



**GROUND TRUTH
SOLUTIONS**

MIXED MIGRATION PLATFORM

**REFUGEE, ASYLUM-SEEKER AND
MIGRANT PERCEPTIONS**

ISTANBUL/TURKEY

— SURVEY REPORT —

29 JUNE, 2017

MIMP | MIXED
MIGRATION
PLATFORM

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OVERVIEW

Introduction

This report analyses data collected from refugees, asylum-seekers, and migrants between April 21 to 30, 2017, in Istanbul, Turkey. Face-to-face interviews for this survey were conducted with 422 non-camp refugees, asylum-seekers, and migrants living across 38 districts of Istanbul. It is the first in a series of data collection rounds by Ground Truth Solutions in Turkey, under the [Mixed Migration Platform \(MMP\)](#). Additional data collection will include both quantitative and qualitative research, looking at refugee, asylum-seeker, and migrant perceptions of humanitarian assistance in different regions of Turkey.

Respondents were randomly selected, with interviewees first being sought out in public spaces such as parks, cafés, and market places – areas where the data

collectors expected to encounter a high number of respondents. Enumerators also used more targeted sampling, e.g. asking parents and teachers at schools in different communities to put them in touch with potential interviewees. The research aimed to have an appropriate gender balance based on available demographics and to include all main groups of refugees, asylum-seekers, and migrants, including Syrians, Iraqis, Iranians, Afghans, and Somalis. The aim was to have an appropriate number of respondents originating from different countries based on available migrant demographics. Respondents were asked to score each closed question on a 1 to 5 scale. More background and information on the methodology can be found at the end of this report.

Summary Findings

Lack of information on available support

The overwhelming majority of respondents do not know what kind of support is available to them from aid agencies and local authorities, with only 5% of them answering positively. Over half say they would prefer it if information was given by short service message (SMS), while more than a third prefer messaging apps.

Lack of awareness of and trust in complaints mechanisms

Across all groups, 88% of respondents do not know where and how to make suggestions or complaints about the support they receive. Among Iraqis, only 2% have positive views when asked about this. Some 65% say that they would like to make suggestions or complaints directly to support providers in face-to-face meetings. Over half do not think they would get a response if they were to submit a complaint.

Priority needs are not met, particularly for the most vulnerable

More than a third of surveyed refugees and asylum-seekers do not feel that their most important needs are being met. Their most pressing needs include affordable and suitable accommodation, help in resuming their studies or the education of their children, and employment and livelihood support. When asked whether support reaches those most in need, opinions are largely negative, with females being more pessimistic than males.

Split awareness of and limited trust in cash assistance

Just over half of surveyed refugees and asylum-seekers are aware of cash-based assistance. Over a third do not think that cash-based programmes are fair and transparent, with male refugees, asylum-seekers, and migrants being more negative than their female counterparts. Over half of those who think transfers are unfair do so because they believe the amount received is not enough to cover the high cost of living in Istanbul.

Lack of understanding of settlement options

Most respondents say they do not understand their options to remain in Turkey or apply for resettlement elsewhere. Knowledge of settlement in Turkey and resettlement elsewhere is poorest among Syrians. People who have access to a smartphone tend to have the most knowledge of settlement options. The lack of understanding is likely explained by the fact that three-quarters of respondents do not know where to inform themselves about their options.

Low trust in information from aid agencies

Respondents express a lack of trust in the information given to them by aid agencies. Syrian respondents and those receiving no support trust the information the least. Those who gave low scores cite contradictory or false information in explanation, as well as limited contact with agency staff. Despite low levels of trust, most refugees, asylum-seekers, and migrants who currently receive support feel that aid agencies treat them with respect.

Trust in information from Turkish authorities

Respondents appear to have more trust in the information Turkish officials provide, with 67% answering positively. The majority of respondents feel that authorities responsible for refugees, asylum-seekers, and migrants treat them with respect. Iranian respondents are most likely to feel that they are not treated with respect.

Strong feelings of safety

Most respondents report feeling safe. Those who feel unsafe cite rising instances of assaults on foreigners, sometimes specifically targeting women and single mothers. Some feel rejected by Turkish citizens while others have experienced robberies. Those who do perceive tensions between themselves and locals feel that Turkish citizens do not want them in their country due to their large number and the length of their stay. A quarter of those responding negatively also report that Turkish citizens discriminate against them because of their legal status, religion, and ethnic origins. However, when asked if they feel welcomed by the host community, almost two-thirds answered positively.

Learning Turkish is a priority

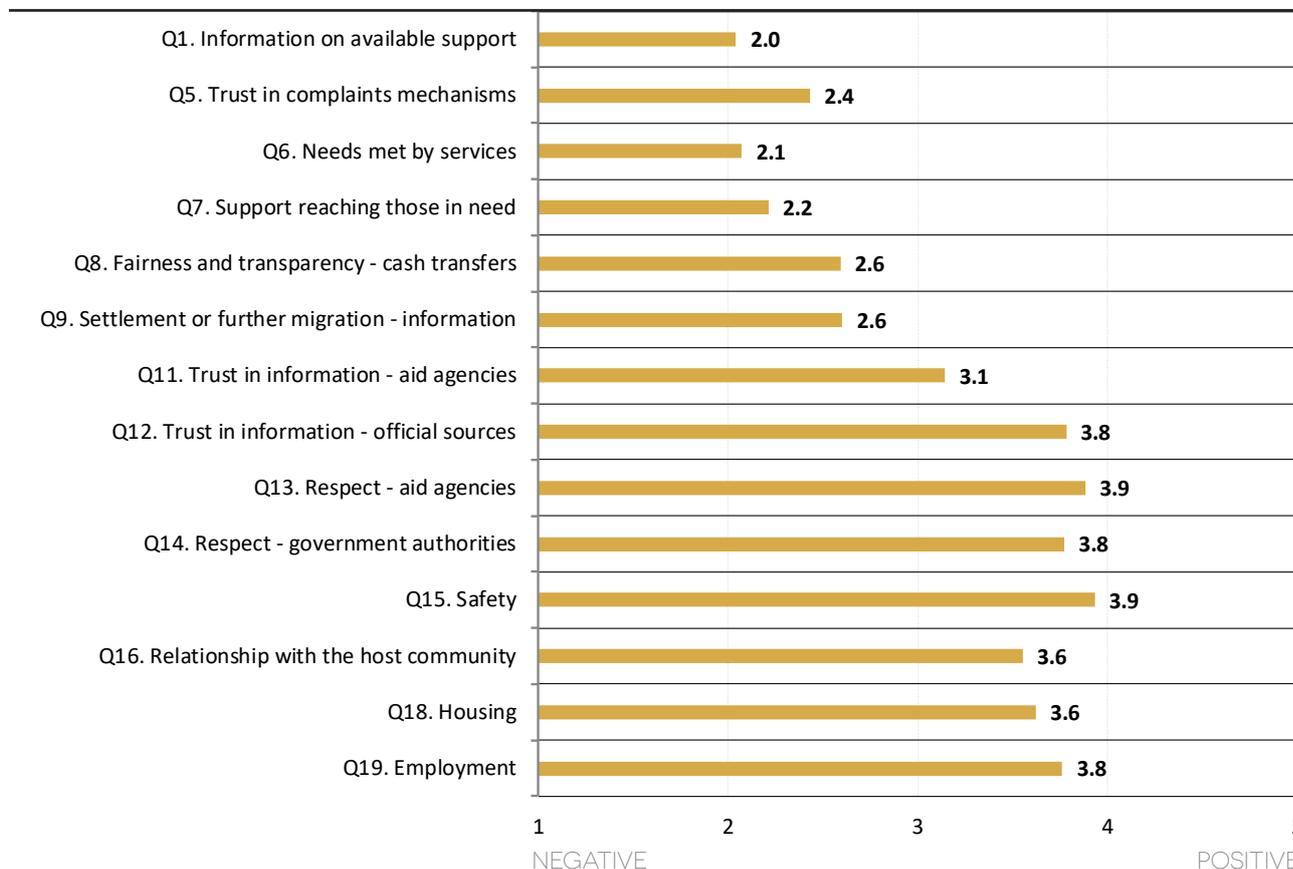
Over two-thirds of respondents are currently learning Turkish. However, the sample included respondents who

were approached around primary education facilities and language centres. Those not learning Turkish said major obstacles to doing so include high tuition costs and lack of free courses, work stress, and not having enough time.

Finding accommodation and work is possible, but often inadequate

Surveyed refugees, asylum-seekers, and migrants generally feel that people from their country are able to find living quarters and employment in Istanbul. However, apartments are often derelict and unsuitable for large families. Respondents consistently lament the high cost of living and discrimination by landlords against refugees, asylum-seekers, and migrants, particularly Syrians or those from other Arabic-speaking countries. Moreover, work is often informal, leaving many vulnerable to exploitation through low wages and long hours. Hence, despite the optimism around finding work and housing, respondents make frequent requests for help in finding suitable and affordable housing and accessing further livelihood support. Those facing language barriers or without documentation consider this support critical.

OVERVIEW OF MEAN SCORES PER QUESTION



Reading this report

This report uses simple bar charts for both open and closed questions. Responses to closed questions are reported using a Likert scale from 1 to 5. The mean score is also shown for each closed question. The bar charts for closed questions show the percentage of respondents who selected each answer option, with colours ranging from dark red for negative answers to dark green for positive ones. For open questions, the bar charts indicate the percentage and frequency of respondents with answers pertaining to a particular theme. For these charts, percentages do not total 100% because respondents were given the option to provide multiple answers.

For each question, we indicate the main take-away or conclusion drawn from the data. We also identify which issues might be worth exploring or probing further. This can be done by comparing the perceptual data with other data sets that are available to humanitarian agencies in Turkey. Another approach is to clarify what lies behind the perceptions revealed in the survey directly through community engagement, such as focus group discussions, community meetings and other forms of dialogue. Ground Truth Solutions will collect qualitative data in July 2017 to further examine some of the issues surfaced by this survey.

HIGHLIGHTS

QUANTITATIVE ROUND

63%

DO NOT KNOW WHAT KIND OF **SUPPORT** IS AVAILABLE TO THEM



PREFERRED INFORMATION CHANNELS:

1. SMS
2. MESSAGING APPS
3. SOCIAL MEDIA

67%

TRUST INFORMATION FROM **OFFICIALS SOURCES** ABOUT SETTLEMENT AND RESETTLEMENT OPTIONS

88%

DO NOT KNOW WHERE OR HOW TO MAKE **SUGGESTIONS OR COMPLAINTS**



PEOPLE NEED:

1. ACCOMMODATION
2. EDUCATION
3. EMPLOYMENT

63%

FEEL WELCOMED BY TURKISH PEOPLE IN THEIR NEIGHBOURHOOD

71%

DO NOT KNOW WHERE TO ACCESS INFORMATION ABOUT **THEIR OPTIONS** TO STAY IN TURKEY OR APPLY FOR RESETTLEMENT ELSEWHERE



BARRIERS TO ADEQUATE HOUSING:

1. HIGH RENT
2. DISCRIMINATION
3. LACK OF DOCUMENTS

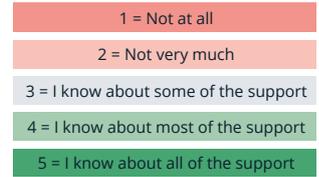
79%

FEEL SAFE IN THEIR NEIGHBOURHOOD

SURVEY QUESTIONS

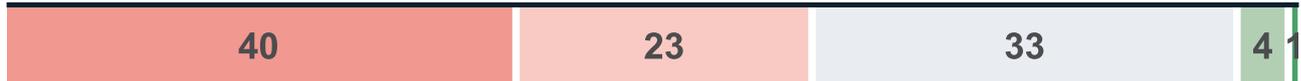
Q1. Information on available support

Do you know what kind of support is available to you from aid agencies and the local authorities?



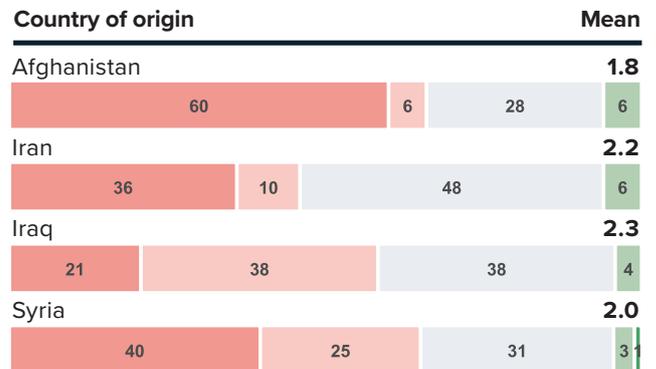
(values in %)

Mean: 2.0



The vast majority of respondents are unaware of the types of support available to them from aid agencies and government authorities, with only 5% answering positively. According to the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan, a “lack of awareness of existing legislation, referral and response mechanisms, lack of psychosocial support, as well as language barriers” are all obstacles to receiving support.¹

Scores are lowest among Afghans, 60% of whom say they have no knowledge at all about the support available to them. Awareness among respondents of other nationalities is only marginally better.



It is notable that even among current aid recipients, only 7% feel well- informed about the support available.

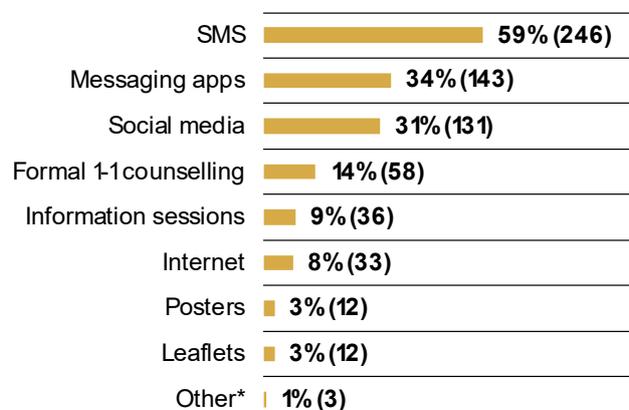


¹ The UN Refugee Agency & United Nations Development Programme, *3RP Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan 2016-2017: Turkey* (UNHCR & UNDP, 2016), 15.



Q2. Information dissemination

How would you like to receive information about support available to you from aid agencies and local authorities?



* 'Other' options mentioned include communicating through a Mukhtar (head of the local community), phone calls, and home visits.

The graph shows the most common responses to this open-ended question. The figures indicate the percentage/number of people who gave this answer. Percentages do not total 100% because respondents could give multiple answers.

Over half of surveyed refugees, asylum-seekers, and migrants say they would like information on available support to be provided through SMS. The second and third most preferred channels are messaging apps such as Whatsapp, and social media platforms. Since most refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants in the region have access to smartphones (see the demographics section of this report for more information), aid actors already make use of such channels. While messaging apps work well with low-bandwidth internet connections, SMS offers greater reach, allowing organisations to communicate with over a thousand people at a time who have access to basic handsets.^{2,3} Responses to this survey point to room for improvement for the methods of communication utilised to communicate with refugees, asylum-seekers, and migrants in Turkey.

Q3. Awareness of complaints mechanisms

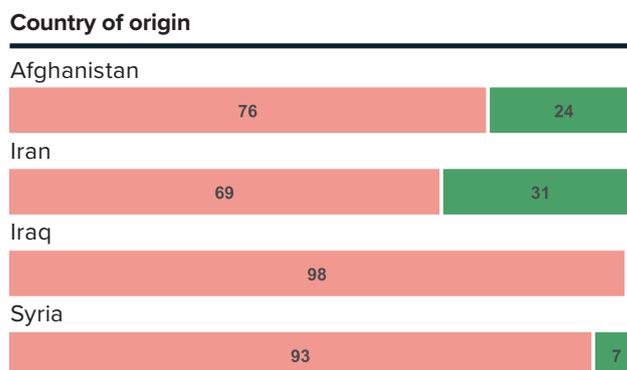
Do you know where and how to make suggestions or complaints about the support you receive?

(values in %)



Awareness of complaint mechanisms among refugees, asylum-seekers, and migrants is very low.

Awareness of complaints mechanisms is highest amongst refugees and asylum-seekers from Afghanistan and Iran, with the most concerning results among Iraqis, of whom only 2% respond positively.



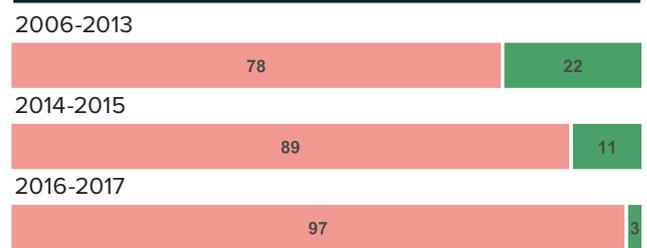
² The UN Refugee Agency & United Nations Development Programme, *3RP Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan 2016-2017: Turkey* (UNHCR & UNDP, 2016), 15.

³ For example, the Yuva Community Centre in Gaziantep is using SMS and messaging apps like Telegram and Whatsapp to provide refugees with information about services available. See International Committee of the Red Cross, *Humanitarian Futures for Messaging Apps: Understanding the Opportunities and Risks for Humanitarian Action*. (Geneva: ICRC, 2017), 51-52.



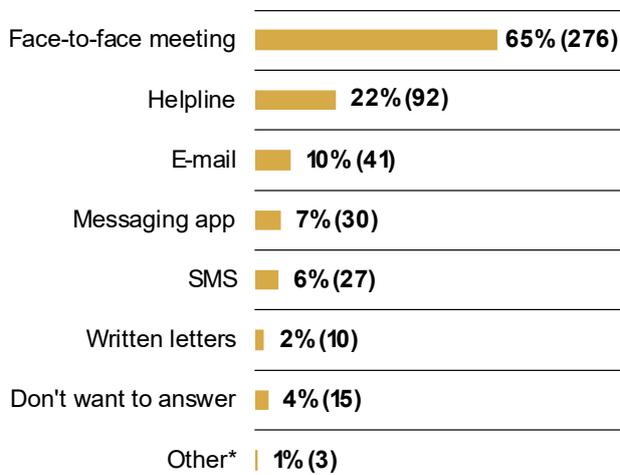
Awareness of where and how to make complaints and suggestions is best among those who arrived in Turkey before 2014. However, even in this group, 78% are uninformed. Given the length of their stay in Turkey, these results indicate that much more could be done to publicise complaints mechanisms among refugees and asylum-seekers.

Year of arrival in Turkey



Q4. Preferred methods of submitting complaints

How would you prefer to make suggestions or complaints about the support you receive?



Two-thirds of surveyed refugees and asylum-seekers say they would like to make suggestions or complaints directly through face-to-face meetings with support providers. Other preferred methods include helplines and email.

The graph shows the most common responses to this open-ended question. The figures indicate the percentage/number of people who gave this answer. Percentages do not total 100% because respondents could give multiple answers.

* 'Other' includes a lack of interest in submitting complaints among those not receiving assistance, and "legal protests".

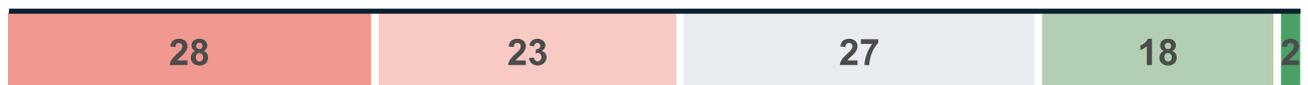
Q5. Trust in complaints mechanisms

If you were to make a complaint, do you believe you would receive a response?



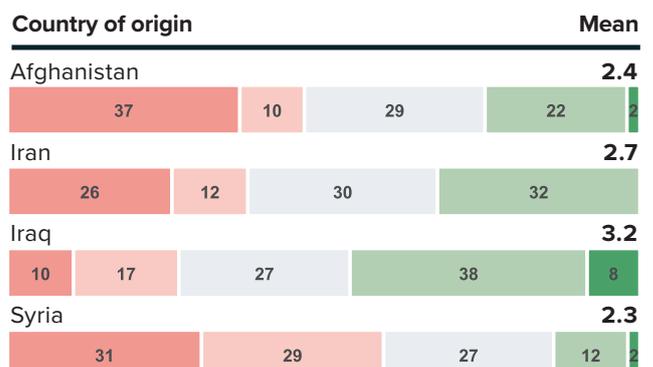
(values in %)

Mean: 2.4



Over half of respondents do not believe that they would receive a response if they made a complaint.

Syrian and Afghan refugees and asylum-seekers are least likely to expect a response after making a complaint.



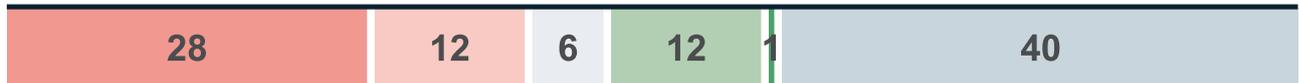
Q6. Needs met by services

Are your most important needs met by the services you receive?



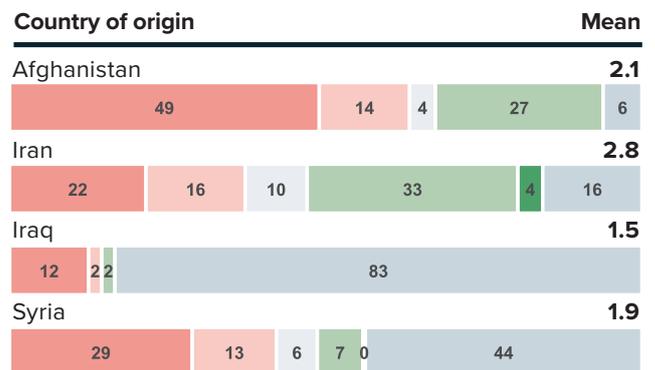
(values in %)

Mean: 2.1



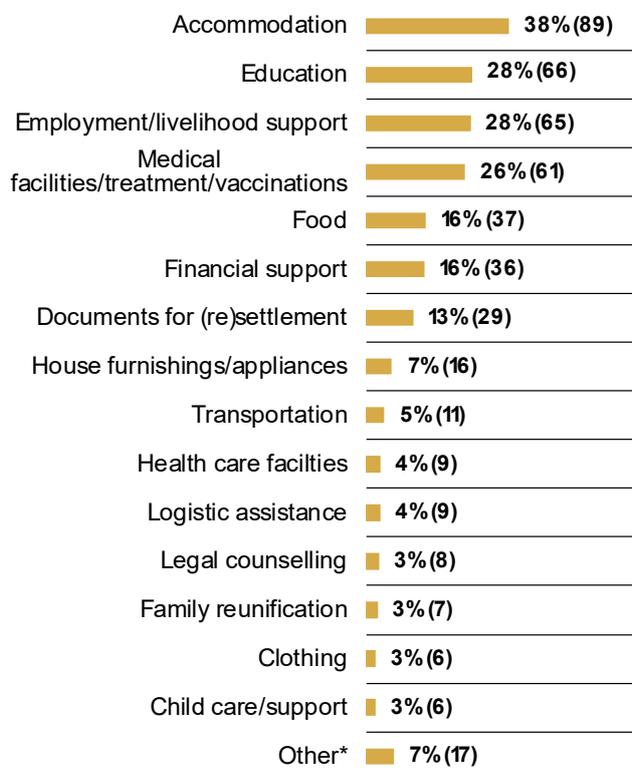
While 40% of respondents feel that the services they receive do not meet their most important needs, another 40% cannot say whether they do or not. It is important to note that 95% of those answering “don’t know” are not currently receiving any type of aid.

Mean scores are lowest among respondents from Iraq and Syria. However, a very high share of people from these countries respond “do not know.” The most negative responses come from Afghan refugees and asylum-seekers – almost half of whom say that what they receive in no way meets their most important needs.



Follow-up question asked to those who responded 1, 2 or 3 to Q6:

What are your most important needs that are not met?



Respondents who feel their most important needs are not met say the support they need most is help with finding and paying for housing, resuming studies or enrolling children in school, finding a job, and receiving medical treatment. More specifically, they complain that rent in Istanbul is far too high, doctors and nurses do not speak Arabic, and available jobs are often informal, leaving many refugees, asylum-seekers, and migrants vulnerable to exploitation. This is in line with concerns described elsewhere. A large percentage of refugees find themselves living in substandard shelters with harmful sanitation and hygiene conditions.⁴ School enrolment rates are highest among primary school-aged children, but decrease dramatically for older children—less than 3% of university-aged youth are enrolled in a higher education programme.⁵

The graph shows the most common responses to this open-ended question. The figures indicate the percentage/number of people who gave this answer. Percentages do not total 100% because respondents could give multiple answers.

* ‘Other’ includes equal treatment, financial support for individuals with disabilities, prosthetics, moral support, recognition of foreign credentials and documents, protection of rights, security, social security, trainings, and counselling.

⁴ The UN Refugee Agency & United Nations Development Programme, *3RP Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan 2017-2018: Turkey* (UNHCR & UNDP, 2017), 62.

⁵ The UN Refugee Agency & United Nations Development Programme, *3RP Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan 2017-2018: Turkey* (UNHCR & UNDP, 2017), 40.



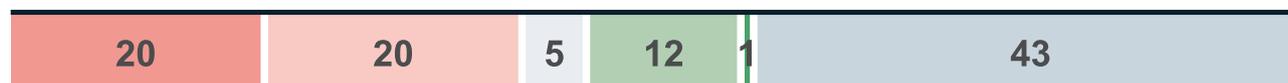
Q7. Support reaching those in need

In your district, does the support to refugees and asylum-seekers reach the people who need it most?



(values in %)

Mean: 2.2



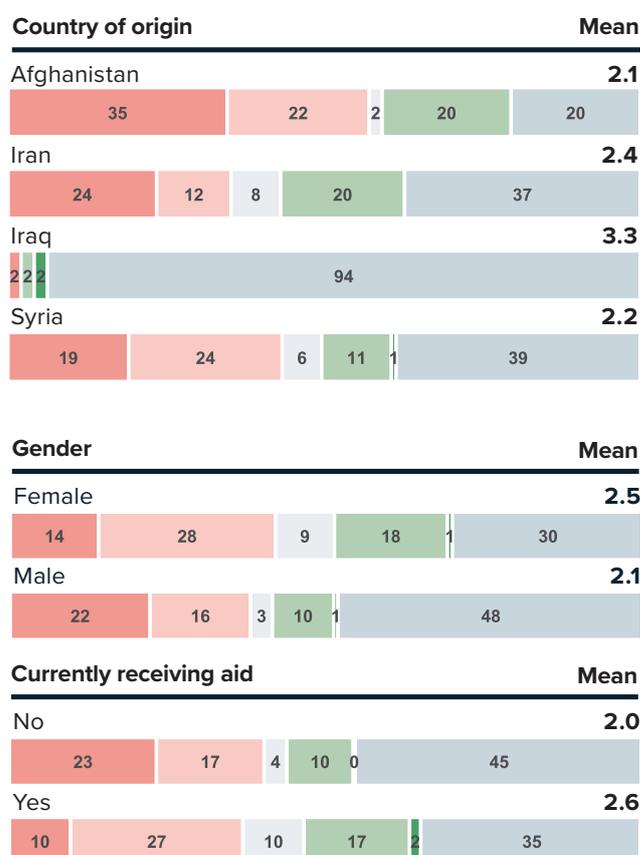
40% of respondents do not feel that support is reaching those who need it most in their district, while 43% feel unable to answer the question. With refugees dispersed across all of Turkey’s 81 provinces and the limited amount of detailed data made available to those providing support, “outreach and identification of vulnerable families remain a primary challenge for all actors.”⁶

The vast majority of respondents from Iraq do not know whether support reaches those who need it most. Scores are largely negative across all other groups as well.

The data collectors report that Iraqis tend to be left out and do not receive many services, which may explain their overwhelming inability to answer this question. Further research is required to investigate this pattern in the broader refugee and migrant population. UNHCR reports that 79,700 non-Syrians of concern were registered in 2016, but only 22,400 received emergency cash, accommodation, local travel, or medical assistance.⁷

While female respondents answer the question more negatively than male respondents, almost half of the men surveyed feel unable to answer the question.

Those currently not receiving any support are more pessimistic about how well it reaches those who need it most.



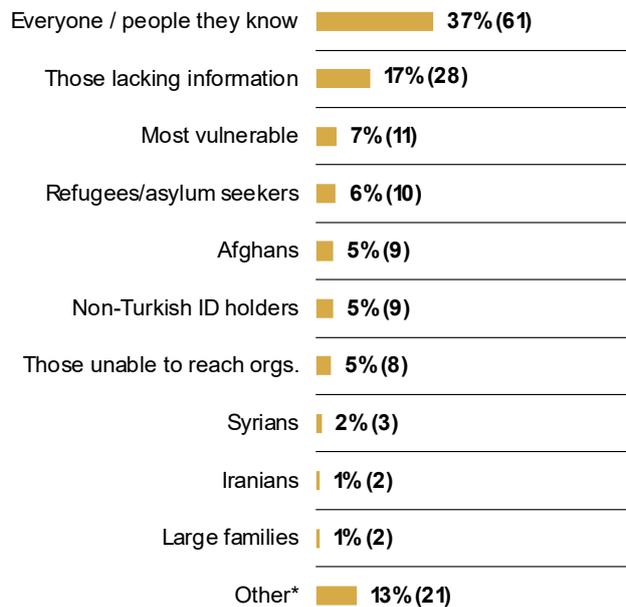
⁶ The UN Refugee Agency & United Nations Development Programme, *3RP Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan 2017-2018: Turkey* (UNHCR & UNDP, 2017), 6.

⁷ The UN Refugee Agency. “Turkey,” accessed June 19, 2017, <http://reporting.unhcr.org/node/2544?y=2016#year>



Follow-up question asked to those who responded 1, 2 or 3 to Q7:

Who is left out?



* 'Other' also includes single cases, middle-income individuals, new arrivals, those lacking internet access, non-Turkish speakers, non-camp residents.

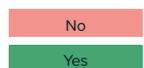
Over a third of those who do not feel that support is reaching those most in need say that people in their social circle are left out. 18% of respondents add that people in general lack information about assistance, particularly how and where to contact support providers.

Possibly due to a misunderstanding of the question, many respondents gave explanations as to why some get left out. Most notably, some accused aid distributors of giving preferential treatment to those that are related to them or close to them. They claim that the supposedly random selection process is unfair as the computer programme used does not prioritise those most in need. Respondents also say that people are excluded when aid is given out due to lack of supervision by aid workers. Additionally, several refugees and asylum-seekers say they have trouble contacting assistance providers, and claim that the provision of support lacks structure. One respondent says that they must pay aid providers bribes to receive services. These responses have been grouped under 'other'.

The graph shows the most common responses to this open-ended question. The figures indicate the percentage/number of people who gave this answer. Percentages do not total 100% because respondents could give multiple answers.

Q8. Awareness of cash transfers

Are you aware of cash transfers provided to refugees and asylum-seekers?



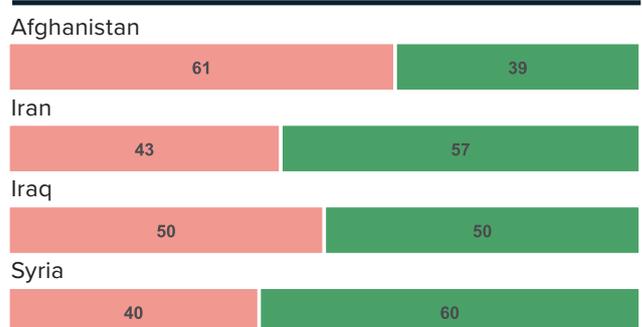
(values in %)



44% of respondents are unaware of the cash-based assistance provided to refugees, asylum-seekers, and migrants.

Afghan refugees, asylum-seekers, and migrants are least aware of cash transfers while Syrians are most aware.

Country of origin



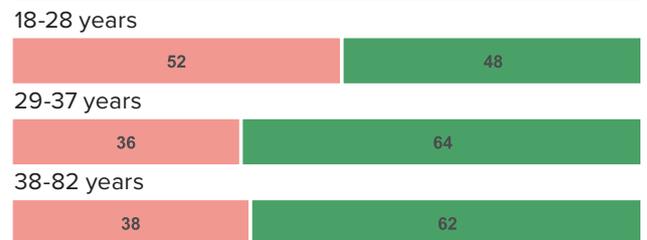
Female respondents are more aware of cash transfers than male respondents.

Gender



The youngest respondents are the least aware of cash transfers.

Age



Fairness and transparency of cash transfers

Follow-up question asked to those who responded "yes" to Q8:

Do you think the cash transfers are fair and transparent?



(values in %)

Mean: 2.6

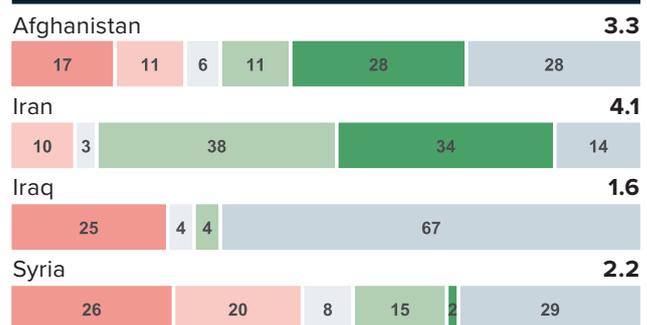


Over a third of those who are aware of cash transfer programmes do not think they are fair and transparent.

Syrian refugees, asylum-seekers, and migrants are largely negative about the fairness and transparency of cash transfers, while Iranians appear far more optimistic. It is difficult, however, to compare the mean scores due to the number of "do not know" responses.

Country of origin

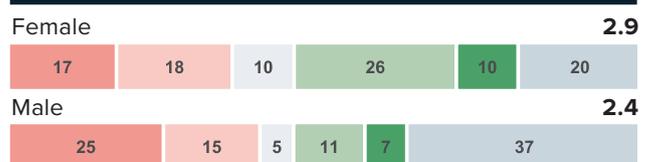
Mean



Negative perceptions of cash transfers are more prevalent among male respondents than females.

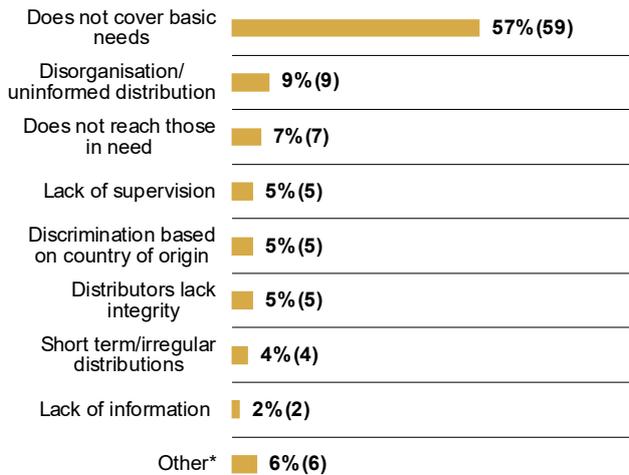
Gender

Mean



Follow-up asked to those who responded 1, 2 or 3 to the previous question:

Why not?



Over half of those who say cash transfers are not fair and transparent also say that the amount received does not cover their most basic needs due to the cost of living in Istanbul. Relatedly, some indicate that those responsible for distributing cash do not properly assess the “situation” of refugees, asylum-seekers, and migrants. Many criticise the distribution process for poor supervision, monitoring and evaluation of the transfers.

The graph shows the most common responses to this open-ended question. The figures indicate the percentage/number of people who gave this answer. Percentages do not total 100% because respondents could give multiple answers.

* ‘Other’ criticisms include the feeling that cash assistance in Turkey is not as good as in Europe, language barriers, requirement of official documents, not knowing any recipients, large families are turned down, and lack of contact with providers.

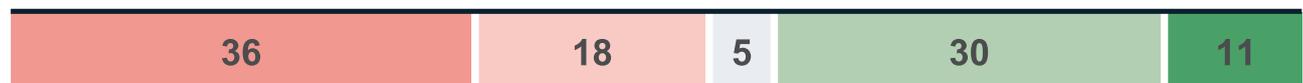
Q9. Information about settlement or further movement

Do you understand your options to stay in Turkey or apply for resettlement in another country?



(values in %)

Mean: 2.6

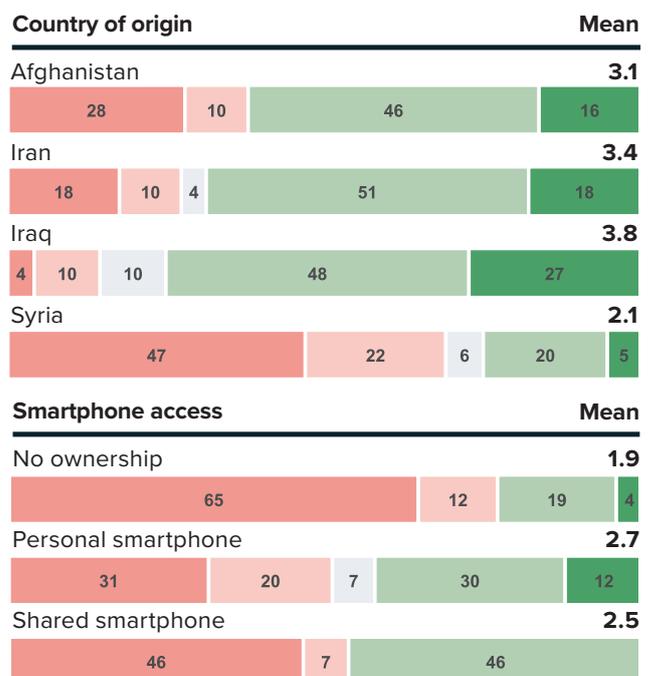


Over half of respondents say they do not understand their options for staying in Turkey or being resettled in a different country.

Syrian refugees, asylum-seekers, and migrants appear least informed about their options, with almost half not understanding their options ‘at all’. On the contrary, three-quarters of Iraqis responded positively to the same question.

The lack of understanding may partly be explained by rapidly evolving migration and resettlement policies in Turkey in recent years. Since 2013, Turkey has passed at least five major pieces of legislation dealing with refugees, particularly Syrians.⁸

Those with no access to a smartphone feel significantly less informed about their options. This is in line with a 2016 study by UNHCR and Accenture, which found that access to the Internet is crucial for refugees to get information on available services and procedures.⁹

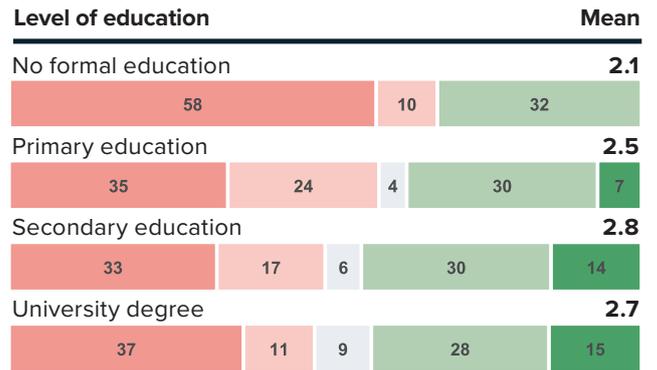


⁸ Library of Congress, *Refugee Law and Policy: Turkey* (Library of Congress, 2016).

⁹ Accenture & UNHCR, *Connecting Refugees* (UNHCR, 2016).

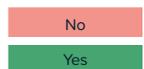


Those with no formal education feel least informed about their options.



Q10. Access to information – settlement options

Do you know where to access information about your options to stay in Turkey or apply for resettlement in another country?

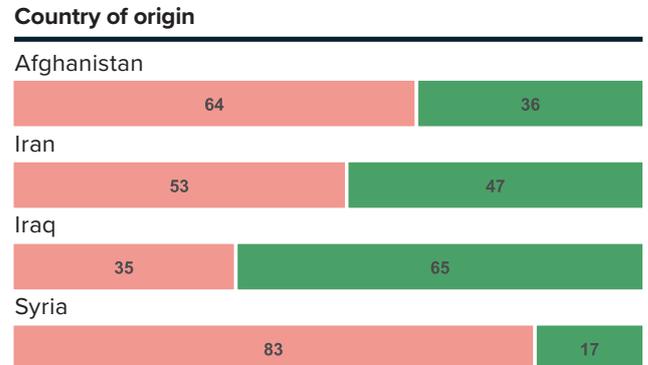


(values in %)

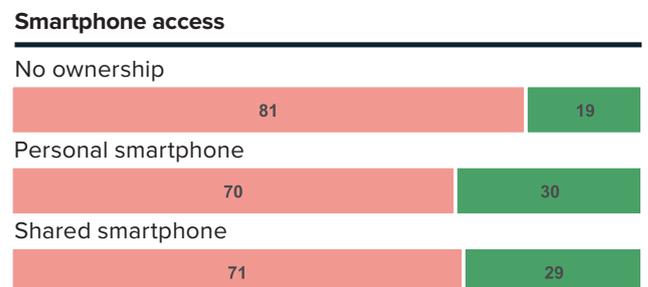


A majority of respondents do not know where to access information about their options to remain in Turkey or apply for resettlement in another country.

Awareness is highest among Iraqi refugees and asylum-seekers, and lowest among Syrians.



There seems to be a dearth of information overall but, again, those without access to a smartphone appear least informed.



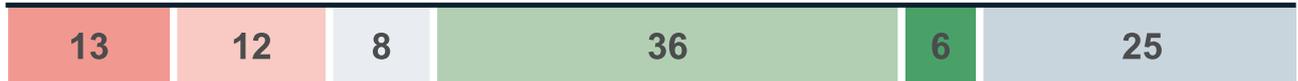
Q11. Trust in information from aid agencies

Do you trust the information you receive from aid agencies about this topic?



(values in %)

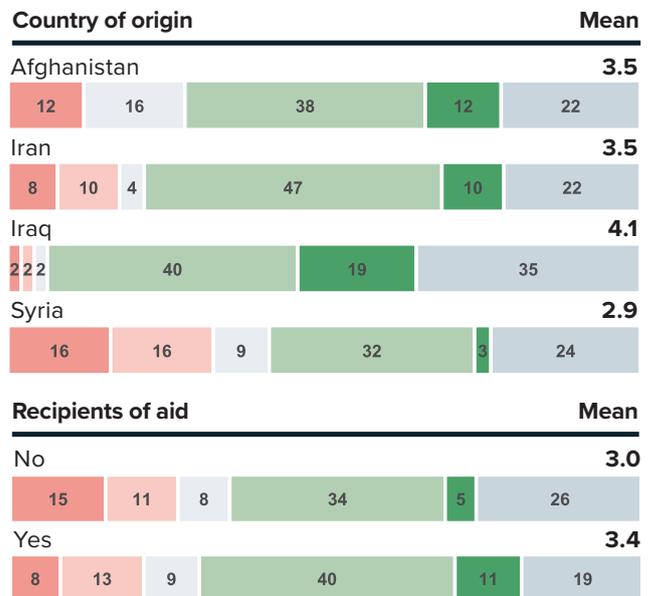
Mean: 3.1



Trust in the information given by aid agencies to respondents about their options to remain in Turkey or apply for resettlement elsewhere is moderate, with 42% answering positively. Almost a quarter of those who do not trust the information they receive say that aid organisations either provide inaccurate information or make empty promises. Many of those who responded negatively have had limited correspondence with agencies and have not received any aid up to now. One respondent notes that the only thing agencies care about is gathering data from refugees. Some respondents mention rarely receiving any follow-up information after registering with organisations for assistance and experience little communication with them after information is gathered from them.

The most negative responses come from Syrian refugees, asylum-seekers, and migrants, while 50% or more of those from the other countries trust the information they receive from aid agencies.

Those who do not receive aid have slightly less trust in information from aid agencies than those who do.



Q12. Trust in information – official sources

Do you trust information you have been given from official sources about this topic?

- 1 = Not at all
- 2 = Not very much
- 3 = Neutral
- 4 = Mostly yes
- 5 = Completely
- Do not know

(values in %)

Mean: 3.8



Two-thirds of respondents say they trust the information from official sources.

Respondents from Afghanistan appear to be the least trusting of information from Turkish officials.

Country of origin	Mean
Afghanistan	3.3
Iran	3.4
Iraq	4.3
Syria	3.8

Country of origin	Rating 1 (%)	Rating 2 (%)	Rating 3 (%)	Rating 4 (%)	Rating 5 (%)	Do not know (%)
Afghanistan	18	4	6	32	14	26
Iran	12	4	10	47	6	22
Iraq	4	0	0	31	38	27
Syria	7	7	3	50	23	10



Q13. Respect – aid agencies

Do aid agencies treat you with respect?



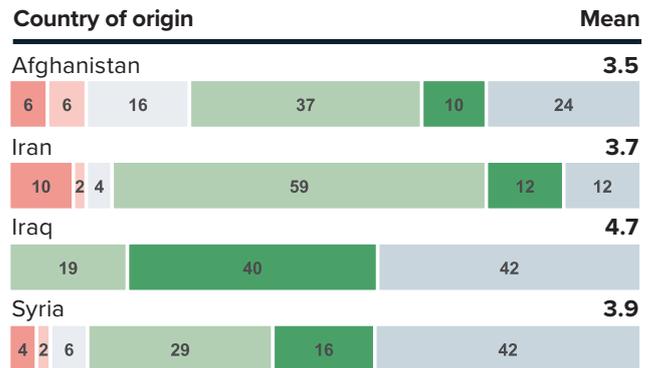
(values in %)

Mean: 3.9



Half of the respondents feel that aid agencies treat them with respect. It is important to note that 89% of those who respond “do not know” do not currently receive any type of support.

While Iranian refugees and asylum-seekers registered the highest number of positive responses, not one person from Iraq responded negatively.



Q14. Respect – government authorities

Do the authorities responsible for refugees and asylum-seekers treat you with respect?



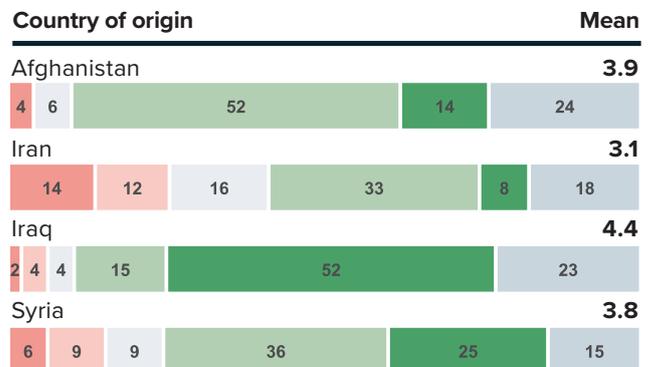
(values in %)

Mean: 3.8



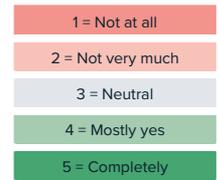
A majority of respondents feel that the relevant authorities treat them with respect.

Respondents from Iran are most negative – over a quarter say they do not feel treated with respect. In contrast, respondents from Afghanistan and Iraq are the most positive.



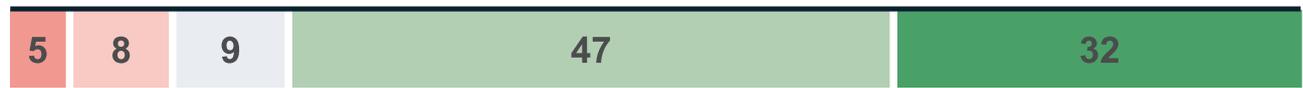
Q15. Safety

Do you feel safe in your neighbourhood?



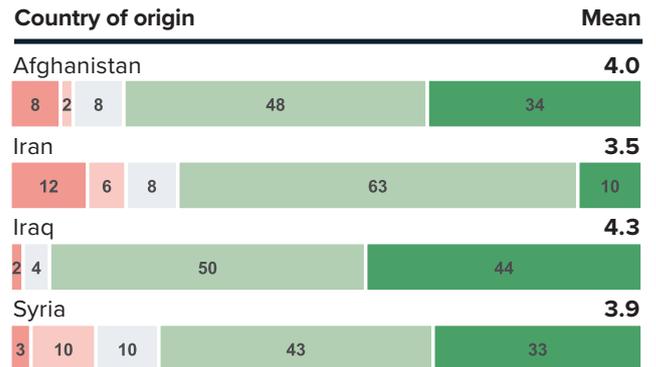
(values in %)

Mean: 3.9



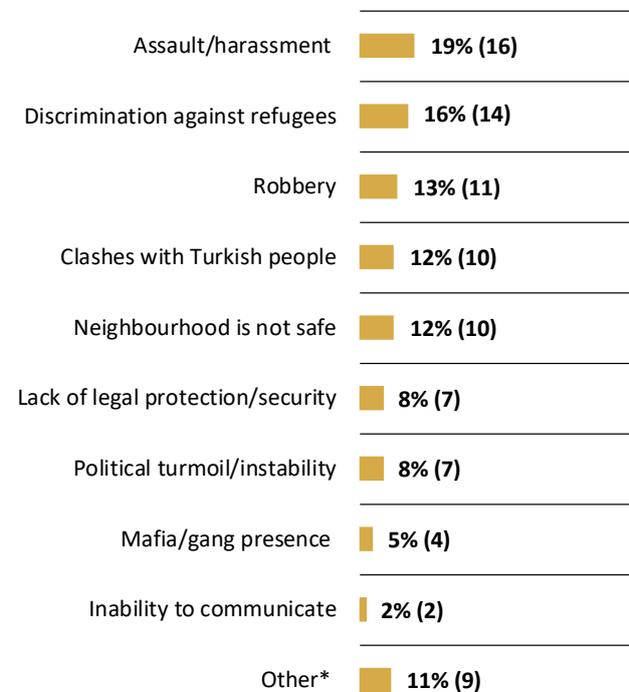
Surveyed refugees, asylum-seekers, and migrants generally feel safe in their place of residence.

Though positive responses dominate each of the national groups, respondents from Iraq feel safest, with only 2% responding negatively.



Follow-up question asked to those who responded 1, 2 or 3 to Q15:

Why not?



Those who feel unsafe report instances of assault and harrassment. According to some, these are directed specifically towards women and single mothers. Other respondents report feeling rejected by Turkish people, or having been robbed or forced to pay bribes.

The graph shows the most common responses to this open-ended question. The figures indicate the percentage/number of people who gave this answer. Percentages do not total 100% because respondents could give multiple answers.

* 'Other' includes feeling uncertain about the future, high unemployment, not having a home, the large size of Istanbul, and encounters with drug users.



Q16. Relationship with host community

Do you feel welcomed by Turkish people in your neighbourhood?

- 1 = Not at all
- 2 = Not very much
- 3 = Neutral
- 4 = Mostly yes
- 5 = Completely
- Do not know

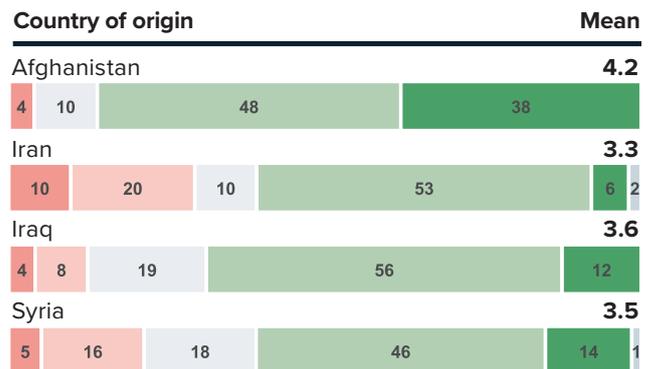
(values in %)

Mean: 3.6



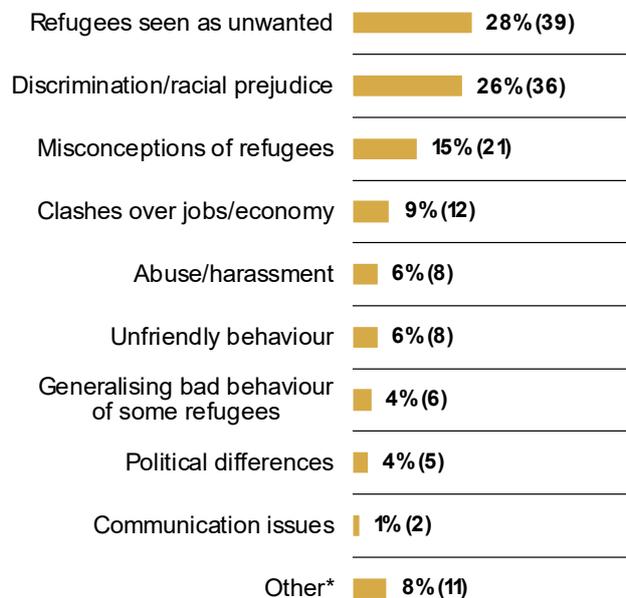
Respondents generally feel welcomed by their Turkish neighbours, although a significant proportion indicate otherwise.

Afghan respondents feel most welcomed by the host community, while Iranian refugees, asylum-seekers, and migrants feel least welcomed, with 30% responding negatively.



Follow-up question asked to those who responded 1, 2 or 3 to Q16:

Why not?



A quarter of those who do not feel welcomed by their Turkish neighbours think that the locals are unhappy with the number of refugees in Turkey and feel they have overstayed their welcome. Many respondents also feel unwelcome because they face discrimination and racism due to their status, religion, or ethnic origin.

The graph shows the most common responses to this open-ended question. The figures indicate the percentage/number of people who gave this answer. Percentages do not total 100% because respondents could give multiple answers.

* 'Other' includes disputes between refugees and locals, being foreign, and the offences committed by other refugees like them in the past.



Q17. Learning Turkish

Are you learning Turkish?

No
Yes

(values in %)



Almost two-thirds of respondents are learning Turkish. It should be noted that some interviews were conducted at Turkish language centres, so this study may over-represent the number taking Turkish classes.

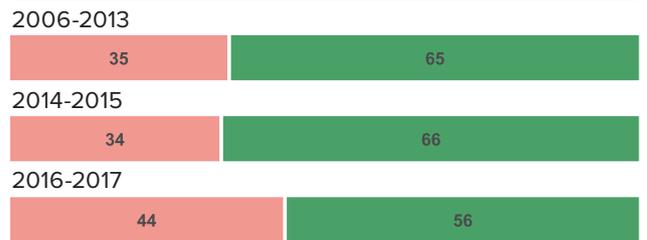
Only a quarter of those without formal education are taking Turkish language lessons.

Level of education



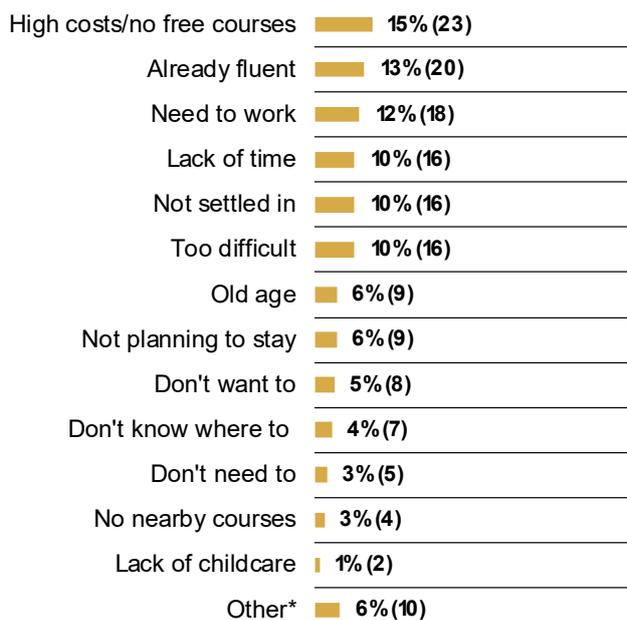
Fewer recent arrivals are taking Turkish language lessons compared to those who have been in Turkey longer.

Year of arrival in Turkey



Follow-up question asked to those who responded "No" to Q17:

Why not?



Those who wish to but are not currently learning Turkish blame the high cost of courses and their long working hours. A recent Human Rights Watch report lists further challenges to learning Turkish, including a lack of civic centres to provide language instruction for all ages, and the fact that asylum seekers must present their proof of lawful status to enroll in classes.¹⁰

The graph shows the most common responses to this open-ended question. The figures indicate the percentage/number of people who gave this answer. Percentages do not total 100% because respondents could give multiple answers.

* 'Other' includes lack of childcare, Turkish not being priority, dislike of the language, lack of motivation, illiteracy, inability to attend classes because of physical ailments, and fear that they would never return to their homeland.

¹⁰ Human Rights Watch, *Turkey: Education Barriers for Asylum Seekers* (Human Rights Watch, 2017).



Q18. Housing

Are people from your home country able to find a place to live in this city?



(values in %)

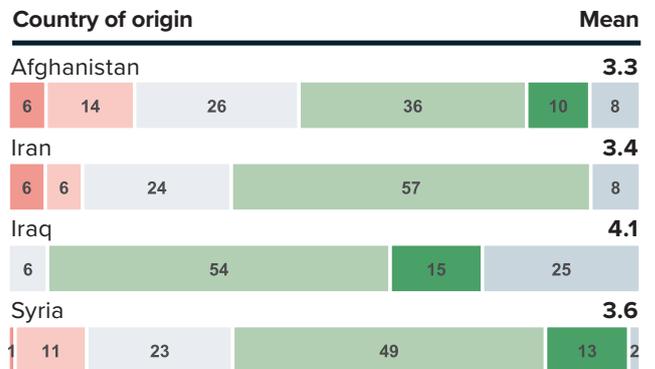
Mean: 3.6



Generally, surveyed refugees and asylum-seekers think that their compatriots can find a place to live in Istanbul.

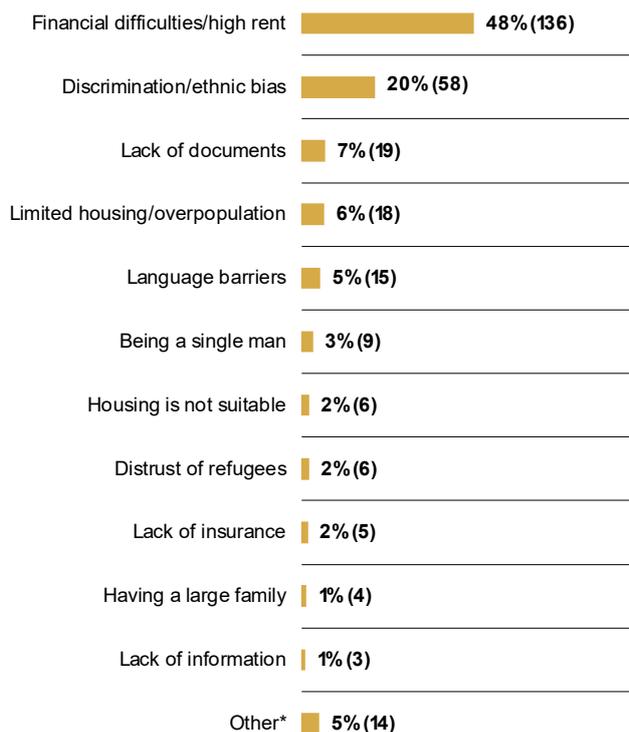
However, it is important to recall the high number of respondents who reported needing assistance in covering the high cost of their rent in Question 6. This discrepancy might ultimately be because finding a place to live, and the ability to cover rent and the cost of living, may be seen as two different things by respondents. Only 10% of the 2.8 million Syrian refugees and asylum-seekers live in state-run camps, and Turkey’s Law on Foreigners and International Protection (LFIP) makes finding a place to live the responsibility of affected groups. The majority use their own funds and networks.¹¹

Afghan refugees and asylum-seekers are least positive about people from their home country finding a place to live in Istanbul.



Follow-up question asked to those who responded 1, 2 or 3 to Q18:

What are the main obstacles?



Almost half of those who think that their compatriots are struggling to find a place to live in Istanbul cite a combination of high rental costs, the need to pay commission and deposits, unemployment, and low wages as the main obstacles.

The graph shows the most common responses to this open-ended question. The figures indicate the percentage/number of people who gave this answer. Percentages do not total 100% because respondents could give multiple answers.

* ‘Other’ includes cases of scams, difficulties to find a kafil (guarantor), accommodation being far from where they work, lack of connections and trust, and having utilities registered in their name.

¹¹ Leghtas, Izza & Sullivan, Daniel, *Except God, We Have No One: Lack of Durable Solutions for Non-Syrian Refugees in Turkey* (Refugees International, 2017), 7.



Q19. Employment

Are people from your home country able to gain employment in Istanbul?



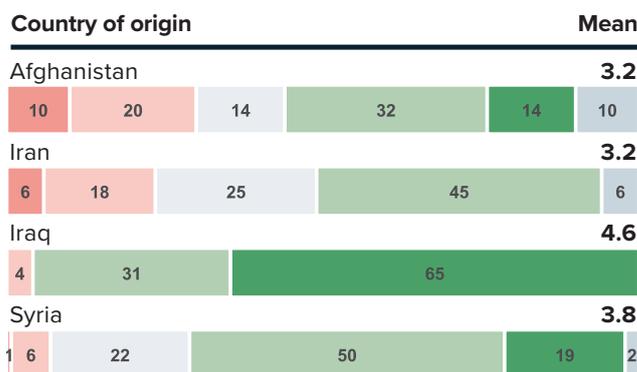
(values in %)

Mean: 3.8



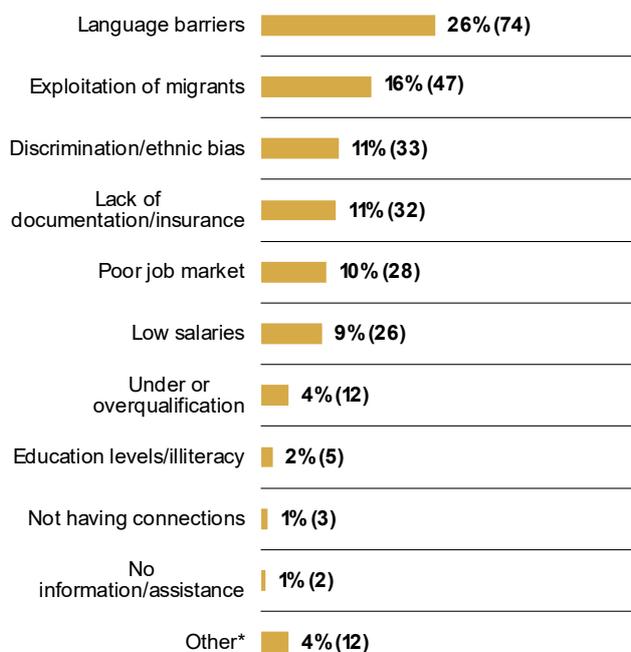
Respondents generally feel that people from their home country can find employment in Istanbul. However, it is often informal work, leaving them vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. Low wages, long hours, and little time off work are common concerns.

Afghan and Iranian respondents feel least positive about job prospects while Iraqis appear overwhelmingly positive.



Follow-up question asked to those who responded 1, 2 or 3 to Q19:

What are the main obstacles?



A quarter of those who say their fellow citizens are struggling to work in Istanbul think that not speaking Turkish is the main obstacle. Many other refugees and asylum-seekers claim they are exploited by Turkish employers who make them work long hours for next to nothing. This affirms findings from a Refugees International study in which respondents say they are paid less than the Turkish minimum wage but cannot complain as they are foreign and working illegally.¹² Some feel disadvantaged by a preference for hiring Turkish people over refugees and asylum-seekers. This preference is explained by the fact that employers must apply for a refugee’s work permit, thus incurring additional costs.¹³

The graph shows the most common responses to this open-ended question. The figures indicate the percentage/number of people who gave this answer. Percentages do not total 100% because respondents could give multiple answers.

* ‘Other’ includes middlemen who charge commission for their help in finding a job, most jobs being seasonal, long working hours, lack of assistance from Turkish people, absence of vocational schools, expensive public transportation, old age, and living far from work.

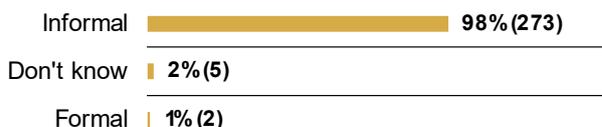
¹² Leghtas, Izza & Sullivan, Daniel, *Except God, We Have No One: Lack of Durable Solutions for Non-Syrian Refugees in Turkey* (Refugees International, 2017), 11.

¹³ Kutlu, Zümray, *From the Ante-Chamber to the Living Room: A Brief Assessment on NGO’s Doing Work for Syrian Refugees* (Turkey: Anadolu Kültür, 2015), 7.



Follow-up question asked to those who responded 4 or 5 to Q19:

What type of employment are they able to get?

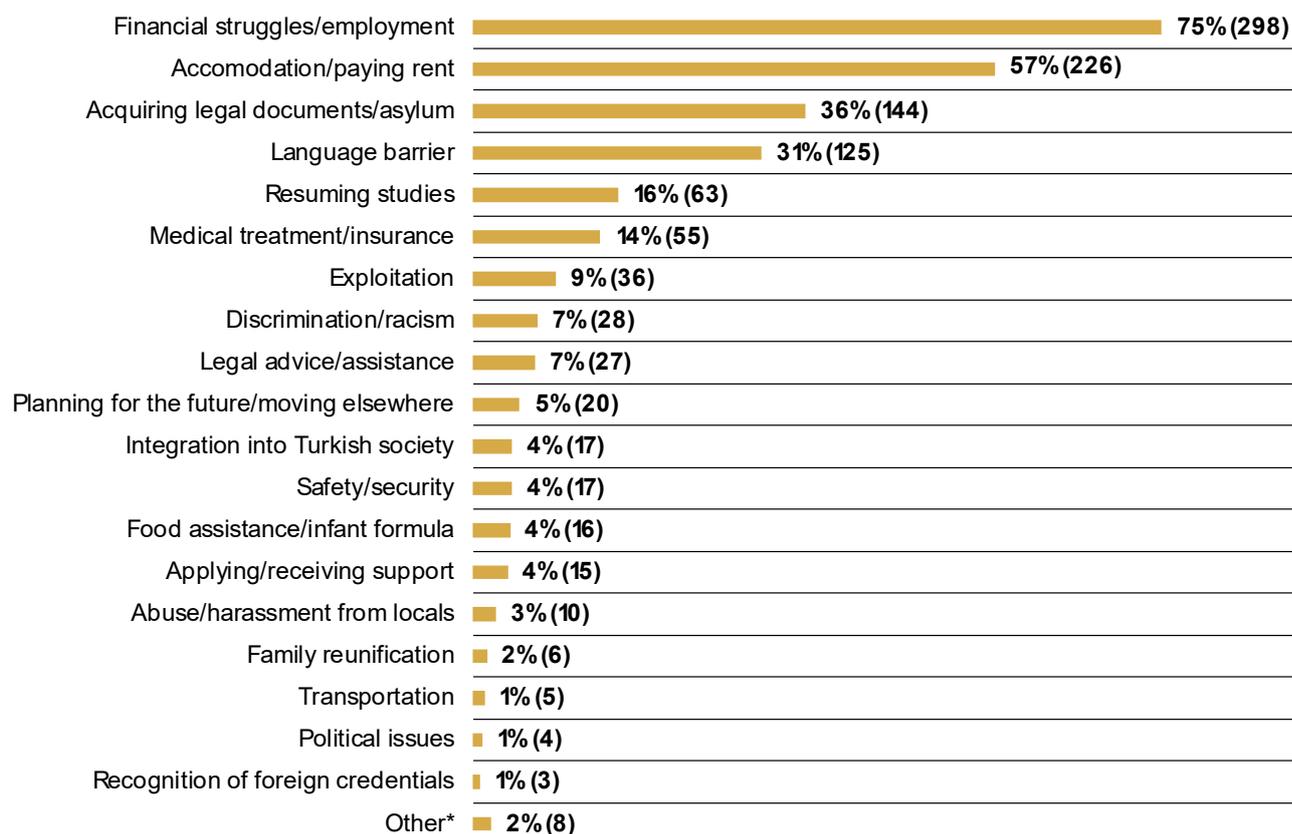


The graph shows the most common responses to this open-ended question. The figures indicate the percentage/number of people who gave this answer. Percentages do not total 100% because respondents could give multiple answers.

The vast majority of those who say their fellow citizens can get work say they can only do so in the informal economy. This is likely due to the difficulty of obtaining legal papers, including an official Turkish ID (in Turkish, *kimlik*). Some choose not to apply for a *kimlik* because of fears that it will hamper future plans to migrate to Europe. The application process is costly, both in terms of time and money, and can lead to a vicious circle in which refugees cannot afford to apply for residency, but need residency to earn the money to apply.¹⁴

Q20. Main challenges faced by refugees and asylum-seekers

What are the three most significant problems or challenges that refugees and asylum-seekers face in Turkey?



* 'Other' includes homesickness, no rights and legal protections, persecution, and a lack of hope.

The graph shows the most common responses to this open-ended question. The figures indicate the percentage/number of people who gave this answer. Percentages do not total 100% because respondents could give multiple answers.

In line with previous findings, respondents say that what they need most is legitimate work that pays decently. Linked to this is their ability to pay rent, which many cite as being very high in Istanbul. To get jobs in the formal economy and decent accommodation, refugees first need help with completing their asylum procedures and obtaining a *kimlik*.

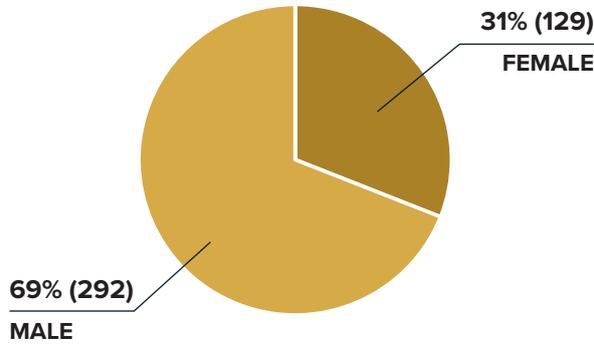
¹⁴ Bellamy et al., *The Lives and Livelihoods of Syrian Refugees* (ODI, 2017).



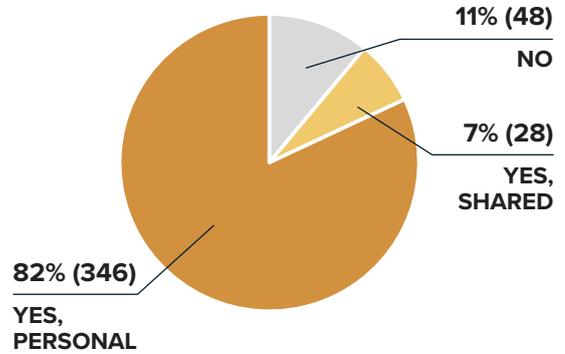
DEMOGRAPHICS

The graphs below depict the demographic breakdown of the 422 respondents in this quantitative round. Each graph shows the percentages, as well as the frequency (in parentheses).

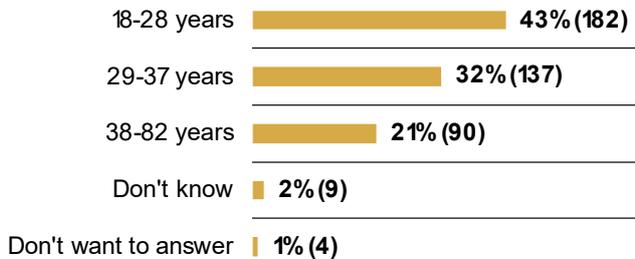
Gender



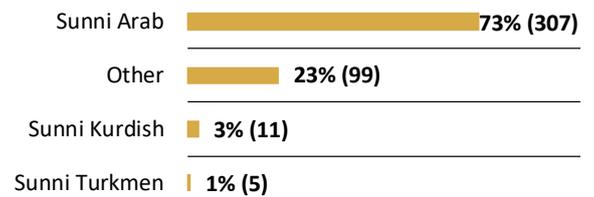
Do you use a smartphone every day?



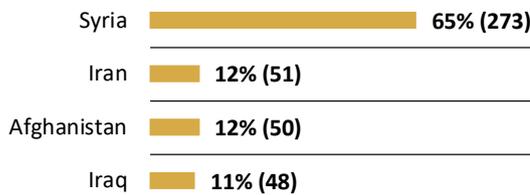
Age



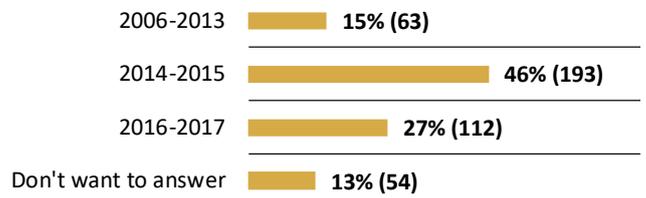
Ethno-religious affiliation



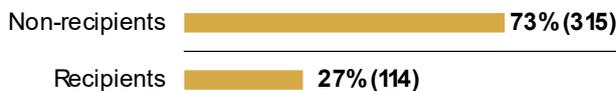
Country of origin



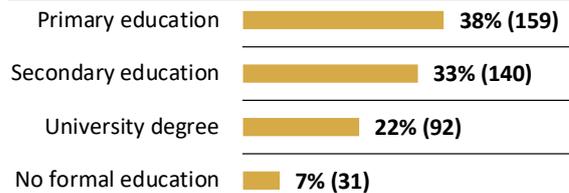
Year of arrival in Turkey



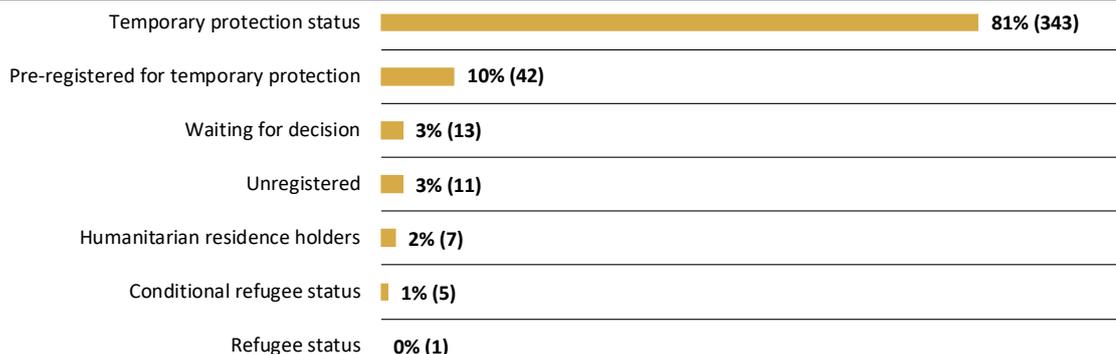
Recipients and non-recipients of support



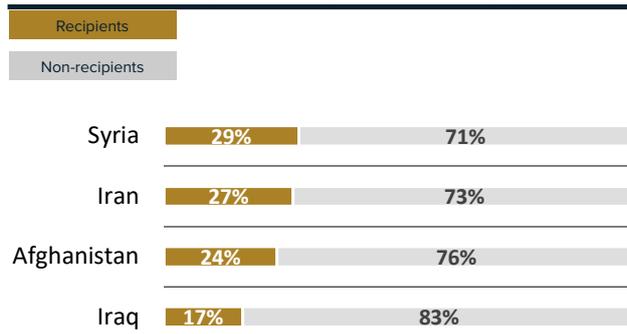
Highest level of education



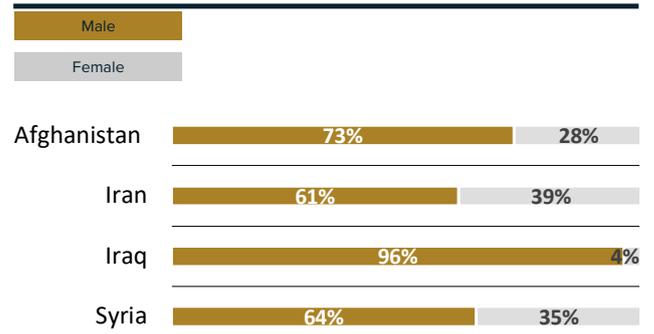
Legal status



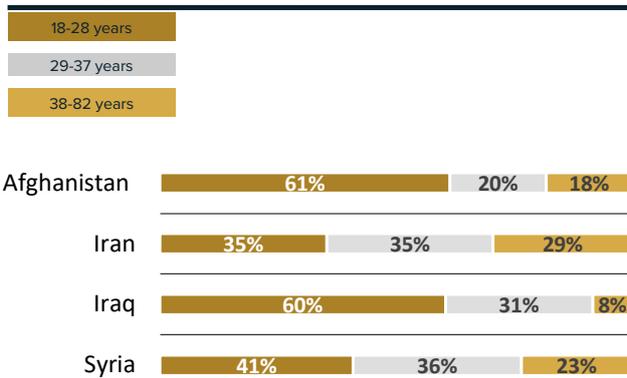
Country of origin - recipients of support



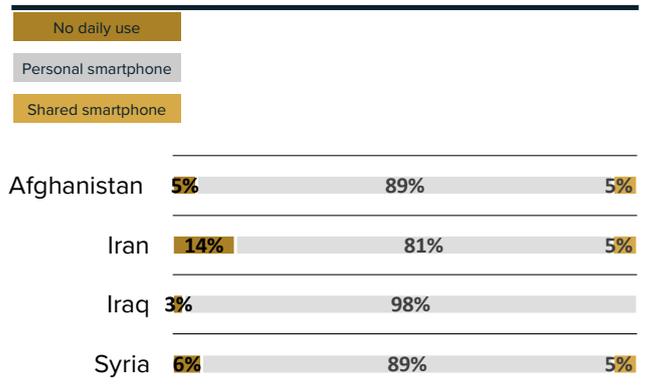
Country of origin - gender



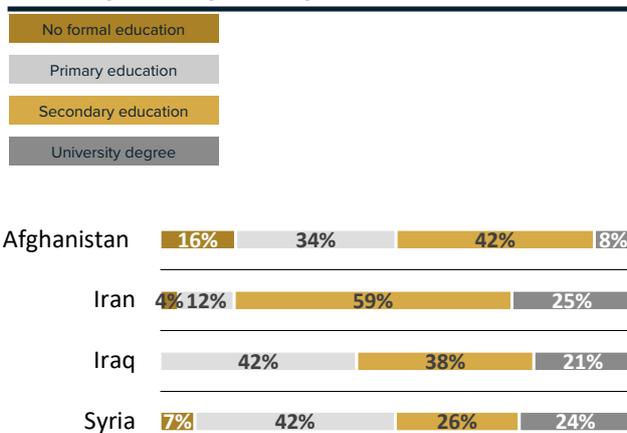
Country of origin - age



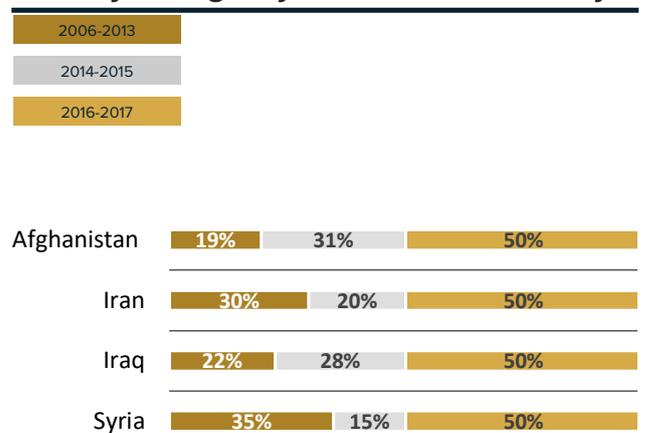
Country of origin - smartphone usage



Country of origin - highest level of education



Country of origin - year of arrival in Turkey



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE HUMANITARIAN COMMUNITY

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

- a) Dialogue.** Discuss the main findings with your own staff, partners, and refugees and asylum-seekers to verify and deepen the analysis. These “sense-making” dialogues should focus on themes where the data suggests that further attention or action may be necessary.
- b) Advocacy.** Consider sharing this report with other aid agencies and institutions working with refugees and asylum-seekers in Turkey to see how, together, the humanitarian and development community can address concerns and bridge gaps.

- c) Closing the loop.** Encourage field staff to close the feedback loop by informing refugees about how services are being adapted to take feedback into account.

Ground Truth Solutions’ staff would be happy to discuss the findings with agencies in Turkey and offer advice on follow-up activities. As mentioned at the start, Ground Truth Solutions will also dig deeper into these findings and share the results of some more qualitative research shortly.

NOTE ON METHODOLOGY

Background

Ground Truth Solutions is one of seven partners that jointly provide analytical services as part of the [Mixed Migration Platform](#) (MMP). The other partners are [ACAPS](#), [Danish Refugee Council](#), [Internews](#), [INTEROS](#), [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 providing information to people on the move in the Middle East and Europe. Ground Truth’s 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 countries of final destination.

Survey development

Ground Truth Solutions developed this survey – with input from humanitarian agencies in Turkey – to gather feedback from refugees on the provision of humanitarian aid in the country. The goal is to inform the programming of humanitarian agencies and contribute to a more effective response. Ground Truth Solutions’ perceptual surveys complement regular monitoring and evaluation of the response. Most closed questions use a 1-5 Likert scale to quantify answers. Several questions are followed by an open-ended question to understand why the respondent gave a particular answer.

Sample size

Interviews were conducted with a total of 422 refugees and asylum-seekers across 38 districts of Istanbul, a majority of whom held temporary protection status or were pre-registered for temporary protection at the time of data collection.

Sampling methodology

Respondents were selected randomly, with interviewees first being sought out in public spaces such as parks, cafés, and market places – areas where the data collectors expected to encounter a high number of respondents. Enumerators also used a more targeted sampling approach, e.g. by asking parents and teachers at schools in different communities to put them in touch with potential interviewees. One enumerator used a hawala office—a bureau for transferring money—to conduct interviews as these are frequently used by Iraqis and Syrians to transfer money. Another interviewer visited language centres teaching Turkish, which is important to keep in mind when analysing results on the issue of “learning Turkish”. The aim was to have an appropriate gender balance based on available migrant demographics and to include all main groups of refugees and asylum-seekers, i.e. Syrians, Iraqis, Iranians, Afghans, and Somalis.

The confidence intervals of the Likert questions for the Istanbul dataset is 5%, with a 5% false alarm rate. In other words, we can be 95% certain that the broader population’s attitudes fall within 5% of the responses of the full sample, assuming no sampling or response biases. Missing responses on particular questions are excluded from mean comparisons and correlations.

Data disaggregation

Data is disaggregated by gender, age, country of origin, smartphone usage, year of arrival in Turkey, level of education, and whether respondents have received any type of aid. The analysis in the report includes any substantive difference in the perceptions of different demographic groups. It does not, however, show the full breakdown of responses according to these categories.

For more information about Ground Truth surveys in Turkey, please contact Elias Sagmeister (elias@groundtruthsolutions.org), Diana Szasz (diana@groundtruthsolutions.org) or Andrew Hassan (andrew@groundtruthsolutions.org).

Language of the survey

This survey was conducted in Arabic, Farsi, Dari, and English.

Data collection

Data was collected between April 21 to 30, 2017, by Proximity International, an independent data collection company contracted by Ground Truth Solutions. Enumerators conducted individual face-to-face interviews.

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