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# The Perspective of Women in Rural Areas on both Banks of the Nistru River

*Sociological study*

**Institute for Public Policy**

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The study has been developed under the aegis of the Institute of Public Policy, in partnership with the Organization “Новый Век” (Tiraspol), with the financial support of the British Embassy in Chisinau through the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund.

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This report is focused on the rights of women, as part of human rights aspects only. Its terminology and language imply no political position. The territory of Transnistria is not recognized as an independent state by the international community, the unanimous position is that it is part of the Republic of Moldova. The Experts have accordingly referred to the decision makers in this territory as de facto authorities. The use in this report of such terms as ‘Constitution’, ‘Law’, or any other term used to clarify the rights of women does not indicate any de jure recognition of these regulatory acts, de facto authorities or institutions. These terms are used exclusively for the convenience of the reader and to provide the most precise identification possible of specific documents, de facto authorities, office-holders and institutions. The names of places and other typographical terms differ between the languages in the territory. The report uses the terms the Experts understood as the most common in the area. In some instances, the Experts have used the terms “left bank” and “right bank” to indicate the territory controlled by the de facto Transnistrian authorities and the Government of the Republic of Moldova, respectively. In other instances, the Experts used the term “Transnistria” to refer to the territory controlled by the de facto Transnistrian authorities. This use follows the pattern established by the latest Protocols signed between the Chisinau and Tiraspol authorities, and does not imply recognition of the independence of the territory. The views expressed in this report are solely those of the authors, based on the independent human rights assessment they were engaged to undertake, and do not necessarily reflect the official position(s) of the British Embassy in Chisinau.

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Ambasada Britanică  
la Chişinău



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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations	Description
CPA	Central Public Administration
LPA	Local Public Administration
ADA	Austrian Development Agency
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics
OR	The Office for Reintegration
CPCVWDV	The European Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women
CEDAW	The UN Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women
FEMM Committee	The European Parliament's Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality
CPEDEE	The Council for Preventing and Eliminating Discrimination and Ensuring Equality
CPD	Centre "Partnership for Development"
DFID	Department for International Development of Great Britain
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
ESAS	Exploitation and sexual abuse
GIDP	Gender in Development Policy (UNDP)
MDL	Moldovan Leu
MECR	The Ministry of Education, Culture and Research
MHLSP	The Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection
PPI	Institute of Public Policy
NAP	National Action Plan on implementation of UNSCR 1325 (National Action Plan)
UN	United Nations
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OSME	Organization for Development of Small and Medium Enterprises
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
OSCE	The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
EU	European Union
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
GBV	Gender-based violence



## ARGUMENT

Globally, women are considered to be one of the vulnerable groups although their contribution to the development of societies is much higher than it would seem. The vulnerability of rural women is higher, and is explained by objective factors of the environment, the conditions under which they live, but also by factors of social nature.

In the Republic of Moldova, women in rural areas represent nearly 30% of the total country's population, and 51% of the resident population in rural areas, and among the main factors of their vulnerability can be listed both economic and social ones. Unemployment and income gap between women and men are the main economic factors which influence the situation of women and cause a number of gender-specific issues. Among the social factors can be mentioned: stereotypes, violence in the family, standards accepted by the society, traditionalism existing on the distribution of roles in the family and in the society between women and men, etc. The persistence in society of discriminatory attitudes towards women, confirmed by the research conducted in the field, the stereotypes in Moldovan society according to which the man is the head of the family and the woman is assigned a series of household responsibilities, including caring for and educating children. Living conditions are worse in villages compared to cities, impacting the situation of women in rural areas. At the same time, reduced access to facilities, poor quality of basic services, lack of employment opportunities, of using knowledge and skills drive migration from rural areas, including women, which determines certain consequences to the family environment beyond the beneficial financial aspects.

The socio-economic potential, in general, is in direct correlation with the level of education, the state of health of the population, the community in which it lives. The deterioration of social capital in the rural areas of Moldova leaves its marks on rural women too. Analysing this issue in the light of the studies, it is noticed that the level of education of women from rural localities on the right bank of Nistru River is much more reduced in relation to women in cities. The same trends are attested in the communities from the left bank. Only 46.4 % of the active women in rural areas have higher education, secondary specialized or secondary vocational education and in recent years their weight is steadily decreasing. This phenomenon is particularly alarming, if compared to the ratio of trained women from the urban areas, which constitutes over 75% of the active women population. At the same time, the possibilities of employment of rural women and developing activities to get income are lower in comparison with women from the cities, leading to the amplification of the migration phenomenon of trained women from the villages.

A particular problem is the situation of women from disadvantaged groups, especially women with disabilities, mothers with many children, elderly women and the representatives of certain minorities (ethnic, religious, etc.). In the case of these social groups both quality of life and participation in community life are more precarious compared with the group of women in rural areas as a whole. Social stigma, marginalization, poverty, practically non-existent access to many services and opportunities produce double disadvantages to these social categories.

Another important issue for women in rural areas is access to medical services. Official statistics on both banks of the Nistru River shows that access to health services of women in rural areas is lower in comparison with the women from the cities. At the same time about 1/5 of the rural women appreciate their health status as bad or very bad compared to 14.5% of the women from urban areas (medical condition of women on the right bank of the Nistru River) (the state of women's health of the right bank of the Nistru River). Such alarming data highlights the issue of the women's health insecurity in villages who, due to informal activities or unremunerated work in agriculture, are not medically insured in addi-



tion to the fact that purchasing health insurance policy is still not popular among the rural population. The use of household equipment in the household, besides the fact that it provides the comfort necessary for a decent living, also reduces considerably the time used for the work in the household. The use of this equipment in rural areas is much more reduced, and women are still disadvantaged, who are considered responsible for household chores.

The lack of opportunities for socialization and realization of potential, through public, cultural activities, etc. worsen the quality of life of women in the villages on both banks of the Nistru River.

The outbreak of the Transnistrian conflict had evidently affected the lives of women in the Republic of Moldova, but failure to resolve it over the years maintains a number of latent or unresolved problems, as well as unknown or ignored ones, on both sides of the River, alike.

The analysis of the aforementioned problems has determined the need for a comprehensive analysis of the prospects of rural women on both sides of the River. The comparative approach of the different social aspects investigated, allowed us to highlight the trends of development and affirmation of women who live on right and left banks of the Nistru River. The researched issues are addressed systemically, focusing on the interconnection between areas, and the application of qualitative and quantitative methods will allow the development of social and policy actions and initiatives, based on concrete data.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ensuring the principle of equal opportunities of women and men is one of the objectives of the public policies, strategies and programs in the Republic of Moldova. Thus, gender equality is found in the main legislative documents of the Republic of Moldova. Over the past few years, the Government of the Republic of Moldova has adopted several changes with respect to women's participation in political life (establishing the mandatory participation quota), integration in the labour market, promoting non-sexist communication in the media and advertising, protection of victims of domestic violence, promotion of gender equality in the security sector, etc.

Despite these efforts, the assessment of the progress achieved in ensuring equality between women and men is still difficult. Although women enjoy the same rights in the sphere of labour as men, they are a relatively vulnerable group on the labour market and their income is lower than that of men. There are also areas of women's participation in public and political life, although recent changes in the legal framework favour and stimulate these processes. Even if in recent years the subject of increasing women's participation in politics and decision-making processes in the Republic of Moldova has benefited of a particular attention, full participation of women in power and decision-making structures is rather low in comparison with the world average and women remain under-represented in the upper forums of decision-making, at central and regional level.

In this context, the Sociological Study *«The Perspective of women in rural areas on both banks of the Nistru River»* aimed to assess the situation of women in rural areas on both banks of the Nistru River (including in the areas bordering the Security Zone) and to identify the main problems and barriers encountered by women in the 5 reference areas: education, health and social protection, civic and political participation, employment, inter-relationships between the citizens of the right and left bank of Nistru River.

The study focused on a **complex methodology**, being applied to quantitative and qualitative methods of sociological research. The following sociological research methods were used to ensure data triangulation: questionnaire survey among rural women on both sides of the Nistru River, in-depth interview, group interview and case study method. **The quantitative study** included the conduct of a national survey among the rural women, in the age of 18 years and more, on both sides of the Nistru River. The sample is representative; the margin of error is 4.3 percent.

The assessment of the situation of women on the right and left bank of Nistru River has revealed the following **general conclusions**:

The assessment of the situation of women on the right and left bank of Nistru River has revealed the following **general conclusions**:

- The quality of life of women in rural areas is relatively low. Poverty manifested by economic problems, lack of employment opportunities and adverse conditions of living are the main issues that affect rural women from both banks of the Nistru River.
- The problems that mostly affect women in rural areas are the following: poor quality of medical services or the lack thereof, poverty caused by a lack of employment opportunities in the labour market and adverse living conditions. These problems are characteristic to women on both banks of the Nistru River, even if the economic situation of women from the right bank is better compared with the situation on the left bank of Nistru River.
- The main sources of income of rural women from both banks of the Nistru River derive from agricultural activities, including income obtained from the processing of the gardens around the houses. The share of women who have a lower income than the husband/partner is considerable, and constitutes 35.1%.



- The main risks associated with female employment in the respondents' view are family factors, including the prevalence of attitudes and stereotypes that attribute to women a number of family roles: raising children, caring for the home, preparing food, keeping the family climate, etc. The study identifies gender-sensitive situations in the work environment, 29.8% of respondents being treated unequally because they are women. Limited access to medical services is another problem encountered. More than half of the women in rural areas do not have in the community a Centre for Family Doctors/Centres that provide health services, and the share of those who hold health insurance is just 40%.
- The study shows that the population of the country shares, in large part, conservative beliefs with respect to the role of women and men in society. The communities continue to manifest themselves as largely patriarchal, which also implies the perpetuation of traditional gender roles.
- Knowledge of the respondents in respect of the unsettled Transnistrian conflict and the format of negotiations 5+2 is quite low. Half of the women in rural areas do not know about/have not ever heard about the work of the 5+2 negotiation format. Depending on the region, we find that the most informed are women from the left bank of Nistru River and those who live in the security zone.
- Impact of the unsettled Transnistrian conflict on the lives of women in rural areas is felt by 44% of respondents (15.7% to a great extent/very great extent and 29.1% to a small extent). Most of all, the conflict has affected the population/women in the security zone/in the immediate vicinity of the security zone. Every third woman in the security zone said that she had suffered as a result of the unsettled Transnistrian conflict.

Based on the findings we propose the following **general recommendations**:

- Development of the legal framework in the field of reference of the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova through the connection to international conventions, the development of an Action Plan to ensure gender equality between women and men and the establishment of a quota of women's representation in public bodies/administration on the left bank of the Nistru River, following the model recently adopted in Moldova.
- Increasing the level of awareness of local representatives with regard to the specific problems of women in rural areas, on the basis of dialogue and communication with the female population on both banks of the Nistru River;
- The inclusion of gender issues/problems faced by rural women on the public agenda and the priorities of local development (e.g., domestic violence, employment of young women, inclusion of women with disabilities, etc.)
- The involvement of the LPA and national NGOs in the promotion of gender equality in the community and combating gender stereotypes. Involvement in the LPA specialists on gender (focal points) or extension of remit of the social worker with the appropriate pay.
- Increasing the level of cooperation between the NGOs on both banks of the Nistru River, by involving in addressing the same common problems of women;
- Increasing the level of cooperation between women from different rural communities, including the right and left banks of the Nistru River. Increasing the level of involvement of women in community life, activities conducted in the community by the local public authorities and associative entities;
- Empowering women on both banks of the Nistru River in the area of leadership, developing the capabilities of leaders, in order to change the way of thinking and mind-set in relation to the roles of women in the family and community; with particular attention to women from the left bank of the Nistru River, who have shown little initiative at community level and are not aware of the need to participate in decision-making; increasing the level of informing the population about the significance of the 5+2 negotiation format and the activities carried out in this aspect.



## METHODOLOGY

The study aimed to analyse the situation of women in rural areas on both banks of the Nistru River (including in the areas bordering security zone<sup>1</sup>), and to identify the main problems and barriers encountered by women in the 5 reference areas: education, health and social protection, civic and political participation, employment, inter-relationships between the citizens of the right and left bank of the Nistru River.

### The study intended:

- To assess the legal framework and the policy framework with reference to the gender equality and equal opportunities, developed on the right and left bank of the Nistru River;
- To document, evaluate and compare the problems faced by the women of the right and left bank of the Nistru River. In this sense, the major problems were identified, common to women on both banks of the Nistru River;
- To develop practical recommendations in order to improve the policies and practices of ensuring gender equality, including suggestions on increasing the level of involvement of women in the 5 reference areas.

The evaluation was based on the analysis of primary data (collected through quantitative and qualitative methods of sociological research), but also on the analysis of secondary data (**content analysis** of the legal framework and the policy framework with reference to gender equality and ensuring equal opportunities for women and men). The following sociological research methods were used to ensure data triangulation: **questionnaire survey** among rural women on both sides of the Nistru River, **in-depth interview**, **group interview** and the **case study** method.

**The quantitative study** included a nationwide survey of 18-year-old women aged 18+ on both sides of the Nistru River<sup>2</sup>. The sample of the study is representative for the adult population of both banks of the Nistru River and is stratified, probabilistic and made up of three layers<sup>3</sup>. On both banks of the Nistru River the same procedures of selection of respondents were applied. The main stratification criteria are: 5 administrative-territorial units, the residential environment - rural, type of rural areas – 5 categories. The randomization stages are: the locality, the household/family and person. The period of collection of quantitative data was: 5 September 2018 - 9 October 2018.

**The total volume** of the sample constitutes 1036 respondents. In addition, 116 questionnaires were collected in the localities immediately adjacent to the security zone, which facilitated comparability of data for **3 sub-samples**:

- a. The right bank of the Nistru River – 522 respondents, rural women of 18 years and older (See Table 1 in the Annexes. The structure of the sample, the right bank of the Nistru River). The margin of error was 4.3%.
- b. The left bank of the Nistru River – 514 respondents, rural women of 18 years and older (See Table 2 in the Annexes. The structure of the sample, the right bank of the Nistru River). The margin of error was 4.3%.

<sup>1</sup> Settlements on the right bank of the Nistru River, which are located in the immediate vicinity of the security zone

<sup>2</sup> On the right bank of the Nistru River the survey was conducted by the iDATA company (Intelligent Data) and on the left bank of the Nistru River the survey was conducted by the organization "Новый Бек" (Tiraspol).

<sup>3</sup> Representativeness of sub-samples differ, given the substantial differences on the total number of resident population on the right and left bank of the Nistru River. The total number of the population from the right bank is much higher compared with the population from the left bank of the Nistru River. In this sense, the aggregation of frequencies obtained on the right bank with the frequencies on the left bank of the Nistru River must be made with caution.



- c. Border towns, located in close proximity to the security zone–206 respondents, rural women of 18 years and older (See Tabelul3 in the Annexes. The structure of the sample, the right bank of the Nistru River). The margin of error was 6.8%.

**The qualitative study** included a comprehensive methodology, using the in-depth interview method, group interview, and the case study method. The sample was a pre-determined one, aiming at certain target groups, whose views were considered of primary importance for this study.

Thus, **the target group** of the study was:

- a) women aged 18 years and older, in rural areas of the right and left bank of the Nistru River;
- b) women leaders in the fields inquired (for example: women principles of schools, women mayors, women entrepreneurs, women leaders at the local level, women leaders in the NGO, etc.);
- c) experts working in the field of gender in government and associative entities;
- d) representatives of the LPA.

A total of 10 group interviews and 30 in-depth interviews with key actors from both banks of the Nistru River have been conducted (see Table 4 in Annex). There were also conducted 2 case studies, which highlight the best practices of affirmative action and professional growth of women. The qualitative study was conducted in 10 rural communities<sup>4</sup> (territorial-administrative units) located in different geographical areas of the country (South, Centre and North) and encompassed the rural communities on the right and left bank of the Nistru River (see Table 4 in the Annex)<sup>5</sup>. The period of data collection was: September-October 2018.

<sup>4</sup> The study is not representative and does not characterize the situation at the national level. Therefore, the results of the study should not be extrapolated to the national level

<sup>5</sup> The identification of the localities and of the target group for the qualitative study was conducted based on the recommendations of experts in the field of gender equality, among which we mention: UN Women, ProDidactica, ODSME, the Partnership for Development Centre, etc. Thus, they identified women leaders in the economic, education, political life, civic activism, the women who participated in the trainings organized for leadership and empowerment in politics, etc.



# I. THE LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK WITH REGARD TO GENDER EQUALITY

## 1.1. Legal, regulatory and policy news

The legal framework governing the field of gender **equality on the right bank of the Nistru River** and determining the directions and areas of intervention of public policies in the field is based on international instruments<sup>6</sup>. They focus on creating the conditions of legal-regulatory and institutional achievement of equality effective for women in all areas of life. They also stipulate the obligations of states to comply with these conditions and to ensure equal rights, *de jure* and *de facto*. On the right bank of the Nistru River national legislation with reference to the principle of gender equality requires protection, promotion and respect of human rights of women and men, ensuring and providing equal opportunities for women and men, in all spheres of life.

On the national level, in the first place, the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova establishes equality between its citizens, without distinction of sex, and, in principle, does not contain discriminatory rules according to this criterion. Legislation of the Republic of Moldova on the right bank of the Nistru River guarantees the equal rights of citizens to participate in public life, to get a profession, to engage in labour field, to have access to certain services, to benefit from social protection etc.

The principle of equal opportunities for women and men is enshrined in the Moldovan legislation in several regulatory acts, starting with the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova, but the most important is the Law No 5-XVI on ensuring equal opportunities between women and men (as of 9 February 2006). This law regulates the measures for promoting equal opportunities between women and men and eliminating direct and indirect discrimination on the criterion of sex, in all spheres of public life. It is important that the law mentions the necessity of including its principles in all “policies, strategies and public programs, regulatory acts and financial investments”, i.e. ensuring an inclusive approach to the gender dimension. Also, the Law provides for an institutional framework for ensuring equal opportunities between women and men by designating the competent authorities with the remit in the field: the Parliament, the Government, the Governmental Commission for equality between women and men, Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection, the line ministries and other central public administration bodies (CPA) and local public administration bodies (LPA).

Although the adoption of legislation in the field was crucial to ensure *de jure* equal treatment for women and men, due to a deficient implementation mechanism, for a period, the Law did not provide a suitable framework for the achievement of the objectives. Thus, ensuring *de facto* equality is, at times, endangered, being a process that must be supported by consistent actions and joint efforts of government structures, development partners, non-governmental organizations and the entire society, both at the level of policies and specific actions to overcome the existing barriers.

In this regard, the Government adopted Law no. 71 (as of 14 April 2016), which amended 15 national laws, including the Electoral Code, the Law on Government and the Labour Code of the Republic of Moldova with the following key changes:

- The introduction of 14 calendar days of paid paternity leave;
- Prohibition of sexist language but also sexist images in media and advertising;

<sup>6</sup> The universal declaration of human rights (1948), the Convention on the political rights of women (1952), the international Covenant on the rights of the economic, social and cultural (1966), the Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (1979), Platform and Plan of action of Beijing (1995), Millennium Declaration (2000), the Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW) etc.



- The establishment of the Coordination Group for gender equality in central public administration;
- Extending the responsibilities of local public authorities with regard to gender equality;
- The establishment of the groups coordinating the field of gender equality in the subdivisions with the powers for developing, promoting and monitoring policies in the scope of central public authorities.

Another improvement of the legal framework related to gender equality is the Law No 196<sup>7</sup> (as of 28 July 2016) on the amendment and supplementing of legislative acts in the field of preventing and combating domestic violence.

The law was drafted on the basis of compatibility report of national legislation with the provisions of the Convention of the Council of Europe and aims to harmonise the national legal framework in the field of prevention and combating domestic violence to international standards. The key changes refer to:

- Improving the mechanism of protection of the victim by means of a new institution “the emergency restraining order”, applied by the police for a period of up to 10 days;
- The inclusion of a new offence “Acts of persecution”, which refers to the persecution of a person repeatedly;
- Expanding the circle of subjects in the Criminal Code through the inclusion of partners, parents and children, relatives and their affinity on the straight line living together or separately;
- Enlarging the spectrum of rights for victims of domestic violence through: the establishment of the right to financial compensation from the state for the damage caused by the criminal offence under conditions laid down by legislation, reporting by specialists in the field of the cases of violence only with the consent of the victim;
- Exemption from the state fee for the submission of the application for issuance of protection orders;
- The establishment of free telephone-based service for counselling callers on a 24/7 basis and creating a WEB page to inform the general public about the phenomenon and the services available.

In April 2017, the Government of the Republic of Moldova adopted the new Strategy for equality between women and men<sup>8</sup>. The major goal of the strategy lies in the empowerment of women and achievement of *de facto* equality between women and men, through the realization of five broad goals followed by specific objectives, in the reference areas: *the provision of a complex approach to equality between women and men; strengthening the institutional mechanism of ensuring equality between women and men; fight against gender stereotypes in the society and promoting non-violent communication; promotion of gender equality in the security and defence sector; gender-sensitive budgeting*. The objectives set for the next five years reflects the global trends and the realization of the commitments undertaken internationally by the Republic of Moldova, focused on ensuring respect for human rights, the functioning of democracy and economic growth based on competitiveness.

Although the content of the Strategy does not include a major or specific objective explicitly targeting women in rural areas, achieving the objectives would lead to an increase in the quality of life of women in rural areas, given that the majority of the objectives refer to the female population predominantly in rural areas. The Progress Report on the implementation of the Strategy<sup>9</sup> for the year 2017 stresses

<sup>7</sup> Law No 196 of 28 July 2016 on the amendment and supplementing of legislative acts in the field of preventing and combating domestic violence. <http://lex.justice.md/md/366648/>

<sup>8</sup> Strategy for equality between women and men, <http://lex.justice.md/viewdoc.php?action=view&view=doc&id=370442&lang=1>

<sup>9</sup> Progress report on the implementation of the Strategy for equality between women and men, [https://msmps.gov.md/sites/default/files/document/attachments/raport\\_snaefb\\_20171.pdf](https://msmps.gov.md/sites/default/files/document/attachments/raport_snaefb_20171.pdf)



that certain goals have good indicators, while some are in progress or with less successful data, due to reduced funding.

Also, in the Republic of Moldova, starting with the year 2015, a series of dialogues, round tables and meetings have been held to enhance the level of information of representatives of public authorities and civil society on the provisions of the Resolution 1325, organized by several development partners. These events were attended by civil servants, MPs, members of the Common Platform for Dialogue of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, activists in the field of gender equality, national and international experts, etc. They have created an appropriate framework for the development of a national Programme for the implementation of the Resolution 1325 with the support of UN Women and the Government of Sweden.

We note that Resolution 1325 was approved by the Security Council of the United Nations on 31 October 2001. This resolution is the first document that directly addresses the impact of war on women and their contribution to resolving conflicts and achieving peace. Thus, in March 2018, the Government of the Republic of Moldova approved the National Programme for the implementation of Resolution 1325 of the UN Security Council on women, peace and security for the years 2018-2021, and the Action Plan on its implementation<sup>10</sup>. The national Action Plan recognizes the important role of women in strengthening peace and security, and proposes concrete steps in order to remove the barriers identified that reduce the representation and influence of women in the security system.

In February 2018 the Moldovan Government adopted the national Strategy for preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, for the years 2018-2023, and the Action Plan for the 2018-2020 for its implementation<sup>11</sup>. This strategy is consistent with the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) which provides for standards for the prevention of gender-based violence, protecting victims of violence, and the punishment of the aggressors.

Among the objectives of the *Strategy* are:

- Prevention of violence against women and domestic violence through the cultivation of zero tolerance to violence. Combating stereotypes and prejudices that lead to violence against women and domestic violence. Informing, raising awareness and encouraging reporting of cases of violence;
- Initial and continuous training of specialists in the field of prevention and combating domestic violence based on a common vision at the state level;
- Strengthening of the education system to ensure education of the new generations in terms of the values of equality between women and men and a culture of non-violent communication;
- Strengthening the mechanisms of protection and assistance to victims of violence against women and domestic violence. Developing specialized services for victims of violence, including sexual violence, in line with international standards;
- Promoting women's economic empowerment and socio-economic independence;
- Strengthening the response of the healthcare system in cases of domestic violence;
- The investigation and prosecution of acts of violence against women and domestic violence;

<sup>10</sup> The national program for the implementation of Resolution 1325 of the UN Security Council on women, peace and security for the years 2018-2021, <http://lex.justice.md/md/374810/>

<sup>11</sup> The national strategy for preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, <http://lex.justice.md/index.php?action=view&view=doc&lang=1&id=374992>



- Ensuring integrated policies in cases of violence against women and domestic violence, based on multi-sectoral cooperation and data collection and other specific objectives.

An important element is the collection and provision of gender disaggregated data by the National Bureau of Statistics through the Stat Bank which contains a separate compartment on gender statistics, with an ample set of data tables, from different areas, useful from the gender equality analysis viewpoint and creation of the user friendly platform: [www.genderpulse.md](http://www.genderpulse.md).

**On the left bank of the Nistru River** there is no legal framework regulating equality between women and men, explicitly. The legal-regulatory framework on implicit issues addressing the situation of women and men currently includes: Constitution of the so-called Transnistrian Moldovan Republic, the Code of Administrative Offences, the Code on Marriage and Family, the Criminal Code and Code of Criminal Procedures.

The legislative provisions on the rights and freedoms of citizens from the Transnistrian region (including issues related to equality between women and men) are contained, first, in the Constitution: *“Everyone has the same rights and freedoms and are equal before the law, without distinction of gender, race, nationality, language, religion, origin, belief, personal and social status”*.

Some aspects of women’s rights are contained in the Code of Marriage and Family. Thus, Article 17 sets out the principles of equality of spouses in family relations: in the matter of education of children, freedom to choose an occupation, a profession, place of residence and stay; it specifies the obligation of spouses to build their family relationships based on respect and mutual aid, to promote welfare and strengthen the family, to take care of their children’s development.

The mechanism of provision of pensions is fixed in the existing model of pension, established in the Transnistrian Law of 17 February 2005 No 537-3-III “On the security of the state pensions of the citizens”; thus, the pension is calculated for each pensioner individually, based on the total work record and wages (or other income). Despite the discussions at global and national level on raising the retirement age, in the Transnistrian region it will remain the same: for men - 60 years of age, and for women - 55 years.

Some civil society organisations make considerable efforts in advocacy to promote the legal framework on prevention of violence, although even in this direction there aren’t any progresses. For example, many development partners conducted at the beginning of 2018 meetings on the topic of violence against women in the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova. The NGO Interaction<sup>12</sup> indicates that victims of domestic violence can contact the NGOs, or they can call the hotline.

This year, the Republic of Moldova continued to implement certain activities in view of the reintegration of the country and thus, in April 2018 the Government Decision “On the Approval of the Program of Reintegration of the Country for 2018” was approved.<sup>13</sup> The program aims at carrying out activities for the development and modernization of the institutions of the educational system and of the system of culture, rehabilitation of aqueducts, street lighting, as well as other activities related to the achievement of the government’s reintegration target. These activities will be implemented by local and central public authorities in the localities from the Security Zone and inhabitants from the left bank of the Nistru River will also benefit. Following the competition, held in the period 01 January to 10 February 2018, the Commission consisting of representatives of the relevant ministries selected 49 most

<sup>12</sup> Article: Say No to the violence in the family, Spune NU violenței în familie, <http://ngointeraction.org/main/en/prioritati/net-nasilii-v-semie>

<sup>13</sup> Program activities for reintegration of the country for the year 2018, <http://lex.justice.md/index.php?action=view&view=doc&lang=1&id=375192>



competitive projects out of 140 proposals submitted for the competition. The total value of projects selected falls in the amount of 15 million MDL, allocated for this purpose by art.3 c) of the Law on the state budget for the year 2018 No 289 of 15 December 2017<sup>14</sup>.

## 1.2. Initiatives of development partners and civil society on both sides of the Nistru River

Currently, on the right bank of the Nistru River, at the Ministry of Justice are registered over 10.000 republican public associations. According to estimates made by the most important donors in the Republic of Moldova some around 200 NGOs are active. The number of local public associations is unknown because the local authorities do not submit the appropriate information to the Ministry of Justice, so that, even at the level of society and even at the level of authorities, the actual total number of civil society organisations in the Republic of Moldova is unknown.

The majority of Civil Society Organizations registered (about 65%) are located in Chisinau municipality, although this territorial unit represents only about 25% of the total population of the country. According to unofficial estimates, in the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova there are registered about 2,500 public associations. In the Republic of Moldova there is a number of 1.9 Civil Society Organisations per 1000 inhabitants, which represents a progress compared with Ukraine (1.2) and the Russian Federation (1.6). But this number is considerably lower in comparison with some countries of Eastern Europe, such as Romania (2.9), Macedonia (5.6), Hungary (6.6) or Croatia (9.6).

According to the estimates of some studies, only about 25% of the total number of CSOs are sufficiently active and develop various projects and initiatives, the reasons include both a lack of funding from within the country and the lack of mechanisms for generating revenue through the provision of the services.

According to estimates of the Association ADEPT, currently, the associative sector from the Republic of Moldova is present in different areas, the main being the field of education and training (50%), social services (40.8%), community development (36.9%), civic participation (26.2%), health and youth (19.2% each) and culture (16.9%).

The most active NGOs **on the right bank of the Nistru River** which implement projects with social impact (See Table 5 in the Annex) in the field of promotion of women and gender equality on the right bank of the Nistru River are:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political Club of Women 50/50</li> <li>• The Centre "Partnership for Development"</li> <li>• The Women's Law Centre</li> <li>• International Centre La Strada</li> <li>• Gender-Centre</li> <li>• Casa Mărioarei</li> <li>• Institutum Virtutes Civilis</li> <li>• Promo-Lex</li> <li>• The Centre for Training in Reproductive Health</li> <li>• The Independent Press Association</li> <li>• Adept</li> <li>• The Institute for Public Policy (IPP)</li> <li>• Expert Group</li> <li>• The IDIS Viitorul Institute</li> <li>• Forum of Women Organizations of the Republic of Moldova</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Centre of Roma</li> <li>• Gender-Doc</li> <li>• Institute for Democracy</li> <li>• Artemida</li> <li>• Vesta</li> <li>• Centre for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities</li> <li>• Legal Resources Centre from Moldova</li> <li>• Conflict Resolution Institute INRECO</li> <li>• The Rehabilitation Centre of Victims of Torture "Memory"</li> <li>• Association of Women Entrepreneurs of Moldova</li> <li>• The PRO Didactica Educational Centre</li> <li>• The Centre for Independent Journalism</li> <li>• The Contact Centre</li> </ul>
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<sup>14</sup> In the period 2011-2017, 10 programs of the country's reintegration activities were implemented, with the allocation of about 82 million MDL, and the realization of 306 projects for the development and modernization of institutions in the educational system, repairs of roads and buildings, reconstruction of aqueducts, street lighting, rehabilitation and consolidation of public services at the local level, etc.



Most prominent gender activists and NGOs are united within the Platform for Gender Equality (<https://egalitatedegen.md/en>), which is a voluntary association of individuals and organisations that act as a unified voice for active promotion of gender equality. The platform was launched on 19th of June, 2015. Currently, it has 29 members and it is still open to new members.

**On the left bank of the Nistru River** there are NGOs, which operate in various fields and which implement projects with direct impact on women in rural areas (See Table 5 in the Annex). The main areas of activity of NGOs from the left bank are: youth empowerment, social protection, trainings and education, the welfare of the population, etc.

The most active NGOs in the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova in the field of promoting the rights of women are:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Centre Rezonans</li> <li>• NGO Stimulus</li> <li>• NGO Interaction</li> <li>• The Association «Mothers for Human Rights»</li> <li>• The Association «The Promotion of Effective Justice»</li> <li>• The Initiative Group «Prosvet»</li> <li>• The Centre for Psychological Support Lada</li> <li>• The Social Service Centre Perspective</li> <li>• The Women's Union for the Defence of Transnistria, Bender</li> <li>• The Committee of Women in the Camenca Rayon</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Women's Union of Dubasari</li> <li>• Association of Families with Many Children</li> <li>• The Association of the Women's Movement «Тираспольчанка»</li> <li>• NGO "For the Care of Children"</li> <li>• The Women's Union in Grigoriopol</li> <li>• The Association «Women for Rights and Freedoms»</li> <li>• The Ecological Club of the Women in the Area of the Nistru</li> <li>• The Committee of Women in Dubasari City</li> </ul>
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The Parliament of the Republic of Moldova declares availability and interest in cooperating with the civil society, and presents a list of the NGOs<sup>15</sup>, in this regard, but it is not updated and contains incorrect data. According to some experts at some public meetings certain NGOs are not admitted, or invitations are sent to specific actors in the associative sector, considered more loyal to the current political regime.

In the optional module *"Gender Equality and Effectiveness of External Assistance Coordination"*, developed voluntarily by the Government of the Republic of Moldova in 2010-12, a comprehensive mapping of donors concerned with gender equality was made. Thus, it was found that some bilateral donors such as Sweden (Embassy of Sweden/SIDA), Austria (ADA), the U.S. (USAID), the UK (DFID), the Swiss Agency for Development, Norway, and Finland have special Government Policies and Action Plans to promote gender equality. The assistance provided by these donors was/is granted in accordance with the national strategies and the action plans adopted, through the country strategy for Moldova. Thus, according to the data for that period, Sweden was the largest bilateral donor, consistently supporting gender equality and women's human rights in cooperation with Moldova since 1998.

The promotion of gender equality and the human rights of women plays a very important role in the policy agenda of the Swedish Government at global level and is also a priority topic in cooperation for international development. The study emphasizes that Sweden, as a bilateral partner of Moldova, has ratified all International Treaties on Human Rights, including CEDAW, and the Government of Sweden has a special policy aimed at the promotion of gender equality, both in the country and in cooperation for international development described in its policy for Global Development (2003).

<sup>15</sup> Lista părților interesate de procesul legislativ sistematizată pe domenii de activitate ale Comisiilor parlamentare permanente, <http://www.parlament.md/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=%2FdsqQky%2Fio8%3D&tabid=60&language=ro-RO>



Another study<sup>16</sup> of IPP and the Expert group noted in 2012 that DFID, ADA, SDC, USAID address gender equality as a cross-cutting issue of human rights and call for all their programmes to include the gender dimension in all activities, to present sex-disaggregated data for monitoring and assessment and to include, at the stage of developing the project, a gender analysis of sectors. These approaches of the donors have served as the impetus for many national NGOs and local governments to integrate a gender perspective in the projects and its activities. A few of the bilateral donors, as SDC and ADA, integrate and monitor the gender perspective in the “non-traditional” areas, such as infrastructure projects, water supply and sanitation etc. The same cross-cutting strategy is applied by the World Bank and the OSCE, the major donors in Moldova, which implement and call, in turn, the integration of the gender dimension in all their programs and projects. In the case of multilateral donors, (the UN family), the process of integration of the gender dimension is part of the mandate of all United Nations agencies, and UN Women remain to be the most important actor in this regard.

Another important donor, the European Union, operates on the basis of comprehensive frameworks, which set out explicit commitments to promote gender equality in all its policies. Each program/project, funded by the EU, establishes the requirement to take into account aspects of gender equality, in accordance with its international commitments. The same principle applies to the development and assessment of the calls for tender, but, at the present time there are no specific projects related to gender implemented in the Republic of Moldova and financed by the EU.

There are also a few bilateral donors such as Romania, Poland, Hungary, the Slovak Republic, the Czech Republic and Bulgaria, whose capabilities and interest in the field of gender is difficult to analyse, due to the lack of relevant information.

It should be noted that 5-7 years ago all donor agencies started to allocate positions in the staff for the Gender Focal Points, responsible for the integration of the gender dimension in projects at the stage of elaboration and monitoring of the contribution from the point of view of the impact/results from the gender perspective. Sometimes, in the country teams, experts in the field of gender equality, as part of the official delegations of the bilateral donors (ADA, Swiss Agency, DFID and USAID) come to carry out certain studies/research/analyses.

Only a few development partners underline in their mandate the area of intervention in the Transnistrian region (e. g., the EU, UN, OSCE, SDC, etc.). Of these, the OSCE has included activities explicitly addressed to NGOs from the Transnistrian region, such as: human rights trainings, monitoring compliance, capacity building of journalists and members of NGOs, including capacity building of lawyers on the both banks of the Nistru River, etc.

### **Development partners active in Moldova:**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Czech Development Agency</li> <li>• The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)</li> <li>• AHEAD-Moldova</li> <li>• The Eastern Alliance for Safe and Sustainable Transport (EASST)</li> <li>• The Bulgarian Embassy</li> <li>• The Swiss Embassy</li> <li>• The Embassy of the United Kingdom</li> <li>• Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International Organization for Migration (IOM)</li> <li>• Internews</li> <li>• Konrad-Adenauer Stiftung (KAS)</li> <li>• Leavitt Institute</li> <li>• The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Estonia</li> <li>• The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany</li> <li>• The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic</li> <li>• The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands</li> </ul>
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<sup>16</sup> Terzi-Barbăroșie, D., Studiu de evaluare Promovarea egalitatii genurilor si a femeilor, [http://ipp.md/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/ODM3\\_ro.pdf](http://ipp.md/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/ODM3_ro.pdf)



- The US Embassy
- The Embassy of Sweden
- The Embassy of Hungary
- The American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative (ABA ROLI)
- Austrian Development Agency
- Austrian Embassy
- The Balkan Documentary Centre
- The World Bank
- The Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights and Labour of the US Department of State
- The Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation (BST)
- British Council
- Caritas Czech Republic
- Civil Rights Defenders
- The European Commission
- The Council of Europe
- Czech Development Agency
- Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)
- Deutsche Welle (DW) Akademie
- FHI360
- The Energy Efficiency Fund
- The International Monetary Fund (IMF)
- The National Fund for Regional Development (NFRD)
- Fund for Democracy of the United Nations (UNDEF)
- Fund Visegrad
- Foundation "John Paul II"
- The Swiss Foundation HEKS
- East-European Foundation
- The European Chess Foundation Kasparov
- Foundation Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
- Foundation Friedrich Naumann for Freedom
- Hanns Seidel Foundation
- Robert Bosch Foundation
- The Soros Foundation Moldova
- Foundation of the Liechtenstein Development Service (LED)
- Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria
- Goethe Institut
- The Government of Great Britain
- The Government of Poland
- The Government of Romania
- The Government of Slovakia
- IM Swedish Development Partner
- International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD)

- The Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway
- National Endowment for Democracy (NED)
- The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
- One World Romania
- World Health Organization (WHO)
- Organization of the United Nations (UN)
- The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)
- OSCE
- People in Need
- Pestalozzi
- PolishAid
- The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- Slovak Agency for International Development Cooperation of the SlovakAid
- SOIR
- Solidarity Fund PL
- Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA)
- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
- Austrian Development Agency
- Austrian Embassy
- The Balkan Documentary Centre
- The World Bank
- The Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights and Labour of the US Department of State
- The Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation (BST)
- British Council
- Caritas Czech Republic
- Civil Rights Defenders
- Terre des Hommes
- UKAid
- A Women
- UNHCR
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC Moldova)
- United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
- The European Union
- World Jewish Relief (WJR)



Among them, the most interested in the field of gender equality, which especially support projects in this field are:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Government of Sweden</li><li>• The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation</li><li>• The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark</li><li>• The European Union (EU)</li><li>• UN Women Moldova</li><li>• The United States Agency for International Development (USAID)</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• FHI 360</li><li>• US Embassy</li><li>• The OSCE Mission to Moldova</li><li>• National Endowment for Democracy</li><li>• The East-European Foundation</li><li>• The Soros Foundation-Moldova</li><li>• The British Embassy in Chisinau</li></ul> |
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The political situation in the country has led to a crisis in the NGO sector. The number of donors interested in the development of civil society, in the implementation of activities, like trainings of people which would activate in the third sector, is small or „non-existent”. The NGOs Council have not updated the information on its site during the last four years so it is difficult to estimate the real numbers of NGOs active, as well as the numbers of NGOs which became active during the same period. The same is valid also for the gender mainstreaming and that despite the fact that there are some activities in the field, but they are not calculated.

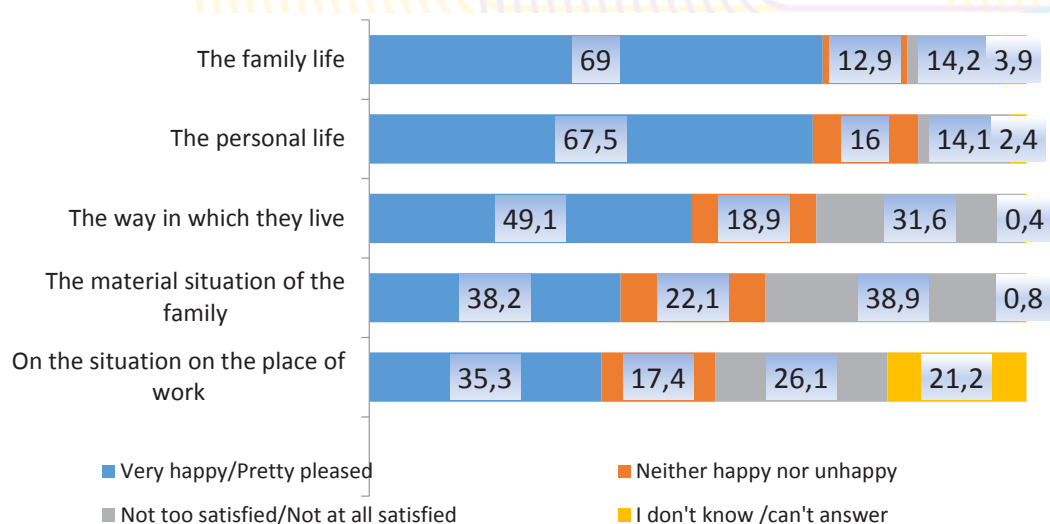


## II. THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF RURAL WOMEN FROM BOTH BANKS OF THE NISTRU RIVER

### 2.1. Perceptions on quality of life

The respondents' attitude towards the social life aspects of the rural environment is relatively positive. Most (about 70%) respondents are satisfied with the family and personal life; this also characterizes the value system of women in rural areas. The economic aspects that characterize the material situation and living conditions are those that awaken the highest level of dissatisfaction among women in rural areas. Thus, every third rural woman is not satisfied/not at all satisfied with the way she lives, the material situation and the workplace (See Figure 1).

**Figure 1.** Ratio of women's satisfaction in rural areas on both banks of the Nistru River on the following aspects, %



In regard to *the situation at the place of work*, the study shows the same trends for the women on both banks of the Nistru River. About a third of the respondents on the right and left bank of the Nistru River stated that they *are not satisfied/not at all satisfied* with the situation at work (27.1% of the respondents from the left bank and 24% of the respondents from the right bank).

Depending on other socio-demographic indicators, we find that the degree of dissatisfaction with the economic aspects (living conditions, material situation, including the situation at the place of work) increases with the increasing age of the respondents. The correlation analysis highlights the same trends for both banks of the Nistru River. To a greater extent are dissatisfied women aged 50 years and older, with poor education (incomplete secondary education) and low incomes, divorced or widow women.

**Table 1.** Women's degree of satisfaction with the way they live, the material situation and the work place, %

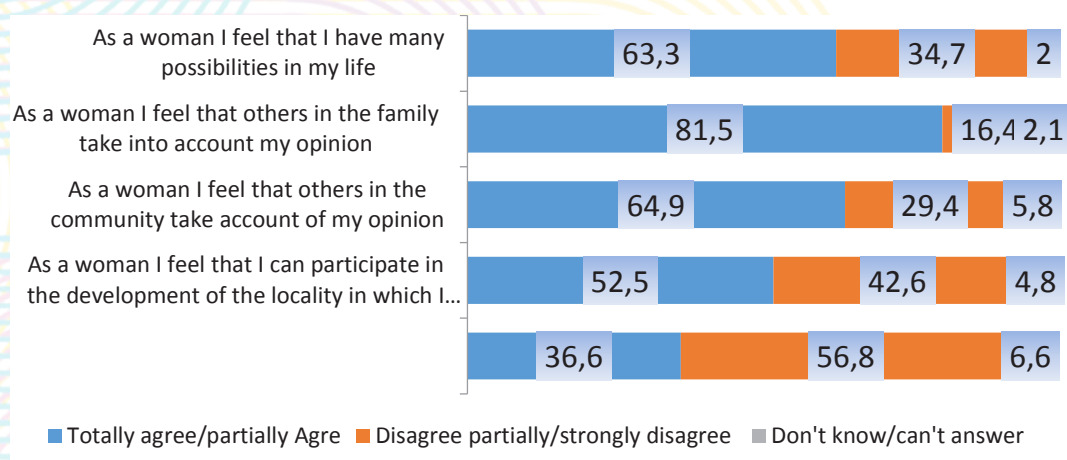
	Very happy	Pretty happy	Neither happy, nor unhappy	Not too happy	Not at all happy	DK/NA
The share of women satisfied with <b>the way in which they live</b>						
<b>The right bank of the Nistru River</b>	12.1	37.4	28.2	16.7	5.5	0.2
<b>The border area</b>	11.2	41.3	25.2	1.0	5.8	0.5



<b>The left bank of the Nistru River</b>	11.2	38.0	9.4	33.4	7.6	0.5
The share of women satisfied with <b>the material situation</b>						
<b>The right bank of the Nistru River</b>	9.2	30.2	35.1	18.5	6.5	0.4
<b>The border area</b>	7.3	34.5	31.6	21.8	4.4	0.5
<b>The left bank of the Nistru River</b>	9.1	28.2	8.7	38.6	14.2	1.2
The share of women satisfied with <b>the job situation</b>						
<b>The right bank of the Nistru River</b>	7.2	27.9	22.5	13.1	11.6	17.8
<b>The border area</b>	9.2	29.6	21.4	15.5	6.8	17.5
<b>The left bank of the Nistru River</b>	9.6	25.9	12.4	19.1	8.0	25.0

The level of social integration of rural women was assessed on the basis of perceptions related to the functionality of social groups in the community (the family, the community, the LPA). Even if, the respondents face economic problems, characterized by a high level of dissatisfaction with living conditions and material situation, however, more than half of the respondents' state that: I feel I have many possibilities in life (63.3%), they feel that in the family, their opinion counts (81.0%), they feel that in the community the opinion of women counts (64.9%). This fact demonstrates a high level of integration and networking of women in the following social groups: *family, neighbourhood/community groups*. To a lesser extent, the respondents say that their opinion is taken into consideration by the LPA (to 36.3%). Every second woman feels that she cannot participate in the development of the locality in which she lives (See Figure 2).

**Figure 2.** The level of agreement of the rural women from both banks of the Nistru River towards the following situations, %



The comparative analysis for the right and left bank of the Nistru River shows approximately the same trends of the perceptions of rural women towards expressing and considering the opinion of the woman in the family environment and community. However, women of the left bank of the Nistru state to a greater extent that their opinion is taken into account in the family and community compared with women from the right bank of the Nistru River (See Table 2).



**Table 2.** Perceptions with regard to expressing and taking into consideration the opinion of women in the family and community, disaggregated by regions, %

	Total agreement	Partial agreement	Partial disagreement	Total disagreement	DK/NA
<b>As a woman I feel that others in the family take into account my opinion?</b>					
<b>The right bank of the Nistru River</b>	42.6	35.4	13.9	6.0	2.0
<b>The border area</b>	50.1	3.0	12.1	3.9	2.9
<b>The left bank of the Nistru River</b>	45.8	39.1	8.5	4.3	2.3
<b>As a woman I feel that others in the community take into account my opinion?</b>					
<b>The right bank of the Nistru River</b>	18.4	39.7	25.5	10.4	6.1
<b>The border area</b>	22.7	38.0	28.4	6.5	4.4
<b>The left bank of the Nistru River</b>	28.0	43.9	14.6	8.1	5.4

Perceptions on the level of involvement of rural women in the development of the locality differ in the case of the two banks of the Nistru River. The study of perceptions with regard to women's participation in different activities in the community/civic participation highlights that women from the right bank (59.6%) believe that they can participate in the development of the community in which they live to a greater extent compared with women from the left bank of the Nistru River (45.5%). The same situation is also found in the case of the interrelation of women with LPA. Women from the right bank (44.4%) report that their opinion and the issues they face are taken into consideration by the leadership of the communities in which they live, compared with women from the left bank (28.8%) (See Table 3).

Depending on other socio-demographic indicators we find that perceptions of the level of involvement of women on the left and right bank of the Nistru River in the development of the community is greater in the case of young women, with higher education and with average and high income.

**Table 3.** Perceptions regarding expressing and taking into account the opinion of women in the LPA, disaggregated by regions, %

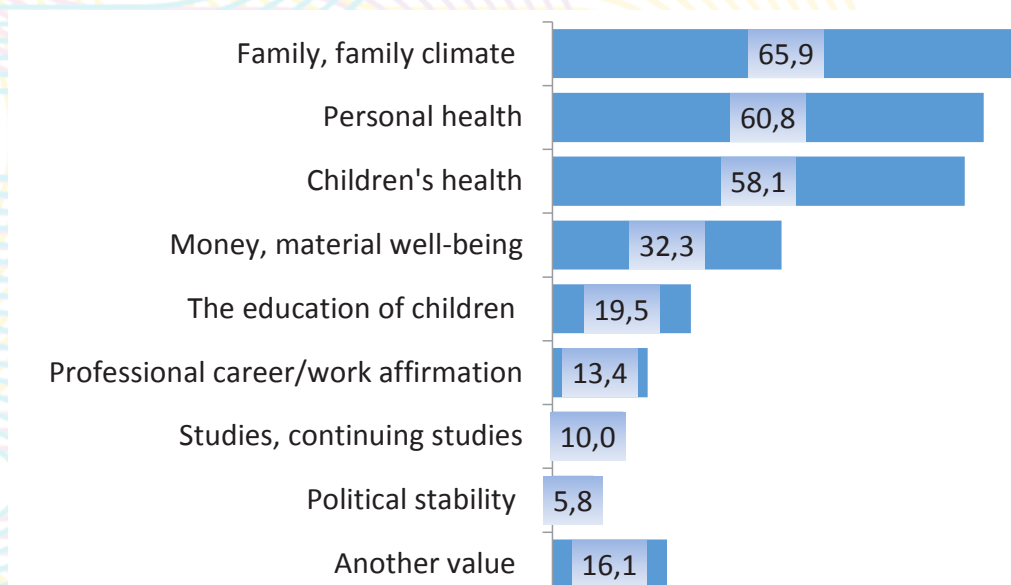
	Total agreement	Partial agreement	Partial disagreement	Total disagreement	DK/ NA
<b>As a woman I feel that I can participate in the development of the locality in which I live?</b>					
<b>The right bank of the Nistru River</b>	22.1	37.5	22.6	13.3	4.5
<b>The border area</b>	33.0	31.6	21.9	9.2	4.4
<b>The left bank of the Nistru River</b>	17.0	28.5	18.3	31.1	5.1
<b>As a woman I feel that those who lead the locality in which I live, take into account my issues/proposals</b>					
<b>The right bank of the Nistru River</b>	12.4	32.0	30.2	20.2	5.2
<b>The border area</b>	17.6	27.6	32.6	18.7	3.6
<b>The left bank of the Nistru River</b>	9.4	19.4	21.8	41.1	7.9



The main values of women in rural areas on both banks of the Nistru River are: *the family/family climate, health, material well-being and education of children*. Less important are the following values: professional affirmation (13.4%), further education (10%), political stability (5.8%), friends (5.3%), environment (3.6%), family security in relation to conflict, violence and crime (2.7%), etc. (See Figure 3).

The analysis of the women's value system in rural areas confirms the existing traditional vision that the role of women in the villages is to create a family and to raise children. The need for further education and women's professional affirmation is not a priority, this fact making most women from rural areas, economically vulnerable.

**Figure 3.** The system of values of rural women from both banks of the Nistru River



The comparative analysis for the right and left bank of the Nistru River does not highlight differences in the value system of the respondents. Thus, for both women from the right bank and for the women from the left bank of the Nistru River - family and health are fundamental values. Material well-being is more important for women from the right bank, while the education of children is mentioned more by women from the left bank of Nistru River and those from the border area.

Family security and political stability do not represent the key values for women in rural areas, being located at the bottom of their list of values. Political stability is valued more by women from the right bank and the security of the family in relation to conflicts, violence and crime – by the women from the left bank of the Nistru River and the border area (See Table 4).

**Table 4.** The distribution of the system of values of women on both banks of the Nistru River, %

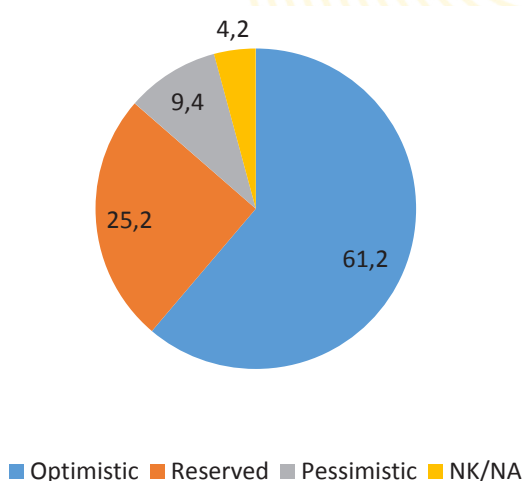
	The right bank of the Nistru River	The border area	The left bank of the Nistru River
Personal health	47.5	55.2	74.0
Family, family climate	61.8	66.3	69.8
Children's health	48.8	65.1	67.1
Education of children	16.2	29.5	23.0



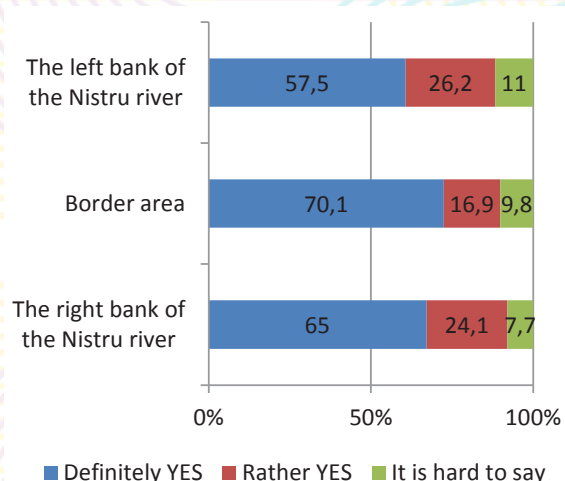
Money, material well-being	43.1	20.5	21.5
Studies, continuing studies	12.4	9.1	7.7
The affirmative action of the professional career/the work	21.3	6.3	5.4
The security of the family in relation to conflicts, violence and crime	1.9	3.6	3.4
Political stability	10.5	4.4	1.4

Even if they are faced with a multitude of social problems, women in rural areas have an optimistic perception of the future (61.2%). Only 10% of respondents say they are pessimistic when they think about the future. The comparative analysis for the right and left bank of the Nistru River shows a level of optimism higher among women on the right bank of the Nistru River and those from localities situated in the security zone (See Figure 5).

**Figure 4.** The perception of the future by rural women from both banks of the Nistru River, %



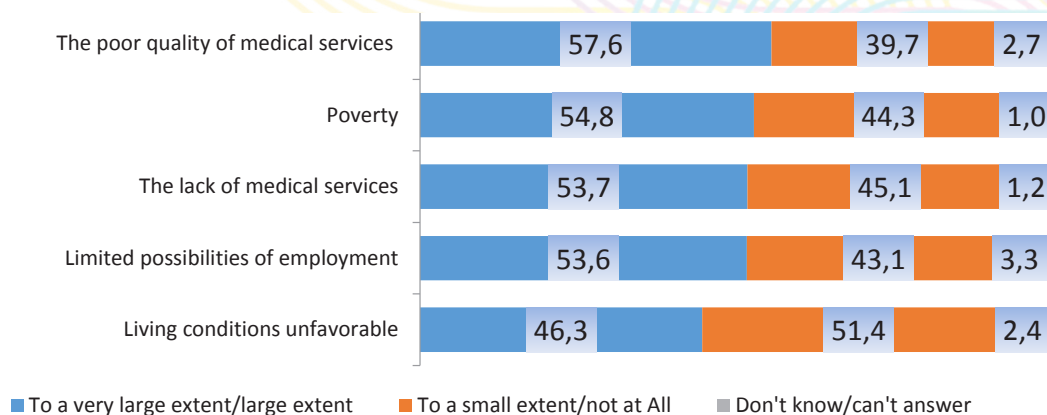
**Figure 5.** Perceptions of future by women in rural areas, by regions, %



## 2.2. Social Problems

The main social problems that affect rural women from both banks of the Nistru River are: poor quality of medical services (57.6%) or the lack of medical services (53%), poverty associated with unfavourable living conditions and reduced possibilities of employment (See Figure 6).

**Figure 6.** The main problems faced by respondents on both sides of the Nistru River, % (part 1)





Poverty and employment migration of the economically active population creates in chain multiple social problems: ageing of the rural population, increasing the rate of morbidity in rural areas, the decline in the number of population and lack of young people in the community are just a few problems mentioned by the participants in the group discussions. Women participating in the group discussions said that sometimes, as a refuge for many of the economic problems, *“a great part of the rural population consumes alcohol and socially degrades”*. It is possible that these addictive behaviours occur as a reaction to dysfunctional stressful situations, lack of solutions, resources and ineffective conflict management. The women participating in the discussions indicated that in such situations the risk of violence against women increases. Even if the survey does not show that the problem of violence is a major problem that affects women (3.7% of the respondents believe that this issue affects them), however, qualitative research allows us to see that approximately half of the population from rural areas is affected by this phenomenon (See Chapter VI, paragraph 6.2. Violence against women).

*“In large part the problems of women on the right and left bank of the Nistru River are the same, just that perhaps it's time for them to get out of this inhibited area and say that they want to be supported or helped. There is the problem of trafficking, violence against women, but the authorities of Transnistria will deny that they have such issues related to women. Currently, Tiraspol wants to show that everything is good for them in this chapter, with the exception of the economic aspect”.* **I\_MD\_expert\_7**

*“Poverty is the biggest problem in rural areas: lack of money, which comes from the lack of jobs and emigration to work abroad, worsening the situation of the elderly left without care. Who to take care of them, if the relatives have gone abroad. The social worker no longer has time for everyone/Women are beaten up, cursed... yes, domestic violence happens in every second home. And where shall they go... and what are the police doing? The police open a criminal case and make him pay a fine. The money to pay the fine still comes from the family budget”-* **FG\_MD\_Zonă\_limitrofă.**

The study participants noted that *“women from the left bank are different to the women from the right bank of the Nistru River”*. The population from the left bank (both women and men) is perceived by the study participants from the right bank of Nistru River as: *“modest, inhibited, withdrawn and without initiative”*. These features could determine a fairly low level of involvement of the women of the left bank of the Nistru in the life of the community. In the view of the participants, the social life in the territory of the left bank has not suffered any changes from the time of the Soviet Union. The mentality, the values and living conditions/physical infrastructure of the villages have remained the same.

*“There is no change in infrastructure, if you want to see how it was in the Soviet Union then go there. Nothing has changed in the villages ... they have transportation only twice per day if compared to us, the right bank, we have a lot of transport”.* **I\_MD\_APL\_1**

Some of the interviewees believe that *“women on both banks of the Nistru River are facing the same problems common for the whole republic and that there are no problems specific to the region. In general, the problems of women are: unemployment among women, alcoholism among women, domestic violence, etc.”* **I\_MS\_APL\_5.** The problems are the same, just that the level of information of women from the left bank is much lower. In large part, women don't know where to go and what possibilities are there to solve the problems they face. Some women *“endure in silence”* according to traditional visions, believing that *“they should keep it in the family”* (**I\_MS\_expert\_9**).

Experts from the left bank of the Nistru River stated that many problems are due to the status of a closed state, which limits all the initiatives and interventions for development (**I\_MS\_expert\_8**). The most affected in the rural areas are housewives/elderly, women who work in agriculture and women with many children. It is continuous increase in the share of elderly women, which requires various types of social and medical services at the rural level.



Many of the problems faced by women are due to the traditional stereotypes and the patriarchal vision that the woman's place is in the kitchen and not where the decisions are made. The stereotyped visions regarding women's roles are found more amid the population from the left bank of Nistru River compared to the other regions.

Although practices show that women's involvement in management structures is much more effective (in the case of Scoreni village in Straseni, it is attested that woman's leadership has led to a higher level of investment and local development projects in the community: full renovation of the main road in the village, partnerships with economic leaders for the employment of housewives, renovation of the kindergarten and school in the village etc.), however, in many communities there is a lack of confidence that the woman will be able to cope with strategic issues for the country.

The problems related to the poor quality of medical services or lack thereof are felt more by the women of the left bank of Nistru River (approx. 60%), compared with women on the right bank and the border area (approx. 50%) (See Chapter V. Women's Health in rural areas on both banks of the Nistru River). The poor economic situation and poverty also affect women in the 3 sub-samples. The problems caused by the limited possibilities of employment and unfavourable conditions of living affect to a greater extent the women from the left bank of Nistru River compared to the other categories of respondents (See Table 5).

**Table 5.** Distribution of the problems affecting to a very large extent/large extent the women on both banks of the Nistru River, % (part 1)

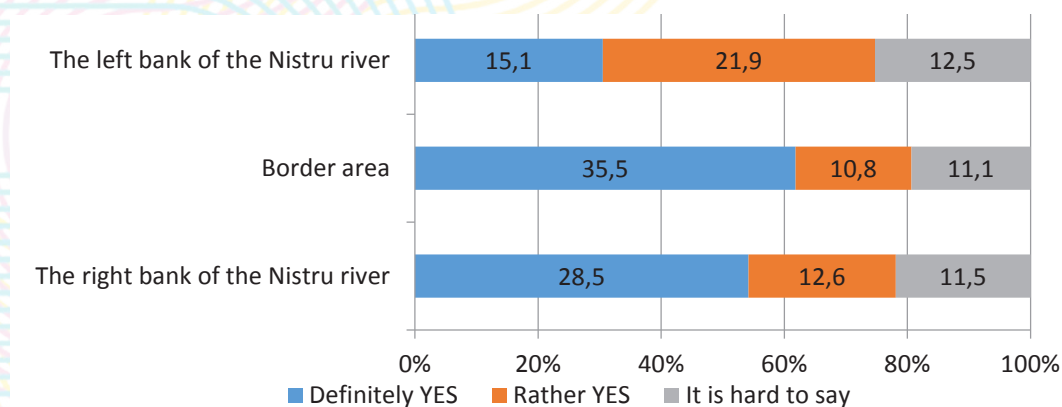
	The right bank of the Nistru River	The border area	The left bank of the Nistru river
The poor quality of medical services	53.3	50.3	62.4
Poverty	54.4	53.3	55.2
The lack of medical services	46.1	49.3	61.7
Limited possibilities of employment	47.3	50.1	59.9
Living conditions unfavourable	37.7	44.1	55.0

Another problem that directly affects the situation of the family, family climate, family functionality, the demographic structure of the country is *emigration for work purposes abroad*. The study included trends of migration of women, and analysed the willingness and availability of women to emigrate for work abroad. The data of our study attests that every fifth woman in the rural areas (21.7%) definitely wants to emigrate to work abroad if she has such chance and 17.3% of the respondents said that even if they are not safe, they would still rather emigrate

The comparative analysis by regions, allows us to see a higher trend towards the emigration of women from the right bank and the security zone, compared to women from the left bank of the Nistru River. This fact is due to the open doors migration policy /freedom of movement and increase of the level of poverty in rural areas (lack of job opportunities, low quality medical services, lack of cultural recreation facilities, etc.) (See Figure 7).

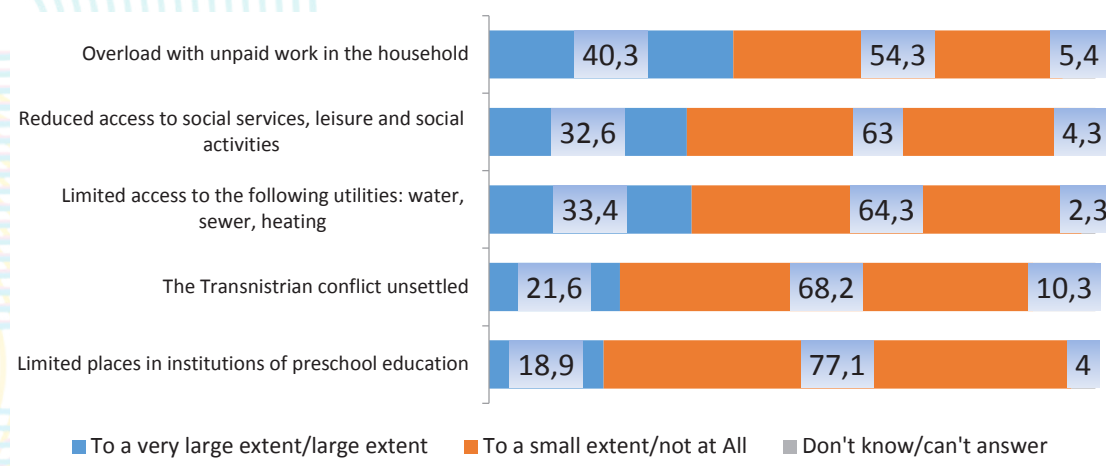


**Figure 7.** The share of women from rural areas who intend to emigrate for work abroad, %



To smaller extent women in rural areas consider that they are affected by problems related to overload with household unpaid work (40.3%), reduced access to social and leisure services (32.6%), limited access to water, sewerage and heating (33.4%), the unsettled Transnistrian conflict (21%), domestic violence, etc.

**Figure 8.** The main problems faced by the respondents from rural areas on both sides of the Nistru River, % (part 2)



The problem of the unsettled Transnistrian conflict affects more women of the right bank of the Nistru River and women who live in localities in the immediate vicinity of the security zone, compared with the women from the left bank of Nistru River (See Chapter VII. Knowledge and attitudes about the unsettled Transnistrian Conflict).

**Table 6.** Distribution of the problems affecting to a very large extent/large extent the women on both banks of the Nistru River, (part 2), %

	The right bank of the Nistru River	The border area	The left bank of the Nistru River
Overload with unpaid work in the household	42.1	43.1	38.5



Reduced access to social services, leisure and social activities	37.4	35.4	27.7
Limited access to the following utilities: water, sewage, heating	38.7	41.2	28.2
The unsettled Transnistrian conflict	25.1	31.7	18
Limited places in institutions of preschool education	29.4	28.8	8.4

Not all the representatives are aware that women have problems in the community. They consider that the problems mentioned are characteristic to all, including women and men. For this reason, women's issues rarely get discussed at the meetings of the District Council.

*"I don't see any problems. If there are problems, then they are general for the entire population. Maybe yes, you need to help people in some way, for example to give them wood for heating in the winter, for those who don't have natural gas etc. this type of things, yes, we have them, but nothing else." I\_MS\_APL\_32.3.*

### 2.3. Living conditions and access to basic services

The living conditions and women's access to goods and basic services is an important element of the assessment of the quality of life of citizens. In the sample investigated we find that 90 percent of the population has access to basic goods, including: *electricity, television, mobile and landline telephones, fridge, cooking stove connected to natural gas*. The majority of respondents (70%) *have computers with internet connection, have access to water and sewage system, own heating*. Only a third of women have access in their household to a functional car (38.1%), which represents one of the sources of access to services (educational and medical) at the community level and district level.

Comparative analysis of the living conditions of women from the right and the left bank certifies approximately the same trends, with the exception for a few indicators: the female population of the left bank has a greater access to sewage system, own heating and centralized water system, compared with the female population from the right bank. (See Table 7).

**Table 7.** The access of women from rural areas on both banks of the Nistru River to the goods in the household, %

	Yes	The right bank of the Nistru River	The border area	The left bank of the Nistru River
Functional TV	97.3	96.8	93.3	97.7
Functional Computer	71.8	62.6	64.8	81.4
Internet connection	73.2	66.0	68.9	80.7
Landline telephony	89.4	86.2	85.1	92.5
Mobile telephony	90.6	86.1	88.1	95.6
Functional Refrigerator	96.5	93.4	94.9	99.7
Washing machine	83.0	80.9	82.1	85.3
Air conditioner	19.7	17.9	8.9	21.4
Stove connected to gas	91.3	87.2	76.7	95.4
Car	38.1	36.7	38.6	39.4
Access to the centralized water system /tap in the house	74.9	62.4	48.7	87.6



Central heating system	19.6	26.1	15.4	13.2
Own heating	67.4	48.0	34.0	87.4
Sewage system	57.6	42.8	47.9	73.0
Electricity	97.9	97.2	98.3	98.8

The analysis of women's access to the main institutions in the community stating that about every woman has access to services provided by public authorities (village hall, local Council), public institutions (educational institutions) and the Church.

The study shows differences concerning the access of women from the right and the left bank of Nistru River to the community institutions. Women from the left bank of the Nistru River have less access to educational services rendered by educational institutions, health services (Centre of family doctors), services for young people in the community, vocational training and continuous training and media services, compared with women from the right bank (See Table 8).

**Table 8.** The access of women from rural areas on both banks of the Nistru River to the institutions of the community, %

	Total	The right bank of the Nistru River	The border area	The left bank of the Nistru River
The local council	98.7	100.0	85.4	99.0
The priest / the Church Council or Religious Organizations/the local Church	98.2	99.0	100.0	97.4
The police	96.1	95.4	80.7	96.7
Village hall	91.2	100.0	85.4	82.4
Preschool educational institution	87.1	97.9	92.3	76.1
Pharmacy	78.6	68.2	50.6	89.2
Leisure centres/ institutions of leisure (the house of culture, concert hall, cafes)	69.4	50.6	37.1	88.7
Institution of secondary education	47.3	87.8	80.3	6.3
Centre of family doctors	41.4	82.0	80.2	0.2
Centres that provide healthcare services for the elderly and persons with disabilities	15.6	18.6	23.3	12.7
Non-governmental organizations (the Centre for youth friendly health, etc.)	15.4	12.4	13.2	18.4
High School	12.8	25.2	24.5	0.3
Day centres for young people	6.3	12.4	13.2	0.2
Local media (press, radio, television)	5.8	9.4	6.6	2.3
Institutions of vocational training and continuous training	1.3	2.3	6.6	0.3

The level of involvement of institutions from the community in solving the problems that affect rural women is quite low. To a greater extent, women are supported by public institutions: *Family Doctors Centre* (49.3%), *educational institutions* (43.6 %), *church* (43.4%), *day centres for young people* (39.9%).



Less, in solving the social problems faced by rural women, are involved: the institutions of public order (Police – 36%), NGOs (35.2%), the local Council (31%) etc. (See Table 9).

**Table 9.** Institutions in the community who are involved to a very large extent/large extent in the solution of problems faced by rural women from both banks of the Nistru River, % (part 1)

	To a very large extent/Large extent	The right bank of the Nistru River	The border area	The left bank of the Nistru River
Centre of family doctors (N=428)	49.3	49.1	46.8	100
High School Educational Institution (N=132)	43.6	43.6	42.0	48.6
The priest/ the Church Council or religious organisation / local church (N=1017)	43.4	60.6	53.3	26.1
Day centres for young people (N=66)	39.9	41.0	48.9	0.0
Secondary School Educational institution (N=490)	39.1	40.0	42.0	27.9
Local media (press, radio, TV) (N=60)	39.9	45.9	20.0	16.0
Pharmacy (N=815)	38.4	48.2	52.2	30.7

The correlation analysis highlights the differences on the level of involvement of institutions from the community in solving the problems faced by women. With the exception of the Centre of Family Doctors and Educational Institutions, the other public and private institutions in the communities from the left bank of the Nistru region give pretty little support for women in rural communities. Compared with the communities from the right bank the level of involvement of public institutions from the left bank of the Nistru in helping and supporting women in the community is two times lower (See table 10).

**Table 10.** The level of involvement of institutions from the community in solving the problems faced by women in rural areas on both banks of the Nistru River, % (part 2)

	To a very large extent/Large extent	The right bank of the Nistru River	The border area	The left bank of the Nistru River
Police (N=995)	36.1	47.4	48.7	25.1
NGOs (youth friendly health centres etc.) (N=160)	35.2	59.6	58.3	18.9
Village hall (N=945)	34.1	49	48.8	16.2
Centres that provide medical services to elderly and persons with disabilities (N=161)	34.7	42.5	50.9	23.5
Local Council (N=1022)	31.0	45.2	42.8	16.5



The Local Public administration has an active role in solving the problems faced by the female population. Even if the LPA does not specifically address women's issues, however many of the actions taken have had a positive impact on the general population, including women.

In collaboration with the associative sector and with the support of donors there have been implemented a number of community projects which have contributed to increasing the quality of life of women in rural areas: *street lighting, gasification of rural communities' projects, creation of Centres for Persons with Special Educational Needs within the school, drinking water supply of the rural population projects, the empowerment of women in the development of their own business etc.*

Many of these initiatives would not be achieved without the support of the international donors. The projects mentioned above have been implemented both on the right and on the left bank of the Nistru River. However, the infrastructure of rural communities from the left bank of the Nistru is underdeveloped, compared with rural communities from the right bank.

*«The possibilities of accessing development projects on the left bank of the Nistru River are much fewer, the representatives of the associative environment confronted with numerous administrative barriers in the process of elaboration and implementation of the strategic plans», I\_MS\_femeie leader \_10.*

Many of the projects conducted have involved a partnership between NGOs from both banks of the Nistru River (see Chapter I, paragraph 1.2. Initiatives of development partners and civil society on both sides of the Nistru River). The topic of women is discussed more in the projects that are being implemented in the villages.

The benefits of these actions have contributed to the development of community infrastructure (repair of roads in the communities of the countryside, repair of school buildings and houses of culture), the creation of support services to vulnerable groups.

*"A million MDL invested in the kindergarten, which has changed the lives of women and the mentality. It was a village hall project. At present all the educators from the kindergarten have higher education and that due to my urge as mayor, I supported increasing the level of education of the women in the village to provide them with a higher salary. We have motivated them to come into the village, having adequate working conditions and good nourishment" - I\_MD\_APL\_1*

The level of involvement of local authorities in solving the problems of women depends on the level of knowledge and interest of the mayor. The mayors who are former school principals or women – mayors address more women's issues in the community. The absence of NGOs in their locality prevent much community involvement in solving the problems of the community. In this sense, the involvement of initiative groups and local parental associations in the school represent the basic structures in terms of the development of civic behaviour of the villagers.

The main role of the LPA is to inform, support and provide public services to different categories of social groups, including women. The priorities of the LPA in relation to the situation of women in the community are focused on ensuring the living conditions that empower women in rural areas. Another innovative activity, carried out by some of the mayors, participants in the study, is the analysis of local budgets from a gender perspective. In this regard a training course was developed for the local authorities and the NGO sector. Also, with the support of the donors a training on the theme of gender equality was carried out for the Presidents of District Councils, etc.

*In many communities, there is a "great gap between women's needs and LPA priorities. Representatives of these groups seem to speak in different languages, women do not feel they are heard", (I\_MD\_female leader \_3).*

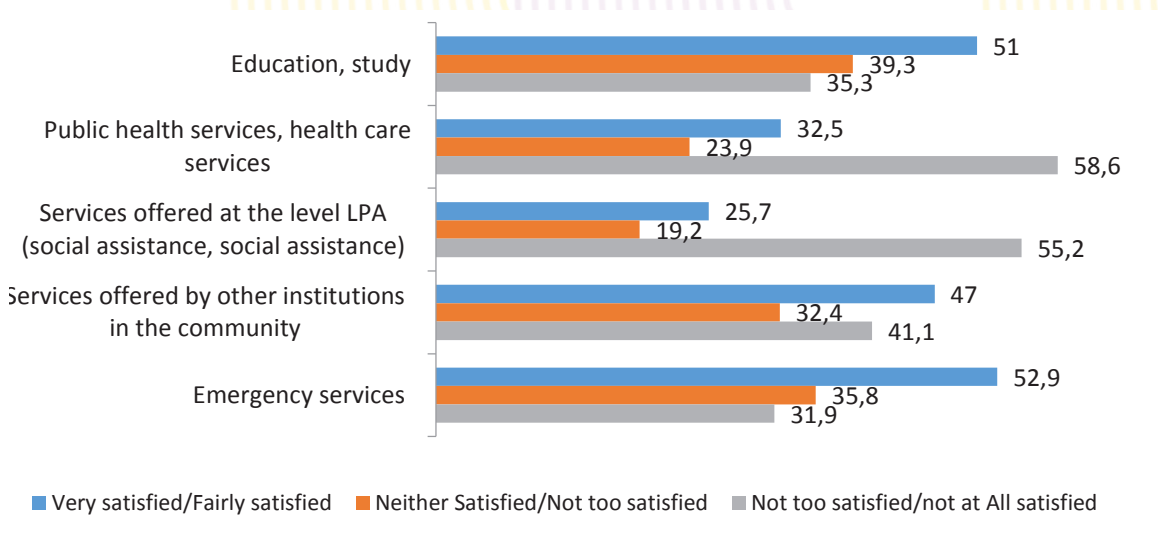


In this regard, women should be much more active and aware of their rights and request from LPA to be more actively involved in solving social problems.

*“And women need to know their rights, because they complain ... but they do not write complaints, do not file requests, do not ask the LPA to get involved or solve some cases. Maybe it’s because they do not know their rights or maybe because they expect everything will just be made available to them”,*  
**I\_MD\_femeie leader \_3.**

The most qualitative services offered at community level in the opinion of the respondents are the following: emergency services (52.9%), educational services (51%), services provided by community institutions, such as church, day care centres for children, etc. (47%) and public health services (32.5%). The Local Public Administration ranks at the bottom of the list, being rated only by 25.7% of the surveyed women (See Figure 9).

**Figure 9.** The degree of satisfaction of respondents towards the quality of services in the community, %





### III. STUDIES AND THE LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF WOMEN IN RURAL AREAS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE NISTRU RIVER

#### 3.1. Level of studies

Of the total number of the sample (1242 women) from the research, there were 522 women from the localities on the right bank of the Nistru River, 514 from the localities on the left bank of the Nistru River and 206 women from the settlements that are located directly on the right bank of the Nistru River (the so-called border area).

The research analysed the level of studies and the education of women in these groups to elucidate which are the larger groups of women in rural areas, according to the criterion of studies completed. Thus, in the group of women from the localities on the right bank of the Nistru River the majority (35.1%) are women with secondary/vocational studies, while in the group of localities on the left bank of the Nistru River, this percentage is higher and constitutes 41.6% (See Table 11).

In the group of women from the localities on the left bank of the Nistru River are fewer women with high school/college education, it accounted for only 9.5%, while the number of women with higher education is highest (28.8%) (See Table 11).

**Table 11.** The level of education of women in rural areas by regions, %

	The right bank of the Nistru River	The border area	The left bank of the Nistru River
Incomplete secondary education	23.6	22.5	19.7
General school/vocational training	35.1	37.3	41.6
High School/College	19.7	17.0	9.5
Higher education	20.6	22.0	28.8

In the group of women from villages in the border area women who have completed general/vocational studies/ and sub-groups of women with incomplete secondary education prevail, while the share of women with higher education is approximately the same as the one in the group of women in the localities on the right and left banks of the Nistru River.

In the localities in the border area the number of women with high school and/or college education (17%) is roughly the same as the number of women in the localities on the right bank of the Nistru River (19.7%), with a large discrepancy compared to the percentage of women with the same level of studies on the left bank of the Nistru River (9.5%).

The comparative analysis of the level of studies on subsamples of the three categories of localities has revealed a few peculiarities. From the data available in the research it is evidenced that of the total sample with three subsamples, the largest group are women with vocational education and incomplete secondary education, and the lowest is composed of women with master's and doctor's degree, on the one hand and those without studies or with primary education unfinished, on the other hand. At the same time, the percentage of women with incomplete higher education (bachelor's degree) is approximately the same in all three groups of women. In the group of women with vocational school studies as well as with complete higher education, more women are from localities from the left bank of the Nistru River.



**Table 12.** The level of studies and the distribution of the subsamples, %

	Total for all 3 regions	The right bank of the Nistru River	The border area	The left bank of the Nistru River
No education, primary unfinished (up to 4 forms)	0.9	1.4	1.0	0.4
Primary (4 forms)	2.7	1.6	2.6	3.9
Incomplete secondary education (9 forms)	18.0	20.6	18.8	15.4
Secondary (general) school (10-11 forms)	14.5	17.1	16.4	11.7
High school (12 forms)	4.2	8.0	4.9	0.5
Trade school (1 year of training)	4.2	5.1	5.0	3.4
Vocational school (3 years of training)	19.6	12.8	15.9	26.5
College (2-5 years of training)	10.4	11.7	12.1	9.0
Incomplete higher education (bachelor's degree) (3 years of studies)	11.9	12.3	11.5	11.7
Complete higher education (master's degree) (4-6 years of study)	12.3	7.7	9.7	16.8
Master's, Doctorate	0.5	0.6	0.9	0.3

### 3.2. Perceptions on the importance of the studies

The interviews and discussions in groups, both with women actively involved and those in passive or minority groups, have highlighted the fact that women in rural areas attach great value to education; the majority of them arguing in favour of the children's education, so they continue their studies in spite of the economic problems of the family.

*"I have always dreamed of being an educator, but my parents did not have enough money at those times to afford my education. I always wanted to go back to studies, but my husband laughed at me, and I could not even enrol in distance learning as he did not support me. Now I regret this and he regrets it, too. However, I succeeded it with my children, both of whom have higher education and have good jobs in Comrat and Chisinau. Had I been more brave in my youth and did not listen to my husband so much, we would've had a different life, certainly a better one"* **FG\_MD\_UTAG.**

Some women participating in the qualitative research marked the level of women's studies as a go card in life, even if they don't get to practice after finishing the studies due to lack of opportunities in the village, their chances at self-affirmation would have been higher, anyway.

*"If the Roma women had better education, regardless whether they work or not, I would have wanted and sure that I would've succeeded to involve them more in community life and even in politics. Through my own example of a Roma woman who has succeeded. In our village the Roma are appreciated because they are householders and because they have education. If more women had undergone through several trainings and workshops, as in Chisinau, sure it would have been more Roma women in the most important areas both on the decision-making level as well as in business"*, **I\_MD\_femeie lider\_5.**



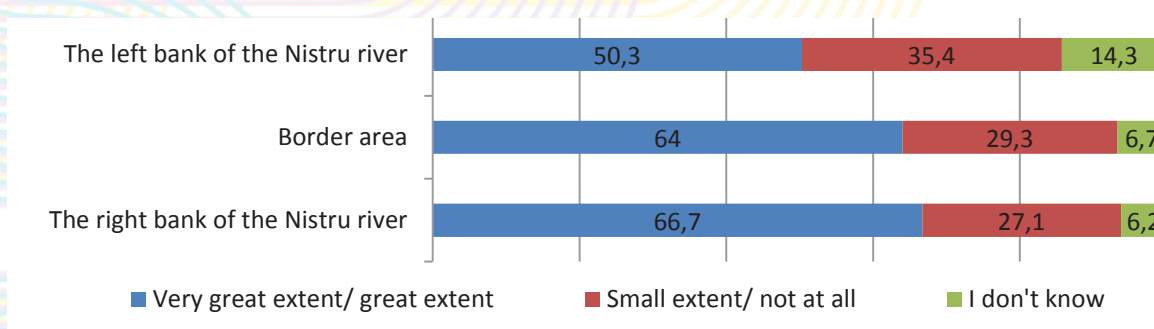
In exchange, the women with the low degree of participation seem to be more sceptical about the continuation of their studies or courses of professional requalification, invoking, in large part, the lack of employment opportunities or low wages.

*"There is no 100% guarantee that you're going to work according to the education you received, before they used to assign you, but they don't longer do it. Unless you have prospects to work and be paid, then yes, but otherwise...for what good?" FG\_MD\_Zonă\_limitrofă*

Although the women involved in the quantitative research do not have the highest level of education, 58.7% of the respondents consider that getting higher education would improve their lives, while only 12.9% don't see a connection between level of education and the quality of life.

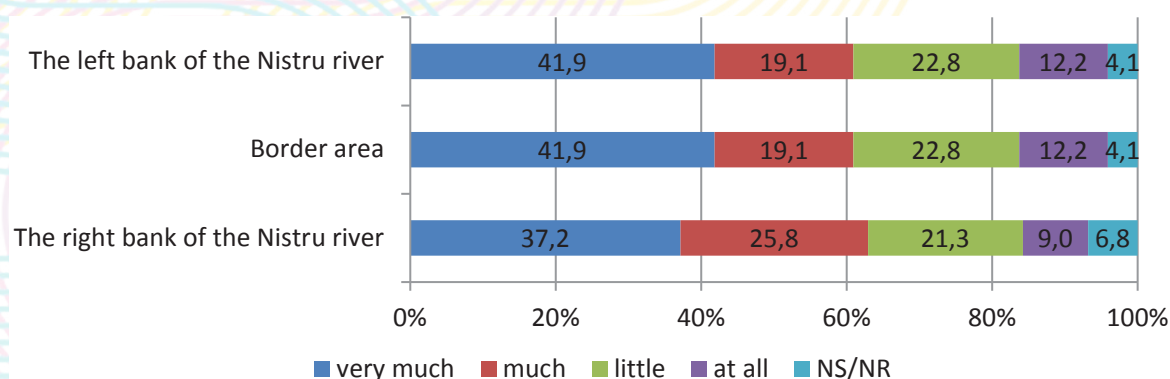
However, the percentage of women who believe so is the lowest in the localities on the left bank of the Nistru River (50.3%) as opposed to the localities from the right bank (66.7%) and in the border areas (64%) (See Figure 10).

**Figure 10.** The opinion of rural women about the following statement:  
Getting higher education will contribute to a better life, %



When asked to what extent they have been supported by parents to do studies the majority of respondents (61.8%) responded that they had been encouraged "very much" and "much", while 9.1% of women claim that they were not at all supported by the parents. The comparative analysis of the three subsamples did not reveal certain differences in the behaviour of parents who supported women in access to education.

**Figure 11.** Supporting parents in access to education, disaggregated by areas, %

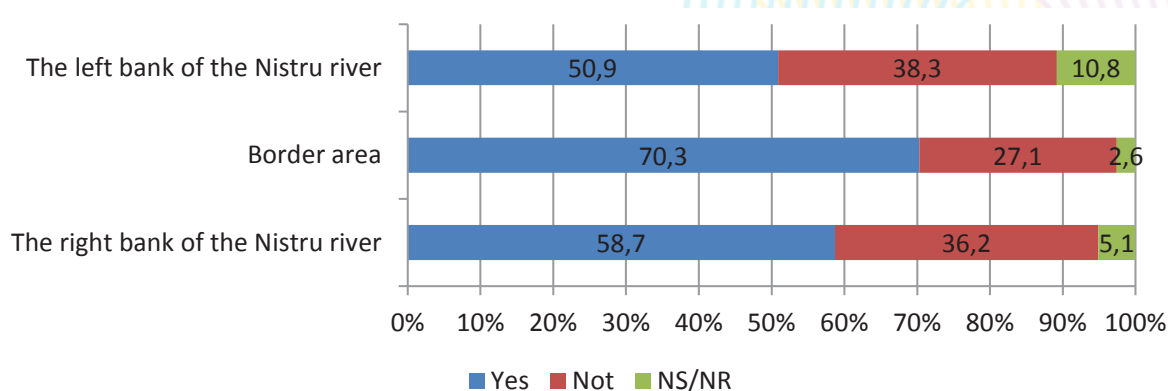


When asked if they thought to continue their studies, the majority of respondents (54.7%) answered affirmatively, but the comparative analysis on the three subsamples highlighted the fact that the wom-



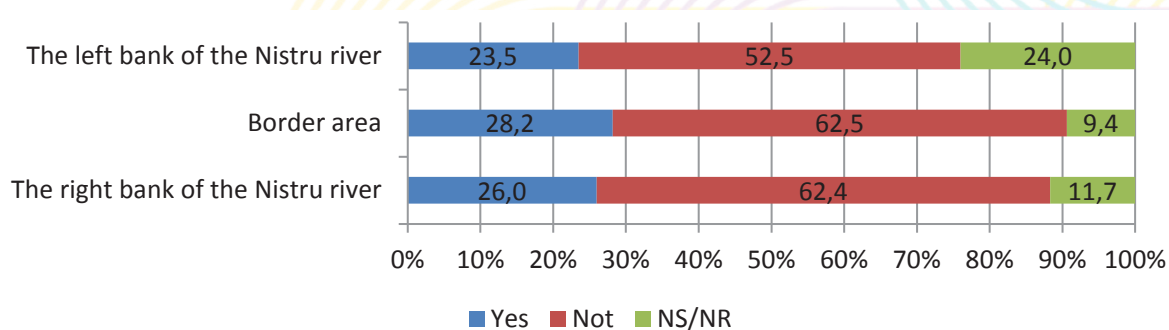
en from the villages in the border area have responded affirmatively in a greater proportion than those from the localities on the right and left banks of the Nistru River (See Figure 12).

**Figure 12.** The distribution, by regions, of women interested in further studies, %



Although the motivation to continue studies is large, the majority of women participating in the survey (57.4%) have pointed out that they do not have sufficient resources to continue studies at a higher level in the case when they had to decide that. The comparative analysis of the three subsamples of women highlighted the fact that the percentage of women who do not have sufficient financial resources to continue their studies is higher in the localities on the left bank of the Nistru River (52.5% versus 62.4% and 62.5% in the other two subsamples) (See Figure 13).

**Figure 13.** The availability of financial resources for further education, disaggregated by geographical area, %



### 3.3. Sources of information

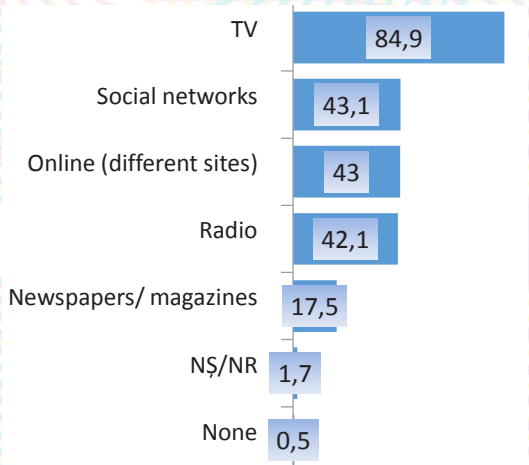
In view of the fact that empowerment of women is based in large part on access to various sources of information, current research has analysed various aspects of the provision of information to women in rural areas in the localities on the right and left bank of the Nistru River, as well as in the border area.

The most popular sources of information for the women of the whole sample are: TV (84.9%), Social Networks (43.1%), Internet (various websites), (43%) and Radio (42.1%). The least popular sources of information are newspapers/magazines (17.5%).



Analysis of sources of information for the women in the three subsamples revealed some differences. Thus, while the majority of women from all three subsamples are informed mainly from TV, the women from the localities in the border area are informed less via radio (24.8%) compared with women in the localities on the left bank (43.7%) and those from the localities on the right bank (40.5%).

**Figure 14.** The main sources of information of women on both banks of the Nistru River, %



**Table 13.** Sources of information for rural women, disaggregated by geographical regions, %

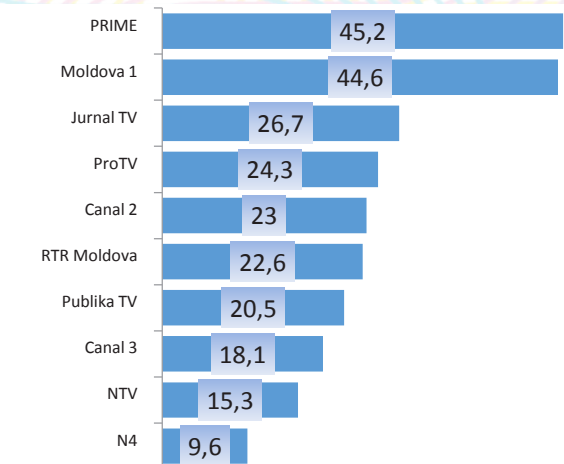
	The right bank	The border area	The left bank
TV	82.3	77.3	87.5
Radio	40.5	24.8	43.7
On-line (different websites)	38.9	49.6	47.3
Social Networks	31.7	23.5	54.5
Newspapers/magazines	19.5	15.7	15.4
None	1.1	2.6	0.0
DK/NA	2.2	0.5	1.1

In contrast, the women in the localities on the right bank of the Nistru River (31.7%) and those from the localities in the border area (23.5%) are informed less through social networks than women in the localities on the left bank of the Nistru River (54.5%). With a small difference (approx.2%), women in the localities on the right bank of the Nistru River used newspapers and magazines more than women in the other two subsamples.

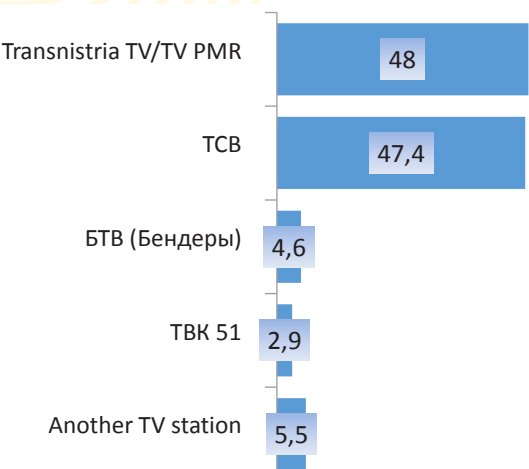
Because television was the major source of information to women in rural areas on the right and left bank of Nistru River, as well as in the border area, the TV stations that are accessible to women were analysed. Thus, when asked to list the TV stations accessible, women in the general sample listed the following sources:

**Figure 15.** Access for women in the general sample to TV stations on both banks of the Nistru River, %

TV channels from the right bank of the Nistru River



TV stations on the left bank of the Nistru River

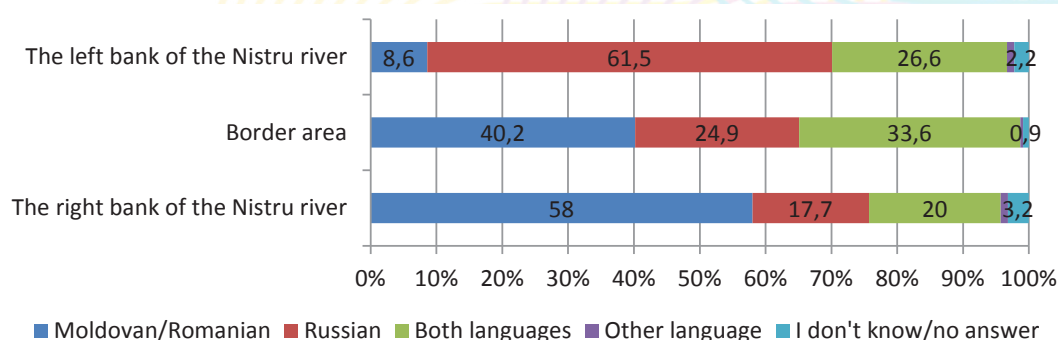




In the general sample the most popular TV stations are: Transnistria TV/TV PMR, TCB, Raw and Moldova 1. At the same time, 39.5% women in the general sample prefer to watch the news in Russian, 33.5% women in the Moldovan/Romanian language, and 23.3% respondents watch news in both languages.

The comparative analysis of the responses of women on the language in which they're watching the news has highlighted the fact that more women from villages in the border area (33.6%) follow the news in both languages. Also, more women in this subsample (24.9%) than women in the localities on the right bank of the Nistru River watch the news in Russian (See Figure 16).

**Figure 16.** Language preference of women for watching the news. The language in which they follow news, by subsamples, %



Access to TV stations of women in the general sample is different, depending on the sub-sample they represent, given the area of broadcasting of the respective TV stations.

**Table 14.** TV channels accessible to women, the subsamples, %

	The right bank of the Nistru River	The border area	The left bank of the Nistru River
PRIME	68.6	53.1	21.6
Moldova 1	64.6	53.1	24.4
Jurnal TV	49.3	45.4	4.0
ProTV	44.7	38.5	3.9
RTR Moldova	39.4	32.7	5.7
Publika TV	36.7	32.0	4.3
NTV	23.2	32.8	7.5
Canal 3	30.4	34.0	5.8
Canal 2	32.8	35.3	13.4
N4	6.3	26.9	3.0
Transnistria TV/TV PMR	3.2	19.6	90.2
TCB	3.8	9.0	89.9
<b>БТВ (Бендеры)</b>	3.6	8.0	5.8
<b>ТБК 51</b>	7.8	6.8	2.3
Another TV station, please, indicate	11.2	11.7	3.3



Comparative analysis of available TV stations used as primary sources of information to women in the localities on the right bank of the Nistru River show us that those women are using mostly such TV stations as Prime, Moldova 1, Jurnal TV, ProTV, while the women in rural areas on the left bank of the Nistru River, such TV stations as Transnistria TV/TV PMR, TCB, Moldova 1 and Prime. The women from the localities in the border area inform themselves mainly from the same sources as the women in the localities from the right bank of the Nistru River: Moldova 1, Prime, Jurnal TV, and PROTV.

**Table 15.** The trust of the rural women in TV stations on both banks of the Nistru River, %

	<b>Very high/high confidence</b>	<b>A little trust</b>	<b>Not at all</b>	<b>DK/NA</b>
PRIME (N=468)	38.9	42.6	11.6	6.9
Moldova 1 (N=462)	43.3	40.0	9.9	6.8
Jurnal TV (N=276)	42.9	37.8	12.8	6.5
ProTV (N=251)	35.5	46.0	11.7	6.7
RTR Moldova (N=234)	42.7	42.9	8.4	6.0
Publika TV (N=212)	29.2	51.9	9.6	9.3
NTV (N=159)	26.8	50.3	11.5	11.4
Canal 3 (N=187)	30.6	45.8	13.1	10.5
Canal 2 (N=238)	32.1	46.4	10.0	11.6
N4 (N=99)	24.3	45.4	11.9	18.4
Transnistria TV/TV PMR (N=497)	49.6	32.9	8.0	9.5
TCB (N=491)	48.5	32.9	8.8	9.9
<b>БТВ (Бендеры) (N=50)</b>	31.6	40.4	1.9	26.0
<b>ТБК 51 (N=30)</b>	27.8	40.5	0.0	31.8
Another TV station (N=57)	64.5	13.1	3.3	19.2

Comparative analysis<sup>17</sup> of data in the subsamples highlighted the fact that women in the localities on the right bank of the Nistru River and the border localities have less trust in Prime channel, while several women on the left bank of the Nistru River (57.5%) have “very high and high trust” in this TV station. TV station Moldova 1 is valued with “very high and high trust” by the women from the localities on the left bank of the Nistru River (60.8%) compared with 36.9% women in the localities from the right bank and 43.1% of women in the border area.

<sup>17</sup> Comparative data for other TV stations cannot be considered conclusive given the small number of women in the sub-samples that they receive information from those TV sources.



## IV. WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT IN RURAL AREAS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE NISTRU RIVER

### 4.1. Professional activity and employment prospects

From the perspective of employment, we find that every second respondent to the survey is not engaged in any professional-economic activity, respectively, does not have a source of own income and every fourth woman is retired because of age or illness. In the opinion of the respondents, in the rural environments where they come from, the possibilities of employment are limited and poorly remunerated.

*"I was hired as a technologist in the neighbouring village, but I was supposed to do the work of a cleaning lady, a janitor, a security guard and whatever else was needed..... and it wasn't 8 hours a day. I was at work from 9 in the morning until 9 in the evening. So for that salary I was supposed to do the work of about 6 people. That's why I made up my mind to go abroad", FG\_MD\_Zonă\_lim- itrofă.*

*"The jobs the village hall is offering us are very poorly paid. Rather than work for 600-800 lei at the kindergarten as a cook, I better grow cattle and sell them on the market. I am not afraid that I would have issues in the family, but I don't have a place to work in the village..." - FG\_MD\_Fe- mei\_Roma*

In many of the settlements on the left bank of the Nistru, the "kolkhozes" that require physical labour are still operating.

*"As far as the employment of women is concerned, we have a kolkhoz in our village and anyone who wants, can get a job there. There is a farm nearby that needs staff. In general, there is a need for physical work in the village", I\_MS\_APL\_3.*

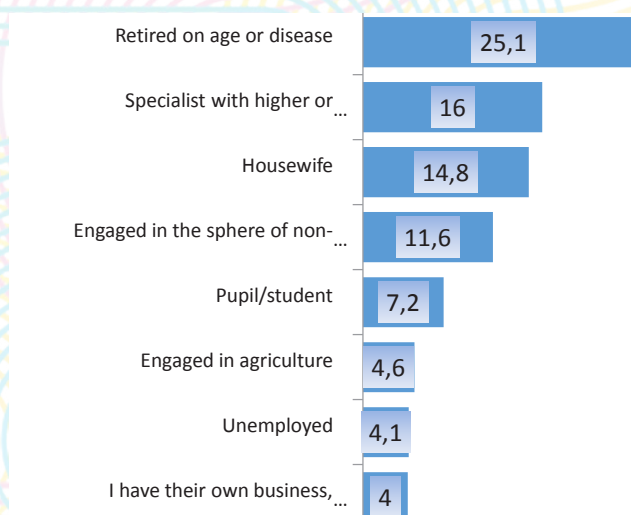
According to the data of the National Bureau of Statistics, the employment rate of women in rural areas in the Republic of Moldova was 49.6% in 2017, with a decrease of 1.9% compared to 2015<sup>18</sup>. Also, we note that the unemployment rate of women in rural areas is higher by 3% compared with the unemployment rate of women in urban areas. This fact is due to several social factors: lack of job opportunities in the community, low level of education/training, overwork in the household, including the childcare, etc.

Of the total 416 respondents employed, most of them are working as specialists with higher/secondary specialized education (16%). 11.6% of the respondents are employed in the non-agricultural area and 4.6% work in agriculture. Only 4% of respondents are entrepreneurs and operate their own business. Few of the respondents have occasional work (2.7%), work abroad (1.7%) or have management jobs (1.2%) (See Figure 17). The level of participation of women in leadership positions is relatively low. On the areas of activity of the respondents on both banks of the Nistru River we find that the women most frequently work in the sphere of services and trade (34.2%), education, culture and technology (25.9%), agriculture (13.8%) and medicine (8.9%) (See Figure 18).

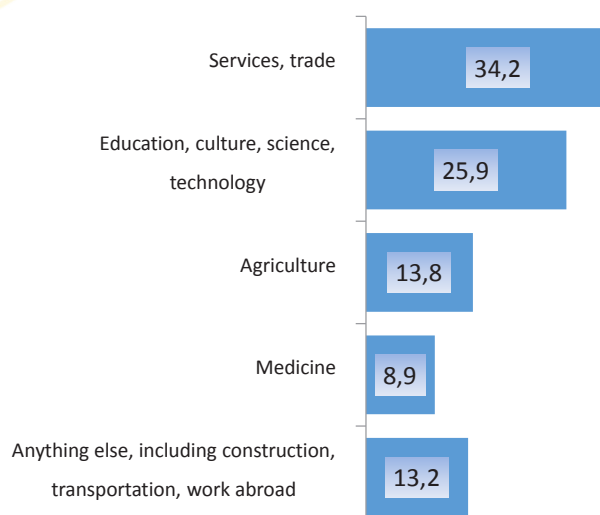
<sup>18</sup> The official data of the National Bureau of Statistics. Gender statistics. [http://statbank.statistica.md/pxweb/pxweb/ro/50%20Statistica%20gender/50%20Statistica%20gender\\_\\_GEN01/?rxid=9a62a0d7-86c4-45da-b7e4-fecc26003802](http://statbank.statistica.md/pxweb/pxweb/ro/50%20Statistica%20gender/50%20Statistica%20gender__GEN01/?rxid=9a62a0d7-86c4-45da-b7e4-fecc26003802)



**Figure 17.** Occupational profession of respondents, field of activity %



**Figure 18.** The main areas of activity of the respondents of the right and left bank of the Nistru River, % N=416



The comparative analysis of the occupational status of women from the right and left bank of the Nistru River proves the following differences: the share of women of retirement age and the share of women employed as specialists with higher education is greater in rural communities of the left bank of the Nistru River, while the share of housewives is higher in localities from the right bank of the Nistru River (See Table 16).

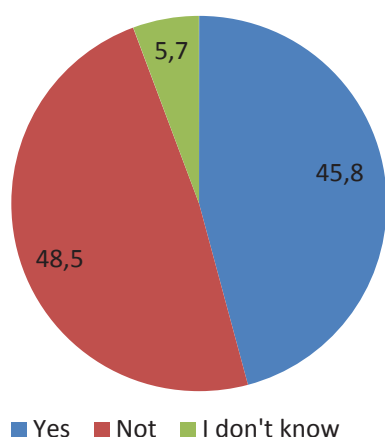
**Table 16.** The occupations of the respondents of the right and left bank of the Nistru, %

	The right bank of the Nistru River N=193	The border area N=75	The left bank of the Nistru River N=220
Retired on age or disease	20.1	22.9	30.6
Specialist with higher or specialized secondary	10.3	2.1	21.4
Housewife	23.1	20	6.5
Employed non-agricultural in the sphere	14.8	21.8	8.3
Student/pupil	5.1	6.1	9.3
Employed in agriculture	3.2	4.3	5.9
Unemployed	3.9	2.4	4.2
Have my own business, entrepreneurs	4.0	2.3	4.0

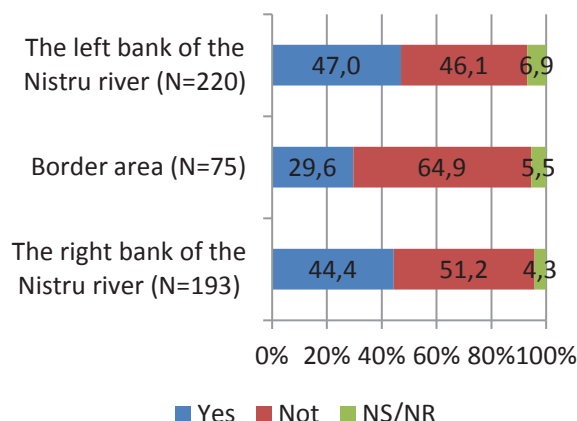
Every second woman (48.5%) employed performs work that does not correspond to the profession obtained in the studies (See Figura19). The share of women in this category is higher in case of women from the conflict area as compared to respondents from other regions.



**Figure 19.** Conformity of the profession held by the respondents with the education received, %N=416

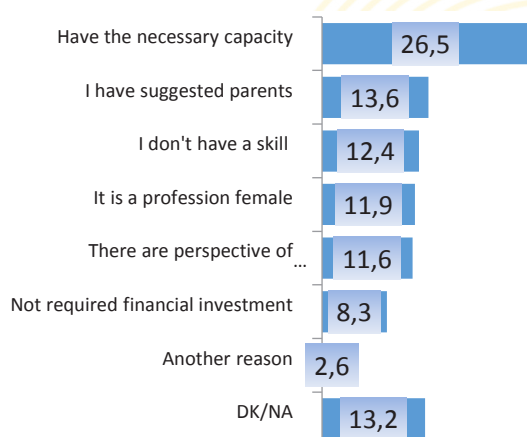


**Figure 20.** The share of women working professionally on the basis of the studies obtained, according to the area of residence, %

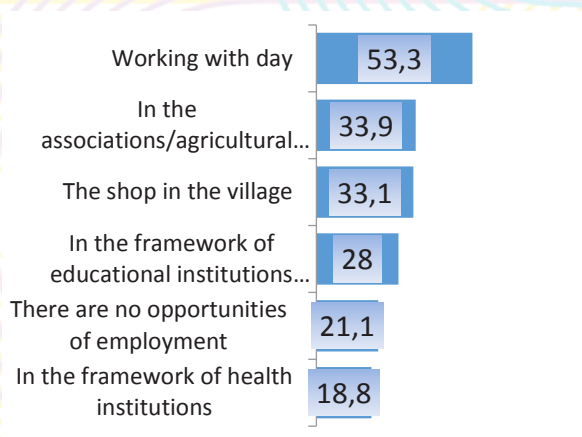


Motivational factors in the choice of their professions are: necessary skills required (26.5%), the influence of family of origin/parents (13.6%), lack of professional skills in case of informal work or from work in the agricultural area (12.4 percent), gender stereotypes towards certain works (11.9%), etc. (see Figure 21)

**Figure 21.** Respondents' motivation for choosing the profession they obtained, % N=416



**Figure 22.** Employment opportunities for women in rural areas on both banks of the Nistru, % N=416



The selection of the skills-based profession is found more in the case of women on the right bank of the Nistru River (35.9%, compared to 18.6% for women on the left bank) and the parents' influence in choosing the profession is higher for women on the left bank of the Nistru River (21% compared with 5% in women from the right bank). The share of women who do not hold a vocational qualification is higher for women from the right bank and the security zone. The selection of the profession on the basis of gender stereotypes is found more in women of the left bank of the Nistru River (See Table 17).



**Table 17.** The main reasons in choosing the profession, according to the area of residence, % N=416

	<b>The right bank of the Nistru River N=193</b>	<b>The border area N=75</b>	<b>The left bank of the Nistru river N=220</b>
Having the necessary skills	35.9	14.1	18.6
My parents suggested	5.0	9.4	21.0
I don't have any skills	19.5	28.2	6.4
It is a feminine profession	9.5	9.6	13.7
There are prospects of employment	12.7	16.1	10.7
Not financial investment required	6.0	7.9	10.4
Another reason	3.8	7.7	1.6

Every second economically active woman states that in the community there are opportunities for day work in the agricultural field, this kind of economic activity being the most demanded (See Table 6 in the Annex). In a smaller proportion, rural women can be employed in nearby agricultural businesses (33.9%), the trade/market sector in the community (33.1%) and public education institutions (28%). At the same time, every fifth woman stated that in the community there are no prospects of employment (See Figure 22). Correlation analysis by region (right bank, left bank and border area) does not reveal any significant differences in employment opportunities.

## 4.2. The income of women

The income of women in rural area is relatively small and does not meet the minimum consumption basket. Every second woman in rural area states that the monthly salary covers only the bare necessities and 16.2% of the respondents stated that the salary does not ensure the bare necessities. The existence minimum of women of working age in villages located on the right bank of the Nistru River constitutes 1701.4 MDL<sup>19</sup> for 2017.

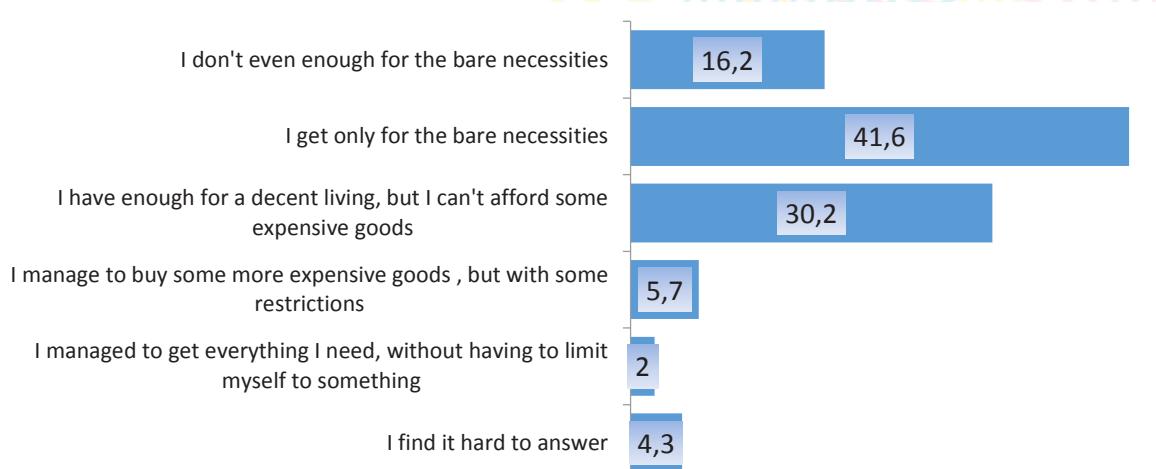
Of the total number of respondents, only 7% say that earnings are sufficient for the purchase of expensive goods and that they can afford to purchase all the necessary things without any limit (See Figure 23). The comparative analysis of women from the right and left bank of Nistru River does not show any differences concerning the way in which the salary income satisfies the women's living needs (See Table 7 in the Annex).

Monthly expenses of respondents for food and housing maintenance reach roughly the average salary per economy, which amounts to 6,507 MDL in 2018, which is about 325 euros, and in the Transnistrian region – 4,270 rubles (about 213 euros). The women on the right bank spend on average 5640 MDL (about 282 euros) per month, compared to the women on the left bank which have a monthly spending budget of 5,242 Transnistrian rubles (about 262 euros). Most expenses refer to purchase of food, house maintenance and purchase of consumables (clothing, household items). Less is invested in the transportation, education and health insurance (See Table 18).

<sup>19</sup> The official data provided by the National Bureau of Statistics; [www.statistica.md](http://www.statistica.md)



**Figure 23.** Ensuring the needs of women in rural areas on both banks of the Nistru River from the salary income, % N=416



**Table 18.** The average amount of expenditure of a household per month, on both banks of the Nistru River

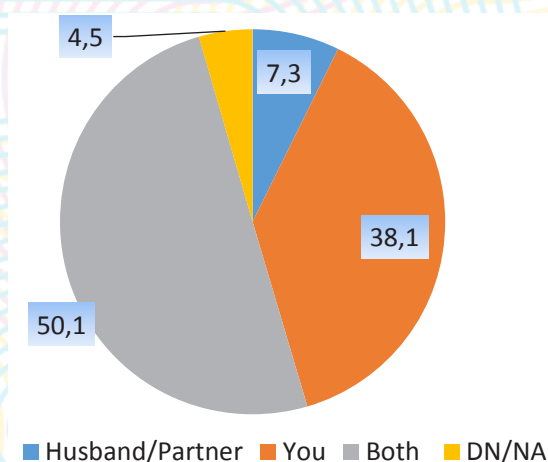
	The right bank of the Nistru River (MDL)	The border area (MDL)	The left bank of the Nistru River (Transnistrian rouble) <sup>20</sup>
Food products (N=493)	1208.44	1419.47	1620.33
Health services (N=432)	580.23	691.65	510.35
Education (N=235)	682.62	810.27	631.14
Expenses for household maintenance (N=462)	1006.43	924.58	712.08
Transport (N=329)	431.58	486.69	507.34
Purchases (Clothes and items) (N=346)	1039.43	1002.25	748.67
Other needs (N=133)	691.31	1062.37	512.09
<b>Total expenditure per month (on average)</b>	<b>5640.04</b>	<b>6397.28</b>	<b>5242</b>

Rural women have an active role in relation to the distribution of the money in the family. In 40 percent of families surveyed, decisions with reference to the distribution of the budget of the household are taken exclusively by women. Half of the respondents interviewed mentioned that the decision on the distribution of the family budget is taken by both members of the family. Only in 7 percent of cases the decision is taken by the spouse/partner. The comparative analysis of the regions reveals the same trends for the population on the right, left bank of the Nistru River and the population from the security zone (See Figure 25).

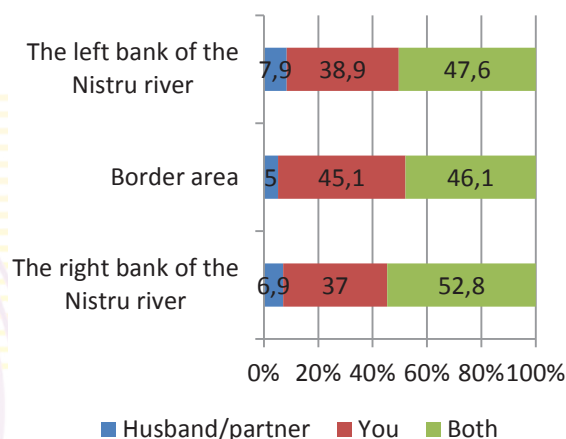
<sup>20</sup> On 29.11.2018, the value of 1 MDL = 0,91 Transnistrian rubles, <http://www.cbpmr.net/?lang=en>



**Figure 24.** Members of the household who decide the allocation of money in the family, %



**Figure 25.** Members of the household who decide the allocation of money in the family, by region, %



The main sources of income of rural women from both banks of the Nistru River are derived from agricultural activities, including income obtained from the processing of the gardens around the houses. Approximately every second woman in rural area earns income from the growing of food products on the territory of the gardens near the house. One-third of women earn public-private salary earnings and every tenth woman earns income from their own business. The percentage of women who work unofficially is alarming (27.2%), which can influence the economic level of women at the age of retirement (See Table 19).

**Table 19.** The sources of income of women's house hold on both banks of the Nistru River, %

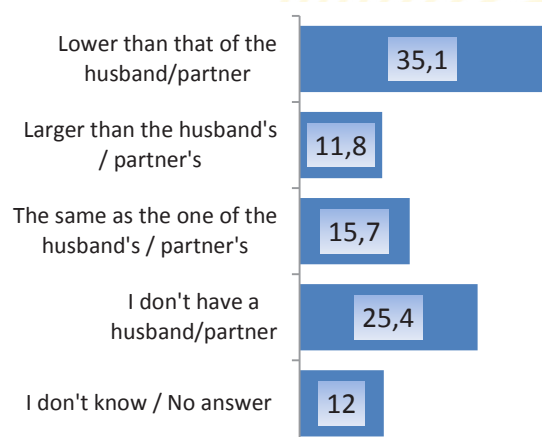
	Yes	The right bank of the Nistru River	The border area	The left bank of the Nistru River
Garden works next to the house	44.3	53.5	42.4	34.9
Salary in the public sector	33.9	36.9	38.6	30.5
Salary in the private sector	26.9	14.6	15.9	38.9
Employment on their own / Entrepreneurs	13.2	11.3	12.4	15.1
Social aid	15.0	15.6	11.0	14.4
Remittances and transfers from abroad	26.1	25.5	23.5	26.9
Gifts and help from relatives	29.7	20.5	17.5	39.1
Pension	29.3	31.4	36.1	25.7
Unofficial work	27.2	15.5	12.8	40.5
Others	2.1	3.0	2.2	1.1

The share of women who have a lower income than the husband/partner is considerable, and constitutes 35.1%. The survey data does not identify any differences for the population of different regions of the country (the right bank of the Nistru River, the left bank of the Nistru River, the border area). Wage differences are also confirmed at the level of the official statistics that showed an increase of the pay gap by 1.9% during the period 2013 - 2017, which implies that the wages of men, in the year 2017, is 13.5% higher compared with the wages of women (see Figure 27).

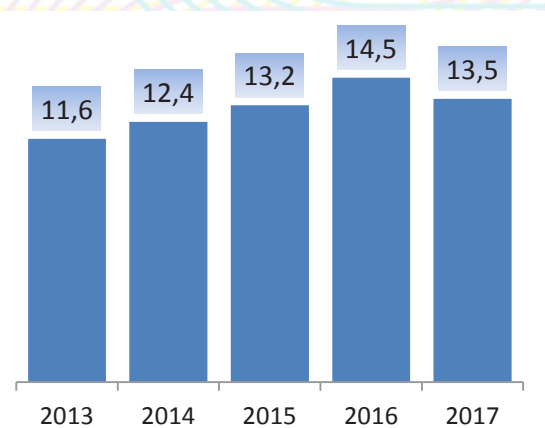


According to the NBS data, the level of remuneration of women is lower than that of men in most economic activities, the discrepancy being from 0.4% in education, up to 41.4% in financial and insurance activities. Gender pay disparities were also recorded in such activities as information and communication (32.8%), art, recreation and leisure activities (18.1%), industry (17.8%), professional, scientific and technical activities (16.1%), health and social care (15.7%), wholesale and retail trade, as well as construction (13.3%).<sup>21</sup>

**Figure 26.** The income of men compared with that of women in rural areas, %



**Figura 27.** The gender pay gap in overall economic activities<sup>22</sup>



### 4.3. Perceptions and risks concerning the employment

The main risks associated with the employment of women in the labour market, in the view of respondents, are related to factors involving their family, including the prevalence of attitudes and stereotypes that assign women a series of roles in the family: *raising children, taking care of the house, preparing food, maintaining the family atmosphere etc.* Approx. half of the respondents engaged in the sphere of labour (45%) say they experience difficulties when combining their professional activity with the family tasks.

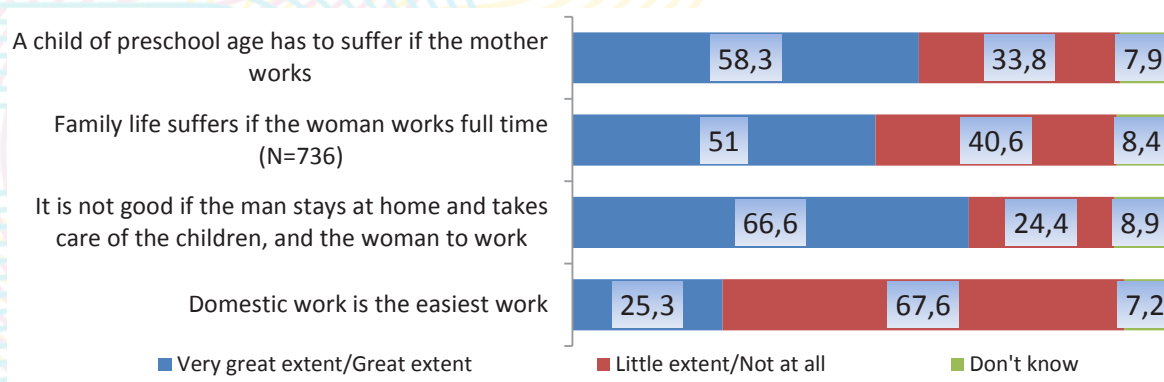
At the same time each of the two respondents, considers that the employment of women affects the main functions of the family (socialization and education of children). Therefore, for 58.3% of women, paid work has a negative impact on children, especially those of preschool age. More than half of the respondents (66%) do not perceive positively the change of gender roles and increased involvement of men in the process of children's growth and care of the household. They consider that *"it is not good if the man stays at home and takes care of the children and the woman is working"* (See Figure 28). The analysis of attitudes of rural women towards family and family roles highlights the gender stereotypes that persist in rural environments and which prevents the social and professional integration of women.

<sup>21</sup> Statistical portrait of women and men in the Republic of Moldova in the year 2016. <http://www.statistica.md/newsview.php?l=ro&idc=168&id=5935>

<sup>22</sup> The official data of the National Bureau of Statistics. Gender statistics. [http://statbank.statistica.md/pxweb/pxweb/ro/50%20Statistica%20gender/50%20Statistica%20gender\\_\\_GEN01/?rxid=9a62a0d7-86c4-45da-b7e4-fecc26003802](http://statbank.statistica.md/pxweb/pxweb/ro/50%20Statistica%20gender/50%20Statistica%20gender__GEN01/?rxid=9a62a0d7-86c4-45da-b7e4-fecc26003802)

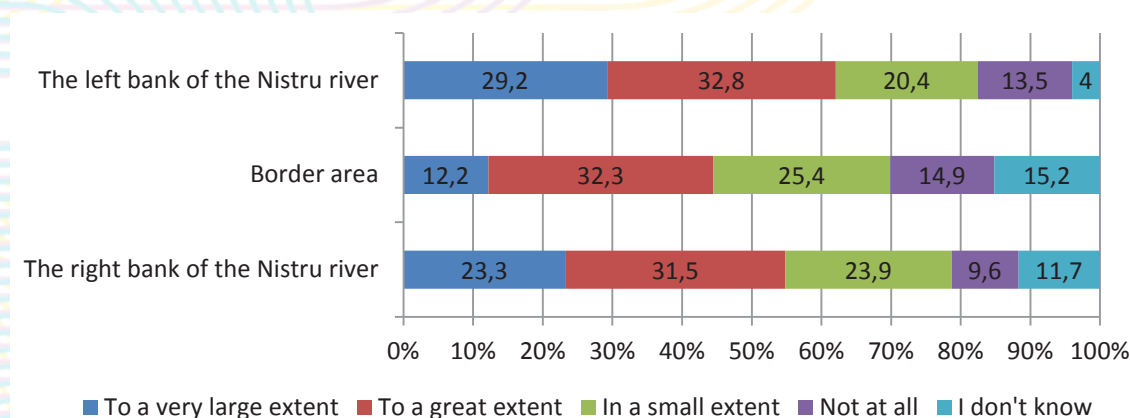


**Figure 28.** Agreement or disagreement with the following statements, %



The analysis of women's perceptions according to the region shows that gender stereotypes persist to a larger extent in the population of the left bank of the Nistru River, compared with the population from the right bank (See Figure 29, Table 8 in the Annex).

**Figure 29.** The agreement or disagreement of the respondents with the following statement:  
A child of preschool age has to suffer if the mother works full day, %

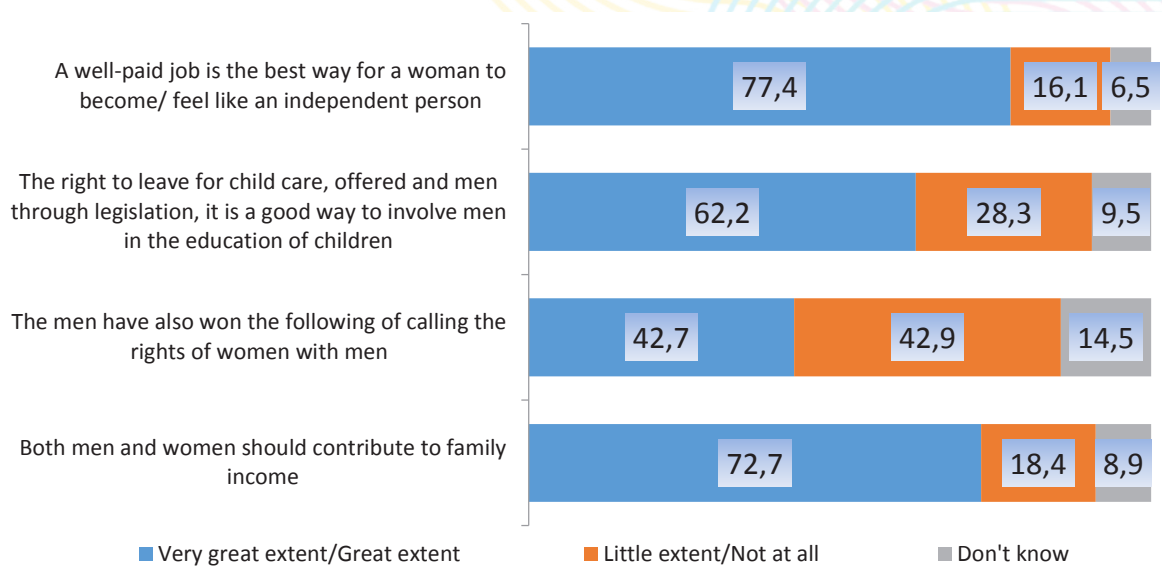


Even if gender stereotypes on the fundamental roles of women are pretty much rooted in rural areas, however, the study shows positive trends for the promotion of equality within own family and in the community, through the participation of women in decision-making positions or in public. The majority of women participating in the study (77.4%), asserts that engaging in the economic sphere gives women economic independence and 42.7% of women believe that men would gain from promoting gender equality of women. The economic function of the family is not perceived as a sole responsibility of the man. 72.7% of women considering that both members of the family, the woman and the man, should contribute to the family income.

The study also highlights changes in the perceptions of women to the task of child care, which is largely carried out by women. Thus, increasing the share of women who consider that the right of paternity leaves for child care, offered to men through legislation, is a positive practice and a good way to involve men in the education of children (See Figure 30).

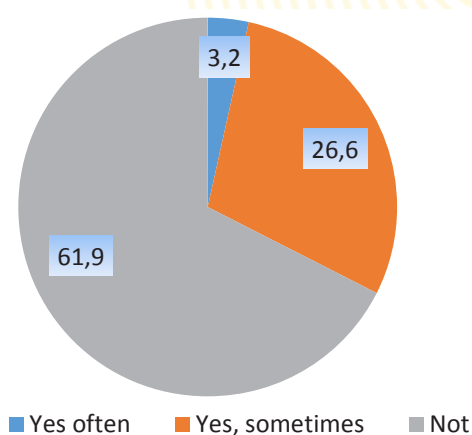


**Figure 30.** Agreement or disagreement with the following statements, %

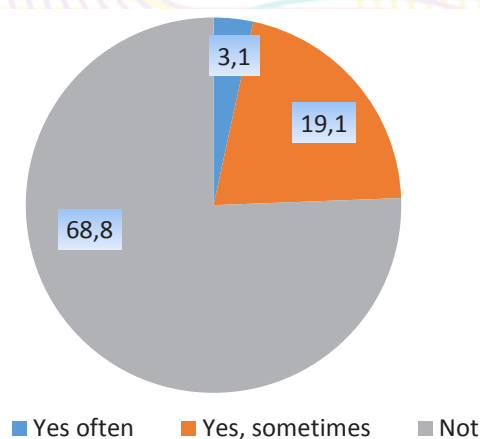


One-third of respondents say they have been confronted professionally with gender-sensitive situations. Thus, 29.8% of the respondents were treated unequally because they are women and 22.2% of employed women say they have suffered professionally for the same reasons. The situations of socio-professional discrimination are felt more by the women from the right bank, compared with women from the left bank of the Nistru River (See Table 9 in the Annexes). The level of reporting cases of discrimination is determined by the level of knowledge of women about the rights they should benefit from. The lesser referral of gender discrimination on the left bank of the Nistru River not necessarily implies the lack thereof. Women do not realize that they have been discriminated against or denied a right by accepting the reality as such.

**Figure 31.** The share of women who have been denied a right or have been treated unequally because they are women, %



**Figure 32.** The share of women who have suffered professionally because they were women (employment or career growth), %





#### 4.4. Barriers to women's empowerment

The quantitative and qualitative data of the research carried out shows that one of the biggest barriers for women in realizing their professional potential is socio-cultural expectations regarding women's role in family life, household responsibilities and care for the children and the elderly in the family.

The participants in the group discussions have evoked situations and concrete aspects of their own lives or lives of other women around them (mothers, relatives, sisters, etc.), that they have encountered and which often had the role of obstacle in the way of self-affirmation, both at the professional level, as well as civic one.

*"I want to tell you that it wasn't easy at all. And not because I am a Roma woman who has become a counsellor, but because I did not know too much at first. Even the counsellors did not seem to be supportive, but because I am a person who wants to do more and I insist to succeed, I was eventually accepted and listened to."* **I\_MD\_femeie lider\_5**

Also experts involved in the research, who in their turn personally know active women involved at the community or national level, have drawn attention to many factors that influence women's decisions or their determination to advance.

*"Even women themselves do not support each other, there are more traditional, more patriarchal villages, where no woman has ever been in any position. In such villages it is very difficult to get a more affirmative idea. And neither their husbands have this interest, the fewer things the wives will know, the more obedient and more laborious they will be - to be docile, to work as maids, not to go to gatherings and meetings - specifically, so most men think, unfortunately. Virtually 80% of women mayors complained about the lack of support from their husbands, their husbands complaining they did not do all the work at home, before entering the office, that they did not leave them something to eat ...". "They have no money. They cannot run their campaign. They are not active members in parties, respectively, the party does not support them, just puts them to work in favour of a male candidate and they of course accept ...". "Some want to be more involved, publicly or politically, but they do not know anything about participation in general, and the political one in particular. In such a case it's easier, provided there is motivation and proper training, good results can be achieved. Often their family does not support them, or the community gossip on them. Many complained about this in our trainings."* **I\_MD\_expert\_3**

The interviewed experts also spoke about the importance of models and trainings, as important aspects in supporting women to overcome the inhibitions imposed by society.

*"In 10 years of political activity I had a lot of challenges. The challenge of being a woman in politics, the challenge of not understanding the ideas and projects that I promoted, not to be supported. Later, I realized that I could have done many more things, if when I got into politics I would have had the chance to be trained by women and men who have political experience. They could have taught me how to negotiate, how to build my arguments better, why stronger coalitions are needed to promote a certain reform or change in society. And then I thought, if I have an opportunity to launch a training activity for training of women who wish to participate in the decision-making processes, then I'll do it."* **I\_MD\_expert\_6**

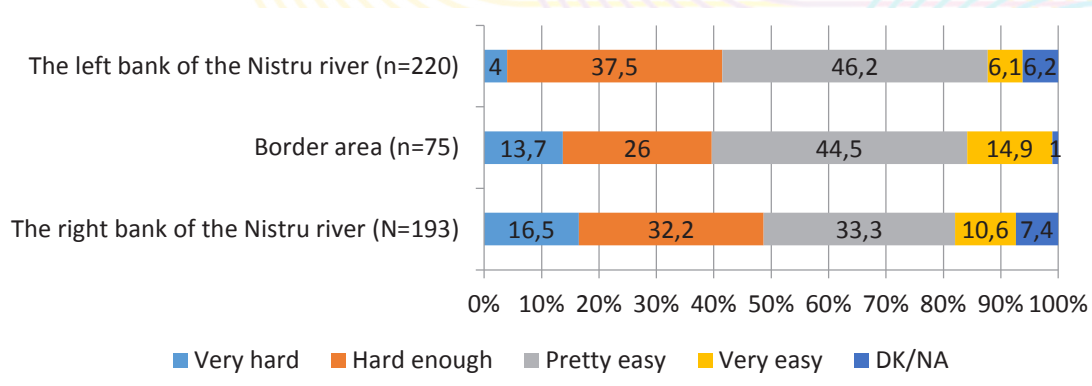
Although the need for women's training programs appears to be more prominent during electoral times, women participating in group discussions have highlighted the role of these types of activities at any time, justifying their visions by allowing them to be more active at community level, but that also would bring some communication and networking chance.



*"I'm up to date with legislative changes and I think they are all welcome, but one can see that the world does not know them, but it is more important for them, than just for the few of us that to know that we have them somewhere out there in some law..." "To develop women who want to be involved, because there are very many good women who maybe would like to, but they are limited, they do not have sufficient self-confidence, but if they could benefit from some training, I think they would manage much better to be involved, in the village, to come to the meetings, to speak, to see each other more often, otherwise only with our home chores we forget even our names"* **FG\_MD\_Femei\_Roma**

Of the women who participated in the quantitative research and who are currently employed (416 respondents) 45% reported that it was "very difficult and difficult enough" to combine work and family life, while 40.2 % said that it was easy enough to do so and only 8.1% chose the "very easy" response. The comparative analysis of the responses of the women in the three subsamples revealed the fact that for more women in the localities on the right bank of the Nistru River (48.7%) it is/was "very hard and tough enough" to combine career with family life, while for more women in the localities on the left bank of the Nistru River (46.2%) it is/it was "fairly easy" to do this, compared to 33.3% of women in the localities from the right bank (See Figure 33).

**Figure 33.** Evaluation of the difficulty of combining professional work and family life, on the subsamples, %



Due to issues associated with the topic of combining professional life with family life, there is a risk that the family in general, and women, in particular, to have lower income. The theme of the common budget in the family was addressed in the group discussions and this has highlighted the fact that few families have this pattern of financial management of partners' income. Moreover, some women participating in the group discussions reported that they often are forced to "hide/keep" certain sums of money to purchase certain things for themselves or children, because of the misunderstandings that arise from this issue.

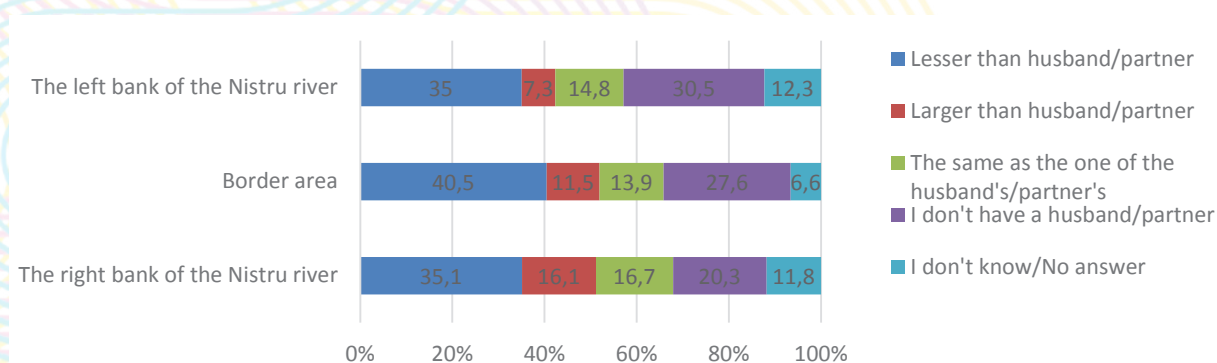
*"Yesterday I was at the market. The prices there are cheaper, food is cheaper, I could buy some cheese, as well as some vegetables...we buy food in Transnistria, many local inhabitants of ours receive pension from Transnistria then with those roubles they go and buy there some stuff. In Chisinau it would cost 100 MDL, but here I can buy the same stuff for 40 rubles. It is cheaper. Clothes, too. Put some money aside and buy something for the kids... as for me ... sometimes yes I can afford it, but it is very rare, only on the 8<sup>th</sup> of March."* **FG\_MD\_Zonă\_Limitrofă**

The quantitative research revealed that 35.1% of women from the general sample consider that their income being lower than that of the husbands/partners and only 15.7% have said that they have the same income with the husbands/ partners. However, a number of women (11.8%) have a higher income than the husbands/ partners.



In terms of the differences between the three subsamples, the women from the localities in the border area evaluate to a higher extent (40.5%) that they have lower income than their husbands/partners. At the same time, the women from the localities on the right bank of the Nistru River (16.1%) and those from the border area (11.5%) believe that they have a higher income than their husbands/partners, compared with a small number of women in the localities on the left bank of the Nistru River, with the same response (7.3%). In the Republic of Moldova the amount of the average monthly salary per economy for the year 2018 is in the amount of 6150 MDL<sup>23</sup> (approx. 358 USD), and in the Transnistrian region is 4270 rubles<sup>24</sup>, which is about 260 USD.

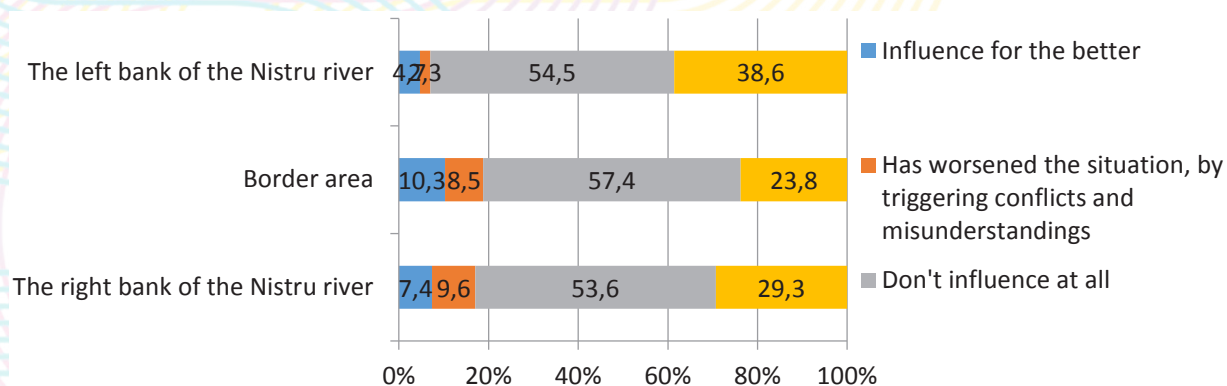
**Figure 34.** The evaluation of women's income compared with that of husbands/partners, by subsamples, %



Being asked to analyse to what extent these differences in income cause certain influences on the couple relationship, the majority of women (54.1%) have specified that the differences in income do not affect at all the relationship between women and their husbands/partners.

Comparative analysis, however, revealed the fact, that fewer women in the localities on the left bank (4.7%) consider that the difference in income influences for the better the couple's relationship, compared with women from the localities in the border area (10.3%) and those from the localities on the right bank of the Nistru River (7.4%). At the same time the number of women in the localities on the left bank of the Nistru River (2.3%) claiming that income gap has worsened the situation, by triggering conflicts and misunderstandings, is lower than that of the women in the border area (8.5%) and the localities on the right bank of the Nistru River (7.4%) (See Figure 35).

**Figure 35.** Evaluating the impact of income difference on the relationship of the couple, by subsamples, %



<sup>23</sup> National Bureau of Statistics informs that in III quarter 2018 the average monthly nominal gross salary was 6 507,3 MDL, registering an increase of 12,0% compared to the third quarter of 2017 (source: [www.statistica.md](http://www.statistica.md))

<sup>24</sup> Information on the website of the so-called Ministry of economy of the Transnistrian region (source: <http://mer.gospmr.org/gosudarstvennaya-sluzhba-statistiki/informacziya/o-zarabotnoj-plate-v-pmr.html>)



Certain barriers were reported in the focus group discussion and interviews in terms of the relations inside the family, in cases when women decide to move forward in the career/public participation/politics.

*"Women have become more powerful, more confident, more autonomous financially, whether they went to training or have grown themselves. But there are risks – there are cases when the family no longer accepts public life/political career of the wife and problems, domestic violence, and even divorce appear. Sometimes as soon as the wife becomes more active, more visible to the public, the husbands feel as if they are threatened. There are cases of women, in the post of mayor, who themselves are victims of domestic violence and do not feel comfortable because the whole village knows, and they are not, in such a case, an example for other women". I\_MD\_Expert\_3*

Barriers faced by rural women in the path of the self-affirmation can be grouped into two categories: (i) **socio-economic** and (ii) **cultural**. The socio-economic obstacles are the following:

- fewer opportunities in finding a job and low level of income;
- poor conditions for the use of knowledge/studies obtained;
- lack of opportunities, technologies, resources, lack of a favourable investment climate;
- the persistence of a male model associated with political and entrepreneurial activities;
- limited access to goods and services, underdeveloped social infrastructure, which would facilitate and enhance the quality of life;
- overload by domestic unpaid work, as a result of the distribution of unfair of gender roles;
- lack of free time for social activities, entertainment and gatherings that are important in the development of individual and emotional well-being.

Among the barriers of a cultural nature are the following:

- stereotypes on gender and the gender roles in the family and society, the persistence of which remains to be a big problem, especially in rural communities;
- cultural norms on the relations of power between women and men in the family, and the community, which maintain the economic and decisional dependence of women, domestic violence, but also limiting the potential of women;
- myths and erroneous views with respect to the reduced abilities of women to lead, to take charge of the business;
- addressing the insufficient equality between women and men, at the community level and the LPA, which is not yet perceived as a fundamental right;
- gaps and flawed approaches in the education of the young generation (the educational system and the media insensitive to the dimension of gender).

#### 4.5. Forms of civic and political participation

Although representing 52% of the population of the country, the women of our country continue to be under-represented in the decision-making structures, both in the community and at the highest decision-making levels (Parliament, Ministries, etc.), and that's because women are still faced with the same situations of disadvantage: lack of financial resources, overwork with domestic duties, lack of opportunities or encouragement in self-affirmation, etc.



Data of the National Bureau of Statistics show that about 50% of women in rural area carried out volunteer work, compared with 43.9% of men who live in the villages. Among women in urban areas this proportion constitutes only 38.4%. The most popular types of volunteering activities are those in community service (59.2%), aid granted to other families in domestic work (31.5%), aid to institutions and organizations of various types in the community (25.4%).

The public survey and qualitative research have analysed the topic of women's participation in community life and society as a whole, and the visions of women in rural areas about their participation in civic life and politics have been analysed both through in the light of previous experiences, as well as the availability and the commitment to engage in the future.

*"I always get involved when it comes to do something, but I don't always have solutions. Sometimes I think that everything stays the same. Although I go and tell the mayor and speak to the councillors, to the social worker. In the most recent case I got involved in a situation of a lady who has 3 children, of which two have some medical issues, so I made a few calls to see where they can in Chisinau to consult with specialists to see what is wrong with the children. With this activism of mine, I do not know what to do, I think I even bother some people ... I am thinking to become a community mediator"*

**FG\_MD\_Femei\_Roma**

In general, active women in the localities on both banks of the Nistru River, as well as in the border area, participating in discussion groups carried out in the framework of the research, pointed out that they feel sufficiently prepared intellectually and psychologically to be actively involved in community life; while women who do not usually get involved have listed a number of limitations that they feel, especially of a psychological and social nature, rooted in gender stereotypes that circumscribe women's participation in the spectrum of domestic responsibilities, and care of children and elderly in the family.

*"There are a few fundamental reasons for the creation of the platform of the civic dialogue, with the participation of women in addressing the practical problems generated by the frozen conflict on the Nistru River, namely: women are a valuable resource – untapped enough for now – in the settlement of the Transnistrian conflict, when having adequate and balanced information, women represent an important agent of change for the better in the conflict resolution process and their role becomes increasingly important in identifying solutions to the problems faced by the members of their families, for both children and elderly, because they know the situation better from the inside."*

**I\_MD\_Expert\_6**

Women participating in the research stated in a proportion of 71.2% that they are informed about the fact that they have the right to participate in public events in the community. The analysis of the subsamples shows that women from the left bank of the Nistru River know about this legal right in a smaller proportion (69.5% compared to 72.8% (the women on the right bank) and 75.3% (those in border communities)).

When asked what kind of actions/activities they carried out last year 74.1% responded that they had not participated. Of all the activities listed, most women (16.9%) stated that they had gone to local gatherings, other 3.2% - engaged in the sanitation activities for the locality and 1.8% - in public actions of protest. Other actions (aid for vulnerable persons, strikes, party activities, complaints etc.) have not been attested in a significant number (under 1%).

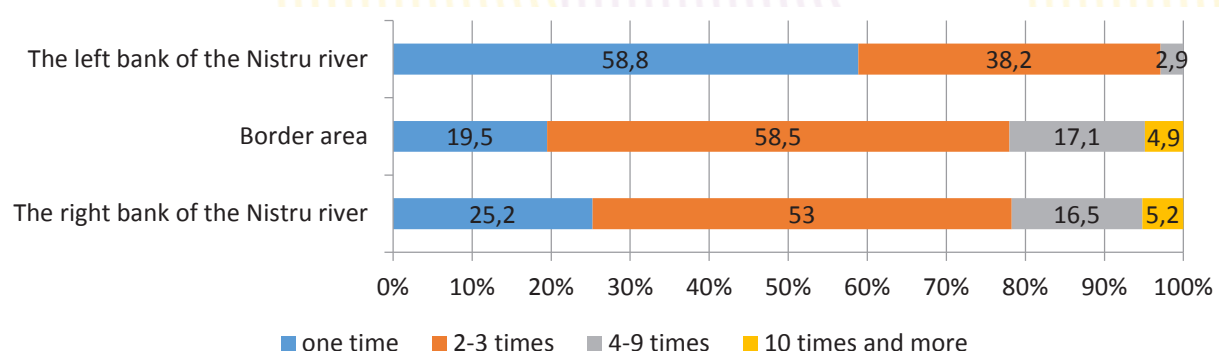
Analysing the frequency with which women participated in this kind of activity, most often women reported that they participated in: activities organized in the framework of non-governmental organisations, the provision of social aid to the vulnerable and local gatherings. The lowest number of women were engaged in the following events: candidacy for leading positions, submission of a complaint, notification of a violation of law, public demonstrations and professional strikes.



**Table 20.** The total number of women who participated in various events at community level

	Total Persons	The right bank of the Nistru River	The border area	The left bank of the Nistru River
Public actions of protest	15	2.7	2.9	0.0
Professional strikes	7	1.1	1.9	0.2
Public demonstrations	5	0.8	1.9	0.2
Local gatherings	183	22.0	19.9	13.2
Submission of complaint at the village hall	26	2.1	1.9	2.9
Reporting of a violation of law	14	0.8	1.5	1.9
Sanitation activities	116	9.2	8.7	13.0
Social assistance to vulnerable persons	74	4.8	9.2	8.9
The maintenance of public order in the community	53	5.6	4.9	4.5
Activities in the framework of non-governmental organisations	12	1.5	1.9	0.8
Activities in the framework of political parties	9	1.1	1.9	0.4
Candidacy for leadership positions	5	0.8	0.0	0.2
Something else	4	1.0	2.9	0.0

The comparative analysis has highlighted some differences: in the actions like "local gatherings"<sup>25</sup> women in the communities on the left bank have reported a lower degree of participation than women in the border area or those from the localities on the right bank of the Nistru River.

**Figure 36.** The frequency of participation in local gatherings, by subsamples, %

The research also looked at women's willingness to participate in similar actions in the future and the results show that women do not have a great interest in them. Thus, most women say that they are likely to participate in the following types of actions:

<sup>25</sup> Participation in other types of community events did not differ significantly and the number of positive answers to certain kinds of activities has been too small to make comparative analysis worthwhile.



- Reporting a law violation (32.8%);
- Sanitation actions for the locality (29.3%);
- Submitting a complaint to the village hall (27.4%);
- Local assemblies (gatherings) (27.4%).

The active participation of women in community life is determined by a number of social factors, interpersonal factor, the educational context and the family. From the standpoint of personal characteristics, we find that women involved in civic education are women that promote fairness, openness to new things, perseverance, critical thinking, etc. Supporting the partner and family of origin is extremely important in the professional advancement and building of self-confidence (See case study: Woman leader of the ethnic minority community).

### Case study: Woman leader of the ethnic minority community

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**Biographical data:** 36 years, married, 2 children (14 years and 9 years).

**Occupation:** community mediator (two years worked as a volunteer in that capacity).

**Personal characteristics:** Fairness, openness towards the new, enthusiasm, emancipated vision about gender relations in the family, perseverance, effective conflict management skills, determination, competitive and innovative spirit, cooperative and inclusive, willingness to work with the youth (role model), high corporate social responsibility, varied interests, reliability studies, power of argumentation, awareness of the role model for own children and for other people, mobilizing other women, courage, financial independence, sociability, critical thinking, self-analysis ability.

**Relational, family and couple factors:** support from husband's side, assertive positioning in the relationship (no submission, no bossy type dominance), acceptance and mutual respect, contribution to the family income, financial management through collaboration.

**Social factors:** encouragement of the teachers in the period of adolescence, encouragement, physical help and the emotional support of the parents, the support of the mayor, the support of the community, groups of friends, collaboration with NGOs and partners in the community, positive public image prior to the decision to be more active in public, social networking, reliable friends and colleagues.

**The context of educational and professional studies:** studies and good jobs, before the current position; additional knowledge of the field in which she operates, orientation towards learning.

**Values and personal priorities:** tolerance and non-discrimination, education, volunteering, autonomous thinking, self-discipline, realizing the potential, helping others.

**Results that maintain the decision of involvement:** social recognition, appreciation by the family and the husband, notoriety, concrete results, satisfaction with the work performed.

**Issues identified throughout the work:** lack of support for women from the LPA and the family, poor motivation, low self-confidence, reduced interest of the Government towards women's issues, discrimination against ethnic minorities, discrimination against women, damaging the public image of active women, gender relations tense in the family, negative influence of other men on her husband.

**Personal challenges:** discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity, difficulties in reconciling professional activity and leadership with family life, husband's jealousy, limited involvement of the husband in the upbringing and education of children, regular fatigue.

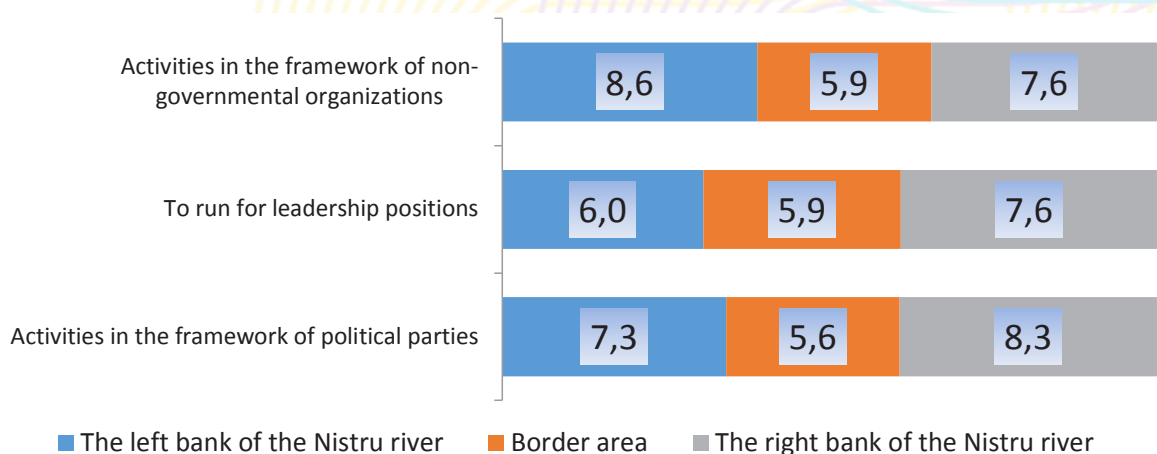
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The survey reveals that fewer women intend to participate in the following actions:

- Activities in the framework of a party (6.4%);
- Candidacy to leadership posts (7.5%);
- Activities in the framework of non-governmental organisations (8.4%);
- Public actions of protest (9.3%).

**Figure 37.** The share of women who stated that are very likely/likely to attend certain types of events, by subsamples, %



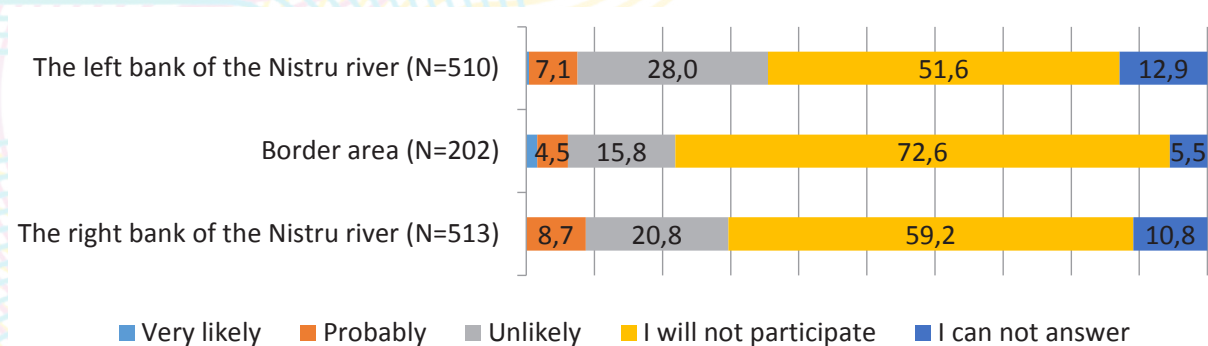
At the same time, the activities in which most women do not intend to participate are the following:

- Candidacy to leadership positions (62.8%);
- Activities in the framework of political parties (60.9%);
- Professional strikes (59%);
- Public protest actions (58.3%) and public demonstrations (58%).

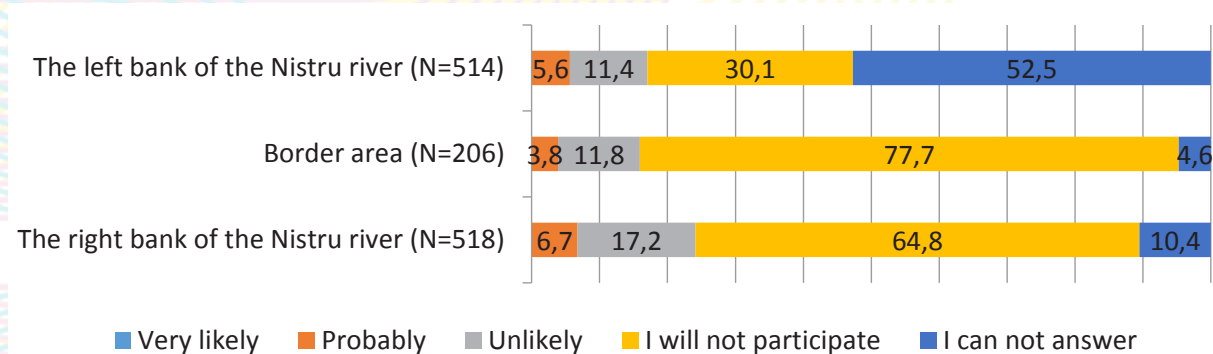
The analysis on the basis of sub-samples revealed the following differences: women in villages of the border area say that they will not participate in the “*public protest actions*” in a higher proportion (66.8%) than those from the localities on the left bank (59.1%) and on the right bank of the Nistru River (57.4%). Also, they support to a greater extent (72.1%) that they will not participate in “*professional strikes*” compared with the women on the left bank (59.7%) and on the right bank (58.2%) of the Nistru River, at “*public demonstrations*” (72.1% versus 57.2% and, respectively, 58.9%) and in the “*local gatherings*” (58.3% versus 34.3% and, respectively, to 48.2%). At the same time, the women from the localities in the border area claim that they will not participate in “*activities in the framework of non-governmental organizations*” and “*activities in the framework of political parties*”, to a greater extent than those from the localities on the left and right bank.



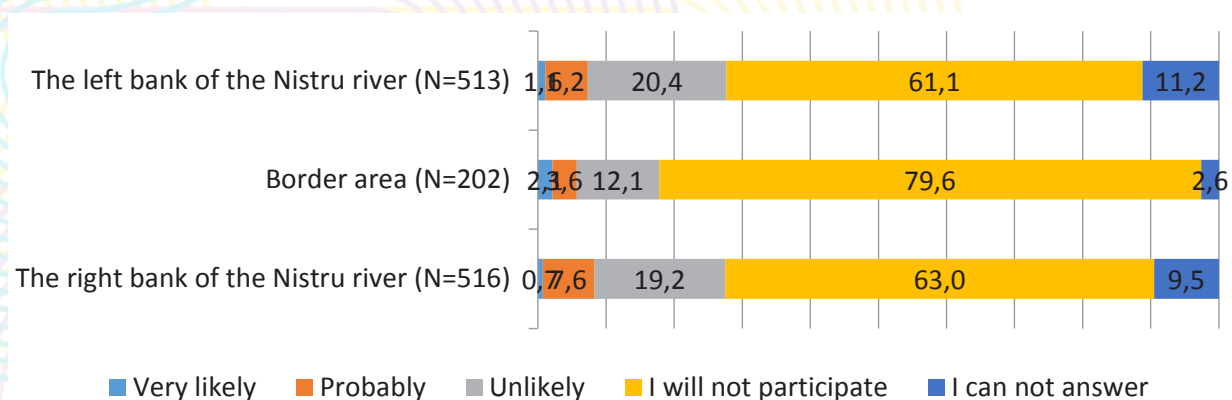
**Figure 38.** The probability of women to participate in activities in the framework of non-governmental organisations, %



**Figure 39.** The probability of women to participate in leadership positions, %



**Figure 40.** The probability of women to participate in activities in the framework of political parties, %

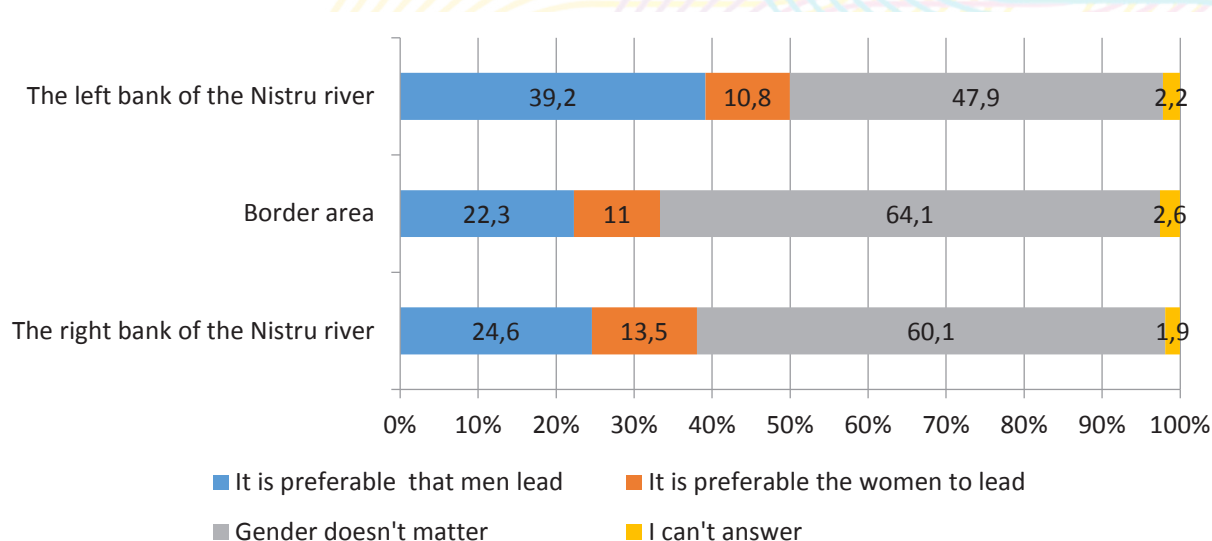


At the same time, women on the left bank of the Nistru River say, to a greater extent (41.4%) compared with those in the border area (16.3%) and those on the right bank of the Nistru River (13.6%) that in the future they are likely to “submit a complaint at the village hall”, as well as “report a violation of the law” (52.5% compared to 16.8% in the border area and 13.4% in the localities on the right bank) and the “sanitation activities of the locality” (42.3% versus 20.2%, and, respectively, 16.9%).



In questions concerning public participation (in administration, politics, work, etc.), traditionalist views were explicitly highlighted. Thus, in the general sample, 31.8% of women in rural areas on the left and right bank and in the border area believe that “it is *preferable for the men to lead*” in public life and 12.1% believe that “it is *preferable for women to lead*”. At the same time, the majority of women (54%), however, believe that “*gender does not matter*” when it comes to leading positions in public life, in administration, politics, workplace, etc.

**Figure 41.** Women’s participation in public life by subsamples, %



### The right bank of the Nistru River

The analysis of the respondents’ answers from the localities on the right bank of the Nistru River, on the basis of other socio-demographic variables, shows that women aged 45-59 years consider in a higher proportion (28.5 per cent) that “*in public life it is preferable for the men to lead*”, and the sub-group of 30-44 years say that “*gender does not matter*” (69.3%). This response is the most frequent option for women with higher education (74.4%), employed or entrepreneurs (65.9%), while women with incomplete education (29.3%) and those who do not work (29.2%) or are temporarily not working (28.5%) and the divorced ones (27.5%) opt for the option “men should be in the leadership posts in public life”. The sub-group of married women in a higher proportion (62%) claim that “*gender doesn’t matter*”.

#### Findings:

- Women who choose the option “In public life, in administration, politics, workplace, etc. it is preferable for men to lead”: 45-59 years, incomplete secondary education, not working or temporarily not working, are divorced.
- Women who choose the option “In public life, in administration, politics, workplace, etc. it is preferable for women to lead”: 45-59 years, general studies/ professional, employed/ entrepreneurs, are divorced.
- Women who have opted for the answer “gender doesn’t matter”: 30-44 years, higher education, employed/ entrepreneurs, are married.



### The left bank of the Nistru River

The analysis of the responses of the women in the localities on the left bank of the Nistru River, depending on other variables, highlighted the fact that women in sub-group of 60+years believe in a greater extent (41.7%) that *"in public life it is preferable for men to lead"*, for the same answer opting mostly women with general education level /vocational level (42.1%), those who do not work (46.4%) and those married (42.5 percent). Among the sub-groups of respondents who opt specifically for the option *"in public life it is preferable for women to lead"*, the majority are women of 45-59 years old, divorced (27.9) and those with higher education. Women with incomplete secondary education form the sub-group with the lowest rate of response (5.9%) in favour of women. The answer *"the gender doesn't matter"* is found significantly more rarely in this question compared with the question about the leadership role of women and men in family life. However, the sub-groups who opt mainly for this answer are the women of 30-44 years (52.6%), with high school/college studies (50.9%) and widowed women (59.2%).

#### Findings:

- Women who choose the option *"In public life, in administration, politics, workplace, etc. it is preferable for men to lead"*: 18 to 29 years and 60 years and over, general school/ vocational training, temporarily not working, are married.
- Women who choose the option *"In public life, in administration, politics, workplace, etc. it is preferable for women to lead"*: 45-59 years old, higher education, not working, divorced.
- Women who have opted for the answer *"the gender doesn't matter"*: 30-44 years, high school/college studies, employed/entrepreneurs, widows.

### The border area

The analysis of the responses of women from different sub-categories, depending on various socio-demographic variables, shows that the majority of women who are of the opinion that *"in public life it is preferable for men to lead"* are in the age category 60+ (32%), and they are the ones with the least responses in favour of women (8%). And the sub-group of women aged 30-44 is the majority to answer *"the gender doesn't matter"* (72.9%), to which opt the women with high school/college (84%) and those with high incomes (69.7%). Women with incomplete secondary education in a higher proportion (35.3%) than other women in the sub-groups on levels of education support the men, while widows (3%) and women who don't work (6.4%) form the smaller sub-groups that support women, these being mainly supported by employed women/ entrepreneurs (16.4%) and divorced women (24.4%).

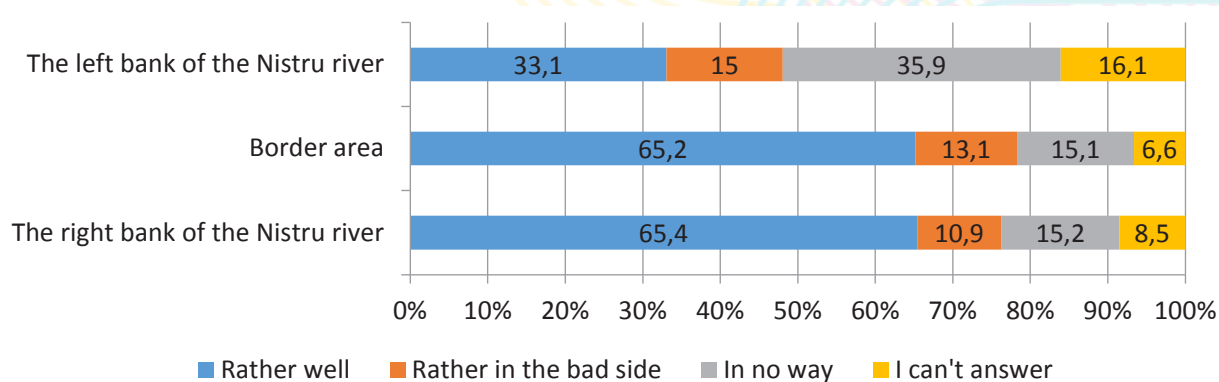
#### Findings:

- Women who choose the option *"In public life, in administration, politics, workplace, etc. it is preferable for men to lead"*: the 60+, incomplete secondary education, not working, are married.
- Women who choose the option *"In public life, in administration, politics, workplace, etc. it is preferable for women to lead"*: 30-44 years, general /vocation school, employed/ entrepreneurs, are divorced.
- Women who have opted for the answer *"the gender doesn't matter"*: 30-44 years, high school/college, temporarily not working, high-income, married or widowed.

When asked if women's participation in political life would influence things for the better or for worse, the majority of women (49.4%) of the total sample opted for the answer *"rather for the better"*, 25.4% believe that *"in no way"* would influence, while 12.9% of respondents are of the opinion that women's participation would influence things for the worse.



**Figure 42.** Perceptions on women's participation in political life, by the subsamples, %



The women in the localities on the right bank of the Nistru River and those from the border area have views with percentage values approximately equal in terms of influencing for the better of things (65.4% and respectively 65.2%), while only 33.15% of the women in the localities on the left bank of the Nistru River are of the same opinion. In these settlements the percentage of women, who believe that women's participation would not influence things in any way is much higher (35.9%) compared with women in the localities on the right bank (15.2 per cent) and the border area (15.1%).

#### Findings for women from the right bank of the Nistru River:

- Respondents who believe that women's participation in political life would influence things *"rather for the better"*: 18 to 29 years (72.8%) and 45-59 years (70.8%), general studies/ vocation studies (68.9%) and higher learning (66.4%), employed/entrepreneurs (70.9%), average income (69.5%), divorced (72.2%).
- Respondents who believe that women's participation in political life would influence things *"rather for the worse"*: 60+ years (12.3%), incomplete secondary education (14.3%), not working (13.7%), low income (up to 13.2%), were never married (15%).
- Women who believe that women's participation in political life would influence things *"in no way"*: 30-44 years (22.1%), high school/college (17.4%), temporarily not working (18.1%), married (16.4 percent).

#### Findings for women from the left bank of the Nistru River

- Respondents who believe that women's participation in political life would influence things *"rather for the better"*: 45-59 years old (37.9%), higher education (39%), unemployed (38.9%), divorced (41.9%)
- Respondents who believe that women's participation in political life would influence things *"rather for the worse"*: 60+years (18.9%), general school/vocational school (18.1%), not working (16.1%), average income (17.2%), married (16.6%).
- Women who believe that women's participation in political life would influence things *"in no way"*: 18 to 29 years (38.7%), incomplete secondary education (49.9%), employed/ entrepreneurs (40.1%), widowed (43.5%).

#### Findings for women in the border area

- Women who believe that women's participation in political life would influence things *"rather for the better"*: 30-44 years (71.2%), higher education (69.4%), employed/ entrepreneurs (69.1%), divorced (75.6%)



- Women who believe that women's participation in political life would influence things "rather for the worse": 60+years (18%), incomplete secondary education (19.4%), not working (15.9%), were never married (26.1%).
- Women who believe that women's participation in political life would influence things "in no way": 60+ years (16%), high school/college (28.2%), unemployed (22.4%), divorced (24.4%).

The qualitative study allowed to highlight several factors that causes/encourages women to participate in the political sphere. One of these factors relates to the support of the family and the support of the partner/husband. Women who enjoy husband, child, and community support are easily succeeding politically. In addition to family factors, personality factors are also important, which highlights the initiative, the desire for self-affirmation, courage, flexibility and persistence, etc.

### Case study: Woman leader in the LPA

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*Biographical data:* married, 2 children.

*Occupation:* mayor for 8 years

**Personal characteristics:** team spirit, wisdom, loyalty, the need for self-affirmation, consistency, vigour, courage, strategic vision, authority, persistence, flexibility, energy, determination and perseverance, the desire to produce changes in the community, the objective to make transparent the activity of LPA, interest to enhance the attractiveness of the village so the people wouldn't leave the village, but to invest, the emphasis on large-scale projects, infrastructure. **Relational, family and couple factors:** the husband (former local councillor), similarities of vision and values, respect and acceptance; support and help of children (already adults).

**Social factors:** the support of the community, the support of the extended family, a developed village, those who left the village support certain projects thanks to the dynamism of the mayor.

**Educational and professional context:** job related to LPA (previously a secretary at the village hall) and previous work in the police, activism increased in the period of youth.

**Values and personal priorities:** common sense, fairness, non-acceptance of conflicts of interest, motivating others, promoting women, continuous development.

**Results that maintain the decision of involvement:** detachment of the views offensive to some, the projects with the community impact, the proximity of Chisinau and other geographical strategic points which provides employment opportunities to the people of the village, plans for the development of the community.

**Issues identified throughout the work:** the lack of communication between different social actors/ community, low involvement of women in the community, lack of interest or courage of women, lack of solidarity between women.

**Personal challenges:** self-doubt shape the decision to run, clashes with the gender stereotypes of the community at the beginning of the mayor career, the differences in political views with some of the social actors, the reconciliation of life of mayor with family life, the spirit of competition of certain social actors or people in the community.

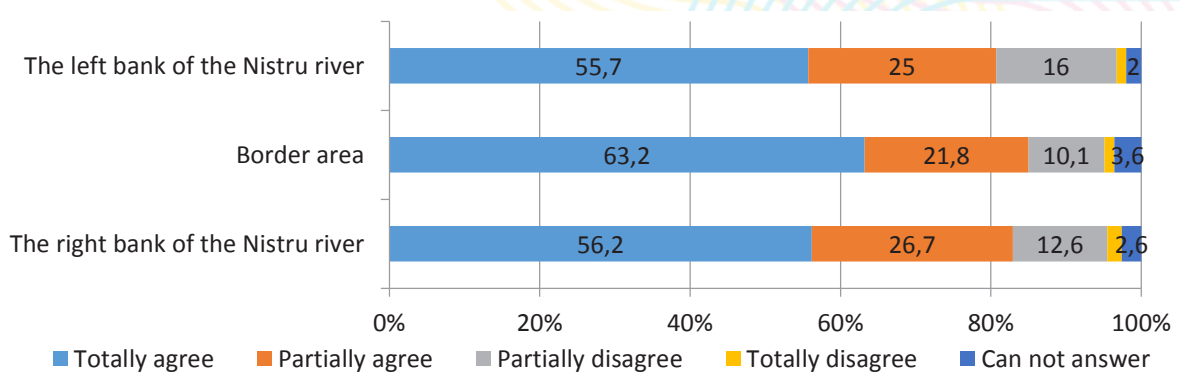
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There are no significant differences between the responses of women to this statement, on the basis of the three replications of the research.

The socio-demographic profile, however, presents several features, namely: women aged 45-59 years



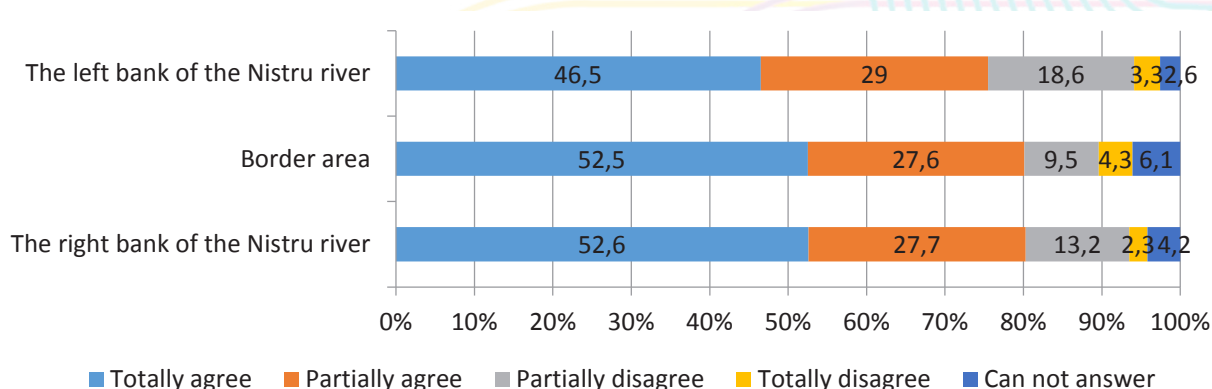
**Figure 43.** Views on the rights of women and men in the community, on the subsamples, %



from the localities on the left bank of the Nistru River, in a greater proportion (22.1%) express disagreement with this statement than any other age group both in the same sub-sample and in the other two subsamples. Also, widowed and divorced women from the localities on the left bank of the Nistru River to a greater extent than those with another marital status, in the same sample, but also from the other subsamples, disagree wholly or partially with this statement.

Women with higher education and those with high incomes constitute the biggest groups that support this statement, in all subsamples.

**Figure 44.** Views on the involvement of women and men in leadership positions and in politics, by subsamples, %



Women in the localities on the left bank of the Nistru River to a larger extent (22%) than women in the other two subsamples (15.5% and 13.8%) disagree partially or totally with this statement.

The analysis of respondents' answers, based on other socio-demographic variables, highlighted the fact that the divorced women from the localities on the right bank of the Nistru and those in the border area have expressed to a greater extent their agreement with this statement, compared to the women from the localities on the left bank of the Nistru River. At the same time, women on the right and left bank sub-samples who do not work temporarily or do not work at all, as well as the divorced women from the left bank of the Nistru River, have expressed more or less the total or partial disagreement on this statement. Perpetuation of stereotypes and traditionalist approaches in Moldovan society, which are more persistent especially in rural areas, by attributing gender-differentiated social roles, keep the women trapped in the household, childcare and elderly care responsibilities and hinder their plenary participation as members of non-governmental, public, political parties, these activities being mainly attributed to men.



## V. WOMEN'S HEALTH IN RURAL AREAS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE NISTRU RIVER

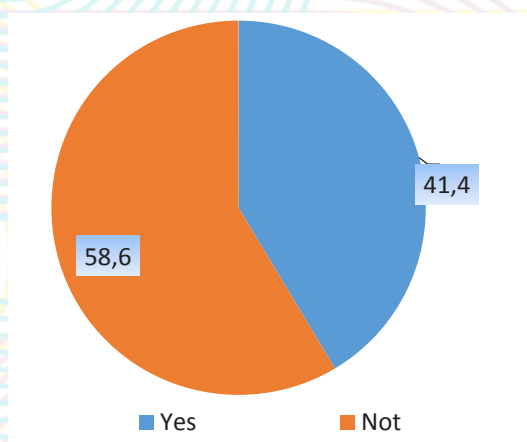
### 5.1. Access to health services

Access to health services was evaluated on the basis of the following indicators: the availability in the community of the Centre of Family Doctors – the availability of the doctor in the community, availability of centres providing healthcare services to the elderly or persons with disabilities, the possibility of purchasing the medical insurance policy if women are unemployed or work unofficially.

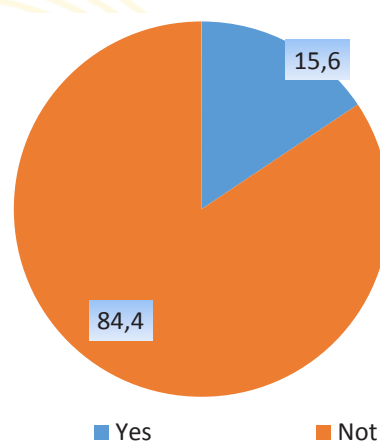
In 60% of the communities studied women do not have access to health care centres/Centres of Family Doctors. This implies that more than half of rural women have to travel to other communities (urban) to have access to health services. The lack of a health care establishment in the community causes a series of health risks due to financial inability or impossibility of the women to go to another community for a medical visit. This situation explains the low rate of visits of rural women to the doctor.

Monthly expenditure of rural households for health services varies from 500 to 700 MDL. The population on the right bank of the Nistru River spends on average 580 MDL monthly, households in the security zone – 691 MDL monthly, and those on the left bank of the Nistru - 510 Transnistrian rubles (See Table 18).

**Figure 45.** The share of women who have access in the community to the Centre of Family Doctors, %



**Figure 46.** The share of women who have access in the community to the Centres that provide health-care services to the elderly %



Of the total number of respondents only 40% have health insurance. Every second woman who does not own a health insurance policy mentioned that she had no money to purchase it. The comparative analysis of the population from the right bank of the Nistru River and the border area doesn't attest any differences in this compartment.

Even if women from the left bank of the Nistru River benefit from a free healthcare system, many of them prefer to treat themselves on the right bank of the Nistru River, purchasing a medical insurance.

The quality of medical services, in the view of participants at the group discussions, is higher on the right bank of the Nistru River, compared with other regions. The technologies available on the right bank are appreciated as being up-to-date, and the ones on the left bank – obsolete. The best quality

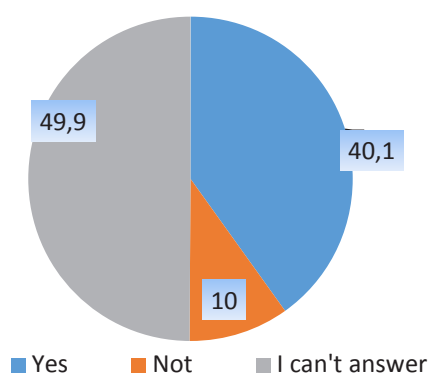


medical services are provided in the Chisinau municipality compared with those at the local or district level. The lack of an efficient health care system in the rural area is determined by the emigration of specialists/doctors to urban areas or abroad. Social assistance services rendered on the left bank of the Nistru River are more focused on the physical fitness of the dwelling and less on the psychological counselling of vulnerable groups.

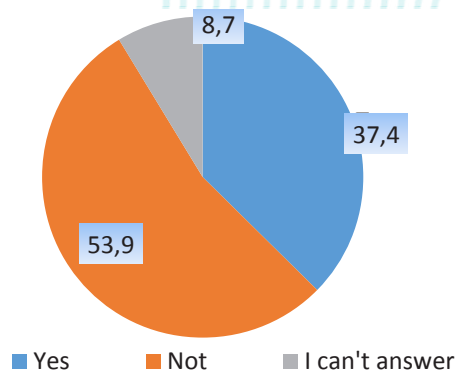
*"Due to the illness I very often go to the doctor, but it's clear that anything else other than referrals to Comrat or Chisinau, I don't get there, not even a good word, a soothing. Usually she knows nothing, can do nothing she and immediately sends me to other doctors, though, even for those referrals I need to humiliate myself, even for a simple blood test. Although, I had an insurance, it has not been of any use to me, I have always paid for everything and still pay back debts for hospitalization, medication and surgery." FG\_MD\_UTAG. "If you have money, then everything is possible, you can buy a health insurance on the right bank of the Nistru River. The clinics, all are provided with necessary equipment, but in Chisinau it is higher quality and sounds safer. In Moldova they always meet us in a more good-natured way than in Bender" FG\_MS\_Centru\_6*

*"When you have a serious health problem we go to treat ourselves in Chisinau and of course they write the prescriptions in Romanian. And when we go to the pharmacy to buy the medications, I was faced with such situations when they wouldn't serve me." FG\_MS\_Centru\_7*

**Figure 47.** The share of women who hold health insurance, %



**Figure 48.** The share of women who do not have health insurance but who have the possibility to purchase it, %



The population in the border area encountered various problems concerning access to health services, due to geographical location. Respondents who currently live in the security zone, who worked on the left bank of the Nistru River were offered the retirement on the left bank, thus, limiting women on the right bank of the Nistru River in terms of social and medical services. This situation caused a good part of the population to get their medical insurance policies on the right bank of the Nistru River. In the absence of financial resources many of the respondents do not have the possibility to purchase the medical insurance policy, determining a very low level of visits to the doctor. Most of the participants in a discussion group stated that they addressed a doctor in the last instance, "when you can't take it anymore, when the disease goes up to the neck/critical condition".

*"I went to the family doctor in the village and asked him to give me a voucher to a sanatorium as this is the case for builders once a year, but the doctor told me that I was a pensioner from Transnistria and refused to give me a voucher to the sanatorium. But what we are to be blamed for if I had worked in a Transnistrian bookshop, which was in Dubasari district and when I went to retirement I was assigned to Transnistria." - FG\_MD\_Zonă\_limitrofă*



The need to access medical services is felt more by the elderly population on both banks of the Nistru River. Financial problems directly affect the health condition of the female population, resulting in an increase of chronic diseases. Most of the participants in group discussions stated that they cannot afford buying the medicines prescribed by doctors, their cost exceeding twice their monthly income. To cope with these situations many of the respondents, who live in the security zone or on the left bank of the Nistru River, prefer to buy medications in the pharmacies located on the left bank, which offers a range of cheap pharmaceutical products. But here, some respondents are experiencing problems and are humiliated. Ignorance of the Romanian language by the population on the left bank of the Nistru is the main barrier in the purchase of medicines on the left bank on the Nistru River, the respondents being urged to buy medicines in pharmacies where Romanian is known.

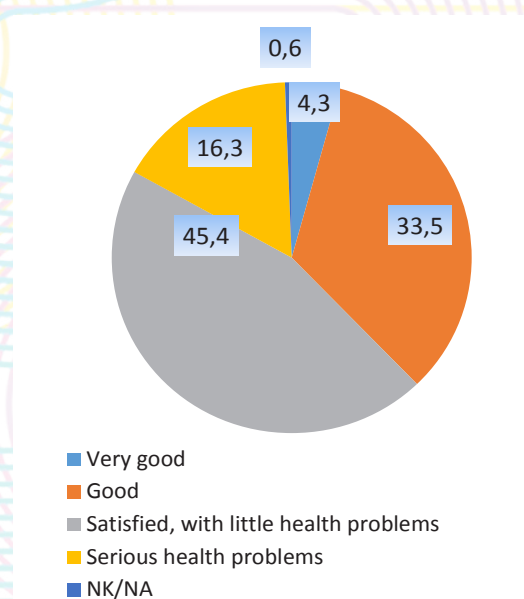
*"In Transnistria, medicines are cheaper, they are Russian, but they are also from Ukraine, and we buy them .... But if you come with a prescription written in Romanian, then the ladies at the pharmacy do not give us the medicines and tell us to go where we got them and buy them ... but what we are to be blamed if the prescription is in Romanian"- MD\_Zonă\_limitrofă*

## 5.2. Practice of addressing to the doctor

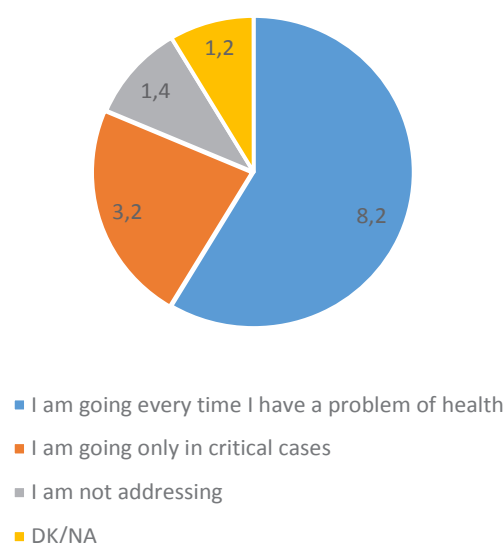
Every second respondent evaluates her own health condition as satisfactory, with little health problems and 16.3% of the women surveyed reported that they are facing serious health problems. However, the level of addressability to the doctor is very low. 50.9% of rural women only go to a doctor in critical cases when the health problem can no longer be treated. The share of the female population suffering from chronic diseases is much higher than the proportion of the male population. Also alarming is the fact that 5.4% of women do not go to a doctor at all to deal with a health problem.

According to the NBS, in 2016 about 40 percent of women said that they suffered from at least one chronic disease compared to 30 percent of men. Statistical data confirms that the prevalence rate of chronic diseases in women is higher than in men (394.4 cases to 311.3 cases per 1000 inhabitants)<sup>26</sup>.

**Figure 49.** Respondents' perceptions of their own health, %



**Figure 50.** Frequency of family doctor consultation, %



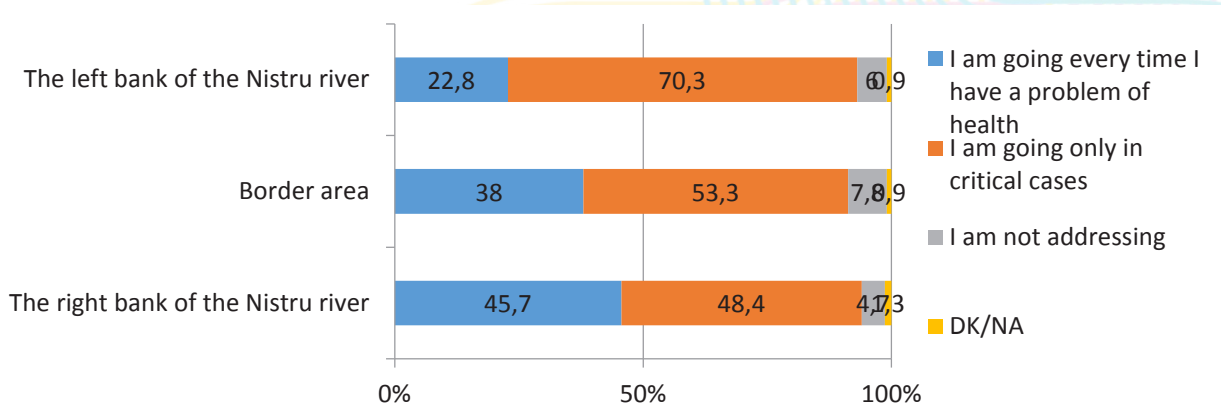
<sup>26</sup> The population's access to health services, Report to 2017.

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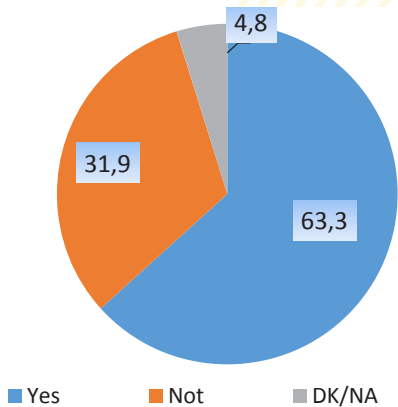
The level of access to medical services is higher for the population from the right bank. Thus, the share of women who addressed to the doctor regularly in case of health problems (45.7%) is higher compared to women of the left bank of Nistru River and the security zone (See Figure 51).

**Figure 51.** The share of women who addressed to the doctor, by regions, %

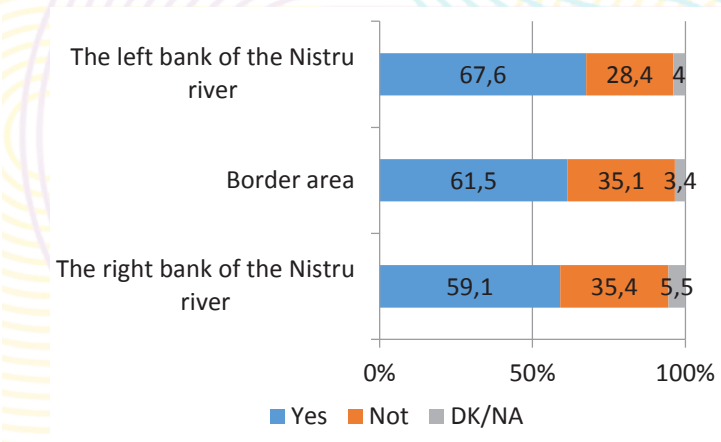


Even if they feel the need to consult a specialist doctor, however, 63.3% of the women interviewed mentioned that during last year they had to abandon this idea to see a doctor. The regional distribution of the respondents certifies that women from the left bank of the Nistru River (67.6%) have experienced to a greater extent such this kind of situation, compared with women on the right bank (59.1%). (See Figure).

**Figure 52.** The share of women from rural areas who had to abandon the idea to see a doctor, %



**Figure 53.** The distribution of women in rural areas who had to abandon the idea to see a doctor, by regions, %



The main reasons which influence the level of addressability to the doctor are: the use of over-the-counter medicines purchased earlier for another health problem (36.2%), lack of financial resources for medical services (19%), belief in the use of naturalistic drugs (9.9%), poor quality of medical services (9.8%) and distrust in specialist doctors (7.9%).

*"I'm going to the doctor when I cannot take it anymore, when I am tired struggling with the disease. ... you think a long time before going to a hospital, anyway, and when you come to a doctor and they*



give you an expensive medical treatment you feel desperate... I did not see a doctor earlier, because I didn't have the money." **FG\_MD\_Zonă\_limitrofă**

**Table 21.** The reasons which led the respondents not to address to the doctor

	<b>Total (N=784)</b>	<b>The right bank (N=309)</b>	<b>The left bank (N=348)</b>	<b>The border area (N=127)</b>
I thought that I would feel better if I used the medication I already had at home	36.2	29.9	41.8	28.9
I considered that I would feel better using natural plants	9.9	12.7	7.3	12.4
I don't have medical insurance	1.9	3.5	0.5	3.9
Family Doctors Centre is far away	2.6	5.5	7.9	8.5
I don't trust doctors	7.9	8.0	13.8	10.6
Medical services are of poor quality	9.8	5.2	16.9	9.3
I don't have money to pay for medical services	19.0	21.5	1.3	14.4
Another reason	2.0	2.8	10.5	4.1



## VI. FAMILY RELATIONS IN RURAL AREAS ON BOTH SIDES ON THE NISTRU RIVER

### 6.1. The distribution of roles in the family

Although in recent decades the Republic of Moldova has implemented certain legal and regulatory frameworks to strengthen gender equality, the population of the country shares, in large part, conservative belief about the role of women and men in society.

Qualitative research has highlighted the fact that the dynamics of gender roles in families and communities is different, on a case-by-case basis, but in general, progress goes beyond women's expectations and wishes.

*"Housework is a serious reason for village women not to get involved so much, but if there is family understanding and it is clear that the woman has potential, I think it is already up to the husband in terms of encouraging his woman, because this factor is very important. Respectively, the same prophylactic measures undertaken with women should be replicated with men. And of course, with children, adolescents - because they are future citizens and depending how open-minded will they be - such will be the participation of women. "I\_MD\_expert\_5*

Communities continue to manifest themselves as largely patriarchal, although some developments have occurred in recent years (increased numbers of women serving as mayors, ministers in Government, etc.). However, gender relations are still traditional, especially within the family, but also in society as a whole (reluctance for women in decision-making positions, distribution of "professions" and "fields" by gender criterion, etc.), which implies the perpetuation of traditional gender roles.

*"Women who are in decision making positions can be a good model, but some are not at all, they even comment sometimes such things as, for instance "I'm a mayor, but I'm not a feminist", these situations are very common, even at public events. Or the feminization of posts - apparently a small, but important problem. Many women mayors, like to be called the mayor and not the woman mayor."<sup>27</sup> I\_MD\_3* Thus, women, in most cases, are responsible for the kitchen, cleaning the house, washing clothes and dishes, as well as the education and care of children and the elderly in the family. Unlike women, men are considered responsible for far fewer issues (home repairs, housework that involves greater physical effort, agricultural work involving the use of agricultural machinery, etc.).

*"I have so much work, I have forgotten what is the colour of the Nistru River... I don't have time to go to the River. I simply don't have time". FG\_MD\_Zonă\_Limitrofă*

*"The kids usually have tasks around house, the girl helping me with my job inside the house, while the boy does the work on the outside. My husband is at work abroad, and we're doing what we can. If I had some free time, I would read or at least watch something on TV, but I don't have time to lose. I have the impression that if it were a 30-hour day I still would not manage everything. A household must be kept permanently and when you have children, you're not thinking about yourself, but about them, how to bring them up healthy and endowed." FG\_MD\_Femei\_Roma*

*"Our family is big, I also take care of my husband's parents, but they are old and cannot work in the household. I do most of the things, because my husband has day work and is not home most of the*

<sup>27</sup> Here we have a word game, in Romanian there is a gender difference between the mayor, male and the mayor, female; in English there is no clear-cut difference.



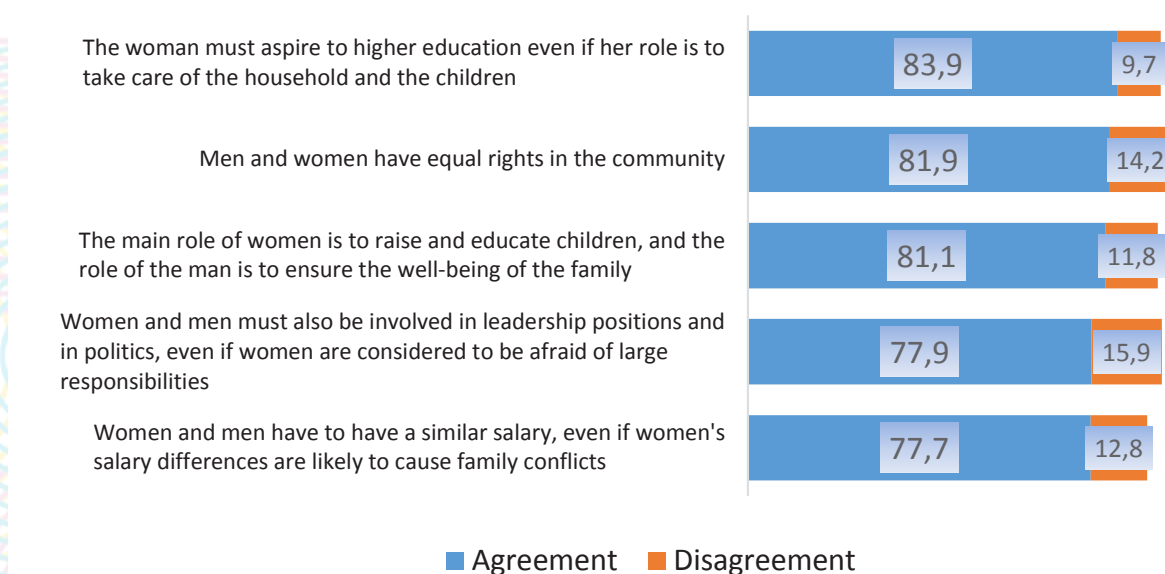
time. If he's home, he takes care of animals, heavier work. I wake up early in the morning to see off everyone to school and kindergarten, then I work and prepare meals for them to be ready when they come home. In the evening I do homework with children and work around the house. If my husband isn't home during the day, I do the harder things, you see, the work is not waiting. (...) I do not have time for me, there's always an emergency, even on Sundays, although we usually don't work, we go to my parents, to help them. In the evening my husband is tired, he watches TV or goes to the neighbours for a glass of wine. I get to see my neighbour girl-friends only on Sunday. It's very difficult to live in the village." **FG\_MD\_UTAG**

Although the opinions shared by the women in the discussion groups focused on more traditional attitudes in the distribution of gender roles, respondents to the survey said in the proportion of 73.5% that *"both parents equally"* in the family must be raising children. However, 24% of the respondents indicated that *"it is more of a mother's task"*, while only 1.3% chose the answer *"more of a father's task"*. The comparative analysis of the three subsamples did not cause substantial differences in this respect.

In terms of other socio-demographic variables women over the age of 60 years, those with incomplete education, without work and with low and average income share more conservative visions on the role of the mother and father in raising children.

At the same time being asked what their opinions and perceptions were about the gender roles in family and society, the opinions of respondents in the general sample were quite similar.

**Figure 54.** Views of women in the general sample with regard to gender roles, %



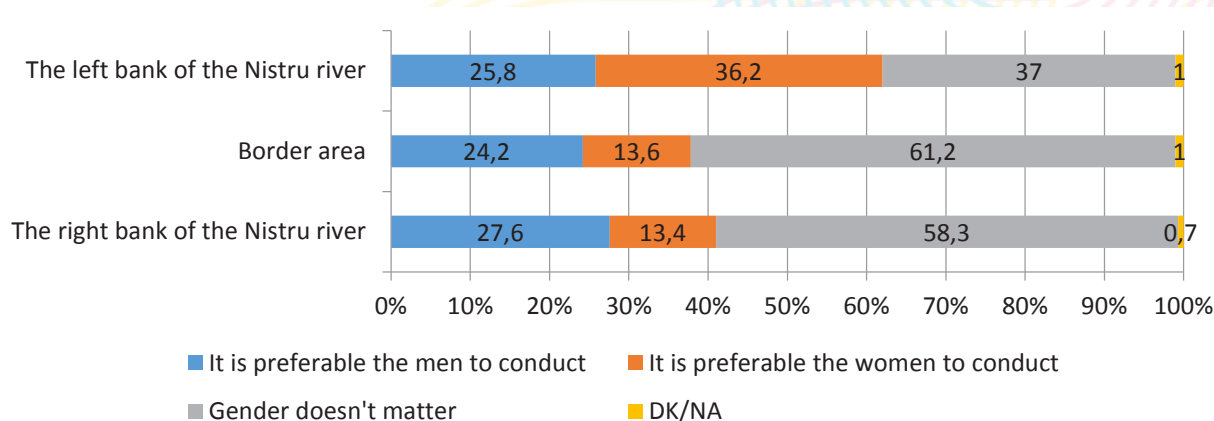
The analysis of the respondents' answers on subsamples highlighted the fact that there are no statistically significant differences between the views of women in the three samples with regard to the topics addressed.

Women's perceptions on women's role within the family, in terms of leadership and decision-making are more emancipated. When asked to answer the question *"Who should lead in the family, the woman or the man?"*, most of the women (47.7%) opted for the answer *"gender doesn't matter"*. At the same time, the percentage of participants in the survey, which believe that in a family *"it is preferable for men to lead"* (26.6%) and those who consider that in the family *"it is preferable for women to lead"* (24.8%) are approximately the same.



The comparative analysis of the quantitative data reveals that women in the localities of the border area and those on the right bank of the Nistru River to a greater extent than those on the left bank of the Nistru consider that *“gender does not matter”* when it comes to the subject of leadership in the family. However, women on the left bank of the Nistru consider to considerable extent that in the family it is preferable for the women to lead.

**Figure 55.** Women’s opinion on the leading role in the family, by sub-sample,%



### The right bank of the Nistru River

The analysis of the respondents’ answers from the localities on the right bank of the Nistru River, on the basis of other socio-demographic variables, shows that of the total percentage of women in the localities on the right bank of the Nistru River, women aged 30-44 years represent the smallest share (9.3%) of those who consider that *“in the family it is preferable for women to lead”*, and this sub-group is even more numerical for the *“gender does not matter”* response. Women with higher education in a greater proportion than other sub-groups believe that *“gender does not matter”*, and women who are not working or temporarily not working is the sub-group the most numerous for the response option *“it is preferable for men to lead.”* At the same time, married women or those with partners in a higher proportion than those divorced or widowed ones have chosen the option *“gender does not matter”*. For the same response opt mostly women with high income (60%). Divorced women consider in a higher proportion than the married, widowed or those who have never been married, that *“it is preferable for the women to lead”*.

- Women who choose the option *“in the family it is preferable for men to lead”*: the 18-29 and 30-44 years old, with incomplete secondary education, not working or temporarily not working, are married.
- Women who choose the option *“in the family it is preferable for women to lead”*: 60+-year old, with general school or vocational education, high-school/college education, employed/entrepreneurs, are divorced.
- Women who have opted for the answer *“gender doesn’t matter”*: 30-44 years old, with higher education, employed/entrepreneurs, are married.

### The left bank of the Nistru River

Analysis of the responses to the same question by women from localities on the left bank of the Nistru River, on the basis of socio-demographic indicators, have highlighted the fact that women of 45-59 years old believe in a higher proportion than other sub-groups of age that *“in the family it is preferable*



for women to lead", compared with the sub-group of women of 60+ (17.8 per cent) from the localities on the right bank, which constitutes the largest sub-group in that sub-sample. The answer "gender doesn't matter" is the option most frequently found in the age category of 18-29 years old (39.8%), but it is still a small percentage, compared with the same category of age in the subsample of women in the localities on the right bank of the Nistru River (58.7%).

Women with high school/college education in a larger percentage (43.9%) than other sub-groups of women with various levels of education believe that "it is preferable for women to lead", in return those with incomplete secondary education, in a greater extent (44.8%) believe that "gender does not matter" in this sense. However, this sub-group is more numeric (35.4%) also for option "it is preferable for men to lead." Women who do not work (27%), those with high income (31.8%) and the widows (30.9%) believe in a higher proportion that "in the family it is preferable for men to lead."

- Women who choose the option "in the family it is preferable for men to lead": the 60+ years old, with incomplete secondary education, not working or temporarily not working, are widows.
- Women who choose the option "in the family it is preferable for women to lead": 45-59 years old, high school/college studies and higher education, temporarily not working, are divorced.
- Women who have opted for the answer "gender doesn't matter": 45-59 years old, with incomplete secondary education, employed/entrepreneurs, divorced, widowed or have never been married.

### The border area

From the sub-sample of women in the border area, the age group of 60+ is of the opinion that "in a family it is preferable for men to lead" (32%), while the option "it is preferable for women to lead" was mostly chosen by women in the age category of 45-59 years old (20%). The option "gender does not matter" was mainly chosen by the women in the age category 30-44 years (76.3%). Women with incomplete secondary education often opt for the answer "it is preferable for men to lead" and those with higher education are choosing more often the answer "gender does not matter" (70.7%). The same response is preferred by women who are temporarily not working (73.8%), who in a smaller number are opting for the answer "it is preferable for women to lead" (9.3%). Women who do not work or those that don't work temporarily, in a higher proportion are opting for the answer "it is preferable for men to lead", the same response being more often, also among women with low income (27.6%) and those that have never been married (34.8%).

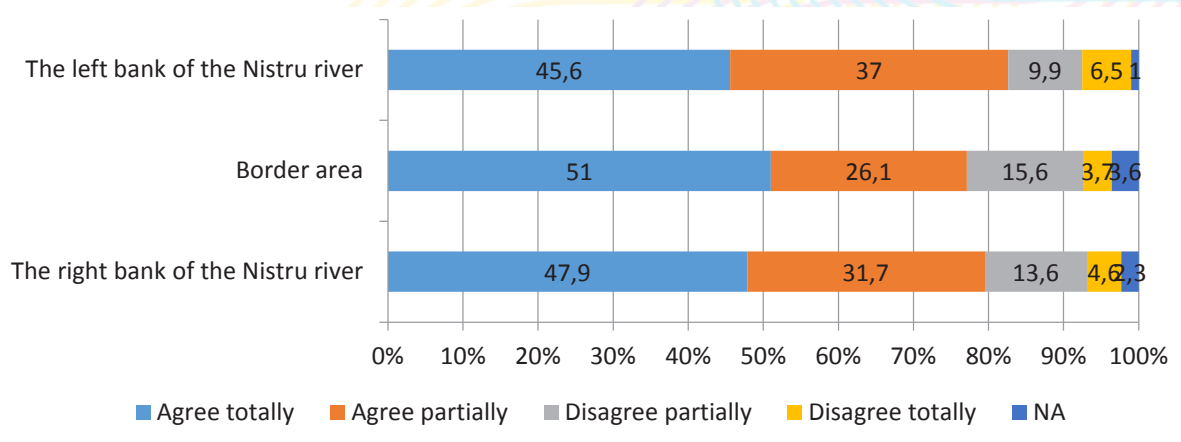
- Women who choose the option "in the family it is preferable for men to lead": the 60+ years old, with incomplete secondary education, not working, are widowed or have never been married;
- Women who choose the option "in the family it is preferable for women to lead": 45-59 years old, high school/college education, employed/entrepreneurs, are divorced.
- Women who have opted for the answer "gender does not matter": 30-44 years old, high school/college education, temporarily not working, married or widowed.

The quantitative research has highlighted the fact that the majority of women in the general sample (81.1%) agree (totally or partially) that the primary role of women is to raise and educate children and the role of the man is to ensure the welfare of the family. However, although they share this stereotyped vision of the reproductive and productive roles of women and men, most respondents (81.9%) consider that men and women have equal rights in the community, while another 77.9% think that women and men have to involve themselves equally in leadership positions and in politics, even if women are considered to be afraid of big responsibilities.



A significant number of respondents (83.9%) totally or partially agree that women are aspiring to higher education, even if their role is to take care of the household and children. At the same time, 77.7% of the general sample of women in rural areas believe that women's and men's salaries should be similar, despite the fact that salary differences in favour of women are likely to cause conflicts within the family. A relatively large group of women voiced their partial or total disagreement (18.7%) with respect to the statement that women and men are equally involved in leading positions.

**Figure 56.** Views on the role of women and men in the family, on the subsamples, %



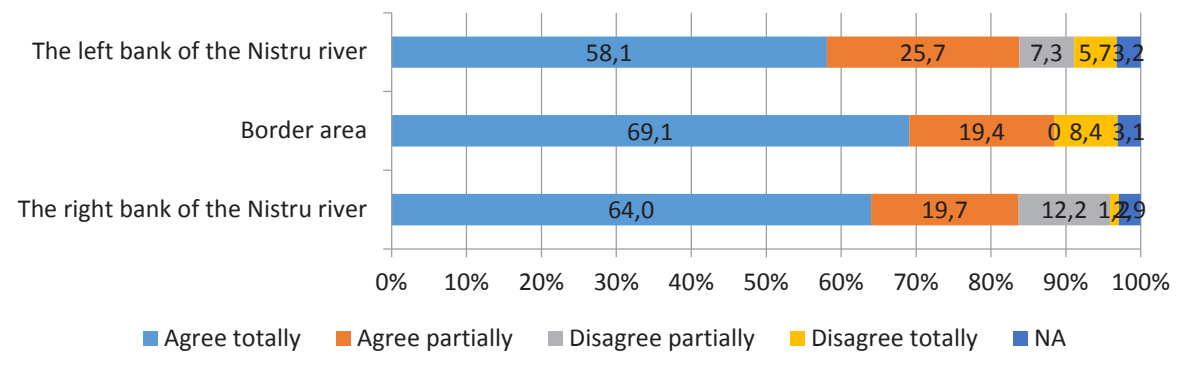
The comparative analysis of the answers of the respondents highlights the fact that there are no statistically significant differences between the views of the women from the settlements of the three subsamples. However, women of 18-29 years old on the right and left bank of the Nistru River are to a greater extent against this statement than other age categories.

At the same time, women with incomplete secondary education in the localities on the right bank and from the border area support to a greater extent this statement. The statement on the role of the woman and the man in the family is largely supported by women who are not working, temporarily not working, in all three subsamples.

Women with high income in all three subsamples express in a higher proportion total or partial disagreement with this statement.

The sub-group of divorced women on the right bank of the Nistru River supports this statement to a larger extent (93.2%), compared with the responses of women on the left bank (80.1%) and in the border area (75.7%).

**Figure 57.** Views on the aspirations of education versus household responsibilities of women, by subsamples, %



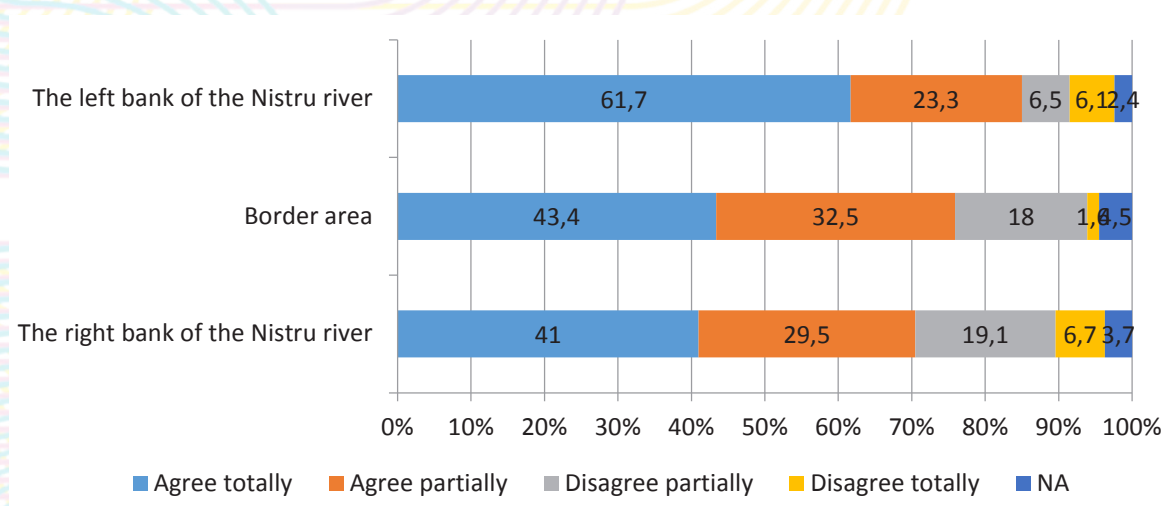


Significant differences in the responses of women in the three subsamples are not found. The analysis on the basis of socio-demographic variables highlights the fact that young women (18-29 years) and those with high school/college studies and with higher education, from the localities on the left and right bank of the Nistru River and in the border area express the agreement to a greater extent than other age categories of sub-samples that they represent.

Women who temporarily do not work and those who have never been married from localities on the right bank of the Nistru River are less likely to completely or partially disagree with this statement than other subcategories of women. In the localities on the left bank of the Nistru River women with higher education are less against this statement, as well as women between the ages of 18-29 from the border area.

On the right bank of the Nistru River women who have never been married represent the sub-group with the highest percentage (94.6%) of the total and partial agreement, while on the left bank it is represented by women with higher education (96.8%), and in the border area – by those with high income (94.5%).

**Figure 58.** Views on similar wages between women and men, by sub-samples, %



A statistically significant difference is the fact that women in the localities on the left bank of the Nistru River express to a greater extent than the women from the other two sub-samples, their total agreement with this statement. Moreover, 85% of the women in this sub-sample express their total or partial agreement on this subject, while women in the right-bank sub-sample share the same opinion at 70.5%, while those in the border localities in a proportion of 75.9%. At the same time, the total or partial disagreement of the women on the left bank of the Nistru River is less significant (12.6%) compared to the opinions expressed by the women on the right bank (25.8%) and the border area villages (19.7%).

The analysis of the data available on the basis of socio-demographic variables highlights the fact that women aged 45-59 on the right bank's villages are to a greater extent (30.5%) disagreeing with this statement than other age categories, both from the sub-sample they represent and from two other sub-samples, namely, higher-educated, high-income and divorced women from localities on both banks of the Nistru River have a higher proportion of agreement with this statement. In the sub-sample of women in the border area, average-and high-income women, as well as those who have never been married, are more in agreement with this statement.



## 6.2. Violence against women

Violence against women, including domestic violence, is one of the most serious forms of violation of gender based human rights in Europe, but due to cultural norms in Moldova, this is held still in silence. Although it is a phenomenon with many consequences on the persons affected and on the family and society in general, stereotypes and prejudices seem to be more powerful than legal rules. Women in Moldova most often do not want to talk about the problems in their family with other people, because many people believe that domestic violence is a private matter. However, violence against women and/or children is also a public matter. This issue affects families, children and society as a whole. In Moldova there are often cases when adults do not understand the real aspects of violence and the extent of the phenomenon, the impact on women and/or children.

*“Yes, domestic violence occurs in every second home (the group laughs), but where would they go and what do the police do? The police initiate a criminal case and require him to pay a sum of money and then he comes home to take these 300 MDL, and, after he returns home, what are you left with? And who wins? The state. But families? You know had this been a situation when this money would not be taken from the child’s mouth, but you know how it works in our case ... The fine is paid from the family budget.” FG\_MD\_Zonă\_limitrofă*

Often people, who initiate a relationship and later get married, do not understand that healthy relationships are not abusive, that family members should respect each other and treat themselves with respect. It often happens that the abuser is justified because he or she is subjected to major stress or is addicted to alcohol, etc. Many times victims of domestic violence phenomenon come to believe not only that beating is natural, but also that they themselves are guilty of these abuses. The myth persists that domestic violence is an accidental behaviour, caused by certain “objective” factors (alcohol, poverty, adultery, etc.), although the NGOs operating in the field promote a discourse to empower the women and clarify the phenomenon in all its aspects (intentional behaviour aimed at establishing and exerting power and control over the abused person).

*“Yes, there are very big issues with domestic violence, including situations of domestic violence after the wife became more publicly/civically and/or politically active. But the people do not talk about it, they all prefer to hide the issue because they are ashamed, because the people are accusing women in most cases and many women, when they hear other people’s comments, of course they prefer to keep it quiet.” FG\_MD\_UTAG*

Another problem is that Moldovan women do not perceive different forms of violence, because the physical form of violence is more understandable to them. Thus, certain myths are also related to forms of violence, often being ignored the economic, psychological, spiritual, sexual forms, etc.

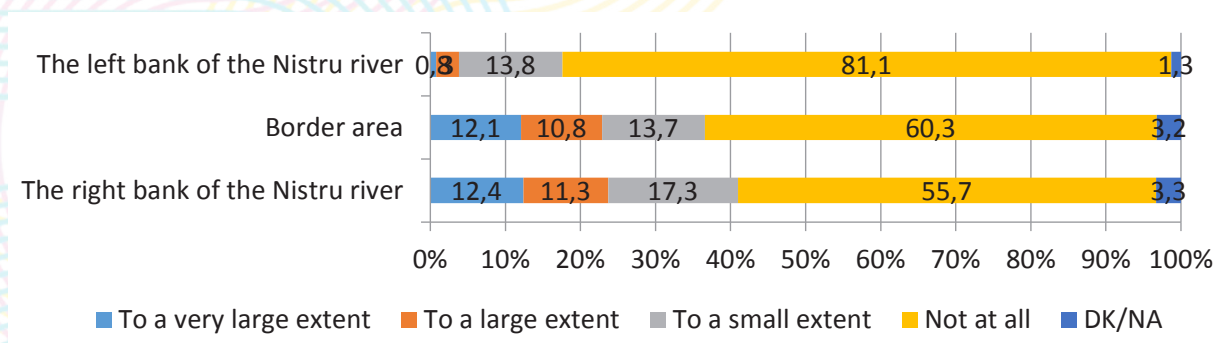
In the quantitative research the respondents from the three subsamples were requested to assess to what extent a number of issues (ex. poverty, limited seats in pre-school education establishments, lack of employment opportunities on the labour market etc.) affect their lives. Thus, the problems that most affect the lives of women in the general sample are the following (in the descending order):

- Poor quality of health services (57.6%)
- Poverty (54.8%)
- Limited opportunities of employment (53.6%)

Only 13.7% of women reported that domestic violence affects their lives, while 68.3% opted for the “Not at all” response. On the contrary, during group discussions and in-depth interviews, the issue of domestic violence was mentioned more often than, for example, the Transnistrian conflict or reduced access to social services, leisure and social activities.



**Figure 59.** Issues that affect the lives of women in rural areas, the general sample, %



The comparative analysis of the answers, by sub-sample, highlighted the fact that women in the localities on the left bank of the Nistru River in a much larger proportion (81.1%) claim that violence does not affect their life at all, compared to women on the right bank of the Nistru River (55.7%), who opted for the same answer, and those in the border area (60.3%). Thus, the women in the localities on the right bank of the Nistru River and those in the localities of the border area report to a greater extent that “domestic violence affects them personally” (23.7% and 22.9%, respectively).

The analysis of other socio-demographic variables shows that women in the localities on the right bank of the Nistru River, who declare themselves the least affected by domestic violence are: women aged over 60 years, with incomplete secondary education who are not working or temporarily not working, have low income or are widowed. Mostly affected by the violence are the women of 30-44 years, with higher education, who are working (employed or entrepreneurs), have high or average income and are divorced or married. The women from the left bank of the Nistru River, who claim that they are not affected by the phenomenon of domestic violence, are women over 60 with high school/ college education, do not work, have high income and are widowed or married have partners. Women who reported violence affecting their lives to a large or very large extent are aged 30-44 years, are educated, employed or entrepreneurs, with average-income and divorced.

The respondents from the localities in the border area who claim they are not affected by domestic violence are young women, 18-29 years, with complete general school/vocational training, not working and with low income, and have never been married. The women in these villages who have confirmed that domestic violence affects their lives are 30-44 years old, with higher education, employed or entrepreneurs, with average or high income, married/with partners or divorced.

The problem of violence against women is on the public and policy agenda of the Republic of Moldova, but at local level the interventions, although much improved, have not yet led to a significant change in the elimination of the phenomenon. Ensuring women’s access from rural areas to social services for victims of violence against women is one of the most pressing problems. The lack of Centres for Assistance to Victims of Domestic Violence and their Children and Centres for Rehabilitation of Family Aggressors, the geographical distance from those existing in the republic and the reluctance of the population towards such services, maintain the problem of violence in rural areas. Such Centres would provide protection to victims of domestic violence, inform the population of their rights and provide legal, medical and psychological counselling. In the case of family aggressors, the usefulness of these Centres is obvious: they would be re-socialized by participating in special counselling programs to reduce, deter and eliminate violent behaviour and to manage conflict situations properly.



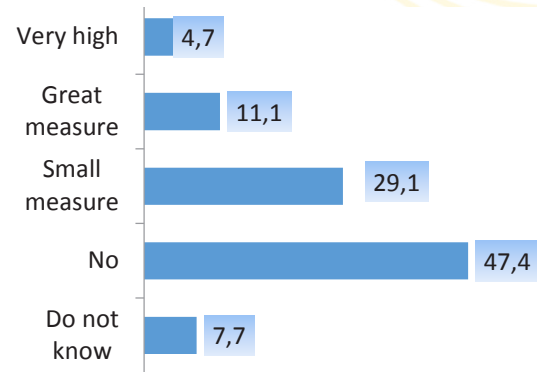
# VII. KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES ABOUT THE UNSETTLED TRANSNISTRIAN CONFLICT

## 7.1. The perceptions of women regarding the unsettled Transnistrian conflict

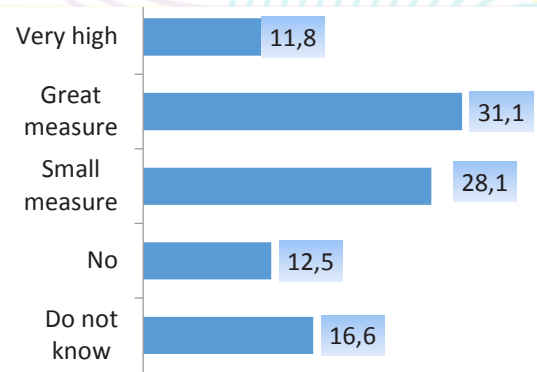
The unresolved Transnistrian conflict is one of the social problems that affect both the life of the respondents, as well as community life in general (See Figure 8). Even if, in comparison with the other economic problems (poverty, bad conditions of living, limited possibilities of employment), the issue of the Transnistrian conflict is much less felt by the respondents (only 21% of respondents), however, the qualitative study allowed us to highlight several negative effects in the social, family compartment, etc.

At the level of perceptions, the unsettled Transnistrian conflict influenced to a very large extent/large extent only 15.7% of the women who come from rural areas. The effects of the unsettled Transnistrian conflict on the population in general is felt by approx. 40% of woman (including the women on the right and left bank of the Nistru River).

**Figure 60.** The impact of the unsettled Transnistrian Conflict on the personal life of the respondents, %



**Figure 61.** The social impact of the unsettled Transnistrian Conflict on the population in general, %



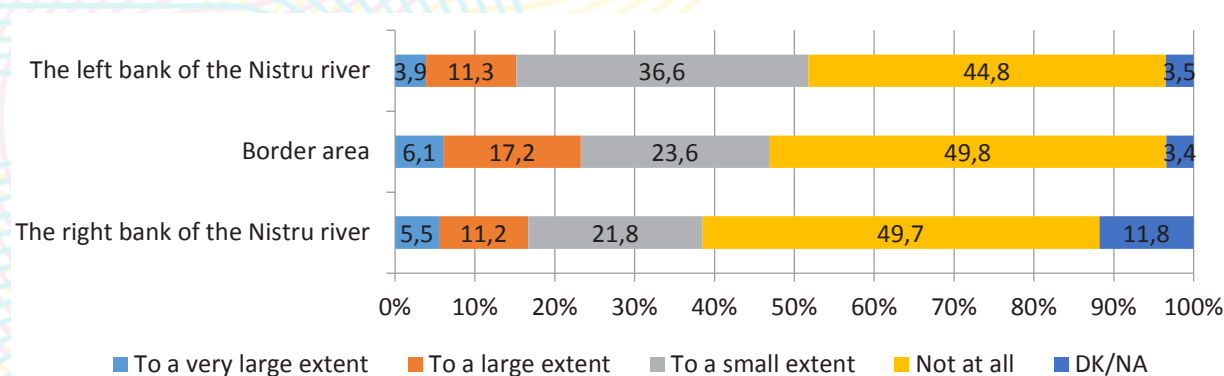
Mostly, the population/women in the security zone/in the immediate vicinity of the security zone have suffered. Every third woman in the security zone said that they had suffered as a result of the unsettled Transnistrian conflict. The female population of the left bank of the Nistru are aware of the problem of the Transnistrian conflict, at least. Only 15.2% of respondents stated that this conflict has directly affected their personal lives.

The Transnistrian conflict has affected the access of a category of the population to medical services from the right bank of the Nistru River. A good part of the population that lives in the security zone, retired on the left bank of the Nistru River, in accordance with the employment record. Even if at the time of the research, they live in the communities from the right bank, they cannot benefit from medical services from the right bank and are forced to go to the hospital on the left bank. This situation displeases a good category of the population in the security zone. Those who have financial possibilities, get the medical insurance policy for the benefit of the medical services on the right bank of the Nistru River:

*“My boy has gone to a doctor with a certificate of residence, but was told that this document is from Transnistria and that’s why they don’t have places for children from Transnistria, even if he lives on the territory of Moldova”* **FG\_ MD\_Zonă\_limitrofă**



**Figure 62.** The impact of the unsettled Transnistrian Conflict on the personal life of women in rural areas, by regions, %



The creation of the border crossing point between the right and left bank of the Nistru River created barriers for the population in the security zone, which gets food/consumables on the left bank. Participants in the group discussions said that because of the low prices for food and clothing, most of those living in the proximity of the communities on the left bank of the Nistru River prefer to buy the necessary things on the markets from the left bank. Thus, they consider that the existence of the border crossing point limits the possibilities of the inhabitants to transport goods/products from the left bank to the right bank of the Nistru River. Women have said that without the consent of the Head of the Local Administration ("Глава администрации" – the phrase used by the participants) "people do not have the right to bring to the territory of the left bank, food in large quantities, repair materials in large quantities, wood from the forest, agricultural products from over the hill, etc." The women participating in the survey said that often the behaviour of the customs officers towards the citizens from the right bank is disagreeable, most of the interviewees feel some emotional discomfort when crossing the customs post in the security zone.

*"They are so strict at the customs there, like we're criminals... the attitude is very ugly. With their inhabitants they behave nicely, but with us... very ugly. I did not expect it to be such a rigorous control, since we said that we were going in only for one day and that today we are returning ... and they told us that today we have to leave the territory ... otherwise they will take us out ... and they looked so ugly at us all ... I felt like we were strangers. And once we went out, there came another customs control, inquiring what we were bringing and stuff... and... they leered at us as if we stole but did not buy the goods ...". FG\_MD\_Centru*

*"Prices are cheaper in Transnistria, food is cheaper ... we buy the products there. There are many residents who receive a pension from Transnistria and those rubles they go and buy products from there. In Chisinau it would cost a 100 MDL, but there I buy the same with 40 Transnistrian rubles" - FG\_MD\_Zonă\_limitrofă*

The relations between the communities on both banks of the Nistru River have not been affected by the conflict. The only discomfort created is the customs clearance between the two regions. Interviewees stated that they have relatives, friends who live on the left bank/right bank and the relationship between them has not changed due to the unsettled Transnistrian conflict.

*"You see that before we used to live as on a single territory, and now it is just the border, but for people as they had been relatives, so it has remained so, nothing has changed. They are friends, godfathers and the way we visited each other, so we still do. It's just politics.... people have not changed in their behaviour, as they used to be in the Soviet Union so, they stayed, with the same attitude." - FG\_MD\_Zonă\_limitrofă*



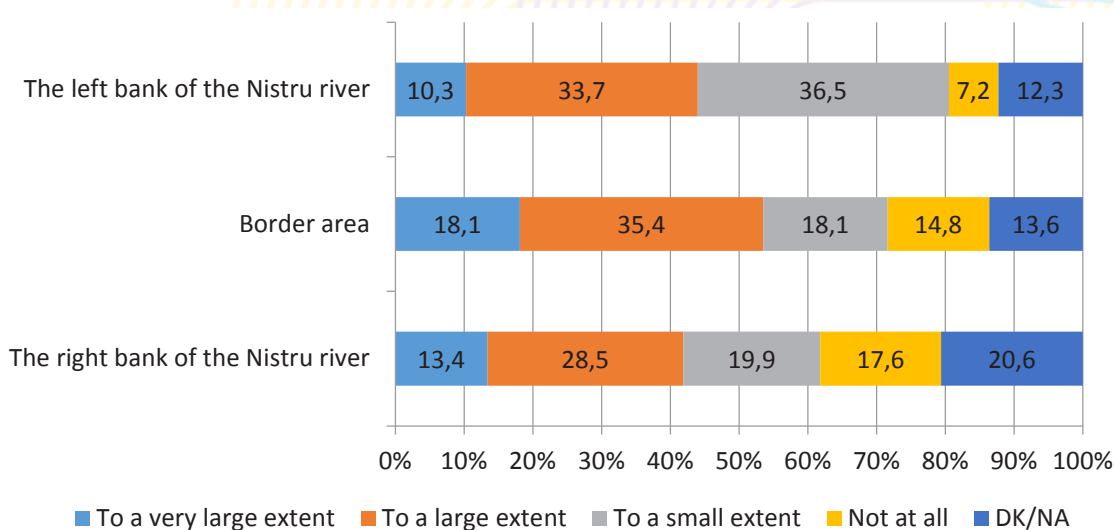
**MD\_Zonă limitrofă.** *“The relations between the relatives have remained the same, better or warmer, we’ve always been family, and we loved one another. But the people there they think we do have some sort of connections... .. when we met with ordinary people with the greatest pleasure we talked and met, and there were no cases of talking badly to one another. Absolutely not... but this thing with customs is the only discomfort. But this did not affect our relations” I\_MD\_APL\_1.* The conflict has not affected the relations between the citizens, the citizens from the rural areas of Moldova do not differ from those in Transnistria. Between us there have never been conflicts. This conflict is an artificial one created for the benefit of someone. It is not hard to recognize to whom...I\_MS\_femeie lider\_11

Some experts believe that the population on the left bank of the Nistru River has suffered much in the wake of the Transnistrian conflict: having limited access to training, quality educational services and health care. All these services are underdeveloped, which negatively influenced the situation of citizens, including women (I\_MD\_expert\_6).

The unsettled Transnistrian conflict has caused, in some cases, the separation of the members of the families who lived in the security zone. These families have lived through emotional stressful states that affected the family lives and the interrelation of its members.

*“After my assignment I went to work in Grigoriopol, because there was no teacher in the village, and there I had been working for 10 years, I had an apartment near school, but there they used the Cyrillic alphabet and that’s why I sent my child to school on the right bank of the Nistru River, where else? And for four years my little baby stood away from me (the interviewer begins to cry) and when I came to visit him he said, “you left me, you left me” I\_MD\_lider femeie\_4.* The regional analysis of respondents’ perceptions of the unresolved Transnistrian Conflict and its social impact attests the same trends: the population in the security zone/border area is the most affected and felt the impact of this problem in the largest proportion; the population on the left bank of the Nistru River in the least proportion thinks that the Transnistrian conflict has a negative impact on the population of the Republic of Moldova. Thus, 36% of the women of the left bank of the Nistru River argue that the level of influence of the conflict on the lives of women and the population in general, is small.

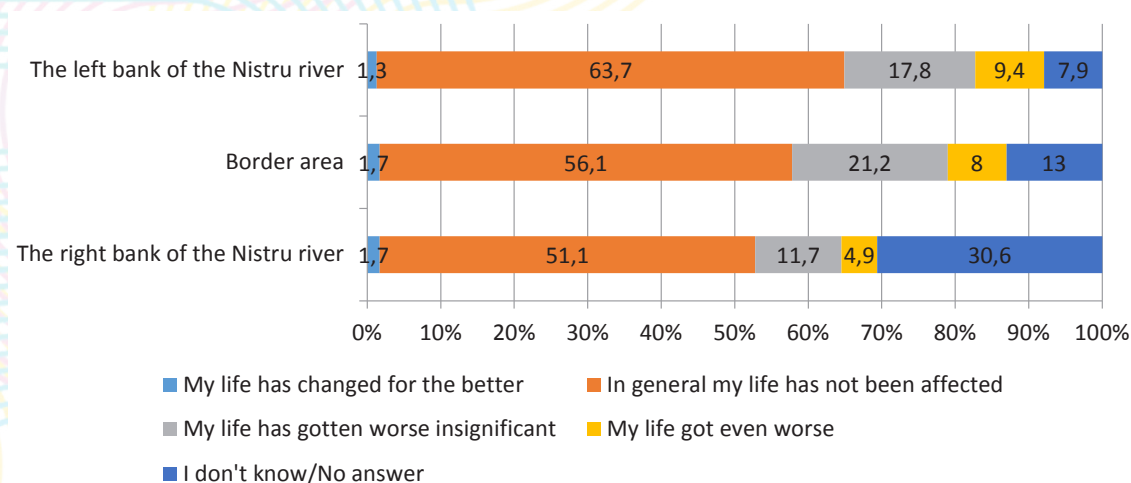
**Figure 63.** The impact of the unsettled Transnistrian Conflict on the population in general, by regions, %



Every fifth respondent (21,7%) states that her personal life has worsened as a result of the unsettled Transnistrian conflict. Women in the security zone (29,2%) and women on the left bank of the Nistru River (27,2%) suffered the most, compared to the women on the right bank of the Nistru.

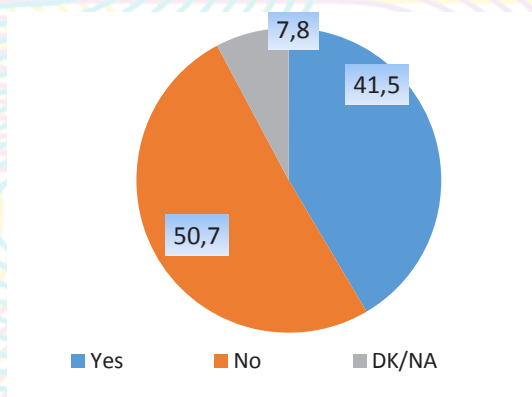


**Figure 64.** The direction in which respondents' life was influenced as a result of the unsettled Transnistrian conflict, %

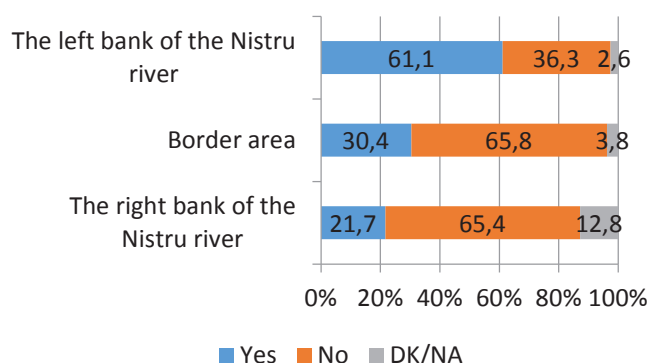


The level of knowledge of respondents about the 5+2 format of negotiations is quite low. Every second respondent does not know/has not ever heard about the format of these negotiations. The most informed are women from the left bank of the Nistru (61.1%) and women in the security zone (30.7%). The level of information regarding the 5 + 2 negotiation format of women on the right bank of Nistru River is the lowest (21.7%).

**Figure 65.** The knowledge of the respondents regarding the format of 5+2 negotiations on the Transnistrian conflict settlement, %



**Figure 66.** The knowledge of the respondents regarding the format of 5+2 negotiations on settlement of the Transnistrian conflict, by regions, %



Of the total number of respondents who know about the 5+2 format of negotiations, 51.3% consider it inefficient (34.1% hardly efficient, and 17.2% not at all efficient). In more weight, this opinion is mentioned by the respondents from the right bank (55.4%), compared with those from the left bank (49.9%).

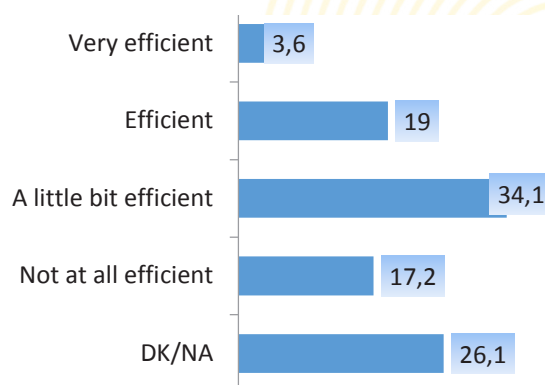
Although the vast majority of those interviewed consider the 5+2 format of negotiations as inefficient, though some experts from the left bank state that some of the results of these negotiations are visible: the possibility for citizens from the left bank to travel with their own cars, the recognition of diplomas etc.



*"We're stuck here, with our registration numbers, you can't cross the border. Better if our status would be a determined one **FG\_MS\_Centru\_6**.*

*"Negotiations are held, but the results are not visible. There is no final decision. Neither Europe, no Russia is oriented to give us a determined status. I think they wanted to give us a determined status, they would have already given it to us. The are no results because both Russia and Europe say that they see us as part of a united Moldova. I don't think that such a small territory can be recognized as an independent country" **FG\_MS\_Centru\_7**.*

**Figure 67.** The vision of respondents on the effectiveness of the 5+2 negotiations format of on the Transnistrian conflict settlement, %



**Table 22.** The efficiency of the 5+2 negotiations format on the settlement of the Transnistrian conflict, by regions, % N=430

	The right bank	The border area	The left bank
<b>Very efficient</b>	6.5	5.5	2.6
<b>Efficient</b>	13.3	9.5	21.1
<b>A little bit efficient</b>	30.6	33.9	35.4
<b>Not at all efficient</b>	24.8	18.1	14.5
<b>DK/NA</b>	24.8	33.1	26.3

The settlement of the Transnistrian conflict will have multiple positive effects on the communication and interrelation of the population on both banks of the Nistru River, on the quality of public services, the economic level and the quality of life in general. More than half of the respondents, states that the settlement of the Transnistrian conflict will ensure freedom of movement across the Nistru of the population of the Republic of Moldova (63.8%), better opportunities for trade and business (56.8%), increased quality of public health services (52.4%), more employment opportunities on the labour market etc.

**Figure 68.** The positive effects of the settlement of the Transnistrian conflict on women in rural areas, %



In a smaller percentage the resolution of the conflict will result in increasing opportunities of education (46.1%), increasing welfare of the population (42.8%), reducing corruption (33.1%), etc.



## 7.2. Practices of communication between the communities on both banks of the Nistru River

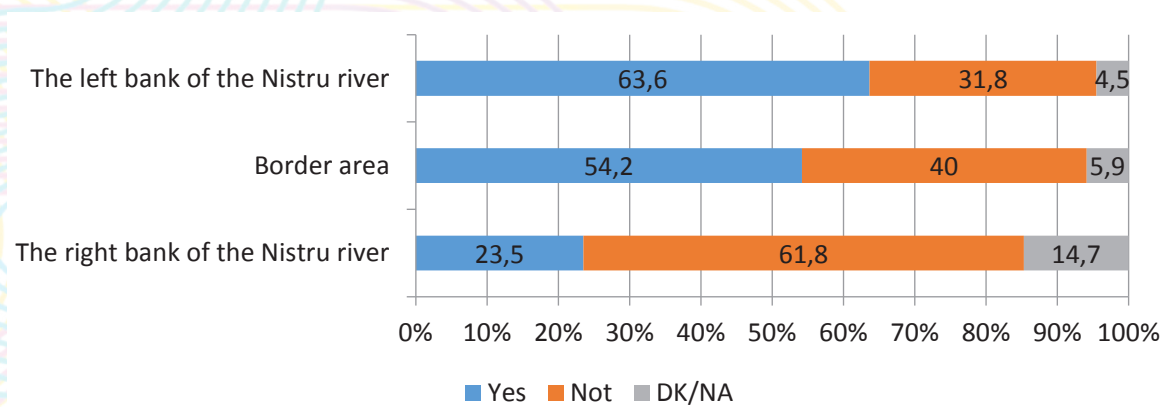
The relations between the citizens of the right and left bank of the Nistru River are characterized in large part as *being good*, with small pressures that are settled in a peaceful way (52.9%), and *very good*, without conflicts of communication (17.7%). The share of respondents who appreciates the relationships between people on both banks of the Nistru River as a tense and conflictual is just 10%.

In spite of the multiple barriers of communication, the study highlights numerous practices of communication and cooperation between the communities on both banks of the Nistru River. The majority cooperate in the framework of various projects/grants for local development. The majority of the communities researched is implementing projects for young people, the development of tourism, development of local culture (I\_MS\_APL\_5).

*"I do not see any links between conflict and entrepreneurial co-operation. In the period of realization of projects in collaboration with the Moldova, we have created more good/friendly relations. Many of us are cooperating so far. Obviously that doesn't influence the bad, we meet at conferences made in Chisinau, and it was a pleasure for us to communicate, even the language barrier was not a problem for us," I\_MS\_expert\_10.*

Every second respondent (43.6%) was, during the last 5 years, in the visit on the territory of the left bank/right bank of Nistru River. Depending on the regions, we find that the women on the left bank of the Nistru River and those in the border area visited in a larger proportion the settlements located on the other bank of the Nistru, compared to the women on the right bank of the Nistru River.

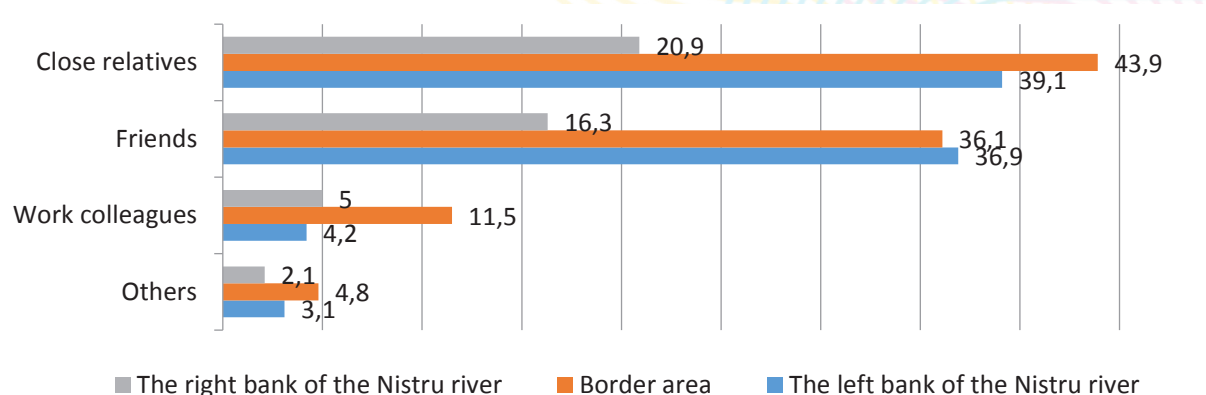
**Figure 69.** The share of women who, over the past 5 years, have visited the settlements on the other bank on the Nistru River, %



Visits to the localities situated on the other bank of the Nistru River were aimed at: *meeting and communication with relatives/acquaintances* (18.1%), *visiting cultural and leisure areas* (10.1%), and, *last but not least, travelling for work* (4.2 %). Data of the quantitative survey found that every third woman has friends (26.8%) and close relatives (30.1%) on the left bank/right bank, which facilitates the communication of citizens on both banks of the Nistru River. Most often the respondents are communicating on the phone, including talks by social networks (31.1%). A part of the rural women, who have relatives on the other bank of the Nistru River, prefer to meet for the holidays in order to maintain relations of kinship/friendship (29.5%).



**Figure 70.** The share of respondents who have relations of kinship, friendship with the citizens on the left bank/right bank of Nistru River, by regions, %



To increase the level of communication between the citizens of both sides of the Nistru River it is necessary to organise various organized group activities, involving both citizens from the right bank, and citizens from the left. Among these we mention: the meeting of the citizens on both banks of the Nistru in the context of group discussions, facilitating the exchange of experience between citizens, organizations and groups of local initiative, increasing the level of communication and interaction between politicians on both sides of the Nistru River, participation in joint events for both sides, etc.

**Table 23.** Activities necessary to be organized to increase the level of communication of citizens on both banks of the Nistru River, %

	General	The right bank	The border area	The left bank
Group discussions between the citizens of both sides of the Nistru River	22.3	25.5	26.5	19.2
Participation in joint events	14.8	12.2	15.6	17.2
The more active and systematic interaction between politicians	11.1	9.0	4.9	13.4
Decision-making by institutions on both banks of the Nistru River, considering the needs of the population	10.6	6.8	8.8	14.5
Exchange of experience between organizations on both banks of the Nistru River	8.7	8.4	9.4	9.1
Else	0.2	0.4	0.4	0.0
I don't know/can't answer	19.6	28.4	22.2	10.6



## GENERAL FINDINGS

### The quality of life of rural women on both banks of the Nistru River

Data of the quantitative survey shows a low level of life quality for rural women. Poverty manifested by economic problems, lack of employment opportunities and adverse conditions of living are the main issues that affect rural women from both banks of the Nistru River. Aspects of family life and personal life are less felt by the respondents.

*Emigration for work abroad* is another problem that negatively affects rural communities. The study found that every third woman wishes to emigrate abroad for work. The problem of the unsettled Transnistrian conflict affects only 20% of respondents, in a higher proportion being affected women from the security zone.

The value system of women in rural areas puts in the first place *the family/family climate, health and material well-being*. Only 10% of women give importance to their *studies/continuous studies and professional affirmation*. The priorities of the value system of women certify attachment to the traditional vision regarding the role of women in the society. Both groups of women, from the right bank and left bank of the Nistru River, follow the same system of values. Family security and political stability do not represent values that are important for rural women.

The social problems mentioned in the survey that affect women in rural areas are: poor quality of medical services or lack thereof, poverty caused by a lack of employment opportunities on the labour market and adverse living conditions. These problems are characteristic to women on both banks of the Nistru River, even if the economic situation of women from the right bank is better compared with the situation on the left bank. Women participating in the survey assessed their income as being relatively small and insufficient to meet the minimum consumption basket.

Despite a great many social problems, women still have a positive perception of the future (61.2%). Many of the problems faced by women are due to traditional stereotypes and the patriarchal vision that women's place is in the kitchen and not where decisions are made. Sometimes, women's issues are not acknowledged by the Local Public Administration (LPA), who should play an active role in supporting women in the community. Even if the LPA does not specifically address women's issues, however many of the initiatives/projects implemented have had a positive impact on the general population, including women: *street lighting, gasification projects of rural communities, creation of Centres for persons with special educational needs within schools, projects for drinking water supply of the rural population, the empowerment of women in the development of their own business, etc.*

The analysis of the living conditions reveals that 90 % of the sample population has access to basic goods, including: electricity, TV, mobile and landline telephony, a refrigerator, a stove connected to natural gas. The majority of respondents (70%) have a computer with Internet connection, have access to water and sewage system, own heating.

The level of involvement of institutions from the community in solving the problems that affect rural women is quite low. Mostly, women are supported by: *Family Doctors Centres (49.3%), educational institutions (43.6 percent), the church (43.4%), day centres for young people (39.9%)*. Most qualitative services provided at the community level are in the opinion of the respondents, as follows: *emergency services (52.9%), educational services (51%), services provided by the institutions of the community*.

### The studies and the level of education of women in rural areas on both sides of the Nistru River

The quantitative research analysed the level of studies and education of women in these groups to elucidate which are the larger groups of women in rural areas, according to the criterion of studies



completed. Thus, in the group of women from the localities on the right bank of the Nistru River, the majority (35.1%) are women with general/vocational school studies, while in the group of localities on the left bank of the Nistru River this percentage is higher and constitutes 41.6%.

In the group of women from the localities on the left bank of the Nistru River there are fewer women with high school/college education, the latter making up only 9.5%, while the number of women with higher education is greater (28.8%). In the group of women from villages in the border area the women who have completed general/professional studies prevails and constitutes 37.3%, while those from the sub-groups with incomplete secondary education and constitutes 22.5%. The women with higher education on the right bank of Nistru River, and those who live in border area is more or less the same, and constitutes 20.6% and, respectively, 22.0%.

In the localities from the border area the number of women with high school and/or college education (17%) is approximately the same as the numbers in the localities on the right bank of the Nistru River (19.7), a big discrepancy compared to the percentage of women with the same level of studies in the localities on the left bank of the Nistru River (9.5%).

The comparative analysis of the level of studies on subsamples of the three categories of localities has revealed a few peculiarities. From the data available in the research it is attested that among the total sample with the three sub-samples, the largest group is the group of women with vocational and incomplete secondary education and the smallest group consists of women with master's and doctorate studies, on the one hand, and those with no studies or incomplete primary education on the other hand. At the same time, the percentage of women with incomplete higher education (bachelor's degree) is approximately the same in all three groups of women. In the group of women with general/vocational school studies, as well as with complete higher education, most women originate from localities on the left bank of the Nistru River, and constitutes 70.4%.

Although women involved in the quantitative research do not have the highest level of education, 58.7% of respondents consider that higher education would improve their lives, while only 12.9% do not see a link between the level of education and the quality of life. However, the percentage of women who believe so is the lowest in the localities on the left bank of the Nistru River (50.3%) as opposed to those in the localities on the right bank (66.7%) and in the border area (64%).

The interviews and discussions in groups, both with women actively involved, and those who do not engage in the life of the community in which they live, have highlighted the fact that women in rural areas give great value to education; the majority of them arguing in favour of supporting their children to continue education, in spite of the economic problems of the family. Some respondents assessed the level of women's studies as a go card in life, even if they did not get to work after completion of education due to lack of opportunities in the village, their chances at self-affirmation would have been higher.

In exchange, women with a low degree of participation seem to be more sceptical to continue their studies or participate in courses of professional requalification, invoking in large part the lack of employment opportunities or low wages.

### **Employment of rural women on both sides of the Nistru River**

According to the survey, half of the women interviewed are not employed and every fourth woman is retired due to age or health condition. Low level employment is determined by the lack of employment opportunities in rural areas on both banks of the Nistru River.

The survey shows that women working in rural area are mainly employed in public institutions from



the community (village hall, school, kindergarten) and in agriculture. Every second female participant in the study (48.5%) is occupied with activities that does not correspond to the profession obtained on the basis of studies. In the opinion of respondents, the main factors in choosing the profession are the skills that they have and parents' influence on their educational decision. Women participating in the study assess their income as being relatively small and insufficient to meet the minimum consumption basket. Every second woman in rural area states that the monthly salary covers only necessities and 16.2% of the respondents stated that the salary does not cover the basics.

Monthly food and house maintenance costs for the respondents reach approximately the amount of an average wage, which in 2018 constitutes 6,507 MDL<sup>28</sup> (about 325 euros), and in the Transnistrian region 4,270 rubles<sup>29</sup> (213 euro). The women from the right bank spend on average for monthly consumption 5640 MDL (282 euro), compared with women on the left bank, which have a monthly spending budget in amount of 5242 (262 euro) Transnistrian rubles.

The main sources of income for rural women on both banks of the Nistru River come from agricultural activities, including income obtained from the processing of the gardens around the homes. The share of women who earn less than their husbands/partners is considerable, and constitutes 35.1%.

*The main risks associated with female employment in the respondents' view are family factors, including the prevalence of attitudes and stereotypes that attribute to women a number of family roles: raising children, caring for the home, preparing food, maintaining the family climate, etc.* One-third of respondents say they have been confronted professionally with gender-sensitive situations. Thus, 29.8% of the respondents were treated unequally because they were women and 22.2% of female employees say they have suffered at their workplace for the very same reasons.

The quantitative and qualitative data of the research shows that one of the biggest barriers for women in realizing their professional potential are the socio-cultural expectations regarding women's role in family life, household responsibilities and care for children and the elderly in the family. Participants in group discussions have evoked situations and concrete aspects of their lives or the lives of other women around them (mothers, relatives, sisters, etc.) that they have encountered throughout their lives and often have played an obstructive role in the way of self-affirmation, both at professional and civic level.

The barriers faced by rural women in their self-affirmation are (i) socio-economic (reduced opportunities to find a job and low income, poor conditions for the use of their knowledge/education, lack of opportunities, technologies, resources, lack of a favourable investment climate, persistence of a male model associated with political and entrepreneurial activities, etc.), and (ii) cultural (gender stereotypes, cultural norms on power relations between women and men in the family, myths and erroneous opinions about women's reduced capacity to lead, take care of business, etc.).

The public and political participation of women can be summarized in the following activities: activities organized within a non-governmental organization, followed by the provision of social assistance to vulnerable people and local assemblies. The lowest number of women participation related to the following events: candidacy for leading positions, submission of a complaint, reporting of a violation of law, public demonstrations and professional strikes. A vast majority of women (71.2%) are not informed that they have the right to participate in public events in the community. A possible solution for this state of affairs could be the development of projects in this region by NGOs and development partners, as well as the LPA commitment to inform citizens.

<sup>28</sup> National Bureau of Statistics informs that in III quarter 2018 the average monthly nominal gross salary was 6 507,3 lei, registering an increase of 12,0% compared to the third quarter of 2017 (source: [www.statistica.md](http://www.statistica.md))

<sup>29</sup> Information on the site provided by the so-called Ministry of Economy of the Transnistrian region (source: <http://mer.gospmr.org/gosudarstvennaya-sluzhba-statistiki/informacziya/o-zarabotnoj-plate-v-pmr.html>)



### The health of women in rural areas on both sides of the Nistru River

More than half of the women in rural areas do not have a Centre/Centres of Family Doctors that provide health services in their community and the share of those who have health insurance is just 40%.

In the view of participants at the group discussions many of them prefer to purchase the medical insurance policy and to benefit from medical services on the right bank of the Nistru River. Women in the security zone, who retired on the left bank of the Nistru River, have most problems in accessing medical services.

The need to access medical services is felt more by the elderly population on both banks of the Nistru River. More than half of the female population visit doctors only in critical cases, when “the disease is already in the throat”.

The main reasons which influence the level of visits to the doctors are as follows: use without prescription of medicines previously purchased for another health issue (36.2%) the belief in the use of naturalistic drugs (9.9%), poor quality of medical services (9.8%) and distrust in specialist doctors (7.9).

### Family relations in rural areas on both sides of the Nistru River

Although in the last decades the Republic of Moldova has implemented certain legal and regulatory frameworks for the purpose of strengthening gender equality, the population shares mostly conservative beliefs about the role of women and men in society. Communities continue to manifest mostly in a patriarchal way, although certain developments have been recorded in recent years (increased number of women in positions of mayors, Government ministers, etc.). However, the relationships between genders are still traditional, especially within the family and in the society in general, (reluctance towards women in decision-making positions, the distribution of “professions” and “areas” on the grounds of gender, etc.), which also involves the perpetuation of traditional gender roles.

Thus, women, in most cases, are responsible for the kitchen, for cleaning the house, washing clothes and dishes, as well as the education and care of children and the elderly in the family. Unlike women, men are considered responsible for far fewer issues (home repairs, housework that involves greater physical effort, agricultural work involving the use of agricultural machinery, etc.).

Women's perceptions with regard to the role of women in the family from the point of view of the leadership and decision-making ability, are more emancipated. When they were requested to answer the question “*Who should lead in the family, the woman or the man?*”, most of the women (47.7%) opted for the answer “*gender doesn't matter*”. At the same time, the percentage of participants in the survey, which consider that in the family “*it is preferable for men to lead*” (26.6%) and those who consider that in the family “*it is preferable for women to lead*” (24.8%) is approximately the same.

Comparative analysis of quantitative data reveals the fact that women in villages from the border area and those on the right bank of the Nistru River to a greater extent than those on the left bank of the Nistru River consider that “*gender does not matter*” when it comes to the subject of leadership in the family. However, women on the left bank of the Nistru River consider in a significantly higher proportion that in the family it is preferable for the women to lead.

The quantitative research has highlighted the fact that the majority of women in the general sample (81.1%) agree (totally or partially) that the primary role of women is to raise and educate children, while the role of the man is to ensure the welfare of the family. However, while they share this stereotyped vision on the roles of reproductive and productive characteristics of men and women, the majority of respondents (81.9%) believe that men and women have equal rights in the community, while others



77.9% believe that women and men must also be involved in leadership and political positions, even if women are considered to be intimidated by large responsibilities.

### **Violence against women**

Although it is a phenomenon with multiple consequences on the victims and on the family and society in general, stereotypes and prejudices seem to be more powerful than legal rules. Women in Moldova most often do not want to talk about the problems in their family with other people, because many people believe that domestic violence is a private matter. Thus, only 13.7% of women reported that domestic violence affects their lives, while 68.3% of respondents opted for the answer *"not at all"*. On the contrary, however, in the focus group discussion and in-depth interviews, when participants were asked to express their opinion on the most pressing issues in the community, the theme of violence in the family was mentioned more often, than for example, the Transnistrian conflict or reduced access to social services, leisure and social activities.

The problem of violence against women is on the public and policy agenda on both banks of the Nistru River, but the interventions at the local level, although much improved, still have not determined a significant shift in the direction of eliminating the phenomenon. Ensuring access to women from rural areas to social services for victims of violence against women is one of the most pressing problems.

### **Knowledge and attitudes about the unsettled Transnistrian conflict**

The knowledge of the respondents in respect of the unsettled Transnistrian conflict and the 5+2 format of negotiations is quite low. Half of the women in rural areas do not know/have not ever heard about the work of the 5+2 negotiation format. Depending on the region, we find that the most informed are the women from the left bank of Nistru River and those who live in the border area.

The impact of the unsettled Transnistrian conflict on the lives of women in rural areas is felt by 44% of the respondents (15.7% to a great extent/ very great extent and 29.1% to a small extent). Most of all, the conflict has affected the population/women in the security zone/in the immediate vicinity of the security zone. Every third woman in the security zone said that they had suffered as a result of the unsettled Transnistrian conflict.

The creation of border crossing points between the right and left bank communities caused more barriers for people of the Republic of Moldova: travel barriers, access to medical services, limiting the possibility of transporting food and household products etc. Every fifth respondent (21.7%) says that personal life has worsened as a result of the unresolved Transnistrian conflict. The relations between the citizens on the two banks of the Nistru River have been affected the conflict. The relations between the citizens on the right and left bank of the Nistru River are characterized as good, with small tensions that are solved peacefully (52.9%) and very good, without communication conflicts (17.7%). Every second respondent (43.6%) visited the territory of the left/right bank of the Nistru River over the past 5 years. The vast majority of those interviewed consider the 5+2 format of negotiations as ineffective, but some experts from the left bank claim that some of the results of this negotiation are visible: the possibility for citizens from the left bank to travel with their own cars, the recognition of diplomas etc.



## RECOMMENDATIONS AND POSSIBLE ENTRY POINTS

### For Central Public Authorities

- Monitoring the implementation of legal provisions related to the field of gender equality and women's empowerment and the optimization of the legal-regulatory framework in the field of domestic violence, primary health care, the investment climate, the rights of persons with disabilities, the reform of pensions and social aid, regulations for the operation and approval of the kindergartens and increasing the efficiency (increasing the number, proper equipping, regionalization, etc.) of institutions for elderly care.
- Development of the legal framework in the field of reference of the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova through adherence to international conventions, the development of an Action Plan to ensure gender equality between women and men and the establishment of a quota of women's representation in public/leadership structures on the left bank of the Nistru River, following the model recently adopted on the right bank. It is important the initiative of the Central Public Administration to promote women in society and to decision-making positions, the principles of gender equality, in particular, among young people, demonstrating the success of women in public life, politics, business and in other areas of human activity which will contribute to the gradual change of traditions in the society.

### For the Local Public Administration on both banks of the Nistru River

- Increasing the level of awareness of the local representatives with respect to the specific problems of women in rural areas, on the basis of dialogue and communication with the female population on both banks of the Nistru River;
- The inclusion of gender issues/problems faced by rural women on the public agenda and the priorities of local development (e.g., domestic violence, employment of young women, inclusion of women with disabilities, etc.);
- Enhancing community cohesion through cooperation with all actors in the community with regard to solving problems mapped in the community (civic Watchdog groups, community police, emergency teams, etc.);
- Analysis of local budgets from gender perspective and budgeting of annual activities to encourage women from rural areas/activities for women;
- Increasing the involvement of citizens by encouraging them to participate in decisions concerning the local budget and the organization of public meetings and the use of other instruments of civic participation;
- The involvement of local government in supporting small business and creating employment opportunities for vulnerable women in the community, by providing professional guidance and skills development in the area of provision of services (barber shops, cosmetology centres, sports centres, cultural leisure centres, etc.);
- Development of alternative services for childcare to enable women with small children to work;
- The creation of community centres for counselling and psychological assistance, including for victims of domestic violence;
- Development of social care services for the elderly, including elderly women, taking into account their needs;



- Promoting healthy lifestyles and increase the quality of life of citizens in rural areas by solving problems related to local infrastructure;
- Increasing the level of transparency of LPA activities through the continuous information of the population about local initiatives and increasing the level of involvement of citizens in community life;
- The involvement of the LPA and national NGOs in the promotion of gender equality in the community and combating gender stereotypes;
- Increasing the level of awareness of citizens towards the problem of domestic violence;
- Involvement within LPA of gender specialists (focal points) or extension of competences of the social worker with appropriate remuneration.

#### **For the civil society on both banks of the Nistru River**

- Creation of local initiative groups, both on the right and on left bank of the Nistru River and empowering them in various fields such as: trainings on how to apply to international grants, project management, problem analysis and development of action plans;
- Increasing the level of cooperation between the NGOs on both banks of the Nistru River, by involving them in solving the same common problems of women;
- The promotion of professional orientation in schools and at community level in order to train the women on the basis of their skills and needs available on the labour market;
- Development of coaching services for rural women in opening their own business;
- The empowerment of rural women in the field of civic and political participation;
- Increasing the level of cooperation between women from different rural communities, including from the right and left bank of the Nistru River;
- Economic empowerment of women by empowering them in the area of starting their own business and informing them about the rights in the labour area;
- Increasing the level of awareness of women of the left bank of the Nistru about the problems faced;
- Increasing the level of involvement of women in community life, activities conducted in the community by the local public authorities and associative structures;
- Empowering women on both banks of the Nistru River in the area of leadership, developing the capabilities of leaders, which would change the way of thinking and vision with reference to the roles of women in the family and community, with a special attention to the women of the left bank of the Nistru River, which have shown little initiative at the community level and do not realize the need of participation in decision making;
- Increasing the level of informing the population about the significance of the 5+2 negotiation format and the activities carried out in this aspect.



## ANNEXES

**Table 1.** The structure of the sample, the right bank of the Nistru River, N=522

Variable	Category	Count	Percentage
<b>Groups of Age</b>	18 - 29 years	123	23.6
	30 - 44 years	134	25.8
	45 - 59 years	129	24.8
	60+ years	135	25.8
<b>Education</b>	Incomplete secondary education	123	23.6
	General school/vocational training	183	35.1
	High School/College	103	19.7
	Higher education	107	20.6
<b>Occupation</b>	Entrepreneur	21	4.0
	Employee	197	37.8
	Temporarily not working	39	7.4
	Not working	252	48.2
<b>Income</b>	Low	178	34.1
	Average	222	42.6
	High	122	23.3
<b>Civil status</b>	Married/Cohabiting	384	73.5
	Divorced	13	2.5
	Widow	79	15.1
	Never married	42	8.1
<b>Ethnicity</b>	Moldovans/Romanian	454	86.9
	Russian	5	1.0
	Ukrainians	22	4.2
	Another	42	8.0
Total		<b>522</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 2.** The structure of the sample, the left bank of the Nistru River, N=514

Variable	Category	Count	Percentage
<b>Groups of Age</b>	18 - 29 years	121	23.6
	30 - 44 years	132	25.8
	45 - 59 years	127	24.8
	60+ years	133	25.8
<b>Education</b>	Incomplete secondary education	101	19.7
	General school/vocational training	214	41.6
	High School/College	49	9.5
	Higher education	148	28.8
<b>Occupation</b>	Entrepreneur	21	4.0
	Employee	211	41.0



	Temporarily not working	39	7.7
	Not working	239	46.5
<b>Income</b>	Low	94	18.3
	Average	296	57.6
	High	124	24.0
<b>Civil status</b>	Married/Cohabiting	337	65.6
	Divorced	38	7.4
	Widow	81	15.7
	Never married	57	11.0
<b>Ethnicity</b>	Moldovan/Romanian	288	56.0
	Russian	95	18.4
	Ukrainian	97	18.9
	Another	34	6.7
<b>Total</b>		<b>514</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 3.** The structure of the sample, the settlements located in the border area, N=206

Variable	Category	Count	Percentage
<b>Groups of</b>	18 - 29 years	49	23.6
<b>Age</b>	30 - 44 years	53	25.8
	45 - 59 years	51	24.8
	60+ years	53	25.8
<b>Education</b>	Incomplete secondary education	46	22.5
	General school/vocational training	77	37.3
	High School/College	35	17.0
	Higher education	45	22.0
<b>Occupation</b>	Entrepreneur	5	2.3
	Employee	79	38.4
	Temporarily not working	19	9.4
	Not working	101	49.1
<b>Income</b>	Low	75	36.4
	Average	82	39.6
	High	49	24.0
<b>Civil status</b>	Married/Cohabiting	140	68.1
	Divorced	7	3.2
	Widow	35	17.2
	Never married	21	10.1
<b>Ethnicity</b>	Moldovan/Romanian	187	90.8
	Russian	2	1.1
	Ukrainian	14	6.8
	Another	3	1.4
<b>Total</b>		<b>206</b>	<b>100.0</b>



**Table 4.** The localities and the categories of actors selected for the qualitative research

No.	Settlements on the right bank of the Nistru River	Actors interviewed	Methods/codes
1.	<b>Locality bordering the village of Dorotkaya from Dubasari rayon</b>	Group of women mainly working in agriculture Woman leader who has opened a business of her own in the community	Group interview <i>FG_MD_Zona_Border Zona</i> In-depth interview <i>I_MD_femeie leader</i>
2.	<b>The South/TAUG Several rural localities in GAGAUZIA</b>	Group of vulnerable women (Russian-speaking) in Gagauzia including Bulgarian women, Woman leader in the field of NGO Woman leader in the community	Group interview <i>FG_MD_UTAG</i> In-depth interview <i>I_MD_femeie leader</i>
3.	<b>The North Chetrosu village of Drochia</b>	Representative LPA/mayor male Mixed group of Roma women and Woman leader in the community	In-depth interview <i>I_MD_APL</i> Group interview <i>FG_MD_Nord</i> In-depth interview <i>I_MD_femeie leader</i>
4.	<b>The Centre village of Carpineni, Hancesti district and other rural communities in the district</b>	Women of Roma ethnicity, leader – community mediator Group of women from the community who participated in the leadership and empowerment training	In-depth interview <i>I_MD_femeie lider</i> Group interview <i>FG_MD_femei_Roma</i>
5.	<b>The Centre, village of Scoreni, Straseni district</b>	LPA Representative, woman mayor Group of vulnerable women speaking Romanian Woman leader in the community (education)	In-depth interview <i>I_MD_femeie leader</i> Group interview <i>FG_MD_femei_Roma</i>
6.	<b>The Centre, Chisinau</b>	Experts in the field of gender equality, working in governmental, international and associative structures: UN Women, DidacticaPro, ProGen, OSME, MSMPFS, independent experts.	In-depth interview <i>MD_expert</i>
NR.	Localities on the left bank of the Nistru River	Actors interviewed	Methods
7.	<b>The Centre The village Carmanovo, Grigoriopol rayon</b>	LPA Representative Group of women in the community Woman leader in the community	In-depth interview <i>I_MS_APL</i> Group interview <i>FG_MS_Centru</i> In-depth interview <i>MD_femeie lider</i>
8.	<b>The Centre, village of Roghi, Dubasari rayon</b>	Representative of the LPA Group of women in the community Woman leader in the community	In-depth interview <i>I_MS_APL</i> Group interview <i>FG_MS_Centru</i> In-depth interview <i>MD_femeie lider</i>
9.	<b>The North, Mocra village, Rybnitsa rayon</b>	Representative of the LPA Group of women in the community Woman leader in the community	In-depth interview <i>I_MS_APL</i> Group interview <i>FG_MS_Nord</i> In-depth interview <i>I_MD_femeie lider</i>



10.	<b>The South, village of Parcani, Slobozia rayon</b>	Representative of the LPA Group of women in the community Woman leader in the community	In-depth interview <i>I_MS_APL</i> Group interview <i>FG_MS_Centru</i> In-depth interview <i>I_MD_femeie lieder</i>
11.	<b>The North, Rotar village, Camenca rayon</b>	Representative of the LPA Group of women in the community Woman leader in the community	In-depth interview <i>I_MS_APL</i> Group interview <i>FG_MS_Nord</i> In-depth interview <i>I_MD_femeie lieder</i>
12.	<b>The Centre, Tiraspol</b>	Experts in the field of gender equality, working in the government structures, academia and the NGO sector	In-depth interview <i>I_MD_expert</i>

**Table 5.** The list of projects with social impact in the gender field implemented on both banks of the Nistru River

No.	The name of the implemented projects on the right bank of the Nistru River, the implementer and the donor
1	„Women build bridges over the Nistru River by addressing practical problems” implemented by the Association “Institutum Virtutes Civilis”, with the financial support of the U.S. Embassy in the Republic of Moldova and the Hanns Seidel Foundation.
2.	The government programme “Women in Business”, implemented by ODIMM and the Ministry of Economy.
3.	«Go Mentor: if you want to grow up, pick a good mentor», implemented by AFAM, with the financial support of UN Women, Embassy of Sweden and the Project of Competitiveness, funded by the USAID and the Government of Sweden.
4.	«Build bridges, overcome barriers – building bridges between civil society and the communities on the two banks of the Nistru River», from the resources awarded by the European Union and co-financed by the Government of Sweden.
5.	“Joint action to strengthen human rights in the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova”
6.	“Transnistrian dialogues”, funded by the financing Platform of the UNDP for Governance, and for Inclusive and Peaceful Society, under the Platform for Conflict Prevention.
7.	“Joint action to strengthen human rights in the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova”
8.	UNDP Program “Measures to promote confidence”.
9.	The joint UN Women/UNDP Programme «Women in Politics».
<b>Including other projects with impact over the field of reference, implemented on the right bank of the Nistru River</b>	
10.	The joint programme of the UN «Strengthening the National Statistical System», including the online interactive platform Gender Pulse (in collaboration with the National Bureau of Statistics and with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women).



11.	The National Programme of Mentoring for Active Women «INSPIR-O!» is conducted by the Centre «Partnership for Development» with the support of the UN Programme «Women in Politics».
12.	The media campaign «The press balances the gender!», implemented by the Independent Journalism Centre in collaboration with the Coordinating Council of the Audiovisual.
13.	The project «From 87 to 100» is implemented by the Centre «Partnership for Development», with the financial support of the Equality and Civic Participation Program of Soros Foundation-Moldova and the OSCE Mission in the Republic of Moldova.
14.	The project "Healthy lifestyles: reducing the burden of non-communicable diseases", implemented by the Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute in the Republic of Moldova, financed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).
15.	The project "All equal, all healthy: Empowering women and girls with disabilities in Moldova to exercise their sexual and reproductive rights", implemented by the Centre for Training in Reproductive Health, with the financial support of the Embassy of Finland in Bucharest.
16.	The project «Technical Assistance activities and strengthening capacity in the field of health on both banks of the Nistru River», financially supported by WHO and the Program «Support to Confidence building Measures», financed by the European Union and coordinated by WHO.
17.	The project "Re-engineering vocational orientation and career counselling", implemented by the Centre for Entrepreneurial Education and Business Support (CEDA), with the support of the Austrian Development Agency.
18.	The project "Training Activity in the Field of Entrepreneurship and Employment in Moldova", implemented by the Centre for Entrepreneurial Education and Business Support (CEDA), with the support of development Agency of Liechtenstein.
19.	The Program GirlsGoIT, UNDP, UN Women Moldova.
20.	«The Gender Equality index 2017", prepared by the Centre Partnership for Development with the support of East European Foundation
21.	„Program to support media institutions in ensuring gender equality", implemented by the Association of Independent Press (AIP) with the support of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in partnership with East European Foundation and the Centre "Partnership for Development", funded by the Swedish Government.
22.	The media programme "Click for gender equality", implemented by AIP, at the initiative of UN Women, with financial support of the Government of Sweden.
23.	Report on the monitoring of media content from the point of view of gender balance, elaborated by the Independent Journalism Centre with the financial support of the Swedish Agency for International Development and Cooperation, through the Embassy of Sweden in Chisinau.
24.	The project "Strengthening democracy in Moldova through inclusive and transparent elections", the CEC, CCET, Centre for electronic governance, with the support of UNDP and the Embassy of Great Britain.
25.	The programme «Women in Business» of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), with support from the European Union, Sweden, the Transition Countries Fund and the Fund for Small Businesses.
26.	Master programs, approved by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research, including Public Finance and Taxation, Financial-Banking Administration, as well as Accounting and Audit in Public Institutions with the inclusion of the discipline "Gender-sensitive budgeting".



Nr.	The name of the implemented projects on the left bank of the Nistru River, the implementer and the donor
27.	The project «Development of a sustainable platform of cooperation of the farming women on both banks of the Nistru River», Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Transnistria. The project is funded by the European Union and implemented by UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). The aim of the project is to support and promote the development of women's entrepreneurship, including in rural areas, as well as the promotion of advanced technologies, in particular in the agricultural sector of the economy.
28.	Transnistrian Platform for the prevention of domestic violence and promotion of women's rights, implemented by the NGO «Initiatives of Women», the Centre for Development and Support of Civil Initiatives «Resonance». The project had aimed at strengthening the joint efforts of NGOs from Transnistria in the field of prevention of domestic violence consequences and promotion of women in society.
29.	The project «The woman and the trades» is implemented by Agency for Regional Development of Transnistria with the support of the Embassy of the Netherlands in Romania and Moldova in the framework of the Program «Human Rights».

**Table 6.** Perspectives of employment of rural women on both sides of the Nistru River, including the border area, %

	The right bank of the Nistru River N=193	The border area, N= 75	The left bank of the Nistru River N= 220
Day work	66.3	65.8	40.0
In associations/agricultural enterprises	33.1	33.1	34.6
At the shop in the village	37.9	37.9	28.6
In in educational institutions (school, kindergarten, etc.)	30.5	26.6	25.6
In health care institutions	19.4	17.6	18.2

**Table 7.** Distribution of rural women from both banks of the Nistru in terms of ensuring the needs of living on salary income, %

	The right bank of the Nistru River N=193	The border area N=75	The left bank of the Nistru River N= 220
I do not even get enough for the bare necessities	28.8	31.5	5.5
I only get to cover the bare necessities	35.8	33.9	46.2
I have enough for a decent living, but I can't afford to purchase more expensive goods	24.7	24.7	35.0
I manage to buy some expensive goods, but with some restrictions	4.3	4.3	7.0
I manage to get everything I need, without having to limit myself to anything	1.2	3.4	2.7
I find it hard to answer	5.2	2.2	3.5



**Table 8.** Agreement of rural women to statements regarding compliance with the employment, per regions, %

	The right bank of the Nistru River	The border area	The left bank of the Nistru River
<b>A child of preschool age has to suffer if the mother works</b>			
In a very large extent	29.2	12.2	23.3
To a large extent	32.8	32.3	31.5
To a small extent	20.4	25.4	23.9
Not at all	13.5	14.9	9.6
<b>A well-paid job is the best way for a woman to become/ feel like an independent person?</b>			
In a very large extent	49.3	47.1	42.0
To a large extent	35.6	23.2	27.8
To a small extent	8.5	13.8	15.5
Not at all	4.5	2.6	3.9
<b>The right for paternity leave for child care, offered to men through legislation, is a good way to involve men in the upbringing of children?</b>			
In a very large extent	27.5	51.1	43.5
To a large extent	25.4	20.4	28.0
To a small extent	14.6	10.7	14.6
Not at all	24.4	1.7	3.2
<b>Do men also benefit from the equality of women's rights with men?</b>			
In a very large extent	13.1	20.2	22.1
To a large extent	24.3	30.6	25.5
To a small extent	21.5	18.1	21.8
Not at all	28.5	11.7	14.3
<b>Is it not good if the man stays at home and takes care of the children, while the woman goes to work?</b>			
In a very large extent	47.8	33.3	30.2
To a large extent	32.5	19.8	23.1
To a small extent	9.8	23.8	21.0
Not at all	4.0	7.9	14.0

**Table 9.** Distribution of women who have suffered professionally because of the gender status, depending on the regions, %

	The right bank of the Nistru River		The left bank of the Nistru River	
	<b>Yes, often</b>	<b>Yes, sometimes</b>	<b>Yes, often</b>	<b>Yes, sometimes</b>
Has she ever been denied a right or the woman was treated unequally because of the fact that she is a woman	5.0	30.2	1.3	23.2
Employment or growth in her professional career was undermined because she is a woman	5.0	20.0	1.1	18.0