

A SYSTEMIC ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON REFUGEES, MIGRANTS, AND ASYLUM SEEKERS IN CYPRUS:

Part II – The Survey

Published in collaboration with Voices of International Students in Cyprus (VOIS)

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CORE FINDINGS

The survey confirms the previous findings of this study, as related to the pandemic's negative impacts on livelihoods, financial survival, education and personal development opportunities, and mental health on refugees, migrants, and asylum seekers in Cyprus.

It also highlights and confirms areas where authorities need to do better - addressing delays in the issue of residence permits, improving COVID-19 related communication in multiple languages, and improving access to healthcare and contraception.

Finally, it shows that discrimination and othering are rampant across the island and have probably increased due to the pandemic - a trend that needs to be immediately addressed.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CCy	Caritas Cyprus
CyRC	Cyprus Refugee Council
EU	European Union
GESY	General Healthcare System
IASFM	International Association for the Study of Forced Migration
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PIO	Press and Information Office of the Republic of Cyprus
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
RMA	Refugees, Migrants and Asylum Seekers
RoC	Republic of Cyprus
TCN	Third-Country National
"TRNC"	The Turkish Republic of North Cyprus
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
VOIS	Voices of International Students in Cyprus

I. BACKGROUND

In this, the second installation of a three-part study on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on refugees, migrants, and asylum seekers (RMAs) in Cyprus, Project Phoenix and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Cyprus Office provide the results of a detailed survey of these populations on both sides of the divided island.

Using a transdisciplinary systems-thinking approach, this study seeks to document the effects the pandemic has had on the social, economic, cultural, and personal lives of these populations in Cyprus, and to offer practical and effective recommendations based on these findings. Part I of the study offers a timeline-based overview of the COVID-19 pandemic since March 2020. Part II is based on a detailed multi-city survey and interviews, offering first-person experiences and insight into the magnitude of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on individuals, while Part III consists of a white paper on potential solutions to ameliorate these impacts.

The survey was conducted from September to late December 2020, with approximately 180 RMAs and international students as respondents. Building upon Part I of this study, the survey probed the impact of the pandemic on the health, livelihoods, personal development, and education of these populations, and analysed how the pandemic affected legal status, the delivery of social benefits, and whether it furthered discrimination.

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

While the situation has slightly improved from the first COVID-19-related lockdown in spring 2020, the findings from the survey, in most cases, reinforce the results of Part I of the study, while providing more insight into how exactly the pandemic has affected RMAs in Cyprus. This report also provides some interesting commentary on causes and possible correlations.

In the Republic of Cyprus (RoC), the survey findings confirm that a majority of respondents (mainly asylum seekers from Africa) have suffered financially, with the loss of livelihoods and delays in receiving welfare benefits; they have lost opportunities for education and further development; suffered discrimination (half of all respondents); and found it difficult to communicate with authorities and to receive medical care, all compounding to affect their mental and physical wellbeing.

From a gender perspective, more men than women were likely to have lost their jobs or livelihoods, while a similar proportion of men and women suffered mental health impacts and, perhaps most worryingly, over 70% of female respondents struggled for access to contraceptives (of those who used them before the pandemic).

In the self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of North Cyprus ("TRNC"),¹ the survey findings provide far more insight into the effect of the pandemic than previously available. The respondents (mainly international students from Africa) saw major disruptions to their education, affected mostly by the financial impacts of the pandemic. In addition, they reported job loss, often faced discrimination, and rarely received information from authorities in a language they spoke.

From a gender perspective, all the female respondents who had jobs lost them as compared to 70% of males, while similar proportions of males and females (over 60%) reported suffering negative mental health impacts due to the pandemic.

Finally, across the island, many respondents continue to remain on the margins of Cypriot society, experiencing long delays in renewing residence permits and immigration procedures, with limited legal recourse.

III. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic, which took the world by storm in early 2020, was an unprecedented challenge for governments and societies. In Cyprus, as documented by Part I of the study, so far, the pandemic has had a detrimental effect on peoples' lives, livelihoods, personal freedoms, and health, and these effects have not been felt equally across society.

Part II of the study builds on this base by incorporating the perspectives of RMAs through a detailed survey, which was shaped by the findings of Part I, to provide more perspective on the challenges these groups have faced over the last year and on potential avenues for amelioration.

IV. METHODOLOGY

RoC

In the RoC, the survey was based on quantitative data collected through an electronic questionnaire contained within the Zoho Survey platform that was distributed to RMAs. The distribution of the questionnaire was done both in-person and through relevant social media channels.

The majority of in-person surveying was conducted by one individual (from the RMA community) with the support of the authors of this study. The surveyor was trained appropriately to ensure that their role did not impact or change the data gathered from RMAs. The process entailed the surveyor handing over a smartphone to respondents to fill out the survey. The device had internet access to the Zoho Survey platform and the surveyor provided explanations and instructions, as necessary, guiding respondents through the form. This was done by visiting public spaces in Nicosia that are frequented by RMAs. In addition, the authors conducted a few in-person surveys in Larnaca, Limassol, and Paphos, in a similar fashion.

The survey was launched on September 26, 2020, and a majority of the surveys were conducted in-person till late November 2020, when the RoC government tightened restrictions, forcing survey distribution to be moved entirely online. At this stage, the survey was distributed through social media on Facebook and Instagram and targeted at RMAs. The survey was concluded on December 19, 2020, with a total of 91 responses. In addition to the survey, 4 semi-structured, detailed interviews were conducted virtually with RMAs in December 2020 and January 2021.

The online questionnaire was divided into 10 sections: Background Information; Access to COVID-19 Information; Impact of Restrictions; Access to Legal Services; Access to Social Services; Employment and Livelihoods; Healthcare and Mental Health; Education and Professional Development; Racism, Discrimination, and Security; and Gender and Reproductive Health.

"TRNC"

In the "TRNC" the survey was based on quantitative data collected through an electronic questionnaire contained within the Zoho Survey platform that was distributed electronically to international students and migrant workers. The distribution of the questionnaire was done by Voices of International Students in Cyprus (VOIS) through its relevant social media channels on Facebook and Instagram and through targeted emails.

The survey was launched on December 1 and was concluded on December 21, 2020, with a total of 85 responses.

The online questionnaire was divided into 9 sections: Background Information; Access to COVID-19 Information; Impact of Restrictions; Access to Legal Services; Employment and Livelihoods; Healthcare and Mental Health; Professional Development; Racism, Discrimination, and Security; and Gender and Reproductive Health.

¹ The use of the term does not imply recognition of the "TRNC" or its administrative bodies.

V. LIMITATIONS

The distribution of an online questionnaire in the midst of a pandemic has resulted in its fair share of limitations to the findings. In general, it is also important to state here that the analysis of the survey data does not aim to provide conclusive results, but rather identify trends which will be tackled in Part III of the study in the form of policy recommendations. Finally, when exploring the gendered impact of the survey, the surveys did not have any respondents who identified beyond the binary choices of male and female.

RoC

In the RoC, first, the launch of the online survey in September 2020, took place during the relaxation of lockdown measures and the reopening of the economy over the summer. This possibly affected respondents' recollection of personal experiences and memories of the prior initial lockdown between March and June 2020, and probably impacted how some of the related questions were answered in the survey.

Second, surveying continued through a second phase of restrictive measures in November and December 2020, that eventually culminated in a complete lockdown in certain parts of the country, including Paphos and Limassol. These changing restrictions and measures, too, probably played a role in how some questions were answered in the survey, as respondents were impacted in different ways.

Relatedly, the prohibition of public gatherings, as well as the temporary ban on movement to and from Limassol and Paphos in this period, prevented the surveyor from accessing these cities and resulted in a larger than expected share of responses from Nicosia. This limitation was later partially addressed by advertising the questionnaire on Facebook and Instagram to audiences outside Nicosia.

Fourth, the survey did not reach any newly arrived asylum seekers located in the Pournara Camp, due to a lack of physical access and the fact that those in the camp had limited internet access. Pournara saw some of the worst human rights violations over the fall and winter and having responses from there would have added more value to the conclusions.

Lastly, the random selection of respondents by the surveyor and the online ads resulted in a disproportionate representation of younger Africans and Asians in the data, with only limited participants from the Middle East. The numbers as such are not representative of the makeup of RMA communities in the RoC.

"TRNC"

In the "TRNC", first, the launch of the survey in December was months after the more stringent pandemic-related restrictions had been lifted in May. As such, the effects of the restrictions on the survey respondents, as well as their memories of them, may have waned relatively significantly.

Second, certain restrictive measures remained in place at the commencement of the data collection phase. Specifically, lim-

itations on public gatherings and the continued closure of universities and public meeting spaces affected the physical collection of data, although this limitation was somewhat overcome through its online promotion by VOIS. The fact that VOIS is a student-oriented organisation meant that the overwhelming majority of respondents were students. It did, however, allow us to achieve a diversity in the locations of respondents across the "TRNC".

Lastly, the random selection of respondents and the online ads resulted in a disproportionate representation of African students with only limited participants from those from the Middle East, Asia, and Europe.

VI. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Data Protection and Anonymity

All data was collected anonymously and was processed and handled legally, ethically, and transparently, according to the latest European General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) by the Project Phoenix team through the Zoho Survey platform. Participation in the survey and interviews was entirely voluntary and participants were free to withdraw their consent to participation at any stage.

No Harm to Respondents

All research was performed in accordance with the International Association for the Study of Forced Migration (IASFM)'s Code of Ethics,² and no respondents were harmed in the process of conducting the survey.

Safety of Respondents and Surveyor

All physical surveying was conducted under the relevant COVID-19 guidelines and decrees in place at the time in the RoC, with the surveyor, authors, and respondents all wearing the needed Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

VII. THE ROC SURVEY

A. Demographic Information

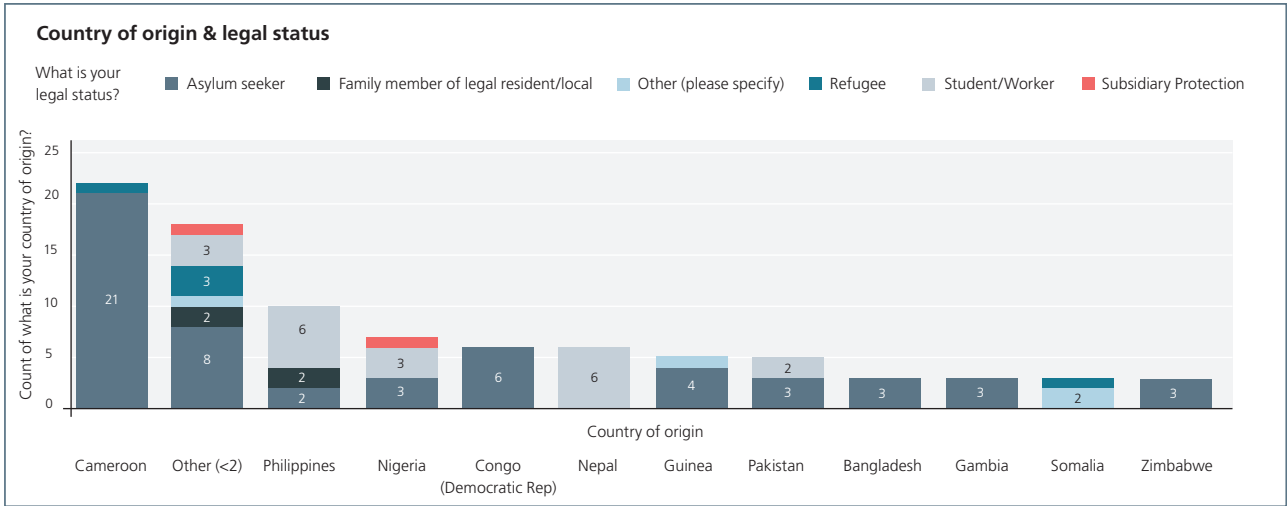
This section profiles survey respondents in terms of country of origin, legal status, gender, and age.

1. Country of Origin & Legal Status

The survey reached a total of 91 individuals in the RoC, from 26 different countries. About two-thirds (56) of the respondents were asylum seekers, 5 were refugees, 20 were students/workers, 4 were family members of a legal resident/local, and 2 were persons with subsidiary protection status. The 4 who responded as "Other" were either asylum seekers whose applications had been rejected or people without legal status in the RoC.

The corresponding bar chart depicts the legal status of the respondents and their corresponding country of origin.

² "Research Code of Ethics", International Association for the Study of Forced Migration, (IASFM, March 2021), <http://iasfm.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/IASFM-Research-Code-of-Ethics-2018.pdf>



Of the 56 asylum seekers a little more than a third (21) indicated Cameroon as their country of origin. The number of asylum seekers from Cameroon has risen since 2014, when only 5 Cameroonians applied for asylum in the RoC, rising to a total of 1,190 in 2019.³ As of December 31, 2020, 632 Cameroonians applied for asylum in Cyprus in 2020, ranking third behind Syria and India in the number of applications.⁴

The remaining respondents of the survey who identified as asylum seekers are primarily from West Africa, namely, Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Guinea, Zimbabwe, and Gambia. Countries with 2 or less responses have been grouped in the chart as Other (<2).

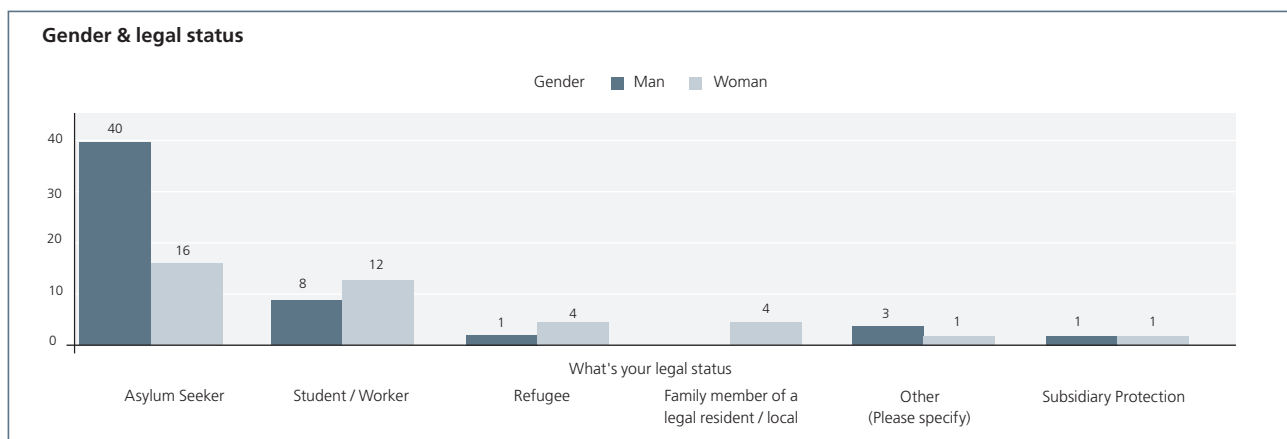
Overall, the random data collection pattern resulted in findings that were at variance with the situation in the RoC in terms of countries that have been the most popular source countries of asylum seekers - India, Syria, and Bangladesh.⁵

Furthermore, out of the 20 individuals who are students or workers, 15 are from Asian countries, mainly from the Philippines (6), Nepal (6), and Pakistan (2).

2. Gender & Legal Status

Breaking down the sample by gender, a total of 53 men completed this survey, of whom 40 were male asylum seekers, while of the 38 women respondents, 16 were asylum seekers. The proportion of female to male asylum seekers in the sample (16:40) roughly corresponds to the proportion (3:7) of women to men asylum seekers in Cyprus in 2019^{6,7}, according to Eurostat.

In terms of other statuses, women respondents were more likely than men to have different legal statuses - they were more likely to be students/workers, refugees, or family members of a legal resident.



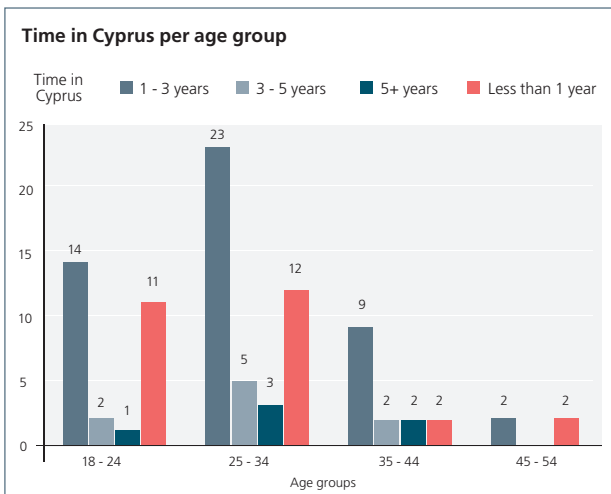
³ "Asylum and first time asylum applicants by citizenship, age and sex - annual aggregated data (rounded)", Eurostat, (Eurostat, March 2021), https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/MIGR_ASYAPPCTZA__custom_435129/default/table?lang=en.
⁴ "Statistical Data 2021", Asylum Service, (Asylum Service, 2020)
⁵ "Asylum Service, Statistical Data" Asylum Service, (Asylum Service, 2020, 2019, 2018, 2017) http://www.moi.gov.cy/moi/asylum/asylumservice.nsf/asylumservice18_gr/asylumservice18_gr?OpenDocument

⁶ "Asylum and first time asylum applicants by citizenship, age and sex - annual aggregated data (rounded)" Eurostat, (Eurostat, March 2021), https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/MIGR_ASYAPPCTZA__custom_435129/default/table?lang=en.
⁷ "Asylum and first time asylum applicants by citizenship, age and sex - annual aggregated data (rounded)" Eurostat, (Eurostat, March 2021), https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/MIGR_ASYAPPCTZA__custom_435129/default/table?lang=en.

3. Time in Cyprus per Age Group

The graph depicts the correlation between the legal status of the respondents and their time of residence in Cyprus. As shown, 71 of the 91 respondents were aged between 18 and 34 years, of whom 60 reported being in Cyprus for less than a year (red) to between 1 and 3 years (dark grey).

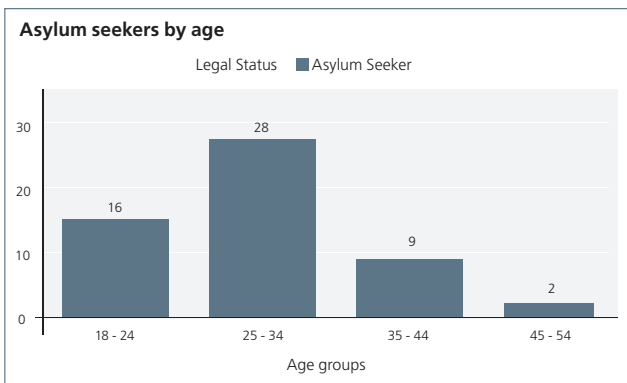
From this data, we can hypothesise that asylum seekers, who comprise two-thirds of the total sample, make up a considerable proportion of those aged 18-34 and have been in Cyprus for no more than 3 years. On the other end of the spectrum, only 8 respondents reported being in Cyprus for more than 5 years and they are evenly split among all age groups.



This information indicates that most RMAs are young, of working age, and thus should be given initial support and job opportunities to lead independent lives in Cyprus once they submit their application, in order to alleviate their reliance on state support. Overall, the capabilities and expertise that third-country national (TCN) migrants and asylum seekers bring once they arrive are not fully utilised due to the sector restrictions they face in employment.⁸

4. Asylum Seekers by Age

The bar chart illustrates the fact that the overwhelming majority of young respondents are asylum seekers, with the data showing that 44 out of a total of 56 asylum seekers are aged between 18 and 34.

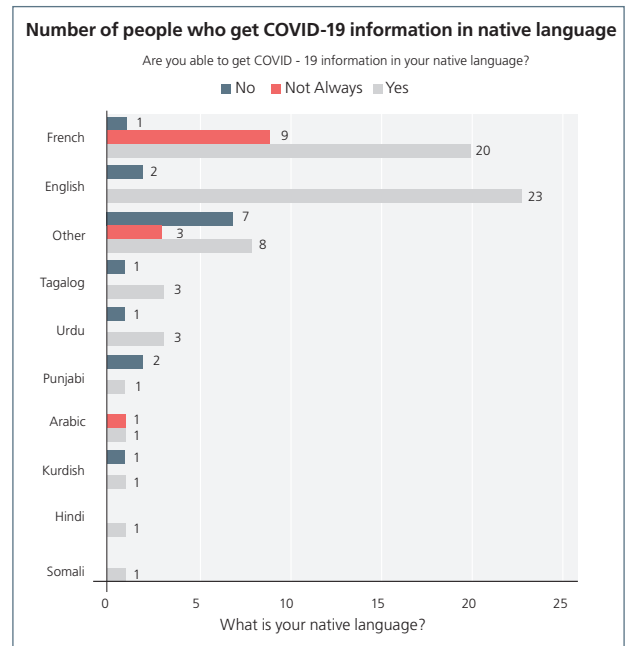


B. The Availability of COVID-19-Related Information

Part I of the study highlighted some of the problems caused by the limited availability of COVID-19-related information, due to the limited availability of translations and support for those who did not speak English or Greek. That preliminary finding is further supported by the data analysed in this section.

It provides a preliminary understanding on the availability of COVID-19 information in other languages and an overview of primary sources of information, the goal being to identify areas in which communication from the government could be improved.

1. Native Language & Access to Information

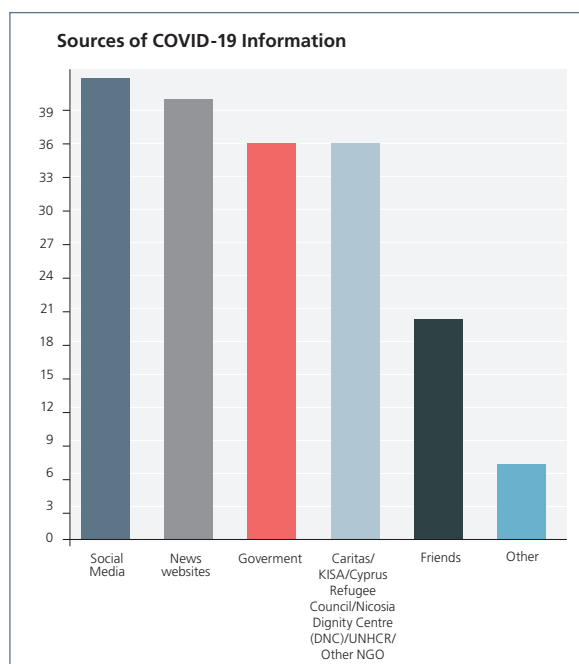


The bar chart illustrates the native language of the participants in relation to their ability to access COVID-19 information in that language. More than two-thirds (69%) of the respondents indicated that they were able to access information in their native language, with the great majority being French and English speakers. The remainder (31%) indicated they could not, or they could not *always* access information about COVID-19 in their language.

⁸ "Your rights as an asylum-seeker," UNHCR Cyprus, (UNHCR Cyprus), <https://help.unhcr.org/cyprus/applying-for-asylum/your-rights-and-duties-as-an-asylum-seeker/>.

2. Main Sources of Information

To better understand the type of information RMA received during the pandemic, we also explored the main sources of this information in the survey.



Social media appeared to be the primary source of information, with news websites coming in second. Government platforms/sources come third in popularity as a source of information, alongside local organisations such as Caritas Cyprus (CCy), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), KISA, and others.

From the two graphs, we can conclude that 2 in 3 respondents had access to information about COVID-19 in their native language, with the most likely source of this being social media and news websites.

This also suggests that efforts by the government to provide translated information on the pandemic have had limited success. This can be attributed to 3 potential factors: a) insufficient dissemination of these translations through channels such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community associations, and non-Greek media; b) too few translated guides about the pandemic; and/or c) a limited number of languages in which government translations were provided.

The Press and Information Office (PIO) of the government produced a series of informative materials about COVID-19 in several foreign languages besides English.⁹ However, the fact that government channels did not serve as one of the primary sources of information, as indicated in the survey, suggests that more needs to be done.

Our follow-up interviews confirmed that government sources were often not the primary choice of information. One inter-

⁹ "Press and Information Office Information/Guidelines," COVID-19 Press and Information Office (Press and Information Office of Cyprus, 2021), <https://www.pio.gov.cy/coronavirus/eng/infola>.

viewee stated they received their information from a Farsi-language Telegram group in Cyprus about decrees and restrictions.¹⁰ They added that their knowledge of English facilitated the process, as they were able to access and cross-reference information with NGO channels. Other interviewees also noted that social media and local NGOs were their primary sources of information in both their native language and English.

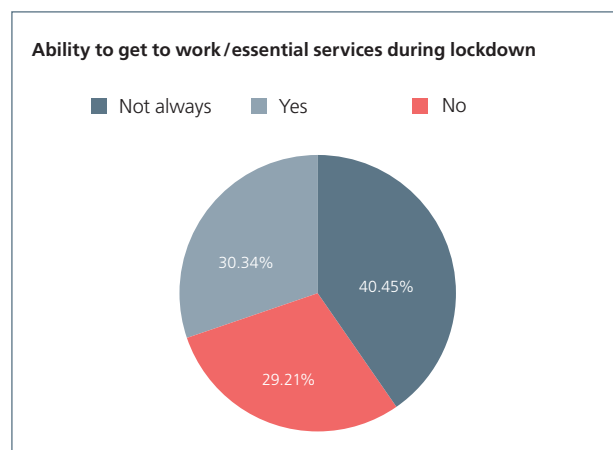
Lastly, the survey indicates that efforts by local organisations in either reproducing government-translated material or often providing additional in-house translations of decrees and mandates in several languages, played a significant role in disseminating valuable information among RMA in Cyprus during the pandemic.

C. Understanding the Impact of Restrictions – Past and Present

This section explores how COVID-19 measures affected the lives of the respondents. As highlighted previously, one of the limitations of the survey was the fact that the data was collected through periods of relative freedom and some limited lockdowns and therefore potentially affected how respondents responded.

1. Impact on Movement During First Lockdown

The pie chart depicts the level of restrictions that RMA faced during the first lockdown period in spring 2020, and whether they were able to access work or essential services. Asked whether they were able to get to their workplace or to essential services (doctor, supermarket, etc) during the lockdown period, 2 in 5 responded affirmatively, while the remaining responses were divided into "No" and "Not always".

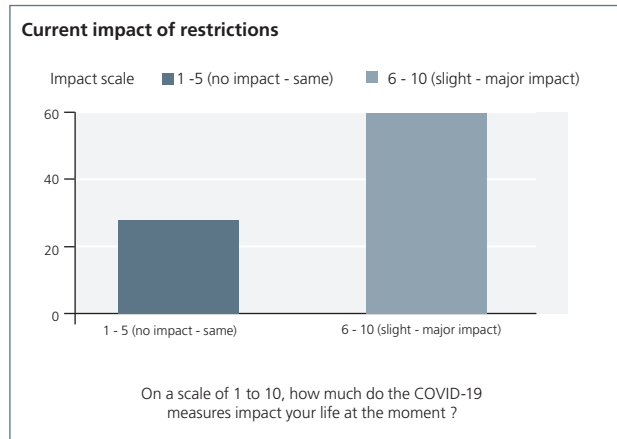


From this, we can see that 60% of the respondents experienced difficulties in accessing essential services, such as visiting the doctor or a supermarket, or getting to work. While we do not have comparative data to go by, it would be useful to examine this response for deviations from a national average of a similar survey for Cypriot or European Union (EU) citizens to see if RMA faced additional difficulties in comparison to others.

¹⁰ Interview conducted on December 10, 2020.

2. Current Impact of Restrictions

For the question “On a scale of 1 (no impact) to 10 (major impact), how much do the COVID-19 measures impact your life at the moment?,” twice as many respondents (60) indicated that the pandemic restrictions at the time of the survey were negatively impacting their lives (6 to 10). The remaining third of respondents said the measures were either slightly or not at all affecting their life at that time (1 to 5). The graph depicts the period from late September to late December 2020.



D. Access to Legal Services

In response to the pandemic, most RoC government departments, including the migration and asylum services and courts, have switched to remote work with limited contact hours for the public and meetings by appointment only, in most cases. This section sheds light on these changes and explores the extent to which RMAs faced additional delays or difficulties in their asylum or residence permit applications and other legal recourse.

1. Delays in Processing Asylum and Residence Permit Applications

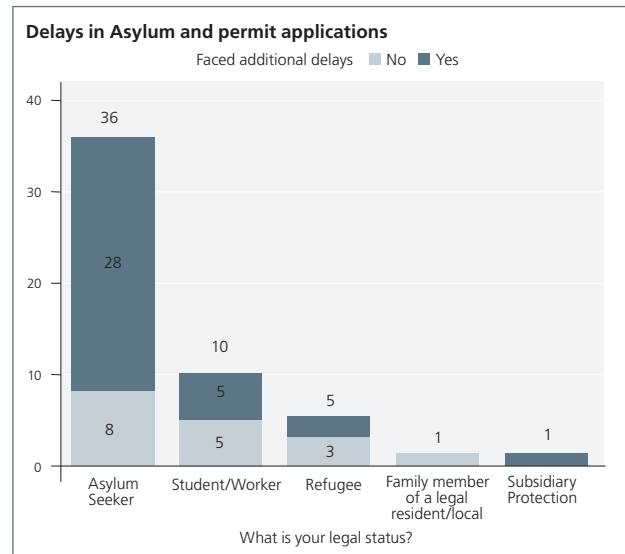
When queried, 36 out of 53 respondents said they experienced additional delays and difficulties with their residency and asylum applications, while 17 RMAs said they experienced no additional difficulties. Those who didn't have a pending application with the authorities were excluded from this dataset.

These delays affected all types of applications, including those submitted by asylum seekers, students, workers, and refugees, as depicted in the bar chart.

Follow-up interviews shed further light on how public offices have operated during the pandemic with interviewees highlighting the consistent difficulty in accessing public offices and gathering information about delays, with many unable to schedule appointments or have their queries answered by telephone.

One asylum seeker interviewed, specifically described going to the Aliens & Immigration Unit and not being allowed to enter due the existing restrictions. After multiple phone calls and further visits, they failed to enter or schedule a meeting and eventually gave up and reached out to an NGO for support, only to be told that they had to wait till the government re-

sponded and there was nothing the NGO could do due to the situation.¹¹



Part I of the study also highlighted the vital role NGOs and other civil society volunteer groups have played in ameliorating some of the worst effects of the pandemic on RMAs in Cyprus. However, despite the information and humanitarian support provided by these groups, they had a limited impact in the legal sphere and being able to assist with asylum and residency applications during the pandemic. This is largely due to the fact that the pandemic has reduced the opportunity for advisors and legal aid volunteers to physically accompany applicants to offices.

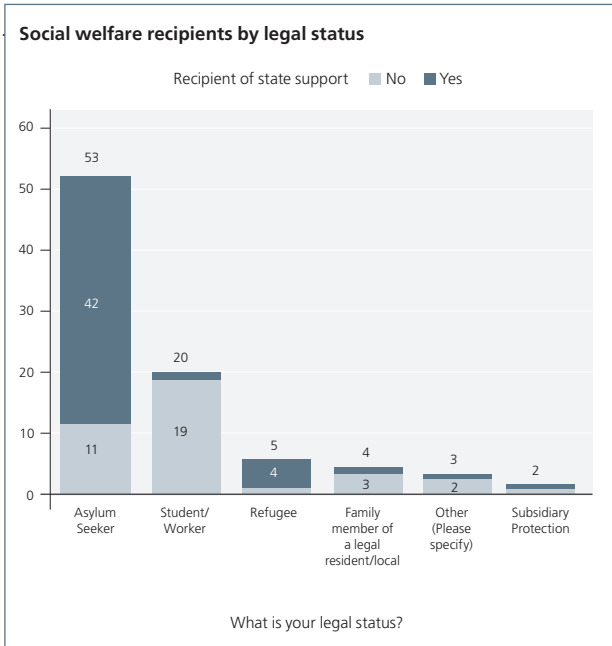
E. Access to Welfare and Support

This section explores how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected recipients of social welfare benefits, the delays they've faced, and whether recipients have been able to communicate with Social Welfare Services effectively. The Social Welfare department - like many other public services - has been operating under extenuating circumstances while being required to provide additional assistance to newer beneficiaries. This is because the Ministry of Labour, Welfare, and Social Insurance has rolled out several support schemes throughout the pandemic to businesses and workers.

1. Recipients of Social Welfare Benefits and Legal Status

The chart depicts the number of social benefits recipients as per their respective legal statuses. The figures in the dark grey columns depict the overall number of respondents as per their legal status, while the corresponding light grey columns depict those not receiving benefits, also divided by legal status. Recipients of social welfare benefits account for 57% of the total sample (dark grey), with the majority of beneficiaries (84% or 42 out of 50) being asylum seekers.

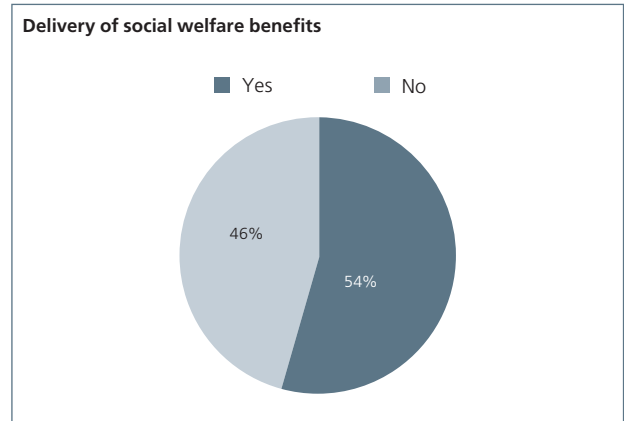
¹¹ Interview with an asylum-seeker on January 8, 2021.



2. Delays in Receiving Social Welfare Benefits

Respondents who indicated they were beneficiaries of state support were asked to report any additional delays in receiving their benefits during the pandemic as a result of the overall disruption of public services.

As depicted, more than half (54%) of beneficiaries said they received their benefits on time, while 46% reported delays.



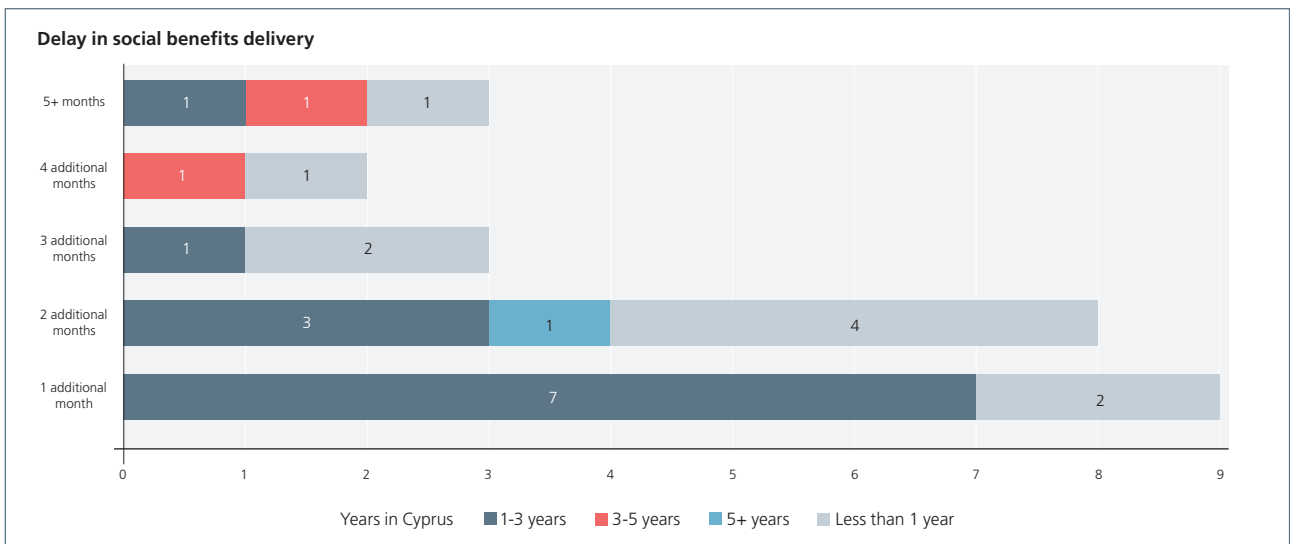
3. Length of Delay

Of the 25 beneficiaries who experienced some kind of delay, 9 said they had to wait for an additional month to receive their benefits, while 8 others reported a two-month delay. The remaining 8 beneficiaries had to wait an additional 3 or more months before they received their benefits.

Interestingly, when correlating the delay in receiving state support with the respondent’s time in Cyprus, we see that those who have experienced minor delays have, relatively, only recently settled in the country, while those with more years in Cyprus were among those who experienced the longest delays.

While the data cannot provide a robust and conclusive correlation between the respondent’s time in Cyprus and delays in social benefits, it seems that Social Welfare Services prioritised those relatively recently arrived in the country.

Summing up the findings of this section, it is important to note that 1 in 2 recipients of state support were able to receive their benefits on time during the pandemic. However, as the majority of the recipients are asylum seekers - a group that extensively relies on state support to make ends meet - it is concerning that half of those receiving social welfare benefits faced long delays in the midst of a pandemic.

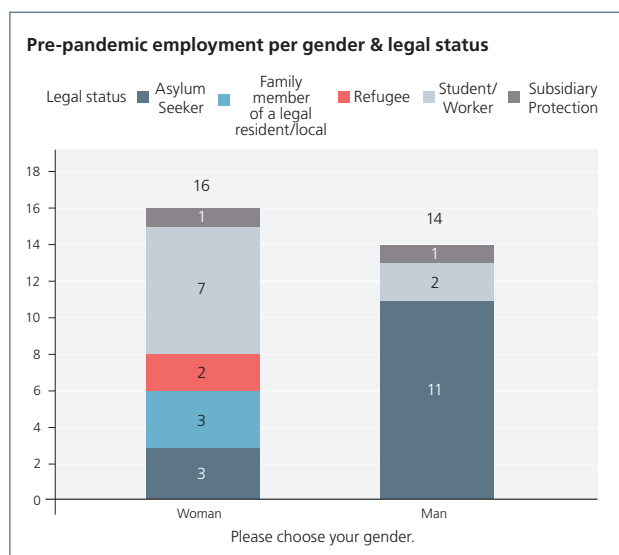
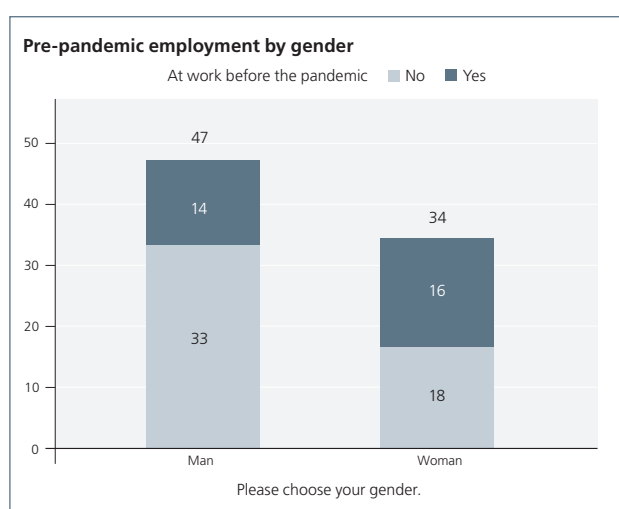


F. Employment and Livelihoods

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a severe toll on the RoC’s economy, particularly in sectors that migrants and displaced persons tend to work. Given this, this section provides insight into the financial situation of RMAs in Cyprus and their livelihoods before and during the first wave of the pandemic.

1. Gender and Loss of Livelihoods

Of the 81 respondents who answered an employment question on the survey, more than half (51) - shown in light grey in the bar chart - said they were not employed, while the remaining (30) - shown in dark grey - said they were employed. Notably, although fewer women than men responded to this question, it appears that women (16) were more likely to have had work when the pandemic began as compared to men (14).



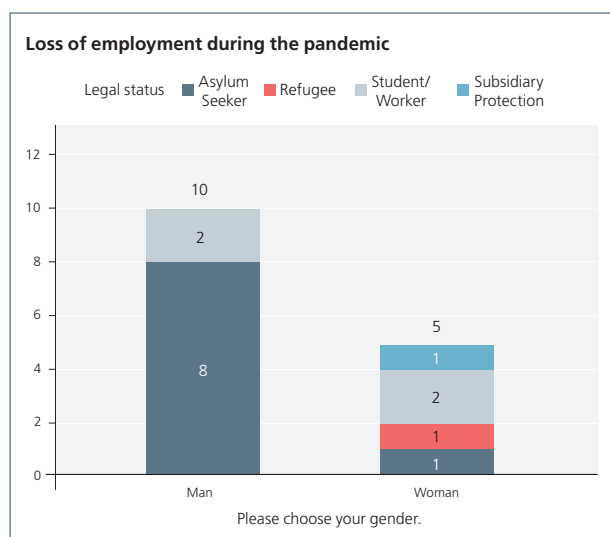
The graph above, also demonstrates that, of the men who were employed before the pandemic, the great majority (11/14) had asylum seeker status. Conversely, women who worked had more diverse employment and legal statuses. They were mainly students/workers (7), followed by asylum seekers (3), and family members of a legal resident/local (3) or refugees (2).

2. Pandemic Job Loss

To better understand the employment status of respondents during the pandemic, those who reported that they were employed prior to the pandemic (30), were also asked whether they were able to maintain their jobs as the pandemic unfolded.

As depicted, half (15) reported they lost their job or chance to work during the pandemic. This is because RMAs in Cyprus either perform labour in sectors like agriculture, cleaning services, hospitality, etc – which were all but shut down; or work irregularly and were unable to move around to find work. Two-thirds (10) of those who lost their jobs were men, although a similar number of men and women were employed prior to the pandemic.

Digging deeper into the legal status of the respondents in this dataset, 11 out of the 14 men who were employed prior to the pandemic were asylum seekers, of whom 8 lost their jobs. Of the 16 women who were employed, 2 with refugee/subsidiary protection status, 2 students/workers, and 1 asylum seeker lost their jobs or chance to work during the pandemic.



This suggests that male asylum seekers were more likely to lose their job (8 out of 11) during the pandemic in comparison to their female counterparts (1 in 3). However, due to the small sample size, this finding should be extrapolated with caution.

The most significant takeaway in regard to RMAs’ employment and livelihoods is that half of those employed before the pandemic broke out, eventually lost their jobs. This reinforces the fact that RMAs in Cyprus tend to work in precarious employment conditions without much job security,¹² with male asylum seekers appearing to be disproportionately affected.

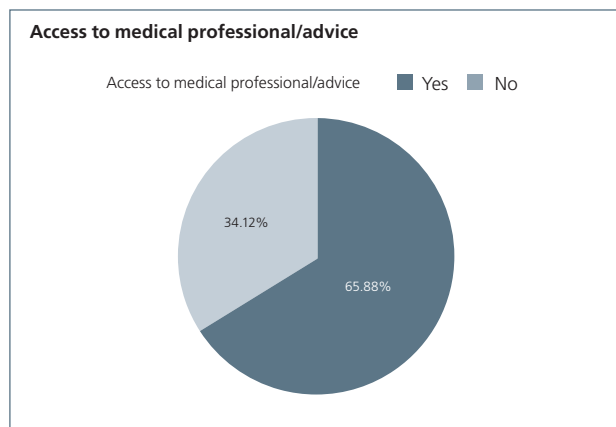
¹² “The Living Conditions of Asylum-Seekers in Cyprus,” University of Nicosia, (UNHCR Cyprus, University of Nicosia, 2018), <https://www.unhcr.org/cy/wp-content/uploads/sites/41/2018/05/LivingConditionsofAsylumSeekersReport.pdf>.

G. Healthcare and Mental Health

Since the onset of the pandemic, many hospital departments have seen disruptions to their work and regular operations, affecting access to healthcare for many patients. Additionally, asylum seekers do not have access to the newly formed General Healthcare System (GESY) and must visit special hospital departments for their needs. In this section, we explored RMA’s access to healthcare and the state of their mental health during the pandemic.

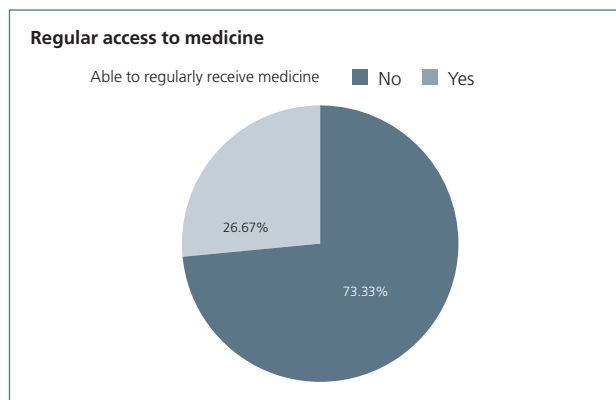
1. Access to a Medical Professional or Medical Advice

When asked whether they were able to receive medical advice from a professional (either by phone or in person) during the pandemic, 2 in 3 RMA’s responded negatively. To better understand the extent to which RMA’s healthcare needs had been affected, we also explored the availability of medication and support for chronic illnesses that RMA’s may have had before the onset of the pandemic.



2. Regular Access to Medication

Of the respondents who had been on medication for a chronic disease or other illness, 3 in 4 said they were not able to get their medicine since the onset of the pandemic. This trend is also reflected in the last section of this report under Gender & Reproductive Health in terms of access to contraception and is worrying enough to suggest further investigation.

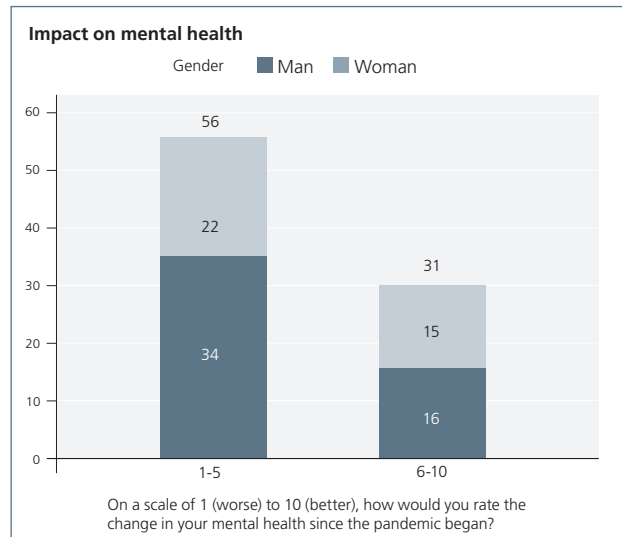


3. Mental Health

The pandemic has resulted in social isolation, financial insecurity, and disruption to people’s personal development and routines, all compounding to negatively impact mental wellbeing. To gain insight into RMA’s mental health as the pandemic progressed, we asked respondents to rate their mental health on

a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being worse than before the pandemic began, 5 being the same, and 10 being better.

As depicted, 65% (56 out of 87) of the participants rated their mental health from 1 to 5, indicating that 2 in 3 RMA’s have experienced a deterioration in their mental health during the pandemic. The remaining third indicated a slight or significant improvement (6 to 10) in their mental health in comparison to the period prior to the pandemic, with 7 male and 5 female respondents rating their mental health state as 8.



60% of female respondents said their mental health either deteriorated or remained the same in this period. A slightly larger proportion - 68% - of male respondents said their mental health worsened during the pandemic, while 32% reported that their mental health improved during the pandemic.

Our research indicated that treatment and support options do exist for those struggling with mental health issues. However, accessing these or information about these options remain scarce, with many organisations once offering these services, currently not doing so. A female asylum seeker interviewed said she struggled with her mental health and she sought help online.¹³ After much searching, she got through to the Cyprus Refugee Council (CyRC) and was able to talk with a therapist within minutes.

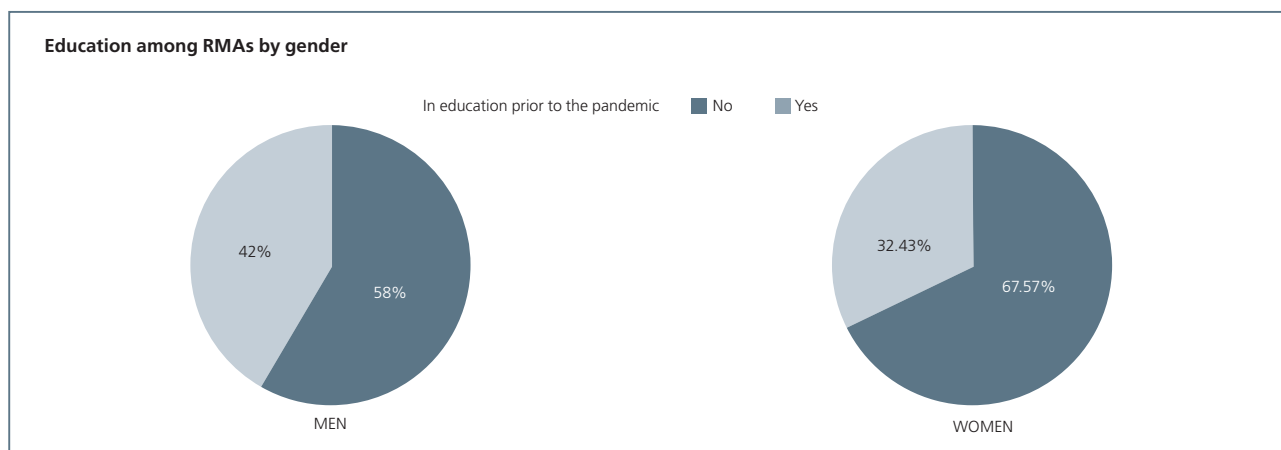
H. Education and Personal Development

This section explored the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on RMA’s education and personal development, and whether those that were receiving some kind of education or training were able to continue their learning during the pandemic.

1. RMA’s Receiving Education or Training Prior to the Onset of the Pandemic

As depicted, 32% of the female respondents said they were enrolled in an educational or personal development programme (language classes, computer training, on-the-job training etc.) prior to the pandemic, while their male counterparts recorded a higher percentage, at 42%.

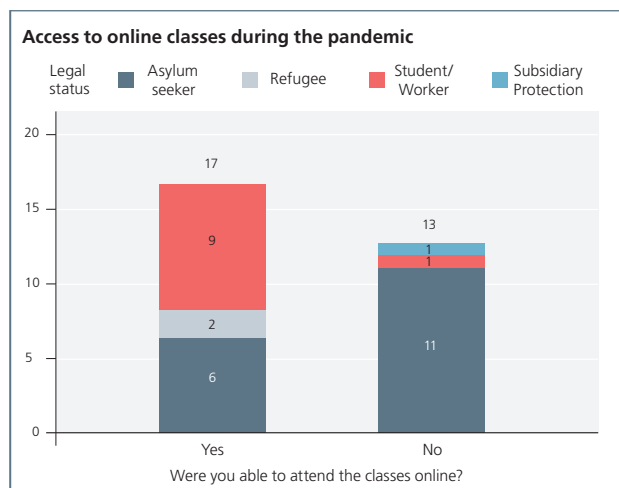
¹³ Interview with an asylum-seeker on January 8, 2021.



Overall, and without accounting for gender, about 1 in 3 of the total number of respondents said that they were in some kind of education or training programme before the onset of the pandemic.

2. Access to Training or Education Online

Of those participating in some type of educational programme, 17 out of 30 respondents were able to attend classes online during the pandemic. Full-time students in formal institutions overwhelmingly said they were able to resume taking their classes online, while two-thirds of asylum seekers in language classes or adult education training were unable to resume their classes during the pandemic.

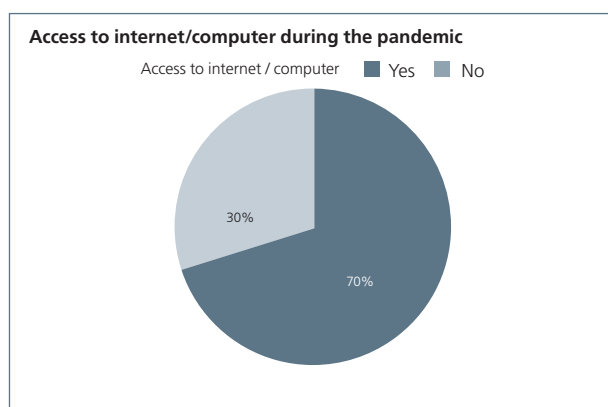


It is clear that the financial and legal uncertainties that accompanied the pandemic also affected RMAs' personal development, forcing them to focus on making ends meet and rendering education of secondary importance, especially when classes were moved online. In one of our interviews, an asylum seeker who had recently begun English and cooking classes stated, "when you are hungry, you can't learn".¹⁴ This mirrored similar statements by other respondents in the comments section of the online survey.

3. Access to the Internet and/or a Computer

Of those taking classes, 3 out of 10 respondents said they had no access to the internet and/or a computer since the onset

of the pandemic. This is probably due to the closure of indoor physical computer labs and other WIFI enabled workplaces that NGOs offered RMAs, as well as due to pandemic social distancing and operating requirements; and the fact that many RMAs live in shared dwellings with slow or limited internet access and/or cannot afford mobile phone data.



I. Security and Discrimination

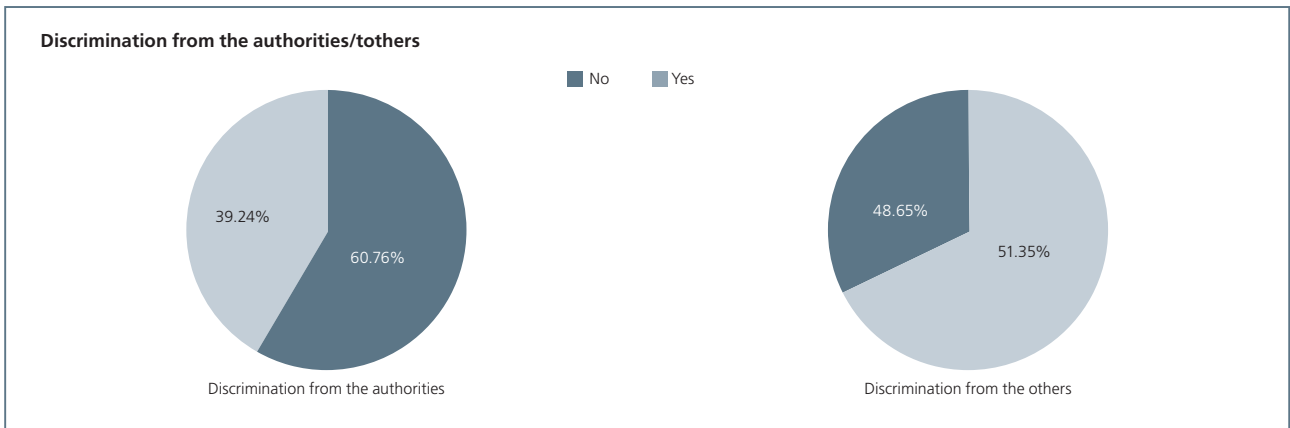
At the onset of the pandemic, xenophobia was rampant around the globe, with governments attempting to politicise the outbreak of COVID-19, often stigmatising minorities, and others. In this section, we explored the level of discrimination, if any, that RMAs faced as the pandemic progressed in the RoC. Using two different sets of questions, participants were asked if they faced discrimination from either the authorities or others. The results indicate that a significant (about half) share of the respondents faced discrimination either by the authorities or others as the pandemic unfolded across the country.

1. Discrimination from Authorities

About 4 in 10 respondents said they experienced discrimination in some form from the authorities. This is consistent with the wide number of complaints of discrimination that were highlighted in Part I of the study and can be attributed to the increased xenophobia being witnessed in Cyprus since the start of the pandemic.¹⁵

¹⁴ Interview with an asylum-seeker on January 8, 2021.

¹⁵ "Racism, xenophobia rife in Cyprus, refugees say," KNews, (KNews, Kathimerini Cyprus, June 2020), <https://knews.kathimerini.com.cy/en/news/racism-xenophobia-rife-in-cyprus-refugees-say>.



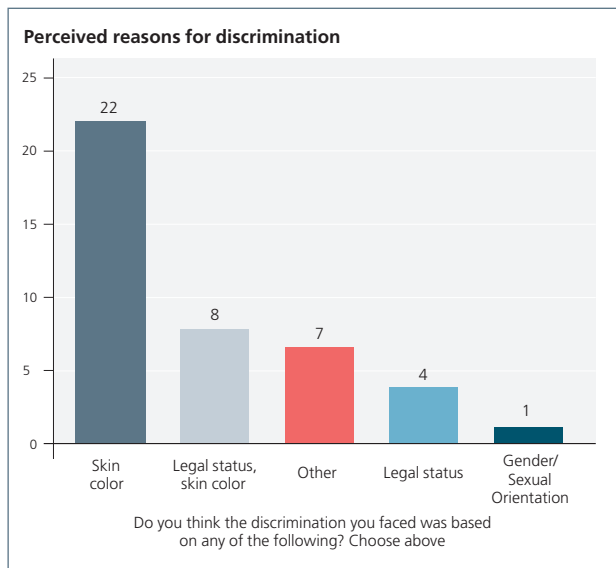
2. Discrimination from Others

As depicted, more than 50% of the respondents suggested that they experienced discrimination in some form from other people in society who were not legal or official authorities.

3. Reasons for Discrimination

Respondents who reported discrimination were asked to indicate the reason they believed they were discriminated against. Participants could choose multiple options including skin colour, legal status, gender, and other.

Overwhelmingly, 22 out of 32 respondents believed that the colour of their skin was the reason for the discrimination they experienced during the pandemic, followed by another 8 who suggested a combination of their legal status and skin colour was the problem. Interestingly only 1 person encountered gender/sexual orientation-based discrimination, with 7 suggesting other causes (possibly xenophobia or financial or social status).



J. Gendered Impacts

The pandemic impacted men and women (there were no respondents who chose alternate gender identities) differently. This section of the survey explored the different gender impacts, namely domestic violence, reproductive health, and household workloads.

1. Domestic Violence

Restrictions on movement and lockdowns over the course of pandemic have resulted in people confined to their homes for

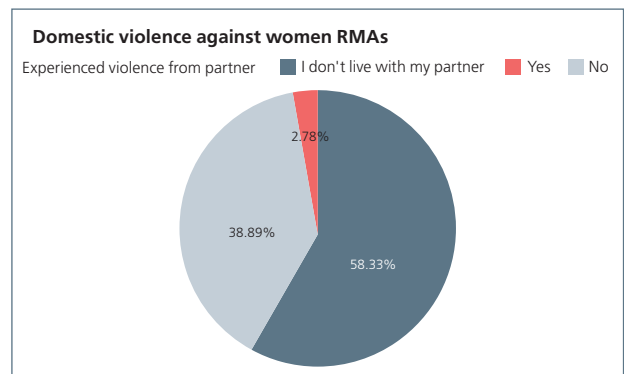
longer periods of time. This has led to an increase in reports of domestic violence against women in the RoC.¹⁶ The survey questions therefore investigated this phenomenon amongst RMAs as well.

For a more comprehensive understanding of domestic violence, both men and women were asked about their experience during the pandemic, including questions on whether they experienced domestic violence and/or pressure to have sex from their partners.

Asked whether they had experienced domestic violence from their partner during the pandemic, of the total sample of women, 58% reported that they didn't live with a partner, with a further 39% responding negatively to the question, reporting that they had not experienced violence from their partner.

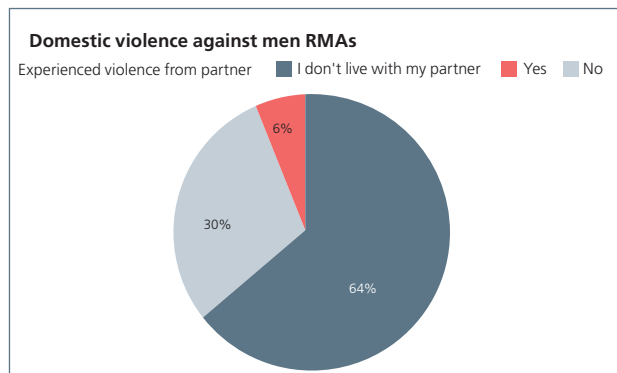
One woman, which translates to about 3% of the total sample, reported that she had experienced domestic violence from her partner during the pandemic.

The small number of RMA women who lived with partners therefore limited the effectiveness of this analysis and the survey did not explicitly investigate whether RMA women living with other people - who are not their family/partner, such as friends, employers, strangers - experienced forms of violence. Going forward, this deserves to be investigated further.



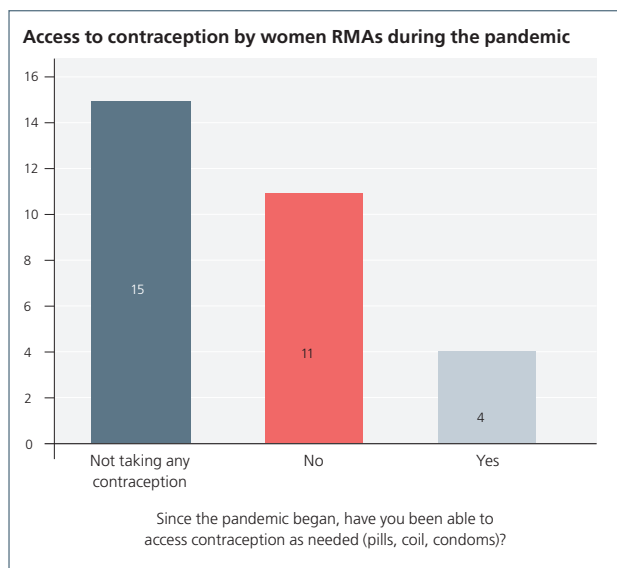
¹⁶ "Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family: 40% increase in assistance seeking due to domestic violence," Kathimerini (Kathimerini, November 2020), <https://m.kathimerini.com.cy/gr/kypros/spabo-ayxisi-40-sta-aitimata-boitheias-logo-endooikogeneiakis-bias>

Of the male respondents, 66% of the total sample said they did not reside with a partner, while 30% said they had not experienced any violence at the hands of their partners during the pandemic. The remaining 6% of the respondents, which translates to 3 out of a total of 50 male respondents, said they had experienced domestic violence.



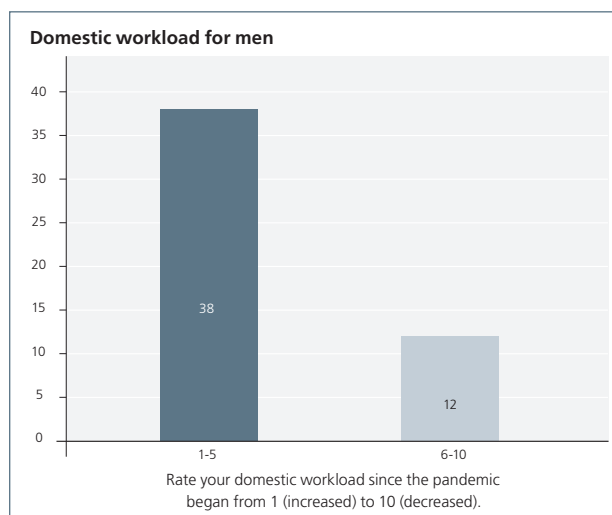
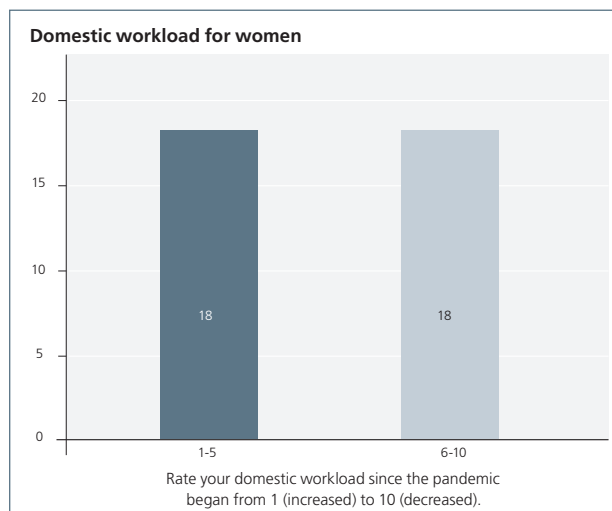
2. Access to Contraception

While the data on domestic violence was unclear, worryingly, a large proportion of female respondents indicated that they were unable to access contraceptives (or had irregular access to contraceptives) during the pandemic. Of the 15 respondents who used contraceptives prior to the pandemic, 11 indicated that they had experienced difficulty accessing contraceptives. This trend definitely deserves further investigation.



3. Domestic Workloads

The survey also explored how much domestic workloads had changed during the pandemic and how this had affected the genders differently. Interestingly, the female respondents were evenly split with half stating that their workloads had increased and the other half suggesting that they had decreased. However, 38 out of 50 male respondents stated that their domestic workloads had increased during the pandemic.



VIII. THE "TRNC "SURVEY

A. Demographic Information

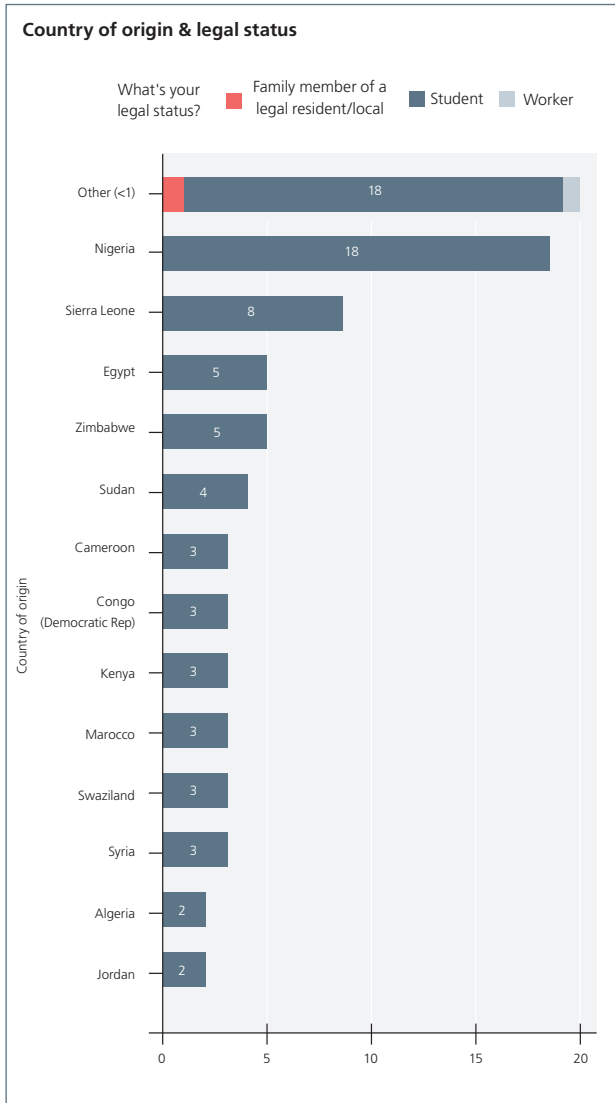
This section of the survey aimed to better understand the makeup of respondents who were mostly international students and migrants in the "TRNC", in terms of country of origin, legal status, gender and age.

1. Country of Origin & Legal Status

The online survey received a total of 82 responses from individuals representing 33 countries of origin. The vast majority of survey respondents were students (80), with 1 family member of a legal resident/local, and 1 worker.

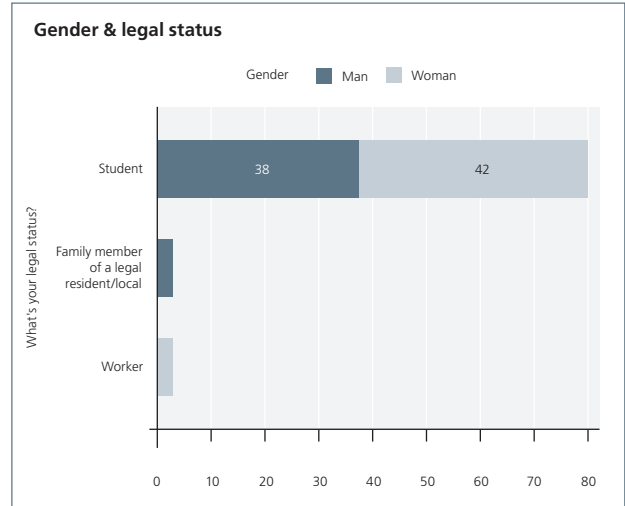
The majority of survey respondents were primarily from African countries, with Arab countries constituting a distant second. Almost one-quarter (18) of respondents reported Nigeria as their country of origin, followed by Sierra Leone (8), and Zimbabwe (5). The remaining countries of origin were represented by less than 5 (>5) individual respondents and were grouped as "Other".

Two respondents indicated their legal statuses as family members of a legal resident/local and identified the United Kingdom and the Philippines as their respective countries of origin.



2. Gender

Breaking down the sample by gender, a total of 43 women and 39 men completed this survey, of whom 1 man was a family member of a legal resident/local and 1 woman a worker.



3. Time in Cyprus per Age Group

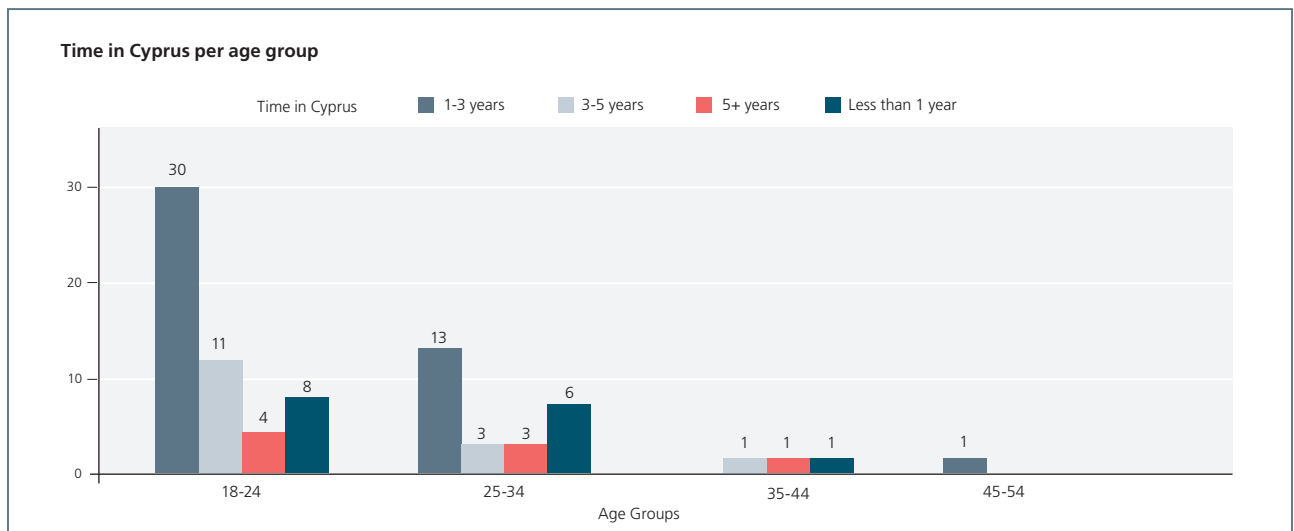
The graph depicts the correlation between the legal status of the respondents and how long they've been in Cyprus. As shown, 53 of the 82 respondents were aged between 18 and 24 years, of whom 38 have reported being in Cyprus for up to 3 years.

This is arguably due to the fact that the majority of respondents are students, and this is the typical duration of a Bachelor's degree. Of the 25 respondents aged 25-34, the majority (13) have been in Cyprus for 3 years or less, corresponding to the average duration of a Master's degree program.

Eight respondents reported being in Cyprus for more than 5 years, presumably due to delays in completing their programs or undertaking subsequent degrees after the completion of their initial program.

Finally, 15 respondents reported being in Cyprus for less than a year with the majority (8) between the ages of 18-24.

This information indicates that the respondents were mostly young people, who might have been susceptible to the adverse socio-economic effects of the pandemic without the support of familiar social systems. This is because the majority may have not been in Cyprus long enough to build networks of support.



B. The Availability of COVID-19-Related Information

Part I of the study highlighted some of the problems caused by a lack of COVID-19-related information due to the limited availability of translations and support for those who did not speak Turkish. That preliminary finding is further supported by the data analysed in this section.

It also provides a preliminary understanding on the availability of COVID-19 information in other languages and an overview of primary sources of information, the goal being to identify areas in which communication from the government could be improved.

1. Native Language and Access to Information

The bar chart depicted illustrates the native language of the participants, in relation to their ability to access COVID-19 information in their native language. Only half (41) of the survey respondents reported being able to access information relevant to the COVID-19 in their native language, the majority being English (26) and Arabic (8) speakers. The remaining respondents said they could not, or they could not *always* access information about COVID-19 in their language.

2. Sources of Information

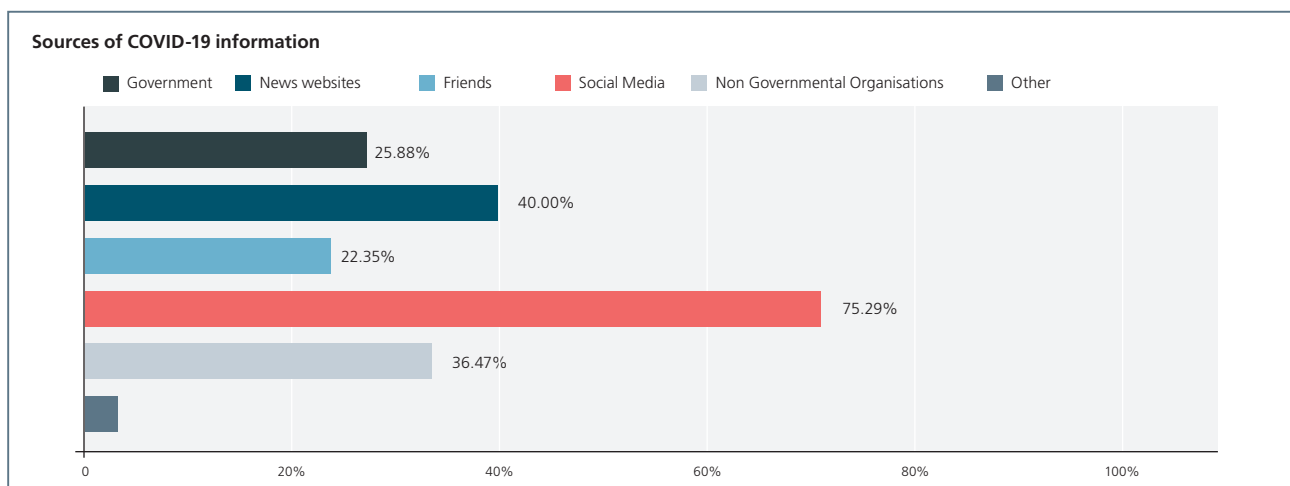
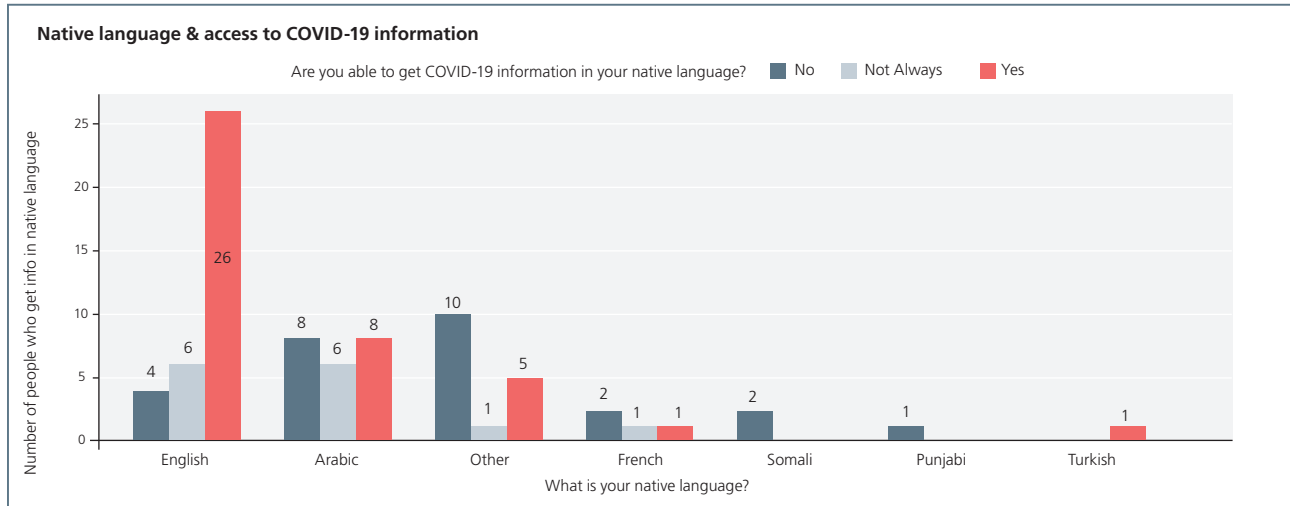
To better understand the type of information respondents received during the pandemic, we also explored the main sources of this information in the survey.

Social media appeared to be the primary source of pandemic-related information. News websites and NGOs followed as the second and third most popular sources of information.

From the two charts, we can conclude that 1 in 2 respondents were able to access information about COVID-19 in their native language, primarily through social media and also through news websites and NGOs. This suggests that the local authorities had very limited success in ensuring access to official translations of pandemic-related information to non-Turkish speakers.

The “TRNC’s Ministry of Health” was primarily responsible for releasing information on the pandemic – including, but not limited to, updates on restrictions, cases, and testing measures. However, this information was officially released in Turkish, making it difficult for migrants and international students to stay abreast of changes and new restrictions.

This, in addition to the fact that social media was the primary source of information reported by respondents, suggests that local organisations like VOIS were instrumental in ensuring the dissemination of new mandates and restrictions in languages other than Turkish, through their online platforms.



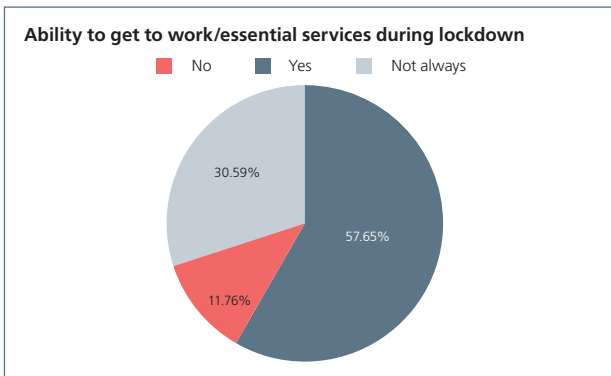
C. Understanding the Impact of Restrictions – Past and Present

This section explores how COVID-19 measures affected the lives of the respondents. As highlighted previously, one of the limitations of the survey was the fact that the data was collected through periods of relative freedom and some limited lockdowns and this therefore potentially affected how respondents responded.

1. Impact on Movement During Lockdown

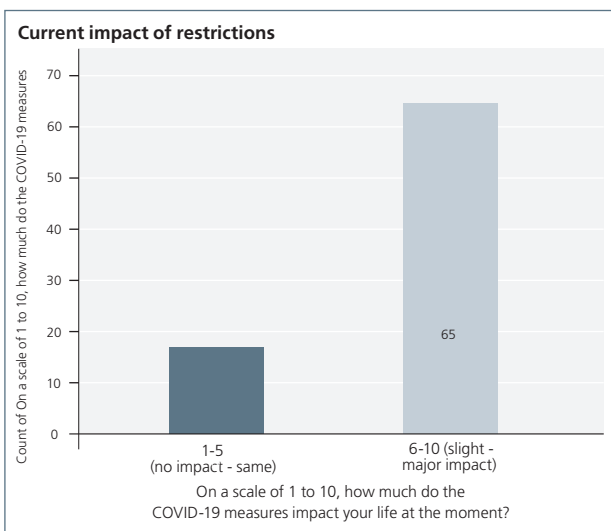
The pie chart provides context on how many respondents faced restrictions during the first lockdown period in spring 2020, and whether they were able to access work or essential services.

Asked whether they were able to get to their workplace or to essential services (doctor, supermarket, etc) during the lockdown period, 58% indicated “Yes”, 31% suggested “Not always”, and about 10% said “No”.



2. Current Impact of Restrictions

In the question “On a scale of 1 (no impact) to 10 (major impact), how much do the COVID-19 measures impact your life at the moment?”, over two-thirds of respondents (65) chose 6 or above on the scale, indicating that the pandemic restrictions at the time of the survey were negatively impacting their lives. The remaining 17 respondents said the restriction measures imposed at the time (December 2020) either slightly or not at all affected their lives.



It was interesting to observe from the previous graphs that less than half (“No” & “Not always”) of the respondents faced difficulties in accessing essential services, such as work, supermarket, or the doctor, but two-thirds of respondents said that pandemic restrictions continued to impact their lives negatively.

This variation can be explained either by the lack of need on the part of the respondents to require such services, or the ability to procure many of these services (particularly supermarkets) online, which made movement restrictions less problematic, but they probably continued to feel the impact of the restrictions on their social lives more with regular gathering places (bars, cafes, restaurants, cinema, etc.) often being closed.

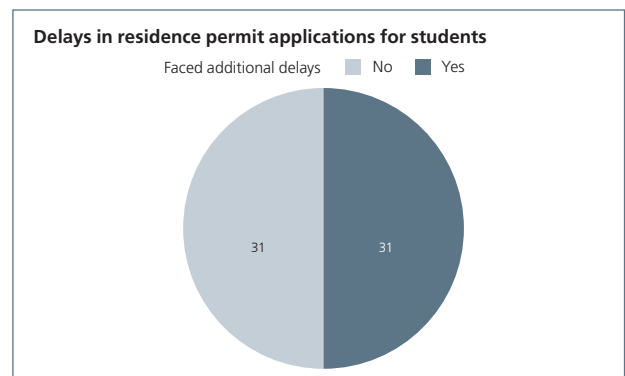
Moreover, the fact that the majority of respondents were students suggest that restrictions on access to workplaces (universities) would not have impacted them at all, given that all classes were moved online.

D. Delays in Renewing Residence Permits

In response to the pandemic, most “TRNC” government departments have switched to remote work with limited contact hours for the public and meetings by appointment only, in most cases. This section sheds light on these changes and explores the extent to which respondents faced additional delays or difficulties in their residence permit applications.

1. Delays in Renewing Residence Permits

Of the 62 recorded responses by students, half indicated that they had experienced delays in renewing their residence permits. While the renewal process is primarily conducted online, new individual applications and some types of renewals can often only be addressed by visiting the relevant office(s) in person, which was difficult during the pandemic.



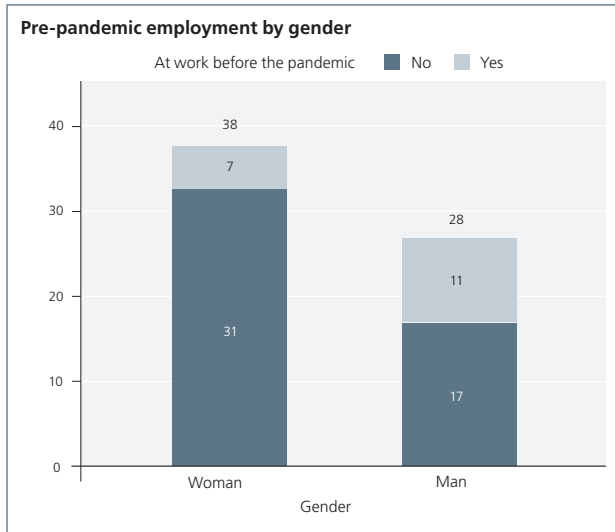
Moreover, the compulsory medical tests, required as part of the permit process, can also only be completed by visiting a hospital/laboratory, which complicated the process for those needing to do so and created a backlog, even after restrictions had been lifted after the first lockdown.

E. Employment and Livelihoods

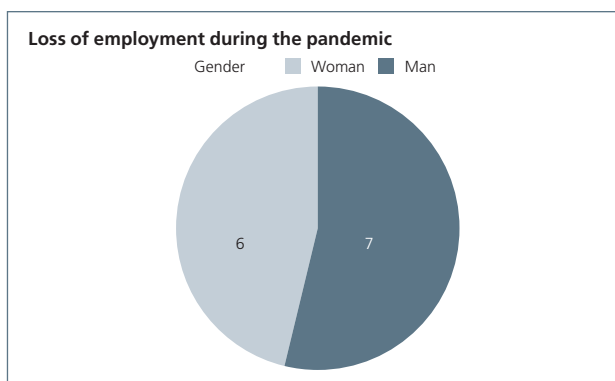
The COVID-19 pandemic has had a severe toll on the “TRNC” economy as well, particularly in sectors that migrants and students tend to work. Given this, this section provides insight into the financial situation of respondents’ livelihoods before and during the first wave of the pandemic.

1. Gender and Loss of Livelihoods

Of the 18 respondents who reported being employed prior to the breakout of the pandemic (light grey) in March 2020, 11 were men and 7 were women.



When asked if they lost their job or chance to work, 6 out of the 11 men and all 7 women reported losing their jobs. This indicated that in addition to women being less likely to have been employed prior to the pandemic, they were also far more likely (7/7 in this case) to have lost their employment as a result of it.



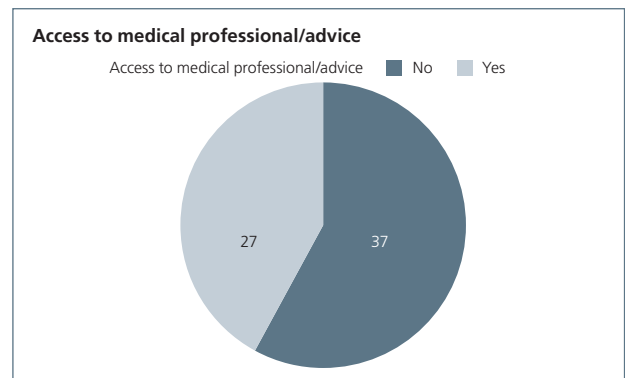
This is presumably attributed to the fact that women are more often employed in the hospitality and service sector (hotels, tourist offices, casinos, etc) in the “TRNC” and the fact that these sectors were severely impacted by the restrictions. We found the opposite case to be true in the RoC.

F. Healthcare and Mental Health

Since the onset of the pandemic, many hospital departments have seen disruptions to their work and regular operations, affecting access to healthcare for many patients in the “TRNC”. In this section, we explored respondents’ access to healthcare and the state of their mental health, during the pandemic.

1. Access to a Medical Professional or Medical Advice

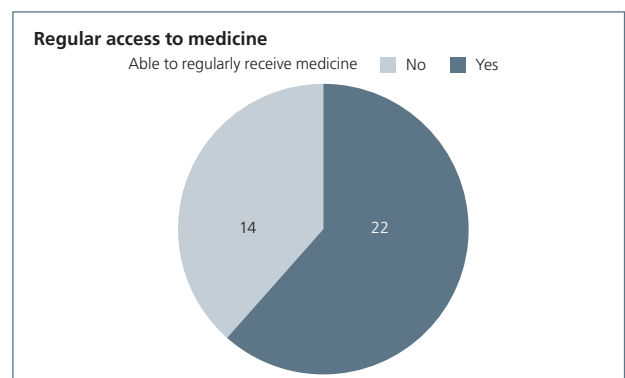
When asked whether they were able to receive medical advice from a professional (either by phone or in person) during the pandemic, approximately 60% of respondents (37 out of 64) said “No”.



To better understand the extent to which healthcare needs had been affected, we explored the availability of medication and support for chronic illnesses that respondents may have had before the onset of the pandemic.

2. Regular Access to Medicine

More worryingly, 14 of the 36 respondents who indicated that they were taking some type of regular medication before the pandemic reported not having regular access to their medicine (shown in light grey), since the onset of the pandemic.

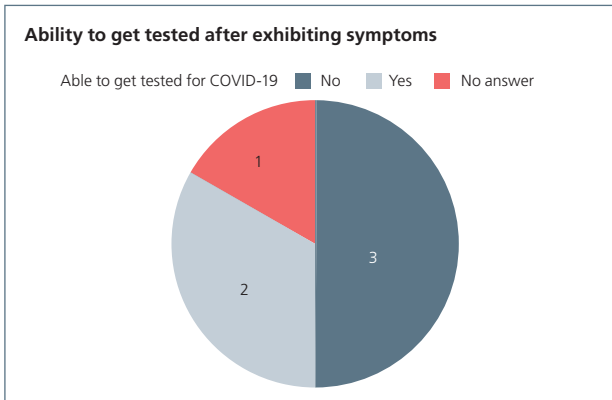


This indicates that a significant number of respondents that required medical advice and medication were unable to access them as a result of the pandemic.

3. COVID-19 Symptoms and Testing

Less than 10% of respondents said they had exhibited COVID-19 symptoms during the pandemic. This is in line with the low numbers of COVID-19 cases reported in the “TRNC” for most of 2020.

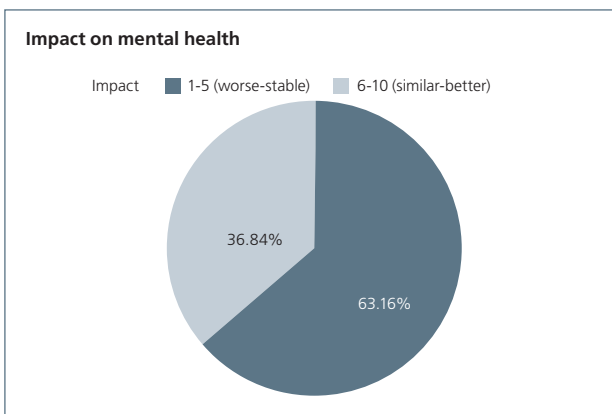
Of the 6 respondents who indicated that they had exhibited symptoms, only 2 reported being able to receive medical advice and subsequently getting tested.



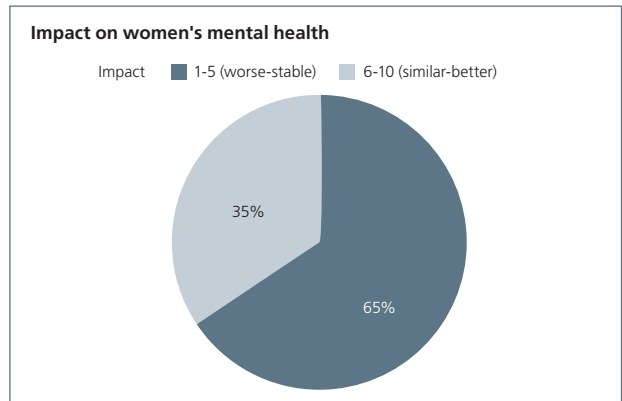
4. Mental Health

The pandemic has resulted in social isolation, financial insecurity, and disruption to people’s personal development and routines, all compounding to negatively impact mental wellbeing. To gain insight into respondents’ mental health as the pandemic progressed, we asked respondents to rate the change in their mental health on a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being worse than before the pandemic began, 5 being the same, and 10 being better.

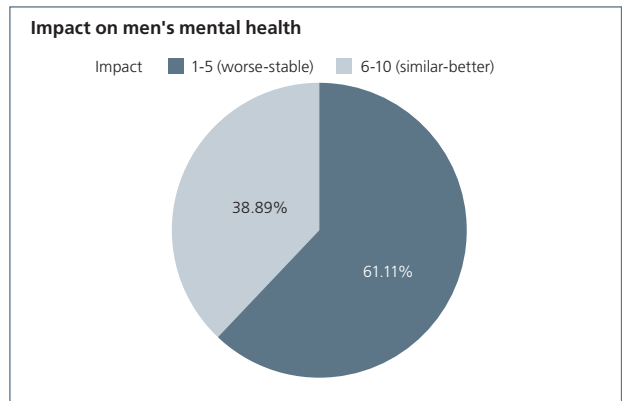
About 37% of the respondents rated the change in their mental health from 6 to 10, meaning that it improved in comparison prior to the pandemic, while the remaining 63% of respondents experienced a deterioration (1 to 5) in their mental health during the pandemic.



65% of female respondents indicated that their mental health had either remained the same or deteriorated (1 to 5) in comparison to the pre-COVID-19 period, while the rest said it improved. A slightly smaller proportion of male participants said their mental health was the same or had worsened during the pandemic, with 61% reporting so.



Interestingly, men who did report an improvement were more likely to indicate a larger improvement relative to their female counterparts with 22% of male respondents rating their mental health between 8-10 as opposed to only 12.5% of female respondents.



The total number of respondents reporting an improvement in their mental health (6 to 10) was also slightly higher for men than women, at 39% and 35% respectively.

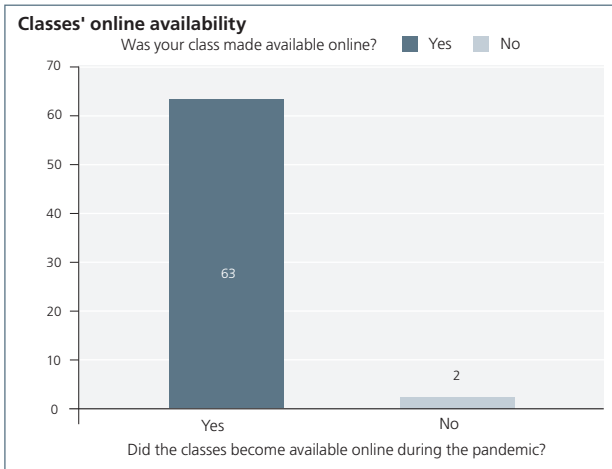
With regard to living conditions, respondents who shared a residence with 2 or more people were less likely to report a deterioration in their mental health as opposed to those who lived alone or had only 1 housemate. This would suggest that living in a shared residence with multiple people during the pandemic may have had a positive effect on mental health.

G. Education and Personal Development

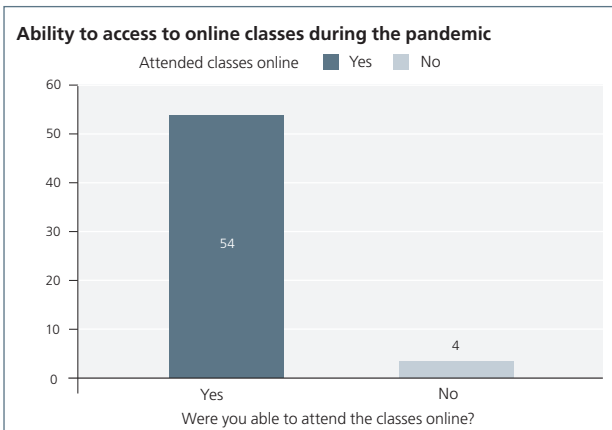
This section explored the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the respondents’ education and personal development. With the majority of respondents being students, it focused on their ability to continue their classes during the pandemic.

1. Ability to Study Online

Of the 65 respondents who indicated that they were receiving some form of education before the pandemic, 63 reported that classes became available online.

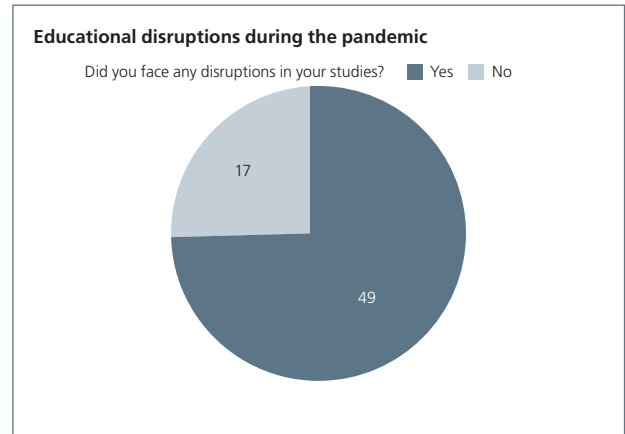


Out of these 63 respondents, 54 were able to attend their classes online, and 4 reported they were unable to do so, while the remaining 7 individuals did not provide a response to this question.

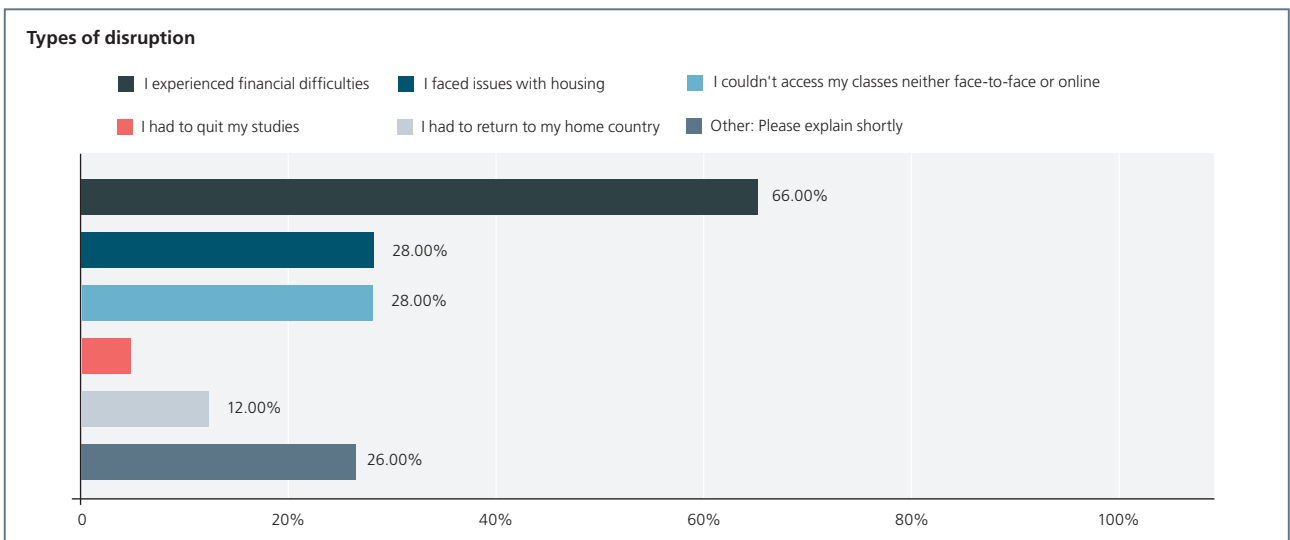


2. Disruptions to Education and Personal Development

When asked, 49 out of 66 respondents indicated that they faced disruptions that negatively impacted their studies. The majority of these disruptions were reportedly due to financial difficulties, followed by difficulties in accessing classes and housing issues.



This data indicates that while educational institutions were able to adapt the delivery of their classes to online environments as a result of the pandemic, it still had a disruptive effect on the education of those enrolled in courses, primarily due to its economic effect.

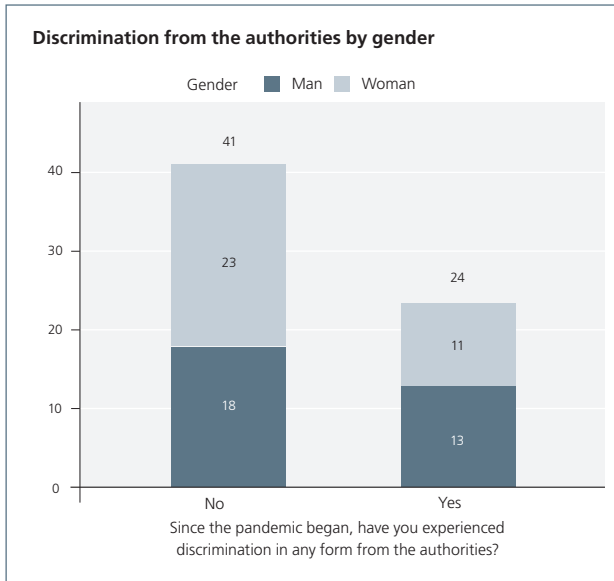


H. Security and Discrimination

Similar to the RoC survey, using 2 different sets of questions, participants were asked if they faced discrimination during the pandemic from either the authorities or others, and what they perceived as the reason for any discrimination, if they did.

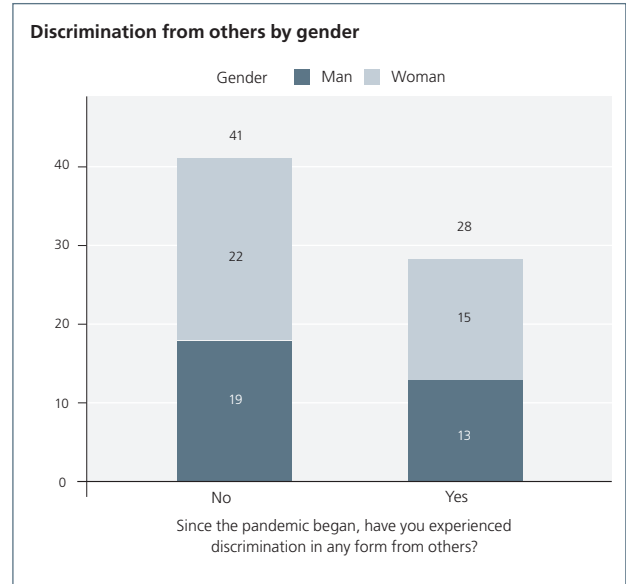
1. Faced Discrimination from the Authorities

As depicted, about one-third (24 out of 65) of respondents indicated that they experienced discrimination in some form from the authorities or those in power, with a similar number of men and women reporting discrimination.



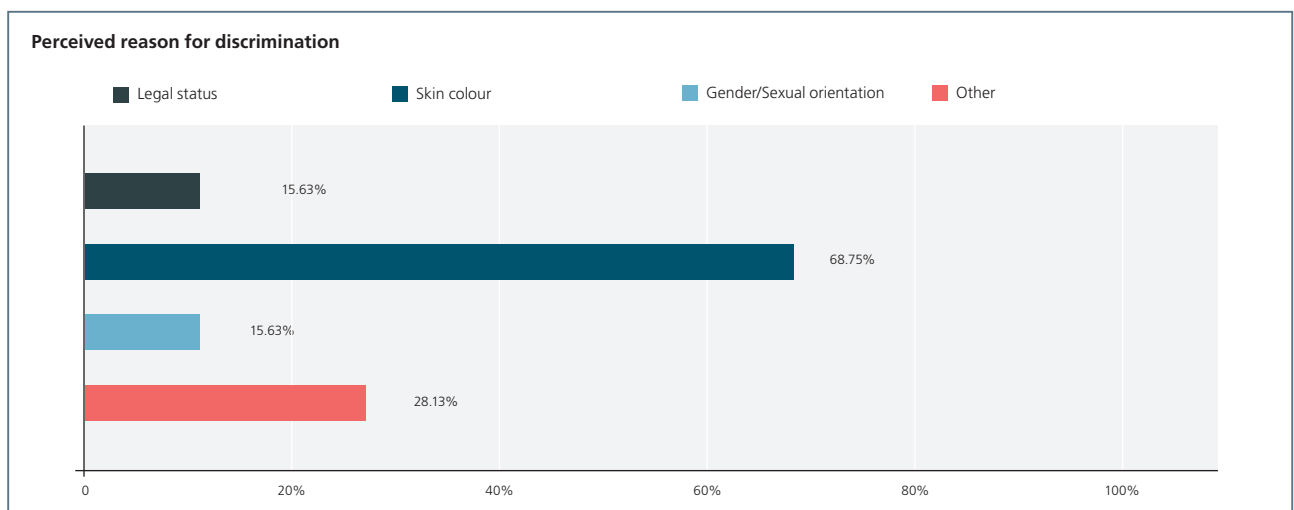
2. Faced Discrimination by Others

When asked if they experienced discrimination from others, besides the authorities, about 40% of the respondents responded in the affirmative.



3. Reason for Discrimination

Respondents who reported discrimination were asked to indicate the reason they believed they were discriminated against. Participants could choose from multiple options including skin colour, legal status, gender, and other. The majority of respondents (69%) indicated that they believed the colour of their skin was the reason for the discrimination. 28% of respondents indicated "Other" as the second most perceived reason for discrimination, followed by "Legal Status" and "Gender/Sexuality Orientation" (both at 15,63%).

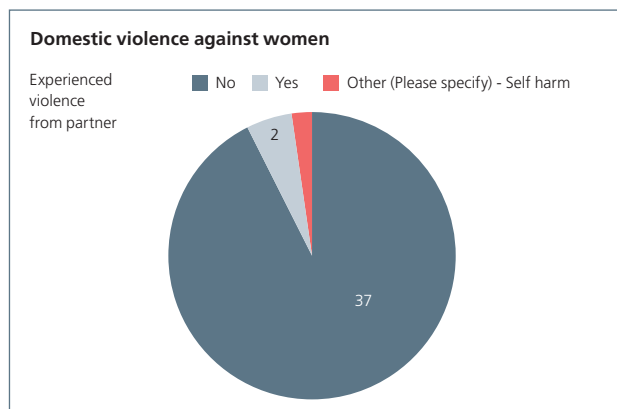


I. Gender and Reproductive Health

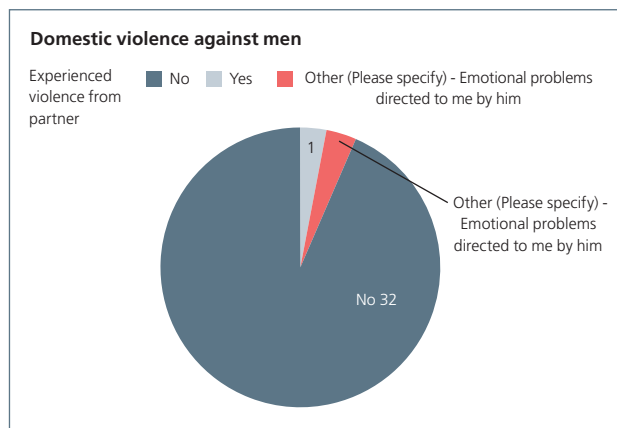
The pandemic impacted men and women (there were no respondents who chose alternate gender identities) in the “TRNC” differently. This section of the survey explored effects on domestic violence and reproductive health. Given the large number of students, we did not explore effects on domestic workloads in the “TRNC”.

1. Domestic Violence

For a more comprehensive understanding of domestic violence, both men and women were asked about their experience during the pandemic, including questions on whether they experienced domestic violence and pressure to have sex from their partners.



When asked if they had experienced domestic violence during the pandemic, 2 female respondents out of 40 indicated that they had, in addition to 1 who said they had self-harmed.



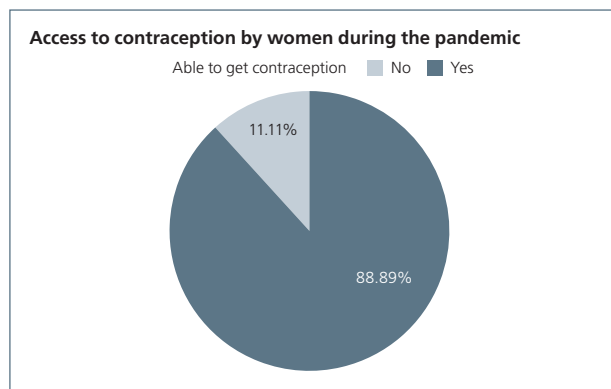
Out of the 34 male respondents, 1 suggested that that they had suffered from domestic violence and 1 other respondent stated that they had been subject to emotional distress from another male (possibly a partner).

The responses for domestic violence are probably at variance with statistical averages, making conclusions hard to draw. However, given the importance of this, this aspect warrants reinvestigation.

2. Access to Contraception

Of those women respondents regularly taking contraception, 9 in 10 reported being able to access it during the pandemic. This figure was dramatically at odds with the figure in the RoC - where 70% had difficulty accessing contraception due to the

pandemic - and can probably be attributed to the different socio-economic statuses of the women respondents in the RoC and “TRNC”. The women respondents in the RoC were mostly asylum seekers with already difficult access to health care and limited financial means, whereas in the “TRNC”, the fact that the respondents were mainly international students and that medicines are both cheaper and easier to access (non-enforcement of prescriptions), perhaps provides some explanation for this variance. It does, however, deserve to be explored further.



CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The survey, despite its major limitations (the lack of diversity of respondents, its limited size, and its exploration of multiple time periods), sheds light on the negative impact of the pandemic on vulnerable populations across Cyprus over the last year, leading to the following conclusions.

First, it reinforces many of the findings of Part I as related to the pandemic’s negative impacts on RMAs’ livelihoods, financial survival, education and personal development opportunities, and mental health.

Second, it highlights and confirms areas where officials on both sides of the island need to do better, particularly as related to inordinate delays in the processing of residence permits and documentation, inadequate communication in different languages, and, perhaps more worryingly, improving access to healthcare and regular medicine and contraception.

Third, it confirms that discrimination and othering are rampant across the island and have probably increased due to the pandemic - a trend that needs to be immediately addressed.

Fourth, perhaps surprisingly (or perhaps due to its limitations), the survey did not observe a particularly gendered impact, with many of the negative impacts of the pandemic being felt by both males and females in similar proportions. The only major exception being job loss for females in the “TRNC”, where all the female respondents lost their jobs in comparison to a smaller number of males.

In terms of next steps, the findings of Part I and Part II will be collated along with further insight from expert interviews, and an analysis of contemporary international best practices to be presented as a set of policy recommendations towards amelioration, in Part III of the study.

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FES CYPRUS OFFICE

FES has been active in Cyprus since 1986 and promotes a cooperative dialogue between political decision makers and civil society. Between 1986 and 2011, the Cyprus branch was administered by the Athens office. However, since 2011, FES Cyprus has had its own small office in Nicosia. The Nicosia office is part of a global network comprising 107 local branches.

FES's thematic work focuses on multiple areas including: ending the division of Cyprus and the reconciliation of all parties involved in the conflict; promoting bi-communal dialogue; regional stability and constructive conflict management; changes in the social, democratic and constitutional frameworks with an emphasis on good governance and social justice; minimizing the negative social and political repercussions of the economic and financial crisis as well as the austerity policy; regional cooperation and conflict prevention in the context of the hydrocarbon findings off the coast of Cyprus and in the Eastern Mediterranean.

In collaboration with local, regional, and international partners, e.g., trade unions, professional organizations, the political elite or universities and research centres, FES Cyprus organizes workshops, seminars, presentations, and conferences in order to promote as well as to strengthen the dialogue between the decision makers, multipliers, and citizens.

PROJECT PHOENIX

Project Phoenix is a migrant-led European NGO and social enterprise dedicated to systemic change of the inclusion ecosystem.

Project Phoenix is currently running a pilot project in Cyprus, where its programming involves an intensive fellowship program focussed on entrepreneurship and skills development, the creation of innovative partnerships with other civil-society groups for collective action, and a solutions-based research and advocacy pillar that aims to influence policy for systems change.

VOICES OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN CYPRUS (VOIS)

VOIS is a non-profit organization which aims to bring to light the problems faced by international students in the "TRNC". VOIS also aims and works actively to bridge the gap and maintain a successful dialogue between students, public, and private bodies.

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