



Assessment on Labour Migration and Trafficking in the Republic of Armenia

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LIST OF ACRONYMES

CAPI	Computer-Assisted Personal Interviews
CECHR	Centre for European Constitutional and Human Rights
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
COVID	Coronavirus Disease
EAEU	Eurasian Economic Union
GRETA	Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human
HLIB	Health and Labour Inspection Body
ILAB	International Labour Affairs Bureau
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KII	Key Informant Interview
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs (Republic of Armenia)
MLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (Republic of Armenia)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
TIP	Trafficking in Persons
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Republic of Armenia (hereinafter – Armenia) has emerged as a growing destination for labour migration, influenced by its relatively open visa regime, economic opportunities, and regional geopolitical shifts. This report examines the drivers of labour migration to Armenia, the regular and irregular pathways migrants take, the employment sectors they integrate into, the regulatory framework governing their work, and the risks they face in terms of exploitation and trafficking. Drawing on Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), survey data, and a review of labour migration policies, the study highlights key challenges and gaps in governance that impact migrant workers' experiences.

Armenia – which only recently emerged as a destination country for labour migration purposes – continues to face significant gaps in its migration management frameworks. Labour governance is weakened by prevalence of informal employment, limited regulatory enforcement, and insufficient protections for workers. Many migrants, particularly those employed in low-skilled sectors such as construction, hospitality, and domestic services, work often under precarious conditions – without formal contracts or access to legal safeguards. Only 59.3 per cent of male and 63.0 per cent of female respondents reported having written employment contracts, while 13.8 per cent of all surveyed migrants are in an irregular status. A further 37.6% hold temporary residence permits and 24.8 per cent depend on work permits, often subject to bureaucratic delays and employer non-compliance. Migrants routinely face challenges such as wage theft, hazardous workplaces, substandard housing, and limited awareness of their rights. These vulnerabilities are further exacerbated by language barriers and fraudulent recruitment practices, with intermediaries frequently deceiving migrants about job opportunities and conditions, resulting in debt bondage and exploitative labour arrangements.

This report addresses five key research questions to provide a comprehensive assessment of the Armenia's labour migration landscape:

1. What have been the main factors driving labour migration to Armenia over the past three years, particularly in the post-COVID-19 period?
2. What are the regular and irregular migration pathways to Armenia?

3. What are the main employment sectors for foreign labour migrants in Armenia, and what factors influence their employment in these sectors?
4. What government regulations exist regarding the foreign labour force, and how aware are foreign workers of their rights?
5. What are the risks of trafficking and exploitation for foreign workers in Armenia?

The findings of this assessment contribute to ongoing policy discussions on labour migration governance, migrant rights protection, and anti-trafficking strategies, aiming to inform evidence-based recommendations for sustainable migration management in Armenia.

Key Findings

Drivers of Labour Migration to the Republic of Armenia

- Labour migration to Armenia in recent years has been shaped by a combination of economic opportunities, migration policies, and geopolitical factors.
- Economic incentives: Armenia's labour market has a demand for low-skilled workers in construction and services, as well as high-skilled professionals in the IT sector. Wage differentials and job availability continue to attract migrants.
- Armenia's economic recovery after COVID-19 has led to workforce gaps in key industries, prompting employers to recruit foreign workers.
- Geopolitical factors: The war in Ukraine has led to a significant influx of Russian migrants, including IT professionals and entrepreneurs seeking stable working conditions in Armenia.
- Migration policy and ease of entry: Armenia's visa-free regime for the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Russian Federation, and several Central Asia and Middle Eastern countries has facilitated migration flows, making it a more accessible destination than European countries with stricter visa policies¹.
- Recruitment intermediaries and informal networks: Many migrants rely on brokers or word-of-mouth networks to secure employment, often without formal contracts or legal work authorization.

Despite the growing attractiveness of Armenia as a migration destination, many foreign workers experience unexpected challenges, including bureaucratic hurdles in securing work permits, non-compliance by employers with labour regulations, and barriers to social and economic integration.

¹ See <https://www.mfa.am/en/whoneedvisa>

Regular and Irregular Migration Pathways

Migrants enter Armenia through both regular and irregular channels, due to gaps in policy enforcement and employer practices.

Regular Migration Pathways

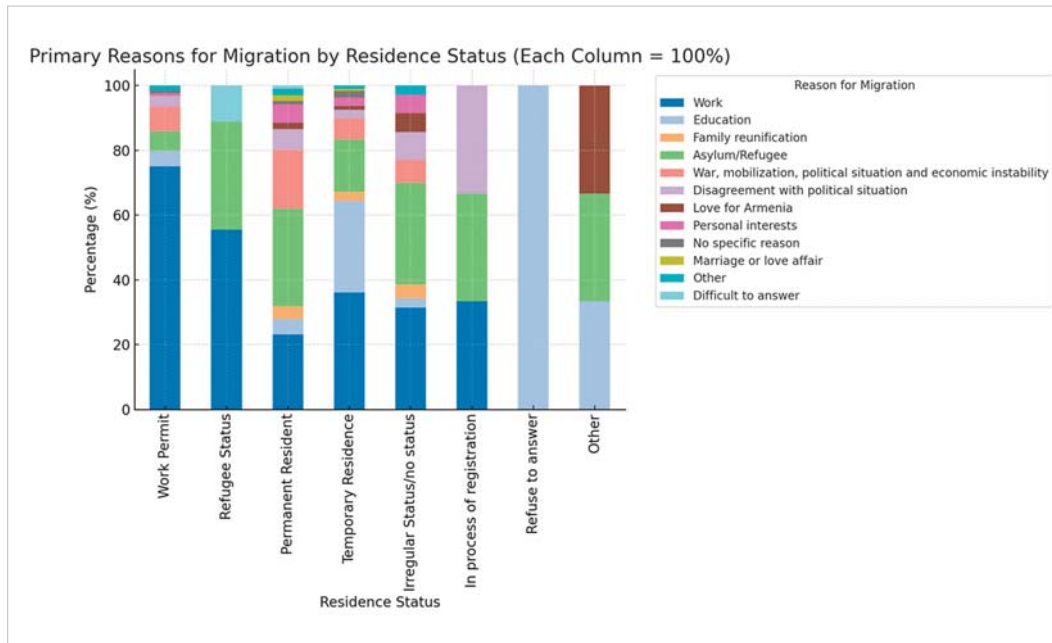
- Visa-free entry: A large group of migrants arrive through Armenia's visa-free or simplified visa policies, particularly those from the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the Russian Federation.
- Work permit system (WPS): In theory, legal employment requires employers to sponsor work permits, but bureaucratic inefficiencies and high processing costs discourage compliance.
- Residency permits for high-skilled migrants: Skilled professionals, especially in IT, finance, and engineering, benefit from employer sponsorship for legal residency.

Irregular Migration Pathways

- Overstayed visas and informal employment: Many migrants enter the country legally but fall into irregular status when they accept employment without the required permits or remain beyond the expiration of their visas, thereby overstaying or violating the terms and conditions of their legal entry.
- Labour exploitation and informal work arrangements: The widespread use of service contracts instead of formal employment contracts leaves workers vulnerable, as they are denied legal protections.

The role of fraudulent recruitment agencies should also be highlighted: although this does not constitute an irregular migration pathway, many migrants pay substantial fees to brokers in their home countries for promised employment opportunities in Armenia, only to discover upon arrival that these jobs do not exist.

The lack of a well-defined work visa system forces many migrants into informal employment, increasing the risk of exploitation and limiting their access to labour rights protections.

Figure 0.1. Primary reasons for migration by residence status (%)

The figure on primary reasons for migration by residence status reveals a strong correlation between migrants' legal status and their motivations for coming to Armenia. Individuals with temporary or short-term residence predominantly cited work as their main reason for migration, reflecting the economic nature of these permits. In contrast, asylum seekers and refugees overwhelmingly reported asylum/refugee protection or conflict-related reasons, confirming the protection-seeking nature of these statuses. Those with no legal status presented a more mixed profile, with significant shares citing both employment and instability in their home countries, highlighting their vulnerability within informal labour markets. Meanwhile, individuals with permanent residence indicated a broader range of motivations, including work, family reunification, and protection. These patterns suggest that while legal pathways reflect distinct migration categories, blurred boundaries – particularly among the undocumented and short-term residents – indicate gaps in regularisation mechanisms and reinforce the need for comprehensive, status-sensitive migration governance.

Employment Sectors and Working Conditions

Foreign labour migrants in Armenia are concentrated in specific sectors, with employment patterns varying by nationality, skill level, and industry demand.

- Construction (43%): One of the largest employers of migrant labour, particularly for Indian and Iranian workers. Many lack written contracts and work in hazardous conditions without insurance or occupational safety protections.

- Hospitality and services (27%): Restaurants, hotels, and cleaning services employ a large proportion of migrants. Wage theft, excessively long working hours, and absence of contracts are common.
- Information technology (IT) and engineering (15%): Russian migrants dominate this high-skilled sector, benefiting from legal employment pathways and generally better working conditions.
- Manufacturing and agriculture (9%): These sectors employ a smaller share of migrants, often under informal arrangements with limited legal protection.
- Domestic work and caregiving (6%): Migrant women, particularly from Middle Eastern countries, frequently work without contracts, making them vulnerable to exploitation.

Foreign workers in Armenia frequently experience wage underpayment, unsafe working conditions, and restricted access to social protections. Informal hiring practices allow employers to circumvent labour laws, making it difficult for migrants to seek legal recourse².

Labour Rights Awareness and Government Regulations

While Armenia has labour laws designed to protect foreign workers, enforcement remains weak, and many migrants lack awareness of their rights.

- Work Permit and Residency Registration: Inconsistent enforcement and high bureaucratic barriers limit foreign workers' ability to obtain legal status.
- Labour Contracts and Minimum Wage Standards: Many employers fail to provide formal contracts, leaving workers without legal recourse for unpaid wages or wrongful dismissal.
- Health and Safety Standards: Particularly weak in construction and manual labour industries, where migrants are exposed to dangerous work environments.
- Social Security and Medical Check-Ups: Required by law but often avoided by employers seeking to cut costs.
- Labour Inspections and Complaint Mechanisms: Migrants have limited access to legal support, and fear of employer retaliation discourages them from reporting abuses.

Without stronger enforcement and improved access to legal protections, migrant workers will continue to be vulnerable to labour rights violations.

² Based on key informant interviews with employers, labour inspectors, and civil society representatives conducted in 2024 as part of this study.

Risks of Trafficking and Exploitation

Migrant workers in Armenia face serious risks of labour exploitation and trafficking, particularly in low-wage, informal employment sectors.

- Debt bondage and fraudulent recruitment: Migrants pay high recruitment fees, leaving them financially dependent on employers.
- Wage theft and underpayment: A large percentage of migrants' experience delayed or unpaid wages.
- Passport confiscation and restricted movement: Some employers confiscate workers' passports, limiting their ability to leave exploitative jobs.
- Unsafe working conditions: Construction workers face high rates of workplace injuries due to poor safety standards.
- Sexual exploitation and forced labour: Migrant women are particularly vulnerable to human trafficking and sexual exploitation.

Despite anti-trafficking policies, weak enforcement and lack of support services allow exploitation to persist (Council of Europe 2021; EVN Report 2021; ILO 2022; IOM 2022; U.S. Department of Labor 2022; U.S. Department of State 2023).

Recommendations

To ensure safe, fair, and well-regulated labour migration to Armenia, a multi-dimensional approach is required. Based on the findings of this assessment, the following recommendations aim to address the key gaps in governance, protection, and service provision.

1. Strengthen Legal and Institutional Frameworks

The current legal framework for managing labour migration lacks clarity and efficiency, particularly in relation to the work permit system. A priority should be to establish a clear, accessible, and predictable work visa system, with standardized timelines, reduced fees, and simplified application procedures, which would ensure gender mainstreaming. This would reduce irregular migration and informal employment.

In parallel, the monitoring and regulation of recruitment agencies must be reinforced. This includes introducing licensing requirements, a national registry of approved agencies, and clear standards of accountability. Cross-border cooperation with countries of origin (e.g. India, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh) should be formalized through bilateral labor agreements, including provisions for ethical recruitment and information exchange.

To ensure the effectiveness of these measures, legal developments should be guided by a human rights-based approach, prioritizing the dignity and well-being of labor migrants. Beyond legal adjustments, fostering policy coherence is essential, both horizontally across relevant ministries and agencies, and vertically between national, regional, and local authorities. This will allow to avoid duplication, conflicting regulations, and gaps in enforcement. Adopting a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach will enhance accountability and inclusiveness by bringing in non-governmental actors, private sector, and migrant communities themselves. This approach will help to ensure that policies are not only formally coherent, but also respond to actual needs, strengthening the effectiveness of migration governance.

2. Improve Labour Rights Enforcement

Migrant workers in Armenia remain vulnerable to labour rights violations due to weak enforcement and lack of oversight. The scope and capacity of the Health and Labor Inspection Body (HLIB) should be expanded to proactively monitor working conditions in high-risk sectors such as construction, domestic work, hospitality, and agriculture. The capacity building should include gender and age sensitivity considerations for women and potential unaccompanied minors present in Armenia who may face additional protection risks.

Legislation should be amended to mandate written contracts for all foreign workers, regardless of sector or skill level. Employers should be held accountable for compliance with national labor laws related to wages, working hours, occupational safety, and social security contributions. Penalties for violations must be consistently applied to deter exploitation and impunity.

3. Promote Regularization and Regular Pathways

To reduce irregularity and ensure the legal gender sensitive protection of foreign workers, the government could consider introducing a time-bound regularization mechanism (e.g. amnesty or transitional status) for migrants already residing and working in Armenia without legal documentation due to systemic barriers.

Pathways from temporary to permanent legal status should be made more accessible, especially for workers in continuous employment or sectors facing labour shortages. This would enhance integration, reduce informality, and support long-term workforce stability.

4. Invest in Integration and Equitable Access to Support Services

Successful labour migration depends not only on legal status but also on access to integration support. The government, in collaboration with civil society and

international partners, should expand free or subsidised language training in Armenian and Russian to help migrants navigate employment, services, and social interactions. The government should ensure gender mainstreaming for such support services to be able to refer women in case they are facing additional protection risks or have already faced challenges or rights violations.

Establishing or strengthening migrant support centres in key cities (e.g. Yerevan, Gyumri) would provide access to legal aid, labour rights education, interpretation services, and psychosocial support. Public campaigns and community-based programmes should promote intercultural dialogue, tolerance, and anti-discrimination, particularly in areas with large migrant populations.

5. Enhance Anti-Trafficking Protection Mechanisms

Although Armenia has national anti-trafficking laws, implementation remains limited, especially in the context of labour exploitation. The government should intensify gender and age responsive training for frontline service providers, including labour inspectors, police, health workers, and social workers, to identify and refer potential victims of trafficking, particularly among migrants in informal sectors.

Accessible and confidential complaint mechanisms, including multilingual hotlines and community-based referral systems, should be developed and advertised widely. Shelters and specialized services for victims of labor and sexual exploitation – especially women in domestic work—should be expanded.

6. Strengthen partnerships with non-governmental stakeholders

Cooperation with civil society organizations and migrant-led associations should be institutionalized, recognizing their role in monitoring risks, offering assistance, and building trust with affected communities.

Such partnerships can enhance, for example, early identification of trafficking and exploitation cases, ensure more comprehensive victim support, and improve outreach to hard-to-reach groups. By formalizing collaboration frameworks, authorities can leverage the specialized expertise and community networks of NGOs and migrant-led groups, ultimately reinforcing a more victim-centered and sustainable protection system.

1. INTRODUCTION

Labour migration has become an increasingly prominent feature of Armenia's economic and social transformation in recent years. Historically known as a country of emigration, Armenia has emerged as a labour migration destination, attracting foreign workers seeking employment opportunities and economic stability. This shift has been driven by a combination of factors, including Armenia's relatively open visa regime, post-pandemic labour market shortages, and regional geopolitical instability. The influx of foreign workers has played a vital role in sustaining Armenia's economic growth, filling critical labour shortages in key sectors such as construction, hospitality, domestic work, and IT. However, alongside these economic benefits, the growing presence of migrant workers has highlighted significant weaknesses in Armenia's migration governance, regulatory oversight, and worker protection mechanisms. The vulnerabilities faced by migrant workers - ranging from precarious employment conditions and wage exploitation to risks of trafficking and forced labour - underscore the urgent need for stronger policies and enforcement mechanisms to ensure the rights and dignity of foreign workers (IOM 2022; U.S. Department of State 2023; Council of Europe 2021).

This report provides an in-depth analysis of the evolving trends in labor migration, risks of trafficking, labor exploitation or lack of decent labor conditions, and the strengths and potential areas of improvement of Armenia's migration governance. By drawing on key informant interviews, survey data, and an extensive review of legal and policy documents, this study examines the systemic challenges facing foreign workers, the patterns of migration flows, and the necessary reforms required to improve labor migration practices and anti-trafficking measures. The research focuses on both regular and irregular migration pathways, highlighting the precarious legal and employment conditions that many foreign workers experience. In particular, the study sheds light on the role of intermediaries and recruitment agencies in shaping migration patterns, as well as the structural factors that contribute to labor exploitation and informality in Armenia's workforce.

The increasing number of foreign workers in Armenia raises critical questions regarding their legal status, working conditions, and access to fundamental labour

protections. Many migrants enter the country legally – usually with a tourist visa – but later transition into irregular status by overstaying due to limited legal pathways for low-skilled workers, particularly when they accept informal or unauthorized employment. In some cases, however, migrants may also enter through irregular channels, bypassing documentation requirements.

The absence of an effective work visa system leads many migrants to enter as tourists before seeking employment, placing them in legally ambiguous positions that make them vulnerable to exploitation. This informality is further exacerbated by employers who prefer to hire migrant workers without legal contracts to circumvent labour laws and reduce costs. As a result, many migrants endure substandard working conditions, delayed or withheld wages, and a lack of access to healthcare and social security benefits. These challenges are particularly pronounced for migrants in low-skilled sectors, where informal hiring practices are widespread and regulatory oversight remains weak.

The objective of this study is to provide a comprehensive understanding of Armenia's labour migration system by examining the key drivers of migration, the employment conditions of foreign workers, and the legal and institutional frameworks governing their rights. The research focuses on the post-COVID-19 period, assessing the economic, political, and policy-related factors that have shaped migration flows over the past three years. The study identifies the main employment sectors where foreign workers are concentrated and evaluates the structural barriers that prevent their integration into the formal labour market. In doing so, it highlights the risks of trafficking and forced labour, with particular attention to deceptive recruitment practices, employer non-compliance, and gaps in legal enforcement. The report also assesses the extent to which current migration policies protect foreign workers and offers recommendations for improving regulatory oversight, strengthening employer accountability, and ensuring fair and equitable treatment for migrant workers.

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative research techniques to provide a well-rounded analysis of Armenia's labour migration landscape. KII were conducted with representatives from government agencies, employer organizations, trade unions, recruitment intermediaries, civil society actors, and migrant advocacy groups. These interviews provided valuable insights into the implementation of migration policies, the challenges faced by employers in hiring foreign workers, and the role of intermediaries in facilitating or obstructing fair employment practices. In addition to qualitative data, a survey was administered to migrant workers to capture their lived experiences, employment conditions, and awareness of their legal rights. By integrating these diverse perspectives, the study presents a nuanced analysis of the factors influencing migration patterns and the realities faced by foreign workers in Armenia.

The research primarily focuses on foreign workers employed in sectors such as construction, hospitality, domestic work, IT, and manufacturing. While high-skilled

professionals are included in the study, the primary emphasis is placed on low-skilled migrants, who are most vulnerable to informality and exploitation. It is important to acknowledge certain limitations of the study, particularly the difficulty of accessing undocumented migrant workers, who may be underrepresented in the survey data. Additionally, some respondents may have been reluctant to disclose experiences of labour rights violations due to fear of employer retaliation or mistrust in formal complaint mechanisms. The clandestine nature of human trafficking networks also presents challenges in accurately assessing the full scope of exploitation within Armenia's migrant workforce. Despite these limitations, the study provides a robust and evidence-based assessment of labour migration in Armenia, offering practical policy recommendations to address existing challenges.

Labour migration to Armenia is shaped by a complex interplay of economic opportunities, legal barriers, and informal employment practices. This report begins by examining the key factors driving migration flows, particularly in the context of Armenia's economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and regional geopolitical instability. It then explores the pathways through which migrants enter Armenia's labour market, distinguishing between legal entry routes and irregular employment arrangements. A detailed analysis of employment trends follows, assessing the distribution of migrant workers across different industries and evaluating the working conditions they face. The report then turns to an assessment of the legal and regulatory frameworks governing foreign labour, identifying gaps in enforcement and barriers to workers' rights protections. The risks of trafficking, forced labour, and exploitation are critically examined, with a focus on deceptive recruitment practices, employer non-compliance, and the systemic vulnerabilities that leave migrant workers at risk of abuse. Finally, the study presents a set of policy recommendations aimed at improving labour migration governance, enhancing legal employment pathways, and ensuring the protection of migrant workers.

Armenia stands at a crucial juncture in the development of its migration policies and labour market regulations. While foreign workers play a significant role in supporting the economy, the widespread informality, lack of legal protection, and exploitative employment conditions they face highlight the urgent need for policy reforms. Strengthening migration governance, enhancing migrant labour rights enforcement, and promoting fair and ethical recruitment practices will be essential in addressing these challenges. This study aims to contribute to ongoing policy discussions on how Armenia can develop a more sustainable and equitable labour migration framework – one that balances economic imperatives with the protection of migrant workers' rights and dignity.

2. BACKGROUND AND PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In recent years, Armenia became an attractive destination for migrants, including migrant workers (Ghantarchyan, 2024). There is ample evidence that migration, when well-managed, holds significant potential to benefit all stakeholders: both countries of origin and destination, as well as the migrants themselves. However, when systems are not fully in place and thus challenges and risks are not adequately addressed, these opportunities can be lost, and migrants may face increased vulnerability to violence of exploitation. In recognition of these risks and the limitations of existing systems, the Government of Armenia is undertaking institutional reforms, with the support of IOM, to strengthen migration governance and ensure that the full benefits of migration can be realized. Within the framework of the project “Combatting trafficking in persons in Armenia: improving victim identification and referral systems” funded by the IOM Development Fund (IOM DF), IOM supports the Government of Armenia to develop and implement a comprehensive approach to combat trafficking in persons by implement effective identification and referral mechanisms that prioritize the safeguarding of potential Victims of Trafficking (VoT) and their rights. The project adopts a rights-based approach in its efforts to strengthen the protection of migrants and (potential) VoTs in partnership with local stakeholders, fostering a society where human rights are respected and upheld. It does this by conducting this Assessment, by strengthening of systems at the national level, and conducting awareness raising and capacity development activities involving government stakeholders, private sector and migrants. More specifically, the project aims to enhance migrant rights protection and fight against trafficking in persons (TIP) by introducing an alert system based on early warning indicators of potential TIP cases in the work permit system in Armenia. This will be achieved through various interventions, such as identifying prevailing patterns in labour migration and migrant recruitment, developing an innovative alert system based on a data-analysis tool in the work permit system, capacitating state and non-state actors, including civil society, and delivering targeted, gender-responsive information to migrants, workers, employers, and local communities. The project will also support the revision of the National Referral system and organize workshops and simulation exercises for national and local

actors to ensure effective implementation. Ultimately, the project will support government efforts in digital transformation.

The project contributes to various national, regional and global strategies and framework, including the Conceptual Framework of Armenia for the state management of migration, the 2023-2025 Anti Trafficking National Action Plan (NAP), the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. It also aligns with IOM Regional Strategy for Europe and Central Asia 2025-2029, and IOM Armenia Country Strategy. The project also contributes to IOM's SRO 3, on regular pathways.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Since gaining independence in 1991, Armenia has grappled with significant migration challenges, initially marked by high emigration rates driven by economic instability, political transitions, and regional conflicts (Rasuly-Paleczek & Six-Hohenbalken, 2017). However, recent geopolitical developments have reshaped these migration patterns. The renewed hostilities in and around Nagorno-Karabakh in 2020, followed by the start of full-scale war in Ukraine in 2022, have led to a noticeable increase in immigration to Armenia (IOM, 2023 a,b). This shift underscores the extent to which external geopolitical events shape migration dynamics in the country, influencing both the movement of displaced populations and the decisions of economic migrants and political exiles seeking refuge or stability. As a result, Armenia has emerged as a key destination within the broader Eurasian migration landscape, reflecting its evolving role in regional mobility trends.

Armenia is currently navigating the complexities of both emigration and immigration, reflecting the broader socio-economic and geopolitical shifts in the region. In recent years, particularly in the post-COVID-19 period, the country has experienced a notable increase in labour migration inflows. The primary factors attracting migrant workers include improved economic opportunities, higher wages, and stable employment, particularly in key sectors such as construction, agriculture, and information technology (Vartikyan & Demirchyan, 2022). The COVID-19 pandemic initially disrupted migration flows, forcing many Armenian migrants to return home due to job losses and global travel restrictions. However, as economies began to recover and mobility restrictions were lifted, Armenia witnessed a resurgence of migration, driven by the demand for skilled and unskilled labour in various industries.

Beyond labour migration, Armenia's relatively stable economic and political environment, especially when compared to neighbouring regions experiencing turmoil, has made it an attractive destination for a diverse range of migrants. The country has become a refuge for individuals seeking security, education, family reunification, and international protection (Devillard, 2012; Honorati, Kerschbaumer et al., 2019; Sahakyan & Lieberman, 2022). Geopolitical tensions, regional conflicts and war in Ukraine, have further shaped Armenia's migration landscape, leading to

an influx of displaced populations, asylum seekers, and expatriates looking for stability.

To systematically track immigration trends, Armenia established a method and procedure in 2014 for compiling semi-annual and annual statistical reports on the number of foreigners granted residence status and those maintaining valid residence permits. Consequently, from 2015 onwards, reliable immigration data has been made available. The primary sources for studying immigration flows into Armenia include the publications of the Statistical Committee of Armenia, official records from the Migration Service, and household survey data, all of which provide valuable insights into the evolving migration patterns (Armstat, 2017, 2021).

The primary migration routes to Armenia are largely influenced by its relatively open borders, especially with neighbouring countries within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)³, which facilitate easy travel and underpin these migration patterns. Armenia is experiencing a notable influx of both returning citizens, technically classified as migrants, and new migrants primarily from Russian Federation, showcasing the strong economic and social connections between the two nations (Fittante and Barry 2022, Atoyan, Karapetyan et al. 2023, IOM, 2023). While Russian Federation is a major source, other CIS countries also contribute to these flows, albeit to a lesser degree (Armstat, 2020). Additionally, there is notable migration from the Islamic Republic of Iran and various Middle Eastern countries and from the Republic of India drawn by historical ties or the appeal of economic opportunities (Nersisyan & Tanajyan 2023). Armenia offers both regular and irregular migration pathways. Regular migration routes include labour mobility programs, sponsorship for high-skilled workers, student visas, and protection for refugees.

Armenia has established national legislation to regulate immigration, primarily through the Law of Armenia on Foreigners (2006, amended in 2023) and the Law on Refugees and Asylum (2008, amended in 2021).

The Law of Armenia on Foreigners covers various aspects of immigration, including entry into the country, types of visas, exit procedures, transit regulations, residence status, employment of foreigners, and protocols for deportation and detention. This legislation aims to ensure that all processes related to foreign nationals are clearly defined and properly regulated.

The Law on Refugees and Asylum outlines the rights and responsibilities of asylum seekers and refugees⁴, delineates the authorities and responsibilities of state bodies,

3 The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) is a regional organization formed during the dissolution of the Soviet Union. It was established on December 8, 1991, by the leaders of the Republic of Belarus, the Russian Federation, and Ukraine, and was later joined by most of the other former Soviet republics. The CIS aims to foster cooperation in political, economic, environmental, humanitarian, cultural, and other fields among its member states. It provides a framework for its members to collaborate on issues such as trade, finance, law enforcement, security, and migration. The CIS also facilitates diplomatic and economic interactions while respecting the sovereignty and independence of its member countries.

4 See <https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?docID=29624> and https://legislationline.org/sites/default/files/documents/63/ARM_on%20Refugees%20and%20Asylum.pdf

and specifies the role of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) representation in Armenia. It also details the procedures for granting asylum and temporary protection to those fleeing their countries due to mass violence, foreign invasion, internal strife, widespread human rights violations, or other events threatening public order. This law aims to provide a robust framework for the protection and support of refugees and asylum-seekers in Armenia.

A unique aspect of the humanistic approach of Armenian laws is that the government has provisions to make exceptions to immigration procedures for migrants from crisis-affected countries. According to the Law of Armenia on Foreigners (2006, amended in 2023), foreigners transiting through Armenia may stay in the country for no more than 72 hours. Additionally, under the Law on Refugees and Asylum (2008, amended in 2021), Armenia grants temporary protection to foreign citizens and stateless individuals who flee their countries of origin due to mass violence, foreign invasion, internal strife, widespread human rights violations, or other events threatening public order (Articles 3 and 6). These channels facilitate safe and orderly migration. However, irregular migration involves unauthorized entry (irregular crossing of borders) or overstaying visas. Irregular entry refers to crossing borders without proper documentation, while overstaying a visa means remaining in Armenia beyond the authorized period. Befallen irregularity occurs when individuals lose their regular status, such as through visa expiration. Irregular migration poses significant risks and challenges due to the lack of legal protection (Sahakyan and Lieberman 2022).

In Armenia, labour immigrants are primarily attracted to the construction, agriculture, and hospitality sectors due to the consistently high demand for workers. However, the enforcement of national labour laws in these industries varies significantly. Sectors with a high reliance on informal labour, particularly construction and agriculture, often show weak compliance with regulations. This inconsistency can lead to the exploitation of migrant workers, as labour laws are not always strictly upheld, posing challenges in ensuring fair working condition (Atoyan, Karapetyan & Atoyan, 2023, ILO, 2023). According to Aleksanyan and Aleksanyan (2022), the substantial informal sector underscores deeper economic issues and shortcomings in state policies that do not adequately incorporate large portions of the workforce, including immigrants, into the formal economy. This situation necessitates a focused approach to enhance enforcement mechanisms and integrate informal workers into the formal sector (Aleksanyan & Aleksanyan 2022).

The 2024 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report by the U.S. Department of State and the analysis from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) provide critical insights into Armenia's ongoing efforts and challenges in addressing labour migration and human trafficking. Armenia has taken notable steps in strengthening legislative frameworks, enhancing victim protection, and integrating trafficking concerns within its Counter Trafficking NAP. However, persistent challenges remain, including inconsistent screening for trafficking

indicators, gaps in victim-centred policies, and limited resources for comprehensive prevention and assistance programs.

Currently active national legal and policy framework regulating actions against trafficking in Armenia is formed by the following acts:

- ▶ Law on Identification and Support of Persons Subjected to Trafficking in and Exploitation of Persons (the Anti-Trafficking Law), adopted in 2014;
- ▶ National Anti-Trafficking Action Plan;
- ▶ National Referral Mechanism, governed by the Government Decree No. 1385-A of 20 November 2008 and Government Decree No. 492-N of 5 May 2016 and Government Decree No. 1385-A;
- ▶ Government Decree No. 1538-N (06.10.2022), establishing minimum quality standards for providing shelter, psychological and legal assistance, material support, and care;
- ▶ Government Decree No. 353-N (06.04.2016) sets out the procedures for organising the safe return of VoTs, ensuring that the repatriation of foreign victims or Armenian victims abroad is conducted in a voluntary, informed, and secure manner;
- ▶ Government Decree No. 851-N (30.07.2015) outlines the procedure for selecting partner NGOs and their representatives to the Identification Commission;
- ▶ Government Decree No. 1200-N (15.10.2015) defines the Identification Commission's rules of procedure and the format of reports submitted to the Council on the Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings and Exploitation.

Institutional framework established to address TiP in Armenia comprised of the following actors. At the strategic level, the Government of Armenia established a Council on the Action Against Trafficking in and Exploitation of Persons consisting of representatives of the ministries playing a key role in trafficking response. The Council is responsible for oversight of the legal framework implementation and identification of national priorities related to combatting TiP. On the technical level, there is an Inter-Agency Working Group consisting of representatives of the governmental bodies entrusted with legislative and procedural improvements, as well as review process of new initiatives adding up to government's TiP response. Another institutional body completing the TiP framework in Armenia is an Identification Commission, mandated with formal recognition of victims of trafficking, including children and persons with disabilities. Decision of the Identification Commission creates a formal basis for victims' access to rights and protection measures prescribed by law. Armenia's legal framework criminalizes trafficking under Articles 188 and 189 of the Criminal Code, prescribing penalties of five to ten years' imprisonment, depending on the victim's age. The 2022

amendments to the Labour Code introduced a definition of forced labour, aligning with international standards. Further amendments in 2023 prohibited workplace violence and sexual harassment, strengthening protections for vulnerable workers.

Since 2004, Armenia has implemented seven national action plans (NAPs) to improve anti-trafficking measures. The 7th National Programme (2023-2025) incorporates recommendations from international partners, including GRETA, OHCHR, and the U.S. State Department, and focuses on legislative improvements, prevention, child protection, victim assistance, international cooperation, research, and monitoring. In the current NAP, Armenian Government is addressing trafficking concerns emphasizing women's participation in decision-making and socio-economic programs to enhance resilience among women affected by conflict. The plan prioritizes women in border regions and Nagorno-Karabakh, focusing on employment opportunities, self-sufficiency, and skills development to reduce vulnerabilities to trafficking and forced labour.

Labour migration plays a crucial role in Armenia's economy, with many Armenian workers seeking employment abroad, particularly in the Russian Federation (Honorati & Kerschbaumer 2019). These workers remain vulnerable to trafficking due to fraudulent recruitment practices, debt bondage, and exploitative labour conditions. The most at-risk groups include men from rural areas with limited education, displaced persons from Nagorno-Karabakh, and individuals with disabilities (CECHR. 2023).

Internally, foreign workers—especially those from the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of India—face risks of exploitation in informal employment sectors such as construction and agriculture. Children in state childcare institutions and those engaged in street vending are highly susceptible to forced labour and trafficking EVN Report (2020) U.S. Department of Labor (2021, 2023, 2022, 2024).

Additionally, OHCHR highlights Armenia's progress in addressing trafficking in conflict and post-conflict contexts. The government has developed guidelines for social workers to assess risks in displacement settings, particularly among refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). The e-soc.am platform, launched in 2023, assesses the primary needs of forcibly displaced persons, particularly those from Nagorno-Karabakh. Social workers utilize this platform to identify vulnerabilities, including trafficking risks, and direct affected individuals to appropriate services.

Despite these efforts, lack of knowledge of what constitutes indicators, individual and situational vulnerabilities, which can be red flags of cases of trafficking, first responders do not consistently screen vulnerable populations for trafficking indicators, particularly among sex workers and foreign migrant labourers. Labour inspections remain inadequate, as the Health and Labour Inspection Body lacks jurisdiction over informal employers, leaving many workers unprotected. Additionally, while Armenia provides training for social workers, law enforcement personnel, and medical professionals, high staff turnover affects the retention of specialized knowledge.

In 2023, the government identified 25 trafficking victims, a significant increase from previous years (6 identified trafficking victims in 2022). Victims received temporary shelter, medical services, psychological support, and legal aid. State-delegated NGO-run services provide critical assistance, ensuring victims have access to comprehensive support around the clock. However, reintegration programs remain underfunded, and a formal victim-witness assistance program is still lacking, discouraging victims from participating in legal proceedings.

OHCHR notes that support services for trafficking victims have been expanded to include digital literacy training for women in rural areas, aimed at reducing their vulnerabilities to online trafficking schemes. Law enforcement authorities are also increasing their monitoring of online recruitment and advertisement platforms to detect trafficking risks.

Despite these advancements, significant gaps remain, which are extensively proven by U.S. State Department and GRETA reports. VoTs are not included in the list of vulnerable populations eligible for state housing support, a finding documented in multiple U.S. State Department Trafficking in Persons (TIP) reports for 2022–2024. Investigations and legal proceedings lack gender-sensitive approaches, with victims often required to face their traffickers in court, exacerbating psychological distress; the 2022 TIP report and GRETA evaluation specifically highlight that victims, including children, are not fully protected during court proceedings, underscoring the need for age- and gender-sensitive measures.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research employed a mixed-methods approach using an exploratory sequential design to investigate the conditions of the foreign labour force in Armenia. The study was structured in two phases: an initial qualitative phase, followed by a quantitative phase informed by the qualitative findings. The research began with Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) to gain an in-depth understanding of the existing situation of foreign labour migrants in Armenia. These interviews provided insights into migrants' incentives for arriving in Armenia, the regulatory framework established by the Government of Armenia regarding immigration, and the risks of trafficking and/or exploitation. The qualitative data obtained from KIIs then informed the development of a survey targeting foreign labour migrants to validate and quantify the preliminary findings.

The study sought to test the following hypotheses:

- ▶ H1: The foreign labour force was exposed to trafficking and/or exploitation.
- ▶ H2: There had been existing irregular labour migration pathways to Armenia over the last three years.

To address the research objectives and test the hypotheses, the following research questions were formulated along with the corresponding research tools:

- ▶ RQ1: What have been the main factors driving labour migrants to Armenia over the last three years, particularly in the post-COVID-19 period?
- ▶ RQ2: What are the regular and/or irregular migration pathways to Armenia?
- ▶ RQ3: What are the main employment sectors for foreign labour migrants in Armenia, and what factors contribute to their employment in these sectors?
- ▶ RQ4: What government regulations exist regarding foreign labour force management (e.g., rights, safety standards, medical check-ups), and how aware are foreign labour migrants of these regulations?

- ▶ RQ5: What are the trafficking and exploitation risks for foreign labour migrants in Armenia?

The first phase of data collection involved qualitative research through KIIs with thirteen key stakeholders. These included government officials responsible for labour regulations, migration policies, and oversight of working conditions, business representatives primarily from the food industry⁵ engaging migrant labour, and representatives from trade unions advocating for worker rights and fair employment conditions. Additionally, NGOs supporting and protecting migrant workers were interviewed, along with stakeholders indirectly involved in migration, including an intermediary broker; a job placement agency employee facilitating foreign labour recruitment; a hostel owner providing accommodation for foreign workers, particularly Indian migrants; and a media outlet staff member involved in investigative reporting on labour migration and trafficking.

A Delphi questionnaire was employed for structured data collection, with tailored questions designed for government officials, employers, trade unions, and NGOs. Given the inclusion of additional participants from other relevant sectors, the questionnaire was amended to incorporate customized questions better suited to their experiences and perspectives.

The qualitative data from the KIIs were transcribed, coded, and thematically analysed⁶ to identify key patterns and themes. These findings guided the design of the survey. Main findings of the KII are presented in a separated chapter in this report.

The second phase of data collection involved a structured survey administered to foreign labour migrants in Armenia. Fieldwork was conducted between 17 December 2024 and 24 February 2025, resulting in a total of 521 completed interviews, surpassing the initial target of 508 interviews. Quantitative data collected through the survey were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods, including cross-tabulation, chi-square tests, and regression analysis, to examine relationships between variables and test the research hypotheses.

Of the total respondents, 30.9 per cent were female and 68.3 per cent were male. The data collection process followed the original sampling plan, utilizing a snowball sampling technique. Under this approach, each respondent was asked to refer additional potential participants, allowing for an organic expansion of the sample. However, recognizing the limitations of this method—particularly the potential for network bias—additional strategies were implemented to ensure a more diverse and representative sample. Interviewers were provided with targeted addresses and locations known to be frequented by foreign migrants. Additionally, some interviewers used their own knowledge of common gathering, working, or living areas to identify potential respondents and facilitate outreach.

5 The focus on the food industry was informed by preliminary scoping, which indicated its growing reliance on migrant labour and its potential significance as one of the main employment sectors for foreign workers—thus aligning with the objectives of RQ3.

6 Interview transcripts were translated into English where necessary, and all subsequent coding and thematic analysis were carried out in English, the working language of the research team.

A combination of face-to-face and telephone interviews was employed to enhance accessibility and flexibility in data collection. In-person interviews allowed for direct engagement, facilitating a deeper understanding of respondents' experiences, while telephone interviews provided an alternative for individuals who preferred remote participation due to logistical constraints or privacy concerns.

Language considerations were an important aspect of the data collection process. In cases where respondents had limited proficiency in English, Armenian was used as a supplementary language, and vice versa, as some participants indicated partial fluency in both languages. To ensure clarity and comprehension, interviewers adapted their approach by simplifying questions, rephrasing statements, and, when necessary, utilizing informal translation support through translation applications or bilingual contacts. These measures aimed to maintain the integrity and accuracy of responses while minimizing language-related barriers. Thus, if migrants spoke a little bit English, Russian or Armenian, or had a colleague or friends to support them to do the interview, the interviews were conducted. However, if migrants did not speak either English, Russian or Armenian, the interviews could not be conducted.

By integrating multiple recruitment methods, interview modalities, and language accommodations, the data collection strategy sought to enhance the inclusivity and reliability of the research, ensuring that a broad and representative range of migrant experiences was captured.

The survey covered a diverse range of employment sectors. The highest concentration of respondents worked in services (30.5%), IT and technology (22.6%), and construction (9.0%). Other represented sectors included manufacturing, arts and media, education, marketing, agriculture, medicine, and finance. Additionally, 15.7% of respondents were unemployed at the time of the survey.

To ensure data reliability, quality control measures included real-time monitoring via Computer-Assisted Personal Interviews (CAPI) software, daily data uploads, and random checks of recorded interviews. Approximately 20 per cent of all completed interviews underwent quality assurance review to verify consistency and interviewer adherence to survey protocols. Quality control efforts also involved systematic checks to ensure interviewers properly introduced the survey's objectives, accurately recorded responses, and maintained polite interactions with respondents.

Another major challenge encountered during the fieldwork was the high turnover rate of interviewers due to difficulties in finding respondents. A significant number of foreign migrants declined to participate, leading to the recruitment of new interviewers throughout the study. Some interviewers, however, struggled to maintain the required quality standards, necessitating additional monitoring and replacement efforts. Moreover, certain respondents were hesitant to answer questions truthfully, fearing potential legal or employment-related repercussions. To address this, interviewers emphasized the anonymity of the survey and its purpose in improving migrant rights. Despite these efforts, some respondents remained cautious, particularly when discussing issues related to work permits, registration, and contractual status.

Complexities related to remote workers from the Russian Federation and other Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) countries also constituted a challenge. In this regard, some migrants residing in Armenia were employed by companies registered outside the country, raising concerns about the applicability of certain survey questions on working conditions. Following consultations with the IOM, it was agreed that up to 10 per cent of EAEU respondents working for non-local companies could be included in the survey, with an additional question distinguishing between local and non-local employment. However, as this question was introduced at a later stage, responses were not available for all participants.

Research Caveats

While the fieldwork successfully gathered valuable data, several challenges emerged that may have influenced the scope and depth of the findings. These limitations were primarily related to stakeholder engagement, language barriers, interviewer turnover, respondent reluctance, and concerns about confidentiality. Together, these factors impacted the comprehensiveness of the research, underscoring the complexities of studying migrant labour in contexts shaped by legal uncertainties, institutional constraints, and trust issues.

First, one of the most persistent challenges during data collection was the language barrier. Many migrant workers, particularly those in construction, agriculture, and service sectors, had limited proficiency in Armenian, Russian, or English, making communication difficult. In some cases, respondents relied on translation applications to understand and answer survey questions, which may have affected the accuracy of responses.

Recognizing this issue, the questionnaire was translated into Armenian to accommodate migrant groups, particularly those from the Republic of India and the Islamic Republic of Iran, who were reported to have better proficiency in Armenian than in English. However, even among those who indicated greater fluency in Armenian, comprehension difficulties persisted. This raised concerns about whether respondents fully grasped the meaning of questions, potentially affecting the reliability of some data. Despite interviewers' efforts to rephrase and simplify questions, language limitations remained a significant constraint.

Secondly, securing the participation of key institutional and corporate actors was one of the most significant obstacles in the research process. Despite assurances of anonymity, many employers and intermediaries were hesitant to take part in interviews, likely due to concerns about confidentiality and potential reputational risks. Those who did agree to participate often expressed cautious opinions, suggesting a reluctance to discuss migrant employment conditions in detail.

Government bodies also posed challenges in terms of engagement. Some agencies reported a limited mandate regarding migrant workers' rights and, therefore, could

not provide substantive insights beyond statistical data. For example, law enforcement divisions working on trafficking issues indicated that their focus was strictly on human trafficking cases rather than broader migrant labour protections. In some instances, after interview requests were escalated to higher-ranking officials, discussions did not proceed, further restricting institutional input. Attempts to interview officials from the trafficking division of the Criminal police were unsuccessful, as they stated that their role was limited to trafficking cases rather than broader labour migration issues. Similarly, efforts to reach the Confederation of Trade Unions were hindered by the unavailability of key representatives, reflecting a broader lack of institutional engagement on the subject.

Engagement with diplomatic representatives was similarly challenging. The Embassy of the Republic of India in Armenia, a key diplomatic actor given the high number of Indian migrants in the country, did not respond to multiple interview requests, leaving a gap in diplomatic perspectives on the issue. These challenges highlight the fragmented nature of labour migration governance in Armenia and the need for greater coordination among government bodies, labour organizations, and foreign diplomatic missions. Finally, efforts to secure corporate interviews encountered obstacles.

These limitations highlight the difficulties in obtaining a holistic understanding of migrant labour conditions, particularly from institutional and corporate perspectives. The sensitivity of these topics, combined with potential legal and reputational concerns, likely contributed to the hesitancy of these stakeholders to participate.

Migrant workers without formal contracts or legal status were especially hesitant to disclose details about their employment conditions, fearing potential repercussions. Despite repeated assurances of anonymity and explanations that the research aimed to improve migrant workers' rights, some participants remained apprehensive. Another key limitation was the reluctance of some respondents to provide candid answers, largely due to concerns about how their responses might be used. This was particularly evident during the quality control process, where recorded interviews were reviewed, and signs of self-censorship were detected.

The process of recruiting and retaining interviewers proved to be another significant challenge. A high turnover rate was observed, primarily due to the difficulty of locating and engaging respondents. Many foreign migrants declined to participate in the survey, leading to frustration among interviewers and contributing to attrition. As a result, new interviewers had to be recruited throughout the study.

To address this, interviewers emphasized the confidential nature of the survey and its funding by IOM to reinforce trust. Nonetheless, lingering concerns likely influenced some responses, particularly on sensitive topics such as informal employment, workplace exploitation, and legal vulnerabilities.

Maintaining consistent data quality was difficult. Some newly hired interviewers struggled to meet the required standards, leading to further disruptions in data

collection. This inconsistency may have affected the comparability of responses across different interviewers, posing additional challenges in ensuring methodological rigor.

Implications for the Research Findings

These challenges collectively underscore the broader difficulties of conducting research on migrant workers in contexts where legal status, employment conditions, and institutional trust play a significant role in shaping participation. The reluctance of key stakeholders – ranging from employers and government agencies to migrant workers themselves – suggests that some aspects of the research topic may remain underexplored due to the limitations in access and data reliability.

While every effort was made to mitigate these constraints through adaptive strategies – including the use of multilingual interviews, flexible recruitment methods, and assurances of confidentiality - these factors should be carefully considered when interpreting the findings. Future research could benefit from deeper institutional collaboration, improved multilingual support, and more targeted trust-building measures to enhance the quality and breadth of data collection in studies on migrant labour.

Government engagement in the study was carefully structured, ensuring that relevant institutional representatives were assigned based on their areas of expertise. To facilitate meaningful discussions, pre-sent questionnaire topics guided the interviews, allowing for focused insights into labour law enforcement, migration policy implementation, and regulatory challenges. Key state institutions participated in the study, including the Health and Labour Inspection Body of Armenia, the Labour and Employment Department of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MLSA), and the Migration and Citizenship Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA). These interviews provided valuable institutional perspectives, with representatives from each body contributing detailed responses to different sections of the questionnaire. Notably, three participants from one institution and four from another engaged in discussions, offering expertise on specific policy areas and administrative procedures related to migrant labor governance.

5. KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS (KII) ANALYSIS

The findings from the KIIs offer a detailed and structured analysis of the factors influencing labour migration to Republic of Armenia. The responses, gathered from government officials, employers, trade unions, migrant workers, and intermediary brokers, provide valuable insights into the economic, political, and social dynamics that drive foreign workers to seek employment in Armenia. By integrating qualitative perspectives with quantitative ratings, this chapter presents a comprehensive assessment of the conditions, motivations, and challenges surrounding labour migration.

The KIIs conducted as part of this study provided a crucial qualitative foundation for understanding the realities of labour migration and trafficking in Armenia. Through direct engagement with stakeholders – including government officials, employers, trade unions, migrant advocacy groups, and informal intermediaries – the study unearthed deep-rooted issues that define the labour conditions of foreign workers. These interviews, though constrained by certain limitations, allowed for an in-depth exploration of challenges in the recruitment, employment, and legal protection of migrant workers.

The research methodology centered around structured interviews that were tailored to each stakeholder group's expertise and role in the labour migration process. While some groups, such as government agencies and trade unions, provided formal perspectives on policy frameworks and regulatory challenges, others, such as brokers and migrant worker advocates, offered insights into the lived experiences of foreign workers in Armenia. The diverse nature of the interviewees made it necessary to adapt the questionnaire, as a one-size-fits-all approach proved inadequate for capturing the complexities of each group's perspective. For instance, while government representatives were asked about regulatory oversight and policy implementation, intermediary brokers were probed on informal recruitment channels, salary practices, and employer-migrant dynamics.

The data presented in the KIIs offers a comprehensive understanding of the factors driving labour migration to Armenia. The responses collected from various stakeholders, including government representatives, employers, and migrant

workers themselves, illustrate the interplay of economic, political, and social factors influencing migration trends.

A key theme emerging from the KIIs is that Armenia has become an attractive destination for labour migrants due to its simplified entry procedures, economic opportunities, and, in some cases, political instability in migrants' home countries. Unlike many European destinations that impose strict visa requirements and lengthy application processes, Armenia maintains a relatively open visa regime, particularly for countries such as the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the Russian Federation. This policy has facilitated a substantial influx of migrants, particularly from the Republic of India, where the streamlined process has significantly lowered the barriers to entry.

Nonetheless, ease of entry alone does not fully determine migration flows. Despite similar visa-free policies for China and the United Arab Emirates, there has been no significant increase in migration from these regions. This discrepancy underscores the fact that economic incentives, job availability, and network effects play a crucial role in shaping migration trends. Interviews with both employers and government officials revealed that Armenia is increasingly seen as a practical and accessible alternative to more competitive and expensive migration destinations such as the European Union, particularly for low-skilled workers. One employer explained, *"If we consider the factors encouraging migration, Armenia is attractive because it is cheaper and less competitive than Europe. Many workers who would not qualify for jobs in EU countries see Armenia as a better entry point."* This sentiment was echoed by a government representative who noted, *"It is obvious that migrants coming from low-income countries see Armenia as an easier and more accessible option, compared to richer European markets where requirements are stricter."* These observations suggest that Armenia's relatively open entry conditions and lower cost of living are key factors shaping migrant decision-making, especially among those who face barriers to accessing wealthier labour markets.

Economic disparities between origin and destination countries remain one of the strongest drivers for migration. Respondents highlighted how workers from economically weaker regions, such as the India and Kazakhstan, view Armenia as an attractive destination due to its higher wages, stable payment systems, and lower risk of wage theft compared to their home countries. Employers also benefit from these dynamic, as foreign workers tend to accept lower wages than Armenian nationals while still perceiving their earnings as favorable. However, while some migrants can achieve moderate financial stability, low-skilled workers often find themselves trapped in low-wage cycles with limited upward mobility.

The impact of Armenia's open visa policies and economic growth was also explored. Several respondents indicated that the influx of foreign workers has coincided with economic expansion, creating more job opportunities, particularly in industries that require manual labour. However, this trend has also raised concerns about labour market imbalances, where certain jobs are increasingly filled by foreigners while Armenian workers move towards higher-paying positions. A plausible dynamic is

suggested by related data – for example, evidence of skills mismatches, indications that foreign workers often take up jobs seen as less attractive, and a trend of Armenian workers seeking better-paid opportunities. However, there is no strong published evidence that fully confirms the specific narrative of labour market imbalance. This shift suggests a growing segmentation of the labour market, where local workers are concentrated in skilled industries while foreign workers dominate low-skilled occupations. market, where local workers are concentrated in skilled industries while foreign workers dominate low-skilled occupations.

Non-economic motivations such as quality of life, climate, and food safety were also cited as drivers of migration to Armenia. Some interviewees described how migrants perceive Armenia as a safer and more comfortable environment compared to their home countries. As one employer remarked, *“They [migrants] like the climate and the fact that life is more relaxed here. It’s not just about money—it’s also about feeling safe and welcome”*. A government official noted, *“Some Russian nationals and returnees come because they feel culturally connected to Armenia and appreciate the food, the nature, and the general pace of life”*. These preferences are particularly common among Russian expatriates and returning Armenians who view Armenia as a socially stable and culturally familiar alternative to their previous places of residence. Such non-material factors can play a substantial role in shaping both migration decisions and long-term settlement plans.

Armenia as a transit country

Another key finding from the interviews is that a considerable number of migrants, especially from the Republic of India, initially plan to use Armenia as a steppingstone to reach Europe. This pattern was consistently highlighted in interviews with both government officials and employers, who noted that many migrants from India and neighbouring countries enter Armenia not as their final destination but as a temporary stopover en route to the European Union (EU). Stakeholders widely acknowledge this trend, with one government representative observing that Armenia’s role as a transit country is clearly reflected in both administrative records and on-the-ground experience. As one interviewee explained: *“Some Indian migrants clearly express that Armenia is just a transit point. They come with the idea of eventually making their way to EU countries, using Armenia as a gateway”*.

Many workers arrive expecting to find legal pathways to Western Europe but struggle to secure visas or employment opportunities that would facilitate onward migration. As a result, many remain in Armenia out of financial necessity, often taking informal, low-paying jobs rather than returning to their home countries.

When expectations fall short, many migrants decide to stay. One employer noted, *“Some of them realize that even with low wages here, it’s still more than they would get back home. So they stay”*. According to another official, *“A daily wage of 4,000 or 5,000*

AMD can be equivalent to what they'd earn in a whole month in India. For them, it's a better option". These findings suggest that Armenia's role in the global migration system is shifting it is no longer only a country of origin or destination, but also a temporary host for migrants in transition.

Evolving political drivers of migration: insights from KIIs

Influx of Russian nationals and refugees from Nagorno-Karabakh

While economic opportunities continue to drive migration to Armenia, political instability—particularly the war in Ukraine—has significantly shaped recent migration flows. A notable development is the influx of Russian nationals, many of whom have sought both economic and political refuge in Armenia (Armenia UN Country Team, 2023). The KIIs further highlight that political and security-related factors are significant drivers of migration to Armenia. Many respondents pointed to the influx of migrants from the Russian Federation following the onset of the war in Ukraine. One government official noted, *"After the war in Ukraine started, we saw a large number of Russians entering Armenia, many of them professionals in IT or finance, trying to escape political uncertainty"*. These migrants are often highly skilled and seek both safety and economic opportunity. Unlike low-skilled Indian and Iranian workers, who tend to fill roles in construction, services, and agriculture, Russian migrants are more likely to be employed in high-skilled sectors such as IT, finance, and professional services. As one official from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs observed, *"many of the Russians who arrived after the Ukraine war are working remotely or are engaged in IT and finance. Their cases are different from other migrants."* This pattern is echoed by the Migration and Citizenship Service, which noted, *"We see a clear pattern: Russians come with valid documentation, often with remote jobs already in place. This is very different from Indian or Iranian workers."* These insights from key informants underline the structural and legal advantages enjoyed by Russian migrants, who often arrive with access to secure employment and the ability to navigate formal pathways that remain largely inaccessible to low-skilled workers.

The interviews also emphasized the impact of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, particularly in terms of ethnic Armenian displacement. As one stakeholder explained, *"The Nagorno-Karabakh situation has brought many ethnic Armenians into the country—they are not always counted as migrants, but they face the same integration challenges"*. This distinction between politically driven and economically driven migration is important, as it shapes the kinds of jobs migrants seek and the integration pathways available to them.

Labour force from other countries

The findings from the KIIs reveal that a large proportion of Armenia's foreign labour force is employed informally, often without work permits or under service contracts that circumvent labour protections. Government officials and labour inspectors acknowledged widespread non-compliance with legal requirements. As one official from the Labour and Employment Department noted, "We still do not have a work visa; we are just regulating people under service contracts, which don't guarantee labour protections". This was confirmed by the Health and Labour Inspection Body, which observed, "During our inspections, we frequently find foreign workers employed without proper documentation or permits". Employers also admitted to avoiding formal procedures, with one stating, "There are very few provisions regarding non-local workers, so we just use short-term or service contracts instead of applying for permits". These insights illustrate that informal hiring is not only prevalent but also structurally embedded in employer practices, driven largely by cost-saving motives and regulatory gaps.

Employers interviewed in the study openly admitted to avoiding the formal registration of foreign workers, citing both bureaucratic inefficiencies and financial burdens. One employer stated, "*The work permit process is too slow—it takes more than a month, and we have to pay over 100,000 AMD. It's just not worth it when we need people urgently.*" Another added, "*We prefer service contracts because they are faster and cheaper. The work permit system is a barrier, especially when we're hiring for short-term or seasonal work.*" These responses reflect a broader pattern of informal hiring driven by employer interests in reducing costs and avoiding administrative delays. However, as a result, many migrants are left without legal protections, increasing their vulnerability to wage theft, job insecurity, and exploitative working conditions.

Another dominant theme in the interviews is the availability of low-skilled jobs, which serves as a strong pull factor for migrants. Respondents emphasized that Armenia offers accessible employment opportunities, particularly for low-wage, non-professional jobs in sectors like construction, food processing, and manual labour. This is particularly relevant for migrants from the Republic of India and the Arab Republic of Egypt, who are seen as filling positions that local Armenian workers tend to avoid. The interviewees describe how entire communities or villages migrate together, sometimes arriving in Armenia through organized job placements, which suggests a structured but informal migration network at play. This trend indicates that labour demand and network-driven migration are key drivers behind the steady flow of foreign workers into Armenia.

One of the most recurring themes across interviews was the wage disparities between Armenian and foreign workers. Employers justified paying migrants' lower wages by citing market demand and industry standards, but trade unions and advocacy groups strongly refuted these claims, arguing that wage suppression is a result of systemic vulnerabilities rather than economic necessity.

Migrant workers in Armenia, particularly those employed in the construction and food service sectors, frequently experience wage-related abuses including delayed payments,

unexplained deductions, and outright non-payment of salaries. These practices were documented across multiple KIIs. One labour inspector recounted: *"During our inspections, we found several cases where workers were promised 250,000 AMD but received as little as 25,000 AMD or nothing at all. They were afraid to complain."* Another official explained, *"Some employers know the workers are undocumented or don't have contracts, so they feel free to deduct wages or delay salaries with no accountability."* An employer admitted: *"Foreign workers don't usually go to the authorities, so there's less risk for us if things go wrong."* These quotes highlight a clear pattern of exploitative wage practices, driven by the structural vulnerability of migrant workers and the absence of effective enforcement mechanisms.

The service and construction industries were identified as having the most severe working conditions, with 12 to 14-hour workdays and no guaranteed rest periods. Labour inspectors confirmed that most foreign workers in these sectors lack formal contracts, making it impossible to enforce minimum wage laws, overtime pay, or workplace safety regulations.

In addition to exploitative work conditions, the KIIs revealed severe housing challenges faced by foreign workers in Armenia. Migrants are often forced to live in overcrowded accommodations provided by employers, with reports of up to 20 workers sharing a single apartment. One labour inspector noted, *"During our inspections, we found apartments packed with 15 to 20 people—sometimes sleeping in shifts due to lack of space."* Another interviewee from the Health and Labor Inspection Body shared, *"Some migrants pay 50,000 to 60,000 AMD for rent, which is deducted directly from their wages, yet they live in places without heating or basic sanitation."* These substandard and overpriced living arrangements—typically tied to employment—leave workers with limited mobility and expose them to further economic vulnerability and health risks.

Interviews with labour inspectors and migrant advocates revealed that the housing arrangements provided to foreign workers are often used as a means of controlling their mobility. Many migrants live on-site or in accommodation arranged by their employers, which limits their ability to leave exploitative conditions or seek alternative employment. As one labour inspector explained, *"They [the workers] live where they work, and the employer controls everything—from housing to meals. Leaving that setup is nearly impossible without losing everything"*. A representative from the Health and Labour Inspection Body added, *"It's very common for workers to stay in employer-owned housing. This allows employers to monitor and restrict them more easily"*. A job placement agency also acknowledged the pattern: *"Depending on the employer, they may provide housing, but it also keeps the workers under their control. It's hard for them to leave"*. These testimonies underscore how seemingly supportive measures like housing provision can be leveraged to reinforce dependency and reduce workers' freedom.

The role of brokers and misinformation

While Armenia's accessibility has created migration opportunities, not all migrants arrive with an accurate understanding of working conditions. Brokers serve as a bridge between employers and foreign workers, but their operations are largely unregulated. Advocacy groups working with foreign workers emphasized that many migrants are recruited under misleading terms, with brokers and recruiters misrepresenting wages, job security, and living conditions. Upon arrival, many realize that their expectations do not match reality—some earn significantly less than promised, while others face exploitative working conditions or substandard housing. This discrepancy between expectations and reality has led to a growing number of migrants who initially saw Armenia as a temporary stop but ultimately remained due to economic necessity.

Recruitment brokers play a central role in this system. Advocacy groups and some migrant workers interviewed reported cases of intermediaries charging exorbitant recruitment fees (up to 1,600,000 AMD) and providing misleading information about job availability and salaries. Employers, in turn, rely on these brokers to supply a steady stream of foreign workers without directly dealing with visa and registration processes. This creates a cycle of dependence, where migrants arrive through intermediaries and have little bargaining power against exploitative work conditions.

One significant revelation from the KIIs was the widespread practice of passport confiscation by employers and brokers, which is commonly used to control migrant workers and prevent them from leaving jobs before the end of their contracts—or in many cases, informal verbal agreements. Labour inspectors confirmed the prevalence of this issue, with one stating: *"During our inspections, we frequently come across cases where employers are holding the workers' passports. They say it's for 'safekeeping', but it clearly limits the workers' freedom."* A government official further admitted, *"Yes, it is illegal to withhold identity documents, but in practice, we have no strong enforcement. Employers are rarely penalized for it."* These admissions highlight systemic enforcement gaps that leave migrant workers vulnerable to coercion and exploitation, underscoring the urgent need for regulatory reform and monitoring mechanisms.

Intermediary brokers often operate through online platforms like List.am to serve as a bridge between employers and foreign workers. Some brokers admitted that they prioritized employer demands over worker rights, often placing workers in jobs without providing clear information about contract terms or conditions. Others claimed that they merely facilitated introductions and bore no responsibility for employment conditions. The lack of regulation surrounding these intermediaries creates an opaque employment chain in which accountability is diffused, leaving workers with little recourse in cases of exploitation. Interviews with trade unions and labour inspectors suggested that formalizing and licensing recruitment agencies could be a step toward greater oversight and protection for migrant workers.

On the other hand, data also suggest a gradual shift in migrant behaviour and knowledge over time. Earlier waves of migrants were even less informed about their

rights and the legal processes in Armenia, making them more vulnerable to exploitation. As one labour official noted, *“In the beginning, most migrants didn’t know the laws or how the system works. Many of them were taken advantage of”*. However, recent patterns point to increased awareness among foreign workers, driven by experience and community-based learning. A representative from a migration-focused NGO observed, *“Migrants are becoming more informed now—they talk to each other, share experiences, and learn how to avoid the worst situations”*. Another respondent added, *“There is a clear difference between the newcomers and those who’ve been here longer. The ones who’ve stayed a while know their rights better”*. While exploitation remains an issue, these developments could suggest an improving landscape as migrants become more capable of navigating Armenia’s labour market and institutional structures.

Armenia’s institutional capacity to regulate labour migration

The KIIs revealed serious shortcomings in Armenia’s institutional capacity to effectively regulate labour migration. While government officials acknowledged the existence of labour inspections, they admitted that their enforcement powers are limited. One official from the Labour and Employment Department noted, *“We still do not have a proper work visa framework, and inspections are mostly reactive. We don’t have the capacity to follow up systematically”*. A representative from the Health and Labour Inspection Body echoed this concern, stating, *“Essentially, we operate within a narrow mandate, and even when violations are identified, the penalties are too low to make a real difference”*. Civil society stakeholders, including migrant rights organizations, emphasized the consequences of these gaps. As one respondent put it, *“Employers know the system is weak—there is no accountability, and that’s what drives the exploitation”*. These insights underscore the structural weaknesses in enforcement and the urgent need to strengthen institutional mechanisms and oversight in the labour migration system.

Employers who hire unregistered foreign workers face fines ranging from 50,000 to 100,000 AMD—amounts that are roughly equivalent to the official work permit fee of 105,000 AMD. However, the preference for informal hiring is not just about avoiding this fee. As one labour inspector noted, *“The fine for not registering a worker is low. It’s not enough to deter employers, especially when they also avoid paying taxes and social contributions”*. A government official similarly remarked, *“Even if they get caught, the financial loss is minimal compared to the savings from not registering workers officially”*. These insights highlight that the economic logic behind informality extends beyond permit costs: employers are primarily motivated by the opportunity to cut total labour expenses, including tax liabilities, while facing little enforcement risk.

Workplace safety and occupational health standards present a critical regulatory gap in the governance of labour migration. Evidence from KIIs indicates that migrant workers in high-risk sectors, particularly construction, are disproportionately

exposed to unsafe working environments, with limited provision of personal protective equipment and inadequate access to health insurance. Labour inspectors highlighted that incidents of occupational injury among migrants are frequently underreported due to the perceived risk of job loss or deportation. Although employers generally refer to the existence of safety protocols, their implementation and monitoring remain inconsistent. Moreover, gaps in formal employment arrangements—particularly the prevalence of undocumented or informally employed migrant workers—significantly restrict access to compensation mechanisms and legal protection in cases of workplace accidents.

Migrant workers interviewed for the study also reported that they rarely seek legal recourse for workplace abuses due to fear of retaliation, language barriers, and unfamiliarity with Armenian labour laws. Some government officials acknowledged this issue, suggesting that improving legal literacy and access to justice for migrants should be a priority. However, migrant advocacy groups pointed out that previous government awareness campaigns have had limited impact, as they fail to reach the most vulnerable workers in informal sectors.

Language and communication play an important role in shaping the integration experiences of migrant workers in Armenia. While Armenian and Russian are the dominant languages spoken locally, English serves as a functional bridge for some migrants—particularly those from India. One employer observed, *“Indian workers usually speak some English, which helps us communicate. It’s not perfect, but better than nothing”*. However, the situation is different for migrants from Arabic-speaking countries. As one government official explained, *“Migrants who don’t speak Russian or Armenian, especially Arabic speakers, face more problems. They rely on others to help translate or navigate systems”*. Despite the limited use of English in Armenian society more broadly, the interviews suggest that Indian migrants are better positioned linguistically than some other groups, due to their general familiarity with English and the presence of informal facilitators. Nonetheless, the overall dominance of Russian in administrative and social life underscores the challenges faced by non-Russian-speaking migrants.

Finally, workplace safety and occupational health standards present a critical regulatory gap in the governance of labour migration. Evidence from KIIs indicates that migrant workers in high-risk sectors, particularly construction, are disproportionately exposed to unsafe working environments, with limited provision of personal protective equipment and inadequate access to health insurance. Labour inspectors highlighted that incidents of occupational injury among migrants are frequently underreported due to the perceived risk of job loss or deportation. Although employers generally refer to the existence of safety protocols, their implementation and monitoring remain inconsistent. Moreover, gaps in formal employment arrangements significantly restrict access to compensation mechanisms and legal protection in cases of workplace accidents.

Conclusion on Armenia multifaceted labour migration

To conclude, the findings from the KIIs reveal a multifaceted and dynamic labour migration system in Armenia. The combination of economic opportunity, ease of entry, informal labour structures, and geopolitical instability in surrounding regions has contributed to Armenia's growing role as both a destination and transit country for foreign workers. Nevertheless, significant challenges remain, particularly in ensuring fair wages, formalizing employment structures, and protecting migrant workers from exploitation.

Another key revelation from the interviews was the existing disparity between legal provisions on paper and their actual enforcement. Government officials asserted that Armenia has established a legal framework to govern labour migration, which includes provisions on contracts, wages, and workplace protections. Stakeholders highlighted the high level of informality in migrant employment. Many foreign workers, particularly those in construction, food services, and manual labour, are employed without formal contracts or legal registration. While employers acknowledge that migrant labour plays an essential role in filling workforce shortages, many also avoid the complexities of official registration processes. This informality means that workers often lack job security, legal protections, and access to social benefits. Employers interviewed for the study cited bureaucratic delays and high costs as major reasons why many foreign workers remain unregistered. While the work permit fee itself is 105,000 AMD, several interviewees pointed out that the true cost of formalizing employment is much higher when taxes and social contributions are included. As one employer noted, *"It's not just about the permit fee—once a worker is registered, we also have to pay income tax and other contributions. That's what we're trying to avoid."* A labour official added, *"Employers know that registering workers means dealing with more paperwork and regular inspections. That discourages compliance"*. On the worker side, limited knowledge of legal procedures contributes to informality. As one respondent explained, *"Migrants don't always know they need a permit. They rely on brokers who just get them in the door, not on legal advice"*. This creates a system where both employers and workers operate in a grey zone, increasing the risk of exploitation and undermining formal labour protections.

Therefore, despite the legal framework in place, multiple stakeholders, including trade unions and NGOs, challenged this assertion of good governance, pointing out the systemic weaknesses that render these laws ineffective in practice. The KII revealed the difficulty in monitoring workplaces that employ foreign workers, especially those operating in informal or semi-regulated sectors such as construction, food processing, and hospitality. The Health and Labour Inspection Body, for example, acknowledged that while they are responsible for workplace inspections, their ability to intervene is limited when migrant workers are employed without proper documentation or formal contracts.

Employers and industry representatives, on the other hand, emphasized the economic necessity of hiring foreign workers, citing labour shortages and the cost-

effectiveness of migrant labour. Many acknowledged that foreign workers are often paid less than their Armenian counterparts but defended the practice by attributing it to market demand and industry norms. However, trade unions and advocacy groups contested these justifications, arguing that lower wages and longer working hours for migrants result from structural vulnerabilities rather than market forces alone. The absence of effective collective bargaining mechanisms for foreign workers was repeatedly highlighted as a major barrier to wage equality. Unlike Armenian workers, who can seek representation through trade unions, foreign workers often lack the legal status or organizational support to challenge unfair labour practices.

Apart from the differences in salaries, KII revealed the prevalence of delayed wage payments and non-payment of salaries, a practice that disproportionately affects foreign workers⁷. Several respondents, particularly those from NGOs working with migrant workers, shared cases where workers were employed for months without receiving their promised wages. When questioned about these cases, employers often cited financial difficulties or contractual misunderstandings. Brokers, who frequently act as intermediaries in hiring processes, played a significant role in these disputes. Some brokers admitted that they facilitated employment agreements without ensuring written contracts, which left workers vulnerable to wage exploitation. Others stated that their role was limited to initial recruitment and that salary disputes fell outside their responsibility. This lack of accountability within the recruitment chain further exacerbates the precarious position of migrant workers.

Beyond wage-related issues, the KIIs shed light on the inadequate living conditions of foreign workers. Employers who provide accommodation typically house multiple workers in small, overcrowded spaces, often without basic facilities such as heating or proper sanitation. Hostel owners interviewed for the study acknowledged the substandard conditions, attributing them to financial constraints and the seasonal nature of migrant labour. Reports from media representatives and advocacy groups reinforced these concerns, with several documented cases of migrant workers living in conditions that violate health and safety standards. Some workers reported being charged high rental fees for these inadequate accommodations, with deductions being made directly from their wages. In many cases, migrants had little choice but to accept these conditions due to the lack of affordable housing alternatives.

Another key issue explored in the KIIs was workplace safety and occupational hazards. Foreign workers in high-risk industries, particularly construction, are frequently exposed to unsafe working conditions, with minimal access to protective equipment or health insurance. Several respondents, including labour inspectors, noted that workplace injuries among migrant workers often go unreported due to fear of job loss or deportation. Employers, when interviewed on this subject, generally maintained that safety protocols were in place but acknowledged that enforcement was inconsistent. In cases where workplace accidents did occur,

⁷ Mentions of wage, salary, or payment issues appeared in 13 out of 14 interviews, which is roughly 92.9 % of all interviews

affected workers rarely received compensation, as they were either undocumented or employed under informal arrangements that excluded them from legal protections.

An additional dimension of vulnerability emerged in the context of migrant workers' ability to report grievances. Many foreign workers, particularly those from the Republic of India and the Arab Republic of Egypt, are unfamiliar with Armenian labour laws and lack access to legal aid or complaint mechanisms. NGOs working in migrant advocacy indicated that language barriers further complicate the situation, as many workers are unable to navigate legal processes in Armenian or Russian. This lack of awareness, coupled with fear of retaliation from employers, discourages workers from seeking redress for labour rights violations. Interviews with government officials revealed that while reporting mechanisms exist, they are underutilized by foreign workers, highlighting the need for targeted outreach and support services.

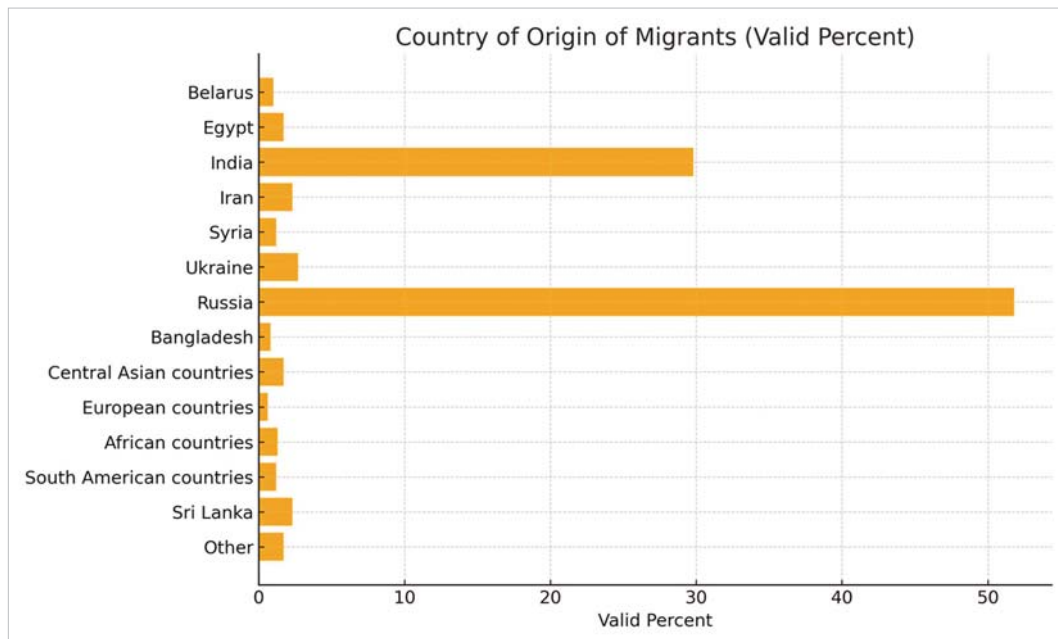
Overall, the KIIs provided invaluable insights into the lived realities of migrant workers and the systemic issues that enable labour exploitation. The findings underscore the urgent need for policy interventions that go beyond legal frameworks and address enforcement gaps, employer accountability, and migrant access to rights and protections. Future policy interventions should focus on enhancing labour protections, improving legal pathways for foreign workers, and strengthening oversight mechanisms to prevent abuses within the informal labour market.

The study also points to the necessity of strengthening labour inspection mechanisms, regulating recruitment intermediaries, and enhancing worker education programs to ensure that foreign labourers are aware of their rights and avenues for legal recourse.

While Armenia provides important economic opportunities for foreign workers, the findings from the KIIs indicate that strengthening protections, improving regulatory frameworks, and ensuring greater transparency in employment processes will be key to creating a more sustainable and fair migration system. With targeted reforms and enhanced enforcement, Armenia has the potential to develop a labour migration model that balances economic needs with the rights and well-being of migrant workers.

6. KEY FINDINGS FROM THE SURVEY

The final survey dataset provides an overview of the country-of-origin distribution among a total of 521 individuals surveyed, highlighting a significant concentration from a few specific countries. The Russian Federation accounts for the largest share, representing 51.8 per cent of the total, followed by the Republic of India at 29.8 per cent indicating that these two countries alone contribute to more than 90 per cent of the sample. Other countries with notable representation include Ukraine (2.7%), the Islamic Republic of Iran (2.3%), the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka (2.3%), and the Arab Republic of Egypt (1.7%), while smaller proportions are observed from the Republic of Belarus (1.0%), Syria (1.2%), and Central Asian countries such as the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and the Republic of Uzbekistan, collectively making up 1.7 per cent. Additionally, individuals from African countries (1.3%), South American countries (1.2%), and European countries (0.6%) form minor segments of the dataset. Bangladesh, at 0.8 per cent has the lowest representation among the specific countries listed. The “Other” category accounts for 1.7 per cent of the total, suggesting that some individuals originate from other places, namely, the State of Israel; the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan; Kurdistan; the Republic of Lebanon; the Republic of Moldova; the Republic of the Philippines. This distribution reflects a highly skewed representation, emphasizing a significant migration or demographic trend concentrated in these two countries: the Russian Federation and the Republic of India.

Figure 1. Country of origin of migrants

The majority of respondents, 68.3 per cent, identified as men, making up more than two-thirds of the sample. Women accounted for 30.9 per cent representing nearly one-third of the participants. Also, 0.8% of respondents identified with another designation, indicating a small but present gender diversity within the surveyed population.

The survey results present the distribution of individuals by year of birth, spanning from 1958 to 2006. When recoded into broader age categories, the majority of the sample (85%) falls into the Adult (20-39 years) category, which includes individuals born between 1985 and 2003. This group represents a significant portion of the dataset, indicating that most respondents are in their working-age years. The Middle-Aged Adult (40-59 years) category, covering birth years 1964 to 1984, constitutes a smaller (12%) but still notable proportion, reflecting individuals in their mid-career or later professional years. The Senior Adult (60+ years) category, represented by those born before 1964, is the least populated, with only a few individuals in this group (0,4%). There are no individuals classified as baby, toddler, child, or teen, as the data set does not include birth years beyond 2006, making the youngest respondents at least 17 years old. This distribution suggests that the surveyed sample consists primarily of working-age adults, with minimal representation of older generations.

Migration to Armenia remained relatively low and sporadic from 2003 until 2020. During this period, monthly arrival counts rarely exceeded one or two individuals. A notable shift occurred in 2021, when arrivals increased to 11% of the total, marking the beginning of a more sizeable migration trend. This pattern intensified markedly in early 2022, with a steep increase in the number of arrivals. The highest

peaks were recorded in March 2022 (30 individuals) and September 2022 (37 individuals), indicating a significant transformation in Armenia's migration landscape. Arrivals in both semesters of 2022 reached approximately 24% of the total, illustrating the sharp rise in migration. Monthly arrival figures remained elevated throughout 2023, which emerged as the peak migration year, accounting for 33% of the total dataset, with a slightly higher concentration in the second half of the year. This sustained level of migration continued into 2024. Seasonally, peaks occurred in March, September, and December, potentially reflecting academic calendars, work permit cycles, or seasonal migration dynamics.

Among the 521 recorded cases, migrants originated from over a dozen different countries, reflecting growing diversification. Russians accounts for more than half of all arrivals in the dataset, with 270 individuals. The significant increase of Russian nationals arriving after February 2022 likely reflects the impact of the full-scale war in Ukraine, including mobilization pressures, economic sanctions, and broader instability. Indian nationals represent the second largest group with 155 individuals. Their arrival patterns, consistent throughout 2022 to 2024, suggest migration driven by employment, education, or business opportunities. Ukrainian arrivals increased notably after the Russian invasion, with 14 individuals recorded in the survey, underscoring Armenia's role as a secondary destination for those fleeing conflict. Other countries contributing smaller but consistent flows include the Islamic republic of Iran (12), the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka (12), and the Arab Republic of Egypt (9). In the case of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, most arrivals occurred in 2023 and 2024, indicating a potential emerging route. Additional groups include individuals from Central Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, South America, and European countries. Although their numbers are lower, their presence signals Armenia's increasing relevance in global migration networks.

The most striking trend is the shift from low-level, scattered arrivals prior to 2021 to concentrated, high-volume migration beginning in 2022. This pivot appears to be driven primarily by geopolitical disruptions such as the Ukraine war, which triggered both large volume of movements. Steady rise in arrivals from India and other countries points to a dual dynamic of displacement and opportunity-seeking. The presence of diverse origin countries also suggests a changing perception of Armenia as a viable destination for relocation or transit.

The data for 2024 suggests continued strong migration trends, with the first half already accounting for 19 per cent of arrivals, indicating that the migration influx is still ongoing. The figures for 2025 are lower so far, representing only 2 per cent likely because only partial data is available for the year.

Generally, the data highlights an intense increase in migration, particularly from 2021 onward, with the majority of individuals arriving between 2022 and 2023. The relatively balanced distribution between the first and second halves of each year suggests that migration patterns might be influenced by seasonal, geopolitical, or administrative factors affecting movement.

A more detailed analysis can show different trends between countries of origin. Migration from the Republic of India has significantly increased over time, particularly in the last two years. In the first semester of 2024, 6.5% of all migrants arriving in Armenia were from the Republic of India, while in the second semester of 2024, this increased to 5.2%. The overall percentage of Indian migrants has grown steadily, suggesting that Armenia is becoming a preferred destination for Indian nationals. This trend highlights the increasing economic or employment opportunities available to Indian migrants.

The Russian Federation remains the most consistent source of migration, accounting for an average of 16% to 18% of total arrivals each semester. The highest peak was observed in the second semester of 2023, where Russian migrants represented 19% of total arrivals. This sustained migration flow is likely influenced by economic conditions, political factors, or bilateral agreements between Armenia and the Russian Federation.

The Republic of Belarus and the Arab Republic of Egypt collectively account for less than 3% of total migration. Migration from The Republic of Belarus slightly increased in the latter half of 2023 (0.4%), while the Arab Republic of Egypt saw a small rise in early 2024 (0.7%). However, these percentages remain low, indicating that Armenia is not a primary migration destination for citizens of these countries.

The Islamic Republic of Iran and the Syrian Arab Republic have witnessed declining migration over the years, with their combined percentage dropping below 2% in the most recent semesters. This might suggest that Armenia is becoming a less preferred destination for migrants from these regions, potentially due to policy changes, economic instability, or shifting migration routes. However, this remains a hypothesis and warrants further research to explore the underlying factors influencing recent migration patterns.

Ukraine has consistently contributed between 2 per cent and 3 per cent of Armenia's migrant population in recent semesters, with a small increase in 2022 that temporarily raised its share to 3.5 per cent.

Migration from Central Asian countries (Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Republic of Uzbekistan) and European countries (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Italian Republic) remains marginal, with each region accounting for less than 1.5 per cent of total migration in any given semester⁸. This suggests that Armenia is not seen as

8 The countries of origin for migrants include the Republic of Belarus, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Republic of India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine, the Russian Federation, the People's Republic of Bangladesh, and the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka. Additionally, there are migrants from regional groups such as Central Asian countries—including the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and the Republic of Uzbekistan—as well as European countries such as the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Italian Republic. Migrants also come from African countries such as the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the Republic of Ghana, and South American or Caribbean countries including the Republic of Cuba, the Republic of Haiti, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, and the Republic of Chile, along with a small number classified under "Other."

a significant migration hub for individuals from these regions.

African and South American countries contribute even less to Armenia's migration, with each region accounting for less than 1 per cent of total arrivals. This highlights Armenia's limited engagement with these regions in terms of migration policies or economic partnerships.

Recent trends from 2023 and 2024 indicate that Indian and Russian migrants make up a growing portion of the total migration population, collectively accounting for approximately 25% of new arrivals. This suggests a shift in Armenia's migration landscape, with these two countries playing a dominant role in shaping labour migration patterns.

Residence status

Regarding residence status, most respondents, 37.6 per cent, hold Temporary Residence, making it the most common status among the group. Following this, 24.8 per cent of individuals have a Work Permit, indicating a significant number of migrants are in the Republic of Armenia for employment-related purposes. 20.7% of respondents are classified as Permanent Residents, suggesting a stable group of long-term settlers.

A significant 13.8 per cent of individuals are in an irregular situation or lack legal status entirely, indicating a segment of the population potentially exposed to legal or administrative vulnerabilities. In contrast, only 1.5 per cent of respondents hold refugee status, representing a small minority within the overall group. The countries of origin of those with refugee status include the Arab Republic of Egypt (1), the Republic of India (2), the Islamic Republic of Iran (3), Ukraine (1), and the Russian Federation (1).

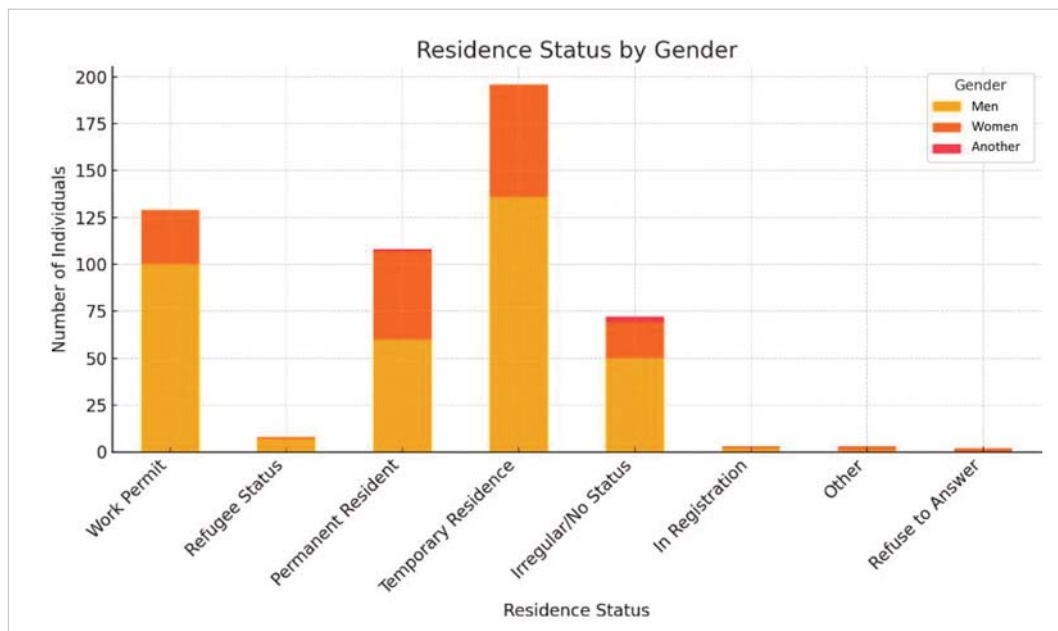
Smaller categories include those in the process of getting registration (0.6%), individuals who refused to answer (0.4 per cent), and those who selected Other (0.6%). The cumulative percentage shows that 98.5 per cent of individuals fall within a clearly defined legal category, while the remaining 1.5 per cent consists of those either in transition, refusing to respond, or selecting an alternative category.

The survey data reveals that most individuals surveyed have either a temporary residence or work-based legal status, with a considerable number also being permanent residents. However, a smaller but notable group remains in an irregular or undocumented status, which could have significant implications for migration policies and legal integration initiatives.

Data on residence status disaggregated by gender reveals further nuances in Armenia's migration landscape. Temporary residence was the most common status among both men and women, accounting for approximately 38 per cent in each group. However, significant gender differences appear in other categories: 28.1 per

cent of men held work permits, compared to just 18 per cent of women, indicating a gendered pattern of labour migration. Conversely, a higher proportion of women (29.2%) held permanent resident status compared to men (16.9%), suggesting that migrant women may more frequently pursue or obtain longer-term settlement, possibly through family or humanitarian channels. Irregular or undocumented status affected 14 per cent of men and 11.8 per cent of women, while individuals identifying with another gender designation were particularly vulnerable, with 75 per cent in irregular status.

Figure 2. Residence status by gender



Living situation and dependants

The KIIs shed light on inadequate living conditions experienced by a segment of the foreign worker population, particularly those housed by employers or residing in budget hostels. Employers who provide accommodation often house multiple workers in overcrowded spaces lacking basic amenities such as heating and proper sanitation. Hostel owners interviewed acknowledged these substandard conditions, citing financial constraints and the seasonal nature of migrant labour. Media reports and advocacy groups reinforced these concerns, documenting cases where living arrangements clearly violated health and safety standards. Some migrants reported in KIIs paying high rental fees for these inadequate spaces, with costs often deducted directly from their wages.

However, survey data presents a more varied picture of migrants' living arrangements. The most common reported situation is living with friends (35.3 per cent), followed by living alone (28.6 per cent), which may reflect stronger social networks or higher levels of independence among some migrants. These figures suggest that while many foreign workers experience poor housing conditions—

particularly those dependent on employer-provided accommodation—others benefit from more stable or self-organised arrangements. This divergence underscores the importance of distinguishing between subgroups within the migrant population when analyzing housing conditions.

Additionally, 25.1 per cent of respondents live with family members, such as uncles, aunts, cousins, or spouses, highlighting the role of extended family in providing housing support. A smaller proportion, 6.1 per cent, live with children, which could indicate families with dependents. Meanwhile, only 2.3 per cent of individuals reside with parents, suggesting that most of the sample comprises adults living apart from their parental homes.

A minor percentage, 2.5 per cent, reported living with acquaintances, indicating informal housing arrangements or temporary living situations. The cumulative percentage shows that 97.5 per cent of respondents live in well-defined social settings, while only a small fraction (2.5%) reside with acquaintances, which may indicate weaker social ties or temporary housing situations.

The results indicate that while a significant number of individuals depend on friends or family for housing, a considerable portion prefer to live alone. The relatively small percentage of those residing with parents or children suggests that the majority of the sample consists of independent adults rather than multi-generational family units.

The dataset provides insights into whether individuals have economic dependents in their home country. The majority of respondents, 60.8 per cent, reported having no financial dependents, indicating that they are financially independent or do not support family members abroad. Among those who do have dependents, the largest group, 29.8 per cent, supports their parents, highlighting a strong financial responsibility towards aging family members.

A smaller proportion, 5.4 per cent, provides financial support to other family members, such as siblings or extended relatives, while 4.0 per cent have children as economic dependents. The cumulative percentage shows that 39.2 per cent of individuals send financial assistance to family members in their home country, demonstrating a notable level of transnational financial support.

To sum up, the survey data suggests that while most individuals do not have economic dependents abroad, a significant portion—nearly 40 per cent—is financially responsible for family members, primarily parents, which may have implications for their economic stability and remittance behaviors.

Primary reasons individuals migrated to Armenia

The dataset provides an analysis of the primary reasons individuals migrated to Armenia. The most common reason cited is work, accounting for 42.6 per cent of

respondents, indicating that employment opportunities serve as a major driver of migration. The second most cited reason for migrating to Armenia was the pursuit of asylum or refuge, accounting for 19.4 per cent of respondents. This likely reflects individuals seeking safety or a more stable environment due to conflict, persecution, or political unrest in their countries of origin. However, it is important to note that only a small fraction of these individuals hold official refugee status in Armenia.

Education is another key reason for migration, with 13.8 per cent of respondents relocating to Armenia for academic purposes. Additionally, 9.2 per cent of individuals reported migrating due to war, mobilization, political instability, or economic instability, further emphasizing the impact of external crises on migration patterns. A smaller proportion, 4.4 per cent, cited disagreement with the political situation in their home country, showing that political dissent is a factor influencing migration decisions.

Other personal motivations include family reunification (2.3%), love for Armenia (1.7%), personal interests (3.1%), and marriage or love affairs (0.6%), suggesting that while some individuals migrate for economic and safety reasons, others do so for social or cultural ties. A minor percentage, 1.2 per cent, indicated having no specific reason, while 1.5 per cent selected "Other", and 0.2 per cent found it difficult to answer.

The data indicates that migration to Armenia is largely driven by economic necessity and forced displacement, with employment and the pursuit of asylum or refuge together accounting for over 60 per cent of cases. Educational migration also emerges as a key factor, comprising nearly 14 per cent of responses. Furthermore, political unrest and economic instability in migrants' countries of origin play an important role, with conflict-related motivations collectively making up more than 13 per cent of reported reasons for migration.

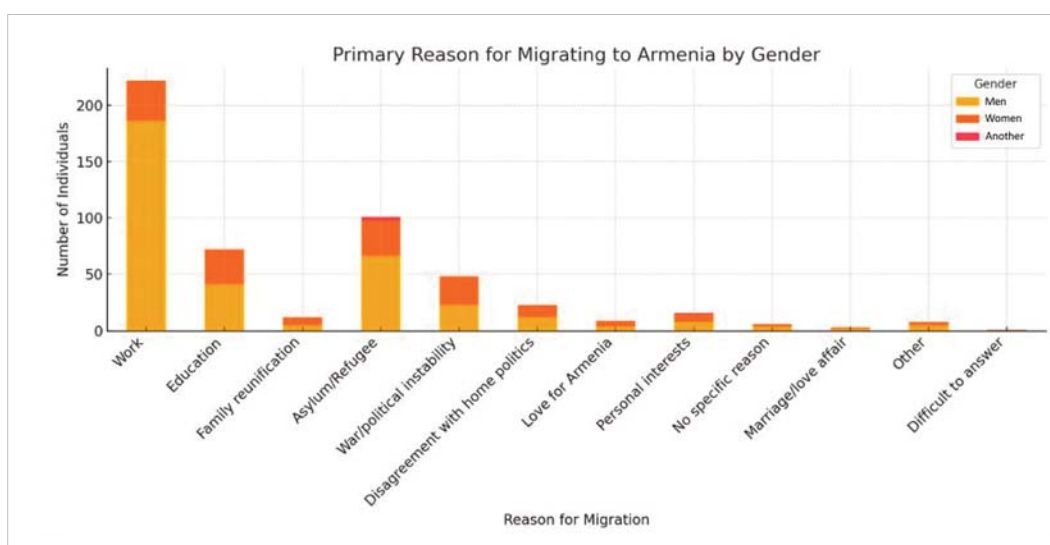
While a smaller percentage of individuals migrate for personal or cultural reasons, their presence suggests that Armenia also attracts migrants through family ties, relationships, and cultural affinity. These findings could have implications for labour market policies, refugee assistance programs, and higher education strategies in Armenia.

The data on the primary reasons for migrating to Armenia, disaggregated by gender, reveals distinct motivations that reflect both structural and personal drivers of migration. Among men, economic motivations dominate. Over half (52.2%) cited work as their main reason for migrating, while 18.5 per cent migrated seeking asylum or refugee protection, and 11.5 per cent came for education. In contrast, women's migration patterns were more evenly distributed. Although work remains a significant motivation for migrant women (22.4%), they were more likely than men to cite education (19.3%), asylum or refugee protection (19.9%), and notably, war, mobilization, political instability, or economic crises (15.5%) as primary reasons for migrating. These findings suggest that a considerable proportion of women are

seeking protection or a more secure and stable environment in response to conflict, persecution, or sociopolitical upheaval in their countries of origin.

Women also more frequently mentioned family reunification, personal interests, and political disagreement than their male counterparts. Among those identifying with another gender designation, asylum/refugee protection (75%) was the dominant reason, suggesting higher exposure to vulnerability or persecution. Overall, this distribution suggests that while labour migration drives mainly men, women and non-binary persons are more likely to be influenced by complex socio-political and personal factors.

Figure 3. Primary reason for migrating to Armenia by gender



Challenges faced during their migration journey

The survey data provides insights into the challenges individuals faced during their migration journey. The majority of respondents, 55.5 per cent reported experiencing no difficulties, suggesting that more than half of the migrants had a relatively smooth transition to Armenia. However, a significant portion, 21.1 per cent, cited financial constraints as a major difficulty, highlighting economic struggles as the most common challenge faced during migration.

Language barriers were the second most frequently reported difficulty, affecting 18.0 per cent of respondents, which indicates that communication obstacles may have hindered adaptation or access to services. Other challenges were reported at much lower frequencies. Only 1.0 per cent of individuals faced difficulties accessing legal migration routes, while 0.6 per cent encountered deception by intermediaries, confiscation of passports, or problems with documentation. These issues suggest that although legal and administrative barriers exist, they are not as widespread as financial and language-related difficulties.

A very small fraction of migrants, 0.2 per cent reported experiencing gender-based or general violence, such as harassment or assault, indicating that while rare, safety concerns remain an issue for some individuals. Additionally, 0.6 per cent encountered problems with banks, such as card blocking or high fees, while 0.4 per cent reported bureaucratic hurdles. Lastly, 1.5 per cent of respondents selected “Other”, which may include challenges not explicitly listed in the survey.

The data suggests that while over half of the migrants did not face notable obstacles, economic and language-related challenges remain significant barriers. Financial constraints, reported by 21.1 per cent, may indicate a need for economic assistance, employment support, or affordable migration services. The 18.0 per cent experiencing language difficulties highlights the importance of language training programs to ease integration into Armenian society.

Although only a small percentage of respondents reported legal, bureaucratic, or security-related challenges, these issues still exist and may require targeted interventions to support vulnerable groups. The presence of even a small percentage of migrants facing deception, documentation issues, or passport confiscation suggests that migration protection policies and legal support structures could be strengthened. In general, financial support, language training, and legal assistance programs could help address the most common migration difficulties and improve the experience for future migrants.

Focusing on gender, distinct patterns emerge in the types of difficulties reported during migration. The data on difficulties faced during migration to Armenia reveals clear gendered patterns in migrant experiences, with financial and language-related challenges emerging as the most common obstacles across all groups. Among men, just over half (51.7%) reported no significant difficulties, but the remaining respondents identified a range of issues, the most common being financial constraints (21.9%) and language barriers (20.8%). A small number experienced more acute vulnerabilities, including confiscation of passports (0.8%), deception by intermediaries, and gender-based or general violence.

For women, a greater proportion (64.0%) reported no difficulties. However, financial constraints (18.6%) and language barriers (12.4%) still featured prominently, with a slightly higher percentage than men reporting deception by intermediaries (1.2% vs 0.3%). Other reported issues included problems accessing legal migration routes and banking difficulties.

Reliance on brokers for migration to Armenia

The survey examines the reliance on intermediaries or recruitment agents for migration to Armenia. The majority of respondents, 78.5 per cent, reported that they did not rely on intermediaries, indicating that most individuals migrated independently, either through personal arrangements or direct opportunities.

In contrast, 21.5 per cent of respondents did use the services of intermediaries or recruitment agents, highlighting a notable portion of the population that depended on external assistance for their migration process.

The fact that nearly one-fifth of migrants relied on intermediaries suggests that for some individuals, accessing migration routes, employment, or legal processes required third-party facilitation. This could indicate potential challenges in navigating regular migration pathways, securing work permits, or arranging logistics independently. 78.5 per cent who migrated without intermediaries may have had prior knowledge, networks, or direct access to opportunities, reducing their need for external assistance.

The presence of 21.5 per cent using recruitment agents or intermediaries also raises questions about the transparency and fairness of such services. While some intermediaries provide legitimate support, others may engage in exploitative practices, leading to risks such as overcharging, deception, or employment fraud. Monitoring and regulating intermediary services could be beneficial in ensuring ethical recruitment practices.

While most migrants in Armenia navigate the migration process on their own, a notable minority relies on intermediaries. This underscores the need for clearer legal migration pathways and stronger regulations to safeguard migrants from potential exploitation in recruitment practices.

Intermediary services provided

The aggregated data on intermediary services provides valuable insights into the challenges migrants face and the types of support they require when relocating to Armenia. The most frequently provided service was accommodation arrangements, accounting for 24.8 per cent of all cases, followed closely by visa assistance at 24.4 per cent. This suggests that securing housing and obtaining legal entry are two of the most significant concerns for migrants relying on intermediaries. Work-related services, including obtaining work permits and securing employment, together represent 30.8 per cent of all cases, highlighting the importance of labour market access for migrants. Logistical support, such as arranging transportation, was provided in 17.1 per cent of cases, indicating that some migrants face difficulties with travel planning and require intermediary assistance.

Employment-related assistance, although significant, was less common than visa and accommodation support. While securing a work permit accounted for 16.7 per cent and securing employment represented 14.1 per cent, these services were not as frequently used as other forms of assistance. This suggests that many migrants may have secured jobs independently or entered the labour market through informal networks. Nevertheless, the combined 30.8 per cent reliance on work-related support indicates that a large proportion of migrants still need structured employment assistance.

Visa assistance was sought more frequently than work permit assistance, which suggests that entry into Armenia was a more immediate concern for migrants than securing formal employment status. Some migrants may enter the country without a work permit in place, potentially working in the informal economy or facing delays in obtaining official documentation. The data also reveals that transportation arrangements were needed by 17.1 per cent of migrants, which suggests that travel logistics are a significant barrier for some individuals. This could indicate that direct migration routes to Armenia are either limited, costly, or require additional coordination.

Accommodation assistance was the most requested service, which underscores the challenges migrants face in finding housing upon arrival. This aligns with broader migration trends, where migrants often struggle to secure affordable and stable housing in a new country. The high demand for housing support could indicate that there is a lack of accessible rental options for new arrivals in Armenia, making them dependent on intermediaries. The widespread reliance on intermediary services raises questions about transparency and fairness in the migration process. If not well-regulated, these services could lead to exploitation, overcharging, or misleading information regarding visas, employment, and housing. The high percentage of visa assistance suggests that navigating legal entry requirements is complex, potentially pushing some migrants towards informal migration channels if they cannot afford intermediary services. Similarly, the 16.7 per cent dependency on work permit assistance indicates that bureaucratic procedures for employment authorization may not be straightforward, necessitating external help.

The findings suggest that simplifying the visa and work permit process could reduce the need for intermediary services, making migration more accessible and cost-effective for individuals. Expanding affordable housing options for migrants could help address the high demand for accommodation assistance. Strengthening oversight of intermediary services is necessary to ensure that migrants receive fair treatment and are not exploited. Additionally, developing direct employment placement programs could reduce dependency on intermediaries by providing migrants with secure and legal job opportunities upon arrival.

In general, the results indicate that migrants rely on intermediaries primarily for legal, housing, and logistical support, with visa and accommodation services being the most in demand. Work-related assistance, while significant, is not as dominant, suggesting that some migrants may already have employment secured before arriving. The reliance on intermediaries raises concerns about accessibility, fairness, and potential risks of exploitation, highlighting the need for policy improvements in migration procedures, employment access, and housing support to reduce dependency on intermediaries and create a smoother migration experience.

Satisfaction among migrants who used intermediary or recruitment agent services

The survey examines the level of satisfaction among migrants who used intermediary or recruitment agent services during their migration process. Among those who responded, the majority, 54.4 per cent, reported being very satisfied, indicating that more than half of the migrants who used these services found them to be highly effective and beneficial. Another 24.6 per cent were somewhat satisfied, suggesting that while the services met their needs to some extent, there may have been areas for improvement. On the other hand, 14.0 per cent of respondents were dissatisfied, highlighting that a notable portion of migrants encountered issues with the intermediaries or agents they relied on. Additionally, 7.0 per cent of respondents selected were not applicable, meaning that they may not have fully utilized the services or did not form a strong opinion on them. The cumulative percentage shows that 93.0 per cent of respondents had a clear stance on the quality of the services, with most people leaning toward a positive experience.

The high percentage of satisfied users, both very satisfied and somewhat satisfied, summing 79.0 per cent suggests that for most migrants, intermediaries provided valuable assistance in navigating the migration process, whether in securing visas, work permits, housing, or transportation. However, the 14.0 per cent dissatisfaction rate points to potential issues such as inefficiencies, overcharging, misleading information, or unmet expectations. The 7.0 per cent not applicable category could indicate cases where migrants relied on intermediaries for only specific services or did not engage deeply with them. 78.1 per cent system-missing responses suggest that the majority of surveyed migrants did not use intermediaries at all.

Given that a portion of users expressed dissatisfaction, there may be a need for greater oversight and regulation of intermediary services to ensure transparency, affordability, and fairness. Strengthening legal protections for migrants relying on intermediaries could help prevent exploitation or substandard service delivery. Additionally, improving access to direct, government-facilitated migration services could reduce reliance on intermediaries and provide migrants with more secure and structured options. All-encompassing, while most migrants who used intermediaries reported a positive experience, the presence of dissatisfaction indicates room for improvement. Monitoring and regulating intermediary practices, as well as providing alternative legal migration pathways, could help enhance migrant experiences and reduce dependency on potentially unreliable third-party services.

Faced challenges or exploitation from intermediaries or agents

The survey data also shows whether migrants face challenges or exploitation from intermediaries or agents. Out of the 114 respondents who answered this question, 18 individuals (15.8%) reported experiencing some form of difficulty or exploitation, while 96 individuals (84.2%) stated that they did not encounter any issues. This suggests that while the majority of those who used intermediaries had a smooth experience, a notable minority faced problems, which could include financial exploitation, misinformation, or unfulfilled promises.

Considering that 78.1 per cent of the total data set did not respond to this specific question, it is important to recognize that the findings are only representative of those who interacted with intermediaries, a small group of individuals. The fact that nearly one in six migrants who used an intermediary reported issues raises concerns about the reliability and ethical standards of these services. Although 84.2 per cent reported no problems, the existence of challenges for 15.8 per cent suggests that a segment of migrants may be vulnerable to fraud, overpricing, contract violations, or other forms of exploitation.

The presence of such challenges highlights the importance of regulation and oversight in the recruitment and migration assistance sector. Governments and organizations working with migrants may need to implement stricter vetting processes for recruitment agents, enforce legal protections, and provide accessible complaint mechanisms for migrants who face exploitation. Additionally, improving direct access to legal migration pathways may reduce reliance on intermediaries, thus decreasing the risks associated with unregulated or predatory practices.

While most respondents reported a positive experience with intermediaries, 15.8 per cent of those who faced issues indicate that there is room for improvement in ensuring transparency, accountability, and protection for migrants who depend on these services. Strengthening legal frameworks and providing education about safe migration options could help mitigate these risks.

The aggregated data on the types of support received during migration provides a comprehensive view of the resources available to migrants, the challenges they face, and the gaps in assistance. The most received support was assistance with obtaining a visa or travel documents, reported by 15.2 per cent of respondents. This highlights that navigating legal entry requirements was one of the most significant obstacles for migrants, requiring external intervention. Given that 24.4 per cent of respondents previously indicated reliance on intermediaries for visa assistance, this suggests that while formal support systems exist, a significant number still resort to third-party intermediaries, which may indicate inefficiencies or complexities in official migration processes.

Employment-related support was another significant area, with 12.8 per cent of respondents receiving job placement assistance, while 7.7 per cent obtained help

with work permits or business registration. These figures align with earlier findings that show 30.8 per cent of migrants relied on intermediaries for employment or work permit support. This reinforces the notion that structured pathways for legal employment and integration into Armenia's labour market remain a major need. The fact that many migrants still use intermediaries despite the availability of formal assistance suggests that either government-facilitated employment services are insufficient, or that migrants lack awareness of them.

Medical check-ups and health-related support were received by 9.5 per cent of migrants. While this is a relatively smaller proportion compared to legal and employment support, it still indicates that health services played a role in the migration journey. Given that financial constraints were identified as a primary challenge by 21.1 per cent of migrants in previous data, it is possible that some migrants required assistance to access healthcare upon arrival. However, the relatively low percentage suggests that healthcare was not a widespread concern or that migrants managed to access these services independently.

Guidance and informational support about living in Armenia, including orientation programs, accounted for 11.4 per cent of respondents. This suggests that adapting to a new environment requires structured assistance for a notable portion of migrants. This aligns with earlier data where 18 per cent of migrants reported facing language barriers during their migration journey. The presence of informational support may have helped some migrants overcome these difficulties, but the relatively low percentage suggests that many may not have received adequate orientation to navigate their new environment effectively.

Housing or accommodation arrangements were provided for 13.4 per cent of respondents. This aligns with previous findings that identified accommodation support (24.8%) as the most frequently provided service by intermediaries. The fact that formal support services also provided housing assistance indicates that securing stable living conditions was a major concern for migrants. Nevertheless, it also suggests that the availability of such assistance may not be sufficient, as a notable portion of migrants continued to rely on intermediaries for housing.

The most salient finding is that 28.4 per cent of migrants reported receiving no support at all, suggesting that a significant number navigated their migration journey independently without assistance from organizations, intermediaries, or formal support networks. This is consistent with the earlier finding that 78.5 per cent of migrants did not use intermediaries, further reinforcing the idea that many individuals rely on personal resources, informal networks, or self-arranged plans for their migration. The 0.3 per cent who selected "Other" and the 0.3 per cent who found the question difficult to answer indicate that a small fraction of migrants may have received unlisted forms of assistance or were unsure about the nature of the support they accessed.

To sum up, the survey data suggests that while support systems exist, a considerable proportion of migrants do not access them, possibly due to a lack of awareness,

availability, or eligibility criteria. The high percentage of migrants receiving visa-related assistance reflects the bureaucratic complexities of migration, while the need for job placement, housing, and informational support indicates critical areas for policy improvements. Strengthening employment placement programs, affordable housing initiatives, and awareness campaigns about available support services could enhance the migration experience and integration process for migrants in Armenia. Additionally, improving direct access to legal migration pathways, expanding structured employment programs, and increasing oversight of intermediary services could reduce reliance on informal or unregulated sources of migration assistance.

Employment status of migrants in Armenia

The dataset provides insights into the employment status of migrants in Armenia. The majority of respondents, 50.7 per cent, reported being in full-time employment, indicating that more than half of the surveyed migrants have stable job placements. Another 12.9 per cent are engaged in part-time employment, which suggests that while they have some form of income, they may not have secured permanent or full-time positions. Additionally, 20.5 per cent are self-employed, highlighting that a notable portion of migrants have started their own businesses or work independently, possibly due to challenges in accessing formal employment opportunities or a preference for entrepreneurial ventures.

A significant proportion, 15.7 per cent, reported being unemployed, which suggests that despite efforts to find work, a notable segment of migrants still struggle with job placement. 0.2% engaged in internships reflects a very small fraction of individuals who are gaining work experience but are not yet in stable employment.

The high percentage of full-time employment (50.7%) suggests that a considerable number of migrants have successfully integrated into Armenia's labor market. Nonetheless, 12.9 per cent in part-time employment and 15.7 per cent unemployed indicate that a combined 28.6 per cent of migrants may still be facing difficulties in securing stable and sufficient employment. The 20.5 per cent self-employment rate is relatively high, which may be reflective of barriers in accessing the formal labour market, leading some migrants to create their own work opportunities.

When compared to previous findings, 12.8 per cent who received job placement assistance and 7.7 per cent who obtained support for work permits or business registration suggest that structured employment support services are available but may not be sufficient to cover all migrants in need. The fact that 15.7 per cent remain unemployed despite such assistance suggests that labour market integration remains a challenge for some.

The relatively high self-employment rate (20.5%) signifies that a portion of migrants may be working in informal sectors or choosing entrepreneurship as a means of economic survival. This may be influenced by factors such as difficulties in obtaining

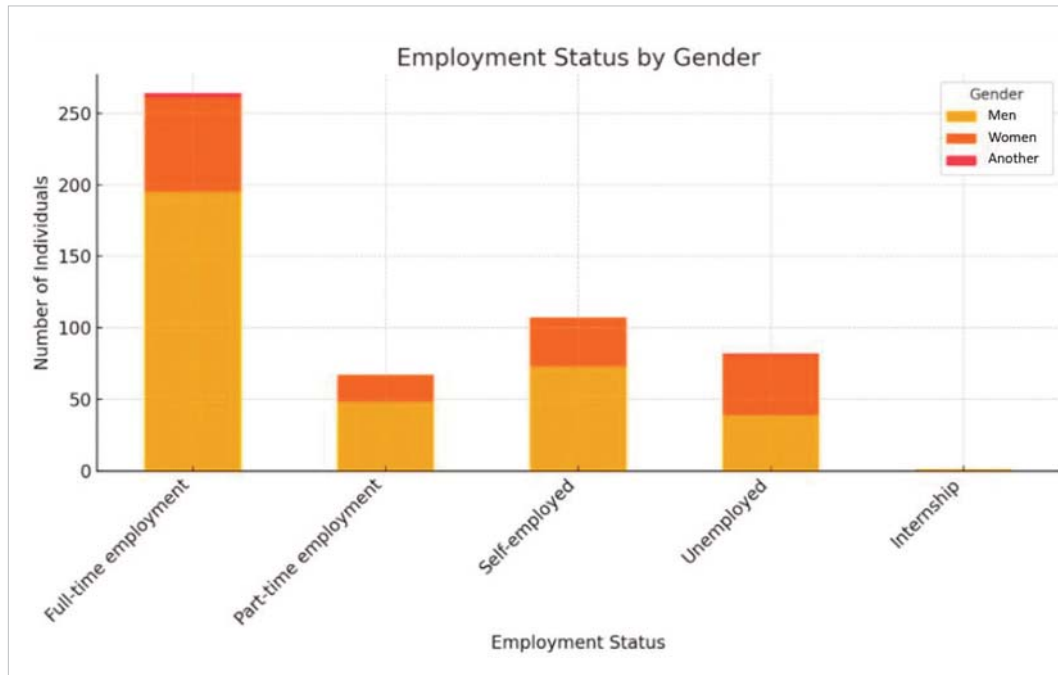
work permits, a lack of suitable job opportunities, or preferences for independent work. The internship rate of 0.2 per cent is extremely low, which suggests that structured internship programs are not a widely used pathway for employment among migrants.

The findings indicate that although a majority of migrants have found employment, there are still notable challenges in securing full-time, stable jobs, particularly for those in part-time work and the unemployed. Strengthening job placement programs, providing additional vocational training, and expanding entrepreneurship support initiatives could help improve employment outcomes. Moreover, improving access to work permits and business registration processes may encourage more migrants to transition from informal to formal employment. Addressing barriers in labour market entry through better policies and support structures could enhance economic integration and stability for migrants in Armenia.

Among men, the majority (54.8%) reported being in full-time employment, with additional proportions in part-time (13.5%) and self-employment (20.5%). Only 11 per cent were unemployed, suggesting relatively successful labour market absorption, potentially reflecting the male-dominant labour migration trend noted earlier.

Among women, the employment pattern is more precarious. While 41 per cent reported full-time employment, a larger share (26.1%) identified as unemployed – more than double the male rate. Women also showed slightly higher self-employment (21.1%), which may point to informal or home-based work often seen in feminized migration contexts. Part-time employment (11.8%) was comparable to men.

Focusing on gender, these findings reveal that men have higher access to stable, full-time jobs, whereas women face higher levels of unemployment and may rely more on flexible or informal work arrangements. This underscores the need for targeted labour market inclusion strategies that address gender-specific barriers, including childcare responsibilities, discrimination, or lack of recognition of prior qualifications.

Figure 4. Employment Status by gender

Type of companies employing migrants in Armenia

The dataset provides insights into the type of companies employing migrants in Armenia. Among the 261 respondents who reported being employed, the majority, 64.0 per cent work for local companies, indicating that most migrants have successfully integrated into Armenia's domestic labour market. Another 25.3 per cent are employed by non-local companies registered in Armenia, suggesting that a significant portion of migrants work for international firms that have a legal presence in the country. The remaining 10.7% are employed by non-local companies not registered in Armenia, which indicates a smaller but notable segment of remote or cross-border workers who may be engaged in freelancing or international employment without formal ties to the Armenian economy.

The high proportion of migrants working for local companies suggests that the Armenian job market plays a primary role in absorbing migrant workers. However, with only 50.7 per cent of all migrants reporting full-time employment, a significant share may be engaged in part-time work, self-employment, or face unemployment – indicating varying degrees of integration into the formal labour market. The 25.3 per cent employment rate in non-local companies registered in Armenia underscores the role of international businesses in providing work opportunities, which highlights the significance of foreign investment and multinational firms in supporting migrant employment. Furthermore, the 10.7 per cent working for non-local, unregistered

companies suggests that a portion of migrants are engaged in remote work, international freelancing, or cross-border employment. This aligns with global trends in the digital workforce, where migrants maintain employment with foreign companies while residing in Armenia, potentially allowing them to bypass local employment barriers or work permit restrictions.

A significant factor influencing these employment patterns could be the availability of work permits, language barriers, or sector-specific opportunities. Previous data showed that 20.5 per cent of migrants were self-employed, and many relied on intermediaries for work permits or business registration. This suggests that while some migrants successfully integrate into local businesses, others prefer working for international companies, particularly if local employment opportunities are limited or bureaucratic hurdles make formal job placements challenging.

The missing system data, accounting for 49.9 per cent of total respondents, indicates that nearly half of the surveyed migrants did not answer this question, likely because they were unemployed, self-employed, or engaged in informal work arrangements. This reinforces earlier findings that a significant proportion of migrants either remain unemployed or rely on self-employment and alternative income sources, such as gig work or informal labour.

The survey data suggests that while the Armenian labour market has absorbed a majority of employed migrants into local businesses, international companies – both registered and unregistered – also play an important role in providing job opportunities. The presence of cross-border employment and remote work highlights an emerging trend in employment strategies among migrants. To further enhance labour market integration, policies that facilitate work permit access, expand job placement programs, and provide incentives for foreign businesses to formally register in Armenia could improve employment prospects. Moreover, expanding vocational training, language support, and entrepreneurship programs could help migrants access more stable and higher-paying positions, ultimately strengthening their economic security in Armenia.

Migrants' employment sectors

The survey findings provide an overview of the employment sectors in which migrants in Armenia are engaged. Among the 439 respondents who indicated their sector of employment, the largest share, 36.2 per cent work in the services sector, which includes retail, hospitality, and delivery. This suggests that a significant portion of migrants are employed in customer-facing or essential service roles, which often require lower formal qualifications but provide accessible job opportunities.

The IT, technology, and engineering sector is the second-largest employer, with 26.9% of migrants working in these fields. This indicates that a substantial number

of migrants have specialized skills and qualifications, allowing them to access Armenia's growing technology and engineering industries. Given the increasing global demand for IT professionals and the role of digital transformation, this sector represents a key employment avenue for skilled migrants.

The construction industry employs 10.7 per cent of migrants, making it the third-largest employment sector. This aligns with broader migration trends, where construction work is often a key employer of migrant labour due to high demand and relatively lower entry barriers. Manufacturing accounts for 5.5 per cent of employment, showing that while industrial production plays a role, it is not a dominant sector for migrant workers.

A smaller but notable percentage of migrants work in arts, creative industries, and media (5.5%), as well as education, research, and scientific work (4.1%). These figures indicate that while opportunities exist for migrants in academic and cultural fields, they are less common than those in technical or service-based jobs. The legal and financial sector (1.1%), medicine (1.1%), and marketing and management (2.7%) each employ a small fraction of the migrant workforce, likely due to industry-specific credential requirements, local language proficiency barriers, or limited openings for non-citizens.

The domestic work sector accounts for 2.3 per cent of employment, reflecting that some migrants take up roles in personal household services. Meanwhile, sports employment (0.9%) and agriculture (1.8%) represent the smallest categories, suggesting that very few migrants work in farming or professional athletics.

The dominance of the services sector (36.2%) indicates that many migrants take up jobs in industries that require direct customer interaction and provide relatively quick employment access. However, the 26.9 per cent employment in IT, technology, and engineering highlights that a significant portion of migrants are part of Armenia's growing knowledge-based economy. The high concentration of employment in IT suggests that Armenia has become an attractive destination for skilled professionals in technology-related fields, potentially due to favorable policies, tech industry growth, or competitive salaries.

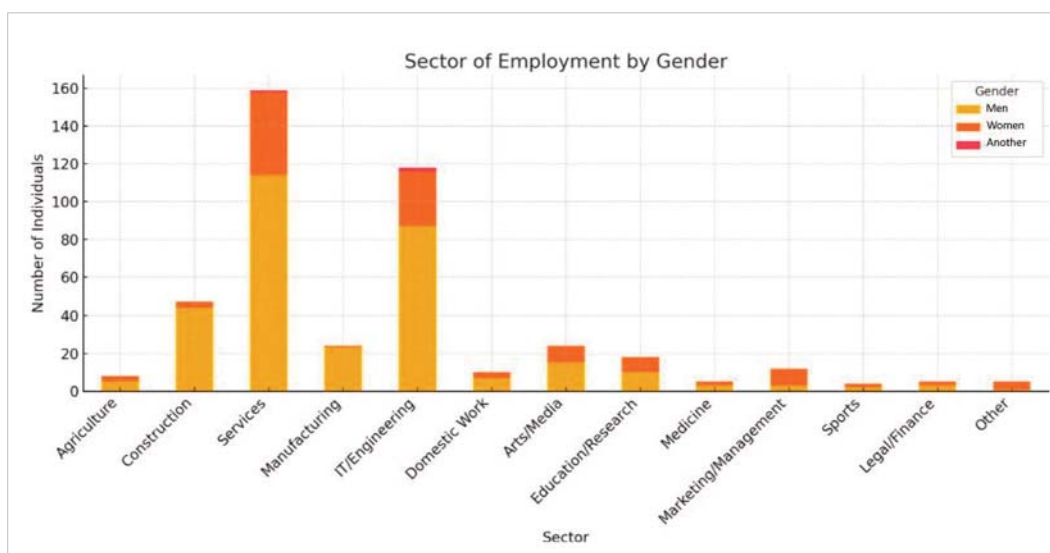
The 10.7 per cent employment in construction reflects the demand for labor-intensive work, while 5.5 per cent in manufacturing suggests that industrial jobs are available but not as widespread. The presence of migrants in education, arts, and marketing sectors shows some degree of professional diversification, but the lower percentages indicate that these fields may have barriers to entry, such as licensing requirements or sector-specific limitations for non-citizens.

The relatively low employment in medicine (1.1%) and law (1.1%) suggests that regulated professions remain difficult for migrants to enter, likely due to strict qualification recognition policies or local licensing exams. Similarly, the 1.8 per cent employment in agriculture indicates that while agricultural work is a major sector globally for migrant labor, it does not appear to be a key source of employment in Armenia.

The 15.7 per cent missing data indicates that some migrants either did not disclose their employment sector or were unemployed, reinforcing the earlier finding that a significant proportion of migrants' face challenges in accessing stable jobs. Given the 15.7 per cent unemployment rate previously recorded, it is possible that some of those without sectoral data are actively looking for jobs or working informally.

Focusing on gender, the data reveals distinct patterns in the sectors of employment among migrant men and women in Armenia. Men are predominantly employed in construction, services, and IT-related fields, with the services sector accounting for over one-third of male employment and IT and engineering engaging more than a quarter. In contrast, women show a more varied distribution across sectors, though they are also concentrated in services. Notably, women are more frequently represented in education, arts, marketing, and domestic work – fields often associated with care, communication, or creativity. Although women also participate in technical areas such as IT, their presence in construction and manufacturing remains marginal. Individuals identifying with another gender designation were employed in IT and services, although the sample size is limited. These gendered distinctions suggest underlying structural and cultural dynamics influencing occupational access and point to the need for inclusive employment strategies that expand opportunities for all genders across diverse sectors.

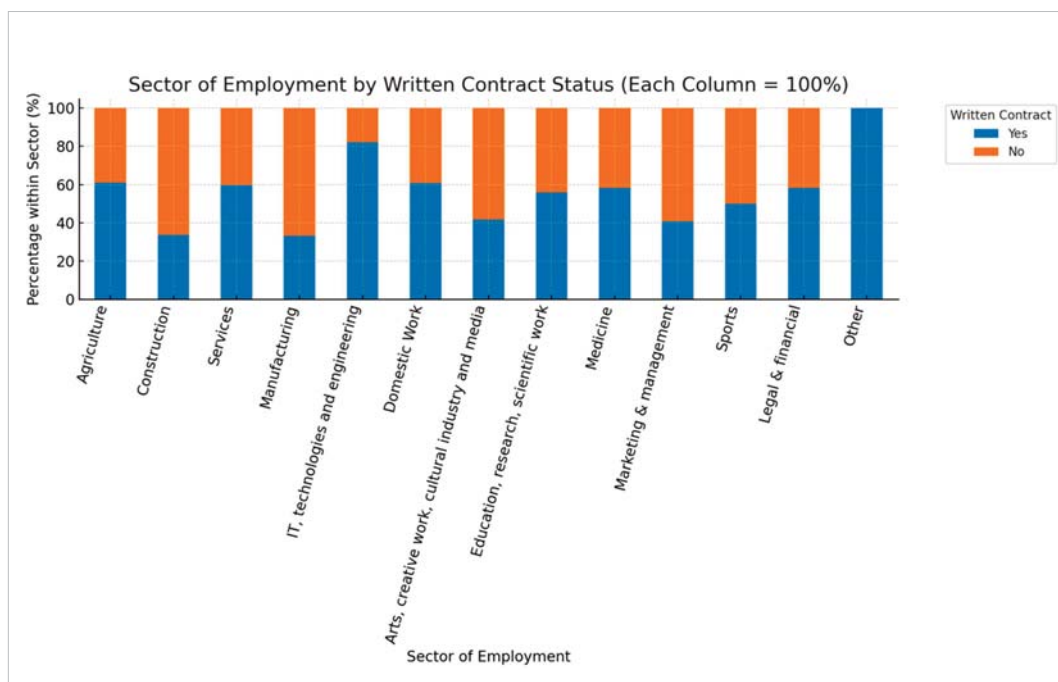
Figure 5. Sector of employment by gender



Contractual employment status of migrants in Armenia

The dataset provides insights into the contractual employment status of migrants in Armenia. Among the 439 employed respondents, 60.4 per cent reported having a written contract, while 39.6 per cent stated that they do not have a contract. This suggests that a significant majority of employed migrants have formal agreements governing their work conditions, but a substantial proportion remains in informal or unregulated employment arrangements.

Figure 5.1. Sector of employment by written contract status



The high percentage of workers with written contracts (60.4%) indicates that many migrants have some form of job security, legal protections, and access to employment benefits. This aligns with previous findings showing that 50.7 per cent of migrants reported full-time employment, suggesting that many full-time positions are likely covered by formal contracts. Having a written contract typically provides workers with clearer terms of employment, including salary, working hours, and protections against unfair dismissal.

Nevertheless, 39.6 per cent of workers without contracts signal that a large proportion of migrant workers are in informal employment, lacking legal protection and potentially facing job insecurity. This group may include part-time workers, self-employed individuals, or those working in sectors where informal agreements are common, such as construction, domestic work, and some service industries. The earlier sectoral employment data showed that a large number of migrants work in services (36.2%), construction (10.7%), and domestic work (2.3%), all of which are sectors known for higher rates of informal employment.

The survey results highlight two key concerns: the high prevalence of informal employment among migrants and the potential lack of legal protection for a significant portion of the workforce. While 60.4 per cent of workers with written contracts is a positive indicator, the fact that nearly 40 per cent work without formal agreements raises concerns about vulnerability to exploitation, wage theft, or job instability.

Migrants working without written contracts may face difficulties in accessing social security benefits, legal recourse in case of labour disputes, and protections against unfair treatment. Given that 15.7 per cent of migrants reported being unemployed, it is possible that some workers accept informal work arrangements due to a lack of alternative employment opportunities or work permit restrictions.

The missing data of 15.7 per cent aligns with the proportion of unemployed migrants, implying that some individuals were either not employed or unwilling to disclose their contractual status. This further reinforces concerns that many migrants may be navigating precarious employment situations, either working informally or struggling to secure stable jobs.

The collected data suggests that while a majority of employed migrants have written contracts (60.4%), a substantial minority (39.6%) remain in informal or unregulated jobs, potentially exposing them to greater job insecurity and legal vulnerabilities. Addressing informal employment through better regulatory enforcement, improved work permit accessibility, and worker education programs could enhance labour protections and job stability for migrants in Armenia.

The dataset provides insights into the reasons why some employed migrants in Armenia do not have a written contract. Among the 174 respondents who reported not having a contract, the most common reason, cited by 29.3 per cent (51 individuals), was that they are self-employed, own a business, or do not require a contract. This aligns with previous data indicating that 20.5 per cent of migrants are self-employed, suggesting that a notable portion of workers operate independently and do not rely on formal employment agreements.

Another 22.4 per cent (39 individuals) stated that their employer did not want to provide a written contract, indicating that a significant portion of migrants work under informal arrangements dictated by employers. This raises concerns about labour rights, job security, and potential exploitation, as workers without contracts may lack protection against unfair dismissal, wage disputes, or unsafe working conditions.

Likewise, 21.3 per cent (37 individuals) reported that they personally chose not to sign a written contract, suggesting that a notable segment of migrants prefer informal employment for reasons such as flexibility, avoiding legal constraints, or potential tax obligations. This could also reflect a lack of trust in formal agreements or a belief that contracts may limit their work options.

A further 16.7 per cent (29 individuals) indicated that they were not aware that a

written contract is necessary, highlighting a gap in the access of accurate information that may affect a significant portion of the migrant workforce. This suggests that educational campaigns about labour rights and contract benefits could be beneficial in ensuring that migrants understand their legal entitlements.

Additionally, 4.0 per cent (7 individuals) reported that they are in the process of signing a contract, in an internship, or on probation, indicating that some workers might transition into formal employment soon. Another 4.0 per cent (7 individuals) selected "Other," while 2.3 per cent (4 individuals) found the question difficult to answer.

The data reveals that while some migrants deliberately opt-out of contracts, a significant portion may be vulnerable to informal employment conditions imposed by employers or influenced by a lack of awareness about labour protections. The fact that 22.4 per cent reported that their employer refused to provide a contract suggests that informal employment practices are still prevalent in certain sectors, particularly in services, construction, and domestic work, where previous data showed higher rates of informal employment.

21.3 per cent who did not want a contract suggests that some migrants prioritize work flexibility over legal protections, possibly due to temporary employment situations, sector-specific norms, or a preference for cash-based work arrangements. However, this also means that some workers may not fully understand the risks associated with working without a contract, such as lack of legal recourse in disputes, difficulty in proving employment history, or exclusion from social security benefits.

The 16.7% who were unaware that a written contract is necessary further highlights the need for greater outreach efforts to inform migrants about their labour rights. Many migrants may be working under assumptions that formal agreements are optional or may not be familiar with local labour laws in Armenia.

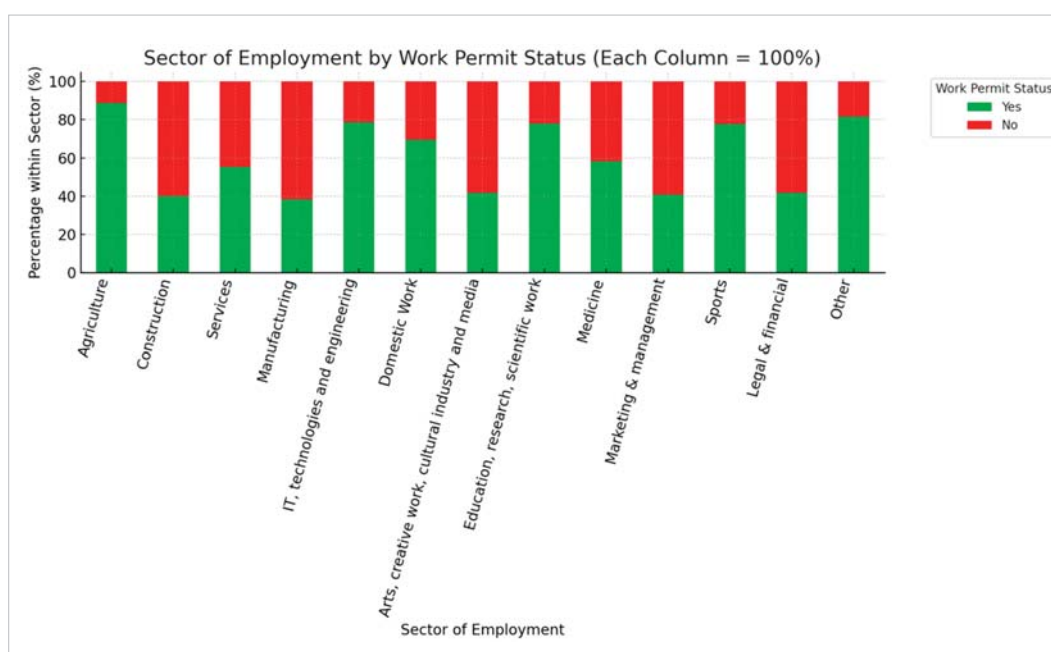
The self-employed group (29.3%), while not requiring contracts in a traditional sense, would still benefit from better access to business registration resources, financial support programs, and tax guidance to ensure that they operate legally and securely.

The survey findings show that while some migrants intentionally choose informal employment, a significant proportion lack contracts due to employer refusals, lack of awareness, or misunderstandings about labour laws. Addressing informal employment through legal enforcement, labour rights education, and improved access to formal work opportunities can help protect migrant workers from potential exploitation while improving overall labour market stability in Armenia.

Focusing on gender, the data suggests that while a majority of employed migrants do benefit from some level of labour formalisation, gender differences in sectoral placement and employment conditions shape access to contractual protections.

Among employed men, 59.3 per cent reported having a written contract, while 40.7 per cent did not. This indicates that a significant portion of migrant men operate in the informal labour market, where job security and access to rights are typically limited. For women, the proportion with written contracts is slightly higher, at 63 per cent, with 37 per cent lacking such documentation. This suggests that migrant women are somewhat more likely to be employed in formal or semi-formal sectors, potentially tied to their higher representation in education, care, and professional services.

Figure 5.2. Sector of employment by work permit status (%)



Work permit registration status

The dataset provides insights into the work permit registration status of migrants in Armenia. Among the 439 employed respondents, 60.1 per cent (264 individuals) reported being formally registered with a work permit, while 39.9 per cent (175 individuals) stated that they do not have formal registration. The distribution of written employment contracts by country of origin highlights notable differences across migrant groups. Respondents from Russia constitute the largest share of employed migrants, with 55.1 per cent of the total; within this group, 36.9 per cent reported having a written contract and 18.2 per cent did not. Migrants from India form the second-largest group, representing 29.2 per cent of employed respondents, with 12.5 per cent having a contract and 16.6 per cent without one—indicating a comparatively high share of informal work. Smaller proportions are observed among respondents from Ukraine (2.5 per cent in total, mostly with contracts), Egypt and Iran (2.1 per cent each, balanced between contract and non-contract), and Belarus, Bangladesh, and South American countries (each under

1 per cent). Migrants from African countries and Central Asia account for 1.4 per cent each, while those from Syria (1.4 per cent) and European countries (0.2 per cent, all without contracts) remain marginal in size. Overall, the data suggests that while Russian and Indian nationals dominate the migrant workforce in Armenia, Indian workers are more likely to be employed without formal contractual protection compared to their Russian counterparts. The distribution of written employment contracts across economic sectors shows important contrasts. Migrants employed in IT, technologies, and engineering (26.9 per cent of the total) and in services such as retail, hospitality, and delivery (36.2 per cent) dominate the employed migrant workforce. Within IT, the majority (22.1 per cent) reported having a written contract, while a smaller share (4.8 per cent) did not. In services, by contrast, while 21.6 per cent held contracts, a significant 14.6 per cent worked without them, indicating a higher prevalence of informality in this sector. Construction employs 10.7 per cent of respondents, but most (7.1 per cent) lack contracts compared to 3.6 per cent who have them, making it the sector with the most evident contractual vulnerability. Other sectors such as manufacturing (5.5 per cent), arts and cultural industries (5.5 per cent), and education/research (4.1 per cent) show more balanced distributions, though with notable shares of informal employment. Smaller groups work in domestic work, marketing and management, medicine, sports, and legal/financial services, each accounting for under 3 per cent of the total. The analysis of employment contracts by gender shows relatively similar patterns across groups. Among men, 59.3 per cent reported having a written contract, while 40.7 per cent did not. Women presented slightly higher contract coverage, with 63.0 per cent holding a contract and 37.0 per cent without one. Although men account for the majority of employed respondents, but the data suggests that both men and women experience comparable levels of formal contractual protection in the Armenian labour market. Overall, this suggests that while the majority of employed migrants are legally documented, a substantial portion remains in informal employment without official work authorization.

60.1 per cent registered with work permits indicates a relatively strong level of legal employment compliance, suggesting that many migrants have successfully navigated through the bureaucratic process required for formal employment. This aligns closely with the 50.9 per cent of migrants who reported having a written job contract, reinforcing the connection between formal employment agreements and work permit registration.

Nonetheless, the 39.9 per cent without work permits signals that a large portion of migrants are engaged in unauthorized employment, which may expose them to job insecurity, lack of labour protections, and potential legal repercussions. The relatively high number of unregistered workers (175 individuals) is concerning because it indicates a pervasive reliance on informal labour markets. This is particularly relevant when compared to previous findings that showed 39.6 per cent of employed migrants lacked a written job contract, suggesting that many of the same individuals working without contracts are also those without work permits.

The high percentage of work permit holders (60.1%) is a positive indicator of legal employment pathways for migrants, but the large share of unregistered workers (39.9%) raises concerns about regulatory enforcement, accessibility to work permits, and barriers to formalization.

The missing system data (15.7%) likely represents individuals who are unemployed, self-employed, or in irregular employment situations. This could reinforce previous findings that self-employment accounts for 20.5 per cent of migrant employment, a category that does not always require traditional work permits.

The survey results indicate that while a majority (60.1%) of employed migrants in Armenia are legally registered, but a significant proportion (39.9%) remain unregistered, raising concerns about labour rights, job security, and compliance with migration laws. Addressing barriers to legal employment, enforcing employer responsibilities, and educating migrants about work permit requirements could help reduce informal labour and improve economic stability for migrants in Armenia.

Migrants' perceptions of wage disparities

The survey findings provide insight into migrants' perceptions of wage disparities between foreign and local workers in Armenia.

Sector-specific considerations include industries with higher rates of informal employment (services, construction, and domestic work) are more likely to have wage disparities due to unregulated pay scales and employer discretion over wages. Highly regulated sectors like IT, engineering, and education may have fewer wage disparities due to structured salary systems and employment protections. Self-employed migrants (20.5%) are less likely to perceive wage disparities, as they set their own wages. The 36.5 per cent missing data likely represents migrants who are unemployed, self-employed, or do not work in environments where wage comparisons are possible.

Out of the 331 respondents who answered the question about wage disparities, 27.5 per cent (91 individuals) reported that they have noticed wage disparities, indicating that more than a quarter of migrants perceive a difference in earnings between themselves and local workers. The majority, 51.1 per cent (169 individuals), stated that they have not noticed any wage differences, while 21.5 per cent (71 individuals) expressed uncertainty about whether such disparities exist.

The fact that 91 individuals (27.5%) believe there are wage disparities suggests that some foreign workers feel they are paid less than locals for similar work. This perception raises concerns about pay equity, labour rights, and potential discrimination in the Armenian job market. Migrants who lack formal employment contracts (39.6%) or work without legal work permits (39.9%) may be particularly vulnerable to lower wages, unstable income, and exploitation due to their informal

employment status. The presence of wage disparities could also indicate that certain industries with high migrant employment – such as construction (10.7%), services (36.2%), and domestic work (2.3%) – may offer lower wages to foreign workers compared to locals.

Nonetheless, the majority of respondents (169 individuals, 51.1 per cent) affirmed that they have not noticed wage differences, which suggests that in many workplaces, foreign and local workers receive equal pay for equal work. This could indicate compliance with labour regulations in sectors where salaries are standardized or where formal employment practices are more prevalent, such as IT and engineering (26.9%), education (4.1%), and medicine (1.1%). It is also possible that migrants in certain workplaces do not experience wage discrimination because they occupy jobs with fixed salary scales or negotiated contracts.

The 71 individuals (21.5%) who were uncertain about wage disparities highlight a lack of wage transparency in some workplaces. This suggests that migrants may not always have access to salary information, making it difficult for them to assess whether they are being paid fairly. The high percentage of uncertainty could be due to language barriers, limited workplace interaction with local employees, or a lack of knowledge about Armenian labour laws.

The survey data indicates that while more than half of respondents (51.1%) do not perceive wage disparities, a significant minority (27.5%) believe they are paid less than local workers, particularly in sectors with high informal employment. The 21.5 per cent uncertainty rate suggests that wage transparency may be lacking in some workplaces.

The analysis of perceptions of wage disparities between foreign and local workers reveals both generational differences and overall scepticism among respondents. Across the full sample, just over a quarter (27.5 per cent) reported noticing wage disparities, while half (51.1 per cent) did not perceive such differences and one in five (21.5 per cent) expressed uncertainty.

When grouped by age cohort, clearer patterns emerge. Among the older cohorts (born before 1980), responses are fragmented due to small sample sizes, but the prevailing trend is either denial of disparities or lack of certainty. The 1980s cohort displays the highest levels of indecision, with many respondents answering “Not sure” – in some birth years this group exceeds 60 per cent. This suggests weaker exposure to or confidence in identifying wage differences among foreign and local workers.

By contrast, the 1990s cohort – which forms the largest share of the migrant workforce in the dataset – demonstrates greater awareness of wage disparities. Between one-third and two-fifths of respondents born in the mid to late 1990s reported noticing gaps, although “No” remains the most common answer in this group. This indicates that younger adults with active labour market experience are more likely to observe inequalities, even if they do not represent a majority view.

Finally, the 2000s cohort presents a more balanced distribution: roughly one-third in each subgroup report disparities, deny them, or remain uncertain. This reflects both limited work experience and the heterogeneity of younger migrants' employment trajectories in Armenia.

The evidence therefore points to a mixed picture. While perceptions of wage disparities are not dominant overall, they are most pronounced among workers born in the 1990s, the age group most embedded in Armenia's current labour market. Older and younger cohorts are less likely to affirm the existence of disparities, either because of limited exposure, fewer work opportunities, or greater uncertainty.

The data shows how perceptions of wage disparities between foreign and local workers vary significantly by country of origin.

Migrants from India form the largest group and are the most likely to report disparities: 56.9 per cent answered "Yes," compared to 33.9 per cent who said "No" and 9.2 per cent who were unsure. This group alone accounts for more than two-thirds (68.1 per cent) of all affirmative responses in the dataset. Iranian respondents display a similar pattern, with 57.1 per cent noticing wage disparities and only 28.6 per cent denying them. Migrants from African countries (60 per cent) and Egypt (44.4 per cent) also show relatively high levels of affirmative responses.

By contrast, Russian migrants – who make up the majority of the sample – predominantly report not noticing wage disparities (64.1 per cent), with only 8.2 per cent saying "Yes" and 27.6 per cent unsure. This group accounts for nearly two-thirds of all "No" responses. Similarly, respondents from Ukraine (77.8 per cent) and Syria (66.7 per cent) are mostly dismissive or uncertain about disparities.

Smaller migrant groups reveal mixed results: those from Central Asia and South America are evenly divided, while Belarusian and Bangladeshi respondents lean towards uncertainty. Respondents from European countries stand out as unanimously uncertain (100 per cent answered "Not sure").

Taken together, the findings highlight a strong contrast between Indian and Iranian migrants, who are far more likely to perceive wage inequalities, and Russian and Ukrainian migrants, who are more likely to reject such disparities. The divergence suggests that perceptions of wage gaps are not uniform but shaped by country of origin and perhaps by migrants' positioning in Armenia's labour market.

The analysis of perceptions of wage disparities by gender reveals notable differences. Among men, 30.5 per cent reported noticing disparities, while 48.1 per cent said they had not, and 21.4 per cent were unsure. Men constitute the majority of responses across all categories, accounting for more than four-fifths of affirmative answers. Women are less likely to report disparities, with only 20.0 per cent responding "Yes," while a majority of 58.8 per cent said "No" and 21.2 per cent were uncertain.

Addressing pay gaps through wage transparency, better labour law enforcement, and improved access to legal employment could help ensure equal pay for equal

work, enhancing job security and economic integration for migrants in Armenia.

The dataset provides insights into how migrants in Armenia perceive their salary satisfaction in their current jobs. Among the 331 respondents who answered this question, 32.3 per cent (107 individuals) rated their salary as “Good,” while 28.4 per cent (94 individuals) considered it “Excellent.” This indicates that a majority of respondents (60.7%) have a positive perception of their salary. Meanwhile, 27.5 per cent (91 individuals) provided a neutral rating, suggesting they do not feel strongly positive or negative about their earnings. However, 10.5 per cent (35 individuals) rated their salary as “Poor” or “Very Poor,” indicating dissatisfaction among a smaller portion of respondents.

The fact that 60.7 per cent of migrants rate their salary as either “Good” or “Excellent” suggests that, for many, wages are sufficient or at least meet their expectations in relation to their job roles. This finding contrasts with the 27.5 per cent of migrants who reported wage disparities between foreign and local workers, indicating that even if some migrants perceive differences in wages, a majority are still satisfied with their earnings.

The 27.5 per cent neutral rating suggests that a significant portion of migrants do not have strong opinions about their salaries. This group may include workers who feel their wages are adequate but not necessarily competitive or those who accept their pay despite potential room for improvement. It is also possible that these individuals work in sectors where wage scales are standardized and thus perceive their earnings as fair but not exceptional.

The 10.5 per cent dissatisfaction rate (those rating their salary as “Poor” or “Very Poor”) is notable because it represents individuals who may be struggling with low wages or financial insecurity. These migrants may work in sectors with a high prevalence of informal employment or lack opportunities for wage growth. Given that 39.9 per cent of migrants reported not having a work permit and 39.6 per cent reported lacking a written job contract, it is likely that a portion of those dissatisfied with their salaries are employed in informal, unregulated jobs where wages are lower, inconsistent, or subject to employer discretion.

The small percentage (1.2%) who responded “Don’t know” suggests that most migrants have a clear understanding of their wages. The missing data (36.5%) likely corresponds to unemployed respondents, self-employed workers, or individuals in irregular job situations where salary satisfaction is either not applicable or not easily assessed.

As for sectoral considerations, salary satisfaction likely varies based on the sector of employment, namely, migrants in high-skilled sectors, such as IT (26.9%), education (4.1%), and medicine (1.1%), are more likely to report higher salary satisfaction due to competitive wages in these fields. Workers in construction (10.7%) and services (36.2%) may have mixed experiences since these sectors often have wider salary variations depending on contract type, employer practices,

and job stability. Those in domestic work (2.3%) and other low-wage sectors are more likely to report dissatisfaction, as these industries have higher prevalence of informal employment and lower wages.

The survey data suggests that while a majority of migrants (60.7%) report being satisfied with their salary, a notable minority (10.5%) feel underpaid, with another 27.5 per cent remaining neutral. Migrants in highly skilled sectors are more likely to express satisfaction, while those in informal, low-wage, or contract-limited jobs may struggle with lower wages. Addressing informal employment, expanding work permit accessibility, enforcing wage regulations, and improving skills development could enhance salary satisfaction and economic stability for migrants in Armenia.

Migrants' satisfaction with their working hours

The survey results provide insights into migrants' satisfaction with their working hours in Armenia. Among the 331 respondents who answered this question, 47.1 per cent (156 individuals) rated their working hours as "Excellent", while 26.0 per cent (86 individuals) rated them as "Good". This means that a significant majority (73.1%) of migrants are satisfied with their working hours. Furthermore, 17.8 per cent (59 individuals) gave a neutral rating, while 7.5 per cent (25 individuals) rated their working hours as "Poor" or "Very Poor". A small percentage, 1.5 per cent (5 individuals), selected "Don't know."

The high satisfaction rate (73.1 per cent rating their working hours as "Good" or "Excellent") suggests that many migrants find their work schedules reasonable, well-structured, or accommodating to their needs. This could be attributed to several factors namely, many migrants may be working in stable, regulated sectors such as IT (26.9%), education (4.1%), and medicine (1.1%), which generally have standard working hours; migrants with formal contracts (60.4%) and work permits (60.1%) may have greater protection against excessive work hours, ensuring fair working conditions; self-employed migrants (20.5%) may have more control over their schedules, leading to higher satisfaction. The 17.8 per cent neutral rating suggests that some migrants do not feel strongly about their working hours. These individuals might have standard work hours but limited flexibility or work in sectors where shifts and schedules vary, such as services (36.2%) and manufacturing (5.5%). 7.5% of respondents who rated their working hours as "Poor" or "Very Poor" probably represent migrants facing long, unpredictable, or demanding work schedules. These individuals may work in sectors known for long hours and physically demanding jobs, such as construction (10.7%) and domestic work (2.3%). Have informal employment without regulated working hours or overtime pay. Be employed in seasonal or shift-based industries, where work schedules fluctuate and can lead to burnout or exhaustion. The small percentage (1.5%) who responded "Don't know" suggests that most migrants have a clear understanding

of their working conditions. The missing data (36.5%) likely corresponds to unemployed respondents, self-employed workers, or individuals not currently engaged in regular work schedules.

When comparing salary satisfaction and working hour satisfaction, the data reveals that working hours receive higher positive ratings. While 60.7 per cent of respondents rated their salary as “Good” or “Excellent”, a higher 73.1 per cent expressed satisfaction with their working hours. This suggests that while wages may not always meet expectations, many migrants feel that their work schedules are manageable. Furthermore, the percentage of respondents rating their working hours as “Poor” or “Very Poor” (7.5%) is lower than those dissatisfied with their salary (10.5%). This could indicate that working hours are generally more standardized or predictable compared to wages, which can vary significantly depending on legal status and sector. The data indicates that working hours are generally well regarded by migrants, with 73.1 per cent expressing satisfaction, compared to only 7.5 per cent reporting dissatisfaction. However, certain industries and informal employment situations may expose some migrants to long or unpredictable work schedules. Addressing sector-specific challenges, improving labour law enforcement, and promoting work-life balance policies can help enhance job satisfaction and well-being for migrants in Armenia.

How migrants in Armenia perceive their access to breaks in the workplace

The dataset provides insights into how migrants in Armenia perceive their access to breaks in the workplace. Among the 331 respondents who answered this question, 49.2 per cent (163 individuals) rated their breaks as “Excellent”, while 21.8 per cent (72 individuals) rated them as “Good”. This means that a significant majority (71.0%) are satisfied with their breaks. Meanwhile, 11.8 per cent (39 individuals) provided a neutral rating, suggesting that they find their break times particularly good or bad. However, 16.1 per cent (53 individuals) rated their breaks as either “Poor” or “Very Poor”, indicating dissatisfaction. A small 1.2 per cent (4 individuals) answered “Don’t know”, suggesting that nearly all respondents had a clear opinion on their break times.

The fact that 71.0 per cent of migrants view their break times positively (“Good” or “Excellent”) suggests that most workplaces provide sufficient break periods, ensuring workers have adequate time to rest. This could be due to labour laws mandating break periods, particularly in formal employment. To more structured workplaces, such as IT (26.9%), education (4.1%), and healthcare (1.1%), which often have regulated break schedules. Or to workers in high-skilled sectors or companies with strong HR policies ensuring adequate rest periods.

The 11.8 per cent neutral rating suggests that a portion of migrants do not feel strongly about their break times, possibly because their job schedules are flexible,

or their breaks are adequate but not particularly generous. The 16.1 per cent dissatisfaction rate (those rating their breaks as “Poor” or “Very Poor”) is notable because it represents a significant group of migrants who may be working in demanding roles with limited rest periods. These individuals are likely to work in physically demanding sectors, including construction (10.7%) and services (36.2%), where break schedules may be irregular or inconsistent. They may be engaged in informal employment, lacking the formal labour protections that ensure entitlements such as break times. They may experience high workloads or face employer-imposed restrictions that limit their ability to take breaks, particularly in domestic work (2.3%). The missing system data (36.5%) likely includes unemployed individuals, self-employed migrants, or those engaged in unstructured forms of employment where break times are not clearly defined. When comparing salary satisfaction, working hours, and breaking satisfaction, the survey data show that breaks receive higher positive ratings than salary (60.7% satisfied) but slightly lower than working hours (73.1% satisfied). This suggests that break times are generally well accepted, but a small proportion of workers experience challenges in securing adequate rest periods.

Additionally, the percentage of respondents dissatisfied with their breaks (16.1%) is higher than those dissatisfied with working hours (7.5%) but slightly lower than those dissatisfied with salary (10.5%). This could indicate that while many migrants are satisfied with their work schedules, some struggle with receiving consistent or sufficient breaks. The results indicate that a majority of migrants (71.0%) are satisfied with their breaks, but a notable 16.1 per cent report dissatisfaction, particularly in labor-intensive or informal jobs. While breaks are generally well-implemented in structured workplaces, challenges exist in sectors where workloads are high, or labor protections are weak. Reinforcing labor law enforcement, improving employer accountability, and educating workers on their rights can help enhance break conditions and overall job satisfaction for migrants in Armenia.

Migrants’ perceptions of safety and health standards at workplaces in Armenia

The survey provides insights into migrants’ perceptions of safety and health standards in their workplaces in Armenia. Among the 331 respondents who answered this question, 47.7 per cent (158 individuals) rated their workplace safety and health standards as “Excellent”, while 26.3 per cent (87 individuals) rated them as “Good”. This means that a majority (74.0%) of migrants are satisfied with safety and health conditions in their jobs. Additionally, 12.1 per cent (40 individuals) provided a neutral rating, suggesting they do not feel particularly positive or negative about workplace safety. Nevertheless, 11.8 per cent (39 individuals) rated the safety conditions as “Poor” or “Very Poor”, indicating dissatisfaction. A small percentage, 2.1 per cent (7 individuals), responded with “Don’t know”.

The high 74.0 per cent satisfaction rate for safety and health standards suggests that most migrants work in environments where safety regulations are followed, and workplace conditions are secure. This could be attributed to strict workplace safety regulations in formal employment, particularly in industries such as IT (26.9%), education (4.1%), and medicine (1.1%), which tend to have well-established safety protocols and higher compliance with national labour laws.

12.1 per cent neutral rating suggests that some migrants do not find safety conditions problematic but also do not perceive them as outstanding. These individuals may be working in jobs where safety is not a primary concern, or where risks exist but are manageable. The 11.8 per cent dissatisfaction rate (those rating safety as “Poor” or “Very Poor”) is significant because it represents a portion of workers who may be exposed to hazardous conditions, insufficient protective measures, or workplace risks. These individuals may work in physically demanding or hazardous industries, such as construction (10.7%) and manufacturing (5.5%); or be employed informally, without legal protections that ensure workplace safety standards are met. Or just face occupational hazards due to a lack of employer investment in proper safety measures. 2.1 per cent of respondents who answered “Don’t know” suggest that some migrants may not be fully aware of workplace safety policies or may work in environments where safety concerns are minimal. The missing system data (36.5%) likely includes unemployed individuals, self-employed migrants, or those not engaged in physically demanding work where safety standards are a concern.

The survey findings suggest that a strong majority of migrants (74.0%) are satisfied with workplace safety and health conditions, but a notable 11.8% report concerns about workplace hazards. While formal employment settings tend to have good safety regulations, certain industries - especially construction and manufacturing – may expose workers to greater risks. Strengthening labour law enforcement, expanding access to safety resources, and improving awareness of workplace rights can further enhance job safety and well-being for migrants in Armenia.

When comparing salary satisfaction, working hours, break satisfaction, and safety standards, the data reveals that: Safety and health standards (74.0 per cent satisfied) receive a higher positive rating than salary (60.7%) and breaks (71%) but slightly lower than working hours (73.1%); The percentage of respondents dissatisfied with safety (11.8%) is higher than those dissatisfied with working hours (7.5%) but lower than those dissatisfied with breaks (16.1%) and salary (10.5%). This suggests that while most workplaces are safe, certain sectors expose workers to higher risks.

Migrants in office-based jobs (IT, education, management) are more likely to rate safety positively, as these industries pose minimal physical risks. Workers in construction, services, and manufacturing may report higher dissatisfaction due to increased exposure to occupational hazards. Migrants working without a formal contract (39.6%) or work permit (39.9%) may be at greater risk of poor safety conditions, as informal employment often lack enforcement of labour protections.

The dataset provides insights into migrants' perceptions of their employers' compliance with labour laws in Armenia. Among the 331 respondents who answered this question, 48.3 per cent (160 individuals) rated their employer's compliance as "Excellent", while 21.1 per cent (70 individuals) rated it as "Good". This means that a strong majority (69.4%) of migrants believe their employers follow labour laws effectively. Furthermore, 13.3 per cent (44 individuals) provided a neutral rating, suggesting that they do not feel strongly positive or negative about labour law compliance. However, 12 per cent (40 individuals) rated compliance as "Poor" or "Very Poor", indicating dissatisfaction. A small percentage, 5.1 per cent (17 individuals), responded with "Don't know".

The high 69.4 per cent satisfaction rate for labour law compliance suggests that many employers in Armenia adhere to labour regulations and provide legal work conditions for migrant workers. This could be due to a strong formal employment sector where contracts and work permits are issued properly; to migrant workers in industries such as IT (26.9%), education (4.1%), and medicine (1.1%) being more likely to experience structured and compliant work environments; to employers recognizing the importance of maintaining legal compliance to attract and retain skilled migrant workers.

The 13.3 per cent neutral rating suggests that some migrants either do not have a clear understanding of labour laws or do not feel strongly about their employers' compliance. These individuals may work in sectors where labour regulations are followed inconsistently or where compliance is not a significant concern. The 12 per cent dissatisfaction rate (those rating compliance as "Poor" or "Very Poor") is concerning, as it represents a portion of migrant workers who may be employed in informal jobs or experiencing labour rights violations. These individuals may work in industries with high rates of informal employment, such as construction (10.7%) or services (36.2%); may be employed without proper contracts (39.6%) or work permits (39.9%), limiting their ability to demand legal protections; or may experience wage disputes, long working hours, or workplace exploitation due to a lack of employer accountability.

5.1 per cent of respondents who answered "Don't know" suggest that some migrants may not be fully aware of their labour rights or the legal obligations of their employers. This indicates a need for greater awareness and education in labour law protections. The missing system data (36.5%) is likely to include unemployed individuals, self-employed migrants, or those working in informal arrangements where compliance with labour laws is not easily assessed.

When comparing salary satisfaction, working hours, break satisfaction, safety standards, and labour law compliance, the survey data reveals that employer compliance with labour laws (69.4% satisfied) is rated slightly lower than safety and health standards (74.0%) and working hours (73.1%) but higher than salary satisfaction (60.7%). Furthermore, the percentage of respondents dissatisfied with labour law compliance (12%) is slightly higher than those dissatisfied with safety

standards (11.8%) and working hours (7.5%) but lower than dissatisfaction with breaks (16.1%) and salary (10.5%). This suggests that while many employers follow labour laws, some workers - especially those in informal work – still experience challenges.

Migrants' attitude towards the integrity of their employers

Migrants in formal employment, such as IT, education, and management, are more likely to rate labour law compliance positively. Workers in construction, services, and manufacturing may report higher dissatisfaction due to more frequent labour law violations. Migrants working without a formal contract or work permit may be more vulnerable to non-compliance issues, including wage theft, lack of benefits, and excessive work hours.

The survey findings suggest that a majority of migrants (69.4%) believe their employers comply with labour laws, but a significant 12 per cent report concern about violations, particularly in informal jobs. While formal employment settings tend to have strong legal protections, certain industries – especially construction, services, and manufacturing – may expose workers to non-compliance with labour law. Strengthening labour law enforcement, increasing access to formal employment, and improving awareness of labour rights can further enhance employer compliance and job security for migrants in Armenia.

Migrants' perception of job security in Armenia

The survey dataset provides insights into migrants' perceptions of job security in Armenia. Among the 331 respondents who answered this question, 43.5 per cent (144 individuals) rated their job security as "Excellent", while 22.4% (74 individuals) rated it as "Good". This means that a strong majority (65.9%) of migrants feel secure in their employment. Furthermore, 18.1 per cent (60 individuals) provided a neutral rating, suggesting they do not feel particularly secure or insecure about their jobs. Nonetheless, 13.9 per cent (46 individuals) rated their job security as "Poor" or "Very Poor", indicating a notable level of concern. A small percentage, 2.1 per cent (7 individuals), responded with "Don't know".

The 65.9 per cent satisfaction rate for job security suggests that most migrants in Armenia work in relatively stable jobs, possibly due to formal employment contracts that provide stability and legal protections; To employment in sectors with strong labour demand, such as IT (26.9%), education (4.1%), and services (36.2%); To employer adherence to labour laws, as seen in previous data where 69.4% of migrants believed their employers complied with legal requirements. The 18.1 per

cent neutral rating suggests that some migrants may have concerns about job retention but do not perceive immediate risks of losing their employment. These individuals might be working in project-based jobs, part-time roles, or industries where contracts are short-term.

The 13.9 per cent dissatisfaction rate (those rating job security as “Poor” or “Very Poor”) is significant and could indicate that some migrants experience instability due to temporary contracts, seasonal work, or informal employment. These individuals may work in sectors prone to high turnover, such as construction (10.7%) and hospitality (part of services at 36.2%); or be employed without written contracts (39.6%) or work permits (39.9%), making them vulnerable to sudden job loss; or experience challenges related to work visa renewals or employer dependency, which may affect job security.

2.1 per cent of respondents who answered “Don’t know” suggest that some migrants may not have clear expectations regarding their job stability or are new to their roles. The missing system data (36.5%) is likely to include unemployed individuals, self-employed migrants, or those working informally without a clear long-term job structure.

When comparing job security with other aspects of employment, such as salary, working conditions, and employer compliance with labour laws, the data reveals that job security (65.9% satisfied) ranks slightly lower than employer compliance with labour laws (69.4%) and working hours (73.1%) but higher than salary satisfaction (60.7%); that the percentage of respondents dissatisfied with job security (13.9%) is higher than those dissatisfied with employer compliance (12.0%) and safety standards (11.8%) but lower than dissatisfaction with breaks (16.1%). This suggests that while most migrants feel secure in their jobs, certain groups - especially those in informal work – face instability.

To sum up, migrants in high-demand industries, such as IT and education, are more likely to feel secure in their jobs. Workers in temporary, project-based, or seasonal roles may report lower job security due to contract limitations. Migrants without a formal contract or work permit are at greater risk of job loss and exploitation, contributing to lower job security perceptions.

The survey findings suggest that most migrants (65.9%) feel secure in their jobs, but a significant 13.9% experience concern about job stability, particularly in informal or temporary employment. While formal employment tends to provide strong job security, certain industries – especially construction, hospitality, and project-based work – may expose workers to greater instability. Strengthening employment protections, improving access to legal work permits, and expanding long-term job opportunities can enhance job security and economic stability for migrants in Armenia.

Workplace challenges and labour rights violations experienced by migrants in Armenia

The dataset provides insights into workplace challenges and labour rights violations experienced by migrants in Armenia. Among the 439 respondents who answered this question, a majority (65.6%) reported experiencing no workplace issues, indicating that most migrants perceive their work environments as fair and compliant with labour standards. Nonetheless, 34.4 per cent (151 individuals) reported at least one form of workplace difficulty, ranging from wage-related concerns to unsafe conditions and various forms of abuse.

The most commonly reported issue was wage delays or underpayment (13.4%), followed by unpaid wages (7.1%). This suggests that financial instability caused by employer non-compliance is a primary concern for a significant portion of migrant workers. Migrants facing wage-related issues may be employed in low-wage sectors, informal jobs, or positions where employers exploit legal loopholes. Delayed or underpaid wages can impact migrants' ability to cover living expenses, send remittances, or maintain financial security.

Another significant concern is excessive working hours (6.4%). This issue may be particularly prevalent in industries where labour laws are less enforced, such as construction, hospitality, or domestic work. Overworking beyond contract terms can lead to burnout, stress, and other health issues, affecting overall job satisfaction and productivity.

Unsafe working conditions were reported by 3.2 per cent of respondents, highlighting that some workplaces fail to meet basic health and safety standards. This is particularly concerning for migrants working in construction, manufacturing, and manual labour jobs, where safety risks are inherently higher. Strengthening workplace inspections and compliance enforcement could help reduce occupational hazards.

While physical and psychological abuse were reported at relatively lower rates (1.4 per cent and 0.9 per cent respectively), these instances still indicate that a small but vulnerable group of migrant workers are subjected to workplace violence. Gender-based violence (0.5%) and confiscation of passports (0.9%) also present significant human rights concerns, particularly for migrant workers in precarious employment situations. The confiscation of passports, while uncommon, indicates possible elements of forced labour or exploitative employer control, which deserves further investigation.

The presence of "Other" responses (0.7%) suggests that some workers may experience additional workplace challenges not explicitly listed in the survey. These could include issues such as job insecurity, discrimination, or limited access to legal protections. The missing system data (15.7%) likely includes individuals who are self-employed, unemployed, or did not feel comfortable disclosing workplace concerns.

When comparing these findings with other employment-related data, several trends emerge, namely, although 65.6 per cent of respondents reported no workplace issues, 39.6% of workers had no written contracts, and 39.9 per cent were not registered with a work permit. This suggests that some migrants may be experiencing violations but lack legal protections or awareness of their rights. Job security (65.9%) and employer compliance with labour laws (69.4%) were both rated positively by the majority of respondents, yet financial and contract-related violations remain a challenge. This may indicate inconsistencies in labour law enforcement across industries; migrants in sectors like IT, education, and healthcare are likely to face fewer workplace violations, whereas those in construction, hospitality, and low-wage service jobs may encounter higher risks.

Migrant workers in manual labour jobs (e.g., construction, agriculture, domestic work) may be more prone to wage delays, unpaid wages, and unsafe working conditions. Women in lower-income sectors may face greater risks of gender-based violence or workplace discrimination, though underreporting may obscure the full scope of the issue. Highly skilled workers in formal employment (e.g., IT, finance, and research) are likely to experience fewer workplace violations due to stronger labour protections and written contracts.

While the majority of migrants (65.6%) do not report workplace issues, a significant 34.4% face challenges related to wage violations, excessive hours, unsafe conditions, and even abuse. These issues highlight the need for stronger labour protections, better enforcement of existing laws, and improved access to reporting mechanisms for migrant workers. Addressing financial instability, workplace exploitation, and unsafe conditions can significantly improve the overall well-being and economic integration of migrants in Armenia.

Focusing on gender, 63.7 per cent of male and 69.7 per cent of female respondents reported no incidents of abuse or exploitation at work, indicating that the majority of migrants surveyed did not face serious violations. However, nearly one in three experienced at least one form of mistreatment, with some differences across genders.

Among male migrants, the most frequently reported violations included wage delays or underpayment (14.2%), unpaid wages (8.2%), and excessive working hours (6.0%). Additional concerns included unsafe conditions, physical abuse, and rare cases of gender-based violence and confiscation of passports by employers. These findings suggest that men, often engaged in sectors like construction and services, are vulnerable to economic exploitation and harsh working conditions.

For female migrants, underpayment (11.8%) and excessive working hours (7.6%) also featured prominently, along with psychological abuse (1.7%) and gender-based violence (0.8%). The rates of unsafe work environments, passport confiscation, and unpaid wages were generally lower among women than men, though the gender-based violence reported, albeit by a small number, underscores

the risk of gender-specific workplace abuses, particularly in informal or unregulated sectors.

Specific workplace violations and labour rights concerns

The dataset provides insights into specific workplace violations and labour rights concerns experienced by a subset of migrants in Armenia. Among the 56 respondents who answered this question, a majority (33.9%) reported wage delays or underpayment per contract, making it the most commonly experienced issue. This suggests that financial instability due to employer non-compliance is a significant challenge faced by migrants in the labour market.

Unsafe working conditions were reported by 16.1 per cent of respondents, highlighting potential gaps in occupational safety and health standards. This is particularly concerning for migrants in high-risk sectors such as construction, manufacturing, and manual labour jobs, where safety regulations may not be strictly enforced. Excessive working hours beyond contract terms (21.4%) was another prevalent issue, reflecting possible exploitation of migrant workers who may lack legal protections or awareness of labour laws.

Although reported at lower rates, psychological abuse (16.1%) and physical abuse (5.4%) indicate that some workers face harassment, bullying, and even physical intimidation in their workplaces. Such issues suggest a need for stronger mechanisms to report and address workplace violence. Gender-based violence, including harassment and discrimination (3.6%), though less frequently reported, remains a critical concern as it points to vulnerabilities among female and minority workers.

A particularly alarming issue is the confiscation of passports by employers (3.6%). This practice can be indicative of forced labour and exploitative employment relationships, as it restricts workers' freedom and mobility. While the overall percentage is low, such cases warrant immediate intervention by labour authorities and legal institutions.

The low response rate (56 out of 521, or 10.7 per cent) suggests that many migrants either did not experience workplace violations or chose not to disclose them. However, the presence of severe violations among those who did report indicates that certain industries or employer types may be more prone to labour exploitation.

Compared to previous findings where 39.6 per cent of employed migrants lacked written contracts and 39.9 per cent were not formally registered, these labour rights violations align with the prevalence of informal employment and lack of legal protections. While 65.6 per cent of migrants in an earlier question reported no

workplace issues, the fact that a subgroup of workers faces contract breaches, unsafe conditions, and abuse underscores the uneven enforcement of labour protections across industries.

Although the majority of migrants may not directly report workplace issues, a significant portion of those who do face serious violations, including wage theft, unsafe conditions, excessive hours, and abuse. Addressing these issues requires stronger enforcement of labour laws, enhanced reporting mechanisms, and increased awareness among migrants regarding their rights and protections. Strengthening labour policies and employer accountability will help ensure fair and safe working conditions for all migrant workers in Armenia.

The data on workplace experiences highlights significant exposure to labour rights violations among migrants in Armenia, with clear gendered patterns. A majority of respondents reported no negative experiences – 63.7 per cent of men and 69.7 per cent of women – but this also means that a sizeable minority did face difficulties at work.

Among male respondents, the most common issues were wage delays or underpayment (14.2%), unpaid wages (8.2%), and excessive working hours beyond contract terms (6.0%). Other concerns included unsafe working conditions (3.2%), physical abuse (1.9%), and psychological abuse (0.6%). While fewer men reported gender-based violence (0.3%) or confiscation of passports (0.9%), the diversity of issues suggests a broad spectrum of labour exploitation risks.

Female respondents reported slightly lower rates of most violations, but certain issues stood out. Wage delays (11.8%) and excessive hours (7.6%) were also common, as were unpaid wages (4.2%) and unsafe conditions (3.4%). Notably, gender-based violence and psychological abuse were more prevalent among women (0.8 per cent and 1.7 per cent, respectively), highlighting specific vulnerabilities tied to gender. Passport confiscation affected 0.8 per cent of women as well.

Specific workplace challenges

The dataset provides insights into specific workplace challenges experienced by a small subset of 21 respondents who reported facing difficulties at work. Unsafe working conditions (42.9%) emerged as the most frequently reported issue, highlighting concerns about occupational safety and health for migrants in the Republic of Armenia. This suggests that almost half of those who reported issues are working in environments that do not meet safety standards, potentially exposing them to risks such as workplace accidents, hazardous conditions, or lack of proper protective measures.

Excessive working hours beyond contract terms (33.3%) was the second most common issue, revealing that a significant proportion of workers face exploitation

through prolonged work schedules. This may indicate a lack of enforcement of labour laws or workers being pressured into unpaid overtime. Migrants are particularly vulnerable to such practices due to limited legal protections, dependency on employers, and potential language barriers preventing them from asserting their rights.

While reported at lower rates, psychological abuse (19%) and physical abuse (4.8%) highlight cases of workplace mistreatment, harassment, and intimidation. The presence of physical abuse, although a small percentage, is alarming and suggests that some migrants may be experiencing coercion, threats, or violence in their workplaces. This issue requires urgent attention, as it can indicate deeper systemic problems, including power imbalances and lack of accountability within certain employment sectors.

The small sample size (21 out of 521 respondents, or 4 per cent) suggests that either these issues are not widespread or that many migrants are hesitant to report workplace abuses due to fear of retaliation or job loss. The 96 per cent non-response rate could indicate that a large number of workers do not experience these issues, but it could also reflect underreporting due to concerns about employer backlash.

When compared to previous data on workplace violations, wage delays, underpayment, and unsafe conditions were also prominent concerns. This indicates a recurring pattern of labour rights violations that may be concentrated in specific industries such as construction, manufacturing, and domestic work. A previous dataset found that 39.6 per cent of migrants lacked written contracts, and 39.9 per cent were not formally registered with work permits. The current data aligns with these findings, suggesting that informal employment arrangements increase the risk of workplace exploitation.

While the low response rate suggests either limited incidents or underreporting, the presence of serious labour violations, including unsafe conditions, excessive work hours, and psychological abuse, indicates a need for stronger protections. Addressing these challenges through policy interventions, employer accountability, and worker education will be crucial in ensuring a safer, fairer working environment for migrants in Armenia.

Experienced workplace violations

The dataset presents insights into workplace violations experienced by a small subset of 12 respondents (2.3%), indicating a low reported incidence of labour exploitation among migrants in Armenia. However, the fact that these violations exist raises concerns regarding labour rights enforcement and workplace protections.

Excessive working hours beyond contract terms (41.7%) was the most commonly reported issue, revealing that nearly half of the respondents who faced workplace

violations were required to work beyond their agreed contractual hours. This suggests that some employers may be exploiting migrant workers by enforcing overtime without proper compensation or violating Armenia's labour regulations.

Psychological abuse (41.7%) was equally prevalent, indicating that verbal harassment, bullying, and other forms of intimidation are a serious concern in some workplaces. This aligns with previous data that pointed to cases of workplace mistreatment, particularly in sectors with informal employment arrangements.

Physical abuse (8.3%) and confiscation of passports by the employer (8.3%) were reported at lower rates but remain serious violations of labour rights. The presence of physical abuse and forced labour indicators (such as passport confiscation) suggests that some migrant workers may be experiencing coercion or forms of labour exploitation. Although these percentages are low, they highlight a need for stronger enforcement mechanisms and legal protections.

The very low overall response rate (12 out of 521 respondents, or 2.3%) could suggest that these issues are not widespread or that migrants may be reluctant to report workplace abuses due to fear of retaliation. Given that 97.7 per cent of respondents did not answer this question, underreporting remains a possibility. Prior datasets have shown that 39.6 per cent of migrants do not have written contracts, and 39.9 per cent are not formally registered with work permits. This lack of formal employment arrangements likely increases workers' vulnerability to excessive work hours, psychological abuse, and contract violations. Previous reports on unsafe working conditions and excessive hours found similar trends, suggesting that workplace exploitation is not isolated but a recurring issue within certain sectors. Migrants working in manual labour, domestic work, and lower-wage industries may be at higher risk.

Although the reported cases of workplace violations remain low, the nature of the issues – excessive working hours, psychological abuse, physical abuse, and passport confiscation – raises concerns about labour rights enforcement and employer accountability. The findings reinforce the need for stronger workplace protections, improved monitoring, and policies that safeguard migrant workers from exploitation.

Migrant workers' awareness of workplace safety protocols and incident reporting mechanisms

The dataset provides insight into migrant workers' awareness of workplace safety protocols and incident reporting mechanisms in Armenia. Among the 439 respondents who answered this question, 46.2 per cent (203 individuals) reported having a general understanding of workplace safety procedures, while only 10.7 per cent (47 individuals) stated that they were specifically knowledgeable about Armenian workplace safety regulations. Nevertheless, a significant 43.1 per cent

(189 individuals) admitted to having no knowledge of workplace safety protocols or reporting mechanisms.

The findings indicate that less than half of migrant workers are aware of workplace safety guidelines, and only a small fraction (10.7%) have specific knowledge of Armenian safety regulations. This gap in awareness presents a potential risk for workplace accidents, unsafe conditions, and lack of reporting of workplace violations. The large proportion (43.1%) of workers who lack any knowledge of safety protocols raises concerns about their vulnerability to hazardous working environment and their ability to report incidents effectively.

The low awareness of Armenian-specific safety regulations (10.7%) suggests a need for improved training programs and employer-led safety briefings for migrant workers. Given that many migrants work in industries such as construction, manufacturing, and services - sectors that pose higher occupational risks – this knowledge gap could contribute to increased workplace injuries and safety violations.

In this early survey data, 26.3 per cent of workers rated safety and health standards as either poor or neutral, suggesting that many migrants may already be working in suboptimal conditions. The lack of safety knowledge could be a contributing factor to this perception. 20.3 per cent of workers previously reported experiencing wage delays, underpayment, or excessive working hours, which suggests that many workplaces may not be prioritizing worker rights and safety standards. If workers are unaware of reporting mechanisms, they may be less likely to seek redress for labour violations. Among previous respondents, only 60.1 per cent of workers were formally registered with work permits, and 39.9 per cent lacked formal employment contracts. Informal employment structures may further limit access to safety information and increase workplace risks for migrants.

The survey findings highlight a critical gap in workplace safety awareness among migrant workers, particularly regarding Armenia-specific safety regulations. Without proper knowledge, migrants may be unable to identify unsafe conditions or report workplace violations effectively. Addressing this issue requires targeted training, employer responsibility, and stronger enforcement of labour laws to ensure a safer working environment for all migrant employees.

Do migrants feel welcomed by the local community in Armenia

The dataset provides insight into the extent to which migrants feel welcomed by the local community in Armenia. Among the 521 respondents, 46.8% (244 individuals) reported feeling very welcomed, while 33.4% (174 individuals) felt somewhat welcomed. This indicates that a strong majority of 80.2% of migrants have a positive reception in Armenia. Additionally, 15.9% (83 individuals) remained neutral,

suggesting that they neither felt welcomed nor unwelcomed. A small minority of 3.8 per cent (20 individuals) reported feeling somewhat or very unwelcomed.

The data suggests that the overwhelming majority of migrants (80.2%) have been received positively by the local community, reflecting an inclusive social environment for newcomers. The fact that nearly half (46.8%) of all respondents feel very welcomed suggests that Armenian society may be relatively open and accommodating to migrants, whether due to cultural ties, social integration efforts, or community-driven support.

Nonetheless, the 15.9 per cent neutral response rate may indicate that some migrants lack strong social connections or meaningful interactions with the local community. These individuals might not have experienced direct hostility but also have not encountered strong integration support. This group may benefit from community engagement programs, language assistance, or employment initiatives that foster deeper social ties.

The 3.8 per cent of migrants who feel unwelcome represents a small but significant portion of the population that could be experiencing social exclusion, discrimination, or difficulty integrating. While this percentage is relatively low, it is important to identify the underlying causes that contribute to this sentiment. Potential factors could include language barriers, cultural differences, or workplace discrimination.

In previous survey analysed questions, some migrants reported wage disparities and employment challenges, which could contribute to feelings of exclusion or unwelcomeness. The significant percentage of migrants working for local companies (64.0%) may correlate with higher levels of social integration as these individuals are directly interacting with Armenian colleagues. The high rate of migrants receiving assistance with visas, work permits, and accommodations (21.1%) suggests that many benefit from structured migration support systems, potentially easing their transition and contributing to positive reception experiences.

The data reveals that Armenia generally provides a welcoming environment for migrants, with most individuals feeling positively integrated into society. However, some migrants remain socially detached or feel excluded, highlighting the need for targeted integration efforts to ensure that all individuals experience a sense of belonging and support in their new communities.

Focusing on gender, half of all male respondents (50.3%) reported feeling “very welcomed”, and 27.8% felt “somewhat welcomed”, indicating that over three-quarters of men had a positive perception of their reception in Armenia. A smaller proportion (18.5%) expressed neutral feelings, while only 3.4% reported feeling somewhat or very not welcomed.

Among female respondents, a slightly different pattern emerged. While fewer women reported feeling “very welcomed” (39.8%), a larger share (44.7%) felt “somewhat welcomed”. This suggests that women may experience a softer, more

reserved integration, with more falling into the middle ground of social acceptance. Only 5% of women reported feeling unwelcomed, a slightly higher rate than men.

The data on how migrants feel welcomed by the local community in Armenia, disaggregated by country of origin, reveals generally positive trends but also notable differences that appear tied to nationality and possibly broader cultural or geopolitical dynamics.

Migrants from the Republic of India (60.0%), the Syrian Arab Republic (66.7%), the Republic of Belarus (60.0%), and Ukraine (71.4%) report the highest levels of feeling “very welcomed”, suggesting strong community reception and, in some cases, the presence of existing diasporas or shared regional experiences. Similarly, migrants from the Islamic Republic of Iran and the People’s Republic of Bangladesh report majority positive experiences, with many feeling “very” or “somewhat” welcomed.

Migrants from the Russian Federation—the largest national group in the dataset – report more moderate levels of welcome, with only 39.3% feeling very welcomed, and another 40.4% somewhat welcomed. A significant proportion (18.1%) reported neutral feelings, possibly reflecting Armenia’s nuanced public and political perception of Russian migration, particularly in the wake of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine.

The Arab Republic of Egypt and the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka showed more mixed perceptions. Among Sri Lankan migrants, only 16.7% felt very welcomed, while 50% felt only somewhat welcomed, and 8.3% felt unwelcomed –the highest rate of negative response in the dataset. This suggests potential challenges in cultural integration or inclusion in local social networks and due to the fact that these nationalities have smaller diaspora in Armenia compared to, for example, nationals of post-Soviet countries.

Migrants from Central Asian countries (e.g. the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and the Republic of Uzbekistan) and from the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Republic of Ghana (grouped under African countries) reported relatively high levels of perceived welcome, though responses were more evenly split between “very” and “somewhat” welcomed.

Interestingly, respondents from European countries (e.g. the Italian Republic, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) were the only group in which a majority reported feeling very unwelcomed (66.7%), although this group had a very small sample size. These findings could point to unmet expectations or isolated negative experiences rather than systemic exclusion.

Overall, the data suggests that while the majority of migrants feel welcomed in Armenia, the extent of perceived inclusion varies notably by nationality. Migrants from nearby or politically aligned countries tend to report higher levels of social welcome, while those from lesser-known or more culturally distant backgrounds appear to face more challenges. These results point to the importance of intercultural

dialogue, public education campaigns, and inclusive local engagement strategies to foster belonging and mitigate potential social distance based on origin.

Discrimination in housing

The data reveals insights into discrimination in housing based on various factors. Among the 521 respondents, a significant majority of 72 per cent reported facing no discrimination in housing, indicating that most migrants or individuals have not encountered barriers when seeking accommodation. However, discrimination based on nationality or migrant status was the most reported form, affecting 13.4 per cent of respondents. This suggests that migrants face notable challenges in securing housing due to their foreign status, potentially reflecting bias from landlords or housing providers.

Discrimination based on race or ethnicity was experienced by 7.5 per cent of respondents, highlighting that racial or ethnic prejudices exist within the housing sector. This could be linked to social perceptions or stereotypes that influence landlords' willingness to rent to individuals of different ethnic backgrounds. Gender-based discrimination was reported by 3.1 per cent of respondents, indicating that some individuals, particularly women or gender minorities, may face additional hurdles in securing housing. Discrimination based on religion or cultural practices was reported by 3.6 per cent of participants, suggesting that some migrants may struggle with housing access due to their religious identity or associated customs.

Additional segmented data reveals that in a subset of 20 respondents who faced discrimination in housing, the majority, 75 per cent cited nationality or migrant status as the primary reason. This further underscores the significance of nationality as a key factor influencing access to housing. Gender-based and religion-based discrimination accounted for 10 per cent each, while 5 per cent of respondents cited "Other" reasons for discrimination. Furthermore, an isolated case reported in another subset indicates that discrimination based on religion or cultural practices was the sole factor affecting that respondent.

Generally, the data suggests that while most migrants do not face housing discrimination, a notable minority experiences difficulties, primarily due to their migrant status. This pattern points to the need for policies that promote fair housing practices and ensure equal access to accommodation, particularly for migrants and marginalized groups. Addressing these issues through legal protections, awareness campaigns, and support programs for affected individuals could help mitigate housing discrimination and improve overall integration into the local community.

The data on experiences of housing-related discrimination among migrants in Armenia highlights overall high levels of non-discrimination but also reveals important gendered and identity-based differences in exposure to bias.

A clear majority of both men (71.9%) and women (72.0%) reported no experiences of discrimination in housing, indicating that for most respondents, access to housing has not been affected by prejudicial treatment. However, among the minority who did report discrimination, the bases of that discrimination varied by gender.

Among male respondents, the most common form of discrimination was based on nationality or migrant status (12.4%), followed by race or ethnicity (8.7%), and religion or cultural practices (4.5%). Gender-based discrimination was low among men (2.0%).

For female respondents, nationality or migrant status also emerged as the most reported source of housing discrimination (16.1%), but gender-based discrimination was more prominent than among men, with 5.6% of women reporting discrimination on this basis. This suggests that women may face additional barriers in the housing market due to both gender bias and foreign identity, pointing to intersecting forms of disadvantage. Discrimination based on race, religion, or culture was lower among women than among men.

Among individuals identifying with another gender designation, 25% reported experiencing discrimination based on race or ethnicity, while 75% reported no discrimination. Although the sample size is small, this indicates heightened vulnerability to racialized exclusion for some gender-diverse migrants.

Discrimination experienced by migrants in various aspects of life

The survey findings provide an overview of discrimination experienced by migrants in various aspects of life, including housing, workplaces, public services, and social interactions. In terms of housing discrimination, 13.4 per cent reported facing bias based on nationality or migrant status, while 7.5 per cent cited race or ethnicity as a discriminatory factor. Gender-based discrimination affected 3.1 per cent and 3.6 per cent reported facing bias due to religion or cultural practices. Though, the majority, 72 per cent did not experience housing-related discrimination, suggesting that while discrimination exists, it is not widespread in this sector.

Workplace discrimination follows a similar pattern, with 5.8 per cent citing nationality or migrant status as the primary factor, while 5.6% reported experiencing racial or ethnic discrimination. Religion or cultural practices were a source of bias for 3.1 per cent and 1.5 per cent faced discrimination due to language barriers. A small percentage, 0.8 per cent experienced gender-based discrimination in the workplace. Encouragingly, 80.6 per cent of respondents reported no discrimination in their workplace, while 2.3 per cent were not employed at the time of the survey.

Regarding public services, such as healthcare and government offices, discrimination was significantly lower. Only 1.2 per cent reported experiencing bias, with half of

these cases related to nationality or migrant status, and the other half linked to religious or cultural practices. A separate report showed that 0.6% of respondents cited religious discrimination as their primary concern in public services. This indicates that public institutions in Armenia generally provide fair access to services, with only a small subset of migrants encountering difficulties.

Social interactions appear to be the least problematic area regarding discrimination. Only 0.6 per cent reported religious or cultural discrimination in public spaces such as markets. This suggests that, while isolated cases of discrimination exist, social cohesion and community interactions are generally positive for migrants in Armenia.

In general, the data indicates that while discrimination does exist, it is not a widespread issue for the majority of respondents. The most common form of bias is related to nationality or migrant status, followed by race or ethnicity, with smaller percentages reporting issues due to religion, gender, or language barriers. Workplace discrimination appears to be more prevalent than discrimination in public services or social interactions, suggesting the need for stronger policies ensuring equal opportunities and fair treatment for migrant workers. Given that the majority of respondents reported no discrimination in any category, this suggests that Armenia is generally a welcoming environment for migrants, though specific cases of bias warrant further attention. Addressing employment-related discrimination and ensuring fair housing practices could further improve the integration experience for migrants.

Biggest challenge in adapting to life in Armenia

The data on the biggest challenges migrants face when adapting to life in Armenia, disaggregated by gender, reveals clear patterns – most notably the dominant role of language barriers across all groups.

Focusing on gender, language barriers were reported as the top challenge by a majority of men (52.5%) and a significant share of women (40.4%), as well as 75 per cent of those identifying with another gender designation. This highlights a systemic issue in integration, as limited Armenian or Russian language proficiency can impede access to employment, housing, healthcare, and social interaction.

Among men, the next most common challenges included housing difficulties (13.8%), financial instability (10.7%), and a smaller share citing lack of social support (5.1%). Interestingly, 12.1 per cent of men reported no challenges, suggesting that a minority adapted with relative ease, possibly reflecting differences in prior preparation, socioeconomic status, or community networks.

Women, while also citing language as the main barrier, were more likely than men to report housing difficulties (18.6%) and financial instability (14.3%). They also

mentioned cultural differences (6.2%) and lack of social support (6.2%) more often than men. These findings suggest that women may face a broader and more layered set of adaptation challenges, possibly influenced by both gender roles and limited access to formal support systems.

A very small number of respondents also reported challenges related to healthcare access, political situation, or lack of information about services, although these were less common across all genders.

Generally, the data underscores that while language is the primary barrier to integration, there are important gender differences in the types of secondary challenges migrants face. Addressing these issues would require multifaceted integration policies, including accessible language education, gender-responsive housing and employment support, and community-based services that foster social inclusion and reduce isolation.

The data on the biggest adaptation challenges migrants face in Armenia, disaggregated by country of origin, reveals a dominant trend: language barriers are by far the most cited issue across almost all national groups. However, significant variation exists in how this and other challenges are experienced by different communities.

Migrants from the Republic of India (74.8%), the Arab Republic of Egypt (77.8%), the People's Republic of Bangladesh (75%), the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka (66.7%), and the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and Federal Republic of Nigeria (grouped under "African countries," 100 per cent) overwhelmingly identified language as their most serious barrier to integration. This reflects the distance between native languages and Armenian or Russian, as well as limited access to language training services upon arrival.

Respondents from the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and the Republic of Uzbekistan (grouped as Central Asian countries), and from the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Republic of Colombia, and Republic of Chile (grouped under "South American countries") also cited language most frequently, though with slightly more variation. In contrast, migrants from Ukraine and the Russian Federation – where familiarity with Russian is more common – reported lower levels of language difficulty (21.4 per cent and 33.3 per cent, respectively), and higher concern with housing (42.9 per cent for Ukraine, 23 per cent for Russia) and financial instability.

For migrants from Ukraine, 35.7 per cent reported no major challenges, one of the highest proportions in the dataset. However, housing difficulties were still prominent, possibly linked to sudden displacement and lack of preparedness. Similarly, Syrian Arab Republic respondents, despite small numbers, reported financial instability (50%) as the most pressing issue, followed by housing and language. This may reflect the socio-economic precarity of refugee arrivals.

In terms of less common challenges, migrants from the Republic of Belarus uniquely cited cultural differences (40%) as equally significant as language barriers,

suggesting that even among Slavic-speaking groups, social adaptation may pose challenges. A few individuals from Russia and elsewhere also mentioned ecology, political conditions, and lack of access to medicines or legal information, though these were outliers.

Frequency of interactions between migrants and members of the local Armenian community

The survey results provide insights into the frequency of interactions between migrants and members of the local Armenian community. A significant majority, 67.6 per cent report daily interactions, suggesting that most migrants are well-integrated into local social structures, workplaces, or communal spaces. This high level of interaction may indicate a welcoming environment and an opportunity for cultural exchange and integration. Additionally, 19.2 per cent of respondents interact with the local community on a weekly basis, further reinforcing the idea that the majority of migrants maintain regular contact with locals.

Nevertheless, 12.1 per cent of respondents report that they rarely engage with the local community, and a small proportion, 1.2 per cent state that they never interact with locals. While this is a minority, it may reflect barriers to integration, such as language differences, social isolation, or employment in sectors that do not require frequent interaction with local residents. It could also indicate that some migrants primarily engage within their own communities or rely on digital communication for socialization and professional networking.

The numbers suggest that most migrants in Armenia have consistent interaction with the local population, which likely contributes to a sense of inclusion and social integration. However, the presence of individuals with minimal or no interaction points to potential challenges, such as linguistic barriers, discrimination, or the nature of their work and living conditions. Further analysis into the demographic and occupational characteristics of those with limited interactions could provide more insight into the specific factors influencing social integration. Efforts to strengthen social inclusion, such as language training, community programs, or networking opportunities, could be beneficial for those who struggle to connect with the local population.

Biggest challenges migrants face in adapting to life in Armenia

The dataset provides insights into the biggest challenges migrants face in adapting to life in the Republic of Armenia. Language barriers are the most significant issue, affecting 48.9 per cent of respondents, indicating that communication difficulties

remain a key obstacle to integration. Housing difficulties, including affordability, availability, and quality, are the second most common challenge, reported by 15.2 per cent of respondents. Financial instability is another major concern, with 11.7 per cent of respondents highlighting economic hardships as a barrier to adaptation.

A smaller proportion of respondents cited social and cultural challenges. The lack of social support was reported by 5.4 percent, suggesting that some migrants struggle to establish connections within the local community. Cultural differences were an issue for 2.9 per cent of respondents, indicating that adjusting to social norms and customs is a challenge for a smaller but notable portion of the migrant population. Other concerns, such as poor ecology (0.2%), lack of medicines or high healthcare costs (0.8%), and political instability (0.4%), were mentioned but were not as prominent.

Interestingly, 11.9 per cent of respondents stated that they faced no challenges in adapting to life in Armenia, indicating that some migrants have successfully integrated into society without significant difficulties. This group may include those with prior knowledge of Armenian language and culture, those who migrated for work with established support systems, or individuals with higher economic stability.

Another subset of responses highlights financial instability as the dominant issue (94.4 per cent of those respondents), reinforcing the importance of economic security in successful integration. Additionally, one respondent identified poor ecology as a major issue, reflecting an individual concern rather than a widespread problem.

Generally, the findings suggest that Armenia's integration efforts should focus on language education and economic opportunities for migrants, as these are the most pressing issues. Addressing housing affordability and accessibility could also enhance migrants' experiences. Additionally, fostering social networks and cultural exchange programs could help migrants overcome social adaptation challenges. Ensuring access to employment, stable income, and affordable living conditions will likely improve the overall migrant experience in Armenia.

The data on adaptation challenges in Armenia, disaggregated by gender, reveals that language barriers are the most significant obstacle across all groups. Among male respondents, over half (52.5%) identified language difficulties as their primary challenge, followed by housing issues (13.8%), financial instability (10.7%), and lack of social support (5.1%). A notable portion (12.1%) reported facing no challenges at all. Other issues such as cultural differences, healthcare access, and political concerns were mentioned by a small minority.

Among female respondents, language barriers also topped the list but at a lower rate (40.4%) compared to men. Women more frequently reported challenges related to housing (18.6%), financial instability (14.3%), and cultural differences

(6.2%), suggesting a broader set of vulnerabilities in their adaptation experience. A similar share of women (11.2%) indicated no significant challenges.

Overall, the analysis by gender confirms that language remains the primary barrier to integration. However, gendered differences emerge, with women reporting relatively more difficulties in housing, finances, and cultural adjustment. These findings underscore the need for gender-sensitive integration strategies, including expanded language training, accessible housing solutions, and community-based social support mechanisms.

Migrant workers' awareness and access to support regarding their rights in Armenia

The dataset provides insights into migrant workers' awareness and access to support regarding their rights in Armenia. The responses indicate a varied level of knowledge among migrants, with a significant portion lacking full awareness of their legal rights and protections.

A substantial percentage, 23.4 per cent reported being not at all aware or having no access to information about their rights, highlighting a significant knowledge gap that could leave many migrants vulnerable to exploitation or legal challenges. Additionally, 13.4 per cent of respondents were only slightly aware or had minimal access to such information, further emphasizing the limited dissemination of legal knowledge among migrants. Together, these figures indicate that over one-third (36.9%) of migrants have a low level of awareness regarding their rights, suggesting a need for better outreach and legal education initiatives.

The largest group, 26.3 per cent reported moderate awareness and access, indicating that while some migrants have a basic understanding of their rights, they may not be fully informed or confident in navigating legal protections. Meanwhile, 20.7 per cent of respondents indicated that they were mostly aware of their rights, showing that nearly one in five migrants has a strong understanding but may still require additional legal guidance or support.

Only 12.9 per cent of migrants stated that they were fully aware and had access to legal rights and protections, representing a small proportion of the population that feels completely informed about their legal standing in Armenia. This suggests that most migrants lack comprehensive legal knowledge, which could affect their ability to advocate for their rights in employment and social settings.

A smaller percentage (3.3%) reported not knowing their level of awareness, which could indicate a lack of engagement with legal support services altogether. Generally, the data suggests that while some migrants have a fair level of awareness of their rights, a significant portion remains uninformed or only slightly knowledgeable. The findings indicate a clear need for improved legal education and access to support

services for migrants. Initiatives such as multilingual legal aid programs, workshops, and outreach campaigns could help bridge this knowledge gap, ensuring that migrants are better equipped to protect themselves from workplace exploitation, discrimination, and other legal challenges.

Migrant workers' awareness and access to support regarding work registration and procedures

The dataset provides insights into migrant workers' awareness and access to support regarding work registration and procedures, such as obtaining work permits and employment contracts in Armenia. The responses reveal a broad range of familiarity with these processes, with significant gaps in knowledge among certain groups.

A significant 22.1 per cent of respondents indicated that they were not at all aware or had no access to information regarding work registration and procedures, suggesting that a substantial portion of migrants may face barriers in securing legal employment due to a lack of knowledge. Additionally, 9 per cent reported being only slightly aware or having minimal access, which further indicates that over 30 per cent of migrants have limited familiarity with these critical employment processes.

The largest segment of respondents, 25.9 per cent reported being mostly aware of work registration and procedures, indicating that many migrants have a strong understanding but may still need additional guidance. Furthermore, 20.2 per cent stated they were moderately aware, meaning they have a basic understanding but may lack detailed knowledge or the ability to navigate legal employment channels effectively.

Only 16.9 per cent of migrants indicated that they were fully aware and had access to all necessary procedures for work registration, representing a relatively small group that feels completely informed. This suggests that most migrants may still require additional legal support or access to information regarding work permits and contracts.

An additional 6 per cent of respondents stated that they did not know their level of awareness, which could reflect either a lack of engagement with employment-related legal processes or uncertainty about the available support systems.

In general, the data highlights that while some migrants have successfully navigated the work registration system in Armenia, a significant portion remains unaware or only partially informed. These knowledge gaps can create barriers to formal employment and leave migrants vulnerable to labour exploitation or irregular work arrangements. To address this, targeted efforts should be made to improve accessibility to work registration information through workshops, legal aid services, and multilingual resources. Strengthening employer accountability and providing clear guidelines for obtaining work permits and contracts can further enhance

migrant workers' ability to integrate into Armenia's labour market securely and legally.

Awareness and access to various aspects of integration and support structures

The survey dataset provides insights into the level of awareness and access that migrant workers in Armenia have regarding various aspects of their integration and support structures. A substantial portion of respondents (23.4%) reported being completely unaware of their legal rights and protections as migrant workers, while an additional 13.4 per cent had only slight awareness. Together, this suggests that over one-third of migrant workers lack adequate knowledge about their legal status and protections, which could make them more vulnerable to exploitation or difficulties in asserting their rights. However, 26.3 per cent of respondents stated they were moderately aware of these rights, while 20.7 per cent reported being mostly aware, and 12.9 per cent claimed full awareness. These figures indicate that while some migrants are well-informed about their rights, there is still a gap in widespread access to legal knowledge and protections.

When it comes to work registration and procedures, the data suggests a slightly higher level of awareness compared to legal rights. While 22.1 per cent of respondents reported being completely unaware, 9 per cent had slight awareness. Meanwhile, 20.2 per cent of respondents had moderate awareness, 25.9 per cent had high awareness, and 16.9 per cent were fully informed about work registration processes, contracts, and permits. The fact that a combined 42.8 per cent of migrants had little to no knowledge of these procedures suggests that a significant number may face obstacles in legalizing their employment status, which can increase job insecurity.

Housing and accommodation support appeared to be one of the least accessible areas for migrant workers, with 33.8 per cent stating they were completely unaware of available housing support services, while an additional 15.4 per cent had only slight awareness. This means that nearly half of the migrant respondents lacked sufficient information about housing support mechanisms. While 16.7% reported moderate awareness, 17.3 per cent had high awareness, and 12.9 per cent were fully aware, these numbers suggest a significant gap in housing support access. This aligns with previous findings that identified housing difficulties as one of the key challenges for migrants in Armenia.

A particularly concerning finding is the awareness and accessibility of social or community integration programs. A striking 43.4 per cent of respondents stated that they had no knowledge of such programs, while an additional 16.3 per cent had only slight awareness. This suggests that nearly 60 per cent of migrants have limited or no access to community support, which can hinder their social inclusion and adaptation to Armenian society. On the other hand, 18.6 per cent had moderate

awareness, 10.7 per cent had high awareness, and only 6.7 per cent reported full awareness of social integration programs. This highlights a major gap in support structures that facilitate cultural and social integration for migrants.

Generally, the data indicates that migrant workers in Armenia face significant challenges in accessing information and support in key areas of their lives. While a minority are well-informed about their rights, work registration, and support services, a substantial portion remain unaware or only slightly aware, making them more vulnerable to exploitation and hardship. The lack of awareness about social integration programs suggests a need for greater outreach and policy interventions to improve the accessibility of support structures for migrants. Addressing these gaps could lead to improved working conditions, better housing stability, and greater social cohesion between migrants and the local Armenian community.

The dataset reveals that a significant portion of migrant workers in Armenia (40.9%) do not know where to seek support if they experience violence, exploitation, or abuse. While 59.1 per cent of respondents reported being aware of available support services, the fact that over two-fifths of migrants lack this crucial knowledge suggests a major gap in the accessibility and visibility of protection mechanisms.

The high percentage of respondents who do not know where to seek help is concerning, as it indicates that many migrants may be vulnerable to mistreatment without knowing how to access necessary assistance. This lack of awareness can lead to situations where individuals endure abuse or exploitation without reporting it, either out of fear or due to limited knowledge of their rights and available resources.

On the other hand, the 59.1 per cent who are aware of support services reflect the effectiveness of some existing information channels or outreach efforts. However, given previous findings that a considerable percentage of migrants lack awareness about their legal rights, work registration procedures, and integration support, it is likely that those who do know where to seek help are primarily individuals who are already better informed about their rights and services in Armenia.

The data underscores the need for stronger awareness campaigns and targeted interventions to ensure that all migrants, particularly those who may be at greater risk of abuse or exploitation, are informed about where to access legal and social support. Expanding outreach programs through local organizations, employers, and community centres, as well as providing multilingual resources, could help bridge this critical information gap and enhance the overall safety and well-being of migrant workers in Armenia.

The data reveals significant insights into the challenges migrant workers in Armenia face when accessing government and job-related services. While the majority of respondents, 75.8 per cent reported no difficulties, a considerable 24.2 per cent indicated experiencing barriers, particularly in legal, healthcare, and employment-related services.

Residency registration was identified as the most common issue, affecting 65.1 per cent of those who faced difficulties. This suggests that the administrative process may be complex, restrictive, or lacking transparency, leading to delays and uncertainty for migrants seeking legal status. Access to healthcare services was another major concern, with 16.7 per cent reporting difficulties, pointing to issues related to affordability, eligibility, or awareness of available medical support. Social benefits and welfare support were also highlighted by 8.7 per cent of respondents, suggesting gaps in the inclusion of migrants in social security and financial assistance programs. A smaller percentage, 4 per cent faced difficulties with police-related services, including car registration and obtaining a driver's license, which could indicate administrative hurdles specific to non-citizens.

Regarding job-related services, 36.5 per cent of those who encountered challenges reported difficulties with work permit or visa processing. This finding reflects possible inefficiencies, legal uncertainties, and administrative burdens that make securing legal employment challenging. Employment registration and contract verification were identified as an issue by 8.7 per cent of respondents, indicating that some migrants struggle to formalize their employment status, leaving them vulnerable to precarious working conditions. Business registration difficulties were also noted by 6.3 per cent suggesting that entrepreneurial migrants may face legal or bureaucratic restrictions when attempting to start their own ventures.

Legal and administrative barriers present one of the most significant challenges, particularly concerning residency registration and work permits. Many migrants find the system difficult to navigate, which may result in delays or incomplete documentation, affecting their ability to work and access public services. Additionally, gaps in healthcare access and social protection highlight a need for greater inclusion in public health services and better dissemination of information about available welfare support. Employment formalization remains another area of concern, as those struggling with contract verification may be more susceptible to informal or exploitative work conditions. Similarly, barriers to business registration may prevent migrants from fully contributing to the local economy through entrepreneurship.

Addressing these challenges requires a series of policy improvements and support mechanisms. Simplifying administrative processes, such as streamlining residency registration and digitizing work permit applications, could help reduce bureaucratic delays and increase transparency. Improving access to healthcare and social services is also crucial, which could be achieved through awareness campaigns to educate migrants on their entitlements and by making policy adjustments that facilitate easier access to health insurance and social welfare programs. Strengthening employment protections through better work contract enforcement would ensure that migrant workers are treated fairly and have legal job security. Additionally, simplifying business registration for migrants could encourage self-employment and foster economic contributions.

Another important step is the development of migrant assistance centres that provide one-stop services for legal aid, job registration support, and social assistance. These centres could serve as key resources for migrants seeking help with residency status, employment contracts, or integration into local communities. Furthermore, improving data collection and monitoring would allow for periodic assessments of the effectiveness of migrant integration policies and help identify new challenges as they arise.

While most migrants do not report major difficulties in accessing services, the significant proportion that does highlights the need for targeted interventions. Enhancing accessibility, improving legal protections, and fostering better social integration would create a more supportive environment for migrant workers in Armenia, ultimately benefiting both migrants and the broader society.

The data on barriers faced by migrants in registering their work or residence status highlights several challenges. Among the respondents, 27.8 per cent cited language barriers as the primary obstacle, indicating that communication difficulties hinder access to legal registration processes. Lack of information was reported by 13.6 per cent suggesting that many migrants struggle with understanding the requirements or accessing relevant guidance. High fees were also a concern for 13.4 per cent pointing to financial constraints as a significant challenge in securing legal status. Moreover, 10.4 per cent of respondents faced difficulties due to complex paperwork, reflecting bureaucratic hurdles that may slow down or discourage formal registration.

A notable finding is that 29.2 per cent of respondents reported facing no barriers, indicating that for some migrants, the process was smooth, or they had adequate support. However, other barriers included long waiting times for obtaining work permits or residence status (1.2%), issues with the functionality of registration websites (0.6%), and long queues (1.3%). A small percentage (1.7%) indicated that they did not register, which could be due to various reasons, including difficulty navigating the system or lack of necessity.

A second dataset segment shows that among those facing challenges, 36.7 per cent struggled with language barriers, reinforcing the earlier finding that communication difficulties significantly affect registration. Additionally, 40 per cent cited a lack of information, emphasizing the need for clearer guidance and resources. Complex paperwork was again mentioned by 15.8 per cent reinforcing the need for simplified administrative procedures.

The survey data suggests that while some migrants experience a smooth registration process, a significant portion face structural barriers that impede their ability to register their work or residence status. Language barriers emerge as the most common challenge, followed closely by insufficient information and bureaucratic complexity. High registration fees also act as a deterrent, especially for migrants with limited financial resources.

These challenges indicate potential gaps in policy implementation and accessibility

of services for migrants. The presence of migrants who did not register or found the process too difficult suggests that some individuals may be working or residing in Armenia without formal documentation, which can expose them to vulnerabilities such as lack of labour protections and difficulties accessing essential services.

The analysis of migration policy satisfaction in Armenia reveals a mixed perception among migrants. A significant portion of the respondents, 47.6 per cent expressed full satisfaction with the existing migration policies, while an additional 26.3 per cent were satisfied but with some concerns. However, a smaller but notable segment, 5.4 per cent indicated dissatisfaction, and 4 per cent were completely dissatisfied. Furthermore, 16.7 per cent of respondents stated that they did not know enough about migration policies to form an opinion, highlighting a gap in awareness.

Among those who had concerns or were dissatisfied, the primary issues revolved around bureaucratic difficulties and lack of information. One of the most frequently cited problems was the complexity of visa and work permit processes, which 23.6 per cent of respondents found challenging. Another major concern was the lack of accessible information and guidance about migration policies, with 26.5 per cent expressing that they struggled to understand their rights and requirements. High costs associated with migration procedures were also an issue for 13.8 per cent of the respondents, making legal compliance financially burdensome for many. Additionally, 3.6 per cent of respondents noted inconsistent enforcement of migration policies, suggesting that experiences with immigration procedures varied depending on circumstances or officials involved. Another 7.3% of migrants reported insufficient access to public services, including healthcare and housing, which directly impacted their quality of life. Discrimination and unfair treatment were also noted, though by a smaller proportion at 2.2 per cent but still warrant attention as they indicate social and systemic challenges.

Difficulties in work and residence registration further demonstrate the barriers migrants face in Armenia. Language barriers were the most significant obstacle, affecting 27.8 per cent of respondents, making it challenging for them to navigate administrative processes. A lack of accessible information was another major issue, reported by 13.6 per cent of migrants. Additionally, 10.4 per cent found the paperwork to be overly complex, further complicating the registration process. High fees for registration discouraged 13.4 per cent of respondents, while long processing durations, system inefficiencies such as malfunctioning websites, and long queues added to the frustrations of many. A small but significant number, 1.7 per cent chose not to register at all due to these difficulties.

Beyond registration issues, 24.2 per cent of migrants reported challenges in accessing government services. The most common difficulty was residency registration, which 65.1 per cent of affected migrants struggled with. Accessing healthcare was another major concern, reported by 16.7 per cent while 8.7 per cent faced obstacles in obtaining social benefits. Some migrants (4.0%) reported

difficulties in accessing police services, such as car registration or driver's licenses, indicating broader administrative inefficiencies.

Job-related services also present significant challenges. Among those facing difficulties, 36.5 per cent struggled with work permit or visa processing, a critical barrier that hinders formal employment. Employment registration and contract verification were difficult for 8.7 per cent of migrants, while 6.3 per cent found business registration to be problematic. Notably, 44.4 per cent of migrants who reported on job-related services stated they faced no difficulties, indicating that while there are systemic issues, a portion of the migrant population successfully navigates these processes.

Awareness of rights and available support services also emerged as a key issue. While 59.1 per cent of migrants knew where to seek support if they experienced violence, exploitation, or abuse, 40.9 per cent did not, indicating a serious gap in awareness that could leave many vulnerable. In terms of knowledge about migrant rights, legal protections, and administrative procedures, 23.4 per cent were completely unaware, 13.4 per cent were slightly aware, and only 26.3 per cent were moderately aware. Awareness of work registration procedures was similarly low, with 22.1 per cent stating they had no knowledge at all. Housing support awareness was even lower, with 33.8 per cent of migrants completely unaware of available services. The lowest awareness levels were in social and community integration programs, with 43.4 per cent of respondents unaware of their existence.

The findings suggest that while Armenia's migration policies satisfy a considerable number of migrants, significant structural and procedural barriers hinder full integration. The primary concerns include language barriers, bureaucratic complexities, high costs, lack of accessible information, inconsistent policy enforcement, and difficulties in accessing essential public services. Many migrants also lack knowledge about their rights and available support systems, which exacerbates their challenges in settling and working in Armenia.

To improve the situation, Armenia should focus on increasing access to information and guidance through multilingual resources, online platforms, and helplines to help migrants navigate administrative procedures. Simplifying bureaucratic processes, particularly for work permits and residency applications, would also alleviate many difficulties. Standardizing and ensuring the consistent enforcement of migration policies would prevent disparities in experiences and reduce administrative inefficiencies. Addressing financial barriers, such as high costs for registration and permits, would encourage more migrants to comply with formal regulations. Expanding access to public services, particularly healthcare, housing, and welfare benefits, would support better integration and improve the overall well-being of migrants. Strengthening protections for migrant workers against exploitation and discrimination would create a more equitable work environment. Lastly, increasing awareness campaigns about migrant rights and available support services would help ensure that migrants know where to seek assistance when needed.

The analysis of migration governance improvements based on the provided data reveals key areas where respondents feel enhancements are necessary. A significant portion of respondents, 35.3 per cent emphasized the need for streamlining registration processes, indicating that bureaucratic hurdles create challenges for migrants. This suggests that simplifying administrative procedures, such as visa applications and residence permits, would benefit migrants and improve overall efficiency. Additionally, 17.7 per cent of respondents advocated for the introduction of specific work visas, demonstrating the demand for clearer pathways to legal employment for migrants.

Employer oversight was highlighted as a crucial area for improvement, with 15.5 per cent supporting better monitoring of employer practices. This reflects concerns about potential labour exploitation or unfair treatment of migrant workers, reinforcing the need for stronger regulatory mechanisms to protect workers' rights. Meanwhile, 9.2 per cent expressed satisfaction with current policies, indicating that while issues exist, some migrants find the current system adequate.

Accessibility of information on required documents and migration procedures was identified as a priority by 3.1 per cent of respondents. The relatively low percentage suggests that while information access is an issue, it is not as urgent as administrative barriers or employment-related concerns. Similarly, 1.2 per cent noted the need for better-trained migration service workers with multilingual capabilities, emphasizing the importance of staff knowledge and language support in assisting migrants effectively.

Additional recommendations can include simplifying bank account registration for migrants (0.8%), expanding online service availability (1.3%), and offering language courses and social integration programs (1.7%). These responses indicate that digital transformation and language support could enhance migrants' ability to integrate into society and access essential services.

A small percentage (0.6%) suggested simplifying the process for obtaining Armenian citizenship, which implies that some migrants see long-term settlement as a goal but encounter barriers in acquiring legal status. The remaining responses covered diverse concerns such as cost reductions for migration-related services and other miscellaneous improvements.

Inferences drawn from the data suggest that migration governance in Armenia could be significantly improved by reducing bureaucratic complexity, providing dedicated work visas, and ensuring better oversight of employer practices. To enhance integration, authorities should consider investing in accessible information services, multilingual support, and digital platforms for easier document processing. Addressing migrants' concerns regarding high fees and service delays would also contribute to a more effective migration system. The findings highlight a clear preference for administrative efficiency and legal clarity as key factors that would improve the migrant experience in Armenia.

Based on the collected data regarding migration experiences in Armenia, several key trends and challenges emerge. A significant portion of respondents reported interacting with the local community frequently, with 67.6 per cent engaging on a daily basis and 19.2 per cent on a weekly basis. Nonetheless, 12.1 per cent rarely interacted, and 1.2 per cent never did. This suggests that while most migrants integrate into society well, a smaller portion faces barriers to social inclusion. Regarding challenges in adapting to life in Armenia, language barriers emerged as the most significant issue, affecting 48.9 per cent of respondents. Housing difficulties (15.2%), financial instability (11.7%), and a lack of social support (5.4%) were also frequently reported concerns. A notable 11.9 per cent of respondents stated that they faced no challenges, while issues like cultural differences (2.9%), lack of medicines and healthcare costs (0.8%), and political situations (0.4%) were mentioned less frequently.

Awareness and access to migrant rights varied, with 26.3 per cent moderately aware and 20.7 per cent mostly aware. However, 23.4 per cent were not aware at all, and 13.4 per cent had only slight awareness. Similarly, awareness of work registration and procedures showed that 22.1 per cent were not aware, and another 9.0 per cent were only slightly aware. A lack of awareness was even more pronounced for housing or accommodation support, with 33.8 per cent not aware at all, while 17.3 per cent were mostly aware and 12.9 per cent fully aware.

For social or community integration programs, 43.4 per cent of respondents had no awareness, with only 6.7 per cent fully aware. This indicates a significant gap in outreach and support services available to migrants. When asked if they knew where to seek support in case of violence, exploitation, or abuse, 59.1 per cent responded affirmatively, while 40.9 per cent did not, highlighting a crucial area for improvement.

Difficulties in accessing government services were reported by 24.2 per cent of respondents, primarily in residency registration (65.1%), access to healthcare (16.7%), and social benefits (8.7%). Among job-related services, work permit or visa processing was the most frequently cited difficulty at 36.5 per cent.

Barriers in registering work or residence status included language barriers (27.8%), lack of information (13.6%), and complex paperwork (10.4%). However, 29.2% of respondents reported facing no barriers, indicating that for some, the process is manageable.

Satisfaction with Armenia's migration policies revealed that 47.6 per cent were fully satisfied, while 26.3 per cent were satisfied but had concerns. However, 5.4 per cent were dissatisfied, and 4 per cent were completely dissatisfied. The most cited concerns were the complexity of visa and work permit processes (23.6%), lack of information (26.5%), and high costs (13.8%). Limited protections for migrant workers' rights (2.5%) and inconsistent enforcement of policies (3.6%) were also mentioned.

Regarding recommendations for improving migration governance, 35.3 per cent suggested streamlining registration processes, while 17.7 per cent recommended introducing specific work visas. Improved employer oversight (15.5%) and better access to migration-related information (3.1%) were also proposed. Notably, 9.2 per cent felt no improvements were necessary.

A majority of respondents (46.4%) strongly recommended Armenia as a migration destination, while 40.1 per cent would recommend it with some reservations. Nevertheless, 6.3% would not recommend it, and 3.1 per cent would strongly discourage it. Those with reservations or negative opinions cited limited employment opportunities (40.5%), low wages (29.2%), and insufficient migrant support (4.9%) as key concerns.

In general, while Armenia offers a generally favourable migration environment, challenges persist in language barriers, housing difficulties, lack of awareness of migrant rights, and limited access to services. Addressing these concerns through improved policies, better outreach, and more accessible support systems would enhance the overall experience of migrants. It is recommended that the government and relevant stakeholders focus on streamlining administrative procedures, increasing transparency in migration processes, and expanding social support programs to ensure better integration and protection for migrants in Armenia.

Based on the responses regarding long-term plans, a significant majority of migrants, 55.7 per cent expressed their intention to continue living and working in Armenia. This indicates that, for many, Armenia provides a satisfactory environment in terms of employment, living conditions, and overall stability. However, a notable portion, 21.3 per cent plans to migrate to another country, suggesting that while Armenia is an option, it may not be the final destination for many migrants. The reasons behind this could be related to factors such as better economic opportunities, higher wages, or better living conditions elsewhere.

Furthermore, 15.5 per cent of respondents intend to return to their home country, which implies that their stay in Armenia is temporary, possibly driven by short-term work opportunities, political instability in their home country, or other transient factors. A small percentage, 0.6 per cent listed "Other" as their response, indicating unique personal circumstances that do not fit within the given categories. Meanwhile, 6.9 per cent of respondents were unsure of their future plans, which could reflect economic uncertainty, indecisiveness, or a lack of viable alternatives.

The data suggests that while Armenia is a favourable destination for many, improvements in job security, wage competitiveness, and long-term stability could help retain more migrants. Addressing concerns such as limited employment opportunities, wage levels, and access to public services could reduce the percentage of those planning to leave for other countries.

To strengthen Armenia as a long-term migration destination, it is recommended that policymakers focus on enhancing job prospects, increasing wage competitiveness,

and expanding social and legal protections for migrants. Additionally, providing better access to information regarding long-term residency, citizenship pathways, and integration programs could encourage more migrants to settle permanently in Armenia. Improving infrastructure and public services such as healthcare and housing would also contribute to a more stable and attractive environment for migrants considering Armenia as a long-term home.

7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Addressing the Research Questions

This report has examined the evolving landscape of labour migration in Armenia, focusing on the key drivers of migration, the pathways – both regular and irregular – that migrants take, the employment sectors they integrate into, the legal and institutional frameworks governing their work, and the risks they face in terms of trafficking and exploitation. Drawing on findings from both the KIIs and survey data, the study provides a comprehensive analysis of the conditions, challenges, and policy gaps shaping the experiences of migrant workers in Armenia.

RQ1: What have been the main factors driving labour migrants to Armenia over the last three years, particularly in the post-COVID-19 period?

Labour migration to Armenia in the post-COVID-19 period has been influenced by a combination of economic, geopolitical, and policy-related factors. The country's relatively open migration policies, particularly the visa-free regime for citizens of several countries, have facilitated an influx of foreign workers, especially from the Republic of India, the Russian Federation, and Middle Eastern nations. Armenia's economic recovery after the pandemic has created employment opportunities, particularly in the service, construction, and technology sectors, attracting foreign workers seeking better wages and stable employment.

The geopolitical instability in the region, including the war in Ukraine and economic downturns in neighbouring countries, has also contributed to an increase in migration flows to Armenia. Russian nationals, in particular, have relocated to Armenia in large numbers due to political and economic uncertainties in their home country. Similarly, Indian migrants have been attracted by promises of employment in low-skilled jobs, often facilitated by informal recruitment channels.

Additionally, labour shortages in Armenia have encouraged businesses to recruit foreign workers to fill gaps in sectors such as construction and domestic work.

However, despite these opportunities, many migrants experience challenges such as bureaucratic hurdles in securing work permits, employer non-compliance with legal protections, and barriers to social integration.

RQ2: What are the regular and/or irregular migration pathways to Armenia?

Armenia's migration pathways can be categorized into regular and irregular routes, with significant overlap between the two due to gaps in policy enforcement and migrant awareness.

Regular Migration Pathways:

Most migrants enter Armenia through visa-free entry agreements or easily obtainable e-visas. The lack of a formal work visa category means that many migrants initially arrive as tourists and later seek employment. The work permit system exists for those who seek legal employment, but bureaucratic inefficiencies and employer reluctance to formalize contracts make compliance challenging. For highly skilled professionals, employment opportunities in sectors like IT and engineering are more structured, with companies assisting in work authorization.

Irregular Migration Pathways:

Many migrants enter Armenia legally but become irregular due to overstayed visas, employment without work permits, or reliance on fraudulent recruitment agencies. A significant portion of the migrant workforce operates under informal employment arrangements, with employers bypassing labour laws to avoid taxation and social security contributions. The use of service contracts instead of labour contracts has also contributed to irregular employment, as these arrangements lack the legal protections of formal employment contracts.

Human trafficking networks and fraudulent recruitment schemes further contribute to irregular migration. Some migrants, particularly from the Republic of India, report paying large sums to brokers who promise work opportunities but fail to provide proper documentation, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation.

RQ3: What are the main employment sectors for foreign labour migrants in Armenia, and what factors contribute to their employment in these sectors?

Foreign labour migrants in Armenia are primarily employed in the following sectors:

- **Services and Hospitality:** Many migrants, particularly from the Republic of India and the Russian Federation, are engaged in cleaning services, food delivery, and restaurant work. The high turnover rate and

demand for low-skilled labour make this sector reliant on foreign workers.

- **Technology and Engineering:** The IT sector has seen an influx of skilled foreign workers, particularly Russian professionals, due to Armenia's growing tech industry and favourable work conditions.
- **Construction:** This sector employs a significant number of migrant workers due to labour shortages and the physical nature of the work, which many local workers avoid. Employers prefer hiring foreign workers as they are often willing to accept lower wages and work without formal contracts.
- **Manufacturing and Agriculture:** Some migrants are employed in factories and farms, though these sectors remain less structured in terms of formal employment.
- **Domestic Work and Care Services:** Women, in particular, find employment in domestic work and caregiving roles, often without legal contracts or worker protections.

Factors influencing employment in these sectors include:

- **Labour shortages:** Many sectors struggle to attract local workers, leading employers to seek foreign labour.
- **Informal hiring practices:** Employers prefer informal arrangements to reduce costs, evade taxes, and maintain flexibility in workforce management.
- **Migrant vulnerability:** Many migrants lack knowledge of their rights and accept poor working conditions due to economic desperation or misinformation from recruiters.
- **Lack of enforcement:** Weak regulatory oversight allows employers to bypass labour laws without consequences.

RQ4: What government regulations exist regarding foreign labour force management (e.g., rights, safety standards, medical check-ups), and how aware are foreign labour migrants of these regulations?

Armenia has a range of legal provisions governing foreign labour, but enforcement remains inconsistent, and awareness among migrants is low. The main regulatory mechanisms include:

- **Work permits and residency registration:** Employers must apply for a work permit on behalf of foreign employees, and workers must obtain residency permits for long-term employment. However, these processes are often delayed and difficult to navigate. At the same time, while monitoring mechanisms such as Human Rights Defender's office exist and also offer support to working migrants to

working migrants in case of violations of their rights, they are often not sufficiently informed about its existence.

- **Labour rights and contracts:** Armenian labour laws stipulate minimum wages, working hours, and safety standards, but these protections are frequently ignored for foreign workers.
- **Occupational safety and health standards:** While Armenia mandates workplace safety regulations, enforcement is particularly weak in sectors like construction and manufacturing, where accidents and injuries are common.
- **Medical check-ups and social security contributions:** Employers are supposed to provide medical examinations and register employees for social security benefits, but many avoid doing so to reduce costs.
- **Coordination mechanisms within the government require strengthening.** Particularly, the Identification Commission, mandated to formally identify persons as victims of TiP has legally established deadlines for identification procedure. However, these deadlines should be more strictly adhered to in order to ensure timely access of the victims to support mechanisms.

Migrant awareness of these regulations is low due to language barriers, lack of accessible legal guidance, and misinformation spread by brokers and employers. Many workers are unaware of their rights or fear employer retaliation if they report violations. While some government initiatives, such as multilingual information platforms and legal aid services, aim to improve awareness, these efforts remain limited in scope and reach.

RQ5: What are the trafficking and exploitation risks for foreign labour migrants in Armenia?

Migrant workers in Armenia face multiple risks related to labour exploitation and human trafficking, particularly those working in informal employment. The primary risks include:

- **Debt bondage and fraudulent recruitment:** Some migrants, particularly from the Republic of India, pay large sums to recruitment agencies or brokers, only to arrive in Armenia without promised jobs or legal documentation. This situation forces them into exploitative working conditions to repay their debts.
- **Wage theft and underpayment:** A significant portion of foreign workers receive wages below the legal minimum, are forced to work without pay for months, or have illegal deductions taken from their salaries.
- **Passport confiscation and restricted movement:** Some employers confiscate workers' passports, preventing them from leaving abusive employment situations or seeking legal assistance.

- **Unsafe working conditions:** Construction workers, in particular, face hazardous job environments with little regard for occupational safety, leading to high risks of injury and fatalities.
- **While there are documented cases of trafficking for forced labour and sexual exploitation in Armenia,** particularly involving vulnerable migrants with limited legal protections, such cases did not emerge in the research findings. This absence may reflect the hidden nature of these forms of exploitation, underreporting by affected individuals, or limitations in the research sample and methods. Further investigation is needed to assess the extent of these issues (EVN Report 2020; U.S. Department of Labor 2023, 2024).

7.2 Conclusions: towards a more equitable labour migration system in Armenia

The findings of this study illuminate the evolving landscape of labour migration in Armenia, a country that has emerged as an increasingly attractive destination for foreign workers. This shift has been shaped by a combination of economic opportunities, an accessible visa regime, and geopolitical factors that influence migration flows. Drawing on both the KII and survey data, the research highlights a dynamic yet complex migration system – one that offers employment prospects but remains fraught with institutional challenges, informality, and vulnerabilities for migrant workers.

Armenia's relatively open visa policies, particularly for key source countries such as India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the Russian Federation, have played a crucial role in shaping its migration trends. Unlike European destinations, which impose stringent entry requirements, Armenia has adopted a more lenient approach, making it easier for workers from these countries to enter and seek employment. However, the research underscores that while visa accessibility contributes to migration patterns, economic factors remain the primary driver. Wage disparities between Armenia and the countries of origin, coupled with job availability in key sectors, have encouraged a steady influx of foreign labourers. Many migrants view Armenia as a viable alternative to more competitive or bureaucratically complex destinations, particularly for low-skilled employment.

Despite these economic opportunities, significant challenges persist in ensuring the fair treatment and legal protection of migrant workers. One of the most pressing concerns revealed by the research is the prevalence of informal employment. The KIIs provided compelling evidence that a substantial proportion of migrant workers are employed without proper documentation, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation. Employers, particularly in industries with high demand for low-skilled labour such as construction, hospitality, and food services, frequently bypass official work permit processes due to bureaucratic inefficiencies, costs, and delays. As a result, many migrant workers find themselves in precarious employment situations, often working long hours for low wages, with no access to social security, healthcare, or legal recourse in cases of abuse. Survey data corroborates these findings, indicating that many migrants lack formal contracts and are unaware of their legal rights upon arrival.

A critical issue compounding these vulnerabilities is the role of recruitment intermediaries and informal networks. Many migrant workers arrive in Armenia through unregulated channels, often relying on brokers or word-of-mouth recommendations to secure employment. While some of these intermediaries facilitate legitimate placements, the research reveals that many engage in deceptive practices, misrepresenting wages, working conditions, and job security. KIIs

identified multiple cases where workers had paid substantial recruitment fees in their home countries, only to find upon arrival that the promised jobs did not exist or differed significantly from the agreements made. This financial burden makes workers more susceptible to coercion and wage theft, as they often feel compelled to accept poor conditions to recoup their initial investments.

Labour market segmentation is another defining feature of Armenia's migration system. The research indicates that Russian migrants – many of whom have relocated due to geopolitical instability – are more likely to secure employment in higher-skilled sectors such as IT, finance, and professional services. In contrast, migrants from the Republic of India and the Islamic Republic of Iran predominantly occupy low-skilled positions in construction, cleaning, and the food service industry. The KIIs suggest that linguistic barriers, educational qualifications, and access to legal employment pathways contribute to this division, with Russian-speaking migrants integrating more easily into professional roles while others face structural obstacles to securing higher-paying jobs. The survey data reflects these patterns, demonstrating a clear disparity in employment opportunities based on nationality and sector.

Beyond employment conditions, the research highlights serious concerns regarding the living standards of migrant workers. Many low-skilled migrants struggle to find stable and affordable housing, often relying on employer-provided accommodations that fail to meet basic living standards. KIIs revealed cases of workers being charged excessive rental fees for overcrowded and unsanitary housing, with up to ten individuals sharing a single room. Survey respondents echoed these concerns, citing poor housing conditions and limited alternatives due to financial constraints. The absence of regulatory oversight on employer-provided housing exacerbates these issues, as there are currently no enforceable standards to ensure that accommodations meet adequate health and safety requirements.

Labour rights awareness remains another critical challenge. Many migrant workers lack information about their legal entitlements, including minimum wage laws, employment protections, and mechanisms for reporting violations. The KIIs revealed that a significant number of workers arrive in Armenia without any understanding of their rights, making them easy targets for exploitative employment practices. Fear of retaliation from employers, coupled with language barriers and limited access to legal aid, further discourages workers from seeking redress in cases of mistreatment. Survey data supports these findings, with a large percentage of respondents indicating that they had never received information about their rights or legal obligations upon arrival. While Armenia has mechanisms for reporting labour violations, including government hotlines and complaint procedures, these are underutilized due to lack of awareness and trust in enforcement institutions.

Despite these challenges, the research identifies promising developments in Armenia's approach to labour migration governance. Recent policy efforts, such as the digitalization of work permit systems and increased employer accountability measures, signal progress towards a more structured migration framework.

However, enforcement remains a significant issue. KIIs revealed that while laws exist to regulate foreign labour and prevent exploitation, their implementation is inconsistent, particularly in sectors where informal employment dominates. Labour inspections, though legally mandated, face resource constraints and enforcement challenges, limiting their ability to protect workers from rights violations. Survey respondents who reported workplace grievances often cited difficulties in obtaining support from authorities, with some expressing concerns about employer retaliation.

As Armenia continues to adapt to shifting migration trends, a more cohesive and rights-based approach to labour migration governance is essential. Strengthening compliance mechanisms, expanding labour rights education initiatives, and improving the accessibility of legal employment pathways will be crucial in addressing the vulnerabilities identified in this study. Additionally, regulating the role of intermediaries and recruitment agencies can help mitigate deceptive practices and ensure that workers arrive with accurate information about their employment conditions. The introduction of a formalized work visa system, coupled with streamlined registration processes, could further encourage compliance among employers and provide greater legal protections for workers.

Looking forward, sustained collaboration among government agencies, international organizations, civil society, and employers will be critical in shaping a fairer and more sustainable migration system. Strengthening regulatory oversight, ensuring compliance with labour standards, and enhancing enforcement mechanisms will be key to protecting workers from precarious conditions and exploitation. Targeted interventions should also be implemented to combat trafficking and labour abuse, with a particular focus on vulnerable groups. This includes improving access to legal support, increasing awareness among migrants about their rights, and fostering inclusive policies that promote fair and safe employment practices.

Moreover, investing in language and integration programmes can further empower migrant workers, facilitating their participation in the labour market and broader society. Educational initiatives that provide migrants with Armenian language training and guidance on navigating administrative procedures could significantly improve their employment prospects and integration experiences. In parallel, greater employer engagement in ethical hiring practices, fair wage distribution, and the provision of safe working environments will be necessary to ensure sustainable labour migration.

Ultimately, the findings of this study emphasize the need for a dual approach that recognizes the economic contributions of migrant workers to the development of Armenia and ensures that the rights and well-being of all migrants are safeguarded. A comprehensive, rights-based strategy – one that includes stronger regulatory enforcement, employer accountability, and accessible migrant support services – will be essential in fostering an equitable and sustainable labour migration

framework. Moving forward, continued dialogue among policymakers, employers, trade unions, and migrant advocacy groups will be vital in shaping policies that balance economic demand with the fundamental principles of fairness and human dignity.

Recommendations

Building on the findings of the assessment and considering Armenia's geopolitical context, legal and institutional frameworks, as well as the lived experiences of migrants, the following recommendations are structured across macro, meso, and micro levels. Each recommendation is paired with a suggested responsible actor to facilitate targeted and actionable implementation.

Armenia's evolving labour migration landscape presents significant opportunities for economic growth and workforce diversification. Nevertheless, some weaknesses in migration governance, employment regulation, and legal protections expose many migrants to precarious working conditions, wage exploitation, and trafficking risks. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive, whole-of-government approach that enhances legal frameworks, strengthens enforcement mechanisms, and promotes the integration of migrant workers into Armenia's economy and society.

Armenia's labour migration framework also presents notable strengths, including a relatively open visa policy and emerging economic opportunities. However, strong weaknesses in legal enforcement, service accessibility, and labour protections continue to increase the vulnerability of migrant workers. Addressing bureaucratic inefficiencies, improving policy clarity, and reinforcing enforcement mechanisms appear essential to reducing risks of labour exploitation and human trafficking. A multi-faceted approach – encompassing stronger legal protections, improved labour rights enforcement, and targeted social programs – could help ensure fairer conditions for migrant workers while promoting Armenia's long-term economic stability.

Survey results highlighted key areas for improvement from the perspective of migrants themselves. The most commonly suggested changes include streamlining registration processes (35.3%), introducing specific work visas (17.7%), and improving oversight of employer practices (15.5%). Better dissemination of legal information and more accessible migration services were also emphasized. These perspectives underscore the urgency and relevance of implementing targeted, migrant-informed policy changes.

To create a more sustainable and just migration system, the Republic of Armenia is encouraged to strengthen its governance structures and strengthen cooperation within coordination existing mechanisms, such as Anti-Trafficking Council and Inter-Agency Working Group, improve migrant protections, and simplify

administrative processes. Enhancing transparency, reducing bureaucratic hurdles, and expanding social support mechanisms may contribute significantly to both the well-being of migrants and the country's overall economic development.

As indicated by the government stakeholders during the KIIs, greater collaboration between government agencies, employers, and labour rights organizations is required to address issues such as gaps in monitoring of employer's compliance, ensuring contract transparency and preventing exploitation. This includes simplifying work permit procedures, increasing outreach efforts to inform migrants about their rights, and enhancing inspections in industries with high migrant employment.

These recommendations outline a multi-level strategy that Armenia may consider adopting to enhance its governance of labour migration and reduce risks of exploitation and trafficking.

Their effectiveness would likely depend on political commitment, interagency coordination, inclusive stakeholder engagement, and sustained investment in migrant-focused services.

Macro-level recommendations

Armenia could consider introducing a formal work visa system that clearly distinguishes labour migration from other forms of entry, such as tourism or education. This would facilitate proper employment authorization and reduce the risks associated with informal labour. To further enhance compliance, visa tracking mechanisms could be strengthened to monitor status transitions and reduce overstays.

Law enforcement responses to trafficking and exploitation may be enhanced by establishing specialized anti-trafficking units and standardizing victim identification gender and aged sensitive protocols across all frontline services. Training law enforcement, judiciary, and social workers in trafficking investigation techniques and victim-centred approaches could increase justice outcomes and improve victim support.

Bureaucratic processes surrounding work and residency permits might benefit from simplification and digitalization. Migrants could be supported by multilingual materials and help desks, while excessive registration fees might be reduced or subsidized to increase accessibility. Monitoring systems that incorporate employer compliance and permit status tracking would help address the growing prevalence of informal employment.

To protect migrant workers from exploitation and abuse, Armenia may also consider regulating recruitment agencies and tourism companies, many of which are involved in informal labour facilitation. These actors should be licensed and monitored to prevent exploitation. International cooperation and bilateral labour agreements

could formalize migration flows and ensure mutual rights and obligations, with a specific focus on gender protection mainstreaming.

To address non-registration specifically, Armenia could lower the cost of registration fees for foreign workers, introduce fast-track permit processing, and increase employer penalties for non-compliance. Targeted gender and age sensitive awareness campaigns and legal guidance should empower migrants to register independently. Government-monitored employment platforms could provide migrants with access to legal job opportunities while limiting reliance on intermediaries.

The increased volume and diversification of arrivals have significant implications for migration governance, integration policies, and service provision in Armenia. The country may need to scale up language training, employment matching, legal aid, and housing services, particularly for migrants arriving outside established humanitarian channels. Understanding the timing and origin of arrivals is crucial for planning and preparedness. The seasonal patterns observed can inform policy interventions and resource allocation, while geopolitical analysis can support early warning systems for future surges. In sum, Armenia's role in regional and global migration is evolving.

Meso-level recommendations

Enforcement of labour standards could be improved by empowering inspectors with the mandate to monitor informal workplaces and ensure that employers issue written contracts detailing job conditions. High-risk sectors such as construction, domestic work, and hospitality may be prioritized for oversight.

Employers who engage in exploitative practices might face enhanced penalties, including fines, license revocation, and public disclosure. At the same time, businesses that comply with ethical employment standards could be incentivized through tax relief or certification programs.

Migrant workers may benefit from enhanced access to legal aid and complaint mechanisms. Helplines, community legal clinics, and anonymous digital platforms could offer critical support in disputes over wage theft, contract violations, and abuse. Workers should also be educated on the risks of informal employment and the benefits of legal work.

To reduce informality, Armenia could facilitate the transition from informal to formal employment by allowing registration without penalties. Expanding support for migrant entrepreneurs – through business registration assistance, micro-financing, and financial literacy training – would also promote job creation and legal compliance.

Sector-specific interventions could include tailored enforcement frameworks and

worker protections in construction, domestic service, and other high-risk fields. Enhanced monitoring and formalization incentives in these sectors would address widespread informality.

Oversight of service contracts should be strengthened to prevent their misuse as a loophole for avoiding labour protections. Increased inspections in informal-heavy sectors and monitoring of employment intermediaries would close critical gaps in enforcement.

Micro-level recommendations

Gender and age-sensitive migrant-focused awareness campaigns could inform workers about their rights, permit requirements, and available services. These should be multilingual and disseminated across digital platforms, transit hubs, and community networks. Orientation sessions at entry and residence registration points may also be considered.

To support integration, the expansion of free language instruction and vocational training could be prioritized. Courses aligned with Armenia's labour market needs – in sectors like ICT, care work, and engineering – would support upward mobility.

Access to fair housing could be improved by regulating rental practices, introducing housing subsidies, and supporting public-private partnerships in low-cost housing. Discrimination in the rental market should be addressed through legal reform and enforcement.

Armenia may consider implementing a migrant healthcare scheme offering subsidized or free basic coverage. This would be especially impactful for undocumented workers and those in physically demanding jobs.

Working conditions could be improved by enforcing regulations around break times, safety standards, and work hours. Migrants should be educated about occupational health rights, and employers held accountable for violations. Anonymous reporting systems and worker safety training – provided in multiple languages – would reinforce these protections.

To promote job security and fair wages, Armenia might implement wage transparency rules, raise minimum wages in low-paying sectors, and facilitate skill development programs. Employers should be required to formalize contracts and adhere to standard wage practices.

Finally, migrants could be supported in securing long-term employment by encouraging employer compliance, supporting legal work permit renewals, and enhancing job placement services tailored to migrant needs.

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