

# PROFILING OF REFUGEES AND RETURNEES IN RENK

## SUDAN EMERGENCY RESPONSE



November 2024

## Acknowledgments

The profiling of refugees and returnees in Renk was led by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), in coordination with the South Sudan Commission for Refugee Affairs (CRA), Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC), and the local authorities. UNHCR is grateful for the contributions and support of the following partners in the two rounds of profiling carried out:

Round 1: Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development, Médecins Sans Frontières, Save the Children International, Africa Development Aid, International Organization for Migration, Relief International, Action Against Hunger, World Vision International, International Rescue Committee, South Sudan Women's Union  
Round 2: Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development, Save the Children International, Community Engagement Network, International Rescue Committee, Jesuit Refugee Service

UNHCR also acknowledges the refugees and returnees whose participation were crucial in informing the direction of the humanitarian response in Renk.

## Executive summary

With no end in sight to the Sudan conflict, the humanitarian response in Renk continues to focus on providing lifesaving assistance at points of entry, transit centers, and onward movement. With the ongoing flow of new arrivals and emerging trends to consider, such as the increasing number of refugees and returnees unwilling to proceed to onward destinations, several options have been identified to facilitate the immediate, medium-term, and long-term response.

A profiling exercise was initially carried out in June 2024 (round 1). A total of 5,440 interviews were conducted, respondents included (18% refugee, 82% returnees), which formed the basis of the proposed approaches encapsulated in the draft Renk Interagency Transition Roadmap. The document has been reviewed and endorsed by all the humanitarian actors on the ground. Given the transitory nature of the population, a second profiling exercise (round 2) was conducted in September 2024 to ensure that the proposed course of action remains relevant and responsive to the needs of the population. Respondents included 8,115 families (14.5 % refugees, 85.4 % returnees). This document presents the findings of the two exercises.

## Methodology

The profiling exercise for round 1 was carried out by **10** partners, while for **5** partners participated in round 2. Tablets loaded with digital Kobo forms were used to collect the data. The survey comprised a total of **93** questions aimed at multiple groups, including refugees willing to relocate, unwilling to relocate, returnees, returnees willing to relocate and already registered with IOM, returnees willing to relocate but not registered with IOM, returnees unwilling to relocate and seeking integration. Each respondent took approximately 20 to 45 minutes to complete the survey, depending on the category.

## Comparative Analysis of Findings between Profiling Exercise 1 and 2

- Overall, the number of refugees and returnees staying in the transit center and surrounding areas for less than three months have significantly reduced, from 43% to 32%. The rest are staying for extended periods.
- In both exercises, humanitarian assistance remains the primary income source in the 30 days preceding the profiling. This is similarly followed by collecting and selling of firewood, coal, and recyclables, and selling of assets.

### Refugee Intentions

- In terms of movement intentions, most still prefer to stay in Renk (increased from 47% in the first exercise to 54% in the second). Those who intend to return to Sudan rose from 3% to 16%, while those who expressed willingness to move within South Sudan also increased from 2% to 13%.
- In terms of relocation, the number of refugees willing to be relocated decreased from 48% in the first exercise to 41% in the second. The increase in the number of refugees who are not willing to relocate highlights the importance of exploring alternative solutions.
- Preferred locations for relocation have changed between the two profiling exercises: Yambio increased from 26% to 49%, to potential settlement in Renk decreased from 30% to 28%, Ajoung Thok decreased from 32% to 13%, Maban and Aweil remained at 7% and 3% respectively, while Yei decreased from 1% to 0.27%.

- In both profiling exercises, access to education, health, and food security were the top three reasons cited behind the preference for the relocation site.
- The main reasons cited by those unwilling to relocate are consistent between the two exercises – distance to the border, family reunification, and concerns with the general safety of camps. Mobility as a factor increased from 8 to 13% and is now at par with safety concerns in the camps.
- Results from the second profiling exercise confirm previous findings that among refugees that are unwilling to relocate, the majority believe that cash grants would facilitate local integration in Renk, the percentage increased from 67.5% in the first exercise to 82.2% in the second.

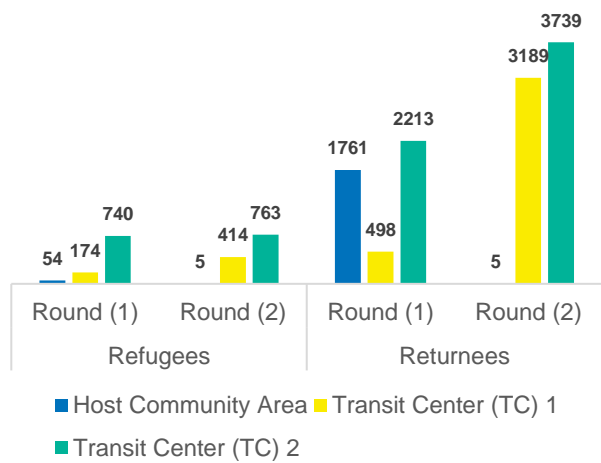
**Returnee Intentions**

- Regardless the duration of stay, most returnees are unwilling to relocate and prefer to integrate in Renk, which was outlined in both exercises.
- Similarly, the majority of returnees that are willing to relocate have not yet registered for relocation.
- In both exercises, returnees that are unwilling to relocate are mostly headed by vulnerable persons – single mothers, pregnant and lactating women, and older persons.
- More returnees (73%) are preferring to stay at the transit centers and surrounding locations compared to the previous profiling exercise (63%).

**Distribution of returnees and refugees across three locations**

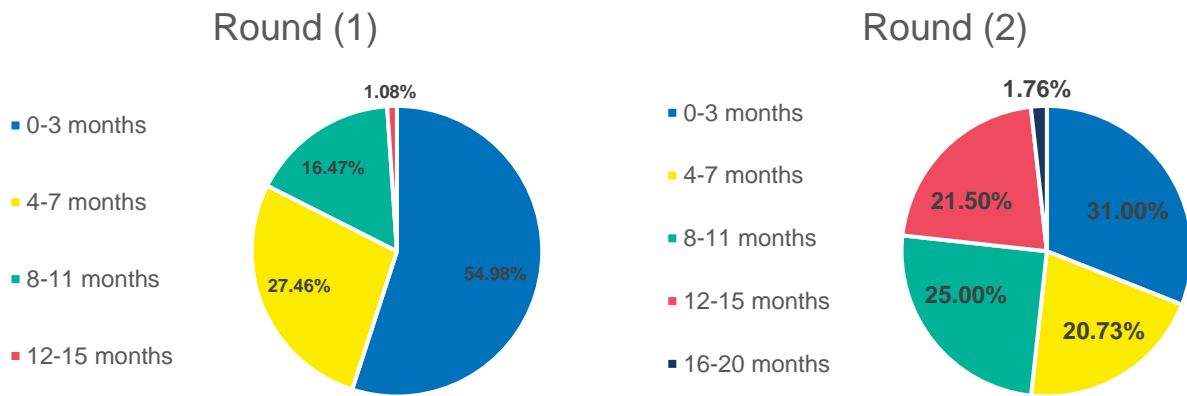
- Most of the population during both rounds are located in Transit Center 2 (TC2). The highest percentage of returnees is also in TC2 (46%).
- TCs surrounding areas host a significant proportion of returnees (32.37%), while during round (2) it shows just around 0.1% that could be attributed to the preference of the population to indicate that they are staying inside TCs for any possible provision of assistance.
- During both round 1 & 2, TC1 and surrounding areas combined accommodate around 45% of the population, which support the idea that people staying in the surrounding area present more that they are in TC1.

Distribution of returnees and refugees across three locations



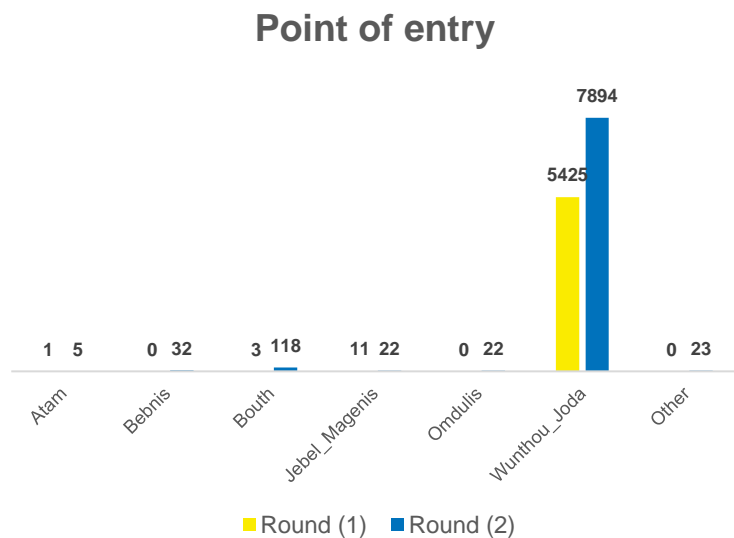
**Date of arrival to South Sudan**

- During round (1), among the residents of the TC, a significant number of returnees and refugees arrived in 2024 as compared to 2023; while round two shows around half of the population arrived in 2024 and the rest in 2023.



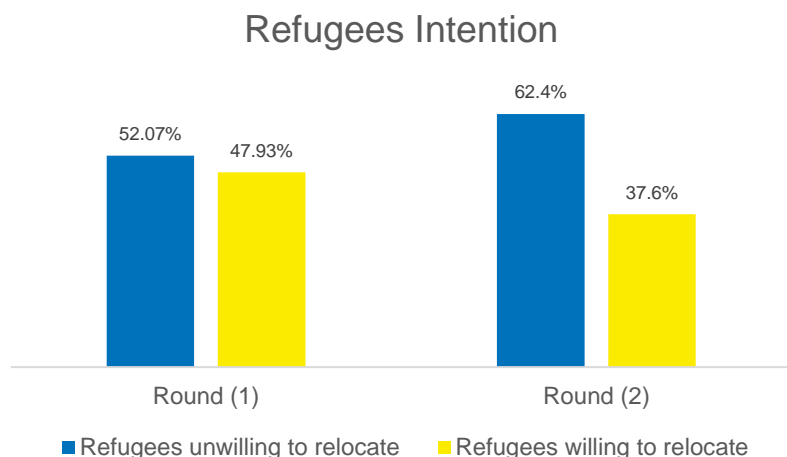
## Point of entry

Based on the information from round (1), the overwhelming majority of both refugees and returnees crossed via Wunthou/Joda (99.72%), with very small number of respondents using other entry points (Atam, Bouth, Jebel Magenis). While round (2) shows increase of the new arrivals from unofficial crossing points to reach around from 0.28 % to 2.7%. That in line with the situation change starting from July 2024 with increased number of refugees and returnees arriving through different crossing points.

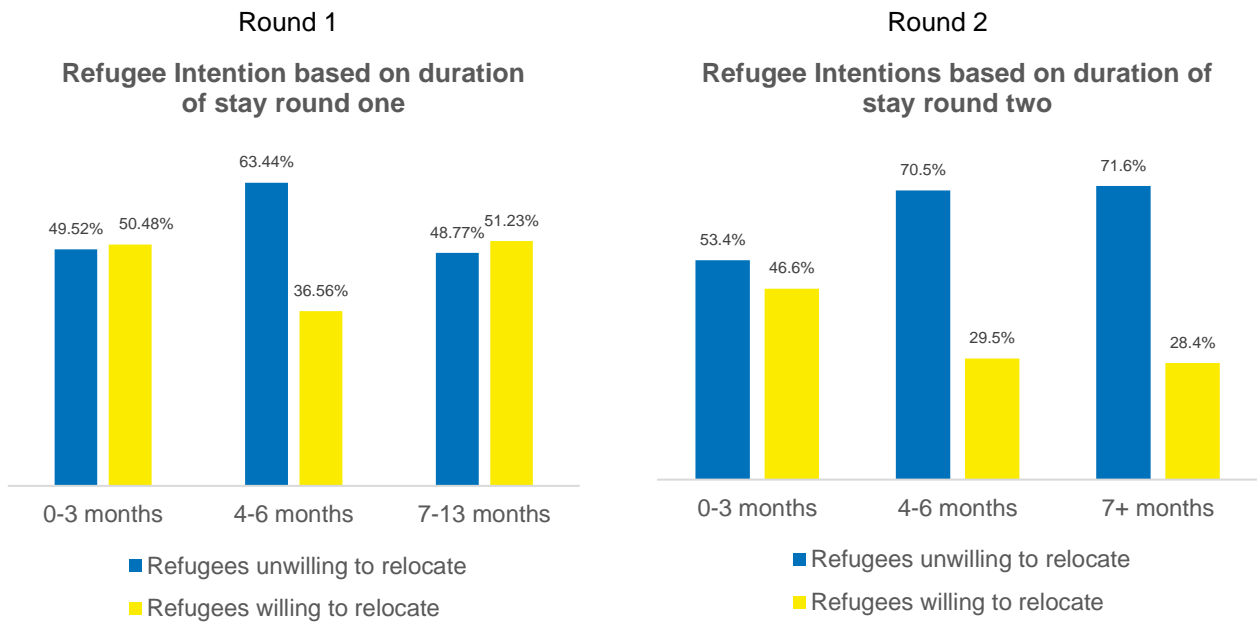


## Intentions of refugees

A slightly larger proportion of refugees (52.07%) are unwilling to relocate compared to those who are willing to relocate (47.93%) in round (1), while round (2) shows increasing by around 10% in the percentage of refugees unwilling to relocate to reach 62.4% that could be attribute to 1) that another round of relocation was done just before the profiling exercise 2) Increase interest of refugees to stay in Renk.



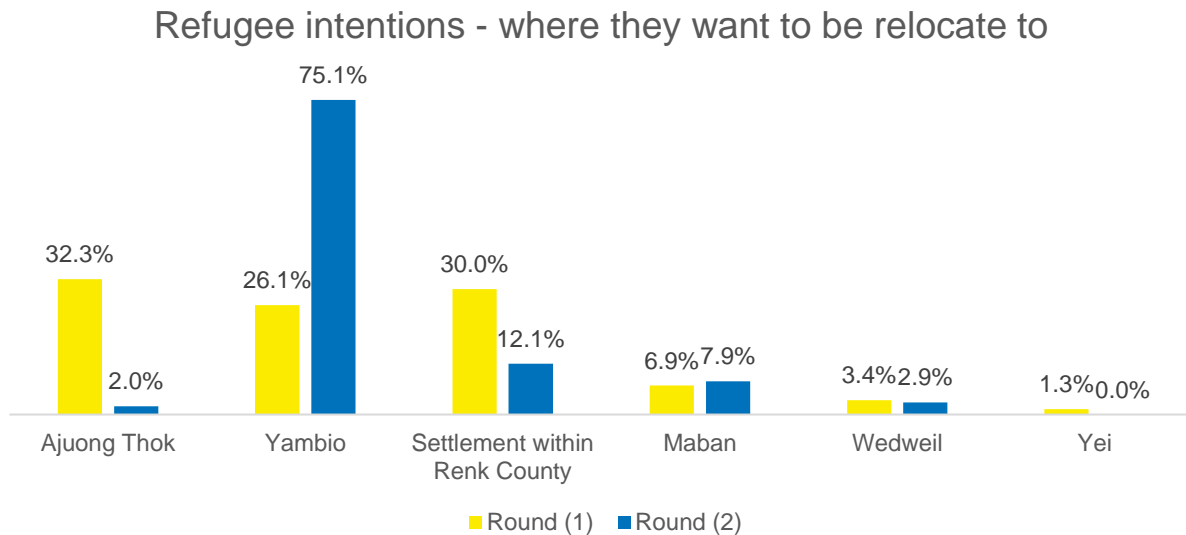
**Refugees intention depending on the duration of stay**



Round (1) - The intention of refugees is close for the ones who stayed up 3 months or for 7 months or more, while decrease for the refugees staying from 4 – 6 months.

Round (2) - This round show more consistent trend with the willingness of refugees to relocate is decreasing with the increase period of staying in Renk.

**The intended destination of the relocation for refugees**



- In both rounds Yambio, Ajuong Thok and settlement within Renk are the top three destinations,
- Ajuong Thok decreased significantly during round (2), that could be attribute to the fact that two round of relocations to Ajuong Thok conducted before the profiling exercise.

- Wedweil and Yei are the least preferred, in both rounds, despite that when Yambio was put on hold, the percentage of refugees interested to be relocated to Wedweil increased significantly.

**Reasons to choose each location**

	Ajong Thok	Yambio	Settlement within Renk County	Maban	Wedweil
Round 1	Family reunification (32.46%)	Access to education (33.33%)	Access to health (23.63%)	Access to education (26.03%)	Food security (26.19%)
	Access to education (18.66%)	Access to health (24.03%)	Food security (21.98%)	Access to health (20.55%)	Access to education (26.19%)
	Access to health & food security (13.81% each)	Food security (17.44%)	Access to education (20.05%)	Food security (19.88%)	Access to health (23.81%)
Round 2	Family reunification (10.5%)	Access to education (26%)	Access to health (20.5%)	Access to education (24.4%)	Food security (16.7%)
	Access to education (26.3%)	Access to health (18.6%)	Food security (19.9%)	Access to health (23.3%)	Access to education (16.7%)
	Access to health & food security (15.8% each)	Food security (14.4%)	Access to education (24.2%)	Food security (14.4%)	Access to health (29.2%)

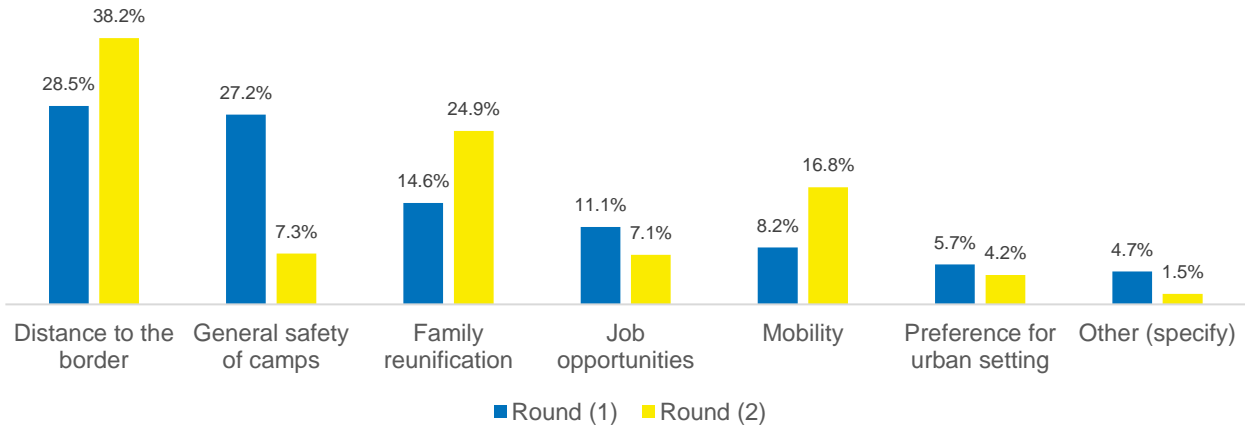
Note: This is based on existing perceptions and information available among refugees, so it doesn't represent a real comparison of available services in each location.

- Ajong Thok: In round (1) family reunification is the most crucial factor, while in round (2) access to education was stated as the most important factor.
- Yambio: in both rounds there is similar results with access to education as first actor followed by access to health then food security.
- Settlement within Renk County: in round (1) health services top the list, while in the second-round access to education came first.
- Maban: in both rounds there is similar results with access to education as first actor followed by access to health then food security.
- Wedweil: in round (1) food security and education are equally prioritized, followed by health services. While in round (2) access to health came first.



**Reasons not to relocate**

Refugee intentions - reasons not to relocate

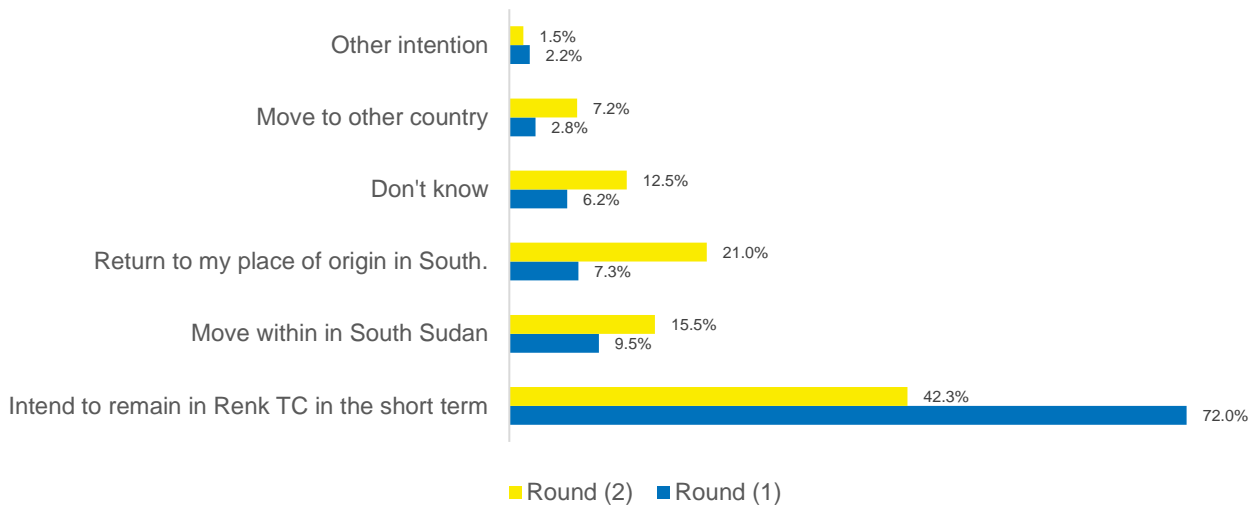


- The most significant reason for not relocating in both rounds is the distance to the border. This might indicate a preference to stay close to the border for easier access to cross-border resources, support, or to return to their home country.
- While the general safety of camps in round (1) was the second highest reason for no relocation, it reduced significantly from 27.2% to 7.3% in round (2), that could be related that more refugees relocated to other camps and information on positive security and safety are shared.
- Family reunification is also a notable reason 14.56% in round (1) and increase to 24.9% in round (2), which means more refugees might have family members in their current location or expecting family members to join them soon and prefer to stay together rather than relocate separately.
- Job opportunities available in their current location influence the decision not to relocate 11.11%. Employment prospects are crucial for the refugees' livelihood and stability, while it decrease to 7.1% in second round which might be results of continuous challenges faced by refugees to find job opportunities.
- Mobility issues 8.17%, which could include transportation difficulties or physical constraints, prevent some refugees from relocating, and that increased to around double 16.8% in the second round.
- Some refugees prefer an urban setting over rural or other types of settings 5.75%. They may find better facilities, services, and lifestyle in urban areas. That decreased slightly to 4.2% in the second round.



### Refugees not willing to relocate - movement intentions

#### Not willing to relocate - movement intentions



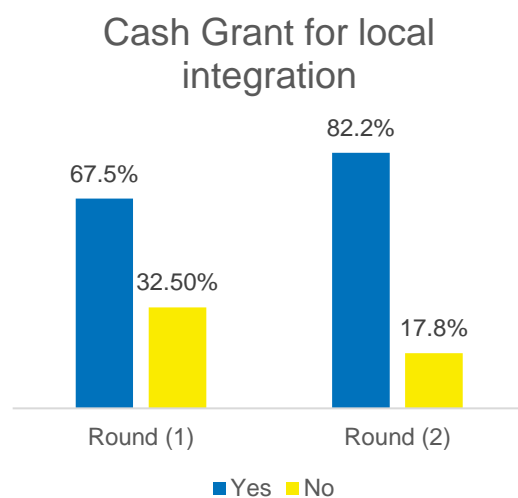
- The vast majority of refugees in both rounds intend to remain in Renk Transit Center (TC) for the short term, though the percentage in Round (2) decreased from 72% to 42.3% this could be attribute to the limited coping mechanism and the increase of the available options for locations of relocations.
- A smaller proportion of refugees (9.5%) are willing to move within South Sudan, but this percentage increased to 15.5% in the second round.
- Some refugees (7.3%) wish to return to their place of origin within South Sudan.
- A segment of refugees (6.2%) is uncertain about their future intentions and this percentage almost doubled in the second round.
- A small percentage (2.8%) consider moving to another country (third country), but the second round showed increase to around 3 times more

### Cash grant for local integration for those refugees that are unwilling to be relocated

In round (1) a significant majority (67.5%) of refugees who do not want to be relocated are willing to consider receiving a cash grant to help them integrate into the local community, while round (2) came with even higher percentage of 82.2% who are interested in receiving cash grant to help them integrate.

The data indicates a strong interest among the majority of refugees in receiving financial assistance to integrate into the local community.

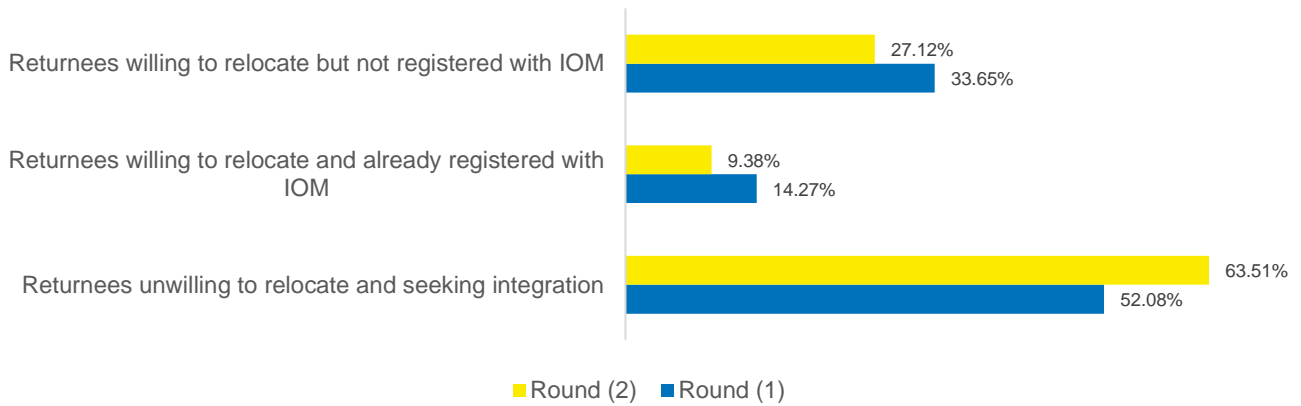
This suggests that cash grants could be an effective tool for supporting local integration efforts. Before deciding on this approach to have better



understanding on the pros and cons and the system to be in place.

## Intentions of returnees

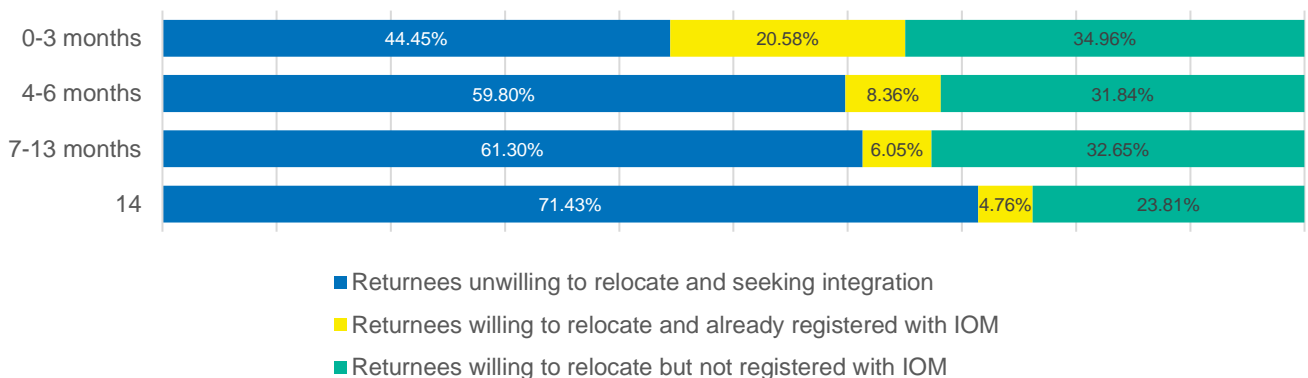
### Intentions of returnees



- Round (1) indicated that majority of returnees 52.08% are unwilling to relocate and are seeking integration into their current local community. This indicates a strong preference for settling and becoming part of the local society rather than moving again. This is also increased up to 63.51% in round (2) to reconfirm the fact that most of the returnees have the preference to stay and integrate in Renk.
- A smaller proportion of returnees 14.27% in round (1) and 9.38% in Round (2) are willing to relocate and have already taken steps to do so by registering with the International Organization for Migration (IOM). This group is actively preparing for relocation.
- A significant portion of returnees 33.65% are willing to relocate but have not yet registered with IOM. This group is open to moving but has not engaged with the formal processes or assistance programs available. In round (2) the percentage of the same group decreased to 27.12%.

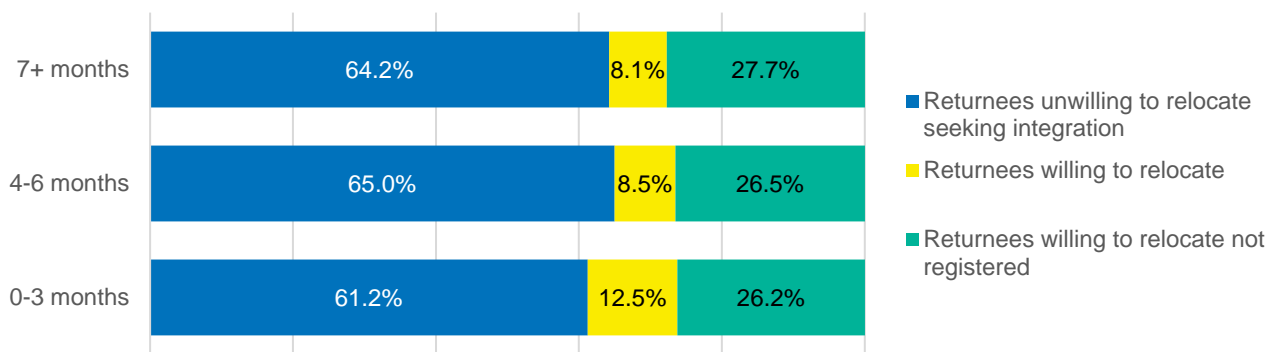
### Returnees intention depending on the duration of stay

Returnee intentions based on duration of stay - Round (1)



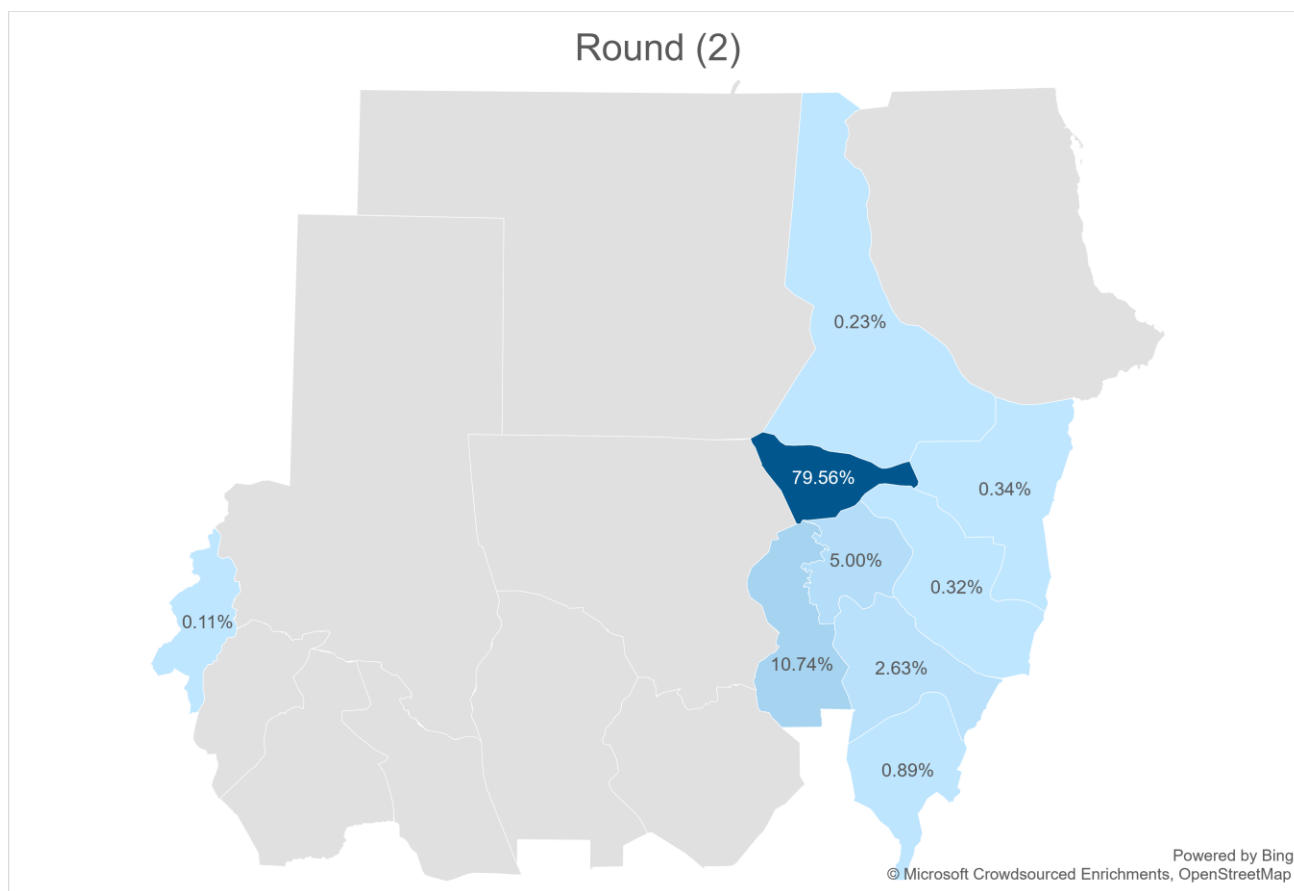
- Short-Term Stay (0-3 Months): A smaller proportion of returnees are unwilling to relocate 44.45% compared to other durations.
- Medium-Term Stay (4-6 Months): The unwillingness to relocate increases significantly to 59.80%. A smaller percentage 8.36% are willing to relocate and already registered with IOM, while 31.84% are willing to relocate but not registered.
- Longer Stay (7-13 Months): The trend continues with an increase in unwillingness to relocate 61.30%. A small percentage 6.05% are registered with IOM for relocation, and 32.65% are willing to relocate but not registered.
- Extended Stay (14 Months or More): The highest percentage of returnees unwilling to relocate is seen in this group 71.43%. Only 4.76% are willing to relocate and registered with IOM, while 23.81% are willing to relocate but not registered.

Returnee Intentions based on duration of stay - Round (2)



The second round doesn't indicate significant different for the returnees intention based on the duration of stay, with the biggest percentage is not willing to relocate and seeking integration.

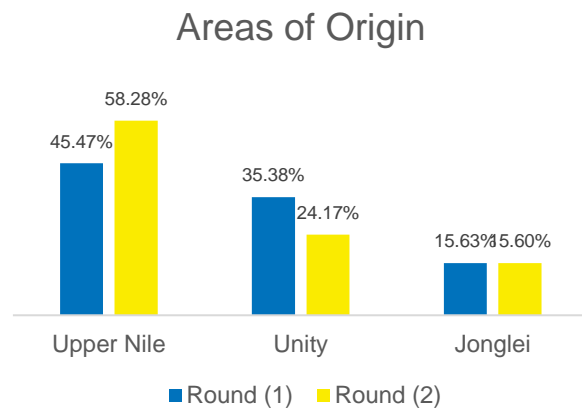
### Location in Sudan from which returnees HH departed



- Both rounds presented the same outcome with Khartoum, White Nile and Al Jazirah as the top three locations people departed from.
- Khartoum is the primary location from which households departed, accounting for nearly 80% (for both rounds) of the returnee population. This suggests that many returnees lived in the capital city, potentially due to better economic opportunities or safety.
- A significant minority of households 9.57% departed from White Nile, while increased in the second round to 10.74% making it the second most common area of departure.
- Al Jazirah is another notable area, with 6.35% of households departing from this location, with slight decrease in round (2) to 5%.

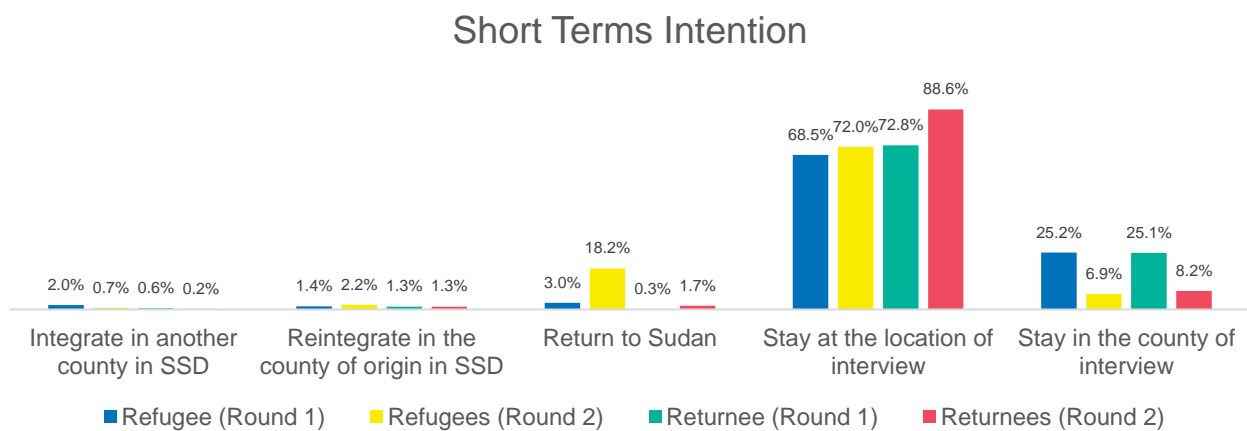
### Area of origin in South Sudan

- The top three locations based on the results of both rounds are Upper Nile, Unity and Jonglei.
- The Upper Nile State has the highest representation, with several counties contributing significantly, with the highest percentage coming from Malakal.
- Unity State (35.38%) has major contributors, including Mayom, Leer and Rubkona.
- Fangak and Ayod are significant contributors from Jonglei.
- While smaller in percentage, various counties from Central Equatoria, Eastern Equatoria, Lakes, Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Warrap, and Western Bahr el Ghazal also contribute to the returnee population.
- Many of the counties of origin, such as those in Upper Nile, Unity, and Jonglei, are currently experiencing high levels of malnutrition, food insecurity, a significant number of IDPs and returnees, and are at risk of flooding.



## Short and medium intention for refugees & returnees

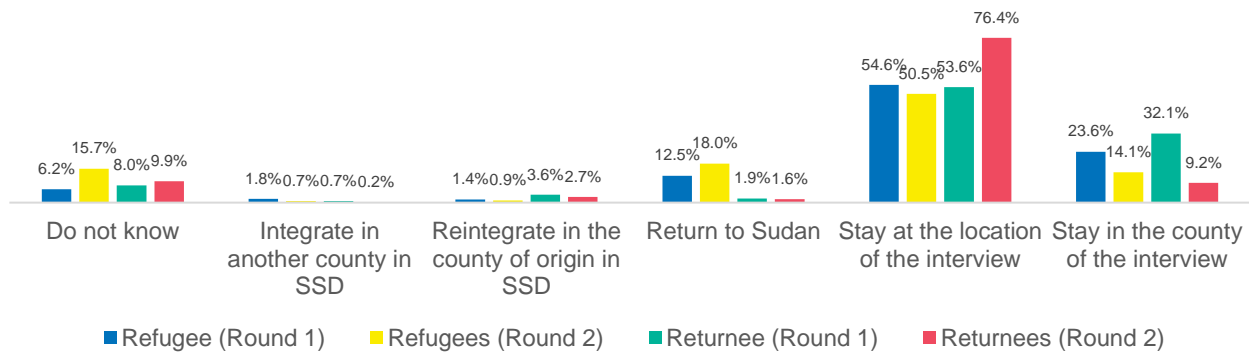
### Short term intention for refugees and returnees



- The majority of both refugees and returnees in both rounds prefer to stay at their current location of the interview, indicating a strong inclination towards immediate stability and familiarity.
- During round 1 around 25.2% of refugees and returnees express their interest to integrate within the county while this significantly decreased during round 2 with range of 7 to 8%.
- Both groups have nearly identical preferences for staying within the county where they were interviewed, highlighting a consistent desire to remain within their current broader community.

**Medium term intentions for refugees and returnees**

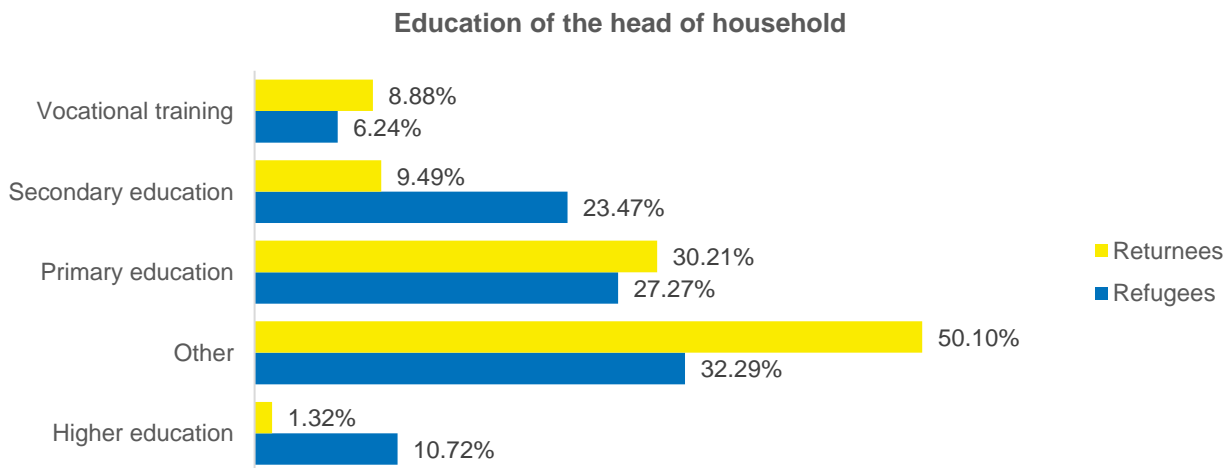
**Mid-Term Intention**



- The majority of both refugees and returnees in both rounds prefer to stay at their current location of the interview, indicating a strong inclination towards immediate stability and familiarity.
- A significantly higher percentage of refugees (18%) consider returning to Sudan compared to returnees (12.5%).

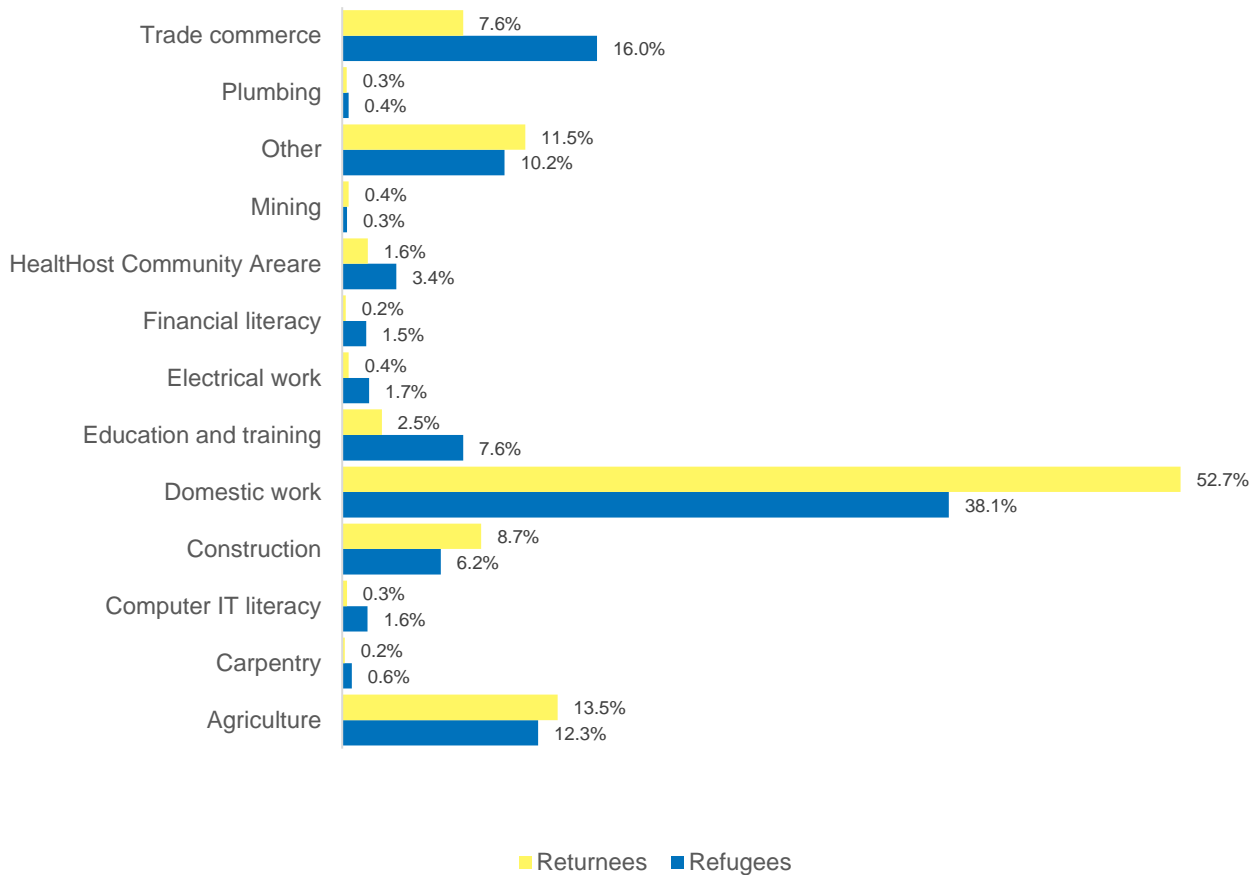
# Education and skills of returnees and refugees willing to integrate in Renk

**Education of the head of household – Round (2)**



## Head of Household's main technical skills and fields of experience - Round (2)

Head of household main technical field and expertise

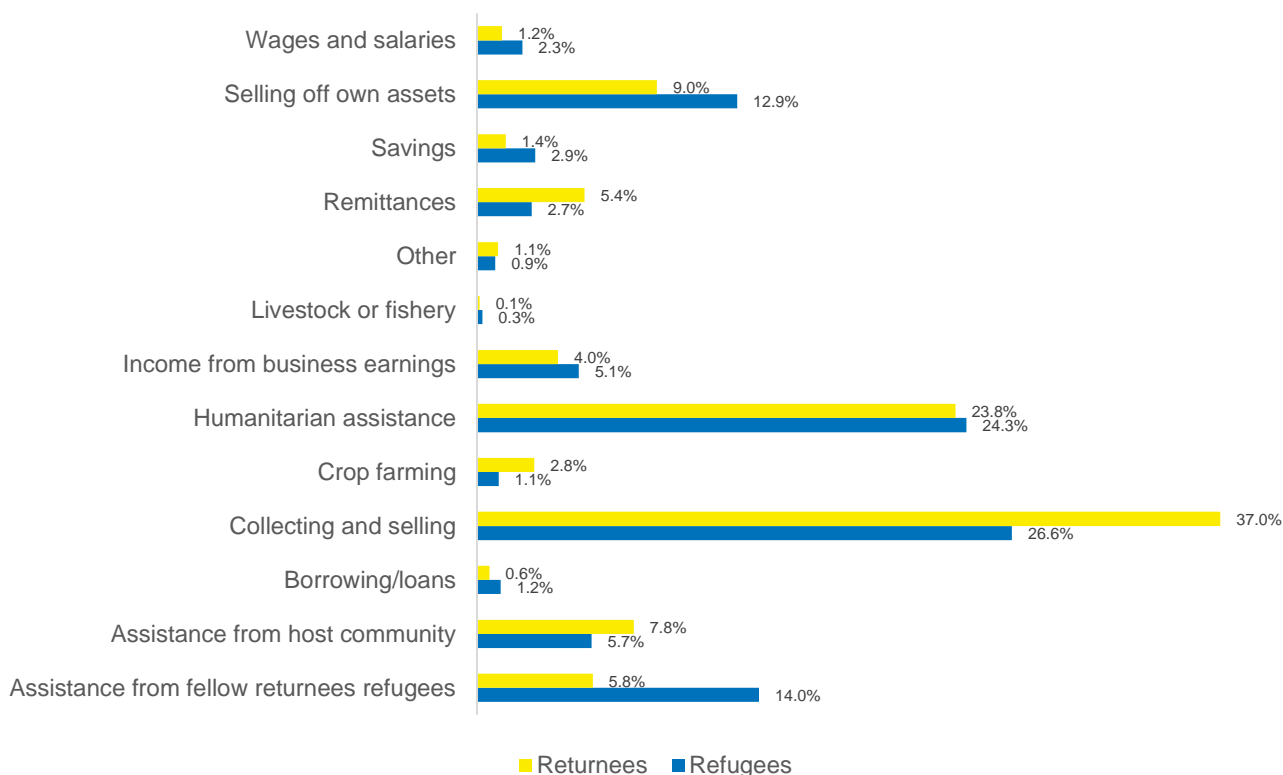


- A significantly higher percentage of returnees (52.7%) have skills in domestic work compared to refugees (38.1%).
- Refugees exhibit a broader range of skills, including higher percentages in carpentry, computer/IT literacy, trade commerce, electrical work and financial literacy.
- Both groups have similar levels of expertise in agriculture and construction, indicating common areas of potential employment and integration support.
- Refugees are more likely to have skills in education and training compared to returnees, which could be leveraged for community development and capacity-building programs.



### Household source of income in last 30 days - Round (2)

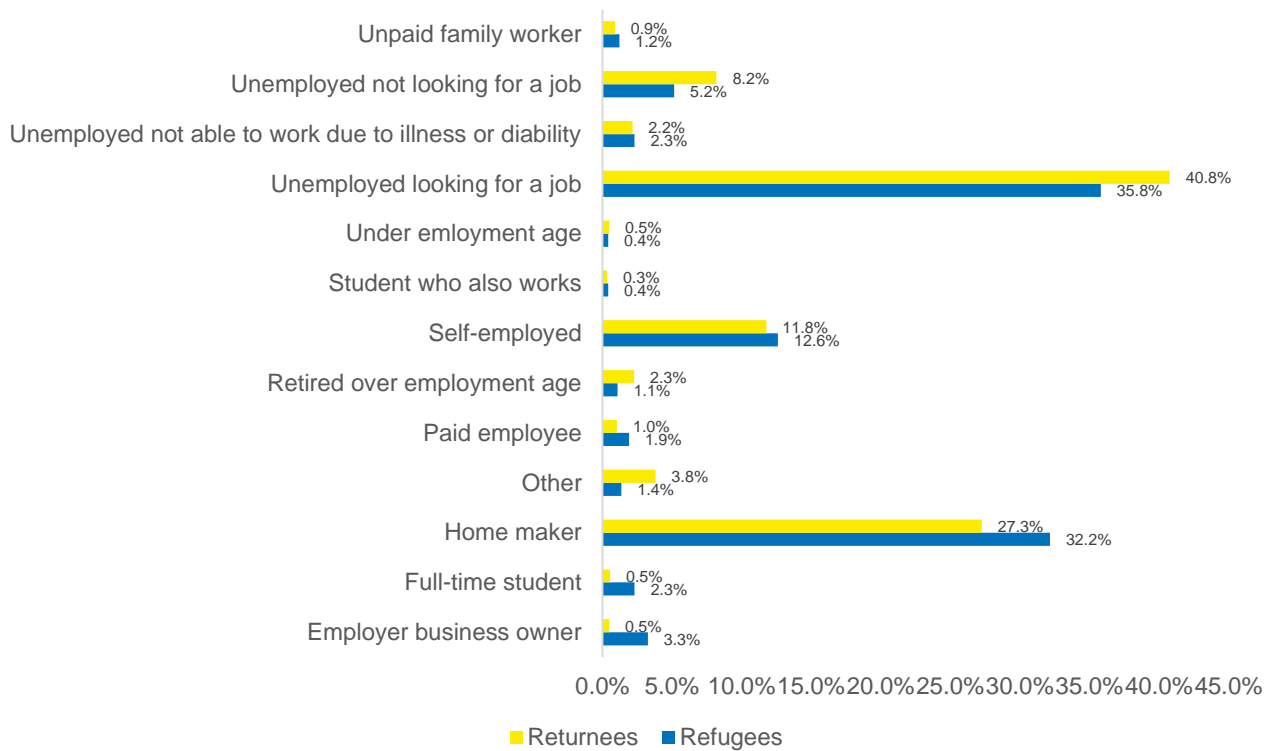
#### Source of income in the last 30 days



- Both groups heavily rely on humanitarian assistance, with slightly higher dependency among refugees.
- For returnees the first three income ways is collecting and selling, followed by humanitarian assistance then selling of ff own assets.
- For refugees same apply for the first two incomes with collecting and selling then humanitarian assistance while the third is assistance from fellow returnees/refugees.
- For both assistance from host community give good source of income with the percentage for returnees is slightly more 7.8% comparing with 5.7% for refugees.
- Refugees has bigger percentage from business earning with 5.1% comparing with 4% for returnees.

## Head of Household's current work/occupation status - Round (2)

### Current work/Occupation status



- Both groups have the first three current occupation as the same starting from unemployed/looking for job, home maker then self-employed.
- Both groups have high unemployment rates, with a slightly higher percentage among returnees looking for jobs: 35.8% of refugees are unemployed and 40.8% of returnees are unemployed
- The second highest is for home maker with 32.2% for refugees and 27.3% for returnees.
- The lowest current work for both groups is for students who work.

For information please contact us at: [ssdjupi@unhcr.org](mailto:ssdjupi@unhcr.org)