

EXTERNAL YOUTH MIGRATION IN THE COUNTRIES OF CENTRAL ASIA:

RISK ANALYSIS
AND MINIMIZATION
OF NEGATIVE
CONSEQUENCES

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TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

EAEU	Eurasian Economic Union
IOM	International Organization for Migration
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

FROM THE AUTHORS

The regional field study was conducted by a group of national experts and researchers from Central Asian countries with the support of the mission of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Kazakhstan—the Subregional Coordination Office for Central Asia. The Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan provided overall guidance and coordination for the project. This study was made possible thanks to support from the International Organization for Migration—the UN Migration Agency in the Republic of Kazakhstan, as part of the project “Asia Regional Migration Program” funded by the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM USA).

The report is the result of joint efforts of representatives of State authorities, international and national experts and researchers, representatives of civil society institutions in Central Asia. The results of the study and the interpretations and conclusions presented in the report do not necessarily reflect the views of IOM or its member countries. The designations employed and the presentation of material in the report do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of IOM concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities or concerning the regulatory and institutional and governing documents in force in the countries of Central Asia.

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INTRODUCTION

Increased competition for qualified and highly qualified human resources in both developed and rapidly developing countries; the perception of educational migration as a factor in increasing the competitiveness of countries and increasing human capital are global trends in today's migration processes. These trends apply to all Central Asian countries and largely determine the pace and nature of their development as well as the development of the entire region as a whole.

In this context, a growing problem for Central Asian countries is the increasing migration of young people who want to obtain an education or work in other countries.

In today's world, the host countries are the focus for studying migration processes. Accordingly, the opportunities and risks associated with migration are most often emphasized in these countries. Migration processes clearly have an impact on the countries of origin, but an in-depth, systematic analysis of the impact of migration on such States remains limited. The project involves the study of youth internal migration in Central Asian countries: its motivators, factors that can intensify or slow it down, and processes that can affect the return or nonreturn of young people to their countries of origin.

The most important issue for the countries of origin is the question of whether youth migration promotes or hinders their further development. As part of youth migration, one of the most valuable resources for country of origin—human capital—flows to the host country. Moreover, given that the intensity of migration processes is highest among people aged 19–35 years old and the lowest among adolescents 12–16 years old, we can say that the countries of origin take on significant costs for the socialization and basic education of young people, the results of which are used by the host countries. Finally, it is necessary to take into account the risk associated with youth migration when there is an aging population in the country of origin and a reduced potential for social support for the elderly.

We cannot ignore the personal risks that a young migrant may face in an unfamiliar socioeconomic and political environment. Without a familiar social environment and stable moral and ethical regulators of behavior, a young person can become quite easily involved in illegal activities. Given that in most cases they retain citizenship of the country of origin, this situation directly affects the country itself.

The country of origin will only gain from the benefits of investing its human capital, if it can make productive use of the accumulated experience of returning migrants, and such benefits will exceed costs.

The purpose of the study is to provide an in-depth analysis based on qualitative and quantitative methods of youth mi-

gration in Central Asian countries as well as to develop recommendations to minimize risks and migration-related issues.

Project Objectives:

- Identify the volumes and trends of educational and labour youth migration from Central Asian countries, including the potential for “nonreturning” youth migration;
- Evaluate the regulation of youth migration processes in Central Asia;
- Identify the motives and drivers that determine youth migration from Central Asian countries, including nonreturning
- Identify the negative and positive impact of youth migration on the sociodemographic, economic, and political development of Central Asian countries as well as their human capital;
- Develop recommendations to minimize the negative effects of youth migration from Central Asian countries.

The analysis of the risks and opportunities associated with the external migration of young people from Central Asian countries will act as a source of information for a wide range of stakeholders (government agencies, international and non-governmental organizations, research and analytical centers) that play a major role in the development, adoption, and implementation of decisions to raise standards for protecting the rights of migrants and improve the human capital of Central Asian countries. This analysis is intended to contribute to the effective identification of shortcomings and needs in the process of developing and improving the legal framework as well as the conceptual and doctrinal framework governing the migration and youth policies of Central Asian countries, in the development and implementation of operational, tactical and strategic decisions, as a result of which it will be possible to prevent the emergence of vulnerabilities in youth migration and find sustainable solutions to reduce their negative impact.

In carrying out the analysis, the authors were guided by the principles of the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly, and Regulated Migration in accordance with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, taking into account applicable international principles and standards.

The authors of the study hope that they succeeded in comprehensively covering the issues regarding migration of young people in Central Asian countries and the motives and drivers of their behavioral strategies. In the long term, the recognition that these needs are multifaceted nature will be of fundamental importance for building State policies in Central Asian countries aimed at maximizing the full realization of the potential of the youth of these countries.

CONCEPTUAL AND METHODOLOGICAL BASIS

The concept of “Central Asia”

Traditionally, Central Asia is considered to consist of the five Asian countries formed after the collapse of the Soviet Union—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. For objective and subjective reasons, it was not possible to conduct the sociological and statistical research provided for by this project

for Turkmenistan. Therefore, the report only covers the migration situation in four of the region’s republics—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. For the sake of simplicity, the concepts of “Central Asia” and “countries of Central Asia” shall mean the four countries under study.

The concept of “youth” in the countries of Central Asia

There are two approaches applied to the definition of the concept of “youth” in the countries of Central Asia:

In Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan at the legislative level, “youth” refers to people aged 14 to 28 years old inclusive.¹ A similar understanding is recorded in the statistical reporting of these countries. So, the annual publication “Youth of Kazakhstan” covers people aged 14–28 years old.²

In Tajikistan and Uzbekistan at the legislative level, “youth” refers to people aged 14 to 30 years old inclusive.³ The same framework is recorded in the sociological study “Youth of Uzbekistan: aspirations, needs, and risks” conducted by the nationwide Yuksalish movement together with UNICEF. In addition, statistical reporting in Uzbekistan operates in several different categories. When assessing youth employment, the State Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan often indicates the age group “16–24 years old,” while the studies of the Ministry of Employment and Labor Relations use the categories

“youth under 30,” “youth aged 15–25,” and “youth aged 16–25 years old.”

The legislation of the Central Asian countries and the corresponding statistical reporting do not imply an internal age stratification of youth.

In certain socioeconomic spheres of the countries of Central Asia, the concept of “youth” has an expanded interpretation. For example, in Kazakhstan, in science, in accordance with Section 15 of the Law “On Science” young people up to and including 35 years old can be classified as young scientists.⁴ In Kyrgyzstan, the concept of “young scientist” is not fixed at the legislative level; however, indirectly, on the basis of other regulations⁵, young scientists include people under 35 years old;⁶ the age limit for creative youth is also 35 years old.⁷ The age of the so-called “political” youth in Kyrgyzstan is also limited to 35 years old: “members of youth associations who are young citizens under the age of 35 must make up at least 75 percent of the total num-

¹ Republic of Kazakhstan. Law No. 285-V ZPK dated 9 February, 2015, “On State Youth Policy”; Republic of Kyrgyzstan. Law No. 256 dated 31 July, 2009, On the Basics of State Youth Policy.

² Youth of Kazakhstan: statistical compilation, 2013–2017, Astana: Statistics Committee of the Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2018, p. 174.

³ Republic of Uzbekistan. Law No. ZRU-406 dated 14 September, 2016, “On State Youth Policy”; The Republic of Tajikistan. Law No. 52 dated 15 July, 2004, “On Youth and State Youth Policy.”

⁴ Republic of Kazakhstan. Law No. 407-IV dated 18 February, 2011, “On Science.”

⁵ Republic of Kyrgyzstan. Law No. 256 dated 31 July, 2009, “On the Basics of State Youth Policy”; Republic of Kyrgyzstan. Law No. 92 dated 30 April, 2003, “On Education.”

⁶ President of the Kyrgyz Republic. Decree of 22 November, 2004 UP No. 409 “On the Establishment of the Prize of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic for Young Scientists.”

⁷ Government of the Kyrgyz Republic. Decree No. 514 dated 23 August, 2000, “On the Establishment of the State Youth Prizes of the Kyrgyz Republic named after Ch. T. Aitmatov.”

ber of members of the association.”⁸ In Tajikistan, the Law “On Youth and State Youth Policy”⁹ states that “taking into account the nature of creative activity,” the age limit of a young person (30 years) is increased by 5 years.

The use of different age criteria seriously complicates the understanding and analysis of the situation associated with labour and educational youth migration. The difficulties are connected with the fact that the terms “educational migrants” and “young professionals—migrants” are not used in official documents.

Eurasian migration system and Central Asian countries

In the report, the idea of migration systems, which was introduced into research practice in the early 1990s, was taken as the starting point for the analysis of external youth migration from Central Asian countries.¹⁰ It is believed that the international migration system is determined by the existence of significant and steady (self-sustaining) migration flows between its member countries based on political, economic, and cultural ties between these countries. It is assumed that differences in the volume of migration flows within the system and beyond allow one to separate one system from another.

Although the collapse of the Soviet Union opened up the widest opportunities for external migration, the main migration flows in the post-Soviet space have so far occurred within the “truncated” borders of the Soviet Union, formally defined by the absence of a visa regime between the countries that form this space.¹¹ In fact, we can say that the foundation was laid here already in the 1990s for the formation of a certain fairly structured migration base or a special international migration system. In the early 2000s, it was suggested to name the migration system that emerged in the post-Soviet space as Eurasian, formed around the Russian Federation as a connecting element mainly a host and, in part, transit country.¹²

Given the identified national characteristics and the fact that the issue of external labour and educational migration of youth affects almost all aspects of the social life of Central Asian countries, the report sets out two lines of youth understanding:

- Analysis of official statistics is based on the definition of youth adopted in national laws and used by relevant ministries and departments;
- Sociological research conducted under the project is based on an expanded understanding of youth (up to and including 35 years old).

If we consider that the Eurasian migration system has existed not from the moment the term was introduced but from when the system was actually formed (taking into account the whole controversy of this approach), we can say that the factors that structure it have undergone a number of changes over time. We can now highlight two stages of its development.

In the early 1990s, “forced migration” dominated within the post-Soviet space, associated with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the sovereignty of new States, including on the basis of the concept of a “titular nation,” which led to powerful pressure on representatives of nontitular ethnic groups, primarily in terms of the formation of societal (identification) challenges and risks for them. One of the main outcomes of the migration processes of the 1990s was the large-scale loss of human capital for countries of origin, which is reflected in the economy and social sphere: a sharp decrease in the number of highly qualified employees capable of developing innovative and technological sectors of the economy.

By the beginning of the 2000s, the value of societal (identification) factors significantly decreased, and economic factors came to the fore: certain countries in the Eurasian migration system become attractive not so much because of cultural and historical features but because of the level of their eco-

⁸ Republic of Kyrgyzstan. Regulation No. 184-O dated 14 August, 2002, “On the procedure for the formation of the State Register of the Kyrgyz Republic of existing youth and children’s public associations” approved by order of the State Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic on Tourism, Sports, and Youth Policy.

⁹ Republic of Tajikistan. Law No. 52 dated 15 July, 2004, “On Youth and State Youth Policy.”

¹⁰ See, for example, *International Migration Systems: A Global Approach*, Oxford, Clarendon Press: 1992.

¹¹ Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia, which became members of the European Union and then the Schengen Agreement and have a visa regime with other countries formed after the collapse of the Soviet Union, clearly went beyond the post-Soviet migration space. Turkmenistan occupies a special position, also having a visa regime with other countries of the post-Soviet space.

¹² I. V. Ivakhnyuk. Two migration systems in Europe: development trends and prospects for interaction // Internet portal “Archipelago,” 2003 // www.archipelag.ru/agenda/povestka/povestka-immigration/strategii/dve_sistemi/.

conomic development or the level of wages. Accordingly, in the 1990s–2000s, labour migration becomes the dominant vector for international migration in the Eurasian migration system. Moreover, the logic of structuring economic migration is largely determined by the results of “forced migration” of the 1990s.

In the 2000s, the Central Asian subsystem was described as part of the Eurasian migration system,¹³ in which Kazakhstan mainly acts as the host and other Central Asian countries as the origin. Identification factors continue to play a role in this,¹⁴ just as in the Eurasian system as a whole. However, in fact, the Central Asian subsystem is determined by economic factors: the main migration flows here are represented almost exclusively by migrant workers. In this case, the system-forming factors are:

- Labour market transformation in the 1990–2000s;
- Cultural and historical proximity of the population of host and origin countries, which does not allow migrants to form “visible minorities” in Kazakhstan;
- Stable political relations of host and origin countries, visa-free travel between them;

Research methodology

Age category: the report examines young men and women 18–35 years old.

Functional Category: the report explores the mobility of external migrant workers and students from Central Asian countries.

Collection period for empirical information: June–August 2019.

Information collection tools:

1. An online survey of young people who left Central Asian countries for employment or education and have been abroad from 6 months to 24 years, which allows us to consider different forms of emigration. The survey covered:
 - Kyrgyzstan—263 people
 - Kazakhstan—80 people
 - Tajikistan—120 people
 - Uzbekistan—76 people

- The presence of typical “push” factors in countries of origin (unemployment, low living standards);
- Increasing demographic pressure in countries of origin.

In general, we can say that to date labour migration, both in the Eurasian migration system and its Central Asian subsystem, has been well studied. Labour migration in the Eurasian migration system is holistic (systemic) in nature and unites interconnected interest groups: donor States, recipient States, migrant workers, employers, migration police, migration networks, intermediary organizations, etc. At the same time, the key system-forming factor is the maximization of profit by all participants in the short term.

In addition, individual components of migration in the Eurasian migration system, even the labour system, remain practically unexplored. This includes issues such as the gender profile of migration flows, the impact of migration on identification of the migrant and host community, including in terms of potential radicalization. Youth migration, both in terms of its labour and educational component, remains poorly studied. This report is aimed at this segment of the migration process.

The survey was conducted using a Google online form. Social networks and closed groups were used to identify compatriots abroad, such as “Compatriots in South Africa, Germany, United States of America, etc.”, as well as personal contacts. A link was sent to the participants, following which they could answer the questions in a short questionnaire in 5–10 minutes.

2. In-depth interviews with young migrant workers, former migrant workers (including deported), students and graduates of foreign higher educational institutions, people who have taken courses and international exchange programmes:
 - Kyrgyzstan—30 people (geography—Bishkek and new districts, Osh, Osh and Jalal-Abad regions)
 - Kazakhstan—30 people (geography—the cities of Nur-Sultan, Almaty, Aktobe, Ust-Kamenogorsk, Shymkent)
 - Tajikistan—30 people (geography—Dushanbe, Khujand, and Sogd region, Bokhtar and Khatlon region, Khorog and Gorno-Badakhshan autonomous region, Rasht region)

¹³ Ye. Sadovskaya, Kazakhstan in the Central Asian migration subsystem // Post-Soviet transformations: reflection in migrations, Moscow: Adamant, 2009, pp. 279–321; I. Chernykh, The Silk Road economic region and its impact on migration processes in Central Asia // The Silk Road economic region in the context of regional security, Almaty: Kazakh—German University, 2017, pp. 117–126.

¹⁴ So, for example, in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan there are programmes aimed at stimulating immigration of representatives of the titular nations: Kazakhs and Kyrgyz.

- Uzbekistan—35 (geography—Tashkent, Jizzakh, and Namangan regions)
3. Focus groups:
- Kyrgyzstan—4 groups with migrant workers (geography—Bishkek and new districts, Osh, Osh and Jalal-Abad regions)
 - Kazakhstan—5 groups (geography—the cities of Nur-Sultan, Almaty, Aktobe, Ust-Kamenogorsk, Shymkent)
 - Tajikistan—5 groups with persons with experience of working or studying abroad (geography—Dushanbe, Khujand, Bokhtar, Khorog, and Rasht)
 - Uzbekistan—5 (geography—Tashkent, Jizzakh, and Namangan regions)
4. Expert interviews with government officials responsible for migration and youth policy, experts and researchers on migration processes, NGO leaders and employees working in migration:
- Kyrgyzstan—6 interviews
 - Kazakhstan—14 interviews
 - Tajikistan—21 interviews
 - Uzbekistan—26 interviews

Analysis of statistical data covers the period from 2009 to 2018. For a number of positions, the authors of the report encountered difficulties in obtaining official statistical information for the entire study period. In these cases, data for a shorter period are used.

1 VOLUMES AND TRENDS OF YOUTH MIGRATION (2009–2019)

When analysing statistics on external migration in the studied countries of Central Asia, it should be kept in mind that the migration supervision system adopted in these countries does not make it possible to unambiguously record the directions and goals of temporary migration, or emigration, if those leaving do not have permanent residence. For example, in Uzbekistan, where everyone leaving the country must declare the destination and purpose of departure, government agencies are not able to verify the data. The motivation for applying for permanent residence is also quite limited: it is either the need to obtain documents that allow people to register in a new place of residence (which is required, for example, in a number of post-Soviet countries) or, as in Kazakhstan, the desire to receive their pension savings (articles 32 and 33 of the Law on Pension Provision in the Republic of Kazakhstan).¹⁵ If a citizen of a Central Asian country leaves, for example, to study in the

Russian Federation and subsequently stays in that country, that person is not recorded in the statistics provided by the Central Asian authorities involved in statistical accounting. This is confirmed, for example, by the fact that according to the Committee on Statistics of the Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2018 only 221 people left the country under an employment contract, and 87 went to study,¹⁶ which obviously does not correspond to reality. Therefore, the data from the Central Asian authorities engaged in statistical accounting do not allow us to describe the true extent of emigration from Central Asian countries, including youth migration. Nevertheless, they reflect two indisputable points:

- General trends
- Minimum volume of migration flows

1.1 Educational migration

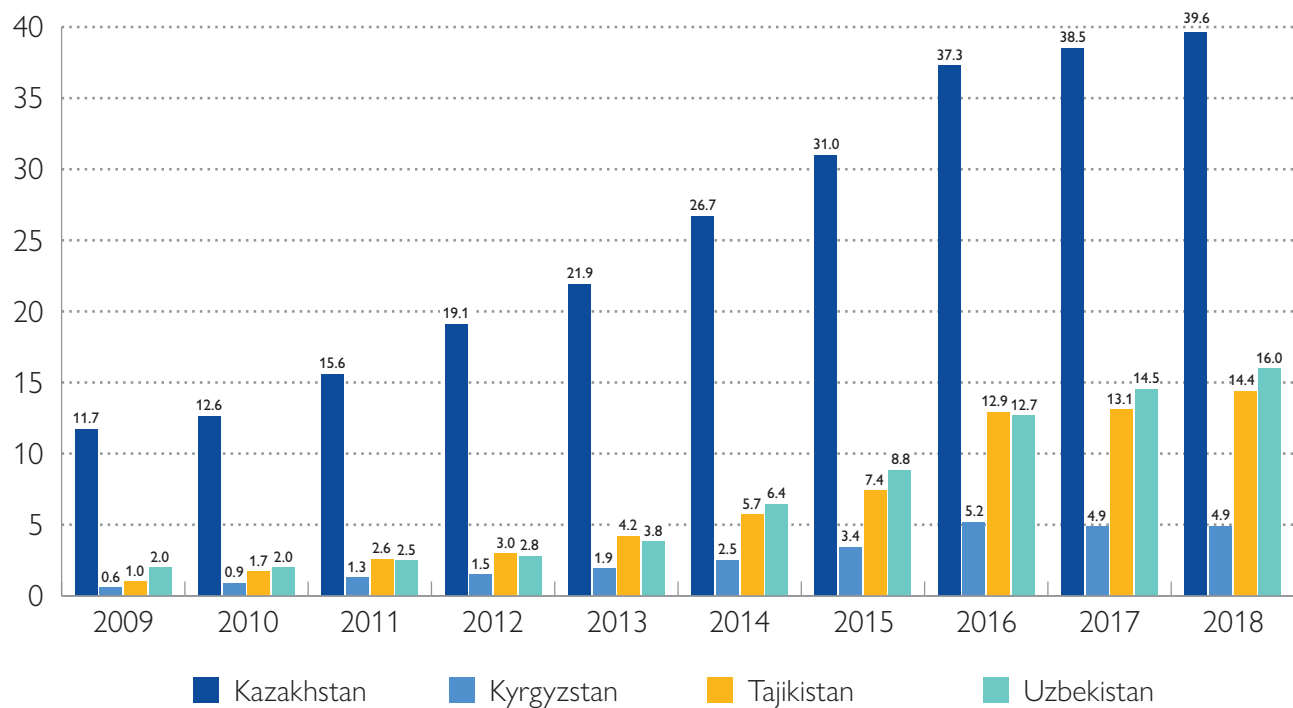
Accurate and systematic data on educational migration from Central Asian countries are not available. Interested ministries and departments, as a rule, record the volumes and migration directions of people studying abroad at the expense of the national budget. However, a significant number of citizens from Central Asian countries study abroad at their own expense or on international scholarships, which is not reflected in national statistics. Therefore, to determine the approximate number of citizens from Central Asian countries studying abroad, it makes sense to use the combined data from their ministries and departments as well as from the countries in which the volume of educational migration from Central Asian countries is the most significant.

The main direction of educational migration from Central Asian countries is the Russian Federation. Moreover, for all countries in the region, there is a tendency toward an increase in the number of people travelling to the Russian Federation for educational purposes. The exception is Kyrgyzstan, where the volume of educational migration to the Russian Federation in 2016–2018 stabilized at 4.9–5.2 thousand people. According to the Russian Federal State Statistics Service, the number of Central Asian citizens studying in the Russian Federation in full-time higher education programmes shows a steady upward trend and amounted to about 75 thousand people in the academic year 2018–2019 (figure 1.1). Kazakhstan pursues an active policy of supporting educational migration both through academic mobility under the Bologna process and through the Bolashak international scholarship (figure 1.2).

¹⁵ Republic of Kazakhstan. Law No. 105-V dated 21 June, 2013, “On Pension Insurance in the Republic of Kazakhstan.”

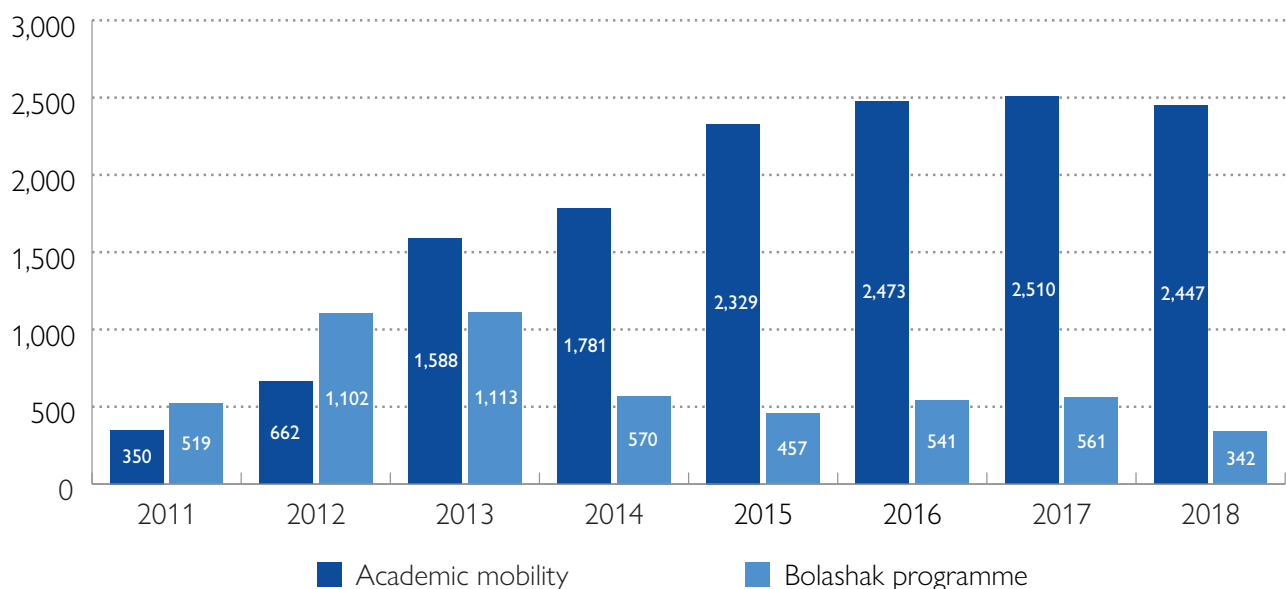
¹⁶ Migration of the population of the Republic of Kazakhstan for January–December 2018, Astana: Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan on Statistics, 2019, p. 64

Figure 1.1—The number of students from Central Asian countries, full-time students in the Russian Federation on higher education programmes, thousand people (2009– 2019)



Source: Russia in numbers: 2011, Moscow, 2011, p. 145; Russia in numbers: 2013, Moscow, 2013, p. 160; Russia in numbers: 2014, Moscow, 2014, p. 160; Russia in numbers: 2016, Moscow, 2016, p. 150– 151; Russia in numbers: 2017, Moscow, 2017, p. 146–147; Russia in numbers: 2019, Moscow, 2019, p. 143.

Figure 1.2—External outgoing academic mobility and the number of scholarship holders of the Bolashak international scholarship in Kazakhstan (2011–2019)



Source: Implementation of the principles of the Bologna process in the Republic of Kazakhstan: analytical report, Astana: Center for the Bologna Process and Academic Mobility, 2018, p. 57; Scholarship holders // Site of Center for International Programmes Bolashak JSC // <https://www.bolashak.gov.kz/ru/pretendentu/obladateli-stipendii.html>.

The total number of people from Kazakhstan studying outside the country is not recorded. The most popular destinations for educational migration are:

- Russian Federation—39.6 thousand people¹⁷
- China—17.6 thousand people¹⁸
- Republic of Korea—1.6 thousand people
- United Kingdom—about 1 thousand people¹⁹

The total number of Kyrgyz citizens studying abroad in 2018 is more than 15.7 thousand people (about 5.5% of all students in Kyrgyzstan). The most popular destinations for educational migration are:

- Russian Federation—5.5 thousand people²⁰
- China—about 3.5 thousand people²¹
- Turkey—about 1.9 thousand people²²

In Tajikistan, according to official data from the report “On the number of citizens of the Republic of Tajikistan sent by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan to study in higher and scientific educational institutions of foreign countries through educational quotas and continuing their studies,” in 2014–2018, more than 20.8

thousand people studied abroad. The most popular destinations for educational migration are:

- Russian Federation—17,081 people
- China—1,520 people
- Belarus—236 people

Tajik citizens also study in Malaysia, the United States of America, Turkey, the Baltic countries, Ukraine, Japan, Germany, Poland, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, India, Turkmenistan, Republic of Korea, Czechia, Kuwait, Austria, and Azerbaijan.

According to data announced by the Minister of Education and Science of Tajikistan N. Said, at the beginning of the 2018–2019 academic year, about 30,000 Tajik students studied in foreign countries, 90 per cent of them on a budgetary basis,²³ 21,000 Tajik students study at higher educational institutions based on bilateral agreements.²⁴

According to information from the State Committee on Statistics of Uzbekistan, the number of citizens who left the country officially declaring “study” as the goal of their trip was 50,623 in 2018 (22.5% more than in 2017) (figure 1.3).

¹⁷ Russia in numbers: 2019, Moscow, 2019, p. 143.

¹⁸ I. Astakhov. How many Kazakh students study abroad // Today.kz, 3 May, 2018 // <http://today.kz/news/kazakhstan/2018-05-03/765342-skolko-kazahstanskih-studentov-uchitsya-za-granitsej/>.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Russia in numbers: 2019, Moscow, 2019, p. 143 (including 25.5% in distance learning).

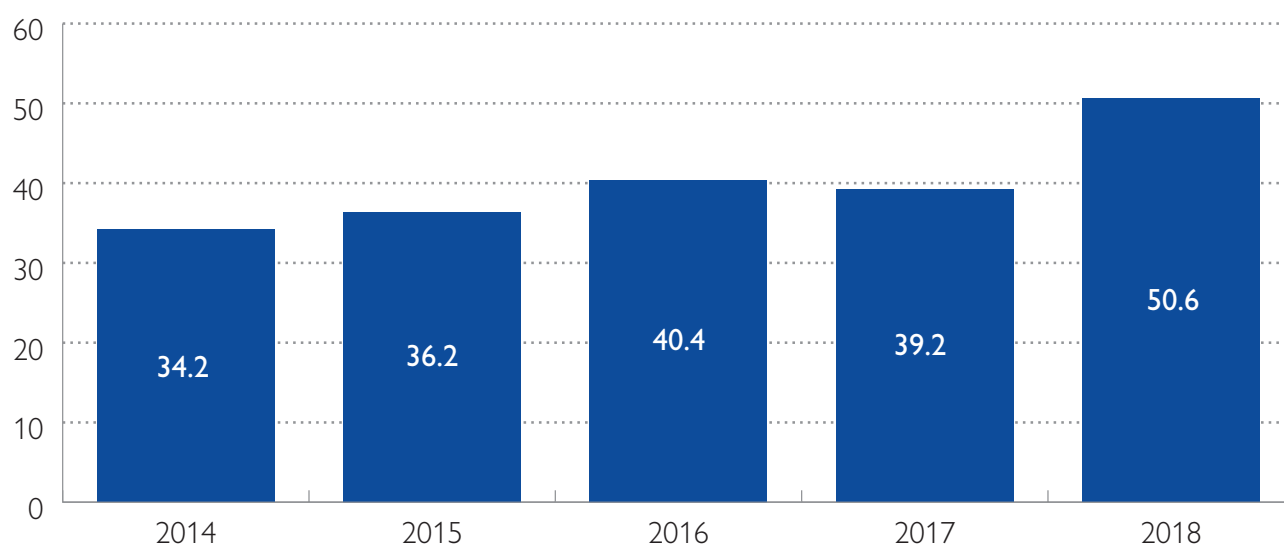
²¹ China has allocated additional quotas for students from Kyrgyzstan // Ingarm.kg Information Business Portal // www.inform.kg/en/business_novosti_kr/248.

²² The “Scholarships of Turkey” programme has created opportunities to receive free education abroad for hundreds of students from Kyrgyzstan // Turmush, 16 September, 2018 // www.turmush.kg/ru/news:1468209.

²³ Minister of Education and Science: 30 Reporters Without Borders // National News Agency of Tajikistan “Khovar”, 19 July, 2019 // <https://khovar.tj/2019/07/vaziri-maorif-va-ilm-30-azor-donish-i-to-ik-dar-muassisa-oi-olii-hori-a-ta-sil-dorand/>.

²⁴ Republic of Tajikistan Minister of Education and Science Nuriddin Said: “Work on the construction of Russian-language schools in Tajikistan is already underway” // National News Agency of Tajikistan “Khovar”, 19 July, 2019 // <http://khovar.tj/rus/2019/07/ministr-obrazovaniya-i-nauki-rt-nuriddin-said-raboty-po-stroitelstvu-russkoyazychnyh-shkol-v-tadzhikistane-uzhe-vedutsya/>.

Figure 1.3—The number of people who left Uzbekistan and declared the purpose of their trip “study,” thousand people (2009–2019)



Source: State Committee for Statistics of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The main destinations of educational migration are:

- Russian Federation—19,477, in 2017— 21,081 people
- Republic of Korea—4,505, in 2017—3,913 people
- China—3,915, in 2017—2,823 people

Also, citizens of Uzbekistan study in Turkey, Latvia, the United States of America, Japan, Germany, Belarus, United Kingdom, United Arab Emirates, and Malaysia.

An important component of educational migration is mobility between the countries of Central Asia. For example,

in Kazakhstan in the academic year 2018–2019, there were 1,085 Kyrgyz (1,026 in 2017), 703 Tajik, and 9,680 Uzbek (3,539 in 2017) students. In Kyrgyzstan, there are 459 citizens from Tajikistan and 3,311 citizens from Uzbekistan (323 in 2017). In Tajikistan, 2,068 people from Uzbekistan are studying. It is expected that the number of Uzbek students in Kazakhstan may grow significantly if the programme for the provision of ten thousand grants announced by the ex-president of Kazakhstan N. Nazarbayev for the Year of Uzbekistan programme is implemented.²⁵

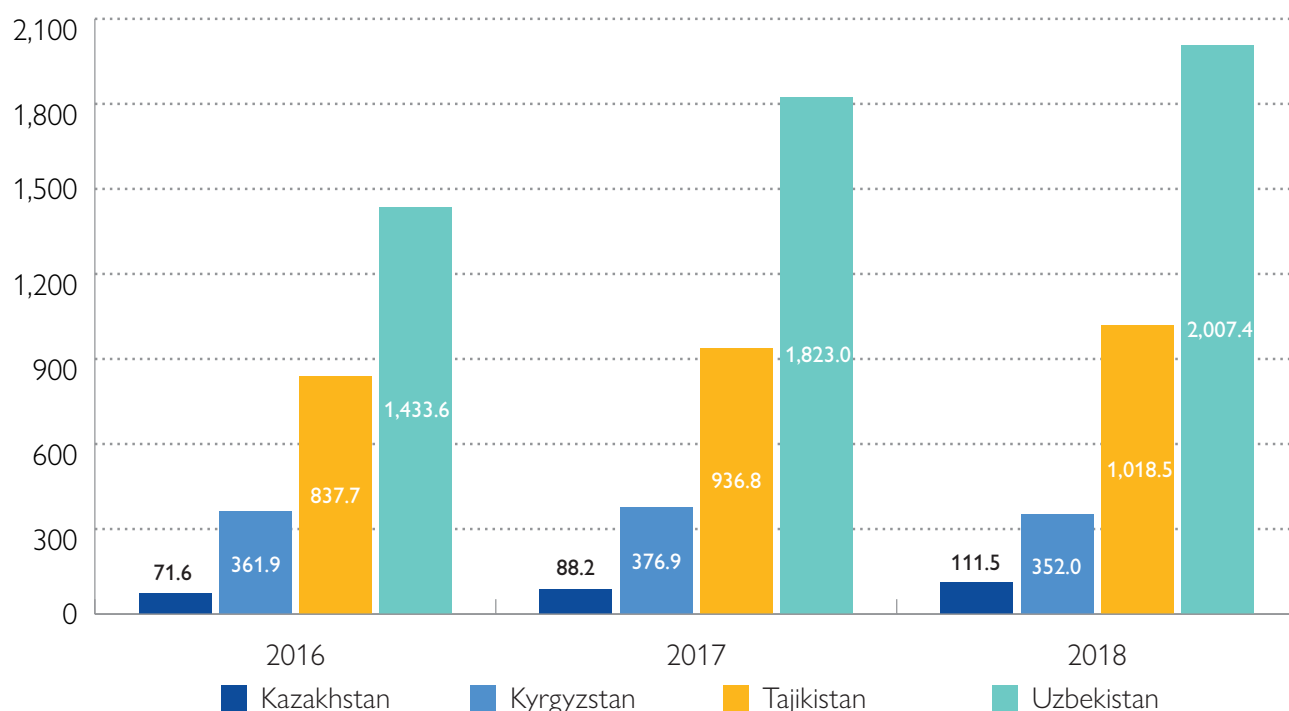
1.2 Labour migration

The main direction of labour migration from the countries of Central Asia, as in the case of education migration, is the Russian Federation. Moreover, for all countries of the region, there is a tendency toward an increase in the number of people travelling to the Russian Federation for work purposes. The exception is Kyrgyzstan, where the volume of labor migration to the Russian Federation in

2016–2018 stabilized at 352–377 thousand people. According to the Russian Federal State Statistics Service, the number of citizens of Central Asian countries placed on the migration register in the Russian Federation for the purpose of “work” shows a steady upward trend and in 2018 amounted to about 3,489 thousand people (figure 1.4).

²⁵ Universities of Kazakhstan allocated 10,000 grants for Uzbek students // Nuz.uz, 24 May, 2018 // <https://nuz.uz/obschestvo/33076-vuzy-kazahstana-vydelili-10-000-grantov-dlya-uzbekistanskih-studentov.html>.

Figure 1.4—The number of citizens of Central Asian countries who were placed on the migration register in the Russian Federation for the purpose of “work,” thousand people (2009–2019)



Source: Statistical information on the migration situation // Website of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation // <https://mvd.pf/Deljatelnost/statistics/migracionnaya>.

Kazakhstan statistics do not distinguish labour migration as a separate type. In the country, the attitude remains that labour migration is not typical for Kazakhs. Volumes of labour migration of Kazakhs can be reconstructed on the basis of data from countries in which the volumes of labour migration from Kazakhstan are the most significant. Thus, according to the Russian Federal State Statistics Service, the number of Kazakhs who indicated “work” as the purpose for entering the Russian Federation shows a steady upward trend and in 2018 amounted to more than 111.5 thousand people (figure 1.4). Also, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan announced on 15 October, 2018, that there were 11,561 irregular migrants from Kazakhstan in the Republic of Korea.

Statistical records of migrant workers in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan are more serious and systematic than in Kazakhstan.

According to the data of the State Migration Service under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, the number of Kyrgyz citizens placed on the migration register by the host coun-

try in 2018 amounted to about 740,000 people. The main destinations for migration were:²⁶

- Russian Federation—640 thousand people
- Kazakhstan—35 thousand people
- Turkey—30 thousand people
- United States of America—15 thousand people
- Italy—5.5 thousand people
- Republic of Korea—5 thousand people
- Germany—5 thousand people
- United Arab Emirates—3 thousand people
- United Kingdom—2 thousand people

A similar situation was observed in 2017.²⁷

The most difficult situation for assessing migration volumes is in Uzbekistan, which is explained by the structural reforms initiated in the country in 2017, which affected both the statistical reporting system and the understanding of migration and its attitude to it. For example, the increases in numbers of migrant workers in 2018 recorded by the State Committee on Statistics of the Republic of Uzbekistan is indicative—the number of migrant workers amounted to

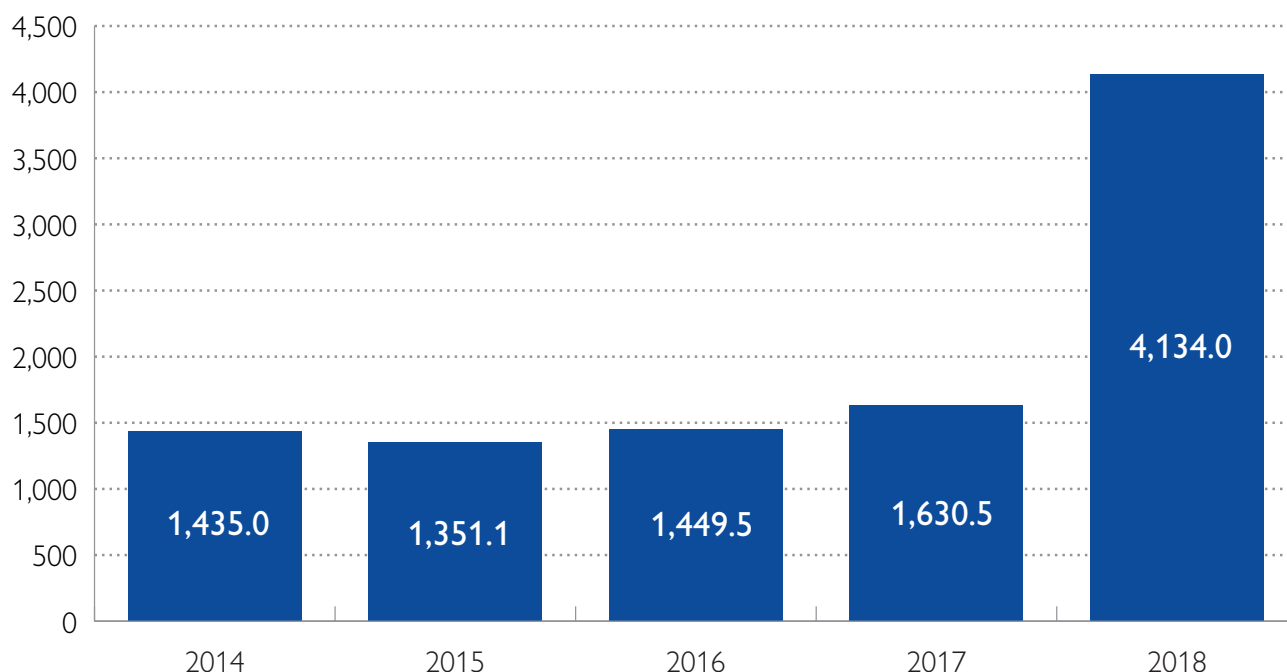
²⁶ Statistics // Official website of the State Migration Service under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic // <http://ssm.gov.kg/useful-information/statistics/>.

²⁷ Extended Migration Profile: Kyrgyzstan (2015–2018), Bishkek: NISI, IOM, 2019, p. 56.

4,134 thousand people, or 21.8 per cent of the country's total labour resources (figure 1.5). According to expert estimates, this can be explained by a group of factors, among which the main ones are:

- An increase in the number of people travelling to work in foreign countries;
- People began to write more boldly about the purpose of the departure.

Figure 1.5—The number of people who left Uzbekistan and declared the purpose of their trip “work,” thousand people (2009–2019)



Source: State Committee for Statistics of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

A number of officials from the relevant ministries and departments of Uzbekistan indicate that the volume of labour migration in 2018 amounted to 2.5–2.6 million people,²⁸ which is equal to approximately 13.7 per cent of the country's labour resources. The discrepancies in the data provided by the State Committee on Statistics of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the relevant departments, according to experts, may be due to the fact that the same citizens may leave the country several times a year, which is reflected in the data of the State Committee on Statistics.

- Russian Federation—852,008 (the lowest figure for the last 5 years), in 2017—944,328 people
- Kazakhstan—3,154,761, in 2017—626,791 people
- Turkey—34,399 (according to Turkish data, 3,573 citizens from Uzbekistan received official permission to work in this country in 2018)²⁹, in 2017—11,394 people
- Kyrgyzstan—31,279; in 2017—1,014 people
- Republic of Korea—19,545 (according to Korean data, according to the quota provided, 3,100 people worked),³⁰ in 2017—19,981 people

The main directions of departure in 2018, according to the State Committee for Statistics of the Republic of Uzbekistan, were:

Experts have sharply criticized data for the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan. In their opinion, Kazakhstan's economy is not able to accept such a volume of labour re-

²⁸ Number of migrants seeking work abroad decreases, Ministry // Kun.uz, 25 December, 2018, 2018 // <https://kun.uz/90542955>; Over 2 million migrants from Uzbekistan annually leave for the Russian Federation, we should strive to make this entire flow organized—the minister // Podrobno.uz, June 18, 2019 // <https://podrobno.uz/cat/uzbekistan-i-rossiya-dialog-partnerov-ezhegodno-v-rossiyu-vyezhaet-svyshe-2-mln-migrantov-i/>; Named the number of citizens who left Uzbekistan to earn money // Upl24, 2 January, 2019 // <https://upl.uz/policy/9600-news.html>.

²⁹ Annual total number of foreigners with Turkish residence permit // Directorate General of Migration Management // www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/residence-permits_915_1024_4745_icerik.

³⁰ South Korea increased the quota for migrants from Uzbekistan to 3,200 people // Podrobno.uz, 20 March, 2019 // <https://podrobno.uz/cat/obchestvo/yuzhnaya-koreya-uvelichila/>.

sources, and the data of the State Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan do not take into account the cyclical nature of labour migration of Uzbeks to Kazakhstan as well as the fact that Kazakhstan plays the role of a transit country for migration to the Russian Federation. Kazakhstan experts, based on a 28 per cent increase (up to USD 320million) in remittances from Kazakhstan to Uzbekistan from 2017 to 2018, calculated that the number

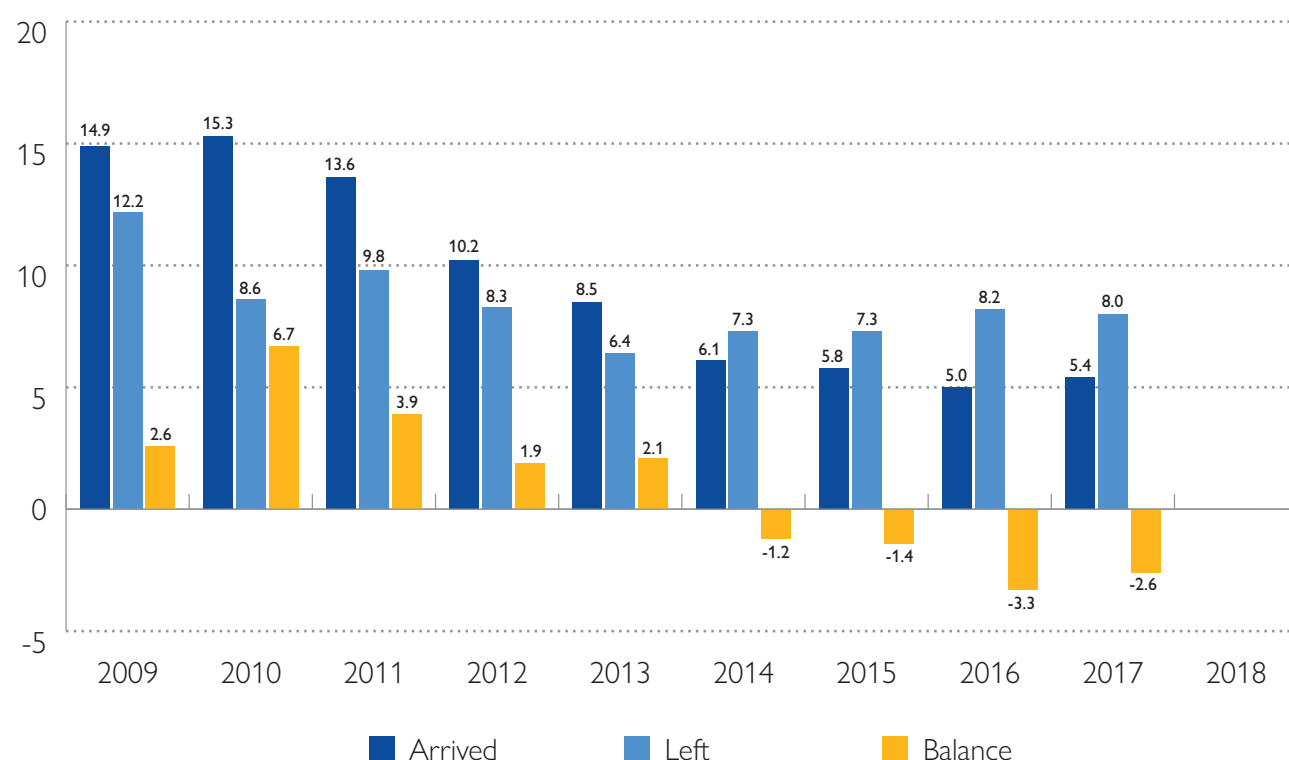
of Uzbek migrant workers in Kazakhstan should be in the range of 650–800 thousand people³¹ (these figures correlate with the data announced by the Minister of Employment and Labor Relations Sh. Kudbiev).³² A similar problem is most likely with data for Kyrgyzstan.

1.3 Youth migration in the general migration flow

In Kazakhstan, the volume of external youth migration (both immigration and emigration) in the first half of the 2010s showed a steady decline. However, starting in 2014, with a decrease in immigration, the emigration flow began

to increase, which led to the fact that for the first time in the 2000s a negative balance of external migration of youth was recorded in this year, which not only persists to this day but is also increasing (figure 1.6).

Figure 1.6—External youth migration in Kazakhstan, thousand people (2009–2019)



Source: Youth of Kazakhstan: statistical compilation, 2009–2011, Astana: Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan on Statistics, 2012, p. 108; Youth of Kazakhstan: statistical compilation, 2012–2016, Astana: Statistics Committee of the Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2017, p. 103; Youth of Kazakhstan: statistical compilation, 2013–2017, Astana: Statistics Committee of the Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2018, p. 98.

³¹ Trends in labor migration in Uzbekistan // Central Asian Analytical Network, 17 April, 2019 // <https://caa-network.org/archives/15856>.

³² The number of citizens who left Uzbekistan to earn money declared // Upl24, 2 January, 2019 // <https://upl.uz/policy/9600-news.html>.

The share of youth in the immigration flow from 2009 to 2018 remains virtually unchanged, remaining at the level of 33.7–36.3 per cent. At the same time, the share of youth among emigrants is steadily decreasing from 36 per cent in 2009 to 21.2 per cent in 2017.³³ The decrease correlates with the general decrease in the share of youth in the population of Kazakhstan: from 2009 to 2018 the share of youth in Kazakhstan decreased from 28.6 per cent (4.5 million people)³⁴ to 21.5 per cent (3.9 million people).³⁵

A negative balance of youth migration is also recorded in Kyrgyzstan. From 2014 to 2018, 19,273 people aged 15–34 (48.7% of the total number of emigrants) emigrated from the country as a whole, and only 7,546 young people immigrated (53.7% of all immigrants). The balance amounted to minus 11,727 people.³⁶ According to expert estimates, among Kyrgyz migrant workers, the share of youth is about 47 per cent of the total.³⁷ The situation is aggravated by the fact that in Kyrgyzstan, as in Kazakhstan, the share of youth in the country's population decreased from 29 per cent (1.7 million people) in 2014 to 25.7 per cent (1.6 million

people) in 2018. In Tajikistan, from 2009 to 2018, the volume of migration as a whole decreased by 30 per cent, while the share of youth among migrants remains almost stable, ranging from 38–40 per cent of the total volume of migrants.

According to expert estimates, the volume of youth migration from Uzbekistan in the total volume of labour migration is 20 per cent to 70 per cent. According to the acting head of the Agency for External Labor Migration under the Ministry of Employment and Labor Relations, H. Asamov, out of approximately 1.5 million migrant workers from Uzbekistan in the Russian Federation in 2017, 60 per cent were young people under the age of 30.³⁸ Since 2009, 13,443 people under the age of 30 have left Uzbekistan through the Agency for External Labor Migration.

In Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan a clear predominance of emigration of young men is recorded. At the same time, a trend toward its feminization is being recorded in Kyrgyzstan.

1.4 External factors: The Russian Federation's migration policy

The Russian Federation's modern migration policy is aimed at stimulating immigration and is based on the concept of "compatriot": it fixes the legal status regulated by the Federal Law "On the State policy of the Russian Federation regarding compatriots abroad."³⁹ The law defines the following definition of the term "compatriots": "compatriots are persons born in one State or living in it and possessing signs of a common language, religion, cultural heritage, traditions, and customs as well as descendants of these persons in a direct descending line." The law also defines the concept of "compatriots abroad," which means:

- Russian Federation citizens permanently residing outside its borders;
- Persons and their descendants residing outside the territory of the Russian federation and, as a rule, related

to peoples historically living in the Russian Federation as well as those who have made a free choice in favor of spiritual, cultural, and legal relations with the Russian Federation; persons whose relatives in a direct ascending line previously lived in the Russian Federation, including:

- Persons who were citizens of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) residing in States that were part of the USSR, received citizenship of these States, or became Stateless;
- Natives (emigrants) from the Russian State, the Russian Republic, the RSFSR, the USSR, and the Russian Federation who had appropriate citizenship and became citizens of a foreign State or who had a residence permit or became Stateless.

³³ Demographic Yearbook of Kazakhstan: statistical compilation, 2016, Astana: Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan on Statistics, 2017, p. 335; Migration of the population of the Republic of Kazakhstan for January–December 2017, Astana: Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan on Statistics, 2018, p. 5; Migration of the population of the Republic of Kazakhstan for January–December 2018, Astana: Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan on Statistics, 2019, p. 5.

³⁴ Youth of Kazakhstan: statistical compilation, 2009, Astana: Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan on Statistics, 2011, p. 5.

³⁵ Youth of Kazakhstan: statistical compilation, 2013–2017, Astana: Statistics Committee of the Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2018, p. 5.

³⁶ Information provided by the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic on request No. 17/790 dated 7 August, 2019.

³⁷ Consolidated Migration Report 2015, Bishkek: State Migration Service under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2016 // <http://ssm.gov.kg/useful-information/single-report-on-migration-2014>.

³⁸ Uzbekistan intends to remove about 400 thousand labor migrants from the "black list" // Migrant website // <http://migrant.mobi/ru/400-ming-uzbekistonlik-rf-ora-rujhat-idan-uchirilishi-mumkin/>.

³⁹ The Russian Federation, Federal Law No. 99-FZ dated 24 May, 1999, "On the State Policy of the Russian Federation Regarding Compatriots Abroad."

The Russian Federation has a State programme to facilitate the voluntary resettlement in the Russian Federation of compatriots living abroad, adopted by decree of the President of Russia of 20 June, 2006. On 14 September, 2012,⁴⁰ a decree was signed containing a new version of the programme and making it unlimited.⁴¹ Amendments to the programme were also made in 2014⁴² and 2016.⁴³

The State programme to facilitate the voluntary resettlement in the Russian Federation of compatriots living abroad is aimed at combining the potential of compatriots living abroad with the development needs of the Russian Federation regions. It is indicated that this programme supplements the system of measures aimed at stabilizing the population size of the Russian Federation, primarily in strategically important territories. Thus, facilitating the voluntary resettlement of “compatriots” to the Russian Federation is one of the directions for solving the country’s demographic problem. It is considered that people educated in the traditions of Russian culture, who speak the Russian language, and do not want to lose touch with the Russian Federation are most able to adapt and quickly enter the Russian community’s system of social ties.

Therefore, by actually implementing the programme, the Russian Federation significantly saves on costs associated with the socialization of the population as well as the training of qualified and highly qualified personnel. The savings are clear, even taking into account the benefits provided to immigrants, which include:

- Payment of the cost of moving to a permanent place of residence;
- Compensation of expenses for State duty payment
- Payment of a one-time settlement allowance (“relocation”);
- Payment in the absence of other income during the first six months of allowances in the amount of 50 per cent of the subsistence level in the region.

The Russian Federation regions participating in the programme since 2013 are divided into “territories of priority settlement” and “territories of settlement.” In the regions belonging to the first group, migrants enjoy the highest level of State support; the relocation allowance when moving to such regions amounts to 240,000 rubles per appli-

cant and 120,000 rubles per each member of the migrant’s family.

The State programme to facilitate the voluntary resettlement in the Russian Federation of compatriots living abroad has quite serious information support. Its main channel is websites, which include:

Automated information system “Compatriots” (www.aiss.gov.ru), which contains information on issues relating to the legal, organizational, and informational basis for participation in the programme:

- Page of the State programme to facilitate the voluntary resettlement in the Russian Federation of compatriots living abroad on the website of the State body in charge of migration issues (currently the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation) -https://mvd.mvd.ru/structure1/Glavnie_upravlenija/guvvm/compatriots.
- The Russian Century internet portal (<http://ruvek.ru>) created by the Institute of Russian Abroad by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs order. The main objective of the Portal is to provide information about the Russian Federation’s activities in supporting compatriots living abroad, including the implementation of the State programme to facilitate the voluntary resettlement in the Russian Federation of compatriots living abroad. The Portal contains detailed information on issues related to the legal, organizational, and informational basis for participation in the programme, including the programme’s official information package, detailed information on regional resettlement programmes, and a regularly updated bank of vacancies in the regions of settlement;
- Internet forum “Home to Russia!” (<http://back2russia.net/>), which, in addition to official information on issues related to the legal, organizational, and informational basis for participation in the resettlement programme, provides assessments and comments of its participants, including number in the country section. For example, the section <http://back2russia.net/index.php?forum/8-kazakhstan/> is devoted to Kazakhstan. The forum is presented not only on the main site but also on VK social media (<https://vk.com/back2ru>), the number of group members as of July

⁴⁰ President of the Russian Federation. Decree No. 637 dated 22 June, 2006, “On measures to facilitate the voluntary resettlement in the Russian Federation of compatriots living abroad.”

⁴¹ President of the Russian Federation. Decree No. 1289 dated 14 September, 2012, “On the implementation of the State Programme for Assisting the Voluntary Resettlement in the Russian Federation of Compatriots Living Abroad” (as amended).

⁴² President of the Russian Federation. Decree No. 201 dated 4 April, 2014, “On Amendments to the State Programme for Assisting the Voluntary Resettlement in the Russian Federation of Compatriots Living Abroad.”

⁴³ President of the Russian Federation. Decree No. 82 dated 25 February, 2016, “On Amendments to the State Programme for Assisting the Voluntary Resettlement in the Russian Federation of Compatriots Living Abroad.”

2017 was 7,425 people) and Odnoklassniki (https://ok.com/back2ru?st._aid=ExternalGroupWidget_OpenGroup, the number of group members as of July 2017 was 13,060 people).

Information support for the programme is also provided by some internet resources focused on specific countries.

A number of countries have authorized bodies that work with compatriots who wish to move to the Russia Federation under the Programme terms. These are either representations of the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs, or temporary groups at Russian diplomatic missions and consular offices, or diplomatic and consular offices of the Russian Federation itself.

The State programme to facilitate the voluntary resettlement in the Russian Federation of compatriots living abroad was supplemented in 2014 by the Federal Law “On Amending the Federal Law On Citizenship of the Russian Federation and Certain Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation,”⁴⁴ which proposes the introduction of a simplified procedure for admitting Russian citizenship in relation to foreign citizens and Stateless persons recognized as native speakers of the Russian language. This law was adopted in pursuance of the idea of President Putin expressed in a message to the Federal Assembly on 12 December, 2012,⁴⁵ on granting Russian citizenship in a simplified manner to people who were born in the former Russian Empire or the USSR, want to live in the Russian Federation, speak the Russian language, and intend to renounce their current citizenship—those who are currently designated “native speakers of the Russian language.”

The main criticism of the Russian Federation’s migration policy with regard to “compatriots” and “native speakers of the Russian language” is related to the presence of bureaucratic barriers that impede the movement of people to the Russian Federation and, most importantly, legalization in the country of migration.

* * *

The number of students from Central Asian countries studying abroad is growing rapidly. Three trends have been recorded:

- The main host country remains the Russian Federation.
- Significant centers of educational migration in Central Asia are Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.
- Educational migration from Uzbekistan to other countries of Central Asia is increasing rapidly.

The number of migrant workers from Central Asian countries shows a steady upward trend and even covers Kazakhstan, which until recently was mainly a host country. The following trends are recorded:

- The main host country remains the Russian Federation.
- Significant points of attraction for labour migration are countries outside the Eurasian migration system.
- Labour migration from Uzbekistan is increasing rapidly.

On the whole, an increase in the negative balance in the external migration of young people is recorded in all countries of Central Asia. A significant influence on this is exerted by external factors, including migration policies pursued by a number of countries, primarily the Russian Federation.

As nonreturning migration from the studied countries of Central Asia, we can definitely consider the group of people who left their country, having registered for permanent residence (although in this case, it is possible to return to their homeland). Forecasts on nonreturning migration regarding those who left the country without completing relevant documents can be reconstructed only on the basis of sociological studies. According to a study conducted as part of the project, about 40 per cent of the interviewed young people plan to return from abroad to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. A significant exception is Tajikistan, where more than 70 per cent of respondents declared their intention to return to their homeland (figure 1.7).

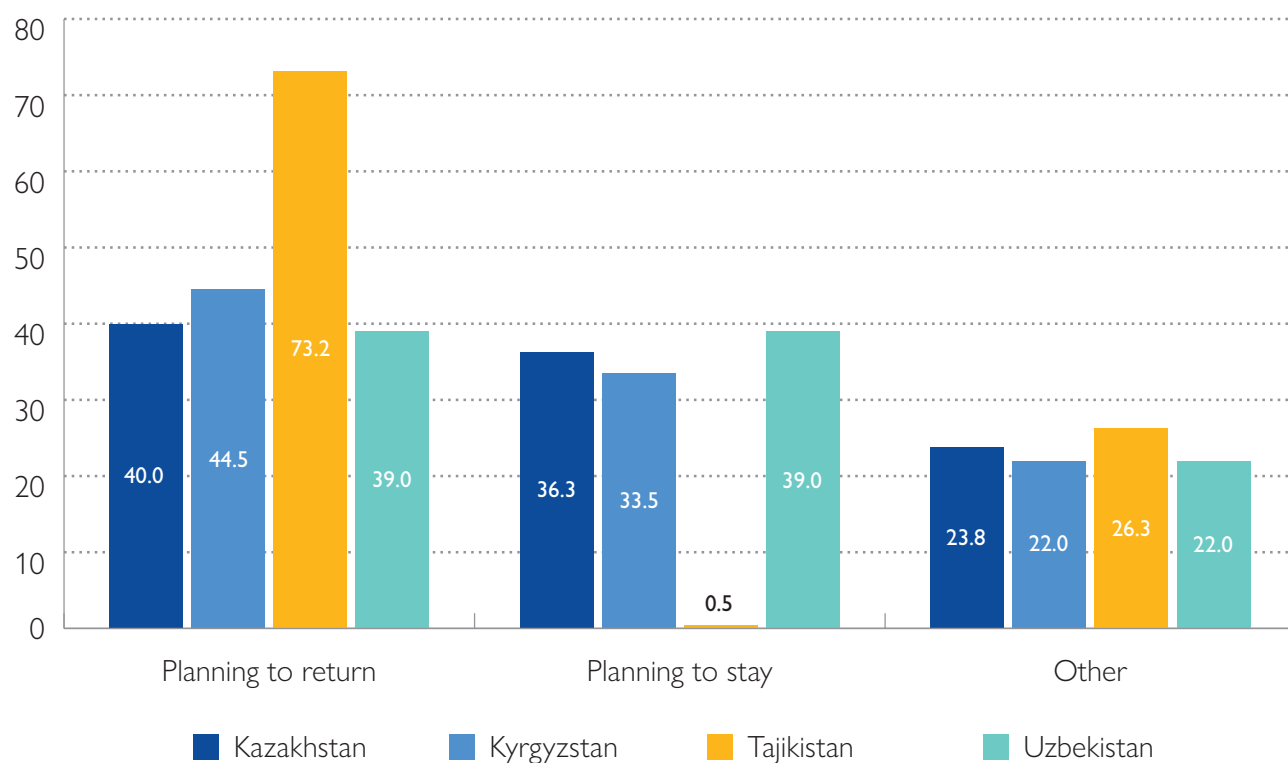
However, expert assessments are more critical, as, in their opinion, young people from Tajikistan, regardless of the country where they work or study, want to “secure a footing” there and continue to work.

Young people covered by in-depth interviews and focus group discussions prefer to leave, but a significant number of them want to return after receiving an education or accumulating capital.

⁴⁴ The Russian Federation. Federal Law No. 71-FZ dated 20 April, 2014, “On Amending the Federal Law On Citizenship of the Russian Federation and Certain Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation.”

⁴⁵ President of the Russian Federation. Message from the President to the Federal Assembly // Official site of the President of the Russian Federation Kremlin.ru, 12 December, 2012 // <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/17118>.

Figure 1.7—Answers to the question “Are you planning to return to your homeland” (online survey of people living abroad, %)



2 REGULATION OF MIGRATION PROCESSES AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

The dynamics of youth migration, its volume as well as motives, drivers, and factors affecting young citizens of Central Asian countries largely depend on how effective the youth policy pursued in the countries of the region is, whether it exists at all, and whether it is linked to regulatory mecha-

nisms of migration processes and the institutions implementing it. In the countries of Central Asia, the regulation of migration processes is, as a rule, carried out at the national level. Exceptions are quite rare bilateral agreements with host countries, usually the Russian Federation.

2.1 Kazakhstan

According to the Law “On State Youth Policy”⁴⁶ and the Concept of State Youth Policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2020, “Kazakhstan 2020: way to the future,”⁴⁷ the following involved in the implementation of youth policy:

- The Youth Policy Council under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan,⁴⁸ youth affairs councils under the akimats and the Coordinating Council for the Development of Youth Organizations—as advisory bodies;
- Youth and Family Affairs Committee of the Ministry of Information and Communications;⁴⁹
- Youth Policy Directorate of regional akimats as well as cities akimats of republican significance.

At the level of civil society and some quasistate structures, these are:

- Youth division “Zhas Otan” in the party “Nur Otan”;
- Kazakhstan Youth Congress;
- Public Association “Alliance of Students of Kazakhstan”;
- Association of Young Deputies of Kazakhstan;
- Research Center “Youth” to provide scientific support for implementation of State youth policy.

The Federation of Trade Unions of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the National Economic Chamber “Atameken Union,” and “National Welfare Fund “Samruk-Kazyna” joint-stock

company are also involved in the implementation of youth policy programmes.

In accordance with the Law “On State Youth Policy” (article 20),⁵⁰ dialog and interaction between central government bodies and youth, youth organizations as well as discussion of issues of implementation of the State youth policy are provided by republican and regional youth forums. To provide services for supporting and developing youth and youth organizations, youth resource centers are being formed that provide informational, methodological, consulting support and support for youth initiatives, monitoring, and analysis of the situation in the youth environment (article 23).

In accordance with the Law “On Population Migration” (article 8),⁵¹ the State system for managing migration processes in Kazakhstan includes:

- Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan;
- Bodies of internal affairs;
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs and foreign institutions of the Republic of Kazakhstan;
- Authorized body for population migration;
- Authorized body for the public health service;
- Authorized body for the education system;
- National security agency;
- Local executive bodies.

⁴⁶ Republic of Kazakhstan. Law No. 285-V ZPK dated 9 February, 2015, “On State Youth Policy.”

⁴⁷ Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Decree No. 191 dated 27 February, 2013, “On the Concept of State Youth Policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2020 ‘Kazakhstan 2020: the Way to the Future.’”

⁴⁸ President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Decree No. 625 dated 1 July, 2008, “On the establishment of the Council on Youth Policy under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan.”

⁴⁹ Minister of Information and Public Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Order No. 30 dated 28 March, 2019, “On approval of the Regulation of the Republican state institution” Committee on Youth and Family Affairs of the Ministry of Information and Social Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan // <http://mic.gov.kz/ru/pages/polozhenie-14>.

⁵⁰ Republic of Kazakhstan. Law No. 285-V ZPK dated 9 February, 2015, “On State Youth Policy.”

⁵¹ Republic of Kazakhstan. Law No. 477-IV dated 22 July, 2011, “On Population Migration.”

The legal framework for regulating migration processes in Kazakhstan is made up of the Law “On Migration of the Population,”⁵² as well as the Concept of Migration Policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2017–2021.⁵³

Youth policy in Kazakhstan is regulated by the Law “On State Youth Policy,”⁵⁴ as well as the Concept of State Youth Policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2020 “Kazakhstan 2020: way to the future.”⁵⁵

In accordance with the Law “On Population Migration” (article 54), citizens of Kazakhstan travelling outside the country are divided into two categories:⁵⁶

- Citizens travelling to another country for permanent residence;
- Citizens travelling to another country for temporary residence (including those working temporarily in foreign countries and undergoing training).

In accordance with article 55 of this law, citizens of Kazakhstan only register exit documents if they leave Kazakhstan for permanent residence. In other cases, citizens of Kazakhstan can travel outside the country without restriction.

The key areas of Kazakhstan’s migration activities are fixed in the Concept of the migration policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2017–2021,⁵⁷ which states that “Kazakhstan adheres to the strategy of temporary migration to attract foreign workers, optimal resettlement of the population throughout the country as well as long-term permanent migration in relation to ethnic repatriates arriving in the Republic of Kazakhstan.” Therefore, the issue of emigration in general and youth in particular is not a strategic priority for Kazakhstan.

In accordance with the Concept, a list of issues is highlighted that “require the expansion of the conceptual framework of migration policy”, in particular:

- An excess of unskilled labour and a shortage of qualified personnel in certain sectors of the economy due to the low level of education;
- The risk of an increase in the outflow of qualified personnel and talented youth.

The indicated problems suggest the presence of a migration policy that includes three interdependent strategic vectors:

- The use of temporary migration for the short-term attraction of foreign workers to certain sectors of the economy or specific priority projects to obtain a quick economic effect in the basic sectors of the economy;
- Liberalization of long-term migration conditions to attract qualified foreign workers to long-term projects aimed at implementing new innovations, increasing entrepreneurship, and developing human capital;
- Implementation of a nationwide continuing education programme capable of satisfying the needs of the developing economy in labour resources in the medium and long term, increasing the number of skilled workers who are citizens of Kazakhstan in the total labour force.

As we can see, the current policy does not focus on the issue of emigration (including youth emigration), although in the future the Concept notes “the lack of a mechanism for retaining so-called” talents “in the country.”

In the Concept of State Youth Policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2020,⁵⁸ the term “migration” is used once in connection with the indication of the values on which it is planned to base the socialization of youth and its involvement in public and political life. One of the values highlighted in the concept is of a hard worker, and it is noted that “the high mobility of youth is of great economic value.”

In addition, the Concept records a number of directions for the implementation of youth policy, work on which can

⁵² Republic of Kazakhstan. Law No. 477-IV dated 22 July, 2011, “On Population Migration.”

⁵³ Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Decree No. 602 dated 29 September, 2017, “On approval of the Concept of the migration policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2017–2021 and the Action Plan for the implementation of the Concept of the migration policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2017–2021.”

⁵⁴ Republic of Kazakhstan. Law No. 285-V ZPK dated 9 February, 2015, “On State Youth Policy.”

⁵⁵ Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Decree No. 191 dated 27 February, 2013, “On the Concept of State Youth Policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2020 ‘Kazakhstan 2020: the Way to the Future.’”

⁵⁶ Republic of Kazakhstan. Law No. 477-IV dated 22 July, 2011, “On Population Migration.”

⁵⁷ Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Decree No. 602 dated 29 September, 2017, “On approval of the Concept of the migration policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2017–2021 and the Action Plan for the implementation of the Concept of the migration policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2017–2021.”

⁵⁸ Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Decree No. 191 dated 27 February, 2013, “On the Concept of State Youth Policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2020 ‘Kazakhstan 2020: the Way to the Future.’”

have a direct and indirect impact on the migration potential of youth. Among them:

- Providing affordable and quality education;
- Creation of conditions for youth employment;
- Development of affordable housing for young people.

These paragraphs correlate with article 4 of the Law “On State Youth Policy,”⁵⁹ in which the following are identified as the main directions of state youth policy.

2.2 Kyrgyzstan

In Kyrgyzstan, the authorized body for the labour migration from the country is the State Migration Service of the Kyrgyz Republic and its overseas representative office in the Russian Federation.⁶⁰ The service’s functional responsibility includes 30 functions, which are divided into “industry policy functions”, “support functions”, “coordination and monitoring functions” and “service delivery functions”. This functional set was transferred to the State Migration Service after the dissolution of the previous Ministry of Labor, Migration and Youth, which embodied the political vision of migration together with issues of youth and employment. On the one hand, the separation of migration into an independent policy, separate from the mentioned areas, was intended for a more targeted solution of migration issues. On the other hand, the transfer of youth policy to the State Agency for Youth Affairs led the existing youth policy to be divorced from migration issues. Like the migration policy it does not fully identify specific processes characteristic to adolescent and youth migration and analyzes the general trends of the migration movement. This omission is especially striking given the fact that the dominance of young people in the migration movement is recognized and highlighted in the concepts of both policies. It is significant that educational migration is not specified in the list of tasks of either the State Migration Service or the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic.⁶¹

Other institutional players in the external labour migration from Kyrgyzstan are:

- Provide affordable and quality education, development of scientific and technical potential;
- Preservation and strengthening of health, the formation of a healthy lifestyle;
- Creation of conditions for employment;
- Creation of conditions for the development of entrepreneurship among young people;
- Development of an affordable housing system for young families and working youth;
- Promoting the development of talented youth;
- Providing conditions for cultural leisure and recreation.

- Government of the Kyrgyz Republic;
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs and foreign institutions of the Kyrgyz Republic;
- Migration Coordination Council under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic chaired by the Vice Prime Minister for Social Affairs.⁶²

Private migrant employment agencies are responsible for informing migrants about employment opportunities abroad. They also search for foreign employers and draw up employment contracts between employees and employers.

The authorized body for youth policy is the State Agency for Youth, Physical Culture, and Sports under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic. Since 2010, with the support of international organizations and the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, the authorized body has been working on the establishment of local youth centers designed to create conditions for mobilizing young people, provide them with the opportunity to share knowledge, acquire new skills and knowledge, grow their talents, and realize and develop activities that are useful for the community. Also, in accordance with the Law of Kyrgyzstan “On Local Self-Government,”⁶³ the organization of activities for working with children and youth is an issue of local importance. However, the role of local government in the implementation of both migration

⁵⁹ Republic of Kazakhstan. Law No. 285-V ZPK dated 9 February, 2015, “On State Youth Policy.”

⁶⁰ Government of the Kyrgyz Republic. Resolution No. 96 dated 2 March, 2016, “On the Representation of the State Migration Service under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic in the Russian Federation.”

⁶¹ Government of the Kyrgyz Republic. Regulation No. 854 dated 11 December, 2015, “On the State Migration Service under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic”. Government of the Kyrgyz Republic. Decree No. 119 dated 20 February, 2012, “On the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic.”

⁶² Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic. Order No. 254 dated 6 May, 2016.

⁶³ Republic of Kyrgyzstan. Law No. 101 dated 15 July, 2011, “On Local Self-Government”.

and youth policies remains limited due to their low institutional capacity and incompetence of local personnel. The scarcity of institutional mechanisms on which the implementation of youth policy depends is one of its weaknesses.

The legislation of the Kyrgyz Republic in the external labour migration and youth policy consists of the following main regulatory legal acts, State programmes, and concepts:

1. Law “On External Migration”;⁶⁴
2. Law “On External Labor Migration”;⁶⁵
3. Law “On the basis of State policy to support compatriots abroad”;⁶⁶
4. The programme for the employment of the population and the regulation of external and internal professional migration up to 2020;⁶⁷
5. Program of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic “Unity. Trust. Creation”;⁶⁸
6. Development of Youth Policy in 2017–2020 programme of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic.⁶⁹

The last time the Concept of State Migration Policy was adopted in 2004 and was valid until 2010. Following expiration of the Concept, the concerned ministries and departments of Kyrgyzstan raised the issue of the need to develop a new migration policy. Some experts even recommended the creation of a migration code to consolidate in one document the numerous regulatory legal acts regarding migration, streamline the functional responsibilities of various departments for migration management, and increase the effectiveness of State migration policy.⁷⁰ To date, the draft Concept of Migration Policy up to 2040 has been developed but not approved, and its status remains unclear.⁷¹ The new programme of the Government of the Kyrgyz Re-

public “Unity. Trust. Creation”⁷² acknowledges that insufficient attention has been paid to migration issues. It emphasizes not only the problems of employment and low wages but also the more global causes of migration: poor development of public infrastructure and regions, insufficient provision of social assistance to the population, etc. However, it demonstrates a rather superficial understanding of the consequences and dynamics of migration. For example, the statement that “every year the professional training of migrants increases. The volume of remittances is growing every year, providing a stimulating effect to the country’s economy” testifies more to the thesis nature of the document than to its pragmatism and realism.

In the absence of an independent Migration Policy Concept, the latter is implemented under the State Programme for Promoting Employment and Regulation of Labor Migration up to 2020, which was managed by the Ministry of Labor, Migration and Youth, which existed at that time.⁷³ The authors of the programme recognize that the work of citizens abroad remains an important component of the employment policy as a temporary opportunity to reduce tensions in the labour market. In this regard, State policy is designed to ease the migration situation of migrant workers located outside the country. Comprehensive measures are being taken to reach agreements among Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) member countries on ensuring pension rights, social protection rights, etc. However, the Concept does not provide an in-depth analysis of the subjects of migration processes and their varying migration behavior, which means that measures for its implementation risk remaining untargeted and generalized. For example, there are no references to young people, their needs and specific motives for going abroad. The hypertro-

⁶⁴ Republic of Kyrgyzstan. Law No. 61 dated 17 July, 2000, “On External Migration.”

⁶⁵ Republic of Kyrgyzstan. Law No. 4 dated 13 January, 2006, “On External Labor Migration.”

⁶⁶ Republic of Kyrgyzstan. Law No. 183 dated 3 August, 2013, “On the Basics of State Policy for the Support of Compatriots Abroad.”

⁶⁷ Government of the Kyrgyz Republic. Decree No. 485 dated 6 September, 2013, “On the Program for the Promotion of Employment and the Regulation of Internal and External Labor Migration up to 2020.”

⁶⁸ Jogorku Kenesh of the Kyrgyz Republic. Decree No. 2377-VI dated 20 April, 2018, “On the Program of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic ‘Unity. Trust. Creation.’”

⁶⁹ Government of the Kyrgyz Republic. Decree No. 471 dated 10 August, 2017, “On the Program of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic ‘Development of Youth Policy for 2017–2020.’”

⁷⁰ Developing a comprehensive long-term migration policy for the Kyrgyz Republic, Bishkek: UN, 2019.

⁷¹ The draft resolution of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic “On Approving the Concept of the Migration Policy of the Kyrgyz Republic up to 2040” is being developed // State Migration Service under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic // <http://ssm.gov.kg/zakonatelstvo-kr-v-sphere-migration>.

⁷² Government of the Kyrgyz Republic. Decree No. 413 dated 30 August, 2018, “On approval of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic Action Plan for 2018 on the implementation of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic ‘Unity. Trust. Creation.’”

⁷³ Government of the Kyrgyz Republic. Decree No. 485 dated 6 September, 2013, “On the Program for the Promotion of Employment and the Regulation of External Labor Migration up to 2020.”

phied emphasis on the economic component of labour migration does not allow us to fully comprehend youth migration, the reasons of which are not always explained by the desire for material prosperity. The action plan for implementation of the programme contains such abstract measures as “the development and implementation of short-term educational program for labour migrants,” “the development and implementation of simplified training program for residents of settlements located in mountainous and border regions.” However, there is no detailed description of these training programme and explanations of their suitability. In addition, the concept did not reflect the issues of reintegration of returning migrants, although these issues have been repeatedly raised in all recent Migration Profiles and by many experts and government officials.⁷⁴

The programme for the promotion of employment and regulation of external labour migration up to 2020 signals that the country’s current leadership maintains a relation to migration as the management of “excess population.” This emphasis is due to the fact that at the political level the belief is that in the near future, in addition to migration,

the population has no alternative to supporting themselves and their families.⁷⁵

The programme of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic “Development of youth policy for 2017–2020”⁷⁶ sets as its main goal the assistance in youth for self-realization. However, in reality, this is no more than the implementation of measures aimed at promoting a healthy lifestyle and sports, holding various tournaments and competitions, and multiplying the diverse social activities of young people. The Programme provides a link to migration statistics, from which the dominance of youth in the migration movement becomes obvious, but migration is not included in the analysis of priority problems of youth. The Programme does not mention how youth policy should be matched with the mass outflow of youth from the country, a decrease in its educational and professional potential. Moreover, the goals, objectives, and programme of measures do not cover rural youth, because they are tied to factors such as youth centers, non-governmental organizations, international organizations, forums, and congresses, whose activities are dependent on external investments and are not always available in the villages from where most young people travel abroad.

2.3 Tajikistan

State regulation of youth migration in Tajikistan is entrusted to the Ministry of Labor, Migration, and Employment and the Committee on Youth and Sports. It is significant that since 2013 issues of migration regulation in Tajikistan have been transferred from the security forces (Migration Service under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan) to civilians—the Migration Service of the Ministry of Labor, Migration, and Employment.⁷⁷

The Migration Service of the Ministry of Labor, Migration, and Employment, as an authorized State body, in accordance with article 7 of the Law of Tajikistan “On Migration”⁷⁸ coordinates and regulates issues related to the migration of Tajik citizens abroad and foreign citizens to Tajikistan. There is also a State agency, the Agency for the Provision of Work Abroad, under the Ministry of Labor, Migration, and Employment whose activities are aimed

at providing employment for Tajik citizens, including youth, abroad.

The State youth policy and other activities related to youth are implemented and coordinated by the Committee on Youth and Sports under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, which is the authorized State body for youth affairs (article 9 of the Law “On Youth and State Youth Policy”).⁷⁹ There is a Youth Labor Exchange under the Committee, which helps young people find work both domestically and abroad.

Youth educational migration is regulated by the Ministry of Education and Science of Tajikistan through the State institution “Center for International Programmes.” The Ministry regulates the issue of the international scholarship of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan “Durakhshan-

⁷⁴ Interviews with experts and employees of the State Service for Migration of the Kyrgyz Republic.

⁷⁵ Interview with an expert, Bishkek, 2019.

⁷⁶ Government of the Kyrgyz Republic. Decree No. 471 dated 10 August, 2017, “On approval of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic Program ‘Development of Youth Policy for 2017–2020.’”

⁷⁷ President of the Republic of Tajikistan. Decree No. 12 dated 19 November, 2013, “On improving the structure of executive bodies of state power of the Republic of Tajikistan.”

⁷⁸ Republic of Tajikistan. Law No. 881 dated 11 December, 1999, “On Migration.”

⁷⁹ Republic of Tajikistan. Law No. 52 dated 15 July, 2004, “On Youth and State Youth Policy.”

tagon” for the training and defense of scientific dissertations in foreign educational institutions and scientific institutions.

The migration and youth policy legislation of Tajikistan consists of the following regulatory legal acts:

1. The Law of the Republic of Tajikistan “On Migration,”⁸⁰ which defines the State regulation of migration. The law does not consider youth migration as a separate component.
2. The Law of the Republic of Tajikistan “On Youth and State Youth Policy.”⁸¹ Article 9, regarding the definition of the powers of the authorized State body on youth policy, States that the Committee on Youth and Sports “promotes the activities of the youth labour exchange in concluding contracts with foreign organizations, provides legal services to migrant workers, provides them with regulatory, legal, information, and methodological materials,” as well as in conjunction with other authorized State bodies contributes to the “creation of additional jobs, including vocational and language training for activities outside the country.” Article 12 on the authority of local youth affairs bodies states that they “conduct meetings and discussions, scientific and practical conferences, methodological seminars, and other educational events on issues of training, labour activity, labour migration, etc.”
3. National concept of youth policy in the Republic of Tajikistan.⁸² The following are noted in this document regarding youth migration:
 - The trend for youth labour migration, depending on the requirements of the regional market, is increasing, and more and more youth are employed abroad.
 - It emphasizes the need for the efficient use of the country’s labour resources (youth) within the country.
 - The importance is noted of developing youth entrepreneurship in employment, in particular, through young people in labour migration, to improve the economic situation, increase the income level of youth and young families.

- A relevant issue in youth labour migration is the low level of qualifications, professions, legal knowledge, civic education, lack of knowledge of a foreign language, and lack of awareness of labour market requirements in countries requiring labour. The expediency of carrying out explanatory measures in this sphere, including regarding the regulation of labour migration, teaching foreign languages, especially Russian, protection against involvement in extremist movements both domestically and abroad, prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, drug addiction, drug trafficking, and offenses, is noted.

In general, this concept notes the growth of youth migration and emphasizes the importance of employing young people within the country; attracting financial resources of migrant workers to entrepreneurial activities; the low level of qualification (knowledge and skills) of young migrants; outreach and awareness-raising activities regarding current issues that youth face in migration are emphasized.

4. The State Youth Policy Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan up to 2020.⁸³ This document regarding youth migration noted that:
 - In the context of globalization and forced migration, young people are called upon to become the proponent of the ideology of tolerance, the development of Tajik culture, and the strengthening of age and international relations.
 - Regarding the involvement of young people who are experiencing integration problems in society, migrants are also noted.

In the National Programme for Social Development of Youth in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2016–2018,⁸⁴ theses are outlined that are noted in the part of the Law and the Concept on State youth policy.

A significant problem is that in these documents the issue of youth migration is considered declaratively, without fixing practical mechanisms for its solution. Educational migration is not considered as a separate area of State youth policy.

⁸⁰ Republic of Tajikistan. Law No. 881 dated 11 December, 1999, “On Migration.”

⁸¹ Republic of Tajikistan. Law No. 52 dated 15 July, 2004, “On Youth and State Youth Policy.”

⁸² Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, Decree No. 228 dated 3 June, 2006, “On Approving the National Concept of Youth Policy in the Republic of Tajikistan.”

⁸³ Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, Decree No. 480 dated 4 October, 2011, “On approval of the State Youth Policy Strategy in the Republic of Tajikistan up to 2020.”

⁸⁴ Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, Decree No. 4 dated 13 January, 2016, “On the National Program for the Social Development of Youth in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2016–2018.”

2.4 Uzbekistan

The function of regulating external labour migration in Uzbekistan is performed by the Agency for External Labor Migration under the Ministry of Employment and Labor Relations of the Republic of Uzbekistan.⁸⁵ The Agency is entrusted with the task of assisting citizens of Uzbekistan in exercising their rights to work abroad by effectively managing and monitoring the processes of organized recruitment, preparation, implementation of adaptation measures and employment abroad. The Agency serves as the working body of the Ministry of Employment and Labor Relations for licensing and monitoring activities regarding the employment of jobseekers outside of Uzbekistan, the accreditation of legal entities engaged in confirming the professional competence of Uzbek citizens travelling abroad to work. In addition, the Agency carries out a comprehensive analysis of external labour migration, develops proposals on this basis for improving the legal framework, assists in the employment of citizens who have returned from labour migration. The Agency participates in the development and implementation of international labour migration cooperation projects, interacts with the relevant authorities of foreign countries on the regulation of the employment of Uzbek citizens abroad and the provision of their labour rights.

The Agency for External Labor Migration works closely with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, diplomatic missions, and consular offices of Uzbekistan abroad to monitor the labour activity of the country's citizens. Monitoring is also carried out through the Agency's representative offices in foreign countries.

To implement measures for legal and social protection, material support for citizens working abroad, the Agency interacts with the Fund for Support and Protection of the Rights and Interests of Citizens Working abroad, operating under the Ministry of Employment and Labor Relations of the Republic of Uzbekistan, as well as diplomatic and consular missions of Uzbekistan in foreign countries.

To implement programmes and projects for the reintegration of migrant workers, the Agency collaborates with territorial employment promotion authorities, which are provided with lists of Uzbek citizens who have returned home after completing temporary labour abroad, for their subsequent employment in the country.

Implementation of youth policy in Uzbekistan is entrusted to the nonprofit organization "Union of Youth of Uzbekistan," the purpose of which is the active involvement of young people in the process of deepening democratic, political, and economic reforms, ensuring the effective protection of the rights, freedoms, and legitimate interests of the young generation, raising the moral and professional level of young people as well as assistance in revealing their intellectual and creative potential.

Prior to the election of Shavkat Mirziyoyev as the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan in December 2016 and the beginning of reforms for streamlining labour migration, the main regulatory legal acts of the country in the labour migration were the following documents:

- Labor Code;
- Law on Employment;
- Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers "On the labour activity of citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan abroad and foreign citizens in the Republic";⁸⁶
- Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers "On measures to improve the labour activity of citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan abroad";⁸⁷
- Law "On the accession of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the agreement on cooperation between the member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States in the fight against illegal migration";⁸⁸
- Decree of the President of Uzbekistan "On measures to further expand cooperation in the labour migration with the Republic of Korea";⁸⁹
- Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Government of the Russian Federation on labour activities and the protection of

⁸⁵ Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Decree No. 725 dated 12 September, 2018, "Regulation on the Agency for External Labor Migration under the Ministry of Employment and Labor Relations of the Republic of Uzbekistan."

⁸⁶ Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Decree No. 408 dated 19 October, 1995, "On the Labor Activities of Citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan Abroad and Foreign Citizens in the Republic."

⁸⁷ Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Resolution No. 505 dated 12 November, 2003, "On Measures to Improve the Labor Activities of Citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan Abroad."

⁸⁸ Republic of Uzbekistan. The law No. ZRU-347 dated 10 April, 2013, "On the accession of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the agreement on cooperation between the member states of the Commonwealth of Independent States in the fight against illegal migration."

⁸⁹ President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Resolution No. PP-1993 dated 1 July, 2013, "On Measures to Further Expand Cooperation in the Labor Migration with the Republic of Korea."

the rights of migrant workers who are citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the Russian Federation and migrant workers who are citizens of the Russian Federation in the Republic of Uzbekistan.⁹⁰

According to a number of Uzbek lawyers, the existing legal framework did not efficiently provide a solution to the problems that arose in external labour migration. First of all, citizens' rights to work and decent wages provided for by the Constitution were not fully realized. This gave rise to growing labour migration, primarily external. However, taking into account the extremely low volumes of organized export of labour to developed countries, there has been a high growth in undocumented labour migration outside the republic and an increase in illegal activities of nonstate employment services abroad. Undocumented labour migration began to pose a threat to national security for both Uzbekistan and the countries hosting migrant workers, which contributed to the violation of the rights of Uzbek migrant workers and the concealment of their income. The solution to the problem of irregular labour migration and its regulation faced an insufficient number of bilateral and multilateral agreements on labour migration with foreign States.

Experts also described the system of training and retraining employees in Uzbekistan, which in fact did not take into account the needs of internal and external labour markets, as an urgent problem. At the legal level, one of the main problems was that most labour migration issues were resolved with the help of many by-laws, which in turn raised the question of the need for their unification at the level of the law.⁹¹

From 2017 to 2019, Uzbekistan made great progress in improving labour migration legislation and further developing the legal framework for cooperation with foreign countries in the protection of the rights of migrant workers. Currently, the regulation of external labour migration is carried out on the basis of the following regulatory legal acts:

- Decree of the President "On additional measures to further improve the system of external labor migration of the Republic of Uzbekistan";⁹²
- Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers "On measures to further improve and radically revise the system of organized employment of citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan abroad";⁹³
- Law on Private Employment Agencies;⁹⁴
- Decree of the President "On the opening of foreign representative offices of the Agency for External Labor Migration under the Ministry of Employment and Labor Relations of the Republic of Uzbekistan";⁹⁵
- Law on the Ratification of the Constitution of the International Organization for Migration (Brussels, 19 October, 1953);⁹⁶
- Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan on measures to further strengthen guarantees for the protection of citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan engaged in labour activities abroad and members of their families;⁹⁷
- Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan on additional measures to protect the rights and legitimate interests of citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan engaged in temporary labour activities abroad.⁹⁸

⁹⁰ President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Decree No. PP-719 dated 31 October, 2007, "On the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Government of the Russian Federation on labor activities and the protection of the rights of migrant workers who are citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the Russian Federation and migrant workers who are citizens of the Russian Federation in the Republic of Uzbekistan."

⁹¹ Silnov P. How to regulate labor migration // Legal Information Portal Normna, 12 April, 2017 // www.norma.uzpredlojeniya_po_zakono-datelstvu/kak_regulirovat_trudovuyu_migratsiyu.

⁹² President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Resolution No. PP-3839 dated 5 July, 2018, "On Additional Measures for Further Improving the System of External Labor Migration of the Republic of Uzbekistan."

⁹³ Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Decree No. 725 dated 12 September, 2018, "On measures to further improve and radically revise the system of organized employment of citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan abroad."

⁹⁴ Republic of Uzbekistan. Law No. ZRU-501 dated 16 October, 2018, "On Private Employment Agencies."

⁹⁵ President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Decree No. 3743 dated 28 May, 2018, "On the opening of foreign representative offices of the Agency for External Labor Migration under the Ministry of Employment and Labor Relations of the Republic of Uzbekistan."

⁹⁶ Republic of Uzbekistan. Law No. ZRU-510 dated 26 December, 2018, "On Ratification of the Constitution of the International Organization for Migration (Brussels, October 19, 1953)."

⁹⁷ President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Decree No. UP-5785 dated 20 August, 2019, "On measures to further strengthen guarantees for the protection of citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan engaged in labor activities abroad and their family members."

⁹⁸ Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Decree No. 713 dated 23 August, 2019, "On additional measures to protect the rights and legitimate interests of citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan engaged in temporary labor activities abroad."

In December 2017, the draft law “On External Labor Migration” was published, many of whose provisions were reflected in the above normative legal acts.

The following agreements should also be noted:

1. Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan and Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan on labour activities and the protection of the rights of migrant workers who are citizens of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the Republic of Uzbekistan and migrant works who are citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the Republic of Kazakhstan for the period from 2019 to 2020.⁹⁹
2. Agreement between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Turkey on the Protection of the Rights of Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (May 2019).
3. The Samarkand Declaration of Human Rights, which at the initiative of IOM included the protection of the rights of migrants. The text of the document says: “States should strive to ensure respect, protection, and fulfillment of the human rights of all migrants, regardless of their migration status and in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals” (First Asian Human Rights Forum, 22–23 November, 2018, Samarkand, Uzbekistan).

The specified legal acts and agreements lay the foundation for the creation and functioning in Uzbekistan of an orderly system for organizing external labour migration, which includes all three stages: assistance in arranging employment abroad, monitoring and providing assistance to migrant workers who are abroad, and assistance in finding jobs for returning migrants. In particular, regulatory acts clearly define:

- Goals and objectives of the Agency for External Labour Migration and the Fund for the Support and Protection of the Rights and Interests of Citizens Carrying Out Labour Activities Abroad, funding sources, and the procedure for using financial resources.
- The organization and selection of applicants.
- The close relationship of responsible structures and directing organizations with applicants at the stage of job search and educational, preparatory, and adaptation measures prior to leaving. They also determine the preservation of relations by monitoring the activities of migrant workers, protecting their rights, freedoms and legitimate interests in the country of employ-

ment, providing legal and various types of financial and medical assistance, coordinating the implementation by foreign partners and employers of relevant decisions and obligations arising from contracts, agreements, protocols, and other documents on the cooperation of Uzbekistan with foreign countries on the employment of citizens of Uzbekistan abroad.

- Areas of cooperation between the Agency and the Fund for Support and Protection of the Rights and Interests of Citizens, attaché for external labour migration of consular offices of the Republic of Uzbekistan; Agency representation abroad; governmental and non-governmental foreign partners of the Agency; sending organizations; non-governmental non-profit organizations.
- The accreditation procedure of legal entities engaged in activities to confirm the professional competence of citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan travelling abroad to work, the criteria for removing a license or accreditation and the nature of appealing against licensing authority decisions.
- The list of services of private employment agencies for the employment of jobseekers outside the Republic of Uzbekistan, the rights and obligations of a private agency, the rights and obligations of employers and jobseekers in their relations with a private agency. As well as the powers of the Ministry of Employment and Labor Relations of the Republic of Uzbekistan in regulating the activities of private employment agencies, the procedure for the inclusion of a legal entity in the Register of Private Employment Agencies, the issue of a license to conduct employment activities for people seeking work outside the Republic of Uzbekistan, the nature of the interaction of private employment agencies with State bodies and other organizations, etc.
- The legal basis for the formation of a unified database of workers and employers to reduce the level of irregular labour migration and increase the social and legal protection of Uzbek citizens working abroad. The unified database includes information about the applicant, the Register of private employment agencies in Uzbekistan and the Register of employers. Information on foreign employers is included in the Register of Employers on the basis of information received from the Agency, sending organizations, and the attaché for labour issues of consular offices of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The register of employers and the register of private employment agencies are posted on the official websites of the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations and the Agency.

⁹⁹ Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan to improve conditions for labor migrants // 24kz, 16 May, 2019 // <https://24.kz/ru/news/social/item/315390-kazakhstan-i-uzbekistan-uluchshat-usloviya-dlya-trudovoykh-migrantov>.

- Regulatory documents require the responsible structures (Agency) to carry out a comprehensive analysis of external labour migration and develop proposals on this basis for improving the regulatory framework. In addition, they prescribe the development and implementation international cooperation labour migration projects, interaction with the competent authorities of foreign States on the regulation of the processes of employment of citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan abroad and ensuring their labour rights.
- Assistance in finding employment for citizens who return from labour migration on the basis of cooperation of the Agency with territorial bodies of assistance for employment of the population.

Youth policy in Uzbekistan is regulated by the Law on State Youth Policy, which defines the main areas of State youth policy,¹⁰⁰ including those related to migration and education, namely:

- Providing affordable and quality education for young people;
- Creation of conditions for employment and youth employment;
- Support and encouragement of gifted and talented youth.

A key document in the youth policy is also the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On measures to increase the effectiveness of State youth policy and to support the Youth Union of Uzbekistan.”¹⁰¹ It defines the priority areas of activity of the Youth Union of Uzbekistan focused on the general activation of socioeconomic, sociopolitical,

ideological, educational participation of youth in the development of the country. Migration issues do not directly affect the decree.

The issue of State youth policy is included in the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On the Strategy for the Further Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan” (section 4.5. “Improving the State youth policy”).¹⁰²

There is no current Concept of State migration policy in Uzbekistan. The draft Concept of Migration Policy of the Republic of Uzbekistan was developed in 2013. However, its fate is unknown.¹⁰³ Uzbekistan’s legislation on labour migration does not highlight youth migration.

There is no Youth Policy Concept in Uzbekistan. Currently, only the project “Youth Concept–2030” has been developed, and it is under discussion. The issue of youth migration does not stand out separately in normative legal acts in youth policy.

* * *

Therefore, in the conceptual and doctrinal documents of the countries of Central Asia, the issue of external migration of qualified and highly qualified young people is precisely fixed. However, it does not receive a systematic and comprehensive interpretation. This leads to the fact that measures are declared in them that can create conditions limiting the outflow of such young people or increasing the attractiveness of their native countries for them. However, these measures remain at the level of declarations and are not transformed into real mechanisms capable of retaining talented youth in Central Asia.

¹⁰⁰ Republic of Uzbekistan. Law No. ZRU-406 dated 14 September, 2016, “On State Youth Policy.”

¹⁰¹ President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Decree No. UP-5106 dated 5 July, 2017, “On Measures to Improve the Efficiency of State Youth Policy and Support the Youth Union of Uzbekistan.”

¹⁰² President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Decree No. UP-4947 dated 7 February, 2017, “On a strategy for the further development of the Republic of Uzbekistan.”

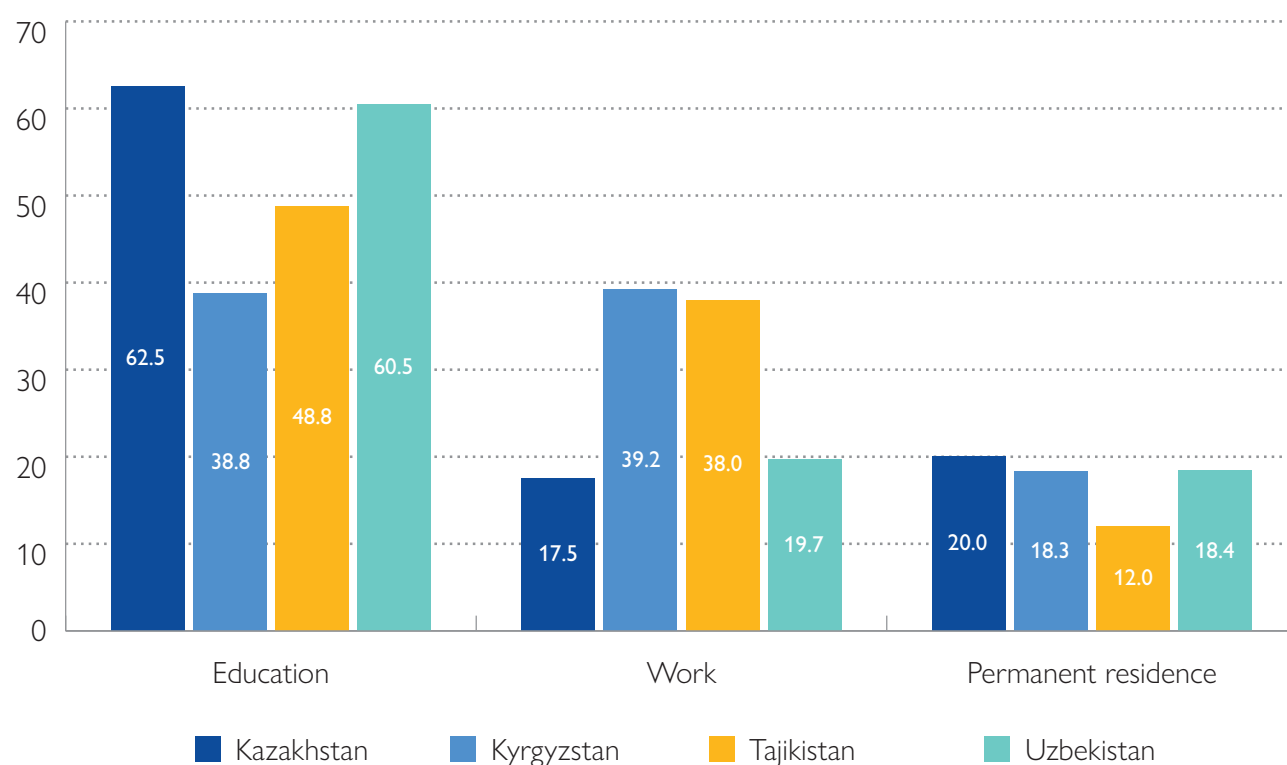
¹⁰³ The draft concept of the migration policy of the Republic of Uzbekistan: Preamble // Uz.demeter, 30 June, 2013 // <http://uz.denemetr.com/docs/694/index-15353-2.html>.

3 MOTIVES AND DRIVERS OF YOUTH MIGRATION

The motivation and drivers that prompt young Central Asian citizens to go abroad were reconstructed based on the results of field studies—an online survey, in-depth interviews, and focus groups.

As the study shows, the main goals of youth migration from Central Asian countries are education and work (figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1—The goals of young people abroad (online survey of people living abroad, %)



3.1 Motives for migration

The motives for migration are:

1. Economic situation. This factor is the most stable for migrant workers and dominates in comparison with other motives. In this segment, the following groups of inter-related factors motivating young people to migrate can be distinguished:

- Systemic poverty and material crisis in the family;
- Lack of domestic jobs as such; employment difficulties (the need for seniority, patronage or bribes);
- Lack of jobs in certain professions;
- Low wages in existing jobs;
- The predominance of jobs in the labour market involving heavy monotonous work (including in rural areas).

Labour migration is also motivated by a seasonal lull in the Central Asian labour market.

In Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, migration is most often a response to the search for solutions to personal socio-economic problems and improving living conditions:

- To accumulate funds for purchase of housing, land, or a car, payment for a wedding or study;
- For the maintenance of children, payment for their education;
- To save money for starting a business in the homeland (most often to buy a place in the market, buy a container for trade).

In Kyrgyzstan, along with the above motives, the decision to migrate was often preceded by a material crisis in

the family: young people go abroad to help parents and other family members (including those in migration), to resolve a material crisis in the family that occurred after certain events (wedding, death of a loved one).

"The mother-in-law's two children married at the same time. Us and my husband's older brother. The situation became financially difficult for us, so we left for [the Russian Federation]."

Woman, 33 years old, Jalalabad, Kyrgyzstan

"There, in Moscow, you need to work 20 days to earn 20 thousand soms. In Kyrgyzstan, you work 60 days to earn 20 thousand soms. That is three times more."

Man, 32 years old, Kara-Suu, Kyrgyzstan

"What pushed us... When I got married, we lived very poorly."

Woman, 31 years old, Osh, Kyrgyzstan

"We did not have enough money. It was very difficult. We really needed food. 1994 was very hard year for us. Everyone probably remembers this. They were hard years... we ate corn bread. I don't know, probably it pushed us"

Woman, 34 years old, Jalalabad, Kyrgyzstan

"Low wages. Insufficient salary even in decent places, in a bank, tax offices, despite having experience. The initial salary is not for yourself, let alone your family."

Man, 30 years old, Jalalabad, Kyrgyzstan

"... there [in the Russian Federation] the State provides better living conditions than ours. What should I do? Nothing. In order for a young specialist to get a job after graduation... Well, I don't know, excuse me, I have to give a bribe. Relatives have to work somewhere. To get a more or less decent place."

Woman, 35 years old, Jalalabad, Kyrgyzstan

"Unfortunately, in the south, there is no development for children. There is no future for children. There are no elementary groups where they develop. There is nothing. Therefore, I think, sooner or later, it will be necessary to leave all the same."

Woman, 35 years old, Jalalabad, Kyrgyzstan

"I tried to help my family, bought a car, paid for the trip, prepared my dowry."

Woman, 25 years old, Chui Oblast, Kyrgyzstan

2. A group of sociopsychological factors, in many respects, of an age-related nature (this class of reasons was most pronounced among Kyrgyz citizens):

- Living at home without parents, longing for parents who have been in labour migration for a long time migration in the post-Soviet space has affected several generations, which forms unconnected family dynamics (reunion of parents and children, spouses, etc.);
- Depression associated with marriage break-ups (for women, often exacerbated by a lack of money);
- Limitation, following the pattern: decided to go, because everyone is going;
- Departure under the influence of spouses, marriage partners, girls;
- Spontaneous, unmotivated decisions.

The influence of a religious factor was also recorded: one respondent (a 30-year-old man from Jalal-Abad) studied to be a banker, but, having accepted the views of Islam on banking services and interest, he abandoned the idea of working in a bank and decided to migrate.

"... I had to leave for family reasons—my husband and I divorced. I was left alone, the children were small... We were very heavily in debt."

Woman, 31 years old, Chui Oblast, Kyrgyzstan

"... mom and dad divorced. Then my mother went to Kazakhstan to feed the four of us. Then, I finished 9th grade and went to her."

Man, 23 years old, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

"I was depressed, my husband came and was jealous. My husband remarried. He married but came and made me live with him. Fighting... I was in the hospital. Then, there was a lot of need. It came to the prosecutor's office. He pierced the tires in my sister's car, cut them. Then, I went to [the Russian Federation]."

Woman, 30 years old, Osh, Kyrgyzstan

"Because I hadn't been with my parents for a long time, I also decided to go."

Woman, 21 years old, Osh, Kyrgyzstan

3. The situation in the education system (primarily higher and secondary specialized). Getting a good education in all countries of Central Asia remains the most effective social elevator as well as a way to resolve economic issues: get a decent and well-paid job, guarantee a stable, secure future. The increased interest of Central Asian youth in studying abroad is also in many ways a reaction to existing problems in national education systems:

- The poor quality of higher and secondary specialized education (including poor material and technical equipment of educational institutions);
- Incompetence of the teaching staff;
- Corruption of the education system.

"The opportunity arose from the Ministry of Education to go to the Moscow State Institute of International Relations, and I agreed. It is a high-quality education."

Woman, Khorog, Tajikistan

"The reasons that prompted me (to go) abroad include earning a decent academic degree, travelling goals, and loads of untapped potential."

Woman, Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan

Interviews with student migrants revealed that Central Asian youth want a high-quality education. Obtaining a good education abroad as a guarantee of a successful career in the future is the driver of educational migration. Moreover, educational migration often turns into labour migration, since highly qualified specialists are in no hurry to return home after receiving a diploma. Such a strategy is recorded by a number of youth migration¹⁰⁴ researchers and is confirmed in this project. The desire of young people to study abroad has three main reasons:

- The level of foreign education is significantly higher than that obtained in domestic higher education institutions.
- Foreign diplomas, especially those obtained in the United States of America and European countries, are more in demand and open up broad career prospects.
- Studying abroad expands the possibilities of establishing international professional and business contacts.

An important factor in migration is the search for opportunities for the high-quality development and education of children.

"I wanted to study in [the Russian Federation]. It is closer and cheaper to study. Living here [in Kazakhstan] is more expensive, and studying too. Living, renting an apartment is more expensive, studying is twice as expensive. Here, you need to study 4 years, there 5. Here, people pay for studying and don't turn up to classes but not there. There, they only asked for a box of chocolates from the group once in 5 years."

Woman, 20 years old, Ust-Kamenogorsk, Kazakhstan

4. Group of political factors: people's perception of the political system in their country and public services (education, health care, social protection) and the resulting attitude to their opportunities, including the level of confidence in the future, the ability to plan their lives and the lives of their children. The political factor also refers to corruption. Migrants complain of a high level of corruption at all levels and point to the lack of meritocracy as another important factor pushing them out of the country.

The study shows that the perception of public services, the presence of corruption, and the incompetence of government bodies are the second most important factor pushing people to migrate. However, for highly qualified young people, corruption, bureaucracy at all levels, impunity, and irresponsibility of officials often come first, higher than unemployment, low wages, and the absence of social guarantees (for example, in Kyrgyzstan). In Tajikistan, the importance of political factors was most often indicated by people who took part in the online survey, which is probably due to the fact that migrants who are abroad freely express their opinion, unlike those who live in the country.

"Yes, there is less corruption. And we have a lot... For example, if you deal with the police there, you have to pay to the bank. If you deal with the police here, you put the money in their hands. I notice it a lot here. Here, for example, if my husband is driving and gives money, he is immediately let go. It's not like that there..."

Woman, 34 years old, Jalalabad Oblast, Kyrgyzstan

In Kyrgyzstan, almost all study participants, regardless of their qualifications, emphasize the absence of positive changes in the country's economy and politics, the absence of any prospects in this area. The situation is described in terms such as "no movement," "no progress," "no change," "stagnation". The negative experience of contact with the state in Kyrgyzstan is even more emphasized because of migration and the possibility of comparing one's country with another. Problems associated with public services, their high cost and low quality are a significant factor stimulating migration. High-quality and affordable public services available in destination countries are also an important attraction.

5. Interest to see another country, to travel. Almost all young migrants, both labour and educational, clearly or indirectly had such an interest, although in each story they focused on what they considered more important (visiting historical and famous places, expanding one's personal horizons,

¹⁰⁴ S. Thieme. An International Degree, Social Ties and Return: When International Graduates Make a Career Back Home in Kyrgyzstan// Internationales Asienforum.—2014.—N 1–2 (45).—P. 113–128.

raising one's level of culture). Some explicitly stated that they first migrated out of interest. This can also include "educational tourism"—the opportunity to visit other countries through a particular educational programme. In many ways, this motive, interest in the other, according to experts, is a result of the general process of globalization.

"From the age of 14, I wanted to learn English. This was my main motive. I wanted to personally get to know life in the United States from the inside and to tell young people from the United States and other countries about the culture and achievements of Tajikistan."

Male, Rasht district, Tajikistan

"I don't know. Travel, see other countries. Have the opportunity to live independently. I live with relatives. Have the opportunity to move out and live normally."

Male, Almaty, Kazakhstan

"I have thought about moving many times. My parents keep me in the country, work commitments. I thought, where would I go to live permanently. I have always thought about moving."

Woman, 28 years old, Shymkent, Kazakhstan

Data on reasons for leaving obtained during an online survey of young people abroad also show the dominance of factors such as corruption, bureaucracy, and irresponsibility of officials; high unemployment and low wages; low level of development of the country, archaization of society (Appendix, figure A.1).

The poor quality of public services (corruption, bureaucracy, irresponsibility of officials) is the dominant reason for travelling abroad given by young Kazakh and Kyrgyz people who took part in the online survey. Among Tajik youth surveyed, this factor shares the first or second place with unemployment problems, low wages, and the lack of social guarantees. Uzbeks put this in second place after problems of unemployment, low wages, and the absence of social guarantees. Slightly behind the first and second positions are issues of the country's low level of development, the retraining of society, and the instability of the socioeconomic situation. The issue of unemployment and low wages is the second most frequently mentioned among Kyrgyz people.

I.: How did you end up in Orenburg?

R.: Through acquaintances.

I.: Did you know anyone there?

R.: Yes, friends. They promised to get us a job first. Help with housing. That's how it all happened.

Woman, 35 years old, Jalalabad, Kyrgyzstan

"There is respect there compared to what is here. Take the road. When somebody crosses a zebra, for example, cars let us. They slow down so we can cross. But here, they just drive through. They don't look whether the traffic light is red or green."

Woman, 33 years old, Jalalabad, Kyrgyzstan

"I can go to [the Russian Federation] any time. My former employer is in touch with me, often calls me back, and keeps a place for me in the workshop. If I go migrate again, I'll go there. I already know everything there, I know my job, my boss, this place. Everything is familiar and usual to me there. There is understanding and trust."

Man, 34 years old, Osh, Kyrgyzstan

"As soon as I get my daughters sorted, I will go to Moscow. To my old place, I'll work as a seamstress again. Yes, we are in touch [with the employer]. "I worked well last time, they trust me and I trust them."

Woman, 30 years old, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

"There you are never late, you leave home on time, and your salary is not even a day late.... There isn't that "take this relative to work, do that." Interviews are held there. Family ties won't help... It's not like it is here."

Man, 26 years old, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

According to expert estimates, the reasons for youth migration are:

- Well-paid work, the search for livelihoods;
- The desire to get a high-quality education and access to social elevators;
- Desire to see the world and be involved in global processes;
- External stimulation associated with the fact that economically developed countries are interested in an influx of young people who are hardworking, not expensive in terms of salary, peaceful, moderately religious, not prone to protests;
- Fears of national and other minorities regarding the prospects of their existence associated with a steady trend toward Islamization, including aggressive;
- The desire to get away from the pressure of the public opinion of local communities as well as from family and relatives;
- Search for prospects for self-realization and the opportunity to change your life;
- The impact of an attractive lifestyle created by the media and social networks.

Figure 3.2.1—The most common answers of respondents from Kazakhstan to the question “What was your motivation for leaving your homeland?” (Online survey of people living abroad, %)

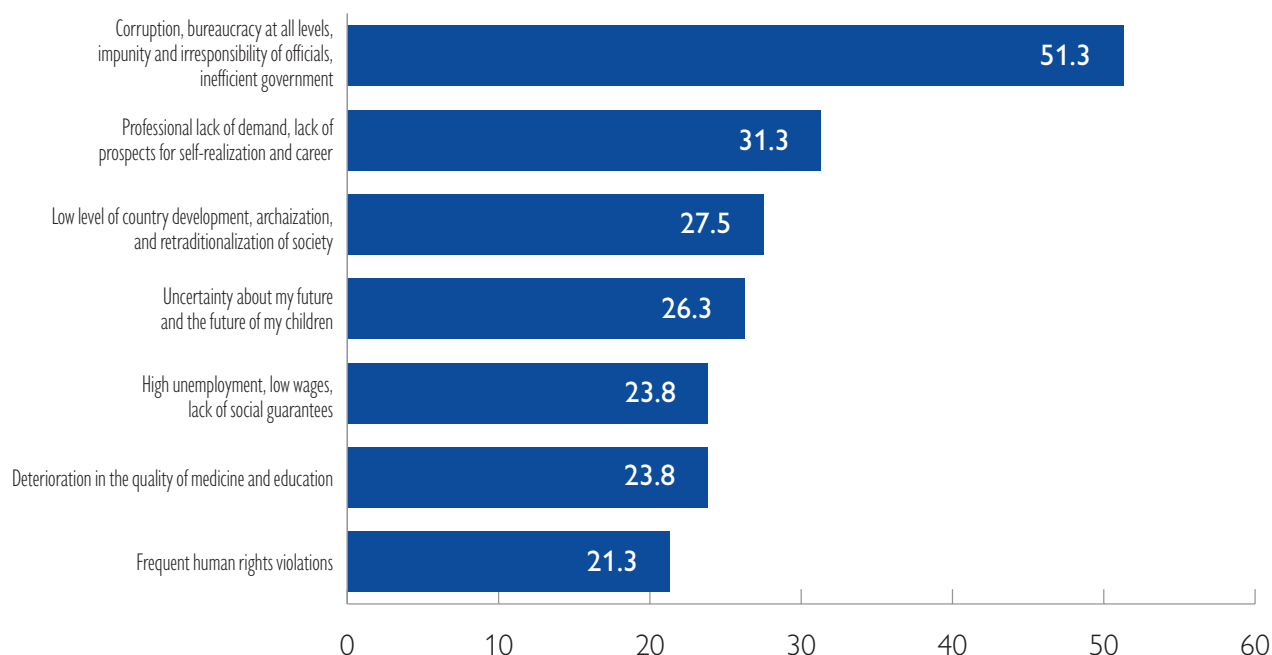


Figure 3.2.2—The most common answers of respondents from Kyrgyzstan to the question “What was your motivation for leaving your homeland?” (Online survey of people living abroad, %)

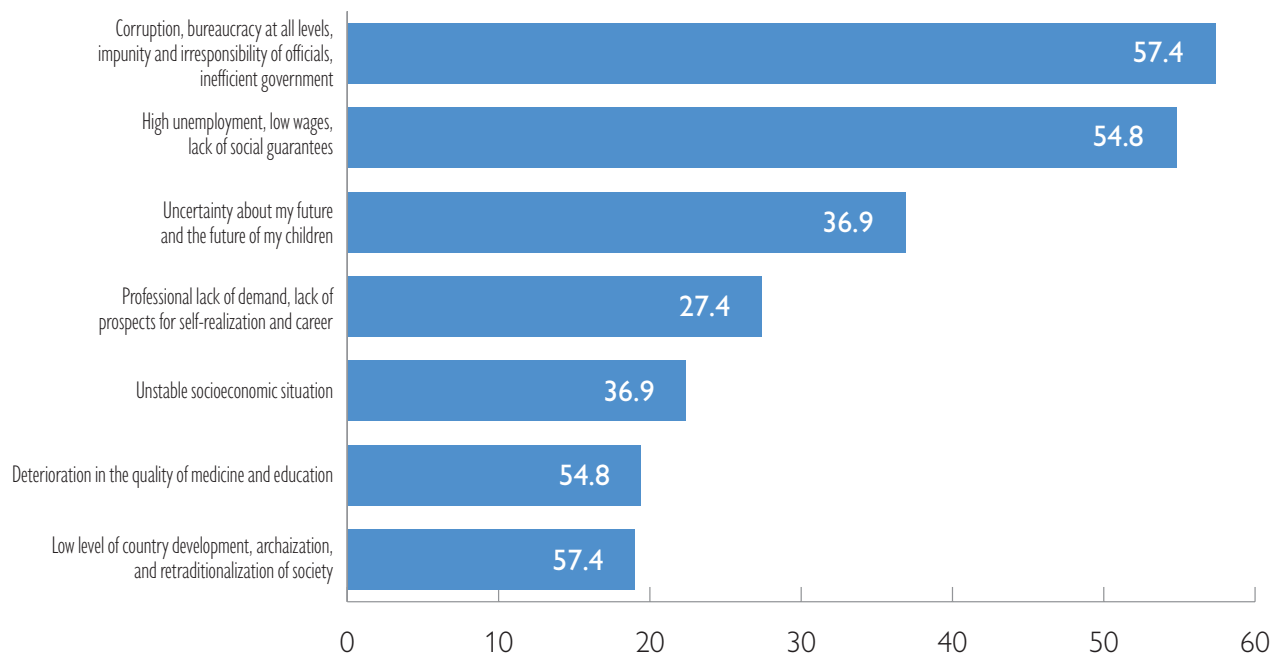


Figure 3.2.3—The most common answers of respondents from Tajikistan to the question “What was your motivation for leaving your homeland?” (Online survey of people living abroad, %)

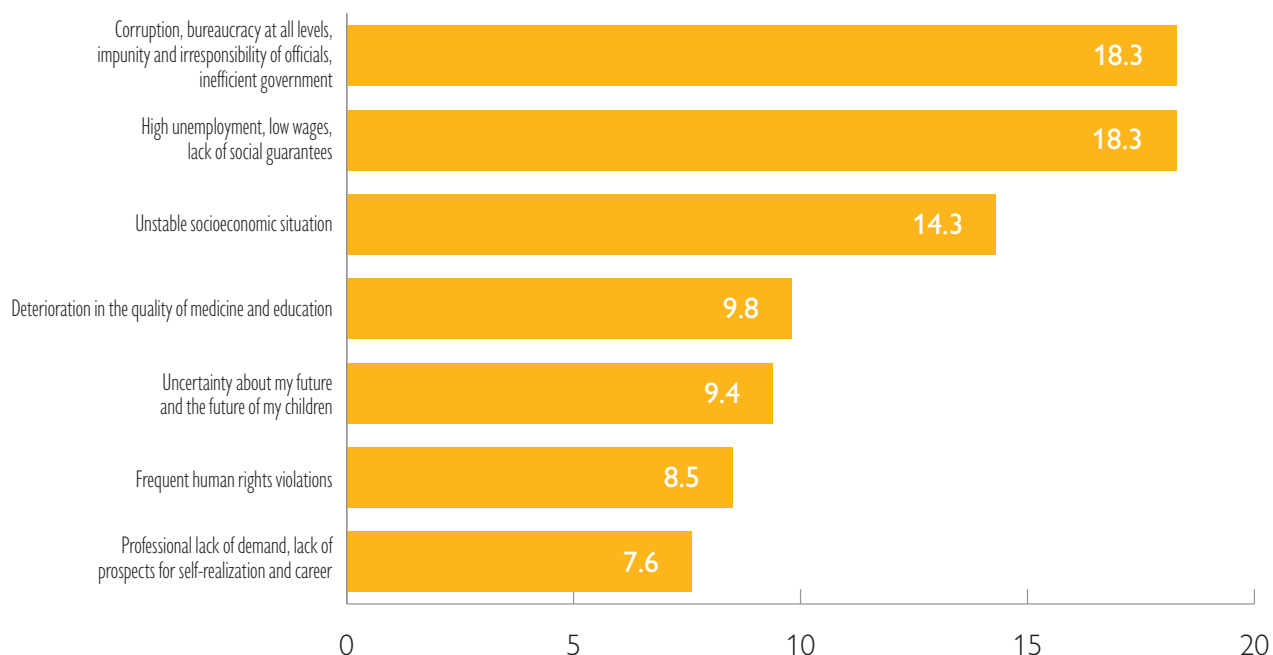
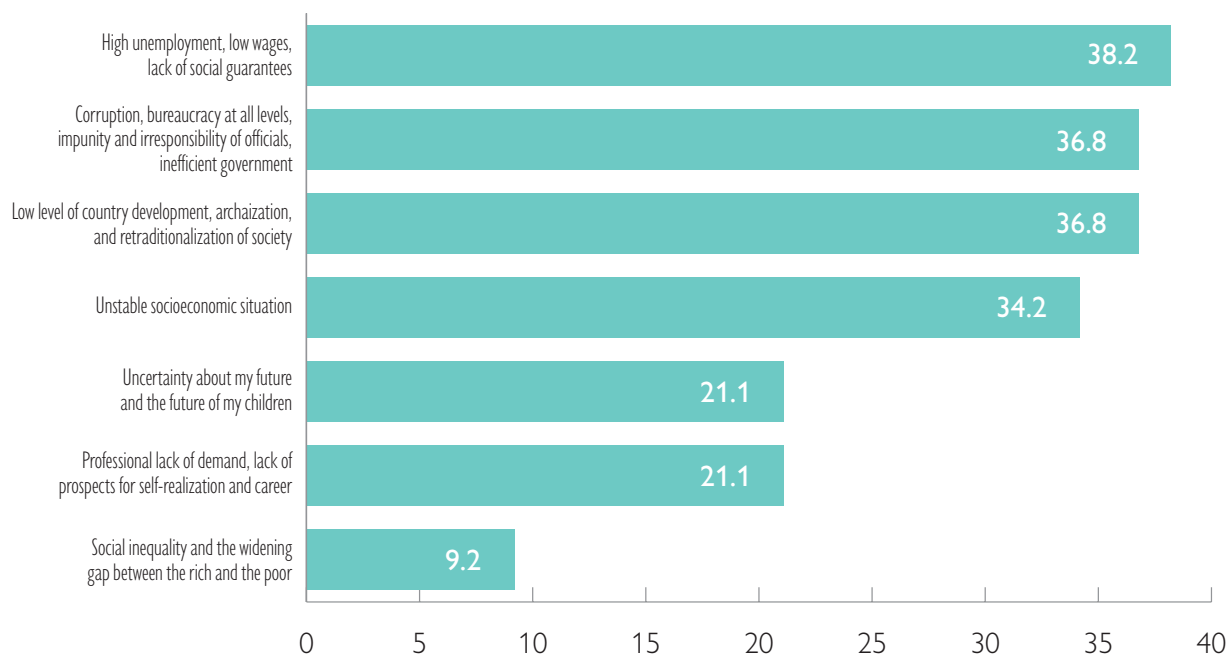


Figure 3.2.4—The most common answers of respondents from Uzbekistan to the question “What was your motivation for leaving your homeland?” (Online survey of people living abroad, %)



3.2 Factors stimulating external migration

Traditionally, low-skilled migrants have noted the following attractive factors in destination countries: the availability of work and its diversity, higher earnings compared with wages at home,¹⁰⁵ the presence of mechanisms that simplify registration and employment within the EAEU.¹⁰⁶ In addition to this list of factors in the framework of the study, the following factors that attract migrants (both labour and educational) were identified:

- The presence of migrant networks (the most common attracting factor in Kyrgyzstan, partly in Uzbekistan), which serve as a “cushioning infrastructure” that reduces the financial, physical, and psychological “costs” of migration;¹⁰⁷
- The presence of established successful relations with the employer;
- The availability and quality of State guarantees in the host country (primarily in the Russian Federation as a space with a higher quality of life: free or cheap medicine, higher pensions, medical insurance);
- High-quality (sometimes more affordable) education and work;
- Personal freedom, personal space, the ability to express and assert a personal opinion: youth in Central Asia, on the one hand, is growing up in a traditional society, under the control of parents, traditions, and customs, while, on the other hand, there is a transformation in the values of young people that they want to express and assert;
- Good prospects for children: infrastructure, human capital, high-quality education, public policy, medical support.

“I left Kazakhstan because I want to raise children as normal people, enjoy life with my wife, travel.”

Man, Germany

“System changes are needed. It should be a free country with a free market without Soviet methods of economic management when there is a competitive market and conditions are created for the youth to remain.”

Man, 31 years old, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

“I think that the State should help and create the infrastructure but not interfere in minds and order. People are independent, and people are not children, they know what they want. We need to give everything the opportunity to develop.”

Man, 26 years old, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

“When he’s there, he does what he wants. You come here, parents say “do this, do that.” In other words, there is no freedom. A person must have personal space, personal freedom, their own opinion.”

Man, 25 years old, Osh, Kyrgyzstan

“I can tell you about [the Russian Federation]. When I was in Moscow for the first time, I liked the fact that there are a lot of museums. We visited the houses where great people lived, for example, Pushkin and Tolstoy. It’s a big city, an impressive level of culture, and there are lots of opportunities to build a good career”.

Girl, 19 years old, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Educational migrants generally indicate socioeconomic factors, such as a higher level of socioeconomic development abroad and high living standards (including high-quality medicine and education), a high level of accommodation and comfort of life, a high level of social security, high wages, fair competition and opportunities for developing your own business as factors that determine the attraction of migration. The second place in terms of importance is taken by

¹⁰⁵ L. Sagynbekova. The impact of international migration: Process and Contemporary Trends in Kyrgyzstan, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2016.

¹⁰⁶ Between 2015 and 2016, the number of Kyrgyz migrants in the Russian Federation increased by 22 per cent, while the number of Tajik migrants in the same period fell by 12 per cent. Over the same period, remittances increased by 26 per cent for Kyrgyzstan and decreased by 13 per cent for Tajikistan (Laitinen A., Kyrgyzstan in the Eurasian Economic Union: Challenges and Opportunities. International Relations Master’s Thesis, University of Tampere, 2018, p. 53).

¹⁰⁷ The presence of emigrant networks as an important condition for emigration is confirmed in other studies. For 90 per cent of labour migrants working in the Russian Federation and 78 per cent working in Kazakhstan who took part in a sociological survey, the presence of relatives, family, and friends was a decisive factor in the decision to emigrate to these countries. Also, when asked about who helped them protect their rights, find work and housing, provide moral support, 81 per cent of those who work in the Russian Federation and 63 per cent of those who work in Kazakhstan answered “emigrant networks” (E. Vinokurov, V. Pereboyev. Labor Migration and Human Capital in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan: Impact of Accession to the SES. MPRA Paper No. 62087, 2013).

such factors as a high level of personal security, trust in law enforcement agencies, low level of corruption, lack of protectionism and discrimination; a strong civil society and democratic institutions, a developed system of local self-government, the opportunity to participate in the life of the country, compliance with the rule of law, clear and transparent rules of behavior for all. Other attractive factors noted by respondents included the wide opportunities in foreign countries for professional development, career growth, and self-realization in a competitive environment.

“Young people leave, see the conditions and prospects in another country, make good money, can afford to have a good rest; therefore, they lose their desire to return. If we solve these problems, I think that the State will be able to keep young people in the country.”

Girl, 25 years old, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

“I went to work in [the Russian Federation] for the first time. I got a good impression. I worked and returned. Moscow has a bad attitude toward people, but in other countries like Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan the attitude toward people is good. In Turkey, the attitude toward people is even better than in our country.”

Man, 26 years old, Jizzakh, Uzbekistan

According to an online survey of young people abroad, the main factors for living abroad are decent pay and the availability of social guarantees; opportunities for professional development and career growth; prospects for children (Appendix, figure A.2).

In Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, the main “attracting” factor for young people surveyed is decent pay and the availability of social guarantees. The second most frequently mentioned point in Kyrgyzstan is the possibility of professional development, self-realization, and career growth. In Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, this is the main “attracting” factor, which is mentioned more often than the desire for decent wages and social guarantees. In Tajikistan, the second position is prospects for children. This is the third most fre-

quently mentioned factor for young people from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. Therefore, the main “attracting” factors for young people in all countries of Central Asia are almost the same.

The push factors for young migrants are dominated by political and socioeconomic factors. Young people point to push factors such as:

- Socioeconomic processes—an unstable socioeconomic situation, a low level of development of the country, a weak economy, lack of economic prospects, difficulties getting a job, stagnation, low wages. It is also noted that in such a situation it is difficult to develop a business and make savings, to realize oneself as a professional.
- Corruption and nepotism, which, according to respondents, are manifested in the countries of Central Asia in all spheres and at all levels.
- Deterioration in the quality of human capital in the country, the mass outflow of highly qualified specialists, the archaization of society, the low level of culture of the population, a fall in the level of education and medicine.

According to an online survey of young people living abroad, the main factors that prevent them from returning to their homeland are difficulties in getting a well-paid job, noncompliance with laws, civil rights and freedoms at home as well as the lack of the possibility of self-realization and career growth: including due to nepotism and corruption. It is notable that the lack of motivation to return is affected by the worsening situation in public safety and education (Appendix, figure A.3).

According to respondents from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, the main deterrent to returning to their homeland is the difficulty of getting well-paid jobs there. In Kazakhstan, the lack of the possibility of self-realization is on an equal footing with corruption and nepotism. This factor is one of the three most frequently mentioned in other countries of Central Asia. In addition, in all countries, the three most frequently cited factors “preventing” return include noncompliance with laws, civil rights, and freedoms in the homeland. Therefore, the most significant factors for this issue are similar for all countries of Central Asia.

Figure 3.3.1—The most common answers of respondents from Kazakhstan to the question: “What goals are you pursuing while abroad?” (Online survey of people living abroad, %)

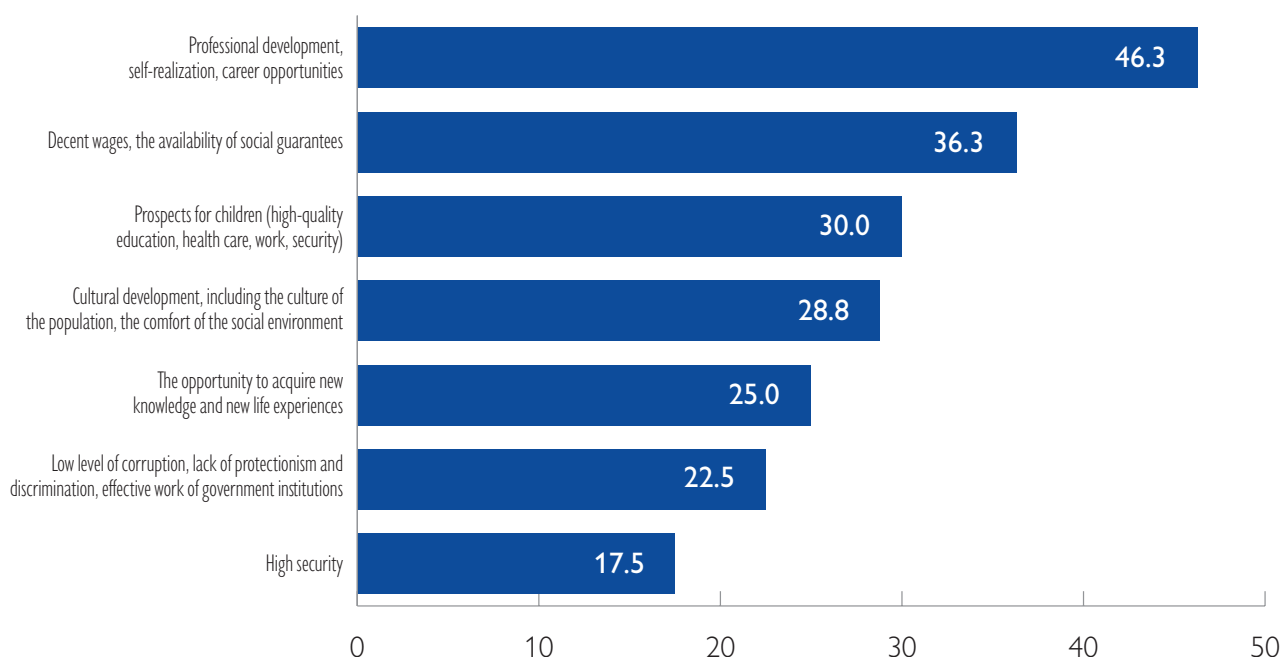


Figure 3.3.2—The most common answers of respondents from Kyrgyzstan to the question: “What goals are you pursuing while abroad?” (Online survey of people living abroad, %)

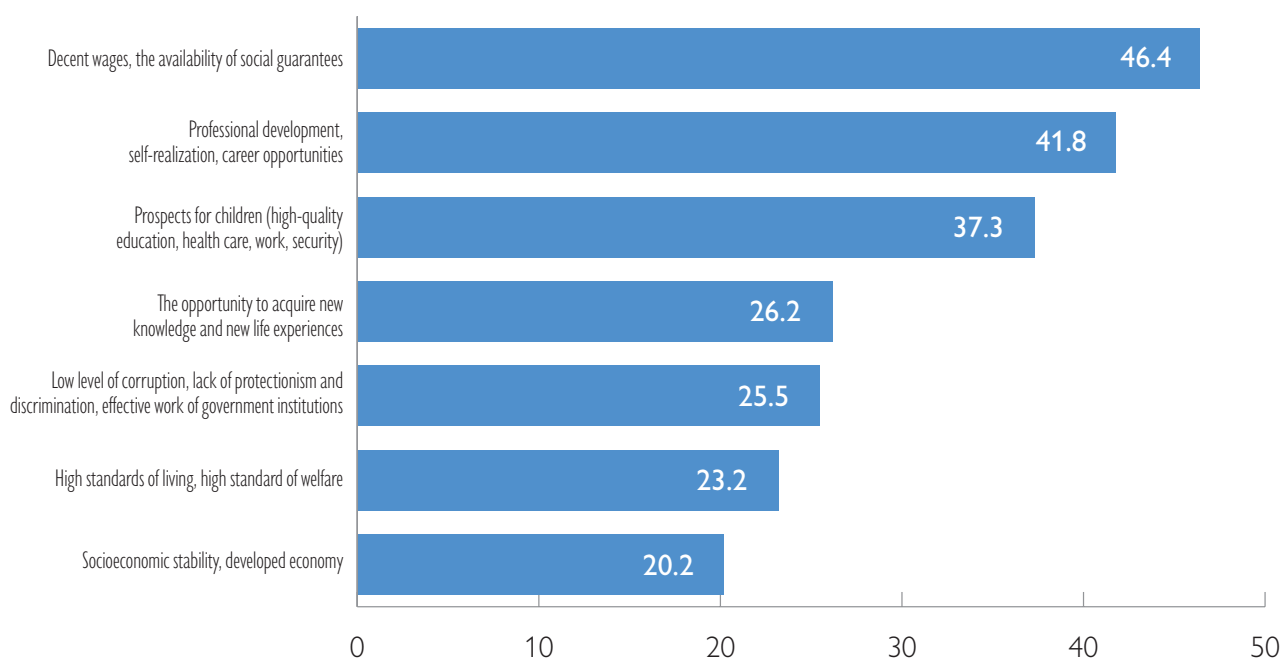


Figure 3.3.3—The most common answers of respondents from Tajikistan to the question: “What goals are you pursuing while abroad?” (Online survey of people living abroad, %)

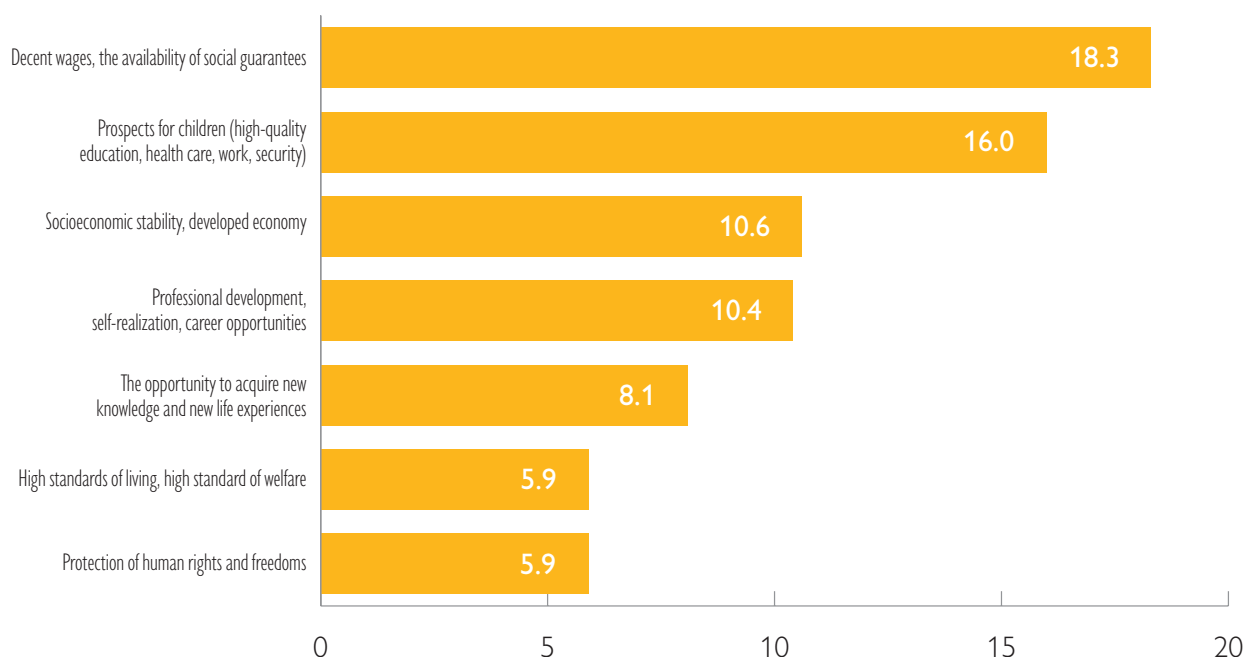


Figure 3.3.4—The most common answers of respondents from Uzbekistan to the question: “What goals are you pursuing while abroad?” (Online survey of people living abroad, %)

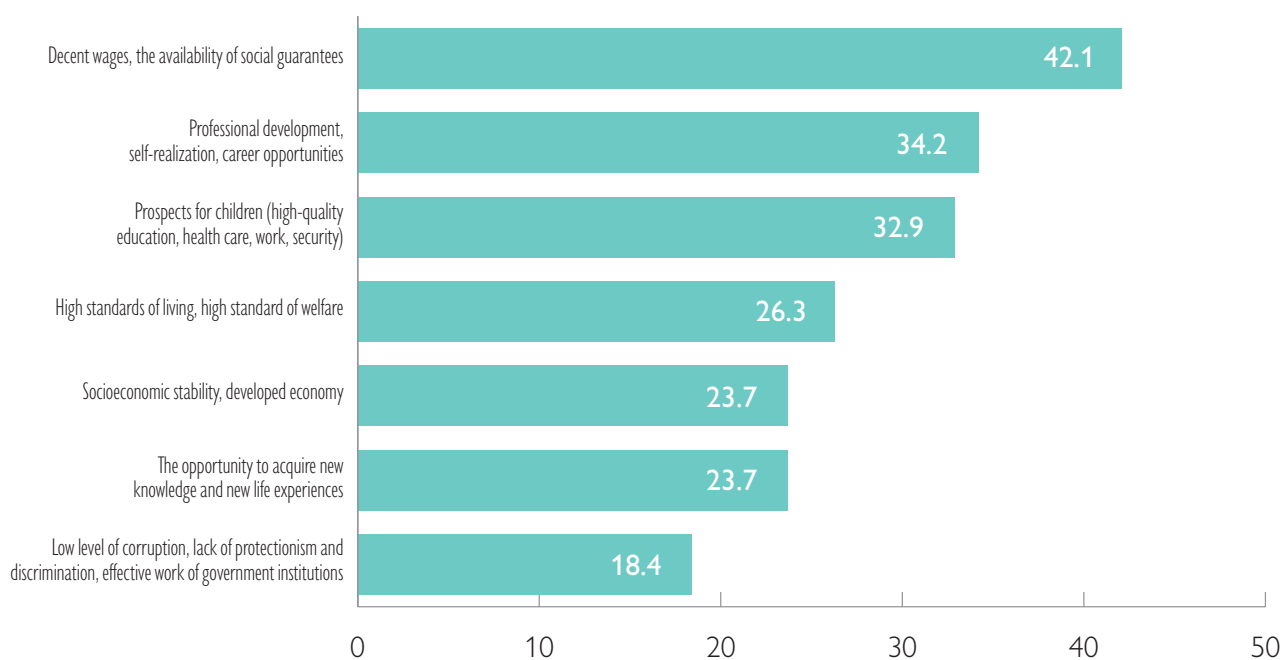


Figure 3.4.1—The most common answers of respondents from Kazakhstan to the question “What stops you from returning to your homeland?” (Online survey of people living abroad, %)

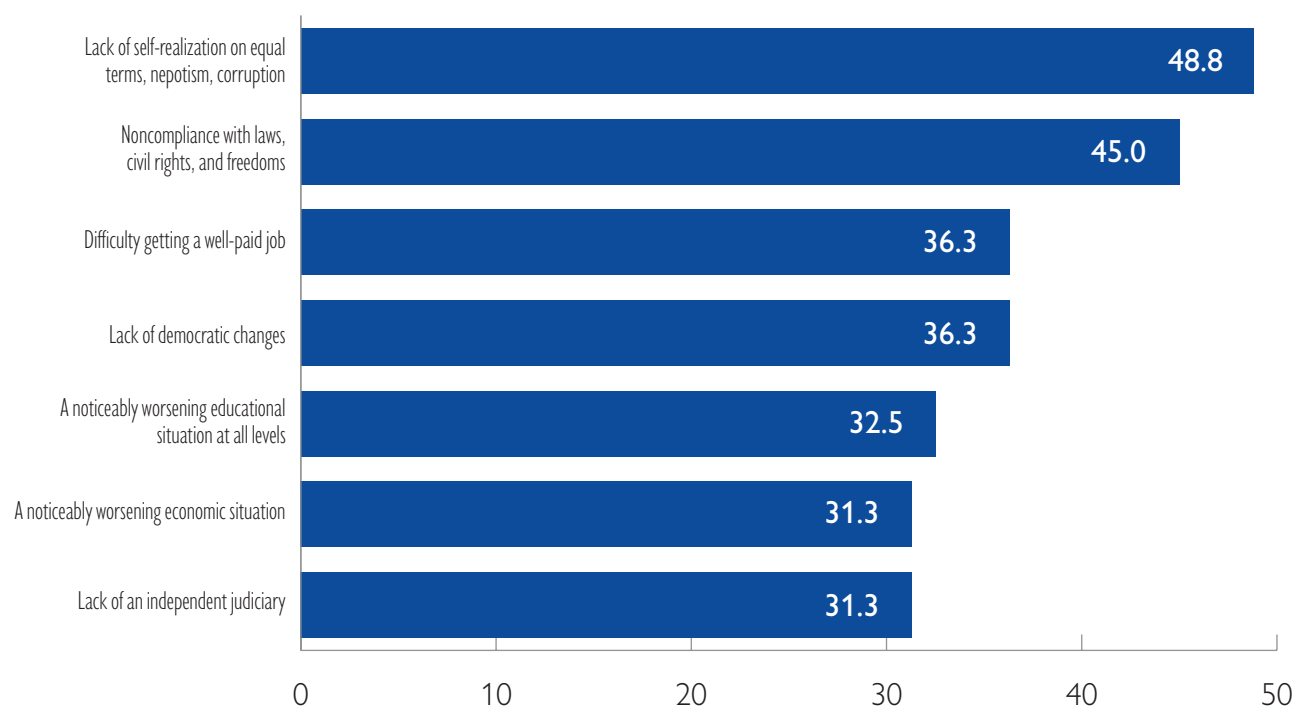


Figure 3.4.2—The most common answers of respondents from Kyrgyzstan to the question “What stops you from returning to your homeland?” (Online survey of people living abroad, %)

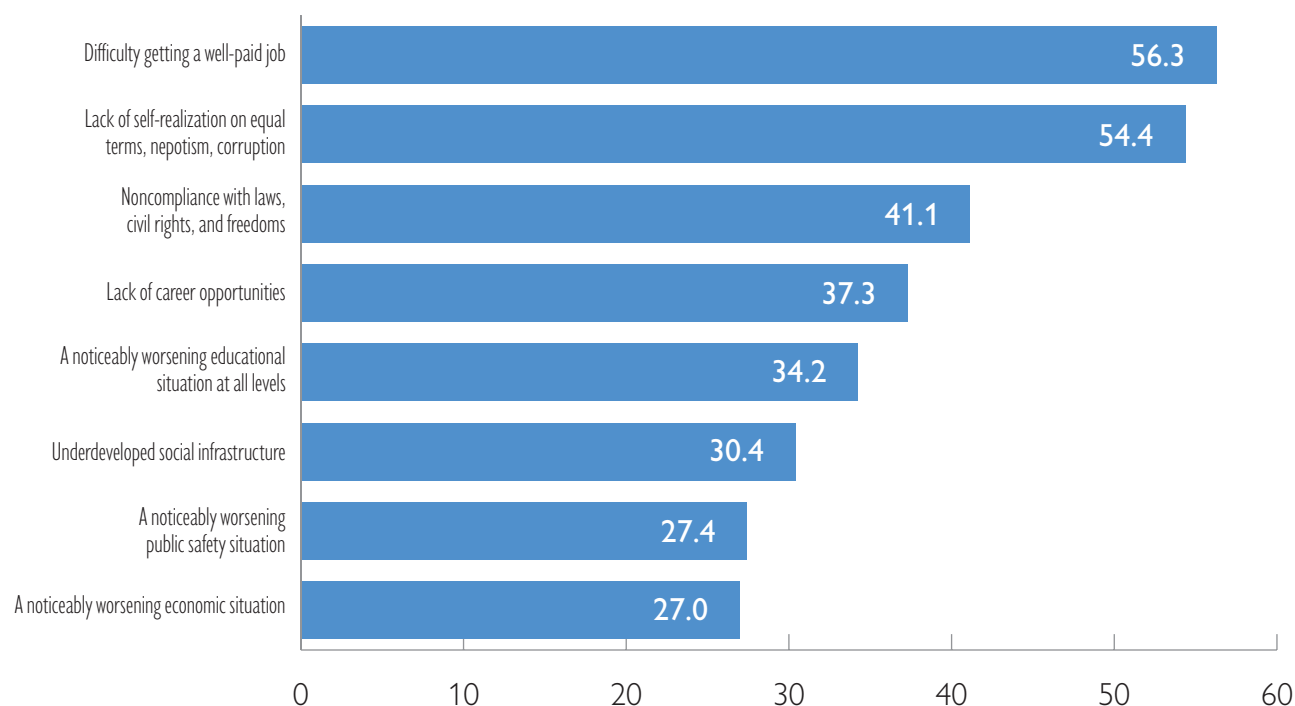


Figure 3.4.3—The most common answers of respondents from Tajikistan to the question “What stops you from returning to your homeland?” (Online survey of people living abroad, %)

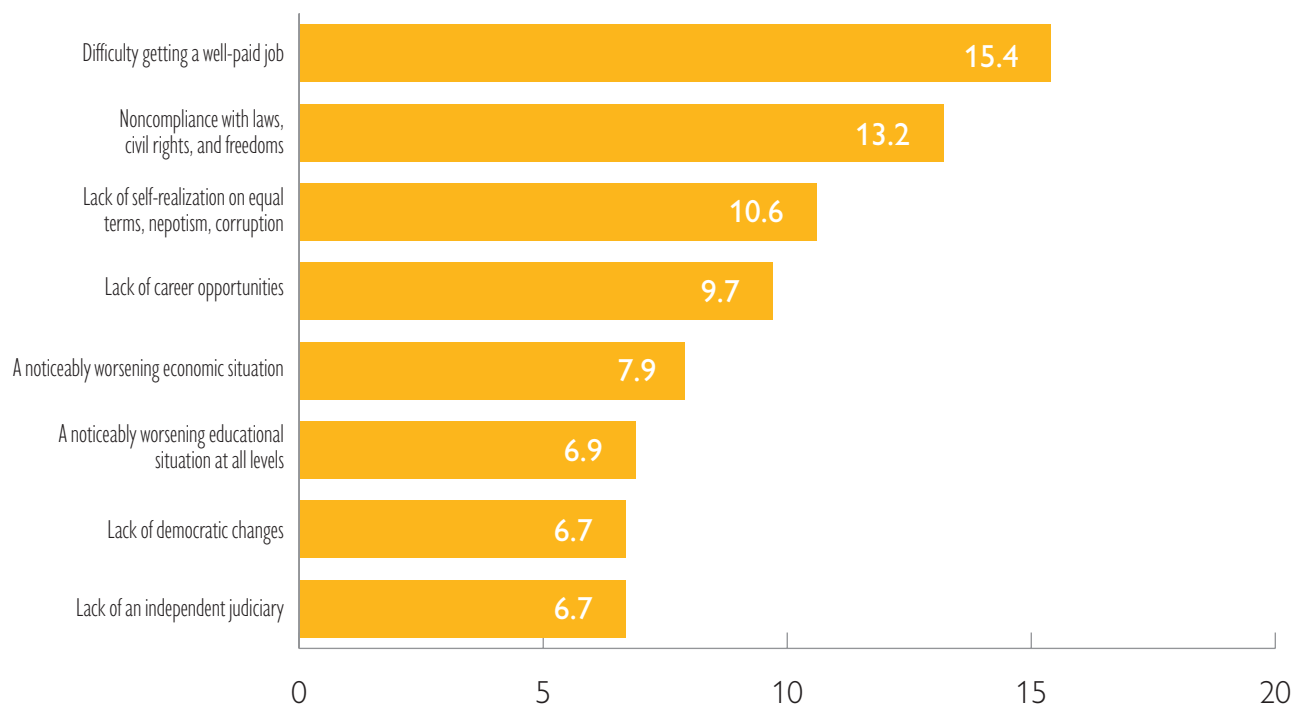
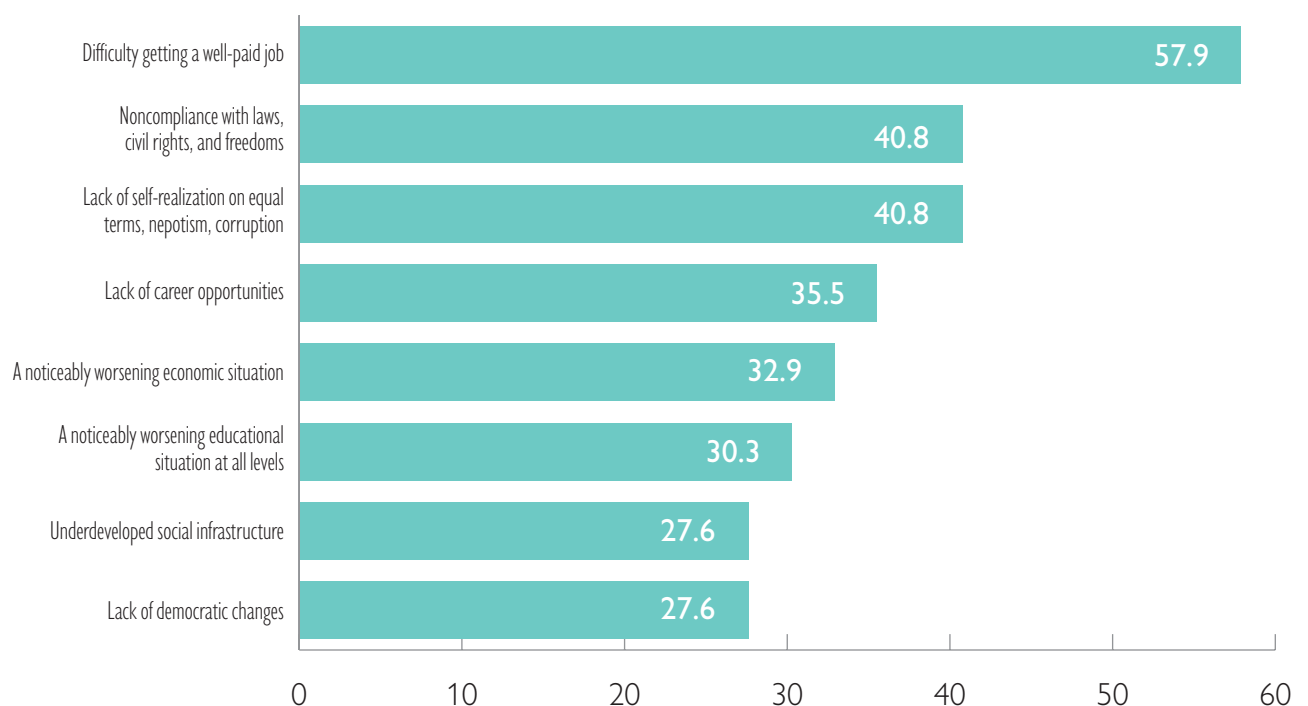


Figure 3.4.4—The most common answers of respondents from Uzbekistan to the question “What stops you from returning to your homeland?” (Online survey of people living abroad, %)



3.3 External migration constraints

Young migrants abroad identified several reasons why they would return to their homeland, the main ones include getting a well-paid job and an improved socioeconomic situation (including improvement in the financial system) as well as the presence of clear career prospects; observance of political rights and freedoms, development of civil society institutions and marked improvements in the fight against corruption and nepotism; radical improvements in the education and health care system (Appendix, figure A.4).

The main factor “attracting” respondents from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan to return to their homeland is getting a well-paid job. For Kyrgyzstan, it is an improvement in the socioeconomic situation of the population (the third most frequently mentioned factor among respondents from Uzbekistan), for Kazakhstan, significant improvements in the fight against corruption and nepotism (the second most frequent in Tajikistan). For respondents from Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, the first three motives include the issue of respect for political rights and freedoms and the development of civil society institutions.

Analysis of in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with young people currently in Central Asia revealed a number of factors that prevent young people from migrating from the region:

1. Family ties—usually the need to support elderly parents, the habit of living with family, friends, a comfortable environment and the presence of young children who may find it hard to adapt to a new place. This factor is most frequently mentioned.
2. “A Sense of Homeland,” attachment to local culture, a sense of comfort in living where everything is known and understood, a desire to serve the development of your country, to improve something.
3. To one degree or another, resolved social problems—the availability of one’s own housing, stable and well-paid work, or medium and long-term contractual relations with the employer, prospects for professional and career growth associated with low competition, one’s own business.
4. Lack of funds to move, understanding of their lack of competitiveness, lack of knowledge of languages (at least English).

Interviews and focus group discussions conducted with young people who have been involved in labour or educational migration highlight the following reasons for the return of migrants to their homeland:

1. Family reasons—return due to the family as a whole (“missing the family”) or its individual members (dominate), including:
 - The need to care for parents (very often);
 - Because of children (often);
 - To build a family.
2. The nature of labour, salary, living conditions abroad:
 - Work in labour migrations ceased to be profitable, trade stopped, got into debt;
 - The work is too hard, working and living conditions are extremely unfavorable, difficulties in earning money;
 - Discrimination, a feeling of fear.
3. Health reasons—sharp deterioration in health, the need for an expensive operation, injury, pregnancy.
4. Administrative, political, and technical reasons, both personal and international:
 - The contract or training period expired;
 - Blacklisted in the host country (most often in the Russian Federation), was deported;
 - Relations between the host country and the home country (for example, between Turkey and Kyrgyzstan) deteriorated.
5. Achievement-patriotic reasons:
 - Achieved one’s goal (saved up money for housing, family; completed their studies at the university);
 - Planned to return initially.

Figure 3.5.1—The most common answers of respondents from Kazakhstan to the question: “Under what conditions would you return to your homeland to work in your country?” (Online survey of people living abroad, %)

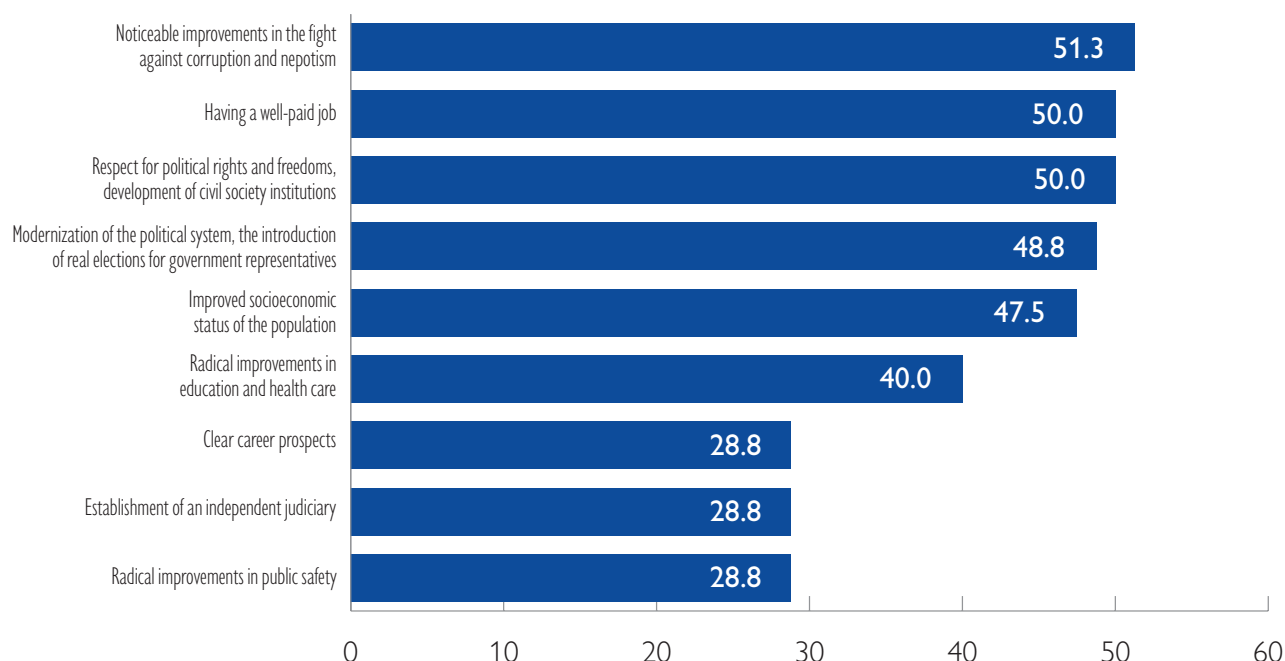


Figure 3.5.2—The most common answers of respondents from Kyrgyzstan to the question: “Under what conditions would you return to your homeland to work in your country?” (Online survey of people living abroad, %)

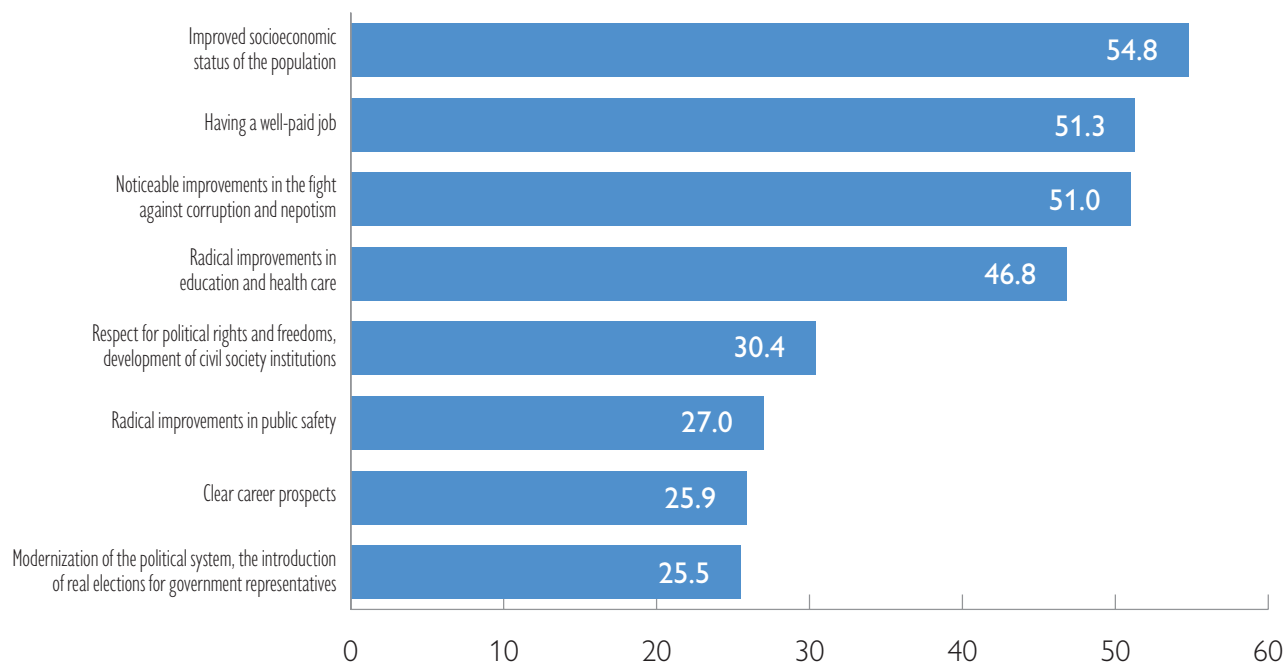


Figure 3.5.3—The most common answers of respondents from Tajikistan to the question: “Under what conditions would you return to your homeland to work in your country?” (online survey of people living abroad, %)

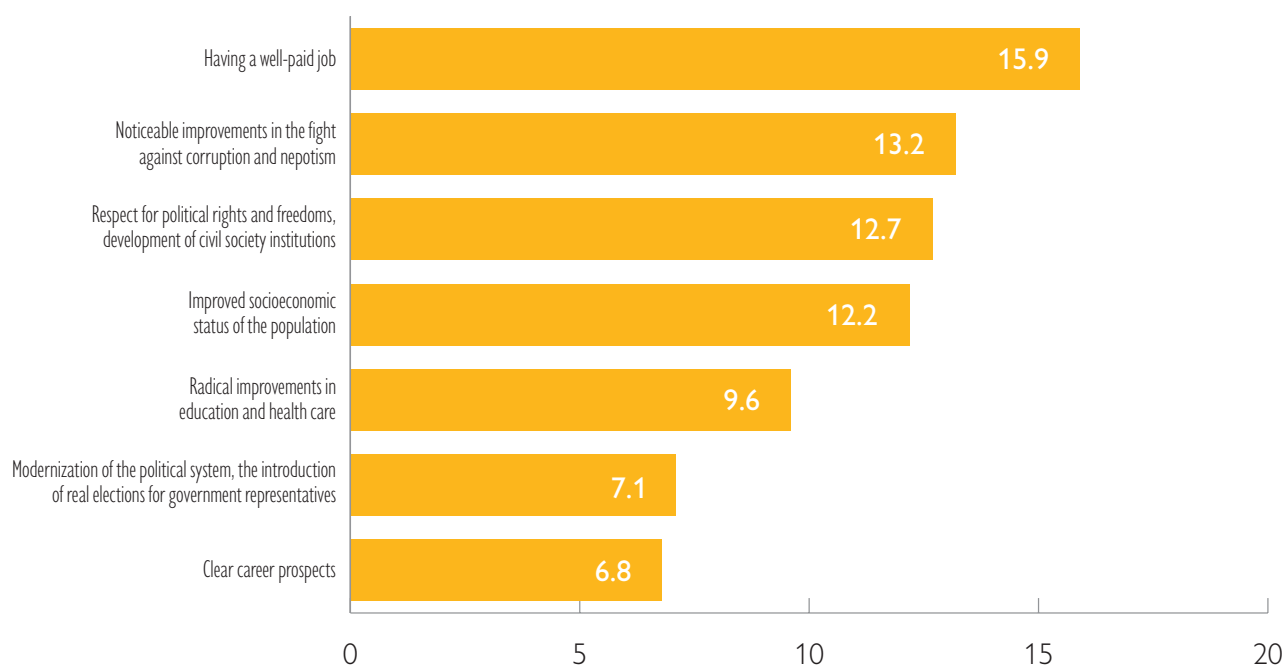
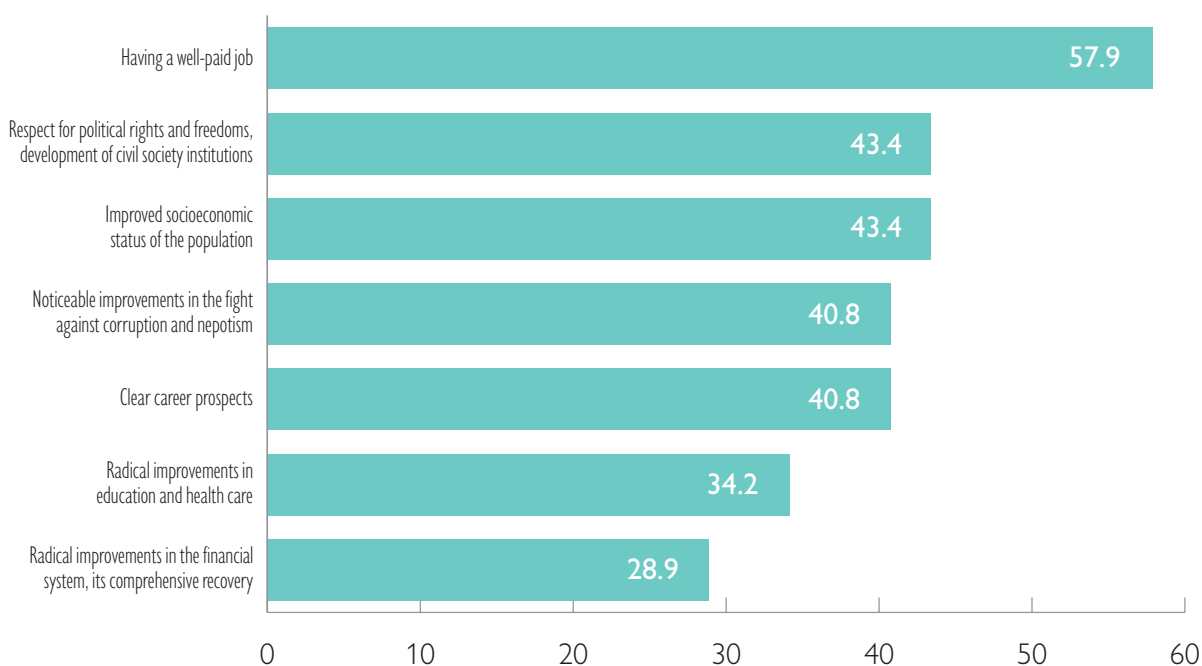


Figure 3.5.4—The most common answers of respondents from Uzbekistan to the question: “Under what conditions would you return to your homeland to work in your country?” (online survey of people living abroad, %)



3.4 Behavioral practices and migration plans

The behavioral practices and migration plans of young citizens of Central Asian countries are determined by the complex of factors considered above as well as the presence or absence of personal migration experience (both labour and educational).

For example, Kyrgyz people who participated in in-depth interviews and who, in most cases, had experience of labour migration (57% of those interviewed) no longer plan to go abroad or doubt that this is necessary. Those who plan to migrate again consider the most different directions for the host country—the Russian Federation and Turkey as well as more distant countries, such as the United States and European countries. At the same time, the motives and goals of migration are also very different—from solving the problem of making money for a child's studies to getting an education for themselves.

Of the 35 people who participated in in-depth interviews from Uzbekistan, 12 of them (more than 34%) are former migrants who do not plan to go abroad again to earn money or for permanent residence in the near future.

The data obtained in the study conducted in Kazakhstan provide us with information on the intentions and attitudes of young Kazakhs, which can determine their behavioral practices:

- The majority of young respondents in the country expressed a desire to leave the country in the medium term (24 out of 30 respondents). The results of the online survey show that among young people abroad the prevailing mood is to stay in the host country for work or permanent residence. 46.7 per cent of respondents definitely do not want to return to Kazakhstan. 37.7 per cent of respondents intend to return to the country, 15 per cent have not decided yet. The interviewees had the impression that migration from Kazakhstan had increased. This is shown by the fact that “acquaintances and relatives are leaving their immediate circle.”
- The general attitude, recorded by almost all respondents, is that education abroad is better than in Kazakhstan. Young people have the strong opinion that “everything that happens in developed countries is better than how Kazakhstan is developing.” Young people have a certain negative image of the country. Those who have received an education abroad and returned are inclined to leave Kazakhstan, believing that it is impossible to use it in our country, it is not in demand.
- Migration is perceived by young people more often positively or neutrally. Associations linked with emigration from the country are described in the categories “I will be more needed and demanded than here,” “I will earn more,” “I will be able to realize myself more effectively,” “I will gain new unique experience and knowledge,” “the social package will be better,” “the quality of medicine and education is higher than here,” etc. Even if the respondent points out the difficulties and risks associated with emigrating from Kazakhstan, it is believed that the risks are justified and in the long run people gain more from emigration than they lose and achieve much more than what they could achieve in Kazakhstan. Most respondents with experience living and studying in another country claim to have learned a lot and gained invaluable experience.
- Mobility and the desire to travel, live in different countries, study at different universities are natural for young Kazakhs, which in principle corresponds to the global trend of youth migration to try and study in different universities and countries. An analysis of the attitudes of young Kazakh people suggests that citizenship does not have a sacred meaning for them: the majority of respondents believed that they could live and work in another country all their lives while retaining Kazakh citizenship and getting a residence permit in the country of permanent residence.
- Educational migration by most respondents is seen as a factor in solving employment issues. If a graduate cannot find a job after completing undergraduate studies, the chance of going abroad to study for a masters or doctorate degree is considered. There is a steady attitude that obtaining a higher education, especially a master's or doctorate degree in foreign universities, increases the chances of getting a good job abroad and the possibility of staying there for permanent residence.

“If you look at the results of their work, almost all teenagers, well, not all, but most, plan to leave, because they don't see any prospects.”

Expert, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

“My brother works as a chef in a sushi bar in Moscow. He asks me to come there, he tells me I can work here instead of lounging around and wasting my time. I want to go and see. I have nothing to do here yet.”

Young man, Kyrgyzstan

In Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan an increase in the external mobility of rural unskilled youth is recorded (in Kazakhstan, as a rule, this group is more focused on internal mobility). Rural youth in these countries see external migration as the “default option” for employment after finishing schooling. This option develops because in the countries of

destination relatives and friends are waiting for them who, through their experiences, stories, and, possibly, pressure, turn migration into a “normal” employment strategy. In addition, such a strategy is formed among young people due to the lack of an alternative vision of their future after finishing school.

Figure 3.6.1—The most common answers of respondents from Kazakhstan to the question: “What is most important for you in life?” (online survey of people living abroad, %)

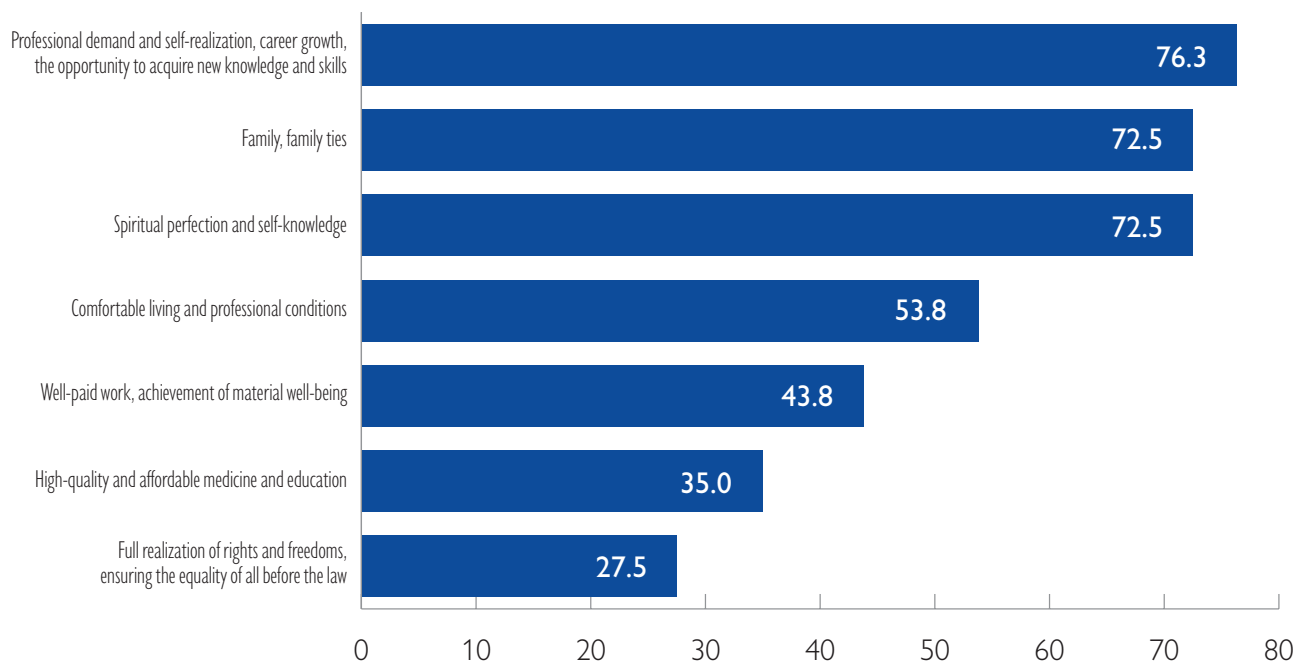


Figure 3.6.2—The most common answers of respondents from Kyrgyzstan to the question: “What is most important for you in life?” (online survey of people living abroad, %)

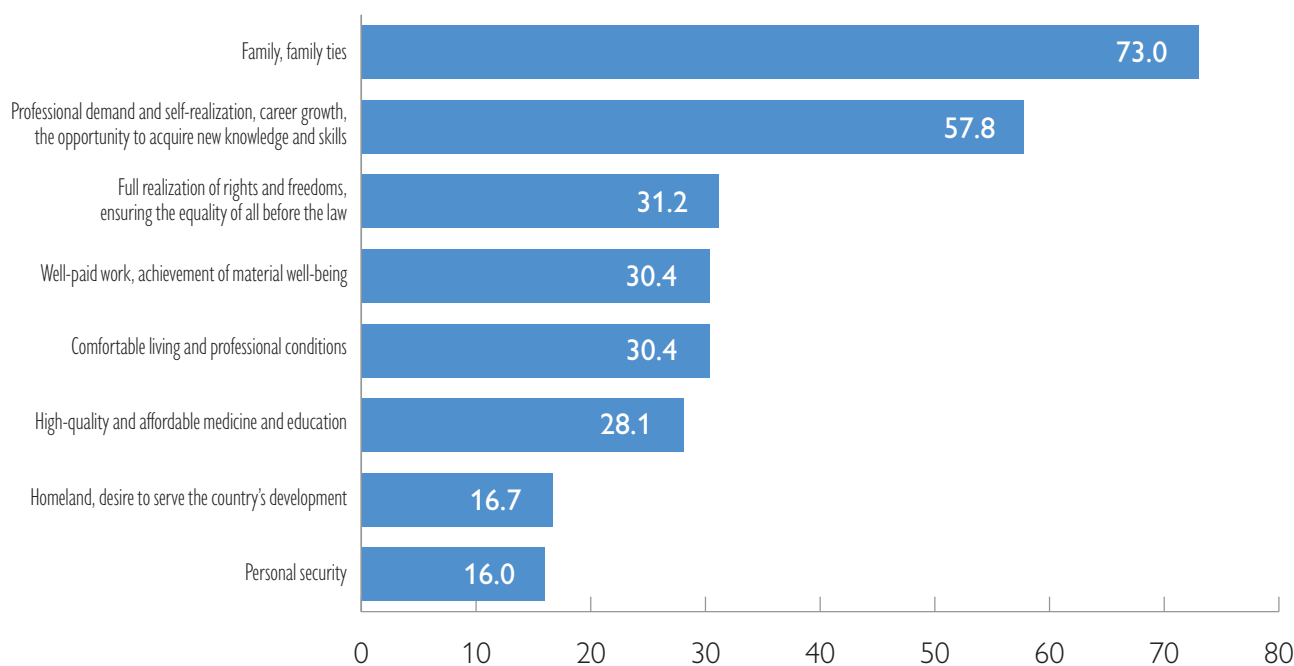


Figure 3.6.3—The most common answers of respondents from Tajikistan to the question: “What is most important for you in life?” (online survey of people living abroad, %)

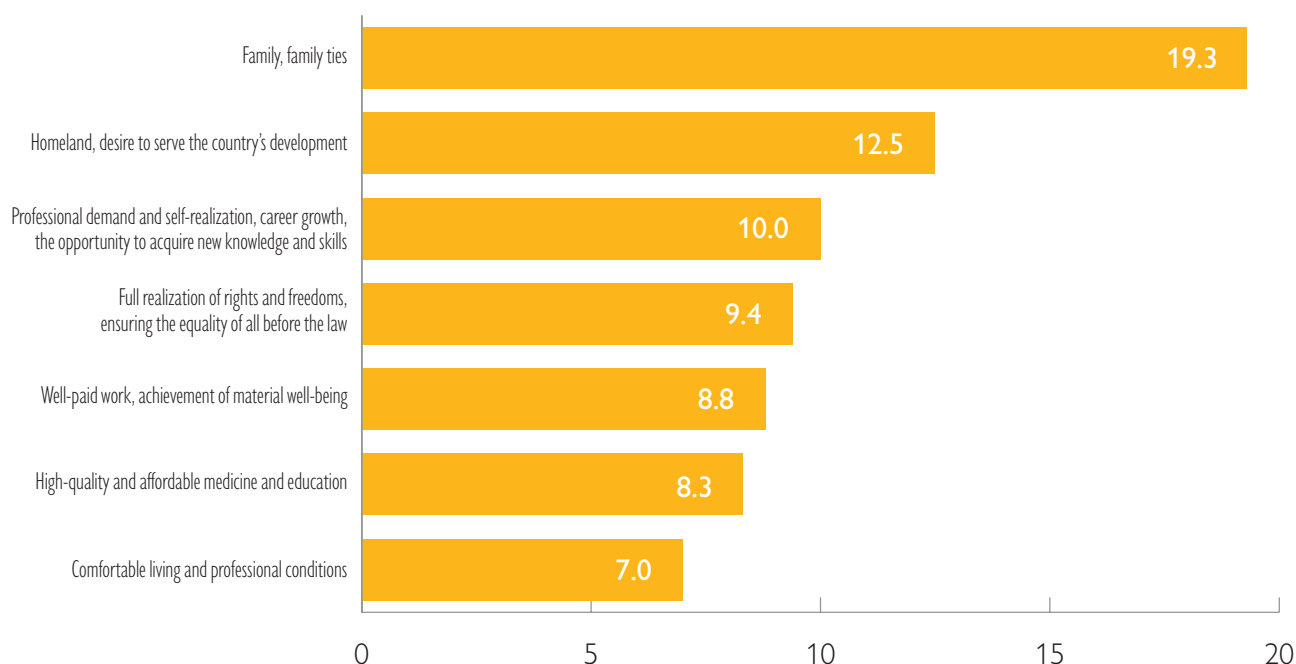
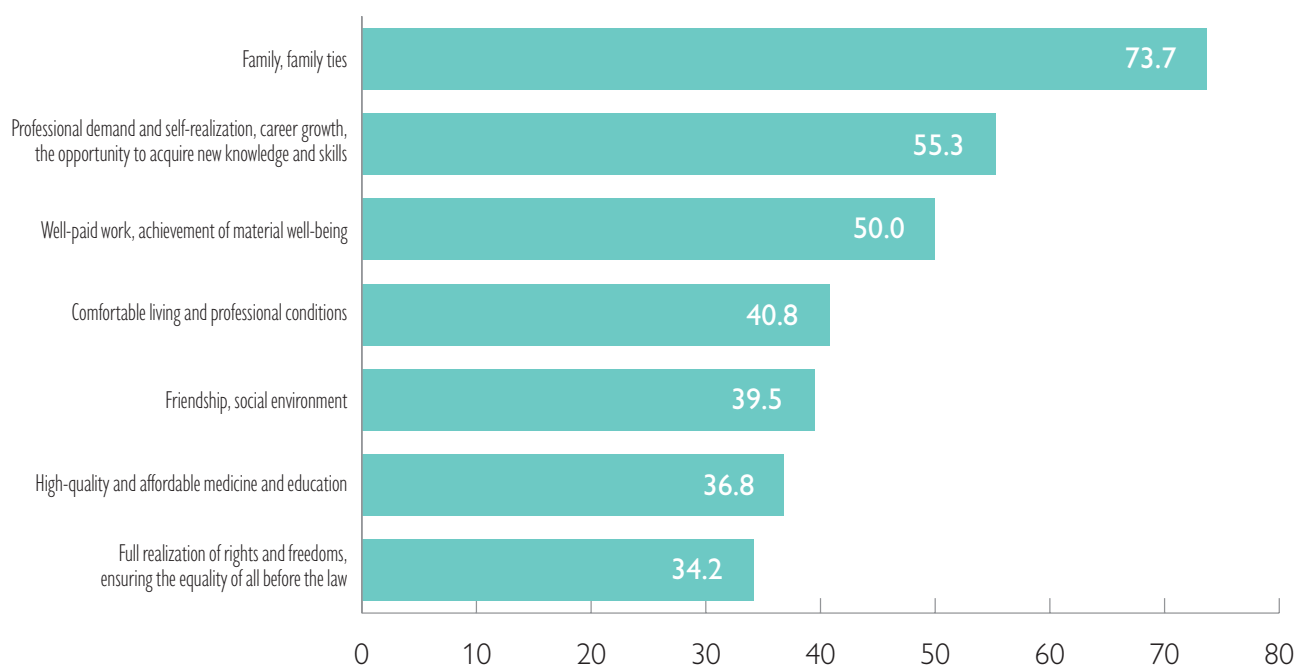


Figure 3.6.4—The most common answers of respondents from Uzbekistan to the question: “What is most important for you in life?” (online survey of people living abroad, %)



The uncertainty of life after school for rural youth, whose opportunities to continue studies and find a well-paid job are limited, is the main reason for leaving. For example, some young people at the time of the study did not have specific goals related to migration. In their answers why they were going to the Russian Federation, Turkey, or Kazakhstan, they relied only on the existence of the networks of relatives, people who were waiting for them there, and a desire to see the world.

Young people under 20 who are leaving differ from older adults who already have families and specific plans for migration (to build a house, buy land, etc.) in the absence of such projects.

In Kazakhstan, the study records several dependencies in the attitudes of respondents determined by the presence or absence of migration experience and educational level:

- The lack of experience of educational migration among respondents produces negative associations regarding migration. The more experience of educational migration (traveled abroad several times for education purposes), the more positive the respondent is toward long-term migration or permanent residence in another country.
- The higher the educational level of the respondent, the lower the fears regarding migration, especially among those who studied abroad for a long time.

Therefore, the decision of young educational and working migrants, young professionals to return or stay abroad can be influenced by four groups of factors:

Where to the fullest extent — at home or in another country — the situation will meet their personal, family, or social value needs (Appendix, figure A.5).

How do they evaluate the degree of success of their studies, employment, and professional activities in a foreign country (figure 3.7).

Do the respondents maintain a connection with their homeland? Do they monitor the situation in their country, do they help their country (figures 3.8 and 3.9).

With which country do respondents associate their future and the future of their children (figures 3.10 and 3.11).

For all respondents from all countries of Central Asia, family and family ties is the most frequent answer regarding what is most important for you in life. Migrants from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan put professional demand, self-realization, and the possibility of acquiring new knowledge and skills in second place. In Tajikistan, it is the homeland, the desire to serve the development of their country.

The vast majority of respondents from all countries of Central Asia consider their foreign experience to be successful (figure 3.7). Indicators of success include:

- The opportunity to acquire high-quality education and training at leading international universities, often for free, which makes it possible to become a specialist in demand and ensure an good standard of living and salary;
- Found work and the necessary connections that open up prospects for a good life and social comfort;
- The feeling of freedom and self-realization;
- Learned to think broadly.

Figure 3.7—The answer to the question “Do you think that you have achieved success abroad?” (online survey of people living abroad, %)

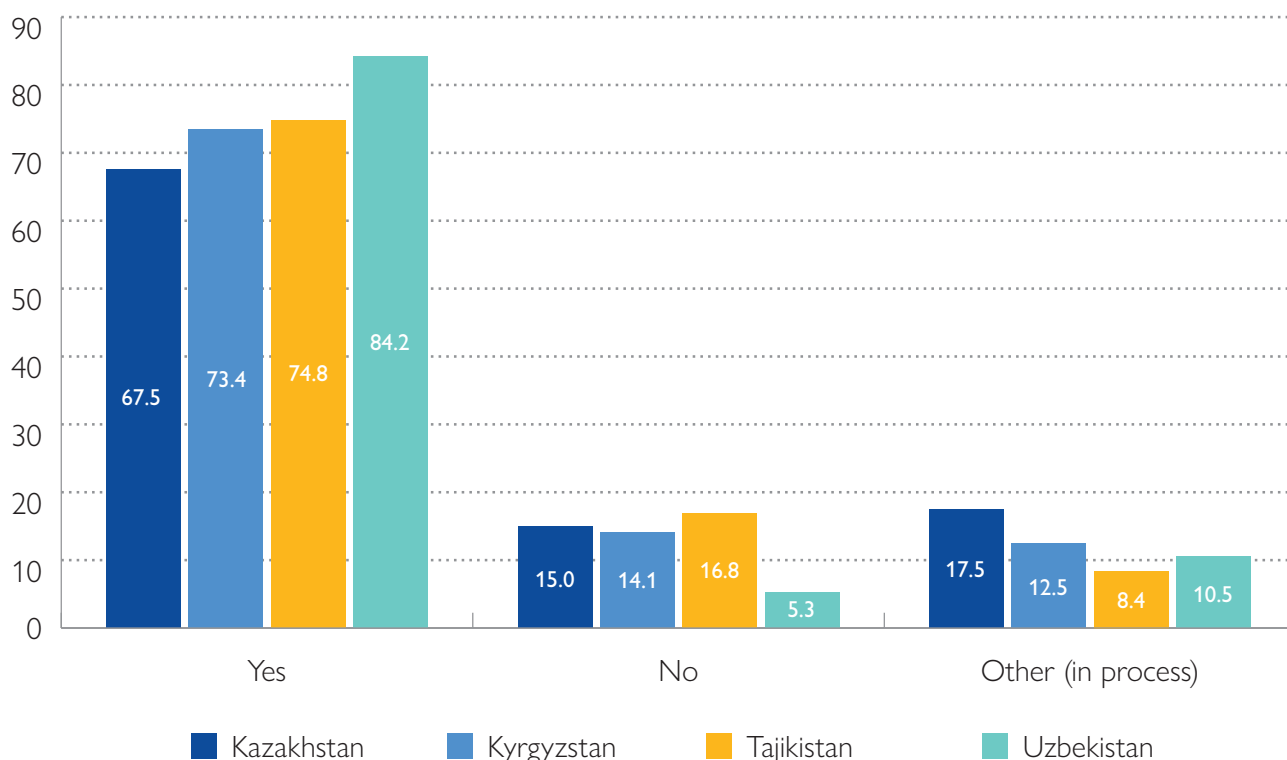


Figure 3.8—The answer to the question “Do you follow the public life of your country, do you follow the news about your country?” (online survey of people living abroad, %)

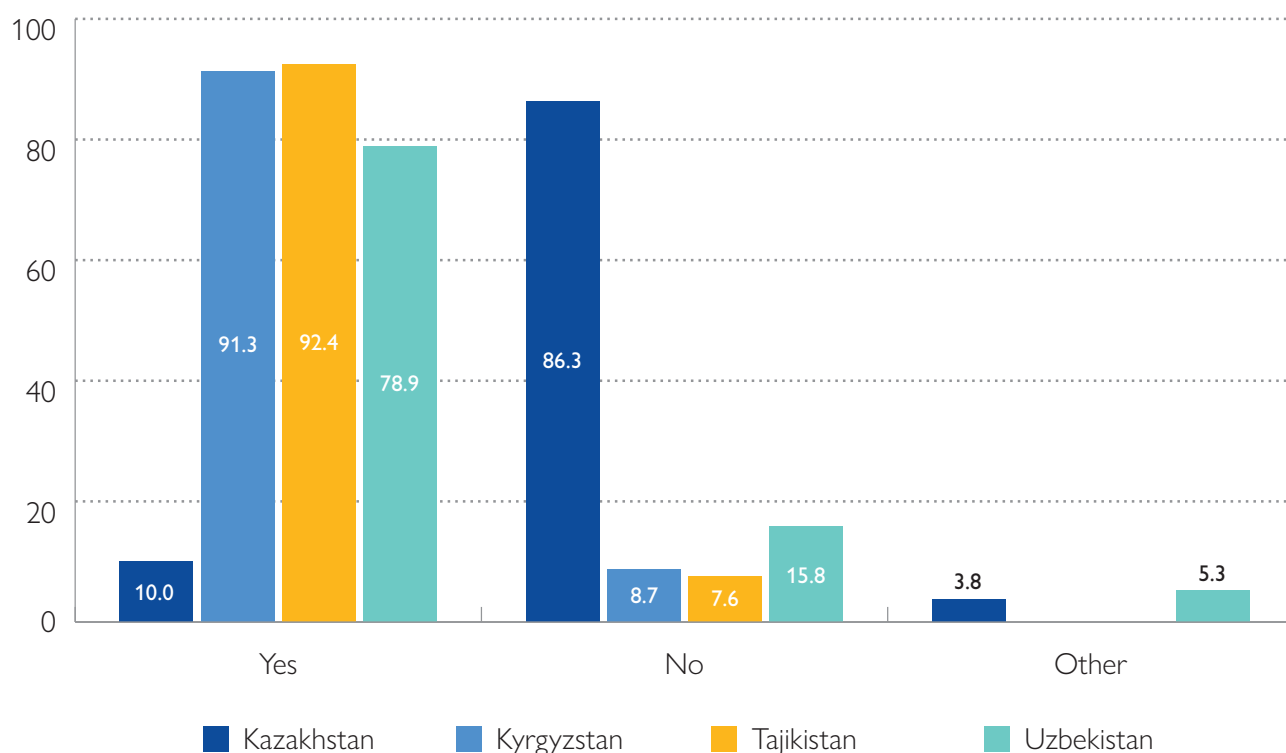
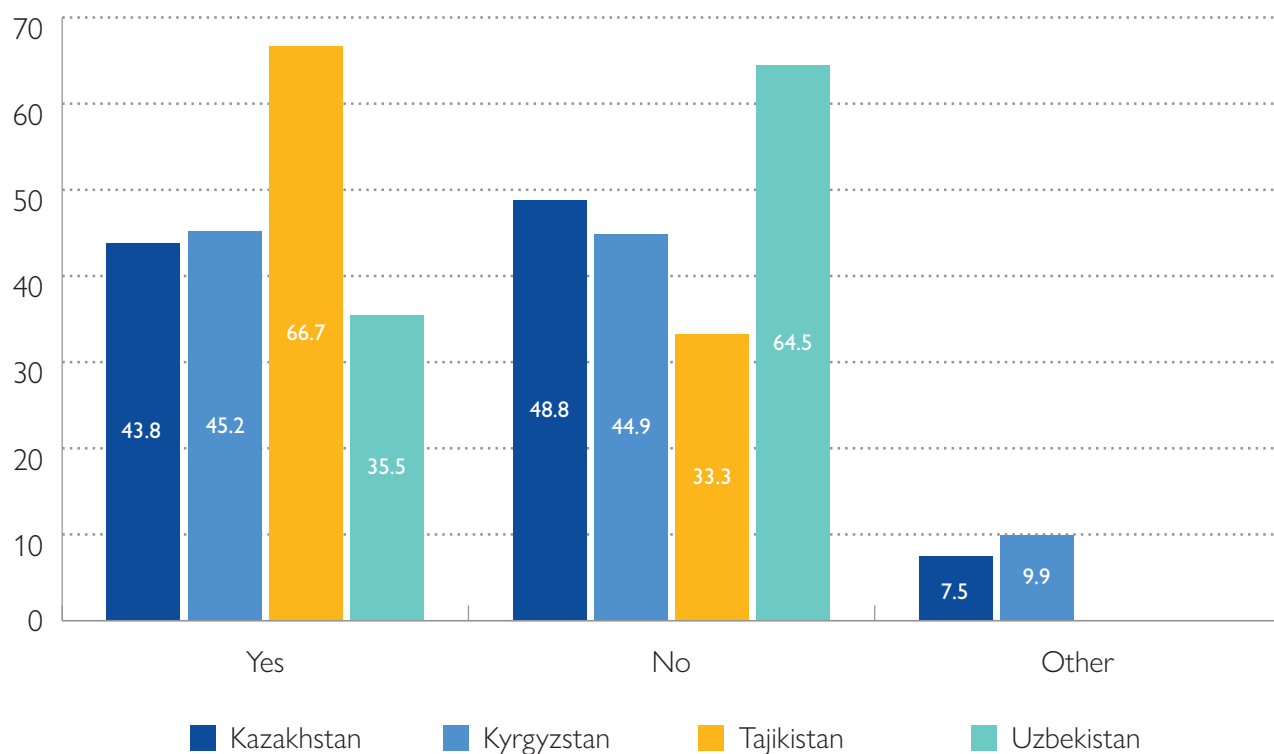


Figure 3.9—The answer to the question “Do you help your country while abroad?” (online survey of people living abroad, %)



The vast majority of respondents from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan follow events at home to one degree or another. The exception is Kazakh people, where only

10 per cent of respondents noted interest in their country's public life (figure 3.8).

The fact that they help their country in one form or another is most often indicated by respondents from Tajikistan (66.7%), less often by Uzbeks (35.5%). In Kazakhstan and

Kyrgyzstan, the responses of interviewed young people in migration were divided into approximately the same groups (figure 3.9).

Figure 3.10—The answer to the question “Where would you like to grow old?” (online survey of people living abroad, %)

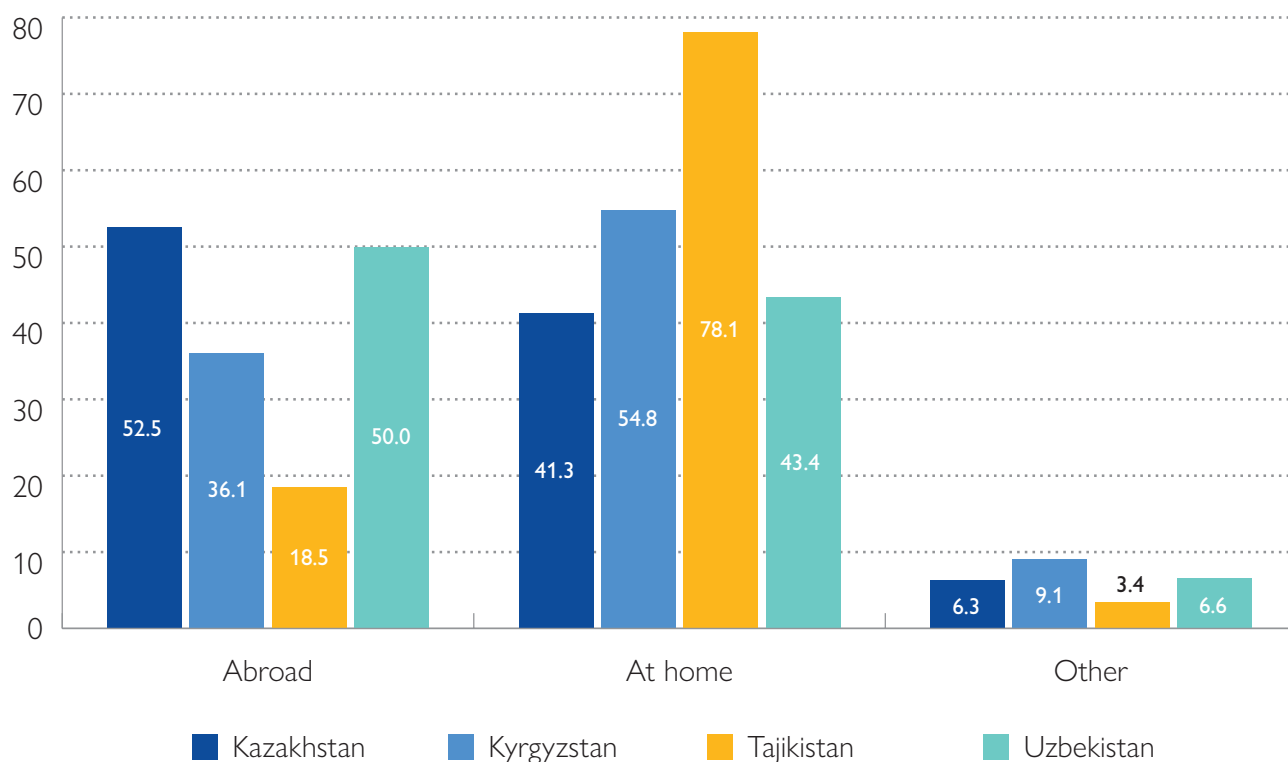
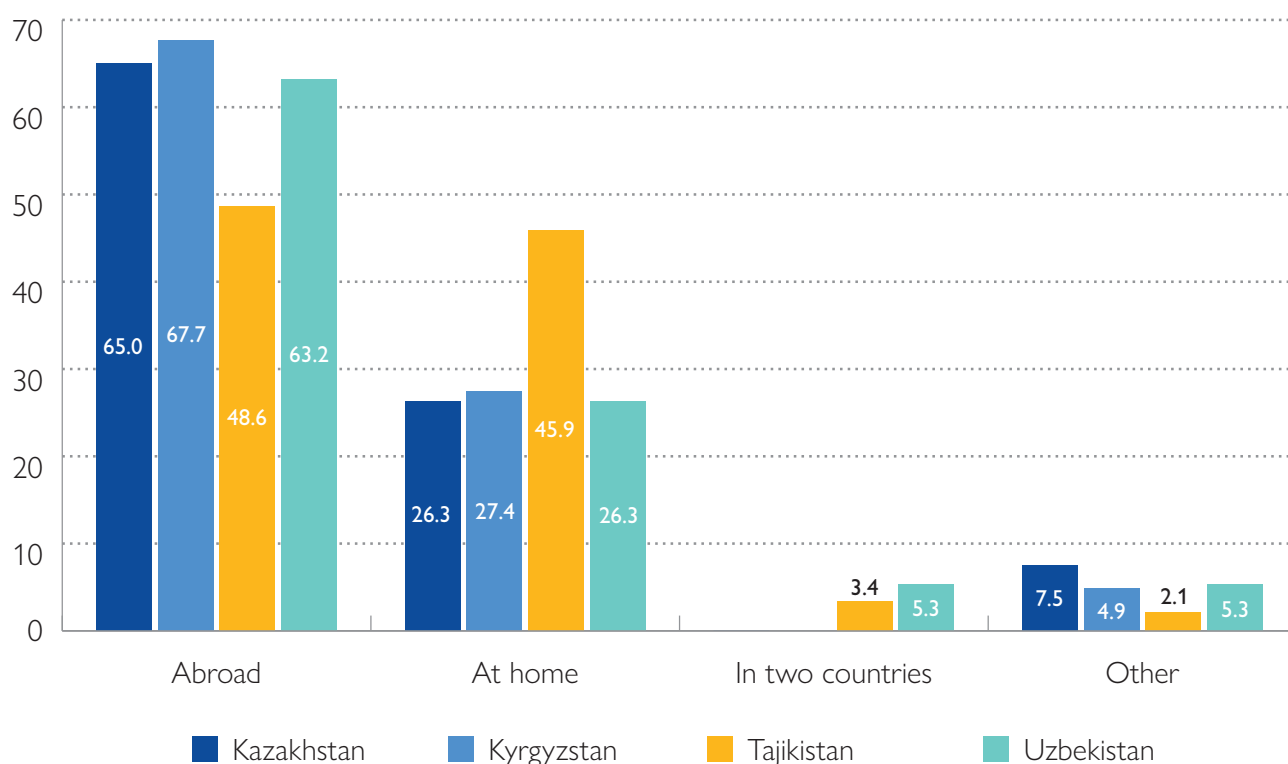


Figure 3.11—The answer to the question “Where would you like to raise your children?” (online survey of people living abroad, %)



Most respondents from Tajikistan (76.1%) would like to grow old at home. This is typical, but to a lesser extent, for Kyrgyz people (54.8%). The interviewed young migrants from Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are more inclined to spend their old age abroad; however, even here these indicators are not dominant and slightly exceed 50 per cent.

Most respondents from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan would like their children to grow up abroad. The exception is Tajikistan, where respondents were divided into almost identical groups in terms of size.

* * *

In-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and online surveys showed that for all young people the decision to migrate to work or study is determined by a combination of factors and reasons, both personal and more general. In the future, factors and causes arising in the homeland are intertwined with factors and causes in the country of destination. Moreover, if the factors stimulating migration are similar in all countries of Central Asia, the motives for returning have a national feature.

4 THE IMPACT OF YOUTH MIGRATION ON CENTRAL ASIAN COUNTRIES AND RELATED RISKS

The results of the study show that external youth migration from Central Asian countries significantly affects the general situation in the countries of the region and the formation of trends of a sociodemographic, economic, and political nature. In the conditions of Central Asian countries, youth migration, on the one hand, contributes to the emergence of new development opportunities, while, on the other hand, it generates risks and challenges for the stable development

of societies and States. The most serious influence of youth migration is the outflow of specialists to foreign countries, the “brain drain,” when a section of young people prefer emigration to realize their potential. Social pessimism and material poverty, which is widespread among young people, also have a serious impact; a significant number of young people try to find and get high-paid jobs abroad or move to a permanent place of residence outside the country.

4.1 Sociodemographic impact

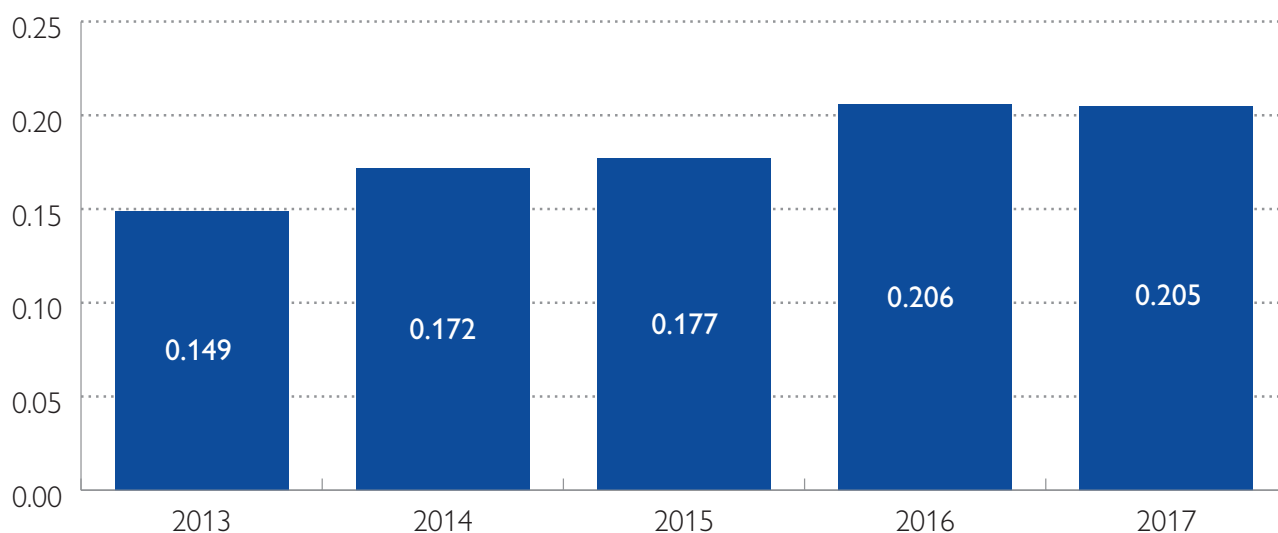
The sociodemographic impact of nonreturning youth migration in Central Asian countries is extremely limited. For example, in Kazakhstan, the relative volume of unequivocally nonreturning youth migration (young people who have left Kazakhstan for permanent residence) ranges from 0.15 per cent to 0.2 per cent of the total number of young people (figure 4.1). Similar conclusions can be drawn in almost all countries of Central Asia. The key idea is that, despite migration processes and a decrease in the birth ra-

te in some countries of Central Asia, a steady population growth is recorded in all countries of the region.

“The impact of migration on the sociodemographic situation is not critical, and the departure of migrants in the country is not felt.”

Expert, Tajikistan

Figure 4—The share of migrants relative to the total number of young people in Kazakhstan, thousand people (2009–2019)



Source: Youth of Kazakhstan: statistical compilation, 2013–2017, Astana: Statistics Committee of the Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2018, p. 98.

"So far, the birth rate has remained high. Accordingly, the outflow of youth does not pose any particular risks for demography in Uzbekistan."

Expert, Uzbekistan

A number of experts argue that the outflow of youth abroad reduces social tension within the countries of Central Asia and the burden on the State in terms of fulfilling its obligations in the social sphere.

"Youth migration negatively affects the sociodemographic situation of the country. The gene pool is narrowing, and the number of people of working-age population is decreasing in villages and districts. Young men are simply disappearing."

Expert, Tajikistan

"A lot of our migrants, mostly young families, leave, without leaving children with guardians... In Kyrgyzstan, the statistics show that there is a lot of violence against abandoned children, exploitation of child labour, and there are cases of murder."

Expert, Kyrgyzstan

Experts also say that it is possible to record the negative impact of youth migration from Central Asian countries associated with the transformation of family relations in these countries. In Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, the following problems are recorded:

- Lack of education for migrant children, primarily of working migrants, who remain at home with relatives or single-parent families;
- Crisis in the institution of the family, including an increase in the number of people (especially women) who are not able to marry, an increase in the number of divorces (both real and fictitious), bigamy (second marriage with women in the host country).

In Kyrgyzstan, the feminization of migration flows is noted, which, among other things, also has an identification and value aspect—negative stereotypes are formed in the society regarding working migrant girls.

A number of studies show that the remittances of migrant workers do not go for bringing up children, for providing better food for them, maintenance or education, so migrant children do not generally benefit from remittances compared to children of nonmigrant families.¹⁰⁸

A particular problem is children and adolescents travelling with their parents or, in the case of adolescents, on their own. Their socialization takes place in an environment alien to them, often unfavorable from an economic and ideological points of view. Children are brought up in a different cultural and civilizational environment, and this process can affect the reproduction of national values and traditions, which can lead to a crisis of identity. Teenagers, as a rule, migrate without knowledge of the language of the host country and any skills, work abroad in low-skilled jobs. It is very difficult for them to improve their status through education, because by working they lose the knowledge and skills acquired at school. In this regard, experts record a loss of confidence in the future, an increased level of apathy and depression among children and adolescents who are in migration.

I.: Your parents have not been around for 10 years. How has that been for you? Wasn't it hard psychologically?

R.: No, psychologically, it wasn't very hard for me. The love between parents and the child is simply less.

I.: Did you feel this when you came to them for the first time?

R.: When I arrived, I felt it. Because, despite living with my parents for a long time, I could not get used to it. It seemed to me that I was in another world, as if Kyrgyzstan had remained in a corner of this world, far away.

Woman, 21 years old, Osh, Kyrgyzstan

An important sociodemographic influence is exerted by the deterioration of the health of migrants mainly due to the formation of chronic diseases (caused by both working and living conditions and changing climatic conditions of life) and injuries. In Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, in addition to these problems, there is an increase in sexually transmitted diseases and the number people with HIV; interviewed experts are convinced that this trend is also related to labour migration. The deterioration in the health status of women remaining in their homeland is also recorded.

¹⁰⁸ A. Kroeger A, K. Anderson. Remittances and Children's Capabilities: New Evidence from Kyrgyzstan, 2005–2008, Discussion Paper No. 6293, 2012, pp. 22–23, 25.

4.2 Economic impact

It is practically unrealistic to assess the economic losses associated with the departure of young people from the countries of Central Asia who have undergone socialization in the country and received secondary specialized or higher education. However, it is possible to assess the impact of migration on individual sectors of the economy. For example, in Kazakhstan, educational migration has a serious impact on the higher education system and the educational services sector. In 2018, at least 13–15 per cent of the total number of Kazakhs in full-time higher education studied outside Kazakhstan.¹⁰⁹ Accordingly, the number of people applying (usually the most trained) to universities in Kazakhstan is decreasing, which leads to a weakening of the material base of Kazakhstan's higher education institutions and lower requirements for applicants (to increase the enrollment of students).

The negative impact on the economy, according to experts, is recorded in individual sectors, for example, engineering and technology. This problem is clearly manifested in Uzbekistan associated with the country's course toward modernization and industrialization—the “brain and hands drain” narrows the internal human resources market, which can become a source of training and obtaining qualified and highly qualified specialists for local and foreign investment companies in Uzbekistan. Moreover, in Uzbekistan, there is a shortage of cheap labour, especially in the regions. In rural areas, it is not uncommon for the local labour market to experience labour shortages, since most of the male population is in labour migration.

Another problem is the reduction of revenues for Central Asian countries from income taxes and social contributions. This is due to the fact that migrant workers pay taxes at their place of work, which limits the room for maneuver for these countries to implement their social obligations and the provision of public services. Moreover, the receipt of remittances from migrants not backed by real production is a powerful inflationary and corruption factor. At the same time, for example, in Uzbekistan, given the scale of external migration, the State is forced to devote resources and efforts to solving the problems of migrants by increasing

spending on social, language, training, and reintegration programmes as well as programmes to help migrants.

However, it must be remembered that the countries of Central Asia have an excess of young labour. Even in the 1970s, Western demographers predicted that from the mid-1980s, three-quarters of the annual population growth in the USSR would occur in Central Asia, Kazakhstan, and the Transcaucasus. In these regions, the working-age population “will increase by 2.5 per cent, while in other regions, by 0.2 per cent.”¹¹⁰ Even in Kazakhstan, which is traditionally regarded as a “host” country (at least within the framework of the Central Asian subsystem of the Eurasian migration system), out of 82,189 graduates from higher educational institutions in 2018,¹¹¹ only 24,001 people, or 29.2 per cent, were employed.¹¹² Based on their specialization—5,407 people (6.6%). Therefore, Kazakhstan provides extremely limited opportunities for young people to realize themselves in their professional field, and the emigration of young specialists is not a significant economic factor for the country.

At the same time, experts believe that young emigrants can positively influence the economies of Central Asia through a number of factors, including:

- Remittances to their homeland—according to expert estimates, migrant remittances to the country help significantly improve living conditions; financial assistance from migrants is mainly used to provide families with food, cover everyday needs, for housing, weddings, and other social events, education and health care;
- Acting as a “bridge” between the native country and other countries, including through the development of commerce;
- Providing financial support to relatives remaining at home;
- Investment and job creation (creation of small enterprises, mainly in services and trade);
- Investments in the development of a “small homeland” of migrants (the construction of stadiums, bridges, roads).

¹⁰⁹ At the beginning of the 2018–2019 academic year, 399,409 people studied in higher education institutions in Kazakhstan on a full-time basis (Higher educational institutions of the Republic of Kazakhstan: at the beginning of the 2018/2019 academic year. Volume 1, Astana: Statistics Committee of the Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2019, p. 20).

¹¹⁰ A. Lewis N. Rowland The movement of the population in the USSR and its influence on society, 1897–1977 / Demographic processes in the USSR 20–80 years. (Modern foreign historiography), (Moscow: Institute of Scientific Information for Social Sciences, 1991, pp. 26–29).

¹¹¹ Higher educational institutions of the Republic of Kazakhstan: at the beginning of the 2018/2019 academic year. Volume 1, Astana: Statistics Committee of the Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2019, p. 20.

¹¹² The movement of labour and the use of the calendar fund of time by employees in the Republic of Kazakhstan: 2018, Astana: Statistics Committee of the Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2019.

“Circular” migration also has a positive effect, when a young person receives knowledge and skills abroad and applies them in their native country. According to expert estimates, migration in Kyrgyzstan gave an impetus to the development of the construction, financial, clothing, and transport industries.

In addition, experts note that investment in the construction of social facilities by migrants in the homeland is extremely small and unsystematic, and remittances do not always reflect positively on the country’s economy, stimulating inflation. The political and socioeconomic situation in countries such as Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan is subject to great external stresses due to the dependence on external investment, including cash receipts from migrants.

Studies have shown that the economic crisis in the Russian Federation in 2014 greatly affected migration trends, reducing the number of migrants from Kyrgyzstan by approximately 58,000 people. The ruble was devalued (by more than 70%), and the earnings of migrants, primarily those performing low-skilled work, were reduced. According to the

4.3 Political impact

According to experts, the impact of youth emigration from Central Asian countries has significant political consequences.

“These are voters. Young people do not actually participate in elections; they become apolitical. When young people are away from their home, they only think about making money, they don’t think about the country. Most migrants simply exclude this political stage.”

Expert, Kyrgyzstan

“I did not go to vote in the last parliamentary elections. What for? [the Russian Federation] feeds me!”

Man, 31 years old, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

Labour mobility affects the level of political participation of the population, the electoral processes, and the composition of elected authorities. According to Kyrgyz experts, labour migration leads to an apolitical youth. This is confirmed by the study conducted in the project. A survey among young migrants showed that, while abroad, most of them do not participate in the elections, citing various problems of access to voting. But those migrants who are at home during the elections prefer not to vote because they do not believe the elections will lead to positive

changes. In some cases, the migration experience leads to the complete depoliticization of migrants due to a belief that the situation at home cannot be improved and because of the formation of alternative strategies such as nonreturning or permanent migration. Nonparticipation of a large segment of the population in the elections ultimately leads to the election of poor-quality members of parliament and local authorities and their low accountability to the population.

In Tajikistan, together with the above, the following negative trends are recorded:

- The growth of dependent psychology—the relatives and friends of migrant workers turn into consumers and do not seek to use the financial resources received for investment in the real sector of the economy.
- The lack of physical and intellectual labour negatively affects the economic development of the country as a whole since human capital is declining in the country.

According to experts, the outflow of youth from Uzbekistan reduces the risk of a protest movement. However, there is also a threat from young migrants who fall under the influence of religious preachers, especially in the Russian Federation. It is shown that upon returning to Uzbekistan, they can begin campaigning among local young people and incite them to illegal actions. Similarly, in Tajikistan, the problem of the radicalization of young migrants, primarily religious, is posed by experts.

On the other hand, for example, in Tajikistan, there is a tendency for migrants to form their own communities, usually on a socioeconomic basis. The solidarity of migrants grows into close ties. It is believed that in the future such associations could transform into political movements. Among political analysts in Tajikistan, there is a growing belief that in

¹¹³ L. Sagynbekova. International labour migration in the context of the Eurasian Economic Union: Issues and challenges of Kyrgyz migrants in Russia, Institute of Public Policy and Administration, Working paper 39, 2017.

¹¹⁴ The crisis reduced the remittances of labour migrants from the Russian Federation to Uzbekistan 3.5 fold // Nur.uz, 14 June, 2016 // <https://nuz.uz/ekonomika-i-finansy/13734-krizis-sokratil-denezhnye-perevody-trudovyh-migrantov-iz-rf-v-uzbekistan-v-35-raza.html>.

the medium term migrants will constitute the most politically active group of citizens. Experts also criticize the rather popular thesis in Central Asia that “fewer people in the country means fewer problems for the State.” Experts point out that young people in conditions of migration expand their political horizons, see and get used to living in conditions of freedom of speech and expression, and gain the skill to assert their interests. Moreover, migrants, especially young ones, go beyond the dominant ideology in Tajikistan related to the “civil war syndrome” and aimed at ensuring that the country has peace. In this way, the conditions for the politicization of young migrants are formed.

This position is not shared by experts from Uzbekistan who believe that young migrants from Central Asian countries, mainly workers, remain apolitical since most of them work in countries with fairly authoritarian systems of government, and many can always return to the recipient country. Moreover, in the Russian Federation, migrants often experience social and political pressure, making up a special category of newcomers who attract the close attention of the authorities.

At the same time, some experts are considering the option of “deferred influence on politics,” holding the view that in the future it is the youth segment of “circular” migration that could constitute a significant part of the middle class, which traditionally is the basis for liberal ideology.

“The most important advantage is that Uzbekistan forms an economic basis for the middle class, its expansion through young people. Gradually, we will focus on the corresponding worldview. Then, a wave of political reforms will come under pressure from civil society.”

Expert, Uzbekistan

Another negative impact of migration on the political system of Central Asian countries is the outflow of qualified specialists. This process has two vectors of negative influence:

1. The departure of qualified specialists negatively affects the staff of municipal and public servants. The issue is particularly acute in the field of education; rural teachers often become migrants who leave their jobs temporarily or permanently and jeopardize educational processes in schools. Problems are recorded in other State institutions that lack qualified personnel, and the frequent rotation of civil servants leads to a deep crisis in the public administration system both at the level of decision making and their implementation.
2. The emigration of qualified specialists significantly reduces the population’s requirements for the quality

of public services—people from Central Asia leave the country who:

- Can clearly formulate requests to the authorities, can clearly state what they want, demand and appeal to the authorities on an equal footing;
- Are representatives of the middle class who know what human dignity is, that they have rights, and which ones, and what opportunities they have.

On the other hand, “circular” migration leads to increased pressure on the political systems of Central Asian countries by young people. People who have experience living in more comfortable conditions than, for example, in Kazakhstan, are often inclined to demand appropriate transformations.

External migration enhances the geopolitical dependence of the Central Asian countries on the host countries, primarily the Russian Federation (for Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, to a much lesser extent from Kazakhstan). Migration has become a lever of pressure on the countries of Central Asia from its stronger partners. Pro-Russian sentiment is very high in all regions of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan as the general population associates its ability to feed families with the Russian Federation. Echoing popular sympathies, the country’s political elite is also looking for Russian support for an additional source of its legitimacy.

Experts also consider the formation and use of stereotypes regarding the disastrous significance of youth emigration from Central Asian countries as a political influence. The emphasis on risks, in their opinion, is a powerful tool for influencing the authorities and their decisions.

One of the key problems of the political sector related to youth migration is the problem of maintaining a national identity. Given in some cases the crisis of public administration, economic stagnation, and geopolitical dependence on stronger players, the outflow of able-bodied youth only complicates the task facing Central Asian countries for maintaining a national identity and maintaining its citizens’ connection with the State and the country.

In Tajikistan, a serious transformation of public relations at the local level and a crisis in traditional institutions are being recorded. In the traditional society of Tajikistan, an important role in regulating social relations was played by elders, educated older people, and parents. Today, there is a process where their functions are being transferred to migrant workers since they have money, solve existing problems, and, as a result, are respected. One of the consequences of this is the radicalization of youth: when traditional institutions cannot fulfill their role, their place is filled by a new, mostly radical, worldview that denies established traditions. There is also a change in religious practice when a person moves away from the Hanafi school of thought.

4.4 The impact of youth migration on the quality of human capital

The impact of youth migration on the quality of human capital is mixed.

In Kazakhstan, experts either adhere to the stereotype that the emigration of educated youth reduces the country's human capital or also record that the presence of such a stereotype of understanding affects human capital since, on the one hand, it encourages qualified specialists to emigrate, and, on the other, it encourages the State to accept programmes to increase the attractiveness of Kazakhstan for qualified professionals. In addition, according to experts, "circular" youth migration is a powerful incentive for the development of human capital in Kazakhstan.

In Kyrgyzstan, experts who positively assess the relationship between migration, human capital, and technological development emphasize the benefits of remittances and new skills acquired for the country. Kyrgyzstan is one of the first countries in the world to receive international money transfers,¹¹⁵ which cannot be underestimated.¹¹⁶ A sociological survey among migrant families in the southern regions of Kyrgyzstan showed that "53% of households consider remittances to be their main source of income—that is, more than half of households rely on remittances." Transfers have become a very important mechanism to combat poverty: about 56% of remittances are spent on daily household maintenance.¹¹⁷

"That place gave me education. Understanding what wealth is, what poverty is, where money comes from, who is who, how to do business with people."

Man, 21 years old, Kyrgyzstan

Other experts question the quality use of transfers for the development of Kyrgyzstan and human capital. For example, it is known that transfers are also used to cover costs associated with various celebrations or tragic events.¹¹⁸ Only about 10 per cent of transfers to Kyrgyzstan go to investment projects, such as starting a business, buying real estate, or investing in human capital (education, health care).¹¹⁹ Another study found that transfers are less invested in chil-

dren's education.¹²⁰ These studies determined that among the factors that affect the distribution of received transfers are small transfers that are quickly spent on everyday living (most migrants send home less than USD 100 a month) and the local investment climate, which does not encourage investment in business.¹²¹ Many migrants, for example, complain that it is difficult for them to open their own business due to corruption in State bodies.

"We have developed a lot of waste. Those guys who work in [the Russian Federation] get married. They arrange big weddings, fall into debt again. They are paid again, they live just to repay the debt."

Man, 31 years old, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

"I actually had wonderful plans to go to university, save up for a contract. But I couldn't carry out the plan. I bought a car for my dad, sent my mom on holiday, bought this, then bought that. It helped me well at home, but my studies remained a pipe dream."

Woman, 24 years old, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

A study conducted in the project shows that the main reasons that prevented migrants from realizing their plans for capitalizing the financial results of migration are determined by the situation both in Kyrgyzstan and in the host country:

- According to migrants, the main problem in the host country is that they could not get the promised earnings because of deception and also because they became victims of a new way of life for them. In the early years of their mobility, many young men spend significant amounts of money on entertainment that is inaccessible to them at home—casinos, gambling, cafés, and nightclubs.
- At home, capital accumulation plans are hindered by the high level of family expenses of traditional families on medical treatment, social support, education, payment of loans and debts, and assistance to relatives.

¹¹⁵ A. Kroeger A, K. Anderson Remittances and Children's Capabilities: New Evidence from Kyrgyzstan, 2005–2008, Discussion Paper No. 6293, 2012.

¹¹⁶ Impact of the Global Financial Crisis on Labor Migration from Kyrgyzstan to Russia, Bishkek: OSCE, ACTED, European Commission, 2009, p. 63.

¹¹⁷ Nasritdinov E., Pros and Cons of Migration in Kyrgyzstan www.academia.edu/4371887/Migration_in_Kyrgyzstan_-_Pros_and_Cons.

¹¹⁸ Impact of the Global Financial Crisis on Labor Migration from Kyrgyzstan to Russia, Bishkek: OSCE, ACTED, European Commission, 2009, p. 53.

¹¹⁹ Kyrgyzstan: Economic growth, employment, and poverty reduction, ILO, 2008, p. 55 // www.ilo.org/moscow/information-resources/publications/WCMS_306632/lang-en/index.htm.

¹²⁰ A. Kroeger A, K. Anderson Remittances and Children's Capabilities: New Evidence from Kyrgyzstan, 2005–2008, Discussion Paper No. 6293, 2012.

¹²¹ E. Nasritdinov Pros and Cons of Migration in Kyrgyzstan // www.academia.edu/4371887/Migration_in_Kyrgyzstan_-_Pros_and_Cons.

The accumulative potential is also affected by the mobility period. With short-term mobility, it is more difficult to make money on the realization of goals and projects. This is due to the high initial costs of preparing and arriving at a new place.

“... the money that we saved to buy a house had to be spent on my father’s funeral. Then, we fell ill. Then, my husband’s brother died, we buried him. And so they spent the money earned abroad. It’s like you leave with very good plans, but the time comes when you need money.”

Woman, 28 years old, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

The results of the study show that while migrant workers are struggling with the effects of the economic crisis that affected several generations of their families at the same time, migrant transfers are spent on solving current problems rather than investing in the future. Migrants try to adequately note the cycles of life and death in the present time, not being able to plan the future by investing in the education and health of their family. The question of how the acquired benefits and efforts spent on the fight against poverty compensate for the price that migrants pay for migration remains open. In all cases, migrant workers noted “health left in a foreign country,” which is difficult or impossible to restore.

Estimates made by experts from Tajikistan are significantly different. They believe that almost everything related to development and innovation as well as the use of new technologies comes to Tajikistan through migrants:

- Young migrants who go to work abroad after finishing school generally do not have qualifications, but, after several years of work they become experienced specialists. For example, by working in construction, they gain knowledge and skills at all stages of the process; moreover, they begin to pay attention to new construction and finishing technologies as well as comfort and design.
- Young migrants change their outlook on life, they dress differently and pay attention to those little things that they did not attach importance to before migration—after living in another country, lifestyle, thinking, horizons change, people move away from the traditional norms of Tajik society and start paying more attention to education: both their own and their children’s.

In general, migration gives young people the opportunity to acquire new knowledge and skills as well as realize their potential abroad. However, the question remains—how much is it in demand at home. The situation regarding skills acquired during mobility and their benefits for the techno-

logical development of the country is ambiguous. According to a number of studies, the return of migrant workers to their homeland promises a positive effect on the development of the country’s human capital.¹²² However, a distinction must be made between the types of migrants and their skills:

- The potential return and successful integration of highly skilled and educational migrants has a positive effect.
- The impact on the human capital of the return and successful integration of low-skilled migrants is doubtful since the skills they acquired in migration relate to low-skilled sectors such as construction, trade, and services.

The results of a study conducted as part of the project on Kyrgyzstan show that migrant workers most often do not acquire professional knowledge but general cultural characteristics: expanded cultural horizons, improved communication skills, ability to communicate and build working and social relations. Obtaining such positive but limited experience is associated with the fact that they are engaged in low-skilled work that does not require specialized knowledge.

In Uzbekistan, in addition to the above, a number of problems stood out:

- Marginalization of skilled workers, when adapting to migration a specialist is forced to change profession, often performing less qualified work;
- “Impoverishment” of the intellectual environment in the country, a shortage of professional Russian-speaking workforce, which requires government expenditures to make up for the lost highly qualified personnel.

* * *

The connection between educational migration and the migration of highly qualified specialists with human capital and technological development of the country, with the successful return of this category of migrants is undoubtedly positive. However, in the case of migration to perform low-skilled work, this relationship is not so obvious and raises questions both in terms of the distribution and use of remittances and the application of acquired skills. If the socioeconomic situation in the country does not change, transfers will continue to be used for the daily fight against poverty, leaving no room for investment in human capital. If the quality of education does not improve in rural areas, emigrating youth will initially have low chances of getting more qualified work in destination countries and, accordingly, less opportunities for professional growth.

¹²² E. Vinokurov, V. Pereboyev. Labor Migration and Human Capital in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan: Impact of Accession to the SES, EDB Centre for Integration Studies, 2013.

5 CONCLUSIONS, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

The study shows that the issues of mass labour and educational migration of young people from Central Asian countries will remain in the medium and long term an important factor affecting the demographic, social, economic, technological development of the countries of the region, the quality of their human capital, both negative and, in some cases, positive:

1. Volumes and trends of educational and labour youth migration. Youth migration from the countries of Central Asia is mainly part of the Eurasian migration system. The number of students from Central Asian countries as well as migrant workers is growing steadily. In all countries of Central Asia, an increase in the negative balance in the external migration of young people is recorded. A significant impact on this is exerted by external factors—the migration policy pursued by a number of countries, primarily the Russian Federation. The following trends are recorded:

- The Russian Federation remains the main host country, although some countries outside the Eurasian migration system are also becoming significant points of attraction.
- Significant centers of educational migration in Central Asia are Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.
- Educational and labour migration from Uzbekistan to other countries of Central Asia is intensively increasing.
- According to age groups, young people aged 25–29 are leaving most,—that is young people who are in their prime.

The potential for nonreturning migration of young people who left Central Asian countries for work or study can be estimated at 30–35 per cent with an upward trend.

2. Regulation of youth migration processes in the countries of Central Asia. In the conceptual and doctrinal documents of the Central Asian countries, the issue of external youth migration is recorded point by point, and external migration of qualified and highly qualified youth is almost not considered. Therefore, these areas do not receive a systematic and comprehensive understanding and, accordingly, are not reflected in the documents of a legal nature. This also leads to the fact that the policy documents of Central Asian countries declare measures that can create conditions limiting the outflow of young people or increasing the attractiveness of their native countries for them. However, these measures remain at the level of declarations and are not transformed into real mechanisms capable of retaining talented youth in Central Asia.

The statistical accounting system existing in the countries of Central Asia does not allow us to talk about the real extent of external youth migration. Only persons leaving for permanent residence, in labour migration in an organized manner, and for studying at foreign higher educational institutions at the expense of the State budget or as part of academic mobility programmes are recorded. Persons travelling for labour or educational migration through personal funds are not directly recorded by the migration registration system. There is no exact information about the geography of study, the studied disciplines, and the obtained degrees. Such statistics are necessary not only to keep in touch with educational migrants but also to gain a deeper understanding of how areas of acquired knowledge and skills can be useful at home.

Central Asian countries have not developed practices for regulating youth migration processes, which could be considered the best and applied in other countries of the region in the form of work instructions, codes of conduct, or by-laws and regulations.

3. Motives and drivers of youth migration. For all young people, the decision to migrate to work or study is determined by a combination of factors and reasons, both personal and more general. In the future, factors and causes existing in the homeland are intertwined with factors and causes in the country of destination. Moreover, if the factors stimulating migration are similar in all countries of Central Asia, the motives for returning have a national feature.

The results of the study are presented in the form of a PEST analysis matrix (table 1).

The reasons for the return of migrants to their homeland are both complex and specific, and the main ones are family-related. Returns are also affected by the nature of work, pay, and life in the host country, health problems, administrative and achievement reasons (mainly for educational migrants). The main conditions for returning to the homeland are:

- Improved socioeconomic status of the population;
- Having a well-paid job;
- Noticeable improvements in the fight against corruption and nepotism;
- Radical improvements in education and healthcare;
- Unity of the legal boundaries;
- Civil rights and freedoms.

Table 1—PEST analysis matrix of factors stimulating youth migration from Central Asian countries

	Factors pushing people from Central Asian countries	Factors attracting abroad
Political factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corruption in all spheres and at all levels, nepotism • Lack of security (high crime rate due to inaction of the authorities) • Uncertainty in the future (including the future of children) due to an unclear State policy • Bureaucracy at all levels, impunity and irresponsibility of officials, inefficient government and reform inefficiency • Increasing restrictions on freedom of speech and expression, lack of independent media • Manifestations of nationalism, narrowing of the Russian-speaking segment in society, the possibility of that the position of the Russian minority may change after the transit of power • Non-observance of human and civil rights • Weak civil society, broken democratic institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High security, trust in law enforcement agencies • Strong civil society and democratic institutions, a developed system of local self-government, the opportunity to participate in the life of the country • Low corruption, lack of protectionism and discrimination • Human rights • Elections, succession of power • Political and economic security, working institutions of power • Compliance with the rule of law, the existence of a single legal space, clear and transparent rules of conduct for all
Economic factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unstable socioeconomic situation, low level of country development, weak economy, lack of economic prospects, stagnation • Low wages, inability to purchase housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed economy, higher level of socioeconomic development • High standards of living, high standard of welfare • Social and economic stability, security • Decent pay • Fair competition, business development opportunity
Social factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deterioration in the quality of human capital, the mass outflow of highly qualified specialists, the archaization of society, the low level of culture of the population, a fall in the level of education • Weak social security, including in public health service and education • Lack of social elevators, prospects for self-realization and career • Professional lack of demand, difficulties finding employment without the availability of the “necessary” connections or relatives • Social inequality, the dependence of a person’s opportunities on money and connections, the clan system • Intolerance, hostility of society • Parents pushing their children to study abroad with the prospect of permanent residence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prospects for children (high-quality education, health care, work, security) • Cultural development, including the culture of the population, the comfort of the social environment • High-quality education • High-quality public health service • The opportunity to acquire new knowledge and new life experiences • Professional demand, transparent rules for employment based on qualifications, the possibility for professional growth • Ability to travel, accessibility of cultural sites
Technical factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low level of development of science and the demand for scientific personnel • Environmental situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity for professional development, career growth, self-realization in a competitive environment • Developed infrastructure focused on personal comfort • Highly developed science • Favorable environment

4. The impact of youth migration on the countries of Central Asia. External youth migration from Central Asian countries significantly affects the overall situation in the countries of the region and the formation of sociodemographic, economic, and political development trends. Youth migration, on the one hand, contributes to the emergence of new opportunities for development, while, on the other hand, it generates risks and challenges for the stable development of societies and States. The most serious negative impact of youth migration is the outflow of qualified and highly qualified specialists to foreign countries (“brain drain”). The main vector of positive impact is also associated with the migration of qualified specialists—their return with increased human capital.

5.2 Findings

During the study, some interesting and significant results were obtained that lie outside the scope of the tasks:

1. There is a trend toward a decrease in the share of youth in the population of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Moreover, in all countries of Central Asia, there has been an increase in the number of people of working age or who are unwilling to retire (both due to increased life expectancy and increased retirement age and due to low pensions). In all countries of Central Asia, despite high youth mobility and internal centripetal population migration, the level of youth urbanization is not high enough.
2. All countries of Central Asia have an excess of young labour, and the models of economic development selected and implemented in them are not capable of ensuring an increase in the number of jobs that could absorb the growth of labour resources. An important factor is the fact that Central Asian countries lag behind in technological development, and an almost complete absence is recorded of innovative vectors of economic development and, accordingly, jobs for highly qualified specialists, including in education and science.
3. Most young people in the study see their educational migration experience as positive and believe they have been successful. At the same time, young people do not determine success through material benefits but through criteria such as education, the availability of work that ensures self-realization and career growth, the availability of rights and freedoms, psychological self-affirmation.
4. For young people in Central Asian countries, the prestige of higher education at national higher educational institutions is declining, which is determined by a set of factors, among which, in the context of the report, the fol-

The connection between educational migration and the migration of highly qualified specialists with human capital and technological development of the country, with the successful return of this category of migrants is undoubtedly positive. However, in the case of migration to perform low-skilled work, this relationship is not so obvious and raises questions both in terms of the distribution and use of remittances and new acquired skills. If the socioeconomic situation in the country does not change, transfers will continue to be used for the daily fight against poverty, leaving no room for investment in human capital. If the quality of education does not improve in rural areas, emigrating youth will initially have low chances of getting more qualified work in destination countries and, accordingly, less opportunities for professional growth.

lowing can be highlighted:

- The weak connection between national higher education systems and national labour markets;
 - The weak correlation between the level of qualification and education, the material and time resources spent on this and the level of wages (especially initial);
 - The poor quality of higher education in most higher education institutions of Central Asian countries.
5. Labour migration of young people is determined by a combination of factors that determine the decision to go abroad to work. As a rule, we can note a combination of macro- and microfactors: the desire to help parents, close relatives; life circumstances, such as marriage, divorce, death; lack of choice of jobs in the local labour market; lack of money and low wages; the presence in the host country of close relatives or migrant networks.
 6. Migration of young people from Central Asian countries is self-sustaining and self-reinforcing in nature—migration gives rise to even greater migration since in the absence of peers the original place of residence loses attractiveness for young people.
 7. Young citizens from Central Asian countries, who can be classified as qualified and highly qualified specialists, clearly understand the situation in their country, consider it comprehensively, and build their life strategy in accordance with this analysis. The key point of these strategies, according to surveys, is the understanding that the situation in Central Asian countries can only be changed at the system level; separately taken “targeted measures” will not produce an effective result and, accordingly, are not able to change the decision of a person to emigrate.

8. Educational migration is considered by a significant number of young citizens of Central Asian countries as a springboard for subsequent emigration from the country. The emigration of young people to permanent residence in the countries of Central Asia is largely mediated through educational migration. Therefore, external educational migration has the opposite effect. It is assumed that educational programmes are aimed at improving the skills of young people so that they invest in the development of the national economy. However, having received an education and experience living in other countries, educational migrants who return to their homeland are again oriented toward migration, but already with the goal of working abroad or staying there for permanent residence.
9. Increasing investment in the education system, opening new higher education institutions focused on the mass graduation of specialists in new technologies, sending students to foreign universities while maintaining the under development of innovative and high-tech sectors of the economy, will only stimulate the departure of young specialists to the Russian Federation, the EU, the

United States of America, and developed and developing countries in Asia. This means that the countries of Central Asia will finance the development of an innovative economy in these foreign countries. The risk of loss or low return on investment without creating a full-fledged ecosystem is also possible in the field of local innovative startups. This situation poses the risk of a brain drain and loss of ideas to countries with developed startup ecosystems.

Therefore, youth migration from Central Asian countries forms a problem for them all, but its tension is different. For example, for Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan youth migration processes pose quite serious risks and problems regarding the outflow of both a statistically significant volume of labour resources and the economically active population, and the intensive outflow of skilled labour, creative youth, and effective entrepreneurs. The pressure from youth migration processes on Kazakhstan is currently somewhat lower; however, problems associated with the loss of human capital have already been identified and are tending to worsen in the short term.

5.3 Recommendations

1. The low level of statistical support for migration processes, in particular, the lack of statistics on migrants leaving Central Asian countries without registering for permanent residence, requires an improvement in the migrant data processing system. It is advisable to connect the consular and diplomatic structures of the countries of the region to the collection of statistical data as well as to intensify the work of a number of specialized ministries (in particular, the Ministries of Education and Science) to collect data on citizens of Central Asia studying abroad through interaction with similar foreign ministries. It is possible to study the creation of coordinated statistical recording in the Eurasian migration system or its Central Asian subsystem. It is possible to organize online monitoring of the movement of migrants abroad by encouraging their registration on a specially created site.
2. It is necessary to go beyond the narrow framework of a strictly economic vision of migration as a problem of employment and labour. In a significant number of cases, young people see migration as an opportunity to get a well-rounded experience and not just earn a living.
3. It is advisable to study the discourse that is an alternative to migration and focuses on emphasizing the opportunities and advantages that young people can get without migration at home. For example, in Kyrgyzstan

together with the discourse on migration as a result of hopelessness and lack of alternatives (“ayl zhok”), there is a discourse that states that there is a choice in the country, opportunities for growth and progress (“ayl bar”), and one can have a good life and salary at home. The existence of an alternative model of youth behavior opens up new possibilities for understanding migration processes and destroying the idea of their “normality” due to the promotion of alternative normalization of youth behavior.

4. Young citizens from Central Asian countries participating in educational migration are mostly fully independent competent individuals capable of building a personal development trajectory and life strategy. In their relations, the paternalistic approach that dominates the countries of the region in making political decisions is unacceptable. If the task is to transform the attitudes of young people (including emigration), then key decisions regarding their lives should be made in agreement with the young people themselves, taking into account their goals and values.
5. Central Asian countries are not able to restrict the labour and educational migration of their citizens without violating basic human and civil rights; moreover, such measures can only increase the outflow of the most educated citizens. Therefore, it is advisable to revise the format for working to pay off loans allo-

cated to specialists who have undergone training abroad at the expense of budget financing. To give a cumulative effect to these programmes, their graduates should be sent to work in educational institutions.

6. Low-skilled workers with basic school education are mainly involved in youth labour migration from Central Asian countries. This significantly reduces their salary and also increases the risks associated with migration. It is therefore advisable:
 - To develop a system of secondary vocational education in the countries of Central Asia with the aim of training qualified young specialists;
 - Organize free courses on the basis of professional colleges and lyceums for training potential migrants before travelling abroad (professional development, training in foreign languages, migration and labour laws of foreign countries, work with consular missions).

Migration policy aimed at improving the regulation of migration processes and increasing the benefits of migration should be coordinated with State educational policy. Obviously, knowledge of languages and having a profession is the key to finding a job, protecting one's rights, and adapting to the host country.

7. Central Asian countries should pay more attention to educational migration. Such migration should be included in government migration concepts. In conditions of decreasing economic importance of natural resources, human capital is starting to play a critical role in social and economic development. Educational migration not only allows you to gain new specialized knowledge and skills but also opens a window of opportunities necessary for expanding international relations, creating business contacts, concluding contracts, etc.

8. Central Asian governments should work to maintain ties with educational migrants. For this, you can use a network of graduates, for example, as is the case in almost all foreign universities. It is vital that highly qualified specialists and students do not lose touch with their homeland and have the opportunity to help the country, if not directly, then indirectly.

9. It is advisable for governments of Central Asian countries and relevant ministries (in particular, the Ministries of Education and Science) to revise the nostrification procedures for foreign academic degrees to remove bureaucratic barriers for the return of qualified and highly qualified young specialists to their homeland. Given the current level of development of science in the countries of the region, additional bureaucratic obstacles do not encourage specialists with foreign degrees to work in scientific and educational institutions in their homeland. As a result, the educational and scientific sector is losing the huge potential of new specialists who could reform the curriculum, attract foreign partners, and create international cooperation programmes.

10. One of the motivators for the return of young migrants is the desire to run their own business—including the implementation of innovative projects (although, obviously, the services and trade sectors dominate). However, in most cases, this is difficult due to the economic (tax), administrative, and corruption pressure on small- and medium-sized businesses. Therefore, it is advisable for the countries of Central Asia to provide preferential treatment for small- and medium-sized businesses.

11. In Central Asian countries (primarily in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan), a reintegration policy should be developed based on coordination with the education and health policies as well as the work of local authorities.

GLOSSARY

The glossary is based on the Glossary of Migration (Geneva: International Organization for Migration, 2019) and the “Migration Terminology Handbook (Russian–English)” (Moscow: International Organization for Migration, 2011).

Best practice	Means and methods for the successful application of existing standards and principles at international and national levels. Best practice can be applied in the form of work instructions, codes of conduct, by-laws and regulations. Signs of best practice: innovation, development of creative solutions; positive impact on the level of observance of the rights of migrants; lasting effect, especially when migrants themselves are involved in this; potential for further development.
Brain drain	Depletion of human capital in a specific occupation or economic sector resulting from the emigration of skilled workers engaged in this occupation or sector from the country of origin to another country (or from one region of a country to another—internal migration).
Brain gain	From the perspective of a country of destination, immigration of skilled workers into the country resulting in the acquisition of human capital. From the perspective of a country of origin, the positive spill-over effects of the emigration of highly skilled workers such as brain circulation, or the motivational effects of migration that spur aspiring migrants to acquire further skills. Brain gain also occurs when migrants return back to their country or communities of origin and bring back with them new skills and knowledge acquired in migration.
Contractual temporary migrant workers/migrant workers	Qualified, nonqualified, or unskilled workers who remain in the host country for a specified period of time as provided for in an employment contract.
Country of origin	In the migration context, a country of nationality or of former habitual residence of a person or group of persons who have migrated abroad, irrespective of whether they migrate regularly or irregularly.
Country of transit	In the migration context, the country through which a person or a group of persons pass on any journey to the country of destination or from the country of destination to the country of origin or the country of habitual residence.
Documented Migrant Worker	A migrant worker or members of their family authorized to enter, to stay, and to engage in a remunerated activity in the State of employment pursuant to the law of that State and to international agreements to which that State is a party (International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their families, 1990).
Economic migrant	While not a category in international law, the term is sometimes used to refer to any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a State, solely or primarily motivated by economic opportunities.
Educational Migrant (Migrant Student)	A person who will undertake a programme of study in a State of which they are not a citizen.
Educational migration	The movement of people from a country of origin to another country for the purpose of education. In most countries, educational migration is regulated by national law. Some countries play an active role in regulating external educational migration.

Feminization of migration	The changing nature of women's migration, reflecting the fact that more women migrate independently rather than as members of a household and are actively involved in employment.
Highly skilled migrant worker	A migrant who has completed a higher level of education or occupational experience, the level of skill or qualifications typically needed to practice a highly skilled occupation.
Individual migration	Cases when people migrate individually or as a family. Such movements are usually self-sponsored or sponsored by individuals, organizations, or the government, in contrast to mass migration programmes.
International migration	The movement of persons away from their country of origin or country of usual residence and across international border to a country of which they are not nationals.
International migration system	The totality of countries determined by the existence between them of significant in volume and stable (self-sustaining) migration flows based on political, economic, and cultural ties between these countries. It is assumed that differences in the volume of migration flows within the system and beyond allow one to separate one system from another.
International youth migration	The movement of persons aged 14–35 away from their country of origin or country of usual residence and across international border to a country of which they are not nationals.
Irregular migrant	A person who moves or has moved across an international border and is not authorized to enter or to stay in a State pursuant to the law of that State and to international agreements to which that State is a party.
Labour Migration	Movement of persons from one State to another, or within their own country of residence, for the purpose of employment.
Long-term migrant	A person who moves to a country other than that of their usual residence for a period of at least one year, so that the country of destination effectively becomes their new country of usual residence.
Low-skilled migrant worker	A migrant worker whose level of education, occupational experience, or qualifications makes them eligible to practice a typically low-skilled occupation only.
Migrant worker	A person who is to be engaged, is engaged, or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a State of which they are not a national. (Article 2 (1) of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, 1990).
Push-pull factors	A model categorizing the drivers of migration into push and pull factors, whereby push factors are those which drive people to leave their country and pull factors are those attracting them into the country of destination.
Receiving country	Country of destination, or third country. In the case of return or repatriation, also the country of origin. A country that has accepted to receive a certain number of migrants, including refugees, on a yearly basis by presidential, ministerial, or parliamentary decision.

Reintegration	A process which enables individuals to re-establish the economic, social, and psycho-social relationships needed to maintain life, livelihood, and dignity and inclusion in civic life.
Return migration	In the context of international migration, the movement of persons returning to their country of origin after having moved away from their place of habitual residence and crossed an international border. In the context of internal migration, the movement of persons returning to their place of habitual residence after having moved away from it.
Right to leave	An element of the right to freedom of movement that entails that everyone shall be free to leave any country, including one's own.
Right to return	An element of the right to freedom of movement entailing that everyone shall be free to return to one's own country.
Skilled citizen	A citizen residing abroad and possessing professional skills for which there is a demand in the country or region of origin.
Skilled migrant worker	A migrant worker who has the appropriate skill level and specialization to carry out the tasks and duties of a given job.
Undocumented migrant workers/ migrant workers in violation of the law	A migrant who is not authorized to enter, to stay, and to engage in a remunerated activity in the State of employment pursuant to the law of that State and to international agreements to which that State is a party.
Young migrant	Migrant 14–35 years old.

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APPENDICES

Figure P.1—Answer to the question “What was your motivation for leaving your homeland (indicate the three most important motives)?” (Online survey of people living abroad, %)

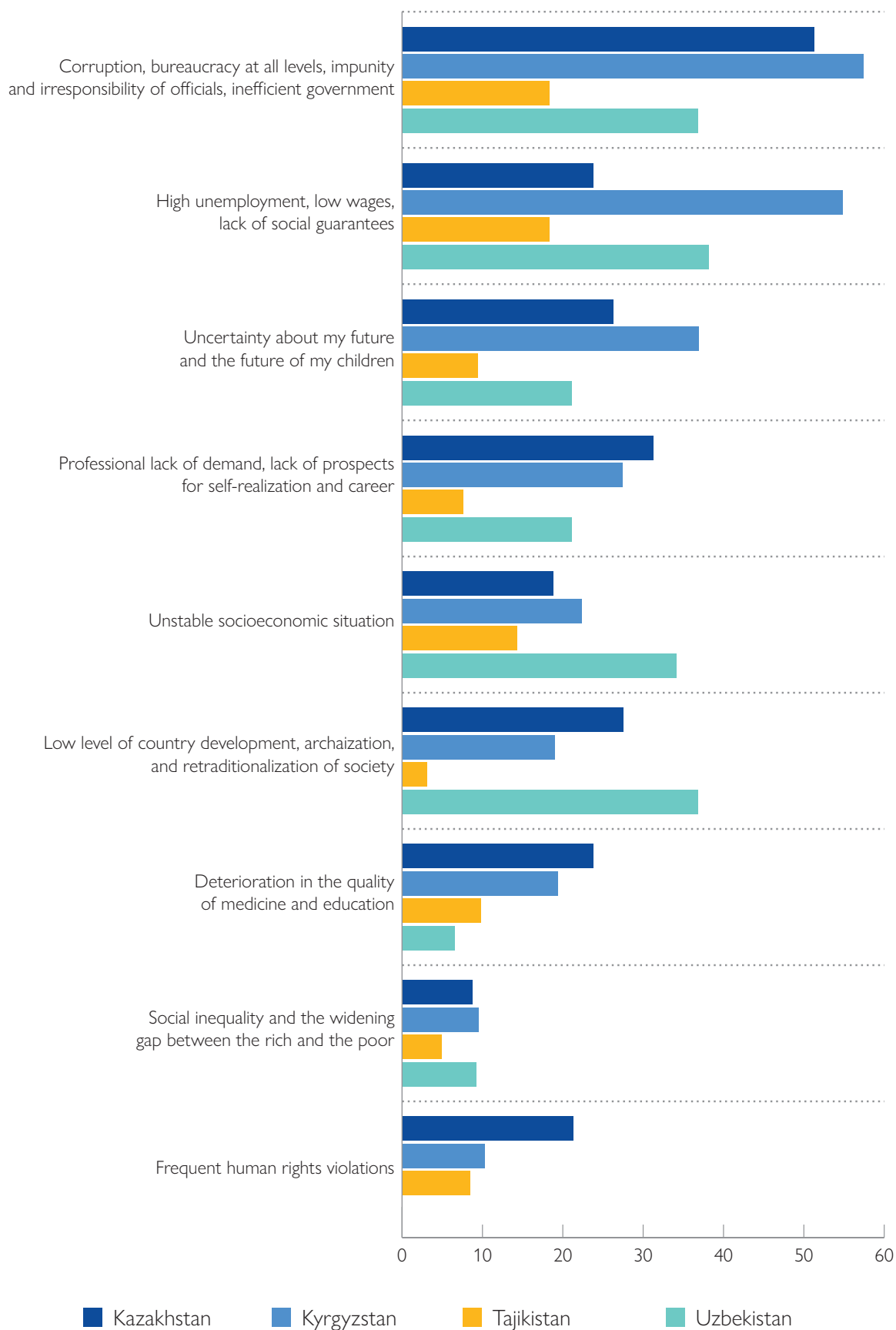


Figure P.2—Factors “attracting” young migrants abroad. The answer to the question “What goals are you pursuing while abroad (indicate the three most important goals)?” (Online survey of people living abroad, %)

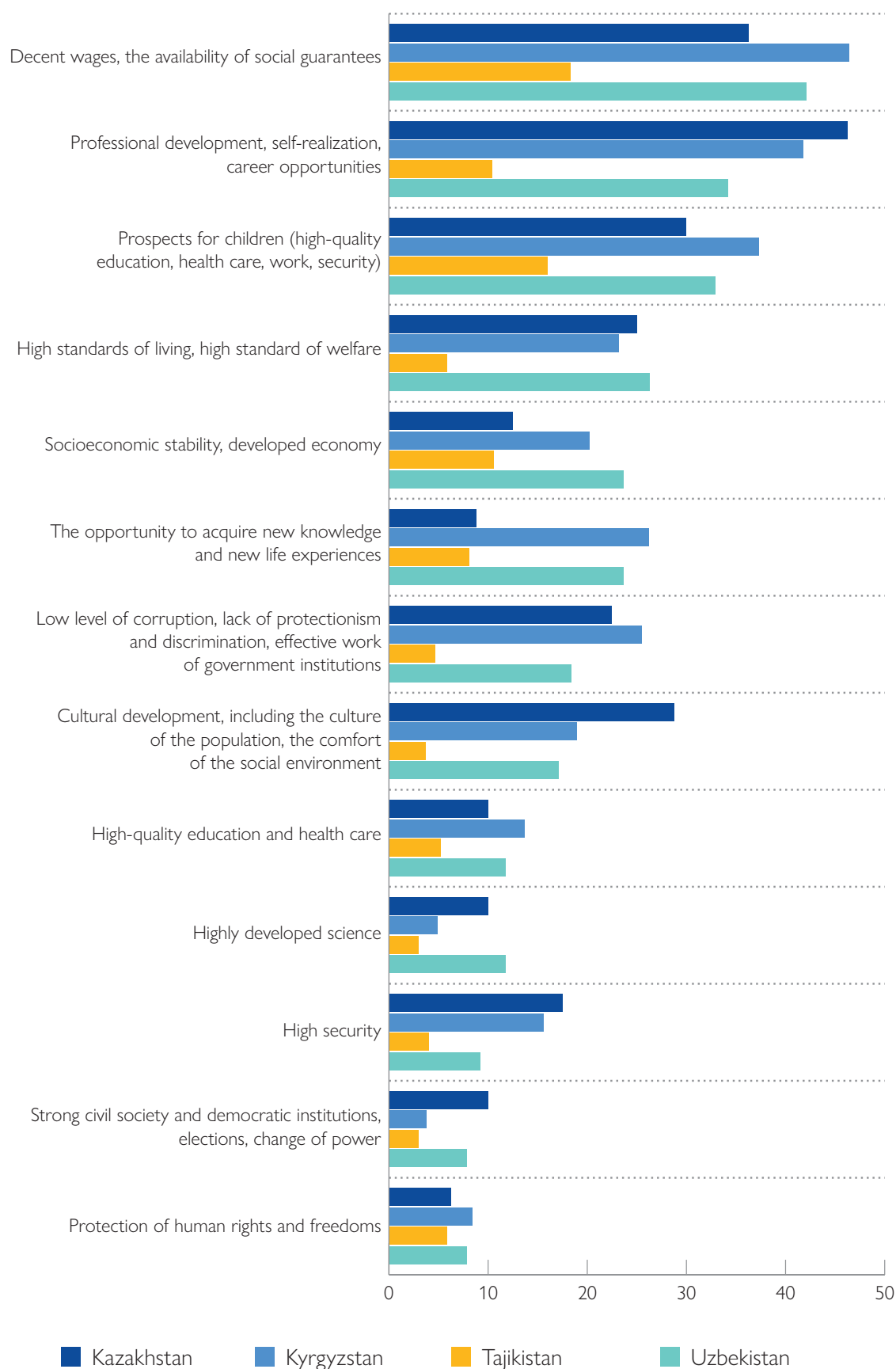


Figure P.3—The answer to the question “What is most important for you in life (indicate no more than five options)?” (Online survey of people living abroad, %)

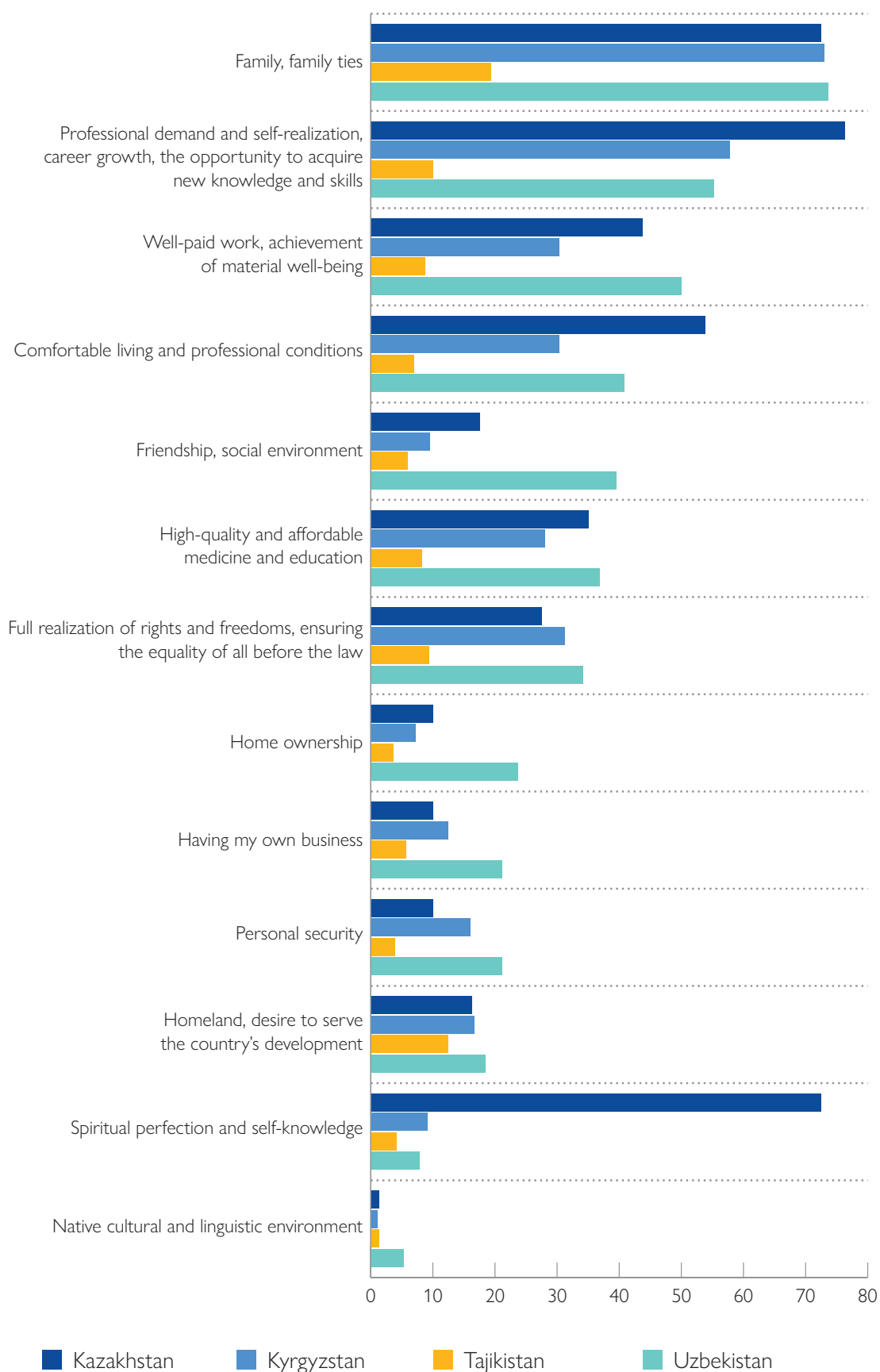


Figure P.4—The answer to the question “What stops you from returning to your homeland? (indicate three reasons)?” (Online survey of people living abroad, %)

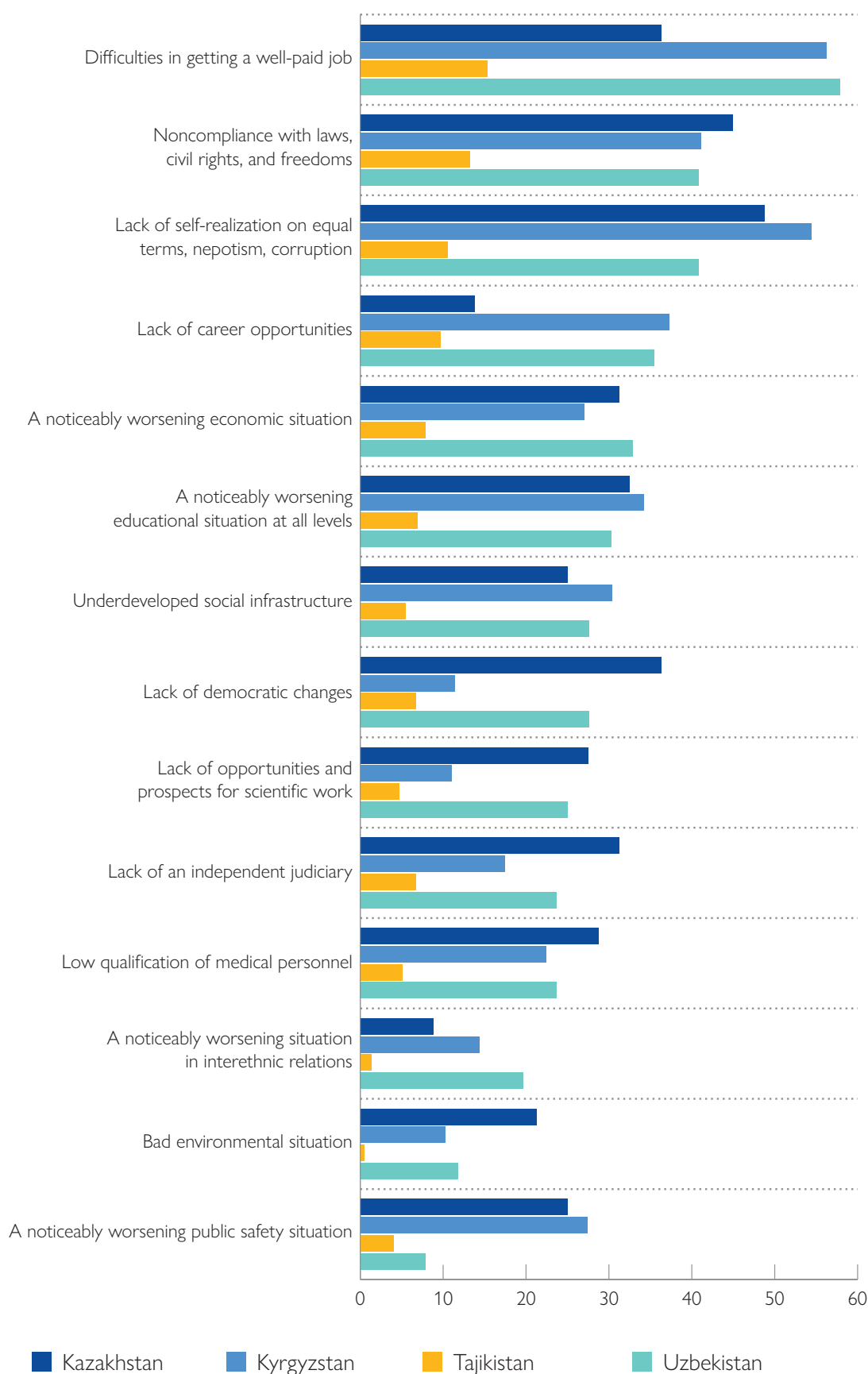
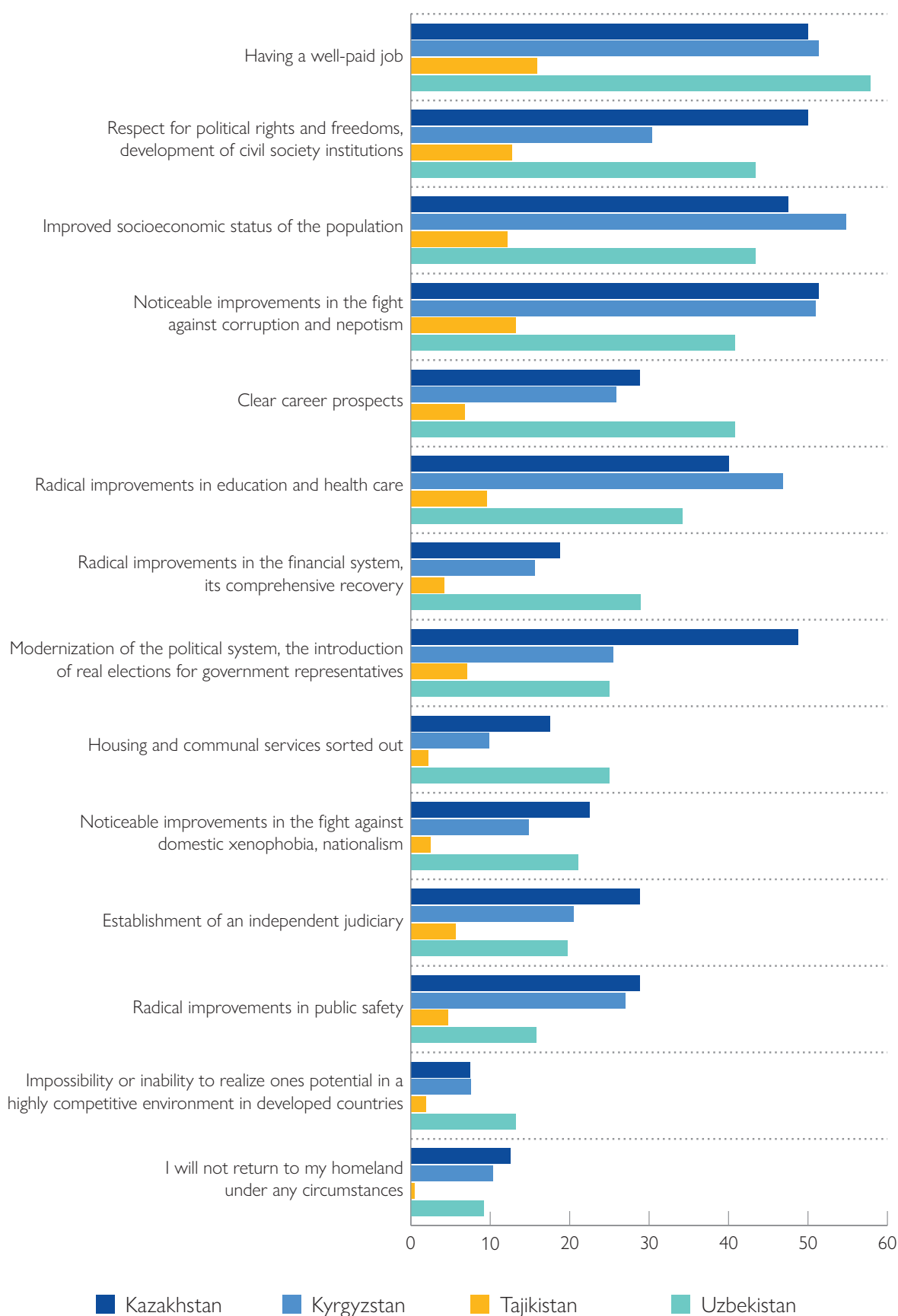


Figure P.5—The answer to the question “Under what conditions would you return to your homeland to work in your country (indicate three conditions)?” (Online survey of people living abroad, %)



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