

**APWLD Feminist Participatory Action Research on Women Migrants in Central Asia  
2022-2024**

**Amplifying voices of Central Asian women migrants for human rights and Development  
Justice**

## **1. Context**

### **Setting the scene of migration: political, socio-economic context and other factors that generate women's migration in Central Asia**

Migration, both internal and cross-border, is a critical phenomenon for Central Asia. Thus, the socio-economic and political importance of migration for the subregion cannot be underestimated. Currently, over 10 million people are involved in the internal and international migration processes<sup>1</sup>, driven primarily by the unfavourable socio-economic situation in the subregion. Besides, the global COVID-19 pandemic, ongoing political instability and cross-border conflicts on the subregional level, recent geopolitical developments and tensions in areas of smouldering crisis and armed conflicts on the regional level also cause the growth of internal and external migration. Moreover, the vulnerability of Central Asia to climate change and the onset of climate impacts in terms of disaster-driven crises and tensions over the scarcity of water resources contributes to the increase of crises and conflict-driven/climate impact migration flows. All of this makes Central Asia remain a subregion reliant on migration<sup>2</sup>.

Migration in Central Asia is closely intertwined with the socio-economic and political conditions of the region. In socio-economic terms, all Central Asian countries hitherto face diverse challenges. Their economies remain undiversified and heavily dependent on agricultural commodities exports, oil and gas revenues, water and labour migration and remittances, making them highly vulnerable to any crisis, be it economic shocks, pandemic or conflicts. Moreover, Central Asian states, despite their progress in reducing poverty, still show alarming degrees of poverty, especially in rural and remote areas. Three Central Asian countries, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, have been listed among thirteen of the poorest countries in Asia<sup>3</sup>. A significant part of the population, especially in rural areas of Central Asia, live on or below the poverty line and have limited access to essential services, such as clean water, electricity, sewerage, heating, nutritious food, adequate healthcare and social protection and support. Moreover, high unemployment rates remain pervasive in the subregion, forcing many people to join rural-urban and cross-border labour migration to find jobs and better life. Popular destinations for cross-border labour migration are subregions of Russia and Kazakhstan. Although during the last decade, some steps were to diversify labour migration flows to Turkey, UAE, South Korea and the EU countries.

Cross-border labour migration and migrants' remittances constitute a large share of the economies of Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. In 2021, 7.8 million migrants registered in Russia from mainly Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. At the same time, it is difficult to estimate the actual number of migrants, as many of them are not registered due to different reasons, among which no visa requirements for the citizens of Central Asian countries to Russia, weak regulatory mechanisms in sending countries and lack of awareness and knowledge of migrants about regulations and their human rights.

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<sup>1</sup> Groundswell Part 2 : Acting on Internal Climate Migration, World Bank, 2021

<sup>2</sup> IOM Central Asia "Regional Strategy 2021-2025"

[https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1486/files/documents/central-asia-strategy-2021-2025\\_0.pdf](https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1486/files/documents/central-asia-strategy-2021-2025_0.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> According to data available at world population review:

<https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/poorest-asian-countries>

Internal migration among women is particularly developed in Central Asia, owing to the poverty, unemployment, lack of decent employment opportunities and low wages, and seasonality of available jobs in rural areas<sup>4</sup>. Women constitute most of the internal migrants in Central Asia. In Kyrgyzstan, women constitute 56.3 percent of all internal migrants in the country<sup>5</sup>. Usually, internal migrants move to capital cities/ more developed provinces and are employed in informal and low-paid jobs in such sectors as trade, services, garment work and construction. In Kyrgyzstan, 51.5 percent of internal migrants are paid below the national average and salaries of men are usually higher than that of women. For instance, about 27 percent of men get higher than average national wages, while significantly less (16 percent) of women get such salaries<sup>6</sup>. Women internal migrants in Central Asia face the same hurdles as cross-border women migrants. Female internal migrant workers are doubly vulnerable as migrants and as women<sup>7</sup>, owing to existing inequalities and additional burdens imposed by local social norms.

Remittances sent by labour migrants are vital for supporting and keeping out of poverty their families left behind. In Tajikistan, up to 40 percent of families live on remittances<sup>8</sup>. Likewise, remittances play a crucial role in the economies by significantly contributing to household incomes and boosting gross domestic product (GDP) growth in Central Asian countries. In Kyrgyzstan, remittances benefited primarily poor rural households and reduced poverty by 11 percentage points in 2019<sup>9</sup>. Remittances from labour migrants constitute 30 percent of the GDP in Tajikistan, 28 percent of the GDP in Kyrgyzstan and 12 percent in Uzbekistan<sup>10</sup>. According to existing data, during the first half of 2021, remittances coming to Kyrgyzstan from migrants working in the Russian Federation made up to 85 percent of all remittances, while in Tajikistan, 58 percent of all remittances and 55 percent in Uzbekistan<sup>11</sup>. These earnings by labour migrants significantly impact the socio-economic situation in these countries, making Central Asia particularly vulnerable and dependent on the political and socio-economic situation in the major receiving countries.

On the political sphere, Central Asian countries are still in transition and remain neither fully democratic nor stable. The region is beset with conflicts in the last three decades: civil war in Tajikistan; inter-ethnic conflicts and persistent revolutions in Kyrgyzstan; military clashes over border disputes, persecution and severe suppression against democratic exercise of human rights and civil liberties in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. These political conditions are preserving authoritarian power in Central Asian states. Authoritarianism and lack of participatory democracy in Central Asian countries underpin the persistence of poor governance, weak democratic institutions, worrisome human rights and freedoms situation, limited progress of complex institutional and legal reforms<sup>12</sup>. These are causing chronic economic decline, fueling public resentment to the inefficiencies of governments and political instability which are driving migration within and

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<sup>4</sup> According to FPARs carried out in Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan within APWLD's Central Asia FPAR Programme, 2019-2021

<sup>5</sup> According to FPAR on the internal women migrant in Kyrgyzstan carried out by Women Support Centre, women-led organisation in Kyrgyzstan

<sup>6</sup> INTERNAL MIGRATION IN KYRGYZSTAN, IOM, April 2021, <https://kyrgyzstan.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd11321/files/documents/Internal%20Migration%20in%20Kyrgyzstan.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> According to FPAR on the internal women migrant in Kyrgyzstan carried out by Women Support Centre, women-led organisation in Kyrgyzstan

<sup>8</sup> Kanat Altynbayev "Experts question benefits of Central Asian labour migration to Russia", 2 November 2021, [https://central.asia-news.com/en\\_GB/articles/cnmi\\_ca/features/2021/02/11/feature-01](https://central.asia-news.com/en_GB/articles/cnmi_ca/features/2021/02/11/feature-01)

<sup>9</sup> Statement by Professor Olivier De Schutter, United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, on his visit to Kyrgyzstan, 23 May – 3 June 2022, <https://www.srpoverity.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/EOMS-Kyrgyzstan-FINAL.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Charu Sudan Kasturi "The Russia-Ukraine crisis is squeezing Central Asian economies", 16 Feb 2022 <https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2022/2/16/the-russia-ukraine-crisis-is-squeezing-central-asian-economies>

<sup>11</sup> Umida Khashimova "Are Central Asian Migrant Workers Ready to Leave Russia?" The Diplomat, 13 April 2022 <https://thediplomat.com/2022/04/are-central-asian-migrant-workers-ready-to-leave-russia/>

<sup>12</sup> Uuriintuya Batsaikhan, Marek Dabrowski "Central Asia — twenty-five years after the breakup of the USSR", Russian Journal of Economics Volume 3, Issue 3, September 2017, Pages 296-320 <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2405473917300429>

outside of Central Asian countries. Besides, migration issues are often considered highly political, especially by receiving countries, to pressure sending countries. The receiving countries, knowing the importance of labour migration for sending countries, use it to leverage for geopolitical purposes in exchange for easing the challenges faced by labour migrants in the receiving countries.

The abject protection of migrants makes them vulnerable in times of crises. The global pandemic profoundly impacted the labour migrants and their families in Central Asian countries– 40 percent of Central Asian migrants in Russia lost their jobs, and 75 percent were forced to unpaid leave.<sup>13</sup> The loss of jobs forced the migrants to return back home. In Uzbekistan alone, over 500,000 migrants have returned home. Returning migrants suffered discrimination as they were regarded as potential sources of infection. They were also discriminated against for their rights to housing, education, health and social security. Hardly were they able to get jobs in their home countries with the closure of industries and establishments. Most internal migrants who were predominantly classified as workers in the informal sector and lived without registration lost their jobs during the pandemic.<sup>14</sup>

The impact of COVID-19 restrictions has been more adverse on women, as the pandemic hit almost all sectors, including supply chain, travel, trade, food, accommodation, textiles, and informal and part-time employment, where women engaged the most. Moreover, reduced remittances have dropped women's income twice compared to men's<sup>15</sup>. Likewise, internal migrant women-led small-scale businesses have been affected the most. In addition to the loss of jobs, women suffered from increased burdens of unpaid domestic and care work and domestic violence. In Kyrgyzstan, domestic violence cases have risen to 60 percent during the pandemic<sup>16</sup>.

Furthermore, Central Asia is already vulnerable to climate change as warming levels are projected to be higher than the global, leading to more heat extremes and consequently altering the mountain glacier and snow reserves<sup>17</sup>. This has already resulted in limited water resources experienced by both mountain and downstream areas. These challenges will persist in the future, aggravated by an increased risk of natural hazards. Climate change seriously affects the agricultural sector. The lack of water resources combined with sharp weather changes, soil salinisation and desertification lead to food insecurity. Natural disasters, floods, rising rivers, mudflows and landslides lead to forced displacement. Central Asia might see up to 2.4 million climate migrants by 2050<sup>18</sup>. Environmental changes driven crisis stimulates internal migration and will probably increase socio-ethnic conflicts within the countries as internal migration causes risks for excessive urbanisation and decline of rural areas, disbalance of the labour market, intolerance growth toward migrants, violation of human rights, the threat to security and quality of life of local communities, social isolation of the migrants.

In addition, the current regional geopolitical developments and crises, such as the growing humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, directly impacts Central Asian countries, especially Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Although data on the number of Afghan people who migrated to these countries is slim, it has been reported that around 15,000 Afghani people

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<sup>13</sup> 'Beyond COVID-19: Prospects for Economic Recovery in Central Asia', OECD, 2021  
[https://www.oecd.org/eurasia/Beyond\\_COVID%2019\\_Central%20Asia.pdf](https://www.oecd.org/eurasia/Beyond_COVID%2019_Central%20Asia.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> Julien Bruley and Iliias Mamadiarov "Kyrgyzstan:Socio-economic consequences of C-19 crisis", 10 November 2020

<sup>15</sup> 'Beyond COVID-19: Prospects for Economic Recovery in Central Asia', OECD, 2021  
[https://www.oecd.org/eurasia/Beyond\\_COVID%2019\\_Central%20Asia.pdf](https://www.oecd.org/eurasia/Beyond_COVID%2019_Central%20Asia.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> Julien Bruley and Iliias Mamadiarov "Kyrgyzstan:Socio-economic consequences of C-19 crisis", 10 November 2020

<sup>17</sup> Reyer, C.P., Otto, I.M., Adams, S., Albrecht, T., Baarsch, F., Cartsburg, M., ... Stagl, J., 2017 Climate change impacts in Central Asia and their implications for development

<sup>18</sup> Internal Climate Migration in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Groundswell, Acting on Internal Climate Migration, policy note#6,  
<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/36248/GroundswellIPN-ECA.pdf?sequence=7&isAllowed=y>  
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and migrants live in Tajikistan<sup>19</sup> and Uzbekistan, about 10,000 to 13,000 people<sup>20</sup>, the status of whom is not clear. Despite the current resistance of Central Asian countries to accepting migrants from Afghanistan owing to security-related reasons and threats of spreading extremist ideology, irregular migration flows might increase. Even an insignificant increase of displaced people arriving in Central Asia, especially Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, might lead to tensions with the local population due to the subregion's difficult economic situation, widespread poverty and fear of radicalisation<sup>21</sup>, especially in the communities where male labour migrants left behind women and children.

Further, continuous political instability, tensions over issues related to border delimitation, the enclaves and exclaves, water resources management, and ethnic relations constantly pose security threats and have an imminent impact on women putting their rights at greater risk and forcing them to migrate. The recent manifestation of the conflict-induced migration of women is ongoing cross-border armed clashes between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, which have substantially increased the number of women on the move in search of safer places. In addition, recent cases of political instability, namely violent demonstrations in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, support concerns over the regularity of violence and conflicts within Central Asia that might become an additional push factor for the majority of Central Asian women to join the migration.

### **Central Asia women in migration: violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms**

At present, women constitute a substantial part of migration processes worldwide<sup>22</sup>, and Central Asia is no exception. Undeniably, women and men have different experiences at all stages of migration. In addition to gender-neutral barriers, Central Asian women migrants face more challenges and discrimination owing to specific beliefs intrinsic to the society inside the countries in relation to internal migrants, and in sending and accepting countries in relation to cross border migrants.

Initially, migration was viewed as a purely male-dominated phenomenon due to existing perceptions of the women's role in the family and society, which is dominant in Central Asia. However, starting from 2007, there has been a spike in the number of women migrants, especially women migrating from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan, although the official statistics show around 40 percent from Kyrgyzstan, 13.4 percent of those from Uzbekistan, and 9.6 percent from Tajikistan<sup>23</sup>. Unfortunately, the official statistics of migrant women do not show an accurate picture, as most of the time, migrant women's employment is not documented and hence, underestimated.

Central Asian women are exposed to discrimination and structural barriers from the start of the migration process due to patriarchal norms and values. Although it is believed that Kyrgyzstan women have fewer restrictions in joining labour migration, they are also constantly stigmatised and accused of not following social norms related to morality, whether at home or abroad. A recent case in point is a proposal of a member of Parliament

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<sup>19</sup> Kamila Ibragimova "Middle-class Afghans with the means to navigate Tajikistan's bureaucracy see the country as a springboard to the West", October 2021 <https://eurasianet.org/afghan-refugees-hope-tajikistan-is-just-a-pit-stop>

<sup>20</sup> Navbahor Imamova "Uzbek Border Restraints Leave Afghan Migrants in Limbo", December 2021 <https://www.voanews.com/a/uzbek-border-restraints-leave-afghan-migrants-in-limbo/6366424.html>

<sup>21</sup> Migration Outlook Eastern Europe and Central Asia 2022 Six migration issues to look out for in 2022 Origins, key events and priorities, International Centre for Policy Development, 2022

<sup>22</sup> Anna Rocheva and Evgeni Varshaver, 'Gender Dimension of Migration from Central Asia to the Russian Federation', ASIA-PACIFIC POPULATION JOURNAL Vol. 32, No. 2, December 2017, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323847852\\_Gender\\_Dimension\\_of\\_Migration\\_from\\_Central\\_Asia\\_to\\_the\\_Russian\\_Federation](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323847852_Gender_Dimension_of_Migration_from_Central_Asia_to_the_Russian_Federation)

<sup>23</sup> Groundswell Part 2 : Acting on Internal Climate Migration, World Bank, 2021

in Kyrgyzstan to restrict women's freedom of movement and ban the travelling of women migrants aged 18-20 on the legislative level<sup>24</sup>.

Furthermore, Central Asian women migrants in receiving countries are vulnerable to a wide range of systemic discrimination and violations of their rights due to a lack of proper pre-departure preparations and knowledge of their rights and freedoms and limited opportunities to undergo appropriate registration and documentation. Lack of registration documents often leads to the regular extortion and arbitrary arrests of migrant women by state bodies. In addition, due to the labour demands in the receiving countries, most of them are engaged in low and unskilled labour, despite their level of education, and employed without official employment contracts. This entails the situation when almost all migrant women are exposed to exploitative working conditions, lack of social protection and restrictive access to healthcare, including sexual and reproductive, gender-based discrimination and violence. On top of that, because of xenophobia, women have limited opportunities to find decent housing and endure additional challenges due to inadequate living conditions, abuse and violence from their family members and fellow male countrymates.

Gender-based violence in its various forms persists to be the most concerning issue throughout Central Asia. Most of the time, the issue of violence against women follows women migrants when they migrate to countries of destinations, particularly Russia, Kazakhstan and Turkey. Majority of violence and sexual abuse cases remain underreported because women depend highly on their husbands and in-laws. They fear losing their jobs and being deported or included in the ban lists of the receiving countries<sup>25</sup>. Besides, Central Asian women are exposed to physical and sexual abuse, especially honour-based punishment and shaming, by their countrymates in the receiving countries. The most dramatic manifestation of this form of violence against women migrants is the videos that appeared on the internet during the past decade, where a group of Kyrgyz male migrants, the so-called "Patriots", violently beaten up and ill-treated Kyrgyz women migrants for having a relationship with a non-Kyrgyz man.<sup>26</sup>

In addition, Central Asian women migrants regularly suffer from physical and sexual violence and exploitation at workplaces, especially those who are 'undocumented' and engaged in informal employment as domestic workers and caregivers, who provide care for children, the elderly, clean homes and cook. These women migrants' rights and freedom are at the discretion of their employers, as domestic work is primarily an unregulated sector, and no specific provisions in the labour laws of the receiving countries exist. For example, most women migrants-domestic workers from Kyrgyzstan experienced sexual harassment and violence from their employers in Russia<sup>27</sup>. Reports on the cases of sexual abuse, forced and exploitative sex work and death or gone missing cases of Central Asian domestic workers, especially in Turkey, are steadily increasing<sup>28</sup>, shedding light on the disturbing situation of women migrants.

Since most Central Asian women are involved in the sectors that are primarily affected by any crisis in the receiving countries, they do not have any other option than to return home and often return to joblessness, stigma and discrimination. Upon returning home, women migrants continue to face challenges due to the lack of proper government

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<sup>24</sup> 'Rally against initiative of Shailoobek Atazov takes place in Bishkek'  
[https://24.kg/english/237003\\_Rally\\_against\\_initiative\\_of\\_Shailoobek\\_Atazov\\_takes\\_place\\_in\\_Bishkek/](https://24.kg/english/237003_Rally_against_initiative_of_Shailoobek_Atazov_takes_place_in_Bishkek/)

<sup>25</sup> Kyrgyzstan: Women and children from Kyrgyzstan affected by migration, International federation for human rights, 2016  
[https://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/rapport\\_kyrgyzstan\\_uk-2-web2.pdf](https://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/rapport_kyrgyzstan_uk-2-web2.pdf)

<sup>26</sup> Eleanora Beishenbek Kyzy and Claire Bigg, "Kyrgyz Migrant Women Brutally Assaulted In 'Patriotic' Videos", Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 31 May 2012, available at:  
[www.rferl.org/content/kyrgyz-migrant-women-brutally-assaultedin-patriotic-videos/24599390.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/kyrgyz-migrant-women-brutally-assaultedin-patriotic-videos/24599390.html)

<sup>27</sup> Lola Abdukadyrova "WE ARE INVISIBLE PEOPLE": KYRGYZ MIGRANT DOMESTIC WORKER", 24 February 2022  
<https://www.solidaritycenter.org/we-are-invisible-people-kyrgyz-migrant-domestic-worker/>

<sup>28</sup> Killian Cogan "Death in Turkey shines light on Central Asian domestic workers", October 2019, Eurasianet,  
<https://eurasianet.org/death-in-turkey-shines-light-on-central-asian-domestic-workers>

policies on the reintegration of returned migrants. The returned migrants often do not have opportunities to find decent jobs due to challenging economic situations that create tremendous difficulties for them and their families. Around 65 percent of returned migrants in Kyrgyzstan are not working, and women returned migrants struggle more (14 percentage points) than male returned migrants in finding jobs<sup>29</sup>. Often, women migrants are even denied state benefits, such as state child allowance, owing to their absence in their countries of origin and only by virtue of being labour migrants outside of the country, as they are often regarded by the local authorities as labour migrants with stable and sufficient income, despite their loss of jobs in the receiving countries, being in a difficult financial situation and not having the capabilities to find decent work due to health issues upon coming back home<sup>30</sup>.

## **2. FPAR as our response to challenge the systemic inequalities and rights violations of Central Asian women migrants and need to organise women migrants**

### **The power of grassroots feminist movements**

APWLD believes that ‘development’ is supposed to benefit the poor and marginalised women of the region, who are best able to identify both the problems and solutions. Since 2013, APWLD together with women’s organisations and other movements in the region has made a unified call for **Development Justice**. Development Justice promotes peoples’ rights, dignity, wellbeing and solidarity while addressing the inequalities of wealth, power, and resources between countries, between rich and poor, and between men and women. APWLD believes that in order to challenge the current development model and to claim women’s human rights, a strong and autonomous feminist women’s movement is needed. It must extend to strengthening women’s capacity to exercise real power and control over their own lives and the terms by which they engage with social, political, and economic structures. They must be supported to build their capacity to document the impacts of lack of access to land and resources, decent work, and basic social services; have meaningful engagement in the decision-making processes governing these issues; form strong local feminist movements that work with other movements to demand accountability from states and corporations; and push governments in tackling the systemic barriers to women’s economic, development, and democratic rights.

APWLD believes that feminist movements, grounded in local struggle and experiences, are the key to making structural changes. Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR) is rooted in movement building. Through FPAR, women collect evidence about the lived reality and take collective action to address the systemic barriers. With strong, locally produced research and documented evidence, women challenge the systems that facilitate human rights violations and gendered power inequalities. Our main goal of FPAR is to change systems and structures to improve the lives of women. We interpret ‘Change’ as ‘Structural Change’ or change to structures and systems of oppression particularly patriarchy and the fusion of patriarchy with globalisation, fundamentalisms and militarism. The participants are not objects on whom research is conducted but rather the subjects of the inquiry who set the agenda, participate in the data collection and analysis,

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<sup>29</sup> Migration, Food Security and Nutrition in the Kyrgyz Republic, IOM, WFP, 2021  
[https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/WFP\\_Annex2.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/WFP_Annex2.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> According to the Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR) on the rights and access of returned migrant mother to state child allowances in Kyrgyzstan carried out within APWLD’s Central Asia FPAR programme by NGO “Nurzholber”

and control the use of the outcomes, including deciding what future actions to take or directions to go in.

The FPAR continues to be a powerful tool in APWLD to strengthen and empower women's organisations and feminist movements in the whole region, including in Central Asia. The first Central Asia FPAR as a response to challenge the systemic inequalities and rights violations of Central Asian women, carried out by seven women's organisations in 2019-2021, has significantly strengthened grassroots women's rights groups' in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, and deepened sub-regional and cross-regional solidarities as well as brought several significant gains in efforts to assert women's human rights and advance Development Justice.

### **3. Focus areas of Central Asia FPAR on Migration 2022-2024**

Although some research has been done on labour migration in Central Asia, a great deal remains to be explored and documented about the struggles intrinsic to women migrants in Central Asia. Due to the underdeveloped regulatory framework in the Central Asian countries, women migrants continue to be vulnerable to violations of their human rights throughout the migration process.

FPAR on Women Migrants in Central Asia 2022-2024 aims to increase evidence-based advocacy, amplify the voices of women migrants of Central Asia and build their capacity to be effective organisers, advocates, and campaigners for women's human rights at local, national and sub-regional levels.

#### **Labour migration and the Right to decent work:**

The focus of the FPAR shall be on documentation and investigation of the various human rights violations and abuses of women migrants. This includes but is not limited to the issues of intersecting systemic challenges, discrimination and violence against women in internal and cross border migration within wider context of Central Asia, for example struggles of women in accessing their **right to decent work, including rights at work and living wage, right to full employment, social protection and social dialogue**. The FPAR shall also highlight how migrant women take leadership roles in defending and asserting their rights in the migration processes.

### **4. Objectives**

#### **4.1. Overall objective**

To advance the human rights of women migrants and strengthen the migrant movements in Central Asia by increasing women migrants' capacity to author evidence-based community research and be vocal and effective policy advocates for women's human rights and Development Justice.

#### **4.2. Specific objectives**

- 4.2.1. Develop the capacity of women migrants and their organisations to research and document evidence and thereby, engage in decision-making processes on women migrants' human rights at local, national, regional and international levels;

- 4.2.2. Foster knowledge and resources on human rights of women migrants, FPAR framework, methodology and feminist community organising tools;
- 4.2.3. Establish strategic advocacy plans and opportunities to share evidence-based results and support women's own positions and solutions for policy change; and
- 4.2.4. Strengthen institutional development of sub-grant partner organisations through leadership development and movement building.

## **5. Participants**

Central Asia FPAR on Migration will accommodate six to eight national and/or grassroots organisations led by women and/or migrants in Central Asia with experience in advocating the issues listed in the identified focus areas (Refer to Part 3). Each partner shall identify two women to be part of this FPAR: one young woman researcher (age below 35) and one woman mentor. At least one of them should come from the community/constituency and be committed to community organising and feminist movement building. English is the main language for regional training, communication with, and reporting to APWLD.

## **6. Support from APWLD**

APWLD will provide the partner organisations with a small sub-grant to employ a young woman researcher and carry out the research including salary and on-costs with the maximum amount of US\$ 14,000. Partner organisations will need to appoint a mentor to assist the young woman researcher throughout the FPAR process.

APWLD will also support the young woman researcher and mentor to participate in capacity building workshops and provide advocacy or network opportunities. They will access training in International Human Rights standards and rights-based approaches in their area of research. Through a combination of face-to-face and online modules, they will share the frameworks within their communities, learn practical research skills, and develop a community-based research plan. As English is the primary language for regional training or meetings, reporting and communication with APWLD, preferably, either the young woman researcher or mentor be proficient in English.

## **7. Our FPAR Journey - the Programme Activities**

### **7.1. First Regional Feminist Participatory Action Research Training on Central Asian Women Migrants' Rights: Methodology and Approach (November 2022)**

Through the first regional training, participants will gain skills and knowledge on the framework of feminist development justice and feminist participatory action research, particularly in relation to human rights of women migrants. The training encourages young



women researchers to build their leadership and foster a generation of women rights advocates. The methodology of the training will be simple, clear and participatory, to ensure that participants are comfortable in new concepts and issues.

### **Expected Outputs**

- Participants understand about the objectives, framework, approach, and time frame of the Feminist Participatory Action Research.
- Participants gain skills and capacity on the key concepts and framework on feminist participatory approach, human rights-based approach, and international human rights framework - particularly in relation to human rights of women migrants.
- Participating organisations developed detailed research plans in their respective communities.
- Participants gain skills and capacity on the tools of Theory of Change, Power Mapping and Critical Pathway to be used together with the community to plan the research and the impact objectives.

### **7.2. Pre-Research Consultation to the constituency**

After the first regional training, appointed young women researchers will conduct consultation in their community. All FPAR processes should start with community consultation before the research has been designed and commences. There may need to be a series of consultations with various stakeholders. FPAR always includes consultations with women in women-only spaces to ensure that discussions of gendered power relations and of issues that may not be easy to speak about in front of men are explored.

The objectives of pre-research community consultations should include:

- Gain the support, collaboration and ownership of the community and stakeholders;
- Form a research team with researchers from the constituency;
- Identify the focused problems or issues of the project;
- Design methods for the research, questions and objectives;
- Develop advocacy plans for long term and structural change throughout the research process.

Based on the consultations, the young women researchers are expected to prepare the draft research design and submit it to APWLD.

### **7.3. Second Regional Training on Feminist Participatory Action Research on Central Asian Women Migrants' Rights: Research Design and Analysis (February 2023)**

In this training, young women researchers will present the Research Design and advocacy plan formulated together with the community, and they will gain inputs and feedback from facilitators and other participants. This training will build skill and capacity on the framework and methodology on Feminist Participatory Action Research, data analysis and reporting. The training will also build the skills on participatory monitoring and evaluation with the community.

Expected outputs

- Participants gain their capacity on feminism and feminist framework – as a core concept to practise and analyse the research in their respective community;
- Participants gain skills and capacity on the framework and methodology on feminist participatory action research – including research designs, methods and feminist analysis;

#### **7.4. Third Regional Training on Feminist Participatory Action Research on Human Rights of Central Asian Women Migrants: Reflections and Ways Forward for Advocacy (October 2023)**

The third regional training will be a collective learning space for participants to share their understanding and experiences in conducting qualitative data analysing, identifying the gaps and challenges, and further improving their research report. The training will reflect the impact of the research, starting from the personal, organisational, and community level. The reflection will discuss the impact stories, best practices, lessons learnt, threat and challenges and ways to address these challenges.

Furthermore, the third training will be an important venue to discuss the ways forward, including advocacy and campaign strategy at local, national, regional and international level; and also identifying ways to work together sustainably – cross issues, cross countries – to strengthen feminist and migrants movement building in the region.

#### **Expected outputs**

- Participants gain their capacity and skills on data analysis, particularly qualitative data analysis and able to share their experience on analysing the data, identifying the challenges and ways to address the challenges;
- Participants are able to identify the gaps in their research report and gain concrete recommendations for the improvement of their research report;
- Participants are able to refine their evidence-based advocacy plans and strategy, in particular to work with the workers to advocate their human rights in the local and national level; and also have a concrete plan with APWLD for advocacy in the regional and international level.

#### **7.5. Research and Reporting**

The team (young women researchers and mentors) will conduct research on their specific focus. The overall duration of the FPAR will be in October 2022 to January 2024, while the data collection and research production will be in March - August 2023. The final FPAR report should be submitted by 20 January 2024. Reports should be submitted in English. Guidelines for the final country research report will be discussed and finalised at the training.

The final financial report according to the template will need to be submitted in January 2024. The six-month advocacy period will begin from March 2024 as an optional period when partner organisations are encouraged to submit their advocacy proposals indicating their national/local advocacy plans based on their research findings. Small amount of sub-grants will be provided for the organisations to conduct national advocacy and campaigns based on their FPAR.

## 7.6. Fourth Regional Reflection Meeting on CA FPAR on Migration: From Personal to Structural Change (End of September 2024)

This meeting will provide a chance for young women researchers and mentors to showcase their FPAR results and impact, and also reflect, self-assess, evaluate and appreciate the journey of FPAR, documenting the changes in the personal, organisational, community or structural level, that they have created and experienced.

### Expected Outputs

- Participants are able to self-reflect on the impact of the FPAR, from the personal to organisational and community levels.
- Participants are able to share their progress of implementing their evidence-based advocacy plans and strategies in the local, regional and international levels.

## 8. Timeline and Process

2022	
Call for applications	August 2022
Selection process	September 2022
Announcement of selected partners	September-October 2022
First Regional Migration FPAR Training	November 2022
Pre-research community consultation	November 2022 - January 2023
2023-24	
Submission of draft research design and interim financial report	February 2023
Second Regional FPAR Training	February 2023
Submission of Final research Designs	February 2023
Submission Interim narrative reports	May 2023
Third Regional FPAR Training	October 2023
Submission of Final FPAR Story and Final financial report	January 2024
Advocacy phase	
Submission of Advocacy plans proposal and budget	February 2024

Advocacy Phase (6 months)	March-August 2024
Submission of Advocacy narrative and financial reports	August 2024
Reflection Meeting	End of September 2024