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SAFE MIGRATION IN CENTRAL ASIA

FACT SHEET

The Safe Migration in Central Asia activity uses evidence-based practices and cross-border connections to strengthen the mutual accountability and effectiveness of governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the private sector to prevent trafficking in persons, protect survivors, and promote safe migration, as part of USAID’s Asia-wide suite of counter-trafficking interventions. Safe Migration in Central Asia is a five-year activity implemented by Winrock International in Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.



Millions of Central Asians leave their homes each year in search of better job opportunities and with insufficient protection of migrants’ rights and safe migration routes, many are at risk of labor and sexual exploitation. These migration outflows, coupled with governments’ attention to the issues of migration and human trafficking, present a window of opportunity to create better systems that support migrants, reduce their vulnerability to labor exploitation, and protect trafficking victims.

OUR WORK

Safe Migration in Central Asia provides assistance to meet the following objectives:

- Support governments in the regulation of migration issues and prevention of human trafficking and protection of survivors;
- Reduce the vulnerability of population to all forms of trafficking in persons;
- Expand and improve identification and assistance to survivors of human trafficking;

- Improve prosecution for crimes related to human trafficking (only in the Kyrgyz Republic).

Safe Migration in Central Asia collaborates with local and international organizations, governments, and civil society to connect individual country approaches into cohesive regional strategies to strengthen bilateral and multi-country actions to promote rights-based migration and counter trafficking in persons. The activity uses the following cross-cutting approaches:

- Engagement of youth and leadership in planning and implementation of the activity to reduce their vulnerability to trafficking in persons and cultivate youth leaders as activists to address human trafficking issues.
- Adapting to changing environments and evolving priorities and focusing on the highest impact activities through continuous learning with selective and focused interventions.
- Ensuring sustainability through collaborative implementation with government, civil society, and the private sector, and their ownership of activities.
- Connecting with and leveraging other programs to achieve the greatest impact through complementarity.
- Using robust monitoring, evaluation, and learning processes and tools to continuously gauge activity progress and effects through measurable impact.

ACHIEVEMENTS 2020-2021

- Safe Migration in Central Asia’s NGO partners reached more than 700,000 people in Central Asia through online events dedicated to International Migrants Day raising awareness about migrant rights, safe migration, and how migrants contribute to their host communities.
- The activity trained more than 600 government employees, hotline operators, and NGOs on responding effectively to human trafficking cases. This included effective psychological, legal, and social assistance for victims of human trafficking, as well as preventing cases of human trafficking.
- Safe Migration in Central Asia trained 133 service providers in Uzbekistan on victim-centered and trauma-informed service provision.
- In partnership with educational institutions and NGO partners, the activity initiated the “Smart Navigator” program in Kazakhstan to train 173 youth on how to recognize and protect themselves from the risks of human trafficking. The activity distributed a youth-produced video through social networks, in which they encouraged their peers to be vigilant of situations of trafficking.
- In the Kyrgyz Republic, the activity trained 184 returning migrants in computer literacy, of which 10 were employed or started their own business within weeks of completing their courses.
- The activity created various online platforms: websites and chat bots, where migrants or those who are planning to travel abroad can find useful information on safe migration, as well as hotline numbers for advice. More than 300,000 persons accessed the Uzbek virtual consultant on migration and human trafficking, using a [Telegram account](#) launched in July 2021 through which one can also report trafficking cases directly to law enforcement authorities. During the 2021 World Day against Trafficking in Persons, in cooperation with government agencies and NGOs, Safe Migration in Central Asia conducted an online regional flash mob to raise public awareness about the problem of human trafficking reaching over three million people in Central Asia. Government agencies, private companies, and NGOs distributed materials with hotline numbers for problems with migration and human trafficking. As a result, hotlines saw a 35 percent increase in the number of calls.
- Turkmenstani NGO partners provided pro bono consultations to 1,641 citizens on legal and migration issues
- Through an NGO network, Safe Migration in Central Asia provided humanitarian assistance and pro bono legal advice to nearly 2,000 migrants who faced difficulties due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The activity initiated events to promote fair labor practices in Turkmenistan and trained 84 representatives of government and NGOs on the promotion of labor right.