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Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC
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Швейцарское управление по развитию и сотрудничеству



Organizația Internațională pentru Migrație (OIM)
Agenția ONU pentru migrație

PROFILE AND CURRENT CHALLENGES OF MOLDOVAN MIGRANT WORKERS

(main findings)

CHISINAU, 2020



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(main findings)

Results of the sociological study *“Labour migration of the citizens of the Republic of Moldova”* and of the study *“IOM’s rapid assessment of the impact of Covid-19 on welfare of Moldovan migrants: addressing vulnerabilities, expectations and strategies to overcome the crises”*

CHISINAU, 2020

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This publication was made possible due to financial support offered by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation within the project „Migration and Local Development”, implemented by the UNDP Moldova and the IOM Moldova.

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INTRODUCTION

Migration is a complex and intense phenomenon in the Republic of Moldova. An impressive number of immigrants (most of them being returned migrants) and emigrants has been registered in the last five years, estimated on the basis of state border crossings by physical persons. In 2017 (the last year for which the migration related data could be estimated for the moment), almost 110 thousand migrants (returned) came to Moldova, and almost 160 thousand emigrants left the country. They formed a negative net migration of approximately 50 thousand persons in that year.¹

Almost a quarter of the population of the Republic of Moldova currently lives abroad either temporarily, or for a long time. They have the intention either to return to Moldova, or to remain on the permanent basis in the host country. In most cases, work experiences abroad are positive, anyhow many of the citizens of the Republic of Moldova abroad face certain difficulties. A large part does not know their rights and become vulnerable towards risks of irregular migration and labour exploitation, as well as lack of protection in exceptional situations, for example the one generated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In major terms, migration affects economies of both the countries of origin, as well as countries of destination. Efforts of migration management, taking into consideration socio-cultural specifics of the citizens of the Republic of Moldova as well as the context of migration policies promoted by host countries are essential in ensuring the protection of the citizens of the Republic of Moldova, regardless of migration phase. In the new global context configured by the pandemic, the short-term migrants and their families who are dependent on the remittances were and are those most affected. However, different evaluations² estimate that the COVID-19 pandemic will have a considerable socio-economic impact on the Republic of Moldova in the following years too, in the post-pandemic period. In this context, four key issues have stood out: (i) high levels of unemployment caused by COVID-19 among one third of Moldovan nationals who reside and work abroad. This leads to an increased return rate of Moldovan migrant workers who as a consequence cause an additional pressure on the internal labour market; (ii) migration trends from Moldova have created a group of vulnerable citizens, separated from members of their families who left for work abroad. They are also deprived now of remittances as a main source of disposable income; (iii) important challenges in essential staff retention for the labour market of Moldova such as professionals in the area of health and education. This will have a major impact on early post-COVID-19 recovery; (iv) the economic growth of the Republic of Moldova is partially due to consumption. In its turn, it is underpinned by financial remittances

¹ NBS, Information Note on the reviewed number of population of the Republic of Moldova, including data on the international migration - <https://statistica.gov.md/newsview.php?l=ro&idc=30&id=6409>

² Evaluation of socio-economic impact (UNDP); Evaluation of COVID-19 impact on education (UNICEF); Effects of COVID-19 crises on women (UN Women); Rapid assessment of the needs for organizations that support persons with HIV (UNAIDS); Rapid mapping of economic vulnerabilities of Moldova in the context of challenges posed by Covid-19 pandemic (macroeconomic assessment) (RCO); Consultations with representatives of diaspora from Spain, France, Germany, Poland concerning COVID-19 impact on the situation of Moldovan migrants (IOM)

that contribute also to tax revenue. It is possible that these financial flows (approximately 16% of the GDP in 2019) will drop following the socio-economic impact of COVID-19.

This analysis reflects the key findings of two extensive researches concerning the situation of the citizens of the Republic of Moldova who work abroad and carried out during 2019-2020. The complete study reports could be accessed on the IOM Moldova webpage³.

The first study “*Labour migration of the citizens of the Republic of Moldova*”⁴ was carried out to offer support to the Government of the Republic of Moldova to improve the process of policy making to ensure protection of the rights of women and men from the Republic of Moldova at all stages of migration. This study was carried out by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection, with the support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) within the Project “Migration and Local Development” (MiDL). The study reflects key challenges for Moldovan migrants and their specific needs over the entire migration cycle. It reports respectively about the experiences of Moldovan migrants during recruitment, working abroad as well as upon their return in Moldova.

The second study, titled “*IOM’s rapid assessment of the impact of Covid-19 on welfare of Moldovan migrants: addressing vulnerabilities, expectations and strategies to overcome the crises*”⁵ was carried out by the IOM-Moldova’s team as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic for a better understanding of how and to what extent the COVID-19 pandemic affects the welfare of migrant workers originating from the Republic of Moldova as well as to identify the key challenges, vulnerabilities, expectations and specific needs of Moldovan migrants in the context of pandemic.

This analysis offers information, opinions and behaviours of migrants. Specialists reflect on the needs for interventions aiming at maximizing the possible effects of migration and protecting the citizens of the Republic of Moldova, regardless their place of stay and socio-economic status. This via following specific situations as the one generated by COVID-19 pandemic.

METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS. Both researchers carried out have contained quantitative methods (survey) and qualitative research (focus groups and in-depth interviews). The study “*Labour migration of the citizens of the Republic of Moldova*” was carried out in 6 destination countries (Poland, Germany, United Kingdom, France, Israel and Spain) and in the Republic of Moldova. The data was collected “*face-to-face*”. Considering the specificity of this time period, the study on COVID-19 was carried out online and covered 10 destination countries (Portugal, Spain, Italy, Germany, France, Ireland, United Kingdom, Poland, Russian Federation and Israel).

The study on labour migrants was carried out in the months of May – December 2019 on a sample of 1344 participants in surveys. Likewise, 46 in depth interviews were carried out and 308 respondents took part in 41 focus groups discussions. In the case of the online study, the

³ <https://moldova.iom.int/publications>

⁴ Sociological study in six destination countries and in the Republic of Moldova, authors Natalia Vladicescu and Maria Vremiş

⁵ This study was carried out within the Internal Project of the IOM-Moldova „ Empirical evidences on vulnerabilities and needs of migrants and diaspora of the Republic of Moldova in the context of COVID-19” / Project manager: Ghenadie Creţu; research and data analysis coordinator: dr. Vitalie Varzari; data controllers: Dorian Bulgac, Irina Arap, Irina Şerban, Maria Josan, Svetlana Digore, Valeria Huţuleac.

data was collected in the period April – May 2020 on a sample of 1186 respondents as a part of online survey and through 59 semi-structured interviews.

LIMITATIONS. Findings of these studies capture phenomenon, trends, and explanations of behaviours – these do not have to be generalized, but shall be analysed with the reference to interviewed persons.

In the Republic of Moldova, quantitative data was collected through the National Employment Agency (NEA) and territorial subdivisions and mayoralties included in the project UNDP/MiDL. Given the fact that the program concerning the work opportunities in the area of constructions in the State of Israel for qualified Moldovan workers⁶ is managed by the NEA, the sample of potential migrants is over-represented by men who intend to leave to Israel.

Furthermore, online collection of quantitative and qualitative data has some methodological limitations concerning the inadequate access to the electronic communication tools of some groups of migrants such as irregular ones who, in general, have a deficient access to the online means of communication or avoid participating in surveys because of precaution. In addition, reduced digital dexterity of some groups of respondents who are not accustomed to online self-administrated questioning leads to the low quality of some questionnaires.

⁶ On the basis of Intergovernmental Bilateral Agreement signed between the Government of the Republic of Moldova and the Government of the State of Israel regarding temporary employment of workers from the Republic of Moldova in the State of Israel (entered into force on 6th January 2013, extended until 5.01.2024.)

MIGRANTS' PROFILE

The structure of the sample of the research “Labour migration of the citizens of the Republic of Moldova” indicates a similar picture referring to the socio-demographic profile of labour migrants reported by the majority of studies carried out in the field.

Thereby, overall speaking, men compared to women prevail among participants in the study. The ratio is approximately 60% of men compared to 40% women. In the meantime nevertheless, it is noted that the share of men is almost twice as high compared to women in the case of Poland and the United Kingdom whereas the share of women is higher compared to men among the participants in the study from Israel and Spain.

More than 3/4 of the migrants are below 45 years. The male migrant workers are generally younger, half of the men abroad are below the age of 35 years. Among the women, almost 40% have a similar age. However, depending on the destination country, distribution by age and gender differs. This could be explained by job offers and variety among destinations.

The majority of migrants - over 65% - are married or live in a couple. One out of ten migrants is divorced. This share is double among women compared with men. More than a half of individuals involved in a migration process have children up to 14 years.

Almost 1/3 of the respondents from the destination countries in this research have higher education, and 20% have secondary professional education. The contingents of migrants in the United Kingdom are more educated, circa 64% have higher education, followed by Germany with 47%, and Spain where 45% of respondents declared that they had similar education. Female migrants generally have a higher level of education compared to men. The share of women with higher education significantly exceeds that of men.

People originating in rural areas of Moldova prevail among participants in the study among both those who reside abroad, and those who returned or potential migrants.

Table 1. Socio-demographic profile of participants in the study
Labour migration of the citizens of the Republic of Moldova

		Destination country/ accomplishment of questionnaire						Total in destination countries	In Moldova
		Poland	Germany	United Kingdom	France	Israel	Spain		
Gender of respondent	Male	65%	54%	70%	55%	43%	45%	56%	64%
	Female	35%	46%	30%	45%	57%	55%	44%	36%
Age groups	15-24 years	9%	7%	7%	10%	-	4%	6%	6%
	25-34 years	35%	43%	63%	53%	25%	27%	39%	39%
	35-44 years	38%	38%	15%	22%	32%	43%	33%	27%
	45-54 years	17%	10%	12%	11%	29%	18%	17%	17%
	55 years and more	0%	2%	3%	5%	14%	8%	5%	11%
Family status	Single	26%	24%	17%	20%	13%	11%	19%	18%
	Married	42%	57%	68%	60%	50%	71%	55%	61%
	Concubinage	15%	7%	7%	12%	6%	12%	10%	8%
	Widow	2%	1%	1%	3%	10%	1%	3%	3%
	Divorced	15%	10%	7%	6%	20%	6%	12%	11%

		Destination country/ accomplishment of questionnaire						Total in destination countries	In Moldova
		Poland	Germany	United Kingdom	France	Israel	Spain		
Existence of children	No children	46%	45%	49%	53%	53%	50%	49%	44%
	With children	54%	55%	51%	47%	47%	50%	51%	56%
The last highest level of accomplished studies	Gymnasium/ Incomplete secondary education and lower	32%	7%	4%	14%	20%	5%	16%	23%
	Lyceum/ general secondary education	24%	8%	8%	11%	14%	12%	14%	9%
	Secondary vocational	19%	11%	11%	22%	23%	18%	18%	25%
	Secondary professional education	15%	27%	13%	17%	26%	20%	20%	19%
	Higher education	10%	47%	64%	37%	17%	45%	32%	24%
Area of residence in Moldova	Urban	48%	62%	57%	34%	38%	36%	46%	39%
	Rural	52%	38%	43%	66%	62%	64%	54%	61%
Total		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

More than 62% of the women and 38% of the men participated in the online study *IOM's rapid assessment*. The distribution differs among the countries. In the case of Italy, Israel and Portugal, 3/4 of the respondents were women. In the case of Poland on the other hand, almost 3/4 of the respondents were men. Likewise, the share of men exceeds the share of women among respondents from the United Kingdom.

Most of respondents are in the age range between 31-40 years (37%). Less are over 51 years (15%). In Poland, Germany and France the participants are younger. 46%, 35% and respectively 29% among respondents are aged between 18-30 years. Older respondents, over 51 years, are more represented in Italy (26% among respondents), in the Russian Federation (23%) and in Portugal (20%).

Most of the respondents indicated that they were married (64%) and had children (74%). The lowest share of married persons (49%) as well as the largest share of divorced persons are in the case of Israel (21%).

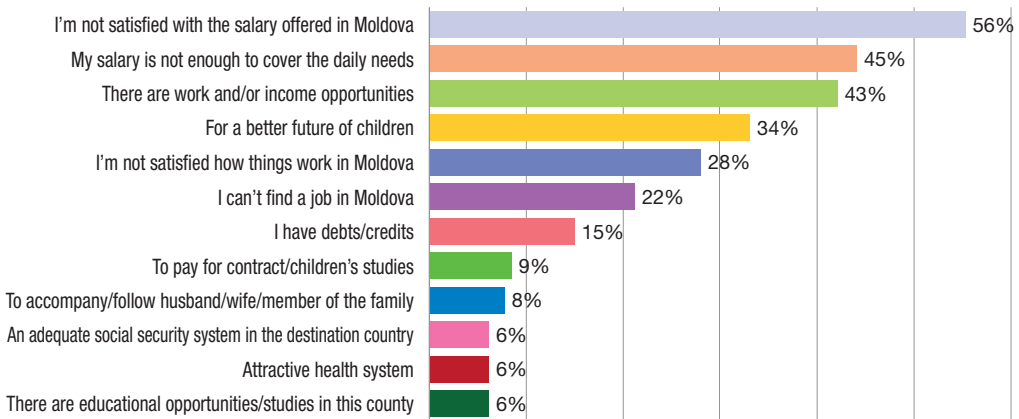
Table 2. Socio-demographic profile of participants in the online IOM study

		Russian Federation	France	Germany	Ireland	Israel	Italy	United Kingdom	Poland	Portugal	Spain	Total
Gender	Female	55%	55%	63%	69%	74%	74%	46%	29%	74%	63%	62%
	Male	45%	45%	37%	31%	26%	26%	54%	71%	26%	38%	38%
Age groups	18-30 years	23%	29%	37%	28%	12%	16%	29%	46%	28%	23%	25%
	31-40 years	29%	46%	37%	48%	41%	26%	42%	21%	37%	40%	37%
	41-50 years	24%	19%	18%	18%	29%	32%	22%	25%	15%	24%	23%
	Over 51	24%	6%	8%	6%	18%	26%	8%	8%	20%	14%	16%
Family status	Single	15%	22%	23%	12%	18%	14%	24%	25%	12%	13%	16%
	Married	67%	57%	58%	73%	49%	59%	63%	58%	68%	64%	64%
	Concubinage	3%	14%	10%	8%	8%	7%	8%	13%	9%	10%	7%
	Widow	4%	-	2%	1%	3%	7%	-	-	2%	-	3%
	Divorced	11%	7%	8%	6%	21%	14%	6%	4%	9%	14%	10%
Existence of children	No children	79%	57%	60%	78%	76%	81%	61%	71%	79%	75%	74%
	With children	21%	43%	40%	22%	24%	19%	39%	29%	22%	25%	26%
Total		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

PREREQUISITE OF LABOUR MIGRATION

The key reasons for labour migration. Labour migration is dictated by a combination of push and pull factors both of economic and social nature. These are expressed through dissatisfaction with the salary offered in Moldova, difficulty to find a job in Moldova, accumulation of debts/credits, job opportunities/ higher incomes abroad, dissatisfactions how things are going in Moldova, dissatisfaction with the quality of public services in Moldova (medicine, education), family reunification and access to more qualitative studies, including abroad.

Figure 1. For which reasons do you intend to leave to work abroad (potential migrants) (multiple response)?

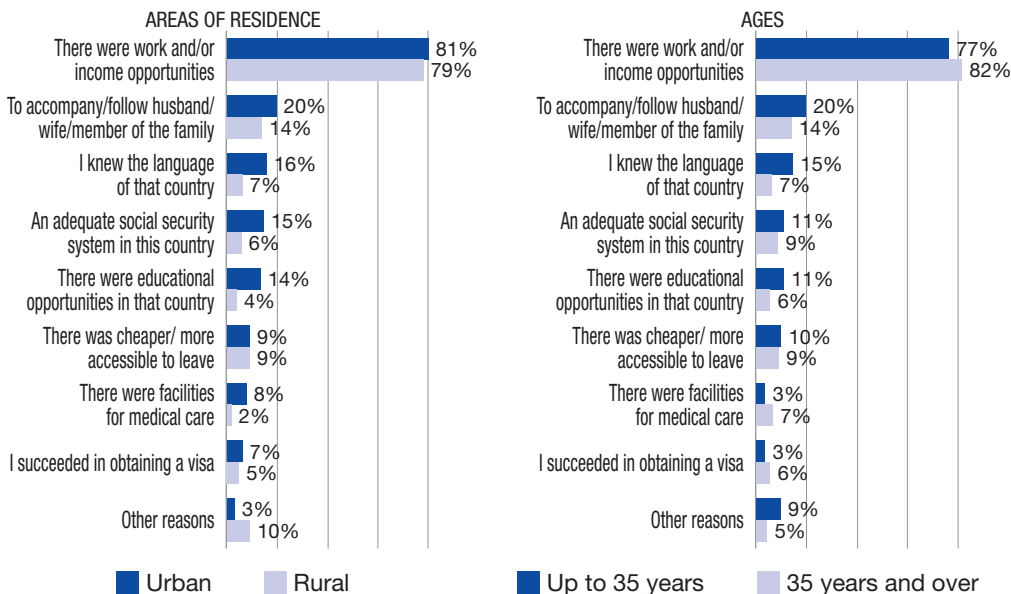


In the meantime, the key motives for labour migration abroad still remain the economic ones. Approximately 80% of respondents mentioned *job opportunities and/or higher incomes in the destination country* as a reason for leaving the home country.

More than half of persons involved in the migration process have children under 14 years. This leads to the conclusion that the willingness of parents to ensure support and education of children from financial points of view continues to be a factor that fosters labour migration.

Migration is also emerging as an escape from the living and working conditions in the Republic of Moldova. The motivation to travel abroad for the younger respondents and those from urban areas is also fuelled to a greater extent by other factors beyond the economic ones. The share who mentioned social security, educational opportunities, as well as other perspectives on life and education for their children as a reason to leave, are more present in these groups. In countries such as the United Kingdom, Germany, and Spain, approximately half of all women arrived with the purpose of family reunification.

Figure 2. For which reasons did you arrive to work in the destination country (respondents residing abroad), (multiple response)?



History of migration. Migration flows are maintained over the years. Around one of the five respondents started the migration cycle in 2005, and this mobility continues with an observed upward in the upcoming periods.

A share of about 40% of respondents who are abroad and more than a half of those returned in Moldova declared that their first migration experience led them to Russian Federation. Reorientation of migrant workers who worked in the Russian Federation towards other destination country is observed. For more than a half of men who work in Poland, France, and Israel the first destination country was the Russian Federation. Furthermore, this country was the first destination country for a considerable share of Moldovan women working in Israel (44%) and Poland (36%).

For the quite pronounced shares of migrants the first destination country for labour migration are the current host countries. In addition, the distribution by countries is different. Moreover, for the majority of women the country where they work for the moment is their first destination country. Their share varies between 41% in Poland and 75% in the case of Spain. Men have a longer migration experience, and the current destination country is the first one for shares, which vary between 13% in the case of Israel and 44% in the United Kingdom. Migration to Israel is a specific one, surging after 2013. This phenomenon is also determined by the implementation of the Intergovernmental bilateral Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Moldova and the Government of the State of Israel concerning the temporary employment of Moldovan workers in the Israeli construction sector⁷.

The mobility of labour migrants is rather pronounced. Nearly 60% of migrants residing abroad worked in at least two countries in the last 10 years. Moreover, 1/5 worked in three countries and more. The mobility of men is more pronounced, circa 73% of them worked in two countries and more, in comparison with circa 45% of women who have the same mobility experience.

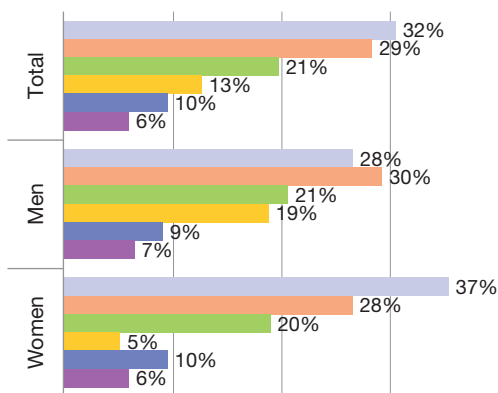
⁷ <http://www.anofm.md/Israel>, the agreement came into force on 6 January 2013, extended until 5.01.2024

Table 3. What was the first destination country (the country where you migrated for the first time), by gender and destination countries?

	Poland		Germany		United Kingdom		France		Israel		Spain	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Russian Federation	62,7%	35,9%	25,7%	9,7%	29,3%	15,6%	55,4%	10,9%	78,4%	44,3%	42,6%	8,8%
Italy	1,4%	6,4%	4,1%	14,5%	13,3%	9,4%	5,4%	10,9%	1,4%	1,0%		5,3%
Portugal	2,1%	1,3%	5,4%						1,4%		10,6%	3,5%
Spain			1,4%	1,6%		3,1%		2,2%	1,4%		31,9%	75,4%
Ukraine	2,8%	5,1%	2,7%		1,3%	3,1%	1,8%		4,1%	1,0%		
Israel	2,8%	2,6%	4,1%		1,3%				13,5%	52,6%		
Poland	21,1%	41,0%	1,4%									1,8%
Germany	0,7%	2,6%	36,5%	66,1%			1,8%	2,2%			6,4%	1,8%
United Kingdom	0,7%		2,7%		44,0%	46,9%		4,3%			2,1%	
France	2,1%	1,3%	1,4%	3,2%	2,7%		32,1%	63,0%				1,8%
Turkey	3,5%	3,8%	1,4%		1,3%							
Other country			13,5%	4,8%	6,7%	21,9%	3,6%	6,5%		1,0%	6,4%	1,8%

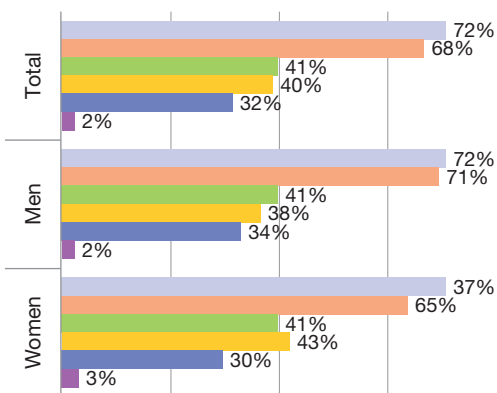
Arrangements for departure to work abroad. The inner social circle is a principle source of information about possibilities to work abroad for around 60% of respondents, in particular family and friends who resides in the respective country, while for circa 1/5 the main source of information is family/ friends from Moldova. In the same context, about 1/3 of respondents addressed to the private agencies from Moldova for various information/ services, and one out of 10 to the private agencies abroad. The requested information referred to *information on the job opportunities, job offer, assistance in the host country and/ or organization of departure to destination country, negotiating an employment contract*. To be mentioned that, as a rule, persons who plan to leave to Poland or Israel approach more often the private agencies.

Figure 3. Did you seek any information/services in Moldova and/or in the country where you reside (respondents residing abroad)?



- Private agencies in Moldova
- Private individuals from abroad
- Private individuals from Moldova
- NEA / its subdivisions
- Private agencies abroad
- Other sources

Figure 4. Could you please specify the type of services in Moldova and/or in the country, which you have benefited from (respondents residing abroad)?



- Information regarding job opportunities
- Job offer
- Assistance in the host country (accommodation, translations, etc.)
- Organizing the departure to the destination country
- Offering / negotiating the employment contract
- Anything else

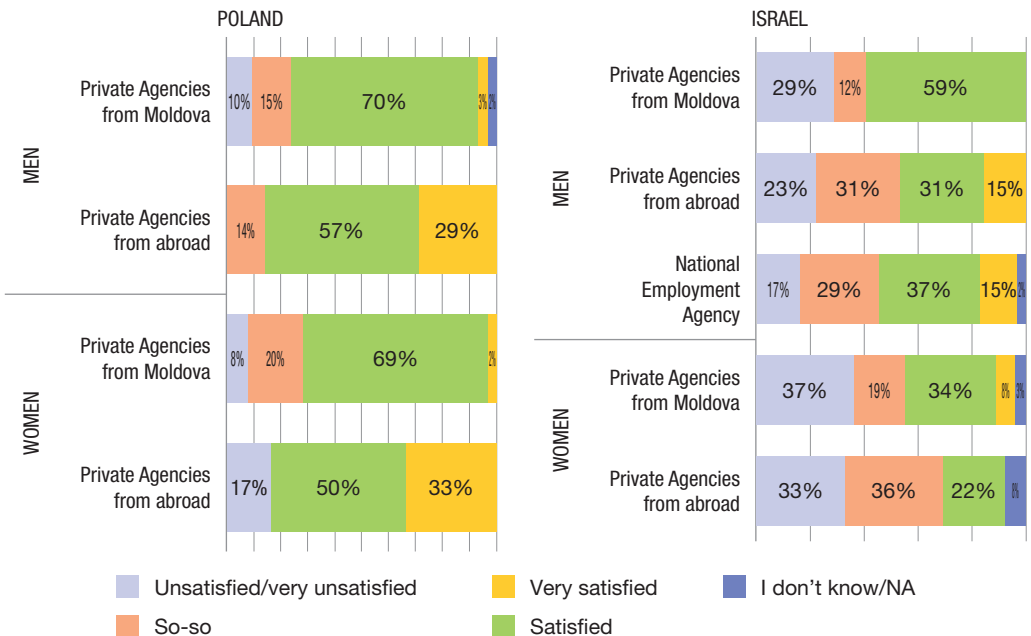
The satisfaction degree towards the services offered by the private agencies differs. Thus, nearly 1/4 of respondents declared that they were *very dissatisfied / dissatisfied* by the services provided by the private agencies from Moldova compared with less than 1/5 of respondents who mentioned the same in respect to the private employment agencies from abroad. In general, the key reasons of migrants' dissatisfaction are *worse working conditions compared with the promised ones, salaries were lower compared with the promised ones, the conditions of employment contract were not respected*.

It is necessary mentioning that labour migrants working in Poland reported a rather high degree of satisfaction towards the private employment agencies' services. Thus, 83% of women and 86% of men were *satisfied/very satisfied* by the services of the agencies from abroad, while 62% of women and 73% of men were satisfied by those from Moldova.

The situation is different with respect to the provided services in the case of Moldovan labour migrants who work in Israel. It is necessary to mention a degree of dissatisfaction in relation to Israel. The data indicates that around 37% of women and 29% of men declared themselves *dissatisfied/ very dissatisfied* by the services of the private agencies from Moldova. Moreover, nearly 1/3 of women and 1/4 of men declared themselves *dissatisfied/ very dissatisfied* by the services of private agencies from Israel. Furthermore, it is noted also 17% of men were dissatisfied by the NEA's services.

The key reasons of migrants' dissatisfaction both in the case of Poland, and in the case of Israel are *worse working conditions compared with the promised ones*. Depending on the destination countries certain differences, related to prioritization of the reasons for dissatisfaction could be observed. Dissatisfaction in relation to the fact that *the salaries were lower compared with the promised ones* was mentioned to a greater extent (in second place) in the case of Poland. Migrants in Israel referred to *non-compliance with the conditions of employment contract*.

Figure 5. Were you satisfied by the services provided (respondents residing abroad)?



Around 1/4 of migrant respondents, participated in certain trainings in Moldova before their departure abroad. Mainly those who left to work in Poland and Israel participated in trainings. The trainings were provided by different service providers. Those who left to work in Poland were trained by *private agencies from Moldova* and by private individuals. Men working in Israel were trained by the *NEA/ territorial subdivisions* of the NEA, women by *private Agencies from Moldova*.

The main trainings received by respondents related to general guidance and language training courses. Circa 80% of respondents who benefited from trainings before departure considered them *very useful/ useful* for employment abroad.

Significant shares of migrants benefited from trainings in destination countries, as well. Circa 43% respondents working abroad and 23% of returned migrants declared that they benefited from certain trainings in destination country, with more pronounced shares of trained men compared with women. More beneficiaries of training abroad were observed in the case of those working in the United Kingdom (63%), less in Poland (27%). Trainings were either mainly provided by employer from the destination country (42% affirmations), or paid by him (22% affirmations), and were oriented to studying/ learning some professions/ competencies.

SITUATION OF MIGRANTS IN THE HOST COUNTRY

Employment abroad. The majority of those interviewed, 9 out of 10 persons, had a job in the destination country at the time of the study. However, it should be noted the phenomenon of brain waste, the erosion of professional qualifications, the tendency of hiring sub-qualified migrants in host countries was noted. The study identified qualified persons such as mayors, priests who were temporarily at work in construction abroad as well as former teachers, engineers who gave up their professions and performed under-qualified jobs.

Consequently, regardless the area of training and qualifications obtained at home, the key sectors where mainly men work are *construction, transport and communications*. Women work in *households, health and social assistance*. The analysis of the situation from the perspective of education/training field, reveals that circa 57% of men with education/training background in the area of agriculture, 55% of those from education sector, and 53% of men from other trainings areas than those listed in the survey (e.g. arts, design, military, priests etc.) work in construction. A larger diversity of sectors of employment could be observed among women. Nevertheless, a small share of women are employed in the sectors relevant to their area of education/training.

Table 4. Distribution of labour migrants by areas of interest and sectors where they work in destination countries, sexes separated

Area of training/ instruction	Number	In what sector do you work in your current job/last job you had?												
		Households	Construction	Agriculture	Hotel services and restaurants	Recreational and leisure services	Commerce	Transport and communications	Food industry	Light industry	Public administration	Education	Health and social assistance	Other
MEN														
Education/ learning	20	15%	55%	5%	-	-	5%	10%	-	-		5%	5%	-
Justice/ law	18	-	39%	-	-	-	6%	33%	-	-	6%	-	-	17%
ICT	31	3%	32%	-	-	-	6%	23%	10%	6%		-	-	16%
Engineering and construction	84	1%	81%	-	-	-	1%	5%	4%	1%		-	-	7%
Agriculture	23	4%	57%	22%	-	-	4%		4%			-	-	9%
Health and social assistance	4	-	-	-	-	-		50%	-	-	-	-	50%	
Transport	32	-	44%	3%	-	6%	6%	34%	-	-	-	-	-	6%
Commerce	11	9%	27%	-	9%	18%	9%		9%	18%	-	-	-	
Economy and finances	28	-	43%	-	7%	-	4%	14%	11%	-	-	-	-	21%
Social sciences	11	-	18%	-	9%	-	9%	9%	9%	-	9%	9%		27%
I don't have specialized studies	166	4%	49%	10%	1%	-	2%	7%	10%	6%	1%	-	-	6%
Other	40	5%	53%	3%	5%	-	3%	3%	18%	-	-	-	-	13%
Total men	468	3%	52%	5%	1%	1%	3%	10%	8%	3%	1%	%	1%	9%

Area of training/ instruction	Number	In what sector do you work in your current job/last job you had?												
		Households	Construction	Agriculture	Hotel services and restaurants	Recreational and leisure services	Commerce	Transport and communications	Food industry	Light industry	Public administration	Education	Health and social assistance	Other
WOMEN														
Education/ learning	46	39%	-	-	17%	-	4%	-	2%	7%	-	13%	9%	9%
Justice/ law	15	13%	7%	-	13%	-	20%	7%	-	-	7%	-	7%	27%
ICT	9	22%	-	-	-	-	11%	22%	11%	11%	-	-	-	22%
Engineering and construction	20	40%	15%	5%	15%	-	5%	-	-	-	-	-	10%	10%
Agriculture	17	82%	6%	-	6%	-	6%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Health and social assistance	40	45%	5%	-	-	-	-	-	5%	-	-	3%	43%	-
Transport	1	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Commerce	22	36%	5%	-	5%	-	27%	-	5%	5%	5%	-	5%	9%
Economy and finances	48	21%	6%	-	4%	2%	19%	6%	6%	-	2%	-	4%	29%
Social sciences	13	15%	8%	-	15%	-	-	-	-	8%	8%	15%	15%	15%
I don't have specialized studies	82	37%	1%	4%	4%	-	1%	2%	22%	9%	1%	-	11%	5%
Other	61	31%	2%	2%	13%	3%	8%	3%	11%	8%	-	-	3%	15%
Total women	374	35%	4%	1%	8%	1%	8%	3%	9%	5%	1%	2%	11%	11%

The analysis of the sectors the labour migrants worked in Moldova in correlation with what sector they work within abroad denotes significant discrepancies. The share of men who continue to work abroad in the same sector as they did at home varies between 39% in the agricultural sector down to 10% in public administration. The exception is construction where around 80% of the migrants work in the same sector abroad as in Moldova. It is worth mentioning that no cases were identified where men with teaching experience in Moldova works in that sector abroad.

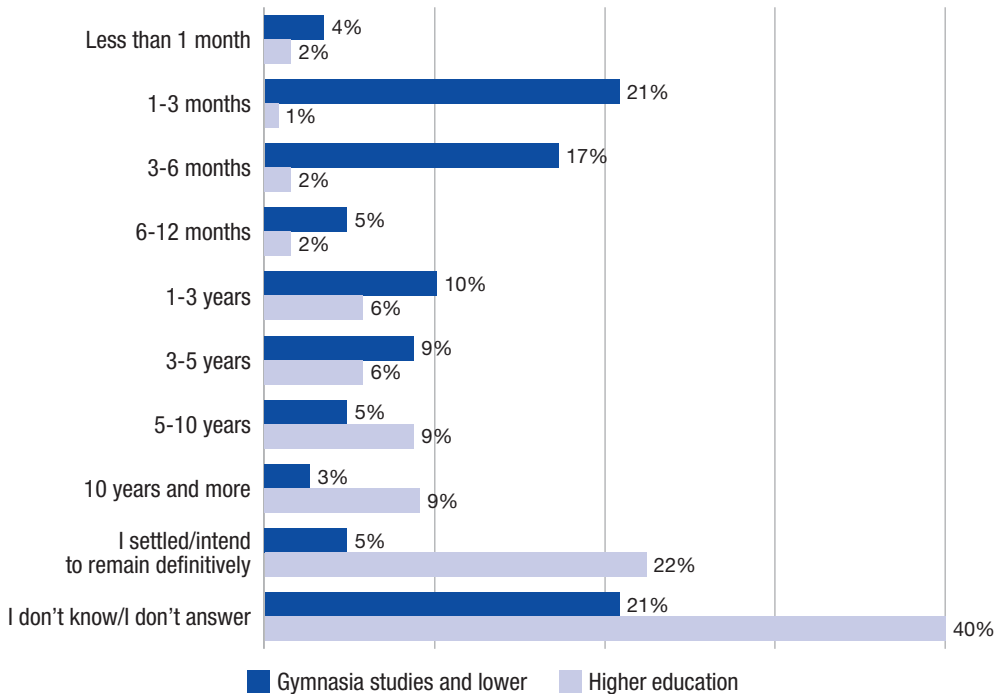
Among the female respondents, nearly 59% of the women who were involved in household work at home worked in the same sector abroad. In the other sectors, the shares of respondents who work in the same sectors abroad varies between 39% in the health and social assistance sector, down to 12% in transport and communications. There are no cases of women who worked in recreational services or public administration in their home country and continuously worked in the same sector abroad. It may be concluded that working experience and skills obtained in Moldova are lost for persons employed abroad in other sectors.

The study identified communities of Moldovans who are employed in qualified works, for example in the banking sector (United Kingdom) and in the health sector (France). A community of more than 15 doctors originating from the Republic of Moldova were identified in a town in France located near Paris, with a population of approximately 30 thousand inhabitants. Their age and profession differ (dentist, surgeon, cardiologist, imagist etc.). It is worth mentioning that the share of Moldovans who left to the destination country with the intention to settle permanently is higher among specialists and people within business, compared to citizens of the Republic of Moldova who left abroad for unqualified jobs. The Moldovans with unqualified jobs abroad saw their work abroad as a temporary settlement. This touches the phenomenon of “brain drain”.

Table 5. Distribution of labour migrants by sector, divided by the sector the participants worked within in Moldova and the sector the participants worked in destination countries, sexes separated

The sector where you worked in the Republic of Moldova before migration	Number	What is the sector where you currently work/ worked at the last workplace?												
		Households	Construction	Agriculture	Hotel services and restaurants	Recreational and leisure services	Commerce	Transport and communications	Food industry	Light industry	Public administration	Education	Health and social assistance	Other
MEN														
Households (housekeeper, caregivers)	4	25%	75%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Construction	138	2%	80%	3%	-	-	1%	1%	4%	3%	-	-	-	5%
Agriculture	44	5%	27%	39%	-	-	2%	-	7%	7%	-	-	-	9%
Hotel services and restaurants	9		33%	11%	11%	11%	-	-	33%		-	-	-	-
Recreational and leisure services	5		40%			20%	20%				-	-	-	20%
Commerce	29	3%	34%	3%	3%	3%	17%	10%	14%	3%	-	-	-	3%
Transport and communications	73	1%	38%	3%	1%		1%	34%	10%	4%	-	-	-	4%
Food industry	13	15%	38%		8%	-	-	-	31%		-	-	-	8%
Light industry	11	-	45%	-	-	-	-	-	18%	27%	-	-	-	-
Public administration	10	-	30%		10%			30%	-	-	10%			20%
Education	9	22%	33%	-	-	-	-	11%	-	-	-	-	11%	22%
Health and social assistance	5	-	20%	-	-	-	-	20%	20%	-	-	-	40%	-
Other	60	-	48%	-	3%	-	7%	12%	2%	2%	2%	2%	-	23%
Unemployed, was not working in Moldova	9	22%	33%	-	-	-	-	11%	11%	-	11%	-	-	-
I have never worked in Moldova	49	2%	51%	-	-	2%	6%	12%	10%	-	-	2%	-	14%
Total	468	3%	52%	5%	1%	1%	3%	10%	8%	3%	1%	%	1%	9%
WOMEN														
Households (housekeeper, caregivers)	21	57%	-	-	10%	-	-	-	14%	-	5%	-	5%	10%
Construction	11	45%	18%	-	-	-	-	-	18%	-	-	-	18%	-
Agriculture	21	24%	5%	24%		-	-	-	14%	-	-	-	24%	-
Hotel services and restaurants	12	17%	8%		25%	-	-	-	8%	17%	-	-	8%	8%
Recreational and leisure services	3	-	-	-	67%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	33%
Commerce	44	30%	-	-	-	-	34%	-	9%	9%	2%	2%	2%	11%
Transport and communications	17	59%	-	-	6%	6%	6%	12%	-	-	6%	-	-	6%
Food industry	28	50%	-	-	-	-	4%	4%	29%	4%	-	-	4%	7%
Light industry	26	31%	8%	-	19%	-	-	-	8%	27%	-	-	4%	4%
Public administration	24	25%	4%	-	4%	-	4%	8%	4%	-	-	8%	8%	33%
Education	44	45%	-	-	11%	-	5%	-	-	5%	2%	14%	9%	9%
Health and social assistance	38	45%	5%	-	-	-	-	5%	3%	-	-	-	39%	3%
Other	32	22%	3%	-	9%	3%	19%	3%	6%	-	-	-	3%	31%
Unemployed, was not working in Moldova	14	50%	-	-	21%	-	-	-	14%	7%	-	-	7%	-
I have never worked in Moldova	39	15%	10%	-	13%	3%	8%	5%	10%	3%	3%	-	13%	18%
Total	374	35%	4%	1%	8%	1%	8%	3%	9%	5%	1%	2%	11%	11%

Figure 6. How long do you intend to stay in the destination country this time?



Cases where short-term labour migration resulted in a long-term residence or in an intention to settle in the host country have been registered. The key reason was family reunification in the host country. Employers from the host countries provide support for family reunification in some situations to keep the employees at the companies, if they are satisfied with their services.

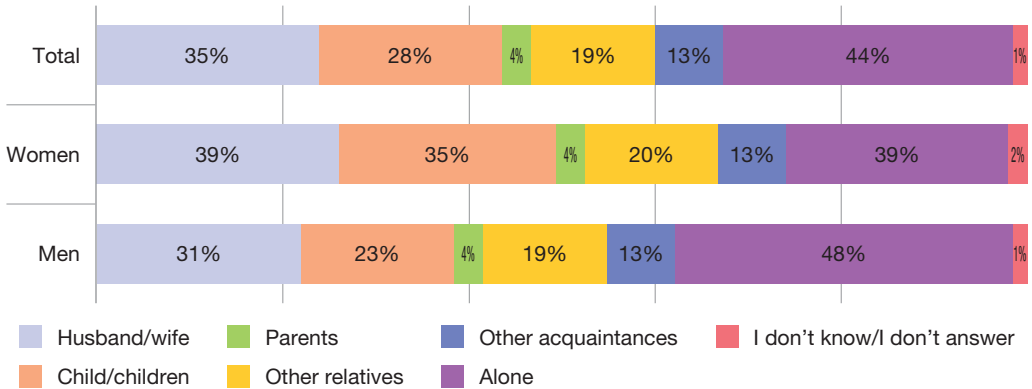
The occasional work abroad - „by replacement” or „in a pair” - is noted among women in some countries. Women managed to be in the family and simultaneously support the family financially. Among men, there are some cases where they work illegally abroad, identifying themselves as “tourists”. They enter legally with the biometric passport from the Republic of Moldova on the basis of a free trade agreement. They attempt to respect the sojourn status in the host country – “I stay three months here and three at home”.

Some cases were identified when companies from certain countries were employing people. However, they were working in other country. These practices are used in particular for specialties where there is a great shortage of human resources.

The family and social circle of migrants. The inner social circle (husband/ wife, children, parents, relatives) are mostly present in all destination countries for migrants. Citizens of the Republic of Moldova who left abroad have their group of interaction made up of relatives, friends, godfatherships, and neighbours from the Republic of Moldova, excepting Israel.

Almost 25% of the migrants intend to stay abroad and work for 12 months or less. The intention to stay a longer period in the destination country is correlated with the presence of a partner and/or children in the host country.

Figure 7. Are you abroad yourself or with other family's members/relatives/acquaintances (respondents residing abroad)?



Moreover, the study denotes a negative impact of migration on families, one out of ten migrants being divorced. This share is twofold among women compared to the amount of men. The case of Israel is special though. Divorces are motivated by the Israeli regulations. In Israel, employment of both spouses is not allowed. It is particularly difficult to visit migrants for family members. In Israel, the first-degree relatives (spouses, children) cannot visit a person who works temporarily in the country, with some exceptions when a visit is guaranteed by a certain amount of money. Furthermore, possibilities of Moldovans to return to Moldova on vacation are conditional by a series of restrictions on behalf of the employer.

Occupational status and labour relations. Most respondents abroad, 80%, are employed. 10% are self-employed. A working week of respondents abroad varies between 51-56 hours among men and 60-63 hours among women. A working week could sometimes last 24/7 per week. Persons who work in households, taking care of elderly or disabled people, declared this duration. If considered the responses of respondents by country, these marginal values could be noticed in Israel and Germany. Furthermore, the noticed highs are 60-90 hours per week, and the average varies between 39-48 hours.

The major share of those who work abroad, circa 80%, has employment contracts, permanent or temporary, among those circa 2/3 were signed in the destination country. Respondents who work in Israel, Poland, Germany, and France are mainly working on the basis of employment contracts, while less of those working in France and the United Kingdom have employment contracts. Moreover, the study identified the fact that the labour migrants are often not aware of the conditions of the signed employment contracts; they didn't read them. The major reason is the linguistic barrier.

Most respondents of the studies mentioned that they were benefiting from the services and facilities offered by the employer, in accordance with the contracts, such as weekly days of rest, medical insurance, overtime payments, contributions to the pension fund, paid sick leave etc. The countries, which provide more benefits to Moldovan migrants, are Spain and Germany. Less ensured are those who work in Poland.

Moreover, it was mentioned that overtime hours were not always paid or the overtime tariffs were not always respected. Women who work as caregivers in Israel are experiencing problems

when request annual leave. They had to find a person to replace them over the period of absence and to pay a remuneration to a “replacement” person.

Housing and working conditions. The degree of satisfaction of the housing conditions in the destination country is rather high. In this context, circa one out of ten migrants mentioned that they were experiencing problems. Among the biggest problems mentioned were overcrowding, insufficient heating or lack of air conditioning (in Israel). It is worth mentioning that housing is provided by the employer in Poland and Israel, while in Germany, France, UK and Spain, migrants are responsible for their own housing.

The degree of satisfaction regarding the working conditions is fairly high. More than 2/3 of the respondents respond that they are satisfied/very satisfied. Those who were dissatisfied reported the following reasons; conflicts at the workplace, lack of contracts, poor working conditions, and unpaid overtime. Cases of discrimination on the basis of nationality, verbal and physical violence were also mentioned. It is noted that migrants from Israel and Spain, as well as men from Germany, experience the most problems. Cases of sexual harassment were reported in Israel and Spain.

It is necessary to highlight that respondents who left to work abroad through private agencies or through their partners in the destination country, reported less satisfaction with housing and who left by other means. Moreover, more pronounced shares of those who left through private agencies declared that they experienced poor working conditions, unpaid overtime hours of work, late payment/ non-payment in time of the salary, but also more frequent situations of verbal violence and poor attitude of the employer.

Figure 8. How pleased are you with the living conditions in the country where you are?

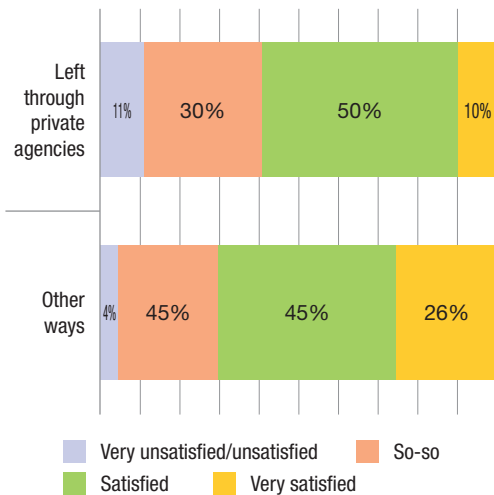
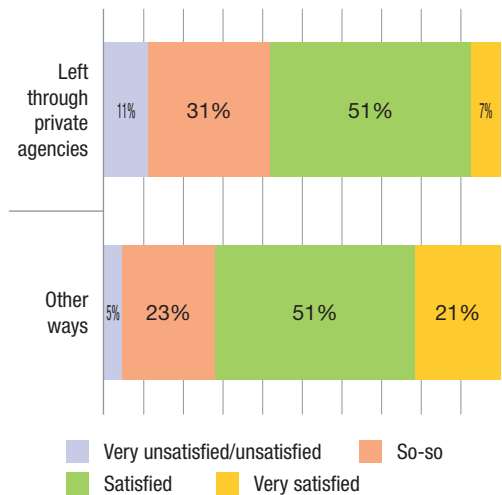


Figure 9. How pleased are you with the working conditions in the country where you are?



Lack of legal culture, a lack of understanding of the basic notions related to labour rights, the lack of knowledge on the modalities of claiming certain rights when they are violated, were identified among different groups of migrants, which emphasizes the need for wider information, the need to increase the addressability of citizens to state institutions, increase of trust in them and the necessity to avoid the existing stereotypes.

In the host countries, migrant workers in many cases do not consult medical services. Around one out of five respondents declared that they had health related problems, but did not consult a doctor. *Concerns about losing the job, lack of medical insurance*, linguistic barriers in communication with doctors; concerns related to the cost of medical services, in particular those of the dentist, were mentioned as the reasons for not visiting a doctor. Labour migrants who are paid per hour or per day are as well reluctant to ask for medical care, as they do not want to be absent from work, and thus lose their revenues.

Limited knowledge/ not knowing the language of the destination country is a significant barrier to integration in the host country, in particular over the first period of migration. In addition, the intermediaries who charge for providing support in liaising with state institutions take advantage of this issue.

Earnings of migrants. Earning possibilities are different from one country to another, and in the same country the possibilities depend on the field of work. Remuneration is different from one employer to another, as well as the wage policy for night shifts, and overtime work. Thus, monthly earnings declared by the respondents of the study, to vary between EUR 500 and more than EUR 2000. Migrant workers in the United Kingdom, France, and Germany earn the most, while migrants in Poland, as well as women in Israel and Spain earn less.

The research found the persistence of partially informal employment. A great part of those employed in construction are, in fact, working on their own/ are self-employed workers, receiving the payment of minimum official salary, while the rest of remuneration is paid “in envelope”. Therefore, many migrants choose higher informal incomes, rather than being insured under medical, social etc. schemes through contributions to the system of social security systems.

Liaising with the homeland. Maintaining relationships with family and the hometown is important for migrant workers, in particular for those who do not intend to settle definitively abroad. It is noted that migrant workers tend to visit their hometowns and family in April-May, during the spring holidays, or in August, during their annual leave.

Meanwhile, legislative and contractual restrictions in the destination country (Israel is an example), the fear of losing the job, as well as the cost to return home make the migrants come home rarely. Moreover, at times migrants choose to remain in the host country even during vacation period to save funds. It is worth mentioning that migrants who work in Israel as caregivers are not able to go on vacation, if they do not identify a person to replace them at the workplace over the period when they are on leave.

A perpetual estrangement from the realities in Moldova was noted. State's efforts to protect citizens who reside abroad for the purpose of employment, for instance, through bilateral agreements on social security, labour migration, reintegration policies of migrants returned from abroad etc., are little known by labour migrants. Nearly 70% of respondents do not know or know little about them.

Expectations on the possibilities to benefit from pensions on return to Moldova are interpreted dually. Apart from this, respondents expect to benefit from pensions on the return to the Republic of Moldova, without contributing to the social protection of Moldova. Other migrants acknowledge that they could not benefit from a pension in the Republic of Moldova if they have not contributed to the social protection system. They consider that Moldovan authorities are supposed to take measures to sign bilateral agreements in this sense with their host countries.

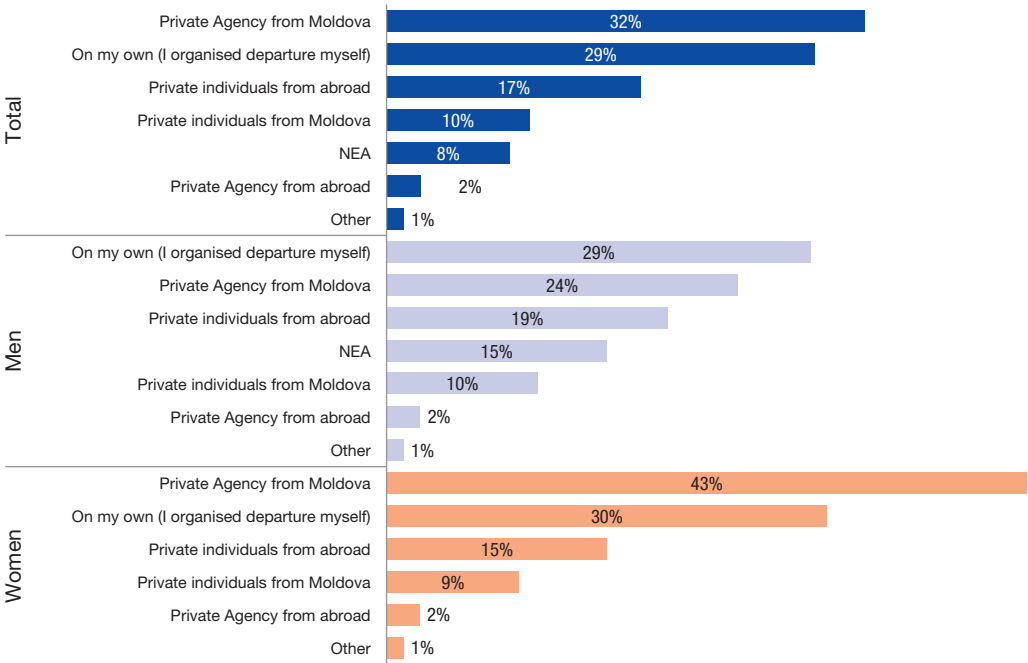
THE ROLE OF PRIVATE AGENCIES IN WORK PLACEMENT ABROAD

The role of private agencies from Moldova and their partner agencies in destination countries are important actors in organizing and in employment abroad. One out of three labour migrants who work abroad envisaged by the study left through a private agency. The agencies facilitated mainly the departure of women for the purpose of employment abroad.

Circa 43% of the women and 29% of the men requested the services offered by the respective agencies. Migrants who left to Poland and Israel benefited the most from the services of the private agencies. 62% of the men and 65% of the women in Poland benefitted, as well as 99% of the women working in Israel.

Besides agencies, private individuals from Moldova provided support in organizing departures with the purpose of employment abroad, particularly in Spain, France and Poland. While they are frequently affiliated with private agencies, respondents did not associate them with these legal entities.

Figure 10. Who helped you to leave to the country where you are at the moment/ the last destination country?



Recommendations from others is a main way of identification of a recruitment agency. Advertising on the streets and on the web is also common. Situations occur when potential migrants, mainly from rural areas, do not interact directly with the recruitment agency, but through a third person who provides them with information on the possibilities to depart abroad with the purpose of employment. As a rule, these persons deal with the preparation of documents and organizing the travel.

Situations are noted when mediators and/or agencies had promised potential migrants certain conditions, but the promises were not respected later on. Cases are registered when individuals do not know any information regarding remuneration, organization of the travels, and did not sign any agreement with the mediators or the respective agencies. Insufficient information for persons who leave to work in Poland persist, starting with the manner in which the departure is organized until living and working conditions in that country.

To ensure that the recruited labour migrants would accept actual living and working conditions in the destination countries, some recruitment agencies from the Republic of Moldova foresee significant penalties (up to 10 thousand lei), to be collected in case the migrant would return to the Republic of Moldova before the predetermined time indicated in the contract. Moreover, in case of some agencies, the job is not even guaranteed while the penalty provisions remain in force.

A low level of information and education of some citizens of the Republic of Moldova is reflected in their behaviour both at the workplace and in society, and make them vulnerable in relation to the promises of mediators, including in the host country. In some situations, citizens of the Republic of Moldova are not responsible for commitments made, they do not fully inform themselves, and take the risks through accepting illegal work that is better paid.

Private agencies charge different taxes for their provided services. The taxes are collected for different purposes, such as: assistance in preparing the documents for departure, sifting, interviewing and consulting about conditions of employment, transport etc. The fee paid to private agencies by labour migrants varies depending on destination country, from EUR 300 to EUR 15,000.

The rationale behind these costs and the period when the fees are charged differ from case to case. Some agencies charge a certain fee for organizing departure, which includes all the costs, including visa arrangements and organizing the transportation to the destination country. Other companies charge fees for organization only, while other entities for visa and transportation. In addition, there are agencies, which offer the possibility to pay these costs later, in the host country.

The majority of the representatives of private agencies, having partner agencies in the host country, are reluctant to describe the mechanism through which the fees for recruitment and employment abroad of Moldovan citizens are paid. To charge the fees, the private agencies from the Republic of Moldova identify various modalities. In some situations, they have partner companies, which provide certain types of services such as making copies (Xerox), providing trainings, translations etc.

One out of four migrants who left through private agencies mentioned that they experienced various issues in the organization of the departure abroad, in particular when arriving in the host country. To solve the issues incurred during job placement abroad, 1/3 consulted the Moldovan Embassy/consulate in the host country. Circa 1/5 approached the public authorities in the host country, as well as asked for help/advice from the inner social circle in the destination country.

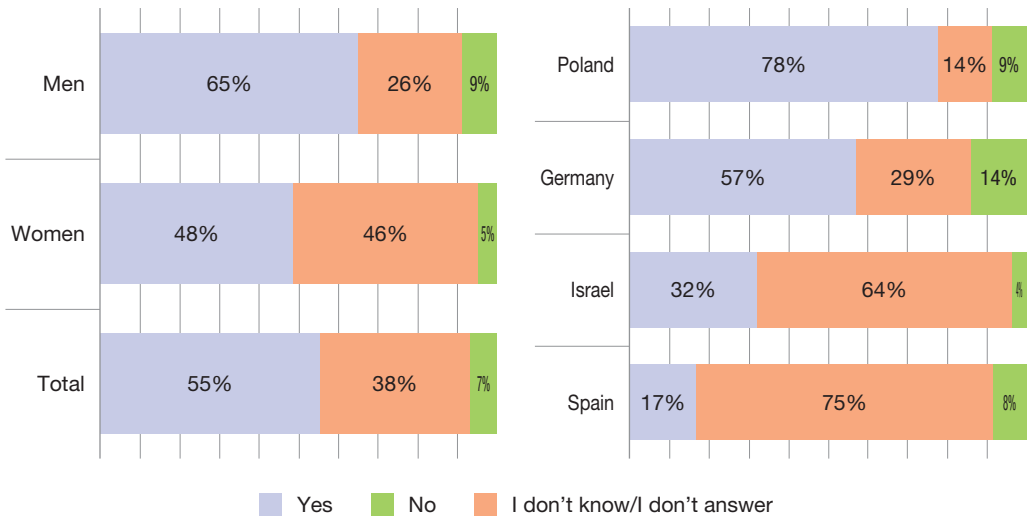
Considerable shares, 53% of the men and 26% of the women, did not tell anyone about the problems they experienced with the agency regarding the process of organizing the departure

to work abroad. The migrants either solved the problems themselves or complied with the emerging situation. The main reasons why a large part of the migrants who experienced problems in the process of migration choose not to appeal to anyone are those related to the lack of trust that no one could provide them support and those guilty will be held accountable, tolerance and resignation, as well as a doubt that competent authorities will take their time, and financial resources.

To better manage the migrants' situation, some employment agencies (for example, those operating in Poland) have delegated persons (so called "coordinators") for each country of origin, responsible for labour migrants in the host countries. Before liaising with employers, coordinators step in when migrants face various challenges such as issues with living conditions, conflicts between migrants and health-related issues. As a rule, coordinators know migrants' language, cultural specificities, and set up interpersonal connections with migrant workers. Respondents who appealed to coordinators mentioned that their problems were solved.

Experience on liaising with private agencies is nevertheless positively assessed. They are recognised to a certain extent as facilitators in organization of departure to work abroad. Regardless of reported problems by migrants in relation to organization of the process of departing abroad by private agencies, more than half of beneficiaries of their services would recommend them to other persons, less for those who left to Spain and Israel.

Figure 11. Would you recommend the services of the private agency to other persons?

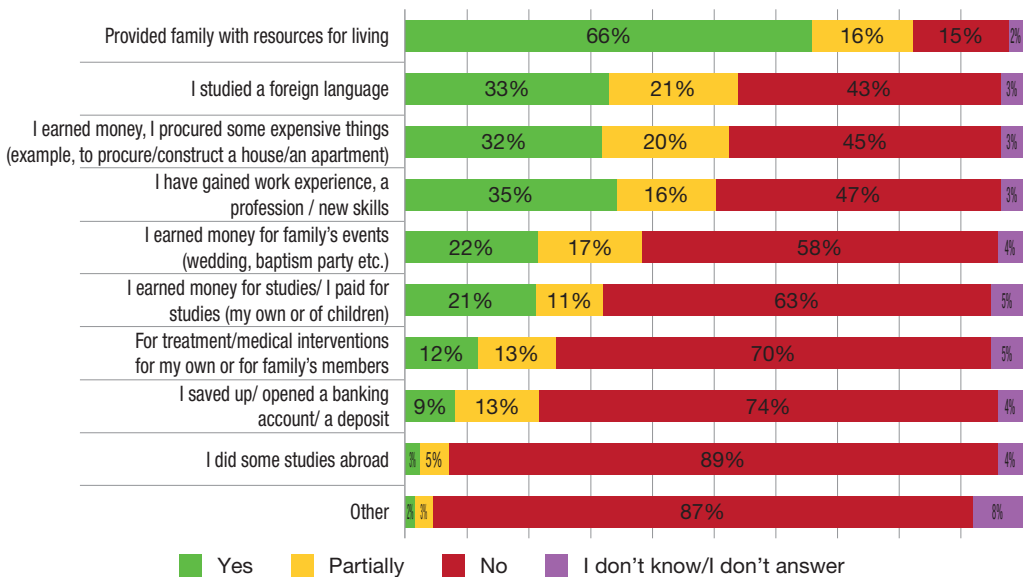


Payments charged by agencies are considered as something normal for organization of departure and for providing job placement services abroad. Regardless of the fact that the amount paid is considered enormous (for example with the case of Israel), nevertheless those who benefited from the services of the private agencies are satisfied by the improvement of the family's financial situation.

IMPACT OF MIGRATION AND PERSPECTIVES OF DEVELOPMENT

Benefits and losses as outcomes of migration. The main benefits of labour migration are related to revenue generation. Most of the respondents mentioned benefits such as providing resources for living for family, accumulation of resources for procurement of long-term goods, for own/children's studies, savings etc. In the meantime, considerable shares of respondents also mentioned other benefits related to knowledge, such as abilities as learning a foreign language, gaining working experience, a profession and new skills.

Figure 12. In your opinion, what are the benefits/ achievements resulting from the work abroad (returned migrants)?



Moldovan migrants working abroad mentioned that they were not able to meet their daily needs with the income they had in the Republic of Moldova. However, they could enjoy a decent life in the country where they currently work even though they experience some difficulties (high cost of rent, linguistic barriers, overtime work etc.). They were not able to afford this when working in Moldova.

Some noted principal losses that working abroad resulted in was that the family had to suffer (loopholes/ gaps in children's education, divorce etc.) as well as the fact that the health worsened.

What the negative consequences of migration are in general for Moldova, are perceived as clear among migrants returned from work abroad. More than 70% of the respondents respond that one negative consequence is that young people leave Moldova. Furthermore, circa 2/3 of the respondents are concerned by the fact that children remain without parental care, and circa 60% consider that families are destroyed as a negative consequence. 55% of the respondents acknowledge that elderly remain without help, and 46% of the respondents consider the important impact of brain drain on the country as another negative consequence of migration.

According to the respondents, other perceived consequences associated with migration are those related with the family members dependence on remittances, resulting in refusal to integrate on the labour market by those who are left behind.

Figure 13. What are your losses resulting from the work abroad (returned migrants)?

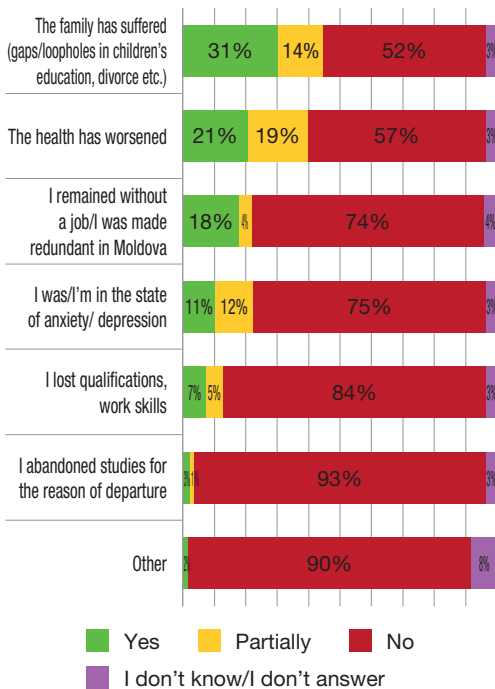
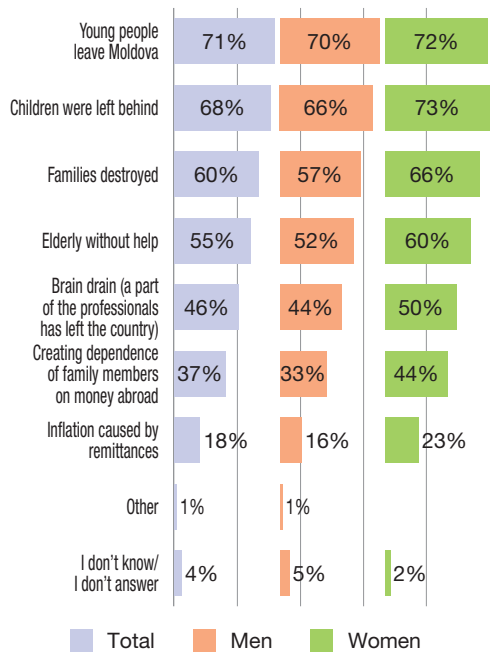


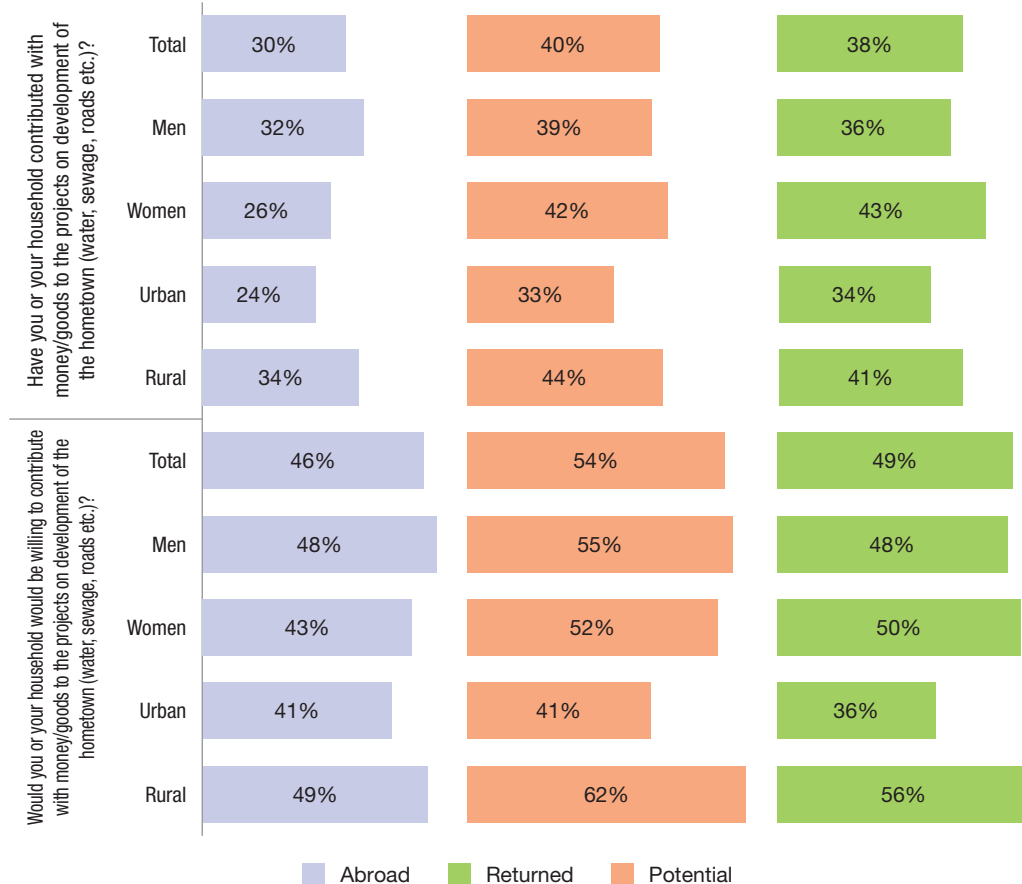
Figure 14. What are the main consequences of migration for Moldova (returned migrants, by gender)?



Migration and development. Using the financial resources earned abroad, migrants contribute to the improvement of living conditions via residential investment, to the quality of accommodation through connecting their own homes to water, sewage, sources of energy etc., but also by contributions to local development and infrastructural projects implemented by mayoralties.

Circa 30% of the participants in the study living abroad, declared that they contributed with money or assets for this purpose. Almost half of the participants from abroad were willing to contribute in the future. Persons interviewed in Moldova, both potential migrants and those who have already returned from abroad, want to develop the community where they live. Thus, circa 38% of the potential migrants and 40% of those returned, underscored the readiness to allocate the money or goods in this sense.

Figure 15. Intentions to contribute to community development



Migrants contribute to local development also through business development. However, the business environment does not seem to be very attractive among migrants. Only about one out of five migrants either own a business or intend to open one in the nearest future. Those who do not want to open a business indicate that the main reasons are related to lack of enough money, high level of corruption and legislative difficulties/ bureaucracy.

From an entrepreneurial perspective, the qualitative study identified the following categories of respondents:

- *Current entrepreneurs/ investors* – persons who work abroad to maintain / develop a business in the Republic of Moldova;
- *Unsuccessful entrepreneurs* – failed businesses in the Republic of Moldova;
- *Potential entrepreneurs* – migrants who intend to develop a business in the Republic of Moldova;
- *Successful entrepreneurs abroad* – some of the entrepreneurs in this category have opened or intend to open businesses in the Republic of Moldova as well. They either plan to do this because of patriotic sentiments, because they want to provide support to their close circle left in Moldova, and/or they have identified a business opportunity.

Furthermore, the respondents who have experienced a business failure, the failure contributed to that they left to work abroad. They expressed dissatisfaction by the conditions offered to them by the Republic of Moldova for development of entrepreneurship and by lack of protection of citizens' investments. The areas of businesses are different: agriculture, commerce, leisure services, transport, processing industry and manufacturing. The responding men have entrepreneurial experience in agriculture, commerce, construction and transport, while women have entrepreneurial experience in commerce and recreational activities.

There are cases when migrants developed business in the host country. These businesses were mainly in the construction and leisure sectors.

Return and reintegration. Respondents returned from abroad mentioned that the main reason to return home was the emotional factor of missing home. *Homesickness* was followed by the *completion of a contract/expiration of a work permit*. Furthermore, one out of five returned because of *the insistence of family*, but also due to the respondents or a family members' health.

Circa 44% of the returnees to Moldova have a paid job, among them circa 35% are men and 63% are women. Half of the former migrants found a job upon return with the help of their relatives/friends. Circa 16% returned to their previous workplace, and circa 14% were assisted by NEA and its territorial subdivisions. Circa 1/4 of the returnees indicated that the qualifications/working experience obtained abroad helped them to find a job in Moldova. This mainly refers to men.

Upon return 1/4 of the migrants benefited from reintegration support provided by NEA, relatives, friends, as well as by programs designated for this purpose. A particularly low awareness about state policies on return and reintegration of the Moldovan migrants was observed among returnees. Only 10% fully or to a large extent know about these state measures.

Return in Moldova is a challenge for the majority of migrants who lived outside the country for a longer period of time. Perceptions on the degree of protection of returnees are quite low. Circa one out of ten Moldovan returnees mentioned that they were to a *large extent or totally protected* at home. Consequently, re-adapting to the situation at home is challenging. As a result, a significant share, almost a half, of those returned home does not work. More than half of the unemployed intend to leave abroad to work again.

In general terms, the migrant workers condition their return home with the following factors identified as a part of the study: guarantees for decent wages, infrastructural improvements, increased level of culture and education of population, restoring the hope and trust in a better life at home.

Attitudes and behaviours. Migration, due to its complexity, triggers a series of phenomena. Some of them are very well known (brain drain, brain waste), others are in the process of research and understanding. This study identified several prototypes of attitudes and behaviours which were developed by migrants as a result of working abroad.

- **The phenomenon of uprooting**, which manifests itself through a distancing from the Republic of Moldova, accompanied with integration and accommodation challenges in the host country. This manifests itself through swinging between the country of origin and destination. When they are abroad, they want to come back, and when they are at home, they want to go back to the country where they work. In many cases migrants have nostalgia towards people and familiar places in Moldova. At the same time though, they get used to the

comfort and lifestyle in the host country. The feeling of temporariness creates, first of all, a psychological discomfort to them.

- **„Moscow” syndrome.** A large part of the migrant workers who worked during many years in the Russian Federation, in particular in Moscow, and reoriented towards other destination countries later on, has developed a subconscious fear of law enforcement representatives. This followed by negative experience with Russian militia because the Russian militia was extorting money from them under different pretexts. Even if they stay legally in the country where they currently work, the fear remains. They therefore try to avoid any contact with law enforcement entities, including avoidance when they see for example the police in the street. Their willingness to call the law enforcement representatives for assistance is reduced because of previous experiences in the Russian Federation. It seems that women overcome this situation easier. They acknowledged that they had these feelings in the first year of staying in the new destination country after the Russian Federation. However, later on they got used to seeing the police as exponents who ensure the public order and not as a repression body.
- **Migration enforced by the context „all leave, I have to leave, as well”** – a part of young people recognizes that they left and stayed abroad because a vast majority of their peers did the same.
- **Vulnerability of women in the process of migration**
 - *Risk to be harassed, sexually abused*

The subject of sexual harassment is, in general, a taboo. A large part of the female respondents in the quantitative study avoided this subject. In group and individual discussions, more women mentioned situations when they personally or other women in their entourage were victims of sexual harassment or even sexual abuse.
 - *Blaming some women concerning child neglect*

Mothers who go abroad having minor children are frequently blamed by the society that they have chosen to make money to the detriment of children’s needs to be close to them. Women’s partners as well as other people (relatives, acquaintances), in whose care children are left, take advantage of the vulnerability of mothers and request to be paid more money and more products to care for the children.
 - *Stereotypes on behaviour, women’s activities outside of the country*

More women involved in the migration process reported within the qualitative study situations when they were labelled and were assigned behaviours with discriminatory sexual hints were blamed by their partners in the Republic of Moldova, condemned by some members of the community because they restored their life in the host country.
 - *Stigmatisation, labelling women on their return to the country*

Some women voiced that upon their return to the home country they were labelled by some members of their community, by some relatives or family members as having frivolous behaviour abroad, such as cheating on their partners or providing sexual services etc.

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON MOLDOVAN MIGRANTS

Challenges experienced abroad by Moldovan migrants, in particular by migrant workers, have been also amplified by Covid-19 pandemic. The study IOM's *rapid assessment of the impact of Covid-19 on welfare of Moldovan migrants: addressing vulnerabilities, expectations and strategies to overcome the crises* identified a series of determinants of vulnerability of Moldovan migrants such as: legal status in the destination country, sector of activity, type of contract signed with employer, eligibility of migrants and existing procedures for obtaining support in times of pandemic.

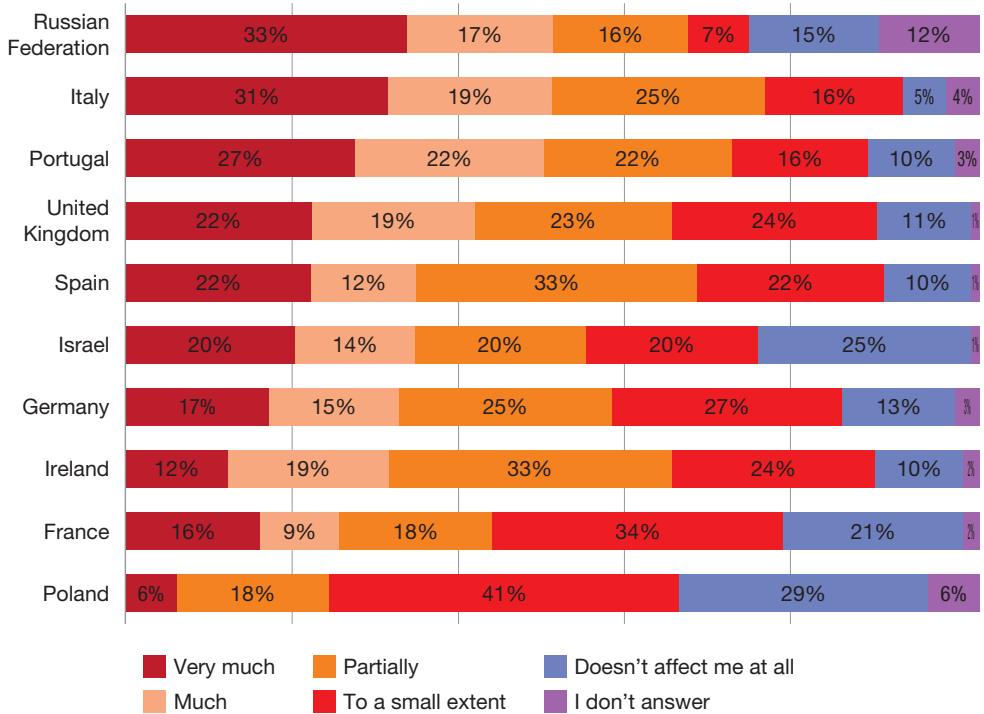
Depending on the mentioned vulnerabilities and differentiated impact of Covid-19 pandemic, the study mentions three major categories of Moldovan migrants: (i) irregular migrants, the majority of them are circular, who are in the destination country on the basis of Moldovan biometric passport; (ii) migrants who hold a passport of an EU country or a work permit issued by the host country, but work on the basis of some precarious employment contracts. As a rule, these are short-term/ fixed term contracts; (iii) Moldovan migrants who are in the destination country on the basis of Moldovan or EU biometric passport, but who managed to sign employment contract for a longer/ indefinite period.

The most affected category is migrants who have an irregular status. They don't have formal employment contracts (in most cases they are based on a verbal agreements with their employers), and starting with the first date of quarantine (who suspend their undocumented professional activity) they remain without a job and source of income, without an access to social benefits offered by host countries in times of crises for citizens and migrant workers with legal status. Due to lack of funds and because of their irregularity, many of them risk being evacuated by the property owners. Exception from this rule is Ireland, where the support in times of crises is offered by the Government, regardless the legal status of a migrant.

Vulnerabilities of migrants, in particular those with an irregular status and those with short-term employment contracts, are amplified by the limited access to the credible sources of information. Most of them do not speak the language of the host country. Therefore, official messages on behalf of authorities of the country of origin reach them to a small extent. Consequently, they rely on information distributed through social networks by other fellow citizens which often are not the most accurate.

In general, circa 83% of respondents declared that they were directly affected by the pandemic. In the same time, the level of Covid-19 impact on welfare and safety was assessed in relatively comparable shares: 23% of respondents consider that they have been affected by the pandemic very much, 17% - much, 24% - partially, 20% - to a small extent, 13% - not at all. It is noted that respondents' perceptions are different depending on their country of destination. The largest share, circa 50%, of those affected *very much/much* by Covid-19 is observed among respondents from the Russian Federation and Italy, and 49% from Portugal. Less affected feel those from Poland, with only 6% being affected *very much/much*, while 29% of respondents from this country declared that they *are not affected at all*.

Figure 16. How much COVID-19 pandemic affects your welfare and safety?



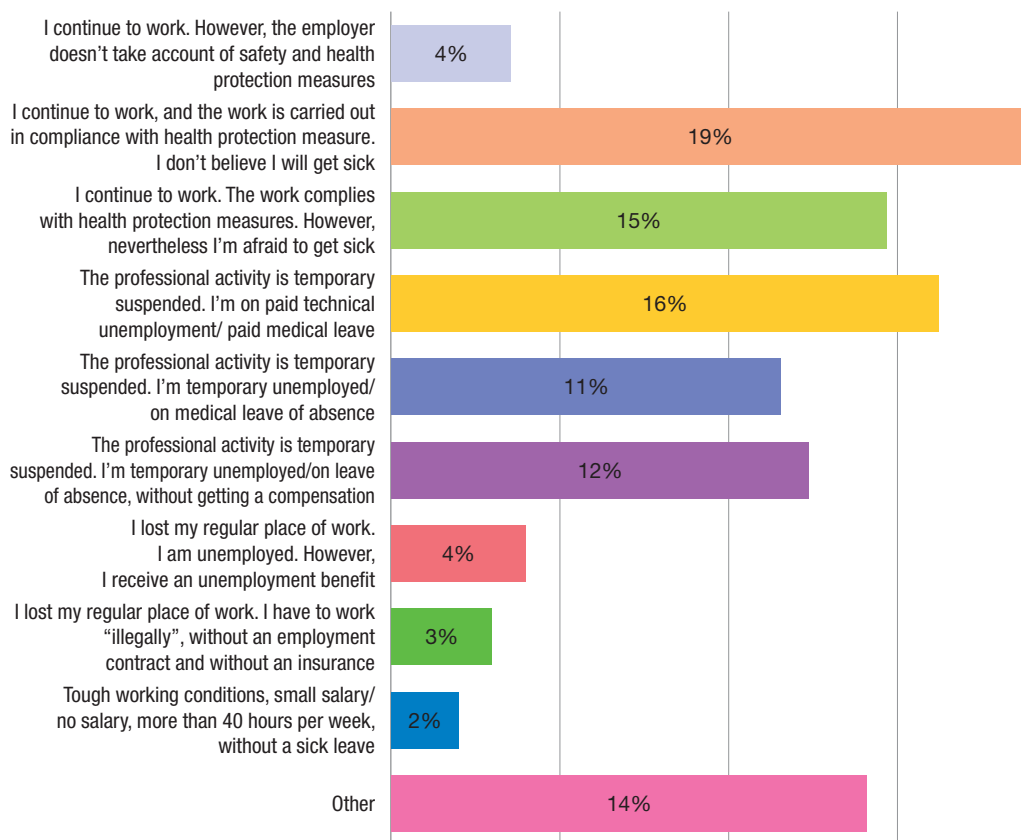
These perceptions rely on the situation of migrants at the workplace, measures taken by employers, but also the access of the migrants to the support programs during the pandemic implemented by the destination countries.

One of the immediate consequences of Covid-19 is the suspension of professional activity or loss of job for almost half of the respondents (46%). 57% of them indicated that they had not received any compensation from the employer or the host country (58% of female respondents and 56% of the men). Respondents who did not have access to compensations for the suspension of professional activity or loss of job have resorted to their own savings (38%) to be able to survive over the state of emergency. Others have turned to friends or relatives from the host country or Moldova for help (17%). At the same time, 16% of respondents who remained without sources of income mentioned that they did not have anyone to ask for help and they were struggling to survive. Another 3% of the respondents declared that loss of income made them work „illegally”. It is worth mentioning that the largest shares of respondents who continue to work in various conditions are among migrants from Israel (69%) and Poland (62%).

Suspension of professional activity led inevitably to the sudden drop in income for 62% of the respondents. For 31% among them the drop in income varies between 31-70%, while 26% indicated that they have no income at all.

Revenue shortfall has also affected remittances. Therefore, 80% of respondents (82% women vs. 77% men), who used to transfer money home before the crisis transferred less in times of pandemic, while 41% of them were not remitting at all at the date of the survey (40% women vs. 42% men). Moreover, 19% of the respondents indicated that the volume of remittances has dropped between 71% and 90%, while for 24% of respondents the remittances has decreased by 31%-70%.

Figure 17. What challenges do you face at work because of COVID-19 pandemic now?



It is worth mentioning that, in accordance with empirical evidence, 51% of all respondents were remitting money home before the crises (56% men vs. 47% women). For the majority of respondents from Israel (81%), Portugal (67%) France (59%) and the United Kingdom (57%) that was a common practice whereas less than half of respondents from Ireland (46%), Russian Federation (46%), Spain (39%), Germany (33%) and Poland (29%) used to remit before the crises generated by COVID-19 pandemic.

Migrants who have regular status in the host country mostly feel themselves protected by the authorities of that country both at the workplace through compensations of income loss that have occurred because of crises, and at the place of residence prohibiting suspension of lease agreements and rescheduling payments for rent and bank credits for mortgage loans.

Less positive practices are observed in the following countries. In the Russian Federation, exaggerated bureaucratic procedures are causing impediments for employers to access assistance in times of crises that are provided by the state to help them to support employees who have suspended their professional activity. In Italy, some professions were treated discriminatory in relation to others (home carers were not supported to the same extent as the employees in other sectors). In addition, the procedures to get unemployment benefits are over-bureaucratic.

In Israel, administrative procedures for the transfer to other employers have been suspended over the time of crises. Therefore, caregivers who had to transfer to other employers work illegally.

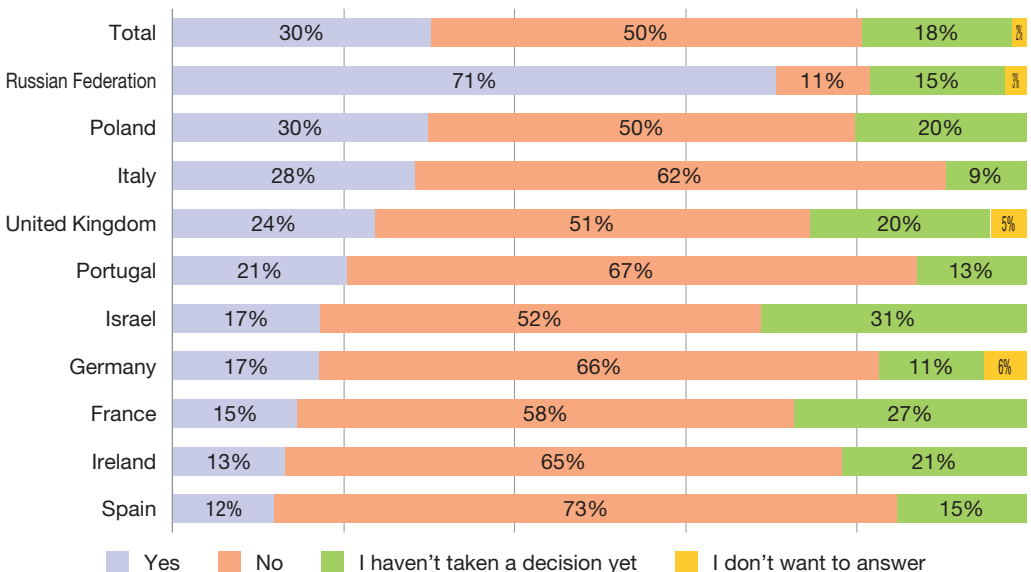
It is worth mentioning that in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic authorities of the Republic of Moldova implemented few support instruments for the citizens of the Republic of Moldova who work abroad. They are intended in particular for the most vulnerable. Thus, 83% of the total of respondents indicated that these measures were not helpful. Nevertheless, informational and logistical support of Embassies and consulates of the Republic of Moldova concerning the organization of charter flights for repatriation of Moldovan migrants in distress was appreciated.

The majority of migrants are concerned by the post-restrictions period because it is anticipated that once the medical crises is over, many public authorities from the host countries will suspend urgent support to the migrants. In addition, a number of Moldovan migrants living abroad are alarmed that they will lose their job and/or their income will decrease significantly. In this situation, the study highlights three possible coping strategies for the migrants in the COVID-19 context: (i) changing the current employment sector to one less affected by the pandemic, (ii) changing the host country and reorientation to a country where there is a higher demand for skills held by migrant and (iii) returning to the home country.

In the study, half of the respondents declared that they were not planning to return to Moldova following COVID-19 impact. Nevertheless, 30% of the respondents intend to return, while 67% among them want to return as soon as possible, and 17% in 1 – 2 months.

Men are more likely to return compared to migrant women (38% men vs. 25% among female respondents). Migrants from the Russian Federation express to a larger extent the intentions to return - 71%. Among them 91% indicated that they would return home as soon as possible. In other countries this share is at least half that percentage.

Figure 18. Considering the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on your situation in the host country, do you plan to return to Moldova in the near future?



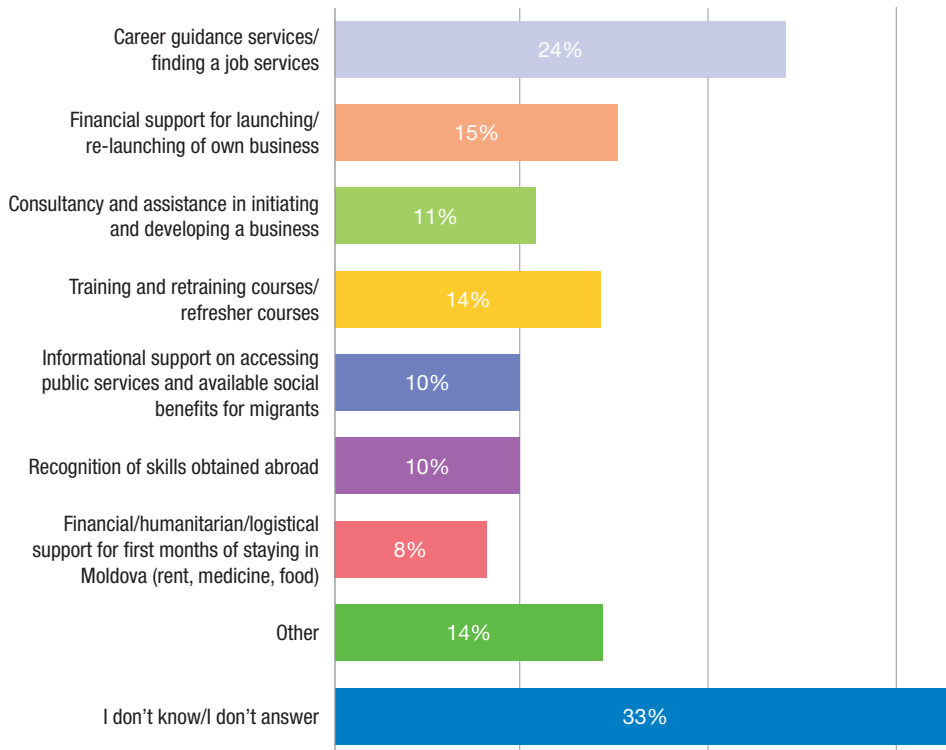
In the prospect of returning home, citizens of the Republic of Moldova working abroad remarked short-term organizational challenges related to their return and more complex, structural challenges concerning their reintegration in the home country.

Short-term organizational challenges indicated by respondents refer to the obligation to respect quarantine for 14 days upon return home, restrictions on internal mobility, lack of mandatory medical insurance and a fear to be infected in Moldova due to the collective irresponsibility.

Potential economic crisis, lack of financial resources to survive in Moldova, difficulty to get a job after return, small pension and social benefits as well as corruption, disinformation etc. are among identified complex and long-term challenges.

Those who intend to return to the Republic of Moldova indicated the fact that they would need the support of the authorities of the Republic of Moldova for social and professional reintegration, including access to the career guidance service (24%), financial support and consultancy in launching or re-launching their own business (26%), re-qualification courses (14%), financial, humanitarian and logistical support for the first months of staying in Moldova (8%).

Figure 19. If you plan to remain in Moldova and to employ/to launch or relaunch your own business, what type of support for reintegration would you need from the authorities of the Republic of Moldova?



However, it's worth mentioning that the option of return for some respondents does not represent the finality of the migration cycle, but only a transitional phase, a phase of personal relaunch used to identify some new opportunities for a better future.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

OF A GENERAL NATURE

Human capital. Labour migration changes the structure of the employed population in the Republic of Moldova. Loss of the human capital in certain areas such as education, health, but also in such sectors as construction, confections has a considerable impact on the Moldovan society and economy. Therefore, specific programs and strategies for these sectors have to be implemented and enhanced to reduce the scale of specialists' outward migration from these sectors.

Policies for young people. *Providing development opportunities for young people's support for their employment through the stimulation of employers and/or young people, diversification and extension of entrepreneurship programs for young people, which would incorporate a period of training and mentorship etc.* The Republic of Moldova needs policies oriented to young people as the migrant contingents is mainly a young one.

Support for children. More than half of respondents involved in the migration process have children under 14 years old. Therefore, the tendency of parents to secure financial maintenance and education of children continues to be a push factor for labour migration. The Republic of Moldova does not offer child benefits, per se, this being partially compensated by social assistance support, in the case of children from vulnerable families from the economic point of view. However, from the perspective of backing the families with children, support mechanisms for them need to be identified. Furthermore, a diversification of payment opportunities for studies is needed.

Housing. One of the main motives that leads to leaving for work abroad for the citizens of the Republic of Moldova is the need for financial resources to purchase their own housing. The governmental programme „The First House”⁸, albeit continuously improved through the extension of eligibility criteria from the financial point of view, remains inaccessible for a large part of young families. Another aspect that needs to be regulated and monitored refers to housing rental, which has to clearly foresee the conditions in which the rent can be increased, the ways for renting agreement cancelation etc. so that both tenants and lessors be protected.

Social infrastructure. The Republic of Moldova has to provide qualitative educational and health services to motivate citizens to remain in the country, including family members who have relatives working abroad. The intention to stay for a longer period in a destination country

⁸ <http://primacasa.gov.md/node/2>

is correlated with the presence of a spouse and/or children in the respective country. Family reunification is a natural matter, and socio-economic opportunities in the host country favour family reunification in the destination country. In addition, development, improvement of infrastructure is of paramount importance for decreasing the departure of persons abroad as well as their decision to return to the Republic of Moldova.

Civic education. Citizens of the Republic of Moldova have to acknowledge that they have to contribute to the social protection system if they want to benefit from their pensions. Informal work, partially paid wages “in envelope”, which are perceived as a benefit of the moment, represent great disadvantages in long and medium term.

Increasing trust in ensuring a decent living in the Republic of Moldova. Restoring hope and trust in a better life in the Republic of Moldova is of paramount importance for the citizens of the Republic of Moldova. Eradicating corruption is essential in this sense. Signals of improving living standards and progress are necessary both for those who intend to leave abroad for work, and for those who intend to return home. In the context of COVID-19 study, a great number of respondents were confident in authorities from the host country whereas many were concerned by the situation in the Republic of Moldova, including during the post-pandemic phase.

TARGET GROUPS

Potential migrants. *Information campaigns, consolidated guiding services for people concerning safe migration.* Adequate information is one of the key prerequisites in preparing for the departure abroad. Migrants who are less informed are also the most vulnerable ones.

Information on possible personal, professional risks of labour migration and migration’s long-term impact on family relationship. Circular migration might be a solution for financial support of the family. Attractive mobility programs / opportunities should be accompanied by presentations of the advantages of circular migration as compared to medium- or long-term migration.

Potential migrants, as well as, part of Moldovan returnees, including those returned in the COVID-19 context, declared that they would emigrate again. Consequently, arrangement for safe and orderly migration should be a part of a complex mid-term approach.

Promoting legal ways of employment abroad through bilateral agreement or through licenced private agencies. State Institutions (NEA), licensed private agencies that organize job placement abroad, should inform migrant workers about entering, leaving, and working conditions in the host country. For destination countries, where migrants go with the support of physical persons (relatives, acquaintances), it is important to provide the abovementioned information in form of a leaflet, flyer, poster distributing it through transportation agencies that operate travel routes to these countries, placing it within diplomatic missions and through other accessible ways for migrants. In the new mobility context, following international measures to halt the pandemic, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs should provide accessible information to the population in due time designated to the citizens of the Republic of Moldova, who intend to travel abroad. In addition, this official source has to be promoted intensively.

Potential migrants should be advised on the impact of overworking on their physical and mental health. A general tendency, in particular for migrant workers who are for the first time in the destination country, is an excessive (overtime, two or more job places) and exhausting (in difficult conditions, physical effort etc.) work.

Clear legislative regulations on provided services by private agencies and their partners. Ensuring transparency of payments made related to organization of departure abroad to work. Accountability of recruiting agencies from the Republic of Moldova in relation to Moldovan labour migrants placed abroad. Some private agencies from the Republic of Moldova assume the role of recruiting and transporting persons outside the country. Later they declare that persons/agencies from the host country are responsible for employment and the situation of the citizens of the Republic of Moldova placed abroad.

Identifying a regulation and control mechanism of persons recruited on the territory of the Republic of Moldova even if they are nationals and/or of other states. A part of agencies/intermediates recruit persons who have the nationality of an EU state, mainly Romanian nationality. Nobody monitors this process.

For persons working abroad. *Informing and promoting the need for legal work, in order to raise awareness of the importance of medical and social insurance. Citizens have to perceive the subsequent benefits of paying taxes and fees. Legalization of an employee status could set up a mechanism of access to social and support services, including family reunification and integration in the host country. Vulnerability of irregular workers over the period of COVID-19 pandemic emphasizes the need to promote legal work.*

Signing bilateral labour migration and social security agreements. Strengthening efforts to advance in negotiations with the countries where there is a high number of Moldovan labour migrants as well as concluding agreements with the countries representing new destinations for Moldovan migrants (Poland, Netherlands).

Improving communication and cooperation of the diplomatic representations of the Republic of Moldova with citizens. Respondents appreciated extending online communication through social networks of many Moldovan diplomatic missions with migrants in the COVID-19 context. This could be an example of best practice.

Providing services of psychological consultation and/or providing information where migrants may address for emotional support and psychological counselling. The first period of adaptation is considered as one of the most challenging from the psycho-emotional point of view. Informing citizens of the Republic of Moldova regarding responsibilities/functions of the host country authorities, of the non-governmental organizations, where they can address in the case of rights violations and/or when they are in distress is essential.

It is necessary to increase the healthcare culture of the population. Migrants need to acknowledge the importance and usefulness of seeing a doctor to prevent subsequent complications of health-related issues. It is crucial to inform this target group about their right to see a doctor without any impact on the job or wage, in case they work legally in the host country, promoting addressability to medical services in the host country.

Maintaining contacts and relations of labour migrants with hometown through the Local Public Authorities, Hometown Associations. In this sense, some localities from the Republic of Moldova have already offered positive examples of collaboration through joint implementation of local projects. Extending

these experiences is beneficial for the development of the locality as well as for persons who left abroad to work. This helps the migrants to be more informed, connected to the realities of the hometown. From the emotional point of view, they are satisfied that they could contribute to improving the quality of life of people in the village/town where they have been born.

Returned migrants. *Providing information on services that could be accessed by returning migrants. The focus should be on employment opportunities and business development. Increasing trust in governmental support programs in initiating and developing businesses and promoting positive experiences is crucial.* Persons who returned in the context of COVID-19 have a potential for the Republic of Moldova. A part of migrants come back with skills and/or are willing to invest. National employment programs, registration procedures and other services need to be accessible and motivating for this target population.

Investment support programs directed to diaspora such as ODIMM's PARE 1+1 are not sufficient to meet the future demand. Investment/support programs for SMEs should become accessible for returned migrants in the Republic of Moldova.

Cooperation between small and medium entrepreneurs aiming at setting up business associations (farmers, beekeepers, bakers etc.) and/or at the local level (from a certain rayon, region). Businesspersons through associations will be able to represent themselves and better promote their products and interests in relation to state institutions and potential partners.

Capitalizing on experiences and qualifications obtained abroad by returning migrants through recognition of their skills and qualifications. Extending the mechanisms of skills recognition and of professional qualifications accumulated abroad. It is important to encourage returned migrants to carry out certain activities, to implement certain projects, which, in their opinion, were functional in the host country and could be taken over, adapted to the context of the Republic of Moldova.

Offering a guideline/protocol for the action of specialists at the local level (LPA, educational institutions, medical institutions, social assistance) to manage the situation of returned migrants in the community. This should also include ethical and behavioural aspects in relation to returned migrants.

Combating stereotypes on migration, avoiding social labelling of some works as being designated for migrants, promoting tolerance and respect towards returned persons. Return to the Republic of Moldova is not a failure, but rather an opportunity to valorise the experiences developed abroad for the development of Moldova.

Diaspora. *Liaising with the citizens of the Republic of Moldova who are living outside of the country, fostering connection with the hometown, with the realities from the Republic of Moldova. Intensifying cooperation between our citizens who work abroad and those who settled in host countries is important.*

Respecting the stated purposes and objectives of diaspora associations. Avoiding overloading diaspora associations with aspects, subjects, going beyond their responsibilities and possibilities. Requesting opinion, permission for engaging, involving Associations from diaspora in various activities. Some Associations are opened and have the capacity to offer the support to fellow citizens through providing consultations. However, others have allocated their human resources towards cultural aspects, providing support to children from the Republic of Moldova. It is necessary to consider these specific aspects.

Identifying leaders from diaspora as key persons for disseminating messages formulated by authorities of the Republic of Moldova. This practice was useful in the period COVID-19 and could be extended in view of informing persons outside the country from reliable sources.

