



## Safe Migration in Central Asia (SMICA) 2020 Annual Report Highlights

### Overview

Throughout the year, the SMICA project focused on mapping key partners among state organizations, NGOs, and international organizations to enhance cooperation on policies and practices regarding migration and counter trafficking in persons (CTIP). When the COVID-19 pandemic struck, millions of migrants in Central Asia were left in precarious situations, both for their health and wellness as well as financially. SMICA addressed these issues by promoting helplines and contacts of civil society organizations (CSO) that could provide help through social and traditional media. Despite many challenges, the first year of programming has provided a solid foundation for successful outcomes in the future.



### INTERMEDIATE RESULT 1 (REGIONAL): STRENGTHENED BILATERAL AND MULTI-COUNTRY STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS TO PROMOTE RIGHTS-BASED MIGRATION AND COUNTER TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

**The SMICA team conducted a situational analysis** in the Central Asia (CA) Region. The analysis documented the following: current trends in labor migration and trafficking in persons (TIP), gaps in responses by stakeholders at national, subnational, and community levels, and recommendations on specific intervention strategies at the community, district, oblast, national, and regional levels. These recommendations would significantly reduce risks and vulnerability for trafficking and improve victims' access to assistance and remedies.

**A regional online conference with civil society representatives working with migrant populations** was held to review the needs of CA migrants, available resources, gaps in services, and plan how stakeholders can coordinate to protect migrants. A total of 102 participants attended, including representatives from all five project countries of CA and Russia, a major destination for CA migrants. The problems identified during the conference helped to formulate SMICA responses to COVID-19.

**Freedom Collaborative and the SMICA project hosted the first webinar on “The Role of Ethnic Groups in Central Asia,”** namely in Kazakhstan, in supporting migrants from other CA countries. In the webinar, SMICA staff, ethnic groups, CTIP experts, and civil societies in Asia discussed the situation of labor migrants during the pandemic in CA. They also shared knowledge on CTIP and safe migration in CA to the global community.

**The Situational Assessment of Migrants in Kazakhstan: Needs and Knowledge During COVID-19** was conducted to better understand the short- and long-term needs of the migrant population. Of the 358 respondents who participated in interviews, 67% were male and 33% were female. The results highlighted important insights into how this vulnerable population has been affected by COVID-19 and provide evidence based on pandemic-related risks for migrants.



## INTERMEDIATE RESULT 2 (PREVENTION): VULNERABILITY OF AT-RISK POPULATIONS TO ALL FORMS OF TIP REDUCED

**World Day Against Trafficking in Persons:** The SMICA team in Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and Turkmenistan partnered with local NGOs, international organizations, and government institutions to conduct awareness-raising activities to combat human trafficking. More than 400 youth participated in 100 days of the awareness raising campaign in Kyrgyzstan by raising the issue of human trafficking in recorded short videos. In a Turkmenistan video, viewers were informed about signs of human trafficking that was released on July 30, 2020. This was followed by a quiz that increased awareness for the general audience to the topic of human trafficking. In Kazakhstan, social media influencers were engaged to disseminate protective measures for at-risk populations through social media pages, reaching around 55,000 viewers.

**An electronic bulletin with information on helplines and NGOs who provide services** as well as contact information for embassies and agencies that can support migrants in destination countries was developed in Kyrgyzstan. The information was shared on the KLOOP KG website in both [Russian](#) and [Kyrgyz](#) languages, as well as through other social media outlets. KLOOP's website post received significant engagement with women who accessed the information 78% of the time, and men 22%. Users from Moscow accessed the information the most followed by Bishkek. On Facebook, the material in Russian was viewed by 11,859 users with an engagement of 2,179 of them, whereas the Kyrgyz version covered 3,623 users with an engagement of 14 users.

**Assessment of the Association of Private Employment Agencies (APEA)** was conducted in Kyrgyzstan. The goal was to analyze the strengths and gaps of the APEA and develop a strategy that can enhance their capacity to support migrants and combat TIP.



## INTERMEDIATE RESULT 3 (PROTECTION): IDENTIFICATION AND ASSISTANCE TO TRAFFICKED PERSONS EXPANDED AND IMPROVED

**A sub-award to the NGO Sana Sezim** was initiated by the SMICA team in Kazakhstan to help mitigate the impacts of hundreds of migrant workers stranded in Kazakhstan. Many Uzbek and Tajik migrants were trapped at the border with no food, water, or hygiene items for several days. Sana Sezim provided humanitarian assistance to migrants and raised awareness on TIP risks. By the end of September, Sana Sezim had provided meals to 250 migrants at the border.

**Online legal consultations and psychological support** to those impacted by COVID-19 were provided by the Resource Center for Elderly Public Fund in Kyrgyzstan. Consultations were provided via social networks such as Instagram (@salammigrantkg), Facebook (group "Salam migrant"), and Odnoklassniki ("Salam migrant") in Kyrgyz and Russian. Through September 30, 212 consultations were rendered to migrants through social network pages. Lawyers provided 268 persons with legal consultations based on referrals from social network pages.

**The Resource Center for Elderly Public Fund launched a Telegram chat-bot** in Kyrgyz and Russian languages designed to provide legal advice on labor migration issues and psychological support for those affected by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Between September 22-30, 119 users entered the chat-bot, and 12 persons received legal and psychological consultations.



## Intermediate Result 4 (IR): Increased Prosecution of TIP (the Kyrgyz Republic)

**The analysis of TIP crimes registered and unregistered in the Unified Register of Cases** was launched by the SMICA team in Kyrgyzstan. The goal of the analysis is to collect information on unregistered TIP cases, reveal the obstacles for registration and investigation of these crimes, and provide recommendations for steps that can be taken to increase the number of TIP crimes registered, investigated, and prosecuted.

## FY2020 Numbers – At a Glance



**55,000**

people engaged at the World Day against Trafficking in Persons social media campaign in Kazakhstan



**250**

migrants stranded at Kazakh-Uzbek border received humanitarian aid through the NGO "Sana Sezim"



**5,000**

masks distributed at border areas of Kazakhstan imprinted with national trafficking-prevention hotline number



**Around 500**

migrants received legal and psycho-social consultations in the Kyrgyz Republic and Kazakhstan

## Adaptive Management and Learning

The SMICA Learning Plan contributes to a vision whereby the SMICA team and partners can develop sustainable solutions to address TIP risks, establish safe migration channels, and effectively manage labor migration processes as well as collect, share, and use consistent and evidence-based data for decision making through constant learning and collaboration. SMICA also encourages staff to take advantage of the online opportunities during the COVID-19 lockdown for learning both CTIP related activities and for professional growth and development. In the reporting year, the SMICA team attended more than 30 learning events hosted by USAID, Winrock International, USAID ASIA CTIP and other key partners. The project also organized online trainings with grantees on effective grant management and required procedures.



For more information about the USAID SMICA Project please contact Ms. Eleanor Valentine, Chief of Party [eleanor.valentine@winrock.org](mailto:eleanor.valentine@winrock.org)