Migrants' Perspectives: Building Trust in Humanitarian Action

Credit: Louis Witter

French Red Cross operates the 'Mobile support systems for migrants' project in the North of France.

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Acknowledgements

Contents

List of figures

Terminology and Acronyms

The following terminology and related definitions are used in this report.

Fundamental Principles: the seven Fundamental Principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity, and universality provide an ethical, operational and institutional framework for the work of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement around the world.

Humanitarian organisations: agencies that provide assistance and protection to migrants in need in accordance with the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. There are a great many differences between various agencies working from the local to global level. Based on the research questions for this project it was necessary to use a general term to facilitate data collection in different countries and contexts.

Humanitarian assistance and protection: any form of help, services or protection received by migrants before or during their journey, upon arrival at their destination, or during or after their return to their country or region of origin. This includes, but is not limited to:

- support to help migrants meet basic needs like healthcare, food and shelter;

- information or other services provided to migrants like assistance to find work or information about migrating; and

- activities that protect the safety and dignity of migrants like monitoring in detention centres, and legal assistance or referrals.

Note: The data collection tools used the term 'humanitarian support and assistance' to refer to the definition above because pilots indicated that the term 'protection' created confusion among respondents. The definition, using the words above, was clearly explained to all respondents and reiterated throughout the tools.

International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (the Movement): The Movement is a global humanitarian network that consists of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the 192 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (National Societies).

Migrants: The IFRC Policy on Migration (2009) defines migrants as 'persons who leave or flee their habitual residence to go to new places – usually abroad – to seek opportunities or safer and better prospects.' In this research project, migrants surveyed and interviewed included people who had crossed international

borders, including migrants with a regular or irregular status, people seeking asylum and refugees (notwithstanding the fact that they constitute a special category under international law), migrants in transit, migrants on temporary visas or residency permits, migrant workers, returning migrants, and deportees, among others.

National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (National Societies): National Societies are the backbone of the Movement. Each one is made up of a network of community-based volunteers and staff who, as auxiliaries to the public authorities in the humanitarian field, provide a wide variety of services in accordance with the Fundamental Principles.

Red Cross and Red Crescent actors (RCRC): This phrase is used in this report to refer to any entities that are part of the Movement that migrants in the study interacted with or were aware of. After consultation with staff from participating National Societies, IFRC and ICRC, and based on feedback received during the pilot testing of tools, it was deemed too complex to ask participants to identify which specific component of the Movement they were referring to in response to each question. For this reason, a general term was consistently used to capture the various entities that respondents could be referring to. In some of the figures presented in the report, this phrase is abbreviated as 'RCRC'.

Acronyms

COB	Country of Birth
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FRC	Finnish Red Cross
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
MRC	Maldivian Red Crescent
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
RCRC	Red Cross and Red Crescent actors
SARCS	South African Red Cross Society
TRCS	Turkish Red Crescent Society

Executive summary

Trust is 'the foundation of humanitarian action'.[1] Trust enables humanitarian organisations[2] – like the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (the Movement)[3] – to reach and respond to the needs of the most vulnerable. But trust is complex and dynamic. It includes many facets – such as trust by humanitarian organisations that public authorities will respect their humanitarian mandates, and trust by migrants and communities in the quality of services provided by humanitarian organisations. Those dependent on humanitarian organisations to meet their basic needs may not have the luxury of trust; they may simply have to hope an organisation will act in their best interest due to lack of other options. Trust, thus, cannot be assumed, it needs to be built, maintained and evaluated – from the local to the global level.

Background

In the context of migration, trust in humanitarian organisations is critical given the vulnerabilities and risks many migrants face throughout their journeys – including an absence of community support networks, language barriers, irregular status, xenophobia and risks of abuse, violence and violations of their safety and dignity. Trust is also important in the context of the increased securitisation of migration and the conflation of border and migration control policies with humanitarian aid.

Despite growing evidence and concern of a breakdown in trust between migrants and humanitarian organisations,[4] little is known about who migrants trust when accessing humanitarian assistance and protection, and why, and how trust or distrust impacts migrants' ability and willingness to seek help at different stages of their journeys.

To gain further insight into migrants' perspectives of – and trust in – humanitarian organisations, the Red Cross Red Crescent Global Migration Lab ('Global Migration Lab') together with the Movement, undertook research with migrants in the Americas, Africa, the Asia Pacific and Europe. The rationale for the research is that by listening and responding to the thoughts, fears, doubts, and concerns of migrants about their situations and the humanitarian assistance and protection they receive, humanitarian organisations can better build, maintain – and, where needed, repair – trust.

Methodology and scope

While there is no widely agreed definition of the concept of 'trust', it is often described in terms of a positive expectation or belief about the behaviour of another person or institution. Across concepts and measures of trust, common attributes like competence and values are recognised as strong predictors of trust. For this research, migrants' trust is assessed in relation to indicators of competence, fairness, integrity and inclusion. Migrants were asked about their experiences and perceptions of humanitarian organisations broadly as well as specific questions related to Red Cross and Red Crescent actors.[5]

The research employed a mixed-methods approach including: 225 qualitative interviews and focus group discussions, 2,086 quantitative face-to-face surveys, and 14,532 quantitative online surveys conducted by National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (National Societies) across 15 countries (Argentina, Australia, Finland, France, the Gambia, Honduras, Maldives, Mali, Niger, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Türkiye, and Zambia). The online surveys also reached respondents in a small number of supplementary countries, primarily Syria. As discussed in detail in Section 4 of the report, data collected was not representative and response levels varied significantly from country-to-country, with a large number of online survey responses (over ten thousand) coming from migrants in Türkiye, the world's largest refugee-hosting country.

While data was collected at the country level, by design data reflects migrants' experiences and perceptions of humanitarian actors and the assistance and protection sought and received throughout their journeys. It does not necessarily reflect their experiences with, or perceptions of, the National Society or any other humanitarian actor in the country in which the data was gathered.

In line with the Movement's strictly humanitarian approach to migration that focuses on migrants' needs and vulnerabilities, irrespective of legal status, type, or category, and reflecting the Movement's inclusive operational description of migrants, the research was conducted with migrants with regular and irregular status, people seeking asylum and refugees, migrants in transit, migrant workers, migrants on temporary visas or residency permits, returning migrants, and deportees, among others – all of whom, at various stages of their journeys, had accessed or needed different forms of humanitarian assistance and protection.

This report focuses on key highlights from the data set collected. Further reports containing detailed analysis and comparison of sub-sets of the data disaggregated by demographic indicators will be released in future. This report should be read with the understanding that data collection was based on convenience sampling of migrants identified based on their perceived need for humanitarian assistance and protection in accordance with national contexts and programming priorities of participating National Societies. Country reports, including cross-tabulations by demographic indicators, have been provided to each participating National Society enabling context specific analysis.

Key Findings

Migrants' perceptions of, and experiences with, Red Cross and Red Crescent actors

The findings reveal Red Cross and Red Crescent actors are, generally, trusted by migrants, but that trust is not universal and work to build and maintain trust must continue.

Findings show Red Cross and Red Crescent actors are widely recognised, but vaguely understood in terms of the support provided to migrants. While most migrants involved in this research associated the Red Cross and Red Crescent emblems with safety and hope (73%), they also expressed confusion about the work Red Cross and Red Crescent actors do with and for migrants, highlighting the need for strategies to better communicate services of Red Cross and Red Crescent actors in providing humanitarian assistance and protection to migrants in vulnerable situations, irrespective of legal status.

The findings also underscore the importance of principled humanitarian action and the need for greater awareness of the independence of Red Cross and Red Crescent actors by migrants. Only approximately 21% of all migrants recognised Red Cross and Red Crescent actors as independent to public authorities in their countries of birth and 26% in their current countries. The majority of migrants surveyed were unsure of the level of independence of Red Cross and Red Crescent actors from public authorities or the relationship that exists between these organisations and public authorities. This has the potential to impact trust – particularly in the context of the securitisation of migration.

The research confirmed Red Cross and Red Crescent actors' staff and volunteers are a key pillar to build and maintain trust by migrants. The direct interactions between migrants and staff and volunteers along routes can positively influence migrants' willingness to seek and access humanitarian assistance and protection. Eighty-five percent (85%) of all migrants noted Red Cross and Red Crescent actors treated them with dignity and respect, while 72% considered Red Cross and Red Crescent actors to be competent in addressing migrants' needs. However, there were some instances where migrants noted they would not seek assistance and protection in the future because of prior negative interactions, underscoring the importance of competence and integrity in building and maintaining trust and the interconnectedness of the work of organisations across borders.

Access to humanitarian assistance and protection: opportunities and barriers

The data provides important insights into migrants' perspectives and experiences of broader humanitarian action. Findings indicate that independence is an important pre-condition for migrants to trust humanitarian organisations and to seek humanitarian assistance and protection. Migrants in particularly vulnerable situations will not seek help if they believe that doing so might place them at risk of detention or deportation. One quarter of all migrants (25%) expressed fear that accessing humanitarian assistance and protection from humanitarian organisations may increase risks of detention or deportation. This fear was more prominent among migrants who self-identified as deportees (48%), those whose asylum applications had been refused (40%), and those with an irregular status (37%).

The findings also suggest a need for further responsiveness by humanitarian organisations to local contexts, as well for increased collaboration at the local level to build trust and reach a wider range of migrants in vulnerable situations. Overall, Red Cross and Red Crescent actors were identified by migrants as a key provider of humanitarian assistance and protection throughout their journeys. More than a quarter (28%) of all migrants had received humanitarian assistance and protection from Red Cross and Red Crescent actors amongst other providers, while 46% would recommend Red Cross and Red Crescent actors to other migrants in need. Findings also point to the important work of other local and international actors, with migrants noting assistance and protection was received from United Nations actors, community groups and governments, thus highlighting the need for coordination and cooperation.

While migrants expressed gratitude and appreciation for the humanitarian assistance and protection received from humanitarian organisations, many were clear about the limitations of such support, particularly in terms of quantity and reach. Despite humanitarian organisations' best efforts, migrants identified a trail of unmet needs, noting that assistance and protection was unavailable at various stages of their journeys (79%) and/or that the support provided fell short of meeting their most immediate needs (51%). This not only emphasises the importance of an integrated approach that addresses humanitarian needs along the entire migratory route, but also the importance of rethinking the type and level of humanitarian assistance and protection available to migrants. The research indicates that the needs of migrants vary greatly depending on their situations, their journeys, the countries where they reside and the local context, and reveals that migrants in some

locations are interested in joining humanitarian organisations as staff and volunteers.

To respond to these varied needs, experiences and perspectives and to reach the most vulnerable and ensure assistance and protection is inclusive, humanitarian organisations must ensure the participation of migrants in the design and evaluation of humanitarian interventions and in relevant decision-making processes. This will build trust and increase the potential reach, quality, and impact of humanitarian assistance and protection available to migrants.

Findings also indicate a clear gap in migrants' awareness of where or how to access humanitarian assistance and protection services (40% reported not knowing where to get services), underscoring the need for outreach initiatives related to existing services and activities. Other key reasons cited by migrants for not accessing humanitarian assistance and protection were limited availability (37%) and restrictions on eligibility (21%). Many migrants expressed frustration and/or disappointment with humanitarian organisations for a perceived inability to provide assistance and protection, which has implications for building and maintaining trust related to competence and fairness.

The level of unmet need reported by migrants confirms that humanitarian organisations are faced with a reality of increasing humanitarian need among migrants across the world. While almost half (44%) of migrants surveyed reported having received some form of assistance and protection at one or more stages of their journey, more than three quarters (79%) reported needing assistance and protection at another stage but not receiving it. This points to the importance of further engagement in advocacy and humanitarian diplomacy to ensure that States enable a principled humanitarian approach, strengthen efforts to prevent and alleviate human suffering, and address the assistance and protection needs of all migrants, irrespective of legal status.

Recommendations

The findings presented in this report can be used to inform approaches to increase the effectiveness of humanitarian interventions, build migrants' trust and contribute to discussions about the importance of a principled humanitarian approach to migration. In particular, this report recommends that humanitarian organisations, including the Movement, urgently identify concrete actions to implement the following recommendations:

1 Uphold the principle of independence and take action to communicate when, where and in what context humanitarian organisations are cooperating with public authorities.

2 Improve migrants' effective access to understandable, relevant and reliable information on services, protection, assistance, and support available along their journeys.

3 Ensure humanitarian action is inclusive, responsive to local contexts and enables the participation of migrants in decision-making processes.

4 Invest in staff and volunteer diversity – engaging people with a lived experience of migration – as well as in training to ensure competence and integrity.

5 Invest and engage in evidence-based humanitarian diplomacy on migrants' needs and vulnerabilities and a principled approach to humanitarian action.

1. Introduction

The Gambia Red Cross Society operates mobile and fixed Humanitarian Service Points to offer humanitarian assistance and protection to migrants in transit throughout country; this is done under the 'Assistance and Protection of the Most Vulnerable Migrants in West Africa' project, in partnership with Spanish Red Cross and funded by the European Union Trust Fund.

Around the world, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (the Movement) works to promote the safety, dignity and well-being of migrants, irrespective of their legal status, while also contributing to strengthening respect for their rights under international human rights law and other applicable bodies of law.[6] The Movement approaches migration from a purely humanitarian perspective. Its aim is to respond to humanitarian needs and reduce suffering, without seeking to encourage, discourage or prevent migration.[7] To do this, the Movement depends on trust.

Trust is 'the foundation of humanitarian action'.[8] Trust enables humanitarian organisations to reach and respond to the needs of the most vulnerable.[9] But trust is complex and dynamic. It includes many facets – such as trust by humanitarian organisations that public authorities will respect their humanitarian mandates, and trust by migrants and communities in the quality of services provided and in the protection of their data and information by

humanitarian organisations. Likewise, it must be recognised that those who are dependent on humanitarian organisations to meet their basic needs may not have the luxury of trust, they may simply have to hope an organisation will act in their best interest. Trust cannot be assumed, it needs to be built, maintained and evaluated from the local to the global level.

In the context of migration, trust in humanitarian organisations – such as the Movement – is of critical importance given the vulnerabilities and risks many migrants face throughout their journeys. These include an absence of community support and social networks, language barriers, irregular status, xenophobia and risks of abuse, violence and violations to their safety and dignity. In the face of increased securitisation of migration and the conflation of border and migration control policies with humanitarian aid,[10] a principled humanitarian approach to migration is ever more important to build trust. The ability to provide much-needed humanitarian assistance and protection,

to migrants is greatly diminished in the absence of trust. For migrants facing risks of harm, discrimination, and exploitation along their journeys, foregoing humanitarian assistance and protection due to a lack of trust can have life-threatening consequences.

Yet, despite growing evidence and concern of a breakdown in trust between migrants and humanitarian organisations,[11] little is known about who migrants trust when accessing humanitarian assistance and protection and why, and how this impacts their ability and willingness to seek help at different stages of their journeys. What little is known, is not often integrated into the evaluation of humanitarian responses to adapt and change practices accordingly in order to build trust with migrants.

While trust is increasingly recognised as a key component of working with vulnerable populations, including migrants, there is limited research and evidence on the topic.[12] Existing studies tend to focus on the humanitarian sector as a whole, with a broad focus on trust among donors, practitioners, governments, or 'aid recipients.' This provides little insight from, or consideration of, the lived experience of migrants as a specific group of concern.[13] Furthermore, available studies on trust and migration are regional or national in nature and are often site- or group-specific (for example, trust among refugees in a particular camp context), with little investigation into global humanitarian trends.[14] There is a need for further research that is migration-specific and global in nature to inform and guide the work of the humanitarian organisations – like the Movement – actively engaged in supporting migrants in vulnerable situations around the world.

To address this knowledge gap and inform strategies to increase the effectiveness of humanitarian interventions, the Red Cross Red Crescent Global Migration Lab (the Global Migration Lab), in collaboration with 15 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (National Societies) in the Americas, Africa, the Asia Pacific and Europe,[15] the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), conducted a large-scale research project to explore migrants' perspectives on, and perceptions of, trust in relation to humanitarian organisations.

The rationale for this research is that by listening and responding to the thoughts, fears, doubts, and concerns of migrants, humanitarian organisations, including the Movement, can better build, maintain – and, where needed, repair – trust.

Research across countries was guided by the following three research questions:

1. **Who** do migrants trust to provide humanitarian assistance and protection during their journeys?

2. **Why** are certain actors, including the Movement, more trusted (or not) than others by migrants in need of humanitarian assistance and protection?

3. **What** factors facilitate or dissuade migrants from seeking humanitarian assistance and protection?

The project employed a mixed-methods approach, using a combination of qualitative interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) and quantitative face-to-face and online surveys with migrants who, at various stages of their journeys, have accessed or needed different forms of humanitarian assistance and protection.

This report presents key findings of this large project. Given the large amount of data, and the complexity of the topic, this report focuses on cross-country level analyses and analyses based on migrants' self-reported legal status. Follow up-reports will further explore migrants' perspectives on, and perceptions of, trust in relation to humanitarian organisations from other important lenses, including gender and different stages of migration journeys.

2. Defining trust

There is growing academic and policy interest on the concept of trust.[16] 'Trust' in government institutions, businesses, and other organisations is regularly monitored as an indicator of reputation, legitimacy, and success across the world.[17]

The humanitarian sector has also shown increasing interest in this topic. Concerns about the behaviour of humanitarian workers and/or the neutrality, impartiality and independence of organisations in specific contexts have led to broader worries about public mistrust in both local and international organisations.[18] Yet, despite trust being on the agenda, there is not widely agreed definition of the concept.

In simple terms, trust (as a noun) can be defined as a 'firm belief in the reliability, truth, or ability of someone or something', or as 'confidence or faith in a person or thing'.[19] According to D. Gambetta, an expert in trust research, 'when we say we trust someone… we implicitly mean that the probability that [they] will perform an action that is beneficial or at least not detrimental to us is high enough for us to consider engaging in some form of cooperation with [them]'.[20] The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines trust as 'a person's belief that another person or institution will act consistently with their expectations of positive behaviour'.[21] These definitions share key elements, describing trust in terms of a positive expectation or belief about the behaviour of another person or institution.

Within the humanitarian sector, notions of institutional trust (i.e. people's trust in institutions) and social or interpersonal trust (i.e. trust between people) are critical. Institutional trust is based on the perception that an institution (or organisation) has competence, abilities or qualifications that inspire trust in others.[22] Social trust can be further divided into particularised trust (resulting from networks of individuals, like family and friends, who know and depend on each other) and generalised trust (resulting from an individual's tendency to view strangers as trustworthy or not).[23] A link between these levels of trust is identified by, among others, A. Giddens, who notes the role of 'face workers' (or frontline workers) in helping to maintain or build trust in more abstract systems.[24] Relationships or interactions on the ground – for instance, between migrants accessing support and 'face workers' such as Red Cross and Red Crescent actors' staff and volunteers who are in direct contact with them – are crucial for the establishment and maintenance of trust in larger institutions.

Across concepts and measures of trust, common attributes such as competence and values or ethical behaviours are recognised as strong predictors of trust. Competence is defined in terms of responsiveness and reliability,[25] or as 'being good at what you do'.[26] Values or ethical behaviours are defined through dimensions of integrity, openness, and fairness,[27] or through dimensions of purpose, vision, honesty, and fairness.[28]

The Movement has 'placed a great deal of faith in [its] humanitarian principles as [its] central tool for maintaining trust'.[29] The Movement's belief is that its seven Fundamental Principles (humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity, and universality) help build and maintain trust, foster acceptance, and ensure access to those in need.[30] While recognising that 'trust must be earned and regained rather than assumed',[31] the Movement has gone further to uphold values of integrity and ethical behaviour,[32] and has developed community engagement and accountability strategies to strengthen trust in and promote principled humanitarian action.[33]

Recognising the centrality of competence and values, and the fragility of trust, is crucial when considering migrants' trust in humanitarian action. Ground Truth Solutions' Humanitarian Voice Index demonstrates that people surveyed consistently said they trust providers of humanitarian aid, yet negatively rate the quality, accountability, and outcomes of the support.[34] A 'courtesy bias' likely contributes to this contradiction,[35] but this also reflects the unequal power dynamics at play in the humanitarian space given the extreme vulnerabilities of people in need of humanitarian assistance and protection.[36] Those dependent on humanitarian organisations to meet their basic needs may have to hope organisations will be trustworthy, even if in reality the services may or may not meet their expectations or needs.[37] In this context, a broader assessment of crucial aspects of humanitarian action – such as people's access to information and participation in decision-making, or the fairness and relevance of humanitarian assistance – rather than trust per se, is necessary to gain more meaningful insights.

In line with notions of competence and values or ethical behaviours that resonate internally and externally to the Movement, and following an extensive review of definitions and measurements of trust used by intergovernmental, humanitarian and development organisations, as well as consultations with staff from participating National Societies, the IFRC and the ICRC,[38] this report assesses migrants' trust in humanitarian action around the following indicators:

Key indicators of trust

COMPETENCE

including perceptions on relevance, reliability and responsiveness

INTEGRITY

including perceptions on honestly, safety, independence and neutrality

FAIRNESS

including perceptions on equity, non-discrimination, impartiality and transparency

INCLUSION

including perceptions on access, participation, diversity and accountability
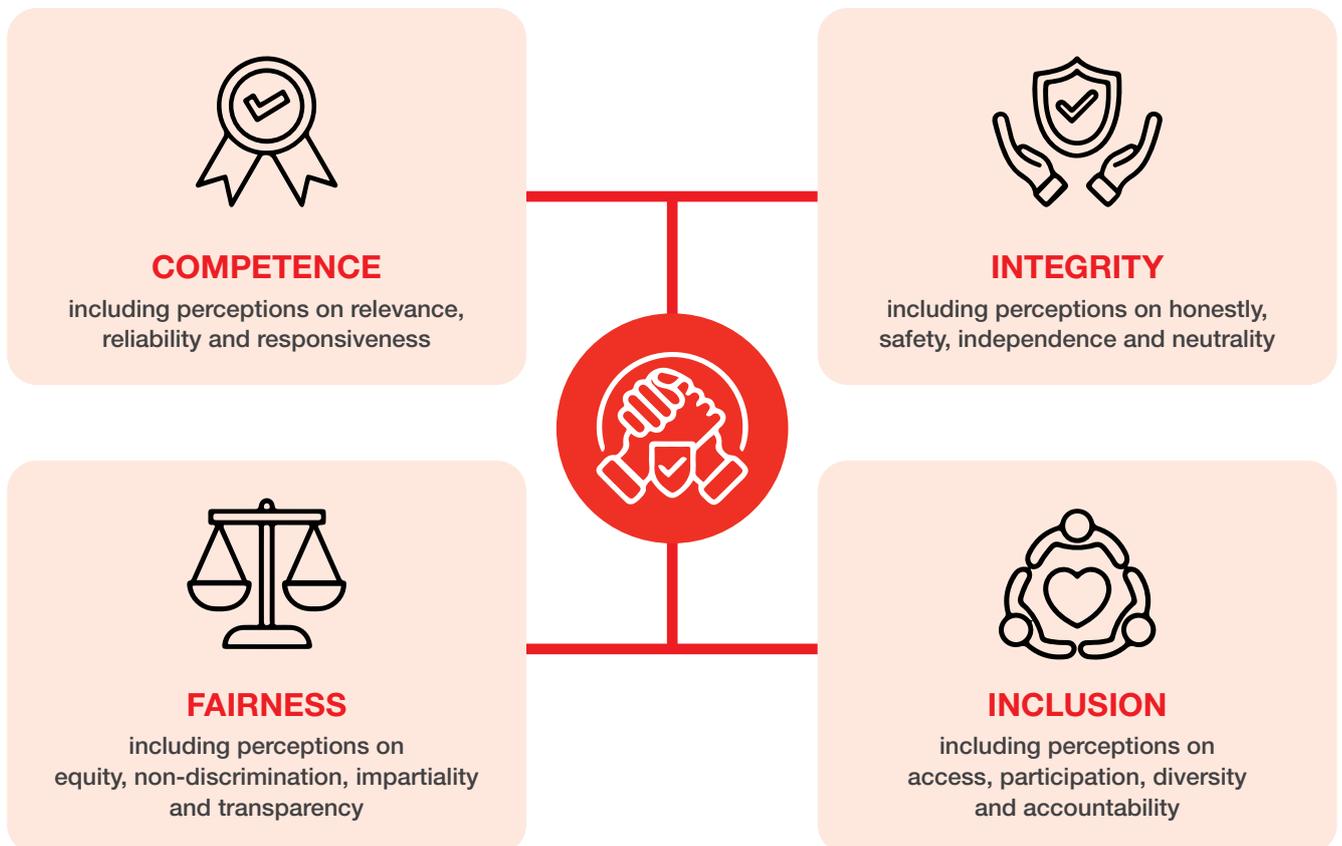
As further discussed in Section 4 of this report, migrants involved in this research were intentionally not explicitly asked whether they trusted Red Cross and Red Crescent actors (or other humanitarian organisations). Instead, the research relied on these four key indicators to map migrants' lived experience and perceptions of humanitarian organisations and the humanitarian assistance and protection provided.

This approach recognises that the best way of building trust is to place migrants at the centre and listen to and respond to the people served by humanitarian action, including their thoughts, fears, doubts, and concerns about the situation they are in, and the humanitarian assistance and protection provided to them.[39]

3. Trust, migration, and humanitarian action: what the literature shows

Sudanese Red Crescent Society volunteers provide humanitarian assistance to Ethiopian refugees in Eastern Sudan, including supporting access to clean water.

Migrants in vulnerable situations face shrinking international protection, increasingly restrictive migration policies and limited safe and accessible migration channels.[40] Trust between migrants and humanitarian organisations is perhaps more important than ever, as humanitarian actors are often the first (and last) port of call for migrants in need of humanitarian assistance and protection. The potential breakdown of trust is of grave concern: if humanitarian organisations are not trusted, life-saving assistance is less likely to get to those migrants who need it most. Identifying and addressing factors that impact (positively or negatively) migrants' trust is critical. While studies focusing on the specific intersection of trust, migration, and humanitarian organisations are limited, some important lessons can be drawn.

Humanitarian organisations are not universally trusted by migrants

Research from the early 2000s with refugees along the Myanmar-Thai border found that, while there was a generic trust in the humanitarian system, trust declined upon arrival in refugee camps, where humanitarian personnel were characterised as inaccessible and lacking empathy.[41] In Mali and Niger, a recent study showed many migrants had limited or low levels of trust in humanitarian organisations: half stated humanitarian assistance and protection did not meet their needs; one third stated organisations did not provide support fairly, or that receiving support placed them at further risk (particularly of deportation).[42] Research with West African migrants en route to Europe, with refugees in Bangladesh, and with refugees in Kenya also found high levels of mistrust towards humanitarian organisations among certain groups of migrants.[43]

The conflation of humanitarian and securitisation agendas is hindering trust

Existing research in the Sahel region found that key barriers to trust included migrants' fear of deportation (or being forced to return to countries of origin or third countries), fear of being dissuaded or prevented from continuing their journeys, and fear that organisations collaborate with police or local authorities.[44] Research with West African migrants en route to Europe noted concerns about the association of humanitarian organisations with detention, deportation, and discouragement: migrants were distrustful and developed avoidance strategies not only because authorities targeted them at sites where humanitarian assistance was provided, but also because of the intersection of specific return agendas and humanitarian interventions in the region.[45] Likewise, research in detention centres in Greece identified the potential for migrants to doubt the intentions of humanitarian workers due to their perceived association with government authorities.[46]

Humanitarian organisations fall short on key indicators of trust

Existing research highlights significant areas for improvement in terms of the competence, integrity, fairness and inclusion of humanitarian organisations and the humanitarian assistance and protection provided to migrants. In the Sahel region, migrants noted fear of being treated poorly by humanitarian staff as a key barrier to trust (particularly among women). Research with refugees in Bangladesh demonstrated trust was eroded by – among other factors – a lack of involvement in decision-making processes, the absence of accountability and responsiveness, and the provision of inadequate assistance (i.e. assistance that did not meet needs or was not provided in culturally appropriate ways).[47] Research in the Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya showed a lack of transparency around decision-making processes and funding allocations negatively impacted trust in humanitarian organisations.[48]

Information influences migrants' perspectives as much as first-hand experience

The study referenced above in the Sahel region indicated that past experiences with organisations and the behaviour of operational staff involved in the actual delivery of humanitarian assistance and protection shaped trust, but also that migrants' perceptions of – and trust in – humanitarian organisations was shaped by families, other migrants, and smugglers. Research in West Africa noted mistrust feeds on 'information shared by smugglers, social networks or personal experiences with local authorities en route'.[49] Negative feedback from family or fellow migrants may lead migrants to refrain from accessing assistance, while smuggling networks can either foster perceptions of risk or act as referral points. In the Sahel region and in Greece, research has shown that efforts by humanitarian actors to share information about their mandate and activities helped migrants understand their limits, mitigate high or unrealistic expectations, and lessen fears associated with perceived or actual collaboration with authorities.[50]

Focusing on competence and values can strengthen the relationship between migrants and humanitarian organisations

The Sahel research also indicated that practical strategies – such as strengthening accountability to migrants, improving interactions with field staff, taking steps to increase the perceived as well as real independence of organisations (e.g. to reduce fears of deportation and detention), and strengthening feedback loops – can build trust with migrants.[51] Research in Bangladesh emphasised the importance migrants themselves placed on humanitarian organisations holding regular, consistent, and accessible consultations, following through on promises and addressing reported problems, speaking respectfully and demonstrating empathy, and providing assistance that meets needs, as tools for developing trust.[52] Research with West African migrants demonstrated the importance of separating humanitarian interventions from migration control and deportation measures.[53] In the Sahel region and in Greece, research also emphasised that transparency towards migrants can strengthen relationships, even under conditions of extreme vulnerability.[54]

4. Methodology and scope

To gain further insights into migrants' lived experience, perspectives on and perceptions of humanitarian action, the Global Migration Lab – in collaboration with the Movement – conducted research with migrants, including refugees, across 15 countries around the globe.

The goal of this project was to gather information from extremely diverse and mobile communities of migrants in need of humanitarian assistance and protection. While it was not feasible to design the research in consultation with migrants in each location, the project and research tools were designed in consultation with local/national staff and volunteers from National Societies who had significant expertise working with migrants in their specific country contexts. The design of the project was further strengthened by the input of regional and international staff of the IFRC and the ICRC, as well as other National Societies engaged in migration-related work.

The research was guided by the following questions:

1. **Who** do migrants trust to provide humanitarian assistance and protection during their journeys?

2. **Why** are certain actors, including the Movement, more trusted (or not) than others by migrants in need of humanitarian assistance and protection?

3. **What** factors facilitate or dissuade migrants from seeking humanitarian assistance and protection?

As explained in Section 2 of this report, the concept of trust used in this project is framed around four key indicators: competence, integrity, fairness, and inclusion. These indicators were selected after a review of definitions of trust used by intergovernmental, humanitarian, and development organisations and following consultations with staff and volunteers from National Societies, the IFRC and the ICRC.

In practice, the research explored migrants' perceptions and experiences through a combination of interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), face-to-face surveys, and online surveys.

In recognition of the limitations of measuring trust under conditions of dependence or vulnerability, migrants were not asked direct questions such as 'Do you trust the Movement?' or 'Do you trust humanitarian organisations'.[55] Instead, migrants were asked to share their experiences and perceptions through questions such as 'Has the support or assistance provided met your needs and expectations?' (as a proxy for competence) or 'How would you describe the relationship between humanitarian organisations and the immigration authorities of this country?' (as a proxy for the value of integrity).

The research tools created included questions specific to Red Cross and Red Crescent actors collectively and the humanitarian assistance and protection they provide, as well as more general questions relating to other humanitarian organisations (including local non-government organisations or community groups, UN actors, and other international organisations). For a summary of questions included in the interviews, FGDs, and the face-to-face and online surveys used across 14 out the 15 countries in the report (excluding the Maldives where questions relating to the project were integrated into data collection taking place for another project), see Appendix 1.[56]

Prior to data collection, research tools and methods were reviewed – and received approval – from the ICRC Centre for Operational Research and Experience's Ethics Review Board. To address the potential vulnerability of migrants and ensure that research was conducted in a manner that is sensitive and emphasises safety, respect, and comfort of all participants, training in research ethics, tools and methods, as well as sessions on the Minimum Protection Approach,[57] were provided to all participating National Societies in multiple languages. The training sessions were attended by local staff and volunteers, who consequently conducted data collection across most countries, often in collaboration with local organisations.[58]

Data collection included:

- **225 interviews and FGDs** with migrants in Argentina, Australia, Honduras, Finland, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sweden, and Zambia

- **2,086 face-to-face surveys** with migrants in Argentina, Australia, Finland, France, the Gambia, Honduras, Mali, Maldives, Niger, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Türkiye, and Zambia

- **14,532 online surveys** with migrants across 13 countries of study (Argentina, Australia, Finland, France, the Gambia, Honduras, Mali, Niger, South Africa, Sudan, Sweden, Türkiye, and Zambia), and additional countries (primarily Syria).

While data was collected at the country level, by design data reflects migrants' experiences and perceptions of humanitarian actors and the assistance and protection sought and received throughout the entirety of their journeys. It does not necessarily reflect their experiences with, or perceptions of, the National Society or any other humanitarian organisation in the country in which the data was gathered.

Reflecting the Movement's inclusive operational description of migrants, people participating in the study represented a broad range of people who cross borders. This included migrants

Honduran Red Cross provides humanitarian assistance - including food, water, information and medical care - to 'migrant caravans' traveling through the country.

with a regular or irregular status, people seeking asylum and refugees, migrants in transit, migrants on temporary visas or residency permits, migrant workers, returning migrants, and people who have been deported.

In each country, participants – aged 18 years old and over – were identified based on their perceived need for humanitarian assistance and protection in accordance with national contexts and programming priorities of National Societies. For instance, in Honduras participants included migrants in transit, as well as returning and deported migrants, while in Sweden participants included migrants whose applications for asylum had been denied by authorities.

Participants were recruited using convenience sampling and included a combination of former and current recipients of humanitarian assistance and protection provided by Red Cross and Red Crescent actors, as well as migrants recruited through partner organisations, or by staff and volunteers visiting public spaces such as shelters and hostels for migrants, city libraries, and informal settlements. Those National Societies that circulated the online survey did so using social media channels and/or contact databases from their operations, as well as by placing QR codes in public spaces.

A demographic profile of migrants that participated in this study is as follows:

GENDER
63% male; 35% female; 1% prefer not to say, <1% other.

AGE
53% below 35 years old; 44% between 35-60 years old; 2% over 60 years old

REASON FOR LEAVING COUNTRY OF BIRTH
71% forced displacement (including refugees, asylum seekers, temporary protected status, and others depending on context); 14% employment or work; 9% other; 3% marriage, family reunification, or family formation; 2% study, education, or training

STAGE OF JOURNEY
56% at destination; 39% in transit; 5% return.

REPORTED A CHRONIC HEALTH CONDITION
30% yes, 63% no, 7% prefer not to say.[59]

HAD RECEIVED HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND PROTECTION FROM RCRC
28% yes, 72% no.

More detailed demographic information and details of the sites and types of data collection for each country is presented in Appendix 2.

Qualitative data was coded and analysed by participating National Societies using RapidCode.[60] All quantitative data was cleaned and analysed by the Global Migration Lab with the support of volunteers and partner organisations using R (among other software tools).[61]

It is important to note a number of limitations to this study:

1. **Bias.** Despite best efforts to ensure a broad spectrum of research participants, it can be assumed that some of the most vulnerable migrants, as well as some of those who hold the most negative views about Red Cross and Red Crescent actors and humanitarian organisations in general, are not included in the sample. These migrants may have been out of reach or unwilling or unable to participate in the study. There is also the risk of courtesy bias in participants' responses (see Section 2 of this report), as more than a quarter of them (28%) were former or current recipients of humanitarian assistance and protection from Red Cross and Red Crescent actors and face-to-face data collection was carried out primarily by staff and volunteers from participating National Societies. To minimise this bias, and reach a wider and more diverse population, the project adopted a strategy of methods and data triangulation, which included collecting data from multiple perspectives (qualitative and quantitative insights), through different mediums (face-to-face and online) and in substantially different socioeconomic and political contexts (15 countries across 4 regions).

2. **Language and cultural barriers.** Participants in the study included migrants from a wide range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds. To facilitate access and participation all research tools were available in a range of languages selected based on the programming priorities of participating National Societies. All tools also contained plain-language definitions for ambiguous terms. The face-to-face research tools were translated into Arabic, English, Spanish, and French. The online survey was available to participants in Albanian, Arabic, English, French, Persian (Farsi), Somali, Spanish, Swahili and Tamil. In some cases, National Societies worked with translators or volunteers with lived experience of migration to facilitate the participation of migrants from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

3. **Representation.** The data is not representative. This is partly a reflection of the well-documented fact that many countries across the world do not collect, publish, or standardise detailed data on migrants,[62] so there are no parameters by which to set a representative sample for the populations in question. Representation was also influenced by the research design – many participants in the study were on the move between countries and often were in precarious conditions associated with their legal status (meaning many are not included in official population data). While not representative, and as per the objective of the project, the findings provide important insights into the lived experience and knowledge of migrants from across the world, many of whom are not included or captured in data collected elsewhere.

4. **Different response levels.** Due to the different capacities of National Societies, and the local context in which they operate, data varies significantly from country-to-country. Not all National Societies conducted interviews, FGDs, face-to-face surveys and online surveys, and some National Societies had much larger response rates to different methods of data collection. The difference in response levels is most striking in the online survey data, where there was an overwhelming response (of over ten thousand responses) to the survey link shared by the Turkish Red Crescent Society (TRCS).[63] For this reason, we avoid making claims to global averages based on survey data, instead reporting meaningful trends in data collected in the same country location or across key demographic indicators. For countries with low survey sample sizes, we are cautious not to draw generalisations based on country-level results. Countries with low sample sizes (n<50) are marked with an asterisk (*) in each chart throughout the report. Additionally, the convenience sampling method resulted in almost twice as many responses from men than women (63% male; 35% female). The Lab will release a separate report that includes a detailed gender-based analysis of the data set in future.

This report should be read with these limitations in mind and with a recognition that, by necessity, the data and analysis presented here represents broad trends across the entire data set that may not be applicable in every country, context, or for all groups of migrants. Detailed country reports, including cross-tabulations by demographic indicators, were prepared for each participating National Society enabling context specific analysis. Follow up analysis is also planned by the Global Migration Lab.

5. Migrants' perceptions of and experiences with Red Cross and Red Crescent actors

Red Cross and Red Crescent: widely recognised, vaguely understood

Red Cross and Red Crescent actors are actively engaged in supporting migrants around the world. More than a quarter (28%) of all migrants involved in the research had received humanitarian assistance and protection from Red Cross and Red Crescent actors among other providers, and 62% of migrants who had received any form of humanitarian assistance or protection during their journeys noted it was from Red Cross and Red Crescent actors. Yet, levels of knowledge and understanding of the work of Red Cross and Red Crescent actors with and for migrants vary across the 15 countries studied.

Red Cross and Red Crescent emblems were associated with 'safety and hope' by most migrants surveyed (73%), with a small percentage (6%) unable to recognise the emblems (see Figure 1). These distinctive emblems may be used for two purposes (1) to signal legal protection in times of armed conflict and (2) for indicative purposes in times of peace and armed conflict as a means to identify components of the Movement, helping people to identify 'humanitarian organisations, helping people in natural disasters, times of armed conflict, war or other emergencies – purely based on need'.[64] The emblems are thus key symbols to convey to migrants that help is at hand. As such, the fact that at least 1 in 10 of all migrants surveyed in Mali (16%), South Africa (19%), Sri Lanka (35%) and Zambia (11%) reported they were not familiar with the emblems indicates the need to increase awareness among migrants of the humanitarian assistance, support and protection provided by Red Cross and Red Crescent actors.[65]

Across countries, there were also different responses to the emblems based on migrants' self-reported legal status: for instance, while asylum seekers (77%), refugees (74%) and stateless people (74%) were comparatively more likely to associate the emblems with 'safety and hope', deportees (65%), people whose application for asylum had been rejected (64%) and those who defined their status as 'other' (60%) were less likely to do so. At least 1 in 10 migrants in certain groups across all countries – including returned migrants (16%), migrants with an irregular status (15%) and deportees (10%) – had no familiarity with the emblems.

Interestingly, and as reported in South Africa, most migrants in interviews and FGDs recognised the emblems and associated them with help during armed conflict, war, disasters, and other emergency crises without considering Red Cross and Red Crescent actors as a potential source of humanitarian assistance and protection beyond these circumstances. Few migrants in interviews and FGDs in South Africa – which took place in informal settlements and at a women's and men's shelter – had any familiarity with Red Cross and Red Crescent actors or the services provided to migrants prior to recent to visits by South Africa Red Cross Society (SARCS) (which provided relief and assistance to migrants during COVID-19).[66] While migrants in other situations may have displayed more familiarity with Red Cross and Red Crescent actors (e.g. migrants in detention centres who may be in contact with the ICRC), the limited understanding about the work of Red Cross and Red Crescent actors with and for migrants was not unique to South Africa. Findings below suggest the need for strategies to better communicate the work and approach of Red Cross and Red Crescent actors in places where humanitarian assistance and protection to migrants in vulnerable situations, irrespective of legal status, is provided.

Figure 1. When you see these symbols, what is your emotional reaction?

Safety and hope
73%

None of the above
12%

I do not recognise those symbols
6%

Prefer not to say
4%

Fear or worry
2%

Other
2%

Anger or frustration
2%

As discussed in further detail in Section 6 below, Red Cross and Red Crescent actors are a key provider of humanitarian assistance and protection to migrants in the study. As told by Arturo, who had received medical and psychosocial support while in transit through Honduras:

> ' *seeing people from the Red Cross gives hope and you know that they will help you if you go to where they are…' (Arturo, male migrant in Honduras).*[67]

Likewise, as recalled by Amanuel based on his experiences in Australia and overseas:

> ' *Red Cross in Africa, know for sure that these people are helping. They don't carry guns, just carrying stuff. They go where people needs them, food rations, to help wounded. Nothing in their hands to kill. They also help in Australia – food, materials, clothes… Red Cross working hard to protect people's rights. Working hard to make sure they're given what they're missing' (Amanuel, male migrant in Australia).*

However, despite the positive experiences of migrants like Arturo and Amanuel, the findings suggest that familiarity with the emblems or previous experiences with Red Cross and Red Crescent actors at some stage of their journeys does not necessarily translate into knowledge of local humanitarian action or the actual forms of assistance and protection available to migrants:

> ' *It is very good that such important organisations are committed to our situation. Without a doubt, if my situation had been different when I arrived, if I had known or there had been help, I would have approached [you]. Because it is very difficult to be alone and not know where to go when such serious and difficult things happen to you in a country that you do not know… Of course, because the Red Cross is the Red Cross. At a global level, it is one of the most important organisations' (Rosa, female migrant in Argentina).*

In other words, while Red Cross and Red Crescent actors are widely recognised by their emblems, their humanitarian efforts on the ground to support migrants in vulnerable situations could be better understood by and communicated to migrants. At different stages of their journeys, and across different regions in the world, migrants often discussed a lack of familiarity and understanding of the presence and activities of Red Cross and Red Crescent actors with respect to migration:

- As noted by migrants in Argentina and Honduras, migrants in transit are often left vulnerable because they do not know where humanitarian service points are installed along their journeys across countries, with migrants like Marcos suggesting that 'it would be good if they give us a map where we can find the Red Cross points to help us' (Marcos, male migrant in Honduras).

- In countries of destination, the lack of knowledge and information manifest in different ways. In Finland, for instance, many migrants did not know where to find the Red Cross: 'here in Finland, I would turn to the Finnish Red Cross, like for real, but I don't know where it is located. If I'd know, I'd ask for their help' (Iman, female migrant in Finland). Others also expressed unfamiliarity about what services are provided and available to them.

- In countries of origin/return, there was also lack of knowledge about the presence and work of other humanitarian actors. For instance, in Sri Lanka, it was observed that, despite having significant needs and despite some migrants having received assistance and protection from Red Cross and Red Crescent actors while overseas, returned migrants relied primarily on authorities rather than asking for support from humanitarian organisations because of a lack of knowledge of the services available: 'I have seen the emblem, but I have no idea on their activities, we directly go to the authorities' (Mathangi, female migrant in Sri Lanka).

In some cases, it may be that National Societies do not provide regular services to migrants given the scope of their programming; however, it is interesting to consider that migrants in the study had undertaken journeys across at least one country border and were asked to respond based on their experiences as a whole, rather than with respect to a particular National Society.

Often, it was the most vulnerable (due to legal status or language skills) who lacked access to knowledge and information needed to receive humanitarian assistance and protection. In Finland, for instance, while most migrants entering the country via the formal resettlement process encountered the Finnish Red Cross (FRC) upon arrival to Helsinki-Vantaa airport or though FRC-run reception centres, interviews and FGDs with migrants revealed that many entering the country via informal channels faced more difficulty learning about and accessing FRC services. Migrants unable to speak the official language of a country may experience even greater difficulty gaining knowledge and

information about where to access assistance and protection from humanitarian organisations. As noted by Faduma:

> *Nobody tells us about services, there is only the responses gotten from a translator. Each time there hasn't been a translator present, then it feels hard to communicate. Even though the employees said that we understand Finnish well enough, we haven't understood anything about the services available' (Faduma, female migrant in Finland).*

It can be challenging for National Societies to reach and build trust with migrants who arrive through alternative channels or who speak a language other than the country's official language. Yet, this focus on vulnerability highlights the importance of Red Cross and Red Crescent actors engaging with migrants beyond official transit points and developing outreach initiatives to increase inclusion, awareness, and access for all of those in need (for instance, by providing interpretation and translation).

Humanitarian organisations and authorities: a potential area of concern

Findings demonstrate that perceptions and experiences regarding the relationship between public authorities and humanitarian organisations has the potential to either break down or build trust and facilitate or hinder migrants' access to humanitarian assistance and protection. The findings indicate that independence is a pre-condition for migrants to trust humanitarian organisations, particularly for migrants in vulnerable situations.

Migrants in interviews and FGDs expressed the view that Red Cross and Red Crescent actors maintained a dignified and respectful approach to migrants as compared to immigration authorities, underscoring the importance of the principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence in building and maintaining trust (see Case Study A). In addition, migrants surveyed expressed fears about seeking assistance and protection from humanitarian organisations due to potential risks of detention or deportation, indicating the importance of humanitarian organisations maintaining independence in order for migrants to feel (and be) safe when accessing support and services (see Figures 4 and 5).

Credit: Maldivian Red Crescent

As part of efforts to engage migrant communities, especially migrants with an irregular status, Maldivian Red Crescent teams find out what people know and think about COVID-19, the vaccine and what they need.

Case Study A: Migrants' voices in Australia, Finland & Sweden

A family fleeing the conflict in Ukraine is greeted in Helsinki by staff and volunteers of the Finnish Red Cross who provide reception support in coordination with Finnish authorities.

In interviews and FGDs in countries like Australia and Finland, migrants highlighted a difference in the way they were treated by Red Cross and Red Crescent actors and by public authorities, emphasising that humanitarian organisations tend to uphold the dignity and humanity of migrants through the provision of different forms support. As told by Catherine:

'Humanitarian organisations – they provide support to people who are going through the migration journey. Immigration department – don't think people are treated in a fair, humane way. Immigration causes a lot of distress. They focus on their policies, not on the human factor' (Catherine, female migrant in Australia).

This distinction has practical implications in terms of the perceived competence, integrity and fairness of Red Cross and Red Crescent actors' staff and volunteers and the support and assistance they provide, even in situations in which their activities or services might be similar to those of the authorities (such as in reception centres). In reflecting about her experiences with Red Cross and Red Crescent actors in her journey across Europe, Iman said:

'It was very good treatment. In every country I travelled through, it (the treatment) was excellent. They even wrapped up my children in these warm clothing. I did not even have to ask anything for them' (Iman, female migrant in Finland).

In contrast, she also described negative experiences with authorities as follows:

'The whole journey was full of challenges… Many times, when I begged the officials to help us, they kept saying things like 'are you trying to ask for help, again'… It was a military base. But when we were released to another location, the treatment changed. The Red Cross was there to welcome us, clothing was given to the children' (Iman, female migrant in Finland).

Importantly, interviews and FGDs in Sweden revealed a more complex view of the differences between humanitarian organisations and public authorities – highlighting that trust is context specific and may vary at different stages of a migrant's journey. In Sweden, participants were primarily migrants whose applications for asylum had been denied by authorities. They were vocal about their grievances with public authorities and the immigration system and also expressed a degree of distrust and dissatisfaction with humanitarian organisations in general. During interviews and FGDs, it was not always clear whether migrants were distrustful of and dissatisfied with the immigration system, with humanitarian organisations or both. The fact that migrants – particularly those involved in lengthy asylum processes – experienced frustration and vulnerabilities while awaiting decisions on asylum applications may contribute to increasing distrust and dissatisfaction towards humanitarian organisations as their needs outpace the resources available from these organisations.

Quantitative survey data revealed a critical understanding of the relationship between humanitarian organisations and public authorities. In response to the parallel questions of 'How would you describe the working relationship between the Red Cross and/or Red Crescent and the immigration authorities in your country of birth?' and 'How would you describe the working relationship between the Red Cross and/or Red Crescent and the immigration authorities in your current location?', around a quarter of migrants stated 'the Red Cross and/or Red Crescent is independent from immigration authorities' (21% and 26%, respectively) (see Figures 2 and 3).

In contrast, about 1 in 10 migrants stated 'the Red Cross and/ or Red Crescent is controlled by immigration authorities' in their country of birth (CoB) (9%) or in their current locations (10%). In addition, more than half of migrants (62%) did not know how to describe the working relationship of Red Cross and Red Crescent actors with immigration authorities in their CoB or in their current location (57%), indicating a clear need to increase awareness and understanding of the independence of Red Cross and Red Crescent actors.

Figure 2. How would you describe the working relationship between the RCRC and the immigration authorities in your country of birth?
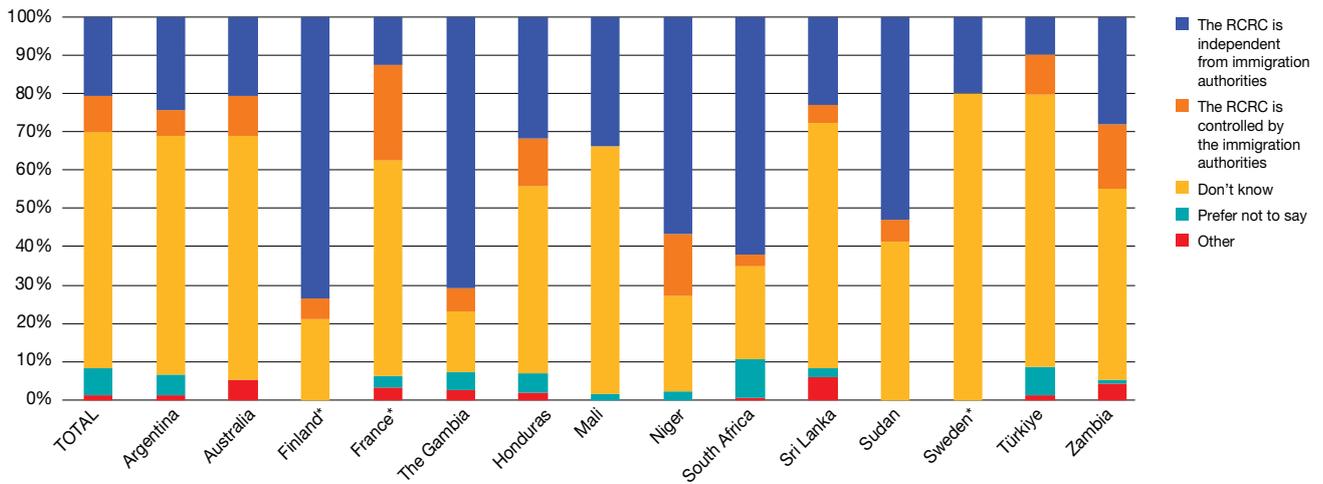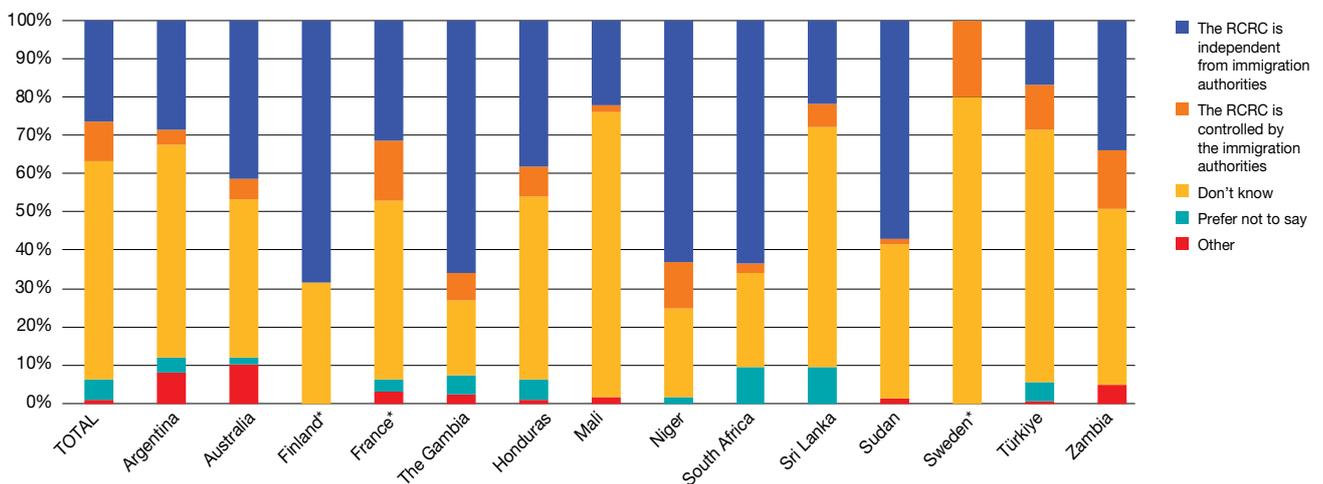

Figure 3. How would you describe the working relationship between the RCRC and the immigration authorities in your current location?

While it is not reasonable to expect all migrants – or the public in general – to have a clear understanding of the auxiliary role of National Societies to public authorities in the humanitarian field,[68] or the mandates of the ICRC and the IFRC, the onus is all Red Cross and Red Crescent actors to act at all times in accordance with the Fundamental Principles, including the principle of independence (meaning that they must retain their autonomy to act solely on the basis of need in an impartial and neutral manner). In this context, the lack of clarity among migrants as to the relationship between Red Cross and Red Crescent actors and immigration authorities, or any actual shortcomings in the way Fundamental Principles are respected, must be addressed. This is particularly urgent given growing evidence that the conflation of humanitarian and securitisation agendas hinders trust in humanitarian organisations. As discussed in Section 4, and as reflected in survey data, one quarter of migrants (25%) agreed with the statement 'migrants may be exposed to risk of detention or deportation if they seek humanitarian support or assistance'.

As shown in Figure 4, this fear was present to some extent across all countries, but it was most salient amongst migrants in Honduras (53%), Mali (62%), and Niger (72%). Notably, across all countries, it was migrants in particularly vulnerable situations who perceived they may be exposed to the risk of detention or deportation if seeking humanitarian assistance and protection. As shown in Figure 5, 48% of migrants who self-identified as deportees, 40% of those whose asylum applications had been refused, and 37% of those with an irregular status associated seeking support from humanitarian organisations with a risk of detention or deportation. In light of this, it is ever more important to ensure the independence of Red Cross and Red Crescent actors – in practice and in perception.

Figure 4. Migrants may be exposed to risk of detention or deportation if they seek humanitarian assistance and protection (% agree)
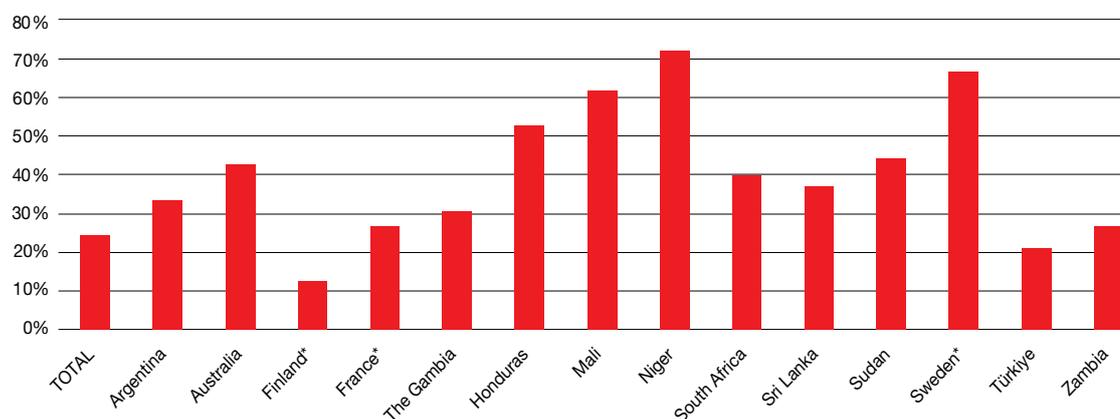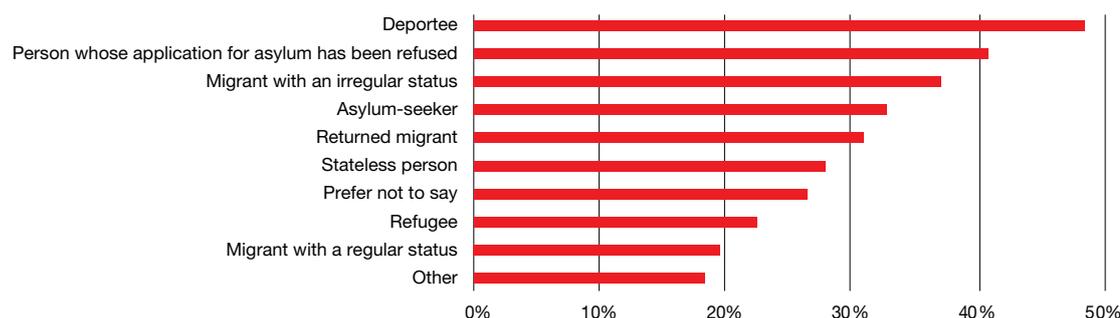

Figure 5. Migrants may be exposed to risk of detention or deportation if they seek humanitarian assistance and protection (% agree, by legal status)

By design, this study did not look into specific aspects related to migrants' trust towards humanitarian action in contexts of armed conflict.[69] However, the study's findings regarding the relationship between independence and migrants' trust in humanitarian organisations has clear implications in these contexts. As discussed in Text Box A, upholding the principle of independence is essential to building and maintaining trust with migrants and other people affected by armed conflict, even more so when the public authorities are party to the conflict.

Frontline staff and volunteers: the foundation of trust in Red Cross and Red Crescent actors

The day-to-day and face-to-face interactions of migrants with Red Cross and Red Crescent actors' staff and volunteers at the local level are critical in building and maintaining migrants' trust and willingness to seek and access humanitarian assistance and protection.

As explored further in Case Study B, migrants in interviews and FGDs emphasised the importance of Red Cross and Red Crescent actors' staff and volunteers' capacity to carry out their work with competence and integrity: by providing the humanitarian assistance and protection that was needed (and when it was needed), by responding and following up on their needs with reliability, and by being responsive to their circumstances in ways that recognise their humanity.

Text Box A: Trust in contexts of armed conflict – a perspective from the ICRC

All migrants, regardless of the reason for leaving their homes, can find themselves trapped in areas affected by armed conflict during their journey or in their country of destination or residence. In the ICRC's experience, migrants caught up in conflicts may be particularly vulnerable as they often have no local community to rely on for protection or assistance. They sometimes face hostile attitudes and stigmatisation on the part of the local population or may not have prospects for effective consular support.[a] As such, migrants may be among the civilians most affected by the consequences of the conflict and at risk of being subjected to sexual violence, arbitrary deprivation of liberty, forced recruitment, or other violations of international humanitarian law (IHL) by parties to the conflict.[b]

For humanitarian actors operating in these highly volatile settings, building and maintaining trust with the affected population – including migrants – requires investment in the capacity to actively listen to and engage with communities on the relevance, design, implementation and review of their activities. Trust also depends upon strong adherence to the humanitarian principles of impartiality, independence, and neutrality vis-à-vis all parties to the conflict. To do so in the context of ongoing armed conflict and insecurity presents distinct challenges – for instance, the circumstances of the conflict may prevent access to certain areas, and make it impossible to reach out to migrants, as well as other people affected. This limits humanitarian actors' ability to deliver an impartial and non-discriminatory response. An additional, and highly topical challenge, pertinent to establishing trust and avoiding harm in, and in the aftermath of, armed conflict, concerns the need to strictly safeguard personal and sensitive data and maintain accountability for how data is handled and secured at all times.[c]

Navigating these challenges and upholding trust in humanitarian actors in situations of armed conflict rests upon the perceived and actual independence of humanitarian organisations and an assurance that they are not acting on any authority/party's behalf and are making impartial and neutral assessments.

a   ICRC, "*Comment on the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration,*" 2017.

b   As civilians, migrants caught up in conflicts are protected under IHL. See Helen Obregón Gieseken, "*The Protection of Migrants Under International Humanitarian Law*", *International Review of the Red Cross* No. 904 (2017).

c   ICRC, "*Accountability to Affected Population Institutional Framework*," 2019; on managing personal data and information in armed conflict, see also ICRC, "*Professional Standards for Protection Work*," 2018.

Case Study B: Migrants' voices in Argentina

Argentine Red Cross provide humanitarian assistance and protection to migrants in need from many countries arriving and and travelling through its borders.

Credit: Cruz Roja Argentina

Positive relationships and interactions between Red Cross and Red Crescent actors and migrants were characterised by the competence and integrity displayed by staff and volunteers on the ground. These positive relationships and interactions were crucial to building trust.

'I had a very good experience with the Red Cross here in Argentina, and of course I trust it, because whenever I needed help, information, and other things, they gave it to me. And they always treated me very well, Ms. Tanya was always aware of my situation and did everything she could to help me' (Roberto, male migrant in Argentina).

Migrants emphasised the value of staff and volunteers creating a safe and responsive space to address their needs and those of their children, a space in which migrants' humanity was central to responses:

'…in my case, the Red Cross here in Argentina helped me. It helped me when I entered via Iguazú with my children... The way they treated us, how they played with my children when they were nervous about the situation, the warmth with which they treated us... I will always be grateful' (Mario, male migrant in Argentina).

Migrants further emphasised the importance of staff and volunteers' capacity to carry out their work with competence – for instance, by providing migrants with safe referrals and reliable and quality information:

'I remember that they also put us in contact with the other organizations that helped us… Mr. Francisco, who was *always available and helped us solve everything'* (Mario, male migrant in Argentina).

In contrast, negative interactions between migrants and staff and volunteers were characterised by disrespect and lack of empathy:

'I have an experience with the Red Cross in [another country], I was travelling and they were at the border. They gave us a shelter because we came with the children, but they spoke to us in such a bad tone that they made us feel very bad. They told us in a very rude way that we had to separate and that the women on one side and the men on the other and that whoever gets lost was not their problem. As if it were a prison and we were criminals. Those who were working there, they were humiliating people, they looked at you badly and put you down' (Lucia, female migrant in Argentina).

Such interactions can generate or reinforce mistrust and fears associated with humanitarian organisations in ways that negatively influence and impact future access to assistance and protection. As reflected by Lucia:

'After seeing how they provided help in [the transit country], I did not see another organization in another country, in fact, I travelled all the way to Argentina and did not see anything. But even if I had seen them, I don't know if I would have approached them, because of that ugly feeling of what I experienced…. I feel they would not have paid attention to me, who knows how they would have treated us… better to continue by ourselves, fewer problems for us' (Lucia, female migrant in Argentina).

The lived experience of migrants in Argentina is helpful to contextualise the results of the quantitative survey data which showed migrants across the countries studied perceived the staff and volunteers of Red Cross and Red Crescent actors to be competent in responding to their needs and to have treated them with respect and dignity. Across all countries, most migrants (72%) surveyed agreed with the statement that 'staff and volunteers from the Red Cross and/or Red Crescent are equipped to understand and respond to migrants' needs' (see Figure 6). Similarly, most migrants surveyed (85%) agreed with the statement that 'the Red Cross and/or Red Crescent treats migrants with respect and dignity' (see Figure 6). In both cases, perceptions differed across countries and while results are positive overall, it is important to note that in some contexts, almost one in three migrants surveyed had concerns about Red Cross and Red Crescent actors' ability to understand and respond to their needs or to treat them with respect and dignity. These findings underscore the importance of gathering real-time feedback from migrants in order to address and respond to concerns.

Disaggregated data based on migrants' self-reported legal status suggests that further efforts are needed to strengthen humanitarian assistance and protection to migrants whose applications for asylum have been refused, as well as those who defined their status as 'other'.

Figure 7 illustrates that these groups were least likely to agree that Red Cross and Red Crescent actors had the ability to understand and respond to their needs. Only 67% of those whose application for asylum has been refused, and 54% of those who defined their status as 'other' agreed with the statement that 'staff and volunteers from the Red Cross and/or Red Crescent are equipped to understand and respond to migrants' needs'. However, 77% and 78% respectively agreed with the statement 'the Red Cross and/or Red Crescent treats migrants with respect and dignity'.

An important finding to emerge from interviews and FGDs is the value migrants themselves place on volunteering or working for Red Cross and Red Crescent actors. As explored in Case Study C, migrants' interest in joining Red Cross and Red Crescent actors can be seen as a sign of trust in the organisation and its inclusiveness. Crucially, the inclusion of migrants through volunteer service – and potential employment – is extremely valuable not only to migrants themselves, but also to Red Cross and Red Crescent actors, as migrants with lived experience have unique insights and expertise to guide the work of humanitarian organisations in how best to respond to their priorities, needs, and strengths.[70]

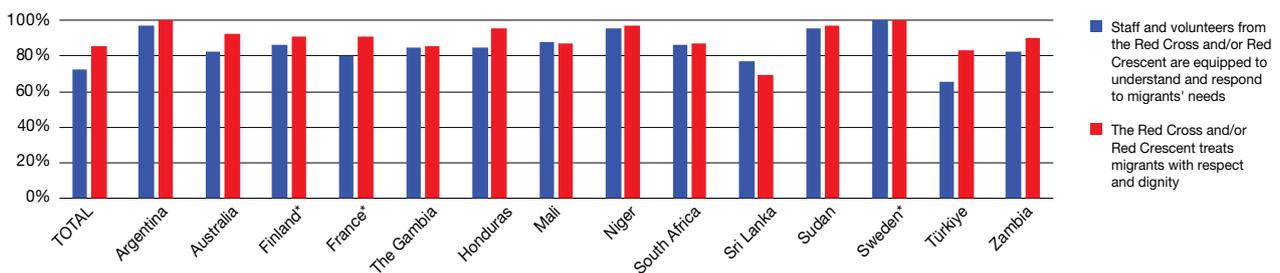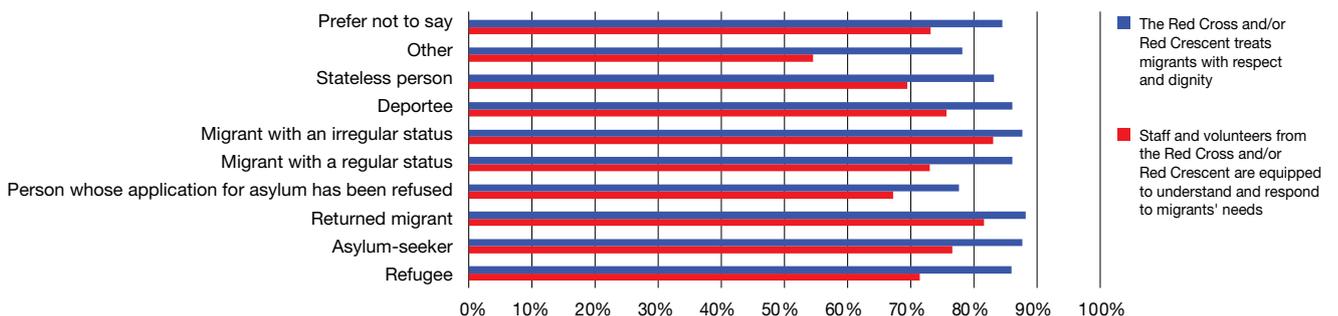Figure 6. Migrants' perspectives on the competence and integrity of RCRC (% agree)

Figure 7. Migrants' perspectives on the competence and integrity of RCRC (% agree, by legal status)

Case Study C: Migrants' voices in Australia, Finland & Sweden

Swedish Red Cross volunteers greet refugees arriving on ferries from Ukraine at Nynäshamns harbour.

Voluntary service is one of the seven Fundamental Principles of the Movement and is an essential element of how National Societies operate across the world. Positive interactions with Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers are crucial to building and maintaining trust with migrants. Equally important, many migrants interviewed in countries such as Australia and Sweden had previously volunteered, or were currently volunteering with National Societies, such as Australian Red Cross and Swedish Red Cross, while migrants in other countries (such as Finland) expressed an active wish to do so.

The act of volunteering is an indication of inclusion and trust in these organisations:

'…. where else will I go? I have no family here and I feel Red Cross is my family. I volunteer here and I feel safe. If something bad happens again to me, I'll go to Red Cross for help. It's a door that's always open and never closes for people like me. Being with Red Cross helps me remember my journey as a migrant, that it makes my life better and better, and how to continue to make my life better' (Sampa, female migrant in Australia).

Voluntary service can benefit migrants in many ways: it offers an opportunity to gain new skills, share existing ones, create new connections, and give back to the organisations that previously supported them. In some cases, volunteering can lead to employment:

'My job at Red Cross is the turning point in my life. … I come to this country as a refugee and now I support refugees when they come into Australia' (Franklin, male migrant in Australia).

For many others, particularly those without legal status or rights to work, volunteering is an important outlet to keep busy and participate.

As explained by Leila in Sweden:

'If you stay at home for years without knowing if you can stay, without a work permit, you cannot work so the only chance to get the time to pass is volunteer work' (Leila, female migrant in Sweden).

And by Salam in Finland:

'I hope that here would be voluntary action in which we could participate. I sit many hours alone at home and there is nothing to do. From the Finnish Red Cross, I'd ask them to give us something to do' (Salam, male migrant in Finland).

Creating volunteer opportunities for migrants and addressing existing barriers to participation – whether in language or culture, for example – is critical to support migrants' inclusion and participation and enables the work of the Red Cross and Red Crescent actors to be informed and guided by the lived experience of migrants.

6. Access to humanitarian assistance and protection: opportunities and barriers along the journey

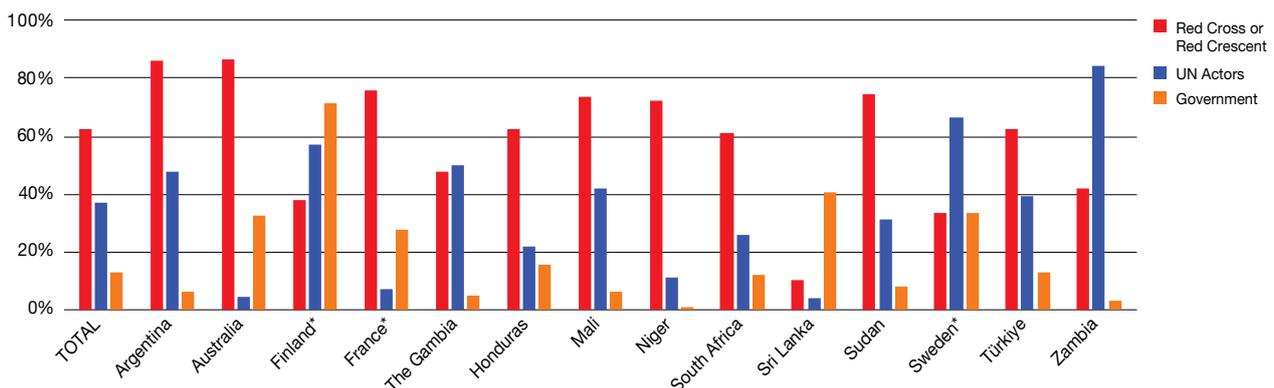## Red Cross and Red Crescent actors as a key provider of humanitarian assistance and protection

While Red Cross and Red Crescent actors are a key provider of humanitarian assistance and protection to migrants, data also provides important insights into migrants' perspectives and experiences of broader humanitarian action. The prominence of Red Cross Red Crescent actors as a provider of humanitarian assistance and protection in the data is not surprising because, as explained in Section 4, of the research sampling methods. Of those migrants who had received any form of assistance and protection during their journeys, 62% stated the support came from Red Cross and Red Crescent actors amongst other providers (see Figure 8). In countries such as Argentina, Australia, Honduras, Mali, Niger, South Africa, Sudan, and Türkiye, Red Cross and Red Crescent actors were the most common provider of humanitarian assistance and protection. Other frequently mentioned providers included United Nations (UN) actors (37%), governments (13%), local non-government organisation or community groups (9%), and family or friends (8%), while other international organisations and private individuals were represented in smaller numbers. In Zambia, where a large percentage of migrants were refugees, the main providers of humanitarian assistance and protection were UN actors, while in Sri Lanka, where a large percentage of migrants were returnees, the main provider was the government. This emphasises the important role Red Cross Red Crescent actors can continue to play in promoting and contributing to the safety, dignity and wellbeing of migrants, as well as the importance of collaborating with other local and international actors to achieve these goals.


Credit: South African Red Cross Society

A volunteer from South African Red Cross Society interviews migrants to understand their humanitarian assistance and protection needs.

Figure 8. To the best of your knowledge, who has provided you with assistance and protection?
(out of subsample who indicated they had receive assistance and protection)

Figure 9. Who would you tell other migrants to go to if they needed support and protection?
(out of entire sample regardless of whether they had receive assistance and protection or not)
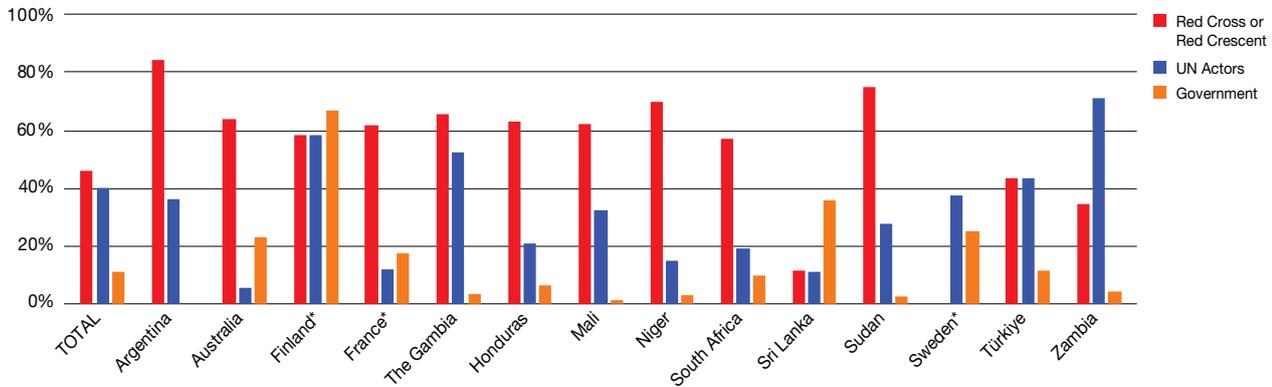
When asked 'who would you tell other migrants to go to if they needed support or assistance?', a question designed to gauge perceptions of the competence and integrity of providers of humanitarian assistance and protection, almost half of all migrants surveyed (46%) would recommend Red Cross and Red Crescent actors to other migrants in need, followed by UN actors (40%) and governments (11%) (see Figure 9). Notably, there were significant variations between countries: for instance, in countries like Australia, at least one in four migrants (28%) would refer migrants in need to other providers such as local non-government organisations or community groups, thus emphasising the importance of local actors. In countries like Mali at least one in five migrants (23%) did not know where to refer other migrants, thus emphasising the general importance of increasing engagement and knowledge about available humanitarian assistance and protection. Further investigation of this finding may point to the need for Red Cross and Red Crescent actors to consider expanding the scope of current efforts to respond to local contexts – for instance, by collaborating with local NGOs or community groups or by engaging in outreach initiatives, such as information campaigns or the recruitment of volunteers and staff with a lived experience of migration, to increase awareness and access for those in need.

Based on interviews and FGDs, migrants had mixed views on the humanitarian assistance and protection provided by Red Cross and Red Crescent actors and other humanitarian organisations. While the overall responses were positive, migrants were also very clear about the limitations of the humanitarian assistance and protection provided across all countries by all organisations. In countries as diverse as Australia, South Africa, Sweden, and Zambia, migrants in interviews and FGDs talked about what was lacking and expressed disappointment and frustration, though notably this did not seem to result in distrust:

- In Australia, migrants hoped that humanitarian assistance and protection could be provided for a longer time beyond the period of settlement; while others emphasised the need for all migrants (irrespective of their legal status) to have access to assistance and protection from humanitarian organisations.

- In South Africa, migrants expressed an expectation that humanitarian assistance and protection could be provided on a regular basis, as opposed to often uncoordinated and sparse support from various organisations.

- In Sweden, migrants expressed distrust and frustration at asking for humanitarian assistance and protection and not receiving it, while other migrants (e.g., from certain countries, ethnicities, or language groups) received help that they did not have access to.

- In Zambia, migrants highlighted that humanitarian assistance and protection does not reach all migrants in need, and that even for those who do receive it, levels of assistance and protection are inadequate to meet their basic needs.

As such, migrants expressed a clear concern that the current quantity and reach of humanitarian assistance and protection did not fully address their needs and vulnerabilities.

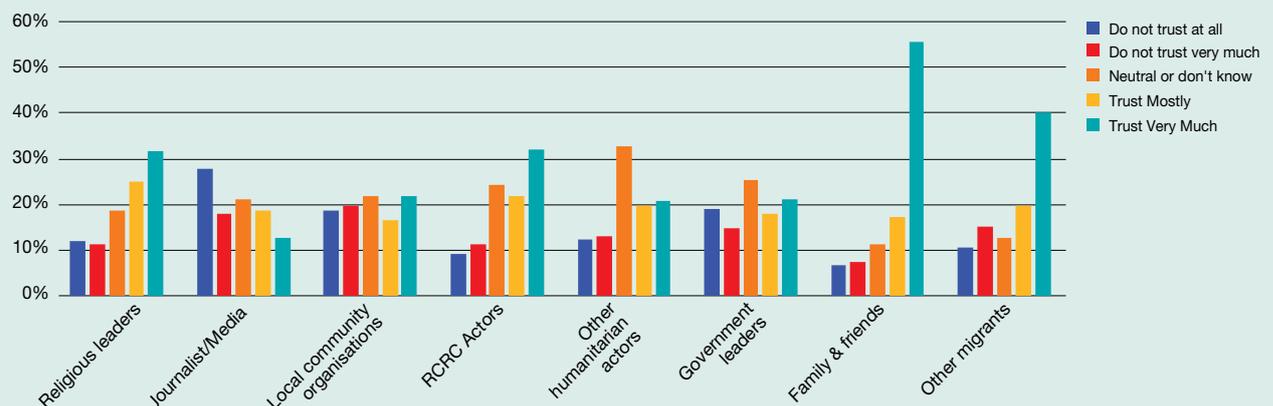# Case Study D: Migrants' voices in the Maldives

Credit: Maldivian Red Crescent

Maldivian Red Crescent teams share health information in languages that migrants understand and promote access to relevant services, to ensure everyone has access to important information about protecting themselves and their families from COVID-19, and accessing vaccinations.

Survey findings provide broader insights into who migrants trust and mistrust in the Maldives (see Figure 10). Migrants were more likely to trust family and friends (74%) to the do the right thing, followed by other migrants (61%) and religious leaders (57%). In contrast, migrants were least likely to trust journalists and the media (32%), followed by local community organisations (39%) and government leaders (40%). Red Cross and Red Crescent actors and other humanitarian organisations sat somewhere in between this spectrum: 55% of migrants surveyed either 'trust mostly' or 'trust very much' Red Cross and Red Crescent actors, while 41% either 'trust mostly' or 'trust very much' other humanitarian organisations.

However, there was also a degree of mistrust or ambivalence towards humanitarian organisations: for instance, around a quarter of migrants declared that they either 'do not trust all' or 'do not trust very much' Red Cross and Red Crescent actors (21%) or other humanitarian organisations (26%), while at least a quarter more declared a degree of ambivalence ('neutral or don't know') towards Red Cross and Red Crescent actors (25%) or towards other humanitarian organisations (33%). This resonates with the broader research finding that while trusted by many, neither Red Cross and Red Crescent actors nor other humanitarian organisations are universally trusted by migrants - trust often depends on the circumstances of their journey, their personal experiences and local contexts.

Figure 10. Maldives: how much do you trust this group to the right thing?

Legend:
- Do not trust at all
- Do not trust very much
- Neutral or don't know
- Trust Mostly
- Trust Very Much

Categories: Religious leaders, Journalist/Media, Local community organisations, RCRC Actors, Other humanitarian actors, Government leaders, Family & friends, Other migrants

Case Study D (continued)

Figure 11. Maldives: migrants' perceptions on humanitarian support and assistance

Legend:
- Do [the services provided by MRC] cover your main needs?
- Do you feel safe when accessing services from MRC (or other humanitarian actors)?
- Do you feel you are treated with respect by MRC (or other humanitarian actors)?
- Do you think the services provided by MRC (or other humanitarian actors) reach the people who need them most?
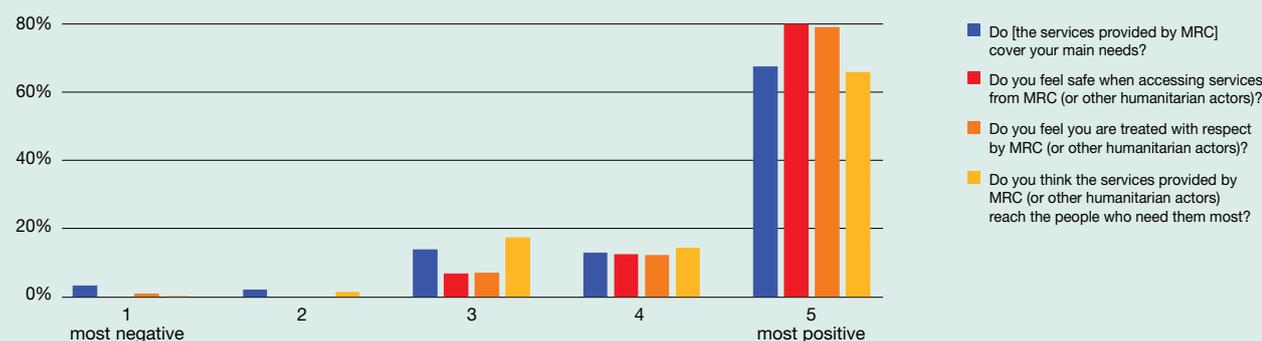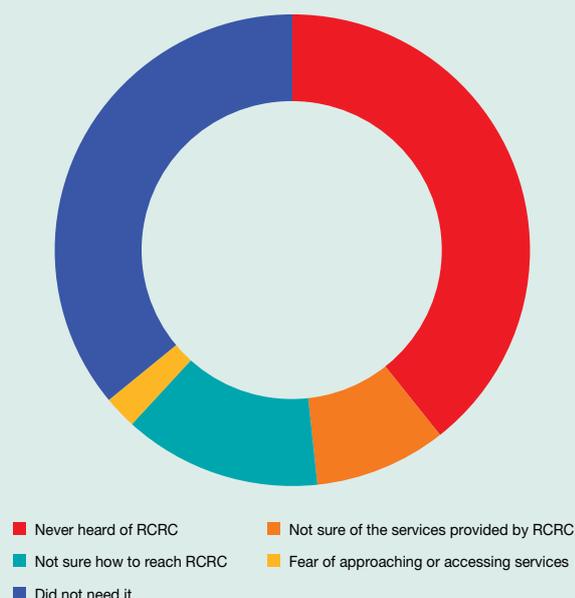
Looking into more detail into migrant's perceptions of humanitarian action, data reveals an important contradiction: while only 27% of migrants received any form of protection or assistance from Maldivian Red Crescent (MRC) (primarily in the form of access to healthcare, information, hygiene materials or food), the majority expressed a positive opinion on key aspects of humanitarian support (Figure 11). For instance, eight out of ten migrants (80%) declared that they 'always' felt treated with respect by MRC (and other humanitarian organisations) and that they 'always' felt safe when accessing services from MRC (and other humanitarian organisations). Possible explanations for this include: migrants had received assistance and protection from other organisations (and thus their perceptions on issues related to respect or safety were a reflection of those experiences); migrants had not received assistance and protection from MRC (or other humanitarian organisations) but had positive interactions or experiences in other contexts; or migrants' perceptions on humanitarian assistance and protection were a reflection of their hopes and expectations (instead of on their actual lived experience).

Lastly, as shown in Figure 12 important lessons emerged from the perspectives of those who had not received any form of assistance or protection from MRC (73%). More than a third (39%) stated they 'had never heard of MRC' as the reason why they had never received assistance. Other key factors behind limited access were also related to issues of awareness: about one in ten migrants were not sure how to reach the MRC (13%) or were unsure of the services provided by the organisation (9%).

As discussed below, this resonates with findings across other countries indicating that awareness is a key barrier to accessing humanitarian assistance and protection. This emphasises the need for further engagement with migrants to ensure everyone – irrespective of legal status– has the knowledge and information required to access humanitarian assistance and protection available when needed.

Figure 12. Maldives: If you have never received assistance from MRC, please state why not?

Legend:
- Never heard of RCRC
- Not sure how to reach RCRC
- Did not need it
- Not sure of the services provided by RCRC
- Fear of approaching or accessing services

Humanitarian assistance and protection: a trail of unmet needs

The scope of current levels and forms of humanitarian assistance and protection is further reflected in the survey data. The research tools asked separate questions about whether migrants had received any assistance or protection during their journey, at what stage this was received, and the form of assistance or protection. Migrants were separately asked 'at any stage of your journey, did you need assistance or protection but did not receive it?' with follow up questions concerning the stage of the journey and their perception of the reason they did not receive assistance or protection. While almost half (44%) of migrants surveyed reported having received some form of assistance and protection at one or more stages of their journey, more than three quarters (79%) reported needing assistance and protection at another stage but not receiving it (see Figure 13). This data reflects migrants' overall experience on receiving or needing assistance and protection from various actors. This gap raises significant questions about the reach and effectiveness of humanitarian action for migrants along migration journeys. In some countries, such as Argentina (85%) and Zambia (78%), most migrants reported having received assistance and protection at different stages of their journeys. Yet, across all countries, at least one third of migrants reported an unmet need for humanitarian assistance and protection at some point during their journey.

In countries such as Mali, Türkiye, and Sudan (see Figure 14) the unmet needs were vast, with 76%, 84%, and 76% of migrants, respectively, reporting an unmet need for humanitarian assistance and protection. Among migrants surveyed in Mali, where most migrants self-identified as returned migrants (44%) or as migrants with an irregular status (27%), unmet needs were most frequently reported while in transit (with 37% reporting an unmet need while in transit or travelling). Among migrants surveyed in Türkiye, where most migrants self-identified as refugees (65%), unmet needs were most frequently reported at their country of destination (with 49% reporting an unmet need at that stage). This was also the case in Sudan, where most migrants also self-identified as refugees (74%) (and where 37% reported an unmet need at their country of destination). Notably, across these three countries, migrants also reported an unmet need for assistance and protection in their own countries of birth (CoB), before departure or upon return. This emphasises the scale of humanitarian need among migrants in different contexts and the need for an integrated approach that addresses humanitarian needs along the entire migratory route, and irrespecitve of legal status. As discussed in Text Box A (see Section 5), these barriers to access are exacerbated for migrants in situations of armed conflict.

Figure 13. Migrants' access to humanitarian assistance and protection (from any actor, all stages of their journeys)
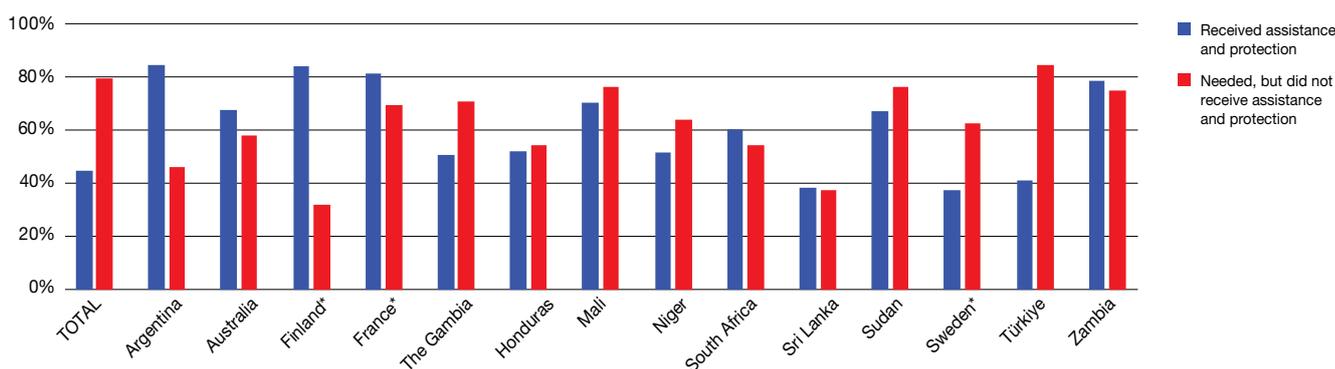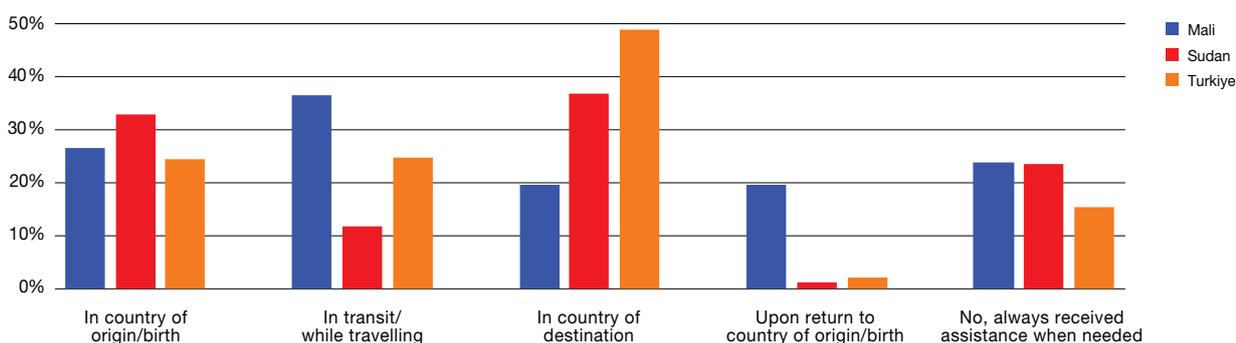

Figure 14. At any stage of your journey, have you needed assistance and protection but did not receive it? (from any actor, by stages of their journey)

The data collected across countries generally reveals that while some humanitarian assistance and protection needs are being met, there remains a trail of unmet needs across countries of origin/return, transit, and destination. A closer look at data from Zambia provides an example of the limitations of available forms of assistance and protection (see Figure 15), though it should be noted that the results from Zambia are not isolated and are used here merely for illustrative purposes. As noted above, 78% of migrants in the country reported having received assistance and protection at one stage of their journey, yet an almost equally high number (75%) reported an unmet need for assistance and protection at one stage. In the sample from Zambia, 42% of migrants reported an unmet need for assistance and protection in their CoB, while only 7% reported having received any assistance and protection there. While one in five migrants (22%) reported receiving assistance and protection while in transit or travelling, an equal number (21%) reported needing assistance and protection but not receiving it. Even in the country of destination (i.e. Zambia), and despite the work of organisations like Zambia Red Cross Society that have provided assistance and protection to more than half of migrants (54%),

more than 1 in 10 migrants (15%) continued to report an unmet need. These figures reflect feedback given by migrants in FGDs, who highlighted the limitations of humanitarian assistance and protection available to them from organisations. As told to us by Pierre, 'we have been receiving cash however, it not enough; as a result, there have been cases of malnutrition' (Pierre, male migrant in Zambia). Similarly, according to Andre, 'the assistance was not enough because we had households which did not receive support' (Andre, male migrant in Zambia).

Migrants surveyed across all countries, as well as those in interviews and FGDs provided more evidence about the extent to which humanitarian assistance and protection fell short in meeting their most immediate needs. Only 49% of migrants surveyed agreed with the statement that the assistance and protection 'provided by humanitarian organisations cover migrants' most important needs' (see Figure 16). Again, there were significant variations from country to country. While a higher percentage of migrants in Argentina (92%), Niger (92%), and Sudan (93%) agreed with the premise, a smaller percentage of migrants in the Gambia (61%), Türkiye (42%), and Zambia (56%) agreed.

Figure 15. Zambia: migrants' access to assistance and protection (by any actor, at any stage of their journey)
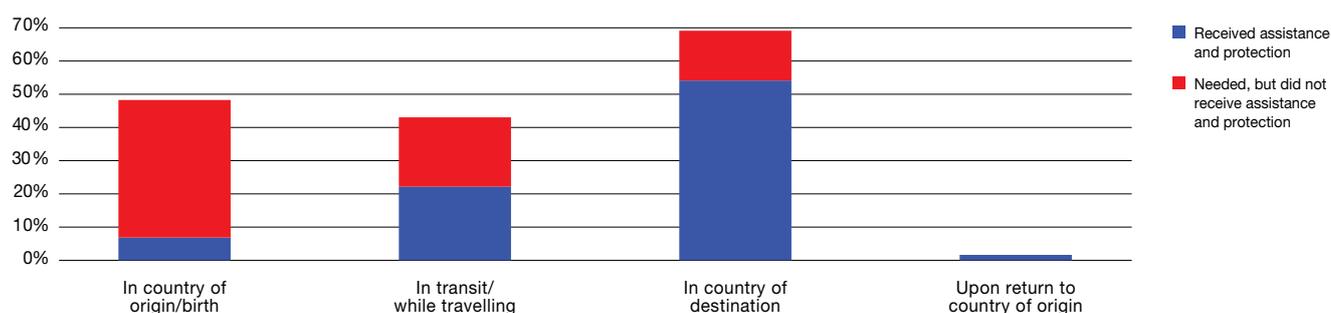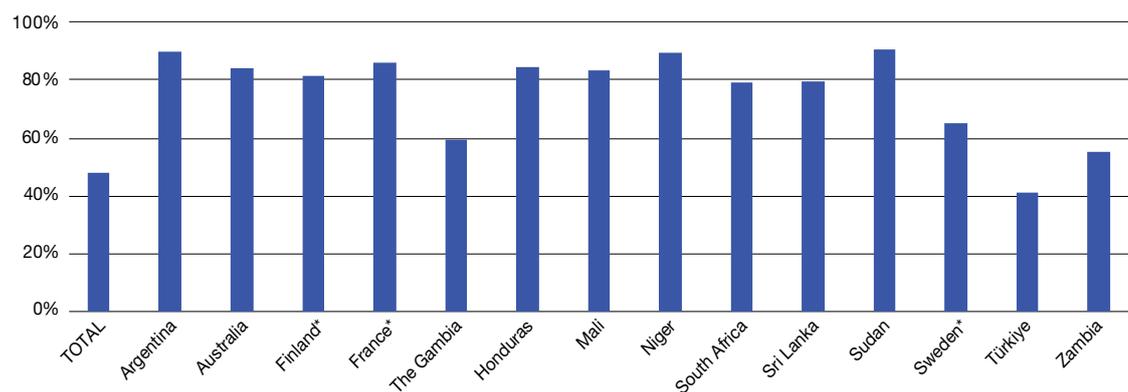

Figure 16. The assistance and protection provided by humanitarian organisations cover migrants' most important needs (% agree)
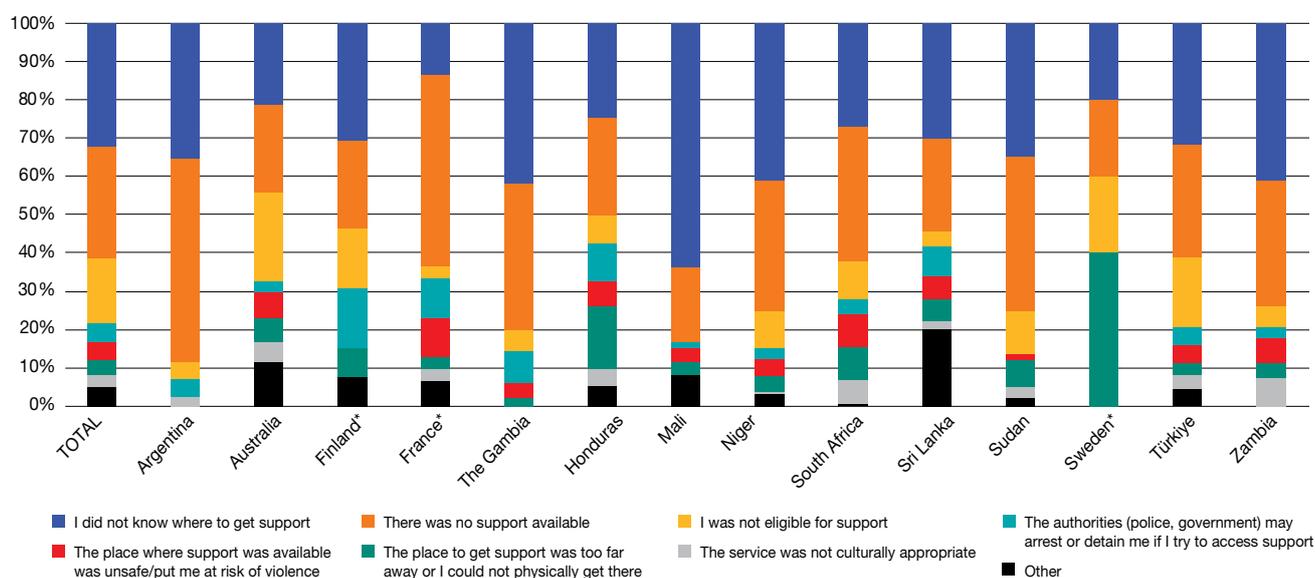
As further explained in interviews and FGDs, the unmet needs are vast. Migrants across all countries spoke of the need to expand the quantity and reach of existing forms of assistance and protection (for instance through requests for more access to clothing, shelter, mental health and psychosocial support, and hygiene and dignity kits). In addition, migrants also drew attention to the need to rethink the quality or form of assistance and protection available:

- Migrants in Argentina and Honduras spoke of the need for accurate and reliable information to reduce their vulnerability throughout their journeys (e.g. information and contact numbers on available assistance and services, and information on the legal/administrative procedures that they are required to carried out).

- Migrants in Finland spoke of the need for inclusion in the delivery of humanitarian assistance and protection to ensure access to everyone in need, provided in a way that overcomes language barriers, lack of IT skills or limited internet access.

- Migrants in South Africa and Zambia spoke of a need for forms of assistance and protection not yet available to them, such as income generating activities, livelihood programs, or the provision of farmland and agricultural inputs, that would allow them to achieve a degree of food security and economic stability.

Key barriers to access: awareness, availability, and eligibility

The data reveals a series of barriers to migrants' ability and willingness to seek and access humanitarian assistance and protection. While many barriers are site or context specific, in general the findings suggest issues relating to the fairness and inclusion of humanitarian action are of concern to migrants. The most common barriers identified by migrants were: (1) not knowing where to find humanitarian assistance and protection when needed; and (2) there was no assistance and protection available at all. As shown by survey data, 40% of migrants with an unmet need for humanitarian assistance and protection stated, when asked the reason why they had not received assistance, 'I did not know where to get support' (see Figure 17). This was followed by 37% of migrants who stated that 'there was no support available'. These two reasons – lack of awareness of and lack of availability – were the most frequently cited reasons by migrants across all countries surveyed (except for Sweden, which had a low sample size). Lack of awareness was also a key barrier identified in the Maldives (see Case Study D above) and by participants in interviews and FGDs in other countries (see Case Study E below). Another frequently cited barrier across all countries included not being eligible for support (21%). Importantly, these three barriers – awareness, availability, and eligibility – were consistently reported by migrants irrespective of their legal status.

Figure 17. What was the reason you did not receive assistance and protection?

Legend:
- I did not know where to get support
- There was no support available
- I was not eligible for support
- The authorities (police, government) may arrest or detain me if I try to access support
- The place where support was available was unsafe/put me at risk of violence
- The place to get support was too far away or I could not physically get there
- The service was not culturally appropriate
- Other

Case Study E: Migrants' Voices in Australia, Argentina and Sweden

Barriers relating to awareness, availability, and eligibility were recurrent themes in interviews and FGDs. Migrants such as Estela highlighted that a lack of awareness about where to access support and assistance can increase feelings of loneliness and helplessness:

'I believe that the main obstacle that a migrant can have in not receiving help is precisely not knowing where to go. It is the ignorance that there are entities that can help us and where to find them. And that is the most difficult thing for a migrant, because you feel alone and do not know where to go' (Estela, female migrant in Argentina).

As noted by migrants such as Farah, not having access to accurate and reliable information not only hinders the ability of migrants to access support and assistance, but also forces them to rely on other (sometimes less credible) individuals or networks:

'…any sort of help really counts… everyone should have access to credible information provided by these organisations. Because as a migrant, we suffer from dodgy [unreliable] information provided to us by migration agents, for example' (Farah, female migrant in Australia).

Migrants in interviews and FGDs across all countries lamented the lack of availability of assistance and protection at one stage or another of their journeys. In the example of migrants who travelled across South America to reach Argentina, migrants spoke about crossing countries without ever seeing or encountering humanitarian organisations (including Red Cross Red Crescent actors). However, in other countries, migrants such as Zara said that even when in contact with organisations, support and assistance may not be available:

'Our situation is difficult, in the beginning all organisations helped, but now, they have all forgotten about us, no one care about our situation anymore' (Zara, female migrant in Sweden).

Issues of availability are intrinsically related to the limited quantity, reach, and forms of humanitarian assistance: even in cases where there is assistance and support in principle, it may not be provided in sufficient quantities to fully meet the needs of migrants.

The question of eligibility was closely linked to perceptions of discrimination or unfairness based on migrant's nationality and/or legal status. For instance, there was a view that certain groups – Venezuelans in the Americas, and Ukrainians in Europe – were eligible for forms of support and assistance that were unavailable to others:

'… Everyone has seen how different they are treating us. I get really sad when I see people from Ukraine as they are people like us, they too have left their country due to war, just like us and they are not the guilty ones' (Ahmet, male migrant in Sweden).

Migrants perceived this to be a biased and discriminatory response in the actions not only of public authorities, but also of humanitarian organisations, which in turn impacted their trust:

'And because of what these compatriots told me about these organizations… that they didn't help Colombians on the road because they could only help Venezuelans… [because of that] I wouldn't ask the organizations for help, I really wouldn't. I would not feel comfortable or calm, on the contrary…I would feel that just because I am Colombian they would not help me…' (Antonio, male migrant in Argentina).

Likewise, and aside from voicing concerns about discrimination based on language and gender, migrants such as Elizabeth spoke of their legal status as a barrier to eligibility:

'People arrive on certain types of visas, but it doesn't tell the whole story. Just because we arrived on a different [non-humanitarian] visa doesn't mean there wasn't trauma. It would've meant so much if there was anything – 'welcome to Australia', at least some information to find out how the community works, how do I get involved in anything… It felt like it was just us… I felt like there was a wall around us. My family were all in different stages of life, different circumstances. We were all trying to connect to this new place, without support networks, without any information' (Elizabeth, migrant in Australia).

It is important to contextualise concerns over eligibility, discrimination, and unfairness. Many humanitarian organisations work under conditions where the need for humanitarian assistance and protection from diverse groups of migrants are increasingly vast but their resources are slim in comparison.

Credit: The Gambia Red Cross Society

The Gambia Red Cross Society provides information, food, water to migrants and helps them reconnect with family at fixed and mobile Humanitarian Service Points as part of the 'Assistance and Protection of the Most Vulnerable Migrants in West Africa' project, in partnership with Spanish Red Cross and funded by the European Union Trust Fund.

This assessment of key barriers to migrants' ability and willingness to seek and access humanitarian assistance and protection underscores a key message from the study: that humanitarian organisations – including the Movement - cannot address the humanitarian needs of migrants alone. Humanitarian organisations are faced with a reality of increasing humanitarian needs amongst migrants across the world. Migrants across all countries continue to face risks of death, violence, abuse, and violations of their fundamental rights along the entire migratory route, are not guaranteed effective access to essential services (irrespective of their legal status), and/or face the risk of detention. As recalled by migrants in transit like Miguel:

> ❛ *During the journey I faced obstacles from the police because they ask for documentation, safe conduct letters and sometimes money, many fellow migrants have been assaulted by criminal groups, and the assistance received by the migration authorities is very little for the migrant population' (Miguel, male migrant in Honduras).*

Or as recalled by migrants like Alisha and Ahmet, who are awaiting the outcome of the asylum application process: 'You can only breathe without a personal number with the last four digits, you cannot do anything else'(Alisha, female migrant in Sweden) and 'if my daughter and son have finished High School and want to study at a university but the law says no, you are not allowed as you do not have a personal number, what can the organisations do about that?' (Ahmet, male migrant in Sweden).[71]

Many migrants demonstrated a keen awareness of the limits of humanitarian action – as put sharply by Zamia, 'it is not the will, but the ability that is the issue' (Zamia, female migrant in Sweden). Yet, many others expressed disappointment and frustration with humanitarian organisations for their perceived inability to support them and others in need. There is an urgent need for further engagement in advocacy and humanitarian diplomacy to ensure that States respect their obligations under international law and strengthen efforts to prevent and alleviate human suffering and address the humanitarian assistance and protection needs of migrants - as captured by the voices and experiences of migrants in this study.[72]

7. Conclusions

This report explored migrants' perspectives on and trust in humanitarian action by assessing migrants' perceptions of the competence, integrity, fairness and inclusion of humanitarian organisations, including Red Cross and Red Crescent actors.

The findings highlight that trust is complex and dynamic, that it cannot be assumed; it is difficult to measure, and yet still it needs to be built and maintained.

The findings confirm, and expand on, existing evidence on the intersection of trust, migration, and humanitarian organisations. Findings highlight the key role of information and awareness in facilitating or hindering migrants' access to humanitarian support and assistance. Whether related to migrants' familiarity with an organisation's emblem or logo, or to their understanding and awareness of the services available to them (and how and where to access them), relevant, accessible and reliable information is key to ensure fairness and inclusion in the provision of humanitarian assistance and protection.

Findings also highlight that humanitarian organisations – including Red Cross Red Crescent actors – are not universally trusted by migrants. In particular, the perceived or actual cooperation of humanitarian organisations with public authorities linked to immigration enforcement has the potential to hinder migrants' trust in humanitarian organisations and may dissuade migrants from seeking humanitarian assistance and protection when needed. Likewise, factors such as face-to-face interactions between migrants and frontline staff and volunteers – and the competence and integrity with which they behave - can build or break trust with migrants.

There is a need to further strengthen the relationship between migrants and humanitarian organisations, by actively listening and engaging with migrants and responding to their needs. Findings revealed a trail of unmet needs along migrants' journeys. This not only emphasises the importance of an integrated approach that addresses humanitarian needs along the entire migratory route, but also the importance of rethinking the quality or form of support and assistance available to migrants. More fundamentally, findings also point to the importance of placing migrants at the centre and actively engaging migrants – as staff or volunteers – and to trust their unique insights and expertise to guide the work of humanitarian organisations in how best to respond to their priorities, needs, and strengths.

Multiple findings across the data underscore the importance of further engagement in advocacy and humanitarian diplomacy to ensure that States enable principled humanitarian action, strengthen their efforts to prevent and alleviate human suffering, and address the humanitarian assistance and protection needs of all migrants, irrespective of legal status.

It is only by placing migrants at the centre of humanitarian action related to migration and by being accountable to their needs, recommendations and concerns that trust in humanitarian organisations can be built and maintained. As told by Pamela during one of the FGDs:

> ' *I would recommend the Red Cross, of course. Especially after this meeting, right? I think that the fact that we are here, that you listen to us, listen to our experiences makes us feel that they really care about us and that they want to help'* (Pamela, female migrant in Argentina).

More than 16,000 migrants contributed their time, lived experience, and knowledge to this report. The onus is now on Red Cross and Red Crescent actors and other humanitarian organisations to take further action.

8. Recommendations

Credit: Jill Coulon

Project SALAM, French Red Cross

The findings presented in this report can be used to inform approaches to increase the effectiveness of humanitarian interventions and contribute to discussions about a principled approach to humanitarian action that builds trust. This report makes the following recommendations to humanitarian organisations, including the Movement (noting that such recommendations should be enacted with attention to regional and national contexts):

1. **Uphold the principle of independence and take action to communicate when, where and in what context humanitarian organisations are cooperating with public authorities.**

Perceptions of independence matter for humanitarian organisations just as much as independence itself. Being seen as independent is critical to ensure and facilitate access. The research indicates that migrants – particularly those who have experienced deportation, or are living with an irregular status - will not seek humanitarian assistance and protection if they believe that doing so might place them at risk of arrest, detention or deportation. Humanitarian organisations must remain independent and be perceived as such. This means ensuring the protection of data, avoiding involvement in the implementation of State's migration-related policies, and carefully considering engagement in processes such as returns and implications for independence (real or perceived).

2. **Improve migrants' effective access to understandable, relevant, and reliable information on services, protection, assistance, and support available along their journeys.**

The findings indicate that migrants' limited awareness of services and information, as well as the limited availability and restrictions on eligibility, prevent access to humanitarian assistance and protection at various stages of their journey. Given that migrants have moved between countries and across borders, it is important to communicate information about their rights, and about services and supports available across countries of origin (for prospect migrants to be able to prepare for the journey where feasible), transit, destination, and return, along migratory routes. It is important to consider the form in which information is shared (i.e. taking account languages, ages, etc.) and the means of communication available to migrants along their journeys, taking into account a 'do no harm' approach with respect the information-sharing tools and self-protection messages for migrants. Humanitarian organisations should communicate across borders and consider cross-border models of coordination and collaboration along the same route that can provide information to migrants at various stages of their journey, thereby facilitating awareness of and access to support and assistance. This will also ensure more comparable services provided by humanitarian organisations, such as the Movement, and other local and international organisations, to support continuity in meeting migrants' humanitarian needs throughout their journeys.

3. **Ensure humanitarian action is inclusive, responsive to local contexts and enables the participation of migrants in decision-making processes.**

The research outlines the needs of migrants vary greatly depending on their situations, their journeys, the countries where they reside and the local context. To respond to these varied needs and perspectives and to reach the most vulnerable, humanitarian organisations must ensure the participation of migrants in the design and evaluation of humanitarian interventions and in relevant decision-making processes. The research also underscores the importance of working with local organisations connected with migrants and communities, to build trust and increase the potential reach, quality, and quantity of humanitarian assistance and protection.

4. **Invest in staff and volunteer diversity – engaging people with a lived experience of migration – as well as in training to ensure competence and integrity.**

Staff and volunteers are crucial to building trust among migrants – their competence and integrity, as well as their adherence to the Fundamental Principles – at the local level can build or hinder trust, impacting migrants' current and future decisions to seek help support and assistance when needed. Those with lived experience understand the realities of migrants' journeys and have significant knowledge to share which can inform the operations of humanitarian organisations. The research demonstrates that migrants' experiences are varied and their insights critical to informing the work of humanitarian organisations. It also underscores the interest of migrants to join humanitarian organisations as staff and volunteers. Furthermore, to overcome distrust and barriers associated to legal status or language, a greater number of diverse staff and volunteers should be engaged and those working on migration-related humanitarian interventions should have a lived experience of migration.

5. **Invest and engage in evidence-based humanitarian diplomacy on migrants' needs and vulnerabilities and a principled approach to humanitarian action.**

Humanitarian organisations have a responsibility to advocate for the needs of the most vulnerable. Engaging in dialogue with States based on a principled humanitarian approach to migration – underscoring the needs and protection risks affecting migrants and possible solutions to prevent and respond to these – is necessary to prevent or minimise the humanitarian impacts of restrictive laws, policies and practices and to ensure all migrants, irrespective of status, can live in safety and dignity. In many cases, laws, policies and practices may create or increase risks migrants face along the route and upon arrival in countries of destination. Using data and evidence to inform States of the humanitarian imperative with respect to migrants' needs and to advocate for States to enable a principled approach to humanitarian action is essential.

Appendix 1: Summary of research tools

The following table provides an overview of the questions contained in the research tools developed for this project. The project created slightly different tools to accommodate the different modalities of the face-to-face survey, online survey, focus group discussions (FGD) and one-to-one interviews.

Standard terminology was used (see Terminology section of the report) across all tools and explained to all respondents before and throughout their participation.

The demographic questions for all tools were asked using standard multiple-choice questions (including 'don't know' and/or 'prefer not to say' as relevant). Questions in the survey tools for all other categories were presented with standard multiple-choice answers that included 'don't know' and/or 'prefer not to say' and/or 'other, please specify' as relevant. Similar questions were asked as open-ended questions in the FGD and interview tools. Tools were available in multiple languages.

Code: Face-to-face survey (S); Online Survey (O); FGD questions (F); Interview questions (I)

Category	Tool type
Demographic Information	
• Age • Gender • Country of citizenship and/or birth • Religion • Number and location of children • Primary occupation • Disabilities • Reason for leaving country of citizenship and/or birth • Time since leaving country of citizenship and/or birth • Length of time in present country • Situation in present location (transit/destination/return) • Legal status *(note: the categories and responses will not be made publicly available in any way that might enable identification of migrants in particular locations)*	S, O, F, I
Humanitarian Support or Assistance	
• At any stage (origin/transit/destination/return) was humanitarian support or assistance received? In which country/countries? • What forms of humanitarian support or assistance were received? • At any stage (origin/transit/destination/return) was humanitarian support or assistance needed but not available? In which country/countries? • What were the reasons humanitarian support or assistance was not received? • Who provided the humanitarian support or assistance (category and organisation)? • Who (category) should other migrants to go to if they needed support or assistance? Why?	S, O, F, I
• Experiences with people or organisations that provided humanitarian support or assistance. • Likelihood of sharing information relating to migration status, journey, or personal circumstances. • Desirable forms of support or assistance that would enhance safety and dignity.	F, I

Category	Tool type
Red Cross and Red Crescent actors	
• Reaction to Red Cross and Red Cescent emblems • Independence from immigration authorities	S, O, I
• Capability of staff and volunteers to understand and respond to migrants' needs • Likelihood of migrants being treated with respect and dignity • Likelihood of migrants feeling safe when accessing support and assistance • Likelihood that information will be kept confidential • Assessment of whether humanitarian support and assistance is provided to the most vulnerable • Assessment of whether humanitarian support and assistance is provided to all people without discrimination based on citizenship, ethnicity, migration status, religion, gender, sexuality or other identity *(note: respondents who disagreed were asked about types of discrimination)* • Assessment of comfort in making a complaint or suggestion	S, O
Humanitarian organisations in general	
• Assessment of whether support and assistance provided covers migrants' most important needs *(note: respondents who disagreed were asked about unmet needs)* • Assessment of whether information received from the humanitarian organisations is helpful and accurate *(note: respondents who disagreed were asked why)* • Assessment of whether information received from government sources is helpful and accurate *(note: respondents who disagreed were asked why)* • Likelihood of migrants feeling safe when accessing support and assistance • Likelihood of migrants being exposed to risk of detention or deportation if they seek humanitarian support or assistance • Assessment of whether the opinion or preferences of migrants are heard by humanitarian organisations • Assessment of whether humanitarian support or assistance is provided in a way that respects migrants' culture, religious beliefs and identity	S, O
• Assessment of whether humanitarian organisations act in the best interests of migrants • Likelihood of approaching a humanitarian organisation for support or assistance in future • Suggestions as to ways humanitarian organisations can better support migrants	F, I

Appendix 2: Data collected by participating National Societies
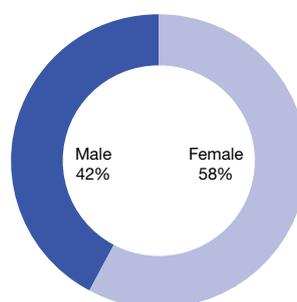
Argentine Red Cross

Research and locations

FGDs, face-to-face surveys and online surveys were conducted in the north of the country in the cities of San Salvador de Jujuy and Salta.
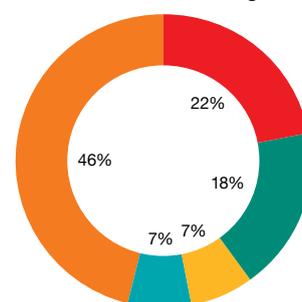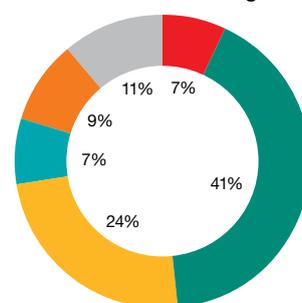
Number of participants

107 migrants in total, including 20 participants in FGDs, 69 participants in face-to-face surveys and 18 participants in online surveys.

Key demographics

Gender

Male 42%
Female 58%

Main reason for leaving CoB

22%
18%
7%
7%
46%

Australian Red Cross

Research and locations

Interviews, FGDs, face-to-face surveys and online surveys were conducted across the country, including in the cities and towns of Brisbane, Wollongong, Wagga Wagga and Katherine.

Number of participants

99 migrants in total, including 20 participants in interviews and FGDs, 21 participants in face-to-face surveys and 58 participants in online surveys.

Key demographics

Gender

Male 23%
Female 77%

Main reason for leaving CoB

11% 7%
9%
7%
41%
24%
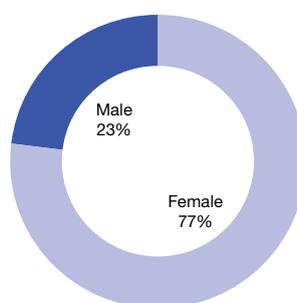
Finnish Red Cross

Research and locations

Interviews, FGDs, face-to-face surveys and online surveys were conducted across the country, including in the cities of Helsinki, Pori, and Tampere.
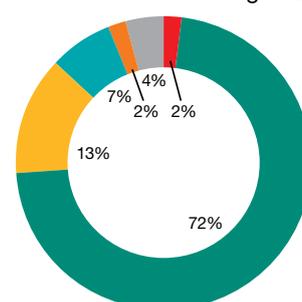
Number of participants

46 migrants in total, including 18 participants in interviews and FGDs, 20 participants in face-to-face surveys and 8 participants in online surveys.

Key demographics

Gender

2%
Prefer not to say
Male 61%
Female 37%

Main reason for leaving CoB

4%
7%
2% 2%
13%
72%

■ Employment or work ■ Forced displacement ■ Marriage, family reunification or family formation ■ No response ■ Other ■ Study, education or training
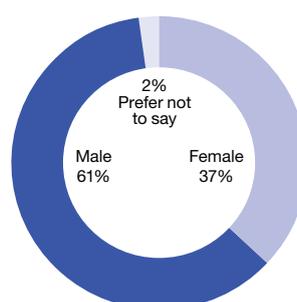
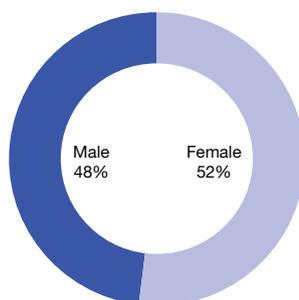## French Red Cross

Research and locations

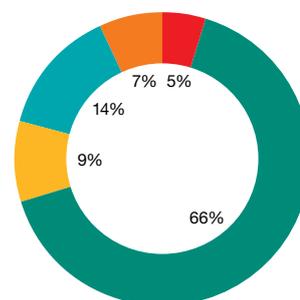Face-to-face and online surveys conducted across France.

Number of participants

44 migrants in total, including 14 participants in face-to-face surveys and 30 participants in online surveys.

Key demographics

Gender

Male 48%
Female 52%

Main reason for leaving CoB

7% 5%
14%
9%
66%

The Gambia Red Cross Society

Research and locations

Face-to-face and online surveys conducted in the administrative regions of: Kanifing Municipality; Banjul; West Coast Region; Lower River Region; North Bank Region; Central River Region; and Upper River Region.

Number of participants

91 migrants in total, including 81 participants in face-to-face surveys and 10 participants in online surveys.

Key demographics

Gender

Female 15%
Male 85%

Main reason for leaving CoB

7%
5% 2% 2%
84%
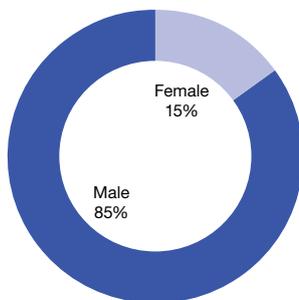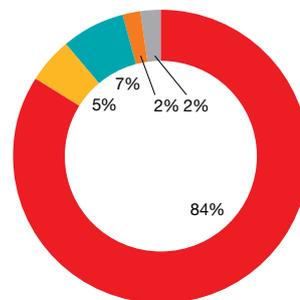
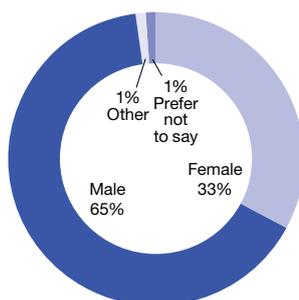## Honduran Red Cross

Research and locations

FGDs, face-to-face surveys and online surveys were conducted in city of Choluteca (in the south of the country) and the town of Omoa (in the north).
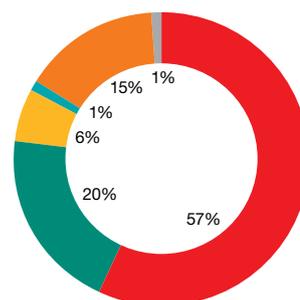
Number of participants

142 migrants in total, including 14 participants in FGDs, 79 participants in face-to-face surveys and 49 participants in online surveys.

Key demographics

Gender

1% Other
1% Prefer not to say
Male 65%
Female 33%

Main reason for leaving CoB

15% 1%
1%
6%
20%
57%

■ Employment or work   ■ Forced displacement   ■ Marriage, family reunification or family formation   ■ No response   ■ Other   ■ Study, education or training
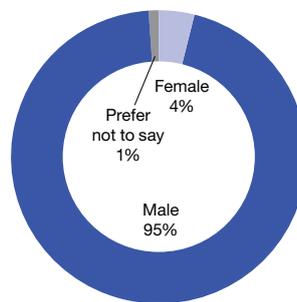
Maldivian Red Crescent

Research and locations

Face-to-face surveys were conducted as part of a larger needs assessment. Surveys were conducted across the Central, Southern and Northern regions.

Number of participants

132 migrants in total, including 132 participants in face-to-face surveys.

Key demographics

Gender

Female 4%
Prefer not to say 1%
Male 95%

Main reason for leaving CoB

No country data available on Reason for Leaving CoB
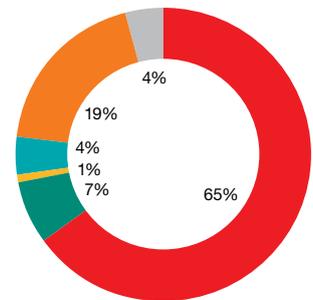
Mali Red Cross

Number of participants

74 migrants in total, including 62 participants in face-to-face surveys and 12 participants in online surveys.

Key demographics

Gender

Female 7%
Male 93%

Main reason for leaving CoB
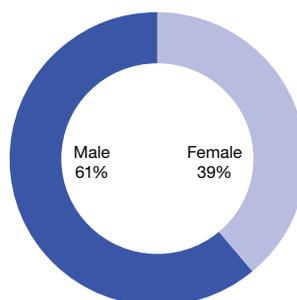
4%
19%
4%
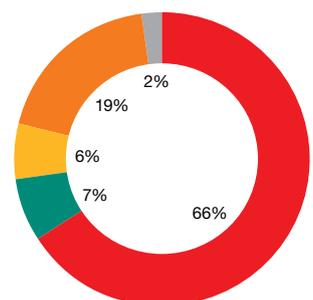1%
7%
65%
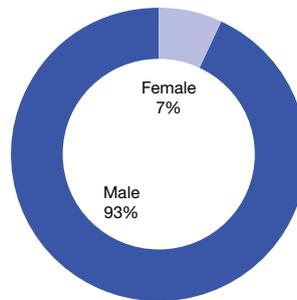
Niger Red Cross

Number of participants

235 migrants in total, including 231 participants in face-to-face surveys and 4 participants in online surveys.

Key demographics

Gender

Male 61%
Female 39%

Main reason for leaving CoB

2%
19%
6%
7%
66%

■ Employment or work ■ Forced displacement ■ Marriage, family reunification or family formation ■ No response ■ Other ■ Study, education or training

South African Red Cross Society
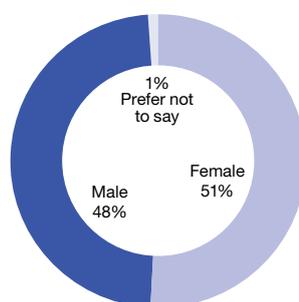
Research and locations

FGDs, face-to-face surveys and online surveys were conducted across the country, including in the informal settlement of Springbok (in the centre of the country) and the town of Musina (in the north).
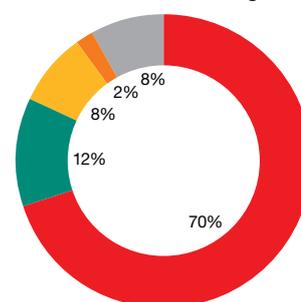
Number of participants

1078 migrants in total, including 65 participants in interviews and FGDs, 997 participants in face-to-face surveys and 16 participants in online surveys.

Key demographics

Gender

1%
Prefer not
to say

Male
48%

Female
51%

Main reason for leaving CoB

8%
2%
8%
12%
70%

Sri Lankan Red Cross
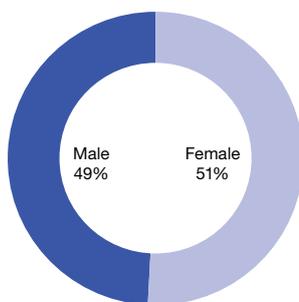
Research and locations

Interviews, FGDs and face-to-face surveys were conducted across the country, including in the towns and cities of Batticaloa, Ampara, Puttalam, Kandy, Colombo, Gampha, Kalutara, and Kurunegala.
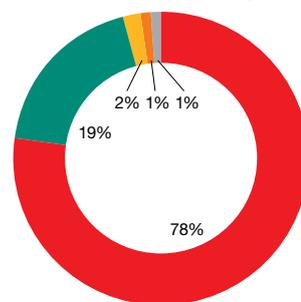
Number of participants

168 migrants in total, including 37 in interviews and FGDs and 128 in face-to-face surveys.

Key demographics

Gender

Male
49%

Female
51%

Main reason for leaving CoB

2% 1% 1%
19%
78%

Sudanese Red Crescent Society
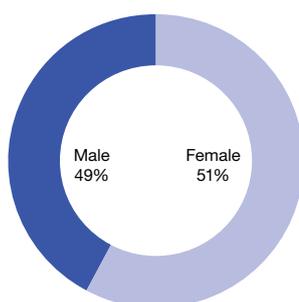
Research and locations

Face-to-face surveys and online surveys were conducted in the locality of Dongola (in Northern State).

Number of participants

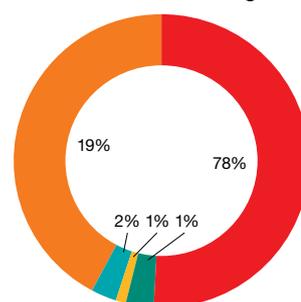78 migrants in total, including 75 participants in face-to-face surveys and 3 participants in online surveys.

Key demographics

Gender

Male
49%

Female
51%

Main reason for leaving CoB

19%
78%
2% 1% 1%

■ Employment or work ■ Forced displacement ■ Marriage, family reunification or family formation ■ No response ■ Other ■ Study, education or training
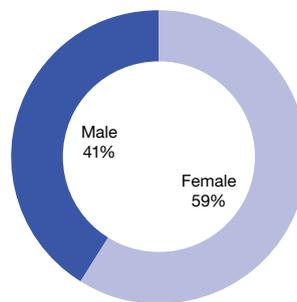
Swedish Red Cross

Research and locations

Interviews were conducted online and face-to-face and included individuals residing in the following cities: Landskrona, Helsingborg, Gothenburg, and Ystad.
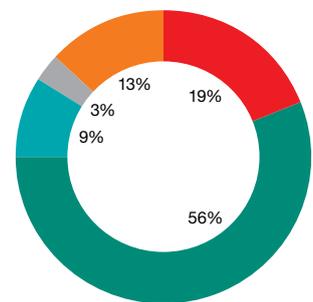
Number of participants

32 migrants in total, including 21 participants in interviews and FGDs and 11 participants in online surveys.

Key demographics

Gender

Male 41%
Female 59%

Main reason for leaving CoB

19%
13%
3%
9%
56%

Turkish Red Crescent Society
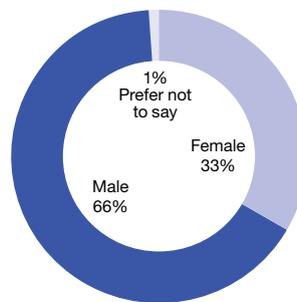
Research and locations

Face-to-face surveys and online surveys were conducted online and in the towns and cities of Adana, Bursa, Çanakkale, Gaziantep, Hatay, Istanbul, Izmir, Kocaeli, Konya, Mardin and Mersin.

Number of participants

10,126 migrants in total, including 48 participants in face-to-face surveys and 10,078 participants in online surveys.
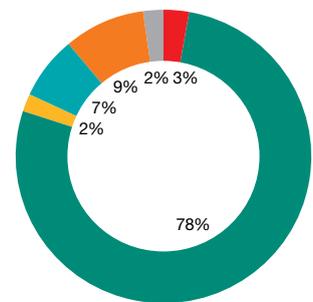
Key demographics

Gender

1% Prefer not to say
Female 33%
Male 66%

Main reason for leaving CoB

2% 3%
9%
7%
2%
78%

Zambia Red Cross Society

Research and locations

FGDs, face-to-face surveys and online surveys were conducted online and in the settlements of Maheba (in the northwest of the country) and Mantapala (in the north).

Number of participants

172 migrants in total, including 30 participants in FGDs, 129 participants in face-to-face surveys and 13 participants in online surveys.

Key demographics

Gender

2% Other
1% Prefer not to say
Female 51%
Male 47%

Main reason for leaving CoB

8% 4%
4% 1%
1%
82%

■ Employment or work ■ Forced displacement ■ Marriage, family reunification or family formation ■ No response ■ Other ■ Study, education or training
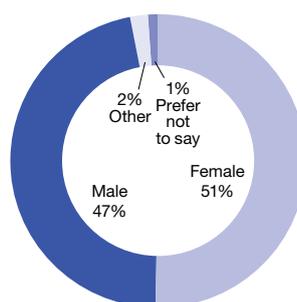
Endnotes

1. 33rd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, "Summary Report from Commission III: Trust in Humanitarian Action," 2019.

2. Agencies that provide support and assistance to migrants in need in accordance with the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. There are a great many differences between various agencies working from the local to global level. Based on the research questions for this project it was necessary to use a general term to facilitate data collection in different countries and contexts.
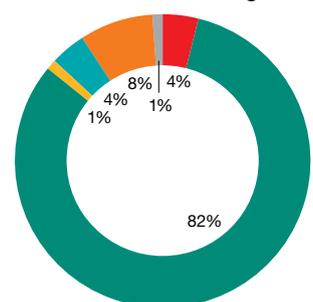
3. The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is made up of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the National Societies, and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

4. Independent Monitoring, Research and Evidence Facility (IMREF), "Exploring Migrants' Trust in Humanitarian Organisations," 2021,; Ida Vammen et al., "Does Information Save Migrants' Lives? Knowledge and Needs of West African Migrants En Route to Europe," 2021.

5. This refers to any combination of the components of the Movement. This term is used to increase the accessibility of this report to readers unfamiliar with the structure of the Movement. Research participants were not asked to specify which component of the Movement they received support from or interacted with throughout their journeys.

6. The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is comprised of the world's 192 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

7. Movement messages on the Global Compact for Migration: From Words to Action

8. 33rd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, Summary Report from Commission III: Trust in Humanitarian Action," 2019.

9. In line with the approach of the Movement, this report uses a broad description of migrants, to encompass all people who leave or flee their home to seek safety or better prospects abroad, and who may be in distress and need of protection or humanitarian assistance. Refugees and asylum seekers, who are entitled to specific protection under international law, are included in this description.

10. Securitisation can be described as 'the repositioning of areas of regular politics into the realm of security by increasingly using narratives of threat and danger aimed at justifying the adoption of extraordinary measures'. In terms of migration, this includes but is not limited, to the political construction of certain migrants as a security issue and a threat to stability and living standards. For more see: Mixed Migration Centre (MMC), "The ever-rising securitisation of mixed migration," 2019.

11. Independent Monitoring, Research and Evidence Facility (IMREF), "Exploring Migrants' Trust in Humanitarian Organisations," 2021; Ida Vammen et al., "Does Information Save Migrants' Lives? Knowledge and Needs of West African Migrants En Route to Europe," 2021.

12. Independent Monitoring, Research and Evidence Facility (IMREF), "Exploring Migrants' Trust in Humanitarian Organisations"; Vammen et al., "Does Information Save Migrants' Lives?"

13. See for instance: Dennis Dijkzeul and Claude Iguma Wakenge, "Doing Good, but Looking Bad? Local Perceptions of Two Humanitarian Organisations in Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo," Disasters 34, no. 4 (October 2010): 1139–70; Saroj Jayasinghe, "Erosion of Trust in Humanitarian Agencies: What Strategies Might Help?," Global Health Action 4, no. 1 (December 2011): 8973.

14. See for instance: Sébastien Bachelet, "'Wasting Mbeng': Adventure and Trust Amongst Sub-Saharan Migrants in Morocco," Ethnos 84, no. 5 (October 20, 2019): 849–66; Ara Jo, "The Effect of Migration on Trust in Communities of Origin," Economics Bulletin 39, no. 2 (2019): 1571–85; Eveliina Lyytinen, "Refugees' 'Journeys of Trust': Creating an Analytical Framework to Examine Refugees' Exilic Journeys with a Focus on Trust," Journal of Refugee Studies 30, no. 4 (December 1, 2017): 489–510.

15. Participating National Societies include: Argentine Red Cross, Australian Red Cross, Finnish Red Cross, French Red Cross, The Gambia Red Cross Society, Honduran Red Cross, Maldivian Red Crescent, Mali Red Cross, Niger Red Cross, Turkish Red Crescent Society, South African Red Cross Society, Sri Lanka Red Cross, Sudanese Red Crescent, Swedish Red Cross, and Zambia Red Cross Society.

16. See Diego Gambetta, "Can We Trust Trust?," in Trust: Making and Breaking Cooperative Relationships (Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 213–38; Oliver Bakewell, "Uncovering Local Perspectives on Humanitarian Assistance and Its Outcomes," Disasters 24, no. 2 (June 2000): 103–16; E. Valentine Daniel and John Chr Knudsen, eds., Mistrusting Refugees (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Fergus Lyon, Guido Möllering, and Mark Saunders, eds., Handbook of Research Methods on Trust (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2016).

17. See for instance: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), "Trust in Government," 2022,; Edelman, "Edelman Trust Barometer," 2022.

18. Jayasinghe, "Erosion of Trust in Humanitarian Agencies"; Hugo Slim, "Trust Me - I'm a Humanitarian," Humanitarian Law & Policy Blog, 2019.

19. Oxford English Dictionary, "Trust," 2022.

20. Gambetta, "Can We Trust Trust?," 217.

21. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), "OECD Guidelines on Measuring Trust," 2017.

22. Ananda S. Millard, Kristian Berg Harpviken, and Kjell Erling Kjellman, "Risk Removed? Steps Towards Building Trust in Humanitarian Mine Action," Disasters 26, no. 2 (June 2002): 161–74.

23. Barbara Fersch and Karen N. Breidahl, "Building, Breaking, Overriding…? Migrants and Institutional Trust in the Danish Welfare State," International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy 38, no. 7–8 (July 9, 2018): 592–605; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), "OECD Guidelines on Measuring Trust."

24. Anthony Giddens, The Consequences of Modernity (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990).

25. The OECD (2017) Trust Framework defines responsiveness in terms of 'availability, access, timeliness and quality, but also about respect, engagement and response' and reliability in terms of a 'delegated responsibility to anticipate needs, minimise uncertainty in people's economic, social and political environment, and act in a consistent and effective manner'.

26. Edelman, "Edelman Trust Barometer Report," 2020.

27. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), "Trust and Public Policy: How Better Governance Can Help Rebuild Public Trust" (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2017).

28. Edelman, "Edelman Trust Barometer Report."

29. Jemilah Mahmood, "The Trust Deficit in Humanitarian Action," in A Skein of Thought: The Ireland at Fordham Humanitarian Lecture Series, ed. Brendan H. Cahill and Johanna Lawton (Fordham University Press, 2020), 57–78.

30. International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), "The Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement: Ethics and Tools for Humanitarian Action," 2020.

31. Slim, "Trust Me - I'm a Humanitarian."

32. Council of Delegates of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, "Statement on Integrity of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement," 2019.

33. Council of Delegates of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, "Movement-Wide Commitments for Community Engagement and Accountability," 2019.

34. Nick van Praag, "Building and Busting Trust in Humanitarian Action" 2019.

35. A courtesy bias can be described as a tendency to understate criticisms that may cause offense.

36. van Praag, "Building and Busting Trust in Humanitarian Action".

37 Van Praag (2019) in his assessment of the Humanitarian Trust Index argues that 'question that probes the level of trust between aid providers and aid recipients may actually reflect a sense of hope rather than trust'. Gambetta's (1989, 219) raises a similar issue for one has no alternative but to depend on another, where 'the problem of trust would not arise: we would hope, rather than trust'.

38 In developing the methodology of the project, the Global Migration Lab consulted extensively with the staff of the IFRC's Community Engagement and Accountability team and ICRC's Center for Operational Research and Experience, and reviewed survey tools currently in use by both organisations. Participating National Societies, and technical staff from the IFRC and the ICRC also provided feedback on the survey and interview questions.

39 International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), "Building Trust Programme," 2022.

40 Lisa Litzkow, "The Impact of COVID-19 on Refugees and Migrants on the Move in North and West Africa," 2021; Yermi Brenner, Frouws, Bram, and Chris Horwood, "Taking Root. The Complex Economics of the Global Smuggling Economy," 2019; Mixed Migration Centre, "The Ever-Rising Securitisation of Mixed Migration," 2019.

41 Tricia Hynes, "The Issue of 'trust' or 'Mistrust' in Research with Refugees: Choices, Caveats and Considerations for Researchers," 2003.

42 Independent Monitoring, Research and Evidence Facility (IMREF), "Exploring Migrants' Trust in Humanitarian Organisations."

43 Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS), "Our Thoughts: Rohingya Share Their Experiences and Recommendations," 2021; Catherine-Lune Grayson, "Le Camp de Réfugiés de Kakuma, Lieu de Méfiance et de Défiance," Canadian Journal Of Development Studies / Revue Canadienne d'études Du Développement 37, no. 3 (2016): 341–57.

44 Independent Monitoring, Research and Evidence Facility (IMREF), "Exploring Migrants' Trust in Humanitarian Organisations"; Ioanna Kotsioni, "Detention of Migrants and Asylum-Seekers: The Challenge for Humanitarian Actors," Refugee Survey Quarterly 35 (2016): 41–55.

45 Vammen et al., "Does Information Save Migrants' Lives?".

46 Kotsioni, "Detention of Migrants and Asylum-Seekers: The Challenge for Humanitarian Actors."

47 Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS), "Our Thoughts: Rohingya Share Their Experiences and Recommendations".

48 Grayson, "Le Camp de Réfugiés de Kakuma, Lieu de Méfiance et de Défiance."

49 Vammen et al., "Does Information Save Migrants' Lives?," 58.

50 Independent Monitoring, Research and Evidence Facility (IMREF), "Exploring Migrants' Trust in Humanitarian Organisations"; Kotsioni, "Detention of Migrants and Asylum-Seekers: The Challenge for Humanitarian Actors."

51 Independent Monitoring, Research and Evidence Facility (IMREF), "Exploring Migrants' Trust in Humanitarian Organisations."

52 Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS), "Our Thoughts: Rohingya Share Their Experiences and Recommendations."

53 Vammen et al., "Does Information Save Migrants' Lives?".

54 Independent Monitoring, Research and Evidence Facility (IMREF), "Exploring Migrants' Trust in Humanitarian Organisations"; Kotsioni, "Detention of Migrants and Asylum-Seekers: The Challenge for Humanitarian Actors."

55 For more on the limitations of measuring trust under conditions of dependence or vulnerability, see Section 2 of this report.

56 Migrants in the Maldives were surveyed a part of a larger needs assessment being conducted by Maldivian Red Crescent (MRC). MRC did not use the standard questionnaire used across other countries and thus the results are analysed separately in Case Study D.

57 The Minimum Protection Approach seeks to provide National Societies and other Movement partners with guidance on how to ensure they are able to provide a minimum level of response to protection needs identified through the course of their work. Read more here: Protection in the Movement | ICRC.

58 The two exceptions were Sweden and Sudan, where National Societies engaged consultants to collect data on their behalf.

59 Chronic condition is defined as one that substantially limits participants' ability to walk, see, hear, speak, learn, remember, or concentrate, including any physical or mental illness, injury or disability that has affected their health for a long period of time.

60 RapidCode is a system developed by Jess Letch (IFRC) to organize and catalogue qualitative information collected from interviews, observation, real-time evaluation or other field-based humanitarian evaluations.

61 R is a free software environment for statistical computing and graphics.

62 Centre for Global Development, "Migrants Count: Five Steps Toward Better Migration Data," 2009.

63 The reach of the TRCS is best understood in the context of its work with refugees. In collaboration with IFRC, the TRCS has implemented one of the largest humanitarian programs in the history of the European Union – the Emergency Social Safety Net – which provides support to more than 1.5 million refugees in Türkiye (for more information, see Red Cross EU Office, 2022).

64 International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), "The Red Cross, Red Crescent and Red Crystal. What Do They Mean? In One Word: Protection," 2017.

65 Across countries, a small minority of migrants also reported negative associations with the emblems: either fear or worry (2%) or anger and frustration (2%), although it unclear if this emotional reaction is directed to Red Cross and Red Crescent actors (or to the emblems in isolation).

66 The SARCS provides migrants with services such as Restoring Family Links (RFL), Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) and Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) in times of disasters and incidents such as shack fires and flooding that happen frequently in the informal settlements.

67 Pseudonyms are used throughout this report.

68 According to the Statutes of the Movement, National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies are considered to be 'auxiliary to the public authorities in the humanitarian field'. This auxiliary role can be described as 'a specific and distinctive partnership, entailing mutual responsibilities and benefits, based on international and national laws, in which the national public authorities and the National Society agree on the areas in which the National Society supplements or substitutes public humanitarian services'. To be a recognised member of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, a National Society's auxiliary role must be recognised by the national legislation of its country.

69 The term 'armed conflict' in international humanitarian law refers to both (1) international armed conflicts involving two or more opposing States, and (2) non-international armed conflicts between the armed forces of a State and organizednon-State armed groups, or between such groups only. See "ICRC commentary on the First Geneva Convention, 2016: Article 2 and Article 3.

70 Australian Red Cross, "Lived Experience Framework," 2022.

71 In Sweden, a personal identity number is a unique twelve-digit number assigned to Swedish citizens and some eligible migrants. Asylum seekers usually have an LMA-card as identification instead, yet the LMA-card is not widely accepted as a valid ID. This means that asylum seekers struggle with daily tasks (bank accounts, lease, job application, phone subscription, internet subscription, etc.) and cannot access educational opportunities such as SFI (Swedish for immigrants) or study at the university.

72 Council of Delegates of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, "Movement Call for Action on the Humanitarian Needs of Vulnerable Migrants," 2017.

The Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

Humanity

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

Impartiality

It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

Neutrality

In order to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

Independence

The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.
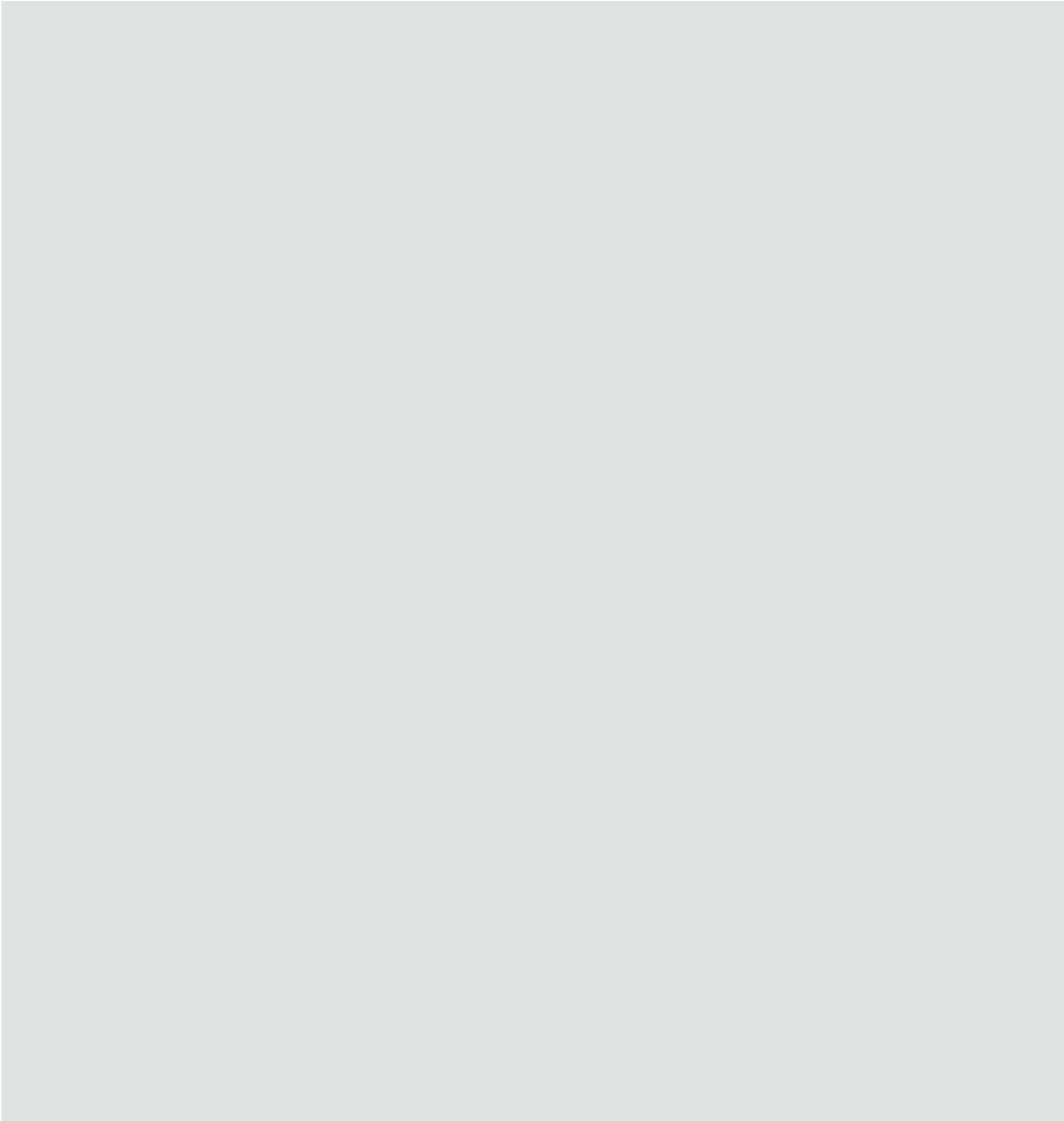
Voluntary service

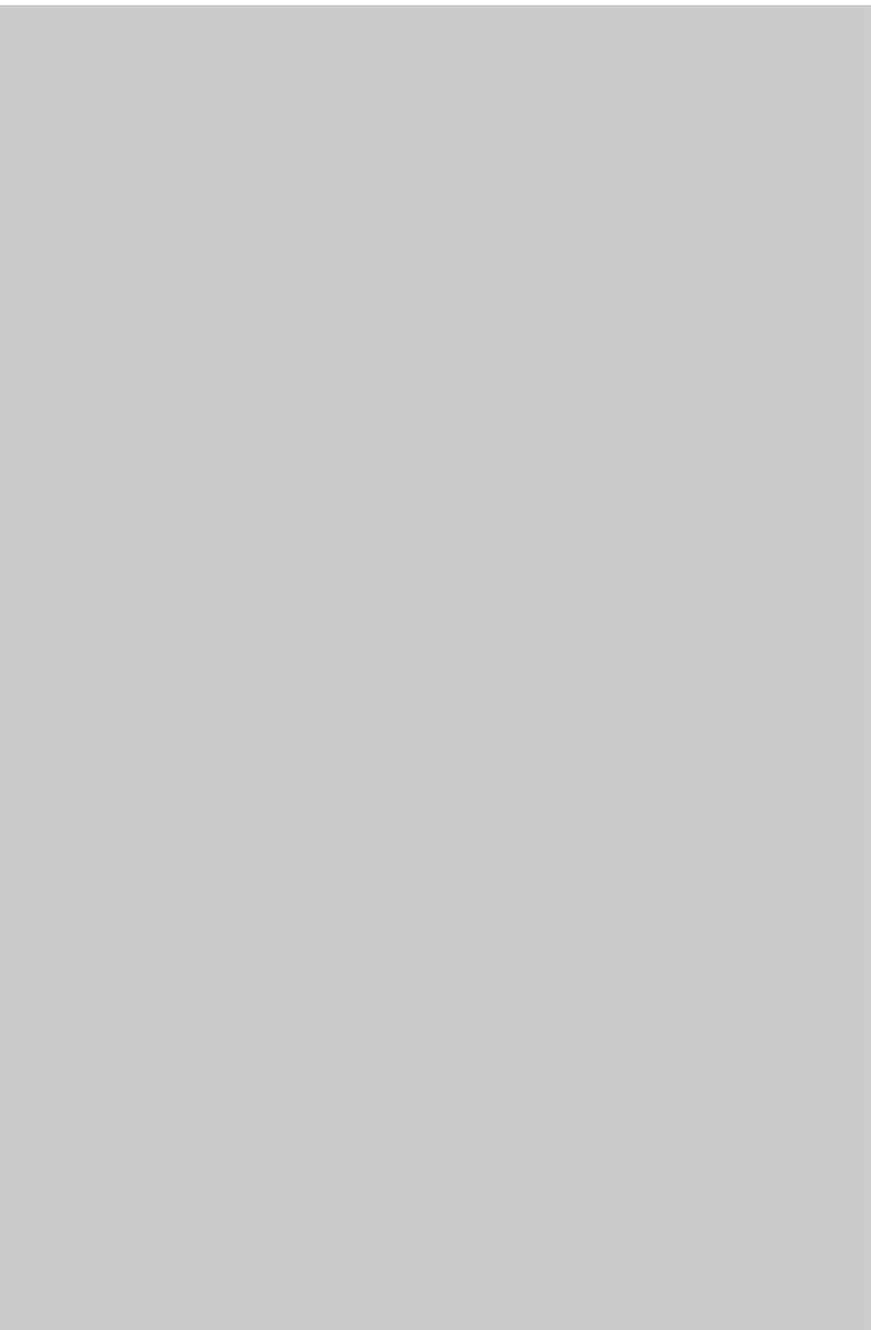It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

Unity

There can be only one Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

Universality

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.