THE REALITIES OF EMPLOYMENT POLICIES OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE CONTEXT OF MIGRATION PROCESSES IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

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One of the most complex and responsible parts of structural analysis of the labour market is the analysis of young employment. Even though the language of statistical analyses speaks of certain economic phenomena, in reality there are lives and destinies affected by this economic scourge and migration. Statistical data and records related to sustainable development objectives can contribute to the re-design of employment policies and the flexibility of the workforce, to find viable solutions for combating migration in order to support sustainable development in the country.

The employment approach among young people is a primary task for the Government. Therefore, a separate and defining aspect of this Strategy about the employment policies of the young population in order to include and maintain them on the labor market, while respecting the principle of equal opportunities. Special emphasis is placed on increasing the social inclusion of all young people, increasing the participation in democratic and civic life, and facilitating the transition from school to adulthood, focusing in particular on labor market integration.

According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the stable population of the Republic of Moldova on 1 January 2018 constituted 3547.5 thousand persons, [33] of which:

• 1149.6 thousand or 32.4% are young people aged 14-34 years. Taking into account that young people represent the third part of the country's population, their generation is steadily decreasing. Over the past few years we have seen a decrease in population aged:

• 14-19 years with 45.3 thousand persons, the share of this category in the total number of young people decreased from 22.0% on 01.01.2014, to 19.8% on 01.01.2018;

• 20-24 years decreased by 61.0 thousand persons, the share decreased by 3.3 percentage points, to 21.7% on 01.01.2018;

 \bullet 25-29 years is also decreasing by 31 thousand, reaching 28.3% on 01.01.2018;

• 30-34 years increased by 45.4 thousand or 5.9 percentage points to 30.2% on 01.01.2018 [31].

The highest share of young people aged 30-34 years is explained by the high birth rate recorded in the years 1985-1990 in ex-RSS Moldova, after which this process has experienced a constant anti-evolution. The process of integration into the workplace has a particular impact on young people's quality of life, and the obstacles and failure to get a decent job after the completion of studies can have a substantial and lasting impact on young people's skills and abilities but also on their income. Positive debut on the labor market determines professional and personal success in later lifetimes of the young person.

The analysis of the statistical data shows that the share of young employees in the national economy increases with age. If for young employees aged 15-24 years the weight registered a tendency of reduction of 13% (from 59.0 thousand to 51.4 thousand) for the last three years, then for the young population aged 25-34 this weight increased by 2.65% in 2017, reaching 220.9 thousand (Table 1).

	2015	2016	2017	2018					
aged 15-24 years	59,0	52,3	51,4	Data is					
	thousand	thousand	thousand	not					
aged 25-34 years	215,2	217,2	220,9	dissemina					
	thousand	thousand	thousand	ted					

Table 1. Young population according to the status of employee

Source: Authorized by NBS data

This is explained by the migration of young people outside the country:

	2017	First Quarter, 2018
aged 15-24 years	50,7 thousand	51,8 thousand
aged 25-34 years	121,6 thousand	132,4 thousand

Table 2. Young people who are at work or looking for work abroad

Source: Authorized by NBS data

As well as by reducing the number of young people as unpaid family workers¹ (Table 3).

¹ Unpaid family worker is a person who carries out his / her activity in a family economic unit run by a family member or a relative for whom he / she does not receive remuneration in the form of a salary or payment in kind. Peasant farm (farmer) is considered such a unit. If several people in a household work in their own household, one of them - usually the head of the household - is considered a self-employed worker and the other - unpaid family workers.

	Table 3. The young population as unpaid family workers										
	2015 2016 2017										
aged years	15-24	10,9 thousand	10,8 thousand	9,2 thousand	Data is not						
aged years	25-34	10,8 thousand	14,7 thousand	9,9 thousand	disseminated						

Source: Authorized by NBS data

Young people are a very mobile category of the population. They are in a significant share both in internal migration (especially rural-urban, small towns, big cities) and in external migration.

• young people leaving for studies outside the country, their share is difficult to estimate, but we can certainly say a few tens of thousands (30-40 thousand young people, according to unofficial estimates based on scholarships offered by host countries and young people enrolled in different universities abroad):

• young people going abroad – they represent around 14% of the total number of Moldovan young people. The average age of migrants in the Moldova is 30 years. Thus, the share of young people in the total number of people working abroad is significant, accounting for around 39% of all migrants. Most young people go to work in the Russian Federation, around 80% of migrant youths working in the country. According to the statistical data for 2017, the countries where most Moldovan youth work are Russia (52.2%) and Italy (12.4%), with no significant disparities according to the residence environment of the young people, but with important gender differences. The share of young women working in Italy is three times higher than that of men (25.4% of all emigrant women vs. 7.6% of total male migrants) while Russia as a destination country is more much preferred by men rather than women (57.4% of all men, compared to 38.0% of all women) [33].

• young people who emigrated for permanent living in the host country. In this respect, more countries (Canada, the USA, Russia) have attractive immigrant government programs for young people in the Republic of Moldova. Their share is also difficult to estimate, as there is no mechanism for quantifying them. Only in 2017 emigrated 277 young people to Russia, followed by Germany and the USA, 146 and 117 young people (Table 4) [13].

Table 4. Number of young emigrated population

2017	,	15-19 years	20-24 years	25-29	30-34	TOTAL
	Men		42	years 32	years 58	153
Russia		21				
	Women	21	32	30	41	124
Germany	Men	16	2	18	17	53
Germany	Women	8	7	35	43	93
U.S.A	Men	8	17	24	13	62
U.S.A	Women	15	9	19	12	55
T11	Men	9	17	19	16	61
Ukraine	Women	11	9	12	8	40
Israel	Men	2	8	5	8	23
Israei	Women	9	5	10	5	29
Austria	Men	1	1	2	-	4
	Women	1	1	3	3	8
Belarus	Men	-	4	1	1	6
Delai us	Women	-	-	1	2	3
Turkey	Men	1	-	1	1	3
Turkey	Women	2	-	-	-	2
Demoste	Men	-	-	1	1	2
Romania	Women	1	-	-	-	1
Italy	Men	-	-	-	-	0
пату	Women	-	1	1	1	3
Greece	Men	-	-	-	-	0
Greece	Women	-	-	-	1	1
Bulgaria	Men	-	-	-	-	0
Bulgaria	Women	-	-	1	-	1

For example, only in early 2018 in Canada there were around 12,000 people, the vast majority being young. Moldova ranks 6th in the main countries of origin for immigrants in Canada [14].

By place of residence, most young people are concentrated in the urban area, where young people are under 34 years of age. Analyzing the number of young people by residence area, we see that the structure by age group is different, changing over the age.

• If in 2017, in the rural area, the majority of young people belonged to the age group 20-24 years (27.2%), and in the urban area predominated the youngsters aged 25-29 years (33.7%),

• In 2018 (1st quarter), in the rural area 28.5% were people aged 25-29 years. While young people aged 30-34 in urban areas accounted for 37.9% (up 11 percentage points).

By residence area, the distribution of young people aged 15-24 is the following:

• In rural areas 34 %% compared to 45.8% in urban areas (2017), with an insignificant growth trend in the first quarter, 2018 with 3.3 percentage points inurban space and a significant decrease of almost 8 percentage points in rural (37.9%) [13].

This is determined, first of all, by the much lower employment opportunities in rural localities compared to urban ones. The structural changes in employment by the environment are largely related to the process of "depopulation" of rural localities.Given that more jobs are available in urban areas; nonfarm wage activity is the main source of income for 47.6% of urban youth (17% in rural areas). At the same time, individual agricultural activity is a source of income for 14.7% of young people in rural areas [33].

		2016		2017			
	TOTAL	Urban	Rural	TOTAL	Urban	Rural	
Employees	52,3	60%	40%	51,4	58%	42%	
	thousand	00%	40%	thousand	38%		
Unpaid family	10,8	2.8%	97,2%	9,2	0.1%	99.9%	
workers	thousand	2,0%	97,2%	thousand	0,1%	99,9%	
Workers on	21,6	25,5%	74,5%	19,2	21.4%	78.6%	
their own	thousand	23,3%	74,3%	thousand	21,4%	78,0%	

Table 5. Young population (15-24 years) on professional and medium status

Source: Authorized by NBS data

Also, there are major employment discrepancies according to the professional status of that group of young people. Due to the absence of statistical data for 2018, we will analyze the trend for 2017 (Table 5). Thus, compared to 2016, all three statutes (employees, unpaid family workers and self-employed workers) show a decrease in the number of the young population aged 15-24 with approx. 11% in 2017. The same trend is observed in residence environments, where the share of young people aged 15-24 in urban areas declined on average by 2% in 2017, and in the rural area increased by approx. 4%.

Also, among the young population there is a significant trend of growth in 2017 with approx. 4% of young people (aged 15-24) working in rural areas on their own (in rural formations, cooperatives or as patrons). This increase would be explained by the increase in the number of visits by young people to entrepreneurship and start-up programs. As an example, only 200 young people were trained in the PNAET program (which ended at the end of 2017), of which 40% are women. The age limit for potential beneficiaries of the program has been increased from 30 to 35 years for 2017 [25].

The average age of trained women is 23.5 years and males of 26.3 years. About 170 businesses were funded, the program budget being 50 million lei, and the grant component 20 million lei for 2017. For the year 2018, the project entitled "Joint Opportunities in Business for Youth" (JOBS4Youth) was launched, managed by ODIMM [21].

The proportion of women in total young people aged 15-24 was 42.6% compared to 57.4% for men. From a gender perspective, among young people (15-24 years old), major discrepancies are not registered by professional status in 2017, except for self-employed workers, where the share of women is 27.1% (5.5 thousand) compared to 72.9% of men (13.7 thousand). This discrepancy would be explained by the fact that women engage in income-generating activities to a lesser extent than men. It should be noted that women (15-24 years) accounted for 47.13% of the total number of employees of that age.

Another group analyzed *is young people aged 25-34*, which accounted for 25% of the total employed population in 2017 (302.1 thousand), being 0.6 percentage points decreasing compared to 2016 (25.6%). In 2017, of the occupied population by professional status, young people aged 25-34 were:

• 18,3% of the total number of employees decreasing by 10% compared to 2016 (28.3%),

• 21,8% of the total unpaid family workers (or down 4.2 percentage points versus 2016 by 26%),

• 4,9% of the total employed population as co-operatives (or by 5.1 percentage points down from 2016 by 10%) [8].

According to the residence permits in 2017, 25-34 year-olds in the urban area account for the highest share, with 56.8% compared to 43.2% in rural areas, with a slight decrease of 2.8 percentage points compared to 2016 (54% urban).

According to the same data sources, from the gender perspective, among the youngsters aged 25-34 years, major discrepancies are registered for those with professional status of self-employed workers, where the male rate was 63% compared to 37% for women in 2017, the same as in 2016. The women's rate was higher than that of men among 25-34-year-old family workers, 66% compared to 34% (2017), decreasing by 2 percentage points versus by 2016 [9]. For market economies, a lower female and male employment rate (with the exception of the 15-24 age group) is normal. This is determined by the reproductive functions that women perform between ages 25-40. The high level of female employment in the Republic of Moldova is a feature inherited from the socialist period when the issue of gender equality is interpreted to some extent erroneously that women, along with men, provide the same labor services. On the other hand, gender mainstreaming approaches also speak in the process of equalizing employment rates between men and women. At the same time, a too simplistic approach to the issue in question also causes tensions that can lead to unpredictable social consequences.

However, in the conditions of economic imbalance, when the wages of the population are insufficient to ensure a decent living, women are forced to work in different jobs, usually badly paid, leaving the second level of their reproduction, education, housekeeping functions, which is extremely negative for socio-demographic developments.

Informal employment is particularly pronounced among young people aged 15-24, showing a positive dynamic between 2016-2017. About 41.7% of young people in the age group had an informal job in 2017 either in formal or informal sector enterprises, or in households producing for their own consumption or employing employees, which is 3.3% less than in 2016.

	2014	2015	2016	2017	Quarter I, 2018				
Fo									
Total on the republic	799,4	785,2	776,2	788,6					
Young people aged 15-24	57,7	52,4	46,9	46,5					
Young people 25-34 years old	216,6	205,4	213,2	215,3	Data is not disseminat				
Inform	Informal workplace								
Total on the republic	385,5	418,4	443,3	418,9					
Young people aged 15-24	36,8	41,2	38	33,3					
Young people 25-34 years old	85,4	94,6	99,5	86,8					

Table 6. Number of young people employed after formal and informal work, thousands

Source: Authorized by NBS data

For comparison, during the period 2014-2017, the average distribution of the total number of employed persons varied to 34.6% for those with informal employment versus 65.4% with a formal job (Table 6).

There are some trends in informal youth employment. In 2017, as compared to 2016, the employment of young people in informal employment is decreasing in both informal and formal sector enterprises. 45% of young people aged 15-24 and 52% aged 25-34 with informal work were active in informal sector enterprises, with a decrease of 3 percentage points compared to 2016 (for the category of aged 15-24 and 1 percentage point for 25-34 years.

The largest increase in the number of young people with informal employment was registered in households that produce for their own consumption: the number of young people aged 15-24 increased by 5% in 2017 (11 thousand persons) compared to 2016 (10.5 thousand), and for the age group of 25-34 years the distribution for the last two years remained unchanged [9].

According to the results of studies, where out-of-work young migrant workers from the country are excluded from the calculations for 12 months and over, over 23% of the employed youth were employed informally. The rate of informal employment remains high, especially among young men (26.6% compared to 18.2% of working women) and among young people in rural areas (over 41% compared to 8.1% among young people in the urban area). Young informal employees are mostly concentrated in agriculture (63.9%), then in industry (12.1%) and services (24%). In informal work, young people with lower levels of education are usually involved: each second has only secondary education, and two out of five - general or vocational education.

Starting from the premise that the transition from adolescence to adulthood brings the prospect of social and economic independence, for some young people, the challenge of finding jobs can be daunting, and the inability to prove that it is a productive member of society can shadow all other qualities and skills. [35]

To this end, SNOFM 2017-2021 provides for a priority theme for young people, where the basic objective of this Strategy is to increase the level of formal employment in general and of the young population in particular on the labor market, leaving the main challenges:

• limited market access for vulnerable groups (young people, retired people, women with children, people with disabilities, the low-skilled, Roma, etc.)

- the shortage of productive jobs and skilled workforce in rural areas,
- the high incidence of informal employment,
- high share of inactive population and labor migration, etc.

Moreover, the Strategy has set goals (targets) to be achieved by 2021, which have been reflected in the Table entitled **"Major Goals of this Strategy"**

(Table 3 of the Strategy). We aim to select only those targets that refer to the young population as well as those of vulnerable young people (for analysis and comparison), eliminating other broader and broader targets.

Indicator	2015	2017	2017		2018, quart. I	2019	2020	2021
1 Employment rate %	40,3	40,8	40,5 ↓	41,6	<i>37,7</i> ↓	42,4	43,2	44,1
1.3. Employment rate of young people (18- 29 years old),%	27,9	28,4	↑ 30,1	29,3	28,8 ↓	30,2	31,1	32,1
***					• • • •			
4. Unemployment rate	4,9	4,5	4,1 ↓	4,0	4,1 ↓	4,0	4,0	4,0
5. Unemployment rate - young (15-29 years)	9,7	9,0	8,1 ↓	8,0	7,6 ↓	7,0	7,0	7,0
6. Young people who do not work, do not learn and are not in vocational training programs (NEETs)	29,3	29,2	<i>29,3</i> ↑	28,8	<i>29,4</i> ↑	28,3	27,5	26,8
6.1. Young people who do not work, do not learn and are not in vocational training programs (% of all young people aged 15-29), men	23,6	23,5	23,1 ↓	23,0	Data is not disseminated	22,5	22,0	21,5
6.2. Young people who do not work, do not learn and are not in vocational training programs (% of all young people aged 15-29), women	35,2	35,0	35,4 ↑	34,5	Data is not disseminated	34,0	33,0	32,0
6.3. Young people who do not work, do not learn and are not in vocational training programs (% of all young people aged 15-29), urban	26,6	26,5	27,0 ↑	26,0	Data is not disseminated	25,5	25,0	24,5
6.4. Young people who do not work, do not learn and are not in vocational training programs (% of all young people aged	31,4	31,3	31,3 -	31,0	Data is not disseminated	30,5	30,0	29,0

Table 7. Major targets of SNOFM 2017-2021

15-29), rural										
* * *										
10. The share of the unemployed in the labor force from the total number of per- sons who have ad- dressed to the Na- tional Agency for Employment	41,1	44,0	47,9	¢	50,0	58,6	¢	60,0	60	62

Source: Year 2017 and 1st quarter of 2018 - elaborated by the author based on NBS and ANOFM data

By operating with the statistical data of the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and the National Employment Agency (ANOFM), we intend to evaluate the dynamics of the achievement of the SNOFM 2017-2021 major targets aimed at integrating young people's priorities in this policy, starting with the launch date of the Strategy, April 2017, so far. This will allow us to identify the disparities that exist between young people and other age groups on the labor market, as well as to analyze the underlying causes of the identified disparities. We will also review the prioritization of the Action Plan for 2017 on the implementation of SNOFM 2017-2021 and we will assess the quality and relevance of the 2018 Action Plan priorities for the young population in the light of recent developments on the labor market of the Republic of Moldova [27].

Young people, especially those without work experience, often face major job hiring problems, their access to the labor market is largely determined by the quality of the transition from education to work. There is a vicious circle with reference to young graduates [23].

On the one hand, in order for young graduates to be employed, experience is needed that cannot be accumulated in school or college banks and, as a result, many of them become unemployed, employed in the informal sector, or follow the path of migration abroad. On the other hand, employers are not satisfied with the practical abilities of graduates, who usually have more theoretical and practical training.

Conclusions and recommendations

Since the implementation of SNOFM 2017-2021 to date, the labor market situation in the Republic of Moldova continues to show a decline in occupational indicators, despite economic stabilization, which may have negative long-term consequences on the economic and social security system.

The most difficult situation remains for young people aged 15-24, where there is an increase in the number of unpaid family workers and self-employed workers, including their increase in rural areas compared to urban ones. Generally, young people face more problems with low productivity and low wage rates, the difficulties of transition from school to adult life, and labor market insertion through the gaps in youth opportunities in the rural area versus urban environment. That is why the share of young employees aged 15-24 is reduced annually by about 10-13%, which is explained by the increase of their migration abroad. Among the priority countries of destination are Russia, followed by Germany, USA, Ukraine, Israel and finishing with Romania, Italy, Bulgaria.

Undoubtedly, the phenomenon of labor migration affects younger generations more and this generates enormous socio-economic costs and risks for the Republic of Moldova. If in the previous years the share of the young population was higher in the urban area, then from 2018 there is a change in the situation, increasing by about 11%. The lack of employment opportunities and the low attractiveness of jobs available in rural areas require young rural economically active people in rural areas to choose between two opportunities: either to accept work that produces a modest income, made in unfavorable working conditions and under increased risk of illness, either emigrating in urban or outside the country to find a more attractive and better paid job.

The negative dynamics of the labor market continues to affect the quality of the human potential, which does not correspond to the current labor market requirements, and the training activities of young people at different levels as well as of the jobseekers are not efficiently capitalized pro-active policies. As a consequence, the young employed and the unemployed become uncompetitive.

Also, for the analyzed period, there is an increasing involvement of young people in entrepreneurship, being beneficiaries of projects aimed at supporting the business spirit and start-ups. As a result, the phenomenon of informal employment among young people declined in the average by 12-13%.

Even though the public employment services are working to ensure the employment growth of job seekers, including young people with disabilities, occupational policies remain untapped and unattractive for young people. These trends are reflected in the negative dynamics of the NEET phenomenon, especially among young women and in urban areas.

In the same context, the young population is poorly acquainted with state policies on youth employment on the labor market (every fourth young person knows poorly or not at all about the existence and implementation of SNOFM), half of whom believe that the strategic framework does not reflect the needs of young people on the labor market. Every young person opts for increasing the salaries of young people on the labor market, which in turn will generate new jobs and a more active involvement of young people in internship programs. On the opposite side, the consequences of implementing ineffective policies on the inclusion of the young population on the labor market will have an impact on economic development, and will also boost the migration of young people abroad.

To this end, in order to adjust the SNOFM 2017-2021 action plan from its implementation so far, based on the identified causes, and to improve the implementation of priorities for the young people in the Strategy, the following recommendations are advanced:

• Promoting economic policies capable of creating competitive and attractive jobs, which would help increase employment, eradicate unemployment, especially among young people and rural areas;

• Revision of the guaranteed minimum wage in the real sector according to the dynamics of the consumer price index and increase of the labor productivity;

• Active implementation of flexible forms of employment, especially for young women on the labor market:

• Implementation of pro-active integration measures in the labor market addressed to young people with disabilities, including returnees;

• Efficiency of a series of policy measures focused on the integration of young migrants returning to the labor market;

• Ensure sustainable measures to increase young people's income, especially from rural areas, by diversifying their areas of activity in rural communities:

• By Developing Shares:

• Active implementation of supporting small and medium entrepreneurship among young people through access to refinancing and lending.

• Capacity building of the institutions that manage the field of employment of the labor market at both national and local level by establishing and ensuring the functioning of the innovative methods and practices of occupational management:

• Provision of labor mediation services, pre-termination services, information and professional counseling, organization of job fairs:

• Supporting and promoting an effective education and training system in order to maintain and develop the existing young capital. Adjusting the content of education and training programs in line with the requirements of the business environment and the labor market:

• Implementing and functioning of the Labor Market Observatory by monitoring the process of employment of graduates; Carrying out labor market research on the assessment of cognitive, socio-emotional and employment barriers; Identification, collection and processing of missing data categories for the development, monitoring and evaluation of employment policies; Improving the tools for assessing the impact of services provided by the National Agency for Employment

• Complex and dimensional implementation of the information and professional counseling procedure within the project "Support for the implementation of the National Employment Strategy 2017-2021, focusing on youth".

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