

# THE IMPACT OF MIGRATION AND REMITTANCES ON COMMUNITIES, FAMILIES AND CHILDREN IN MOLDOVA

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**THE IMPACT OF MIGRATION AND  
REMITTANCES ON COMMUNITIES,  
FAMILIES AND CHILDREN IN  
MOLDOVA**

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**The Impact of Migration and Remittances on Communities, Families and Children in Moldova**

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## Executive Summary

This report is based on data from the sociological study, *The Impact of Migration and Remittances on Communities, Families and Children* and on the International Organization for Migration's study, *Migration and Remittances in the Republic of Moldova, 2006*.<sup>1</sup> Data for the sociological study were collected in October and November 2006 in seven communities using focus group discussions with the spouses of migrants and with the guardians, teachers and children of migrants; case studies, in-depth interviews of local leaders and children with parents working abroad were carried out based on semi-structured questionnaires for households, children of migrants and the communities. The main objectives of the study were to identify the impact of migration and remittances on communities, families and children.

The main **results for communities** were the following:

### Migration

- To date, there is little cooperation between local public institutions and migrants. Migrants tend not to trust local leaders, while the latter consider that those who work abroad are no longer interested in the problems and needs of the community.
- Departures for work abroad create a labour force deficit, especially in agriculture and construction. Community leaders are also concerned about the exodus of qualified people such as teachers and doctors.
- Because the average age of migrants is 35, migration has a negative impact on the demographic situation, including reduced birth rates and an aging population.
- Some parents who have settled legally in the countries where they have found jobs have taken their children with them, and in the opinion of local leaders this trend will increase as more parents legalize their new residences.
- For many localities, migration means not only the loss of human capital but also the loss of social capital. Relationships are affected as social networks fall apart. Communication with those who have left to work abroad occurs very rarely except for contact with immediate family members.

### Remittances

- Remittances affect the general appearance of the community (e.g., nicer houses), but money from abroad contributes to a very small extent to the development of local infrastructure.

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<sup>1</sup> Research was carried out nationwide on a sampling of 3,940 households, of whom 1,024 had family members working abroad. The period of data collection was July-August 2006.

- The gap between the incomes of families with members working abroad and those of families without has widened. The attitudes and behaviour of the two groups also differ and directly affect their relations.

The main **results for families** were the following:

### **Migration**

- A family member's departure requires a period of adjustment. In the majority of cases, a redistribution of roles occurs.
- Long-term migration strains relationships between spouses, parents and children.

### **Remittances**

- Remittances contribute significantly to improving the financial situation of the household: 79 percent of families with children stated that after one family member's departure, their financial situation was better or much better.
- Remittances are mostly used for current consumption, i.e., food and clothing. They are also used to improve housing and to repay debts.

The main **results for children** were the following:

### **Migration**

- Teachers said that all children, irrespective of age, are affected psychologically and emotionally by their parents' departure, in particular by the departure of the mother. The ways of expressing these emotions vary: usually younger children become attached to their caretakers while older children become more distant.
- Adults interviewed felt the departure of parents had a negative impact on the academic performance of children, but only 10 percent of children agreed that their academic achievement had deteriorated and 59 percent felt their performance was the same after their parent/parents migrated.
- The police in the seven study communities had not established any connection between young people committing various types of offences and parents' departure, and the number of minors with police records whose parents were abroad was insignificant.

## Remittances

- Usually, parents send money to those who are taking care of their children, but the funds are not always used for meeting the children's needs. There are caregivers, including close relatives and neighbours, who take advantage of the money and goods to satisfy their own needs.
- Most remittances are spent on food, clothing, higher-level education and improving housing. Amounts spent on education (through the secondary level) and health are similar to those spent by families that do not receive remittances.
- Both families that receive remittances and those that do not agree that remittances provide more opportunities for education beyond the secondary level and a greater chance to succeed in life.

## Resumen Ejecutivo

Este informe está basado en los datos del estudio sociológico titulado *The Impact of Migration and Remittances on Communities, Families and Children* y en el estudio de la Organización Internacional para las Migraciones titulado *Migration and Remittances in the Republic of Moldova, 2006*<sup>2</sup>. Los datos del estudio sociológico se recopilaron en octubre y noviembre de 2006 en siete comunidades que utilizaron los resultados de debates de grupos de muestra elegidos en los que participaron cónyuges de los migrantes y tutores, maestros e hijos de migrantes; los estudios monográficos y las entrevistas en profundidad con dirigentes locales y con niños cuyos progenitores trabajan en el exterior se llevaron a cabo sobre la base de cuestionarios semiestructurados para los hogares, para los hijos de migrantes y para las comunidades. Los principales objetivos del estudio fueron determinar las repercusiones de la migración y de las remesas sobre las comunidades, las familias y los niños.

Los principales **resultados para las comunidades** fueron los siguientes:

### Migración

- Hasta la fecha, hay muy poca cooperación entre las instituciones públicas locales y los migrantes. Los migrantes no suelen confiar en los dirigentes locales, mientras que estos últimos consideran que aquellos que trabajan en el exterior dejan de interesarse por los problemas y las necesidades de la comunidad.
- Las salidas al exterior en busca de trabajo crean un déficit en la fuerza laboral, especialmente en la agricultura y la construcción. A los dirigentes comunitarios les preocupa también el éxodo de personas cualificadas como maestros y médicos.
- Debido a que la edad promedio de los migrantes es 35 años, la migración tiene repercusiones negativas en la situación demográfica, lo que incluye una reducción de las tasas de nacimiento y el aumento de la población senescente.
- Algunos progenitores que se han asentado legalmente en los países donde han encontrado trabajo se han llevado a sus hijos con ellos, y en opinión de los dirigentes locales esta tendencia aumentará a medida que aumente el número de progenitores que legalicen sus nuevas residencias.
- Para muchas localidades, la migración significa no solamente una pérdida de capital humano sino también una pérdida de capital social. Las relaciones sufren a medida que las redes sociales se desmoronan. Muy pocas veces existe una comunicación con aquellos que han abandonado su país para trabajar en el exterior, excepto los contactos con los miembros inmediatos de la familia.

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<sup>2</sup> La investigación se llevó a cabo a escala nacional sobre una muestra de 3940 hogares, de los cuales 1024 tenían miembros de la familia que trabajaban en el exterior. El periodo de recopilación de los datos fue julio y agosto de 2006.

## Remesas

- Las remesas afectan la apariencia general de la comunidad (por ejemplo, mejores casas), pero el dinero del exterior contribuye en un grado muy reducido al desarrollo de la infraestructura local.
- La diferencia entre los ingresos de las familias con miembros que trabajan en el exterior y de las familias sin este tipo de miembros se ha ampliado. Las actitudes y los comportamientos de los dos grupos difieren también y afectan directamente a sus relaciones.

Los principales **resultados para las familias** fueron los siguientes:

## Migración

- La salida de un miembro de la familia exige un periodo de ajuste. En la mayoría de los casos se produce una redistribución de funciones.
- La migración a largo plazo crea tensiones en las relaciones entre los cónyuges, los progenitores y los niños.

## Remesas

- Las remesas contribuyen considerablemente a mejorar la situación financiera del hogar: un 79% de las familias con niños dijeron que después de la salida del país de un miembro de la familia, la situación financiera fue mejor o mucho mejor.
- Las remesas se utilizan sobre todo para el consumo diario, por ejemplo, alimentos y vestidos. También se utilizan para mejorar el hogar y rembolsar deudas.

Los principales **resultados para los niños** fueron los siguientes:

## Migración

- Los maestros dijeron que todos los niños, independientemente de su edad, sufren psicológica y emocionalmente debido a la salida del país de sus progenitores, especialmente la salida de la madre. La forma en que expresan estas emociones varía: por lo general, los niños más pequeños se encariñan con sus cuidadores mientras que los niños de mayor edad se vuelven más distantes.
- Los adultos entrevistados consideran que la salida de los progenitores tiene repercusiones negativas sobre el rendimiento académico de los niños, pero solamente un 10% de los niños estuvieron de acuerdo en que su rendimiento económico se había deteriorado y un 59% consideró que su rendimiento era el mismo después de que su progenitor/progenitores emigraron.
- La policía de las siete comunidades del estudio no había establecido ninguna vinculación entre los jóvenes que cometieron varios tipos de delitos y la salida del país de sus

progenitores, y el número de menores de edad con antecedentes policiales cuyos progenitores se encontraban en el exterior era insignificante.

### **Remesas**

- Por lo general, los progenitores envían dinero a quienes se ocupan de sus hijos, pero los fondos no siempre se utilizan para satisfacer las necesidades del niño. Hay cuidadores, incluidos parientes cercanos y vecinos, que se aprovechan del dinero y de los bienes para satisfacer sus propias necesidades.
- La mayor parte de la remesas se emplean en dinero, vestido, educación superior y en la mejora del hogar. Las cantidades que se gastan en educación (hasta el nivel secundario) y la salud son similares a las que gastan las familias que no reciben remesas.

Tanto las familias que reciben remesas como las que no las reciben están de acuerdo en que las remesas ofrecen más oportunidades para la educación más allá del nivel secundario y una mayor posibilidad de tener éxito en la vida.

## Résumé Analytique

Ce rapport s'appuie sur des données extraites de l'étude sociologique *The Impact of Migration and Remittances on Communities, Families and Children* et de l'étude de l'Organisation internationale pour les migrations *Migration and Remittances in the Republic of Moldova, 2006*<sup>3</sup>. Les données de l'étude sociologique ont été recueillies en octobre et novembre 2006 dans 7 communautés au moyen de discussions de groupes de consultation menées avec des conjoints et conjointes de migrants et avec des tuteurs, des enseignants et des enfants de migrants ; des études de cas et des entretiens approfondis avec des dirigeants locaux et des enfants dont les parents travaillent à l'étranger ont été effectués en s'appuyant sur des questionnaires semi-structurés destinés aux ménages, aux enfants de migrants et aux communautés. Les objectifs principaux de l'étude étaient d'identifier l'impact de la migration et des envois de fonds sur les communautés, les familles et les enfants.

Les résultats **principaux pour les communautés** ont été les suivants :

### Migration

- À ce jour, il y a peu de coopération entre les institutions publiques locales et les migrants. Les migrants ont tendance à ne pas se fier aux dirigeants locaux, alors que ceux-ci considèrent que ceux qui travaillent à l'étranger ne sont plus intéressés par les problèmes et les besoins de la communauté.
- Les départs motivés par le travail à l'étranger créent un déficit de main-d'œuvre, surtout dans l'agriculture et la construction. Les dirigeants communautaires sont aussi préoccupés par l'exode de personnes qualifiées comme les enseignants et les médecins.
- Parce que l'âge moyen des migrants est de 35 ans, la migration a un impact négatif sur la situation démographique, notamment une baisse de la natalité et le vieillissement de la population.
- Certains parents qui se sont légalement installés dans les pays où ils ont trouvé du travail ont emmené leurs enfants avec eux, et de l'avis des dirigeants locaux cette tendance va s'accroître avec le nombre croissant de parents qui légalisent leurs nouvelles résidences.
- Pour de nombreuses localités, la migration ne représente pas seulement une perte de capital humain, mais aussi une perte de capital social. Les relations sont affectées à mesure que les réseaux sociaux se démantèlent. Les communications avec ceux qui sont partis travailler à l'étranger sont rares, à l'exception des contacts avec la famille proche.

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<sup>3</sup> Ces recherches ont été menées dans le pays tout entier, sur un échantillon de 3940 ménages, dont 1024 comptaient des membres de la famille travaillant à l'étranger. La période de collecte des données a été juillet-août 2006.

## Envois de fonds

- Les envois de fonds ont un impact sur l'aspect général de la communauté (les maisons sont plus belles), mais l'argent envoyé de l'étranger ne contribue que très peu au développement de l'infrastructure locale.
- Le fossé entre le revenu des familles dont certains membres travaillent à l'étranger et celui des familles où ce n'est pas le cas s'est creusé. Les attitudes et les comportements des deux groupes diffèrent également et affectent directement leurs relations.
- Les **résultats principaux pour les familles** ont été les suivants :

## Migration

- Le départ d'un membre d'une famille requiert une période d'ajustement. Dans la plupart des cas, on assiste à une nouvelle répartition des rôles.
- La migration à long terme compromet les relations entre conjoints, parents et enfants.

## Envois de fonds

- Les envois de fonds contribuent de manière importante à l'amélioration de la situation financière des ménages : 79 pour cent des familles qui ont des enfants ont déclaré qu'après le départ d'un membre de la famille, leur situation financière s'était améliorée ou beaucoup améliorée.
- Les envois de fonds servent principalement à acheter des biens de consommation courante : nourriture et vêtements. Ils sont aussi utilisés pour améliorer le logement et rembourser les dettes.

Les **résultats principaux pour les enfants** ont été les suivants :

- Selon les enseignants, tous les enfants, quel que soit leur âge, ont été affectés psychologiquement et affectivement par le départ de leurs parents, et surtout de leur mère. Ils ont des moyens variés d'exprimer leurs émotions : habituellement, les enfants plus jeunes s'attachent à ceux qui en ont la garde alors que d'autres enfants deviennent plus distants.
- Les adultes interrogés pensaient que le départ des parents avait eu un impact négatif sur les performances scolaires des enfants, mais seuls 10 pour cent des enfants ont admis que leurs résultats scolaires s'étaient détériorés, alors que 59 pour cent pensaient qu'ils n'avaient pas changé après la migration de leur(s) parent(s).
- La police des sept communautés concernées par l'étude n'avait pas établi de lien entre divers types de délits commis par des jeunes et le départ de leurs parents, et le nombre de mineurs possédant un casier judiciaire et dont les parents étaient expatriés était insignifiant.



## **Envois de fonds**

- Habituellement, les parents envoient de l'argent à ceux qui prennent soin de leurs enfants, mais ces fonds ne sont pas toujours utilisés pour répondre aux besoins des enfants. Certaines personnes, y compris des parents proches et des voisins à qui les enfants ont été confiés, profitent de l'argent ou des biens qu'ils reçoivent pour satisfaire leurs propres besoins.
- La plupart des fonds envoyés servent à acheter de la nourriture et des vêtements, à payer les frais de l'éducation et à améliorer le logement. Les sommes dépensées pour l'éducation (dans tout le cycle secondaire) et pour la santé sont comparables à celles que déboursent les familles qui ne reçoivent pas d'argent de l'étranger.

Les familles qui reçoivent des fonds de l'étranger et celles qui n'en reçoivent pas s'accordent à dire que l'argent offre aux enfants de meilleures possibilités de poursuivre leurs études après le secondaire, ainsi qu'une meilleure chance de réussir dans la vie.

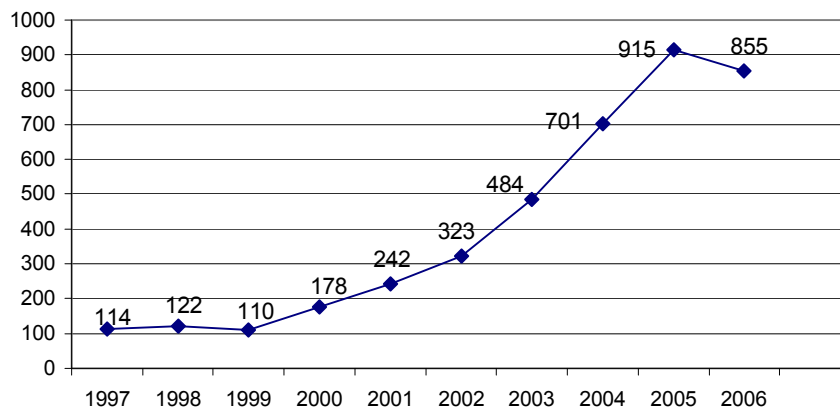


# THE IMPACT OF MIGRATION AND REMITTANCES ON COMMUNITIES, FAMILIES AND CHILDREN IN MOLDOVA

## Introduction

Social and political developments at the beginning of the 1990s had an impact on the living standards of the population of Moldova. Unemployment, low salaries and delays in paying salaries encouraged people to improve their livelihoods by leaving the country to work abroad. As a result, the 2004 population census registered that 273,000 people had migrated. According to International Organization for Migration (IOM) in their study, *Remittances and Migration in the Republic of Moldova, 2006*, there were 252,000 people working abroad and more than 1.5 million Moldovans were living in households receiving remittances. Remittances from abroad increased steadily from 1997 to 2005, and according to some estimates currently represent 30 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) of the country (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Remittances to Moldova from 1997 to 2006  
in millions of US Dollars**



Source: National Bank of Moldova

According to the IOM study, the number of potential migrants in 2006 was 551,000, of whom 340,000 had worked abroad in the past two years and 211,000 intended to go abroad in the next 12 months. In all, 177,195 children had at least one parent working abroad, and 21,860 of them had both parents abroad. The majority of these children (80 percent) came from rural areas.

In the IOM study, research was done on a nationwide sample of 3,940 households out of which 1,024 had family members working abroad. The period of data collection was July and August 2006. The study focused on the effects of migration and remittances at the national level with some reference to their effects on families. The sociological study commissioned by UNICEF and UNDP, *The Impact of Migration and Remittances on Communities, Families and Children*, was also conducted in 2006 and focused on communities, families and children. This report is based on data from both studies.

## 1. Methodology

Data for the UNICEF/UNDP sociological study were gathered from local leaders, educational staff, parents, children with parents working abroad and their caregivers (see Table 1) from 15 October to 10 November 2006 in seven localities selected for broad geographic coverage by type and size of the community and by the number of migrants:

- Telenesti
- Cimisia
- Copceac (Gagauzia Autonomous Region)
- Cirpesti (Cantemir Raion)
- Antonesti (Stefan Voda Raion)
- Niscani (Calarşi Raion)
- Plop (Donduseni Raion).

**Table 1: Research Design**

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Method of Data Collection</b>
Parents with spouse working abroad	1 Focus group
Guardians (caregivers)	1 Focus group
Children 8–14 years with one or both parents working abroad	1 Focus group
Children 15–16 years with one or both parents working abroad	1 Focus group
Children with one parent working abroad	6 In-depth interviews
Children left in someone’s care or at home alone	4 In-depth interviews
Special cases	5 case studies
<i>Local Leaders</i>	
Mayors	5 in-depth interviews
Teachers	1 Focus group
School directors	5 in-depth interviews
Family doctors	3 in-depth interviews
District policemen	3 in-depth interviews
Subjects who know the situation in the community best of all	7 community questionnaires
Parents/guardians	306 household questionnaires
Children	68 questionnaires for children aged 10–18 years

The study unit was a household with children under 18 years of age. The sample was determined by dividing the locality into three regions and randomly selecting households. In cases where there were no children under 18 in the household selected, the next household was visited. A total of 306 semi-structured household interviews were carried out, with an average of 40 in every locality. Interviews were conducted with people over 18 years of age who were best able to answer the questions.

In-depth interviews were conducted with local leaders, i.e., mayors, school directors and teachers, doctors and policemen. Data were also gathered from discussions in five focus groups. Participants were selected using the snowball method.<sup>4</sup> Two groups consisted of children with parents working abroad: one of children aged 8–14 and the other of children aged 15–16. The other three focus groups consisted of teachers, guardians and parents whose spouses were abroad. The guardian group included grandparents, close relatives, educators, neighbors and friends. The children they were caring for ranged in age from a few months to 16 years.

The community questionnaire gathered comprehensive data on the localities from knowledgeable people. Case study subjects were people who had been through unusual life experiences who were identified with the help of local leaders and community members.

## **2. Results of the UNICEF/UNDP Study**

### **2.1. The Effects of Migration and Remittances on Communities**

The study found that because of remittances, the appearance of the communities had changed. The houses of those who had a family member working abroad had been renovated. People receiving remittances also dressed better. These were the main positive outcomes of migration and remittances on communities. The most frequently cited negative outcomes were demographic – the exodus of able-bodied workers – and economic – discrepancies in household incomes.

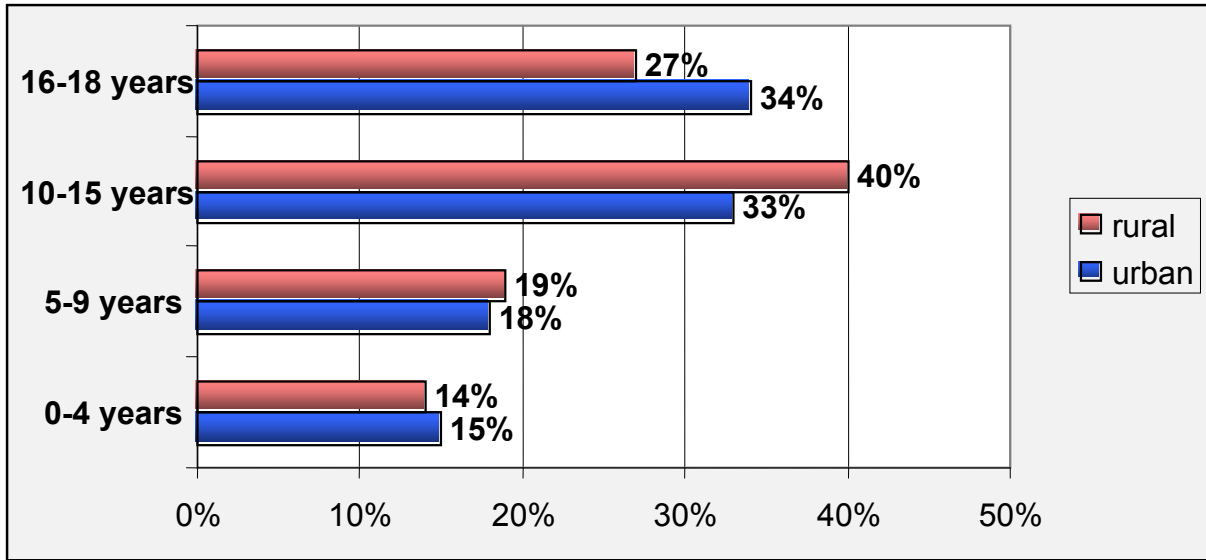
#### **Demographic Effects**

In the respondents' opinions, labour migration has had a negative impact on the demographic situation in the country because generally young people leave to work abroad; this directly affects the birth rate and contributes to the aging of society. According to the IOM study, the average age of those who work abroad is 35 years. Of the total, 42 percent are women and 58 percent are men. Most migrants (65 percent) are from rural areas, and 18% have higher education. Most children (80 percent) whose parents work abroad come from rural areas. Between the ages of 10 and 15, 40 percent of rural children have parents abroad compared with 33 percent of urban children. This trend is reversed in the 16–18 age group (see Figure 2).

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<sup>4</sup> In the snowball sampling method, existing interview subjects recruit future subjects.

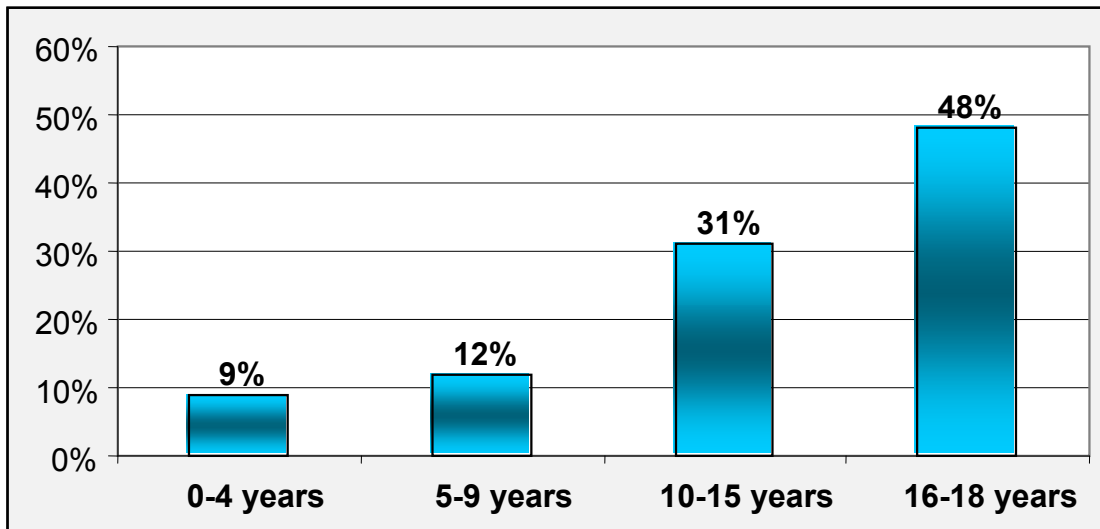
**Figure 2: Age Structure of Children with Parents Working Abroad**



Source: Remittances and Migration in the Republic of Moldova 2006

Some parents who have settled legally in the countries where they found jobs have taken their children with them, and in the opinion of leaders this trend will increase in the years to come as more and more parents manage to legalize their new residences. In all seven localities where this study was conducted, there were families with children that had left the country (see Figure 3). Their numbers ranged from a few to a few dozen. This was also confirmed in discussions with children who mentioned that their parents were preparing documents for them to leave the country in the near future and with others who were waiting to go until the academic year was over or until they got permission from the other parent. In a group discussion with ten children, for instance, five of them mentioned that in the near future they intended to join their parents abroad; some already had the necessary documents.

**Figure 3: Age Structure of Moldovan Children Living Abroad**



Source: 2004 census adjusted to the age groups used in the study

According to the IOM study, more than half (55 percent) of parents from urban areas had worked more than a year abroad without returning to Moldova, and 44 percent of village migrants had stayed abroad for more than a year. Seasonal migrants from urban areas stayed abroad longer (8.6 months) than their rural counterparts (6.4 months) and more planned to settle abroad (see Table 2).

**Table 2: Migratory Movements of Parents**

	<b>Seasonal</b>	<b>Number of departures</b>	<b>Length of migration (months)</b>	<b>Planning to settle abroad</b>
<b>Urban</b>	46%	4.5	8.6	20%
<b>Rural</b>	56%	4.6	6.4	8%

Source: Remittances and Migration in the Republic of Moldova 2006

The exodus of people from rural areas has created a labour force deficit in agriculture and in construction. Most local leaders as well as some parents were further concerned about the brain drain of highly qualified persons. Many referred to the departure of the best teachers, and community leaders mentioned many cases where teachers, doctors, and other qualified specialists left with their entire families.

### **Economic Effects**

The division of community members by economic criteria is becoming increasingly obvious: the families of people who go abroad become richer while those who stay in the community do not. In this context, it has been mentioned that relations between community members have become, “...less friendly, people are more prejudiced, more withdrawn, more envious, more insular.” Rural areas traditionally characterized by close relations and openness among neighbours have also been affected by this phenomenon. “I was wondering about my Chişinău relatives and how they live next door to someone and do not know each other, but now it happens here as well. People from the neighbourhood do not visit each other, they quarrel over something, one is richer, another is poorer – this is a current phenomenon.” (Rural teacher).

This latent conflict between rich and poor surfaces when support is required for an activity to benefit the community. “The poor say, ‘Let the rich give money,’ and the rich say, ‘Should I pay for that country bumpkin?’ They blame each other and don’t look for a compromise.” (Rural mayor). When initiating community development projects like the installation of gas pipes or water pipes or repairs to public buildings, conflicts arise due to the inability of those working in Moldova to contribute at the same rate as those receiving remittances. They are then blamed for delaying the work. “People with jobs here are waiting for their salaries to pay for the gas pipe, while those who receive money from abroad were the first to pay the total amount. Now they start asking if others are going to make their contributions or not. Because of them they cannot be connected to the gas pipe.” (Rural school director).

In the opinion of the participants in the study, households with at least one member working abroad had raised their living standards, but the effects were less visible on local infrastructure since those who work abroad avoid contributing to community activities and projects or investing in the community (Appendix 1, Table A1). They cited several reasons for this.

- Most of those who work abroad had left in order to achieve certain goals or to meet specific family needs.
- They want better living standards only for their own households. *“They do not contribute money so that the village can have its own sewage system. They are building their own property – autonomous heating in the house, autonomous bathroom, sewerage - everything.”* (Rural primary school teacher).
- There is a lack of trust that the funds will be correctly used for the development of the community.
- Going abroad to work can involve great efforts and risks.
- They fear investing in an unsafe business environment with very high risks.
- They are not interested in the problems and goals of the community.

In the opinion of some local leaders, people who leave the country to work abroad believe that if they change their lives, the community will change. Some mayors emphasized that migrants and community dwellers believe that they should take care of their own households, while it is representatives of the local and central public administration who are responsible for the community’s needs. Moreover, even in projects requiring participation, the migrants *“...know we will find other ways and they know that the job will be done without their contributions. It is a negative fact, but to count on them isn’t worth it”* (Rural mayor).

In schools, however, parental support is greater and there are cases of significant contributions for technical and other equipment. *“There were situations when persons who left the country contributed to the resolution of particular school issues, to the implementation of the school radio project with 500 lei, 1000 lei and 1600 lei per family. A group that was working in Moscow contributed to the purchase of mats for the sports hall. They were very expensive and they bought four. Another group contributed to the reconstruction of the heating system for the sports hall...some people came even with food.”* (Rural school director).

Only one mayor said that when people working abroad returned home they gathered with their neighbours and proposed improving the infrastructure, repairing roads, building a water supply system or generally improving the community’s living conditions. In the opinion of many participants, those who receive remittances could contribute to community projects, but this would require a leader who could organize and mobilize the population and who enjoys the trust of the citizens. There is potential, but it should be explored by local institutions such as parents’ involvement in schools.

Social networks are an indicator of the cohesion of a community and the community’s potential for carrying out joint activities and development projects. These networks are not only important for exchanging information but also for pulling together resources and taking advantage of opportunities. People who work abroad interact less with those left behind and form new networks in the host country. Table 3 shows that, in fact, relations are mainly maintained only



within immediate families and sometimes with close relatives. For data on the frequency of contact with those abroad, see Table A2 in Appendix 1.

**Table 3: Migration and Social Networks (in percentages)**

	Have/know somebody who left to work abroad	With how many do you stay in touch?			
	Yes	With all	With some of them	With very few	With no one
Family members	41	88	8	2	2
Close relatives	5	40	28	19	13
Distant relatives	34	20	19	18	43
Neighbours	51	12	22	16	49
Friends	44	24	24	15	37
Work colleagues	13	11	19	33	36
Acquaintances within the locality	53	5	10	25	61
Acquaintances outside the locality	19	9	11	24	56

In addition to not participating in community development, most of those who work abroad do not contribute to any national social security system or medical insurance. Some local leaders expressed their concerns in connection with old-age insurance for those who at the moment are working abroad and do not contribute to the Moldovan social insurance system. The matter of the non-payment of taxes by those who work abroad was also emphasized. *“They do not pay for health insurance. Although they have children and parent-pensioners who receive a medical insurance policy free of charge, they bring no revenue to the state. A large part of their income is transferred through banks while the other part is remitted in person (unofficial transfers) without being registered.”* (Rural school director).

## **2.2. The Effects of Migration and Remittances on Families and Children**

### **How Families Adjust**

According to study data, a family must first adjust and then adapt to the absence of a family member. Adjustment may last from a few days to a few months; it is the most difficult period in the opinion of most respondents. Then the period of transition from adjustment to adaptation starts when the other members of the family or other people take over the roles and responsibilities of those who have left. One rural family doctor recommended that the family, and especially the children, be assisted by a psychologist during the period of adjustment because it could have a negative impact not only on the development of the child’s personality but also on his/her health. *“There should be a psychologist. During this adjustment period after parents’ departure, children retire into themselves, whining more. They can enter into a depression that leads to the aggravation of chronic diseases.”* The moral and psychological climate of the family is affected; 39 percent of adults cited a deterioration after members left the country (Table A3 in Appendix 1).

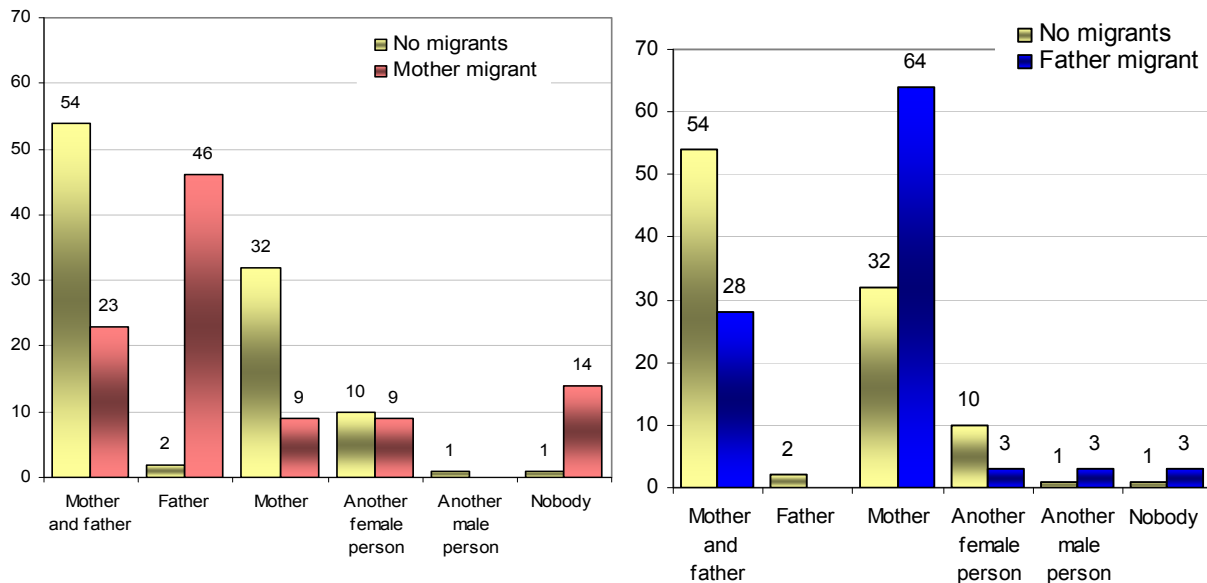
However, after a period of time that varies from case to case, families adapt. The fact that migration is a rather widespread phenomenon in Moldova helps as they realize that they are not

the only ones to undergo the experience. Also, the example of other households that have achieved much higher living standards helps family members to overcome the emotional trauma caused by the departure. Children mentioned that during the initial period after their parents left, discussions with other children whose parents had left to work abroad helped them.

In some families, the process of becoming accustomed to loss involves excluding the person who went abroad from the daily life of the family, so periodic visits by that person become inconvenient. Adaptations the family has made have to be altered upon the migrant's return. *"In my case, if my husband leaves, my boy sleeps with me, but when my husband came home, one day my boy told me that everything is good at home, only that father came and took his place"* (Mother). *"One girl told me that when her parents come home she feels worse because when they come home, they start to quarrel over money issues. She suffers even more and says it's better if they leave for Moscow"* (Rural teacher).

A family member's departure in search of a job abroad entails handing over responsibilities to other family members (Appendix 1 Table A4). For families without migrants, gender roles can be summarized as follows: Mothers are largely responsible for cooking and preparing meals, taking children to the doctor, helping children to prepare for classes, taking care of the home and supervising children during their leisure time. Traditional roles for fathers are earning money and agricultural work, though many roles are shared by fathers and mothers. In families where both parents are at home, caregivers are either both father and mother (54 percent), or mother (32 percent). In families with a migrant mother, fathers take care of the children 46 percent of the time, and if the father is the migrant, mothers are the caregivers 64 percent of the time (Figure 4). When the mother leaves, her role may be taken on by the father. In families without migrants, the father cooked only 1 percent of the time while in families where the mother had migrated, 41 percent of fathers prepared meals (Table A4). *"My father is like a mother to me, he cooks, he does everything"* (14-year-old urban female).

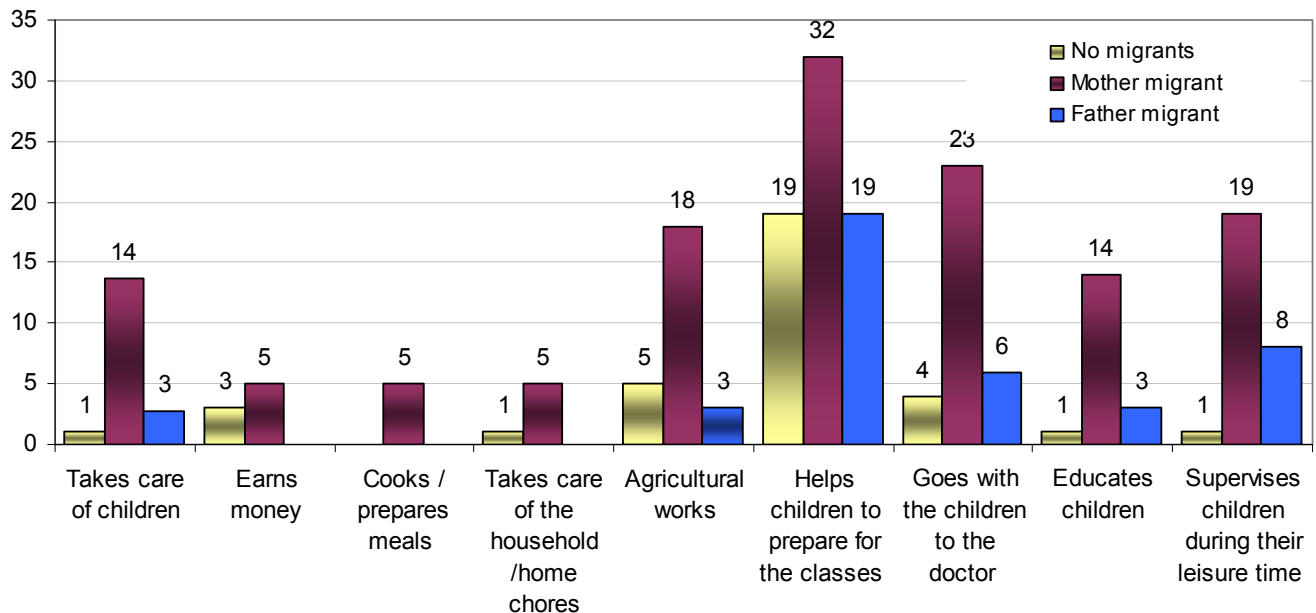
**Figure 4: Who Takes Care of Children in Families with and without Migrants (in percents)**



According to the IOM study, of the 177,195 children aged 0–18 whose parents were working abroad, 37 percent were 10 to 15 years old. UNICEF’s sociological study showed that many of these children had to adapt to new responsibilities. *“It was very difficult, very, very difficult. There was no one to wake me in the morning or to prepare meals until I learned how to do what usually mother or father did, but now I can do this myself”* (15-year-old rural male). *“I and my sister now do everything that our mother was doing when she was at home, and our father works in the yard”* (15-year-old rural female). *“I take care of the ducks, one of my brothers takes care of the poultry and the elder takes care of the hog. We wash the dishes and the clothes which mother used to do when she was home”* (11-year-old rural male). *“Then both parents left and it was very hard as neither mother nor father was nearby. Then I got used to it, but it isn’t the same. It is not a big deal, but I worry without them.”* (15-year-old rural female). Some said they had less spare time to play as they were more involved in household chores. *“Dad doesn’t let us go play anywhere, just sometimes on holidays, but mom allowed us to go play. Father doesn’t allow us because we’ve got things to do at home”* (11-year-old rural male).

Some family roles may not be performed at all after a member or members migrate, especially if the migrant is the mother. In 14 percent of families with a migrant mother, the children perceived that nobody took care of them, but this was the case in only 3 percent of families with a father abroad (Figure 5). This was also true in other areas of family life where women traditionally play significant roles, such as helping with homework and taking children to the doctor. According to Table A4, in 23 percent of families with migrants, no one took children to the doctor and in 10 percent no one was responsible for educating them.

**Figure 5: Percentage of Children Saying Family Roles Not Filled**

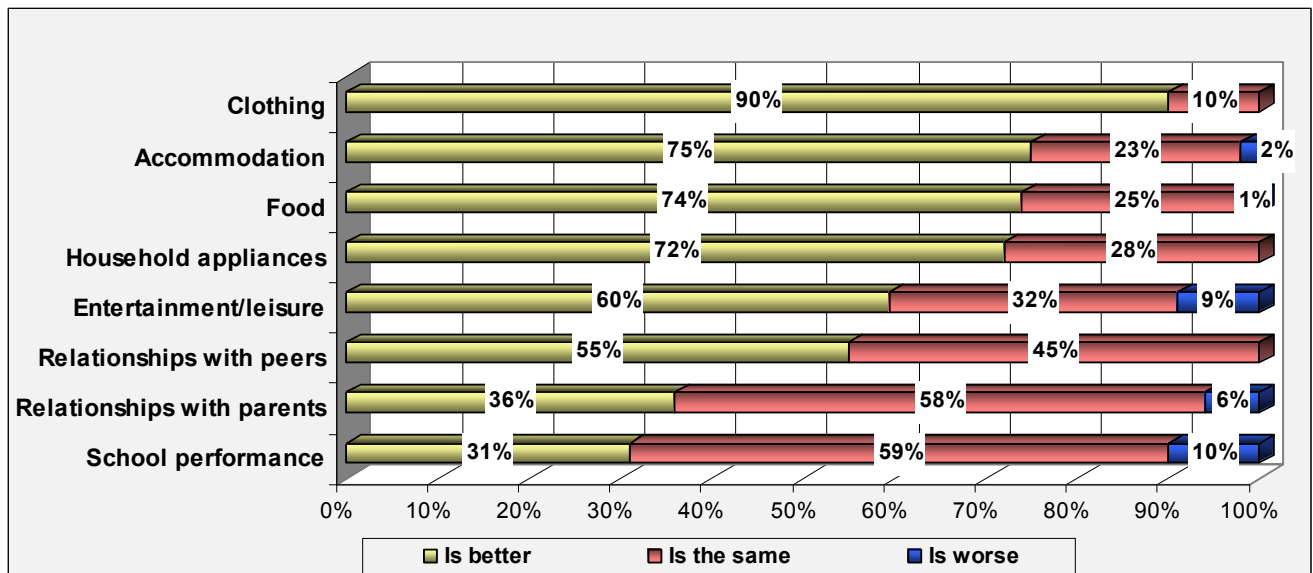


Divorce was a consequence of working abroad that was frequently mentioned by the participants (See Appendix 2 Case Study 1). This entails other issues such as child custody and property division. *“Our women head mostly for Turkey, then family dramas begin: family dissolution, divorce, property division, decision on child custody which is not always given to the mother as*

*she leaves for Turkey, so the children stay with the father”* (rural mayor). Many respondents noted that if a spouse does not come home for extended periods, the family can no longer be called a normal family, *“Out of a class of 20 pupils, the parents of 12 children work in Italy, Portugal and Spain, and the parents of four children are in Russia. Three of these children are brought up by grandparents, and in the rest of the cases, the father is abroad and the mother stayed home. Six families have fallen apart for good and do not live together anymore as he or she has remained abroad”* (rural primary teacher). Lengthy absences can also create tensions with caretakers. *“In a recent case here, a mother stayed five years in Italy, the couple divorced, the father also left the country, and the children stayed with the father’s relatives. When the mother came back, she could not see her children as the relatives told them, ‘If you go to your mother, don’t come back to us”* (rural teacher).

Children said that their material situations had improved following their parents’ migration: 90 percent said their clothing was better, 75 percent said their housing had improved and 74 percent had better food. Migration had less of an effect on their relationships with their parents as 58 percent thought that these hadn’t changed and only 6 percent thought they were worse. Relations with their peers improved or stayed the same in all cases, and only 10 percent thought their academic performance had suffered (Figure 6).

**Figure 6: Children’s Opinions about Changes in their Lives when their Parents Work Abroad**



Contrary to children’s perceptions, local leaders and teachers think children whose parents work abroad are more distant with their peers and are affected emotionally. Teachers underscored that irrespective of age and nature, all children of migrants display vulnerability on the subject of parents. *“When I was telling them to make up a sentence, it was always, mother left for Italy by plane or mother left for Italy by train or mother left for Italy by minibus and asking when his/her mother will come back”* (rural primary teacher). *“I gave them an assignment to analyze a text about mother, and when I came back into the classroom the children told me that a pupil had started to cry”* (urban primary teacher). Excerpts from compositions titled “My Parents” written by sixth grade children show that children are affected by their parents’ absence. *“Three years*

ago my father left the country. If my mother leaves the country, I wouldn't be able to live without her" (11-year-old rural female). "Mother changed; we don't get along as we used to. Once when I was in grade 2, my mother left for Italy and I had to stay with my father for two years" (10-year-old rural male).

According to the IOM study, when households with children were asked to choose the two greatest effects of migration, increased income ranked first in both urban and rural areas (Table 4). Some rural households had to work more and longer, and both commented on the emotional stress migration caused. Interestingly, a small percentage said migration had not had any effect on the household at all.

**Table 4: The Effects of Migration on Households with Children (%)**

	Urban	Rural
Household income increased	66	70
No effect	17	15
Household members have to work more and longer	4	17
Emotional stress for household members	13	15
Children without parents' care	17	13

Source: Adapted from Remittances and Migration in the Republic of Moldova 2006

Local leaders say that migration weakens parental control over children. Yet according to the police, no direct connection between committing various types of offences and parents' departure to work abroad has been established. The number of minors with police records whose parents are abroad is insignificant. The police admitted, however, that they do not investigate and do not thoroughly know the situation of children whose parents are abroad. They intervene when teachers or mayors request their help, usually in situations when children do not attend school or in connection with other problems or conflicts.

In the opinion of a rural mayor, however, children of migrants are, "... rather more prone to offences related to injuries, i.e., beating, hooliganism and that kind of thing than to robbery and burglary. They are conceited and are always ready to strike back." Local leaders believe that parental control is absolutely necessary for children's proper development. "Children must be constantly supervised by parents. They should check on their homework assignments, see how long they play after school, if they observe the daily schedule, the diet, all of which reflect on children's health and development" (urban mayor). The lack of parental supervision can also lead to alcohol and drug consumption by children and to irresponsible behaviour. "The majority start smoking, drinking, not to mention school truancy, for there is no one to keep tabs on them. Maybe some do not like the word control, but we all need it" (rural mayor).

Some of the adult participants emphasized that the impact of the absence of parents on children and children's reactions vary by age. "Teenagers start to face problems because of their desire to assert themselves through buying luxury items or through deviant behaviour; they consider themselves more mature, nobody controls them and they can do whatever they want. Children

from the primary grades experience the common feeling of missing their parents that can be noticed in continuous stress, anxiety and suffering” (urban school director).

Some may not know or recognize their parents after a long absence. “At first the husband left and did not return for four years, saying that he had married there. His boy in the third grade doesn’t even know the name of his father and the girl doesn’t know him at all, as he left before she was born. Now the mother has left, too, leaving five children in the care of a woman” (rural teacher).

Some are abused by their caretakers or take on responsibilities beyond their years. (see Appendix 2, Case Study 2.) “I know how to cook beans, potatoes and fried eggs, for instance, but more complicated meals I cannot prepare as I haven’t learned yet. When I grow up, I will learn” (6-year-old rural female). There are even cases of abandonment. Men whose wives have left the country may leave their children and find another partner, or women may start new lives in the countries where they work and break their relations or contacts with their families in Moldova, without even supporting them financially .(see Case Study 3 in Appendix 2.)

Children appeal to different people for help when their parents are abroad depending on their ages and on the issue to be addressed. Children over 12 prefer their friends, colleagues or elder sisters and brothers rather than adults. Younger children appeal more to the people who care for them. Girls have difficulty discussing problems related to their physical maturation if they live with their fathers and say they cannot discuss them over the phone with their mothers. They appeal to other females, usually friends and close relatives. “For matters related to girls, I speak to my cousins, sisters-in-law or aunts. For the rest, I speak to my father” (11-year-old urban female). Children with both parents absent rely heavily on their friends (Table 5).

**Table 5: Who do Children Left with Caretakers Turn to for Help with Their Problems?**  
(%)

Type of Problem	Parents	Brothers, sisters	Close relatives	Solve the problem themselves	Friends	Other
Personal	11	17	6	6	56	4
Health	11	17	6		61	5
Educational/ School	5	11	11		67	6
Other kind of problem	18	6	12		59	5

Although children experience difficulties when their parents leave, 61 percent cited financial support as a positive outcome of their parents working abroad (Appendix 1, Table A5). Some children whose parents have been working abroad for many years stated that their parents left them too early and should have waited until they had grown up a little. The IOM study shows that seasonal migrants to the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and legal migrants to the European Union (EU) on average stay five months and 14 months respectively. People who work illegally in the EU, on the other hand, and have paid a great deal of money to reach the host

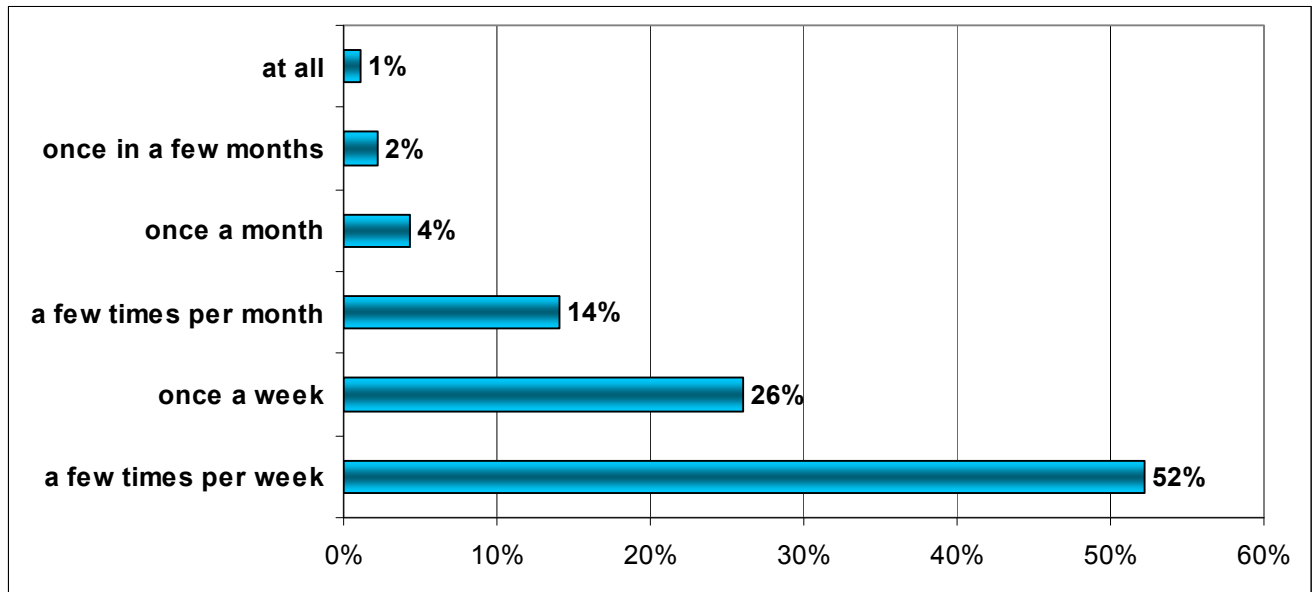
country, can't risk coming back to Moldova for regular visits, or at all. *“Both my parents have been to Moscow. They used to come back every year, but now since they have left for Italy, I am not sure whether they will be able to come”* (15-year-old urban female).

Generally, children did not think their relationships with their parents working abroad had been negatively affected. Only 6% felt they had deteriorated to a certain extent while 58% thought they were the same and 36% thought they had improved slightly or significantly (Appendix 1 Table A6). On the other hand, participants had examples from their communities or personal experiences when children left in the care of other people were cold to and distant from their own parents or did not even recognize them. *“She comes to stay with me just a bit, preferring to hug her grandfather. She asks me why have I asked her to come to me and goes to her grandfather to sit on his lap”* (mother working abroad). *“It's 15 years since we married, and for 10 years he has been coming and going. I have raised the youngest boy myself mainly. For a year and three months he wasn't home, and when he came he brought candies, but the child took the candy quickly and came to me saying, ‘Mother, there is a stranger.’ My husband started to cry”* (mother with husband working abroad).

### ***Communication with Parents***

Communicating by telephone is the most widespread form of communication between migrant parents and children left behind, as 90.2 percent of adult respondents said that parents abroad called their children. A total of 52 percent called a few times per week, though 1 percent did not call at all (see Figure 7).

**Figure 7: Frequency of Communication between Children and Parents Working Abroad**



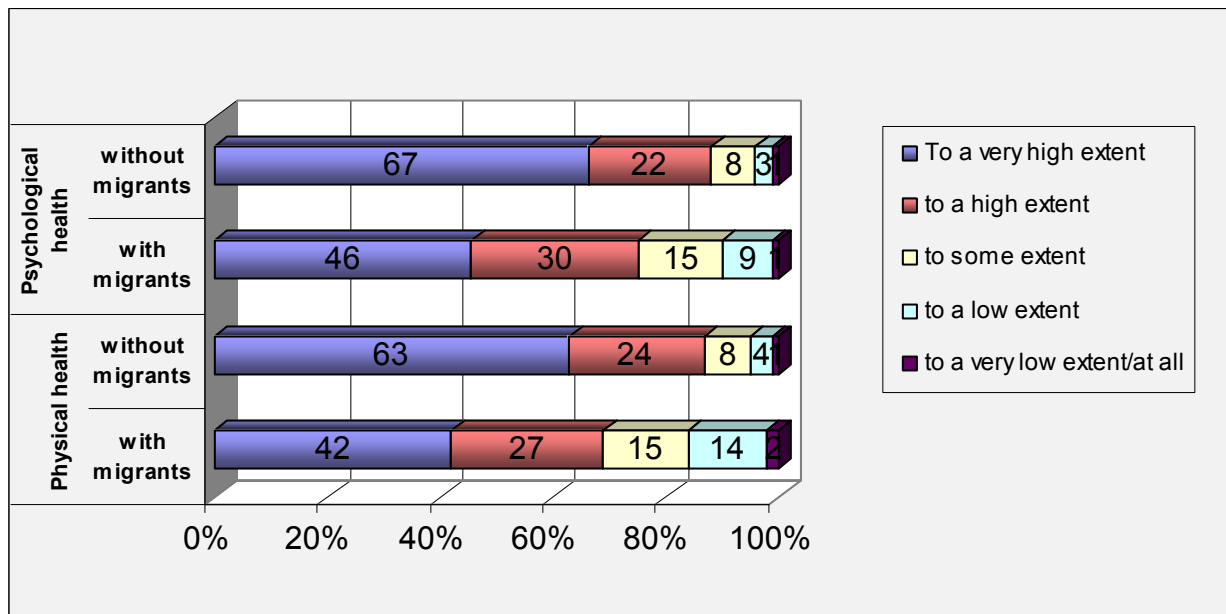
### ***Health***

Parents who work abroad are very concerned about their children's health, and this is the most frequently discussed subject when parents call home. In situations when only one parent has left the country, some hold the parent in Moldova responsible for any health problem the children

might have. *“My husband told me to put aside all work and take care of the child and that if anything happens to the child at home he would divorce me immediately”* (wife with husband abroad). Children often avoid telling their parents abroad about their health problems, believing that this protects them from additional worries. *“It is a terrible stress. The mother in Italy is crying and asking about an insignificant fever. It costs hundreds of euros, starting with medicine, a hospital, insomnia, telephone calls, packages”* (rural guardian).

The majority of participants believe that the absence of parents affects children’s physical and psychological health, though this belief was truer of families without migrants (Figure 8). Children who live with both parents are physically healthier was the conclusion of 87 percent of families without migrants and of 69 percent of families with migrants.

**Figure 8: Parents’ Perception of the Impact of Their Absence on Children’s Health**

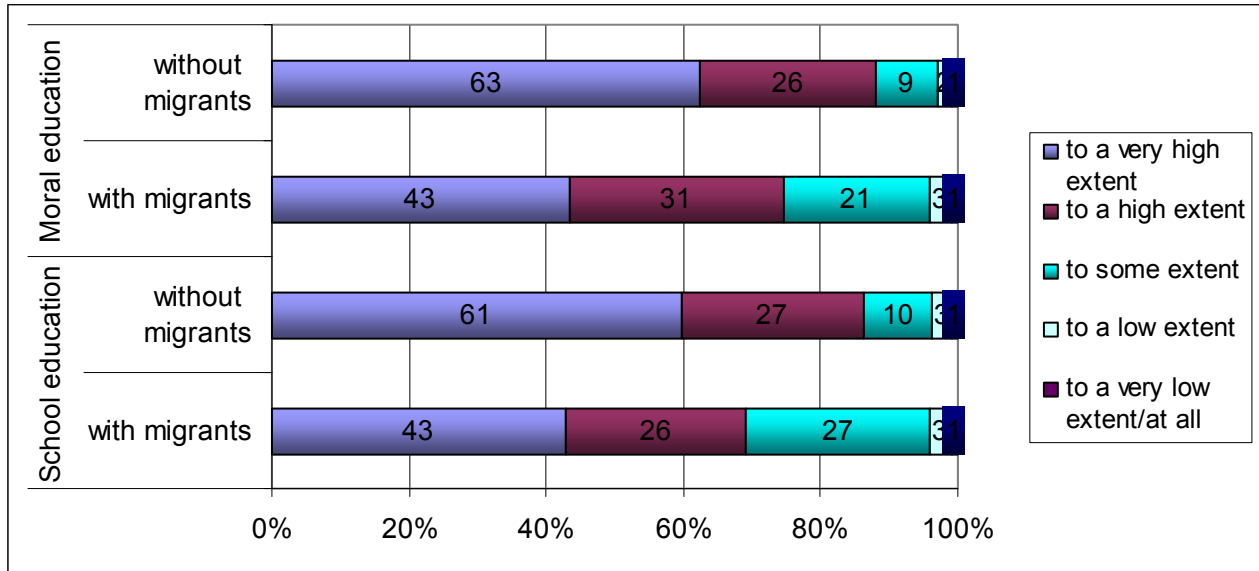


**Education**

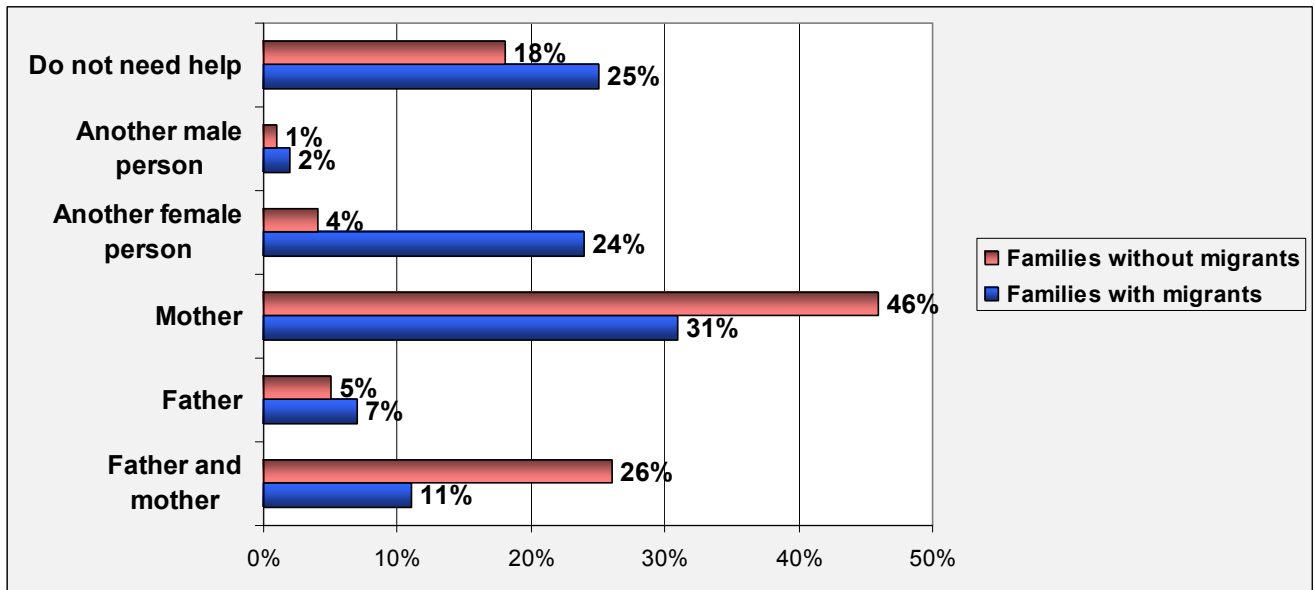
In the opinion of most participants, the absence of parents has a negative impact on the moral and academic education of children, although again, this opinion was truer of families without migrants. In all, 89 percent of these thought migration had a negative impact on moral education compared with 74 percent of families with migrants. Very few respondents (1 percent) believed that parents’ departure did not influence children’s education (Figure 9), especially if the migrant was the mother, as mothers usually help their children with their homework (Figure 10).



**Figure 9: Influence of Parents' Absence on Education**



**Figure 10: Who Helps with Homework?**



Children's access to information technology, on the other hand, is greater if their parents work abroad; 72 percent noted a positive change in this regard (Table A6). Some respondents believe access to computers, especially, plays an important role in children's development. Furthermore, migrant parents can afford tutors. Teachers said that while parents can pay for additional classes, generally, children do not attend them regularly and do not prepare their assignments.

A phenomenon that will occur more frequently in the years to come in the opinion of community leaders is parents taking their minor children to the countries where they work. Some cases were noted where children who migrated with their parents didn't continue their studies in the host country, even at the middle school level which is mandatory in Moldova. A child who left the

country in the seventh grade returned after a year abroad to continue his studies in middle school. He had worked the year he was away because he found the Turkish language too difficult. (Appendix 2, Case Study 4).

### ***Guardians***

When both parents leave, most often young children are left in the care of grandparents. Some felt that grandparents are not the best choice particularly if they are of advanced age. Not only is it hard on the grandparents, young children may start acting like old people. *“Children who are raised by grandparents show the psychological development of an old person as they are talking to their grandparents and have their grandparents’ manners and habits”* (wife with husband working abroad). Also, many grandparents cannot read Latin script and so are not able to help their grandchildren with their homework even in the primary grades. However, no cases were reported of grandparents neglecting their grandchildren. On the contrary, many children stated that they regretted they could not stay with their grandparents.

The opinion of children over ten years of age is taken into account when their parents decide with whom to leave them. Older children prefer to stay in their own homes, sometimes rejecting direct supervision. In such cases, parents may resort to neighbours to monitor their children. Some parents choose to leave their children in the care of teachers, hoping they will get a better education and that their school performance will be easier to check. Others ask for the advice of educators or school directors about whom they should leave their children with in order to make the right choice for their upbringing.

There can be difficulties between children left with a guardian and the children of the guardian. Children whose parents are abroad are very sensitive about the attitudes of the people around them. Children of guardians are often jealous, believing that their parents are favouring the migrants’ children, which guardians also admit. *“My boy was one year older than she and envied her because I was paying more attention to her as she was alone and cried and hugged me. He said, ‘You love her more’ and went away crying”* (guardian). *“I have to buy them the same things, otherwise they get upset. My daughter (16) says I love the other child (6) more. She says, ‘I am yours while she isn’t”* (guardian, urban).

A number of cases of ill-treatment by guardians, sometimes even close relatives, have been reported by community members or by children themselves. Abuses included insufficient food, poor living conditions or discriminatory treatment. In Case Study 5 in Appendix 2, the money sent by children’s parents was used for the caretaker’s own needs, such as house repairs or purchasing household goods. Even the parcels sent by the parents to their children were “checked” first by the guardians and only things they did not need were given to the children. The opposite can also be true, i.e., when parents leave their child/children in someone’s care and then “forget” to send money.

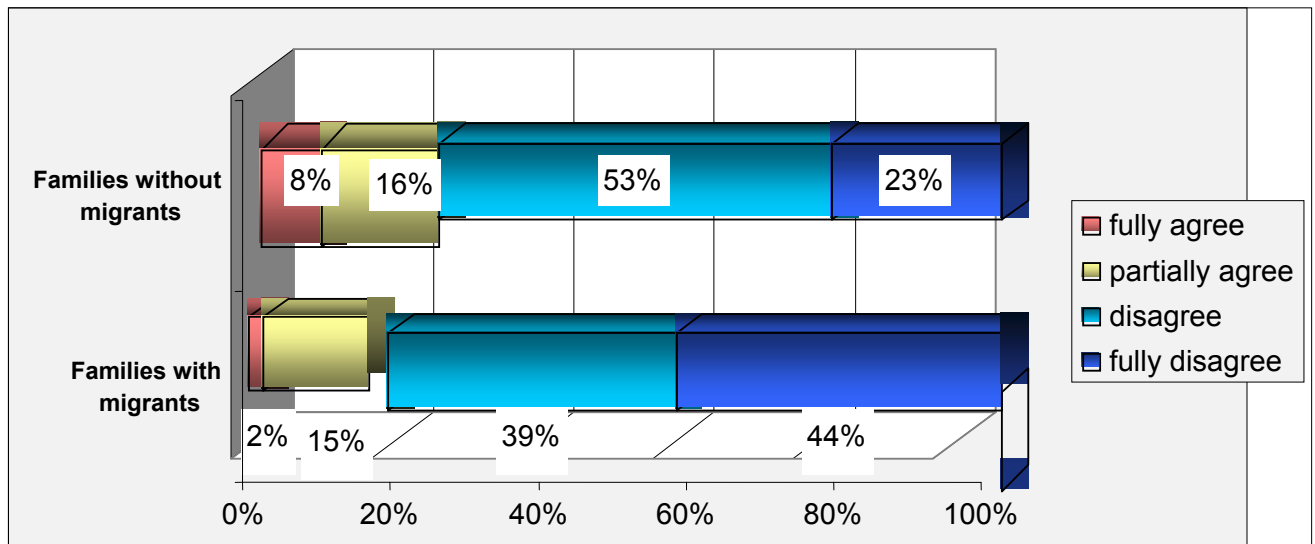
### ***Separation vs. Material benefits***

In some cases, the departure of parents abroad is accompanied by a series of upheavals for children, one of which is moving out of the family home. These children have to part with their friends, their school and familiar places which implies another adjustment, often a new life style,

and represents an additional stress to that of their parents' departure, "I came here to my grandparents, and this is a village. I liked it more in the city, as here there is much work around the house and I have to help my grandmother" (11-year-old rural male).

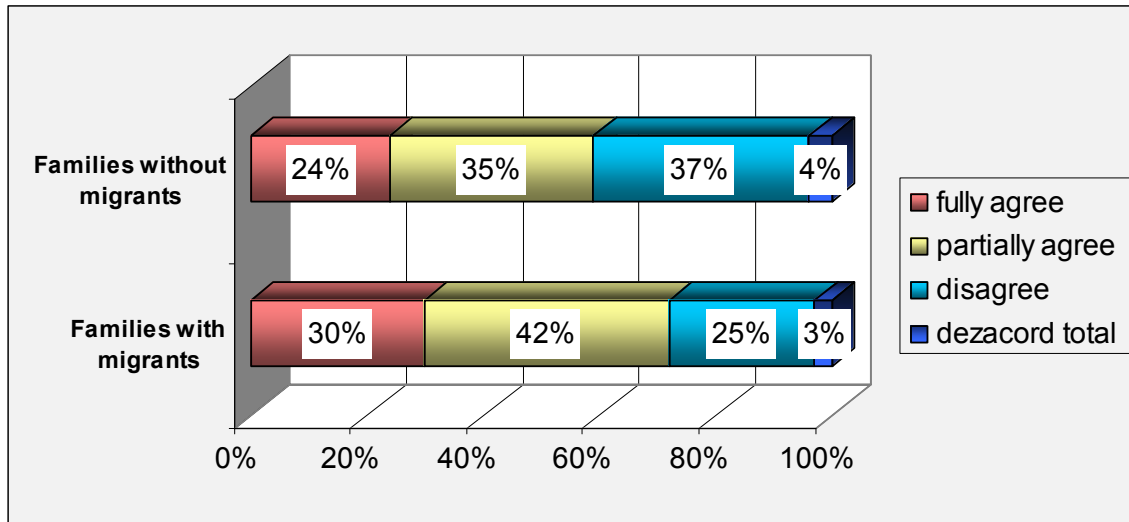
Is it better to live with your children or to ensure better living standards for them? This is a concern shared by parents, tutors and local leaders. "The difference is great if considered from the point of view of those whose parents left the country. The children are better dressed and don't lack financial means, but I am convinced that those who have parents here and lead a modest life are happier" (rural mayor). Not surprisingly, 75 percent of families without migrants disagreed or strongly disagreed that it was more important to provide financial support than to live with their children, but it was surprising that 87 percent of families with migrants did also (Figure 11).

**Figure 11: It is More Important to Provide Financial Support than to Live with Your Child?**



Nevertheless, parents justify working abroad because they do it for their children. In all, 72 percent of parents with a spouse abroad agreed that, "Children whose parents work abroad have greater chances to succeed in life." Only 59 percent of parents who were both at home agreed (Figure 12).

**Figure 12: Children with Parents Who Work Abroad have a Better Chance to Succeed**

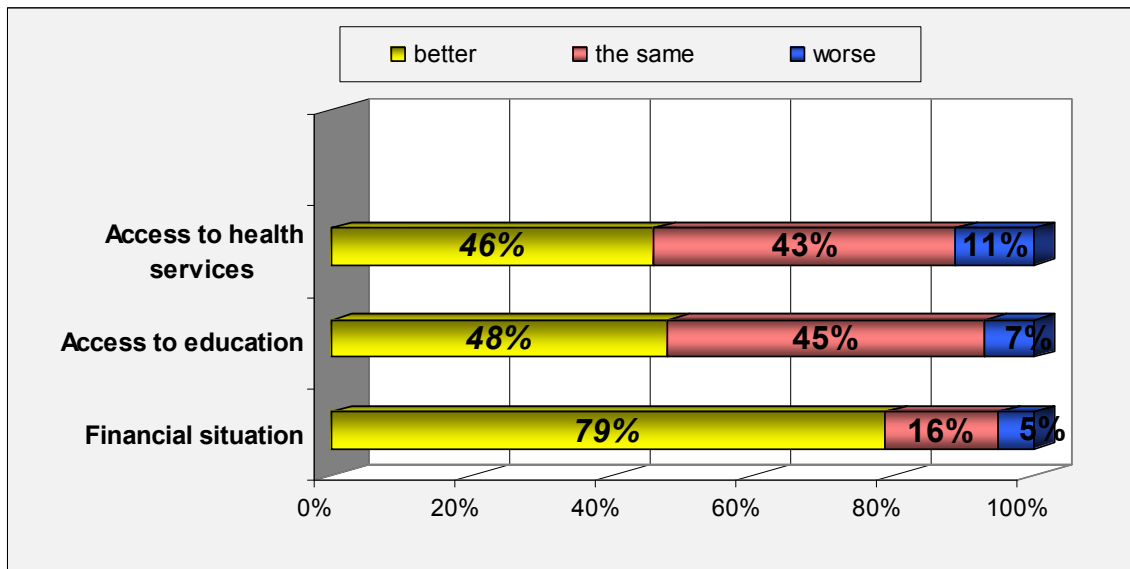


Seasonal migration for two or three months represents, according to some respondents, a way of reducing the impact of migration. Short-term migration does not sever the bonds of the migrant with the community, and family relations are less affected. In this context, efforts should be made to have migration policies that allow migrants to European countries to travel legally and to come back whenever they want. Currently, when costs for travelling can be 4000 euros, few people risk returning if they do not have all the necessary papers to go back abroad.

### 2.3. The Effects of Remittances on Material Wellbeing

The study shows that remittances have a positive impact on the financial situation of families receiving them. The great majority of participants (79 percent) said that the financial situation of the family had improved after one of its members went abroad to work, although improvements in access to health and education were not significant (Figure 13).

**Figure 13: Changes with One Family Member Working Abroad**



The contribution of remittances to the family budget is highly significant for most households that receive them. In 52 percent of households with children aged 0–18 years with a family member working abroad, remittances constituted more than 50 percent of the family budget. The same was true for 36 percent of families without children. Thus, for three out of four households that receive them, remittances represented the main source of income. There is also a positive correlation between the presence of children and the contribution of remittances to the family budget. Remittances represent more than 75 percent of the family budget for 27 percent of families with children but for only 12 percent of families without children (Table 6).

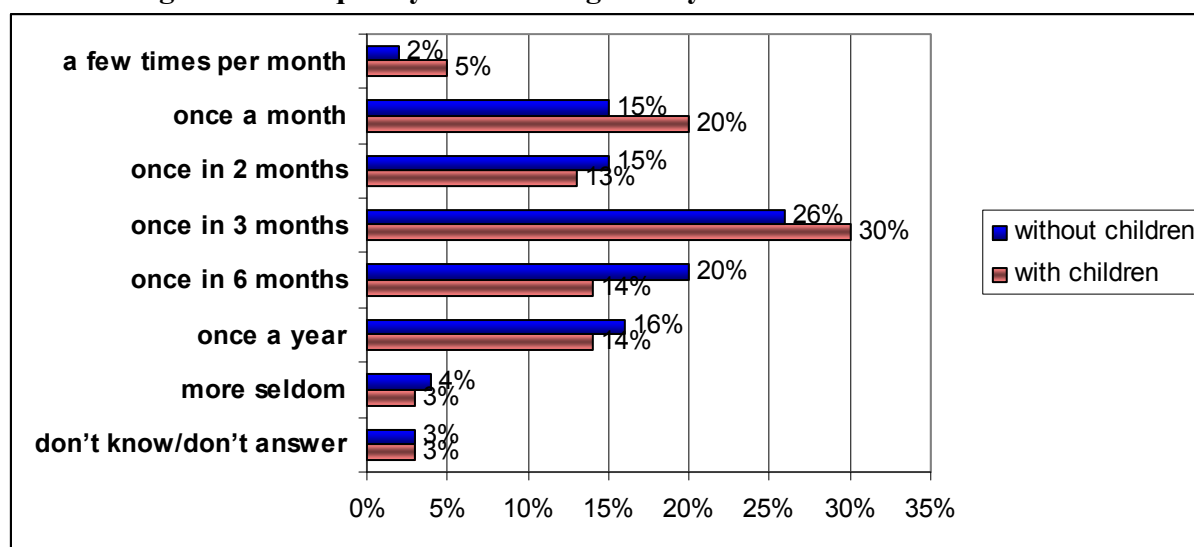
**Table 6: Contribution of Remittances to the Household Budget**  
(in percents)

Contribution of Remittances	In Households with Children	In Households without Children
Less than 25	12	22
25–50	26	30
50–75	25	24
More than 75%	27	12
I don't know/I am not going to answer	11	12

Source: Remittances and Migration in the Republic of Moldova 2006

The dependence of families with children on remittances is also demonstrated by the frequency with which they receive goods and financial resources from abroad (figures 14 and 15). A total of 25 percent of families with children receive cash remittances at least once a month, while only 17 percent of families without children do.

**Figure 14: Frequency of Receiving Money from Abroad in the Past Year**

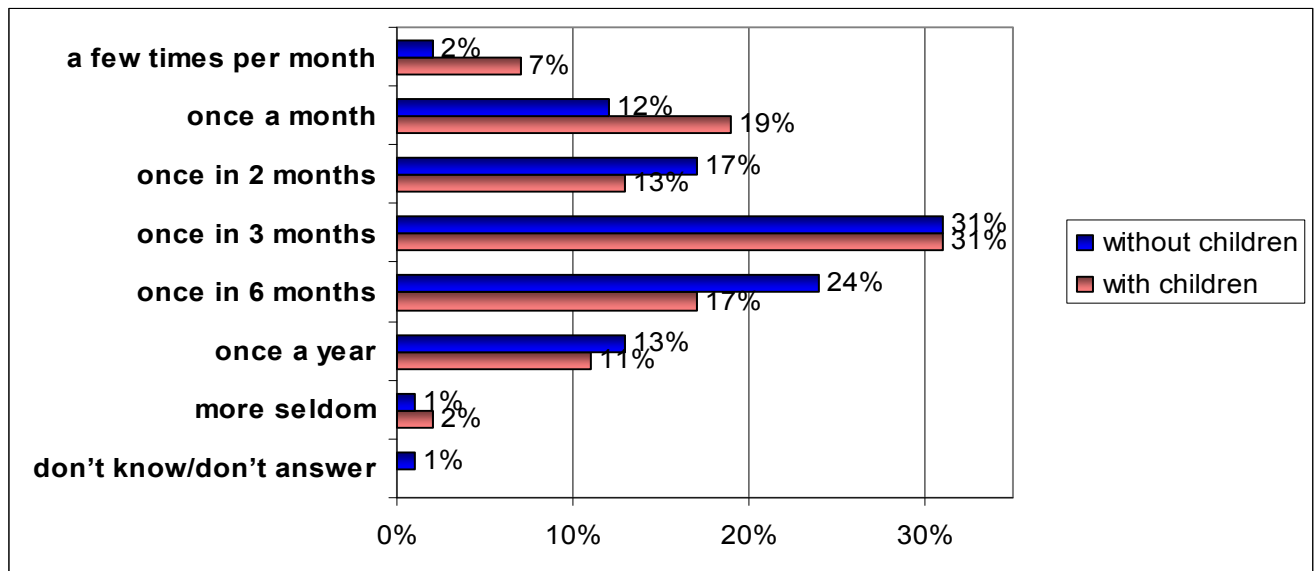


Source: Remittances and Migration in the Republic of Moldova 2006

As for goods, the difference between families with children and those without is even more significant.

In all, 26 percent of parents with children aged 0–18 in Moldova sent goods at least once a month, while only 14 percent of households without children received goods on a monthly basis.

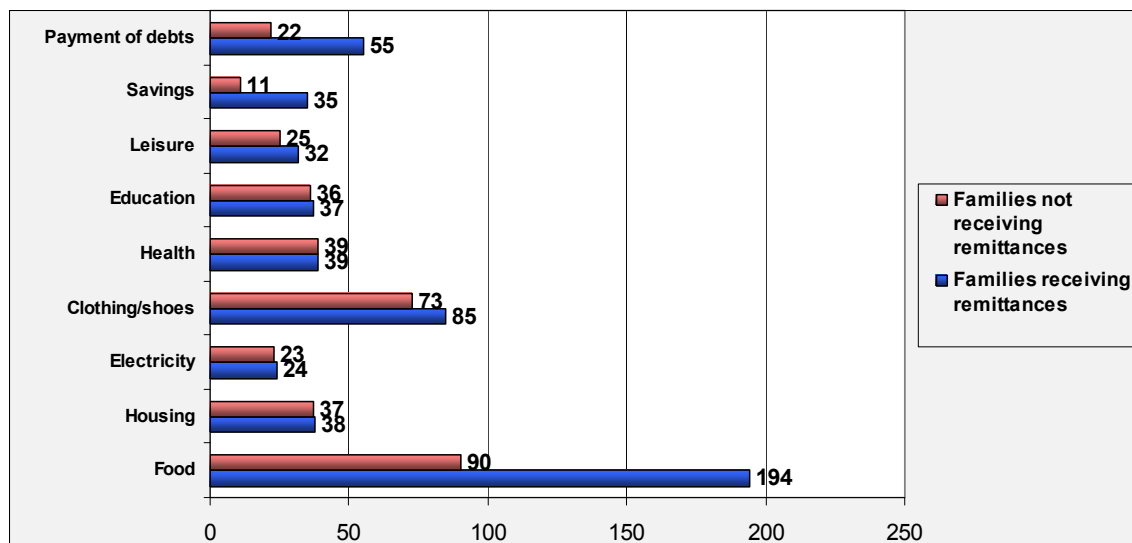
**Figure 15: Frequency of Receiving Goods from Abroad During the Past Year**



Source: Remittances and Migration in the Republic of Moldova 2006

Families who receive remittances spend more than twice as much on food each month while amounts spent on health, education through high school, housing and electricity are virtually equal (Figure 16). Households that receive remittances manage to save three times as much as households that don't, but they spend more on paying debts – possibly to cover the costs of migration.

**Figure 16: Monthly Expenditures in Lei per Person in Families with Children that Do and Do Not Receive Remittances**



Source: Remittances and Migration in the Republic of Moldova, 2006

When the children of migrants were asked how remittances were spent, they said on food, clothing, school fees, improving housing, school supplies, technical equipment and entertainment, in that order (Appendix 1 Table A7).

### ***Housing***

In addition to purchasing food and clothing, remittances are also used for improving housing. For many young families, the lack of their own home was the reason for leaving the country in search of work. “*Mother explained that she is going to earn money in order to buy a house and a computer for me*” (11-year-old rural male). The majority of participants noted that after one family member’s departure, housing problems diminished. In the opinion of a series of respondents, completing housing construction or buying an apartment would have been impossible without money earned abroad. In all, 76 percent of children said their housing had improved to a great or to a certain extent (Table A6).

### ***Higher Education***

At the gymnasium and lyceum levels there is no significant difference in expenditures on education between families that do and do not receive remittances. Discrepancies emerge for higher education that entails living and tuition expenses. It was the perception of families without migrants that the children of migrants would have more opportunities for higher education, as 73 percent agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “Children left in care and who receive money from their parents working abroad have better chances to continue their educations than the rest of the children” (Appendix 1, Table A8) although it was interesting that only 71 percent of families with migrants concurred.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

For many Moldovans, migration represents an alternative for supporting their families, and the financial impact is felt by the 1.5 million citizens who live in households that receive remittances. Nevertheless, while going to work abroad contributes significantly to household incomes, it also has many social costs. The average age of migrants is 35, which has had a negative impact on the birth rate. Migration also affects social relations. Social networks are destroyed which makes cooperating on community projects difficult. Those who remain often communicate infrequently with those working abroad, which creates a gap between migrants and the community and a loss of human and social capital. Remittances from migrants to a great extent improve the living standards of a family, but they play an insignificant role in the development of local infrastructure. Individual and family prosperity does not have an impact on the prosperity of the community left behind.

There is a growing gap between the incomes of households that receive remittances and those that do not. In 52 percent of households with children aged 0–18 years with a family member working abroad, remittances constituted over 50 percent of the family budget. The same was true for 36 percent of families without children. Thus, for three out of four households that receive them, remittances represented the main source of income. The great majority of participants (79 percent) said that the financial situation of the family had improved after one of its members

went abroad to work, though improvements in access to health and education were not significant. Remittances are used primarily for current consumption, i.e., food and clothing, and also for improved housing.

Migration has psychological and emotional effects on family members and their relationships. After a family member's departure, an adjustment period follows during which the family becomes accustomed to the new situation. Migration also changes the roles within the family as additional tasks must be assumed by those left behind. The departure of the father has fewer negative consequences on a child's development. According to respondents, a mother's absence affects children most with respect to their psychological and emotional states, nutrition, health and academic performance. Teachers say that all children, irrespective of their ages, are affected by their parents' departure, but they express it in different ways. Young children become attached to the people who take care of them while the older ones become more reserved, aloof or withdrawn. If both parents migrate, many leave their young children in their grandparents' care, which is good. The study found no cases of neglect on the part of grandparents.

A growing number of children now go abroad to join their parents, a phenomenon that will gather momentum in the coming years, according to community leaders. There have been situations when children who left the country with their parents have dropped out of school to work in the host country.

Regarding health and education, parents who work abroad are very concerned about their children's health. Both children and guardians avoid telling parents about children's health problems. Remittances offer more opportunities for higher education while at the middle and high school levels they do not play a significant role. Community leaders and teachers perceive that children's academic performance is mostly negatively affected by their parents' absence.

Parents working abroad communicate with their children mainly by phone. On average, they speak two or three times a week.

In all, 75 percent of families without migrants and 87 percent of families with migrants thought living with their children was more important than providing financial support for them. Nonetheless, parents said they worked abroad for their children; 72 percent of parents with a spouse abroad agreed that "children whose parents work abroad have greater chances to succeed in life" while only 59 percent of parents who were both at home agreed.



# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1

### Research Data

**Table A1: Intentions of Community Members to Contribute Money for Community Projects**  
(in percents)

	Families with Migrants			Families without Migrants		
	Yes	No	NA/Don't Know	Yes	No	NA/Don't Know
Gas pipe	58	38	4	66	31	3
Water pipe	35	59	6	66	38	6
Road	54	38	7	51	39	10
Well/s	43	50	7	42	47	11
Construction/repairs of the kindergarten	50	43	7	44	46	10
Construction/repairs of the school	68	27	5	62	34	4
Construction/repairs of the church	68	25	7	59	31	10
Construction/arrangement of a rubbish dump site	38	53	9	29	57	14

**Table A2: Frequency of Communication with those Abroad**  
(in percents)

Families with Migrants	A few times per week	Once a week	A few times a month	Monthly	Once in a few months	Not at all
Family members	59	19	15	4	2	1
Close relatives	7	10	19	17	29	17
Distant relatives	4	4		6	32	54
Neighbours			2	10	22	67
Friends	7	2	2	16	22	51
Work colleagues					31	69
Acquaintances in the locality				4	18	78

<b>Families without Migrants</b>	A few times per week	Once a week	A few times a month	Monthly	Once in a few months	Not at all
Close relatives	8	15	19	17	30	12
Distant relatives	1	4	7	10	36	41
Neighbours	4	2	4	7	35	47
Friends	4	6	4	13	34	39
Work colleagues				4	57	39
Acquaintances within the locality			1	4	23	72

**Table A3: How Did Your Family's Life Change after a Member Went Abroad to Work? (%)**

	Much better	Better	The same	Worse	Much worse
Finances	30	55	12	1	1
Access to health care	22	25	45	7	1
Access to education	17	32	45	4	1
Psychological (moral) climate	3%	17%	41%	32%	7%

**Table A4: Roles of Family Members in Families with and without Migrants**  
(in percents)

		Without migrants	With migrants	Migrant mother	Migrant father
<b>Taking care of children</b>	Father and mother	54	24	23	28
	Father	2	13	46	
	Mother	32	36	9	64
	Another female person	10	15	9	3
	Another male person	1	1		3
	Nobody	1	10	14	3
<b>Earning money</b>	Father and mother	46	42	46	42
	Father	31	25		47
	Mother	13	20	46	6
	Another female	6	9	5	3

		Without migrants	With migrants	Migrant mother	Migrant father
	person				
	Another male person	3	2		3
	Nobody	3	2	5	
<b>Preparing meals</b>	Father and mother	12	2		6
	Father	1	11	41	
	Mother	74	50	9	83
	Another female person	13	34	41	11
	Another male person	1	1	5	
	Nobody		2	5	
<b>Taking care of the home</b>	Father and mother	39	10	5	17
	Father	8	20	50	6
	Mother	40	42	9	75
	Another female person	12	25	27	3
	Another male person	2	1	5	
	Nobody	1	2	5	
<b>Agricultural chores</b>	Father and mother	51	17	5	36
	Father	21	25	68	6
	Mother	11	22		42
	Another female person	8	18	5	6
	Another male person	4	9	5	8
	Nobody	5	10	18	3

		Without migrants	With migrants	Migrant mother	Migrant father
<b>Taking children to the doctor</b>	Father and mother	23	7		11
	Father	3	14	46	3
	Mother	61	45	14	78
	Another female person	8	18	18	
	Another male person	1	2		3
	Nobody	4	14	23	7
<b>Educating children</b>	Father and mother	60	23	23	33
	Father	3	15	46	3
	Mother	26	35	9	58
	Another female person	8	14	9	
	Another male person	1	2		3
	Nobody	1	10	14	3
<b>Supervising children during their leisure time</b>	Father and mother	50	14	10	25
	Father	2	19	62	3
	Mother	36	32	5	53
	Another female person	8	19	5	6
	Another male person	2	2		6
	Nobody	1	13	19	8
Families observed		70	30		

**Table A5: Children's Opinions on the Positive Aspects of Parents Working Abroad (%)**  
(open question)

Financial/material support	61
Enrich the country	2
Prospects for the children	3
They have got jobs/well paid /earn money	14
See the world	1
To send money for studies	2
You have the possibility to settle there	1
You can afford to go somewhere on holidays	0
Nothing positive	10

**Table A6: Children's Perceptions of Changes after One/Both Parents Left to Work Abroad (%)**

	Has improved to a great extent	Has improved to a certain extent	Remained the same	Has worsened to a certain extent	Has worsened to a great extent
Food	25	49	25	1	
Clothing	26	64	10		
Housing	28	48	23	1	
Entertainment / spare time	19	41	32	9	
Relations with parents	10	26	58	6	
Relations with children their age	16	29	55		
School performance	10	21	59	9	2
Technical equipment (computer, tape-recorder, mobile phone etc.)	25	48	28		

**Table A7: Use of Remittances According to Children of Migrants (%)**

	Multiple answers
For food	85
Clothing	79
School fees	36
Improvement of living space conditions (purchase, construction /house repairs	21
School supplies	16
Entertainment	10
Technical equipment (computer, tape-recorder, etc.)	12

**Table 8: Adult Opinions on Possibilities for Further Education**

<b>Families with Migrants</b>	Total agreement	Partial Agreement	Disagreement	Total disagreement
Children left in care and receiving money from their parents have greater chances to receive an education, continue their studies	29%	42%	23%	5%

<b>Families without Migrants</b>	Total agreement	Partial Agreement	Disagreement	Total disagreement
Children left in care and receiving money from their parents have greater chances to receive an education, continue their studies	27%	46%	22. %	5%

## Appendix 2

### Case Studies

#### Case Study 1

*Respondent: a 14-year-old girl*

I have a twin brother, my parents are divorced. Mother is abroad and I stay with my grandfather. My grandmother is dead. Father has another family. When mummy left it wasn't a problem, but later they quarreled and divorced. Even before mother left they were arguing and after two years she came home and they argued even more. I think that the thing I want the most is to be with my mother; I do not know anything else. If only she could take us to Italy with her or if she could come here if she had enough money. I ask for money from my mother or grandfather. I do not ask for money or anything else from my father. If I need something urgently I ask my mummy. I asked my father once, and he said he wouldn't give us money as we did not deserve it. I don't know what he meant. I haven't called him since then; he lives in Chişinău. My brother gets along with grandfather.

When we were children we lived in Chişinău, but after mother left we came here to the village as we had no one to stay with. We stayed with our grandmother for half a year. I am used to staying with my grandparents. At first, I stayed with my father for few months in Chişinău, and after that we went to another flat with his brother. Then granny came to Chişinău and we stayed for half a year and then moved here to the countryside. I left my father as he brought a lot of women home and I didn't want to stay with him. We were renting an apartment with my grandmother and mother was sending money. The apartment our family had was bought with the money from their wedding but they took it from us. Father doesn't even come to see us, it is a year almost since he came or called. I think it's because of his new family; the woman he married gave birth to a girl.

Mother left because of my father, because he found a new family. When we lived in Chişinău, there were problems with money. When mother wanted to buy something he changed the subject. She left because of the money.

After I finish ninth grade, I want to go to a college in Chişinău. If I finish 11 classes, I can go to an institute in Italy. It depends on mother. I am sure I won't live in the village. Mother cannot take us to Italy as they are divorced and father has to give his permission, and he doesn't want to. Mummy has tried to take us a lot of times, but he doesn't want to sign. If only we could go there. Mummy tried to talk to him, we went to the court but he doesn't want to sign. He says we don't have to go abroad. There are four years left until I'm 18 and can leave without father's permission. I am learning English now, and Italian is not difficult. Mummy teaches us when she comes home.

## Case Study 2

*Respondent: 6-year-old girl.*

*There are five family members: 2 parents a 6-year-old girl, a 4-year-old boy and a 2-year-old boy*

Mother left and she said she would stay only three months but she stayed longer—almost four. Now she says she will earn a lot of money as the first time she left she hadn't learned how to work. We stayed with a woman. I took the boys and some clothes and we stayed with her. Before that we stayed with a girl for a while. If mother hadn't come last summer, that woman would have left us in an orphanage. The woman was smoking and had something to do with the drinking, but I want to stay with that girl. She was good. Of course she hit us when we were naughty, but that woman was working and came home late. She did not cook, but that girl cooked and we woke up in the morning, ate and went to school together. When I went to school a man who milked the cows and bought bread stayed with my brothers. I am in the 1<sup>st</sup> form. I'm not a very good student, but I get by. The teacher gave me books, and the woman bought me notebooks. When homework is too difficult I go to that girl, and she helps me.

When mother came I went home and cleaned the house. It was untidy because father had forgotten about it. He found a girl here in the village and moved in with her. When mother came she went to that girl's place and took father home. When mother came we bought some things and some guests came. She had some money and bought some clothes for us and for father and some food and washing powder. Mother said that when she comes back we will fix up the house. One wall is broken and she wants to build a little kitchen and then to remodel the entire house.

Mother got the flu and we all got sick, and father got drunk one evening and punched her in the eye.

When mother came, she brought mayonnaise and my 2-year-old brother ate too much of it and vomited. She said that she must take him to the doctor because his heart and lungs were struggling, and I had a pain in my heart last night. We didn't go to the doctor. Mother cut my hair because that woman had lice. I had long hair before.

I can prepare food like beans, potatoes and fried eggs, but difficult things I can not prepare; that woman didn't teach me. When I'll grow up, I will learn how to cook.

Father came home and quarreled with my mother. When he hit mother I told him not to because there was no reason, but he said that in Moscow mother had another man and that's why she didn't come home. Mother told him to go with her, but father hit his head and the hospital certified that he has mental problems.

My little brother wears my old boots. They are ok. I will clean them and will wear them. I don't have any others. Mother promised that when she comes the next time she will buy more toys for my brothers so they do not fight over them



*Family doctor:*

The mother is working in Russia, and father found a lover meanwhile. A young girl took care of the children, and after her a 50-year-old woman looked after them. I wrote to the mayor to take the children to an orphanage because no one takes care of them. I do not know what the decision was, but now I believe that the children are at home. They came to our village and bought a house.

### **Case Study 3**

*Respondent: a 36-year-old man.*

*His wife went abroad for two years and started a new life. She rarely contacts the family in Moldova and doesn't support them financially. The father is raising three children: a 6-year-old girl, an 11-year-old boy and a 14-year-old girl.*

I came home one day, and the neighbours told me that I had to make a party as my wife got to Italy successfully. I thought our troubles would be over. The eldest asked where their mother was, I told them that she had left and they began to cry. I began to cry too. They have grown up; the little one is already 6. My wife doesn't call. She is living with a Romanian there. She told me and I talked to him too. They called me names.

Maybe I don't get along with my wife, but I won't forget about my children while I'm alive. I tell everyone to take care of my children and to tell them about their mother and father. My children understand, even the little one. I tell her, "Danuta, mother will come, you will go to her," but she says, "I won't go to her because we have a very hard life." The children tell me that when everybody goes to have lunch, they do not eat. When they pass by the canteen, they get sick. I cry and try to think what I can do for them. Now, for the winter, we need some wood and so on. We're always thinking what we should do.

She called a week or two ago. My boy didn't want to speak to her. He said, "You are there with man, and father is here complaining." The elder girl talks to her and answers her questions. I tell her about our situation and she hangs up the phone or calls me bad words. She speaks vulgarly. I even denounced her to the police. A lot of people ask me how is it that I haven't start drinking or smoking.

The boy and the younger girl are very cold with her; the elder girl is a little different. I often tell her, "Alinuța, mother will come, will bring money and all you need. The things I cannot afford, you will get." But she says, "No, Daddy, I need her now, and now when we need her the most she doesn't even call, when she called she said she will bring everything, she said she would send us 400 euros for the 1<sup>st</sup> of September but she didn't." The children asked me, "Daddy, when will you receive the money to buy things for the 1<sup>st</sup> of September?" and I didn't know what to answer. I knew that she had lied to them, but I didn't know what to say. At last I told them the truth because otherwise they would tell me that I was telling lies to them.

I tell a lot of men not to send their women abroad. I tell them about my situation. A lot of people know

me, and when I tell them that my wife left me, nobody believes me. The ones who have their wives abroad call them back. When she left, she called me on the phone and told me that she did not have to work in the sun and that she didn't have any injuries. "You did not appreciate me, when I was working you were sitting in the house," she said on the phone. "The state here is better, the women do not work." And I explained to her, "The state has money there, there is comfort and so on, it's different from here. I do not ask you to do it for me but for the future of our children." And she answers, "That's life." When I tell her the real facts she tells me that this is life and that she has no money and she hangs up the phone. I hope that in 2007 when Romania gets into EU, we can travel farther than Romania. I hope that I can make a future for my children, to give them the opportunity to travel, to get what they need, to go to school, to university, to be able to help my children as they are smart, but the financial situation is difficult. If there were a school, a free one for socially vulnerable families, that would help us. Maybe there are, but not in our district.

I do all I can; the cooking and washing – all that depends on me. If I had the possibility to earn 1000–2000 euros I wouldn't stay here any longer. I don't want anything else. The children are crying sometimes as the mothers of other children do a lot of things for them. I told them that I'll go anywhere and do everything I can.

#### Case study 4

*Respondent: a 17-year-old boy.*

*Mother left for Turkey for five years. After one year she divorced. Her child lives with his aunt.*

Mother left mostly because she wanted to get rid of our father, as he was hitting her all the time and she was afraid she couldn't escape him. When she left she had a good job. She regrets it now and wants to come back to work as a doctor. We were getting along quite well.

First, I was living with my father. After mother came home after a year, she took me with her to Turkey. I came back to graduate from ninth grade. Now I'm learning a profession—a painter—because abroad this job is well paid. I couldn't learn there and could only work for the year I was there as the language is difficult.

When I came home to finish school, it was a little difficult as I had forgotten everything because I didn't study for a year. I came to live with my aunt as my mother and I wanted this. I was afraid that if I came home father would beat me, and there was no one to take care of the house. After mother left, he beat me as revenge. He is a little bit crazy since he fought in Afghanistan. Even if I go abroad I'll go only for a while to earn money and after this I'll come back. People are different there. Even if you know them, they treat you like a stranger.

## Case Study 5

*Respondent: 13-year-old female*

*The family has four members. The father currently works abroad; the mother previously did, but is now staying home with her children.*

Father wasn't at home for five years. He left when I was three years old and came back when I was eight, but he stayed for only three months, and then he and mother left for Austria. They stayed till mother couldn't stand it any longer and came home, but father stayed there as he supports us. If they would both come back it would be ok, but one of them had to stay there.

For two years my brother and I stayed with my godmother. She is one of our relatives, but living there was hard. I had to work hard in order to get food, and after working I had to do my homework and of course I was tired and this was the reason why I was getting marks from 5 to 7. (Since mother has come home I have got only first class marks.) At my godmother's my brother and I were insulted and were made to work. We felt slighted as we were not given the food their family was eating. We were given food and after we finished eating it they were eating something else. We worked, but her children didn't. We had money, but they took it. We had a computer, we had everything, but it was not good because our parents were not at home and my godmother's family insulted us. It was very hard to overcome those difficulties. When we left it seemed to me that we were saved from drowning. It seemed that we started a new life. We were chased out and slept outside till 9 or 10 o'clock in the evening till they called us. Especially our godfather was very strict and he chased us out and after that our godmother was looking for us and got us into the house and beat us.....it was very difficult.

In summer, we went to bed at 10 o'clock. In winter bedtime was a little earlier because it was snowing outside and we had no work to do, but in summer we got to bed very late and we also had homework to do for the next day. Sleep was heaven for me.

The worst day was when I lost three geese. When I came home I didn't notice and realized it only when I counted them. She took an iron pole and hit me on the head with it. I ran away and since then avoided her because I knew she hated me and she didn't want the best for me. I talked to my mother almost every day but couldn't say anything as my godmother was always sitting beside me, so we couldn't tell her anything. One day, my brother went to gather nuts and he jumped from a tree and fell down very hard. When he came home, his foot was swollen and he couldn't walk because of the pain. Mother called and talked to my brother and she understood that something was wrong and then my brother explained to my mother what had happened and only then my godmother took him to the hospital to see what was wrong. He was in bed for a whole week.

I didn't try to talk to anyone to get help; I held out when I learned that mother was coming home. I had friends, but I didn't trust them. My life was a secret till mother came home. It was obvious to everyone that something was wrong and they asked me, "What's wrong with you?" "Why are you so shy?" "Why don't you tell us?" I told them that I'd tell only my parents what was wrong. I had a friend to whom I was telling all my secrets till I realized she was talking about me behind my back, so I didn't talk to

anyone else until my mother came, and then I told her everything.

She was sending us money, clothes, food and sweets—so many things—but a lot of it was hidden from us. When a package came from mummy, they opened it first and then they gave it to us. They were also fixing up their house with our money. They began to build a bathroom, but mother came home and they had no more money to finish it.

When my parents left I was very, very scrawny, ugly and not cared for. After my mother came home I got better; I grew and I ate healthy food. Mother buys what we want and since she has come home, we don't lack anything. If I were a parent, I wouldn't leave my children. I would take them everywhere with me and if I couldn't take them, I would leave them with their grandparents.

Mother has decided to stay home to get her Romanian citizenship. Then we can go to Europe without problems and if we have these papers we can go to our parents anytime. Father has left legally with a visa, and the time for staying has expired. We hope that when he comes home he will also get Romanian citizenship and all the family will be secure.







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