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## MIGRATION FROM RURAL AREAS - ITS IMPACT AND PROSPECTS

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### **Abstract**

*The present work is a study of migration phenomenon from national rural areas as well as of the social, demographic and economic effects caused by migration. There was analyzed the impact of migration on rural areas under general migration trends of the country and the peculiarities of the rural sector in the Republic of Moldova. Migration from rural areas is caused by lack of jobs, poor living standards, rising unemployment. Migration is an attractive opportunity, particularly for the rural population and remittances continue to be an essential support for the Moldovan economy. For these reasons, it is necessary to elaborate the ways to strengthen the development potential of migrants to their home country and to overcome the social consequences of migration.*

**Key words:** migration, remittances, rural area, rural population

### **INTRODUCTION**

The migration of rural population is one of the most complex demographic phenomena, which exerts a considerable influence on the economic and social development of rural areas, on population distribution and human resources, on the development of human habitat.

The share of rural population in Moldova is higher compared to other countries in this region, it constitutes 58.7%.

In rural areas there are recorded lower incomes, higher rates of poverty, low employment level and lower indicators of health and education, which has spurred much of the rural working population to seek a job abroad.

The high rate of migration strongly influences the economic activity in the Republic of Moldova, particularly in rural areas.

Taking into account that a significant part of migrants is interested in returning to their home, the Government should provide the migrants, who return home, with the necessary information and help them fit in the society. This is the first and the most essential step. The migrant also needs information regarding employment opportunities [4].

In this context, the aim of this article is to examine the impact of migration on the rural sector in the Republic of Moldova and to

highlight the ways to minimize the migration flows.

### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

In order to characterize the evolution of the migration process in the Republic of Moldova there was taken into account the number of persons working or seeking work abroad by age groups, by area (urban, rural), by country of destination.

The data were collected from the National Bureau of Statistics. The period of the analysis of the study covered the years 2009-2013.

To analyze the migration process we used statistical method by providing data on the migration of population; socio-demographic method by researching issues related to migratory population diversity in economic and social development; economic approach by representing the number of migrant workers and how to reduce migration flows.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

One of the main objectives of the state is to ensure full employment of labor force. In the Republic of Moldova the labor market faces a number of problems that require both short-term and long-term solutions. We can mention the following existing problems:

- Large share of employees in agriculture;
- Low labor costs;
- Population ageing;
- Long-term unemployment among young people;
- The reduction in the number of economically active population;
- Growing number of migrants.

The last element, related to population migration, has been and continues to be caused by the social and economic crisis in the country, as well as by the lack of well-structured state programs on employment policy and labor remuneration.

People continue going abroad to find a job, especially the people from rural areas (Table 1).

Table 1. The evolution of labor migration in the Republic of Moldova (thousand persons)

Specification	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Urban	89.5	90.6	92.7	90.2	94.4
Rural	205.4	220.5	224.2	238.1	238.0
Total per country	294.9	311.0	316.9	328.3	332.5

Source: National Bureau of Statistics, Labour Force Survey (without data from Transnistria).

According to statistics data and opinion polls, there is an increase in the number of migrants in 2013 compared to 2009 by 12.8%. The highest share belongs to the people from the rural areas in 2013 and account to 71.6% of total migrants. This number is constantly growing, increasing in 2013 compared to 2009 by 15.9%, while in urban areas this increase is not as significant, constituting only 5.5%.

The causes of increased migration in rural areas are: lack of employment opportunities to better paid jobs, low income, unemployment.

The failure of employment in the labor market in rural areas is dramatic. Compared to urban areas, villages lose their qualified potential due to migration. Also here it is recorded a significant difference between the sexes. Migrant women from villages are more prepared professionally, 25.7% of them have higher education and speciality, while among men only 12.2% have these characteristics. Annually, the number of highly educated women who go to work abroad is constantly

increasing. Among the rural migrant men, the highest share belongs to the men with vocational and secondary schools, 32.1% and 20.8% respectively.

Another aspect that deserves to be highlighted is that not the poorest people migrate. The decision to leave is often made for fear of becoming poor. In most cases, going abroad is related to an event that happens in the family and needs additional financial expenses that most people don't have: children's education, important family event, household expenses, real estate purchase, material support for young families [3].

Referring to official statistics, according to the last census (2014) we can see that 11.3% of the population is abroad. In the most cases the young population of the country is involved in the migration process. The most mobile are the age groups of 15-44 years. In rural areas, people of this age constitute more than 3/4 of the total number of rural migrants (Table 2).

Table 2. The distribution of rural labor migrants by age groups (thousand persons)

Specification	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
15-24 years old	57.7	57.3	56.1	60.2	58.2
25-34 years old	57.0	70.5	74.3	78.2	79.8
35-44 years old	46.9	48.9	47.6	52.3	51.6
45-54 years old	38.0	37.3	38.6	40.3	39.4
55-64 years old	5.9	6.4	7.5	7.1	9.0
65 years old and over	0.1	-	-	0.1	0.2
Total	205.4	220.5	224.2	238.1	238.0

Source: National Bureau of Statistics, Labour Force Survey (without data from Transnistria).

The active involvement of young people in the migration process is obvious, moreover, there is a tendency to its increase. The intensity of the continuous migration of young people demonstrates the low efficiency of the policies pursued in the field of employment, especially for the youth.

The migration of the population of the Republic of Moldova is now quite diverse in form, types and trends. By the early 90s of the XXth century the emigration was predominantly oriented to the ex-USSR area.

Today, beside the East direction, the West direction took shape. The priority direction is represented by Russia, especially Moscow and St. Petersburg cities [1].

The distribution of migrants by destination countries reveals that most migrants work in Russia (68.1%). This happens because of the relatively low cost of travel, knowledge of Russian language, etc. For the most part, in this country people from rural areas work (77.4%), especially men.

In the European Union countries, where the access is difficult due to high cost and little knowledge of language, 25.5% of migrants work (Figure 1).

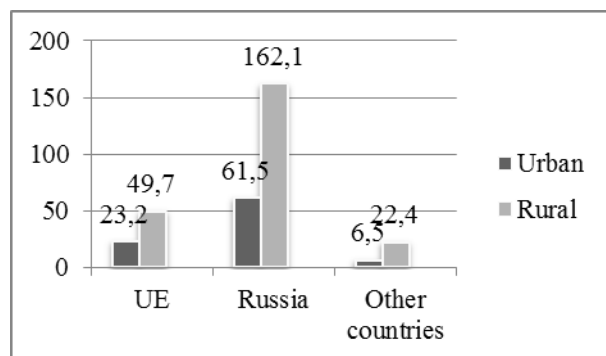


Fig. 1. The distribution of migrants by destination countries and areas, thousand persons  
Source: National Bureau of Statistics (without data from Transnistria).

Among the EU countries the most popular destination is Italy, where 5.1% of migrants from urban area and 10.2% of rural area work.

Unlike the migrants in Russia, those working in the EU are older, have a higher level of education, and most of them had a job before going abroad.

Regardless of the medium, there is the feminization of migration flows by constantly increasing female migration. The women determine the host country according to their studies and professional training.

A negative aspect of the migration process is the increase of the number of children left without parental care, their parents working abroad. With a parent or both abroad for a longer period of time children may risk social, psychological, emotional deprivation. Official data show that approximately 170,000 children in Moldova have one or both parents

working abroad, mostly from rural areas. Today, the migrants who leave to work abroad are required to submit at the border crossing a document proving that they delegated guardianship over the child to somebody. However, most Moldovans go abroad in order to work illegally. In their case, this requirement can not be applied.

The children of migrants are the group the most predisposed to enter the second wave of migration, either through the processes of family integration or through the effects of habit and appearance of " the migrational culture ", when migration becomes a norm [2].

The factors that determine people to work abroad are mostly economic, represented by the lack of opportunities to obtain adequate income for life. The majority of migrants indicate as the main reason for going abroad low salaries in Moldova. The other reasons invoked are lack of jobs according to skills/qualification and bad working conditions (Figure 2).

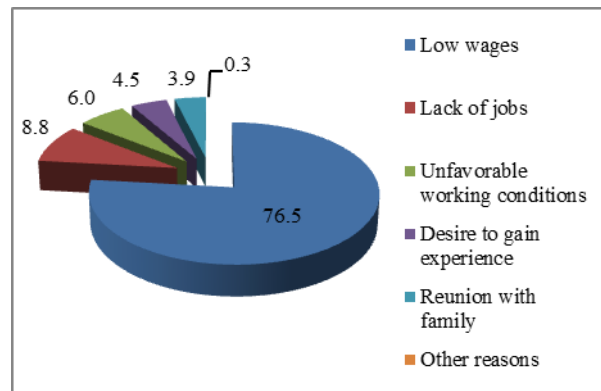


Fig. 2. Reasons for going abroad, %  
Source: National Bureau of Statistics

In general, in the Republic of Moldova, especially in rural areas, migration is determined mainly by push factors, such as poverty and lack of employment opportunities. Later, when the first migrants returned with stories about a better life elsewhere and family networks were created, pull factors began to play their role. However, poor economic situation in the country remains the dominant factor that keeps the migrants away from home. It is also true that about 15% of migrants do not plan to return

home (in rural areas), but intend to move to live in urban areas.

The migration of the population from rural areas strengthens the negative impact of migration on the demographic processes from rural areas by its indirect consequences: ageing of the population, decreased birth, skilled workforce reduction etc.

At the same time, returning migrants encounter various difficulties, such as:

- The domestic labor market has limited capacity to absorb returning migrants;
- The domestic labor market does not provide sufficient employment opportunities for young people;
- Migrants do not invest in the economy due to unfavorable business environment etc.

Because of the substantial difference between wages in the country and abroad, the motivation to migrate will not diminish. Migration continues to be an attractive opportunity. For these reasons, the efforts to consolidate the development potential of migrants for their country of origin and overcoming social consequences of migration are imperative. It is necessary to form among people the education of a migrational culture, the awareness of risks and the importance of making personal contribution to social, medical etc. funds to ensure their future.

In terms of the decrease of migration expansion it is necessary to implement a strategic policy capable of regulating and creating jobs with optimal wages.

The implementation of a social policy to support unemployed young people, who are looking for a job, would be another important step in reducing migration process.

The level of information and its accessibility among the rural population is significantly reduced, that's why it would be appropriate to implement some social programs to improve people's access to services, especially health and education .

The low level of the minimum wage relative to inflation rate requires redesigning the remuneration system and the inflation adjustment to public accessibility.

## CONCLUSIONS

The migration from the rural areas is increasing, being generated by the lack of jobs, low living standards, rising unemployment, economic changes in the distribution of productive forces.

The total number of migrants from rural areas of the Republic of Moldova cannot be determined exactly, but the fact is that it is steadily growing.

The results of the migration flow over general population ratio are strong and have long lasting effects. The negative aspects of migration are related to creating such problems as: family destruction, the low level of education of children, unbalanced relationships between family members.

Migration also has some positive aspects, such as helping to increase household incomes, rising living standards, lower unemployment. Finally, the cooperation and integration of migrants in different cultures gives them the opportunity to form new values and beliefs, and besides remittance migrants may send home new methods, projects, ideas and techniques acquired by working abroad.

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