# KAZAKHSTAN: STUDY ON THE SOCIOECONOMIC

# EFFECTS OF COVID-19 ON STRANDED MIGRANTS

## MITIGATING THE EFFECTS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON MIGRANTS AND THEIR FAMILIES FROM CENTRAL ASIA AND THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION – FEBRUARY 2021

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Suggested citation: Bruni V., 2021. Kazakhstan: Study on the Socioeconomic Effects of COVID-19 on Stranded Migrants. International Organization for Migration (IOM), Kazakhstan.

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# KAZAKHSTAN: STUDY ON THE SOCIOECONOMIC EFFECTS OF COVID-19 ON STRANDED MIGRANTS

**MITIGATING THE EFFECTS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON MIGRANTS AND THEIR FAMILIES FROM CENTRAL ASIA AND THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION – FEBRUARY 2021**

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# INTRODUCTION

The outbreak of COVID-19 has affected the status of migrants and communities and produced new challenges and vulnerabilities. The socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19 global pandemic include the stringent movement restrictions and the suspension of income-generating activities and labour produce a set of challenges for migrants. Along with interference to the working environment, free movement and appearance of health threats, there is no or limited access to technology, limited amount of savings, which made migrants leave host countries.

In Central Asian region, many labour migrants decided to leave the the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan and return to their home countries. A huge number of migrants were determined to leave Kazakhstan, but many of them are not able to cross the borders and return to their countries of origin.

According to the latest data from migration offices in Kazakhstan, there are stranded migrants from CIS countries, Central Asian countries and the Philippines. However, there are many unregistered stranded migrants from different countries and of different nationalities. Stranded migrants face many challenges and become vulnerable due to uncertainty about their legal status, availability of social services, health services and stringent movement restrictions. There is no clear data on the number of stranded migrant population. The extent to which different challenges and vulnerabilities are affecting stranded migrants is also unknown.

Moreover, it is unclear whether stranded migrants are receiving sufficient information about COVID-19 or have access to the resources which will allow them to maintain the hygiene and sanitation standards required for effective protection. Information is also missing on their return intentions and plans for the future.

To fill this data gap and inform possible responses, in August 2020, IOM missions in Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan started to implement the regional project "Mitigating the socioeconomic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on migrants and communities in Central Asia and the Russian Federation".

The project´s objective is to mitigate the socioeconomic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on migrants and communities and help governments of the Central Asian States and the Russian Federation address operational challenges of migration management in the current global health crisis.

Beneficiaries of the project: Governments of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and the Russian Federation, civil society organizations, labour migrants, returnees, vulnerable migrants and communities of origin and destination.

The project responds to the Regional Appeal: IOM Central Asia and the Russian Federation Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan. As such, it contributes to the overall objective of the IOM COVID-19 Global Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan to halt further transmission of COVID-19 and mitigate the impact of the outbreak, including its social and economic impacts. In line with the COVID-19 Global Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan, IOM is supporting governments and partners to understand population mobility trends and reinforce public health that aims to minimize disruption to society and the economy. While the efforts are initially focused on preparedness and response, IOM keeps the need for recovery in mind. This includes the approach of "Leaving No One Behind" as well as incorporating elements of social cohesion and programming throughout.

As a part of the regional project, IOM initiated a baseline data collection on the demographic profiles and COVID-19–related vulnerabilities of stranded migrants in Kazakhstan.



Baseline data collection in the field
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# SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

## Sociodemographic profile

The stranded migrant population was mostly composed by male respondents (72%), by respondents aged between 25 and 44 years old (68%) and originally from three neighbouring countries to Kazakhstan (80%): Uzbekistan – 51 per cent, Tajikistan – 15 per cent and the Russian Federation – 14 per cent.

A large share of interviewees indicated the active marriage status (46%) and more than half of respondents indicated that they have children (60%). The majority of them have 1 to 4 children (93%). However, only one third of children live with interviewees in Kazakhstan (32.5%). Most of the rest of the children that stay apart from their parents live in three neighbouring countries (85%): Uzbekistan – 53 per cent, Tajikistan – 18 per cent and the Russian Federation – 13 per cent.

The majority of respondents either have completed or initiated secondary level of education (46.2%) or participated in vocational training (40.4%). Only 10 per cent of interviewees have higher education.

## Reasons for Migration

The data analysis indicated that that there are five key reasons for leaving the home country and migrating to Kazakhstan, which include: low wages (47.6%), a lack of work (45.7%), finding employment in Kazakhstan (34.3%), problems with family (14.8%) and visiting/reuniting with family and friends in Kazakhstan (11.6%).

Six key pull factors were considered to select Kazakhstan as a country of destination: previous work experience in Kazakhstan (21.3%), geographical proximity (14.4%), higher salaries (11.2%), availability of jobs in Kazakhstan (8.7%), having friends (8.6%) and the large share of other migrants from home country (8.4%). The data demonstrates that using savings (61.6%) and borrowing money (42.3%) were two main sources of funding the migration journey.

COVID-19 has affected the length of stay in Kazakhstan of a majority of respondents (81.8%). Most of them feel stranded, because they want to go back (89.8%). The respondents faced return related challenges because of three key reasons: closed borders because of COVID-19 regulations (42.6%), a lack of money (26.5%) and document loss (12.7%). The data shows that most stranded migrants wanted to return because they want to visit friends and family (62.6%).

However, most interviewees expected to face challenges upon arrival to their home country (83.1%). Finding employment (54.9%), inability to migrate again (33.4%), repayment of debts (15.3%) and finding housing (12.5%) are main common challenges that they expected to face upon return.

## Employment situation

The majority of respondents (73%) were employed before their arrival to Kazakhstan. The data indicates that most of respondents were working in three main sectors: construction (36%), wholesale and retail trade (18%) and agriculture forestry (11%).

The data shows that 68.6 per cent of interviewees are employed in Kazakhstan. Most of them are working in three sectors: construction (34.%), wholesale and retail trade (31%) and hotels and restaurants (10.9%). In terms of recruitment, most respondents reported that they did not pay a fee (96.4%) and did not go through an official recruitment process (92%). 49 per cent of respondents indicated the absence of need to go through a recruitment process, because they could find employment with the help of friends and relatives.

A majority of respondents informed that they currently earn more than the average minimum wage in Kazakhstan (71%). However, salary size (55%) and working hours (45%) of a large proportion of stranded migrants have decreased due to COVID-19.

## COVID-19 impacts

Considering the household income, more than half of stranded migrants (58%) indicated that their household income was insufficient to meet monthly expenses. According to the data, 11 per cent of stranded migrants have no personal income at all.

Most stranded migrants faced challenges after COVID-19 outbreak (70%). The data demonstrates that the large proportion of respondents' financial situation worsened due to COVID-19 (66%).

Considering COVID-19 outbreak and following challenges, a majority of respondents faced challenges during the past three months (65%). The data analysis indicated the two key challenges: insufficient income (21%) and inability to leave Kazakhstan (21%).

More than half of respondents did not ask for a help to solve their problems (52%). In contrast, 48 per cent sought for an assistance. A majority of those who sought a help, received a support upon their request on their challenges (96%).

When looking at COVID-19 needs, a majority of respondents indicated that they have access to water (91%), soap (95%), a hand sanitizer (73%), face masks (85%) and information on COVID-19 (77%). A lack of money is a key reason of a lack of access to water (55%), soap (69%), a hand sanitizer (56%) and face masks (60%).

*Note:* The high education level of the sample population is partially explained by the sampling method used – snowball sampling. Respondents had links with IOM research field teams who generally have a high education level.

Baseline data collection in the field
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# 1.  METHODOLOGY

## 1.1 Research methods and sampling

The primary goal of the baseline data collection on number of stranded migrants was exploring the extent to which they had been affected by COVID-19 outbreak.

The baseline data collection targeted stranded migrants who were located in Kazakhstan by the survey period, irrespective of their nationality, intention to return or legal status. Face–to–face interview and telephone survey methods were applied to collect the baseline data due to respondents' availability and research limitations.

Recruitment and job–seeking BEHAVIOUR of migrants were assessed in order to inform longer–term programming on labour migration governance in the region. In this investigation, stranded migrants were defined as: "Migrants whose intention is to return to their country of origin but are unable to do so." The baseline data was collected within one month, from December 3rd 2020 to January 5th 2021.

During the period of pandemic, IOM office in Kazakhstan received information from stranded migrants in 12 regions of Kazakhstan and specifically from regions with check points. Therefore, 12 regions were selected as key locations for implementing the surveys. Due to the pandemic situation, it was crucial to investigate the key locations and the check points, as stranded migrants could be found in the different locations because of different circumstances.
The 12 regions include – Aktobe, Almaty, West–Kazakhstan region, Karaganda, Kostanay, Kyzylorda, Mangystau, North–Kazakhstan region, Turkistan region (and Shymkent city), East–Kazakhstan, Nur–Sultan city and Almaty city.

In total, 12 team leaders of data enumerators group in each region, directly recruited by IOM, worked on the baseline data collection. Each data enumerator group was in charge of collecting data for a specific region. To ensure a higher quality of data, team leaders were trained in a 2 days training with the DTM Coordinator and were provided with a list of definitions and a handbook to use as a reference.

All data enumerators were Kazakh nationals, who speak the local language and know migration dynamics in Kazakhstan. This choice was done to create a sense of kinship and trust between enumerators and interviewee and get more accurate results and answers.

## 1.2 Limitations

Two main limitations existed during the baseline data collection: long holidays and harsh weather conditions in December 2020 and January 2021. These limitations affected the planning and conducting the face–to–face interviews. In this sense, the telephone survey was an optimal solution.

Initially it was planned to apply a stratified sampling strategy in order to get a representative sample with a 95% confidence level (CL) and 5% confidence interval (CI). However, due to research limitations and respondents' availability two non–probability sampling methods were actively implemented (snowballing and convenience methods). Data enumerators travelled to different locations with the highest possibility of meeting potential respondents such as migration offices, market places, construction areas and other locations. Furthermore, data enumerators actively used connections with local authorities and community leaders who generally deal with foreigners and labour migrants from abroad.

## 1.3 Definitions

Stranded migrant: any person, who 1) was identified as a migrant, 2) is currently located in any of 12 regions of Kazakhstan and within the borders of Kazakhstan, 3) has been in Kazakhstan for over 1 month at the time of assessment, 4) has the intention to return to his/her country of origin, but is unable to do so.

## 1.4 Sample distribution

According to the data from migration agencies in Kazakhstan, during nine months of 2020, about 3 million foreigners arrived in Kazakhstan. Nearly 2,8 million came from CIS countries and about 149,000 of them arrived from distant countries, such as Turkey and India. Around 170,000 of the arrived foreigners stranded in Kazakhstan.

Based on the arbitral award of IOM Kazakhstan and international consultant, a sample size (720 individuals) was proportionally stratified by region as illustrated in the table below[2].

## NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS BY LOCATION OF THE INTERVIEW

**659** Respondents

Aktobe: 50
Almaty: 34
Almaty city: 48
East Kazakhstan: 42

Karaganda: 61
Kostanay: 49
Kyzylorda: 39
Mangystau: 97

North Kazakhstan: 58
Nur–Sultan city: 63
Turkistan: 76
West Kazakhstan: 42

## NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS BY LOCATION OF THE INTERVIEW

Uzbekistan
**337** Respondents

Tajikistan
**97** Respondents

Russian Federation
**93** Respondents

Kyrgyzstan
**51** Respondents

Other Nationality **12** Respondents

Turkmenistan
**26** Respondents

Republic of Moldova
**19** Respondents

Azerbaijan
**17** Respondents

Mongolia
**7** Respondents
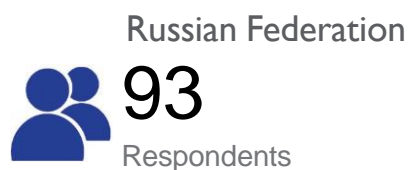


Face-to-face interview with a respondent
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# 2. DATA ANALYSIS

2.1 Sociodemographic profile

**659** Respondents

WOMEN 28%    MEN 72%

## SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION BY AGE AND SEX



■ Women
■ Men

| Age | Women | Men |
|---|---|---|
| 65+ | 0% | 1% |
| 55-64 | 1% | 4% |
| 45-54 | 4% | 10% |
| 35-44 | 10% | 26% |
| 30-34 | 4% | 12% |
| 25-29 | 6% | 11% |
| 18-24 | 3% | 9% |
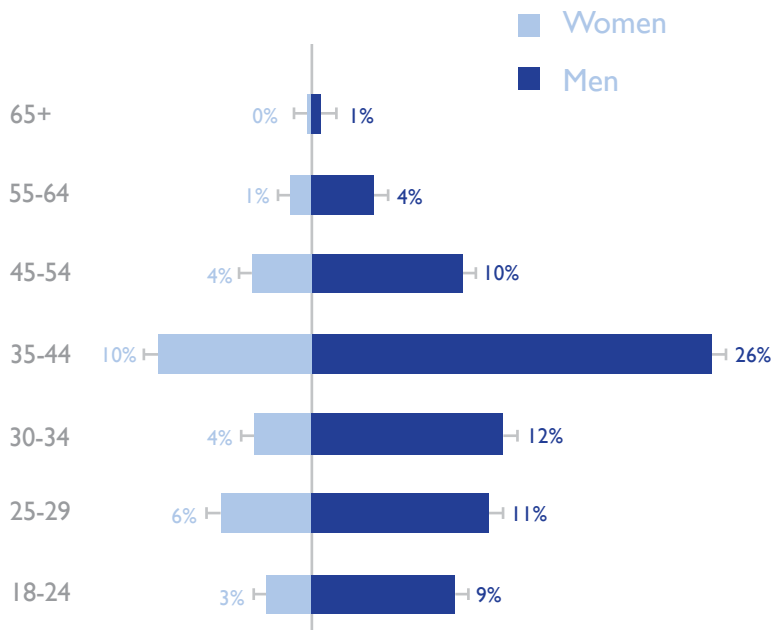
The sample size for this percentage is lower than 20 respondents.

The data indicates that approximately ¾ of respondents are males (72%) and female respondents constitute 28 per cent. A large proportion of respondents (35%) are aged between 35 and 44 years old. Share of interviewees aged between 25–29 and 30–34 years old is similar, 17 per cent and 16 per cent respectively. The proportion of respondents aged between 18–24 and 45–54 years old is also similar, 12% and 13% respectively. The smallest share of the sample population consists of the stranded migrants aged over 55 years old (6%).

A large share of stranded migrant population is married (45.8%). Approximately one third of interviewees are single (34%) and 15 per cent of respondents informed that they are divorced. Interviewees who are widowed (4%) and who indicated other marital status (1%) have the smallest share. A large proportion of respondents have children (59%).

More than half of respondents have 1–2 children (55%). 38 per cent of interviewees have 3–4 children. Seven per cent of respondents have from 5 to 12 children. More than half of respondents' children stay outside of Kazakhstan (65%). Approximately one third of children live with interviewees in Kazakhstan (33%). Around 5 per cent of children stay apart from their parents even if they stay in same country, i.e. in Kazakhstan. Majority of respondents' children who reside outside of Kazakhstan stay in three neighbouring countries (85%): Uzbekistan – 53 per cent, Tajikistan – 18 per cent and the Russian Federation – 13 per cent. The rest 15 per cent of children live in 12 different countries apart from their parents, i.e. interviewees.

## PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY: MARTIAL STATUS



20% Other

**45,8%**
В браке

33,4% Single
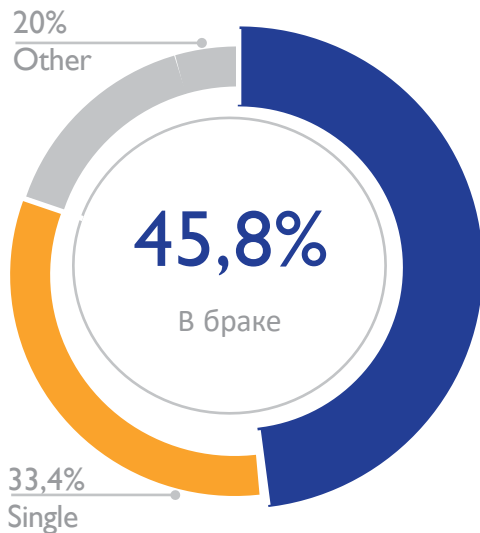
## PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY: RESPONDENT'S CHILDREN



**59,1%**
Имеют детей

**31,8%** of the respondents with children reported that their children were with them in their current location.

40,6% No children

## PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY: COUNTRY OF LAST RESIDENCE

| 8% | 8% | 14% | 18% | 52% |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Other | Kyrgyzstan | Tajikistan | Russian Federation | Uzbekistan |
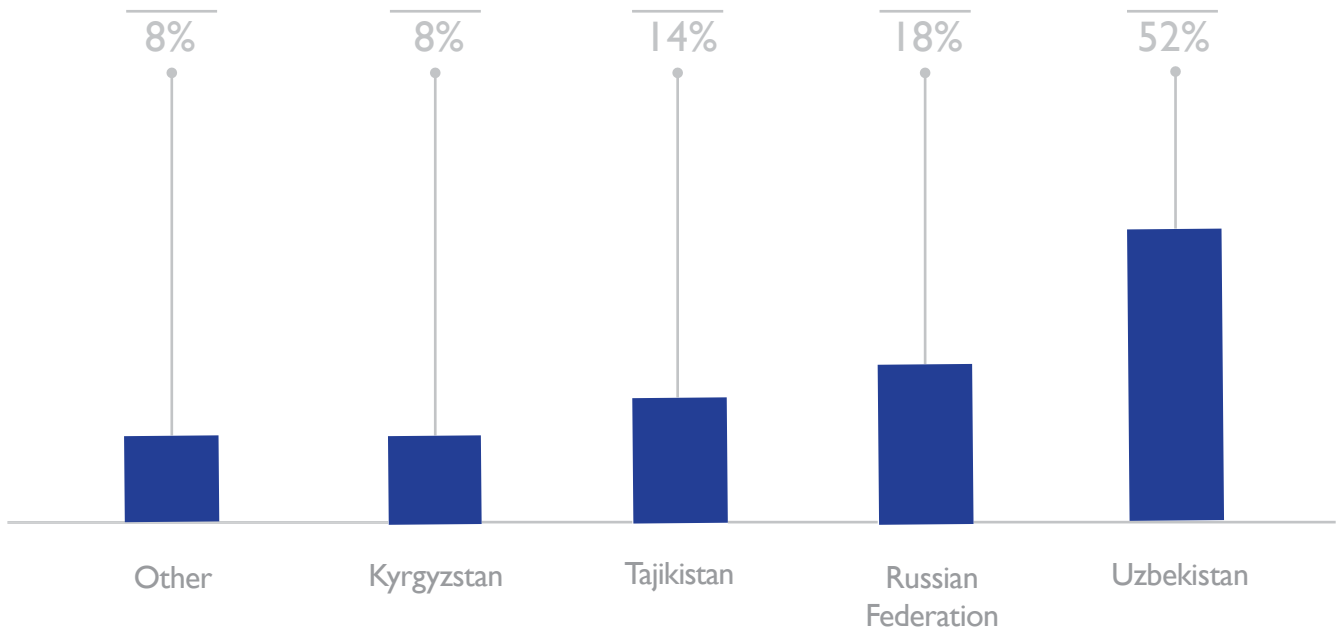
*Note:* This question was asked only to respondents who reported experiencing return related challenges.

## EDUCATION

The research study shows that almost half of the respondents have completed or initiated the secondary level of education (46%). Similarly, 40 per cent of interviewees participated in vocational training.

Around one in ten stranded migrants has a university degree (10%), bachelor or higher (2%) and higher education (8%) respectively. The share of interviewees with no and other kind of education level is 2 per cent and 1 per cent respectively.
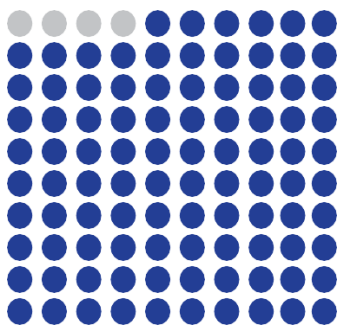
# 96%

(635 Respondents)

Have completed some level of formal education

## PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY: EDUCATION LEVEL

| | |
|---|---|
| Secondary | 46% |
| Vocational | 40% |
| Higher education | 8% |
| Bachelor / higher education | 2% |
| No education | 2% |
| Other | 1% |

09
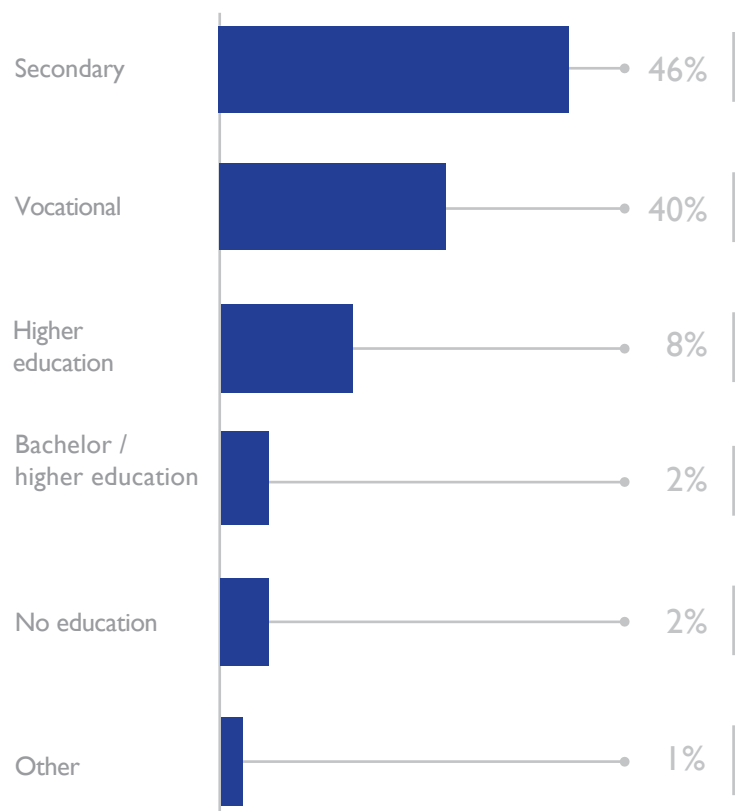
## PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY: EDUCATION LEVEL AND NATIONALITY

| | Bachelor or higher | Secondary | Higher education | Vocational | No education |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Kyrgyzstan | 4% | 49% | 18% | 25% | >1 |
| Russian Federation | 4% | 25% | 25% | 46% | >1 |
| Tajikistan | 3% | 59% | 4% | 31% | 1 |
| Uzbekistan | 1% | 49% | 3% | 44% | 2% |
| Other | 1% | 41% | 8% | 40% | 6% |
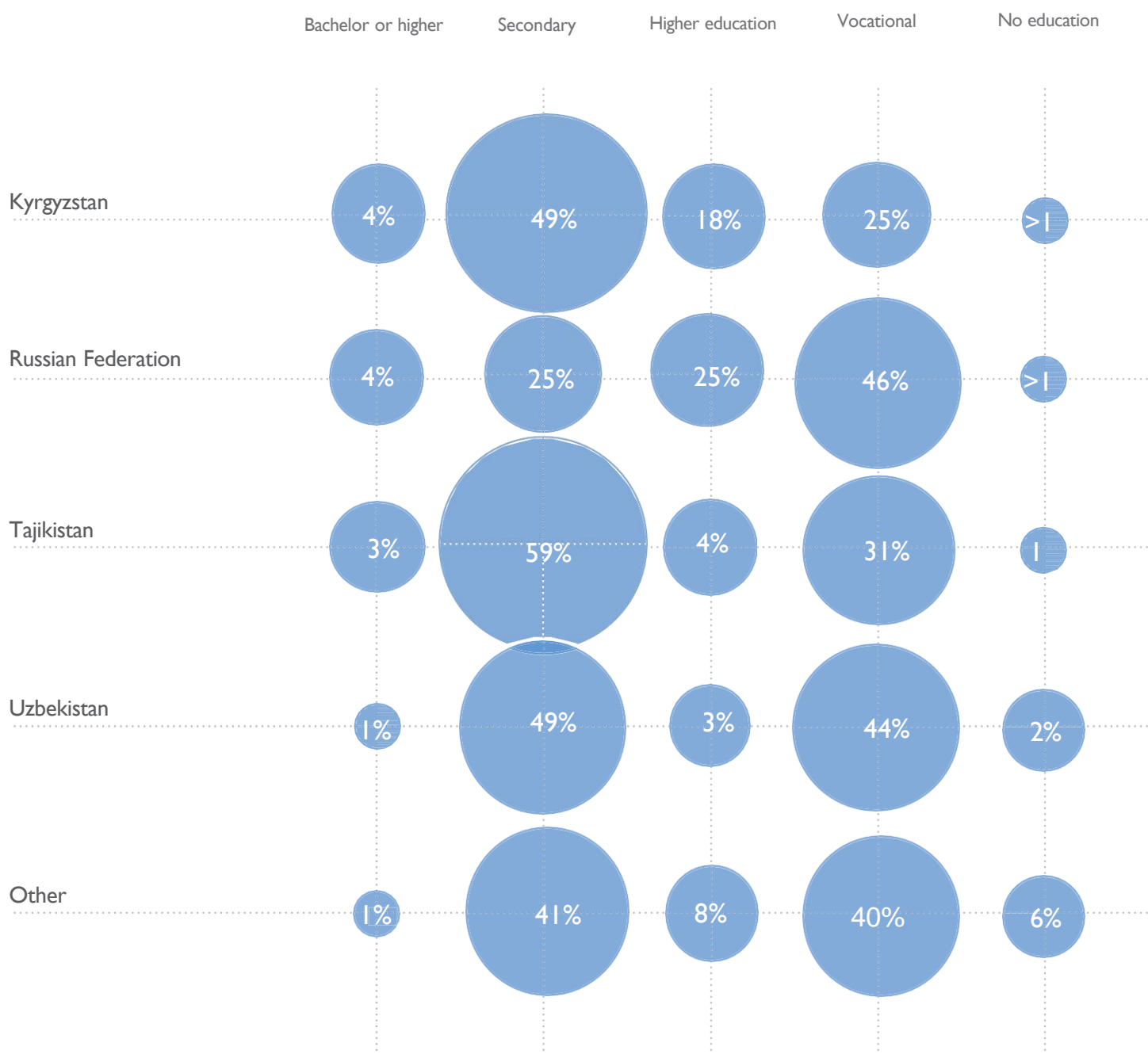
## 2.2 Migration trajectory

The findings of the research study indicate that there are five main reasons for leaving the home country and migrating to Kazakhstan. These reasons include: the lack of work, low wages, employment opportunities, the possibility to reunite with family and friends, as well as the family problems.

When looking at the most common reasons for migration, a large proportion of respondents originally left home country because of the economic related factors, low wages (48%) and a lack of work (46%). The data analysis indicates that the reason for migration for approximately one third on interviewees was getting a job in Kazakhstan (34%). Similar proportion of respondents left their home country due to family problems (15%) and to visit and reunite with the relatives and friends in Kazakhstan (12%).

Considering the reasons for choosing Kazakhstan as a country of destination, there are six key pull factors that attract respondents: previous work experience in Kazakhstan (21%), geographical proximity (14%), higher incomes (11%), more job opportunities in Kazakhstan (9%), having friends (8.6%) and a lot of other migrants from home country in Kazakhstan (8%). The data analysis shows that the majority of respondents used savings to finance their migration journey (62%). Considering other ways of financing the migration journey, 42 per cent of respondents indicated that they had to borrow money in order to migrate. Moreover, 6 per cent of interviewees had to sell their assets (e.g. car, furniture, gold) and 2 per cent of respondents indicated selling their house or land in order to cover migration expenditures. According to the findings of the research study, the share of all other ways of financing the migration journey is less than five per cent.

## PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY: REASONS FOR MIGRATION

(multiple answers question)

| 48% | 46% | 40% | 15% | 12% | 5% |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Low wages | Lack of work | Employment | Family problems | Visit / reunite with family / friends | Other |
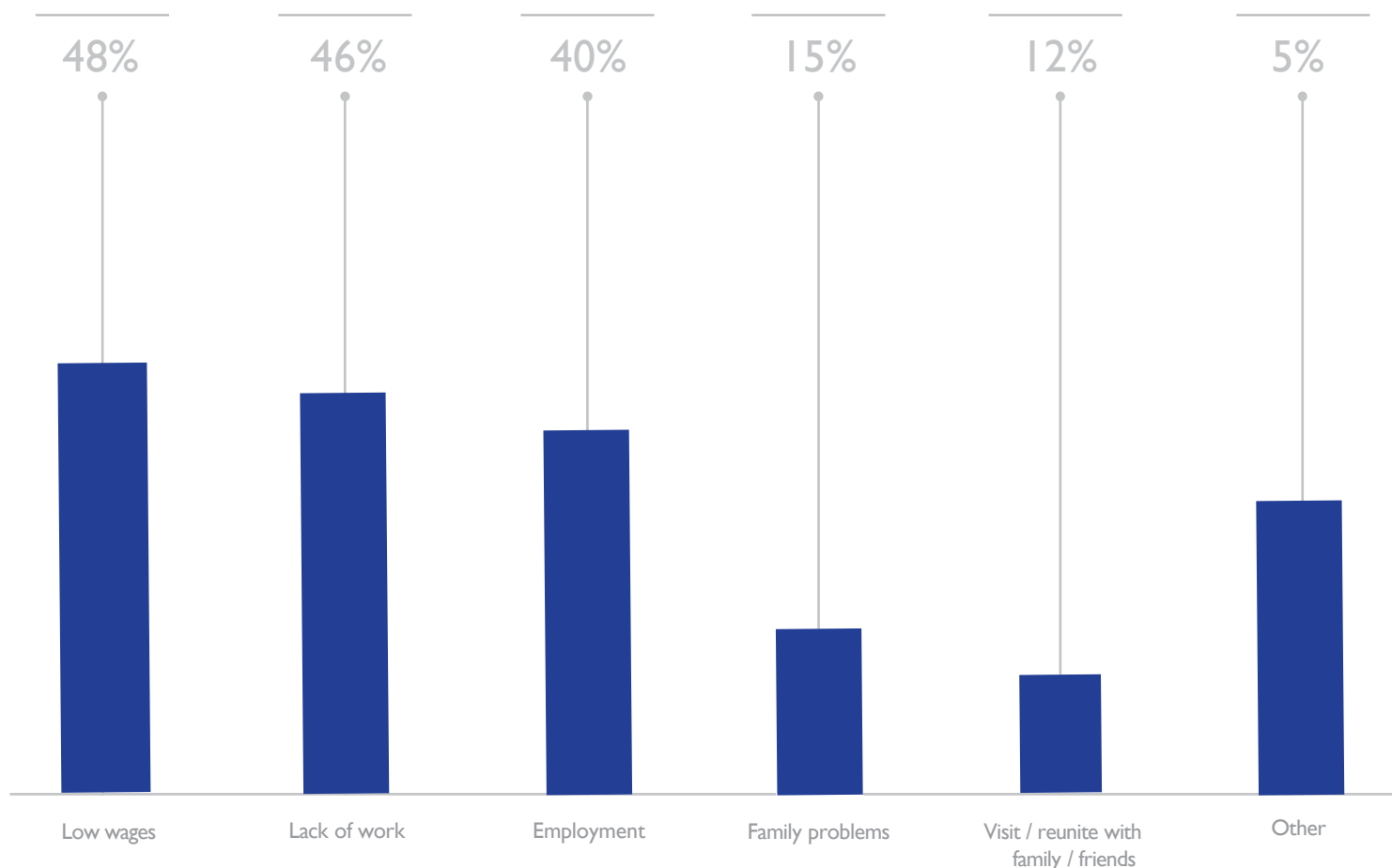
## PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY: CHANGES IN THE LENGTH OF MIGRATION DUE TO COVID-19

**82%**
Changed
the lenght of migration
due to COVID-19

**18%**
Did not
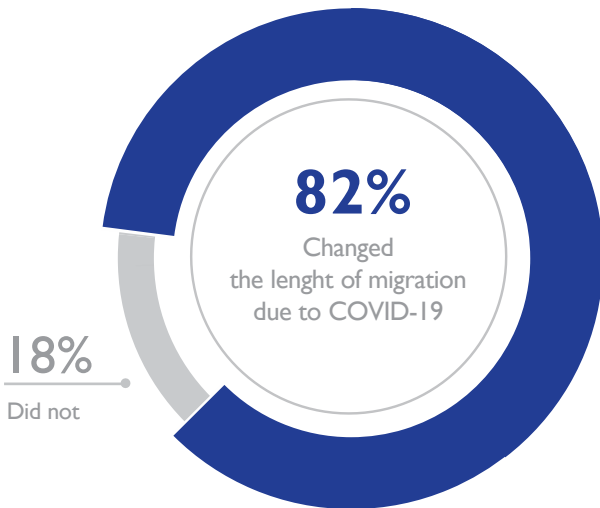
## PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY: HOW THEIR MIGRATION CHANGED

**6%**
I stayed less

**2%**
Other

**2%**
I stayed more

YES

**90%**
Could not
go back
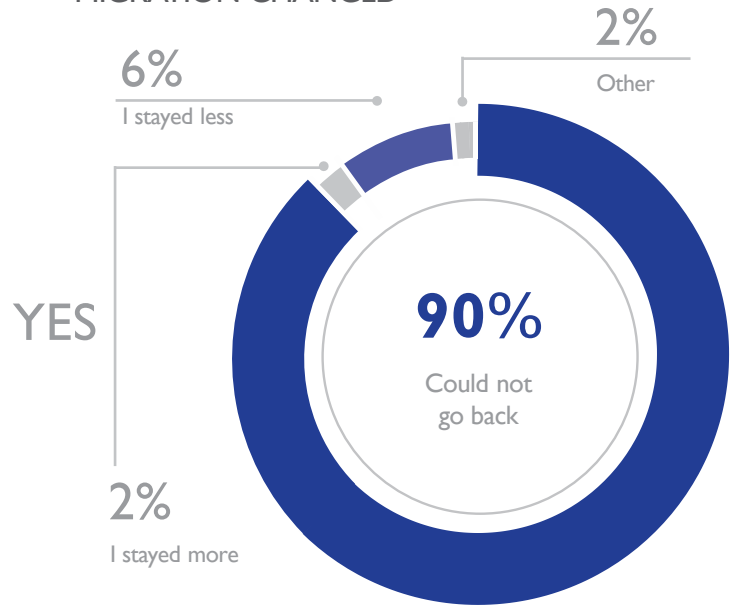
*Note:* This question was asked only to respondents who reported changing the lenght of their migration due to COVID-19

## PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY: REASON FOR NOT BEING ABLE TO RETURN HOME AND SEX

### Female

| 36% | 31% | 13% | 39% |
|---|---|---|---|
| Closed borders | Not enough money | Lost / lack of documents | Other |

### Male

| 45% | 25% | 13% | 17% |
|---|---|---|---|
| Closed borders | Not enough money | Lost / lack of documents | Other |
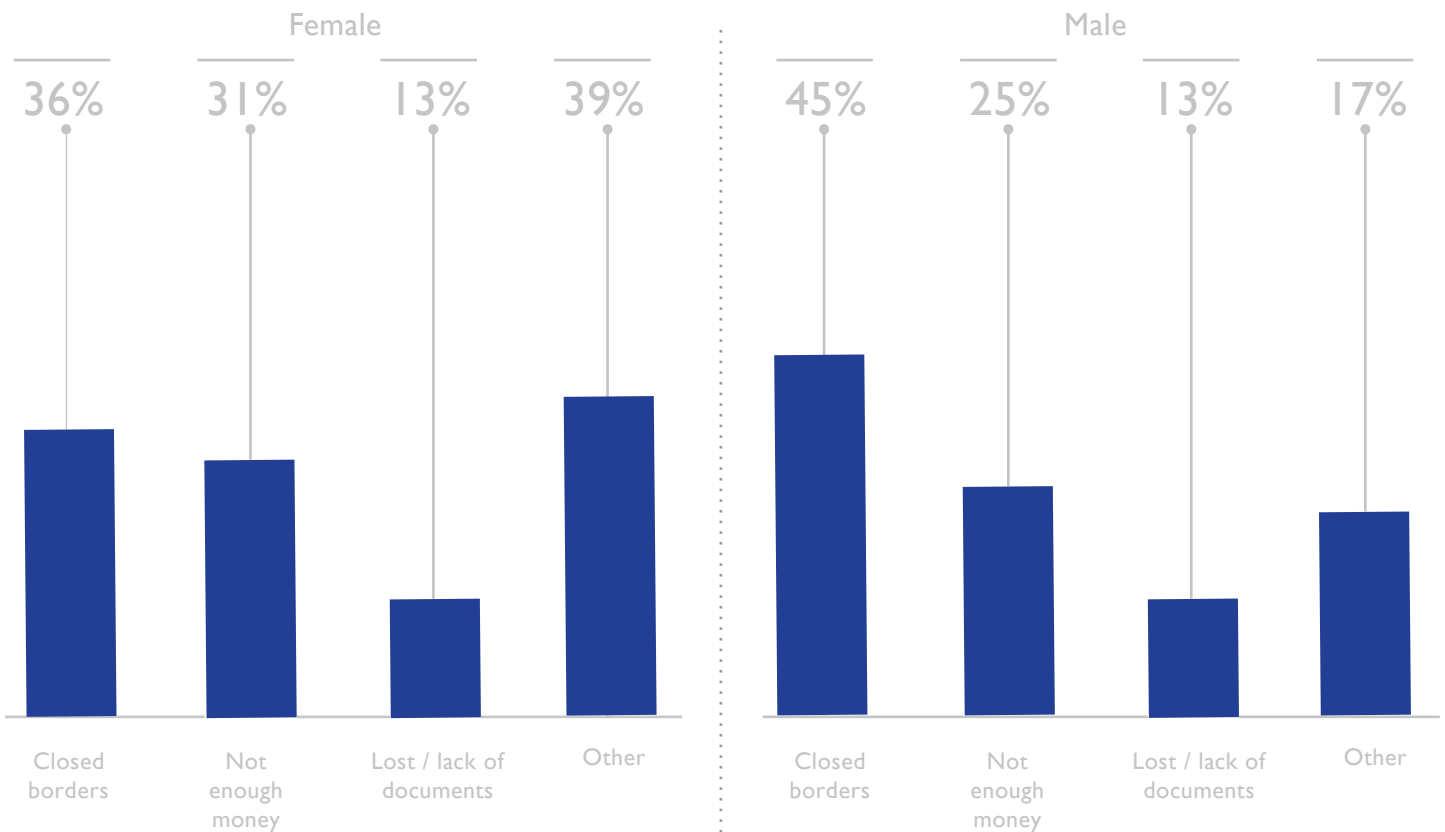
The data analysis demonstrates that the COVID-19 pandemic influenced the change of the length of migration of 82 per cent of respondents. While the majority indicated changing the length of migration, only 18 per cent of respondents indicated that they did not change the duration of their migration because of the pandemic. A majority of interviewees who reported changing the length of their migration due to COVID-19 indicated that they were unable return to their home country (90%), while 2 per cent of respondents stayed more than plannes. Around 6 per cent of respondents stayed less in Kazakhstan than planned initially.

Considering the reasons for inability to return to the home country, 45 per cent of male interviewees and 36 per cent of female respondents indicated closed borders as the primary reason. When asked to cite other reasons for not being able to return, 13 per cent of male and female stranded migrants indicated the lack of documents, while 31 per cent of female interviewees and 25 per cent of male interviewees indicated the shortage of money as the reason for not being able to return to their home country.

## PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY: TYPE OF PAYMENT FOR THE MIGRATION JOURNEY

2%
Sold house

6%
Sold assets

62%
Savings

42%
Borrowing
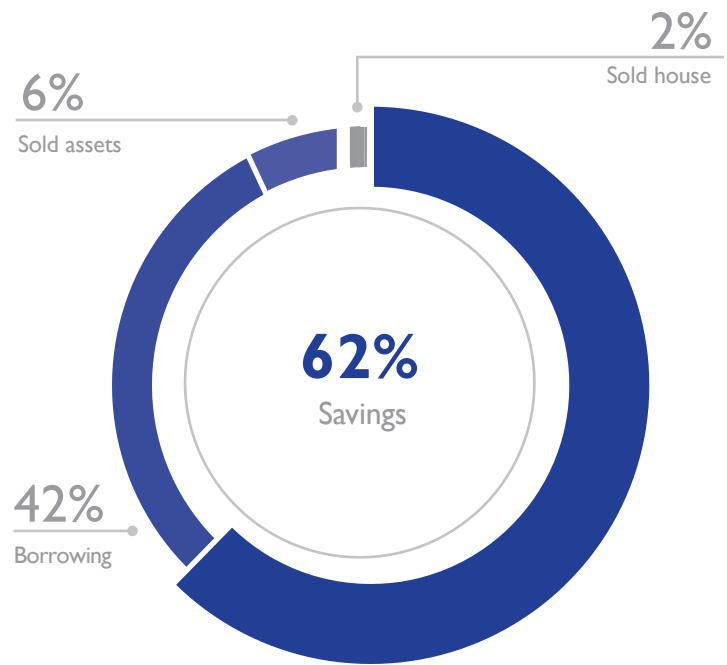
## PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY: REASONS FOR SELECTING A SPECIFIC DESTINATION COUNTRY

Most important factors

| 21% | 14% | 11% |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Worked there before | Geographical proximity | Higher incomes |

Second most important factors

| 8% | 10% | 10% |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Worked there before | More jobs | Friends live there |

Third most important factors

| 6% | 17% | 3% |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Safer country | Other migrants live there | Better work conditions |
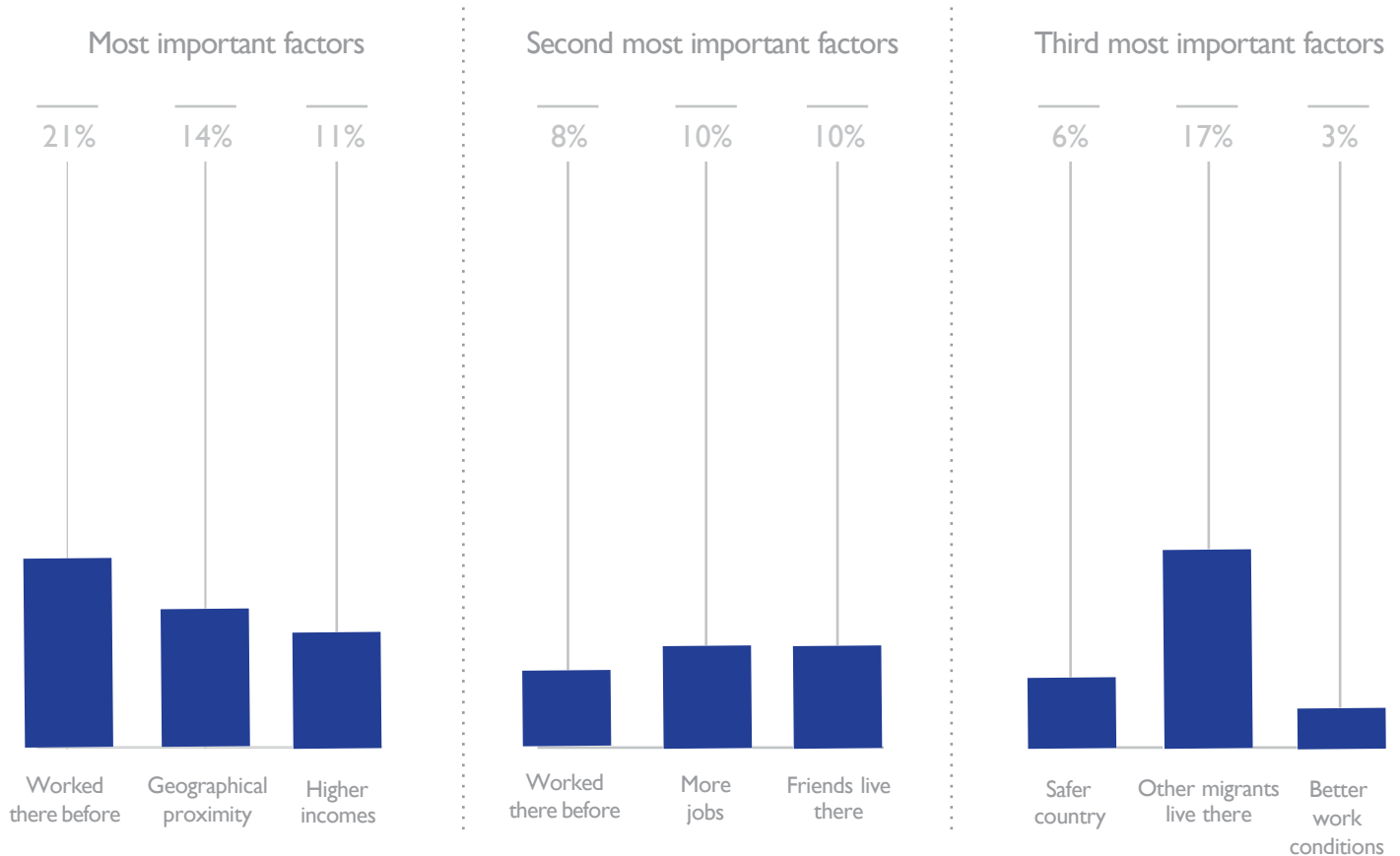
## PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY: REASONS FOR WANTING TO RETURN TO THE HOME COUNTRY (multiple answers question)

| 11% | 13% | 17% | 28% | 63% | 43% |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Lost job | Documents expired | Life or work was not as expected | Family wants me back | Visit friends and family | Other |
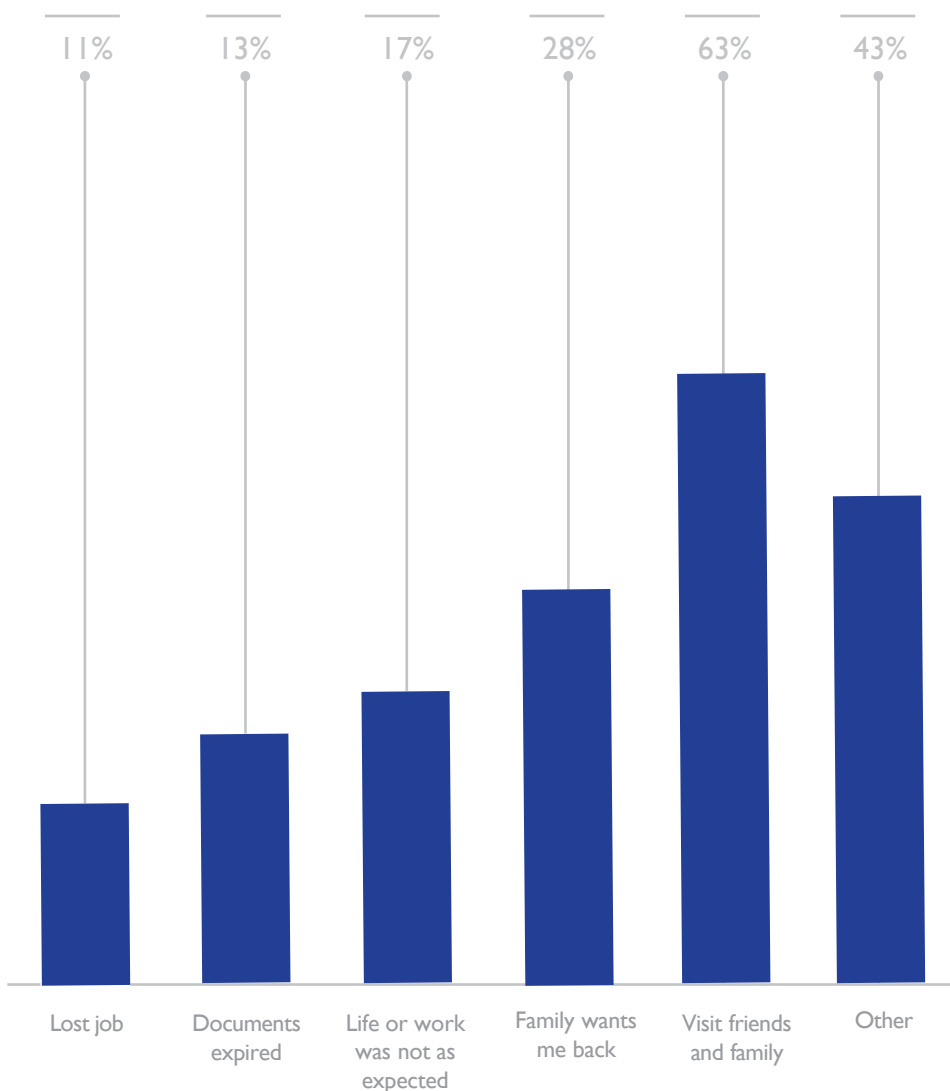
To further explore migration trajectory, stranded migrants were asked about the reasons for wanting to return to the home country. The data indicates that the key reason for wanting to return to the home country is to visit friends and relatives (63%). In addition, there are four main reasons for that: stranded migrants' families want them back (28%), life or work in Kazakhstan was not as going as expected (17%), the expiration of documents (visa or work permit) (13%) and loss of employment (11%).

The desire to visit relatives and family is more relevant to interviewees from Uzbekistan (70%) and Kyrgyzstan (65%) than to stranded migrants from the Russian Federation.

Considering other reasons for wanting to return, the data indicates that the share of stranded migrants who indicated that their families want them back is the largest for the respondents from Tajikistan (38%), which is three times more than the share for the respondents from Kyrgyzstan (14%). The data shows that the share of stranded migrants who reported that their expectations about life or work in Kazakhstan were not satisfied is the largest for respondents from Uzbekistan (18%).

## PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY: REASONS FOR WANTING TO RETURN TO THE HOME COUNTRY AND NATIONALITY

| Kyrgyzstan | | | Russian Federation | | | Uzbekistan | | | Tajikistan | | |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 65% | 14% | 16% | 50% | 23% | 16% | 70% | 28% | 18% | 60% | 38% | 15% |

■ Visit friends / family   ■ Family wants me back   ■ Life or work was not as expected

## PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY: EXPECTATION TO FACE RETURN RELATED CHALLENGES

**83%**
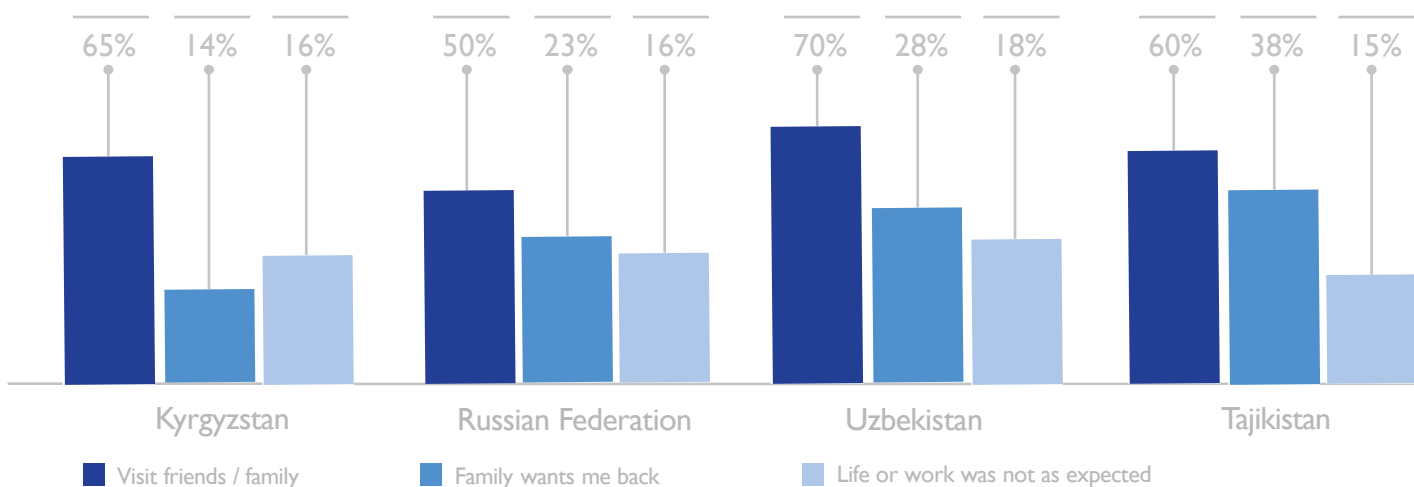
Reported expecting to face some return related challenges

When looking at other reasons for wishing to return to the home country, the data analysis shows that the largest percentage of respondents who indicated that they want to return their home country because of the expiration of documents is from the Russian Federation (21%). This number is approximately twice more than the percentage of stranded migrants from Tajikistan (10%), Kyrgyzstan (10%) and Uzbekistan (10%), who indicated the same reason.

Considering the employment loss as the reason for wanting to return, this is the least relevant for interviewees from Kyrgyzstan in comparison to respondents from all other countries (4%).

The data analysis demonstrates that the significant percentage of respondents expected to face at least one challenge upon return to their home country (83%). This is more relevant to interviewees from Kyrgyzstan (95%) and Tajikistan (92%) than to stranded migrants from other countries (73%).

When looking at the common challenges, finding employment is a key common challenge, that more than a half of respondents expect to face upon arrival to the home country (55%). This challenge is more relevant for stranded migrants from Tajikistan (64%) and Uzbekistan (60%).

## PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY: EXPECTATION TO FACE RETURN RELATED CHALLENGES AND NATIONALITY (multiple answers question)

| Kyrgyzstan | Tajikistan | Russian Federation | Uzbekistan | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 95% | 92% | 85% | 81% | 73% |
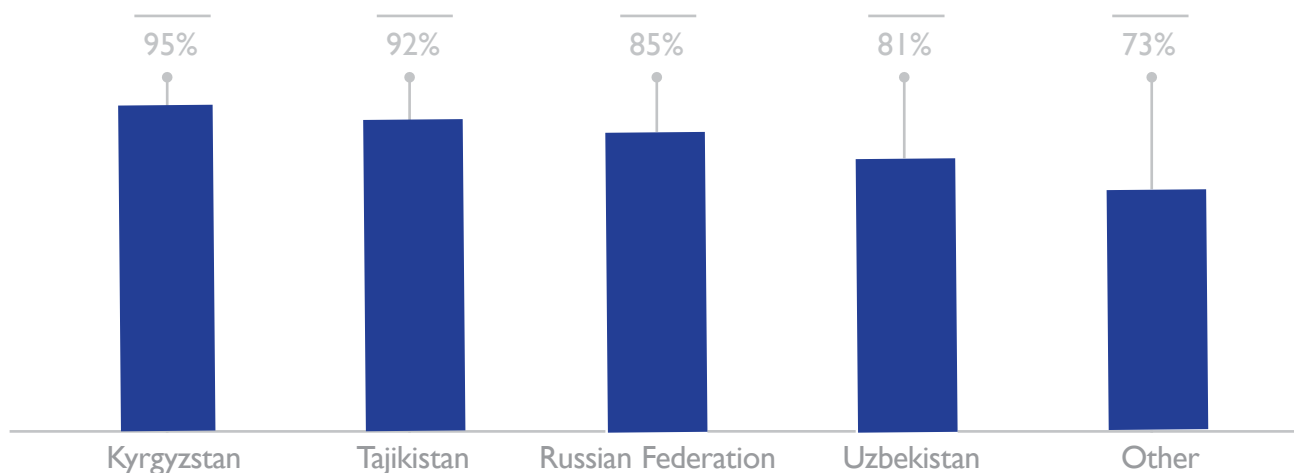
According to the findings of the research study, there are three main challenges that a large share of respondents expected to face upon return, which include: complexities with the new migration journeys (33%), repayment of debts (15%) and finding housing (13%). The first main expected challenge, which is facing the complexities with the new migration journeys, is more relevant for interviewees from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, with the approximately similar share of respondents (49% and 48% respectively). When looking at other challenges, the data shows that repayment of debts is more relevant for stranded migrants from Tajikistan (34%) and Kyrgyzstan (26%). Considering the third common challenge that respondents expected to face upon return to the home country, finding housing is the challenge that is more relevant for stranded migrants from the Russian Federation, with the share of 32 per cent of the respondents.

## PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY: TYPE OF EXPECTED CHALLENGE AND NATIONALITY

|  | Finding job | Hard to migrate again | Repayment of debts | Finding housing | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Kyrgyzstan | 44% | 49% | 26% | 7% | 78% |
| Russian Federation | 40% | 32% | 11% | 32% | 62% |
| Uzbekistan | 60% | 26% | 11% | 9% | 38% |
| Tajikistan | 64% | 48% | 34% | 8% | 40% |
| Other | 45% | 40% | 9% | 15% | 50% |
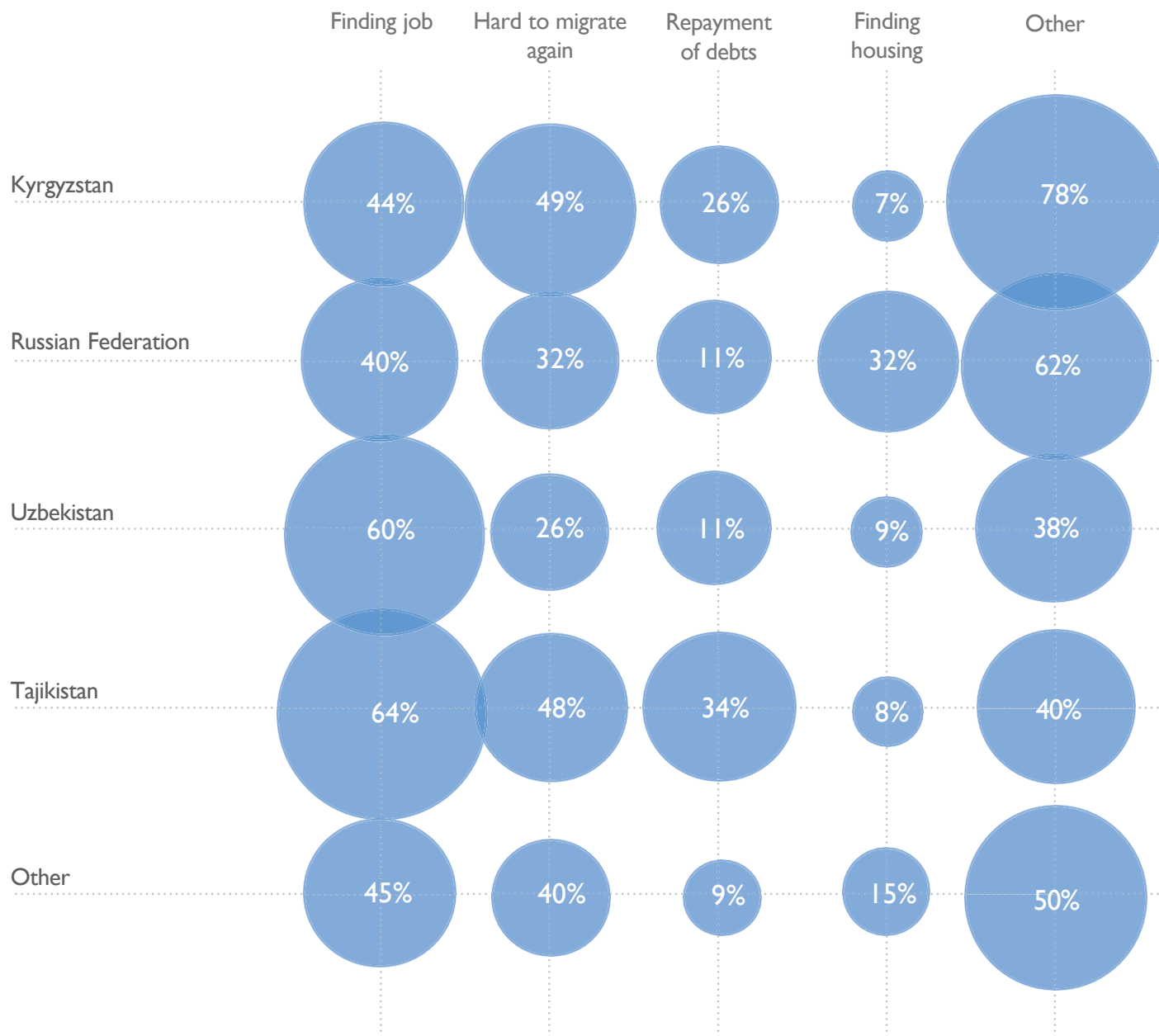
*Note:* This question was asked only to respondents who reported that they expected to face difficulties in returning.



Data enumerator in the filed
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## 2.3 Remittances

**PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY: REMITTANCES SENT AND NATIONALITY**

# 34%

of the
respondents sent
remittances

**Kyrgyzstan**
**31%**
Sent remittances

**Russian Federation**
**7%**
Sent remittances

**Tajikistan**
**52%**
Sent remittances

**Uzbekistan**
**39%**
Sent remittances

**Other**
**22%**
Sent remittances
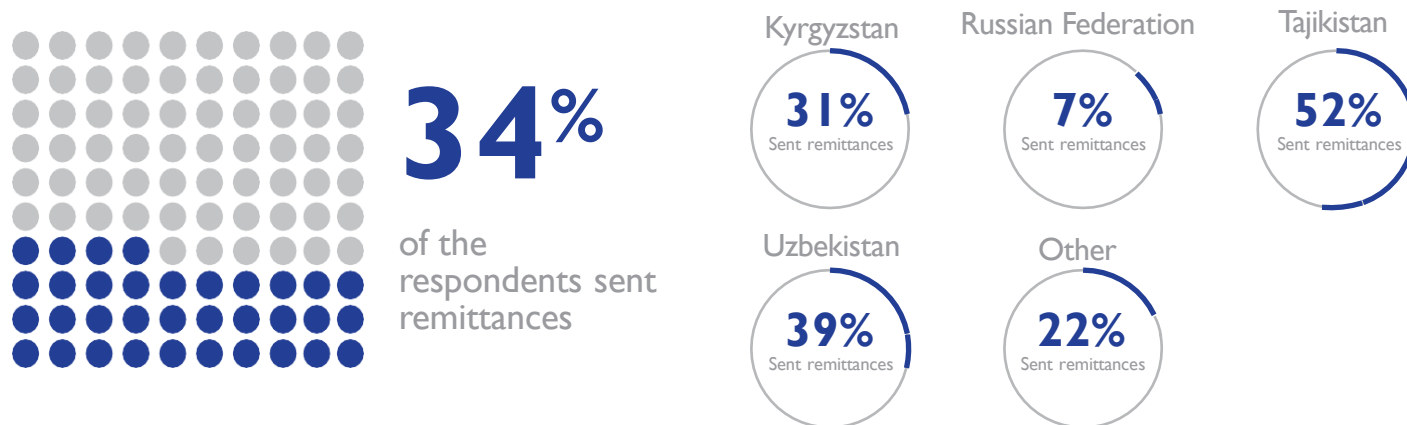
**PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY: CHANGES IN THE AMOUNT OF REMITTANCES SENT HOME
DUE TO COVID-19 AND NATIONALITY**
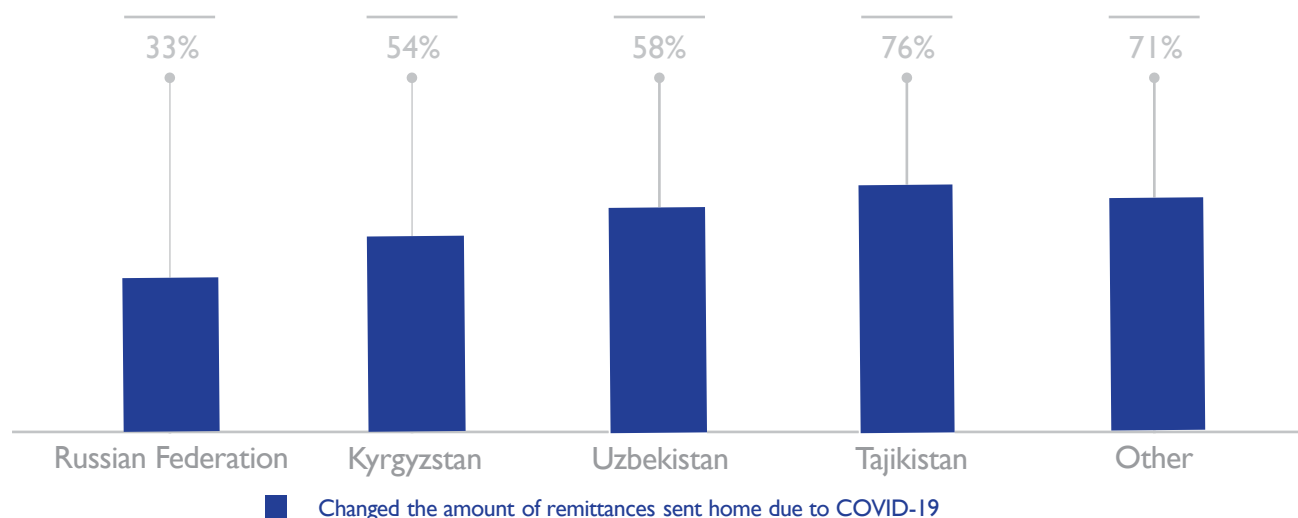
| Russian Federation | Kyrgyzstan | Uzbekistan | Tajikistan | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 33% | 54% | 58% | 76% | 71% |

■ Changed the amount of remittances sent home due to COVID-19

*Note:* This question was asked only to respondents who reported having sent remittances back home.

When looking at the percentage of respondents who send remittances to the home country, the data indicates that the majority of stranded migrants did not send money back home during their stay in Kazakhstan (66%). The data shows that It is more relevant to stranded migrants from the Russian Federation (92%) and other countries (78%). In comparison to all respondents, minimum half of stranded migrants from Tajikistan used to send money back home during their stay in Kazakhstan (52%).

Considering the percentage of respondents and the changes in the amount of remittances sent home due COVID-19, a plurality of those interviewees, who sent money back home, informed that amount of money they sent every month changed because of COVID-19 (63%). It is more relevant to respondents from Tajikistan (76%) and other countries (71%). More than a half of interviewees from Kyrgyzstan (54%) changed the amount of remittances sent home due to COVID-19. The similar trend persists in the number of respondents from Uzbekistan (58%), who changed the amount of remittances sent home due to the pandemic. Unlike the interviewees from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, the majority of respondents from the Russian Federation (67%) did not change the amount of remittances sent home due to COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 provided a negative impact on the amount of remittances sent home by stranded migrants. According to the findings of the study, a significant percentage of interviewees, who sent remittances, changed sending behaviour because of COVID-19. Sixty-one per cent send less money and 37 per cent stopped sending money back home due to the pandemic.

A plurality of respondents, who send money back home during their stay in Kazakhstan, indicated sending money one time per month on average (62%). The data shows that 29 per cent of interviewees send remittances once every three months and 2 per cent of respondents send money back home twice a year.

When looking at gender division, the data demonstrates that in contrast to female respondents, male interviewees used to send money back home more frequently (31%). While 59 per cent of female respondents send money back home once in a month and only 22 per cent of female interviewees send remittances once every three months, the data indicates that 62 per cent of male respondents send remittances once in a month and 31 per cent of male respondents send money back home once every three months. Only 2 per cent of males and 3 per cent of females send money back home twice a year.

## PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY: CHANGED IN REMITTANCE SENDING BEHAVIOUR DUE TO COVID-19
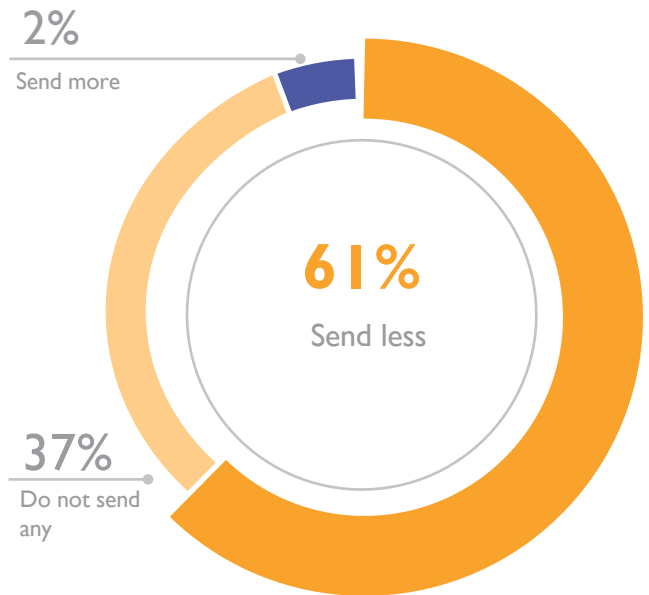
2%
Send more

61%
Send less

37%
Do not send any

*Note:* This question was asked only to respondents who reported having sent remittances back home.

## PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY: HOW OFTEN THEY SEND REMITTANCES AND SEX

| | Once in a month | Once in three months | Once in three months | Twice a year |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Total Sample** | 62% | 29% | 7% | 2% |
| Female | 59% | 22% | 16% | 3% |
| Male | 62% | 31% | 5% | 2% |
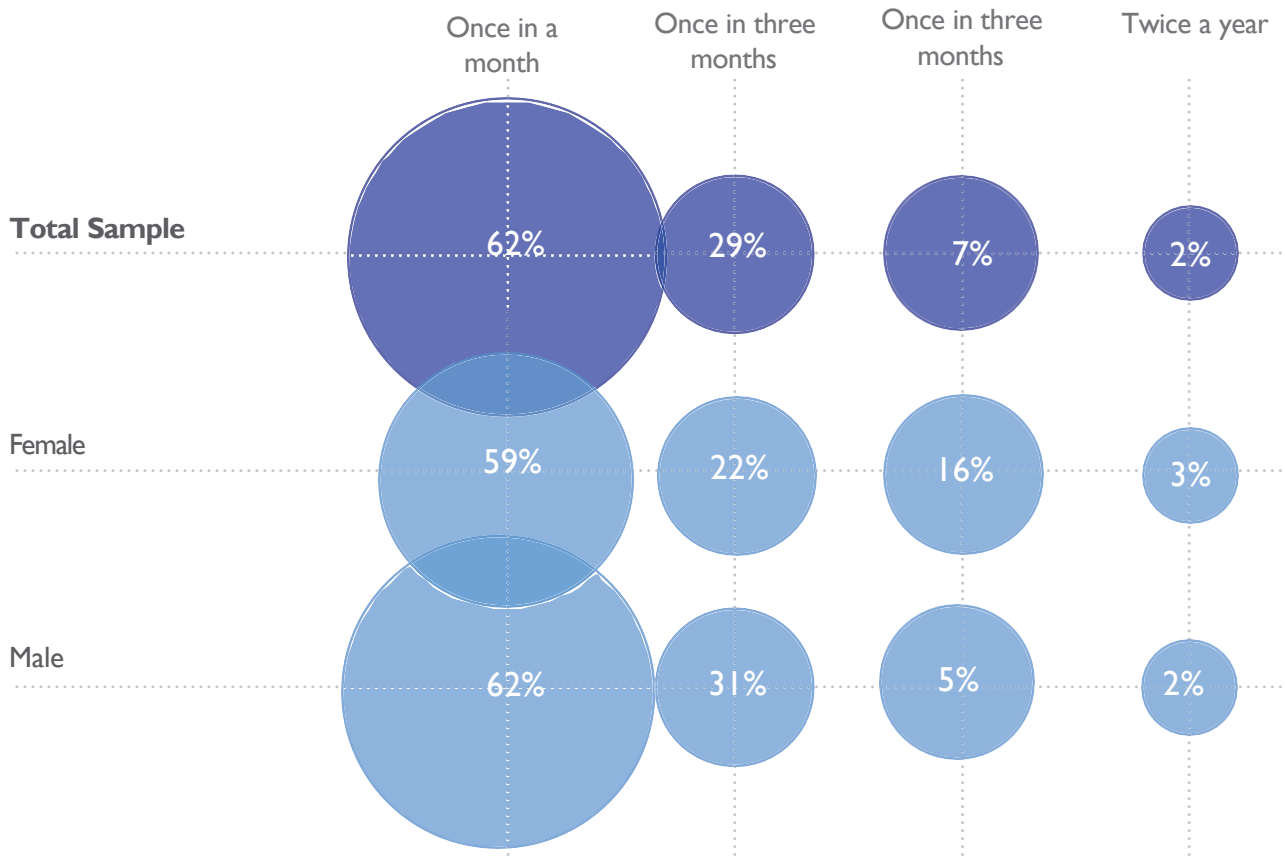
## PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY: PREFERRED WAY OF SENDING REMITTANCES

| 50% | 19% | 14% | 11% | 4% | 3% |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Bank office | Money transfer services | By friends / relatives' card | Bank website | By friends / relatives' cash | Other |

## PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY: REASON FOR USING A SPECIFIC WAY OF SENDING REMITTANCES

| 3% | 20% | 26% | 47% |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Habit | Accustomed method for relatives / friends | Speed | Safety |

According to the data, the preferred ways of sending remittances include money transfer services, bank websites and bank offices, as well as one of preferred ways include the assistance of friends and relatives, who help sending remittances via their cash or cards.

When looking at specific ways of sending remittances, the data shows that more than a half of respondents, who sent money back home during their stay in Kazakhstan, preferred to use bank services: at bank offices (51%) and on bank website (11%).

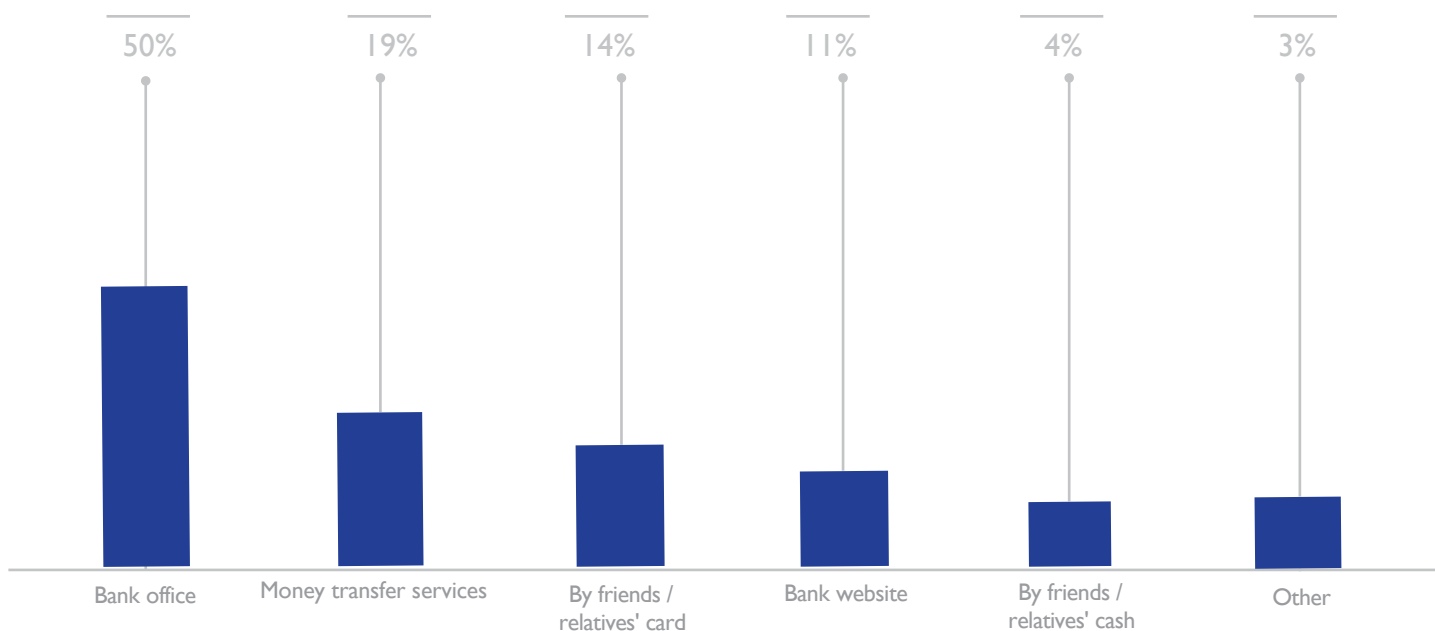Considering other ways of sending remittances, the data analysis indicates that approximately every fifth interviewee applied to money transfer operator services (19%): at office (17%) and on the website (2%). The data shows that 18.4% of interviewees sent remittances via friends and relatives: by card (15%) and in cash (4%).

There are three key reasons for sending money back home by bank and money transfer operator services and via friends and relatives: safety, speed and accustomed method of recipients.

Safety is the major reason for using a specific way of sending remittances (47%), while speed is the second important reason (26%) for sending money back home by a specific preferred way. 20 per cent of respondents indicated that the reason for using a specific way for sending remittances is the accustomed method for their relatives and friends.

*Note:* This question was asked only to respondents who reported having sent remittances back home.

## PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY: CHANGES IN THE PREFERRED WAY OF SENDING REMITTANCES DUE TO COVID-19
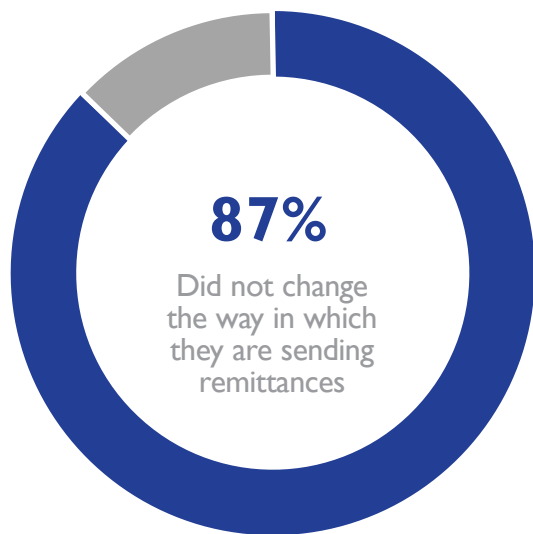
**87%**

Did not change
the way in which
they are sending
remittances

*Note:* This question was asked only to respondents who reported having sent remittances back home.

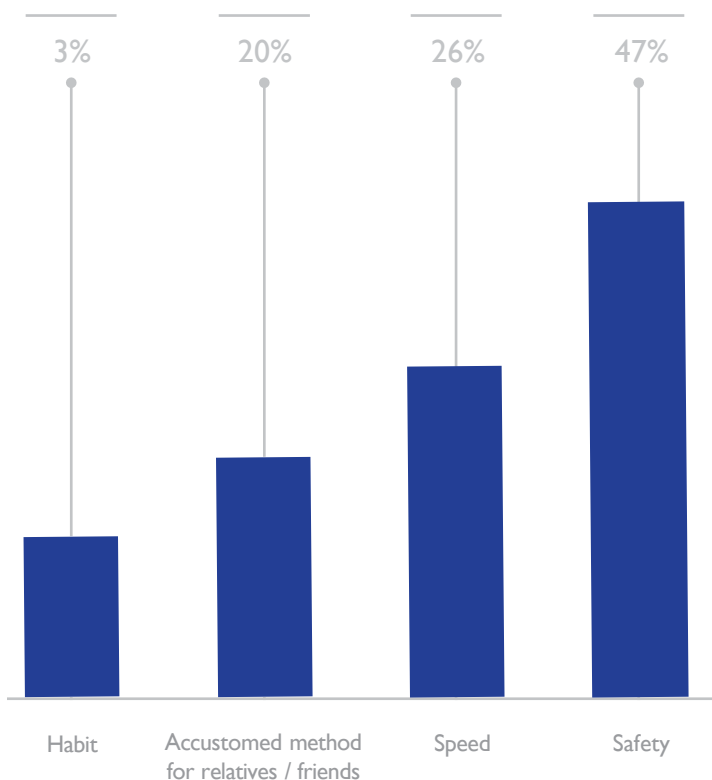When looking at the changes in the preferred way of sending remittances due to the pandemic, the findings of the study show that preferences of sending remittances were not changed after the COVID-19 outbreak for a majority of respondents (87%).

The data analysis indicates that the major reasons for sending remittances to home country include: supporting the family in terms of covering the basic needs and in terms of business, paying off the debts and buying the property.

When looking at these reasons more precisely, the data shows that the major reason for sending remittances to home country is to support family in terms of covering basic needs (91%). If repayment of debts is a major reason for sending remittances for a 5 per cent of male respondents, buying a property is a motivation to send remittances for a 6 per cent of female interviewees. Another reason for sending remittances to home country for 2 per cent of male respondents is to support the family and relatives in terms of business.



The process of data collection
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IOM data collection in the field
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## 2.4 Employment situation

### 2.4.1 Employment situation before migration

The data analysis shows that 73 per cent of respondents were employed and 17 per cent were unemployed before their arrival to Kazakhstan. According to the findings, 5 per cent of stranded migrants used to do unpaid family work before the migration.

When looking at the sector of employment, the data shows that a large share of interviewees was employed in construction sector (36%). It is more relevant for males (45%) than for females (5%). The data shows that 18% of respondents used to work in wholesale and retail trade sector. A proportion of females (29%) in this sector is approximately twice more than males (15%). Around every tenth interviewee worked in agriculture forestry sector (11%). A share of other sectors that respondents used to work in before migrating to Kazakhstan is less than 10 per cent.

### PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY: EMPLOYMENT STATUS PRIOR TO MIGRATION

3%
Retired

1%
Student or apprenticeship

17%
Unemployed

**74%**
Employed
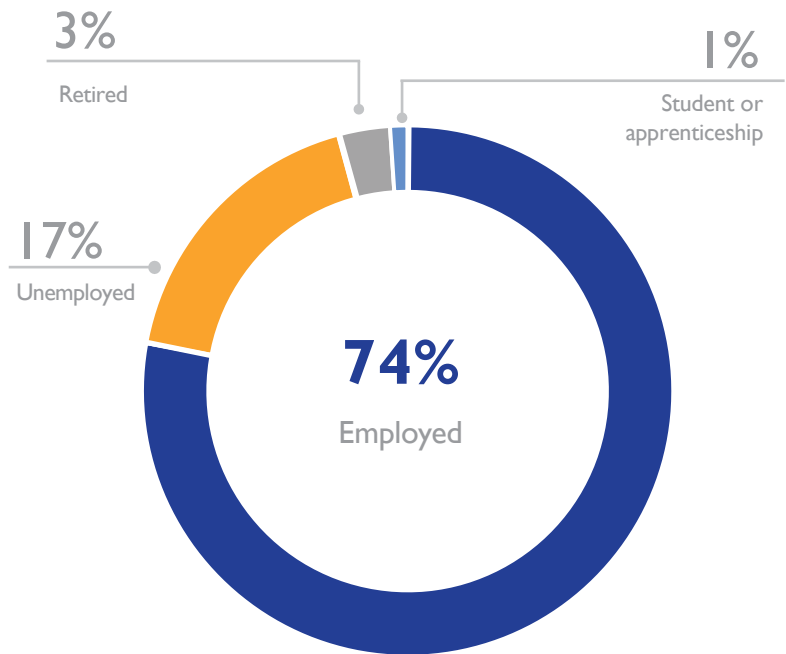
### PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY: SECTOR OF EMPLOYMENT PRIOR TO MIGRATION AND SEX

#### Female

| Construction | Wholesale | Agriculture | Other |
|---|---|---|---|
| 5% | 29% | 7% | 13% |

#### Male

| Construction | Wholesale | Agriculture | Other |
|---|---|---|---|
| 45% | 15% | 11% | 9% |
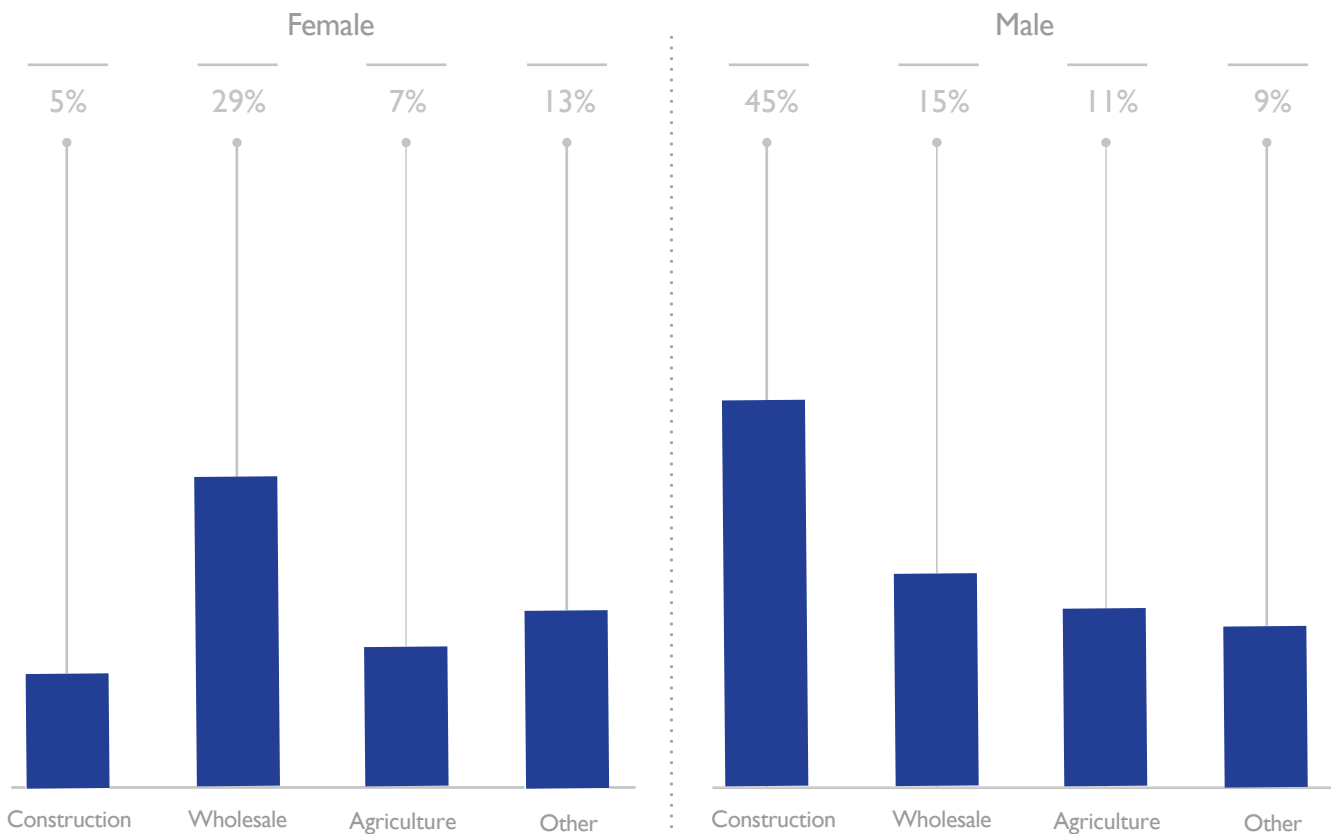
## 2.4.2 Current employment situation

When looking at the current employment situation of stranded migrant population, the data indicates that a large proportion of interviewees are performing either a full time job (42%) or a part time job (27%) in Kazakhstan.

The data indicates that 31 per cent of respondents are currently unemployed in Kazakhstan. When looking at gender dimension, the data shows that a share of employed male respondents is more than the 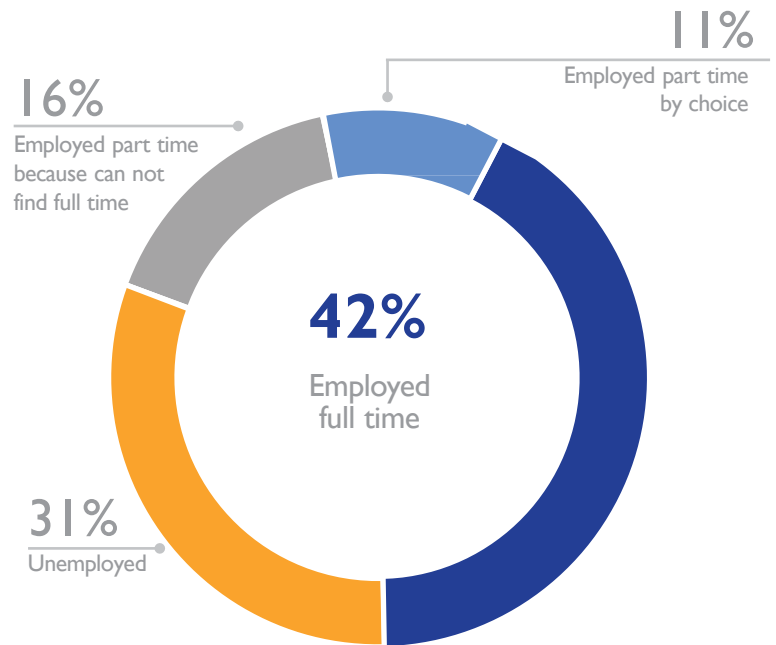share of employed female respondents. In contrast, a proportion of unemployed males is less than the share of unemployed females.

According to the findings, more than a half of respondents who indicated being employed, reported that this is their main job (56%). A proportion of male respondents (58%) performing a main job is a bit more than female respondents' proportion (54%).

In contrast, a share of interviewees that do a temporary job in Kazakhstan (40%) is more among female respondents (42%) than among male interviewees (40%).

### PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY: CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS

**11%**
Employed part time by choice

**16%**
Employed part time because can not find full time

**42%**
Employed full time

**31%**
Unemployed

### PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY: TEMPORARY OR MAIN JOB AND SEX
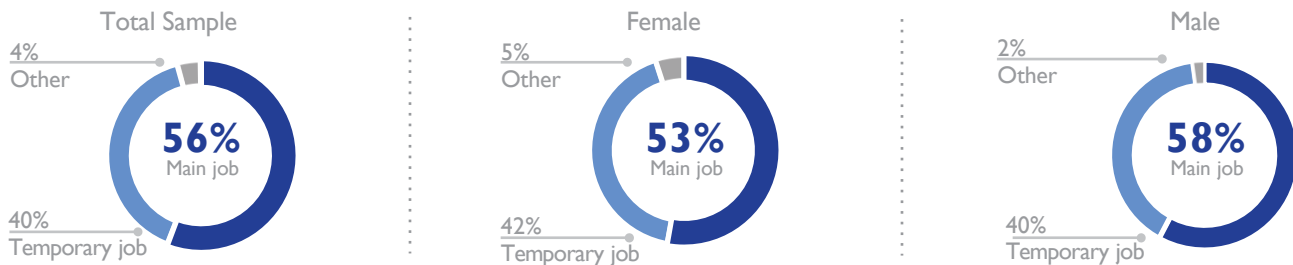
**Total Sample**

4%
Other

**56%**
Main job

40%
Temporary job

**Female**

5%
Other

**53%**
Main job

42%
Temporary job

**Male**

2%
Other

**58%**
Main job

40%
Temporary job

*Note:* This question was asked only to respondents who reported being currently employed.

### PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY: CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS AND SEX
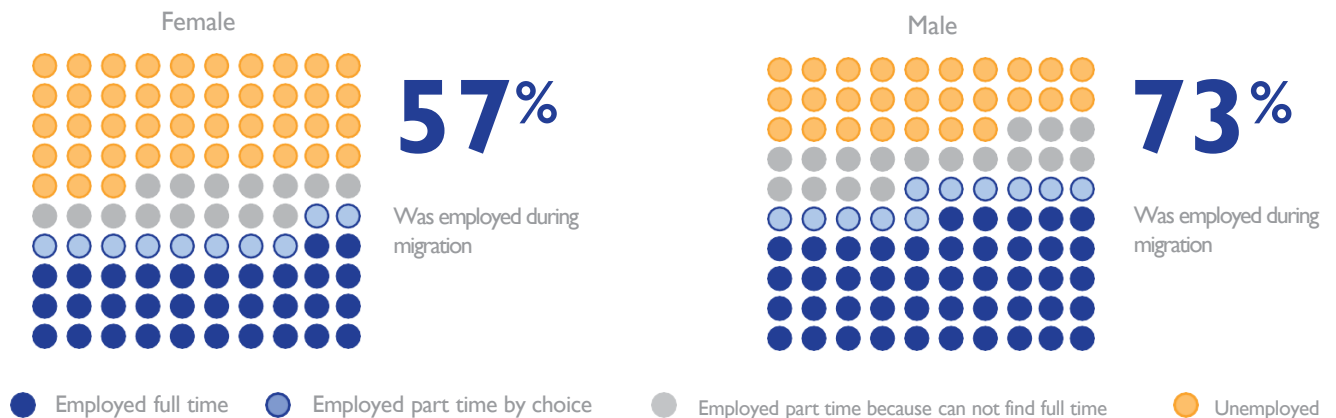
**Female**

**57%**
Was employed during migration

**Male**

**73%**
Was employed during migration

● Employed full time    ◯ Employed part time by choice    ● Employed part time because can not find full time    ● Unemployed

*Note:* This question was asked only to respondents who reported being currently employed.

## PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY: CURRENT SECTOR OF EMPLOYMENT AND SEX

| | Construction | Wholesale | Hotels and Restaurants | Agriculture and forestry | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Total Sample** | 34% | 31% | 11% | 4% | 20% |
| Female | 3% | 40% | 26% | 0 | 31% |
| Male | 44% | 28% | 6% | 5% | 17% |

According to the data, the large share of interviewees is employed in two sectors of employment in Kazakhstan: construction (34%) and wholesale and retail trade (31%). Male respondents (44%) are more employed in construction sector and less employed in wholesale and retail trade sector (28%) than female respondents, with 3 per cent and 40 per cent respectively. Around every tenth of respondents is working in hotels and restaurants sector. A proportion of female respondents (27%) in this sector is approximately four times more than the proportion of male respondents (6%). A share of other sectors that respondents are employed in Kazakhstan is less than 10 per cent.

## PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY: WORK IN THE INFORMAL SECTOR AND NATIONALITY

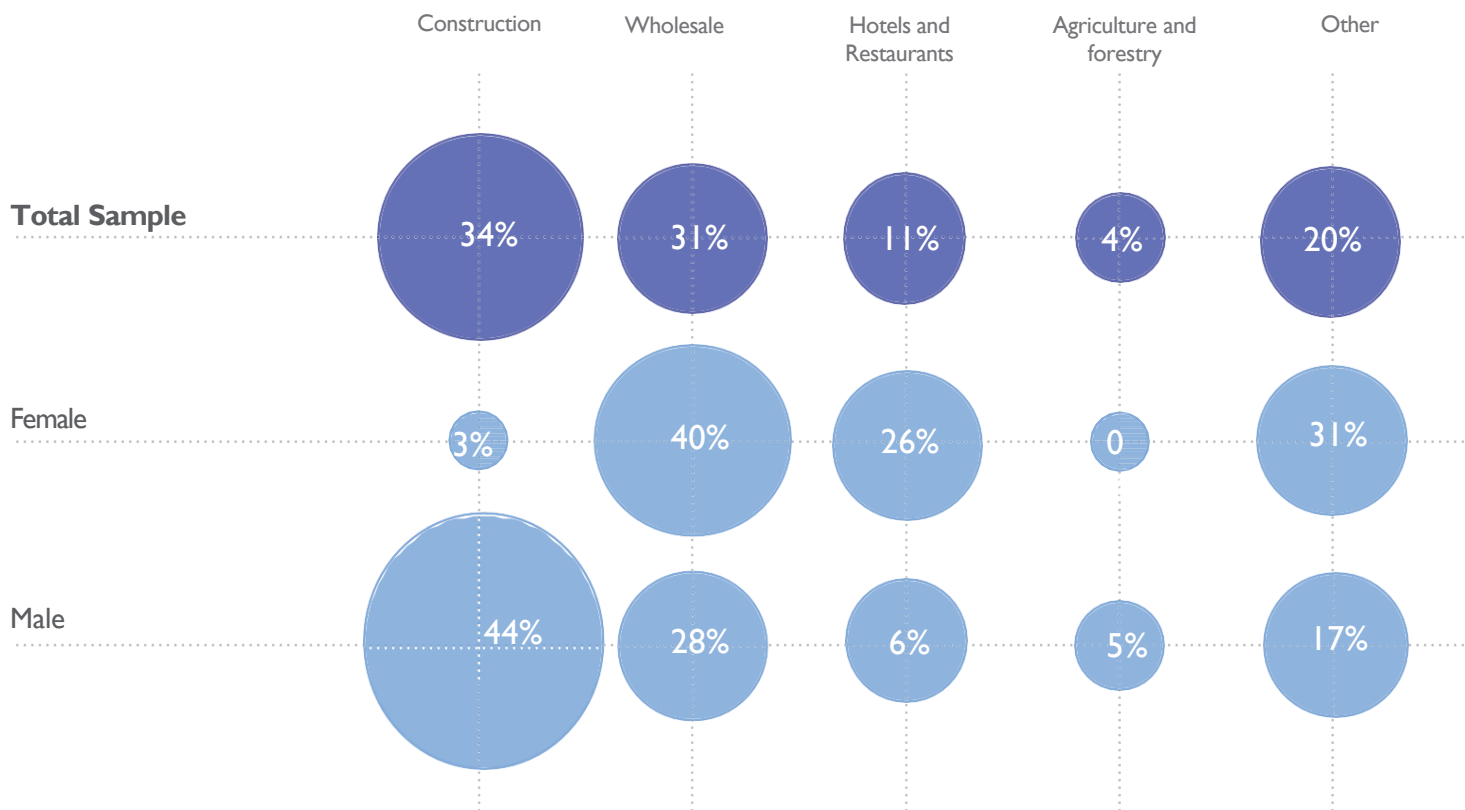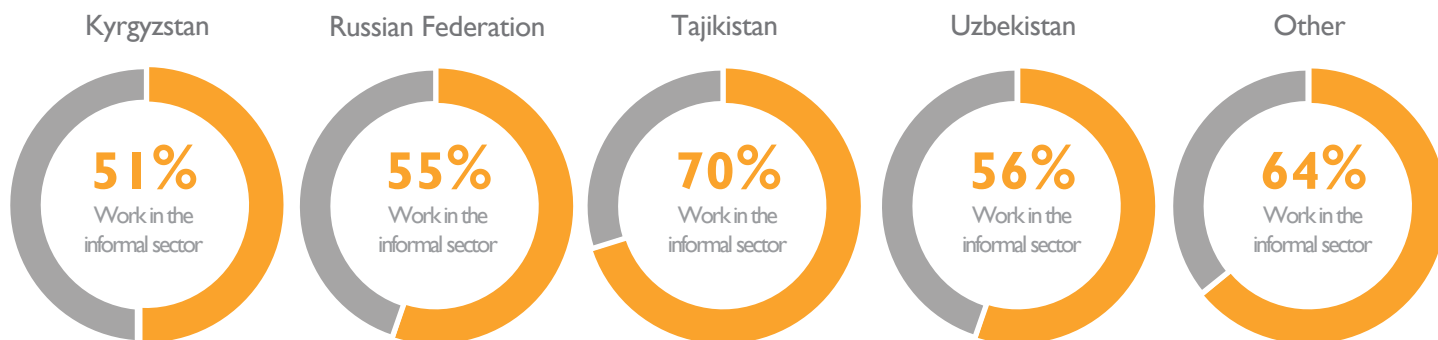| Kyrgyzstan | Russian Federation | Tajikistan | Uzbekistan | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 51% Work in the informal sector | 55% Work in the informal sector | 70% Work in the informal sector | 56% Work in the informal sector | 64% Work in the informal sector |

*Note:* This question was asked only to respondents who reported being currently employed.
The sample size for this percentage is lower than 10 respondents.

Data collection in the local bazaar
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## PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY: PAYING A FEE TO FIND EMPLOYMENT AND SEX

Payed a fee

**Total Sample**          3%

Female          3%

Male          4%
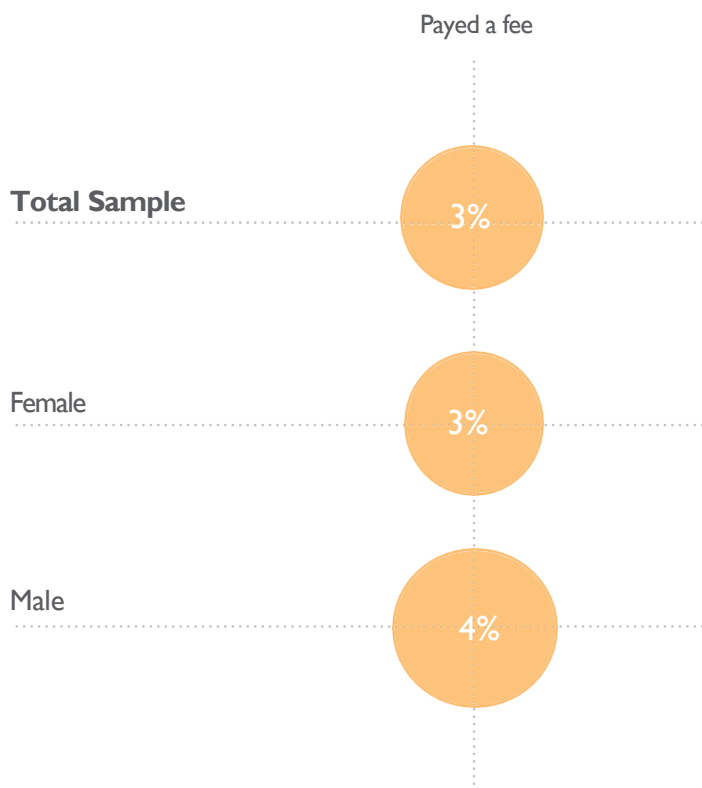
When looking at the monthly wage of stranded migrant population, the data shows that a plurality of respondents' current monthly income is higher than the average minimum wage in Kazakhstan (71%). In contrast, 13 per cent of interviewees reported that their current monthly income is less than the average minimum wage in the country.

Considering gender division, the data analysis shows that the share of male respondents with higher wages compared to a minimum salary (73%) is a bit more than the share of female respondents (66%).

The data shows that the majority of respondents (96%) did not pay a fee to find employment in Kazakhstan. Only 3 per cent of females and 4 per cent of males among respondents payed a fee to find employment in Kazakhstan.

The data analysis indicates that a majority of interviewees are working in the informal sector (59%). In contrast, 23 per cent of respondents indicated that they are working in the formal sector. These two findings are more relevant for respondents from Tajikistan (70% and 11% respectively) and less for interviewees from Kyrgyzstan (51% and 30% respectively).

More than a half of respondents from the Russian Federation (55%) and Uzbekistan (56%) informed that they are working the informal sector, while 64 per cent of respondents of other nationalities indicated that they are employed in the informal sector.
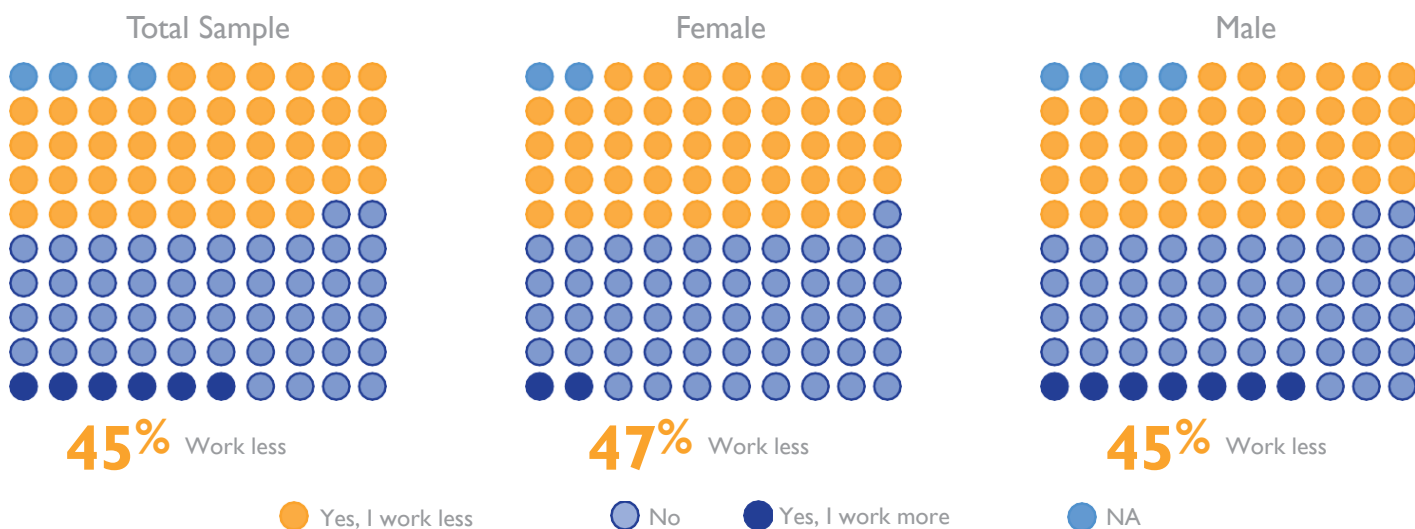
*Note:* This question was asked only to respondents who reported being currently employed.

According to the findings of the research study, the proportion of respondents, who indicated the decrease of working hours due to COVID-19 (45%) and who reported that the working hours did not change (46%) is approximately the same. A share of male respondents, who reported working hours increase (7%), is three time more than the share of female respondents (2%). While 47 per cent of female respondents indicated the decrease in the working hours, the share of male respondents who informed about the decrease of the working hours is 2 per cent lower.
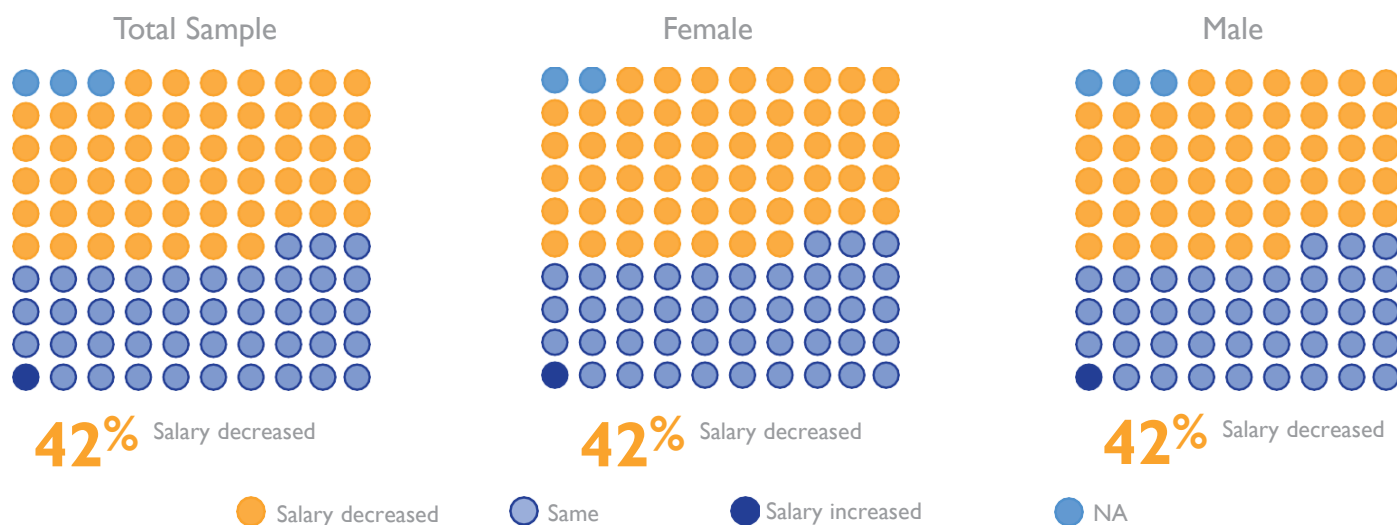
A proportion of respondents, who indicated the salary size decrease due to COVID-19 (55%), is more than the share of respondents, who indicated that their salary size has not changed (42%). More importantly, the same percentage (42%) of male and female respondents indicated the salary decrease after the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. Only 1 per cent of both male and female respondents indicated the salary increase after the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak.

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY:  CHANGES IN THE WORKING HOURS AFTER THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK AND SEX



Total Sample

Female

Male

**45%** Work less

**47%** Work less

**45%** Work less

- Yes, I work less
- No
- Yes, I work more
- NA

*Note:* This question was asked only to respondents who reported being currently employed.

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY:  CHANGE IN THE SALARY AFTER THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK AND SEX



Total Sample

Female

Male

**42%** Salary decreased

**42%** Salary decreased

**42%** Salary decreased

- Salary decreased
- Same
- Salary increased
- NA

*Note:* This question was asked only to respondents who reported being currently employed.

Ninety-two per cent of respondents did not go through a recruitment process in their country of origin in order to find a current job that they do in Kazakhstan.

## PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY: GOING TROUGH A RECRUITMENT PROCESS

**4**%
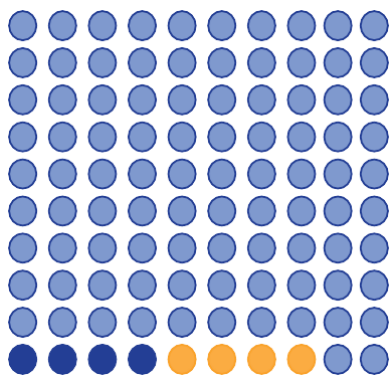
of the respondents went trough a recruitment process
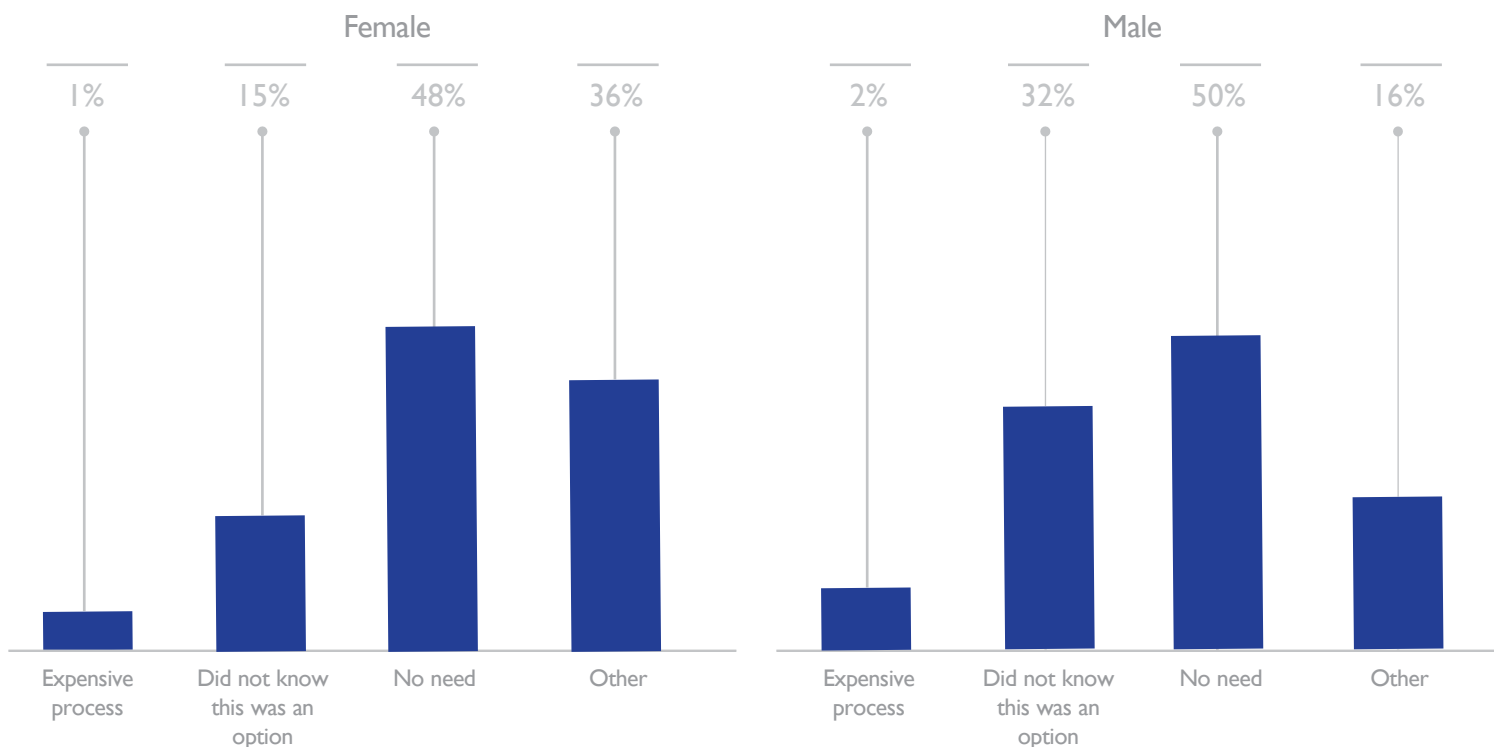
● Went trough a recruitment process

● Did not went trough a recruitment process

● Unknown

*Note:* This question was asked only to respondents who reported being currently employed.

During a survey with a respondent
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PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY: REASONS FOR NOT GOING TROUGH A RECRUITMENT PROCESS AND SEX

Female

| 1% | 15% | 48% | 36% |
|---|---|---|---|
| Expensive process | Did not know this was an option | No need | Other |

Male

| 2% | 32% | 50% | 16% |
|---|---|---|---|
| Expensive process | Did not know this was an option | No need | Other |

*Note:* This question was asked only to respondents who reported being currently employed and did not go through a recruitment process.

## 2.5 COVID-19 impacts and needs

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY:
INSUFFICIENT INCOME TO PROVIDE FOR
FAMILY BASIC NEEDS* AND SEX

13%
Total Sample

14%
Female

13%
Male
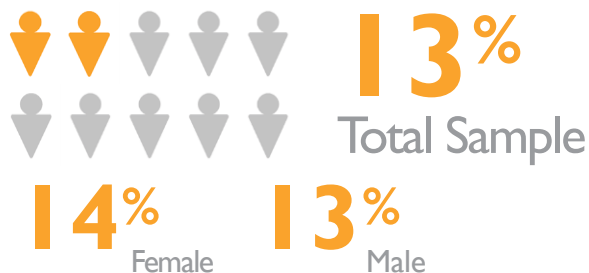
Considering the COVID-19 impacts and needs, the data analysis indicates that the majority of interviewees' household income is not sufficient to meet monthly expenses (58%): 11 per cent of stranded migrants have no personal income at all and 13 per cent of respondents have not enough money for essential goods and needs (food, clothes, health care, education, etc). This is more relevant for female respondents (14%) than male respondents (13%).

According to the study, 42 per cent of interviewees have enough household income to meet monthly expenses. However, 28 per cent of those respondents are unable to make savings. Relating to the gender dimension, the data analysis shows that the share of male respondents is more than females in terms of having enough household income, 46 per cent and 32 per cent respectively.

*Basic needs are defined as housing, food, health care and education.

The findings of the research study demonstrate that reasons for not going through a recruitment process include: expensiveness of the process, lack of knowledge about this option and opportunity to go through a recruitment process and absence of necessity to go through this procedure. Majority of respondents, both male (50%) and female respondents (48%) indicated no need to go through the recruitment process for the employment. When looking at the lack of knowledge about this option, 15 per cent of female respondents and 32 per cent of male respondents respectively, did not know about the option of the recruitment process. The least important reason for not going through a recruitment process for both male (2%) and female respondents (1%) is the expensiveness of the process.

The data shows that the majority of respondents (65%) faced various challenges during the past three months. When looking at gender dimension, among respondents who experienced the challenges, the proportion of female respondents is 11 per cent more than the share of male respondents, 73 per cent and 62 per cent respectively. According to the data, stranded migrants from Tajikistan experienced problems less frequently than respondents from other countries (43%). In contrast, respondents from Uzbekistan faced challenges more frequently (70%). Correspondingly, more than half of stranded migrant population from the Russian Federation (64%), Kyrgyzstan (67%) and from other countries (65%) faced different challenges over the past three months.

## PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY: CHALLENGES FACED OVER THE PAST THREE MONTHS AND SEX

| Total Sample | Female | Male |
|---|---|---|

**65%** Very often    **73%** Very often    **62%** Very often

● Faced challenges    ● Did not face challenges
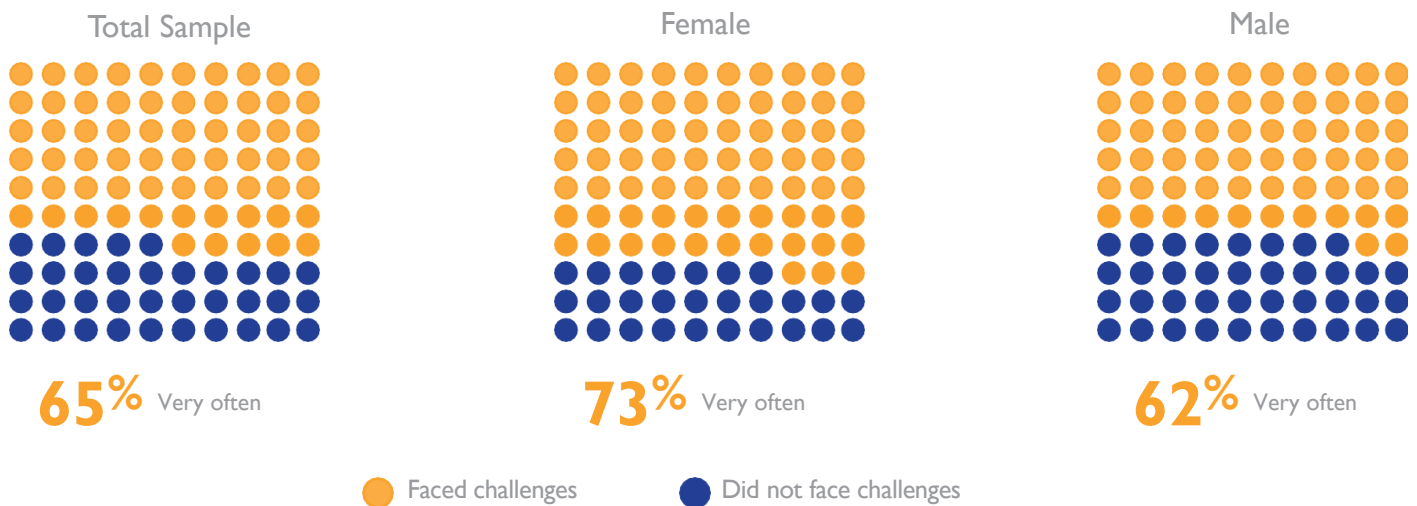
## PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY: CHALLENGES FACED OVER THE PAST THREE MONTHS AND NATIONALITY

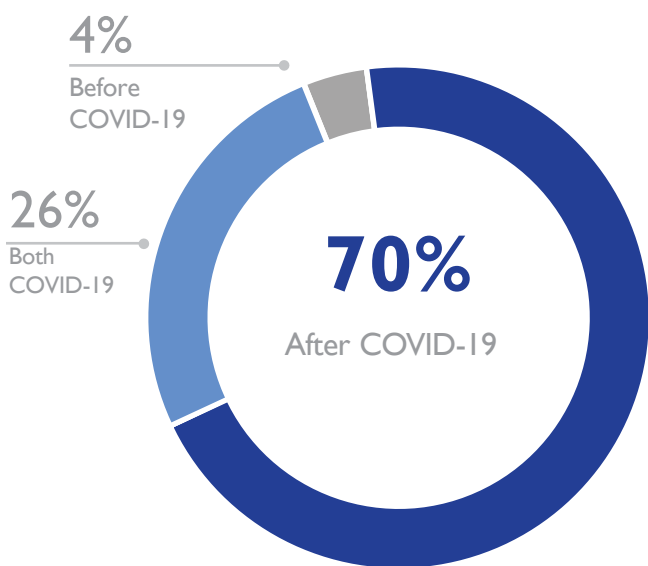| Tajikistan | Russian Federation | Kyrgyzstan | Uzbekistan | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 43% | 64% | 67% | 70% | 65% |
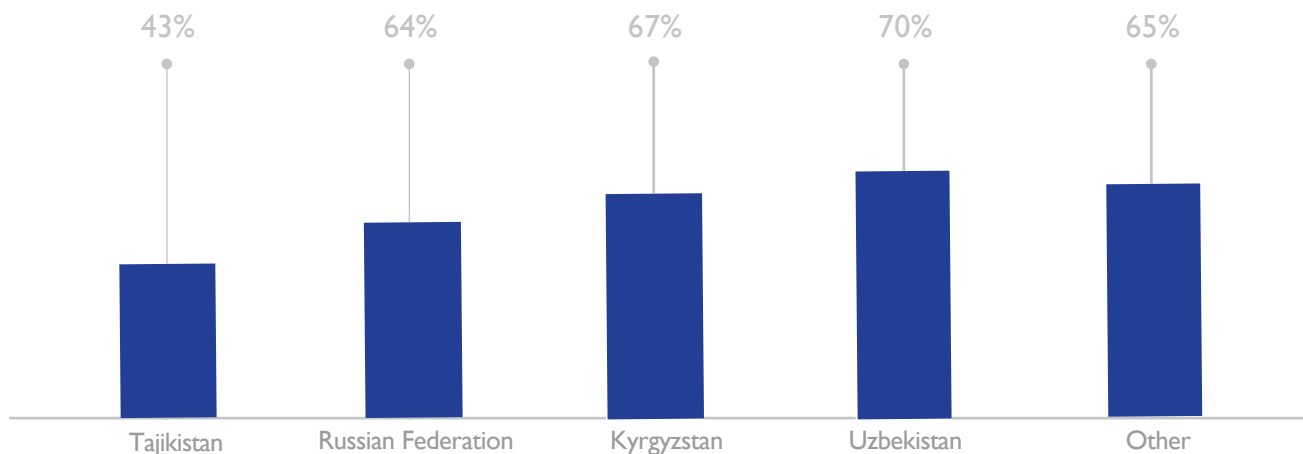
## Percentage of Respondents by: (MEN/WOMEN) ПО ТИПУ ТРУДНОСТЕЙ

*Note:* this question was asked only to respondents who reported facing challenges over the past three months.

### Female

| Unemployment | Insufficient income | Other | Stranded in Kazakhstan |
|---|---|---|---|
| 10% | 20% | 56% | 14% |

### Male

| Unemployment | Insufficient income | Other | Stranded in Kazakhstan |
|---|---|---|---|
| 9% | 24% | 45% | 22% |
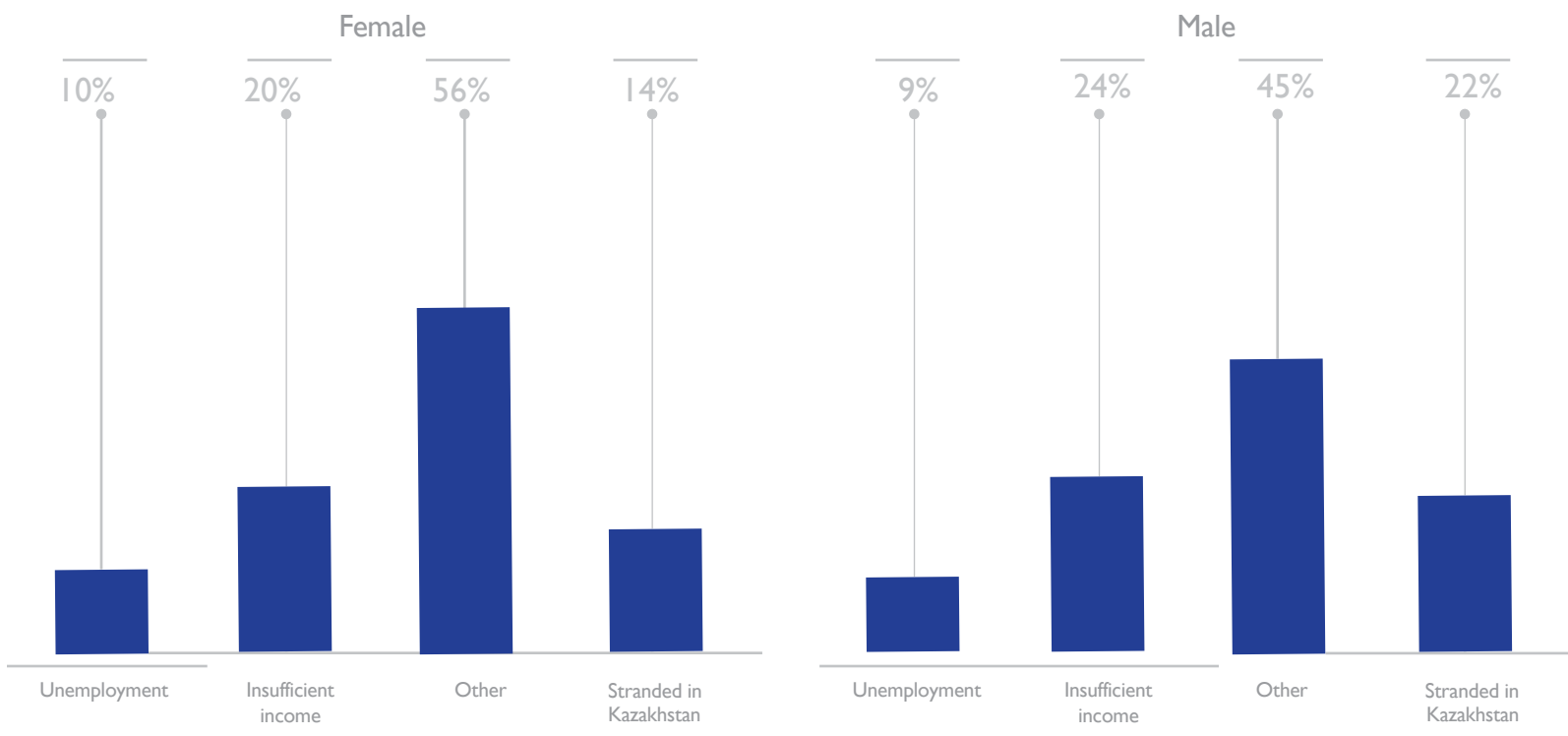
## PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY: TIME WHEN THEY FACED CHALLENGES

4%
Before COVID-19

26%
Both COVID-19

70%
After COVID-19

*Note:* this question was asked only to respondents who reported facing challenges over the past three months. Basic needs are defined as housing, food, health care and education.

The research study shows that the most common types of challenges that were faced by stranded migrants include: unemployment, insufficient income and the inability to leave Kazakhstan.

The data demonstrates that insufficient income (21%) and inability to leave Kazakhstan (21%) are two key challenges that were indicated by a large proportion of respondents. Inability to leave Kazakhstan was more common among male interviewees (24%) than female interviewees (14%). Among other challenges, 9 per cent of stranded migrants faced difficulties with unemployment and 8 per cent faced difficulties with wage reduction. The study shows that all other challenges are related with insufficient income, health care, housing and education.

According to the data, the large proportion of the sample stranded migrant population faced challenges after the COVID-19 outbreak (70%). In contrast, only four per cent of stranded migrant population experienced these challenges before the pandemic. The data analysis indicates that 26 per cent of stranded migrant population faced problems before and after COVID-19 outbreak.

Considering the asking for assistance, more than half of interviewees (52%) did not ask for help to solve their problems. When looking at the gender dimension, the data analysis shows that female respondents asked for assistance more than male respondents, 55 per cent and 45 per cent respectively.

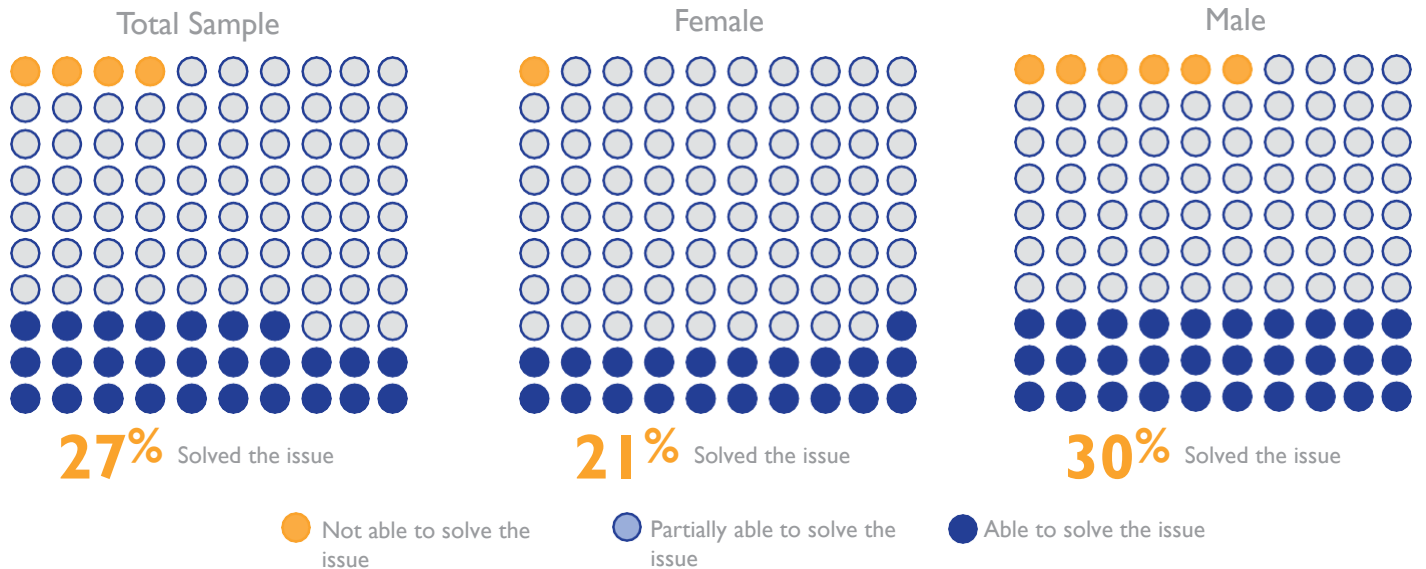## PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY: SEEK FOR HELP IN CASE OF CHALLENGES
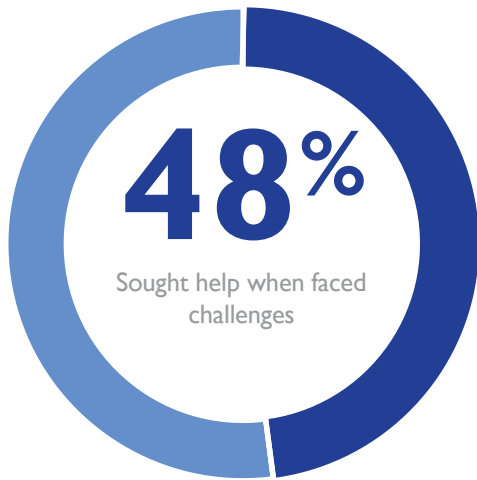
**48%**

Sought help when faced challenges

*Note:* this question was asked only to respondents who reported facing challenges over the past three months.

## PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY: SEEK FOR HELP IN CASE OF CHALLENGES AND SEX
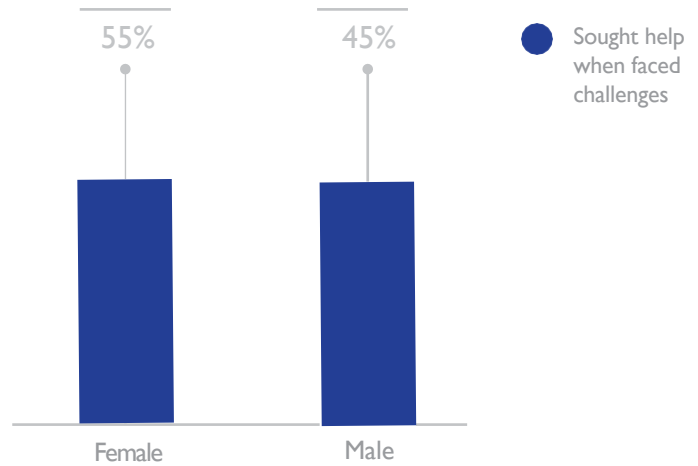
55%

45%

● Sought help when faced challenges

Female

Male

*Note:* this question was asked only to respondents who reported facing challenges over the past three months.
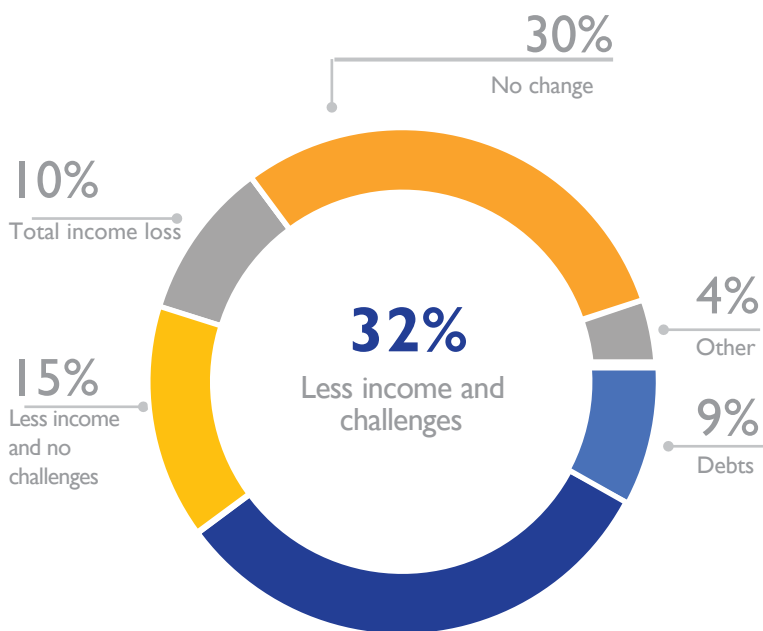
## PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY: EFFICIENCY OF THE SUPPORT NETWORK

Total Sample

**27%** Solved the issue

Female

**21%** Solved the issue

Male

**30%** Solved the issue

● Not able to solve the issue

● Partially able to solve the issue

● Able to solve the issue

*Note:* this question was asked only to respondents who reported facing challenges over the past three months and seeking for help to solve such challenge.

In terms of receiving the assistance and support, the majority of stranded migrant population, who reported asking for help, informed that they received the needed support to overcome their challenges (96%). In comparison to male respondents, female respondents received more support, 94 per cent and 99 per cent respectively. Among those who received support, 27 per cent of stranded migrant population were able to solve their issues and overcome their challenges completely, while 69 per cent of stranded migrant population solved their issues partially.

## PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY: CHANGES IN THE FINANCIAL SITUATION DUE TO COVID-19

**30%** No change

**10%** Total income loss

**15%** Less income and no challenges

**32%** Less income and challenges
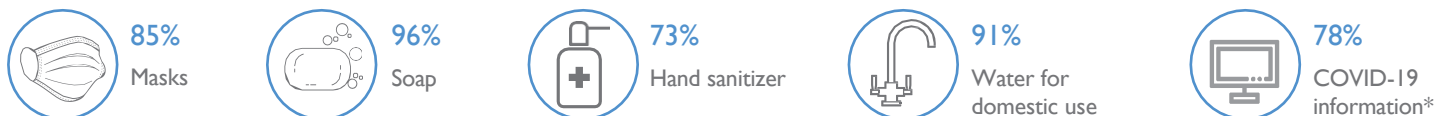
**4%** Other

**9%** Debts

When looking at the changes in the financial situation of stranded migrants since COVID-19, more than the half of respondents (66.1%) indicated that their financial situation worsened due to the pandemic. According to the data, 47 per cent of stranded migrant population indicated that their income level decreased, while 32 per cent of respondents indicated that they faced not only the wage reduction but also experienced other challenges due to the worsened financial situation.
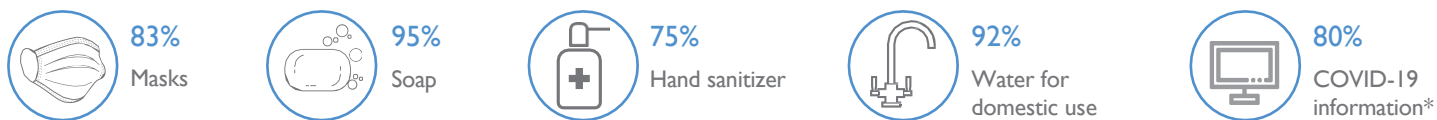
The findings of the study demonstrate that 10 per cent of respondents lost all income and 9 per cent of interviewees acquired debts due to the pandemic. In contrast, 30.3 per cent of stranded migrant population did not experience any changes in finance.

Considering the access to hygiene items, the large proportion of respondents (91%) have access to water. In contrast, approximately every tenth stranded migrant have not access to it. A key reason for a lack of access to water is a lack of money (55.1%). Ten per cent of stranded migrant population indicated other reasons for the lack of access to water. In terms of other hygiene items, 95 per cent of respondents have access to soap. In this regard, the lack of money is also the key reason of the lack of access to soap (69%). 14 per cent of respondents indicated that they have no need for soap.
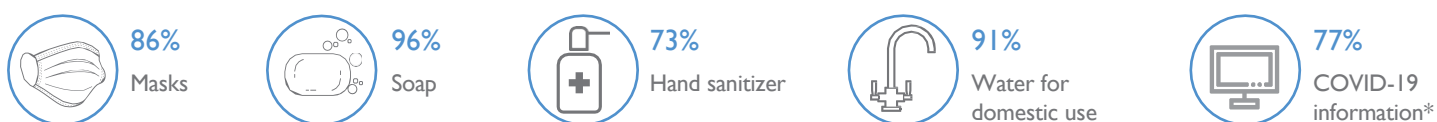
## PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY: DAILY ACCESS TO HYGIENE ITEMS – TOTAL SAMPLE

**85%** Masks | **96%** Soap | **73%** Hand sanitizer | **91%** Water for domestic use | **78%** COVID-19 information*

## PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY: DAILY ACCESS TO HYGIENE ITEMS – FEMALES ONLY

**83%** Masks | **95%** Soap | **75%** Hand sanitizer | **92%** Water for domestic use | **80%** COVID-19 information*

## PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY: DAILY ACCESS TO HYGIENE ITEMS – MALES ONLY

**86%** Masks | **96%** Soap | **73%** Hand sanitizer | **91%** Water for domestic use | **77%** COVID-19 information*

The data about daily access to hygiene items shows that 73 per cent of respondents have access to hand sanitizer. In contrast, approximately every fourth stranded migrant does not have access to it. Considering face masks, 85 per cent of respondents indicated having access to it. A key reason of a lack of access to face masks and hand sanitizers is a lack of money (56% and 60% respectively). In terms of the access to information about COVID-19, the majority of stranded migrant population (78%) indicated that they have access to the needed information. In contrast, 22 per cent of stranded migrant population indicated not having access to the needed information about COVID-19.

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY: PROBLEMS RELATED TO THE LACK OF ACCESS TO PERSONAL
PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT AND HYGIENE PRODUCTS

|  | No money | No need | Other | Unknown problem |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Face masks | 60% | 25% | 10% | 5% |
| Soap | 69% | 14% | 7% | 10% |
| Hand sanitizer | 55% | 33% | 6% | 6% |
| Water for domestic use | 55% | 27% | 10% | 8% |
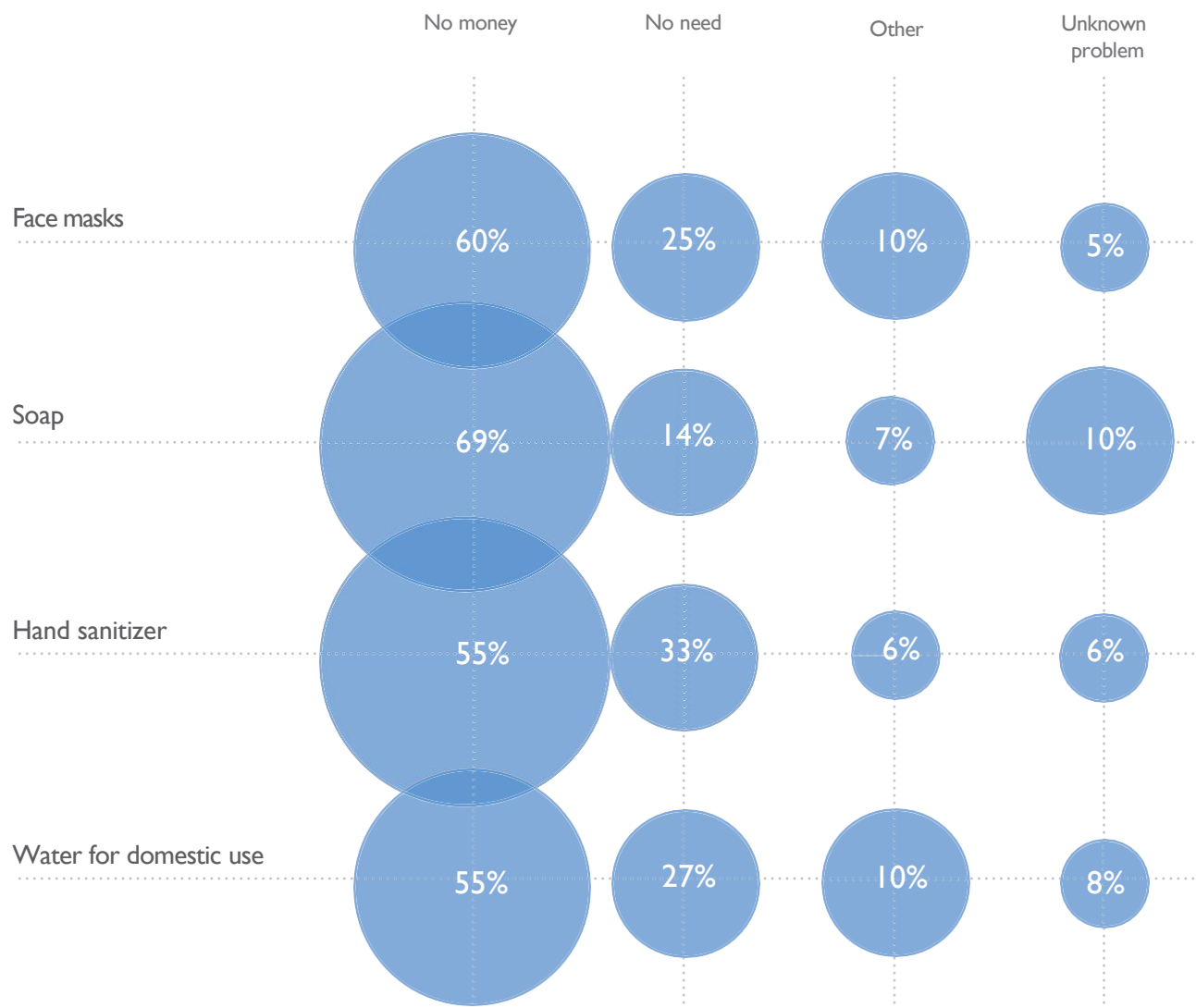
*Note:* This question was asked only to respondents who reported not having enough daily access to at least one of the items listed above.



A discussion with local officials
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FOR NOTES: