

●INTRODUCTION

IFES proposed to the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL) the idea to measure the electoral enfranchisement and political engagement of out-of-country voters, namely labor migrants, as follow-up to a technical assistance project conducted with the Tajik Central Commission on Elections and Referenda (CCER) following the 2005 parliamentary elections. This *Ethical and Procedural Training* project focused on improving election administration at all levels and bringing the voting process and the rules governing it more into line with international standards. The survey was envisioned to contribute to that process by helping the CCER to become aware of labor migrants' needs and improve out-of-country voting procedures for the many Tajikistani citizens living and working abroad, primarily in the Russian Federation¹. An additional objective of the survey was to improve the quality of in-country voters' lists by instituting stronger control methods to account for citizens residing outside of the country, which would lessen the possible instances of voting abuse and fraud at the polls. A survey of 500 migrant workers on home leave in Tajikistan was thus conducted nationwide with the support of the CCER to capture attitudes on voting and political enfranchisement that will assist the CCER as it makes preparations to administer the November 2006 presidential election.

IFES contracted with the Dushanbe-based Sociological Research Center *Sharq*² as a local implementing partner based on a competitive process. In February 2006 the survey field instrument was developed collaboratively between the IFES offices in Washington and Dushanbe, *Sharq* and the CCER. Approximately forty questions were drafted that were designed to measure political engagement and electoral enfranchisement in addition to providing a standard demographical picture of respondents.

Among the themes addressed were voting habits, reasons for seeking labor outside the country, access to information about the political situation and the electoral process, contact with local officials, media habits and preferences, and knowledge of the system of elections in Tajikistan. The questions were pre-tested with 50 total respondents in both the Tajik and Russian languages. Most of the subsequent field interviews were conducted in Tajik, which overwhelmingly reflected the language of preference for respondents.

Main fieldwork for the survey was conducted in March 2006. In order to obtain the desired number of 500 respondents, a figure which would provide a sufficiently high confidence level, IFES needed to approach just over 3000 domiciles in order to locate labor migrants currently residing at home prior to returning abroad for seasonal jobs. The most common travel season for Tajik migrant workers is from March through November, based on weather-related factors in the host countries³. IFES decided that for reasons of cost effectiveness it would survey migrants currently on "home leave" in Tajikistan who were resident for a period of 3-4 months before resuming their jobs outside of the country. It also facilitated an easier interviewing process, as many immigrants living outside the country (particularly in Russia) were feared less accessible and less comfortable speaking openly in some cases due to their unofficial immigration status.

There were no major problems reported during the interview process in Tajikistan. The CCER's support of the project, affirmed through meetings with the survey partner *Sharq* through the IFES country office in Dushanbe, facilitated the movement of the *Sharq* interviewers throughout the country. As with all national surveys conducted in Tajikistan at the present time, local governments (Hukumats)

¹ It is estimated that up to one million citizens of Tajikistan live and work abroad, which would represent nearly one-seventh of the entire population, and an even higher percentage of the eligible voting population.

² Drs. Saodat and Muzaffar Olimov are senior *Sharq* research specialists, with whom IFES collaborated on a nationwide survey of public opinion in Tajikistan in 1996. They maintain a team of well-trained survey interview specialists in all regions of the country.

³ The primary destination for labor migrants from Tajikistan is the Russian Federation.

were informed in advance and received clearance from central authorities to allow interviewing to take place.

86% of persons in Tajikistan live below the poverty line⁴. The majority of workers toil in the agricultural sector, even though the country's territory is only 6% arable. The collapse of the Soviet Union and resulting civil war caused tremendous economic hardship from which the country has yet to recover. Many citizens were displaced as internal refugees, with others driven across the border into Afghanistan. In the aftermath many live on subsistence farming, with others employed seasonally in the cotton and produce sectors. Even though 64% of its people continue to live in abject poverty, Tajikistan has experienced steady economic growth since 1997, but experienced a slight drop in its growth rate to 8% in 2005 from 10.6% in 2004. Continued privatization of medium and large state-owned enterprises would further increase productivity. Tajikistan's economic situation, however, remains fragile due to uneven implementation of structural reforms, weak governance, widespread unemployment, and the external debt burden.⁵ With unemployment officially at 12% but likely much higher, workers have had to look outside of the country at finding ways to provide for their families.

It is likely that actual total labor migration from Tajikistan greatly surpasses official figures because most of the migration takes place in the form of temporary labor, which is difficult to track. Official statistics vary widely, but in 2001, according to the State Border Committee, 1.2 million Tajik citizens were working abroad out of a total population of over seven million citizens. In previous survey work conducted by *Sharq* in 2003, 18% of the adult population, identified as 15 years of age or older, had left the country to look for a job⁶. Even when considering that the legal voting age is 18, this figure represents a significant percentage of the total voting-age population of the country. While not all labor migrants are necessarily out of the country at the same time, nor out of the country during times of national elections (which typically take place in November and December), the large total number of persons working and residing abroad could certainly have a major impact on the outcome of an elections were they given an opportunity to cast ballots as out-of-country voters. The CCER estimated that over 400,000 persons had voted abroad during the landmark 2000 national parliamentary elections, out of a total of 800,000 voting-age residents abroad. However, this figure appears somewhat exaggerated given the direct observation of official voting tabulations. Indeed, as confirmed by the present survey results, out-of-country voting appears to be an area in need of particular attention by the election authorities of the country, both in terms of education of out-of-country voters as well as their ultimate enfranchisement.

To its credit, the CCER improved its procedures in 2005 of keeping track of out-of-country in comparison with the elections of 2000, posting on the walls of the polling stations a list of voters not physically present on election day due to reasons of labor migration. As anticipated, the Russian Federation was by far the most frequently mentioned destination for labor migration as reported by respondents. An overwhelming majority of these migrants were men, Tajik by ethnicity, and between the ages of 25 to 45.

Nevertheless, questions remained with the sanctity of voters' lists in some districts and whether or not proxies were allowed to vote on behalf of persons not physically present. Several instances of multiple voting were observed by international and domestic observers, which may be more a function of long-standing tradition than overt malfeasance, though it does speak somewhat to the overall mentality of voters and election officials that such practices were at least implicitly, if not overtly, tolerated.

What follows is a detailed look at the major findings from the survey, followed by some recommendations for both election officials and international assistance providers:

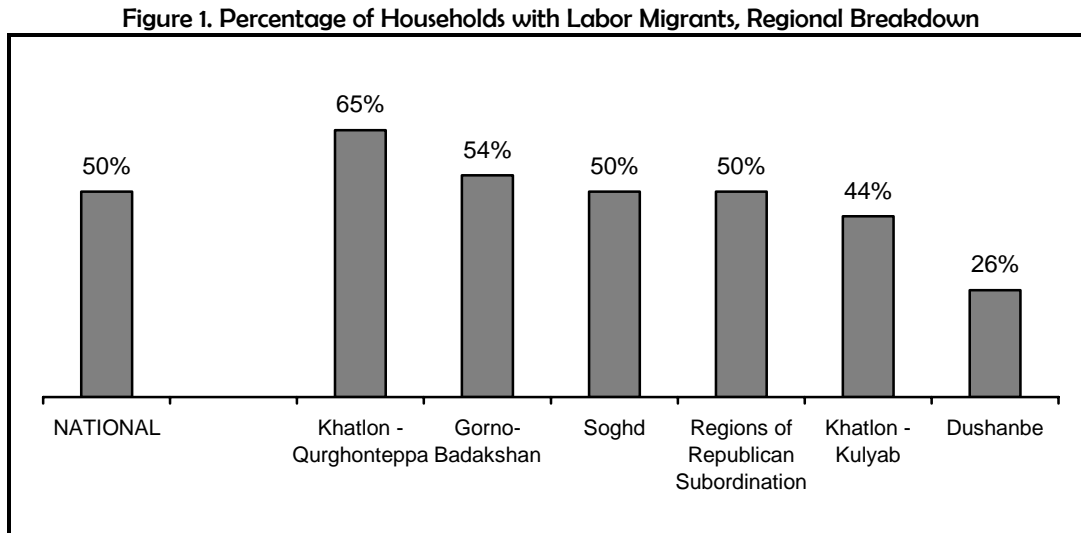
⁴ IOM-Sharq report Labor Migration from Tajikistan, 2003, pp. 13.

⁵ CIA Factbook 2006

⁶ IOM-Sharq report Labor Migration from Tajikistan, 2003, pp. 18.

I. CHARACTERISTICS OF EXTERNAL MIGRANT POPULATION IN TAJIKISTAN

- Of the 3,023 households approached for this survey, 50% report that their household contains at least one individual who works abroad for at least one month out of the year. Both rural and urban areas of the country have a large percentage of households that have an external labor migrant, but the data indicates that a higher percentage of rural households (53%) contain migrants than urban households (43%).
- Households in Dushanbe are the least likely to say that they contain a labor migrant (26%), while those in the Qurghonteppe region of Khatlon (65%, Figure 1).



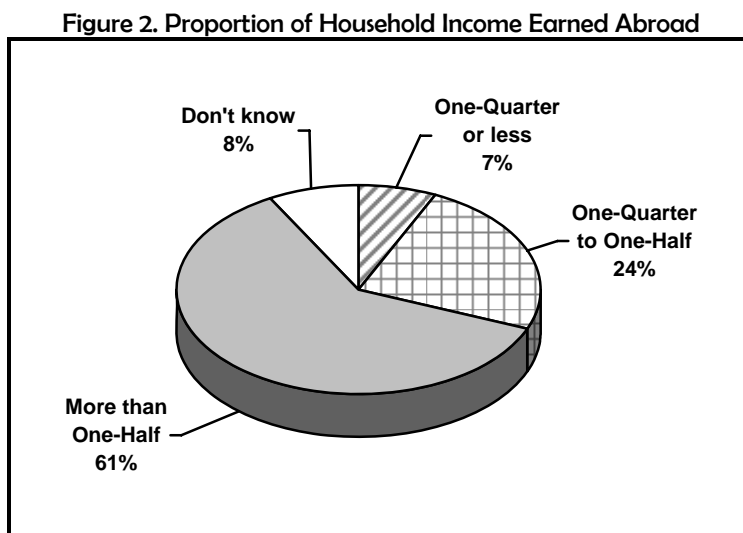
"Does household have any member who works abroad for at least one month out of the year?" (n=3023)

- Most of the households that have labor migrants report having only one labor migrant (79%), while 17% say that two members of the household work abroad. Very few households have more than two persons who travel abroad for work.

Destinations and Reasons for Migration

- Upon determining that a household contains a labor migrant, interviewers were instructed to try to obtain an interview with the labor migrant in the household (or randomly select one in cases where there was more than one labor migrant). Of the households that contained a labor migrant, interviews were obtained in 33% of the cases (508 cases), while they were not obtained in 67%. Among the households where an interview could not be obtained, the migrant was out of the country in 63% of the cases and in 9% of the cases, the migrant could not be located at home despite repeated callbacks by the interviewer. In 27% of cases, a migrant contacted for the survey refused to be interviewed.
- Of the interviews obtained with migrants, 30% were with migrants who live in Soghd, 23% with migrants from the Regions of Republican Subordination, 21% from the Qurghonteppe region of Khatlon, 13% from the Kulyab region, 9% from Dushanbe, and 3% from Gorno-Badakhshan. Given the lack of reliable data on labor migration in Tajikistan, it is difficult to determine whether these percentages represent the actual regional distribution of labor migrants in Tajikistan. This report will not make any assumptions as to the regional distribution of labor migrants in Tajikistan and the reader is advised to bear this in mind when reading the report.

- Russia is the overwhelming choice of destination for labor migrants in Tajikistan. Every one of the labor migrants interviewed reported having worked in Russia in the past. Kazakhstan (2%), Uzbekistan (1%), and Ukraine (1%) were other countries mentioned by 1% or more of the labor migrants. There is a near even split between the number of migrants who are legally eligible to work abroad (43%) and those who are not eligible to work abroad (47%). Ten percent did not give a response.
- When asked what kind of work they perform abroad, a majority of labor migrants say that they work in the construction and building industry while abroad (62%). A quarter of migrants (25%) say that they have worked in the service sector in such jobs as gardening, housework, or in restaurants. Twenty percent of migrants say their primary vocation is trading in goods abroad, while 8% have worked in industry and transportation. Four percent say that they are active in agriculture abroad. There is little difference in the type of work performed abroad by labor migrants from rural and urban areas.
- The majority of labor migrants say that they have been working abroad for more than 2 years. Thirty-seven percent of migrants have been working abroad between two and five years, while 26% say that they have worked abroad for more than five years.
- As might be expected, the poor economic conditions in Tajikistan are the primary factor in Tajikistanis looking for work abroad. Forty-eight percent of the labor migrants say that they work abroad to provide life's necessities for their families. Thirty-nine percent say they work abroad because there is a lack of work in Tajikistan, and 31% say that the wages and salaries are better abroad than in Tajikistan. Eighteen percent cite the poverty in the country as a reason for working abroad.
- The wages earned abroad by labor migrants is a major source of income for their households. When asked for the proportion of household income that they earn while working abroad, most migrants say that they earn more than half the household income abroad.

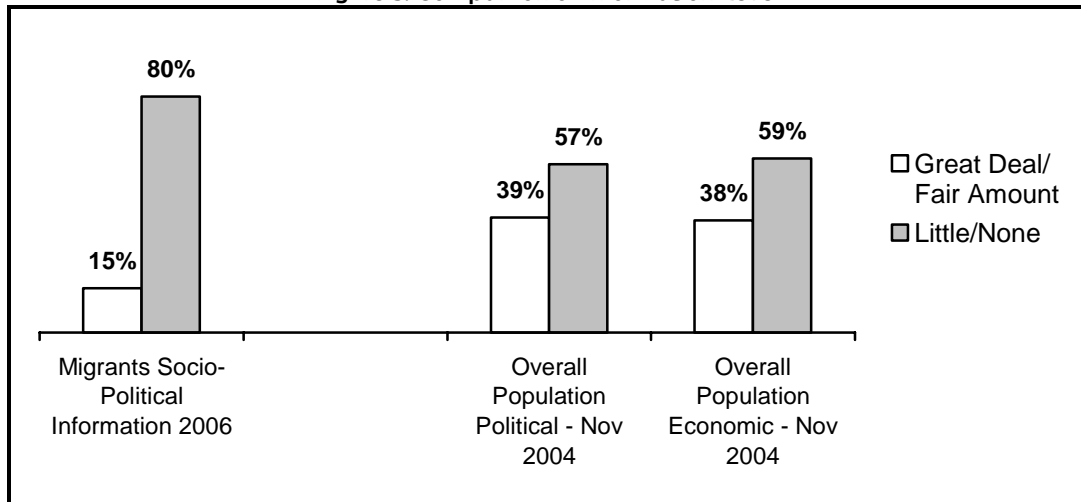


"Approximately what part of your household's annual income do you earn while working abroad?" (n=508)

II. SOCIO-POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT AMONG EXTERNAL MIGRANT POPULATION

- A minority of external migrants (40%) say that they are interested in political and government affairs in Tajikistan. Fifty-six percent of migrants state that they are not very or at all interested in political affairs. Overall, the level of interest in politics among migrants is not much different from the overall population in Tajikistan. In a November 2004 survey IFES survey in Tajikistan, 36% of adult Tajikistanis expressed an interest in politics compared to 62% who said that they were not interested. Interestingly, the longer a migrant has worked abroad, the more likely they are to be interested in political affairs in Tajikistan. Among those who have worked outside Tajikistan for two or fewer years, 31% say they are interested in political affairs in Tajikistan. This compares to 41% among those who have worked abroad two to five years, and 51% among those who have worked abroad for more than five years.
- While the level of interest in political affairs in Tajikistan is similar among both the migrant and overall adult population, in Tajikistan, comparison of data from this survey with national-level survey data indicated that migrant are much less likely to be informed about socio-political events in Tajikistan while they are working abroad. (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Comparison of Information Levels



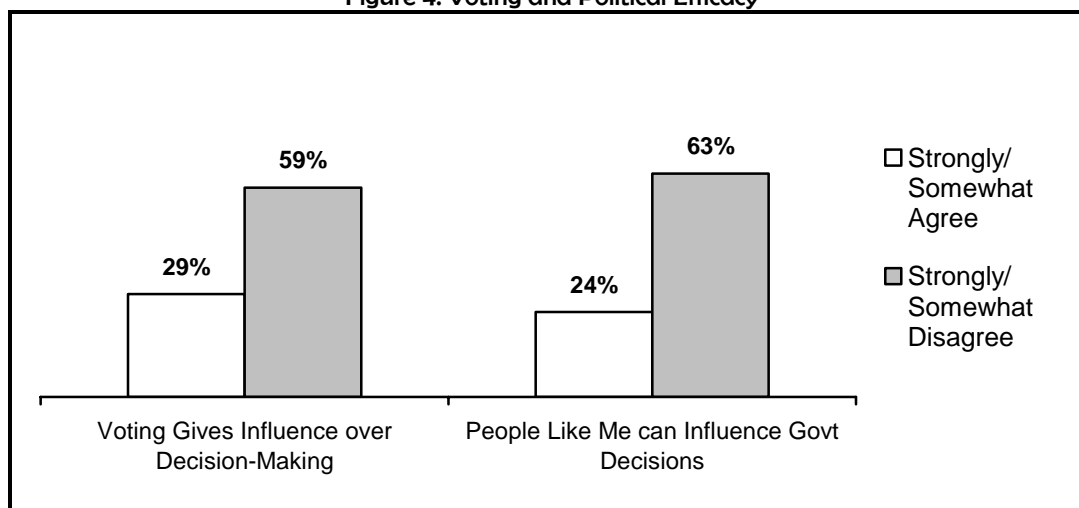
"While you are working abroad, how much information do you receive about the socio-political event taking place in Tajikistan?"

- Just fifteen percent of migrants state that they receive a great deal or fair amount of information on socio-political events in Tajikistan while they are working abroad. While the exact same question was not asked on the national survey in 2004, and the difference in times the two surveys were conducted also comprises that comparability of the data, it still seems reasonable to assume that migrants as a group are less likely to have information on socio-political developments in Tajikistan than those who are in Tajikistan for most of the year.
- Compared to the differences highlighted in interest in politics, there is not much difference in information levels between migrants who have worked abroad for different periods of time. There is also little difference by the number of months spent abroad each year. As would be expected, information levels among those interested in politics are higher than among those with little or no interest in politics (6%).
- When labor migrants are asked what types of information sources when abroad to learn about events in Tajikistan, a mixture of mass media and informal sources were listed. The television was

most likely to be listed (48% of migrants), and the radio (17%) and newspapers (12%) were also listed as important sources of information to learn about events in Tajikistan. However, the data also indicates that informal sources of information are also very important sources for Tajik migrants abroad. More than four in ten migrants mention that they rely on their relatives and friends or other acquaintances for information about events back home (relatives/friends 17%, phone calls 25%). In addition, other migrants working or residing abroad are also important sources of information. Twenty-four percent say that they rely on migrants who have recently arrived in the country in which they are working and 7% mention the Tajik diaspora in the country as an important source of information. Given the fact that media sources in the country in which migrants work (primarily Russia) are likely to provide a small amount of coverage to events in Tajikistan, it is likely that migrants rely on informal sources to gain more in-depth information and analysis on events in Tajikistan.

- There are slight differences in sources of information used between migrants from rural and urban areas. Migrants from rural areas are more likely to rely on their acquaintances in Tajikistan for information on events in the country, while those from urban areas are more likely to use media sources for information.
- The survey data indicates that a majority of external migrants lack a sense that they can influence political decision-making through participation. A majority of the migrants disagree that voting gives people like them influence over decision-making in Tajikistan and that people like them can have influence on the decisions made by the government (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Voting and Political Efficacy

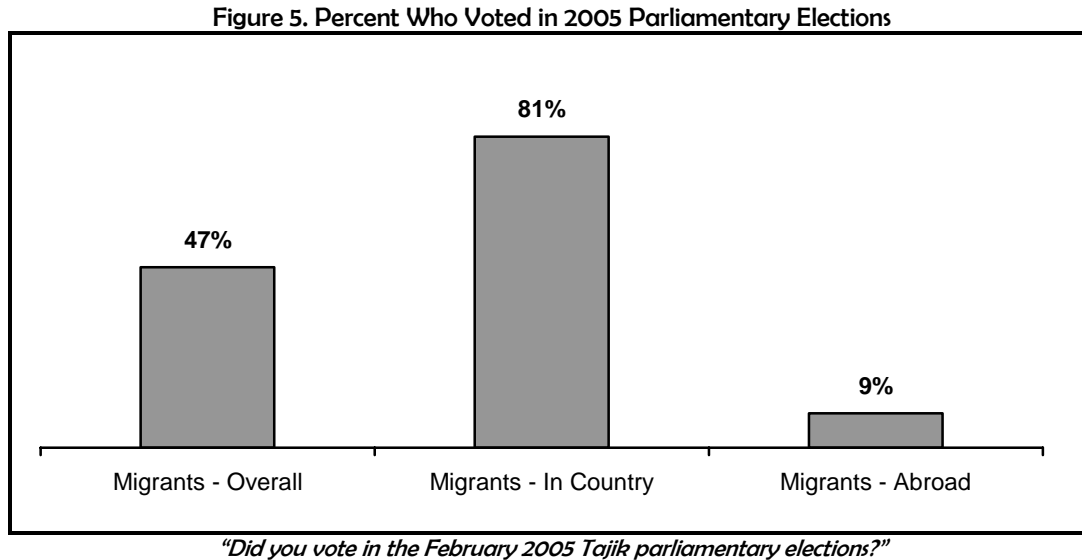


Agree/Disagree: "Voting gives people like me a chance to influence decision-making in our country."
"People like me can have influence on decisions made by the government."

- Respondents to the 2004 IFES national survey in Tajikistan were also asked the question on voting influencing decision-making. In that survey, 66% agreed that voting gave them a chance to influence decision-making. However, that survey was fielded shortly before parliamentary elections and the percent agreeing might have been boosted due to the event. Still, that large difference in agreement between the overall population and labor migrants is noteworthy.

III. ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION AMONG EXTERNAL MIGRANT POPULATION

- According to official figures, the February 2005 parliamentary elections witnessed near universal participation by the Tajikistani public (93% of registered voters reported as having voted). This was not the case among Tajik labor migrants. Data from this survey indicates that 45% of labor migrants were working abroad at the time that the 2005 parliamentary elections took place (the survey question did not distinguish between first and second round). A slight majority of labor migrants (53%) reported having been in the country at the time of the elections. Whether a migrant was in the country or not turns out to have been a key factor in electoral participation among labor migrants in Tajikistan (Figure 5).

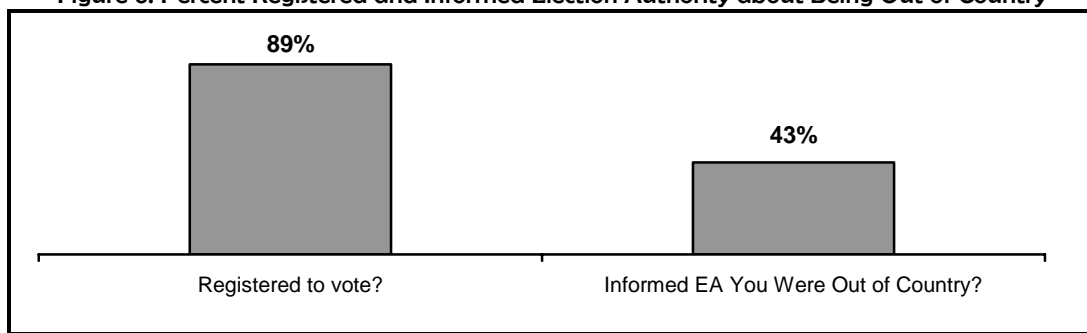


- Overall, 47% of labor migrants reported voting in the parliamentary elections, a figure significantly lower than the officially reported turnout for the overall electorate in Tajikistan. However, the low rate of electoral participation was driven almost entirely by those who were working abroad at the time of the election. Among migrants who were in the country at the time of the election, 81% reported voting in the election, while among those who were abroad, only 9% reported voting. Among those who voted in the country, 98% stated that they voted in their home region.
- The low level of participation by those working abroad occurs despite the fact that the Tajik government provides facilities in its embassies and consulates for Tajik citizens living abroad to vote. The survey data indicates that these arrangements are not well-known to those who do work abroad. When those who did not vote were asked the reason or reasons they did not vote, 58% replied that they did not have an opportunity to vote because they were working abroad. Fourteen percent did not know about the elections, and 9% said that there was no polling facility nearby to allow them to vote. By contrast, among migrants who were in Tajikistan at the time of the election, 17% did not vote because their relatives voted for them. Thirteen percent replied that they are not on the voters list. Close to a quarter did not vote because they either do not think the elections give them a voice (11%) or because they lack faith in elections (13%).
- The findings highlighted above indicate that even though the Tajik government provides facilities for those living abroad there is not much awareness of these facilities. Respondents to the survey were asked whether it was possible for Tajikistanis living or working abroad to vote in national elections. Sixty-five percent of migrants say that it is not possible for Tajikistanis living or working abroad to vote, while 35% say that this is possible. The opinion that it is possible for migrants to vote abroad

increases with the length of time that a migrant has been working abroad. Among those who have been working abroad two years or less, 29% say it is possible for Tajikistanis living or working abroad to vote. This compares to 47% among those who have been working abroad for five or more years. Even though awareness of voting abroad options increases with length of time spent abroad, it is still instructive that a majority of those who have been working abroad for five or more years are not aware of this.

- Those who say that it is possible for Tajikistanis to vote abroad were asked how this can be done. Most mention Tajik government facilities. Forty-seven percent say that it is possible to vote in Tajik embassies or consulates and 20% mention that the government organizes polling places in locations where many Tajiks live or work. Nine percent also mention that the Russian government helps Tajiks to vote while they are working in Russia.
- The survey data also indicates that those who are aware of facilities to vote abroad learn about these facilities through informal sources, rather than through official communications by the Tajik government. Fifty-three percent of those aware of voting abroad facilities say they learned about them from other Tajikistanis who are working or living abroad, while 25% say they learned about it through the Tajik diaspora. Only 9% say that they learned about the facilities from officials at the Tajik embassy or consulate in the country. Seven percent say they learned about the facilities through Russian TV or radio, and another 7% said that special representatives went to markets where Tajik traders proliferate to inform them of the facilities.
- When those labor migrants who are aware of facilities to vote abroad are asked whether they have ever voted abroad, only 21% say that they have done so while 79% say that they have not voted abroad. No matter the length of time they have worked abroad, a majority of migrants say that they have not voted abroad. Among those who have worked abroad for more than five years, 31% say they have voted abroad in the past and 69% say they have not, while among those who have worked abroad for two years or less, 10% have voted abroad and 90% have not. Those who have not voted abroad give many reasons for not voting. Twenty-eight percent say that they were in Tajikistan at the time of elections and did not need to vote abroad. Twenty percent cite a lack of opportunity to vote, 14% say that polling sites were too far away from where they work when abroad, and 9% say that they did not know where to go vote. Eleven percent have not voted because they do not feel a necessity to vote and 8% say they lack the proper documentation to vote abroad.
- Even though a majority of migrants report not voting in the 2005 parliamentary elections, the vast majority do report that they are registered to vote in their home communities. However, a majority of those who were working abroad at the time of the 2005 elections also say that they did not inform their local election authority that they were not going to be in the country (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Percent Registered and Informed Election Authority about Being Out of Country



"Is your name on the voting list for your home region?"

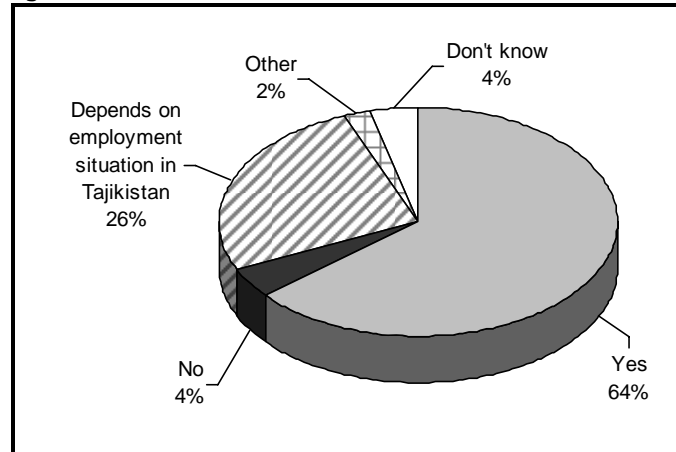
"Was your local election commission informed that you were not going to be in the country on election-day?"

- Nearly nine in ten migrants say that they are registered to vote in their home communities. However, only a minority of those who were abroad during the 2005 parliamentary elections state that they informed their local election authority that they would be out of the country on election-day. Fifty-seven percent say that they did not inform their local election authority that they would be out of the country. Labor migrants from rural areas were more likely to inform their election authorities than those from urban areas (46% versus 35%). The practical impact on electoral participation due to informing the local election authority of one's absence is not evident from the survey data. Only 11% of those who were abroad at the time of the February 2005 elections and informed their local election authority actually voted abroad in this election.

IV. MIGRANT PARTICIPATION IN UPCOMING ELECTIONS AND VOTING ABROAD

- The opportunity for Tajik labor migrants to vote abroad will continue to be a concern into the future as more than 6 in 10 labor migrants interviewed in this survey indicate that they are likely to keep working abroad over the next three or four years (Figure 7).

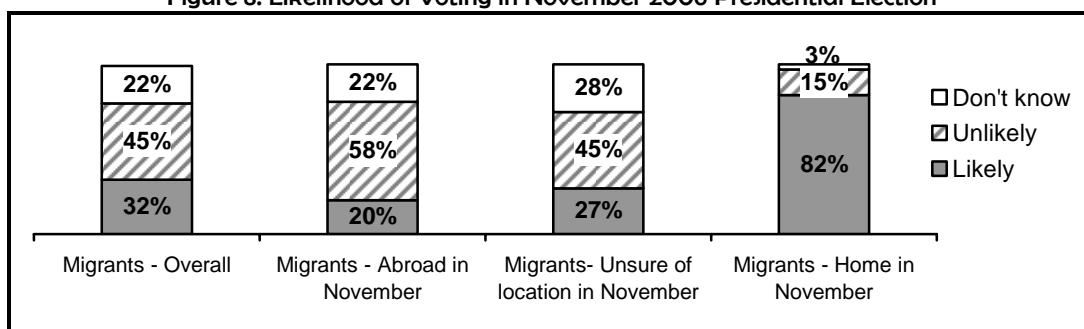
Figure 7. Plan to Work Abroad over Next Three to Four Years?



"Can you tell me whether you plan to keep going abroad for work over the next three to four years?"

- Only 4% of labor migrants say that they will not be working abroad in three to four years. More than a quarter say that their decision will be based on the employment situation in Tajikistan over the next few years. There is little difference between migrants from rural and urban areas, and between migrants from different regions of the country in this regard. Most migrants either say they will definitely be working abroad or they will make their decision based on the employment situation in the country.
- When asked specifically whether they will be working abroad in November 2006 (the month of the presidential election), half of the labor migrants say they are not sure if they will be abroad or in Tajikistan at that time. Thirty-six percent say that they will be abroad, while 14% say they will be in Tajikistan. The discussion on turnout among labor migrants for the February 2005 parliamentary elections illustrated that participation was severely impacted if the migrants were working abroad at the time of that election. The same impact can be seen in likelihood of voting in the November 2006 presidential elections (Figure 8).

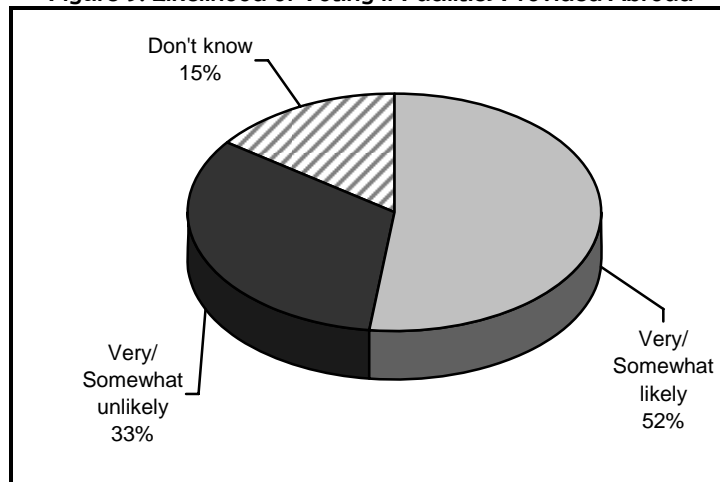
Figure 8. Likelihood of Voting in November 2006 Presidential Election



"How likely are you to vote in the presidential elections in November of this year?"

- Among migrants overall, 32% say they are very or somewhat likely to vote in the November elections while 45% say they are very or somewhat unlikely to vote. A large percentage (22%) is unsure whether they will vote or not. Further analysis of the data shows that those migrants who expect to be working abroad in November or are unsure whether they will be working abroad in November are much less likely to vote in the election than migrants who expect to in Tajikistan in November. A majority of those who expect to be abroad in November (58%) say that they are unlikely to vote in the presidential elections, compared to only 20% who say they are likely to vote. Among those unsure of whether they will be abroad in November, there is similar uncertainty of their likelihood of voting. Forty-five percent of this group says they are unlikely to vote, 27% say they are likely to vote, and 28% are unsure of whether they will vote or not. Among those who expect to be in Tajikistan, the vast majority (82%) are likely to vote.
- Information plays a key role in whether migrants who will be abroad in November 2006 are likely to vote or not in the presidential election. Analyzing only those migrants who expect to be abroad in November, those who are aware that there are ways for Tajikistanis to vote abroad are more likely to vote in the presidential election (37%) than those who do not know that there are ways for Tajikistanis to vote abroad (11%). This finding highlights the importance of a voter education program that can inform migrants of the electoral facilities available to them when working abroad. This is further highlighted by the fact that many migrants who say they are unlikely to vote in the November election say that if there were voting centers abroad, they would vote. Nearly three in ten also say that they would vote if they were home in Tajikistan. About a quarter, however, say they would not vote because they do not think that voting makes a difference.
- In order to assess the effectiveness of providing convenient facilities for migrants to vote abroad, respondents were asked if their likelihood of voting in the presidential elections would increase, decrease, or stay the same if convenient facilities were provided for them to vote in the country in which they work. Overall, 40% of migrants say that their likelihood of voting in the November elections would increase if more convenient facilities were provided, 36% say their likelihood of voting would stay the same, and 9%, somewhat curiously, say their likelihood of voting would decline. Among those who expect to be working abroad in November, 38% say their likelihood of voting would increase, 37% say it would stay the same, and 13% say it would decline. Focusing even more specifically on migrants who expect to be abroad in November and who say they are not likely to vote in the presidential elections, 25% of this group says that their likelihood of voting would increase if convenient facilities were provided, while 43% say it would stay the same. Twenty-two percent say their likelihood of voting would decline.
- Labor migrants were also asked for their likelihood of voting in Tajik elections if, in general terms and not for the November election specifically, convenient facilities were provided in the country in which they worked. The data indicates that a majority of labor migrants would be likely to vote in elections if such facilities were provided (Figure 9 next page).

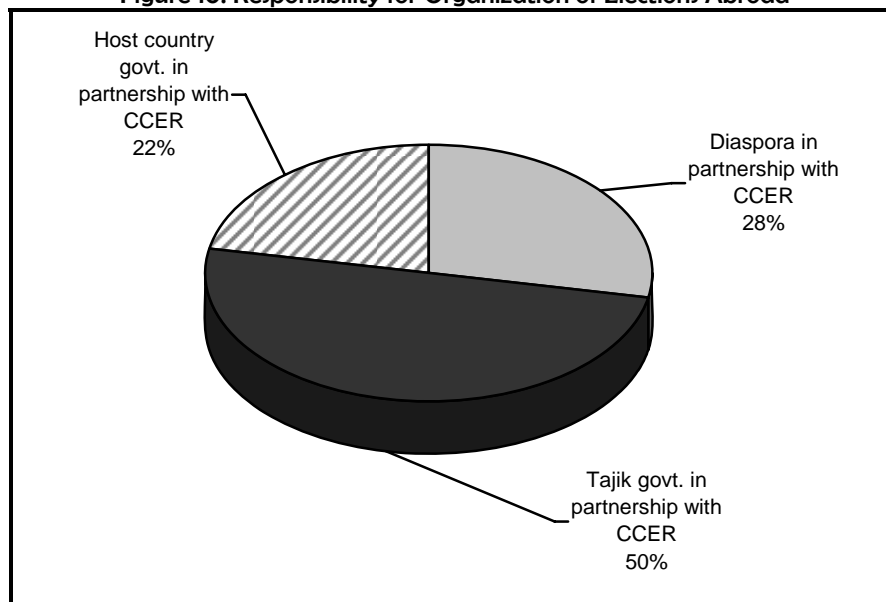
Figure 9. Likelihood of Voting if Facilities Provided Abroad



"Generally speaking, how likely are you to vote in Tajik elections while working abroad if convenient facilities were provided to vote in the country in which you work?"

- Fifty-two percent of labor migrants say they are likely to vote in Tajik elections if convenient facilities are provided while 33% say they are still unlikely to vote in the facilities. One indication of the utility of facilities that are convenient is that among those migrants who are aware that Tajikistanis can vote abroad but have never actually voted abroad, 53% say they are likely to take advantage of the convenient facilities. It is interesting to note that even among those migrants who are not legally eligible to work in the country in which they do work, 47% say they would be likely to vote if convenient facilities were provided.
- Even if convenient facilities are provided for Tajik citizens to vote abroad, the Tajik authorities will have to educate Tajik citizens about the voting facilities available to them. As mentioned before, voting facilities are provided to Tajik citizens in embassies and consulates in several countries. Yet, the data from the survey shows that a majority of labor migrants are not aware of the location of Tajik embassies and consulates in the countries in which they work. When labor migrants were asked to estimate the distance between the place in which they work and the nearest Tajik embassy or consulate, 27% reported that they worked in the same city as an embassy or consulate, and 17% mentioned the distance to the nearest embassy or consulate. Fifty-six percent did not know where the nearest Tajik embassy or consulate was located. Given this data, it is not surprising that only 10% of Tajik labor migrants report having visited a Tajik embassy or consulate in the country or countries in which they have worked.
- Although a majority of labor migrants say that they are likely to vote abroad if convenient facilities are provided, enthusiasm is somewhat lower for another method of postal voting significantly lower for internet voting. When asked for the likelihood of voting while working abroad if postal voting facilities were available to labor migrants, 42% say they would be likely to vote using this method, 44% say they would be unlikely to vote, and 14% are not sure. With regard to voting on the internet, 27% say they would be likely to vote using this method, 48% say that they would be unlikely to vote using this method, and 25% are not sure. In both these cases, education seems to play a part in the responses as likelihood of voting with either of these methods generally increases with level of education.
- When labor migrants are asked who should be responsible for organizing elections for Tajik citizens abroad, half of the migrants mention the Tajik government and the CCER working together to make these arrangements (Figure 10 next page).

Figure 10. Responsibility for Organization of Elections Abroad



"If efforts were made for the Tajik diaspora to organize elections in the country where you work, do you think these arrangements should be made by.."

Fifty percent of migrants are of the belief that the Tajik government should work in partnership with the CCER to organize elections abroad. Another 28% would like the CCER to work with the Tajik diaspora to organize elections in a country. Twenty-two percent would prefer the CCER to work with government of the country in which they work.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Government of Tajikistan, in order to provide for the large number of labor migrants expected to reside outside of the country on the day of presidential elections scheduled for November 6, 2006, needs to consider undertaking an informational and motivational campaign to inform its citizens living and working abroad of the election and the means by which they can participate as voters. The results of the survey clearly indicate a population that is relatively disengaged and disinterested in the election process, but one which would participate should information and the means to participate be provided.

Absolutely essential to the success of the out-of-country voting effort is arming labor migrants with information on the kind of documentation they need to maintain in order to feel comfortable traveling to one of the out-of-country voting centers set up on their behalf.⁷ This includes passports and proof of registration with the local authorities, which in the past has proven a barrier to the free traveling of Tajik citizens throughout Russia. The status of many labor migrants prevents them from obtaining this registration, and in turn from feeling comfortable to risk participating in elections at local voting centers, where local *militia* have been known to congregate.

It is recognized that the Government of Tajikistan is challenged to provide for every one of the many thousands of citizens living outside of its borders, but increased awareness of the election, a greater effort to provide voting facilities, and improved overall outreach through a paper and electronic campaign are recommended actions that can be taken or done collaboratively with international assistance providers.

⁷ Up to one dozen voting centers will be set up in the Russian Federation for the benefit of Tajikistani citizens residing there. Most of these centers will be located on the European side of the RF.

Speaking to the issue of motivation, one of the additional factors in lower levels of voting among labor migrants is the confidence they have that they can make a difference by voting. This general sense of apathy pervades among residents living inside the country as well, as seen in the survey data and by results obtained in the 2004 nationwide survey of democracy indicators. This is not an attitude that can change overnight, and it will take a concerted effort by an independent CCER to instill confidence in the system of elections, relying on continued advice and guidance from international advisers and demanding transparency and accountability from all levels of local election and political administration, from professionalization of Precinct and District Election Commissions to non-interference by state bodies such as local Hukumats. Given the massive and growing youth demographic, efforts must be made now to create a “mindset of democracy” among young and future voters by engaging them in schools with an interactive civic education program that focuses on democratic governance and citizen participation.