

A Systematic Review of Reports on the Impact of COVID-19 on Refugees- II

June-December 2020



sgddakademi.org.tr



**Association for
Solidarity with Asylum
Seekers and Migrants**

ASAM Academy on Migration



ASAM ACADEMY
on migration

A Systematic Review of Reports on the Impact of COVID-19 on Refugees- II (June-December 2020)

All rights are reserved for this report, prepared by ASAM. Copyright belongs to ASAM. The right to reproduce, including reproduction in electronic media, of the text, article, picture, graphic and illustrations found within the report solely belongs to ASAM. However, brief references from these publications could be reproduced without permission, provided that the source is indicated. For reproduction, translation, processing, applications could be made to *Birlik Mah. Katar Cad. No: 11 Çankaya / Ankara* or to *info@sgdd-asam.org* via e-mail.

Cannot be sold in exchange for money.

June 2021

Prepared By:

Anastasiya Stelmakh, Deniz Küçükşen, Utku Akman

Contributors:

Ayşegül Yalçın Eriş, İbrahim Vurgun Kavlak, Nehir Gök Sayın

Graphic Design:

Alper Doğan, Kaan Aksulu

Cannot be sold in exchange for money.



Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants

June 2021

Address: Birlik Mah. Katar Cad. No: 11 Çankaya / Ankara

Telephone: +90 312 427 55 83

+90 312 212 60 12

Web: <https://sgdd.org.tr/>

E-mail: sgdd@sgdd.org.tr

Table of Contents

Introduction	8
1. Brief Information on Methodologies and Sample Characteristics of the Analyzed Reports....	10
2. Main Findings of the Analyzed Reports	16
2.1. Access to Information about COVID-19.....	16
2.2. Access to Healthcare Services	19
2.3. Access to Online Education.....	20
2.4. Sources of Income (Livelihood)	21
2.5. Access to Basic Needs	24
2.6. Protection.....	25
3. Conclusion	28
Bibliography	30

List of Figures

Figure 1: Refugees' main sources of information about COVID-19.....	16
Figure 2: Socio-economic problems faced by refugees during the pandemic	20
Figure 3: Main factors impacting refugees' mental health conditions during the pandemic.....	24

List of Tables

Table 1: General information about the reports published between June-December 2020.....	12
---	-----------

List of Abbreviations

SGDD-ASAM	Sığınmacılar ve Göçmenlerle Dayanışma Derneği Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants
CCTE	Conditional Cash Transfer for Education Programme /Şartlı Eğitim Yardımı Programı (ŞEY)
DDD	Dünya Doktorları Derneği (Doctors of the World)
ESSN	Emergency Social Safety Net Programme (Sosyal Uyum Yardımı Programı/ SUY)
MMC	Mixed Migration Center
TRCS	Turkish Red Crescent Society
UNHCR	The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WFP	World Food Programme

Introduction

COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect millions of lives across the world. Its major effects not only create serious healthcare concerns but also bring inexorable consequences in many aspects of life. Even though successful vaccines with promising results have been developed, distribution and administration processes of vaccines seem to have brought different questions as to the future of the pandemic. Moreover, while UNCHR underlines the importance of the “inclusion of refugees in vaccination plans” (Sköld, 2021)¹, existing practices around the world do not seem to be prevalent yet. This, in turn, reminds us that refugees still constitute one of the most disadvantaged groups during the pandemic.

In Turkey, as of June 2021, there are more than 5 million ‘confirmed cases of COVID-19’ (WHO, 2021)². While the vaccination program has effectively been launched, it is still not certain whether refugees in Turkey will be able to become part

of the program in the near future. Therefore, regular assessment of refugees’ situations during the pandemic still plays an essential role so as to provide necessary services and assistance for them. In this respect, SGDD-ASAM, international organizations, civil society associations and other stakeholders in the field have been releasing important reports, analyses and policy briefs in the light of fieldwork conducted with refugees in Turkey to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on refugees. Part of this concern, in October 2020, ASAM Academy on Migration published its first issue of *Systematic Review* in which various reports that analyzed the impact of the pandemic on refugees published between April-June 2020 were comparatively analyzed to map out the general situation in the field (see ASAM Academy on Migration, 2020). This report analyzing the studies published by different organizations between June-December 2020 represents the continuation of our first report.

¹ <https://www.unhcr.org/neu/51787-unhcr-calls-for-inclusion-of-refugees-in-vaccination-plans.html#:~:text=As%20COVID%2D19%20vaccines%20start,included%20in%20national%20vaccination%20strategies.>

² <https://covid19.who.int/region/euro/country/tr>

We think that this selection of reports based on the fieldwork is adequate to provide a general image of the refugees' situation in Turkey during the pandemic.

In this systematic review, we analyze seven studies assessing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on refugees conducted by different organizations. These organizations are World Food Programme (WFP), Association of Leather Textile and Shoe Workers, Mixed Migration Center (MMC), Turkish Red Crescent Society (TRSC), Inter-Agency Coordination in Turkey- UNHCR, Association for Solidarity with Syrian Refugees in İzmir and Dünya Doktorları Derneği (DDD). Having provided a brief overview of methodological features of the studies, the main findings of the reports are investigated under the titles of **Access to Information about COVID-19, Access to Healthcare Services, Access to Online Education, Sources of Income (Livelihoods), Access to Basic Needs, and Protection.**

The main objective of this study is to provide a systematic and comparative review of conducted studies in the field so as to understand the general situation of refugees during the pandemic and identify important issues which need to be taken into account in terms of both meeting essential needs of refugees and designing further studies.

1. Brief Information on Methodologies and Sample Characteristics of the Analyzed Reports

In this section, we provide an overview of methodological features of the analyzed reports such as characteristics of the samples, sample sizes and used techniques concerning the conduct of the studies. This information can also be seen in Table 1.

The study published by WFP (2020) uses panel surveys. According to the report, while 267 refugees from the camps located in Adana, Kahramanmaras, Osmaniye, Boynuyogun, Yayladagi and Elbeyli participated in the first round, there were 255 participants in the second round (these participants were also involved in the first round). In addition, it is asserted that ‘random sampling’ was the preferred method in the selection of the participants (pp. 6-7).

The sample of the study by the Association of Leather Textile and Shoe Workers (2020) consists of 100 refugee workers living in different districts of Izmir, namely, Konak, Karabaglar, Bornova, Buca and from different occupational sectors. Furthermore, there are 68 male and 32 female participants. The study is based on a survey method conducted via face-to-face interviews and phone calls. Besides, the report also shares details from interviews with 6 workers .

The preferred methodology in the briefing paper written by Verduijn (2020) from Mixed Migration Center is ‘semi-structured interviews’. It is stated that that interviews were conducted with 11 people (eight male

³ Deri Tekstil ve Kundura İşçileri Derneği. This report was originally written in Turkish and it does not include page numbers.

⁴ Here, it is important to note that usage of ‘survey’ in some of the studies does not necessarily refer to the usage of quantitative analysis techniques. In the case of this report, ‘survey’ results rather seem to be presented in a descriptive manner. For further details regarding the methodology, please see Association of Leather Textile and Shoe Workers (2020).

and three female) who were from Ankara, Van, Eskisehir, Konya, Kayseri, Erzurum, Yalova and Istanbul. Participants' ages range from 34 to 59 years old (p.3).

The study conducted by TRCS (2020) has 3840 participants composed of local people and refugees, out of which there are 1848 Syrian people and 97 people from different countries of origin. The report says that survey questionnaires were delivered to the participants primarily through social media channels of TRCS and 'phone interviews'. In addition, 'online consultations' along with focus groups were conducted in 16 Community Centers of TRCS. In this regard, the study relies on both qualitative and quantitative analysis in the assessment of the impacts of the pandemic on local people and refugees (p.12).

The report by Inter-Agency Coordination (2020) is based on a survey design consisting of 1020 refugee participants which was conducted via phone. Regarding participants' countries of origin, it is stated that 774 of them were from Syria, 72 people were from Afghanistan, 38 people were from Iran and 18 of them were from 'other' countries. Among the Syrian participants, the ratio of female participants is stated as 50%. While Iraqi male refugees constitute 53 %, the same ratio appears to be 64% amongst Afghan participants. Furthermore, the report asserts that the selection of the

participants was made through 'random sampling' and the sample was 'representative' (pp.5-6).

The report published by Association for Solidarity with Syrian Refugees in Izmir (2020)⁵ uses survey methodology which was conducted with 300 participants living in Izmir. Given that women and female children constitute the main focus of the study, 268 of the total participants are women. Also, it is stated that a focus group consisting of 12 women was also conducted and its questions were in line with questions of the survey (pp.13-16).

The primary data collection method in the report by DDD (2020) is 'semi-structured interviews' composed of 'open and close-ended questions'. The report states that 'cluster sampling method' was preferred and 'random selection' was applied from the 'universe' consisting of registered beneficiaries in the cities where DDD provides services, namely, Antakya, Izmir and Istanbul. In addition, the study utilizes 'Thematic Analysis' in the analysis of the qualitative data coming from the respondents. Regarding the main characteristics of the sample, the report states that 123 respondents participated in the study. It is stated that 40 people are from Istanbul, 36 from Izmir and 47 from Antakya. The ratio of male participants in the study is 52% while the ratio of women is 48 %. Relatedly, it is also

⁵ İzmir'de Suriyeli Mültecilerle Dayanışma Derneği (Association for Solidarity with Syrian Refugees in Izmir). The report was originally written in Turkish.

important to note that the report seems to have tried to keep gender distribution as equal as possible even amongst participants of three different cities (pp. 5-7).

In terms of methodological features of the analyzed studies, it is plausible to say that the studies conducted by TRCS (2020) and Inter-Agency Coordination (2020) have the highest numbers of refugee participants compared to other studies. Here, it can also be said that the organizational capacities of these organizations seem to play an important role in reaching and including more participants in their studies. Moreover, in the reports published by TRCS and WFP, it is possible to observe that their way of designing the studies includes comparative analysis. For instance, TRCS (2020) makes comparisons between 'local community' and 'refugee communities' based on the answers they provide. Likewise, given that WFP uses 'panel survey' conducted in 'two rounds', it occasionally compares the results of two surveys. Either conducted with

large or small samples, survey methodology stands as the preferred data collection technique for the majority of the studies. All in all, when all the reports are analyzed in a systematic and holistic perspective, it is seen that they effectively map out the general situation in the field as their findings come from diverse participants and geographies along with different issues they measure.

Table 1: General information about the reports published between June-December 2020

Organization	Name of the Report	Geographic Area/Provinces	Sample Size	Data Collection Method	Data Collection Date	Findings
World Food Programme (WFP)	COVID-19 Pandemic in Turkey: An assessment of readiness and impact on Refugees living in-camps	Adana, Kahramanmaraş, Osmaniye, Boynuyogun, Yavlıadagi, Elbeyli Camps	267 refugee households in six different camps (first round) 255 refugee households (who had participated in the first round) The majority of the respondents were (83%) heads of households, while 9 percent were spouses and 7 percent were children.	Survey through phone call & uploaded via Koboltoolbox	April 2020 - June 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness, knowledge and practice regarding COVID-19 • Access to food and hygiene items • Income sources and coping strategies
Deri Tekstil ve Kundura İşçileri Derneği (Association of Leather Textile and Shoe Workers)	Being a Refugee Worker during the Pandemic (Pandemide Mülteci Olmak)	Izmir (Konak, Karabağlar, Bornova, Buca)	100 refugee workers 6 refugee workers, face-to-face interview 68 male & 32 female Syrian, Afghan, Iranian and African	Survey through phone calls and face-to-face in-depth interviews	August 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment conditions • Access to social support mechanisms • Experiences of refugee workers

- Access to information related to COVID-19
- Access to health services
- Support mechanisms
- Access to basic needs
- Xenophobia
- Psychological distress

Mixed Migration Centre

Concerns and Contusion: Afghan refugees and migrants in Turkey face COVID-related challenges every day: Afghan voices from Turkey

Ankara, Van, Eskişehir, Konya, Kayseri, Istanbul, Erzurum, Yalova

8 male & 3 female Afghans aged between 34-59

In-depth interviews via phone calls

April 2020 – May 2020

- Knowledge on coronavirus: barriers, access, awareness
- Attitudes towards coronavirus
- Practice regarding COVID-19 and challenges

TRCS

Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) Assessment on COVID-19

16 TRCS Community Centre (CC) locations in Adana, Ankara, Istanbul Bağcılar, Istanbul Sultanbeyli, Bursa, Hatay, Izmir, Gaziantep, Kahramanmaraş, Kayseri, Kilis, Konya, Mardin, Mersin, Şanlıurfa and Kocaeli

3,840 individuals interviewed

320 refugees and local people participated in FGDs

Age between 14-59

51% female & 48.9% male

Turkish (49.3%), Syrian (48.1%), Iraqi (1.1%), Afghan (0.5%), Iranian (0.1%), & other (0.9%)

Mixed method: Survey and focus groups & uploaded via KoboToolbox

June 2020 – August 2020

- COVID-19 awareness and access to information
- Access to health services and education
- Work, income and assistance
- Access to basic needs and hygiene items
- Protection and Community concerns

Inter-Agency Coordination, UNHCR

Inter-agency Protection Sector Rapid Needs Assessment Analysis

Marmara, Southeast, Aegean and Central Anatolia & Other

1,020 refugees age above 18

Syrian (774), Iraqi (118), Afghan (72), Iranian (38), other (18)

50% female, %50 male

Survey through phone calls & uploaded via KoboToolbox

June 2020

<p>Association for Solidarity with Syrian Refugees in İzmir</p>	<p>Research report on Refugee Women's access to Fundamental Rights in the COVID-19 pandemic (COVID-19 Pandemi'si'nde Mülteci Kadınların Temel Haklarına Erişimine İlişkin Araştırma Raporu)⁶</p>	<p>Izmir</p> <p>300 Syrian refugees age between 18-60 89.9% female, 10.1% male</p> <p>Face-to-face questionnaire & FGDs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness during COVID-19 • Employment & income • National support • Local supports • Education & refugee children • Access to health services
--	---	---

<p>Dünya Doktorları Derneği</p>	<p>Psychosocial Effects of COVID-19 in the Framework of MHPSS Needs of Syrian Refugees in Turkey</p>	<p>Istanbul, İzmir, Antakya</p> <p>123 Syrian refugees 52% male, 48% female Age between 15-50+</p> <p>Semi-structure interviews</p> <p>May 2020</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of Psychosocial well-beings of refugees during the pandemic with a special focus on mental health situations
--	--	---

⁶This report was originally written in Turkish.

2. Main Findings of the Analyzed Reports

2.1. Access to Information about COVID-19

According to the findings of the studies, it is plausible to say that refugees make use of different channels to receive information about COVID-19. General trends regarding this issue are illustrated in Figure 1.

The study conducted by WFP (2020) found that the common ways of receiving information about COVID-19 were ‘television’ at 62% and ‘social media’ at 29%. These were followed by ‘acquaintance’ (7%) and ‘official institutions’ (2 %) (p.11). Furthermore, the analysis also measures ‘awareness of symptoms and ‘prevention mechanisms’ of COVID-19. In this regard, while ‘fever’, ‘dry cough’ and ‘sore throat’ appeared as the ‘most known symptoms’ by 96 %, 88 %, 44 % respectively, ‘avoiding public spaces’ (81%), ‘wearing a mask outside’ (81%) and ‘staying at home’ (75%) were observed as the ‘most practiced prevention measures’ (pp. 13-14).

In the report of Mixed Migration Centre (Ver-

duijn, 2020) on the impact of COVID-19 on Afghan refugees, it is pointed out that refugees were aware of the danger and were ready to follow necessary ‘precautionary measures’ (including distancing, using protection materials). The study asserts that the problem lied in the lack of protection materials or lack of financial sources to purchase them. Therefore, it is stated that some refugees were even willing to make these materials by themselves. In this regard, an example was given of Afghan refugees who volunteered to participate in the production of “5000 masks in 10 days in Kayseri” (p.3). In the study, an Afghan doctor stated that people still lacked knowledge on simple protective measures and continued ‘touching the face and eyes while wearing gloves’. According to the study, the most difficult part of COVID-19 measures was the restriction to ‘stay at home’, which challenged income-generating activities. In addition, the report underlines that Afghan refugees’ living places pose a risk for their

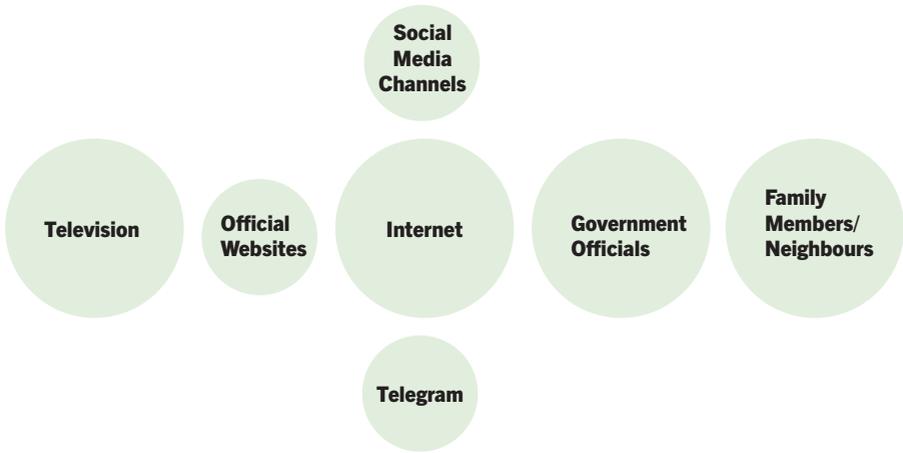
health given that these places are crowded. It is reported in the study that as information about COVID-19 was available primarily in Turkish, for those who did not speak Turkish or were 'illiterate' or 'lacked education', understanding the information from mainstream media was a challenge. In addition, the study points out that social media applications like WhatsApp, Facebook and Telegram became more actively used as a source of information by 'volunteers' and 'local NGOs'(pp. 3-6).

TRCS (2020) reports that 'TV' (30%), 'Facebook' (24.5%), 'Website' (13.3%), and 'Family/neighbours' (13.2%) became the channels which were mostly used by refugees so as to receive information regarding COVID-19 (p.20). In addition, television (21.8%), 'Government officials' (18.3 %) and 'Facebook' (13.7%) appeared to be the primary reliable tools for getting information about the pandemic amongst refugees (p.22). Besides, the study also measures participants' attitudes towards COVID-19. In this respect, while some of the refugees (28.8 %) reported that there was no case of 'discrimination' against people who had COVID-19, others (8.7 %) thought in the opposite way (p.27). In terms of taking essential precautions, 36.8 % of the refugees stated that they did not experience any dif-

ficulties in doing so, while 6.8 % said that they had to go outside in order to work and 8.1 % of the refugees reported that they have been struggling with buying essential hygiene products (p.33).

According to the findings of the Inter-Agency Coordination (2020), 80% of respondents were found to be having 'enough information about COVID-19', and the ratio of people who are 'partially aware' of COVID-19 is stated as 16%. According to the report, 75% of the participants knew "at least one of the main COVID-19 symptoms". It is stated in the study that level of 'perceived and actual awareness' about the pandemic increased sufficiently thanks to the 'increased number of sources' or 'modalities' and 'standard and common messaging' used by stakeholders in the field. More importantly, the report conveys that 70% of the participants were able to acquire information about the pandemic both in the form of adequate translations and directly 'in their own language'. In the report, primary sources of information are stated as follows: internet and social media (34%), TV/newspaper (26%), community (12%), official websites (10%), SMS (5%) (pp.7-8).

Figure 1: Refugees' main sources of information about COVID-19



According to the Association for Solidarity with Syrian Refugees in İzmir (2020), 91.3% of the refugees had sufficient information about COVID-19. Amongst the means of receiving information regarding the pandemic, social media was identified as the primary source of getting information about the COVID-19 at a rate of 36.6 percent and 16.8 percent of the participants stated that non-governmental organizations and associations constituted their main source of information. In this regard, the study interprets the efficient usage of social media by the refugees as an indicator of their adaptability to using technology. In a similar way, in the study, the role played by non-governmental organizations in providing adequate information to the refugees about the pandemic was regarded as notable (p.20).

According to the findings of the report published by DDD (2020), respondent refugees' primary tools of receiving infor-

mation about the pandemic are 'social media' (72%), 'TV channels (countries of origin)' (42%), 'WhatsApp groups' (31%), 'TV Channels' (Turkish) (29%), 'Verbal information' (family, friends, etc.) (21%), 'Humanitarian Organizations' (20%). In addition, 20% of the respondents found the information related to pandemic either 'non-sufficient' or 'partially sufficient'. Among them, as the report conveys, while 11 out of 24 participants stated that 'lack of information about where to receive information' and 'lack of Turkish language' were the most important problems in terms of receiving information about the COVID-19, for 4 people out of 24 the reason was the absence of necessary technical equipment (pp.8-10).



2.2. Access to Healthcare Services

Verduijn (2020) asserts that two participants stated that even ‘those with special needs’ could not benefit from health insurance. In the light of the respondents’ answers, the study points out that the other problem arose from the fact that many applications for international protection of Afghan refugees were declined, thus they could not benefit from health insurance. The study says that lack of awareness among Afghan refugees about free access to health services in the case of COVID-19 led to the situation when they preferred not to reach the hospital because of their fear of being charged if the test was negative. Other fears were stated in the study as “being put under quarantine in a detention center” (“exposure to the virus in overcrowded conditions”) or being deported (the study also notes that given the deferring of ‘court proceedings’ due to the pandemic, stay in the detention center was prolonged for an ‘unknown period’) (pp.4-5).

Inter-Agency Coordination (2020) has found that health services became the service that was the most difficult to access. The report conveys that Afghans (44%) and Iranians (56%) were affected more by this problem. In the study, the ratio of people who did not apply to health services because of the fact they were afraid of going outside is 29%. While 49% of respondents were found to be trying to reach health services during the pandemic, 75% of them managed to reach them. In the report, ‘de-prioritization of non-COVID-19 related services’ (25%) and ‘inactivation of health insurance’ (20%) were noted as the primary reasons why some participants were not able to reach health services. The report emphasizes that Afghans were affected more by the ‘inactivation of insurance’ (58%) in comparison to other refugees. According to the report, 38% of female respondents were found to be having “difficulties in accessing sexual and reproductive health

(SRH)” services, and there were also other participants who were not in need of health services or they could not manage to reach them (pp. 9-10).

With respect to refugees’ access to healthcare services during the pandemic, the report published by Association for Solidarity with Syrian Refugees in Turkey (2020) asserts that while 20.3 % of the participants were satisfied with the healthcare services, 69.7 % of them stated their dissatisfaction with provided healthcare services. Furthermore, in the report, 70% of the participants stated that they had difficulty accessing healthcare services. That said, the participants who think that they have received enough information about COVID-19 precau-

tions constituted 71.3% of the total participants. However, it is stated that the majority of participant refugees (76%) asserted that refugees are not supported enough in this topic (pp.31-32).

According to DDD (2020), 25% of the participants were found to be hesitant to visit healthcare institutions as they were afraid of becoming sick due to COVID-19. Besides, the report finds that 15% of the participants faced difficulty in accessing healthcare services due to the fact that their requests were rejected. While 10% were found to be having a chance to benefit from private healthcare institutions, for 40% of the participants, receiving healthcare services was not required (p.10).

2.3. Access to Online Education

According to the findings of Inter-Agency Coordination (2020), 51% of respondents, who have children, were found that “all of their children were registered and school-going”, and 13% had at least one child participating in education (p.10). The report asserts that Iraqis have the ‘highest levels of enrollments’ (56%). After the launching of online education, it is stated in the report that 79% of those having children said that they did not have difficulty with online education. While Iraqis constituted the highest percentage of those attending online education, for those who did not attend online education, Afghans (29%) and Syrians (19%) come to the fore. The report underlines that the main barriers to access remote

education were the absence of internet (22%), lack of equipment (17%), ‘language barriers’ (13%), absence of TV and TV connection (12%). In the report, while lack of equipment was observed more in Central Anatolia and Southeast, Afghans and Iranians were found to be ‘having less information’ about reaching online information. The study contends that the rate of the beneficiaries who continued to access online education also partially relates to the ‘socio-economic status of the household’ (pp.10-11).

According to Association for Solidarity with Syrian Refugees in Izmir (2020), only 15 % of the refugees’ children were able to access distance education even

though 77 % of the participants had school-age children. In the report, outstanding reasons for not being able to have access to online education were listed as 'lack of internet access' at 35.9 %, 'lack of information' at 26.4 % and 'lack of technological equipment' at 19 %. The report also analyzed to what extent refugee families were able to create an available environment for online education by considering male and female children separately. In this respect, the study pointed out that 61 % of the participants having male children were not able to create appropriate conditions for

distance education. This ratio decreased to 53.5 % for participants having female children in which 37.1 % of them stated that they were able to 'partially' create available conditions for online education (pp. 27-30).

According to DDD (2020), 27% of 88 participants who have school-age children were found that they could not make use of online education. Amongst the primary reasons for this difficulty, the absence of technological equipment along with 'technical guidance' comes to the fore (p.10).

2.4. Sources of Income (Livelihood)

According to WFP (2020), 68% of the participants who were normally employed outside of the camps either experienced wage cuts or became unemployed during the pandemic. In addition, it is emphasized in the report that for 46 % of the participants, the financial aid provided by WFP (100 TL) constitutes the major component of their earnings (p.24). Accordingly, refugees' reactions against socio-economic hardship caused by the pandemic consisted of 'borrowing money' (45 %), 'spending savings' (29 %), 'selling household assets' (20 %) and 'buying food on credit' (18%) (p.27).

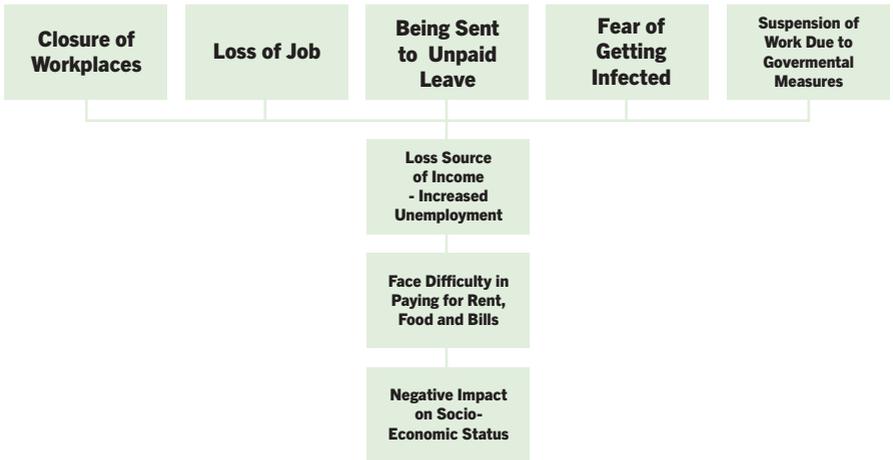
The survey study conducted by the Association of Leather Textile and Shoe Workers (2020) exclusively focuses on the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on refugee workers in Izmir, Turkey. In ter-

ms of sectoral distribution of participants' occupations, it is stated that out of 100 participants 37 people are employed in the textile sector, 13 people in the small industry manufactures, 15 people in factories, 8 people in the service sector, 21 people in the construction sector and 6 people in the collection of recyclable waste. While 5 % of the participants were 'registered', 95 % of them had 'unregistered' status regarding their employment. According to the study, it was found that 83 % of the refugee workers lost their job (including unpaid leave), 9 % of them continued working part-time and 8 % of them, who were working in collecting recyclable waste, maintained their employment. In addition, it is indicated that 83 participants out of 100 'completely' lost their source of income, 13 participants have faced a decrease in their level of

income and for 4 participants, there was no change in their level of income due to the pandemic. With respect to necessary payments such as rent, food and bills during the pandemic, in the study, it is said that 83 participants have been struggling with paying their rents, while 91 people faced difficulty with meeting the cost of food and 77 people asserted that pandemic made an impact on paying their bills.

In the study prepared by Verduijn (2020), it is stated that assistance to the refugees remained ‘local and small scale’ for those who could get assistance. It is conveyed in the study that the concerns that Afghan refugees have are more about “how to feed their families rather than the virus itself” (p.6). Except for employment in agriculture, the study asserts that many Afghans were deprived of their sources of livelihood (pp.5-6).

Figure 2: Socio-economic problems faced by refugees during the pandemic



The study by Inter-Agency Coordination (2020) points out that after the COVID-19 pandemic, there occurred a deterioration in the employment status of 84% of the participants, and Iranians (96%) were identified as the ‘most affected population’. According to the report, main reasons for losing jobs

include ‘closure of workplaces’ (29%), ‘loss of job’ (14%), ‘being sent to unpaid leave’ (10%), ‘fear of transmission’ (14%), suspension of work due to governmental measures (23%) and others. The report underlines that refugees in their majority rely on humanitarian assistance, which constitutes “34% of their

reported income” (p.13). In the study, employment (30%), personal savings (11%), community support (10%) are stated as remaining means of income. The report has found that ‘humanitarian support’ constitutes the primary source of income for Afghans while it is ‘neighborhood and community support’ for Iranians, and ‘personal savings’ for Syrians. 52% of all respondents were found to be relying on assistance (ESSN, CCTE, cash) provided by public institutions, local authorities, I/NGOs and UN agencies. While the nation-wide main source of assistance remains ESSN and CCTE, region-wise sources are identified as follows: NGOs in the Southeast region, municipalities in the Aegean region, Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundations in Marmara and UNHCR in Central Anatolia and other regions (pp.12-14).

In the study conducted by the Association for Solidarity with Syrian Refugees in Izmir (2020), it is stated that ‘temporary jobs’ constitute the main source of income for the participants at a rate of 51.4 %, which is followed by ‘permanent jobs’ with the rate of 13.9 percent. In addition, the report asserts that 9.5 % of the refugees solely depend on support provided by the state. During the pandemic, it is said that while 69.4 % of the participants were able to work in ‘daily basis jobs’, 7.3 % of them had ‘regular jobs’. Concurrently, with the emergence of the pandemic, there occurred a drastic decrease in the ratio of working people from 65.2 % to 18.5 % accompanied by job losses reported by 84.5% of the participants. The report

points out that 32.9% of the participants could not find a job and 34.6 % of them noted that their workplace was shut down due to the pandemic. 83% of the participants who were able to work under the circumstances of the pandemic mentioned wage cuts in their income as well (pp. 17-18).

DDD (2020) asserts that sources of income of 89% of the participants were found to be deteriorated due to the pandemic. Besides, in the light of the findings of the report, it is plausible to say that support provided by the state and the NGOs constitute components of some of the respondent refugees’ (‘52 out of 109 participants’) sources of livelihood (pp.10-11).

2.5. Access to Basic Needs

In terms of the conditions of markets as the main locations where refugees meet their basic needs, according to WFP (2020), people thought that there was a higher number of people shopping in markets compared to normal times, at 50 %. As a way of responding to the crisis of the pandemic, WFP asserts that some of the participants preferred ‘stocking’ products while others maintained their regular style of shopping. In addition, 16 % of the participants stated that if they had the financial means, they would have bought more products for the future. (p.18).

The report written by the Association of Leather Textile and Shoe Workers (2020) shows that 77 % of the refugee workers were not able to receive social aid in the form of food support and essential hygienic materials provided by ‘local governments’ or ‘humanitarian aid associations’. In addition, it is asserted that participant refugees were unable to receive financial support provided by governmental institutions due to their non-citizen status.

The report by Verduijn (2020) notes that due to the rumors such as Afghans brought COVID-19 to Turkey, there were cases of discrimination toward Afghan refugees. For instance, it is stated in the study that while shopping, Afghans were accused of being a transmitter of COVID-19 (p.6).

According to the findings of the Inter-Agency Coordination (2020), there were no major difficulties with reaching ser-

vices for most of the participants (66%) after the pandemic emerges. It is stated that 57% of Afghans and 50% of Iranians had problems with ‘essential services’ in the ‘Central Anatolia & Other’ and Aegean regions. The report says that, for Afghans, reaching health and education services, ‘data updates with PDMM’ were quite problematic, and Iranians had difficulty with access to PTT and banks. Furthermore, 88% of the participants were found to be lacking financial means to meet “their monthly expenses and basic household needs”, and it is stated that half of these participants also lacked ‘any assistance’ (p.14). The report also points out that there is a difference between ‘female-headed households’ and ‘male-headed households’ in terms of meeting the ‘monthly expenses’. In this respect, it was found that ‘female-headed households’ faced more difficulty in this issue compared to ‘male-headed households’ (53% vs 43% respectively) (p.14). In the report, among the most observed coping mechanisms were borrowing money, ‘reducing essential food expenditure’, and ‘spending household savings’. Moreover, the study underlines that the ratio of people who could not reach hygiene products is 54%, and Afghans and Iranians were found to be affected the most. Among hygiene items, the study asserts that the most difficult to reach/afford were hand sanitizers (84%), alcohol-based products (77%) and masks (50%). The most common reasons for not being able to reach

these products were noted in the report as the high price of the products, followed by ‘unavailability of items in shops’ and poor quality (pp.9-15).

In terms of refugees’ access to essential foods, Association for Solidarity with Syrian Refugees in Turkey (2020) found that 75 % of the participants could not meet their basic needs. Approximately 80% of them faced difficulties with finding fruits and vegetables. Similarly, it is stated that the majority of the parti-

cipants (80%) had difficulty consuming red meat/chicken and dairy products. On the other hand, the report also made it clear that refugees had problems with accessing hygiene and cleaning products. In this sense, 58.3 % of the participants were found to be lacking enough financial resources to purchase necessary hygiene materials. Nevertheless, it is observed in the report that the majority of the participants (68%) tried to use hygiene and cleaning materials (p.22).

2.6. Protection

In the study conducted by WFP (2020), it is reported that families in which there are old members (60 and 60+ years old) constitute 10% of the total participants. Furthermore, 24 % of the participants were found to be having “at least one member with a chronic disease such as cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease or diabetes, etc.” (p.2). The report also stated that 8 people got infected by COVID-19 two weeks before the survey was conducted. While the number of people who visited the hospital was 7, the test was applied to 4 of them and due to the probability of receiving treatment at the hospital, 1 person did not prefer to go to the hospital (p.9). The report states that people also experienced fear, anxiety and stress. The main sources of stress were listed as ‘fear of illness and infection’, ‘losing jobs or reduced income’, ‘limited freedom to move’ and ‘to avoid getting infected’ (WFP 2020, 11).

Besides, it is indicated in the report that the ways in which women and men experience anxiety differ. While women’s anxiety is more related to COVID-19 itself, men have more socio-economic-related anxiety such as ‘fear of losing jobs’ (p.11).

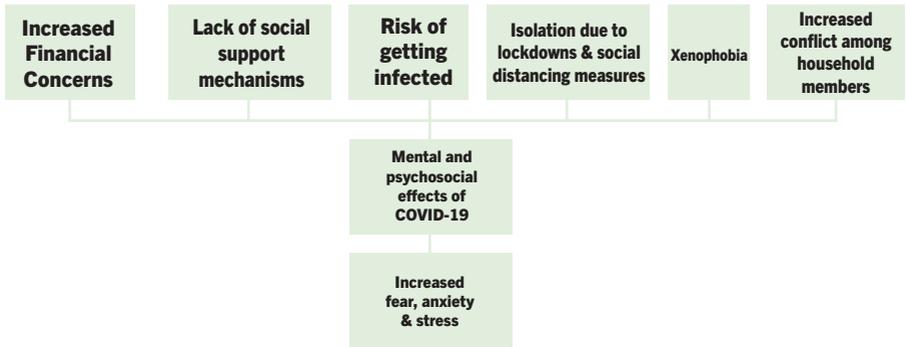
According to Verduijn (2020), with COVID-19, mental and psychological problems increased amongst the participants. Especially due to the calling off asylum processes, ‘uncertainties’ were noted as an important source of mental problems, and it is stated that some of the participants started rethinking to return to their countries but could not do so due to COVID-19 related ‘travel restrictions’ in Turkey (p.7).

In terms of the sources of fear or anxiety amongst refugees caused by the pandemic, TRCS (2020) asserts that while the

risk of becoming ill was the outstanding reason of stress (33.2 %), socio-economic fears or anxieties such as ‘paying house rents/bills’ (9.4%) ‘lost employment due to coronavirus’ (9.1 %) and ‘fear to lose employment due to coronavirus’ (9.0 %) constituted the second

most important reason of fear or anxiety observed by refugees, which were also higher than the rates observed in ‘host population’. Lastly, fear of receiving treatment at the hospital (7.7) was observed as another significant factor affecting the lives of refugees (p. 29).

Figure 3: Main factors impacting refugees’ mental health conditions during the pandemic



According to the findings of the Inter-Agency Coordination (2020), there are several protection-related issues stated by 63% of the participants such as “increased stress within their community”(38%), “conflict amongst household members” (13%) (p.16). In the report, Marmara and ‘Central Anatolia & Other’ regions are noted as the areas where there were observed more ‘protection problems’. The report states that ‘stress’, ‘xenophobia’ and ‘homelessness’ were experienced by Afghan and Iranian participants. Furthermore, the report points out that 43% of the participants were found to be having “increased stress within their own household”,

and the ratio is 14% for people who ‘partially’ had it. That said, it was found that there was no need for further assistance about stress for 20% of the participants. The report points out that opposed to the forecasts about the increase of domestic violence, only 3% reported an ‘increase in domestic violence’, which is more regularly identified ‘in the Southeast and within Syrian communities’(p.17). According to the report, there are several ways that people prefer in the case of protection-related issues. These are calling the police (38%), ‘family members’, UN institutions and NGOs. It is also stated in the report that while men generally prefer to call the police so as to get help

(42%), women were found to prefer 'family members'. In addition, it is underlined in the report that participants do not prioritize UN institutions and NGOs in receiving help in the case of protection-related concerns (10%). Lastly, the report asserts that UN institutions are preferred more by Afghans and Iranians (45%) compared to NGOs (32%), Syrian participants preferring UN institutions in terms of protection-related concerns is 3% and for 10% there was no need to call for help or assistance in the case of protection-related issues(pp.16-18).

DDD (2020) presents detailed data on the psycho-social effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on refugees. In this regard, the report asserts that 'mental

health' (64%) constitutes the most affected area observed among refugees due to the pandemic. Moreover, 62% stated in the report that 'daily routine' (62%), 'social life' (61%) and 'physical health' (15%) are the other areas negatively affected by the circumstances of the pandemic (p.13). Concomitantly, the report also reveals that the women experience the negative impacts of the pandemic on their mental health more intensively compared to men (75% and 55% respectively). In addition, among the widely observed mental health deteriorations, 'feeling of suffocation' (30%), 'exhausted children' (24%), 'fear of infection' (19%) and 'general distress'(14%) come to the fore (p.19).

Conclusion

In the light of the main findings of the analyzed reports, the following interpretations can be made.

- Even though refugees face a variety of difficulties due to the pandemic, they can receive COVID-19 related information through different channels like social media, TV, official government institutions and other means of communication. In comparison with other issues, access to information about the pandemic is seemingly less problematic for refugees in spite of certain difficulties. Relatedly, it is important to note that refugees also make use of information sources in their own languages, which eases their comprehension of essential COVID-19 information.
- Access to healthcare services is one of the crucial issues for refugees during the pandemic. As the reports have shown, while some of them can receive healthcare services, the problems that refugees encounter in this field still continue.
- In this case, in comparison with our first Systematic Review report, it can be said that there is no significant progress in terms of refugees' access to healthcare services. The issue still matters for refugees since the majority of them have difficulty with accessing healthcare services (cf. ASAM Academy on Migration, 2020)
- Due to the lack of necessary technological devices, availability of the internet, language barriers, and access to online education remain the most challenging issues for refugee children. In parallel with our first Systematic Review, it is possible to say that this difficulty continues to be one of the major side effects of the pandemic for refugee children (cf. ASAM Academy on Migration, 2020)
- In the light of the analyzed findings, socio-economic problems caused by the pandemic seem to be the top priority for refugees. Unemployment emerges as a widely observed outcome of the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings of all reports clearly state that refugees remain the most disadvantageous group in society in terms of exposure to the negative economic impacts of the pandemic. As a result, various coping mechanisms have been observed such as borrowing money and spending savings.
- The reports assert that problems in accessing food and hygiene materials continue to be observed.
- Regarding protection-related issues, reports observe an increasing level of stress and anxiety among refugees. It is seen in the reports that some of these problems stem from socio-economic uncertainties caused by the pandemic while others result from COVID-19 based health anxieties. Besides, as DDD (2020) has found, mental

health issues affect women's lives more seriously than men's. In this respect, more studies solely focusing on the psychological and mental situations of refugees should continue to be conducted on a regular basis. The report published by DDD (2020) constitutes one of the detailed accounts in this manner.

In terms of methodologies of the analyzed reports and general ideas for further research, the following suggestions can be made.

- It is very important that fieldwork studies continue to be conducted during the pandemic. In this respect, it is pertinent to say that continuous/time-series analyses have an advantage in providing meaningful comparative analyses. Organizations in the field having offices or representation across Turkey seems to have a comparative advantage in reaching refugees for designing their samples.
- Reaching refugees for conducting fieldwork, especially for survey studies, might be challenging under the circumstances of the pandemic. Even though survey studies conducted with relatively high numbers of participants can provide us with certain general patterns and trends regarding the issue, when it is not possible to find an adequate number of volunteers to participate in studies, qualitative research techniques such as interviews and focus groups can be preferred so as to have detailed information about the subject. Still, the most effective solution appears to be the usage of mixed methodology. As indicated in this report, some of the analyzed studies conflate qualitative and quantitative analysis. Though the pandemic limits to a certain extent physical presence in the field, the wider usage of online resources (calls, online surveys, etc.) should be duly integrated into the methodology of the further studies. The overwhelming effect of COVID-19 on refugees in all areas should be measured on a regular basis with all available resources at hand.
- For further research, it is vital to design studies whose focus is solely on refugee children. Not all the published reports have an explicit emphasis on problems that particularly refugee children face during the pandemic, even though they occasionally touch upon the problems regarding their access to online education. In this regard, a more profound analysis of the overall impact of COVID-19 on refugee children is needed for further analysis.
- As certain reports have shown, psychological problems stemming from the pandemic have been observed amongst the refugee population. As a result, special attention should be taken while designing further research and fieldwork. In addition, studies focusing on more particular topics of psychological problems of refugees and coping mechanisms that they develop would be another meaningful alternative in terms of conducting fieldwork.

Bibliography

ASAM Academy on Migration. (2020). *A Systematic Review of Reports on the Impact of COVID-19 on Refugees: April-June 2020*. SGDD-ASAM.

Deri Tekstil ve Kundura İşçileri Derneği. (2020). *Pandemide Mülteci Olmak [Being a Refugee in Pandemic]*. *Deri Tekstil ve Kundura İşçileri Derneği*. Retrieved March 2021, from https://deritekstilkunduraiscileridernegi.files.wordpress.com/2020/09/pandemi_multeci_isci_olmak_rapor.pdf

Dünya Doktorları Derneği. (2020). *Situation Analysis Report: Psychosocial Effects of COVID-19 in the Framework of MHPSS Needs of Syrian Refugees in Turkey April-May 2020*. Retrieved March 2021, from https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Psychosocial_Effects_COVID-19_Needs_Assessment-3.pdf

Inter Agency Coordination. (2020). *Inter Agency Protection Sector Rapid Needs Assessment Analysis June 2020*. Inter Agency Coordination. Retrieved March 2021, from <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Inter-Agency%20Protection%20Sector%20Rapid%20Needs%20Assessment%20Analysis.pdf>

İzmirde Suriyeli Mültecilerle Dayanışma Derneği. (2020). *COVID-19 Pandemisi'nde Mülteci Kadınların Temel Haklara Erişimine İlişkin Araştırma Raporu*. İzmirde Suriyeli Mültecilerle Dayanışma Derneği. Retrieved March 2021, from <https://www.stgm.org.tr/sites/default/files/2020-11/covid-19-pandemisinde-multeci-kadinlarin-temel-haklara-erisimine-iliskin-arastirma-raporu.pdf>

Sköld, N. (2021, February 17). *UNHCR calls for inclusion of refugees in vaccination plans*. Retrieved from UNHCR Nordic and Baltic Countries: <https://www.unhcr.org/neu/51787-unhcr-calls-for-inclusion-of-refugees-in-vaccination-plans.html#:~:text=As%20COVID%2D19%20vaccines%20start,included%20in%20national%20vaccination%20strategies>.

Turkish Red Crescent Society. (2020). *Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) Assessment on COVID-19 September 2020*. TRCS. Retrieved March 2021, from https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/20201009-KAPReport_FINAL.pdf

Verduijn, S. (2020). *Concerns and Confusion: Afghan Refugees and Migrants in Turkey Face COVID-related Challenges Every Day*: Mixed Migration Centre. Available at: www.mixedmigration.org. Retrieved March 2021, from https://mixedmigration.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/126_briefing_paper_concerns_and_confusion.pdf

WHO. (2021, March 23). *WHO Coronavirus (COVID-19) Dashboard*. Retrieved from World Health Organization: <https://covid19.who.int/>

World Food Programme. (2020). *COVID-19 Pandemic in Turkey: An assessment of readiness and impact on Refugees living in-camps*. WFP Turkey Country Office.



ASAM ACADEMY
on migration

