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Intergenerational support during the period of childcare and care of older parents in Moldova

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This analysis was developed within the [GGG Fellowship Programme](#) launched by United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA Moldova) in November 2021 with the purpose to conduct in-depth targeted analysis based on GGS to support the authorities to design data-driven policies and build demographic resilience in the Republic of Moldova.

The Generations and Gender Program is implemented by United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA Moldova) in partnership with the [Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Republic of Moldova](#), the [National Bureau of Statistics](#), the [Interdisciplinary Institute of Demography in the Netherlands \(NIDI\)](#). The program is funded by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, the India-UN Development Partnership Fund and UNFPA Moldova.

The [Generations and Gender Survey \(GGG\)](#) is the first and the most complex longitudinal demographic study conducted so far in more than 24 countries and is part of the international program coordinated by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the Netherlands Interdisciplinary Institute of Demography (NIDI).

The conclusions of this study will support the decision makers to better understand the demographic changes in the Republic of Moldova, so that the authorities can develop people-centered demographic policies tailored to people's needs. At the same time, the conclusions of this analysis will be used by the authorities to identify measures to transform the demographic crisis into an opportunity, to support the country's development and to promote demographic resilience in Moldova.

For references: Republic of Moldova – Generations and Gender Survey(2020). Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Republic of Moldova, National Bureau of Statistics (study sample), UNFPA Moldova, NIDI-GGP (partner and data distributor).

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Introduction

The Republic of Moldova goes through many demographic changes like shrinking population, out migration of young and reproductive population, aging and a growing disproportion between young and older generations and others. The studies on population dynamics shows that the next future of population age structure will include about equal proportion of children and old people. These changes will reshape the population pyramid that requires adjustment of national policy measures to the new realities.

In the demographic framework has been achieved generational demographic reversal, where we have a reduction in the number of young people and an increase in the number and generations of the older population.

The older population in the Republic of Moldova reached the share of 22.8% (2021), which in numerical value represents over 593.0 thousand people. Every third person is between 60-64 years old. In the last five years, the share of the older population in the 70-74 age group has increased the most and constitutes 19% of their total. Of the total households of the older population, 62.3% lived in rural areas, with limited access to social and health services. This group of population has an increased risk of loneliness and depression. As per the data launched by the National Bureau of Statistics in 2022, there is an increase of communities with an aging population, with approximately 30% of the total population, e.g. Cimislia 29.1%, Basarabeasca 28.8%, Briceni 28.3%, Edinet 27.8%, Donduseni 27.6%.

According to the Active Aging Index of the Republic of Moldova (2020)¹, less than 1/3 of the human potential aged 55 and over is capable and has opportunities for active and healthy ageing. Only 9,5% of the older population is employed. People aged 55-64 have a high rate of inactivity (57.8% in 2018), which is certified as having the lowest employment rate in Europe. Economic growth does not benefit the older population. Life expectancy in the Republic of Moldova is modest and was 70.9 years (2019), having decreased to 70.1 years (2021) after the period of COVID 19, for men constituting 65.2 and women 73.1. Life expectancy in the Republic of Moldova is 11.3 years lower than in the 27 EU countries, which in 2020 was 80.4 years.

The restrictions of COVID-19 intensified the physical and social isolation of the older population. Additionally, during the pandemic period, the inactivity of the older population, especially for rural ones, is obvious, and the needs of health services are increasing.² So, promoting the principle of active and healthy aging in sectoral policies becomes an imperative strategically to help people stay in charge of their own lives for as long as possible aging and, where possible, contribute to the economy and society.

¹ Mariana BUCIUCEANU-VRABIE, Indicele Îmbătrânirii Active, 2020, UNFPA, Fondul ONU pentru Populație în Republica Moldova, 2021.

²

https://moldova.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/analiza_riscurilor_pandemiei_covid_19_asupra_persoanelor_in_varsta_din_republica_moldova.pdf

Healthy aging with the adaptation of the skills of older workers would ensure a protected aging, a longer and more prosperous life³. The concept of active aging, and reducing poverty is considered an essential element for achieving the objectives of the country's 2030 Development Strategy.

For demographers it is crucial that through care and protection to create the sustainability of reproduction in the generational circuit that can give families. Household's decisions about how to meet their older care and childcare needs balance multiple imperatives, constraints, and opportunities, and the outcomes of these choices can have significant repercussions for societies' economic trajectories. However, the family is the most valued value for most of the population (90.8%). We note an increase in the role of grandparents in the exercise of family functions, especially related to childcare. This role becomes even more important when young couples and the older population live together in the so-called "family nests" (the extended family model). In this way, only 0.3% of young couples hire nannies and grandparents contribute to the family budget with at least 25% of living expenses. But, as a result of out-migration, the younger generation is increasingly attracted to move abroad for a better quality of life and social services. According to the GGS data, about 15.5% of the population intends to move to another country in the next 3 years. This will produce effects on the demographic structure of the society and will increase the share of the older population that will require support and social protection. In this regard, social policies should be addressed through building intergenerational exchange and connections, including emotional support, financial support etc.

In the context of population aging, several policy initiatives have been implemented. In 2017, the Government of the Republic of Moldova approved the Action Plan on active aging 2018-2021, for integrating aging issues into policies. The Plan aims to ensure a society for all ages and prioritize the promotion of quality of life and enlargement measures for older participation in social and economic life. The National Development Strategy "Moldova 2030" highlights the need to create necessary conditions for using the potential of each person, regardless of age, place of residence, sex, ethnicity, disability, religion or other condition. Currently, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection is developing a new National Program on Healthy and Active Aging for 2023-2027. The program aims to ensure that people everywhere are able to age safely and with dignity and continue to participate in societies as full citizens. The United Nations General Assembly declared 2021–2030 the Decade of Healthy Ageing and advocates for the need to develop policies adjusted to the needs of the population.

The population of the Republic of Moldova will continue aging, and in 2050 every second citizen will be over 50 years old, which implies a total change in approach to demographic policies and priorities with an emphasis on promoting Active and Healthy Aging and creating the conditions for work for the older persons. Demographic policies must be reoriented towards supporting and maintaining the active and healthy older population, and the demographic aging component of the population is to be sectoral integrated.

3

<https://www.worldbank.org/ro/news/feature/2017/12/05/moldovas-aging-population-turning-concern-into-opportunity>

Methodology of research and theoretical context

The study is based on the research "Generations and Gender Survey" (GGS) wave 1 from Moldova⁴, which aims to collect quality disaggregated data on the demographic structure and changes in the family, the number of desired children, relationships and support between generations, family planning, issues related to work life balance and others. A series of socio-demographic factors were analyzed to identify the key determinants of intergenerational exchange and support.

The form of intergenerational relationship is one of the most direct and objective dimensions of observing intergenerational family relationships (Bengtson and Roberts 1991). Regarding intergenerational living arrangements, a phenomenon of great concern in recent years has been older parents living with their adult children, showing that the traditional form of stem family is in decline. Strong reciprocal social and economic obligations exist in Moldova, as in many European societies, and are culturally performed through intergenerational co-residence and emotional support offered between generations. Though support provided by younger family members can be in exchange for the support received from parents earlier, family relationships consist of dynamic bi-directional ongoing exchanges where even present provision of support can motivate future intergenerational transfers.

The basic cell of the coexistence of the community of generations (grandparents, parents, children, grandchildren) is the kinship family. Family generations form a transition between the biological and social characteristics of generational existence because the biological meaning of age is already associated with social elements. The influence and care of the family on the categories of generations remains decisive for a long time in societies. Belonging to different generational groups implies a certain degree of awareness, awareness of mutual responsibilities with connections, material, and spiritual, emotional, physical support, where Moldovan families are no exception.⁵

In GGS study we will focus only on generativity (a term used in psychology by Erikson), used in demography as the availability of generations to take care of the young, mutual care especially in the reproductive interval. In this context, the reciprocity of the members of the family generations related to private or public demographic transfers through their succession is of special interest.

Society's attitude towards the older is an indicator of its civilization. Society is responsible for the social, physical, and material well-being of its older members.

Intergenerational transfers, solidarity, and help (assistance/support) are the concepts used to indicate the flow of giving and receiving resources within the extended family and the society as a whole. Intergenerational transfer is the most generic term, generally used in economic and sociological research with diverse family cultures (more individualistic versus more collectivistic).

In the stage of mass emigration of young families, the mobility of mothers, in order to provide the necessary protection and care in the stage of raising (childbirth, or in the first year of life) of young children (grandchildren) is quite common. It takes place either temporarily, or by living together

⁴ Republic of Moldova – Generations and Gender Survey (2020). Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Republic of Moldova, National Bureau of Statistics (survey sample), UNFPA, NIDI-GGP (as partner and distributor)

⁵ Ființa generațională și destinul culturii / Károly Veress. – Cluj-Napoca: Casa Cărții de Știință, 2003.

with the children's family, or for a long time. We remind that, the involvement takes place more widely at the time of children's schooling, where young families rarely resort to babysitting services and rely on the broad involvement of grandparents. It takes place for several reasons: long life with exorbitant expenses, young families rely on the attachment of mothers to grandchildren.

Age is an important factor for grandparental care for both men and women. Younger grandparents might be active in the labor market, while older grandparents' frailty and health limitations might shift them into the category that needs care. Studies show that before 60 years of age, up to 30 percent of grandfathers and about 20 percent of grandmothers were employed. While younger grandparents have a higher involvement in childcare support of their grandchildren, those over 70 years of age, before retirement age involvement is substantially higher among grandmothers than grandfathers. However, grandmothers in their sixties provide significantly less frequent childcare as those in their fifties, but higher than grandfathers at all ages. The late marriages of the younger generations (average age 27-28 years), in the current realities of Moldova, reduces the possibility of caring for grandchildren.

Population aging, and specifically, the combination of increased longevity and delayed onset of fertility, has given rise to what has been called in scientific literature a '**sandwich generation**'—women who are expected to provide care simultaneously to multiple generations, normally their parents and their children and/or grandchildren.

The sandwich generation, in the traditional sense of the term, refers to people sandwiched between caring for their parents and children.⁶ The club sandwich generation refers to people in their 50s and 60s who care for their parents, adult children, and grandchildren. It can also be used to describe younger adults who care for their parents, grandparents, and children. The open-faced sandwich generation refers to the population of people involved in or caring for the older generation.

The target groups of the analysis are the families between 25-35 years old, through the generations in the reproductive stage and the older generations 60+ years old, associated with mutual support and care.

The purpose of the analysis is to assess the specific intergenerational relationships, emotional and financial support offered between young and older generations, and ways of communication. A special interest is to explain the key factors that influence intergenerational exchange and support during the period of reproduction and the period of limitation of physical potential (of parents). The paper analysis provides a series of policy recommendations aiming to build intergenerational support and social solidarity among the population. In the same way, we intend to establish to what extent parents can model, modify the reproductive standards of young families within the limits of generational replacement and how the state and families would sustainably share the role of caring for the older persons for a decent life.

The research hypothesis are:

⁶. "[The Sandwich Generation: Definition](https://www.sandwichgeneration.com)." <https://www.sandwichgeneration.com>.

- The support between generations is higher in families from rural areas, where the age difference between parents and children are smaller and physical daily interaction is possible due to the fact they live in the same locality
- Access to internet increase the level of intergenerational exchange and support between generations, especially in the context of out-migration
- Level of education is an important factor that contributes to a strong intergenerational support
- Level of income as social factor contributes to a higher support and welfare of families

The research was based on the following questions form GGS questionnaire:

| Question | Response options |
|--|------------------|
| GEN66 (Given personal care) Over the last 12 months, have you given any person inside or outside the household regular help with personal care, such as washing, getting out of bed, or dressing? | Yes No |
| GEN68 (Any financial transfer from persons inside or outside HH) Over the last 12 months, have you received any goods or money from anyone inside or outside this household? Please consider only gifts of a value at least 750 MDL | Yes No |
| GEN70 (Any financial transfer to persons inside or outside HH) Over the last 12 months, have you given any goods or money from anyone inside or outside this household? Please consider only gifts of a value at least 750 MDL | Yes No |

Dimensions of intergenerational support in Moldova

The family is the main element in the system of intergenerational relations. Throughout a person's life, family is the first and last support for him - a "launching pad" at an early stage of life and a "last refuge" at a later age. The family is the first and most individual level of relationships between different generations.⁷ Currently, the family is going through demographic, cultural, socio-economic changes, which are reflected in intra-family ties. As family ties become less important, older people often prove to be useless to anyone. The demographic transition in our country, the unstable economic situation and multiple crises the country is facing, influence the way the young people perceive the older generation.

The realities based on the GGS study prove a strong relationship between young and older generations, family members being open to provide mutual help and emotional and financial support. This has historical roots. In Moldovan tradition, the parent-child relationship is a bilateral one. Both generations have proven it over time. Parents' care of their children takes place long after they have reached adulthood, or even if they are already in their families. The argument is the economic dependency of young generations at that stage of life. Children have financial support up to the age of over 25. Parents support financially because of the high costs of studies, the difficult integration into the labor market and the start of adult life.

Spatial mobility has induced a new foray, where the families of children and parents found themselves separated by distance and new locations of children. Even if 60% of the population lives in rural areas, where tradition leaves its final mark, migration has impacted intergenerational relations between parents and children. Rural migration has created categories of "orphaned" older parents inside the country - families who do not have the direct attention and care from children because they emigrated to a different city. The financial support provided by children up to the age of 50 is insignificant and constitutes about 9% of the population. For people aged 65 and over, the share of people who received financial support is 13%, and at the age of 70+, over 15%.

Mass urbanization (the transfer of generations of children to cities, especially to Chisinau), the families with few children, including for rural areas (specially those in the northern area) changed the family structure and size, intensity, care and protection of parents at older age. It occurred, either because of an increase of internal migration to the national urban space, or because they were involved in a large flow of emigrants abroad, a phenomenon that has characterized the population of Moldova since the 90s of the twentieth century.

The GGS results confirm a high level of satisfaction with the relationship with children/parents. Thus, 69.4% of the respondents are very satisfied and evaluated their relationship with their mother as being "very good". In the case of fathers, 46.0% mentioned that their relationship is satisfactory, and 3.0% said they had an unsatisfactory relationship with their father. It is obvious, in the case of the gender approach, we have a difference in the quality relationship.

The level of satisfaction of the relationship with parents depends on the age. E.g. only 50% of respondents mentioned that their relationship with parents was perfect during adolescent period

⁷ <https://minikar.ru/ro/schaste/vzaimootnosheniya-pokolenii-v-seme-kratko-problemy-pokolenii-v/>

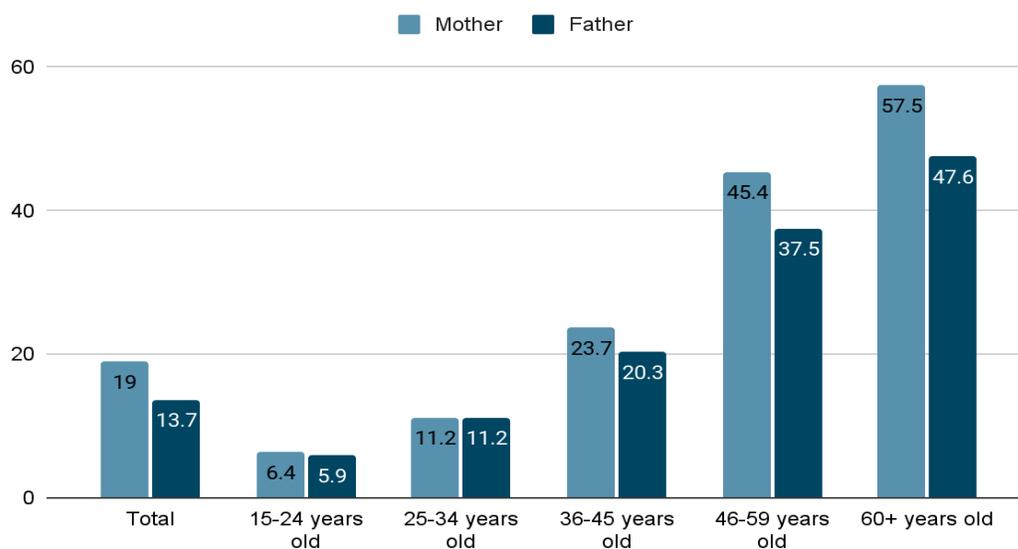
(until the age of 15). But, at a mature age, when children create their own families, the level of satisfaction increases.

Intergenerational relationships between parents and children were analyzed based on the following variables: **living and intentions of living together or living separately from parents, frequency of visits, discussions with parents at home or sources of communication, and the possibilities of grandparents to see their grandchildren** etc.

Older people who need personal care and support

The GGS data shows that for 19% of respondents, the daily activity of their mothers is limited and requires permanent care and support, 13,7% in case of fathers. Female dependence prevails. The phenomenon is evolving as the ages increase, reaching 50% for both sexes at the advanced age of the generations of children. So, we conclude that 10-20% of families in the reproduction stage also bear the burden of the parents' physical dependence.

Figure 1. Percentage of respondents who reported their mother/father's every day activity is limited because of a health problem, by age category, in %



Source: GGS survey data

Intention to live together with parents

Over 53.6% of mothers still live with someone, and 46.4% are lonely (which is enormously national in size). In total, 27% of mothers live with their son, 23.2% with their daughter (or half of the respondents confirmed that they live with one of their children), 35.1% with their life partner, 11.4% live with relatives, 3.5% with friends and acquaintances.

The shared living intentions of the mother and the children's generation is far from achievable, 50.8% confirmed that they definitely have no intentions, 23.3% probably not, 10.1% confirmed that probably yes, 9% are not sure it is possible , 6.7% definitely yes.

The situation according to the GGS study does not differ in the case of fathers, except the fact it is of lower intensity. As an explanation we have the maternal life expectancy which is higher for women than for men. According to the national statistics, older men are more vulnerable physically and become at an earlier age dependent on care services.

The intergenerational relationship is deeply affected, either by social or demographic realities. The phenomenon of demographic ageing is not based on a development of the child-parent relationship. Even if we have an increase of life expectancy in the country (70+ years) the number of those with grandparents is modest. The study confirms that most families are apart from living grandparents. Here we perceive that the late marriages and the modest hope of the grandparents have outlined this particularity for the national demographic framework. We remind, that for the year 2021 the average life expectancy was 69 age (65 for men and 72 for women).

However, it is visible from the data that families without grandparents are about 48%, with 1-2 grandparents are extremely few, if we follow the data of the GGS survey. As a percentage of the GGS study, families who confirmed that they have grandparents make up a total of 20%, which is significantly less, and for this reason the support for child care for families in the reproduction period decreases considerably for the generations that will enter the reproduction circuit from demographic perspective of time.

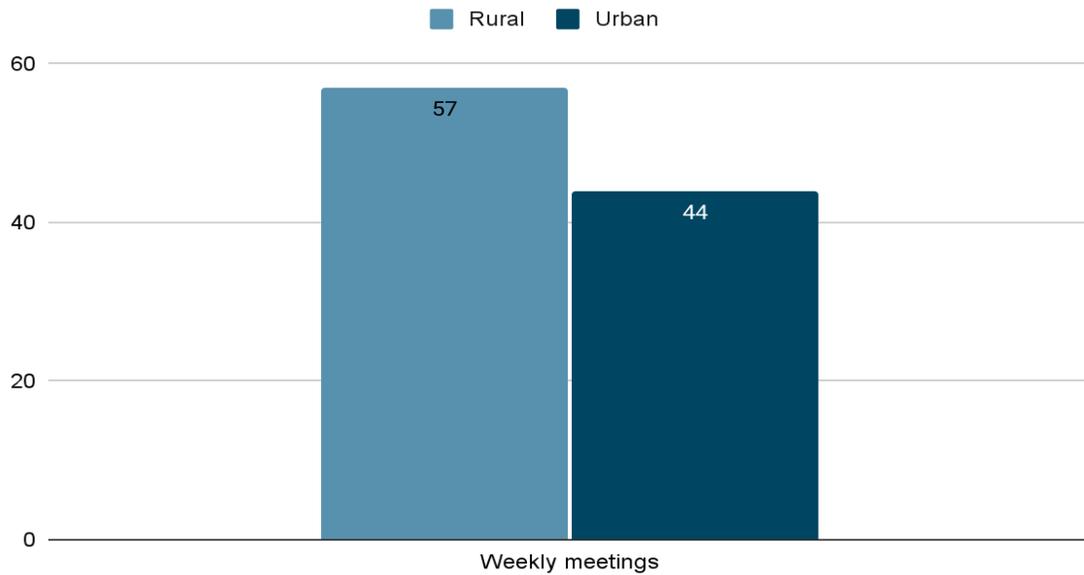
Only 20% of respondents have one or two grandchildren, each sixth has three grandchildren. Grandparents with four or more grandchildren are below 10%. From here, we conclude that late marriages, birth settlement, especially second-degree births, and the small number of children in the family etc. have a large influence on intergenerational relationships.

Traditionally in Moldovan society the older population were integrated into the families of their children. In fact, these were multigenerational families, a phenomenon widely present in the Soviet period, but caught in the Moldovan tradition of the domination of the rural way of life and large families with children until the 90s in the demographic framework. Nowadays, most older people live in their private homes. We have to induce in this context the idea that the people from Moldovan society are very reluctant in the intention to spend their life outside their own house being at a younger or older age. They prefer to live in loneliness but in their own house, rather than in the asylum or old people's homes.

Communication with older parents

More than half of the population (57%), mentioned they have weekly meetings with their mother, which is indisputably the explanation of a close relationship, more intensiv are for rural areas.

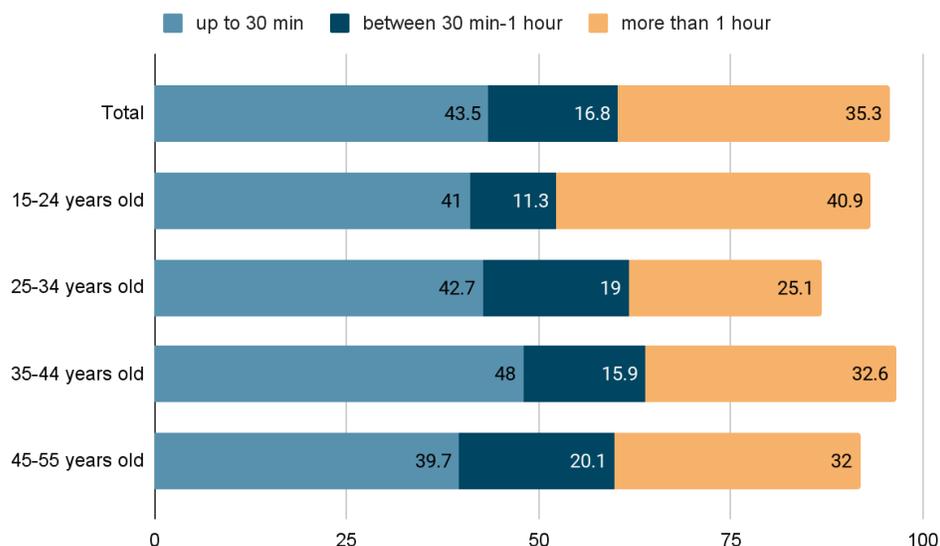
Figure 2. Percentage of respondents who meet with their mother weekly, in %



The frequency of mother-child meetings depends on the specifics of the spatial size of the country (small size) depending on the location of the parents. The second criteria distinguishes between parents in the national space and outside it, when the meetings can take place only once a year during the holidays. In the case of fathers, we attest to a higher intensity (attention) of both weekly, monthly and annual visits. As an explanation we have, the high degree of physical dependence of the older fathers.

The duration in time (minutes) to the house where the parents live is only a few minutes for 3.3%, about 25% of respondents have to cross 10 minutes, the rest have a greater distance than 20-30 minutes or some hours. Thus 40 % are in immediate proximity. So, we can conclude that the spatial mobility of young people has limited their connection between generations.

Figure 3. Percentage of respondents by duration from children’s home to parents’ home, in %



Additionally, more recently we also have the transfer of older parents to the living area of their children, either as established with living in their families or as living separately from the children's families, which is part of the current study and we will reflect below.

Moldovan families in the recent past were characterized by demographic stability, the average duration in age partners living together was estimated at over 20-25 years. Currently the period has practically reduced to only 10-11 years. The intergenerational relationships are influenced not only by the family stability, but also the duration from childrens’ home to parents’ home, frequency of meetings with parents and other factors analyzed.

Regular support with childcare

The GGS data shows that every fifth person who has a young child aged 0-6 years old received regular help with childcare from relatives or friends (variable HHD18) that highlighted one more time a strong connection between generations.

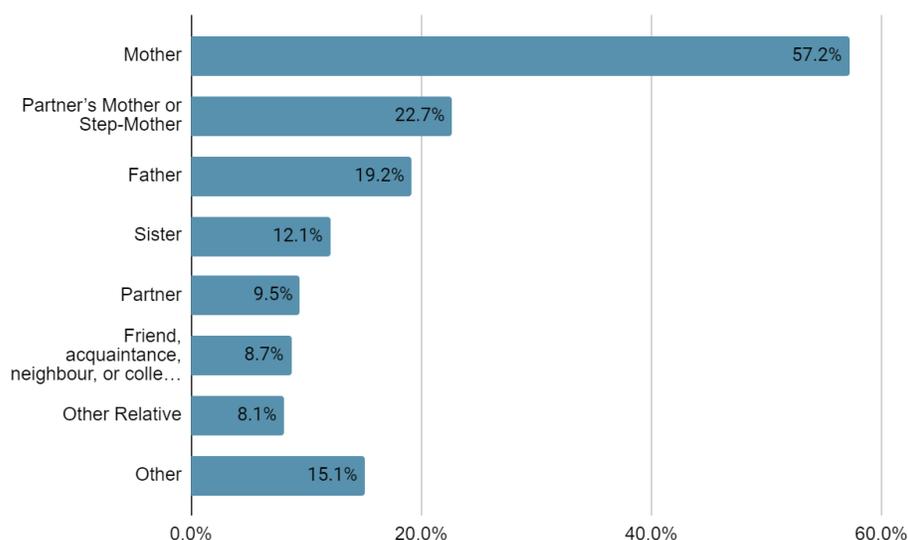
The most important factors that contribute to a stronger support with childcare between generations are: the use of the internet, level of education and household’s income. The survey shows that digital opportunities can be an important driver for building intergenerational exchange and relationships. The most vulnerable categories of population are those from rural areas, with low education and income.

Table 1. Percentage of population who received regular help with childcare from relatives of friends

| | | Count | Row N % |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------|---------|
| Internet use | Do not use internet | 48 | 14.1% |
| | Use internet | 609 | 20.8% |
| Living in an urban area | Rural | 324 | 16.2% |
| | Urban | 335 | 26.2% |
| Highest educational level | Primary education | 9 | 15.0% |
| | Gymnasial education | 176 | 17.8% |
| | Upper secondary general education | 81 | 18.0% |
| | Secondary vocational education | 109 | 17.7% |
| | Postsecondary vocational education | 78 | 18.6% |
| | Higher education | 204 | 27.4% |
| Income quintile of households | Quintile 1 | 16 | 13.0% |
| | Quintile 2 | 60 | 15.6% |
| | Quintile 3 | 223 | 21.5% |
| | Quintile 4 | 81 | 20.2% |
| | Quintile 5 | 214 | 22.1% |

Regular help for young families with children is mostly provided by their mothers, which is consistent. About 60% of the respondents confirmed it.

Figure 4. People who provided regular help with childcare, in %



Source: GGS survey data

About 30% of respondents confirm that help was provided daily, 20% 1-2 times per week, 10% 3-4 times per week. We admit that, in modern conditions only a small part of families can afford nannies (due to the modest income of young families). A dimension of support with help in the care of children are also close relatives (families of brothers, sisters, aunts, etc).

The mutual help between generations that go through the reproduction stage is visible. Support for young generations with childcare persists in two dimensions: from the generation of adult children and parents. The contribution of mothers during the reproduction period for young families is particularly consistent. It appears as a main pillar. Reciprocity of intergenerational support with childcare exists. The data of the GGS study do allow us to detail the aspects of their duration, intensity, frequency, ages but we admit also that can be more occasional. About 60,5% of respondents confirm that help was provided weekly. The intensity of childcare support is only in the case of first-rate family relatives (mother, mother-in-law, sister-in-law, sister, brother). Traditionally, childcare support is more consistent in Moldovan society from mothers of daughters and sisters for families with children.

The mother-daughter relational support is strong and reciprocal in time, confirm the GGS study. This support reduces the burden of raising the young generation who is more focused on breeding families and less on policies at the expense of the state and society.

In the context of market economy competition, intergenerational support from parents to young families during the reproduction period has a major role in taking decisions regarding having more children or not. Some families decide to have more children if the older generation (particularly parents) are able and willing to support them with childcare. However, the mother-daughter or grandmother-grandchildren relationship, according to the GGS study data, is strong, and the postponement of births to an older age has not yet impacted these relationships.

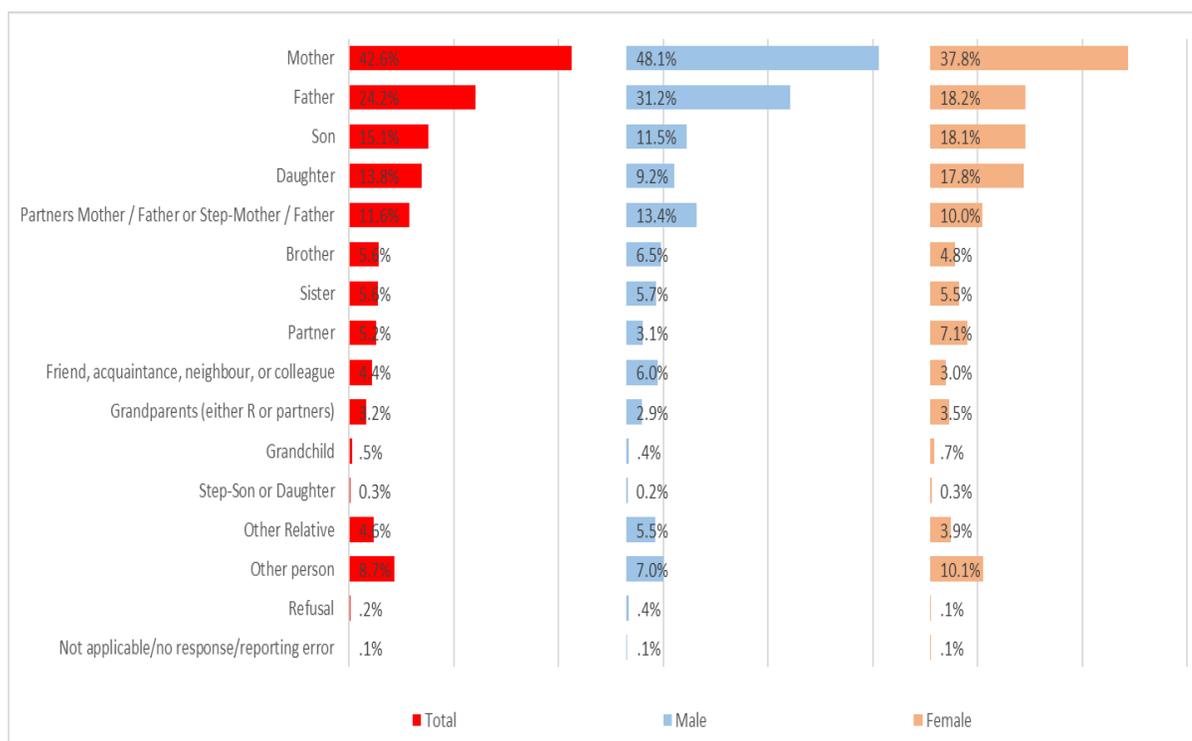
Personal and financial support provided between generations

From the data of the study, we have a clarity of intergenerational support, almost 15% of respondents confirmed they provided help to a person under the age of 75, primarily these are people from rural areas, 9.5% do it weekly, 5.5% monthly. In the case of people over 75, the share of those with support is 11.3%, of which 6.9% do it weekly and 4.4% at least once a month. We conclude that the elderly over 75 years do not enjoy the same attention and care as their younger counterparts, especially if their needs are greater.

It is obvious that the need for services for social protection and care of older people is targeted to specific groups of population. Data shows that 10.7% of the respondents confirmed they paid for the needed help and protection, of which 7.7% are from rural areas, with priority being women. This kind of support starts mostly with 59 years old, especially for women, and lasts until 80 years old.

Almost 13.6% of the respondents confirmed that they **receive transfers** of funds (in the amount of 750 MDL) both from inside and outside the country, of which 7.6% are citizens from rural areas (aged 62-80 years), and 8.8% are women. Of which, 22.4 % are transferred by sons (for families of parents-mothers), 16.0% by daughters, and 27.3% are financial transfers by mothers for their children who are studying, between the ages of 15-35 years.

Figure 5. Persons who provide financial support, by gender

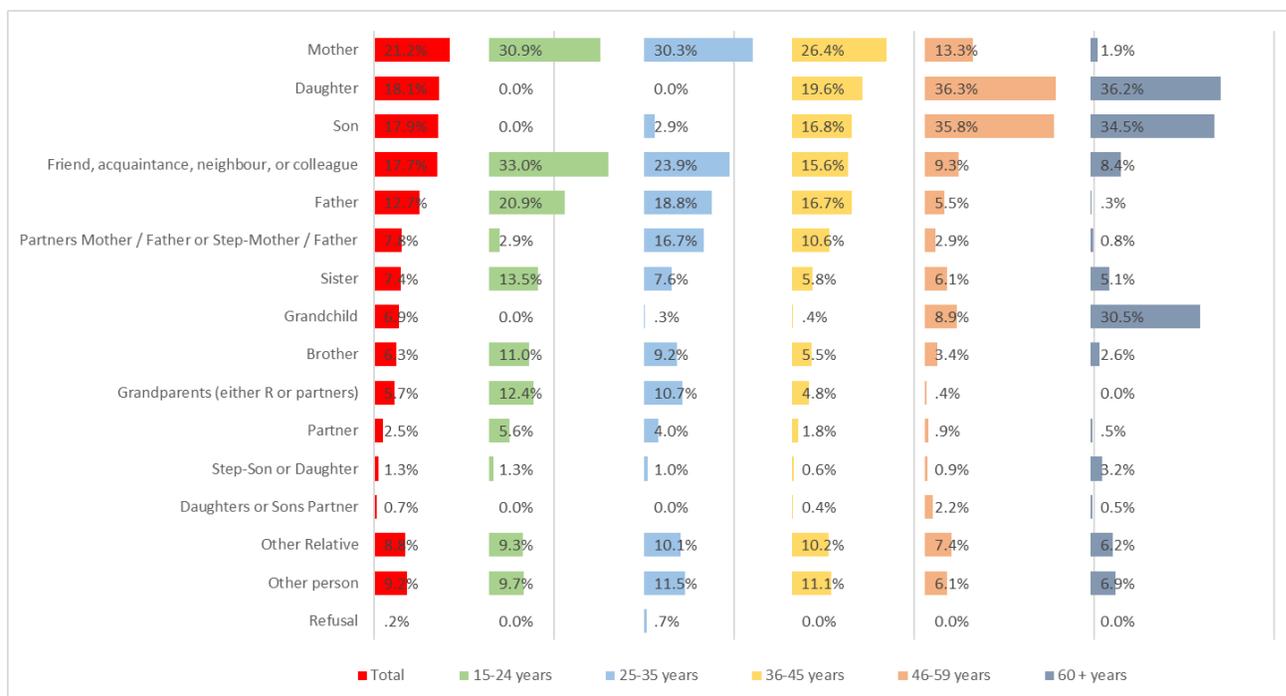


Source: GGS survey data

The mutual financial support is also visible in the relation between grandchildren and grandparents. From the data of the study, we have the confirmation that 30.5% have confirmed the

financial support of the grandchildren for the age category 60+ years. Financial support for parents is consistent once they reach pre-retirement age. More than 30% confirmed financial support received from their son and daughter.

Figure 6. Persons or relatives who provide financial support, by age category

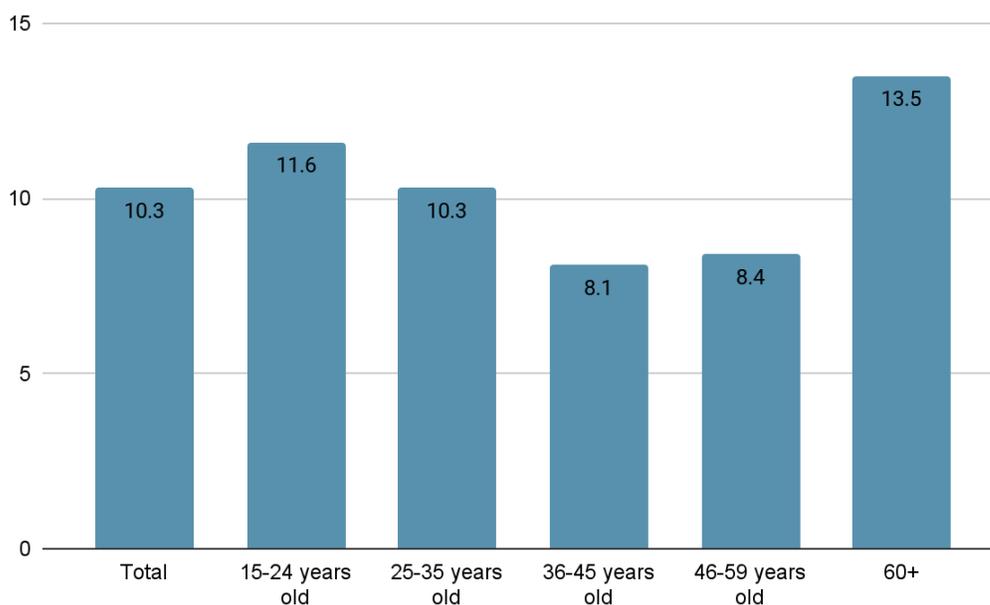


Source: GGS survey data

Regular help provided with household chores

Regular help in maintaining the household is a dimension that strengthens family cohesion aimed to support older parents. For older people this kind of support is more evident after the age of 50, along with the limitation of their physical potential. 30% of the respondents confirmed they receive this support regularly, only 10% receive household help daily, 21% once or twice a week with low prevalence for rural areas. Help in the household for parents is more consistently provided by children (sons and daughters) and at the age older people reached 60+. The contribution of sons and daughters is equivalent in maintaining the household. The help in maintaining the household is mutual (young families and the parents' family), where 30% percent confirmed that they do it monthly. Other persons provide support with household care occasionally.

Figure 7. Percentage of respondents who provide regular help with household care, by age



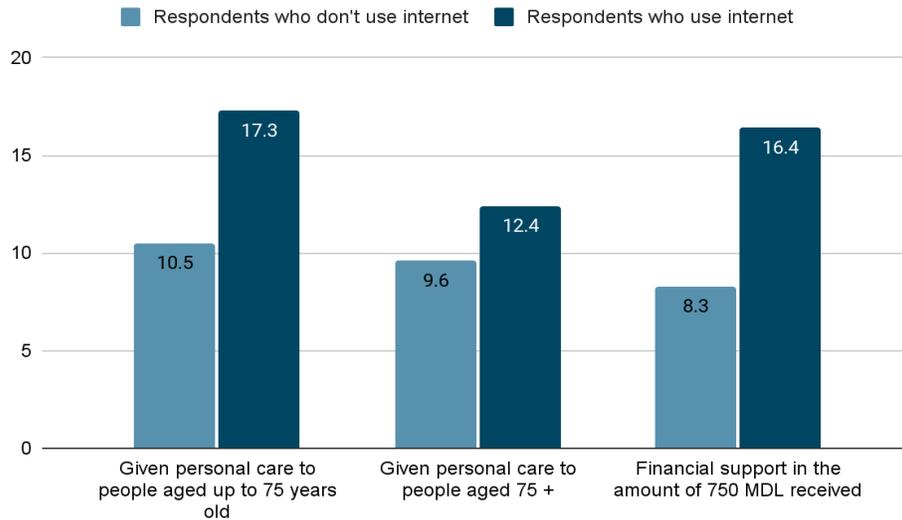
Key factors in building intergenerational relationships

To identify the main drivers of intergenerational support, we analyzed the influence of several factors: use of the internet, level of education, residence, and family income.

Digital empowerment and the use of the internet proved to be an important driver of intergenerational support, especially in the context of out-migration of younger generations. The data shows that people who are using the internet are more likely to provide personal care to older people aged up to 75 years old or over. Also, this is actual in the case of financial support provided. Digital skills are very important nowadays to all categories of generations including both young and older generations. This contributes to an increased level of participation in the community and a comfortable life. E.g. older people can access public services and participate in the community through different digital platforms. At the same time, generations can connect regardless of social and physical distance. The benefits of digitalization have been proven in many social programs implemented recently by UNFPA in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection.

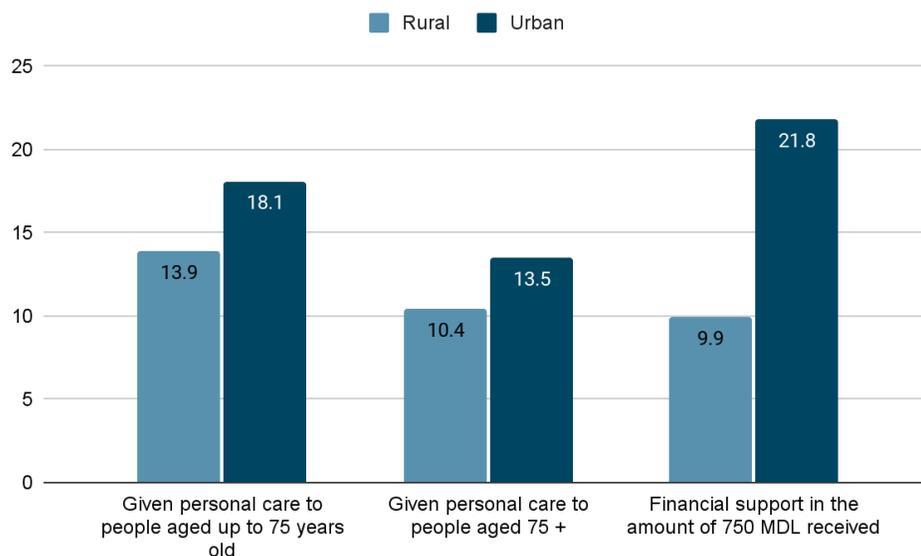
Another determinant of intergenerational **support is household income**. The survey showcases that people with a high income are more likely to provide support, financial or personal care. Also, the survey shows that the most poor respondents are also disposed to interrelate with other generations. The financial opportunities makes people more open to providing support (financial or personal), that means a better life and economic situation overall can contribute to a stronger intergenerational support. This means policy measures should include activities that will increase the quality of life for all generations.

Figure 8. Percentage of respondents who provide support to older persons by use of internet, in %



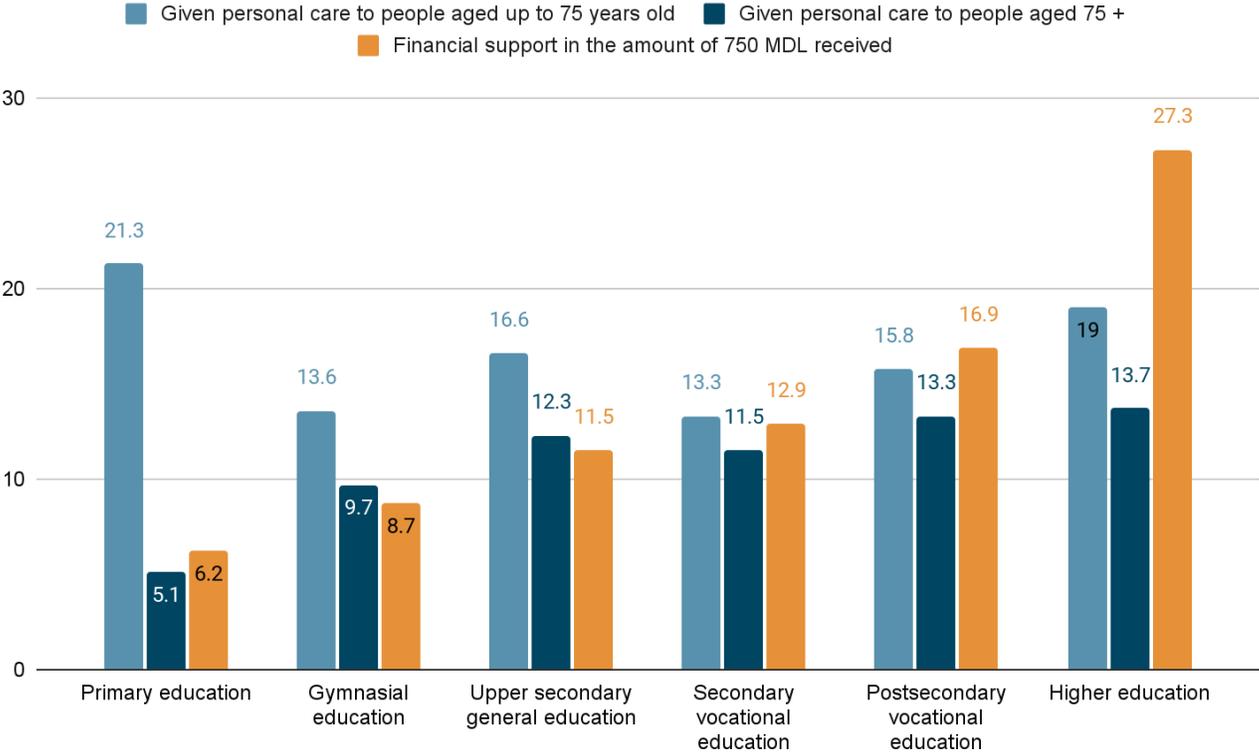
Intergenerational support depends on the residence. The survey data shows that about every fifth person from urban areas supported financially and with personal older persons. This is because people from urban areas have a better economic situation, the population is younger and most probably they have older parents. The population in rural areas is continuously aging, which causes them to be economically inactive and limited to decent life. Young population is abroad or intends to move abroad, shows the GGS data. In the context of out-migration of young people, the unproportional balance between young and older generations increased. In rural areas, financial support is twice as low than in urban areas, and represents about 10%.

Figure 9. Percentage of respondents who provide support to older persons by residence, in %



The level of education is a strong indicator of intergenerational connection. Survey data shows that people with high levels of education provide to a greater extent intergenerational support to older persons, e.g. every third person with higher education provided financial support and every 5th respondent offered support with personal care. The social protection support or services are not enough to ensure the wellbeing of older generations. But they do not cover the needs of older people, that is why social policies should be adjusted to the new demographic context and take in consideration the establishment of social dividends. Another important element is the development of long-life learning opportunities. In this context, we suggest developing local training programs for older people, development of digital skills, development of local infrastructure that will allow engagement of older people in learning activities.

Figure 10. Percentage of respondents who provide support to older persons by education, in %



Vulnerable groups in terms of loneliness and lack of communication with their family are: people with low level of education, with low income, from rural areas and limited access to digital technologies. In the context of demographic changes, there is a risk of an increasing number of vulnerable groups of aging population.

The social profile of those actively involved in intergenerational exchange and support represents educated people with medium or high income, mostly from urban areas and with large access and use of digital technologies. The age category of those who provide personal support are people aged 25-45 years old.

Conclusions and policies implications

The national demographic framework is in continuous modeling under the action of internal demographic and socio-economic factors that amplify new demographic qualities of the entire system adapted to current requirements. Generationally, the population has undergone profound changes, both in terms of the number of generations, and the modeling of each generation, the priorities and demographic standards embraced by the generations in the reproduction period.

The GGS study eloquently shows that the population has the resources to adapt to new realities and the older population can be valued and can contribute to the society if social policies empower them to have an active and healthy aging. Achieving the demographic balance is possible through the generational and individual dimensional training. Every member of society from a generational position can contribute and receive support, care, and comfort for life. As a finality of this study, we establish the following findings:

- Intergenerational support is mutual where older generations support the younger one with childcare and during the study age, and younger generations support financially and with personal care their parents in older age. Every fifth person from urban areas and every 10th person from rural areas provided financial support and personal care support to the older population. More than 50% of the population communicate with parents weekly.
- About 20% of respondents mentioned their parents need care and support, to a greater extent older women (respondents' mothers).
- The use of internet and digital empowerment of young and older generations are important drivers of intergenerational support and can ensure their economic opportunities and finally the quality of life.
- The social profile of those actively involved in intergenerational exchange and support are: educated people with medium or high income, mostly from urban areas and with large access to digital technologies.
- The level of satisfaction of intergenerational relations is high for both - younger and older generations. Both generations are open to provide mutual support in different stage of life cycle.

Policy recommendations

Intergenerational policy measures involve efforts to create social relations, social conditions of governmental or non-governmental institutions with distribution of resources. Demographic change involves a change of attitude. People are getting older and therefore want to be active and healthy for longer. Where reduced employment opportunities, few job retraining options, generate unemployment for young people, adults, and the older population.

The sustainability of generational policies is a challenge of economic dimensions not only through skills, knowledge, and competences, but also the social inclusion of each member of the society. Demographic aging should not be perceived as a problem but as an opportunity through development of policy measures that will value and empower the older population. As a result of GGS data, the Republic of Moldova is currently at the second stage of aging⁸. That is why the policy measures should be oriented to value this category of population, making them economically active and thus contributing to the development of society.

Policy recommendations

- Implement social and awareness programs to combat age stereotypes because of limited capacity to work and being economically active, efficient and useful. This could be achieved through a large communication campaign on active and healthy aging. An important role in combating age stereotypes has civil society organizations that could implement different innovative projects and empower the older population at local level to be active and participate in community life. Also, it's important to have cooperation between LPAs, community leaders and CPAs to reflect aging principles in local and national strategies or implemented practices.
- According to the legal framework, the retirement age is 60 for women and 63 for men and does not allow older people to continue their work activity. Based on international practices, we recommend establishing work friendly places that will allow the older population to adjust their schedule and work program (part-time or flexible working arrangements).
- Promote social solidarity and cohesion through intergenerational dialogue by engaging the older population in decision making activities and other relevant community activities.
- To create more education opportunities, lifelong-learning opportunities for the older population to allow them to be competitive on the labour market, remain actively involved in community life. The government should invest in education programs for all age categories.
- To develop policy measures for building demographic resilience in order to support young and older people to achieve their family and fertility aspirations. In this context, both young and older people can independently decide on the creation of not a family or on the number of children desired.
- Apply innovative approaches and increase digital skills of older generations by implementing different social intergenerational programs. E.g. community volunteering,

⁸ Second stage of aging represents the share of the aging population reaching 20% of population.

intergenerational exchange of skills, knowledge and experiences gained in different circumstances.

- Promote family friendly policies that will support younger generations to be economically active and independent during the reproductive years, especially in the period when they need to raise a child. To create more opportunities of childcare services available in order to return to the labor market when they want.
- The national policies should integrate recommendations on infrastructure adjustment to the health and conditions of the older population, considering specific diseases.
- Social policies must develop a wide spectrum of services adapted to the needs of the older population with priority for the rural population, including the following:
 1. development of long-term services for older people
 2. free of charge mobile phone services to older people in order to build intergenerational support and reduce the share of population who face with loneliness
 3. to establish preferences prices for older people to TV services especially for people from rural areas, where the access to information is limited and people has a high risk of loneliness
 4. adjust urban and rural infrastructure and public transport to the needs of older people.

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