

COVID-19 COMMUNITY FEEDBACK REPORT

TURKEY, COMMUNITY-BASED MIGRATION PROGRAMME
#1 August-December 2020



TRCS staff distributing masks and disseminating information about COVID-19 to a community member

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in both a public health crisis, and a humanitarian crisis, affecting the lives, health, and livelihoods of people around the world. In Turkey, understanding of the COVID-19 outbreak is rapidly evolving. **There are information gaps, misconceptions, and rumours about the virus, how it can spread or how to prevent the risk of infection which can create social tension or lead to practising harmful behaviour.**

As part of the IFRC supported COVID-19 response project targeting refugees and host population in Turkey, staff and volunteers of Turkish Red Crescent Society (TRCS) under the Community Based Migration Programme has been collecting and responding to communities' questions, feedback, complaints and rumours at each of its 16 Community Centres (CCs) across the country. This is one of the key activities under the project to monitor and address the information gaps, promote positive behaviour, and ensure that the services delivered are relevant and appropriate to communities' needs.

WHAT INFORMATION IS COLLECTED?

COMPLAINT

formal expression of dissatisfaction about service or someone's behaviour

QUESTION

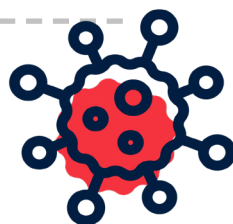
about COVID-19 or TRCS Community Centre COVID-19 activities

FEEDBACK

information, suggestion, request or compliment

RUMOUR

any unverified information transmitted from one person to another



HOW INFORMATION IS COLLECTED?

To enable all Community Centre staff and volunteers to record and respond to various issues on COVID-19, a feedback form was developed and deployed through KoBo toolbox. Staff roles, responsibilities and procedures to respond to various issues on COVID-19 were shared with the Community Centres and discussed during an online training in July 2020. Starting from 1 August 2020, staff and volunteers at the Community Centres have started to use the KoBo feedback form. This report, covering the period from 1 August – 31 December 2020, presents an overview and analysis of various issues - questions, feedback, complaints, and rumours on COVID-19 that were received from and responded to community members in the 16 Community Centre locations. The findings are aimed to inform sector teams and improve the ongoing COVID-19 response operation.

Total number of issues received

1,027



670
women

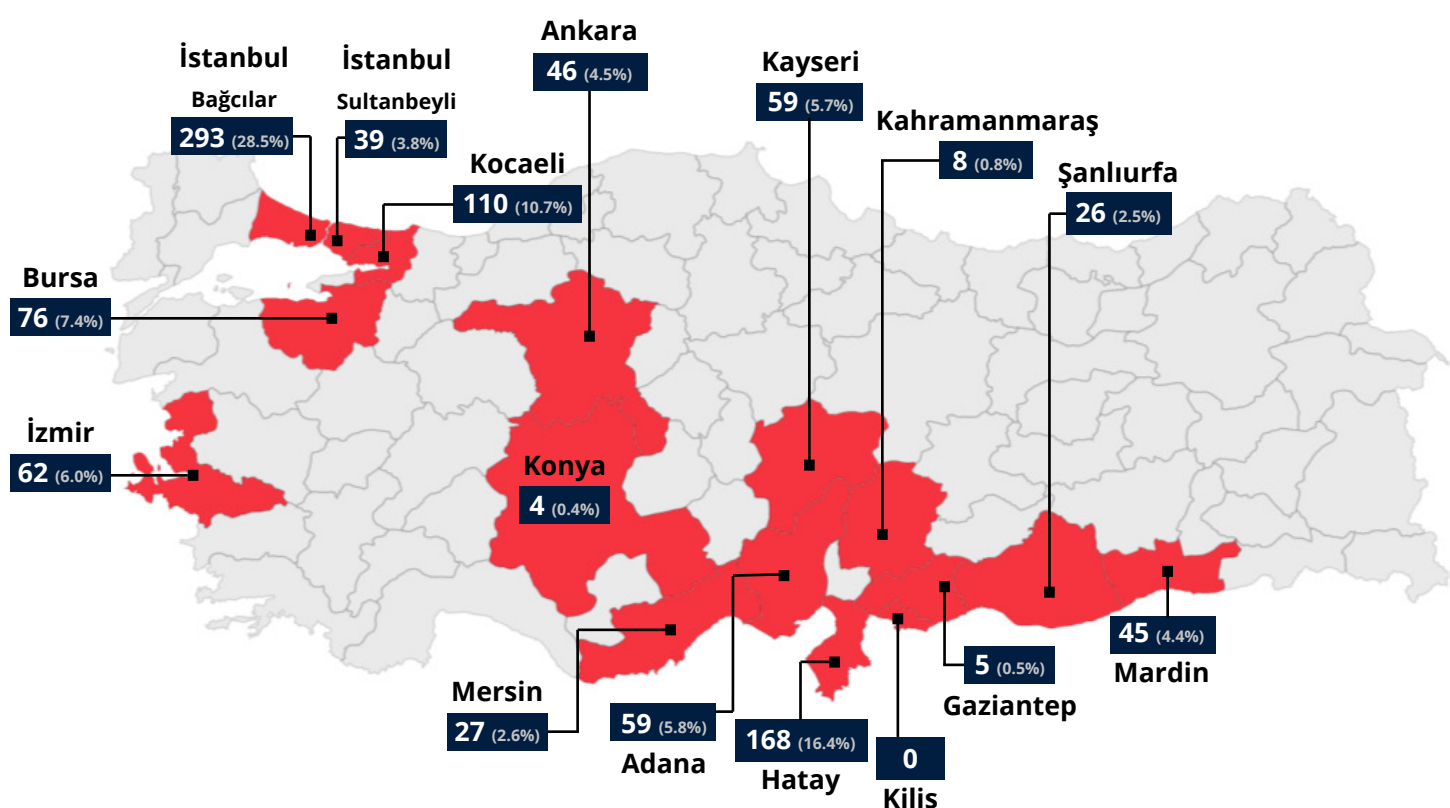


357
men

QUESTIONS:	469 (45.6%)
FEEDBACK:	372 (36.2%)
RUMOURS:	159 (15.5%)
COMPLAINTS:	27 (2.6%)

Number of issues received, by province

Including feedback, questions, complaints and rumours



Out of 1,027 issues, 670 (65.2%) issues were reported by women and 357 (34.7%) by men. The highest number of issues were reported by women in Bağcılar counting to 215 (20.9%) questions, feedback, complaints, and rumours. The findings show that refugees shared more responses (896 responses, 84.1%) compared to host population (155 responses, 14.5%).



The age distribution of the community members who shared various issues: 2 issues (0.2%) by children (5-17-year-olds), 773 issues (75.2%) by adults (18-59-year olds) and 25 issues (2.4%) by the elderly (over the age of 60). Once again, the highest number of issues were reported by adults in Bağcılar with a total of 197 issues (19.1%). 869 (84.6%) issues were reported by refugees, 146 (14.2%) by local people, and 11 issues (1.1%) by people of nationalities such as Moroccan, Turkmen, Iraqi, Lebanese, Egyptian and Tunisian.

Number of issues received, by age and status



* 227 (22.1%) of respondents did not share their age.
** In this report, the term refugee refers to Syrians under Temporary Protection (SuTP) and those under International Protection as defined in the Law No: 6458 on Foreigners and International Protection.



TRCS staff responding to feedback from a Community Centre participant

Responding to feedback, complaints and questions

Number of issues received, by category

The different types of questions, feedback and complaints reported are classified under seven categories: hygiene parcel, TRCS services, information about COVID-19, government support, psychosocial support, access to health care and others.

Hygiene parcel	450 (42.2%)	Government support	116 (10.9%)
Other TRCS activities on COVID-19	135 (12.7%)	Psychosocial support	29 (2.7%)
Other (COVID-19 related)	179 (16.8%)	Access and referral to healthcare	16 (1.5%)
Information about COVID-19	140 (13.2%)		



Majority of the issues reported, i.e. 450 issues (42.2%), were related to hygiene parcels, where 292 questions and 85 feedback were about how to receive TRCS hygiene parcels and 13 complaints were about the quality of the packages. **Given the COVID-19 situation, this finding shows that the need for hygiene parcels is quite high among community members, as most people have asked about the procedure to receive the parcels from TRCS while others have suggested how to improve the package.**

Questions about hygiene parcels also included how to receive TRCS hygiene parcel, if the hygiene parcel were provided only to Syrians, what were the items in the package and its usefulness. Complaints were overall related to the low quality of washing powder, sanitary napkins, and toothpaste in the package. Some shared feedback that the size of the parcel was not adequate for large families. Suggestions were made to include masks and disinfectants as part of the package. There were quite many feedback from people saying that while the hygiene parcel was useful, the need for food was quite high and that food parcels should also be distributed.

“

“How do I receive TRCS hygiene parcel?”

“Are the parcels only for Syrians?”

“The size of the package wasn’t adequate for larger families.”

Around 135 responses (12.6%) were about TRCS services, where 70 feedback and 31 questions were related to TRCS activities on COVID-19, suggesting TRCS to provide livelihood support or enquiring if there were any livelihood activities that they could participate in, given that a lot of people have lost their jobs during COVID-19 pandemic and have no regular income. Fewer responses, 31, were related to TRCS information services on COVID-19.

“

“I suggest Turkish Red Crescent to increase the number of employment or livelihood related courses.”

“I was dismissed from my job during the coronavirus pandemic. Can you help me find a new job with a work permit?”

Under Information about COVID-19, 140 responses (13.1%) were received, with majority of the issues related to asking information about the trusted sources of information (27 responses). Other information people were looking for: how to prevent COVID-19 (19 responses), COVID-19 symptoms (14 responses), what to do if infected (14 responses) and how to protect people with chronic disease (14 responses). Fewer people asked about who to ask questions on COVID-19, how to wear and how long to wear masks, when to wash hands and precautions for pregnant women.

Under Government support, 116 responses (10.8%) were received, of which almost all (109 responses) were regarding how to access distance learning programme.

How were the issues received?



The channel most frequently used by community members to share feedback was phone (649 issues, 63.1%). Despite the COVID-19 situation, face to face interaction at the Community Centres was the second most preferred channel used by people to share their concerns. Around 258 issues (25.1%) were recorded through face to face interaction at the centre. 62 issues (6.04%) were recorded through the Advisory Committee meetings. Fewer issues were received through WhatsApp, Zoom/Skype and other channels.

Phone	649 (63.1%)	WhatsApp	21 (2.4%)
Face to face (at Community Centre)	258 (25.1%)	Other**	8 (0.8%)
Advisory Committee meeting*	62 (6.0%)	Zoom/Skype	5 (0.5%)
Face to face (outreach)	24 (2.3%)		

* The Advisory Committee comprises of community representatives (locals and refugees) and functions as a platform to share with TRCS, along with other stakeholders, their feedback or concerns about the Community Centre activities and other issues affecting them.

** Issues shared with TRCS programme staff and later channelled to Community Centre Beneficiary Communication and Relationship Officers.

Response to community feedback

Out of 868 questions, feedback and complaints reported by community members, 860 (99.0%) issues were responded, and necessary actions were taken - **according to TRCS Community Centre staff, majority of the issues have been responded immediately**. 381 (32.0%) issues were responded by providing information on the topic requested. For 220 (18.4%) issues, majority of which were feedback, community members were thanked for having shared their feedback and only one case was referred to the hospital.

Complaints related to hygiene parcels were forwarded to health and psychosocial support (PSS) team in TRCS Community Centres as well as the Community Centre managers and later resolved. Other types of actions taken - information about COVID-19 are provided to communities based on the updates and information from the Ministry of Health website. Information related to TRCS Arabic social media accounts, distance learning programme and HES* code were also provided.



*Hayat Eve Sığar (HES) code application has been put into place by the Turkish Ministry of Health to fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. Both Turkish residents and foreign nationals need a HES code to share their COVID-19 risk status with institutions and individuals for activities like transportation by bus within the cities, during intercity travel by planes and while entering shopping malls, etc.

Responding to misperceptions/rumours

Number of rumours received, by category

In total 159 rumours were received, of which 118 were under "Other" category. The rest 41 were related to COVID-19 situation in Turkey, religion or fatalism, practice/behaviour to prevent risk of infection, perception about those infected with or recovered from COVID-19, origin of coronavirus and stigma/negative attitude towards those infected with COVID-19. Under "Other" category, the rumour most reported was "TRCS is distributing food vouchers to everyone". 97 rumours were related to this topic, which was also the highest compared to the number of rumours on any other categories. Apart from this, rumours in the "Other" category also included issues about unemployment, denial of COVID-19, community centre services and distance learning (EBA) classes.

Other (COVID-19 related)	118 (74.2%)
COVID-19 situation in Turkey	20 (12.6%)
Religion or fatalism	5 (3.1%)
Practise/behaviour to prevent risk of infection	4 (2.5%)
Perception about those infected or recovered from COVID-19	4 (2.5%)
Origin of Coronavirus	3 (1.9%)
Stigma/negative attitude towards those infected with COVID-19	2 (1.3%)
Negative attitude towards refugees	2 (1.3%)
Conspiracy/war	1 (0.6%)

Examples of reported rumours classified as "Other":



"I heard that workers are being fired because of COVID-19."

"COVID-19 does not infect children who are 0-5 years old."

"There is no coronavirus."

"COVID-19 is an operation to reduce population."

"Food voucher is distributed to everyone from TRCS."

"Milk for babies is distributed along with hygiene parcels."

"Only Syrians can apply for the hygiene parcel."

"TRCS Community Centre is giving out computer tablets to support students who find difficulties in accessing distance education."

"We heard that you support for EBA lessons. We need it too. How can we benefit?"

Where and how were the rumours heard?



Respondents informed that rumours were mostly heard from their neighbourhood (125 responses, 27.3%) and their relatives/friends (122 responses, 26.6%). Other places included WhatsApp and Facebook groups (96 responses, 21.0%), social media (87 responses, 19.0%) and TV (15 responses, 3.3%). These responses were higher for refugees than local people.

People hear these rumours often during conversation with their neighbours, family and relatives, local people or refugees. Other mediums include social media and TV. Again, these responses were higher for women (65.4% rumours shared by women) and refugees (90.5%) compared to men (34.6%) and local people (9.5%).

Where?

In my neighbourhood	125 (27.3%)
From a relative/friend	122 (26.6%)
WhatsApp/Facebook groups	96 (21.0%)
Social media	87 (19.0%)
Television	15 (3.3%)
In the Community/Centre	5 (1.1%)
Shop/market	3 (0.7%)
Other*	3 (0.7%)
Govenmental office	1 (0.2%)
Don't remember	1 (0.2%)

* at home, in a camp (temporary accommodation centre)

How?

Talk w/neighbours	121 (20.5%)
Talk w/relative/family	114 (19.3%)
Talk w/refugees	107 (18.1%)
WhatsApp/Facebook groups	95 (16.1%)
Social media	86 (14.6%)
Talk w/locals	33 (5.6%)
Television	14 (2.4%)
Talk w/friends	13 (2.2%)
Other*	4 (0.7%)
During community meeting	2 (0.3%)
Talk w/TRCS staff/volunteers	1 (0.2%)

* neighbourhood/family

Despite the COVID-19 situation, face to face interactions at the Community Centres were the most frequently used channel to share rumours, through which 86 rumours had been reported. Phone was the second most preferred channel used by people and 65 rumours had been reported through this channel.

Photo: Ankara Beneficiary Communication and Relationship Officer meets community member to listen and respond to her feedback.



Verification and response to rumours

Out of 159 rumours, 144 of them have been verified and responded by TRCS staff. **The rumours have been responded based on the verified information, videos, and TRCS misperception/ rumour bulletin.**

Most of the rumours have been responded immediately based on the verified information. For other rumours, the time taken to verify, and respond was an average of 7 days. For some, the verification and response took slightly longer than 14 days due to triangulation of data and development of key messages. Once verified, TRCS staff shared the factual information with the community members over phone, advisory committee and through visual materials in its social media platforms.



Bursa Community Centre staff listens and responds to feedback



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