



Program Goal - to reduce illegal labor migration from Armenia and promote the reintegration of returnees into their home communities.

According to a recent survey on labor migration conducted by the Gallup Organization, only 25 percent of adult Armenians are permanently employed. The same survey found that approximately one-third of Armenians are interested in seeking employment abroad. Russia is the primary country of destination for Armenian labor migrants. Although reliable figures on the number of Armenians working in Russia do not exist, 31 percent of Armenians have at least one family member working in Russia.

In an effort to minimize illegal labor migration, Russia has adopted regularization procedures that offer migrants an opportunity to legalize their status upon arrival. Although these registration procedures were recently simplified, most labor migrants in Russia remain unaware that they can easily legalize their status. As a result, over 90 percent of labor migrants from Armenia continue to work in Russia illegally. These illegal labor migrants frequently are subject to exploitative living and working conditions and they fall victim to organized smuggling and trafficking syndicates. Upon their return to Armenia, labor migrants often have tremendous difficulty finding jobs, in part because they do not have access to reliable sources of information on employment opportunities.

In order to discourage illegal labor migration from Armenia and to support the return and reintegration of labor migrants, Eurasia Partnership Foundation is implementing a program that will increase the understanding among policy-makers of current trends in labor migration, develop the capacities of local institutions to serve as Migration and Return Resource Centers, and develop partnerships between these resource centers and similar centers in Armenia and abroad.

Increased Understanding of Labor Migration Trends

Eurasia Partnership Foundation's Caucasus Research Resource Center (CRRC) conducts the Data Initiative, a yearly household survey across the South Caucasus of trends in household economic behavior and social attitudes, including attitudes towards labor migration. In 2007, with support from the International Organization for Migration, the Caucasus Research Resource Center also conducted a pilot survey in Yerevan and three of Armenia's regions to examine attitudes towards labor migration among adults and to determine the profile of potential labor migrants. The results of both surveys are disseminated to government, civil society organizations and the general public through presentations and the CRRC website at www.crrccenters.org.

In order to better understand migration dynamics among highly-educated Armenians, Eurasia Partnership Foundation will conduct an assessment in spring 2008 that will examine trends in elite migration from Armenia, including:

- ◆ Where graduates from selected departments of Armenia's elite schools and universities are now;
- ◆ The types of jobs the highly educated migrants currently hold / have held both abroad and in Armenia;
- ◆ Labor migrants' experience in finding jobs upon return; and
- ◆ The remittance patterns that these labor migrants demonstrate.

The study will produce recommendations for businesses and government on how to retain highly educated young people in Armenia's work force.

Eurasia Foundation (EF) is a privately managed non-profit organization supported by the United States Agency for International Development and other public and private donors. Since 1992, Eurasia Foundation has invested over \$370 million through more than 8,400 grants and technical assistance projects in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. The Foundation's headquarters office is located in Washington, D.C. Since 1993, the Foundation has invested more than \$30 million in grants and technical assistance in Armenia.

Eurasia Partnership Foundation (EPF) is the locally-registered, legacy institution of Eurasia Foundation in Armenia.

This publication is made possible by the support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of Eurasia Partnership Foundation and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

Capacity Development

In October 2007, Eurasia Partnership Foundation established six Migration and Return Resource Centers in partnership with local institutions (NGOs and intercommunity unions) already operating in Armenia's regions. Partner organizations were selected based upon their ability to function as a resource center and their commitment to providing services to potential migrants and returnees. Each center will offer pre-departure counseling to potential migrants; vocational training opportunities for returnees; information on organizations at home and abroad that provide social assistance to migrants and returnees; and information on employment opportunities in Armenia.

With support and guidance from Eurasia Partnership Foundation, staff from the Migration and Return Resource Centers will gather information on local trends in labor migration and on the difficulties encountered by labor migrants while abroad. MRRC staff will work with EPF to analyze this data. The results of the analysis will be summarized in a report and disseminated to government agencies in Armenia working in the field of labor migration. This approach will develop the capacities of the MRRCs to monitor trends in labor migration in the communities they serve and to better develop services that are tailored to the needs of returnees and potential labor migrants.

Partnership Development

Eurasia Partnership Foundation Armenia will work with its partner in Russia, the New Eurasia Foundation, to establish links between Migration and Return Resource Centers in Armenia and resource centers for labor migrants throughout Russia. Support for exchanges will allow resource center staff to learn more about Russian legislation relevant to labor migration, to develop a better understanding of the challenges faced by both labor migrants, and to establish partnerships for continued information exchange and cooperation.

For more information, please contact:

Eurasia Partnership Foundation
Armenia Office
56 Zarobyan Street
Yerevan 0009, Armenia
Tel/Fax: (374 10) 58 60 95/96

eurasia@eurasia.am
www.eurasia.am