

# REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

## ECONOMIC INTEGRATION OF REFUGEES FROM UKRAINE

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APRIL – JUNE 2024

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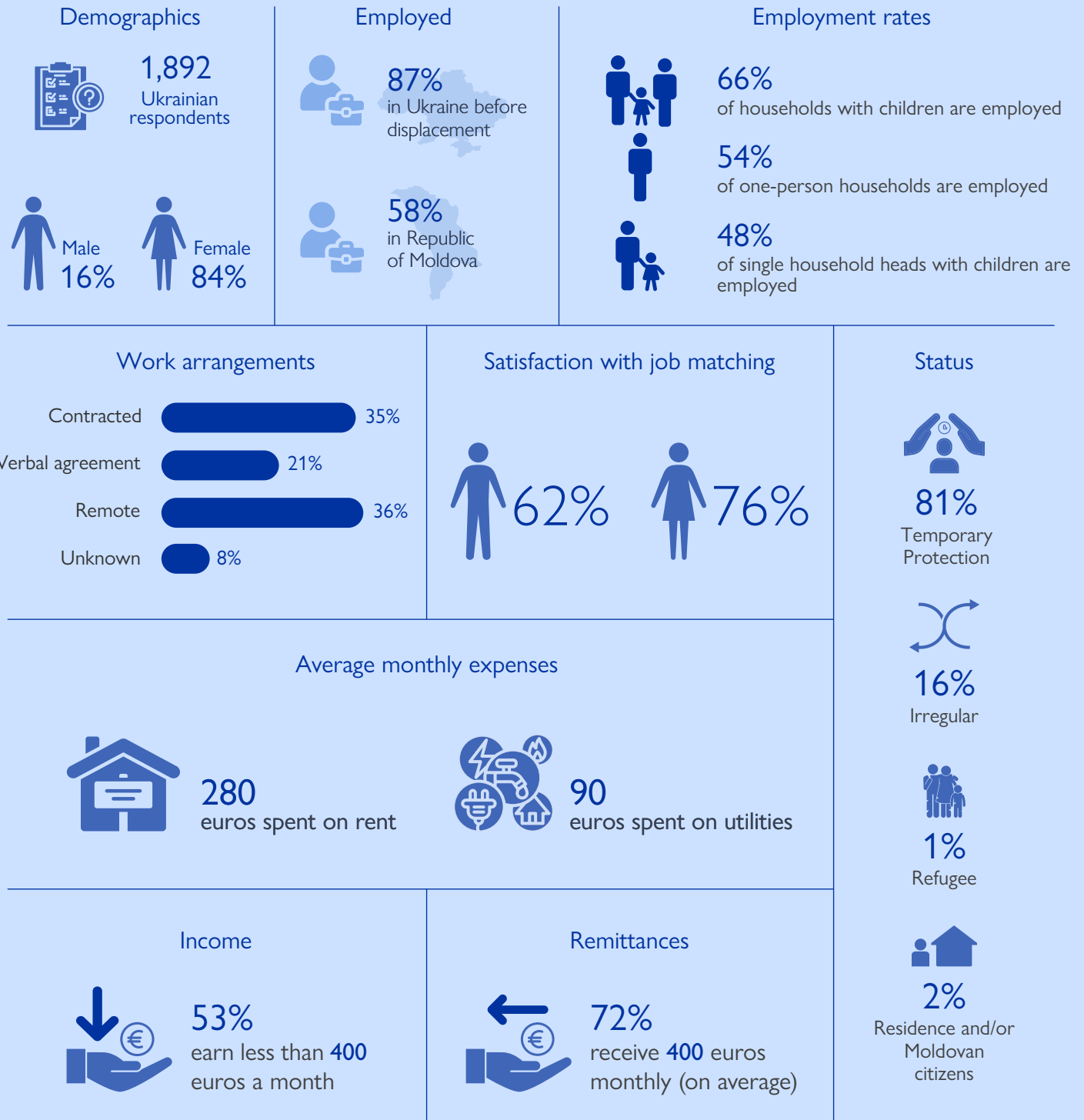
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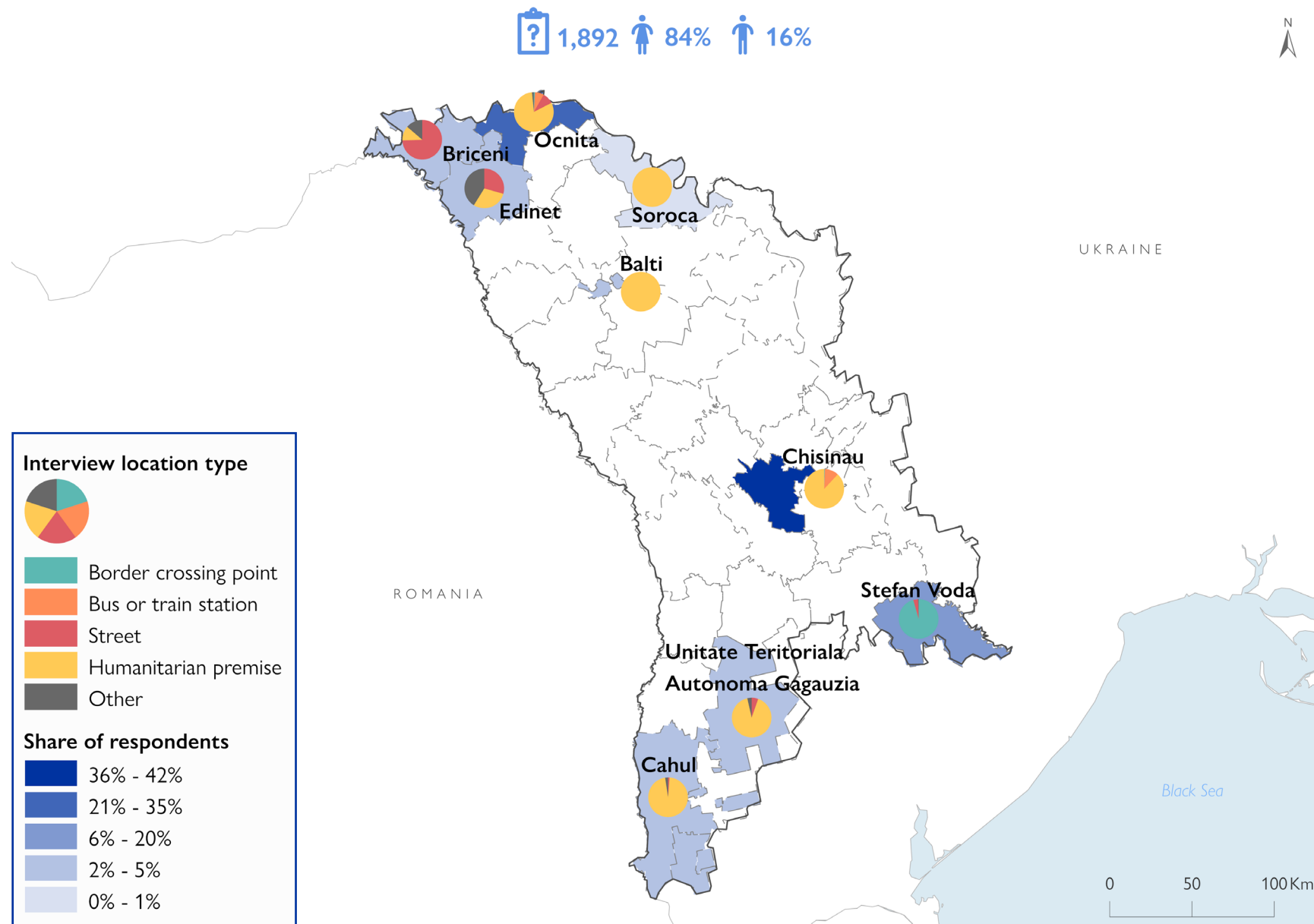
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# KEY FINDINGS



Map: NUMBER OF SURVEYS AND LOCATIONS OF DATA COLLECTION IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, APRIL - JUNE 2024



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# INTRODUCTION

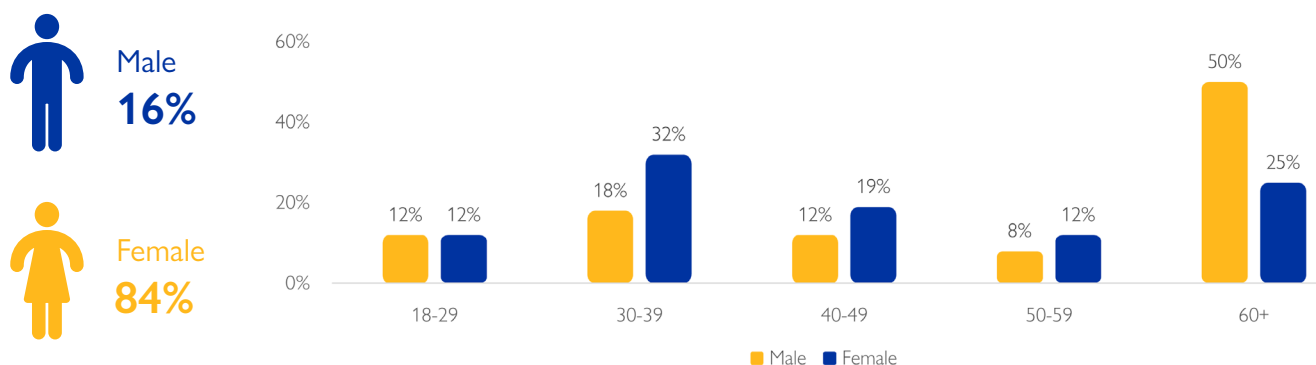
IOM’s Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) collected data through surveys with refugees from Ukraine during the period April to June 2024. In the Republic of Moldova, a total of 1,892 individuals were interviewed. This report focuses on the economic integration of the respondents, delving deeper into their employment profiles, skills, and prospects for participation in the local labour market. It should also be noted that results may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding or multi-select questions.

The top three regions where data from interviews were collected are Chisinau (41%), Ocnita (35%), and Stefan Voda (11%). The remaining 13 per cent were collected in Cahul (4%), Comrat (3%), Briceni (3%), Balti (2%), and Edinet (1%). These

interviews were mainly conducted at NGOs premises (34%), IOM premises (25%), border crossing points (11%), info centers (9%), bus and train stations (8%), and on the street (6%).

Among respondents (n=1,892), women constituted 84 per cent, while men accounted for the remaining 16 per cent. The majority of women fell into the 30–39 age group (32%) and the 40–49 age group (19%). Among men, the largest proportion fell within the 60+ age group, comprising 50 per cent. A total of 1,538 (81%) respondents were of working age (aged between 18 and 64 years old). The share of working age female respondents was 83 per cent, compared to 74 per cent for male respondents.

Figure 1. Respondents by age and gender (%), n=1,892



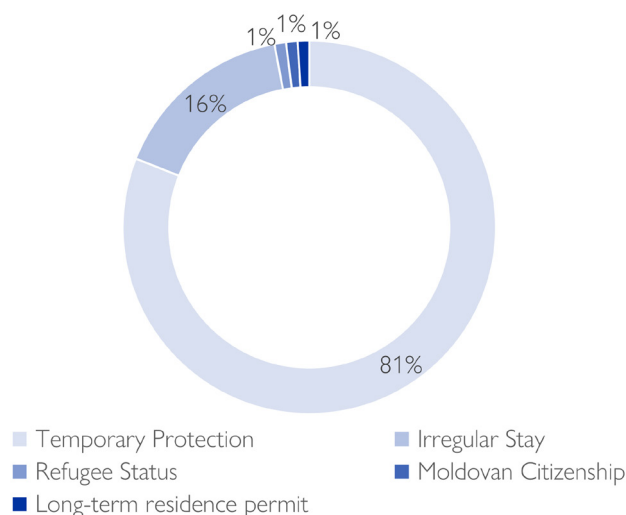
## STATUS

To better understand the economic integration of refugees from Ukraine into the Republic of Moldova, it is important to examine their legal status as it can impact their capacity to access and participate in the labour market. The majority of participants possessed Temporary Protection (TP) status (81%).<sup>1</sup> Another 16 per cent reported having an irregular status at the time of the interview.<sup>2</sup>

The remaining respondents had a long-term residence permit (1%), refugee status (1%) or held Moldovan citizenship as their second citizenship (1%).

Notably, the share of respondents that reported having TP status was almost double the proportion of TP holders estimated among Ukrainians residing in the Republic of Moldova as of 15 July 2024, which was 43 per cent.<sup>3</sup>

Figure 2. Legal status in the Republic of Moldova (%), n=1,892



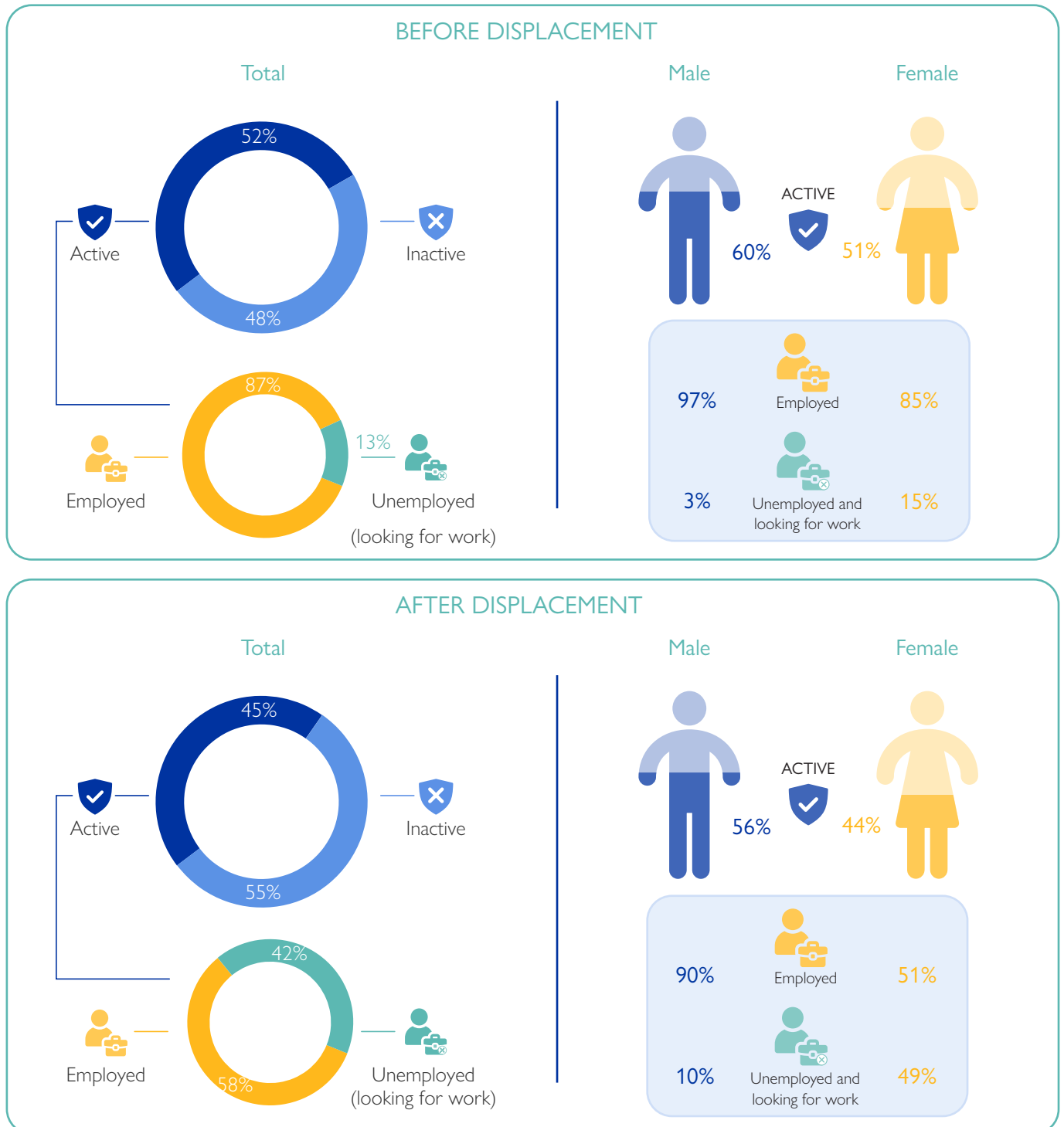
1. Since March 2023, the Government of the Republic of Moldova has granted Temporary Protection (TP) Status to persons displaced from Ukraine as a form of immediate protection, granting them access to essential services in the Republic of Moldova. TP has been extended until 1 March 2025. Source: General Inspectorate for Migration (Chisinau, 2024). “The temporary protection for Ukrainians on the territory of the Republic of Moldova is to be extended”, accessed 19 July 2024.
2. According to Law No. 200 of 2010 and its subsequent amendment on December 28, 2023, a person with irregular status is defined as a foreigner who does not meet or no longer meets the conditions for entry, stay, or residence in the Republic of Moldova. Source: Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, (Chisinau, 2024). <<https://www.refworld.org/legal/legislation/natlegbod/2010/en/104333>>, accessed 19 July 2024.
3. National Employment Agency, (Chisinau, 2021). “LAW no. 105 from 14-06-2018 on the promotion of employment and unemployment insurance”, accessed 19 July 2024. Please see the Methodology section for the limitations of the self-reporting nature of this survey.

# ACTIVE POPULATION

Within the working-age bracket (n=1,538), 796 respondents (52%) were actively involved in the labour market before leaving Ukraine. This includes those employed and those unemployed and looking for a job. By contrast, after their displacement in the Republic of Moldova, labour market participation among working-age refugees from Ukraine decreased to 45 per cent.

Among the active population in Ukraine, 87 per cent were employed, while 13 per cent were unemployed and looking for a job. After their displacement, the number of unemployed respondents reached 42 per cent, with the remaining 58 per cent being employed. This highlights higher levels of employment among respondents before being displaced from Ukraine.

**Figure 3.** Labour market participation and employment rate before and after displacement by gender (%), n=1,538

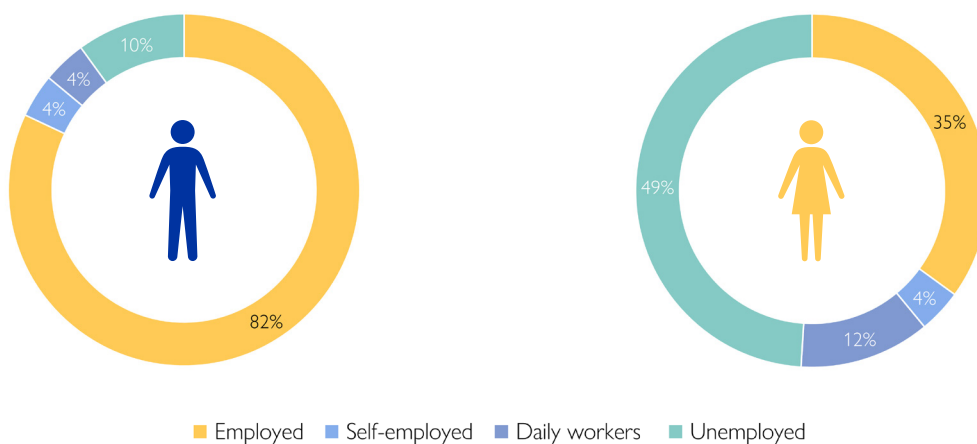


## EMPLOYMENT

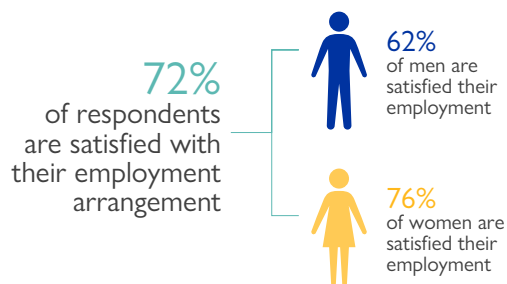
During Q2 (April – June) of 2024, 58 per cent of respondents reported being employed in the Republic of Moldova. Among them, 44 per cent of the active population were in regular employment, followed by informal and daily workers at 10 per cent. A small proportion were self-employed (4%). More

men were in regular employment compared to women at the time of interviews (82% versus 35%). Conversely, the share of unemployed women (49%) was five times higher than that of men (10%).

Figure 4. Employment status within active population by gender (%), n= 699



## EMPLOYMENT SATISFACTION



exhibited lower satisfaction levels than women (62% versus 76%). However, none of the employed respondents reported any level of dissatisfaction. Conversely, 12 per cent of the respondents that were unemployed and looking for a job at the time of the interview were somewhat or very dissatisfied.

The most common reason for dissatisfaction among respondents was the difficulty in finding employment while in the Republic of Moldova. Regarding the working conditions and problems faced while working in the Republic of Moldova, four per cent of the respondents' employers did not want to offer a registered working contract, three per cent reported being underpaid, and two per cent stated that the working hours were longer than agreed.

Overall, 72 per cent of the employed respondents reported being either somewhat satisfied or very satisfied with their working arrangement while the remainder were not. Men



Rehabilitated and equipped playground with IOM Moldova's support in ATU Gagauzia, Comrat district., Republic of Moldova. © IOM 2024 / R. Severi

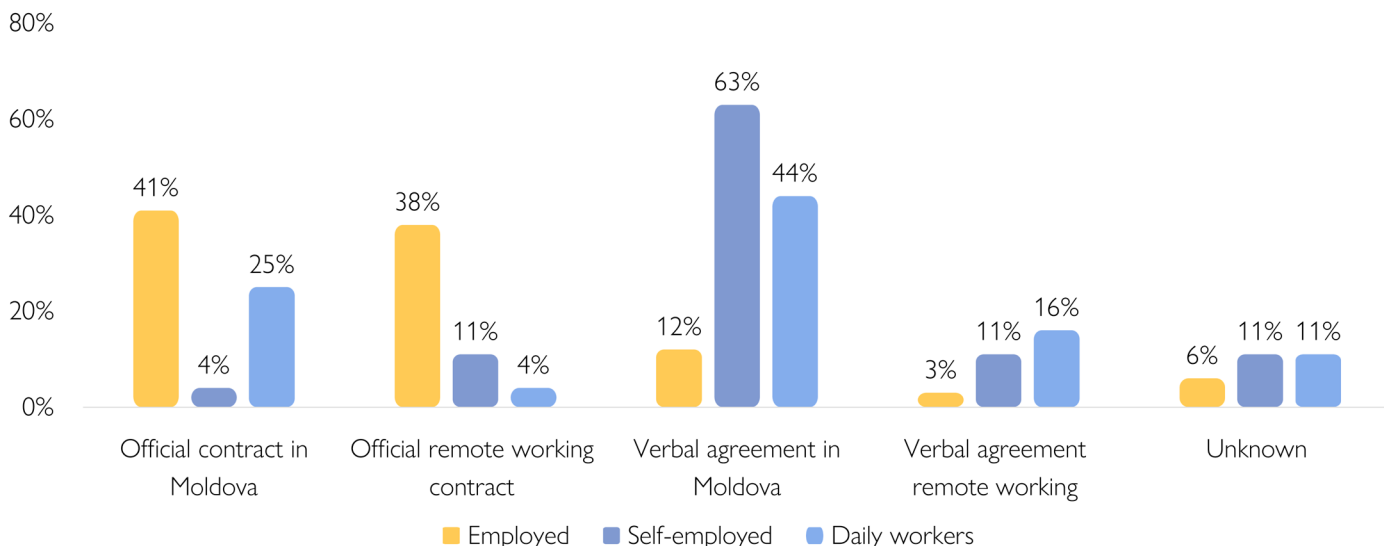


## WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

Those who reported having regular employment had a higher share of official working contracts than respondents in other employment categories. Forty-one per cent of the employed respondents had an official contract, while 38 per cent had a remote working contract in another country. On the other

hand, the majority (63%) of those self-employed were working based on a verbal agreement. More than half of the informal and daily workers had a working arrangement based on a verbal agreement in the Republic of Moldova (44%) or in another country (16%).

Figure 5. Working arrangement by employment status (%), n=404

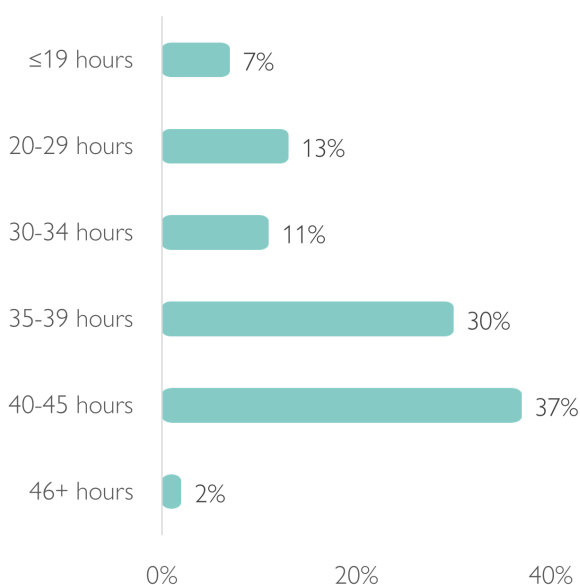


## WORKING HOURS

Most of the employed respondents (67%) reported working full time, between 35 and 45 hours per week. A smaller proportion had a part-time arrangement and worked up to 29 hours per week (13%), or less than 19 hours weekly (7%).

More women were working less than 29 hours weekly than men (21% versus 12%). Conversely, the majority of men were working full time, between 35 and 45 hours per week.

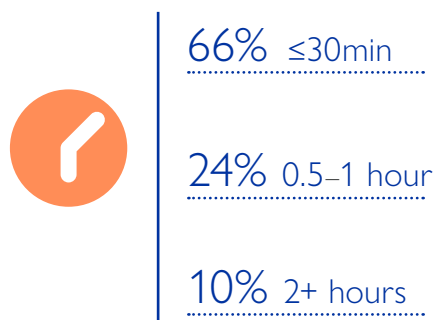
Figure 6. Hours worked in a week (%), n=310



## COMMUTE

Most of the working-age respondents who were employed were commuting less than 30 minutes per day to work (66%) or between half an hour and one hour per day (24%), indicating that most respondents found employment close to their place of residence.

Figure 7. Hours spent commuting daily (%), n=339



## JOB SEEKING CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES

Nearly half of the respondents (49%) encountered difficulties when looking for a job whereas only four per cent reported job seeking a somewhat easy task. This highlights the difficulties refugees from Ukraine might face when trying to integrate in the local labour market.

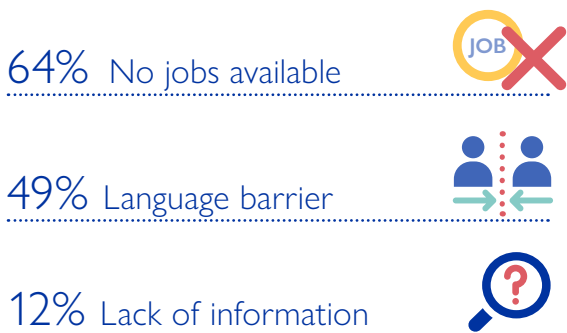
“It is difficult to find someone that wants to hire a woman over 40 without any knowledge of the Romanian language.”

*Forty-four-year-old woman, originally from Kharkiv, residing in Chisinau, Republic of Moldova*

According to most unemployed respondents, a series of barriers complicate the process of economic integration. Firstly, a significant majority (64%) mentioned the lack of job opportunities in the Moldovan labour market.

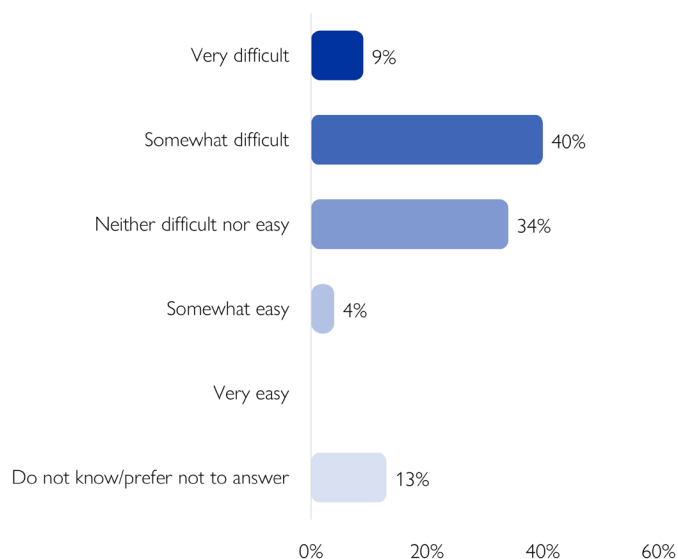
Half of the respondents (49%) identified the language barrier as a difficulty. While almost all the respondents reported knowing Russian, which is a well-known language across the Republic of Moldova, the lack of knowledge of Romanian was a significant barrier in their integration. Finally, the third most mentioned barrier to finding employment was the lack of information, which was reported by 12 per cent of the respondents.

**Figure 9.** Top 3 barriers encountered looking for employment (%), n=295



Multiple answers possible

**Figure 8.** Difficulty finding employment (%), n=699



While the language barrier was identified as one of the main obstacles in job hunting by most respondents, only 21 per cent of those unemployed had begun a language course to enhance their employment prospects.

Strategies used to find employment were through social media (50%), consulting job portals (43%), sharing their curriculum vitae (39%), and consulting with local employment agencies (28%). This highlights the importance of online outlets and spaces as a source of information for refugees from Ukraine, but also refugees' importance in the process of refugees' economic integration.

**Figure 10.** Actions taken to find employment (%), n=295



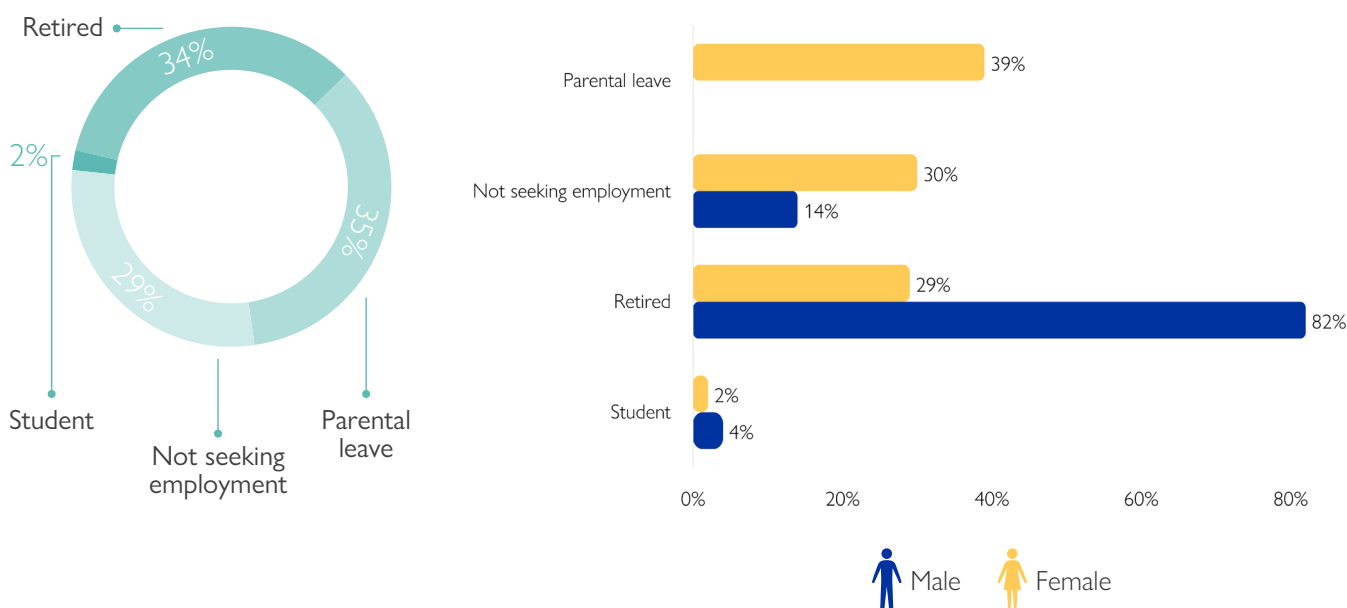
Multiple answers possible

# INACTIVE POPULATION

The inactive population comprises working-age individuals that were not an active part of the labour market. This includes students (2%), retirees (21%), those on parental leave (38%), and those unemployed but not looking for a job (39%). Three-quarters (75%) of inactive male respondents of working age were retired. This was more than four times the proportion

of retired female respondents (17%). The majority of women were on maternity leave or not looking for a job (41% each). In contrast, no men were on paternity leave and 19 per cent were not seeking employment. Also, more male respondents were students (6%) compared to female respondents (1%).

Figure 11. Status within inactive population by gender and total (%), n=822



The majority of working-age respondents who were unemployed and not looking for a job indicated this was because of their family responsibilities (49%), such as caring for children, elderly family members, or persons with disabilities. One in four respondents (25%) mentioned that they did not need any

employment, while 19 per cent reported that they were inactive due to personal medical conditions. The remaining participants mentioned they either had plans to return to Ukraine soon (7%) or chose not to disclose their reasons (8%).



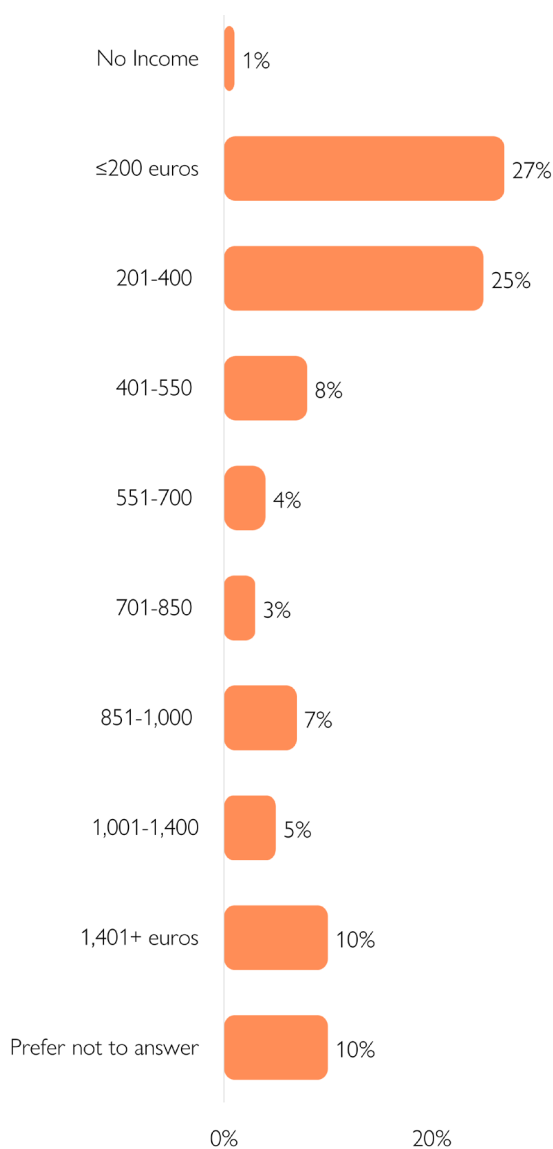
IOM delivered sports equipment, uniforms, and technical equipment to the Lyceum Dimitrie Cantemir in Rascani city, Republic of Moldova. © IOM 2024

# INCOME

A majority of respondents (60%) indicated earning less than 550 euros per month, while more than half of the surveyed households (52%) had a total monthly income of less than 400 euros. Consequently, the income reported by more than half of the participants in the survey falls below the average income as reported by the National Bureau of Statistics in the Republic of Moldova which, in the year 2023, amounted to approximately 600 euros per month (12,355 Moldovan Lei).<sup>4</sup>

Notably, more than one in four respondents (27%) had an income of less than 200 euros per month and another quarter earned between 201 and 400 euros (25%).

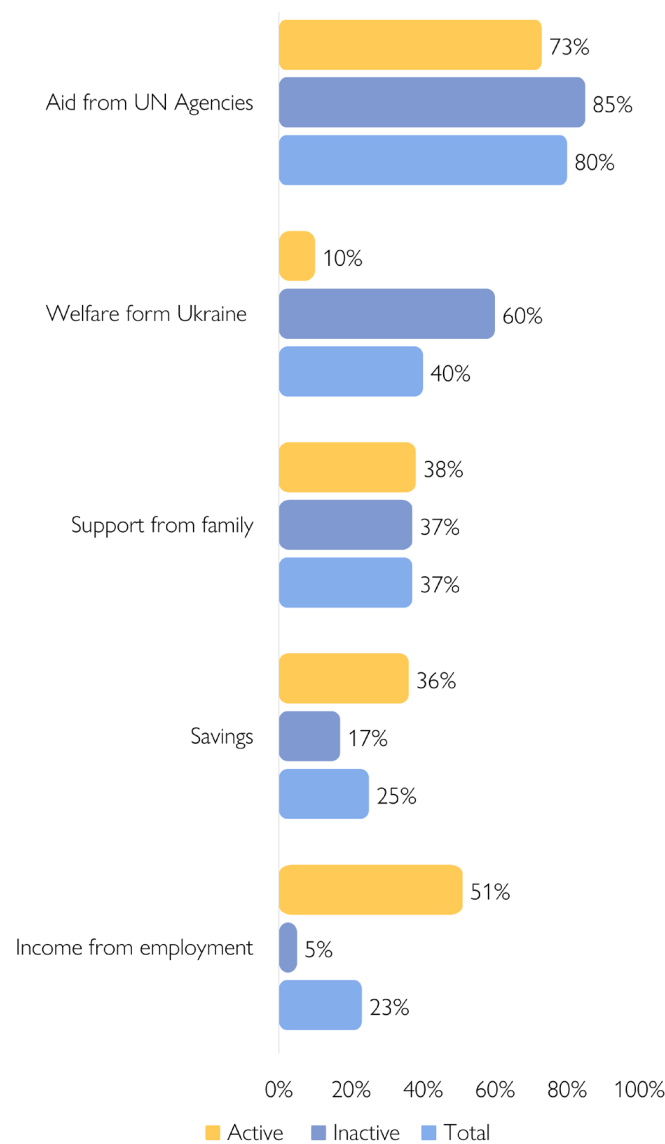
**Figure 12.** Household net monthly income (%), n=1,892



The sources of respondents' income varied. A vast majority (80%) received aid from United Nations (UN) agencies. Social welfare programmes were cited by 40 per cent of households, particularly among the inactive respondents, 60 per cent of which mentioned it.

There were differences between respondents who were active and those who were inactive in the labour market. Employment was reported as a source of household income by 51 per cent of those active. Conversely, welfare from Ukraine was reported as a source of income by 60 per cent of those inactive. This could be because a large majority of those within the inactive population are either retired or on parental leave.

**Figure 13.** Sources of household income by participation in the labour market and total (%), n=1,892<sup>5</sup>



*Multiple answers possible*

4. National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova, (Chisinau, 2024). "Căștigul salarial și costul forței de muncă - Wage earnings and labour costs", accessed 19 July 2024.

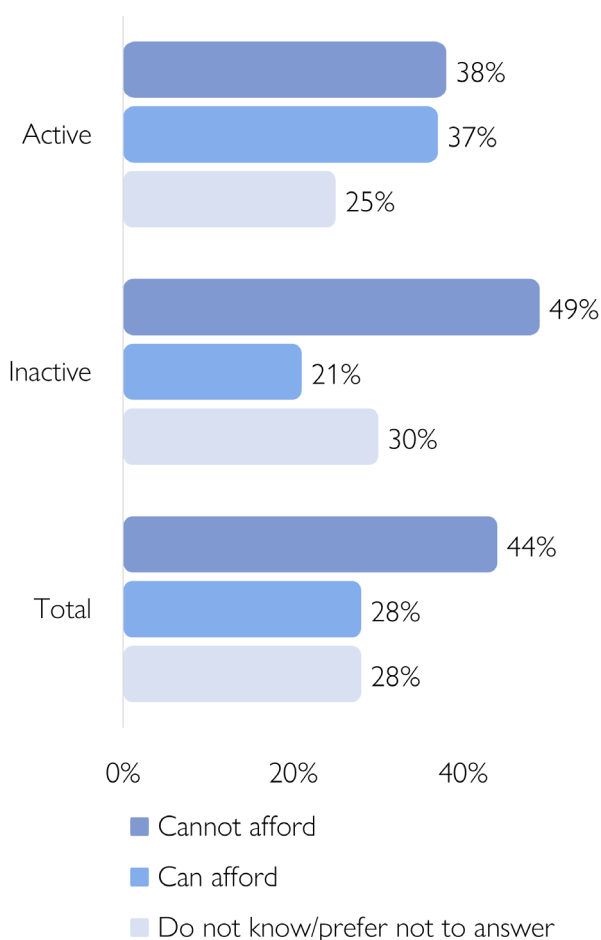
5. A small portion of respondents who are inactive may continue to receive income from pensions, their employers while on parental leave, or other sources.

## EXPENSES

The potential vulnerability of the respondents is further highlighted when analyzing their reported capacity to cover emergency expenses up to 100 euros. Almost half of the inactive population (49%) would not be able to cover such an unexpected expense. However, among the active population this proportion was lower (38%).

Given that almost half of the respondents (44%) stated they could not afford such an expense, this could suggest limited economic resilience and, overall, a potentially high level of vulnerability among respondents.

**Figure 14.** Household’s ability to afford an unexpected expense of 100 euros (%), n=1,892




## ACCOMMODATION AND UTILITIES

Among the respondents that agreed to share the amount their household spent on accommodation in the thirty days before the interview (n=1,528), 44 per cent reported paying nothing for accommodation.

A total of 860 respondents paid an average of 5,600 Moldovan Lei (MDL) for their accommodation, equivalent to 280 euros. On average, the active population spent 6,000 MDL on rent (300 euros), while the inactive reported spending 5,200 MDL (260 euros).

While not all households interviewed reported paying for their accommodation, the majority (89%) reported paying for utilities and bills. Among them (n=1,630), the average reported expenditure was 1,800 MDL or 90 euros.


**RENT**



**Average**  
5,600 MDL (280 EUR)

**Maximum**  
18,000 MDL (900 EUR)

**UTILITIES**



**Average**  
1,800 MDL (90 EUR)

**Maximum**  
6,000 MDL (300 EUR)

Significantly, the combined average household expenditure on accommodation and utilities amounted to 370 euros. As mentioned previously, this equates to the net monthly income reported by more than half of respondents. This suggests a high level of vulnerability among households with lower incomes, underscoring the importance of aid and remittances from Ukraine for these households.

## REMITTANCES

A total of 1,475 respondents agreed to disclose whether they received any remittances from Ukraine in the 30 days prior to the interview. Among them, 28 per cent did not receive any remittances, while the remaining 72 per cent received an average of 400 euros during the month preceding the interview. The amount varied, ranging from 15 euros to 3,500 euros. A significantly higher proportion of inactive respondents reported receiving remittances compared to the active population (81% versus 56%). However, the average sum received by active respondents, totaling 535 euros, was higher than what inactive respondents reported receiving (370 EUR). This might suggest that the income earned by the active population is insufficient to cover their monthly expenses.

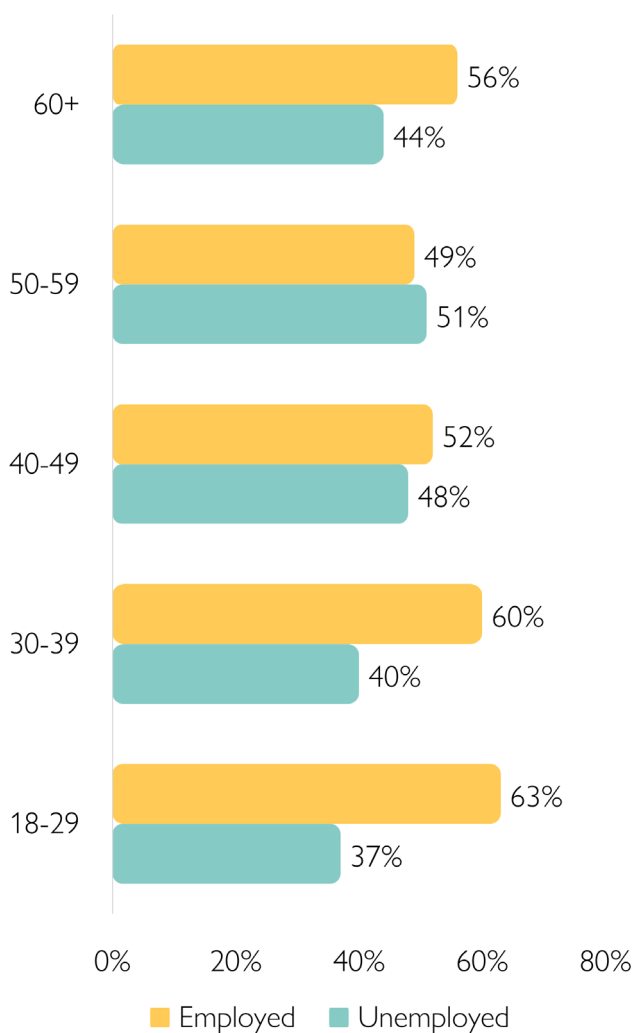
# ENABLING FACTORS AND BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT

## GENDER AND AGE

During the analysis, certain factors were identified as more or less favourable preconditions for those trying to secure employment in the Republic of Moldova. During this round of data collection, the proportion of working-age active men who were employed was almost double that of women (90% versus 51%).

Besides gender, age is also an enabling factor to employment. The share of employed respondents is higher among younger age groups and decreases with age. As highlighted in the chart below, 63 per cent of those aged 18 to 29 years reported being employed. The share of employed respondents decreases in the other age groups, reaching 56 per cent among those aged over 60.

Figure 15. Employment status by age group (%), n=732



## HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION AND EMPLOYMENT



The household composition of the respondents also influenced respondents' capacity to secure employment in the Republic of Moldova. In particular, differences were noticeable between the employment status of households with children and single person households. Sixty-six per cent of the active working-age respondents who were part of a household with two adults and children were employed, compared to only 48 per cent of single-headed households with children.

## EDUCATION

To further understand the challenges refugees from Ukraine encounter when integrating into the local workforce, their educational background should also be considered. Among the active population, the majority (50%) had achieved a secondary level of education. Notably, almost one-third (27%) of the respondents had completed tertiary education and no respondent reported having no level of formal education.

Considerably more women completed tertiary level of education than men (30% versus 16%). Conversely, the vast majority (72%) of male respondents had an upper secondary level of education, compared to 38 per cent of female respondents. One third of those employed reached the tertiary level (30%) or postgraduate education (1%). On the contrary, unemployed respondents had a lower level of tertiary education (25%).

# FUTURE PROSPECTS, ASPIRATIONS, AND NEEDS

## INTENTIONS

The majority of respondents (86%) reported no intention to move to another country in the six months following their interview. Among the remaining, 11 per cent were uncertain, while only three per cent expressed a definite intention to move abroad.

Similarly, respondents reported low intentions of mobility within the Republic of Moldova, with one per cent expressing the intention to relocate to another locality. The majority either had no intention to move (91%) or were undecided (8%).

One factor influencing low mobility intentions of individuals could be due to a personal connection with the Republic

of Moldova. Most survey participants cited some degree of connection with the country. For the majority, this connection was moderate (61%), very close (23%), or extremely close (4%). The remaining 12 per cent either did not feel any connection at all (1%), reported a weak connection (3%), or chose not to answer (8%).

Feelings of connection were higher among respondents that intended to stay in the Republic of Moldova. Conversely, among those that intended to move, there were lower levels of perceived connection.

Figure 16. Connection with the Republic of Moldova by movement intentions (%), n=1,731

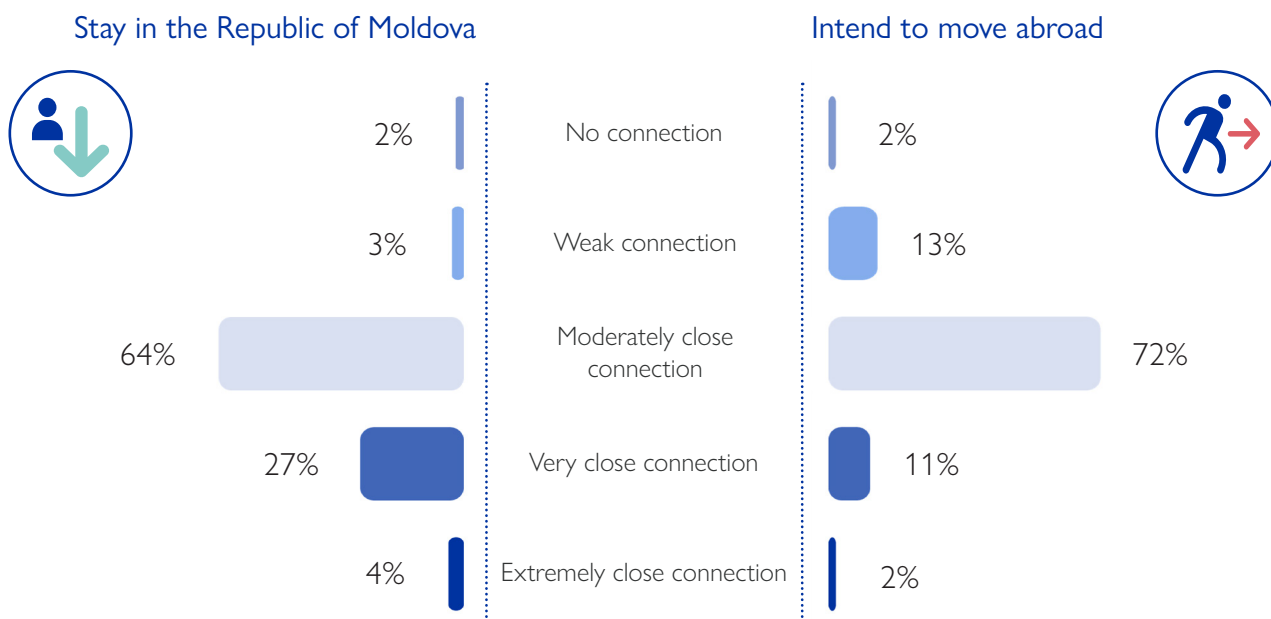
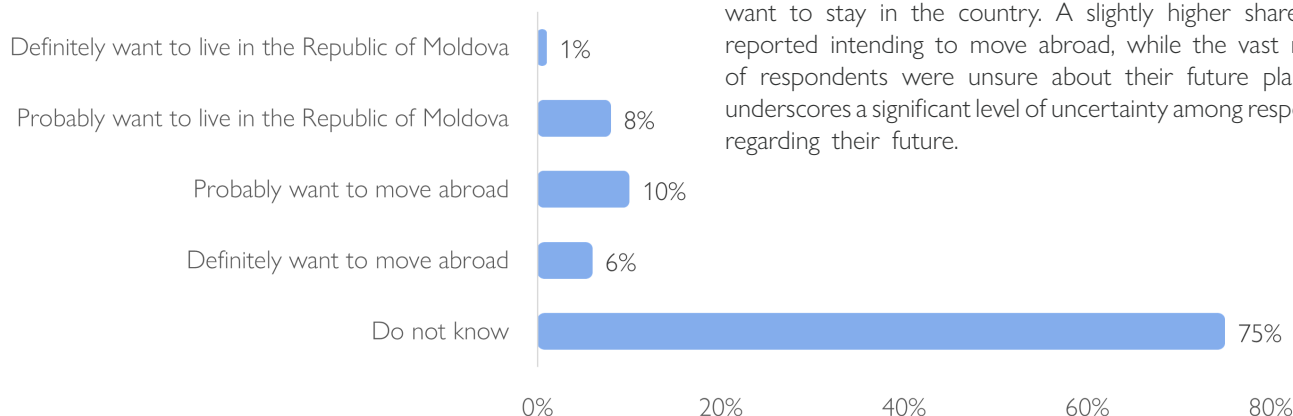


Figure 17. Intentions for the future (%), n=1,892



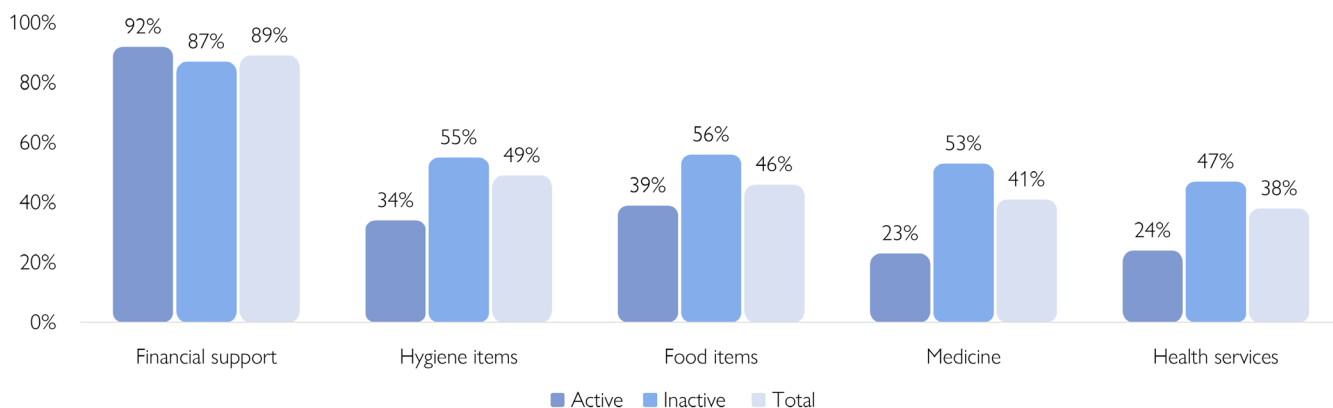
Despite the overall strong level of connection with the Republic of Moldova, only a minority (9%) reported that they would want to stay in the country. A slightly higher share (16%) reported intending to move abroad, while the vast majority of respondents were unsure about their future plans. This underscores a significant level of uncertainty among respondents regarding their future.

## NEEDS

The most commonly cited need was financial aid, reported by 89 per cent of all respondents. This was followed by needs such as food (49%), personal hygiene items (46%), medicine (41%), and health services (38%). Overall, the needs varied noticeably between active and inactive populations, with a higher

percentage of the latter expressing the need for aid. Notably, both active and inactive populations reported the need for financial support, which could indicate that the income earned by the active population is insufficient to cover their expenses.

**Figure 18.** Top 5 reported needs by employment status (%), n=1,892



Multiple answers possible

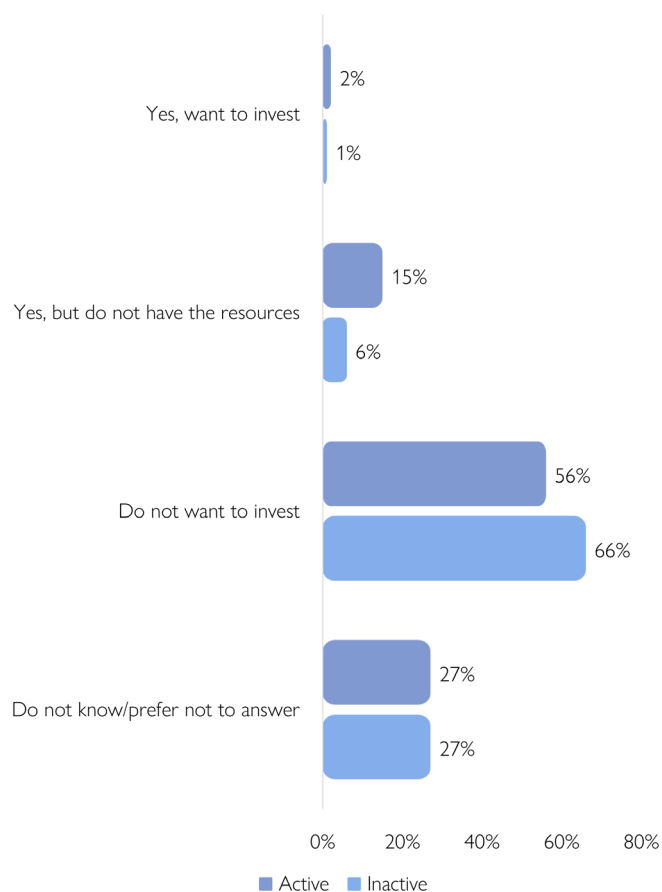
## ENTREPRENEURIAL ATTITUDES AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

As shown in Figure 19, there was high interest among the active population in developing their personal skills and knowledge.

The proportion of respondents interested in investing financial resources to develop their skills was double among those engaged in the labour market (17%) compared to those inactive (7%). Self-employed individuals represented a higher share of respondents interested in investing to develop new skills (22%). Unemployed respondents that were looking for a job presented high levels of interest in developing skills also (20%) despite most of them not having the necessary resources to invest in such activities (19%).

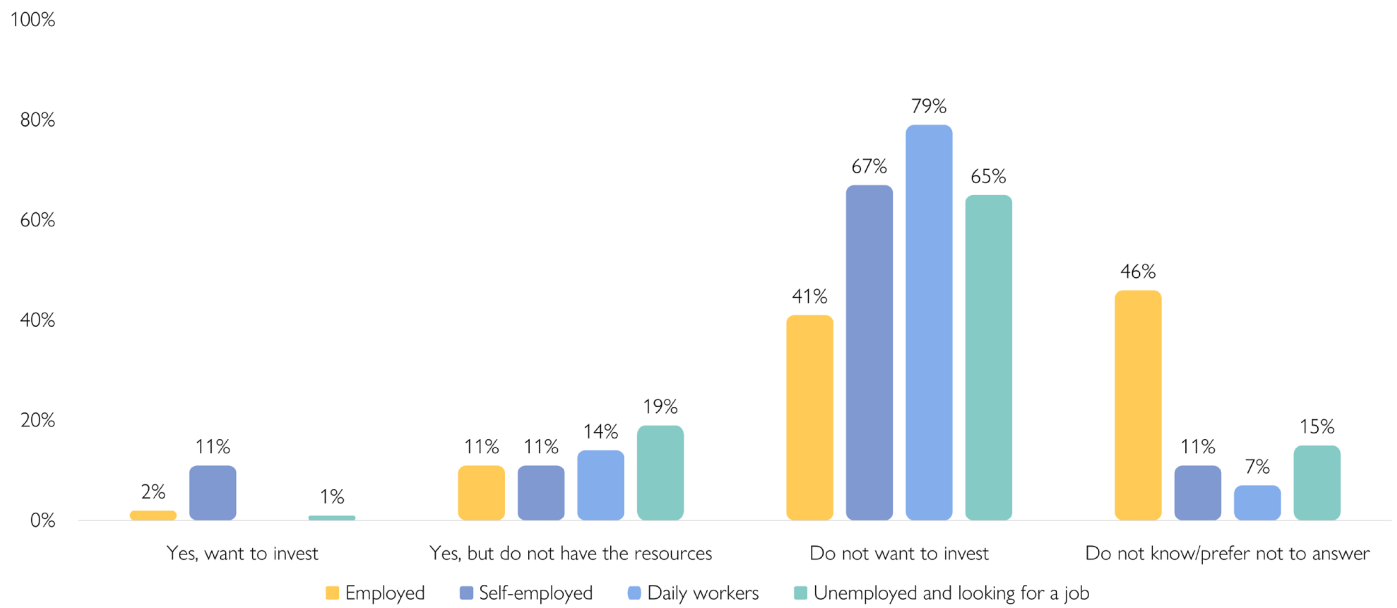
Among those willing to invest in their personal development and possessing the necessary resources (n=18), the average amount mentioned for investment was up to 1,500 euros. The majority (78%) were willing to spend between 100 and 300 euros, while 25 per cent were willing to invest from 500 to up to 1,500 euros.

**Figure 19.** Willingness to invest financially in professional skills development by active and inactive population (%), n=1,538

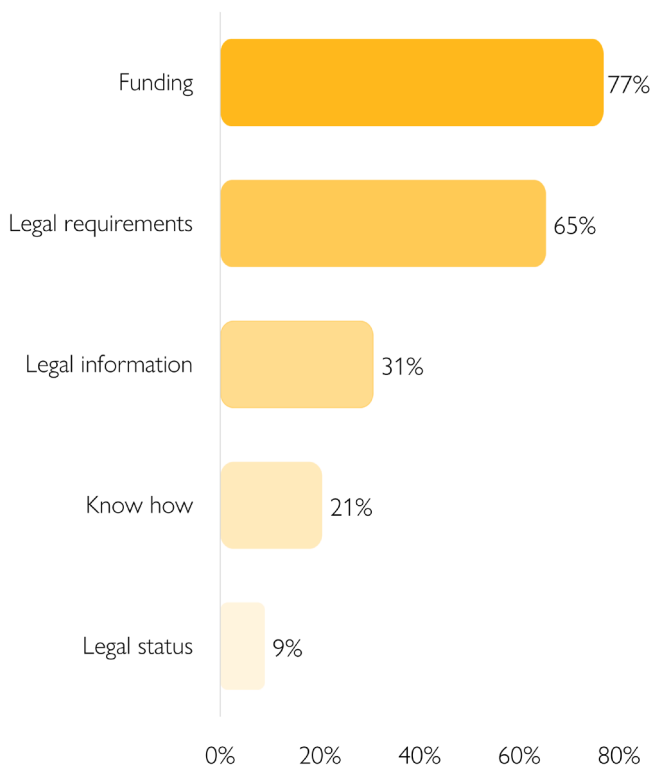




**Figure 20.** Willingness to invest in professional skills development by employment status (%), n=699



**Figure 21.** Top 5 barriers to opening a business (%), n=732



In terms of willingness to open a business, 11 per cent of the total working-age active population (n=699) reported already having or being interested in opening their own business.

The inclination towards entrepreneurship was higher among female respondents (12% versus 8% among men). Those reporting to be interested in opening their own business in the Republic of Moldova (n=78) mentioned a series of barriers that were stopping them from doing so. The vast majority (77%) reported lack of funding. This was followed by issues related to the legal domain such as legal requirements (65%), lack of legal information (31%), and the lack of knowledge (21%).

*Multiple answers possible*

## METHODOLOGY

IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) is a system to track and monitor displacement and population mobility. It is designed to regularly and systematically capture, process, and disseminate information to provide a better understanding of the movements and evolving needs of displaced populations, whether on site or en route. Since April 2022, DTM has been surveying people who are residing in the 11 countries included in the Regional Refugee Response Plan for Ukraine. The aim of the survey is to improve the understanding of their profiles, displacement patterns, intentions, and needs. The survey is deployed in six countries neighbouring Ukraine – Belarus, Hungary, Poland, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, and Slovakia, and an additional five European Union countries particularly impacted by the arrivals of refugees from Ukraine, including Bulgaria, Czechia, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

In the Republic of Moldova, face-to-face surveys were conducted by nine trained enumerators with adult refugees from Ukraine (18+ years old). Surveys were collected in various locations and regions across the Republic of Moldova, with the top three

regions where data was collected being in Chisinau (41%), Ocnita (35%), and Stefan Voda (11%). The remaining 13 per cent was collected in Cahul (4%), Briceni, Comrat (3% each), Balti (2%) and Edinet (1%). Respondents were approached in a simple random sample by enumerators at selected entry, exit, transit points and accommodation centres. In border crossing point areas, both persons entering/exiting by car, by bus, by foot and by train were interviewed.

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



### ABOUT THE SURVEY

#### Aim

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

#### Target Population

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

#### Location and execution

Face-to-face surveys were conducted by 9 trained enumerators stationed at selected locations in 9 regions of the Republic of Moldova. Surveys were conducted in Ukrainian, Russian, English, and Romanian using the KoBo application.

#### Data collection period:

In the Republic of Moldova data was collected between 1 April and 22 June 2024.

## LIMITATIONS

The sampling framework was not based on verified figures of refugees from Ukraine entering through all land border points or staying in the various regions where the surveys are conducted, due to the lack of baseline information. The geographic spread of enumerators deployed captures a wide range of locations. Whilst the overall results cannot be deemed as representative, the internal consistency of data collection in each country and at the regional level suggests that the current sampling framework produces findings of practical value.

While every attempt was made to capture all types of locations, the operational reality of fieldwork was confronted with

different levels of accessibility of BCPs and other transit and stay locations, including the different availability of possible target individuals to comfortably spend 10–20 minutes responding to the questionnaire depending on a mix of personal conditions. Other factors such as organizational changes in the entry and transit areas from national authorities, or weather conditions, also play a role.

Additionally, the self-reporting aspect of the survey may introduce biases that affect data accuracy. For instance, respondents might overreport their Temporary Protection status due to reluctance in disclosing the lack of legal status.

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## DTM

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

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

For more information, please consult:

<https://dtm.iom.int/responses/ukraine-response>