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Study on rural migration and return migration in Kosovo

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DISCUSSION PAPER

Leibniz Institute of Agricultural Development in Transition Economies

Study on rural migration and return migration in Kosovo

**Judith Möllers, Diana Traikova,
Thomas Herzfeld, Egzon Bajrami**

**DISCUSSION PAPER No. 166
2017**



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Study on Rural Migration and Return Migration in Kosovo

By Judith Möllers, Diana Traikova, Thomas Herzfeld, Egzon Bajrami

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TABLE OF CONTENT

List of tables	7
List of figures.....	9
Executive summary	11
1 Introduction	13
1.1 Objectives.....	15
1.2 Study design and methodology.....	16
2 Migration motivation and rural migrant households.....	19
2.1 Migration motives	19
2.2 Integration in the destination country – Some insights from Germany-based Kosovar migrants.....	20
2.3 A comparison of migrant and non-migrant households based on the Kosovo Remittance Study.....	22
3 Migration impacts in rural Kosovo	25
3.1 Poverty alleviation.....	25
3.2 Employment creation – Is there a trickling down of migration-related investments and skills?	27
3.3 Further (ambiguous) effects of migration	29
4 Return migration – Who are the returnees and how do they reintegrate after their return?	31
4.1 Return migration to Kosovo – What do we already know?	31
4.2 General profile of our sample of return migrants.....	31
4.3 Skills profile of return migrants	38
4.4 Socio-economic situation after return	40
4.5 Personal well-being and health among returnees	44
4.6 Structural and sociocultural integration after return	49
4.7 Will they stay or leave again?	54
5 Policy implications and recommendations.....	57
5.1 Main policy-relevant issues identified from return migrant survey	57
5.2 Policy recommendations targeting return migrants.....	59
6 References	63

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1:	Regional and ethnic composition of sample.....	18
Table 2:	Indicators of integration for three migration waves (2009).....	21
Table 3:	Migrants' return plans and ties to the origin along three migration waves (2009)	21
Table 4:	Socio-economic characteristics of rural households with and without migrants.....	23
Table 5:	Socio-economic characteristics according to income classes	26
Table 6:	Migration and return	32
Table 7:	Demographic characteristics of return migrants.....	33
Table 8:	Education and skills.....	38
Table 9:	Socio-economic situation after return	41
Table 10:	Health status indicators	46
Table 11:	Negative thoughts related to personal well-being.....	48
Table 12:	Support measures for returnees.....	52
Table 13:	Participation in political and social life indicators	53
Table 14:	Experience of hostility among return migrants.....	53

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1:	Population with citizenship of Kosovo	14
Figure 2:	Inflow of remittances to Kosovo as % of GDP	15
Figure 3:	Regional distribution of return migration and survey sites	17
Figure 4:	Information channels by migration wave.....	21
Figure 5:	Highest level of education achieved (left) in comparison to Life in Transition Study (right).....	33
Figure 6:	Migration patterns for men and women.....	34
Figure 7:	Migration motivation: Gender and regional differences	35
Figure 8:	Intentions to stay abroad on a permanent basis	36
Figure 9:	Study fields and professions (frequencies).....	39
Figure 10:	Language skills by level in %	40
Figure 11:	Income ladder perceptions before and after migration	42
Figure 12:	Poverty perception.....	43
Figure 13:	Travel cost as a financial burden (in € per capita) by regions	44
Figure 14:	Subjective wellbeing of return migrants in %.....	45
Figure 15:	General health assessment compared to pre-migration situation	47
Figure 16:	Condition intensity of somatic and psychic symptoms worsened compared to pre-migration situation	49
Figure 17:	Most frequently mentioned sources of reintegration support over municipalities.....	50
Figure 18:	Challenges for reintegration.....	52
Figure 19:	Reasons behind the intentions to leave or to stay	55
Figure 20:	Anticipated future business activity/occupation.....	56
Figure 22:	Need for actions mentioned by respondents	59

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Kosovo, migration is a long-standing livelihood strategy. In recent times, a new migration peak was observed in 2014/15, followed by significant (forced) returns, mainly due to stricter repatriation enforcement in EU countries, and in particular in Germany, the main destination of Kosovar migrants. This study focuses on the causes and consequences of migration for rural areas of Kosovo. It puts particular attention to the most recent migration wave and the socio-economic situation of returned migrants as well as barriers to and opportunities for their re-integration.

The report presents insights on the migration motivation and impacts of migration in rural Kosovo. The consequences of the recent wave of return are analysed based on a survey conducted for this study with the help of face-to-face interviews in April 2017. The survey targeted a sample of 179 returnees from ten municipalities with high return rates and considered a strata with relevant ethnicities, gender and age groups.

The chief motive for recent migration from Kosovo is labour migration. As in other Eastern European countries this is pushed by high unemployment combined with a very low formal labour force participation rate as well as quality of life considerations. Research identified the typical migrant households as weak, for instance in terms of their income and education. For a long time, young, mostly male household members were sent abroad. The link to the home country is usually maintained by migrants (shown for example in high and stable levels of remittances). However, there are first indications that migration patterns are slowly changing towards an increase in the wish to leave permanently and together with the core family.

Migration has, without doubt, significant influence on the situation of the families who stay back as well as on rural areas in general. While the literature highlights positive effects in the field of consumption and income levels (due to remittances), there are concerns that also negative effects might be at work, including for example disincentive effects with regard to work or education, or an increase in income inequality, but also mental stress. With regard to return migration, a lack of relevant new skills and work experience is found to be a constraint to successful re-integration. However, returnees sometimes become innovators who bring different views for example in terms of social norms and gender roles, but also business ideas. This is underlined also by the survey of return migrants in this study.

Involuntary returns and disrupted migration circles put successful re-integration at threat. Forced return and the experience of "failed migration" causes not only mental stress, but most repatriated persons restart their life with few resources and depend on social assistance. This economic vulnerability is highlighted by this study: returnees position themselves in the lower income strata, and further economic downward mobility as well as indebtedness as a result of the costly migration were observed. A high share of returnees was found to have problems to cover even basic needs. In particular ethnic minorities and other vulnerable groups such as women are disadvantaged in many regards. Ethnic minorities score for example the lowest in terms of life satisfaction, and show more mental stress as well as a higher intensification of health problems compared to the pre-migration situation. Women have lower education levels and lack work experience, which makes them more dependent on the income of male household members.

The most important barrier to improving livelihoods and smooth re-integration is the labour market situation. Unemployment and economic inactivity is rather the rule than the exception

and usually many household members depend on just one income earner or fully depend on the small amount of social welfare that they receive. Low educational levels – almost 20 % of the interviewed return migrants have no or only primary school education – and a lack of skills and work experience make it hard for returnees to access the labour market. The often desperate economic situation, but also the stress caused by the (failed) migration and return, contribute to a very low life satisfaction and a high prevalence of mental stress. The prevalence of somatic, but also depressive symptoms is high and failed migration and return are clearly linked to a worsening of both general health indicators as well as psychic and somatic symptoms. Health issues turned out to be highly important. They are not only an important trigger for migration, but they are also relevant for successful re-integration and highly important for the decision to stay or to leave again.

Despite significant re-integration problems, the outreach of assistance measures was relatively low, and much too low in critical areas such as health and psycho-social treatment. Most support came from the close family. NGOs play an important role as providers of formal support. The role of direct state support was reported as comparatively low, but with regional variations. The low level of awareness of re-integration support measures is striking. Most of the measures are known by less than one third of the interviewed returnees. This is worrying as involuntary returns often tend to be followed by unsuccessful re-integration and the intention to re-migrate. Indeed, the willingness to stay in Kosovo was overall low. More than 40 % of respondents assessed their probability to stay at 20 % or lower. Economic conditions and unemployment were the most important reasons mentioned as a trigger for repeated migration, followed by health care.

The study offers a number of policy recommendations. Actions are recommended in particular in three fields: (1) any improvement in the state of the labour market will have direct positive effects on the successful re-integration of returnees and is a pre-condition for increasing the willingness to stay in the country. Making better use of entrepreneurial spirit and intentions could be one promising strategy, but also (temporarily) subsidised work opportunities for low-skilled returnees may be considered as a better alternative to inactivity and dependency on social welfare. (2) For the short and medium-run strategy regarding integration support, it is important to improve the strategies to reach the target groups and to offer support tailored to the specific needs of different groups of returnees. Better data bases and close follow up on returnees after their arrival are preconditions. Communal structures and governance are important for this and should be closely involved. (3) Furthermore, medium-term strategies are needed for enabling the business environment and social conditions and improving the quality of education.

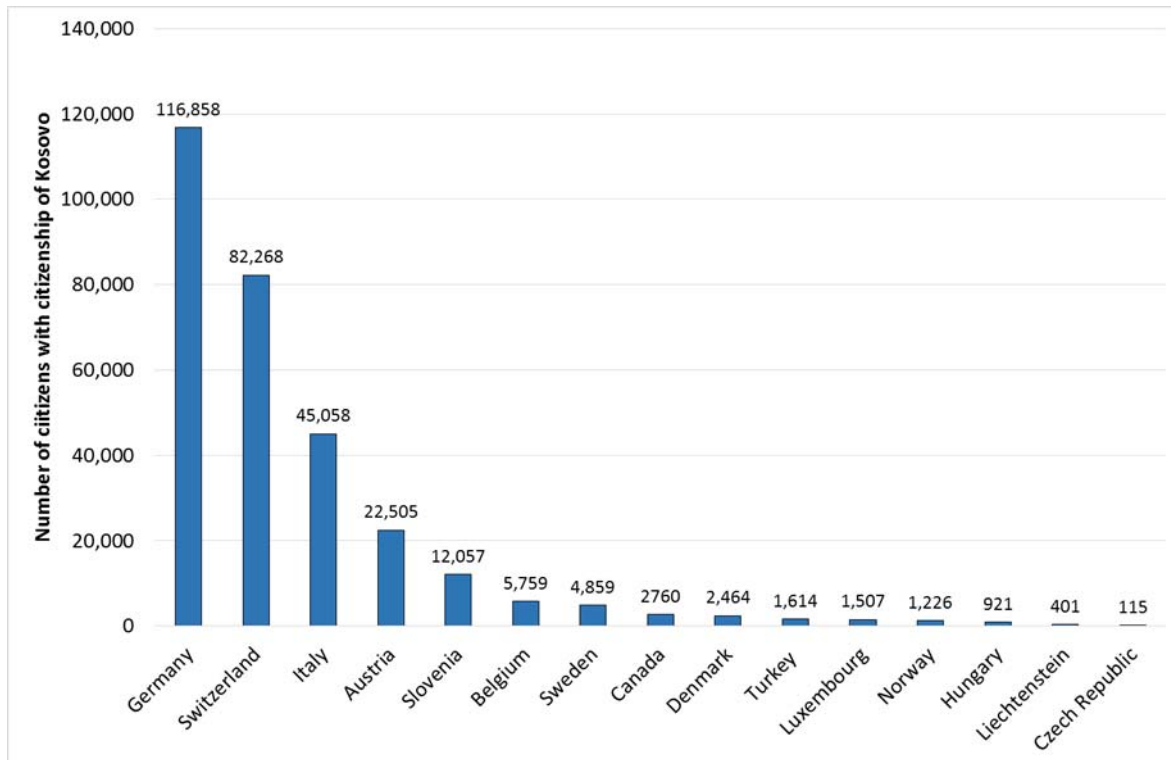
1 INTRODUCTION

In Kosovo, migration is a long-standing livelihood strategy. Over the past 50 years, Kosovo has experienced a strong outpouring of people. Leaving the country was never a welcome prospect for the migrants, but simply sheer necessity: the majority of Kosovar migrants (70 per cent) originate from rural areas (WORLD BANK, 2007) and were forced to leave when the traditional livelihood base, the farm, could no longer provide sufficient means to make ends meet for the large traditional households. In the 1960-70s many rural people with little education left toward western European countries like Germany to work as guest workers. A second wave of migration started in the 1980s when the rights of ethnic Albanians were being threatened and violated within the former Yugoslavia and people left mainly for political reasons. This migration wave reached its height with the violent conflict in 1998-99 when many people fled.

After the war ended in 1999 and Kosovo became an independent country in 2008, it appeared as though the era of mass migration had come to an end: many Kosovars returned to their home country full of hope for a better future. At the same time migration doors closed when, among others, Germany, where most Kosovar refugees and migrants lived, ended its generous toleration policy¹ (ESI, 2006). However, emigration intentions have quickly risen to their pre-independence level (IVLEVS & KING, 2015) and out-migration has again been increasing in recent years. A new migration peak was observed in 2014/15. Up to 100,000 people may have illegally crossed EU borders in a very short period. In Germany alone, more than 37,000 Kosovars registered as asylum seekers in 2015 (EUROSTAT, 2017). In general, the importance of migration for the Kosovar economy is reflected in the size of the diaspora as well as the flow of remittances. Figure 1 illustrates an estimate of the number of Kosovars living in other European countries. In addition to a total population of 1.8 million living in Kosovo, the diaspora accounts for another 450,000 to 550,000 people (UNDP, 2014). Due to the country's young history and earlier migrants possessing a different citizenship, the figure below gives a lower estimate of the geographical spread of the diaspora.

Migrants are expected to send remittances to their families in their country of origin. For Kosovo this financial flow is of vital importance. Data presented in Figure 2 show that remittances still represent close to one-fifth of the Kosovar GDP.

¹ Toleration ("Duldung") provides that for a certain period of time the holder cannot be compelled to leave. Reasons for being granted such a certificate may be illness or war in one's home country. Many people from Kosovo and Serbia stayed in Germany with such papers for several years; however, their status remained insecure as the papers were issued (repeatedly) only for short periods.

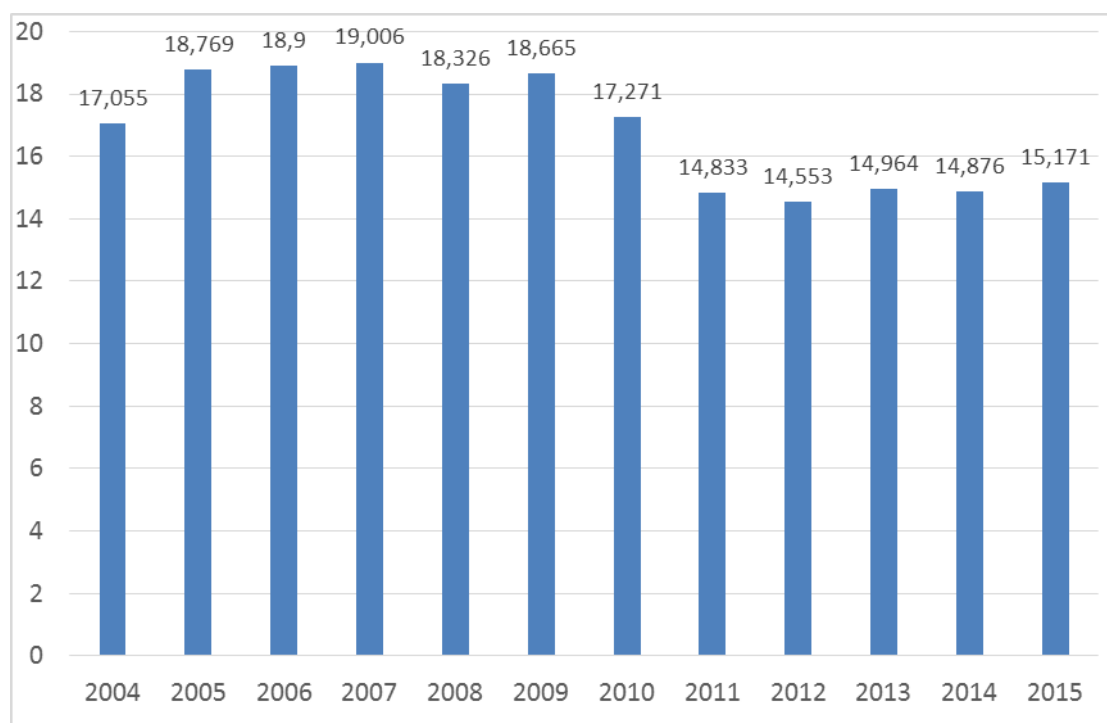
Figure 1: Population with citizenship of Kosovo (average 2014-16)

Source: EUROSTAT (2017) for all countries except Switzerland, Bundesamt für Statistik der Schweiz for Switzerland (2017), and Canada, Statistics Canada (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca>).

Note: Some countries with relevant Kosovar diaspora such as France or the USA, could not be included in the Figure due to missing data.

However, the chances for the latest wave of migrants to receive the right to stay and work in the EU are close to zero. This is due to several reasons. First of all, Kosovars are almost never accepted as rightful asylum seekers as Kosovo is listed as a "safe country of origin" in many EU member states including Germany. While in the past, Kosovar migrants could hope for long procedures which would often allow them to stay (and work) for years in the destination country, this has changed since the EU, and in particular Germany, Hungary, and Sweden have been struggling with a large influx of refugees from the Middle East (EUROSTAT, 2017)). This rise in migration has forced authorities to reduce the processing times of asylum claims in general and caused political pressure to implement stricter rules for granting asylum (ZEIT ONLINE, 2017). Therefore, the numbers of rejected asylum requests peaked in 2015 at almost 21,000 persons in Germany and reached close to 15,655 in 2016 (EUROSTAT). Earlier migrants with no permanent right to stay are also affected by the stricter enforcement of repatriation regulations. Within the period of January-December 2016, a reported 9,730 returnees (thereof 6,519 returned by force from different countries) arrived in Kosovo and needed to be reintegrated, while for the same period in 2015 this number was even higher at 16,546 (MIA, 2015, 2016)². This undoubtedly represents a significant challenge for Kosovo and calls for appropriate support and reintegration measures.

² The data provided by the Ministry of Internal Affairs need further explanation. Whereas a figure of 6519 returned persons is reported according to DCAM, the Case Management System reports 9730 persons in 2016.

Figure 2: Inflow of remittances to Kosovo as % of GDP

Source: WORLD BANK (2017), World Development Indicators.

1.1 Objectives

The overall objective of the study is to address the causes of migration and its consequences for rural areas of Kosovo. More specifically, we focus on the motives of migrants, the impact of migration on households left behind and the socio-economic situation of returning migrants. In the first part of this study, we will discuss the motivation behind migration. A specific focus is on drivers of the recent out-migration wave which started in 2014. We will furthermore shed some light on (positive and negative) migration impacts in the second part of the study: for some households, remittances received from migrated family members may alleviate poverty, while for others migration is linked to significant psychological burdens or lack of labour force in family businesses. In the third part, the study will focus on the consequences of return migration by identifying important attributes of the recently returned migrants and their specific needs and potentials for successful reintegration. We will look at the skill sets (education and experience) of the returnees, as well as their personal well-being and intentions to stay. Vulnerable groups such as women and ethnic minorities will be analysed separately. The study will provide recommendations on how the needs of returnees can be addressed and how they may contribute to a positive rural development in their communities. It will furthermore be used as a source of information for other ongoing projects dealing with return migration.

The study was closely coordinated with a number of stakeholders in the Republic of Kosovo. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) provided funds for this project in the framework of its project "Competitiveness of the Private Sector in Rural Areas". The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development (MAFRD) provided technical support. The study was carried out by the Leibniz Institute of Agricultural Development in Transition Economies (IAMO). Other programme partners include: municipalities, the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), the Ministry of Diaspora (MD), the Ministry of Finance (MF), the

Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST), the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW), NGOs, farmers' and forest owners' associations, women's groups and ethnic communities, the Kosovo Forestry Agency (KFA), and the Association of Municipalities in Kosovo (AMK).

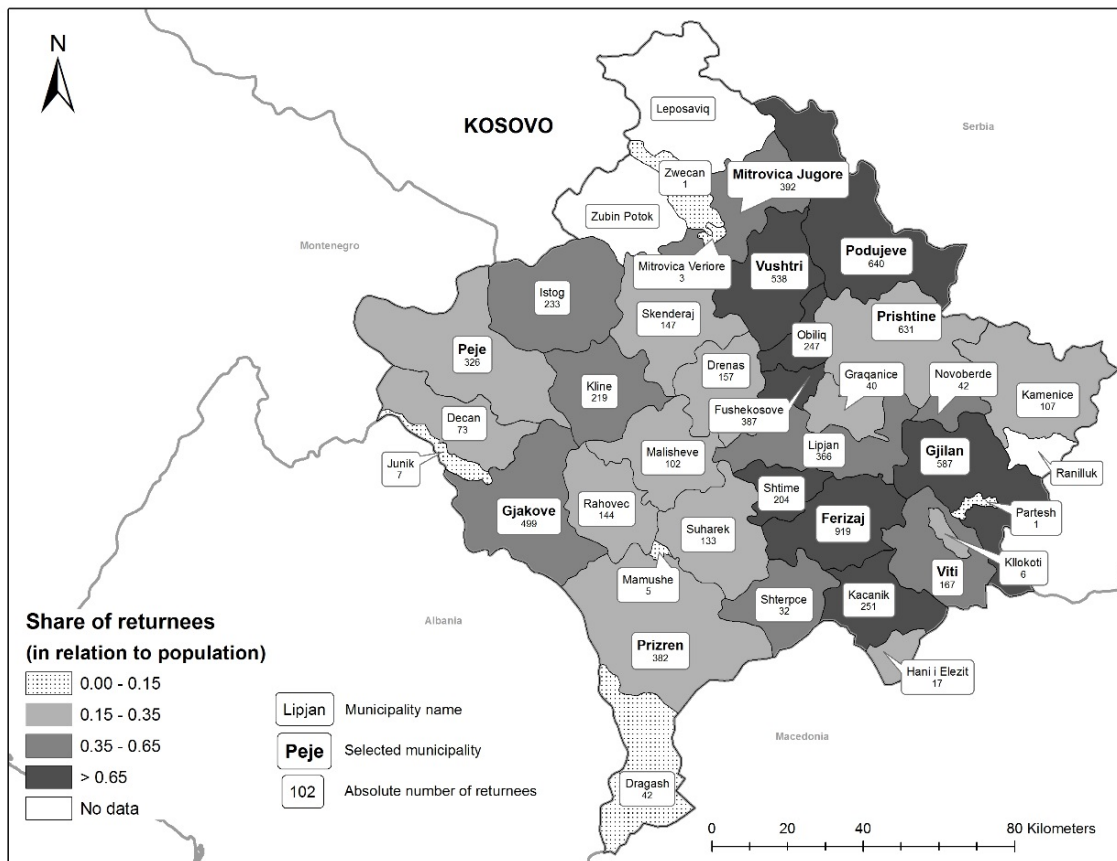
1.2 Study design and methodology

The study draws from a combination of desk research and field research. Desk research comprises a review of existing literature, empirical studies, and reports and surveys carried out by government bodies, and national and international organisations. The field work draws mainly on a small quantitative survey. Its main target group were returnees in mostly rural areas of Kosovo. Ten municipalities, marked with an asterisk in Figure 3, were selected for the survey. The field study took place in the following municipalities: Gjilan, Viti, Ferizaj, Prizren, Peja, Gjakova, Prishtina, Podujeva, Vushtri, and Mitrovica.³ The main selection criterion was the number of returnees that were registered. However, the selection of locations also reflects a balanced choice of areas with different agricultural potential and levels of rural development. Interviewees were randomly selected from a list of recently registered returnees. During selection strata with all concerned ethnicities⁴, gender and age groups were included. Most of these migrants left with the 2014/15 migration wave, but there are also long term migrants among the returnees. While the UN defines return migrants as those who are intending to stay in their own country for at least a year (UNITED NATIONS, 1998), we do not apply this criterion as the migration intention is one of the issues that we explore in this study. Instead, our sample simply consists of migrants who returned recently (within the last two years). The final sample size was 179 individuals. They were distributed over the 10 municipalities as shown in Table 1. Data collection was conducted in a timeframe of about two weeks in April 2017 in face to face interviews.

³ The administrative organisation of Kosovo is divided into seven regions. A region can have from one up to six municipalities. Municipalities are constituted of villages. For more information about the administrative structure, see: <http://www.gjiganti.com/kosova/komunat/prishtine.html>.

⁴ Among the registered returnees receiving assistance shown in Figure 3 there are 3,656 Albanians, 926 Roma, 910 Ashkali, 101 Egyptian, 44 Bosnian, 10 Goran, 23 Serbian, 6 Turk. In our final sample we included the three minority groups.

Figure 3: Regional distribution of return migration and survey sites



Source: Data for January till October 2016 provided by MIA (2017).

The field research was aimed at generating a quick, but sufficiently detailed insight into how individual returnees interpret their leaving and return. A particular interest was in understanding the specific (additional) triggers of the recent out-migration and the resulting challenges of increased return migration. The survey tool was a classical questionnaire. It was pre-tested and interviewers were trained with the final questionnaire before the survey took place. The questionnaire covered six topical sections: migration history, skills and education, household indicators and employment, economic well-being and staying/migration plans, personal well-being, and reintegration.

Table 1: Regional and ethnic composition of sample

Municipality	Ethnicity			
	Albanian	Roma	Ashkali	Egyptian
Prishtina	27	0	5	0
Podujeve	16	1	1	0
Ferizaj	25	0	3	0
Gjilan	13	0	0	0
Peja	3	3	2	0
Gjakova	1	0	4	12
Viti	8	0	6	0
Mitrovice	9	4	0	2
Vushtrri	17	0	0	0
Prizren	9	1	7	0
Total	128	9	28	14

Source: IAMO-GIZ-MAFRD Survey (2017).

2 MIGRATION MOTIVATION AND RURAL MIGRANT HOUSEHOLDS

This section describes what is known about the migration motives and, more generally, the migration traditions and routines (scripts) which shape rural livelihoods in Kosovo. It furthermore provides insights into typical features of rural migrants and provides a comparison of rural households with and without migrants in Kosovo.

2.1 Migration motives

The chief form of migration in eastern European countries is labour migration: recent labour flows in Europe are pushed by poorly functioning labour markets and insufficient productive capital, as well as quality of life considerations, which might drive, but also inhibit, migration (IOM, 2015; MANSOOR & QUILLIN, 2007). In Kosovo, the conflict in the 1990s led to an increase in politically and war-driven out-migration, but nowadays the majority of Kosovars intends to emigrate mainly for economic reasons.⁵ These include the differences in standards of living, paid employment opportunities and in the welfare (and health system) between Kosovo and the host countries (KOTORRI et al., 2013). As mentioned above, the country, and in particular its Albanian population, has a long-standing labour migration tradition, which has brought about migration routines, which are deeply rooted in social and cultural norms (MÖLLERS, ARAPI-GJINI, HERZFELD, & XHEMA, 2017; REINECK, 1991)⁶. These routines or "scripts" reflect the norms of the traditional household in which resources are pooled and migrants directly contribute to the pooled household income.⁷ Even if absent over decades, migrants remain part of the sending household and continue to be obliged to send remittances; similarly, the sending households feel entitled to remittances which constitute an essential source of rural livelihoods.

According to data from UNDP's 2011 Kosovo Remittance Study (KRS), around 13 % of Kosovar people intend to migrate.⁸ This intention is much higher for the Albanians (13.0 %) and other ethnicities (15.7 %) than it is for the Serbs (7.8 %) (DUVAL & WOLFF, 2015). The preferred destination choices for potential Albanian migrants are Switzerland, followed by Germany. This reflects current emigration trends for this ethnic group as well as the influence of migrant networks. The preferred destinations for the Serbs living in Kosovo are Serbia and Germany (DUVAL & WOLFF, 2015).

The probability of migrating differs not only between ethnic groups, but also according to socio-economic and demographic variables. Migration is triggered by factors that identify the household as weak, for example low incomes and education, or limited access to networks (KOTORRI et al., 2013). On the other hand, migration is pushed by a migration culture in which having a migrant in the family increases the reputation of a family. This rise in reputation might

⁵ This is true in particular for the Albanian majority while Serbs state political reasons as their leading motive to emigrate (DUVAL & WOLFF, 2015).

⁶ In a study by MÖLLERS, MEYER, XHEMA, and BUCHENRIEDER (2013) 96 % of the respondents interviewed in Kosovo stressed that migrants act as "role models". Even those with negative attitudes widely agree that young men are expected to migrate.

⁷ Typically, one family member – always a man, usually a young and unmarried man – had to go and earn money abroad. The whole family decided who should leave. The strong patriarchal family structures made it possible for migrants to be ordered back and exchanged by another family member if they failed to regularly remit. Thus, most of the money earned was saved and sent back. The migrants lived a modest life and understood their migration as a sacrifice that they had to make for the family (MÖLLERS et al., 2013).

⁸ This number is rather moderate compared to results by LOVO (2014), who find that in a number of other European countries more than 20% indicate that they would like to move to another country (e.g. in Estonia, Italy, Belgium and Lithuania).

be partly correlated to the migration-induced increase in income. Furthermore, people with networks abroad are shown to have a high propensity to migrate, especially if they are recipients of remittances (IVLEVS & KING, 2012). Social networks seem to play a major role before and after the arrival of the migrant in the destination country. MÖLLERS et al. (2013) showed for Kosovar migrants in Germany that they were assisted prior departure by parents and siblings. After arrival in Germany, almost all migrants received assistance in one way or another, mostly from relatives and friends who were living in Germany. A significant share of the interviewed migrants was able to make use of financial support from the German social system and social networks facilitate access to information and help with the administrative system.

In particular, young people – especially young, single males – have a high likelihood of emigrating (IVLEVS & KING, 2012). This is no surprise with view to existing migration scripts, as well as the extremely high youth unemployment rate. For these individuals, it seems that education rather increases the probability of taking concrete steps towards migrating. This was shown by a survey on preparedness to emigrate from Kosovo, carried out in the summer of 2008, which suggested that, holding all other factors constant, an extra year of education increases the probability of taking concrete steps to realizing migration intentions by up to 9 percentage points (IVLEVS & KING, 2012). Interestingly, people with children under six years of age also are shown to have a high propensity to emigrate (IVLEVS & KING, 2012). This might reflect the increased interest in permanent migration and the parents' desire for a better future for their children.⁹

2.2 Integration in the destination country – Some insights from Germany-based Kosovar migrants

As most studies interview migrant households at the place of origin, insights from migrants in the receiving country are less readily available. In the following, we briefly discuss some results from a study by MÖLLERS et al. (2013) describing how Kosovar migrants integrate in Germany. Integration in the destination country is assumed to influence return probabilities, as well as remitting behaviour. In the case of involuntary return, it might also be a factor that facilitates or hinders reintegration after repatriation.

According to MÖLLERS et al. (2013), most migrants continue to use Albanian as their main language regardless of how long they have been in the country (Table 2). Most Kosovars have no problems with speaking German, at least when they were in the country for a longer time, and many also have sufficient writing skills. The connection to the home country is strong, which is indicated in a high rate of feelings of homesickness. It is also shown in Table 3 where two-thirds of the respondents indicated that their link to Kosovo remains stronger than their link the country where they currently live. Despite this, the willingness to return to Kosovo is only high for older migrants who often came as guest workers. The younger migration waves are often still undecided, but show a low inclination to return.

Figure 4 also shows that connections to the home country are maintained and assimilation seems to be the exception. One-third of the respondents indicated that they mainly read

⁹ The trend towards longer term migration is not completely new. MÖLLERS et al. (2013) found, for example, that for Kosovar migrants in Germany, migration that was initially planned as temporary often evolved to a rather permanent one. The average stay of the respondents was 19 years; usually migration started with a young man, who, about 4-5 years later, had his nuclear family follow him. Among the more recent migrants (those who have arrived since the 2000s), there are many who had been away during the Kosovo conflict, but were deported back there after the war ended. For them reintegration into the still crisis-ridden home-country was often not easy and fuelled their wish to leave again.

Kosovar newspapers. Although differences between earlier and later migration waves exist, the share of respondents reporting a reliance on mainly German TV channels or newspapers reaches 16 % at maximum.

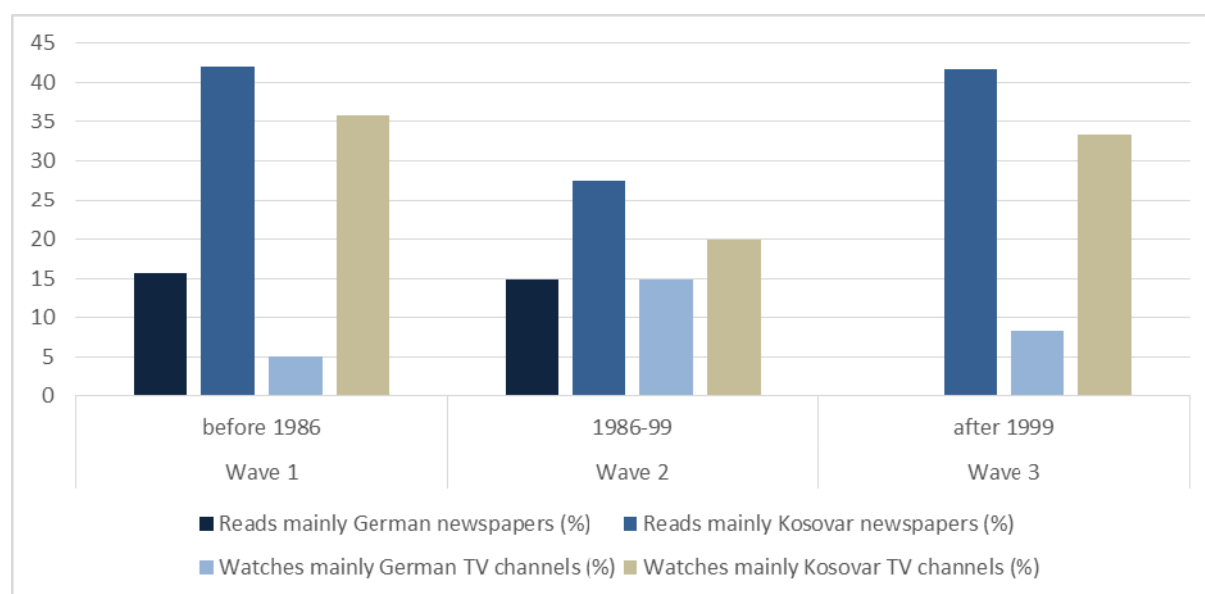
Table 2: Indicators of integration for three migration waves (2009)

	Wave 1 before 1986	Wave 2 1986-99	Wave 3 after 1999	Total	Significance
Total number of migrants of this wave in sample	40.0	162	24.0	226	
Indicators of integration					
Main language used is German (%)	2.5	13.6	12.5	11.5	
Main language used is Albanian (%)	62.5	40.1	62.5	46.5	**
Lack of German language skills (speaking) ^a (%)	2.6	4.3	37.5	7.6	***
Lack of German language skills (writing) ^a (%)	42.1	31.7	62.5	36.8	**
Feel very often homesick (%)	76.9	80.4	79.2	79.4	

Source: MÖLLERS et al. (2013).

Note: ^a Rating from 1-5. Share of answers in the categories (1) no or (2) bad German language skills. Differences between groups statistically significantly different from zero are indicated in the last column at the 1 % level (**), 5 % level (*) and 10 % level (*) based on Kruskal Wallis Test. n.s.= not significant.

Figure 4: Information channels by migration wave



Source: MÖLLERS et al. (2013).

Table 3: Migrants' return plans and ties to the origin along three migration waves (2009)

	Wave 1 before 1986	Wave 2 1986-99	Wave 3 after 1999	Total	Significance
Tie to KS is stronger than tie to Germany	63.2	65.6	70.8	65.8	n.s.
Tie to DE is weak (%)	15.8	5.6	16.7	8.6	n.s.
Tie to KS is weak (%)	2.6	0.6	4.2	1.3	n.s.
Plans to return to KS (%)	50.0	14.3	4.2	32.7	***

Source: MÖLLERS et al. (2013).

Note: N = 222. Differences between groups statistically significantly different from zero are indicated in the last column at the 1 % level (**), 5 % level (*) and 10 % level (*) based on Kruskal Wallis Test. n.s.= not significant.

The most recent migration wave, together with migrants from earlier waves who have no permanent work permit, is faced with forced return. They are described by MÖLLERS et al. (2017) as mostly lower middle class people – poor, but not from the poorest strata, often people who had access to some regular income in Kosovo. The largest group are young men in desperate search for a paid and secure job, which they could not find in Kosovo. They have fled from a situation in which they did not see any prospects for further education, obtaining a proper profession or entering employment at all. Another significant group are families who left together to start a new life. Among others, poor health care and education make prospects grim for a young family living in rural Kosovo or in small towns. Finally, there is a smaller group of very poor and/or vulnerable persons. Often, they are elderly people or people with health problems who hope to get appropriate treatment and social assistance. These are often families who strive for "humanitarian protection" for a sick child or elderly family member that cannot get treatment at home.

The recently arrived migrants often have no migration experience, but there are also people who were in Germany before. Some left Germany deliberately (often with their parents) after the war ended. They have now come back, disillusioned and with the hope to be able to return to their previous lives. A distinct group of young people among the incoming migrants could be labelled a lost generation. They once went to school in Germany after fleeing the war in Kosovo with their parents, and now wish to return because they never fully reintegrated into the Kosovar society after they left Germany (MÖLLERS et al., 2017).

2.3 A comparison of migrant and non-migrant households based on the Kosovo Remittance Study

The objective of this sub-section is to present important differences in the demographic- and income-related variables of Kosovar households with and without migrants based on a subsample of 1,727 rural households of the representative dataset of the Kosovo Remittance Study (KRS) of UNDP (2010). This comparison gives some first insights into how migrant households are selected and whether migration is linked, for example, to higher incomes or better education. Major socio-economic variables are contrasted in Table 4.

Rural households in Kosovo are typically large. The 1,727 rural households of the KRS have, on average, five family members (with considerable variation in the household size). The average age of the household head is 50 years. Around 28 % of the households are categorised as migrant households, meaning that they have at least one family member living abroad. On average, the number of migrants is 2.5. About 60 % of these migrant households receive remittances, contributing on average 13 % of their income. In less than 4 % of the rural households remittances make up the largest income share.¹⁰

However as represented by the dependency ratio (0.60 versus 0.49), households with migrants have a higher share of children and elderly persons to support. Obviously, the migrating member should be able to work abroad and belongs thus to the respective age cohort. Education is sometimes mentioned as a key door opener for migration activities. But although the educational attainment of the rural household heads is generally high (almost eleven years of schooling), it does not differ significantly between migrant and non-migrant households. The same is true for the highest level of education within the household.

¹⁰ However, as shown by MÖLLERS et al. (2013), remittances frequently represent between 30 % and 50 % of the recipient family's income.

Table 4: Socio-economic characteristics of rural households with and without migrants

	All households	Migrant household=1	0	Significance
Number of rural hohouseholds	1727.00	479.00	1248.00	--
Household size	4.97	5.03	4.95	n.s.
Dependency ratio	0.52	0.60	0.49	***
Age of HH head	49.85	52.47	48.85	***
Years of education of household head	10.95	10.68	11.06	n.s.
Number of migrants	0.71	2.54	0.00	***
Highest level of education in household (%)				
- Primary School (up to 4 years) or lower	2.21	2.30	2.17	n.s.
- Secondary General School (~ 8 years)	8.25	9.81	7.64	n.s.
- Vocational or Grammar School (~12 years)	50.35	47.60	51.41	n.s.
- University degree	39.20	40.29	38.78	n.s.
Household income (€)	4,819	5,177	4,682	n.s.
Household income incl. remittances (€)	5,249	6,728	4,682	***
PC income, equivalised (€)	1,889	2,017	1,840	n.s.
PC income incl. remittances, equivalised (€)	2,060	2,633	1,840	***
Income shares (%)				
- Waged employment	66.62	58.83	74.52	***
- Self-employment	10.66	6.47	11.22	**
- Remittances	5.14	13.15	0.00	***
- Other income	17.58	18.16	12.50	***

Source: Own calculation based on KRS 2010 data.

Note: N=1,727 rural households; PC = per capita.

Differences between groups statistically significantly different from zero are indicated in the last column at the 1 % level (**), 5 % level (*) and 10 % level (*) based on Kruskal Wallis Test. n.s.= not significant.

The average annual household income (excluding remittances) lies at around €4,800 per annum. When remittances are not considered in the household income, differences between migrant and non-migrant households are not significant; if remittances are included, migrant households have significantly higher household and per capita incomes¹¹. Per capita incomes that include remittances are 70 % higher for migrant households than for non-migrant households (€2,633 versus €1,840).

The major share of rural incomes, around two-thirds, stems from waged employment. Indeed, 70 % of all rural households have waged employment as their primary income source. The

¹¹ Per capita incomes are equivalised, meaning that they are adjusted to the household size to better reflect economies of scale. Economies of scale arise in many ways in a family, for example by sharing certain expenditures such as housing or a car. The equivalised income refers to the so called modified OECD equivalence scale. It assigns the coefficient 1 to the household head, 0.5 to other adults in the household, and 0.3 to children under the age of 16.

income share is lower for migrant households (59 %). Self-employment is the primary income source of around 11 % of all rural households. It plays a slightly bigger role in the income portfolio of non-migrant households (11 % income share versus 6 % in migrant households).

Income from farming activities, unfortunately not included in the KRS database, constitute a minor income source for rural households. National statistics show that only around 6 % of Kosovar households indicate that farm incomes are their major income source, and the contribution to overall individual incomes is only 1 % (SOK, 2010). Even for farm households this share at 13 % is surprisingly low, most likely due to the small average farm size of less than three hectares and low levels of market orientation (MÖLLERS et al., 2013).

The category "other income" in Table 4 is mainly derived from pensions or social payments. At the national level, social welfare benefits account for 2 % of individual incomes, pensions from Kosovo for 6 % and pensions from abroad for 4 % of the incomes (SOK, 2010). According to KRS data these contribute a surprisingly large share (18 %) of total rural household incomes (Table 1); around 14 % indicate that "other income" is their main source of income. The significant difference between migrant and non-migrant households is probably due to former or current migrants having access to pensions from abroad.

3 MIGRATION IMPACTS IN RURAL KOSOVO

Migration usually has positive impacts at the place of origin. However, it is also linked to concerns over a number of potential costs (MCKENZIE & YANG, 2014, 2015). Among the positive impacts at the level of individuals and households are, for example, poverty alleviation through remittances, and employment creation through investments and knowledge transfer. There is ample empirical evidence of the positive impacts of remittances on the consumption and income levels of the sending household (see, for instance, ADAMS, 2011; MÖLLERS & MEYER, 2014; TAYLOR, 1992), as well as the subjective well-being (e.g. JOARDER, HARRIS, & DOCKERY, 2016). On the negative side, there are concerns related, for example, to the ability of households receiving large, temporary flows of remittances to save appropriately. Furthermore, remittances might induce a disincentive effect, crowding out the entrepreneurial initiatives of the household members at the place of origin. However, empirical evidence is not unanimous (COX, HANSEN, & JIMENEZ, 2004). There are also concerns that the benefits of migration do not spread far beyond the immediate household; concerns that sending countries are losing the positive externalities of highly skilled workers; and concerns about human trafficking and abuse of migrant rights. Thus, the communities receiving remittances may be faced with specific migration related vulnerabilities (CARLING, 2014; MEYER, MÖLLERS, & BUCHENRIEDER, 2012). Another branch of the literature deals with the effects of family separation, which is often addressed by looking at the wellbeing of those left behind (e.g. GRAHAM & JORDAN, 2011; JONES, 2014).

This section aims at shedding some light on what is known about the effects of migration and remittances in rural Kosovo. The focus is on whether and how remittance flows contribute to poverty alleviation and employment creation through investments and skills transfers. Finally, we address ambiguous effects of migration, in particular with regard to how remittances affect education.

3.1 Poverty alleviation

Effects on poverty and inequality depend on the number of recipients, absolute amounts of remittances, and who sends migrants and receives remittances. Based on the subsample of 1,727 rural households drawn from the representative dataset of the Kosovo Remittance Study (KRS) of UNDP (2010), we quantify the income-related outcomes of migration on (migrant sending) rural households. The results show that the share of households receiving remittances increases with the income class and that, on average, wealthier families have more migrating family members (Table 5). It is thus very likely that household income is higher due to migration and remittances. The causal effect will be discussed further below.

Table 5: Socio-economic characteristics according to income classes

	All households	Income class (tertile)			Significance
		1	2	3	
Number of rural HH	1727	616	573	538	---
Share of remittances receiving HH in %	16.79	7.79	14.14	25.47	***
HH size	4.97	5.64	4.92	4.26	***
Dependency ratio	0.52	0.57	0.41	0.34	***
Age of HH head	49.85	50.73	50.20	48.46	**
Number of migrants	0.71	0.44	0.69	1.02	***
Share of HH with at least one migrant	27.74	18.02	25.83	40.89	***
PC income, equivalised (€)	2,060	1,047	1,996	4,512	***
Income shares (%)					
- Waged employment	66.62	55.30	74.50	71.17	***
- Self-employment	10.66	13.91	9.38	8.30	**
- Remittances	5.14	2.63	4.35	8.83	***
- Other income	17.58	28.15	11.75	11.70	***
HH with remittances as main income source (%)	3.65	1.95	2.62	6.69	***
Share in all household incomes (%)	100.00	18.41	29.70	51.90	--
Upward shift compared to tertile based on counterfactual migrant incomes	28.20	--	28.10	60.59	--

Source: Own calculation based on KRS 2010 data.

Note: N=1,727 rural households (HH); Income class according to per capita (PC) income, whereby Tertile 1 includes incomes up to 1500 Euros, Tertile 2 incomes >1500 Euros and < 4500 Euros, and Tertile 3 includes all incomes > 4500 Euros.

Differences between groups statistically significantly different from zero are indicated in the last column at the 1 % level (**), 5 % level (*) and 10 % level (.) based on Kruskal Wallis Test. n.s.= not significant.

More specifically, poorer households have significantly fewer migrants, and less than 10 % receive remittances at all. In particular, the number of migrant households (with at least one migrant) is significantly higher in wealthier households. Accordingly, the percentage contribution of remittances to the income portfolios rises from the poor to the wealthy tertile. In the wealthiest income class, more than one-quarter of households receive remittances; for almost 7 % of households in the third tertile remittances are their main income source.

Whether recipient households have climbed the ladder towards this wealthy tertile or were better off in the first place is an important question. One indication for the amount of upward shifting is shown in a comparison for tertile membership in a counterfactual situation. The counterfactual situation implies that instead of the actual income of the migrant household, the observed income of a similar non-migrant household is imputed as counterfactual income. The matching was done with propensity score matching analysis. Results of this comparison show that 28 % moved from tertile 1 in the counterfactual (non-migration) scenario towards tertile 2 in the actual (migration) scenario. More than 60 % of wealthy households in tertile 3 come from the counterfactual tertiles 1 and 2.

The impact of remittances on the poverty incidence is further discussed by MÖLLERS and MEYER (2014) along three different poverty lines. The consumption-based poverty line of €1.55 per day in 2009 prices used by the WORLD BANK and STATISTICAL OFFICE OF KOSOVO (2011) is far below the average expenditure of the poorest tertile of the KRS rural households of around €83 per person per month. It thus clearly reflects extreme poverty. According to this poverty

line, 7 % of the rural sample is considered extremely poor. Vulnerability to poverty is reflected in the PPP-US\$4.30 line which reflects a yearly per capita income of €1,450. Here, the vulnerability incidence lies at 45 %. A relative poverty line of 60 % of the median of the equivalised per capita income is below the PPP-US\$4.30 line. It refers to a per capita income of €930 per year and results in a poverty incidence of 20 %. Based on a scenario of counterfactual incomes for households receiving remittances, poverty levels would rise between 0 % and 3 % if households were not supported by their family members living abroad. Yet, extreme poverty seems to be unaffected by remittances. This may be explained by the self-selection of migrants from the middle and higher income groups. For the relative poverty line MÖLLERS and MEYER (2014) found that 18 % of the migrant households are able to raise above the poverty threshold due to remittances. Their analysis further shows that migration leads to an average income increase of around €690 per capita and year in migrant households.

An indicator for the existence of income inequality within rural Kosovar households is shown in Table 5 in the fact that the richest income group earns more than half of all incomes, while the share of the poorest tertile in all household incomes is only 18 %. A calculation of rural Gini coefficients, which are not shown in the table, showed that compared to the national Gini coefficient for the year 2005 (0.30) (WORLD BANK, 2007), the sample indicates a slightly higher inequality for our rural population (0.37). Remittances are shown to have an un-equalising effect.

3.2 Employment creation – Is there a trickling down of migration-related investments and skills?

What is most needed in Kosovo's rural areas is employment creation in and outside of the agricultural sector. Migration is sometimes linked to supporting employment creation as migrants return with substantial accumulated savings, newly acquired specific experience and skills, or new business ideas that could raise domestic productivity and employment upon return. However, empirical support for this claim is rather patchy and there is no consensus with respect to the effects of return migration on economic growth and development (KOTORRI et al., 2013). Still, there are two key questions: how are remittances and money brought from abroad spent at home? And do migrants and returnees bring skills and ideas which are used in a productive way in rural areas?

Financial investments

A low level of business investments may be linked to the institutional context of markets and the characteristics of the return migrants such as their age, education and labour market experience. DUMONT and SPIELVOGEL (2008) summarised a number of studies demonstrating that the business environment and the banking sector at home are crucial for the entrepreneurial activities of return migrants.

Focusing on the case of Kosovo, limited empirical insights exist. DUVAL and WOLFF (2015) demonstrated that remittances are rather linked to increased consumption and less to investment activities. In line with this, HAXHIKADRIJA (2009) reported that in Kosovo the receipt of remittances is often followed by the purchase of leisure goods such as satellite dishes, mobile phones or cameras. Next to daily expenses, rural households primarily use remittances to improve their basic equipment. As such, expenses frequently flow into imported goods, trickle down effects and thus longer term impacts on development and poverty reduction may be hampered. In a study by MÖLLERS et al. (2013), almost 40 % of surveyed migrant-sending households in Kosovo indicated that they used remittances for repaying consumption credits.

The same number of households reported to have used remittances for the purchase of electrical devices such as TVs or microwave ovens for private use. Around 46 % spent remittances for health expenditures which otherwise would have been difficult to pay for. Another important field for the use of remittances were festivities such as weddings or funerals. Although greater rewards are likely if remittances are spent on investments, migrants' financial capital may generate positive economic growth even when used for consumption due to multiplier effects.

With regard to investments, MÖLLERS et al. (2013) found that, in general, incomes of rural households are mostly consumed and there is only limited room for investments at all. The small income share that is invested flows into housing (including repairs, a flat in town, a bathroom, or devices that are used in the house). A few households have bought cars or invested in farm equipment or land.¹² Investments into other businesses such as a bakery or a small shop are the exception.¹³ However, if money was invested in self-employment businesses, a substantial part of the seed money came from remittances (on average 52 %) compared to 15 % of the investment financed via bank loans. Thus, it seems that remittances facilitate the establishment of a business in Kosovo but the individual intentions to start a business or other institutional constraints are more likely to be the limiting factor.

Social capital and know-how transfer

Some migrants return motivated by the hope that their augmented human capital may open up new opportunities and significant future returns (DUSTMANN & WEISS, 2007; MAYR & PERI, 2008). Yet, empirical support is ambiguous here too (KOTORRI et al., 2013). Several studies on southern Europe have found that because the great majority of migrants work in unskilled jobs, few return with work experience that can be considered important to the development of the home economy (GLYTSOS & KATSELIS, 2005; GMELCH, 1980, cited in KOTORRI et al. 2013). Another field in which returnees are portrayed as important innovators is that of social norms. They bring with them different views on, for example, waste management or work attitudes, but also in terms of gender roles. In addition to introducing new experiences, and being sensitive to differences in work culture and environment, returnees often transform their knowledge by reinterpreting and adapting it rather than simply transferring it to a new context (ISKANDER & LOWE, 2011). Finally, KOTORRI et al. (2013) pointed out that among the factors that determine the success of the transfer of returnees' innovative potential are the home countries' institutional contexts, such as legal framework, business environment, institutional characteristics and economic progress (MARKLEY, 2011) and how effectively returnees interact with the organisations and institutions in the home country (CASSARINO, 2004). During their stay abroad, migrants benefit from the possibility to accumulate social capital specific to their host country, including language skills, forming networks and acquiring knowledge of the economic and institutional conditions of their new country of residence (DUMONT & SPIELVOGEL, 2008).

¹² For farm households in neighbouring Albania, MILUKA, CARLETTO, DAVIS, and ZEZZA (2010) suggest that migration is used by rural households as a way out of agriculture. For Kosovo there are, however, no indications that significant amounts of remittances are used for this purpose, yet, those few households that do report business investments often make use of remittances (GASHI & HAXHIKADRIJA, 2012; MÖLLERS et al., 2013).

¹³ Non-farm family businesses are of particular interest in terms of development as they open up an income source for the family where perhaps no other or no attractive employment alternatives are available. In the case of success, it can be expected that family businesses also contribute to employment creation. Difficult access to credit is often a key constraint for rural households that wish to start a business. Indeed, rural credit markets often fail to provide potential entrepreneurs with the financial services they need. Furthermore, rural people are often reluctant to go into debt. Remittances can therefore be an important substitute for bank loans (MÖLLERS et al., 2013).

Empirical evidence for Kosovo is scarce, but MÖLLERS et al. (2013) reported that, of those who actually started a business, when asked to indicate the key relation between the migration activities and the foundation of the business, one-third of the respondents stated that the migrant brought the idea for the business from abroad.

3.3 Further (ambiguous) effects of migration

As mentioned above, migration can sometimes also be related to problematic effects. In particular, the receipt of remittances might be seen as critical if it leads to a disincentive effect with regard to taking up employment or entrepreneurial initiatives (COX et al., 2004; KALAJ, 2013). Migration and remittances may also negatively influence the ability and motivation to invest in education. While on the one hand migration may contribute to relaxing household budget constraints and consequently lead to increases in education expenditures, there are negative implications as well. As, for example, MCKENZIE and RAPOPORT (2006) showed that migration acts to lower children's education such as through the disruption of the household structure (absent parents), direct substitution of schooling today for migration today, and the change in expected future returns to education when migration becomes a competing strategy to education in the prospect of migration possibilities.

In Kosovo, budget constraints related to education investments are expected to mainly affect higher education participation (as primary and secondary education is mandatory and publicly provided). Empirical evidence is not clear. While KOTORRI et al. (2013) found that only a relatively small portion of remittances is spent on education, and, contrary to expectations, remittances do not increase participation in higher education, a smaller survey of MÖLLERS et al. (2013) found that around 45 % of migrant households reported that they used remittances for education purposes which otherwise could not have been financed.

Another field of potentially negative consequences of migration is discussed in sociological and psychological research. This strand of research stresses a decline in "relationship capital" and homesickness as further negative consequences of migration (McCANN, POOT, & SANDERSON, 2010). Relationship capital describes the investments needed to create, maintain and improve long-lasting cohesion among family members or other interpersonal relations (DOLLAHITE & ROMMEL, 1993). Investments can take monetary and non-monetary forms. As any capital, the stock of relationship capital is assumed to depreciate over time. Thus, relations between migrants and their sending households get weaker if no interactions (e.g. phone calls, visits, remittances) take place. Homesickness here refers to a state of distress among the migrants, but could also be an issue among returnees who have been well integrated in their country of residence. In extreme cases, homesickness could result in far-reaching negative effects on health (VAN TILBURG, VINGERHOETS, & VAN HECK, 1996). Similarly, disrupted migration circles and (in particular forced) return are a source of stress and may constitute a risk factor for health and mental health (GERACI, 2011; TOSCANI et al., 2007). That these health and well-being related factors are linked to the successful reintegration and thus in the wider sense development of the migrants, is widely neglected so far in the literature about migrants from transition countries and their sending households. In the survey among returnees we aim to shed some light on these consequences of migration for Kosovar returnees (see Section 4.5)

4 RETURN MIGRATION – WHO ARE THE RETURNEES AND HOW DO THEY REINTEGRATE AFTER THEIR RETURN?

This section first briefly introduces return migration to Kosovo. It then focuses on survey results on the most recent wave of returned migrants. In this analysis we identify important attributes of the returned migrants and their specific needs and potentials for successful reintegration. We look at the general profile and skill sets (education and experience) of the returnees, as well as their personal well-being. Vulnerable groups such as women and ethnic minorities will be analysed separately where appropriate. With view to return migrants' needs we analyse the use of assistance measures and difficulties experienced by the returnees. Finally we discuss the returnees' intentions to stay or leave.

4.1 Return migration to Kosovo – What do we already know?

Earlier studies, although few in number, found that migrants are more likely to return if they are from households with very low or very high levels of per capita income, that have lower shares of household members in employment, lower shares of females, consist of more than one member, have a lower level of socio-economic integration, or if the migrant emigrated during the war (KOTORRI et al., 2013). The link between education and return is less clear. While KOTORRI et al. (2013) found that those who are or have been educated in the host country have a lower probability of returning, all else equal, GASHI and ADNETT (2015) found that the more educated migrants and those who have acquired additional education whilst abroad are more likely to return. Finally, migrants possessing permanent resident status and staying with their family abroad are less likely to return (GASHI and ADNETT, 2015).

Most Kosovars who return do so either because the prospects of further work abroad have come to an end, or through the special voluntary and forced return programs within the EU (VIERU, 2015, p. 6).¹⁴ The success of return greatly depends on the preparedness of the migrant. Disruptions to the migration circle, which are typically the case for current returnees to Kosovo, might have serious implications for the migrants' wellbeing. An interrupted migration experience is linked to failure, problems with reintegration, and high re-migration rates (DAVID, 2017). Repatriated persons in Kosovo, in most cases, restart their life with few resources of their own, or totally dependent on social schemes (MIA, 2013, p. 11). It is therefore no surprise that return migrant households have significantly lower average gross monthly incomes per capita compared to non-return migrant households. In addition, the share of household members who are in employment is significantly lower among return migrant households (KOTORRI et al., 2013, p. 54).

4.2 General profile of our sample of return migrants

Our sample comprises 179 recent returnees, 61 women and 118 men, from 10 municipalities. Most of them migrated illegally and were repatriated after applying for asylum in Western Europe. The sample includes four ethnic groups: Albanian (71 %), Ashkali (15 %), Roma (5 %) and Egyptian (8 %) (see Table 1). The share of ethnic minorities in our sample exceeds their share among the total population by more than a factor of ten.

¹⁴ As of 1 January 2015, according to the homepage of the German Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, the German return program no longer provides start assistance, but funds only travel costs for Kosovar returnees from Germany who arrived after 31 December 2014, (<https://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Meldungen/DE/2015/20150304-reag-garp-starthilfen.html>).

Almost all of the return migrants interviewed (93 %) left Kosovo in 2014/15 (Table 6). They most commonly took the route via Serbia and Hungary towards Western Europe. A major part (80 %) of the returnees left Kosovo together with their family; single migrants were more common among males, while women almost always travelled together with other family members (Figure 6). At the time of the interview, migrants were between 18 and 65 years old (Table 7). The average age was 35 years. This relatively young age reflects the young age structure of Kosovo, as well as the typically young age of migrants (see Sections 2.2 and 2.3). Two-thirds of the male migrants were the heads of their household, while this was the case for only about 10 % of female respondents. The level of education was lower than that of the general population in terms of the share in upper secondary and higher education (Figure 5). On average, migrants attended school for around nine years (lower secondary school). The typical households had five to six household members of which two were children. The dependency ratios were slightly higher (i.e. with more dependent persons) compared to the nationally representative sample shown in Table 4.

With regard to preparing the trip, it seemed that most people left spontaneously. Some left without collecting any significant information (6 %), others followed rumours they had heard (58 %), and yet another group left after watching TV (or other) news programmes in which they saw busses full of migrants leaving the country (26 %). Social media played a surprisingly small role: less than 1 % of respondents mentioned this as their main source of information regarding their migration. For most of the respondents (93 %) Germany was the country of destination. Other destination countries mentioned were France (7 persons), Austria (3 persons), Sweden (2 persons) and Belgium (1 person).¹⁵

Table 6: Migration and return

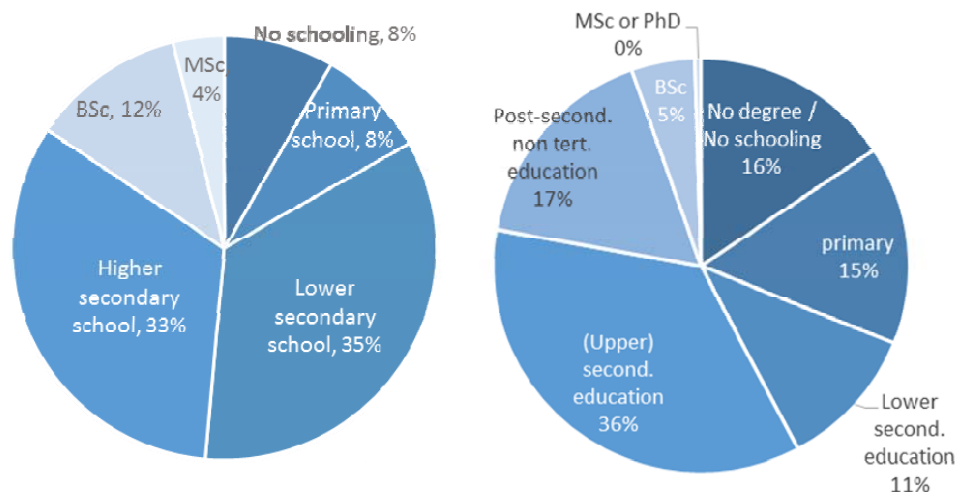
	Total	Women	Men	Significance
Number of returnees in sample	179	61.0	118.0	
Left with 2014/15 wave (%)	92.7	91.8	93.2	n.s.
Duration of stay abroad (months) ^a	14.4	13.0	15.1	***
Left as a family (%)	79.9	96.7	71.2	***
Returned to origin municipality (%)	95.5	96.0	95.8	n.s.
Return was forced (%)	24.9	24.6	25.0	***
Return was voluntary with assistance (%)	56.5	63.9	52.6	***
Return was voluntary without assistance (%)	18.6	11.5	22.4	***

Source: IAMO-GIZ-MAFRD Survey (2017).

Note: ^aTwo outliers are not included in the mean calculation for the duration of the stay.

Differences between groups statistically significantly different from zero are indicated in the last column at the 1 % level (**), 5 % level (*) and 10 % level (•) based on Kruskal Wallis Test. n.s.= not significant.

¹⁵ Our result is in line with earlier findings which show that Kosovar migrants mainly choose destinations in Europe (e.g. Germany, Switzerland) and less often in the USA or in Australia (VIERU, 2015).

Figure 5: Highest level of education achieved (left) in comparison to Life in Transition Study (right)

Source: IAMO-GIZ-MAFRD SURVEY (2017), Life in Transition Survey (2010).

Table 7: Demographic characteristics of return migrants

	Total	Women	Men	Significance
Age (years)	35.4	35.9	35.1	**
Return migrant is household head (%)	46.4	9.8	65.3	***
Household size (no.)	5.8	5.7	5.9	n.s.
Number of children (no.)	1.9	1.9	1.8	n.s.
Dependency ratio ^a	0.8	1.0	0.8	n.s.
School attendance (years) ^a	9.4	8.6	9.8	n.s.

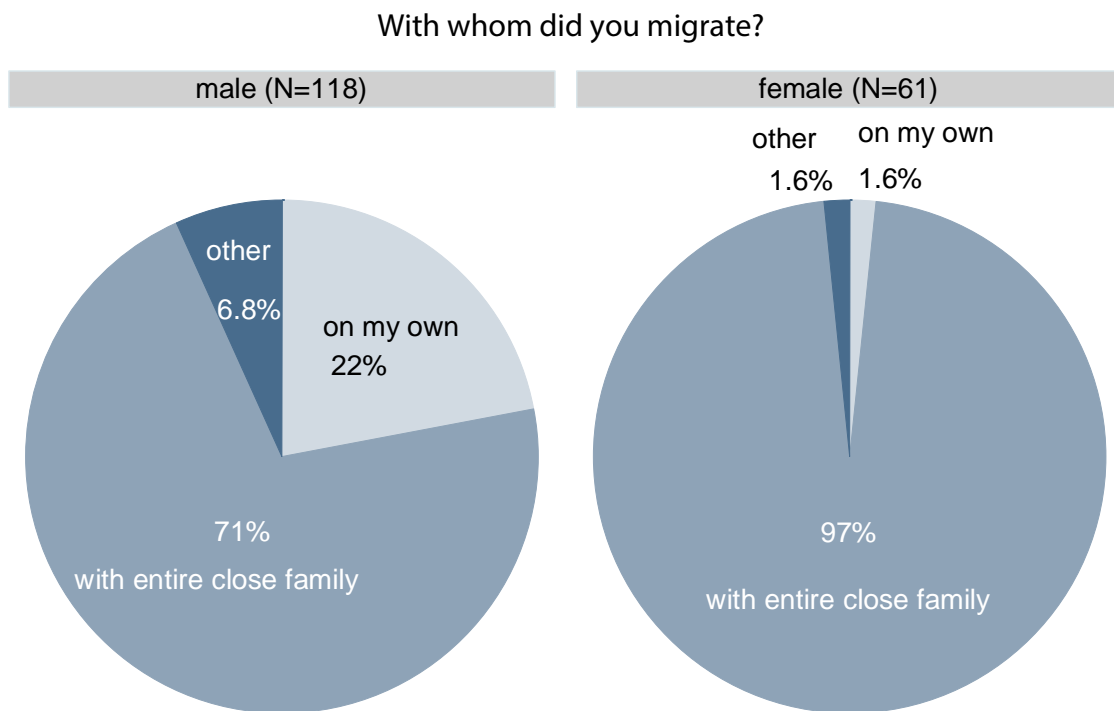
Source: IAMO-GIZ-MAFRD Survey (2017).

Note: N = 179/^aN = 176.

Differences between groups statistically significantly different from zero are indicated in the last column at the 1 % level (**), 5 % level (*) and 10 % level (*) based on Kruskal Wallis Test. n.s.= not significant.

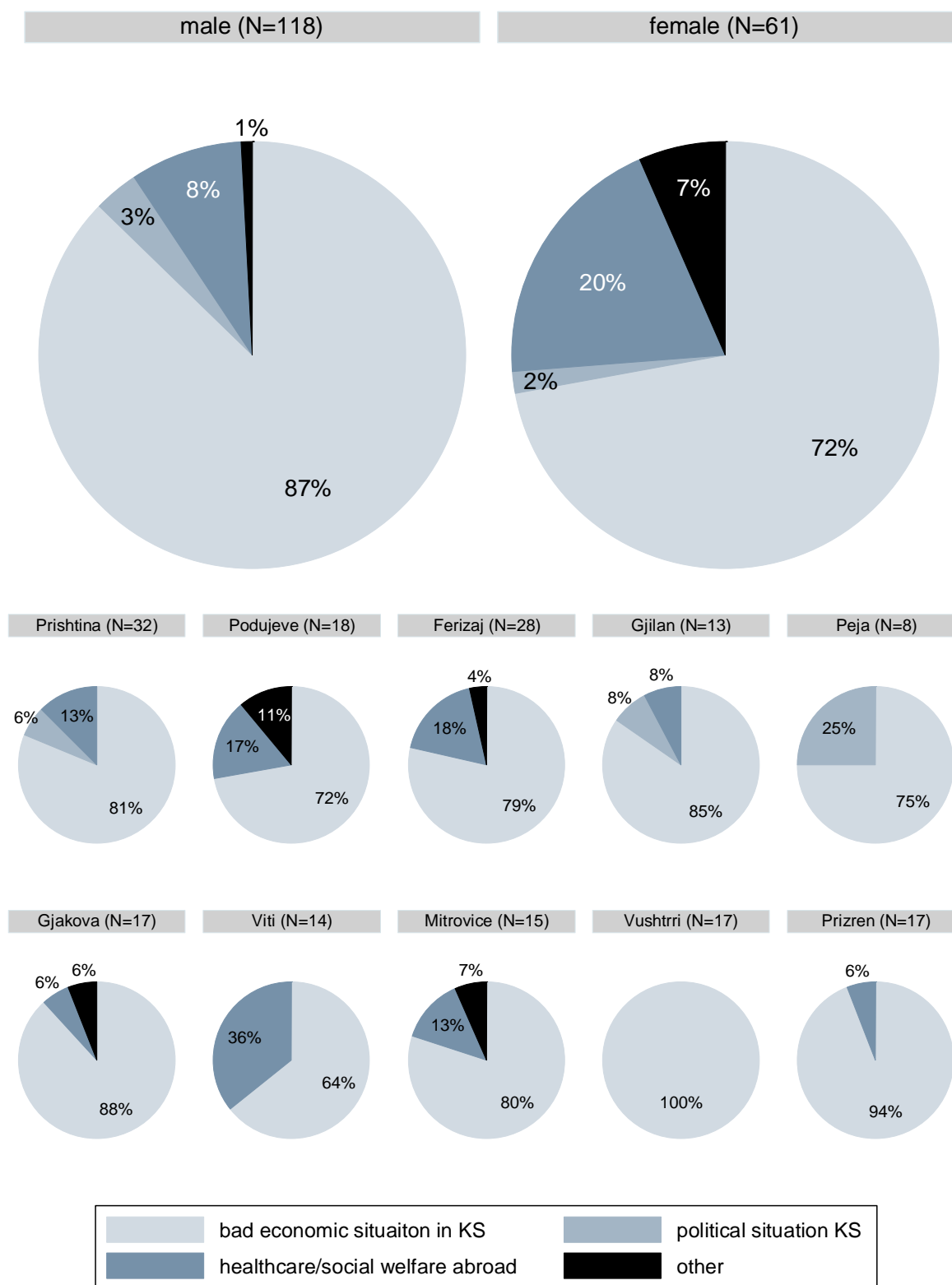
The main driver of the decision to migrate was the bad economic situation in Kosovo. This reason was given by 82 % of respondents as their main migration motivation. The second important reason was the wish to access better health care or social welfare in the destination country. Twelve per cent of respondents indicated this as their main reason to leave. The political situation and other reasons were of low importance compared to these two main motives. When looking at gender differences, it can be seen that for women the health and social welfare motives were more important than for men (Figure 7); other reasons mentioned by women were family related problems and ethnic discrimination. Regional data points at differences in the importance of political dissatisfaction as a driver of migration.¹⁶ In Peja, for example, one-quarter of the respondents, indicated that they left Kosovo due to dissatisfaction with the political situation. This reason is actually only relevant in three of the researched municipalities. Interestingly, the health and social welfare motives also only seemed relevant in four of the ten researched municipalities, in Podujeva, Ferizaj, Gjakova and Mitrovica (Figure 7).

¹⁶ All results referring to regional differences have to be treated with care due to very small sample sizes.

Figure 6: Migration patterns for men and women

Source: IAMO-GIZ-MAFRD Survey (2017).

Figure 7: Migration motivation: Gender and regional differences

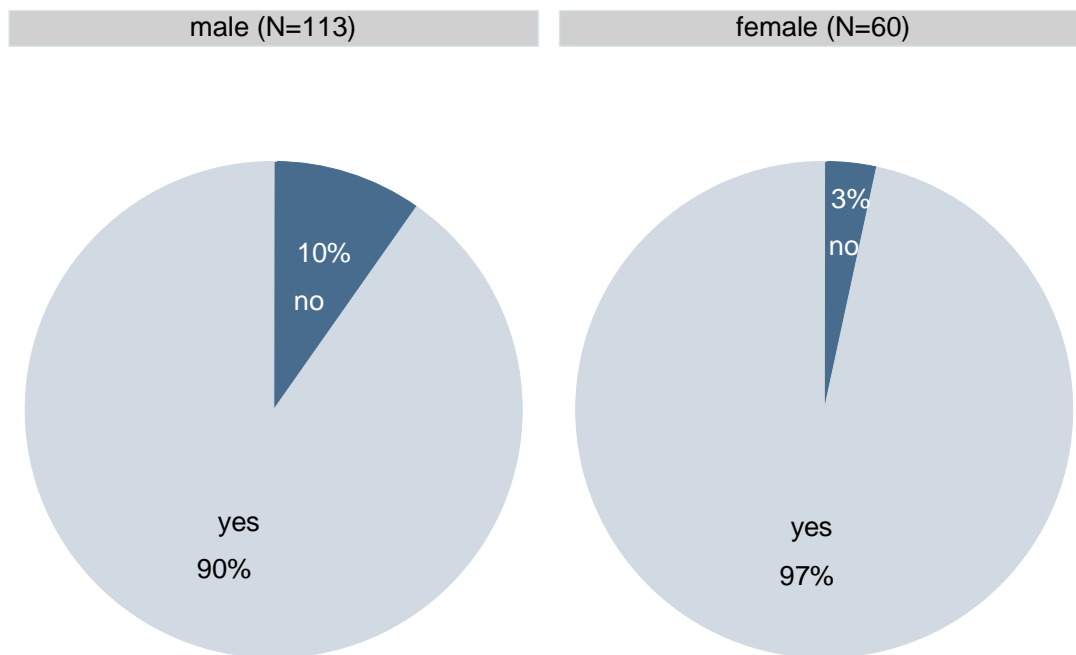


Source: IAMO-GIZ-MAFRD Survey (2017).

The average stay in the destination country was 14 months, whereby men stayed longer on average than women (Table 6). Most of the returnees were abroad for only a relatively short period of time, most frequently between four and seven months. However, this short stay was

not intended: 92 % indicated that they had hoped to permanently settle in western Europe. This share is even higher among women (Figure 8). Although only one-quarter of the respondents was returned by force, those who returned voluntarily had in fact no other choice, but usually decided to accept assistance for voluntary return (around 57 %) in order to avoid forced deportation. This support is offered by the destination countries such as Germany, where voluntary returns are promoted through the Reintegration and Emigration Programme for Asylum-Seekers in Germany and the Government-Assisted Repatriation Programme, which cover travel expenses and, until 2015, provided a start-up aid. Less than 20 % returned voluntarily and without assistance (Table 6). The place of return was usually the same municipality from which the migrants had initially started off (Table 6).

Figure 8: Intentions to stay abroad on a permanent basis



Source: IAMO-GIZ-MAFRD Survey (2017).

Box 1: Health as a reason to leave Kosovo

Case 1. A family from the municipality of Vushtrri decided to go abroad for the improvement of their daughter's health. Their daughter could not speak properly and could not be understood by strangers. After searching in vain for a special school and therapy for the child in Kosovo, the family decided to go abroad with money borrowed from relatives because they themselves lived under difficult economic conditions and had no regular income. After a stressful journey, they arrived in Germany where the girl could finally go to a special school for people with such disabilities. The daughter's speaking skills began to improve, despite still being traumatised from the journey. Yet, the stay in Germany soon ended when the family's request for asylum was declined. Back in Kosovo, the girl's condition deteriorated once more and returned to the state it was before migration. A therapy offered for free by a specialised therapist in another town had to be stopped as the family was unable to pay for the travel cost.

Case 2. A lady from a village in the municipality of Prishtina, decided to go to Germany for surgery after she had a very bad experience in a hospital in Prishtina. She sold all her valuables, such as gold and some home furnishings, to pay for the trip. After her arrival in Germany, she had a successful operation. She stayed in Germany for some months in order to recover before she came back to her village in Kosovo with the idea to open a small pastry shop for making different kinds of sweets.

Case 3. A family of eight in a village in the municipality of Mitrovica, was facing extreme poverty. In addition, their eldest son, aged sixteen, suffered from hip dislocation, a condition which required immediate surgical treatment. The boy was first unsuccessfully operated on in Mitrovica. He was then sent to a hospital in Prishtina only to find that they do not perform such surgical procedures. Finally they decided to have the boy treated in Skopje at a cost of 5,000 euros. They had to borrow money and accepted additional work to finance the surgery, which was again, unfortunately, unsuccessful. The family was devastated both emotionally and financially. Since their son could not seek treatment in Kosovo, they decided to migrate illegally, hoping that he could be treated elsewhere. They sold all their cattle to afford the expenses for all eight members. During their stay of one and a half years in Germany the son was not able to receive the operation and finally the family was forced to return in despair. The family's fate took a happy turn when some German families, who they met during their stay, raised funds for the boy's treatment. At the time of the survey, the boy and his father were in Germany receiving the treatment they were promised.

Case 4. A young mother from a village in the municipality of Podujeva decided to go to Germany after her doctor recommended her to do this. She wanted to seek medical assistance for her heart problem that she could not receive in Kosovo. She stayed for some time as an applicant within the German asylum system and got a new diagnosis in Germany. At one point she accepted to return voluntarily with assistance after she was promised that she could get the proper medication for her health problem in Kosovo. This turned out to be untrue and she is now very worried about what will happen to her without proper treatment.

[Insights collected and written down by interviewers of IAMO-GIZ-MAFRD Survey (2017)]

4.3 Skills profile of return migrants

Some studies claim that migrants return with substantial accumulated savings, newly acquired specific experience and skills, and new business ideas that are likely to raise domestic productivity and employment upon return. However, empirical analyses do not always provide support for this. There is thus no consensus with respect to the effects of return migration on economic growth and development (KOTORRI et al., 2013). As our study mainly deals with the involuntary return of asylum seekers, the opportunity for these migrants to acquire new skills is without doubt rather limited. Due to their status as asylum seekers (and the relatively short time they stay in the destination countries), formal employment is not permitted and the opportunities to find illegal employment are likewise restricted.

With regard to their educational background, most of the returnees indicated either a lower or higher secondary school certificate as their highest degree achieved (Table 8). Gender differences exist as the largest group among women tended to have only a lower secondary degree, while for men the higher secondary school degree was the most prominent category. Men also had a larger share in bachelor's degree higher education. There was also a relatively big group of low educated persons with no schooling or only primary school education (almost 17 %). Around 16 % were better educated with a bachelor's or master's degree. People from this last category with higher education came from four municipalities only: Prishtina, Podujeva, Gjilan and Mitrovica.

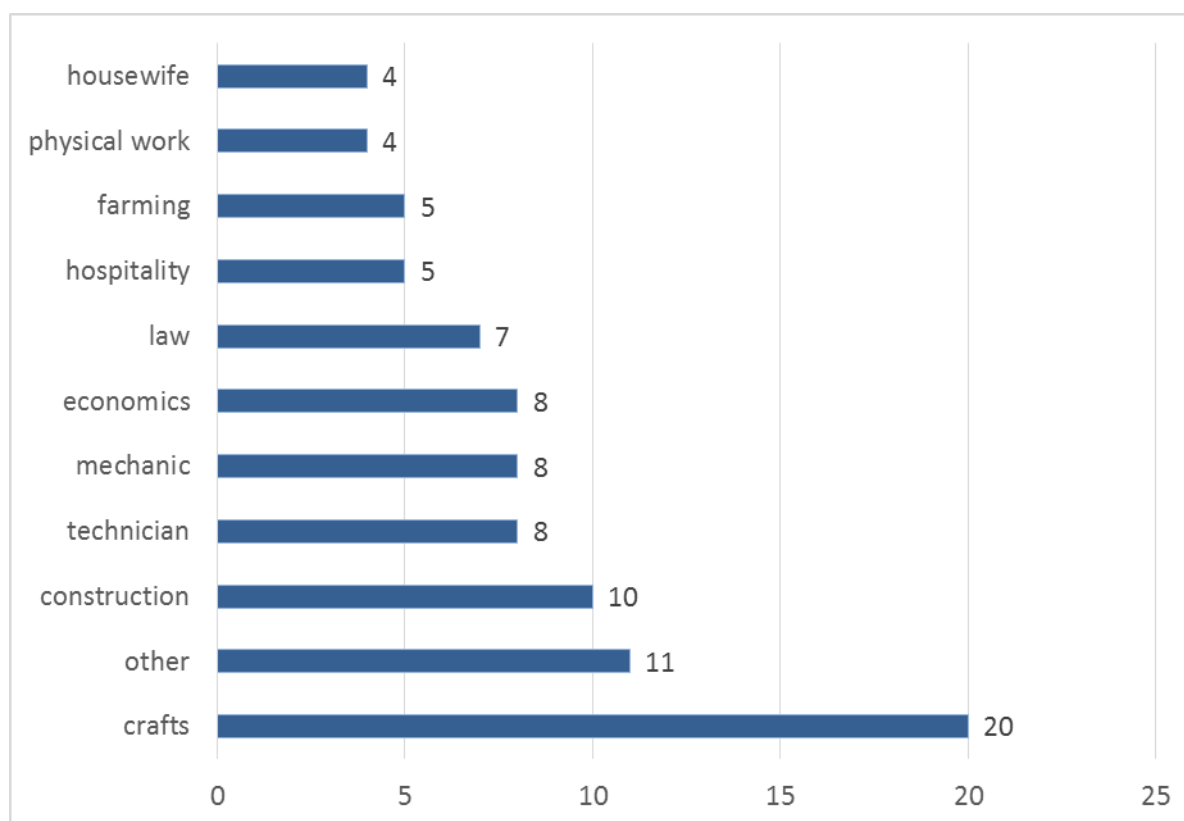
Table 8: Education and skills

	All N=179	Men N=118	Women N=61	Significance
Highest level of education achieved (%)				
- No schooling	8.4	6.8	11.5	***
- Primary school (classes 1-5)	8.4	7.6	9.8	***
- Lower secondary school (classes 6-9)	34.6	30.5	42.6	***
- Higher secondary school (classes 10-12)	33.0	36.4	26.2	***
- Bachelor's degree (13-15 years of school)	11.7	16.1	3.2	***
- Master's degree (16-17 years of school)	3.9	2.5	6.6	***
Work experience in Kosovo (%)	68.2	82.2	41.0	***
Work experience abroad (%)	17.3	23.7	4.9	***
Skills/knowledge improved abroad (%)	43.0	43.2	42.6	n.s.
Business networks improved abroad (%)	7.8	10.2	3.3	*
Came back with specific business idea (%)	26.8	32.2	16.4	**

Source: IAMO-GIZ-MAFRD Survey (2017).

Note: Differences between groups statistically significantly different from zero are indicated in the last column at the 1 % level (**), 5 % level (*) and 10 % level (*) based on Kruskal Wallis Test. n.s.= not significant.

For some of the respondents, school education was their only formal source of skills. They indicated no additional skills and are not included in Figure 9, or reported their main skill to be housework (for women) or physical work (for men). Others had further specialisations in certain study fields or indicated specific professions (Figure 9). Among the most mentioned skills were crafts, which include for example carpenter, blacksmith, welder, tailor, or pastry chef. Construction, as well as professions such as technicians and mechanics, was also quite frequently mentioned. Some were educated in law or economics, and a few indicated that they had professional skills in the hospitality industry or in farming.

Figure 9: Study fields and professions (frequencies)

Source: IAMO-GIZ-MAFRD Survey (2017)

Note: N=90; additional 62 return migrants indicated that their skills only refer to their school education, whereby 58 % of them had only elementary school education or no school education at all, and 42 % had a general education resulting from middle or high school enrolment.

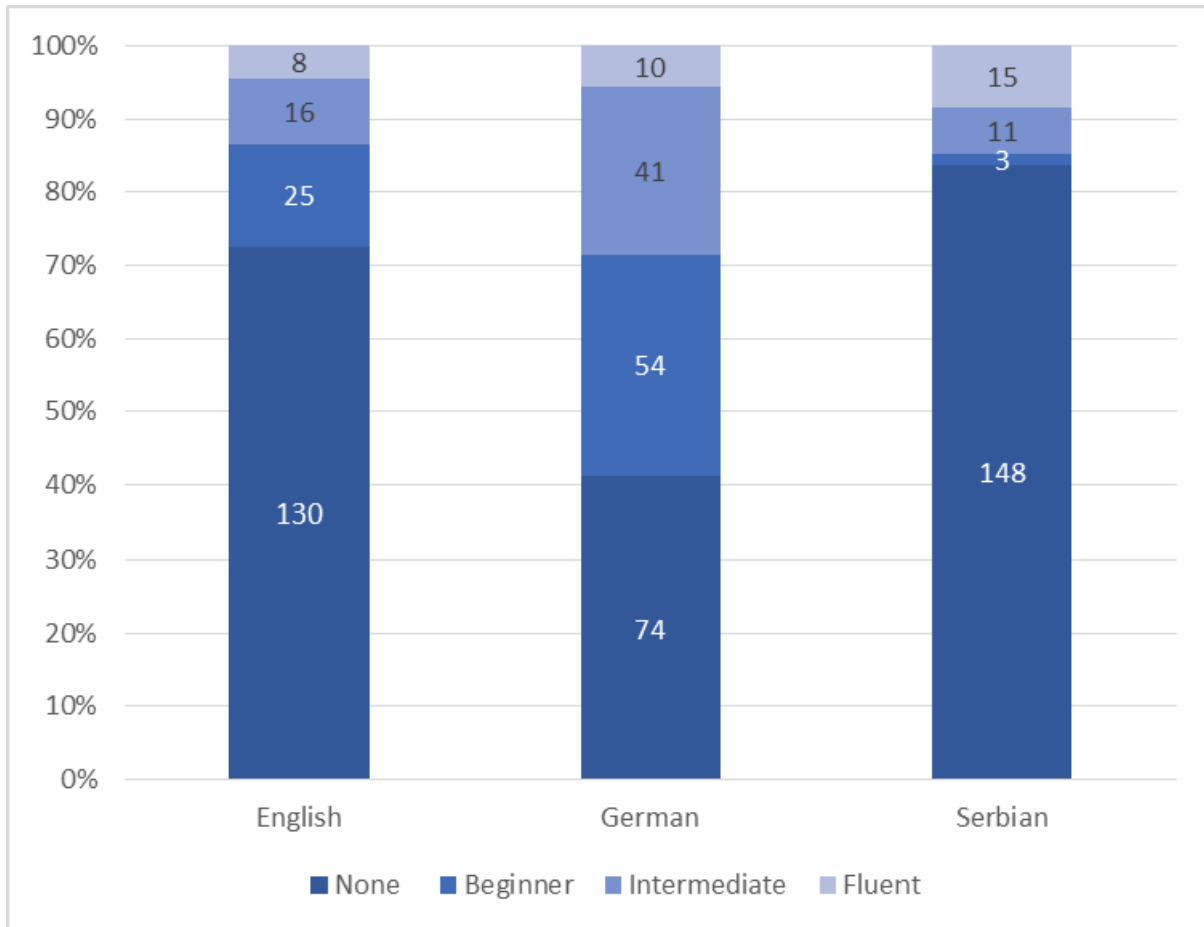
Considering Kosovo's difficult labour market situation, it is no surprise that a considerable share of the return migrants lacked work experience (Table 8). Over 30 % had never worked for money before in Kosovo. Of course this share was higher for women (almost 60 %) and lower for men (around 18 %). Work experience abroad was even lower. Around 24 % of returned men had worked abroad (during this migration episode or an earlier one), and only 5 % of the women (Table 8). This means that more than 80 % of the return migrants never worked while abroad. Despite this, 43 % of respondents indicated having improved their skills while abroad.¹⁷ However, most answers referred to language skills (64 mentions). Other skills that were mentioned referred to ways of working (5), new professions (5), social skills (4) or formal education (1). The share of those who improved their business networks is much lower, but still 8 % indicated some gains in this field. In addition, a relatively large share of 27 % of the respondents brought home a specific business idea from their stay abroad.

Foreign language skills are important for migrants and in some cases they may be a relevant asset after return. They are typically acquired or improved during a stay abroad. On average, one foreign language was known by the respondents. As Germany was the main destination country, German was the most common language mastered by the respondents: almost 60 % had some German skills. A little bit less than 30 % had knowledge of English, and slightly less

¹⁷ One might suspect that results are biased if respondents give socially desired positive answers with regard to acquiring skills. However, from our impressions in the field and from the fact that most migrants only referred to language skills (usually at a beginner or intermediate level), we think this is not the case.

than 20 % had Serbian language skills. Except for Serbian, where those people who spoke the language tended to have a good or even very good knowledge (usually acquired during Yugoslav times), for English and German the majority were beginners (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Language skills by level in %



Source: IAMO-GIZ-MAFRD Survey (2017).

Note: Number in the bars indicate absolute number of respondents with the respective skills level.

4.4 Socio-economic situation after return

Similar to KOTORRI et al. (2013, p. 54), the study results reveal that return migrant households are vulnerable to poverty and have significant difficulties in accessing employment. Lack of employment is found to be a consistent problem and threat to return migrant integration, especially given that it is often the precipitator of migration (ARENLIU & WEINE, 2016). Negative labour market outcomes are known to be linked in particular to forced return and may lead to marginalisation in the home environment (DAVID, 2017). As such, the low rate of employment in returnee households is to be seen as critical. Despite an average household size of five to six people, only one person (if at all) was employed on average (Table 9). Female income earners were, as expected, the exception and not the rule. The share of the return migrants who were working for money was only 25 %.

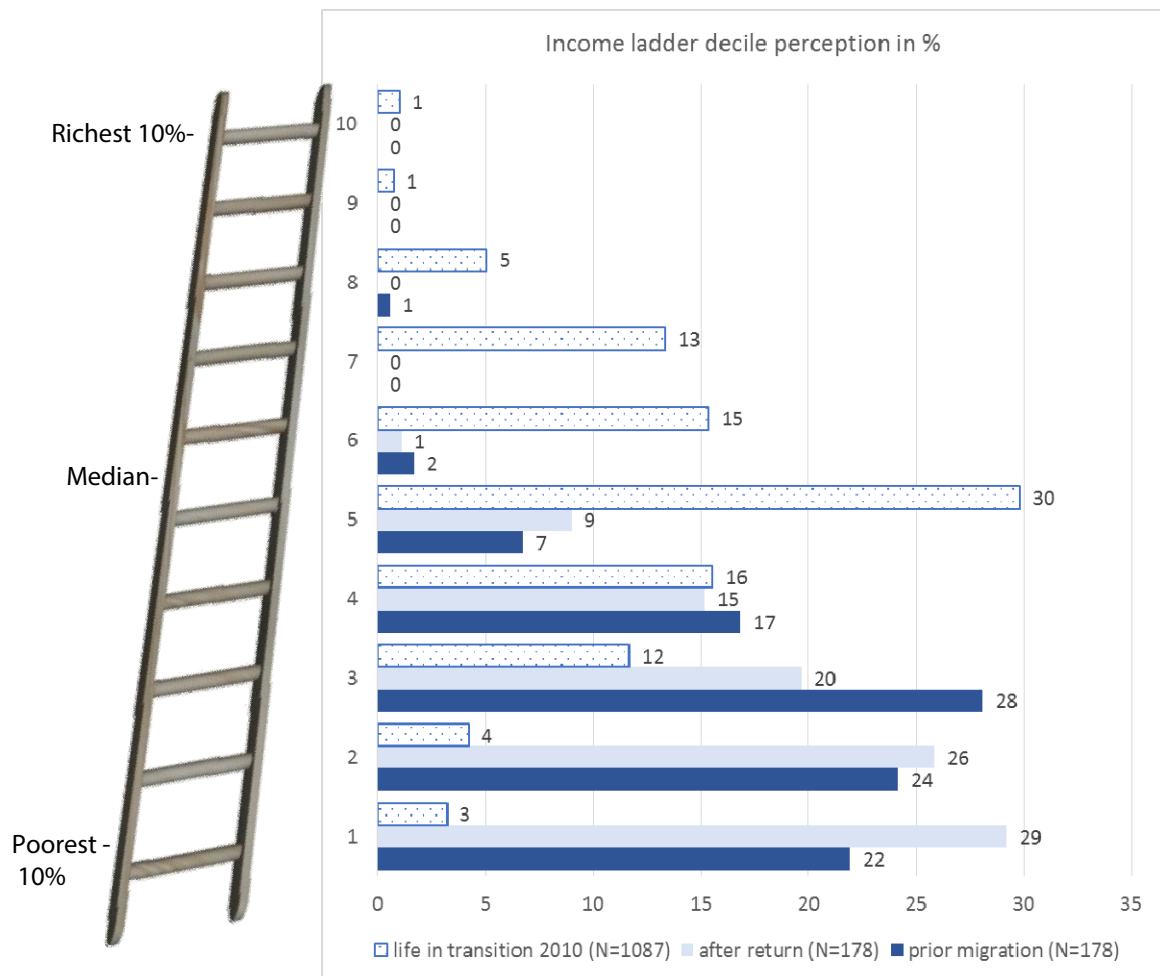
Table 9: Socio-economic situation after return

	Returnee household
Number of income earners in household	0.8
Household with female income earner (%)*	16.0
Returnee is working for money (%)	25.1
Not working and searching for work (%)	87.6
Household income (median of 10-step ladder)	2.0
Household income was at least 1 step higher before migration (%)	23.6
Number of different income sources	1.2
<u>Main</u> income source	
- Farm income (%)	3.4
- Waged employment (%)	33.0
- Non-farm own business (%)	13.4
- Remittances (%)	2.8
- Social transfers (%)	30.2
- Other, including occasional jobs (%)	16.8
Household has no "earned" incomes, but relies on transfers only	27.4
Average trip cost (€ per person)	981.1
Household cannot cover essential needs (%)	85.7
Household lives in rented place	6.9

Source: IAMO-GIZ-MAFRD Survey (2017).

Note: * Only households with earned income (N= 108).

Most of the returnees considered their households to be on a low income level both before and after migration. This is shown against national data taken from the Life in Transition Survey (2010) in Figure 11. While the higher steps of the ladder remained almost completely empty for our study sample, the median of the current position of returnees is at the second step of the 10-step income ladder (see Table 9), whereby the highest step among the respondents after return was six, and the lowest, one (Figure 12). Almost one-quarter of the respondents indicated that, compared to their pre-migration situation, their position on the income ladder worsened by at least one step after their return. However, most migrants seem to have returned to a similar situation as before migration: 56 % saw no difference in their position on the income ladder when they compared their situation before and after migration. Around 20 % saw their situation as improved.

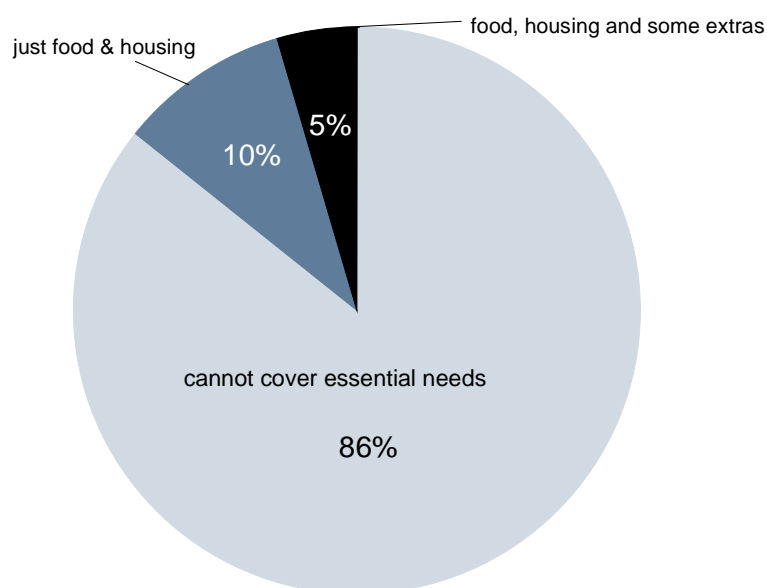
Figure 11: Income ladder perceptions before and after migration

Source: IAMO-GIZ-MAFRD Survey (2017).

Most households rely on only one income source. However, for 27 % the only income was transfers (including remittances). The *main* income source for most households, as shown in Table 9, were social transfers and waged employment. Social transfers were received by 39 % of households and the main income source for 31 %; waged employment was an income source for 36 % of the households and the main income source for 30 %. Farm income seems to be of low relevance in terms of cash income. Only nine respondents mentioned it as an income source at all. Also non-farm businesses were, as expected, not very widespread. Eleven households indicated incomes from such non-farm self-employment. The share of households relying heavily on remittances was low at only 3 %. Only eleven households actually reported remittances. However, given that the surveyed returnees were mostly from the lower income strata, this reflects national data (see Table 5).

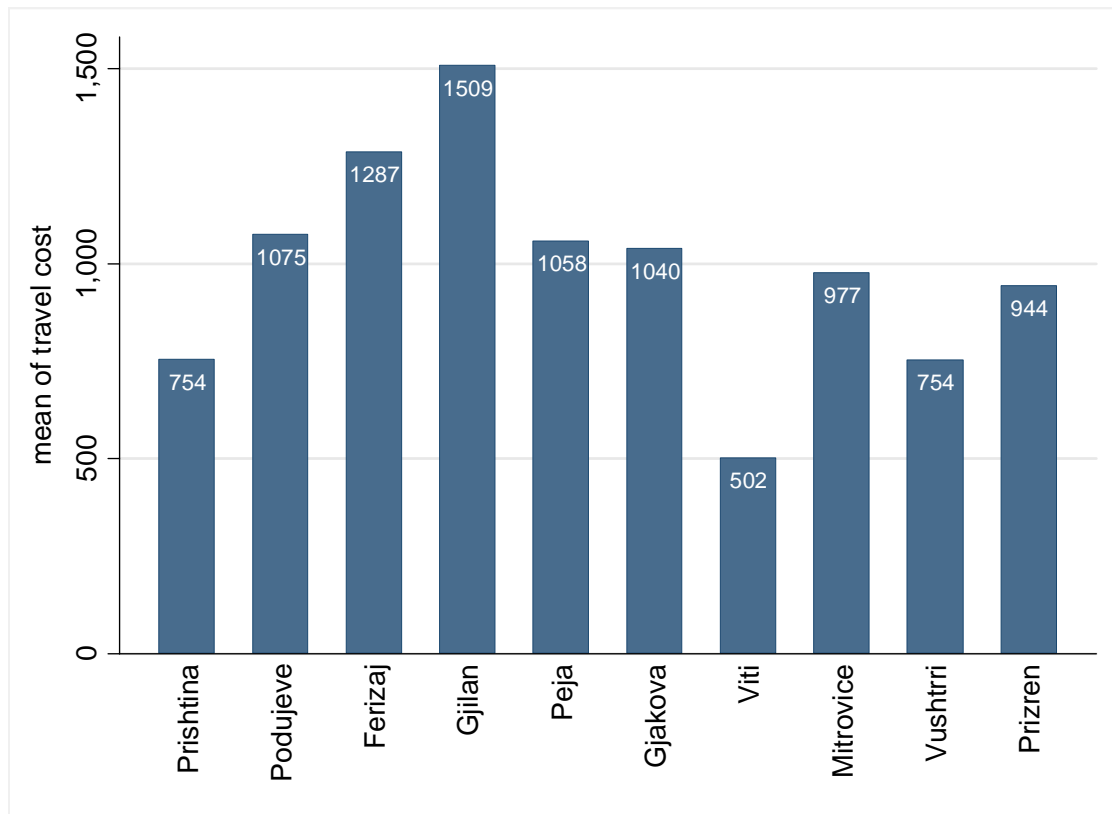
Overall, the economic situation of the researched households was far from satisfactory: 86 % reported that they were not even able to cover essential household needs (Figure 12). Although this answer could be biased as respondents might have hoped for support, it still reflects what we saw in the field: very poor living conditions and desperate respondents. On the positive side, more than 90 % of respondents lived in a house that was not rented and were thus not burdened with additional housing costs. However, this might underestimate the problem of housing as some might stay with relatives with constricted space.

Figure 12: Poverty perception: "To what extent does your household income suffice to cover your households' needs?"



Source: IAMO-GIZ-MAFRD Survey (2017).

Considering the economic situation of the return migrant households, the money spent for financing the migration seems significant. On average, each migrant paid almost 1,000 euros for the trip (Table 6). Prices for travelling range between a few hundred up to 2000 euros. They differ between individuals and between regions. The lowest average price was found in Viti at around 500 euros, while the highest prices were paid by migrants from Ferizaj, on average around 1,500 euros (Figure 13). The main source of financing the trip was borrowed money from relatives or friends (63 %). For the rest of the cases the main sources of financing were savings (13 %), sale of land or property (11 %) and other sources such as selling valuables, cars or livestock (13 %). It can thus be expected that migration continues to be a burden on households that are still indebted or lack assets.

Figure 13: Travel cost as a financial burden (in € per capita) by regions, N=170

Source: IAMO-GIZ-MAFRD Survey (2017).

4.5 Personal well-being and health among returnees

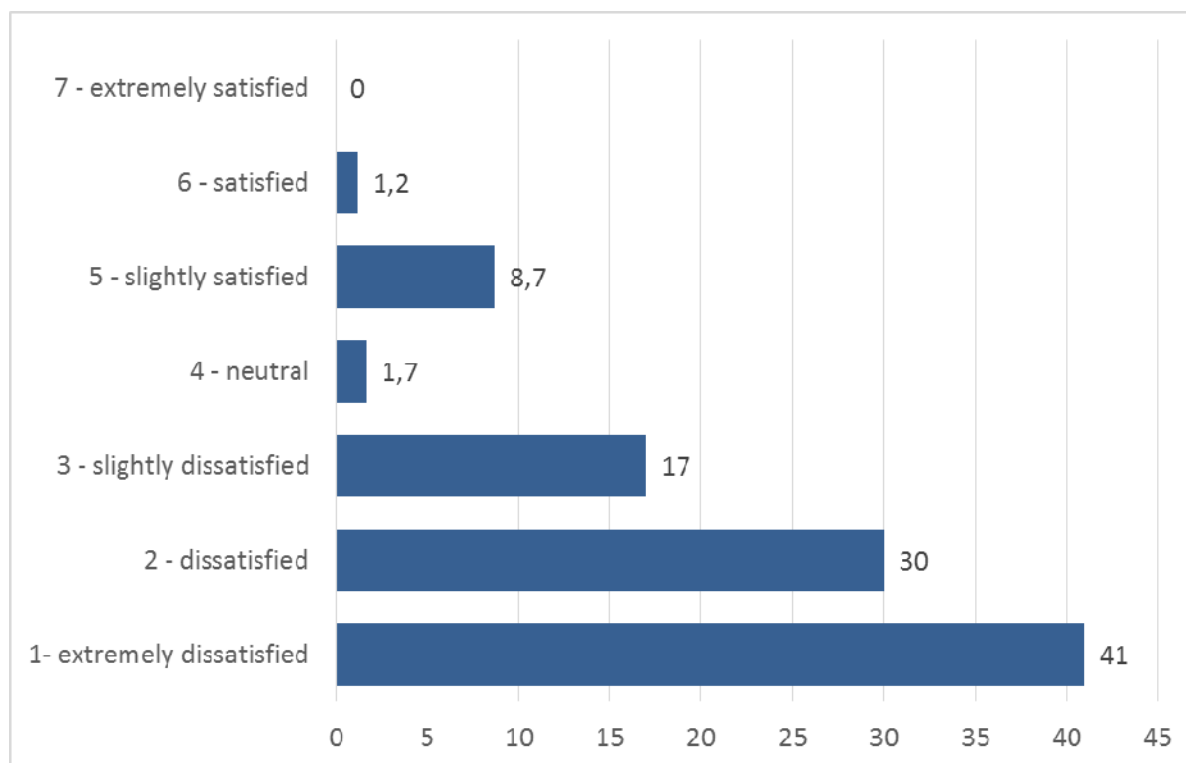
The returnees' health and well-being directly impact their ability to successfully make a new start at the place of origin. The migration and return experience leaves any return migrant, to a greater or lesser extent, with psychosocial issues: a range of emotions and expectations which will have an impact on the return process and on the sustainability of return migration (GERACI, 2011). In particular, compulsory repatriation may constitute a risk factor for physical and mental health (TOSCANI et al., 2007). Vulnerable groups such as women, minorities or the elderly were found to suffer from worse mental health and problems in reintegration, based on observations from ARENLIU and WEINE (2016).

In our study we therefore assess the life satisfaction and a range of psychosocial aspects in order to better understand the wellbeing of the return migrants. We first take a general perspective in asking to what extent the return migrants see their lives in a positive or negative way. For this purpose, we used the classical 5-item measure for global cognitive judgments of one's life satisfaction following DIENER, EMMONS, LARSEN, and GRIFFIN (1985). Respondents indicated the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with five life satisfaction items using a 7-point scale. The overall index of life satisfaction is shown in Figure 14. The ratings were summarised and the results categorised into seven groups describing well-being situations from extremely satisfied to extremely dissatisfied.

Figure 14 clearly indicates a high dissatisfaction with life (and thus low subjective well-being) of the Kosovar return migrants interviewed. This is not surprising per se as we know that the reason for leaving was dissatisfaction in the first place and the return only added to this as it was in most cases not planned or voluntary in the sense that there was a free choice.

The lowest degree of satisfaction was found in the municipality of Peja (the average rating on the 7-point scale was only 1.50), the highest level was found in the municipality of Prishtina (2.66). Also ethnic differences seem striking: while the Albanian majority scores 2.25 on average, the life satisfaction scores of Ashkali (1.48) and Roma (1.86) are lower. It is, of course, not easy to interpret such values without having a proper comparison group. Yet, without much doubt, they are rather extreme. DIENER and SELIGMAN (2004), for example, compared results from different regions of the world and from different life situations. According to this comparison, Swedes, Inuit people, the "richest Americans" and African Maasai score as quite happy with average ratings of 5.7 or 5.8 on the 7-point scale, whereas homeless people, whether they are from a richer place (California) or from a poorer place (Calcutta) have the lowest ratings of 2.9 on the scale. Results found that Kosovar returnees lie even lower than that (on average 2.1). For a comparison with the European Quality of Life sub-sample from Kosovo, we recoded our results to a 10-point scale. After recoding, the return migrants score 3.2, compared to 6.2 for the representative Kosovo sample from the European quality of life survey.¹⁸ Thus, the comparisons underline that return migrants show a very low level of life satisfaction.

Figure 14: Subjective wellbeing of return migrants in %, N=173



Source: IAMO-GIZ-MAFRD Survey (2017).

Life satisfaction is, however, only part of the story. It only covers a general assessment of the life situation, which is, understandably, not very positive among recently returned "failed" migrants. In addition, and as is very likely reflected in the extremely low scores of life satisfaction, return migrants often suffer from psychological stress. In our study we assess a number of issues that we assume to be linked to the failed migration experience which most of our respondents have gone through. On the one hand, we asked for a range of negative thoughts

¹⁸ Kosovo has the third lowest rank in this survey of EU-27 and enlargement countries. The highest score is 8.4 in Denmark and the lowest is 5.5 in Bulgaria (EUROFOUND, 2013).

reflecting a low level of self-esteem and self-efficacy which might be responsible for low outcomes of subjective well-being. On the other hand, we checked for dimension of two typical symptoms, somatisation and depression, which helped us to assess the extent to which migrants are prone to depression and mental stress manifesting in the form of physical symptoms. This seems important as, for example, it might be hard to encourage a depressed person to take an active part in the return process (GERACI, 2011). Besides these psychological burdens, we also let respondents assess their general health with regard to chronic illnesses and changes compared to the pre-migration situation.

A considerable share of respondents (15 %) indicated that they were burdened with a chronic illness (Table 10). This might explain the relatively high percentage of people who left for reasons connected to health and social welfare discussed above. Chronic illness is slightly more pronounced among women, and there seems to be no significant differences between Albanians and ethnic minorities (except that the small number of Roma in the sample did not indicate chronic illnesses at all). A negative change in their general health compared to the pre-migration situation was reported by one-third of the respondents. For women and elderly this share was significantly higher, and Egyptian and Roma minorities also reported higher rates of a worsening of their general health (Figure 15). It should be noted here that the Kosovo health system represents a challenge for a number of services such as cardiac-surgery, oncology, poly-trauma, transplants, and treatment of serious mental disorders. Repatriated persons suffering from serious illnesses, who were treated abroad, do not get the same treatment after arrival (MIA, 2013, p. 11).

Table 10: Health status indicators

	All	Men	Women
	N=179	N=118	N=61
General health condition			
Chronically ill (%)	14.61	12.71	18.33
Worsened health compared to pre-migration (%)	36.31	33.90	40.98
Psychic and somatic symptoms			
Depressive symptoms out of the norm (%)	35.96	35.04	37.70
Somatic symptoms out of the norm (%)	41.24	37.93	47.54
Condition intensity worsened compared to pre-migration ^a	54.75	53.39	57.38

Source: IAMO-GIZ-MAFRD Survey (2017).

Note: ^a For N=131 returnees who indicated symptoms.

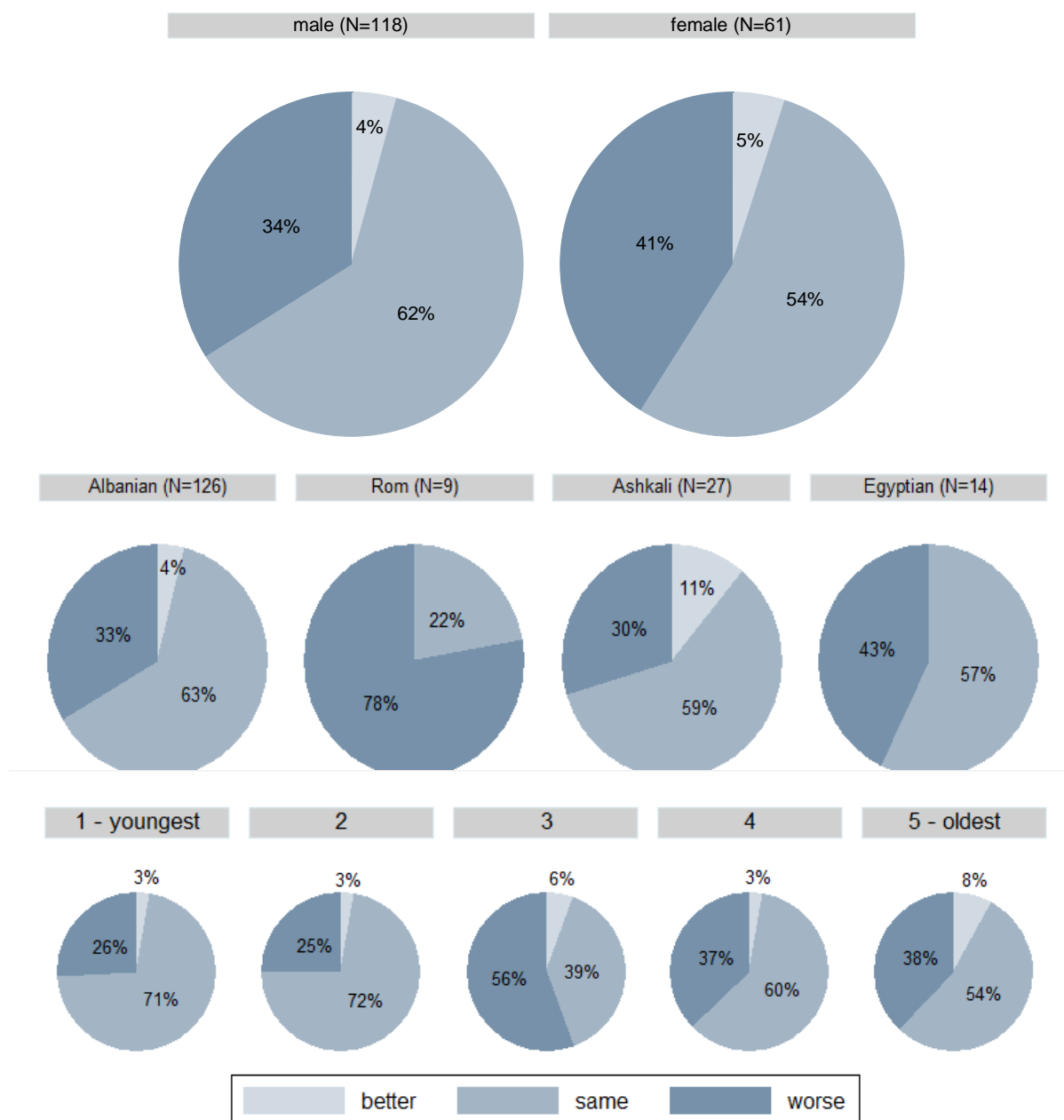
Despite the differences in absolute values, group differences between men and women are not statistically significant due to a small sample size and high variance in the health indicators.

We used selected items from the Brief Symptom Inventory of Derogatis (FRANKE, 2000), in particular scale 1 (somatisation), which describes symptoms that may be physical, but are typical outcomes of high levels of stress, and scale 4 (depression), which covers items ranging from sadness to manifested depression. Without having a direct group for comparison in our sample, we used norm values of average western European adults to assess whether return migrants are burdened with higher levels of somatic and depressive symptoms (Table 10). The norm values are taken from FRANKE (2000).

More than one-third of the return migrants interviewed showed a degree of depression symptoms that exceeds the norm (84th centile or higher), and 15 % showed severe symptoms which are only found in the 98th centile or higher for the comparison group. Women seemed

to be more affected than men. The same is true for ethnic minorities in the sample, in particular Roma and Egyptian. Regional differences are difficult to judge due to the small sample size, but there seems to be a particularly high occurrence of people with depressive symptoms in Peja, Mitrovica and Podujeva, while the numbers are comparatively small in Viti, Vushtrri and Gjilan.

Figure 15: General health assessment compared to pre-migration situation



Source: IAMO-GIZ-MAFRD Survey (2017).

Even higher numbers of returnees were suffering from somatic symptoms which include health issues such as dizziness, heart and chest pain, stomach problems, or difficulties breathing. These symptoms may be physical, but are known as typical outcomes of stress. All in all, 41 % of the respondents reported a level of somatic symptoms that is above the norm. Again the share was higher for women (48 %) than for men (38 %). Over 30 % of female returnees were found to be in the 98th centile or higher, while for men this share was 16 %. The

share of above the norm somatic symptoms ranged from 23 % in Gjilan to 57 % in Peja. Ethnic minorities were again more strongly affected than Albanians. The share of affected persons was 38 % for Albanians, but 43 % for Roma, 46 % for Ashkali and 64 % for Egyptian. Among Roma and Egyptians in our sample 48 % showed extreme symptoms (98th centile or higher).

We assume that the involuntary return and failure of the migration attempt is not only linked to the described symptoms of somatisation and depression, but furthermore lead to negative effects on the self-esteem and perceived self-efficacy of the return migrant with additional negative implications for the ability to smoothly reintegrate.¹⁹ We thus assume that return migrants may be prone to the "Why try" phenomenon which encompasses self-stigma, self-esteem and self-efficacy and their effects on goal-related behaviour (CORRIGAN, LARSON, & RUESCH, 2009). This means that they might decide not to engage in opportunities or have limited personal aspirations, but might also serve to explain low rates of use of available services and support measures. Without being able to draw final conclusions from our results due to the lack of a comparison group, we would like to stress that more than half of the respondents reported a low level of self-efficacy as reflected in the last statement listed in Table 11. Almost 22 % indicated that this feeling of lacking self-efficacy was a very strong one for them. Other negative thoughts were slightly less pronounced, but might still be relevant as a hindrance to smooth reintegration. More than 30 %, for example show considerable to very strong feelings of apathy and passivity, and more than 20 % considerable to very strong feelings of inferiority, personal failure, and disconnectedness or rejection (Table 11).

Table 11: Negative thoughts related to personal well-being

In the last 7 days, how much did you suffer from...?	Not at all	A little bit	Considerably	Strongly	Very strongly
	Answers in this category in %				
... a sense of inferiority	65.1	11.4	8.6	7.4	7.4
... feelings of personal failure	56.3	15.3	13.6	9.1	5.7
... negative thoughts about yourself or your prospects	62.6	17.5	8.8	7.0	4.1
... a feeling of "disconnectedness"/rejection	67.1	9.7	10.2	6.8	6.3
... a feeling of shame about things that happened to you	74.4	9.3	8.7	4.1	3.5
... a sense of apathy and passivity	53.1	16.0	14.3	10.3	6.3
... a feeling as though whatever you might attempt to do to change things couldn't make a difference	49.4	7.7	12.4	8.8	21.8

Source: IAMO-GIZ-MAFRD Survey (2017).

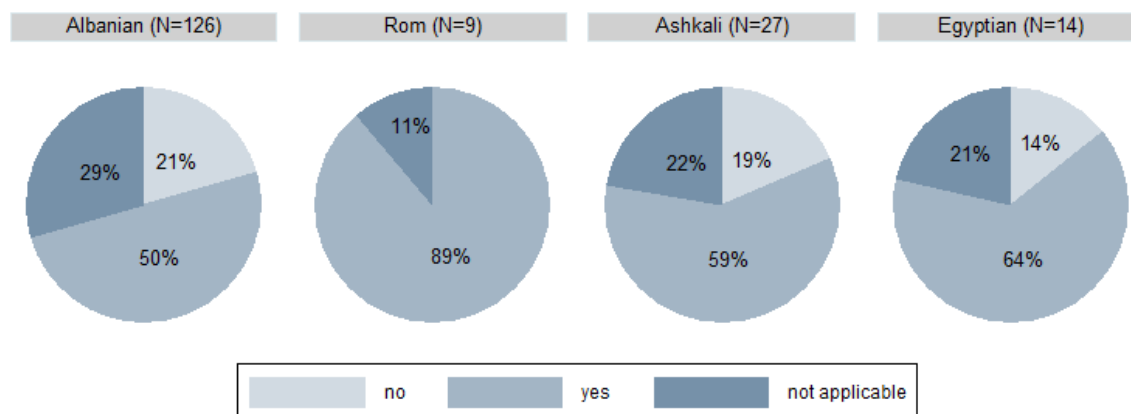
Note: N=176, for some variables less due to missing data.

By asking to what extent existing issues (rated as considerable, strong or very strong) have worsened compared to the situation before the migration, we get a rough indication of whether the condition was influenced by the migration and subsequent return. All in all, 55 % of those with symptoms (relating to somatisation, depression or symptoms listed in Table 11) indicated that they had worsened compared to the pre-migration situation. This seems to

¹⁹ The so called "dependence syndrome" was found to be related to the length of stay whereby longer stays were associated with more apathy, helplessness and lack of self-initiated actions. Long term refugees and asylum seekers were typically not allowed to work and were dependent on state subsidies (ARENLIU & WEINE, 2016).

confirm that a link between somatic and psychic symptoms, and the migration and return experiences exists. The intensification of symptoms was slightly more pronounced among women (Table 10), and seemed also to be stronger for ethnic minorities compared to Albanians (Figure 16).

Figure 16: Condition intensity of somatic and psychic symptoms worsened compared to pre-migration situation



Source: IAMO-GIZ-MAFRD Survey (2017).

4.6 Structural and sociocultural integration after return

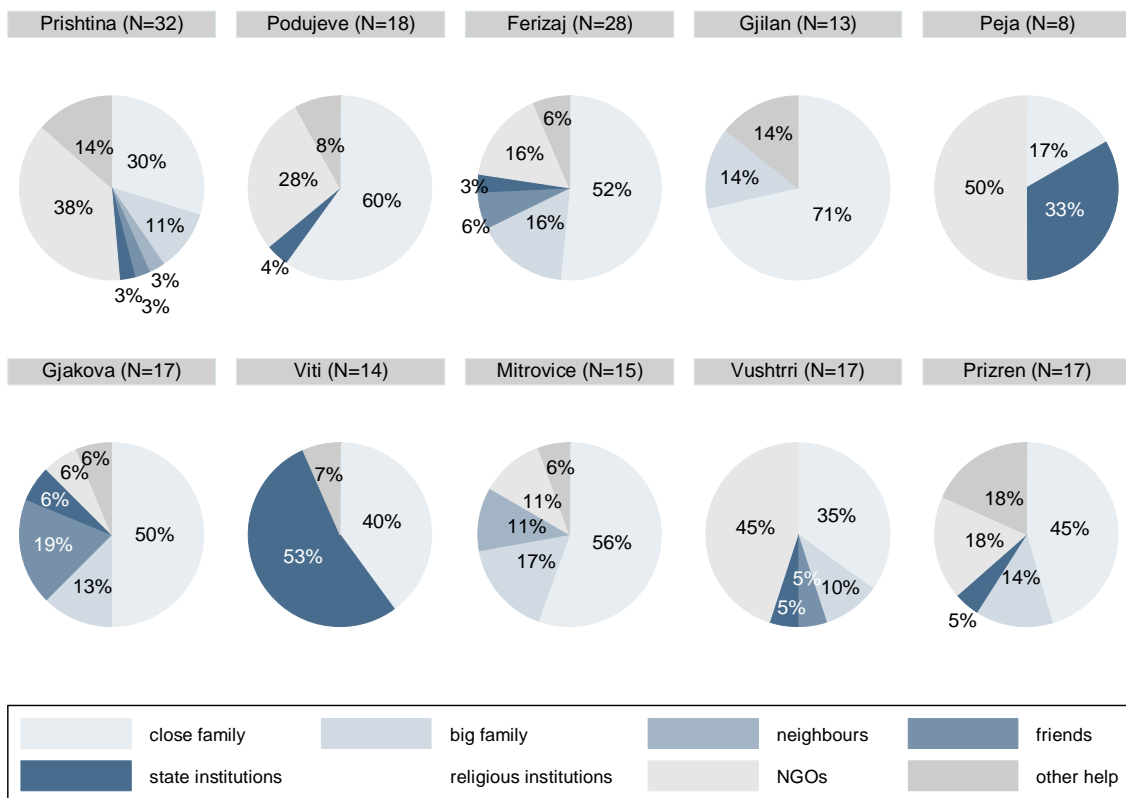
HECKMANN (2006) distinguishes two fields of integration: structural integration, which involves for instance access to employment, housing and education, and sociocultural integration, which covers social interactions and the feeling of belonging. When looking at involuntary return, which is most relevant in our case, previous research points at the high cost of forced return (HAGAN, ESCHBACH, & RODRIGUEZ, 2008), the possibility of downward mobility (VAN HEAR, 1995) and difficulties integrating into labour markets (leading to the wish to re-migrate) (DAVID, 2017; MEZGER KVEDER & FLAHAUX, 2013). DAVID (2017) stresses that having been forced to return impedes the migrant's sociocultural reintegration and assimilation. If migrants are not ready and willing to return they will have difficulties in activating and using their networks to find a job.

For returnees who came back after the Kosovo war, earlier research identified a higher prevalence of problems related to adaptation and reintegration among those who had stayed abroad for a longer period of time, those who had returned involuntarily, and Roma people. Overall, poor housing conditions and lack of support from family or friends was found to be negatively related to adaptation, business initiative, and the health issues of returned migrants (ARENLIU & WEINE, 2016 and literature cited herein). At the macro-level, unemployment and the overall economic situation were perceived as the major challenges for a successful reintegration of return migrants (ARENLIU & WEINE, 2016).

Successful structural and sociocultural reintegration starts with a functioning support network. For the returned migrants that participated in the study, family structures were, overall, the most important source of support. Almost half of them received support from their close family, and 10 % were supported by the extended family. The second most important source of reintegration support, named by 22 % of the returnees interviewed, were NGOs. Only 8 % of the returnees mentioned governmental programmes as a source of "effective support". Here, it remains unclear whether people assess the public measures as insufficient or

do not make use of them for other reasons. Religious organisations were not mentioned at all as a source of support. Friends and neighbours also only played a minor role. Roma, at least from our small sample, received above average support from NGOs and also from neighbours. However this result is certainly to be treated with care. The same is true for regional differences shown in Figure 17. State support seemed to be more important in Viti and Peja, while help from neighbours was often mentioned in Gjakova. In Peja, Vushtrri and Prishtina. NGOs are highly important. They were more often mentioned as a form of support than the close family.

Figure 17: Most frequently mentioned sources of reintegration support over municipalities



Source: IAMO-GIZ-MAFRD Survey (2017).

Overall, returnees reported that the reintegration into their families, villages and circle of friends was rather smooth. Between 66 % and 72 % of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that immediate reintegration was easy. However, for all three categories there was also a considerable share of returnees who indicated the opposite. More than 20 % reported difficulties reintegrating into family structures, and around 19 % indicated difficulties reintegrating into community and village structures. Fewer problems (13 %) were found regarding reintegration into the circle of friends.

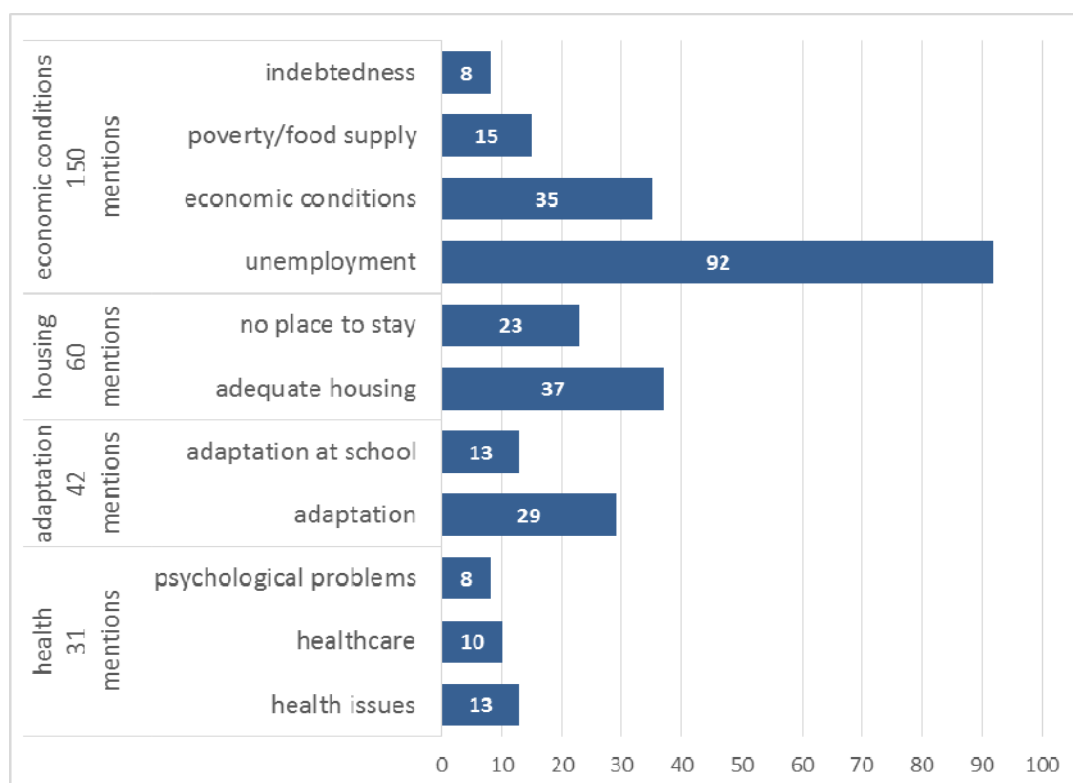
Earlier research highlighted that the situation of the children of repatriated Kosovars is of particular concern. School drop-out rates are very high among them. One of the problems for children of ethnic minorities born abroad is the absence of schools or teaching in their mother tongue upon return. For instance, children of Roma who grew up in Germany, often speak Roma and German, but are placed in either Serbian or Albanian schools upon return (VIERU, 2015). In our survey we found that the majority of children went to school before

migration (86 %), while abroad (81 %) and after return (76 %). Thus, structural reintegration for children seems to work to a certain degree. However, the 24 % not enrolled after return should receive attention and reasons for their non-attendance need to be analysed. Furthermore, anecdotal evidence reported during interviews shows that children suffer from violence at school and, thus, sociocultural reintegration faces bigger challenges.

In reply to an open question asking for the main reintegration difficulties experienced by the respondents, lack of employment or unemployment was mentioned by more than 90 respondents as a key integration issue. Adequate housing and economic conditions follow at a large distance.²⁰ Basic needs like "no place to stay" or "poverty/food supply" were also mentioned relatively often. Other barriers were seen in the field of adequate health service, the problem of indebtedness, and psychological and family related problems.

Public support programmes focus especially on structural reintegration. Assistance and support for the repatriated persons is offered at central and local level, starting from emergency assistance to the access to public services (MIA, 2013, p. 20). In 2016, data from the MIA shows that less than 60 % of all returnees benefitted from public assistance. Similarly, as is shown in Figure 17, public support is not always recognised as an important and effective source of facilitating return. Table 12 reports on the awareness and use of available support measures. The measure that was best known (by 60 % of the respondents) was food assistance, other measures listed in Table 12 were known to only between 9 % and 35 % of the respondents. The share of those who actually applied for the food assistance measure was 50 %, while between 5 % and 25 % of respondents applied for other support measures. The share of those who actually received assistance was even lower. Medical and psycho-social treatment had a particularly low outreach to only less than 2 % of the respondents. The last column in Table 12 shows the number and share of actual recipients of the listed measures who were satisfied with the support. Overall, it seems that support does not have a sufficient outreach and that those who receive support are not all happy with what they get.

²⁰ The micro-level factors of housing, social support from friends, family and the community are important variables to take into consideration in return migration especially as protective factors regarding poor mental health outcomes. The combination of lack of social support and basic housing conditions evidently reduces the chances of reintegration (ARENLIU & WEINE, 2016).

Figure 18: Challenges for reintegration (frequencies based on open answers)

Source: IAMO-GIZ-MAFRD Survey (2017).

Note: Multiple responses possible; N=306.

Table 12: Support measures for returnees

Measure type	Returnee knows this measure	Returnee applied for this measure	Returnee received funds for this measure	Number and share of satisfied recipients
Housing through rent	56 (31.3%)	24 (13.4%)	13 (7.3%)	10 (76.9%)
Assistance food	108 (60.3%)	90 (50.3%)	66 (36.9%)	42 (75.0%)
Assistance furniture	62 (34.6%)	42 (23.5%)	18 (10.1%)	16 (88.9%)
Medical treatment	35 (19.6%)	22 (12.3%)	3 (1.7%)	2 (66.7%)
Psycho-social treatment	16 (8.9%)	8 (4.5%)	1 (0.6%)	0 (0.0%)
Winter package	24 (13.4%)	12 (6.7%)	6 (3.4%)	3 (50.0%)
Other	23 (12.9%)	20 (11.2%)	15 (8.4%)	14 (93.3%)

Source: IAMO-GIZ-MAFRD Survey (2017).

The way people are informed and actively engage in a society influences their sociocultural integration. Being a member of an organisation such as a political party or an association is negatively correlated with, for example, the probability of being unemployed (DAVID, 2017). Other indicators that have an influence on participation and sociocultural integration are the use of language or difficulties during migration (DAVID, 2017). These issues were also relevant for at least some returnees in the sample. Among the aspects of socio-cultural reintegration we specifically focus on information sources, interest in politics and participation. Table 13 shows that TV and internet were the information sources most often used, whereas newspapers played only a small role. Interest in politics seemed rather modest as about half of the respondents indicated that they do not follow government or public affairs, and almost

60 % never talked about politics with family and friends. Indeed, 43 % of the respondents did not regularly follow any of the mentioned information sources.

Participation is high when looking at elections and voting, where two-thirds of the respondents indicated taking part. However, in other fields, active participation seems moderate (although certainly not insignificant). There are a number of people who indicated an occasional engagement in community problem solving. Taking part in protests or contacting officials or media to raise attention to certain issues was reported by around 15 % of respondents. Yet, less than 2 % indicated actively engaging as a member of a group or an organisation. However, as comparable information for the Kosovar population is missing, a further assessment of these figures is up to future analysis.

Table 13: Participation in political and social life indicators

Information sources	N	Never	Sometimes	Often
Watching TV news (%)	179	16.2	5.3	33.5
Reading newspaper (%)	179	63.1	30.7	6.1
Reading internet news pages (%)	178	30.3	34.3	35.4
Reading news from social media (%)	179	31.8	31.3	36.9
Interest in politics				
Following government and public affairs (%)	178	48.3	39.3	12.4
Talking about politics with family and friends (%)	178	57.9	33.2	9.0
Participation				
Engaging in community problem solving (%)	178	59.6	31.5	9.0
Taking part in elections (voting) (%)	178	19.7	15.2	65.8
Persuading others to vote for particular candidate/party (%)	177	91.5	5.1	3.4
Contacting officials or media to raise attention to certain issues (%)	178	84.3	15.2	0.6
Taking part in protests (%)	179	83.8	14.0	2.2
Go to mosque/church/religious group (%)	179	46.4	39.1	14.5
Actively engaging as a member of a group or organisation (%)	179	98.3	0.0	1.7

Source: IAMO-GIZ-MAFRD Survey (2017).

Table 14: Experience of hostility among return migrants

Did you ever experience hostility or unfair treatment during your last stay abroad?	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often
	Answers in this category in %			
... because of my cultural background/nationality	97.2	0.6	2.3	0.0
... because of my religious background	97.7	0.6	1.7	0.0
... because of another reason ^a	96.4	0.0	3.6	0.0
Did you ever experience hostility or unfair treatment in Kosovo?				
... because of my migration history	93.2	4.6	2.3	0.0

Source: IAMO-GIZ-MAFRD Survey (2017)

Note: ^aThe only reason mentioned here was the status of being an illegal migrant.

Our findings do not support the pessimistic assessment of a rather adversarial public opinion towards returnees in Kosovo (e.g. stereotyping, reluctance to engage) reported by VIERU (2015). Only a small share of respondents reported any hostility abroad or in Kosovo (see Table 14).

4.7 Will they stay or leave again?

Involuntary returns often tend to be followed by unsuccessful reintegration and the intention to re-migrate. Any forced return is thus unlikely to be beneficial (MEZGER KVEDER & FLAHAUX, 2013). We therefore asked return migrants about their staying intentions over the next two years on a scale from 0 to 100. About one-quarter of the respondents indicated that they are very likely to stay with a probability of 80 % or higher. The mean probability tends however towards leaving (41 %) and more than 40 % of respondents indicated a probability of staying of 20 % or lower. For around 70 % of the respondents, both males and females, the probability of leaving again was higher than the probability of staying. Ethnic minorities had slightly higher propensity to stay than ethnic Albanians. The municipalities with the lowest staying intention scores were Viti and Vushtrri (more than 80 % tended towards leaving), and the highest chance for migrants to stay seemed to be in the municipalities of Podujeva, Prizren, Ferizaj and Prishtina, where the probabilities of staying were between 34 % and 44 %. Furthermore, 40 % of respondents indicated that international migration of other household members is likely.

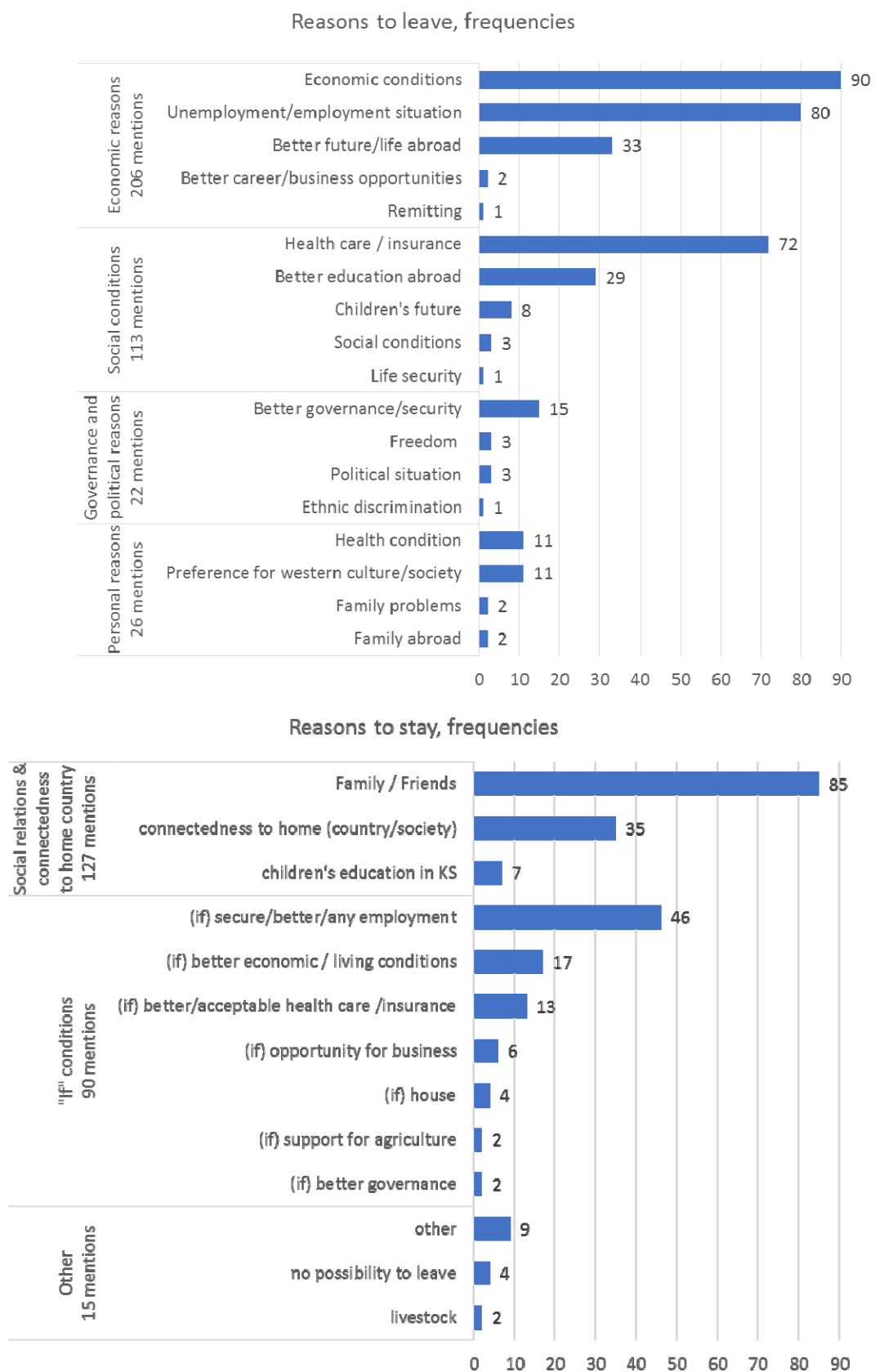
Figure 19 reveals the reasons behind the intentions to stay or to leave. Economic conditions and unemployment appeared here quite prominently among the reasons that drive people out of the country, followed by healthcare. The wish for a better future for oneself or the children (children's education) as well as access to better education abroad was furthermore important. For those who intend to stay, the family and friends were most important. There were also a number of "if"-statements, either explicitly stated like this or to be understood like this (e.g. if I had a house/secure employment/access to good healthcare and health insurance) which implied that staying is desired, but depends on conditions which are not always given. Again access to secure, better or any employment is highly important.

Overall, it seems that international migration constitutes a highly preferred alternative for return migrants and their families. In contrast to this, the interest in moving to urban areas within Kosovo is not visible in the sample: only one person indicated considering a move from a rural place to an urban place.

The orientation towards emigration is once more underlined by results shown in Figure 20. It depicts where the respondents see themselves in five years. Most of them indicated that they assume they might have emigrated again. Furthermore, those who indicated that they see themselves having emigrated in the future tend to think that that they will not leave on their own (23 %), but with their family (77 %). The intention to leave as a family is more pronounced (>80 %) among women, as well as for Roma people and in some municipalities (Viti, Prizren, Gjilan, Prishtina, Podujeva).

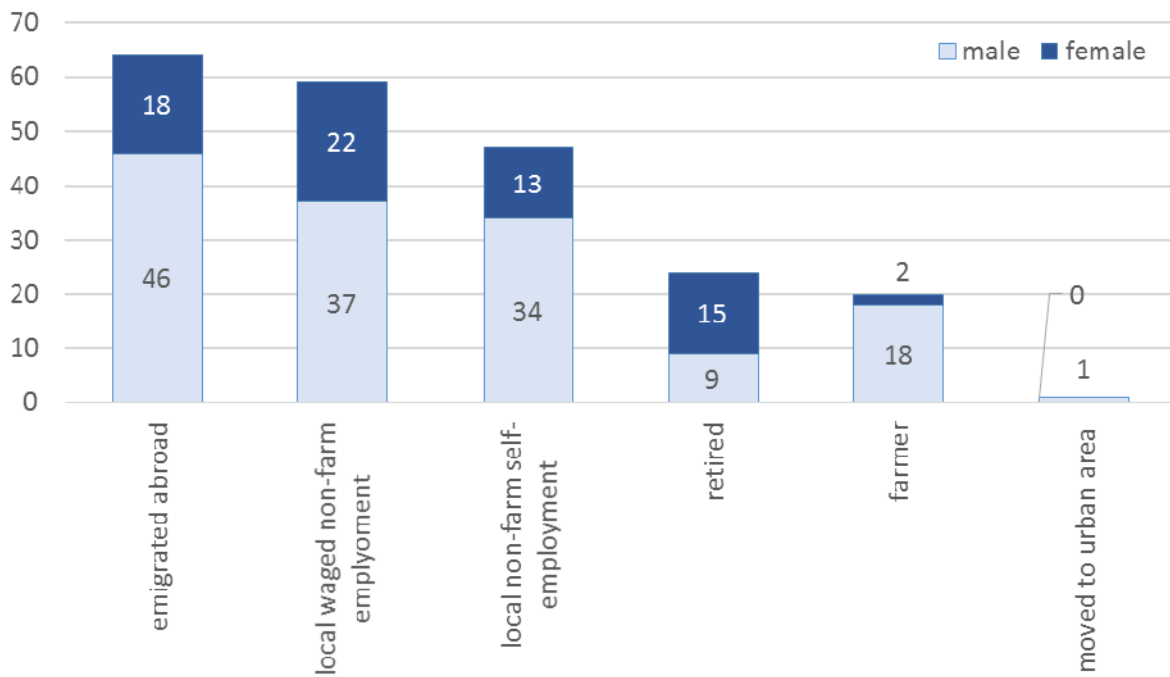
Among those who see themselves in Kosovo, most of them thought they might be working in waged employment. There is also a relatively large number of people who mention self-employment (combinations of different types of employment were possible which explains why the number of answers exceeds the sample size). Almost 30 % of male respondents and 21 % of female respondents indicated that they see themselves self-employed in the future as entrepreneurs. This interest in self-employment seemed to be particularly high in the municipalities of Podujeva, Prizren and Gjakova, but very low in Viti, Mitrovica and Peja. Farm employment played a small role, and no role at all among ethnic minorities as well as in some municipalities such as Prishtina, Peja and Gjakova.

Figure 19: Reasons behind the intentions to leave or to stay (open question), frequencies



Source: IAMO-GIZ-MAFRD Survey (2017).

**Figure 20: Anticipated future business activity/occupation
(multiple answers possible) by gender, frequencies N=215**



Source: IAMO-GIZ-MAFRD Survey (2017).

5 POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Migration policies are rarely evaluated for their impact, and longitudinal analyses of reintegration programmes are virtually non-existent (MCKENZIE & YANG, 2014). Thus, best practice examples are difficult to identify. This study mostly deals with involuntary returns and policy recommendations focus on ways to facilitate reintegration and to improve productivity among return migrants.

5.1 Main policy-relevant issues identified from return migrant survey

Our study highlights the economic vulnerability of the group of recently returned migrants. Returnees seem to be selected from the lower income strata. Their migration was costly and left many of them in debt and in an even worse economic position compared to their situation before migration. A high share of returnees has problems covering even basic needs. Although the majority is living in a house that belongs to the family, housing remains an issue.

The most important barrier to improving livelihoods and smooth reintegration is the labour market situation. Unemployment is rather the rule than the exception and usually many household members depend on just one income earner or fully depend on the small amount of social welfare that they receive. The need for action in this field is underlined by results presented in Figure 21.

Low educational levels and a lack of skills and work experience make it hard for returnees to access the labour market. Almost 20 % of the return migrants interviewed had no or only primary school education. Lacking work experience and a lack of professional skills add to this. In our study, where we mainly deal with the involuntary return of asylum seekers, the opportunities for migrants to acquire new skills are without doubt rather limited. However, some returned with business ideas and almost 30 % of male respondents and 21 % of female respondents indicated that they see themselves in the future as self-employed entrepreneurs.

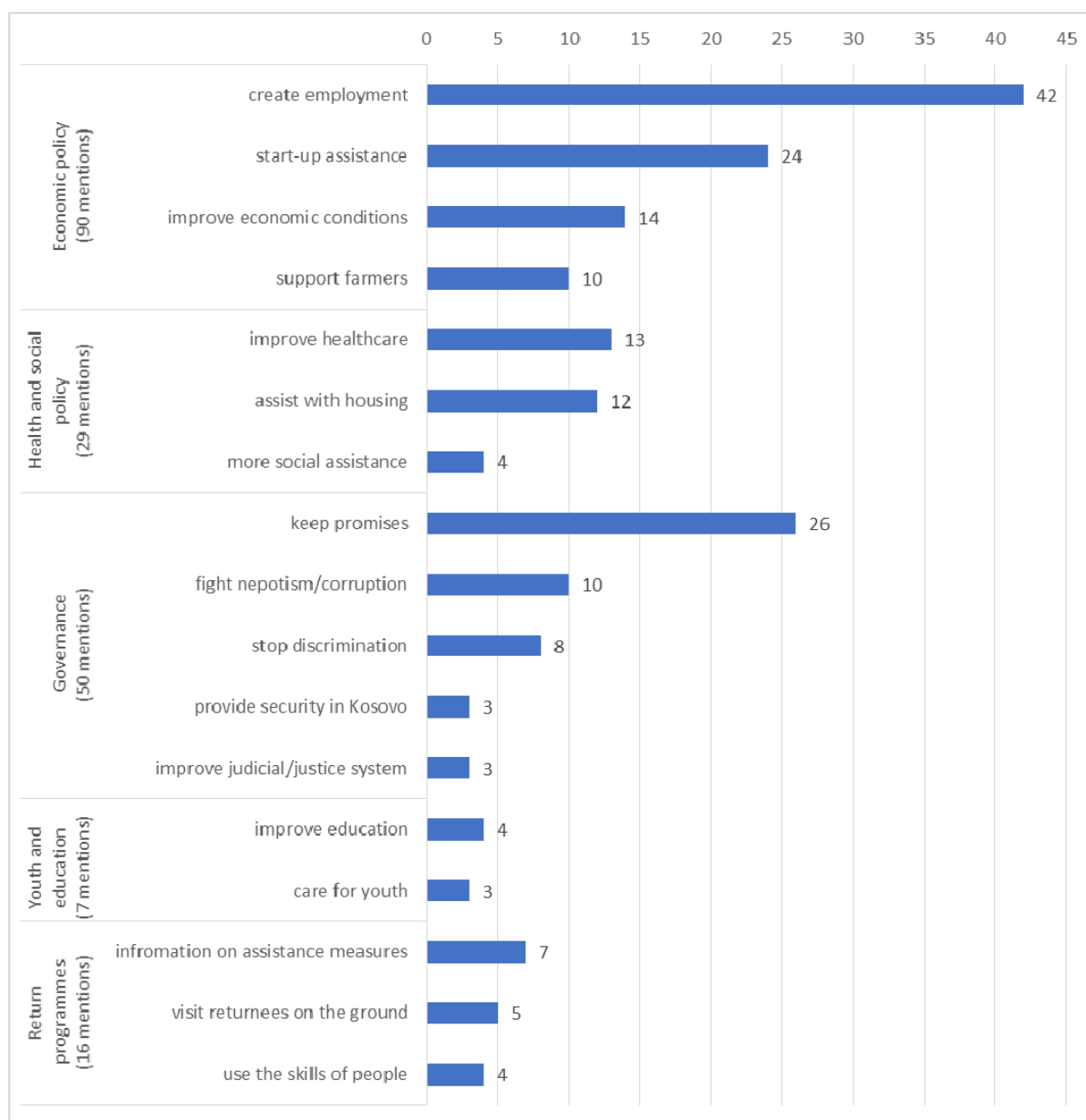
The often desperate economic situation, as well as the stress caused by the (failed) migration and return, contribute to a very low life satisfaction and a high prevalence of mental stress. The perceived life satisfaction reported during the interviews reflects the low well-being of returnees. It is not only significantly lower than the level of life satisfaction measured at the national level by the European Quality of Life Survey, but it is even comparable to values of homeless people, who score the lowest in other studies. Failed migration and return are linked to a worsening of both general health indicators as well as psychic and somatic symptoms. The prevalence of symptoms of depression is high: more than one-third of the respondents suffered from symptoms that are clearly elevated beyond the norm. More than half of the returnees with psychic and somatic symptoms became worse after their return.

Health issues are found to be an important trigger for migration, but they are also relevant for successful reintegration and highly important for the decision to stay or to leave again. Chronic diseases were reported by 15 % of interviewees. Health was the second most important reason for the most recent migration episode. It was also mentioned as a reintegration issue, which seems all the more relevant as 36 % of returnees reported a worsening of their general health after return. Consequently, health care is important and seems to be among the most important triggers for repeated migration as well (see below).

The outreach of assistance measures does not seem to be very high, and is much too low in critical areas such as health and psycho-social treatment. Most support comes from the close family. NGOs play an important role as providers of formal support. The role of direct state support seems comparatively low, but with regional variations.

Involuntary returns often tend to be followed by unsuccessful reintegration and the intention to re-migrate. Indeed, we find an overall low willingness to stay in Kosovo. More than 40 % of respondents placed their probability of staying at 20 % or lower. For around 70 % of the respondents, both males and females, the probability of leaving again was higher than the probability of staying. Economic conditions was the most important reason mentioned as a trigger for repeated migration, followed health care. The willingness to stay is linked with close bonds established through family, friends and culture, but also economic assets such as a business or livestock. It is also linked to a number of conditions such as access to work, health insurance and health care, etc. These conditions are also reflected in Figure 21 which lists the most important fields of actions as seen by the respondents.

The comparatively unfavourable situation of ethnic minorities and other vulnerable groups such as women was confirmed. Ethnic minorities, for example, scored the lowest in terms of life satisfaction, and showed more somatic and psychic symptoms as well as a higher level of aggravated symptoms compared to the pre-migration situation. Women have lower education levels and lack work experience, which makes them more dependent on the income of male household members.

Figure 21: Need for actions mentioned by respondents

Source: IAMO-GIZ-MAFRD SURVEY (2017).

Note: Multiple answers possible.

5.2 Policy recommendations targeting return migrants

The study has a number of policy implications. In the following we suggest fields of actions in three categories: (1) recommendations regarding the state of the labour market, (2) recommendations regarding integration support, and (3) recommendations addressing education, the provision of an enabling business environment, and improvement of social conditions.

Broad recommendations regarding the state of the labour market

- The Kosovar labour market is characterised by an extraordinarily low labour force participation rate (38 % in 2015 versus 73 % in the EU28) and extremely high unemployment rate (33 % in 2015 versus 9 % in the EU28). Obviously, policies should aim at generating more employment. **Any improvement of the labour market situation will have direct positive effects for returnees and is, at the same time, a requirement for any successful economic reintegration. It is also a pre-condition for increasing the willingness of return migrants to stay in the country.**
- Return migrants tend to be vulnerable in terms of their socio-economic, physical and mental well-being. Therefore they are disadvantaged in the labour market and may need support to be able to find work. **Work opportunities for low-skilled returnees should be offered as a better alternative to inactivity and dependency on social welfare.**

Short and medium-term strategies regarding the labour market

- To make best use of the entrepreneurial spirit and ideas brought from abroad, it is important to identify returnees with entrepreneurial aspirations at arrival. **An effective spread of information about business opportunities as well as available support is important. Access to credit for entrepreneurial activities, start-up funds and public guarantees could push the creation of employment, but should be used only after thorough investigation of the market situation, as subsidised loans distort the market and should only be considered if positive external effects are to be expected.**
- A focus on sectors and occupations with low entry costs (i.e. close to zero upfront investments) could help to generate broad and quick income generating activities. Similar to the German workfare programme, "One-Euro Jobs", a programme could be launched to activate return migrants (as well as other vulnerable groups depending on welfare payments) and provide a bridge into formal labour markets. **By strategically combining social and economic policies, people could be motivated to stay or become active and increase their welfare benefits through work with a positive effect on the society. Again, market distortions should be weighed against expected positive effects.**
- The low involvement of rural people in agriculture should be further investigated. It might be the case that a **better use of agricultural resources and better possibilities and incentives for commercialisation could contribute to job creation and improvement in income levels for some households. In general, public policy should create an environment in which business-oriented smallholders have a fair chance to commercialise. This depends among others on equal access to the markets, as well as to important services such as financial services, public advisory services and subsidies.**
- Acknowledging the fact that Kosovo's labour market, even in the best of scenarios, will not provide as many jobs as are needed and that time is required before reforms can show positive effects, migrant labour and remittances will remain important in the near future. **Agreements on circular migration with EU countries, for example for seasonal farm work, or other legal ways of migration could further reduce the**

pressure on (often unsuccessful) migration via asylum procedures. Given that legal ways exist, information about them and on the skills that are needed to gain access to EU labour markets should be promoted.

Short and medium-term strategies regarding integration support

- A relatively modest use of support measures in the field of reintegration and low knowledge about them calls for better strategies to reach the target groups. **It seems to be of utmost importance to clearly identify at time of entry (1) who is ready to be integrated into labour markets, (2) who needs medical or psycho-social treatment before integration into labour markets, and (3) who represents a particularly difficult case and needs targeted social support? Available measures and support infrastructure should be adapted to the needs identified during this process.**
- Inconsistencies in the statistical data of returnees and beneficiaries call for a more systematic data collection and monitoring of data bases. **Reliable data is the best basis for targeted policy measures and also helps to avoid possible abuse of financial aids.**
- With regard to social measures, housing seems to be very important. **Often those who are most vulnerable, including the poor, elderly, or ethnic minorities, are in need of support for housing. Not only short-term assistance, but long-term solutions are needed.**
- Clearly, returnees return to communities. **One potential option that may enhance the development effect of reintegration assistance, is to provide community level assistance to communities of return.** On the one hand, such a programme could enable the emergence of bottom-up initiatives and could motivate stakeholders within villages. On the other hand, success depends strongly on finding "leaders" and on strong support from communities (who might see such initiatives as competition and not as a beneficial complement). Experiences in similar community or grass-root led projects exist in the framework of the EU's Leader programme in rural development and should be explored.
- Given the psychological burden of involuntary return, beneficiaries of the reintegration programme might have difficulties clearly developing plans right after arrival. Thus, public reintegration **measures should allow for flexibility, provide close interaction with advisory services** and allow beneficiaries to gradually adapt and develop their plans over the course of the respective support programme.

Medium-term strategies regarding education

- Education, including early education in kindergartens and pre-schools, is of utmost importance. Migrants indicate the future of their children as a reason for leaving. **Offering adequate education is therefore key for keeping returnees from leaving again and, indeed, increasing the chances of a better life for the coming generations.**

Medium-term strategies for an enabling business environment and social conditions

- Non-transparent business conditions driven by informal exchanges, corruption and clan networks are often mentioned as characteristics of Kosovo's economy. The creation of a transparent, merit-based and predictable business environment will provide the base for an improvement of labour markets. **Thus, incentives for informal activities and**

corruption should be minimised. Improved governance will create more trust, and thus facilitate reintegration and increase the willingness to stay.

- Health reasons proved to be an important driver of the migration decision. Therefore, the **problems in the domestic health system need to be tackled and/or solutions need to be developed as to how Kosovars can be treated in EU countries in case of serious diseases that cannot be handled in Kosovo.**

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