

UNDERSTANDING HOW
UNHCR ENGAGES WITH
COMMUNITIES IN
YEMEN

Community Engagement Survey Report

September 2020



A staff from UNHCR's NGO partner organization, NMO, records feedback from a displaced woman at a non-food items distribution site in Aden. © UNHCR/NMO, Amer Abdulkareem, July 2020

Introduction

Community engagement and two-way communication with affected populations are critical to understanding refugees and internally displaced persons' needs and how they want UNHCR and its partners to address them. It also allows UNHCR to inform displaced communities and individuals about how to access services. It supports communities to strengthen pre-existing capacity and their own resilience to shock, such as conflict, natural disaster or epidemic, notably COVID-19. Listening and talking to the communities it serves is inherent in UNHCR humanitarian response and an integral to UNHCR community-based protection approach.¹

In Yemen, community engagement has been an essential part of UNHCR's response to the crisis. UNHCR and its partners engage and communicate with communities using both physical and virtual modalities, including face to face meetings, posters, leaflets, hotlines, text messages, and social media. It is essential for emergency responders to understand different groups and individuals' information needs, their preferred channels, and trusted sources. Any engagement with communities must also take into consideration socio-cultural norms and traditional practices that may impact specific groups – such as women, children, elderly persons, and persons with disabilities – access to information and opportunities to impart information to other members of the community or humanitarian partners.

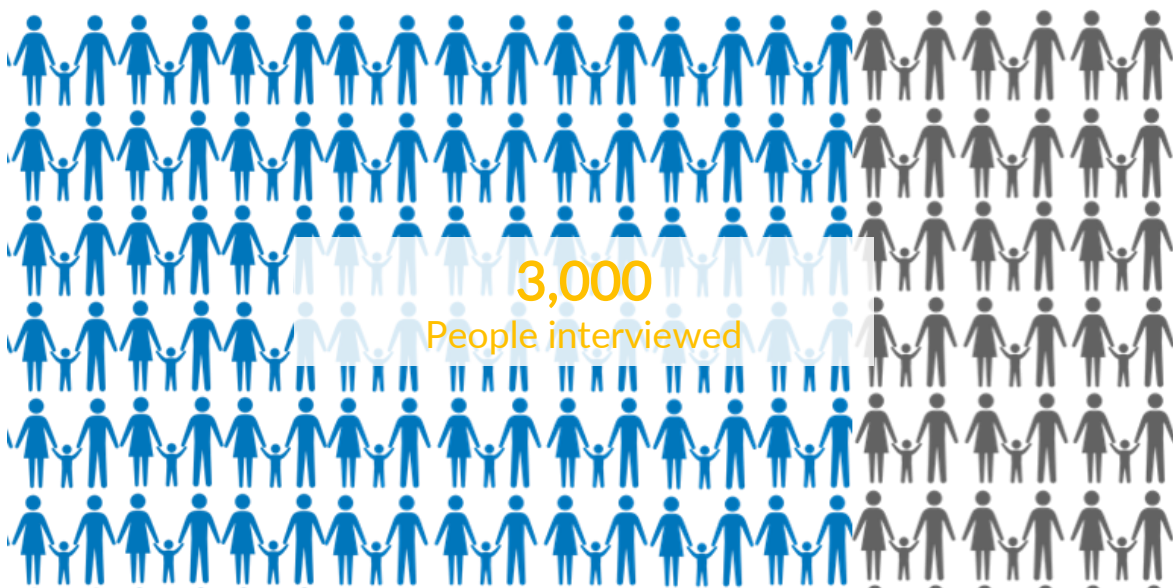
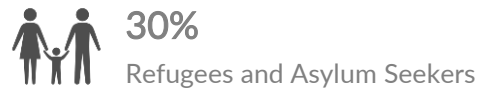
In June 2020, UNHCR conducted a survey to assess the quality and impact of its engagement with communities and identify areas for improvement. This abstract presents the key findings of the study and recommendations to address the gaps identified and better support effective two-way communication between UNHCR and its partners and the communities they serve in Yemen.

¹ <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/5209f0b64.pdf>

Methodology

Who we spoke to?

UNHCR interviewed over 3,000 displaced Yemenis, refugees, asylum seekers, and host community members across the country.



42%

of IDPs respondents were women and girls



58%

of IDPs respondents were men and boys



73%

of refugees and asylum seekers respondents were women and girls



27%

of refugees and asylum seekers respondents were men and boys

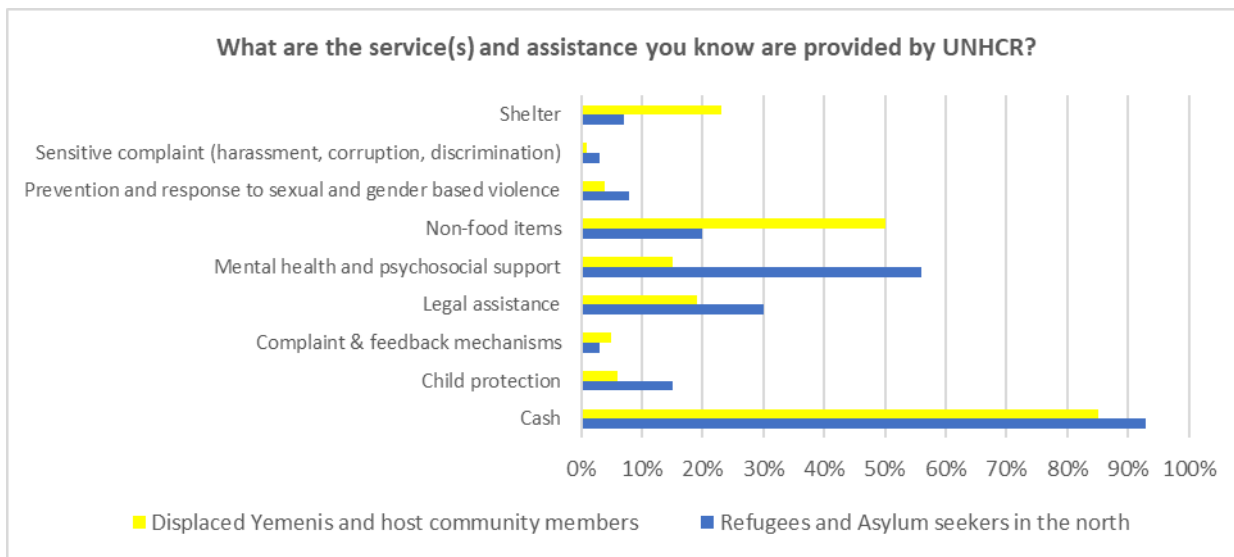
What did we ask?



The survey was designed to help to capture the understanding that displaced people and their host communities have of the services offered by UNHCR and its partners. It also aimed to understand how displaced communities communicate with UNHCR and its partners, in particular their use of complaints and feedback mechanisms and their main challenges that may prevent them from using such mechanisms in order to identify how UNHCR could adapt its two-way communication. The survey also included questions related to the knowledge amongst displaced persons of COVID-19 preventive measures and the main barriers in implementing them.

Key findings

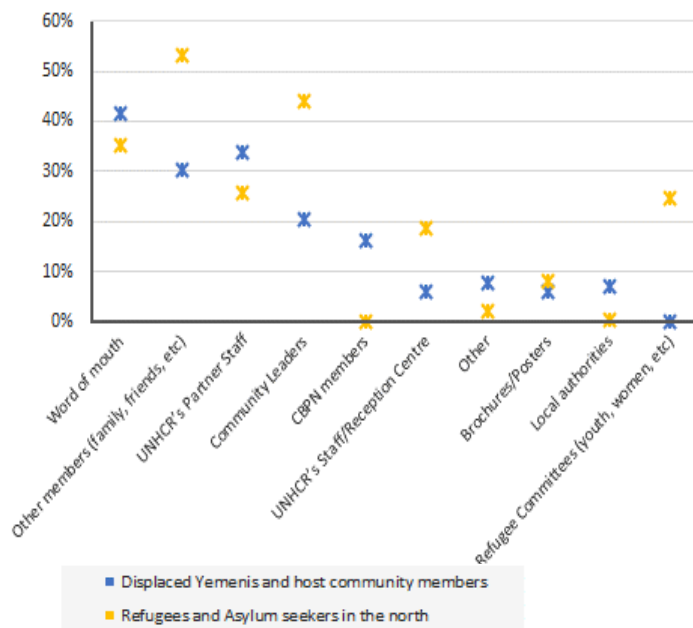
- **Displaced Yemenis, refugees, asylum seekers, and host communities' families do not always know the full range of services offered by UNHCR and partners.** They are generally well informed mainly of UNHCR cash support, a lifeline for most of them.
 - Refugees and asylum seekers interviewed in the north of Yemen are well-aware of the psychosocial support offered by UNHCR and partners, including as psychological first aid in the field.
 - Displaced Yemenis are aware of non-food items assistance, given UNHCR presence on the frontline of the emergency response, when families lose their home and belongings due to conflict or flooding.
 - They are less aware of other available protection services, including psychosocial support, legal assistance, specialized services for SGBV survivors, and children, which may be explained by an overall lack of familiarity with such services that, even before displacement, were limited and socio-cultural norms.



▪ **Refugees, asylum seekers, displaced Yemenis, and members of their host communities play a crucial role in supporting the information flow on UNHCR's assistance and services.**

- **Displaced persons trust people they know:** more than half of refugees and asylum-seekers respondents in the north and one-third displaced Yemenis and host communities interviewed countrywide rely on their **family, friends, and relatives** to access information;
- **Informal communication remains the preferred way to receive information:** forty-two per cent of displaced Yemenis and host communities interviewed countrywide, and 35 per cent of refugees and asylum seekers interviewed in the north rely on **'word of mouth'**;
- **Organised community structures help transmit information:** forty-four per cent of refugees and asylum seekers interviewed in the north of Yemen rely on **community leaders** while 25 per cent on refugee specialised committees.
- **UNHCR** primarily relies on local and community-based organizations that are often well-rooted and respected in the communities they serve.

How do you obtain information in your community about Services provided by UNHCR?



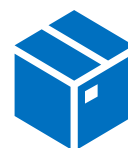
UNHCR partners managing protection services, including at community centres, remain key intermediaries between UNHCR, refugees, asylum seekers, displaced Yemenis, and members of their host communities. UNHCR partners lead activities at the community level, such as awareness-raising sessions, mass information campaigns, door-to-door visits, and monitoring in sites and at services points, such as community centres. These activities ensure that UNHCR partners are in direct and regular contact with communities affected by displacement.

35% of displaced Yemeni reported that they learned about UNHCR activities through UNHCR partner staff.



27% of displaced Yemeni contact UNHCR and its partners using hotlines.

22% of refugees and asylum seekers in the north of Yemen contact UNHCR and its partners through complaints and feedback boxes.



69% of refugees in asylum seekers in the south of Yemen prefer face to face meetings with service providers to raise their concern.

15% of refugees and asylum seekers in the north of Yemen contact UNHCR and its partners through UNHCR staff.

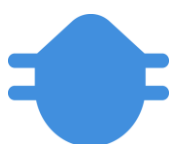


Complaints and Feedback Mechanism in Yemen

UNHCR Yemen's Complaints and Feedback Mechanism is a system through which refugees, asylum-seekers, displaced Yemenis and returnees can share their feedback and complaints regarding their protection and assistance concerns. The existing channels include hotlines, complaint and feedback boxes in Community Centers and UNHCR Offices and emails managed by UNHCR staff.

- **Strong communication initiatives to raise awareness about COVID-19, including by UNHCR, helped to increase awareness and adoption of preventive measures amongst displaced Yemeni, refugees, and asylum seekers.**

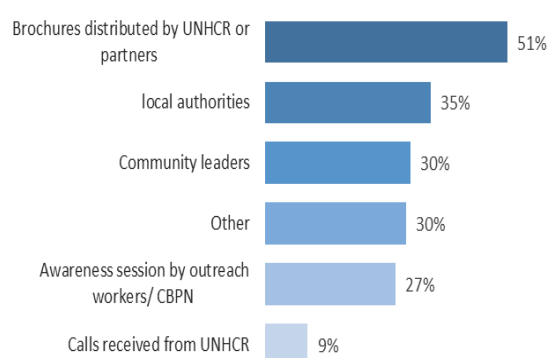
89% of displaced Yemeni and host communities, and **87%** of refugee and asylum seeker respondents interviewed in the north of Yemen **know about COVID-19 preventive measures**



85% of displaced Yemeni and host communities and vast majority of refugees and asylum seekers in the north of Yemen interviewed say that **they apply those measures**. However, some cannot apply them mainly due to **lack of access to clean water and hygiene, lack of access to PPEs, and financial means to purchase them**.

Sources used to get information about the preventive measures for COVID-19

Refugees and Asylum seekers in the north



Displaced Yemenis and host community members



* "others" such as through radio, SMS messages etc.

UNHCR's communication initiatives about COVID-19

UNHCR conducted mass awareness raising on COVID-19 preventive measures through various communication channels to pass accurate and timely information. This included the production and distribution of brochures, information dissemination through calls, messaging at the assistance collection points, home visits and at community centres.

These awareness-raising were coupled with other initiatives such as the distribution of hygiene kits.



A staff from UNHCR NGO partner organization, NMO, leads an awareness-raising session with a group of

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https://www.yunbaogao.cn/report/index/report?reportId=5_17657

