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REPAIR - REunification Pathway for IntegRation

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY REPORT ON NEEDS AND AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE FAMILY REUNION PROCESS

2024

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BritishRedCross



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY REPORT ON NEEDS AND AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE FAMILY REUNION PROCESS

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Executive summary of findings based on the experiences of people engaged in the family reunion process in countries of departure and arrival

February 2024

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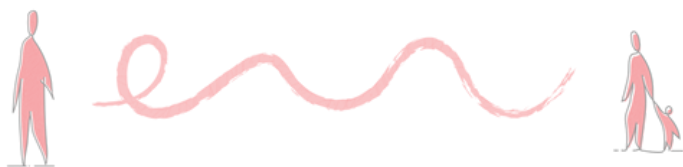


# Introduction

Family reunification is one of the safe and legal routes to protection in Europe. However, in practice, family members face multiple obstacles and challenges when seeking to reunite, primarily due to the complexity of the legal frameworks as well as practical obstacles throughout the process.

This report is a final summary of findings from participatory assessments of needs and potential areas for the development of support at different stages of the family reunification journey. It is one of the deliverables of the REunification PathwAys for IntegRation (REPAIR) project.

This report was prepared by Austrian Red Cross with the support of REPAIR partners. In each country partners worked together with diaspora communities to collect data through interviews, focus group discussions, and surveys with reunited families.



## ABOUT REPAIR

Funded by the EU's Asylum Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), led by IFRC and implemented by the Austrian Red Cross (ARC), the British Red Cross (BRC), the French Red Cross (FRC), and the Slovenian Red Cross (SRC); the REPAIR project has sought to adopt participatory approaches to explore new ways of supporting beneficiaries of international protection to access family reunification.

Project activities have addressed these needs by working with families and communities to develop and co-design ways of working and resources to support the process, and by providing direct support and assistance to families before, during and after the family reunification process.

# About Family Reunion

Family unity and family life are fundamental rights enshrined in international and EU law. For beneficiaries of international protection (BiP) and their family members, family reunification (FR) is often the only way to enjoy the fundamental right to family life and preserve family unity.



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“He is much better since his family arrived; he participates in sports and hangs out with his brothers and sisters. It's a huge change for him. He didn't like school before and didn't go out much. He's very happy and shares everything. Recently, on his birthday, he received his favourite shoes and gave them to his brother”

Discussion with a father (applicant), interview with FRC, March 2023

“I am a single mother of seven children, who have no father. I had to work and pay the bills for all of my children, for the apartment where they live in Ethiopia, for travel, and for food. I also needed to pay rent for my own flat and bills and other expenses here in Austria, which was difficult for me. The waiting time (for reunification) was so long.”

Somali refugee in Austria

Family separation can have devastating consequences on the well-being of individuals and their integration. As well as supporting psychological and emotional wellbeing, family reunification also provides desperate families with an alternative to making dangerous journeys - too often resulting in tragic deaths and disappearances - to join their loved ones.

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# Diaspora Research

One of the primary goals of the project has been to highlight gaps in the Family Reunion (FR) process. Understanding the concrete needs of people accessing Family Reunion, the needs of host communities, and the gaps in available services is crucial to identifying solutions.

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To achieve this, the first stage of the project focused on assessing the barriers (before, during and after being reunited with family members) faced by those who have already accessed Family Reunion and/or who are currently in the process.

This work package sought to conduct needs assessments with beneficiaries of international protection and their family members throughout the family reunification journey. The research consisted of the following activities:

- Co-production of questionnaires for beneficiaries of international protection and key informants, including caseworkers and organizations engaged in family reunification work.
- Interviews with beneficiaries of international protection and key informants.
- Production of an executive summary report.

# Dissemination

This findings from this research were initially only intended for dissemination to REPAIR partners, with the results feeding in to the development of materials and tools supporting families to access family reunification.

However, on completion, there was a strong will among partners to share the research findings more widely, resulting in this more public-facing report.

Findings have already also been shared with UNHCR and within the RC Family Reunification Working Group, including National Societies from across the EU and around the world.



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# Note on Methodology

- Tools and methods used in needs assessment
- Co-production of Questionnaire
- Sample and demographics

The main goal of the needs assessment was to collect additional information about the level of support to, and unaddressed needs of, families before, during and after the family reunification process.

The data collection tools were designed in cooperation with organizations and representatives of relevant diaspora communities. As part of the methodology, and to ensure the quality of collected data, project partners used various methods to ensure a participatory assessment approach. Information on needs and support to family members in countries of departure/origin was collected separately by partner-National Societies and some diaspora organizations.

Results and findings of the needs assessment have been analyzed with the support of community partners. Decisions on the recommendations and the deliverable format and content of this research will be taken together with each project partner.



# Tools and Methods

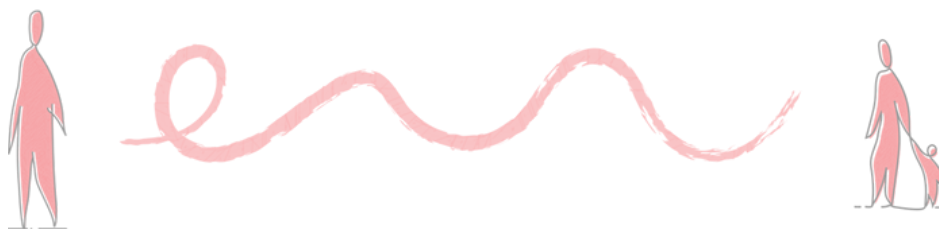
The needs assessment was conducted in all four implementing countries. The primary method was a questionnaire developed together with community partners to structure interviews with beneficiaries of international protection from various countries of origin and key informants.

During planning, project partners decided to adopt a mix of uniform and context-specific approaches to carry out the assessment. This approach was necessary to allow for the differences in all four countries and to ensure the quality of collected data.

To support the consistency of structured interviews and data collection, KoBo Toolbox was used to assist with data collection <https://www.kobotoolbox.org/>

Depending on the family reunification process and working context of each project partner National Society, other methods were also used, including:

- Focus group discussions
- Stakeholder interviews
- Community partner discussions
- Questionnaires/surveys



# Sample and Demographics

The sample for the needs assessment was defined by project partners and proportional, based on their total number of family reunification cases within REPAIR (Figure 1), and the nationalities represented within these (Figure 2, p12).

The assessment included both ‘sponsors’ - family members already in a safe country - and ‘family members’, those seeking to travel to be reunited with their loved one or loved ones. Of 199 participants who contributed to the research, the majority represented cases from Syria, Afghanistan, Somalia, Iran, Eritrea, and Rwanda.

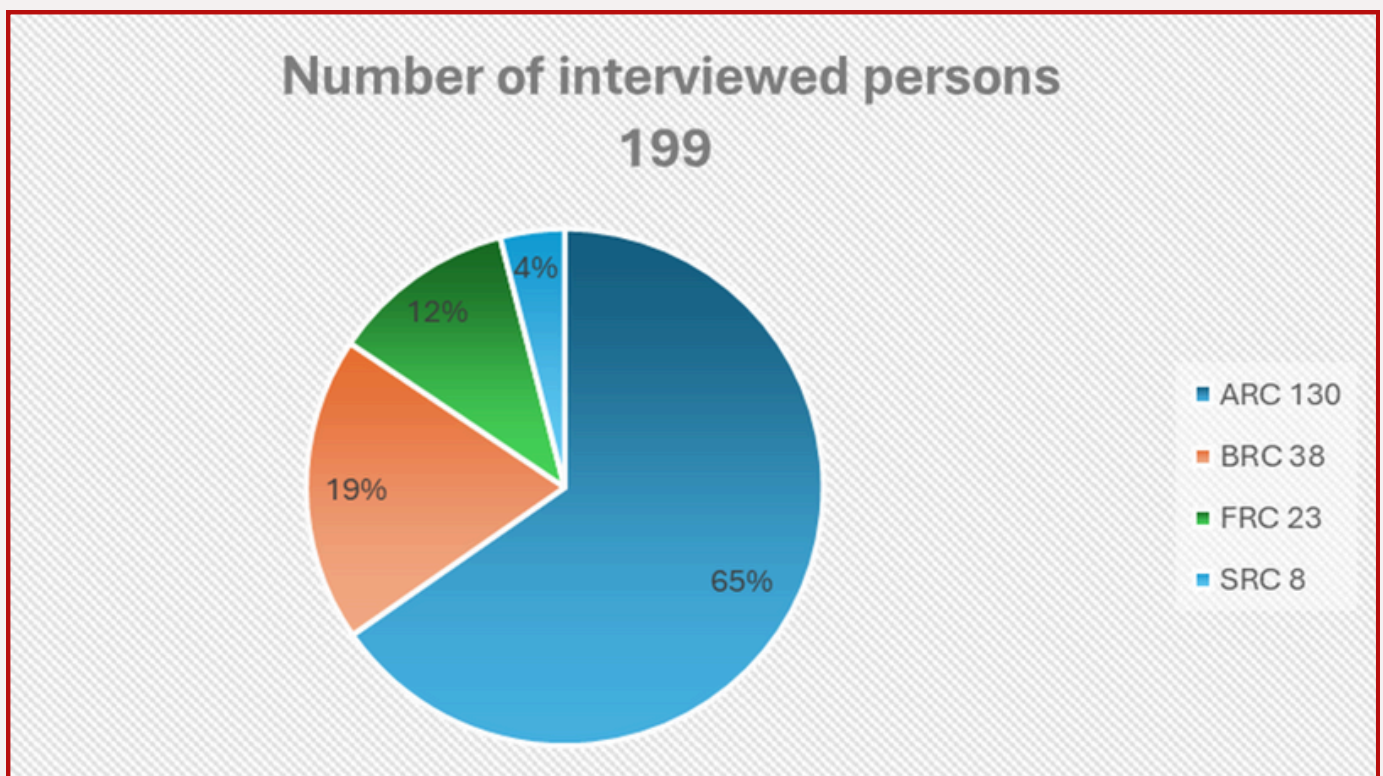


Figure 1: Number of participants – Austrian, British, French and Slovenian Red Cross

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# Co-Production of Questionnaire

The questionnaire included questions related to the demographics of participants and to different phases of the family reunification process.

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An initial questionnaire for the needs assessment was produced by the Austrian Red Cross in cooperation with a diaspora organization from Austria. This document was then reviewed by the project team and diaspora partner organizations, and feedback provided was used to adapt the questionnaire.

Some questions were adapted for language and formulation, and to reduce potential bias. Trying to control for bias was important for all project partners, but due to differing working practices and capacities, project partners adopted varying approaches to address this. In Austria diaspora partner organizations and volunteers conducted the interviews, for example.

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Other project partners were not able to conduct interviews with diaspora communities because this practice hasn't been established yet in National Society ways of working, and engagement with communities is still developing.

The needs assessment questionnaire covers a range of questions related to all three phases of the family reunification process.

To ensure a broad range of perspectives on unmet needs relating to the family reunification process were collected, an additional questionnaire was created for key informants: UNHCR, ICRC delegations and other organizations working with people in need of international protection.

# Sample and Demographics

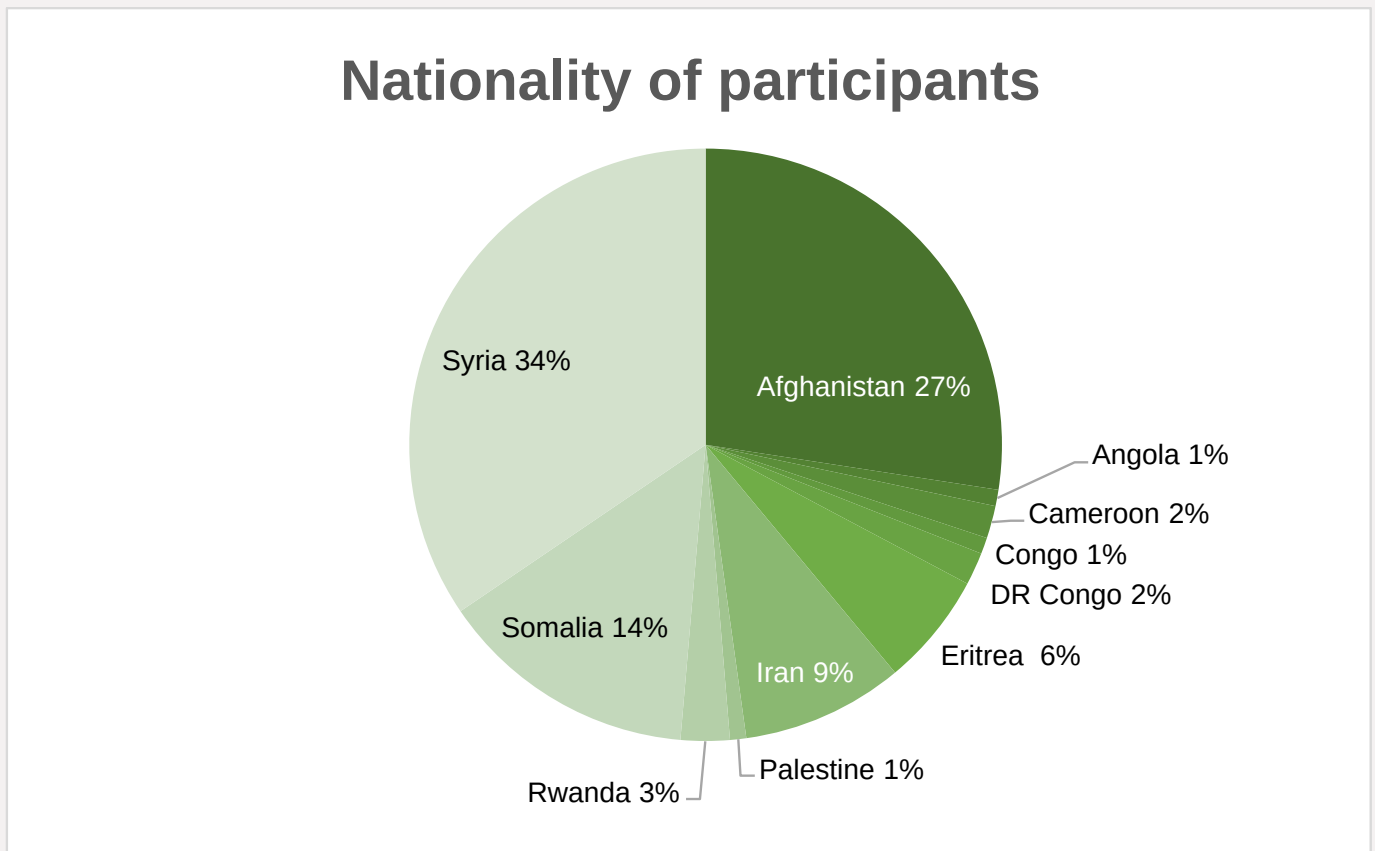


Figure 2: Nationality of participants in Austria, France, UK and Slovenia.

Participants in the needs assessment were mostly people under international protection - ranging from 69% of participants in France to 100% in the UK. Other participants had subsidiary protection or other residency status.

Around 70% of people interviewed in Austria, UK and Slovenia were male. In France around 39% were female, 30% male and 30% minors, who took part in focus group discussions and individual interviews.



# Sample and Demographics

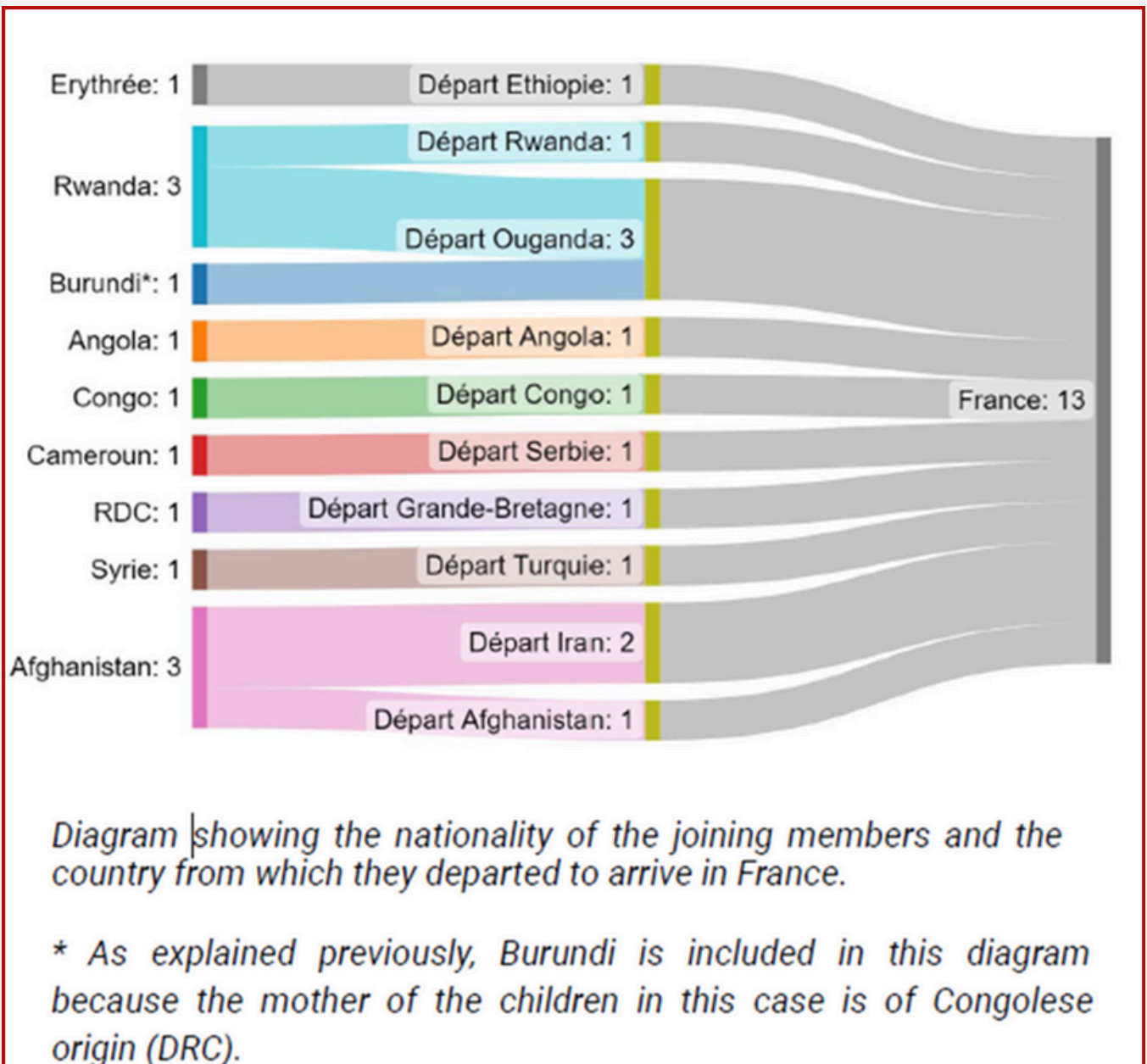


Figure 3: French Red Cross - Nationalities of participants and their country of departure.

# Sample and Demographics

Data collection was conducted by a variety of means through project partners, and partner diaspora community organizations. In Austria 43 of 130 people interviewed were contacted through diaspora community networks. Focus group discussions were a very important way of collecting data and understanding people's needs during the family reunification process.

British RC and French RC organized focus group discussions as well as individual interviews. Austrian RC and Slovenian RC conducted individual interviews only.

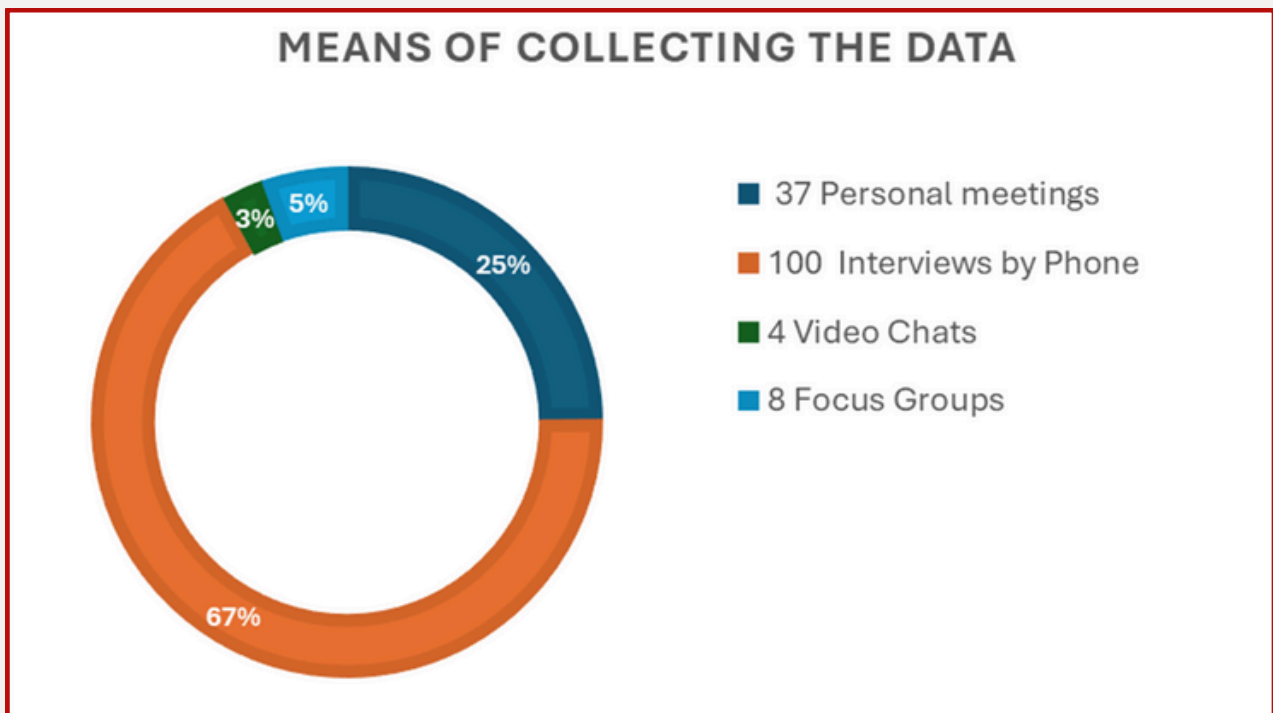


Figure 4: Means of collecting the data - Austrian, British, French and Slovenian Red Cross.

# Summary Findings

The questionnaire for assessing the needs of separated families during the family reunification process consisted of a set of demographic questions followed by questions about three key phases of the reunification process:



## Pre-departure

All project partners: Austrian, British, French and Slovenian Red Cross conducted needs assessments on the pre-departure phase.



## Departure

All project partners: Austrian, British, French and Slovenian Red Cross assessed needs during the departure from country of origin or transit country to arrival in their destination country.



## Post-arrival

Assessments of needs after arrival in the destination country were conducted by Austrian and French Red Cross Societies.

# Pre-Departure

This part of the report aims to identify key areas where refugees and their family members require support during the waiting period before they are reunited. It highlights key findings regarding the sources of information, preferred communication channels, language preferences, and challenges faced by applicants.

Pre-departure is often the longest and most challenging phase of the reunification procedure, as applicants struggle with prolonged separation, complex administrative and logistical processes, travel, and documentation costs, etc. The diagram below shows the most important difficulties and challenges identified by participants in the assessment:

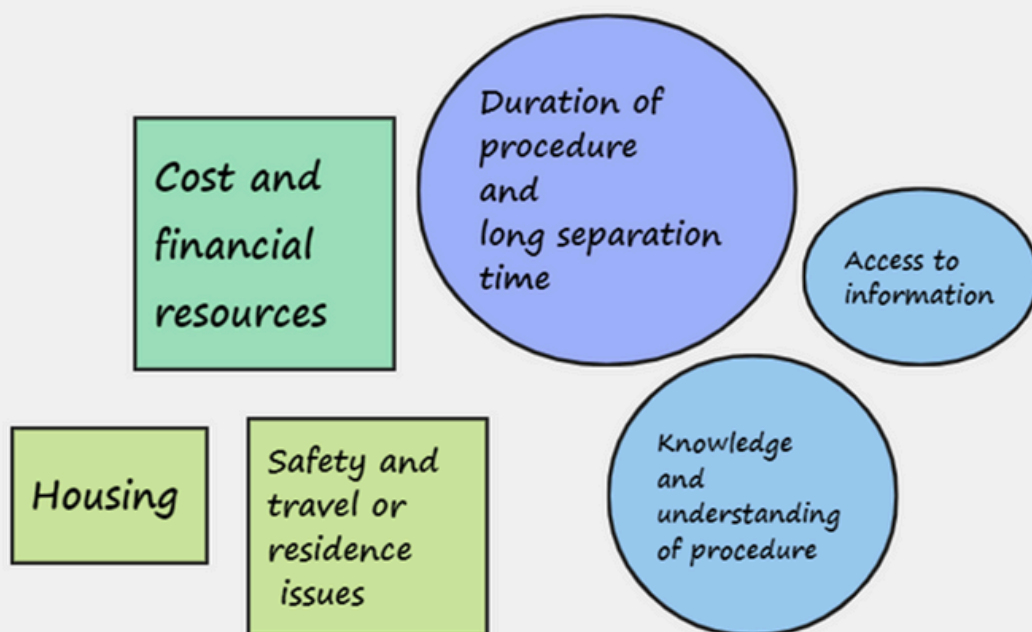


Figure 5: Challenges during the pre-departure of family reunification.

The figure above maps topics raised, divided between procedural/legal (green squares) and practical (blue circles) issues, and with the size of each box indicating the relative importance placed on each topic by participants.



# Pre-Departure

In the UK, 90% of all interviewees said they suffered from stress and anxiety as a result of family separation during their wait to receive protection status, an issue that was prevalent across all partner countries.

The initial stage of this assessment recorded 20 participants - 11 male and 9 female. One participant came from Afghanistan, nine from Iran and ten from Eritrea. At the moment of applying for family reunion, 16 of the participants already had a refugee status. 14 reported receiving support from the Red Cross at various stages of the process. see figure 7 below.

Sponsors in the UK identified multiple areas where information provision could be improved, including:

- Having regular information on delays.
- Knowing who to speak to access information and what to do next.
- Knowing that Red Cross could provide some support and avoid paying the lawyers.
- Having more information for understanding the steps of the procedure and what to expect.

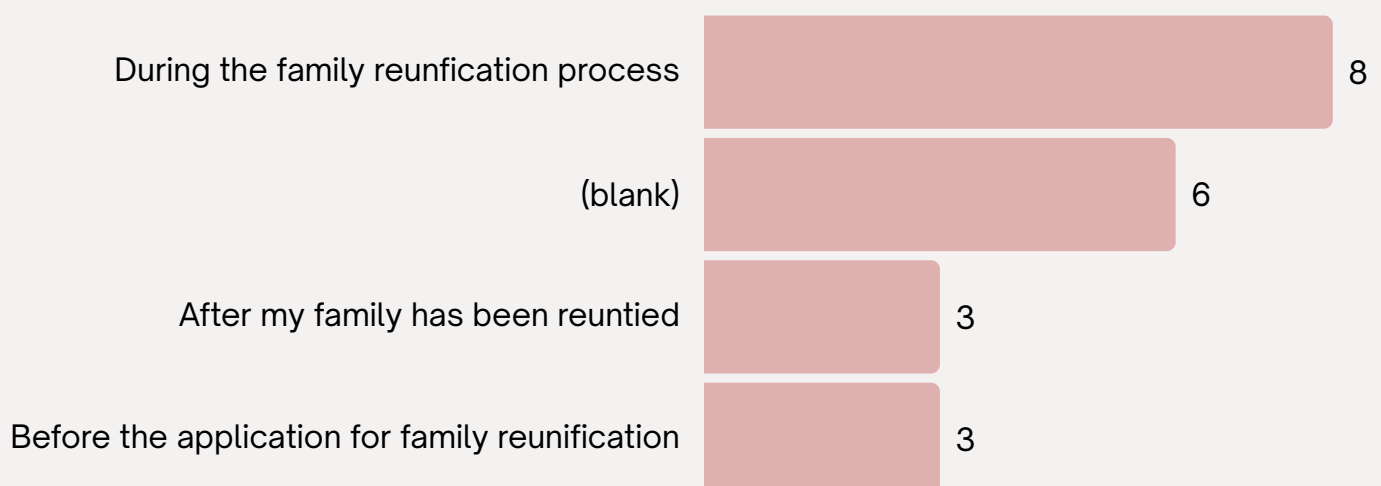


Figure 6: BRC: Number of families who received support in different stages of family reunification.

The duration of the family reunification procedure was an issue in all four countries – 81 of 130 people in Austria stated that the waiting period was their main challenge.

Direct consequences of the length of the family reunification procedure include the continued separation of family members, increasing costs for living, travel, and documentation, concerns over safety, and psycho-social challenges that the uncertainty and stress of the situation brings to family members.

The needs assessment shows that more than half (55%) of families in all four countries were separated for more than 2 years. About half of all family members seeking to join their loved ones were still in their country of origin.

**Of the support you accessed, what did you find most useful:**

*Regular contact with legal advisors/case managers*

*Access to trustworthy information*

*Financial aid*

*Travel assistance – practical/financial*

*Additional support with housing, childcare, and form completion*

**What support was missing that you would have found useful:**

*Additional financial aid*

*Access to more or trustworthy information on FR process*

*Assistance with housing*

*Regular contact with legal advisors or case managers*

*Travel assistance – practical/financial*

Needs identified in this pre-departure phase of family reunification related to following issues:

- **Financial support**
- **Sources of information**
- **Access to housing and healthcare**

# Breakdown of Costs



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## Initial Travel Costs

Traveling from the country of origin to the country of transit (e.g., Eritrea to Sudan or Syria to Turkey). To complete travel formalities, all families are required to present themselves at an embassy of the country they will be traveling too at least once. This can be challenging both logistically and financially.

Families coming from countries like Syria, Afghanistan, or Eritrea have to travel in neighbour countries or even more far away to attend an embassy of the country of destination for in-person interview. Due to the fact that some EU countries have only few embassies, this severely affects some third country nationals. Additionally, in extreme cases high unofficial “facilitation fees” may be demanded to enable travel through countries of transit - totally undermining the intention of Family Reunion as a “safe pathway”.



Copyright: IFRC

## Living Expenses in Country of Transit

Accommodation and life costs, entry or exit visa fees, medical costs, and possibly irregular security-related costs.



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## Obtaining Required Documentation

Fees associated with acquiring necessary documents to launch the family reunification procedure or to provide the necessary evidence required for a decision – this can include very high costs and complicated logistics for DNA testing or the issuing of passports and travel documents.



Canva.com

## Sponsor's Costs

Sponsors are often responsible for supporting family members financially with covering their living costs, as well as additional expenses related to the family reunification process. Many applicants transfer money to the countries where their family members are located during the process, with varying costs depending on the destination.

Additionally, sponsors face the dilemma of whether to pay potentially high travel expenses to visit family members in the country of transit during the process – this is especially challenging if the separation of the family has been for an extended period. The costs of simply keeping in touch (phone and internet bills, postage etc.) can mount up. The need to cover these costs often comes alongside the necessity to put aside adequate funds to cover the cost of appropriate housing in the country of destination once family members arrive.

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Participants emphasized the need for support to balance competing priorities, such as securing housing and initiating the reunification process. Access to comprehensive assistance could prevent individuals from accruing debt or entering unfavorable financial arrangements to cover the demands placed on them.

### Sponsor from Slovenia

“I am doing everything I can, and everything that has been asked of me, to bring my family here. I have collected all the documents that have been asked for, I have paid a lot of money to get those documents and paid a lot to send them where they needed to be, and still we don't have an answer.”



# Sources of Information

The primary source of information for family members waiting to travel is their sponsor who is already residing in the country of destination. Due to limited access to information outside their family circle, most joining family members rely solely on their family members or in some cases their community – this was stated by approximately 40% of participants – for guidance regarding the immigration process.

Identified Need	Description
Access to Information	Minors, whether in their country of origin or in transit countries, often lack information about the immigration process and the reasons for visiting the embassy. Parents, aiming to protect their children, often provide minimal information until the day of departure.
Regular Information Updates	Access to timely and accurate information regarding delays in the reunification process was identified as crucial for managing expectations and planning.
Guidance on Accessing Information	Participants expressed a need for clear guidance on whom to contact to obtain information about the next steps in the reunification process.
Preferred Communication Channels	Among the interviewed individuals, a significant portion expressed a preference for receiving information through legal advice centers (ca.40%), followed by direct email (ca.30%), and communication apps like WhatsApp, Viber, or Facebook. Additionally, respondents emphasized the importance of receiving information in their native language.
Language Preferences	Both sponsors and joining members reported a lack of information available in their native language and dialects, underscoring the need for materials to be provided in various languages to ensure comprehension and accessibility.

## Identified Need

## Description

### Understanding Procedure

Approximately **55%** of those interviewed reported difficulties in understanding the immigration procedure.

Key reasons cited for this included:

- Language barriers
- Limited knowledge about the legal system
- Insufficient information
- Complexity of the process
- Reliance on family members who themselves may not be well-informed about the process.

“It would be useful if someone could support my family during their travel. Especially in Turkey when they experience difficulties due to being Kurdish people and not speaking other languages”

Family member in UK

“We missed the exact details of when we would actually see each other. All the processes were very long, and in between we were afraid that we would not see each other at all.”

Family member in Austria

# Access to Housing and Healthcare

Access to housing and healthcare was an issue for almost all families, at all stages of the reunification process, including for those still residing in their country of origin. Family members residing outside their countries of origin - be that in transit or in destination countries - reported facing huge difficulties related to these issues.

Joining family members expressed challenges in finding affordable housing and/or accessing medical assistance, especially in transit countries and countries of destination, highlighting the need for assistance in navigating these processes and offering practical help in managing and adjusting to everyday life in new countries.

Cultural and linguistic barriers further complicated access to essential services, emphasizing the importance of providing accessible information and support.

“The main support from the Red Cross was the timely counselling at the start, during, and after the process ended.

The Red Cross helped us to arrange and attend appointments on time, collect documents when needed by the embassy, and helped us with school registration.”

Sponsor in Austria

## Red Cross Assistance

Participants highlighted the importance of Red Cross support, which streamlined processes and eased the burden of navigating the immigration system. Upon receiving a positive decision on their status, participants suggested automatic referral to organizations like the Red Cross to ensure awareness of rights and entitlements regarding family reunification. A high proportion of participants – **65%** in Austria and **37%** in Slovenia – stated that the Red Cross service helped them in understanding the procedure.

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# Departure

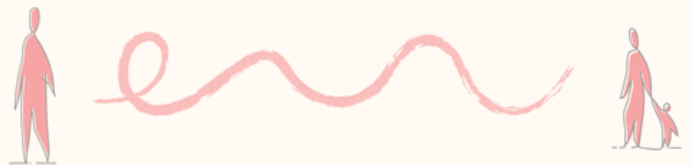
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During their reunification journey, families encounter a myriad of challenges, including hurdles related to departure from their country of origin or transit country.

Many expressed their concerns about risks and difficulties related to accommodation, health, general safety, and problems with local authorities, during their transit which they feared would exacerbate their vulnerability. The risks include exposure to sexual exploitation as women rely on smugglers and people introduced to them from distance by their husband; long travel journeys and the risk for many to exit their country of origins illegally; their financial and social vulnerability as they are faced with lack of finance and multiple journeys to visa application centres and attending multiple appointments to gather required documentations.

There was a strong emphasis on problems related to:

- Visa Application Expenses
- High living and travel costs
- Finding accommodation



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## Visa Application Expenses

Fees for visa applications, including expenses for additional documents or permits add up. In most cases joining family members need to travel to the embassy in person to apply for and pick up their visas. Approximately 50% of family members in the REPAIR research needed to travel to another country to do this - adding another layer of visas, travel documents and costs required to access reunification.

Several families faced the risk of overstaying and becoming illegal aliens in transit countries due to visa issues, leading to additional obstacles and potential fines.

# Financial Difficulties Faced by Families

Where travel costs were not covered by organizations like the Red Cross, some applicants had to obtain loans to finance plane tickets. Tickets were often expensive due to short notice, unusual destinations, and purchasing tickets for multiple family members.

Even with assistance from organizations like the Red Cross or support from community members, a huge number of families need to cover costs by themselves. In addition to the high costs while waiting for a decision on a family reunion application, departure and travel costs can force families - and especially sponsors - into debt and precarious financial situations. About 40% of research participants in Austria shared that they had financial difficulties related to departure costs.

## Sponsor in UK

“I didn't work at that time, so I just had to borrow money to be able to bring my wife. I was borrowing £20, £50... Like that. From many people. It could be easier to arrange these tickets if my wife could have some help in the travels, because she doesn't speak languages and doesn't have experience travelling. So, I bought her direct tickets from Teheran to London. But these were very expensive. Sometimes, you can buy cheaper tickets if you have transfers. But it would be difficult for my wife to make those changes while she cannot communicate with anyone”.

“The police at the airport looked for an excuse to ask for money from my wife, to get through the Gate, but because she didn't have any money to give to them, they rejected her, and she missed her plane and I needed to buy her another plane ticket. Sometimes the police just stop you and ask for money, because you are an Afghan foreigner. The police at the airport didn't want to let my family take the plane, unless she paid them money. Their reason for holding them was a stupid excuse. They said that she came to Pakistan through another border than she said...they just wanted money from her.”

## Sponsor in Austria



# Challenges in Finding Accommodation

Most respondents found the process of finding accommodation in transit countries extremely challenging, citing bureaucratic complexities and limited availability. Navigating the local housing system in transit countries proved to be a significant challenge for families, with limited options available and complex procedures to follow in a relatively short time.

Challenges included:

- Family members had to leave the country within a limited period.
- Only high-cost options were available or accessible to them - e.g, hotel.
- Uncertainty of how long they need to stay in the country depending on how smoothly or otherwise the process goes.

Some participants reported being forced to stay in overcrowded conditions at friends' houses, highlighting the lack of suitable temporary accommodation options. The prolonged duration of stay in temporary accommodation added to the frustration and uncertainty people experienced.



IFRC/Stephen Ryan

# Post-Arrival

Following arrival in their destination country, most families encountered several common issues. Considered as a final part of family reunification process there is an existing gap on national level regarding the provision of information by authorities or simplified procedure for post-arrival support.

Most families didn't have enough information regarding first steps upon arrival having great difficulties in carrying out all administrative procedures and accessing the law on their own. This included a lack of information regarding post-arrival procedures, notably concerning emergency or temporary housing and enrolling their children in schools. Only around 10 % participants felt that they knew what to do upon arrival.

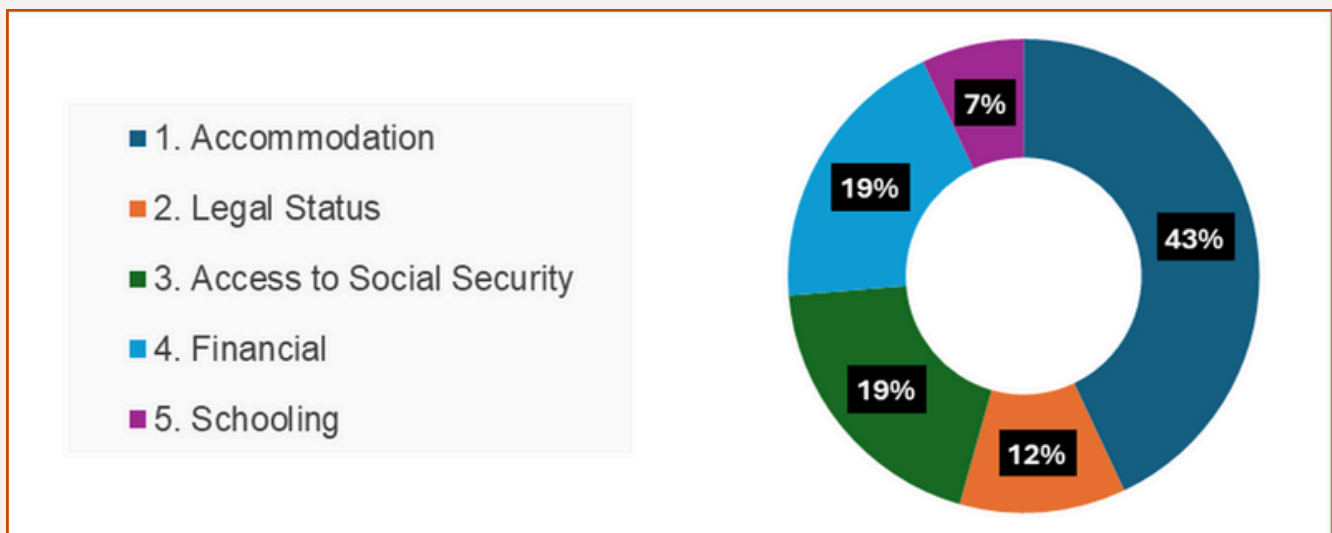


Figure 7: Main issues families face upon arrival in country of destination

Financial challenges stemming from airport pick-up expenses were also prevalent. Administrative difficulties and language barriers led to misunderstandings and complications with border police and immigration procedures, in some cases resulting in further separation of families.

## Accommodation

A lack of accommodation is the most pressing concern that almost all families express, not only after arrival in the country of destination but during the procedure, in transit countries and even in countries of origin.

The reasons for this are several: there is a general and almost universal lack of emergency/short term housing for refugees; most families can only start searching for permanent housing after arriving at their destination; families are unfamiliar with the usual process to search for accommodation in their new country and do not yet have social connections which could help them; landlords often require residency permits and/or proof of income which take time for new arrivals to acquire. Additionally, protracted delays in obtaining financial assistance for accommodation, where it is available, also serve to exacerbate these issues.

## Schooling

Access to schooling depends greatly on where in their new country a family is located. Finding a place for each child can be difficult depending on local availability and communication with schools. Despite this, once school places can be found, most children adapt well to their new school environment. Even when there is a language barrier, children quickly adjust to the local language, often much faster than other family members.



Copyright: ARC/Michael Kreihsl

## Legal Status

One of the first actions families must do is register as asylum seekers and in turn receive their residence permit or refugee status or ask directly for a residence permit depending on the hosted country. This process can take a very long time, during which applicants cannot work or receive only partial government aid. Most reunited families receive temporary governmentally assigned accommodation, but these often have inadequate space for the number of people housed or no privacy for mothers with small children.

Not having a proper legal status can also hinder applicants in their search for jobs, permanent housing, and schools/nurseries. This can lead to extreme stress, especially among mothers living alone with their children who fear they may become destitute.

Another issue families raised was the administrative hurdles that arise due to the combination of language barriers and complicated procedures. This can be exacerbated by security measures prohibiting contact between a sponsor - who is usually more familiar with the context in the new country - and their family members. There are numerous pitfalls that can slow or even halt the asylum process completely, particularly issues with documents such as passports or birth certificates, and children reaching their 18th birthdays and legally becoming adults during the process.



## Access to Social Security

Most families expressed the need to access social security support and healthcare. Lack of, or long delays in, access to either or both of these can hinder family members from accessing needed healthcare. Many families simply cannot afford up-front health costs and need to wait until they have either social security or direct healthcare support to be able to access services.

After being separated, often for several years, families may need access to psychological support. Young children especially may also be traumatized from the journey they have undertaken to reunite with their loved ones. There is a lack of structured psychological support available, and given the many other administrative difficulties reunited families face on arrival, psychological support is often not prioritized.

## Financial Security



The first major financial burden that surprises many families is the cost of being picked-up from the airport on arrival. Afterwards, many families find themselves in a need of financial support because they cannot access the employment market or (adequate) assistance from the state. This problem compounds as without enough money, a healthy diet may not be sustained, and even basic housing may become unaffordable.

Lack of employment also means a degradation in socio-professional integration, as new arrivals try to fit into their new country.

This often leads to the family taking on loans to stay afloat, further increasing the debt many families take on to cover the original costs of fleeing in the first place.



# Key Informant Partners Survey

Twelve organizations from 12 different countries were invited to participate in the assessment of needs and challenges during family reunification. Their contributions provide broad experience and the perspective of case workers and service providers. UNHCR for Somalia was also asked to take part, but as they do not provide Family Reunion services opted not to participate.

The following 11 organizations participated in the survey:

- **Cultuur in Harmonie** - Netherlands
- **UNHCR** - Türkiye, Iran, Lebanon
- **Vrije Universiteit Brussel** - Belgium
- **International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP) Europe** - France, Sweden, and Germany
- **ICRC** - Pakistan, Uzbekistan for Afghanistan

Many organizations provide assistance in the pre-departure (10) and post-visa granting stage (9), offering various different types of support and information provision:

1. provision of information, referral to other institutions - **75%**
2. legal, administrative, and practical support - **50%**
3. facilitating physical reunification - **42%**
4. help with obtaining documents - **33%**

Organizations also provided information regarding additional types of support they offer, including:

- Emotional and psychosocial support, safe spaces to share experiences, translation of documents. [Cultuur in Harmonie, Netherlands]
- Liaising with other UNHCR operations to request information on legal advisory services, advice in complicated cases, and to establish contacts with state institutions (when necessary), such as: Welfare State Organization or other agencies that can provide logistical support to accompany applicants to obtain documentation or be informed of other aspects of the process (Overstay Penalties). [UNHCR, Iran]
- Facilitation of family reunification interviews (virtual) with receiving countries by providing office space and use of UNHCR reception facilities. [UNHCR, Lebanon]
- Access to information (usually in the mother language), translation and safe spaces to share experiences with other sponsors. Financial support when there are no other options. [Cultuur in Harmonie, Netherlands]
- Facilitating exit permits with Turkish authorities. [UNHCR, Turkiye]

Copyright: IFRC/Yara Naradi



Integration support after family reunification is provided only in the Netherlands by Cultuur in Harmonie.

Asked to select 3 top challenges related to the provision of services in pre-arrival, the results based on responses from 11 organizations were:

1. **Evidence gathering support - 60%**
2. **Navigating the visa application system - 50%**
3. **Logistical challenges - 42%**
4. Access to embassies and dealing with authorities - 33%

Key informant partners reported that the majority of stakeholders providing support in countries are:

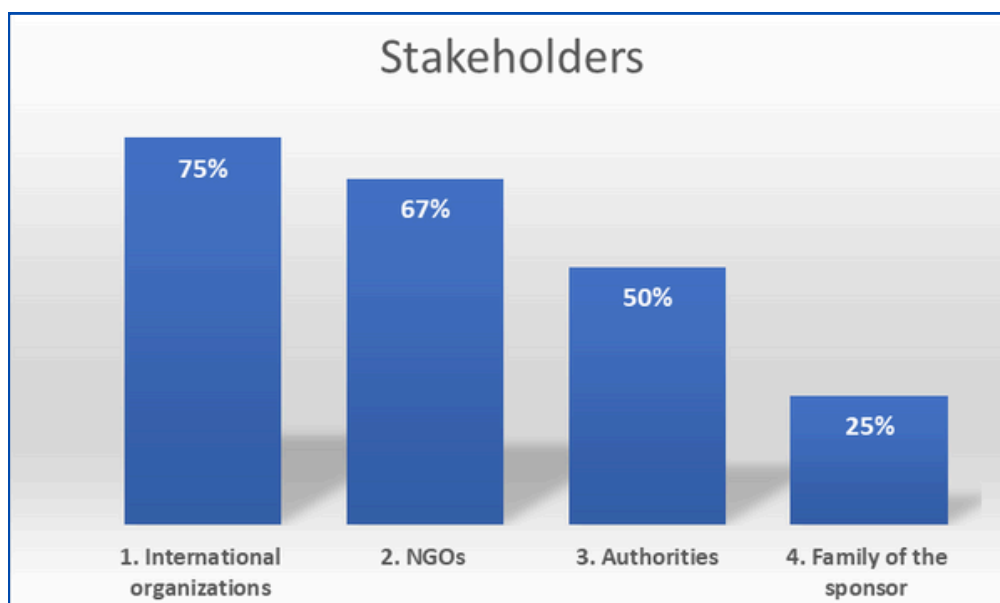


Figure 8: Stakeholders providing support in countries of origin or transit.

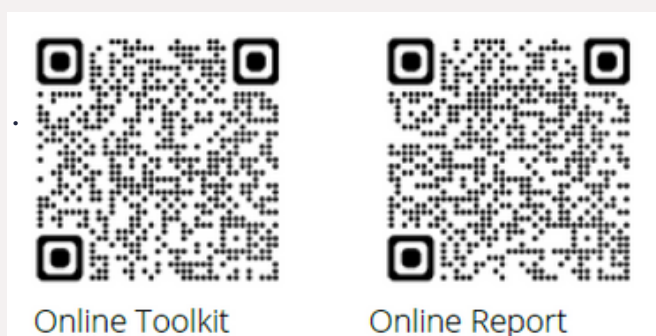
In selecting the top 3 challenges and gaps which families face during pre-arrival stage the results from the same 11 organizations were:

1. Financial challenges - **50%**
2. Access to embassies - **42%**
3. Evidence gathering, difficulties in existing countries and navigating the visa application system - **33%**

# Next Steps...

The results and findings of the needs assessments have been used by partners to continue ongoing discussions with community partners. As well as informing the creation of information materials and supporting more inclusive and participatory ways of working, the findings have also been used to develop a series of recommendations for how challenges throughout the family reunification process can be addressed.

Recommendations have been established at both country and project level - with asks to authorities as well as to civil society - and are available through the Online REPAIR report as well as the REPAIR Online Toolkit.



Outreach events highlighting the work of REPAIR and the assessment findings were organized in 2024 with ICRC delegations and National Societies in countries of departure to help build contacts and raise awareness on FR needs.

A final project event in Brussels in December 2024 provided a further opportunity to disseminate both findings of the assessment, and the REPAIR project overall.

## Conclusion

The experiences of reunification shared by families during this assessment shine a light on the huge range of challenges encountered - from financial constraints to legal hurdles to emotional and psychological hardships. Addressing these requires a coordinated effort from governments, international organizations, and civil society to ensure the well-being of separated families throughout their reunification journeys.