Addressing cross border control of tuberculosis among labor migrants in Kazakhstan

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Large Influx of Migrants in Kazakhstan, a High MDR-TB Burden Country
Kazakhstan is experiencing a rapid economic growth and a large influx of migrants from neighboring countries in the Central Asian region. The burden of MDR TB is one of the highest in the world and remains one of the region’s greatest public health challenges. Project HOPE began a project in December 2014 in 7 pilot sites in Kazakhstan to improve TB prevention and TB treatment among migrants under a grant funded through the GFATM New Funding Model (NFM).

Improving Access to TB Treatment & Diagnosis Among Migrants
The project is 1) removing barriers that restrict access to TB services for migrants; 2) providing TB prevention and treatment services among migrants; and 3) strengthening engagement of community systems and enhancing the role of civil society and non-governmental organizations in provision of TB control and support to migrants.

Results
Over 35,000 Migrants Reached to Date
Since July 2015, 35,720 migrants have been directly informed about TB symptoms, how to access TB diagnosis and treatment, and about project activities. Of these, 10,445 were examined for TB, including mobile X-ray screening, & 497 received a diagnosis of confirmed TB.

NGOs Engaged to Work with Migrants
Over 500 staff members from NGOs and healthcare facilities have been trained and contracts have been executed with five local NGOs to provide outreach, information campaigns, and social support to migrants.

Migrant-Friendly Healthcare Facilities Established
A network of 47 “migrant-friendly” facilities including 37 general healthcare and 10 TB facilities were identified.

Bilateral & Multilateral Agreements Established
Three Regional Working Group meetings and a High-Level Regional Meeting have been held to discuss cross-border TB control in the Central Asian region. Outcomes include:

- Minimal package on transborder prevention, control, treatment of tuberculosis among migrants
- 12-month work plan for coordination of activities and execution of bilateral and multilateral agreements on TB control between and among Central Asian countries

Conclusions
Controlling TB among migrants requires strong coordination and partnerships among government institutions, NGOs, and civil society. Removing barriers to access through outreach screening and awareness campaigns and migrant-friendly treatment facilities is key.

Recommendations
- Improve migrants’ knowledge on TB symptoms
- Inform migrants about existing accessible TB diagnosis and treatment services in the host country
- Establish network of friendly medical institutions to provide health services to migrants
- Establish inter-country cooperation on cross-border TB control and treatment to assure continuity of treatment