



Community engagement and accountability

Case Study: Assessment report, Red Cross Multifunctional Centre of Thessaloniki



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Since May 2015 the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies along with the Hellenic Red Cross have worked with local communities on the frontline of the migration response to provide relief and assistance to people seeking safety in Europe. Assistance included primary health care, hygiene promotion, food and relief distribution, first aid, psychosocial support, Restoring Family Links and cash assistance.

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created by MFC information officer

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The Red Cross Multifunctional Centre (MFC) in Thessaloniki has been running since November 2017 as a social centre that strives to accommodate a holistic range of services by providing timely and reliable information to the migrant and refugee communities by facilitating Integration, Social Services (Casework, Greek language lessons, Orientation Services), Restoring Family Links (RFL) and Cash Transfer Programming. The main goal of the community center is to reduce vulnerability of refugee and migrant communities by enhancing capacity towards self-sustainability, providing access to proper and effective information, navigating the Greek public systems and providing cash assistance to meet basic needs while fostering integration and resilience through trainings and social support groups.

The MFC has established a system to listen, collect, analyse, respond to and act on feedback to understand better the aspect of the challenges that the migrants and refugees face in their daily life in Thessaloniki. This is designed with input from the community and staff and volunteers properly trained to manage it.

To achieve the above mentioned, the MFC is supported by a set of Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) activities (suggestion box, focus group discussions, assessment survey) that help put communities at the centre of what MFC does, by integrating communication and participation.



An assessment of MFC services was conducted in November 2019 and provided insight into services from a beneficiary perspective, with a view to informing future service improvements and new integration activities.

The survey had the following objectives:

- Check beneficiaries are aware of MFC services and know how to access them
- Test understanding of specific cash assistance processes, including certification; help-desk and understanding of when cash assistance will finish
- Check awareness of feedback and complaints process in MFC
- Identify preferred communication channels for MFC service updates
- Identify themes for future multi-cultural activities to assist with cultural integration

The MFC has over ten working languages, and therefore the challenge was to design an assessment that could be utilised without losing detail in translation. It was decided to design the questionnaire in English, and train the MFC volunteers, themselves former asylum seekers and refugees, to conduct the survey by asking the beneficiary the questions in their first language. The volunteer would then record the answers in English, using tablets provided. This method ensured that beneficiaries fully understood the question and were able to participate in the process irrespective of their literacy level.

The additional advantage of this method was the wealth of cultural knowledge and understanding that the volunteers brought, in communicating fluently with the beneficiaries, re-phrasing and explaining the questions as required, and providing insight into the answers and feedback that they gave.

Methodology

Pilot process

The questions were initially created combining two draft surveys, one from the cash assistance staff and one from the social services team.

There were two broad stages in developing the assessment:

1. refining the questions and
2. identifying and training the volunteers.

In the first stage the questions were trialled by staff in interviews with MFC volunteers. After five interviews the question wording was amended based on feedback from the volunteers. After three interviews with the new questions, including thorough feedback from the volunteers on their understanding of the questions, they were further refined and reworded until they reached the clearest possible format for non-native English language speakers.

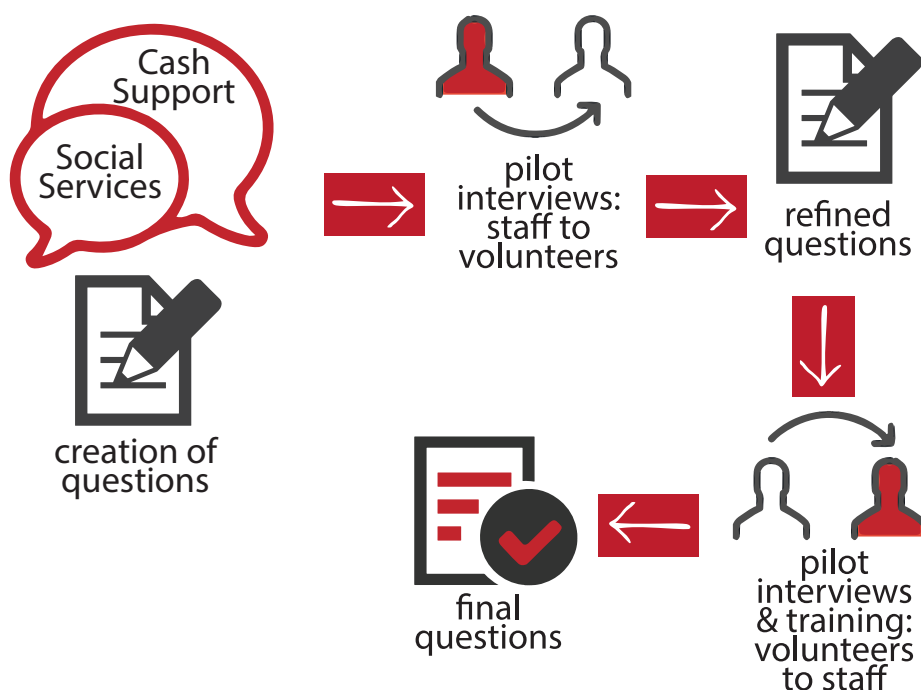
In the second stage, volunteers with a high level of English were identified and asked to test the questions on the staff. By reversing the process, it was possible to train the volunteers in how to conduct the surveys, the purpose of the questions and the range of answer options. This training ensured that the volunteers were confident in the meaning of the question and understood the reason behind the choice of wording, so as to accurately be able to translate and explain the questions to the beneficiaries.

Implementation

After a week of development and training, the assessment was implemented by the MFC volunteers with beneficiaries waiting to access MFC services. A staff member was on hand to provide support and answer any queries the volunteers had. Staff also monitored the data collected, to ensure that it was relevant and clear for the purpose of meeting the assessment's objectives.

Challenges

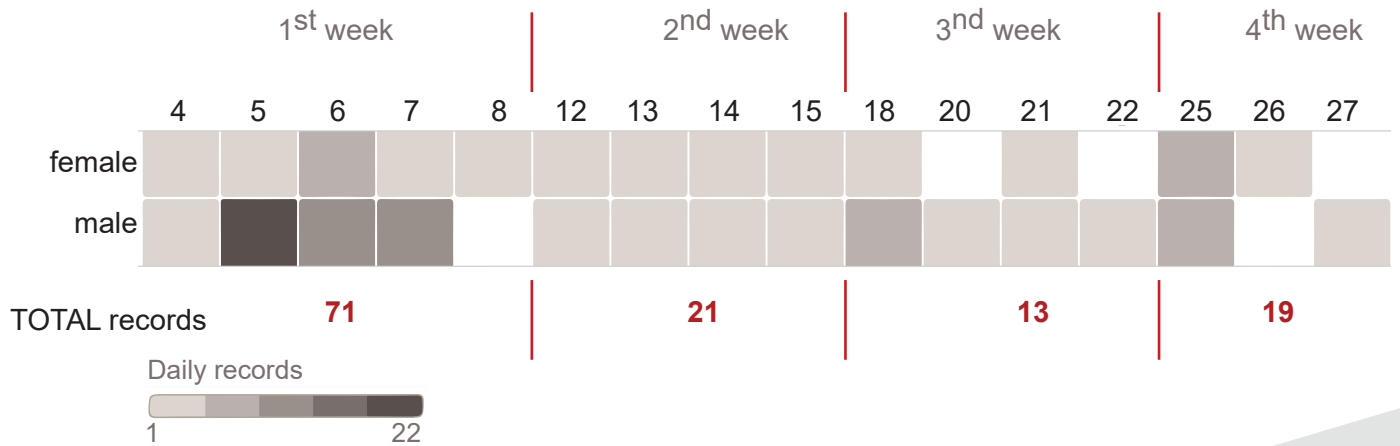
- Many different spoken languages at the MFC.
- The pilot process required the continuous presence of two staff (facilitators) for one week. Ten volunteers and three staff participated in the pilot interviews.
- Five times the questionnaire changed, rephrasing the questions.
- Identifying volunteers with good understanding of English, communication skills and adequate use of KOBO in tablets.
- The assessment was running daily for one month simultaneously with the provision of the MFC's services.
- Daily coordination of the volunteers to identify gaps and issues.



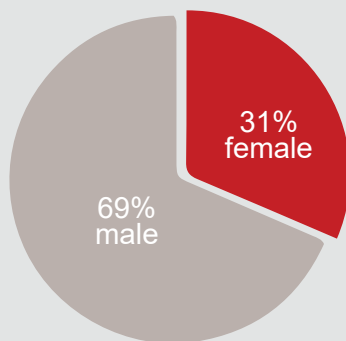
General Data

Daily Records

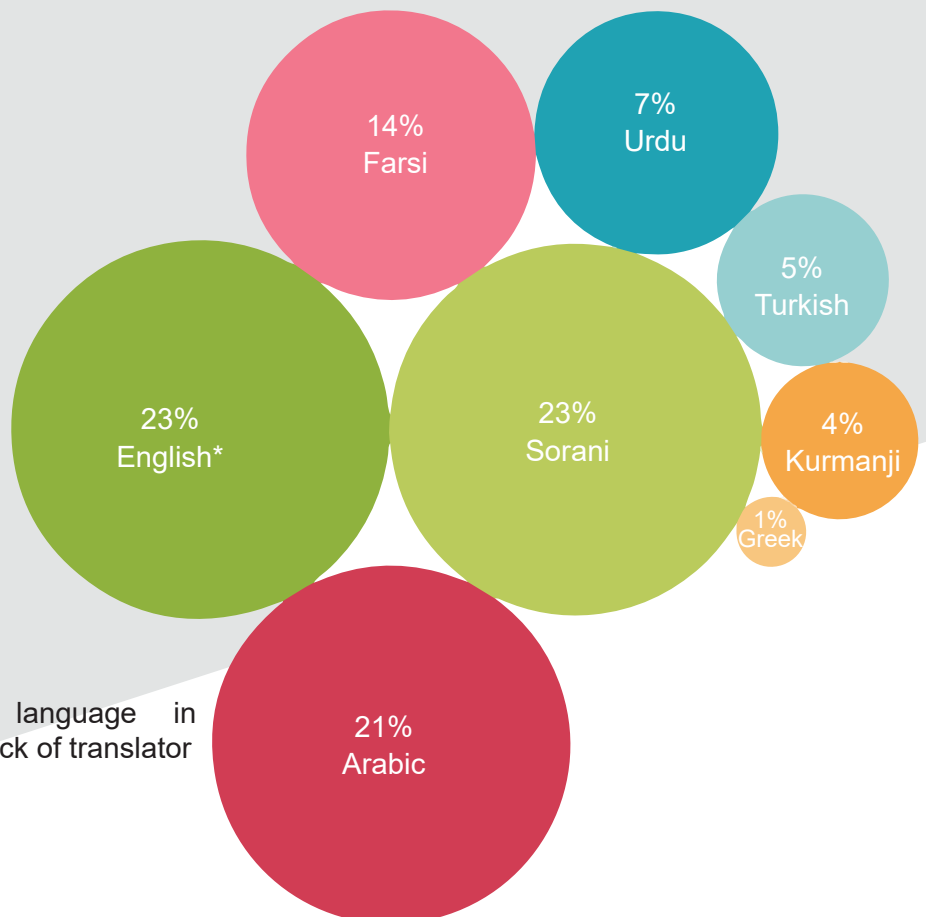
one hundred twenty four total interviews



Gender

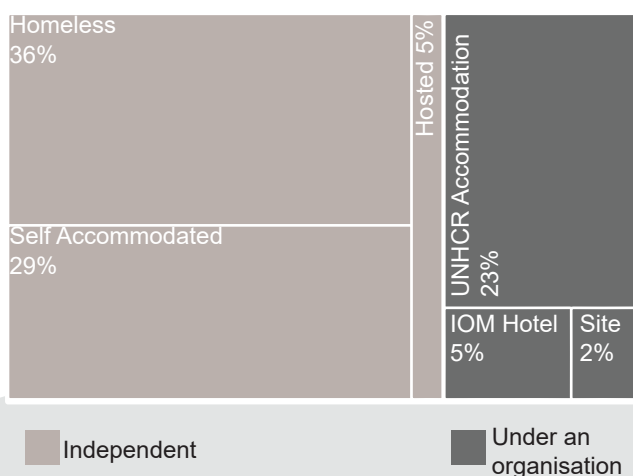


Language of the interviews

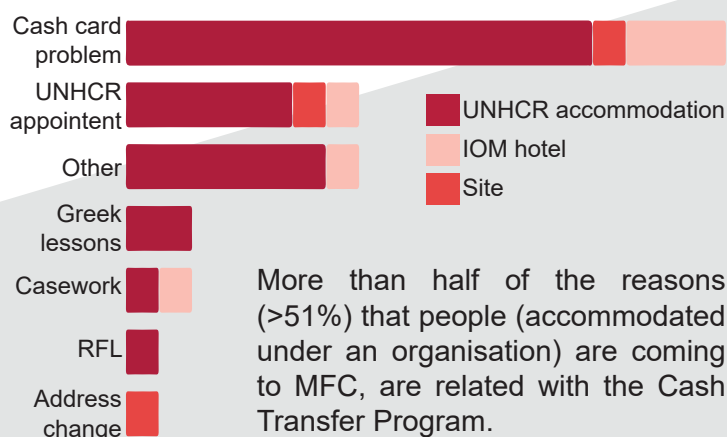


*second language in case of lack of translator

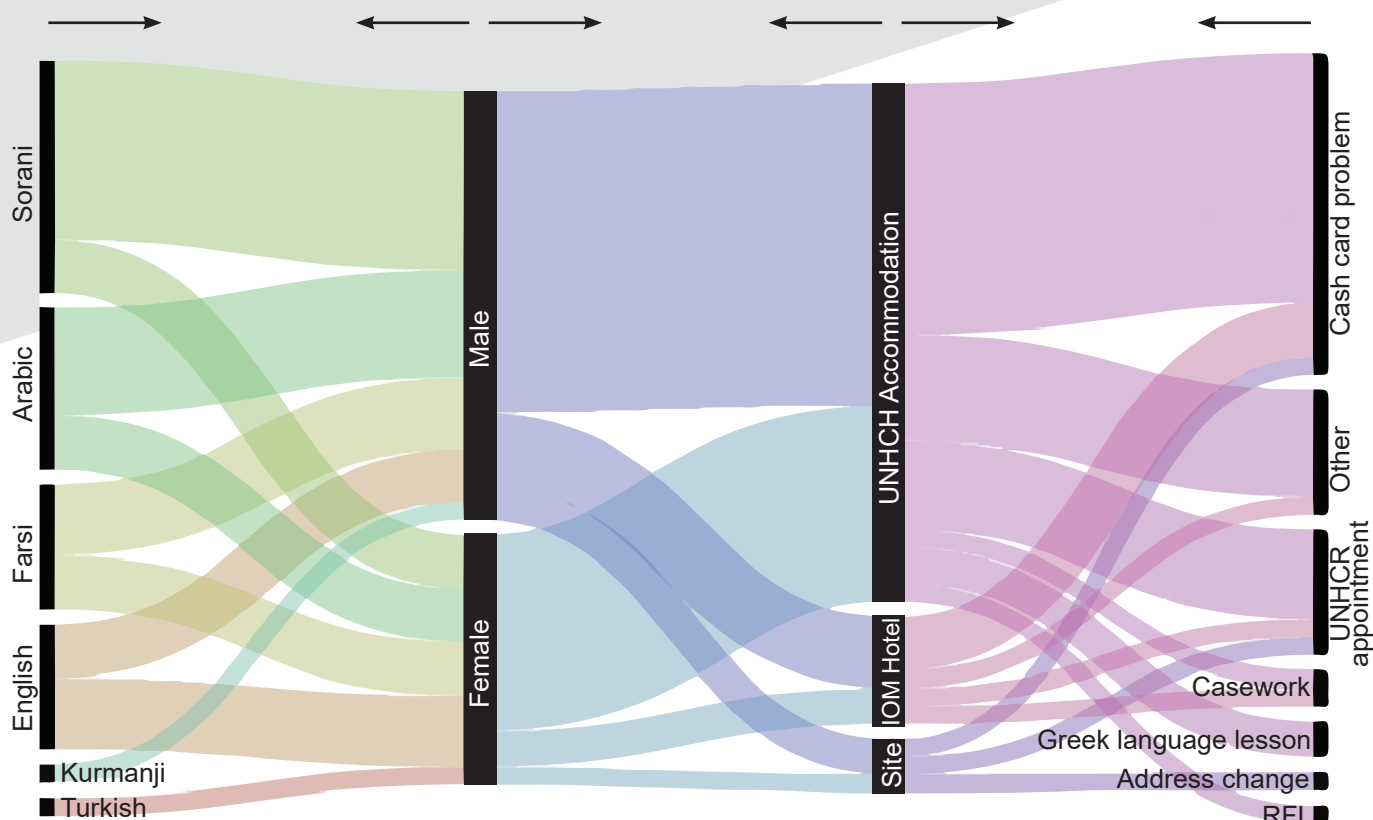
Type of accommodation



Reasons visiting the MFC



The below alluvial diagram shows the flows and correlation between four different categories from the people that are under an organisation: 1) Language 2) Gender 3) Type of Accommodation and 4) the reason someone came to the Muti Functional Centre. The correlation is readable through each neighboring category only.

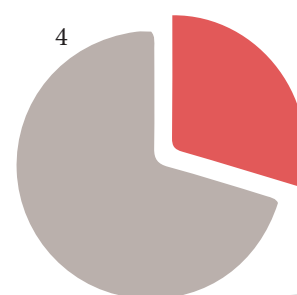
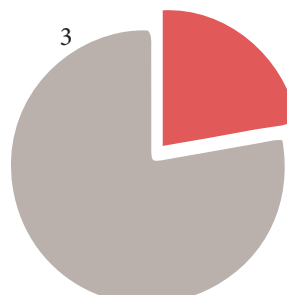
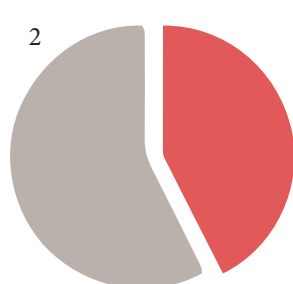
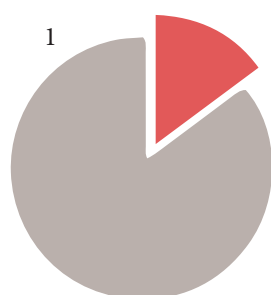


Questions related to cash transfer program

Do you know how...

1. how to use the cash card?
2. when your cash assistance will end?

3. when to come to sign?
4. what to do if you have a cash card problem?



yes

no

From 15% of the people that do not know how to use the cash card: 88% are homeless, 50% speak Sorani and 25% Urdu. 75% are male.

From the 43% of the people that do not know when the cash assistance will end: 48% are homeless and 48% self accommodated. 30% speak Urdu, 22% English and 17% Sorani. 70% are male

From the 22% of the people that do not know when to come to sign: 50% are self accommodated and 42% homeless. 25% speak Urdu and 25% English. 67% are male.

From the 30% of the people that do not know what to do in case of cash card problem: 63% are self accommodated. 31% speak Urdu, 31% English, 13% Sorani and 13% Kurmanji. 69% are male.

From 86 responders, 57 (46%) receives cash assistance. From them 54 are the cash holders (focal points). Four questions were asked to them about cash service:



70% of the Urdu speakers don't know when the cash assistance will end, and 50% do not know what to do in case of cash card problem. Similar information gaps appear to Sorani and Farsi speakers while the English and Arabic speakers are well informed.



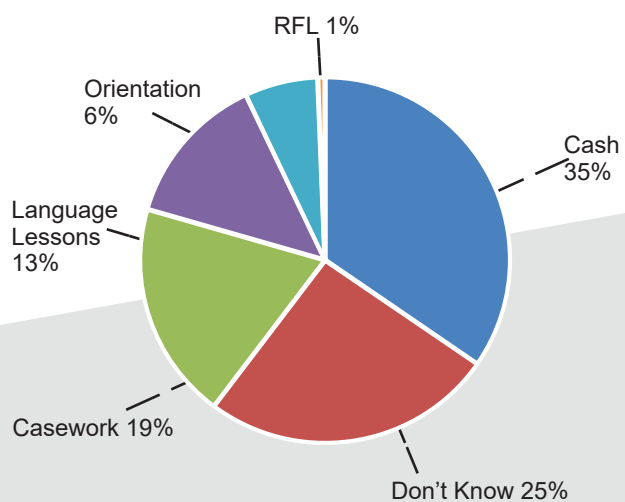
52% of the homeless people and 38% of the self accommodated do not know when the cash assistance will end. One big difference appears in the use of the card while the self accommodated know better (97%) how to use the card. Respectively only the 67% of the homeless know how to use the cash card. The hosted people appear well informed.



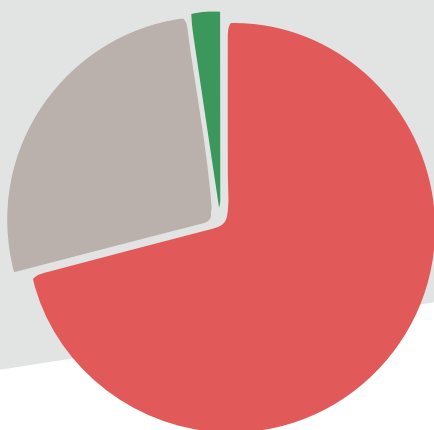
It seems that the men are more informed than women in all above questions. 54% of women do not know when the cash assistance will end and 39% do not know how to use the cash card, while the men are 39% and 27% respectively.

Questions related to transparency and participation

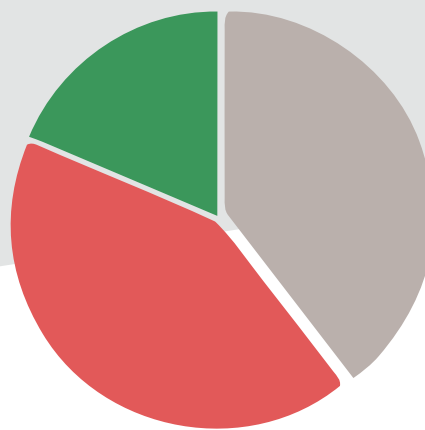
What do you know about the activities in the Red Cross centre?



Do you know how to use the feedback mechanism of MFC?



Are you interested in sharing your opinion with Red Cross?

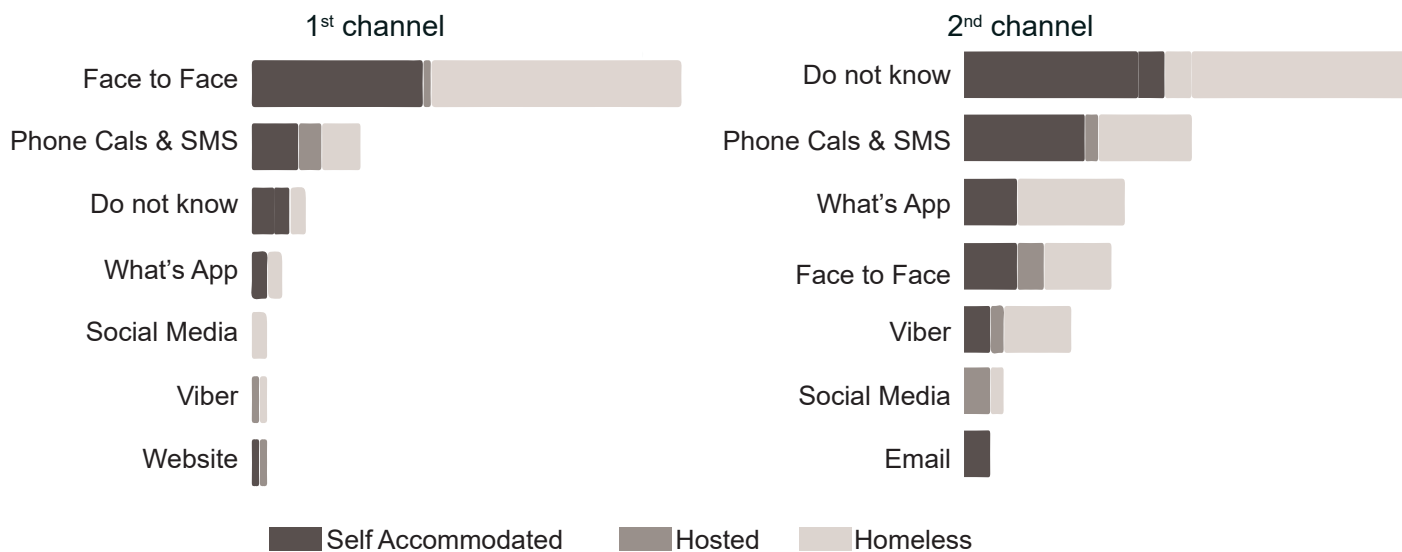


yes

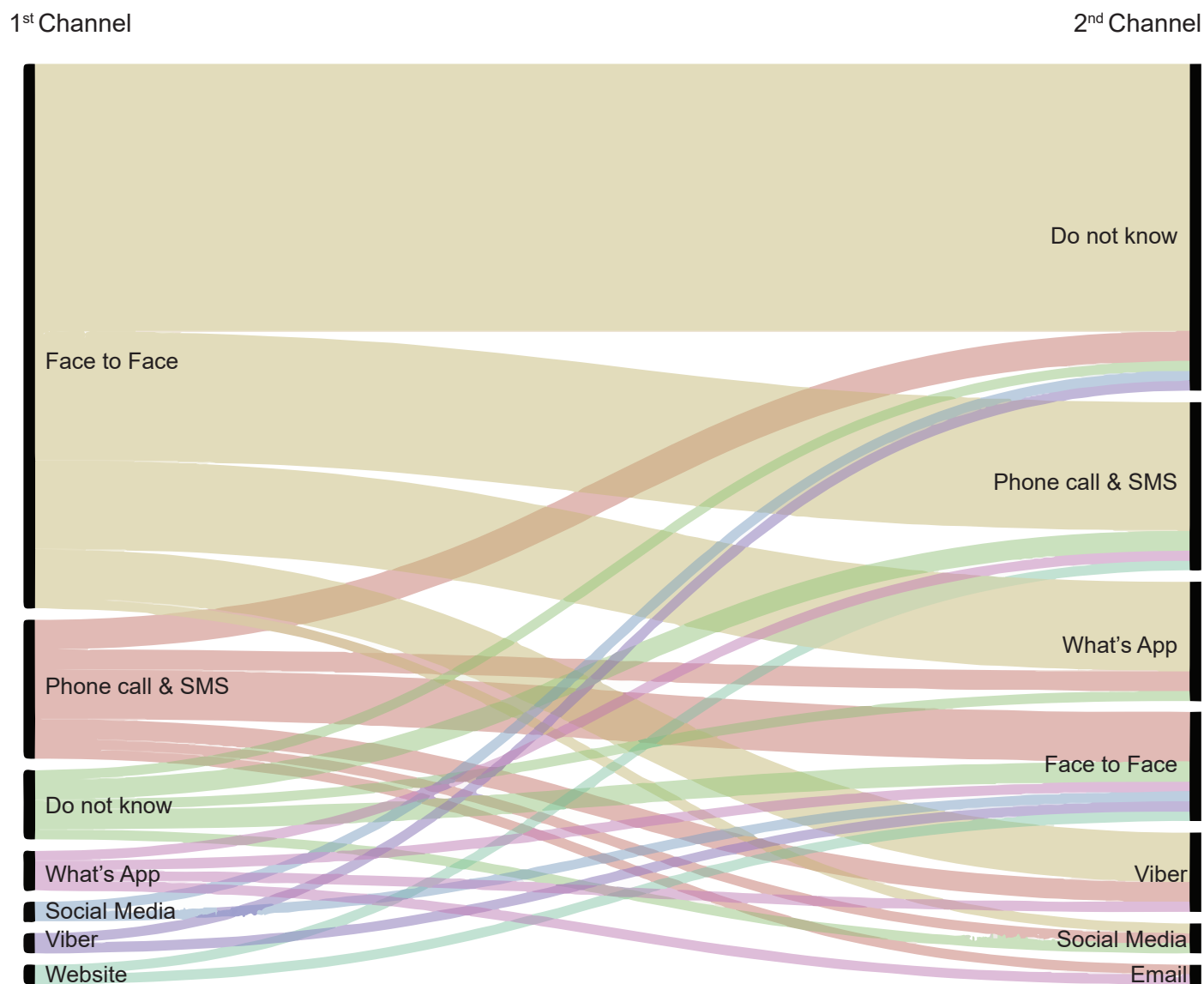
no

not sure

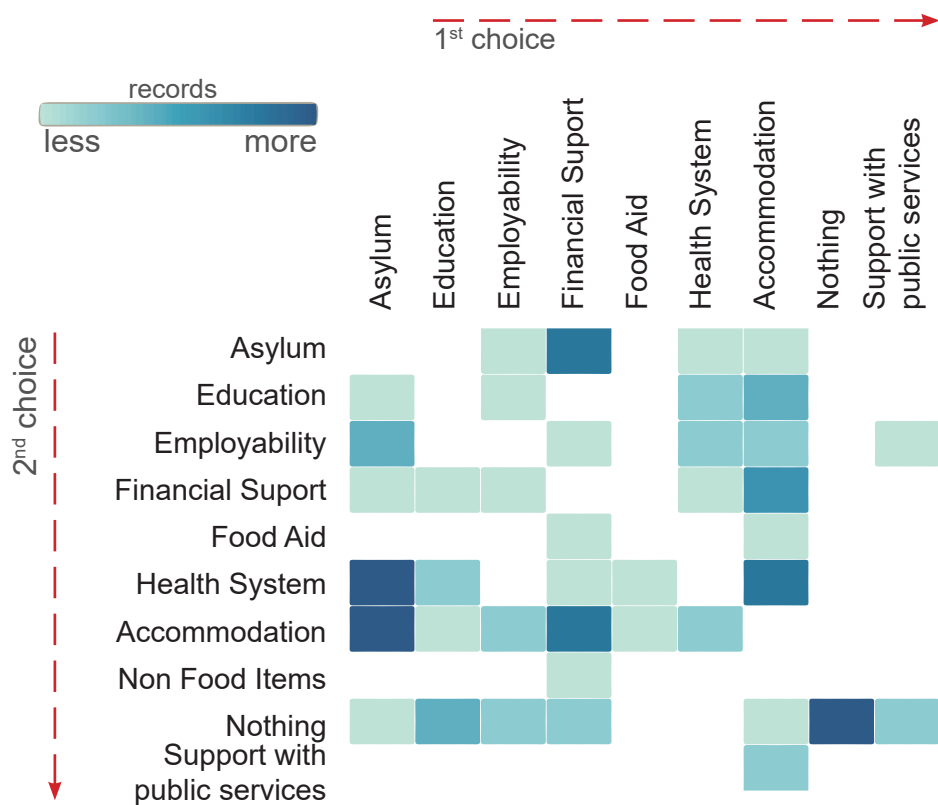
What are the best two ways for the Red Cross to provide you with information?



Alluvial diagram that shows the flows and correlation between the two channels of communication.

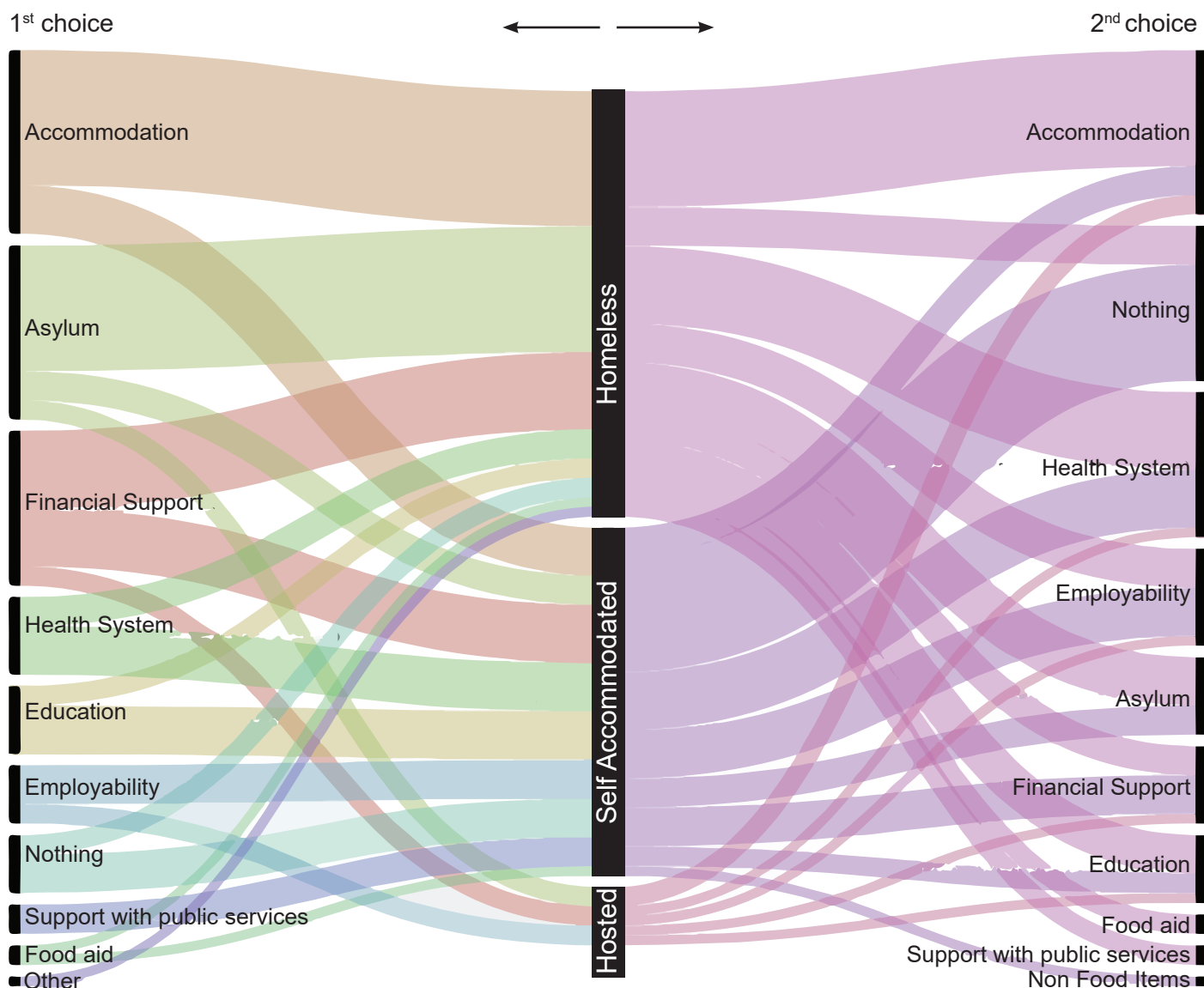


What are the two most important things that you need to get information about at the moment?



Each box in the heat map represents a frequency of responses. The darker the color the more the responses for each topic.

The Accommodation has a strong correlation with almost all the other topics as first and as second choice.



Interests Hobbies Activities

How do you spend your free time?



Many people answered that they don't have free time or that they do not do anything because they are searching for house.

What you would like to do different in your free time?



Is there a general comment that you want to share?



Humanity

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

Impartiality

It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

Neutrality

In order to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

Independence

The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

Voluntary service

It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

Unity

There can be only one Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

Universality

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.

