



**GROUND TRUTH
SOLUTIONS**

MIXED MIGRATION PLATFORM

UNACCOMPANIED AND SEPARATED CHILDREN PERCEPTIONS IN GREECE

JULY 18, 2017

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HIGHLIGHTS

68%

THINK THEIR **SCHOOL LESSONS ARE USEFUL**

74%

ARE **SATISFIED WITH HOW CHILDREN ARE TREATED** BY SHELTER STAFF

82%

SAY THEY **FEEL SAFE** AT THE SHELTERS

44%

DO NOT HAVE INFORMATION ON LEGAL OPTIONS OR AVAILABLE SUPPORT



TO IMPROVE SCHOOLING:

1. ADD CLASS TIME/ LESSONS
2. HIRE ARABIC-SPEAKING TEACHERS
3. ADD MORE LANGUAGE CLASSES

43%

DO NOT HAVE A CARE PLAN THAT COVERS ACCESS TO SERVICES AND FUTURE PLANS



CHILDREN WOULD LIKE:

1. BETTER QUALITY FOOD AND TRADITIONAL MEALS
2. JOB OPPORTUNITIES AND PERSONAL INCOME
3. CLOTHES AND SHOES

INFORMATION NEEDS:

1. UPDATES ON LEGAL STATUS
2. LEGAL ADVICE & INFORMATION ON THEIR RIGHTS AS REFUGEES
3. ASYLUM PROCEDURE AND OPTIONS FOR (RE)SETTLEMENT



OVERVIEW

Introduction

This report analyses data collected in Greece from 137 unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) between the ages of 14 and 18. Face-to-face interviews for this survey were conducted from March 22-24, 2017 across eight shelters run specifically for UASC by three international organisations and its local implementing partners in Athens, Northern Greece, and the East Aegean islands.

Everyone residing in the shelters was asked to participate in the survey. A total of 137 out of 222 children (62%) were interviewed. Most of the children who did not participate

were either engaged in other activities, asleep, or with the doctor. Some of the non-respondents were also those not fluent in any of the survey languages – Arabic, Farsi and Urdu. Respondents were asked to score each closed question on a 1 to 5 scale. Each option was illustrated with a choice of faces ranging from very sad to very happy. (see demographics section).

More background and information on the methodology can be found at the end of this report.

Summary Findings

Overall satisfaction with the support and services provided at shelters

Most children are happy with the quality of the shelters and the support they receive. However, respondents would like better quality food, specifically meals that resemble what they would traditionally have at home. Children are also happy with the recreational activities offered at the shelters, but would like a better variety of sports and exercise activities.

Good relationship with shelter staff

Children at the shelters seem to have good and trusting relationship with shelter staff, with most reporting that they feel comfortable discussing their problems and feelings. Thirty-six percent of respondents attribute their feeling of safety at the shelters to the caring nature of the staff, specifically regarding attentiveness to the needs of the children. Just under two-thirds of the children are also happy with how well staff at the shelter listen to concerns, answer questions, and take their views into account.

Split access to care plan development

Over half of the children have a plan developed by their case worker that covers access to services and future plans, however, a large proportion of the children still lack a clear course beyond the shelters. Children with a care plan in place for the most part are satisfied with 73% saying that nothing is missing. Children are particularly happy with assistance to reunite them with family members in Greece and elsewhere in Europe.

Desire for more school and language lessons

The children are pleased with the help they receive enrolling in school and language lessons. Ninety-three percent of the surveyed children are satisfied with their curriculum and many express their desire for more

opportunities to be in the classroom, with 28% requesting a greater number and variety of classes as well as longer school days. The children also request that their teachers be able to speak languages other than Greek such as Arabic so that they can understand their class material better.

Satisfaction with legal services

Children are largely satisfied with the legal advice they receive at the shelter, with 49% saying that they have the information they would like on their legal options and available support services in Greece. Children would like to have more information about their rights in Greece and Europe, their options for resettlement, how to procure the right documents, and how to access updates on their status more frequently. Some of the children request face-to-face meetings with lawyers.

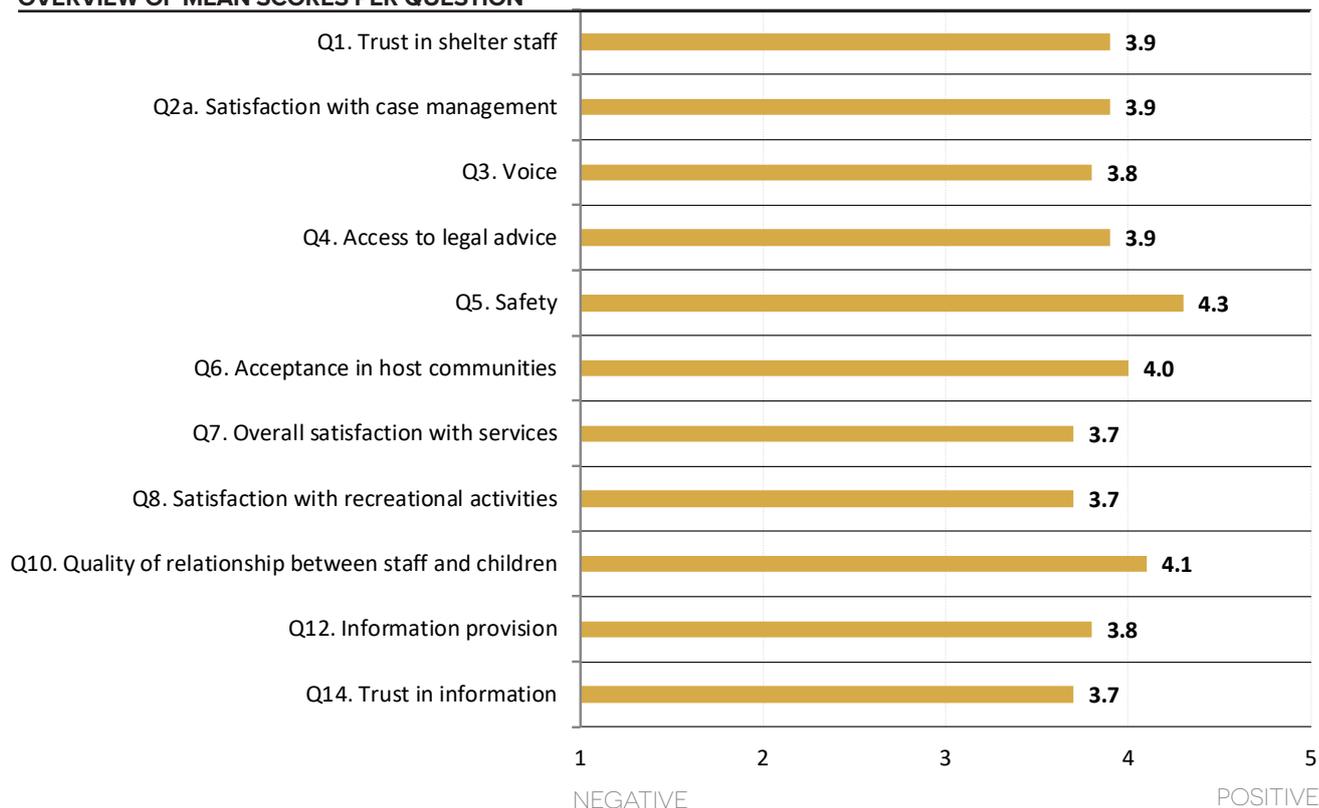
Strong feelings of safety and acceptance in host community

Across all groups, children say they feel safe, in part due to the staff and security officers present at the shelter who watch over the children. Almost three-quarters of surveyed children say they feel welcomed by the local community.

Trust in information

Well over half trust the information they receive, and report that they are asked about their information needs and the communication channels that they prefer. That said, two-thirds of the participating children are content with the way information is shared, while 24% say they would like to have more face-to-face meetings with shelter staff and again, lawyers.

OVERVIEW OF MEAN SCORES PER QUESTION



Correlations

Correlations across the survey show that children who trust the information they receive (Q14) are also satisfied with the way information is provided (Q12). Responses to the follow-up question to Q14 reveal that many children would like to receive information through direct consultation with shelter staff and lawyers as well as

electronic sources such as social media platforms and email. Children who feel comfortable talking to shelter staff about their problems and feelings (Q1) are also those who are satisfied with how well staff listen, answer questions, and take the opinions of children into account (Q3).

Reading this report

This report uses bar charts for both open and closed Likert scale questions. The charts show the distribution (in %) of answers chosen for each question – with colours ranging from dark red for negative to dark green for positive. The mean or average score is shown for each question on a scale from 1 to 5.

For each question, we indicate the main conclusion drawn from the data. We also identify which issues might be worth exploring further. This can be done by comparing the perceptual data with other data sets that are available

to humanitarian agencies in Greece. Another approach is to clarify what lies behind the perceptions revealed in the survey through focus group discussions, key informant interviews, or other forms of dialogue with children.

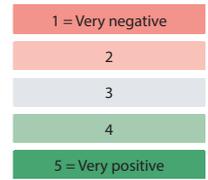
Throughout this report, where data is disaggregated by country of origin, “Other” refers to Algeria (7%), Ethiopia (2%), Iraq (2%), Democratic Republic of Congo (2%), Iran (1%), Morocco (1%), Bangladesh (1%), Eritrea (1%), and Somalia (1%).



SURVEY QUESTIONS

Q1. Trust in shelter staff

How comfortable are you talking to staff in this shelter about problems or your feelings?



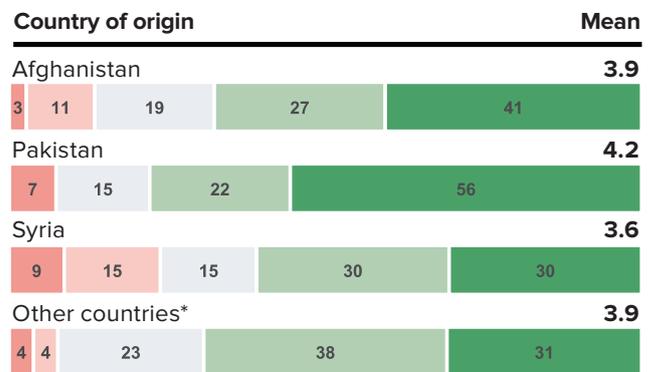
(values in %)

Mean: 3.9

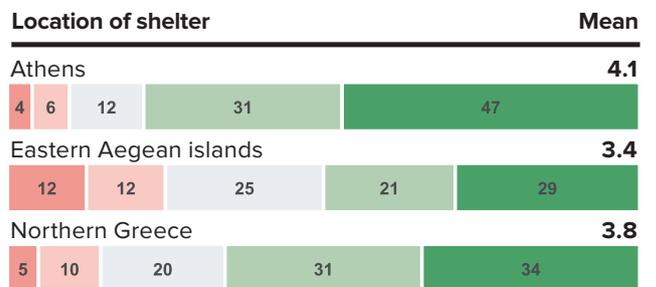


The majority of interviewed minors feel comfortable talking with staff at the shelters about their problems or feelings.

Scores are lowest among Syrian children, while over three-quarters of respondents from Pakistan say they feel comfortable talking with staff.



Negative perceptions are most prevalent among children receiving support at shelters in the Eastern Aegean islands.



* Throughout this report, the term "other countries" will be used to refer to individuals from Algeria (7%), Ethiopia (2%), Iraq (2%), Democratic Republic of Congo (2%), Iran (1%), Morocco (1%), Bangladesh (1%), Eritrea (1%), and Somalia (1%).



Q2. Satisfaction with case management

No
Yes

Do you have a care plan developed with your case worker/social worker that covers access to services and plans for the future?

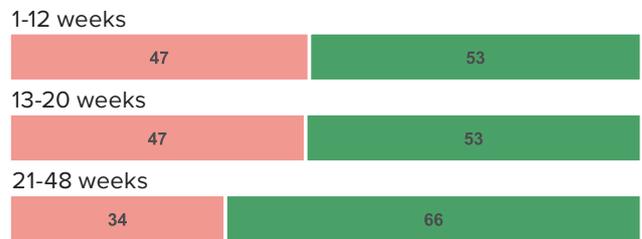
(values in %)



While over half of the interviewed children say that they have a care plan developed with their case worker, a notable number of respondents are without one. The guardianship and foster care for UASC in Greece have only been offered by NGOs and are not supported by the state, leaving Greek and international NGOs to step up and provide an array of services, “ranging from accommodation to legal aid and healthcare.”¹ Despite the requirement for a public prosecutor to act as a provisional guardian for every UASC, there is a limited capacity in Greece to be able to handle the cases of the over 2,500 unaccompanied minors.²

Positive responses are highest among children who have been at the shelter longest.

Time spent at shelter



Follow-up question to those who answered “yes” to Q2:

How happy are you with your care plan developed with your case worker/social worker?

1 = Very negative
2
3
4
5 = Very positive

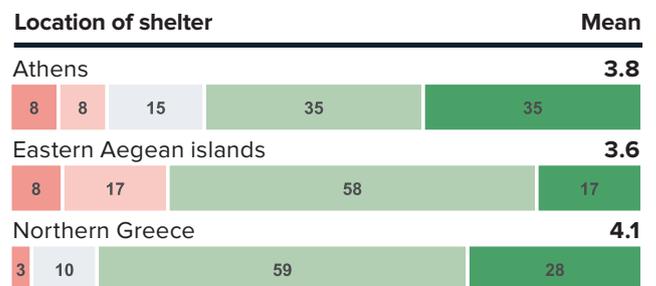
(values in %)

Mean: 3.9



Most respondents who have a care plan are satisfied with it.

Satisfaction with care plans is lowest among children receiving support at shelters in the Eastern Aegean islands.



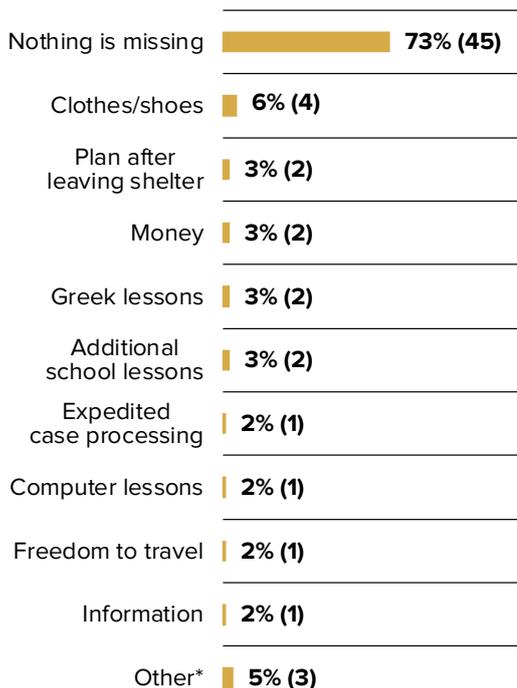
¹ Fili and Xythani, “Unaccompanied Minors in Greece: Who Can “Save” Them?” *Border Criminologies* (blog), 2017, <https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/research-subject-groups/centre-criminology/centreborder-criminologies/blog/2017/02/unaccompanied>

² Konstantinou et al., *Country Report: Greece* (Greek Council for Refugees: 2016), 75.



Follow-up questions to the previous question:

In your opinion, is there anything missing from your care plan?

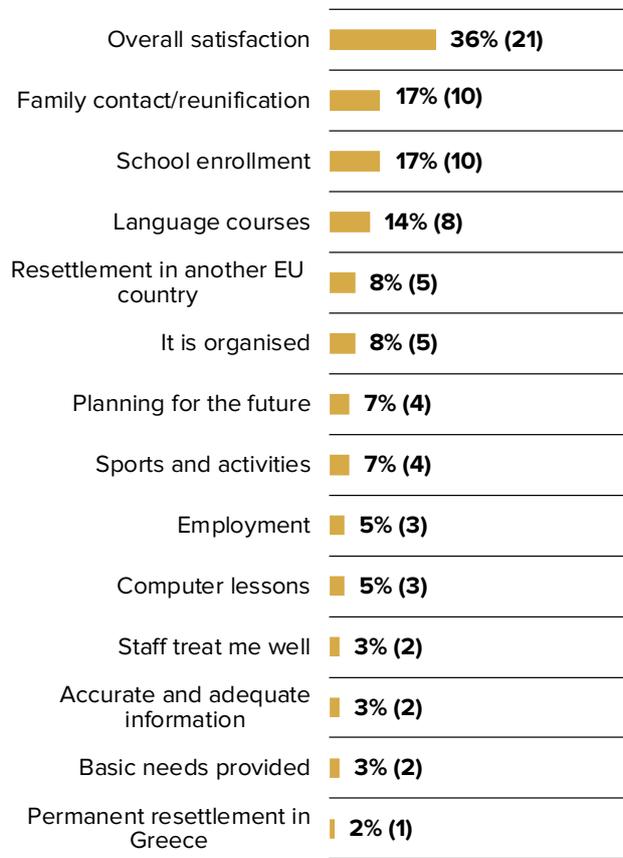


Almost three-quarters of interviewed children are either generally satisfied with their current care plan or think that nothing is missing from it.

The graph shows the most common responses and how frequently they were mentioned. The percentages do not total 100% because respondents could give multiple answers.

* "Other" includes better food and a better understanding of what to expect after leaving the shelter.

What do you like about your care plan?



Over a third of the children express how satisfied they are with the entire plan. Maintaining contact with members of their family and having a reunification plan in place, as well as being able to attend school lessons are each mentioned by 10 respondents, respectively. The length of time that UASC must wait to be reunited with their family has been made worse because of the 2016 border closures and the implementation of the EU-Turkey statement – as the process can take between 10 months and two years.³

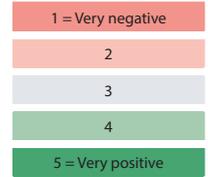
The graph shows the most common responses and how frequently they were mentioned. The percentages do not total 100% because respondents could give multiple answers.

³ Tidey and Crowe, "Refugee and migrant children stranded in European transit countries suffer psychologically in the face of uncertain future," UNICEF – Central and Eastern Europe Commonwealth of Independent States, last modified May 4, 2017, https://www.unicef.org/ceecis/media_30878.html



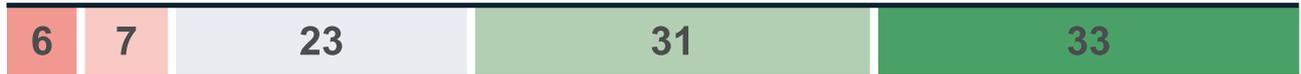
Q3. Voice

How happy are you with how case workers plan your time in Greece, answer your questions, and take your views into account on matters that affect you?



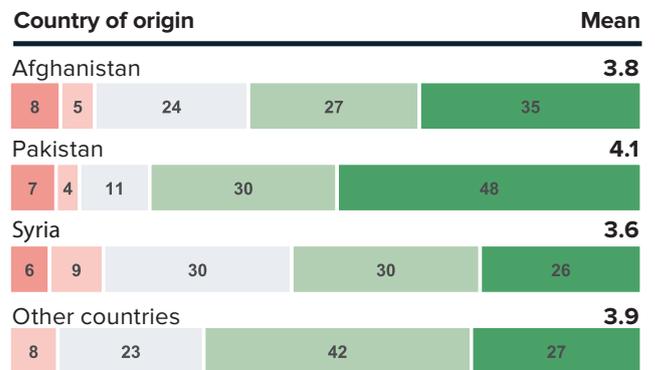
(values in %)

Mean: 3.8



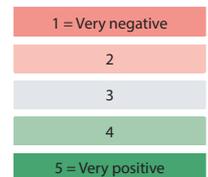
Just under two-thirds of children feel positively about how well staff at the shelters and safe zones listen to them, answer their questions, and take their views into account.

Satisfaction with how shelter staff listen to the children and take their views into account is highest among Pakistani minors.



Q4. Access to legal advice

How happy are you with your access to legal support in this shelter?



(values in %)

Mean: 3.9



Scores are largely positive, with 70% of surveyed children expressing satisfaction with their access to legal support at the shelter.



Q5. Safety

How safe do you feel in this shelter?



(values in %)

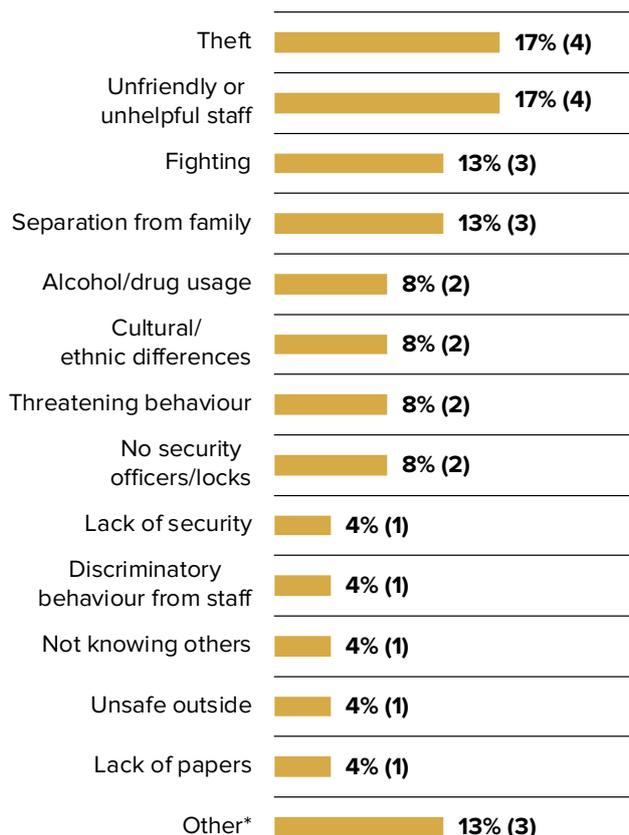
Mean: 4.3



Across all groups, most of the surveyed children say that they feel safe at the shelters. “According to the National Centre for Social Solidarity (EKKA), as of 28 December 2016, there were 1,256 accommodation places for minors, while a number of 1,443 unaccompanied children were on the waiting list for such a place to be found.”⁴ Outside of these shelters, children are vulnerable to detention in closed facilities for up to several months, “without access to registration, asylum procedures or information.”⁵ Non-child-friendly accommodation centres around Greece often put the safety of refugee children at risk because of the lack of adequate security, broken fencing, and inadequate lighting.⁶

Follow-up question to those who responded negatively to Q5:

What makes you feel unsafe?



Theft of personal items and staff members at the shelters who are unkind and unhelpful are given as reasons for feeling unsafe by four children, respectively. Additionally, some children cite fighting among one another and being separated from their families.

The graph shows the most common responses and how frequently they were mentioned. The percentages do not total 100% because respondents could give multiple answers.

*“Other” includes general dissatisfaction with the shelters, the existence of problems the respondent prefers not to discuss, and a lack of clothes and money.

⁴ Konstantinou et al., *Country Report: Greece* (Greek Council for Refugees: 2016), 126.

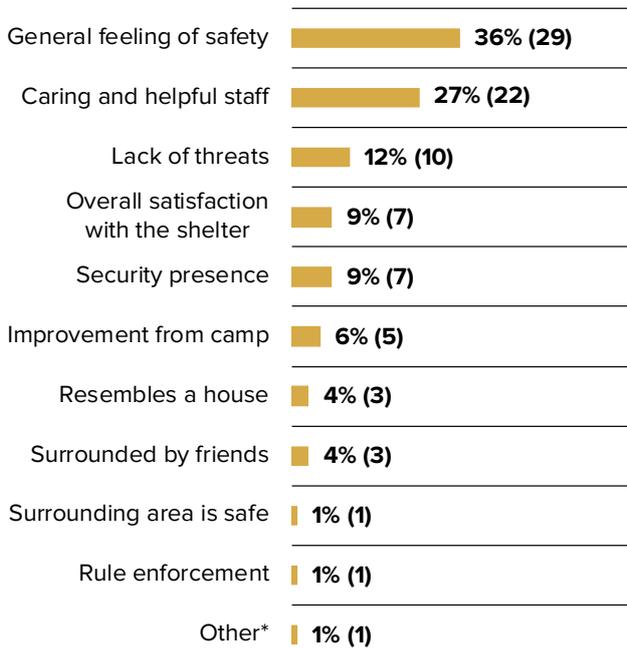
⁵ Médecins Sans Frontières, “The Situation of Unaccompanied Children in Greece,” *Médecins Sans Frontières*. Last modified October 14, 2016, <https://www.msf.gr/publications/situation-unaccompanied-children-greece>

⁶ Emmanouilidou et al., *Conditions in refugee camps: The case of Schisto* (Network for Children’s Rights: 2017), 7.



Follow-up questions to those who responded positively to Q5:

What makes you feel safe?



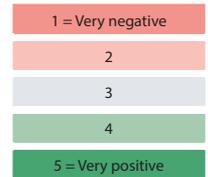
Over a third of respondents to this question say that the shelters generally feel safe. Many of the children comment on how caring and helpful staff are at the shelter, particularly when it comes to working to meet the needs of shelter residents.

The graph shows the most common responses and how frequently they were mentioned. The percentages do not total 100% because respondents could give multiple answers.

*"Other" includes personal feelings of strength.

Q6. Acceptance in host communities

How welcomed do you feel by people from the surrounding community/neighbours?



(values in %)

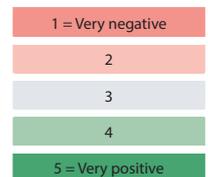
Mean: 4.0



Almost three-quarters of the surveyed children report that local community members are welcoming.

Q7. Overall satisfaction with services

Overall, how happy are you with the quality of the shelter you are staying in?



(values in %)

Mean: 3.7

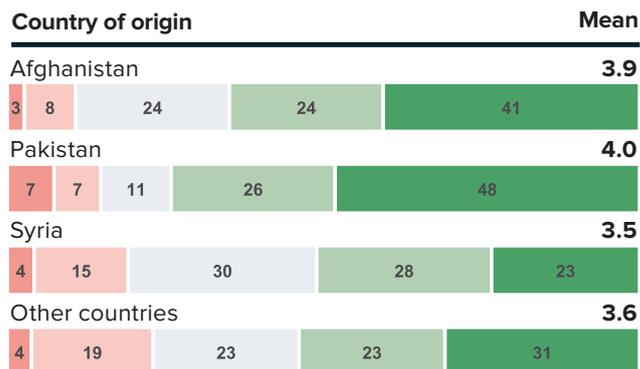


A majority of the surveyed children are happy with the quality of the shelter they are staying in. UASC who do not have a place in long-term or transit shelters find themselves at temporary accommodation facilities that have been consistently scrutinised for their substandard conditions.⁷

⁷ Konstantinou et al., *Country Report: Greece* (Greek Council for Refugees: 2016), 102-113.

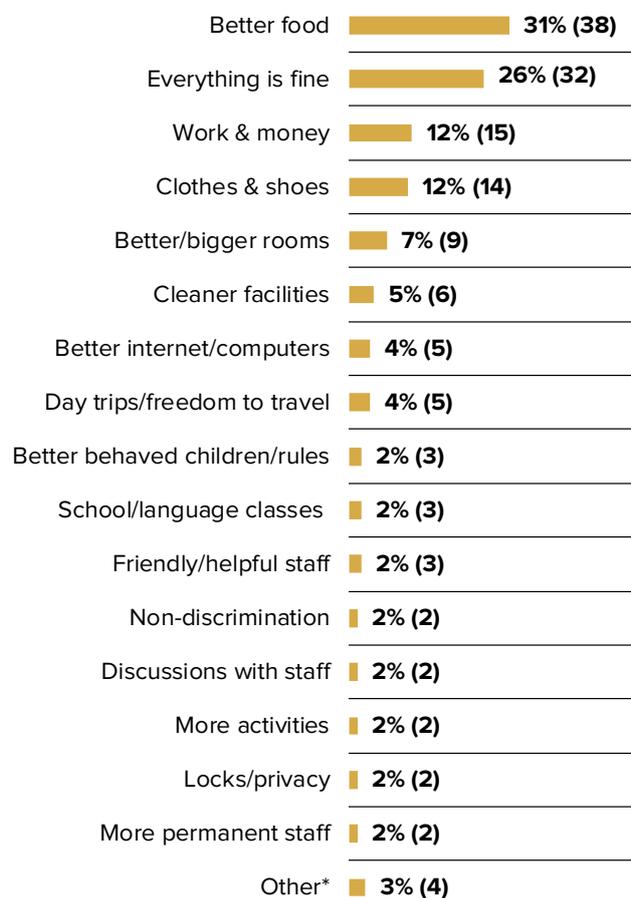


Children originating from Syria are least satisfied with the quality of the shelters they are staying in.



Follow-up question to Q7 asked to everyone:

How could the shelter be improved?



Almost a third of the children would like better quality food, as well as meals that are similar to what is traditionally served in their country of origin. Work that provides a stable flow of income as well as cash assistance programmes are seen as areas that could potentially improve the quality of children’s lives at the shelter. Additionally, they mention that they would appreciate more clothes and shoe donations.

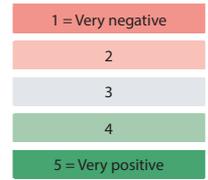
The graph shows the most common responses and how frequently they were mentioned. The percentages do not total 100% because respondents could give multiple answers.

*“Other” includes the recommendation for children to talk to one another more often to find solutions to problems, and shelter staff that are more respectful and interested in the children.



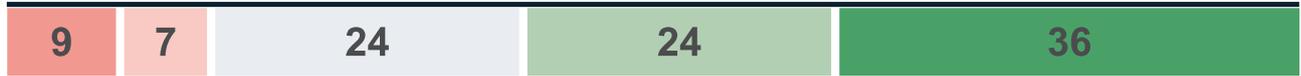
Q8. Satisfaction with recreational activities

How happy are you with the recreational activities here?



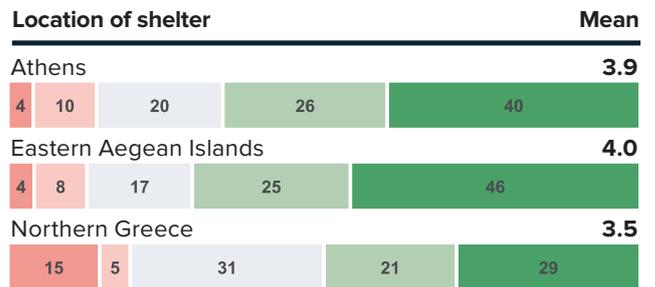
(values in %)

Mean: 3.7



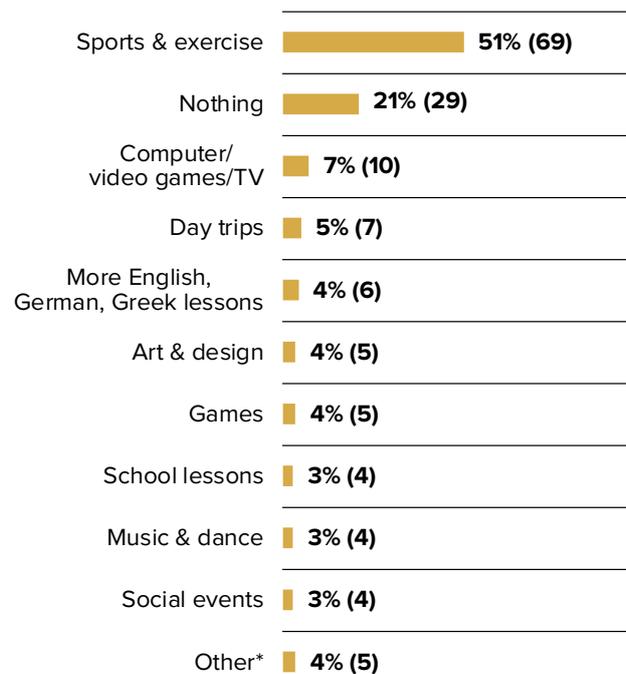
Well over half of the children responding to this question are satisfied with the recreational activities offered to them at their respective shelter.

Surveyed children residing in shelters in Northern Greece are least satisfied with the recreational activities available to them.



Follow-up question to Q8 asked to everyone:

What other activities would you like to do?



Most children want to participate in more types of sports and exercise activities (e.g. gymnastics, swimming, basketball, cricket, weightlifting, volleyball, and martial arts). Many of the children mention that they are unable to take part in such activities due to the lack of sports equipment and facilities.

The graph shows the most common responses and how frequently they were mentioned. The percentages do not total 100% because respondents could give multiple answers.

*"Other" includes more options in general and the opportunity to work for a few hours a day.



Q9. Quality of classes

- No
- Yes
- Do not know

Do you learn useful things in the (formal) educational classes or in school?

(values in %)



Over two-thirds of surveyed children say that they learn useful material in their formal educational classes offered at the shelter or school.

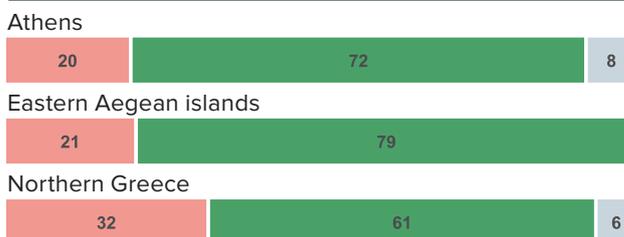
Syrian children are least satisfied with the quality of the material that is taught to them in comparison to children of other nationalities.

Country of origin



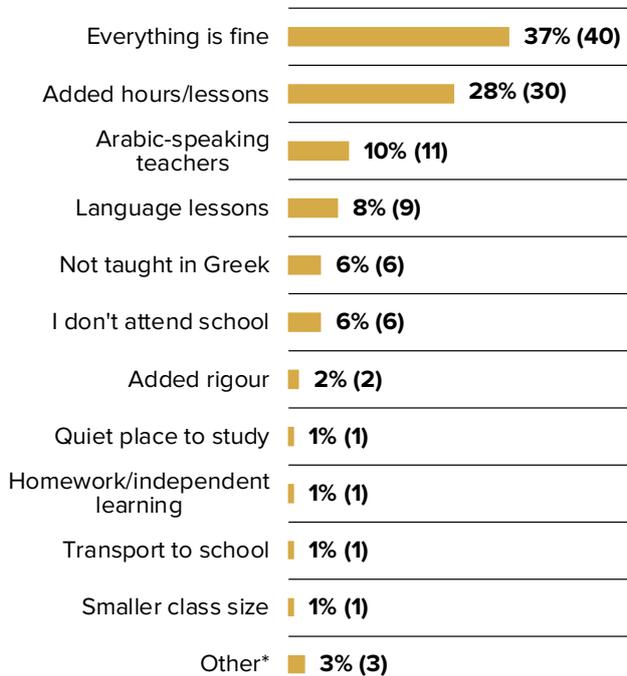
Respondents residing in shelters located in Northern Greece are least satisfied with the topics discussed in their formal educational classes or school.

Location of shelter



Follow-up question to Q9 asked to everyone:

How could the (formal) educational or school classes be improved?



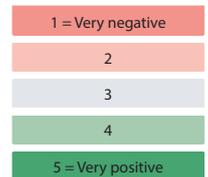
Over a third of the respondents do not think that anything needs to change. The children indicate that they would like more time in the classroom and with their teachers, as well as additional lessons. Some express the need for their teachers to know how to speak Arabic, while another nine children would appreciate more opportunities to learn languages, particularly English, Greek, and German.

The graph shows the most common responses and how frequently they were mentioned. The percentages do not total 100% because respondents could give multiple answers.

*"Other" includes a general dislike of the classes, more "meticulous" and organised teachers, assessments of children's education level so that they are not placed in classes or taught material that they are not ready for.

Q10. Quality of relationship between staff and children

Are you happy with how the staff treat children here?



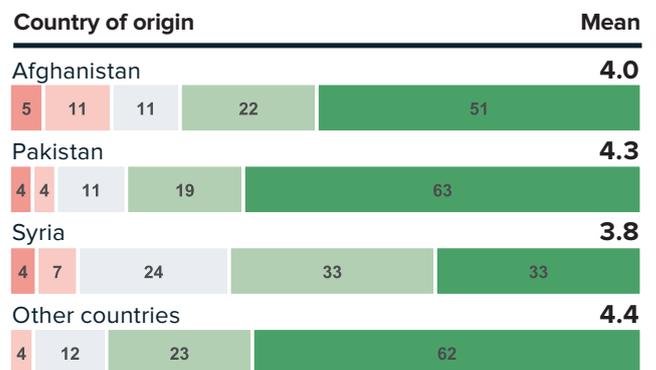
(values in %)

Mean: 4.1

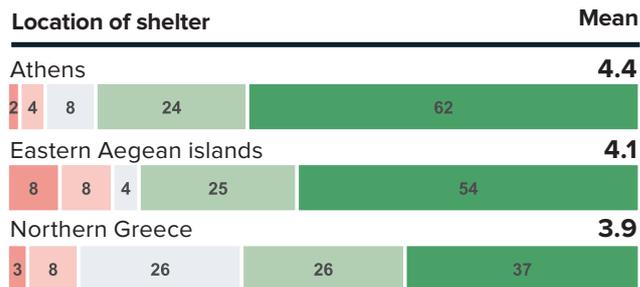


Just under three-quarters of the children are happy with how staff at their shelter treat them.

Children from Syria are least happy with how staff treat them at the shelters.

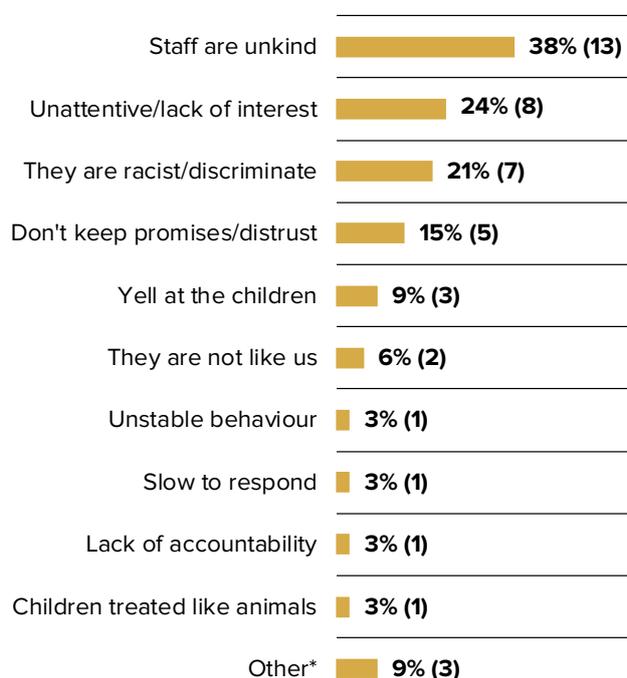


Children are least satisfied with the treatment from staff at shelters in Northern Greece.



Follow-up question asked to those who reported being unhappy with staff in Q10:

Why not?



Reasons for not being happy with the way they are treated are unfriendly staff, with some children reporting that some staff members yell at them. Almost a quarter of respondents say that staff are inattentive, as some ignore children and are slow to respond to their needs. A notable number of respondents report that staff provides preferential treatment to some based on their country of origin.

The graph shows the most common responses and how frequently they were mentioned. The percentages do not total 100% because respondents could give multiple answers.

* "Other" includes the staff having not enough money to purchase better food, and two children report that several children have been thrown out of the shelters by staff.



Q11. Information needs

Do you have the information you would like on your legal options and available support services while in Greece?

No
Yes
Do not know

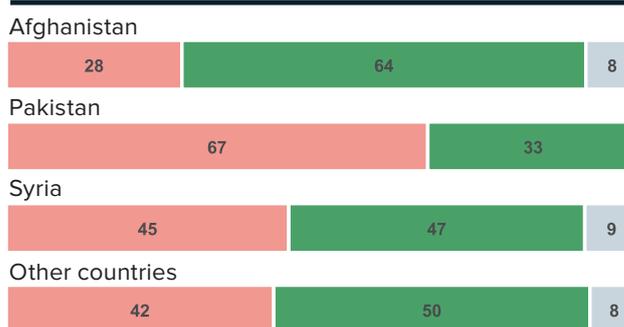
(values in %)



A little under half of the children report that they do not receive enough information on their legal options or the available services in Greece. Under Greek law, every UASC must be assigned to a public prosecutor or legal guardian who is legally responsible for providing temporary/provisional guardianship until a permanent guardian is appointed.^{8,9} There have been reports of poorly informed public prosecutors who do not understand the needs of UASCs, and who rarely meet with the children in their care.¹⁰ According to a recent Mixed Migration Platform report on UASC in Greece, it is noted that some prosecutors are said to be responsible for up to 1,000 individual cases at one time, placing many of these temporary guardians under a lot of pressure.¹¹ The inability of public prosecutors to handle each and every case properly inevitably results in many UASC being deprived of the adequate support they require.¹²

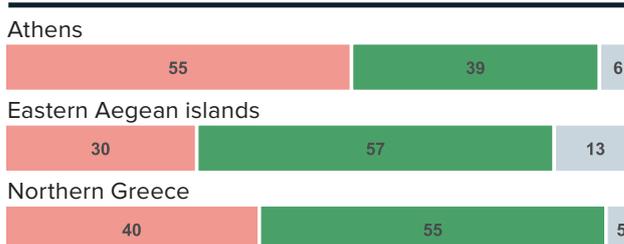
Most children from Pakistan say they do not have the information they would like about their legal options and available support, while just under two-thirds of Afghan children are satisfied.

Country of origin



Over half of children residing in shelters in Athens feel they do not have the information they would like.

Location of shelter



⁸ Directive 2013/32/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 on common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection, Greek Civil Code Articles 1589-1654. CARDET, Defence for Children International – Italy et al., *IMPACT, Improving Monitoring and Protection Systems Against Child Trafficking and Exploitation*, National Report Greece, 2014, 125.

⁹ Human Rights Watch, *Why are you keeping me here? Unaccompanied children detained in Greece* (United States: Human Rights Watch, 2016), 24.

¹⁰ Mixed Migration Platform, *Underage, undocumented and alone: A gap analysis of undocumented and separated children on the move in Jordan, Lebanon, and Greece* (Amman: Mixed Migration Platform, 2017), 4.

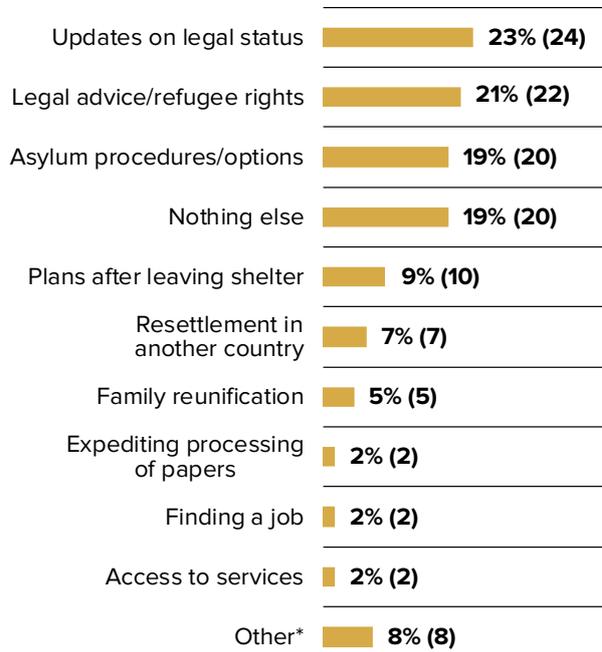
¹¹ Ibid., 4-5.

¹² Ibid, 5.



Follow-up question to Q11 asked to everyone:

What do you need more information on?



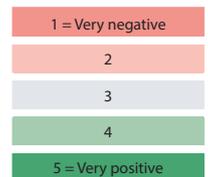
Children would like to receive more updates on the status of their papers and asylum procedures within Greece and other countries including France, England, and Germany. Many of the respondents also say they would like to be given legal advice and assistance to fully understand what rights they have in Greece and the rest of Europe, options for resettlement, and how to register for the requisite documents. Some of the responses were paired with requests to have direct meetings with lawyers so that they could be sure that the information they receive is verifiable.

The graph shows the most common responses and how frequently they were mentioned. The percentages do not total 100% because respondents could give multiple answers.

*"Other" includes information about family members, how to become a translator, and more information in general.

Q12. Information provision

How happy are you with the way information is provided?



(values in %)

Mean: 3.8

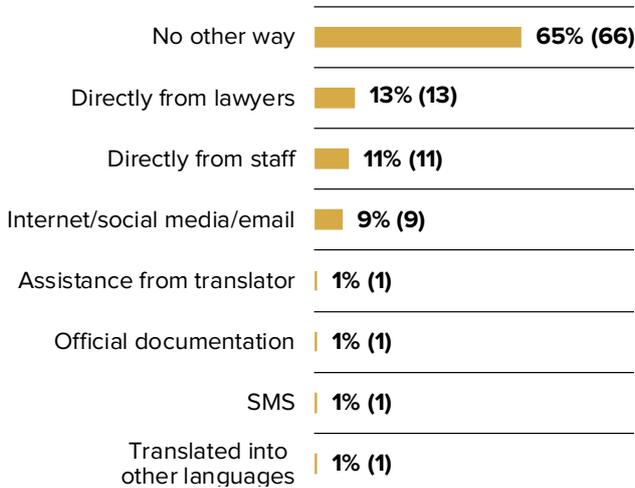


Almost two-thirds of the respondents are satisfied with the current systems of information provision.



Follow-up question to Q12 asked to everyone:

Is there another way you would like to receive information on legal options and available services within Greece?



Most children are happy with the way that information is provided to them. Like some of the responses to the follow-up to Q11, many of the children say they would like more opportunities to meet lawyers and shelter staff one-on-one to ask questions and receive information.

The graph shows the most common responses and how frequently they were mentioned. The percentages do not total 100% because respondents could give multiple answers.

Q13. Consultation of information needs and provision

Are you consulted about what information you need or how you would like to receive it?



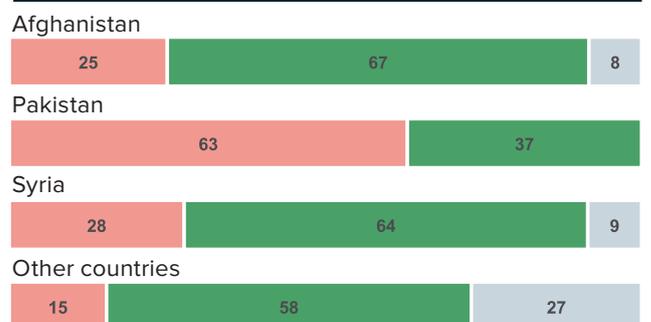
(values in %)



Over half of children at the shelters say they are consulted about their information needs and the ways they would like to receive it.

A majority of children from Pakistan give largely negative scores.

Country of origin



Q14. Trust in information

To what extent do you trust the information you receive?



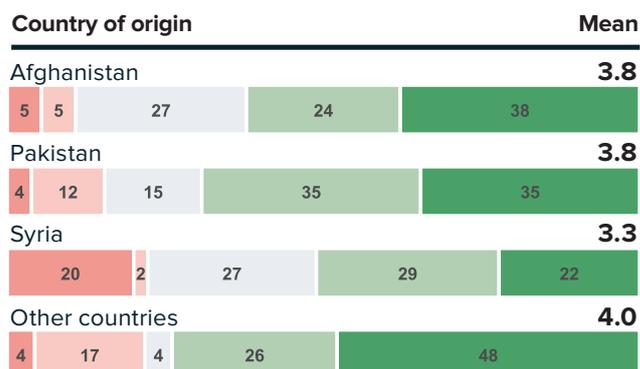
(values in %)

Mean: 3.7



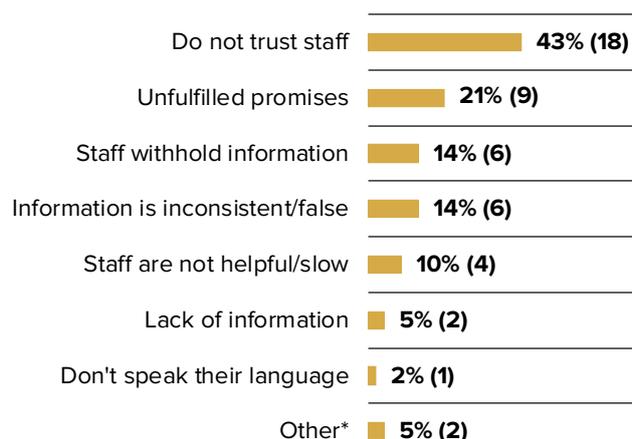
Well over half of the children consider the information they receive to be trustworthy.

Compared to other nationalities, surveyed Syrian children trust the information they receive the least.



Follow-up question asked to those who responded negatively to Q14:

If you don't trust it, why not?



A large portion of respondents say they do not trust the staff, with children reporting that they consider the information provided either false or inconsistent with other sources of information such as friends living abroad. It is also said that staff will make promises and then not follow through (e.g. promising papers will be returned by a certain date or making offers to buy them clothes or shoes).

The graph shows the most common responses and how frequently they were mentioned. The percentages do not total 100% because respondents could give multiple answers.

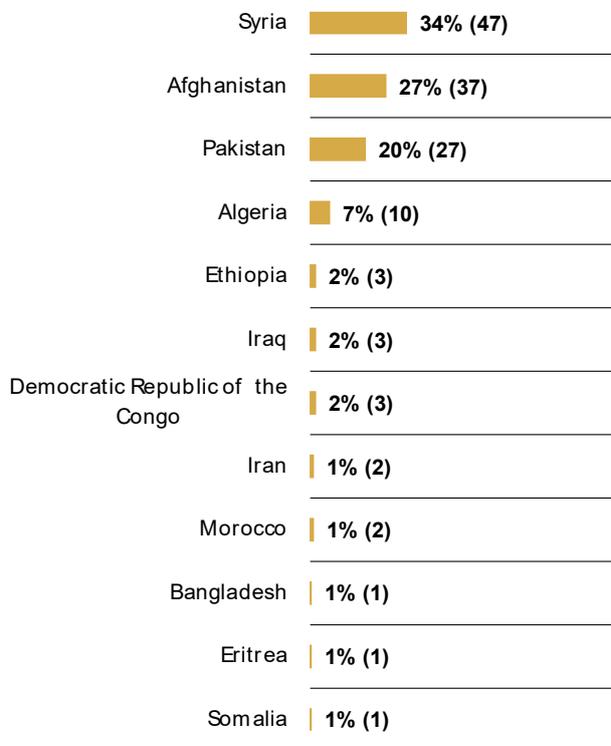
*"Other" includes the lack of new information and being new to the shelter.



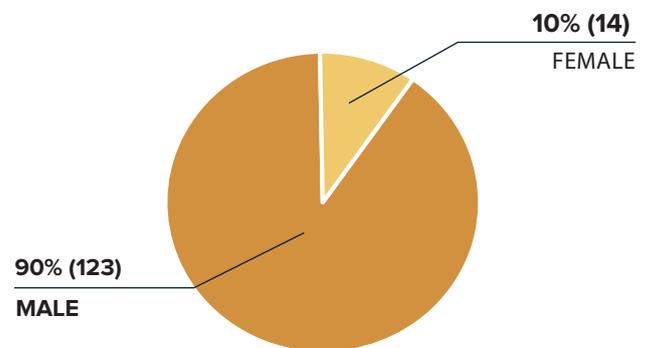
DEMOGRAPHICS

The graphs below depict the demographic breakdown of the 137 respondents in the first round. Each graph includes percentages, as well as the frequency in parentheses.

Country of origin



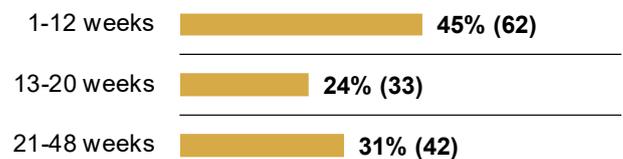
Gender



Age



Length of time spent at the shelter



RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The following next steps are suggested for consideration by humanitarian agencies in Greece:

a) Compare. Share the main findings with your staff and partners and discuss whether the issues resonate with your own experience or with the feedback you have gathered from unaccompanied and separated children.

b) Collect and discuss. If you have not done so yet, consider collecting feedback on issues that seem relevant for your work from the children you are supporting through your programmes. You can conduct your own survey or use the findings in this report as a basis for discussion with UASC. Discuss the results of any feedback collection both internally as well as with children to identify possible improvements.

c) Close the loop. Encourage field staff to close the feedback loop by informing minors about how services are being adapted to take feedback into account.

d) Advocate. Consider sharing this report and other data you have on unaccompanied and separated children's perceptions with other aid agencies and institutions working with UASC in Greece to see how, together, the humanitarian community can address concerns and bridge gaps.

Ground Truth Solutions' staff would be happy to discuss the findings with agencies in Greece and offer advice on follow-up activities.



NOTE ON METHODOLOGY

Background

This report presents the findings of a survey commissioned by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) to improve care and protection of UASC in Greece and the Balkans. The data, gathered in collaboration with three international organisations running shelters for unaccompanied and separated children in Greece, is being published under the Mixed Migration Platform (MMP) with a view to inform other organisations' work in the country who might find relevant many of the issues that surfaced in the report. Ground Truth Solutions is one of seven partners that jointly provide analytical services as part of the platform. The other partners are ACAPS, Danish Refugee Council, Internews, INTERSOS, REACH, and Translators without Borders. The goal of MMP, which was launched in October 2016, is to provide information related to mixed migration for policy, programming and advocacy work, as well as to provide information to people on the move in the Middle East and Europe. Ground Truth Solutions' contribution to the platform is the collection and analysis of feedback on the perceptions of people in different stages of displacement – in the borderlands, transit countries, and states of final destination.

Survey development

Ground Truth Solutions developed the survey questions in close collaboration with three international organisations in Greece. The goal was to gather feedback from UASC and track how perceptions evolve over time. Most closed questions use a 1-5 Likert scale to quantify answers. Each answer option was illustrated with a series of faces ranging from very sad to very happy.



Several questions are followed by an open-ended question to understand why the respondent gave a particular answer.

Sample size

Interviews were conducted with 137 minors living in eight shelters and one safe zone run by three international organisations across Athens, Northern Greece, and the East Aegean islands.

Everyone living in the shelters was asked to participate. Most of those who did not participate were engaged in other activities, asleep, or with the doctor. A small minority were not fluent in any of the survey languages – Arabic, Farsi, Urdu and English.

Language of the survey

This survey was conducted in Arabic (47%), Farsi (23%), Urdu (26%), English (4%), and French (2%). The figures do not equal 100% as three of the interviews were conducted in multiple languages.

Data collection

Data was collected March 22-24, 2017 by an independent data collection company contracted by Ground Truth Solutions. Enumerators conducted face-to-face interviews with individual children. Data collectors presented themselves as working for an organisation independent from the international organisation managing the shelter.

For more information about Ground Truth surveys in Greece, please contact Andrew Hassan (andrew@groundtruthsolutions.org).

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