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Labor Migrants Who Returned to Georgia

Mariam Sakevarishvili analyzed the life of labor migrants returning to Georgia. She combined CRRC 2004 Data Initiative findings with 50 interviews across Georgia (conducted in 2005). The interviews very much replicated the findings from the Data Initiative: prior to emigration 37% of respondents did not have adequate income; 31% were unemployed; 16% cited personal reasons for migration.

The priority for most of the migrants was providing financial support to their families. All respondents had realistic expectations about migration, therefore most were satisfied and thought that they had achieved their goals - purchased an apartment, returned loans, and met other immediate needs .

The research indicates that many male migrants are involved in criminal activity. For many this seems the only escape from poverty (especially because illegal immigrants are excluded from the formal employment sector). Sakevarishvili suggests that this contributes to building stereotypes of Georgian males as being criminal and dangerous. Apparently Georgians themselves tend to be cautious about establishing connections with their compatriots abroad.

The majority of the respondents say they may migrate again. The respondents said that the biggest discomforts for them were nostalgia and the relationship with the host country police. Conversely, they reported that the migration experience had helped them develop their own self-esteem, and that this was one of its biggest benefits. As for the adaptation process in foreign countries, Sakerashvili found that emigrants adjust better in Russia, Israel, Spain and Portugal, in the order in which they are listed. Respondents who lived in Russia even did not use the word “adaptation” in the conversation. For them, Russia has closer ties with Georgia than any other European country and both nations have a lot in common.

According to the research most of the emigrants used to live in Russia. More specifically, based on CRRC DI 2004 data (some caveats about existing migration data are appropriate) 31% of respondents said that their relatives were living in Russia, 16% in Greece, 13% in Germany, 13% in the US, 7% in Israel; 7% in England.

After coming back from abroad the respondents did not really notice tremendous changes in Georgia. For most, the changes that they found in their homeland were superficial. The above mentioned findings are based on the analysis of migration block of CRRC DI 2004 and face-to-face, in-depth interviews with 50 respondents in Tbilisi, Gori, Dmanisi, Kutaisi and Lanchkhuti.

And where do you find more about this research? As usual, on [our website](#), in Georgian.