



## IOM Tajikistan Newsletter - June 2011

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## Foreword from the Chief of Mission

Dear Readers,

With the growing number of Tajik citizens working and living in the exterior, it has become difficult to overstate the impact migration has had on Tajik society. For those of us here in Tajikistan, the scope of the phenomenon goes without mention. For others, it is worth considering that upwards of 1,000,000 Tajiks (of a total population estimated around 7,000,000) have migrated abroad, largely in search of employment. Their remittances alone account for 30-40% of the national GDP, making the nation one of the most dependent on remittance dollars in the world.

This newsletter aims to present IOM Tajikistan's activities during the first half of 2011. Building upon IOM's long established and vast presence in-country, IOM initiated a new project which aims to equip the Government of Tajikistan to respond to natural disasters, and launched a pilot project to assist the abandoned wives of Tajik labour migrants.

Herewith, we hope to present our ongoing initiatives on counter trafficking, border management, migration health, and our largest programme in Tajikistan, facilitating migration.

IOM Tajikistan has allocated significant resources into the development of the knowledge and skills of governmental officials and civil society groups throughout the country on the Essentials of Migration Management.

Only with the generous support of our donors and continued cooperation with our implementing partners is IOM able to provide the needed support to people of Tajikistan during these economically challenging times. On behalf of the entire IOM Mission in Tajikistan, I would like to extend our highest gratitude for their confidence.

For any comments or questions regarding the information in this bulletin, please feel free to contact us. You may also find more information on our website: [www.iom.tj](http://www.iom.tj).

Best regards,  
Zeynal Hajiyev  
Chief of Mission, IOM Tajikistan

### Current Donors to IOM Tajikistan Projects





## Legal Assistance to the Wives and Families of Labour Migrants

For all the benefits labour migration has brought to Tajikistan, there are also negative aspects for the families of migrants left behind. Recent research has shown a growing trend of labour migrants ceasing to send financial resources to their families, or not returning home to their families at all. Some families even remain unaware of their abandonment as migrants start new families abroad.

Wives of labour migrants often lack higher education and specialized professional skills at the time of their abandonment. Further complicating matters is a low level of legal literacy, limiting their ability to remedy their situation in the case of violation of their rights. These factors lead to increased rates of extreme poverty and high susceptibility to hunger, abuse, crime, and even risk of suicide. These women thereby have become a highly vulnerable population in Tajikistan.

In early 2011, IOM Tajikistan implemented a pilot project to improve the access to justice and legal awareness among this group. The project was financially supported by the Swiss Confederation.

During the project, IOM opened a free legal reception center for households of labour migrants at the Migrant Support Center in Kulob. Residents of Vose district and the city of Kulob arrived at the center with various legal problems throughout the six months of the project.

Many women appealed to the project lawyers, the majority with family issues that had underlying legal issues at stake. For example, the recovery of alimony and acknowledgement of paternity were of particular concern for the women. Another problem frequently encountered during consultations was the legal process for divorce. Lawyers acting out through the project framework also carried out mediation services and assisted in the reunification of four families.

There were many appeals regarding the search of missing labour migrants. With the help of Tajik Diaspora groups in the Russian Federation, project staff managed to find six missing migrants and re-established contact between them and their families.

In total, more than 450 women received legal assistance, either by visiting the Migrant Support Center in



Kulob or participating in the dozens of mobile consultations to the surrounding rural areas.

Considering the mounting numbers of the abandoned families of labour migrants throughout the country, IOM hopes this project serves as a catalyst for the increase of government and international attention and resources towards alleviating the unforeseen social dilemmas stemming from the high rate of external labour migration.





## Strengthening Disaster Response Capacities of the Government



*Damage from mudslides in Ayni District, 2010*

In early 2011, IOM Tajikistan launched a project designed to support the Government of Tajikistan found a robust disaster response coordination mechanism. As part of this project, the capacities of existing state structures such as the Committee on Emergency Situations will be strengthened and a new Emergency Operations Center (EOC) will be built and equipped with the necessary information technology and support. This project is made possible with the financial contributions by the Government of Japan.

While the construction on the premises for the Emergency Operations Center is currently underway and expected to be completed by August 2011, planning and capacity building activities for its operation have already begun in earnest.

As part of this effort, IOM organized two study tours for Tajik government officials, the first to Astana, Kazakhstan to meet with officials from the Ministry for Emergency Situations and to discuss matters related to emergency preparedness and management. During this trip, the delegation had the chance to become acquainted with their counterparts in Kazakhstan and

familiarized themselves with the operations of various departments within the ministry.

The second study tour was arranged in June to Ankara, Turkey to discuss the emergency management systems in Turkey. This visit was arranged in close cooperation with the Turkish Agency for International Development (TIKA). During this visit, the Tajik delegation had an opportunity to get acquainted with the Turkish experience in disaster management, their equipment, and methodology of work. Participants also had the opportunity to visit several centers for emergency situations management were outside Ankara, as well as the Rescue Training Center, and Red Crescent Society.

These visits provided Tajik officials the opportunity to familiarize themselves with some of most advanced equipment and practices for managing emergency situations that the Emergency Operations Center in Dushanbe will be possessing in a few short months.





## Ecological Pressures Behind Migration

Sadoqat was born and has lived in Ayni district her entire life. She tells IOM of destructive natural hazards, some tragically claiming the lives of neighbors.

Sadoqat worked for many years on a Soviet collective farm, and later in her own garden until just recently when she became too frail to continue. She owned her house, a tiny plot for vegetables, and a small number of livestock. Although not living in luxury, she was content in her native village.

Then in August 2010, the tumultuous environment that had impacted so many of her neighbors over the years struck her family.

A massive mudflow destroyed her barn and almost half of her plot. Fortunately, her house and family was spared from the destruction. Nevertheless, she had neither the resources nor the strength to reconstruct her livelihood, and adapting to the repeating hazards she faced presented considerable challenges.

Following the severe food shortages resulting from her demolished harvest last year, she invested the little money she receives as from her husband in Russia to increase the usage of fertilizer. Overwhelmed by the remarkably high price of fertilizer, though, Sadoqat questions the potential return on her investment.

External support after the disaster was limited to two weeks of food rations from local authorities and the offer of relocation to a plot of land in Zafarobod. The relocation, though, remains impossible.

“I would move to Zafarobod, but if I cannot even afford enough food here in Ayni, how could I possibly move there, and start from scratch with no help?”

Despite the possibility of leaving Ayni for the open space and free plot of land in Zafarobod, Sadoqat is not unlike many others in Tajikistan, fearing a repeated disaster, but with no capacity and support to rebuild their lives.



*Sadoqat in her native village, resisting the pressures to leave her native village despite frequent natural disasters*



## Joint Trainings for Tajik and Afghan Border Guards



*Closing ceremony of joint trainings in Khorog*



*Tajik and Afghan border guards attend trainings at Khorog Training Center*

IOM Tajikistan has successfully completed the 6th round of joint training courses for Tajik and Afghan border guards on “Border and Immigration Control” implemented within the framework of the project titled “Expansion of Tajikistan Border Guards Training Center in Khorog: Supplemental Assistance to Dushanbe Training Center (Phase V)”. Nine border police officers of Afghan National Border Police and six officers of Department of Border Forces of Tajikistan participated in the training course. The training was held on the premises of the Khorog Training Centre for Border Guards, recently established by IOM Tajikistan in Khorog city, Badakhshan region.

This joint training aimed to contributing to the enhancement of security measures along the Afghan-Tajik border by developing the professional knowledge and skills of border officers working at border crossing points in the Badakhshan region. Subjects covered during the training included the basics of border security, cross border cooperation, visa policy, detection of fraudulent documents, combating human trafficking and terrorism.

The project foresees 6 more similar trainings during the lifetime of the project, which received financial support from the United States Department of State Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL).

INL Country Representatives Mr. Eric Hamrin and Mr. Darren Tees accompanying by INL Project Officer Mr. Khirad Khargasov has visited this training as well. This delegation monitored the ongoing training (6th round)

as well as attended above-mentioned courses. The mentioned INL delegation also had a separate closed door interview with the Khorog training center’s instructors.

Initially, it was planned to have a high level of delegation from Afghan Border Police side to visit this round of training. On June 9th, 2011 the ongoing training was attended by the high level delegation of Afghan Border Police authorities. The delegation was represented by Gen. Abdul Khalil Bakhtyar (Deputy of head and Executive Director of Afghan Border Police) and Col. Gul Nabi Talash (Training Manager of ABP). They visited the Badakhshan region Check Points as Ishkashim, Shugnan and Noosay (Ruzvay) and met Afghan Border CPs in Afghanistan side as well.

The closing ceremony of the training was held on June 12th, 2011, was attended by the High level delegation from both Afghan and Tajik side, Gen. Abdul Khalil Bakhtyar, Col. Gul Nabi Talash, Consul of the Afghan consular section in Badakhshan region, Mr. Ali Haydari, as well as the head of the Law and Order Division of the Badakhshan region - Mr. Jum’a Davronbekov and esteemed personnel Col. Saidakbar Bodomov from the Border Detachment of the Department for Border Forces of Tajik State Committee for National Security in Badakhshan.





## Roundtable on HIV/AIDS Prevention Along Transport Routes



*Roundtable at the Regional Coordination & Training Center on Migration and HIV in Dushanbe, June 2011*

On June 7th, IOM and Ministry of Health organized a roundtable to discuss the ongoing efforts to provide HIV prevention to Tajik labour migrants along the transportation corridors while *en route* to destination countries.

A recent assessment conducted by IOM revealed inadequacies concerning ongoing interventions implemented by international organizations and local NGOs. Among the major shortcomings uncovered was the lack of involvement by the Ministry of Transportation in the new National Program on Combating HIV/AIDS for 2011-2015.

Roundtable participants included officials from government ministries, members of the international community, and NGOs active in HIV prevention efforts throughout Tajikistan. During the roundtable, participants adopted a resolution determining the roles and responsibilities of the Ministry of Transportation in the new National Program on Combating HIV/AIDS as well as the need to involve the Ministry of Transportation in the National Coordination Committee Against AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

Additional recommendations stemming from the roundtable included the creation of a technical working group for developing a sustainable mechanism to continued access to HIV prevention for labour mi-

grants during their travel. According to the Ministry of Transportation, an average of 66,250 passengers use mass transport routes for long distances each month in the country.

The roundtable was conducted on the premises of the Regional Coordination & Training Center on Migration and HIV, within the framework of the project “Community Mobilization for HIV Prevention among Labour Migrants and Their Families,” financially supported by the UNDP Project Implementation Unit of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.



## Promoting Household Budgeting to Build Confidence for the Future

Tracking migration related issues and turning migration benefits for development, IOM is commissioning a series of training endeavors for migrant households on how to consume, save and invest remittances and raise financial literacy.

These trainings are delivered first to the non-government organizations (NGOs) to learn and impart received knowledge to final beneficiaries – migrant households. Several NGOs operating to deliver such training courses attended a four-day “Effective Family Budget Management” and recognized the practical importance and timely placement of similar trainings for migrant and remittance-receiving households.

“The concept, approach and subject matter discussed in the training itself is an effective tool to sensitize the issue of family budget management among migrant households and provide avenues for efficient budget management and appropriate investment that could bring additional resources for households,” says Shuhrat Latipov, training coordinator of Istaravshan-based Fund for Society Development.

“This is very essential for those households without a future income vision and those that lavishly expend remittances hardly earned abroad. We are already delivering similar trainings and conducting awareness raising campaigns for migrant households in various localities, and people are gradually understanding the core value and benefit of planning the household budget.”

Shuhrat continued, “I learned new knowledge during the training delivered by IOM and can apply it in the communities to help people change behavior and rationally use their own income to have a better future.”

Household budgeting trainings are part of the ongoing Rural Growth Programme, a multi-year programme jointly conducted by UKAID, GIZ, UNDP, and IOM to mobilize local resources for community development in Sughd, the northern region of Tajikistan.



*Shuhrat Latipov delivers a family budget management training in Jamoat Guli Surkh of Istaravshan*







*Essentials for Migration Management Training in Qurghon-Teppa, April 2011*

## Training Tajik Officials in the Essentials of Migration Management

Through congregated funding from the IOM 1035 Facility, Rural Growth Programme and Central Asian Regional Migration Programme, the IOM Tajikistan is implementing a series of trainings for government officials on the Essentials of Migration Management (EMM) in order to optimize their operational migration management practices and decision-making.

More than 300 government officials have participated in EMM trainings across Tajikistan since late 2010. IOM has hosted trainings in Hissar, Khorog, Qurghon-Teppa, Tojikobod, Dushanbe, amongst other localities. These officials have been sensitized on the principles of international migration management, including the terminology of migration, conceptual models of migration management, migrant rights, international migration law, appropriate legislation and administrative framework development. These trainings are the first of their kind in Tajikistan, particularly for district and regional level government officials.

IOM recently signed a memorandum of understanding with the Civil Servants Advanced Training Institute of the Republic of Tajikistan (CSATI) to conduct a series of training-of-trainings workshops. This will enable the CSATI trainers to offer continued education in migration management to government officials, thereby institutionalizing the migration management course for state officials and practitioners in the future.

“Cooperation with IOM in terms of mainstreaming migration management into CSATI’s training curriculum is a critical step forward to institutionalize similar

courses and make them available for government officials directly or indirectly involved in managing migration,” says Ms. Gavhar Sharofzoda, CSATI Rector.

Challenges remain in extending the benefits of migration to the larger Tajik society. Further cooperation is recommended among the government agencies in order to develop a unified approach in protecting migrants’ rights and implementing a national migration strategy.

Migration management courses are already exerting a positive impact on the officials’ understanding of the deeply migration-affected Tajik society. For example in Sughd region, districts are applying comprehensive economic development planning tools where migration is reflected as one of the cross-cutting issues with justified acknowledgment of being a reason for political and social sustainability.

Similar trainings are envisioned and IOM continues to seek to invite all relevant government agencies to further discuss the importance of migration management and its application to the Tajik context, particularly with respect to improved statistical gathering and exchange.



## Monitoring Use of Child Labour in Tajikistan's Cotton Harvest

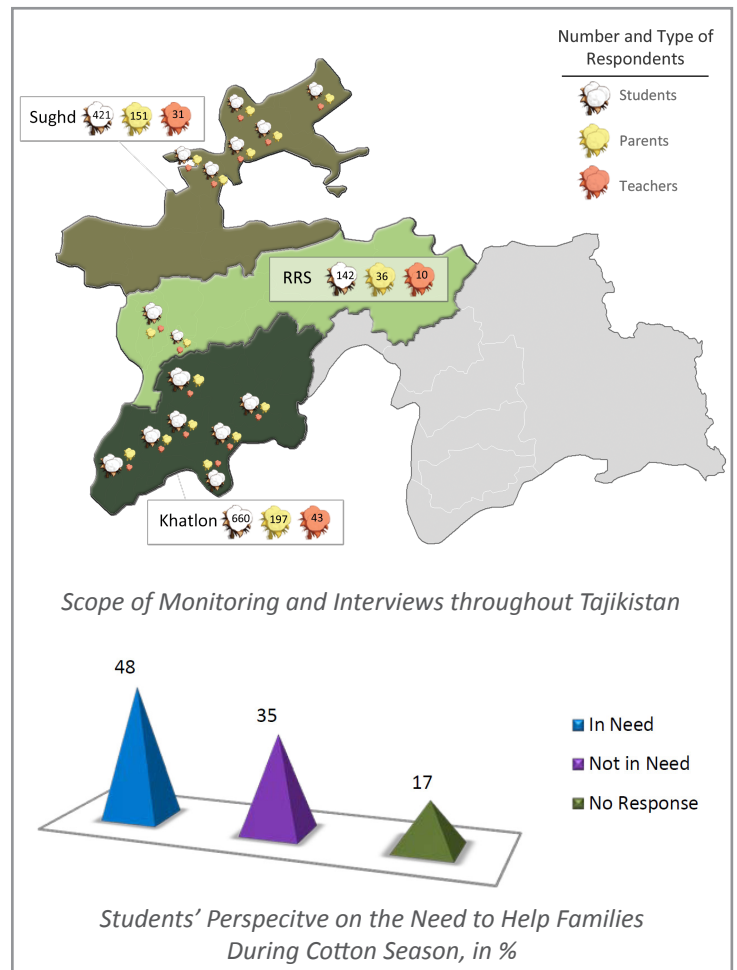
IOM Tajikistan counter trafficking programme has recently released its final report on the scale of child labour during the annual cotton harvest in Tajikistan.

Cotton is cultivated in all Central Asian countries, and almost everywhere cotton is picked manually. Although officially prohibited in all Central Asian countries, the use of child labour in the cotton harvest has been and still is a common practice since the Soviet era. During Soviet times, the five republics of Central Asia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan were the main suppliers of cotton for the whole Soviet Union. In order to meet the Soviet demand for cotton and fulfill production quotas which were developed by Moscow, the governments of the Central Asian republics used child labour to harvest cotton when faced with severe technical and financial resources.

IOM Tajikistan, with the authorization of the Inter-Ministerial Commission on Combating Trafficking in Persons under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, implemented the project, "Assessment of the Exploitation of Children and Students in the Cotton Fields of Tajikistan". During the course of this project, 15 local NGOs conducted independent monitoring visits in the 25 cotton growing areas of the country.

The information gathered from these visits was later complemented with selective interviews of school children, students, parents, teachers and directors from local schools, as well as staff from the district departments of education.

A handful of reports indicated that a small number of children had participated in the annual cotton harvest. A female student in the secondary school in the Farkhor district (Khatlon Province) explained during the open discussions that on 6th October 2010 only six students were attending school. The other students voluntarily went to the cotton field early in the morning, when they heard that the landlords were offering 0,50 Somoni (about USD 0.11) for 1 kg of picked cotton. Another female student said that she was also picking cotton for three days in a row. She explained that she had to pay 21 Somoni (about USD 4.71) to rent her school books.



The efforts taken by the Tajik government to prevent large-scale exploitation of schoolchildren and students had a mark of initial success. They were also the result of the initiative of the country's President to Parliament in 2009 discouraging this practice, as well as the instruction to relevant ministries and government agencies in 2010 to intervene in the recruitment of children in agricultural works as part of the national Law "On Education". Another reason for the observed decrease in the use of children in the cotton fields was the global increase in raw cotton prices, which made it more favorable for adult farmers to pick the cotton themselves in order to send the yield to the market faster.

The full report is available online at [www.iom.tj/publications.htm](http://www.iom.tj/publications.htm)





The IOM Mission in Tajikistan was established in 1992. Currently, the mission employs 40 staff stationed at the headquarters in the capital city, Dushanbe.

## Who supports us?

IOM Tajikistan is currently supported with through the financial support of the Governments of Canada, Japan, Norway, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America, as well as the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and the IOM 1035 Facility.

## Contact us

Chief of Mission  
Zeynal Hajiyev  
[iomdushanbe@iom.int](mailto:iomdushanbe@iom.int)

Mission phone: + 992 37 221 03 02  
Mission fax: + 992 37 251 00 62

Mission website:  
[www.iom.tj](http://www.iom.tj)

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