

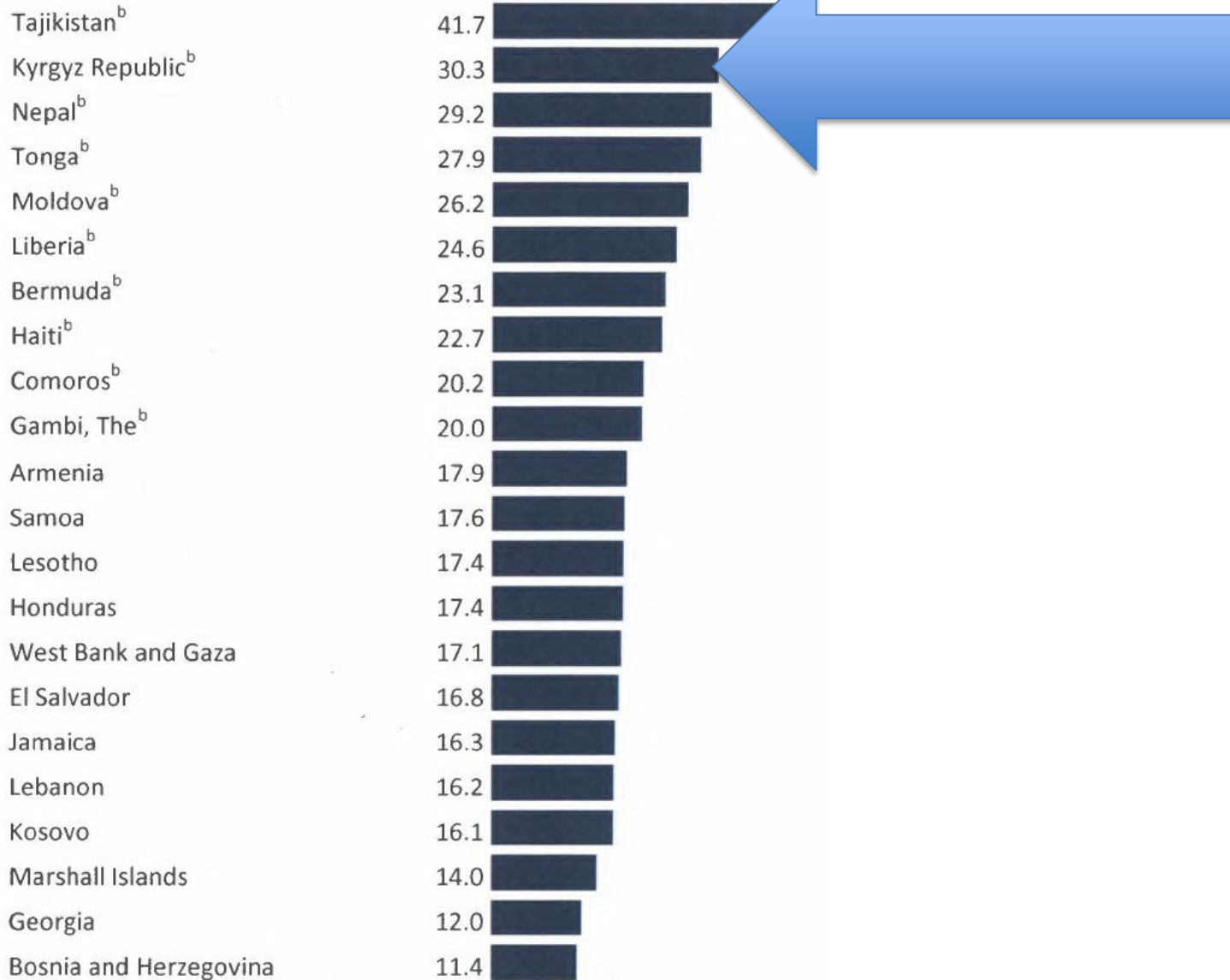
Institutional transitions: Migration and multilocality in Kyrgyzstan

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Top Remittance-Receiving Countries, 2014

percent of GDP



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culties and we sold our livestock. I went trading to Russia. Of course it was difficult.



So I hope that my kids will be independent and will have enough money. We are planning to send our daughter Nargiza to the medical institute.

ALMATY

BISHKEK

YLAILALAA

h et al. 2010, Thieme 2012a/b,
ne 2014, Thieme 2008, 2009,
ther silk road 2008.



Right now, my grandchildren call us father and mother, but soon they will understand that we are their grandparents.

Focus:

Patterns of multilocality and resulting changes, risks and opportunities for people's livelihoods at different places

Structure:

- Conceptual background
- Multilocal livelihoods in Kyrgyzstan
- Conclusion

Debates and concepts

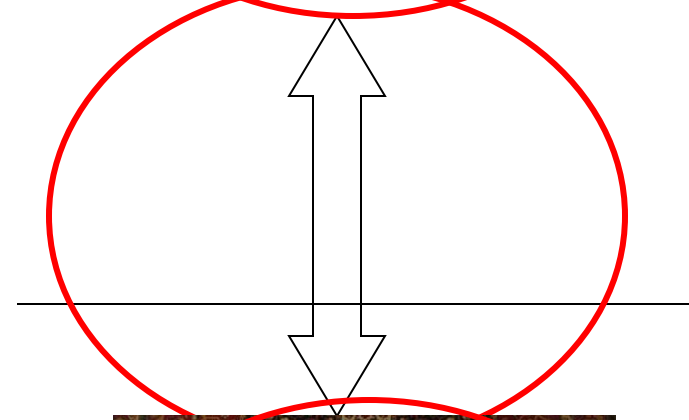
- Migration & mobility
 - Transnational social spaces (Pries, 1999, 2010)
 - Multilocality, responsibilities at different places (Schmidt-Kallert 2009, Weichhart 2009, Thieme 2008, Rogaly & Thieme 2012) -> translocality debates
- Transition, continuities and change in post-socialist contexts (Buchli and Humphrey, 2007; Sykora and Bouzarovski, 2012)
- Development oriented research (e.g. Bebbington, de Haan & Zoomers)

Power/inequalities

- Relational approach: understanding practises and societal relations which produce inequalities and power asymmetries in different global contexts (Bourdieu 1983, Bourdieu & Waquant 1992, Thieme 2008, Thieme and Siegmann 2010, Wiesmann & Messerli 2007; Defner & Hafenburg 2014)

Theoretical Approach

- Skills, property, family networks etc. are capitals (social, human, economic)
- People are acting in social fields e.g. field of labour, finance, education (Bourdieu et al. 1992)
- Possibilities to act depend on capitals
- Value of kinds of capital depend on social fields
- Capitals can be transformed
- Relations between people in place of origin and place of work)
- Struggle, power imbalances, inequality



Russia, Kazakhstan

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ALMATY
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Where do people go back to?

- Clear intention of return to Kyrgyzstan

“Migrants bring a lot of money here. I think that they will only leave temporarily. They are not going to settle down there [Russia and Kazakhstan]”. (Mayor of the municipality, 50 years, 2007)



Establishing a new home in urban areas (Bishkek)

- ‘My younger sister trades in Almaty and so do I. We bought two houses in Bishkek. In the long run I am going to live in Bishkek. (Satirbek, 33 years old, Almaty, 2010)

Visiting parents in rural areas

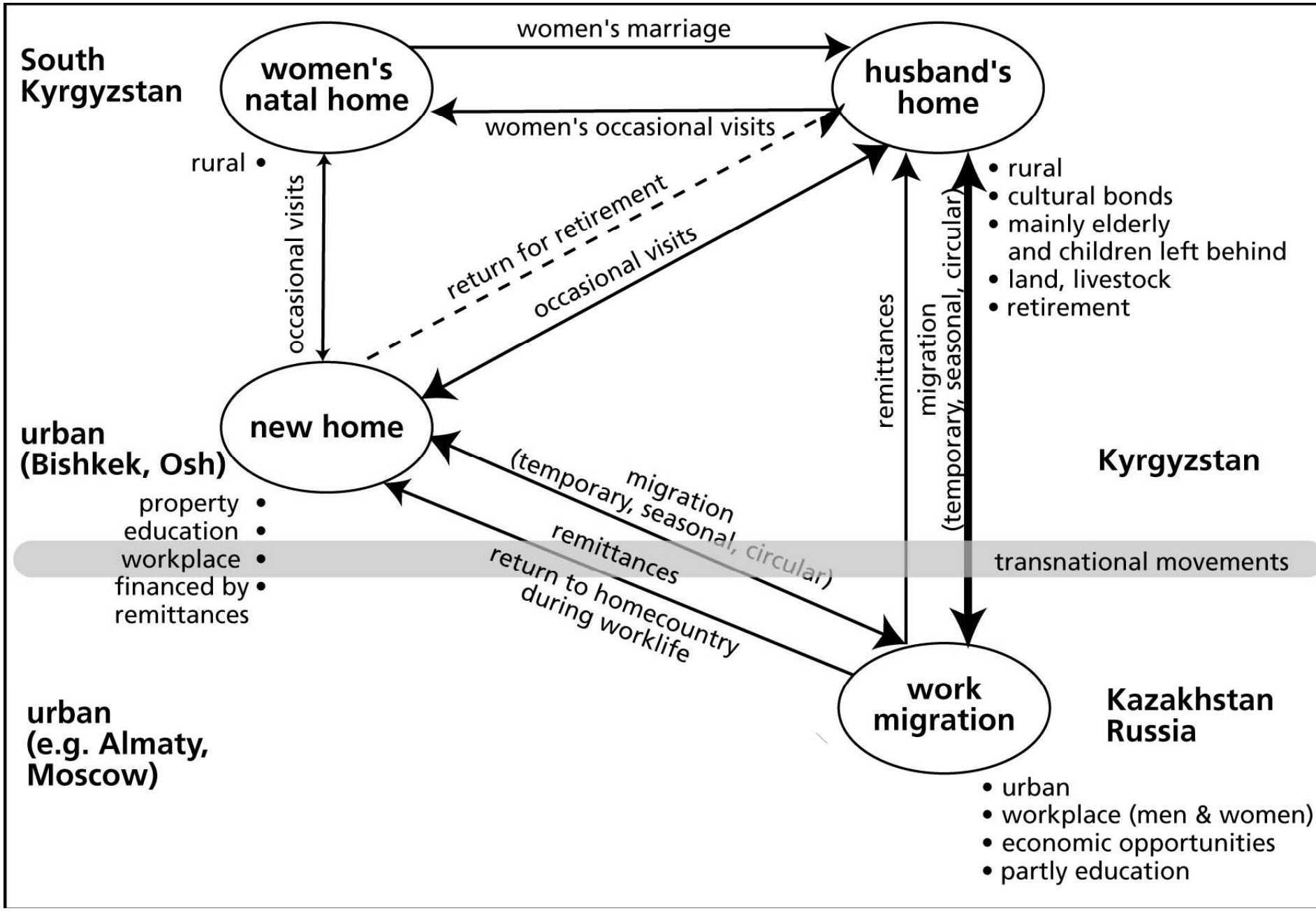
- “I go to the village, meet my parents, stay 10 days and then I return. There aren’t any young people.” (Male trader, 2010, 25 years, resident of Bishkek, but for business reasons he visits Almaty on a regular basis)

Retirement - longing to return to rural area (place of birth)

- „We will return. We have a house and cattle there. We have a nice house there. We maintain it in a very good way.” (Mr. Kubatbekov, 45 years old, Bishkek, 2007)

No finances to invest in urban areas, staying as long as necessary in Kazakhstan/Russia but placing future/retirement in rural area (husband's village)

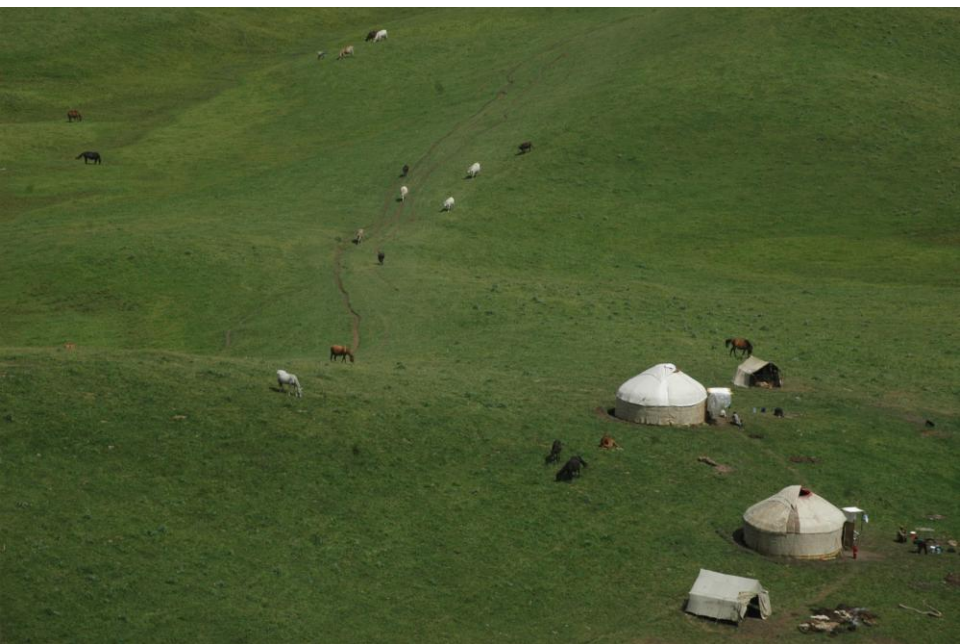
Place of home reduces risks of irregular international migration („Fall-back strategy“) - pregnancy, medical care at home



Remittances



- High pressure to support family
- “Every family tries to support their own household as a priority, to build a house and buy livestock. (...) My family highly expects that I send money, so it is difficult, even when you are sick you have to work and earn money. You try to earn money even when you are sick. You realise that your family and your children expect your support. There is no other way, you have to work.” (Women, selling bread in a market in Almaty)
- Investment of remittances: livestock, house, car, marriage
 - Livestock as symbol of wealth, stability, fall-back strategy
 - Livestock increasing (since 2000)
 - No investment in community projects



Lack of workforce & qualified people in rural areas

- Within households: livestock raising, hay cutting, cultivating fields (help by friends & relatives, payment of professionals, local day labourers paid by remittances, reducing production)
- For service provision: livestock production, agriculture, medical care, education

Do migrants gain new skills?

- Brain waste/ devaluation of skills among older generation
- Investment of remittances in education of children (mainly in urban centres)
- Young people (school/university age) migrate and combine work and education but also quitting school earlier in order to migrate

Social protection and caring at distance



“All my children are at different places. It’s not a normal family anymore. I would love to bring my children up, but because of the bad economic situation I don’t have any choice. I am their mother, and I know best how to treat my children. (...) My two-year-old girl couldn’t stay with my mother-in-law because she is too difficult and too young for my old mother-in-law, but for my middle daughter it was OK. My youngest daughter now stays with one of my aunts.” (female trader in Almaty)

Consequences of family separation

- For children not clear yet: remittances for better nutrition & education vs. changes in care arrangement, psychological stress
- For elderly not clear yet: tradition that youngest son stays with wife is changing



South Kyrgyzstan

New places of work and life

- Pressure to send remittances but also status increase at home
- Deskilling among older generation -> settlement -> education of children
- People (school/university age) migration & work or quitting school earlier to migrate
- Work: irregular, casual, precarious -> prevents multi-locality of livelihoods
- High commercialisation of daily life
- Transit by train/bus: high vulnerability of passengers
- Changing migration and trading policies



the other silk road (2008, 30 min)

Бир дүйнө 08
Даректүү тасмалар кароосу

Адам укуктары боюнча документалдуу фильмдердин «Бир дүйнө» эл аралык экинчи фестивалы

23-28-октябрда Бишкекте
28-29-октябрда Караколдо

Дубляпук экрандан тасмалар кыргызча субтитрлери менен

Второй Международный фестиваль документальных фильмов по правам человека «Один мир» в Бишкеке и Караколе

Second International festival of documentary films on human rights «One world» in Bishkek and Karakol

«Бир дүйнө... бирде бирде дүйнө жок, бирдейт дагы» Виллас Габса

фотос: Фотостудия «Солнечный»

Адрес: 83, Абдрахманов көчөсү, 106
Телефон: 995 318 627, 64-01-01, 63-00-00

- NCCR N-S & Panos SAS collaboration
- Research: S. Thieme, Script: S. Barbora & S. Thieme, Film: K. Ahmed, U. Bardoloi, S. Kashyab
- Screenings 2008/09: e.g. place of origin in South Kyrgyzstan, Human Rights Watch Filmfestival Bishkek & Ethnographic Filmfestival Zurich, guest seminars at Uni Stanford and Berkeley

Conclusion

Empirical

Bridging urban-rural and national-international divides with a multi-local perspective on regional migration dynamics

- New chances/ deliberations but also stresses and dependencies
- Multi-locality constraint by restricted migration regulation and irregularity
- Roles, status, spaces for action and negotiation differ at the places – closely linked to age/generation, gender, economic and residential status

Conceptual & methodology

Bridging development and migration studies discourses with social theory

- Bourdieu's Theory of Practice fruitful analytical instrument for understanding power relations and the hidden and thus very resilient dialectics between social structure and social practice
- Analytical level always matters
- Multisited research, quantitative & qualitative methods and film



A Kyrgyz architecture student studying in Switzerland presents her thesis on 'Aesthetic and energy improvement of the panel apartment buildings in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan'. Photo: Philipp Steinhilber (2012)

Studying abroad: encouraging students to return to Kyrgyzstan



Case studies featured here were conducted in Kyrgyzstan

Policy Messages

- How many students study abroad, and how many return? How many specialise in the country's needs, and to which disciplines? Kyrgyzstan lacks adequate statistics on these questions.
- Kyrgyzstan should appropriately encourage foreign PhD degrees to encourage young highly qualified professionals to return to the country.
- Kyrgyzstan is suffering from a brain drain because many graduates choose to stay in their host countries after earning degrees abroad. Incentives are needed to encourage them to return to Kyrgyzstan, where their knowledge and skills can benefit the country's development.

More and more students from Kyrgyzstan are now studying at foreign universities, where they gain knowledge and skills that are vital for Kyrgyzstan's development and prosperity. But many face difficulties in finding opportunities to apply their new skills upon their return. This issue of *evidence for policy* examines the causes and consequences of this situation, and examines challenges of making student migration advantageous for Kyrgyzstan.

- **Linking education and employment**
- The number of people studying outside their home country is increasing worldwide, with some 4 million students migrating abroad for education in 2010 (OECD 2012). This trend holds for Kyrgyzstan too: the number of students from Kyrgyzstan at foreign universities has increased in recent years, but only selective numbers are available and they vary widely depending on the source. The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD 2012) indicates that 1.5% of all students from Kyrgyzstan study abroad. Top destinations include Russia, Turkey, Kazakhstan, Germany, and the USA. Looking at Turkey, for example, there are no agreed-upon official numbers that are available for students from Kyrgyzstan – only partial statistics are available. The Turkish Embassy in Kyrgyzstan sent 3,286 students to Turkey between 1991 and 2012; the Kyrgyz

Ministry of Education registered between 1,800 and 2,000 students who were sent through a Turkey-Kyrgyzstan interstate agreement between 1991 and 2010; and the Association of Kyrgyz students who graduated in Turkey "Egemenдик" (independence) suggests that 6,500 students from Kyrgyzstan received education in Turkey so far. The main attractions of pursuing a degree abroad are the higher quality of education, better job opportunities, and the ability to study certain disciplines not taught in Kyrgyzstan. Plus, studying abroad is a chance to visit other places and escape from local norms such as early marriage.

Many students hope that an international degree will be an entry ticket for a career abroad or into the international arena back in Kyrgyzstan. The return of graduates is thus closely linked to the labour market and a potential gain or loss of skilled workers.



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Kyrgyz woman selling plastic shoes imported from China on the market of Almaty, Kazakhstan. Many labour migrants find job opportunities in the urban trade sector (Photo by K. Ahmed & S. Thieme, 2007).

nccer
 north
 south

Making migration safer

In a globalising market, labour migration in low-skilled sectors plays a particularly important role. A growing number of poor people move between their villages of origin, the capital and international destinations, while financially sustaining their families and regions. The positive role of remittances for alleviating the poverty of sending countries is widely acknowledged. However, migration also leads to a growing imbalance between rural and urban areas and unfavourable societal changes. Drawing on case studies in Central and South Asia, this issue of *evidence for policy* examines the challenges of making migration safer for low-skilled workers and more beneficial for their families left behind.



Case studies featured here were conducted in: India, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Pakistan

Policy Message

- Labour migrants in the low-skilled sector have a strong potential to be development agents in poverty alleviation.
- Considering migration in development means taking into account the different stages of migration, from departure to return. For example, information and vocational training benefit migrants before they leave the country.
- Circular migration should be facilitated by governments with measures such as flexible residency, citizenship rights and portable benefits.
- The migrants' social and economic security and the impact on families left behind should be considered.

- **Circular migration**
- Worldwide, more than 200 million people live outside their countries of origin. About one half of these are labour migrants, making significant contributions to the economies of both receiving (host) and sending (home) countries. This has resulted in a widespread recognition of the advantages of migration. Policymakers and development agencies now consider migrants with their incomes as new development agents. In one example, the ILO has initiated a High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (2006).

In another, Nepal is drafting a new Non Resident Nepalese policy to enhance the role of migrants in national development efforts.

Despite this improvement in the perception of migrants, there is still a long way to go in terms of clarifying their legal status. NCCR North-South research on migration in Asian countries has shown that due to their perceived temporary status and high mobility, migrants' rights as citizens as well as their living and working conditions are still not of enough concern to either host or home country.



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- Thank you!