LABOUR MIGRATION TO LIBYA

REMITTANCES AMIDST CONFLICT AND PANDEMIC

LIBYA • MARCH 2021

Cover Photo: ©Moayad Zaghdani / IOM 2020

DTM enumerator conducts an interview with a migrant in Tripoli for a UK FCDO funded in-depth thematic study on migration to Libya. Since the onset of COVID-19 pandemic all interviews and surveys conducted in person on ground are carried out in line with WHO and local health authorities' guidelines on infection prevention.

IOM UN MIGRATION

UKaid from the British people

This report was funded by UK aid. The views in this report do not necessarily reflect those of the donor.

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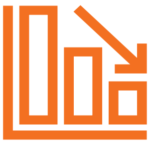
HIGHLIGHTS

1 in 3
migrants remitted

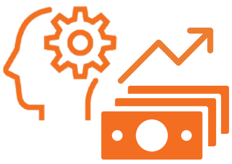
1-in-3 migrants interviewed in 2019 and 2020 reported to have sent remittances to their countries of origin from Libya



Trend analysis identifies that the percentage of migrants sending remittances fell from 52% in January 2019 to 26% in July 2020, indicating that the dual crises related to armed conflict in western Libya and the COVID-19 pandemic affected migrants' ability to send remittances from Libya (see figure 2)

-15%

A decrease in the amounts sent was also recorded among those who still managed to transfer remittances. The amount of remittances sent was estimated to have dropped by 15 per cent from an average remittance of 146 US dollars per month reported in 2019 to 123 US dollars reported in 2020. Global projections indicate that migrant remittances during 2021 will further decline over 2020 due to the economic crises resulting from COVID-19 pandemic, and if the same projection applies to migrant population in Libya an increase in migrant vulnerabilities and humanitarian needs in Libya cannot be ruled out in 2021



Analysis of determinants of remittances shows that migrant workers with higher skills whose migration to Libya was driven by economic motivations were successful in sending higher amounts of remittances.

65%

of migrants from South and South-eastern Asia (Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Philippines) reported to have sent remittances home, followed by 40 per cent of migrants from Northern Africa (Algeria, Egypt, Sudan, Tunisia, Morocco) reflecting the major remittance sending cohorts amongst the migrant population in Libya

Photo: ©Rawand Al Hares/ IOM 2020

Migrants in Libya face increased vulnerabilities and challenges due to COVID-19 pandemic and its socio-economic impact. IOM in Libya continues to provide health assistance including psychosocial and mental health awareness and support in addition to COVID-19 pandemic awareness sessions.

INTRODUCTION

Historically, Libya has been a key country of destination in North Africa for migrant workers from neighbouring countries, as well as for migrant workers from countries further afield in Western Africa, Western Asia (Middle East), and Southern Asia. Prior to 2011, up to 2.5 million migrant workers were estimated to be employed in the services (health, domestic work, retail and others), industry (such as construction and light manufacturing), energy (oil production and related services) and agriculture sectors in Libya.[1] Persistent labour deficit linked to the Libyan demographic profile and steady demand for skilled work force since the discovery of oil in Libya resulted in several labour migration trends that continue to date.[2]

During 2019 – 2020, IOM Libya's Displacement Tracking Matrix identified that between 666,717 and 571,464 migrants and refugees were present in Libya , as significant mobility trends were observed including arrivals of new migrant workers, returns to country of origin, onward migration to other countries such as Malta and Italy, as well as circular migration between Libya and its neighbouring countries.[3] The baseline figure of migrants in Libya during these two years, along with the mobility trends, saw a steady decline, initially driven by insecurity caused by armed conflict in western Libya in 2019, and subsequently due to restrictions on mobility imposed across borders and within Libya to curb the spread of COVID-19.

However, despite these various crises affecting people in Libya, a significant population of migrants (571,464 as of December 2020) is estimated to have remained in Libya, with several staying and working in Libya for long-term.[4]

This study presents key findings about remittances sent by migrants from Libya to their countries of origin, utilizing microdata collected from over 41,000 migrant interviews conducted in 2019-2020, including self-reported data on remittances disclosed by 13,738 migrants. Additionally, IOM Libya's DTM Programme further explored several dimensions of migrants' remittances during the last quarter of 2020 through select in-depth questions.

The findings presented in this report are reached using the new economics of labour migration (NELM) theory as an analytical framework to understand the link between migration and remittances.[5] Furthermore, the analysis presented considers migrants' access to livelihoods in Libya as central to understanding the dynamics of migration to Libya.[6] Migrants engagement in the Libyan labour market is a vital capability enhancing factor that reduces their vulnerabilities to financial shocks and reduces negative humanitarian consequences. While remittances build resilience at the individual level, remittances also serve as a risk mitigation and income diversification strategy for migrant households in the country of origin.

One in three migrants interviewed by DTM Libya in 2019 and 2020 (33%) reported to have sent remittances to their country of origin[7] from Libya, while a vast majority (83% interviewed during 2020) reported that they intended to send remittances.[8]

Although one third of migrants interviewed in Libya send remittances, others face various challenges that prevent them from successfully sending remittances such as lack of secure livelihoods, difficult employment circumstances, inadequate earnings for those employed, and difficulties faced in sending remittances due to lack of reliable money transfer services. 99 per cent of the migrants interviewed in Libya were unbanked and lacked access to secure and regular financial services. A majority (58%) of the remittance sending migrants reported to have used informal funds transfer systems (such a hawala) to send remittances from Libya, while others used various other transfer modalities such as mobile money services,

1 IOM 2020a
2 ICMPD 2010; AfDB 2012; IOM 2012; Bartolomeo, A. D. et al 2011, ETF 2014
3 DTM Round 24 (Jan – Feb 2019) had identified 666,717 migrants present, while by Round 34 (Nov – Dec 2020) 571,464 migrants were present in Libya.
4 IOM 2020b; Migrants who move to a country other than that of their usual residence for a period of at least one year, so that the country of destination effectively becomes their new country of usual residence are considered long-term migrants as per the definition adopted from UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs' Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration, Revision 1 (1998) p. 10.

5 Taylor, J. E. 1999
6 De Haas, H. 2007
7 De Haas, H. 2009, IOM 2019
8 Further details on page 11 (reference to the box explaining this further)

financial service providers offering money transfer services, or relying on fellow migrants returning home.

Migrants' employment status, occupations they were engaged in, and their education and skill levels were found to be related to their success in sending remittances from Libya. Migrants with higher education and skill levels (linked with their occupations) were on average not only more likely to send remittances but also reported sending higher amounts of remittances. Furthermore, a positive relationship between length of stay in Libya and proportion of migrants reporting to have sent remittances was also identified, showing that recently arrived migrants are less likely to have sent remittances compared to those who have stayed in Libya for longer.

Close family members in the country of origin constituted the primary beneficiaries of remittances sent from Libya, while 94 per cent of the remittance sending migrants reported that part of their remittance was used for their families' daily needs such as food, utilities, rent etc. However, only 32 per cent of the remittance sending migrants interviewed during 2020 reported that their remittances were the primary source of income for their households in the country of origin. This shows that a majority of remittance sending migrants in Libya could be relying on remittances as a risk mitigation and income diversification strategy for their households in the country of origin.[9]

Throughout 2019-2020 the proportion of migrants sending remittances from Libya and the amounts remitted declined steadily, both due to armed conflict and the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. This decline is another facet of the difficult situation faced by migrants in countries in crisis in general and Libya in particular.[10] Based on the self-reported microdata collected by DTM, a 15 per cent year on year decline in the amount of remittance sent per month by migrants in Libya was recorded from 2019 to 2020. The economic crises caused by the COVID-19 pandemic is projected to result in a 14 per cent global decline in the amount of money migrant workers will send home in 2021, and this could also negatively affect migrants in Libya.[11] Therefore, a concerted effort towards improving the situation of migrant workers in Libya is needed via regulation of labour market and strengthening of social protection mechanisms available to migrant workers.

9 De Haas, H. 2009, IOM 2019

10 IOM 2017
11 World Bank 2020

METHODOLOGY

During 2019 – 2020 Displacement Tracking Matrix conducted 41,095 quantitative interviews with migrants that included questions on remittances. These interviews were conducted using DTM Flow Monitoring Survey (FMS), Thematic Migrant Surveys and a specific survey questionnaire designed for the UK FCDO (DFID) funded study on remittances.

The findings on remittances presented in this study are based on descriptive statistics and trend analysis using microdata on self-reported remittances collected from 13,404 migrants who completed the remittances module of the FMS and Thematic Migrant Surveys during 2019-2020, and from 334 migrants interviewed through in-depth interviews.

The survey questionnaire designed specifically for this UK FCDO (DFID) funded study on remittances included questions on remittances sent, recipients or beneficiaries of remittances in the country of origin, transaction modalities used to send remittances to the country of origin, challenges faced by migrants in sending remittances, and lastly questions on what household expenses were met by remittances.

LIMITATIONS

This study relies on microdata on remittances collected from migrants in Libya through individual interviews and surveys during 2019 – 2020, and is therefore different from institutionally collated data on remittances.[12] The amount of remittance self-reported to DTM by migrants interviewed via FMS throughout these two years was recorded in US dollar values (with all conversions when needed made on the spot according to the parallel market exchange rate on the day of assessment prior to recording the value). All migrants interviewed via the FMS or using the specific survey on remittances were only interviewed once.

DTM's Flow Monitoring Survey (FMS): FMS is one of the main components of DTM implemented on a rolling and continuous basis in Libya since 2016. It is one of the primary assessment tools through which DTM conducts face-to-face interviews with migrants. The core questionnaire includes questions on migration motivations, aspirations, intentions, decision-making, and routes.

Thematic Migrant Surveys: Since 2019, DTM Libya is also employing thematic migrant surveys covering topics related to Education; Food Security; Livelihoods; Remittances; Health; Migration Challenges; Accommodation; and access to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) services in Libya. The data used for this analysis is primarily drawn from the core questionnaire and the thematic surveys on Remittances.

12 Such as data on remittances obtained from International Monetary Fund (IMF) Balance of Payments (BoP) database; for further details see reference: World Bank 2017

Photo: ©Rawand Al Hares/ IOM 2020

A lower percentage of female migrants interviewed (23%) reported sending remittances compared to male migrants (33%) indicating that apart from facing increased vulnerabilities, female migrants may also lack access to capacity enhancing and capability increasing factors.

FINDINGS

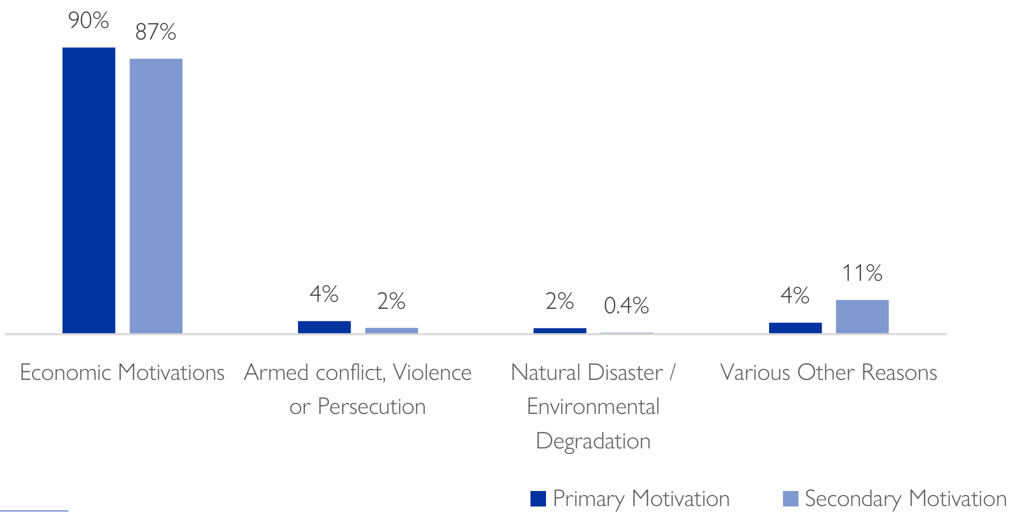
Analysis of data on migration motivations, aspirations and intentions collected by DTM during 2019 – 2020 shows that labour migration undertaken by migrant workers primarily seeking better livelihood prospects in Libya constitutes the major trend in the dynamics of migration to Libya.[13] Despite the various challenges faced by migrants in Libya, analysis of remittances shows that migration to Libya holds the potential to enhance migrants' individual capabilities through access to a potentially better labour market than in their countries of origin. Furthermore, remittances sent from Libya are used by households in the country of origin[14] to meet their basic needs as well as contribute to household savings and investments.

From over 41,000 migrants interviewed by DTM in Libya during 2019 – 2020, 90 per cent of the migrants identified economic reasons as their primary motivation for migration to Libya (figure 1). This included 68 per cent who had identified lack of job opportunities or inadequate income to meet their basic needs in their country of origin as reasons motivating them to migrate.

While, 22 per cent had identified motivations such as looking for better job opportunities in Libya, conducting business, engaging in circular migration for livelihoods, or various other economic reasons.

Furthermore, 83 per cent of the migrants interviewed during 2019 – 2020 indicated that at the time of departure from their countries of origin they had intended to migrate to Libya. When asked about their migration aspirations and intentions at the time of the interview in Libya, 73 per cent of the migrants reported that they still intended to continue to stay in Libya, further confirming that Libya remains a destination for a majority of migrant workers in Libya.[15]

Fig. 1 Motivations for migration to Libya analysed through first two reasons identified for leaving the country of origin (primary motivation n = 40,548; secondary motivation n = 38,227, 2019 – 2020)



13 IOM 2019, IOM 2020a, De Haas, H. 2007

14 79% of the migrants interviewed in 2019 – 2020 (remittances dataset) were employed in Libya at the time of the survey, whereas only 51% of these migrants reported being employed in their country of origin prior to migration. This shows that migration to Libya resulted in improved employment circumstances for 28% of the migrants arriving in Libya. Employment in Libya was previously found to be a significant protective factor that corresponds with reduced vulnerabilities for migrants in Libya (IOM 2019), likewise improvement in employment circumstances is considered indicative of enhanced capabilities.

15 The most significant change in migration intention pre-departure in the country of origin to the intention expressed at the time of the interview was that a majority expressed an intention to return to their country of origin.

Decline in Remittances Sent from Libya

Throughout 2019 and 2020, despite armed conflict and COVID-19 pandemic negatively affecting migrants in Libya, 33 percent of the migrants interviewed on remittances (13,738 from 41,095) reported to have remitted money to their countries of origin from their earnings in Libya.

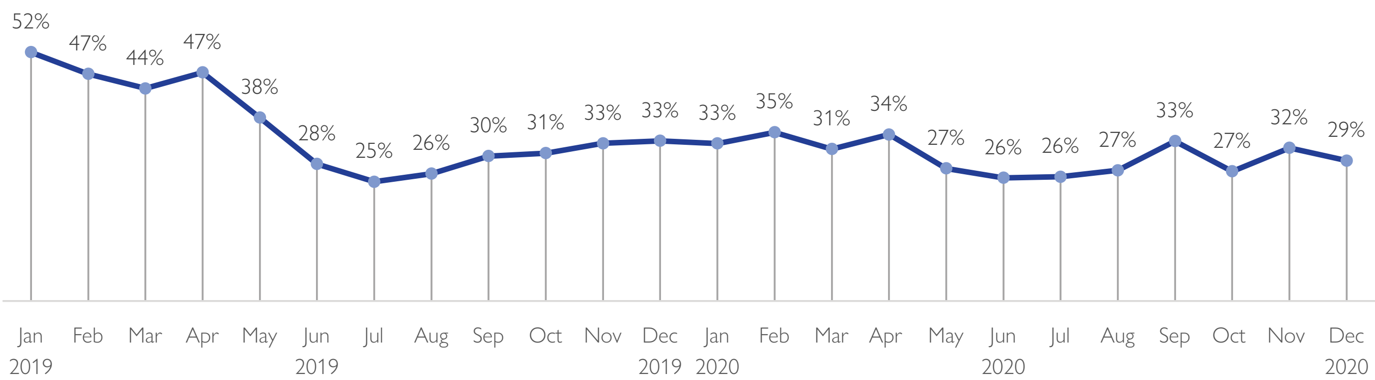
However, trend analysis of migrants reporting to have sent remittances confirms that armed conflict and COVID-19 pandemic in Libya negatively affected migrants' capacity to send remittances. In January 2019, 52 per cent of the migrants interviewed reported to have sent remittances which decreased to the lowest recorded proportion of migrants sending remittances (25%) by July 2019 as can be seen in figure 2 below.

The trend of migrants sending remittances from Libya registered gradual improvements till April 2020 when the effects of COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a second downward trend.[16]

The impact of reduction in monthly remittances can also be seen in the figure 4 (next page) where remittance values reported by migrants are compared between 2019 and 2020. During 2019, 46 per cent of the migrants who reported having sent remittances were sending home more than 100 US dollars per month, while in 2020 this decreased to 32 per cent.

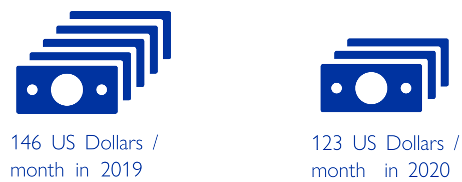
These findings show that during 2019–2020, not only did armed conflict and the COVID-19 pandemic negatively impact the percentage of migrants sending remittances from Libya (as shown in figure 2), but also the financial capacity of those migrants who were able to send remittances was considerably reduced in 2020 compared to 2019.

Fig. 2 Percentage of migrants sending remittances by month during 2019-2020



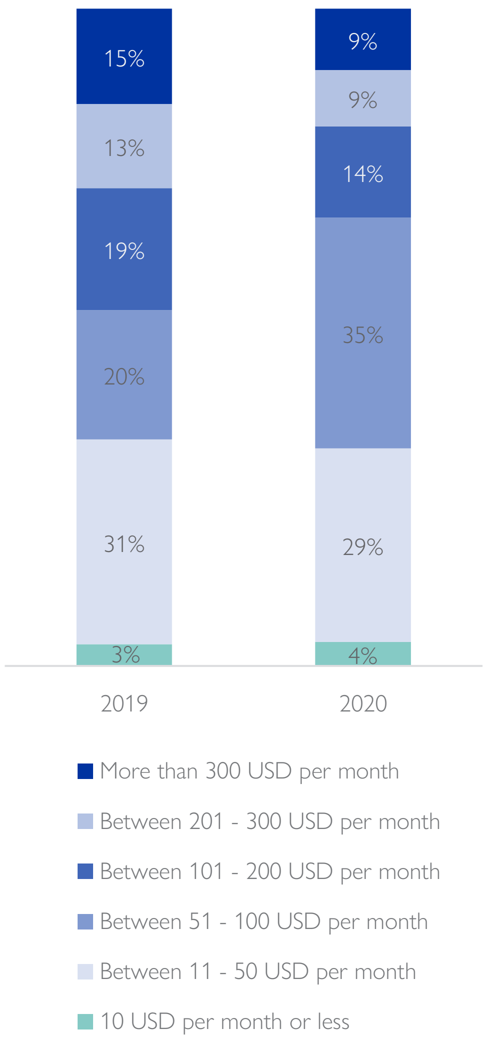
The average remittances sent home by migrants interviewed during 2019 – 2020 was 137 US Dollars per month. Comparing both years, trend analysis shows that remittances sent by migrants in Libya fell from an average of 146 US Dollars per month to 123 US Dollars per month in 2020. This represents a 15% reduction in monthly remittances sent in 2020 compared to 2019.

Fig. 3 Average remittance sent by migrants per month fell from 146 US Dollars in 2019 to 123 US Dollars in 2020



16 DTM assessments on socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 in Libya had identified during the months of April – September that migrants faced challenges in accessing livelihoods due to COVID-19 induced economic slump and the mobility restrictions imposed to curb the spread of the virus. IOM 2020c

Fig. 4 Comparison of remittances sent between 2019 and 2020, shown in US Dollar value brackets (n = 10,395)



The reduction in the percentage of migrants sending remittances and the reduced financial capacity of remittance sending migrants both indicate that migrant workers in Libya during 2019 – 2020 faced increasing vulnerabilities, reduced coping capacity, and also faced negative humanitarian consequences of the multiple crises affecting Libya.

Do all migrants intend to send remittances?

In 2020, IOM Libya's Displacement Tracking Matrix also started collecting data on whether migrants who did not report having sent remittances intended to do so in order to better understand to what extent some migrants may lack financial capacity or if they simply do not aspire to transfer money to their countries of origin.

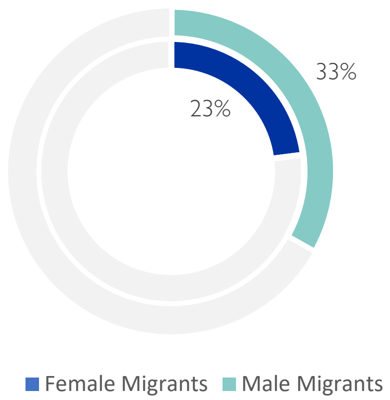
Only 17 per cent of the migrants interviewed during 2020 reported that they did not intend to send remittances, showing that a clear majority of migrants (83%) intended to send remittances although only 29 per cent reported having successfully transferred remittances in 2020. This shows that a majority of migrants (54%) despite wanting to send remittances faced challenges in Libya that prevented them from doing so. Factors preventing migrants from sending remittances range from unemployment, lack of adequate earnings or slow pace of earnings (as migrants often try to accumulate savings before sending remittances) to lack of reliable money transfer services.[17]

17 For further details see the section on challenges faced by migrants in sending remittances (pg. 26).

Demographic Profile of Remittance Sending Migrants

The median age of remittance sending migrants was 30 years (average 31) whereas in comparison the median age for all migrants interviewed between 2019 – 2020 was 28 years (average 29), indicating that remittance sending migrants in Libya tend to be slightly older than the migrant population at large.

Fig. 5 Gender analysis of remittances shows that a higher proportion of male migrants (33%) had sent remittances from Libya compared to female migrants (23%); (n = 40,352, 2019 – 2020)



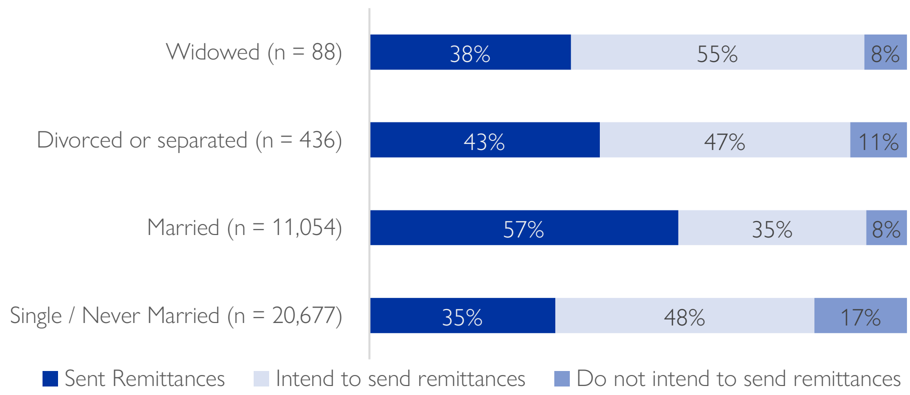
23 per cent of female migrants interviewed in 2019 – 2020 reported sending remittances compared to 33 per cent of male migrants, showing that a higher proportion of male migrants in Libya were sending remittances.[18]

Analysis of remittances data by marital status shows that a higher proportion of migrants who were either married (57%) or had been married (widowed 38%; divorced 43%) reported to have sent remittances compared to migrants who had never married (single 35%).

Furthermore, the highest proportion of single migrants (who had never married 17%) reported that they did not intend to send remittances. This finding is in line with several studies that show that migrants send remittances based on both individual motives (such as altruism, exchange, and inheritance) and familial motives (such as insurance and investment at family levels in the country of origin).[19]

Migrants with familial relationships and social networks composed of family and friends in their country of origin have been shown to be more likely to send remittances as a strategy to reduce livelihood risks for members of family, to secure and increase household income, and to acquire investment capital.[20] A recent DTM study on social networks of migrants in Libya found that social networks in migrants' countries of origin played a significant role in motivating migration.[21] The finding here (figure 6) on relationship between marital status and the likelihood of sending remittances indicates that migrants' family members in their country of origin are not only a motivation for their migration to Libya but could also be influencing the decision to send remittances.[22]

Fig. 6 Comparison of migrants sending remittances by their marital status (n = 10.395, 2019 – 2020)



18 Only 10% of the Libyan migrant population are adult females (DTM Migrant Report Round 34).

19 Rapoport, H. and Docquier, F. 2005
20 Stark, O. and Taylor, J. 1989; Quinn, Michael A. 2006
21 IOM 2021
22 The section of this report on remittance recipients highlights that immediate members of family in the country of origin receive remittances directly.

In addition to the likelihood of sending remittances, migrants who indicated being currently married or having been married (divorced, separated) had also sent higher amounts of remittances compared to the migrants who were single or had never been married. Figure 7 shows that nearly half of the married migrants (49%) and a majority of divorced or separated (64%) migrants reported having sent more than 100 USD per month. In comparison, less than a third (31%) of the migrants reporting to be single had sent more than 100 USD per month. This indicates that migrants with family members dependent on remittances sent from Libya for meeting their household needs were not only more likely to send remittances but were also sending higher amounts compared to migrants without such familial connections.

Migrants from Egypt, Niger, Sudan and Chad constituted 77 per cent of migrants sending remittances to their countries of origin during 2019 – 2020, reflecting their higher proportions in the migrant population in Libya. Figure 8 shows the complete distribution of migrants interviewed during this two-year period who reported sending remittances from Libya. This sample of remittance sending migrants reflects the typical composition of migrant population in Libya as migrants from Libya's neighbouring countries, especially Egypt, Niger, Chad and Sudan, constitute a majority of migrants in Libya.

Fig. 7 Migrants' marital status and the amount of remittances sent per month shown in US Dollar value brackets (n = 10,395, 2019 – 2020)

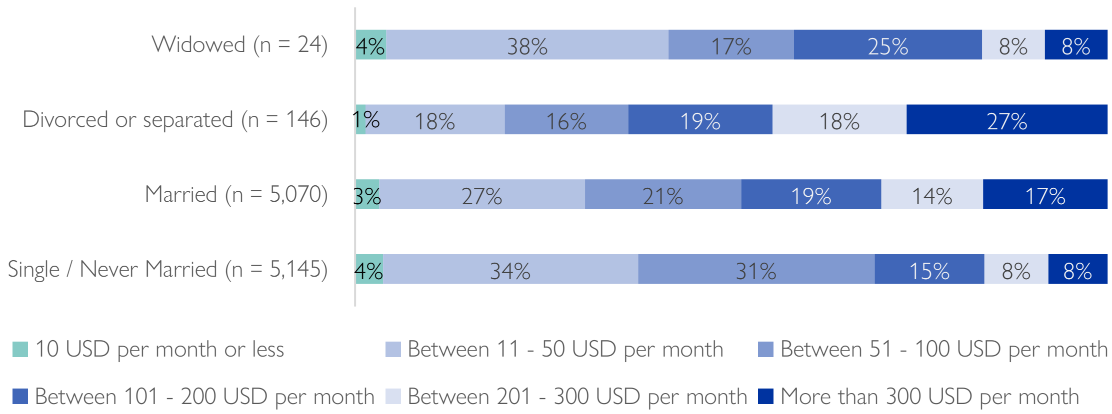
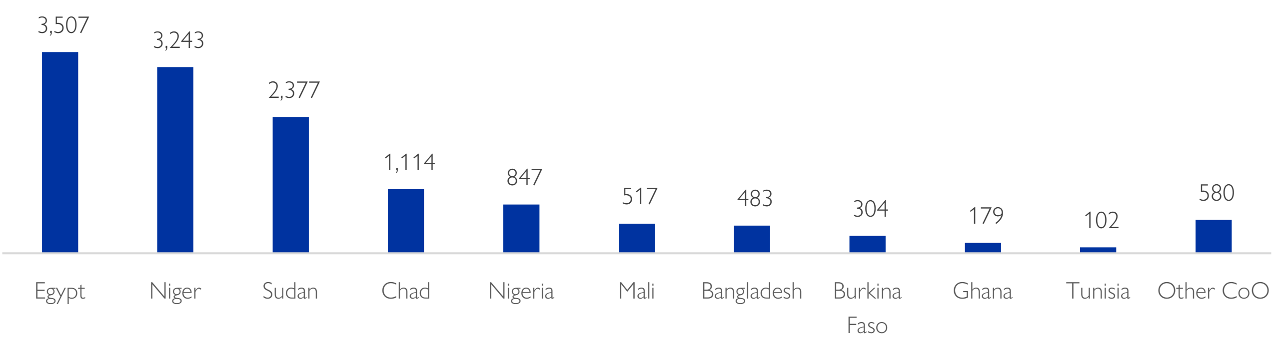


Fig. 8 Migrants reporting sending remittances from Libya shown as per their country of origin (n = 13,253, 2019 – 2020)



However, a different trend emerges when the percentage of migrants sending remittances amongst the country of origin cohorts are considered. As shown in figure 9, 64 per cent of migrants from Bangladesh, 45 per cent from Burkina Faso, and 44 per cent from Egypt interviewed during 2019 – 2020 reported sending remittances, indicating that a larger proportion of migrants from these countries of origin are sending remittances home.[23]

Similarly, in terms of region of origin, the majority of migrants from South and South-eastern Asia (Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Philippines) reported sending remittances during 2019 – 2020, followed by migrants from Northern Africa (Algeria, Egypt, Sudan, Tunisia, Morocco). Figure 10 shows the comparison of regions, and for comparison also includes the cohort of neighbouring countries that includes migrants who benefit from geographic proximity and well-established support networks.[24]

Fig. 9 Proportion of migrants sending remittances in each country of origin cohort (n = 41,094, 2019 – 2020)

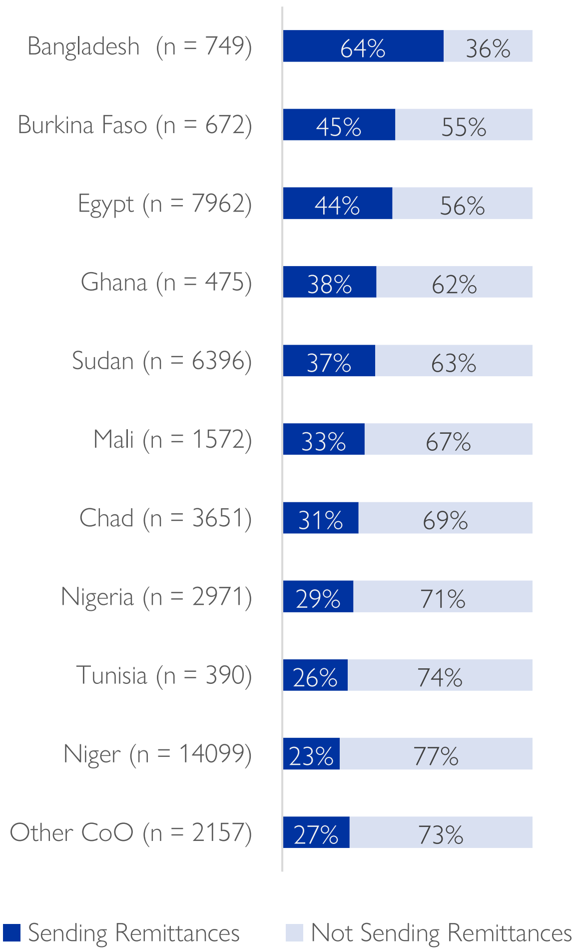
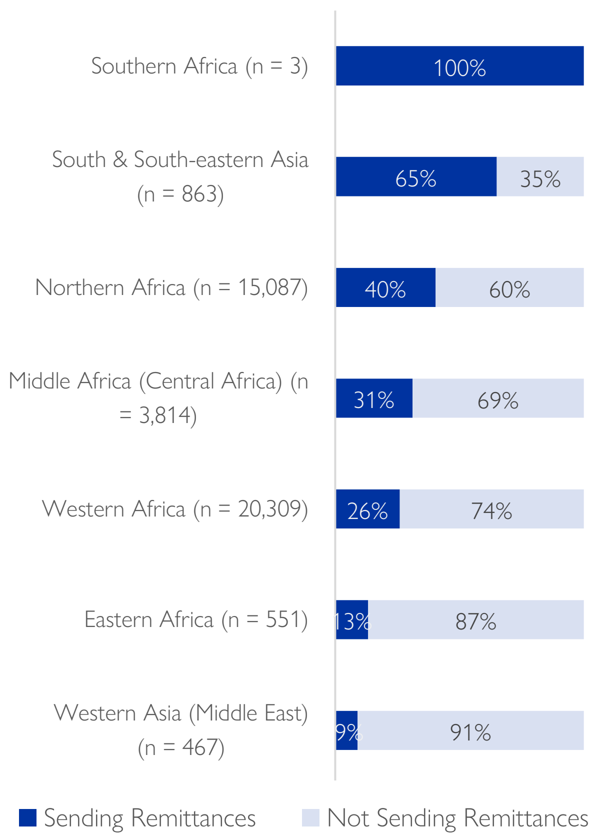


Fig. 10 Proportion of migrants sending remittances by their region of origin cohorts* (n = 41,094, 2019 – 2020)



23 Further details under the following section on Determinants of Migrant Remittances from Libya

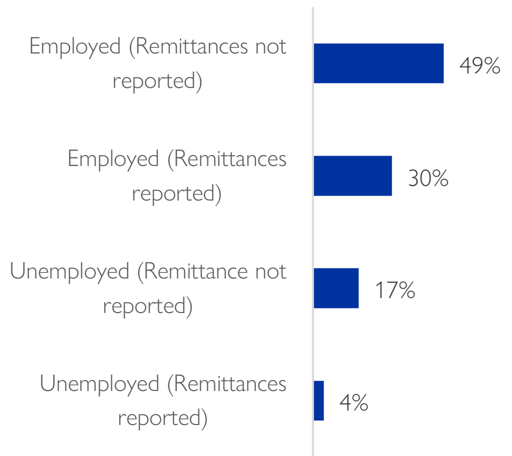
24 IOM 2021

* Southern Africa (South Africa and Namibia) is an outlier in figure 10 as only 3 migrants were interviewed on remittances during 2019-2020.

Determinants of Migrant Remittances from Libya

Employment is the most important capacity enhancing factor and determinant of migrants' ability to send remittances from Libya, as in other destination countries, as migrants wanting to send remittances would need a source of earnings. However, several other factors also play a role as determinants of migrants remittances since all migrants who were employed at the time of the survey did not report sending remittances. Figure 11 shows that 30 per cent of the migrants interviewed about remittances reported being employed at the time of the survey and to have sent remittances, however 49 per cent had not sent remittances although they were employed at the time of the survey. On the other hand, 4 per cent migrants who were unemployed at the time of the survey also reported to have sent remittances previously.

Fig. 11 Employment status and remittances (n = 40,653, 2019 – 2020)

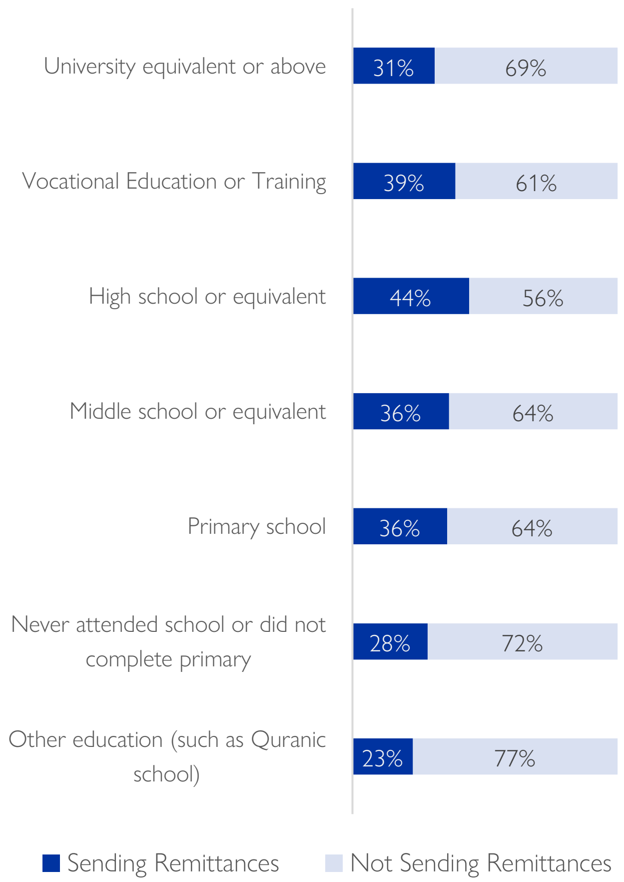


To better understand the underlying factors playing a role in migrants' capacity to send remittances from Libya, further analysis related to migrants' education levels and employment sectors was conducted.

A higher proportion of migrants in Libya who had achieved high school or equivalent levels of education (44%) reported sending remittances compared to those with other levels of education, followed by migrants who had attained vocational education or technical trainings (39%).

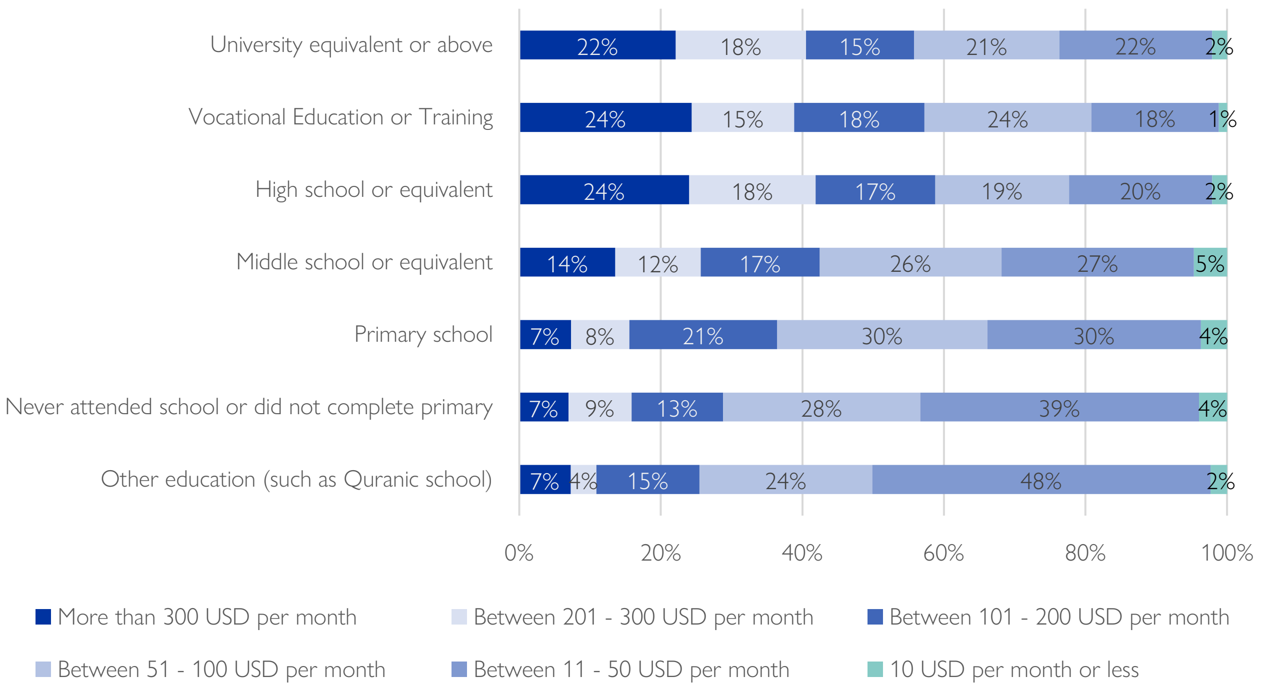
While the general trend shows that the proportion of migrants sending remittances increased with higher education levels, the university graduates or migrants with tertiary education emerged as outliers.[25] This trend needs to be further investigated within the Libyan migration context; however, it is possible that a larger proportion of this cohort represents migrants who are more likely to be based in Libya with their families. Furthermore, it is also possible that university or tertiary education is indicative of these migrants' better socio-economic backgrounds in the country of origin, as tertiary education requires significant access to capital and resources, and therefore a lower a proportion of these migrants' families in the country of origin may be dependent on remittances to meet their basic needs.

Fig. 12 Proportion of migrants sending remittances by highest education levels achieved (n = 41,094; 2019 – 2020)



25 Similar trend has been observed in the case of Mexican migrants in the United States, where "migrants with higher levels of education, immediate family members in the United States, the ability to speak English, skilled occupations in the United States, and who have spent a high share of their lives from the first migration to the last migration" were found to "be less likely to remit". DeSipio, 2000

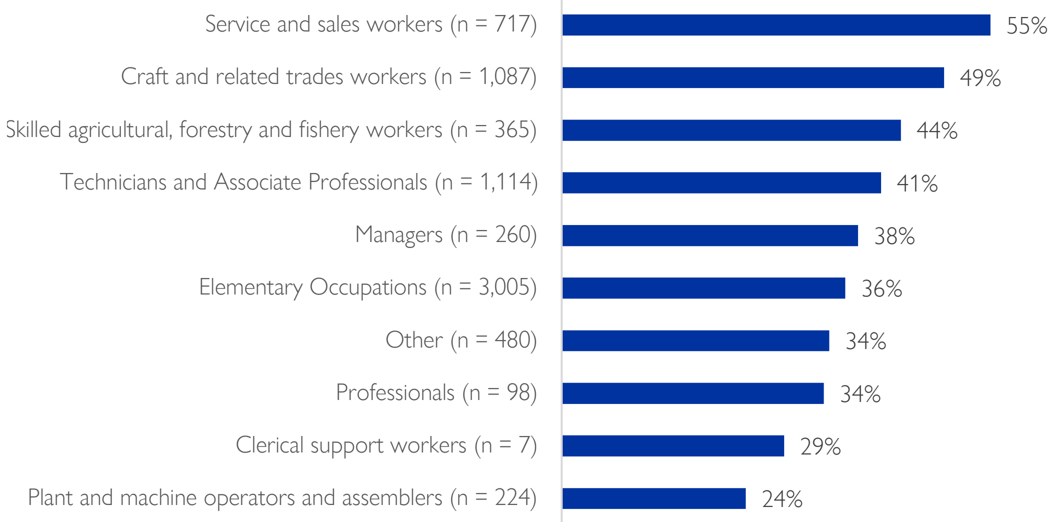
Fig. 13 Amounts of remittance sent per month by highest education levels achieved (n = 10,395; 2019 – 2020)



The majority of migrants (55%) employed as service and sales workers (such as waiter, cook/chef, hairdresser, beautician, housekeeper or domestic worker, cashier or teller etc.) reported having sent remittances. While 49% of migrants working as craft and related trades workers (such as car mechanic, blacksmith, electrician, carpenter etc.) reported having sent remittances. This was followed by 44 per cent of the migrants employed as skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers, and 41 per cent of those employed as technicians and associate professionals (construction supervisor, manufacturing technicians, mining technicians etc.).

36 per cent of the migrants working in elementary occupations (labourers, unskilled construction workers, cleaners, garbage collectors etc.) also reported to have sent remittances. While 38 per cent of migrants employed as managers (hotel or restaurant managers, sales managers etc.) and 34 per cent employed as professionals (medical doctors, engineers, nurses or paramedics, pharmacists etc.) reported to have sent remittances to their countries of origin.

Fig. 14 Percentage of migrants sending remittances by occupation (n = 7,357; 2020)



Analysis of remittances by skill levels required for the occupations in which migrants were employed shows that a higher proportion of migrants with skill level 2 (involving tasks that may involve operating of machinery or equipment, see annex for full definition) were sending remittances compared to other cohorts (figure 15).

Analysis of remittances sent per month shows that remittance sending migrants working in occupations requiring higher skill levels were able to remit higher amounts per month than those employed in occupations requiring relatively lower skill levels. 74 per cent of remittance sending migrants employed in occupations requiring skill level 4 reported to have remitted more than 100 USD per month, compared to 27 per cent remittance sending migrants at skill level 1 (figure 16). This finding was in line with the variation in the amount of monthly remittances observed for migrants with different educational backgrounds (figure 13) where remittance sending migrants with education levels of high school and above were shown to be sending higher amounts in remittances.

Fig. 15 Percentage of migrants sending remittances by the skill levels required in their occupations (n = 7,357; 2020)*

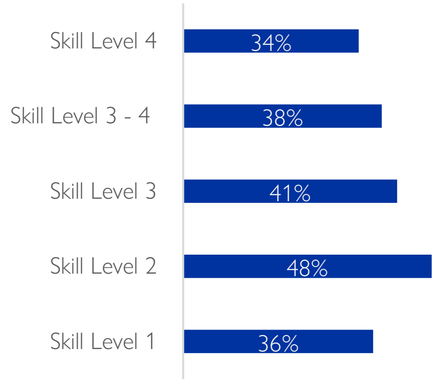
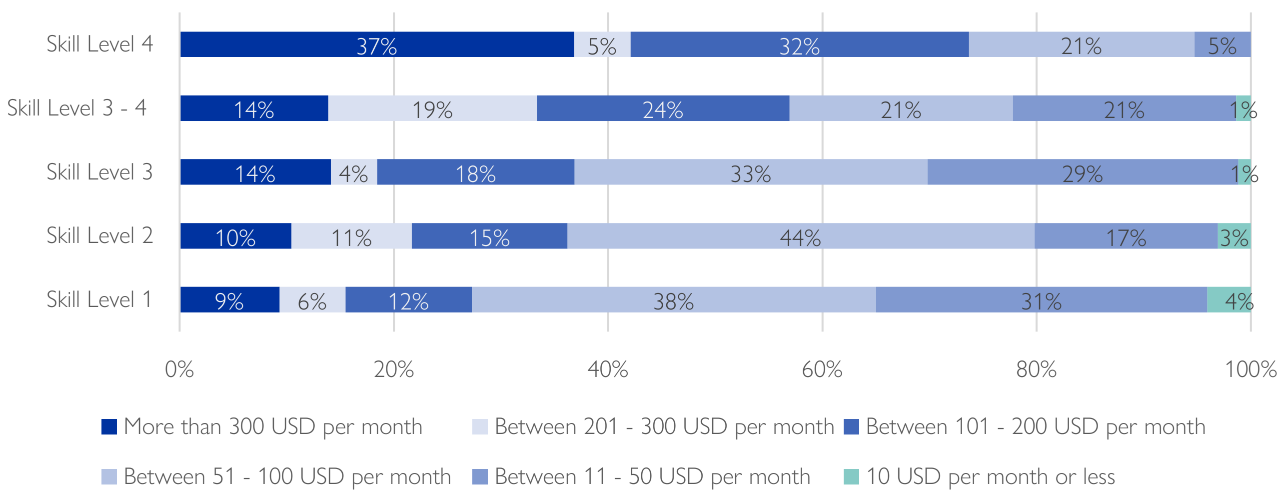


Fig. 16 Amounts of remittance sent per month shown in US dollar value brackets as per migrants' skill levels (n = 7,357; 2020)

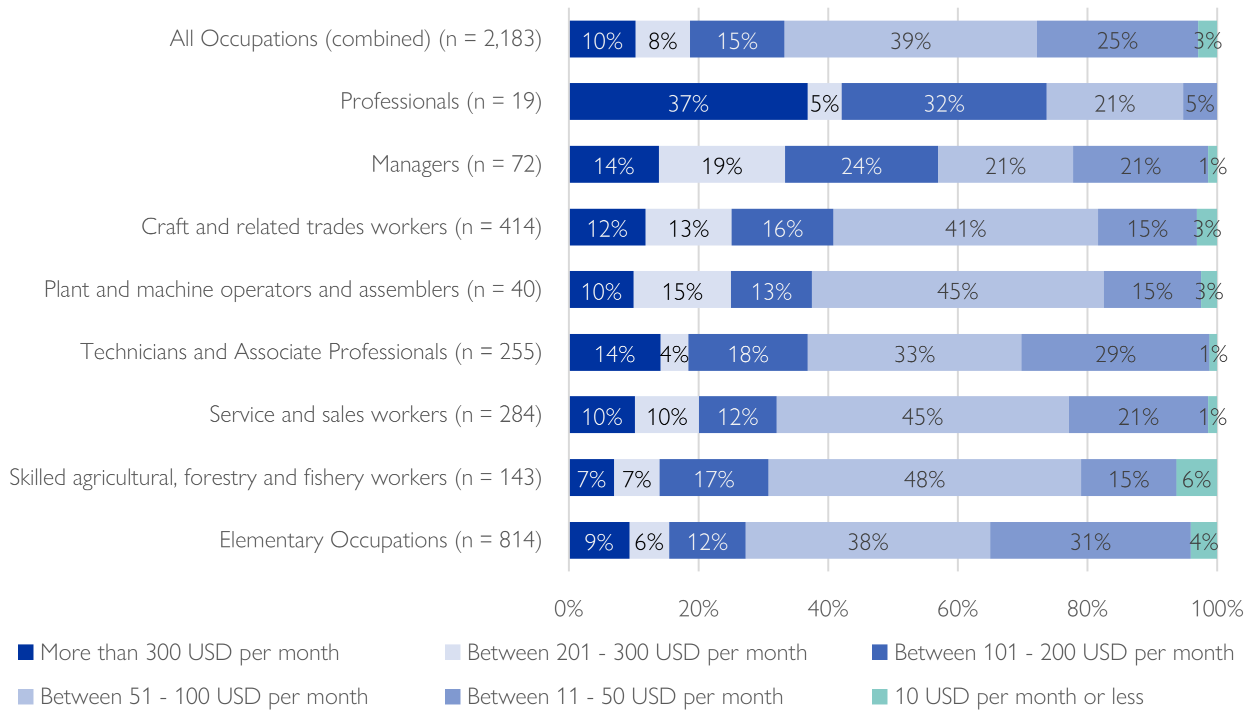


* Skill Level 3 – 4 covers the occupational category of "managers" as per the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08) which includes occupations such as Chief Executive Officers (CEOs), managing directors, sales managers, agricultural managers, and other types of managers overlooking day to day operations.

Similarly, looking at the reported amount of remittance sent per month shows that 74 per cent of remittance sending migrants employed as professionals (for example, engineers and medical doctors), and 57 per cent of remittance sending migrants employed as managers (such as hotel, restaurant or sales managers) had remitted 100 US dollars or more per month. In contrast, only 27 per cent of remittance sending migrants employed in elementary occupations (for example, daily labourers, unskilled construction workers, cleaners and garbage collectors) reported to have remitted 100 US dollars or more per month.

These findings on education levels, in specific skill levels, and occupations that migrants were employed in, even during the two years when Libya faced several crises (2019 – 2020), indicate potential avenues for labour migration management programming. Based on preliminary findings of an ongoing labour market assessment caried out by IOM, Libyan labour force needs diversity as there is great demand for both skilled and low-skilled workers in various economic sectors. Currently the demand for low-skilled workers is generally met through unregulated channels, which is not sustainable for economic growth as well as putting migrant workers in vulnerable situations. Therefore, policies and programming that facilitates regular migration, to fill specific workforce and skill gaps in the Libyan labour market, through well managed immigration of skilled as well as unskilled migrant workers will benefit both Libya and countries of origin.

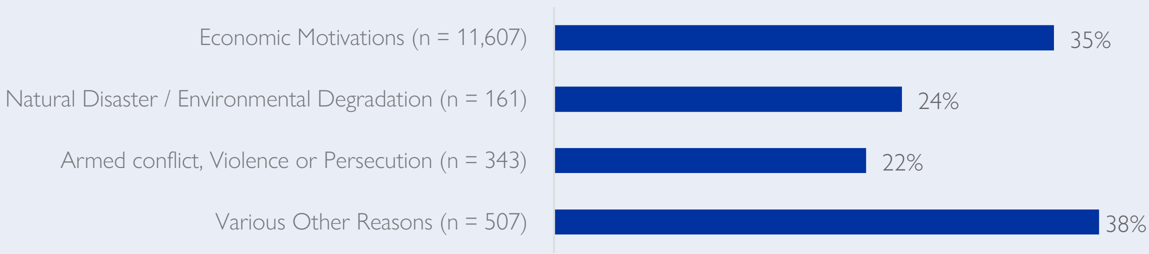
Fig. 17 Amounts of remittance sent per month shown in US dollar value brackets for each occupation reported by migrants employed in Libya (2020)



Link of Remittances with Migration Motivations, Aspirations and Intentions - Libya Context

Analysis of remittances sent by migrants in light of their motivations for migration indicates that a higher proportion of migrants coming to Libya with economic motivations (due to lack of job opportunities, inadequate income in country of origin, or simply because of seeking better livelihood options in Libya) reported to have sent remittances compared to migrants leaving their country of origin due to other reasons (such as armed conflict, violence or persecution). This indicates that while migrants who were compelled to leave their country of origin due to circumstances that are typically characterized as forced migration were also sending remittances, however less frequently than those who had economic motivations at the time of departure from their countries of origin for Libya.[26]

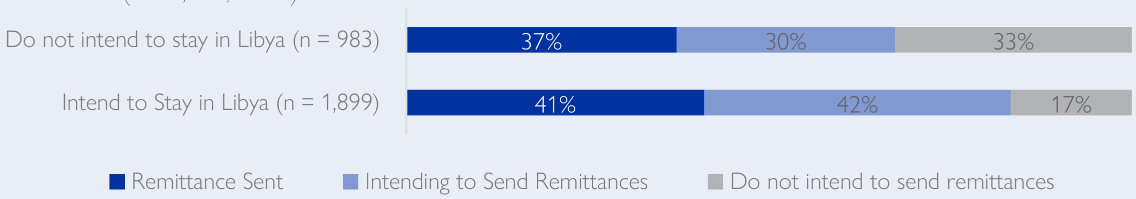
Fig. 18 Percentage of migrants sending remittances shown as per motivations for migration to Libya (n = 12,618; 2019 – 2020)



Similarly, 41 per cent of migrants who expressed an intention to stay in Libya at the time of the interview reported having sent remittances compared to 37 per cent who either intended to return or migrate onwards from Libya.

Overall, 83 per cent of migrants who expressed an intention of staying in Libya were interested in sending remittances while only 17 per cent reported that they had no intention of sending remittances. However, a third of the migrants (33%) who did not intend to stay in Libya, either wanting to return or to migrate onwards, reported that they did not intend to send remittances at all.

Fig. 19 Percentage of migrants sending remittances or intending to send remittances shown as per migration intentions (n = 2,882; 2020)

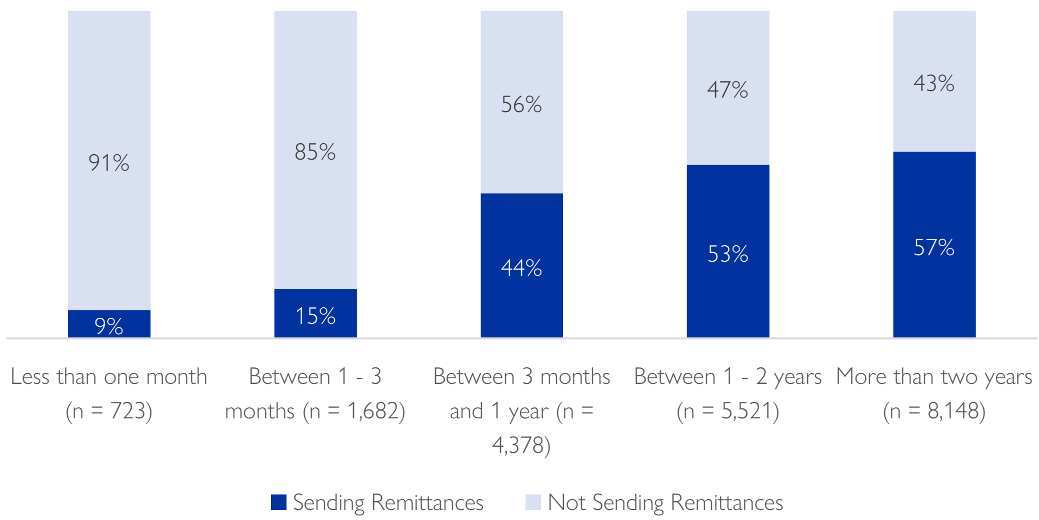


These findings indicate that migrants workers arriving in Libya primarily with economic motivations and those who intend to stay in Libya are potentially more likely to send remittances than other migrants.

26 UNHCR 2017; World Bank 2016; ODI 2007

A majority of migrants (55%) who had stayed in Libya for more than 1 year (long-term migrants) had sent remittances, compared to only a third (33%) of the migrants who had stayed less than a year. Furthermore, only 9 per cent of migrants who had stayed in Libya for less than a month by the time of the interview reported to have sent remittances, while 15 per cent of migrants who had been in Libya for between 1 to 3 months reported sending remittances. Figure 20 shows the trend for migrants sending remittances as per their duration of stay in Libya, with a higher proportion of migrants who had stayed in Libya by the time of the interview for three months or more (44%) reported to have sent remittances compared to the sample average of 33 per cent. This indicates that a significant proportion of migrants end up working and saving for at least three months before sending their first remittances from Libya[27].

Fig. 20 Length of stay and remittances (n = 20.452, 2019 – 2020)



27 Previous assessment of migrant vulnerabilities had also identified duration of stay in Libya as a significant indicator of migrant vulnerability, as migrants who had recently arrived in Libya were found to be more vulnerable to negative humanitarian consequences compared to those who had been in Libya for longer (see IOM 2019 for further details).

Use of Remittances

During 2020, 32% of the remittance sending migrants reported that remittances sent by them were the primary source of income for their households in the country of origin. This indicates that a majority of remittance sending migrants may be using remittances as a risk mitigation and income diversification strategy for their households in the country of origin.[28]

The country of origin analysis indicates that a majority of remittance sending migrants from Bangladesh in Libya (56%) reported that remittances sent from Libya were their primary source of household income. This was followed by more than one third of remittance sending migrants from Egypt, Tunisia, and Chad reporting that their remittances from Libya were primary source of household income (see figure 21).

In terms of what these remittances were used for at the household level in countries of origin, an overwhelming majority of migrants who had sent remittances (94%) in response to a multiple-choice question reported that part of their remittances sent from Libya were covering their family's daily needs (such as food, utility bills and other essential items).

Furthermore, 69 per cent of the migrants sending remittances also reported that part of their remittances contributed to their household savings or investments (including for the purposes of constructing property, such as houses). Less than a third of migrants (30%) indicated that their remittances were partly also covering the costs incurred from their migration journey to Libya.[29]

In response to a question on whether remittances contributed to another family member's migration related costs (only asked in in-depth questionnaire on remittances during 2002), only 8 per cent of the migrants confirmed that their remittances were going to help fund another family member's migration.

Fig. 21 Percentage of migrants in each country of origin cohort reporting that remittances were the primary source of income for their households

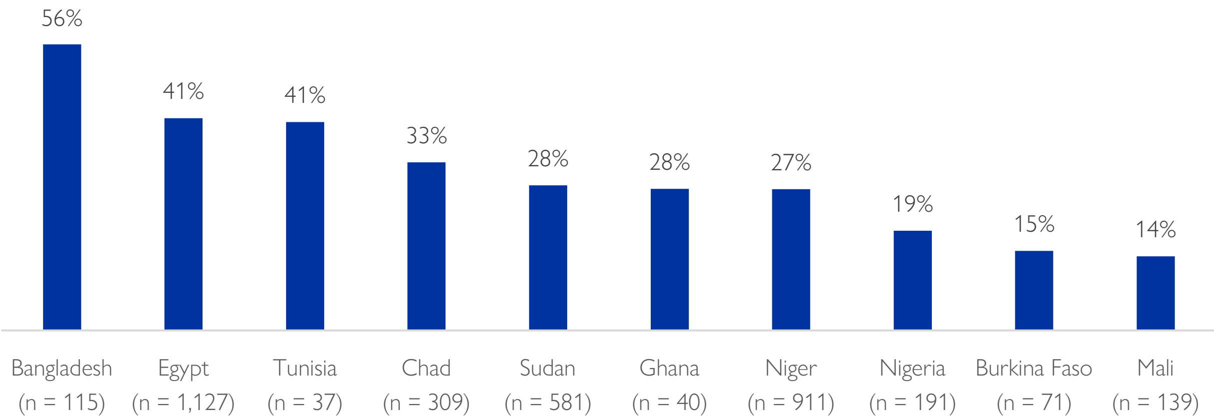
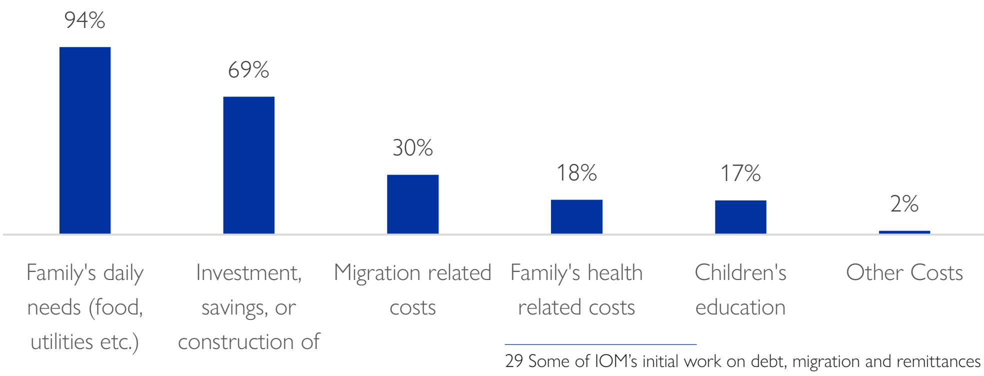


Fig. 22 Use of remittances as reported by migrants sending remittances from (multiple choice question; n = 13,634; 2019 – 2020)



29 Some of IOM's initial work on debt, migration and remittances for South and South-East Asia indicates that migrants also take debt to cover migration-related costs, e.g. recruitment, transportation, documentation and medical checks, and remittances are often used to repay such debts. For further reading visit report Risks and Rewards - Outcomes of Labour Migration in South-East Asia, IOM 2017b; IOM 2020d

28 IOM 2019, De Haas, H. 2009

Recipients of Remittances

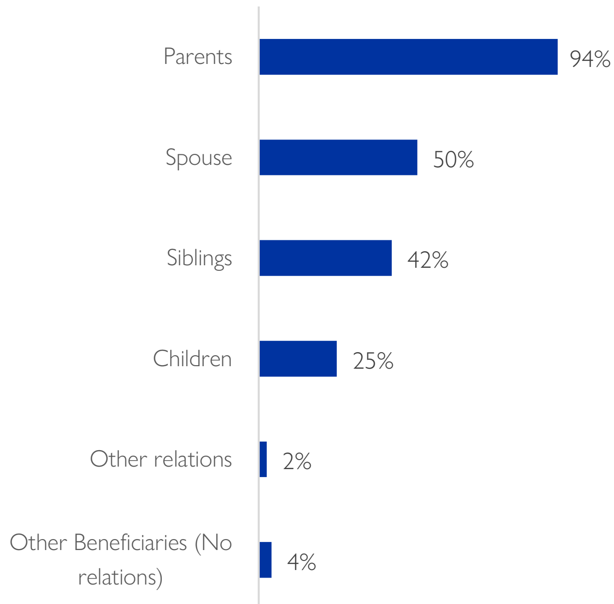
Analysis of data on who receives remittances in the country of origin shows that migrant's close family members in the country of origin were the primary beneficiaries of remittances sent from Libya. In a multiple-choice question reflecting the possibility that migrants in Libya may have sent remittances more than once or to multiple recipients, 94 per cent of the migrants interviewed during 2020 identified their parents as recipients of their remittances. This was followed by 50 per cent of the migrants who also identified a spouse (husband or wife) as the recipient, while siblings (brothers and sisters) were reported as a recipient of remittances by 42 percent of the migrants.

This shows that members of the migrants' communities outside of their immediate families or broader social networks in the country of origin were not a direct recipient or beneficiaries of their remittances as only 6 per cent of the migrants identified such recipients (2% other relations, 4% other beneficiaries who were not relatives shown in Figure 23).

98% of the migrants sending remittances identified at least one female recipient or direct beneficiary of remittances sent to their family (such as mother, wife or sister), in comparison 88% also identified at least one male family member (such as father, husband or brother) as a direct beneficiary of remittances. This indicates that overall female members of migrant households in their country of origin are more likely to receive remittances than male members of the household.

While remittances received by migrant households often benefit their communities of origin at large, less than ten migrants identified either community leaders or community members as direct recipients of the remittances sent. Only 4 per cent of the respondents identified recipients of their remittances that were not their immediate family or relations, while less than 1 per cent of the migrants indicated that their remittances in addition to their family were also going directly to their creditors who were not their family members.

Fig. 23 Recipients of remittances in the migrants' countries of origin (multiple choice question; n = 3,484; 2020)



Transaction Modalities

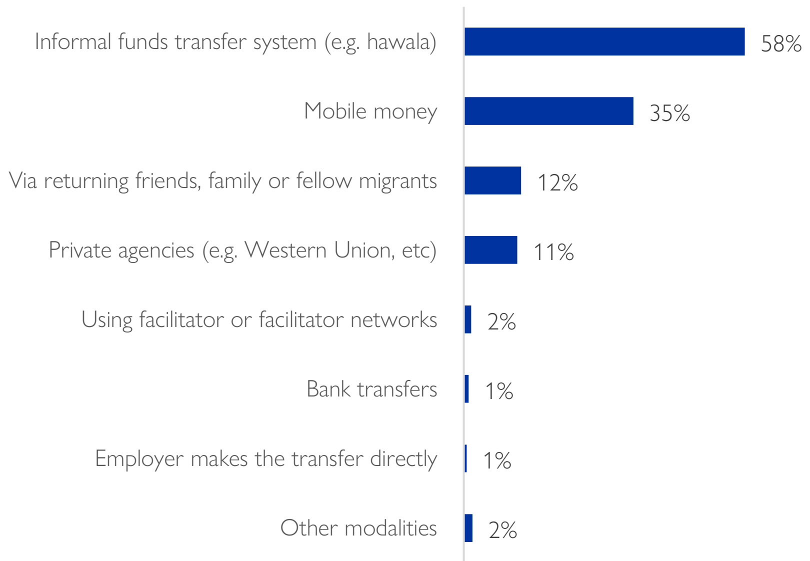
Throughout 2019 – 2020, a majority of remittance sending migrants (58%) indicated that they had used informal funds transfer systems (such as hawala)[30] as the main transfer modality for sending remittances to their country of origin. Figure 24 shows the complete distribution of various remittance transfer modalities used by migrants as identified in response to a multiple-choice question. A majority of migrants reported to have used more than one transfer modality, while bank transfers were utilized by only 1 per cent of the migrants reporting remittance transfer modalities used. This was in line with the finding from the in-depth questionnaire on remittances where 99 per cent of the migrants reported that they did not have access to banks in Libya.

Thus, the majority of migrant workers in Libya typically lack appropriate documentation needed to access formal banking services and are operating entirely unbanked. In a previous DTM study published in 2020 in collaboration with Columbia University, 94 per cent of the long-term migrants interviewed in Libya reported to receive their salaries in cash payments.[31]

As part of the questionnaire on remittances, migrants were also asked about the frequency of times they had sent remittances, and on factors that determined this frequency. 45 per cent of the migrants sending remittances reported that they did not send remittances regularly but only when they had saved enough from their earnings in Libya.

Furthermore, despite the overall decline in remittances recorded during 2019-2020, a majority of the remittance sending migrants interviewed since March 2020 (51%) reported to have sent money home to support their families between 1 to 3 times since the start of COVID-19 pandemic.

Fig. 24 Transfer modalities used by migrants to send remittances from Libya (multiple choice question; n = 9,116, 2019 – 2020)



30 Informal funds transfer systems (such as hawala) here broadly refers to money transfers that occur in the absence of, or in parrallel to, formal banking sector channels (See IMF 2003 for further details)
31 IOM 2020b

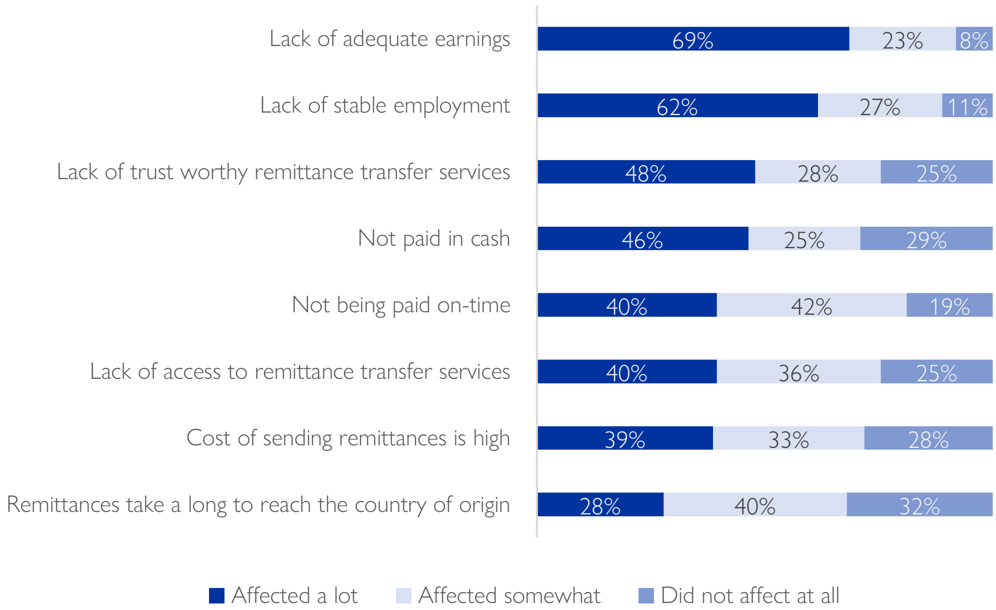
Challenges Faced in Sending Remittances

Apart from being unbanked and having to rely on informal channels to transfer remittances, migrants in Libya face several other challenges that limit their ability to send remittances. Analysis of the challenges reported by migrants shows that the most common challenge faced was a lack of adequate earnings which 69 per cent of the migrants sending remittances reported to have been affected by significantly, while 23 per cent reported to have been affected by this to some extent. This coupled with the finding that 45 per cent of the remittance sending migrants indicated they were sending remittances only when they were able to save enough highlights the uncertainties and insecurities faced at times by migrant workers in Libya.

The majority of migrants also reported that a lack of stable employment affected them to varying degrees. Figure 25 shows the range of challenges that affect migrants' ability to send remittances from Libya. A subsequent study utilizing qualitative interviews with migrants could further elaborate on these challenges and how they impact migrants' ability to send remittances from Libya.

Furthermore, a macroeconomic review of the Libyan labour market, migrants role in it, and its connection with migrants' ability to send remittances is also recommended. Furthermore, additional research on the extent and dynamics of the informal economy, which impacts negatively both migrant workers' rights to decent protected jobs (including means to send remittances) as well as the long-term economic growth in Libya is of critical importance. Finally, an updated assessement of avaialble remittance transfer services available in Libya should be carried out to provide recommendations on how money transfer services can be improved and contribute to sustainable development.

Fig 25 Challenges affecting migrants and their extent of affect on migrants ability to send remittances from Libya (multiple choice question; n = 334; 2020)



CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Remittances sent by migrants from Libya are not only indicative of reduced vulnerabilities and enhanced capabilities for these migrants as individuals, but also serve as an important source of income and risk diversification strategy for their households in the country of origin. Throughout 2019-2020, 33 per cent of over 41,000 migrants interviewed reported to have sent remittances to their country of origin from Libya. However, the dual crises of armed conflict in western Libya and COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a decline in both the number of migrants sending remittances during 2019 – 2020, as well as a substantial year-on-year reduction of the amounts remitted among those who still managed to transfer remittances (15 per cent reduction). This indicates that while one in three migrants reported to have sent remittances during the last two years, a majority of migrants despite intending to send remittances was unable to do so.

A positive relationship was found between migrants' education and levels with the amounts of remittances they were sending, as migrants with higher education and skill levels were sending higher amounts of remittances. Furthermore, migrants' likelihood of sending remittances was found to increase with their length of stay in Libya, showing that migrants who had been in Libya long enough to earn and save were more successful in sending remittances compared to recent arrivals.

Regional analysis shows that migrants from South and South-eastern Asia, including migrants from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Philippines, were particularly likely to transfer remittances as 65% of the migrants in this group indicated sending remittances to their countries of origin. South Asia was followed by migrants from Northern Africa, including migrant workers from Algeria, Egypt, Sudan, Tunisia and Morocco, where 40% reported sending remittances.

However, migrants also identified several challenges faced by them that posed obstacles to sending remittances from Libya, including insecure livelihoods, unstable employment prospects, inadequate income in some cases, and lack of access to reliable money transfer services. 99 per cent of the migrants interviewed were unbanked in Libya, and therefore largely relied on informal funds transfer systems (such as hawala) to transfer their remittances.

Migrant remittances sent from Libya contribute to increasing household income in countries of origin as 94 per cent of those sending home remittances indicated that their remittances were used to meet daily household needs such as food, utilities, rent and other essential expenditure. At the same time, 1-in-5 migrants interviewed in 2019-2020 also reported that their remittances either contributed to their families' savings or were invested in construction of property or other ventures. This indicates that remittances sent from Libya beyond meeting migrants' household immediate needs were also part of a vital risk diversification strategy that has been shown to help migrant households become resilient to financial shocks and contribute to local development in their communities of origin[32].

Overall, remittances can be considered a potential capability enhancing outcome of migration to Libya and also serve as a vital protective factor indicating reduced vulnerabilities of migrants[33] in Libya. Therefore, labour migration and social protection programming aimed at supporting and enhancing the circumstances that enable a larger number of migrants in sending remittances will have a positive impact on the overall situation of migrants in Libya.

32 De Haas, H. 2009
33 IOM 2019

Recommendations

Labour migration programming that aims at promoting avenues for regular and well managed migration to provide the much needed labour force for a diverse economy in Libya, as well as promoting migration for sustainable development is needed. To do so, labour migration programming should support policy development aimed at establishing national protection schemes that uphold minimum standards of living, ensure decent working conditions including sustainable means of sending remittances to migrants' countries of origin.

Regular labour mobility programming, in collaboration with relevant government counterparts and respective embassies, to promote migration of skilled workers to Libya as per the Libyan labour market demand for skills via targeted information campaigns in the country of origin is also recommended. While migrants who are already in Libya should be supported with trainings on technical skills needed in the Libyan labour market, in specific for jobs that closely match their profile, to improve their prospects of sending remittances resulting in reduced vulnerabilities. This can be done through setting up economic hubs, where migrant workers could have access to a variety of services such as health, legal support, employment opportunities as well as skills enhancement trainings.

Apart from the structural and more medium to long term action, migrants in Libya who face difficult economic as well as social prospects could benefit from livelihoods support to enhance their protection and reduce vulnerabilities.

As 99 per cent of the migrants interviewed were unbanked and a lack of access to reliable money transfer services was identified as a major challenge faced by migrants in Libya, programming and policies aimed at improving migrants' access to safe and reliable money transfer services are also recommended. At national level, the Libyan economic sector reform should be supported via advocacy aimed at ensuring that migrant perspectives are incorporated in the improvements planned for the Libyan banking sector.

Migrants in Libya constitute a significant proportion of the population as well as the labour market, and as migrant workers are expected to continue to contribute to the Libyan economy, therefore reforms in the banking and financial services sector should consider structural improvements that facilitate their inclusion into the formal economy. The unbanked migrant population represents a significant market segment that will not only benefit from accessing legal and equitable financial services but is also an untapped source of revenue for the financial service providers and banks in Libya.

Lastly, a follow-up study of migrant households in the country of origin receiving remittances from Libya should be carried out to further elaborate the link between migration, remittances and their impact on migrant sending communities' local economy.

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APPENDIX

Mapping of International Standard Classification of Occupations 2008's (ISCO-08)* major occupation groupings to skill levels:

ISCO Major Group	Skill Levels
1. Managers	3 + 4
2. Professionals	4
3. Technicians and Associate Professionals	3
4. Clerical Support Workers 5. Services and Sales Workers 6. Skilled Agricultural, Forestry and Fishery Workers 7. Craft and Related Trades Workers 8. Plant and Machine Operators, and Assemblers	2
9. Elementary Occupations	1
10. Armed Forces Occupations	1 + 2 + 4

Definition of Skill

Skill is defined as the ability to carry out the tasks and duties of a given job.

Definitions of the four ISCO skill levels**

Definitions of each of the four ISCO skill levels are provided below. Each definition provides examples of

• the typical or characteristic tasks performed at each skill level,

• the types of skill required (in broad terms), and

• the typical occupations classified at that skill level

Skill Level 1

- Occupations at Skill Level 1 typically require the performance of simple and routine physical or manual tasks. They may require the use of hand held tools, such as shovels, or of simple electrical equipment, such as vacuum cleaners. They involve tasks such as cleaning; digging; lifting and carrying materials by hand; sorting, storing or assembling goods by hand (sometimes in the context of mechanised operations): operating non-motorised vehicles; and picking fruit and vegetables.

- Many occupations at Skill Level 1 may require physical strength and/or endurance. For some jobs basic skills in literacy and numeracy may be required. If required these skills would not be a major part of the job.

- For competent performance in some occupations at Skill Level 1, completion of primary education or the first stage of basic education (ISCED Level 1) may be required. A short period of on-the-job training may be required for some jobs.

- Occupations classified at Skill Level 1 include office cleaners, freight handlers, garden labourers and kitchen assistants

** For further details on International Standard Classification of Occupations 2008 (ISCO-08) see https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/ilo-bookstore/order-online/books/WCMS_172572/lang--en/index.htm*
*** The definitions used here are used exactly as laid out in the ISCO-08's mapping of skill levels and major occupation groups*

Skill Level 2

- Occupations at Skill Level 2 typically involve the performance of tasks such as operating machinery and electronic equipment; driving vehicles; maintenance and repair of electrical and mechanical equipment; and manipulation, ordering and storage of information.

- For almost all occupations at Skill Level 2 the ability to read information such as safety instructions, to make written records of work completed, and to accurately perform simple arithmetical calculations is essential. Many occupations at this skill level require relatively advanced literacy and numeracy skills and good interpersonal communication skills. In some occupations these skills are required for a major part of the work. Many occupations at this skill level require a high level of manual dexterity.

- The knowledge and skills required for competent performance in all occupations at Skill Level 2 are generally obtained through completion of the first stage of secondary education (ISCED Level 2). Some occupations require the completion of the second stage of secondary education (ISCED Level 3), which may include a significant component of specialised vocational education and on-the-job training. Some occupations require completion of vocation specific education undertaken after completion of secondary education (ISCED Level 4). In some cases experience and on the job training may substitute for the formal education.

- Occupations classified at Skill Level 2 include butchers, bus drivers, secretaries, accounts clerks, sewing machinists, dressmakers, shop sales assistants, police officers, hairdressers, building electricians and motor vehicle mechanics.

Skill Level 3

- Occupations at Skill Level 3 typically involve the performance of complex technical and practical tasks which require an extensive body of factual, technical and procedural knowledge in a specialised field.

- Occupations at this skill level generally require a high level of literacy and numeracy and well developed interpersonal communication skills. These skills may include the ability to understand complex written material, prepare factual reports and communicate with people who are distressed.

- The knowledge and skills required at Skill Level 3 are usually obtained as the result of study at a higher educational institution following completion of secondary education for a period of 1 – 3 years (ISCED Level 5b). In some cases extensive relevant work experience and prolonged on the job training may substitute for the formal education.

- Occupations classified at Skill Level 3 include shop managers, medical laboratory technicians, legal secretaries, commercial sales representatives, computer support technicians, and broadcasting and recording technicians.

Skill Level 4

- Occupations at Skill Level 4 typically involve the performance of tasks which require complex problem solving and decision making based on an extensive body of theoretical and factual knowledge in a specialised field. The tasks performed typically include analysis and research to extend the body of human knowledge in a particular field, diagnosis and treatment of disease, imparting knowledge to others, design of structures or machinery and of processes for construction and production.

- Occupations at this skill level generally require extended levels of literacy and numeracy, sometimes at a very high level, and excellent interpersonal communication skills. These skills generally include the ability to understand complex written material and communicate complex ideas in media such as books, reports and oral presentations.

- The knowledge and skills required at Skill Level 4 are usually obtained as the result of study at a higher educational institution for a period of 3 – 6 years leading to the award of a first degree or higher qualification (ISCED Level 5a or higher). In some cases experience and on the job training may substitute for the formal education. In many cases appropriate formal qualifications are an essential requirement for entry to the occupation.

- Occupations classified at Skill Level 4 include sales and marketing managers, civil engineers, secondary school teachers, medical practitioners, operating theatre nurses and computer systems analysts.

IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) tracks and monitors population movements in order to collate, analyze and share information to support the humanitarian community with the needed demographic baselines to coordinate evidence-based interventions.

To consult all DTM Libya reports, datasets, static and interactive maps and dashboards, please visit:

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