**Abstract**

**RS-17**

Title: **«**Informal social and economic practices of labor migrants in Moscow»

Head of the Project: Ekaterina Demintseva

Department/Institute: Institute for Social Policy

1. **Goal of research:** The goal of this project was to describe informal social and economic practices that exist in migrant communities in Moscow, and to analyze why they arise, how they are implemented, what resources are attracted for this. The goal of this research was also to study how labor migrants are integrated into religious institutions, and into the educational infrastructure of the city.
2. **Methodology:** Methodology involved qualitative data on all topics. In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with migrants from Central Asia and the Caucasus. The part of the study that deals with migrants’ families involved interviews with children, as well as with representatives of informal children's clubs, NGO volunteers working with children of migrants and refugees, teachers working with children of migrants. The study also included participant observation in children's centers, mosques, prayer halls, at meetings of NGOs.
3. **Empirical base of research:** In the course of the study we focused on the integration of migrants in the city, the uses of social infrastructure by labor migrants and their efforts to create infrastructure of their own. Special attention was paid to the study of the use of the city’s educational infrastructure by migrants, including schools and kindergartens, as well as the creation by the migrants from Central Asia of informal infrastructure, such as “children's clubs” and “kindergartens” working to prepare migrant children for Russian public schools. We also continued the study of religious practices of Muslim migrants.

The project also entailed the study of daily Muslim practices outside the mosques, including the role of the “folk” mullahs. Also, the projects paid attention to in-country migration and the migration situation in the Russian province and its influence on the demographic situation there. Project participants also launched the study of access to treatment for HIV infection among migrants in Russia. Field studies were conducted on all of these topics. The results of the work are described in articles in leading Russian and international journals, as well as presented at international conferences.

1. **Results of research:** The study demonstrates that today we can speak about the emergence of informal migrant infrastructure in Russia. It includes kindergartens created by migrants, clubs for migrants children. We have also seen that in recent years an informal Muslim infrastructure was been created. Importantly, the Muslim space of Moscow is not limited to mosques, as there appear “folk” mullahs.

Studies of Central Asian labor migration show that the Kyrgyz community is one of the most cohesive in Moscow and its representatives are creating their own infrastructure for migrants from Central Asia. This is primarily due to the fact that many Kyrgyz already have Russian citizenship, as both countries for many years had special ties that facilitated the entry of Kyrgyz into the Russian labor market, and today both countries are members of the EAEU.

We also conducted research in the "Kyrgyz kindergartens" and "children's clubs". We saw that the activities of these informal structures are aimed at integrating the children of migrants into the Russian education system. However, in these centers, migrant children remain in a socially excluded environment. There is no communication of children with other educational institutions and with the host society.

As for the local Muslim space, it is defined not only by major local religious figures (imams of mosques) and foreign and Russian Islamic intellectuals, but also by ordinary believers who, for various reasons and in different social contexts, are respected and respected by their co-religionists. The accessibility of these “folk mullahs”, their personal migration experience, and their social capital - all these factors determine the kind of influence they enjoy within the community.

1. **Level of implementation, recommendations on implementation or outcomes of the implementation of the results** Results of this study can be drawn upon by Moscow city government and its agencies for framing and formulating migration policy, as well as for designing specific economic, social, and cultural programs in Moscow.