



MDG ACHIEVEMENT FUND

YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY AND  
RETENTION PROGRAMME



# To BiH or not to BiH?

A report on the return of young Diaspora  
to the BiH labour market





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**To BiH or not to BiH?**  
**A report on the return of young Diaspora to the BiH Labour Market**

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The Youth Employability and Retention Programme  
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## Foreword

This publication has been produced within the framework of the project “Youth Employability and Retention Fund” in Bosnia and Herzegovina, supported by the Kingdom of Spain through the Millenium Development Goals Fund.

The authors wish to thank all those who contributed to the survey and this report and particularly those young people in BiH and Diaspora who took the time to share their opinions with us through the survey. We extend our thanks to Envesa Hodžić-Kovač and Louisa Vogiazides for their invaluable advice in developing and analysing the survey. We would also like to thank The Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees, the Diaspora Sector, the Employment Institutes in Federation of BiH, Republika Srpska and Distrikt Brčko, the Labor and Employment Agency of BiH, Agency for Employment Mediation “Posao.ba” and Agency for Employment Mediation “Agencija Spektar”, The Association Alumni of the Center for Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Studies (ACIPS), World University Service of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Braingainprogram of the World University Service Austria and Student radio eFM who assisted in ensuring that the survey reached as wide an audience as possible.

We extend a special thanks to the Diaspora Sector of the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees (MHRR), who provided guidance in the development of the survey and this report. The activities of the Diaspora Sector can be of great assistance to young people of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Diaspora. Within the responsibilities of the Diaspora Sector are to raise awareness on issues of relevance to BiH Diaspora and provide technical assistance in efforts to protect their rights. In order to realize its responsibilities as effectively as possible, the Diaspora Sector of the MHRR uses its website to provide the BiH public and BiH citizens living abroad with information.<sup>1</sup> Any question can be sent to the following email address – [iseljenistvo@mhrr.gov.ba](mailto:iseljenistvo@mhrr.gov.ba) – the Diaspora sector will liaise with the relevant responsible authorities at different levels of government to gather information and respond directly to the person who sent in the question. The answers to frequently asked questions can be found in the archives of the section “You ask-We answer<sup>2</sup>.”

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1 <http://www.mhrr.gov.ba>

2 [http://www.mhrr.gov.ba/iseljenistvo/Pitajte/Archive.aspx?template\\_id=18&pageIndex=1](http://www.mhrr.gov.ba/iseljenistvo/Pitajte/Archive.aspx?template_id=18&pageIndex=1)

In 2008 the Diaspora Sector of the MHRR prepared and published an *Information Booklet for BiH Diaspora* that is available on the MHRR website<sup>3</sup>. The “booklet” provides guidance with regard to realizing various rights related to, inter alia, citizenship in BiH; identification documents; tax relief; health, pension and disability insurance; the recognition of foreign diplomas and qualifications in BiH; and absentee voting.

These information dissemination activities can be of use to young people in Diaspora who are considering a return to BiH or those who are trying to clarify how best to pursue their rights in BiH.

Aside from these activities, young people in Diaspora can also benefit from summer opportunities offered at the the Diaspora Sector of the MHRR. The internship is designed for students of BiH origin who wish to learn more about the work of institutions in BiH as well as advance their knowledge of their mother tongue. During the internship students acquire more knowledge about the work of institutions in BiH, the Diaspora Sector in particular, as well as other institutions and non governmental organizations in BiH.

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3 <http://www.mhrr.gov.ba/iseljenistvo/Publikacije/?id=915>

## Summary

874 returnees and young persons in Diaspora responded to a survey conducted under the umbrella of the Youth Employability and Retention Programme (YERP); a first mapping of the potential for the return of migrants, re-integration into the labour market, and contribution to the development of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) by its young Diaspora. A link to an online survey, consisting of both quantitative and qualitative questions, was sent to Diaspora organizations and individuals across the world. The results of the survey, including demographic characteristics of the migrants; motivations for and obstacles to their return and reintegration into the BiH labour market; ties to and identification with their home country; as well as comparisons across groups, are analysed in this report. The aim of the report is to identify the challenges and opportunities for young Diaspora to return successfully to BiH (with a focus on the BiH labour market) as well as to identify interest and motivation to contribute to its development whether or not they are interested in returning.

Conclusions and recommendations are presented, including possible measures for:

1. attracting young Diaspora to return;
2. successful labour market integration upon return;
3. fully harnessing the contributions of migrants that have stated an interest in contributing without permanently or physically returning to the country.



## Introduction

Migration has shaped Bosnia and Herzegovina for centuries. The most recent mass migration, resulting from the war of the 1990's, led to the internal displacement of 25% of BiH's population and the migration beyond national borders of another 25%. Following the war, although many migrants returned home, others continued to leave BiH for work, to study, and to reunite with family members abroad. According to the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees, it is now estimated that 1.67 million Bosnians live abroad.<sup>1</sup> Although no official census has been conducted since 1991, the Bosnia and Herzegovina Agency for Statistics' population estimate for June 2010 is 3.84 million, suggesting that as much as 43% of BiH's potential human capital is outside of the country.<sup>2</sup> As the world globalizes and the demand and supply of attractive labour force erases national borders, all countries face the challenge of both retaining their own labour force and attracting labour from outside their national borders.<sup>3</sup> A vital step towards a country preparing for the future is mapping its human capital both inside and outside its borders. Through the engagement of Diaspora members, ambassadors outside their original national borders, the doors to global labour, research and financial markets can be opened.

This Diaspora survey grew out of the objectives of the Youth Employability and Retention Programme (YERP) and specifically the programme's aim to maximize the positive impact of youth migration whilst minimizing the impact of irregular migration. How has young Diaspora members experience in migration given Bosnia's youth access to new skills, experience, and knowledge? How can BiH ease their reintegration into the country should they desire to return? How can this pool of talent be harnessed by BiH for its own development?

Through this survey, completed in partnership with the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees, Sector for Diaspora, the YERP has gained an initial understanding of the young people's opinions on the challenges posed by a return to BiH. Because of the YERP's focus on employment and employability, both the survey and this report have focused primarily

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1 Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sector for Immigration, "Migration profile of Bosnia and Herzegovina for year 2010" <http://www.msb.gov.ba/dokumenti/strateski/?id=6157>

2 Bosnia and Herzegovina Agency for Statistics "Demography 2010", [http://www.bhas.ba/tematskibilteni/DEM\\_2010\\_001\\_01-bh.pdf](http://www.bhas.ba/tematskibilteni/DEM_2010_001_01-bh.pdf)

3 Nikolić, Mraović & Čosić "Brain Gain-How to return, retain and bring experts to BiH" ACIPS, 2010.

on migrant return and on labour market reintegration though it also aims to gather relevant information on the full spectrum of Diaspora potential and to be used as one of the tools for developing appropriate policies to be suggested through the YERP.

## ABOUT THE SURVEY

In order to meet the programme mandate on providing interested migrants from Diaspora with information on the labour market in BiH, the survey attempted to research the following:

- background information on migrants in Diaspora interested in returning to BiH,
- the employment status and integration of those returnees from Diaspora currently in BiH,
- the motivations and obstacles of a control group of both those not interested in returning, and those who migrated again after having returned to BiH,
- the extent to which all groups have been or are informed about the labour market in BiH.

A bilingual survey available in both BHS and English was developed using SurveyMonkey, an online tool for creating surveys. All people of BiH origin in Diaspora as well as returnees from Diaspora who live in BiH were invited to answer the questions, which were related to their migration from BiH and, if applicable, return. Potential respondents were reached by snowball sampling. The Diaspora Sector of the MHRR, the Employment Bureaus in the Federation, the Republika Srpska, and Brčko District as well as numerous websites in BiH and Diaspora<sup>4</sup> hosted the survey online for a six-week period from December 2010 through mid-January 2011. The survey was composed of a series of single and multiple choice questions, providing space for interviewees to write in comments or opinions on some of the issues. Questions covered demographic characteristics, educational and professional status and experience, as well as return experiences and intentions.<sup>5</sup>

The first question of the survey “Are you considering a return to BiH?” was answered by 1,545 respondents (unique IP addresses), while the remaining 30 questions were completed by 874 persons. This group of 874 respondents, for the purposes of analysis, was divided into four sub-categories: Migrants considering temporary or permanent return 449 (51%)<sup>6</sup>, Migrants not considering return to BiH 271 (31%), Returnees residing in BiH 113 (13%) and those that returned to BiH, but migrated again 41 (5%). These subcategories are presented in the figure below.

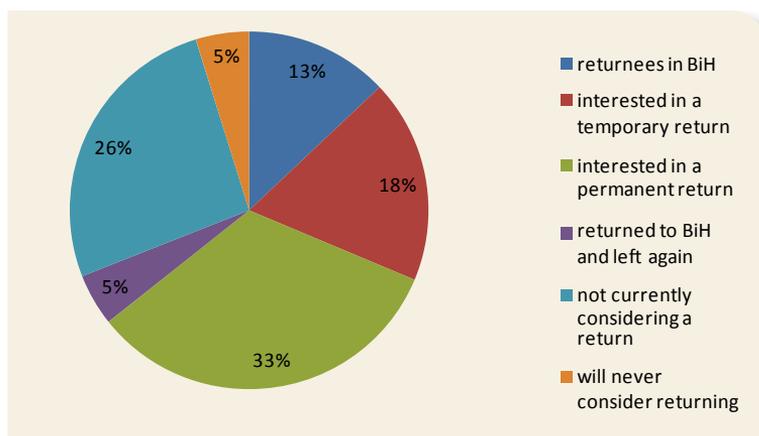
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4 The survey was placed on the websites of The Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees, sector for Diaspora [www.mhrr.gov.ba](http://www.mhrr.gov.ba), the web pages of all Employment Institutes in BiH, the Federation of BiH [www.fzzz.ba](http://www.fzzz.ba), Republika Srpska [www.zzrs.org](http://www.zzrs.org), Distrikt Brčko [www.zzzbrcko.org](http://www.zzzbrcko.org), Labor and Employment Agency of BiH [www.arz.gov.ba](http://www.arz.gov.ba), Agency of employment mediation “Posao.ba”, [www.posao.ba](http://www.posao.ba), Agency of employment mediation “Agencija Spektar” [www.agencijaspektar.com](http://www.agencijaspektar.com), [Sarajevo-x.com](http://Sarajevo-x.com), [www.sarajevo-x.com](http://www.sarajevo-x.com), ACIPS [www.acips.ba](http://www.acips.ba), World University Service of Bosnia and Herzegovina [www.sus.ba](http://www.sus.ba), World University Service Austria Braingainprogram [www.braingainprogram.org](http://www.braingainprogram.org), Student radio eFM, [www.efm.ba](http://www.efm.ba)

5 The survey results, separately in BHS and English, are available in different file formats for analysis, including Excel with pivot tables, SPSS files and STATA files. Each format has two types of datasets, one with the original data coded by the SurveyMonkey tool, and the other that is recoded for the purpose of specific statistical analysis.

6 All percentages are rounded up to zero decimal places.

**FIGURE 1.1** DIVISION OF ENTIRE SAMPLE ACCORDING TO RETURN INTENTIONS



## ABOUT THIS REPORT

This paper is divided into sections that analyse the quantitative results of the survey.

- A)** We first present the key characteristics of the entire sample, followed by
- B)** a section that focuses on the group of migrants living in Diaspora who are considering a temporary or permanent return to BiH and
- C)** a presentation of the experience of young people who have returned to BiH.
- D)** We then compare the expectations of this group with the conditions that returnees have faced upon returning to BiH and attempting to reintegrate.
- E)** A brief review of the smallest group of respondents – young people that returned from Diaspora but re-migrated (5%) - is presented.
- F)** The report then focuses on the 31% of respondents who have said that they do not intend to return (“*Will never consider returning*” together with “*Are not currently considering a return*”).
- G)** Finally we map development contributions for all groups and
- H)** we summarize conclusions.
- I)** Initial policy considerations as well as recommendations for further research are made.

In order to provide additional insight into the analysis of quantitative responses, responses to open ended questions have been included in text boxes throughout the report.

## LIMITATIONS AND BIASES

The main limitation of any online survey, including this one, is the difficulty in achieving a satisfactory representation of the desired demographic. However, a survey such as this, where a country’s Diaspora lives in numerous destination countries, cannot be conducted practically in any other way. Therefore the drawbacks of such a method must be accepted if we wish to study this target population.

Thus, we can expect three main types of biases as part of this survey. First, there is the sample selection problem of online surveys, i.e. that only those individuals who use the internet are potential interviewees. The sample is usually biased towards more educated individuals.

Secondly, the supposition is that willingness to participate in such surveys is proportional to the degree to which the individual maintains ties with her or his home country. Therefore, results may be slightly biased towards a greater willingness to return and/or contribute than is typical.

Finally, there are several issues that need to be taken into consideration when interpreting quantitative results from this particular survey. First, in most of the questions, it was possible to choose more than one option, even when the responses were mutually exclusive. Moreover, the scales used were not always completely clear and were open to interpretation. In addition, divergent lists of options were presented to the different types of migrants and for the different language options, making direct comparisons of the responses difficult.

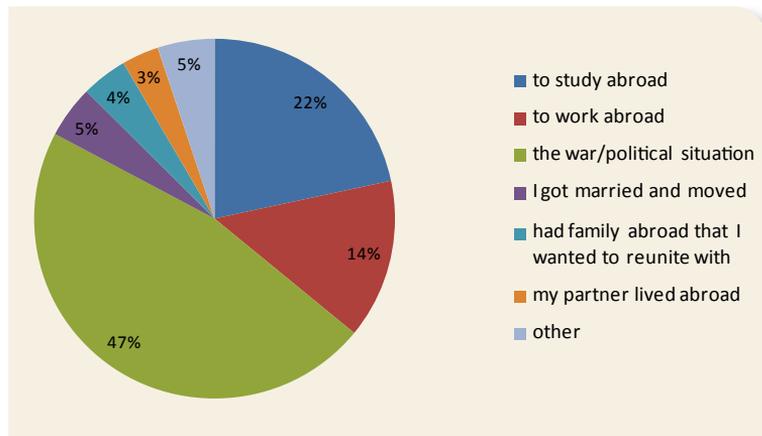
However, having taken each of these issues into account, every effort was made to create dependent variables for analysis, and therefore the authors can state without qualification that the results of the analysis presented in the next sections of the report can be considered reliable, despite the limitations of the survey.

# A.

## The Entire Sample: An Overview

In total, across all types of migrants, the average age of respondents was 32 years, the time since they emigrated from BiH is 15 years (thus on average they emigrated in 1996), and their average age at the time of migration was 18 years. The sample is made up of 42% women and 58% men. The top reasons listed for leaving BiH are: the war/political situation (47%), to study abroad (22%) and to work abroad (14%). The reasons for leaving BiH are presented in the figure below.

**FIGURE 2.1. REASONS FOR MIGRATING FROM BIH FOR THE ENTIRE SAMPLE**



Currently survey respondents live in BiH (19%), the U.S. (16%), Austria (14%), Germany (11%), Sweden (6%) and the Netherlands (5%).

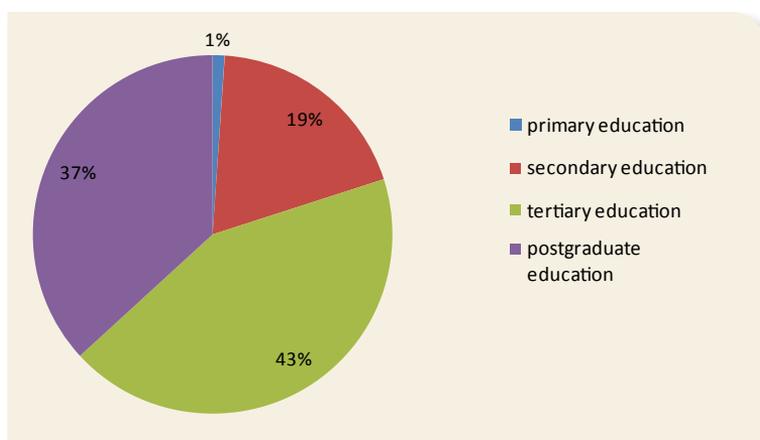
48% of all respondents have BiH citizenship only, while a significant proportion (43%) of migrants in Diaspora have both BiH citizenship and citizenship of the destination country, while 9% have foreign citizenship only.

With regards to the choice of language, we can see that out of 874 interviewees, 29% of them decided to complete the questionnaire in English. This is not a surprising result from interviewees residing abroad, but it is interesting that 19% of individuals who have returned and currently reside in BiH decided to complete the questionnaire in English.

## EDUCATION

The majority of respondents have at least post-secondary education. Only 1% of interviewees have primary education only, while 19% of them finished their education at the secondary level. 37% of respondents answered that they have a degree above the undergraduate level (masters, doctoral, or post-doctoral studies). However, this is an expected bias of internet based surveys, as, generally speaking, younger more educated populations will be internet users. Presented in the figure below are migrant levels of education.

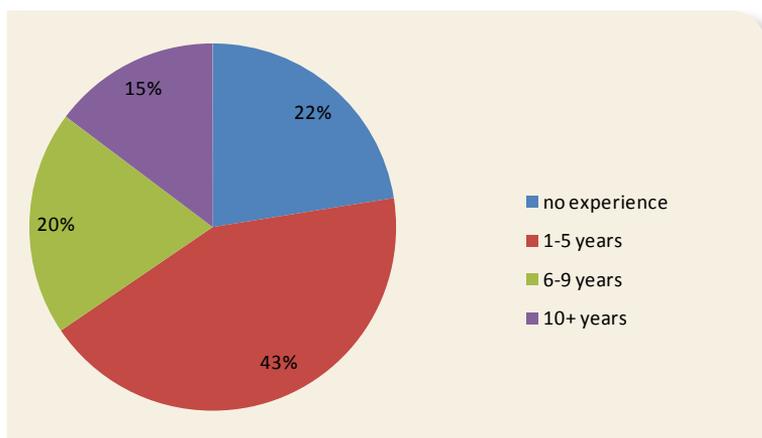
**FIGURES 2.2** EDUCATION LEVELS OF ENTIRE SAMPLE



## EMPLOYMENT AND THE LABOUR MARKET

78% of the sample report to have had work experience, of which the greatest number (43%) have 1 to 5 years of experience. Also, 74% of all those who have work experience gained it outside BiH, though 26% stated that they had acquired some work experience in BiH before their original migration. This data is presented in the figure below.

**FIGURE 2.3 WORK EXPERIENCE OF ALL INTERVIEWEES**



The sectors in which the greatest numbers of survey respondents have work experience are presented in the table below: general management and IT were selected by most respondents.

**TABLE 2.1 FIELD OF WORK EXPERIENCE FOR THE ENTIRE SAMPLE BY NUMBER OF INTERVIEWEES**

	RETURNEES	INTERESTED IN RETURN*	RETURNED AND LEFT	NOT INTERESTED IN RETURN	TOTAL
Accounting & Finance	17	26	6	15	64
Advertising & Marketing	12	46	4	7	69
Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry	4	4	1	3	12
Art and Design	7	25	3	17	52
Sales	18	44	5	13	80
Research	18	53	4	5	80
Banking, Financial Services, Insurance	18	33	6	6	63
Construction	3	39	1	10	53
Education & Childcare	15	26	3	7	51
Engineering	3	23	1	22	49
General Management	34	78	11	21	144
Healthcare	4	22	3	8	37
HR/Recruitment	15	32	5	28	80
IT	22	61	7	14	104

\* Return constitutes both temporary and permanent return.

## LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION

Respondents believe that the main ways of finding *information* about employment opportunities are through employment bureaus, newspapers and web portals. To actually find a job, the most effective ways are through recommendations by friends and family (53%) or through direct contact with the desired employer (50%), Internet (37%), advertisements in BiH newspapers (20%), while only 4% of interviewees see the Employment bureaus as an effective source for employment. This suggests that contacts are of crucial importance for success in BiH.

**TABLE 2.2 THE BEST CHANNELS TO FIND EMPLOYMENT IN BiH FOR THE ENTIRE SAMPLE**

	NUMBER OF INTERVIEWEES	PERCENTAGE OF INTERVIEWEES
The Employment bureaus	38	4%
Internet	323	37%
Ads in BiH newspapers	178	20%
TV, radio	43	5%
Direct contact with employers	433	50%
Recommendations from friends and family	466	53%

## ENTREPRENEURSHIP

A section on business and self-employment was integrated into the survey. 8% of migrants in Diaspora are self employed and have experience of running a business in their current country of residence, while only 3% ran their own business in BiH prior to migration abroad. Of the migrants residing abroad who are interested in temporary or permanent return, 32%, state that they would be interested in initiating a business if they return to BiH. 2% of returnees run their own business.

### Key Findings for the Entire Sample

- BiH young Diaspora are highly educated: 80% of respondents are university graduates and postgraduates.
- 48% of all respondents have BiH citizenship only, 43% of migrants in Diaspora have both BiH citizenship and citizenship of the destination country, while 9% have foreign citizenship only.
- 51% of the entire sample report an intention to return, of which 64% aim for a permanent return.
- Some degree of work experience in BiH before their original migration was obtained by 26% of migrants abroad that are interested in temporary or permanent return, 35% of returnees living in BiH, and 56% of returnees that re-migrated. These individuals are thus, to some extent, acquainted with the labour market in BiH.
- The major reason for leaving BiH for all those surveyed was forced migration because of the war (47%). For this reason, motivation/desire to return to BiH and contribute to its development may be closely linked to nostalgia and development goals.

# B.

## Migrants Abroad who Wish to Return: an Overview

In this section, we present the opinions of young Bosnians in Diaspora who are considering returning to BiH either temporarily or permanently. In this sample of 449 respondents, 35% are women and 65% men. 37% are married, 32% single and 19% have a partner. 61% have children.

The average net monthly income of the respondents is EUR 798, and the average net monthly household income is EUR 2,869 - numbers surely skewed by the percentage of students (21%) who undoubtedly have lower income. Average household size for this group is 2.9 members.

Regarding their intentions to return, 36% of them stated that they would return temporarily, while 64% answered that they would return permanently. On average, migrants intended to return in about 2.3 year's time; 32% of migrants would return alone, 27% would return with their partner and children, and 14% would return with a partner.

Demographic characteristics show that 38% of migrants interested in a return have BiH citizenship only, while 51% have both BiH citizenship and citizenship of the destination country. A significant proportion of respondents have foreign citizenship only (11%). The return of migrants in this last group and their access to the labour market, according to BiH legislation, would be conditional on their receiving residence and quota-based working permits with yearly prolongations while on BiH soil. Alternatively, and depending on whether their country of migration allows it, they may choose to apply for BiH citizenship. Dual citizenship bearers on BiH territory are treated as BiH citizens.

### EDUCATION

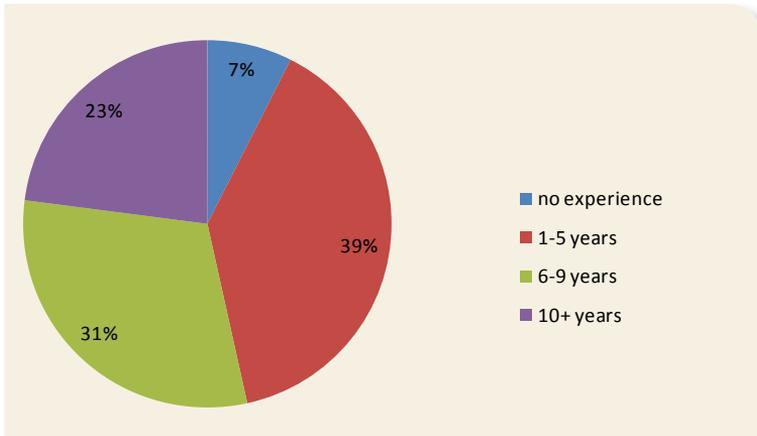
The majority of interviewees have post-secondary education. Only 2% of interviewees have primary education only, while 21% of them have secondary education. Here, fewer individuals have a postgraduate degree (33%), than the average of all interviewees (37%).

## EMPLOYMENT AND THE LABOUR MARKET

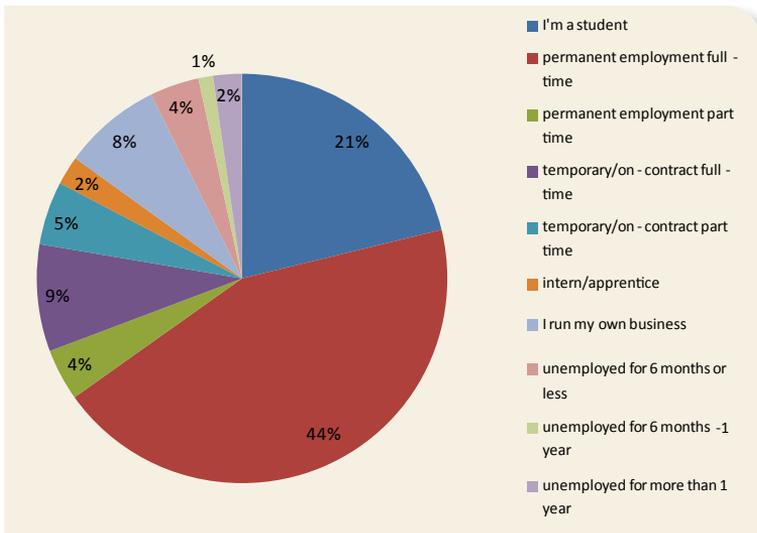
93% of respondents have some work experience. Among these, the largest proportion (39%) have 1 to 5 years of work experience. 74% of all who have work experience gained it outside BiH, while 26% acquired work experience prior to migrating from BiH.

44% of migrants abroad interested in return are in permanent employment full time, 21% are students, 8% report that they are running their own business and 7% are unemployed.

**FIGURE 3.1** NUMBER OF YEARS OF WORK EXPERIENCE OF MIGRANTS INTERESTED IN RETURN

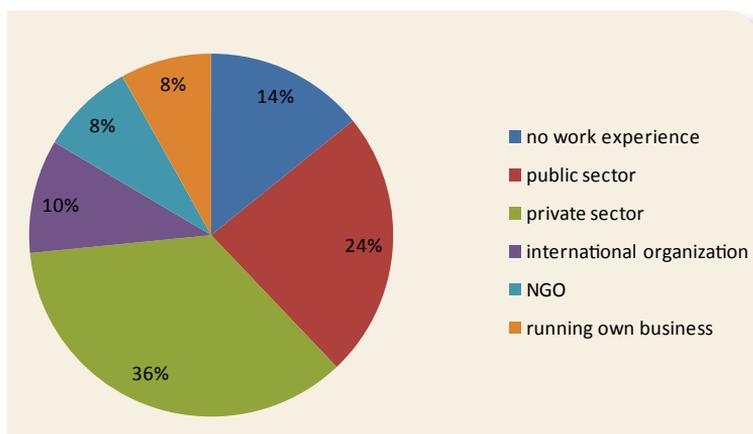


**FIGURE 3.2** CURRENT EMPLOYMENT DIVISION AMONG MIGRANTS INTERESTED IN RETURN



Sectors in which migrants in this group have acquired their work experience abroad are as follows: private sector (36%), public sector (24%), international organizations (10%), NGOs (8%) and running their own business (8%). 14% of migrants have not yet been active in the labour market.

**FIGURE 3.3 WORK EXPERIENCE BY SECTOR FOR MIGRANTS INTERESTED IN RETURN**



Migrants that report an interest to return to the BiH labour market, either temporarily or permanently, are interested in finding a job in the following areas: general management (26%), public sector and government (21%), sales (19%), secretarial and administrative (14%), science (14%), tourism and hospitality (11%) and HR/recruitment (11%). On average, the minimum net salary that migrants would require in order to be interested in return to consider employment in BiH is just above 1,500 EUR.

“I SIMPLY DON’T KNOW WHAT SOURCE SHOULD BE MOST CREDIBLE TO OBTAIN THIS INFORMATION (ON LABOUR MARKET IN BiH)”

## LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION

Responses suggest that young people in Diaspora are not provided with labour market information. Only 6% of interested migrants have information about labour market demand in different municipalities in BiH, 9% have information on services provided by the employment bureaus in BiH and 11% have access to information on the labour demand in their profession. 21% of interested migrants claim to have access to information on how to find job vacancies. 26% of those interested in returning to BiH acquired work experience in BiH prior to migration. Though this group will have some information about the labour market in BiH, their knowledge will require updating and they will need to be reintroduced to BiH’s social security system for unemployment and health benefits.

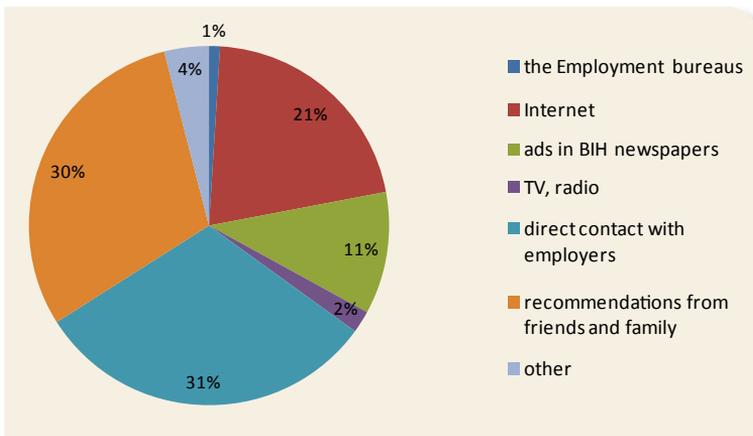
“LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION IS NONEXISTENT”.

Additional questions on information Diaspora members were interested in receiving was also included in the survey. The table below presents information most sought by Diaspora that wishes to return and find work in their country of origin.

**TABLE 3.1 INFORMATION NEEDED OR REQUESTED BY MIGRANTS IN DIASPORA INTERESTED IN RETURN**

RESPONSE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Information on how to find job vacancies	244	54%
Information on the labour demand in my profession	258	58%
Information on the labour market in different municipalities in BiH	220	49%
Channels of searching for employment	218	49%
How to apply for personal documents	108	24%
Information on welfare benefits (health, pension and unemployment benefits)	186	41%
Information on services provided by the Employment Bureaus	183	41%

When asked if they would register at the public employment service, 37% say that they would register, while 32% would not and 31% stated that they do not know if they would register. A question related to availability of information about support and services provided by the employment bureaus reveals that only 9% of migrants interested in return have access to such information and are thus not acquainted with the benefits obtained from registering at an employment bureau upon return to BiH. Further, Diaspora that are interested in returning to work in their country of origin, do not consider employment bureaus to be reliable sources for finding employment. Rather, they would expect to rely on direct contact with employers (31%), recommendations from friends and family (30%), and the Internet (21%). The figure below presents migrant opinions on the most reliable ways for finding employment.

**FIGURE 3.4 RELIABLE SOURCES FOR FINDING EMPLOYMENT**

## MOTIVATION TO RETURN

To the question “What would be your motivations for returning?” those surveyed were invited to select one or more preset choices. 47% say they are motivated to return “to help rebuild my country,” 42% because “friends and family live in BiH,” 32% “to raise my children in BiH,” and “I don’t feel at home where I live now” (28%). The answers to these questions suggest that despite the length of time since original migration (an average of 15 years), nostalgia for and the wish to contribute to BiH development remain pull factors that influence young Diaspora to return and attempt to integrate. Least important of the motivations to return include: “I want to find/I found a spouse from BiH” (8%), “To work on my BiH language skills” (5%) and “I am unemployed and can’t find work in my current country of residence” (1%).

“ALL MY FRIENDS AND FAMILY LIVE IN BOSNIA. I HAD ACHIEVED COLLEGE DEGREE IN THE US, SO I FEEL IT WILL BE NORMAL TO MOVE BACK TO BOSNIA AND TRY TO USE MY KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE, AND LIVE WITH THE PEOPLE THAT I LOVE.”

“I AM NOT REALLY SURE WHEN BUT I HAVE PLANS TO RETURN FOR AT LEAST A COUPLE OF YEARS SO THAT MY CHILDREN (I STILL DON’T HAVE ANY) CAN GROW UP IN BIH AND LEARN THE LANGUAGE.”

“IT IS MY HOME COUNTRY AND DUE TO MY STUDIES IN EUROPE AND MY EXPERIENCE I AM ABLE TO SHARE THIS WITHIN MY COUNTRY. TO HELP ORGANIZATIONS AND BUILD BRIDGES BETWEEN EUROPE AND BOSNIA.”

## PRECONDITIONS FOR RETURN

Migrants were asked to describe the basic conditions that they required in order to be able to return. 40% state they want a job in their profession, 38% require housing, 27% need a pension plan, 22% require schooling for their children, and 15% do not have any preconditions at all.

“I WOULD LOVE TO GO BACK TO MY HOME COUNTRY. A REQUIREMENT FOR ME TO RETURN WOULD BE TO FIND A JOB IN MY FIELD OF STUDY THAT CAN SUPPORT MY FAMILY AND PAY BACK ON MY SCHOOL LOANS.”

## PERCEIVED OBSTACLES TO RETURN

Migrants considering return to the country perceive a range of possible obstacles, which include finding employment in their profession (30%), finding employment at all (25%); the unsatisfactory political situation in the country (25%), the unsatisfactory economic and business environment in the country (24%) and salary level (23%). The obstacles to return that mattered the least to respondents were: having been outside BiH for too long (6%), friends and family live outside BiH (6%), and a lack of knowledge of the local languages (8%).

## Key Findings for Migrants Abroad who Wish to Return

- 36% of interested migrants would return temporarily, while 64% answered that they would return permanently. On average, they intend to return in about 2.3 years.
- 44% of migrants in Diaspora interested in return have 1-5 years of work experience suggesting that they are more interested in a return to BiH than those with longer work experience. Possible reasons for this is that people with fewer years of work experience are more mobile on the global labour market as well as attracted by the idea of discovering a new labour market.
- Migrants are interested in acquiring employment in BiH in general management; the public sector and government; sales; and secretarial and administrative support.
- 37% say that they would register at the Employment Bureau while 32% would not and 31% stated that they do not know if they would register. A question related to availability of information about support and services provided by the Employment Bureaus reveals that only 9% of migrants interested in return have access to such information and are thus not acquainted with the benefits obtained from registering at an Employment Bureau upon return to BiH.
- Popular motivations to return are *“to help rebuild my country,”* because *“friends and family live in BiH,”* *“to raise my children in BiH,”* and *“I don’t feel at home where I live now”*.
- Most of the interviewees in this group have a university level degrees and a broad range of skills and work experience. This result, combined with qualitative answers to the question about the professional experience and skills that they could offer the BiH labour market, shows how large a potential young Diaspora are for BiH and for the economic development of the country.



## Returnees: an Overview

This section provides a summary of the characteristics of young people who returned to BiH (13% of the sample). The following section will provide more detail on returnees and compare their experiences of actual return with the expectations of migrants abroad who are considering return.

The average age of the returnees participating in this study is 33. With regard to the marital status of returnees, 45% are married, 26% are single, and 13% have a partner. 59% of returnees do not have children and 54% returned alone, whilst 16% returned with their spouse and children, and 13% with their parents. The average net monthly income of these respondents is EUR 625 while the average net monthly household income is EUR 830, with an average household size on 2.1 members. The average time that returnees have spent in BiH since their return is 4.8 years.

Among the group of returnees currently residing in BiH only 1% have only foreign citizenship. Returnees with BiH citizenship only amount to 50% and those with dual citizenship to 49%.

### EDUCATION

Only 1% of respondents have primary education, while 18% have secondary education. Here, even more individuals have postgraduate degrees (44%), than the average of all interviewees (37%). The proportion of returnees who validated their diplomas gained abroad is very low, while the largest number of respondents is made up of those who did not even try to validate their diplomas: 44% of returnees in this sample attempted to have their diplomas validated, out of which only 15% succeeded.

## EMPLOYMENT AND THE LABOUR MARKET

In this group, 71% has some work experience and 70% of those who have work experience gained it outside BiH. 61% of returnees currently residing in BiH report to be employed while a significant proportion (39%) is unemployed. 41% of currently employed in permanent contracts full time while 10% are in temporary contract full time and 9% are in permanent employment part time.

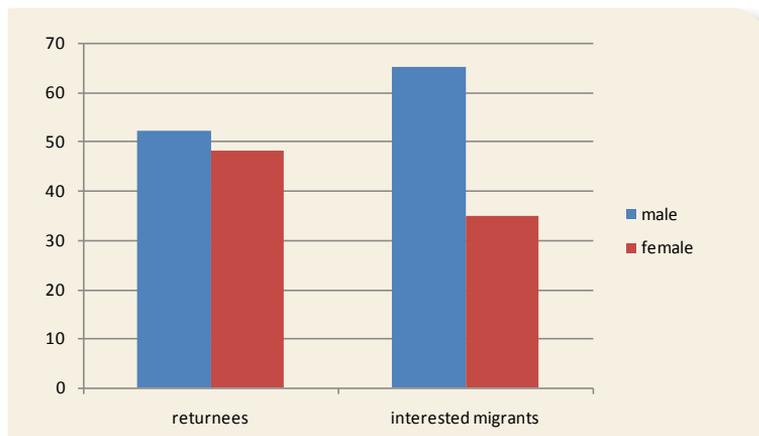
“I HAVE BEEN HERE FOR 3 MONTHS AND I HAVEN’T FOUND ANYTHING. I WAS HOPING TO FIND WORK SINCE I HAVE AN EXCELLENT EDUCATION BACKGROUND BUT I AM GETTING INCREASINGLY DISAPPOINTED IN THE POWER OF GOOD EDUCATION AND THE WILL FOR CONTINUED LEARNING, MY HOPE OF FINDING WORK WITHOUT CONNECTIONS IS GETTING SMALLER.”

## D. The Realities of Returning vs. Expectations and Perceptions

This section compares their real life experiences of young people who returned with the expectations of migrants who are considering return.

The ratio of male to female returnees within the sample of returnees is 52% to 49%. While this constitutes a favourable gender division for a survey, it is important to note that the sample of migrants considering return reveals that a greater proportion of men than women are currently interested in a return to BiH (65% and 35% respectively).

**FIGURE 4.1 GENDER COMPARISON BETWEEN MIGRANTS INTERESTED IN RETURN AND RETURNEES**



Though 27% of migrants considering return would return with a spouse and children, only 16% of returnees actually came back with spouse and children, which could attest to the inherent difficulties in the reality of such a return. Among the difficulties highlighted in returning with spouse and children are the obstacles of finding adequate schooling for children and the lack of job opportunities for the spouse. The biggest discrepancy in the study is found in comparing the 22% of migrants considering return that expect to find suitable schooling for their children compared to 7% of returnees that have actually achieved this.

“MUST SECURE A JOB PRIOR TO RETURN. FEEL THAT MY CHILDREN ARE STILL BETTER OFF ABROAD, BUT HOPE THAT THIS WILL IMPROVE”.

“I WOULD LIKE TO RETURN BUT I AM CONCERNED ABOUT THE FUTURE OF MY DAUGHTER THAT IS BORN IN THE US. HERE I HAVE PLENTY OF ALTERNATIVES FOR HER EDUCATION AND THE GENERAL FAIRNESS OF THE SYSTEM...”

In addition, 21% of migrants considering return expect there to be opportunities for their spouse to find employment, but only 8% of returnees confirm to have found this upon return.

Other discrepancies are in the area of plans for retirement. A secure pension plan upon return is expected by 27% of interested migrants, but is only found by 7% of returnees. The lack of a secure pension plan is likely to deter older returnees and affect the length of stay of the 64% migrants that have stated an interest in a permanent return. In addition only 20% of returnees have access to health insurance (though only 6% of those interested in return voice a concern about provision of health insurance). These are crucial areas that require significant attention, to facilitate the return and successful reintegration of the Diaspora into the labour market.

A question concerning citizenship reveals that, whilst 11% of migrants considering return have only foreign citizenship, only 1% of returnees have foreign citizenship. This might be a clear indication that a return to BiH for those with foreign citizenship is more difficult than anticipated.

„...BECAUSE I HAVE ONLY A GERMAN CITIZENSHIP, IN BIH I AM TREATED LIKE A FOREIGNER, THAT MEANS THAT I WOULD HAVE TO APPLY FOR A WORK PERMIT AND GO THROUGH THE REST OF THE BUREAUCRATIC OBSTACLES. FOR ALL FIRMS WHERE I APPLIED FOR VACANCIES IT WAS TOO MUCH WORK AND THEY WOULD RATHER HIRE LOCALS. THAT IS A PITY, BECAUSE I THINK THAT PEOPLE FROM THE DIASPORA COULD WITH THEIR EXPERIENCE ACQUIRED ABROAD TRANSFER A LOT OF KNOWLEDGE AND HELP THE DEVELOPMENT OF BIH.”

## EMPLOYMENT AND THE LABOUR MARKET

Returnees were asked about their employment status: 61% of returnees stated that they are employed (vs. 62% of Diaspora), 39% are unemployed (vs. 7% of Diaspora), 8% are students (vs. 21% of Diaspora), 2% of returnees and Diaspora are volunteers or interns, and 2% of returnees state that they run their own business, compared to almost 8% of migrants in Diaspora considering return. Whilst 40% of migrants considering return say that a precondition would be to find a job in their profession, this is a reality for only 20% of returnees, figures that also must be seen in the light of the official general unemployment rate in BiH that in 2010 was 27%.<sup>7</sup>

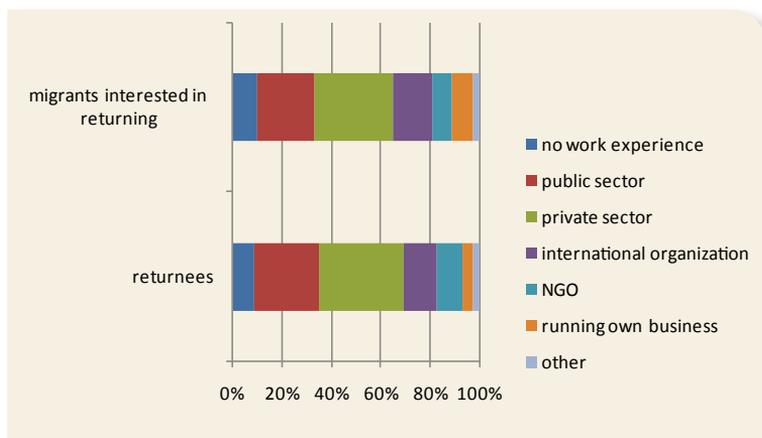
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<sup>7</sup> Bosnia and Herzegovina Agency for Statistics, “Labor Force Survey 2010”, [http://www.bhas.ba/tematskibilteni/lfs\\_2010\\_001\\_01-bh.pdf](http://www.bhas.ba/tematskibilteni/lfs_2010_001_01-bh.pdf)

A comparison of employment experiences between returnees and migrants considering return reveals that those in the Diaspora with between one and five years of work experience are more likely to return to BiH than those with more extensive employment experience. A possible reason for this is that people with fewer years of work experience are more mobile on the global labour market and may be more inclined to take a risk by entering a new labour market.

The division of employment by sectors is broadly similar, with the private sector constituting the main sector for employment for both migrants abroad and returnees in BiH.

**FIGURE 4.2** COMPARISON OF SECTORS OF WORK EXPERIENCE OF MIGRANTS INTERESTED IN RETURN AND RETURNEES IN BIH



The specific sectors in which returnees are employed are general management (25%); IT (20%); education and childcare (15%); secretarial and administrative (15%); social/non-profit work (15%); banking, financial services, and insurance (12%); accounting and finance (11%); and sales (10%). This broadly coincides with the sectors that Diaspora hope to enter if they were to return, though Diaspora also show an interest in the public sector and science as potential sectors for employment if they were to return.

The average monthly salary for returnees in the BiH labour market is 625 EUR, while the average net monthly household income is 830 EUR. The average household of returnees is made up of 2.1 people. Compared to the individual net income as reported by returnees, the low household income suggests that one person is typically employed per household. However, the national average monthly wage in BiH in 2010 was 798 KM<sup>8</sup> (406 EUR<sup>9</sup>) in 2009, which constitutes 65% of the monthly income declared by returnees in this survey. The income gap suggests that the enhanced skills and experience of returnees are valued by employers, and that they seek employment in sectors that are better remunerated.

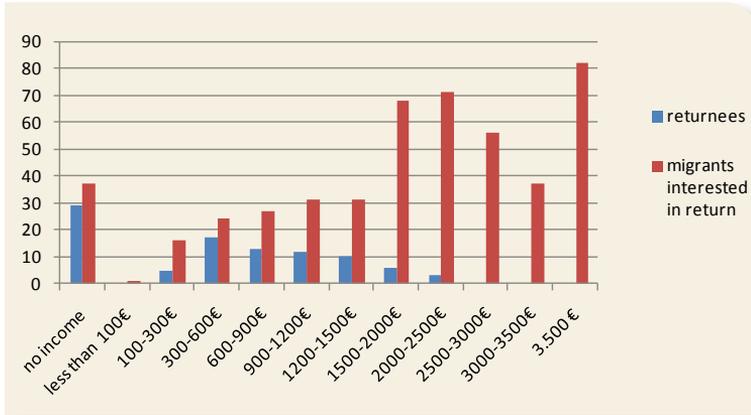
Compared to migrants considering return, the personal net income of returnees is 22% lower and household net income is 71% lower. This clearly highlights that a return to the BiH labour market will likely result in a deficit in both personal and household income. This disparity in household income can be explained by both the loss of the income of second

8 Bosnia and Herzegovina Agency for Statistics, "Labor Force Survey 2010", [http://www.bhas.ba/tematskibiteni/lfs\\_2010\\_001\\_01-bh.pdf](http://www.bhas.ba/tematskibiteni/lfs_2010_001_01-bh.pdf)

9 Raiffeisen bank Bosnia and Herzegovina, online converter BAM to EUR, 02.11.2011

wage earner and possibly of social welfare contributions that were received in the country of destination.

**FIGURE 4.3. MONTHLY INCOME OF RETURNEES COMPARED TO MIGRANTS INTERESTED IN RETURN**



## LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION

On average, returnees spent between three and six months looking for a job, have had two jobs since their return, and have between one and three years of work experience overall. Returnees found that the best ways to find employment were through recommendations from friends and family (30%), Internet (25%), direct contact with the desired employer (20%), and advertisements in BiH newspapers (14 %).

Most returnees state that they lacked relevant labour market information upon their return. Only 6% state that they had access to information about the labour market in different municipalities in BiH, whilst 90% did not have information on services provided by the Employment Bureaus. Comparing the accessibility of information to returnees and migrants considering return, it is apparent that, in the 4.8 years that returnees have on average spent in BiH, no improvement in the provision of labour market information has been achieved. In many cases the returnees requests for information on the labour market in BiH is even higher than the estimated need for information made by migrants abroad interested in return.

The respondents were asked to list the information they would have needed (in the case of returnees) or would find useful upon at the time of their return (in the case of those interested in returning).

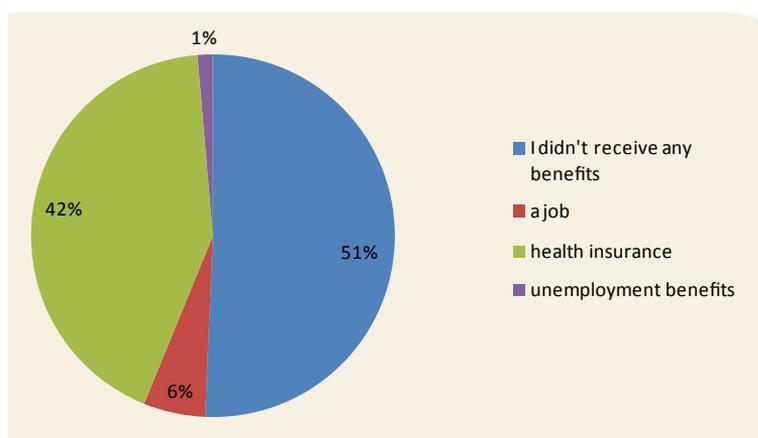
**TABLE 4.1. INFORMATION ON LABOUR MARKET REQUESTED BY MIGRANTS INTERESTED IN RETURN AND RETURNEES**

RESPONSE	INTERESTED MIGRANTS	RETURNEES
Information on how to find vacant jobs	54%	50%
Information on the labour demand in my profession	58%	68%
Information on the labour market in different municipalities in BiH	49%	77%
Channels of searching for employment	49%	61%
How to apply for personal documents	24%	39%
Information on welfare benefits(health, pension and unemployment benefits)	41%	59%
Information on services provided by the Employment Bureaus	41%	74%

“ALL INFORMATION THAT I RECEIVED I HAD TO FIND MYSELF, I DON’T THINK THAT THERE IS ANY SERVICE THAT WOULD ENCOMPASS ALL INFORMATION THAT RETURNEES FROM DIASPORA NEED UPON RETURN TO BIH AND NOBODY PROVIDED ME WITH ANY INFORMATION, I SEARCHED FOR IT AND FOUND IT MYSELF”

Upon returning to BiH, 38% of returnees registered at the Employment Bureau, which is in line with the proportion of migrants abroad who would register upon return (37%). Regarding the benefits provided by Employment Bureaus, the chart below shows that 52% of returnees who registered at an Employment Bureau did not receive any benefits. Among those who received benefits, the majority received health insurance (42%). Despite the fact that 35% of returnees had employment experience prior to their original migration, only 1% successfully applied to receive unemployment benefits. The number suggests that there is a lack of information on the services provided by Employment Bureaus.

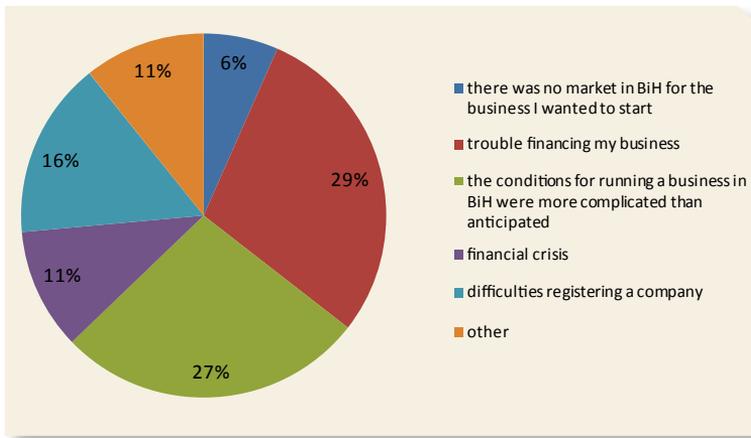
**FIGURE 4.4. BENEFITS RECEIVED UPON REGISTRATION AT EMPLOYMENT BUREAUS UPON RETURN**



## ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The largest difference in sectors of employment when comparing the two groups can be seen in self-employment; only 2% of returnees are self-employed compared to 8% amongst migrants considering return. Obstacles to starting a business in BiH are stated to be trouble financing the business (28%), harder than anticipated conditions for running a business (27%), difficulties registering a company (16%), and the financial crisis (11%). It is likely that the 32% of returnees considering return that have stated an interest in starting a business upon their return will face similar obstacles unless specific measures are taken to combat them.

**FIGURE 4.5 OBSTACLES TO BUSINESS START-UP IN BiH UPON RETURN**



“I TRIED OPENING TWO COMPANIES IN BiH THIS YEAR, BUT THE BUREAUCRACY, CORRUPTION IN THE INSTITUTIONS AND HAUGHTINESS FOR WORK AND RESPONSIBILITY, AS A NON-EXISTENT CODE OF CONDUCTING BUSINESS FORCED ME TO GO BACK TO USA. I HAVE A MASTER IN INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND I AM A GRADUATED IT EXPERT WITH 10 + YEARS OF WORKING EXPERIENCE. I AM FLUENT IN ENGLISH AND GERMAN AND I HAVE SUCCESSFULLY CONDUCTED BUSINESS ACROSS EUROPE, CANADA AND USA. UNFORTUNATELY VERY UNSUCCESSFULLY IN MY BiH.”

## VALIDATION OF DIPLOMAS

44% of returnees had attempted to get a diploma validated, out of which only 15% succeeded. It is likely that many of those employed without having had their diploma recognised are working within firms or international organizations that do not require validated diplomas. Feedback from those surveyed highlighted that the requisite process to validate diplomas was time consuming, exhausting, as well as expensive.

„JUST FINDING THE RIGHT PLACE TO VALIDATE MY DIPLOMAS WAS A CHALLENGE. PROCESS IS RIDICULOUS, EXPENSIVE AND MADE WITH INTENT TO DISCOURAGE ME TO STAY IN BiH. I HAVE GIVEN UP ON THIS PROCESS AND HAVE FOUND A JOB WITH AN INTERNATIONAL FIRM NOT ASKING FOR THIS VALIDATION AT ALL.”

“I AM NOT ATTEMPTING TO VALIDATE MY DIPLOMA AS I HAVE NO INTENTION TO WORK IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR.”

“MY EXPERIENCE WITH VALIDATING DIPLOMAS WAS QUITE STRESSFUL AND UNSUCCESSFUL. GATHERING THE DOCUMENTATION, THE UNFRIENDLINESS OF THE STAFF, THE PRICE OF 1000 KM, THE FACT THAT I WAS NEVER GOING TO BE ABLE TO VALIDATE MY DIPLOMA DUE TO THE TEACHING PLAN AND MY MASTER PROGRAM ACQUIRED ABROAD WAS NOT CONSISTENT WITH THE TEACHING PLAN AND PROGRAMME OF RELEVANCE ON A BIH UNIVERSITY.”

## MOTIVATION TO RETURN

Principal motivations amongst returnees for their return were that „*friends and family lived in BiH*“ (50%), „to help rebuild the country with knowledge and experience“ (43%), and the experience of not feeling fully integrated in the country of previous destination (21%). This is in line with the motivations amongst migrants considering return, many of whom express the will to help with the development of BiH and nostalgia as pull factors. The least important motivation for return were an inability to find work in the previous country of residence (3%): in other words, unemployment in the country of destination is not a push factor in return.

## OBSTACLES TO RETURN

If we compare concerns expressed by Diaspora with the obstacles actually faced by returnees, we can see that migrants interested in returning already have a reasonable overview of the challenges inherent in possible return. In comparing the obstacles expected upon return with the obstacles confronted by returnees, 23% of migrants considering return are concerned about their level of salary, an obstacle faced by 50% of returnees. A similar trend is revealed with regard to finding employment at all, with 25% of migrants considering return stating this as a concern, and 49% of returnees confirming that this is an obstacle upon return. An unsatisfactory economic and business environment a concern for 24 % migrants and for 49% returnees and unsatisfactory political situation expressed as an obstacle by 25% interested migrants confirmed by 48% returnees are further principal concerns amongst migrants considering return abroad and the situation actually confronting those returnees in country.

“TODAY, EVERYTHING IS SPINNING AROUND MONEY, AND EVEN THOUGH MANY FEEL THAT SOMETHING IS ATTRACTING THEM TO THE COUNTRY OF THEIR PARENTS, IT IS INDISPUTABLE THAT BIH CAN'T OFFER THE SAME ECONOMICAL OPPORTUNITIES AS THE COUNTRIES OF WESTERN EUROPE AND THE US. IF THERE WAS MORE WORK AND GOOD JOBS AND VARIOUS POSSIBILITIES, IN MY OPINION MANY PEOPLE WOULD DECIDE TO RETURN.”

“THE THING THAT IS VERY DISAPPOINTING IS THAT ALL OF THE THINGS THAT I HAVE LEARNED OUTSIDE THE BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA I WASN’T ABLE TO SHARE WITH ANYONE. EITHER I’M OVERQUALIFIED OR I DON’T HAVE ENOUGH CONNECTION WITH THE POLITICIANS OR THE EMPLOYER. THAT IS VERY SAD IF YOU ASK ME. WE EMPLOY PEOPLE TO THE POSITIONS DUE TO THEIR CONNECTION WITH POLITICIANS AND STATURE OF THEIR FAMILY.”

### Key Findings for Returnees; Realities vs. Expectations

- Compared to the average income of migrants residing abroad that are considering a return to the labour market, the income of returnees in BiH is lower by 22% in personal net income and by 71% in household net income.
- Substantially fewer migrants (2%) are self-employed in BiH than abroad (8%). Obstacles to business start-up in BiH are: trouble with finding financing (29%), the conditions for running a business in BiH harder than anticipated (27%), difficulties registering a company (16%), and the financial crisis (11%).
- The sample consisting of returnees shows a gender division of 52% men and 48% women. While this indicates a good gender division amongst returnees the sample of migrants interested in a return shows that more men (65%) than women (35%) are currently interested in a return to BiH.
- The question on citizenship shows that among the group of returnees currently residing in BiH 1% have foreign citizenship only, while 11% of migrants interested in return have foreign citizenship only. This suggests that return to BiH for those with foreign citizenship is harder than anticipated by migrants abroad. Returnees with BiH citizenship are 50% of the sample and 49% have dual citizenship.
- Comparing the obstacles expected upon return with obstacles actually encountered by returnees we see that the interested migrants, concern for level of salary (23%) is confirmed by 50% of returnees. The same trends can be seen in finding employment where 25% bring forward a concern that is confirmed by 49% returnees.

# E.

## Migrants who Returned to BiH and then Left again: an Overview

The motivations to return as selected by returnees that have left the BiH show the same trends as detected among migrants abroad interested in a return as well as returnees still in BiH. An urge to contribute to BiH development, strong family ties with members residing with BiH and a desire to raise children in BiH seem to be the strongest motivations for all groups and are likely to be fairly stable over time considering that they served as motivation for returnees that returned five years ago and are still triggers for those who intend to return in the near future. The motivations of personal growth/challenge (29%), to integrate into BiH society (29%), and to attempt to integrate in the BiH culture (29%) that are more highly ranked among this particular group of returnees that have migrated again suggests that they have an aspiration to learn more about BiH society and culture and see return as an opportunity for personal growth and challenge rather than a permanent solution.

“I AM GETTING A DEGREE IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN 2011 AND HOPE TO GAIN AN EMPLOYMENT IN SARAJEVO, I SPENT 6 MONTHS IN BIH IN 2010 TESTING THE WATERS FOR SUSTAINABLE RETURN.”

### LABOUR MARKET

The average length of time that young people spent in BiH before leaving again (either to the previous country of destination or to a new destination) was 1.6 years. On average, they returned 5.2 years ago (in or around 2005), and left the country again 3.3 years ago (in or around 2007). In this group of returnees that migrated again, 55% answered they were able to find a job in BiH, while 13% were not able to and 33% claim unemployment as the primary reason for leaving BiH.

The average period of time that these returnees spent job searching was 3 to 6 months, they changed jobs on average twice, and gained 1 to 2 years of work experience, all of which coincide with the experience of returnees that are still residing in BiH. The average salary while being employed in BiH was 600 to 900 EUR which is also in the same range as the income that returnees who have remained in BiH report.

**TABLE 5.1 DID YOU FIND WORK UPON COMING TO BIH?**

RESPONSE	
Yes, I found work prior to coming to the country	18%
Yes, I found work upon my return	38%
No	13%
No, I didn't find work and I left the country because of that	33%

## CONDITIONS MET UPON RETURN

This group of returnees who left again had access to housing (56%), a job in their profession (27%), health insurance (20%), and a social network (17%), which follow the trends set by returnees that are still in BiH. Returnees that left also report similar low scores on conditions as those who have remained when it comes to having a pension plan (2%), schooling for children (2%), and a job for partner/spouse (2%).

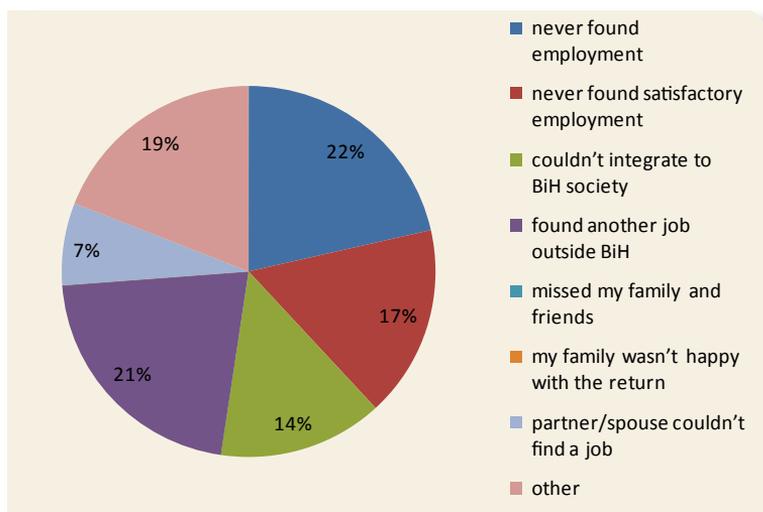
## OBSTACLES UPON RETURN AND REASONS TO MIGRATE FROM BIH AGAIN

So, why did one group of young people leave while another group remains in the country? Unfortunately the scope of this survey and the size of this particular respondent group do not allow us to draw any firm conclusions. A hint may lie in the fact that one third of those who migrated once more (as opposed to 19% of those who have remained in country) reported that not one of the opportunities listed by the survey were met upon return.

The survey also provides us with the reasons why young returnees chose to leave again: some never found employment (22%), others found another job outside BiH (21%), families were not happy with return (19%), some never found satisfactory employment (17%) and some could not integrate into BiH society (14%). Thus sustainable return for this group depended primarily on a successful integration into the BiH labour market: it is unemployment, lack of satisfactory employment, or a new job opportunity abroad that seem to trigger a second migration from BiH. Interestingly, it should also be noted that the spouse or partner's satisfaction with the return experience (and particularly the partner's success in the labour market – only 2% of re-migrants' partners were able to find a job upon return) is an important factor in sustainable return from abroad. However, 60% of respondents stated that they would consider returning to the BiH labour market.

"I WANTED TO RETURN AND SO I DID BUT MY ENVIRONMENT WAS CREATING TWO BIG PROBLEMS. THE FIRST WAS THAT I STUDIED ABROAD (I AM NOT A CLASSICAL DIASPORA PER DEFINITION, I WAS ONLY ABROAD FOR MY STUDIES) AND THAT WAS BEING LOOKED UPON WITH RIDICULE AND SECOND WAS THAT I RETURNED WITH MY FIANCÉE (LATER ON WIFE) WHO ISN'T A BIH CITIZEN, AND BY THAT COULDN'T FIND NORMAL EMPLOYMENT DUE TO THE NEED OF A WORK PERMIT."

**FIGURE 5.1. REASONS FOR RE-EMIGRATION**



An encouraging point for young people in Diaspora who may wish to come back and “test the waters” is that salaries of those who returned to BiH and then left again appear to return to the pre-departure level, suggesting that a period of temporary return to BiH does not have a negative impact on earning potential abroad. The current average net monthly income of this group of interviewee is EUR 808, and the average net monthly household income is EUR 2,801 which matches the average income of other migrants in Diaspora.

“I RETURNED TO BIH BECAUSE I STRONGLY BELIEVED THAT I COULD UTILIZE MY EDUCATION GAINED OVERSEAS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF MY COUNTRY, BUT AFTER ALMOST 3 YEARS I DECIDED TO LEAVE BIH AGAIN BECAUSE I COULDN'T FIND ADEQUATE EMPLOYMENT. I WORKED FOR \$ 500.00 A MONTH FOR 10 MONTHS, AND I SIMPLY COULD NOT GO ON LIVING SUCH A SMALL SALARY.”

“IT WAS VERY HARD TO RE-INTEGRATE BECAUSE OF THE NEGATIVITY THAT YOUTH ARE FACED WITH ON REGULAR BASIS. FINDING A JOB WAS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE AS IT BECAME CLEAR HOW “CONNECTIONS” AND “RELATIONSHIPS” WORK IN REAL LIFE. AS FOR THE LIFESTYLE, IT WAS PRETTY EASY TO RE-INTEGRATE AND RE-CONNECT WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY.”

### Key Findings for Migrants who Returned to BiH and then Left Again

- Returnees in this group remained in BiH for 1.6 years on average before migrating again. 55% answered they were able to find a job while they were in BiH, while 46% were not able to. They received 600-900 EUR in income which coincides with the income of returnees who remain in BiH.
- While “re-turnees: are triggered by same motivations as returnees who have remained in BiH - to contribute to BiH development and reunite with family and friends the main reasons for re-migration from BiH are: never found employment (22%), found another job outside BiH (21%), my family was not happy with return (19%), never found satisfactory employment (17%).
- The current average net monthly income of this group of interviewees is EUR 808, and the average net monthly household income is EUR 2,801 suggesting that salaries rise to pre-departure level, meaning that a migration to BiH does not have a negative impact on earning potential abroad.
- 60% of respondents answered they would consider returning to the BiH labour market once more.

# F.

## Migrants Abroad not Considering a Return: an Overview

Of the total number of respondents, 31% state that they are not considering a return to BiH. This group can be further divided into those that say they are not *currently* considering return, but might change their mind in the future (15% percent of this group) and those that state they have *no intention of returning ever* (85% percent of this group). In this group of 271 interviewees, 56% are men and 44% are women.

51% of this group have BiH citizenship only, which is high, compared to the other segments of survey respondents. Around 36% of this group of young Diaspora have both BiH citizenship and citizenship of the destination country, while 13% of interviewees in this group have foreign citizenship only, a percentage somewhat higher than migrants interested in returning and those that have returned.

### OBSTACLES TO RETURN

Perceived obstacles to return to BiH are the unsatisfactory political situation in the country (21%), unsatisfactory economic and business environment in BiH (18%), level of salary in BiH (17%) difference in living standards between the current country of residence and BiH (16%), and finding employment in their profession (14%). As compared to other groups in the survey, those who are not considering return perceive obstacles in the socio-political and macro economic environment as being the greatest impediment, while other groups focus more on the practicalities of finding a job.

Many interviewees from this group chose to list their preconditions to further detail the conditions that they needed to be in place before considering a return to BiH. Many of them chose to focus on the society in general, rather than on employment and the labour market: “*long-term political and social stability*,” “*more tolerance across nationalities and genders*” and “*stronger democratic institutions and a better economy*.”

“(MY CONDITION TO RETURN IS) A CHANCE TO ADVANCE THE WORKING CONDITIONS IN MY LINE OF PROFESSION, A LOW RATE OF CORRUPTION, PROMPTER WORK OF THE LEGAL SYSTEM, LOWER RATES OF CRIME AND THE ABOLISHMENT OF THE ENTITIES”.

### **Key Findings Migrants Abroad not Considering Return**

- In the group of migrants not interested to return, 85% of them stated that they do not have an intention to return ever while 15% are not considering return as an option at the moment but might change their mind in the future.
- Perceived obstacles to return to BiH are the unsatisfactory political situation in the country (21%), the unsatisfactory economic and business environment in the country (18%), the level of salary (17%) and the difference in the living standard between my current country of residence and BiH (16%), and country of residence and BiH (16% and finding employment in my profession (14%). This second biggest group in the sample (31% of the total sample) makes a statement by bringing forward political reasons and dissatisfaction with the current economic situation in the country as obstacles to return.

# G.

## Contributions to BiH Development

### HOW CAN DIASPORA CONTRIBUTE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF BIH?

Migration and development, i.e. the impact of migrants on the development of their home country, is an increasingly popular field of research and activity world wide. The survey included a number of questions related to young Diaspora’s potential to contribute to BiH development.

The following statements were posed to all interviewees. Respondents answered using a scale of 1 to 4, with 4 showing the highest level of agreement with the statement (*absolutely agree*) and 1 showing the least amount of agreement (*completely disagree*), with 2 being “*tend to disagree*” and 3 being “*tend to agree*”.

**TABLE 8.1 DIASPORA CONTRIBUTIONS TO BIH DEVELOPMENT**

RESPONSE	RETURNEES	INTERESTED	RE-MIGRANTS	NOT INTERESTED	ALL GROUPS AVERAGE/ QUESTION
I identify with the development of BiH	2.4	2.5	2.8	2.9	2.7
I believe that young labour from Diaspora could advance BiH development	2.0	1.9	1.9	2.2	2.0
I feel that I have shared/could share the knowledge and experience I have acquired abroad with my colleagues in BiH	1.9	2.0	1.8	2.5	2.0

Though all groups show a fairly high level of agreement with the statement “*I identify with the development of BiH,*” they appear to be more sceptical when it comes to their ability to actually impact BiH development: both “*advancing BiH development*” and “*sharing knowledge and experience*” receive low scores. This rather poor prognosis may speak to the significant overall challenges facing BiH’s development and to the fact that Diaspora does not perceive a

climate in the home country that is receptive to knowledge and skills transfer with colleagues and in their sphere of work upon return.

In order to identify how Diaspora members outside BiH borders were interested in being part of BiH development, an additional set of options for contribution to BiH were provided to just migrants outside of BiH. Multiple answers to the question were allowed.

**TABLE 8.2 . IN WHAT WAY ARE YOU INTERESTED IN CONTRIBUTING TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF BiH?**

RESPONSE	INTERESTED	RE-MIGRANTS	NON-INTERESTED
by coming to work on the BiH labour market (again)	51%	42%	
volunteering in BiH a limited time every year	14%	17%	24%
online/virtual volunteering	12%	20%	36%
saving money in BiH banks	15%	12%	24%
rebuilding my home in BiH	26%	27%	52%
by sending money to family and friends in BiH	30%	39%	81%
vacationing in BiH every year	31%	31%	69%
investing in BiH projects	23%	24%	48%
starting a business in BiH	35%	20%	69%
establishing business links with BiH companies	30%	34%	67%
offering free consultations to colleagues/companies in BiH in my area of expertise	23%	29%	57%

Migrants abroad interested in a return feel that they can best contribute by a return to the BiH labour market (51%), starting a business in BiH (35%), and vacationing in BiH every year. Migrants who have returned to BiH and then left again see yet another return to the BiH labour market (42%), sending money to family and friends in BiH (39%) and establishing business links with BiH companies as their preferred ways of staying connected to their homeland. Migrants abroad who have said they are not interested in a return to BiH feel overwhelmingly that they can best contribute through remittances (81%), establishing business links with BiH companies (67%) and offering free consultations to colleagues/companies in BiH in my area of expertise (57%).

Though young people who have had an opportunity to return to BiH feel that they do or can contribute most through their presence in the local labour market, those still living in Diaspora show an interest in contributing to BiH development through sending remittances, establishing business links with BiH companies and offering free consultations to colleagues/companies in BiH in their area of expertise. This suggests that there is a will to contribute to BiH development both through physical return and forms of contribution that do not require a physical presence in the country.

## IS THERE A RECIPROCAL GAIN TO RETURN?

Given that Diaspora and young returnees show an interest in returning and/or contributing to the development of their country of origin, do they also see a personal gain in coming to BiH?

Those surveyed were asked to rate on a scale of 1 to 4 their opinions about how their participation in the BiH labour market *has* (in the case of those that have worked in BiH) or *would* (in the case of those living in Diaspora who have not had work experience in BiH) impact their personal growth and career. In the table below, 1 is “absolutely disagree” and 4 is “absolutely agree.” Higher averages therefore indicate higher degrees of agreement with the statement. Given the responses, it seems that those surveyed in all groups see working in BiH as an opportunity for personal growth and career advancement.

**TABLE 8.3 IS THERE A RECIPROCAL GAIN TO RETURN?**

RESPONSE	RETURNEES	INTERESTED	RE-MIGRANTS	NOT INTERESTED	ALL GROUPS AVERAGE/ QUESTION
Integrating into the labour market in BiH has or could provide(ed) me with an opportunity for personal growth	2.3	2.3	2.2	2.6	2.4
By coming to BiH market I have/could advance(ed) my career	2.8	3.0	3.1	3.2	3.0

“I’M HAPPY TO HAVE RETURNED. I HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO STUDY IN THE US AND NOW IT’S TIME TO FOCUS MY ENERGY ON CONTRIBUTING TO BiH. THIS IS MY COUNTRY AND IF I DON’T CONTRIBUTE TO ITS DEVELOPMENT, I HAVE NO RIGHT TO EXPECT FROM OTHERS TO DO SO.”

“I THINK ABOUT RETURNING, BUT I HAVE NO PERCEPTION ABOUT HOW MY LIFE WOULD BE IF I RETURNED. THERE IS A DILEMMA, WHERE AM I MOST USEFUL FOR MY COUNTRY, WHERE I AM NOW OR BACK IN MY HOME COUNTRY.”



# H.

## Conclusions

Analysis of the quantitative data collected through the YERP survey is presented above, and reveals a number of interesting findings. Acknowledging all the limitations of the survey explained in the introduction of this report, we can still draw a number of conclusions and recommendations that can serve as a starting point for further analyses, discussions and design of Diaspora related policies in BiH.

The results about the return intention of our migrants have shown that only a small percentage of interviewees have chosen not to return to BiH ever (5% of entire sample). This figure, combined with the figure showing that more than a half of interviewees are considering return or might consider it, suggest that the appropriate policies could have significant results in terms of return of our educated young people who are currently residing abroad.

The basic demographic figures about migrants show that BiH migrants are generally young, married, and have children. The fact that many interviewees have children, combined with the answers to the qualitative questions about schooling conditions for children as one of the most important conditions they expect when considering return, is a clear suggestion to the policy makers about the focus of potential interventions to attract young Diaspora to BiH.

What is particularly important is that most of the interviewees answered that they have a university level degree. This result, combined with qualitative answers to the question about the professional experience and skills that could offer at the BiH labour market, shows how great the potential of BiH Diaspora is and types of skills that can be employed in the economic development of the country. This also suggest which jobs could be offered to these people in order to attract them to return. Further, this suggests that it will be critical for major impediments such as the difficulty and expense of foreign diploma accreditation to be removed.

The national average monthly wage in BiH in 2010 was 798 KM (408 EUR)<sup>10</sup>. which constitutes 65% of the monthly income declared by returnees in this survey. The income gap suggests that the enhanced skills and experience of returnees are valued by employers, and that they seek employment in sectors that are better remunerated. However, compared to migrants considering return, the personal net income of returnees is 22% lower and household

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10 Bosnia and Herzegovina Agency for Statistics, "Labor Force Survey 2010", [http://www.bhas.ba/tematskibilteni/lfs\\_2010\\_001\\_01-bh.pdf](http://www.bhas.ba/tematskibilteni/lfs_2010_001_01-bh.pdf)

net income is 71% lower. This clearly highlights that a return to the BiH labour market will likely result in a deficit in both personal and household income.

The largest proportions of interviewees have some work experience, mainly between 1 and 5 years (39%). Still, every fifth interviewee answered that s/he does not have any work experience. This may be explained by the fact that these people are on average very young and many of them are still studying or have just entered the labour market. The lack of work experience is in positive correlation with their intention to return. This suggests that provision of internship opportunities in BiH companies for young Diaspora studying abroad can be very beneficial for the country, by attracting and helping them to integrate and employ the skills they acquired abroad.

Out of all interviewees who returned, only a third of them replied that they found a job upon return. This suggests that provision of job search, training and career counseling services to returnees by employment bureaus and the Centers for Information, Counseling, and Training (CISO) established by the MDG-F YERP in 16 locations throughout BiH could have significant impact on their decision to stay and might reduce the number of those who decided to emigrate again.

While many migrants are interested in entrepreneurship few actually initiate business activities upon return. This indicates obstacles and complications linked to doing business in BiH but also that many migrants have not had experience in running business in BiH prior to migration nor in their current country of residence and may lack skills in business start-up. This suggests an opportunity to provide young returnees support with information, networking, financing, and business development assistance.

Young Diaspora from BiH do experience a “Diasporic identity”<sup>11</sup> though on the one hand they are well paid and successfully integrated in to the foreign labour market, we see also that these migrants still feel very tied to the home country due to forced migration, family and friends living in BiH and a lack of holistic integration in their receiving countries (28 % of migrants interested in return stated that they don’t feel at home where they live now).

Interestingly almost the same proportion of migrants abroad and those who return have been absorbed in permanent full time employment (44% migrants interested in return and 41% of returnees). This may be seen in the context of different factors influencing the labour market but some emphasis should also be placed on the life skills and key competencies<sup>12</sup> that this entire group possesses when entering the labour market abroad or in BiH.

Last, but not least, the final section of this report has shown us that Diaspora members regardless of intention to return have an expressed wish to contribute to the development of BiH. If this desire and the skills, experience, and competencies that young Diaspora have to offer can be supported by opportunities in BiH, both the country and its migrants may be in a position to develop a win-win reciprocal relationship linking migration and development. The potential for a “triple-win”<sup>13</sup> also exists: Young Diaspora interest in “establishing business links with companies in BiH” pose an opportunity not just for BiH, but also for migrant receiving countries to expand their zone of influence in the countries of origin.<sup>14</sup>

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11 “...The Diaspora experience as I intend it here is defined, not by essence or purity, but by the recongition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity...” Hall, Stuart “Cultural Identity and Diaspora” from Jonathan Rutherford (ed.) Identity, Community, Culture, Difference London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990

12 UNICEF “Identifying key competences and life skills” MDG-F/YERP publication 2011

13 ‘Circular migration’ has recently been promoted as a triple win solution, bringing benefits to destination countries, origin countries and migrant workers themselves – and a major mechanism to reap development benefits of labour migration. ILO 2011

14 Hatzigeorgiou, Andreas “Migration as Trade Facilitation: Assessing the Links between International Trade and Migration,” The B.E. Journal of Economic Analysis & Policy 2010



## Policy Considerations

*Diaspora Strategy:* Diaspora and migration issues should be integrated into existing strategies and decision makers should consider the completion of a Diaspora strategy for BiH, drawing on the useful examples of other countries in the region. Elements of any strategy that includes Diaspora issues could consider facilitating and monitoring seeming less tangible contributions such as innovation, knowledge and skills transfer.<sup>15</sup>

*Labour Market Data:* Employment Institutes in both entities are endeavoring to improve labour market information such that it more accurately reflects labour market demand, supply and gaps. This process is vital to all young people in BiH and could prove additionally useful to both young migrants abroad and BiH development if outreach to the Diaspora were part of the effort: if labour market gaps are identified with respect to the supply of the in-country labour force, effective outreach to and networking with young Diaspora would ensure that skills gaps can be filled with young talent from abroad.

*Support to Young Returnees and Families:* As part of this survey, 39% of returnees currently residing in BiH report to be unemployed. This figure is above the 2010 Labour Force Survey<sup>16</sup> unemployment rate in BiH (27%), which suggests that returnees face additional obstacles in accessing the labour market. As mentioned above, this points to the need for job search, counseling and career advising services targeted specifically at young returnees and their spouses. This is within the mandate of the CISO's and should be encouraged.

Given that many young people considering return have families, language and cultural orientation courses could be developed for accompanying children of returnees thus preparing them for transition to schooling in BiH.

Simplified diploma accreditation is necessary. Ideally a unified process would be developed for the country with the possibility of being able to track applications online.

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15 The joint Croatian government and World Bank initiative "Unity through Knowledge" has created a solid ground for networking and joint efforts among scientists home and abroad. Increased connections among universities and research centers at home for scientists and researchers such as cooperation in research projects, organization of joint conferences, institutional agreements, fellowships programmes have been supported. <http://www.ukf.hr/default.aspx?id=65>

16 Bosnia and Herzegovina Agency for Statistics, "Labor Force Survey 2010", [http://www.bhas.ba/tematskibilteni/lfs\\_2010\\_001\\_01-bh.pdf](http://www.bhas.ba/tematskibilteni/lfs_2010_001_01-bh.pdf)

*Investment:* The Foreign Investment Promotion Agency (FIPA) and regional development agencies could design promotional activities targeting young BiH Diaspora<sup>17</sup> while also providing orientation to returnees interested in investing in BiH upon return or from their countries of residence. Networking opportunities between Diaspora and returnee investors and entrepreneurs in country could be organized to enable two-way knowledge transfer and support. Investment would also be encouraged by offering favorable tax treatments, faster registration of companies and other subsidies of temporary, performance based nature.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCHERS

Further research should be aimed towards showing the differences in integration upon return to BiH by gender as this research established that currently more men (65%) than women wish to return to the BiH labour market.

28% of interested migrants claim to “*not feel at home where they live now*” and consider this a motivation for a return to BiH. Only 1% of interested migrants consider their unemployment as a reason to return suggesting that labour market integration (or lack thereof) is only a part of many considerations affecting any young person’s desire to return to BiH. Future research can be aimed at studying the full spectrum of return and reintegration dynamics.

Future research should be aimed at the return of older migrants from Diaspora. This research has shown that 27% of migrants interested in return hope for a secured pension plan, a reality found by only 7% of returnees.

A very small group in this sample re-emigrated after their return to BiH. 60% of this group, however, claims an interest in returning once again to BiH. Are these circular migrants and if so, how can their mobility be supported and their skills and knowledge harnessed?

The return and integration of entrepreneurs should be mapped in order to present possibilities and challenges that investors face upon return to BiH.

Short term as well as long term labour market benefits of a return to BiH for the individual returnee, the receiving country but also sending country should be tracked and documented. Who is the winner in the process of returns to the home country?

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17 Serbia’s Diaspora Ministry has produced material specifically targeting Serbian Diaspora. See for example the publication/CD “Investment Opportunities in Serbian Municipalities and Cities” and the new website: <http://www.mzd.photosidea.com/>





