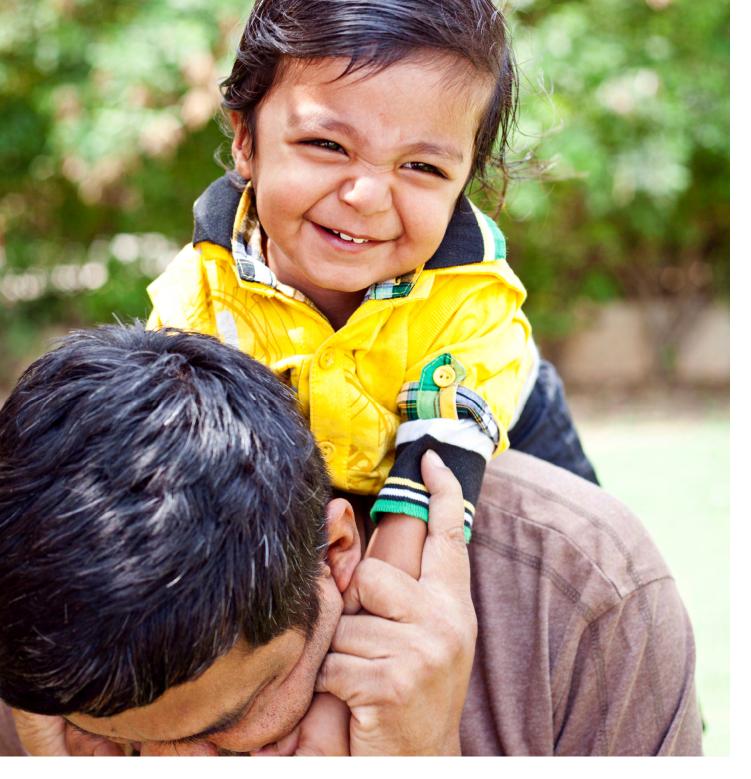


Trust in humanitarian action: Migrants' perspectives

A report by Australian Red Cross | June 2023





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Cover image: This is Jojo. Jojo and her friend, Namarake, fled violence in their homeland of the Democratic Republic of Congo. They now live in NSW, where they have set up a catering business.

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This report serves as an Australian companion to the Red Cross Red Crescent Global Migration Lab Global Report, "Migrants' perspectives: Building trust in humanitarian action". The Global Report was coordinated and authored by Magdalena Arias Cubas, Nicole Hoagland and Sanushka Mudaliar, who also supported Australian Red Cross participation in this global project.





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4 Executive summary

Trust is the foundation of humanitarian action.¹
Trust enables humanitarian agencies – local and global – to increase their impact as they reach and respond to those who are experiencing vulnerability or are in vulnerable situations, including migrants, as noted in new research conducted by the Red Cross Red Crescent Global Migration Lab (the Lab), "Migrants' perspectives: Building trust in humanitarian action" (Global Report).²

The Global Report explores who migrants (including refugees and asylum seekers) trust, and how this affects their ability and willingness to seek and receive humanitarian protection and assistance at different stages of their journeys, from country of origin, in transit, destination, and sometimes return. The research – conducted in Africa, the Americas, the Asia Pacific and Europe – includes migrants who feel vulnerable or unsafe during their migration journey regardless of their status and mode of arrival.

The research provides insight into migrants' first-hand or 'lived experience' of migration and their perceptions of how well humanitarian actors uphold the fundamental principles of humanitarian assistance. Importantly, the research identifies ways in which trust in humanitarian actors may be strengthened.

This report reflects insights gained from the Australian contribution to the global study. The Australian data – collected from nearly 100 people who arrived in Australia at different times and under various circumstances – reveals that migrants trust Australian Red Cross (Red Cross) to treat them with respect, dignity and humanity and to meet migrants' most important needs. This report has important findings on how to build and increase trust in Red Cross and other humanitarian organisations, and it should be read in conjunction with the Global Report.

Red Cross conducted the study using online and in-person surveys, in-depth interviews and a focus group. Participants' stories reflect their experiences of their journeys to Australia, and of living in Australia for one year or more. For the purpose of the research, trust is understood as and assessed in relation to four indicators: competence, integrity, fairness and inclusion.³

Key findings

- Despite some barriers, migrants in general trust Red Cross. Red Cross staff and volunteers, in particular, are recognised as being well– equipped to meet their most important needs, with respect and dignity.
- Migrants feel safe when they receive Red Cross support and assistance and trust the organisation to keep their information confidential.
- Migrants value inclusion, support to build a new life in local communities, feeling welcomed, and making connections with others from different backgrounds.
- Migrants may not seek assistance because they are ineligible for or not aware of where they may receive services, services are not available, or language and cultural differences present barriers. In some instances, migrants did not seek assistance for fear of being detained or deported at some stage in their journey (this may be prior to or after arrival in Australia).
- Migrants may not know if Red Cross is independent of government.
- Migrants place their trust in Red Cross because
 of the quality of services and support provided.
 Migrants may experience vulnerabilities and
 need assistance regardless of their visa status
 and mode of arrival in Australia; humanitarian
 assistance needs to be inclusive of these
 migrants.
- Migrants believe that humanitarian actors in Australia – Red Cross and sector partners – could improve services and support and inspire more trust by collaborating more (and more closely) to provide assistance.

The findings of the research present an opportunity for Red Cross – and the broader humanitarian sector – to reflect on how to meet humanitarian needs more effectively, how to engage migrants in services development, how to contribute to building welcoming communities, and build greater trust with migrants in Australia.

Red Cross will use the findings of this and the Global Report to also:

- inform the role of Red Cross as an auxiliary to government in the humanitarian field, and
- contribute to ongoing discussions about how to apply a humanitarian lens to global migration.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the Australian evidence collected for the Global Report. They are consistent with the Global Report's key findings.⁴

Red Cross recommends that - to build greater trust and access to humanitarian assistance for those most in need - governments, humanitarian actors, and Red Cross consider the following recommendations.

 That humanitarian actors collaborate with and support migrants to identify needs and gaps and guide co-design initiatives to address them.

Some participants in the study said their needs were not met because they did not know what humanitarian assistance was available, or, for others, because they were disconnected from community support. Humanitarian actors are likely to improve access to and effectiveness of services when we:

- collaborate with migrants to identify individual and community strengths and needs;
- enhance community networks to facilitate knowledge about and access to assistance; and
- invite migrants to collaborate in the design of initiatives which are inclusive of and responsive to their needs.

Governments and humanitarian actors also can enhance their ability to design and deliver humanitarian support and assistance by recruiting and involving staff and volunteers with lived experience of migration.

2. That governments allocate funding for community programs to facilitate individual migrant and community capacity building, to guide collaborative and co-design initiatives that identify and address needs.

Government programs that specifically fund capacity building as part of humanitarian assistance are likely to foster collaborative and co-designed initiatives that allow for flexibility, that are place-based, provide social licence to operate, and therefore are more likely to generate more positive long-term outcomes and impacts. They also are likely to foster greater trust in humanitarian actors. Funding capacity building will mean that humanitarian actors are more likely to meet peoples' needs more effectively.

3. That governments and humanitarian actors invest to build welcoming and inclusive communities.

Migrants, irrespective of their reason for migration, can experience isolation. Investment in programs that support migrants to share and foster awareness in the broader community of migrants' experiences is likely to result in migrants feeling included, so that they may build on their strengths and thrive. Such investments could contribute to or be part of funded community capacity building initiatives.

4. That Red Cross communicates more effectively to people, communities and governments how it functions as an auxiliary to public authorities in the humanitarian field.

Many participants in the study were unaware of or uncertain about Red Cross independence of public authorities: Red Cross is likely to gain more trust from migrants if Red Cross explains how it acts in accordance with the Fundamental Principles, particularly Impartiality, Neutrality and Independence.



Australian Red Cross Connected Women group in Darwin.

That the Australian Government supports global research and endorses global agreements which recognise the global to local interactions of migration.

Research undertaken by the Red Cross Red Crescent Global Migration Lab (among others) and agreements such as the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) reflect and highlight the conditions that prompt migration, and the opportunities to ensure that minimum standards for human dignity can be met, irrespective of status. Global research contributes to local knowledge. The findings from this research increase Red Cross understanding of how migrants in Australia can have their humanitarian needs met and participate in a safe, fair, welcoming and inclusive society.

Further, when governments and humanitarian actors endorse and act on global agreements, like the GCM, they increase the likelihood of effectively delivering services to, advocating with and for migrants, and building partnerships to meet migrants' humanitarian needs. Migrants may then have greater trust that their humanitarian needs will be met.

Australian Red Cross (Red Cross) works with people in need to prevent and alleviate human suffering. As a member of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (the Movement), the work of Red Cross is guided by seven Fundamental Principles without regard to nationality, race, culture, gender, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, social background, disability, family or marital status, age or political opinions.

Red Cross Fundamental Principles

Humanity
Impartiality
Neutrality
Independence
Voluntary service
Unity
Universality

In Australia, Red Cross works with people at all stages of migration and works with partners to address the vulnerabilities and humanitarian needs migrants can experience. This includes people on temporary visas, people without a visa, refugees, people seeking asylum, people in immigration detention, people who may have been trafficked or forced into marriage, people who have been separated from their loved ones, and other people who may not have access to mainstream government services or any other support.

Our experience, together with data, contributions of a diverse volunteer and staff workforce, and facilitation of co-design projects provide Red Cross with insights into who migrants trust to assist them. The Red Cross Red Crescent Global Migration Lab (the Lab) report, "Migrants

perspectives: Building trust in humanitarian action" (Global Report),5 provided Red Cross with a framework through which to test and challenge the validity of those insights. The global study is a result of collaboration of the Lab with fifteen National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies⁶. the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). It examined who migrants trust to provide humanitarian protection and assistance and why, at different stages of their journeys. The Lab conducted research and collected on-line and face-to-face data from migrants in the Americas, Africa, the Asia Pacific and Europe. Australian Red Cross contributed by conducting in-depth interviews and a focus group, and in-person and online surveys, with a total of 99 participants.

This report reflects insights gained from the Australian contribution to the global study and provides a summary of the Australian findings. It should be read in conjunction with the Global Report.

The research gives Red Cross an opportunity to learn more of and from migrants' first-hand or 'lived' experience of the provision of humanitarian assistance.

The global study and Australian findings will inform our ongoing commitment to build trust by migrants and local communities, and to improve our support to migrants at individual, community and national levels, through delivery of services, advocacy and partnerships. The study also will inform how Red Cross can progress commitments made with the Australian Government to build, strengthen and learn from welcoming communities.⁷

8 Indicators of trust

While there is no single widely agreed definition of the concept of trust within the humanitarian sector, humanitarian actors recognise that institutional, social and interpersonal trust are critical.⁸ The Movement recognises that Red Cross and Red Crescent staff and volunteers who work directly with migrants who seek and receive support, are crucial to establishing and maintaining trust in Red Cross Red Crescent as an institution.

For the study, the concept of trust was framed around the four key indicators of trust identified by the Lab, those of competence, integrity, fairness, and inclusion. These indicators were selected after a review of definitions of trust used by intergovernmental, humanitarian and development organisations, and are used to map and explore migrants' trust in humanitarian action. For a detailed discussion on the design, scope and methodology of the project, see the Global Report.⁹

Key indicators of trust



Image credit: Arias Cubas M., Hoagland N., Mudaliar S., 2022, Migrants' perspectives: Building trust in humanitarian action, Red Cross Red Crescent Global Migration Lab, Australia, p.13

How we conducted the study: Methodology and scope

To contribute to the global study, Red Cross conducted 17 in-depth interviews and one focus group discussion, 21 in-person and 58 online surveys, with respondents in urban and regional centres from across Australia. A total of 99 migrants participated in the study: 44% indicated that they arrived in Australia due to forced displacement; while others arrived as students/ trainees or partners, or for employment (see demographic data at Appendix page 27).

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?

Rather than ask participants in the study directly if they trust Red Cross or other humanitarian organisations, participants were asked to share their experiences and perceptions using questions such as 'Has the support or assistance provided met your needs and expectations?' (a proxy for competence) or 'How would you describe the relationship between humanitarian organisations and the immigration authorities of this country?' (a proxy for the value of integrity.

There were some limitations to the Australian element of the study: The sample size is small, and data are not representative of all migrants, nor of all states and territories. Further, some survey respondents did not reply to every question in the online survey. Red Cross also acknowledges that some participants in focus groups and in-person surveys and interviews were, at the time of the study, recipients of Red Cross support, which may have influenced some participants' responses. The findings nonetheless provide important insights into the lived experience and knowledge of migrants in Australia.



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



In Australia,
"Safety and hope"
was the emotional
response 62% of
respondents felt when
seeing the emblems.

Young Australian Red Cross volunteers in Queensland.

The emblem/s

The Red Cross and Red Crescent emblems are symbols which convey that help is at hand. The Global Report reveals that of the 16,843 migrants surveyed across 15 countries, 73% associated the Red Cross and Red Crescent emblems with 'safety and hope'. Yet, despite this positive result, migrants also expressed a degree of confusion about the work Red Cross and Red Crescent actors do with and for migrants. This highlights that Red Cross and Red Crescent actors need to communicate better with migrants in vulnerable situations, to inform them of humanitarian assistance and protection available to them, regardless of legal their status.

Of the migrants who completed the survey online in Australia, 62% said that, to them, the emblem represented safety and hope. In addition, 90% of respondents said they felt safe when 'accessing Red Cross support and assistance'. The remaining 10% did not know or were neutral.

Red Cross offers a variety of humanitarian services to migrants across Australia, regardless of visa status or reason for migration. 87% of the participants in the study indicated that they had received some kind of assistance from Red Cross at some point in their migration journey.

While the prominence of Red Cross as a provider of humanitarian assistance in Australia is not surprising (because of the research sampling methods), important insights can be gained into migrants' perspectives on the work of the organisation. Below is a selection of responses to the question "When you see these symbols, what is your emotional reaction?"

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, interview in urban centre

The thoughts expressed by Amanuel and Mussa (below) are consistent with those from participants in other countries, and whose experiences of Red Cross and Red Crescent actors are in the context of fleeing conflict.

Africa – Red Cross was everywhere, symbol of safety. In Australia – neutral role, middleman, build the bridge and gaps to elevate humanity, connect people.

- Mussa, interview in urban centre

Humanitarian support. ... It really means help.

- Miryam, interview in urban centre

For some migrants, their understanding of the work of Red Cross and Red Crescent actors in their country of origin differs from their experience in Australia. This may reflect the public profile of specific areas of work of Red Cross and Red Crescent actors in their country of origin, and their needs upon arrival in Australia.

Red Cross is a really big name even overseas, especially the blood banks. But here, especially when I moved to [name of city], I got to know the other Red Cross projects like the migration support and financial support especially during Covid-19 pandemic.

- Luci, interview in regional centre

I associate Red Cross with blood donation in [home country]. When I saw Red Cross in Nauru, I feel my guardians coming.

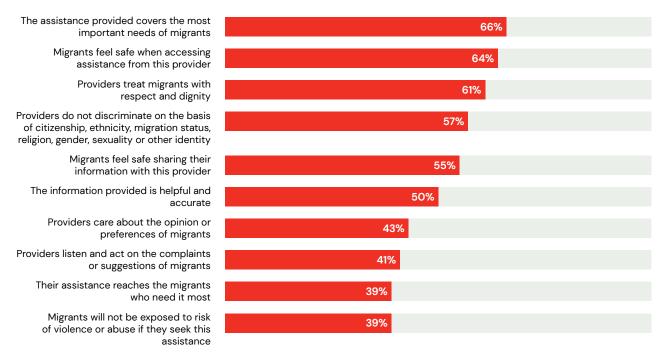
- Madhay, interview in urban centre

The Australian results suggest that in Australia, migrants recognise the Red Cross emblem, that their perceptions of Red Cross as a humanitarian actor are generally positive, and that they have considerable trust in Red Cross to cover migrants' most important needs (see Figure 1). The study indicates that migrants trust Red Cross to treat them with dignity and respect and to provide support and humanitarian assistance in safety.

Yes, so far, I think they are helping and supporting me. The thing is when I don't know anything, I am asking them, and they are telling me the answer and then I am knowing. So, they are supporting me.

- Daivy, interview in regional centre

Figure 1. Reasons why migrants would recommend RCRC actors to other migrants in need.



Factors that influence migrants' trust in Red Cross and Red Crescent actors

The perspectives of migrants in Australia who participated in this study reflect varying understanding and experiences of Red Cross and Red Crescent actors at different stages of their migration journey. The common thread through participants' experiences is that Red Cross and Red Crescent actors provide humanitarian assistance based on need, without taking sides and with respect for people's dignity.

This approach and way of working sits at the heart of the first three of the Movement's Fundamental Principles: Humanity, Impartiality and Neutrality. Provision of neutral, impartial, exclusively humanitarian assistance is central to building and maintaining trust.

In Australia, the online and in-person surveys reveal that migrants overwhelmingly felt safe when seeking assistance from Red Cross (91%) and trust Red Cross to keep their information confidential (88%). (See Figures 2 and 3.) The data suggest that trust in Red Cross stems from the quality of the services and support provided by Red Cross (as noted above in migrants' responses to the emblems, and their reasons for recommending others to Red Cross).

Figure 2. Information shared with the Red Cross and/ or Red Crescent will be kept confidential

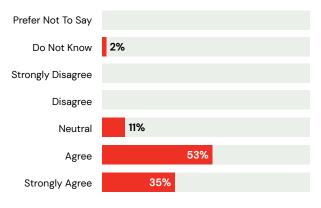
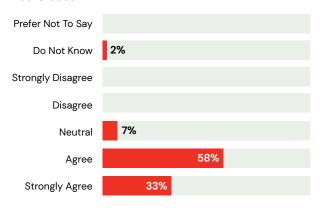


Figure 3. Migrants feel safe when accessing support and assistance from the Red Cross and/or Red Crescent



The Australian data indicate that the relationship between Red Cross and migrants is also influenced by the crucial role played by the organisation in providing assistance to people who may not have access to mainstream government services or any other support.

When people don't have government support, they need Red Cross.

- Madhav, interview in urban centre

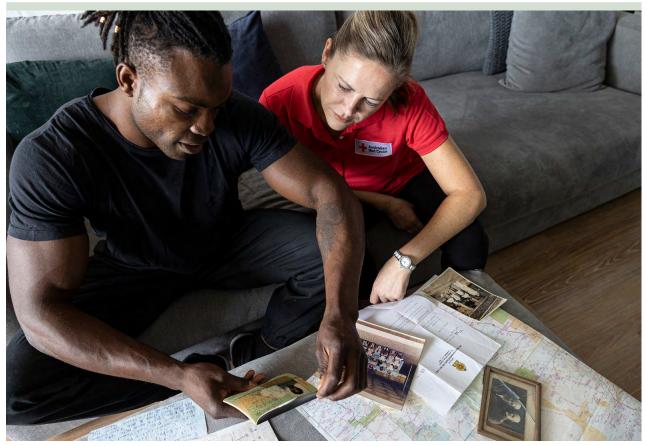
I am confident that they will provide the support, financial support and psychosocial support.

- Tandin, interview in regional centre

Looking back, it had something to do with meeting their criteria to be able to support me. They ask, 'what can we do to help someone' based on open criteria, as opposed to Centrelink's [Australian Government income support agency] criteria that focus on 'closed' criteria that focus on "is this person meeting [criteria for] domestic violence, for example ... Yes or no. And if not, they're unable to support.

- Isabelle, focus group discussion in regional centre

Red Cross acknowledges that some participants in the study were receiving assistance from Red Cross and that this may influence how confident they felt to openly criticise Red Cross.¹¹



Red Cross help people find family who have been separated by conflict and natural disaster through Restoring Family Links.

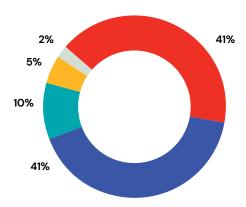
Relationship between public authorities and Australian Red Cross

For Red Cross to assess how migrants perceive the relationship between itself and public authorities, the study asked questions about the perceived independence of Red Cross and Red Crescent actors, and about why migrants may recommend others seek assistance from Red Cross and Red Crescent actors. The results provide valuable feedback for Red Cross in Australia.

The Global Report highlights the importance of the Fundamental Principles for building and maintaining trust, and that Red Cross and Red Crescent actors demonstrate their independence of governments, particularly in the context of the securitisation of migration.¹²

The data from Australia shows that while Red Cross enjoys considerable trust among the migrants who participated in this study, 41% of survey respondents said that they didn't know if Red Cross is independent of immigration authorities in Australia (see Figure 4). This represents 24% of all participants in the Australian study. 5% of respondents said they thought Red Cross is controlled by immigration authorities.

Figure 4. How would you describe the working relationship between the Red Cross and/or Red Crescent (RCRC) and the immigration authorities in Australia?



- Red Cross is independent from immigration authorities
- Don't know
- Other
- Red Cross is controlled by the immigration authorities
- Prefer not to say

Of the migrants who participated in in-depth interviews, one said they thought that immigration authorities and humanitarian organisations like Australian Red Cross are the same, yet the interviewee did not suggest that their trust in Red Cross was diminished by its relationship with immigration authorities.

I think it is the same. They are all together to help you.

Other migrants considered that Red Cross is most definitely independent of government, with different principles and processes, and in which these migrants have considerable trust.

I don't think Red Cross is controlled by the immigration department ... because Red Cross is an independent organisation, [and]... I know that Red Cross is an organisation that I can run to for help.

- Luci, interview in regional centre

Humanitarian organisations – they provide support to people who are going through the migration journey. [Australian] 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. Yes, Red Cross is independent.

- Miryam, interview in urban centre

Some migrants said they would like Red Cross to do more to demonstrate that it acts consistently with the Fundamental Principles of Impartiality, Neutrality and Independence. Uncertainty about the independence of Red Cross may deter migrants from seeking assistance and put their safety at risk. It may also limit their capacity to make informed decisions.

I think Red Cross is trying to be independent and doing their best and through educational programs such as ISOS [the In Search of Safety program] and advocacy and support of the most vulnerable. The organisation is so heavily government funded.

- Elizabeth, interview in urban centre

39% of survey respondents said they thought migrants may be exposed to risk of detention or deportation if they seek humanitarian support or assistance. This represents 26% of all respondents. It is not known if this fear is associated with experiences prior to arrival in Australia, or since, or is associated with any particular humanitarian actors. It is a concern that migrants may not seek the assistance they need because of a fear of detention or deportation.

The data suggest that Red Cross could do more to demonstrate both its independence of government and how it fulfils its unique role as an auxiliary in the humanitarian services of the government. This may include meeting the humanitarian needs of migrants experiencing vulnerability who are otherwise ineligible for, or unable to access other assistance. It also is important for Red Cross to articulate its role as part of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, to fulfil a specific mandate, which includes clearly defined roles and responsibilities to deliver health and social programs and to promote international humanitarian law and humanitarian values.¹³

Staff and volunteers – foundation of trust

The research suggests that migrants trust organisations that offer services and assistance without judgement and look at the whole person and their circumstances. The research also highlights the crucial role played by staff and volunteers in building trust with migrants.

Even before I started working for Red Cross, I see them help people without discrimination and very active in people's lives and that has inspired me to be involved in Red Cross. I am telling from my heart this organisation has a big influence on my life.

- Tandin, interview in urban centre

The Global Report indicates that over 70% of migrants said they believed that Red Cross and/or Red Crescent is/are equipped to understand and respond to migrants' needs; that over 80% said they believed Red Cross and/or Crescent treat/s migrants with respect and dignity.¹⁴

In Australia, 82% of survey participants said that they agree or strongly agree that Red Cross staff and volunteers are equipped to understand and respond to migrants' needs (See Figure 5). 91% said they agree or strongly agree that Red Cross treats migrants with respect and dignity.

The case worker was amazing. Very safe, friendly and welcoming. We had an in-person interpreter with the caseworker.

- Miryam, interview in urban centre

Red Cross is the best thing for the humanitarian purpose, especially to make this world a better place. Women have no rights in [home country] – considered very low. For women this [Red Cross] is the best place to go.

- Jasmin, interview in unidentified location

Mussa highlighted the power of the longstanding service provided by the Red Cross Restoring Family Links program which gave him comfort, "My Dad passed away in 1996 and Red Cross brought a letter to let me know. There was an opportunity for closure in that letter."

- Mussa, interview in urban centre

Migrants in Australia frequently referred to inclusion as an approach fostered by Red Cross, by connecting them to services, linking them with employers and providing opportunities to volunteer and build their social networks.

When we arrived in [regional town], we were very lonely and there was no friends and social activities. Red Cross assist us by linking us to various program. As a volunteer at Red Cross, I have participated in many events.... I also engaged with Connected Women program. Through this, I have been able to meet friends and expand my social networks.

- Ditya, interview in regional centre

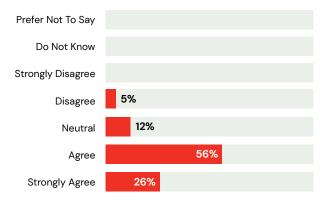
I have a very a good relationship with Red Cross. Red Cross has helped me with improving my social and personal skills and I have also help them by volunteering for them.

- Diyan, interview in urban centre

Red Cross doing the best what I can see, trying their level best to make it as easy as possible. Migrants not all from one country and try to get everyone's names to make them feel welcome and just trying their best to make them all feel welcome.

- Faizah, interview in regional centre

Figure 5. Staff and volunteers from the Red Cross and/ or Red Crescent are equipped to understand and respond to migrants' needs



To foster inclusion, Red Cross has developed guidance – a *Lived Experience Framework* – to ensure that clients, staff and volunteers with first-hand or "lived" experience of migration have a strong voice in how Red Cross develops and delivers humanitarian assistance and conducts its advocacy.¹⁵



Australian Red Cross Emergency Services team talking with community members in Queensland.

Red Cross - one of many providers of humanitarian assistance, and the value of collaboration

Red Cross, among a variety of agencies, including government and non-government organisations, provides different types of humanitarian assistance in Australia.

Nationally and as part of the Movement, Red Cross provides unique tracing and messaging services for separated and missing family members, known as Restoring Family Links. Other nationwide services include monitoring conditions of immigration detention, administering emergency financial relief and casework and assisting victims/ survivors of modern slavery and domestic violence.

Red Cross also provides a range of different services in each state and territory. For example, Red Cross provides settlement assistance to humanitarian migrants in Western Australia (WA), southern New South Wales (NSW) and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). In these and other states, Red Cross variously facilitates social and economic inclusion, access to services provided by government and non-government organisations and provides casework services that

I don't know

target and support women migrants and people seeking asylum.

In Australia, 87% of survey respondents said they had been assisted by Red Cross and 50% said they had been assisted by local non-government or community groups. 64% of respondents said they would tell migrants to go to Red Cross if they needed support or assistance. 28% said they would refer other migrants to local nongovernment organisations or community groups. The reasons respondents gave for their answers depended on the type of assistance they required, if Red Cross or other organisation provided the assistance the migrants needed, and if they were aware of which organisation or group provided that assistance.

When we are here in the beginning Red Cross is helping me. In the beginning we have one-month free accommodation and after that they are helping with the settlement journey, everything they provide for me. As far as I know or remember it was Red Cross [that provided resettlement assistance].

- Daivy, interview in regional centre

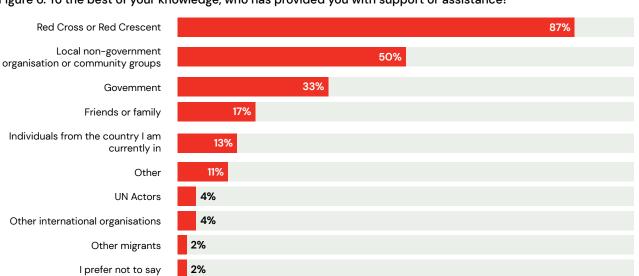


Figure 6. To the best of your knowledge, who has provided you with support or assistance?



A family from East Africa reunites in Australia.

Madhav and Lana (below) respectively highlighted how Red Cross and non-government organisations met needs of migrants experiencing vulnerability who are ineligible for government support and described how Red Cross worked together with others to facilitate access to needed services, to live in safety and with dignity.

When people don't have government support, they need Red Cross. I [an asylum seeker] didn't receive any support from anybody to get a job and make connections. Only Red Cross, community visitors, food parcels, [church and community organisations] found share houses for us. Red Cross showed kindness, people provide support/advice. I got some job seeker support from Red Cross.

- Madhav, interview in urban centre

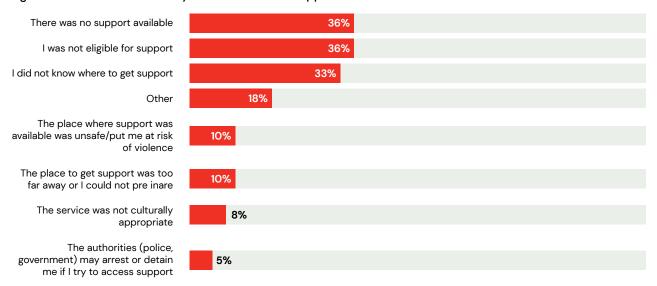
[Local non-government organisation] was initially supporting me, they referred me to [national non-government organisation] who assisted me with accommodation and food through their shelter From there, I was referred to Red Cross who provided me with financial support and referrals to women legal services who is now assisting me with my legal issues and migration.

- Lana, focus group discussion in urban centre

While participants in the study recounted positive experiences reflective of coordinated service delivery by humanitarian actors, the study findings suggest humanitarian actors and governments could collaborate more to build trust with and, therefore, reach more migrants in vulnerable situations.

18 Access to services

Figure 7. What was the reason you did not receive support or assistance?



Despite humanitarian organisations' best efforts, the Global Report highlights a trail of unmet needs. 79% of global participants noted that humanitarian assistance was unavailable at various stages of their journeys, while 51% noted that the support provided fell short of meeting their most immediate needs (51%). In Australia, 58% of participants reported having needed – but not received – assistance at one stage or another, while 18% noted that the support provided was inadequate to meet their most immediate needs (see Figure 7).

In terms of unmet needs, survey participants said they wished that support and assistance they received could be provided beyond that provided; others emphasised the need for all migrants, regardless of their legal status, to have access to support and assistance.

First month we stay with Red Cross, then we need to find our own place. It's too hard and too early to find a place. We can't get it because we don't have a job. Very hard to find first place to rent. Even now it's too hard. More support here.

- Sama, interview in regional centre

Any sort of help really counts. Looking back, I think everyone should have access to credible information provided by these organisations. Because as a [non-humanitarian] migrant, we suffer from dodgy [unreliable] information provided to us by migration agents, for example.

- Luci, interview in urban centre

The results highlight that any migrant may need humanitarian assistance at any point along their journey, regardless of how they arrived in Australia.

Awareness of services and who may need them

The data in the Global Report show that 40% of migrants with an unmet need for humanitarian assistance and protection stated that they didn't receive assistance because they 'did not know where to get support'. 37% said that 'there was no support available'. The data for Australia largely mirror those discussed in the Global Report: 33% of migrants who completed surveys said they did not know where to go for assistance. Participants in the study who were interviewed in-depth suggested that migrants are likely to gain access to assistance if they are aware the assistance is available to them.

Things you think are obvious are not. You don't know where to go, what you have access to or not, whether you can afford it or not. Today may be easier with the internet.

- Elizabeth, interview in urban centre

In response to the question, "What are some of the barriers that migrants like yourself faced in accessing support and assistance?", Luci said,

One is lack of information about services or misleading information [about migration pathway].

- Luci, interview in urban centre

At the same time, the data indicates that migrants are less likely to be aware of and have access to assistance if providers of humanitarian assistance:

- don't know who may be eligible for assistance; and
- don't build or participate in community networks to identify and be accessible to potential recipients of assistance.

Red Cross does not promote themselves to the migrant community well. Red Cross needs more visibility in the community and the symbol is global. ... Red Cross doesn't put enough resources to engage with the community, we do it once, not ongoing process. Need to do more community engagement, highlight what we've been doing for over 30 years.

- Mussa, interview in urban centre

Need more outreach for migration/community events. More advice/engagement.

- Madhav, interview in urban centre

Red Cross uses various models of community engagement to build awareness of assistance and services among migrants, and to learn more about unmet needs: Connected Women is a program in three Australian States and Territories, which brings women together to create friendships, increase mutual understanding and learning from each other and ultimately strengthen the socio-economic contributions of newly arrived migrant women.¹⁷ Red Cross in Queensland, in collaboration with Refugee Health Network Queensland and the CALD COVID-19 Health Engagement Project, facilitates equitable access by migrants to appropriate health information and services. See the Lab's report "Sight Unseen".¹⁸



Australian Red Cross teams talking with community members in Queensland.

Eligibility – ineligibility for services and vulnerability

The data collected across participating countries for the Global Report generally reveal that while some humanitarian support and assistance needs are being met, there remains considerable unmet need across countries of origin/return, transit, and destination.

In Australia, 41% of respondents said that they didn't receive support or assistance once in Australia. This may reflect the limited availability of humanitarian assistance and a safety net for migrants on temporary visas, or with no substantive visa. Of the 92 participants in the study who indicated the reason for leaving their country of birth, 55% arrived under a program other than the humanitarian program.

Sometimes your visa is a barrier for getting additional support. E.g., no Centrelink support or other government support due to visa status.

- Lana, focus group discussion in urban centre

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 (e.g. volunteering). You eventually learn this on your own in time. It felt like it was just us, people couldn't understand my accent. I felt like there was a wall around us. There wasn't a community centre. There was no support for my brother or for people from non-English speaking backgrounds. 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, interview in urban centre

In community detention, Red Cross, [and non-government organisations], always helping us, I still go to Red Cross for support payments. We don't have other supports; we are struggling in the community.

- Madhav, interview in urban centre

This feedback is consistent with previous research conducted by the Lab on the impact of COVID-19 on migrants globally: The report "Locked Down and Left Out" exposed unmet needs – among migrants – for financial assistance, and for access to information about health directives and social support services, such as COVID-19 vaccines, and family and domestic violence services. The feedback also is consistent with analysis by Red Cross of the impact of COVID-19 on temporary migrants and migrants without a visa in receipt of Red Cross emergency [financial] relief in Australia.²⁰

Other barriers: language and cultural differences

While the Global Report highlighted awareness, availability and eligibility as key barriers to access to and receipt of humanitarian assistance, in Australia, a majority of those who gave in-depth interviews nominated language and cultural differences as additional barriers to seeking or gaining assistance.

For the new settler, the language is a barrier, and do not know the Australian rules and laws, so difficult for them.... The thing is we don't know English, so we don't know what is happening – what is happening to understand so that we take the opportunity.

- Daivy, interview in regional centre

Two participants in the study highlighted how cultural differences may be a barrier to seeking humanitarian assistance, in particular mental health support services.

Mental health support, I do believe it was offered but Dad declined it because we culturally don't believe in it. For my older siblings, they know the disadvantages, what they missed out on and the trauma – it would've been beneficial if they'd had access to it. Wasn't offered at [intensive English language high school for newly arrived young refugees and migrants].

Miryam, interview in urban centre

Collective vs individual cultural differences – difficult to be yourself, as resistance from your community, no one to talk to ... suffer mental health issues because you don't have these humanitarian organisations welcoming you at the start. [Humanitarian assistance organisations] should work along with Home Affairs [responsible for Australian Immigration and citizenship] so you are in contact at the start. There is so much to learn. There is no one you can relate to.

- Misha, face-to-face survey

People who arrive on humanitarian visas are eligible through government-funded services for unlimited hours of free English language tuition.²¹ They are introduced to Australia's free Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)²² and bi-lingual/bi-cultural community navigators to support their access to a limited number of services.

Depending on their visa status, other migrants have full, limited, or no access to language tuition. Migrants may depend on government and / or humanitarian assistance providers to provide multi-media, multi-lingual information about services until they [migrants] acquire English language skills; their access to interpreting services may depend on service providers' knowledge of the availability of services like TIS. Some migrants take longer than others to develop and feel confident in their language skills.²³

Further, many migrants noted that even when they speak English, they are not always understood, or they feel that others have no interest in listening to them.

English has been a biggest barrier as people don't seem to understand me [student] very clearly when I speak to them. Due to my accent, people do judge me. My skin colour is also a barrier.

- Diyan, interview in urban centre

By further building awareness of and capacity to listen to the voices of migrants, governments and humanitarian services can reduce language and cultural barriers.

Building welcoming and inclusive communities

Of the four indicators of trust (inclusion, fairness, integrity and competence), inclusion was discussed twice as often as any other individual indicator, followed by fairness and integrity.

In their discussions, participants reflected that inclusion takes many forms. Inclusion can come from having information about what services exist and how to gain access to them. It can take the form of receiving an invitation to a seminar or booklet – available to all migrants – saying, "Welcome to Australia" (as suggested by Elizabeth on page 19). One of Mussa's wishes was that earlier in his settlement in Australia, he had had the opportunity to get a job, join mainstream sporting clubs and participate in local community activities to feel like he was part of the community.

I was interested in getting a part-time job, very difficult to get help with pathways to a job. I would've liked to have been connected to local activities, sporting clubs, mainstream activities but when I asked, they said wait until you're settled.

- Mussa, interview in urban centre

Inclusion also comes from participating in the workforce, having a licence [and a car] to get to services, jobs and community events when there is no, or inadequate, public transport. Inclusion comes from being invited to share your experiences with and contributing to the wellbeing of others.

Communication/interpreting is so critical. They can then work and identify their needs with local language and understand what they need.

- Amanuel, interview in urban centre

When they come here, orientation about Australia, orientation on how to get a job, get a licence. For [name of town] a licence is important as there is no transport outside of [the town] into [the town] and so it is hard for them

- Zaheer, interview in regional centre

Other interviewees talked about feeling welcomed when they were invited to share their experiences with others. Several interviewees talked of how much they enjoyed volunteering, and how in addition to gaining health benefits, they felt part of something larger than themselves.

Yes, there were times when I'd been asked to share my experiences with groups and at gatherings, like talking in front of international students, about my experiences and how to volunteer and find work, to help students have a better understanding of what we go through. It felt a bit uncomfortable at first, but I thought if it helps other people, I'll do it.

– Lana, focus group discussion in urban centre

As a volunteer Red Cross helps with my depression. I meet a lot of people here and they make me think about and see other cultures.

– Sampa, focus group discussion in urban centre

Inclusion exists when Australian institutions and services and community organisations reflect the diversity of the Australian community in their leadership, their staff and volunteers and in their clientele.

In 2020, the Australian Government along with Red Cross pledged to build and strengthen welcoming communities, including to strengthen refugee and migrant understanding about Australia and our shared values.²⁴ Participants in the Australian part of the global study have clearly indicated that they appreciate the efforts of Red Cross, other humanitarian actors and public authorities from local councils to the federal government, to contribute to the creation of welcoming communities, and what more we can do. This is valuable information for Red Cross as it endeavours to build on the existing trust of migrants in Australia.

22 Red Cross reflections and recommendations

Reflections: putting the findings in context of the role and mandate of Red Cross

The findings of the research discussed in this, and the Global Report provide useful insights for governments, humanitarian actors and Red Cross to consider how to build greater trust and access to humanitarian assistance for those most in need.

From Red Cross perspective, the results affirm that Red Cross can continue to do more to maintain and build on migrants' existing trust in Red Cross. It is encouraging that migrants said they trust Red Cross to meet their most important needs and to treat them with respect, dignity and humanity, but we know there is always more that we can do. This chapter considers how the findings of research led by the Global Migration Lab may be applied by Red Cross in Australia.

The specific mandate of Red Cross

Global findings indicate that independence is an important pre-condition for migrants to trust humanitarian organisations and to seek humanitarian assistance and protection. Red Cross has a specific mandate to fulfil a unique role as an auxiliary to government in the humanitarian field providing a range of services including disaster relief, health and social programs and educating people about international humanitarian law.

The research data suggests that migrants' trust in Red Cross may be enhanced were Red Cross to describe better how it acts on this mandate and remains independent: this is particularly important in the case of migrants in vulnerable situations (as noted above on p16). With responsibilities and privileges for each party, Red Cross is committed to growing and deepening understanding of that relationship [with government], including respect for and application of the Fundamental Principles, particularly Impartiality, Neutrality and Independence.

The global and local role of Red Cross

The Global Report found that migrants face "a trail of unmet needs" throughout their journeys despite the efforts of humanitarian actors to reach the migrants with greatest vulnerabilities²⁵. The Global Report reinforces that migration is a global matter, that migrants can experience vulnerability at different stages of their journeys and that the impacts of migration require local, national and international responses and solutions.

As a member of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, Australian Red Cross is committed to preventing or reducing human suffering wherever it is found and to increase assistance for migrants experiencing vulnerability across the region and globally. Trust in Red Cross is critical to this mission. Red Cross is therefore committed to meeting the IFRC Minimum standards for protection, gender, and inclusion,²⁶ as it provides dignity, access, participation, and safety for all people affected by disasters and crises. Australian Red Cross also applies the 'minimum protection approach'27 to ensure that all programs and operations do no harm; embed a child safe culture across Red Cross work; and maintain a commitment to improving the wellbeing and safety of those adults with whom we interact, particularly anyone experiencing vulnerability.

As co-Chair of the Red Cross Red Crescent Global Migration Leadership Group, a member of the Red Cross Red Crescent Asia Pacific Migration Network (APMN), and host of the Global Migration Lab, Red Cross is well-placed to support and learn from other national societies in our global network to develop cross-border evidence of, and strategies to address, the impacts of migration.

Participation in the Lab global research on trust has provided Red Cross with an opportunity to learn from migrants themselves how (and if) they perceive and trust humanitarian assistance prior to and after arrival in Australia. It has also allowed Red Cross to learn from migrants' perspectives in other parts of the world.

The data collected through the research on trust indicate that governments and humanitarian actors could do more. To that end, Red Cross, encourages the Australian Government to endorse the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular



Australian Red Cross volunteers in Darwin.

Migration (endorsed by the Movement in 2018), and to engage humanitarian actors to strengthen protection of migrants, with safe access to basic services.

Learning from and designing humanitarian assistance inclusive of migrants' experience

In addition to learning from international experience, Red Cross is committed to learning from migrants in Australia – the people we serve, staff and volunteers – with lived experience of migration.

The key findings tell us that migrants value inclusion and place their trust in Red Cross because of the quality of services and support Red Cross provides. Findings highlight the importance of Red Cross and other humanitarian actors, investing in staff and volunteer diversity as well as in training to ensure competence and integrity. Therefore, it is important that Red Cross remain committed to ensuring that people with lived experience of migration are at the centre of what we do. Participating in the global study is one example of that commitment. Another is the adoption of the *Lived Experience Framework*.

The Lived Experience Framework provides guidance to Red Cross staff and volunteers on collaborating with migrants individually and collectively: to identify individual and collective strengths and needs; to identify and enhance community networks to improve accessibility and accuracy of information; and to improve the design and delivery of humanitarian assistance and support.

Humanitarian actors can increase the potential for positive impacts on individuals and broader community when they include migrants in design and delivery of humanitarian assistance and support, and, in turn, help to build trust.

Recommendations

Red Cross recommends that – to build greater trust in and access to humanitarian assistance for those most in need – governments, humanitarian actors, and Red Cross consider the following recommendations.

 That humanitarian actors collaborate with and support migrants to identify needs and gaps and guide co-design initiatives to address them.

Some participants in the study said their needs were not met because they did not know what humanitarian assistance was available, or, for others, because they were disconnected from community support. Humanitarian actors are likely to improve access to and effectiveness of services when we:

- collaborate with migrants to identify individual and community strengths and needs;
- enhance community networks to facilitate knowledge about and access to assistance; and
- invite migrants to collaborate in the design of initiatives which are inclusive of and responsive to their needs.

Governments and humanitarian actors also can enhance their ability to design and deliver humanitarian support and assistance by recruiting and involving staff and volunteers with lived experience of migration.

 That governments allocate funding for community programs to facilitate individual migrant and community capacity building, to guide collaborative and co-design initiatives that identify and address needs.

Government programs that specifically fund capacity building as part of humanitarian assistance are likely to foster collaborative and co-designed initiatives that allow for flexibility, that are place-based, provide social licence to operate, and therefore are more likely to generate more positive long-term outcomes and impacts. They also are likely to foster greater trust in humanitarian actors. Funding capacity building will mean that humanitarian actors are more likely to meet peoples' needs more effectively.

That governments and humanitarian actors invest to build welcoming and inclusive communities.

Migrants, irrespective of their reason for migration, can experience isolation. Investment in programs that support migrants to share and foster awareness in the broader community of migrants' experiences is likely to result in migrants feeling included, so that they may build on their strengths and thrive. Such investments could contribute to or be part of funded community capacity building initiatives.

4. That Red Cross communicates more effectively to people, communities and governments how it functions as an auxiliary to public authorities in the humanitarian field.

Many participants in the study were unaware of or uncertain about Red Cross independence of public authorities: Red Cross is likely to gain more trust from migrants if Red Cross explains how it acts in accordance with the Fundamental Principles, particularly Impartiality, Neutrality and Independence.



An Australian Red Cross volunteer who came to Australia as a refugee with his family when he was a child.

That the Australian Government supports global research and endorses global agreements which recognise the global to local interactions of migration.

Research undertaken by the Red Cross Red Crescent Global Migration Lab (among others) and agreements such as the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) reflect and highlight the conditions that prompt migration, and the opportunities to ensure that minimum standards for human dignity can be met, irrespective of status. Global research contributes to local knowledge. The findings from this research increase Red Cross understanding of how migrants in Australia can have their humanitarian needs met and participate in a safe, fair, welcoming and inclusive society.

Further, when governments and humanitarian actors endorse and act on global agreements, like the GCM, they increase the likelihood of effectively delivering services to, advocating with and for migrants, and building partnerships to meet migrants' humanitarian needs.

Migrants may then have greater trust that their humanitarian needs will be met.

26 Conclusions

The findings of the research conducted by the Red Cross Red Crescent Global Migration Lab, complement Red Cross experience of working with migrants in Australia by giving us useful data about how migrants perceive Red Cross and other humanitarian actors, the accessibility and quality of services and assistance we provide, and how much migrants trust us and why. The findings of the research reinforce for Red Cross the importance migrants place on competence, integrity, fairness and inclusion.

With a deeper understanding of these aspects of migrants' trust in Red Cross and other humanitarian actors, Red Cross is in a much better position than it was prior to the study to strengthen its work with, assistance to, and support for migrants in Australia.

This report reinforces the importance of listening to and including migrants and migrant community organisations in the way Red Cross responds to migrants.

Yes, I do think humanitarian organisations like the Red Cross / Red Crescent act in the best interest of migrants]. I've had a positive experience. When I go to talk to them about something, they are friendly, listen to us and support us. They proactively reach out

- Sama, interview in urban centre

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, interview in regional centre

As the Global Report concludes, '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.'28

Australian Red Cross thanks all the people who contributed their time, lived experience and knowledge to this report. The onus is now on Red Cross and other humanitarian organisations to take further action.

Appendix

Methodology, scope and demographic information

There were some limitations to the study:

- The sample size is small, and data are not representative of all migrants, nor of all states and territories.
- Red Cross also acknowledges that some participants in focus groups and in-person surveys and interviews were, at the time of the study, recipients of Red Cross support, and they, therefore, may have been more cautious in their responses.

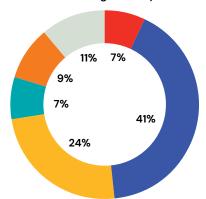
The findings nonetheless provide important insights into the lived experience and knowledge of migrants in Australia.

Research and locations: In-depth interviews, Focus Group Discussions, face-to-face surveys and online surveys were conducted across the country, including in the cities and towns of Brisbane, Wollongong, Wagga Wagga, Katherine and Darwin.

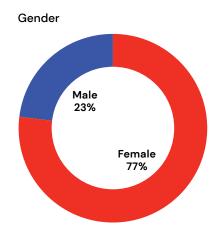
Number of participants: 99 migrants in total, including 20 participants in in-depth interviews and FGDs, 21 participants in face-to-face surveys and 58 participants in online surveys.

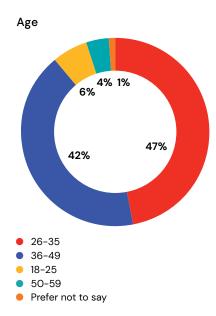
Key demographics

Reason for leaving Country of Birth



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





Time in Australia (in-person interviewees only)

1-2 years	2
3-5 years	4
5 years or more	14

28 Endnotes

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- Red Cross Red Crescent Global Migration Lab (2022), Migrants' Perspectives: Building trust in humanitarian action (Global Report)
- For further detail into the design, scope and methodology of the project, see: Arias Cubas M., Hoagland N., Mudaliar S., 2022, Migrants' perspectives: Building trust in humanitarian action, Red Cross Red Crescent Global Migration Lab, Australia.
- Arias Cubas M., Hoagland N., Mudaliar S., 2022, Migrants' perspectives: Building trust in humanitarian action, Red Cross Red Crescent Global Migration Lab, Australia. p.8
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- 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, South African Red Cross Society, Sri Lankan Red Cross, Sudanese Red Crescent Society, Swedish Red Cross, Turkish Red Crescent, and Zambia Red Cross Society.
- 19 March 2020, Pledge by Australia and Australian Red Cross, Building and Strengthening Welcoming Communities – Statutory Meetings (https:// rcrcconference.org/pledge/building-and-strengthening-welcomingcommunities/)
- Arias Cubas M., Hoagland N., Mudaliar S., 2022, Migrants' perspectives: Building trust in humanitarian action, Red Cross Red Crescent Global Migration Lab, Australia. p.12
- Arias Cubas M., Hoagland N., Mudaliar S., 2022, Migrants' perspectives: Building trust in humanitarian action, Red Cross Red Crescent Global Migration Lab, Australia, p.13
- Some online survey respondents did not answer all questions in the survey. This means that percentages quoted may reflect different numbers of respondents for each question (unless otherwise stated).
- For further discussion of the limitations of the data, and the risk of courtesy bias, see 'Section 4: Methodology and Scope' of Arias Cubas M., Hoagland N., Mudaliar S., 2022, Migrants' perspectives: Building trust in humanitarian action, Red Cross Red Crescent Global Migration Lab,
- 12. 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%). (Arias Cubas M., Hoagland N., Mudaliar S., 2022, Migrants' perspectives: Building trust in humanitarian action, Red Cross Red Crescent Global Migration Lab, Australia, p21)
- Australian Red Cross, (2012). A guide for parliamentarians to the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. https://www. redcross.org.au/globalassets/cms-assets/documents/about-us/guide-to-movement-australia.pdf
- Arias Cubas M., Hoagland N., Mudaliar S., 2022, Migrants' perspectives: Building trust in humanitarian action, Red Cross Red Crescent Global Migration Lab, Australia, p.19
- 15. For further details on the Lived Experience Framework, contact Red Cross.
- Arias Cubas M., Hoagland N., Mudaliar S., 2022, Migrants' perspectives: Building trust in humanitarian action, Red Cross Red Crescent Global Migration Lab, Australia, p.33
- Red Cross, (2022). Migration Support Programs: A Year In Review (https://www.redcross.org.au/globalassets/cms/publications/migration-support-programs-year-in-review-fy21-22.pdf)
- Global Migration Lab, (2021) Sight Unseen: A vision for effective access to COVID-19 vaccines for migrants, p.13 (https://www.redcross.org.au/ globalmigrationlab/research-and-publications/ and https://www.redcross. org.au/globalassets/cms-assets/documents/migration-services/rcrc-gmlsight-unseen-covid19-vaccines-final.pdf)

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- 21. See Australian Government, About the Adult Migrant English Program website (https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/settling-in-australia/amep/about-the-program)
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