



INTERNATIONAL REFUGEE CONGRESS 2018 CONSULTATION REPORT

MARCH 2018



**INTERNATIONAL REFUGEE CONGRESS 2018
CONSULTATION REPORT**

MARCH 2018

Acknowledgements

The Steering Committee of the International Refugee Congress 2018 are extremely grateful to every organisation and individual that agreed to participate in this consultation, which would not have been possible without their willingness to engage and share their views and perspectives.

This report was written by Evan Easton-Calabria, Mia Tong and Ceren Topgul. The Steering Committee wishes to thank the report's authors, as well as all those that contributed to the research design, data collection, data analysis, drafting and report review, including: Ayman Abulaban, Didem Aksoy, Amer Alkayed, Meryem Aslan, Ahmet Ceran, Muhtar Cokar, Metin Corabatir, Ravda Nur Cuma, Eda Demirhan, Gokcen Durutas, Beyza Dut, Aysegul Ekmekci, Gokhan Erkutlu, Sana Mustafa, Cigdem Nas and Josephine Whitaker Yilmaz.

For more information, or to comment on this report, please contact the Steering Committee at refugee.congress.2018@gmail.com.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Study Overview	1
Key Findings: Top Policy Priorities	1
Key Findings: Experiences of Participation and Engagement	2
Key Findings: Recommendations on engaging civil society in policymaking	2
Introduction	3
Context	3
Background and objectives	4
Methodology of the Consultation Process	4
Online Survey	4
In-depth Interviews	5
Limitations of the Methodology	5
Key Findings	6
Section 1: Analysis of Top Policy Priorities	6
Top Policy Priorities (prompted)	6
Top Policy Priorities (unprompted)	8
In-Depth Interview Data: Refugee Priorities	9
Reflections on Policy Priorities	13
Expectations for National and International Institutions	14
The Least Well-Addressed Policy Issues	15
Section 2: Participation in National and International Policy Processes Regarding Refugees	18
Experiences of Participation and Engagement	18
Experiences of engagement with the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) process	18
Limitations in respondents' engagement in the GCR process	20
Conclusion	22
Annex 1. Survey Questions	23
Annex 2. Consultation Interview Guide	27

Executive Summary

This report is based on the consultation conducted for the International Refugee Congress 2018 that is organised through the collaboration of the Research Centre on Asylum and Migration (IGAM), Human Resources Development Foundation (IKGV), Support to Life (STL), Ravda Nur Foundation, Asil Vakfi, Foundation for the Support of Women's Work (KEDV), Education Reform Initiative (ERG), Economic Development Foundation (IKV), Network for Refugee Voices, the Turkish Refugee Council, and Oxfam. It covers a range of issues based on the findings of 475 surveys and 79 in-depth interviews with civil society organisations, including national, refugee-led, women's, and other organisations. In sharing these findings, the report aims to provide a key substantive input into the development of thematic policy positions and recommendations for the International Refugee Congress process. In particular, it seeks to support the increased representation and influence of refugee-led and national organisations in international policymaking related to refugees. This report may also be shared through more formalised channels throughout the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) process, and other relevant policymaking processes.

Study Overview

- » A total of 475 respondents filled out a 20-question online survey between December 15th 2017 and March 1st 2018, available in Arabic, English, French, Spanish, and Turkish. The survey asked questions on the priorities of refugees, opinions on international and national policy priorities, previous engagement in policymaking processes such as the GCR, and interest in engaging in future policymaking processes as well as the International Refugee Congress.
- » 79 in-depth interviews were held with organisations in January and February 2018. Interview respondents answered questions on the priorities of refugees and policy-makers, expectations for national and international policy-makers, and involvement in policymaking processes.
- » The study used a snowball methodology, whereby with the help of other surveyed and interviewed organisations, previously unknown organisations were identified and consulted. Given this, the study is not representative across countries or types of organisation.

Key Findings: Top Policy Priorities

Findings on top policy priorities of refugees demonstrate the need to address both the basic needs of refugees as well as to provide longer-term support in areas such as livelihoods and education. The prevalent focus on access to legal employment by respondents in countries around the globe suggests the widespread nature of restrictions on legal work faced by refugees, and thus represent a crucial area of improvement in refugee assistance.

In a prompted survey question on top policy priorities, access to services was ranked highest across all organisation types (49.9%), followed by protection against involuntary return (36.2%), access to legal employment opportunities (34.1%), and recognition of legal status and access to documentation (33.9%). In an unprompted survey question on top policy priorities, access to legal employment opportunities was cited the most (43.2%), followed by access to education (27.8%), and recognition of legal status and access to documentation (22.5%). Amongst respondents from women's organisations, access to legal employment opportunities was cited as the most important issue (33.3%), followed by access to education (20%) and gender/gender sensitive policies (20%). When prompted, women's organisation respondents identified gender based violence (46.7%) as the top priority, followed by xenophobia and discrimination (43.3%), women's access to employment (43.3%), and language barriers (43.3%). When unprompted, lack of holistic and long-term policy framework (22.4%) appears as the most cited priority by the respondents from refugee-led organisations.

The interview data corroborated much of the survey data, and found that the main priorities of refugees according to all types of organisations were access to education (43 mentions in interviews), access to legal

employment opportunities (39), and recognition of legal status and access to relevant documentation (36). The consistent importance of access to legal employment, recognition of legal status and access to documentation cited in both survey and interview responses highlight the prominent need these constitute for refugees across the globe.

Key Findings: Experiences of Participation and Engagement

More than half of the interviewed organisations/experts (49 out of 79 respondents) stated that their organisations have been involved to some extent in policymaking processes, at different levels (national and/or international) and through different means, including attending meetings, membership to groups and direct involvement in decision-making. Participation in international conferences/meetings (23 organisations) has been the main modality for engaging in decision-making processes regarding refugees. Despite this, direct engagement in policymaking is low both at the national and international level. Strikingly, only two refugee-led organisations (out of 38) have been directly engaged in international decision-making processes regarding refugees, and only four organisations stated national involvement in decision-making. This indicates, amongst the organisations surveyed, a prominent dearth in refugees' involvement in national and international decision-making, despite recent calls for increased participation of refugees in the international refugee regime.

Overall, the findings of the consultation demonstrate a moderate level of engagement amongst respondents in the GCR development process and a high level of non-engagement in consultations. One fourth of respondents have participated in the GCR development process. However, according to the in-depth interviews, only eight out of 79 organisations engaged directly or indirectly in the Global Compact processes. Two of these organisations are refugee-led while none of them is a women's organisation.

From the perspectives of respondents who haven't engaged in the GCR development, the process led by UNHCR appears to be highly exclusionary. Respondents reported not being informed about the process (26.1%), not being invited to take part or be consulted (14.3%), and the process excluding small, local, rights based, or non-partner organisations (6.1%) as reasons for not having engaged. Around one third of respondents from major refugee-hosting countries and from national organisations stated that they were not informed about the process. Lack of opportunity appears to be a barrier for engagement in the process to a similar extent across countries (8-9%). Not being invited to take part or be consulted (22.9%) and organisational limitations (11.4%) appear to concern primarily the respondents from refugee-led organisations, in comparison to other types of organisations.

Key Findings: Recommendations on engaging civil society in policymaking

The most common suggestions by in-depth interview respondents for policymakers to ensure civil society engagement in the development of national and international refugee policies were: invite civil society organisations to conferences and meetings (9); support and establish partnerships with CSOs and refugees (6); foster open dialogue with these groups (6); provide (direct) funding for CSOs (5); involve refugees and refugee-led organisations in the policymaking processes (5), as well as women and women's organisations (3); invest in skill development of CSOs and refugees to participate in policymaking (3) and develop new approaches or tools to facilitate their participation (3). When asked about the type of preferred mechanism for future engagement with UNHCR and other international organisations, survey respondents mainly envisaged mechanisms for participation, indicated whose participation should be ensured, and specified the aims of such mechanisms, including cooperation, monitoring, policy development, and project implementation.

Introduction

This report is based on the consultation conducted for the International Refugee Congress 2018, and presents data collected through the online survey and in-depth interviews. Its overall purpose is to provide an analysis of the findings from this consultation process.

More specifically, the objectives of the report are as follows:

1. To share the key findings of the consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, including refugee-led, national and international civil society organisations, UN agencies, state institutions and the private sector;
2. To reflect the profile of the institutions and individuals consulted, and the diversity of their perspectives and ideas about policy priorities;
3. To provide a key substantive input into the development of thematic policy priorities and initial recommendations in the context of the International Refugee Congress process.

Context

The distribution of the world's large and growing refugee population is highly uneven. 84% of the world's refugees are hosted by low and middle-income countries.¹ While the world's six wealthiest countries host less than 9% of all refugees, the least developed countries host almost a third.² These figures underline one of the central weaknesses of the international refugee regime: the absence of an equitable distribution of responsibilities among state and international actors for international refugee protection. The New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants, adopted in September 2016, and the subsequent process of developing a Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), offer an opportunity to create a more comprehensive, predictable, and reliable approach to responding to large-scale refugee movements, as well as develop new normative frameworks for international responsibility sharing.

For decades, civil society organisations (CSOs) around the world have intensively sought to influence international policymaking related to refugees. The GCR process – and other international decision-making processes – has given CSOs some opportunities to contribute towards planning and designing refugee policy. Despite this, these opportunities have mainly been ad hoc, and these efforts have stopped short of creating a mechanism that ensures the inclusion of refugees and host communities in policymaking discussions and negotiations. Refugees and host communities based in the countries that host the highest numbers of refugees have indeed largely been underrepresented in these processes. For example, only 4% of the organisations which participated in the High Level Meeting on Refugees and Migrants in September 2016 came from the top 5 refugee-hosting countries.³ As refugees and host communities are most affected by forced migration across international borders, it is critical that refugees, host communities, and the organisations which represent them play a leading role in shaping the GCR and other international policymaking processes.

Background and objectives

In December 2017, the Turkish Refugee Council, the Research Centre on Asylum and Migration (IGAM) and Oxfam, together with a steering committee of eight other organisations⁴ launched an international civil society consultation and policy development process designed to contribute to existing efforts to increase the participation of refugees and host-communities in international and national policymaking processes.

1. <http://www.unhcr.org/5943e8a34.pdf>

2. <http://www.unhcr.org/globaltrends2016/>

3. Based on the published list of NGOs approved to participate in the High Level Meeting (available here: https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/sites/default/files/20160823173049_0.pdf). The top 5 refugee-hosting countries based on the total number of refugees hosted are: Turkey, Pakistan, Lebanon, Iran, and Uganda (UNHCR, 2017).

4. Human Resources Development Foundation (IKGV), Support to Life (STL), Ravda Nur Foundation, Asil Vakfi, Foundation for the Support of Women's Work (KEDV), Education Reform Initiative (ERG), Economic Development Foundation (IKV), and Network for Refugee Voices.

This project aims to facilitate the inclusion of the perspectives of these stakeholders, which are most affected by forced displacement across international borders. It seeks to contribute to a paradigm shift, whereby these stakeholders increasingly drive the development of international refugee policy. The participatory and inclusive design of the process for consultation and collaborative policy development aims to identify commonalities in the views of refugee-led organisations and national CSOs in major refugee-hosting countries, and to build shared policy positions to be amplified in international policymaking processes. The focus of the consultation and policy development process is on refugee-led organisations, national CSOs, academia, and other key stakeholders from many of the world's major refugee-hosting countries – namely, Turkey, Lebanon, Pakistan, Iran, Uganda, Ethiopia, Jordan, Germany, DRC, Chad, and Kenya.⁵ The project also aims to highlight best practices and lessons learned from these countries. It ultimately seeks to support the development of a mechanism to enable ongoing positive engagement and track progress in policymaking efforts related to the international refugee regime.

Methodology of the Consultation Process

The consultation process involved an online multi-language survey and a series of in-depth interviews,⁶ followed by an analysis of the information gathered through these tools. Both tools were designed to shed light on the diverging and converging perspectives of CSOs, including refugee-led organisations, think tanks, and academia, regarding international and national refugee policies that impact the lives of refugees, the communities and countries hosting them, and the wider international community.

To carry out a thorough consultation and reach out to organisations across the globe, the project team utilised the support of the networks of a range of national and international CSOs, including those of the steering committee. The project team also conducted an extensive mapping to identify refugee-led organisations and civil society organisations working with and for refugees in major refugee-hosting countries. A snowball technique was used throughout the consultation process, whereby surveyed and interviewed organisations enabled the identification of previously unknown organisations, which were then consulted. Given the constraints of this technique, the results of the consultation process are not representative of the perspectives of all CSOs or all refugee-led organisations across the world. Nevertheless, they do provide credible insight into the perspectives and priorities of refugee-led organisations and national CSOs in some of the major refugee-hosting countries, although not each country is equally represented. Turkey, for example, is overrepresented, with Turkish participants comprising 30 out of the 79 interviews.

To understand the different perspectives and experiences regarding refugee priorities and the policies governing refugee issues, all findings from the online survey and in-depth interviews were analysed by the respondents' type of organisation (refugee-led, national, international, and women's organisations), by country, and by gender. The following sections provide further details on the online survey and the in-depth interviews.

Online Survey

The online survey was available between December 15th 2017 and March 1st 2018 in Arabic, English, French, Spanish, and Turkish. The survey consisted of 20 open-ended and multiple-choice questions pertaining to the priorities of refugees, opinions on international and national policy priorities, previous engagement in the GCR process, and interest in engaging in future policymaking processes as well as International Refugee Congress to be held in May 2018 (see Annex 1). The survey data collected was analysed using the statistical programme SPSS. Overall, there were a total of 475 survey responses. Responses include views from nine of the world's major refugee-hosting countries, and 47 countries in total.

5. These countries were chosen on the basis of figures from 2017 on the top refugee hosting states as well as top refugee hosting states compared to the host country population.

6. Whenever possible, we have sought to distinguish findings of the survey and interviews in text by referring to "survey respondents" and "interview participants".

Almost half of the survey respondents were from national organisations, 10% were from refugee-led organisations and 9% were from international organisations. Women's organisations comprised 6% of the total dataset. Women and men each constituted one third of total respondents.⁷

In-depth Interviews

The project team carried out in-depth interviews with a diverse array of organisations between January and February 2018. Interview respondents were prompted with questions on the priorities of refugees and policymakers, expectations for national and international policymakers, connections with refugee-led organisations, involvement in policymaking processes, and their willingness to engage in the ongoing policy consultation and development process (see Annex 2). In total, the project team conducted 79 in-depth interviews. Interviews were conducted with organisations based in 9 of the top 10 refugee hosting countries, as well as with organisations based in 11 other countries.⁸ Overall, the team conducted interviews with 38 refugee-led organisations, 37 national organisations, 4 international organisations, and 9 women's organisations. 43 participants were male, 29 participants were female, and 4 interviews involved participants of both genders.

Limitations of the Methodology

- » Participation in the consultation process was limited to the organisations that could be reached through the mapping exercise as well as through professional networks. As a result, the study is not representative across countries or types of organisations (e.g. refugee-led organisations). Women's organisations are relatively underrepresented.
- » Organisations in Turkey are overrepresented in the consultation process compared to organisations in other major refugee-hosting countries.
- » The available survey languages may have created obstacles for the participation of civil society in certain countries.
- » Participation might have been influenced by the limited internet access in some contexts, especially in some of the major refugee-hosting countries.

7. 30% of respondents did not complete the questions about their country of residence, gender, and type of organisation.

8. 65 interviews were conducted in 9 of the world's top ten refugee-hosting countries including: Turkey (30); Germany (5); Uganda (6); Lebanon (6); Jordan (6); Pakistan (7); Iran (1); Kenya (3); Chad (1). 14 interviews were conducted in other countries, including Australia, Bulgaria, Greece, Iraq, Sudan, Singapore, Indonesia, Philippines, the Netherlands, South Korea, and the USA.

Key Findings

Section 1: Analysis of Top Policy Priorities

This section presents the main policy priorities of organisations from both the survey and interview data. The datasets hold a high degree of overlap, with access to legal employment and education emerging among the top five policy priorities for each dataset. Overall, the policy priorities suggest an ongoing need for refugees' access to both basic necessities and development support. The following sections examine the top policy priorities according to country, organisational, and question type (prompted or unprompted⁹).

Top policy priorities (prompted)

Several policy priorities emerge as common themes among respondents from across countries and different organisational types. Over half of the respondents from both major refugee-hosting (50.2%) and other countries (56.6%) cited access to services that meet essential needs as a main policy priority. This priority was also consistently the highest amongst respondents regardless of the type of organisation they represent (national: 50%, international: 43.9%, refugee-led: 49%, others¹⁰: 68.4%), including women's (40%) and other organisations (52.3%).

There was a similar trend in the importance of recognition of legal status and access to documentation. This was among the top five policy priorities for respondents from both major refugee-hosting (36%) and other countries (39.5%). Across organisational types, the percentage ranged from 34.2% (other organisations) to 38.8% (refugee-led organisations). Women's organisations (23.3%) found this to be less of a priority than did other organisations (38.7%). Male respondents (40.9%) were also significantly more likely to cite this as a policy priority than females (32.9%), although women cited issues such as xenophobia and discrimination (39.2%) and child labour (29.1%) more often than men (25.8% and 16.4%, respectively).

Significantly, protection against involuntary return (36.2%) was the second highest priority mentioned in response to the prompted question. For refugee-led organisations, this was the second most-cited policy priority (46.9%). It is concerning that this ranks so highly as a policy priority for refugees given that involuntary return (*non-refoulement*) is the cornerstone of international refugee law and protection, and is considered a gross violation of human rights. Interestingly, this issue was cited slightly more frequently by respondents from outside the major refugee-hosting countries. This may be linked to the current international discourses that are shifting away from the fair share of responsibility for international refugee protection. In combination with the first priority of access to services that meet essential needs, these findings suggest that, according to those surveyed, refugees are not being assured of the protection of their basic rights – nor provided with wider opportunities, as reflected in other policy priorities, to lead independent and dignified lives.

⁹. For details, please see the Annex 1.

¹⁰. The category of "other organisations" includes professional associations, private sector, labour union, media organisation, governmental organisations and others.

Table 1: Policy priorities for refugees (prompted, %)

	Policy priorities	%
1	Access to services that meet essential needs	49.9
2	Protection against involuntary return	36.2
3	Access to legal employment opportunities	34.1
4	Recognition of legal status and access to documentation	33.9
5	Access to education	33.1
6	Xenophobia and discrimination	31.4
7	Social cohesion and harmony	27.8
8	Access to durable solutions	27.6
9	Language barrier	26.5
10	Ability to claim asylum	26.1
	N (number of respondents)	475

Source: Consultation survey.

Question: Various research has identified the following issues as some of the key priorities of refugees in different contexts and countries. Based on your context, which of these issues do you think are the top six priorities for refugees?

Interestingly, respondents from many major refugee-hosting countries cited issues affecting their workforce and society as higher policy priorities than other countries, perhaps reflecting the importance of such issues for integration and the general wellbeing of their country's populations. In particular, issues such as child labour (24.5% compared to 10.5%), access to education (35.6% compared to 22.4%), and social cohesion and harmony (30.7% compared to 25%) represent domestic issues of particular concern to respondents in many major refugee-hosting countries compared to other countries.

In contrast, the policy priority of access to legal employment opportunities was consistently high (over 30% for respondents from both major refugee hosting countries and other countries), and across all organisation types except for 'others' (23.7%). This demonstrates the widespread importance accorded by the survey group to refugees' access to legal employment, as well as the prevalence of barriers to it. This priority in conjunction with recognition of legal status and access to documentation, and access to education, indicates that refugees are seeking ways to live independently from humanitarian assistance and create meaningful livelihoods. The fact that these priorities emerge repeatedly throughout the data (see below) demonstrate that despite being of paramount importance, attaining dignified lives remains a challenge for refugees.

It is important to note that in the prompted question, women's organisations indicated gender-based violence (46.7%) as the top priority, followed by xenophobia and discrimination (43.3%), women's access to employment (43.3%), and language barrier (43.3%). This can be interpreted as a reflection of the high level of awareness that exists among women's organisations on the multifaceted discrimination refugee women are facing, and the potential impact of this on their ability to be gainfully employed. Such prioritisation by women's organisations may also indicate the need for gender-specific policy solutions across sectors such as education, employment, legal rights, and addressing violence and discrimination, including gender-based violence.

Table 2: Policy priorities for refugees according to respondents from women's organisations (prompted, %)

	Policy priorities	Women's organisations, %	All other organisations, %
1	Gender-based violence	46.7	11.6
2	Women's access to legal employment opportunities	43.3	13.2
2	Language barrier	43.3	24.5
2	Xenophobia and discrimination	43.3	29.5
3	Ability to cross international borders	40.0	24.8
3	Access to services that meet essential needs	40.0	52.3
4	Access to legal services and protection	36.7	19.2
	N	30	302

Source: Consultation survey.

Question: Various research has identified the following issues as some of the key priorities of refugees in different contexts and countries. Based on your context, which of these issues do you think are the top six priorities for refugees?

Top Policy Priorities (unprompted)

In an unprompted question about the three most important policy issues impacting refugees that need improvement, access to legal employment opportunities was the most cited (43.2%), followed by access to education (27.8%), and recognition of legal status and access to documentation (22.5%). These three issues were consistently raised in survey answers by all groups, demonstrating their importance, although their order of priority shifted according to the type of organisation (see Table 3 below).

Table 3: Policy priorities for refugees (unprompted, %) by type of organisation

National organisations	%	International organisations	%	Refugee-led organisations	%	Other organisations	%
Access to legal employment opportunities	48.0	Access to legal employment opportunities	48.8	Lack of holistic/long-term policy framework	22.4	Access to legal employment opportunities	47.4
Access to education	32.8	Recognition of legal status and access to documentation	34.1	Access to legal employment opportunities	20.4	Social cohesion and harmony	31.6
Recognition of legal status and access to documentation	23.0	Access to education	26.8	Recognition of legal status and access to documentation	20.4	Access to education	26.3
Xenophobia and discrimination	13.7	Access to services that meet essential needs	14.6	Xenophobia and discrimination	18.4	Xenophobia and discrimination	23.7
Lack of holistic/long-term policy framework	13.2	Xenophobia and discrimination	12.5	Access to education; Access to health services; Language barrier	14.3	Access to safeadequate shelter; Language barrier; Access to durable solutions - local integration	15.8

Source: Consultation survey.

Question: What are the three most important policy areas that are negatively impacting refugees and need improvement in the country in which you work or are based?

Note: Priorities that are grouped together were indicated by the same percent of respondents.

As the above table demonstrates, themes surrounding the importance of employment, education, legality, and social integration emerged across organisations. As mentioned, access to legal employment opportunities was also high amongst women's organisations, for which this issue was the most important in the unprompted question (33.3%) followed by access to education (20%) and gender/gender sensitive policies (20%). This might be a strong indication of the economic stress felt by women and their families, and their desire to overcome this stress. The particular discrimination towards and vulnerability of refugee women in the labour market, as well as an awareness of the intersectionality of gender with other issues such as access to legal employment may also have impacted the choice of employment as top priority policy issue.

Refugee-led organisations, however, cited a lack of holistic or long-term policy frameworks as the most significant policy priority (22.4%), potentially reflecting a lack of cohesion in addressing the other policy issues that were cited as important. Guiding policy frameworks are integral for all types of refugee responses, and it is striking that this priority emerged for refugee-led organisations in particular. These organisations are those most aware of the daily realities of refugees. These responses indicate that there may be a disconnect between the lived experiences of refugees and the policy frameworks and plans that may exist in host countries to support refugee protection, well-being, and integration. This, in turn, may suggest the need for more communication from state and international institutions with refugees as well as more cohesive and effective policy frameworks.

In-Depth Interview Data: Refugee Priorities

The survey data summarised above sheds light on the variety of policy priorities of different organisations across countries. The following section augments this by illuminating the findings of in-depth interviews, and highlights the top ten priorities of refugees as perceived by all types of organisations.

In line with much of the survey data, the main priorities of refugees according to different types of organisations were access to education (43 mentions),¹¹ access to legal employment opportunities (39), and recognition of legal status and access to relevant documentation (36). These top issues were followed by a range of other priorities, including access to health services (25), social cohesion (19), and access to services that meet essential needs (16) (see Graph 1 below for complete list).

Interview participants from across the globe emphasised that refugee children are not attending school, and discussed the challenges posed by this. As one national organisation explained, "The biggest problem is education. In the area of education, many children are still are not able to go to school. We are creating a lost generation."¹² The biggest barrier to education cited was the expense of school, including needed material and clothes. Another national organisation stated, "Most people cannot pay for the fees for schools. Although the school is free, they still pay. Refugees don't have the money to attend the schools."¹³ Other explanations included family poverty that necessitated child labour, including trafficking, and the prohibitive geographic distance to access state-provided education. The main identified issues resulting from children and youth not being in school were a lack of social and economic integration and an inability to navigate national systems.

Access to legal employment was also repeatedly mentioned by interview participants. The lack of the right to work was cited as a major issue, as well as the challenge of accessing work permits or having to pay higher fees to operate businesses due to permit issues. One national organisation discussed the lack of access to skills trainings that could increase employment opportunities, stating that, "Resources should be invested in such a manner that refugees' skills and skill development strategies are useful both in [the] host country and country of origin (when they return)."¹⁴ The cited effects of barriers to legal employment included negative coping mechanisms such as commercial sex, and illegal activities such as being involved in the drug trade, as well as general well-being issues such as psychological disturbances.

11. Unless otherwise noted, the figures in this section represent the number of times each issue was mentioned in the in-depth interviews.

12. Interview with national organisation (11.01.2018)

13. Interview with refugee-led organisation (18.01.2018)

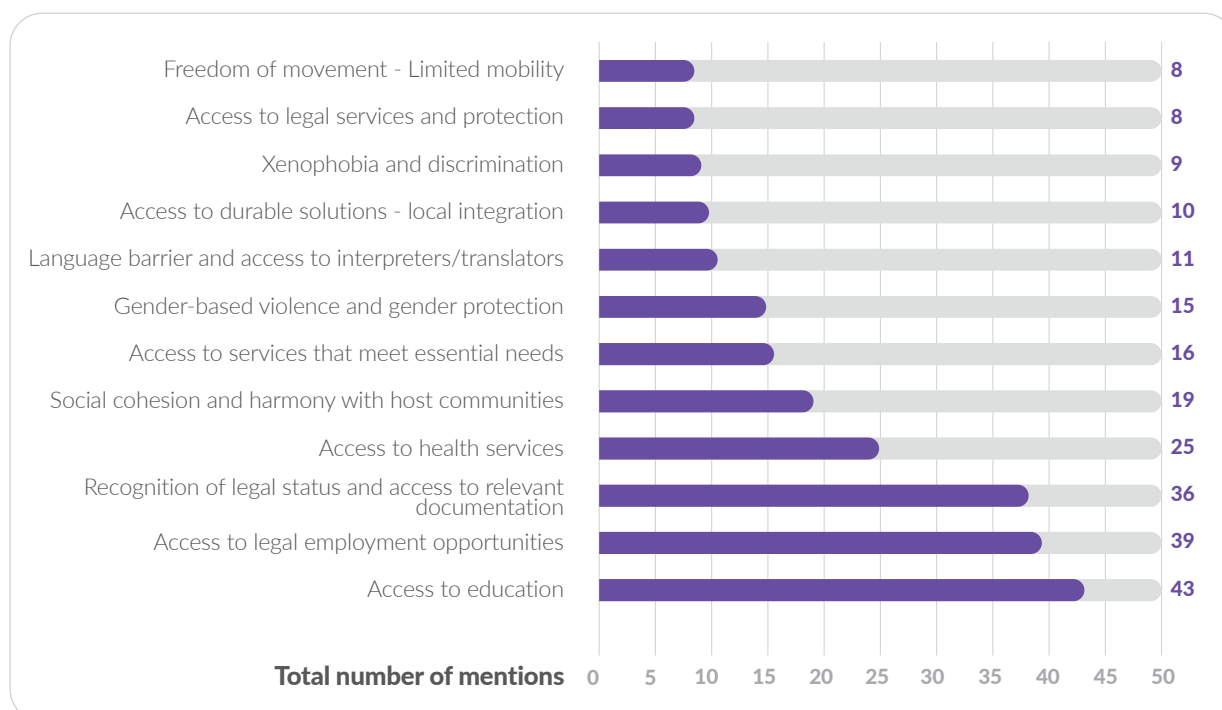
14. Interview with national organisation (28.01.2018)

The recognition of legal status and access to relevant documentation featured prominently among the interview participants, as well. This was epitomised by a respondent from an international refugee-led network:

“The number one priority that needs to be addressed is legal status. While food and shelter are critical need[s] and will always be there, the main need is for legal status. Everything else flows from this. Without legal status, [refugees] don’t have access to public services, or rights. This creates instability and [the] desire to try to leave. They want to leave because they can’t exercise their basic rights, they can’t work – this is all connected to legal status.”¹⁵ [emphasis in interview]

The inability to access other services such as education and health without legal status or documents was also cited as a primary issue. When discussing asylum seekers from Africa, one national organisation explained that they “are in a more disadvantaged position due to their legal status. They are often unregistered, cannot go to the police in case of emergency, they pay 2-3 times more when they go to the hospital.”¹⁶ A refugee-led organisation in the Middle East also warned about the issue of statelessness that can emerge when the registration of refugees is suspended.¹⁷ While another refugee-led organisation in Africa lauded the country for the right to work and freedom of movement it provides refugees, it also mentioned the challenges arising from refugees’ lack of naturalisation in the country.¹⁸ Notably, such challenges were discussed by almost half of interview participants from countries around the world, including from the major refugee hosting countries and others in Europe, Africa and Australia, demonstrating the widespread nature of the lack of recognition of legal status and access to relevant documentation for refugees (please see table 4 on pages 12-13 for more detail).

Figure 1: Top priorities for refugees according to interviewees



Source: In-depth interviews.

Question: What are the priorities of refugees in the country you work/are based in?

15. Interview with refugee-led organisation (09.02.2018)

16. Interview with national organisation (12.02.2018)

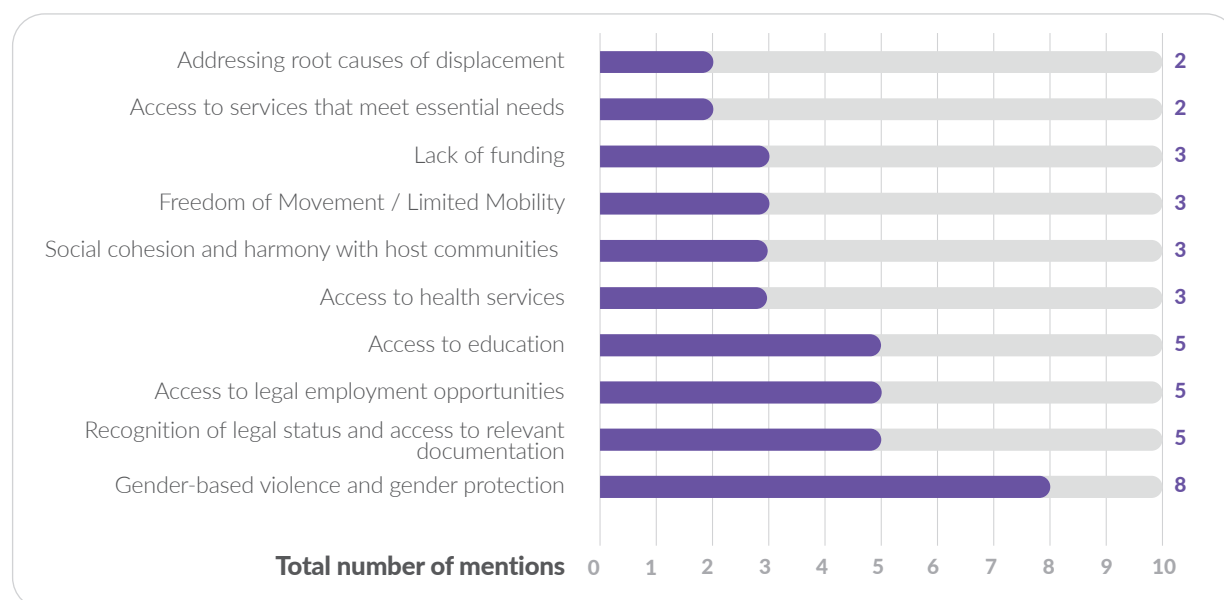
17. Interview with refugee-led organisation (08.02.2018).

18. Interview with refugee-led organisation (26.01.2018)

These figures change slightly when examining the top priorities of refugees according to refugee-led organisations as compared to national organisations. Interview participants from refugee-led organisations cited recognition of legal status and access to relevant documentation (20) and access to education (20) as the main priorities of refugees, followed by access to legal employment opportunities (16), access to health services (14), and social cohesion and harmony with host communities (11). The ranking of these priorities changes with national organisations, which mentioned access to legal employment opportunities (21) and access to education (21) as the two main priorities of refugees. These were followed by recognition of legal status and access to relevant documentation (15), access to health services (10). Following these issues, access to services that meet essential needs, gender-based violence and gender protection, local integration and social cohesion and harmony with host communities were all equally identified by national organisations (7). While slightly different, both sets of organisations perceived refugees as having a clear need for basic rights that can be considered necessary for integration into host countries. It is worth emphasising that these priorities are all cornerstones for surviving in a legal and protected manner in host countries. The fact that they remain un- or under-addressed across contexts is highly problematic, and begs the questions of how these priorities can be effectively addressed, and by which actors.

Interview participants from women's organisations cited gender-based violence and gender protection as the main priority of refugees (8), followed by an equal ranking of recognition of legal status (5), access to legal employment opportunities (5), and access to education (5). While the number of women's organisations interviewed was much lower compared to other organisation types, these figures reflect both a focus on gender as a priority issue area as well as on the basic rights cited by others.

Figure 2: Priorities of refugees according to respondents from women's organisations (in-depth interviews, out of 9 women's organisations)



Source: In-depth interviews.

Question: What are the priorities of refugees in the country you work/are based in?

The priorities of refugees as cited by respondents from each of the major refugee-hosting countries are also largely consistent with each other, although the ordering of priorities varies according to country. The top priorities of refugees stated by respondents from Turkey (30 participants) were access to education (18), access to legal employment (17), recognition of legal status (15), social cohesion (10), and access to

health services (9). While fewer participants from the other top refugee-hosting countries were interviewed, their main policy priorities were largely congruent with Turkey's, with exceptions such as participants from Pakistan emphasising access to durable solutions and local integration as a priority (3), from Lebanon citing lack of funding (4), from Jordan mentioning gender-based violence as an issue (3), and from Kenya citing xenophobia and discrimination (2). Table 4 below provides an overview of the top five priorities of refugees according to participants from the top ten refugee-hosting countries.

Table 4: Top 5 Priorities of Refugees, by country

Country	Priority	Total number of mentions
Turkey	Access to education (including education policy)	18
	Access to legal employment opportunities	17
	Recognition of legal status and access to relevant documentation	15
	Social cohesion and harmony with host communities	10
	Access to health services	9
Pakistan	Recognition of legal status and access to relevant documentation; Access to legal employment opportunities; Access to education (including education policy); Access to durable solutions - local integration	3
	Access to health services; Access to safe and adequate shelter; Access to durable solutions - voluntary repatriation; Refugee and host community participation and representation in decision-making	2
Lebanon	Recognition of legal status and access to relevant documentation	5
	Lack of funding	4
	Access to legal employment opportunities; Access to health services	3
	Gender-based violence and gender protection; Access to education (including education policy); Access to safe and adequate shelter; Access to legal services and protection; Social cohesion and harmony with host communities; Politicisation of the refugee situations	2
Germany	Access to legal employment opportunities	4
	Recognition of legal status and access to relevant documentation; Access to education (including education policy)	2
Jordan	Access to legal employment opportunities; Access to education (including education policy)	4
	Gender-based violence and gender protection; Access to health services; Addressing root causes of displacement	3
Kenya	Xenophobia and discrimination (including negative media coverage); Access to education (including education policy)	2
	Access to services that meet essential needs; Recognition of legal status, access to relevant documentation; Access to legal employment opportunities; Social cohesion and harmony with host communities; Lack of holistic long-term policy framework regarding refugees; Coordination; Land rights, rights to ownership, and financial rights	1

Country	Priority	Total number of mentions
Uganda	Recognition of legal status and access to relevant documentation	2
	Access to education (including education policy); Access to health services; Access to humanitarian assistance (including financial assistance); Access to legal services/protection; Access to durable solutions; Access to durable solutions - local integration; Social cohesion and harmony with host communities; Refugee and host community participation and representation in decision-making; Human rights (detention, living in dignity); Needs of urban refugees	1
Chad	Access to legal employment opportunities; Access to education (including education policy); Access to health services; Access to food and nutrition	1
Iran	Access to services that meet essential needs	1
	Recognition of legal status and access to relevant documentation; Access to legal employment opportunities; Access to education (including education policy); Access to health services; Land rights, rights to ownership, and financial rights	1
Other countries	Access to education (including education policy)	9
	Recognition of legal status and access to relevant documentation; Access to legal employment opportunities; Access to health services	5
	Gender-based violence and gender protection	4

Source: In-depth interviews.

Question: What are the priorities of refugees in the country you work/are based?

Note: Priorities that are grouped together received the same number of mentions

Reflections on Policy Priorities

While the survey and interview data on policy priorities are illuminating, it is important to note that they do, to a certain extent, reflect the main priorities of surveyed and interviewed organisations. Nevertheless, corroboration of the findings of this study with other public opinion polls indicates the consistency of these policy priorities with those of non-organised refugee population. For example, a recent poll of 1,684 Syrian refugees in Turkey indicated that refugees' top priorities were legal employment, economic wellbeing, and addressing language barriers.¹⁹ Similarly, refugees' concepts of safety and dignified living in Lebanon were found by one recent survey to encompass economic, political and social well-being, such as the ability to access jobs and education.²⁰ In a piece of research on Pakistan, Afghan refugee-households reported that poverty was a major reason that their children were not attending school, and one-third of these respondents also pointed out a lack of job opportunities as a key concern.²¹ Another research project found that most refugee households in the Rhino Camp Settlements in Northern Uganda were concerned about the limited income generation opportunities available to them in the settlement, as well as price inflation, as it hindered their access to essential household items.²² Thus, the activities of surveyed and interviewed organisations in this report could be interpreted as reflecting the immediate needs and ongoing barriers to surviving in dignity that refugees around the world present as challenges.

This, in turn, indicates a level of commonality across countries on several policy priorities such as access to legal employment, and suggests that particular needs do not arise in only one major refugee-hosting country but are often present – and being addressed – across them. In addition, these findings make apparent that refugees and the organisations that serve them in a variety of locations are keenly aware of existing gaps in

19. 'Understanding Syrian Refugees in Turkey' (Oxfam and Partners, 2017 (Publication Forthcoming).

20. Oxfam 2017. Still Looking for Safety: Voices of Refugees From Syria on Solutions for the Present and Future.

www.policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/still-looking-for-safety-voices-of-refugees-from-syria-on-solutions-for-the-pre-620281

21. DRC 2013. Socio-Economic Survey of Afghan Refugees Living in Pakistan.

www.drc.ngo/media/1182394/socio-economic-survey-of-afghan-refugees-living-in-pakistan.pdf

22. World Vision, UNHCR and Caritas 2017. <https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/Livelihood%20report-highres.pdf>

service provision, infrastructure, and policy frameworks. In addition to knowing existing needs, they are also cognizant of the steps needed to address them (such as obtaining access to legal documentation); however, the implementation and actualisation of necessary service provision in areas such as legal employment, education, and healthcare remain lacking. These areas of need therefore represent realms where state institutions and members of the international community can and should provide greater support. Based on this observed overlap, a key priority going forward is to monitor whether financial investments are made according to these priorities, and whether policy measures designed to address these priorities actually have the intended impact of addressing the priorities of refugee women and men equally, without discrimination.

Expectations for National and International Institutions

Interview participants identified a wide array of expectations for national governments and international institutions, which both converged and diverged from the main policy priorities discussed in the previous sections.²³ According to participants, national governments are expected to create a national response, framework, or strategy (11); provide access to rights such as legal status (8), education (8), and legal employment (7); as well as access to basic services (8). For example, one refugee-led organisation stated, “Helping refugees doesn’t mean throwing money to INGOs and NGOs in the country without creating an actual policy to solve the issues.”²⁴ Other expectations for national governments include addressing the discrimination of refugees (5); coordinating with key stakeholders (5); providing freedom of mobility (4); closing the information gap on refugees (4); and providing clarifying information to refugees on domestic legal frameworks, legal rights, and basic services (4).

Table 5: Top Expectations for National Governments

	Expectations for National Governments	Total number of mentions
1	Create a national response/framework/strategy	11
2	Provide access to legal status and protection for refugees	8
2	Provide access to basic services	8
2	Provide/promote access to education	8
3	Provide access to legal employment	7
4	Address discrimination, xenophobia, and misrepresentation of refugees	5
4	Coordinate with NGO, INGO, and other stakeholders	5
5	Freedom of movement/access to mobility	4
5	Close the information gap on refugees	4
5	Clarify information on legal framework/legal rights/basic services	4
	N	47

Source: In-depth interviews.

Question: In addition to your organisational priorities, what do you think should be the priorities of national/international policymakers to improve the lives of refugees?

23. Please note that not all interview respondents directly addressed this question. The number of mentions listed are out of a total of 38 respondents on international expectations, and 47 respondents on national expectations.

24. Interview with refugee-led organisation (09.02.2018)

Expectations for the international community differ starkly from those for national governments. Responsibility sharing in general was cited as the top expectation by around a quarter of respondents (10). Specific methods of sharing responsibility also featured prominently amongst responses to this question, including increasing resettlement (9), and supporting host countries and addressing the individual needs of host countries (7), likely reflecting host countries' need for funding and different forms of support. This was further highlighted in expectations such as monitoring funding and resource management (5) and financial responsibility sharing (5). Overall, macro expectations such as addressing the root causes of displacement (5) and finding solutions (3) were placed on international bodies, rather than only on national governments, which instead were more prominently emphasised in relation to providing different forms of access to support the lives of refugees.

Table 6: Top Expectations for International Community

	Expectations for International Community	Total number of mentions
1	Responsibility Sharing	10
2	Increase resettlement	9
3	Support host countries and address individual needs of host countries	7
4	Address root causes of displacement	5
4	Monitor funding and resource management; monitoring and evaluation of programs/INGOs	5
4	Financial responsibility sharing	5
5	Promote coordination and partnerships between stakeholders	4
6	Create an international long-term strategy/international governance system for refugees	3
6	Find Solutions	3
6	Address discrimination, xenophobia, and misrepresentation of refugees	3
6	Provide access to basic services (psychosocial support, health, education, housing, etc.)	3
6	Promote the rights and dignity of refugees	3
6	Reform border controls and create access to safe passage	3
6	Establish safe and dignified conditions for return	3
6	Provide training to local NGOs	3
6	Create and uphold minimum standards for protection and assistance	3
	N	38

Source: In-depth interviews.

Question: In addition to your organisational priorities, what do you think should be the priorities of national/international policymakers to improve the lives of refugees?

The Least Well-Addressed Policy Issues

Survey respondents were asked their opinion on which issues were least well-addressed by national and international policymakers, as well as what can be done about them. Reflecting some of the responses of expectations cited above, addressing root causes of displacement (18.5%), access to livelihood and employment opportunities (9.9%), integration (9.5%), social harmony/discrimination (8.2%), and responsibility sharing (6.3%) were cited as the main least well-addressed issues. Overall, answers to the questions varied, perhaps reflecting the many issues faced by refugees that need addressing. However, what is striking is that the top answer cited – addressing root causes – is not reflected elsewhere in the data as a top policy priority. Several participant suggestions on this policy issue are connected with analysing the root causes, as demonstrated in the following quotes:

“ *The root causes evolve and could be in response to approaches adopted by international and national actors. An improved understanding of the needs of the displaced population, an improved understanding of the challenges faced in the country of origin for the refugee[s] and assessment of practices that have worked in other context[s] to explore other strategies of addressing the root causes of migration.*”²⁵

“ *In addition to assessing applications for asylum and integrating/resettling refugees in a timely manner, time (and money) needs to be set aside to properly analyse the root causes of displacement and consider possible “remedies. This needs to be done in cooperation with countries of origin and civil society organisations. Money and capacity for this could be freed up by some countries by abandoning costly and ineffective strategies such as offshore processing and detention.*”²⁶

Easing restrictions on the right to work, in part by more easily enabling access to work permits, was a reoccurring suggestion by survey respondents. For example, one respondent recommended, “Issuing an exceptional law pertaining to the refugee in terms of work and laws that prevent work according to the certificate held by the refugee...and also to encourage the provision of free education opportunities even at the level of university.”²⁷

Work and educational opportunities were also presented by some respondents as a means of improving integration. One respondent from a national organisation suggested, “Initially providing access to free education, health and shelter, help them find legal employment so refugees could be self-sufficient which will lead them to be fully integrated in the host country.”²⁸ Other suggestions for addressing integration included an “amendment in existing laws which will help refugees integrate and [make it] easier for them to be naturalised,”²⁹ and:

“ *Guidance teachers who speak Arabic should be appointed at schools, children should be placed in classes according to their learning levels, not ages, special education should be given to children who are older (who struggle more in adaptation).*”³⁰

Addressing social harmony and discrimination was suggested by one national organisation through conducting “needs assessments on the ground, surveys and interviews within the host communities to find out more on local capacities and discourses. To employ more social workers and engage local peace-builders to solve tensions with the help of peaceful conflict transformation methods.”³¹ [sic]

25. Survey respondent, National organisation.

26. Survey respondent, National organisation.

27. Survey respondent, anonymous.

28. Survey respondent, National organisation.

29. Survey respondent, anonymous.

30. Survey respondent, National organisation.

31. Survey respondent, National organisation.

Diverse means for improving responsibility sharing were offered by the survey respondents. Many suggestions involved creating coordination mechanisms and improved transparency and accountability. For example, a survey respondent suggested “identifying and drawing up balanced financial policies and appointing supervisory bodies to know the cash flow. Is it going in the right direction regarding support?”³²

Interview participants provided recommendations on a wide variety of policy issues they felt should be better addressed by national and international policymakers. Several of these recommendations also centred on coordination in the humanitarian sphere by both policymakers and NGOs themselves. For example, one organisation stated that, “chaos [is] caused by humanitarian and development system[s], so we need more coordination and involvement from other organisations as much as possible.”³³

Multiple recommendations to policymakers in state institutions focused on the need to engage civil society actors and “recognise the civic space.”³⁴ As one of the national organisation explained,

“*State and NGO relations should be brought to a level that is more conducive for open collaboration; currently these relations at times feel as if there is a competition. Instead, the states should recognise the significant contributions made by the NGOs on refugee response. The states should let NGOs grow and support their work.*”³⁵

Overall, the recommendations from the survey and interviews share a common theme of coordination and point to the need for bridging the gap between the civil society organisations and both the states and international institutions. Notably, recommendations for civil society organisations were similar, with multiple mentions of the need to engage with policymakers, create strong networks, and critically reflect on the relationship between CSOs and state institutions. Given the increased focus on including civil society organisations in refugee responses, as outlined by the GCR and other initiatives such as the World Humanitarian Summit, mechanisms for the meaningful contribution of the CSOs to refugee assistance and policy making at national and international levels should be at the forefront of the discussions. Failing to address the international and national conditions under which civil society organisations may be limited in their ability to engage might risk further exclusion of refugee-led and host-country based civil society organisations from the debates.

32. Survey respondent, Refugee-led organisation

33. Interview with national organisation (10.01.2018)

34. Interviews with national organisations (12.01.2018)

35. Interview with national organisation (16.01.2018)

Section 2: Participation in National and International Policy Processes Regarding Refugees

This section examines the experiences and expectations of the survey and interview participants regarding their involvement in national and international policymaking processes on refugees.

Experiences of Participation and Engagement

More than half of the interviewed organisations/experts (49 out of 79 respondents) stated that their organisations have been involved to some extent in policymaking processes, at different levels (national and/or international) and through different means including attending meetings, membership to groups and direct involvement in the policymaking. A small group of organisations (7) did not directly answer this question during interview.

Participation in international conferences/meetings/presentations (23 organisations) has been the main way of engaging in policymaking processes regarding refugees. This is an issue of equal concern to those interviewed members of refugee-led and national organisations (11 organisations from each group). International membership in groups (such as ICVA) (14), direct involvement in national decision-making (13), national participation in conferences or meetings (11), national membership in groups (such as the Turkish Refugee Council for Turkish organisations) (10) and direct involvement in international policymaking (9) were all mentioned as means of engagement in refugee policies by the interviewed organisations/experts.

Despite a high level of some means of policy involvement, direct engagement in policymaking is low both at the national (as indicated by 13 interviewed organisations/experts) and international level (as indicated by nine organisations/experts). Strikingly, only two refugee-led organisations (out of 38) stated that they had been engaged in international policymaking regarding refugees, and only four organisations stated national involvement in policymaking. Compared to this, direct involvement at international and national levels cited more often by the interviewed national organisations (7 out of 37 organisations). Meanwhile, one third of (3 out of 9) the interviewed women's organisations (led by either refugees or national members) stated direct engagement in national policymaking processes. However, none of them has been directly involved in international level policymaking regarding refugees at the time of the interview.

Overall, 23 organisations/experts hadn't engaged in any kind of policymaking processes regarding refugees. This is higher among interviewed refugee-led organisations (13 out of 38) compared to 8 national organisations (out of 37) and 1 international organisation (out of 4). One fifth of the interviewed women's organisations (out of 9) hadn't engaged in any kind of policymaking engagement at the time of the interview. These figures demonstrate a striking lack of host country-based and refugee-led civil society involvement in policymaking. Given the acquired experiences and expertise of many of the CSOs interviewed in this consultation, including refugee-led organisations, it can be assumed that their engagement would add valuable 'real-world' perspectives and recommendations to policy discussions. However, policymaking appears to remain an exclusive process despite the clear ramifications such practices have on the populations that civil society actors in major refugee-hosting countries are working to assist.

Experiences of engagement with the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) process

While interviews provided general information on the engagement of organisations in the international refugee policies, there was little emphasis on specific policymaking processes such as the GCR. In contrast, survey respondents were only asked about their engagement in the GCR, the findings of which are described below.

Overall, the findings of the consultation demonstrate a moderate level of engagement in the GCR development process and a high level of non-engagement. One fourth of the respondents of the survey indicated that they participated in the GCR development process. However, according to the in-depth interviews, engagement in this policy process is much lower, with only 8 out of 79 organisations engaged directly or indirectly in the Global Compact processes (including the GCR and Global Compact for Migration). Two of these organisations are refugee-led while none of them is a women's organisation.

Table 7: Percentage of respondents who engaged in the GCR development process, by country, organisation type and gender

Engagement of respondents in the GCR development process	Percent of Engaged Organisations	%
TOTAL	24.8	475
Major Refugee Hosting Countries	23.9	259
Other Countries	27.6	76
National organisations	23.0	204
International organisations	42.5	40
Refugee-led organisations	27.1	48
Other organisations	15.8	38
Women's organisations	13.8	29
Other organisations	26.2	301
Women	24.8	165
Men	25.2	159

Source: Consultation survey.

Question: Have you or your organisation engaged in the process of developing the Global Compact on Refugees that is being led by UNHCR?

Participation of the survey respondents in the GCR development process from major refugee-hosting countries and from other countries is similar (23.9% and 27.6% respectively), but it is striking that those countries hosting the majority of the world's refugees have had slightly less engagement in the process than other countries. Unsurprisingly, international organisations (42.5%) indicated the highest level of engagement in the GCR development process. Notably, refugee-led organisations (27.1%) had the second-highest level of engagement, followed by a lower share of respondents from national (23%) and other organisations (15.8%). Women's organisations were almost half as likely as other organisations to have engaged in the process (13.8% compared to 26.2%).

Both advocacy/influencing and engagement with state institutions were the main forms of engagement by more respondents from other countries than those from major refugee-hosting countries (advocacy/influencing: 71.4% versus 41.9%, engagement with state institutions: 61.9% versus 33.9%). One fifth of the respondents stated that they directly engaged with UNHCR. Unsurprisingly, respondents from international organisations indicated higher direct access (35.3%), whereas this means was relatively limited according to respondents from national organisations (25.5%) and much more limited for those from refugee-led organisations (7.7%). Direct engagement was also relatively lower among respondents in

major refugee-hosting countries (21%) as compared to other countries (33.3%). A higher share of respondents from international organisations (23.5%) mentioned their role in facilitating policymaking compared to those from refugee-led (15.4%) and national organisations (10.6%).

These findings are indicative of a potentially troubling deficiency in the participation of both national CSOs in major refugee-hosting countries and refugee-led organisations around the world in policymaking at national and international levels. The reasons for this apparent exclusion of national and refugee-led organisations should be further analysed, including from the perspective of the balance of power and control of resources. Appropriate measures should be taken to provide space for national and refugee-led organisations to exercise their right to participation at both national and international policymaking platforms, and allow their experience, knowledge, and expertise to benefit the policies that are meant to benefit them.

Limitations in respondents' engagement in the GCR process

From the perspectives of respondents who have not engaged in the GCR development,³⁶ the process led by UNHCR appears to be highly exclusionary. Respondents who have not engaged in the GCR process expressed not being informed about the process (26.1%), not being invited to take part or be consulted (14.3%), and the process excluding small, local, rights-based, or non-partner organisations (6.1%) as reasons for not having engaged in it. Some respondents who have not engaged in the GCR process indicated that their organisation did not engage because advocacy/influencing work on international refugee policy was not relevant to their area of work (8.9%). Others stated they didn't have the opportunity (8.2%) or the resources (5%) to engage, with organisational limitations (such as being a new or small organisation) indicated as a barrier for engagement (6.1%).

Around one third of respondents from major refugee-hosting countries (30.5%) and from national organisations (29.9%) stated that they were not informed about the process, compared to 14.5% from other countries. Lack of opportunity appears to be a barrier for engagement in the process to a similar extent across countries (8.1-9.1%). Not being invited to take part or be consulted (22.9%) and organisational limitations (11.4%) appear to concern primarily the respondents from refugee-led organisations, in comparison to other types of organisations. A similar share of respondents from national and refugee-led organisations (8.3% and 8.6%, respectively) considers the process to be exclusionary. During interviews, refugee-led organisations particularly highlighted the exclusion of refugees from the GCR development process led by UNHCR, as highlighted by one member of a refugee-led organisation, who stated, "Some organisations say they're doing consultation [with refugees] – that's not really true."³⁷ Another refugee-led organisation explained, "Refugees are not even able to access UNHCR, they're not allowed. [UNHCR] thinks they identify the issues for refugees, [and] they design projects without taking refugees' perspectives into consideration."³⁸

National and refugee-led organisations stated lack of resources and opportunity as barriers to meaningful participation in the GCR development. One national organisation stated, "[UNHCR] invited a local organisation to Geneva 2 days before the event, so it is like an un-invitation. NGOs don't have the resources to attend processes/events effectively."³⁹ Another organisation explained:

“It's a little bit about resources – pay from their own pockets to attend meetings. [The] main problem is knowing about meetings. Another problem is being invited to them – [there are] restrictions on participation [and] limited numbers of attendees.”⁴⁰

36. 75.2% of all respondents stated that they had not engaged in the GCR process.

37. Interview with refugee-led organisation (18.01.2018).

38. Interview with refugee-led organisation (31.01.2018).

39. Interview with national organisation (25.01.2018).

40. Interview with refugee-led organisation (16.01.2018).

The highest number of respondents that did not consider influencing the GCR development process to be relevant for their area of work came from international organisations (39.1%). Strikingly, however, they too stated a lack of opportunity to engage in the process as a barrier to their engagement (13%). The majority of respondents that did not consider influencing the process relevant came from other countries (18.2%) rather than major refugee-hosting ones (7.1%).

Respondents from women's organisations emphasised that they weren't invited or consulted (20%), and didn't have the opportunity to engage (12%) as well as organisational limitations (8%) and lack of resources (8%), as reasons for not engaging in the GCR development process. As one interview respondent from an international women's organisation argued:

“ Women's organisations are still not being consulted. Women's organisations that do advocacy work [are] unequipped to do it as an international mechanism, and there is a dichotomy between women's organisations and international policymaking mechanisms. The international system is not equipped well enough. [For example], sending someone for three days to do [a] gender analysis is not enough.”⁴¹

Overall, these findings show a disappointing lack of refugee women's voices providing input into the GCR development process, despite overt discussions in the GCR itself on how best to include refugee women and other refugees in 'key fora, institutions, and decision-making processes'.⁴² Based on these findings, the perpetuation of the views and interests of dominant voices risks becoming a key underpinning of the GCR. In turn, important issues of vital concern to the most marginalised refugees risk being overlooked, as do the valuable experiences and best practices of CSOs from around the world.

41. Interview with international women's organisation (22.01.2018).

42. The Global Compact on Refugees, Draft 1. 9.03.2018, p.7.

<https://zoberginstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Global-Compact-on-Refugees-DRAFT-ONE.pdf>

Conclusion

This report has presented the findings of a consultation process involving an online survey and interviews from a range of refugee-led organisations, as well as CSOs based in major refugee-hosting countries and other countries around the world. A wide array of policy priorities, policy areas for improvement, ideas about the state of affairs in relation to participation in policymaking processes, and the ability to influence policies were described, comprising the opinions of 554 respondents and participants in total. Overall, several common policy priorities emerged, with access to legal employment, legal documentation, education, and health being consistent themes across the survey and interview data. Addressing gender-based violence emerged as one of the top priority issues for women's organisations and individual women that were interviewed during this consultation process. Notably, all of these priorities constitute basic rights ascribed to refugees in refugee law, and are meaningful and necessary steps towards local integration in refugee-hosting countries. The fact that they remain prominent policy priorities today suggests the failure of the international refugee regime to provide assistance and protection on a widespread scale.

Another consistent theme highlighted in this report is the need for the greater engagement of refugee-led and national organisations from many of the world's major refugee-hosting countries in policy processes, as many feel shut out of national and international decision-making, including the GCR process. The capacity for refugees and other members of civil society to organise and provide support is noted in documents such as the GCR but, as the data presented here indicates, it is probably not being fully drawn on. In the case of refugees, such exclusion might have some unintended consequences such as further perpetuating the perception about them as mere aid recipients. Nevertheless, it is also striking to note that at times civil society organisations in major refugee-hosting countries appear to be even more excluded, than the refugee-led organisations. A shift from the current rhetoric that emphasises the importance of civil society participation in programmes and policymaking towards forming true partnerships with CSOs to guide policy and programming seems to be long overdue. Establishing and supporting meaningful participation mechanisms may be an important immediate step to take.

This data on participation also provides important broader indications of the potential impact of the current aid system on the ability of the civil society organisations in major refugee-hosting countries to participate in national and international policymaking processes. In particular, it demonstrates the need for communication and inclusion channels in this arena to be either created or further strengthened. Doing so may require national governments hosting refugees and international organisations to invest concerted efforts and resources for the inclusion of civil society in policymaking mechanisms. This is important not only for ensuring participation, but also for facilitating social cohesion and synergy among host and refugee communities and their organisations.

The need for greater representation of refugee-led organisations in consultations such as this, as well as increased overall involvement from CSOs in major refugee-hosting countries, has also been further confirmed by the findings of this consultation. The upcoming International Refugee Congress, as well as other refugee- and civil society-led initiatives around the GCR process, represent important opportunities for civil society participation and partnership, as does the formation of working groups focused on key issues highlighted in this report. Together, these offer valuable opportunities to address the need for the greater coordination and involvement that was emphasised by the participants of this consultation process.

Annex 1. Survey Questions

SECTION 1: POLICY PRIORITIES

Q1. What are the three most important policy areas that are negatively impacting refugees and need improvement in the country in which you work or are based? (unprompted question)

1	
2	
3	

Q2. Various research has identified the following issues as some of the key priorities of refugees in different contexts and countries. Based on your context, which of these issues do you think are the top six priorities for refugees? (prompted question)

(Please select up to 6 issues)

Ability to claim asylum in the country of residence (i.e. the country in which a refugee is currently)	
Ability to cross international borders to seek safety	
Protection against involuntary or forced return, or refoulement	
Access to adequate, safe and dignified reception conditions	
Access to services that meet essential needs, including water and sanitation, food, shelter, health care (including reproductive and sexual health and psychosocial support) , education and protection	
Recognition of legal status and access to relevant documentation	
Access to birth registration and relevant documentation	
Physical safety and protection	
Gender-based violence	
Xenophobia and discrimination	
Access to legal employment opportunities	
Women's access to employment opportunities	
Safe and dignified working conditions	
Child labour	
Access to education	
Quality of education	
Access to health services	
Quality of health services	
Access to safe and adequate shelter	
Access to water and sanitation	
Access to humanitarian assistance	
Access to legal services and protection	
Language barrier	
Access to durable solutions (local integration, voluntary repatriation and resettlement)	
Addressing root causes of displacement	
Social cohesion and harmony with host communities	
Other (please specify)	

Q3. The following issues have been identified as priorities by international policymakers in recent years. Which of these issues would you consider as the top three priorities?

(Please select top 3 priorities only)

The readiness of countries to receive and host refugees, and/or support their needs through financial contributions	
Supporting refugees in addressing their health, education, employment, legal status, housing and other concerns in the country of asylum	
Facilitation of the voluntary return of refugees to their country of origin	
Facilitation of the resettlement of refugees to a third country	
Addressing root causes of displacement	
Integrated support to host and refugee communities	
Technical assistance to host countries and communities	
Other measures designed to support host countries and communities, such as concessional trade arrangements	
Others (please specify)	

Q4. Which issues do you think are least well addressed by national and international policymakers?

Q5. What can be done to ensure that these priorities are better addressed?

SECTION 2: ENGAGEMENT IN THE GLOBAL COMPACT ON REFUGEES DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Q6. Have you or your organisation engaged in the process of developing the Global Compact on Refugees that is being led by UNHCR?
(yes / no)

Q7. If yes, how? (please select all that apply)

Sent written contributions	
Attended a meeting / consultation	
Produced a policy brief / statement / other document relating to the Global Compact on Refugees	
Participated in influencing or advocacy activities relating to the Global Compact on Refugees	
Discussed the issue with the responsible national governance institutions (such as ministries, general directorates for migration and refugees etc.)	
Other (please specify)	

Q8. Please specify the details of your engagement (for example: what written contributions did you send and to whom; how many meetings did you attend, and who were they organised by; what did you do with the policy recommendations and positions developed; what influencing or advocacy activities did you participate in; with whom did you discuss the issues etc).

Q9. How satisfied are you with the level of engagement that you have had access to?

1 (very satisfied)	2 (satisfied)	3 (Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied)	4 (Dissatisfied)	5 (Very dissatisfied)	Don't know
--------------------	---------------	--	------------------	-----------------------	------------

Q10. If (not engaged), why not?

Q11. Would you like to engage with UNHCR and other international organisations after the Global Compact on Refugees is adopted?
(yes / no)

Q12. If yes, what type of mechanism would you suggest for such engagement?

SECTION 3: INTERNATIONAL REFUGEE CONGRESS

Q13. Are you / your organisation interested in attending an international congress on forced migration in Turkey at the end of February or beginning of March 2018?
(yes / no)

Q14. Are you / your organisation interested in engaging in a thematic working group together with civil society organisations from other countries in order to develop joint policy recommendations and strategies to influence the Global Compact on Refugees and other international policy processes relating to refugees?
(yes / no)

SECTION 4: YOUR INFORMATION

Q15. What is your name? (optional)

Q16. What is your email address? (optional)

Q17. What is your gender?

Q18. In which country are you based?

Q19. What is the name of the organisation that you work for? (optional)

Q20. How would you describe the organisation that you work for?

Community-based organisation	
Neighbourhood association	
Refugee-led organisation	
Women's organisation	
Refugee-led women's organisation	
Professional association	
Media organisation	
Academic institution (e.g. university, college etc.)	
Think tank	
Labour union	
National non-governmental organisation	
International non-governmental organisations	
International institution (e.g. UN, World Bank etc.)	
Governmental organisation (including municipalities)	
Private sector	
Other, please specify	

Annex 2. Consultation Interview Guide

1. Priorities concerning refugees: What are the priorities concerning refugees in the country you work/are based in? What can be done to address these issues? What are your organisational priorities?
2. National/international policymakers: In addition to your organisational priorities, what do you think should be the priorities of national/international policymakers to improve the lives of refugees?
3. Connection with refugees/refugee-led organisations: Which refugee-led organisations do you have contact/work with? How do you think these organisations can be engaged in the process? Do you engage with refugees directly, if so how do you engage with them directly? (If a refugee led organisation) Do you engage/work with local/national/international CSOs on the issues concerning refugees? If so, how?
4. Engagement in policymaking processes: To what extent do you think you/your organisation have/has been involved in the policymaking processes related to refugees at national and international level? What should be done to ensure engagement of civil society (especially refugee led organisations) in international policymaking processes? (what do you think organisations need to engage in these processes?)
5. Involvement in the process: How do you think you can involve in the policy consultation and development process related to refugees and the Refugee Congress (as a Turkish Refugee Council member)?
6. Working groups: Following the completion of the survey, our intention is to form thematic working groups that can develop policy recommendation around specific thematic areas (these areas will be finalised with the inputs that we will receive from the online survey as well.) The themes may be around reception and admission of refugees, support for immediate and ongoing needs of refugees, support for refugee-hosting communities, and durable solutions for refugees. Are you / your organisation interested in engaging in a thematic working group together with civil society organisations from other countries in order to develop joint policy recommendations and strategies to influence the Global Compact on Refugees and other international policy processes relating to refugees? If so, which thematic areas would capture your interest? And who can represent your organisation in these working groups?
7. Congress: We are also in the process of designing the international refugee congress at the moment. Are you/your organisation interested in attending the international refugee congress in Turkey in March 2018? What do you think should be the integral parts of the congress? What would be your expectations from such an international congress?

