REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

LABOUR MARKET INTEGRATION OF REFUGEES FROM UKRAINE

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

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KEY FINDINGS

DEMOGRAPHICS

1,415
Ukrainian respondents are stayers

85%   **15%**

LABOUR MARKET

41% active

53% inactive

6% preferred not to answer

ACTIVE POPULATION

64% employed

36% unemployed and looking for a job

EDUCATION

42% upper secondary

28% tertiary

30% other

TOP 4 SECTORS

13% accommodation

11% wholesale & retail

10% education & science

9% human health & social work

BEFORE DISPLACEMENT

81% employed

19% unemployed

JOB MATCHING

71% satisfied with their field of work

74% satisfied with their field of work

INCOME

72% sufficient income to cover basic expenses

ARRANGEMENTS

81% contract

40% verbal agreement

INTRODUCTION

The IOM's DTM collected data on the Needs, Intentions, and Integration Challenges of Ukrainian refugees in the Republic of Moldova throughout the year of 2023, interviewing a total of 2,520 individuals. This report focuses on those who either intend to or have already settled in the country (n= 1,415). These individuals are considered as "stayers" for the purpose of this study, as they are actively investing human and social resources to fully participate in the host communities, while others who did not considered staying in the country are considered "goers". The interviews were conducted in Chisinau (20%), Ocnita (47%) and Stefan Voda (33%)

LABOUR MARKET INTEGRATION

Due to the introduction of legislative changes since Law No.105 (2018), those with recognised statelessness, asylum and temporary protection (TP) are entitled to access to labour markets and social services like citizens. Therefore, they are allowed to register officially as unemployed in addition to registering as job seekers with the National Employment Agency (NEA).

On 1 March 2023, Moldova introduced Temporary Protection for citizens of Ukraine and other eligible Third-Country Nationals (TCNs) affording them equal rights to employment, education, health care accommodation and other social services. Although this was initially implemented for a period of one year, it has now been extended until March 2025.

TEMPORARY PROTECTION

According to the General Inspectorate of Migration between 1 March 2023 and 25 March 2024, a total of 41,328 people were pre-registered for temporary protection in the Republic of Moldova (GIM, 2024). On 25 March 2024, 1,290 people were also registered as asylum seekers.

Figure 1. Beneficiaries of TP in the Republic of Moldova, by gender and age (%), n=41,328

Age	Male	Female
60+ years	50%	22%
50-59 years	8%	15%
40-49 years	22%	26%
30-39 years	16%	27%
18-29 years	4%	10%

■ Male ■ Female
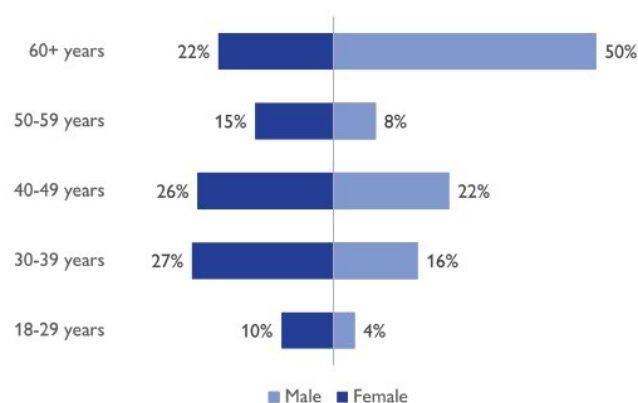
SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHICS

GENDER AND AGE

Among the active 'stayers', 89 per cent were women, while men constituted only 11 per cent. This is consistent with the proportions of all those interviewed throughout the year. There were few variations in the proportion of women within the group except for those below the age of 29. The distribution of men among the age groups had wider variations although the percentages were much smaller when compared to women in the same age groups. The smallest group among men was between the ages 18 – 29 years which made up only two per cent of the respondents while the largest was that of men aged older than 60 years which comprised over 63 per cent. The figure below shows the distribution of men and women among the age groups.

Figure 2. Stayers by age and gender (%), n=1,415

GENDER AND EDUCATION

Figure 3. Highest level of education attained (%), n= 586
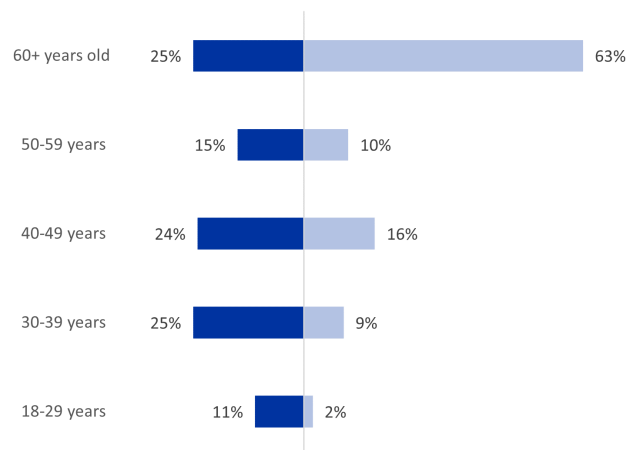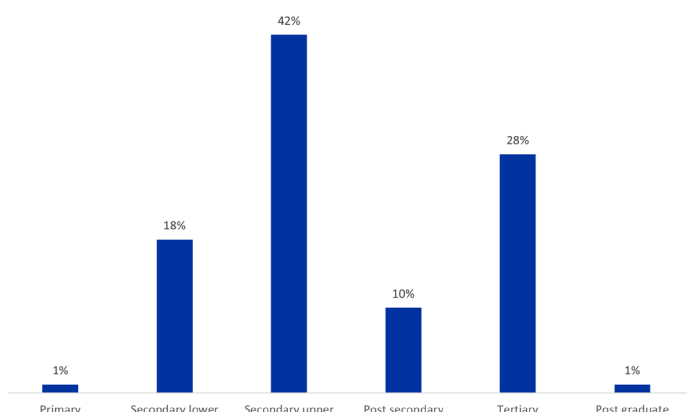

To understand the challenges that migrants face during their integration into the labour market, it is important to evaluate their skills and qualifications.

Additionally, it is necessary to examine the mechanisms established in the host country for the acknowledgment of these competencies and credentials. The Ministry of Education, Culture, and Research (MECR) in the Republic of Moldova has a mandate that encompasses the recognition of academic qualifications obtained overseas (a process known as Nostrification). This also includes the authentication of academic qualifications issued within the country, and the certification of knowledge and skills procured through non-formal education. This approach will ensure a thorough understanding of the migrant's integration process. Forty-two per cent of respondents had am educational level of upper secondary school, more of which were women (37%) while five per cent were men. Another 16 per cent of women had lower secondary level education compared to men (2%). Those who attained a tertiary level education comprised 28 per cent, of whom 26 per cent were women.

Figure 4. Highest level of education of the active population, by gender and age (%), n=586
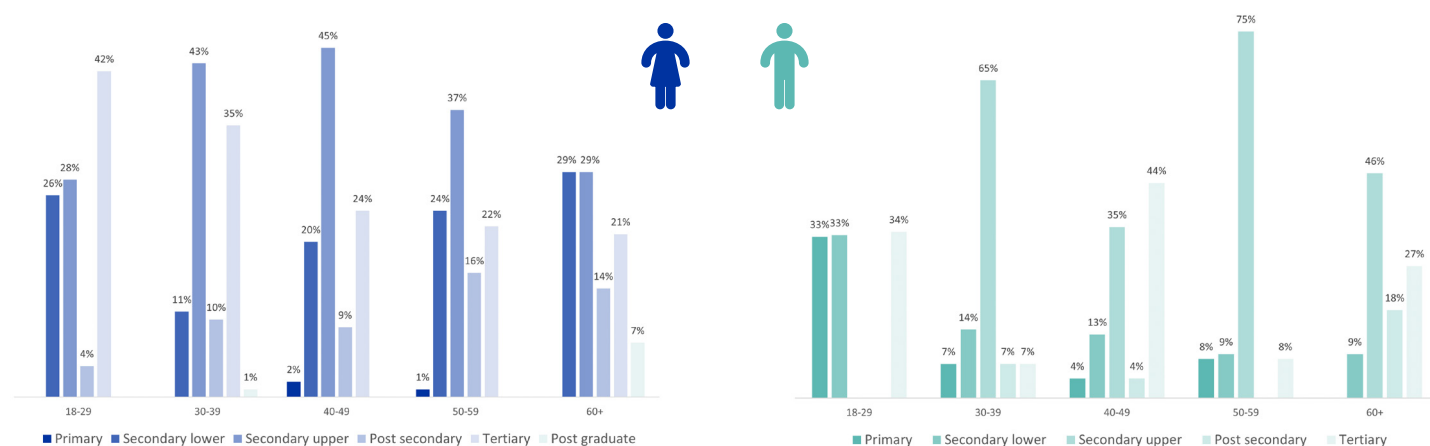
As illustrated above, most respondents had education level up to upper secondary, the majority of whom were women between the aged 30 and 49. Women with tertiary level education also featured in significant numbers followed by those with lower secondary level education. Among the men, most of them had at least a lower secondary level of education among those between the ages of 30 and 59. Generally among men, those aged between 18 and 29 with tertiary level education was most common compared to other age categories.

Figure 5. Education attained and employment status (%), n=586

Employed | Self-employed | Informal and daily workers | Unemployed and looking for a job

SKILLS AND GENDER

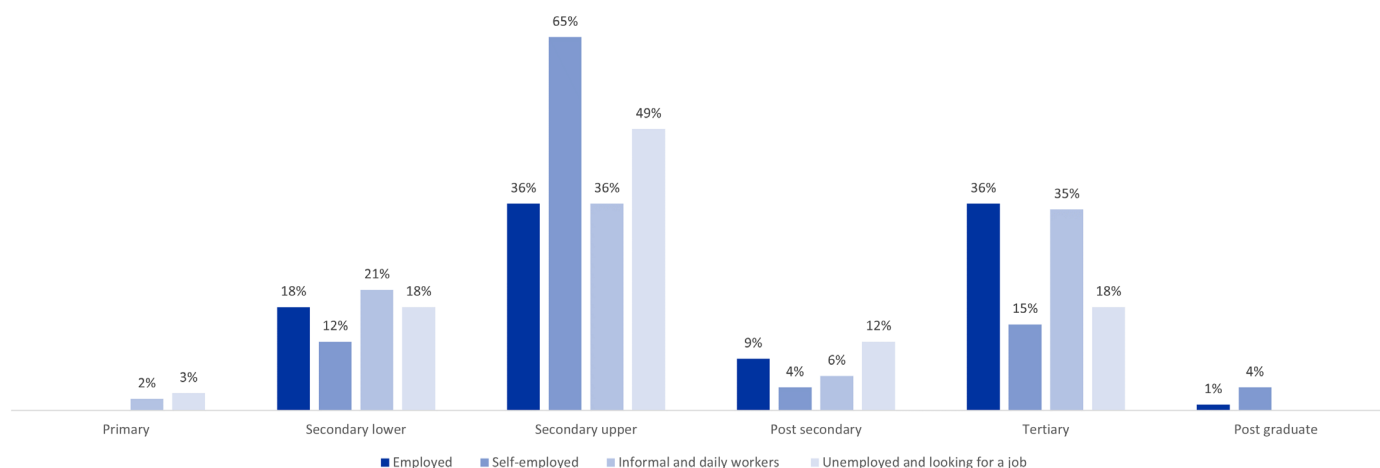Considerations were also made for the types of skills that existed among the stayers in order to compare them with education levels and employment status. While it is important to highlight that the below graph does not take into account the variations within the two subgroups, there were more female respondents with specific skills than men. A larger proportion of women worked in accommodation and food services (14% versus 3%) and human health and social work (10% versus 5%). On the contrary, almost one-quarter of the male respondents (23%) worked in construction, compared to two per cent for female ones.

Figure 6. Sector of employment in Ukraine, by gender and total (%), n=537

Accommodation & food services | Administration | Wholesale and retail trade | Agriculture
Manufacturing | Construction | Education & science | Human health and social work
Information & communication | Financials & Insurance | Other
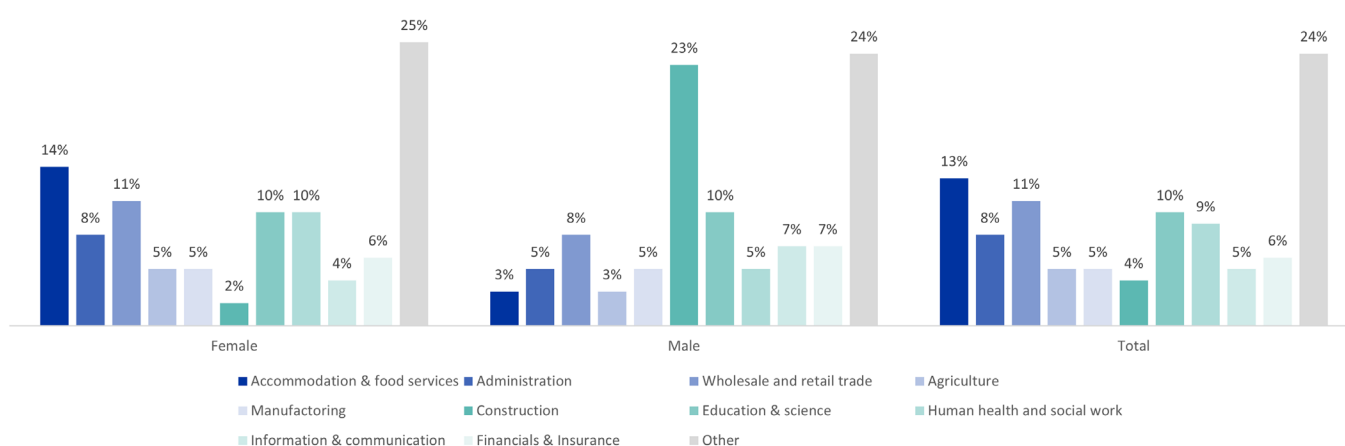
Disaggregating the data further by gender shows significant differences within the subgroups when compared to the entire group. While it remains the case that more of both men and women were skilled in some other unspecified occupations (respectively 24% and 25%), 11 per cent of women and 10 per cent of men were also skilled in professional scientific disciplines. The evidence showed a more diverse set of skills among the women than men.

Figure 7. Employment before and after displacement (%) n=1,415

Informal and daily workers 5%

Employed 31%

Maternity/paternity leave 9%

Retired 30%

Self-employed 2%

Student 2%

Unemployed and looking for a job 9%

Unempoyed and not looking for a job 13%

Informal and daily workers 7%

Employed 19%

Maternity/paternity leave 9%

Retired 30%

Self-employed

Student

Unemployed and looking for a job 16%

Unempoyed and not looking for a job 16%
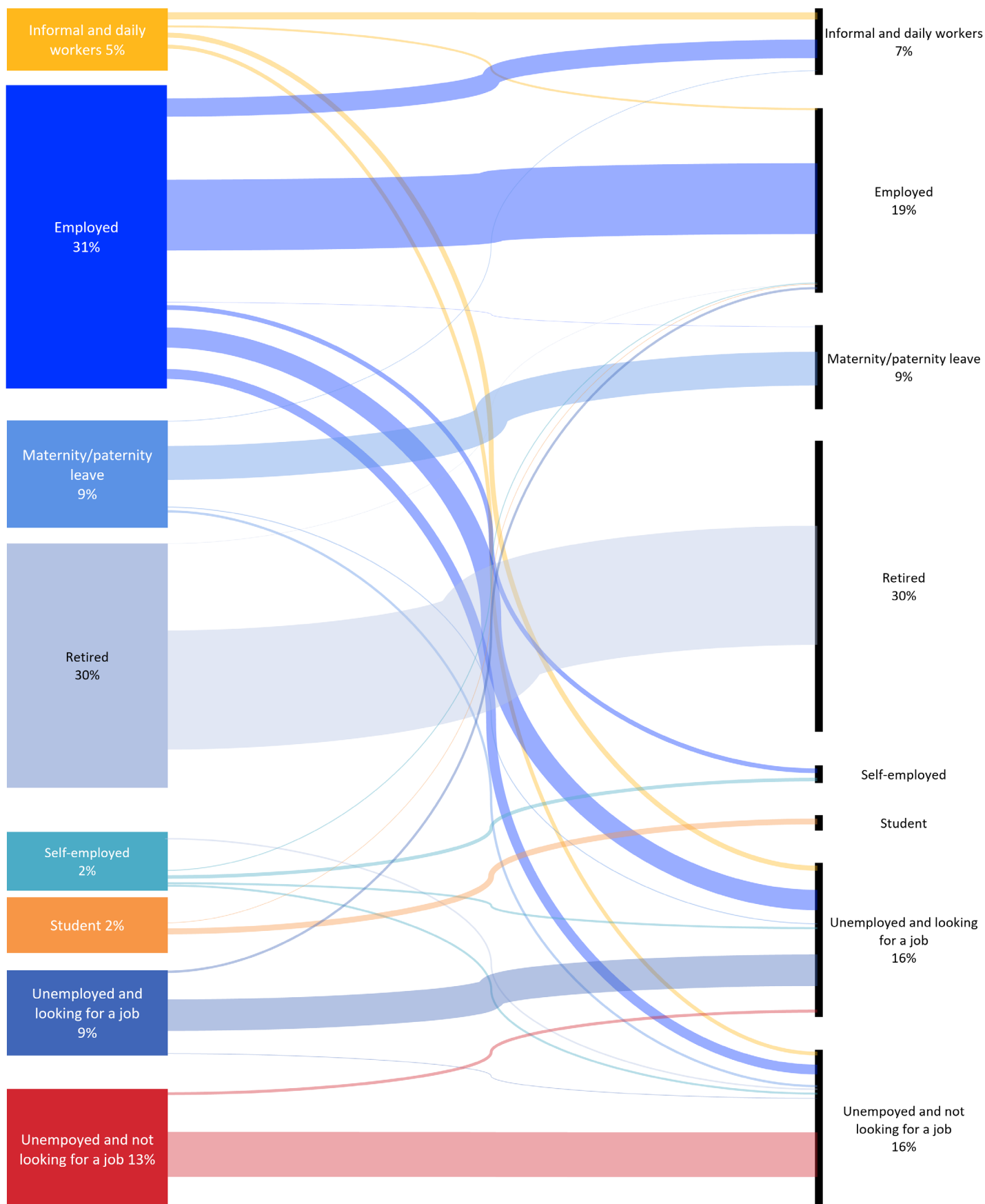
EDUCATION, SKILLS, AND EMPLOYMENT

Employment and the potential to get employed are invariably linked to one's level of education, skills and amount of experience gained in the various employment sectors. This section will explore the employment status of the active population, both prior to and subsequent to displacement. This analysis will be conducted in correlation with the highest level of education attained by the individuals and will be disaggregated further by gender. Before respondents left Ukraine, 81 per cent of those active were employed while 19 per cent were not employed but looking for work. At the time of interview, 64 per cent of respondents were employed in the Republic of Moldova while 36 per cent were unemployed but looking for work.

STATUS IN UKRAINE

Within the active stayer population, 81 per cent were previously employed of which 89 per cent women and 11 per cent men. It should be noted that most surveys were conducted with migrants at point of entry while a smaller percentage of interviews were conducted in-country.

Figure 8. Active vs inactive before displacement, by gender (%), n=660

STATUS AFTER DISPLACEMENT

Looking at employment of respondents at the time of interview, 64 per cent reported that they were employed and 36 per cent reported they were unemployed. Among them, 58 per cent of those employed were women and six per cent were men.

As mentioned above, the active population, includes those who reported being employed, informal and daily workers, and self-employed; and those who are unemployed and looking for a job. Forty-four per cent of the active population was employed, followed by informal and daily workers at 16 per cent, and self-employed at four per cent. The remaining 36 per cent reported being unemployed and looking for a job. More female respondents were employed compared to men at the time of interviews (64% versus 60%).

Figure 9. Employment status within active population before displacement (%), n=660

Figure 10. Employment status within active population, by gender (%), n=523
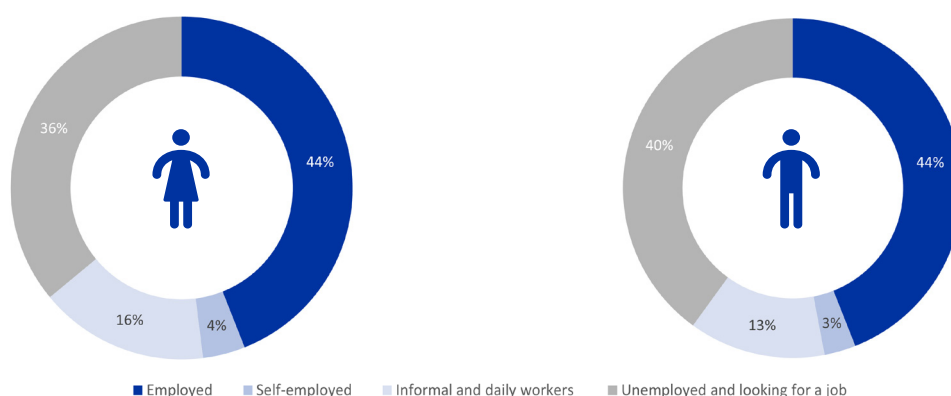
JOB MATCHING

When asked whether respondents felt like their job matches their level of education and experience, the majority indicated that their job matched their skills and qualifications. The vast majority (81%) of those employed in the Republic of Moldova confirmed that their job matches their background. The proportion was lower among those self-employed and informal and daily workers (55% and 59%).

On the contrary, a mismatch between experiences and the level of education and employment in the Republic of Moldova was reported by 19 per cent of the informal and daily workers, 15 per cent of those self-employed, and by eight per cent of those employed. Finally, a considerable number of respondents preferred not to answer, with a higher share being among the self-employed (30%) and the informal and daily workers (22%) than among the employed (11%).

When disaggregating by gender, it is notable that the share of respondents who reported a mismatch between their employment and their previous experiences was higher among male informal and daily workers (67%), which equated to almost three times the value among female respondents in the same category.

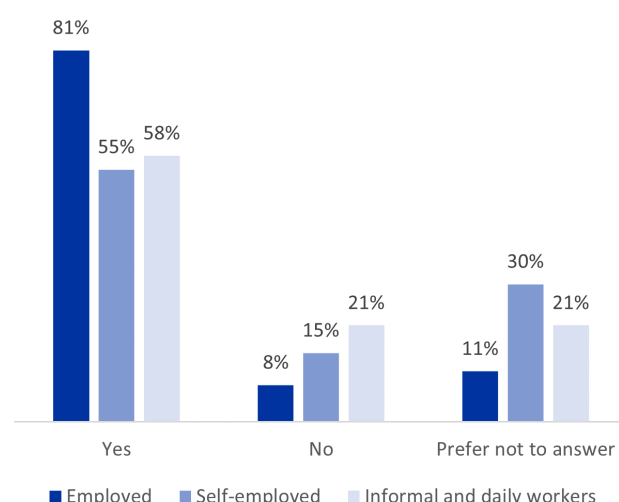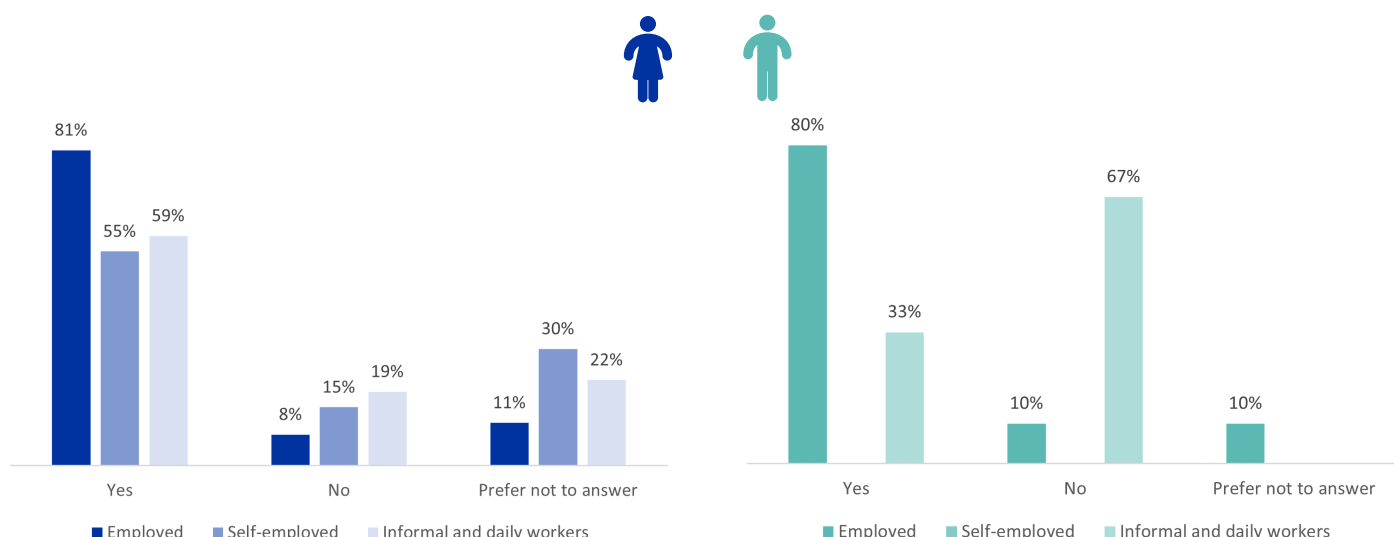Figure 11. Job matching the level of education and experience, by employment status (%), n=210

Figure 12. Job matching the level of education and experience, by employment status and gender (%), n=210

ARRANGEMENTS

The working arrangement of the respondents, those who reported being employed had a higher share of official and registered contracts than other categories. In particular, 23 per cent of the employed respondents had an official contract in the Republic of Moldova, 16 per cent had an official remote working contract back in Ukraine, and seven per cent had an official remote working contract in another country. This was followed by the informal and daily workers, of which five per cent had an official contract in the Republic of Moldova, and 13 percent had a remote working contract in Ukraine. On the other hand, the majority of informal and daily workers were working based on a verbal agreement: 41 per cent had a verbal agreement in the Republic of Moldova, 16 per cent had one in Ukraine, and a remaining two per cent had an agreement for remote work in another country.

Figure 13. Working arrangement, by employment status (%), n=210

Legend: Employed, Self-employed, Informal and daily workers
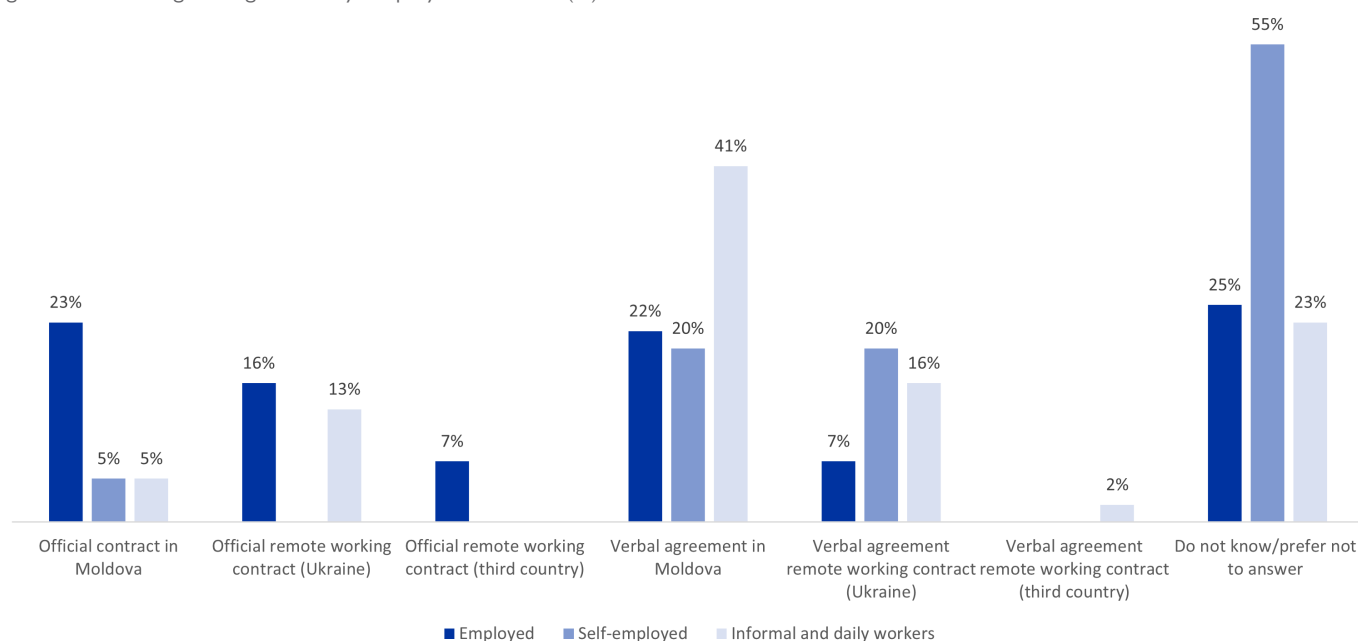
INCOME

Upon inquiry regarding the sufficiency of their monthly income to meet expenses, a significant majority of employed respondents (72%) responded positively. Conversely, 10% stated that their income was insufficient, while 18% chose not to respond.

In the case of informal and daily workers, a majority (66%) reported that their income was sufficient to cover their expenses. However, the proportion of individuals in this group reporting insufficient income was nearly double (18%) that of employed respondents.

The pattern observed among self-employed respondents was distinct. One quarter of respondents (25%) reported having sufficient income, while a small fraction (4%) reported an insufficient income to cover expenses. Notably, the vast majority (71%) opted not to respond. This reluctance could potentially be attributed to societal stigma associated with financial dependency or the inadequacy of income from employment to meet personal needs.

Figure 14. Is your income sufficient to cover your expenses, by employment status (%), n=210

Legend: Yes, No, Prefer not to answer
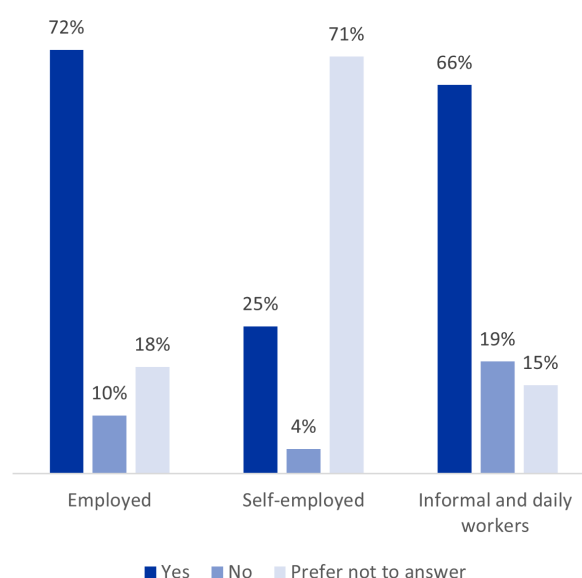
METHODOLOGY

IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) is a system to track and monitor displacement and population mobility. It is designed to regularly and systematically capture, process and disseminate information to provide a better understanding of the movements and evolving needs of displaced populations, whether on site or en route.

Since April 2022, DTM has been surveying people who are residing in the 11 countries included in the Regional Refugee Response Plan for Ukraine. The aim of the survey is to improve the understanding of their profiles, displacement patterns, intentions, and needs. The survey is deployed in 6 countries neighbouring Ukraine – Belarus, Hungary, Poland, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, and Slovakia, and other 5 European Union's countries particularly impacted by the arrivals of refugees from Ukraine, including Bulgaria, Czechia, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. In the Republic of Moldova, face-to-face surveys were conducted by 6 trained enumerators with adult refugees from Ukraine (18+ years old). Surveys were

collected in various locations in the Chisinau metropolitan area and at two border crossing points in the Ocnita and Stefan Voda Regions. Respondents were approached in a simple random sample by enumerators at selected entry, exit, transit points and accommodation centres. In border crossing point areas, both persons entering/exiting by car, by bus, by foot and by train were interviewed.

The survey is anonymous and voluntary, administered only if consent from the respondent was given. The respondent could stop the survey at any time. In the Republic of Moldova, the questionnaire is available in Ukrainian, Russian, English and Romanian, and the preferred language is determined by the interviewee. Only fully completed surveys were considered for this report. Prior to the start of the survey, all enumerators were trained by IOM on DTM standards, the use of Kobo application, IOM approach to migrants' protection and assistance, the ethics of data collection and the provision of information and referral mechanism in place.

About the Survey

Aim

To improve the understanding of the profiles of refugees from Ukraine residing or transiting through the Republic of Moldova, including their displacement patterns, intentions, and needs.

Location and execution

Face-to-face surveys were conducted by 6 trained enumerators stationed at selected locations in 3 regions of the Republic of Moldova. Surveys were conducted in Ukrainian, Russian, English and Romanian using the KoBo application.

Target population

This analysis focuses on the labour market integration and employment prospects of working-age (18-64 years-old) refugees from Ukraine who have already settled or intend to settle in the Republic of Moldova.

Regional data collection and analysis

In the Republic of Moldova data was collected between February 24th and December 21st, 2023. Data collection was interrupted from July to September 2023 to avoid overlapping with the ongoing Multi-sectoral Needs Assessment.

LIMITATIONS

The sampling framework was not based on verified figures of refugees from Ukraine entering through all land border points or staying in the various regions where the surveys are conducted, due to the lack of baseline information.

The geographic spread of enumerators deployed captures a wide range of locations. Whilst the overall results cannot be deemed as representative, the internal consistency of data collection in each country and at the regional level suggests that the current sampling framework produces findings of practical value.

While every attempt was made to capture all types of locations, the operational reality of fieldwork was confronted with different levels of accessibility of BCPs and other transit and stay locations, including the different availability of possible target individuals to comfortably spend 10-20 minutes responding to the questionnaire depending on a mix of personal conditions. Other factors more related to the conditions at a specific location and period, such as organizational changes in the entry and transit areas from national authorities, or whether conditions, also play a role.

DTM

Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) is a system to track and monitor displacement and population mobility. The survey form was designed to capture the main displacement patterns – origin country and region – for refugees of any nationality fleeing from Ukraine because of the war. It captures the demographic profiles of respondents and of the group they are travelling with, if any; it asks about intentions relative to the intended final destination and prospects of permanence in the country of the survey/first reception; it gathers information regarding a set of main needs that the respondents expressed as more pressing at the moment of the interview.

Since the onset of the war in Ukraine, several IOM's DTM tools were deployed in countries neighbouring Ukraine and in other countries particularly impacted by the new arrivals of migrants and refugees from Ukraine.

For more information, please consult: https://dtm.iom.int/responses/ukraine-response
DTM is part of IOM's Global Data Institute.

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