

# **VOICES OF REFUGEES**

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION NEEDS OF REFUGEES IN GREECE AND GERMANY**

## Acknowledgements

First and foremost, BBC Media Action would like to thank all the participants in this research. This research would not have been possible without refugees and humanitarian workers generously giving up their time to talk to us.

This report was written by a team of researchers from BBC Media Action: Theodora Hannides, Nicola Bailey and Dwan Kaoukji.

Special thanks go to the research team who contributed to this research: Gilles Gasser of Development and Humanitarian Learning in Action (DAHLIA), who acted as a partner throughout this research project; BBC Media Action researchers Kavita Abraham Dowsing, Theodora Hannides, Dwan Kaoukji and Shams Tazi; independent researchers Leila Younes, Reem Karssli and Tony Spence; Dari and Farsi translators Ajmal Wafa and Farideh Colthart.

Special thanks also to the BBC Media Action colleagues who contributed to this report, particularly Miriam Marti, Sophia Nikolaou, Sarah Williams, Simon Derry, Lisa Robinson, John Sutcliffe and Sonia Whitehead, as well as members of the Communicating With Disaster Affected Communities (CDAC) Network Steering Group who reviewed the report.

This research has been funded by UK aid from the UK government through the START Network European Refugee Response Programme.

Thanks to the Action Against Hunger (ACF) monitoring, evaluation and learning team, in particular Mariagni Ellina, for organising the learning workshop with agencies in Athens, and Samaritan's Purse for hosting it in its offices. Thanks to Timo Luege (Communicating with Communities team leader) and UNHCR field workers in Greece, who facilitated research in a number of locations.

Project manager: Alexandra Buccianti

Editor: Katy Williams

Copy editor: Lorna Fray

Design: Lance Bellers

Proof reader: Sarah Chatwin

Production team: Anna Egan, Maresa Manara, Sam Waterton

BBC Media Action is the BBC's international development charity. We use the power of media and communication to help reduce poverty and support people in understanding their rights. Our aim is to inform, connect and empower people around the world. We work in partnership with broadcasters, governments, non-governmental organisations and donors to share timely, reliable and useful information. The content of this report is the responsibility of BBC Media Action. Any views expressed in this report should not be taken to represent those of the BBC itself, or any donors supporting the work of the charity.

# Contents

Executive summary	<b>3</b>
1. Background	<b>7</b>
2. Research objectives and methodology	<b>9</b>
3. Refugees featured in this study	<b>11</b>
4. Refugees' information and communication needs	<b>15</b>
5. Cross-cutting themes	<b>23</b>
6. Humanitarian agencies	<b>29</b>
7. Recommendations	<b>31</b>
8. Conclusions: How media and communication can support refugees' needs	<b>35</b>
Bibliography	<b>37</b>
Appendices	<b>38</b>
Endnotes	<b>48</b>



# Executive summary

Since 2015 more than a million women, men and children have undertaken perilous journeys to reach northern European countries, using unofficial migration routes across the Mediterranean Sea and south-east Europe.<sup>1</sup> Not all of them have reached their preferred destination, and many have died or gone missing on the way.

These people reflect diverse nationalities, languages and levels of literacy, income, social status and access to technology. But they have one overwhelming aspect in common – they require information to make decisions about their next steps, to remain safe and meet their minimum survival needs. And yet, even in this age of digital technology, they often cannot get the reliable information they need due to a lack

of online or mobile connectivity and limited consistent information that they trust.

This study provides a snapshot of refugees' experiences regarding communication and information at different points on their journey. It examines the communication behaviours and priority information needs of refugees<sup>2</sup> in three areas: on their journey, in “transit” camps in Greece, and in Germany, for those who have reached this key destination country for refugees. The research consists of interviews with refugees and with humanitarian agency officials in Greece and Germany. The study examines how refugees access and use information, and presents the concerns and challenges faced by humanitarian agencies in addressing their needs.

## The research

A total of 66 refugees from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq participated in the qualitative study in formal and informal camps in Greece. An additional 13 interviews took place in Germany – capturing the voices of those who had completed their journey. A total of 16 focus group discussions were also conducted. Participants were asked to tell the story of their journey so far, focusing particularly on the information and communication they needed and used at different stages.

In-depth interviews with 41 humanitarian actors in Greece and four in Germany captured their understanding of refugees' communication needs. In April 2016, humanitarian agency staff in Greece reviewed the research findings. They discussed possible ways to better meet refugees' current information and communication needs. (See the appendices for full details of the research process.)

*Previous page*  
A man and a child cross train tracks at a makeshift camp for migrants and refugees at the Greek–Macedonian border near the village of Idomeni in April 2016.

JOE KLAMAR/AFP/  
GETTY IMAGES

The findings from this research highlight refugees' overarching need for critical information about their current and future situation, as well as broader communication needs:

- Refugees need to be listened to
- Refugees need to be able to tell their stories
- Refugees need to participate in dialogue that provides them with physical, social and psychosocial support
- Many refugees also need trauma counselling

It is important to note that the situation of refugees in Europe is a dynamic one. Until March 2016 refugees could pass through the Western Balkans and receive humanitarian assistance at key points along the route from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other agencies. Since 2015 more than a million people have attempted to reach northern European countries using unofficial migration routes. According to UNHCR, 70% of these displaced people come from Syria, Iraq or Afghanistan. Governments started to impose border restrictions from August 2015,<sup>3</sup> culminating in the Western Balkans route being declared shut by early March 2016 and leaving more than 46,000 people stranded in camps in Greece.<sup>4</sup>

Research for this report was carried out in April 2016 in this shifting, highly uncertain climate. Most refugee research participants were stranded in challenging living conditions in Greece, with communication needs that reflected their static and uncertain status. Despite being stuck, almost all of the refugee participants considered themselves to be still on a journey – either back to their country of origin or on their way to their destination country – and believed that things would change at any moment.

The research found that these refugees had one overriding communication requirement: timely and reliable information on how to get to their next destination safely, quickly and without being detained – a need that humanitarian actors were often not able to fulfil.

Despite determined work by agencies on the ground, refugees interviewed in Greece tended to be confused about their status and legal rights – not knowing what point they had reached in the asylum process, and frustrated by perceptions that the application process was unfair. Some said their journey to Europe and experience in the camps was worse than living in war, since at least then they knew where they were and had a home, even if their lives were at risk. Refugees living in shelters in Germany, for whom life was often much harder than anticipated, had no official rights to live or work in Germany, no knowledge of whether they would be allowed to stay, and were confused about their rights and asylum status. These people wanted to know: what was next for them?

Aside from this, exhausted refugees in Greece described how they needed basic information about the logistics of daily living, including how to stay safe and where to find healthcare, but often had no common language to communicate with service providers. They voiced concerns about a lack of translators – especially Farsi/Dari speakers – to liaise between them and agencies, and also expressed mistrust of translators used in asylum interviews.

Who could refugees trust for information?

Often they did not have a choice, and had to put their “trust” in whoever could supply relevant information when they needed it most. Faced with an information vacuum or low confidence in sources that they perceived to be unreliable, they often sought information from people smugglers.

The analysis shows that refugees who stay in regular contact with other refugees and who have wide communication networks of family members and friends (via mobile networks and social networking sites such as Facebook and WhatsApp) were likely to be more resilient than those who were less connected. The latter, particularly Afghan refugees, tended to rely more heavily on smugglers and their travel group for information on their journey and were often cut off from contact with family and friends.



In interviews, humanitarian staff revealed major challenges in meeting refugees' information and communication needs. Chief among these was that they did not know when and whether borders would open to allow the refugees to continue their journey. While they wanted to share helpful,

accurate information, these agencies knew that the situation could quickly change and was outside their control. With multiple actors working in this space, and a rapidly changing situation, providing accurate, consistent information was, and remains, extremely challenging.

### What refugees said they need

Refugees who participated in this research said they particularly needed information about:

- Whether borders were open or closed
- What was going to happen to them next
- How the asylum process worked
- Their options
- Where to access psychosocial support and other health services
- How to report poor services and communicate their needs

Suggestions from refugees on how their information and communication needs could be met:

1. Have **focal points** within the camps who speak the right languages, can communicate people's needs and concerns to agencies, and provide answers to their questions.

*"We need someone to translate for us, to communicate our needs and give us answers to our questions."*

2. Have more **legal advisers** in the camps (with translators), who can consider people's individual cases and advise them on their options.

*"We need one-to-one appointments with legal advisers, to help us understand our rights and our options."*

3. Hold **regular meetings** within the camps to update refugees on the current situation, preferably led by EU/government officials.

*"They could gather everyone together in meetings to share important updates."*

4. Although free wi-fi is available in some camps, all camps need it to enable people to be **connected to the internet**, so they are also connected to their families and other sources of information.

*"We need access to the internet to find information and communicate with our family at home."*

## Definitions<sup>5</sup> of common terms

This report uses the term “refugee” to describe research participants living in Germany and Greece, since almost all refugee research participants said they had left their countries because of fear of persecution and an inability to gain protection.<sup>6</sup> This report uses “refugee” as an umbrella term, while acknowledging that some research participants have applied for asylum and are therefore asylum seekers, particularly those living in Germany.

Agency/agencies	Humanitarian agencies, which can include UN bodies, international and national non-governmental organisations (NGOs).
Asylum seeker	A person seeking safety from persecution or serious harm in a country other than their own and awaiting a decision on their application for refugee status under relevant international and national instruments.
Humanitarian actor	People working for agencies involved in supporting refugees in some way, including staff of humanitarian agencies, camp managers, local and international NGOs and UN bodies.
Participant/s	People interviewed as part of this research study.
Migrant	A person outside the territory of the state of which they are nationals or citizens, and who has resided in a foreign country for more than one year – irrespective of the voluntary or involuntary causes and the legal or illegal way used to migrate.
Volunteers	People who support refugees without being paid. They may volunteer with a specific organisation or independently.

## Abbreviations

ACF	Action Contre la Faim (Action Against Hunger)
CDAC Network	Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities Network
DAHLIA	Development and Humanitarian Learning in Action
DFID	UK Department for International Development
EU	European Union
FYRoM	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders)
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees



# I. Background

Figure I: Balkans route to Germany



Map: Original source UNHCR, accessed via BBC News on 24 April 2016<sup>7</sup>

In 2016, the world is facing its largest displacement crisis since World War II. According to UNHCR,<sup>8</sup> approximately 60 million people are displaced as a result of persecution, conflict, generalised violence, human rights violations and untenable conditions in their home country. The ongoing conflict in Syria, which began in 2011, has rapidly accelerated this trend, making it the world's largest driver of displacement. The Mediterranean Sea has been an important migration route for decades. However, the number of people attempting to cross it has significantly increased in recent years.<sup>9</sup>

Since 2015 more than a million women, men and children<sup>10</sup> have attempted to reach northern European countries, using unofficial migration routes across the Aegean and Dodecanese seas and south-eastern Europe. According to UNHCR figures, 70% of these displaced people come from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq, with the other 30% coming from countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Iran, Pakistan and Somalia.<sup>11</sup> Thousands of people have been reported dead or missing during their attempt to reach safety.<sup>12</sup>

The social, cultural and ethnic diversity of refugees passing through the region, highlighted by their diverse languages and dialects and their differing levels of literacy and ability to access technology, has added to the complexity of their

communication needs. The continual changes to national asylum policies and border status across the region since January 2016 has created an environment in which it became even more difficult to access timely and accurate information.

UNHCR, international and national agencies aimed to meet refugees' immediate needs by offering humanitarian assistance, including food and medical help, at key points along the main transit route through Greece, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYRoM) and Serbia. In effect, this created a humanitarian corridor along the length of the Western Balkans.

However, this safe passage was short-lived: as border agencies struggled to cope with the increasing number of refugees transiting through the region, governments began to implement border restrictions. In November 2013, Bulgaria began constructing razor wire fences along parts of its land borders with Turkey.<sup>13</sup> In September 2015, Hungary also closed its southern borders to refugees, triggering a number of subsequent border controls across the region. Some of these restrictions stopped people of specific nationalities from crossing regional borders and claiming asylum,<sup>14</sup> while other restrictions, such as those implemented by Austria, capped the number of asylum claims that could be processed in any 24-hour period. Austria also placed a daily cap on the number of people permitted to transit through Austria to Germany.<sup>15</sup> For a timeline of these events, see Appendix D.

These restrictions led to a growing proportion of the migrant population being unable to leave Greece and Serbia, while more people continued to arrive in Greece. Eventually, borders along the Western Balkans route only remained open to refugees from Iraq or Syria, later culminating in FYRoM completely closing its borders to all refugees.<sup>16</sup> In March 2016, the Western Balkans route was declared as coming to an end,<sup>17</sup> leaving thousands trapped in Greece.

On 20 March, the European Union (EU) and Turkey reached an agreement with the aim of better managing the refugee crisis.<sup>18</sup> Under the EU–Turkey deal, refugees and migrants arriving in Greece are sent back to Turkey if they do not apply for asylum or if their claim is unsuccessful. The deal includes a refugee reallocation programme – the EU will process applications from Syrian refugees wishing to officially resettle in the EU directly from Turkey. People currently in Greece who do not wish to make an asylum application to resettle there will be returned to Turkey.

On 4 April, the first group of refugees and migrants were returned to Turkey. According to figures from the European Commission, migration from Turkey to Greece has significantly decreased since the EU–Turkey scheme began.<sup>19</sup> The deal, however, also increased fears that migrants and refugees could attempt other, more dangerous routes to get to Europe.<sup>20</sup>

As of April 2016, it is estimated that 46,000 refugees<sup>21</sup> and migrants are stranded in Greece – across the north of the country, close to the Macedonian border, around Athens and the Greek islands. Many of these refugees are staying in formal or informal camps that lack basic services such as medical, sanitation, hygiene, food, as well as other essential supplies. The communication needs of these refugees, who are now unable to cross the region and face potential “resettlement” to Turkey, have evolved to reflect their new static and uncertain status.

## 2. Research objectives and methodology

### Research objectives

The overall aim of the study was to identify opportunities for better communication with refugees across Europe, so that:

1. Humanitarian practitioners and the emergency relief sector have access to insights into successful communication with refugees and communication gaps
2. Humanitarian responders can use these insights to adapt and respond to refugees' communication needs

The work stemmed from recognition by key actors (including UNHCR, the CDAC Network<sup>22</sup> and START Network<sup>23</sup>) of the unique challenges of communicating with diverse groups on the move and providing them with timely and up-to-date information. The research was commissioned by the START Network through the CDAC Network<sup>24</sup> and had two overarching objectives:

1. To examine the information and communication needs of **refugees** along their journey to and within Europe, and to understand how they use this information to make decisions
2. To examine the views of **humanitarian agencies** working with refugees and the challenges they face in addressing refugees' needs

Following closure of the FYRoM border in March 2016, the research design expanded to explore the past communication needs of refugees on their journey to Europe, as well as their current needs while static. This focused on refugees in Europe (Greece and Germany), not in the Balkans.

The following research questions underpinned the research with refugees and humanitarian actors:

- What are the priority information and communication needs of refugees?
- How is information sharing and communication taking place between refugees and various actors?
- What information is being shared between refugees and actors?
- What communication initiatives/activities are agencies implementing for refugees in Europe?
- Based on the research findings from this study, what are the recommended practices for existing and future communication with refugees?

## Research components

The study took a qualitative approach to addressing the research questions and exploring the perspectives of key stakeholders in the study. The primary method used was a storytelling, narrative approach. Given the frustration felt by many refugees, and their “need to be heard”, this approach was considered the most aligned to ethical guidelines for research in crisis contexts.<sup>25</sup> The research therefore served two purposes – meeting the research objectives and also providing an opportunity for refugees to tell their story to external actors who spoke their language, which participants said they appreciated.

The research was carried out in three phases.

**Phase 1: Project scoping** (January to April 2016) consisted of two observational trips to FYRoM and Greece to understand the local context and help identify the main actors involved in the refugee crisis. This phase involved a desk study to map communication initiatives in the response to the refugee crisis.

**Phase 2: Field research with refugees in Greece and Germany** (11–27 April 2016) consisted of interviews with refugees and humanitarian actors to understand refugees’ priority information and communication needs, how information is being shared, and the type of information being shared.

**Phase 3: Participatory feedback workshop in Greece** (28 April 2016) consisted of a workshop with humanitarian agencies to feed back fieldwork data from phase 2 and provide an opportunity for agencies to reflect and share ideas on how best to use the findings to inform practice.

The full research methodology is in Appendix A.

## Limitations of the research design

The qualitative approach employed for this study covered a select number of locations. In these locations, interviews were primarily with refugees from the three most prominent nationalities, as well as some from minority nationality groups.

Furthermore, the closing of borders limited interviews to refugees in camps, rather than those in transit as originally planned. These findings are not representative of the whole refugee population but instead explore the communication needs of specific groups.

It is also important to note that the researchers could only gain access to a limited number of camps for this study. Consequently, this report presents the voices of refugees from those locations only.

### 3. Refugees featured in this study

Research participants included people from different nationalities, primarily Syrians, Afghans and Iraqis. The decision to include those nationalities as the main target groups of the research was in line with data provided by UNHCR, listing these as the top three nationalities of refugees crossing the Mediterranean Sea up to January 2016.<sup>26</sup>

Refugee research participants included men and women of different age groups and differing socio-economic status – from a family who begged for money, to professors, teachers, students and businesspeople. Some participants were highly educated, and some had little or no education. Some spoke multiple languages, including English or German, but others only spoke their mother tongue. Researchers spoke to people travelling alone and people travelling with their families, as well as pregnant women, older people, youths and people with disabilities.

For more information on the sample and the research locations, please see appendices B and C. Appendix B also provides information about the humanitarian actors interviewed as part of this research.

#### Voices of children

The respondents included in the study comprise a wide range of age groups, including unaccompanied minors and adolescents (aged 15–17). Unaccompanied minors under 15 were not interviewed as they fall below the age of consent for participating in research.

The voices of children are also reflected in responses from families interviewed, and in the observations made by the researchers in the field.

Although people from the same country or area shared some common narratives about what drove them to leave their homes, the research highlighted the diversity of people's experiences, personal histories and identities.

Their situation at the time of interview also played a role in the stories people told. Researchers spoke to people who had already arrived in Germany, a "destination country", to those who found themselves stuck – or, in the case of one camp in Lesvos, detained when the camp became a detention centre. In Greece, researchers spoke to people living in formal and informal camps,<sup>27</sup> which varied in levels of assistance, atmosphere and morale. In Berlin, researchers spoke to people who felt stuck in Tempelhof (the city's largest refugee shelter) and others who were living in hotels or apartments with their families.

Everyone's story was unique, in terms of what they had left behind, their journey, the situation they were in and what they hoped for – or expected to reach – in Europe.

From a communication perspective, it is important to highlight these differences, as refugees in Europe are not a homogenous group. They are people who hear and perceive information, as well as express their own voices, very differently. They are also connected to, and influenced by, different sources of information and communication.

The people we spoke to for this piece of research do not form a homogenous group, but within this report we have aimed to identify and represent cross-cutting issues arising from the research.

Examples of three different refugees participating in this study are outlined below.

### Syrian man in Athens

Researchers interviewed a Syrian man in his thirties at the Piraeus Port in Athens. In Syria, he lived in Aleppo and monitored and evaluated projects for a research agency based in London. When the situation in Aleppo became unbearable, he left Syria to look for safety in Europe. He travelled with many of his relatives, including his widowed cousin and her children. They wanted to reach Germany as some family members live there.

### Afghan woman in Lesvos

Researchers interviewed a 70-year-old woman in Lesvos, who is originally from Afghanistan but had been living in Iran with her husband for 12 years. They had fled Afghanistan because of deteriorating security as the Taliban took control of the area where they lived. In Tehran, she worked as a teacher. She and her husband were harassed and threatened by their landlord after they lodged a complaint with the police. They decided to leave Iran for Germany as their children live there. They reached Lesvos at the end of February 2016, with the help of many smugglers. They travelled by land to Turkey, and then by sea to Greece.

### Iraqi man in Berlin

Researchers interviewed a young man from Iraq in one of Berlin's biggest refugee shelters. He was a student in Iraq but decided to travel to Europe for increased safety and a better education. One of his relatives, already based in Germany, encouraged him to leave Iraq. He travelled to Turkey with the help of a smuggler, and then by sea to Greece. He reached Germany in October 2015.





## 4. Refugees' information and communication needs

Refugees are trying to make important life choices, often without all the information they need. Unanswered questions are points of huge frustration for everyone – humanitarian actors, refugees and residents in host countries. This section examines the priority information and communication needs of refugees in three areas: on their journey, in “transit” camps in Greece and at the end of their journey in Berlin.

This report distinguishes between refugees who are still on their journey to Europe or are stranded in Greek camps, and those who have arrived at their destination in Germany. This two-phase situation represented the refugee context when the research was carried out, but in reality it is ever-shifting. Whether on the move or static in camps, all refugees felt that they were still in transit.

All of the refugees profiled in this research shared one overwhelming communication need: what next? This may refer to how to move on with their lives in their new home, or their journey going forward or even going back. However, refugees had distinctive needs depending on what phase of the journey they were on, as outlined below.

### Refugees' main information need: what next?

**Research participants in Greek camps**, whose journeys had come to a standstill, had one overriding information requirement: they wanted to know when and whether the borders would open so they could continue their journey. As highlighted in other research on this crisis,<sup>28</sup> even if they know the answers, humanitarian actors are not well placed to respond to questions relating to international border law.

These refugees wanted to know how long they would need to stay in the Greek camps and whether they should give up trying to get to their

**“I just want to get out of here. I want to know when the borders will open. What is happening? We don't know.”**

**Yazidi girl from Syria, Ritsona Camp, Greece**

*Previous page*  
A family enters the train going towards Vienna at Keleti train station, Budapest, Hungary, in September 2015.

NURPHOTO VIA GETTY IMAGES

### Suspicion of official sources

Refugee research participants wanted information from officials such as the UN, but at the same time reported being suspicious of this information as they knew it was limited. For example, some refugees believed that UN officials were closely linked with government officials.

One Iraqi refugee recounted how he and his travel group placed their trust in friends and other refugees, and paid a smuggler to get them across the Hungarian border and on to Berlin rather than follow the advice of UN officials to be fingerprinted and register as refugees in Hungary.

final destination. If they did give up, should they return home or stay and seek asylum in Greece? This uncertainty was exacerbated by constant rumours about borders opening and new opportunities to reach northern Europe that they heard through informal networks, via social media, from smugglers, or even in some cases from volunteers.

“Do you have any information from the EU or any humanitarian or human rights organisations about the situation of people stranded at the Macedonian border so those stranded in Athens can move on? That is my only query really.”

Syrian woman, Caritas Refugee Centre, Athens

**Research participants in Germany and Greece** explained that their priority information need on their journey was how best to move forward and reach their destination quickly, without being stopped. This information was easier to obtain for some than for others, depending on the border situation when they were travelling.

Humanitarian actors were restricted in their ability to provide information about onward movement to refugees by national and sometimes international authorities even before the borders closed. However, research participants travelling at some points in time described being “waved through” European border crossings by local people, volunteers and even the police in some countries.

People who travelled to Europe following the border closures relied on advice from refugees who had previously made the journey (through social media networks or their own personal contacts) or “underground” sources such as smugglers. They knew the latter was a risky strategy, but they often felt they had no other option.



### Confusion over official papers

A young Afghan man showed researchers his official papers in Greek – which he did not understand – and pointed out his own photograph on them.

He said he had previously had papers with his son’s photograph on too, but that police had taken those. He knew he needed the other papers, but he did not know how to get them back. He was very distressed.

### Lack of clarity about rights and status

**Research participants in Greek camps** were confused about their current status and unsure about their stage of the asylum application process, or whether they were even in it. They pulled out crumpled papers in languages they did not understand. Some refugees said that the police had taken some of their papers. Though they did not understand the words on the papers they could see their pictures, and knew they were important papers relating either to freedom or asylum. There was confusion over family relocation and reunification programmes, regarding who qualifies and how, and which countries were part of these schemes. Refugees reported frustration when they saw others arriving after them but getting an asylum interview before them, which compounded feelings of distrust and injustice between people from different nationality groups.

Humanitarian actors also highlighted the need for clear and simple information, and for more legal advisers to explain the process to themselves and to refugees. They felt ill equipped or unable to meet this information need themselves.

Before applying for asylum, many wanted to understand what “asylum in Greece” would mean for them and their families – would they be able to work, live, find accommodation and meet their daily needs?

Additionally, the Skype number provided to refugees by the Greek authorities to support them in setting up an asylum interview caused great frustration because of limited availability, lack of internet access, and poor connections. Some refugees were confused about what exactly the call was for, and most could not get through.

“I haven’t asked for asylum because I don’t know what Greece is going to be like and whether they will be able to look after me or not. If they can, why have I just got a tent here...? My future is passing me by.”

Afghan boy, Idomeni camp, Greece

### Humanitarian actors

Most of the refugee research participants in Greece and Germany said that they could not distinguish between the UN agencies present in their camps and various other actors, including NGO representatives and volunteers in uniforms.

Confusion over rights in Greece was heightened by the EU–Turkey deal: some refugees felt “fooled” because they had arrived before the deal was signed but had heard that the same rules would now apply to everyone, regardless of when they arrived in Greece. Others expressed deep frustration at arriving just a couple of days before the deal was signed, but being told that they would be counted as arriving after the deal due to computer system failures.

Although **research participants in Germany** had reached their “destination” and applied for asylum, life for some was harder than they had anticipated, as they found themselves in camps without official rights to live or work, and no knowledge of when they would find this out, or whether they would be allowed to stay. They had to decide whether to wait and see if they would be able to make a life for themselves, or consider returning home or going elsewhere.

“The situation here is not good. Staying here does not suit us. We can’t bear it. Take us out of here to a different camp. A better one. Or open the borders and let us go to my brothers.”

Syrian man, Ritsona camp, Greece

### Urgent medical information needs

A 23-year-old Afghan man in Idomeni camp, Greece, described how he and his brother were attacked by other camp residents. They were both taken to hospital, and he gave blood for his brother, but was later told he did not need it. They were discharged from hospital but he did not understand why. His brother suffered severe head injuries, and has since been unable to communicate well.

This man wanted to know who could help his brother. His priority information need was how to look after, and get medical assistance for, his brother.

There was confusion and speculation about who would qualify for asylum, and why. One refugee in Berlin told the story of two brothers from Syria with identical backgrounds, who received different residency statuses.

Participants wanted to know – in their mother tongue – their rights, and when they could live in an apartment with some privacy and move on with their lives, through work or studying. Afghan refugees were particularly unclear about their rights and felt treated as a lower priority than Syrian refugees. They also felt disadvantaged by the lack of translators who spoke Farsi, Dari and Pashto, compared with Arabic. One Afghan refugee explained that he had started a German course twice, only to be asked to leave each time, as Afghans were not considered a priority.

A big focus of the international and local organisations interviewed in Berlin was to support refugees in understanding their papers and the asylum process. But many refugee research participants had not come across these services, and felt there was “no one to ask” outside of the official appointments they received at the registration centre.

“I am pregnant, in my eighth month. I suffer from constant bleeding and I’m worried for my baby. I want to know where I can get medical help. Where can I give birth? I’m worried something might happen to my baby. I want a safe and clean place to give birth.”

Syrian woman, Alexandria camp, Greece

### Access to services and staying safe

Information about day-to-day living and how to keep safe was a big concern for people on their journey, and particularly for those living in the camps in Greece.

**On their journey**, refugees reported needing basic information on where to sleep, where to go next, where to find medical care for their children and themselves, what supplies to take and where to charge their phones or buy a Sim card. Some of these needs were met at borders, by asking other refugees, agencies, local people or volunteers. Families travelling with children were more likely to mention the need for medical care and finding somewhere to rest, while groups of younger travellers prioritised mobile phone charging and connectivity to help guide them on their journey.

When asked about information needs on their journey, refugees said they needed to know how to stay safe on the boat and once ashore,

how to avoid being found by authorities, and which smuggler to trust. As outlined in the next chapter, they obtained this information from a variety of sources – those who had travelled the route before, personal contacts and social media platforms.

Refugees also wanted to know what to expect in their destination country, including how registering in countries on the way would affect their asylum claim in the future.

**Research participants in Greece**, who were facing harsh conditions in refugee camps, often had no common language to communicate with service providers about their basic needs.

**How to access healthcare** was a priority information need for many people. Some explained how existing medical conditions had been exacerbated by the long and painful journey to Europe on foot, or how they had become sick since arriving in the camp. For some refugees, medical issues were so severe that their asylum status had become a side issue. Agency representatives also said that refugees were seeking information about reproductive health issues, and how to prevent and treat HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. The services and the capacity of agencies to meet these differing needs varies between the camps.

**Safety and protection** in the camps was a concern for refugees, particularly in the informal camps between different ethnic groups. Tensions were understandably high in this uncertain context, and animosity between some ethnic groups was particularly strong. Some refugees reported positioning themselves near to agencies in Idomeni camp for protection.

“You don’t realise how traumatised you are until you leave, and you arrive somewhere safe.”

Syrian woman, now living in Berlin



## Broader refugee needs where communication could play a role

In addition to highlighting key information needs, the refugees' stories draw attention to other needs, particularly for people living in the camps in Greece.

<p><b>People are traumatised from their previous and current experiences</b></p>	<p>Many humanitarian agencies and refugees highlighted the need for psychosocial support and trauma counselling, especially since adult and child war survivors were facing additional emotional and physical hardships. Some refugees said their journey to Europe and experience in the camps was worse than living in war, since at least then they knew where they were and had a home, even if their lives were at risk.</p>
<p><b>The situation of people feeling stuck has heightened pre-existing tensions between some groups</b></p>	<p>Reports of attacks on different ethnic groups were frequent, particularly in informal camps. The research findings show that perceptions of injustice may have caused tension between different groups of refugees.</p>
<p><b>Safety is an increasing issue, particularly in northern Greece</b></p>	<p>Agencies pointed out the rising violence and power of gangs that operate in Idomeni camp, explaining that the Greek police were on site but rarely intervened. Volunteers and agencies also expressed concern about the numbers of unaccompanied children disappearing from the camps.</p>
<p><b>Some groups feel particularly marginalised</b></p>	<p>In both formal and informal camps in Greece, there was frustration and feelings of marginalisation among non-Syrians who felt that they were “last in line” for basic services, although everyone highlighted the shortage of items available. Afghan and Iraqi refugees felt less confident than Syrians that they would be granted asylum or be able to move on. In the Moria detention centre in Lesbos, Afghans noted that only a few people a day were called for asylum interviews – and all were Syrians. Afghan refugees in Germany also felt overlooked in terms of access to language courses and other services.</p>
<p><b>People feel their voices are muted</b></p>	<p>Refugees in both Germany and Greece felt that there was no one to hear their voices or believe their stories, and no one they could address questions to. The research shows that this was leading to frustration and mistrust.</p>
<p><b>The need for psychosocial support is growing</b></p>	<p>As people felt increasingly stuck in the camps, psychosocial needs became more significant, increasing the need for opportunities for face-to-face conversations and sharing stories.</p>
<p><b>People have health concerns and are worried about the spread of disease</b></p>	<p>Refugees and agencies were concerned that warm weather and deteriorating sanitation in some of the camps would accelerate the spread of disease. Basic health, sanitation and service information was not easy to obtain.</p>



## 5. Cross-cutting themes

This section presents themes that emerged from refugees' stories. They cut across the target participant groups and are common to all camp settings.

### Trust and choice of information sources

Refugees need information to make life decisions, including what their next steps will be, and what risks might be worth taking. For each new piece of information they receive, refugees need to decide whether they trust it, and therefore whether to act on it.

This research shows that trust in information is affected by different factors, outlined below. It is important to note that ultimately no refugees really “trust” many of the sources or people they choose to put their confidence in. Their choices are made from the limited options available.

**Sources of information:** As refugees spoke about their journey, it was clear that most relied on smugglers to transport them from their home country to Europe, through different routes. Before leaving their homes, many gathered information from friends or family members who had already made the journey, and from the internet. Some were able to stay in touch with contacts along the route, using wi-fi to connect when it was available. But many refugees relied heavily on smugglers as their main source of information during their journey to Europe.

When people arrived in Greece and had access to other information sources, their trust in informal sources such as smugglers reduced and their trust in formal information sources increased. Some reported realising that they had been betrayed and misinformed by smugglers at this point.

However, as time progressed, refugees' confidence in agencies and official sources fell as they found themselves stranded and unable to obtain

“I don't trust anybody. Smugglers are liars – they always provide the wrong information. Governments are liars. They say borders are closed and that nobody arrives anymore [from Turkey to Greece]. In reality, people are still arriving. I don't trust anything or anybody now unless I see it with my eyes. The Greek government told us that camps were good, but we found very harsh conditions. They are full of snakes and worms.”  
Disabled Iraqi man, Piraeus Port, Athens

*Previous page*  
Mobile phones are charged on wires which have been detached from street lighting in Kara Tepe camp, Lesbos island.

GEORGIOS MAKKAS/  
PANOS



### Feedback and engagement with agencies in camps

Refugees who wanted more information regarding their asylum status did not know who to direct their questions to and who was responsible for giving them the right information. The presence of agency officials was not particularly visible to them, and they could not differentiate between different agencies.

answers, solutions or make themselves heard. And so refugees' dependency on information from smugglers increased, and they started to attach more importance to rumours again as they were not getting the information they needed from official sources.

Many refugee research participants could not distinguish between different agencies, or between humanitarian actors, volunteers and government officials. Some reported that it was not clear who would provide information, and which sources they could trust to provide the specific information they needed.

Refugees, particularly those who were well connected to networks of other refugees, placed the most trust in people who had done the journey before them.<sup>29</sup> People who were not well connected in this way were more likely to trust smugglers and other refugees they met along the route, as they had no alternatives.

**“Always internet, Facebook and rumours, you hear rumours all over the place. If you ask anyone in the camps what is true and what is not, they can't tell you.”**

Syrian woman, Caritas Refugee Centre, Athens

**Accuracy of information:** Refugees' lack of trust in agencies and officials mainly resulted from their perception that information from various sources did not always match what they saw in reality, heard elsewhere, or what they later discovered. This may be because the information was not reliable, because the situation was rapidly changing or because it simply did not exist – but it eroded trust all the same.

On the other hand, cases where information did live up to expectations helped to reinstate trust. In one camp in northern Greece, refugees were told to expect fresh food from a shop, and this happened. In another example, refugees were told they would receive a wi-fi connection, and they did. Though seemingly trivial, accurate information plays a key role in building trust levels – particularly in an environment where communication with service providers is extremely limited.

**Face-to-face contact builds trust:** Refugees wanted a trusted person in the camps who spoke their language – a “go to” person for information. In

some camps, agencies have tried to identify community leaders, mediators or “reference persons” from the refugee community to shape and disseminate information, establish feedback mechanisms and rebuild trust. However, they recognise that it is hard to know if this approach will work given population movements, increasing insecurity in informal settlements and rumour-spreading.

**Language is a barrier to trust:** Refugees voiced concerns about a lack of translators available to liaise between them and agencies. They worried that translators, particularly in asylum interviews, did not translate accurately and jeopardised their chances of a successful claim – as they saw no difference in their status. This also compounded refugees’ feelings that their stories were not believed.

In order to build trust, information needs to be accurate and consistent. Given the changing information landscape, the multiple actors involved, and the wide circulation of rumours in the European refugee crisis, providing accurate and consistent information on many topics is a challenge.

“I know about events from Facebook. We heard two days ago about the riots that happened at the borders. We hear everything from Facebook, nobody communicates with us.”

Syrian man, Piraeus Port, Athens

### Connectedness reduces vulnerability

The analysis showed that participants who stayed in regular contact with other refugees and who had wide communication networks were likely to be more resilient and feel less vulnerable than those who were less connected. This is because they had greater access to information to understand their situation and make critical decisions.

#### **People with access to mobile networks were more resilient:**

Many participants with mobile access explained that direct contact with other refugees who had already made the journey gave them access to a trusted network. They trusted these sources, before and during their own journeys, for advice on the best routes, smugglers’ contact details, places to stay on the journey, GPS coordinates and how to avoid police to ensure they arrived at each location safely.

When possible, refugees living in camps developed virtual connections (via phone, social networking sites such as Facebook and WhatsApp) with family and friends outside the camp, in their countries of origin and sometimes in the country they were aiming for. Some camps provide phone-charging stations, free Sim cards and wi-fi. However, buying phone credit was a challenge for many. Syrians and Iraqi Yazidis were most likely to communicate with family members and friends in, for instance, Germany, Austria and Finland, having means to do so and contacts there.

“I want one concerned party, one trusted organisation or trusted person that we can talk to. If they come and tell us that we will have to wait four months, or even five, and that my wife and children will join me in Germany then I’m fine with that, but we need a trusted person. We have different organisations giving us conflicting information... Who is responsible for these organisations?”  
Syrian man, Pikpa camp, Greece

**Access to social networks helped keep people safe on the journey:**

Some participants were part of their own information networks, using smartphones to access social media and WhatsApp groups to share useful information such as sea safety advice, video footage of the journey, and contact numbers for police and rescue organisations. Facebook pages in different languages provided information and advice, reaching an audience that went way beyond the circle of friends and family.<sup>30</sup> There were stories of people notifying a Facebook group when they were about to make a crossing and updating it when they arrived safely on the other side.

However, not all participants had strong online social connections. For example, many of the Afghan refugees had no social media access and reached Europe without it. Syrians were more likely to be in social media contact with people who had made the journey than Afghans. The latter were less likely to be connected online before they left home and therefore did not plan their journeys in the same way.

**Age, wealth, education, nationality and language all played a role in how connected people were with others:** Younger, wealthier participants from Syria were most likely to have access to smartphones and be confident internet users, while participants from Afghanistan were less likely to be connected to the internet on their mobile phones. People with less access to networks via the internet relied on smugglers and people in their travel group for information on their journey, and were mostly cut off from family and friends during the journey. Some refugees were able to pay people along their route – mainly in Turkey – to give them information, and some were able to buy new Sim cards in each location and charge their phones in hotels where they stayed on the route.

“We don’t communicate with people outside the camp as we don’t have enough money to buy credit. But we hear about other people outside [from] refugees around us. I can’t reach my family back home, except occasionally I speak with a friend and she sometimes talks with my mother... I feel disconnected all the time.”  
Iraqi woman, Idomeni camp, Greece

**Face-to-face interaction appeared to lessen refugees’**

**vulnerability:** On the journey, as well as in camps, poorer or illiterate refugees (particularly Afghans) had fewer connections with other people and relied more on information from smugglers and other refugees who perhaps

## Connections

One Iraqi refugee explained how important internet connectivity was for passengers on his boat, as they made the crossing from Turkey to Greece.

As well as using global positioning system (GPS) on mobile phones to ensure they were steering the boat in the right direction, one passenger had a laptop with an internet connection. Through Facebook, he was in contact with anonymous volunteers who checked that the boats arrived safely in Greece.

In this instance, the boat started to sink. The passengers alerted the volunteers through Facebook, who alerted the Greek police, who sent a helicopter to check the situation. Eventually, a boat arrived to rescue the passengers and deliver them safely to Greece.

spoke English and became unofficial group leaders. At transit points, word of mouth resulted in accepted knowledge, such as “Everyone knows that...”. These refugees also relied on volunteers, local people and even police for information.

For information, refugees in the camps in Greece mainly depended on other refugees in the camps, family and friends at home and even people they knew in destination countries (Syrians and Yazidis in particular), via phone and through social media. Refugees reported having limited communication with agencies and volunteers due to language barriers, but were sporadically connected to journalists, military officials and smugglers who passed in and out of the camps.

Refugees living in Berlin shared information (and speculation) about their rights and status applications with other refugees, as well as information about how to access services. They were connected with government officials through appointments at the refugee registration centre, where they received information about their asylum status. Two participants had been in contact with voluntary organisations, which advised them about their asylum application.

“We need them to tell us what to do. This situation is not bearable anymore. Our children cannot stand it any longer. We are here, hoping that they will open the borders and that we can go. We fled the war and we came here, only to face even harder conditions – the heat, the cold. Our situation is terrible... and nobody tells us how we can reach our family in Sweden.”

Syrian woman, Piraeus Port, Athens



## Transient in a static place

The political uncertainty that left many refugees stranded in camps in Greece meant that they had to balance their need to survive in camps with their reluctance to settle permanently there, since ultimately they still hoped to reach their intended final destination. For many, this resulted in a lack of any feeling of ownership of their surroundings.

For example, while refugees were concerned about the availability of safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene in the camps, they were less inclined to take collective action to improve their situation as they believed they would soon be moving on. Some even felt that accepting services such as schools would imply that they were willing to settle permanently in the camps and were less likely to make it to their destination. This was not a universal feeling – others were worried about their children’s education, were glad of the education provided and requested more. Some refugees in Idomeni camp had set up small businesses, such as selling cigarettes or falafels.

In Germany, though a “destination” country, many felt insecure, trapped in temporary shelters and unsure of their rights to settle in the country. Some refugees living in Berlin said they chose not to share information with their family at home about their depressing situation, as in many cases they had given up everything to reach Europe. Others, particularly those living in Berlin’s largest refugee shelter (Tempelhof) warned family members not to come, as life in Germany was not what they had expected, and they were even considering going back to their countries of origin. This decision was not taken lightly, and depended on where they came from, their main reasons for leaving their country, their perceived chance of being granted asylum, and their living situation in Germany.

---

**Preferred information providers for refugees in Greek camps**

Refugees felt that face-to-face communication was the most trustworthy method of receiving information.

Although they had low confidence in official sources such as UNHCR or governments, they expected information on asylum and rights should come from these sources. They expected to get information on basic services from NGOs, volunteers and camp managers.

In reality, they received information about basic services from other refugees, or by observing what other refugees were doing. Information about the political situation or borders came from social media, news websites and rumours spread through informal networks in the camps. Information about illegal travel options was increasingly provided by smugglers. Some refugees asked camp visitors for updates on the situation: one Yazidi refugee told researchers that he had asked 23 visitors what would happen to them. The researchers were the 24th.

---

## 6. Humanitarian agencies

Interviews with humanitarian staff at all research locations revealed major challenges faced by agencies in meeting refugees' information and communication needs, particularly given the rapidly changing situation with border closures.

<p><b>Agencies can only provide limited information</b></p>	<p>Agency staff did not know when and whether borders would open, while smugglers could offer immediate, if risky, options to help people continue their journey. Agency staff were unable to give refugees legal advice. They told staff to refer refugees to UNHCR – but the UN agency was also restricted in the information it could provide.<sup>31</sup></p> <p>Agencies wanted to share helpful and accurate information but they knew the situation could quickly change and was not within their control. Information that is – or is perceived to be – inaccurate reduces trust, frustrates and even angers refugees, with reports of information boards being torn down in Idomeni camp because refugees perceived them to be inaccurate.</p>
<p><b>Border closures required a rapid change in communication activities</b></p>	<p>Agencies had to switch rapidly from providing information to people in transit, to communicating with frustrated people who were prohibited from moving. This requires different information and different communication methods. Developing new communication materials is challenging given the limited resources available to agencies.</p>
<p><b>Staff capacity and resources are limited</b></p>	<p>Staff with a broad range of language skills were difficult for agencies to find. They highlighted a lack of interpreters, e.g. Arabic and Farsi speakers. Agencies stressed the need for specific training on effectively meeting refugees' information and communication needs. The staff turnover is very high, given the extensive workload working with refugees.</p>
<p><b>Multiple stakeholders operate in different ways</b></p>	<p>Agencies were working alongside various actors – including governments, the Greek military, volunteers and activists – who have different agendas, different ways of working and different approaches to communicating with refugees.</p>

“The information [from] smugglers and traffickers as well as other sources is difficult to counterbalance. They operate across countries, often using highly sophisticated networks of organised crime to ensure that misinformation is spread, with the objective of continuing to exploit refugees and migrants financially and with little regard to their safety.”

Humanitarian actor, Athens

## Information activities in the camps

Before the border closures, agencies were able to provide some information and communication for refugees. This included distributing Arabic and Farsi leaflets at the port with basic information (where to find a doctor, services for shelter and information on urban transport), and providing audio messages on buses to support refugees. However, after the border closures in March 2015, the communication landscape became extremely challenging. Agencies struggled to provide information on asylum relocation and reunification in a changing context, and with a lack of clear information on these issues. Furthermore, the lack of interpreters in camps made it difficult to communicate with refugees and/or to translate information and messages for them. Nevertheless, some agencies attempted to address information needs, adopting an attitude of “telling them at least what we know” and running information sessions in some camps.

“Too many cooks in the kitchen and no one knows what to say or cook.”

Humanitarian actor, northern Greece

Some agencies integrated their communication efforts around health-related topics, as well as hygiene and social issues (such as sexual violence, psychosocial issues, protection and security). In camps, agencies also provided digital logistics such as wi-fi, Sim cards, and open access to computers or electric sockets to recharge mobile phones. Again, the quality of digital services varied between camps.

# 7. Recommendations

## Recommendations from refugees

Refugees who participated in this research said they particularly needed information about:

- Whether borders were open or closed
- What was going to happen to them next
- How the asylum process worked
- Their options
- Where to get psychosocial support and access other health services
- How to report poor services and communicate their needs

Suggestions from refugees on how their information and communication needs could be met:

1. Have **focal points** within the camps who speak the right languages, can communicate people's needs and concerns to agencies, and provide answers to their questions.  
*"We need someone to translate for us, to communicate our needs and give us answers to our questions."*
2. Have more **legal advisers** in the camps (with translators), who can consider people's individual cases and advise them on their options.  
*"We need one-to-one appointments with legal advisers, to help us understand our rights and our options."*
3. Hold **regular meetings** within the camps to update refugees on the current situation, preferably led by EU/government officials.  
*"They could gather everyone together in meetings to share important updates."*

4. Although free wi-fi is available in some camps, all camps need it to enable people to be **connected to the internet**, so they are also connected to their families and other sources of information.  
*“We need access to the internet to find information and communicate with our family at home.”*

## Recommendations from humanitarian agencies

The research findings from this study were presented to representatives of humanitarian agencies at a learning workshop in Athens on 28 April 2016. Agency staff discussed how they could better meet the information and communication needs of refugees in the current context, based on the research findings and recommendations from the humanitarian interviews.

The following recommendations are based on those discussions, and interviews with humanitarian actors:

### 1. **Share what you can, in the right language**

Refugees and agencies stressed the need for more humanitarian workers who speak relevant languages. Humanitarian agencies should try and respond to the refugees’ desire to know any available official information on border and legal issues, however little, even if it clarifies that there will be no planned movement for the next six months. Receiving information and realistic timelines would enable refugees to make decisions and help them tolerate their present hardship.

Agencies can also provide a wealth of much-needed information relating to, for instance, services available in the camps, official information about refugee rights, protection information to help promote tolerance in the camps, or factual information about health and safety risks along routes and in camps. Agencies can – and some already do – play a major role in helping refugees make sense of official documents they are given.

### 2. **Get people connected**

The research showed that being connected – to friends and family as well as news and information sources – is important to people’s well-being. This could be enabled by providing free wi-fi in camps without the need for Sim cards and credit, or even providing mobile phones to those who do not have them.

**3. Improve communication between refugees and agencies, via people who speak the right language**

The research highlighted the importance of face-to-face communication in building trust with refugees, and was the preferred communication method among refugees. As well as providing accurate, up-to-date information and answering people's questions, these focal points could help represent refugees' needs and concerns to agencies.

**4. Strengthen the capacity of NGOs and volunteers to communicate effectively with refugees**

Refugees wanted people who could help them navigate the asylum process, their rights and their options. Agency representatives suggested training NGOs and volunteers about how to meet information and communication needs on these topics. This could help equip them to share complex information on rights and asylum in a simple, accurate way and in appropriate languages.

**5. Share critical information between agencies**

Agency representatives felt that it was important to find a better way of exchanging data and accurate information about refugees' needs, and border and legal asylum issues. They are already discussing setting up a working group on legal issues to share problems and knowledge and to pose joint questions to legal experts, so they are better equipped to share this information with refugees.

**6. Support relevant government bodies to communicate effectively with refugees**

Refugees wanted to receive information from official sources, which is beyond the control of humanitarian agencies. However, agencies could support governments to help them create more effective communication on these issues.

**7. Adapt communication strategies to the current situation**

Humanitarian agencies have been in a transition period, shifting from a dynamic to a more static crisis as the majority of refugees became stranded in Greece and many organisations had to cease their former communication

interventions. Agencies highlighted the need to adapt their communication and information strategies, taking into account this new context and the variety of refugees' needs.

**8. Better understand refugees' information needs, and how they communicate with each other**

Agency representatives pointed to the need for communication needs assessments and profiling of refugees to better meet their needs. Some suggested creating links with second-generation migrants in Greece, who could help agencies to increase their understanding of refugees, and help to develop effective communication and support strategies according to refugee profiles, needs and sensitivities.

## 8. Conclusions: How media and communication can support refugees' needs

The research shows that despite several challenges, there are opportunities for effective communication with people affected by this refugee crisis. It is encouraging that many of the recommendations from agencies reflect the needs highlighted by refugees, such as the need for more translators, a preference for face-to-face communication, and the need for support in communication around rights and legal issues.

The research highlights that many refugees feel their voice is not being heard, and that they have no one who can provide them with answers. This is leading to frustration and mistrust. The research also outlined the importance of agencies and governments being honest about what they do not know, and sharing any accurate information they do have regularly and reliably, to build a relationship of trust.

Building on these research findings, and on learning from previous emergencies,<sup>32</sup> there are a number of ways in which communication can play an important role in supporting people stranded in camps in Greece and Germany, as detailed below.

**Ensure that refugees have a voice:** Increasing opportunities for dialogue between refugees, agency staff, and even decision-makers or people who can answer pertinent questions, could help to alleviate frustrations and rebuild trust, and also give agencies an opportunity to act on feedback from refugees. Communication interventions can play a role in projecting refugees' voices, by providing platforms for people to share and tell their stories.

**Sharing stories of other refugees in similar situations:** In situations like this, where people have to make difficult choices and there are no clear answers, media and communication interventions can play a role in showcasing and encouraging dialogue and debate around different options and viewpoints. For example, sharing stories of other refugees in similar situations, outlining the decisions they made and how, the challenges they faced and the information they used through various platforms such as information hubs or radio programmes.



**Provide psychosocial support:** Many humanitarian agencies and refugees involved in this research acknowledged the need for psychosocial support and trauma counselling for refugees, arising from the dangers they faced before leaving their home country, difficulties on their journey and hardships they now face in camps or their destination country.

Previous research<sup>33</sup> has shown that media and communication interventions, such as screens in camps, radio and television, designed to support people in crisis with relevant information and communication, can play a crucial role in providing psychosocial support to people affected by crisis.

**Foster tolerance:** With reports of attacks on some ethnic groups in refugee camps, creating platforms for dialogue between different groups could play a role in reducing tension, promoting social inclusion and fostering tolerance. For example, drama and discussion programmes have played a role in conflict resolution in previous crises by increasing understanding and empathy. While tensions between some groups are entrenched and predate this crisis, the research findings show that perceptions of injustice have escalated some tensions between refugees.

**Provide better access to communication networks:** Access to wi-fi and mobile phones are critical for refugees on the move and can have a direct influence on their experiences on the route.

**Provide information consistently:** Information on changes to policies and legal status need to be provided consistently by agencies to maintain trust between them and refugees, particularly during times of uncertainty around borders.

**Explore the relevance of social media for refugees, and work with it instead of alongside it:** Informal information sources through social media networks such as Facebook are increasingly playing a key role in informing refugees of their rights and available services in different country contexts. This could offer agencies opportunities to connect with refugees. However, there is a risk that it could be counterproductive, as social media can also be a source of unverified rumours and false information.

# Bibliography

Curry, D., Waldman, R. and Caplan, A. (2014) *An ethical framework for the development and review of health research proposals involving humanitarian contexts*. London: Enhancing Learning and Research for Humanitarian Assistance (ELRHA). [online] Available from: [http://www.elrha.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/FINAL-R2HC-Ethical-Framework\\_Final-Report\\_24-January-2014\\_0.pdf](http://www.elrha.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/FINAL-R2HC-Ethical-Framework_Final-Report_24-January-2014_0.pdf) [Accessed January 2016].

Hagen-Zanker, J. and Mallett, R. (2016) *Journeys to Europe. The role of policy in migrant decision-making*. ODI Insights. [online] Available from: <https://www.odi.org/publications/10317-journeys-europe-role-policy-migrant-decision-making> [Accessed May 2016].

Médecins Sans Frontières (2013) *Research ethics framework: Guidance document*. Médecins Sans Frontières. [online] Available from: [http://fieldresearch.msf.org/msf/bitstream/10144/305288/5/MSF+Research+Ethics+Framework\\_Guidance+document+\(Dec2013\).pdf](http://fieldresearch.msf.org/msf/bitstream/10144/305288/5/MSF+Research+Ethics+Framework_Guidance+document+(Dec2013).pdf) [Accessed July 2015].

Mfutso-Bengo, J., Masiye, F. and Muula, A. (2008) Ethical challenges in conducting research in humanitarian crisis situations [online]. *Malawi Medical Journal*, 20:2, 46–49. Available from: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19537432> [Accessed July 2016].

Squire, V. et al. (2016) *Crossing the Mediterranean Sea by boat: Mapping and documenting migratory journeys and experiences*. Warwick: Warwick University, ESRC funded research. [online] Available from: [http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/pais/research/researchcentres/irs/crossingthemed/output/evidence\\_paper.pdf](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/pais/research/researchcentres/irs/crossingthemed/output/evidence_paper.pdf) [Accessed May 2016].

# Appendices

## Appendix A – Research methodology

The research design and approach was modified in consultation with the monitoring, evaluation and learning division of the START Network, led by Action Against Hunger, to examine the information and communication needs of refugees in their present context and along their journey. The research focused on Europe (Greece and Germany) not the Balkans, given the limited access to the latter locations.

### Research approach

A rapid research approach was used, in that data was collected, entered and analysed with researchers in the field in order to share preliminary findings with key agencies. This allowed immediate consultation around results and their inclusion into implementing programmes. Further analysis and report writing was carried out later to allow for more reflection.

The field research was carried out in Germany and Greece between 11 April and 2 May 2016. The research team consisted of eight researchers from BBC Media Action and DAHLIA, four of whom were Arabic speaking, along with two Dari/Farsi-speaking translators.

### Target population and selection criteria

The research focused on two key target populations; refugees in transit in Europe and officials in humanitarian agencies. Once permissions were granted to enter the refugee camps in the target locations, researchers were briefed by UNHCR or other agencies on 1) the updated situation for refugees; 2) the context in the camp; 3) particular issues there; 4) key questions likely to be asked; and 5) advice on how to respond. Where possible (in most cases), the lead agency showed the research team around the camp and highlighted key services/issues.

Agencies were also sometimes able to identify areas where refugees of particular nationalities lived. It was relatively easy to find Syrian refugees, as they made up the majority in most camps. However, Afghan and Iraqi refugees were fewer in number and harder to find. When walking

through a camp with an agency staff member, the research team asked passing refugees where to find people of different nationalities. The researchers relied on others to point out where men, women, families and people with disabilities were within the camps.

### Refugee participants

Researchers conducted 66 individual interviews with refugees and 14 focus group discussions in Greece. In Germany, 13 individual refugee interviews were conducted and two group discussions were conducted.

The interviews comprised predominantly three groups: Syrians (including Kurds, Afghans and Iraqis (including Yazidis). It also included some refugees from lesser represented countries, such as Pakistan, Cameroon and Iran. The rationale for choosing Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq as the three main countries was that UNHCR identified these three countries as having the highest number of refugees in Europe. Furthermore, the study focused on representing a broad range of voices, including both male and female refugees and vulnerable groups.

Researchers also interviewed a total of 45 officials from humanitarian agencies which are members of the CDAC or START Networks and other agencies working with refugees in Greece and Germany.

<b>Table I Individual interviewee respondents in Greece and Germany</b>			
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Breakdown</b>	<b>Number of interviews</b>	
		<b>Greece</b>	<b>Germany</b>
Gender	Male	39	7
	Female	27	6
Nationality	Syrian	23	9
	Afghan	25	3
	Iraqi	12	1
	Minority groups	6	0
Vulnerable groups	Elderly people, pregnant women, disabled people, injured people, sick people, minors (15-17)	24	2
Age	Youths <sup>34</sup>	6	0
	Adults	36	13

## Group discussions

Greece locations	Age	Gender	Nationality
Idomeni	Youths and adults	Mixed	Palestinian and Syrian
	Youths (vulnerable brother and sister)	Mixed	Syrian
	Adults/youths (family)	Mixed	Iraqi
	Youths	Mixed	Syrian
Caritas	Youths	Male	Iraqi
	Youths and adults	Female	Iraqi
Cherso	Adults	Male	Syrian
	Adults	Female	Syrian Kurds
	Youths and adults	Male	Syrian
	Elderly (vulnerable)	Mixed	Syrian (2 of Palestinian decent)
Moria	Adults	Male	Syrian and Iraqi
	Adults	Female	Syrian
Pikpa	Adults/youths (family)	Mixed	Iranian/Afghan
Kara Tepe	Adults (sisters)	Female	Afghan

## Group discussions

Germany locations	Age	Gender	Nationality
Tempelhof	Adults	Male	Iraqi
Tempelhof	Adults and elderly	Female	Iraqi

## Research methods and analysis

Researchers used a qualitative approach to fully understand the information needs and communication behaviours of refugees. This design also enabled flexibility and was an ethically appropriate way to capture information from a vulnerable population.

Researchers used four distinctive qualitative research methods to capture the experiences and perspectives of refugees in each of the target locations, as well as the perspectives of humanitarian officials. These are described briefly below:

Target group	Research method
<b>Refugees</b>	Refugees were asked to <b>narrate the story of their journey</b> and give details of the information they had used, and how they had sourced it. The overarching question asked was, “Please describe your journey here, and where you got information to make choices on how best to travel”. This storytelling approach allowed participants to describe their experiences in a way that would have been difficult to capture through structured interviews. Refugees were asked a number of key questions about their sources of information and the reasons they chose them.
<b>Formal and informal refugee camps</b>	<p>A total of 16 <b>group discussions</b> were held with families and youth groups within the camps, allowing participants to give a collective view of their experiences. This allowed researchers to identify shared or unique views. Youths were selected for group discussions where possible since they form natural groups that are not necessarily part of their original travel group, and therefore provide broader perspectives.</p> <p>Researchers wrote an <b>observational account</b> for each camp visited, and accompanied camp officials on a <b>transect walk</b> to document available services and the participants’ living conditions. This method was adopted during fieldwork, as camp managers and some NGOs preferred it to interviews as a research approach. It was also a helpful way of conducting additional observations.</p>
<b>Humanitarian officials and volunteers</b>	<b>In-depth interviews</b> were carried out with 45 international and local humanitarian officials in order to capture their understanding of the refugees and their communication needs.

### Analysis

Due to the complex environment and the need for rapid findings to help inform stakeholders’ programming, the majority of the analysis took place during the field research. The analysis took an inductive<sup>35</sup> approach to the data that allowed researchers to identify the common views/needs of all research participants as well those specific to each nationality or vulnerable group.

Interviews were recorded on electronic recorders and notes taken when needed. The data was inserted into a framework that mapped out the journeys of each refugee and their sources of information. The framework allowed researchers to review the data across all the refugee groups, and across the camps, to identify common responses and emerging themes around their information needs.

Refugees were interviewed by camp, and the findings were analysed by target location (Lesvos, Athens, Idomeni, Berlin), whereby each of the four sites were treated as separate locations.



Data collected from research participants in the camps was validated against the observations made by the researchers who carried out the transect walks in the camps, and triangulated against the views of the humanitarian stakeholders interviewed for this study.

Data from the humanitarian officials was analysed separately to provide a comprehensive overview of humanitarian officials' views on the refugees' key communication needs. This was reviewed against the data from the refugees to allow triangulation of communication needs. Each researcher conducted a preliminary analysis at the end of each day and entered data into a framework, along with their observations. After the research in each location, the research team conducted a joint preliminary analysis together.

### Ethical considerations

Asking broad assessment questions enabled the researchers to make a judgement on the appropriateness of interviewing each respondent. This included a general conversation ("how are you?", etc.) and observation. If the respondent showed high levels of duress, then they were not interviewed.

The research and purpose of the interviews were clearly explained, with time allowed for questions (which were frequent). Each participant gave his or her full **consent** before participating, with the option of discontinuing at any time during the interview/discussion. Additionally, researchers ensured the **confidentiality and anonymity** of all participants in the study. As a result, all participant names were excluded from the research. Thus, the research was designed to be independent and impartial.

Interviews were paused if an interviewee became distressed when reciting his or her story. The narrative approach was helpful as it allowed refugees to speak without feeling they were being interrogated, which was particularly important given the high levels of distrust and insecurity in the research locations. As mentioned above, camp briefings were held with UNHCR/key agencies at the outset, which alerted researchers to key points to be aware of in each camp and advice to ensure that neither researchers nor respondents were harmed.

The interview questions were checked to ensure that they would not cause any harm to vulnerable research participants.

## Appendix B – Humanitarian research participants

### Humanitarian key informants

Researchers sought a range of humanitarian actors for the research. Participant selection was based on the availability of staff from the following groups: international NGOs (INGOs), NGOs, local organisations, volunteers, camp managers (including military personnel) and UN agencies. Several attempts were made to interview government representatives but this was not possible because of their extensive workload.

Location	Agency
<b>Greece locations</b>	
Athens monitoring, evaluation and learning workshop	Norwegian Refugee Council
	Doctors of the World
	Catholic Relief Services
	Oxfam
	Internews
	International Rescue Committee
Athens meetings	UNHCR
	Emergency Response Centre International
Elliniko camp, Athens	UNHCR x 2
	Volunteer
Piraeus Port, Athens	Hellenic Red Cross
	Medical Association of Piraeus
Ritsona camp, Athens	Military
	Spanish Red Cross
Lesvos camp fire	Emergency Response Centre International
Athens, Caritas office	Caritas
Lesvos meetings	Better Days
Kara Tepe camp, Lesvos	ActionAid
	Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)
	Military
	Humanitarian Service Aid (camp logistics)
	UNHCR

Table continues over page →

Mytilene meetings, Lesvos	Save the Children
	UNHCR
	Humanity Crew
	UNHCR
Idomeni informal camp	Humanitarian Service Aid
	German Information Volunteer Team
	Lesvos Solidarity
	Praxis
	Humanitarian Team
	German Information Volunteer Team
	Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)
	Volunteer Co-ordinator
Skype	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)
Cherso	UNHCR
Idomeni	UNHCR
Alexandria	UNHCR
Idomeni	MSF Belgium
Lesvos (hotel refugee centre)	Caritas
<b>Germany locations</b>	
Berlin	AWO Refugium Askaniering Shelter
Berlin	Caritas
Berlin	Deutsches Rotes Kreuz
Berlin	Save the Children Germany

## Workshop attendees

Athens workshop facilitated by ACF (START) and BBC Media Action, hosted by Samaritan's Purse

Agency	Type
Christian Aid	INGO
Emergency Response Centre International	Volunteer
European Asylum Support Office	NGO
Greek Forum of Refugees	Local NGO
IFRC	INGO
Internews	INGO
Samaritan's Purse	INGO
Save the Children	INGO
UNHCR	UN

## Appendix C – Research locations

### Greece research locations<sup>36</sup>

Type	Name of camp (or other place)	Number of individual interviews
Formal camps	Alexandria	33
	Cherso	
	Elliniko	
	Moria	
	Pikpa	
	Ritsona	
	Kara Tepe	
Informal camps	Idomeni	20
	BP Garage	
	Piraeus Port	
Caritas Refugee Centre	Day centre Athens	8
Caritas hotel	Caritas hotel Lesbos	4
Coffee shop (downtown Athens)	Coffee shop	1

### German research locations

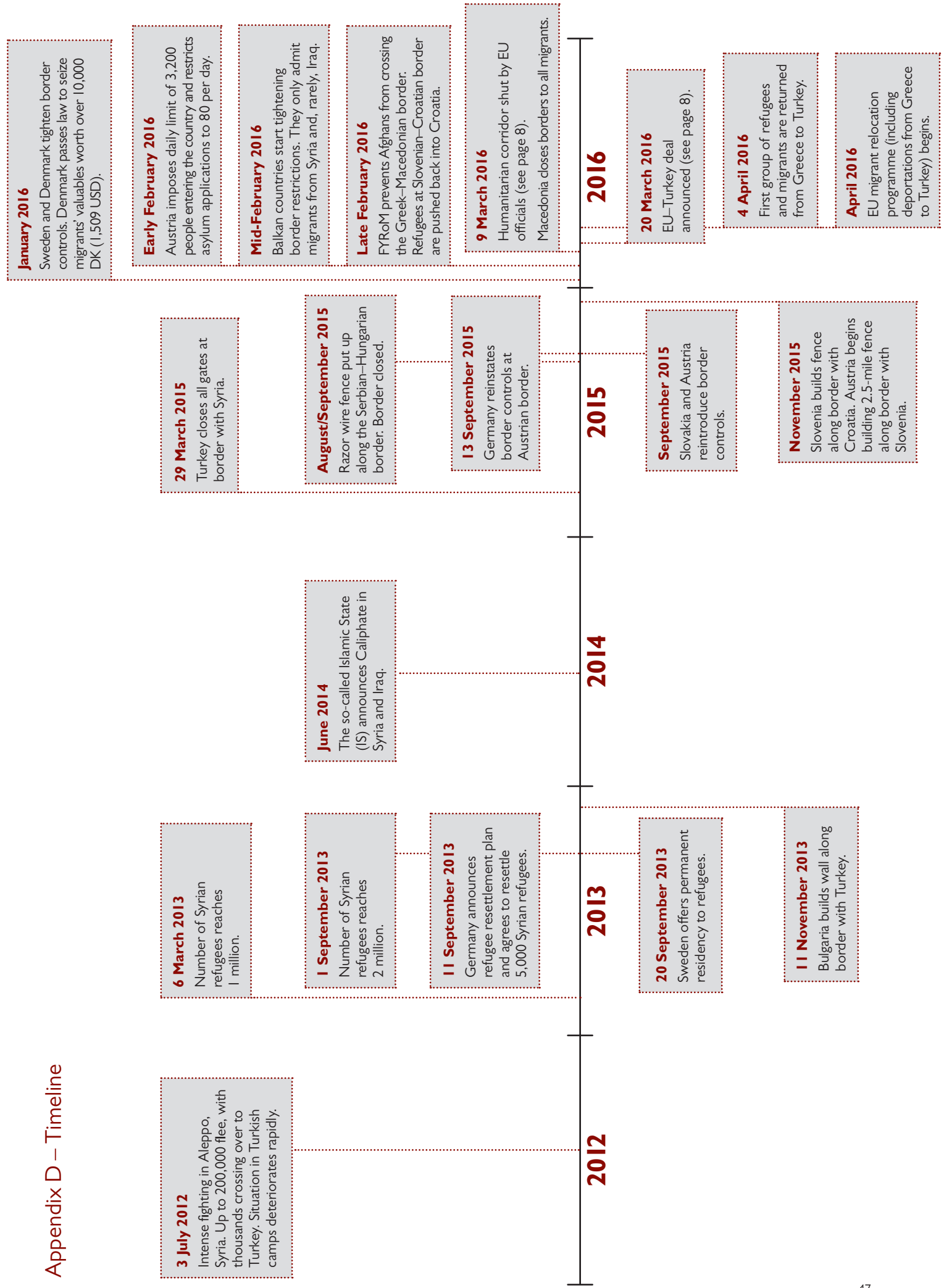
Type	Name of camp (or other place)	Number of individual interviews
Temporary refugee accommodation	Tempelhof refugee shelter	5
Refugee registration centre	LaGeSo refugee centre	5
Coffee shop	Coffee shop	2
Telephone interview	n/a	1

The selection of camps for research locations was based on conversations with key informants,<sup>37</sup> who advised on locations according to given research criteria: camps that represented vulnerable groups<sup>38</sup> and different nationalities. The locations were then selected and research conducted once access and permission were granted.

Additional camps were selected as research was gathered. For example, Ritsona was not initially selected but agencies and refugees mentioned this camp frequently and advised the researchers to visit it, as it had a distinct location on the outskirts of Athens and refugees in other camps were told of “snakes” and “scorpions” there. Kara Tepe and Pikpa camps were recommended as research locations since they were mostly for “vulnerable populations” and represented different groups of refugees, services and size. In each field location, the researchers and UNHCR and/or other key agencies working in the area received a briefing before conducting research.

Formal and informal camps were included in the research. There was a clear distinction between them in terms of services available, general atmosphere and security levels. Though limited, formal camps provided more services and facilities and allowed refugees less freedom of movement. In Lesvos, for example, the informal “border kitchen” camp on the edge of the water had very limited services (no toilets/medical provisions) so women and children chose not to go there. However, the camp’s volunteer co-ordinator explained that male refugees preferred to stay there, despite its extremely limited services, because it allowed them freedom to move. The researchers managed to visit this camp shortly before it was closed and refugees were transported by police buses to the detention centre, Moria.

## Appendix D – Timeline



# Endnotes

1. UNHCR (2016) *Refugees/Migrants Emergency Response – Mediterranean*. UNHCR data portal [online]. Available from: <http://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/regional.php> [Accessed 11 May 2016].
2. The term “refugee” is used in this report since almost all of those who took part in the research said they had left their countries “for reasons relating to fear of being persecuted and were unable to gain protection in their own country” (1951 refugee convention; see: <http://www.unhcr.org/3d58e13b4.pdf>). The report focused on those from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq since that is where 70% of arrivals in Europe come from, according to UNHCR figures.
3. Lyman, R. (2015) Bulgaria Puts Up a New Wall, but This One Keeps People Out [online]. *The New York Times*, 15 April. Available from: <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/06/world/europe/bulgaria-puts-up-a-new-wall-but-this-one-keeps-people-out.html> [Accessed 23 May 2016].
4. As of 11 April 2016: Amnesty International (2016) *Trapped in Greece: an avoidable refugee crisis* [online]. Available from: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur25/3778/2016/en/> [Accessed 19 May 2016].
5. Médecins Sans Frontières (2016) *Obstacle Course to Europe: A policy-made humanitarian crisis at EU borders* [online]. Available from: [http://www.msf.org/sites/msf.org/files/msf\\_obstacle\\_course\\_to\\_europe\\_0.pdf](http://www.msf.org/sites/msf.org/files/msf_obstacle_course_to_europe_0.pdf) [Accessed 11 May 2016].
6. As outlined in the 1951 refugee convention; see: <http://www.unhcr.org/3d58e13b4.pdf> [Accessed 5 July 2016].
7. See: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-36121083> [Accessed 5 July 2016].
8. UNHCR (2015) *Global Trends 2014: World at War* [online]. Available from: [http://www.unhcr.at/fileadmin/user\\_upload/dokumente/02\\_unhcr/events/Global\\_Trends\\_2014.pdf](http://www.unhcr.at/fileadmin/user_upload/dokumente/02_unhcr/events/Global_Trends_2014.pdf) [Accessed 11 May 2016].
9. Human Rights Watch (2015) *The Mediterranean Migration Crisis* [online]. Available from: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2015/06/19/mediterranean-migration-crisis/why-people-flee-what-eu-should-do>. Migration Policy Centre (2016) *Tariq al-Euroba: displacement trends of Syrian asylum seekers to the EU* [online]. Available from: <http://www.migrationpolicycentre.eu/migrant-crisis/> [Both accessed 19 May 2016].



10. UNHCR (2016) *Refugees/Migrants Emergency Response – Mediterranean*. UNHCR data portal [online]. Available from: <http://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/regional.php> [Accessed 11 May 2016].
11. Ibid.
12. International Organisation for Migration *Missing Migrants Project* [online]. Available from: <http://missingmigrants.iom.int/> [Accessed 19 May 2016].
13. Lyman, R. (2015) Bulgaria Puts Up a New Wall, but This One Keeps People Out [online]. *The New York Times*, 15 April. Available from: <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/06/world/europe/bulgaria-puts-up-a-new-wall-but-this-one-keeps-people-out.html> [Accessed 23 May 2016].
14. BBC News (2016) Why is EU struggling with migrants and asylum? 3 March [online]. Available from: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-24583286> [Accessed 23 May 2016].
15. BBC News (2016) Migrant crisis: Austria asylum cap begins despite EU anger. 19 February [online]. Available from: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-35609823> [Accessed 23 May 2016]
16. European Council of the European Union (2016) Statement of the EU Heads of State or Government, 07/03/2016 [online]. Available from: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/03/07-eu-turkey-meeting-statement/> [Accessed April 2016].
17. Ibid.
18. European Commission (2016) *Implementing the EU-Turkey Agreement – Questions and Answers*, Press release, April [online]. Available from: [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_MEMO-16-1494\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-16-1494_en.htm) [Accessed 19 May 2016].
19. Ibid.
20. Gidda, M. (2016) As routes to Europe close, refugees are starting to consider one of the oldest and deadliest crossings. *Europe Newsweek*, April [online]. Available from: <http://europe.newsweek.com/europe-refugee-crisis-libya-italy-central-mediterranean-446528> [Accessed 23 May 2016].
21. As of 11 April 2016: Amnesty International (2016) *Trapped in Greece: an avoidable refugee crisis* [online]. Available from: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur25/3778/2016/en/> [Accessed 19 May 2016].
22. CDAC Network: Skype call with UNHCR and CDAC Network agencies: European Refugee Crisis, 30 November 2015.
23. CDAC Network (January 2016) CDAC Network Research Proposal for European refugee crisis.

24. ACF provides the START Network with monitoring, evaluation and learning services for this response.
25. BBC Media Action adheres to ethical guidelines in crisis which highlight that humanitarian research must be of direct benefit to people affected, and “do no harm”. This is in line with humanitarian guidelines given by MSF (2015) and Research for Health in Humanitarian Crisis (R2HC) programme.
26. UNHCR (2016) *Refugees/Migrants Emergency Response – Mediterranean*. UNHCR data portal [online]. Available from: <http://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/regional.php>. Data last updated 12 May 2016.
27. Formal camps refer to land that has been classified by relevant government or council authorities as a residential zone or is occupied by formal housing. Informal settlements are unplanned and where housing, shelter and services have been constructed on land to which the occupants have no legal claim, or which they occupy illegally. See: UNHCR (2014) *Global Strategy for Settlement and Shelter. A UNHCR Strategy 2014-2018*: Geneva: UNHCR, p16. [online] Available from: <http://www.unhcr.org/530f13aa9.pdf> p16 [Accessed 15 June 2016].
28. Squire, V. et al. (2016) *Crossing the Mediterranean Sea by boat: Mapping and documenting migratory journeys and experiences*. Warwick: Warwick University, ESRC funded research. [online] Available from: [http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/pais/research/researchcentres/irs/crossingthemed/output/evidence\\_paper.pdf](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/pais/research/researchcentres/irs/crossingthemed/output/evidence_paper.pdf) [Accessed 5 July 2016].
29. Recent research by the Overseas Development Institute found that “information becomes trustworthy when it is transmitted by known social connections with whom the individual already shares a relationship of (at least some) trust”. See: ODI (2016) *Journeys to Europe* [online]. Available from: <https://www.odi.org/publications/10317-journeyseurope-role-policy-migrant-decision-making> [Accessed 5 July 2016]. For those we interviewed, these included friends, family members, travelling companions or even a smuggler who came recommended.
30. Marrouch, R. (2016) *Boycott death boats*. BBC Trending, February [online]. Available from: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/blogs-trending-35441568> [Accessed 5 July 2016].
31. Agencies in Greece explained that there are restrictions on what they can say, given the crisis in Greece is managed by the government, not agencies.
32. Hannides, T. (2015) *Humanitarian broadcasting in emergencies – A synthesis of evaluation findings*. Research Report, Issue 7. London: BBC Media Action. [online] Available from: <http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/pdf/research/humanitarian-broadcasting-in-emergencies-2015-report.pdf>.
33. Ibid.

34. Youths under 18 travelling alone were classified in the “vulnerable group” as “minors”. They were interviewed in the group discussions.
35. An inductive approach involves a process of reviewing observations and using them to draw a number of general conclusions from the data that can be explored further in other research, rather than coming to the data with a preconceived hypothesis.
36. Unless otherwise stated, this section refers to information collected through the field research only.
37. Key agencies working in the area: UNHCR, ActionAid and Save the Children.
38. “Vulnerable” is defined here as: pregnant women, unaccompanied minors, people with disabilities, medical conditions, injuries and/or the elderly (over 65).





Registered charity number (England & Wales): 1076235

Company number: 3521587

Registered office: Broadcasting House, Portland Place,  
London W1A 1AA, United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0) 20 8008 0001

Fax: +44 (0) 20 8008 5970

Email: [media.action@bbc.co.uk](mailto:media.action@bbc.co.uk)

© BBC Media Action 2016

[www.bbcmediaaction.org](http://www.bbcmediaaction.org)



**BBC**  
**MEDIA ACTION**  
TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH MEDIA  
AROUND THE WORLD



**START**  
NETWORK

dahlia 



CDAC  
COMMUNICATING WITH DISASTER-AFFECTED COMMUNITIES