

Press Release: 10th and 11th December 2023

Kathmandu and Pokhara: launch of new digital initiatives to support migrants

Two new initiatives using digital technologies in support of migrants and their families have been launched during events held at Hotel Himalaya in Kathmandu (10th Dec) and Hotel Landmark in Pokhara (11th Dec): the **pardesi.org.np** website, an integrated platform for safe migration information in Nepal; and **training resources for migrants about safe, wise and private** usage of digital tech (in the six main languages of Nepal).

During 2019/20 more than 700,000 Nepalese obtained labour approval from the Department of Foreign Employment to work abroad. This shows a picture of foreign migration from Nepal due to the limitations of employment within the country. Most Nepali youth who go for such employment travel to the Gulf countries and Malaysia. In the last few years, the number of people going for employment from Nepal has also been increasing gradually in the countries of Eastern Europe.

Large numbers of people go abroad for employment, but many of them have been cheated because they do not have accurate information. The lack of information about the process of foreign employment, information about the destination country, and inadequate knowledge about training providers are all significant challenges. Similarly, other issues related to foreign employment include financial literacy, utilization of remittances, welfare arrangements, health related facilities in the destination country, climate, culture, and traffic rules. The **pardesi.org.np** is a single portal through which migrants can find out accurate and up-to-date information about all of these important issues. It provides free and easy access to many different existing resources provided by institutions such as the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security and its subordinate bodies, national and international NGOs, trade unions and other civil society organisations.

Many migrants are also cheated, exploited and misinformed through their use of digital technologies. A series of **training resources on the safe, wise and private** use of digital tech has therefore also been launched today. These are freely available in Nepali, Maithili, Bhojpuri, Tharu, Tamang and Nepal Bhasa (Newar), and can be adapted and developed to suit many different contexts. They have been designed to provide migrants and their families with appropriate knowledge about how to use their mobile phones and other devices so that they can get the most out of them and limit their potential pitfalls.

These resources are the outcome of collaboration between Nepali migrant organizations (including NNSM, POURAKHI, AMKAS & PNCC) and the local tech sector (including the digital education NGO, AuraED & NIC), as well as support from other entities such as NISER (Country Lead for MIDEQ), Helvetas SaMi, the Pokhara MRC, NEST, Desh Paradesh, the UNESCO Office in Kathmandu, Ujyaalo, GSMA, IME and Hamro Patro. The initiative was conceived and facilitated by the Digital Technologies and Migration work package (WP9) of the MIDEQ Project funded by the UKRI. WP9 is led by Professor G. "Hari" Harindranath and Professor Tim Unwin CMG, with the support of Dr. Maria Rosa Lorini, based at the ICT4D Collective (Royal Holloway, University of London, UK).

This is just the beginning of this initiative. As the portal itself is an evolving resource, it will continue to be updated and will contain more information in the future. We welcome the support of government and non-governmental organizations, trade unions, civil society, and media working in this field to take this opportunity to share their information through the portal and use these valuable training resources to ensure that migration is a safer and better opportunity for Nepali citizens in the future.

For more information visit the following websites:

- The pardesi.org.np platform: <https://pardesi.org.np/>
- The full resources: <https://ict4d.org.uk/technology-inequality-and-migration/nepal/>
- The MIDEQ Hub: <https://mideq.org/>
- WP9 <https://www.mideq.org/en/themes/digitaltechnologies-and-inequality/>
- For more information contact: Sindhu Aryal (POURAKHI) aryalsindhupourakhi@gmail.com.