

REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

SURVEYS WITH FOREIGN POPULATIONS IN CAHUL AND BALTI MUNICIPALITIES

Joint MGI-DTM Initiative



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Data collection: 06 February - 11 March 2023

SUMMARY REPORT

Executive Summary



661

Respondents



2

Municipalities

This is a summary report of the findings from surveys conducted with foreign populations in Balti and Cahul local municipalities of the Republic of Moldova as part of a joint investigation with the Migration Management Unit (MGU) on Migration Governance Indicators (MGIs). The Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) survey was aimed at complementing the MGI analysis and contributing to a better understanding of migration dynamics within the two selected municipalities in terms of service provision and service availability. The two municipalities were selected based on four main criteria as:

1. Geographical presence of refugees and TCNs, Strategic geographical position (e.g., on the main migration corridors, border crossing points, major urban areas).
2. Significance of migration and development workstreams and presence of diaspora involvement and return migration in local development.
3. Socio-economic indicators (e.g., workforce shortages, unemployment, foreign investments and companies).
4. Existing capacity of IOM, local authority and other partners (e.g. presence of Moldova General Inspectorate for Migration and Asylum one-stop-shops; possible synergies with UN partners' programming).

Whereas the Migration Governance process involved capturing and analysing the perspectives of local authorities in terms of their capacity to provide services, the DTM exercise captured the circumstances of affected migrants regarding sociodemographic characteristics, mobility, vulnerability, needs, and access to public services. among migrant populations namely Ukrainian refugees and Third-Country Nationals within Cahul and Balti municipalities in the Republic of Moldova.

Considering that this exercise was conducted in the context of the conflict in Ukraine, all of the respondents were either Ukrainian refugees or Third Country Nationals (TCNs). All indicators collected under the exercise are aligned with DTMs methodological Framework and data dictionary to ensure further cross-analysis and triangulation with other assessments conducted in the country and the region if it becomes necessary.

I. Socio-Demographic characteristics

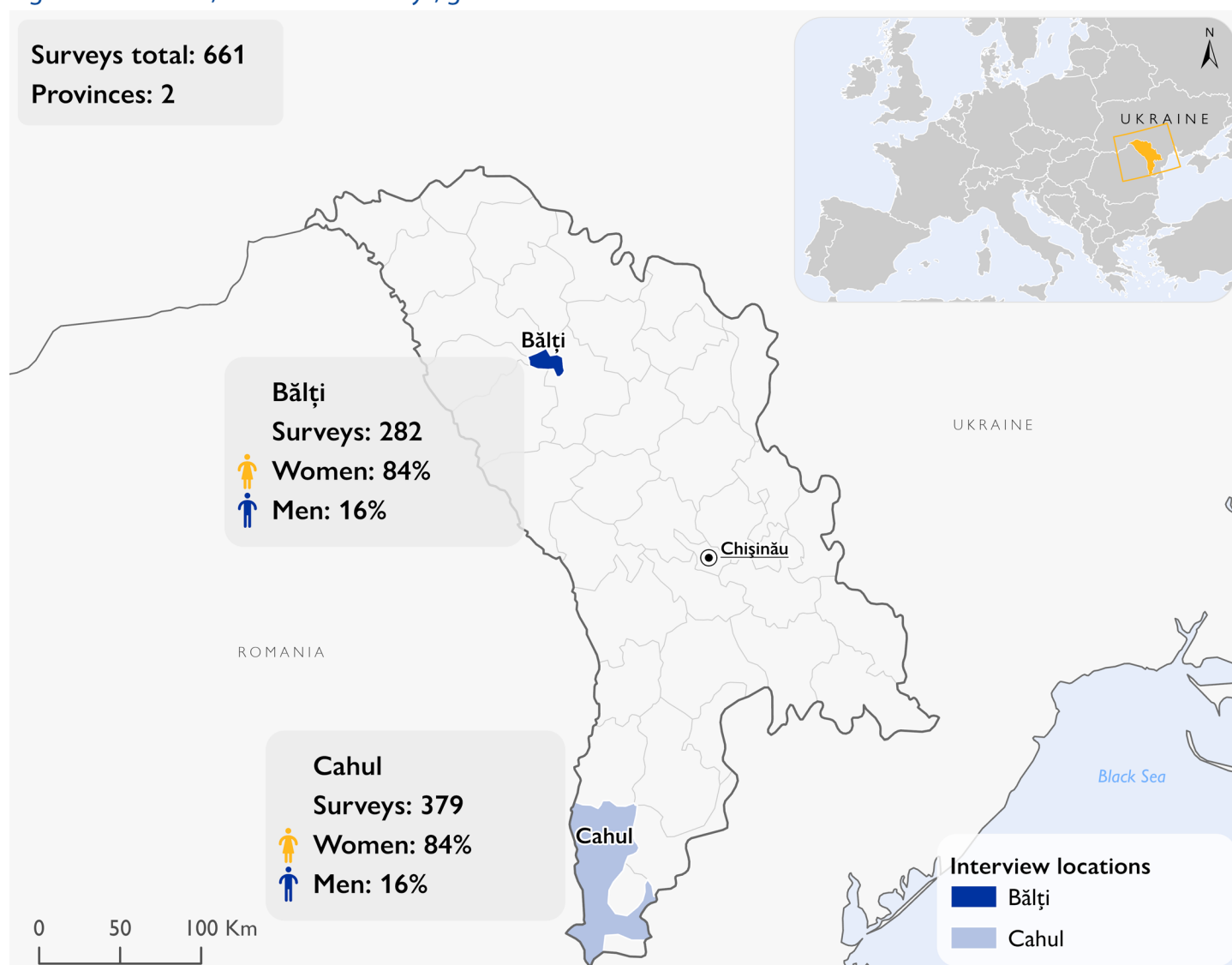
A total of 661 people took part in the survey, and all except 3 were Ukrainian citizens. 379 interviews were conducted in Cahul and 282 in Balti. The proportion of women (84%) and men (16%) was similar in both municipalities. The average age of women was lower (43 years) than that of men (49 years). Between the two municipalities, respondents were on average older in Balti (48 years) than in Cahul (41 years). Around 75 per cent reported living in the Republic of Moldova with family members. From all respondents living with families, 50% stayed with children aged 0-17 years and 20% stayed with older persons 60 years and over.



Data collection period:
6 February to 11 March 2023

- **99% respondents were Ukrainian. 3 individuals were (TCNs)**
- **Majority arrived after the start of the war in Ukraine (few before)**

Figure 1: Location, number of surveys, gender distribution



II. Mobility

The most common oblast for origin among respondents was Odeska (39%), followed by Mykolaivsk (15%) and Doneska (8%) although 38% of respondents originated from the rest of the oblasts in Ukraine. Majority of the respondents left Ukraine and arrived in the Republic of Moldova in 2022. Respondents were mostly living in groups (84%) while 16% lived alone. Proximity to Ukraine and a common spoken language were the main reasons why respondents came to the Republic of Moldova.

About 35% of respondents stayed in private accommodations, 22% in Refugee Accommodation Centres (RAC), and 10% lived in accommodations supported by NGOs or UN agencies. The proportion of respondents living in accommodations supported by NGOs and UN agencies was higher in Balti than in Cahul.

About 44 per cent reported that they or their family do not intend to apply for refugee status, 40 per cent reported that it depends on the future situation and only 5 per cent declared that they or their family will apply for refugee status. 4 per cent indicated that they already have refugee status.

Figure 2: Reasons for leaving Ukraine

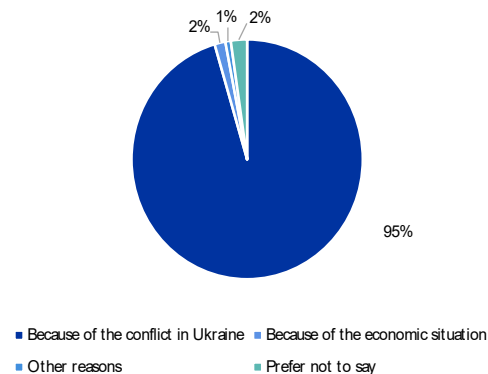


Figure 3: Intentions to apply for asylum

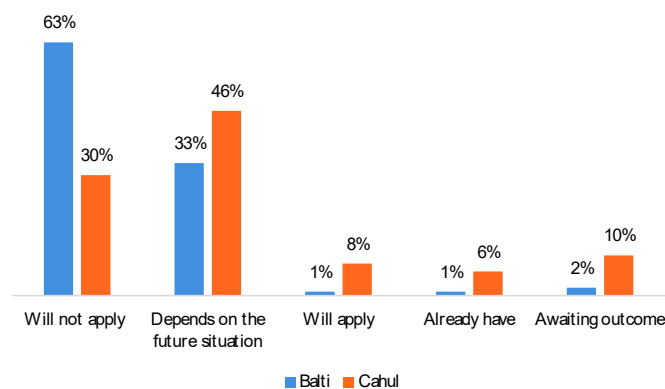
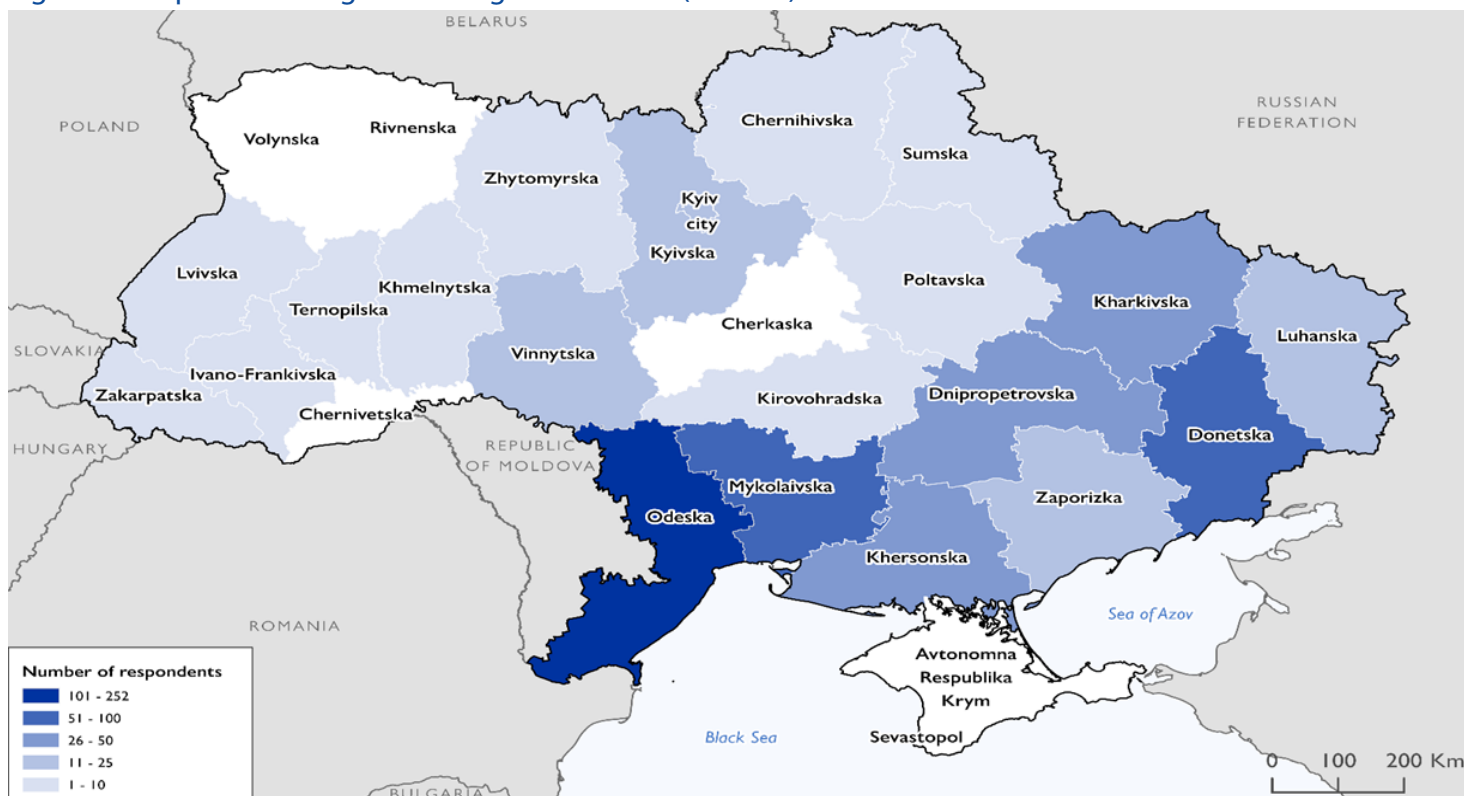


Figure 4: Respondents' regions of origin in Ukraine (Oblasts)



Almost 67 per cent of the respondents declared they intended to stay in the Republic of Moldova until they can return home and 29 per cent were uncertain about their duration of stay, about 2 per cent intended to stay more than one year and the remaining 2 per cent for less than one year .

One-third of respondents reported staying in private accommodation (35%), 22 per cent in RACs, 18 per cent with relatives (without paying), and 10 per cent in private accommodation, rented or paid by NGOs or UN agencies. The remaining 15 per cent reported other types of accommodation. The majority (94%) did not intend to leave their accommodation. The most common reason for leaving their accommodation were the intention to move to another country, to stay in a different type of accommodation in the same area, the impossibility to stay in their accommodation.



96% reported staying in Moldova until they can return to their home or didn't know



94% did not intend to leave their actual accommodation in the country



75% are living with family members

Figure 5: Accommodation

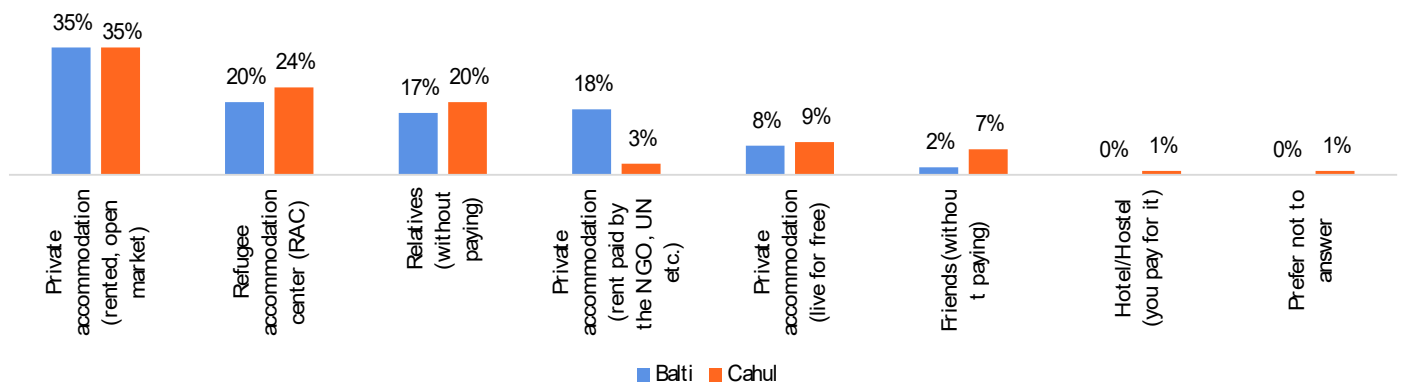


Figure 6: Distribution of respondents by travel mode and by municipality (%)

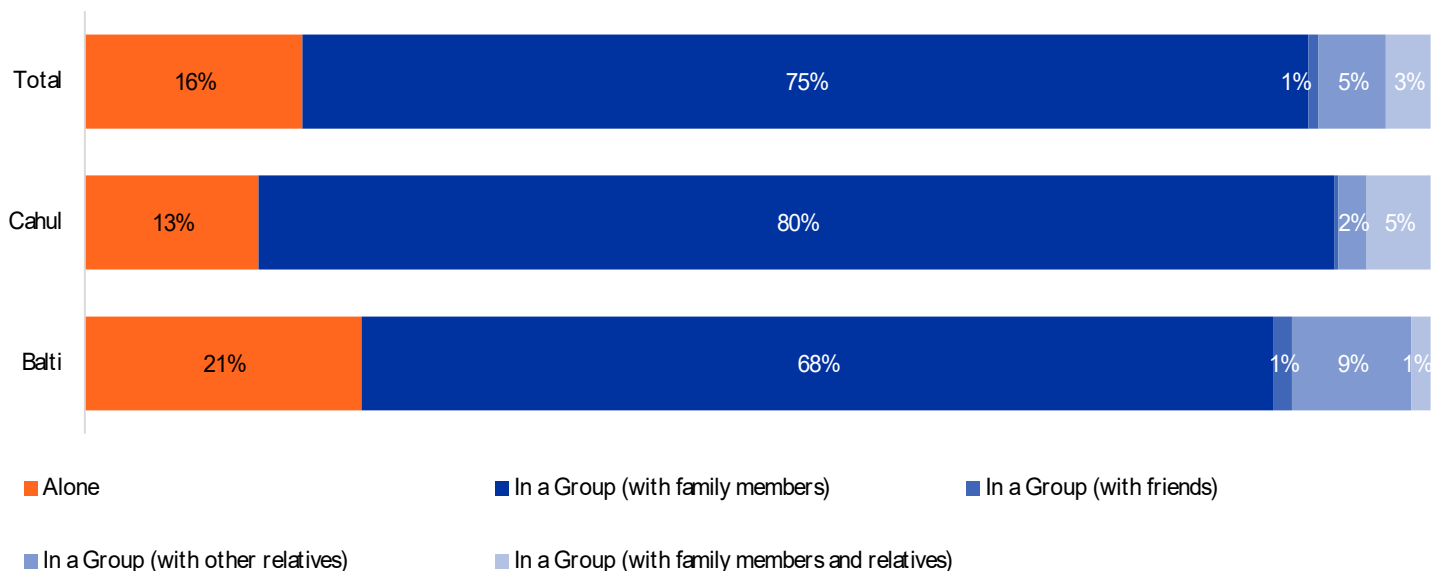
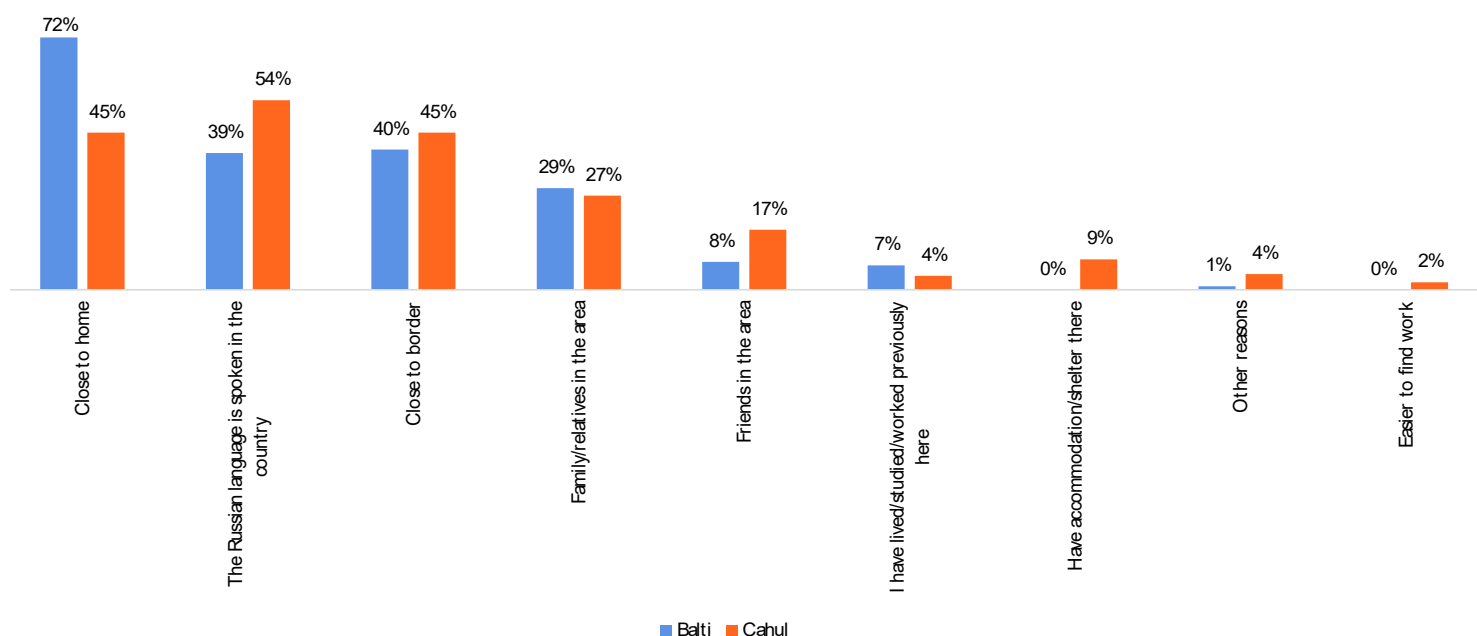


Figure 7: Reasons for coming to Moldova



Proximity to the place of origin, and the fact that the Russian language is spoken in Moldova are the main reasons cited why respondents chose to move to Moldova.

The average length of stay in the Republic of Moldova for respondents was 7 months.

III. Vulnerability

There were migrants considered more vulnerable than others based on their personal or family situation and among them were those with chronic diseases, pregnant and lactating women as well as those with functional difficulties and subsequent disability as defined in the Washington Group Questions¹. A total of 179 cases of disability among respondents' households were identified, 48% of which concerned older people 60 years and above while 16% concerned children between the ages 5-17 years old.

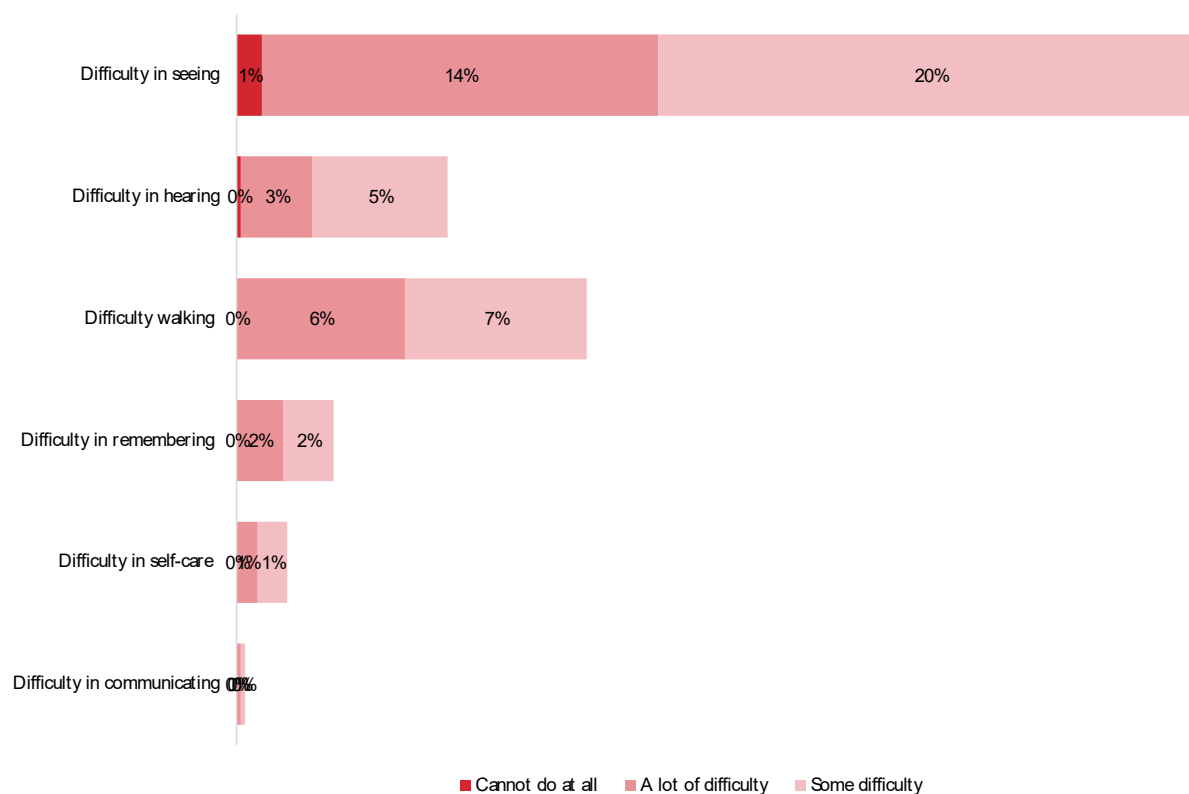
The prevalence of children with disabilities (16%) is very high compared to the overall prevalence of children with disabilities in the Republic of Moldova (6%), in Ukraine (6%) or even worldwide (10%).

About 43% of respondents had family members with at least one functional difficulty and 20% had at least one family member with a disability. There are more households with members having some functional difficulty in Balti than in Cahul. Among all respondents, 12% had a family member with a disability and a chronic disease while 8% had at least one family member with a chronic illness but no functional difficulty.

Out of 661 respondents, over one-third declared to have at least one family member with seeing difficulty (35%), 8 per cent with hearing difficulty, 4% had one member of their household with difficulty remembering or concentrating and 2 per cent with difficulty in self-care.

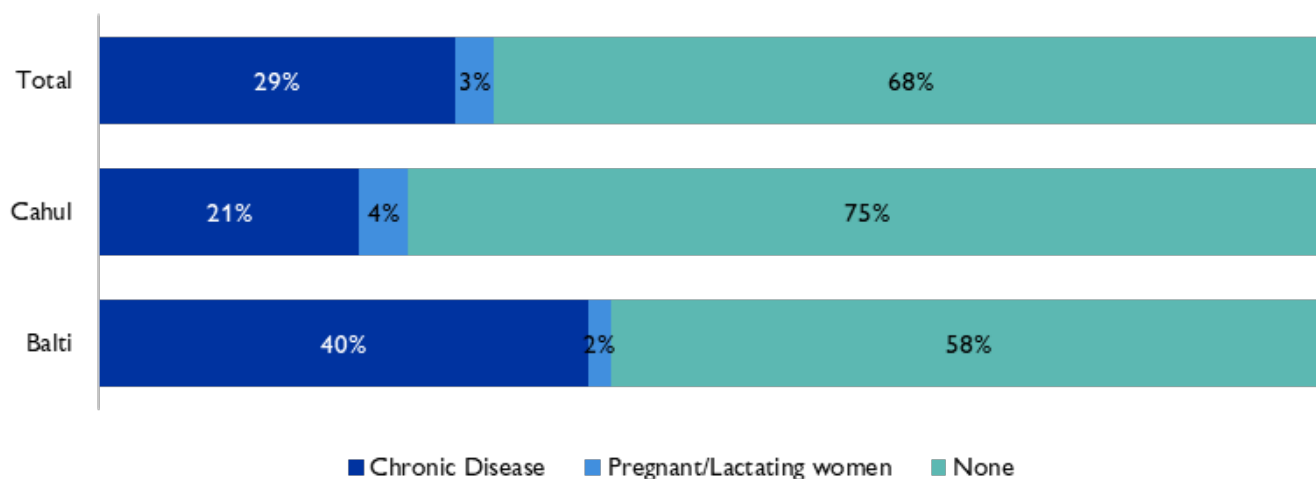
¹ Washington Group Questions are a measure of disability based on 6 human functioning domains.

Figure 8: Households having at least one member with functional difficulties (number and prevalence)



About 29 per cent of the respondents (193 out of 661) indicated that they have a chronic disease and 21 respondents (3%) stated that they have a pregnant or lactating woman in their household. Proportionally, there were more households with pregnant and lactating women in Cahul than in Balti while there were more people with chronic illnesses in Cahul than in Balti.

Figure 9: Chronic diseases and pregnant/Lactating women

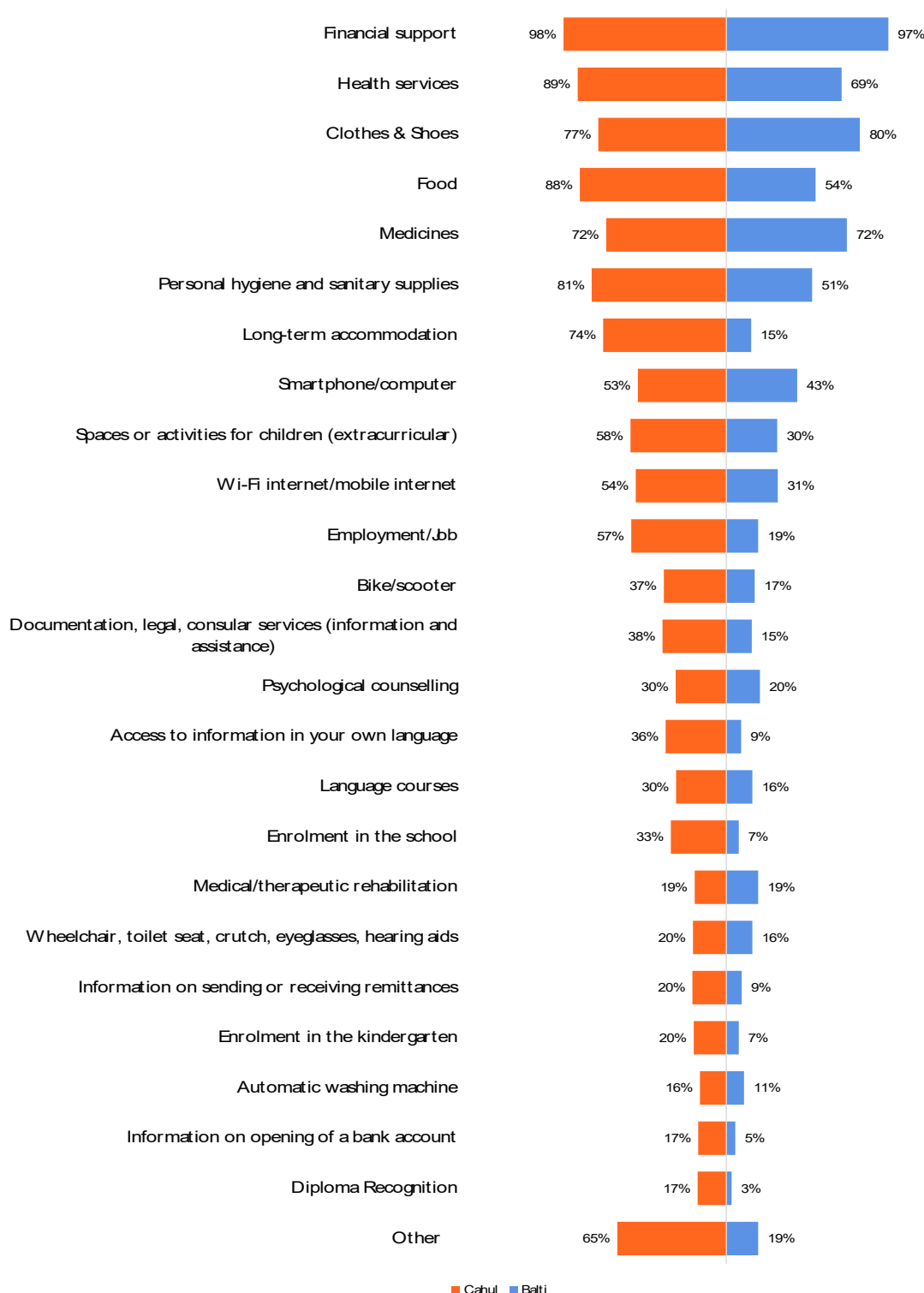


IV. IMMEDIATE NEEDS

The top ten reported needs among all respondents were financial support (97%), health services (81%), clothes and shoes (78%), food (73%), medicines (72%), personal hygiene items (68%), long-term accommodation (49%), smartphone or computer (49%), spaces or activities for children (46%), wi-fi/mobile internet (44%). Of significance was the fact that households with pregnant and lactating women had the highest number of needs followed by households with members with a chronic disease.

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Figure 10: Main needs in Balti and Cahul municipalities (% , multiple options)

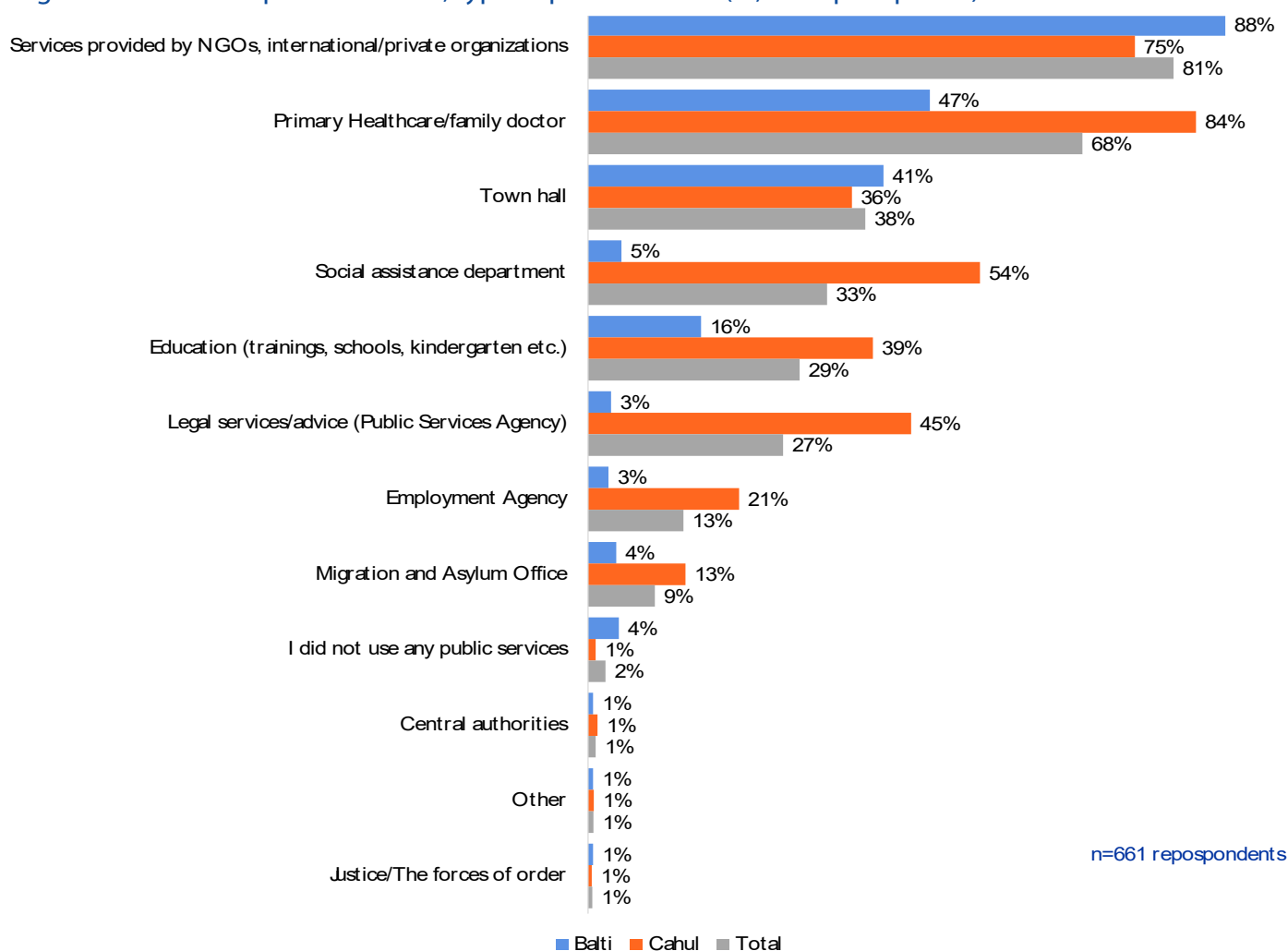


V. ACCESS TO PUBLIC SERVICES

All respondents reported that they or their family members accessed at least one public service since they are in the Republic of Moldova. About 81 per cent of respondents reported that they or members of their family have accessed services provided by non-governmental, international or private organizations (third party), 68 per cent of respondents visited a

family doctor or primary healthcare facilities, 38 per cent sought support from local Town Halls, 33 per cent accessed services provided by the social assistance department, 29 per cent accessed education, 27 per cent sought legal services or advice at Public Service Agency, 13 per cent visited an employment agency, 9 per cent contacted the Migration and Asylum Office.

Figure 11: Access to public services, type of public service (% , multiple options)



Out of the 661 respondents, 95 % reported having no difficulty or challenge in accessing public services in both municipalities although the level of satisfaction with such services was much higher in Balti. The highest level of dissatisfaction with service provision regarded the services of primary health care in Balti and those of employment agencies in Cahul. Other difficulties highlighted included accessing the services of town halls, education and those provided by NGOs and international organizations

as well as services available from the social service departments. Respondents indicate different levels of satisfaction with the services they receive in the two municipalities as well as with the service providers. While respondents indicate a level of general satisfaction with service provision in Balti, they are noticeably indifferent with most of the service provision in Cahul.

Figure 12: Satisfaction with quality of services provided in Balti (more than one service per respondent)

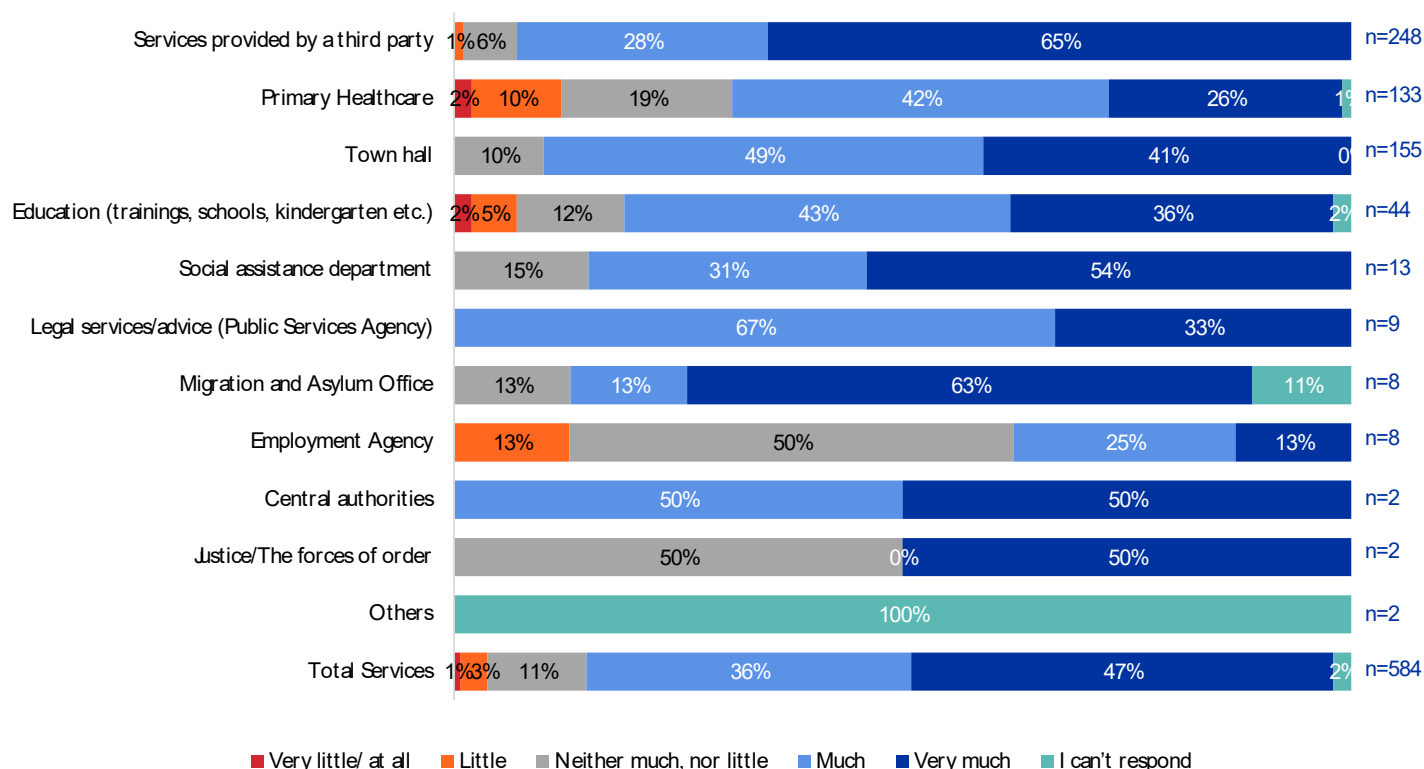
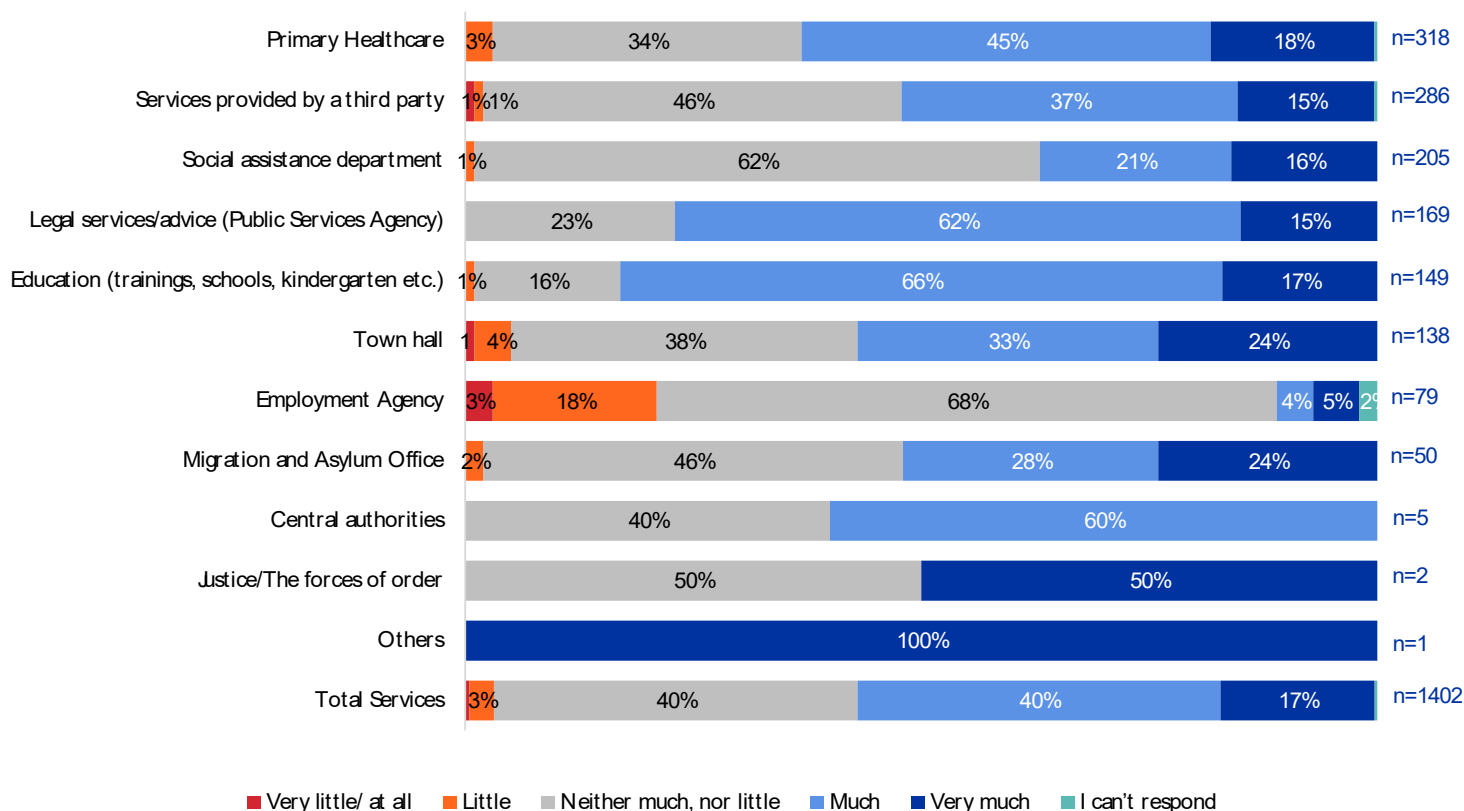


Figure 13: Satisfaction with quality of services provided in Cahul (more than one service per respondent)



Half of 661 respondents reported having children (331 people), of whom 218 in Cahul (58% of respondents) and 113 in Balti (40% of respondents). About 59 per cent of those who reported having children reported that their children attend online classes offered by a school in Ukraine, 40 per cent reported that their children go to a local school in Ukrainian or Russian language. The impact and consequences of online schooling for households has to be assessed.



47% have higher education



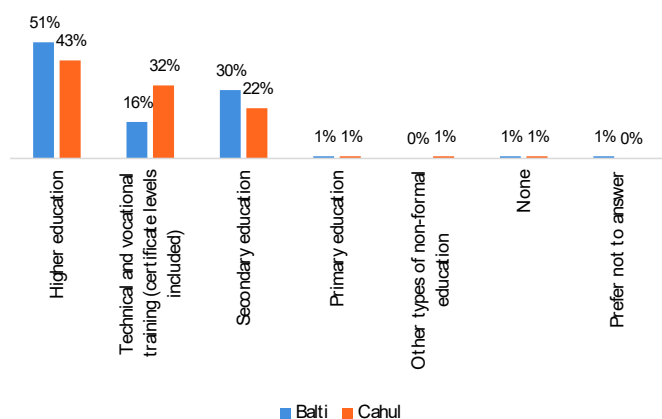
59% reported that their children attend online classes offered by a school in Ukraine

VI. EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Migrants indicate that most of them have attained higher education or some technical or vocational training. This is also reflected in the observation that many of them were employed in specific professions before they left Ukraine which has traditionally produced a very high number of graduates per

A comparative analysis between the previous and current employment status of respondents shows that only a small share of those who were employed or self-employed in their country found a job in the Republic of Moldova (9 per cent reported being employed and 1 per cent self-employed).

Figure 14: Respondents' level of education



About 29 per cent reported being unemployed and looking for a job and 16 per cent reported being unemployed and not looking for a job. Almost 11 per cent reported being on maternity leave and 11 per cent reported being retired, one per cent declared being a student and 15 per cent preferred not to answer to this question.

The shares of those who reported being unemployed and looking for a job were higher in Cahul, so were the shares of those who were informally employed (38% versus 16% and 12% versus 2%).

population even when compared with the most developed countries in Europe. With a literacy rate of over 99%, it is not surprising from the data collected that only very few of the respondents have no formal education or lower levels of educational achievement.



19% of those previously employed in their country of origin found a job in Moldova

Half of all respondents reported that they were employed in their country before arriving in the Republic of Moldova (49%), and five per cent self-employed, 15 per cent were on a maternity leave, one per cent retired and one per cent were students. Only four per cent were unemployed and looking for a job, five per cent were unemployed and not looking for a job, and eight per cent preferred not to answer.



8% are informally employed in Moldova

About 73 per cent of respondents reported having a valid bank account and credit card in their last country of residence and 27 per cent did not. Only 21 per cent declared that they or their family members have a valid bank account in the Republic of Moldova. About 42 per cent declared not needing it because they were using their Ukrainian credit cards or are paying cash, 12 per cent reported that they applied for a bank account but were rejected, 10 per cent declared to be waiting for a bank account confirmation letter, 7 per cent mentioned that they or their family did not apply for a bank account but intended to do so the future.

VII. PROTECTION

Around 4 per cent of respondents reported that they or their family members received offers of doing informal work (i.e., without contract, unregistered business, etc.) mostly in hospitality sector, domestic work or other services.

One woman in Cahul and another in Balti, reported that they or members of their family had been contacted by previously unknown people (in person or online) with offers of uncomfortable or disturbing activities which could involve transactional sex online or offline and the sale of blood/body organs

VIII. CONCLUSION

Although the whole survey was conducted to complement the MGI survey which in principle looks at broader migration governance issues, respondents were exclusively those that had left Ukraine because of the war. Participants were selected from areas where IOM is already conducting other activities. Intentions and needs may therefore be biased by the fact that respondents may already be aware of provisions from IOM, other UN organizations and NGOs, therefore, responding out of expectation.

The share of those who declared applying for a bank account but were rejected was higher in Balti than in Cahul (27% versus 1%).

Only 2 per cent tried or planned to open their own enterprise in the Republic of Moldova.



21% have a valid bank account in Moldova



27% were rejected of having a bank account in Balti

etc. Thirty-one respondents declared that they or members of their family experienced unfair or unequal treatment based on nationality, ethnicity, gender, or their current status since they arrived in the Republic of Moldova (of whom 15 in Balti and 16 in Cahul).

Out of 31 people who reported experiencing an unfair treatment, 20 declared that it was from local communities, 9 from service providers and 5 from Moldovan authorities. Only one submitted a complaint to local authorities.

VIII. SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The findings presented in this report draw on a survey of sociodemographic characteristics, mobility, vulnerability, needs, and access to public services among migrant populations namely Ukrainian refugees and Third-Country Nationals within Cahul and Balti municipalities in the Republic of Moldova.

The DTM survey aims to complement the Migration Governance Indicators (MGI) analysis and contribute to a better understanding of migration within the two regions, strengthen the capacities of local authorities, promote sustainable interventions, and improve the well-being of migrants and host communities.

The survey was conducted by nine trained enumerators using a Kobo toolbox. Only adults (18+) were interviewed using the random sampling method or a snowball approach and those interviewed in the survey were only Ukrainian refugees or TCNs who arrived or settled in Cahul and Balti municipalities after 24 February 2022 when the conflict in Ukraine started although there were a few respondents who settled before then. Enumerators conducted interviews at public administration buildings (town halls, polyclinics, schools, kindergarten, etc.), bus or train stations, refugee accommodation centres, NGOs and other locations. Local authorities were very helpful in identifying and reaching targeted immigrants.

The questionnaire consisted of 6 parts as follows:

Section 1 - Survey location, enumerator details and respondent's consent to participate in the survey.

Section 2 - Demographic and social profile of the respondents (citizenship, reasons for travelling to the Republic of Moldova, gender, age, marital status and spoken languages).

Section 3 - Travel characteristics and the mobility of target populations, their intended destinations, length of stay in the Republic of Moldova, reasons for choosing the country of destination as well as the size and composition of their households.

Section 4 - Living conditions, vulnerabilities and needed support.

Section 5 - Access to public services and their economic, social and cultural integration, providing insight into possible needs for services and integration programmes based on migrants' socioeconomic and professional profile analyses, including programmes for recognizing informal skills, psychosocial and emotional counselling, and children's integration services.

Section 6 - The last part of the survey comprises the protection components related to unfair or unequal treatment (due to race, nationality, or ethnicity).

All indicators collected under this exercise are aligned with DTM guidelines and data dictionary to ensure further cross-analysis and triangulation with other assessments conducted in the country and the region.

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