

# BASELINE ASSESSMENT AND SURVEYS: RETURNING MIGRANT WORKERS IN KYRGYZSTAN NOV – DEC 2022



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# ABOUT MOBILITY TRACKING MATRIX

The Mobility Tracking Matrix (MTM) is a system that tracks and monitors displacement and population mobility. It is designed to regularly and systematically capture, process and disseminate information to provide a better understanding of the movements and evolving needs of displaced populations, whether on site or en route.

In November 2022, MTM conducted the first round of its Baseline Mobility Assessment in Kyrgyzstan to track mobility, provide information on population estimates, geographic distribution of migrant workers and return migrants, reasons for migration, countries of return and periods of migration. MTM enables IOM and its partners to maximize resources, set priorities, and deliver better-targeted, evidence-based, mobility-sensitive and sustainable humanitarian assistance and development programming. For more information about MTM Kyrgyzstan please visit <https://dtm.iom.int/kyrgyzstan>.

## 3 TARGET POPULATIONS

Through the Baseline Mobility Assessments, MTM tracks the locations, population sizes and period of mobility of three core target population categories:

### 1. Return Migrant

*The movement of Kyrgyz nationals returning home after having moved away from Kyrgyzstan and crossed an international border.*

### 2. Migrant Worker

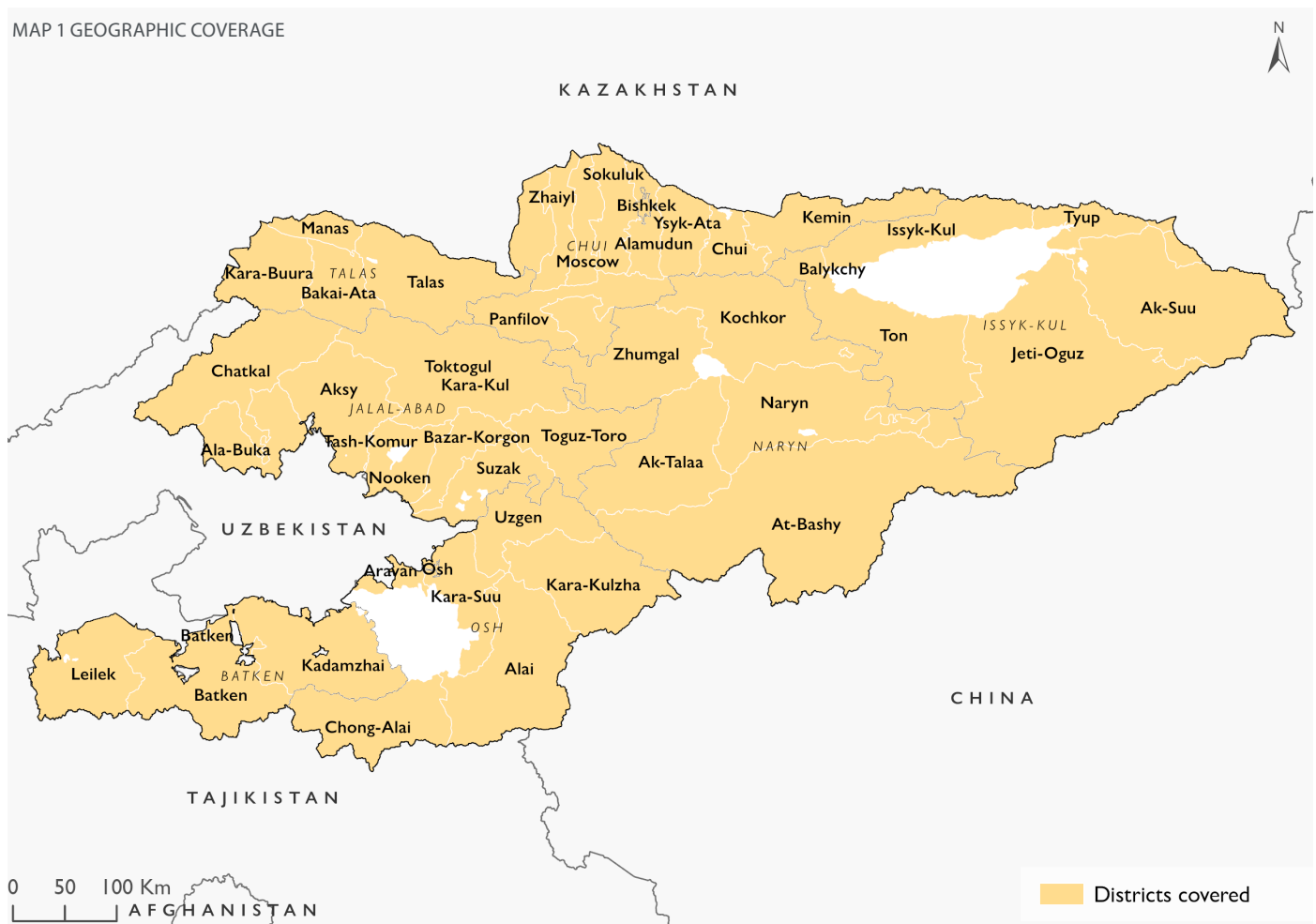
*A migrant worker is defined as a person who is to be engaged, is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a State of which he or she is not a national.*

### 3. Emigrant

*Kyrgyz national who moved from Kyrgyzstan to another country, so that the country of destination effectively becomes their new country of usual residence<sup>1</sup>.*

Data on population sizes for the 3 target population categories is collected by time of mobility, categorizing them yearly for 2020, 2021 and 2022.






MAP 1 GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE



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<sup>1</sup> [https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/iml\\_34\\_glossary.pdf](https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/iml_34_glossary.pdf)

## SUMMARY OF KEY HIGHLIGHTS AND METHODOLOGY

<p><b>7 regions</b> covered</p> 	<p><b>45 rayons</b> assessed</p> 	<p><b>69 key informants</b> interviewed</p> 	<p><b>1,434 returned migrants</b> interviewed</p> 	<p><b>24,284 individuals</b> returned from abroad</p> 	<p><b>1 in 2 returned migrants</b> 45% individuals interviewed were reported the sole/primary providers for their households</p>
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The Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Migration (MLSSM) of the Kyrgyzstan provided support with the baseline assessment. MTM teams assessed 69 locations across Kyrgyzstan<sup>2</sup> in November 2022 for Round 1 of the baseline mobility assessment in close coordination with MLSSM the key informants were heads of rayon (district level). MTM interviewed 1,434 return migrants with the results from the baseline assessment.

### METHODOLOGY

The key informant interviews and surveys were conducted using IOM's Mobility Tracking Matrix (MTM) system in Kyrgyzstan. MTM is adapted to the context in Kyrgyzstan based on IOM's Global Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) methodology<sup>3</sup>. DTM is a system for collecting and analysing data to disseminate important multi-layered information about the mobility, vulnerabilities, and needs of displaced and mobile populations to enable evidence-based migration management.

DTM's Mobility Tracking Baseline Assessment, and Survey methods were implemented for this study. Baseline Assessment was done through key informant interviews while Surveys were conducted with returning migrant workers. Key informants were selected based on their knowledge of the areas, migrant situation, local community and mobility in their locations. They included heads and representatives of the rayon (district level) offices of the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Migration of the Kyrgyz Republic. The key informant interviews were recorded on tablets using KoBo software. The interview form covered questions on when, where and why the migrant workers returned.

The Survey locations were selected based on the results of IOM's Baseline Assessment on returning migrant workers. The survey questionnaire was developed based on IOM's similar studies in Central Asia and in consultation with internal and external thematic experts. The questionnaire included questions on socio-economic profile, migration experience, employment and remittances, needs and vulnerabilities.

The Survey sample was calculated based on a Baseline Assessment on the presence of returning migrant workers in the selected locations. The interviews were performed using tablets and the KoBo software. All interviews were anonymous and IOM's Data Protection Principles<sup>4</sup> were observed throughout the entire data cycle.

Data collectors approached potential respondents using the snowball method to obtain their informed consent. Data collection was conducted in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Migration of the Kyrgyz Republic and its regional offices who extended their technical expertise and staff resources to support the study.



Photo 1 ©IOM 2022

<sup>2</sup> Please see appendix for the list of assessed locations.

<sup>3</sup> <https://dtm.iom.int/about/methodological-framework>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.iom.int/data-protection>

## KEY FINDINGS FROM BASELINE ASSESSMENT

Top three countries that migrant workers returned from were the Russian Federation (85%), Kazakhstan (7%), and Republic of Türkiye (5%). Other countries included European countries and the Republic of Korea. Jalal-Abad, Chui, Osh, Batken and Talas hosted the largest number of the returning migrant workers.

FIGURE 1 RETURN MIGRANTS BY COUNTRY OF RETURN | ANNUAL TRENDS

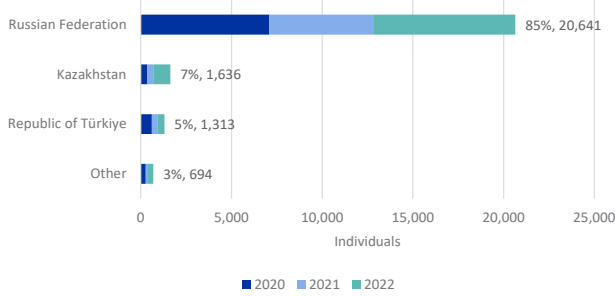
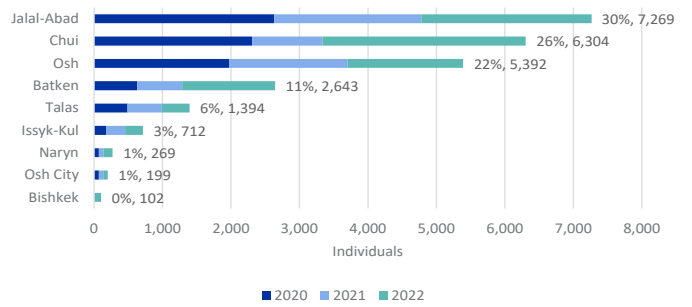


FIGURE 2 RETURN MIGRANTS BY PROVINCE | ANNUAL TRENDS



The most common reason for return (28%) was cited as family issues including reuniting with family members, marriage, and supporting family members in Kyrgyzstan. The partial mobilization announced by the Russian Federation in September 2022 was also listed as a reason for returns (21%) followed by the economic situation in the Russian Federation due to the international sanctions imposed on the country (20%)<sup>5</sup>. Conflict and security situation (11%) and COVID-19 pandemic and its socio-economic impact (11%) were also reported as factors for return. A decrease of 23% were observed in 2021 compared to 2020 and a sharp increase of 46% in returns were observed in 2022 compared to 2021.

FIGURE 3 REASONS FOR RETURN IN 2022 ONLY

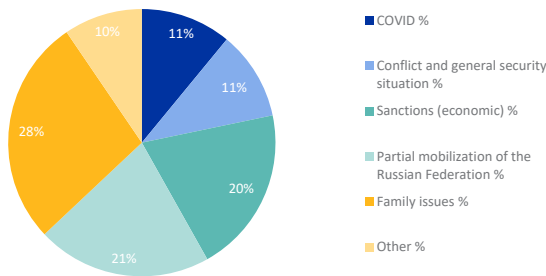
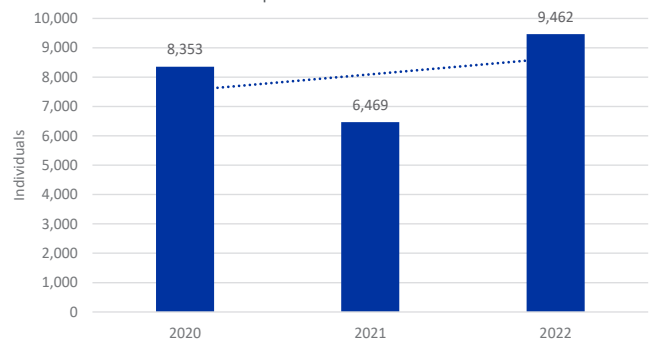
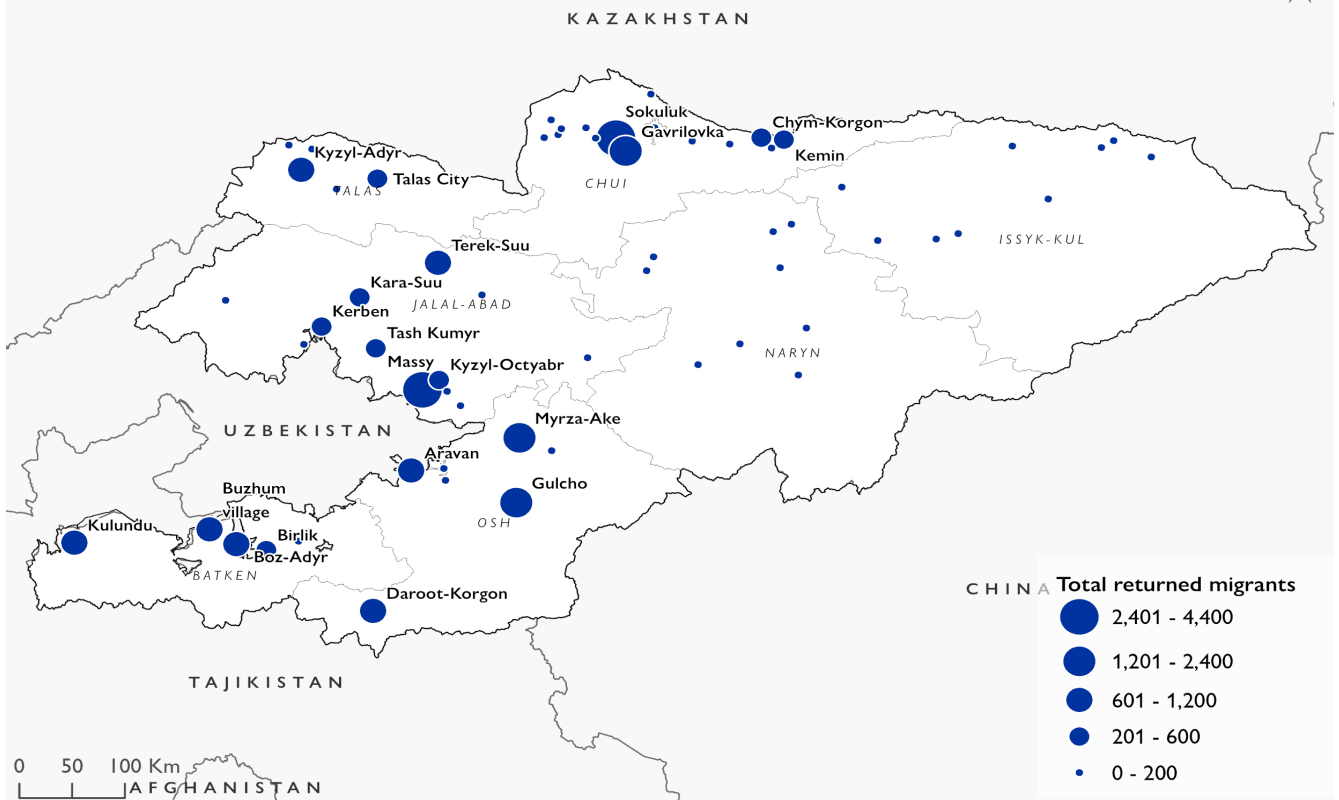


FIGURE 4 RETURN MIGRANTS | ANNUAL TRENDS



MAP 2 RETURNEES BY LOCATION 2020 - 2022



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<sup>5</sup> In 2022, the international community imposed severe sanctions to the Russian Federation, which translated into a depreciation of Russian rubbles against the USA dollars. Many Russian banks have had their assets frozen, including the Central Bank of the Russian Federation, whose foreign assets amount to around USD 630 billion. For more information see: <https://reliefweb.int/report/tajikistan/food-security-update-and-implications-ukraine-conflict-tajikistan-april-2022>.

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILES OF MIGRANT WORKERS**

Thirty-four per cent of the respondents were women while 66 per cent were men. The average age of respondents was 36 for both women and men. Most respondents reported being married (70%) followed by those who are single (18%) and divorced (8%). The marriage rate was slightly higher among male participants (74%) in comparison to those of female respondents (63%). Women were more likely to report being divorced (14%) than men (5%).

For majority of respondents (37%), the highest education achieved was upper secondary education, to which it should be added 15 per cent who have completed post-secondary non-tertiary education. However, 38 per cent in total reported having completed tertiary education, either short-cycle (15%) or bachelor/master (25%) degrees. The reported fields of education varied, including education (19%); engineering, manufacturing, construction and architecture (15%); social sciences, journalism, administration and law (14%); and art and humanities (12%).

FIGURE 5 SEX AND AGE DISAGGREGATION

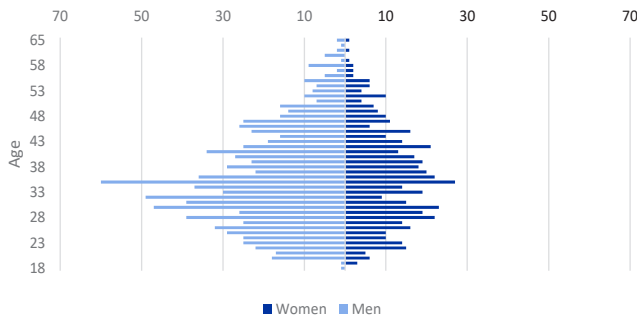
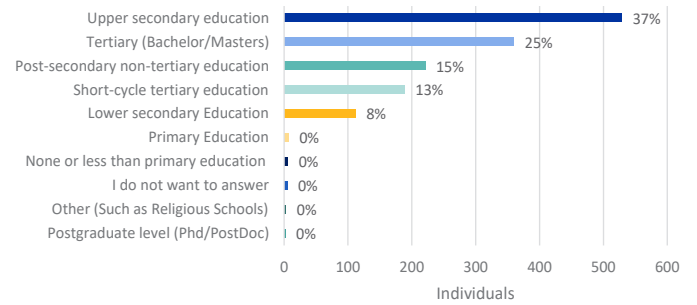


FIGURE 6 COMPLETED LEVEL OF EDUCATION



The reported fields of education varied, including education (19%); engineering, manufacturing, construction and architecture (15%); social sciences, journalism, administration and law (14%); and art and humanities (12%).

Nearly half of the respondents (45%) reported being the sole/primary providers for their households. Men (57%) were much more likely to report being the main providers for their families than women (23%).

**MIGRATION EXPERIENCE**

Eighty-one per cent of respondents returned to Kyrgyzstan from the Russian Federation, followed by those returning from Kazakhstan (8%), Republic or Türkiye (4%), and 1 per cent each from Germany and the Republic of Korea.

TABLE 1 TOP 5 COUNTRIES OF RETURN

Countries of Return	Individuals	Percentages
Russian Federation	1,168	81%
Kazakhstan	117	8%
Republic of Türkiye	51	4%
Germany	12	1%
The Republic of Korea	10	1%

When asked about the duration of their stay in the countries they returned from, 32 per cent of the respondents reported between one and three years, 28 per cent between seven months and a year, and 17 per cent between three and five years. A little more than half of the respondents (53%) shared that this was the duration that they had intended to stay. Among the 47 per cent who said they had not intended stay for the duration that they did, sixty-nine per cent said they had planned to be away for less than a year, which may indicate that they stayed longer than expected.

FIGURE 7 ACTUAL LENGTH OF STAY ABROAD

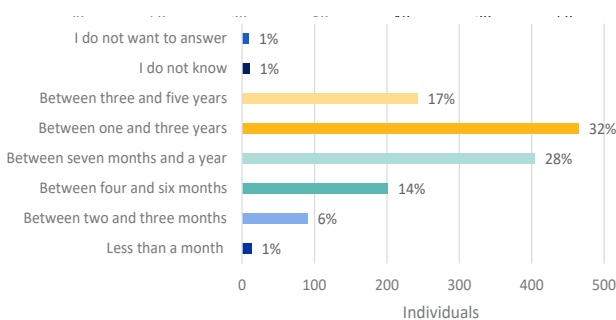
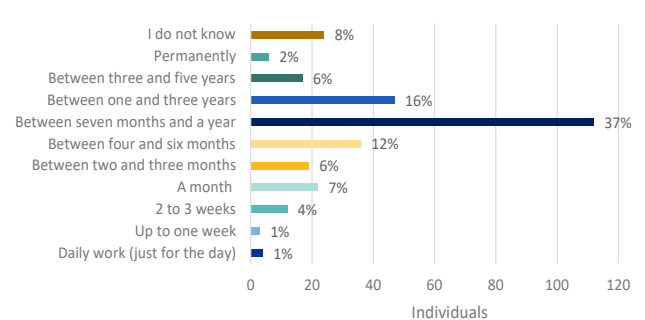


FIGURE 8 PLANNED LENGTH OF STAY ABROAD



EMPLOYMENT

Majority of respondents were employed in the last place of residence prior to their return (67%), followed by those who reported being self-employed (10%) and on daily wages (9%). Reported employment rates were similar among men (68%) and women (64%). Most commonly reported sectors of employment were community, social, personal services (30%), construction (24%) and transportation, storage and communication (13%). Women were more likely to report working in community, social and personal services and wholesale and retail trade while men mainly worked in construction and transportation, storage and communication.

However, sixty-five per cent of the respondents reported having work in their current place of residence. The highest percentage of responses were community, social, personal services; construction; and transportation, storage and communication. Women were more likely to work in community, social, personal services and wholesale retail while more men reported working in construction; and transportation, storage and communication.

FIGURE 9 EMPLOYMENT SECTOR IN HOST COUNTRY

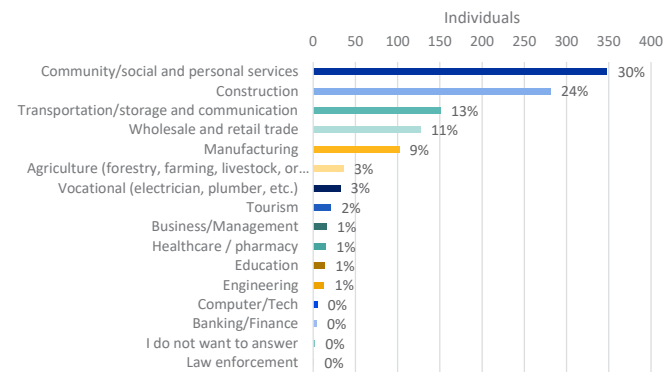
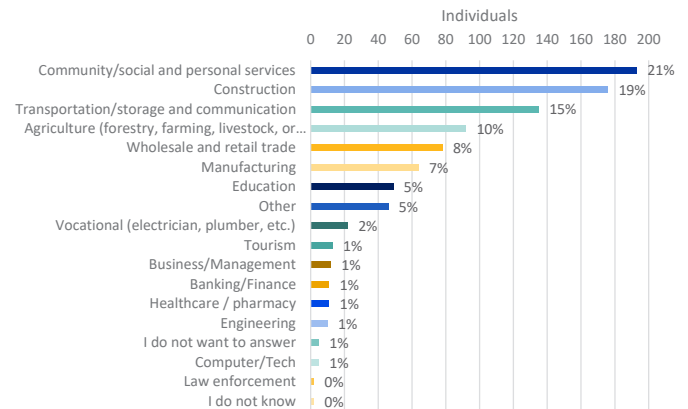


FIGURE 10 CURRENT EMPLOYMENT SECTOR



CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Sixty-five per cent of the respondents reported having work. Their status of employment varied from full time to part time and daily work<sup>6</sup>. Twenty-nine per cent were unemployed and looking for jobs in (16%) or out (13%) of Kyrgyzstan. Only six per cent noted intentions to start their own businesses. While the percentage is still low, men were slightly more likely to wish to start their own businesses (7%) than women (4%). Among those who reported being unemployed, most (69%) said they would accept any job with sufficient remuneration while those who required the job to meet their sector (12%) or qualifications (20%) were much smaller in number.

Seventy-six per cent stated that they have not received any advice, help or assistance from employment services in Kyrgyzstan. Men were more likely to report not having received any advice (48%) than women (28%). When asked about the reason why they thought they could not find employment, the highest majority listed education (33%); this was similar for women (31%) and men (35%). The rest of the group included those who could not identify a reason (15%) and those who said the available work conditions were poor (14%).

Forty-six per cent of the respondents reported changing jobs to obtain a better job or conditions. Vast majority of respondents (72%) said they found their jobs through personal connections including family and friends. More than half (57%) of respondents noted that they did not seek assistance from recruitment agencies because they found the process too complicated or did not know this was an option.

Thirty-nine per cent of the respondents reported that they had no personal income after they returned to Kyrgyzstan and five per cent chose not to respond to this question. Thirty-eight per cent of the respondents considered their monthly income sufficient; however, within the same group, 27 per cent said they did not make enough money to save. The reported income included remittances from other countries, remuneration gained through work in Kyrgyzstan, social benefits and other financial support.

Multiple indirect indicators were used to assess the working conditions of migrant workers. Half of respondents (50%) reported working without a written contract. Large majority did not have a pension scheme (63%) or benefit from annual leave or compensation instead of it (79%). Forty per cent reported that their salaries were less than what they have been initially promised by their employers.

FIGURE 11 UNEMPLOYED | DESIRED TYPE OF WORK

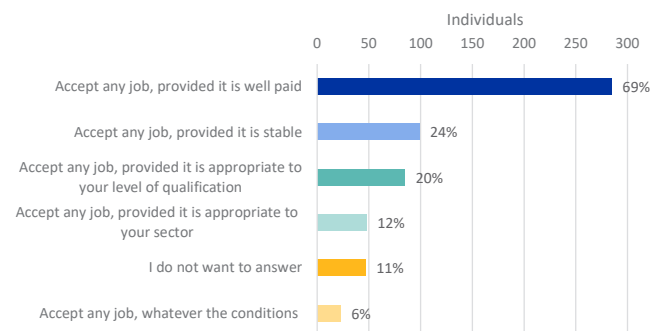
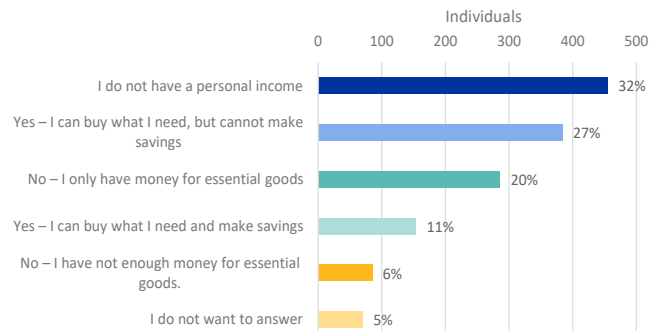


FIGURE 12 SUFFICIENCY OF AVERAGE MONTHLY INCOME FOR EXPENSES



<sup>6</sup> International Labour Organization definitions of labour and work was adopted for the purposes of this question. Please see more on: <https://ilostat.ilo.org/resources/concepts-and-definitions/classification-economic-activities/>.

### FUTURE INTENTIONS

Forty-four per cent of the respondents shared their intention to permanently stay in Kyrgyzstan while 31 per cent intended to continue circular migration between Kyrgyzstan and countries they returned from and 19 per cent wished to migrate to another country. A small percentage (5%) wants to permanently settle in the country of return. (1%) wants to do other.

The Russian Federation was the top country of destination among the respondents who stated their intentions to migrate, followed by Germany (14%), United States of America (7%), the Republic of Türkiye (6%) and the Republic of Korea (6%).

FIGURE 13 MIGRATION INTENTIONS

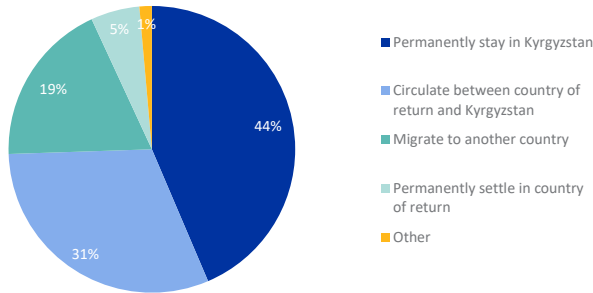
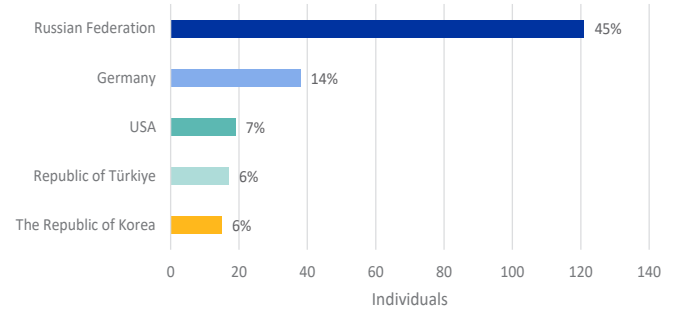


FIGURE 14 TOP 5 COUNTRIES OF (INTENDED) RE-MIGRATION

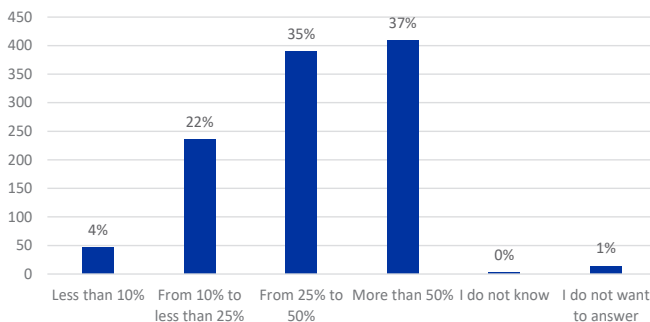


### REMITTANCES

Large majority (76%) of respondents reported that they sent money back to Kyrgyzstan during their stay in the countries they returned from. Slightly more men (78%) said they sent remittances compared to women (72%). The biggest group among the respondents (37%) said they remitted more than half of their monthly income, followed by those who remitted between 25-50% (35%) and between 10-25% (22%). The largest group amongst men reported sending 50 per cent of their earnings to Kyrgyzstan while amongst women this was between 25-50 per cent of their income. Respondents commonly said they remitted once a month (63%) through money transfer operators’ offices; friends and relatives; and banks in the order of most frequently used method of transfer.

Most (66%) reported that the remittances were the main source of income for their families in Kyrgyzstan. Men (72%) were more likely to report that remittances were the main income of their families than women (55%).

FIGURE 15 PERCENTAGE OF INCOME REMITTED



### GENERAL WELL-BEING IN KYRGYZSTAN

More than half (54%) of the respondents said the current state of economy in Kyrgyzstan affected their willingness to live and work in the country. Large majority of respondents (63%) said that they experienced challenges in the last six months. Eighty-three per cent of those who responded positively to the previous question, said that the challenges were economic. Increased prices, lack of work, low wages, and debt were listed as common challenges.

While a large majority (83%) stated that they lived in permanent housing, 14 per cent reported living in temporary accommodation and 2 per cent was homeless.



## APPENDIX

TABLE 2 LIST OF ASSESSED LOCATIONS

Admin 1 Name	Admin 2 Name	Admin 3 Name
Batken	Batken	Boz-Adyr
Batken	Batken	Buzhum village
Batken	Kadamzhai	Birlik
Batken	Kadamzhai	Kuldu
Batken	Kadamzhai	Zhal
Batken	Leilek	Kulundu
Bishkek	Bishkek	Altyn-Ordo
Bishkek	Bishkek	J.M.Ak Orgo
Bishkek	Bishkek	Kolmo
Bishkek	Bishkek	Krasny Stroitel
Bishkek	Bishkek	Leninsky district
Bishkek	Bishkek	W/M Kainda
Chui	Alamudun	Vasilievka
Chui	Chui	Den-Aryk
Chui	Kemin	Chym-Korgon
Chui	Kemin	Kemin
Chui	Kemin	Orlovka
Chui	Moscow	Belovodskoe
Chui	Moscow	Petrovka
Chui	Panfilov	Panfilovskoe
Chui	Panfilov	Voznesenovka
Chui	Sokuluk	Gavrilovka
Chui	Sokuluk	Sokuluk
Chui	Ysyk-Ata	Internationalnoe
Chui	Zhaiyl	Alekseevka
Chui	Zhaiyl	Kalinin
Issyk-Kul	Ak-Suu	Ak-Chii
Issyk-Kul	Balykchy	Balykchy
Issyk-Kul	Issyk-Kul	Ananyevo
Issyk-Kul	Jeti-Oguz	Kyzyl-Suu
Issyk-Kul	Ton	Bokonbaevo
Issyk-Kul	Ton	Kadzhi-Sai
Issyk-Kul	Tyup	Taldy-Suu
Issyk-Kul	Tyup	Tyup

Admin 1 Name	Admin 2 Name	Admin 3 Name
Jalal-Abad	Aksy	Kara-Suu
Jalal-Abad	Aksy	Kerben
Jalal-Abad	Ala-Buka	Ak-Korgon
Jalal-Abad	Bazar-Korgon	Beshik-Zhon
Jalal-Abad	Bazar-Korgon	Kyzyl-Octyabr
Jalal-Abad	Chatkal	Kanysh-Kiya
Jalal-Abad	Kara-Kul	Unknown
Jalal-Abad	Nooken	Massy
Jalal-Abad	Suzak	Suzak
Jalal-Abad	Tash-Komur	Tash Kumyr
Jalal-Abad	Toguz-Toro	Kazarman
Jalal-Abad	Toktogul	Terek-Suu
Naryn	Ak-Talaa	Baetovo
Naryn	At-Bashy	At-Bashy
Naryn	Kochkor	Kochkor
Naryn	Kochkor	Kok-Jar
Naryn	Kochkor	Telek
Naryn	Naryn	Min-Bulak
Naryn	Naryn	Uchkun
Naryn	Zhumgal	Baizak
Naryn	Zhumgal	Chaek
Osh	Alai	Gulcho
Osh	Aravan	Aravan
Osh	Chong-Alai	Daroot-Korgon
Osh	Kara-Kulzha	Kara-Kulzhinsky
Osh	Kara-Suu	Ozгур (part)
Osh	Uzgen	Ak-Terek
Osh	Uzgen	Myrza-Ake
Osh City	Osh	Orke
Osh City	Osh	Ozгур (part)
Talas	Bakai-Ata	Bakai-Ata
Talas	Kara-Buura	Kyzyl-Adyr
Talas	Manas	Mayskoye
Talas	Manas	Pokrovka
Talas	Talas	Talas City

