



**KEY FINDINGS**

- **Background:** Around 84% of interviewed UASCs were born in Afghanistan. However 37% stated Iran as their main place of residence prior to the journey. The vast majority (74%) identified themselves as Hazara with most of them coming from Ghazi, Day Kundi, Kabul and Kunduz in Afghanistan, as well as Teheran, Qom and Ishahan in Iran.
- **Education and work:** The majority of those surveyed had completed primary school, while two thirds reported they had worked for an average of ten months in the past year (mainly construction, agriculture and food service), which had prevented them from attending school. Now, in Sweden 84% stated to be able read and write and 20% said they could already speak and write Swedish.
- **Family background:** Most of the Afghan UASC interviewed lived with their nuclear family prior to embarking on their journey. However, those interviewed often reported that their parents, or habitual care-givers were missing. For example, half of the UASC participants reported that their father was deceased, and one quarter of those surveyed noted that their mother was either deceased or her location unknown.
- **Reasons for leaving:** Overall, Afghan UASC provided protection related reasons for their departure from their countries of habitual residence, irrespective of the country (Afghanistan, Iran or Pakistan). While UASC leaving Afghanistan primarily stated security-related reasons for embarking on the journey, including conflict and violence, UASC departing from Iran mainly referenced discrimination, lack of access to rights, and lack of documentation as their primary motivation for leaving. Economic reasons were only mentioned by a small fraction (9%) of UASC interviewed.
- **Journey:** The interviewed UASCs spent an average of 7 months traveling. All of them came through Iran and Turkey and have witnessed or experienced death, violence and abuse along the journey.
- **Choosing their destination:** The interviewed UASCs chose Sweden to apply for asylum as they perceived it offers good education opportunities (41% of interviewed UASC), to have good human rights standards (32%), and a fair and efficient asylum procedure (29%), as well as economic opportunities. The decision was typically made along the journey based on information from other travellers and smugglers.

**CONTEXT**

In 2015, Sweden received a record number of asylum-seekers, with a total of 162.877 applications for asylum registered throughout the year. Out of these, 35.369 applications, close to 22% of all applications, were lodged by unaccompanied or separated children (UASC). Overall Afghans constituted the second largest group of asylum applicants in Sweden, with a total of 41.564 applications. Of these, 23.480 were UASC (66% of all UASC), constituting 56% of all the Afghan asylum-seekers in 2015.

The situation of UASC of Afghan origin applying for asylum in Europe has received increasing attention. In the current context, UNHCR, UNICEF and other child protection actors, together with the UN Country Teams in Iran, Pakistan and Turkey, are looking at ways to ensure a child and protection-sensitive response to the movement of Afghan UASC. Given the large number of Afghan UASC applying for asylum in Sweden, UNHCR decided to conduct a profiling survey of the Afghan UASC population in Sweden to obtain a greater understanding of the factors that have led this population to leave Afghanistan or their first countries of asylum - Iran, Pakistan or Turkey - and seek asylum in Sweden, i.e. the 'push' and 'pull' factors.

**METHODOLOGY**

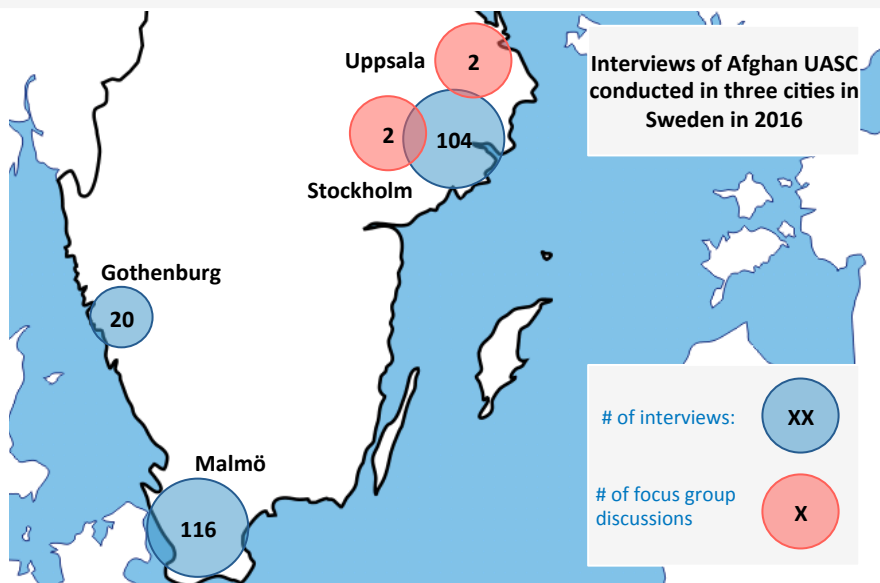
The overall objective of the profiling was to provide a better understanding of the profile and background of the Afghan minors that arrived in Sweden without a parent or an adult caretaker, in order to improve UNHCR's work to protect and assist in Sweden, in country of origin and during the journey.

More specifically, the survey aims to provide a better understanding of the causes of the Afghan UASCs' recent departure from Iran, Pakistan and/or Turkey, in order to understand the reasons behind the increase in arrivals in 2015.

The profiling exercise consisted of two data collection methods. Firstly, quantitative individual surveys were conducted by three teams of Farsi/Dari speaking enumerators based in Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö with 240 Afghan UASC between March and May 2016. Secondly, four qualitative focus group discussions (FGD) with a total of 34 Afghan UASC, were held in Uppsala and Stockholm.

Using a database of all registered Afghan UASC who arrived in Sweden in 2015 provided by the Swedish Migration Agency (SMA), a random clustered sampling was drawn from zip codes containing more than 10 entries so as to restrict the geographical spread of the sample.

The methodology and survey questionnaire were tested, monitored and adjusted throughout the data collection period.



## LIMITATIONS

The results of the study were affected by the time frame of the project, which restricted the time available to spread information about the study as well as for participation. Additionally, the challenges in contacting the legal guardians, group homes and children means that a part of sampled UASC were not reached and could hence not participate.

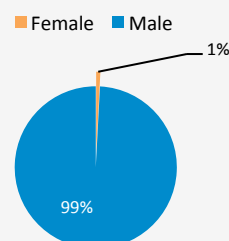
The study provides overall results with a 6 percent margin of error and a confidence level of XX. The survey results are representative at level of the total Afghan UASC population, but cannot be generalized by main country of residence (Afghanistan and Iran) as the survey sample is too small. Hence, results expressed by main country of residence are only included to indicate trends.

## SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND OF AFGHAN UASC ASYLUM SEEKERS INTERVIEWED

### AGE



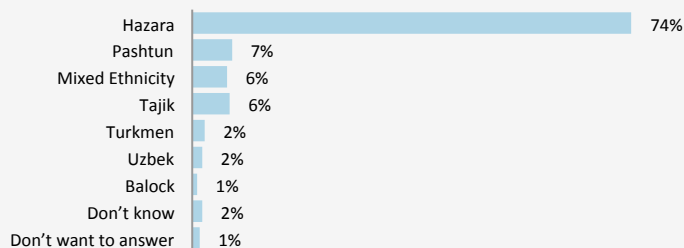
### GENDER



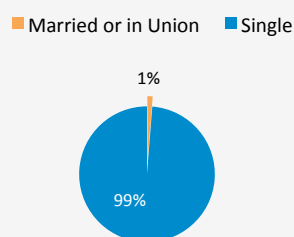
**97%** of the interviewed UASCs speak Dari/Farsi.

**20%** speak English, **20%** Swedish, and **15%** Pashto.

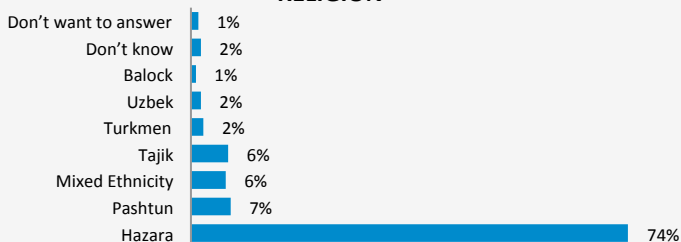
### ETHNICITY



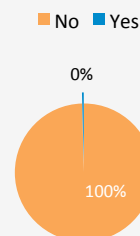
### MARITAL STATUS



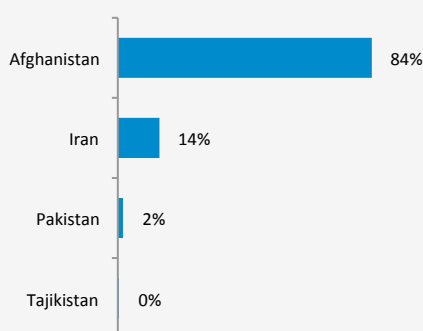
### RELIGION



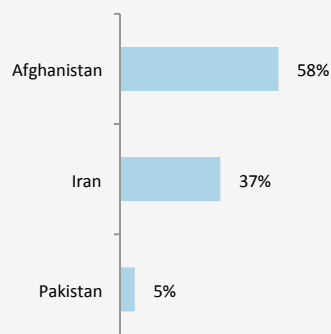
### HAS CHILDREN?



### PLACE OF BIRTH



### MAIN PLACE OF RESIDENCE

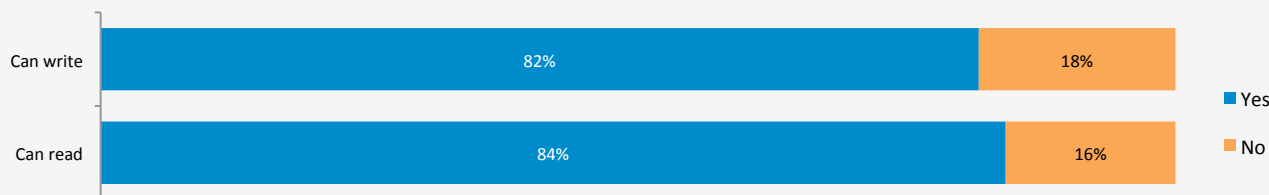


**84%** of the UASCs interviewed were born in **Afghanistan**, but only **58%** identified Afghanistan as their main place of residence.

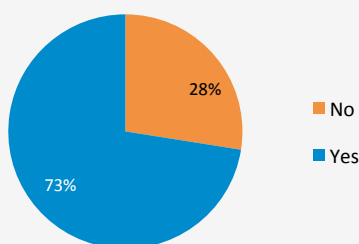
**37%** identified **Iran** as their main place of residence

## EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES PRIOR TO DEPARTURE

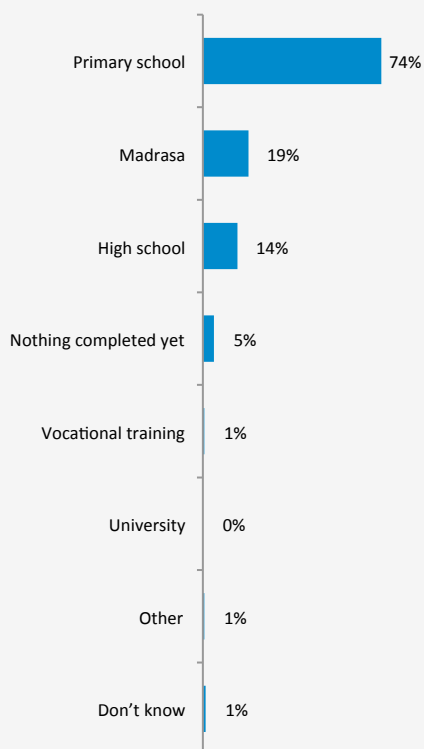
### LITTERACY RATE



### WENT TO SCHOOL IN COUNTRY OF RESIDENCE



### EDUCATION LEVELS ACHIEVED

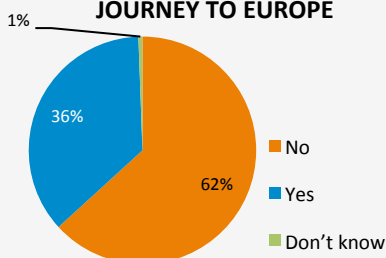


Percentage of UASCs who went to school is higher among those whose place of residence was **Iran**, than among those who mainly lived in Afghanistan.

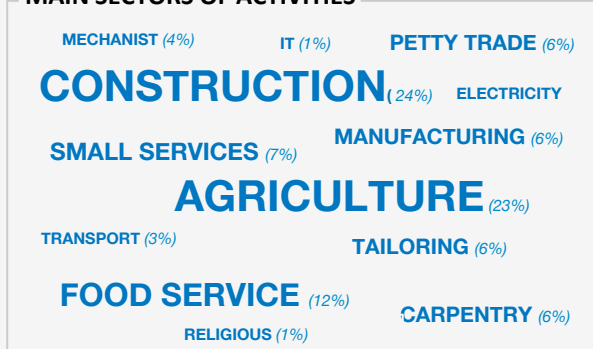
Nearly two thirds of the interviewed UASC (62%), were not registered in school when starting the journey. For those in school, the most frequent levels which were interrupted **were primary school and high school**.

56% said that working prevented them from going to school.

### SCHOOL INTERRUPTED BY THE JOURNEY TO EUROPE



### MAIN SECTORS OF ACTIVITIES



The UASC who resided in **Afghanistan** mainly worked in the **agriculture** sector.

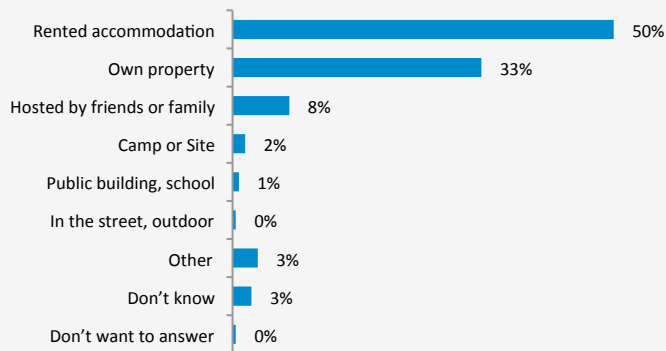
The UASC who resided in **Iran** mainly worked in the **construction** sector.

**68%**

Worked for a salary or in a family business for an average of **10 months** during the year before starting the journey.

## SITUATION PRIOR TO FLIGHT

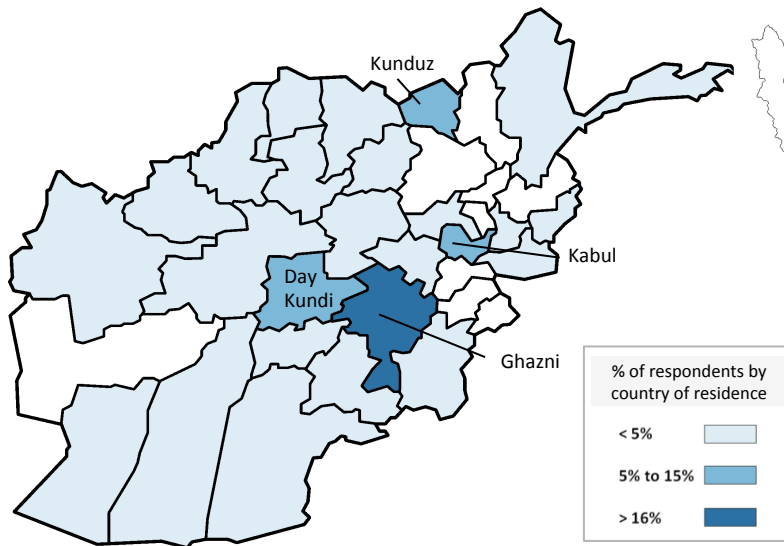
### ACCOMMODATION IN PLACE OF RESIDENCE



**28%**

**Internally displaced due to conflict or violence prior to the journey.**

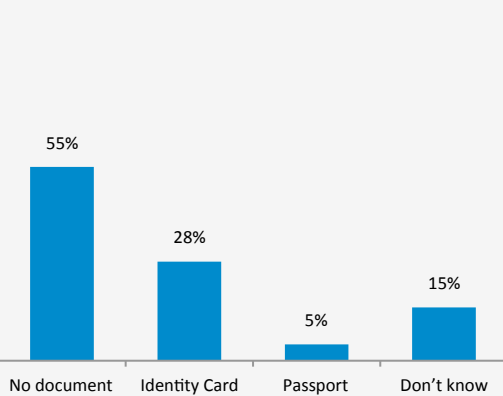
### PROVINCES OF RESIDENCE OF UASCs RESIDING IN AFGHANISTAN



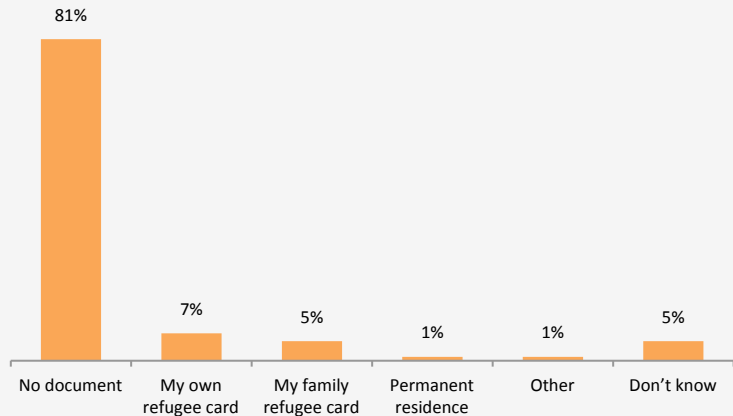
### PROVINCES OF RESIDENCE OF UASCs RESIDING IN IRAN



### IDENTITY DOCUMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN



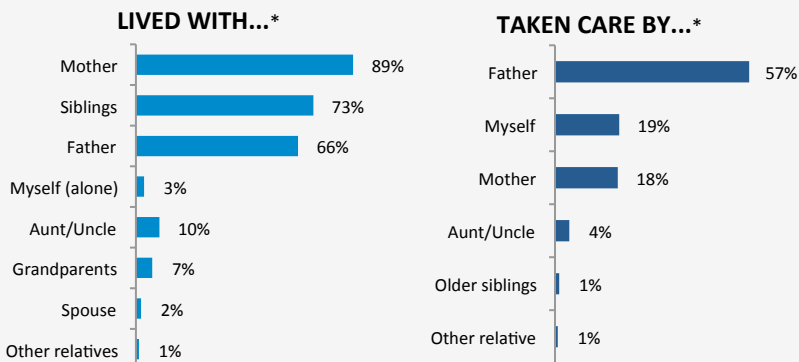
### IDENTITY DOCUMENTS OF UASCs RESIDING OUTSIDE OF AFGHANISTAN



## SITUATION PRIOR TO FLIGHT

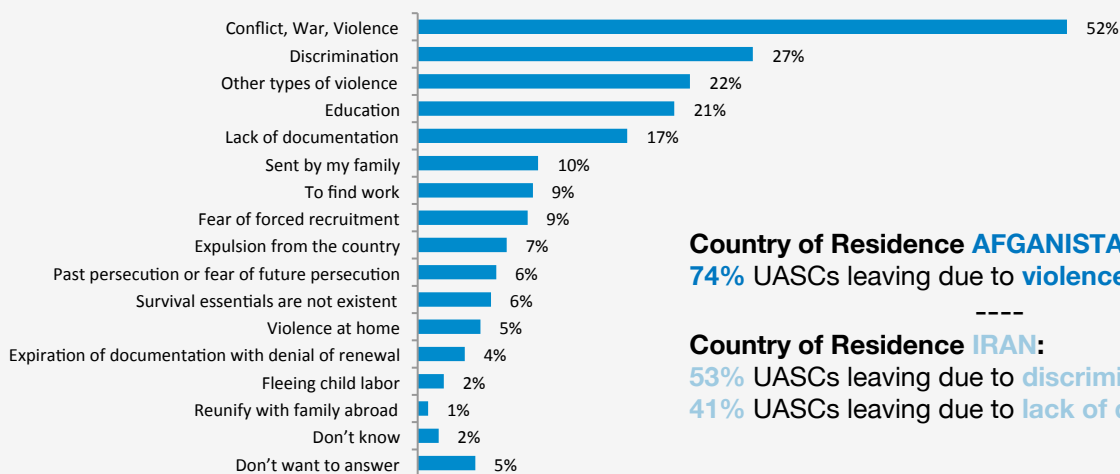
In the main country of residence, 3% of the UASC lived ALONE

**In addition:**  
8% without **MOTHER** and **FATHER** (but other relatives)  
25% without **FATHER**  
3% without **MOTHER**



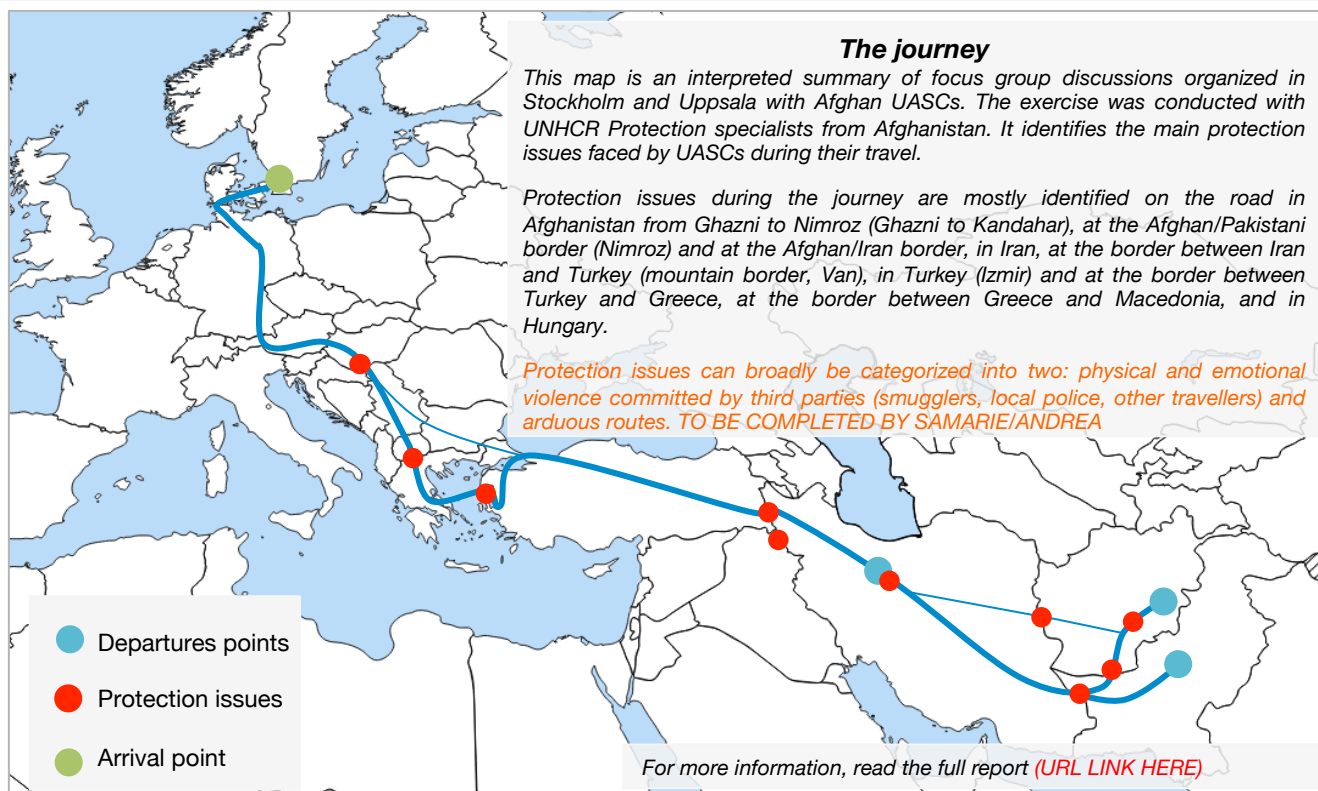
## REASON FOR THE FLIGHT

### MAIN REASONS FOR LEAVING THE COUNTRY OF RESIDENCE\*

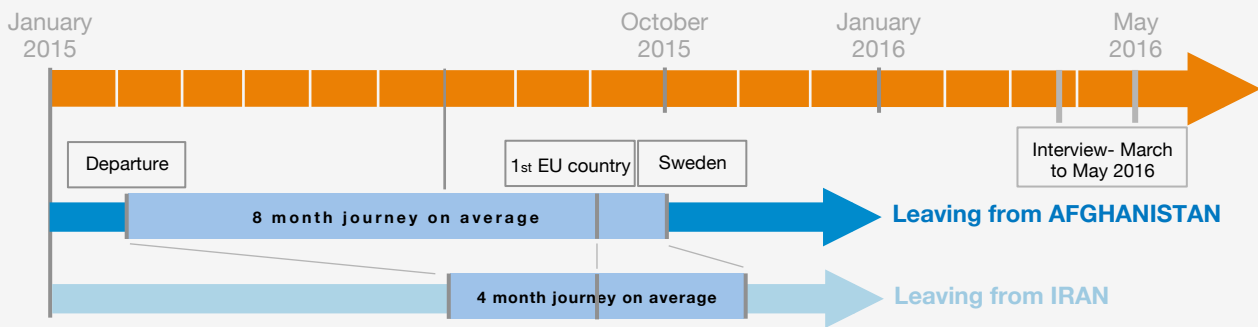


**Country of Residence AFGANISTAN:**  
74% UASCs leaving due to **violences** or **conflict**

**Country of Residence IRAN:**  
53% UASCs leaving due to **discrimination**  
41% UASCs leaving due to **lack of documentation**



## JOURNEY TO EUROPE AND SWEDEN

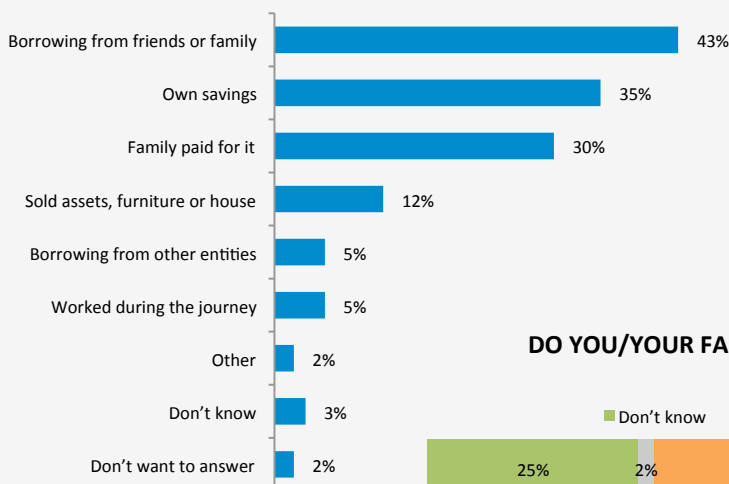


On average UASCs **SPENT 7 MONTHS ON THE ROAD** to accomplish the journey. Those who left from Iran spent less time on the road than those leaving from Afghanistan (4 and 9 months respectively).

**60% of the interviewed UASC travelled ALONE.** Only 10% travelled with at least one family member. Others travelled with friends.

## FINANCING THE JOURNEY

### FINANCE FOR THE JOURNEY\*



**3,576 USD**

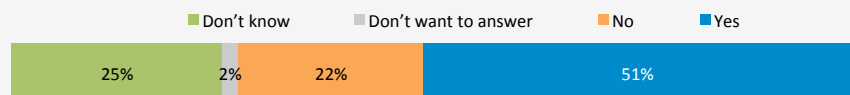
Average cost of the journey from Afghanistan

**2,192 USD**

Average cost of the journey from Iran

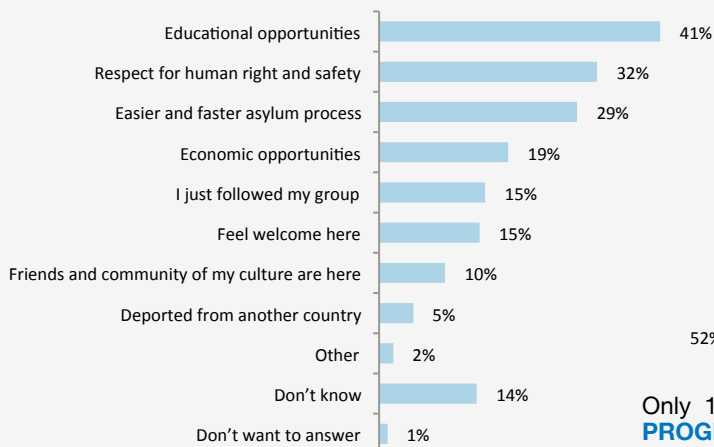
**Only 5% of the respondents are sending money to their family back at home**

### DO YOU/YOUR FAMILY NEED TO PAY BACK THE MONEY BORROWED?

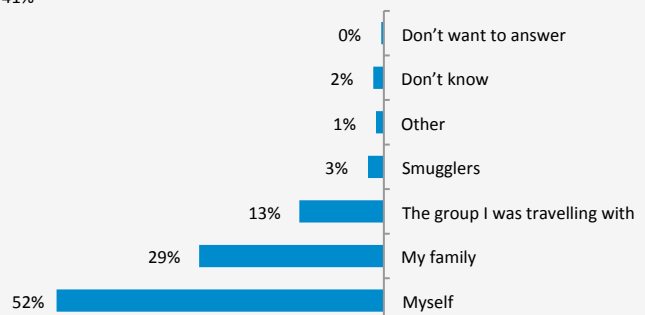


## THE CHOICE OF SWEDEN AS COUNTRY OF ASYLUM

### REASON FOR CHOOSING SWEDEN\*



### WHO TOOK THE DECISION TO COME TO SWEDEN?



Only 1 respondent (0.4%) had heard about **RELOCATION PROGRAMS**. None had heard about family reunification.

## THE CHOICE OF SWEDEN AS COUNTRY OF ASYLUM

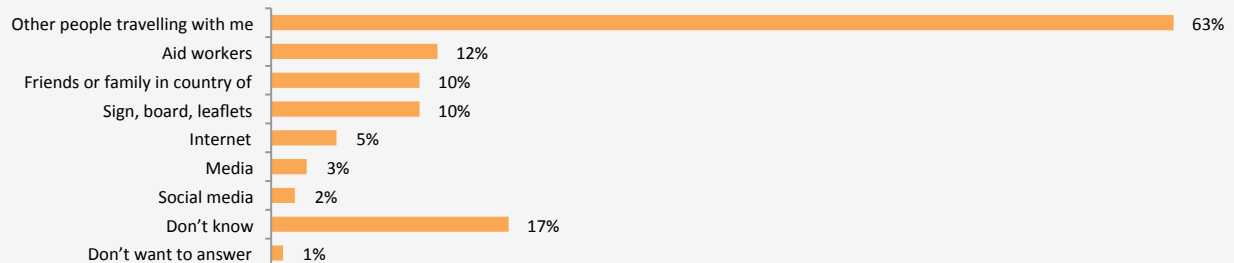
### Source of information about Sweden before/during the journey:

**45%** of UASCs got their information from **people travelling** with them

**16%** of UASCs got their information from **friends and family in Sweden**

The Focus Group Discussions confirmed that the **decision to go to Sweden was mainly taken while travelling**, based on information from other travellers.

### WHERE DID YOU MAINLY GET INFORMATION DURING THE JOURNEY?\*



## CURRENT SITUATION IN FORMER PLACE OF RESIDENCE

### Do you know where your parents are?

**52%** **Father** is either **dead** or don't know where he is

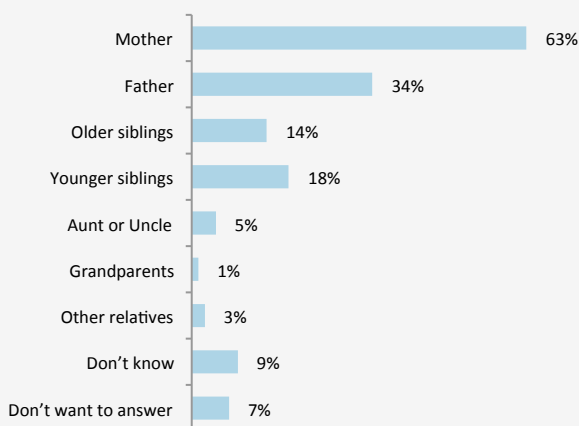
**24%** **Mother** is either **dead** or don't know where she is

*"I haven't had contact with my family in two years. My home town doesn't have telephone".*

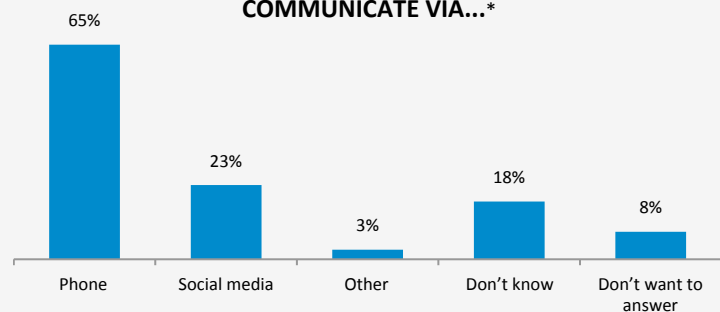
*"I still have contact with them (family) now. Their situation isn't good there."*

**Afghan asylum seeker in Sweden.**

### CURRENTLY COMMUNICATES WITH...\*



### COMMUNICATE VIA...\*



Reading note: charts marked with \* can add up to a total higher than 100%, as the respondents could provide multiple answers to the questions.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)  
Supported by the Joint IDP Profiling Service (JIPS)

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on the maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Contact:

Other sources: from: <http://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/regional.php>