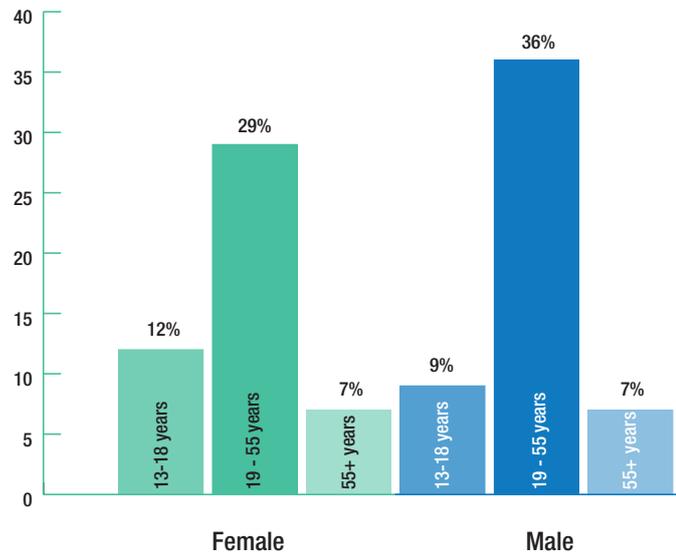


# INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

MARCH 2016 - TABANOVCE

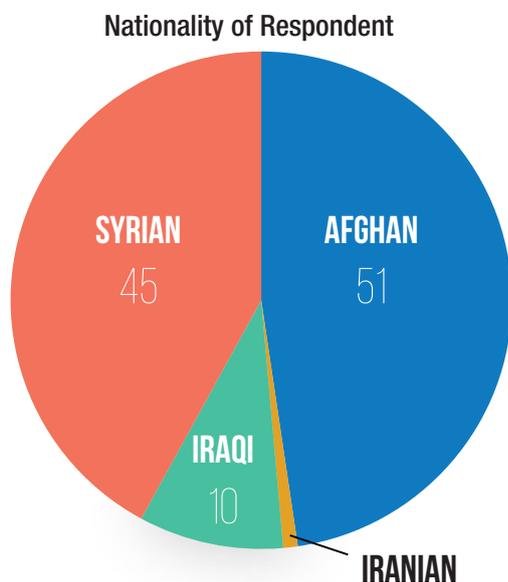
In the period of 27 March- 05 April 2016 an Information and Communication needs assessment was conducted in Tabanovce transit center in order to identify the information and communication needs of refugees and migrants, as well as the most appropriate channels for information sharing.



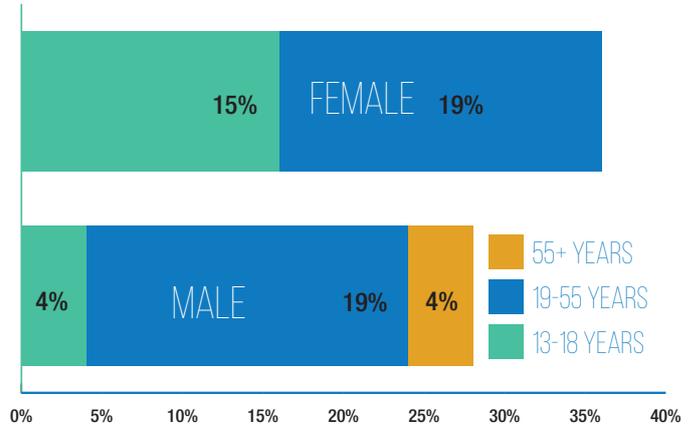
A total of 107 respondents were interviewed through semi-structured interviews, of which:

- 48% were from Afghanistan, 42% from Syria, 9% Iraq, 1% Iran.
- 12% girls, 9% boys, 36% women, 43% men.

The assessment covered: Most used channels to communicate with friends and family; Information people need in order to make informed decisions; Barriers to accessing information; Most reliable sources of information; and preferred channels for communication with UNHCR. Multiple choice questions were available.



## Who identified that they need more information on asylum?



## OVERVIEW

The results of the assessment indicate that respondents were more connected than anticipated - 90% indicated they used the internet to contact friends and family; with Viber and WhatsApp cited as the most frequently used tools. In terms of preferences for communication with UNHCR, the overwhelming majority indicated they preferred face-to-face dialogue. Afghan respondents indicated a much greater level of trust in the information provided by UNHCR compared with Syrian respondents.

Information needs largely focused on options for asylum, legal procedures and questions around the potential for border restrictions to be relaxed or relocation options. Men were more forthcoming with their information needs than women, who were more concerned with opportunities for their families, and the support they might receive if they were to apply for asylum. A small number of people were looking into options regarding return to their country of origin, information around smuggling routes and how to continue their journey. An additional highlighted need was access to international news, which would allow the refugees and migrants in site to keep themselves updated about the political developments that are affecting their situation.

Barriers to accessing information, include the fact that many felt that the information they were looking for was not available; others indicated that they had not had the inclination to ask for information. Additional barriers included the changing nature of the situation, with refugees or migrants unable to determine exactly the information they required. Critically, a number mentioned poor / limited access to internet was a barrier for them getting the information they needed to make informed decisions about their situation. Women were more hesitant than men to approach humanitarian organizations for more information – reasons cited included waiting for the border to open or seeking information from their husbands. An additional barrier to information noted by 10% of respondents was the issue of language – with the need to wait for interpreters to be able to access information.

## INFORMATION NEEDS

29% of respondents were interested in information on asylum and legal procedures for refugees in the country, of which:

- 57% want to learn about asylum and legal procedures to stay in the country (in case borders will not open again)
- 20% would like to receive information on reception conditions for asylum seekers and integration possibilities for recognized refugees in FYR Macedonia (living conditions, access to school for children, available assistance, etc.)
- 10% would like to learn about asylum possibilities and conditions in other countries than FYR Macedonia (Serbia, Greece, Turkey)
- 7% would like to receive information on the situation in the country (economical and general)
- 6% would like to know if they can travel to other countries if recognized as refugees

Significant number of respondents are concerned for their future (23%), particularly they want to know when the borders will be open and what will happen to them if the borders are not open again. This is coupled with the data that 20% of respondents of all ages and gender expressed they don't need any information, of which 18% stated that they were waiting for the borders to be open.

Women and men are mainly interested in how future events and opportunities may affect them and their families:

- 23% of women and 28% of men want to know what the decision on their situation will be. In this regard 10% of men expressed need for access to worldwide news.
- 21% of women and 24% of men want to have information on asylum and rights their families would have if they are granted refugee status (school, housing, benefits, passport)

The topics people reported needing most information on



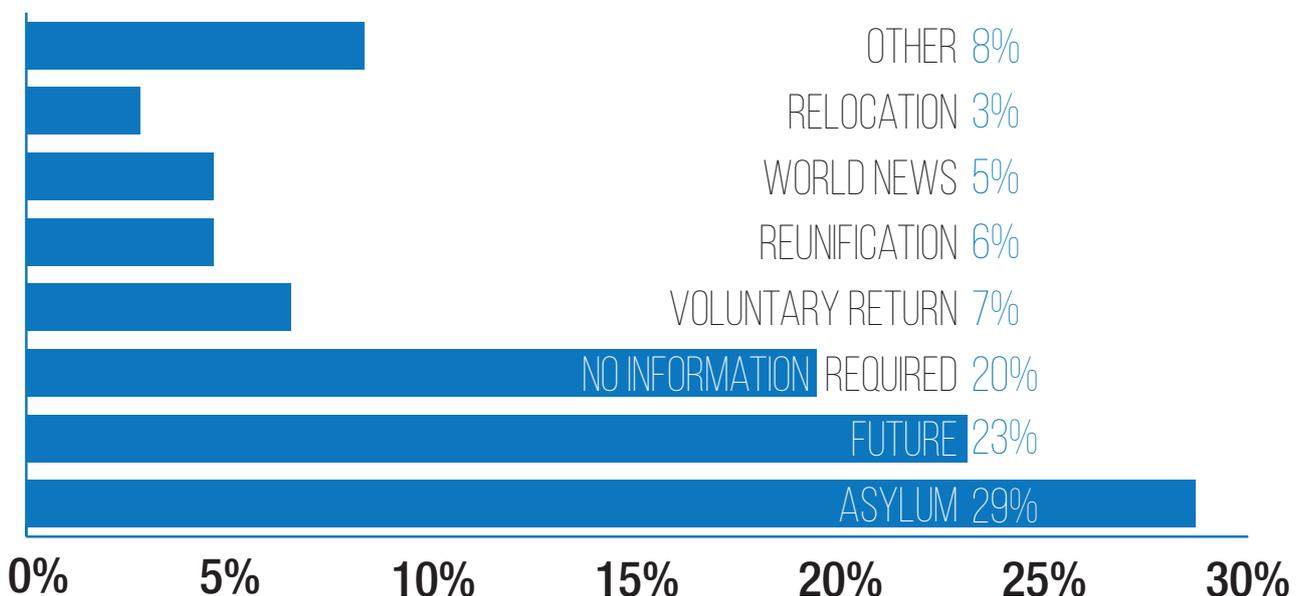
Girls are more interested in legal procedures such as asylum and refugee rights (46%), than boys (30%). 50% of boys explained they have no information needs, while 10% openly expressed their interest in smuggling channels.

## COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

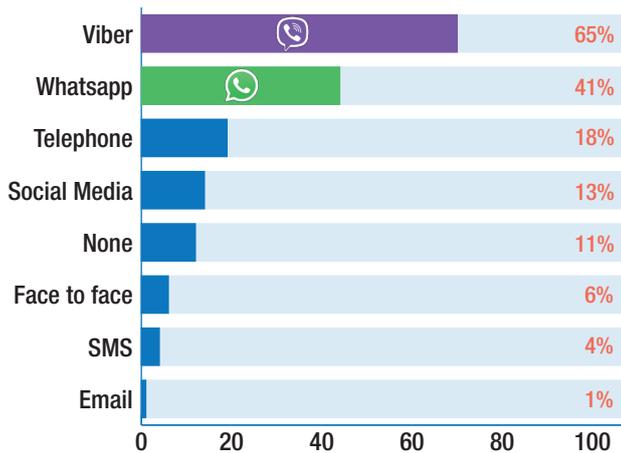
As indicated above, the vast majority of respondents (90%) contacted friends and family using internet services such as Viber and WhatsApp. 11 respondents indicated that they had no access to technology to contact friends or family. There was no significant difference between nationalities, respondents who were over 55 had a slightly lower than average use of Viber and WhatsApp. Additional channels to communicate with friends and family included direct telephone (although significantly lower than WhatsApp, indicated by only 19 people).

Face-to-face communication is overwhelming the preferred choice of communication with UNHCR – with a total of 107 respondents. Respondents were able to indicate multiple choices for preferred channels, but no respondents indicated that they would prefer to email UNHCR. Limited numbers of respondents referenced social media or instant messaging, with only 7 people responding with

### What information do refugees need to help their decision-making?



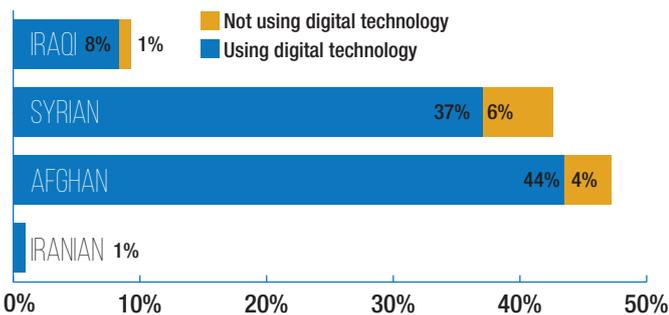
**What channels do you use to connect to friends, family and relatives?**



telephone as one of their preferred channels. Additional channels for communicating also included through an interpreter – which re-highlights the language issues – and via a family member (specifically husbands).

**INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION BARRIERS**

**How many refugees are using digital technology?**



As referenced above, many felt that the information they were looking for was not available - 18% said that no one could provide the required information, mostly about border opening and future events. Alternatively, respondents indicated that they had not had the inclination to ask (35%).

80% of respondents said that UN agencies and other international organizations were the most reliable source of information - UNHCR (75%), IOM (1%), Red Cross (4%). There is much greater trust among

the Afghan population (58%), than amongst the Syrian population - 88% of the respondents that don't trust any organization/source of information are from Syria.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Provision of more information and advice about asylum and legal rights (also in other countries) to refugees and migrants
- Provision of information about their future status in the country
- Increase face to face communication, including through the Information & Advice Desk
- Building trust, in particular amongst the Syrian population
- Greater access to international news (TV screens), which would allow the PoC in site to keep themselves updated about the political developments that are affecting their situation
- Improving internet connectivity as majority communication service for refugees and migrants
- Engage more interpreters, particularly Farsi and Pashtu in order to improve communication and information sharing with refugees and migrants.

