

Between 2014 and 2017, 90% of arrivals to Europe along the Central Mediterranean Route had departed from Libya, making the country a well-known point of transit.¹ Libya is also a key a destination country. Historically, Libya was a major destination for labour migrants seeking employment in the country's lucrative oil economy and in construction. While conflict and crisis have led to a decline in refugees and migrants since 2011, Libya is still host to more than 650,000.² This snapshot examines the socio-economic situation of respondents who cited Libya as a final destination, with a focus on employment status and labour market perceptions.

Profiles

This 4Mi snapshot is based on the 19% (994 out of 5,159) of all refugees and migrants surveyed between May 2017 and June 2019 who report Libya as their final destination.³ Some 90% of the 994 respondents originate from countries in West Africa, while 8% are from Central Africa and 2% from East Africa.⁴ The share of East Africans are larger in the full 4Mi sample regardless of intended destination (19%), which suggests that East Africans see Europe as a final destination to a larger extent than West Africans. Thirty-nine percent of the sample are women and 61% are men.

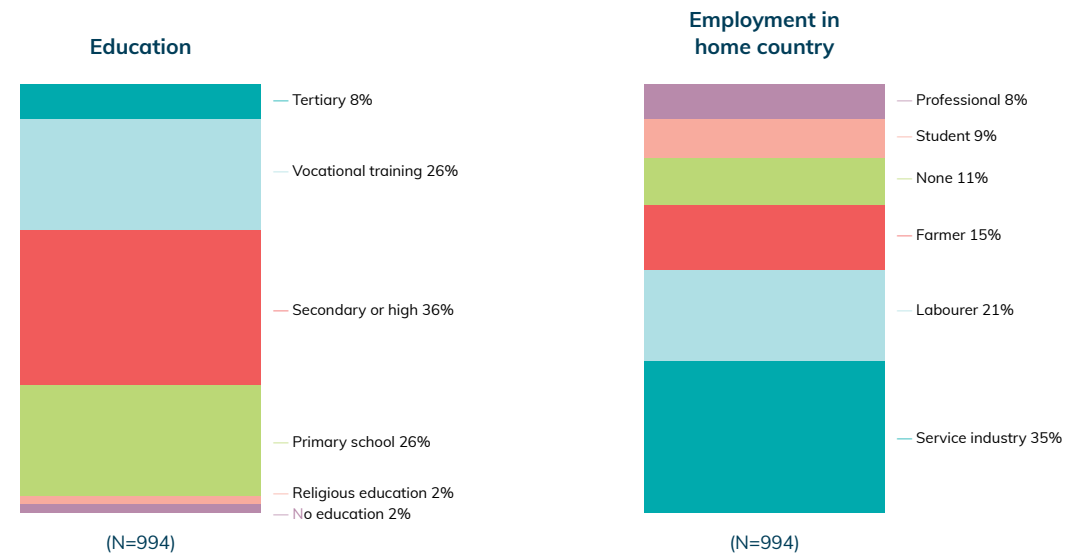
Higher levels of education than their counterparts in home countries

Very few respondents reported having no education (2%), while most finished either primary school or secondary school (62%). Eight percent of the sample had attained tertiary

education. The figures are higher than the averages for sub-Saharan Africa, which indicate that 60% completed at least primary education and 4% tertiary education.⁵ In terms of refugees' and migrants' employment history in their origin countries, the largest share had worked in the service sector (35%), followed by labourers (21%), and farmers (15%). Eleven percent said that they had no job, while 9% were students and 8% were professionals.

The relatively high levels of education and labour market involvement support what we know from migration theory,⁶ which is that migration, particularly when it is across multiple national borders, requires aspirations and a certain minimum level of capabilities.

Figure 1. Employment and educational background



1 UNHCR Libya, <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/libya.html>

2 IOM-DTM 2019

3 4Mi data furthermore suggest that the share of refugees and migrants who see Libya as their final destination has decreased dramatically during the period of data collection.

4 This snapshot adopts the UNDESA classification of regions, with the exception of Sudan, which is included in East Africa. Regions are defined as follows: East Africa: Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Uganda; West Africa: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo; Central Africa: Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tome and Principe.

5 UNESCO 2019.

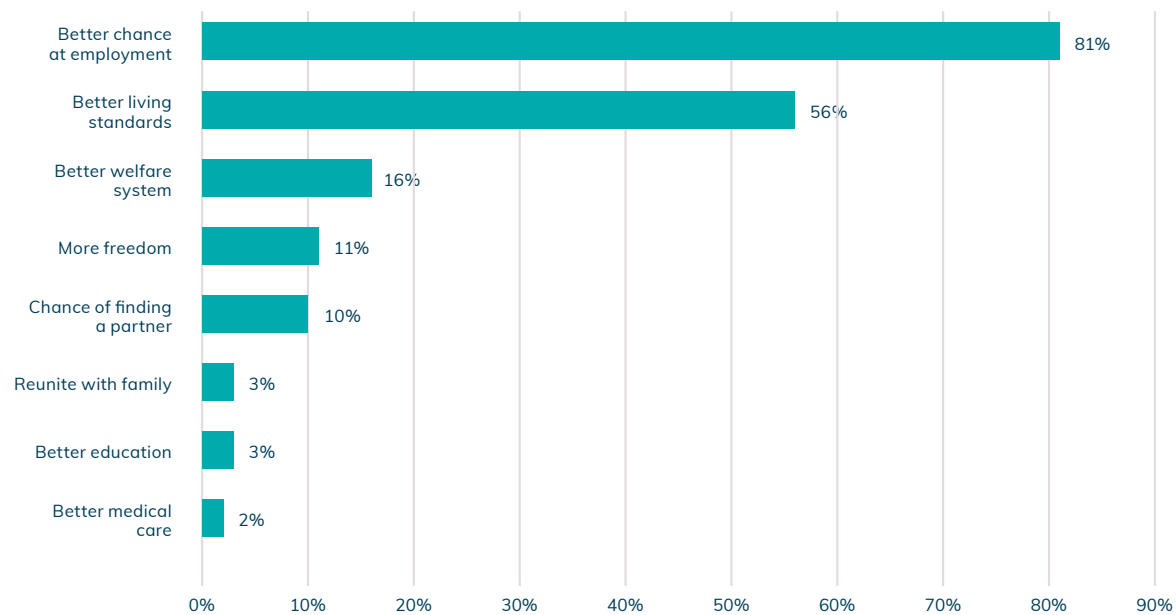
6 See for example: De Haas 2014. Migration theory: Quo Vadis?

Libya perceived as offering opportunities for employment and improved living standards

MMC North Africa's [Snapshot on Drivers of Mixed Migration](#) (August 2019) revealed that economic factors are key drivers and are reported alongside factors linked to conflict and insecurity, violence, and a lack of rights, irrespective of respondents' migration status. In the same vein, when asking respondents why they chose Libya as a destination (rather than point of transit) (Figure 2), 81% state that Libya would provide them with a better chance of finding employment, followed by a better living standard (56%).

This shows that despite the protracted conflict and economic crisis in Libya, a significant proportion of refugees and migrants still perceive it as a viable destination offering better opportunities for livelihoods than their origin countries. These responses also highlight that drivers of mixed migration are linked to both the origin as well as intended destination country, in addition to factors related to the individual.

Figure 2. Why did you want to go to Libya?⁷ (N=987)



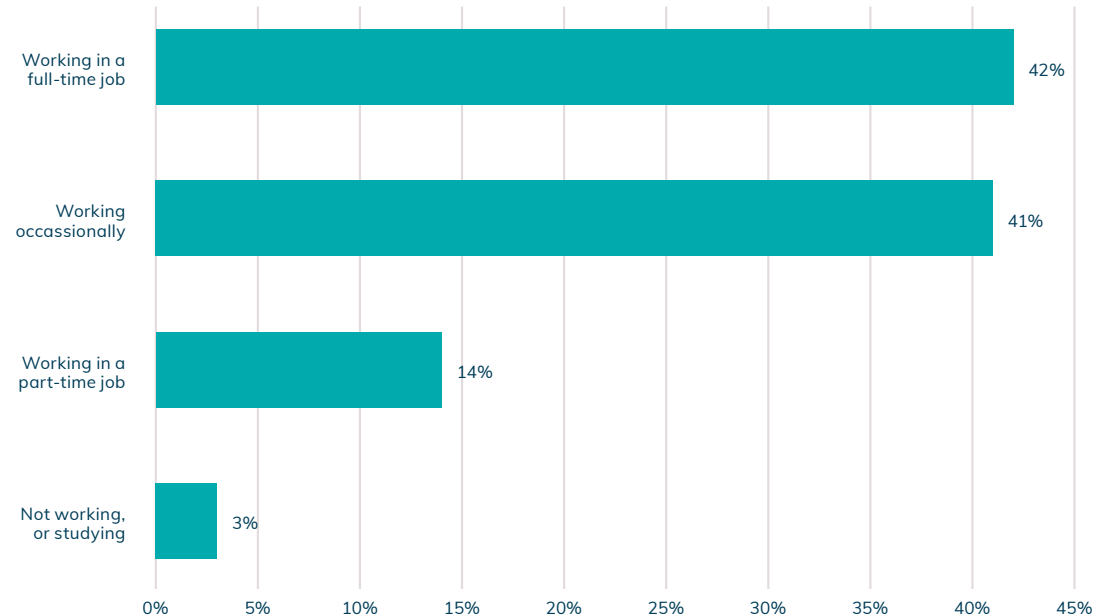
⁷ Note that the total sum exceeds 100% as the respondents can choose multiple answers.

The majority have some form of employment in Libya

Figure 3 reveals that a small fraction (3%) of respondents did not engage in any form of employment in Libya. The largest share (42%) reported working in a full-time job, while occasional work and part-time work was reported by 41% and 14%, respectively.

4Mi data also suggest that most refugees and migrants (70%) in Libya are sending remittances back home, which supports the notion that most find some type of income-generating activity, and that migration is often a household livelihood strategy.

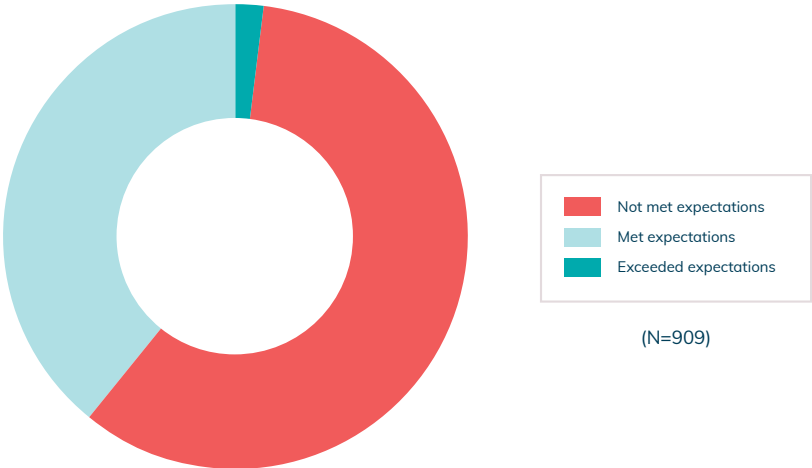
Figure 3. What is your employment status now? (N=971)



Economic expectations largely not met

The majority (59%) of respondents' expectations of the economic situation had not been met in Libya. Some 39% stated that their expectations were met, while 2% said that the economic opportunities exceeded their expectations (see Figure 4). This points to a perception of Libya as a country of economic opportunities, offering employment and better living standards, but that the reality is often different.

Figure 4. Did the level of economic opportunity in Libya meet your expectations?

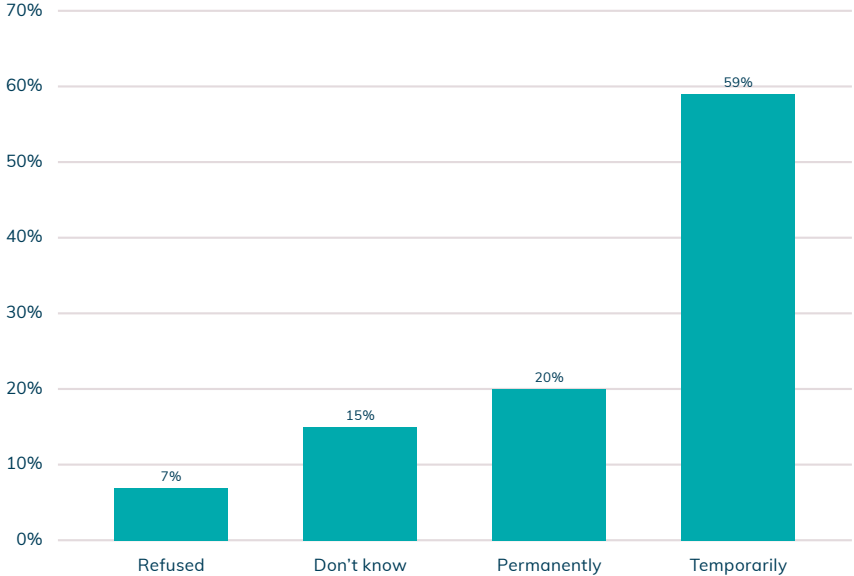


(N=909)

Most intend to stay in Libya temporarily

Most of our respondents stated that they plan to stay temporary in Libya (59%), while only 20% said that they planned to stay in Libya permanently (Figure 5). Out of the 59% of the respondents who planned to stay temporarily, a striking majority (98%) planned to move back to their country of origin after a few years in Libya. This contrasts with 4Mi respondents who stated Europe as their intended final destination, of which 40% intended to settle permanently.

Figure 5. Do you intend to stay temporarily or permanently in Libya?



(N=994)

Conclusion

This snapshot analyses a subset of 4Mi data focusing on 994 refugees and migrants who named Libya as their preferred final destination. The majority of respondents planned to stay in Libya temporarily, send remittances back home, and to return to their countries of origin. Although almost all surveyed individuals were able to find some sort of employment, most reported that the level of economic opportunities did not meet their expectations. Libya is largely perceived as a country of economic opportunities, offering employment and better living standards, but those perceptions often do not match the reality.



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The Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism Initiative (4Mi) is the Mixed Migration Centre's flagship primary data collection system, an innovative approach that helps fill knowledge gaps, and inform policy and response regarding the nature of mixed migratory movements and the protection risks for refugees and migrants on the move. 4Mi field monitors are currently collecting data through direct interviews with refugees and migrants in West Africa, East Africa and Yemen, North Africa, Asia, and Europe.

Sample sizes are clearly indicated and represent a limited section of those on the move. The findings derived from the surveyed sample should not be used to make any inferences about the total population. See more 4Mi analysis and details on methodology at www.mixedmigration.org/4mi