BASELINE ASSESSMENT AND SURVEYS: RETURNING MIGRANT WORKERS IN TAJIKISTAN DECEMBER 2022 – FEBRUARY 2023

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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 January 2023 MTM has conducted its first round of the Baseline Mobility Assessment in Tajikistan 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 Tajikistan please visit https://dtm.iom.int/Tajikistan

3 TARGET POPULATIONS[1]

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 Tajik nationals returning home after having moved away from Tajikistan and crossed an international border.

2. **Migrant Worker**
   A migrant workder 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**
   Tajik national who moved from Tajikistan to another country, so that the country of destination effectively becomes their new country of usual residence.

Data on population sizes for the 3 target population categories is collected by time of mobility, categorizing them yearly for 2020, 2021 and 2022.
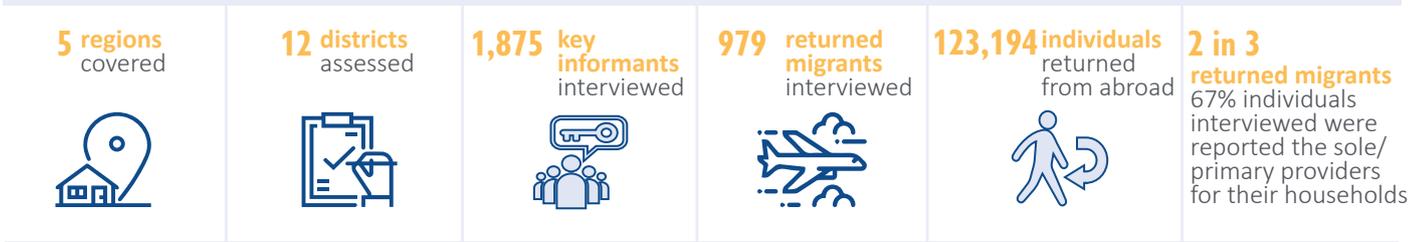
MAP 1 GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE
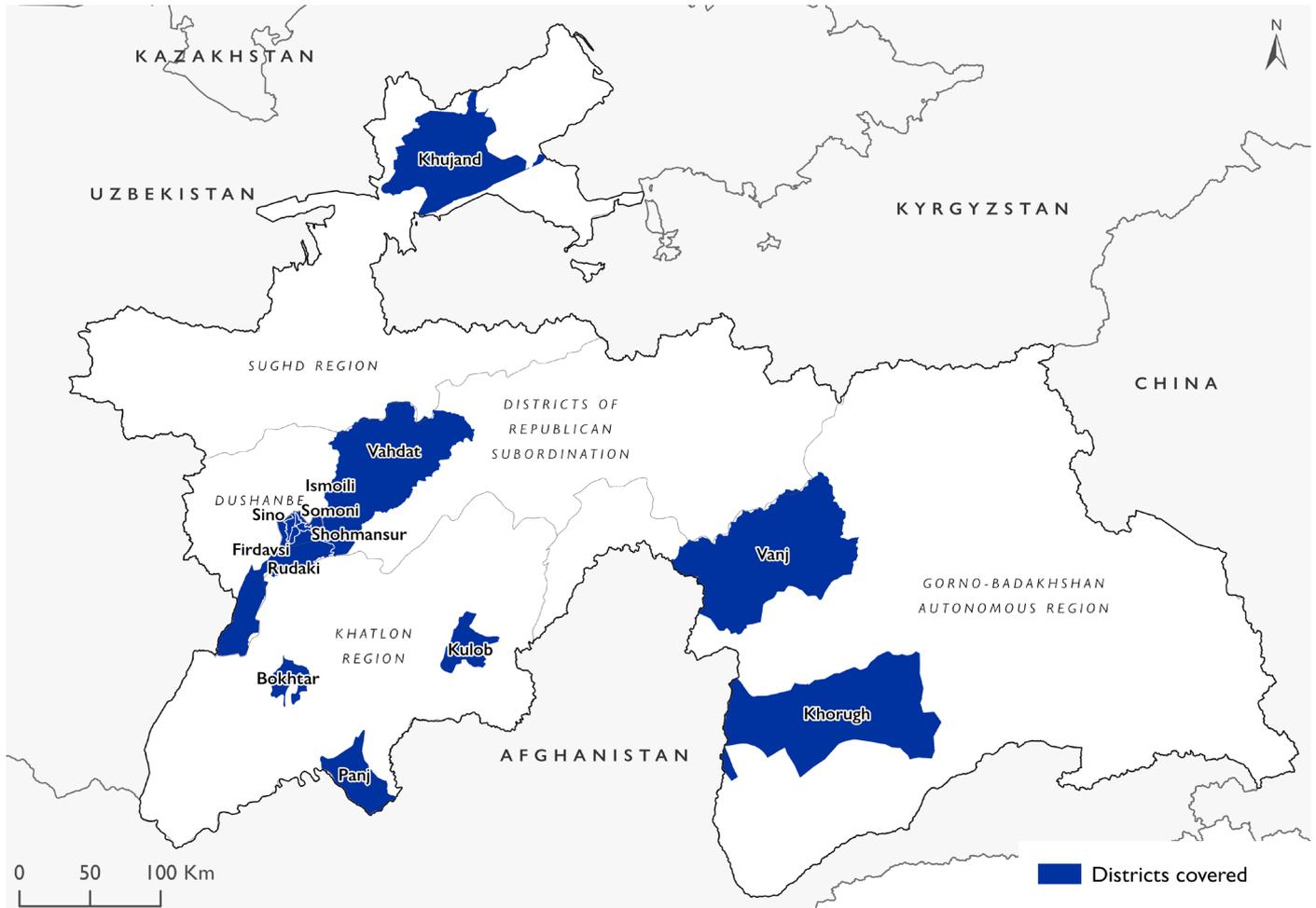
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[1] https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/iml_34_glossary.pdf

5 regions covered

12 districts assessed

1,875 key informants interviewed

979 returned migrants interviewed

123,194 individuals returned from abroad

2 in 3 returned migrants 67% individuals interviewed were reported the sole/ primary providers for their households

From December 2022 to February 2023, IOM Tajikistan has assessed 859 villages across 12 districts[2] with 1,875 key informant interviews (20% women) for its baseline assessment and conducted 979 surveys (12% women) with returning migrant workers in the country.

METHODOLOGY

The key informant interviews and surveys were conducted using IOM's Mobility Tracking Matrix (MTM) system in Tajikistan. MTM is adapted to the context in Tajikistan based on IOM's Global Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) methodology[3]. 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 local authorities, community leaders, teachers, and religious leaders. 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 conducted using mobile devices and the KoBo software. All interviews were anonymous and IOM's Data Protection Principles[4] 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 Tajik Republic and its regional offices who extended their technical expertise and staff resources to support the study.

KEY FINDINGS FROM BASELINE ASSESSMENT

Three groups of populations were targeted in the baseline assessment: (1) international migrant workers, (2) returning migrant workers and (3) emigrants. In the timeframe 2020-2022, IOM Tajikistan found 123,194 return migrant workers, 3,111 international migrant workers and 251,180 Tajiks were out as emigrants at the time of baseline assessment.

Top three countries that migrant workers returned from were the Russian Federation (97%), Kazakhstan (2%), and Ukraine (0.4%).

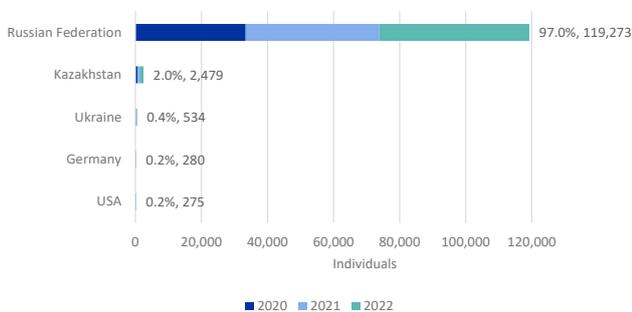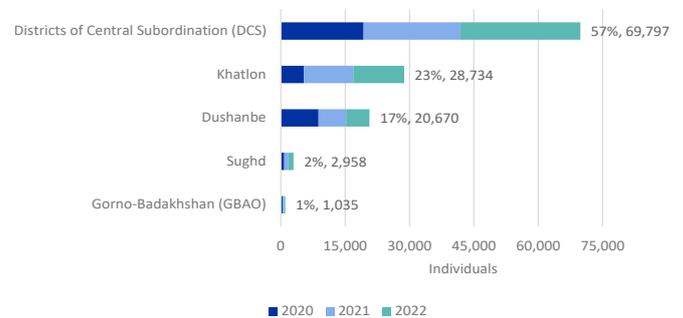FIGURE 1: RETURN MIGRANTS BY COUNTRY OF RETURN | ANNUAL TRENDS

Country	Value
Russian Federation	97.0%, 119,273
Kazakhstan	2.0%, 2,479
Ukraine	0.4%, 534
Germany	0.2%, 280
USA	0.2%, 275

■ 2020 ■ 2021 ■ 2022

FIGURE 2: RETURN MIGRANTS BY PROVINCE | ANNUAL TRENDS

Province	Value
Districts of Central Subordination (DCS)	57%, 69,797
Khatlon	23%, 28,734
Dushanbe	17%, 20,670
Sughd	2%, 2,958
Gorno-Badakhshan (GBAO)	1%, 1,035

■ 2020 ■ 2021 ■ 2022

Vahdat and Rudaki districts in the Districts of Central Subordination (DCS), Kulob city in Khatlon region and Sino district in Dushanbe city hosted the largest number of returning migrant workers respectively. An increase of 21 per cent was observed in 2021 compared to 2020 and another increase of 12 per cent in returns was observed in 2022 compared to 2021.

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[2] Assessed districts: Vahdat; Rudaki; Kulob; Bokhtar; Panj; Sino; Shohmansur; Fidavsi; Ismoili Somoni; Khujand; Khorugh; and Vanj..
[3] https://dtm.iom.int/about/methodological-framework
[4] https://www.iom.int/data-protection

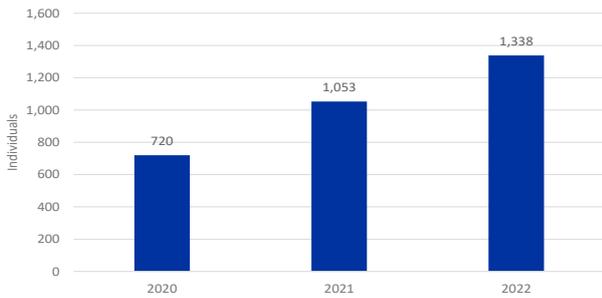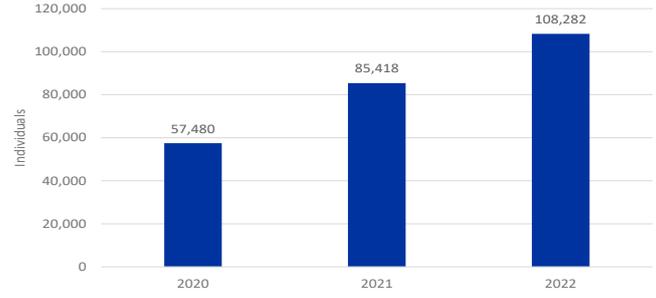FIGURE 3: INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS WORKER | ANNUAL TRENDS

FIGURE 4: EMIGRANTS | ANNUAL TRENDS

The most common reasons for return (22%) were cited as the cold winter season, the Russian war in Ukraine and the general security situation each, followed by family issues (20%) including reuniting with family members, marriage, and supporting family members in Tajikistan, while amongst the returnees were people whose duration of stay and/or work patent in destination country was expired (18%). The partial mobilization announced by the Russian Federation in September 2022[5] was also listed as a reason for return (7%) followed by the economic situation in the Russian Federation due to the international sanctions imposed on the country (7%) . A smaller part (3%) mentioning other reasons or COVID-19 pandemic (1%) as valid reasons for return.
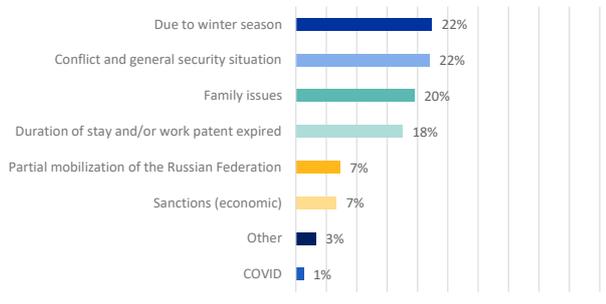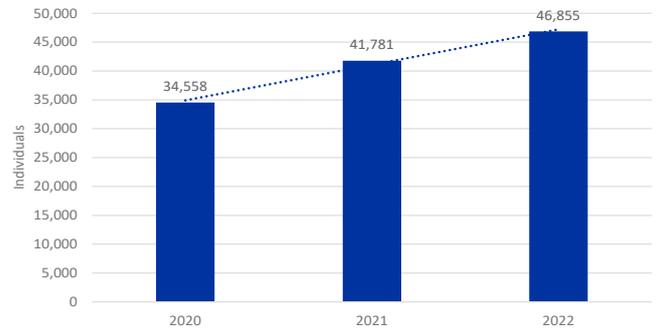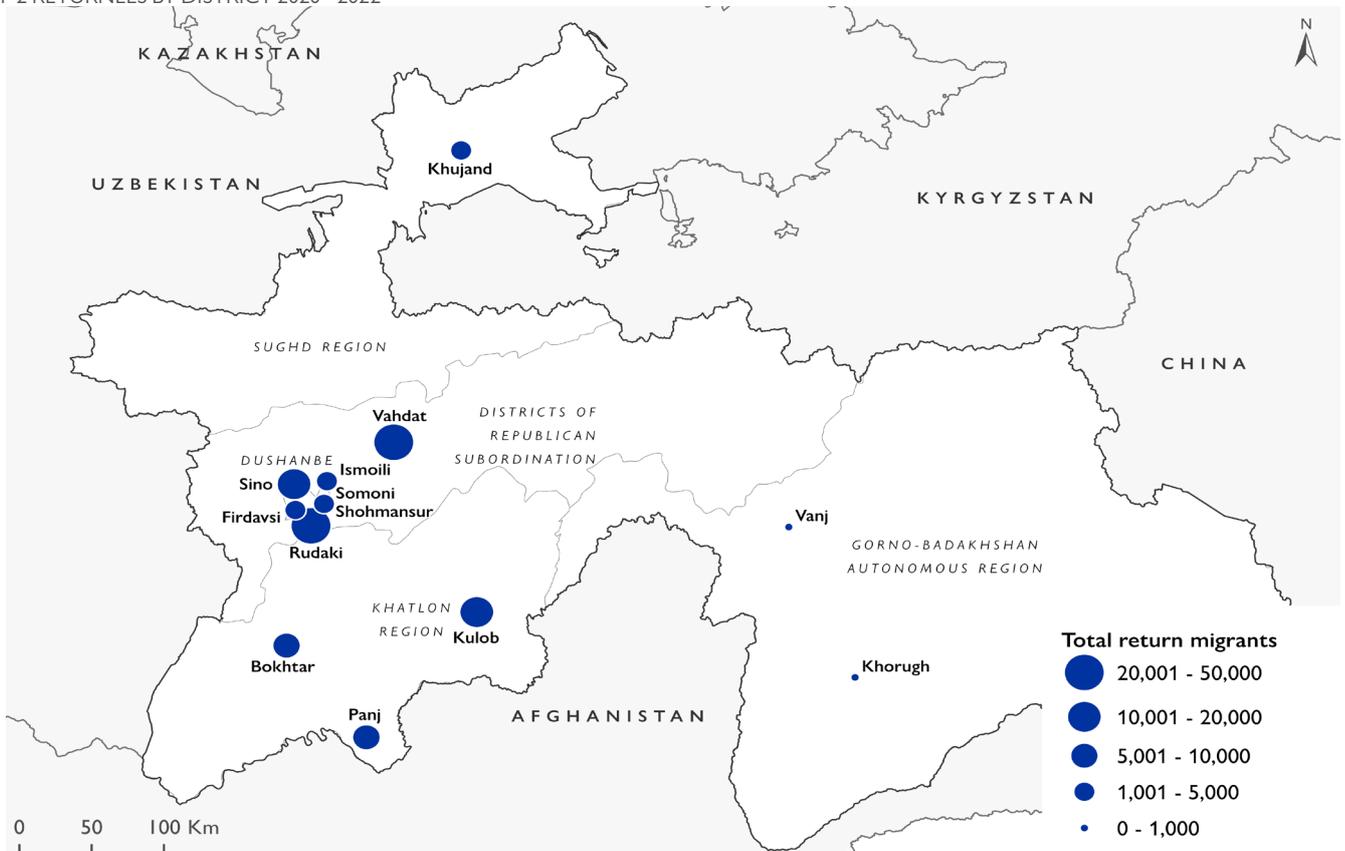
FIGURE 5: REASONS FOR RETURN IN 2022

Reason	Percentage
Due to winter season	22%
Conflict and general security situation	22%
Family issues	20%
Duration of stay and/or work patent expired	18%
Partial mobilization of the Russian Federation	7%
Sanctions (economic)	7%
Other	3%
COVID	1%

FIGURE 6: RETURN MIGRANTS | ANNUAL TRENDS

MAP 2 RETURNEES BY DISTRICT 2020 - 2022

Map ©IOM 2022 This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by theInternational Organization for Migration

[5] 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

Twelve per cent of the respondents were women while 88 per cent were men. The average age of respondents was 40 for women and 37 for men. Most respondents reported being single (86%) followed by those who are widowed (8%) and divorced (4%). 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%).

A higher proportion of respondents (38%), the highest education achieved was upper secondary education, followed by 27 per cent tertiary (Bachelor/Masters), 14 per cent who have completed post-secondary non-tertiary education, seven per cent none or less than primary education, lower than secondary education (5%) and primary education (2%). However, 34 per cent in total reported having completed tertiary education, either short-cycle (7%) or bachelor/master (26%) degrees.
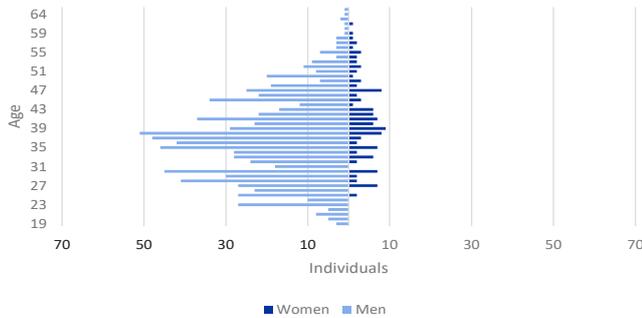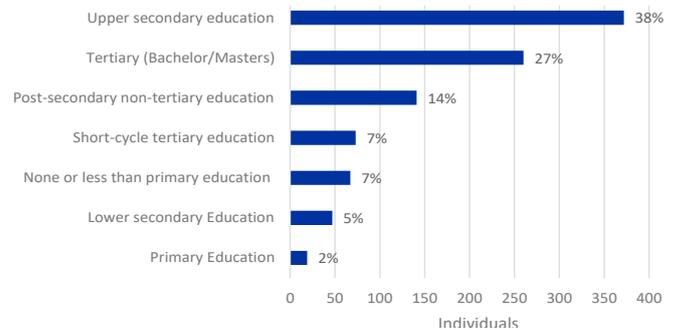
FIGURE 7: SEX AND AGE DISAGGREGATION

FIGURE 8: COMPLETED LEVEL OF EDUCATION

The reported fields of education varied, including engineering, manufacturing, construction and architecture (31%); education (18%); natural sciences, mathematics, statistics and computing (18%); generic programmes and qualifications (13%); services (e.g., personal, transport, environmental protection, security) (10%); and social sciences, journalism, administration and law (8%). A smallest part (7%) reports being educated in health, welfare and social services, followed by other (5%), agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary (4%) as arts and humanities (4%).

Almost two-thirds of the respondents (67%) reported being the sole/primary providers for their households. Men (71%) were much more likely to report being the main providers for their families than women (35%).

MIGRATION EXPERIENCE

Ninety-eight per cent of respondents returned to Tajikistan from the Russian Federation, followed by those returning from Kazakhstan (1%).

TABLE 1: TOP 5 COUNTRIES OF RETURN

Countries of Return	Individuals	Percentages
Russian Federation	958	98%
Kazakhstan	9	1%
Republic of Türkiye	2	0.2%
Germany	2	0.2%
The Republic of Korea	2	0.2%

When asked about the duration of their stay in the countries they returned from, 38 per cent of the respondents reported between seven months and a year, 31 per cent between one and three years, and 24 per cent between four and six months. Exactly half of the respondents (50%) shared that this was the duration that they had intended to stay. Among the eight per cent who said they had not intended stay for the duration that they did, fifty-nine per cent said they had planned to be away for less than a year, which may indicate that they stayed longer than expected.
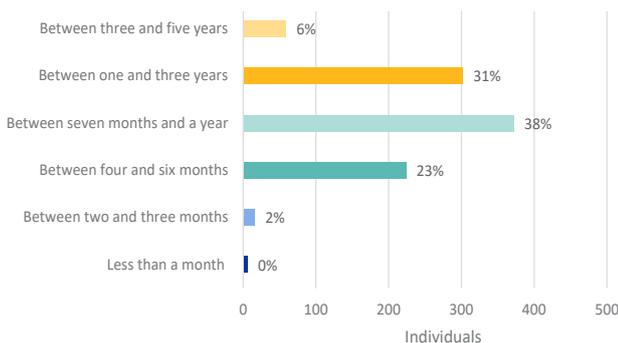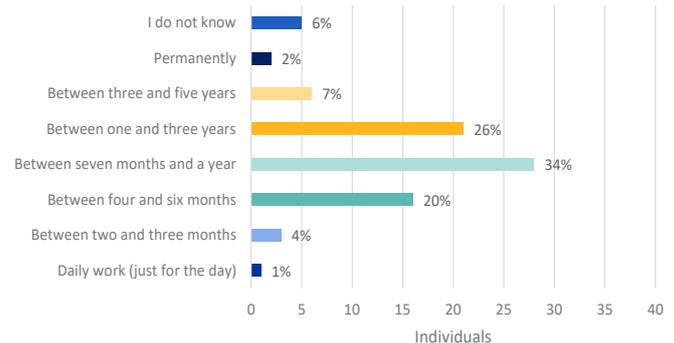
FIGURE 9: ACTUAL LENGTH OF STAY ABROAD

FIGURE 10: PLANNED LENGTH OF STAY ABROAD

EMPLOYMENT

The majority of respondents (37%) were employed as daily wagers in host country, followed by those who reported being employed in private sector (16%) and employed in public sector (9%). Most reported as sectors of employment construction (36%), followed by community, social, personal services (21%), and wholesale and retail trade (11%). Women were more likely to report working in community, social and personal services (57%) and wholesale and retail trade (11%) while men mainly worked in construction (41%) and community/social and personal services (15%).

With regard to the current employment sector, almost half (47.8%) of return migrant workers reported construction, followed by community, social, personal services (22.1%) and transportation, storage and communication (9.2%). Women were more likely to work in community, social, personal services (73%) while more men reported working in construction (54%).

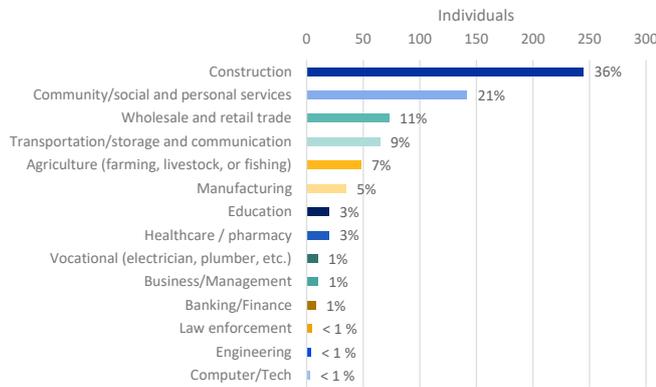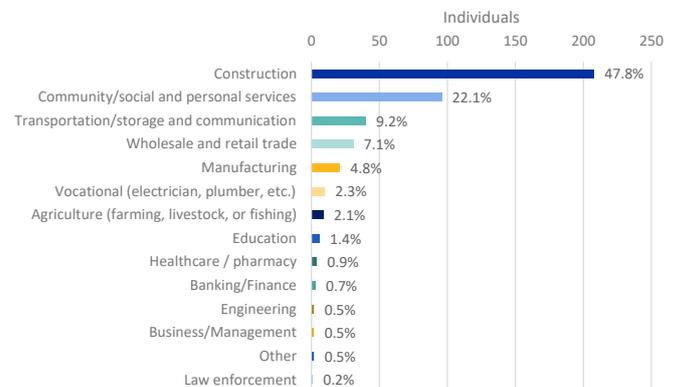FIGURE 11: EMPLOYMENT SECTOR IN HOST COUNTRY

FIGURE 12: CURRENT EMPLOYMENT SECTOR

CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS

When asked about current employment status, half of the respondents (51%) reported being unemployed[6]. Forty two per cent of them were not looking for a job, 7 per cent were looking for a job within country and the remaining two per cent were looking for a job outside of the country. In addition, 18 per cent of the respondents mentioned daily wages as current employment, followed by employed (19%), self-employed (7%) and volunteer (2%).

Among those who reported being unemployed and looking for a job, most (80%) said they would accept any job with sufficient remuneration while those who required the job in employment sector previously worked (26%) or skills and qualifications (22%) were much smaller in number.

Ninety per cent stated that they have not received any advice, help or assistance from employment services in Tajikistan. Men were more likely to report not having received any advice (75%) than women (15%). When asked about the reason why they thought they could not find employment, the highest majority listed education (47%); this was almost similar for women (38%) and men (48%). The rest of the group included those stated lack of employment opportunities (11%) and language barrier (9%).

Thirty-six per cent of the respondents reported that they wanted to change jobs in order to obtain better jobs or conditions. The vast majority of respondents (70%) said they found their jobs through personal connections including family and friends.
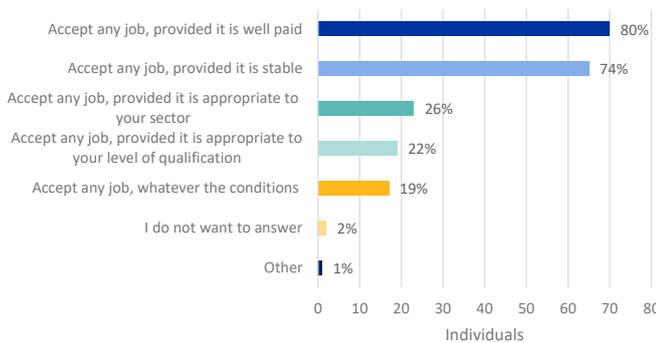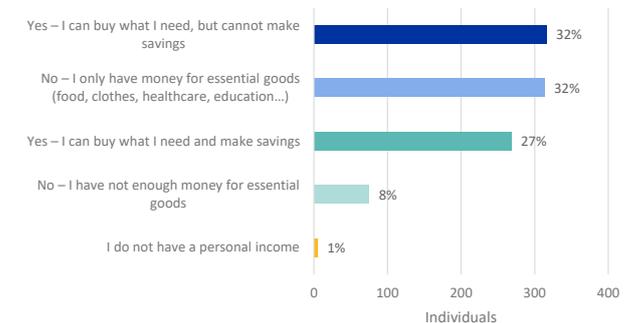
FIGURE 13: UNEMPLOYED | DESIRED TYPE OF WORK

FIGURE 14 :SUFFICIENCY OF AVERAGE MONTHLY INCOME FOR EXPENSES

Thirty-seven per cent of the respondents reported that they had no personal income after they returned to Tajikistan. Sixty per cent of the respondents considered their monthly income sufficient; however, within the same group, 32 per cent said they did not make enough money to save. The reported income included remittances from other countries, remuneration gained through work in Tajikistan, social benefits and other financial support.

Multiple indirect indicators were used to assess the working conditions of migrant workers. More than half of respondents (56%) reported working without a written contract. The majority did not have a pension scheme (88%) or benefit from annual leave or compensation instead of it (65%).

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[6] 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 continue circular migration between Tajikistan and countries they returned from, another part of respondents (32%) intend to settle in the country they returned from, while only eight per cent intended to permanently stay in Tajikistan. A smaller percentage (14%) wants to migrate to another country.

The Russian Federation was the top country of destination among the return migrant workers who stated their intentions to migrate (48%), followed by those who have not decided on a destination yet (7%), the United Kingdom (5%), Germany and Kazakhstan (8%) each.
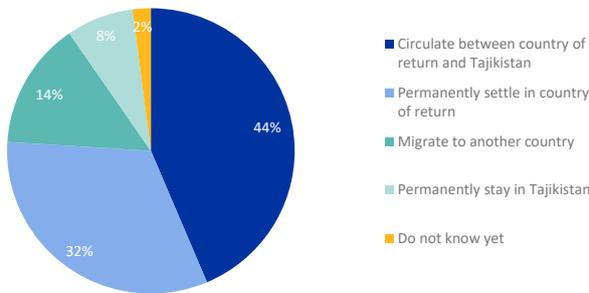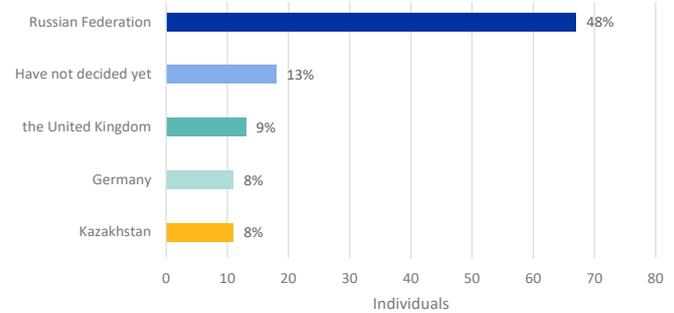
FIGURE 15: MIGRATION INTENTIONS

- Circulate between country of return and Tajikistan
- Permanently settle in country of return
- Migrate to another country
- Permanently stay in Tajikistan
- Do not know yet

FIGURE 16: TOP 5 COUNTRIES OF (INTENDED) RE-MIGRATION


REMITTANCES

The majority (97%) of respondents reported that they sent money back to Tajikistan during their stay in the countries they returned from. Comparably more men (99%) said they sent remittances compared to women (88%). The biggest group among the respondents (58%) said they remitted from 25-50% monthly income, followed by those who remitted more than half (27%) and between 10-25% (13%). The largest group amongst men reported sending 50 per cent of their earnings to Tajikistan and this was similar amongst women as well. Respondents commonly said they remitted once a month (75%) through money transfer operators' offices; banks website or applications; money transfer operator's website or application in the order of most frequently used method of transfer.

Most (74%) reported that the remittances were the main source of income for their families in Tajikistan. Men (76%) were more likely to report that remittances were the main income of their families than women (55%).

FIGURE 17: PERCENTAGE OF INCOME REMITTED
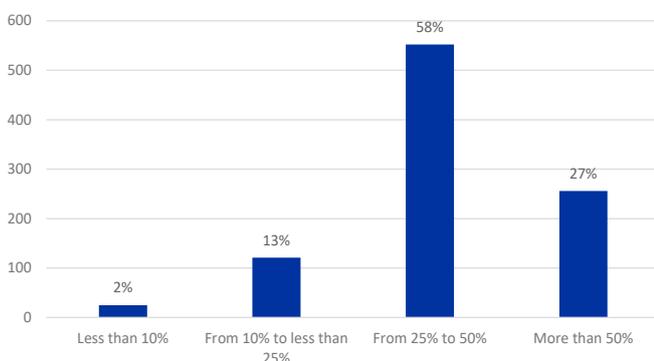
GENERAL WELL-BEING IN TAJIKISTAN

More than half (59%) of the respondents said the current state of economy in Tajikistan affected their willingness to live and work in the country. Nearly half of respondents (43%) said that they experienced challenges in the last six months. Seventy-five per cent of those who responded positively to the previous question said that the challenges were economic. Increased prices (31%), lack of work (23%), low wages (20%), and debt (6%) were listed as common challenges.

While a large majority (94%) stated that they lived in permanent housing, four per cent reported living in temporary accommodation and two per cent was homeless.

FIGURE 18: CURRENT HOUSING STATUS

- Permanent housing
- Temporary housing
- Homeless

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