



IOM International Organization for Migration
OIM Organizația Internațională pentru Migrație

Victims of Trafficking trends 2010-2012

The IOM works to identify, repatriate and reintegrate individuals exploited abroad. In the years from January 2010 until December 2012, the IOM dealt with 400 new cases of victims of trafficking (VoTs). 134 new victims were assisted in 2010, 93 in 2011, and 173 in 2012.

The IOM's beneficiaries often receive assistance for longer than 1 year, and so it is important to note that this report, which describes only the newly identified cases between 2010 and 2012, does not reflect the total number of people assisted in those years, or the workload of the IOM or CAP (Centre for Assistance and Protection). Instead, it tries to identify trends in the characteristics of the victims, exploitation, and form of recruitment in recent years. It is also crucial to bring attention to the fact that in some cases, victims of trafficking are assisted by the IOM years after the exploitation took place, and so the report will contain data on victims abused prior to the reporting period. Finally, it is vital to remember that many cases of trafficking are never identified, and so the reported trends are based on limited information. Although the accuracy of the report is affected by the aforementioned issues, it can still provide useful general observations on the groups in society vulnerable to trafficking, and the tactics of the traffickers.

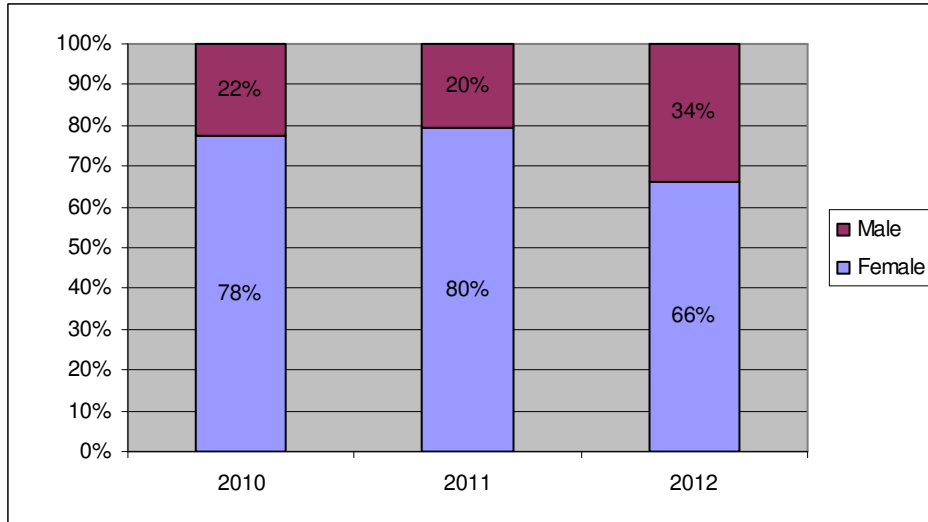
Characteristics of VoTs 2010-2012 - identifying at risk groups

The IOM has a pro-active prevention approach to trafficking in human beings, by assisting people in vulnerable situations. Based on the in-depth knowledge gained from working with victims of trafficking over the past decade, particular situations put VoTs at risk before they fall prey to traffickers; victims of domestic violence, single parents, children from boarding schools or persons with low education and/or from poor rural areas with minimal opportunities. Since the year 2010, the IOM has shifted its focus to include people from 2 other vulnerable groups: children left behind by migrating parents (CLB) and elderly left behind (ELB). CLB are especially vulnerable to being exploited and trafficked and are therefore a target group for pro-active prevention of Trafficking in Human Beings (THB).

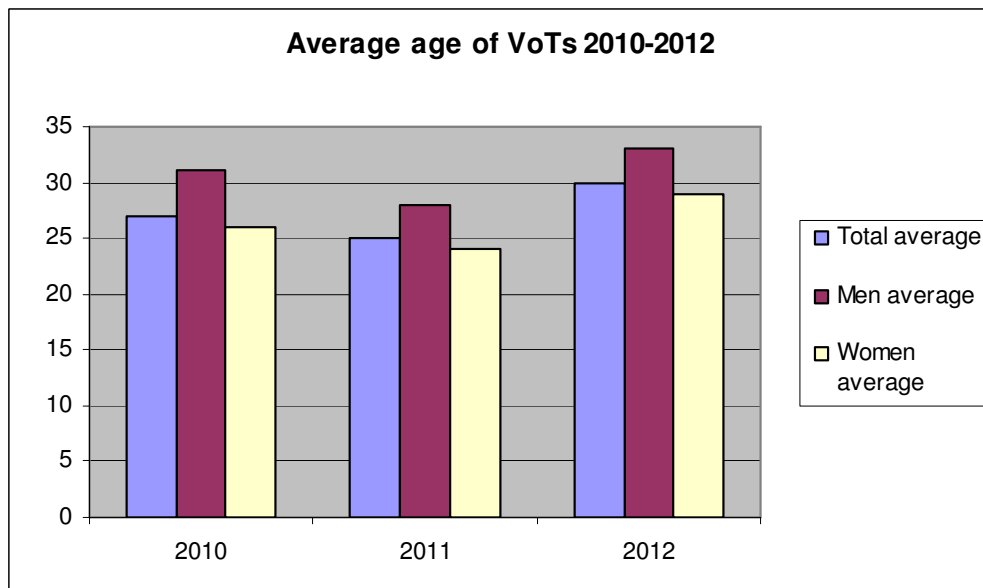
It is important to note that the data for 2012 has been significantly influenced by the discovery of a very large case of trafficking, with 74 labour victims discovered on a tobacco farm in the Ukraine. While there has been a general rising trend in the number of cases of exploitation of men, and of labour exploitation, this rise may seem more drastic due to the aforementioned case. The inclusion of Kosovo as one of the main destination countries is also the result of the detection of one site of sexual exploitation.

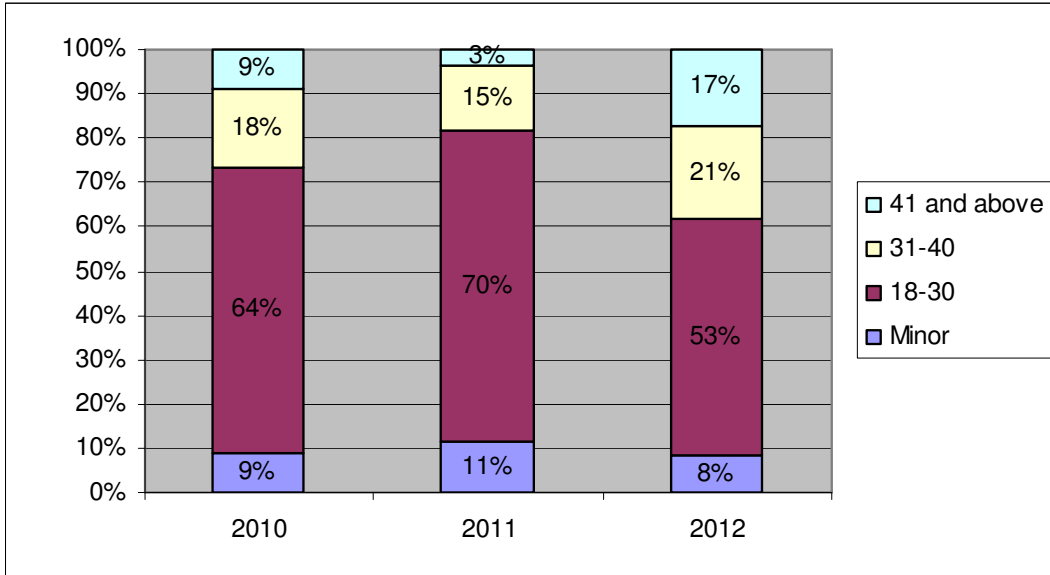
Age and Gender

VoTs are predominantly female, although recently the number of male victims has increased significantly, in part due to a growing trend of trafficking for the purposes of labour exploitation.

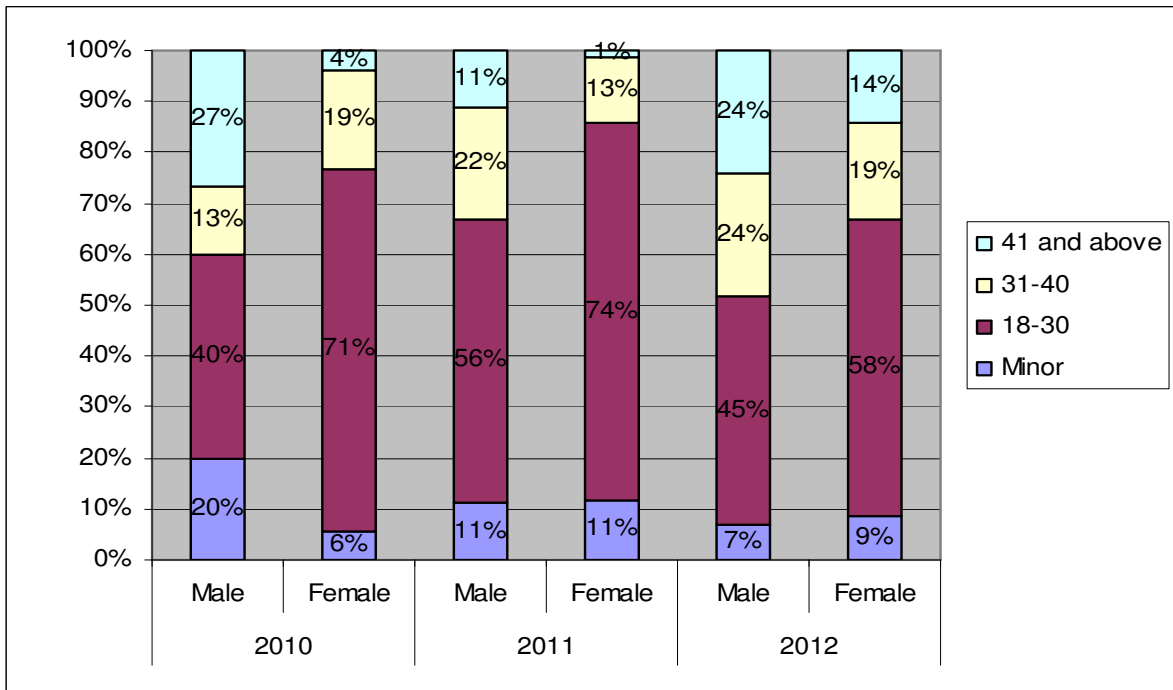


This trend has also resulted in a slight rise in the average age of VoTs in the last 3 years, with a significant proportional decrease in the number of victims in the 18-30 age group (although they remain the largest group).





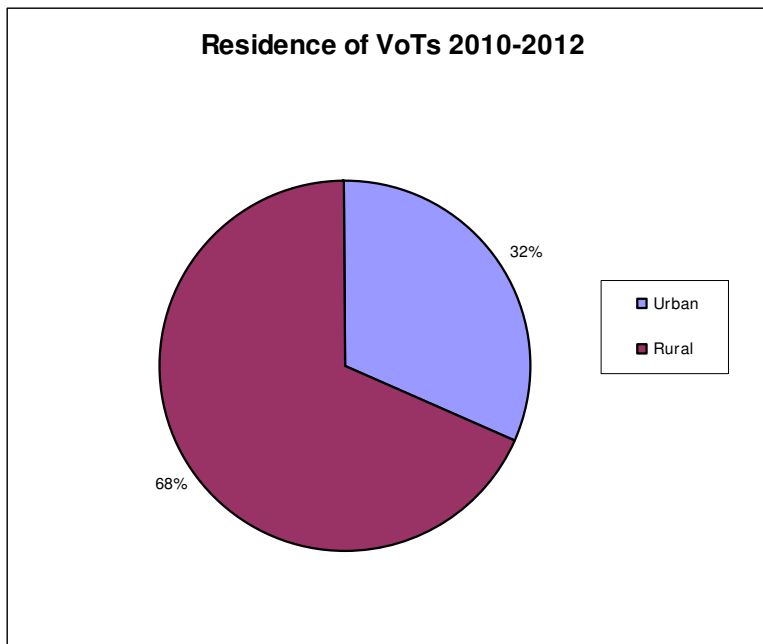
Female victims tend to be younger than male victims, in part due to the existence of trafficking for sexual exploitation of female but not male adults. The proportion of minor victims has remained roughly constant in the last 3 years, while the number has risen slightly, with 12 victims in 2010, 10 in 2011 and 14 in 2012. It is important to note that the age of assistance is considerably higher than the age when victims get trafficked.

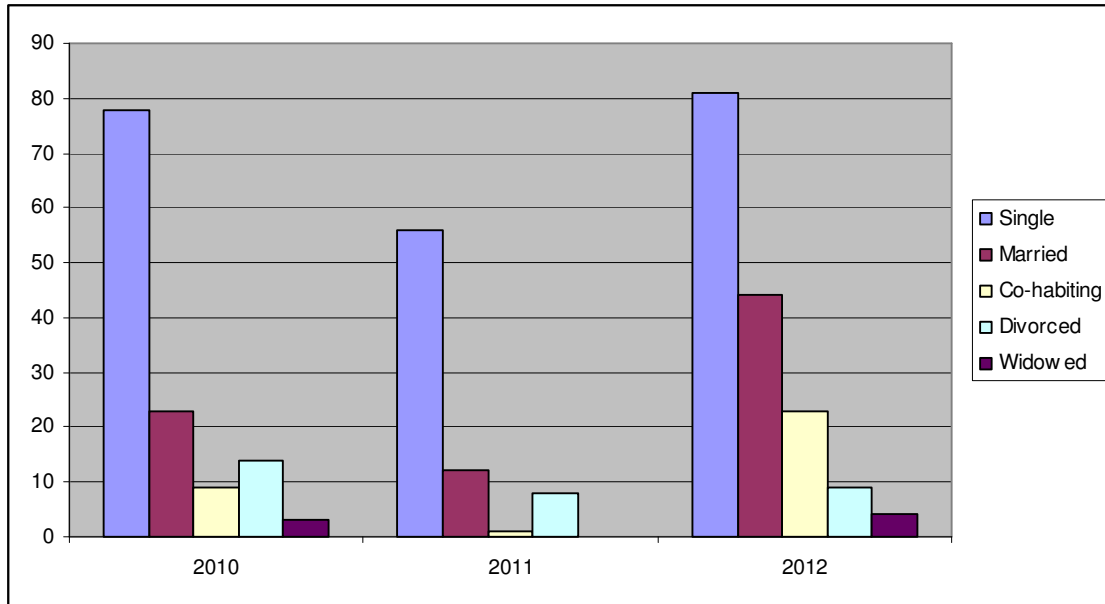


Residence, civil status and children

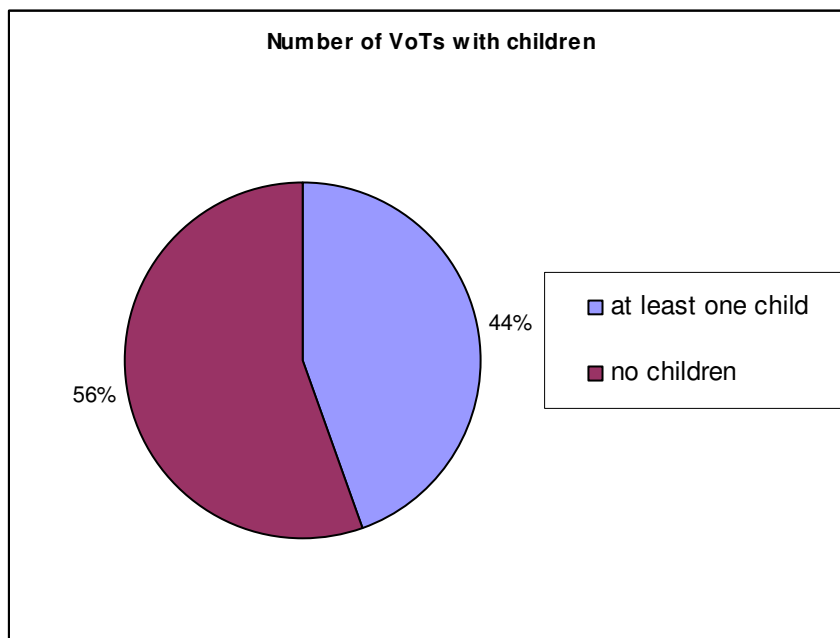
Over 2/3 of the victims assisted in 2010-2012 originated from rural areas, and the ratio of rural to urban residents has remained roughly constant. Rural areas in Moldova tend to be more affected by unemployment and poverty. The vast majority of VoTs identified between 2010 to 2012 were unemployed (79%) and in a bad financial situation. Therefore, most of the victims identified reported that they wished to go abroad for work, because of the utter despair in which some people live in the country caused by poverty, unemployment and low salaries.

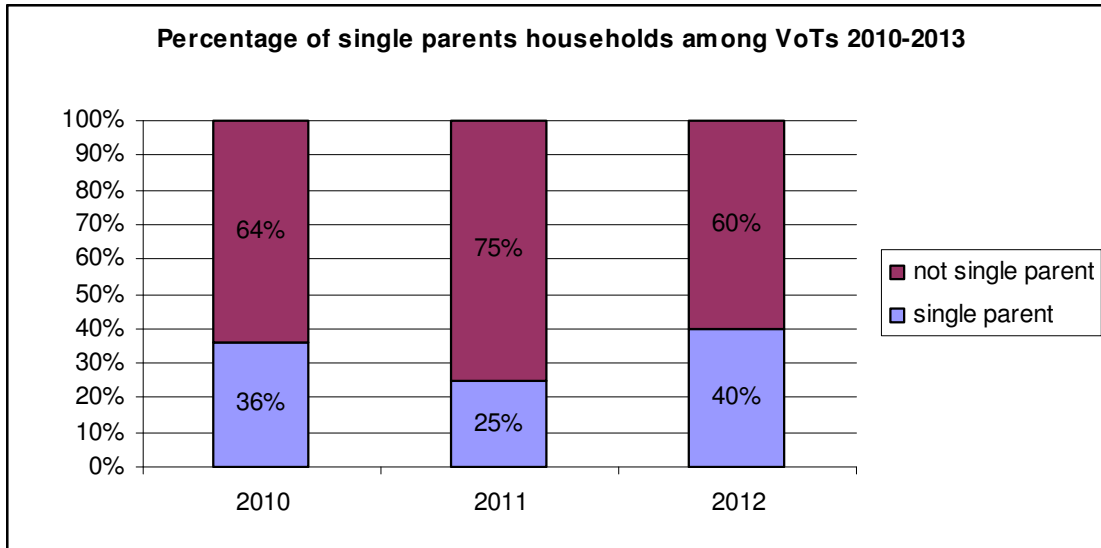
The majority of the victims were single, however it is important to note that the overall number of married victims has risen in recent years, and that economic difficulties can push people to migrate and leave their families behind. It is also important to remember that problems within the family, such as domestic violence, can cause people to seek employment abroad in an attempt to escape a difficult home situation.





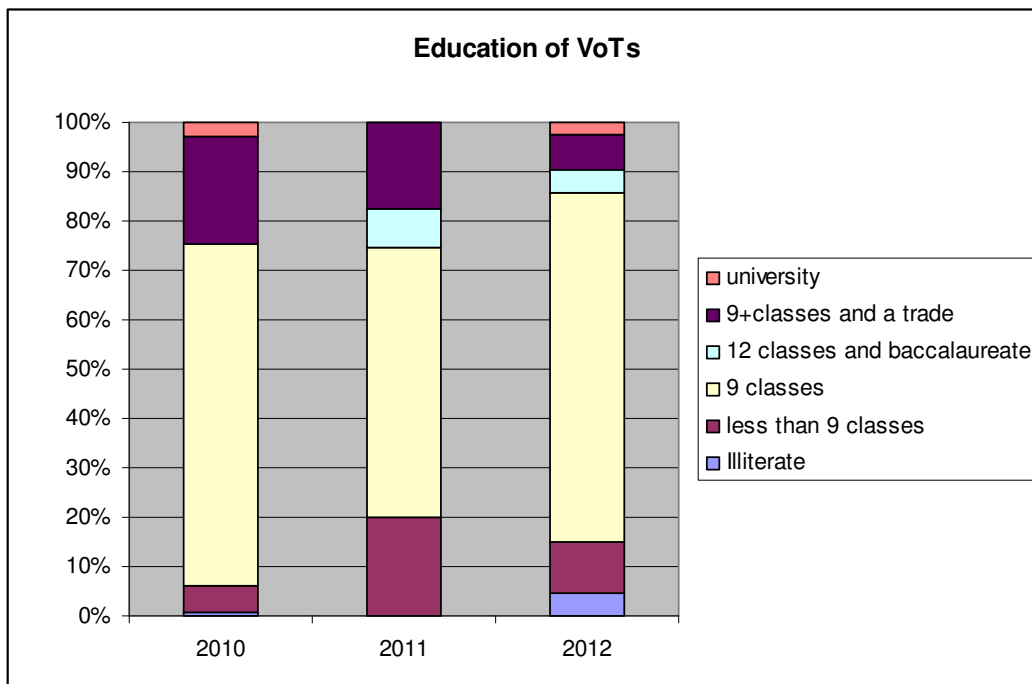
A little below half of the victims identified between 2010 and December 2012 have children, suggesting that having children or not having a partner to care for the children does not decrease the chances of becoming a VoT. In fact, the high, and increasing number of single parents among trafficking victims could suggest that the difficult financial situation single parent households face is a push factor for migration, and therefore increases the risk of trafficking





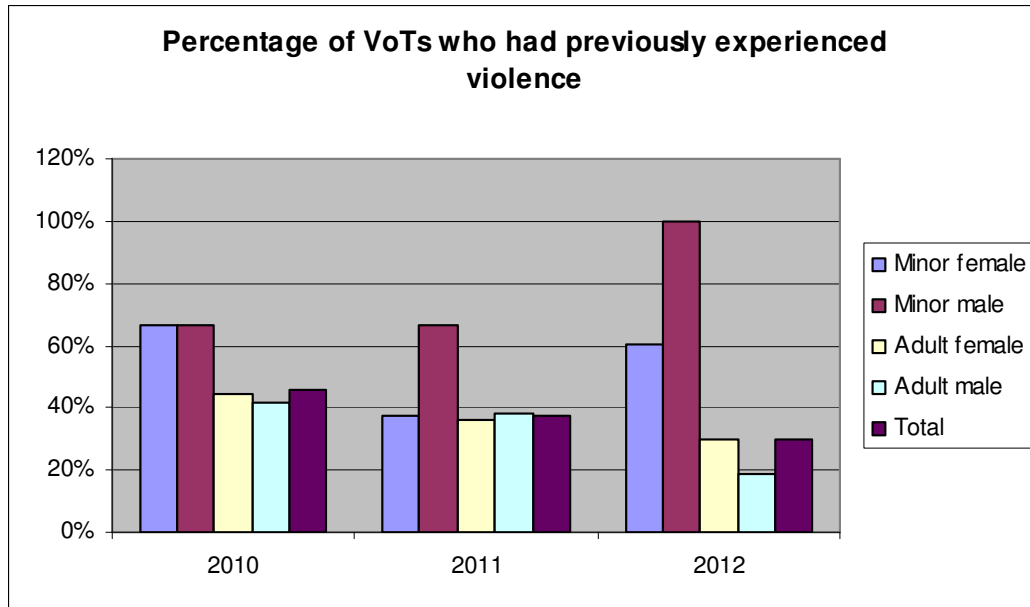
Education

Similar to previous years, for both men and women, most of the identified victims of trafficking in the years 2010-2012, have been educated up to the obligatory level of class 9. However, it is noteworthy that some victims of trafficking also have a trade, have been to college or have attended university, and that education alone does not prevent trafficking.

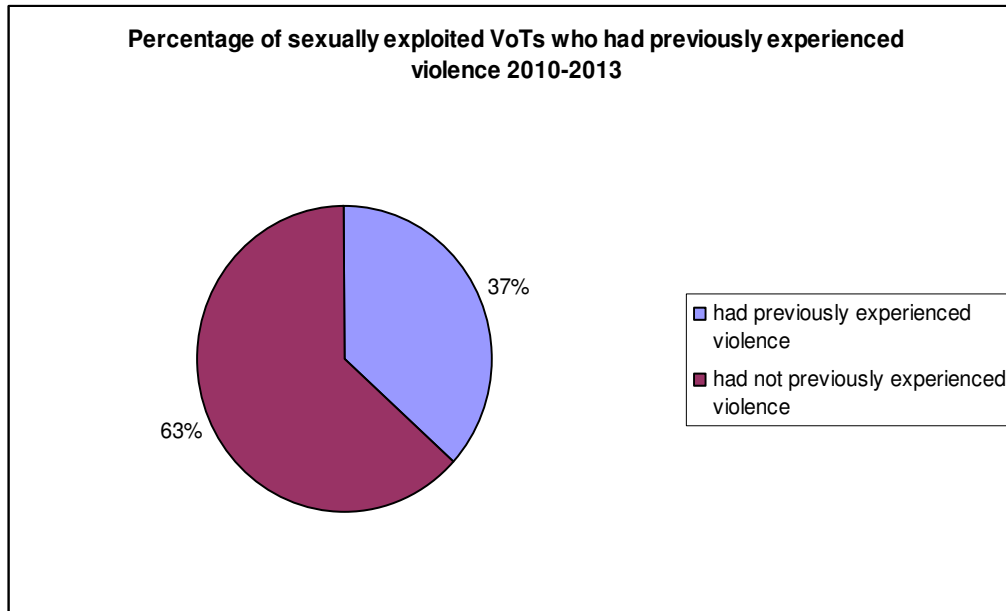


Previous experience of violence

It is becoming increasingly clear that VoTs have often experienced some type of violence in the past. Nearly half, 46%, of the VoTs assisted in 2010 had previously been victims of violence (physical, sexual and/or psychological). In 2011 this proportion went down to 38% and in 2012 to 30% of the VoTs having previously been victims of violence. Despite the decrease, the number remains significant. It is important to acknowledge that male victims are also subjected to domestic violence, although less commonly than women. It is also important to note that the majority of minor victims across the 3 years had previously experienced violence.



Of the women trafficked for sexual purposes, 37% had previously been victims of violence. It should be noted here that the numbers given are based on VoTs' self-reporting of previous violence and trafficking and may therefore in reality be much higher.



Conclusions on VoT profile

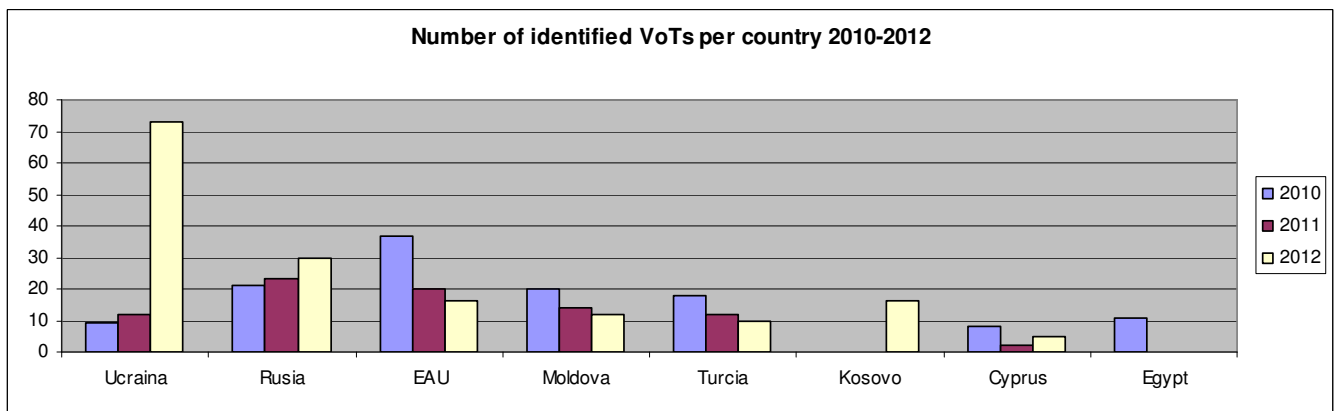
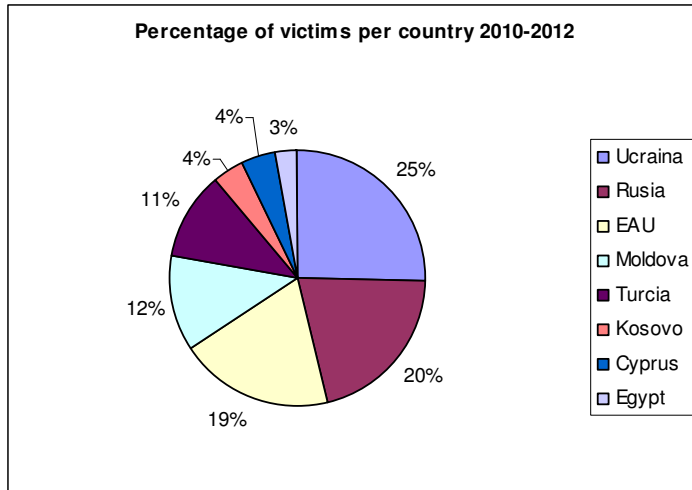
Identified VoTs are mostly single unemployed women from rural areas with an education up to class 9. These women might have children and they could have previously been subjected to violence or trafficking. Because of their circumstances and the difficulty of supporting their (and their family's) livelihood, they are seeking employment abroad. They are recruited by men and women and are often trafficked for under 4 months to perform work involving sexual services in the UAE, Turkey and Russia, and to work in the agricultural and service sectors in the Ukraine and in Russia.

The generalized profile for men is very similar, with the only difference being that they are not necessarily single, are slightly older, and mostly get recruited by men to be exploited for labor purposes in the Ukraine or Russia.

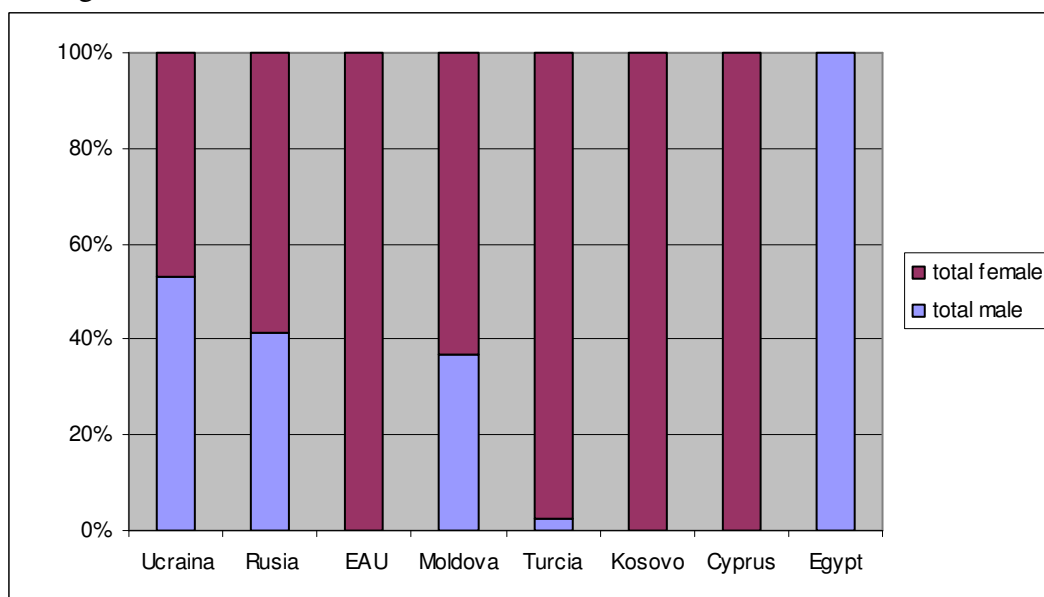
DESTINATION COUNTRIES AND TYPE OF EXPLOITATION

Countries of destination

Victims assisted by IOM Moldova between January 2010 and December 2012 were exploited in 21 destination countries. During the last years, trends related to destination countries have changed, with the victims returned from Turkey and the United Arab Emirates lowering because of the shift in type of exploitation. The main destination countries for the mentioned period were Ukraine (25%), Russia (20%), United Arab Emirates (UAE) (19%), Turkey (11%) and internally in Moldova (12%). It is important to note that the Ukraine became the largest country of destination only in 2012, following the discovery of an important case of labour trafficking, with many victims identified at one site.



The countries of destination differ considerably for men and women with men mostly being trafficked towards Russia and Ukraine and women mostly to UAE and Turkey, although also to Russia, Ukraine and other countries.



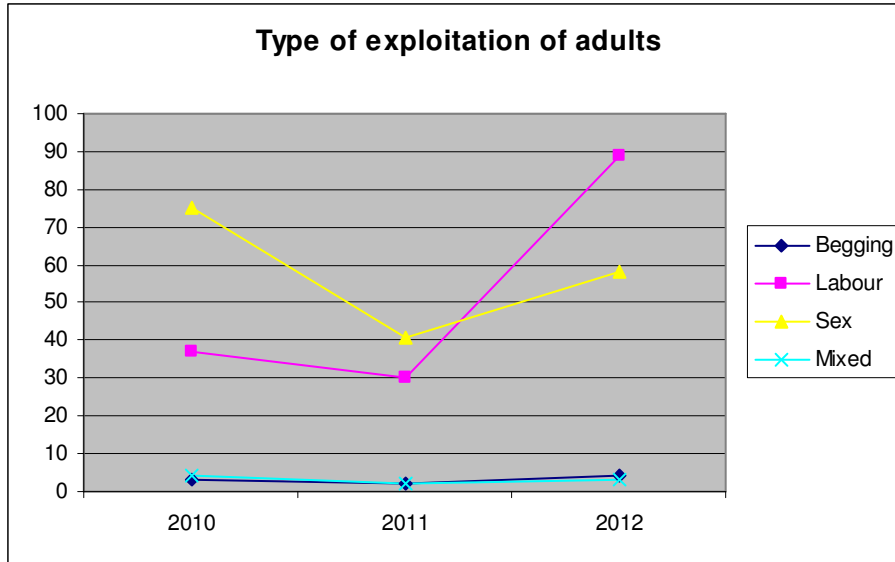
IOM Mission to Moldova

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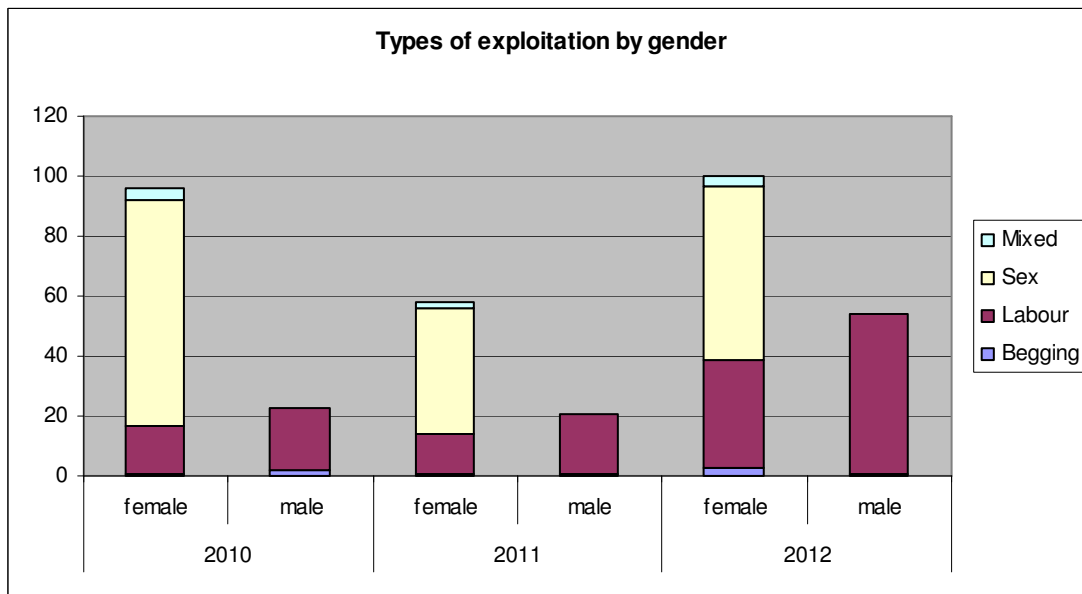
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Type of exploitation

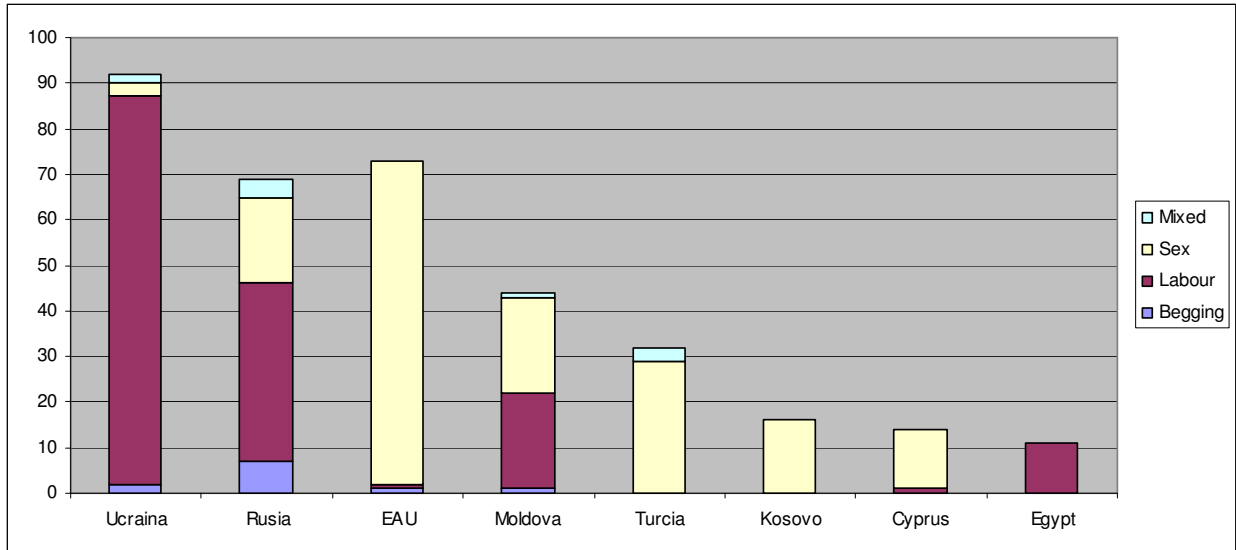
While most VoTs identified in 2010-2011 were women exploited for sexual purposes, in 2012, the majority of the victims were trafficked for labour purposes.



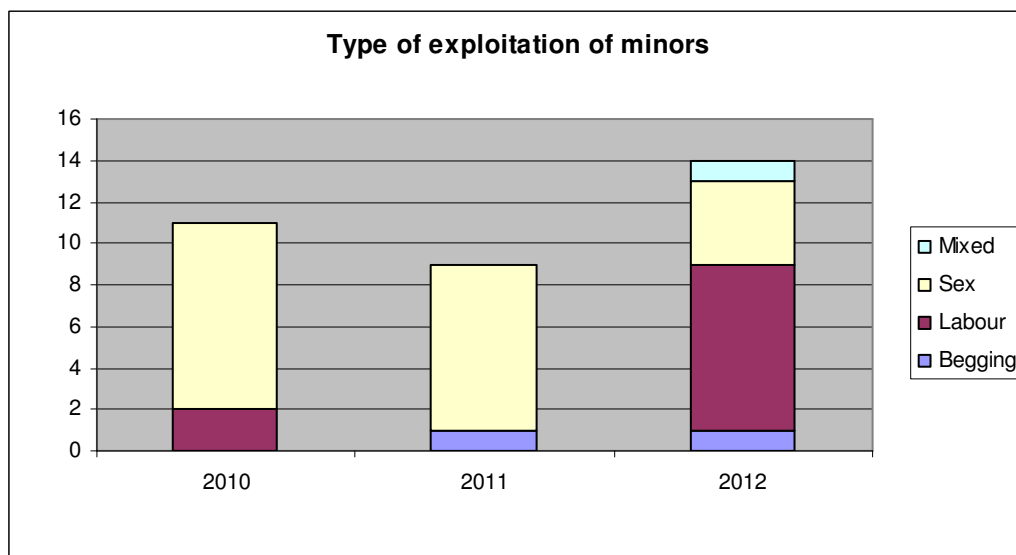
The rise in labour exploitation has resulted in a higher number of male victims, however female and minor victims have also been exploited for labour purposes. While women used to be exploited sexually in the vast majority of cases of trafficked women, in 2012 trafficking for sexual purposes accounted for only 58%. This is in part due to the large case discovered in the Ukraine.



This exploitation pattern differs per region and country, with sexual exploitation happening mostly in UAE and Turkey, and labour exploitation -for both men and women- mostly in Russia and the Ukraine.



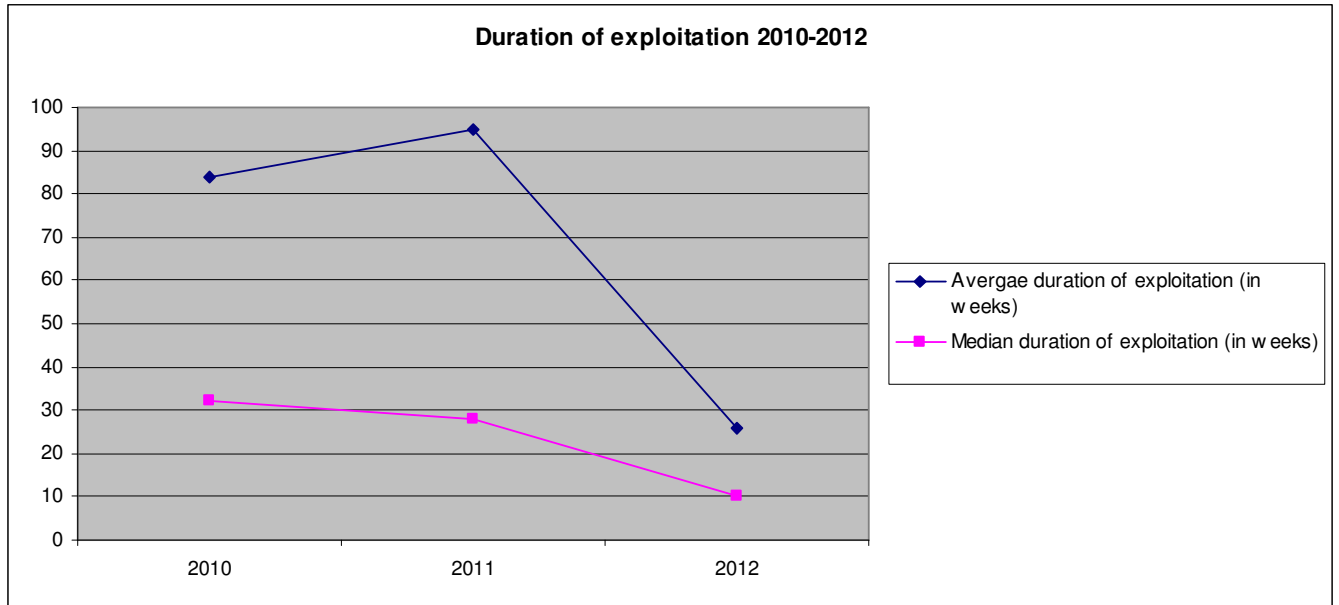
It is important to note that adult women are not the only ones trafficked for sexual purposes. Minor girls and boys also get trafficked for this purpose, with minor boys being trafficked internally in Moldova for this type of exploitation and minor girls being trafficked both internally and externally for sexual exploitation.



Conditions and duration of exploitation

The conditions of exploitation have changed over the years and are now “better” than before, the trafficking experience is generally shorter (usually lasting 2 to 6 months), the

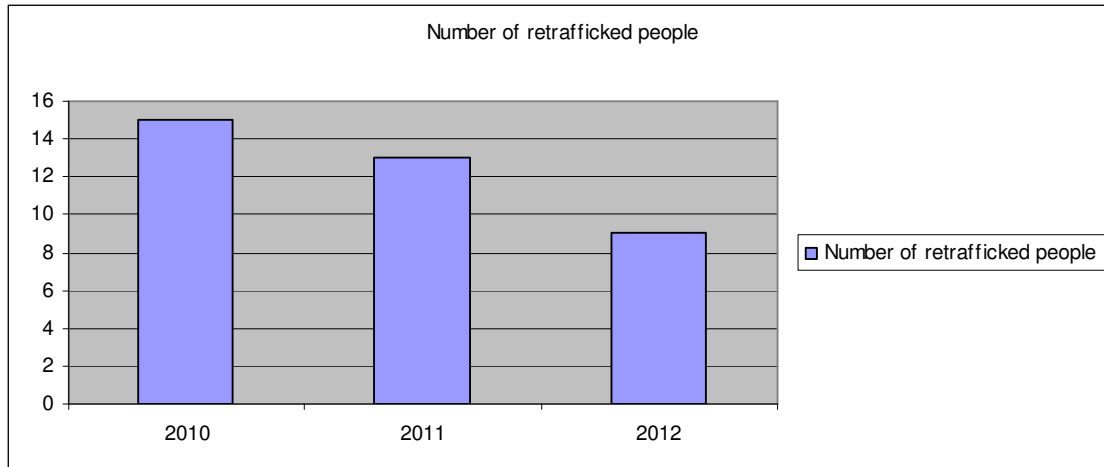
victims are paid small amounts of money; they are allowed to contact their parents/children and are allowed partial freedom of movement. These manipulative techniques have caused many victims to fall under an illusion of well-being where they consider their traffickers as friends: causing some to return to their traffickers after being rescued or arrested by police and deported.



Re-trafficking

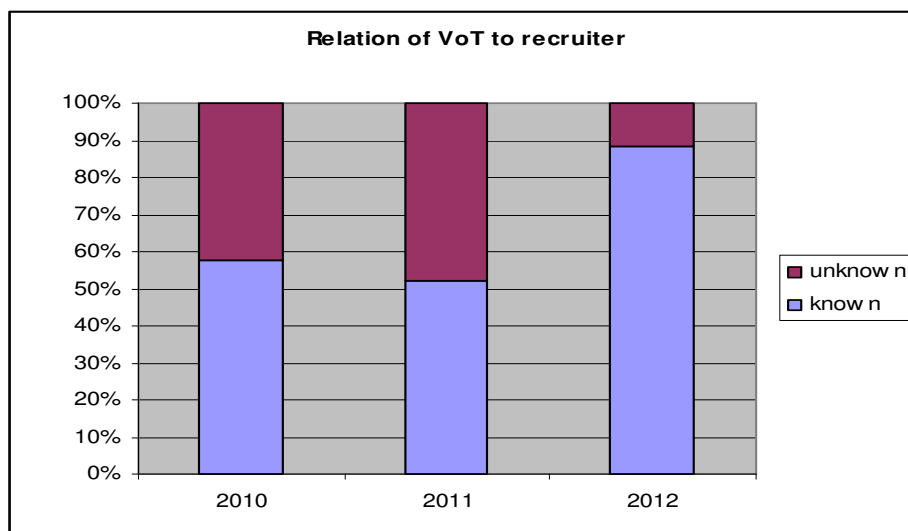
Many identified victims of trafficking also treat the trafficking experience as failed migration and rush to find a new job in order to provide for their families. Hence, they do not identify themselves as victims and thus refuse psychological and additional types of assistance available to them and might fall victim to trafficking again.

In 2010, 2011 and 2012, 37 VoTs had also been VoTs before and had thus been re-trafficked. The people who had been re-trafficked had not previously been assisted by the centre for assistance and protection and therefore did not know all the risks involved with accepting offers under different circumstances than in their previous trafficking experiences

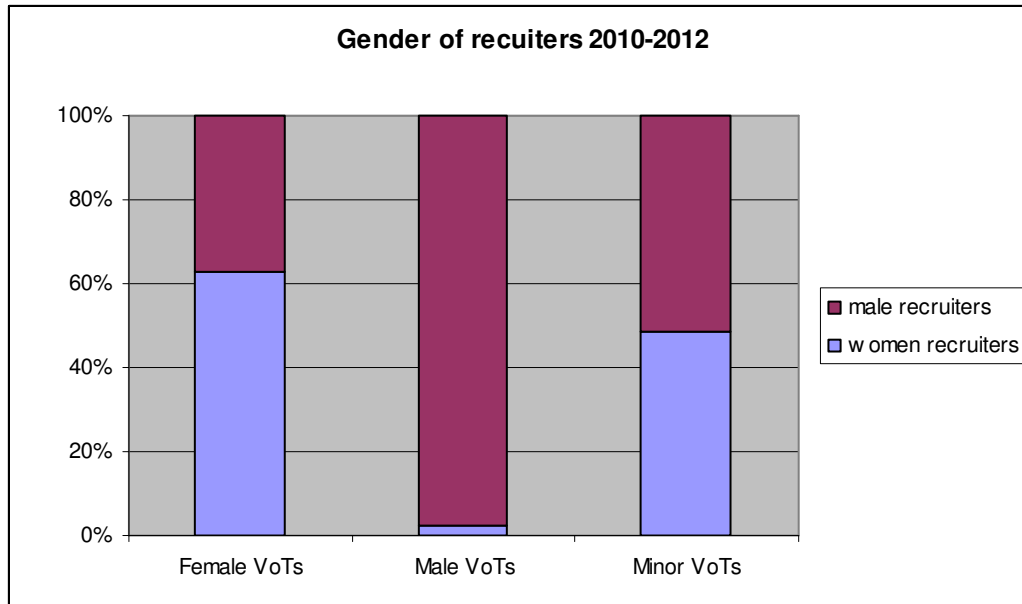


The recruiters

Often people the VoTs trust, such as neighbours or acquaintances, are the first point of contact into trafficking.



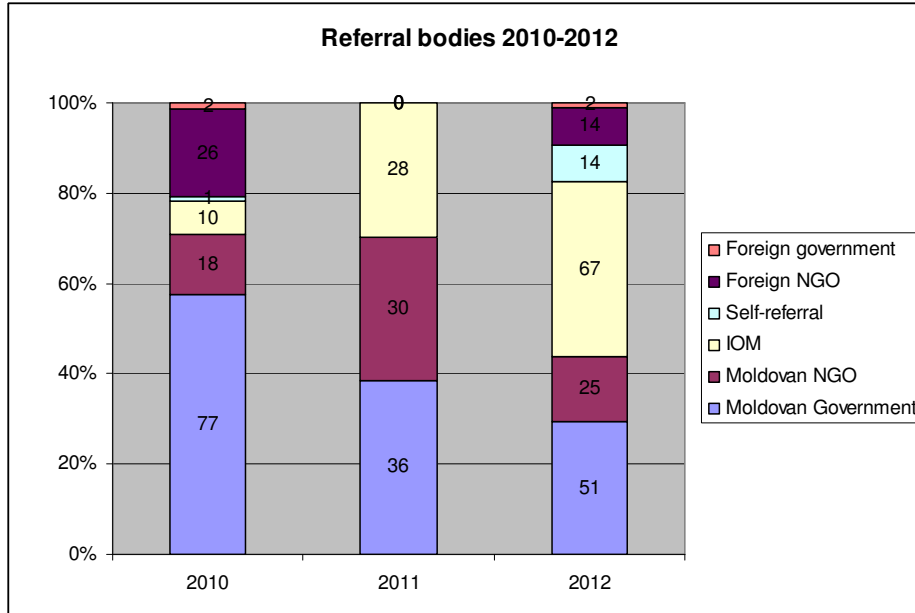
Although both men and women are involved with the recruitment side of the crime, women are mostly recruited by women (63%) and men are mostly recruited by men (98%) while minor victims are recruited by both men (51%) and women (49%). Sometimes victims of trafficking are made to recruit others, and are promised their freedom in exchange for a new recruit.



The jobs that VoTs are offered range from salesperson, agricultural worker, cook and housemaid to waitress, dancer and prostitute. It is important to note here that agreeing to provide sexual services abroad does not preclude the individual from becoming a VoT. The offer (including the conditions) accepted in the country of origin at the moment of recruitment differs considerably from the conditions of exploitation in the destination country.

Referral of VoTs

Referring agencies play a crucial role in the identification and return of victims. The majority of cases were referred by IOM Missions and NGOs in the destination countries and if discovered or self-identified after their return to Moldova they were referred through the NRS and local NGOs, including the hotlines in Transnistria and the rest of Moldova. The number of self referrals grew in 2012, partly due to the identification of victims who had managed to return to Moldova from the aforementioned farm in the Ukraine, who then received assistance along with other victims from the same case. Self referral is rare as victims are often scared of their persecutors, or unaware of their rights. The media also played a role in the identification of some victims in 2012.



Assistance

Because of the exploitation and often humiliating factors involved with the human trafficking experience, victims of trafficking may suffer from traumas or suffer from mental disorders such as post-traumatic stress disorder. In order to cope with the experience, some victims start abusing and become dependent on substances such as alcohol and drugs. In order to assist them the Centre for Assistance and Protection (CAP) in Chisinau provides victims with psychological support in the form of individual, group and family consultations so that they can learn to live with their past experience and can be reintegrated into society.

Trafficking does not only have mental effects however, the bad and often unsafe conditions under which people work leads to physical sickness as well. Disorders of the reproductive system are not uncommon among people who have been sexually exploited, and disorders in the nervous system, memory disorders, back pains, and exhaustion are also often found among those who were under stress and worked long hours. For these reasons, VoTs also receive diagnosis, treatment of acute diseases and prophylactic treatment of chronic and incurable diseases at the CAP.

The victims are also assisted with their return home, and are given temporary housing. They are given juridical help with applications for documentation, or with bringing their persecutors to justice, if they wish to do so. They are further helped with finding employment, learning a trade in order to seek employment or completing their education.

National Referral System for protection and assistance of victims of trafficking and persons at risk

The national referral system is a comprehensive system of co-operation between various Government institutions, International Organisations and civil society to assist and protect victims of trafficking based on international standards. On 5 December 2008, the NRS strategy 2009-2016 and Action Plan 2009-2011 were approved by the parliament making it a legally binding document. The implementation of the NRS in the regions of Moldova was done through the creation and training of multidisciplinary teams (MDTs) which are the main operational units of the NRS, operating on different levels and bringing together a wide range of specialists (social workers, policemen, prosecutors, doctors, teaching staff or other educational officials, representatives of public registry, bodies, lawyers, psychologists etc.). MDTs identify and assist victims and potential victims of TIP in their rehabilitation and reintegration process by referring them to service providers. To date, the NRS covers the whole territory of the Republic of Moldova at the district level. The NRS methodology was also introduced in 6 out of 7 territorial units in TN to ensure equal access to services for beneficiaries from this region. Based on the in-depth knowledge gained from working with victims of trafficking (VoTs) over the past decade, it became increasingly clear that all victims had been in particularly vulnerable situations, which put them at risk before they fell prey to traffickers: situations such as: victims of domestic violence, single parents, children from boarding schools or persons with low education and/or from poor rural areas with minimal opportunities. Thus, prevention of TIP through social and economic measures for potential victims is an integral part of the NRS

Ukraine (Kherson) case (2012)

Recruitment: A group of 67 Moldovan citizens were recruited to work in Ukraine by acquaintances. They were promised to earn around \$500-600 per month; money that most of the victims planned to spend on the repair of their houses.

Transportation: The exploiters transported them legally over the Moldovan-Ukrainian border in small groups (10-15 persons).

Exploitation: After they arrived, they were accommodated in barracks (with women allocated in the same rooms with men, with wooden beds with dirty mattresses, etc) and their passports were taken away under the pretext of obtaining work permits and registration. The territory was guarded, and cell phones were withheld during work time. The victims had to work over 15 hours a day, with no holiday time. During the period of exploitation, when victims asked about their passports or about their salaries, they were threatened and manipulated with false promises. A small number managed to obtain their passports and raise enough money to get home, but the majority believed that they would be paid eventually and remained on the farm. Because of this, the exploitation of the majority of the victims took place for almost one year.

Identification/Referral: A group of 47 Moldovan citizens exploited on agricultural fields in Kherson was identified by an IOM Kiev NGO partner and referred for repatriation

assistance to IOM Chisinau. Immediate actions were taken and the NGO together with the local police rescued the group, while IOM Kiev provided transportation to the city of Kherson. IOM Chisinau took over after that and repatriated the VoTs to Moldova where crisis intervention assistance (accommodation, food and medical assistance) was provided. After repatriation, during the period of working with the victims in Moldova, another group of 20 people exploited on the same farm was identified. These 20 individuals had been able to come back home by themselves at a different stage of exploitation.

Assistance: The group of 47 beneficiaries received legal, psychological and medical assistance upon arrival and all 67 beneficiaries received reintegration assistance designed to fit their needs.

The two IOM Missions in Kiev and Chisinau are in permanent contact, including through subcontracted lawyers in both countries, who are representing the victims in the ongoing transnational criminal investigations in Moldova and the Ukraine.

Challenges/Lessons learned: In such a big group of VoTs, group behaviour plays a big role. The people stayed at the site despite having doubts about their situation because they saw others had also decided to stay. There were also procedural challenges in the country of destination because of the size of the group.