Situational Assessment of Labor Migrants in Asia: Needs and Knowledge During Covid-19
Research Brief 3: NEPAL
August 2020

Respondents
195
Returned migrants participated in interviews between June 9 – June 17

89%
Of respondents were male

78%
Of respondents were under the age of 40

Country of Return, by Respondents

Type of Job in Destination Country

- Hospitality/Restaurant: 32%
- Manufacturing/other factory work: 25%
- Construction: 11%
- Fishing: 4%
- Security: 4%
- Domestic Work: 5%
- Other: 22%
Of respondents **do not** have enough food to eat every day (31%)

Of respondents **do not** have enough income to support themselves (66%)

Have **not** received any support since returning to Nepal (68%)

95% of respondents **had not** been sick since returning to Nepal

Confidence in accessing medical care if respondents became sick (n=187)

- Low: 10%
- Moderate: 80%
- Very: 10%

Are returnees being treated differently than others? (n=195)

- Much Better: 0%
- Better: 5%
- Same: 47%
- Worse: 20%
- Much Worse: 10%

95% of female respondents said they **had not** faced an increased risk of violence since returning.
Of respondents are currently employed in Nepal.

Did respondents receive their full salary before returning?

- India: Yes (52%), No (21%), I don't know (24%)
- United Arab Emirates: Yes (10%), No (90%), I don't know (0%)
- Qatar: Yes (0%), No (100%), I don't know (0%)
- Malaysia: Yes (0%), No (100%), I don't know (0%)
- Saudi Arabia: Yes (0%), No (100%), I don't know (0%)
- Other: Yes (0%), No (100%), I don't know (0%)

Do respondents plan to re-migrate for work?

- YES: 52%
- MAYBE: 21%
- NO: 24%

How respondents plan to find a job in destination country (n=102, multi-response)

- Return to previous job: 50%
- Family or friends: 40%
- Recruitment agency: 10%
Of respondents received prevention information on Covid-19 (96%)

Of respondents could list 4 or more ways to protect themselves against Covid-19 (80%)

Ways respondents listed to protect themselves against Covid-19 (multi-response)

- Wash hands
- Wear face mask or cover
- Don’t join large groups
- Social distancing
- Stay away from sick people

70% Need more information on Covid-19. This is where they would go for trusted information:

- Television
- Radio
- Family/friends
- Facebook
- Online news

*Only primary answers shown >10%, multi-response
A five-year (2016-2021) program, the USAID Asia Counter Trafficking in Persons (CTIP) project is a regional activity that focuses on transnational and regional challenges to combat human trafficking. The program aims to reduce the trafficking of persons in Asia through a coordinated and consolidated action by governments, civil society and business that will foster cross-border cooperation, develop opportunities for private-sector leadership and improve the quality of data associated with human trafficking. Read the full research brief with detailed methodology here.

Nepali returnees are facing extremely high unemployment rates: 92% of those interviewed said they were currently unemployed. As the country prepares to open its borders in August, millions of Nepalis who have been stuck abroad are anticipated to return home. To ensure that current and future returnees have opportunities to enter the labor market, the government of Nepal – particularly at municipal level - should facilitate domestic job placement and skill training services for returnees. International organizations should invest in programming that will provide income-generating opportunities to returnees.

Since returning to Nepal, 66% of respondents reported not having enough income to support themselves and 31% said they did not have enough food to eat every day. When asked if respondents had received any support services since returning, 68% said ‘none’. Immediate needs packages such as food and hygiene items should be distributed to returnees. Cash transfer schemes should also be considered as an influx of more unemployed, vulnerable migrants make the journey home.

Over a third (36%) of returnees interviewed reported not receiving full payment for their work in the destination country before returning to Nepal. Migrant assistance and labor rights organizations could take this opportunity – while returnees remain at home – to conduct outreach campaigns for those who may have faced exploitation while working abroad and connect them with needed support services such as legal assistance and/or mental health professionals.

Over half of respondents (52%) said they plan to re-migrate for work and most (82%) said they would ask family or friends when deciding if it’s safe and possible to re-migrate. Up-to-date travel restrictions and guidelines should be provided at community-level so returnees can receive the vital information needed to safely take on a return journey. Both local and international organizations should work in coordination with municipal governments to support migrant resource centers that could provide this information as well as pre-departure orientations and worker rights briefings.