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INDONESIA HIGH FREQUENCY SURVEY: COMMUNICATION WITH COMMUNITIES

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[COVER PHOTOGRAPH:]
Asama Bibi, 7, and Janatara, 8, Rohingya refugees from Myanmar, play with other children.
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Executive Summary

UNHCR has carried out an assessment of the use of official channels of communication by refugees and asylum seekers in Jakarta and surrounding areas during the COVID-19 pandemic. The assessment relied on phone surveys using Interactive Voice Response (IVR) completed in December 2022 and January of 2023. The assessment aimed to assess familiarity with communication tools, identify whether respondents have unaddressed protection issues as well as alternative sources of support following the absence of in-person services. The report concludes that the UNHCR email address as well as Kobo are well-known by respondents whereas the UNHCR Help page and the Turn.io chatbot are less known and used. Few respondents had unaddressed protection issues in relation to threats of deportation, arrestation, or verbal, physical or sexual abuse, whereas unaddressed protection concerns in relation to lack of documentation or medical emergencies were more common. The survey found that those with unaddressed protection concerns were as familiar with the official channels of communication. Use of alternative sources of support was equally common with respondents who were very familiar with the channels of communication as with those with lower levels of familiarity.

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Rohingya refugee Mohamad Yazunor, from Myanmar, uses facetime, Lhokseumawe, Aceh, Indonesia. © UNHCR/Jiro Ose

Introduction

Overview

COVID-19 has impacted the socioeconomic status of people across the globe and how humanitarian agencies communicate with communities. Restrictions on movement due to social distancing makes it difficult to collect and directly interact with the refugee communities.

Building upon the experience from the past survey, UNHCR Indonesia would like to investigate COVID-19 impact on refugees and asylum-seekers. The focus for this survey is to understand refugees' awareness and usage of major communication and information channels with UNHCR.

Objective, coverage, and scope of the project

The aim of the survey is to assess the awareness and usage of major UNHCR communication and information channels with refugee communities. While communication via email with UNHCR has been available for many years, a suite of new communication tools (Kobo, Turn.io chatbot and the Help page) were introduced around or during the pandemic. The survey findings will help UNHCR understand how well the refugee population was able to communicate with UNHCR during the pandemic in the absence of in-person services. In addition, the survey also aims to identify if their protection issues were sufficiently addressed during the pandemic. The results will allow UNHCR to re-examine and reform the tools of communication and its communication strategy.

The survey covers the refugee population located in and around Jakarta. The objective of the survey was to collect a minimum of 400 completed responses. For this purpose, UNHCR provided Viamo with 1,071 valid phone numbers. This report explores the relationship between the people that UNHCR serves and their ability to reach UNHCR via digital communication channels, protection challenges and their awareness and reliance on alternative solutions to their protection issues.

Methodology

Implementation methodology

The survey was conducted in a phased manner. After each batch was completed, the data was studied to understand any patterns of call drop and engagement.

- Batch 1: 15th - 19th Dec 2022
- Batch 2: 24th - 27th Dec 2022
- Batch 3: 6th - 9th Jan 2023

To increase the engagement and overall completion rate of the survey, after a cooling period of 2-3 days more retry calls were sent. For this round of retry, the secondary phone numbers provided by UNHCR were used in case there was no interaction with the user using the primary phone number.

Before the calls were sent out, an SMS from the sender ID UNHCR was sent out to all respondents informing them about the call that they will receive the next day and the time of the call. Initially the call timings were set as 3-5 pm. To ensure survey engagement and completion, an incentive of IDR 50,000 was provided to all respondents who completed the survey.

Implementation

The survey questions were developed by UNHCR. Viamo optimized and edited questions to suit an IVR data collection. Based on learnings from the previous survey, the tool for this round of data collection was optimized in the following ways:

- The length of the survey was kept closer to ideal length (10-12 questions)
- Shortened options: less text in each of the options to ensure that the respondent can register the various options that they will select from and contribute to a higher engagement rate.

In addition, to ensure sufficient engagement, UNHCR also mobilized refugees and asylum-seekers using the local networks. The flyer used for mobilization can be found here.

Platform set-up

All survey questions are pre-recorded using voice artists, in three languages that are most common among refugees in Indonesia – Farsi, Arabic (standard) and Somali. For users where the language preference was not provided, a language selection option was provided. Once the recording was completed, the audios were tested by UNHCR's team in Indonesia to validate any audio quality or technical issues such as difficulty in pressing key options to register a response. The phone numbers that were shared by UNHCR were uploaded on the platform after removing any duplicates and invalid phone numbers.

Overall survey Engagement

UNHCR provided Viamo with 1,071 valid phone numbers in three batches. Batch 1 consisted of 482, Batch 2 consisted of 404 phone numbers and Batch 3 consisted of 185 phone numbers. 60% of respondents either did not pick up or complete the survey. Known limitation to phone surveys in displacement contexts apply. Respondents are more likely to have a phone number that changes seldomly, which is more common with those with means to spend on technology.

Asmatullah (right), a Rohingya refugee from Myanmar, is staying at a site converted from an unused government complex in Lhokseumawe, Aceh province, Indonesia. © UNHCR/Jiro Ose

Findings of the survey

This section presents descriptive analyses from each question in the survey as the first step to analyzing how their answers reflect their experience in communicating with UNHCR during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Section I: Demographic Characteristics

We collected information about respondents' demographic characteristics with 3 questions related to language, age, and gender.

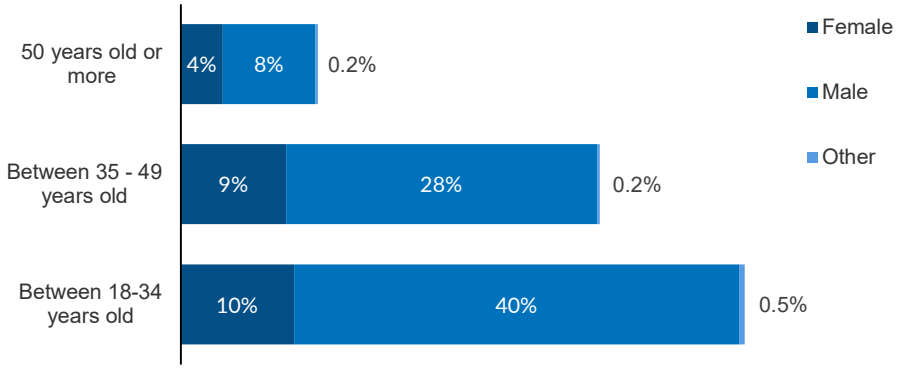

Figure 1: Age and gender of respondents n= 426
Source: Indonesia High Frequency Survey 2022
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Respondents were overwhelmingly male (76% across age categories, 322 respondents). 23% were female (100 respondents) and below 1% identified as "Other" (4 respondents) (Figure 1). There is an over-representation of men amongst the respondents, but the refugee population is heavily male with 67% men and 33% women[1]. The respondents are mostly young, with half aged between 18 and 34 years of age (50%, 214 respondents), 37% aged between 35 and 49 (159 respondents). 12% were 50 or older (52 respondents).

Figure 2: Contact language of respondents n= 426
Source: Indonesia High Frequency Survey 2022
© UNHCR, The UN Refugee Agency

279 respondents speak Farsi language (65%), followed by Arabic (28%, 118 respondents) and Somali (7%, 29 respondents) (Figure 2).[2]

[1] *UNHCR (2022) Global Trends*
[2] *The top 3 countries of origin for refugees and asylum-seekers in Indonesia in 2022 are Afghanistan, Myanmar, and Somalia. Refugees from Myanmar are mostly Rohingya*

Section II: Familiarity with UNHCR Channels

The survey examined respondents' familiarity with four common channels of communication with UNHCR.

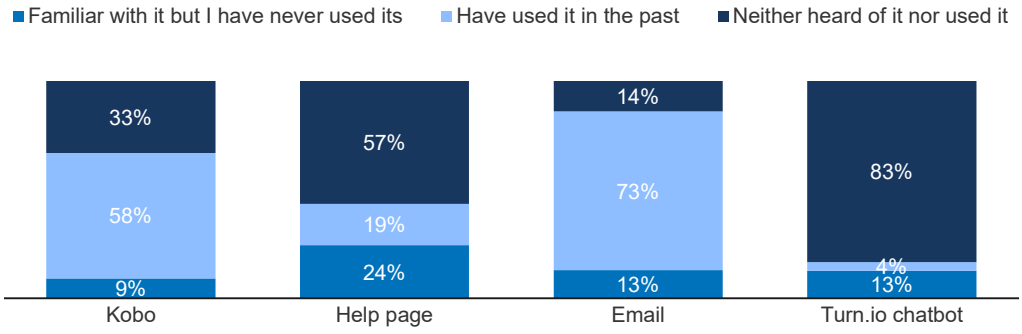

Figure 3: Respondents' familiarity with four common UNHCR Channels n= 426

Source: Indonesia High Frequency Survey 2022
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Most respondents in this survey had utilized KOBO as a channel to communicate with UNHCR (58%, 246 respondents). This made KOBO the second most utilized channel. (Figure 3).

19% of respondents have used Help website in the past and 24% answered that they are familiar with it but have never used it. Most respondents had never heard of or used the Help page (57%, 241 respondents).

The third channel analyzed is Turn.io chatbot. Few respondents had used it in the past (4%,17 respondents), making it as the least used channel by respondents.

UNHCR's email address is the most well-known channel to the respondents. Most respondents were familiar and had used UNHCR's email address to communicate with UNHCR (73%, 311 respondents).

As part of the analysis, we reviewed respondents' familiarity disaggregated by gender, language, and age. Familiarity levels follow the general trend with a few exceptions shown here.

For Kobo, the trends did not change but familiarity varies with the contact language. Respondents who speak Somali were twice as likely to have used Kobo in the past than respondents who speak Arabic (93% and 47% respectively). Arabic-speakers were more likely to have heard of Kobo but not used it (44% compared to 31% and 7% for Farsi and Arabic speakers respectively).

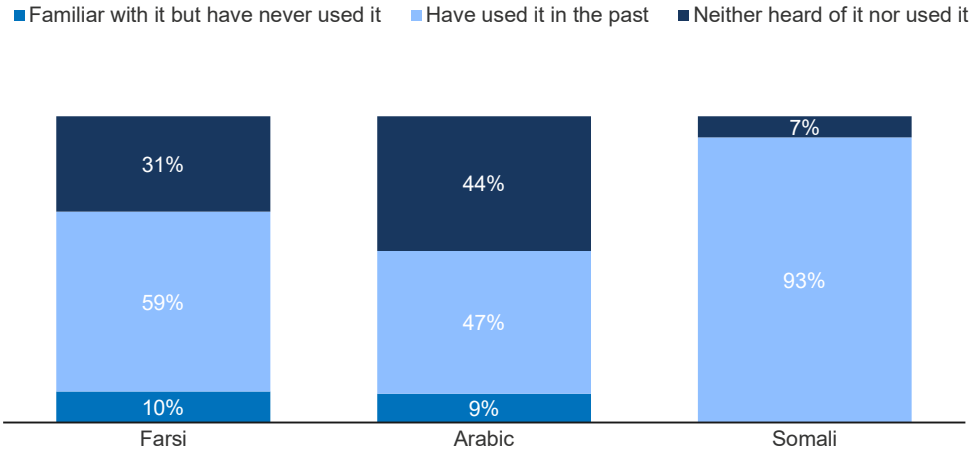

Figure 4: Familiarity with Kobo by language n= 426

Source: Indonesia High Frequency Survey 2022
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Disaggregating familiarity of Kobo by gender, the highest proportion of respondents who had used Kobo was found in Other and female groups. The percentage of unfamiliarity were around a third for both the Male and Female group.

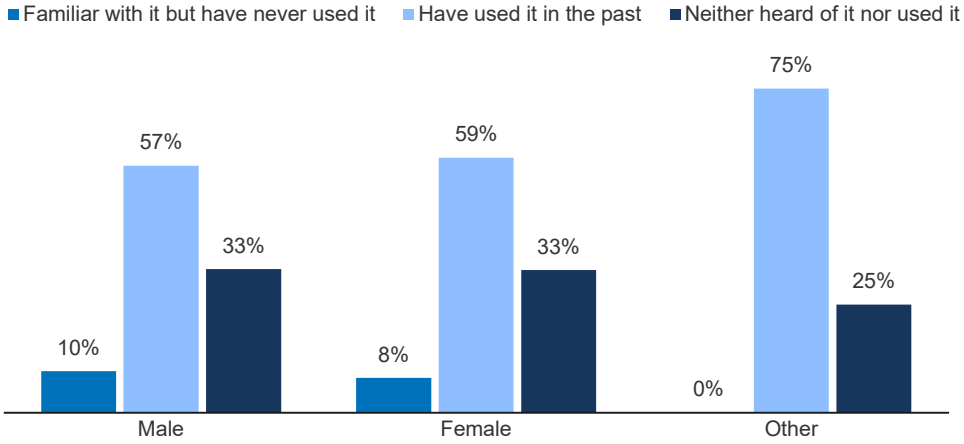

Figure 5: Familiarity with Kobo by gender n=426

Source: Indonesia High Frequency Survey 2022
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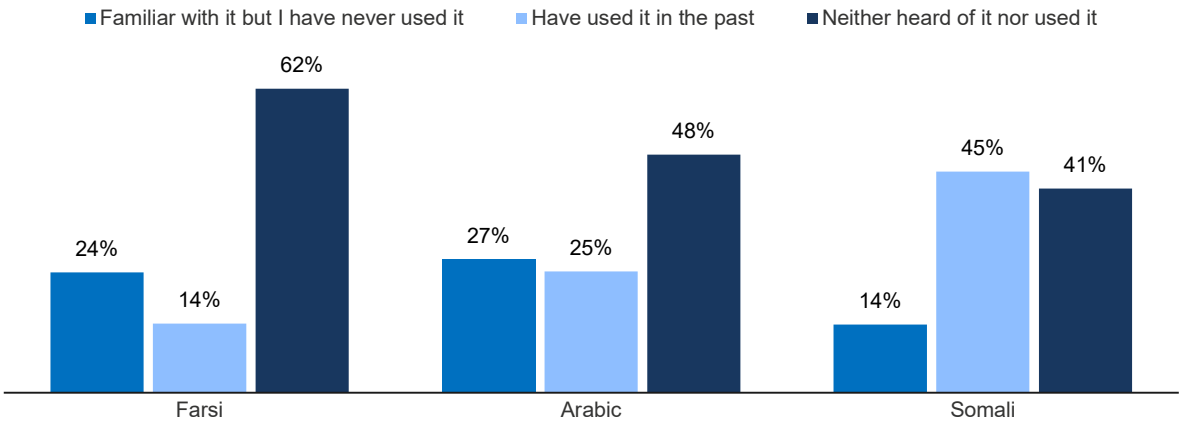

Figure 6: Familiarity with the UNHCR Help page by language n= 426

Source: Indonesia High Frequency Survey 2022

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Broken down by language groups (Figure 6), the highest percentage of respondents who had utilized the UNHCR Help page was found in the Somali group (45%). In contrast, those who spoke Farsi include the highest proportion of respondents who were unfamiliar with the channel and have never used it before (62%).

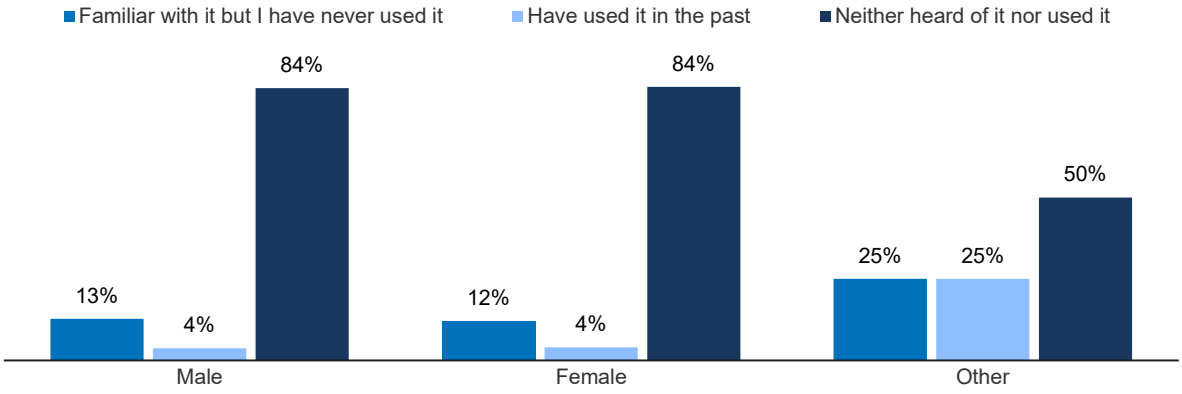

Figure 7: Familiarity with Turn.io Chatbot by gender n= 426

Source: Indonesia High Frequency Survey 2022

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Female and male respondents had a similar proportion of unfamiliarity with the channel (84%), while those who labelled themselves as other also had a high proportion of unfamiliarity (50%) (Figure 7).

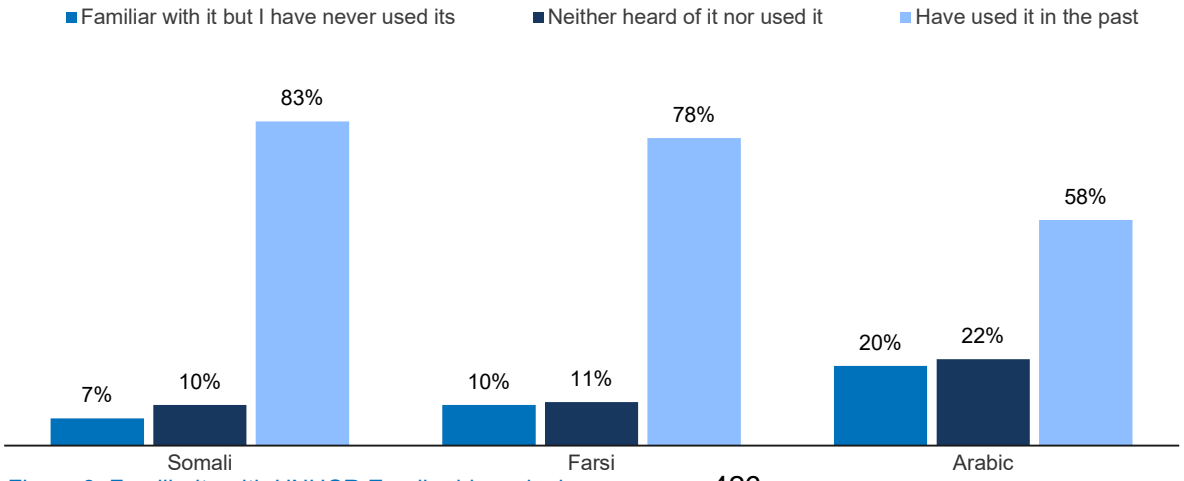

Figure 8: Familiarity with UNHCR Email address by language n= 426

Source: Indonesia High Frequency Survey 2022
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Analyzing familiarity of UNHCR email addresses among respondents with their languages, Somali had the highest percentage of respondents who had used email (Figure 8). Generally, all language groups had a high proportion of those who had used email in the past (above 50%).

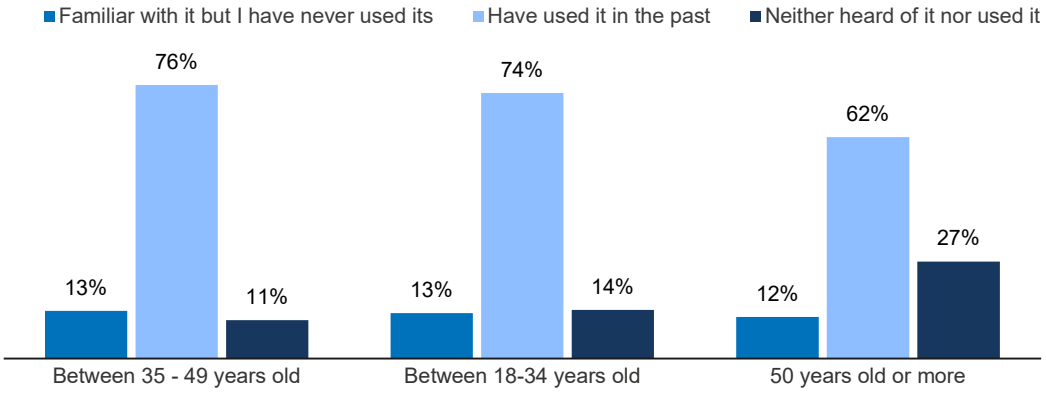

Figure 9: Familiarity with UNHCR Email address by age n= 426

Source: Indonesia High Frequency Survey 2022
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Group of respondents who were 35-49 years old had the highest proportion of UNHCR email utilization (Figure 9). However, all groups' percentage of "have used it in the past" answer exceeded 60%.

Section III: Protection Issues

The survey asked respondents about protection issues experienced during the pandemic in two different questions. The first question asks about legal protection and GBV issues, i.e. arrest or detention, threats of deportation or physical/verbal or sexual abuse experienced.[3] Respondents could select multiple issues.

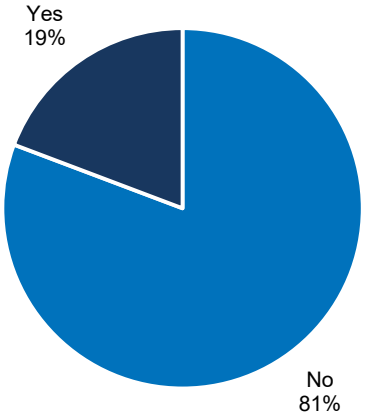

Figure 10: Legal protection and GBV issues experienced during the pandemic n= 426

Source: Indonesia High Frequency Survey 2022
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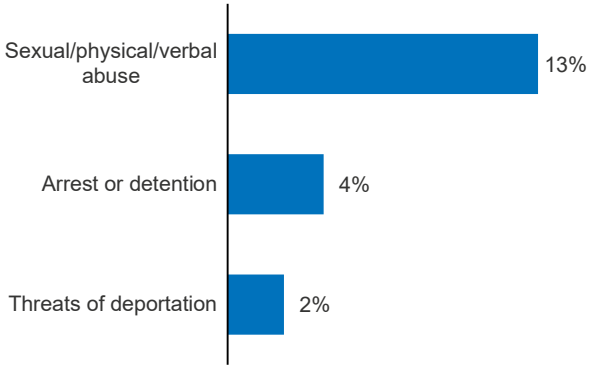

Figure 11: Legal protection and GBV issues experienced by respondents n=82

Source: Indonesia High Frequency Survey 2022
© UNHCR, The UN Refugee Agency

81% (344 respondents) experienced no kind of legal protection or GBV issues. Of the 19% who reported an issue, 13% (55 respondents) mentioned the experience of sexual, physical, or verbal abuse. Respectively 4% and 2% experienced arrest/detention and threats of deportation.

[3] *GBV issues in the report includes physical, verbal or sexual abuse.*

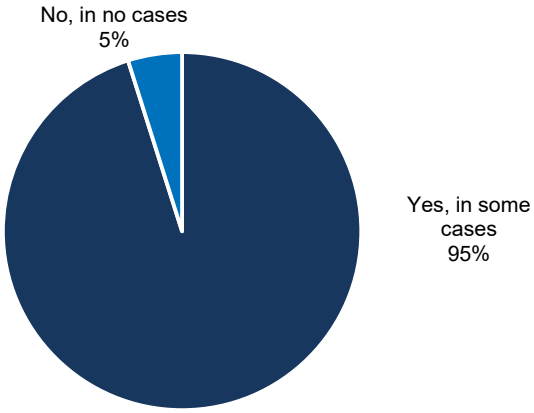

Figure 12: Access to help when faced with legal protection and GBV issues
Source: Indonesia High Frequency Survey 2022
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n= 82

From those who experienced legal protection or GBV issues, 78 respondents stated that they were able to get help in some cases (95%), while the remaining 4 respondents did not get help in any cases (5%).

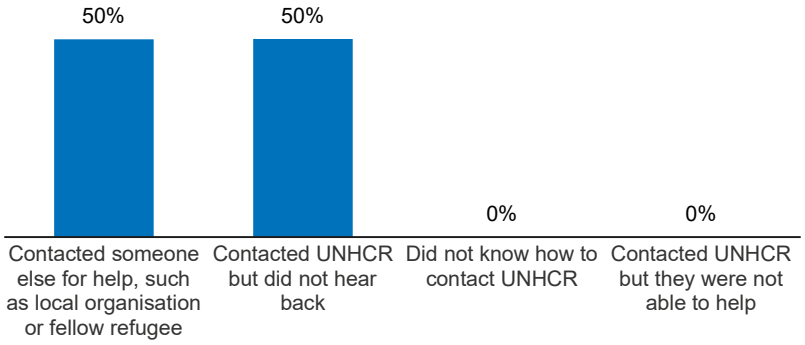

Figure 13: Reasons for lack of help n=4
Source: Indonesia High Frequency Survey 2022
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Of the 5% who did not get any help when they experienced legal protection or GBV issues, two had contacted UNHCR but did not hear back while the other two contacted someone else for help (Figure 13).

The second question on protection issues asked respondents if they had experienced documentation or medical issues.

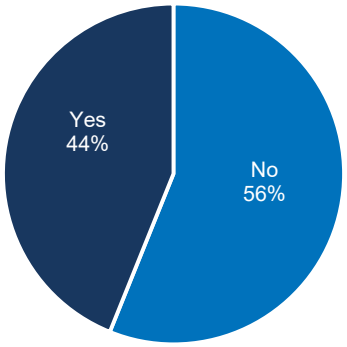

Figure 14: Documentation and medical issues experienced during the pandemic n= 426

Source: Indonesia High Frequency Survey 2022
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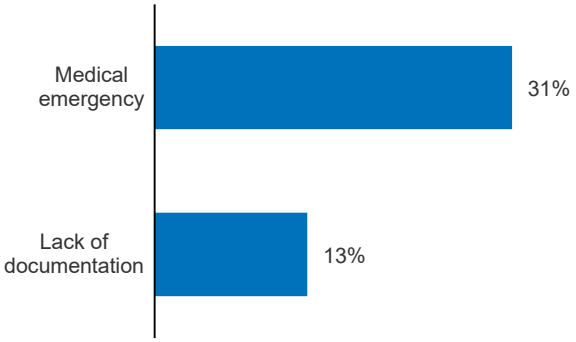

Figure 15: Documentation and medical issues experienced by refugees n=187

Source: Indonesia High Frequency Survey 2022
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More than half of the respondents did not experience any documentation or medical issues (56%, 239 respondents), about 31% (131 respondents) reported a medical emergency (Figure 15). Lack of documentation was also present for 13% (56 respondents).

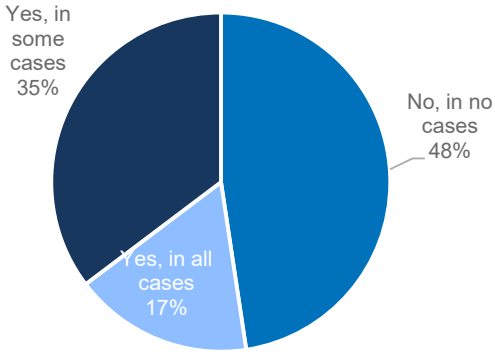

Figure 16: Access to help - medical and documentation n=187

Source: Indonesia High Frequency Survey 2022
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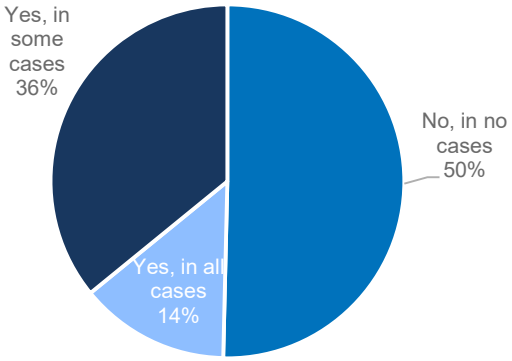

Figure 16a: Access to help - documentation n=56

Source: Indonesia High Frequency Survey 2022
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From those who experienced documentation or medical issues during the pandemic, we proceeded to ask the ability of respondents to get help (Figure 16). 52% (98 respondents) answered that they received help in some or all cases: 17% (32 respondents) in all cases and 35% (66 respondents) in some cases. The “no, in no cases” answer reflected the absence of any help to the participants (48%, 89 respondents). Looking

at documentation only as it is a service provided by UNHCR, the percentage of those who received help in all or some cases is lower, 14% (6 respondents) and 36% (15 respondents) respectively (Figure 16a).

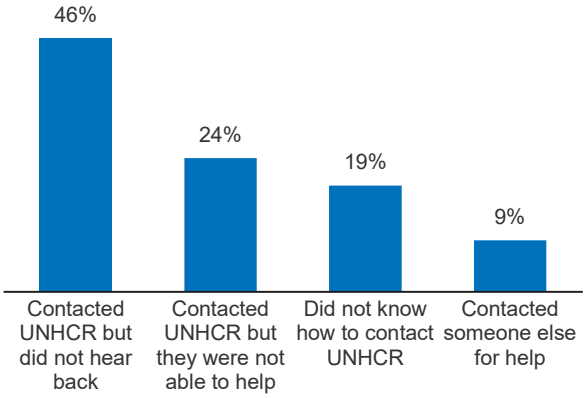

Figure 17: Reasons for no help - medical and documentation

Source: Indonesia High Frequency Survey 2022
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n=155

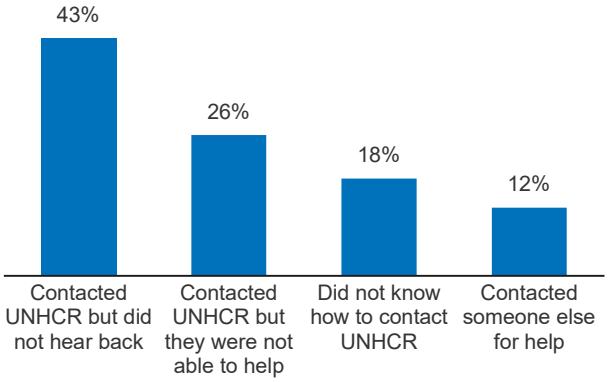

Figure 17a: Reasons for no help - documentation

Source: Indonesia High Frequency Survey 2022
© UNHCR, The UN Refugee Agency

n=42

Among the 48% who did not get help in all or some cases when they experienced documentation or medical issues, the survey asked them how they had tried to get help (Figure 17). The proportion of those who did not know how to contact UNHCR was low (19%, 30 respondents). 46% of respondents who had contacted UNHCR when experiencing documentation or medical issues did not hear back (75 respondents), and 24% of respondents said that UNHCR was not able to help them (36 respondents). 9% (15 respondents) contacted someone else to help them. For protection issues related to documentation only, the proportion who contacted UNHCR was slightly lower (43%, 18 respondents). Similarly, to both protection issues, 26% answered that they contacted UNHCR but did not receive help (11 respondents) and 18% that they did not know how to contact UNHCR (8 respondents), Contacting someone else for help was slightly more popular for documentation-related protection issues.

Section IV: Support from Refugee Representatives, Refugee Led Organizations (RLOs), and Partner Organizations

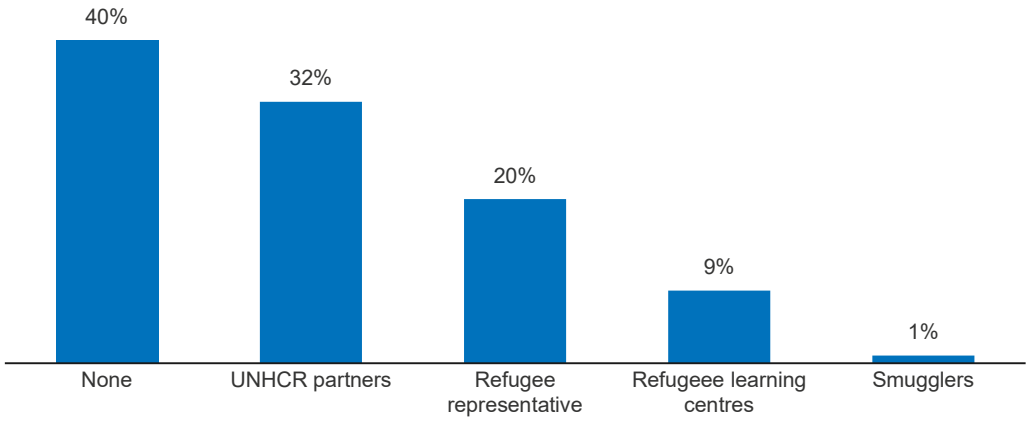

Figure 18: Respondents familiarity with alternative sources for support n=426, (select multiple)
Source: Indonesia High Frequency Survey 2022
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Figure 18 describes respondents' answers about their familiarity with alternative options for information or support. 169 respondents answered none, reflecting 40% of total respondents who were not familiar with any of the listed organizations. The second highest answer was UNHCR partners (32%, 137 respondents), followed by Refugee Representatives and refugee learning centers with 20% (86 respondents) and 9% (38 respondents) respectively.

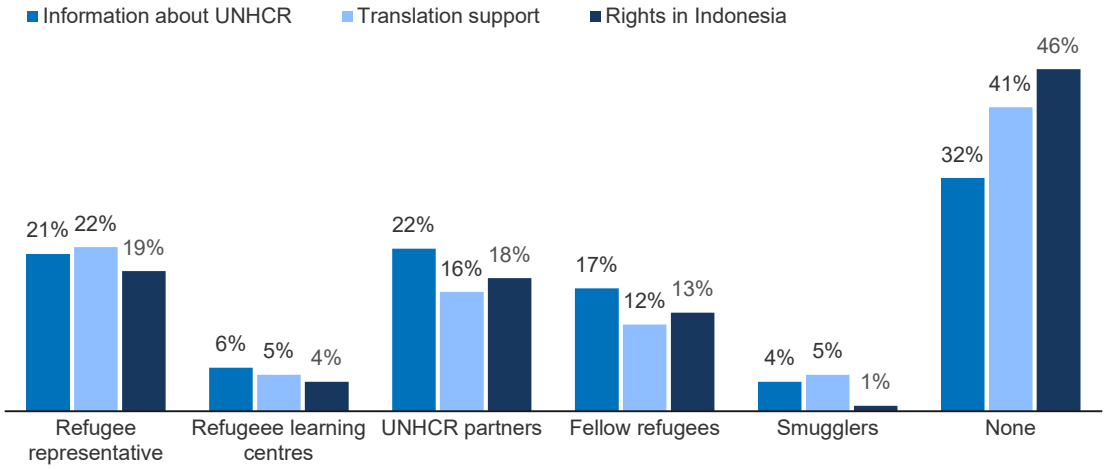

Figure 19: Reliance on alternative support for common queries n=426 (select multiple)
Source: Indonesia High Frequency Survey 2022
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From the listed options to obtain information about UNHCR, the majority of respondents chose none i.e., they did not receive information about UNHCR from any listed organizations. For those who did receive information, UNHCR partners and Refugee Representatives (21% each) were the most popular (Figure 19).

While 41% of total respondents (176 respondents) did not receive any translation help (Figure 19), for those who received translation support, Refugee Representatives were a popular choice (22%).

When asked about whether they received information regarding their rights in Indonesia from any of the listed sources, most respondents answered, “none of the above” (46%, 198 respondents) (Figure 19).

Section IV: Linking familiarity levels with unaddressed protection issues and use of alternative support

In this section, the report aims to find out the relationship between the familiarity level of the respondents with one of the four communication channels that they can use to communicate with UNHCR vs. their ability to get support for protection issues they faced. We examine the familiarity level of all participants, and then specifically of those that faced protection issues. We also examine the familiarity level of those that rely on alternative sources of information or support compared to the overall familiarity level.

Familiarity Level

To analyze the familiarity level for UNHCR communication channels better, we used scoring to divide respondents' scores into quartiles. We encoded options in all questions of familiarity as:

"Familiar with it but I have never used it" = 1

"Have used it in the past" = 2

"Neither heard of it nor used it" = 0

With this value assigned, a mean familiarity score (between 0 and 2 based on the values above) per tool was calculated. This score can be used to assess whether a tool is widely known, despite not being widely used. The ranking of tools according to familiarity levels matches the ranking according to use. The UNHCR email has the highest familiarity followed by Kobo.

Tool	Score (of 2)
Kobo	1.2
UNHCR help site	0.6
Turn.io Chatbot	0.2
UNHCR Email	1.6

Summing the familiarity level per respondent gave us a familiarity score across tools between 0 and 8 as each of the four tools has a max score of 2. On average respondents had a familiarity score of 3.6.

The average familiarity score of those with unresolved legal protection or GBV issues is 3.5. The average familiarity score of those with unresolved medical or documentation issues is 3.6. It appears there is no significant difference in the level.

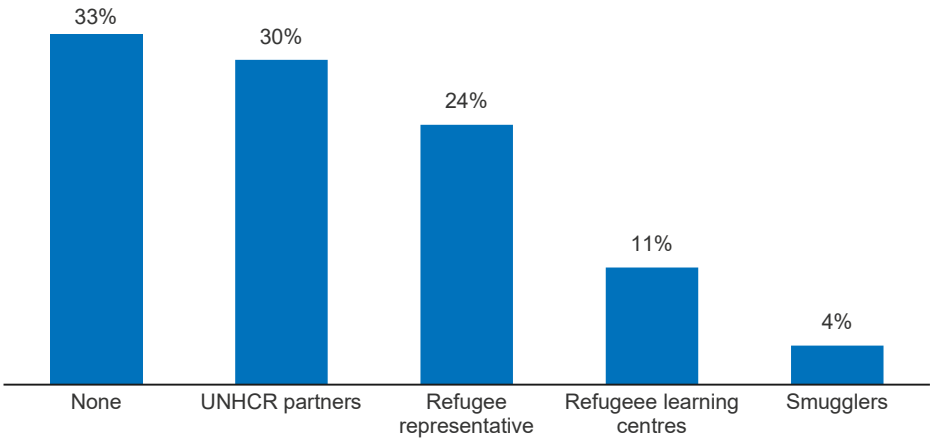

Figure 20: Respondents with unaddressed legal or GBV issues familiarity with alternative sources for support n=82, (select multiple)

Source: Indonesia High Frequency Survey 2022
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Looking at familiarity with alternative sources of support (UNHCR partners, Refugee Representatives, RLOs, etc.), the survey found that **half of respondents with no help for legal protection or GBV issues were unfamiliar with any of the listed organizations (33%) (Figure 20).** This is higher than for all respondents, where 40% is not familiar with any alternative source of support (Figure 18). The remaining respondents were mostly familiar with UNHCR partners (30%) and Refugee Representatives (24%).

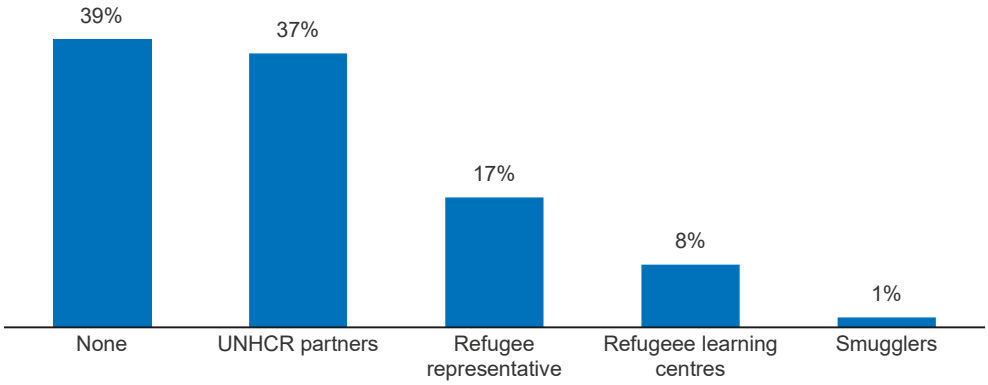

Figure 21: Respondents' with unaddressed documentation or medical issues familiarity with alternative sources for support n=155, (select multiple)

Source: Indonesia High Frequency Survey 2022
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39% of the respondents who did not receive any help were not familiar with any of the alternative sources for information or support (Figure 21), while 37% were familiar with UNHCR partners and 17% were familiar with Refugee Representatives. This is similar to the familiarity amongst all respondents but with slightly higher familiarity with UNHCR partners.

Summary

The study included Farsi, Arabic, and Somali language groups, and considered age and gender as other demographic characteristics. The majority of respondents were male, 18-34 years old, and spoke Farsi.

The survey found that the **most familiar and utilized channels are UNHCR email address and KOBO, followed by the UNHCR Help page**. Turn.io chatbot was not known or utilized by most respondents. The report reviewed channel familiarity disaggregated by language, gender and age group. The disaggregation did not change the overall picture of which channels were the most widely known and used. However, across all channels, there was little difference between male and female respondents while the Somali speaking respondents were more familiar with and utilized most channels. The 50+ age group were less likely to use any channels of communication.

To determine underlying factors causing preference for one channel over another, further study is needed.

While **most respondents did not face any protection issues, medical emergency (31%), lack of documentation (13%), and GBV issues (13%) were the three major issues experienced by respondents during pandemic**. 50% of respondents were not able to get help when they experienced documentation issues. Of these, 43% said they had reached out to UNHCR but had not heard back. The proportion of respondents who were not able to get help regarding physical or legal protection issues (GBV, deportation, arrestation) was significantly lower (5%). It appears that refugees have largely been able to get the help they needed for issues pertaining to their immediate safety despite absence of in-person services.

More than 40% of respondents were not familiar with support from any alternative source of support such as Refugee Representatives, UNHCR partners or Refugee Led Organizations. Respondents mainly received translation help and information about their rights in Indonesia from Refugee Representatives and UNHCR partners.

Overall, respondents who did not get any help when faced with legal protection or GBV issues were as familiar with the major communication channels as the average respondent. This group were also more likely to be familiar with the support available from listed organizations. The support available from the listed

organization does not appear to act as compensation or an alternative to UNHCR support. Of those with unaddressed protection issues, those who faced documentation or medical issues were as likely to be familiar with alternative sources of support as the average respondent. They were particularly familiar with UNHCR Partners (37%) while those with legal protection or GBV issues were more familiar with Refugee Representatives (24%) than the average respondent.

Learnings

The study findings highlight some of the areas of considerations for UNHCR's strategy to enhance its accountability to affected people, including communication with refugee communities and response to feedback.

- While UNHCR e-mail address is most well-known and utilized by refugees regardless of gender, language and age group, noting high proportion of respondents reporting no reply from UNHCR, the strategy can focus on establishing more effective and efficient two-way communication channels and feedback mechanisms to ensure that refugees receive timely responses and can access UNHCR services.
- Considering that Kobo and the Help page acquired a reasonable level of awareness (second and third following e-mail) despite being introduced to the refugee community – in the beginning and middle of the pandemic, respectively – the two communication channels can be more closely monitored and utilized to establish a system which enhances response by UNHCR to individual inquiries submitted by refugees (Kobo) and information sharing among the refugee community (Help website).
- Efforts need to continue to address the protection needs of elderly refugees who are not familiar with the recent communication channels and establish mechanisms that they can easily access to communicate with UNHCR, e.g. group counselling during community outreach for a target group, joint campaign with RLOs for the parents group.
- With the resumption of in-person activities after the pandemic, some of the protection issues noted by respondents might have been improved, in particular, in documentation. Regardless, efforts need to be made to re-visit refugees' awareness and access to medical assistance and interventions for legal protection and GBV issues, as many of these protection issues need to be

addressed as a priority and can be enhanced via efficient referral mechanism in partnership with partner organizations.UNHCR's community outreach and communication strategy can be further discussed to explore ways to enhance awareness and utilization of Refugee Representatives and RLOs as they are present in the community and can provide direct support to refugees experiencing urgent protection issues.