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**Moldova:
Gender Disparities in Endowments and Access to
Economic Opportunities**

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BEEPS	The Business Environment and Enterprise Performance Survey
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
DHS	Demographic and Health Surveys
ECA	Europe and Central Asia
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus Infection / Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
LFS	Labor Force Survey
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PISA	Program for International Student Assessment
UN	United Nations
WDI	World Development Institute
WHO	World Health Organization
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
USAID	The United States Agency for International Development

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. **This assessment provides a broad picture of gender disparities in Moldova in agency, education, health, and access to economic opportunities.** The report builds on the framework of the World Bank's regional gender report, *Europe and Central Asia: Opportunities for Men and Women*, as well as the *World Development Report on Gender and Development*. The assessment takes a quantitative approach based on multiple international data sources including the World Bank World Development Indicators (WDI), IMF International Financial Statistics, UN Human Development Index, as well as some national and international surveys: Moldova Labor Force Survey for the last few years, Moldova 2010 Public Expenditure Survey, Life in Transition Survey (2010), and Business Environment and Enterprise Performance Survey (2009). Key findings of the assessment can be summarized as follows:

2. **The gender gap in education is small, yet it is greatest at higher levels of education.** Gender gaps in primary enrollment and completion rates are negligible, but the overall rates have fallen since the early 2000's. Boys lag behind girls in secondary and tertiary enrollment, and girls are less likely to pursue vocational training. Girls and boys also concentrate in different subjects in university, with girls clustering in education and health care and boys in industry. Secondary and tertiary schools therefore appear to be the beginning of occupational segregation that yields less favorable outcomes for women in the labor market. Overall, education outcomes for both genders have been low compared to other countries in the region.

3. **Moldova's health indicators are significantly underperforming compared to other Europe and Central Asia (ECA) countries, and male mortality is of greatest concern.** Most notably, lifestyle-associated health problems are more pronounced among men than women, echoing the gender gap in life expectancy of seven years. Specifically, excessive consumption of alcohol and tobacco are health risks for men, and alcohol consumption per capita in Moldova is the highest in the world. While maternal mortality rates are low compared to other countries at the same income level, they have been volatile in recent years, demonstrating the ongoing challenges in managing maternal health. For example, rural areas are less equipped to provide the required level of maternal and infant health services. Additionally, the high frequency of abortions conducted in unhygienic conditions, using unsafe methods creates a major risk for Moldovan women, as a third of pregnancies end in abortion.

4. **Male and female labor force participation rates are low, and the gender gap is small. Nevertheless, the most prominent gender gaps in Moldova lie in access to economic opportunities.** Labor force participation rates of both men and women declined substantially between 2000 and 2010, and the female labor force participation rate therefore trails that in ECA by 17 percentage points. Yet despite similar participation rates, the labor market is characterized by gender segregation by sector, occupation and leadership positions. Three sectors account for 75 percent of women's jobs (public administration and education, agriculture, and trade and hotel services). At the same time, only 21 percent of firms have women as top managers. Reflecting this segregation, women earn only 74 percent of what men earn and the earnings gap persists even in economic sectors in which women predominate. Important disparities also exist between rural and urban female employment rates, and employers have been said to discriminate against women with children.

5. **Self-employment rates are high compared to other countries in the region, but men are twice as likely as women to be employers of other people.** Women's propensity to engage in some form of entrepreneurial activity (25 percent) is almost twice as high as the average rate of entrepreneurship among women in ECA. However, self-employed women are less likely than men to have employees working for them, which reflects the disparities in size and nature of businesses that women and men lead. Overall, businesses begun by male entrepreneurs are less likely to fail than those begun by women, and firms owned by men are larger, have higher revenues and are more likely to export their products. Female

entrepreneurs tend to be less educated and have no prior experience in business. Additionally, almost two thirds of companies partially owned by women operate in only three sectors – retail (34 percent), food (14 percent) and construction (11 percent).

6. Moldova has made some progress in integrating women in politics, yet representation remains low. Women hold about 20 percent of seats in Parliament, which is comparable to the average for most developed countries in the region. However, in 2012 only 6 percent of ministerial positions were held by women, and the representation of women at local levels of government is incredibly low. Women are also underrepresented amongst judges, and the number of female ambassadors, senior civil servants, and journalists is much lower than those in neighboring countries or in the rest of the EU.

7. Largely egalitarian views exist in Moldova on gender roles and responsibilities. Research shows that women in Moldova feel relatively high autonomy over their own lives as compared to women in other countries. Additionally, a majority of both men and women believe that women and men should take the same responsibility for home and children and contributing to household income. However, a majority also agree that while jobs are important, women really want a home and children.

8. The legislative structure surrounding gender equality is generally strong, but implementation is lacking particularly with regards to domestic violence. Moldova is party to international legislation surrounding gender equality and echoes this commitment in its domestic laws as well. However, the application of protection mechanisms for domestic violence is still problematic in practice. Main challenges include low awareness and implementation by relevant authorities, failures to execute protection orders, and delayed initiation of criminal proceedings. This is critical as violence against women is widely accepted by both women and men in Moldova, where 25 percent of youth 15-19 years believe that beating one's wife is justified under certain circumstances.

9. Moldova has one of the highest rates of human trafficking among neighboring countries and is primarily a source country. The economic situation in the country and domestic violence are identified as the main reasons for the persistent problem of trafficking of women. According to the U.S. Department of State (2012), the Government of Moldova has not fully complied with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so. The Government has made progress in addressing the protection of victims and the prevention of trafficking, but has not shown sufficient progress in addressing widespread complicity in trafficking by law enforcement and other public officials. However, the European Commission has noted some improvements through the implementation of the national action plan and the anti-trafficking national system built on a multi-agency cooperation, including with civil society.¹

10. Reducing gender inequality in Moldova will require incorporating these findings into development strategies in order to improve education, skills and health outcomes; promote economic equality; and end human trafficking. From the start, the education system should be reformed to offer job-oriented and skill building courses to women to meet labor market needs and to reduce the gender gap in employment. To reverse the negative trends in health outcomes for men, priority should be given to raising public awareness on the health risks of smoking and drinking, and to increased support, particularly for men, to overcome the habit. The elimination of violence against women and the protection of women's rights should be policy priorities as well. In order to address these, better data and analysis are required, as crimes are currently underreported. Monitoring and assessments can provide insight into the reasons behind violence and high-risk behavior, and the extent to which government policies reach the targeted population. In order to address inequalities in access to economic

¹ 5th Progress Report of the European Commission on the Implementation of the EU-Moldova Visa Liberalization Action Plan from June 2013: Assessment Block 3/ topic 1b – Preventing trafficking in human beings

opportunities, it will be important to promote diversification in the sectors in which women work since a major barrier to economic equality is the concentration of women in only a few sectors. Work therefore needs to be done to identify policies that increase female participation in a wider range of fields. At the same time, development of entrepreneurship among women and men as well as formalization of existing businesses can be facilitated through better enforcement of existing regulations, reduced corruption, improved infrastructure, and access to credit. The Government of Moldova also needs to take further steps to combat human trafficking. Most notably, they still need to address and combat the complicity of law enforcement and public officials in the matter through investigations and prosecutions.

INTRODUCTION

1. The fall of the Berlin Wall led to the largest natural social experiment in human history- the transition of Eastern bloc countries from closed regimes to open, democratic societies. While some countries have since emerged as high income economies, others embraced reform and development more slowly. Moldova, currently considered a lower middle-income economy with a Gross National Income per capita (Atlas method) of around US\$2,070 in 2012, suffered economic losses following the collapse of the Soviet Union. The Russian financial crisis in 1998 further hindered its progress. But it began to recoup its losses after 2000, and its economic growth reached 6 percent. However, it never achieved the 7 percent growth seen in the CIS countries between 2000 and 2007. The global financial crisis in 2008 again slowed its economic development. Despite these setbacks, Moldova has made some advances, yet it continues to face many challenges. In 2012 nearly 17 percent of its population lived below the national poverty line.

2. The process of transition has had an uneven impact on the overall human development of the people of Moldova. The UN Human Development Index was 0.649 in 2011, placing the country in the medium human development group. In contrast, the Gender Inequality Index was 0.298, putting it in the high to very high category in gender development. Notwithstanding this, Moldova faces many gender-related issues, like domestic violence, continuing bias against women, lower employment opportunities, and trafficking (Burke, 2009; USAID, 2011). This paper looks at gender disparities in three major areas of concern: (i) agency—life satisfaction, gender related views of society, and the legal and institutional framework, (ii) human development – education and health, and (iii) economic opportunities – labor market, employment prospects, entrepreneurship, migration and human trafficking. The goal is to identify and address critical problems. The paper builds on the framework of the World Bank’s regional gender report, Europe and Central Asia: Opportunities for Men and Women (World Bank, 2011a), and the World Development Report on Gender and Development (World Bank, 2011b). Whilst most of the analysis is conducted using national data, wherever possible and appropriate, the paper makes a comparison to countries in the wider Europe and Central Asia region, especially developing countries in the region.² In order to make these comparisons, the paper has relied on several internationally recognized data sources: World Development Indicators (WDI), IMF International Financial Statistics, the UN Human Development Index, as well as a few national and international surveys: Moldova Labor Force Survey for the last few years, Moldova 2010 Public Expenditure Survey, Life in Transition Survey (2010), and BEEPS (2009).

3. The gender disparities found in human development and labor market opportunities can be summarized as follows:

- **The gender gap in education is small, yet it is greatest at higher levels of education.** Boys lag behind girls in secondary and tertiary enrollment, and girls are less likely to pursue vocational training. Secondary and tertiary schools therefore appear to be the beginning of occupational segregation that yields less favorable outcomes for women in the labor market. Overall, education outcomes for both genders have been low compared to other countries in the region.

² ECA (developing countries) include: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, FYR Macedonia, Georgia, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kyrgyz Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan.

- **Moldova's health indicators are significantly underperforming compared to other ECA countries, and male mortality is of greatest concern.** Most notably, lifestyle-associated health problems are more pronounced among men than women. Specifically, excessive consumption of alcohol and tobacco are health risks for men.
 - **Violence against women is one of the most frequent forms of human rights violations and is widely accepted by both women and men.** It is a human rights violation and a vital public health concern that results in increased health costs, murders, and female morbidity from related physical, mental, sexual and reproductive health outcomes.
 - **Male and female labor force participation rates are low, and the gender gap is small.** The causes for low male employment rates are poorly understood and require further analysis. Nevertheless, the most prominent gender gaps in Moldova lie in access to economic opportunity. The labor market is characterized by gender segregation by sector, occupation and leadership positions. At the same time, men are more successful in establishing new businesses, and firms owned by men are larger, have higher revenues and are more likely to export their products.
 - **Moldova has one of the highest rates of human trafficking among neighboring countries and is primarily a source country.** The economic situation in the country and domestic violence are identified as the main reasons for the persistent problem of trafficking of women. According to the U.S. Department of State (2012), the Government of Moldova has not fully complied with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so.
4. This paper is structured as follows. Chapter I discusses factors which may shape the process of how men and women use their endowments and utilize economic opportunities. Chapter II covers human development disaggregated by gender, focusing on education and health. Chapter III examines the gender gap in employment and opportunities, and its implications for the labor market, particularly, entrepreneurship and career advancement for women. Chapter IV makes selected policy recommendations.

CHAPTER 1

AGENCY

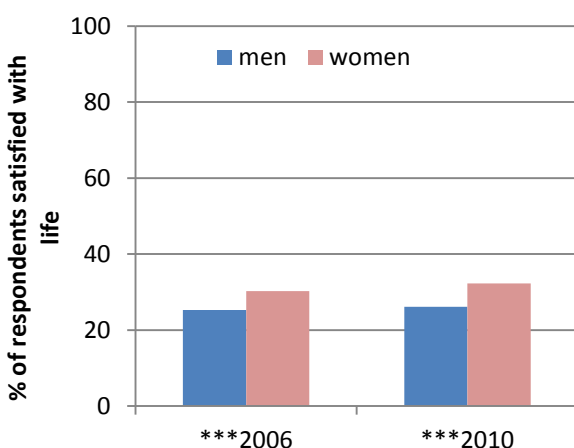
1.1 This chapter focuses on factors which shape “the ability of a person to act independently and to make his or her own free choices” or in other words—agency. According to the World Bank (2011b), expressions of agency include control over resources, ability to move freely, decision making over family formation, freedom from the risk of violence and ability to have a voice in society. This chapter covers three important factors which may have an impact on control over one’s actions and life choices: legislation, social norms about gender roles and responsibilities, and voice and representation. The chapter begins with an overview of life satisfaction of men and women which can be associated with the abilities to make choices and to transform them into effective outcomes.

A. LIFE SATISFACTION

1.2 Life satisfaction has remained stable in Moldova during the period of 2006-2010 with women being slightly more satisfied than men based on the Life in Transition Survey (LiTS) data. The LiTS is used to explore who is more satisfied with life: men or women. The question asked was to provide a response to the statement: “all things considered, I am satisfied with my life now”. Women were slightly more satisfied with life than men in 2006: 30 versus 25 percent respectively. The gender gap in favor of women did not change after four years and women were still more satisfied than men in 2010: 32 versus 26 percent respectively (Figure 1.1a). Overall, the level of life satisfaction in Moldova was quite low compared to other countries from the Europe and Central Asia region.

Figure 1.1: Life satisfaction

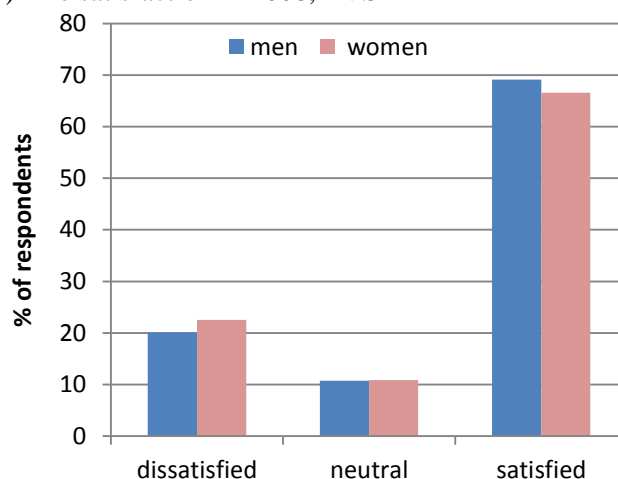
a) Life satisfaction in 2006 and 2010, LiTS



Source: LiTS I and II (EBRD and World Bank, 2008 and 2011).

Notes: *** gender difference significant at 1%, ** gender difference significant at 5%, * gender difference significant at 10%. Percentage of satisfied people includes respondents who strongly agree or agree with the statement “All things considered, I am satisfied with my life now.” Data was weighted. Missing and ‘do not know’ answers were excluded from calculation of shares.

b) Life satisfaction in 2008, EVS



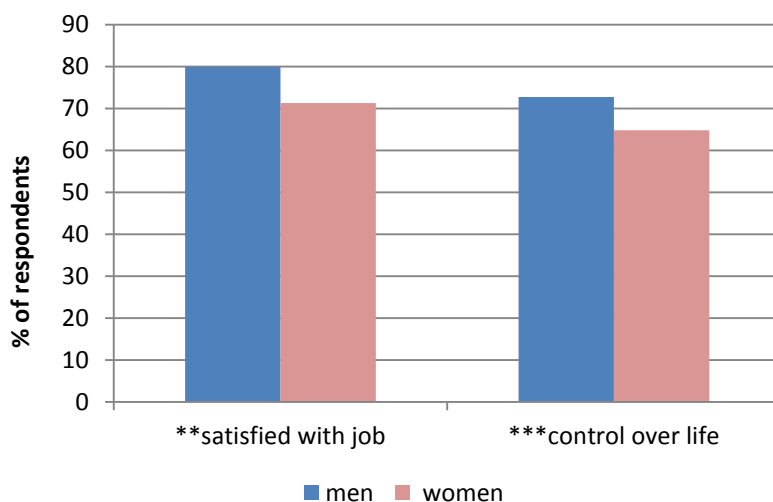
Source: EVS (2010).

Notes: The question states: “How satisfied are you with your life in scale from 1 to 10, 1 being dissatisfied and 10 being satisfied”. Data was weighted. We aggregated first four steps into “dissatisfied”, the fifth step into “neutral” and the last five into “satisfied” groups. Missing and ‘do not know’ answers were excluded from calculation of shares.

1.3 Another data source on life satisfaction (EVS) shows higher level of satisfaction than the LiTS and does not have statistically significant differences in the level of life satisfaction across gender. The European Values Survey (EVS) is used to check the life satisfaction between men and women in 2008 (Figure 1.1b). There is no difference in life satisfaction between men and women in the EVS and the level of satisfaction is much higher than those in the LiTS: 69 percent among men and 67 percent among women. The difference between the LiTS and the EVS may be related to the differences in (a) wording of questions and answers, (b) differences in average characteristics of respondents by gender, (c) different time period.³

1.4 Women believe they have less control over their lives and are less satisfied with their jobs. The EVS asks questions about satisfaction with the current job for those employed and the perception of the control over live. Even though there is no gender gap in life satisfaction between men and women in the EVS data, women tend to be less satisfied with their jobs and to believe they have less control over their lives than men (Figure 1.2). Thus, about 71 percent of women were satisfied with their current jobs in 2008 compared to 80 percent among men. About 65 percent of women believe they have control over their lives compared to 73 percent among men.

Figure 1.2: Job satisfaction and control over life in 2008, EVS



Source: EVS (2010).

Notes: *** gender difference significant at 1%, ** gender difference significant at 5%, * gender difference significant at 10%. The first question asks: “How satisfied are you with your job in scale from 1 to 10, 1 being dissatisfied and 10 being satisfied”. The second question asks: “What level of control do you have over your life in scale from 1 to 10, 1 having no control and 10 having full control. Data was weighted. We aggregated last four steps into “satisfied” and “control over life” categories. Missing and ‘do not know’ answers were excluded from calculation of shares.

1.5 Compared to other countries in the world, women in Moldova had rather high control over resources and decision making. According to Sunita and Subaiya (2008) and National Scientific and Applied Center for Preventive Medicine and ORC Macro (2006), 51 percent of currently married women in Moldova make decisions alone about their own health, 19 percent about large purchases, 64 percent about daily purchases and 20 percent about visits to family and friends. These rates were higher than in other regions in the world or comparable to the best performers (Latin American/Caribbean countries).

³ Sample methodology for LiTS is described here:

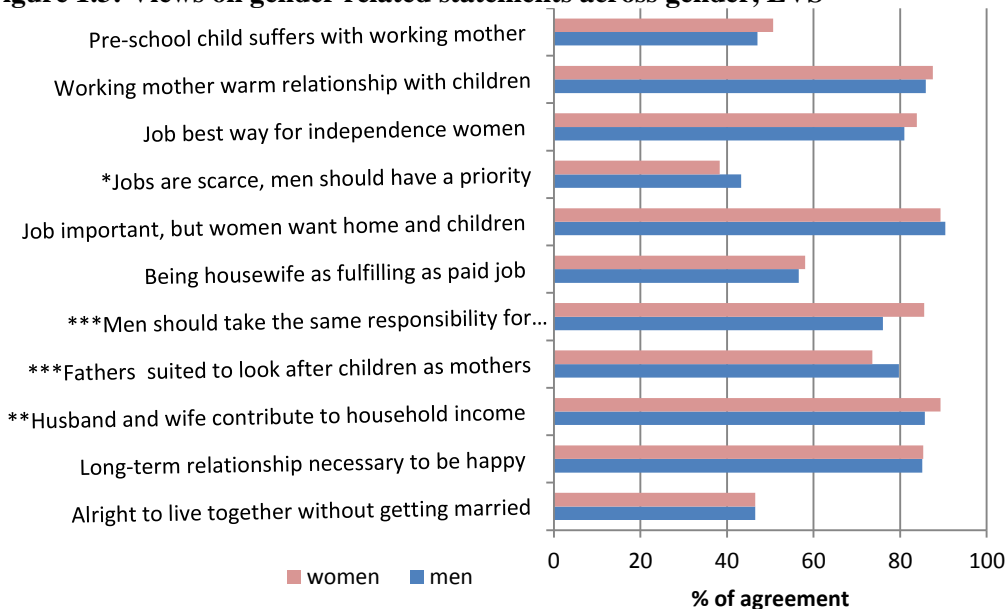
<http://www.ebrd.com/downloads/research/surveys/LiTS2eh.pdf>. Sampling procedure of EVS is discussed here: <http://info1.gesis.org/EVS/Studies/studydescription.asp?db=OSD-EVS&id=ZA4793&fi=dt> **SamplingProc.**

B. GENDER RELATED VIEWS OF SOCIETY⁴

1.6 There are rather equalitarian views on gender roles in Moldova. EVS presents views of men and women on gender related statements (Figure 1.3). A majority of men and women in Moldova agree on equal sharing of responsibility for home and children and contribution to household income. A majority of men and women also believe that a mother's employment does not harm the relationship with children and that a job is the best way for independence of women.

1.7 Nevertheless, some gender stereotypes remain. Thus, for example, about 58 percent of the population believes that "Being housewife as fulfilling as paid job". A majority of the population in Moldova also agrees with the statement "Work is important, but women really want home and children". Finally, around 40 percent of the population believes that men should have more rights to jobs when jobs are scarce.

Figure 1.3: Views on gender related statements across gender, EVS



Source: EVS (2010).

Notes: *** gender difference significant at 1%, ** gender difference significant at 5%, * gender difference significant at 10%. Data was weighted. Respondents have to (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) disagree, or (4) strongly disagree with each of the statements above. We transformed the replies into agree/disagree with 1 meaning agreement and 0 disagreement.

1.8 There is a mixed picture on how gender views differ between women and men. For almost all statements, there are no statistically significant differences in views on gender roles between women and men. Men and women have different views only on four statements. Thus, more women than men believe on equal sharing of responsibility for home and children (86 versus 76 percent respectively) and on equal contribution to household income (89 versus 86 percent). Men underestimate women's role in the labor market. Thus, about 43 percent of men believe they should have priority in getting jobs during a crisis compared to 38 percent among women. Rather surprisingly, in one statement, men demonstrate more equalitarian views. In particular, more men than women believe that fathers are as well suited as mothers to look after children (80 versus 74 percent respectively).

⁴ This section discusses perceptions of life satisfaction and gender views of society, which can be different from observed behavior and gender outcomes, as will be further shown in the report.

C. LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Overall legislation

1.9 The legal framework in Moldova is gender neutral and follows the general principles of gender equality. Moldova ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1994, and the Optional Protocol on violence against women in 2006. The Law on Ensuring Equal Opportunities for Men and Women was enacted in Moldova in 2006. The main purpose of this law was to ensure equal rights to women and men in political, economic, social, cultural and other spheres of life – as guaranteed by the Constitution, in order to prevent and eliminate all forms of gender discrimination. This law provides definitions relevant to discrimination of women. It also sets out the liabilities for gender based discrimination and identifies state entities responsible for ensuring gender equality (Manole, 2011).

1.10 The Law on Ensuring Equal Opportunities for Men and Women set the legal basis for the National programs on ensuring gender equality developed and enacted in Moldova. The Government adopted two National Programs on Ensuring Gender Equality in the Republic of Moldova: for 2006-2009 and 2009-2015. These programs provide a comprehensive approach to mainstreaming the gender equality principle in policy documents in all areas and at all levels of decision making and implementation. The National Programme on Ensuring Gender Equality for 2009-2015 is supplemented by two action plans for 2010-2012 and for 2013-2015 years. The following fields were identified as the most important in the program: employment and migration, gender-sensitive budgeting, participation in public life and decision making, social protection and family, healthcare, education, violence and trafficking, and public awareness (CEDAW, 2011).

1.11 The following state entities are responsible for ensuring the equality between women and men in Moldova based on the Law on Ensuring Equal Opportunities for Men and Women: Parliament, the Government, the Government Committee for equality between women and men, Ministry of Labor, Social Protection and Family (Division for gender equality and violence prevention), and the gender focal points in other central and local administrative institutions. According to CEDAW (2011), there are concerns related to the efficiency of the state machinery, in particular regarding the activity of the gender focal points who are busy with their primary functions and do not have enough time for gender equality issues. While the policy foundation for gender equality laid out is laudable, its full implementation has not been realized. Sufficient resources have not been allocated for its execution, and at times courts seem unwilling or unable to apply gender equality laws⁵.

1.12 The legislation in Moldova guarantees women and men equal access to property, courts and credit. According to the Family Code, both spouses have equal rights over movable and immoveable property. Women are not prohibited to sign a contract, to open a banking account, or to register a business regardless their marital status. Women carry the same evidentiary weight in court as men. Women do not need permission from their husbands or guardians in order to initiate legal proceedings in court (World Bank and IFC).

Domestic violence

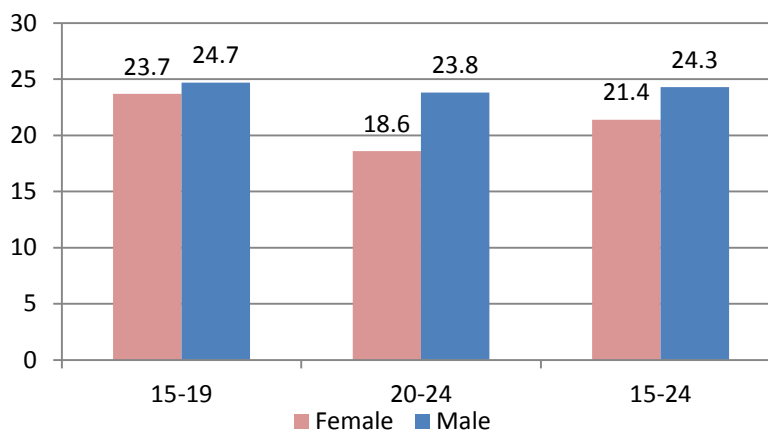
1.13 Violence against women is one of the most frequent forms of human rights violations in Moldova. Gender-based violence is not only physical and sexual, but also includes psychological and economic abuse. In addition to taking a toll on women's health and the health services, gender-related violence also impairs productivity and human capital. According to UNDP, in Moldova (2011b), seven out of ten women have been a victim of violence by their spouse or partner in rural areas, and six out of ten women have suffered such violence in urban areas. According to the 2010 Human Rights Report on

⁵ UNDP (2011c). "Moldova Country Analysis".

Moldova, 40 percent of women have been victims of at least one violent episode. About 51 percent have reported psychological violence and 24 percent physical violence (US Department of State, 2010). However, because domestic violence is under-reported, exact figures are not known and are believed to be much higher.

1.14 Violence against women is widely accepted by both women and men in Moldova. About 25 percent of youth between 15–19 years believe that beating one’s wife is justified under certain circumstances, such as when she burns the food, argues with her husband, goes out without telling him, neglects the children, or refuses to have sex (Figure 1.4). In the 20-24 age group, about 19 percent of women and 24 percent of men believe gender-based violence is justified in some situations. This is much higher compared to Ukraine where about 2 percent of women and 9 percent of men believe gender based violence is justified. These attitudes perpetuate abuse.

Figure 1.4: Youth Agreeing with One Reason for Beating Wife, %

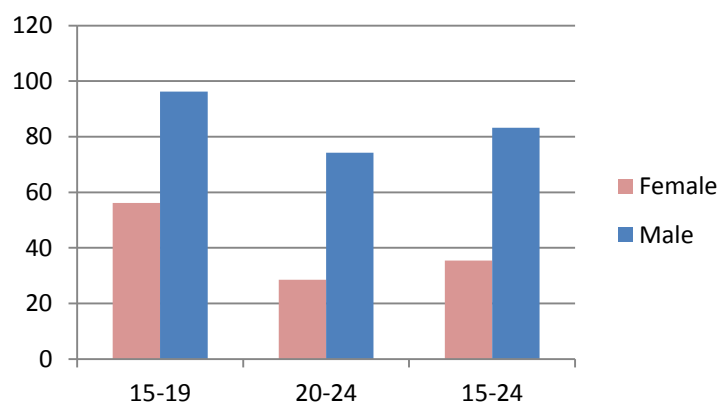


Source: National Scientific and Applied Center for Preventive Medicine and ORC Macro, 2006.

1.15 Perceptions on beating one’s wife differ systematically with education, employment status, residence and welfare status. Acceptance of violence is higher among men and women living in rural areas. People with better education, employed for pay and from wealthier quintiles demonstrate less tolerance toward gender-based violence. For example, only 10 percent of women from the top wealth quintile believe that violence is justified versus 38 percent of women in the poorest quintile. This is consistent with empirical evidence on higher incidence of domestic violence among women with low social and economic status (World Bank, 2011b).

1.16 Gender-based violence makes women more vulnerable to contracting HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. Gender-based violence has serious consequences for women’s health and empowerment. Unequal gender relationships, coupled with patriarchal attitudes, deny women the ability to manage their sexual health effectively and negotiate the use of condoms or any contraception, and to say no to high-risk sexual behavior (ILO, 2011). With unprotected sex, a woman’s risk of contracting HIV is twice as high as the risk for a man. Although girls report being less likely to engage in risky sexual behavior, it is likely that this is underreported (Figure 1.5). Younger women in particular have less power and experience, so are likely more vulnerable to not using protection and thus contracting HIV.

Figure 1.5: Youth Engaged in High-risk Sex,%



Source: National Scientific and Applied Center for Preventive Medicine and ORC Macro, 2006.

1.17 Laws and regulations have not sufficiently addressed domestic violence and the level of public awareness remains low. Several measures have been taken to deal with issues relating to gender-based violence, yet the need for public awareness that domestic violence is a fundamental violation of human rights has not been sufficiently addressed. The Law on Preventing and Combating Domestic Violence was enacted in 2008, but it lacked mechanisms for implementation. This law was amended by a new Law in 2010 which also introduced a new provision in the Criminal Code stipulating domestic violence as a criminal offence. Protection orders for victims of domestic violence can be issued both in the criminal and civil proceedings. Nevertheless, according to Manole (2011), even though the law provides sufficient protection mechanisms, its application in practice is still problematic. The main issues are related to low awareness of the law provisions and implementation mechanisms by the relevant authorities, failures to execute protection orders and delayed initiation of criminal prosecution.

Trafficking in Persons

1.18 Moldova has one of the highest rates of human trafficking in the region. Moldova is primarily a country of origin, and to a lesser extent country of transit, for trafficking in persons. Based on the responses to a survey conducted in 2005 (GfK, 2006), it is estimated that after travelling abroad for a job, 31,500 Moldovans have been forced to work with little or no pay in the agriculture and construction sectors, and 19,000 in the social care sector. Additionally, it is estimated that 6,500 Moldovans have been forced to work in the sex industry after travelling abroad. Destinations for trafficked women and children include the EU (Austria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Slovak Republic), the Western Balkans (Albania), middle income CIS countries (Russia, Ukraine) as well as others (Israel, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates). Criminal trafficking rings operate easily within Moldova in the breakaway region of Trans-Dniester in particular. As a result, the Trans-Dniester-Ukraine border is a key route used by traffickers⁶.

1.19 The poor economy and domestic violence are identified as the main reasons for the ongoing problem of trafficking of women. According to the 2005 Demographic and Health Survey, 27 percent of women over 15 years of age had experienced violence in the home at least once. Out of 1,706 victims of trafficking, identified and assisted between 2000 and 2005, 70 percent had experienced family violence. Domestic conditions of this nature become “push” factors for young, inexperienced teenagers to accept ambiguous work opportunities abroad. Forced marriage can be another form of human trafficking. The Serbian non-governmental organization, Astra, has reported cases of criminals manipulating women to

⁶ The Protection Project, SAIS, The Johns Hopkins University, Annual Report, 2011.

marry them for the express purpose of trafficking, primarily to Norway. Fake marriages are conducted to conceal criminal offenses, eliminate potential witnesses, or misrepresent the situation of the woman. Various NGOs are seeking legal means to annul these forced marriages.

1.20 In 2005, Moldova adopted the Law on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings. The law focuses on strengthening preventive measures and acknowledges trafficking in human beings as a crime violating the human rights, dignity, and freedom of the victims. The government approved the National Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings and established the National Committee and Territorial Commissions to implement it. The law provides full protection to children who are victims of trafficking. They are entitled to assistance in accommodation, integration, and rehabilitation until their full recovery⁷. The criminal code imposes imprisonment of seven to 15 years on anyone who traffics people for purposes of commercial or non-commercial sexual exploitation, forced labor, armed conflicts, organ or tissue transplantation, and any criminal activity by using or threatening to use violence, fraud, abuse of power or taking advantage of the victim's vulnerability. Punishment is increased to imprisonment of 10 to 20 years if the offense is committed repeatedly, against a pregnant woman, against two or more people, by two or more people, by endangering a victim's life, physical or psychological health, or by using torture, inhuman or degrading treatment.

1.21 According to the U.S. Department of State (2012), the Government of Moldova does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so. The Government has made progress in addressing the protection of victims and the prevention of trafficking. Yet it has not shown sufficient progress in addressing widespread complicity in trafficking by law enforcement and other public officials. However, the European Commission has noted some improvements through the implementation of the national action plan and the anti-trafficking national system built on a multi-agency cooperation, including with civil society.⁸

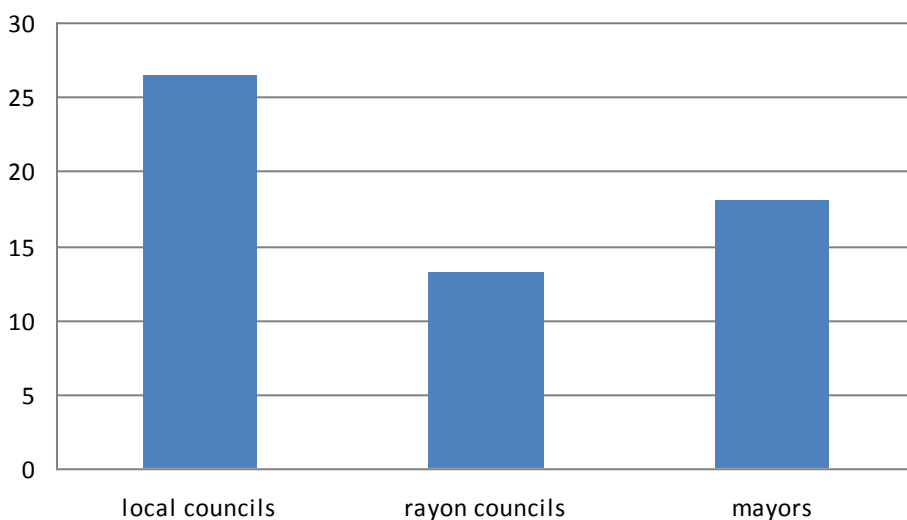
Voice and representation

1.22 Moldova has made some progress in integrating women in politics, yet representation remains low. Political parties are not required to have female candidates on their electoral lists or to have a minimum number of women as members. Consequently, fewer women than men are members of political parties (LiTS 2011). Women hold about 20 percent of seats in the current Parliament, which is comparable to the average for most developed countries in the region, such as Croatia or the Czech Republic. However, the number is small compared to Western European countries, such as Sweden or Norway, where women comprise up to half the number of seats in the national legislative institutions. In 2012, only 6 percent of ministerial positions in Moldova were held by women. In the same year, this number was 24 percent in the EU and 14 percent in lower middle income countries. In the current Government, there are only 5 female ministers, two of which are Deputy Prime Ministers, including the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Additionally, the representation of women at local levels of government is incredibly low. As Figure 1.6 shows, women currently hold 27 percent of seats on local councils and 13 percent of seats on rayon councils (administrative units). At the same time, only about 18 percent of all mayors in Moldova are women.

⁷ The Protection Project, SAIS, The Johns Hopkins University, Annual Report, 2011.

⁸ 5th Progress Report of the European Commission on the Implementation of the EU-Moldova Visa Liberalization Action Plan from June 2013: Assessment Block 3/ topic 1b – Preventing trafficking in human beings

Figure 1.6: Women in Local Councils, Rayon Councils and Mayors, in %



Source: UNDP.

1.23 Representation of women in other spheres of Moldovan public life is low. Less than a third of judges are women, and there is one woman among the five members of the Central Bank Board of Moldova. Similarly, the share of female ambassadors, senior civil servants and journalists is much lower than those in neighboring countries or in the rest of the EU. The Life in Transition Survey points out that very few women have participated in political activities, such as attending lawful demonstrations, participating in a strike or signing petitions. There is also a significant gender difference in union membership and membership of humanitarian or charitable associations.

CHAPTER 2

GENDER ISSUES IN HUMAN CAPITAL

2.1 Developing and maintaining a large pool of human capital is crucial for a country striving to achieve sustainable economic growth. Moldova, with its socialist history, has had relatively abundant human capital, but this advantage has eroded in recent years, with education and health indicators falling behind other countries in the region and gender disparities growing. The sections below on education and health discuss the changing trends and their impact on the economy. The first section on education looks at similarities and disparities in gender in primary, secondary, and tertiary education. The second section on health and demography reviews key differences in health, including life expectancy, mortality, fertility, communicable and non-communicable diseases, lifestyle-associated problems, and gender demography indicators. Both sections examine not only the figures, but also patterns over time and in comparison to the ECA region.

A. EDUCATION

2.2 Education plays an important role in shaping individual successes and in creating a more capable labor force. Moldova enjoyed nearly universal primary enrollment before 2004, offering equal access to education to both girls and boys. It has also made significant progress in improving adult literacy rates since 2000. However, a trend in recent years that has caused concern is the deteriorating education standards and achievements, with students attaining average reading scores and below average mathematics scores on the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA).⁹

2.3 Gender inequality is still not widely evident in primary education. However, disparities in secondary and tertiary education persist. Net enrollment rates for girls and boys at the secondary level are comparable, but gender differences in completed secondary education continue. Girls and boys also pursue different disciplines at the secondary level, setting the stage for future occupational segregation. This section identifies differences in enrollment and achievement between girls and boys at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels, and looks at rural-urban differences. It highlights the problematic trends in gender segregated secondary and tertiary education.

Primary and Secondary Education

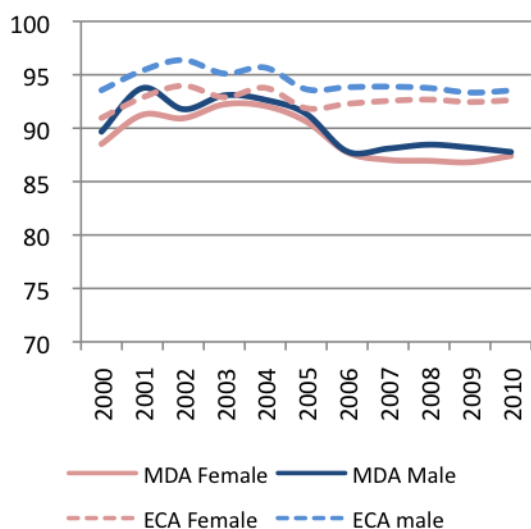
2.4 Gender gaps in net primary enrollment and completion rates are negligible, but the overall rates have fallen since the early 2000s. Primary school spans the first four years of education (after kindergarten) with a starting age of seven. The primary net enrollment rates for girls and boys are 87 percent and 88 percent, respectively, which are comparable to the levels seen in lower middle income countries globally (Figure 2.1). However, both enrollment and completion rates are lower than those in the early part of the 2000s, indicating that children are being bypassed by the education system. This downward slide in primary enrollment also indicates a divergence from the trend seen in the ECA region as seen in Figure 2.1. Primary school completion rates for both girls and boys deteriorated sharply in 2007 by five percentage points, mirroring the decline in enrollment rates.

⁹ PISA, coordinated by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), is an international testing of 15-year-olds, every three years, in reading, mathematics, and science literacy. <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/>

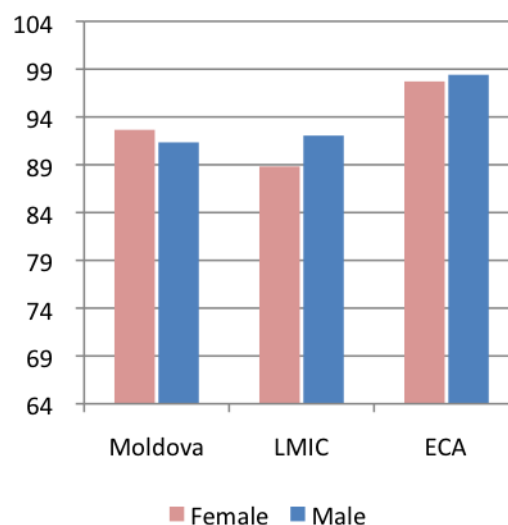
2.5 Net enrollment rates for girls and boys at the secondary level are comparable. The enrollment rates were 79 and 78 percent for girls and boys, respectively (Figure 2.2)¹⁰. These rates were significantly above the average of lower middle income countries (57 and 60 percent for girls and boys, respectively) in 2010. The gender gap in the 2000s varied between 1 and 4 percentage points (always in favor of girls). Of some concern are the enrollment rates for boys which have consistently lagged behind the ECA average. Additionally, almost 20-25 percent of girls and boys are not enrolled in secondary school, which is a hurdle to Moldova's goal of increasing jobs and productivity as part of its economic development strategy.

Figure 2.1: Primary Net Enrollment and Completion Rates in Moldova and Comparators, by gender

Primary school enrollment rates, 2000-2010
in percent



Primary school completion rates, 2010
in percent



Note: "MDA" is Moldova.
Source: WDI.

Source: WDI.

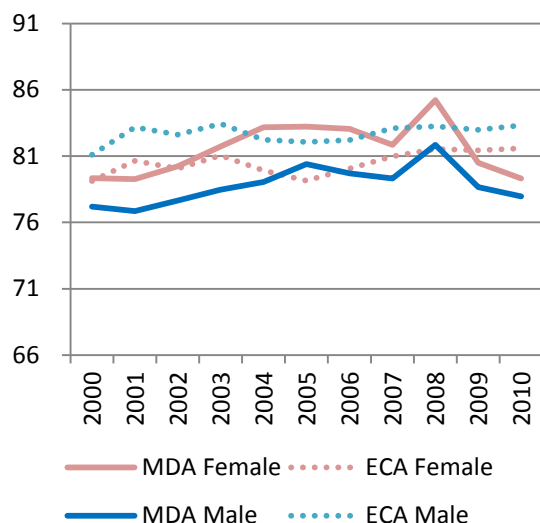
2.6 Girls and boys pursue different disciplines at the secondary level, setting the stage for future occupational segregation. Boys tend to pursue secondary vocational training (65 percent of boys as opposed to 36 percent of girls), while girls opt for general secondary education (lyceum), trade school, and higher education (United Nations Moldova, 2008). Thus, secondary school appears to be the beginning of occupational segregation.

2.7 The number of educated persons over 15 years of age is relatively high. About 0.7 percent of youth has not completed primary schooling or has not obtained any other type of education. This ratio is similar for women and men. Half the population over 15 has up to nine years of schooling, and more than 20 percent of youth have completed some university education (Table 2.1). The share of university educated individuals is larger among women than men (26 percent and 21 percent, respectively).

¹⁰ Comparing secondary school enrollment rates across countries is more difficult to assess since these schools vary in terms of age of student intake and minimum number of required schooling years.

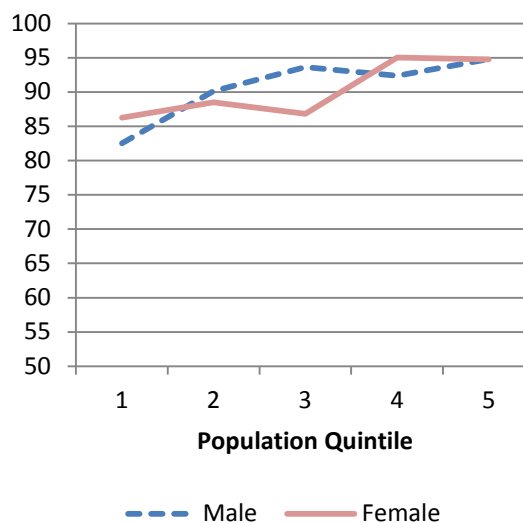
Figure 2.2: Secondary School Enrollment Rates, by gender

Net enrollment rates, 2000-2010
in percent



Note: “MDA” is Moldova.
Source: WDI.

School enrollment rates (15-17 year olds) by
income quintile
In percent



Note: “MDA” is Moldova.
Source: WDI.

Table 2.1: Education of the Labor Force in %, 2011

	Men			Women		
	Whole country	Urban areas	Rural areas	Whole country	Urban areas	Rural areas
Higher education	21	35	8	26	41	13
Secondary specialized	12	15	10	20	22	18
Secondary professional	31	26	35	15	13	17
Secondary school	18	17	19	22	19	25
Gymnasium	17	7	26	15	5	26
Primary or no education	1	<1	1	1	<1	1
Total (Thousands persons)	642	305	338	615	302	313

Note: Population aged 15 years and over.
Source: LFS, 2011.

2.8 Regional differences in educational attainment among the young are common. The number of individuals who have completed only gymnasium is over four times higher in rural than in urban areas. While this may reflect the inequality in the education systems, it may also indicate low economic opportunities and returns on human capital in rural areas.

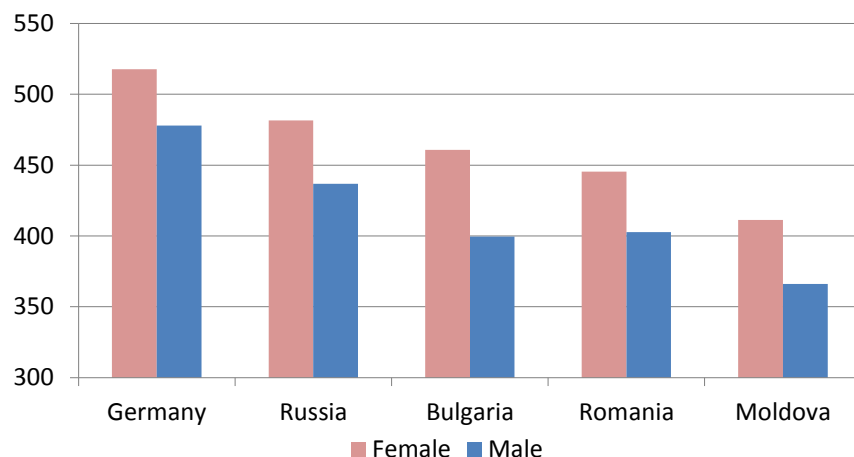
2.9 Girls and boys perform similarly on educational skill assessments. According to the results of the PISA survey, conducted in 2009, students in Moldova attained average scores on the PISA reading test (Table 2.2), but below average in mathematics and science tests as compared to OECD countries and neighboring Romania. Moldovan girls performed better than boys in reading and science, and the gender gap favoring boys in mathematics was smaller in Moldova than in the average OECD country¹¹ (Figures 2.3 and 2.4). Overall, the gender gap in PISA scores was small.

¹¹ The gender gap in mathematic results is -3 points while it reaches -12 points in the average OECD country (Walker, 2011).

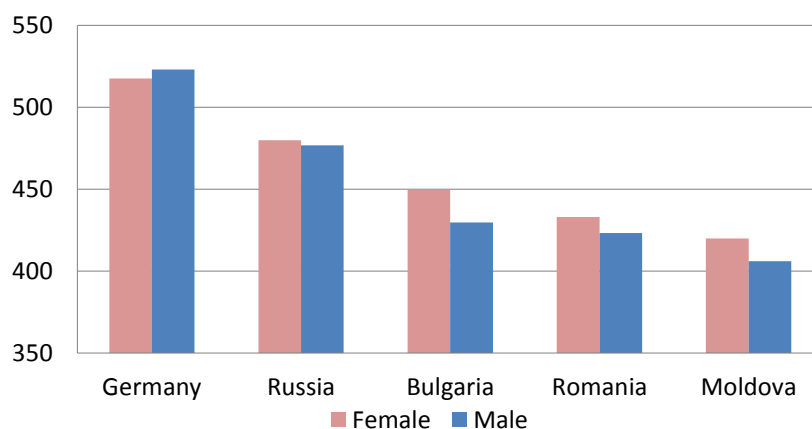
Table 2.2: Table 2: PISA Reading Scores for Moldova, 2009

	Girls	Boys
Overall reading scores	411	366
Overall mathematics scores	396	399
Overall science scores	420	406

Source: <http://research.acer.edu.au/pisa>

Figure 2.3: Disparity in Reading Test Scores, 2009

Source: OECD, PISA 2009.

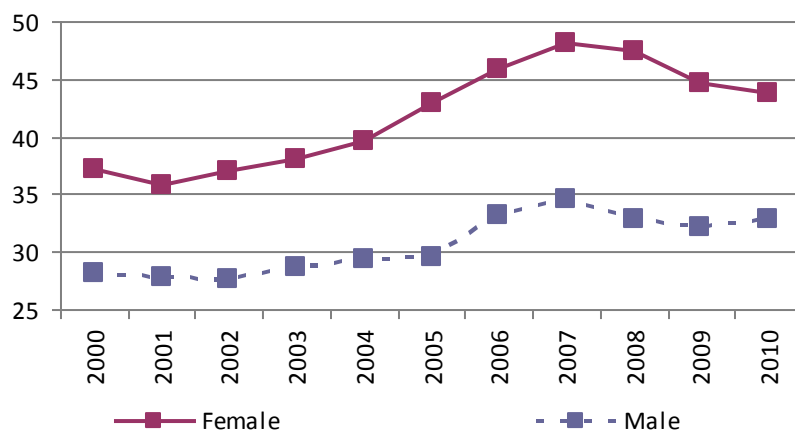
Figure 2.4: Disparity in Science Test Scores

Source: OECD, PISA 2009.

University Education

2.10 The enrollment rate in tertiary education remains higher for girls. Gross enrollment rates for girls increased from 37 percent in 2000 to 44 percent in 2010, while gross enrollment for boys increased from 28 percent to 33 percent (Figure 2.5). Thus the gap between girls and boys increased from 9 to 11 percent. However, female enrollment in 2009 remained substantially below the averages of ECA and the EU, by 16 and 25 percentage points, respectively.

Figure 2.5: Enrollment in Tertiary Education, by gender, %



Source: WDI, 2011.

2.11 Girls and boys tend to enroll in different fields of study. The “feminized” fields in which the majority of students are girls are education (72 percent), health care (69 percent), economy (63 percent), and arts and cinematography (62 percent). Fields with a numeric predominance of boys are physical culture and sports (80 percent), industry (65 percent), law (57 percent) and agriculture (55 percent). The reasons behind the choice of majors by girls are not well researched, however, several factors have been identified: a) whether girls, at the time of investment in their education, perceive their participation in the labor force as brief and intermittent or long and continuous; b) whether they find personal satisfaction in their jobs; and c) whether they are considered “secondary workers” who optimize their time allocation by taking their husbands’ labor market decisions as given to them (Goldin, 2006).

B. HEALTH AND DEMOGRAPHICS

2.12 This section on health and demographics examines key gender differences in health indicators, including life expectancy, mortality, fertility, communicable and non-communicable diseases, lifestyle-associated problems, and general demography indicators. Each section examines both the figures for Moldova and comparative patterns over time in the ECA region.

2.13 There has been a decline in the overall health status of the people in Moldova since the transition, with life expectancy among the lowest in Europe. The large gender gap favoring women in life expectancy and mortality is of great concern. The higher mortality rates for men are heavily attributed to road accidents and deaths resulting from alcohol abuse and homicides. Notably, alcohol consumption per capita for men is the highest in the world and is the leading health risk factor for men.

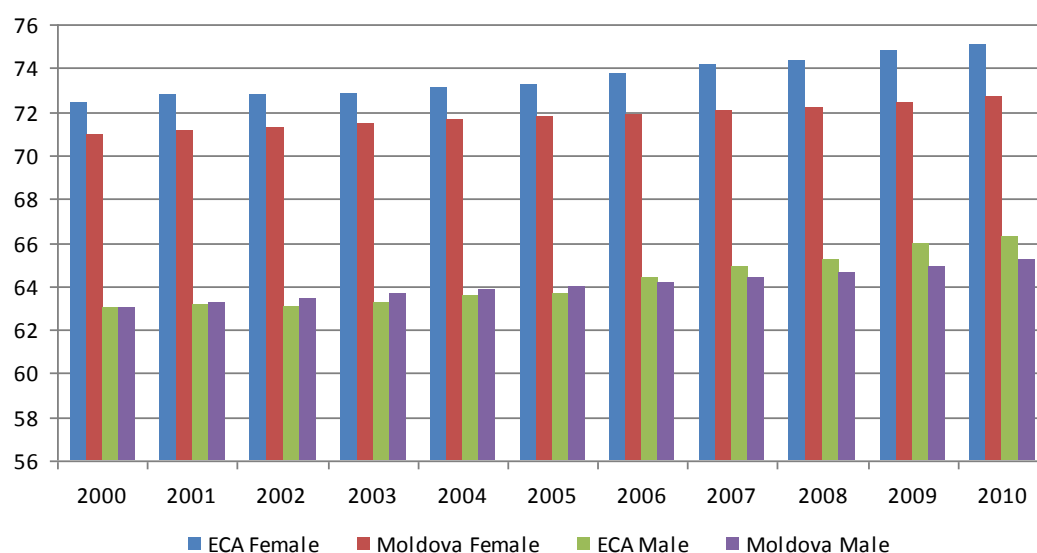
2.14 The demographic situation in Moldova is characterized by declining fertility rates leading to a gradual drop in the population. At the same time, the number of elderly, particularly women, is increasing. The decline in the prime age population poses a threat in the long run to Moldova’s economic growth; on the other hand, this underscores the potential gains of increasing female labor force participation to counteract this effect.

Life Expectancy

2.15 The health status of the population deteriorated during the transition that followed independence partly due to changes in coverage of health care delivery, and life expectancy is now among the lowest in Europe. In 2004, mandatory health insurance was introduced and policies to strengthen the primary health care system were implemented (WHO, 2006a). Some progress in restructuring the health care system was made, but it also suffered from substantial cuts, and coverage was further reduced, especially in rural areas, because of the 2008-2009 economic crisis. Thus there is a need to improve the overall quality of health services and the health of the population (Health Systems in Transition, 2008).

2.16 Life expectancy is lower than in the ECA region with a substantial gender gap in favor of women. Overall life expectancy is also amongst the lowest in Europe (WHO, 2006b). Although life expectancy for Moldovan men is only one year below that for men in ECA, it is 8 years below that for Moldovan women (Figure 2.6). Men's life expectancy in Moldova has shown little improvement in recent years, and life expectancy for women is higher than that for men at birth and at any age. However, although women live longer, the level of poverty among them is higher and the quality of their life is also lower compared to that of men (NBS, 2008).

Figure 2.6: Life Expectancy at Birth, years

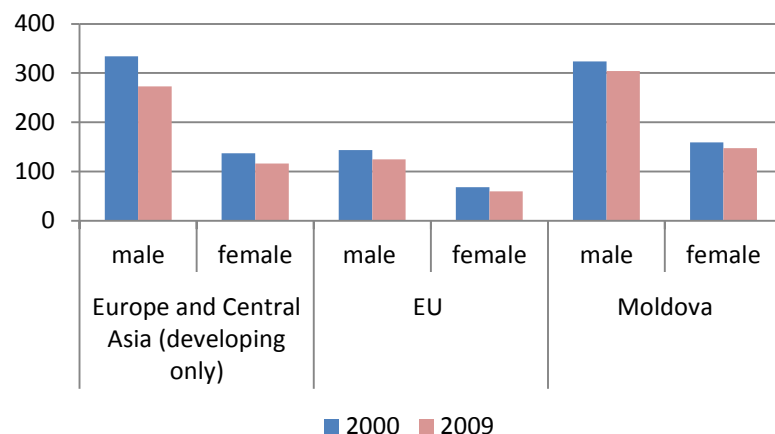


Source: WDI, 2011.

Mortality

2.17 There was a slight decline in total mortality rate in the last decade, but it was still higher than the average in the ECA region in 2009. Male mortality in Moldova was slightly lower than the ECA average in 2000, yet that in ECA has shown greater improvement (Figure 2.7). As a result, male mortality in Moldova is now higher than in the region. And while female mortality declined in Moldova during the last decade, it remains higher than that in ECA (147 versus 116 per 1000 in 2009). Consequently, while the gender gap in mortality declined slightly in Moldova to be comparable to the average in ECA, the male mortality rate is still more than double the female mortality rate.

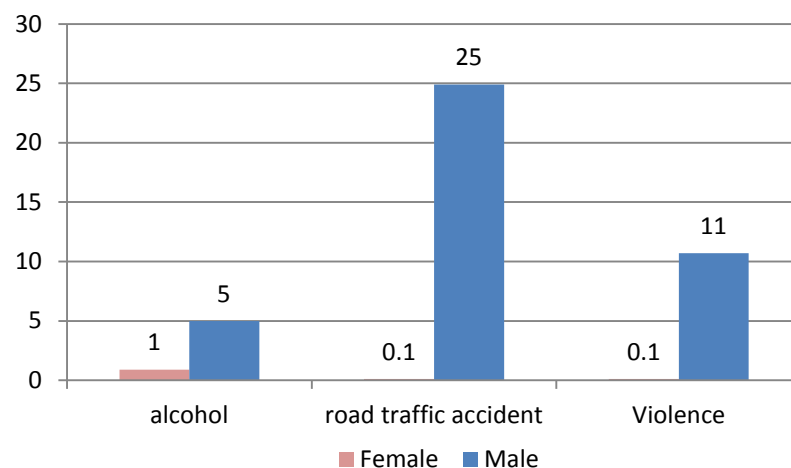
Figure 2.7: Male and Female Mortality in 2000 and 2009, per 1000 adults



Source: WDI, 2011.

2.18 The higher mortality rate for men is attributed to traffic accidents, alcoholism and homicides. Death rates from road accidents reached 25 per 100,000 men in 2011, while they are significantly lower for women at 0.1 per 100,000 women (Figure 2.8). Similarly, deaths resulting from alcohol abuse or homicide were substantially higher for men than women. According to the WHO (2005), certain myths about “masculinity” such as ability to have multiple partners and alcohol consumption contributes to risky behavior among men.

Figure 2.8: Death Rate per 100,000 Inhabitants



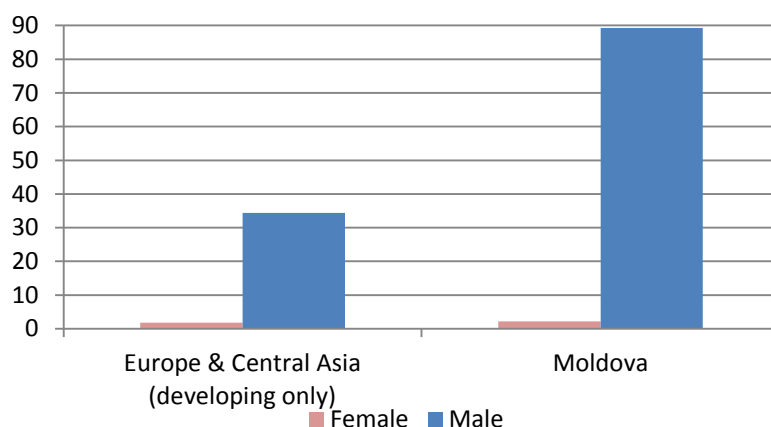
Source: National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova, 2011.

2.19 The male mortality rate from liver cirrhosis is one of the highest in the world (WHO, 2012a). Moldovans, especially men over 15, consume the highest amount of alcohol in the world, and alcohol is the leading health risk for men (WHO, 2006b). The annual consumption of alcohol is over 18 liters per capita, and about 89 out of 100,000 men die from liver cirrhosis¹² (Figure 2.9). The ECA average male

¹² The numbers from the National Bureau of Statistics, which cite five per 100,000 deaths to be alcohol related, appear to be in contrast with those from the WHO, which report liver cirrhosis as the cause of 89 of 100,000 deaths. It is possible the former classifies liver cirrhosis elsewhere, such as a digestive system disease.

death rate from cirrhosis is much lower, at around 34 out of 100,000 men. The mortality rate from cirrhosis is also significantly lower for Moldovan women, at around 2 for 100,000 women, which is comparable to the rate for women in ECA. The Government of Moldova has introduced a National Program on Alcohol Control (2012-2020) to reduce alcohol abuse, particularly among men.

Figure 2.9: Death Rate by Liver Cirrhosis per 100,000 Inhabitants



Source: World Health Organization, 2011.

Note: Age-standardized death rates, liver cirrhosis, per 100,000.

Maternal Mortality

2.20 Maternal mortality rates have been volatile in recent years, with the 2010 rate at 45 cases per 100,000 births. While this is low compared to other countries at the same income level, it represents an increase from earlier in the decade. The increase as well as the volatility demonstrates the ongoing challenges in managing maternal health. Poverty, migration and other social factors have a significant impact on maternal mortality (Government of the Republic of Moldova and United Nations, 2010). Although 100 percent of births are attended by skilled health staff, complications developed during pregnancy continue to pose a threat, especially in rural areas, which are less equipped to provide the required level of maternal and infant health services. Indeed, the infant mortality in rural areas is 10-15 percent higher than in urban areas (WHO, 2006a).

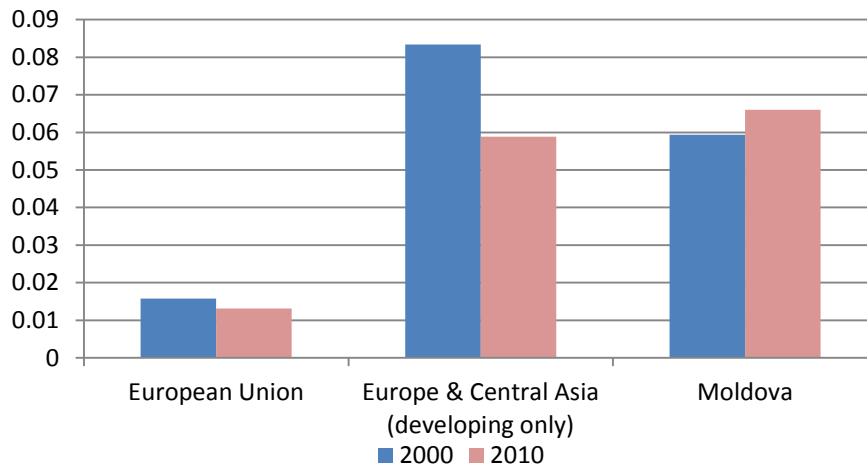
2.21 The lifetime risk of maternal death¹³ is comparable to that in the ECA region. In 2005, women in Moldova had a lower risk of maternal death than women in the ECA region, 0.04 percent compared to 0.07 percent. However, after 2005, this trend was reversed, and in 2010 the risk for Moldovan women nearly doubled, increasing to 0.07 percent (Figure 2.10). The ECA rate is slightly lower at 0.06 percent lifetime risk of maternal death. According to the WHO, the high frequency of abortions conducted in unhygienic conditions, using unsafe methods creates a major risk for Moldovan women, as a third of pregnancies end in abortion (WHO, 2006a; USAID DHS, 2005).

2.22 The unplanned pregnancies that result in the most abortions in Moldova occur because of unmet need for birth control or the use of traditional birth control methods that are not as effective in preventing pregnancy (USAID DHS, 2005). The percentage of married women with an unmet need for family planning was 11.4 percent in Moldova in 2005 which is higher than in Ukraine – 10 percent. Traditional birth control methods were also more widespread in Moldova than in Ukraine. Thus, 44 percent of

¹³ Life time risk of maternal death is the probability that a 15-year-old girl will die eventually from a maternal cause assuming that current levels of fertility and mortality (including maternal mortality) do not change in the future, taking into account competing causes of death.

married women used modern methods of birth control in Moldova compared to 48 percent in Ukraine. Contraceptive use increases with the level of education in Moldova, while the use of modern methods rise steadily with wealth (National Scientific and Applied Center for Preventive Medicine and ORC Macro, 2006). According to Lyons-Amos, Durrant, Padmadas (2011), there is a small, but significant negative impact of economic wellbeing on the use of traditional methods. They also show that family planning programs have some success, but with limited impact in regions outside the capital.

Figure 2.10: Lifetime Risk of Maternal Death, %



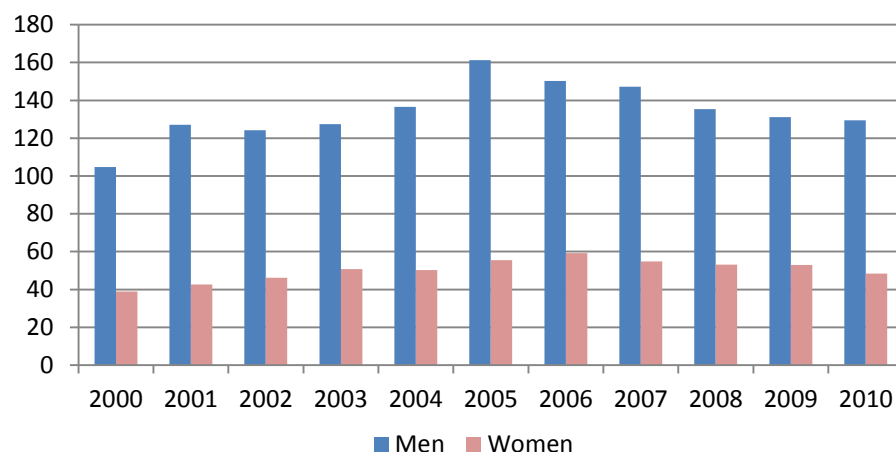
Source: WDI, 2011.

Communicable Diseases

2.23 Mortality rates from tuberculosis dropped slightly in 2008, yet substantially more men than women continue to suffer from it. While the number of deaths decreased minimally from 734 in 2000 to 726 in 2004 (Figure 2.11), the number of cases rose by 76 percent in the same period, from 2,935 to 5,154. Although the incidence of tuberculosis has since fallen slightly, the epidemiological situation continues to pose a challenge as indicators remain high, and combating tuberculosis has become a public health priority (Government of the Republic of Moldova, and United Nations, 2010). Furthermore, morbidity rates from tuberculosis remained nearly three times higher for men than for women in 2010 at almost 130 cases per 100,000 men and 49 cases per 100,000 women.

2.24 The incidence of HIV/AIDS is steadily increasing. The rate of HIV/AIDS rose from four cases per 100,000 in 2000 to 19 cases per 100,000 in 2008. Combating HIV/AIDS is an important public health concern, and the government is collaborating with its development partners as part of its Millennium Development Goals (Government of the Republic of Moldova and United Nations, 2010). However, given the epidemiological situation and existing trends in the development of HIV/AIDS, it is improbable that the MDG targets for 2015 will be achieved.

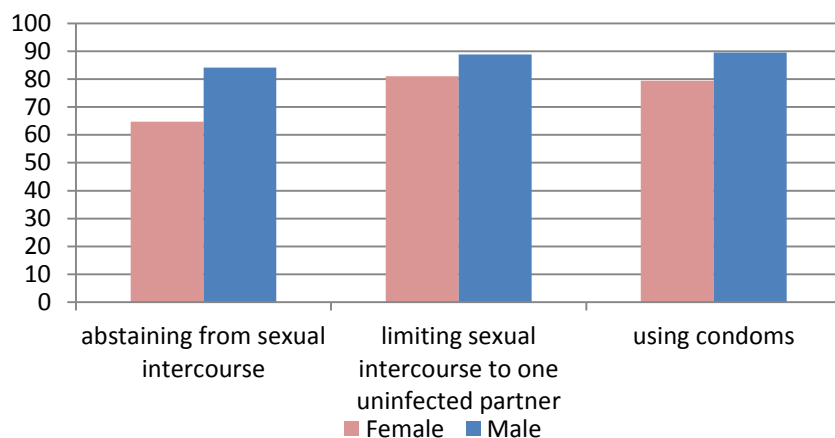
Figure 2.11: Morbidity from Tuberculosis (per 100,000 inhabitants)



Note: Population morbidity with acute tuberculosis patients by gender.
Source: National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova, 2011.

2.25 There was a relative “feminization” of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in 2004, and knowledge of protection against HIV is low among young women. In 2004, the number of HIV positive women increased sharply, and women are now 39 percent of the population over 15 years of age living with HIV. However, one possible reason for this increase was the better monitoring of pregnant women who were mandatorily tested twice for HIV/AIDS during pregnancy (Figure 2.13) (Government of the Republic of Moldova, and United Nations, 2010). Nevertheless, girls seem less informed than boys on how to protect themselves against HIV. Around 20 percent of girls did not know that they would be protected if they restricted themselves to one uninfected partner and used condoms (Figure 2.12). This number was ten percent for boys.

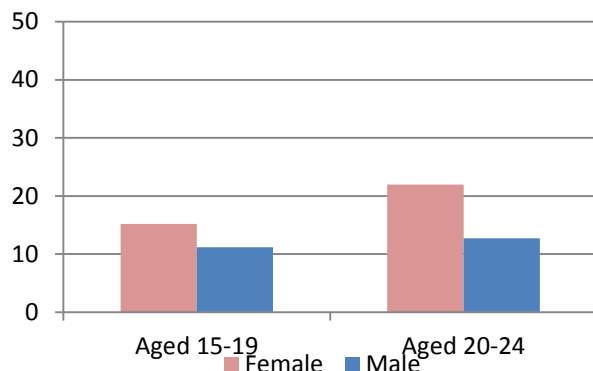
Figure 2.12: Youth Knowledge of HIV Protection Methods, %



Note: Percentage of youth who knows a particular way of reducing the risk of getting AIDS.
Source: World Health Organization, 2011.

2.26 Unprotected sex is the main form of transmission reported in new cases. Of the 721 new cases reported in 2011, 85 percent mentioned unprotected sex as the main form of transmission. Men constituted 53 percent of the new cases in 2011. Among the groups at risk were those taking drugs using needles. In 2009, the incidence of HIV reached 16 percent among this group (Ministry of Health Moldova, 2012).

Figure 2.13: Youth Tested for HIV, %



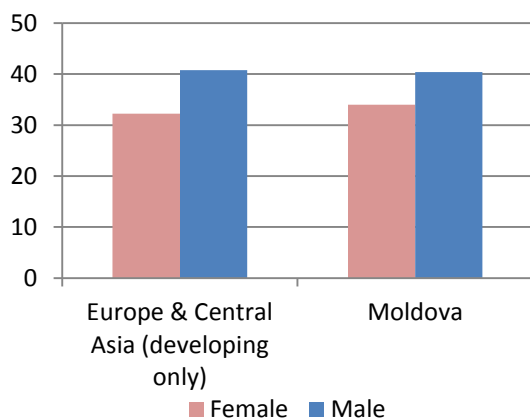
Note: Percentage of youth who were tested for HIV and received the results in the 12 months preceding the survey.

Source: World Health Organization, 2011.

Non-communicable diseases

2.27 Increasingly, mortality is due to non-communicable, rather than communicable diseases, which is uncommon for a country at Moldova's level of economic development. The rates of high blood pressure in Moldova are close to the averages for the ECA region and pose a serious health risk (WHO, 2006b) (Figure 2.14). Men suffer from high blood pressure at a higher rate than women (40 percent and 34 percent, respectively). Additionally, the incidence of high blood glucose levels is comparable to the ECA region, at 10 percent for men and 11 percent for women (Figure 2.15).

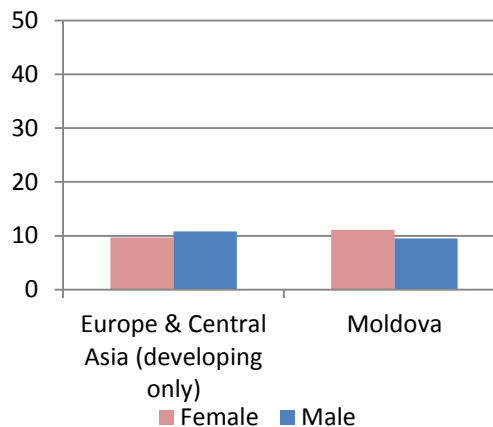
Figure 2.14: High Blood Pressure in 2008, %



Note: High blood pressure (SBP \geq 140 OR DBP \geq 90) (age-standardized estimate).

Source: World Health Organization, 2011.

Figure 2.15: High Blood Glucose in 2008, %

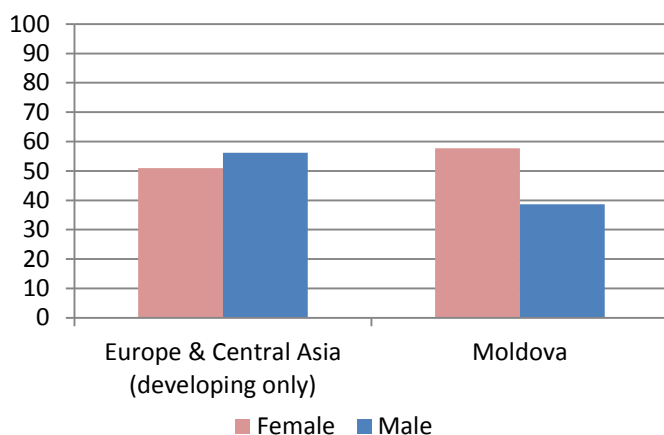


Note: High fasting blood glucose (\geq 7.0 mmol/L or on medication)(age-standardized estimate).

Lifestyle-Associated Problems

2.28 Obesity is higher among women than men. Obesity rates in Moldova are 58 percent for women and 39 percent for men, whereas the ECA average is 51 percent for women and 56 percent for men (Figure 2.16). High BMI rates pose significant health risks for women in Moldova (WHO, 2006b).

Figure 2.16: Obesity Rate in 2008, %

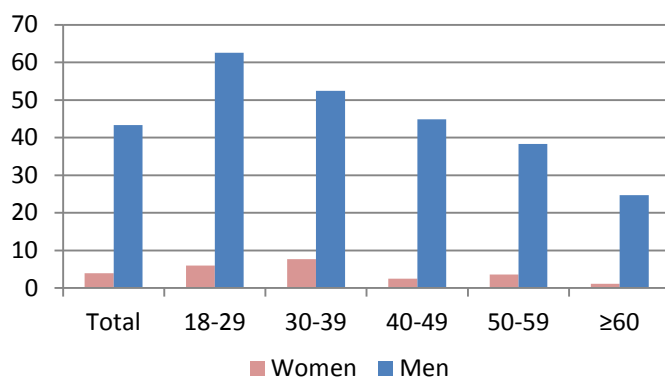


Note: BMI ≥ 25 (age-standardized estimate).

Source: World Health Organization, 2011.

2.29 Men are more likely than women to smoke and die of lung cancer. In 2009, 43 percent of men over 18 smoked, while only five percent of women smoked (Figure 2.17). A gender gap in smoking rates also appears for the youth, with boys nearly twice as likely as girls to smoke (Figure 2.19). Comparatively, the gender difference in developing countries in ECA is much smaller, and the smoking rate of adult women in Moldova is nearly four times less than that in developing ECA (Figure 2.18). The number of deaths from lung cancer is nearly four times more for Moldovan men than women (WHO, 2006b).

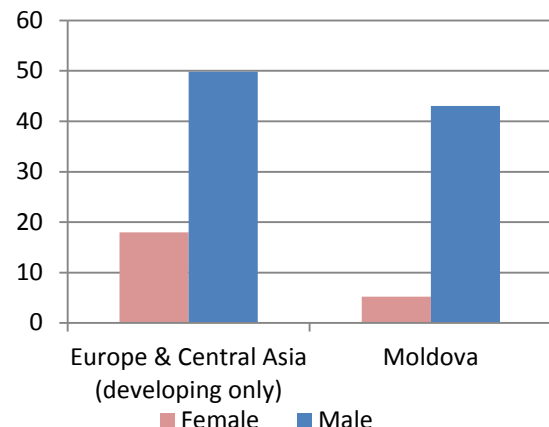
Figure 2.17: Smoking Rate by Age Groups in 2001, %



Note: Smoking prevalence rates, by age group 2001.

Source: Gilmore et al. (2004).

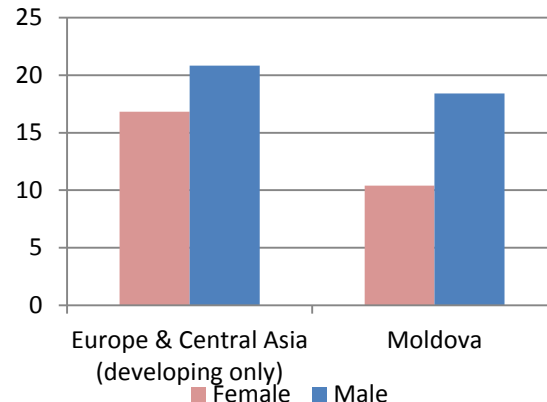
Figure 2.18: Smoking Prevalence in 2009 (% of adults)



Source: WDI, 2011.

Note on Figure 2.19: The EU and ECA figures are un-weighted country averages. Countries were excluded if data were unavailable.

Figure 2.19: Youth Smoking in 2010, %



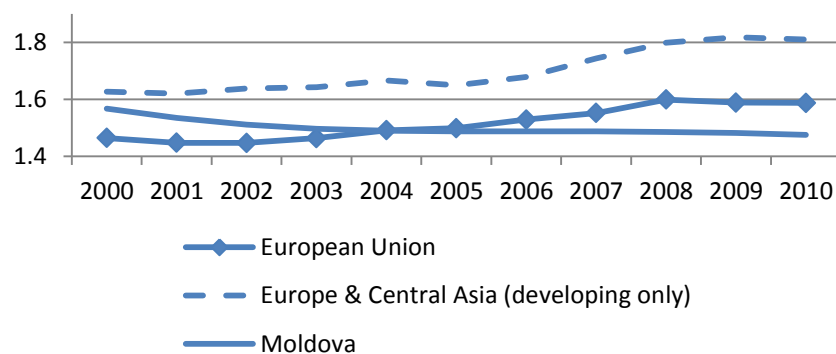
Source: World Health Organization, 2010.

2.30 The government has launched a program to raise awareness and control tobacco consumption. Tobacco use poses one of the highest health risks for men in Moldova (WHO, 2006b). In 2012, the government created a National Program on Tobacco Control, in line with the WHO framework. The priority areas included launching of a national anti-tobacco campaign and the development of comprehensive legislation to control the use of tobacco (WHO, 2012b).

Demography and General Indicators

2.31 The total fertility rate declined during the last decade and dropped below the ECA average. The total fertility rate fell from around 1.6 births per woman in 2000 to 1.5 births in 2010 (Figure 2.20). In contrast to Moldova, the fertility rate increased from 1.5 to 1.6 births per woman in the same period in EU countries. The ECA region also has younger populations and a higher average fertility rate than Moldova, at 1.8 births per woman in 2010. In contrast to the total fertility rate, the adolescent fertility rate in Moldova is higher than the ECA average, although it also declined from 46 to 31 births per 1,000 women aged 15-19 years in the past decade.

Figure 2.20: Fertility Rate, total (births per woman)



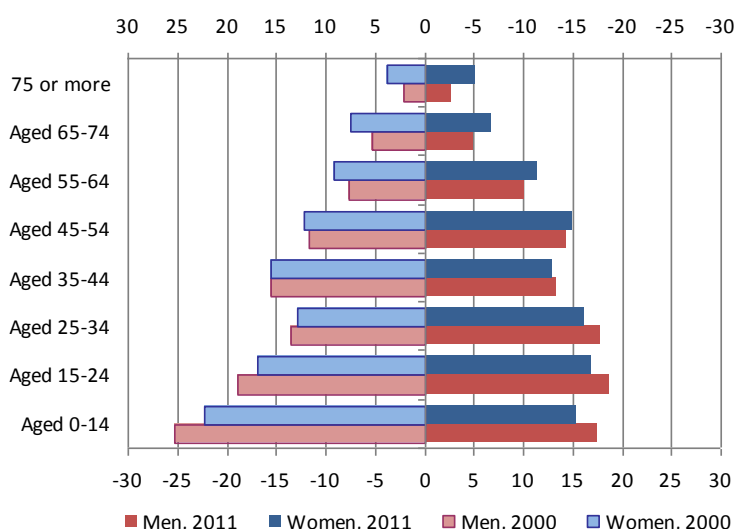
Source: WDI, 2011.

2.32 The overall population is declining while the share of the elderly, particularly women, is increasing. The total population declined from 3.64 million in 2000 to 3.56 million in 2011. The United Nations estimates that there is a risk that the overall population could fall by 20 percent by the year 2050. Others estimate the decline to be around 30 percent. The transition process has already been marked by a drop in the number of births, an aging population, and a corresponding decline in the younger population (Government of the Republic of Moldova and United Nations, 2010). The proportion of those over 64 years rose from nine percent, of which almost 62 percent were women, in 2000 to ten percent in 2011 (Figure 2.21) and will reach 17 percent in 2025 and 24 percent in 2050, of which 60 percent will be women (Figure 2.22). There are more aged women than men because of women's higher life expectancy and higher numbers in the total population. The most significant difference in the aging population is observed in rural areas, where 18 women compared to 12 men per 100 people are above the age of 60 (NBS, 2008). This demographic shift to a high proportion of elderly, and women in particular, could have significant fiscal implications for the pension and social protection systems.

2.33 The decline in the prime age population is a threat to economic growth in the long run. The number of employable persons has been falling, and the share of the population between the ages of 15 and 64 is predicted to fall from 2.6 million to 1.6 million by 2050. This is equal to a 38 percent decrease (Government of the Republic of Moldova and United Nations, 2010). The decline in population of prime age could have negative implications for labor, education and pension systems (Government of the Republic of Moldova and United Nations, 2010).

2.34 The decline in prime age population could also provide more opportunities for women's employment. In order to contain the sharp decline in the size of the labor force and total economic activity, policies to foster women's participation need to be put in place. The current mandatory retirement age is 57 for women and 62 for men. Thus an increase in the retirement age could retain women in employment longer. Policies also need to be implemented to attract women outside of the labor force into the labor force through flexible schemes. These measures could sustain economic growth in the medium to long term, lead to higher female participation, and offer more economic opportunities to unemployed women (Sattar, 2011).

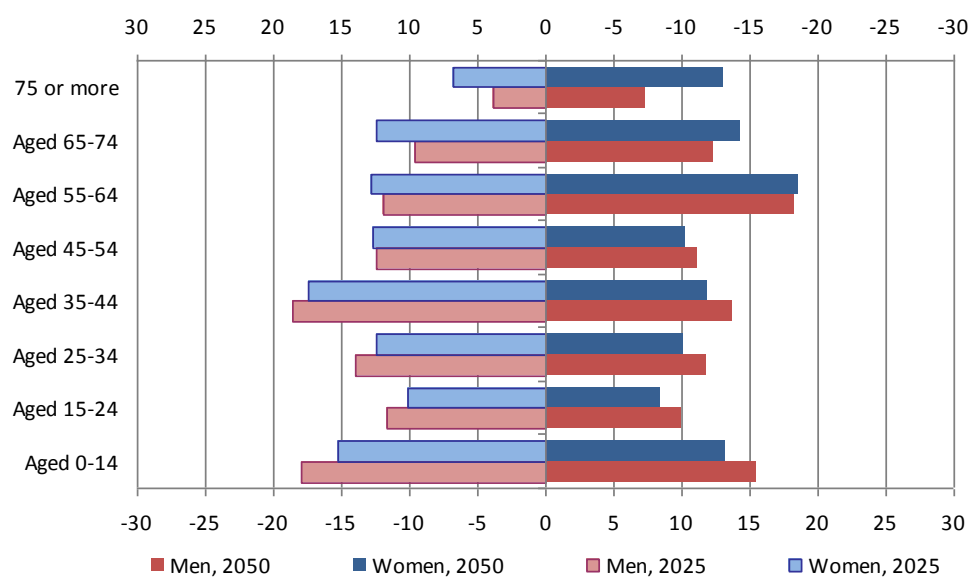
Figure 2.21: Share of Population by Age Groups 2000 and 2011, %



Source: National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova, 2011.

Note: Districts from the left side of the river Nistru and municipality Bender are omitted.

Figure 2.22: Share of Population by Age Groups 2025 and 2050, %



Note: Medium variant of the UN's *World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision*.

Source: Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat.

CHAPTER 3

LABOR MARKET, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND CAREER ADVANCEMENT

3.1 Productive careers and employment are essential not just for survival, but also for the sense of purpose and identity they give. Moldova has a relatively low unemployment rate, yet the overall participation of the population in the labor force is well below ECA and EU averages. Accordingly, about 17 percent of the population in Moldova lived below the national poverty line in 2012, and the poor economy and lack of job opportunities spur migration.

3.2 Section A deals with labor market indicators, employment rates, unemployment rates, patterns for women and men, and rural-urban disparities. There was a sharp decline in female labor force participation in the last decade most likely due to gender bias in the labor market, unavailability of flexible and part time work, and a lower retirement age for women. Section B considers the extent of entrepreneurial initiatives and related challenges for women and men. Women in Moldova have a higher propensity to engage in entrepreneurial activity than women in other ECA countries, yet they are less successful than Moldovan men. Section C examines international migration.

A. LABOR MARKET

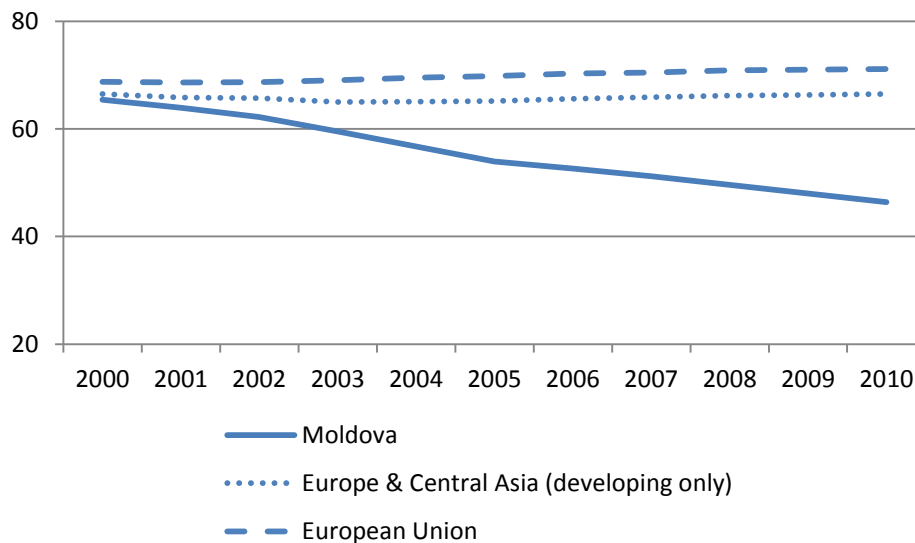
Labor Force Participation Rates and Employment Rates

3.3 The overall rate of participation in the Moldovan labor force is well below ECA and EU averages, yet the gender gap in participation is low. There was a substantial decrease in labor force participation from 2000-2010 in Moldova. Labor force participation was therefore only 45 percent in Moldova in 2010 while it was 70 percent in ECA and 65 percent in the EU (Figure 3.1). This meant that only 40 percent of the population was employed. However, the gender gap in labor force participation in Moldova has remained relatively low. It changed little during the last decade, and was about 7 percent in 2010 in favor of men (Table 3.1). This is well below the ECA regional average of 20 percent.

3.4 The low rate of participation in the labor force may be the result of migration, an increase in the number of university students and an aging population. According to the European Training Foundation (2011), the shrinking workforce is the result of increasing international labor migration, higher enrollment in tertiary education, and increasing numbers of pensioners. According to Cantarji and Mincu (2013), during 2001-2011, the number of economically inactive people increased by 390,600. People over working age constitute only a small part of the economically inactive population, while returned and “invisible” (not in migration-recording statistics) migrants account for a much larger share of this group.

3.5 According to Görlich, Mahmoud, Trebesch (2007), migration and remittances seem to have a strong effect on non-participation in the labor force, increased enrollment in higher education, and engagement in home production by the remaining family members. Many of the poor in Moldova live in large families with few working members and usually survive on either subsistence agriculture or remittances from abroad.

Figure 3.1: Labor Force Participation Rate, total (% of total population ages 15-64)



Source: WDI, 2011.

Table 3.1: Labor Market Indicators (population age 15-64)

Year	%						People, thousand					
	Activity rate		Employment rate		Unemployment rate		Labor force		Employed		Unemployed	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
2000	64	56	58	52	10	7	828	827	747	767	81	60
2001	62	55	56	51	9	6	807	810	737	763	70	48
2002	60	55	55	52	8	6	795	820	731	774	64	45
2003	55	49	49	46	10	6	731	742	661	695	70	47
2004	52	48	47	45	10	6	702	731	632	685	70	46
2005	50	48	46	45	9	6	690	733	630	689	60	44
2006	50	43	46	41	9	6	690	667	629	629	62	38
2007	48	42	45	41	6	4	663	651	622	626	42	25
2008	47	42	45	40	5	3	659	644	629	622	30	22
2009	46	40	43	38	8	5	649	617	598	587	51	30
2010	45	39	41	36	9	6	631	605	573	570	57	35
2011	46	39	42	37	8	6	642	615	593	581	50	34

Source: LFS, 2011.

Note: Activity rate is the share of labor force (employed and unemployed population) in the total population over 15 years of age.

3.6 Employment rates for women are low because of gender biases pervasive in both the labor market and educational system. Only 37 percent of working age women have a job. While the situation is not too different compared to men (42 percent of working age men have a job), gender bias in employment does exist. There are several reasons for this gender gap in employment. One reason is the variation in the educational attainment of women and men. Although the legacy of the previous system that ensured equality of education still lingers, women and men often choose different fields of study. Other factors include a lower mandatory retirement age of 57 for women compared to 62 for men; stereotyping of women as home-makers; and low market demand for women's labor. According to Magenta consulting (2011),

women are still considered as having the main responsibility for taking care of work in the home. If men earn less than women they feel they lose their primary economic role.

3.7 Studies have found that employers discriminate against women with children, and childcare is often unavailable or unaffordable (Glass and Fodor 2011; Saxonberg 2006). Bias against women affects both women's educational and career outcomes by decreasing the time women spend on their studies and career advancement. At the same time, the reality for many school-going girls is that they are required to do housework and take care of younger siblings. This can limit their time for education, pursuing career goals, and developing skill sets¹⁴. The Life in Transition Survey, 2011, lists family responsibilities as a reason why some women are unable to work for wages. However, studies from other countries, for example, the garment industry in Bangladesh and the cut-flower industry in Ecuador, show that when lucrative job opportunities are available, even households in very traditional societies can change the allocation of family responsibilities that may allow women to take advantage of paid employment.¹⁵

Table 3.2: Moldova - Labor Market Indicators by Region, %

	Activity rate		Employment rate		Unemployment rate	
	men	women	men	women	men	women
Moldova	46	39	42	37	8	6
Chisinau	63	47	56	43	11	8
North	41	38	38	36	6	5
Center	42	38	39	36	7	4
South	39	35	36	34	8	5

Source: Moldova LFS, 2011.

3.8 There are significant regional disparities in labor market indicators. Both labor activity and employment rates are higher in the capital compared to the North, Center or South, but the gender gaps are also highest in the capital (Table 3.2). There are multiple factors that may inflate the activity and employment rates in the capital compared to other regions in the country. Historically, in transition countries, the capital city has been the administrative, political and economic center of the country. The private sector often benefits in metropolitan areas because of the “agglomeration effect,” which provides well-developed infrastructure, a high degree of market specialization, greater competition, information exchange, and more efficient matching in the labor market, making the environment conducive to lowering costs and producing higher returns.

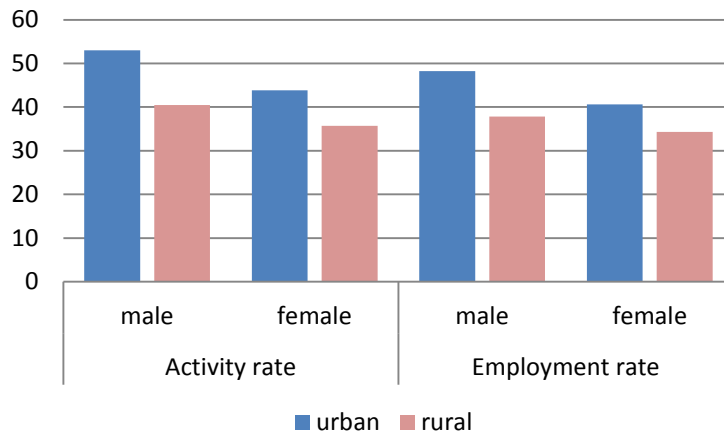
3.9 There is a significant difference in the employment and activity rates of urban and rural women and men, and gender gaps are highest in urban areas due to urban men outperforming all other groups (Figure 3.2). There is about an 8 percentage point difference between the activity rates of urban and rural women and about a 6 percentage point difference between the employment rates of urban and rural women. However, the most plausible explanation for this disparity is the participation of the majority of the rural population in subsistence agriculture, which is not counted in the official activity and employment rates by the National Statistics

¹⁴ A cross-country qualitative study of norms related to gender roles indicates similarities across 20 countries with regards to the dominance of women's domestic role and men's breadwinning role in female and male identities (World Bank, forthcoming).

¹⁵ Newman, Constance (2002). “Gender, Time Use, and Change: The Impact of the Cut Flower Industry in Ecuador.” *The World Bank Econ Rev* (2002) 16 (3): 375-395.

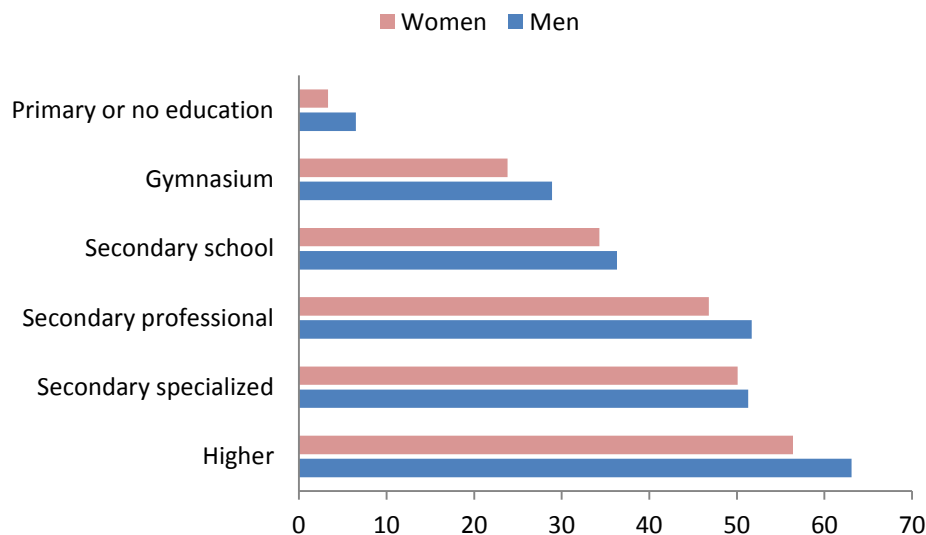
Office. Subsistence agriculture helps the rural population in bridging the income gap and meeting their daily dietary needs, and it is one of the main reasons for lower employment levels. Other factors for the lower participation of women in rural areas may include lack of employment opportunities in the provincial and rural areas and patriarchal norms which discourage women from actively seeking employment.

Figure 3.2: Activity and Employment rate by Location in %, 2011



Source: Moldova LFS, 2011.

Figure 3.3: Employment Rates and Educational Attainment by Gender in %, 2011

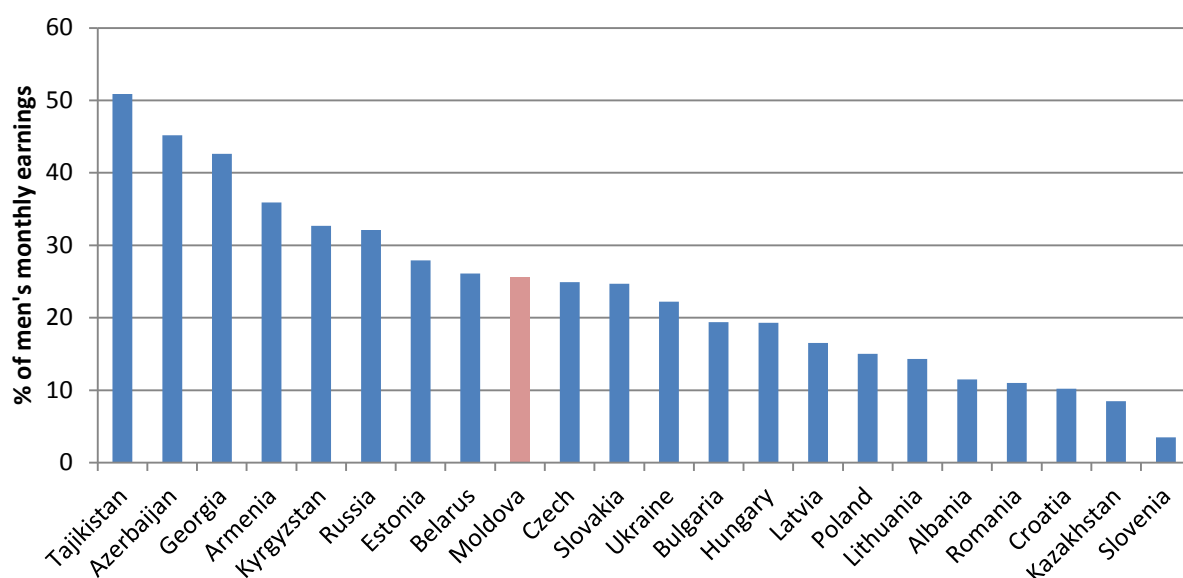


Source: Moldova LFS, 2011.

3.10 Employment rates for men and women tend to increase with higher education as in other transition economies (Figure 3.3). Employment rates for women vary from 56 percent among those with higher education to three percent among those with primary or no education. The same pattern is true for men, though both rates are higher for men. It appears that education level affects likelihood of employment, and those with primary or no education have little chance of obtaining employment.

Women earn 74 percent of what men earn and the earnings gap persists even in economic sectors in which women predominate. This unadjusted, average monthly earnings gender gap of 26 percent is comparable to the gap in other countries in the region, such as Ukraine, where the monthly gap in earnings is about 22 percent (Figure 3.4)¹⁶. Notably, these figures do not account for worker characteristics such as skill level. The true value of inequality may therefore be underestimated if the women in the labor force are better educated than the men. Additionally, these figures refer to the gender gap in average monthly earnings. As a result, the indicator captures gender differences in economic autonomy by reflecting differences both in type of work performed and in time worked. In many countries, the monthly earnings gap therefore appears larger than hourly wage gaps since women tend to work fewer hours than men.

Figure 3.4: Gender Gap in Monthly Wages in %



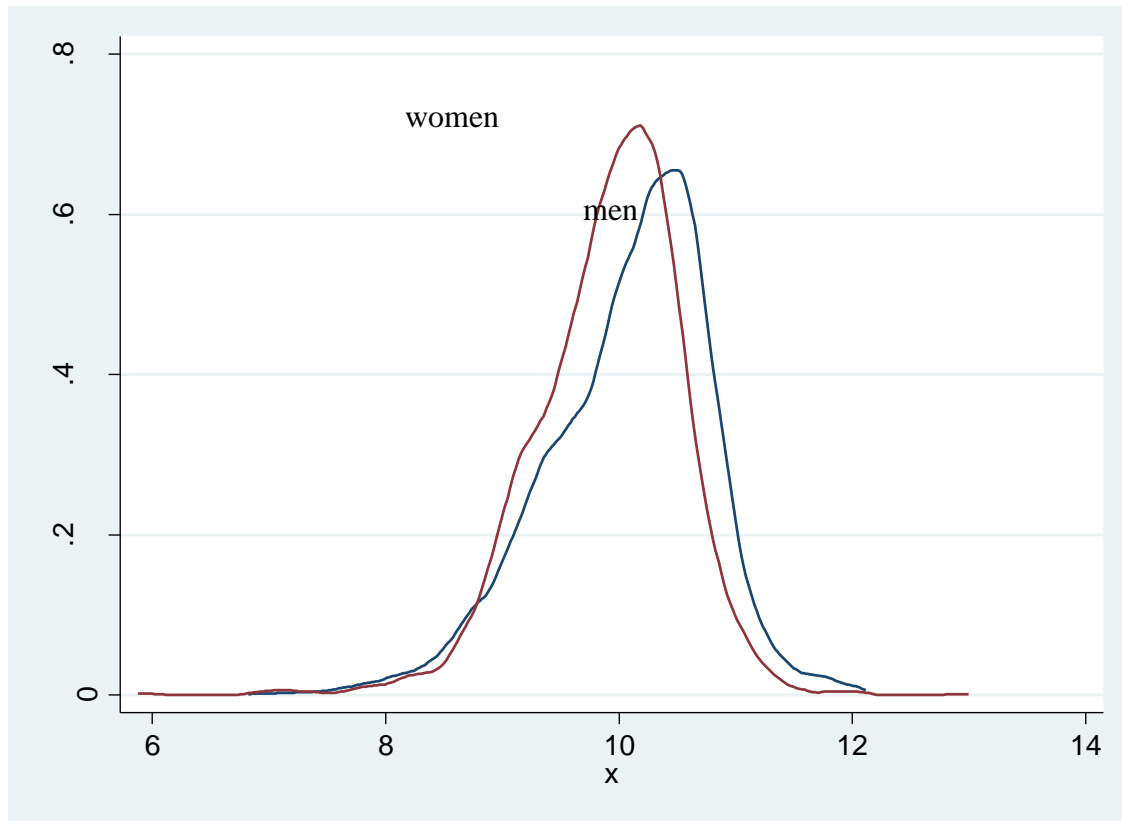
Source: UNECE Statistical Database, 2011.

3.11 Analysis of micro data from a household budget survey in 2011 indicates that the raw gender gap in labor earnings was about 22 percent in favor of men in 2011 (Figure 3.5). The hourly wage gap was lower, at about 10 percent, since women work fewer hours than men. Oaxaca decomposition reveals that observed characteristics explain only 26 percent of the gender gap in logarithm of annual labor earnings (Table 3.3).¹⁷ All observable differences in characteristics between women and men make the gender gap lower. Returns to education also decrease the gender gap. However, this decrease is not enough, and the overall unexplained part of the gender gap is four times more than the explained part and it widens the gap in labor earnings between men and women. The large, unexplained part of the wage gap may be the result of omitted variables, but could also signal discrimination of women in the labor market of Moldova.

¹⁶ UNECE Statistical Database (2011). "Gender pay gap."

¹⁷ Results are qualitatively the same if wage per hour is used.

Figure 3.5: Log of annualized labor earnings across gender in 2011



Source: Authors' calculation, ECAPOV.

Notes: Kernel density distributions. The gender difference in the distributions is statistically significant at a 5% level based on Kolmogorov-Smirnov equality-of-distributions test.

3.12 There is some evidence that discrimination against women may be one component of the gender wage gap. For example, approximately 70 percent of complaints received by the Labor Inspection Department were from women complaining of discrimination in the hiring process, most frequently in the form of being asked about children and being requested to provide medical certificates on pregnancy. To some extent, this may reflect employers' dissatisfaction with the provisions of laws on maternity leave, which can result in employees being gone for extended periods of time. Many women also report that sexual harassment is common in the workplace. About 22 percent of female respondents in one survey stated that they had been touched inappropriately at the workplace or school, and 32 percent said they had been embraced without their permission¹⁸. Although the Law on Equal Opportunities provides a definition of sexual harassment, there are no mechanisms for punishing perpetrators.

¹⁸ Women Organization's Forum from the Republic of Moldova (2006). Alternative Report of Evaluation Regarding the Implementation of Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

Table 3.3: Oaxaca Decomposition of annual labor earnings, 2011

a) Threefold and twofold decomposition of wage gap, original scale, leu		b) Detailed twofold decomposition of wage gap, log of yearly labor earnings	
Threefold decomposition		Gap	100
Gender gap, %	6157***	Explained	-26
Endowments	-838**	Experience	-6**
Coefficients	7418***	Education	-8
Interaction	-423	Sector	-14***
Twofold decomposition		Region	2
Explained	-1049**	Unexplained	126
Unexplained	7206***	Experience	12
		Education	-87**
		Sector	27*
		Region	25
		Constant	149

Source: Authors' calculation, ECAPOV database.

Notes: *** significant at 1%, ** significant at 5%, * significant at 10%. Explanatory variables include potential experience, education dummies, regional and sectoral dummies. Positive sign of components indicates increase of gender wage gap.

Employment Patterns

3.13 The majority of both men and women work in the private sector, but women are more likely than men to work in the public sector. As indicated in Table 3.4, about 74 percent of men and 59 percent of women featured in the 2011 Labor Force Survey indicated that they work in the private sector. In Moldova, as in most countries in transition and Western Europe, public sector jobs therefore constitute a larger share of total female than male employment. About one third of employed women work in the public sector. This trend may be in part because public sector jobs are relatively secure and have more flexible working hours, allowing women to combine work with family responsibilities. In addition, anecdotal evidence suggests that private sector employers dislike hiring women because they fear women will go on maternity leave. Additionally, there is a historical pattern as most women in the former Soviet Union were employed in the public sector, such as education, health and social care.

Table 3.4: Employer at the Main Job in %, 2011

Employer	Male	Female
Public	21	35
Private	74	59
Other	6	7

Source: Moldova LFS, 2011.

*Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

3.14 Three sectors account for 75 percent of women's jobs, and women are twice as likely as men to be employed as professionals. About 30 percent of employed women work in public administration, education, health and social work; followed by agriculture, forestry, and fishery (which employ about 24 percent of working women); and trade, hotel and restaurant services (which employ 22 percent of working women) (Table 3.5). About 22 percent of employed women work as service workers and shop and market sales workers (Table 3.6). According to the World Bank (2011b), this pattern of female concentration in services is typical for all countries with different levels of economic development. Also similar to other countries in the region, women in Moldova are twice as likely as men to work as professionals, associate professionals, and technicians. Three main factors responsible for this gender segregation in occupation type include gender differences in time use patterns, access to productive inputs, and the impact of market and institutional failures.

Table 3.5: Employment by Gender and by Sector, %

Sector	Male	Female
Agriculture, forestry; Fishery	31	24
Industry	15	11
Construction	10	1
Trade; Hotels and restaurants	16	22
Transportation, Communications	9	3
Public administration; Education; Health and social work	13	30
Other	7	9

Source: Moldova LFS, 2011.

*Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

3.15 Women are more likely to work less than 40 hours per week. In 2011, about 25 percent of women worked less than 30 hours per week in comparison to 20 percent of men. The gender gap in underemployment is more pronounced in rural areas, where 30 percent of women and only 16 percent of men worked less than 30 hours per week (LFS, 2011). This difference in hours worked is reflected in the gender gap in monthly earnings.

Table 3.6: Employment by Gender and Profession, %

Occupation	Male	Female
Legislators, senior officials and managers	9	6
Professionals	9	18
Technicians and associate professionals	6	12
Clerks	1	3
Service workers and shop and market sales workers	8	22
Skilled agricultural and fishery workers	6	6
Craft and related trades workers	15	6
Other occupations:	46	27
elementary occupations	31	26

Source: Moldova LFS, 2011.

*Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

3.16 About one third of total employment in the country is in the informal sector, and the level of informal employment is higher among men than women. In 2011, the share of informal employment was much greater in rural areas than in urban areas (45 percent compared to 14

percent) because a large amount of agricultural work is in the informal sector. However, the total share of informal employment has decreased since 2003 when it was 38 percent. This reduction was observed mostly in urban areas, where the level of informal employment declined from 28 percent to 14 percent. At the same time, informal employment rates were equal across gender in 2003, but are now 28 percent for women and 34 percent for men (LFS, 2011)¹⁹. This may be the result of higher participation of women in the public sector which provides formal employment.

3.17 Maternity leave is guaranteed by law, but may be an obstacle to more women participating in the labor market due to employer discrimination. The law on maternity leave allows pregnant women 126 calendar days of leave with full wages and other benefits. It also provides additional parental leave until the child reaches the age of six, although not at full pay. As in most other countries in the region, maternity coverage is provided by the state social insurance system²⁰. Yet while this legislation is meant to help women bearing family responsibilities, it may have unintended consequences. According to Burke (2009), a summary assessment of the 2003 Labor Code by UNIFEM and the Government of Moldova finds that the legislation poses a threat to women's increased participation in the labor force. Employers may discriminate in the hiring process in order to bypass the potential unpredictability of employing women. Determining ways to establish non-disruptive and financially viable measures for filling short-term positions while women are on maternity leave may therefore be helpful in combating discrimination.

Unemployment Rate

3.18 According to the 2011 Labor Force Survey, the unemployment rate in Moldova is relatively low at 7 percent, and lower than other countries in the region. Unemployment rates among men and women were declining before 2007. However, since the spread of the financial crisis in 2008, unemployment rates among both men and women have increased. Many people who are currently unemployed have never had a job before, while half of the unemployed population has been looking for a job for a year or more.

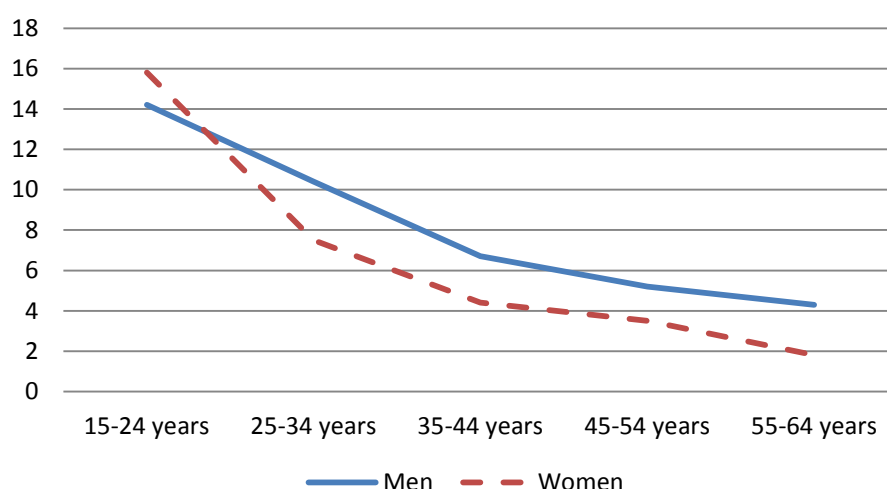
3.19 Unemployment is particularly severe among young men and women. The unemployment rate at 15 percent among youth, aged 15-24, is twice as high as the national average. Unemployment rates decrease both with educational attainment and with age (Figure 3.6). Lack of adequate education and the absence of flexible employment opportunities are the two main reasons for the higher than average unemployment rates among the young. One matter of concern is that an increasing number of youth neither has a job nor is in school/university and may resort to drug abuse or antisocial behavior²¹.

¹⁹ According to the National Bureau of Statistics, informal employment includes the following: a) employment in the informal sector which is defined as units without legal status and registration with tax authorities; b) own accounts workers; c) contributing family workers; d) persons exclusively engaged in the production of agricultural goods for own consumption of households, with a working week of 20 hours or more; e) paid workers and employees in formal sector if not benefiting from paid and sick leaves and if their employers do not pay social contributions

²⁰ World Economic forum, Report on Gender Gap, 2011.

²¹ La Cava et al (2006) "Young people in South Eastern Europe: from Risk to Empowerment", World Bank, Washington DC, 2006.

Figure 3.6: Unemployment by Age Group in %, 2011



Source: Moldova LFS, 2011.

3.20 According to the latest Household Budget Survey, about 20,000 people receive unemployment benefits. In addition, those living in abject poverty are entitled to other social assistance programs that vary from child and career allowances to veteran and state pension benefits. An analysis conducted by the World Bank²² suggests that the majority of labor market program beneficiaries are people who live below the poverty line, although some slip-ups have been documented. This finding emphasizes the need to improve the targeting of labor market programs among both women and men, especially if they are to help in poverty alleviation.

B. ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND CAREER ADVANCEMENT

Women's Involvement in Entrepreneurship

3.21 In 2008, over 30 percent of the working population in Moldova was engaged in some form of self-employment, which was high for the region. Lack of employment opportunities in the private and public sectors have encouraged many people to start their own business ventures. Although more men than women launch their own enterprises in Moldova, women's propensity to engage in some form of entrepreneurial activity (around 25 percent) is nearly twice as high as the average rate of entrepreneurship among women in ECA²³. Nevertheless, most individuals who are self-employed are own-account workers that lack employees. In fact, Moldovan men are twice as likely as women to be employers of other people, which reflects disparities in size and nature of businesses that women and men lead.

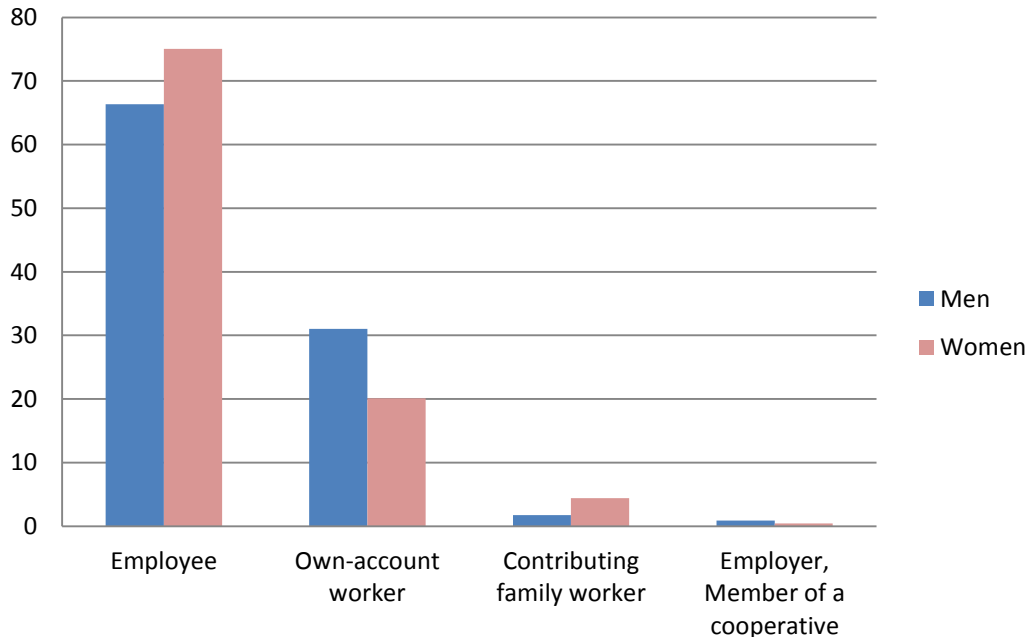
3.22 Men are more likely to be entrepreneurs than women – one in three working men and only one in five working women are own-account workers (Figure 3,7). According to Aculai (2009), there is a marked difference in the profiles of women and men entrepreneurs: (1) Women entrepreneurs have slightly less education than men (64 percent of female and 70 percent of male entrepreneurs have higher education); (2) Unlike most men, women tend to be home-makers with

²² This is an analysis conducted with the latest Household Budget Survey using the AdePT programme developed by the World Bank Research Department.

²³ World Bank. 2010. "World Development Indicators," Washington DC

little or no prior experience in business (50 percent of women and 0.2 percent of men were primarily involved in housework before becoming entrepreneurs) (3) Women are much more likely than men to manage micro-enterprises with limited resources and not engage in export; (4) As compared to men, women rarely start a business using their own savings and instead borrow funds from relatives; (5) Women often establish businesses in trade, hotel, restaurant and real estate; and (6) Women are more likely than men to work at new or young enterprises.

Figure 3.7: Employment by Status in Employment, in %



Source: Moldova LFS, 2011.

3.23 The latest Life in Transition Survey (LITS)²⁴ reveals that businesses begun by male entrepreneurs are less likely to fail than those begun by women. According to LITS, about 13 percent of men have tried to set up a business, compared to 10 percent of women, and gender differences in risk aversion could be one reason for this gap. Around 60 percent of men who set up a business were successful, while data shows that less than half the women (48 percent) who started a business were successful. Despite this difference in success rate, both men and women agree on the main hurdles in setting up a business. Over 90 percent of unsuccessful entrepreneurs identified access to finance and too much red tape as the two main reasons for failure.

Formal Sector

3.24 The share of firms that are partially owned by women is greater than that of the ECA region (55 versus 40 percent). According to the Business Environment and Enterprise Performance Survey (BEEPS), 2009, the majority of companies in Moldova are privately held (limited liability companies), followed by publicly listed companies and sole proprietorships. Female ownership follows the same pattern, with private companies constituting 56 percent of companies with some female ownership. Public companies account for 30 percent of firms with some female ownership and only 10 percent of firms with solely male ownership. Notably, men are nearly twice as likely as women to be sole proprietors.

²⁴ Life in Transition Survey (2011), London, UK.

3.25 Firms that are partially owned by women are relatively smaller than firms fully owned by men, with an average of 74 employees compared to 103. Additionally, almost two thirds of companies partially owned by women operate in only three sectors – retail (34 percent), food (14 percent) and construction (11 percent). The relative concentration of companies partially owned by women in sectors with little value added coupled with the relatively small size of these firms may explain why they generate less revenue than firms that are solely owned by men, as companies solely owned by men have about twice as much sale revenue compared to firms partially owned by women.

3.26 Firms that are solely owned by men are more likely to be innovative and export oriented. Only 49 percent of firms partially owned by women have introduced a new product or service in the last fiscal year compared to about 60 percent of firms that are completely owned by men. Furthermore, only 23 percent of firms partially owned by women have invested in R&D compared to 32 percent of firms owned solely by men. Firms that are owned solely by men are also more likely to sell their products abroad. Moreover, the percentage of total sales that is exported is much higher for firms owned solely by men than firms owned partially or fully by women (12 percent compared to 9 percent; the numbers include percentage of direct exports as well as exports of products/services sold to third parties).

Constraints to Doing Business and to Entrepreneurship

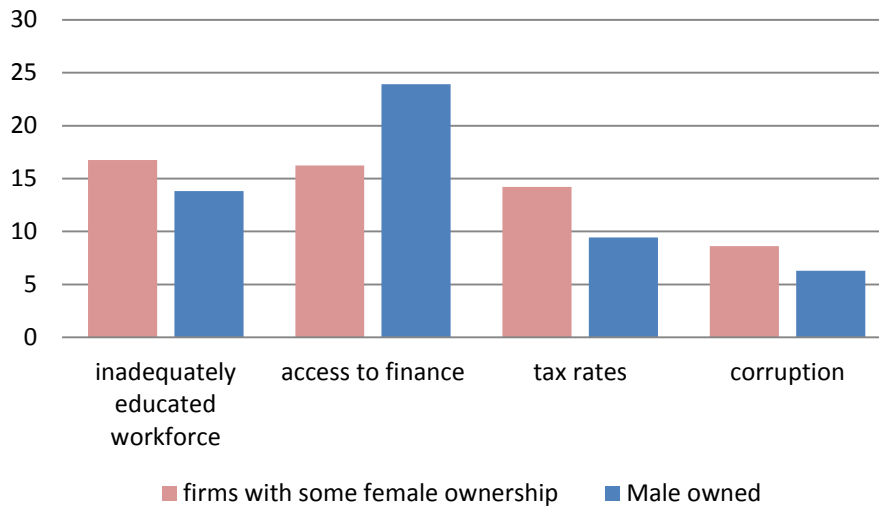
3.27 As in the rest of the transition region, companies in Moldova face numerous constraints in doing business. The latest BEEPS (2009) interviewed 363 Moldovan firms to assess the major bottlenecks for doing business. The survey identified several obstacles that firms complain about: high tax rates, an inadequately educated labor force, lack of access to land, lack of access to finance, corruption and political instability. These obstacles are similar to the ones faced by firms in neighboring countries and countries at the same level of economic development²⁵. Firms owned by women are more concerned about high levels of taxation and corruption than men are, but are still predominantly concerned about access to finance and a poorly educated labor force (Figure 3.8).

3.28 Corruption remains one of the biggest problems for business owners in Moldova. According to the Life in Transition Survey, over 20 percent of the respondents believed that people made regular payments to public sector authorities. This suggests that the Moldovan public sector is one of the most corrupt in the transition region. BEEPS 2009 confirms this, finding that about one in three firms stated that authorities expect gifts to perform their regular duties, such as inspections or issuing permits. Notably, firms with a female top manager were twice as likely to report that they were expected to give gifts to secure government contracts²⁶.

²⁵ A recent study (Nikoloski, 2012), confirms that access to finance, along with corruption are the two biggest obstacles to doing business in large sample of lower and upper middle income countries. Despite efforts to abridge the problem, and the introduction of microfinance schemes, the access to affordable financial services is still lacking in most middle income countries.

²⁶ Apart from the cost of bribes paid to public officials, corruption can further hamper firms as it has recently been found to deteriorate the quality of management and management practices of firms (Athanasouli and Goujard, 2013).

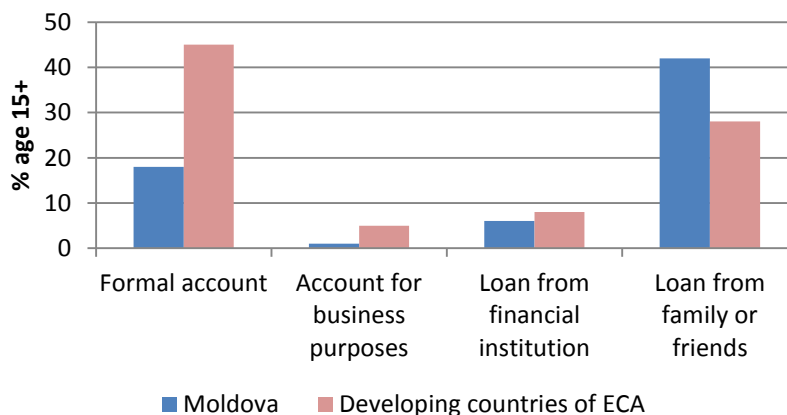
Figure 3.8: Percentage of Firms that Perceive Business Regulations as a Major or Very Severe Obstacle to Current Operations



Source: BEEPS (2009).

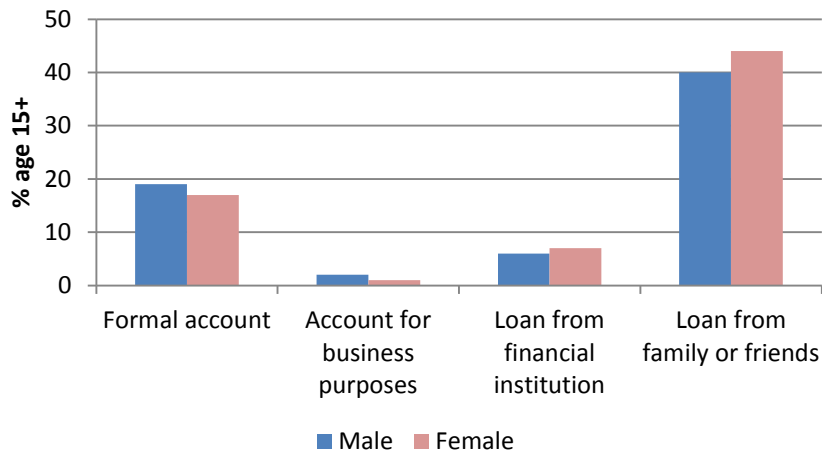
3.29 Moldova lags far behind other developing countries in the ECA region in access to financial services, and women are slightly more likely than men to use informal sources of financing. Only 17 percent of women and 19 percent of men in Moldova have formal bank accounts, compared to 45 percent of people in other developing countries in the ECA region. Access to finance is therefore a problem for both female and male owned firms regardless of the sector in which they operate. Only one percent of the Moldovan population has bank accounts for business purposes compared to 5 percent in ECA. As a result, informal sources for loans seem to be more common in Moldova. Almost 42 percent of the population borrows money from family or friends compared to 28 percent in the ECA region (Figure 3.9). About 44 percent of women in Moldova borrow money from family and friends compared to 40 percent of men (Figure 3.10). A recent report by the World Economic Forum based on a survey conducted in the country concluded that finance programs available to women are limited.

Figure 3.9: Financial Inclusion in Moldova in Comparison to Developing Countries of ECA, %



Source: Financial Inclusion Data, the World Bank.

Figure 3.10: Financial Inclusion in Moldova by Gender, %



Source: Financial Inclusion Data, the World Bank.

Career Development

3.30 Lack of progress in eliminating gender bias has hampered women's career development. According to BEEPS (2009), around one fifth of managers are women. This is in line with the average figure for the ECA region (20 percent). The consistently low representation of women in leadership positions in the private sector throughout the region may be explained by a number of different factors, including fewer women than men employed in the private sector, lack of established performance evaluation and staff promotion mechanisms in the private sector, bias against women in senior positions, hidden discriminatory practices, and a near absence of role models.

C. LABOR MIGRATION

Labor Migration

3.31 The poor state of the economy has resulted in many job seekers migrating. Yet there is a difference in the pattern of migration between women and men. While women and men with primary or basic secondary education make up about half of the migrant population, highly educated women constitute a larger percentage of total female migrants than highly educated men do of total male migrants (Table 3.7). However, this distribution of migrant educational attainment may simply be reflecting the same gender differentiated education patterns seen in the entire Moldovan population. Ghencea and Gudumac (2004) and CBS-AXA (2005) confirm that a large majority of migrants have at least secondary education.

Table 3.7: Migration Patterns by Education Level, in percent, %

	Men	Women
Higher	9	14
Secondary specialized	9	19
Secondary professional	29	18
Secondary school	25	28
Gymnasium	28	21
Primary	0.6	0.3

Source: Moldova LFS, 2011.

*Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

3.32 The destination patterns of migrants differ for men and women (Table 3.8). Nevertheless, most migrants tend to go to Russia, followed by Italy, and then Ukraine for men and Turkey for women. According to Ghencea and Gudumac (2004), migrants choose Russia because of its large labor market, free movement, reduced migration costs and socio-cultural proximity. The authors point out that migrants to CIS are mainly from rural areas (62 percent), while those going to Italy and other southern European states, such as Spain and Portugal, are predominantly from urban areas (62 percent). Moreover, there is evidence that migrants going to Western countries come from families that are better off than migrants going to CIS. The CBS-AXA (2005) study suggests that women are more likely than men to go to Italy, whereas men are more likely to choose Russia as their destination. This gender difference is explained mainly by the sectors in which migrants are employed (Table 3.9). For example, the construction sector in Russia, Ukraine, and Portugal attracts men, whereas the service sector (catering, housekeeping, and hospitality) in Italy attracts women. Overall, CBS-AXA estimates that around 60 percent of migrants working in Russia and 40 percent of those working in Portugal are employed in construction, whereas 40 percent of migrants to Italy work in social care. In contrast, most migrants working in Greece and Cyprus are employed in agriculture.

Table 3.8: Migration Patterns by Country, in percent

	Men	Women
Greece	0.2	2
Israel	0.3	5
Italy	8	37
Portugal	2	1
Romania	1	0.4
Russia	77	42
Turkey	1	5
Ukraine	2	1
Other countries	8	8

Source: Moldova LFS, 2011.

*Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding

Table 3.9: Work and Occupations of Moldovan Migrants by Gender

Area of work	Distribution of migrants (%)	Gender distribution	
		% Male	% Female
Construction, maintenance	31	95	5
Baby-sitting, personal care and social assistance	31	4	96
Trade-related activities	11	36	64
Plant, factory workers	10	69	31
Technical and mechanical services	6	96	4
Agriculture	5	75	25
Other	6	61	39
Total	100	55	46

Source: Ghencea and Gudumac (2004)

*Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

3.33 Economic hardship is the main reason behind migration to Russia, while better quality of life is also an important reason for migration to Europe. According to Piracha and Saraogi (2011), unemployment was the leading reason for migration to Russia. The rate of poverty in households among migrants to Russia is almost double compared to the rate of poverty in households among migrants to the EU. This may indicate that “push” factors are more relevant for households with migrants to CIS countries and “pull” factors are more important for households with migrants to the EU.

3.34 Women tend to spend remittances on basic daily needs, while men use them to invest in housing, cars and consumer durables. According to Zwager, Gressmann, and Sintov (2010), 84 percent of migrants sent money home in 2009, and receiving remittances is positively correlated with the ability of households to cover costs of basic needs. According to Lopez-Ekra et al. (2011), women used their remittances on food, clothes, household equipment, education, health, furniture, and repayment of loans, while men used the money to invest in housing, cars and consumer goods.

3.35 While labor migration can have a positive economic impact, it may have negative psychological and social consequences for children and the elderly. According to a qualitative study conducted by Cheianu-Andrei et al (2011), migration affects the psychological state of family members, especially children and the elderly. Absence of a parent deprives a child of attachment, help, advice, and love, and may therefore have a negative effect on a child's personality development, self-identity, and social integration. More work needs to be done to identify and quantify the unintended consequences of labor migration on the family. For example, attention should be given to the labor market outcomes of children from families where a parent has migrated.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 These conclusions and policy recommendations focus on areas with significant gender gaps, rather than general countrywide concerns. They are the result of the analysis provided in this paper, and proceed from the earlier discussion. These recommendations should therefore be incorporated into development strategies for Moldova in order to reduce inequalities between women and men. Furthermore, the findings on these gender gaps should also inform discussions on work being done on general countrywide concerns in order to advance inclusive and sustainable development in Moldova.

Improve Agency, Education, Skills, and Health Outcomes

4.2 The education system should be reformed to offer job-oriented and skill building courses to women to meet labor market needs and to reduce the gender gaps in the labor force. Improving employment opportunities for women by providing courses and skills that match the needs of the labor market should be an essential part of the educational strategy. Vocational schools, which are predominantly attended by men, help in the development of professional skills and are more aligned with the needs of the market. The significant gender differences in levels, types, and compensation of employment may be explained to some extent by the disparities in education and skills. Even though the enrollment levels of women are higher than men, the returns on education favor men. Many employees with tertiary and post-graduate education point to their lack of professional skills for their ideal job, and women are more likely than men to complete higher education. Providing skills that match labor market needs can therefore help women to increase their job potential and also reduce gender inequality. This will require reforms in the education system and the provision of information on career development. The strengthening of non-formal education may also contribute to the development of specific and transferable skills based on labor market needs.

4.3 Health campaigns are needed to combat non-communicable diseases to improve male life expectancy. An important factor explaining the disparity in life expectancy between women and men is the difference in their lifestyle choices, including the high rates of smoking and alcohol consumption by men. To reverse the trend, priority should be given to raising public awareness on the health risks of smoking and drinking, and to increased support, particularly for men, to overcome the habit. For example, the National Program on Tobacco Control that was approved by the government focuses on the implementation of a national anti-smoking campaign and the development of new laws to regulate tobacco products and marketing. This may help in raising awareness and reducing smoking.

4.4 Steps should be taken to improve girls' knowledge of communicable diseases and HIV prevention. Women do not have sufficient knowledge, particularly compared to men, about protecting themselves against communicable diseases, such as HIV. The rate of HIV infection among women is increasing, and gender inequality and entrenched beliefs about the status of women in society have contributed to this rise. Violence against women and the limited say women have in the use of contraception expose them to high health risks, thus policy reforms should emphasize behavioral changes in society that reduce gender inequality.

4.5 The elimination of violence against women and the protection of women's rights should be policy priorities. Given the wide acceptance of domestic violence and sexual harassment, policy makers should aim at fostering women's equal rights by raising awareness among the people. Addressing the tolerance towards violence and changing these attitudes will help reduce the number of women at risk of experiencing violence. The relationship between domestic violence and women's education is significant, with women with higher education reporting fewer cases of domestic violence. Both education and access to information about violence can therefore help in the empowerment of women. In addition, addressing other social issues may also reduce violence against women. For example, it is believed that male perpetration of violence against women is exacerbated by alcohol abuse.

4.6 In order to address violence against women, better data and analysis are required. Statistical information on domestic violence is limited as widespread social tolerance of domestic violence, lack of official sensitivity to crimes against women, and absence of effective laws to handle complaints and impose penalties deter people from reporting criminal behavior. They also prevent victims from getting the assistance they need (U.S. Department of State, 2010). In 2011, the first report on violence against women by the National Bureau of Statistics in collaboration with UNDP and other development partners was published. However, because of extensive underreporting exact figures are not known and are believed to be higher. To obtain more accurate figures, victims should be encouraged to report all crimes. Monitoring and assessments can provide insight into the reasons behind violence and high-risk behavior, and the extent to which government policies reach the targeted population. For example, research is needed to determine whether household poverty causes women to be more likely to accept domestic violence given that poverty limits their freedom to leave.

4.7 The Government of Moldova needs to take further steps to combat human trafficking. According to the U.S. Department of State (2012), the Government of Moldova has not fully complied with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so. Most notably, they still need to address and combat the complicity of law enforcement and public officials in the matter via investigations and prosecutions.

4.8 Government agencies in charge of communications could cooperate to help change the image of women. Notably, the biased portrayal of women and men in the media and the use of sexist images in advertising are rampant. Such representations perpetuate gender stereotypes and prejudices about women's role within the family and in society. Coordinated initiatives to create awareness among the people and the media are needed to change deeply entrenched attitudes.

Promote Economic Equality

4.9 It will be important to promote the diversification of sectors in which women work. A major barrier to economic equality is the concentration of women in only a few sectors. Work needs to be done to identify policies that increase female participation in a wider range of fields. One step would be to examine the occupational streaming that begins in secondary and tertiary education. More data should also be collected on the sectors that women predominate. The law needs to be changed so that it does not restrict the jobs in which women are permitted to work. Additionally, the government may want to consider the pros and cons of affirmative action policies or other ways to guarantee that qualified women are as likely as qualified men to be considered. Successful policies could serve as a role model for the private sector.

4.10 Equal opportunities for women and men at the workplace should be promoted. Stereotypes can lead to gender disparities in the labor market and to the "feminization" of jobs.

For example, women pursue careers in education much more than men, leading to an apparent “feminization” of the profession. Many professions that have become “feminized” offer fewer opportunities to women for career advancement and are often less well paid. Additionally, even within the same profession, the average salary is often lower for women than for men. Furthermore, men tend to acquire more higher level or managerial positions than women. These differences between women’s skills and labor market needs and the persistence of pay and leadership disparities could result in demotivation for many women and may reverse the current trend of women seeking higher education. This could also contribute to higher rates of international migration, especially of educated women.

4.11 Changes in the law should promote women’s labor force participation. The mandatory retirement age should be equal for women and men, which would require increasing it from 57 to 62 for women. Additionally, current maternity leave policies may be an obstacle to women’s employment due to employer discrimination. However, the length of Moldova’s maternity leave is comparable to the average mandatory maternity leave in the OECD, and, like most OECD countries, it is paid by the government. This indicates that the issue lies with poorly enforced labor equality legislation, rather than overly generous maternity leave. It will also be important to document the various social transfers that women receive, incorporating a gender lens into tax and expenditure decisions.

4.12 Barriers to women’s entrepreneurial activities should be removed. There are many obstacles that entrepreneurs face, including corruption, high taxes, and lack of access to finance. These pose an even larger problem for female-owned businesses. Development of entrepreneurship among women and men as well as formalization of existing businesses can therefore be facilitated through better enforcement of existing regulations, reduced corruption, improved infrastructure, and access to credit. Additionally, the current differences in sector concentration of businesses owned by women versus men play an important role in the gender gap between entrepreneurial successes. Consequently, increased diversification of sectors of female employment could help the success of female entrepreneurship. Lastly, work could be done both by the government and women’s business organizations to support female entrepreneurship.

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