



OBSTACLES AND PROBLEMS OF FORCIBLY DISPLACED PERSONS FROM NAGORNO KARABAKH IN THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA



2024

The study "Obstacles and Problems of Forcibly Displaced Persons from Nagorno Karabakh in the Republic of Armenia" is conducted by the Confederation of Trade Unions of Armenia with the support of the International Labour Organization.

The International Labour Organization is not responsible for the content of this study.



The study was conducted in August – September 2024.



The submission of recommendations on the technical and legal primary problems, discovery of the obstacles in the implementation of labor activity and integration in the labor market and overcoming these problems of forcibly displaced people from Nagorno Karabakh, who settled down in the regions of the republic and in the city of Yerevan.



In the choice of the participants were involved forcibly displaced persons from Nagorno Karabakh who found their permanent or temporary residence in Yerevan city, Ararat, Armavir and Kotayk regions.

Abbreviations used:

Republic of Armenia - RA

Nagorno Karabakh - NK

Confederation of Trade Unions of Armenia - CTUA

International Labor Organization - ILO

Labor Code - LO

Methodology

The study was carried out at the initiative of the Confederation of Trade Unions of Armenia with the support of the International Labor Organization. During the study quantitative sociological research methodology was applied. When analyzing the results percentage, the quantities obtained in the expression were rounded up to decimal.

350 respondents from Yerevan, Ararat, Armavir, Kotayk regions were included in the sample. 2.85 percent of the total number of respondents, or 10 people, were in the above mentioned regions at the time of the survey, but they live in Tavush and Syunik regions.

The main questions included in the questionnaire are:

The respondent's education, gender, age, residence status in RA, profession, availability of work and how he found work, existence and type of contract, nature and field of work, source of income, obstacles while finding work. The information collected by the quantitative research was supplemented with the results of the qualitative interviews.

63% of respondents were women and 37% were men.

Figure 1

Gender Distribution of Respondents

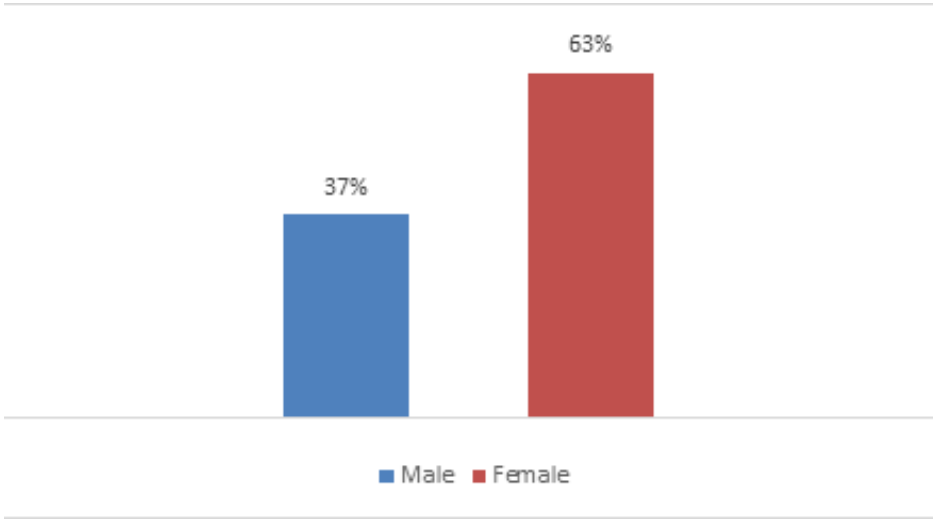
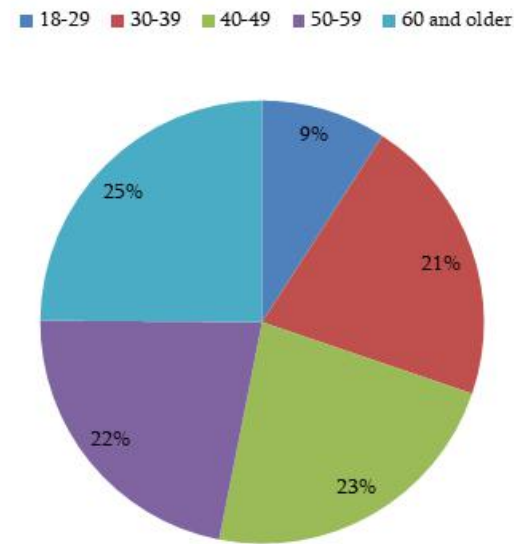


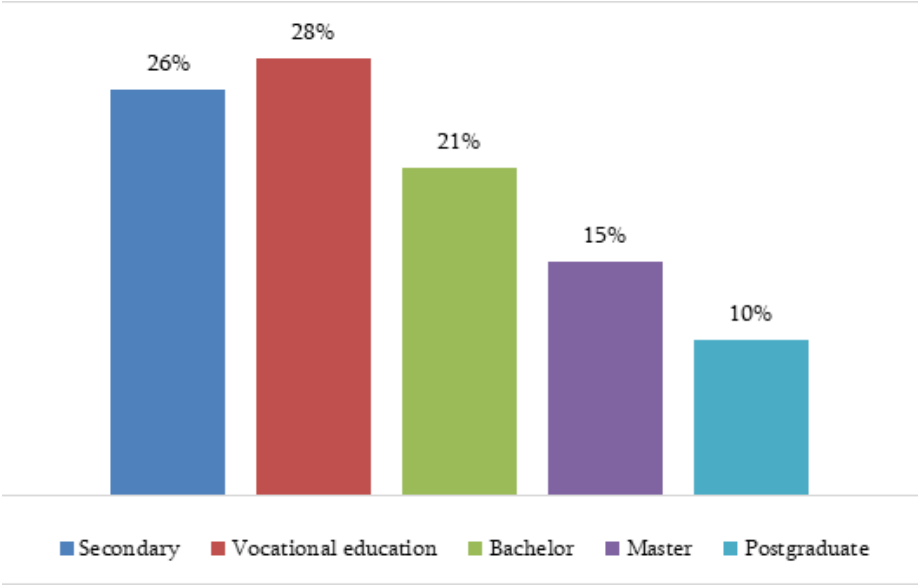
Figure 2

Age Distribution of Respondents



9 percent of respondents are 18-29 years old, 21 percent are 30-39, 23 percent are 40-49, 22 percent are 50-59, and 25 percent are 60 or older.

Figure 3 **Respondents' education**

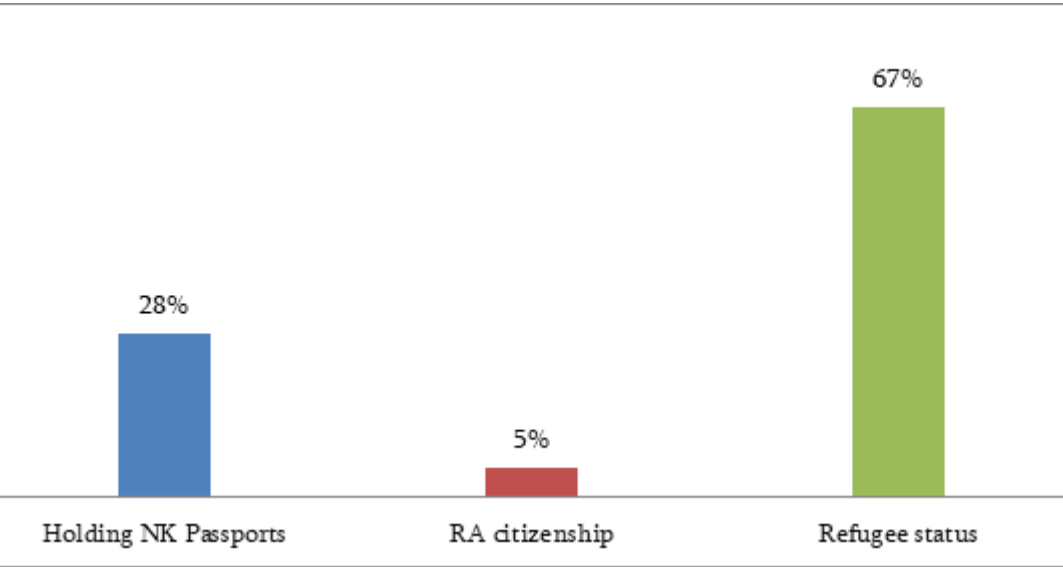


26 percent - secondary, 28 percent – vocational education, 21 percent - bachelor's, 15 percent - master's and 10 percent - postgraduate.

The respondents' residence status in RA:

24 percent of the respondents have a NK passport and are in the process of receiving the RA passport, 6 percent have RA citizenship, 70 percent have refugee status.

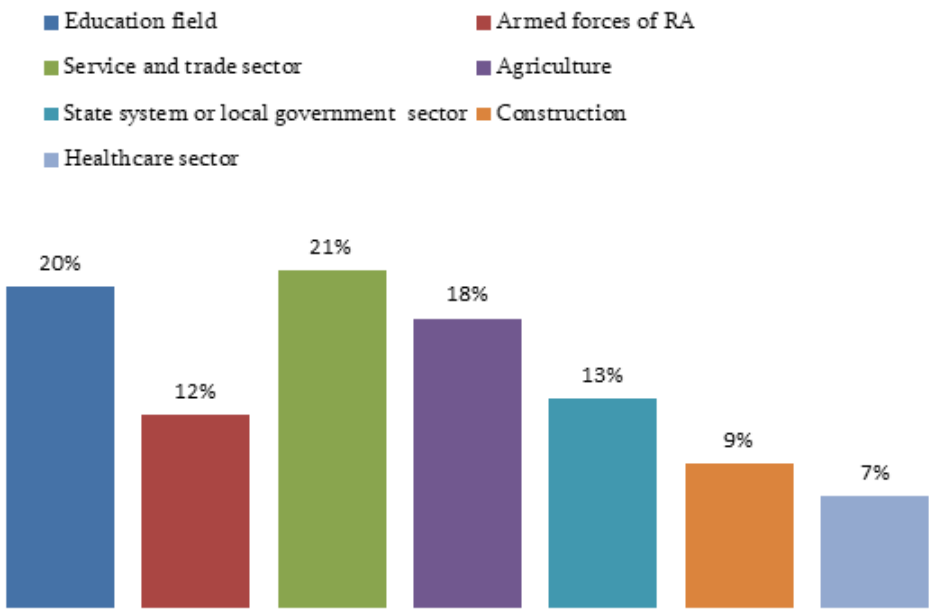
Figure 4 **Residence Status of Respondents in the Republic of Armenia**



40 percent of respondents to the question "Do you work in RA?" answered that they found permanent or temporary work.

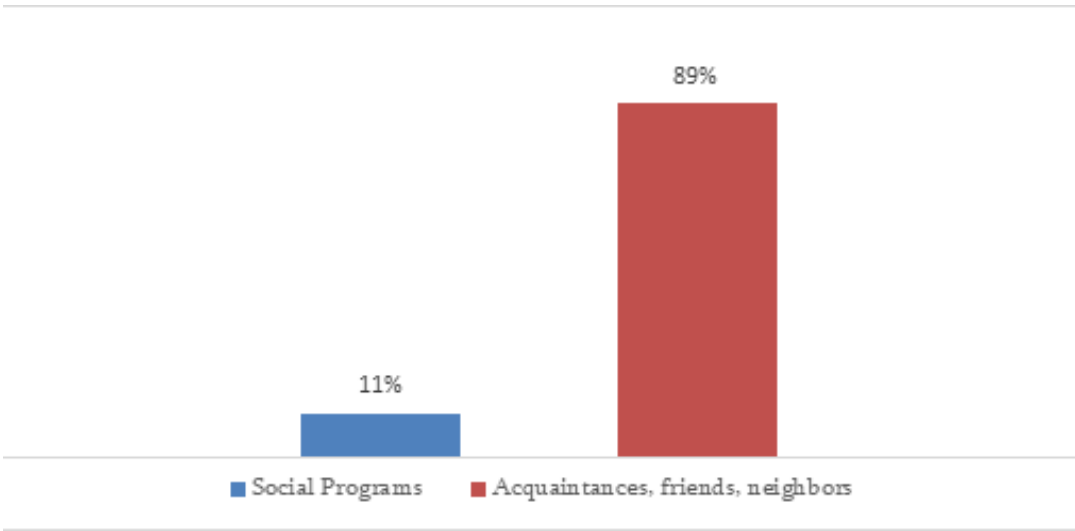
To the question, how is employment characterized and in which field is carried out, 20 percent of respondents who found a job found it in the field of education, 12 percent in the RA armed forces, 21 percent in the service and trade sector, 18 percent in the field of agriculture, 13 percent in the state system or local government sector, 9 percent in construction, 7 percent in the healthcare sector.

Figure 5 **Description of Employment and Sector**



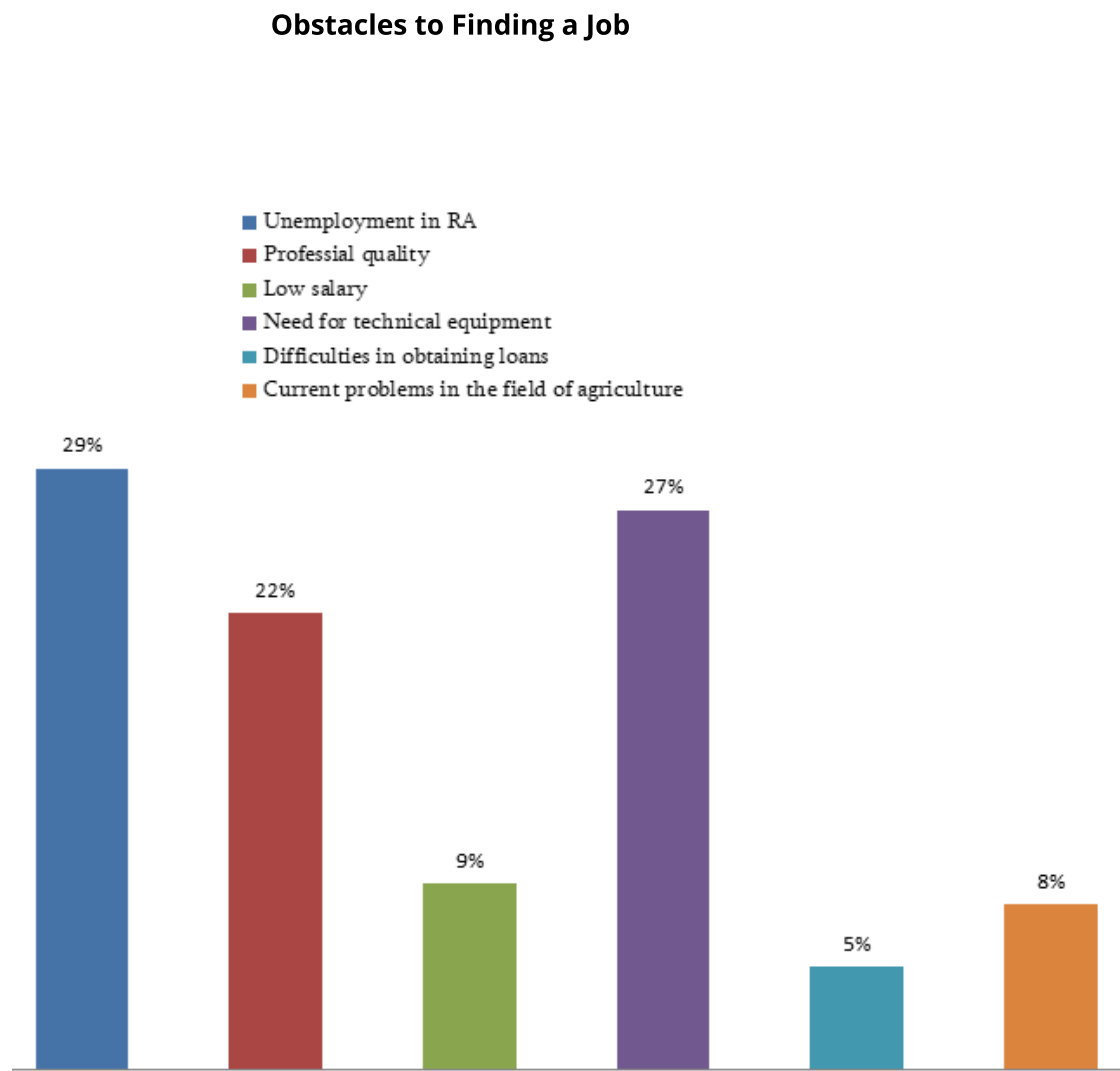
While answering the question how they found a job 11 percent of respondents answered that they did it through the social programs, 89 percent - with the help of acquaintances, friends, neighbors at the place of residence.

Figure 6 **Ways of Finding Employment**



To the question of what are the obstacles to finding a job, 29 percent of the respondents answered that they are: the level of unemployment in RA and the lack of work in general, 22 percent mentioned that their professional quality does not correspond to the demands of the labor market, 9 percent - low salary, 27 percent noted the lack of necessary equipment and accessories which are rather expensive, 5 percent related to difficulties in obtaining loans to start their own business, 8 percent – difficulties in obtaining important agricultural lands, not having the necessary number of animals to engage in cattle breeding.

Figure 7

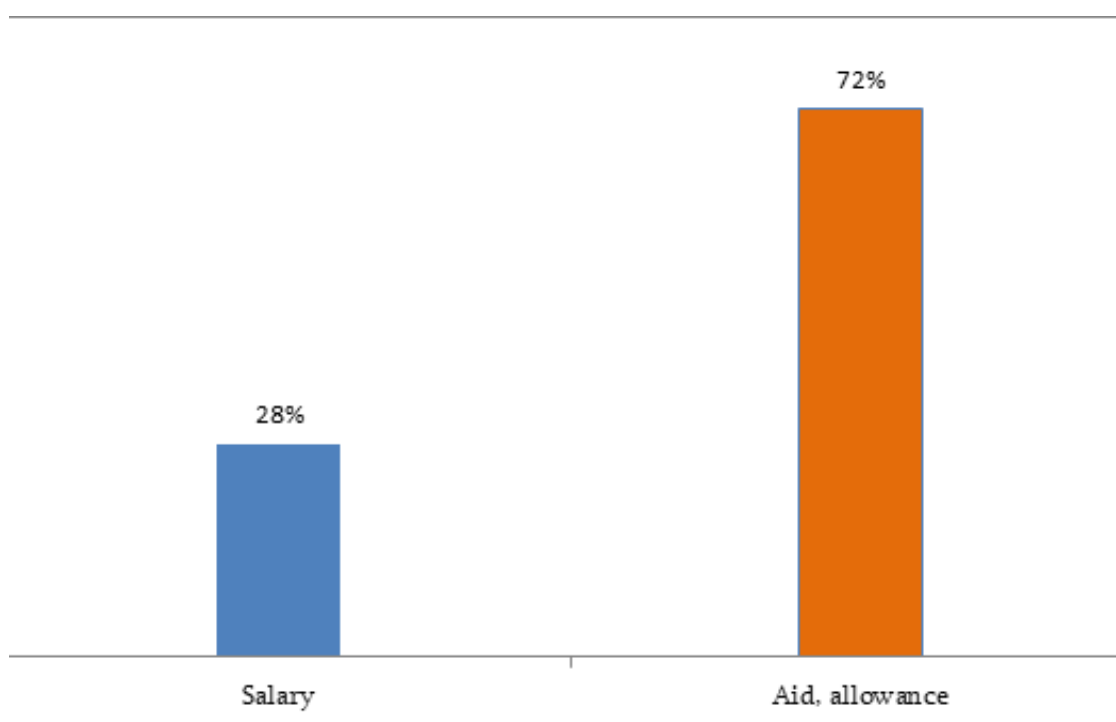


To the question - what is the main source of income and whether it satisfies them 72 percent of the respondents noted aid, allowance, 28 percent - salary.

87 percent of the respondents stated that the salary is not enough to take care of the needs of the family.

The main reason is not having a place of residence, renting inadequately expensive apartments and houses, difficulties to access to state programs, inconsistency of requirements between state programs and the labor market, low salary, not having documents, including an identity card.

Figure 8



Conclusions and recommendations

According to the data from the Migration Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in 2023 115 365 people forcibly displaced from Nagorno Karabakh arrived in Armenia. 20.331 people settled in Kotayk region, 10.500 - in Armavir region, 15.000 people – in Ararat region.

The others settled in Syunik, Tavush, Lori regions and in Yerevan.

The State, Trade Unions, Employers/Entrepreneurs/ during 2023-2024 carry out continuous, periodic assessment of needs and various programs which are aimed at integration and involving of displaced people in the labor market. Despite this, those who were forcibly displaced from Nagorno Karabakh continue to face problems and have difficulties on the way to find a job. According to the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs they mostly look for a job in the field of trade, construction, food, service and security. Our study shows that NK citizens due to the absence of a permanent place of residence: a house, an apartment find themselves in uncertainty while planning their future. As a result, they do not try to integrate in labor market and are satisfied with benefits. Moreover, the settlement in border villages isn't often considered by them because of the objective feeling of anxiety, unstable security environment.

They mainly work on short-term contracts or with civil law contracts. It is an exception when persons are employed in education and government systems. It is worth noting that although the contract for a certain period of time is signed only as an exception under the LC of the RA, in education and healthcare sectors there are also many workers, both NK and RA citizens, who concluded a fixed time limit labor contract for a certain period of time, which is a violation of legislative regulations. Most respondents have little or no knowledge of RA legislation.

When enumerating the obstacles, the respondents often mention difficulties in accessing state programs, in particular, incomplete information about implemented state programs or supports (except benefits), they do not know where to apply and what kind of documents are needed, they need technical and paperwork support. In addition, the displaced persons find it more useful to provide them with work tools, with which they will be able to ensure their employment and the well-being of their families.

It is interesting that the majority of the respondents state that not having citizenship creates all kinds of obstacles, but those who applied for citizenship made up only 24 percent of the respondents.

Age is also an obstacle. In the qualitative interviews, many people state that although the official reason for rejection is not age, but people over the age of 45, when they call on the phone for a job with a job advertisement, as soon as they mention their age, the next questions become pop-ups and seem formal and they do not receive a call back or a job invitation.

Referring to the manifestation of discrimination, it is worth noting that in this regard, those forcibly displaced from Nagorno Karabakh face problems that exist in the RA labor market in general. Those forcibly displaced from Nagorno Karabakh, together with RA citizens, face such problems as high unemployment, manifestations of discrimination, low wages and other problems, which objectively exist in the RA labor market and are the same for everyone.

Therefore, many aspire to become self-employed, joining the ranks of informal workers at home, or register as an individual entrepreneur and provide various services.

However, other difficulties also appear here: the need for professional training, the need to learn languages, problems related to the documentation of loans and citizenship. It is also noted that in order to register a legal entity and fill out the subsequent reports correctly, support is needed, for example, accounting, which many of them do not have the opportunity to do.

Only 28 percent of respondents stated that they have a stable income in the form of salary, the rest live on benefits.

In both cases, both workers and beneficiaries stated that the income is not enough or "It is enough to buy only essential food", "Winter will be hard, communal housing conditions are not sufficient, heating is expensive, house rents are more than received income" are mentioned by the respondents.

According to the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, the state implements a program for the specialization and employment of people forcibly displaced from Nagorno Karabakh, which has 3 components: training and employment, the second component - acquisition of practice and employment and the third - training, practice and employment accommodation. However, there are very few applicants with the training component, mostly they want to work and practice.

Trade unions, in turn, support forcibly displaced persons, trade union members, and provide free advice and legal assistance on labor law issues.

As a result of our study, it becomes clear that the required support can be divided into 2 main directions: material-technical and educational.

Material and technical:

In order to integrate into the labor market in various sectors of the economy, the respondents asked for assistance in acquiring computers, financial software, hairdressing tools, sewing machines, agricultural machinery, beehives and other tools.

Educational - language learning - Armenian, English.

Professional trainings, retraining.

Primary and advanced studies of law.

Recommendations:

To the trade unions:

- Consistently implement awareness programs to get out of the informal economy and promote legal labor relations;
- Continue the implementation of remote and direct counseling;
- Organize seminars, trainings;
- Submit the raised issues to the relevant bodies;
- Work to attract donor organizations and provide logistical support;
- Organize or initiate job fairs;
- Implement programs aimed at adding new members of the forcibly displaced to the ranks of trade union;
- Carry out monitoring of state programs and submit advisory opinions to the state.

To the state:

- To combine the state support programs for providing housing for Artsakh Armenians with the state programs for integrating the labor market;
- Continue to support and promote entrepreneurs in the job placement process;
- Provide technical assistance in the implementation of document circulation;
- To facilitate the process of obtaining citizenship;
- Facilitate the processes of support for the purchase of apartments for those living in regions and border communities;
- To ensure the simplified procedures for the provision of arable land by the communities and the provision of the necessary logistical means to practice agriculture;
- Continue and expand the integration programs of forcibly displaced people in rural communities.