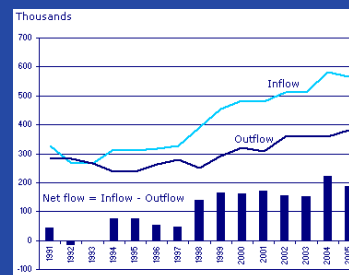
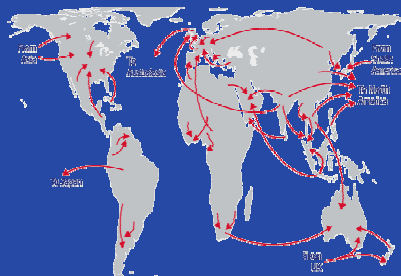


# Collecting better census data on international migration: UN recommendations



**Haoyi Chen**  
**United Nations Statistics Division**

Regional workshop on *Strengthening the collection and use of international migration data in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, 31 January-3 February 2017, Bangkok

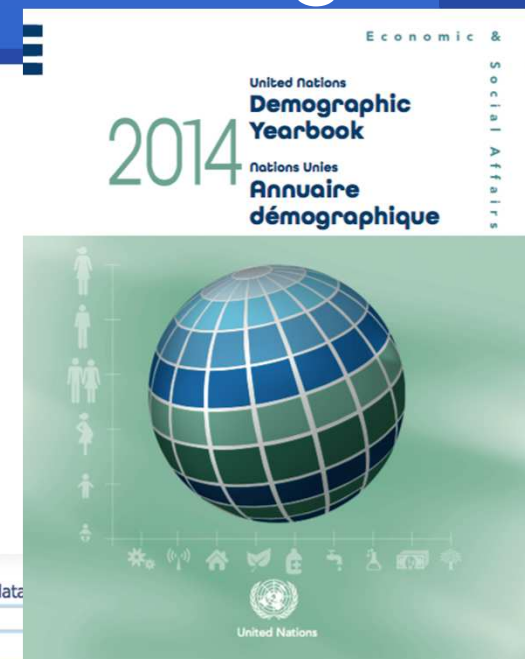
# UN recommendations/handbooks

- Principals and Recommendations on Population and Housing Censuses, Rev. 3
- Recommendations on Statistics on International Migration, rev. 1
- Handbook on the Use of Population Censuses for International Migration Statistics



# Data collection & capacity building

- ❑ United Nations *Demographic Yearbook* data collection – since 1948
  - ❑ Census questionnaire
  - ❑ Questionnaire on International Migration and Travel
- ❑ Regional workshops and country-level assistance



**UNdata** A world of information

**Data** Glossary Metadata

**foreign-born**

**Results**

For **foreign-born** also try: migration, **UNSD Demographic Statistics**

**Select filters:**

Sources (1)

☐ **UNSD Demographic (4)**

**Apply Filters**

**Data series**

**Foreign-born population by country/area of birth, age and sex**  
1037292 records  
Source: [UNSD Demographic Statistics](#) | [United Nations Statistics Division](#)  
 [Preview](#) [Download](#) [Explore](#)

**Native and foreign-born population by age, sex and urban/rural residence**  
50007 records  
Source: [UNSD Demographic Statistics](#) | [United Nations Statistics Division](#)  
 [Preview](#) [Download](#) [Explore](#)

**Economically active foreign-born population by occupation, age, sex and urban/**  
63376 records  
Source: [UNSD Demographic Statistics](#) | [United Nations Statistics Division](#)  
 [Preview](#) [Download](#) [Explore](#)

**Foreign-born population 15 years of age or over by country/area of birth, educ**  
162172 records  
Source: [UNSD Demographic Statistics](#) | [United Nations Statistics Division](#)  
 [Preview](#) [Download](#) [Explore](#)

# Using census to answer policy questions

- ❑ Policy needs
- ❑ Data needed to address the policy needs
- ❑ Censuses in measuring international migration
  - ❑ Important aspects to ensure better coverage of migrants
  - ❑ Phrasing questions in a better way
  - ❑ Compiling data to address policy needs

# What data are needed to answer the questions?

|            | Policy questions                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Data required                                                                               |
|------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Immigrants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Who are the immigrants?</li> <li>- Where are they from?</li> <li>- How long are they in the country?</li> </ul>                                                                           | Sex, age, country of origin, duration of stay in the country                                |
|            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What is the skill level of immigrants?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                         | Educational attainment                                                                      |
|            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Are immigrants employed/unemployed?</li> <li>- What type of jobs?</li> </ul>                                                                                                              | Labour force status<br>Occupation (ISCO)<br>Economic sectors (ISIC)<br>Status in employment |
| Emigrants  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Who are the emigrants?</li> <li>- At what age do people emigrate?</li> <li>- When did they leave the country?</li> <li>- What is their skill level when they left the country?</li> </ul> | Sex, age, country of destination, year of departure, educational attainment at departure    |

# Workshop countries census and migration

| Country            | Census years            | Information asked on census |                        |                        |            | Returned migrants | Socioeconomic conditions |
|--------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
|                    |                         | Country of birth            | Country of citizenship | Year/period of arrival | Emigration |                   |                          |
| <b>Bangladesh</b>  | 2011                    | Yes                         |                        |                        | Yes        |                   | Yes                      |
| <b>India</b>       | 2011                    | Yes                         |                        |                        |            |                   | Yes                      |
| <b>Indonesia</b>   | 2010                    |                             | Yes                    |                        |            | Yes               | Yes                      |
| <b>Nepal</b>       | 2011                    | Yes                         | Yes                    |                        | Yes        |                   | Yes                      |
| <b>Pakistan</b>    | No census in 2010 round |                             |                        |                        |            |                   |                          |
| <b>Philippines</b> | 2010                    |                             | Yes                    |                        | Yes        |                   | Yes                      |
| <b>Sri Lanka</b>   | 2012                    | Yes                         |                        |                        | Yes        |                   | Yes                      |
| <b>Thailand</b>    | 2010                    | Yes                         | Yes                    |                        |            |                   | Yes                      |

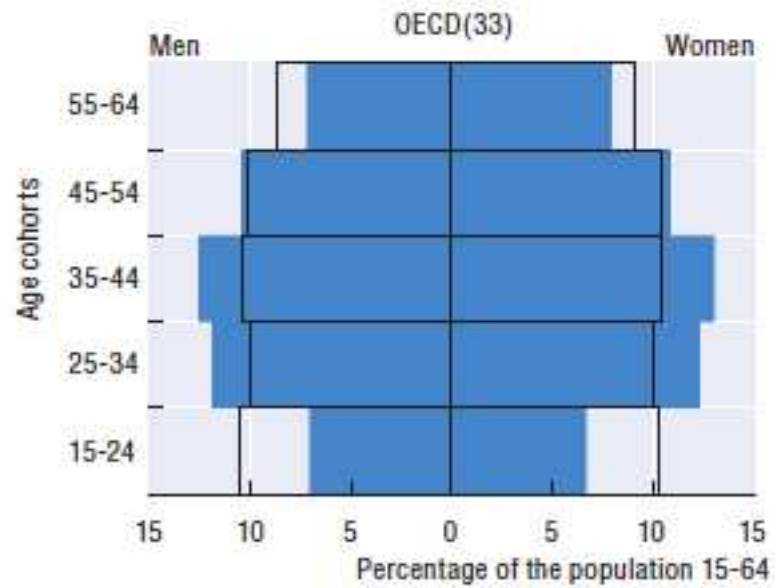
Source: United Nations Statistics Division

# Use of census data(1)

Figure 2.2. **Age composition of the 15-64 population by place of birth and region of stay, 2010-11**

Percentages of foreign- and native-born populations

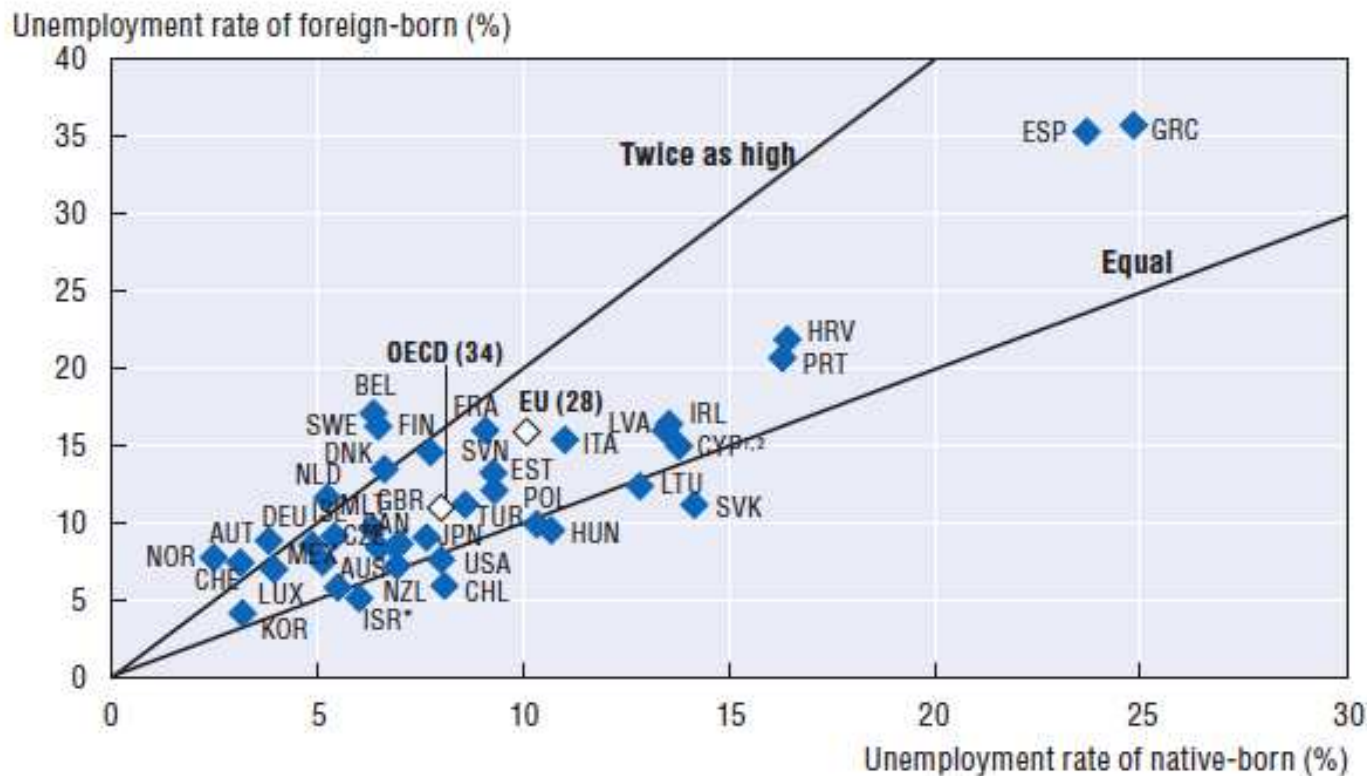
Native-born Foreign-born



Source: Settling in 2015 (OECD)

# Use of census data (2)

**Figure 5.8. Unemployment rates by place of birth, 2012-13**  
Percentage of the economically active population (15-64 years old)



StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888022212258>

Source: Settling in 2015 (OECD)

# What censuses can produce?

- ❑ Population stocks related to international migration:
  - ❑ Stocks of foreign-born
  - ❑ Stocks of foreigners
  - ❑ Stock of returned migrants
  - ❑ Stock of first (second) generation immigrants
  - ❑ Stock of emigrants (??)
- ❑ Socioeconomic situation and geographic location of immigrants
- ❑ Intercensal net migration
- ❑ Some indication of recent migration flows

## Advantage of censuses for data on international migration

- ❑ Availability – every country is committed to 1 census every 10 years
- ❑ Comparability – less flexibility in questions
- ❑ Coverage – covers everybody including small population group and difficult to capture group (migrants and undocumented migrants)
- ❑ Wealth of information – socioeconomic variables and geographic location within the country (concentration of migrants in the country)

# What censuses cannot do?

- ❑ Infrequent!
- ❑ Migration history, different dynamics of mobility
- ❑ Causes or consequences of international migration
- ❑ Decent work, social protection floor, pension portability

# Key aspects of censuses for better captured migration data



# Aspects of planning and design of population censuses relevant to migration data collection (1)

## **At the initial planning stage**

- Who is included?
  - *Usual resident population count*
  - *Population present count*
  - *Treatment of special population groups (P&R population census rev. 3)*
- The use of sampling in the census
  - *No need for tabulation for small area*
  - *Need more probing*
  - *Proportion of international migrants vs. sample proportion*

# Census enumeration approach (2010 census round)

| Region                                            | Usual resident | Population present | Legal/<br>permanent<br>address | Total no. of<br>countries |
|---------------------------------------------------|----------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Africa                                            | 14             | 22                 | 4                              | 28                        |
| Northern and Central America<br>and the Caribbean | 15             | 6                  | 0                              | 18                        |
| South America                                     | 3              | 5                  | 0                              | 7                         |
| Asia                                              | 22             | 17                 | 2                              | 31                        |
| Europe                                            | 25             | 10                 | 15                             | 36                        |
| Oceania                                           | 3              | 5                  | 1                              | 7                         |
| Total                                             | 82             | 65                 | 22                             | 127                       |

Source: United Nations Statistics Division

# Aspects of planning and design of population censuses relevant to migration data collection (2)

## ***At the preparatory stage***

- Communications and publicity campaign
  - Separating census enumeration from immigration authorities
  - Covering different languages



## Aspects of planning and design of population censuses relevant to migration data collection (3)

- Training of interviewers (sensitivity/capturing the right person)
  - Household listing: probing
  - Understand inclusion/exclusion rules
  - For specific migration-heavy areas: building trust and dealing with fears
- The issue of confidentiality

# Aspects of planning and design of population censuses relevant to migration data collection (3)

## *In the questionnaire preparation*

- The selection of topics to be included
  - Data available from other source?
  - Quality of data collected from census (testing)
  - Be realistic: not one-size-fit-all
- The formulation of questions
  - Avoid technical terms, e.g., “migrant”, “immigrant”, “place of usual residence”
- The use of pre-coded response categories
  - Country listing: NO, unless with a very concentrated list of countries, but still need an “other, specify:” category
- Provision of questionnaire in different languages

# Aspects of planning and design of population censuses relevant to migration data collection (4)

## *In the plan of enumeration*

- Enumeration methods (in-person, self-enumerated)
- Enumerating people
  - in unconventional living situations (a census stand outside of the market)
  - difficult to enumerate groups
    - refugees
- Issues of coverage and response



# In the plans for data processing and dissemination

## Multi-layer tabulation

- *Labour force participation of foreigners, by citizenship and duration of residence in the country*

Always tabulate by sex and age

## Disseminate accompanying metadata:

- Concepts, definition, duration threshold etc
- Data coverage
- Sampling fraction & sample errors (long form)

Free access of data; publicly disseminated (justify the census cost)

## Core topics on international migration

- ❑ Country of birth
- ❑ Country of citizenship
- ❑ Year or period of arrival in the country
  - First or most recent arrival
  - Mainly for people born outside of the country; but could be relevant for native-born people when returned migrants are of interest

# Country of birth (1)

I-5. What is your place of birth?

1. In (this country) - District code \_\_\_\_  
Town/village \_\_\_\_\_

2. Abroad -

1 - Italy

2 - Greece

3 - USA

4 - Canada

5 - Turkey

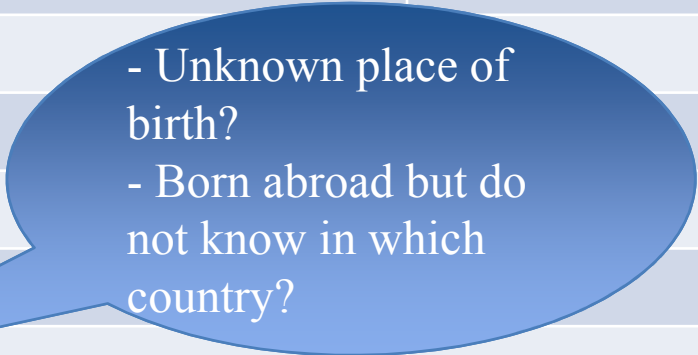
6 - Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ Coding: in sufficient detail to allow the individual identification of all countries
- ☐ Any grouping of countries should only be done at data processing stage
- ☐ Country recorded according to present border

## Country of birth (2)

Be careful with data with lots of unknowns:

| Country of birth    | Both sexes | Female | Male |
|---------------------|------------|--------|------|
| Italy (native born) |            |        |      |
| Spain               |            |        |      |
| France              |            |        |      |
| ...                 |            |        |      |
| China               |            |        |      |
| Unknown             |            |        |      |



- Unknown place of birth?  
- Born abroad but do not know in which country?

9.1a. Were you/ Was N born in (this country) or abroad?

☐ (This country)

☐ Abroad (Specify below)

Country (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

☐ DK/NS

☐ DK/NS

# Suggestion on how to ask country (place) of birth

## ASK OF ALL PERSONS

Where was (person) born?

or

What was the usual place of residence of (person's) mother when (person) was born?

\_\_ (This country) [Specify province and municipality.]

Province \_\_\_\_\_ Unknown

Municipality \_\_\_\_\_ Unknown

\_\_ Another country [Specify country according to present borders.]

Country \_\_\_\_\_ Unknown

\_\_ Country of birth unknown

|

# Country of citizenship (nationalité in French)

iii. *Pre-coded list for country of citizenship:*

Example C

P9. Citizenship

- |    |                                  |          |
|----|----------------------------------|----------|
| 01 | (from this country)              |          |
| 02 | Ethiopian                        | Ethiopia |
| 03 | Somalian                         | Somalia  |
| 04 | Yemenite                         | Yemen    |
| 05 | Eritrean                         | Eritrea  |
| 06 | Other Africans                   | ...      |
| 07 | French                           |          |
| 08 | Other Europeans                  |          |
| 09 | Asians                           |          |
| 10 | Americans from the United States |          |
| 11 | Other Americans                  |          |
| 12 | Others                           |          |

- ❑ Coding: in sufficient detail to allow identification of all countries of citizenship
- ❑ Do not use adjectives, may confuse with ethnicity
- ❑ Including a category “stateless” or “without citizenship” in the pre-coded responses

# Country of citizenship (nationalité in French)

## Multiple citizenships:

- Collects such information if of policy concern
- Made aware of the possibility of counting people with multiple citizenships more than once and how it affects the marginal totals in the table.

Example D. (Serbia, 2011)

### 16. Citizenship

1. (This country)
2. (This country) and other country \_\_\_\_\_
3. Other country \_\_\_\_\_
4. Without citizenship

# Year or period of arrival in the country

Distinguishing between recent migrants and those of longstanding

To whom it should be asked?

- Foreign-born only?
- Interested in returned migrants?

a) “In what year did you/ did \_\_\_\_\_ come to live in (this country)?” (Jamaica, 2011)

b) “In which year did the person first arrive in (this country) to live here for one year or more?” (Australia, 2011)

c) “In which year did (name) move to this country? [If moved more than once into (this country), please indicate year of last move.]” (South Africa, 2011)

# Is your census asking the year of arrival to the country?



Haoyi  
Born in  
China



20 December 2009:  
arrived in Bangkok



6 January 2010: moved  
to Koh Phi Phi

How long have  
you lived in this  
municipality/SAO?

9 months

Where did you  
previously live?  
Specify  
Amphoe/Province/  
Country

If you have never  
moved, write  
"NEVER MOVED."  
Then skip (22) and  
(23), and go to (24).

Bangkok

Census date: 1 September -31 October 2010

# How to collect data on returned migrants?

## ASK OF ALL PERSONS OVER ONE YEAR OLD

Has (person) ever lived outside (this country) for a period of at least 12 months?

☐ Yes

☐ No → Skip to Question x.

When did (person) last arrive to live in (this country) for 12 months or more?

Year  Month

In which country did (person) last live? [Specify country according to present borders.]

Country

# Collecting data on returned migrants

Indonesia, 2015

|      |                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |              |                          |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|
| 820. | Since Januari 1, 2010, has (NAME) ever lived abroad?         | YES 1                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | NO 2 → Q.626 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 821. | Name of country residing abroad                              | COUNTRY : <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/><br>(CODE IS FILLED BY TEAM COORDINATOR)                                                                                                                                       |              |                          |
| 822. | In what month and year (NAME) went to that country?          | MONTH : <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/><br>YEAR : <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>                                                                                                                             |              |                          |
| 823. | How long has (NAME) lived in that country?                   | <input type="text"/> YEAR<br>(FILL "00" IF LESS THAN 1 YEAR)                                                                                                                                                                                                                |              |                          |
| 824. | What was the reason of (NAME) moving to that country?        | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/><br>EMPLOYEMENT..... 01<br>EDUCATION..... 02<br>FOLLOWING SPOUSE/PARENT/CHILDREN..... 03<br>FOLLOWING SIBLING/OTHER RELATIVES..... 04<br>SAFETY/POLITICS..... 05<br>DISASTER/ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE..... 06<br>OTHER..... 99 |              |                          |
| 825. | Main activity (NAME) did when she/he lived in that country : | <input type="checkbox"/><br>WORKING..... 1      TAKING COURSE..... 3<br>SCHOOLING..... 2      OTHER ( <input type="text"/> ) 6<br>SPECIFY                                                                                                                                   |              |                          |

# Collecting data on emigration

Through an emigration module: identify the person abroad

- Emigration within the last XX (5 or 10) years
- Left the country for at least 6 months (or 1 year)

Characteristics of emigrants

- Age, sex, Marital status
- Age at emigration
- Educational attainment (at time of migration or current)
- Occupation (at time of migration or current)
- Country of emigration
- Reason for emigration

# Country examples on emigration

## Example A (Albania, 2010)

### LIST 2. PERSONS THAT LIVE ABROAD

Is any previous member of this household living abroad for 12 months or more?

[Do not include children born abroad who have not lived in this household.]

1 ☐ Yes – (Fill in the table)

2 ☐ No – Go to LIST 3.

## Example D (Algeria, 2008)

### TE 5. DEPARTURES ABROAD DURING THE LAST 5 YEARS

DEP1. Are there persons who were members of the household who settled abroad (emigration) during the last five years?

E01. Has any former member of this household been living continuously for 6 months or more outside (country)?

Yes – Record the following information (for each person listed) ...

No – Go to P00.

## More country examples

- a) “Was any person who used to live with you, living in another country on July 31, 2010?” (Brazil, 2010)
- b) “Is any person who was a member of this household, currently living in another country?” (Nicaragua, 2005)
- c) “Has any member of this household left to live permanently in another country? (El Salvador, 2007)

# More country examples

## Example B (Ghana, 2010)

### EMIGRATION OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY

[Answer for all former household members 15 years or older who have been living continuously for 6 months or more outside (country) (or intends to do so).]

## Example E (Belize, 2010)

SECTION 2: EMIGRATION. This section will collect basic information on persons who have permanently moved abroad in the past ten years.

2.1 Between the year 2000 and now, did anyone in your household move to live abroad and is still living there?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No → Go to SECTION 3
- ☐ DK/NS → Go to SECTION 3

# Collecting emigration data through censuses

Be specific about

- The time period that you are interested in capturing the emigrants
- Who are emigrants?

Not much information on the quality and usefulness of the data gathered

- Entire household left the country
- Recall issue
- Duplicate reporting by multiple households

Data should be evaluated against:

- Data from administrative sources or surveys
- Data from receiving countries

# Additional topics – Emigration

Emigration module can not provide an accurate count of the total number of emigrants residing abroad, but the following groups can be relatively well-covered:

- Emigrants who left the country in recent years (up to 5 years before the census)
- Emigrants who are more likely to keep close ties with their country, mainly because of close family ties and/or geographic proximity
- Emigrants who are still in the registration system of the country of origin, if registers exist

# Evaluating data on emigrants

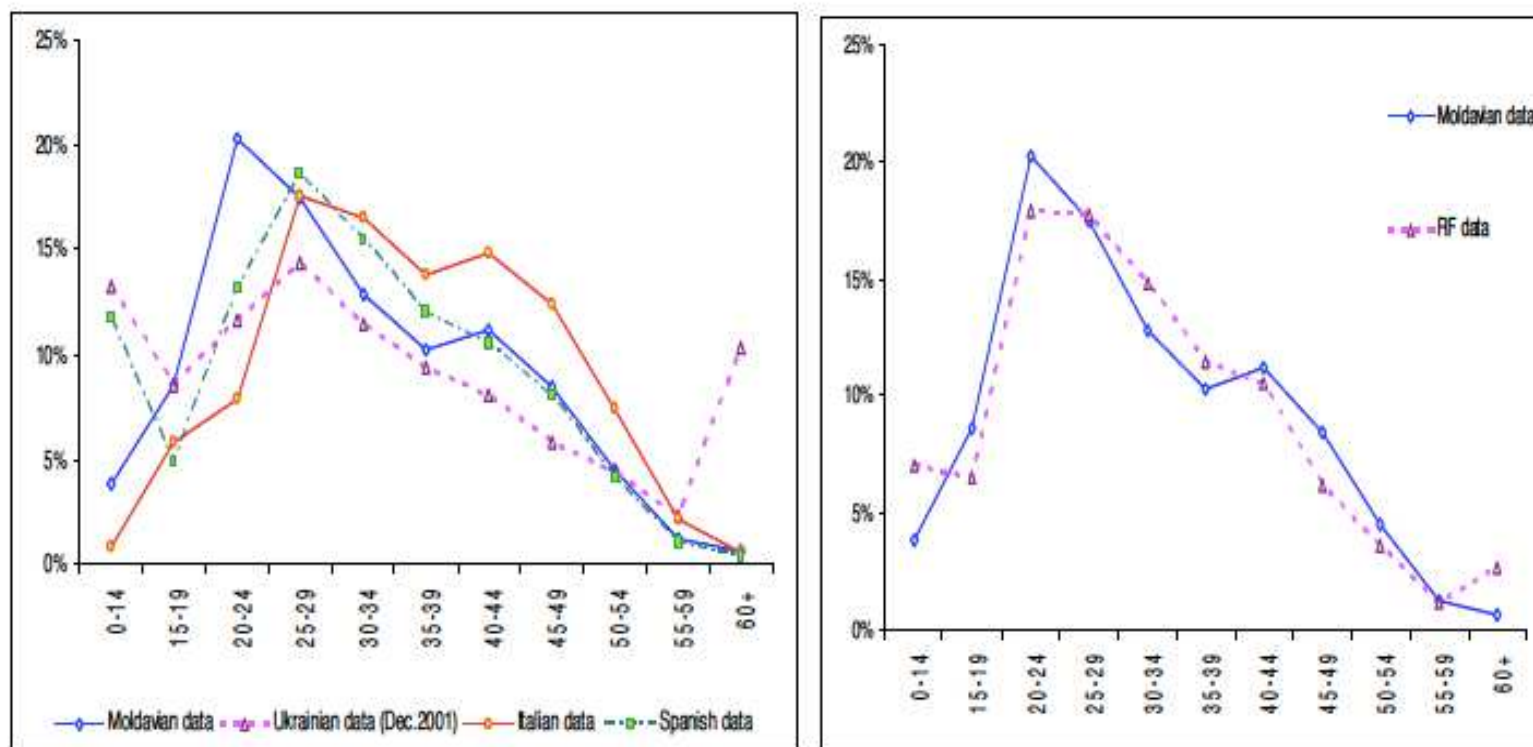
**Table 8 - Number of Moldavian migrants in main countries of destination**

| Host country              | Data source                                                                                      | Stock of migrants |       |       | Coverage |        |        |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------|-------|----------|--------|--------|
|                           |                                                                                                  | Total             | M     | F     | Total    | M      | F      |
| <b>Russian Federation</b> | RF data on citizens of Moldova: residents and temporary migrants in the RF 10/2002               | 60608             | 38018 | 22590 |          |        |        |
|                           | Moldavian data (cohort of emigrants with period of residence in the RF since 10/2002 and before) | 34964             | 22194 | 12770 | 57,7%    | 58,4%  | 56,5%  |
| <b>Italy</b>              | Italian data (estimation for 10/2004)                                                            | 39905             | 12116 | 27789 |          |        |        |
|                           | Moldavian data (emigrants in Italy 10/2004)                                                      | 53010             | 17857 | 35153 | 132,8%   | 147,4% | 126,5% |
| <b>Ukraine</b>            | Ukrainian data (census 2001)                                                                     | 13522             | 6439  | 7083  |          |        |        |
|                           | Moldavian data (migrants staying abroad since 2001 and earlier)                                  | 1273              | 728   | 545   | 9,4%     | 11,3%  | 7,7%   |
| <b>Spain</b>              | Spanish data (stocks of Moldavian citizens residents of Spain, estimation for 10/2004)           | 8012              | 4446  | 3566  |          |        |        |
|                           | Moldavian data                                                                                   | 3868              | 2388  | 1480  | 48,3%    | 53,7%  | 41,5%  |

Source: MEASURING EMIGRATION AT THE CENSUS: LESSONS LEARNED FROM FOUR COUNTRY EXPERIENCES, UNECE (2008)

# Evaluating data on emigrants

**Chart 11 - Age structure of migrants from Moldova to host countries (for Moldova average data for all destinations), %**



Source: MEASURING EMIGRATION AT THE CENSUS: LESSONS LEARNED FROM FOUR COUNTRY EXPERIENCES, UNECE (2008)

# Workshop countries census and migration

| Country     | Census years            | Information asked on census |                        |                        |            | Availability of stock data |            |
|-------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------|----------------------------|------------|
|             |                         | Country of birth            | Country of citizenship | Year/period of arrival | Emigration | Foreign-born               | Foreigners |
| Bangladesh  | 2011                    | 1                           |                        |                        | 1          |                            |            |
| India       | 2011                    | 1                           |                        |                        |            | 1                          |            |
| Indonesia   | 2010                    |                             | 1                      |                        |            |                            | 1          |
| Nepal       | 2011                    | 1                           | 1                      |                        | 1          | 1                          | 1          |
| Pakistan    | No census in 2010 round |                             |                        |                        |            |                            |            |
| Philippines | 2010                    |                             | 1                      |                        | 1          |                            | 1          |
| Sri Lanka   | 2012                    | 1                           |                        |                        | 1          | 1                          |            |
| Thailand    | 2010                    | 1                           | 1                      |                        |            | 1                          | 1          |

Source: United Nations Statistics Division