



Kyrgyzstan  
Briefing note | 01

# NASILIYE AND THE CHILDREN OF MIGRANT WORKERS

Recommendations for local government, law enforcement agencies, educational institutions, and social protection

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*This research has been carried out as part of the [Mobile Arts for Peace – MAP – project](#) that uses interdisciplinary arts-based practices for peacebuilding.*

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**According to UNICEF, more than 11% of children in Kyrgyzstan have at least one biological parent living abroad and children are often left with relatives as their parents seek work. Almost 73% of children report experiencing abuse or neglect in the family.**

Within the MAP framework, school-aged researchers from Sharipova, Uzgen conducted a study among their peers to find out more about the problems that affect young people, prioritizing the issue of violence against children of labor migrants. Together with the youth committee at mayor's office of Uzgen, they have identified a set of recommendations to take action against this violence.

## **Local government should:**

- Take on the task of coordinating the efforts of **all** relevant structures to strengthen the responsibility of parents and establish mechanisms for formalizing official guardianship.
- On an ongoing basis, conduct monitoring to identify the children of migrants and provide them and their families with social and legal assistance.
- Hold public information meetings about the responsibilities related to harsh treatment of children.

## **Law enforcement agencies should:**

- Hold public information meetings on international instruments and national laws prohibiting violence against children.
- Promote prevention with parents and their relatives, strengthen measures to protect children from violence and provide assistance to families and children.

## **Educational institutions should:**

- Strengthen work with parents on the prevention of child abuse.
- Strengthen communication between parents and relatives.

## **Social protection should:**

- Conduct preventive conversations with parents and relatives at risk, interact with schoolteachers and monitor disadvantaged families.

## **Why is this research important?**

Economic conditions in Kyrgyzstan drive more than 86% of residents to look for work abroad, resulting in many children being left in the care of relatives – their aunts, uncles, and grandparents. However, harsh treatment of the children by these relatives has become widespread and, in recent years, there has been an increase of beatings with fatal outcomes and those where injured children remained disabled. Recent cases have been reported in the Jeti-Oguz district, when a 3-year-old child died of beatings; in Bishkek, when a close relative tied a 9-year-old boy to a car and dragged him; and in Uzgen district, when the father of a 17-year-old girl was accused of sexual harassment.

Our researchers found that children are abused in different ways – physically, emotionally, and sexually – with impacts that included low self-esteem, negative attitudes, disability, suicide, reduced mortality, and violent behaviours in later life. Violence has a devastating impact on children, threatening their emotional well-being and their prospects. **It is an urgent problem with serious lifelong consequences.**

## **Why does nasiliye happen?**

To help them develop recommendations, the researchers also explored why this violence happens, and they discovered a variety of reasons. Social norms are in place that allow the violation of children's rights and the use of physical and psychological violence, offering a sense of impunity for those who use violence against children. Relatives and friends who are aware of the violence often remain silent, and this is mitigated by the lack of communication between children and their migrant parents, meaning the children cannot talk to their parents about the abuse. Parents do not or cannot always issue official guardianship, not least because the guardianship system does not work, and this can lead parents to abandon their children without proper supervision. The high degree of labor migration and the lack of awareness about parental responsibilities and the rights of children serve to exacerbate the issue.

## **About the project**

Mobile Arts for Peace (MAP) Kyrgyzstan in partnership with Foundation for Tolerance International (FTI) and the University of Lincoln (UK) was funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) Global Change Research Foundation (GCRF). The project aims to empower young people to promote dialogue for peacebuilding between cultures and generations. For more information visit: <https://map.lincoln.ac.uk/>.