

# CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS AND HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

MOLDOVA Country Report 15/10/2023

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FINAL DRAFT

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# FOREWORD

The proactive engagement and initiatives of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in the realm of non-formal and informal education have played a pivotal role in facilitating access to lifelong learning opportunities for both young and adult individuals, thereby contributing significantly to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4), which focuses on ensuring quality education for all.

Considering the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, CSOs have critically reviewed their involvement in non-formal and informal learning, and their support for employment initiatives. This strategic reassessment responds to the evolving landscape of the “new normal”. The dynamic nature of global developments and the disruptions caused by the pandemic and Ukraine refugee crises have pushed CSOs to swiftly adapt their services, ensuring they remain closely connected to their local beneficiaries and frequently searching for innovative approaches.

These key insights emerge from the comprehensive study conducted by the European Training Foundation (ETF) in 2020–2021, which examined the response of CSOs engaged in the development of human capital (HCD), with a specific focus on non-formal and informal learning, as well as their contributions to employment support. The survey was developed upon prior research in this field and encompassed six countries: Albania, Jordan, Serbia, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

In 2023, ETF extended the study to the Republic of Moldova, the country having been granted EU Candidate Country status in June 2023. The study’s primary objective was to map the operational capacity of CSOs in Moldova concerning HCD and explore how CSOs, in collaboration with institutional bodies, can play a more substantial role in our ever-changing societies, ensuring better access to lifelong learning. The focus was on:

- skills development through non-formal and informal learning of young and adult people;
- employment-related services that support the learning-employment link;
- awareness-raising and advocacy on skills development and employment;
- knowledge creation, utilisation and exchange on skills development and employment.

The Moldova Country report presents the findings from the ETF study conducted among CSOs engaged in HCD activities within the country. This assessment covered a range of dimensions, encompassing CSOs’ proactive and reactive responses to emergencies, their ability in mobilising both human and financial resources, their innovative and forward-looking approaches, their organisational learning capacity, their contributions to complementing the efforts of local and national governments, and their strategic plans for the future.

The report, in its six Chapters, offers insights into the unique landscape of challenges and opportunities encountered in this vibrant and dynamic sector of the country’s civil society.

Chapter 1, entitled “Organisation Profile”, provides information about the main characteristics and activities of organisations that participated in the survey.

Chapter 2, “Response to the COVID-19 pandemic effects”, presents the findings related to the CSOs’ response to the COVID-19 pandemic effects on HCD. It analyses the changes in the organisation’s beneficiary groups and activities due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, it provides a comparative analysis between pre-pandemic activities and beneficiary groups related to skills development through non-formal and informal learning and services related to employment (HCD). The chapter also examines how organisations adjusted their priorities and embraced learning during the crisis.

Chapter 3, “Managing the Refugee Crisis in the context of the Ukraine war”, reflects the findings about the CSO’s involvement in managing the refugee crises and the types of assistance provided to Ukrainian refugees.

Chapter 4, “Stakeholders and policy dialogue”, examines the participation of the CSOs in policy dialogue with institutional counterparts and the CSOs’ contribution to the HCD policy.

Chapter 5, “Potential of organisation in the HCD sector”, refers to present advantages and possible future contributions to the HCD sector. Finally, Chapter 6 structures the conclusions around key issues and presents recommendations about the CSOs’ current engagement, role and potential for the future in the HCD sector.

The ETF study in Moldova should serve as an inspiration for reimagining the critical role of CSOs as effective intermediaries connecting public authorities and citizens regarding lifelong learning, HCD and skills agenda. It offers valuable insights to enhance the engagement of CSOs in national and local policy dialogues, where they can act as vigilant monitors, persuasive advocates and collaborative partners. Although they have often been consulted with limited impact on policy decisions in the past, there is a bright future ahead where CSOs and institutional bodies can collaborate more effectively to support lifelong learning and HCD in evolving societies. Together with public authorities and other partners, they can ensure that learning and employment opportunities are readily accessible and that inclusivity remains at the forefront of the joined efforts, leaving no one behind.

The ETF has also prepared a summary of the main findings across all six countries that participated in the survey to overview their commonalities and differences, which are available in the ETF Open Space. The aim is to support mutual learning and allow a joint reflection on the conditions that enable CSOs to be active in designing, implementing, monitoring and assessing policies on HCD.

The study was led by Margareta Nikolovska, Senior Human Capital Development Expert at the ETF. This report was prepared by Carolina Budurina-Goreacii and Vasile Cantarji, who implemented the survey in Moldova. The ETF experts’ team – Margareta Nikolovska, Senior Human Capital Development Expert; Stylianos Karagiannis, Human Capital Development Statistician; Filippo Del Ninno, Human Capital Development Expert and Country Liaison for Moldova and Siria Taurelli, the Coordinator for Governance and Quality Assurance – guided the overall concept, design and methodology of the survey and integration in the country context.

We want to extend our gratitude to all the CSOs in Moldova and stakeholders who contributed to this study by participating in the survey, supporting the data collection, providing feedback or putting us in touch with relevant actors in the sector. Our heartfelt gratitude goes to our ETF colleagues – Liia Kaarlop, Project Officer and Galyna Terzi, Project Manager – whose technical support was instrumental in ensuring the team’s efficient functioning.

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# ACRONYMS

AOPD	Alliance of Organisations for Persons with Disabilities from the Republic of Moldova
APSCF	Alliance of NGOs active in the field of Child and Family Social Protection
CIN	Coalition for Inclusion and Non-discrimination
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSDS	Civil Society Development Strategy
EAEA	European Association for the Education of Adults
EASPD	European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
EHRA	Eurasian Risk Reduction Association
EKHN	Eurasian Key Population Health Network
FB	Facebook
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
GPPAC	Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict
LAG	Local Action Group
HCD	Human Capital Development
HQ	Headquarter
MOOC	Massive Open Online Course
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics
NCOs	Non-Commercial organisations
NCP	National Council for Participation
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NEPC	National Education Policy Centre
NYCM	National Youth Council of Moldova
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe

POB	Public Opinion Barometer
PSA	Public Service Agency
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEE RCN	Southern and Eastern European Regional Network of Communities Affected by Tuberculosis and HIV
UN	United Nations
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollar



# INTRODUCTION

For the last two years, the main events that significantly influenced the environment of the CSO sector were the war on the border with the Republic of Moldova, manifested by the aggression of the Russian Federation in Ukraine, as well as the large wave of Ukrainian refugees in Moldova and their social inclusion in all spheres of society. At the same time, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on the gradual resumption of the usual CSO activity that was typically carried out before the pandemic. Accordingly, in 2021, the activity of the CSO sector in Moldova was influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic and early parliamentary elections held in 2020.

## Public image of the CSO sector

Currently, the public image and trust of the population in CSOs are constantly growing. According to the June 2021 Public Opinion Barometer (POB), 29.8% of respondents said they trust NGOs, compared to October 2020, when only 23.1% said so. The reasons for the improvement of the image and trust among the population could be the lower number of attacks by the authorities following the elections, the active involvement of CSOs in promoting several draft laws and the support provided by CSOs during the pandemic, including their role in activities to raise awareness of public opinion regarding vaccination against COVID-19.

## Financial dependence

The financial dependence of non-governmental organisations on external grants varied between 70% and 80% in 2022. According to CSO representatives, it is imperative to diversify the financing portfolio so that the civil society is not so dependent on external sources. One of the ways to achieve financial independence for NGOs is the 2% mechanism, which provides for the transfer to the accounts of non-commercial organisations of 2% of the income tax of natural persons. Furthermore, the financial sustainability of NGOs is crucial for increasing public trust in civil society. According to the non-profit sector representatives, natural persons can contribute financially to strengthening the capacities of civil society by donating their income tax. Also, one of the mechanisms through which NGOs can enhance their financial capabilities is social entrepreneurship.

## Sectoral work

The reasons underlying the establishment of civil society organisations are varied: involvement in community life, the realisation of civic or professional interests, the possibility of obtaining some financing for the activity or certain additional incomes, etc. The thematic purpose of civil society organisations in the Republic of Moldova is vast. It includes social movements to protect the environment, initiatives to develop cooperation between communities, human rights protection, combating discrimination, supporting disadvantaged people and protecting minorities, youth participation and cultural heritage preservation.

To achieve the proposed objectives, civil society organisations in today's country cover all spheres of activity – civic, cultural, economic development, human rights, media, environmental protection, youth, etc. From national studies, it can be highlighted that in 1996, a significant interest in the activity of the institutions was represented by the social field (25%), education (22%) and the protection of human rights (14%). Then for the year of 2002, the activities in the sphere of environmental protection (18%) and mass media (18%) represented essential guidelines in this regard. In 2007, the situation was shifted so that a change occurred in the social field (32.7%) and that of education (22.4%), followed by community development (14.1%). The data from 2011 emphasises that the priority fields of activity were represented by health protection and education (20%), community development and culture (13%), human rights and gender (13%), disabilities (7%), the social-economic field (7%) and NGO development (7%). Surprisingly, organisations from ecology, mass media and youth are not represented. According to the data presented for 2013, it is noted that the main areas of activity referred to education/training

(50%), social services (40.8%), community development (36.9%), followed by civic activism and advocacy (26.2%). Between 2014 and 2016, civil society organisations preferred to carry out activities in the same fields. In the case of the Transnistrian region, most organisations operate in the sphere of social services (63.6%), followed by the areas of youth (50%) and community development (40%). The above findings show continuous instability regarding the development of specific fields in which CSOs are active. This fact may be explained by the existing gaps and problems in the country, where the mobilisation of citizens and the implementation of community development policies (mechanisms) remain priorities.

At the same time, in 1996, the fields that registered a lower involvement from CSOs were represented by the following spheres: religion (2%), economy (3%) and European integration (4%). The list of domains with low involvement continued in 2002, including religion, sports and tourism (with approximately 5%), as well as education (4%). In 2007, a low degree of involvement was registered in the fields of ecology (0.7%), European integration (1.8%) and mass media (3.4%). Also, in 2013, European integration, agriculture and human rights reached 6.2% each, while only 4.5% of organisations opted for public policies economy/entrepreneurship. Between 2014 and 2016, the fields of activity regarding health and youth registered only 19.2%, and culture 16.9%. However, nowadays, CSOs require more significant involvement in health, culture and youth because they include a considerable part of the population of different ages on which the general well-being depends. On the other hand, the areas that recorded a constant reduction in the indices also demonstrate donors' interest in financially supporting specific sectors, a fact felt, particularly in project proposals for financing. Unfortunately, civil society still notices this today because about 70–80% of the organisations' funding sources come from external donors.

## Number of active CSOs in Moldova

According to the *State Register of Legal Entities* regarding non-commercial organisations, in December 2021, 14,939 non-commercial organisations were registered in Moldova, of which 438 were registered in 2021. Approximately 13,746 of these organisations can be considered CSOs; the rest are public institutions, political parties and other socio-political organisations that do not correspond to the CSO definition used by the CSO Sustainability Index. About 78% (10,681) of registered CSOs are public associations. The other 22% include religious organisations, foundations, private institutions, trade unions, etc. According to the data presented by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), only approximately 30% of registered organisations submitted reports to the NBS in 2021, of which about 80% are in Chisinau. Given that all CSOs must submit annual financial statement reports to the NBS, this indicates the number of active organisations in the country<sup>1</sup>.

## Moldovan legislation regulating CSOs sector

Civil society from the Republic of Moldova asserts itself more and more visibly as a plenipotentiary partner in collaboration with public authorities at the national and local levels. This fact is due, on the one hand, to the professionalism and active involvement of CSOs from various fields in solving the problems faced by the state and, on the other hand, to the need to implement European standards that presuppose an active involvement of the CSOs sector in the process decision making.

To ensure the sustainable growth of civil society, the most supportive legislation is first needed, connected to the greatest extent to the fundamental principles of participatory democracy. Therefore,

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<sup>1</sup> Indexul Sustenabilității OSC-urilor din Republica Moldova pentru anul 2021. [Online] Available at: <https://management.md/indexul-sustenabilitatii-osc-urilor-din-republica-moldova-pentru-anul-2021/> [Accessed 10.08.2023]

the legislative framework represents the necessary platform for the emergence of civil society organisations and their activity and continuous development<sup>2</sup>.

In this sense, the Law on Non-Commercial Organisations is the fundamental pillar regarding the functioning of non-governmental organisations in Moldova, adopted in 2020<sup>3</sup>. This legislative act repealed the Law on Public Associations, which previously regulated the activity of the CSOs sector in Moldova. Also, the Law on public associations was the first law in force in 1996, then modified several times in 2010, 2014 and 2016.

The Law on Non-Commercial Organisations (NCO Law), adopted in 2020, establishes an enabling framework for public associations, foundations and private institutions. The law provides precise requirements regarding CSOs' internal governance, managerial and executive functions segregation, reporting obligations and other issues. Any individual or legal entity, except for public authorities and institutions or state and municipal enterprises, a member of a public association. A CSO must submit a predefined list of documents set in the law to become legally registered. CSO registration can take up to 15 days, which is longer than the registration of commercial entities, which is often completed within 24 hours or in four hours in urgent situations.

Although the NCO Law provides that registration is free of charge for most forms of organisations, the Public Service Agency (PSA) charges fees to register some types of organisations, as well as for various registration-related services, such as checking the name of the organisation, issuing confirmations from the Register of Legal Entities and sending the registration. CSOs believe that the fees for these services, ranging from USD 25 for various warranties to USD 68 for registering trade unions and water users' associations, are considered too high. The NCO Law also provides that CSOs must amend their bylaws by 27 August 2022, if their internal statutes do not align with the current legal framework. Non-compliance may result in an organisation's forced liquidation. According to the European Center for Not-for-Profit Law's CSO Meter, around 3,000 NCOs re-registered in 2021; the overall number of CSOs subject to this requirement is unknown<sup>4</sup>.

Another essential pillar for developing a solid and well-informed civil society is the Law on Access to Information from 2000<sup>5</sup>. Also, the legislation regulating the activity of the CSOs sector in the Republic of Moldova includes the Law on Foundations (1999)<sup>6</sup> and the Law on Philanthropy and Sponsorship (2002)<sup>7</sup>.

A mandatory condition for the good functioning of CSOs is their cooperation with state institutions. Thus, in November 2005, the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova proposed for discussion a draft *Concept on the cooperation between the Parliament and civil society*. Debated and finalised by civil society representatives, this document was adopted by Parliament Decision No 373 on 29 December 2005. This legislative act also required the development of internal organisational measures within the Parliament. Thus, on 16 February 2006, the Permanent Bureau of the Parliament adopted a decision regarding the execution of the concept of cooperation between the Parliament and civil society. According to this decision, the Parliament was assigned internal responsibilities to conduct the consultation process. On 9 June 2023, it has been adopted the decision on the approval of the Platform

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<sup>2</sup> Transparența decizională. Organizații ale societății civile. [Online] Available at: <https://www.parlament.md/TRANSPAREN%C8%9AADECIZIONAL%C4%82/Organiza%C5%A3iialesociet%C4%83%C5%A3iicivile/tabid/60/language/ro-RO/Default.aspx> [Accessed 12.07.2023]

<sup>3</sup> Law on Non-Commercial Organisations. No 86 of 11.06.2020. Published: 27.07.2020 in the Official Monitor of the Republic of Moldova No 193.

<sup>4</sup> The 2021 CSO Sustainability Index for Moldova, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Law on access to information. No 982 of 11.05.2000. Published: 28.07.2000 in the Official Monitor of the Republic of Moldova No 88-90.

<sup>6</sup> Law on foundations. No 581-XIV of 30.07.99. Published: 28.10.1999 in the Official Monitor of the Republic of Moldova No 118-119.

<sup>7</sup> Law on philanthropy and sponsorship. No 1420 of 31.10.2002. Published: 31.12.2002 in the Official Monitor of the Republic of Moldova No 185.

for dialogue and civic participation in the Parliament's decision-making process<sup>8</sup>. The platform's purpose is to encourage civic initiatives to make the participative input of interested parties more efficient in the Parliament's decision-making process, thus contributing to ensuring transparency and increasing its credibility. The Law on Transparency passed in 2008<sup>9</sup>, has been of great interest since then, becoming mandatory to place all draft legislative and normative documents on the public authorities' websites for consultation before its final approval.

Today, civil society is already present in all spheres of activity and can provide decision-makers with opinions, expertise, strategies and scientifically and practice-grounded concepts. In this context, it was undeniably necessary to establish a framework that would promote the strengthening of collaboration between governmental and non-governmental sectors, fostering civic initiatives, participatory democracy and a clear understanding of societal challenges. Thus, it is valuable to mention the three Civil Society Development Strategies (CSDS) for the years 2009–2011, 2012–2015 and 2018–2020 that have been adopted to facilitate the cooperation between CSOs and state authorities as well as to undertake concrete actions and obtain good results for the general well-being of the population in all spheres of society. Three main strategic objectives are included in all three CSDSs: strengthening the normative and institutional framework regarding civil society participation in developing and monitoring public policies implementation; promoting and strengthening the financial sustainability of civil society; and developing civic spirit and volunteering.

Some recommendations regarding the improvement of sector CSOs in Moldova at the current stage are listed below:

- Adopting a new strategic document on the development of civil society should also include the unrealised actions from the previous strategy (Civil Society Development Strategy for 2018–2020).
- Elaboration of a modern registry of CSOs and compliant registration procedures.
- Development of a unique online platform to ensure transparency and participation in the decision-making process.
- Modification of the Law on philanthropy and sponsorship to encourage philanthropic activity etc.

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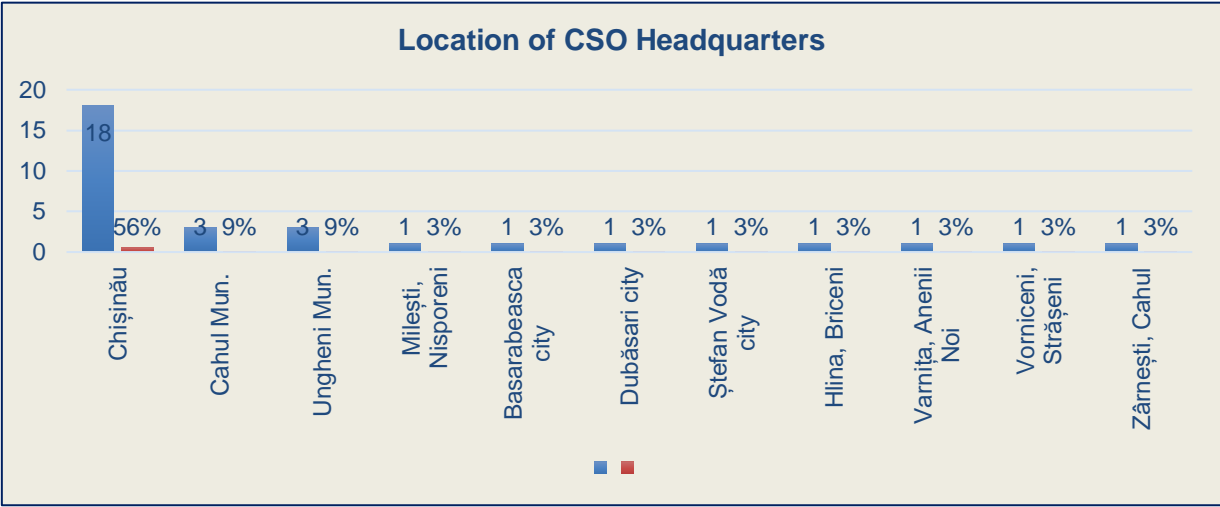
<sup>8</sup> Decision on the approval of the Platform for dialogue and civic participation in the decision-making process of the Parliament. No 149 of 09.06.2023. Published: 20.06.2023 in the Official Monitor of the Republic of Moldova No 200-203/345.

<sup>9</sup> Law on transparency in the decision-making process. No 239 of 13.11.2008. Published: 05.12.2008 in the Official Monitor of the Republic of Moldova No 215-217.

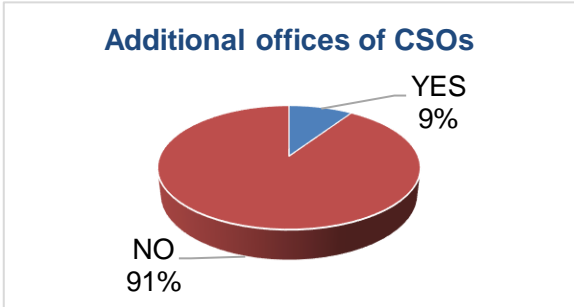
# CHAPTER 1 ORGANISATION PROFILE

## 1.1. Overall Profile

32 CSOs participated in this survey. Most of the CSOs, 56%, have their headquarters (HQ) in Chisinau, the capital city. It is worth noting that in this report, one of the critical criteria was the inclusion of organisations from the whole country, particularly those CSOs that focus on HCD in Moldova. Therefore, CSOs from the north and south of the country also participated in the survey, from localities such as Cahul, Ungheni, Nisporeni, Basarabasca, Dubăsari and Ștefan Vodă. Briceni, Anenii Noi, Strășeni. (See Graph 1). At the same time, the report’s authors interviewed both organisations that are known to the public at the national level, have experience in the field of HCD and have operated for a long or less time. Based on the above, it is believed that the research results presented in the report are objective and current.



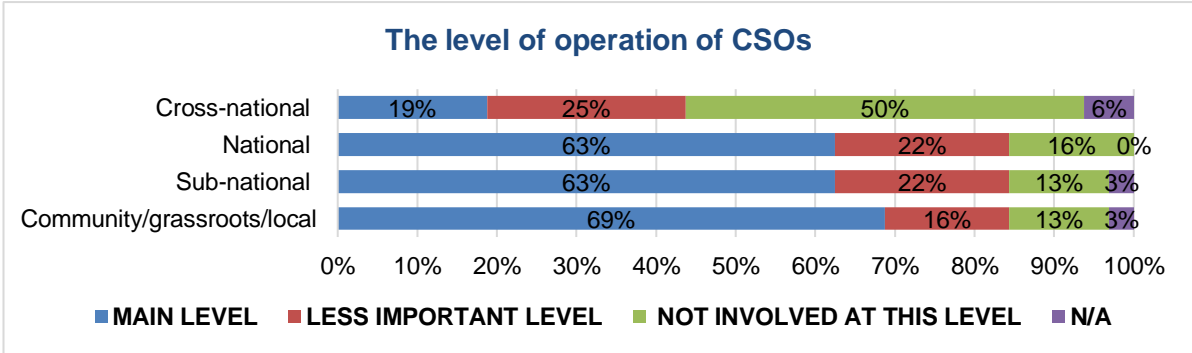
Graph 1. Location of HQs for surveyed CSO in Moldova



Three among 32 surveyed CSOs mentioned having additional regional offices, the proportion in this context being 9% to 91%.

Regarding the level of operation, 69% of surveyed CSOs work at the community/grassroots/local level, and 63% work at national and sub-national level. Only 19% of the interviewed organisations highlighted that they operate at a cross-national level. (See Graph 3)

Graph 2. Additional offices of CSOs in Moldova



Graph 3. The level of operation of CSOs

Those operating at the cross-national level mentioned as target regions – Europe/European Union, Eastern/Central Europe and Central Asia, while among targeting countries there have been listed – Romania, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Serbia, Hungary, Slovakia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Slovenia, Austria, Czech Republic and Georgia.

During 2023, five interviewed CSOS coordinated a network in the country, the proportion being 16% to 84%. (See Graph 4 for reference). However, it is mentioned that 84%, i.e. 27 CSOs interviewed, do not have experience managing or coordinating a network. This is a lesson that still needs to be learned for Moldova. The list of networks which interviewed CSOs manage are presented in the Figure 1 below.

Networks CSOs manage
1. <b>Academia Voluntarilor/Volunteer Academy</b>
2. <b>Coaliția pentru Incluziune și Non-discriminare (CIN)/Coalition for Inclusion and Non-discrimination (CIN)</b>
3. <b>Lobby-ul european al femeilor/European women’s lobby</b>
4. <b>Forum List</b>
5. <b>Rețeaua Primarilor, Platforma ONG-ilor pentru dezvoltarea locală rurală/Network of Mayors, NGO Platform for local rural development</b>

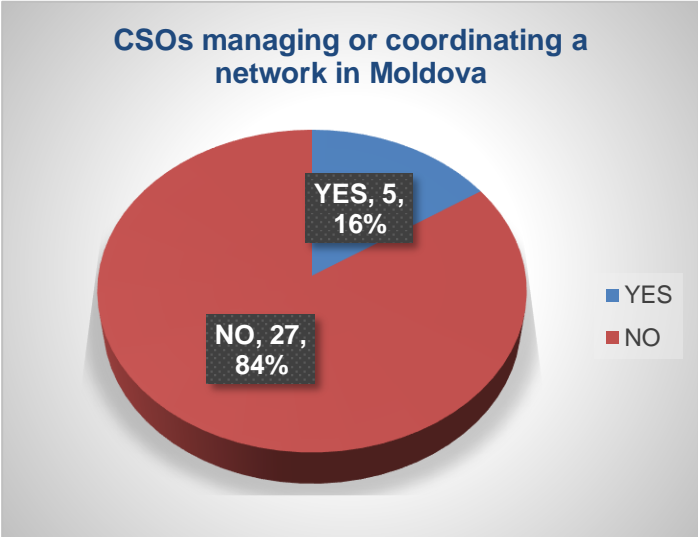
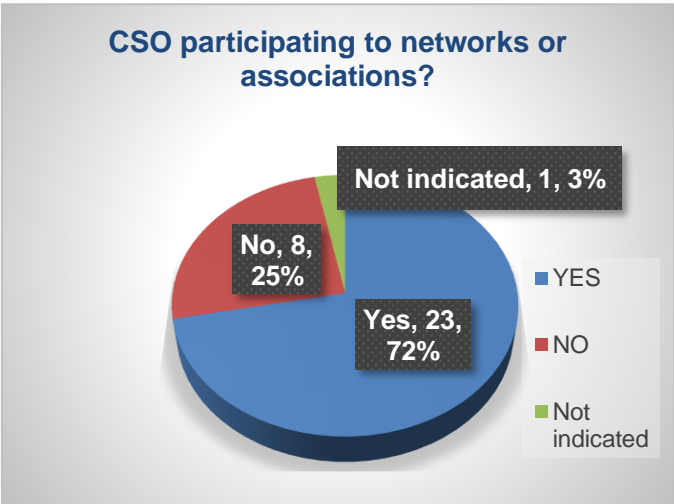


Figure 1. The list of networks CSOs manage

Graph 4. CSOs managing or coordinating a network in Moldova

According to the study, CSOs from Moldova are very interested in participating in various networks and associations. In Moldova, this fact offers them several advantages: cooperation with other organisations in common fields, exchange of experience and good practices, diversification of financial resources and establishing partnerships. In particular, the report notes that during 2023, 23 CSOs participated in one or more networks or associations, the proportion being 72% to 25%. Another 1.3% did not provide any information for this question. (See Graph 5 for reference).



Graph 5. CSO participating to networks or associations

Concerning the list of networks in which the CSOs participate, then there have been mentioned the following:

- **Platforms:** The National Platform for the Promotion and Development of Philanthropy; The National Platform for Adult Learning and Education; Advocacy Platform of National Youth Council of Moldova; The National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum; The Platform for Gender Equality; EU-Moldova Civil Society Platform.
- **Networks:** Eurasian Risk Reduction Association (EHRA); Eurasian Key Population Health Network (EKHN); Southern and Eastern European Regional Network of Communities Affected by Tuberculosis and HIV (SEE RCN); OSCE

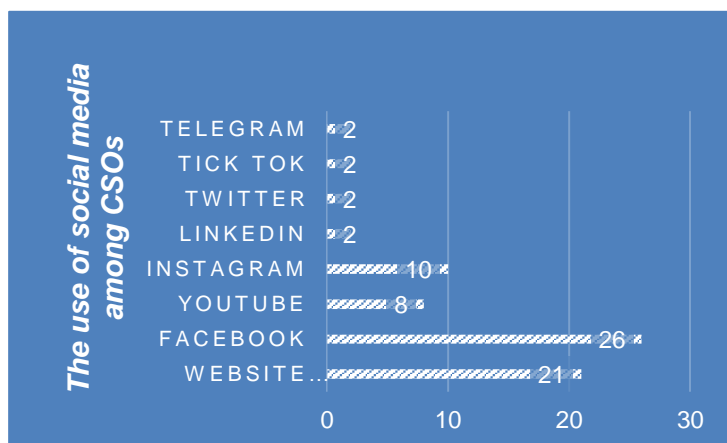
Network of Think-Tanks and Academic institutions; Network of Think Tanks on Eastern Partnership; Network of Volunteer Clubs of Transnistria; Alliance of Organisations for Persons with Disabilities from the Republic of Moldova (AOPD); Alliance of NGOs active in the field of Child and Family Social Protection (APSCF); European Association of Service providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD);

European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA); National Education Policy Center (NEPC); Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC).

- **Forums and groups:** Forum of Environmental NGOs; Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum; Working group No 4, Interhuman contacts; EU4Youth National Coordination Group on Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship.

- **Coalitions and councils:** Coalition for Inclusion and Non-discrimination, Coalition “Life without Violence”; the Economic Council next to the Prime Minister; Regional Participation Council, National Youth Council in Moldova (NYCM); Southeast Europe Leadership for Development and Integrity (SELDI); Local Action Group (LAG) “Portile Nordului” (*Eng. Northern Gates*); Youthbank Moldova, Entrepreneurship Funds for Young People; Gagauzia and Southern Moldova Council (*Rus. М-ЛИГА*);

- **Others:** Ministry of Education, Independent Press Association, Civic Initiative “Moldova for Peace”.

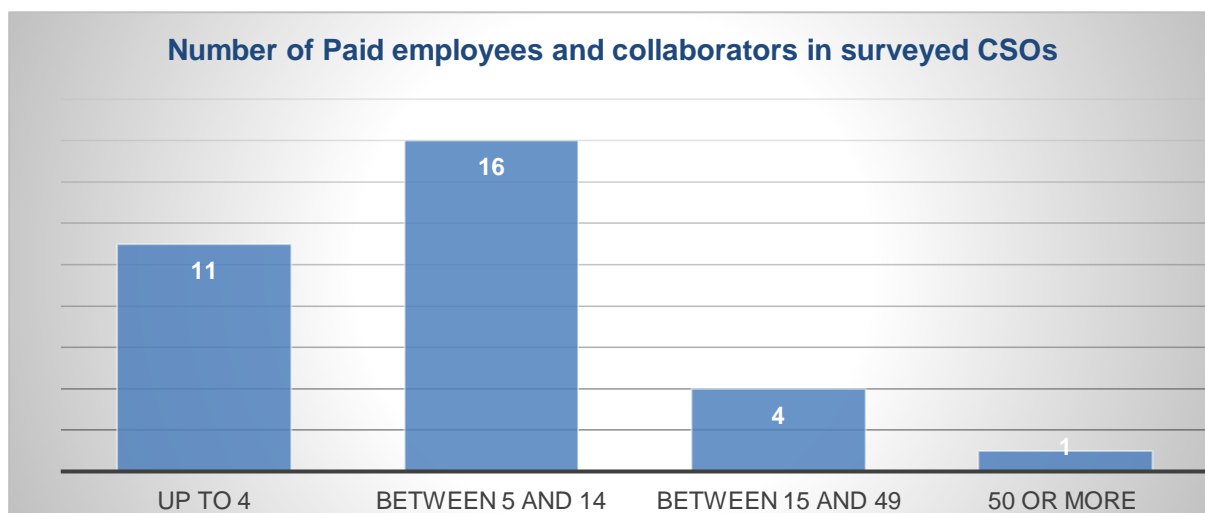


Graph 6. The use of social media among CSOs

30 CSOs from 32 mentioned having a website and using social media channels. Specifically, 21 of the respondents have a website and 26 use a Facebook page/group for their activity. For 10 CSOs, Instagram is a platform of communication with beneficiaries, while eight organisations have created YouTube to share their results with the community. LinkedIn, Twitter, TikTok and Telegram are unpopular among Moldovan CSOs. Only two organisations for each platform listed above use such social media channels.

## 1.2. Human Resource Capacities

This survey also explored the staff capacity of CSOs, including employees and collaborators who work in the CSOs sector. Thus, Graph 7 below provides an overview of the number of paid employees and collaborators in the surveyed CSOs.



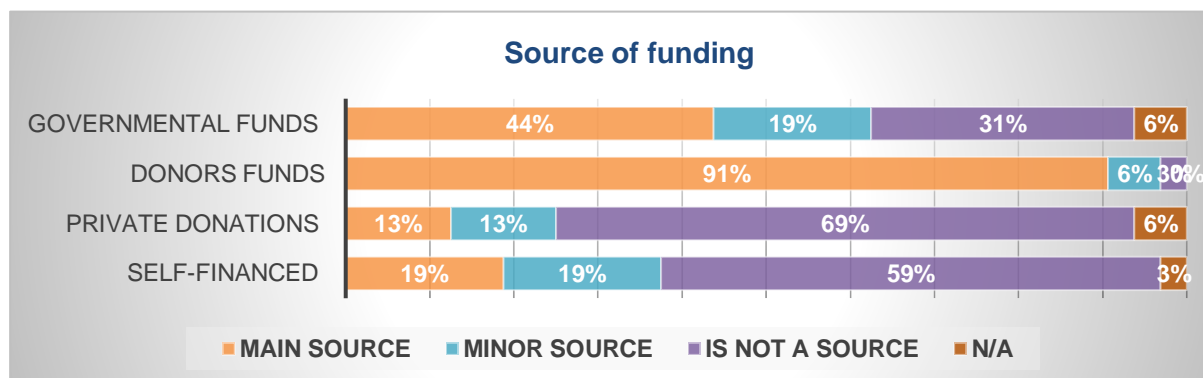
Graph 7. Number of Paid employees and collaborators in surveyed CSOs

16 CSOs out of 32 have between 5 and 14 paid staff and collaborators. 11 interviewed CSOs mentioned that up to 4 employees work within their organisation. Lower employment of more than 15 working staff

in CSOs is observed, as follows – 4 surveyed organisations have between 15 and 49 employees and only 1 organisation has more than 50 employees.

### 1.3. Financial capacities

Concerning CSOs' financing of their activities, Graph 8 below provides an overview of the source of funding for surveyed CSOs. Almost 91% of surveyed CSOs rely on donors' funds and about 44% rely on governmental funds. A shallow number of CSOs are funded by private donations (13%) and self-financed (19%), respectively.



Graph 8. Source of funding

CSOs continue to depend heavily on foreign funding – this dependence on foreign funding limits civil society's sustainability and resilience. The European Union (EU) is the largest donor to civil society in the Republic of Moldova. USAID continues to support Moldovan CSOs based on the 2020–2025 Country Development Cooperation Strategy, according to [foreignassistance.gov](http://foreignassistance.gov). Sweden actively supports civil society to implement projects in Moldova. The German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) provides grants to local CSOs through the Citizens' Empowerment in the Republic of Moldova project<sup>10</sup>.

According to the "Law 2%"<sup>11</sup>, individuals may direct 2% of their income tax to an accredited CSO. In 2021, 665 CSOs were registered as potential beneficiaries of this mechanism, an increase of 131 from 2020<sup>12</sup>. Thus, in 2022, more than 9 958 023,66 lei (486,000 euros) from the income tax of natural persons were redirected to civil society organisations<sup>13</sup>. It is the highest annual amount designated since 2017, when the law started to be implemented. Still, the mechanism is far from fulfilling its full potential, especially in civil society at the local level. Only 5–6% of taxpayers know about the existence of this mechanism<sup>14</sup>. Experts consider that the mechanism could be improved by increasing the transparency of beneficiary organisations, preventing abuse of the mechanism by public institutions that direct money towards affiliated CSOs, and establishing a more straightforward procedure to report how funds are used<sup>15</sup>.

According to the Law on Philanthropy and Sponsorship, companies offering donations to CSOs benefit from tax benefits. However, the existing law does not encourage companies to engage in philanthropic activities due to the bureaucratic procedures involved in fiscal reporting. In addition, corporate social

<sup>10</sup> The 2021 CSO Sustainability Index for Moldova, p.4-5.

<sup>11</sup> Law on the amendment and completion of some legislative acts. No 158 of 18.07.2014. Published in the Official Monitor on 15.08.2014.

<sup>12</sup> Raportul statistic. [Online] Available at: <https://sfs.md/ro/pagina/desemneaza-2> [Accessed 04.08.2023]

<sup>13</sup> Mecanismul 2% - cum funcționează și ce noutăți aduce. [Online] Available at: <https://www.justitiatransparenta.md/mecanismul-2-cum-se-aplica-si-ce-noutati-aduce/> [Accessed 22.06.2023]

<sup>14</sup> Campanie de promovare a mecanismului de desemnare procentuală – Legea 2%. [Online] Available at: [https://www.ipn.md/ro/campanie-de-promovare-a-mecanismului-de-desemnare-procentuala-legea-7967\\_1095683.html](https://www.ipn.md/ro/campanie-de-promovare-a-mecanismului-de-desemnare-procentuala-legea-7967_1095683.html) [Accessed 27.08.2023]

<sup>15</sup> 30% din alocațiile desemnate prin „mecanismul 2%” ajung la 1% din beneficiari. [Online] Available at: [https://www.ipn.md/ro/30-din-alocatiile-desemnate-prin-mecanismul-2-ajung-la-7967\\_1087981.html](https://www.ipn.md/ro/30-din-alocatiile-desemnate-prin-mecanismul-2-ajung-la-7967_1087981.html) [Accessed 25.08.2023].



responsibility is still uncommon in Moldova, and many companies do not have a vision of how they would support CSOs or other social initiatives.

Crowdfunding has enabled CSOs to diversify their funding streams in recent years. Three major crowdfunding platforms – particip.md, sprijina.md and caritate.md – continued to be active in 2021, while the fourth platform, www.guvern24.md, resumed operating after being discontinued in 2018. Government ministries channel public funding to CSOs through direct grants (in culture, youth or the environment) and contracting to provide social services<sup>16</sup>. However, the allocated money is not enough to fully impact the communities in Moldova. Thus, this field is still sensitive at the current stage.

## 1.4. Support to SDGs

In September 2015, the Republic of Moldova and 192 other UN member states adopted the Declaration of the Summit on Sustainable Development, through which it undertook to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development<sup>17</sup>. Thus, by 2030, Moldova and other states will mobilise efforts to eliminate all forms of poverty, combat inequalities and address climate change issues, ensuring no one is left behind. The 2030 Agenda is an action plan for People, Planet and Prosperity. Also, the 2030 Agenda is aimed at strengthening Universal Peace. All countries and all stakeholders must act in Partnership to implement this action plan. Thus, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets of the 2030 Agenda fall into five fundamental pillars: people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership<sup>18</sup>.

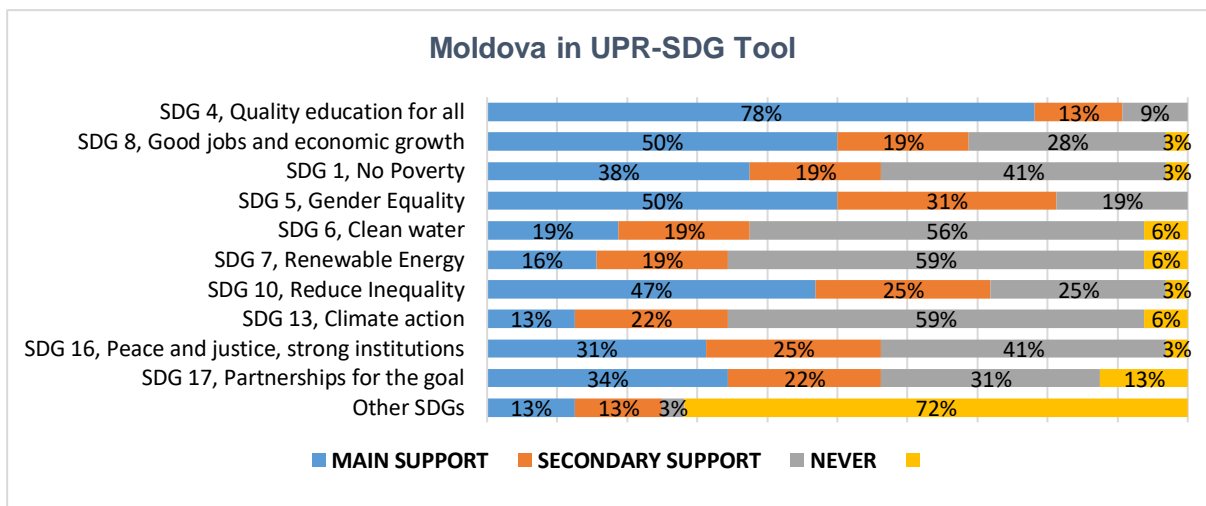
Exploration of the pursuit of the SDGs implementation in surveyed CSO work reveals that most CSOs supported SDG 4, Quality education for all (78%). Areas such as Gender Equality, Good jobs and economic growth have accumulated 50%. An insignificant decrease in the same question was registered by SDG 10, Reduce inequality (47%). CSOs also focus on more significant involvement in the following areas: SDG 1, No poverty (38%); SDG 17, Partnerships for the goal (34%) and respectively, SDG 16, Peace and Justice, strong institutions (31%). A minor interest was noted in SDG 13, Climate Action and SDG 7, Renewable Energy. These indicators demonstrate the Moldovan CSOs sector's involvement and objective interest, considering the projects implemented and their impact on the communities at the current stage. On the other hand, those areas that have registered an active involvement must be further explored, supported and recognised by all stakeholders so that the role of CSOs is significant and efficient for the democratic development of the country. It is also important to note that one of the critical criteria for the CSOs' participation in the survey was that they are active in HCD, education and training, skills development or employment support to citizens.

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<sup>16</sup> The 2021 CSO Sustainability Index for Moldova, p.4-5.

<sup>17</sup> The Sustainable Development Goals in Moldova. [Online] Available at: <https://moldova.un.org/en/sdgs> [Accessed 29.07.2023]

<sup>18</sup> Agenda de dezvoltare durabilă 2030. [Online] Available at: <https://cancelaria.gov.md/ro/apc/agenda-de-dezvoltare-durabila-2030> [Accessed 21.06.2023]

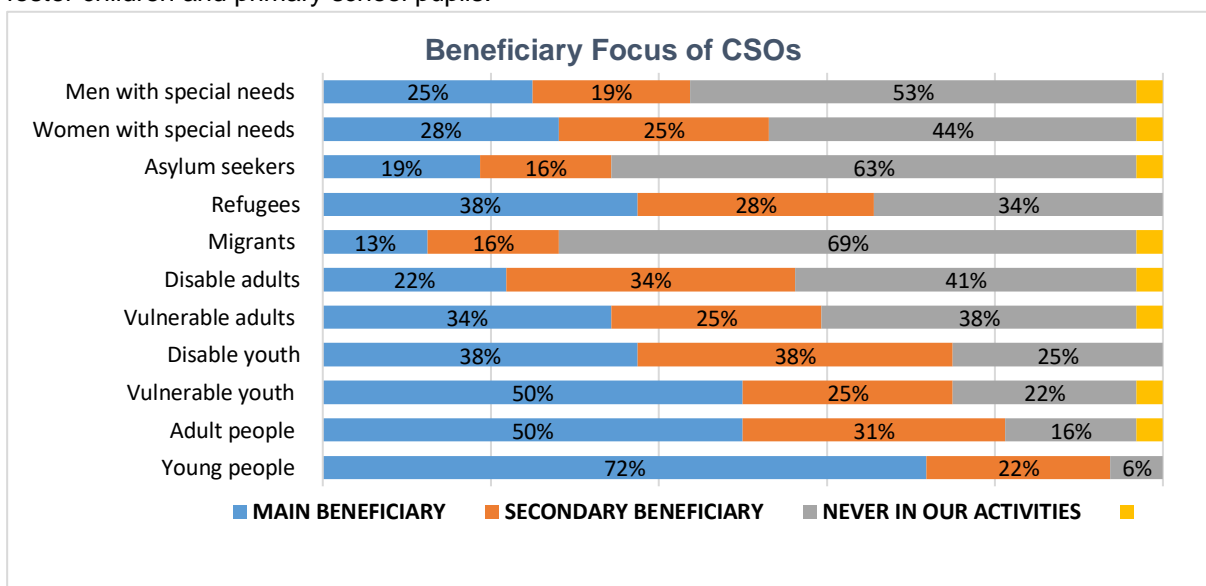


*Graph 9. Moldova in UPR SDG Tool*

## 1.5. The beneficiaries of CSOs' activities related to skills development and areas of support

In line with their areas of development support, the beneficiaries of CSOs' activities related to skills development through non-formal learning and informal learning and services to employment – 72% were young people. Similarly, vulnerable youth and adult people pointed to 50%. Also, 38% of beneficiaries were disabled youth and refugees. Less interest is shown for migrant beneficiaries. Only 13% of the respondents noted that among the beneficiaries are migrants. This can be explained by the fact that migration is a more specialised field where certain organisations are involved, with specific experience and direct active communication with migrants from inside and outside the country.

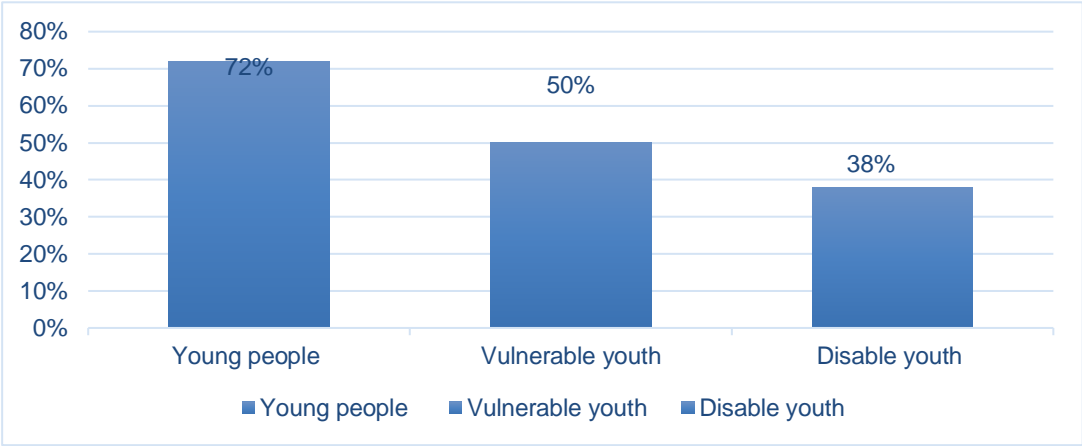
Also, among the beneficiaries, the interviewed organisations highlighted orphans, adoptive families, foster children and primary school pupils.



*Graph 10. Beneficiary Focus of CSOs*

The findings show that at the current stage, the primary beneficiaries of Moldovan CSOs are young people. Thus, organisations from rural areas and bigger cities try to involve young people in most implemented activities (72%). At the same time, the interest of CSOs to support and contribute to the

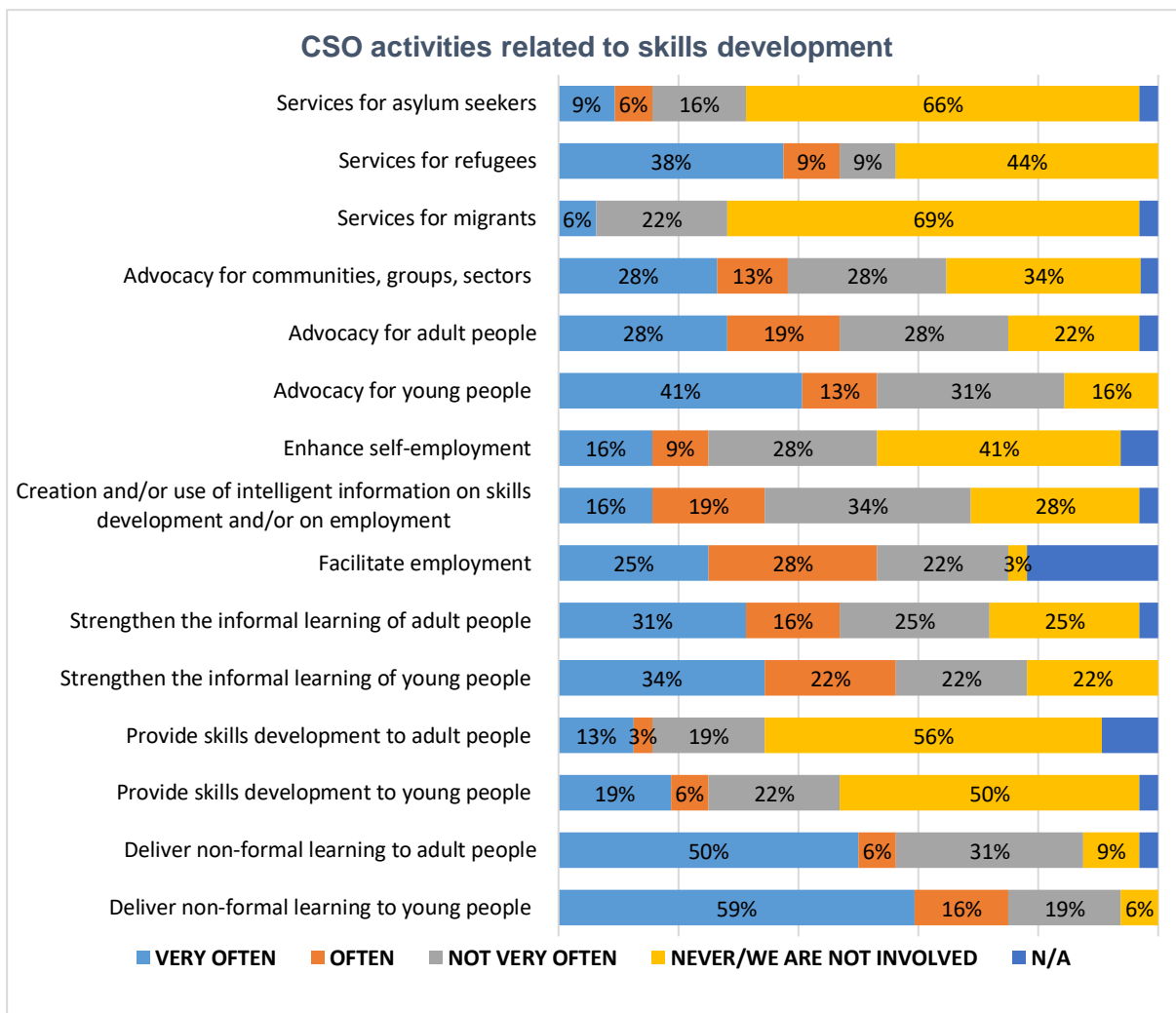
social inclusion of young people with special needs (38%) and those from poorer families with many children and fewer opportunities (50%) is becoming more visible.



Graph 11. Beneficiaries among the youth

The current Moldovan legislative framework and donors encourage and urge CSOs to involve young people in various programmes and local actions. Thus, they can enrich their personal development and contribute to developing their community and the country.

Graph 12 below provides an overview of surveyed CSOs' activities related to skills development through non-formal learning and informal learning and services to employment. Thus, survey results show that most CSOs focused their activities related to skills development on delivering and strengthening non-formal learning to young people (50%) and on providing non-formal learning to adult people (50%). They had fewer activities focused on services for migrants (6%), services for asylum seekers (9%) and providing skills development to adult people (13%).



Graph 12. CSO activities related to skills development.

Among other activities for skills development through non-formal and informal learning and services to employment that have been emphasised by CSOs were: counselling adoptive parents and foster children, informing young people with disabilities as well as employers about the programmes offered by the government to employ people with disabilities in the field of labour market; providing support for filling different kind of documents.

The findings from the study show that non-formal learning is one of the most essential services CSOs provide in Moldova, emphasising a strong influence on youth personality development. In this context, CSOs play a vital role in delivering non-formal learning to young people (59%), presenting an attractive and interesting way to spend their free time and learning to collect a lot of information.

Also, advocacy for young people (41%) is essential. It is identifying, understanding and addressing issues important to young people. By advocating for youth in educational institutions, communities and society, CSOs can empower them to take responsibility for their well-being.

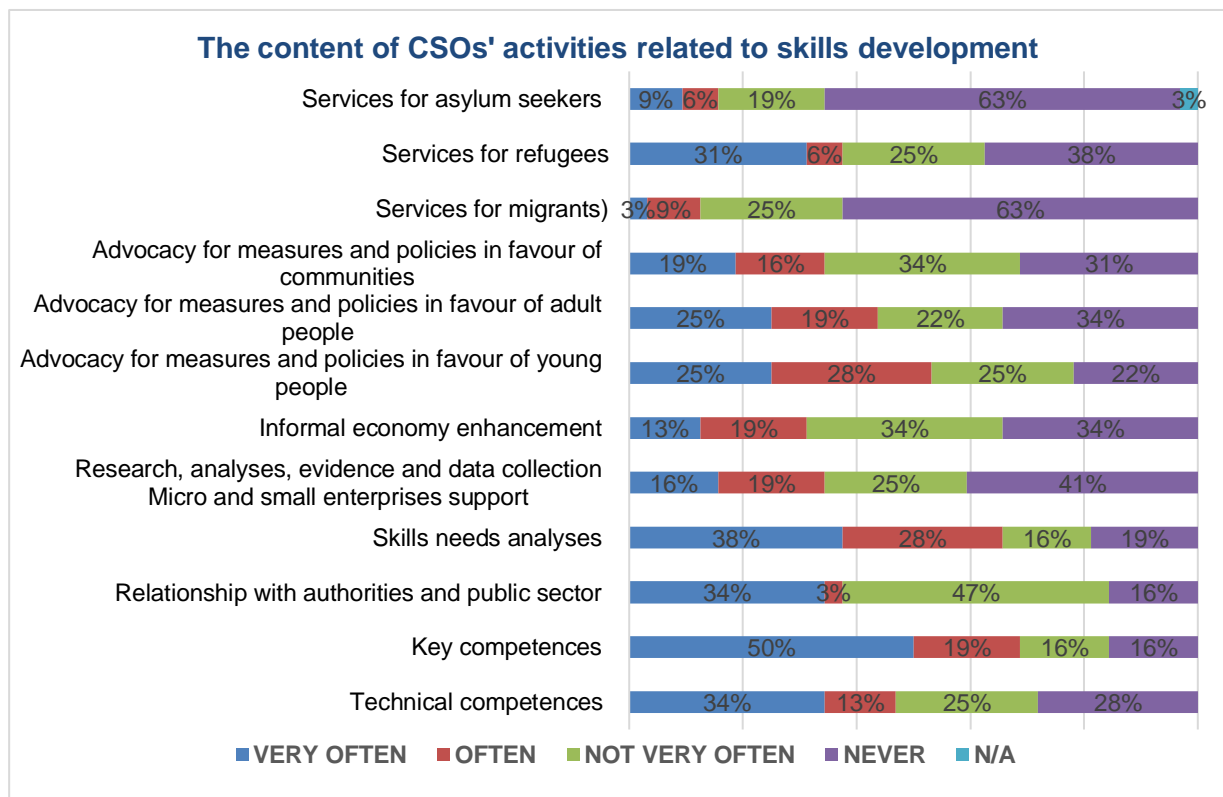


Graph 13. Activities related to skills development of young people.

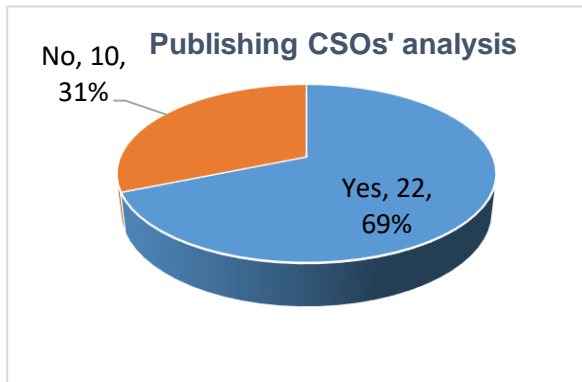
Informal education can help young people learn new skills and knowledge; it allows them to learn in a flexible framework and helps develop a strong engagement awareness. All these young people's skills must be strengthened within the actions conducted by CSOs in an informal environment (34%), that is, outside the classroom. Currently, the Moldovan CSOs sector succeeds very well in including young people in various programmes, which are more attractive, creative, flexible and helpful to learn among youth

on a peer-to-peer basis. Finally, the mission of CSOs when it comes to young people is to contribute to developing young people's social, civic and life skills in the regions where they operate, using non-formal and informal learning (19%). (See Graph 13 for reference)

When asked about the **content of CSOs' activities** related to skills development through non-formal learning and informal learning, and services to employment, the most significant part of interviewed CSOs responded to have provided support with Key competencies (e.g. learning to learn, teamwork, leadership, communication, languages, public speaking, self-confidence, entrepreneurship); Skills needs analyses; Relationship with authorities and public authorities; Services for refugees, as well as Technical competences. CSOs were less involved in implementing such activities as Services for migrants and Services for asylum seekers.



Graph 14. The content of CSOs' activities related to skills development



Graph 15 Publishing CSOs' analysis

Further, being asked to provide information on whether they carry out analysis, research and data collection, 69% (22 of surveyed CSOs) stated that they **publish their analysis**, publications and studies through their online channels of communication such as Website, Facebook or Instagram and also, they are willing to share the results with networks and stakeholders. Another 31% (that is, 10 CSOs) have not yet tried to publish the results of the activities carried out because they did not have this need due to the lack of experience, the specifics of the activities carried out and the fields in which they operate.

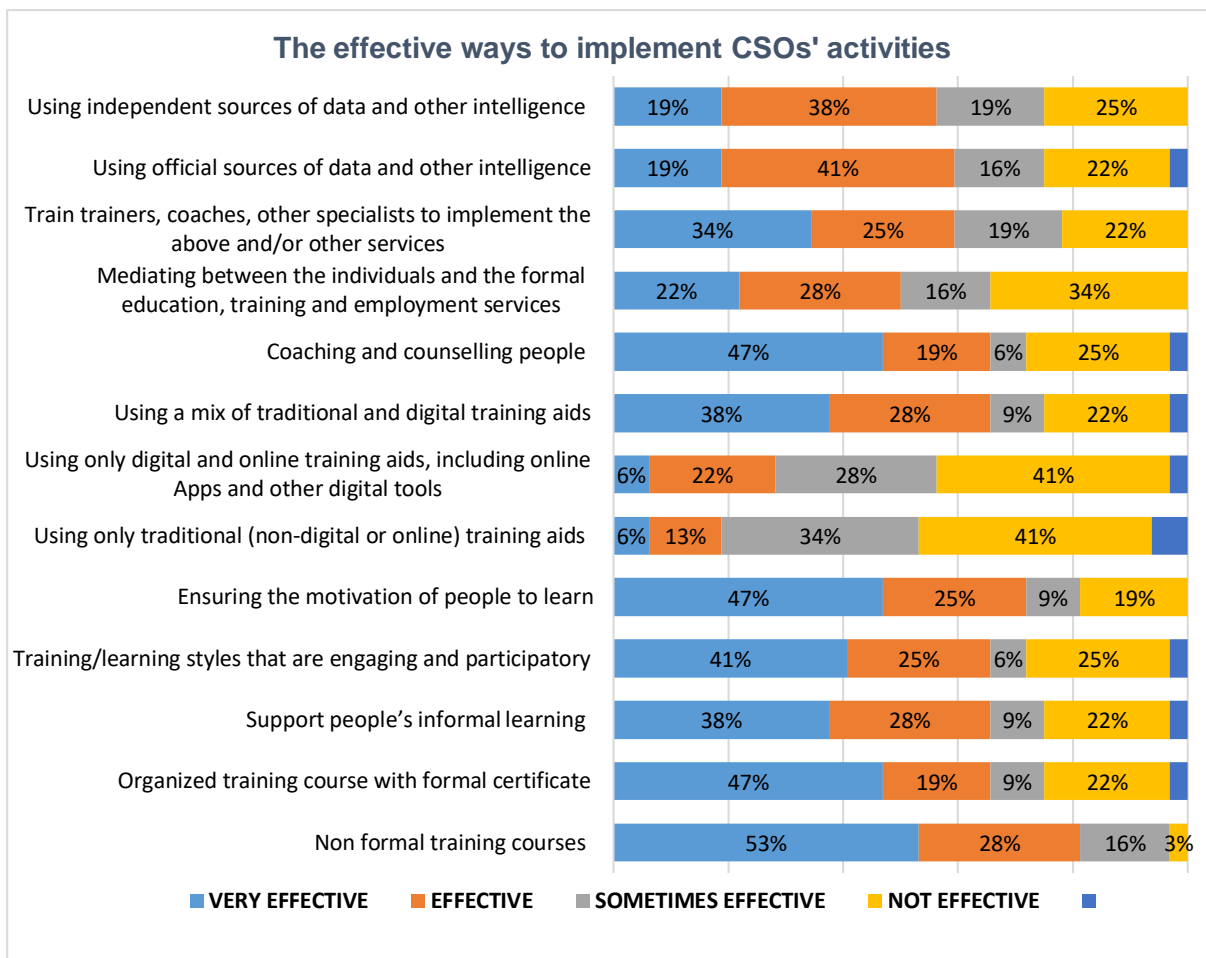
Among the respondents who published the results of their activities, the following statements were highlighted:

- *“This is one of our key activities, as all of our advocacy (influencing national policies) is based on data, research and analysis. We carry out analyses related to the labour market, education, social protection, reconciling family and professional life, abuse and harassment at work and studies, participation in the decision-making process, etc. The collected data are used in elaborating analysis reports, opinions and positions of the organisation concerning certain national policies, in the dialogue with decision-makers, etc. All elaborated materials are published on the organisation’s websites, and are used and distributed in the dialogue with national decision-makers and promoted in networks”.*
- *“They are published on our website and that of our partners. Also, most of the products are shared with our potential target group who will use it”.*
- *The Public Association “X” collects data, research and analyses within the implemented projects to increase the effectiveness of the interaction with the beneficiaries, the thorough analysis of the needs of the beneficiaries, as well as the analysis of the suggestions related to the activity we carry out. After collecting the necessary data, an analysis report, infographics and visibility materials are drawn up, which can be distributed in the online environment (upon request) but also presented to the target group for which this research was carried out.*

Regarding the *most effective ways to implement activities* related to skills development through non-formal learning and informal learning, and services to employment CSOs, there were noted the following effective ways (See Graph 16 for reference)

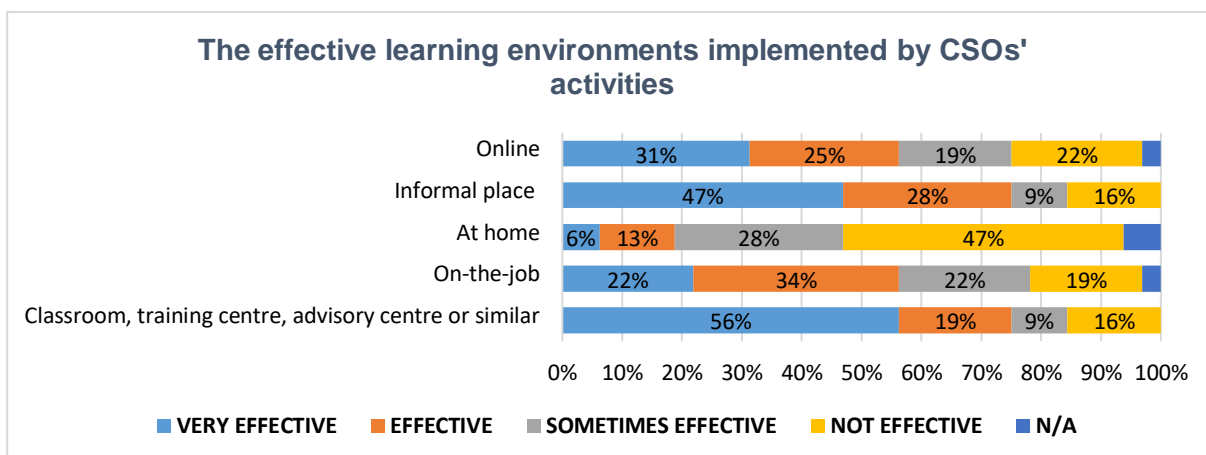
- Non-formal training courses (53%)
- Coaching and counselling people (47%)
- Ensuring the motivation of people to learn (47%)
- Organised training course with formal certificate (47%)

It is important to emphasise that these effective ways to implement activities were also in line with the surveyed CSOs activities in focus.



Graph 16. The effective ways to implement CSOs' activities

Most of the respondents from surveyed CSOs found the classroom, training centre, advisory centre, or similar learning environment (56%), informal place (47%) and online (31%) as a very effective learning environment. However, at home (only 6%) were less preferred or deemed a less effective environment place.



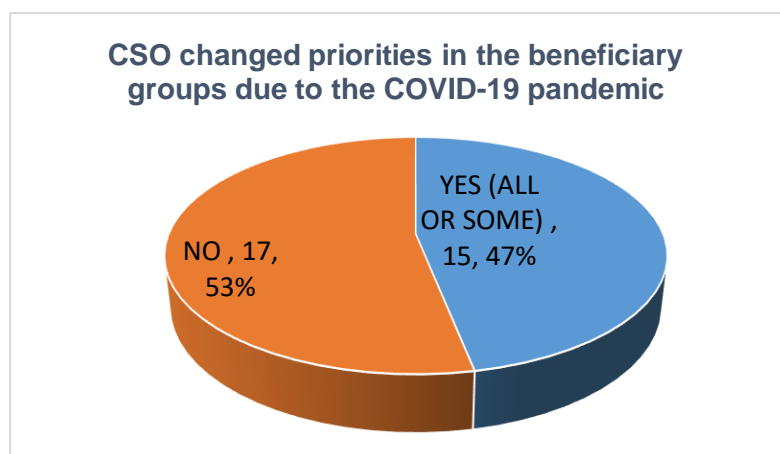
Graph 17. The effective learning environments implemented by CSOs' activities

## CHAPTER 2. RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC EFFECTS

The questions addressed in this section were about the changes in the CSOs' beneficiary groups and activities due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Overall, the emergency of COVID-19 brought much uncertainty to the population regarding their economic stability and social issues.

The pandemic has impacted all aspects of the activity of CSOs – from running programmes, planning finances and coordinating staff to collaborating with partners and stakeholders in implementing projects or expected programmes. However, for many Moldovan CSOs, the challenges of the pandemic have opened the way to new opportunities and innovative tools for working in the field in which they operate. This is a chance to renew how global issues are approached in the new realities. At the same time, many CSOs have been forced to redesign their activities/programmes to respond to the rapidly changing landscape caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. So, organisations have adjusted their goals and programme implementation strategies in line with the challenges communities have faced considering the pandemic<sup>19</sup>.

At the same time, many funders have eased protocols to allow implementing partners to redirect their activities and funding programmes to the COVID-19 response. Donors have been observed to offer organisations (on a case-by-case basis) more possibilities to activate in crises, such as online reporting mechanisms, to simplify administration during the pandemic<sup>20</sup>.



Graph 18. CSO changed priorities in the beneficiary groups due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Enquiring whether the surveyed CSOs changed priorities regarding their activities for HCD during the COVID-19 pandemic, fifteen (15), or 47% of surveyed CSOs stated to have adjusted their activities. In contrast, 17 CSOs, or 53%, did not. (Graph 18).

In this context, it is noted that the pandemic has not significantly affected the activities carried out by CSOs. Considering the specifics of the activities in the HCD field, in the study, it is noticed that the techno-digital tools have been diversified, thus avoiding physical contact with the actual

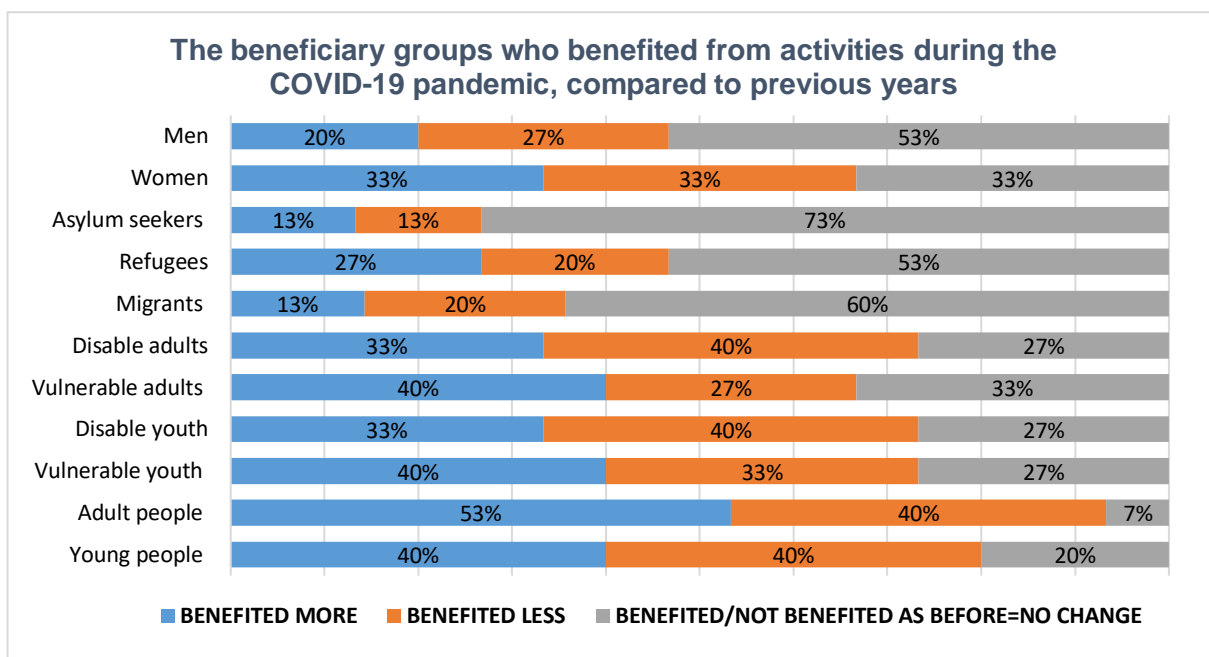
beneficiaries.

According to interviewed organisations, the beneficiary groups who benefited from CSOs activities during the COVID-19 pandemic, compared to previous years, were the adult people (53%), followed by young people, vulnerable youth and vulnerable adults (each receiving 40%). The least attention has been given to asylum seekers and migrants (13% each). (See Graph 19 for reference).

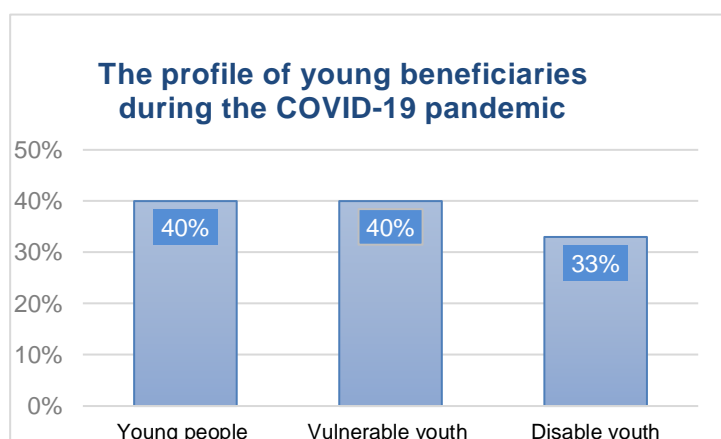
<sup>19</sup>Budurina-Goreacii C. Managementul insitutiilor societății civile în perioada pandemiei Covid-19. În: Studia Universitatis Moldaviae, 2021, nr.8(148), Chișinău, p. 266-267.

<sup>20</sup> How are NGOs coping with the impacts of COVID-19. [Online] Available at: <https://www.toladata.com/blog/how-are-ngos-coping-with-the-impacts-of-covid19/> [Accessed 05.07.2023]





Graph 19. The beneficiary groups who benefited from activities during the COVID-19 pandemic, compared to previous years



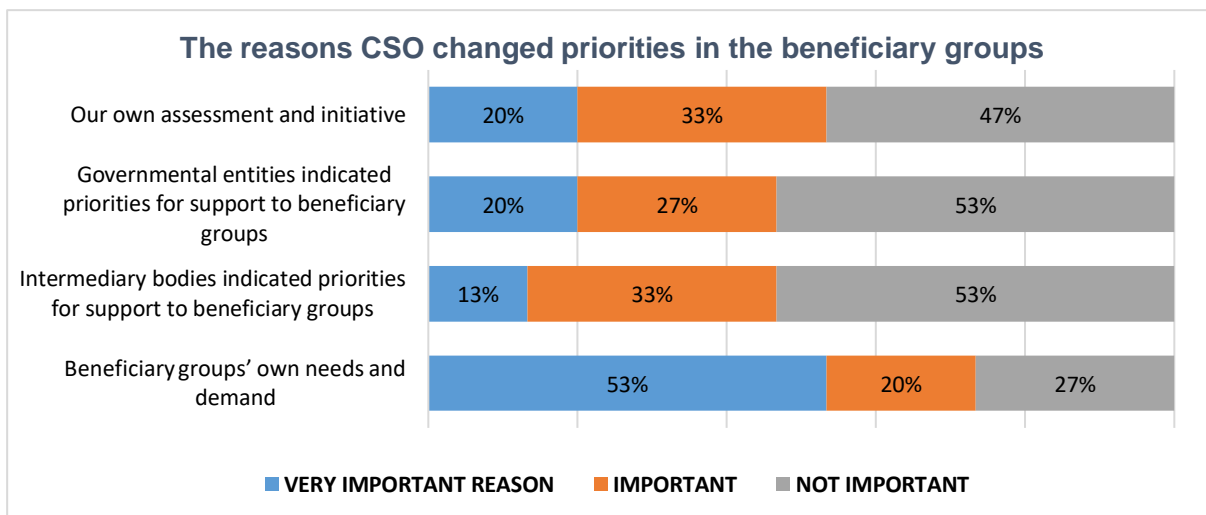
Graph 20. The profile of young beneficiaries during the COVID-19 pandemic

Also, according to the study, during the COVID-19 pandemic, great attention by CSOs has been given to young people. Thus, young people (40%), vulnerable youth (40%) and disabled youth (33%) benefited more from the activities of CSOs. This fact demonstrates that in critical situations, young people are more vulnerable and adapt more difficult to unforeseen emergencies.

In this case, the role of CSOs is to help them overcome crises more easily, to give suitable protection and to support them when needed and required.

The organisations changed their priorities in the beneficiary groups due to the needs and demands of the beneficiaries (53%). Some respondents (20%) reasoned about the changes made from their assessment and initiative. Also, 20% of respondents referred to the indication of the government entities priorities for support to the beneficiary groups. In contrast, only 13% of the respondents mentioned that changes were made at the request of the intermediate bodies to support the groups of beneficiaries.

More specifically, when asked if the organisation changed priorities regarding the activities for HCD during the COVID-19 pandemic, 41% of respondents said “No” or “To some extent”, and only 16% mentioned “to have changed their priorities regarding the implementing activities for HCD”.

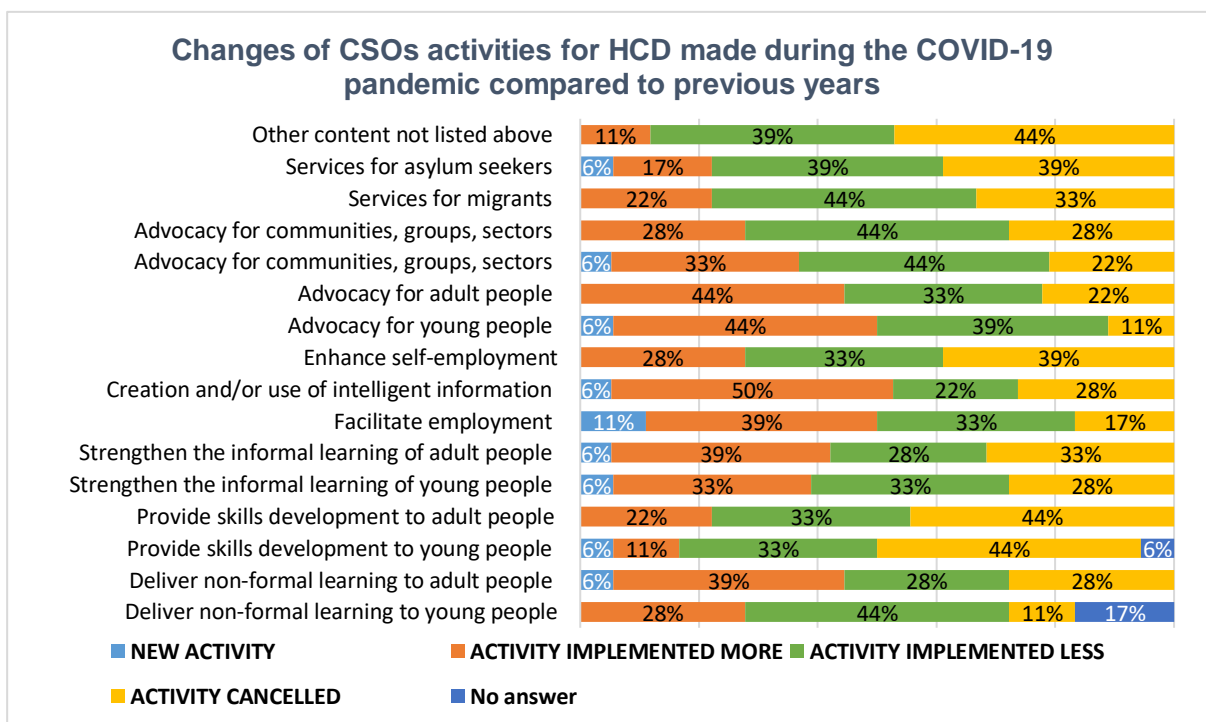


Graph 21. The reasons CSOs changed priorities in the beneficiary groups

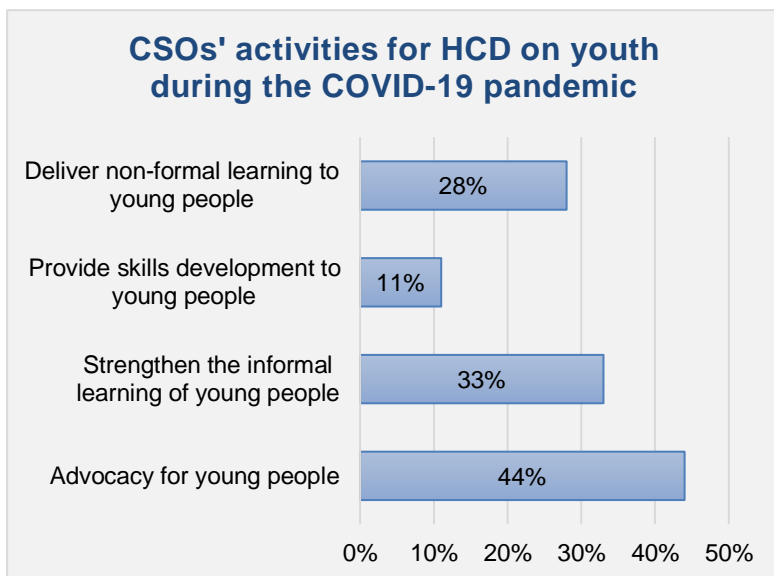
The CSOs that changed their activities for HCD during the COVID-19 pandemic compared to previous years reported the following changes:

- The new activity started: Facilitating employment.
- Activities implemented more: Creation and/or use of intelligent information or skills; Advocacy for adult people; Advocacy for young people,
- Activities implemented less: Services for migrants; Advocacy for communities, groups and sectors; Deliver non-formal learning to young people.
- Cancelled activities: Provide skills development to adults; Provide skills development to young people.

From Graph 22, the CSOs did not focus too much on starting new activities but only organised more activities in certain areas, following the requirements of the beneficiaries and the new realities existing in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Graph 22. Changes of CSOs activities for HCD made during the COVID-19 pandemic compared to previous years

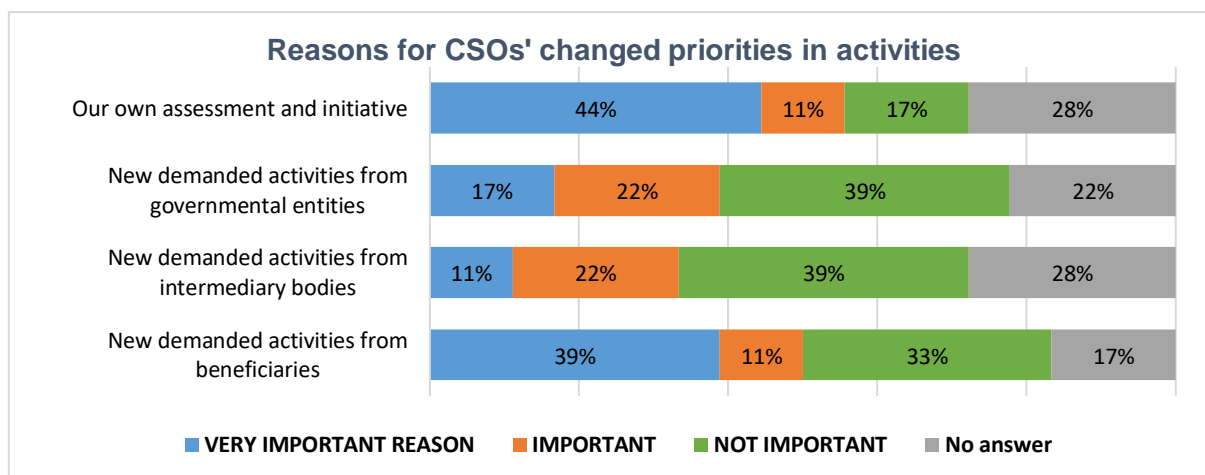


Graph 23. CSOs' activities for HCD on youth during the COVID-19 pandemic

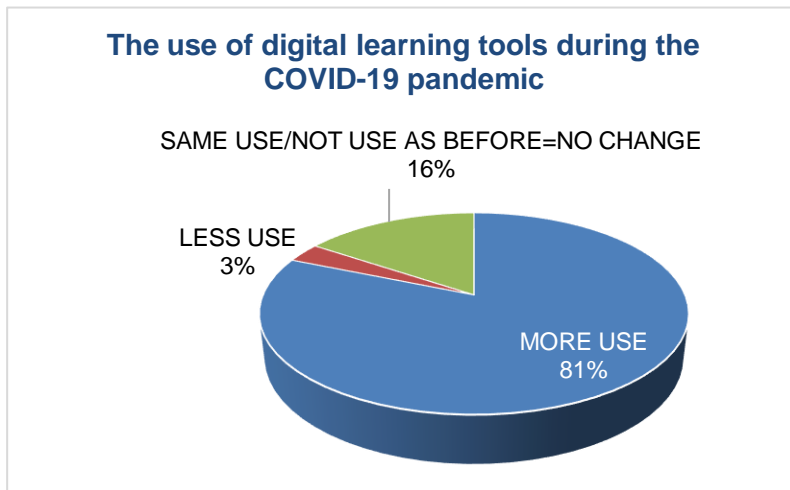
As for the changes regarding the youth-focused activities of CSOs for HCD during the pandemic compared to previous years, the data show that more advocacy was done for young people (44%) and an attempt was made to strengthen the informal learning of young people (33%). At the same time, fewer actions were registered on delivering non-formal learning to young people (28%) and providing skills development to young people (11%). It is believed that the last indicators presented are less objective, given that they emerge from the first two – advocacy and strengthening informal learning.

Indeed, the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that regardless of the situation, CSOs must adapt to the new realities and diversify their tools, actions and implemented programmes whether they have direct or indirect contact with their beneficiaries. However, despite the inconveniences, the priorities focused on youth remained unchanged.

CSOs changed their priorities in activities at their assessment and initiative (44%) and newly demanded activities from beneficiaries (39%). Fewer respondents presented as causes – required activities from the government entities (17%) and newly requested activities from intermediary bodies (11%). These data demonstrate, to some extent, the close collaboration of CSOs with their beneficiaries and the independence of CSOs in their activities and decisions. On the other hand, the lack of connection of CSOs with state authorities may have a minor impact on the local community in this case, especially since, during the pandemic, state authorities have more effective tools to monitor and reduce its spread among citizens.



Graph 24. Reasons for CSOs' changed priorities in activities



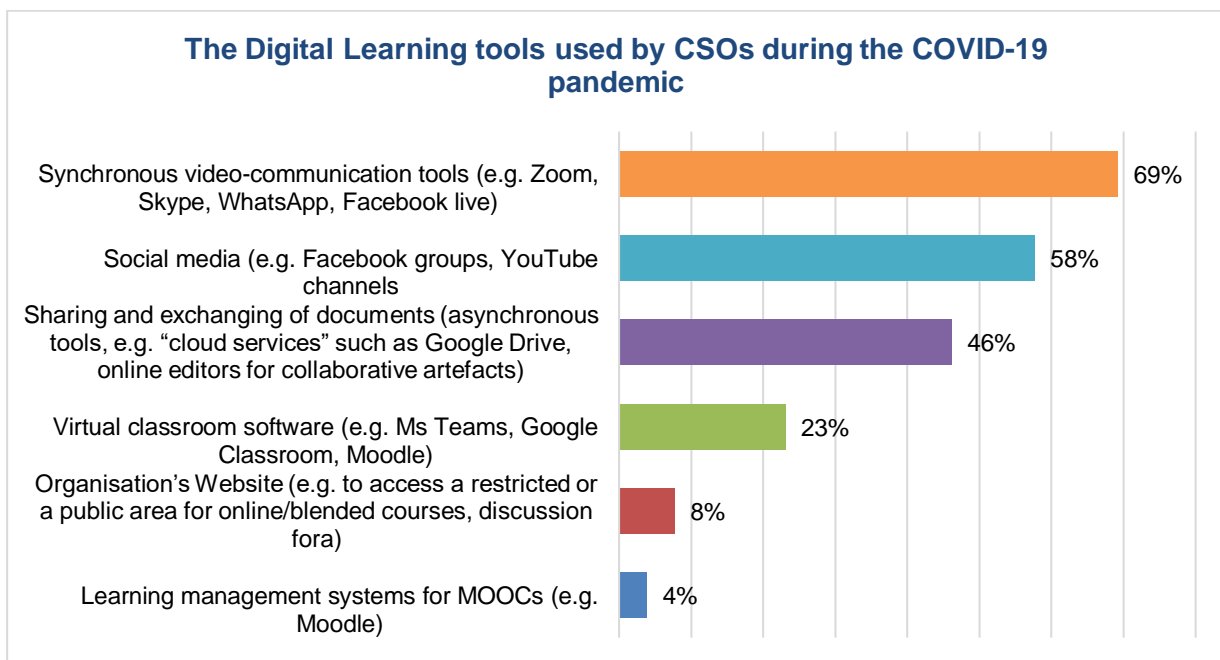
Graph 25. The use of digital learning tools by CSOs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

81% of respondents reported to have used more Digital Learning tools during the COVID-19 pandemic compared to previous years (Graph 25).

In this way, synchronous video-communication tools (e.g. Zoom, Skype, WhatsApp, Facebook live) and social media (e.g. Facebook groups, YouTube channels) were tools used more by them compared to previous years (Graph 26).

Currently, learning management systems for MOOCs (e.g. Moodle) are still not so popular among CSOs and their

beneficiaries. Only 4% of respondents use this tool. However, during the pandemic, in Moldovan educational institutions of primary, secondary and university levels, the Moodle platform, for example, was a prevalent and effective digital tool among users.

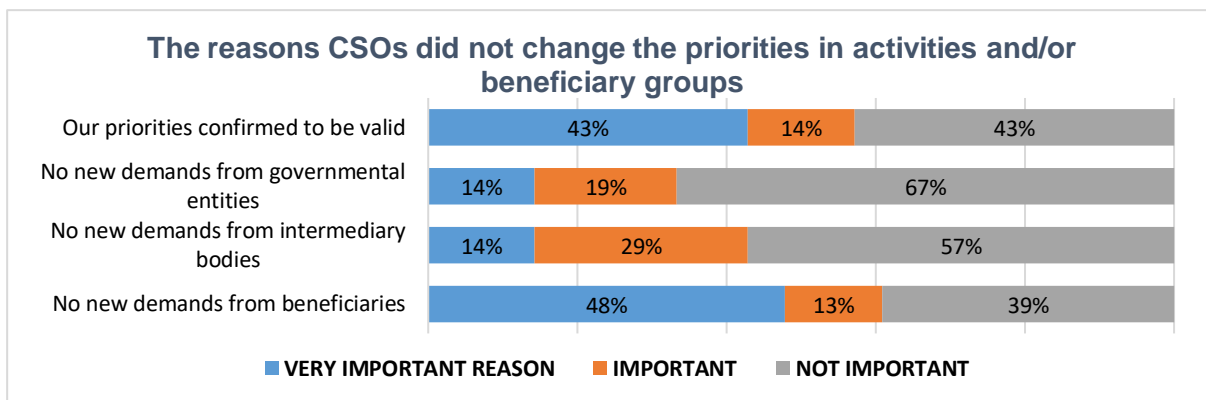


Graph 26. The Digital Learning tools used by CSOs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

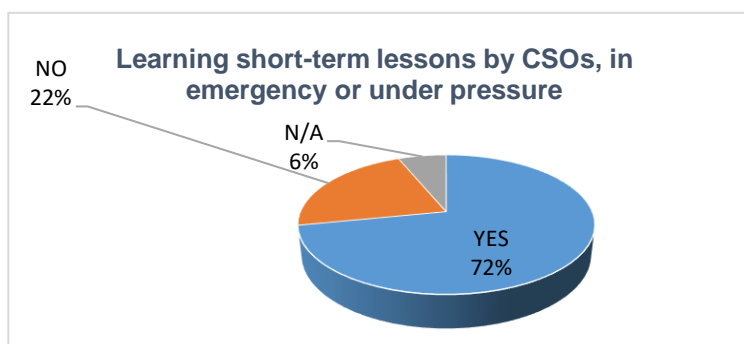
The most relevant answers to why the CSOs did not change their priorities were that the organisation's priorities were confirmed to be valid and that no new demands from the beneficiaries appeared (Graph 27).

Among other reasons mentioned by CSOs but who have not been included in the survey but to which the organisations referred were mentioned:

- The process of implementing the priorities has been adapted and the priorities themselves have remained relevant.
- The organisation's team was mobilised during the pandemic.



Graph 28. The reasons CSOs did not change the priorities in activities and/or beneficiary groups

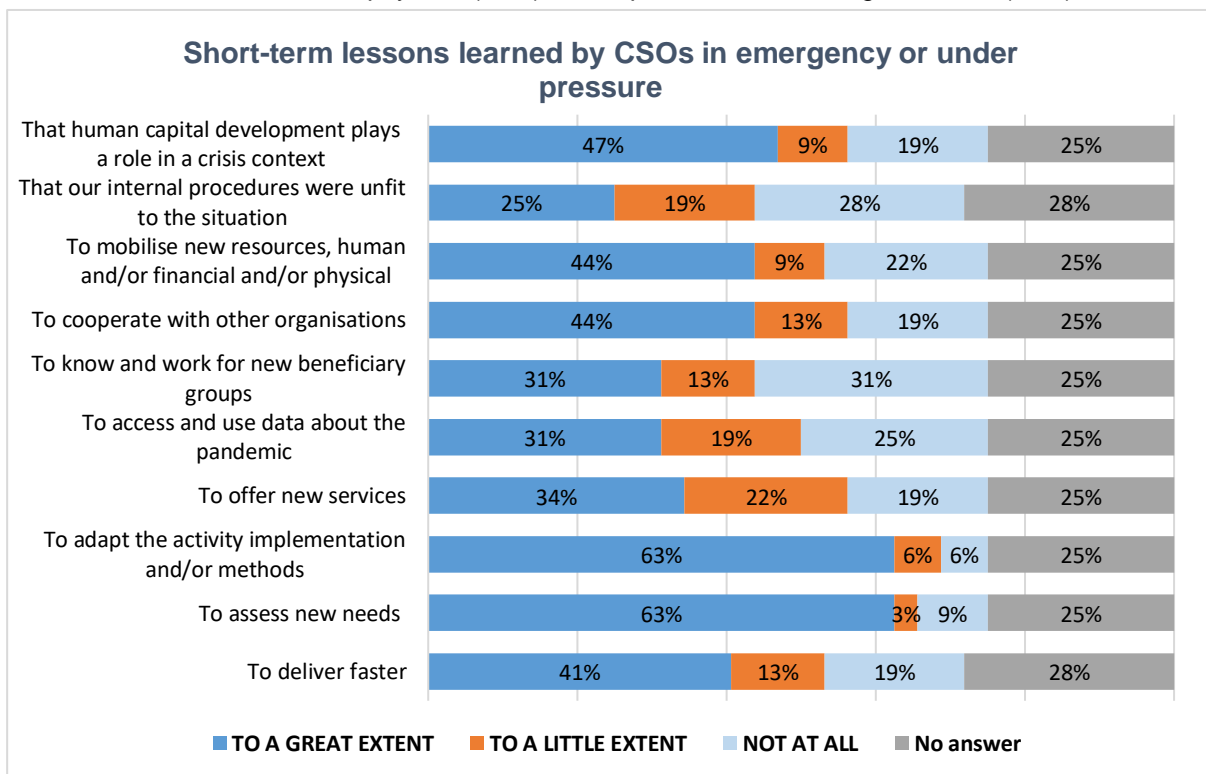


72% of interviewed CSOs confirmed that they had learned short-term lessons in emergencies or under pressure during the implementation of HCD activities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Another 22% denied learning such lessons, while 6% of respondents could not provide an answer to this question (Graph 29).

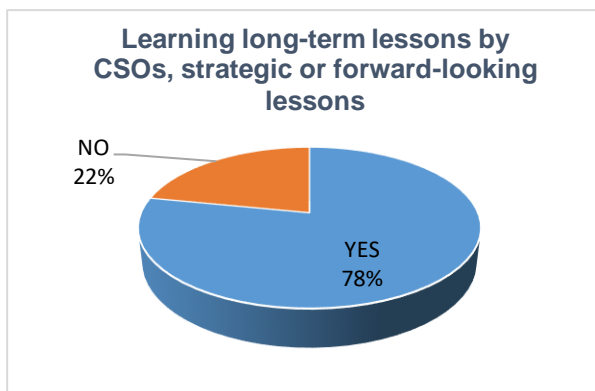
Graph 29. Learning short-term lessons by CSOs, in emergency or under pressure

To a great extent, short-term lessons learned include: adapting the activity implementation and/or methods

(63%); that human capital development plays a role in a crisis context (47%); to mobilise new resources, human and/or financial and/or physical (44%); to cooperate with other organisations (44%).



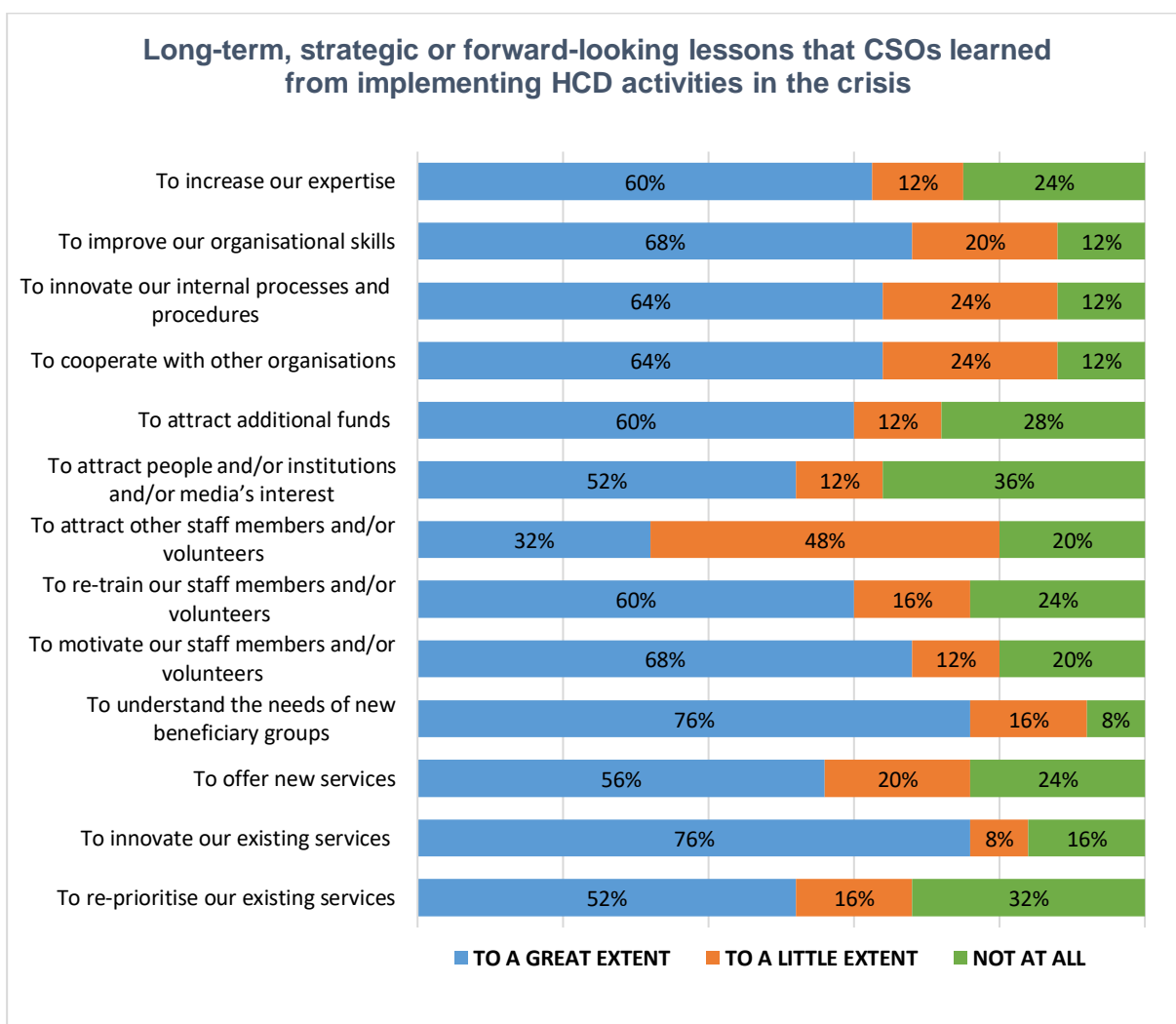
Graph 30. Short-term lessons learned by CSOs in emergency or under pressure



78% of interviewed CSOs confirmed that they had learned long-term lessons, strategic or forward-looking lessons. Another 22% denied learning such lessons. (Graph 31)

To a great extent Long-term, strategic or forward-looking lessons that CSOs learned from implementing HCD activities in the crisis include: to innovate the existing services (76%); to understand the needs of new beneficiary groups (76%); to improve the CSOs organisational skills (68%); as well as to innovate CSOs staff members and/or volunteers (68%).

Graph 31. Learning long-term lessons by CSOs, strategic or forward-looking lessons



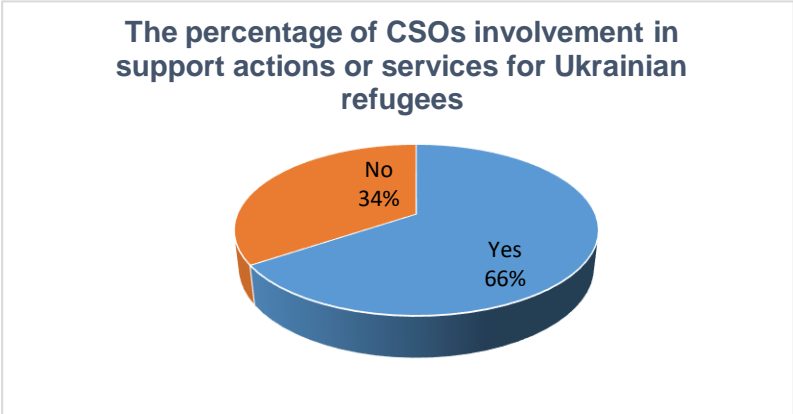
Graph 32. Long-term, strategic or forward-looking lessons that CSOs learned from implementing HCD activities in the crisis

# CHAPTER 3. MANAGING THE REFUGEE CRISIS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE UKRAINE WAR

In this section, the main questions have been focused on identifying whether CSOs have been involved in managing refugee crises and determining the type of assistance provided to Ukrainian refugees.

With the outbreak of war in Ukraine, due to Russia’s invasion on 24 February 2022, the situation remained uncertain, and staying at home had become a real danger to the lives of Ukrainian citizens. Being on the border with Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova became the host of hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian refugees either temporarily or in transit, later continuing their route to other countries. Some of them returned home to Ukraine. And other Ukrainians, refugees in the Republic of Moldova, have already settled for an undetermined long time, given that the war in Ukraine is in full swing also at the time of preparing this report.

In this context, the merit of the Moldovan CSOs is vast because they reacted quickly to the situation related to Ukrainian refugees. The involvement of CSOs in managing the Ukrainian refugee crisis was diverse, some being more active and others offering support in various forms.



Graph 33. The CSOs involvement in support actions or services for Ukrainian refugees

Being asked if during 2022, CSOs provided support or certain services to people who left Ukraine due to military actions, 66% stated that they offered such services, while 34% mentioned that they did not get involved in any activities.

Most CSOs that were involved in supporting actions for Ukrainian refugees noted that in 2022, they offered psychological counselling (67%), provision of hygienic products (67%), food insurance (57%) and support to refugees in

improving their skills (57%).

A slight decrease was recorded in the provision of such services as: support to refugees in improving their education (52%), organisation and equipment of child-friendly spaces (48%), and provision of materials/resources for children (48%). The indicators show that the beneficiaries primarily requested these services. On the other hand, the data provide information about the CSOs’ ability to get involved financially, materially and humanly in ensuring a more accessible accommodation of Ukrainian refugees.

At the same time, CSOs denied involvement in such areas as: the provision of communication resources (phone card, internet) (81%), insurance with transport to a destination point in the country or abroad (81%), as well as insurance with financial resources (76%).

These indicators were recorded due to the low interest of CSOs in getting involved in such fields – limited financial resources and the lack of projects focused on providing such services by CSOs.

For more information, see Figure 2 on the types of support provided to refugees.

<b>Types of support</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<i>Psychological counselling</i>	14	7	67%	33%
<i>Legal consultations</i>	9	12	43%	57%
<i>Housing/residence insurance</i>	7	14	33%	67%
<i>Accommodation in the centre intended for refugees</i>	7	14	33%	67%
<i>Food security</i>	12	9	57%	43%
<i>Insurance with medicines/medical services</i>	7	14	33%	67%
<i>Clothing/footwear insurance</i>	9	12	43%	57%
<i>Provision of hygienic products</i>	14	7	67%	33%
<i>Insurance with transport to a destination point in the country or abroad</i>	4	17	19%	81%
<i>Insurance with financial resources</i>	5	16	24%	76%
<i>Provision of materials/resources for children</i>	10	11	48%	52%
<i>Provision of communication resources (phone card, internet)</i>	4	17	19%	81%
<i>Job search support</i>	9	12	43%	57%
<i>Support in placing children in educational institutions</i>	8	13	38%	62%
<i>Support in establishing refugee status</i>	8	13	38%	62%
<i>Organisation and equipment of child-friendly spaces</i>	10	11	48%	52%
<i>Support for host families</i>	8	13	38%	62%
<i>Support to refugees in improving their education</i>	11	10	52%	48%
<i>Support to refugees in improving their skills</i>	12	9	57%	43%
<i>Support to refugees in the recognition of their education and skills</i>	9	12	43%	57%

Figure 2. Types of support provided to refugees

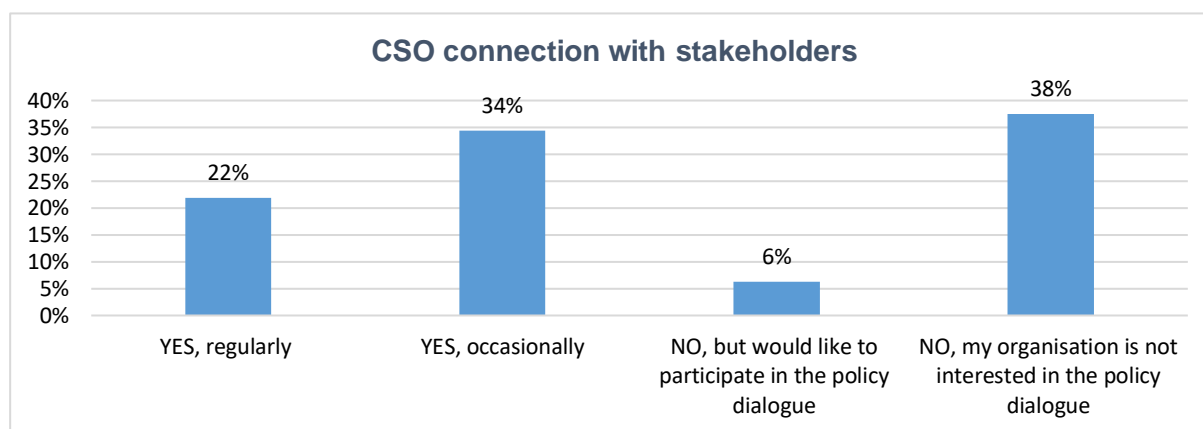


## CHAPTER 4. STAKEHOLDERS AND POLICY DIALOGUE

The section includes references to the participation of the CSOs in policy dialogue with institutional counterparts and the CSOs' contribution to the HCD policy. This broadly covered strategy formulation and policy design, budgeting of programmes and actions, implementation and monitoring, and policy evaluation and review.

It is necessary to mention that the policy dialogue between the Moldovan Civil Society and the state authorities is carried out through the National Council for Participation (NCP, established in 2010), the National Council of NGOs (established in 2008), the Consultative Platform of Civil Society Representatives next to the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova (set in 2019); the Coordinating Committee for an Open Government (the Decision of the State Chancellery of 13.04.2018); but also on the platform particip.gov.md.

From the CSOs included in this survey, 38% said that they are not involved in the policy dialogue regarding non-formal learning, informal learning and employment because of the lack of interest in policy dialogue. 34% of the CSOs are occasionally involved. The indicators mentioned in Graph 34 show that 22% regularly participate in policy dialogue and only 6% express willingness to collaborate with policy actors.



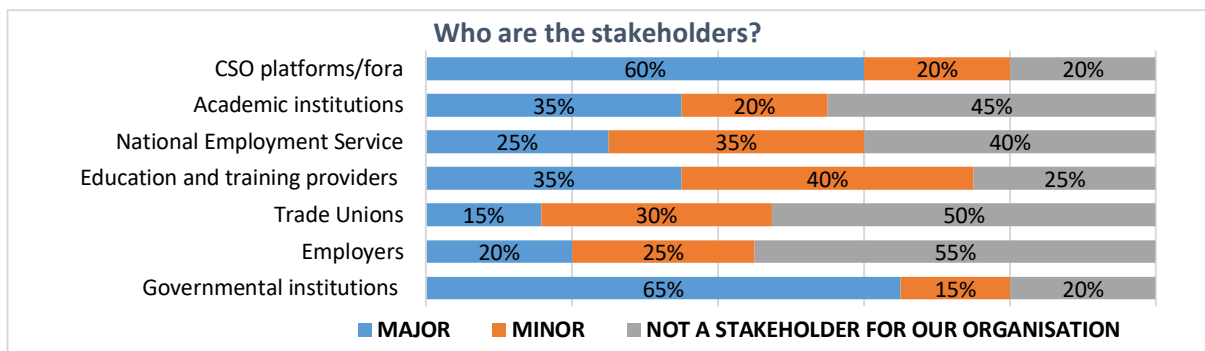
Graphic 34. CSO connection with stakeholders

The data presented in the study confirm the findings stated in the report on the implementation of the Civil Society Development Strategy for the period 2018–2020: “The COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions applied in this regard have greatly influenced the traditional tools used by CSOs, which assume the physical presence, such as public meetings, various discussion formats or trainings”. Also in the report, it is mentioned that to improve the situation, it is necessary to “strengthen and optimise the institutional framework for dialogue with civil society, diversify cooperation instruments, improve the legislative framework that regulates public participation processes – information, consultation, transparency, access to information, promotion continuing the civic spirit, but also strengthening the capacities of the given sector”<sup>21</sup>.

The surveyed CSOs reported that they were more frequently involved with the following stakeholders:

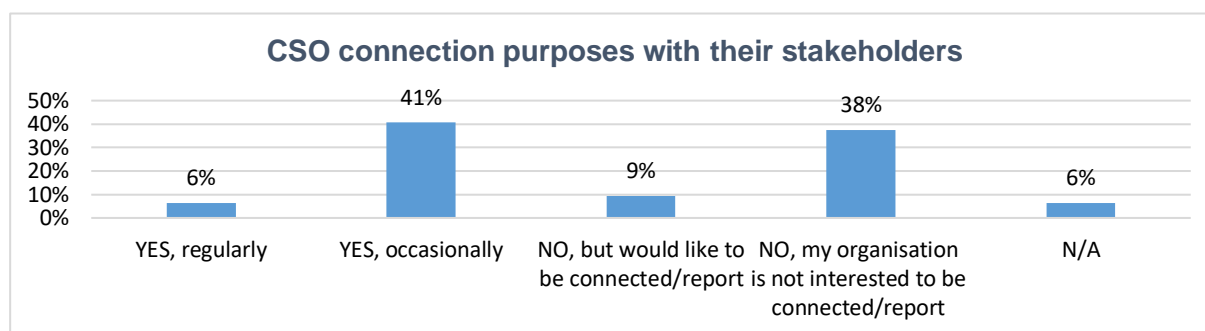
- 65% with Governmental institutions.
- 60% with CSO platforms/fora.
- 35% with Academic institutions.
- 35% with Education and training providers

<sup>21</sup> Raport privind implementarea Strategiei de dezvoltare a societății civile pentru perioada 2018–2020, Chișinău, 2021. p. 24.



Graph 35. Who are the stakeholders?

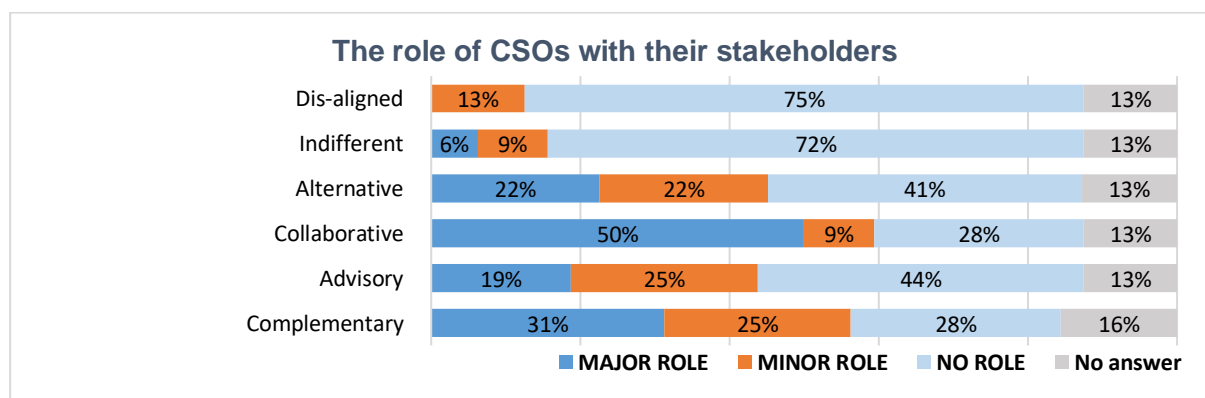
From Graph 36, it can be seen that 41% of CSOs are occasionally connected with their stakeholders. 38% of respondents mentioned that their organisation is not interested in being connected. 9% of CSOs state that they are not connected but would like to collaborate with the above stakeholders, followed by regular connection of CSOs with stakeholders (6%). From those CSOs reporting to be regularly connected with the above stakeholders, the main content of the connection/reporting was for monitoring reports and advocacy.



Graph 36. CSO connection purposes with their stakeholders

Concerning HCD, **CSOs described their role with stakeholders as Collaborative (50%), Complementary (31%), Alternative (22%) and Advisory (19%), while 6% of CSOs stated to be Indifferent (we are not informing the government and the government does not inform us).**

*We are the “engine” - we try to put into practice what the government puts on paper, facilitating the perception by the people of the provisions offered by the law in the field of education and employment. (Public Association “X”)*



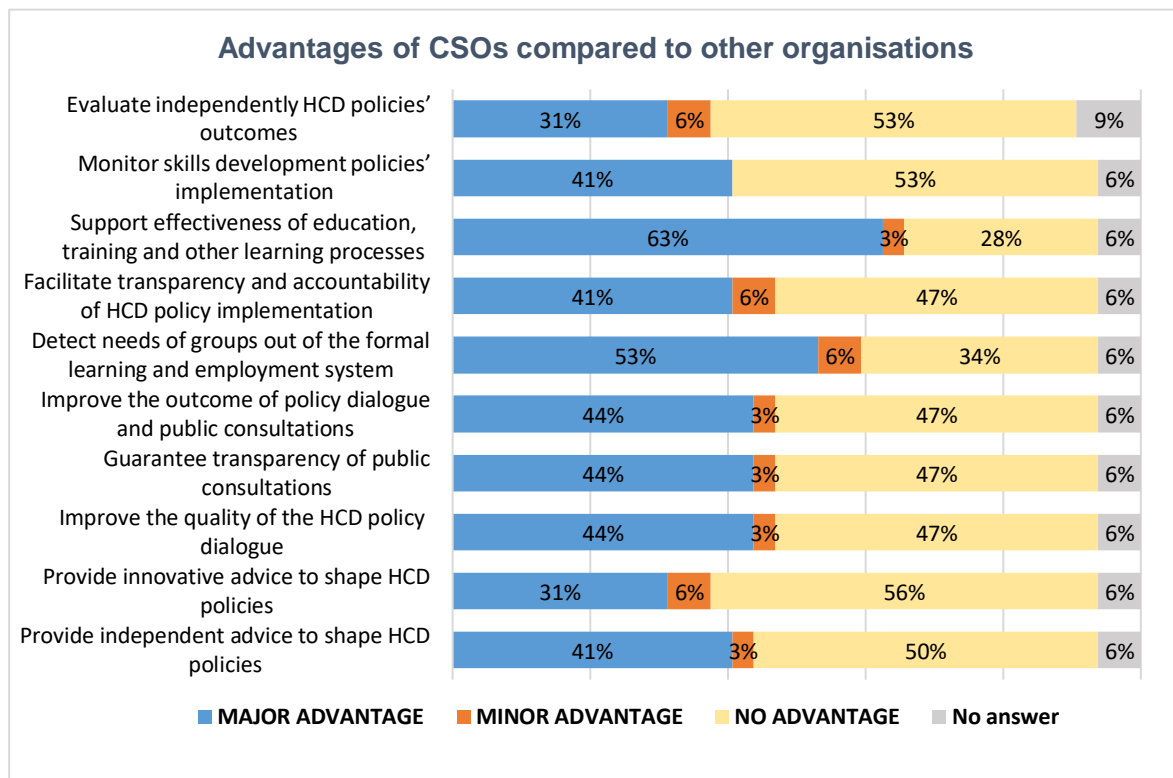
Graph 37. The role of CSOs with their stakeholders

## CHAPTER 5. POTENTIAL OF THE ORGANISATION IN THE HCD SECTOR

This section investigated information on how CSOs perceived present advantages and possible future contributions to the HCD sector.

Regarding the **major advantages of CSOs compared to other public, private and non-governmental institutions**, the interviewed organisations identified the following areas (Graph 38):

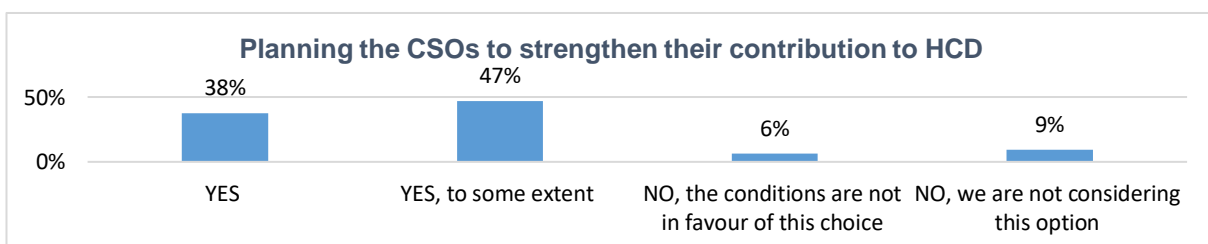
- 63% stated to Support the effectiveness of education, training and other learning processes.
- 53% stated to Detect the needs of groups out of the formal learning and employment system and bring their voice to the policy dialogue.
- 44% stated to Improve the quality of the HCD policy dialogue.
- 44% said to Guarantee transparency of public consultations.
- 44% stated to Improve the policy dialogue and public consultations outcome.



Graph 38. Advantages of CSOs compared to other organisations.

On whether the surveyed CSOs were **planning to strengthen their contribution to HCD**

- 47% stated that they would to some extent.
- 38% stated that they would.
- 9% stated that they are not considering this option.
- 6% stated that they are not in favour of this option.



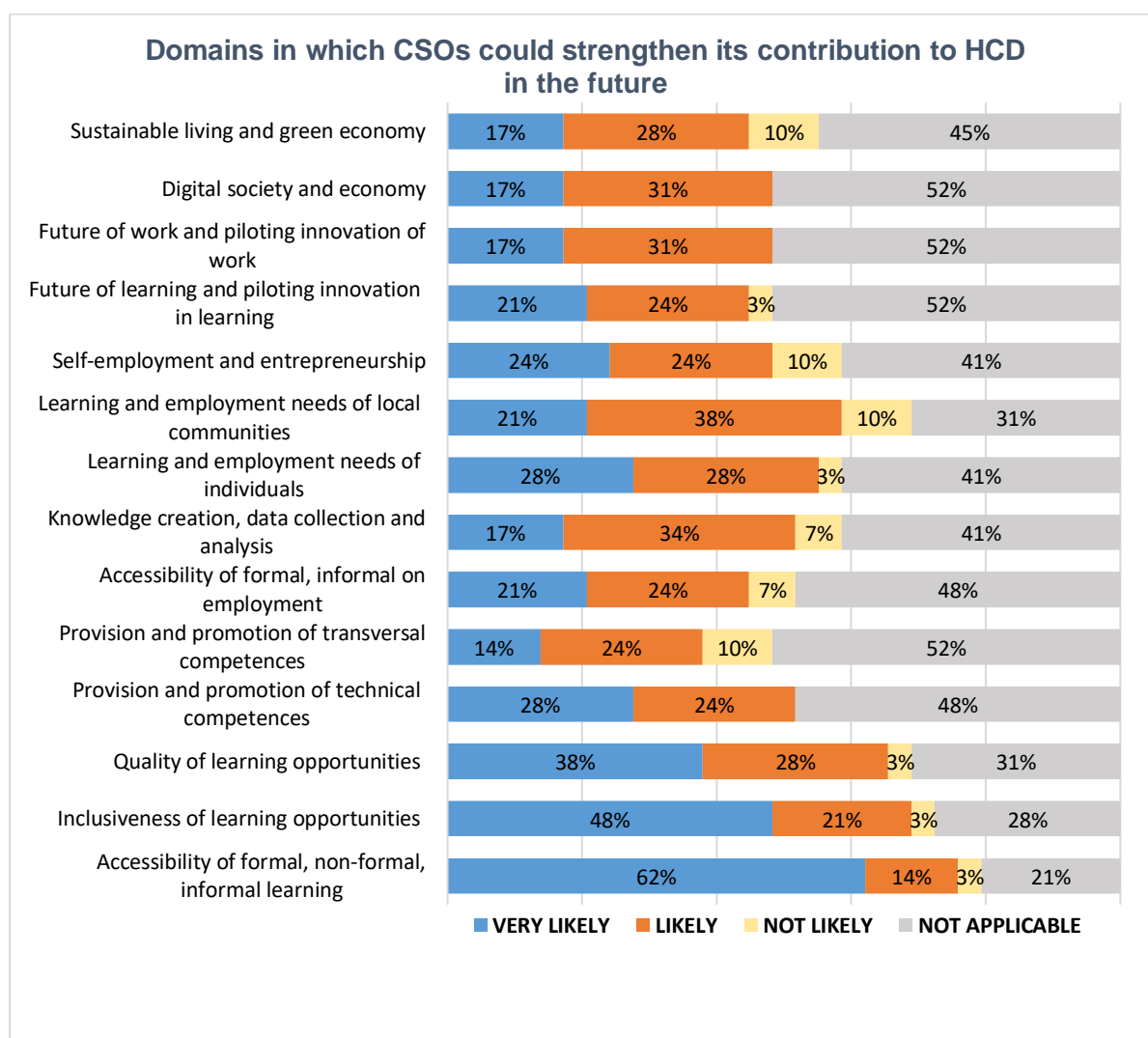
Graph 39. Planning the CSOs to strengthen their contribution to HCD

**Regarding the main domains that CSOs were very likely or likely to strengthen their contribution to HCD, the survey found that:**

- 62% of them considered accessibility of formal, non-formal and informal learning.
- 48% of them considered inclusiveness of learning opportunities (regardless of age, gender, abilities, citizenship, vulnerability, employment status, etc.)
- 38% of them considered the quality of learning opportunities.

**Fewer domains were considered**

- 17% Knowledge creation, data collection and analysis, independent monitoring and evaluation of the HCD sector, policy advice.
- 17% Future of work and piloting innovation of work.
- 17% Digital society and economy.
- 17% Sustainable living and green economy.
- 14% Provision and promotion of transversal competencies.



Graph 40. Domains in which CSOs could strengthen its contribution to HCD in the future

## CHAPTER 6. MAIN FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Civil society organisations are important actors in Human Capital Development in the Republic of Moldova. The same time, regardless of the year of the organisation's registration whether it operates for a longer or shorter period, the CSOs in Moldova carry out activities in the HCD. They participate in various networks, platforms, forums and national/international councils to be visible, transparent and credible to society. Thus, CSOs can exchange experience and good practices, transmit information from their beneficiaries regarding their needs and identify common and accessible solutions together with partners for their benefit.

Being a geographically small country with limited financial, human and material resources, Moldovan CSOs have not opened many regional/additional offices. These are often limited to renting/buying the offices where they carry out their essential activity and where they are registered according to the statute. Most of the CSOs have between 5 and 14 employees and collaborators. This indicator is explained by the fact that it is difficult for an organisation to engage more persons and to maintain a permanent staff due to the vulnerability and excessive financial dependence of Moldovan CSOs towards donors. Also, because of temporary programmes/projects in the organisations, the employees do not want to have a temporary job but instead choose a career with a stable salary.

Moldovan CSOs focus their activities related to skills development on delivering and strengthening non-formal learning to young people and adults (50%). Formal education and training are left to educational institutions that offer certificates and diplomas recognised by the relevant ministries. At the same time, fewer activities are focused on services for migrants (6%), services for asylum seekers (9%) and providing skills development to adult people (13%). This reduced involvement is explained by the fact that the respective fields include a narrow group of beneficiaries, which require a particular approach. Finally, this does not mean that in Moldova, there are no CSOs that offer services for migrants or asylum seekers, only that in the survey, these organisations have been less involved, as one key criteria for CSOs participation in the study was to be active in HCD. .

The CSOs did not change their priorities too much during the COVID-19 pandemic because the organisation's priorities were confirmed to be valid and no new demands from the beneficiaries appeared. According to the report, the organisations' beneficiaries during the pandemic remained the same. The difference is only in the group of beneficiaries who benefited more from CSOs activities during the COVID-19 pandemic compared to previous years. Therefore, adult people have become more of a priority for CSOs (53%), followed by young people, vulnerable youth and vulnerable adults (each one 40%). The least attention has been given to asylum seekers and migrants (13% each). Also, the organisations changed their priorities due to the needs and demands of the beneficiaries (53%). Other 20% reasoned as the changes made from their assessment and initiative. Also, 20% of respondents referred to the indication of the government entities' priorities for support for beneficiary groups. In contrast, only 13% of the respondents mentioned that changes were made at the request of the intermediate bodies to support the groups of beneficiaries.

More specifically, 41% of respondents said that they did not or, to some extent, change priorities regarding the activities for HCD during the COVID-19 pandemic. Only 16% mentioned having changed their priorities regarding the implementing activities for HCD. The CSOs did not focus too much on starting new activities but only on organising more activities in certain areas, following the requirements of the beneficiaries and the new realities existing in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. To make their contribution to HCD more effective, 81% of interviewed CSOs reported to have used more Digital Learning tools during the COVID-19 pandemic compared to previous years.

The short-term lessons learned by CSOs in a crisis context proved to be adapting the activity implementation and/or methods, mobilising new resources, human and/or financial and/or physical, as well as cooperating with other organisations. Overall, CSOs understand that human capital development plays a significant role in a crisis context. Concerning the long-term lessons, the findings of the survey show that CSOs learned from implementing HCD activities to innovate the existing services to

understand the needs of new beneficiary groups (76%), to improve the CSOs' organisational skills (68%) as well as to innovate CSOs staff members and/or volunteers (68%).

In the context of the war in Ukraine, in 2022, Moldovan CSOs got involved in support actions and services for Ukrainian refugees who left the country due to the ongoing war. The survey shows that 66% provided different services, while 34% mentioned not getting involved in any actions. Thus, most of CSOs offered psychological counselling (67%), provision of hygienic products (67%), food insurance (57%) and support to refugees in improving their skills (57%). Concerning the CSO contribution to HCD for Ukrainian refugees, it was found that 52% of positive answers have been given to supporting the refugees in improving their education, 57% support refugees in improving their skills, and finally, 43% supporting refugees in recognition of their education and skills. Thus, it can be observed that the area regarding HCD is current and urgent for the Moldovan CSOs, interested in being as close as possible to the Ukrainian refugees.

Concerning the participation of the CSOs in policy dialogue with institutional counterparts and the CSOs' contribution to the HCD policy, 38% said not to be involved in the policy dialogue regarding non-formal learning, informal learning and employment because of the reduced interest in policy dialogue. 34% of CSOs are occasionally involved. The indicators show that 22% regularly participate in policy dialogue and only 6% express willingness to collaborate with policy actors. The study results show the uncertainty of CSOs to address the issue of HCD in the policy dialogue with the institutions concerned. To rectify this situation, more awareness-raising, advocacy and information actions are needed to mobilise CSOs to participate in the policy dialogue regarding HCD. Concerning the major advantages CSOs have compared with other stakeholders, it is considered that they may provide more support effectiveness of education, training and other learning processes. Also, CSOs can easily detect groups' needs outside of the formal learning and employment system and bring their voice to the policy dialogue. Another point in this regard refers to improving the quality of the HCD policy dialogue and guaranteeing transparency of public consultations. Overall, the efforts of CSOs may improve the outcome of policy dialogue and public consultations. The main domains to be strengthened by CSOs in HCD – accessibility of formal, non-formal and informal learning, then inclusiveness of learning opportunities and quality of learning opportunities – were noted.

From the above, the following conclusions can be identified:

- The HCD sector for Moldovan CSOs is one at the beginning of the path, but with prospects to be developed as a robust sector adapted to the needs of Moldovan beneficiaries.
- The main groups of beneficiaries in the field of HCD represent young people, adults and vulnerable groups, and the main activities carried out by CSOs are aimed at covering this segment of the population in the Republic of Moldova.
- Moldovan CSOs do not have enough experience in HCD; however, they implement diverse range of services focused on formal and informal learning activities for better, easier and quicker inclusion in employment.
- The COVID-19 pandemic affected the activities of the CSOs in the field of HCD. Some of the planned activities were interrupted, cancelled, or postponed. However, the study's findings show that the interviewed CSOs were not significantly affected by the pandemic because their priorities proved to be valid, and the digital tools that replaced the face-to-face activities proved effective.
- CSOs could actively participate in and be invited to various national and international events such as conferences, training sessions and roundtable discussions to gain insights and share best practices in the field of HCD.
- To achieve greater effectiveness, CSOs can explore a wider range of digital tools for HCD. This entails acquiring the necessary skills to utilise specific digital resources that can benefit their target beneficiaries.

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