

# Tracer study

on Cook  
graduates' employability  
in the Republic of Moldova

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

As part of the monitoring exercises run by CONSEPT, we have conducted a study to find out the path the graduates from the training program for Cooks followed after their graduation. Similarly to the studies into Electrician and ACGV graduates, we aimed to learn more about the careers of the graduates.

We did not touch the questions concerning the relevance of the learning in the VET school for the selected occupation. We focused on the career paths in order to keep the efforts limited. It's relatively difficult to find graduates more than one year after graduation.

## 2. TARGET-GROUP

The study sample included 136 graduates from the total number of 270 who have graduated from the training program for Cooks in 4 partner-schools in June 2013:

- ŞP Soroca (3-year program)
- ŞP No 2 Bălţi (1-year and 3-year program)
- ŞP No 1 Cahul (1-year program)
- ŞP Cupcini (3-year program)

The survey was undertaken in May – June 2015, almost 2 years after the graduation.

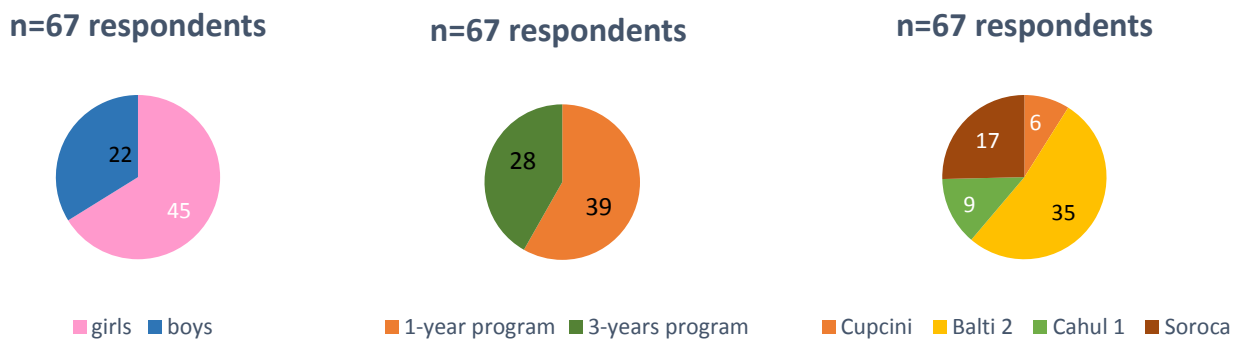
## 3. METHODOLOGY

The school management has provided us with the information on students' names, addresses and telephone numbers. For the first time, we have tried the online survey to collect data on the study questions. The online survey is a tool that could facilitate the data collection and grouping. However, due to the fact that few students use electronic mail, only 6 persons who have offered their electronic addresses completed the questionnaires.

Thus, we decided to apply the telephone survey, asking the respondents to answer a brief questionnaire. Although we have called them at different times of the day – afternoon, evening and weekends – we were not able to talk to many graduates. This is a very common issue in carrying out this sort of studies. We wonder whether students have either changed their addresses or their telephone numbers, or have left the country, or did not wish to answer the telephone. The alternative approach to contacting the graduates through the social networking site "odnoklassniki" has not increased the response rate either. As we have contacted few students, we have enlisted the help of those with whom we have managed to talk earlier to find out more about their colleagues.

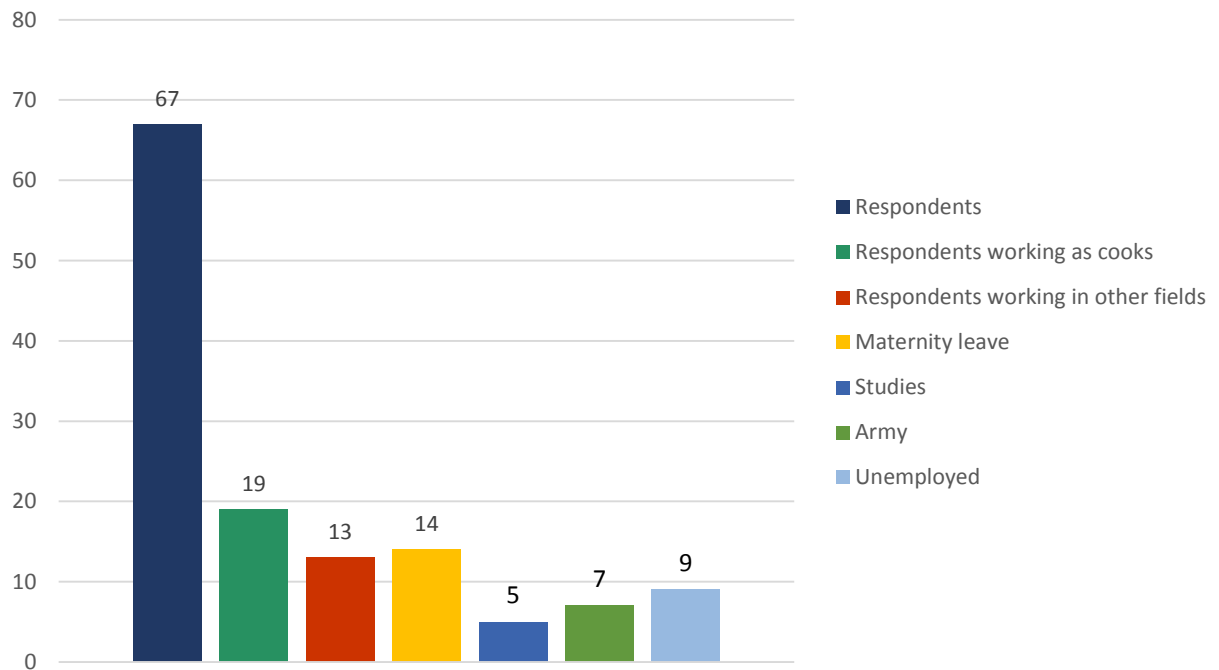
As a result, we managed to gather information on 67 graduates out of 136:

Figure 1: Description of the sample



#### 4. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSING OF THE RESULTS

Figure 2: General findings

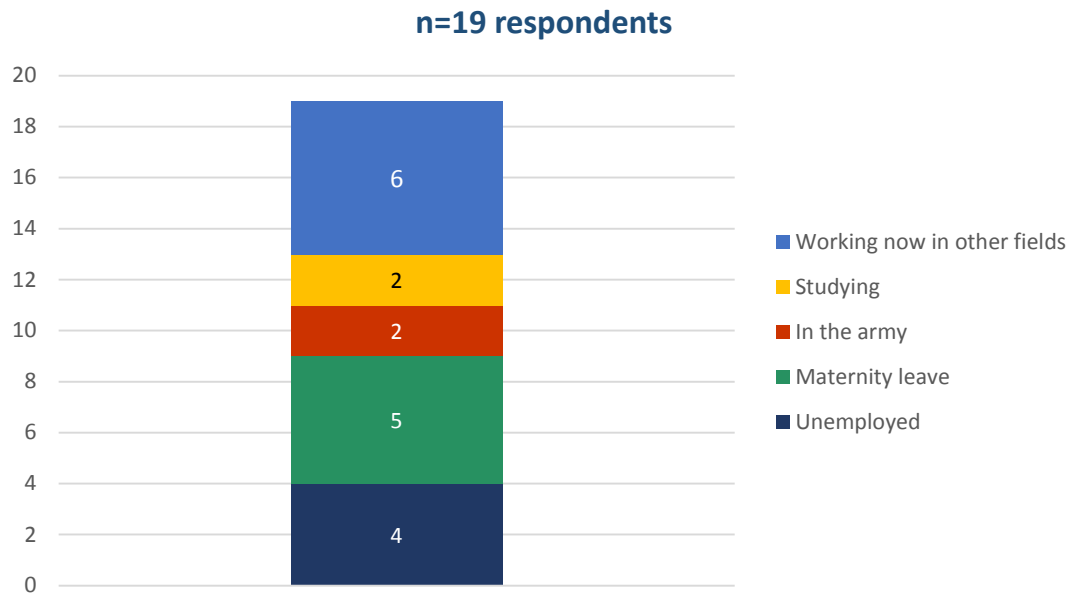


The data analysis has shown that out of 67 respondents, 32 graduates had a job (19 of them were working as cooks), 14 respondents were on the maternity leave, 5 have continued their studies, 7 graduates were in the Army and 9 graduates were unemployed.

At the first sight, the results are not very optimistic as only 19 respondents out of 67 graduates worked as cooks. However, if we take into consideration the experiences of the graduates who worked in the past in their professional field but don't work now as cook, we realize that there

are another 19 people who have previously worked as cook but who stopped doing so because of various reasons.

Figure 3: Respondents who worked as cooks in the past



Therefore, at the time of conducting our study, 4 respondents out of those who were unemployed, 5 of the students on maternity leave, 2 out of those who were in Army and 2 of those who were continuing their studies, used to work as cooks. 6 respondents who have worked as cooks at some point have changed their field of work.

As a result, 19 respondents have worked in their professional field previously. This means that in total, 38 out of 67 respondents (56%) have worked as cooks at one point after their graduation and therefore were able to get working experience as cook.

#### 4.1. Paid Work

Figure 4: Respondents being in paid work

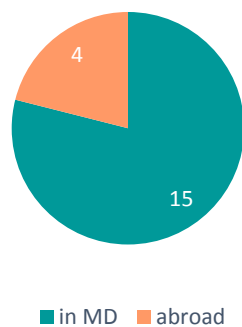


The survey showed that 32 respondents had a job at time of being questioned. 19 were working as cooks, 13 were working in different other fields. 26 respondents stayed in MD, but 6 have left abroad.

The percentage of respondents who have left abroad, mainly to Russia, is not that high as in the case of the other occupations for which we did a tracer study (electrician and HGVS). Yet, as mentioned above, 6 students have left abroad, all moved to Russia where 4 worked as cooks and 2 worked in other occupational fields.

*Figure 5: Respondents working as Cooks*

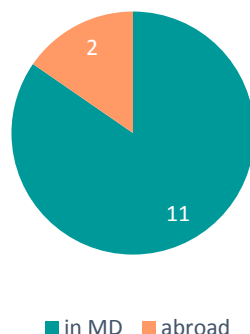
**n=19 respondents**



Out of 19 graduates who worked as cooks, 15 were working in MD and 4 were working abroad (all of them in Russia). The number of people working in their occupation abroad is relatively high among the cook graduates. In other occupations (electrician, heating & ventilation) the percentage of people who were able to work in their occupation abroad was considerably lower.

*Figure 6: Respondents working in other fields*

**n=13 respondents**



Out of 13 graduates who worked in different fields of work, 11 worked in Moldova and 2 worked abroad (all of them in Russia).

They worked in various fields:

- Sale consultant (2 persons)

- Babysitter (2 persons)
- Assistant at a summer school
- Seamstress
- Car wash cleaner
- Barman
- Window fitter
- Nail technician
- Auto service technician
- Waiter
- One respondent has not provided any information on his/her occupation.

Some of them stated that the reasons for working not as cook but in other fields were:

- low salary, mentioned by 4 people
- was offered a position immediately after graduation (1 respondent)
- personal reasons (2 respondents)

6 respondents have previously worked as cooks.

The respondents who worked as cooks but have changed their jobs listed the following reasons for doing so:

- low salary, not enough to cover the living expenses (2 persons)
- a heavy workload (exhausting) (2 persons)
- the bad/negative attitude at work, coming from the owners of the place (2 persons)

1 of those who were working in Russia in another field, worked in Moldova as a cook, but left his job because of the low salary, which wasn't enough to cover the living expenses.

## 4.2. Studies

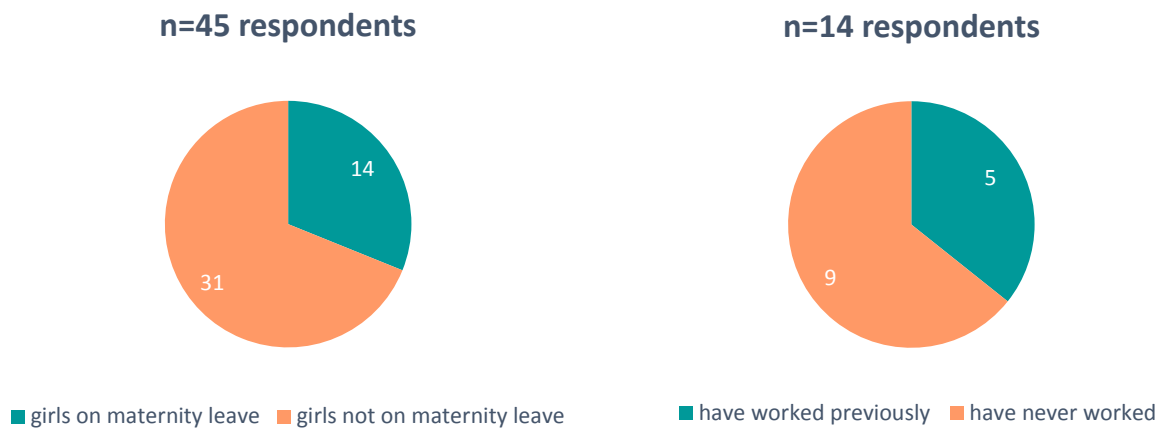
5 respondents have continued their studies, but no one studied in their field. They opted for:

- VET School No 3 from Bălți – tailor
- College of Light Industry from Ungheni - tailor
- Agricultural College from Soroca:
  - Electro mechanics (1 person)
  - Electrification of Agriculture (1 person)
- About 1 respondent we only know he was studying in Bălți, without any other details.

2 respondents who were continuing their studies worked a few months as cooks in Moldova (one of them has worked as a cook also in Russia for a month), but both of them decided to change their jobs due to the low salary which was not sufficient to cover the living expenses.

## 4.3. Maternity leave

Figure 7: Respondents on maternity leave



14 graduates out of 67 respondents (45 of which were girls) were on maternity leave. 9 said that they have not worked at all after their graduation, whereas 5 worked in their field, with some working for a few months to up two years before going on maternity leave. Given the widespread habit in Moldova to get children very early, this figure is not surprising. Cases where girls don't finish their studies because of early pregnancy are not rare.<sup>1</sup>

#### 4.4. Army

7 graduates were in the Army at the time of the conduct of this study.

3 worked before enrolling in the army:

- cook (2 persons)
- assistant at a summer school (1 person)

1 respondent was working as a cook at the place where he was serving in the army.

1 person took a training program in Pastry cook before joining the Army.

#### 4.5. Unemployment

Figure 8: Unemployed



<sup>1</sup> [http://ccd.ucoz.com/\\_ld/0/22\\_POLICY\\_PAPER.pdf](http://ccd.ucoz.com/_ld/0/22_POLICY_PAPER.pdf)

9 respondents out of 67 were unemployed. 7 had a job previously:

- Cook (4 persons)
- Window fitter
- Construction jobs
- Waiter/barman

Some of these respondents suggested the following reasons for becoming unemployed:

- personal reasons (2 persons)
- low salary, insufficient for living (3 persons)

It sounds like a strange argument to leave work and being unemployed because the salary is too low. However, this decision might be rational. One reason for rather be unemployed than badly paid might be that the living costs in city is rather high, whilst there is free accommodation in the village. Another reason could be that a person being in a low paid job has more limited possibilities to find a better employment.

One important thing we have observed while conducting this study was that all the respondents, with no exceptions, stated to like the cook profession. Even those who work in other fields explained that they changed their jobs not because they did not like it but because the above mentioned reasons.



**Annex****Questionnaire**

- 1) Living
  - a) Where? [Country, Raion]
  - b) If abroad: Country? Planned duration?
  
- 2) What are the graduates doing after graduation?
  - a) Job/employed:
    - i) in the respective sector, related to the study?
      - (1) Since when?
      - (2) How long did it take to find a job?
      - (3) How did you find a job?
      - (4) Full-time or part-time employed?
  
    - ii) in another sector?
      - (1) Which?
      - (2) Why?
  
  - b) Further education:
    - i) In a related field?
      - (1) Where?
      - (2) What exactly?
      - (3) Full-time or part-time student?
  
    - ii) In another field?
      - (1) What exactly?
      - (2) Where?
      - (3) Why?
  
  - c) Girls on maternity leave:
    - i) Did you work previously?
  
  - d) Unemployed:
    - i) Looking for a job in which sector?
    - ii) Did you work previously?