

CIRCULAR MIGRATION TO LIBYA



LIBYA • MAY 2021

During 2020 COVID-19 Pandemic significantly affected seasonal migrants workers' ability to earn decent wages in Libya due to loss of livelihoods driven by economic slowdown. Cover photo is from a December 2020 livelihoods training where migrants were taught tailoring skills including techniques that can be used to produce personal protective equipment (PPE) such as fabric masks.

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CONTENTS

HIGHLIGHTS	6
INTRODUCTION	9
METHODOLOGY	11
FINDINGS	13
PROFILE OF SEASONAL MIGRANT WORKERS	13
SEASONALITY AND GEOGRAPHICAL TRENDS	17
SEASONAL EMPLOYMENT IN LIBYA (PROFILE OF ECONOMIC SECTORS)	20
SEASONAL MIGRANT WORKERS ON DATE PALM PLANTATIONS	23
DRIVERS OF CIRCULAR MIGRATION	26
LIVING CONDITIONS OF SEASONAL MIGRANT WORKERS IN LIBYA	29
IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON CIRCULAR MIGRATION TO LIBYA	32
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	35
REFERENCES	37
APPENDIX	40

LIST OF FIGURES

Fig. 1 A. Comparison of seasonal migrant workers and the migrant population in Libya shown disaggregated by country-of-origin. B. Percentage of migrants within each country of origin cohort identified as seasonal migrant workers during migrant thematic surveys. •13

Fig. 2 Estimates of maximum percentage of migrant workers amongst the top country of origin cohorts employed in Libya on a seasonal basis during a typical year without mobility restrictions. •14

Fig. 3 Female migrants represent an even smaller minority amongst seasonal migrant workers at 6%, below their 10% representation amongst migrants in Libya. •14

Fig. 4 Comparison of marital status between seasonal migrant workers identified and those migrants who did not report to engage in circular migration to Libya. •15

Fig. 5 Education levels – comparison between seasonal migrant workers and other migrants. •16

Fig. 6 Top country of origin cohorts for each region / mantika of Libya with their percentage share in local seasonal migrant worker population. •17

Fig. 7 Country of origin disaggregation of seasonal migrant workers identified via migrant interviews in different geographical regions of Libya. •18

Fig. 8 Country of origin disaggregation of seasonal migrant workers in different geographical regions of Libya estimated from the top three country of origin cohorts identified by key informant interviews. •18

Fig. 9 Employment status •20

Fig. 10 Unemployment rates for seasonal migrant workers interviewed in 2020 saw spikes in April, June and October 2020 (n = 599). •20

Fig. 11 Occupations employing seasonal migrant workers in Libya classified as per major ISCO-08 categories (FMS, Seasonal Workers n = 476; Other Migrants n = 10,001) •21

Fig. 12 Categories of economic units / work places where seasonal migrant workers are employed in Libya (KII, n = 207). •22

Fig. 13 Range of economic activities that seasonal migrant workers find jobs and employments in Libya at (KII, n = 219)* •22

Fig. 14 Majority of migrant workers find work or jobs after arriving in Libya (KII, n = 219). •23

Fig. 15 Most employers recruit seasonal migrant workers in Libya by asking migrants already present in Libya (KII, n = 219). •24

Fig. 16 Most migrants find work on a seasonal basis in Libya through word of mouth (KII, n = 219). •25

Fig. 17 Employers in Libya recruit seasonal migrant workers due to local workforce shortages (KII, n = 197). •25

Fig. 18 Factors driving migrant workers to Libya on a seasonal basis (multiple choice question in KI interviews, n = 219) •26

Fig. 19 Motivations for migration to Libya analysed through first two reasons identified for leaving the country of origin (Migrant surveys; n = 604). •27

Fig. 20 Breakdown of primary economic factors motivating migration to Libya (Migrant surveys; n = 534)•27

Fig. 21 Accommodation types utilized by seasonal migrant workers in Libya (KII, n = 206)•29

Fig. 23 Living Conditions of Seasonal Migrant Workers•30

Fig. 22 57% of seasonal migrant workers had either no or limited access to health services in Libya (Migrant surveys, n = 383)•30

Fig. 24 Perceptions of seasonal migrant workers; inner doughnut shows how employers in their communities perceive contribution of seasonal migrant workers to their businesses, and the outer doughnut represents the perception of seasonal migrant workers within the local community (KII; n = 206)•31

Fig. 26 Impact on seasonal labour demand (KII; n = 206)•32

Fig. 25 Impact on local businesses employing seasonal migrant workers (KII; n = 206)•32

Fig. 27 Impact of COVID-19 on arrival of seasonal migrant workers (supply) •33

Fig. 28 Impact on return of seasonal migrant workers during 2020 (n = 125)•33

HIGHLIGHTS

13%

Seasonal migrant workers are estimated to account for up to 13% of the migrant population in Libya during a typical season

88%

of the seasonal migrant workers interviewed were from Libya's neighbouring countries. Many of them were located in regions in Libya close to their countries of origin, indicating the influence of geographic proximity and migrant social networks on circular migration to Libya

83%

of seasonal migrant workers were employed at the time of the interview, compared to only 74% of migrants who did not report to engage in circular migration on a seasonal basis



Seasonal migrant workers in Libya in some cases faced difficult living conditions and increased vulnerabilities due to limited access to decent housing. Most seasonal migrant workers were reported to live at their workplaces

57%

57% of seasonal migrant workers reported limited or no access to health services in Libya which is of particular concern in the context of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic



The COVID-19 pandemic has been negatively affecting local businesses in Libya employing migrant workers on a seasonal basis, while the pandemic has also affected the trend of arrivals and returns of seasonal migrant workers in Libya as many migrants reportedly either returned earlier than usual in 2020 or were stranded due to mobility restrictions

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LIBYA • MAY 2021



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Migrants in Libya face increased vulnerabilities and challenges due to COVID-19 pandemic and its socio-economic impact. IOM in Libya continues to provide assistance including awareness raising sessions aimed at enabling migrants to better protect themselves against COVID-19.

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the past decade several studies and reports have presented evidence-based narrative detailing the dynamics of migration to and from Libya. Most of these studies focus on the themes of mixed migration in the region¹ or transit migration to European Union from Libya², while several recent publications also present newly emerging evidence that highlight that post-2011 Libya is still a country of destination for migrant workers seeking employment and livelihoods³. However, despite brief or occasional coverage⁴, there is very little systematic analysis of circular migration to Libya and therefore not much is known about seasonal migrant workers in Libya. This study presents exploratory analysis and evidence aimed at filling this knowledge gap on the topic of circular migration to Libya by exploring the case of migrants interviewed in Libya who reported moving back and forth between Libya and their countries of origin.

Circular Migration, in this study, is understood as “a form of migration in which people repeatedly move back and forth between two or more countries”⁵. Furthermore, migrants engaging in circular migration to Libya for seasonal employment are referred to as seasonal migrant workers in this study.⁶

The study presents a demographic and socio-economic profile of seasonal migrant workers in Libya, findings on seasonality and geographical trends of circular migration, analysis of seasonal employment and drivers of circular migration to Libya. Furthermore, findings related to the living conditions of seasonal migrant workers in Libya will also be discussed by looking at their access to housing and health services. The study also presents population estimates aimed at establishing a baseline understanding of the extent of circular migration to Libya.

While only 4% of 14,235 migrants who were asked questions on circular migration to Libya during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020⁷ reported to engage in circular migration on a seasonal basis, estimates based on key informant interviews indicate that seasonal migrant workers may constitute up to 13% of the migrant population in Libya during a typical work season. In the absence of data originating from administrative or immigration systems, these findings triangulated via two surveys show that circular migration to Libya accounts for a significant segment of the overall migration and mobility pattern in the region.

88% of the seasonal migrant workers interviewed were from Libya’s neighbouring countries and their larger concentrations in Libya were usually in regions closer

1 Altai Consulting 2013, 2015; DRC 2013; IMPACT 2018

2 Bredeloup, S. et al. 2011; Toaldo, M. 2015

3 2020e, 2021b

4 FAO 2017

5 IOM 2019; definition adapted from Commission of the European Communities, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on Circular Migration and Mobility Partnerships between the European Union and Third Countries (16 May 2007) COM (2007) 248 final, p. 8.

6 IOM 2019a Based on the definition of Seasonal Migrant Worker as “a migrant worker whose work, or migration for employment is by its character dependent on seasonal conditions and is performed only during part of the year”. Source: International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, 2220 UNTS 3, Art. 2(2)(b).

7 Disruption of usual mobility patterns due to restrictions on mobility imposed to curb COVID-19 resulted in a smaller number of migrants engaging in circular migration during 2020, and therefore it is possible that migrants identified via thematic migrant surveys may have been lower in proportion than what reflects their usual share amongst Libyan migrant population. Longitudinal tracking of this data point during 2021 is expected to shed more light onto this pattern.

to their countries of origin indicating the influence of geographic proximity and migrant social networks on circular migration to Libya. A larger proportion of migrants from Tunisia (29%) and Egypt (8%) interviewed during 2020 were identified as seasonal migrant workers compared to migrants from other countries of origin (below 5%).⁸ Notably, female migrants accounted for only 6% of the seasonal migrant workers identified in 2020, confirming that a lower proportion of female migrants engage in circular migration to Libya as reported in other studies.⁹ This finding on gender was also triangulated via key informant interviews.

A significantly larger proportion of seasonal migrant workers reported to be married (64%) compared to other migrants who did not engage in circular migration on a seasonal basis (31%). A majority of the married migrants (80%) had come to Libya seeking seasonal livelihoods or jobs without their spouses or family, where several migrants also reported that their families in the country of origin were a significant motivation for their return from Libya at the end of work season. Furthermore, seasonal migrant workers were also found to be older in age (media 31 years; average 33 years) than the broader migrant population in Libya (with median age of 28 years, and average 29 years).

A higher percentage of seasonal migrant workers interviewed (83%) in 2020 were employed compared to other migrants who did not report to engage in circular migration on a seasonal basis (74%). According to key informants a majority of seasonal migrant workers were employed in agriculture and livestock related activities, with most migrants finding work through word of mouth after arriving in Libya within their social networks that included both their fellow migrants and known employers.

Analysis of migration motivations and structural factors related to local labour markets indicates that circular migration to Libya is primarily driven by better availability of livelihoods in Libya than in migrants' countries of origin. However, some of the seasonal migrant workers in Libya were facing difficult living conditions and potentially increased vulnerabilities due to lack of access to decent housing as the majority of seasonal migrant workers indicated living at their workplaces. Like many other migrants in Libya, limited or no access to health services was also reported as a significant challenge (reported by 57% of interviewed seasonal migrant workers). Furthermore, most seasonal migrant workers were reported to arrive without identity documents, and a significant proportion of seasonal migrant workers

interviewed (18%) reported facing challenges due to lack of access to such documentation. Only 27% of the seasonal migrant workers interviewed reported to have entered Libya through an official point of entry (POE), indicating that a large part of circular migration to Libya has been happening irregularly, putting migrants at increased risk of detention, exploitation, and harm.

During 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic induced economic slowdown significantly impacted the local businesses in Libya employing migrant workers on a seasonal basis reducing the overall demand for seasonal migrant workers. While the number of migrant workers arriving in Libya for seasonal work also dropped due to restrictions imposed on mobility to curb the spread of pandemic a decline in seasonal work opportunities because of the economic slowdown was reported to be one of the most critical constraints for seasonal workers triggered by the pandemic. Furthermore, key informants also reported that the usual return of seasonal migrant workers from Libya at the end of work season was also disrupted in some cases due to mobility restrictions imposed during the pandemic.

⁸ See figure 1B for further details; percentages show proportion of migrants within these country of origin cohorts identified as seasonal migrant workers.

⁹ FAO 2017

METHODOLOGY

This study mainly relies on interviews with 604 seasonal migrant workers in Libya conducted in 2020 as part of DTM's thematic migrant surveys, and 219 in-depth key informant interviews (KIIs) conducted during November – December 2020 using a structured quantitative questionnaire designed specifically for this UK FCDO (DFID) study on circular migration.

The 219 key informant interviews were conducted with a wide range of key informants who were knowledgeable or had first-hand experience of circular migration in Libya including 103 migrant workers, 39 local officials, 37 business owners who employed migrant workers on a seasonal basis, 25 humanitarian workers, and 15 other key informants. These other 15 key informants included business owners who did not employ migrants, casual workers working with migrants, migrant community workers, and a director of the local livestock department.

Of the migrant key informants interviewed, 75% (77 individuals) reported to engage in circular migration to Libya on a seasonal basis, and were therefore also personally well informed on this subject.

The study covered 57 main municipalities of Libya with high migrant presence representing 84% of the total migrant population in Libya.¹⁰ The key informant interviews were conducted in 52 municipalities out of which in 51 of these municipalities (98%) key informants confirmed during in-depth key informant interviews that migrant workers arrived there for work on a seasonal basis. While DTM's thematic migrant surveys identified and interviewed seasonal migrant workers in 38 of the assessed municipalities throughout 2020.

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 labour migration and remittances.

In the report comparison of findings is often presented between findings from interviews with seasonal migrant workers and migrants who did not identify to engage in circular migration on a seasonal basis. This comparison is drawn from a set of 13,631 interviews conducted using thematic migrant survey with migrants who did not indicate engagement in circular migration when asked if they travelled to Libya and returned to their countries of origin on a regular basis. Furthermore, where population level comparisons between the sample of seasonal migrant workers and migrant population in Libya are drawn from the migrant population estimates used are obtained from DTM's migrant baseline figures published as part of DTM Migrant Report.¹¹

Limitations

The study relies on quantitative interviews for identification of seasonal migrant workers based on self-reported migration histories and motivations, and employment and occupation data. The approach undertaken in identifying seasonal migrant workers via migrant surveys was similar to that of demographic surveys conducted with migrants that plan to oversample in order to identify as many respondents matching the criteria as possible.¹² The downside of this approach was that the sample is non-probabilistic and therefore non-representative of the overall unknown population of seasonal migrant workers in Libya. However, this approach helps establish a baseline understanding of circular migration and the case of seasonal migrant workers in Libya that can be further investigated.

¹⁰ See Appendix for the list of municipalities assessed with their migrant population

¹¹ IOM 2020a

¹² UNECE 2016 See "5.1.5 demographic surveys" in UN ECE 2016:

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IOM continued to provide Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) services to migrants during the pandemic including group sessions aimed at helping migrants cope with stress and to be aware of referral services when needed. All in person group activities are implemented with due consideration of COVID-19 prevention measures.



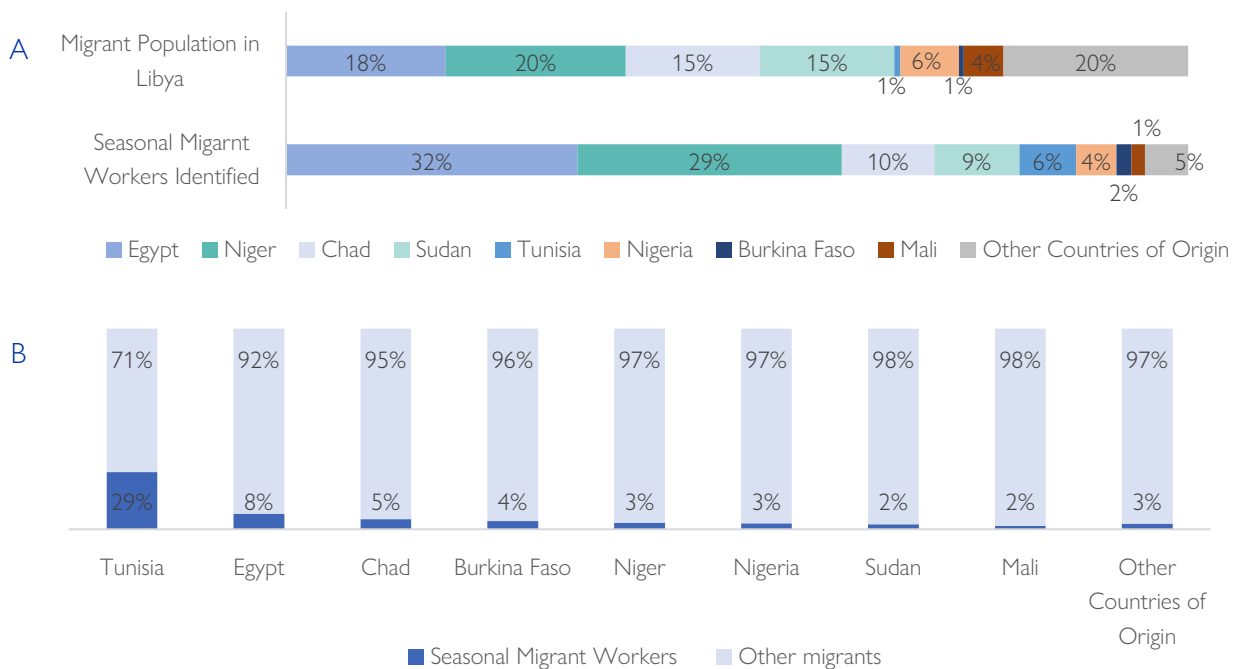
FINDINGS

PROFILE OF SEASONAL MIGRANT WORKERS

In 2020, 14,235 migrants were asked about circular migration to Libya, out of which 604 migrants (4%) confirmed to engage in circular migration by identifying that they repeatedly moved between their country of origin and Libya seeking employment opportunities and livelihoods on a seasonal basis. 88% (534 individuals) of these migrants reporting to engage in circular migration were from Libya’s neighbouring countries including Egypt (32%; 195 individuals), Niger (29%; 177 individuals), Chad (10%; 62 individuals), Sudan (9%; 57 individuals), Tunisia (6%; 38 individuals) and Algeria (1%, 5 individuals).¹³ Other DTM assessments have also shown that for individuals on the move from Niger to Libya – the majority of whom were Nigeriens – seasonal migration was identified as one of the most common reasons for migration.¹⁴

Seasonal migrant workers from Egypt, Niger, Chad and Sudan collectively were identified as a higher proportion of the sample at 81% compared to their overall share of 67% in the Libya’s migrant population indicating that circular migration to Libya is more prevalent amongst migrants from the neighbouring countries.¹⁵ However, circular migration to Libya from these four neighbouring countries of origin may still not constitute the major mobility trend as less than ten percent of migrants from each of these cohorts were identified as seasonal migrant workers (see figure 1 A. B. for charts showing comparisons).

Fig. 1 A. Comparison of seasonal migrant workers identified via thematic migrant surveys and the migrant population in Libya shown disaggregated by country-of-origin. B. Percentage of migrants within each country of origin cohort identified as seasonal migrant workers during migrant thematic surveys.



13 Percentages of seasonal migrant workers by their country of origin cohorts as identified during thematic migrant surveys (figure 1 A). Not to be confused with the share of seasonal migrant workers identified within each country of origin cohort (figure 1 B) via the thematic migrant surveys.

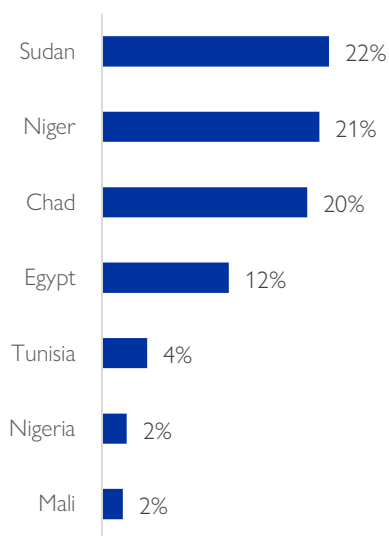
14 IOM 2020d

15 IOM 2020a

However, the proportion of migrants from Tunisia in the sample who identified as seasonal migrant workers was considerably higher as 29% of migrants from Tunisia interviewed on circular migration reported to repeatedly travel between Tunisia and Libya seeking employment opportunities and livelihoods. Migrants from Tunisia accounted for 6% of the seasonal migrant worker's sample identified in 2020, whereas they constitute only a smaller share of the entire migrant population in Libya.¹⁶ These statistics indicate that circular migration from Tunisia to Libya is a significant migration trend, perhaps one that benefits from the ease of cross border mobility, historical economic and cultural ties between border communities, and well established migrant social networks.¹⁷

Key informants interviewed also reported that migrants from Chad, Egypt, Niger, Sudan and Tunisia were highly represented amongst those migrants employed in seasonal work in their respective municipalities. Figure 2 shows the top seven country of origin cohorts of migrant workers employed in Libya on a seasonal basis as identified by key informants. The percentages in the figure show key informant estimates of the highest percentage of migrants from these country of origins in Libya employed in work opportunities available on a seasonal basis.

Fig. 2 Estimates of maximum percentage of migrant workers amongst the top country of origin cohorts employed in Libya on a seasonal basis during a typical year without mobility restrictions.



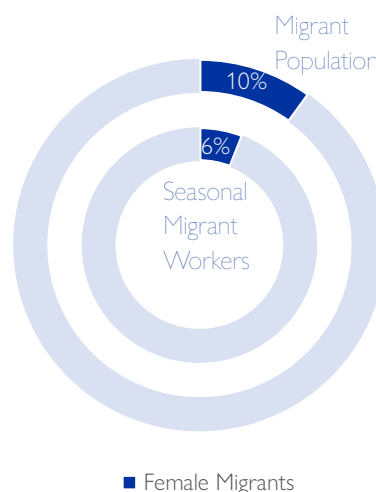
16 IOM 2020a; Despite the trend that circular migration to Libya is more prevalent amongst migrants from Tunisia, the overall scale of this migration pattern remains small as migrants from Tunisia accounted for less than 4000 migrants in Libya by December 2020.
17 IOM 2021a

Gender

Only 6% of the seasonal migrant workers identified via migrant interviews were female, which was lower than the 10% of Libyan migrant population identified as adult females, indicating that possibly a smaller proportion of female migrants may be engaging in circular migration than their overall share in the Libyan migrant population (figure 3).¹⁸

This trend was also triangulated by key informant interviews as 77% of the key informants reported that female migrants constituted less than 10% of the seasonal migrant workers in their municipalities. These findings also corroborate findings from a 2017 study which showed that male migrant workers constitute the core of paid agricultural work force in Libya.¹⁹ Moreover, an agriculture and livelihoods study conducted in Fezzan (Southern) region of Libya also highlighted that women in Southern Libya are generally not employed in seasonal labour outside of the family farms due of insecurity, local customs, religious norms and beliefs.²⁰

Fig. 3 Female migrants represent an even smaller minority amongst seasonal migrant workers at 6%, below their 10% representation amongst migrants in Libya



18 IOM 2020a
19 FAO 2017
20 WFP 2020

Family and Social Networks

A majority of seasonal migrant workers (64%) reported to be married and had families at the time of the interview which was found to be significantly higher compared to other migrants interviewed in Libya who did not report to engage in circular migration (only 31% of them reported to be married).

Only 20% of married seasonal migrant workers reported to have brought their spouses with them to Libya. While 80% indicated that their spouses were not in Libya, indicating a potential motivating factor for their return to country of origin. This finding was also confirmed by key informant interviews as 95% of the key informants reported that a majority of seasonal migrant workers did not bring their families to Libya.

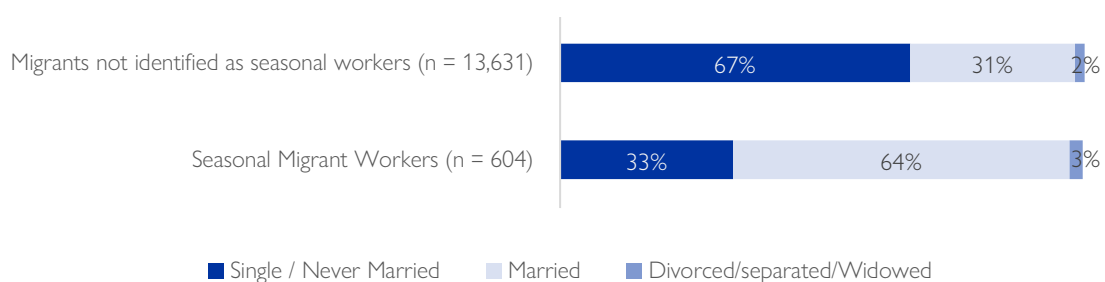
Several studies show that familial relations and migrants' social connections within their communities in the country of origin constitute a significant motivating factor determining migrants' likelihood of opting to return to their country of origin either permanently upon end of migration journey or as in this case on a regular basis if seeking seasonal work abroad.²¹

Age

The median age of migrants identified as seasonal migrant workers was 31 years, while the average age was 33 years, which indicates that migrants engaging in circular migration to Libya were on average older compared to the migrant population in Libya which has an estimated median age of 28 years (average of 29 years).²² This age difference could also be indicative of the seasonal migrant workers in Libya representing a slightly more established group, as those on their first trip to Libya may be of a younger age and therefore less likely to report engaging in circular migration which entails either having planned a return or the experience of several previous trips to Libya.

In some cases, the higher average age of seasonal migrant workers compared to other migrants could also be related to the type of work they engage in, as shown in other studies where the bulk of migrant workers hired as shepherds from neighbouring Sudan, Chad and Egypt were typically reported to be between 30 and 60 years old.²³

Fig. 4 Comparison of marital status between seasonal migrant workers identified and those migrants who did not report to engage in circular migration to Libya



²¹ Vadean et al. 2009

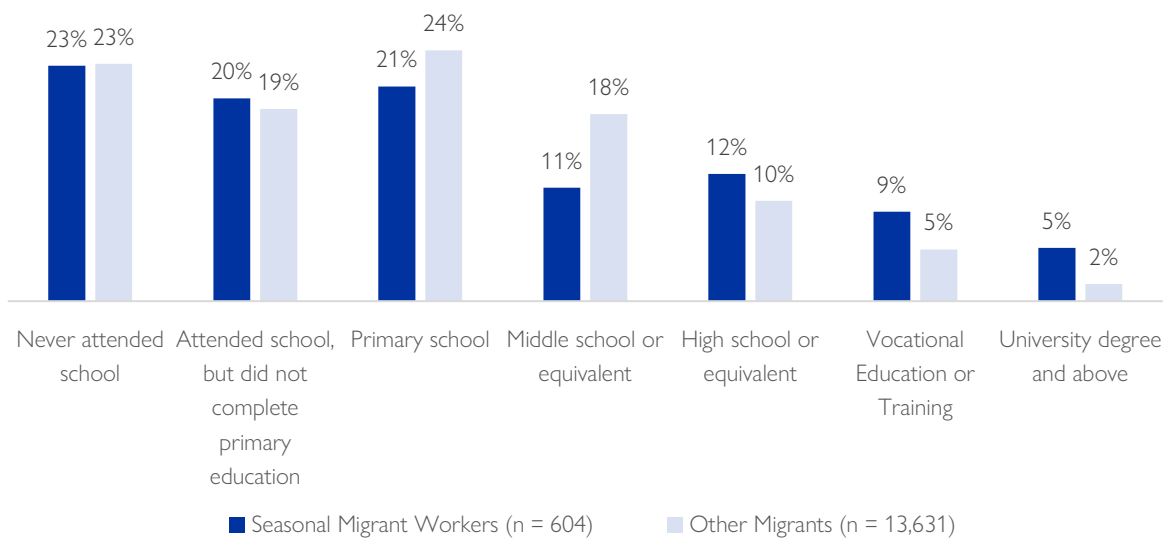
²² Median age of migrant population in Libya is estimated as 28 years via analysis of interviews conducted by DTM during last two years.

²³ FAO 2017

Education Levels

26% of seasonal migrant workers reported to have achieved education levels of high school and above, which was 10% higher than the 16% high school and above education levels recorded for other migrants who were interviewed during the same surveys but did not identify to engage in circular migration (see figure 5).

Fig. 5 Education levels – comparison between seasonal migrant workers and other migrants



SEASONALITY AND GEOGRAPHICAL TRENDS

Almost one in three respondents who were identified as seasonal migrant workers reported to have arrived in Libya between March and May. Key informants in 71% of the municipalities assessed also identified that a majority of seasonal migrant workers arrived in their municipalities between the months of March and May. Furthermore, in 55% of the municipalities assessed the majority of seasonal migrant workers were also reported to leave for their countries of origin between the months of October and December at the end of the season.

While the months reported during which migrants were able to find seasonal employment varied between the municipalities assessed indicating local variation of work season within different areas of Libya, 77% of the key informants reported that the work season in their municipalities did not change from year to year.

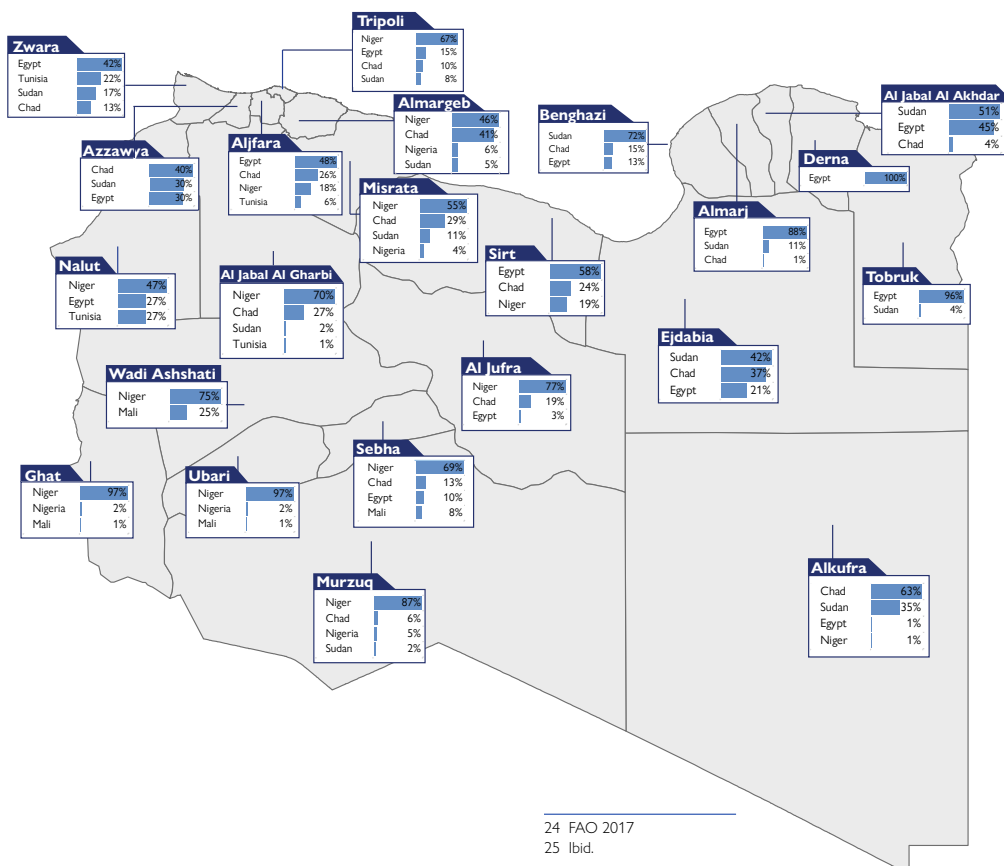
These findings show that despite local variation in seasonality, for most seasonal migrant workers seeking temporary employment in Libya the season seemed to

start between the months of March and April and ends during the months of October and December every year. Previous studies have also shown that seasonal migrants generally travel to Libya during three main periods, starting from April to May for the harvest of wheat and barley, in July and August for fruit picking, and October - November for picking olives.²⁴

While many migrant workers come to Libya in search of income-generating opportunities on a seasonal basis to augment their household incomes, they also contribute vital human resource for the labour market in Libya, as farm owners rely on migrant workers particularly during peak season.²⁵

Geographical analysis of seasonal migrant workers' presence in Libya by their country of origin indicates that geographical proximity between country of origin and place of employment in Libya, and historical connections indicative of migrants' social connections may significantly affect seasonal mobility patterns.

Fig. 6 Top country of origin cohorts for each region / mantika of Libya with their percentage share in local seasonal migrant worker population



24 FAO 2017
25 Ibid.

Figure 6 (on the previous page) presents the map showing regional level analysis of top countries of origin identified for seasonal migrant workers present in each region (mantika) of Libya based on key informant reports and on surveys with seasonal migrant workers.

For instance, a significantly larger proportion of seasonal migrant workers from Tunisia were identified to be employed on seasonal basis in Al Jabal Al Gharbi, Aljbara, Nalut, and Zwara regions of Western Libya, presumably due to geographical proximity. Whereas seasonal migrant workers from Mali were identified to be employed only in the Southern regions of Sebha, Ghat and Wadi Ashshati, indicating a possible role of established migrant social networks. Municipality-level assessments or case studies aimed at understanding the role of seasonal migrant workers in local labour markets, within the overall context of circular migration to Libya may further help elaborate geographical aspects that could not be uncovered in this broader study.

Further analysis of geographical spread of seasonal migrant workers identified via thematic migrant interviews as per their country of origin shows that a vast majority of seasonal migrant workers interviewed in Eastern Libya were from Egypt (79%), while in Southern Libya migrants from Niger constituted the majority of seasonal migrant workers (52%). However, the composition of seasonal migrant workers in Western Libya seems to be more diverse in terms of its country of origin disaggregation as no single country of origin cohort dominated the interviewed sample there (figure 7).

The trend on the country of origin make-up for seasonal migrant worker population in the three geographical regions of Libya was also confirmed through key informant interviews where key informants were asked to identify the top three countries of origin for seasonal migrant workers in their municipality. The country of origin disaggregation for seasonal migrant workers in the three geographical regions of Libya obtained via key informant interviews is shown in figure 8.

Fig. 7 Country of origin disaggregation of seasonal migrant workers identified via migrant interviews in different geographical regions of Libya

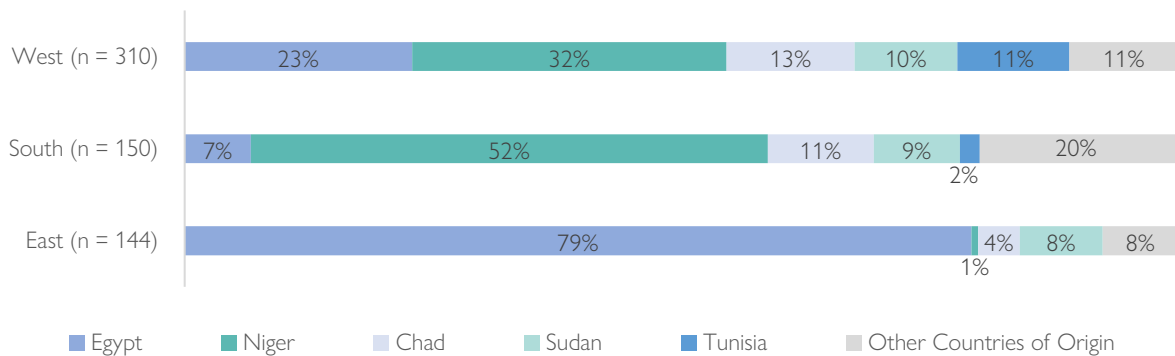
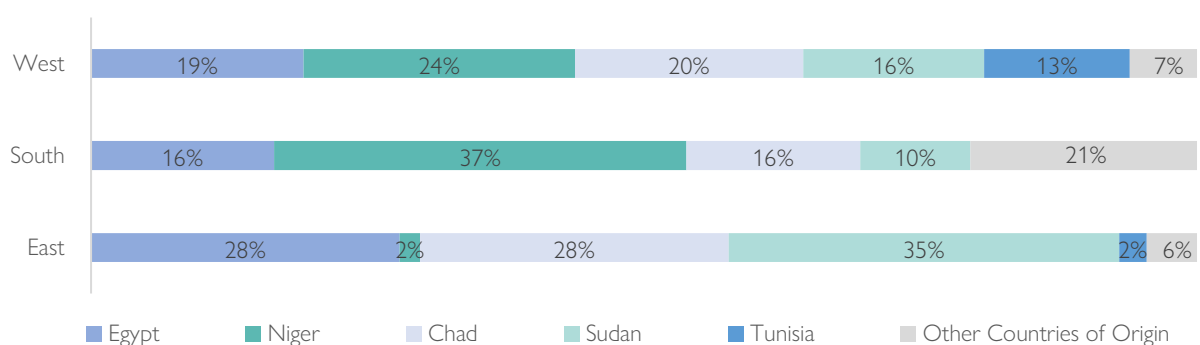


Fig. 8 Country of origin disaggregation of seasonal migrant workers in different geographical regions of Libya estimated from the top three country of origin cohorts identified by key informant interviews



While there are differences between the sample driven statistics (fig 7) and estimates derived from key informant reported make-up of the seasonal migrant population (fig 8), the country of origin disaggregation derived from both methods represents similar trends for regional distribution of migrants in Libya. Circular migration of seasonal migrant workers from Egypt and Sudan is the dominant seasonal trend observed in Eastern Libya, while circular migration to Southern and Western Libya was found to be relatively more diverse and varied. Migrants from Niger and Chad account for the largest proportion of seasonal migrant workers in Western and Southern Libya, whereas seasonal migrant workers from Tunisia were only employed in Western Libya.

The significance of Nigerien and Chadian seasonal migrant workers in southern and western Libya may also be linked to the traditional, tribal and kinship links between and within communities of the Sahara and Sahel. For instance, members of the Tebu and Tuareg tribal communities have been known to traditionally cross in and out of Libya's southern border to seek work in agriculture or other temporary labour opportunities – mainly on a seasonal basis – or to conduct trade.²⁶ While there are well-established seasonal and temporary migratory patterns between Niger and Libya, the flow of Nigeriens traveling to and from Libya and recorded at the Séguédine flow monitoring point has decreased between 2016 and 2019 as a result of increased insecurity in Libya and a decline in income-generating opportunities.

26 IOM 2014

SEASONAL EMPLOYMENT IN LIBYA (PROFILE OF ECONOMIC SECTORS)

Comparison of employment rates indicates that a higher proportion of seasonal migrant workers – who regularly travel to Libya seeking employment on a seasonal basis – were employed at the time of the interview than other migrants. 83% of the seasonal migrant workers identified in 2020 reported to be employed at the time of the interview compared to 74% employment rate recorded for other migrants who did not identify to engage in circular migration (figure 9). Analysis of migrant employment in Libya has previously been shown to be related to migration dynamics, indicating that employment rates in Libya were recorded higher for those migrants who came to Libya due to economic motivations and considered Libya a country of destination in comparison to migrants who did not consider Libya a country of destination and had to leave their countries of origin due to non-economic factors.²⁷

As seasonal migrant workers typically represent migrants who decidedly arrive in Libya seeking employment or livelihoods on a seasonal basis, and intend to return to their country of origin when the work season ends, further analysis was conducted to better understand the relationship between circular migration and seasonal employment dynamics in Libya.

Monthly trend shows that the overall employment rate for seasonal migrant workers is often linked to unemployed seasonal migrant workers interviewed at the start or near the end of work season. Unemployment spikes were particularly registered in April (start of work season) and October 2020 (end of work season). Furthermore, 2020 was an unusual year in terms of seasonal migration as widespread internal and cross-border mobility restrictions affected migration patterns, while the economic impact of COVID-19 also negatively impacted the employment prospects of migrant workers in Libya.²⁸ Therefore, while these findings establish a baseline indicating that employment amongst seasonal migrant workers was higher during 2020 in comparison to migrants with other aspirations or migratory statuses, continued collection of such data and trend analysis in 2021 may result in more robust findings.

Fig. 9 Employment status

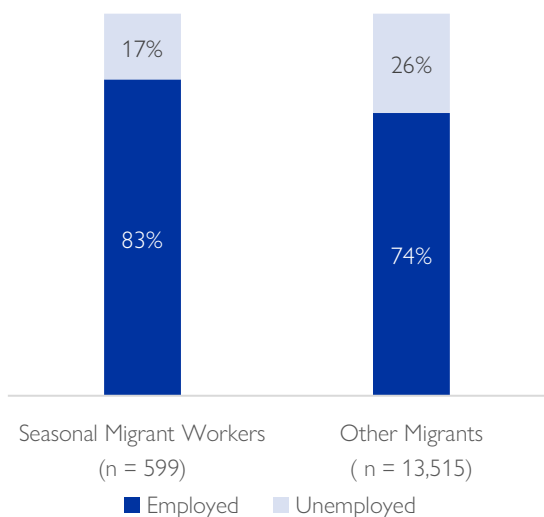
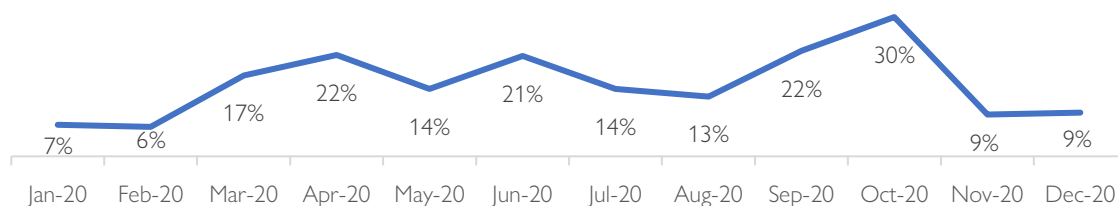


Fig. 10 Unemployment rates for seasonal migrant workers interviewed in 2020 saw spikes in April, June and October 2020 (n = 599)



27 IOM 2019b

28 Further explored in the section on impact of COVID-19 on circular migration to Libya

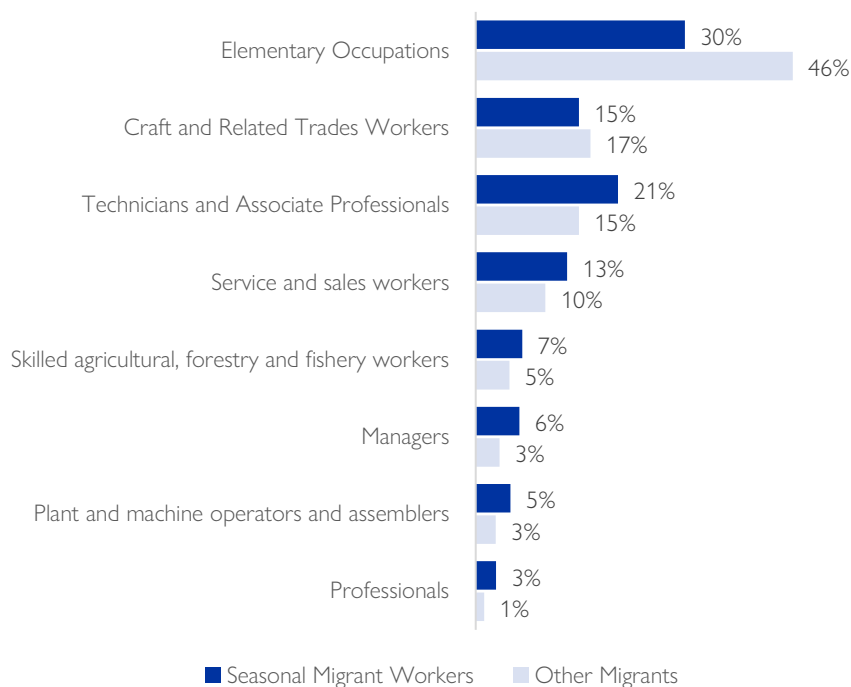
Slightly less than a third of seasonal migrant workers employed at the time of the interview (30%) reported working in elementary occupations such as unskilled construction or farm workers, which was 16% lower than the sample of other migrants who did not identify to engage in circular migration. Figure 11 shows the complete breakdown of occupational classifications under which seasonal migrant workers reported to be employed in Libya. A side-by-side comparison with the sample of other migrants who were asked the same questions but did not identify to engage in circular migration is also presented in the same figure.

The initial analysis based on this comparison shows that a higher proportion of seasonal migrant workers in Libya were employed in occupations requiring relatively higher levels of skill sets than those required for elementary occupations.²⁹

Further research focused on understanding circular migration to Libya within the broader context of Libyan labour market dynamics is recommended to confirm this initial finding and if possible to elaborate the underlying structural aspects driving the trend.

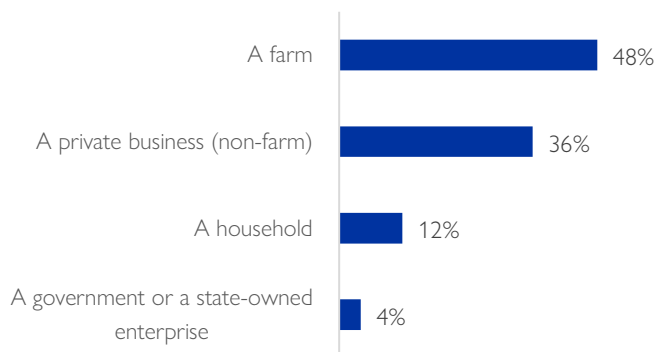
To further understand employment and occupational conditions of seasonal migrant workers key informants were asked to identify the common types of entities in their municipalities that employed migrants on a seasonal basis. Farms were identified as the most common entity (48%), followed by private businesses (36%) not related to agriculture (non-farm entities). Only to a limited extent seasonal migrant workers were identified to be working in households (12%) and at public facilities (4%) as shown in figure 12 (on next page).

Fig. 11 Occupations employing seasonal migrant workers in Libya classified as per major ISCO-08 categories (FMS, Seasonal Workers n = 476; Other Migrants n = 10,001)



²⁹ Elementary occupations as per ISCO-08 classification of occupations includes jobs such as unskilled construction work, unskilled agricultural work which require the performance of simple and routine physical or manual tasks and are therefore translated as the lowest skilled jobs.

Fig. 12 Categories of economic units / work places where seasonal migrant workers are employed in Libya (KII, n = 207)



Furthermore, the largest proportion of key informants also identified that a majority of seasonal migrant workers were employed in agriculture and related activities (53%), followed by working with animal or livestock as the second most common type of activities that seasonal migrants were engaged in.

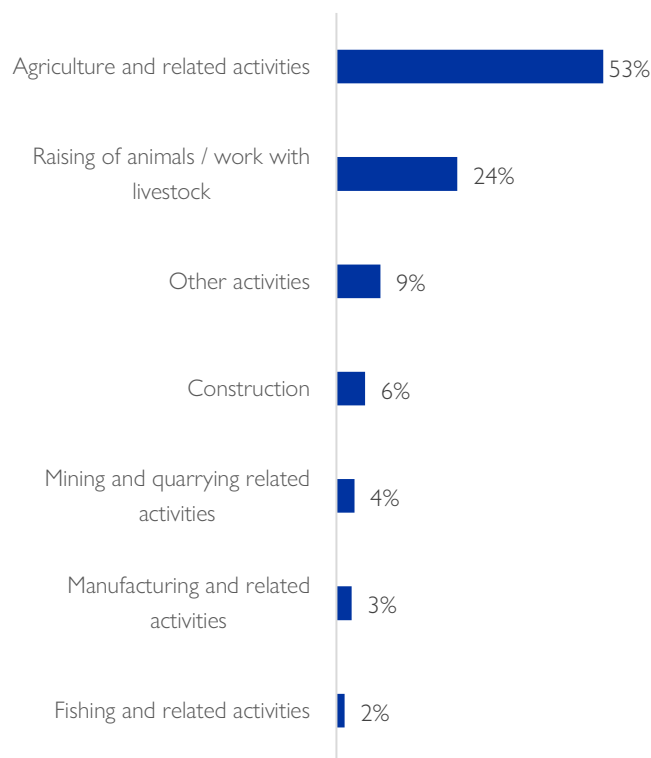
This indicates that agriculture and livestock related work in Libya may be drawing the highest share of seasonal migrant workers seeking livelihoods. Underlying reasons include potential gaps in the labour market for agricultural workers; the majority of employment available in the agricultural sector has generally not attracted the Libyan labour force because of low wages, gruelling work, and its seasonal nature among other reasons.³⁰ Therefore the Libyan agricultural sector has heavily relied on migrant workers to fill the bulk of jobs, including planting and harvesting.

Studies focusing on southern Libya also show that agricultural labour has traditionally been seen by migrants as one of the most stable sources of casual employment with a guaranteed income.³¹

Seasonal migrant workers also engaged in other types of activities as shown in figure 13 including construction, mining and quarrying, manufacturing and even fishing related activities.

Other activities (9%) shown in figure 13, include a diverse range of economic activities reported by a minority, such as retail or wholesale, repair and installation of machinery and equipment, or work related to Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply.

Fig. 13 Range of economic activities that seasonal migrant workers find jobs and employments in Libya at (KII, n = 219)*



30 IOM 2014
31 WFP 2020

* Classification of economic activities is adapted from International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC Rev 4), UN DESA 2008

Seasonal Migrant Workers on Date Palm Plantations

The majority of seasonal migrant workers in Libya were broadly identified to be working in agriculture related jobs, while key informants highlighted that seasonal migrant workers in Aljufra, Al Qatrun, and Sebha were particularly common on date palm plantations. Migrants from Niger and Chad constitute the majority of seasonal workers on these plantations, while migrants from Egypt, Sudan, Tunisia amongst others were also reported to be employed on a seasonal basis.

Key informants highlighted a lack of workers from the local community, specifically shortage of skilled agricultural workers as the main reason for employers to recruit seasonal migrant workers on their farms and plantations. Seasonal migrant workers were reported to be preferred by employers due to their skills and prior experience in working on date plantations. The migrants were reported to work both during the harvest season as well as during other seasons to take care of the plantations. A recent study on agriculture and livelihoods in Fezzan (southern Libya) had also identified that seasonal migrant workers were responsible for various activities related to crop production such as land preparation, application of fertilizers and pesticides, to harvesting and selling of agricultural produce.³²

These findings show that seasonal migrant workers play an important role in the Libyan agricultural sector at large and on date plantations and farms in particular. As shown in the next section on drivers of circular migration, most migrant workers arrive and stay in Libya irregularly. However, in light of the predictable seasonal demand for migrant workers in the agricultural sector, a labour migration scheme aimed at promoting regular, orderly and safe migration of seasonal workers could be considered. Seasonal migrant workers from Niger and Chad employed by medium to large scale date plantations could be of particular interest for any such efforts.

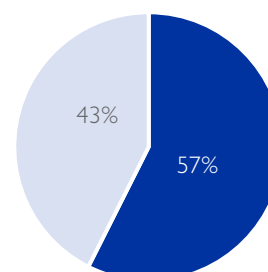
To understand job security and related dynamics, seasonal migrant workers interviewed were also asked if they had a contract or agreement with their employment at the time of the interview. Only 9% of the seasonal migrant workers informed that they had a written and signed contract, whereas 69% reported that they had an oral agreement with the employer but did not have a contract.

However, 22% of the seasonal migrant workers gainfully employed at the time of the survey neither had a contract nor an oral agreement and were therefore working for daily wages without adequate legal protection in case of disputes or exploitation. Other studies have shown that seasonal agricultural migrant workers were often employed on a monthly basis, especially when the soil needs tilling or the farm needs maintenance, or on a daily basis during harvest time.³³

While a majority of key informants (57%) reported that most of the seasonal migrant workers first arrived in their municipalities and only then started searching for work,

a significant proportion (47%) of the key informants also identified that seasonal migrant workers in their municipalities were specifically recruited and brought in by employers to meet their particular labour needs.

Fig. 14 Majority of migrant workers find work or jobs after arriving in Libya (KII, n = 219)



- Look for seasonal work or jobs only after arriving at this location
- Migrants are specifically recruited by employers for seasonal work or jobs

³² WFP 2020

³³ Altai Consulting 2013

Key informants indicating that employers specifically recruited migrants on a seasonal basis also identified that most employers recruited migrants through word of mouth via either asking migrants they know in Libya to ask for other migrants in their country of origin to come for seasonal work, or by asking other employers of seasonal migrant workers (figure 15).

These findings are in line with a recent DTM Libya study on migrants' social networks, which found that 64 percent of migrants – engaged in circular migration or not – had found their current employment through their social networks.³⁴ Family connections appeared to play a significant role in finding work in the sector of agriculture, domestic work and retail or sales.

A small proportion of key informants also identified the role of recruitment agents or facilitators and also reported that employers also at times travelled to the country of origin to directly recruit seasonal migrant workers.

Key informants also indicated that seasonal migrant workers found work through word-of-mouth job search within their social networks including other migrants, relatives, friends and Libyan contacts as well as by simply waiting on the street side recruitment points as shown in figure 16 (next page). This further indicates that social networks play a significant role in influencing employment and living conditions of migrants in Libya.³⁵

Key informants were also asked to identify factors influencing employers' decision to recruit seasonal migrant workers, where a narrow majority (51%) identified that most employers recruited seasonal migrant workers in their municipalities due to workforce shortage as not enough Libyan workers were available in the area (figure 17).

Whereas 46% of the key informants reported that while there was adequate local workforce available in their municipalities it lacked skills required to do seasonal work. Studies carried out in southern Libya have also shown that a significant proportion of farmers hire migrant workers to meet their agricultural labour need, especially for the seasonal jobs on farms, such as land preparation or harvesting.³⁶

Interestingly 4% of the key informants specified other factors including very specific observations such as “most of the local workforce was employed in public jobs with salaries and therefore not available to do seasonal work”.

Other key informants specified that seasonal migrant workers employed in their municipalities had specific skills required for cattle herding or related to care of fig orchards, date palms and grape plants.

Fig. 15 Most employers recruit seasonal migrant workers in Libya by asking migrants already present in Libya (KII, n = 219)



34 IOM 2021a
35 IOM 2021a

36 WFP 2020

Fig. 16 Most migrants find work on a seasonal basis in Libya through word of mouth (KII, n = 219)

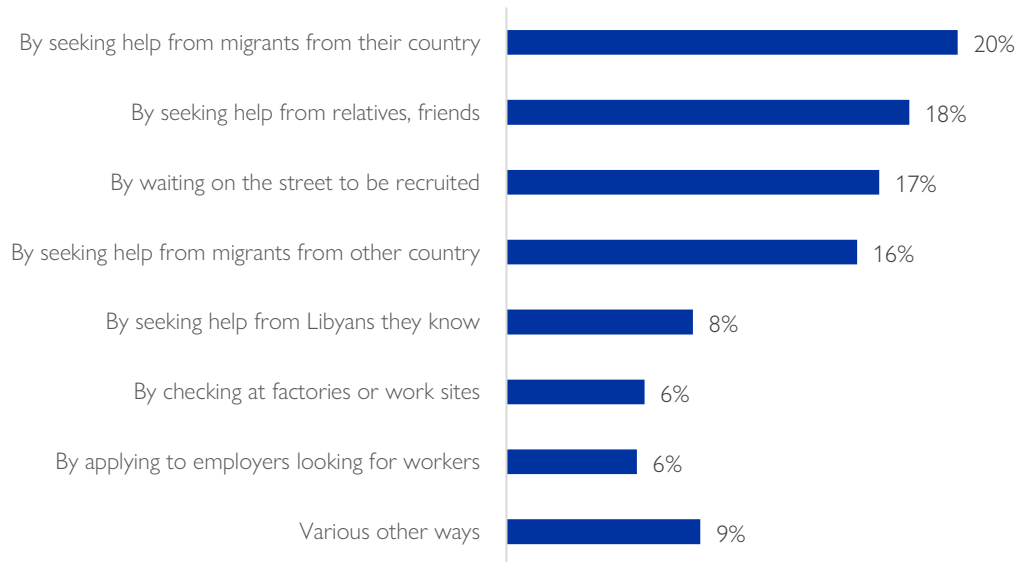
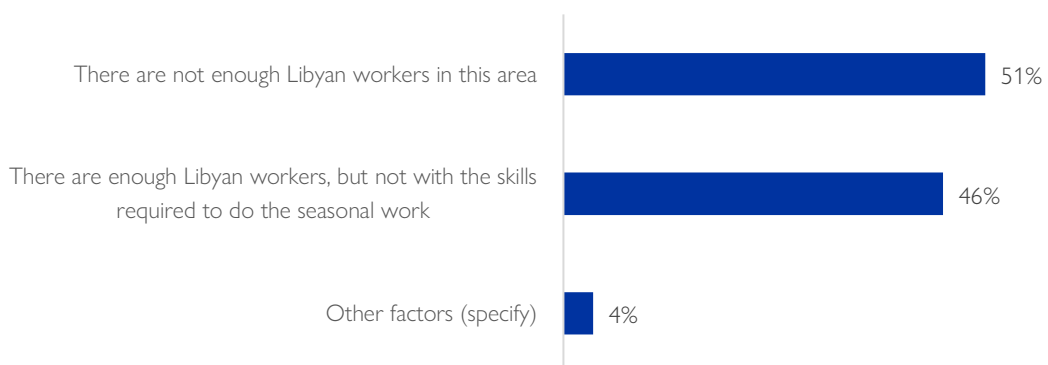


Fig. 17 Employers in Libya recruit seasonal migrant workers due to local workforce shortages (KII, n = 197)



When asked if wage differences between what is typically paid to seasonal migrant workers and local workforce was also a reason, 55% of the key informants confirmed that migrant workers willingness to work for lower wages compared to local work force may also be influencing employers' decision to recruit seasonal migrant workers. These findings are in line with a 2017 FAO study which also found that the wages of migrant workers were generally lower than those of local residents.

These findings indicate that a majority of seasonal migrant workers in Libya were employed, where most of them worked in elementary occupations related to agriculture and livestock management, and they found these livelihood opportunities through their social networks either directly out of their initiative or as a result of their

employers' efforts in finding workers but mostly through word of mouth. Furthermore, these initial findings related to seasonal employment in Libya show that structural aspects related to local labour and workforce market dynamics may be playing a role in driving circular migration to Libya. In light of these findings the next section further explores the drivers of circular migration to Libya.

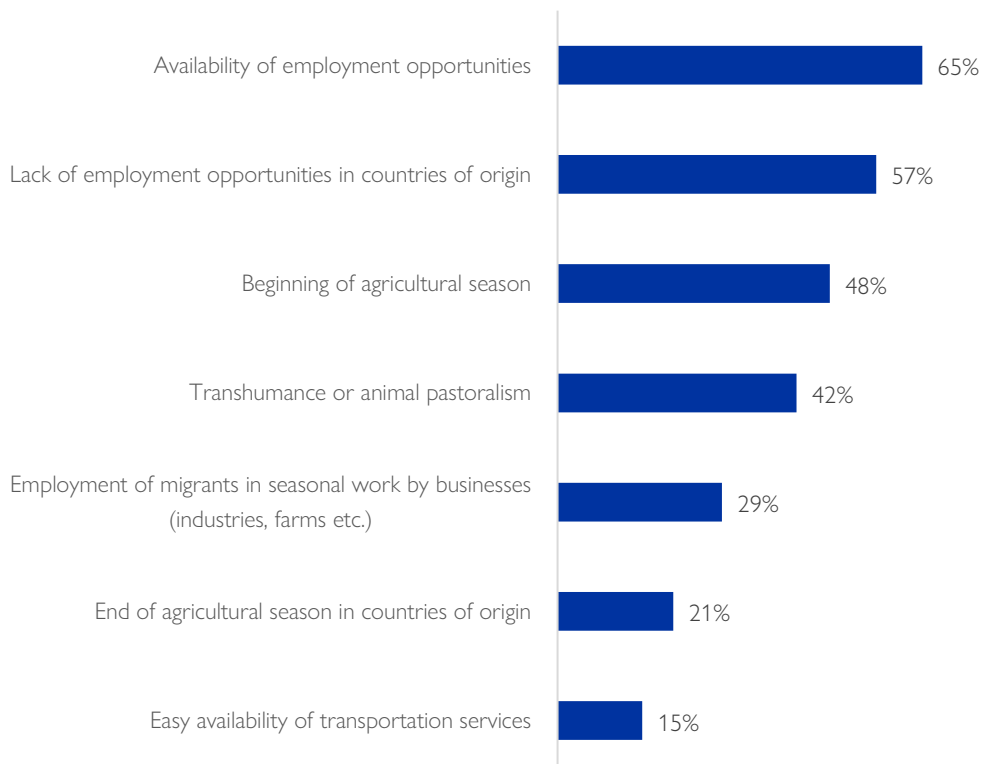
DRIVERS OF CIRCULAR MIGRATION

To understand the drivers of circular migration to Libya, which entails arriving in Libya for seasonal work on a periodic or regular basis and then returning to the country of origin upon completion of work, this study relies on the synthesis of migration motivations identified by seasonal migrant workers interviewed and the structural aspects related to local labour markets identified by key informants.

Placing motivations for leaving the country of origin identified by the seasonal migrant workers (figure 19) within the context of structural factors that affect circular migration to Libya identified by key informants figure 18 indicates two major drivers: i. The disparity in availability of livelihoods between migrants' places of origin in their countries and the municipalities assessed in Libya, ii. The lack of work force available or willing to work on seasonal jobs within the assessed municipalities.

When asked to identify factors that were driving migrants to their municipalities for seasonal work, in response to a multiple-choice question, a majority (65%) of the key informants identified that availability of employment opportunities in their municipalities was the primary driver. Furthermore, 57% of the key informants also indicated that in their opinion lack of employment opportunities in the migrants' countries of origin may also be playing a role in driving their migration to Libya on a seasonal basis. Other factors identified included beginning of the agricultural season (48%), transhumance or animal pastoralism (42%), and employment of migrants in seasonal work by local businesses (29%) as shown in figure 18.

Fig. 18 Factors driving migrant workers to Libya on a seasonal basis (multiple choice question in KI interviews, n = 219)



In terms of motivations for leaving countries of origin and seeking work on a seasonal basis in Libya, 88% of the seasonal migrant workers interviewed identified economic reasons as their primary motivation for migration. Figure 19 shows the broad breakdown of motivations for migration reported by the seasonal migrant workers interviewed in Libya: While the overwhelming majority identified economic factors as their primary and secondary motivation for leaving the country of origin, a small yet significant percentage of migrants also identified other primary motivations including armed conflict, violence, or persecution in their countries of origin (2%), natural disasters or environmental degradation (5%) and various other reasons (12%) for them to seek seasonal work in Libya.

Further breakdown of economic factors shows that for a majority of migrants identifying economic factors as their primary motivation insufficient income in the country of origin (53%) was the main factor behind their decision to leave their countries of origin for work in Libya on a seasonal basis. Furthermore, 22% of the seasonal migrant workers identifying economic reasons as their primary motivation reported that they simply looked for job opportunities abroad (in this case Libya), while 21% identified a lack of job opportunities in their country of origin as the main motivating factor for their engagement in circular migration (see figure 20).

Fig. 19 Motivations for migration to Libya analysed through first two reasons identified for leaving the country of origin (Migrant surveys; n = 604)

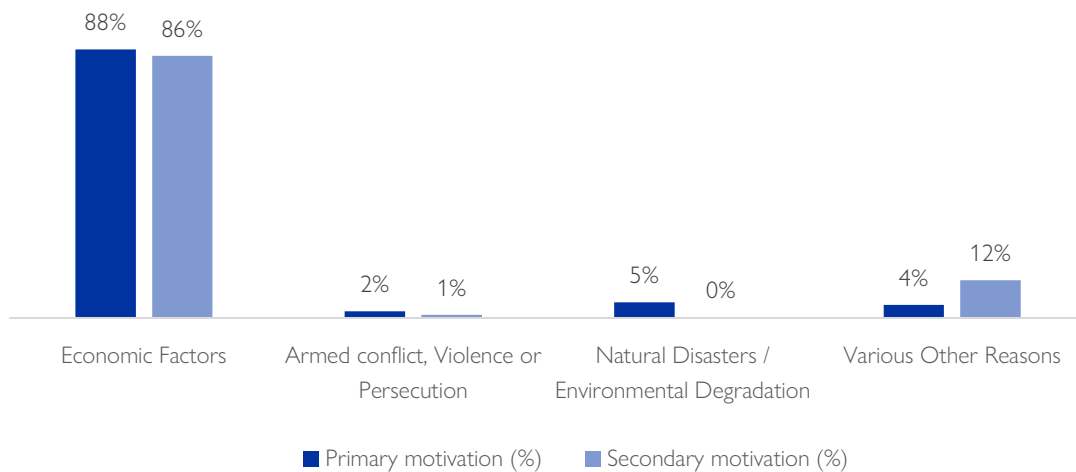
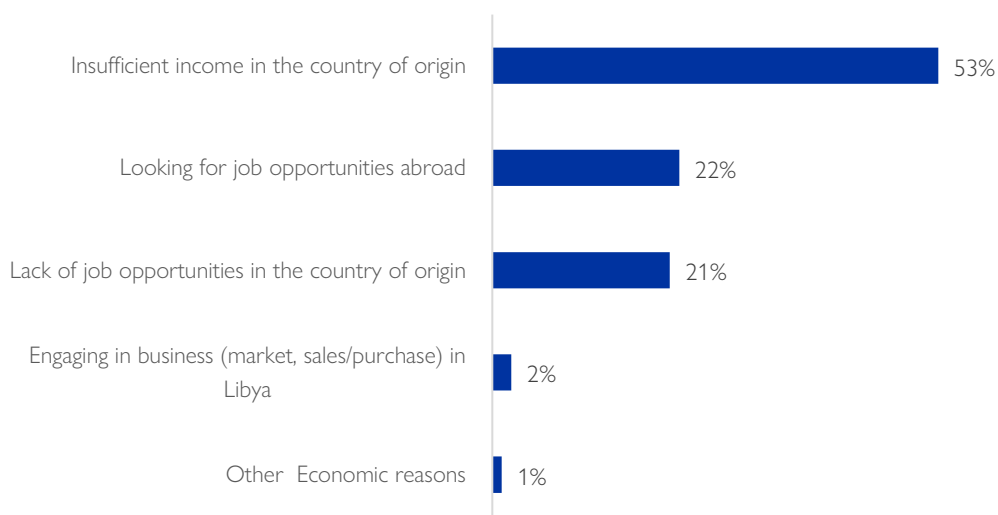


Fig. 20 Breakdown of primary economic factors motivating migration to Libya (Migrant surveys; n = 534)



Data analyzed in this study indicates that circular migration to Libya may be primarily driven by better availability of livelihood opportunities in Libya compared to the migrants' countries of origin. However, this does not imply a certain improvement in migrants' circumstances or living conditions simply because they gain access to livelihoods in Libya, as migration to Libya presents its own set of challenges.

Furthermore, 11% of the key informants reported that migrants' social networks played a role in encouraging circular migration to Libya. This was also confirmed during interviews with migrants where 25% of the seasonal migrant workers reported that their families and communities in the country of origin influenced their decision to engage in circular migration to Libya.³⁷

Moreover, the influence of family within the context of circular migration was also found to influence the decision to return to country of origin as reported by 4% of the seasonal migrant workers interviewed.

For many seasonal migrant workers migration may be occurring outside the scope of regulatory frameworks, although they may be spending a major part of their year in Libya to work. In this study, 73% of the key informants reported that a majority of seasonal migrant workers arriving in their municipalities did not bring identification documentation with them. Around 18% of the seasonal migrant workers interviewed in 2020 also confirmed this by expressing that one of the major challenges they faced in Libya was related to lack of access to identification documentation.

Furthermore, only 27% of the seasonal migrant workers reported entering Libya through an official point of entry (POE) indicating that circular migration to Libya by a majority of seasonal migrant workers is undertaken outside the scope of relevant immigration and labour regulatory frameworks. Therefore, a majority of seasonal migrant workers arriving in Libya seeking livelihoods face significant risks of detention, exploitation and harm. To further explore the extent and prevalence of circular migration, it is crucial that administrative and immigration data systems in Libya are encouraged and supported to capture the details of migrant workers engaging in circular migration.

³⁷ For further details see IOM 2021a

LIVING CONDITIONS OF SEASONAL MIGRANT WORKERS IN LIBYA

Several assessments and studies in Libya present analysis and findings highlighting the challenging living conditions and circumstances faced by migrants and refugees in Libya.³⁸ However, very little analysis on circumstances of specific population groups exist. This section of the study aims to present a baseline picture of the living conditions and circumstances of the seasonal migrant workers in Libya.

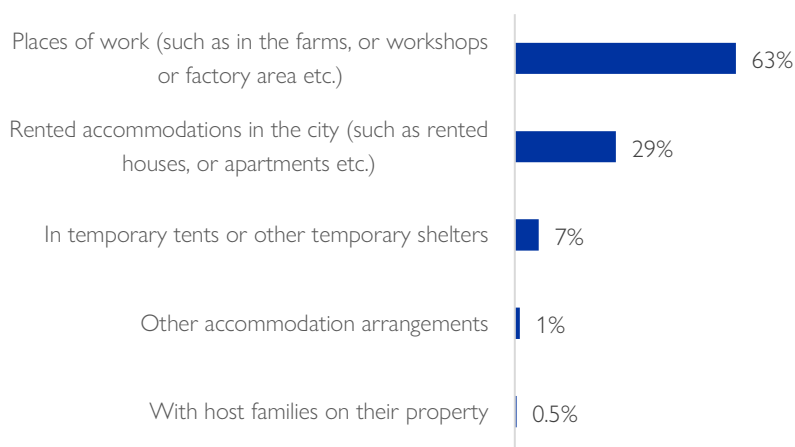
One of the main indicators used to assess the living conditions of seasonal migrant workers was related to their accommodation situation. 63% of the key informants identified that the majority of seasonal migrant workers in their municipalities lived at their places of work including farms, workshops, or factory areas. Almost one third (29%) of the key informants reported that the majority of seasonal migrant workers in their municipalities were mainly staying in rented accommodations (figure 21). These findings are in line with a WFP study, which found that in southern Libya when not accommodated on-site, migrant workers typically lived nearby and commuted.

This finding also shows that the accommodation situation of seasonal migrant workers is significantly different from the overall trend observed for the migrant population where a majority (77%) is reported to be living in rented accommodations.³⁹

DTM's previous assessment of migrants' housing conditions in Libya had found that migrants living at their places of work fared worse compared migrants renting accommodations.⁴⁰ Workplaces used for accommodation were found to be more overcrowded compared to rented accommodations and were also more likely to lack appropriate bathing or washing facilities in comparison to other types of accommodations utilized by migrants. The housing study had also found that most workplaces were of substandard structural quality in comparison to other accommodations build for purposes of living, and that migrants living at workplaces also lacked security of tenure.

Considering that a majority of seasonal migrant workers are reported to be living at their workplaces, in view of the conditions of workplaces assessed in the housing study, seasonal migrant workers could be facing increased vulnerabilities in terms of quality of accommodation or shelters used, and security of tenure. Other studies have also shown that migrant seasonal workers suffered from a lack of adequate housing opportunities in Libya.⁴¹

Fig. 21 Accommodation types utilized by seasonal migrant workers in Libya (KII, n = 206)



38 IOM 2019b, REACH 2021
39 IOM 2021a

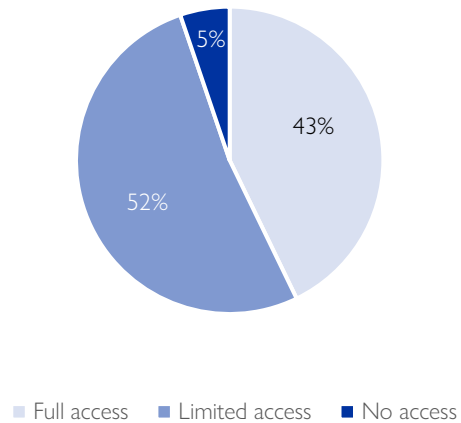
40 IOM 2020b
41 FAO 2017

The second key indicator used to determine the living conditions and circumstances of seasonal migrant workers was related to their access to health services. Key informants identified that nearly one in three seasonal migrant workers in their municipalities did not have access to health services if and when needed. Similarly, in individual interviews 57% of the seasonal migrant workers answering the questions in the health module also confirmed that they had no or only limited access to health services (figure 22).

These findings are particularly concerning in the context of COVID-19 pandemic, where lack of access to health services for any segment of population can be detrimental to the overall public health situation. Inclusion of seasonal migrant workers into humanitarian health programming with an aim of increasing their access to local healthcare services should be encouraged irrespective of their immigration status or relatively shorter duration of stay or temporary employment in Libya. Whereas policy level advocacy aimed at systematically increasing migrants access to health services in Libya is also recommended.

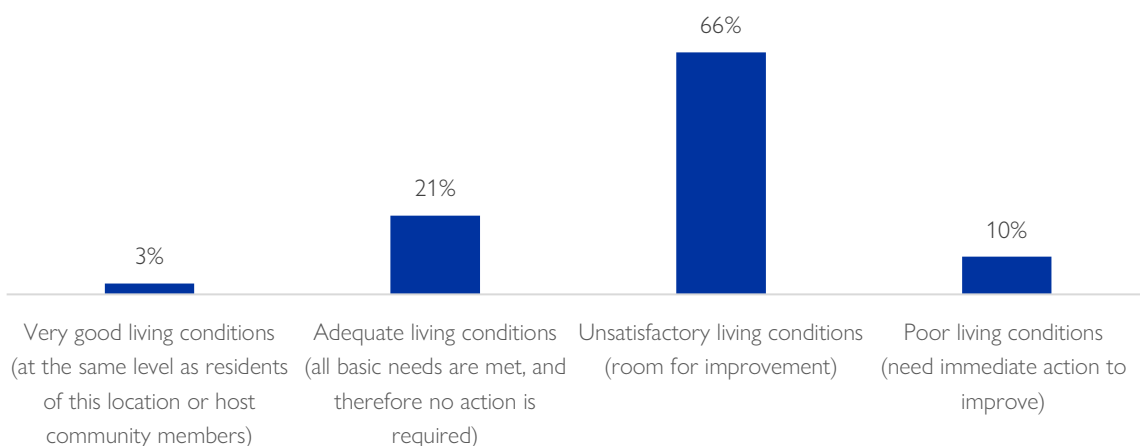
Beyond the two main indicators related to status of migrants' accommodation and their access to health services, key informants were also asked to make a subjective determination about the living conditions of seasonal migrant workers in their municipalities.⁴²

Fig. 22 57% of seasonal migrant workers had either no or limited access to health services in Libya (Migrant surveys, n = 383)



76% indicated that living conditions of seasonal migrant workers can be improved, as seasonal migrant workers in their municipalities were subject to unsatisfactory and poor living conditions that require improvement (see figure 23).

Fig. 23 Living Conditions of Seasonal Migrant Workers



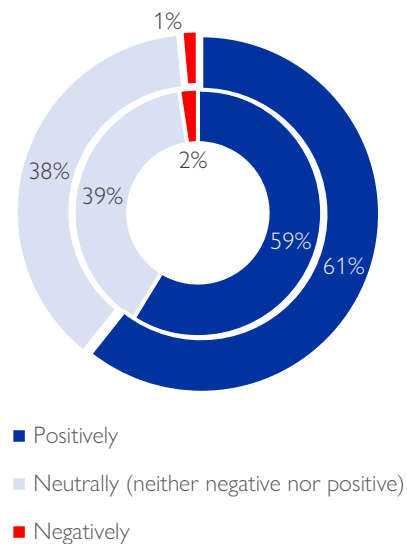
⁴² Note: 35% of the key informants interviewed were seasonal migrant workers, while 17% were employers who recruited seasonal migrant workers.

Further analysis shows that a higher proportion of employers (13%) and migrants (12%) interviewed as key informants identified that the living conditions of seasonal migrant workers in their municipalities were unsatisfactory compared to the conditions prevalent in their local context and therefore in need of action aimed at improving them. While these specific findings are subjective and anecdotal, they are still indicative of opinions from the field highlighting a need for improvement.

To further gauge public opinions on the contribution of seasonal migrant workers to local businesses and within local communities, key informants were asked how owners of local businesses perceived contributions of seasonal migrant workers to their businesses. A majority (59%) reported that businesses owners perceive the contributions of seasonal migrant workers positively. Similarly, when asked about perceptions of seasonal migrant workers within the local communities, 61% of the key informants reported that seasonal migrant workers were perceived positively within local communities. Interestingly, a significant proportion of key informants' perceive seasonal migrant workers neither positively nor negatively (39% in relation to their contribution to local businesses and 38% with regards to their contribution to local community), leaving only a small minority (less than 2%) that perceived the seasonal migrant workers' contributions negatively (see figure 24).

These findings indicate that there is space and possible acceptance of community-led and owned programming to improve the living conditions of seasonal migrant workers who are seen to be contributing positively to the local businesses as well as the communities. Positive perceptions of seasonal migrant workers can be harnessed to improve their access to locally available health services as well as to find dignified accommodation and housing solutions even if migrants spend only a part of the year within these communities. Therefore, any migration management and governance programming aimed at facilitating regular, orderly and safe migration of seasonal workers to Libya should also focus on improving these migrants' access to housing and health services in Libya.

Fig. 24 Perceptions of seasonal migrant workers; inner doughnut shows how employers in their communities perceive contribution of seasonal migrant workers to their businesses, and the outer doughnut represents the perception of seasonal migrant workers within the local community (KI; n = 206)



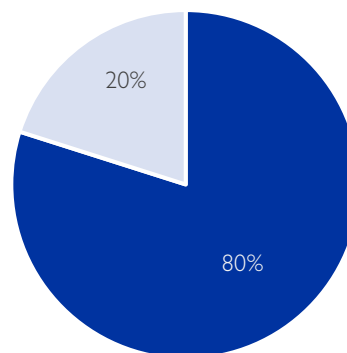
IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON CIRCULAR MIGRATION TO LIBYA

In 2020 DTM Libya recorded a decline in the number of migrants present in Libya as more than 80,000 migrants were estimated to have left Libya while arrival of new migrants was also decreased significantly.⁴³ This dynamic was largely driven by COVID-19 pandemic, primarily due to its socio-economic impact on mobile populations in Libya and its neighbouring countries. The pandemic has disrupted the pattern of circular migration to Libya, while the economic slowdown resulting from the pandemic along with the mobility restrictions imposed to curb its spread have also negatively impacted seasonal migrant workers.

During this assessment key informants were asked a range of questions aimed at understanding the impact of COVID-19 on circular migration to Libya and on seasonal migrant workers migration journeys. 80% of the key informants reported that local businesses employing seasonal migrant workers were negatively affected by the pandemic possibly indicating that their financial capacity to employ seasonal migrant workers may have decreased as a result (figure 25).

As shown in figure 26, 59% of the key informants reported that the economic slowdown due to COVID-19 pandemic triggered a decreased demand for seasonal migrant workers' services.

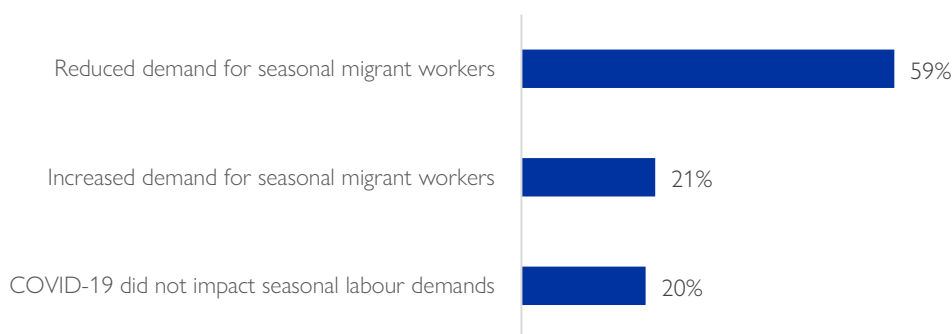
Fig. 25 Impact on local businesses employing seasonal migrant workers (KII; n = 206)



- COVID-19 negatively impact local businesses employing seasonal migrants
- COVID-19 did not impact on local businesses employing seasonal migrant workers

Notably, 21% of the key informants also indicated that in some locations the demand for seasonal migrant workers may have increased which could result from even lower participation of local workforce in certain seasonal activities, such as agriculture and livestock management due to COVID-19 pandemic.⁴⁴

Fig. 26 Impact on seasonal labour demand (KII; n = 206)



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43 IOM 2020a

44 Some key informants – as presented under the section on Seasonal Employment in Libya – have reported that in their municipalities majority of local workforce was employed in public sector jobs leaving only a smaller proportion of local workforce to work in seasonal or temporary jobs.

The COVID-19 pandemic was also reported to have impacted the dynamics of circular migration to Libya during 2020 as 60% key informants reported that fewer seasonal migrant workers arrived in Libya during 2020 compared to the previous years (figure 27).

Furthermore, 75% of the key informants indicated that mobility restrictions implemented to curb the spread of COVID-19 resulted in a decline in the number of arrivals. While 47% of these key informants also reported that a decline in the work opportunities available to seasonal migrant workers in their areas due to COVID-19 pandemic induced economic slowdown may also have resulted in a lower number of arrivals.⁴⁵

The COVID-19 pandemic reportedly also disrupted the return of some seasonal migrant workers during 2020, as 61% of the key informants reported that the usual return of seasonal migrant workers was affected by the pandemic. Most of the key informants stressing this constraint also indicated that many seasonal migrant workers were forced to stay longer in Libya, delaying their return. Similarly, some seasonal migrant workers were also reported to have returned earlier than usual at the onset of the pandemic as they feared getting stuck due to mobility restrictions.

Furthermore, a negative impact of COVID-19 on migrants' remittances has also been observed in 2020 as reported in DTM's recent study on remittances of migrants in Libya.⁴⁶

The significant loss of seasonal labour opportunities due to the COVID-19 pandemic is globally feared to result in financial hardship for seasonal workers' families in their country of origin.⁴⁷ In October 2020, the World Bank projected a potential 14 per cent decline in remittance flows to low- and middle-income countries by 2021 compared to pre-pandemic levels.⁴⁸

These findings further highlight how the economic slowdown due to COVID-19 impacted circular migration, job opportunities and therefore the overall conditions of seasonal migrant workers in Libya.

Fig. 27 Impact of COVID-19 on arrival of seasonal migrant workers (supply)

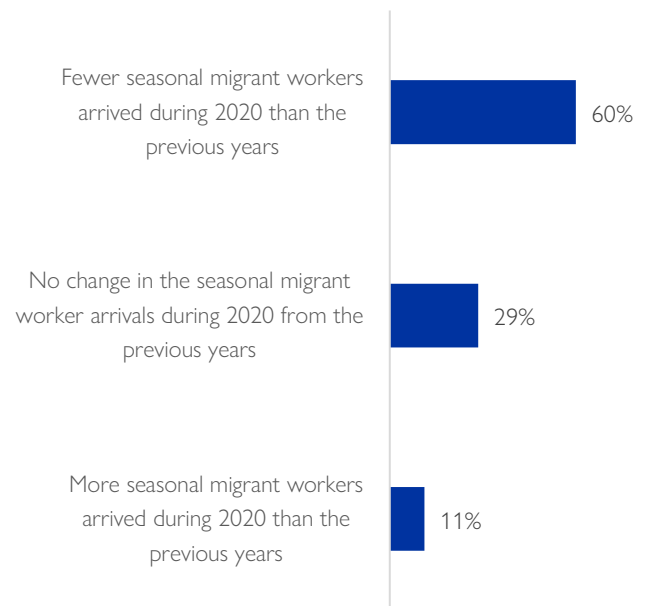
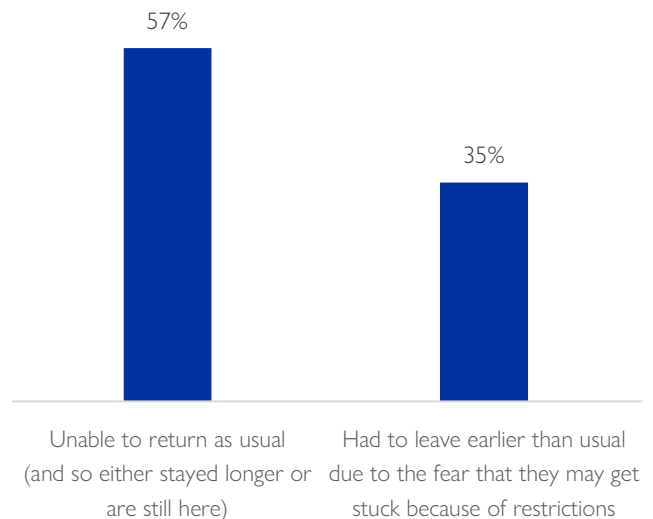


Fig. 28 Impact on return of seasonal migrant workers during 2020 (n = 125)



45 Section on Seasonal Employment in Libya highlighted that most migrants found work via word-of-mouth job search, and if the word on reduced job opportunities in Libya goes around through migrant social networks it likely to impact their decisions to migrate resulting in lower number of arrivals.

46 IOM 2021b

47 IOM 2020c

48 World Bank 2020

Photo: ©Moayad Zaghdani / IOM 2021

Due to COVID-19 pandemic and its socio-economic impact migrant workers faced increased challenges in Libya, including food insecurity linked to loss of livelihoods. IOM - WFP joint food distributions such as the one shown in this photo from Sebha serve as essential lifeline for vulnerable migrants.



CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study shows that circular migration to Libya represents a significant share of the overall migration influx to Libya, with estimates indicating that up to 13% of the migrant population in Libya could be identified as migrant workers employed on a seasonal basis and returning to their countries of origin at the end of the season.

The vast majority of seasonal migrant workers in Libya come from neighbouring countries, taking benefit of geographical proximity and well-established social networks. In thematic migrant interviews conducted in 2020, seasonal migrant workers from Egypt, Niger, Chad and Sudan collectively accounted for 81% of the seasonal migrant workers identified, compared to their overall share of 67% in the Libya's migrant population; key informant estimates at local level confirmed this trend. This trend was broadly reflective of these cohorts' large share in the overall migrant population in Libya (with the exception of Tunisia).

Only 6% of the seasonal migrant workers engaging in circular migration identified via migrant interviews were female, which was also confirmed by key informants reporting that less than 10% of the seasonal migrant workers were women. Furthermore, average age for seasonal migrant workers identified was 4 years higher than the average age of migrants in Libya in general, indicating that seasonal migrant workers in Libya include more migrants of older age who may have made several trips to Libya for seasonal work in the past.

A higher proportion of seasonal migrant workers interviewed (83%) were employed at the time of the survey compared to other migrants (74%) during 2020, where a large proportion of these migrants was employed in elementary occupations working on farms in agriculture and with livestock. However, seasonal migrant workers overall were employed in a diverse range of occupations and worked in wide variety of economic sectors including construction, mining and manufacturing amongst others. 22% of the seasonal migrant workers employed at the time of the survey neither had a contract nor an oral agreement and were therefore working for daily wages without job security. Seasonal migrant workers primarily found jobs on a seasonal basis through word of mouth within their social networks that included fellow migrants and employers.

The analysis of seasonal migrant workers' motivations for migration and structural aspects of seasonal local labour markets indicates that circular migration to Libya is driven by better availability of livelihoods in Libya compared to migrants' countries of origin. However, despite migration to Libya possibly offering an increased chance of engaging in livelihoods or finding employment, seasonal migrant workers still faced several challenges in Libya related to their living conditions. A majority of seasonal migrant workers were living at their workplaces, which previous housing assessments have shown to often not provide adequate living conditions.⁴⁹ Furthermore, 57% of the seasonal migrant workers interviewed had no or only limited access to health services which was of particular concern during the current pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic was also found to have affected circular migration to Libya and the circumstances of seasonal migrant workers as local businesses employing seasonal workers were negatively impacted. During 2020 the demand for services of seasonal migrant workers was reported to have significantly reduced due to economic impact of COVID-19, while the arrival of migrants on a seasonal basis had also declined due to mobility restrictions imposed to curb the spread of COVID-19. Some of the seasonal

⁴⁹ IOM 2020b

migrant workers who had made it to Libya before pandemic were reported to have temporarily been stranded at the end of the work season as they were unable to return, while others returned earlier to avoid being stuck. These trends indicate that 2020 was not a typical work year for seasonal migrant workers, nor a typical year for circular migration to Libya, and therefore data collection aimed at further understanding circular migration to Libya should continue during 2021.

Recommendations

Apart from continued survey data collection on circular migration during 2021, to establish a better and systematic evidence-based understanding on the extent and prevalence of circular migration to Libya, immigration and administrative systems (to systematically caption migrant workers) should be supported.

A further study focusing on seasonal businesses and their demand for seasonal labour could help to better understand what measures can be taken to promote and regularize circular migration to Libya. As it stands circular migration to Libya represents an unregulated labour space where market forces including demand for workers not only influences seasonal mobility patterns but possibly also encourages overall irregular migration to Libya. Migration management and governance programming aimed at bringing circular migration to Libya within the regulatory frameworks such as the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families has the potential to significantly improve the conditions of seasonal migrant workers while at the same time meeting the workforce needs of Libyan labour market.

Programming aimed at improving the living conditions of seasonal migrant workers as well as for all other migrants and refugees in Libya is strongly recommended with housing and access to health services identified as the areas of immediate concern. Seasonal migrant workers' lack of access to health services must immediately be brought to focus as well as advocacy is needed to include them within the vaccination programs aimed at reducing the effects of COVID-19.

Contributions of seasonal migrant workers in local businesses and communities in Libya are viewed positively, and this presents a significant opportunity in finding community led and owned solutions for improving the living conditions of seasonal migrant workers in Libya as well as potential for their easy inclusion in the local vaccination programs to strengthen the public health situation at community level.

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APPENDIX

Coverage of the DTM thematic migrant surveys and key informant interviews on circular migration along with the figures of migrants at each location covered as per DTM Round 35 (January - February 2021) Mobility Tracking data collection.

Baladiya	Migrants Present in municipality (indv.)	Key Informant Interviews	Migrant Interviews
Abu Qurayn	890		✓
Abusliem	20630	✓	✓
Ain Zara	28980	✓	✓
Al Qalaa	300	✓	
Albawanees	1369	✓	✓
Albayda	10400	✓	✓
Albrayga	1119	✓	✓
Algatroun	15605	✓	✓
Aljufra	12433	✓	✓
Alkhums	4155		✓
Alkufra	15530	✓	✓
Almarj	4900	✓	✓
Alsharguiya	7710	✓	✓
Arrayayna	250	✓	
Ashshwayrif	2900	✓	✓
Aujala	9285	✓	
Azzintan	16020	✓	✓
Bani Waleed	2020	✓	✓
Benghazi	34094	✓	✓
Brak	2805	✓	✓
Daraj	1350		✓
Derna	3950	✓	✓
Ejdabia	35970	✓	✓
Ejkherra	4619	✓	
Emsaed	1000	✓	✓
Garabolli	4170	✓	✓
Gemienis	1970	✓	
Ghadamis	1550	✓	✓
Gharb Azzawya	6125	✓	
Ghat	8496	✓	✓
Ghiryan	2444	✓	✓
Hai Aandalus	4440	✓	✓
Jalu	15871	✓	✓
Janoub Azzawya	2100	✓	
Janzour	15180	✓	✓
Misrata	45610	✓	✓
Murzuq	1430	✓	
Nalut	1077	✓	
Qasr Bin Ghasheer	3670	✓	
Sabratha	10770	✓	✓
Sebha	27350	✓	✓
Shahhat	3950	✓	
Sirt	5260	✓	
Suloug	2650	✓	
Suq Aljumaa	8065	✓	✓

Continued from previous page: Coverage of the DTM thematic migrant surveys and key informant interviews on circular migration along with the figures of migrants at each location covered as per DTM Round 35 (January - February 2021) Mobily Tracking data collection.

Baladiya	Migrants Present in municipality (indv.)	Key Informant Interviews	Migrant Interviews
Surman	3500		✓
Swani Bin Adam	4490		✓
Tajoura	15605	✓	✓
Taraghin	6495	✓	
Tobruk	6348	✓	✓
Tripoli	8560	✓	✓
Ubari	10420	✓	
Wadi Etba	1853	✓	
Yefren	254	✓	
Zliten	10030	✓	
Zwara	3216	✓	✓

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