MANAGING THE PRE-DEPARTURE ORIENTATION PROCESS FOR ARMENIAN LABOUR MIGRANTS

Sergey Brestovitsky

Country-specific assessment to identify gaps and assess migrant-orientation needs prior to departure

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1. Introduction

This report has been prepared within the framework of IOM Armenia's "Strengthening Armenia's labour migration management capacities towards enhanced democracy and good governance" project, funded by the Government of Romania. The project is aimed at enhancing the capacities of the Government of Armenia to better manage labour migration through the establishment of a pre-departure orientation centre and the optimization of the pre-departure orientation process for Armenian migrant workers.

The research period coincided with considerable developments in the Armenian migration strategy, as well as regional migration trends: Armenia has joined the Treaty of Eurasian Economic Union; the main destination of Armenian labour — the Russian Federation — faces the toughest economic challenges in modern history;[1] the Syrian crisis has prompted an inflow of displaced population from the conflict zone; finally, the authorities are considering an organized recruiting scheme as a new pattern for an Armenian migration management system. These important events have served a basis to think about pre-departure orientation and to explore it both in the context of the current migration situation and as an integral part of the national migration system.

Study objectives

1. To conduct target group analysis and identify characteristics of potential migrants who need pre-departure information in order to make informed decisions on migration and be protected in the country of destination.

2. To identify how pre-departure orientation would help potential migrants to make migration decisions (for example, legal or employment information, vocational, skills, language or financial literacy training, or facts about work and living conditions in another country).

3. To identify the most effective means of communicating information and reaching targeted migrants.

4. To identify additional services that should be provided to labour migrants (for example, assistance in finding employment and/or provision of training in the destination or home country).

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1 Russia faces toughest economic challenges in modern history - Medvedev. Russia Today, 21 April 2015. www.rt.com/business/251613-russia-challenges-economy-stabilized

Methodology

This report has been prepared based on available publications on the subject, as well as current migration-related activities in the Eurasian Economic Union (EaEU) region. However, the most important and valuable data were collected during interviews with IOM Armenia, the Armenian authorities, and other stakeholders during a visit to Armenia in October 2015.

2. Pre-departure orientation as a protection measure

One of the main issues any country of origin faces during an international migration process is the protection of its citizens abroad. While sending countries' position is not usually strong, particularly considering possible violations on foreign territory, they have very effective instrument at their disposal, if used appropriately. Information on this instrument and other possibilities should be provided to potential migrants and those who have already made up their minds to leave the country. Efficient dissemination of up-to-date, relevant information helps migrants to make informed decisions and avoid many potential problems. In contrast, false expectations or insufficient information about the realities at a destination puts migrants at risk and undermines orderly migration.

Access to information is fundamental for all migration decisions. Often, migrants are unaware of the practical, legal, social and economic conditions and consequences of migration. It is especially important for migrant workers, who are most vulnerable to abuses as a result of exploitative recruitment and employment practices. Problems occurring most commonly cited by migrant workers and countries of origin are: contract substitution and violations; lack of, reduced, or late payment of agreed wages and non-fulfillment of return air fare obligations; harassment of female workers by employers. Other problems include poor working conditions, a virtual absence of social protection, denial of freedom of association and workers' rights, discrimination and xenophobia, as well as social exclusion.[2] Pre-departure orientation can help to protect migrants and prepare them for different phases of recruitment, travel and employment.

Pre-departure orientation can contain information to raise awareness on legal procedures for admission, and provide life skills and reliable sources to help migrants find employment upon arrival. Up-to-date information before departure can also facilitate the understanding of what support and protection structures are available in the destination country. An important component of pre-departure orientation is to ensure that potential migrants are aware of their rights and responsibilities at all stages; this starts at the decision-making process for migration and continues throughout the migration process. It is essential for migrants to plan safe, protected and legal forms of migration.

Therefore, general mechanisms for pre-departure orientation should aim to empower potential migrants to make informed decisions and choices about whether or not to migrate, where to migrate to, and under what circumstances. This can be guaranteed by equipping migrants with the following information:

- Necessary requirements, conditions and steps that need to be taken to make migration more successful and to avoid risks associated with irregular migration, including reference information;

- Migration-related legislation, procedures and requirements concerning entry, residence and work;

- Resources for employment.[3]

2 ICMPD, Prague Process Handbook on Managing Labour and Circular Migration (Vienna, 2014). Available from www.pragueprocess.eu/en/documents/category/3-programme-key-documents?download=73:prague-process-handbook-on-managing-labour-and-circular-migration-en

3 J.Pillinger, Running an Effective Migrant Resource Centre: A Handbook for Practitioners, (Budapest, IOM, 2015). Available from https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/running_effective_migrant_resource_centre.pdf

3. 3. The Armenian situation:
why pre-departure orientation is needed and what is necessary

3.1. Armenia as a sending country

Available studies and research on migration in Armenia confirm the fundamental principles of human mobility. Economic migration usually originates in locations with lower living standards and a lack of job opportunities. Migrants from such locations tend to migrate and look for better opportunities in locations with higher living standards. When a migration decision is made, the choice of destination country is affected by such factors as proximity, liberal migration rules, and integration opportunities, including language and traditional historical ties. All of these axiomatic features are seen in labour migration from Armenia, particularly with regard to the Russian Federation, the principal destination.

In very general terms, Armenia is a country of origin, providing a labour force within the Eurasian migration system,[4] with the Russian Federation as the main destination country. Labour emigration constitutes 70–75 per cent of the total amount of emigration flows from Armenia, sometimes even reaching 94 per cent.[5] Unemployment is cited as the largest problem; it was estimated at around 17.2 per cent in 2014 (with youth unemployment at 24%).The other cited problem, poverty, affects more than 30 per cent of the population.[6]

In addition to the fundamental factors listed above, the political aspect of Russian–Armenian relations influences labour migration schemes. First and foremost, this refers to opportunities provided by Armenia's association with the Eurasian Economic Union (EaEU), a key topic of this pre-departure orientation study.

In addition to the Russian Federation, other frequently named destination countries include Ukraine, the United States, other Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries and EU Member States.[7] Other research gives more detailed distribution by chosen destinations:[8]

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4 "A migration system is understood as a group of countries linked by relatively large-scale and sustainable migration flows. These flows are the result of historic, cultural, demographic and political factors and lead to structural transformations in recipient and donor countries. Those transformations, in turn, reproduce the direction of migration flows and render those flows sustainable. The term 'Eurasian migration system' was suggested and justified by I.V. Ivakhnyuk" - Sergey Ryasantsev.

5 H. Chobanyan, Emigration and Diaspora of the Republic of Armenia (Florence, CARIM East, 2012). Available from www.carim-east.eu/media/exno/Explanatory%20Notes_2012-30.pdf

6 European Commission, Implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy in Armenia. Progress in 2014 and recommendations for actions (Brussels, 2015). Available from https://eeas.europa.eu/enp/pdf/2015/armenia-enp-report-2015_en.pdf

7 A. Devillard, Labor migration in Armenia: Existing trends and policy options. Report on needs assessment of labor migration management in Armenia (Yerevan, IOM, 2012). Available from https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/labour_migration_in_armenia_en.pdf

8 P. Gois, Report on Household Survey on Migration in Armenia (Yerevan, IOM, 2014). Available from http://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/household_survey_eng.pdf

Table 1.   Percentage and location of the Armenian labour migrant population

Country of destination	Percentage (%) of the Armenian labour migrant population
Russian Federation	90.6
Nagorno-Karabakh (NK)	1.3
France	1.2
United States	0.8
Spain	0.8
Ukraine	0.6
Germany	0.6
Poland	0.4
Islamic Republic of Iran	0.4
Turkey	0.4
Georgia	0.3
Belgium	0.2
Brazil	0.1

In most cases, labour migration from Armenia is temporary—migrant workers stay abroad for less than a year. This scheme (a circular migration pattern, where the migration experience is repeated) is relevant for 94 per cent of all migrants. Only 3 per cent leave the country with the purpose to permanently settle abroad; 2 per cent leave to study abroad.[9] In most cases, migrant workers are hired for seasonal or otherwise fixed-duration assignments in the construction sector.

The rate of external migration flow is relatively high, which highlights the importance of this research. Moreover, the dynamics of this phenomenon deserve more attention: in 2006, labour migration was estimated at 60,000 − 81,000 of the entire Armenian population. According to IOM's household survey, this figure had increased to 224,000 in 2014.[10]

3.2. The sociodemographic profile of Armenian labour migration

Understanding target audiences and knowing how to effectively reach them is vital for any informational activities. To ensure that the information provided to migrants is appropriate and that all communication is conducted effectively, an audience analysis needs to be performed. An analysis of the sociodemographic characteristics of Armenian labour migrants would help us to understand the most useful and efficient information and methods for delivery.

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9   A. Devillard 2012. Op. Cit.

10 P. Gois 2014. Op. Cit.

Table 2. The sociodemographic profile of migrant workers[11]

Characteristic	Value	Comments
Age	20—50 years old.	This represents the most active age group both in terms of mobility and labour potential.
Sex	Male. According to experts' estimation, females form only 6—18% of the migrant population.	Everybody agrees that labour migration in Armenia is strongly dominated by men. This runs contrary to global labour migration flows, which are traditionally dominated by women.
Education	In general, the educational level is medium. The majority of labour migrants (up to 70%) has received secondary education.	Around 20% of Armenian emigrants have tertiary education; therefore information should be addressed to a less educated audience. Low-skilled migrants with up to secondary education constitute 49.8% of total emigrants. Messages should be crafted in simple, comprehensible language to reach the widest target audience.
Skills	Law skilled (49,8 %) and medium skilled (23.9%) workers prevail.	A significant number of skilled workers are not employed in their area of expertise and are, therefore, underemployed.[12]
Occupation	Employment in construction represents 57—77% of occupations abroad, mostly in the Russian Federation.	In addition to the construction sector of the Russian labour market, high migration rates also apply to transport, electric and electronic engineering, agronomy, health, and education. Most are employed in private companies (50%) or in individual labour activities (22%). Only 19% work in the public sector.

11 Ibid.; P. Gois 2014, Op. Cit.; G. Poghosyan, Armenian Migration (Yerevan, Europrint, 2014); T. Galkina, Contemporary Migration and Traditional Diasporas in Russia: The Case of the Armenians in Moscow (Migracijske I etnicketeme 22:1—2 (p181—193), Moscow, 2006).

12 Some researchers provide alternative data on this issue. Poghosyan (2014) argues that, asked whether their occupation abroad corresponded with their level of education and professional skills, the majority of the returnees from Moscow and other destinations gave positive answers of 61.6 and 63.4 per cent respectively. However, when providing information for migrants, the worst scenario should always be mentioned and considered.

3.3. Policy and existing infrastructure

Recent Armenian migration policy has been designed to discourage emigration; this is understandable considering that, for Armenia, the main historical trend of the 1990s was depopulation.[13] Moreover, official Armenian migration policy considers emigration as a drain on educational, scientific and cultural potential and a threat to the country's national security.[14] However, realities dictate a more flexible approach towards migration management.

> "...If people have to leave and they have no alternative, they must make sure where, what kind of job and under what conditions they will be doing it."[15]
>
> *Ruben Yeganyan,*
> *Demographer*

External labour migration is an issue for Armenia, both in terms of its scale and negative influence on all aspects of Armenian life. This influence, however, does also have positive effects. Firstly, as with any sending country, external migration arises as a response to a lack of employment and relieves the pressure on the local labour market for those who do not migrate, thus helping achieve balance in the local labour market. Secondly, Armenian migrant workers are not the final beneficiaries of this process. Improvements in living standards of their households in Armenia are the most obvious positive effect of labour migration. Money earned in other countries is sent to families at home, and used by migrants' households to purchase consumer goods and property, or to make investments in human capital and business.

The positive effects of migration can be significantly increased if supported and developed by the State. Enhancing social and economic opportunities and protecting migrants' rights are regular agenda for countries of origin. This coincides with the principles of Armenian migration policy, i.e. to take specific steps to integrate Armenia into the international labour market in a civilized manner[16] and to protect the rights and interests of Armenian citizens abroad.[17] The Armenia Development Strategy (2014−2025) mostly complements these principles, prioritizing employment, human capital development, improved social protection systems, and the institutional modernization of public administration and governance.[18]

These priorities and concrete actions have been incorporated into Armenian strategic policy documents on migration management.[19] Some focus on information dissemination in particular:

 ⮑ Campaigning on the procedure and terms of employment of Armenian nationals in host countries, and advocating for orderly labour conditions

13 G. Poghosyan 2014. Op Cit.

14 Concept for the Policy of State Regulation of Migration in the Republic of Armenia (adopted in 2010).

15 Migration Concerns: Despite negative economic outlook in Russia, most Armenian migrants still have no alternative - Armenia Now. 03 February 2015 https://armenianow.com/society/60293/armenia_migra-tion_problems_demography

16 Concept for the Policy of State Regulation of Migration in the Republic of Armenia (adopted in 2010).

17 Ibid.

18 Armenia Development Strategy, Annex to RA Government Decree # 442-N, 27 March 2014.

19 Concept for the Policy of State Regulation of Migration in the Republic of Armenia; 2012–2016 Action Plan for Implementation of the Concept for the Policy of State Regulation of Migration in the Republic of Armenia

in said countries. The purpose of this is to deliver hotline consulting services, publish leaflets, activate contact with mass media, and deepen cooperation with non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

⮑ Developing information exchange mechanisms between State bodies responsible for labour migration and mediator companies.

⮑ Regularly providing information to mediator companies on sociocultural conditions, State labour markets, and target countries' legislation governing labour migration and any changes to it.

⮑ Studying the level of awareness among and sources of information available to Armenian citizens on procedures and conditions of labour abroad.

⮑ Organizing discussions/roundtables among representatives of NGOs, media, mediator organizations, and local and territorial employment centres to raise awareness levels among the population on the procedures and conditions of labour abroad in an effective manner.

⮑ Conducting awareness-raising activities about foreign labour markets, and about how to protect the rights and interests of Armenian citizens in foreign countries (through TV, print media, hotline telephone services, internet websites, information booklets, etc.).

⮑ Organizing regular seminars for NGOs on changes to labour conditions abroad and how to best protect migrants' rights and interests.

⮑ Organizing a tender for NGOs to carry out consultation programmes on legislation and labour conditions for Armenian citizens in host/destination countries.

⮑ Organizing a competition for media outlets to conduct information campaigns aimed at Armenian citizens on legislation and labour conditions in host/destination countries.

These information dissemination and consultation strategies, as well as information about employment opportunities, are being developed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. These services are expected to be provided by a system of Migration Resource Centres (MRC). The first MRC was established in 2006 and has operated as a division within the International Organization for Migration (IOM). MRCs were then made operational in Yerevan and 6 regions of Armenia . In 2010, the responsibility for MRCs was transferred to the State Employment Service under the Armenian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. MRC development in Armenia has continued as a part of a social services reform package.

Generally, MRCs should provide the population with migration-related information in accordance with the IOM's MRC model. Potential and returned migrants will be provided with information on travel and visa procedures, legislation and employment opportunities in host countries. They will also receive training to prepare them for employment and life abroad.[20]

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is now working on incorporating 51 branches of the State Employment Agency (SEA) and other social services into a system of Integrated Social Services Resource Centres (ISSRCs).[21] ISSRCs will take on responsibilities for labour-migration management. In accordance with the new law on labour adopted in 2014, the ministry has designed technical terms for a labour information system ("Gorts"). This

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20 IOM, Referral Guide for Reintegration of Returnees in Armenia (Yerevan, 2013). Available from https://publications.iom.int/system/files/reintegration_referral_guide_eng.pdf

21 http://esocial.am/en/innersocialcenterofficeru

will list vacancies, job seekers, contracted migrants, and returned migrants, as well as provide a job fair platform. All ISSRCs will be equipped with this system. Pre-departure orientation information should be uploaded to this system and regularly updated. The World Bank will provide a loan to finance this work, which should be completed by the end of 2016.

At the moment, however, there is no full understanding of standard operation procedures and management of migration divisions within ISSRCs. The most urgent needs at this stage are:

⮞ Development of standard informational modules for the information system.

⮞ Development of a modus operandi for work with overseas employers (e.g. risk assessment, analysis of migrants' perspectives in a destination country). Armenian labour legislation should include standards for overseas employers.

⮞ Collection of information on destination countries by partners, e.g. employment services of destination countries and employers. It is easier to work with countries with which Armenia has bilateral agreements or other types of cooperation, especially within the framework of EaEU.

⮞ ISSRC staff should be trained to:

⤷ Enter and update information into the ISSRC database following individual consultations;

⤷ Conduct individual consultations for migrants according to their destination, needs, and field of labour;

⤷ Follow up with job seekers after entering them into the system.

3.4. Armenia as a part of the Eurasian Economic Union migration system

The majority of Armenian migrants choose the Russian Federation as a destination country. This traditional migration pattern is expected to continue for the foreseeable future. The two States are closely interrelated economically and socially, have historical ties and a large diaspora, and share cordial aspects of their environments (i.e. language, religion, and former common territory). Finally, Armenian labour migration has developed within the Eurasian migration system for more than 20 years. This period of time shows that traditional migration schemes, which formed during the dissolution of the Soviet Union, are still attractive.

On 2 January 2015 Armenia joined the EaEU,[22] forming a common labour market with the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, Belarus and, later, Kyrgyzstan. A number of experts have stated that,

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22 Treaty on the Accession of the Republic of Armenia to the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union of 29 May 2014. Available from https://docs.eaeunion.org/docs/en-us/0007297/itia_11102014

from a developmental perspective,[23] particularly with regard to migration policy and Armenian external labour migration trends, that this accession is a shrewd move. These analysts claim that Armenia's accession to EaEU opens up a "window of opportunities",[24] especially when taking Turkey and Azerbaijan's economic blockade of Armenia into account. This blockade negatively affects the internationalization of economic relations and mobility of human resources. Some estimate that Armenia's EaEU accession has the potential to provide remittance growth of up to USD 40 million a year.[25] However, this figure is questionable when bearing in mind the recent slowdown in the Russian economy.

> "Since the beginning of this year, the economies of our states have begun full-scale cooperation in the new realities and circumstances... Work should be focused on increasing trade and investment flows, strengthening business ties, institutions of the EaEU and, finally, achieving a higher level of integration of our economies."
>
> *The President of the Republic of Armenia,*
> *Serzh Sargsyan* [26]

The EaEU treaty takes management of migration processes to a new qualitative level. The agreement provides an opportunity for the free movement of goods, people, services, and capital.[27] The most important provision for Armenian migrant workers is that they are not required to obtain any authorization to work on the territory of the union. Governments may not implement protectionist restrictions on workers from Member States, and employers are allowed to hire workers without special permission. Workers may stay in the host country as long as they have a valid employment contract. Without a contract, they are limited to stays of 90 days.[28]

Another favourable treaty provision is on the social insurance of migrant workers in the EaEU. This is offered under the same terms and conditions as for nationals of the State of employment. The treaty says that migrant workers from State parties to the treaty and members of their families have the right to receive free emergency medical assistance (in the event of an emergency and in urgent conditions) under the same terms and conditions as nationals of the State of employment.

An important achievement of the treaty is the codification of the right for children living together with migrants to attend pre-school institutions and receive education in accordance with the law of the destination State.

The treaty settles issues of direct recognition of educational documents without carrying out any additional procedures, and the recognition procedure for graduate degrees and titles.

23 A. Tavadyan et al., Armenia and the Customs Union: impact of economic integration (Saint Petersburg, EDB Centre for Integration Studies, 2013). Available from www.noravank.am/upload/pdf/doklad_20_en_preview.pdf

24 S. Ryazantsev et al, The Specificity of the Differential Regulation of Economic Integration in the Context of Contemporary Labor Migration(Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences 6:3, 2015).

25 Ibid.

26 S. Sidorski (ed.), EaEU Industrial Policy: from its Creation to the first results (Moscow, EEC, 2015). Available from http://eec.eaeunion.org/ru/Documents/Industrial_eng.pdf

27 Article 4 of the Treaty.

28 Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union, chapter XXVi, Labour Migration, art.97 (9).

> "Providing free movement of labour is one of the fundamental functioning principles of any economic union. However, lifting registration barriers and simplifying regulatory approvals for labour force migration between countries of the Common Economic Space and the Eurasian Economic Union could not be effective unless social guarantees are to be provided."
>
> *Stepan Titov, World Bank senior economist and MIRPAL Programme Head* [29]

However, interactions within EaEU are still complicated, and theory does not always coincide with reality. A principal concern is that, both in the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan, the low-skilled migrant labour market has long operated in the shadows. For example, the EaEU treaty requires migrants to sign a contract with an employer to stay in a host country beyond 90 days. However, for low-skilled migrants, signing contracts has not been a traditional part of working arrangements in the Russian Federation or Kazakhstan. Many employers have, traditionally, been reluctant to sign contracts and thus formalize working relationships in a way that obligates them to pay taxes and social insurance. The shadow schemes are even more typical for Kazakhstan, where the available quota for low-skilled workers has long been far below labour market needs.[30]

Other difficulties faced by Armenian migrants seeking employment within EaEU, particularly the Russian Federation, include the current slowdown in the economic growth across EaEU countries and the instability of the Russian rouble.

3.5. Key problems faced by Armenian labour migrants

Problems migrants face in destination countries depend on the nature of immigration, migrants' status (regular or irregular, qualified or unqualified, male or female, ethnic origin, nationality, etc.) and the circumstances and policies of the destination country (economic and political situation, civil laws, concrete legislation regulating migration, corruption, popular perceptions of migrants, etc.). Of course, all migrants face problems simply due to their alien status.

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29 Labor Migrants' Pension Mobility as a Symbol of Efficient Functioning of the Emerging Eurasian Economic Union. World Bank, 21 July 2014. www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2014/07/21/labor-migrants-pension-mobility-as-a-symbol-of-efficient-functioning-of-the-emerging-eurasian-economic-union

30 C. Schenk, Labor Migration in the Eurasian Union: Will Freedom of Movement Trump Domestic Controls? (PONARS Eurasia, Washington, D.C., 2015). Available from www.ponarseurasia.org/memo/labor-migration-eurasian-union-will-freedom-movement-trump

> "Only a very few of us had valid passports or visas. When the police caught us, we were thrown into jail and deported. Without papers we could not work legally or stay in one place for long. We were perpetually on the move.
> In every town we stopped at the post office, hoping to find letters from friends and relatives. On the roads we scrutinized every wall for messages from those who had passed through before us: addresses, warnings, words of advice. The walls were our newspapers and bulletin boards."
>
> *Erich Maria Remarque,*
> *Prologue to Shadows in Paradise*

These problems include legalization of stay and searching for work, language,[31] and isolation, as they are "perpetually on the move". Armenians can be considered as exceptions to this rule due to relative preferences in obtaining legal immigration status and, for the most part, satisfactory knowledge of the language of the main destination — Russian.[32] However, many other difficulties still remain, such as access to healthcare and housing, a lack of information about rights and responsibilities in the destination country, discriminatory attitudes among local authorities, and inhibitors to the growth of businesses.[33]

The latest survey conducted by IOM and the Armenian State Employment Agency in late 2015 of returnee labour migrants (mainly from the Russian Federation) highlights questions which arouse considerable interest among Armenians abroad:
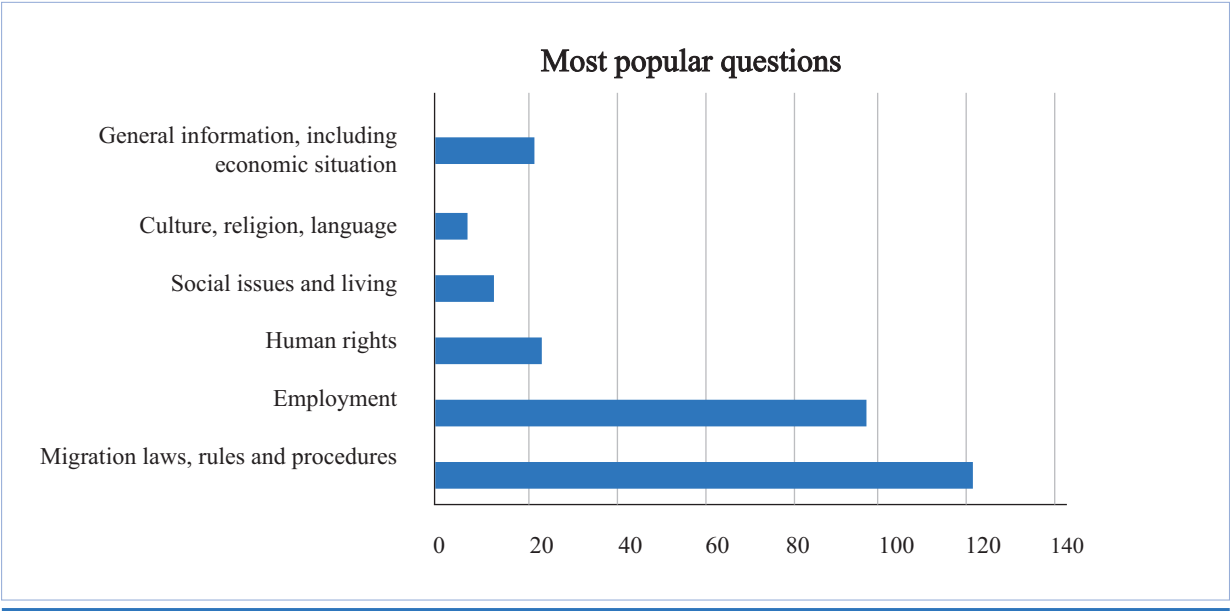
31 "I had arrived a few months before on a freighter from Lisbon and knew little English–it was as though I had been dropped deaf and dumb from another planet." Erich Maria Remarque.

32 The author interviewed labour migrants in the Russian language for 6 months. There were no reported problems with Armenians in contrast to representatives from other migrant groups from visa-free countries.

33 G. Poghosyan 2014. Op. Cit.

The absence of relevant information leads to two common problems. The first is false expectations. All migrants encounter psychological difficulties assimilating into a new environment. They usually suffer an emotional reaction or even shock when unable to understand and predict what is going on. This shock is aroused by uncertainty about living standards and expectations and, therefore by the difficulty in controlling and predicting the future. In this respect, pre-departure information can serve as a method to manage expectations.[34]

The second problem is that a lack of knowledge can lead migrants into a situation where they can be unsuspectingly cheated or tricked. In this case, pre-departure information can warn them in advance about the risks of migration and help to avoid labour exploitation and trafficking.

When confronted with a problem, migrants generally seek help from local citizens whom they already know (up to 90%[35]), rather than local authorities, the Armenian embassy, human rights organizations, or even the Armenian Church.[36] Usually, migrants' profound distrust of State bodies prevents them from turning to officials or public organizations; in addition, they may not even know any institution that would be able to help them.

3.6. Re-entry ban

With regard to the Russian Federation, another potential threat is the use of blacklists to restrict certain migrants from entry from three to five years. As a measure to control and limit irregular migration, Russian authorities have tightened law enforcement by widening the grounds for re-entry bans for foreign nationals who have repeatedly breached Russian laws and administrative regulations. In recent years, the number of migrants who have been placed on blacklists as a result of administrative violations has grown. The situation is getting worse due to the unforeseen character of the re-entry bans. As there was (and still is) no automatic mechanism for informing "offenders" that they had been banned from re-entering the Russian Federation; therefore, a lot of migrants simply do not know about their re-entry bans. Many of them find out about their ban when they are turned down at Russian airports by border guards, after having made an expensive trip to the Russian Federation. The EaEU treaty does not address the handling of blacklisted migrants.

A number of measures are necessary to decrease the negative effect of blacklisting at the national level:

⮞ Operational measures, such as building knowledge of Russian laws and regulations to prevent re-entry bans and enhancing early-warning mechanisms to inform migrant workers with re-entry bans about their status before they leave for the Russian Federation;

⮞ Policy-level measures, such as promoting cooperation among the migration authorities of the two States.

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34 "Seek to prevent disappointment by establishing in advance what can realistically be achieved or delivered by a project, undertaking, course of action, etc." www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/manage-expectations

35 IOM, Assessment of labor market potential in Armenia (Yerevan, 2011). Available from https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/labour_market_potential_english.pdf

36 G. Poghosyan 2014. Op. Cit.

Another possible way forward is to develop new markets for Armenian labour, for example in Kazakhstan. Broader migration geography provides opportunities for better maneuver ability. Where labour does not match demand in one receiving State, it can be redirected to another. Migrants who are restricted from entering the Russian Federation, but still have the relevant skills and migration intentions, could choose Kazakhstan as their destination.

3.7. Displaced populations from Syrian Arab Republic[37]

According to Armenia's Foreign Ministry in 2016 the country continued to meet her commitments under the 1951 Refugee Convention and granted asylum to all those who qualify under Article 1 of the Convention and Article 6 of the Law on Refugees and Asylum.

Amended provisions of the Law on Refugees and Asylum adopted in December 2015 brought the rights of refugees and persons seeking asylum inconformity with European standards. Armenia closely cooperated with UNHCR in preparing these legal amendments.

As a hosting/destination country, Armenia grants refugees civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights similar to those enjoyed by her citizens. Refugees may also become naturalized citizens. UNHCR called naturalization process in Armenia as "one of the most successful voluntary naturalizations of refugees..."

The war in the Syrian Arab Republic continues to devastate the nation and forces millions out of their native country and into protracted displacement, making it one of the worst humanitarian crises in modern history.

Armenia expressed concern over the issue of protection of ethnic and religious minorities in the Syrian Arab Republic, including the Armenian community, on many occasions and in various formats; these people found themselves in extremely vulnerable situation and became primary targets of the attacks.

About 20,000 persons displaced during the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic have sought protection in Armenia. This wave of displacement is yet another challenge for the country which is already hosting and integrating hundreds of thousands of refugees from Azerbaijan and thousands of refugees displaced not too long ago from Iraq.

Armenia follows the principle of non-refoulement, and from the first days of arrival of refugees the country has adopted a policy aimed at integrating refugees into the society, current economic and social difficulties notwithstanding. The Government of Armenia offers three options: (1) naturalization through a simplified procedure made possible through amended citizenship law allowing Syrian nationals of Armenian descent to receive passports from consulates and embassies; (2) accelerated asylum procedures and (3) preferential treatment in acquiring short, mid- and long-term residence permits.

All these efforts however still leave some priority gaps such as addressing housing, employment, health and education needs of refugees.

Findings of a "Study on Migration Related Considerations of Displaced Syrian Population"[38] agree with these considerations while identifying a noteworthy trend. This trend suggests that after arriving in Armenia, persons displaced from the Syrian Arab Republic often move to other countries, mostly for employment considerations and in search of greater financial stability and independence. In view of this trend, pre-departure orientation services should be made available in Armenia to offer this category of migrants an opportunity to address and prevent challenges like exploitation, trafficking, rights violation, and family separation they may encounter in their next migration project.

The social-demographic characteristics of displaced Syrians who plan to migrate after

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37 This section is based on the data provided by 2015 UNHCR survey.

38 Study on Migration Related Considerations of Displaced Syrian Population/Assessment Report/UNHCR, IOM 2015/ http://un.am/up/library/Study_migration_syrians-2015.pdf

Other countries 8%

Gulf States 17%

Europe 17%

Russian Federation 13%

Syrian Arab Republic 45%
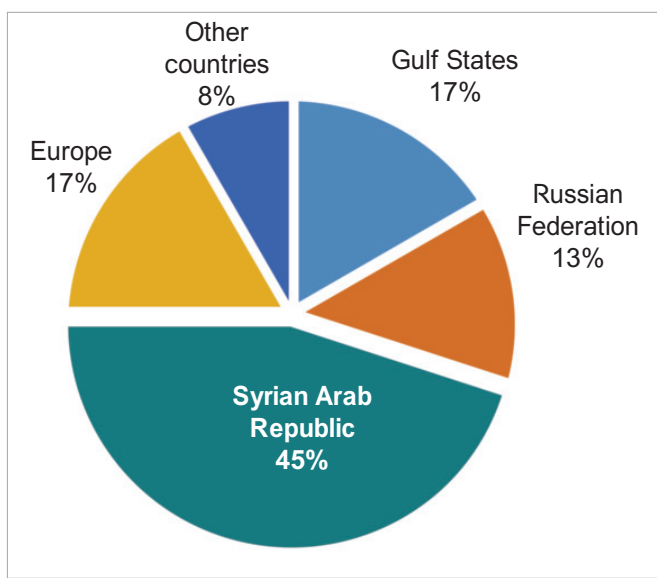
arriving in Armenia are generally similar to those of local Armenians. These migrants may be considered a young group: 68.3 per cent are aged 25–45 and 3.4 per cent are aged 18–25. The group is entirely male (most of them married), and they tend to travel alone (91.7%). Only 8.3 per cent of these labour migrants travel with their families in tow.

The choice of next destinations, mostly Persian Gulf States, is easily explained. This choice is informed by the migrants' knowledge of Arabic and business environment in these countries. Labour migration to the Gulf States can indeed be successful if a migrant has high qualifications and experience, as well as close relatives or friends who can act as references.

Labour migration of displaced Syrians to the Russian Federation is seasonal. About 13 per cent of all respondents of the UNHCR survey had already worked in the Russian Federation or CIS countries, and intended to repeat this experience. Some of them had studied in Armenia during Soviet times; others had visited Armenia several times and had relatives or friends who were able to help them find employment. Local connections helped them join teams that leave for the Russian Federation or CIS for seasonal unskilled employment. They do not usually speak the Russian Federation (or have a very basic knowledge of the language), are not aware of rules and regulations, and are completely dependent on their leader and other team members, i.e. relatives, partners and friends. These migrants have expressed interest in Russian language training before the next labour migration season.

Another 15 per cent of respondents of the survey preferred European countries, such as Sweden (90% of respondents) and Germany (10%).

In general, difficulties faced by labour migrants from displaced Syrian populations while working abroad match typical challenges faced by a broader group of Armenian labour migrants: administrative hurdles i.e. temporary registration and migration regulations, finding work, i.e. signing contracts and arranging payments, and settlement issues like accommodation, health care, and education.

4. Pre-departure orientation: content and methods of delivery

4.1. The main types of information to be delivered

Pre-departure measures for migrant workers in their country of origin can address two main objectives. The first is information, such as:

⮑ Instructions on migration procedures and basic information about the destination country, such as climate, geography, history, and the social, ethnic and religious composition of the host society and its political system;

⮑ Accommodation, public transport, the banking system, remittances, etc.

⮑ Labour market and labour employment procedures.

The second is more proactive and suggests measures to match labour market needs with skills (job matching). This approach includes developing migrants' skills (professional and soft skills) and recognizing skills and competences. However, this needs significant time, resources and effort at the national (inter-agency cooperation) and international (cooperation agreements between countries of destination and origin) level. This requires thorough studies of legal bases and in-depth long-term planning and programming. Job-matching measures should be more tailored to individuals.

Generally, the Government of Armenia should take three points of action into account: (1) increasing the availability of information, regular research on and analysis of foreign labour markets and national labour capacities; (2) developing flexible, specific measures to improve both foreign employers' and migrants' access to information; and (3) ensuring that the rights of migrants and employers are observed and protected.

Soft skills

Soft skills are deemed very important in the process of preparing migrants for their new life in a destination country, being instrumental for integration irrespective of migrant category.

These skills include critical thinking, interpersonal and communication skills, the ability to create networks and work in teams, problem solving, team management and communication, the ability to learn and adapt, and coping and self-management skills.

On the one hand, soft skills help migrants to respond effectively to situations they encounter in the country of destination. Properly managed expectations can protect against anxiety and depression upon arrival, and lead to faster and more efficient access to, and use of, important services.

A.Chindea, Headstart to Integration: A Global Review of Pre-departure Support Measures for Migrants (Budapest, IOM, 2015)

- Market assessment

The first issue in job matching is deciding whether there is genuine need for migrant workers and, if so, where they are needed. Data and research play a crucial role.

The long-term prospects of key labour markets need to be understood for strategic planning. For example, according to the most recent European projections, the working age EU population will decrease by about 21.7 million (6.5%) over the next 20 years.[39] In Canada, the Canadian Occupational Projection System estimates a total of 6.5 million job openings over the next ten years.[40] The decrease of labour demand in the main destination, the Russian Federation, as a result of the current financial crisis, demands the consideration of migration flow diversification.

Assessing potential labour markets cannot be limited to simply finding possible destinations. In a globalized world, developed countries compete for labour; however, labour source States should make efforts to offer competitive workers. Data on high-demand migrant profiles should be gathered and analysed, e.g. the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training[41] (Cedefop) regularly monitors current and future skills needs in Europe. Currently it states that there is an over-supply of low-skilled workers, and that demand for medium-level qualifications is higher. In Canada, two thirds of occupations usually require post-secondary education.[42] Therefore, the enhancement of potential migrants' skills, through training and educational programmes, would substantially increase their competitiveness in labour markets.

- ▪ Matching the labour force and job vacancies

To promote high-quality matching of available labour skills and jobs, reliable information and timely access are a necessity. Therefore, databases on migrants should be developed.

Electronic databases of job seekers' profiles would allow for effective matching of labour demand and supply by facilitating reliable information exchange between key actors in the labour market. These databases should offer a professional, universal and comprehensive interface to subscribers on both sides, enabling quick and consistent communication a round job seekers' profiles. Indeed, databases could target both potential labour migrants and employers wishing to recruit from abroad.

Databases should subsequently be made available to employers and recruitment agencies in the countries of destination, putting migrants more directly in contact with employers. Vacancies should entail concrete requirements, and be regularly updated and available to potential candidates. Databases should allow for the upload of individual profiles of jobseekers, including their personal data and contacts, qualification, and professional experience. If resources and staffing permit, assistance in actual job placement abroad, as well as the acceptance of concrete job offers and verification of employment contracts, could be provided. Moreover, establishing online tools to assess the language and general skills and competences of candidates is considered good practice.

Private employment agencies (PEAs) could participate in the process by subscribing to State databases, creating their own segments, or providing their own web resources. The European EURES job portal[43] provides tools for potential migrants to search for employment, training and scholarships, as well as facilities for employers to search for employees. In the Russian Federation, one of the oldest companies providing various services for both migrants and employers, OST Ltd.[44] is now launching an electronic resource.[45]

39 OECD/EU, Matching Economic Migration with Labour Market Needs (Paris, 2014). Available from www.eesc.europa.eu/resources/docs/oecd-2014---matching-economic-migration-with-labour-market-needs.pdf

40 "Canadian Occupational Projection System (COPS) - 2015 to 2024 projections". Government of Canada, 23 March 2016. http://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset/e80851b8-de68-43bd-a85c-c72e1b3a3890

41 www.cedefop.europa.eu

42 OECD/EU, 2014. Op. Cit.

43 https://ec.europa.eu/eures/public/homepage

44 http://ostltd.ru/

45 http://ostltd.ru/full-jobs-migrant

- ▪ Follow-up and Cooperation

The main task of the State in job matching is not just providing potential migrants with lists of vacancies in destination countries, but protecting their rights by ensuring that the offered job is decent, adequately paid, and provided by reliable, scrupulous employers.

In countries of destination, governmental agencies primarily play an oversight role for foreign recruitment; private sector organizations, and sometimes civil society organizations, are involved in implementation. Both of these roles should be taken into account and addressed accordingly.

Cooperation with governmental agencies can often be included in bilateral agreements. Often, these agreements are concerned with broader topics, such as promoting economic cooperation between countries of destination and origin. More specific details focus on labour migration, with the agreements formalizing each side's commitment to ensuring that migration takes place in accordance with agreed principles and procedures. Furthermore, bilateral agreements may include references to the protection of migrant workers' rights, remuneration, social security entitlements, etc.

Less formal documents are known as memoranda of understanding (MoUs). There are also informal practical arrangements, for example between national employment agencies in the countries of origin and destination. These tools are often not legally binding; however, their effectiveness is instead determined more by how they are implemented and enforced in practice.[46] In some cases, trilateral agreements can be concluded with the participation of IOM or other international agencies to guarantee compliance with international standards. Such an approach has been tested by IOM in Central Asia and has proven effective.

At the operational level, countries of origin could aim to reach direct agreements with employers in receiving countries simultaneously to provide concrete vacancies to potential candidates.

The participation of PEAs from countries of destination could be also incorporated into the design of job-matching measures, as they often have first-hand access to employers. However, when using PEA services, it is very important to check their reliability. This requires verification of their credentials to ensure that they follow ethical recruitment practices. Monitoring mechanisms should be considered from the perspective of the sending party even for reliable recruitment agencies or employers. If a problem occurs in a destination country (for example, a pay dispute) a worker should have the possibility to raise the issue with the sending agency, which could then follow up directly with the employer. Employment conditions should be monitored until labour migrant receives his/her first salary.

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46 A. Chindea, 2015. Op. Cit.

Table 3.   Types of pre-departure orientation information

Type	Scope	Objectives	Sources
General information about the destination country	- Country: its history, population and geography; - The benefits and challenges of working in the specific country for migrant workers; - Political structure; - Language; - Cultural customs and living in the country, communicating with and greeting people, dress and attire in public places, respect for religious or ethnic practices, etc.	Empowers migrants to be able to make informed decisions and choices on the relevant destination related to their migration plans.	The targeted information usually canbe extracted from manuals prepared for newcomers, e.g. http://testcons.ru/
Legal migration and travel information	- Legal migration procedures (entry, length of stay); - Documents needed; - Visa information where appropriate; - Risks of irregular migration, human trafficking and illegal Recruitment, existing prevention mechanisms.	Empowers migrants to be able to prepare for travel.	Official information from corresponding sate agencies: immigration and border guards, customs, MFA, e.g. www.fms.gov.ru/ or http://xn—b1ab2a0a.xn—b1aew.xn—p1ai/
Living	- Banking and finance, including requirements for opening a bank account; - Rental accommodation and costs; - Transport links, costs of transport and how to use public transport; - Costs of living for items, including food and clothing, and advice on managing budgets; - Communications and Internet services.	Helps migrants to integrate into their new place of residence.	Official information provided by service providers, preferably State entities, e.g. www.sberbank.ru/ru/person http://rzd.ru/ www.mts.ru

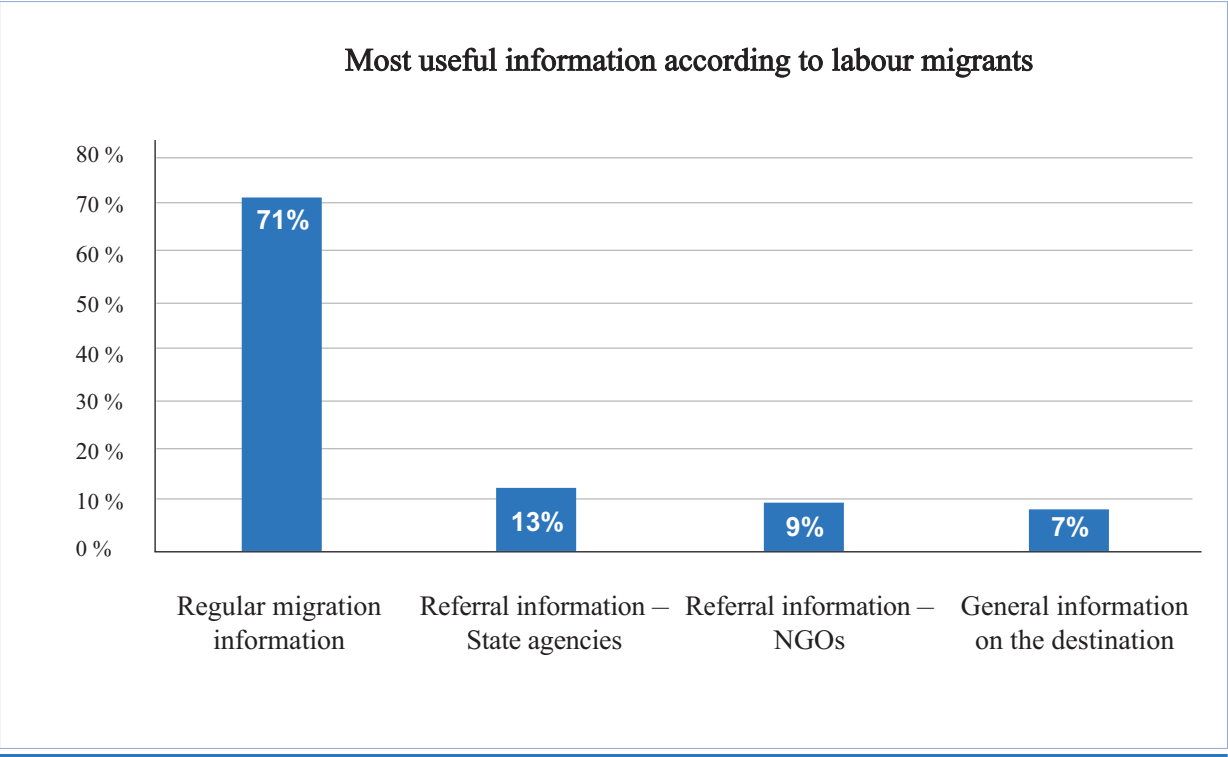| Type	Scope	Objectives	Sources
Social services	- Access to school and university education for children, including fee requirements; - Access to child care and services for pre-school children; - Access to health care.	Helps migrants to integrate into new place of residence. Provides support services for newcomers.	NGOs, migrant associations, diaspora communities, trade unions, e.g. www.profmigr.com
Protection mechanisms	- Migrants' rights and protection mechanisms, including legal redress; - Access to law-enforcement agencies; - Access to social protection services; - Access to specific State and non-State services for migrants at risk or who have experienced exploitation (national consulates and embassies, NGOs, migrant associations, diaspora communities, trade unions and migrant information facilities); - Psychosocial support services,[47] such as hotlines and remedies for migrants who have experienced discrimination, racism, hate crimes, gender-based violence, etc.	Provides services for migrants at risk or who have experienced exploitation to enable them to protect themselves. Provides information and awareness about the dangers of human trafficking and exploitation, including extreme forms of exploitation, such as trafficking for forced labour and sexual exploitation.	Law enforcement, international organizations, NGOs, migrant associations, diaspora communities, e.g. http://moscow.iom.int/russian/ractivities_countertrafficking_information.html https://mvd.ru/contacts/sites
Social services		Helps migrants to integrate into new place of residence.	NGOs, migrant associations, diaspora communities, trade unions, e.g.

Type	Scope	Objectives	Sources
Employment[48]	- Safe recruitment, the legal aspects of entering into labour contracts; - Labour and employment conditions; - Job opportunities and current vacancies abroad; - Knowledge of rights and obligations related to employment and labour law (national and international laws and standards on decent work, social protection, protection against exploitation); - Information on employment contracts, including all relevant factors (e.g. place of employment, position and job title, pay, working hours, overtime pay, probationary period, medical and social security benefits, taxation); - Contractual rights; - Information about how to address employment-related disputes, for example, if an employer does not honour a contract, fails to pay a salary, or exploits a worker.	Empowers migrants to seek employment that guarantees decent work, pay and conditions of employment, opportunities for skills and professional development. Provides information about conditions in the country of destination when signing an employment contract. Provides for concrete vacancies.	Job search portals, recruitment companies, tailored legal resources, e.g. www.superjob.ru www.ostltd.ru

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47 This is particularly important as many migrants, particularly on arrival in a new country, may experience social isolation, stress from being away from family and social networks, and difficulties coping with integration.

48 Professional consultation is recommended.

Pre-departure information, orientation and advice need to be tailored to the individual needs of migrants, according to their specific backgrounds. These include country of origin and the country to which they plan to migrate, the sectors in which they plan to work, and other factors related to family circumstances, health and wellbeing. In addition, this information will be guide on how to deal with stress and culture shock on arrival in a new country.

The results of a recent survey conducted by IOM and State Employment Agency show that the majority of Armenian migrants with migration experience recognize the importance of information on legal migration procedures. Other points of interest include contact information of institutions, both State and non-State, which can provide support and help migrants in the destination country.

Most useful information according to labour migrants

Regular migration information	71%
Referral information — State agencies	13%
Referral information — NGOs	9%
General information on the destination	7%

4.2. Methods of delivery

There are a number of different ways through which information can be delivered, and they need to balanced against the needs of different groups of migrants. These can include:

➲ One-on-one consultations;

➲ Individual telephone information services and hotlines;

➲ Web-based information and online services;

➲ Outreach services provided in targeted locations such as colleges, schools or community centres;

➲ Mobile services provided in different locations, for example, in rural and remote areas;

➲ Referrals to other services and specialist agencies.

Telephone hotlines for migrants should be free of charge. These hotlines could also be set up in countries of destination to support incoming migrant workers. Hotlines should not only raise public awareness on various migration issues, but also provide individual consultation on specific requests.

The development of separate information packages on individual countries of destination, including links to relevant government bodies dealing with immigration, is strongly recommended. Exchange of information between migrants themselves can also contribute to elaborating migration plans, for which social media resources can be used.

It is important that information be provided in a clear and accessible way, and in a language that the potential migrant can understand. This will enable people to participate in an act of migration that results in a positive and enriching experience. As many migrant workers come from rural areas, it is important to ensure that they are also able to benefit from the provision of pre-departure information and assistance.

Pre-departure orientation training could focus on basic language skills, financial management, health counselling, human rights awareness, and the socioeconomic, political and cultural specificities, as well as main rules and practices, in the country of destination. Targeted professional formation for potential labour migrants would be better if provided by professional consultants; however, basic information and lists of vacancies could be made available through online resources.

Pre-departure consultations can be conducted by different institutions, such as MRCs, employment centres, and NGOs. These can provide general information and information on employment possibilities abroad. In the Armenian context, the Multifunctional Resources Centres (MfRC) system under development has good potential to lead this process.

However, promoting MfRC information provision is not easy. All research on Armenian migration shows that, in the majority of cases, the migration process is organized with the help of friends or relatives staying in the country of destination.[49] Up to 80 per cent of Armenian migrants have such a network.[50] Therefore, the diaspora is the main recognized channel of employment information[51] and protection. These conclusions are also valid for persons displaced from the Syrian Arab Republic.[52]
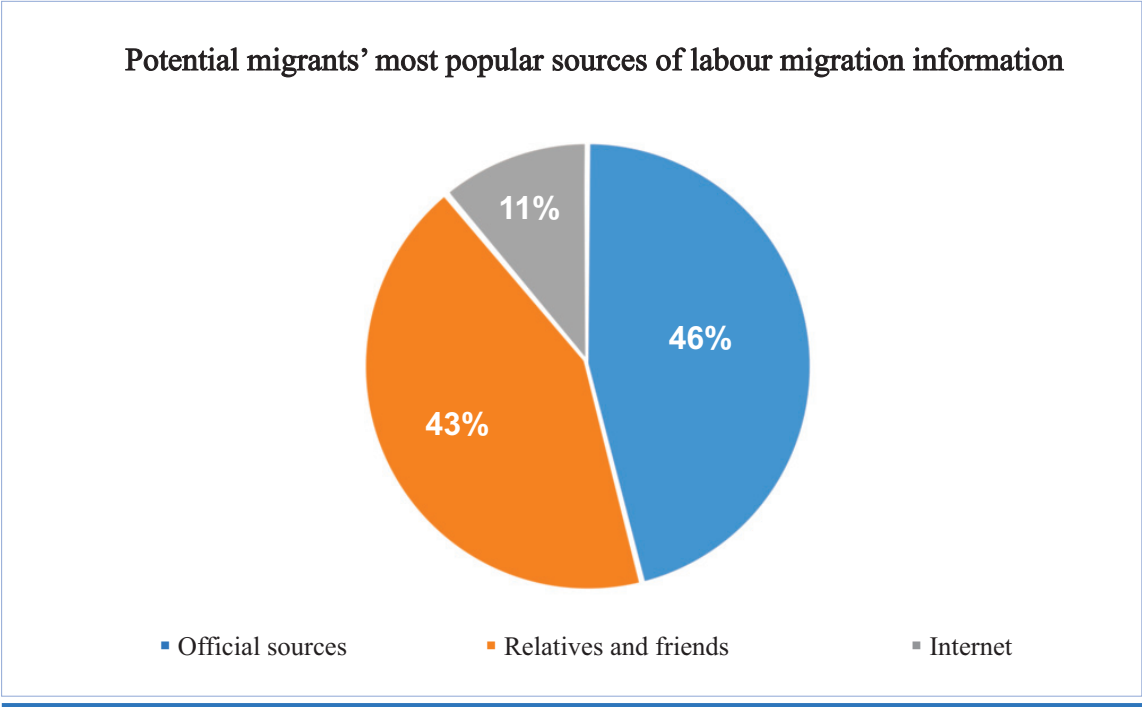
The recent survey conducted by IOM and State Employment Agency measured the interest of respondents in having different opportunities to find the information needed to plan and manage migration projects. Respondents were interested in having access to official information; this is cause for optimism with regard to state-run MfRCs acting as a pre-departure orientation system.

49 Al. Devillard, 2012, Op. Cit.

50 A. Aleksanyan, Labor Migration of Armenians into Russia: Problems and Prospects (Mir Rossii. Sotsialogiia. Etnologia 2:24, 2015). Available from http://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/labor-migration-of-armenians-into-russia-problems-and-prospects

51 P. Gois, 2014. Op. Cit.

52 As stated in UNHCR/IOM Assessment Report on Migration Related Considerations of Displaced Syrian Population; see section 3.7

Potential migrants' most popular sources of labour migration information

- ■ Official sources
- ■ Relatives and friends
- ■ Internet

Pre-departure orientation mechanisms could be made more successful through integration into national systems. Collecting information on safe migration and employment should be a continuous process and carried out on a wider scale, involving a larger number of stakeholders, including private and public sectors (with the State in the lead role). Migrants' high degree of confidence in official information is a strong basis for establishing and integrating this mechanism.

Table 4. Methods of information delivery

Active information services and advice:

Information provided in person, orally, in writing or via the Internet, as well as by signposting or client referral. Active information provision focuses on an individual seeking assistance about a specific issue or case. It requires a formulated approach that ensures a specific problem or issue is identified, examined and diagnosed, following which different options are provided to the client.

Type	Objective	Examples
Counselling		
Individual consultations	Individual consultation is the most efficient way of pre-departure orientation. It can be provided during personal applications of migrants to MRCs or other multifunctional resource centres. In this case, potential migrants can also benefit from more tailored assistance and be given an opportunity for one-on-one counselling. This delivery methodology is often used with travel-ready migrants.	IOM has substantial experience in running MRCs and migrant counselling. www.iom.tj/index.php/activities/migration-management/103-migrant-resource-centres
Pre-departure orientation seminars	Pre-departure orientation seminars are usually conducted within the framework of State or international programmes by State authorities or designated NGOs. Seminars can be designed as short (half day on average) training for migrants, equipping them with general information on migration realities and codes of conduct, country of destination profiles, employment opportunities, health and safety, financial literacy, and travel procedures.	This approach is widely and most successfully used by South Asian States like Sri Lanka, Philippines, and Bangladesh. www.poea.gov.ph/
Outreach sessions	This approach uses other organizations' premises to provide services to hard-to-reach groups.	Examples of outreach sessions include providing information services and advice to young people through a youth club, school or college settings.

Telephone hotlines	Hotlines provide confidential and anonymous services to migrants, including vulnerable migrants and victims of human trafficking, who are seeking help and information.	http://moscow.iom.int/russian/ractivities_countertrafficking_hotline.html
Web based channels		
Dedicated websites	Internet resources are widely used by potential migrants, as well as those who are already staying in the country of destination. They can provide general or specific information and be administrated by public agencies or non-governmental organizations. Thematic websites and targeted information are easily searchable online through popular search engines, using relevant tags.	State: www.fms.gov.ru, www.smsmta.am, http://russia.mfa.am/ru/ Non-State: http://moscow.iom.int/russian/, www.ialm.ru
Online communication tools, such as Skype	Skype or other similar applications specializing in video and voice call services are useful. Users can exchange texts, files and images, and create conference calls. These can be efficiently used by MfRCs to arrange distance communication between potential migrants and employers in destination countries.	IOM's Central Asian Regional Programme[53] successfully managed direct communications between sending agencies in the countries of origin (Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan) and employer counterparts in the countries of destination (Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation). Routine procedures included verification of migrants' skills over Skype.
Social media	Social media are a powerful tool for providing information; they are very popular among young migrants. They also allow migrants to share information and exchange personal experiences. Active use of social media and migrant-popular content is recommended for further dissemination of both official information and tailored advice.	https://web.facebook.com/portal4migrants/

Mobile applications	A promising communication method is outlined in section 5.	https://web.facebook.com/portal4migrants/ https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id= com.lexmobile.migrant, http://tutjdut.ru/

Passive information services and advice

Information that does not involve any interaction and includes general information contained in leaflets and other printed materials.

Information boards	Public information boards with background information listing services, working hours, etc. Particular subjects, like available vacancies, are useful if put up in MRCs.	
Printed information	Brochures and guides. However, printed leaflets, booklets and other materials lose relevance in the face of modern, web-based means of communication and information. Production is quite expensive when weighed against efficiency.	

4.3. Skills and qualifications needed for pre-departure counselling

Pre-departure orientation requires the involvement of qualified staff trained in counselling techniques and equipped with relevant, tailored and up-to-date information on migration.

Any institution providing social information recognizes the need for this training approach; this includes Armenian authorities involved in labour-migration management. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs' position is that, during the development of migration component, all involved staff (both ministry and 350 MfRC staff) should attend corresponding training. The staff of the 7 existing MRCs should be trained not only to provide services but also to train their colleagues at new MfRCs.[54] The Head of State Migration Service suggests an even more proactive approach, offering to certify staff by including counselling functions in their terms of reference (i.e. civil servant passport).[55]

Professional training for staff involved in migration counselling must cover the legal and labour rights of migrants, the procedures and visa requirements for migrating legally, ethical recruitment procedures and responsibilities of recruitment agencies, international standards and rights-based approaches to migration, and information on support services in the country of origin and in destination countries. Staff should be able to provide reliable advice, or know where to find relevant information. It is important to ensure that staff is updated about relevant local, national and international law and policies and procedures, together with any changes in governmental and non-governmental services provided to migrants and potential migrants. Keeping up to date with information on legal and integration issues in destination countries will require skills in using, updating and searching for information over the Internet. As a result, it will be important to incorporate computer literacy into training. Staff should also be trained on how to deliver this information. Specific skills in counselling and information provision are required to communicate this information accurately and accessibly.[56]

Standards to follow in providing individualized counselling and assistance services

The following guidelines represent standards that should be observed when providing information and assistance to clients, irrespective of whether a client is documented or undocumented:

▶ Listen to clients and identify their needs in a respectful, non-judgmental and empathetic way;

▶ Observe professional boundaries and avoid becoming too personally involved in a client's case;

▶ Diagnose the problem in an objective and impartial manner;

▶ Give accurate and up-to-date information, and do not withhold information that could be relevant to a client's case;

▶ Advise on all of the options available and, where necessary, take action on behalf of clients;

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54 Interview with Ministry of Labour officials.

55 Interview with the Head of the State Migration Service.

56 J. Pillinger, 2015. Op. Cit.

▶ Ensure that clear criteria are in place in cases where it is not possible to provide a service to clients, for example, due to a lack of resources;

▶ In all circumstances, MRC staff should aim to find alternative service providers to meet the needs of the client and, where possible, refer them to appropriate agencies;

▶ Avoid creating false expectations about the services that can be provided. It is important to be realistic about the types of information and assistance that can be delivered;

▶ Ensure that clients know what they can expect from MRCs and what is expected from them;

▶ Remember that all information provided by the client is confidential and no information should be provided to third parties without the consent of the client;

▶ Ensure that the client suffers no hurt, e.g. if information is given about trafficking, exploitation or violence, MRC staff should ensure that any reporting to the public authorities is managed without causing harm to the client who provided the information.

Developing curricula for personnel involved in migration training is vital for the establishment of effective pre-departure orientation mechanisms. Detailed programmes that take into account all aspects of migration, including logistics,[57] should be developed using international experience. Therefore, the involvement of international organizations, primarily IOM, would benefit the process. Since the 1950s, IOM has been conducting training for migrants. Over the last 60 years, IOM has developed a tailored approach that takes into consideration the specific needs of migrants and receiving countries.[58] Effective training requires the participation of resource persons with solid training and facilitation skills, as well acknowledge and expertise on the topic.

Training activities, as one of the most important tools of capacity building process, usually include four basic elements: (1) needs assessment; (2) training design; (3) training delivery; and (4) training evaluation.[59]

Step	Description
1. Training needs assessment	A training needs assessment identifies the problem the training should explore, and clarifies key questions relating to the target audience, the skills or knowledge they need to learn, and how the training will accomplish this. It is an analytical process that should clearly identify knowledge or skills that are missing and articulate the changes necessary to improve performance. The overriding question throughout the assessment process is: "What new learning will lift the target audience from their current level of performance to a level. Which matches the organizational need?" Training needs assessments also provide baseline data to assess if training has been successful. For the Armenian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the development of a complex pre-departure orientation counselling system is a relatively new issue; therefore, the baseline can be basic. IOM and the International Labour Organization (ILO) in Armenia have experience and expertise to offer in this field.

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57 Ibid.

58 www.iom.int/migrant-training

59 These are based on the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs' training guidelines.

Step	Description
2. Training needs assessment	Training activity design starts by developing learning objectives, choosing the training modality, techniques and media to use and, most importantly, developing content. The first task is to develop a set of learning objectives. It is mandatory that this uses a participatory approach (provided that responsibilities for planning, implementing and reporting are shared with the Armenian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs). A participatory approach will help to properly define objectives, taking into account relevant needs and existing resources, as well as guaranteeing ownership. In general, learning objectives should focus on developing knowledge and skills and be developed using SMART criteria (S: specific, M: measurable, A: achievable, R: realistic, T: time-bound). The most appropriate training modalities depend on the facilities and resources available to the Armenian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, and can include: • courses and workshops; • distance learning courses; • webinars or seminars. Training techniques should be based on the principles of adult learning (andragogy).[60] The key is to develop relevant content, deliverable through a variety of techniques to generate interest and promote learning. Below are some topics relevant to initial and ongoing staff training: • Sources of information, using the Internet to keep information up-to-date and relevant; • Migration law, information and terminology; • Migration and employment trends in countries of destination; • Sourcing and providing information in individual and group settings; • Human trafficking and the protection of vulnerable migrants; • Employability skills (CVs, job interviews, etc.) and assistance in finding employment in a country of destination.
3. Training delivery	The most appropriate method for delivering training is facilitated sessions using presentations which allow for high levels of interaction with the audience. Presentations should be visual in the form of PowerPoint slides. This tool provides a narrative structure for a presentation, condensing the main points to be discussed. There are also a number of elements that should be included in any training agenda, such as the opening, introductions, expectations, icebreakers and warm-ups, ground rules, and a farewell/summary.

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60 Derived from Ancient Greek, meaning "the method and practice of teaching adult learners".

4. Training evaluation	Without evaluating training results it is impossible to determine whether or not the investment in a training programme has been successful. Evaluation provides important feedback that can improve future training activities. Most evaluations use Kirpatrick's[61] four-level model as a basis for analysing training effectiveness.[62]

Level 1 - Participant Reaction - determining participants' general level of satisfaction with the learning event. Obtaining this type of feedback is to ensure that a programme was delivered in logical, simple and understandable way, and matched participants' needs and competence.

Level 2 - Participant Learning - what principles, facts, and techniques were understood and absorbed by the trainees. Evaluation at this level seeks to understand how much participants have really learned as a result of having attended the learning event.

Level 3 - Knowledge Transfer - how learning from the training event has been applied at participants' workplaces.

Level 4 - Organizational Impact - how learning has had an impact on participants' work environments. |

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61 Donald Kirkpatrick (15 March 1924-9 May 2014) was Professor Emeritus at the University of Wisconsin in the United States and a past president of the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD).

62 D. Kirpatrick, Evaluation Training Programs, (California, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2006).

# 5. Recommendations for measures to be developed and applied in Armenia

5.1. Development of innovative communication technologies

The fact that a significant share of targeted migrants are low skilled should be considered when designing information tools and channels. It is important that this information is provided in a clear and accessible way, and in language that a potential migrant can understand. A message full of complex legal language would not promote confidence and understanding.

The 21st century provides a new reality for communications. Low-skilled migrants may face difficulties in understanding messages, but are able to use modern communication technologies with ease, such as web-based information resources, social media, video chat,[63] and mobile applications. This is particularly true for Armenian migrants. IOM's Moscow-based Migrant Information Portal on Facebook suggests that Armenian migrants represent the majority of users.

An accessible website can be an effective tool for providing simple, easy-to-reach information, downloadable documents, and online support. It is important to make such a resource easy to use and accessible to a wide range of information users.[64]

This approach has proven effective in some sending countries. For example, in Tajikistan,[65] the EU funded the project "Migrant workers and their families: Empowered institutions - protected rights," implemented by DanChurchAid (DCA). It designed and piloted information and communication technologies for effective information dissemination, and counselled potential and returned migrants and their family members. This action was based on a web platform[66] that includes three main components: relevant information for migrant workers about a destination country; information on available services; window for requests from migrant workers on legal assistance. There are four options to apply: phone call, SMS, email, and online forms. The web platform has been

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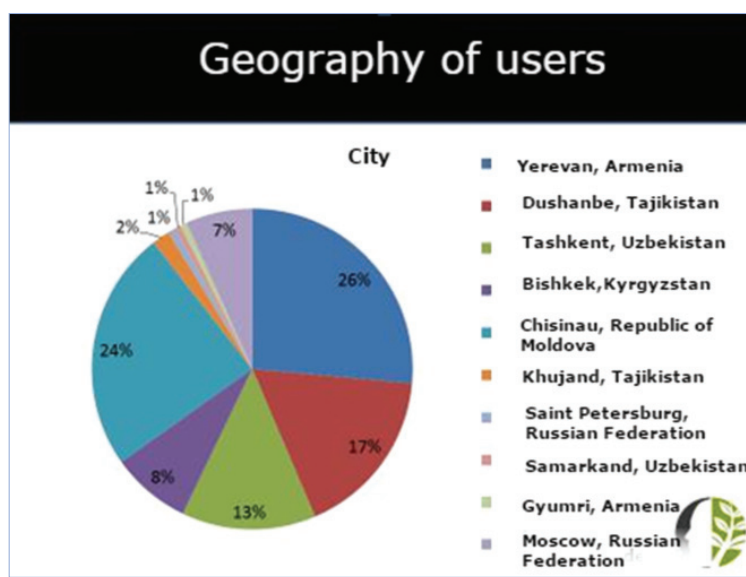
63 In 2014, during the evaluation of the IOM reintegration project in the Northern Caucasus, it was revealed that Skype is one of the most popular channels of communication linking migrants in Western Europe (Austria, Germany) with their families in the remote districts of Chechnya.

64 Report of Development Solutions LLC on IOM Information Campaign in Social Media, 2015.

65 The Republic of Tajikistan shares certain similarities with Armenia with regard to migration and the development of the State migration policy.

66 www.muhojir.info
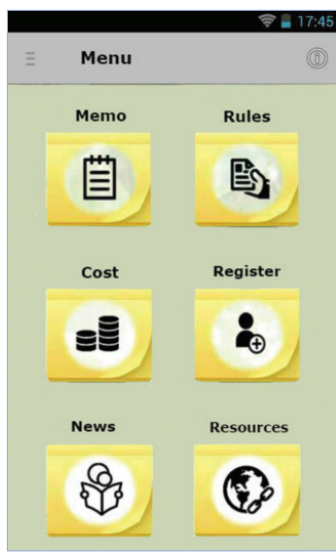
designed as a centralized system for data collection, information provision, and comments and responses from all relevant duty-bearers and stakeholders working on the protection of migrants' rights. This new channel of communication for migrant workers has allowed them to receive quality and timely information and legal assistance from a range of service providers.

Another interesting and innovative initiative is the introduction of mobile applications. Nowadays, migrants use telephones extensively. Often, smartphones are the only communication resource available upon arrival to a destination country. This is true for Armenian migrants —57 per cent of them use phones as their primary mode of communication.[67] The potential of mobile applications is even more important taking into account the relatively young age of Armenian migrants. Indeed, preference and use of communication channels depends very much on the age of the audience; for example, in the Russian Federation, 76 per cent of the population aged 12–24 prefers mobile Internet.[68]

The Human Rights Centre in Dushanbe that leads the mobile application component of the aforementioned project has developed Android-based a mobile application for migrants travelling to the Russian Federation, called MigRu.[69] This resource provides migrants with information: entry and migration rules, information on language tests required to get a work permit (known as patent), relevant links, and migration-related news. Another useful option provided by this application is opportunity to check the migrant blacklist and ensure that migrants have right to cross the border of the Russian Federation. This is done by redirecting the user to the corresponding webpage of the Federal Migration Service of the Russian Federation.

These technologies are becoming increasingly popular and can be offered by different developers for free.[70] More opportunities and functions can be provided at a relatively moderate cost.[71]

There are more examples of mobile Internet applications that meet the needs of different categories of migrants. For example, the Finnish IT company Funzi responded to inflows of migrants from conflict zones by launching an online guide for asylum seekers accessible through smartphones.[72]
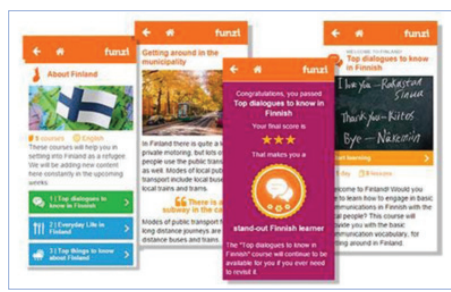
67 A. Devillard, 2012. Op. Cit.

68 "Russian mobile market research. IRMAA Group, 29 July 2015.
http://russia-promo.com/russian-mobile-market-research

69 https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=tj.masud.app.masud

70 For example https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.lexmobile.migrant

71 For example http://daily.afisha.ru/archive/news/gorod-v-moskve-poyavilos-mobilnoe-prilozhenie-dlya-migrantov/

72 https://twitter.com/funzi?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw

5.2. Ethical recruitment and organized schemes

In October 2015, the Head of the Labour and Employment Department of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs stated that MfRCs should serve as a platform for the organized recruitment of migrant workers. These ambitious plans need considerable effort and resources; however, if realized, this could be of significant benefit to the national migration-management system. Moreover, pre-departure orientation mechanisms work most effectively when integrated as a component into a broader migration management model.

An organized recruitment scheme is a pattern through which migrants are recruited in a country of origin in accordance with a particular request of an employer in a country of destination. This system presumes the introduction of certain norms that guarantee the rights of both parties, the employer and migrant worker. These norms are based on the existing international labour standards in the origin and destination countries, and are reflected in ILO documents and legal procedures.

One of the main aspects of the methodology behind organized recruitment is its contribution to circular migration. It is initially assumed that migrants return after completing their assignment (after their contract ends). In principle, this should guarantee security in destination countries and avoid brain drain, demographic losses and other problems in countries of origin.

Returning to the realities of migration in EaEU, the organized recruitment mechanism seeks to reduce illegal or "shadow" employment by including government stakeholders responsible for legal observation of the process and the application of international standards for migrant protection. This combination can be described as a dynamic business process under State control.

For this system to function properly, efforts of numerous stakeholders at the national and international level need to controlled by the State. In other words, organized recruitment is an advanced system of labour-migration management characterized by the observation of decent work standards, the availability of effective infrastructure, and a proactive approach.

In theory, the introduction of organized recruitment would be in the interests of both labour migrants and employers. Its principles are articulated in the International Recruitment Integrity System's (IRIS)[73] approach to ethical recruitment:[74]

- ⮑ Labour migrants will benefit from the assurance that they have "bona fide" job offers and from a reduced risk of exploitation, labour trafficking and unfair labour practices;

- ⮑ Employers will benefit from better job matching, brand protection and from publicly demonstrating that they adhere to fair recruitment principles in their business activities;

- ⮑ The recruitment industry will benefit from reduced instances of forced labour and labour trafficking, and the promotion of fair competition among ethical practitioners;

- ⮑ Governments of destination countries will benefit from a reduction in the number of trafficked and exploited workers entering their jurisdictions, while governments of sending countries will have greater assurances that the labour rights of their citizens are protected while working abroad.

73 http://iris.iom.int

74 IRIS, International Recruitment Integrity System (Geneva, IOM, 2014). Available from www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/SRMigrants/ConsultationRecruitment/IRISBrochureMarch5th2014.pdf

Therefore, organized recruitment can serve as effective solution to ensure safe and decent migration, bringing benefits to migrants, employers and States.

IOM has recently tested this mechanism in its Central Asian Regional Programme; therefore, positive lessons learned could be factored into the development of a similar system in Armenia.

Organized recruitment presumes that the most important measures to protect migrants from violations and integration difficulties have been accomplished pre-departure. Indeed, the majority of the groundwork for successful migration can be laid in countries of origin before migrants' departure.[75] The two crucial components of pre-departure measures are: (i) providing information to allow migrants to make informed decisions and which will help with the integration process in a destination country; (ii) ensuring proper legal arrangements which, ideally, should include a working contract. Assistance can be provided in a variety of ways by different entities – government agencies, NGOs, international organizations, or private agencies. However, for organized recruitment, particularly in the EaEU migration context, government control of the migration process would guarantee the most appropriate protection of migrants' rights. Therefore, the Armenian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has significant potential to lead this process.

While the key actor in organized recruitment is the sending agency in the country of origin, its cornerstone is the demand side, i.e. employers.

As employers guarantee that the whole process takes place – they generate demand for foreign labour and provide working and living conditions for migrant workers during their stay and work - they must take into account two points. The first is benefits for employers themselves, and the second is benefits for migrants, as well as mandatory programme requirements.

Underpinning organized recruitment are circular migration flows, which are planned and organized on the basis of: (1) specific labour demand of the employer in the destination State; (2) specific professional skills of migrant workers; (3) professional management and infrastructure to match components 1 and 2. IOM's methodology has been successfully implemented in a number of contexts, resulting in direct communications between sending agencies in countries of origin and employers in countries of destination.

Several elements of IOM's organized recruitment scheme are completely new and innovative:

▪ Monitoring system

Rights violations are a major risk for migrant workers, even if they are protected by a legal contract and all the necessary guarantees are provided by employers. Inspection bodies in countries of destination tend to focus on sanctioning employers for employing third-country nationals in an irregular fashion. Therefore, the monitoring of workplaces, housing conditions, wages, etc., by sending agencies in countries of origin is crucial.

▪ Post-arrival assistance

Migration is a risky business. People on the move represent a potentially vulnerable population group because they are staying in a foreign country. Those who employ workers from abroad face different challenges – even after selection procedures the possibility remains that third-country workers do not meet qualifications or the necessary psychosocial conditions. IOM has invested resources to mitigate against unforeseen problems and prepare for emergency situations. If and when a problem occurs in a destination country (for example, a pay dispute), a worker can raise an issue with the sending agency, which then follows up directly with the employer. When migrant skills or health conditions do not satisfy employers, they can be returned home or other workers can be selected to replace them.

75 A. Chindea, 2015. Op. Cit

▪ Geographical coverage and diversification of migration routes

One of the main goals of sending agencies participating in the IOM programme in Central Asia was to reduce dependence on the Russian Federation and find alternative destinations for migrant workers. As mentioned previously, this is particularly relevant for the large number of migrants who have been banned from entering Russian Federation due administrative violations. Kazakhstan, which was put forward by IOM as a potential destination, has become a viable alternative.

> ## Standards set by the IOM Central Asia Regional Programme

In country of origin

1. Migrants' qualification and skills and language level are assessed before their departure;

2. Migrants undergo a medical assessment to verify that they are fit for work abroad and receive full medical insurance. Medical examinations are sometimes mandatory for migrant workers upon arrival in the receiving country, for example in the Russian Federation. Workers should not be charged for mandatory examinations;

3. Migrants should learn about work and housing conditions before departure. Employers assess and verify migrants' skills before departure;

4. A work contract is signed before departure;

5. Sending agencies are not allowed to charge recruitment fees for job seekers. Recruitment fees may be charged to employers; however, employers must not recover recruitment fees from workers.

In country of destination

1. Migrants are provided with decent housing conditions during employment. Ensuring good, culturally appropriate and expected living conditions is an important part of attracting and retaining quality employees. All workers, both migrant and domestic, housed in dormitory settings, must be treated equally;

2. Migrants' salaries are at least as high as average salary of this type of job in the local labour market;

3. Obligatory contributions to social welfare funds are paid by employers;

4. Monitoring and compliance verification is conducted on regular basis by representatives of sending agencies.

6. Legal information needed for those who seek employment in the Russian Federation (brief module)

Table 5.   Legal migration information (Russian Federation)

Information package for Armenian citizens seeking employment in the Russian Federation			
Stage	**Process**	**Documents**	**Remarks**
Arrival	Upon arrival to the Russian Federation in the airport or other State border checkpoint, at passport control foreign citizens shall present their passport and filled-out migration card, along with other ID and travel documents. No seizure of the passport and migration card is allowed. A foreign national or a stateless person shall receive and fill out a migration Card upon arrival. The card shall be returned at passport control upon departure from the Russian Federation. Migration cards are usually available in aboard of aircraft. They can also be found in arrival halls on special desks next to the passport control queue. Entry (Card "A") and Exit (Card "B") sections of the migration card shall be filled out personally by the owner of the documents, using a fountain-or ball-point pen (black, blue or purple ink). Make sure to fill out both parts of the migration card. If a foreign national lacks knowledge of the Russian language, personal data may be written in English as they are spelled in the passport or any other ID. Columns of the migration card shall be filled out in legible print. Mark relevant boxes with "X" to identify sex and purpose of visit.	Passport Migration card 	The migration card with purpose of visit "work" should be stamped upon entry to the Russian Federation.

| Registration | Within 30 days upon arrival in the Russian Federation the Armenian citizen should register. All registration procedures shall be performed by the receiving party, so that the foreign national has no need to turn to any further organization and save his/her time.

The receiving party may be represented by citizens of the Russian Federation, foreign nationals and/or stateless persons residing in the Russian Federation on a permanent basis (holding residence permits), as well as legal entities, their branches or representative offices, wherein the foreign national *de facto* resides (stays) or works.

If the foreign national checks in at a hotel, the administration of the hotel shall be the receiving party, responsible for notifying the territorial body of the Federal Migration Service of the foreign national's arrival, as well as for performing all necessary procedures related to registration.

The receiving party shall make a stub of the notice available to the foreign national. Said stub, with a relevant marking, shall be proof of the foreign national's registration with the immigration authorities. | | www.fmsarmenia.ru/index.php?cat_id=321

Failure to comply with migration registration rules may result in administrative penalties to a sum total of RUR 2,000 to RUR 5,000 and, in certain cases, expulsion from the Russian Federation. Following administrative expulsion, the foreign national may forfeit his or her right to visit the Russian Federation for a period of up to five (5) years. |
| Stay | Initial duration of the Armenian citizen's stay in the Russian Federation may not exceed ninety (90) days (period of validity of the migration card). After a working contract is concluded, the term of temporary stay is extended for the time period during which the contract is valid, but for no more than one year. The decision on the extension of the temporary stay period is made by the territorial agency of General Department on Migration Issues of the Ministry of Interior of Russian Federation. | | |

| Employment | Employment procedures for the Armenian national are the same as for Russian citizens. An employment contract (trudovoi dogovor) for any type of employment (full-time, part-time, temporary or permanent) must always be in writing, with two original copies signed by both parties, and one kept by each party. If, in exceptional cases, a company admits an employee without a written contract, a contract should be prepared and signed within three days of admission.

All contracts must be in Russian to be accepted by a Russian court, and usually contain the following:

♦ Name and contact details of the employer and the employee

♦ Details of the position

♦ Start date

♦ Probation period

♦ Salary and method of payment

♦ Working hours

♦ Holiday allowance

♦ Social insurance and/or health care arrangements

♦ Work conditions

♦ Rights and obligations of both parties | | Employees of one Member State in order to perform educational, legal, medical or pharmaceutical activities in another Member State shall be subject to the procedure established by the legislation of the State of employment for the recognition of educational certificates in accordance with the laws of the State of employment. |

Managing the pre-departure orientation process for Armenian labour migrants

Country-specific assessment to identify gaps and assess migrant-orientation needs prior to departure

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Yerevan, 2016
International Organization for Migration (IOM)