration and Law²²) and the attempts to unite on a general civil platform – for instance, through the initiative of the Migration 21st Century²³ Foundation in late 2012.

²¹ <http://migrocenter.ru/gender/gender.php>

²² <http://refugee.memo.ru/>

²³ See the Statement by the leaders of non-governmental organizations working in the field of migration, Independent informational-analytical magazine "Migration 21st Century", No7 (16) January-February 2013, pages 22-25, on the establishment of a platform for NGOs

The Integration Center Migration and Law is the only 24-hour hotline in Moscow that provides help in five languages (Russian, Kyrgyz, Tajik, Uzbek and Moldavian), operates on weekends and holidays and does not cause huge appointment queues which make it hard for the migrants to get advice or assistance. Through the years, their staff has developed the ability to quickly solve many problems over the phone (consultation with consular service, registration of certificates of return, certificates of partner agreement with the Embassy, etc.) and only complex cases require an additional personal appointment. Despite the fact that this hotline is focused on work in Moscow, when needed it helps migrants from other regions and includes other NGOs from the regions in solving these problems.

The Center signs agreements of cooperation with other organizations only when they provide a 'partnership' discount for redirected migrants. But there are not too many commercial organizations around working with migrants who are open to such a "rigid partnership".

The best example of effective cooperation has been their "rigid partnership" with the All Russian Memorial Network of Migration and Justice that employs lawyers to help migrants. Of mutual interest to the two organizations is the Center's monitoring of all appeals on specific issues (whether you have been exposed to violent actions, whether there was discrimination on the grounds of nationality, etc.). The availability of lawyers and humanitarian assistance from the Network and the 24-hour five-language hotline service provided by the Center has formed an effective symbiosis.

The Center's experts also share good practices among the four country branches, which is both efficient and effective. For example former members of Terre de homes, an organization focusing on Moldavian migration issues, joined the Center in 2012 and formed its Moldavian division. This allowed them to bring in in their child protection experience that was then used in the Kyrgyz, Tajik and Uzbek branches of the Center's work.

The Tajik branch of the Center served as the vehicle for negotiations with the Government of Tajikistan on the agreement not to take money for the repatriation of the bodies of Tajiks who died in Russia. This agreement, reached at the Government level, sparked the beginning of negotiations on a similar agreement between Kyrgyzstan and Russia.

Such practices of transferring gained experience are quite positive, facilitate implementation of effective services for migrants from any of the countries of origin and promote the creation of a network of international centers (which will be addressed separately below).

In order to further the work of hotlines providing legal support, it would be useful to publish a special compendium of law enforcement practices based on real-life examples. Such a guide, drawing upon established practices like a compass indicating what needs to be done in a difficult situation, would be extremely useful for a new lawyer who is setting up his work in new integration centers, for example.

The work of the Migration and Law Center hotline shows that women from Central Asia who have become victims of violence need, rather than psychological assistance, help in exiting the impasse in which they have fallen. Temporary housing or legal protection would be the most useful and accepted form of assistance. Their traditional mentality prevents most of them from discussing their problems with people "not their own"; that is why it is so important for NGOs to have employees who can speak their language.

In the general opinion of the interviewed experts, non-profit non-governmental organizations are the most efficient and best providers in assisting labor migrants. But, unfortunately, while effective solutions have been proposed, the Russian state and the Government of Kyrgyzstan have failed to support the establishment, maintenance, or monitoring of organizations to provide much needed services to help labor migrants.

The "situation monitoring - problem detection - search for an effective solution - search for an implementer" mechanism does not work in Russia unfortunately because State structures do not heed the opinion of civil society.

NGOS with elements of commercial activity

In Russia, there are examples of groups of migrants organizing themselves into non-governmental organizations, both to address long-term challenges and to deal with the results of the devastating effects of war and the problem of refugees. For example, the Forum of Trans-migratory Organizations emerged after the collapse of the Soviet Union to address the problems of refugees and internally displaced persons. One of the organizations in the network, The Ural House,²⁴ evolved over time to a public organization with a humanitarian role. This has become a model program as it provides quality services to migrants for the lowest possible price and follows a strict code of operations that precludes dubious schemes of work with "black intermediaries".

It is not possible to measure the quality of a commercial firm's work simply by looking at the number of migrants served, i.e. quantitative results do not speak about the quality, while the success story of a migrant who has successfully used the services of an organization may serve as a key indicator of the quality of its work. One intermediary organization may serve thousands of people every year, working with documents for their legalization, whereas another organization works on employment for dozens or hundreds of people, but those are doctors and teachers that are needed in the region and each such migrant receiving assistance is a success story.

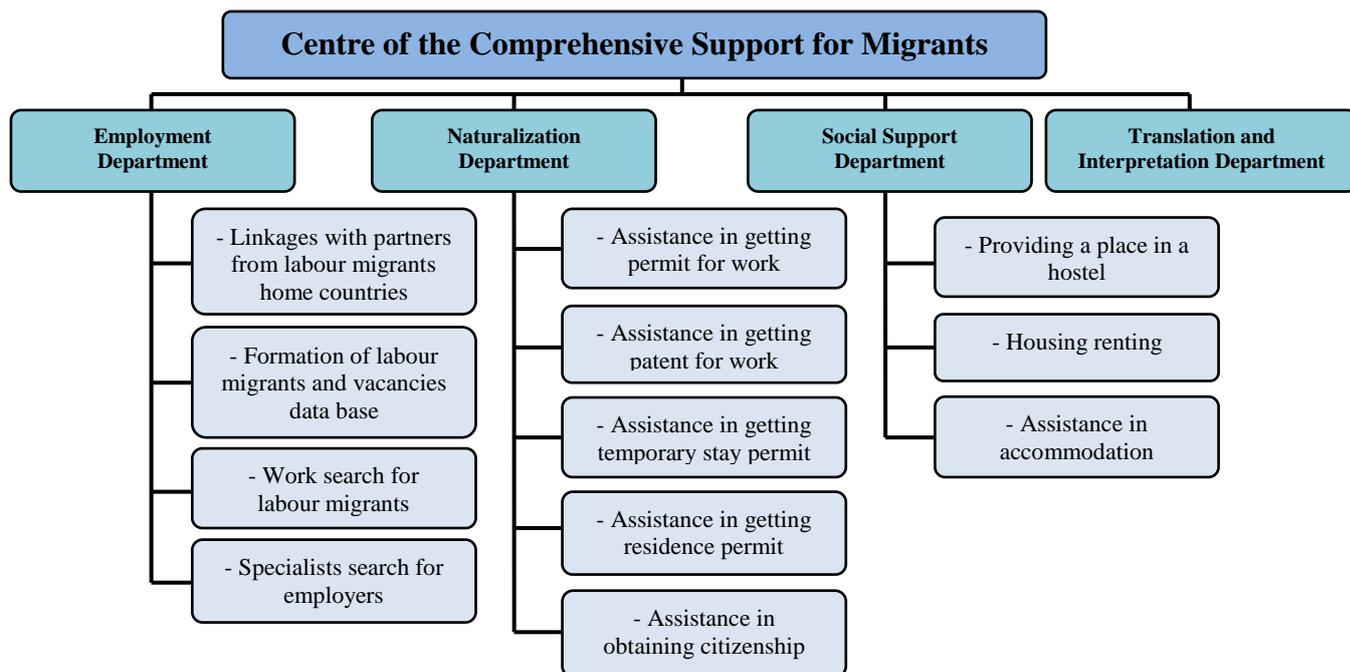
Experts noted that if the aim of the sending country is to send the greatest number of people abroad with minimal costs, then the legal framework within which they work usually fades into the background. In this case, the legalization and registration of people occurs through dubious gray schemes leading to insecure outcomes. The permits get processed, however nobody cares where people will work in the end and there is no monitoring of further development of the situation. Unfortunately, many organizations operate in exactly this way. There are not too many organizations like the Ural House which evaluate their own performance by monitoring the activities of each client, observing his working conditions throughout the year, conducting follow-up work and creating a permanent dialogue with his employer. However, these are the organizations that one should focus on when building long-term plans for the development of migration policies and the organization of assistance to labor migrants in Russia.

The services that the Ural House provides includes helping migrants to find work in accordance with their education and qualifications, providing jobs and housing to migrants, assisting foreign nationals obtain work permits and patents, welcoming migrants arriving in Ekaterinburg, and assisting with transportation to and from work. Ural House also works with employers, providing expertise and advice, explaining the advantages working with legal foreign labor, recruiting specialists, preparing applications for a quota of foreign workers, and preparing documents for the FMS, IRS, and Employment Center related to the employment of foreign nationals.

The work of the Centre for comprehensive support for migrants allows for simultaneous informing, consulting, advertising, legalizing, and searching work for migrants and professionals needed for employers, maintain feedback with migrants and employers, and develop a database of potential migrants from CIS countries and vacancies in the Sverdlovskaya Province.

²⁴ The public organization "Ural House" was established in 1977. During the work of this organization more than 20 socially significant projects in the sphere of migration have been realized. The structure of this organization includes the legal division, educational and medical centers and also the Center of complex support of migrants. It has been the regional council of IOM in the Sverdlovsk region since 2010.

Fig. 2. Organizational scheme of the work of the Center providing complex support for migrants.



Ural House provides space in a comfortable dormitory, equipped with appliances, furniture, and utensils for temporarily housing migrants.

Fig. 3 Dormitory of Ural House



Photo: presented by Public Organization Ural House

Fig. 4, 5, 6 New 23 room dormitory, constructed by Ural House in 2012, for the temporary placement of labor migrants.





Photo: presented by Public Organization Ural House

It is understandable that the countries of origin and the foundations that represent migrants are interested in ensuring the maximum number of legalized migrants. But it is also important to keep in mind both the interests of migrants themselves and the interest of the receiving country. Only then can long-term cooperation between the two countries, humane treatment of migrants by all intermediaries and compliance with their labor and human rights be ensured. It is important to note that any activity with whatever resource provided can either turn into an opportunity for economic exploitation of or become an instrument of long-term and effective assistance to labor migrants.

To avoid the former, it is better to plan future work on the basis of current successful activists and programs, helping them expand their activities and developing work plans using their standards; applying their best practices in dealing with migrant issues.

According to the interviewed experts, pursuing NGO's human rights cases against unscrupulous employers will make some of these employers change their approach and stop taking advantage of migrants. Thus, embarking on long-term cooperation with human rights NGOs is advised. In addition, such work through NGOs and other effective intermediaries provides legal support to employers for improving their knowledge of the law and the legality of their practices, allowing complex situations to be resolved without violations of the law.

The situation is weak when employers turn to intermediary organizations with requests for the recruitment of a dozen of workers for example; this clearly should be the function of a labor exchange or an organized recruitment mechanism. Usually in good-faith intermediary organizations this situation is resolved through the establishment of an information service, but it would be even better if this issue were resolved by creating a special body such as a labor exchange, since this will raise the issue to the level of the Ministry of Labor and Employment. As soon as another such situation appears, it can be quite effectively addressed through the availability of an appropriate service network such as the labor exchange.

So in the short term it is necessary to develop a bona fide intermediaries' employment assistance function, transfer employment quotas to them and provide support in establishing relationships with employers. This type of systematic work will begin when the project work starts to be carried out through formal agreements, and when human rights NGOs become part of a system that has a labor exchange functioning as one of its components. In this way, a well-tested model can then function as a semi-commercial or commercial structure and be institutionalized by the state.

The idea of a labor exchange for migrants that simplifies the access of migrants to employment and helps protect their labor rights through a transparent recruitment system has been periodically discussed within the Russian migration community, however it has a record of failed implementation attempts. This failure is due to the low profits such an exchange would generate when efficiently performing its direct functions, as well as due to the lack of a humanitarian approach to migrants on the part of Government agencies. Many public organizations are dealing with employment issues on a small-scale, whereas the

necessary large-scale work involving selection of employers and ensuring their compliance with labor laws hasn't been started as yet.

The idea of using rural libraries as an information resource has already been successfully implemented in Tajikistan and Moldova, where, with the help of IREX, libraries are now being equipped with computers. In Russia, libraries can host Sunday schools for the children of migrants and teach them Russian.

The creation of new fully functional organizations will require a serious investment. Therefore, it is advisable to assist already existing organizations to develop, as these organizations, over the past ten to fifteen years, have gained valuable experience operating within an adverse environment. It is also advisable to create any new organizations based on their models.

Medical organizations

Access to medical services for migrants remains a problem that has not been effectively addressed as yet. The first step could involve surveying and assessing Russian insurance companies to determine the best conditions for insurance and their inclusion in a special program for migrant workers, and the next step would be obligatory medical insurance for labor migrants entering Russia.

The Ural House has been trying to open a medical center and has invested more than one million rubles in this project, but so far has not received a license. This Center is expected to provide medical services by employing foreign citizens, namely physicians from Central Asia. But any medical service needs to be paid for whether through mandatory health insurance premiums or those of voluntary medical insurance. For migrants caught up in difficult life circumstances, it is necessary to provide some free services, but to provide all medical services for free is simply not sustainable.

It is possible that an organization at the level of the Red Cross or Red Crescent, due to its international authority and experience in the humanitarian sphere, could research the prices and the quality of medical care provided by insurance companies in order to find the best company and begin negotiations on even greater reduction of prices for the steady stream of migrant customers. One possibility is to insure migrants prior to their departure, with Russian companies starting to insure them while they are still in Kyrgyzstan. A system such as this with uniform prices, effected at the level of interstate and interdepartmental agreements, will be quite effective. There has been no comparative study done on this topic. But it is obvious that for example while the organization Doctors Without Borders has funding, many other medical organizations have less reliable funding.

An important step would be to monitor Russian hospitals, where, according to the experts interviewed, widespread violations in relation to labor migrants occur. One example is the treatment of maternity patients where hospitals solicit bribes when issuing and giving birth certificates and release patients from the hospital immediately after the birth regardless of their condition, in spite of the regulation requiring three days of free service.

Specifics of work in rural regions

There is a need for special aid programs to help the labor migrants working in agriculture. But at present not so many Kyrgyzstani people are involved in agricultural work. The Kyrgyzstani people are either working on large robust farms, which are few nowadays, or they are working in private businesses and farms that try to economize on each item, including the salaries, even though the demand for workers is high at those farms and private businesses. Therefore, these jobs are not very attractive to migrants, except maybe for migrants from China, but this business is quite specific.

The Ural House has experience working in the field of agriculture- recruiting rural business specialists, veterinarians, milkmaids and tractor drivers on demand. The salaries are not high, since even the locals are paid only 10.7 thousand rubles per month (U.S. \$230-330). However, it is still more money than can be earned at home. On one of the farms Kyrgyz men worked 1.5 shifts for 15,000 rubles per month as cattlemen. In Kyrgyzstan, even though this is hard work, it is impossible to earn even 3000 rubles for the same kind of work.

Targeted assistance to migrants from Kyrgyzstan or International Integration centers with a Kyrgyz component?

If the existing problems are tackled without separating migrants by their countries of origin but rather working with them in one unified center, one can achieve a good exchange of best practices while prioritizing no particular nationality. This will help to solve issues common to all migrants, including those that do not occur often but nevertheless exist, as expertise and services will be consolidated. At the same time, these centers can help internal Russian migrants and thus eliminate criticism on the part of the more conservative part of the population wary of migrants.

It is also possible to establish a social fund to support migrant workers in Russia. Its main task would be to identify the most vulnerable groups, such as victims of human trafficking, and give them the opportunity to return to their country of origin or go to a shelter that can provide training. Such a social fund would also support sick people, women with children, etc.

To work more effectively in Russia, the diaspora organizations can form a network of international centers dealing with migration and integration. All interested parties would work together to place acute problems on the public agenda, work through them, and make decisions on the basis of common interests. With such a network it is easier to conduct a dialogue with the government, avoiding the rivalry between Kyrgyz diaspora organizations that we observe at present who compete for the attention of the government, something that resembles in an expert's definition the game of "first come, first served." It is necessary to monitor the work and results of implementation of any decisions made jointly with the government with the help of independent public research organizations.

Currently, there are several notable interethnic structures: the Congress of National Communities of Russia, the Federation of Migrants of Russia, the Assembly of the Peoples of Russia, and the Union of Diasporas of Russia, but they have no step-by-step action plan or a systematic approach.

The idea of creating international centers providing standard services to migrants was supported by all the interviewed experts. In such international centers, the differences in the provision of generic services to migrants will only be at the level of rendering the services, i.e. when a hotline expert speaks a migrant's language to facilitate interaction, and when gender and national differences are taken into account while addressing the problems of a migrant who has applied for aid. It will be important to highlight the gender-sensitive nature of such centers' activities.

Current resettlement organizations helping labor migrants (having been once united under the auspices of the Forum of Migrants Organizations, such as the Ural House, etc.) initially helped people of

different nationalities or mixed-type families immigrating to Russia, and did not divide migrants according to their national affiliation. A migrant finding himself in a difficult life situation has always been not only a client for them, but also a supporter and an ally. This strategy led to the current success of such organizations in the difficult survival conditions created by the state of civil society in Russia today. People finding themselves in a new environment or state would unite in order to address common problems and this was in line with what used to be proclaimed as the aim of the Soviet times: to create a multicultural society in which ethnicity was not a significant factor.

An aid system created on the basis of already functioning organizations, including the existing Migration and Law network of the Memorial lawyers, leaders of the Forum of Migrants' Organizations, the Migration and Gender network, and the Media and Migration international network (which have gathered the best and most experienced experts) will be more successful if the efforts of specialists of different nationalities are joined in addressing common issues of migrants of any nationality.

If the Russian authorities work not with just individual organizations, but with the community of nationalities linked with practitioners and professionals from NGOs, then such work will be much more successful, reaching a qualitatively different level of formulation of tasks and their subsequent solutions.

Preserving national and cultural autonomy cannot help those who want to integrate, because it is aimed at preserving cultural identity, (which is essential to already engrained migrants). Although the diaspora can work to establish cultural centers, in a systematic approach priority should be given to those organizations that help migrants integrate and adapt.

The aid program on Kyrgyzstan's part: what can it be like?

Aid programs should focus on non-governmental organizations and human rights and research organizations that have long worked helping migrants and monitoring their situation. Some of these existing organizations are dependent on grant aid and some have come up with methods of self-financing, through such things as providing intermediary services. However, it will be necessary to designate additional resources to increase service provision and the expansion of work areas. For example it is usually impossible solely on a grant basis to undertake or to complete the construction of or to buy a shelter or hostel for short-term accommodation of migrants. This is where state agencies can be of help; Russian and Kyrgyz state agencies must be involved in the partial financing of such operations, as well as in carrying out complex international programs to help Kyrgyz labor migrants succeed in Russia.

Labor Migration is a direction of migration policy, which, from the state's point of view, requires quality intermediaries.

It is possible for NGOs and commercial organizations to relieve the state of some of its responsibilities by offering social services to migrants such as helping them find housing.

A Kyrgyz labor migrants' support program should also be focused on organized recruitment, as current mechanisms for this are not optimized. Kyrgyzstan can achieve this through developing and expanding the networks of already existing organizations with experience in such work. The experience of the Ural House will be useful in this as it has experience running its own education center and using technology to connect a number of organizations and new partners in Russia, including not only NGOs, but also recruitment agencies, and government agencies of Kyrgyzstan (under the Ministry of Labor, Migration, and Youth). It is necessary for the labor migrant to find money for the trip, for his first month of stay and to pay for any necessary intermediary services. It is not appropriate or possible to depend on the state of origin for this funding and it is a dead-end route to try to transfer the cost to the Russian government, demanding free health insurance, medical care and Russian language classes.

At the same time, if Russia does not create the conditions necessary to recruit or train the specialists it needs, it will not be able to find them considering the existing education system in Kyrgyzstan. Hence, if

Russia wants to get quality human resources, Kyrgyz youth can be trained on the basis of special agreements both at Russian vocational schools, where there are not enough students, and in Kyrgyzstan itself, staffing its vocational schools with Russian teachers and instructors.

Kyrgyzstan could develop a health insurance program through an agreement with Russian insurance companies, at a price affordable to both parties. Kyrgyzstan can limit and control the travel abroad by requiring travelers to acquire a health insurance policy, as it is for Russians traveling abroad, thus protecting and achieving preference for its migrants in Russia.

Kyrgyzstan has already had the idea to develop state provided lending programs for outgoing labor migrants: if there is an agreement with and permission from the employer, with prescribed amounts of compensation, then the banks must provide concessional loans, giving one thousand to fifteen hundred dollars to labor migrants for travel so that the migrant can exit the country, arrange all the paperwork and, within a short time period, pay the loan back. The banks that provide these loans receive special assistance from the state or aid might be provided by the National Bank of the Kyrgyz Republic. With this program, an organized recruitment system would be crucial, because if a migrant receives a loan, he must then have a guaranteed job in Russia.

Thus, it would be more effective to have a network of experts rather than individual experts select best practices and create a network for interaction with the government. For this it is necessary that Kyrgyzstan give money to the Kyrgyz component's support program within the network of international assistance centers.

Such centers can be found in every major city with over one million residents, and it is possible to assess the need for them in other regions methodically - through research and monitoring. The success of such centers in Germany serves as a compelling example of their effectiveness.²⁵ They will provide support for not only labor migrants from Central Asia, but for all migrants, including internal migrants throughout Russia. Multilingual hotlines for labor migrants supported by the governments of sending countries and local governments, a labor exchange and shelters all can be integrated into these centers. This should be reinforced with an intergovernmental agreement binding Russian government officials to always work with such networks. It is possible to incorporate the existing Friendship Houses and Houses of Nationalities in Russia into such networks as their functions are similar.

Since it is Kyrgyz citizens who come to Russia, Kyrgyzstan should initiate such a program of action, and then Russia can take the next step.

VERSIONS OF POLICIES

Suggested policy options focus on several governmental and nongovernmental providers: the government of the Russian Federation, the Kyrgyz government, NGOs, Russian trade unions, migrant trade unions, informal communities of Kyrgyzstanis, the Kyrgyz diaspora organizations, international and humanitarian organizations, religious organizations, and Russian businesses and health care organizations that provide services to migrants.

There are three current options relating to labor migrant policy:

1. Continue to implement the existing measures of assisting labor migrants without making changes to the current policies.
2. Improve the existing policies to address identified errors and shortcomings

²⁵ The Women's International Center in Berlin provides comprehensive assistance (legal, psychological, counseling, and in prisons) to women regardless of their citizenship. The local government gives grants to German citizens and other civilians for this work. The Center has specialists who speak the languages of the largest groups of migrants residing in Germany - <http://www.susi-frauen-zentrum.com/>; <http://www.susi-frauen-zentrum.com/>; <http://www.susi-frauen-zentrum.com/seiten/gruppen.html>; <http://www.susi-frauen-zentrum.com/seiten/gruppen.html>

3. Change the strategy of action and the migration policy of the Russian Federation (RF) and the Republic of Kyrgyzstan (RK).

According to our research data, the problems related to labor migration in Russia cannot be solved without changing the existing policies, so the option of continuing work within the currently existing framework (1), in the author's opinion, has no prospects.

Table 1. The options for development of policies for assisting migrant workers from Kyrgyzstan in Russia

	Zero Option «Leave things as they are» (1)	Transitional Option (2)	Full version (3)
Non-commercial NGOs	A small number of NGOs offering free practical assistance to migrants with limited resources for development; haphazard interaction of NGOs with each other and with other organizations. working with migrants; research activities in the field of migration.	Creation of NGO networks, including networks of international integration centers with an emphasis on the women's component; coordination of this network with the network of diaspora and international organizations working in the field of migration.	Inclusion of NGO networks and international centers in the Russian budget and grant funding and Kyrgyz grant funding on a competitive basis and the mandatory inclusion of experts from these networks in the adoption of migration-related decisions by the governments of RF and RK.
Kyrgyz diaspora organizations	Non-systematic assistance for labor migrants; a focus on cultural activities and commercial services through affiliated structures dealing with document registration; dissociation within the diaspora; desultory interaction with other actors.	Association of diaspora organizations into regional networks; separation of the commercial component; enhanced practical work to provide free assistance to labor migrants in collaboration with networks of human rights and research NGOs; work with the local media and international organizations; prevention work with young people to reduce the potential for inter-ethnic conflict in the regions.	Joint systemic work with NGO networks and international centers and dispatching in-house activists to work with them; support for volunteering.
Russian business-structures and	Project initiatives to assist migrants	Promotion of the networks of	Integration into the system of organized

progressive entrepreneurs, managers	that do not achieve large-scale implementation; dissociation of initiatives.	international centers for migrants' support and labor exchanges.	recruitment and cooperation with the migrants' trade unions.
Informal nets of migrants	Mutual information assistance exchange among migrants, acclimation to the place of work and residence.	Cooperation on a regional basis and self-organization for constant interaction with NGO networks and Kyrgyz diaspora networks.	Involving migrants in the trade unions.
International and humanitarian organizations	Periodic research and interaction with government agencies, NGOs, diaspora organizations, media, trade unions, and government agencies in Russia and RK.	Developing solutions to migration issues in partnership with NGO networks and diaspora organizations and initiating the monitoring of their work; assisting in the exchange of best practices of all actors in the migration field.	Integration of Russian research projects with international research projects; coordination of NGO networks on the interstate level.
Religious organizations	Weak involvement of religious organizations in the provision of practical assistance to labor migrants.	Working with vulnerable migrant groups (children, women) and measures to prevent conflict on religious or ethnic grounds.	Creation of specialized structures focused on practical assistance to victims of human trafficking and labor slavery (shelters, rehabilitation programs).
Trade Unions of migrants	Limited scope of coverage of migrants.	Inclusion in the network activities; strengthening cooperation with Russian trade unions.	Integration with Russian trade unions to form a single network structure (possibly within the framework of a common Eurasian space or a customs union).
Russian Trade Unions	Passive resistance to migration processes; little interest in working with internal Russian migrants.	Work with internal and external migrants on regional labor markets; work with labor registry offices.	Protection of workers' rights in Russia, regardless of their nationality.

The Government of the Russian Federation	A formal approach to the acclimation of external and internal migrants; minimum protection for the rights of labor migrants and the lack of monitoring of ongoing migration policy.	Grant-based competitive support to organizations that provide assistance to labor migrants; simplification of conditions for organized recruitment; facilitation of the creation of labor exchanges for migrants and the development of a low-cost housing market; combating corruption in the field of migration.	Integration of networks of NGOs and the diaspora to work in the field of migration; formation of models for the resolution of migration issues involving civil society; institutionalization of models of assistance for labor migrants developed by civil society organizations.
The Government of the Kyrgyz Republic	Interaction with diaspora organizations and participation in cultural activities; case-by-case response to labor migrants' problems; weak monitoring of labor migration.	Support of the establishment of a network of international support centers for labor migrants in Russia with a Kyrgyz component; interaction with the Russian human rights NGOs and hotlines; pre-departure work with migrants including training; requiring obligatory medical insurance for departing labor migrants and providing state loans to cover the cost of their trips; monitoring labor migration and research.	Active protection of the rights of labor migrants from Kyrgyzstan in Russia and joint monitoring of labor migration and its effects.
Medical organizations in the Russian Federation	Lack of medical care for migrants; prohibitive prices on services and lack of protection for vulnerable groups (women migrants, children of migrants, etc.).	Agreements with Russian insurance companies on mandatory health insurance for the labor migrants leaving for Russia; special programs to protect children and women migrants.	The increase of medical establishments providing services to migrants.
NGO and commercial organizations	Complicated services for labor migrants (few organizations) or registration of the documents for legalization (the vast majority of organizations).	Expansion of the services provided; participation in the organization of labor exchanges.	Systematic work with labor migrants.

Resource: data of the report's author

If we consider the two proposed policy options for organizing assistance to labor migrants from Kyrgyzstan in Russia and expanding best practices of such assistance, in both cases a systematic approach should be made that will allow for rendering assistance to migrants on a large-scale basis and for engaging all possible parties with maximum efficiency. In addition, a change in the provision of assistance to labor migrants through the creation of a universal approach for assisting all types of migrants through international centers should be encouraged. For the gradual development of such a systematic approach, the Transitional Option is more preferable (#2), as the changes should not be abrupt, and it should be possible to revise them in the course of their implementation. The ultimate goal of these changes is to reach the Full Option (#3) that improves the migrant assistance policies and moves in the direction of the full cooperation of NGO networks and diaspora organizations with Russian and Kyrgyz government agencies. This option will also lead to the institutionalization of best practices of assistance to labor migrants by Russian and Kyrgyz government agencies to achieve the best possible control over the observance of the rights of Kyrgyz labor migrants in Russia as well as the creation of an integrated system for integration and acclimation of all Kyrgyz labor migrants coming to Russia and mutual cooperation of the two states in the sphere of labor migration.

With both options, protection of labor migrants' rights policy should be harmonized with migration policy and linked to general improvements in the area of acclimation of labor migrants in Russia.

Work and policy need to be differentiated regarding the following groups of migrants

While considering policy changes, it is necessary *to clearly differentiate among migrants, as different groups require different approaches. These are:*

- Male labor migrants;
- Female labor migrants, including pregnant women and/or those with small children
- Children of migrants who have come to Russia with their parents or who have been born in Russia

Premium attention should be paid to women migrants and children of migrants, as they are in the most vulnerable position. The policies undertaken must be gender sensitive.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the process of preparing this report a direct link was clearly revealed between the creation of an effective mechanism for assistance to labor migrants from Kyrgyzstan in Russia and the need for the modernization of the migration policies of both Russia and Kyrgyzstan. This is a crucial condition for the long-term solution of migrants' issues: a policy of maximum protection by Kyrgyzstan of its own migrants and creation by Russia of clear and simple receiving conditions and employment opportunities for documented employment of labor migrants from Kyrgyzstan, as well as conditions for their expedient acclimation and protection of their rights.

Providing assistance to labor migrants from Kyrgyzstan in Russia is a complex task that requires a systematic approach. It is directly related to the improvement of living conditions of all migrants in Russia - both external (from Kyrgyzstan and other countries) and internal (coming from different regions of Russia and having Russian citizenship). Particularly important in this context is the provision of social services for migrants and systems for protecting their rights. Preventive activities that begin with Kyrgyz migrants' orientation prior to their departure are very important. This work involves giving detailed information about the risks that might accompany going overseas for employment, and about possible negative circumstances they might encounter and how to protect themselves from such circumstances.

The hypotheses put forward by the author have been almost fully confirmed during the research:

1. It was assumed that the most successful practices protecting labor migrants are those produced not by diaspora organizations of Kyrgyzstanis but by Russian non-governmental organizations engaged in assisting all labor migrants. The study showed that the best practices of assistance to labor migrants have been produced specifically by Russian NGOs, whereas the Kyrgyz diaspora organizations are largely focused on the already established members of the diaspora and are engaged in cultural and intermediary activities, and do not prioritize practical advocacy activities and information counseling.

2. It was assumed that the current situation regarding assistance to labor migrants from Kyrgyzstan is largely determined by the weakness of the acclimation component in the migration policy of Russia and the lack of a systemic approach to labor migration on the part of both Kyrgyzstan and Russia. The study fully supports this thesis.

3. It was also assumed that the development of common services for all labor migrants in Russia would be more promising than focusing on just Kyrgyz migrants in the development of such assistance. This thesis was also fully confirmed by a survey of experts and analysis of the work of the actors involved in the provision of assistance to labor migrants from Kyrgyzstan. Labor migrants get better quality assistance from organizations that address the problems of all migrants and it is these organizations that have numerous best practices of assistance.

The author is aware that going with the third option of comprehensive policy changes (discussed in the chapter on "Policy Options") entails a serious scientific study and a number of researches, and that is the reason why he considers the gradual transition from the second option of transitional change to the full option to be a quite rational choice.

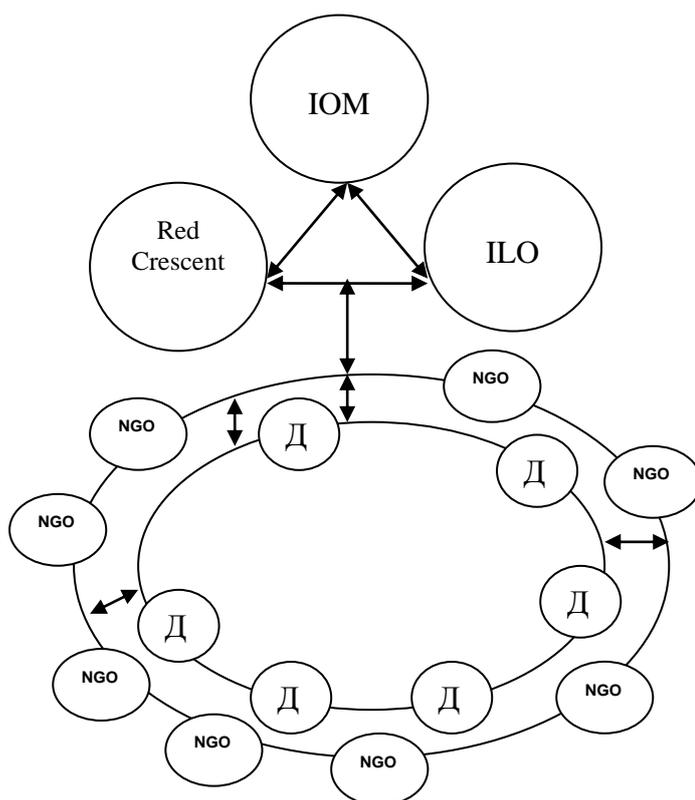
In order to avoid mistakes, it is better to plan future work on the basis of successful and high quality working actors and organizations, helping them to expand their activities, developing further work according to their model and using their tested practices on migrant issues. National or cultural autonomy cannot help those who want to integrate because it is aimed at preserving cultural identity, which is of more relevance for those migrants who are already established. Although the diaspora can engage in the creation of cultural centers, in a systematic approach the priority should be given to and work be done with those organizations that help migrants to integrate and adjust.

Assistance on the part of the government of Kyrgyzstan could start with the support of organizations that have already demonstrated their effectiveness, such as the Migration and Law Integration Center and the Ural House, as well as enhancement of the Migration and Gender network and assistance in expanding the Memorial's Migration and Justice network.

One of the biggest gaps in the work with migrants, apart from the lack of civil control, is the lack of an all-Russia labor exchange for migrants. The survey of experts showed that organizations that provide assistance to migrants in fact either assume the functions of a labor exchange or that their work is related to addressing the problems caused by the absence of such a labor exchange operating on a sufficiently transparent basis. Labor migration flows going from Kyrgyzstan are not regulated under a systematic framework, under which most of the visitors could obtain quality employment services. Therefore these flows resort to using the services of dubious firms for such things as documents execution and looking for jobs, rather than "through friends." This leads to their getting stuck with unscrupulous intermediaries or being placed in slave labor conditions.

A labor exchange that cooperates with intermediary organizations that register documents on a transparent basis and have significant experience working with employers is the exact mechanism needed both for Russia and the Republic of Kyrgyzstan.

Fig. 2 Possible work format of international organizations (IOM, ILO, Red Cross, etc.), NGOs and the Diaspora Organizations (Д)



It would be worthwhile to encourage interaction among networks while implementing the transition option for the development of the policy for assistance to labor migrants from Kyrgyzstan in Russia. As it currently stands, the Russian IOM (migration programs), MOT (programs on labor, labor legislation), the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (programs on health and other social issues) and other international organizations have contacts only with separate NGOs and diaspora organizations, and do not coordinate with each other.

A systematic approach would involve the creation of an NGO network (outer circle) and a diaspora network (inner circle) that work together to address practical problems of migrants in an interconnected

system. The inner circle has not yet been formed though this can be facilitated by both international organizations and NGOs. The association Zamandash already has the experience of unifying diaspora organizations, but there are no clear forms of interaction between all Kyrgyz diaspora organizations as yet, and there is an ongoing internal competition for resources and the right of regional representation. In order to create the network, monitoring needs to be undertaken to formally determine the activity and capacity (availability of an office, range of services, whether they are free of charge or what the rates are, etc.) of the most active organizations willing to enter such a network. It will be a very painful process to form an all-Russian network. It is also important to encourage and facilitate constant information exchange among research NGOs, human rights NGOs and the diaspora organizations so that the data collected by the hotlines can be processed by research NGOs. This would provide an overall Russian-wide snapshot and this insight and information could be disseminated through the network, reaching journalists and other information resources that write about migration. Precisely such a system would be realistic and efficient enough to be implemented in the medium term. This can and should be supported through the allocation of resources to create a network of the most effective organizations, most of which have already formed partnerships (e.g., the Migration and Gender network). In such a particular case, recommendations sent out through information networks will be based on actual best practices. The main idea of such a format is that everyone should be engaged in an area of work in which he or she is an expert.

* * *

In conclusion, it must be said that the study revealed very latent factors affecting the provision of assistance to labor migrants. For ethical reasons, not all of them have been directly reflected in this report. But it is clearly seen that there is a need for a larger-scale investigation that can document in detail effective practices of assistance to labor migrants for their proliferation as models. The author also believes that it is necessary to reinforce the conclusions and proposals made in this study with more research and to bring more light to the specificity of Russian regional practices of assisting Kyrgyz labor migrants working in Russia, since this study only outlines possible approaches to such assistance from various actors working in the Russian migration sphere.

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Annex 1

Questionnaire for the experts' survey

Please describe the most attractive experiences (best practices) of work with migrants that have been used by:

- Trade unions (migrant and Russian) and the diaspora organizations (public private partnership);
- NGOs and public organizations that protect migrants' rights;
- Humanitarian organizations (the United Nations, Doctors without Borders, etc.);
- Organizations providing legal aid (private employment agencies, hotlines);
- Medical organizations (poli-clinics, maternity hospitals);
- Informal networks of migrants and local residents;
- Business structures and progressive entrepreneurs and managers.

Questions utilized to help to elaborate upon the above questions include:

What methods and strategies have been successful?

How effective is the official legal advice – as provided by FMS, other state structures (the passport office, etc.)?

Who is the most successful in fighting migrant workers' workplace abuse, discrimination and xenophobia and which work models are useful in different regions?

What can the cooperation be like between parties that actively work with migrants and is it possible in principle?

How are knowledge, practices, and know-how disseminated?

How do the migrants learn about the services provided by different organizations?

How do law enforcement agencies and officials work? What motivates them when they provide assistance and why can they be flexible?

What are the differences between work in the rural areas and that in the cities? What are the factors of the differences?

What is the role of the governments of Kyrgyzstan and the Russian Federation in supporting best practices?

How can this be implemented?

What is the best way to deal with cheating employers, recruiting firms and housing rental agencies?

Annex 2

List of interviewed experts

No	Name	Place of work, position
1	Asamdinov, Almaz	Embassy of Kyrgyzstan in Moscow, Labor attaché
2	Grishin, Leonid	Public organization Uralskiy Dom (the Ural House), Chair (Zarechnyi town, Sverdlov Oblast)
3	Djuraeva, Gavhar Kandilovna	Informational Law Center Migration and Law, Head (Moscow)
4	Zhamgyrchiev, Urmat	Sol –Iletsk-Orenburg, legal representative of Zamandash Association, part time representative of the Ombudsmen office of the Kyrgyz Republic. (Sol-Iletsk-Orenburg)
5	Sulaimon, Shohzoda	Labor exchange center of the independent non-commercial organization Opora Druzhby (a project of Opora Rossii), Deputy Director (Moscow)
6	Argymbaeva, Aikan	Head of the Kyrgyz diaspora of the Krasnodar public organization Sodeistvie
7	Chekirbaev, Zamir	Leader of the Diaspora organization of Kyrgyz people, Director Asman (Novosibirsk)
8	Temirov, Bolot	Association Zamandash (Bishkek), Expert
9	Popov, Aleksandr	Labor migrants' Trade union, Chief editor of the newspaper <i>Vesti trudovoi migratsii</i> (Moscow).