



# RAPID ASSESSMENT

## NEEDS AND VULNERABILITIES OF INTERNAL RETURN MIGRANTS IN KURIGRAM

REGIONAL EVIDENCE FOR MIGRATION ANALYSIS AND POLICY (REMAP)  
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM)  
DISPLACEMENT TRACKING MATRIX (DTM)



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# DEFINITIONS

**Returnee:** The term “returnee” in this document refers to former Bangladeshi migrants who returned to their point of departure within Bangladesh during the survey period. This could be within the territorial boundaries of Bangladesh or between a country of destination or transit and Bangladesh.

# ACRONYMS

**BDT:** Bangladeshi Taka

**BMET:** Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training

**DTM:** Displacement Tracking Matrix

**IOM:** International Organization for Migration

**MFI:** Microfinance institution

**NGO:** Non-governmental organization

**NPM:** Needs and Population Monitoring

**REMAP:** Regional Evidence for Migration Analysis and Policy

**USD:** United States Dollar

## Statistical Notes:

1. When the label “Multiple answers possible” appears above a graph, it means that a single respondent was allowed to provide more than one answer. For this reason, totals do not add up to 100 per cent.
2. Statistics representing less than 10 people will be marked with an asterisk. Percentages of zero are automatically assumed to represent less than 10 people since the total sample size in this report is less than 1000.

## DISCLAIMER

This report is part of the outputs under the European Union funded project “Regional Evidence for Migration Analysis and Policy (REMAP)”. The objective of DTM REMAP is to strengthen the evidence-based formulation and implementation of humanitarian and development policy and programming on migration and forced displacement in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, People’s Republic of Bangladesh, Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Iraq and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan through the use of the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM). The findings, interpretations and conclusions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of IOM, its Member States, the European Union or other donors. The designations employed and the presentation of material throughout the work do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of IOM concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning its frontiers or boundaries.

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## BACKGROUND

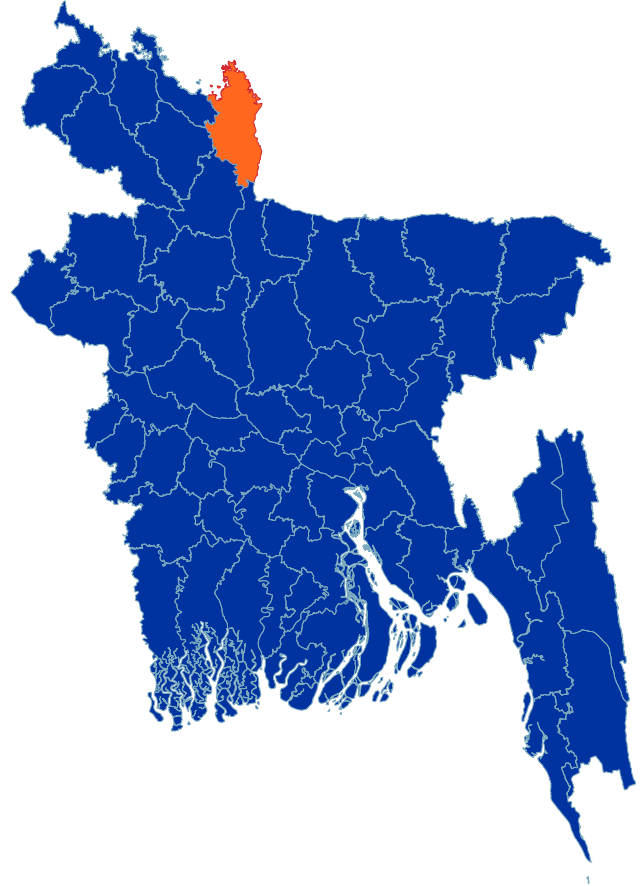
As the COVID-19 pandemic emerged globally, migrant workers, both internationally and within Bangladesh, found themselves facing a new set of challenges and vulnerabilities. With limited access to income-generating activities, social services, healthcare systems, and social support networks, many have opted to return home. During May and June 2020, IOM, supported by the European Union under the regional program REMAP, along with the NPM team based in Cox's Bazar, completed data collection on the needs and vulnerabilities of international and internal Bangladeshi migrant returnees. A rapid assessment report on all surveyed migrants was developed shortly afterwards, focusing on the demographic and socio-economic profile of returnees, their livelihoods and employment, their migration and return experiences and practices, and their economic and social challenges and aspirations.

Following the country-level rapid assessment, data was analysed on the district level in order to gauge potential geographical distinctions and provide greater nuance and detail to the focus themes. This district-level report summarizes the findings in Kurigram.

Snowball sampling was used from a returnee list provided by the Government of Bangladesh in order to determine a sample population for this study. Due to mobility restrictions, data collection was phone-based. As a result of the sampling method, the survey is non-probabilistic, meaning that the sample is not necessarily representative of the returnee population of Bangladesh. Additionally, the number of female respondents was low, so the report does not necessarily represent the needs and vulnerabilities of female returnees.

The survey results highlight various socio-economic vulnerabilities and challenges. However, the severe lack of employment emerged as the most important challenge as a large majority of respondents (81%) were unemployed during the assessment period. Moreover, since the internal returnee respondents lost their job after they returned to their home district, many families have lost remittances as a source of income. Finally, a large proportion of respondents (94%) reported that they want to re-migrate after COVID-19 ends, often back to the same district from which they returned.

## KURIGRAM



## RESPONDENTS



TOTAL INTERNAL RETURNEES  
SURVEYED IN KURIGRAM

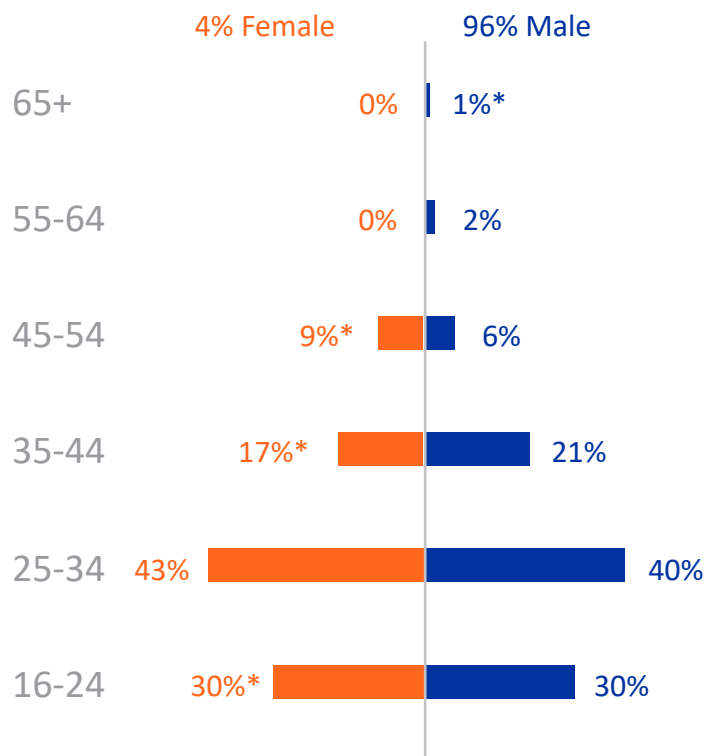
# INTERNAL RETURNEES





## DEMOGRAPHICS OF INTERNAL RETURNEES

### POPULATION PYRAMID



Average household size including respondent ..... **5.3**



Average number of household members living abroad ..... **1**



Respondents who are married ..... **72%**



Respondents who have children ..... **62%**

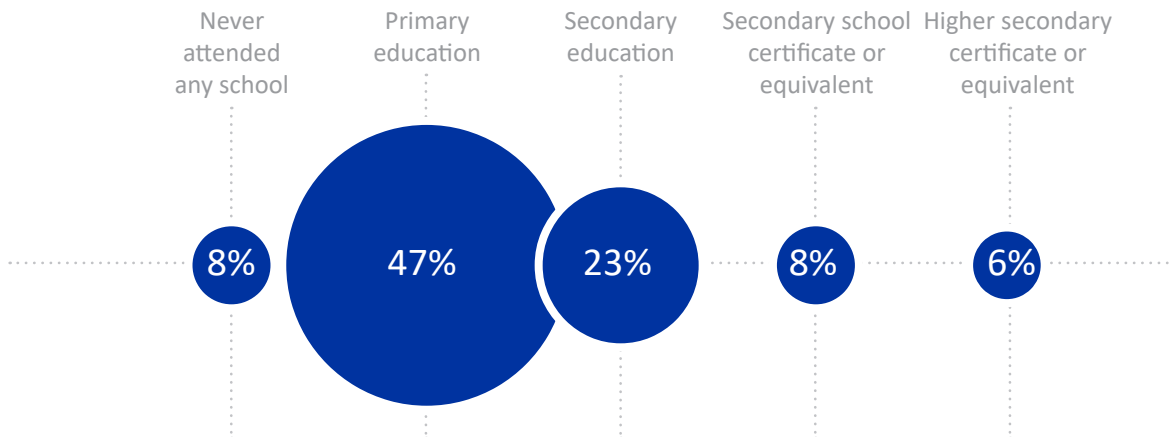


Respondents who had some form of formal education ..... **89%**



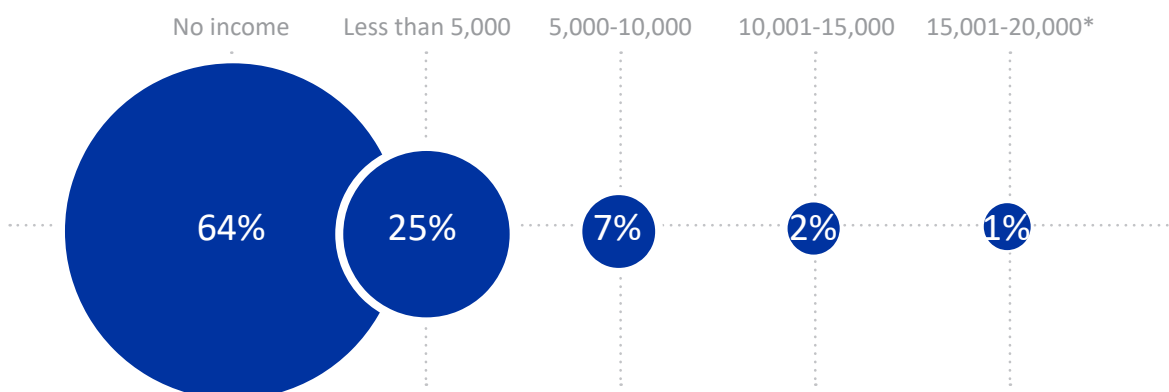
Respondents who did not have formal education but can read/write ..... **2%**

### EDUCATION LEVEL (top 5 answers)



The majority of respondents in the internal returnee sample population were male in between 16 and 34 years old. Seventy-two per cent of respondents reported being married at the time of the interview, and of respondents who were married or had been married, 62 per cent had children.

### CURRENT TOTAL AVERAGE MONTHLY HOUSEHOLD INCOME IN BDT

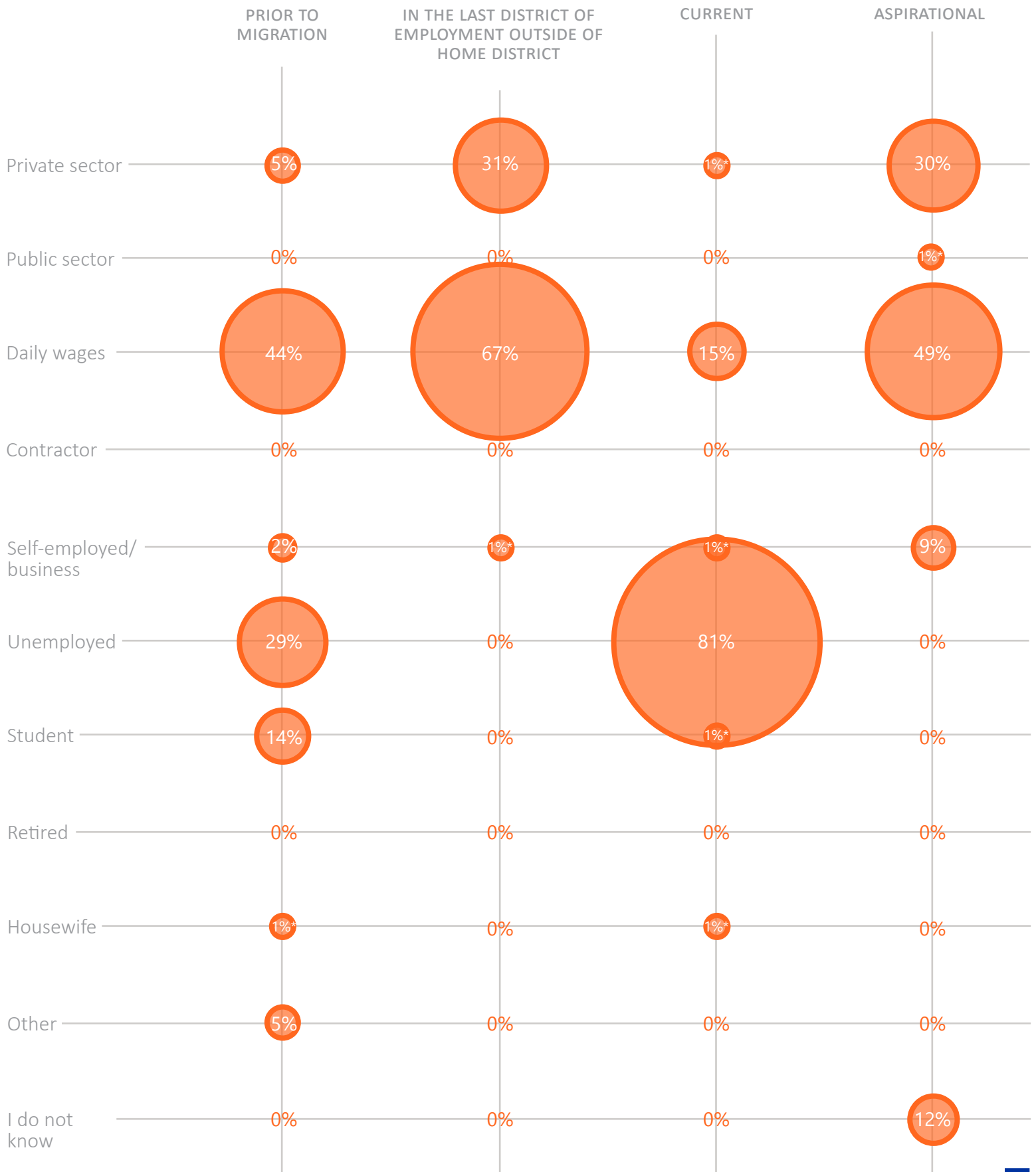


Eighty-nine per cent of respondents had completed some form of formal education. Of those, the most common level of completion was primary education (47%), followed by secondary education (23%). Sixty-four per cent of internal returnees reported no monthly household income at the time of the interview.



## EMPLOYMENT OF INTERNAL RETURNEES

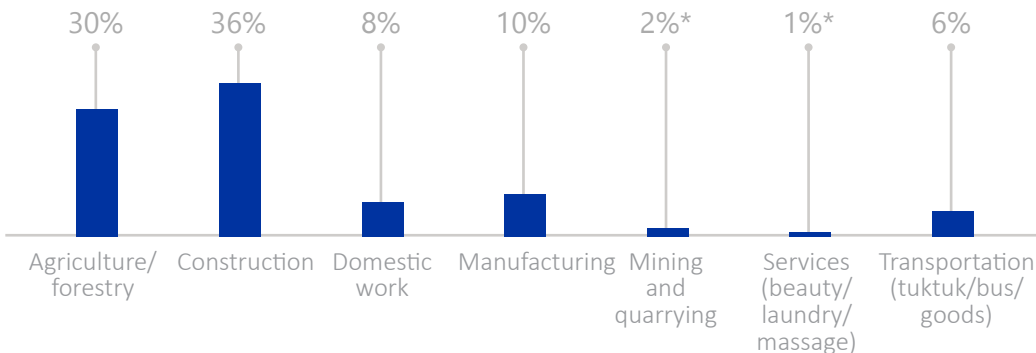
### EMPLOYMENT STATUS (multiple answers possible)



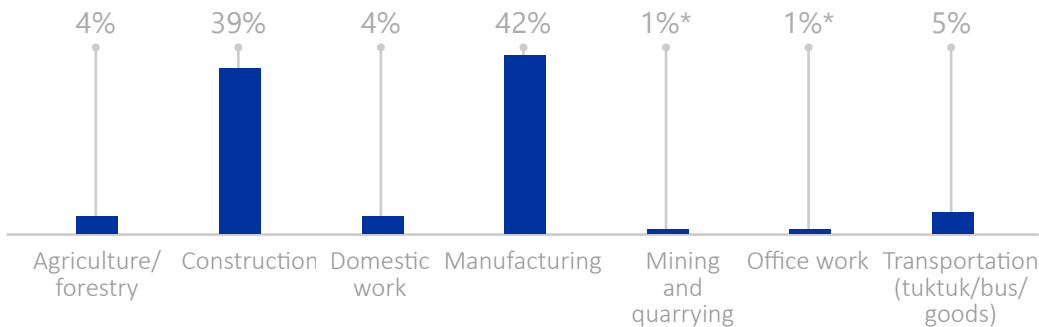


## OCCUPATIONAL SECTOR (top 7 answers)

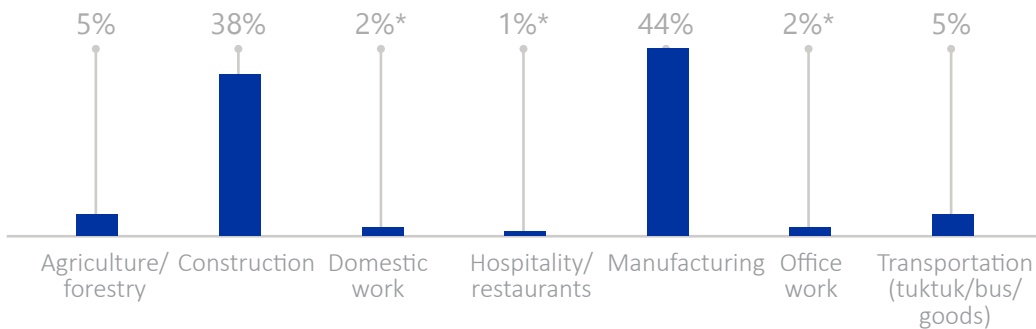
### PRIOR TO MIGRATION



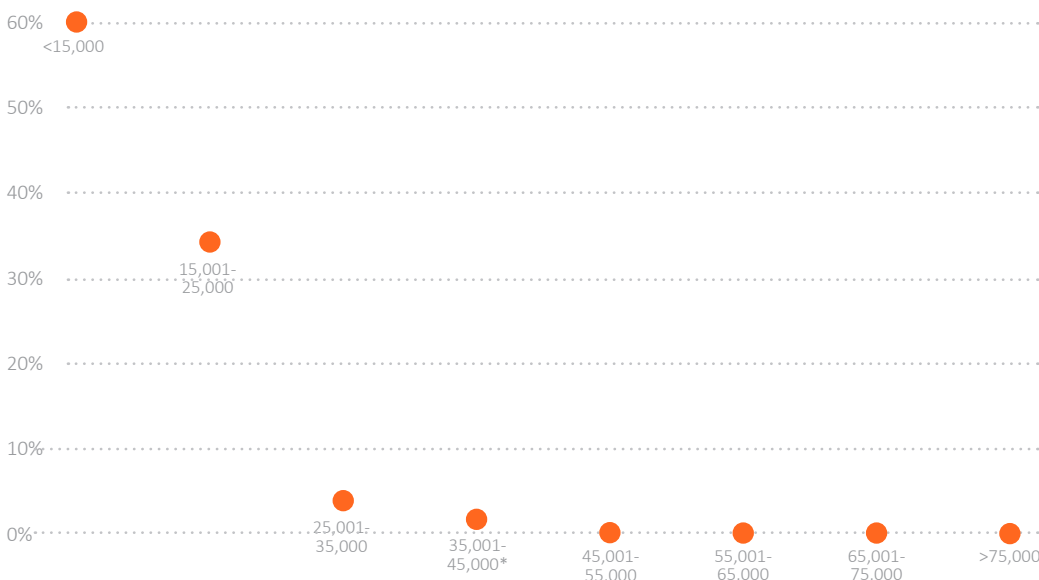
### IN THE LAST DISTRICT OF EMPLOYMENT OUTSIDE OF HOME DISTRICT



### ASPIRATIONAL



## MONTHLY INCOME IN LAST DISTRICT OF EMPLOYMENT (BDT)



\*Exchange rates are 84.8 BDT to 1 USD, according to the [UN Operational Rates of Exchange](#) between 1 August to 1 September 2020.

The primary form of employment for internal returnee respondents, both prior to migration and while working in the last district of employment, was daily wages (44% and 67%). Meanwhile, participation in the private sector of employment increased from prior to migration (5%) to working in the last district of employment (31%). During the assessment period, 81 per cent of respondents were unemployed, while 15 per cent worked for daily wages. Nearly half of all internal returnee respondents aspired to work for daily wages in the future (49%), while 30 per cent planned to work in the private sector and 9 per cent planned to be self-employed.

Occupational sectors also shifted throughout internal returnee respondents' migration journey, with manufacturing becoming more significant in the last district of employment (42%) as opposed to prior to migration (10%). Manufacturing was also one of the most common aspirational occupations for respondents (44%). On the other hand, work in construction stayed consistent prior to migration (36%), in the last district of employment (39%) and aspirationally (38%). Agriculture and forestry were important sectors prior to migration (30%), but dropped significantly both in the last district of employment (4%) and aspirationally (5%).

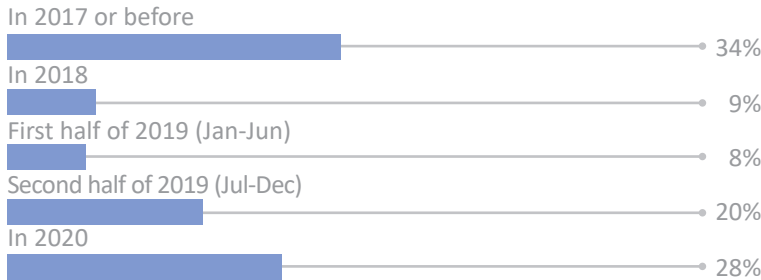
The majority of respondents earned less than BDT 15,000 (176.90 USD)\* per month in their last district of employment (60%). None of the respondents for internal returnees earned more than BDT 45,000 (530.66 USD)\* in their last district of employment.





## MIGRATION AND RETURN JOURNEY OF INTERNAL RETURNEES

### WHEN DID YOU LEAVE YOUR HOME DISTRICT?



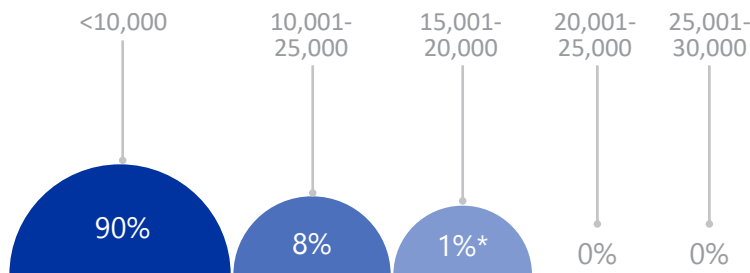
### FROM WHICH DISTRICT DID YOU RETURN?

(top 5 answers)

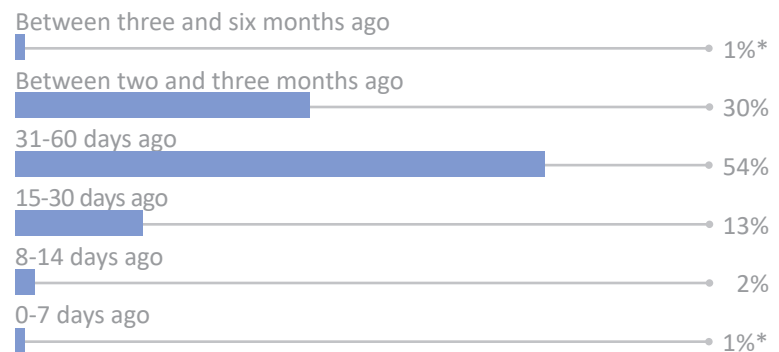


### REMITTANCES IN BDT

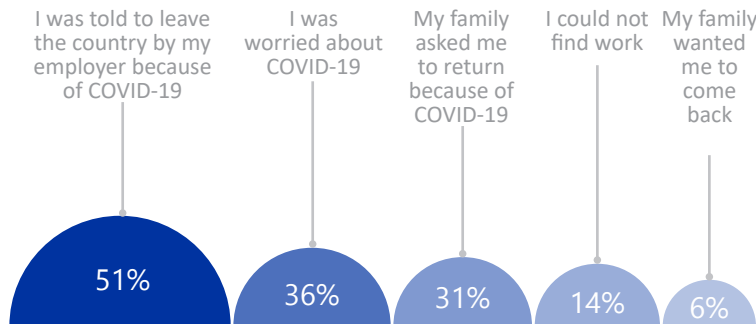
**95%** Of respondents sent money home every month



### WHEN DID YOU RETURN?



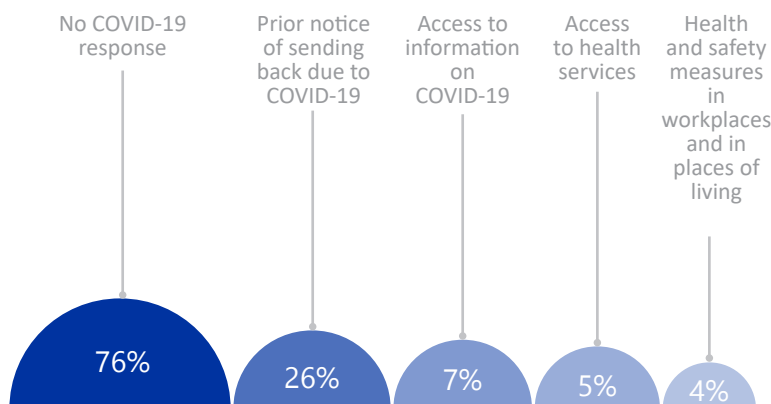
### WHY DID YOU RETURN? (top 5 answers, multiple answers possible)



**83%** Of respondents received their final wages before returning

Thirty-four per cent of respondents had left their home districts to migrate to another district in Bangladesh in 2017 or before. Another 28 per cent left their home district only in 2020. The most common district to migrate to was Dhaka (63%), followed by Gazipur (8%) and Narayanganj (5%).

### IF YOUR RETURN WAS DUE TO COVID-19, HOW WERE YOU TREATED IN THE DISTRICT FROM WHICH YOU RETURNED AFTER COVID-19 CAME INTO EFFECT? (top 5 answers, multiple answers possible)



Ninety-five per cent of the sample population sent remittances home, mostly less than BDT 10,000 (117.92 USD)\* (90%). Almost all respondents returned to their home districts between two weeks and three months ago (97%), citing decisions by their employer (51%), personal worries (36%) and family concerns (31%) related to COVID-19 as primary reasons for returning.

Seventy-six per cent reported no COVID-19 response in the district from which they returned. On the other hand, 26 per cent received prior notice of being sent back due to COVID-19 and 7 per cent reported that they had access to information on COVID-19 in the district from which they returned. Five per cent had access to health services while 4 per cent experienced health and safety measures in their workplace and living space. Seventeen per cent of respondents did not receive their final wages before returning to their home district.

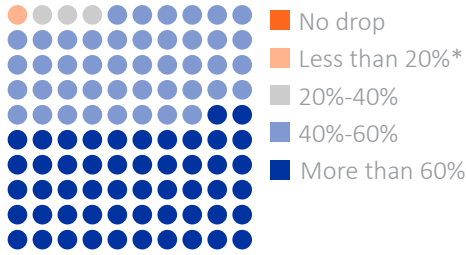
\*Exchange rates are 84.8 BDT to 1 USD, according to the [UN Operational Rates of Exchange](#) between 1 August to 1 September 2020.



## CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY INTERNAL RETURNEES

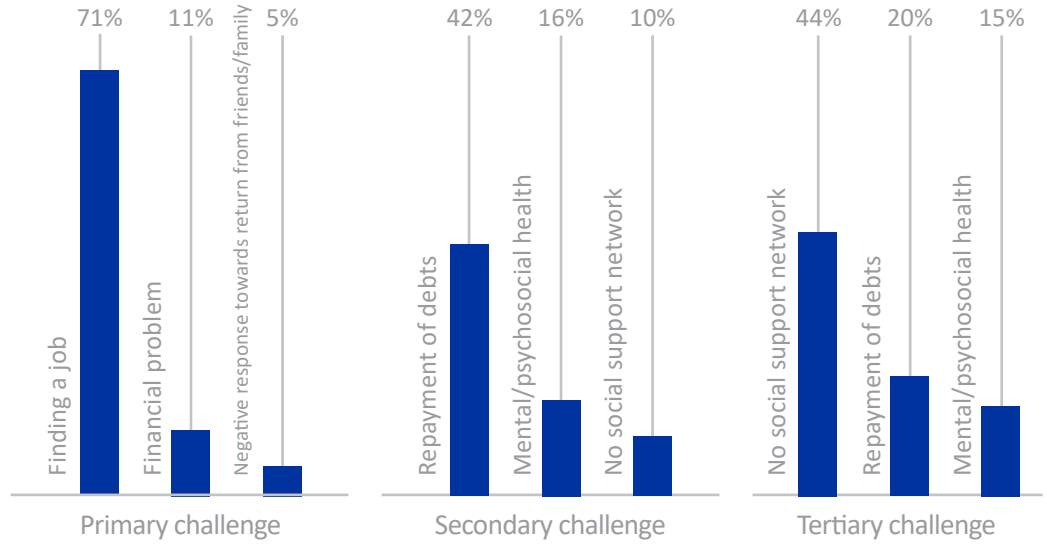
# 66%

Respondents experienced challenges upon returning to their community



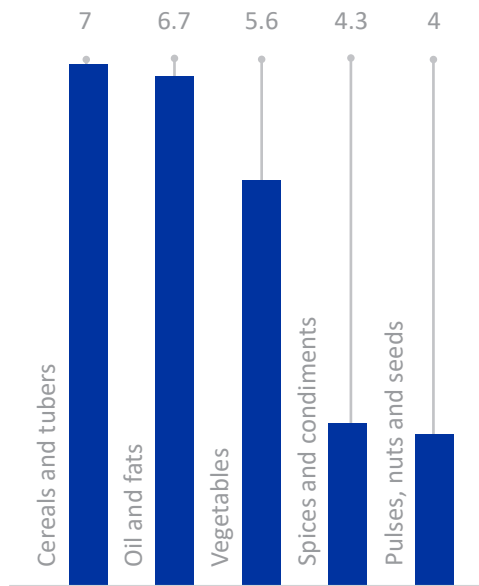
Drop in household income after return

### CHALLENGES (top 3 answers)

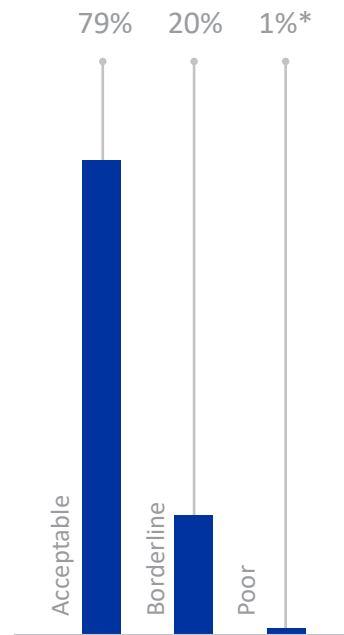


### FREQUENCY OF CONSUMPTION PER FOOD TYPE (top 5 answers)

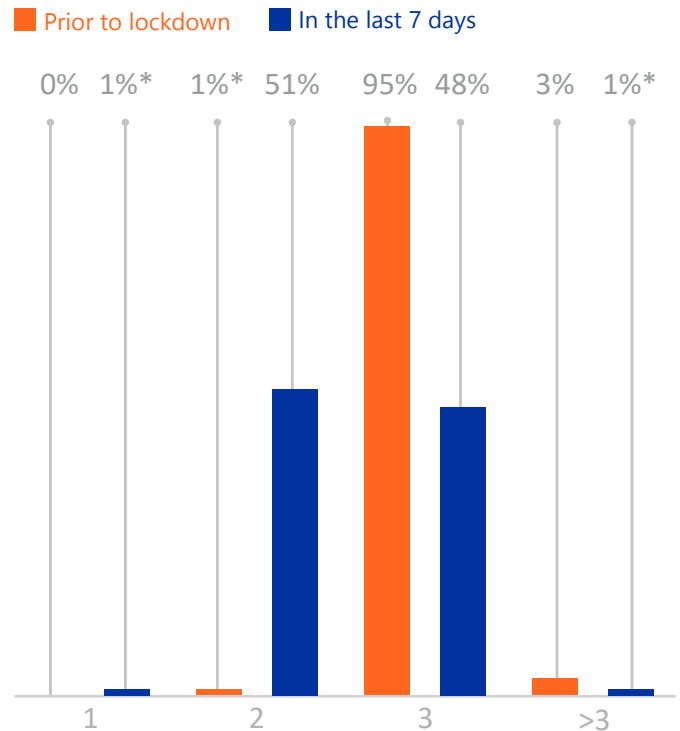
Over the past 7 days, on how many days did you and your household consume these types of food?



### FOOD CONSUMPTION SCORES



### AVERAGE NUMBER OF DAILY MEALS CONSUMED BY HOUSEHOLD\*



Sixty-six per cent of all respondents experienced challenges upon returning to their home district. Internal returnee respondents' main primary challenge was finding a job (71%) followed by financial problems (11%) and negative response towards return from family/friends. (5%). Debt repayment (42%) and mental/psychosocial health (16%) were significant secondary challenges, while the lack of a social support network (44%) was a primary tertiary challenge. This re-emphasizes the pervasiveness of the

social and economic impacts of return during COVID-19.

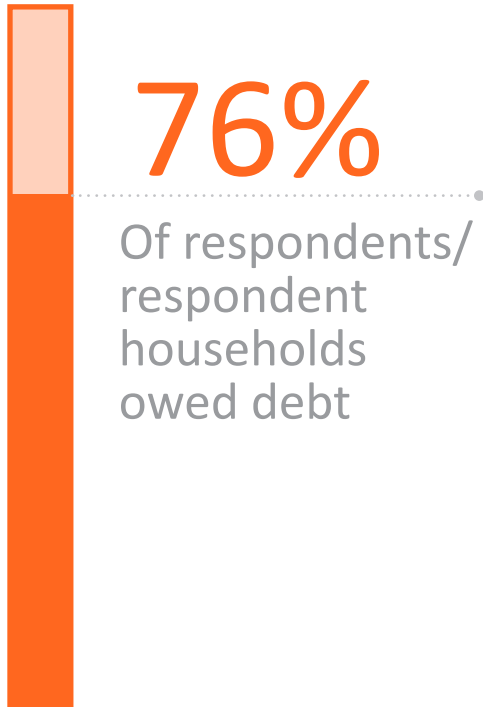
More than half of the internal returnee respondents (52%) experienced a drop in their household income of more than 60 per cent. A further 44 per cent experienced a drop between 40 and 60 per cent. Only one per cent of the respondents experienced a drop of less than 20 per cent.

\*19.9% of interviews with internal returnees were conducted during Ramadan, which could be a contributing factor to the decrease in meals.



## DEBT AMONG INTERNAL RETURNEES

### DO YOU OR YOUR HOUSEHOLD OWE DEBT?

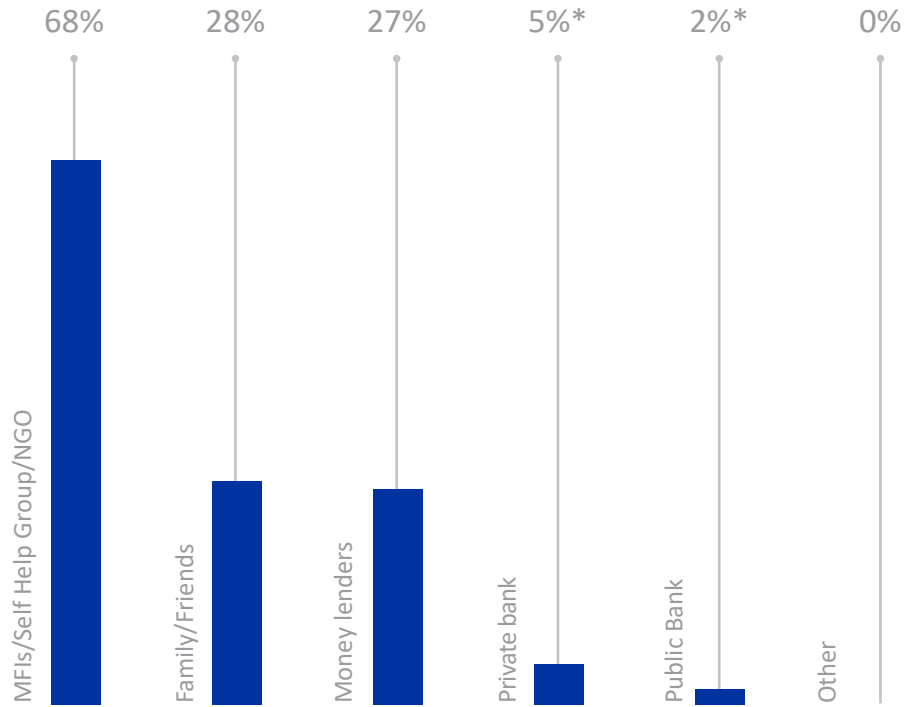


In total, 76 per cent of respondents or respondent households reported that they owed debt, a majority of which was owed to MFIs/Self help groups/NGOs (68%), family and friends (28%) and money lenders (27%).

Prior to returning, the majority of internal returnee respondents planned to repay their debts with the personal income they would earn through their job (90%). Another 11 per cent reported income/job earnings from family members as a debt repayment method. Only five per cent indicated that they did not know how to repay their debt.

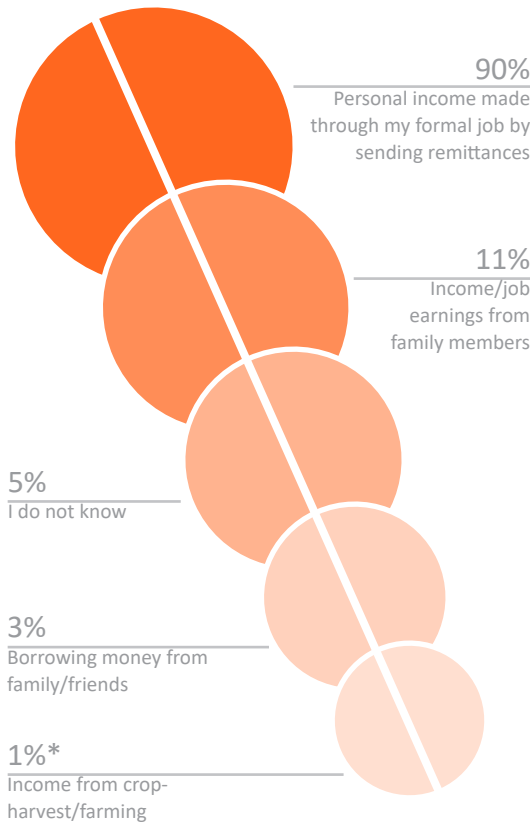
Alternatively, 59 per cent of respondents did not know how they would repay their debt after having returned to their home districts. Seventeen per cent planned to repay their debt with personal income they would earn through their job. This was followed by income/job earnings from family members (10%), borrowing from family/friends (8%) and income made through crop-harvest and farming (5%).

### TO WHOM DO YOU OWE YOUR DEBT?

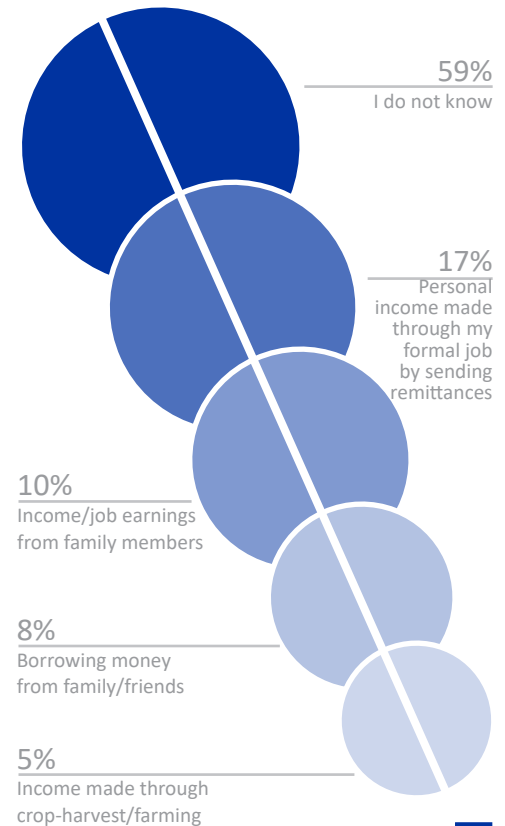


### DEBT REPAYMENT (top 5 answers, multiple answers possible)

#### Before your return, how did you plan to repay this debt?



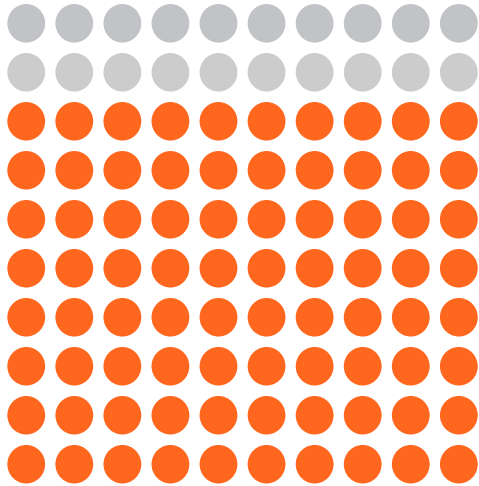
#### How do you plan to repay this debt now?





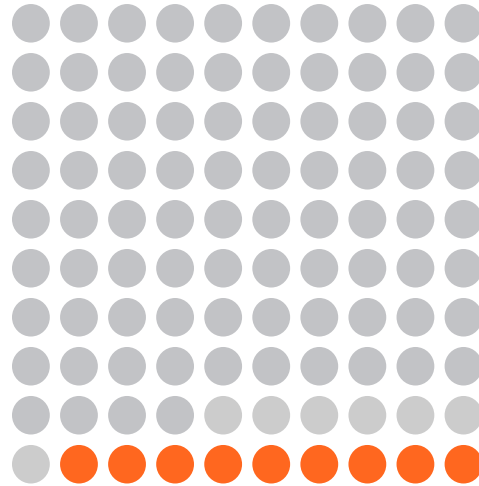
## FUTURE EMPLOYMENT ASPIRATIONS OF INTERNAL RETURNEES

### RESPONDENTS PLANNING TO BE EMPLOYED



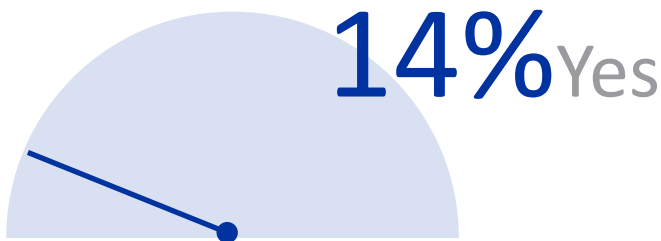
**80%** Of respondents were planning to be employed in the private sector, employed in the public sector, work for daily wages, or work as a contractor

### RESPONDENTS PLANNING TO BE SELF-EMPLOYED



**9%** Of respondents were planning to be self-employed or to start or own a business

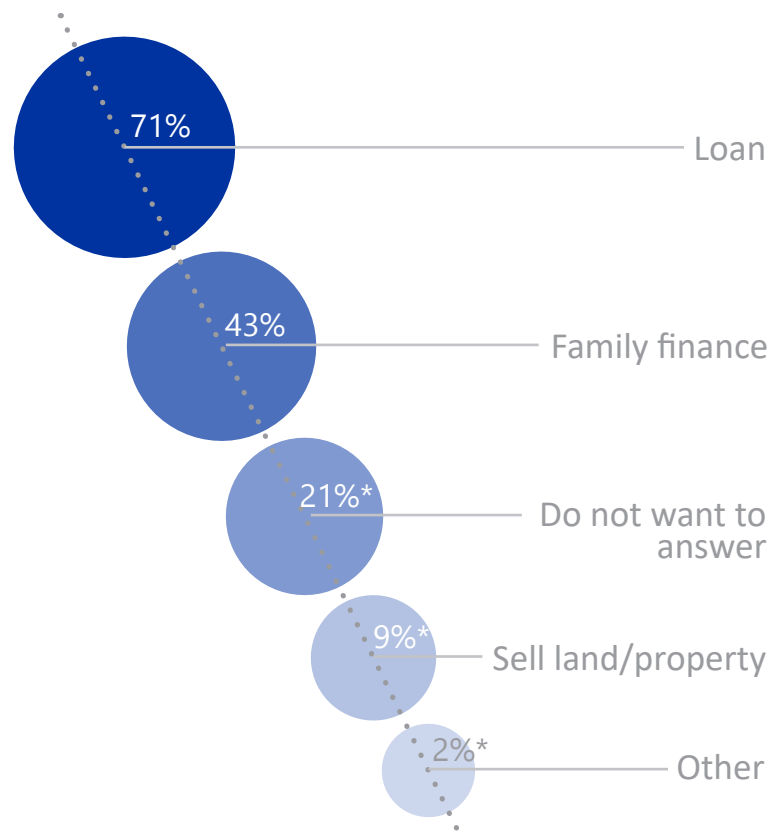
### IF YOU PLAN TO BE SELF-EMPLOYED, DO YOU HAVE THE SEED MONEY TO START YOUR BUSINESS?



Among internal returnee respondents, 80 per cent were planning to be employed in the future. This included those wanting to work in the private sector, in the public sector, for daily wages and as contractors. Alternatively, 9 per cent of respondents aspired to be self-employed in the future, either starting or running their own business.

Of the respondents who planned to be self-employed, 14 per cent had seed money to start their business. Those who did not, planned to arrange for seed money primary through loans (71%). Family finances were also an important method through which respondents planned to attain seed money (43%), followed by selling land or property (9%).

### IF YOU DO NOT HAVE SEED MONEY YET, HOW DO YOU PLAN TO ARRANGE FOR IT? (multiple answers possible)



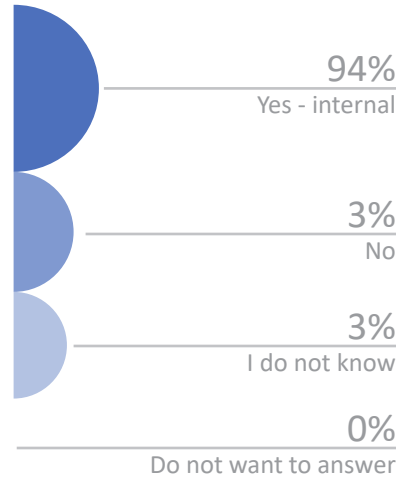


## FUTURE MIGRATION ASPIRATIONS OF INTERNAL RETURNEES

When asked whether they would want to re-migrate, 94 per cent of the sample population responded positively to internal migration. Among those who wanted to re-migrate, 89 per cent reported that they want to leave after COVID-19 ends.

A large proportion of internal returnee respondents indicated that they would like to re-migrate internally. The same proportion reported that they would choose to migrate to the same place they had left to return home (94%). Meanwhile, 58 per cent of respondents are interested in upgrading their skill set. Four per cent have already taken training to upgrade their skill set and of those, 33 per cent have a training certificate.

### DO YOU WANT TO RE-MIGRATE?



**4%**

Of respondents have taken training to upgrade their skill set

**33%\***

Of respondents who have taken training to upgrade their skill set have a training certificate

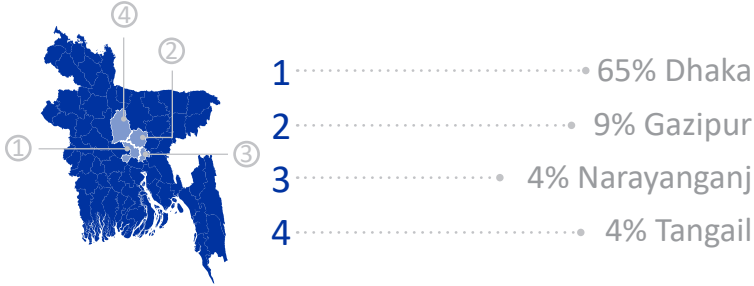
**58%**

Of respondents are interested in upgrading their skill set

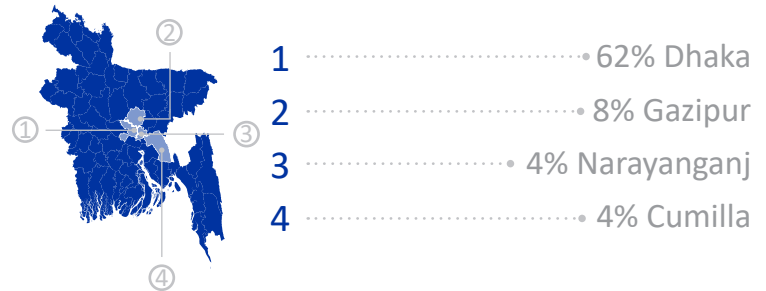
**94%**

Of respondents want to re-migrate to the same district

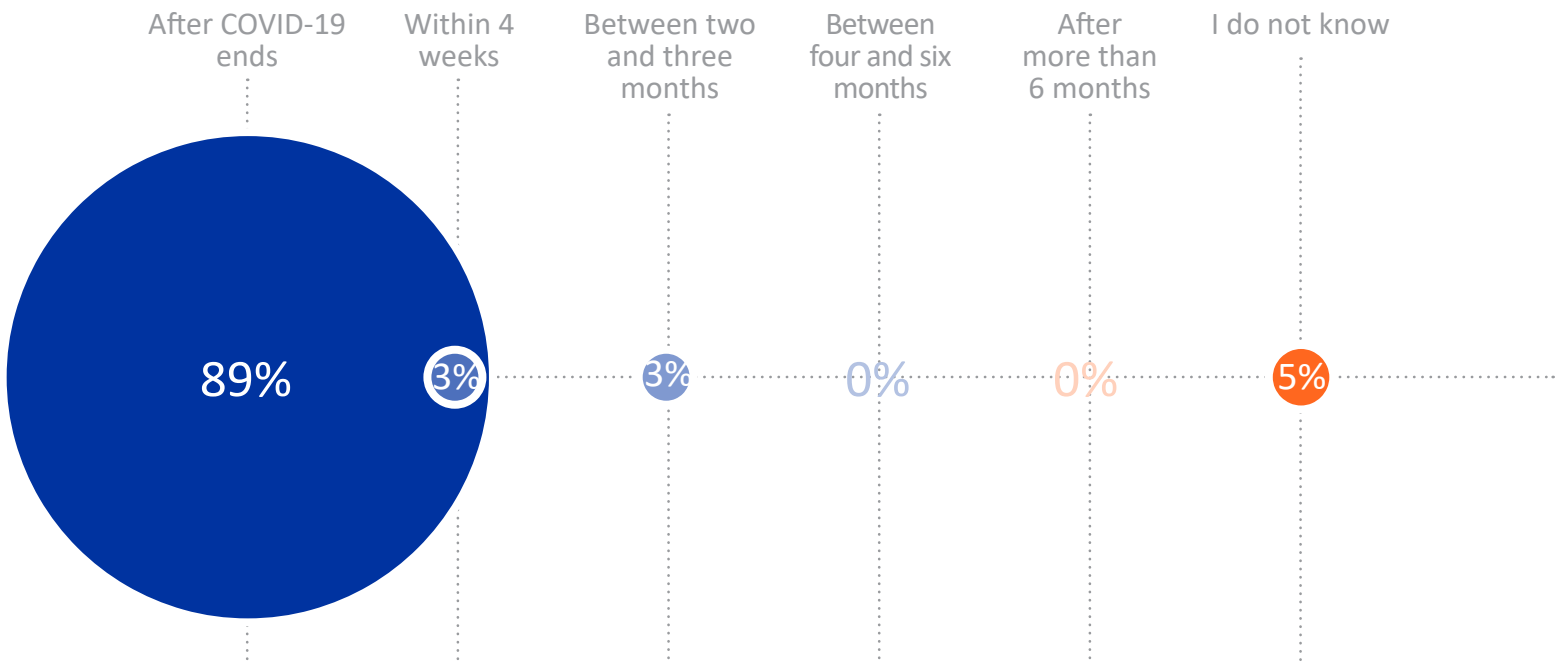
### IF YOU WANT TO RE-MIGRATE, WHERE (INTERNAL DESTINATIONS)? (top 4 answers)



### IF YOU WANT TO RE-MIGRATE TO THE SAME DISTRICT, WHICH ONE? (top 4 answers)



### IF YOU WANT TO RE-MIGRATE, WHEN?





**DTM**

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