

Abstract

This paper studies the role of social remittances in entrepreneurship in rural settings of the South of Kyrgyz Republic. Birlik ayil okmotu in the South of Kyrgyz Republic is the main research site. This region is identified as a major donor of migrant workers to the Russian Federation due to the highest level of poverty and unemployment in the country. The research combines quantitative and qualitative methods involving a migrant household survey to gather information about remittance behavior, savings and investments and social remittances using semi-structured and in-depth interviews.

This research studies social remittances by migrant workers using various variables: the main destination city of migrant workers, the type of work done by migrant workers before migration in the country of origin and after migration in the recipient country, the period of time the migrant workers have been working in the indicated employment sector abroad, job search methods used by the migrant workers, main issues faced by migrants abroad and their coping mechanisms, the biggest achievement for migrant workers abroad, the incidence of social remittances – skills acquired for running an entrepreneurial/income-generating activity in the home country, change in the attitude of the migrant workers/migrant households towards development in the community, incidence of the migrant worker's contribution into the development of their household/community.

Given the abundant amount of academic literature and policy discourse on migration and development and associated remittances, social remittances are the concept that is usually overlooked. The empirical data in this research supports the hypothesis that the social remittances are important for rural entrepreneurship in Birlik ayil okmotu of the Kyrgyz Republic. In the light of increasing labor migration flows from Kyrgyz Republic to Russian Federation, and promotion of migration and entrepreneurship policies by the Kyrgyz government, this research attempts to add to the policy discourse and literature within the broader migration and development debate, providing information on importance of social remittances for rural entrepreneurship.