Gender-Sensitive Risks and Options Assessment for Decision Making (ROAD) to Support WiF2

Claudia Ringler, on behalf of the project team

WiF2 Steering Committee meeting
November 10, 2021

https://www.ifpri.org/project/gender-sensitive-risks-and-options-assessment-decision-making-road-support-work-freedom

Overview: Evaluation Key Research Questions

Overarching Question

How are female migrants' options shaped by gender and what is the potential of empowerment intervention to reduce trafficking and forced labor?

(i) Which interventions are most cost-effective in reducing vulnerability to trafficking and forced labour for women from South Asia (to the Middle East)?

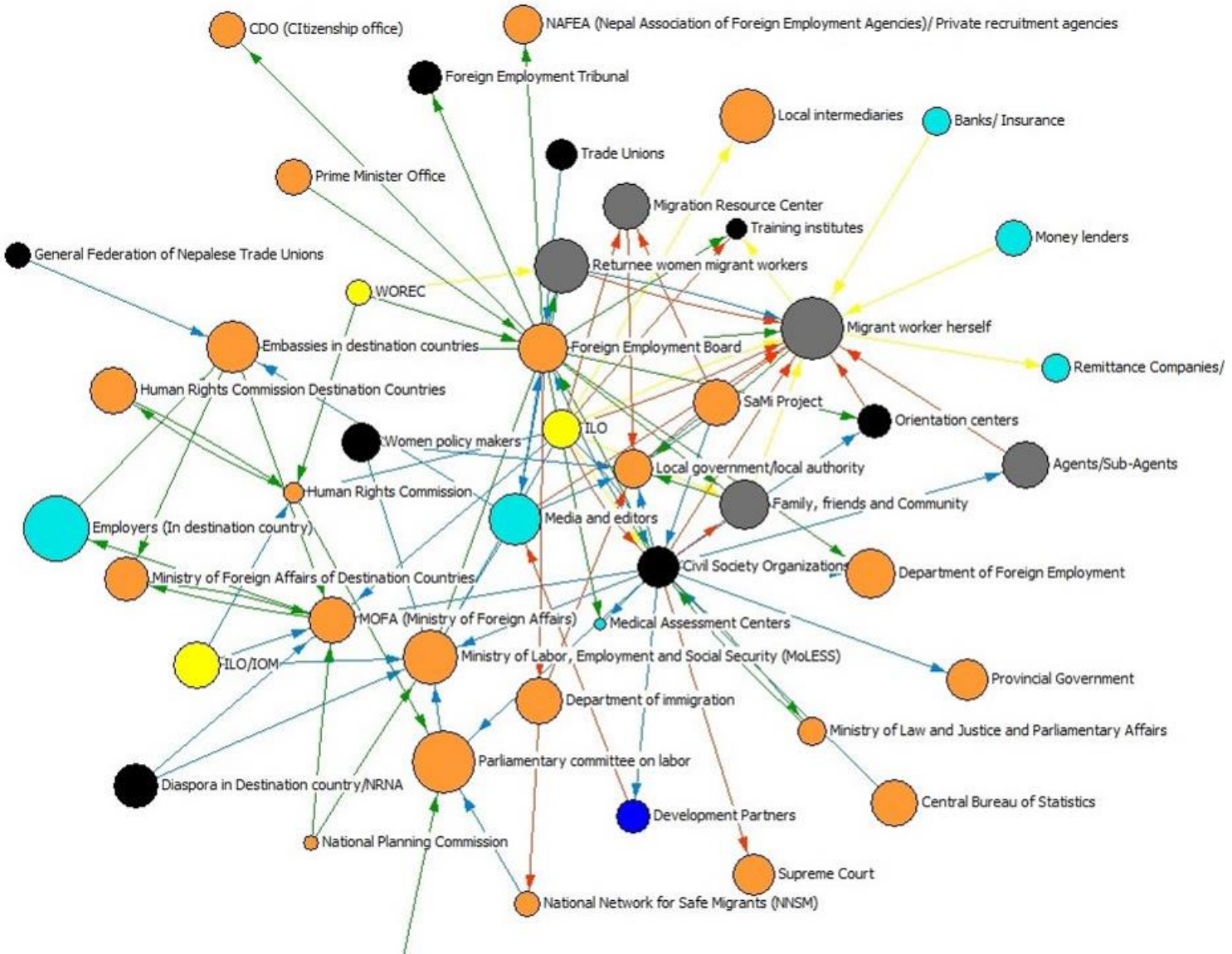
(ii) Can empowerment interventions improve migrant women's wellbeing?

Focus on Bangladesh, Nepal, Jordan and Lebanon

Overview: Research Questions by workstream

- **WS1:** What are the risks to trafficking and forced labour by female migrants along the migration pathway?
- What are the enabling environmental conditions affecting changes in migration and, in particular, changes in trafficking and forced labour of women and girls?
- What changes in the WiF-2 TOC can further strengthen achievement of the WiF-2 Goal?
- **WS2:** How and to what extent do WiF interventions influence Bangladeshi women's decision-making processes (to stay/leave exploitative work conditions) and agency? How were they supported by their immediate family members? What is the role of women's empowerment?
- **WS3:** What is the role of women's empowerment (and the potential of gender sensitization) in the migration process?
- **WS4:** What are the different ways employers interact with private recruitment agencies and government institutions? How do existing processes and practices contribute to increased risk of trafficking/forced labour of migrant workers?
- **WS5:** How and to what extent can a migrant's social networks in the destination country impact conditions of forced labour and improve work quality?
- **WS6:** What is the impact of WiFs activities on freedom of association in Lebanon and Jordan?

Workstream 1: Netmap: Who affects short- term, low-skilled women's migration from Nepal to the Middle East?

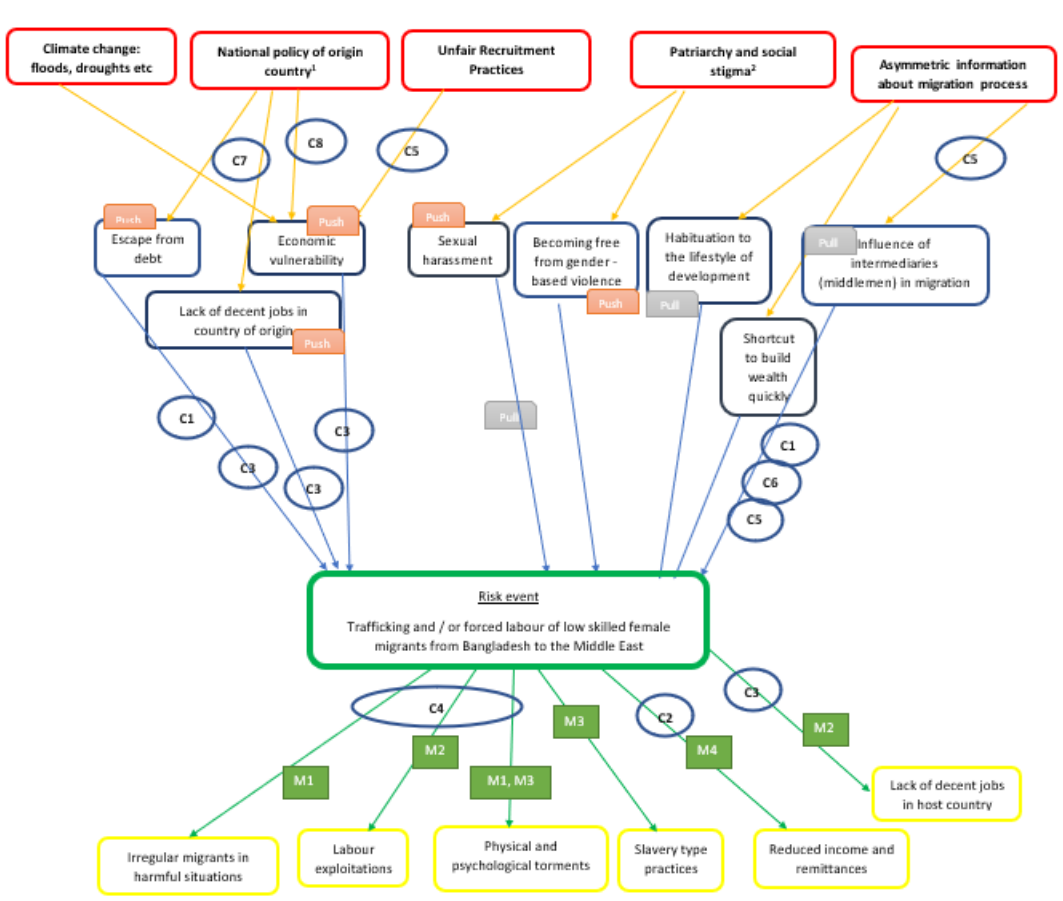


Early results:

- One highly connected network with a large number of players
- Foreign Employment Board as a core entity linked closely with migrants
- Important role of various entities in destination countries recognized

EX ROAD Bangladesh: Key Controls and Mitigants to reduce trafficking and forced labour of WMDW

Controls	Mitigants
C1. Reduce the cost of immigration to (help save and reduce the burden of debt)	M1. Hotline/resource centre in the home country to help victims
C2. Improve the wages negotiation by the expatriate ministry	M2. Certification of skills acquired or gained in the source country
C3. Safety Nets	M3. Hotline/research centre for victims in the host country
C4. Agreement with destination country to include better working conditions	M4. Ensure savings through local bank accounts for migrants
C5. Accountability of recruitment intermediaries	
C6. Regulation of migrant channels: Publications of the list of accredited intermediaries	
C7. Skill development of women, including soft and life skills	
C8. Enact WEWB 2018 to ensure the well-being of female migrants	



Additional workshops:

Lebanon:

- Originally targeted for July 1/2021, but postponed due to continued/growing challenges to reach policymakers and other stakeholders
- Earlier university closure and continued departure of staff has affected our activities

Jordan

- In touch with Igor/ILO to liaise with Jordan's Ministry of Labor and the Amman Governor to hold this event in early 2022 face-to-face.

Example: KIIs and literature reviews for WIF2 TOC

WIF II ToC mechanisms	*Evidence from the literature and KIs*

Social workers engage women and girls and other community members — leading to women understanding better how to negotiate and take decisions that affect their lives
• Outreach to vulnerable women and girls.
• Information provision enables women to know about their rights and negotiate better access to local entitlements and jobs.
• Collective voice and networking strengthens women's mutual support for one another in addressing common challenges.
	• **SUPPORTED:** Providing migrant workers with information on their labor rights and the job market in destination countries significantly improved their knowledge and working conditions (Barsbai 2018).
	  ○ **CAVEAT**: A focus on women's empowerment alone regardless of women's plans to migrate or not might not be cost-effective if the focus is to prevent trafficking and forced labor
	  ○ **CAVEAT:** Positive impacts from information provision are only reported for migrants prior to departure and not for potential migrants.
	  ○ **CAVEAT:** Training on negotiation is insufficient to fully address deception practices and non-honoring of contracts. Without having the legal papers, even with knowledge of their rights, migrant workers cannot negotiate.
	• **SUPPORTED:** Initiation of social networks pre-departure is an important channel to utilize for conveying information to migrant women throughout the migration process. (Frantz, 2014; KI 5, 2020). Domestic care workers tend to rely on their social networks for information rather than official channels.
	  ○ **CAVEAT:** These pre-departure measures should take into consideration the controlled environment that domestic workers are placed into and that abuse might occur, including having their cell phones confiscated and belongings searched.

Capacity development of social workers and government scheme workers • Learning and knowledge sharing enables social workers to mediate information more effectively to and from women and girls.	• **UNCLEAR:** Developing of capacity of migrants is widely seen as important; supporting social workers interacting with migrants can also be helpful, but it is not clear how these social workers liaise with the migration process; Key Informants and other references strongly suggest to involve former migrants in any capacity building of migrants.

ElDidi et al. (2021)

Workstreams 1 & 3: 20 Key Informant Interviews focused on Bangladesh and Nepal

1. Holistic perspective to address trafficking and forced labor beyond migration management to support empowerment of women (Wu and Kilby under review)
2. Elevate the voice of vulnerable migrant women to catalyse action (T-20)
3. Seek regional and multilateral solutions in support of female migrating workers (T-20)
4. Support certification of migration agents (T-20)
5. Improve training quality and access for first-time migrants (T-20)
6. Develop social assistance programmes for female migrants (T-20)
7. Develop reintegration programmes for female returnees (T-20)
8. Support development and implementation of standard employment contracts (T-20)
9. Formalise a redress mechanism to quickly address complaints (T-20)
10. Provide access to health services in countries of work (T-20)

Workstreams 1 & 3: 20 Key Informant Interviews focused on Bangladesh and Nepal

Wu, J. and P. Kilby. (2022). 'The Precarity of Gender, Migration and Locations: Case Studies from Bangladesh and Nepal' submitted to Development In Practice special issue on Modern Slavery and Exploitative Work Regimes

Kilby, P., and J. Wu. (2021). 'Migration and the Gender Impacts of COVID-19 on Nepalese Women'; Under review. Pakistan Journal of Women's Studies, special issue on gender and COVID-19 (December).

Wu, J., P. Kilby, S. Abdulrahim, Z. ul Arefin Choudhury, H. ElDidi and C. Ringler. (2021). Reducing Vulnerability and Precarity of Low-Skilled Women in Short-Term Migration from the Global South: Key Policy Recommendations for the G-20. Taskforce 10. Migration. T-20.

Kilby, P., and J. Wu. (2020). Migration and the Gender Impacts of COVID-19 on Nepalese Women: Global Development Working Paper 1. Humanitarian and Development Research Initiative (HADRI) At Western Sydney University, 2020. https://doi.org/10.26183/59d6-7s16

G-20 statement on migration

38. **Migration and forced displacement**. The impact of the pandemic has confronted us with new challenges with regard to migration in our globalized economies. We commit to take steps to support the full inclusion of migrants, including migrant workers, and refugees in our pandemic response and recovery efforts, in the spirit of international cooperation and in line with national policies, legislation and circumstances, ensuring full respect for their human rights and fundamental freedoms regardless of their migration status. We also recognize the importance of preventing irregular migration flows and the smuggling of migrants, as part of a comprehensive approach for safe, orderly and regular migration, while responding to humanitarian needs and the root causes of displacement.

G20 Declaration

Workstream 4: Work with existing data: Qualitative & quantitative data in the employer space in Lebanon

Quantitative

- Knowledge of *Kafala* ***DOES NOT*** predict employer practices
- Recruiting a WMDW through an agency and "discriminatory attitues" is predictive of some employer practices
  - Locking a worker inside the home
- Withholding the worker's passport was almost universal (>90%)

Qualitative

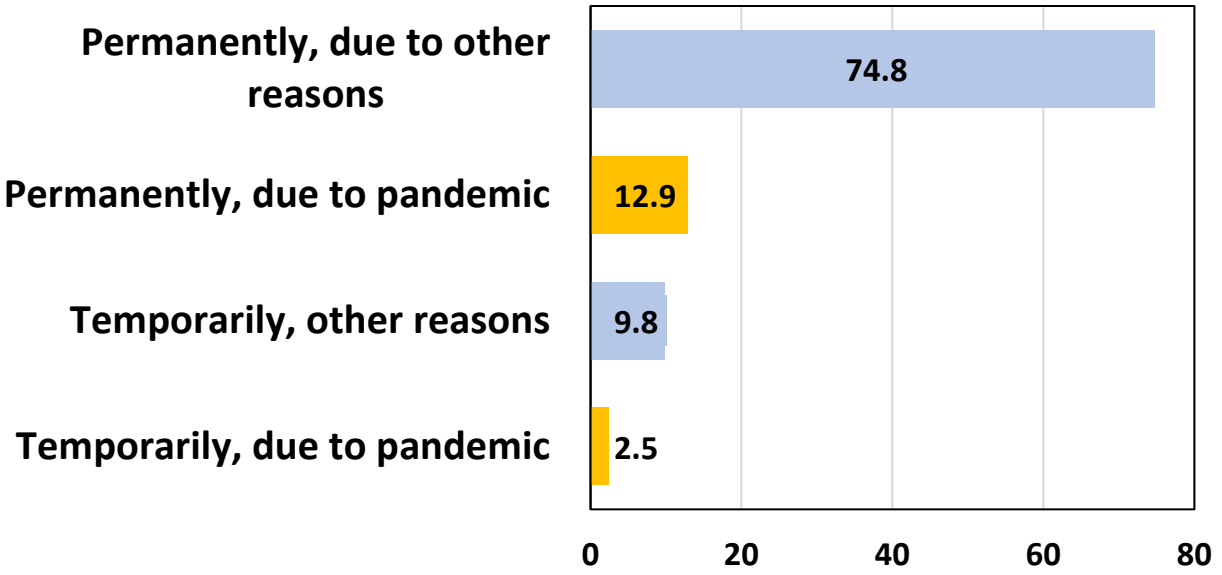
- Employers have different and often contradictory understandings of *Kafala*
- There are normative practices that become interpreted as *Kafala*; recruitment agents shape employer practices
- Employers keep the worker's passport as a "guarantee" irrespective of whether they believe *Kafala* allows this violation of the worker's rights

Phone survey—to assess the impact of Covid-19 on women migrants in Bangladesh

- Research Questions: What has been the impact of Covid-19 on the migration experience? Which vulnerabilities (along the migration pathway) have deepened most?
- Collection of pre-consent via local NGOs directly working with female migrants (IC from ~1000 short-term female returnee or potential migrants; 63% could be reached);
- Data on 488 returnee migrants (since July 2019); and 114 potential migrants (planned to migrate since July 2019)
- 45% returned from KSA, 18% Jordan, 10% UAE and 13% Lebanon

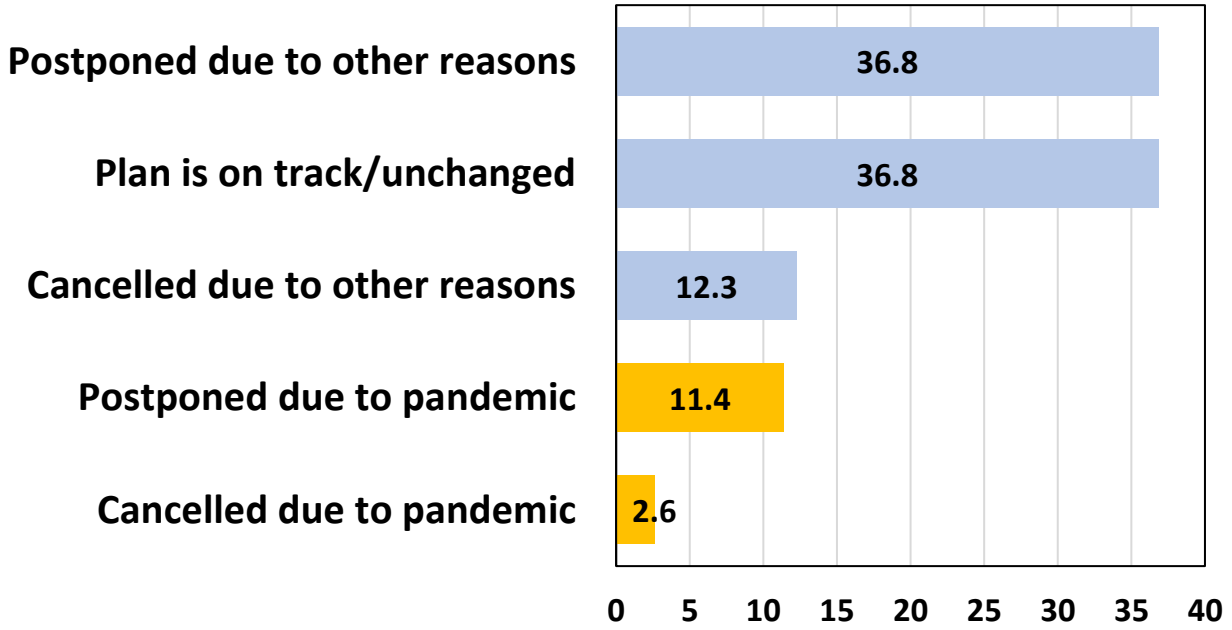
Migration and Covid-19, Bangladesh: Reasons for return / non-migration

Returnee migrants, since July 2019



N=488; average of 4.5 yrs abroad

Potential migrants, since July 2019



N=114

27% had obtained paperwork for migration but could not go because of COVID

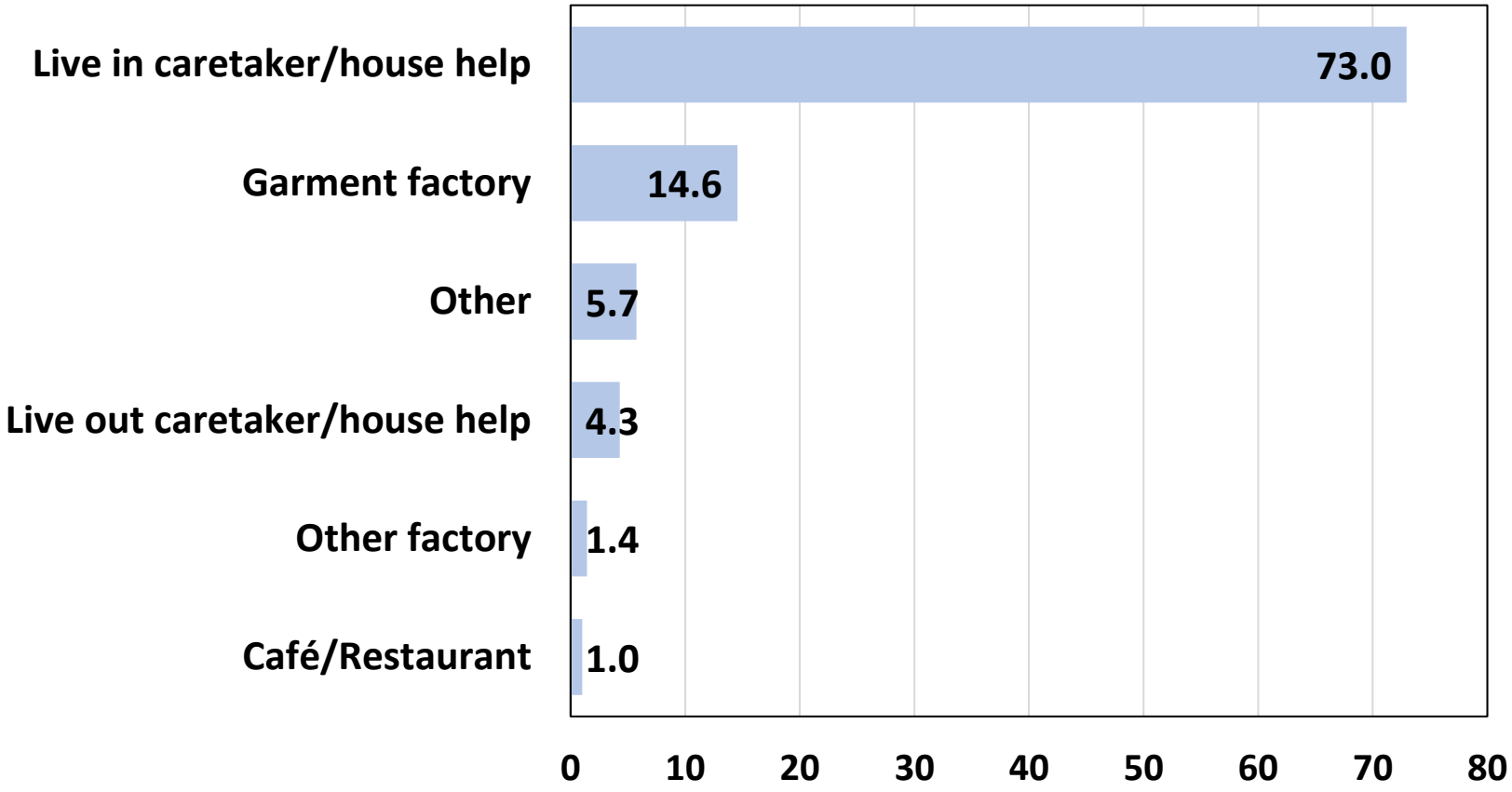
Migration and Covid-19, Bangladesh: Salient issues

- 28% of respondents did not attend school; 29% have less than 5th grade education
- 55% married; 27% divorced or separated
- 57% consider themselves as either housewives or unemployed, those working mostly raise small livestock
- 95% note that the household has a cellphone

Migration and Covid-19, Bangladesh: Potential migrants - Salient issues

- Potential migrants trust migration information from: returnee family and friends (50%) *Dalals* and NGOs (17%), government agencies (14%)
- 10% had attended NGO training and 38% had attended govt training before going abroad
- 60% wished they had language training and 30% wished for skills training before going abroad

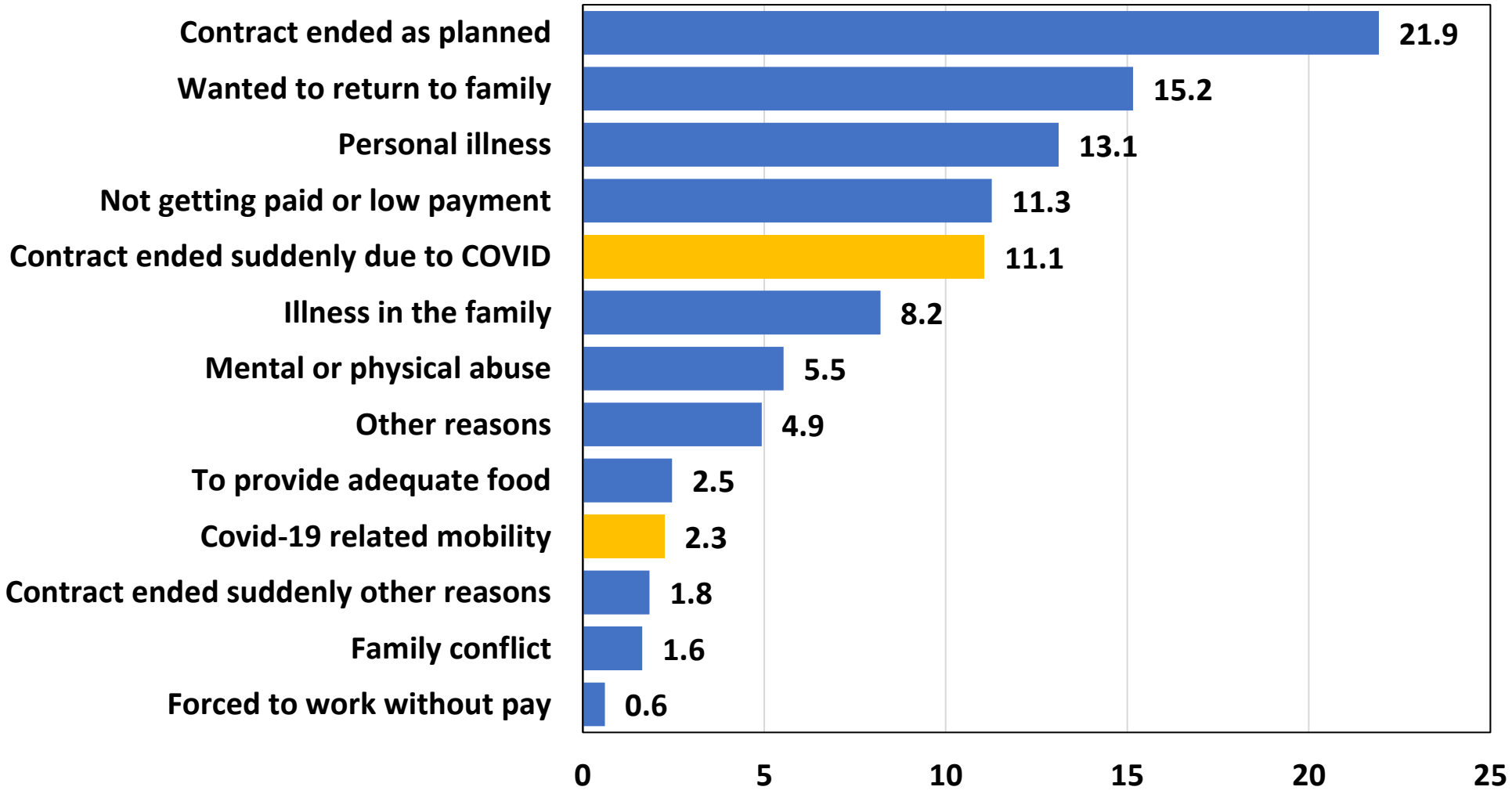
Migration and Covid-19, Bangladesh: Last job



Jordan: 62% factory work

Lebanon: 82% caretakers (live in and live out)

Migration and Covid-19, Bangladesh: Specific reason for most recent return



Migration and Covid-19, Bangladesh: Salient issues

- 14% of returnees stated they did not have to pay for migration costs, among those who paid: 46% took loans from family/friends and 28% from local lenders; women spent an average of 51300 TK (US$ 600) for migration- compared that to average HH monthly expenditure of 11000 TK (US$ 128)
- 43% of migrants noted on their last migration they had earned less than they were promised;
- 27% of migrants stated they had faced some kind of abuse or threat from their employer
- 41% of migrants had no female friend in the destination country
- Migrants worked on average 14 hours a day
- 76% had no off day

Migration and Covid-19, Bangladesh: Salient issues

- 37% of returnees did not receive all due wages before they left and nearly 30% ran out of money while waiting to return to Bangladesh
- 14% did not have access to healthcare abroad
- 11% feel discriminated against by the community since their return mostly because they had travelled without a guardian
- All women noted they had to borrow money upon return, 65% to meet HH expenditures
- 53% had not tried looking for work since returning, 26% were unable to find jobs; among those who work 87% make less than they did abroad