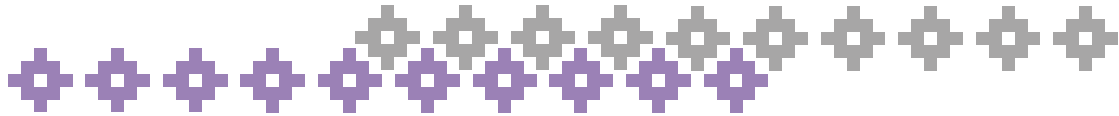


Profile of Migrant Women





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“Profile of Migrant Women”, 2016

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This analytical note is part of a **series of profiles related to women and girls** that belong to certain underrepresented groups from the Republic of Moldova, who are coming from disadvantaged socio-economic or geographical backgrounds (*migrant women, women from rural areas, Roma women and women who are victims of violence*), those with special health conditions (*women with disabilities, women living with HIV or elderly women*) or who are less present in certain sectors (*women in elected and appointed positions, women in decision-making positions and women involved in the economic and business sector*).

The purpose of these profiles is to inform the public, based on evidences, about the advantages, capabilities and potential of women's groups that have been analysed and the contribution they can make to the development, their interaction environments, the opportunities that they benefit from or are deprived of, as well as the limitations and obstacles they face. The profiles include a factual analysis of the described vulnerable group (by its subpopulations) and its comparison with the opposite group (invulnerable) of women (sometimes also with the corresponding group of men). Quantitative and qualitative data from various available official (official and administrative statistics) and independent sources (studies, surveys) were combined and used.

The document is intended for decision makers, policy makers, civil society and the general public and aims at increasing the understanding of data and exemplifying the use of the multi-dimensionally disaggregated statistical data with a view to identifying the intervention measures necessary to promote equality, inclusion and cohesion, non-discrimination and acceptance of the underrepresented groups of women.

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Abbreviations

NBS	-	National Bureau of Statistics
HBS	-	Household Budget Survey
MDG	-	Millennium Development Goals
ILO	-	International Labour Organization

Introduction

Among European countries, the Republic of Moldova has the highest level of emigration, especially for labour purposes, and the socio-economic conditions and the political instability in the Republic of Moldova do not create any premises to tackle this phenomenon. Studies conducted on migration show that the main pushing factor for Moldovan migrants remains migration for economic purposes, particularly due to the lack of employment opportunities and low wages offered on the labour market in the country. The Republic of Moldova is situated between two geopolitical systems Common wealth of Independent States (CIS) and the European Union (EU), both of which are attractive, in one way or another, to the population that is looking for opportunities to earn their living.

Migration affects a significant part of the population, and any policy promoted by the Government in this field results in a significant impact on the economy and development of Moldovan society as a whole. Migration involves both the urban and rural populations, men and women. Women participating in the migration processes are subject to specific risks, including the risk of human trafficking, which makes this group particularly vulnerable.

The purpose of this analytical note is to analyse the situation of migrant women, how their families are affected by migration, how they can influence the development of their living environment, and finally, their contribution to society's development.

I. Presentation of the Group

Migration in the Republic of Moldova began with the proclamation of independence, and passed through a number of different stages, and is described extensively in the analytical reports in the field¹. Migration in the country continues to be characterized by international emigration of the Moldovan population and less by immigration of people from outside the country.

The impact of migration on the population was also analyzed in various studies, having both positive and negative aspects.

Overall, the most important positive aspects of migration are as follows:

- improved financial situation of migrants' households;
- increased purchasing power of the population;
- lower unemployment;
- a change in living conditions and lifestyle, especially of migrants and their families.

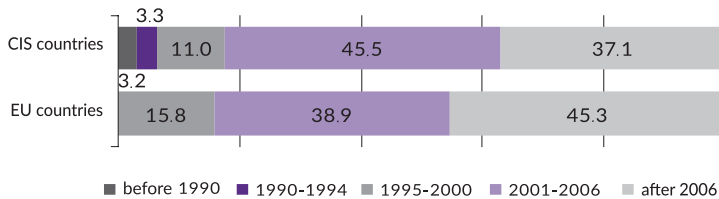
Among the negative effects of migration, the most significant might be:

- children without parental care and elderly without support;
- breakdown of migrants' families;
- depopulation of villages, where mostly the elderly and children stayed behind.
- a lack of specialists and labour force in certain areas.

Labour force migration has continued in the Republic of Moldova for more than two decades, involving a large number of women. In the 90s, a significant share of women reacted to the socio-economic changes imposed by the global crisis of that time. The loss of jobs, the lack of income necessary for living, and increasing poverty prompted the search for possibilities to obtain the means of subsistence, to educate children, which resulted in their migration abroad. A new migration direction, to European countries, was explored, with a significant number of migrant women having begun their migration story to Europe from 1995-2000 (Figure 1).

¹ Migration trends and policies in the Black Sea region: Cases of Moldova, Romania and Ukraine, IDIS „Viitorul”, Chisinau 2008; Report on “Extended Migration Profile of the Republic of Moldova”, IOM, Chisinau 2012; http://iom.md/attachments/110_emp_report.pdf- First Stage (1990-1994), Second Stage (1995-2000), Third Stage (2001- 2006), Fourth Stage (since May 2006)

Figure 1. Women's Experience of Migration for Employment, %



Source: ILO, Return labour migration and the socio-economic development of the Republic of Moldova, 2013

Labour migration in the country is estimated by the NBS, based on LFS² data, through the number of people aged 15 and above, who were working or searching for a job abroad at the time of research (hereinafter *migrants*). According to LFS data, about 300,000 people had worked abroad for a certain period of time from 2010-2014. Migrant women account for about 35% of all migrants and 7.8% of all women aged 15 and above in the country (Table 1).

Table 1. General Data on Population and Migration for Employment, 2010-2014

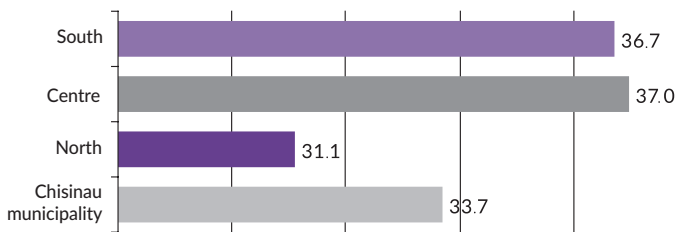
Years	Total in the country (persons)			Population aged 15 and above, who is working or looking for work abroad (migrants)			
	Both sexes	Total women	Women aged 15 and above	Both sexes	Women		
					Persons	% of total migrants	% of total women aged 15 and above
2010	3562.0	1849.3	1562.2	311.0	113.0	36.3	7.2
2011	3560.0	1848.1	1565.8	316.9	112.5	35.5	7.2
2012	3559.5	1847.5	1568.5	328.3	109.7	33.4	7.0
2013	3558.6	1846.6	1569.8	332.5	115.6	34.8	7.4
2014	3556.4	1845.5	1569.9	341.9	122.8	35.9	7.8

Source: NBS, <http://statbank.statistica.md/>

² LFS - Labour Force Survey is a continuous survey conducted in households, organized by the NBS since 1998, and since 2006 it has been carried out on a new sample of households, and is based on a methodology adjusted to the latest ILO recommendations, European rules and the Moldovan Labour Code. The target population of the research are all the persons from selected households, while the labour market variables are collected only for persons aged 15 and above. Available at: <http://www.statistica.md/publicatii>.

The migration of women is acutely felt in villages. The largest share of migrant women comes from rural areas and constitutes 70% of the total. This is a significant figure, if we take into account that the share of rural women among all women in the country is 56.6%. The Centre and South regions are affected the most by women's migration for work, where women constitute about 37% of all those have left to work abroad, and less the North region, with 31.1% (Figure 2).

Figure 2. **Share of Women Aged 15 and Above, who Work or Search for Work Abroad, among all migrants, by regions, 2014, %**



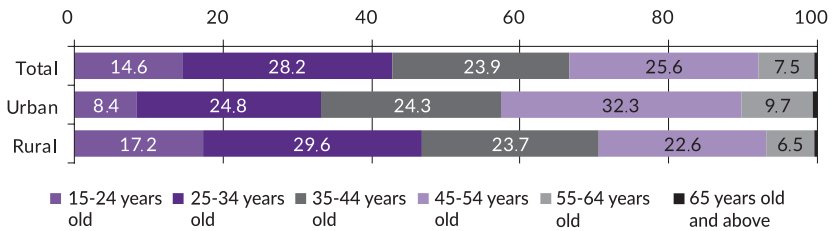
Source: NBS, <http://statbank.statistica.md/>

Women of childbearing age leave for abroad, which leads to the deterioration of the social and demographic structure of the population. The impact of migration of women of this age on the demographic processes is dual: first, the decrease in the number of women of working age leads to an increased share of elderly people; second, the birth rate falls, thus deteriorating the population's natural reproduction, which besides ageing, leads to a demographic decrease.

Over two-thirds of women, who go abroad for employment purposes, are between 15 and 44 years of age, the share of this age group constitutes 66.6% (Figure 3). The group of migrant rural women is getting younger, women up to 35 years old constitute 46.9% compared to 33.2% of women of the same age from urban areas, up to 44 years old - 70.5% from rural areas, 57.4% from urban areas. Hence the rural population is aging quicker in the Republic of Moldova, where the ageing coefficient among rural women exceeded 19%³, and the prevalence of rural migration compared to the urban one amplifies the depopulation trends of the rural environment.

³ NBS, <http://statbank.statistica.md/pxweb/Database/RO/02%20POP/POP01/POP01.asp>, Population Aging Coefficient, 1980-2014.

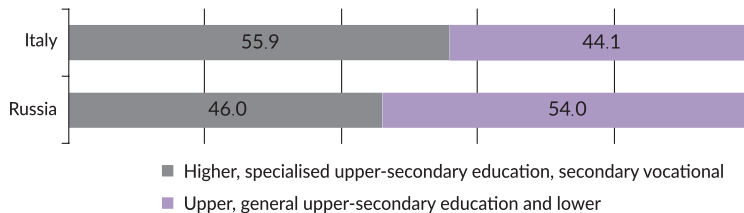
Figure 3. Share of Women Aged 15 and Above, Who Work or Search for Work Abroad, by age groups and areas of residence, %



Source: NBS, <http://statbank.statistica.md/>

Migration is oriented both toward CIS and EU countries, the most preferred countries being Russia and Italy, which host 79% of migrant women (48% Russia and 31% Italy). Women who go to Italy are more educated, 56% of them have secondary vocational education and above, and 18.4% have secondary and lower education. People with high school and lower education go to Russia, accounting for 54% of migrant women in the country (Figure 4).

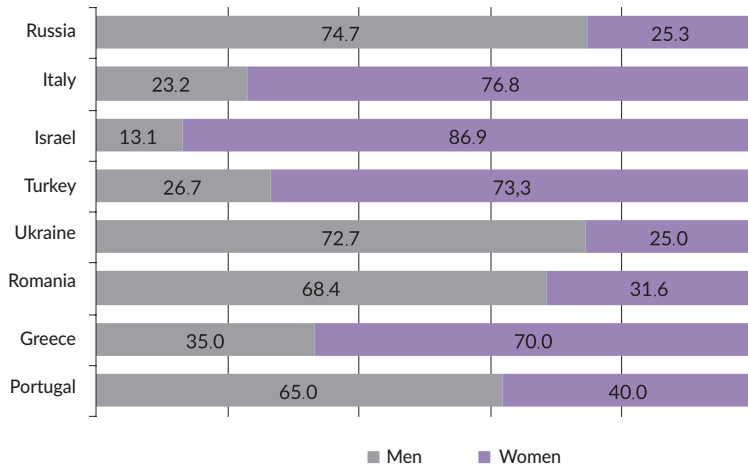
Figure 4. Distribution of Women Aged 15 and Above, Who Work or Search for Work in the Main Countries of Destination, by level of education, 2014, %



Source: NBS, <http://statbank.statistica.md/>

Gender differences can be noticed in the selection of the country of destination by job seekers. The highest shares of women, which constitute more than 70% are noticed among persons who work or search for work in Italy, Israel, Turkey and Greece, men are more represented in Russia, Ukraine, Romania and Portugal (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Distribution of People Aged 15 and Above, who Work or Search for Work Abroad, based on countries of destination and genders, 2014, %



Source: NBS, <http://statbank.statistica.md/>

II. Social Capital, Potential of Migrant Women

It is important to be aware of the effects of migration on women and on their socio-economic potential, including related to education, skills, competencies, etc. Initially, mainly educated women would leave the Republic of Moldova to find work abroad, particularly those with teaching or medical education, and settle in families abroad for household work or to take care of the elderly or the sick. The evolution of migration has led to some changes in the group of migrants, still preserving some trends on the profile of migrant women. It can still be observed that women who go to work abroad have a higher level of education than men, so around one-third of women who go abroad to work have medium specialised or higher education, whereas just a bit over one-fifth have secondary education (Table 2).

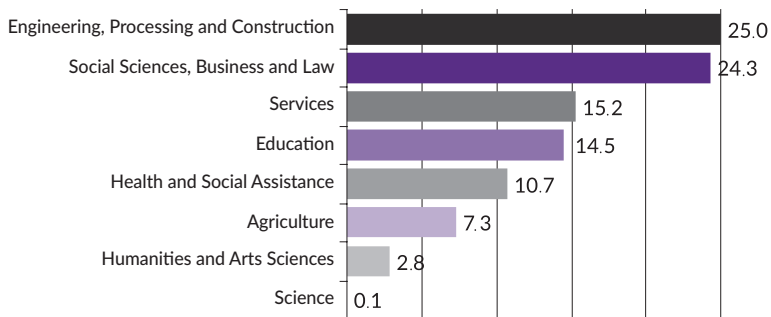
Of particular interest is the relationship between migration and the education level of the population, the so-called “brain drain” phenomenon. A certain interdependence is noticed if we compare the structure of the female population aged 15 and above in the country and the structure of migrant women. It is the “brain drain” per se though, however, the female labour migration from the Republic of Moldova can be characterized as the migration of people with vocational and specialised upper-secondary education, and of men - with secondary vocational and lower education. Also in the case of women with higher education, the migration trends are more obvious, if we compare the differences between shares in the total population and migrants.

Table 2. Distribution of People Aged 15 and Above, by the level of education and gender, 2014, %

Level of education	Women			Men		
	total	migrant	difference	total	migrant	difference
Higher	18.7	14.5	4.2	14.5	9.1	5.4
Specialised upper-secondary education	14.2	16.5	-2.3	10.0	9.4	0.6
Secondary vocational education	13.7	19.5	-5.8	26.8	30.6	-3.8
Upper secondary education	23.1	27.5	-4.5	19.4	21.5	-2.1
Lower secondary education	24.9	21.7	3.1	25.2	29.0	-3.9
Primary or without education	5.5	0.2	5.3	4.2	0.5	3.7

It is acknowledged that the social field had more to lose from women migration. Most women with at least secondary vocational education level have studied in various fields of training before leaving, mainly related to the social area, including 24.3% social sciences, business and law, 14.5% education, 10.7% health and social assistance, 15.2% - services⁴. Other ¼ were trained in engineering, processing and construction, 7.3% - in agriculture (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Distribution of Migrant Women with Higher, Specialized Upper Secondary, Secondary Vocational Education by field of training before traveling abroad, 2012, %

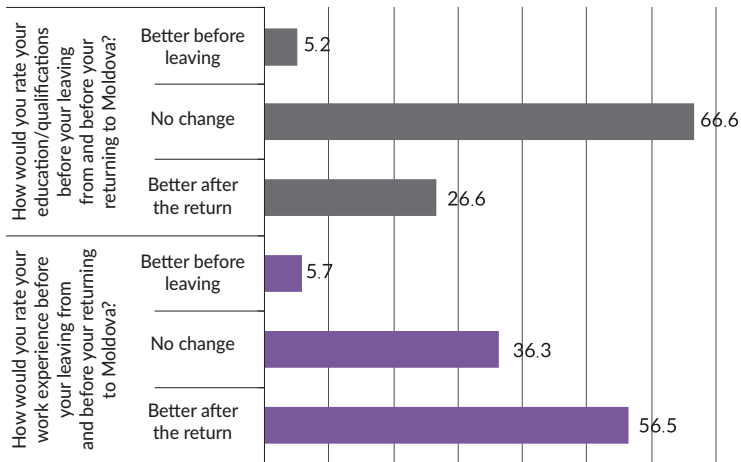


Source: NBS, Labour Force Migration, 2012

Besides the losses that could be observed as a result of labour migration, the returned migrants appreciate positively the migration experience with regard to studies/ qualifications and work experience in the country of destination. Nearly one-quarter of the women who migrated to work abroad believe that their qualifications are better after returning home, and the work experience is positively appreciated by more than half of the women who returned from labour migration (Figure 7).

⁴ NBS, Labour Force Migration (LFM) Research Data on households, conducted in the fourth quarter of 2012 as a complementary module (ad-hoc), attached to the Labour Force Survey. The survey involved people who, at the time of the interview: (i) were working or looking for work abroad ("current migration"), or (ii) had been abroad for these purposes in the last 24 months prior to the interview ("returned migrants").

Figure 7. Appreciation by Women with Experience in Migration of their Qualifications and Experience Obtained as a Result of Migration for Labour Purposes



Source: ILO, CBS-AXA, Return labour migration and the socio-economic development of the Republic of Moldova, 2013.

Women who work abroad are particularly vulnerable in terms of social protection and health care in the host country. The formalization of labour relations is important to protect the employed person, for migrant women it is a challenge, given that they mostly work in households. Only one-third of migrant women have a permanent or temporary employment contract, and research data in the field reveal that the contractual relations are correlated with the women's age. With age, more and more women tend to gain permanent or temporary employment contracts (Figure 8).

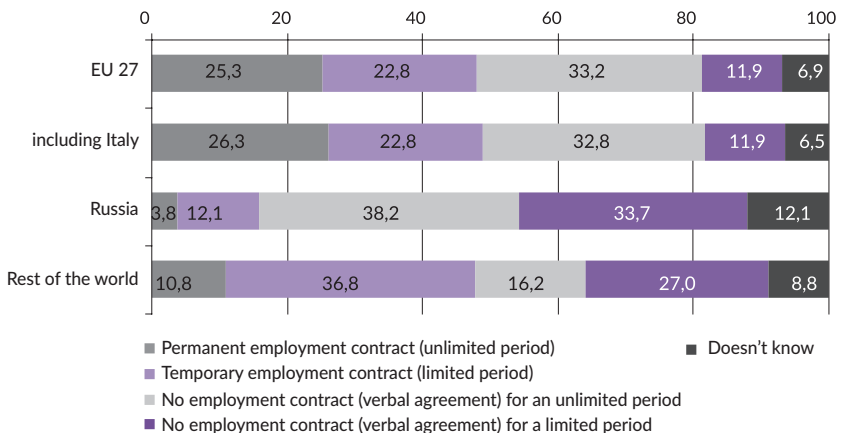
Figure 8. Distribution of Migrant Women by Labour Relationship, by age groups, %



Source: NBS, Labour Force Migration, 2012.

Less protected in this respect are women working in Russia, where the formalization of labour relations is not practiced and only 15.9% enjoy this advantage, thus only they may benefit from some guaranteed social protection and medical care. In EU countries, including Italy, nearly 50% of women have permanent or temporary employment contracts (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Distribution of Migrant Women by Labour Relationship and Country of Destination, %

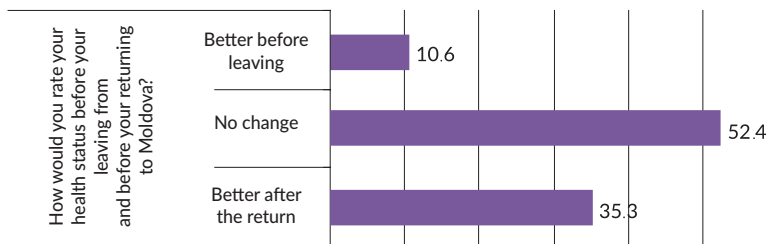


Source: NBS, Labour Force Migration, 2012.

Limited access to health care is revealed in the reasons given by migrants when explaining their failure to see a doctor in the host country. The most common obstacles, reported by migrants abroad, were the following: (i) lack of health insurance - 34%; (ii) illegal stay that makes it difficult to see doctors - 28.7%; (iii) financial constraints - 25%; (iv) banned from leaving the workplace during business hours - 14.7%; (v) fear of losing jobs - 20.5%, a relatively small share of migrants mentioned a mistrust in the professionalism of doctors. - 6.1%⁵.

Working abroad, with implications and challenges regarding the limited access to health services, whether due to working without legal contracts, a lack of health insurance, or the tendency to save, lead to poor health, confirmed by the subjective assessment of the state of health by former migrant women. Over one-third of women (35.3%) reported that their health had been better before leaving (Figure 10) and a share of 13% reported poor health as a reason for returning home. It is also necessary to mention the noticed trends of migrants getting older - in 2008, the average age of migrant women was 37 years, in 2012 - 38.5 years⁶ (compared to the average age of men - 34 years in 2008, and 36.6 years in 2012), which also constitutes one of the factors contributing to the trends of migrants' health worsening.

Figure 10. **Appreciation, by Women with Migration Experience, of Their Health when Returning from Labour Migration, %**



Source: ILO, CBS-AXA, Return labour migration and the socio-economic development of the Republic of Moldova, 2013.

Additionally to the limitations in the country of destination, in the Republic of Moldova migrants, including migrant women, also face a number of challenges, limiting their access to social protection and health care after they return. Although both the national health insurance and the social insurance systems allow voluntary insurance, these options are not popular among migrants. This is confirmed by the fact that la-

⁵ IOM/WHO/UNAIDS (2010). Moldovan Migrants' Health. Impact of the Socio-Economic Welfare.

⁶ http://www.statistica.md/public/files/publicatii_electronice/migratia/Migratia_FM.pdf, 2008, 2012

bour migration is reported as a reason for not having a health insurance policy⁷. The following are the key obstacles encountered by migrants in accessing health services in the country: (i) high costs of health care - 59.3%; (ii) lack of health insurance - 44.9%; (iii) mistrust in the professionalism of local doctors - 29.2%; (iv) the need to receive referrals from the family doctor - 19.1%⁸. Studies in the field show that the number of migrants consulting a doctor is half of that of the population that is not involved in migration⁹.

The migration of parents also influenced the children's access to health services and the most affected in this context are children whose mothers have left. About 23% of children with mothers working abroad said that no one accompanies them to the doctor, compared to 6% of those whose fathers have left, and 4% with both parents abroad¹⁰.

It can be noted that the main reasons of migrants' failure to participate in the national social insurance system are the following: unavailability of the cumulative pillar and a limited range of social risks that are proposed to be covered, which include only a minimum old-age pension and death grant, not including other risks, such as temporary work incapacity, disability, maternity, etc. The amount of money that cover the risks are particularly low; in 2014, after the annual indexation, the minimum pension was MDL 798.33¹¹ or 59.4% of the subsistence minimum for pensioners¹², which confirms the lack of attractiveness of the national social insurance system.

⁷ http://www.statistica.md/public/files/publicatii_electronice/acces_servicii_sanatate/Accesul_servicii_sanatate_2011.pdf

⁸ IOM/WHO/UNAIDS (2010). Moldovan Migrants' Health. Impact of the Socio-Economic Welfare.

⁹ The report "Extended Migration Profile of the Republic of Moldova", IOM, 2012, http://iom.md/attachments/110_emp_report.pdf

¹⁰ UNICEF/CBS-AXA (2008). The Impact of Migration and Remittances on Communities, Families and Children http://www.unicef.org/moldova/ro/2006_003_Rom_Study_Children_Left_Behind.pdf

¹¹ Government Decision No 170 of 12 March 2014, on Indexation of Social Insurance and State Social Benefits.

¹² Author's calculations according to data from the Bank of statistical data of NBS.

III. Interaction Environment of Migrant Women

The interaction environment of migrant women is divided in two major dimensions: (i) communication with the home country/town of the women working abroad, and (ii) communication in the country of destination, where they work or search for work. These two dimensions are different, both being difficult to estimate.

As for the first dimension, migrant women usually do not lose touch with their home, especially if they have children or family left behind. This is confirmed by the share of about 80% of migrant women who send money to their families/households in the Republic of Moldova, and a significant share send funds via friends/relatives or during personal visits¹³. Moreover, the migrant women who returned reported the family connections as reasons for their return: *I missed my home, my parents/husband insisted on me coming back. It was difficult for me to bring up my children in such a way.* Other reasons that confirm keeping in touch with the home town are the following: *My presence was important for our family business, I inherited some assets/land, I found a job at home, I started a business at home*¹⁴.

At the same time, certain experiences were found of migrants participating online in various meetings of LPA councils, focused on issues related to community development, socio-economic and development projects implementation in migrants' home communities.

Communication in the country of destination is limited due to the workplace of the migrant woman, who usually works in housekeeping and is confined to the environment where she works. The establishment of communication networks in the localities of the migrants' country of destination is confirmed by various studies, as well as by the reasons underpinning the decision to migrate to the country of destination: *I have friends/relatives in that country; To accompany/follow my spouse or parent.*

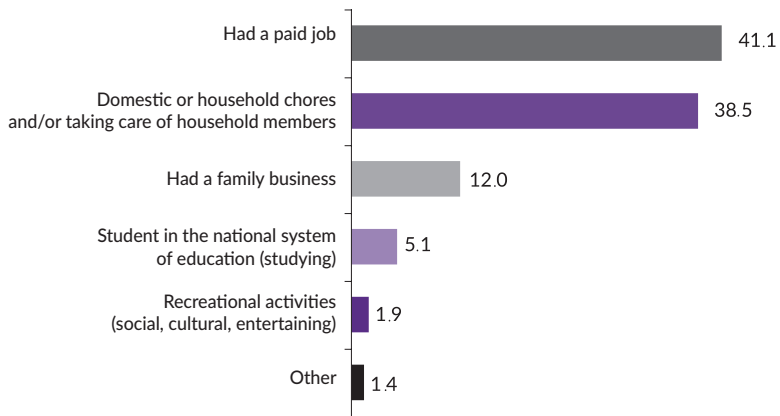
¹³ NBS, Migration of Labour Force, 2012.

¹⁴ ILO, CBS-AXA, Return labour migration and the socio-economic development of the Republic of Moldova, 2013.

IV. Opportunities that Migrant Women Benefit from or are Deprived of

A large share of people who already have an income-generating activity at home go abroad in search of work. Over half the migrant women (Figure 11) had an occupation in Moldova before leaving (a paid job or family business), which reveals that the main factor is not the lack of employment opportunities in general, but jobs that are less attractive because of low wages offered by employers in the country, a mismatch between the jobs and their skills/qualifications, and poor working conditions, which are also the main reasons reported by respondents in studies conducted in this field.

Figure 11. Distribution of Migrant Women by Economic Situation before Leaving for Abroad, %



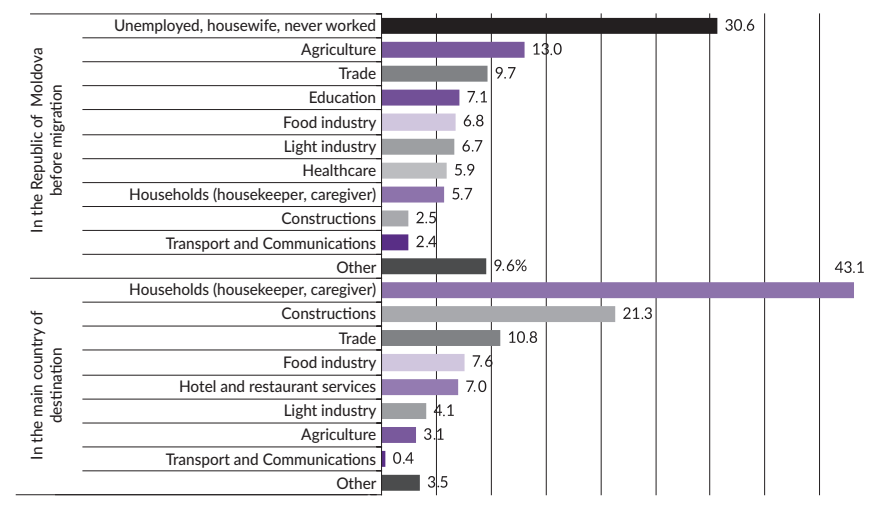
Source: NBS, Labour Force Migration, 2012.

It is worth mentioning that about 30% of migrant women, who had a paid job or family business, before leaving used to hold positions or used to be involved in occupations of high-level qualifications and only 28.8% were unskilled labourers (compared to men, these shares are 9% and 46.8% respectively)¹⁵.

¹⁵ NBS, Migration of Labour Force, Sinteza_MFM_2012.pdf.

Relevant studies indicate considerable gaps between the job held by migrants, including women, in the country before their departure and in the country of destination, during migration, which leads to a loss of experience and skills obtained in the country from studying and working. According to research data on the returned migrants¹⁶, before leaving abroad, women used to work in different sectors in relatively comparable numbers (agriculture, trade, education, industry, health care, etc.), but in the countries of destination, migrant women have no opportunity to apply their skills and work experience they obtained in the Republic of Moldova, most of them being employed in households (43.1%), construction (21.3%), and trade (10.8%) (Figure 12).

Figure 12. Distribution of Returned Migrant Women by Sectors/Fields, where They Used to Work in the Republic of Moldova Before Migration and Abroad During Migration, %

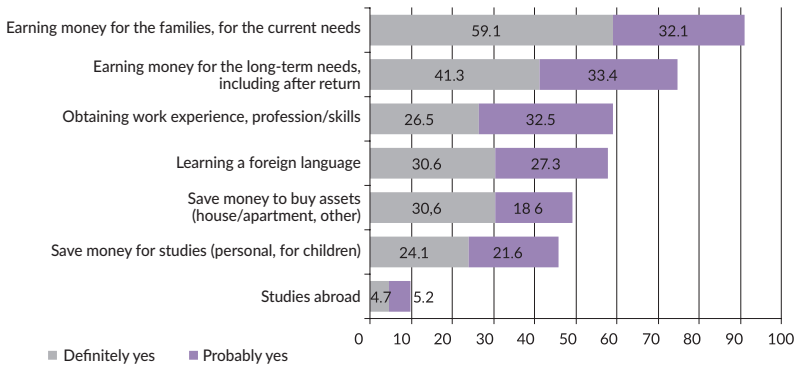


Source: ILO, CBS-AXA, Return labour migration and the socio-economic development of the Republic of Moldova, 2013.

Migration has offered women some opportunities that are acknowledged and appreciated, the main ones being associated with the opportunity to earn money for their families and save money in order to buy assets (house, apartment), pay for their own or their children's education. They also appreciate the opportunities to accumulate work experience, develop their skills and learn a foreign language in the country of destination (Figure 13).

¹⁶ ILO, CBS-AXA, Research conducted between September and October 2013 on a sample of 1,000 migrants returned to Moldova.

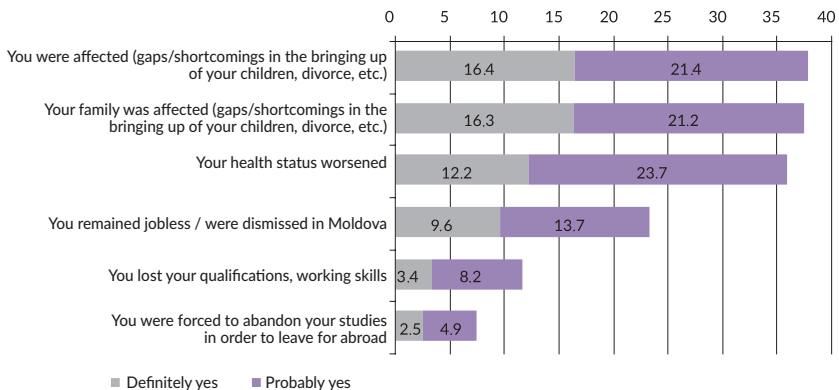
Figure 13. **Benefits from Working Abroad, as Reported by Returned Migrant Women, %**



Source: ILO, CBS-AXA, Return labour migration and the socio-economic development of the Republic of Moldova, 2013.

They are also aware of the losses caused by labour migration, the main one being that it reportedly affects both women and their families (they did not participate in the education of their children, which resulted in gaps and shortcomings in this regard, family breakdown, resulting in divorce, etc.), deteriorating health status, job loss in the Republic of Moldova. Migrant women recognized the losses associated with personal qualifications and skills, the need to abandon their studies in order to go abroad (Figure 14).

Figure 14. **Losses Arising from Working Abroad, reported by returned migrant women, %**



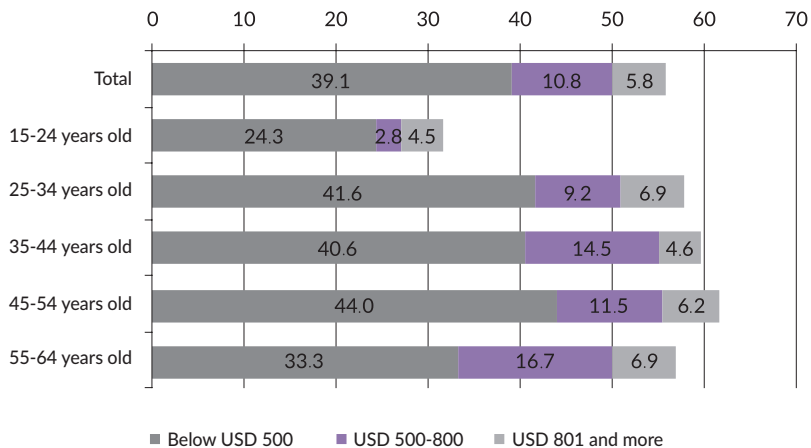
Source: ILO, CBS-AXA, Return labour migration and the socio-economic development of the Republic of Moldova, 2013.

V. Capacity and Possibility of Migrant Women to Participate in Development

The lengthy absence from the Republic of Moldova limits the opportunities of migrant women to participate actively in the public life of the country, their involvement in society's development being limited to transferring money to their family/household, which they manage according to their needs and capacities.

Migrant women transfer significant amounts of money to the country, which are used by households for various purposes. Over 40% of women working abroad send or bring home up to USD 500 monthly, 10.8% - between USD 501-800, and 5.6% - over USD 800 (Figure 15)¹⁷. A correlation was noticed between the amounts transferred and age, women of 35-54 years of age accounting for the biggest share and transferring the largest amounts to their families.

Figure 15. Distribution of Migrant Women by Average Amount Sent/Brought to the Family Monthly, %

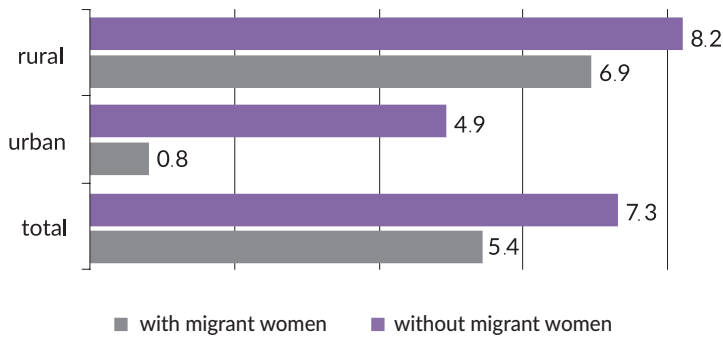


Source: NBS, Labour Force Migration, 2012.

¹⁷ These shares might be underestimated, for almost ¼ of women did not want to report the amount of money sent home.

The impact of the amounts of money from remittances is quite significant on the family/household of migrant women. To analyze this impact, poverty in households with migrant women was estimated compared to households with no women working abroad, using data from the Household Budget Survey (HBS). It can be noticed that the incidence of poverty is significantly lower in households with migrant women, both in urban and rural areas (Figure 16).

Figure 16. Poverty Rate in Households with Migrants, %



Source: NBS, HBS, 2014.

Households with migrants depend highly on remittances, which constitutes almost 60% of the total household income. Note that the amount of disposable income of households with migrant women exceeds by more than 10% the amount of income of households without migrant women, the share of revenue from remittances is also bigger in these households, 58% compared to 56.6%, respectively, in households without migrant women.

Two other groups of households should be compared: those *without migrant men*, i.e. only women went to work, and those *without migrant women*, i.e. only men migrated. The data reveal the significant contribution of women's work in the disposable income of the household, respectively when women are present in household, they work, which is confirmed by the share of income from their work, equal to the percentage of that income from households without migrant men (about 35% in both groups). In cases where women are abroad, more income from remittances is noted, which are higher in households without migrant men, constituting 57.8% compared to 56.6% in households without migrant women, i.e. where only men are abroad (Table 3).

Table 3. Structure of Disposable Income, households with migrants, 2014

	With migrant women	Without migrant women	With migrant men	Without migrant men
Disposable income (MDL/person/month)	2138.0	1903.4	1916.9	2208.7
Salary income (%)	20.1	22.1	21.6	20.4
Income from individual agricultural activity (%)	8.1	9.7	9.4	8.1
Income from individual non-agricultural activity (%)	5.1	2.4	2.3	6.4
Social benefits (%)	6.8	7.6	8.0	5.6
Pensions (%)	5.3	5.8	6.0	4.8
Child benefits (%)	0.9	0.9	1.1	0.3
Social aid (%)	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Other incomes (%)	59.8	58.2	58.6	59.6
Remittances (%)	58.0	56.6	56.9	57.8

Source: NBS, HBS, 2014.

Consumption expenses are bigger in households with migrant women (MDL 2046.8 per person/month), especially where only women went abroad (MDL 2146.6 per person/month). The expense structure records different trends depending on the gender of people who stay at home, households without migrant women (women stay at home) spend for financial resources for food, clothing/footwear, health, education; men staying at home spend more compared to women on alcoholic beverages and tobacco, housing maintenance, transport, communications and entertainment. Even if the discrepancies are not that significant, they report certain trends in the household consumption pattern (Table 4).

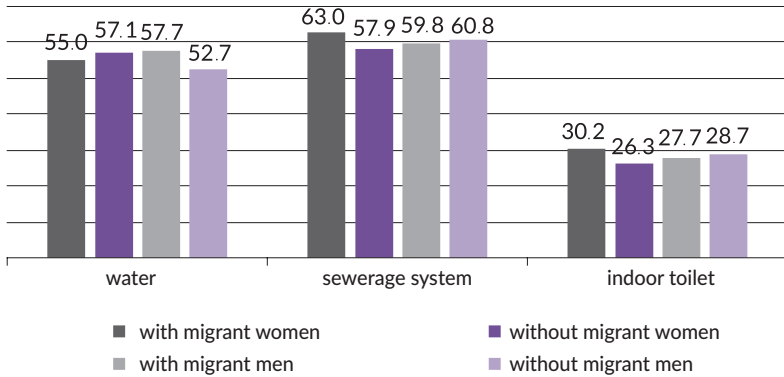
Table 4. Structure of Consumption Expenses, households with migrants, 2014

	With migrant women	Without migrant women	With migrant men	Without migrant men
Consumption expenses (MDL/person/month)	2046.8	1812.3	1814.4	2146.6
Foodstuffs (%)	39.5	41.8	41.9	38.4
Alcohol, tobacco (%)	1.4	0.6	0.8	1.4
Clothing, footwear (%)	12.8	14.1	14.1	12.3
Housing maintenance (%)	18.6	17.6	17.6	18.9
Furbishing the house (%)	4.2	4.3	4.2	4.3
Health care (%)	4.3	5.2	5.0	4.5
Transport (%)	4.1	3.2	3.1	4.6
Communication (%)	5.4	4.9	5.1	5.1
Entertainment (%)	2.6	1.0	1.1	3.2
Education (%)	0.8	1.0	0.9	0.9
Hotels and restaurants (%)	1.6	0.9	0.9	1.8
Other (%)	4.6	5.4	5.3	4.4

Source: NBS, HBS, 2014.

Migrants' investments in community development, particularly in community infrastructure, is known, but no records are available in this regard. However, it is noted that the families of migrant women record certain trends of ensuring higher living standards for their household members (access to the sewerage system, indoor toilets) (Figure 17). Note that the access depends on the availability of water supply in the village, and availability of financial resources to connect to and pay for such services.

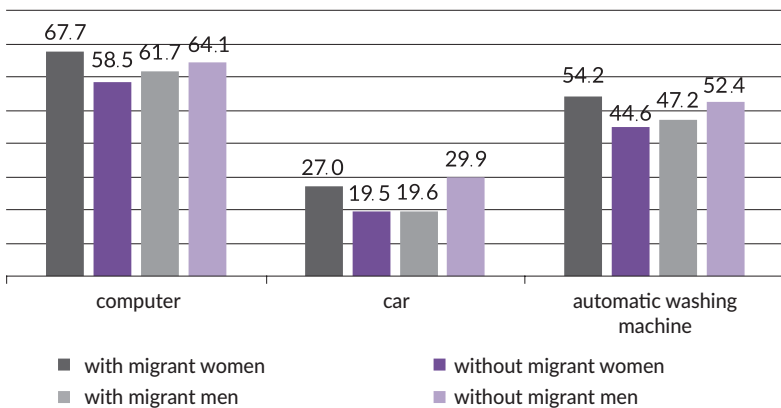
Figure 17. Access to Water Supply in Households with Migrants, %



Source: NBS, HBS, 2014.

The orientation of efforts toward raising the culture and living standards of a family/ household can be noticed also with respect to access to certain goods, which require relatively large expenses. The availability of computers in households with migrant women is 67.7% compared to only 58.5% in households without migrant women, 27% compared to only 19.5% have a car, 54.2% have automatic washing machines compared to only 44.6% in households without migrant women (Figure 18).

Figure 18. Access to Some Durable Goods in Households with Migrants, %



Source: NBS, HBS, 2014.

VI. Limitations, Barriers, and Obstacles Encountered by Migrant Women in the Society

Broadly, the main problems faced by migrant women are similar to those of the entire migratory contingent, and are related to the three relevant periods of migration: pre-migration, migration and after return to the home country.

During the pre-migration period, migrants have to select the country where to migrate to, find a well-paid job, as reported by migrants in various studies. The country of destination is selected by migrants mainly on the basis of information obtained from family, friends, acquaintances, who are or were in that country, over 80% stated these sources of information¹⁸.

The limitations faced by migrants in the country of destination are related both to employment and psychology, not knowing the environment, language of communication and the regulatory framework of the country of destination. Migrants have limited knowledge about the environment of the country of destination, an insignificant share of only 5% of respondents¹⁹ participated in some training before going abroad, specifically focused on preparing them for life and employment abroad. Of these, 48% attended vocational training courses, 34.7% - language courses and, 10.3% - cultural orientation.

Human trafficking remains one of the major challenges faced particularly by migrant women. 23 of the 151 registered cases of human trafficking involved girls under the age of 18²⁰. A number of measures have been taken by the Government to negotiate and conclude bilateral agreements aimed at regulating the flow of migrant workers and protecting migrants, preventing human trafficking, but few migrants know about them.

A major challenge is related to health and social assistance, discussed above in Chapter II, and here we will mention just the necessity of continuing the Government's involvement in this context, by signing the necessary agreements with countries of destination.

¹⁸ ILO, CBS-AXA, Return labour migration and the socio-economic development of the Republic of Moldova, 2013.

¹⁹ Same source.

²⁰ MIA, 2014, data submitted on NPGE indicators, collected by NBS/ MLSPF.

Employment, finding well paid jobs according to the skills acquired abroad is one of the major challenges faced by returning migrants. Over 70% of the Moldovan migrant workers returning to the country are not helped by the new skills they gained in finding a job. The regulatory framework of the country on starting their own businesses also constitutes an important barrier to their reintegration, and often does not contribute to doing business.

Problems related to social insurance and health care were discussed in Chapter II, here we only mention that the national system of health insurance, with the optional insurance, helps migrants access the package of basic social security services - a minimum old-age pension and death grant, without covering other social risks like disability, temporary inability to work, maternity leave, etc.

Besides issues related to employment, upon return, migrants face a number of psychosocial and economic problems related to their reintegration into the society. This situation is common especially for those who had been abroad for a longer period. Note that the migrants' expectations with the possible improvements in the socio-economic infrastructure, access to utilities and services are not met. The low quality services, the attitude of service providers toward consumers increases their dissatisfaction and discomfort, pushing them to continue their migration experience.

Perceptions regarding the traditionalism with reference to the cultural and behavioural stereotypes and attitudes toward women have changed with leaving abroad. Resettlement to another environment has resulted in considerable change of attitudes and, ultimately, of lifestyle. During migration, women experienced a different style of life, a different culture, adopted the values and behaviours existing in the countries of destination and social backgrounds, which are different from those in the Republic of Moldova. All these experiences had a considerable impact on women, resulting in changes in lives and perceptions of many aspects. When returning home, women face the same problems, and few would accept to return to the previous lifestyle.

Conclusions

The number of women migrating continues to increase, and the departure of women of childbearing age damages the social and demographic structure of the population by reducing the birth rate, amplifying the ageing of the population and diminishing the population.

The migration of women is particularly felt in villages. The contingent of migrant women who leave rural areas is younger, and the prevalence of rural migration compared to the urban one amplifies the depopulation trends in the rural environment.

Migrant women have a higher level of education compared to men. The female labour migration from the Republic of Moldova can be characterized as people with vocational and specialised upper-secondary education, and of men - with vocational secondary and lower education. Besides the losses observed that result from labour migration, the returned migrants appreciate the migration experience with regard to studies/qualifications, work experience accumulated in the country of destination.

Women who work abroad are particularly vulnerable in terms of social protection and health care in the host country. Formalization of labour relations is important to protect the working person, for migrant women it is a challenge, given that they mostly work in households. With age, more and more women tend to gain permanent or temporary employment contracts.

Additionally to the limitations in the country of destination, in Moldova the migrants, including migrant women, also face a number of challenges, limiting their access to social protection and health care after they return. Although both the national health insurance and the social insurance systems allow voluntary insurance, these options are not popular among migrants.

Since people who leave for abroad for employment purposes used to have an occupation in Moldova, the main factor prompting women to leave is not the lack of employment opportunities in general, but jobs which are less attractive because of low wages offered by employers, a mismatch between the jobs and their skills/qualifications, and poor working conditions.

A loss of experience and skills obtained in the country by studying and working is perceived from the perspective of the gaps between the job held by migrant women in the country before their departure and in the country of destination, during migration. Before leaving abroad, women used to work in different sectors in relatively comparable

numbers (agriculture, trade, education, industry, health care, etc.), but in the countries of destination most migrant women are employed in households, construction, and trade.

They also appreciate the opportunities resulting from migration, such as earning money for their family, saving money to buy goods, paying for education, as well as work experience, skills obtained, and learning a foreign language in the country of destination. They are also aware of the losses resulting from labour migration, and that both women and their families are affected, their health status worsened, they remained jobless, as well as the losses related to personal qualifications and skills, the need to abandon studies in order to go abroad.

A lengthy absence from the country limits the women's opportunities to participate actively in the public life of the country, and the involvement in the society development processes is limited to transferring money to the family/household. The impact of remittances is quite significant on the family/household of migrant women, and the incidence of poverty is considerably lower in households with women working abroad, compared to households without migrant women.

The contribution of migrant women to the development of their household is also noticed. Migrant women contribute significantly to the household income, the share of income from remittances being almost 60%. The families of migrant women record certain trends in securing higher living standards for their household members (access to the sewerage system, indoor toilets), access to certain goods that require relatively high expenses.

The main limitations faced by migrant women are those referring to employment after coming back, access to health and social protection, psycho-emotional and behavioural traditionalism and stereotypes which persist in the country.

