

Assessment of Asylum Seeker, Refugee and Humanitarian Status Holder Youth in Georgia



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1. INTRODUCTION

A study of the “Assessment of Asylum Seeker, Refugee and Humanitarian Status Holder Youth in Georgia” has been prepared by PMC Research Center (PMC RC) with the support of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The study’s overall objective was to assess the current situation of asylum seekers, refugees, and humanitarian status-holding youth (i.e. those aged 14-29¹) in Georgia, including with respect to their access to rights and services. The study was conducted in December-March 2023.

The first part of the report outlines the methodology of the study, while in the second part an assessment of the current situation, including with regard to access to rights and services, of refugee youth is analyzed under the following areas:

- 1. Overall protection** – The corresponding chapter explores the level of knowledge and awareness that refugee youth have regarding their rights and the available state support services in the direction of protection in Georgia. Moreover, it examines refugee youth’s challenges, such as alleged discrimination and cases of violence, and how they perceive their level of safety in Georgia.
- 2. Healthcare** – The relevant chapter explores refugee youth’s level of knowledge and awareness regarding their rights and available healthcare services (including psychosocial services) in Georgia. Moreover, it analyzes their access to healthcare services, their affordability, and the satisfaction of refugee youth with the services received.
- 3. Education and learning** - This chapter analyzes refugee youth’s knowledge and awareness regarding their rights and available education and learning services in Georgia. In particular, it examines their access to such services and their level of engagement in the educational process.
- 4. Transition to work** – The corresponding chapter analyzes refugee youth’s knowledge and awareness regarding their rights and available state support services helping them engage to with the labor market. It analyses their overall engagement, and obstacles to establishing themselves, in the labor market.
- 5. Participation and engagement** – The chapter provides insights into the level of participation and engagement of refugee youth in public life in Georgia and in decision-making processes. Furthermore, it overviews their networks of friends and relatives in Georgia, coping mechanisms, and their future plans.

The third part of the study provides recommendations for stakeholders supporting refugee youth, aiming to increase their awareness and knowledge regarding their rights as well as available services (and access thereto) in the following areas: protection, healthcare, education and learning, transition to work, and participation and engagement.

¹ The study mentions asylum seekers, refugees, and humanitarian status-holder youth aged 14-29 as refugee youth.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For the purposes of this study, a mixed-method approach was employed, which includes quantitative and qualitative methods, namely a telephone survey and focus group discussions with asylum seekers, refugees, humanitarian-status-holders, as well as Ukrainians who have not yet applied for asylum in Georgia, all of whom are aged between 14 and 29. The collected quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS, while the qualitative data were analyzed systematically through MAXQDA software.

TELEPHONE SURVEY

For the purposes of this study, PMC RC conducted a comprehensive telephone survey with asylum seeker, refugee, and humanitarian status-holder youth, as well Ukrainian youth who have not yet applied for asylum residing in different locations in Georgia. Moreover, PMC RC developed a comprehensive survey questionnaire in English, Georgian, and Russian covering all of the research questions.

Sampling frame: The refugee youth in Georgia include asylum seekers, refugees, humanitarian status-holders, and Ukrainians without any legal status, all of whom are aged between 14 and 29. For the selection of respondents, the database provided by UNHCR was used².

Sampling type: In this study, stratified simple random sampling was applied to achieve representativeness of the survey results.

Stratification: Stratification was applied using the following variables: legal status; gender; age; country of origin; and the municipality in which they currently reside (see Table 1).

Table 1: Variables and groups of surveyed refugee youth

Variables	Groups
Legal status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ukrainians who have not yet applied for asylum ▪ Asylum seekers ▪ Refugees and humanitarian status-holders
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Female ▪ Male
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 14-17 ▪ 18-29
Country of origin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ukraine ▪ Other countries³
Municipality in which they currently reside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tbilisi ▪ Batumi ▪ Other⁴

² Information about the provided database is given in Annex 1.

³ Other countries include: Iraq, Iran, Russia, Syria, Egypt, Yemen, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somali, Lebanon, Turkey, Bangladesh, Jordan, Myanmar, Saudi Arabia, the State of Eritrea, Algeria, Cameroon, Congo, Denmark, India, Palestine, Sudan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan.

⁴ Other municipalities include: Kutaisi, Rustavi, Zugdidi, Kobuleti, Martkopi, Poti, Akhaltsikhe, Gardabani, Marneuli, Akhmeta, Ambrolauri, Chkhorotsku, Dmanisi, Gudauri, Kaspi, Khashuri, Mtskheta, and Sighnaghi.

The database was divided (stratified) into different strata using the abovementioned variables. In addition, the number of respondents selected from each stratum was determined proportionally to the square root of the stratum volume. The utilized sampling method ensured the representativeness of domains of interest in the study to the extent that would enable meaningful analysis.

Initially, the sample size was determined to be 550 respondents, ensuring a maximum margin of error of 3.1%. However, in the frame of the study, only 483 respondents were surveyed⁵ (mainly due to the low response rate), resulting in a slight increase in the maximum margin of error to 3.5% with a 95% confidence interval. The margins of error according to the different strata are given in Table 2.

Table 2: The margins of error according to the different strata

Variable	Strata	Maximum margin of error with 95% confidence interval
Legal status	Ukrainians who have not yet applied for asylum	5.4%
	Asylum seekers	10.1%
	Refugees and humanitarian status-holders	2.4%
Gender	Female	4.2%
	Male	5.1%
Age	14-17	2.3%
	18-29	5.4%
Country of origin	Ukraine	3.9%
	Other countries	6.7%
Municipality in which they currently reside	Tbilisi	4.8%
	Batumi	5.2%
	Other	10.1%

Data weighting was performed according to the strata: the volume of each stratum was divided by the number of surveyed refugee youth.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Together with conducting the telephone survey, PMC RC carried out two online focus group discussions with refugee youth. These focus group discussions gave the survey results greater depth and increased their validity and value. For the discussions, PMC RC developed an interview guide. In total, 14 refugee youth participated in the discussions, of which seven were from Ukraine, and seven were from other countries, namely Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Egypt, and Iran⁶.

In terms of age category, five participants of the focus group discussions were from the 18-29 category, while nine participants belonged to the 14-17 category. Furthermore, by status, six participants were Ukrainians who had not yet applied for asylum, while three were asylum seekers and five were either refugees or humanitarian status-holders.

⁵ The information on surveyed refugee youth is given in Annex 1.

⁶ The information on focus group participants is given in Annex 2.

3. RESEARCH FINDINGS

3.1. OVERALL PROTECTION

This chapter explores the level of knowledge and awareness among refugee youth regarding their rights and available state support services providing them protection in Georgia. Moreover, it examines refugee youth's challenges in this regard, such as alleged discrimination and cases of violence, and how they perceive their level of safety in Georgia.

Main findings

- ❑ Overall, the study found that refugee youth in Georgia consider themselves to have a high level of safety, with 90% of respondents indicating that they feel safe or very safe in the country. However, country of origin had an impact on their perspective on safety, with those from Ukraine reporting the highest levels of safety. The focus group discussions also revealed that respondents did not face significant safety problems in Georgia.
- ❑ Considering that most refugee youth feel safe in Georgia, it is unsurprising that most refugee youth recorded not having faced discrimination (83.8%). However, the remaining 16.2% indicated having experienced cases of alleged discrimination on various grounds in Georgia.
- ❑ The incidence of alleged discrimination varied across different groups, with fewer respondents in the 14-17 age group reporting alleged discrimination compared to the 18-29 age group. Alleged discrimination was also more prevalent in Tbilisi, compared to other parts of the country. Notably, respondents from Ukraine reported the lowest incidence of alleged discrimination, with 11.1% reporting having faced alleged discrimination, which is 17 percentage points lower than among refugee youth from other countries.
- ❑ Alleged discrimination was most common on grounds of ethnicity. Observing by country of origin, the lowest share of respondents indicated they had faced alleged discrimination (7.1%) was Ukrainians. In contrast, the exact figure for the corresponding indicator for other countries combined was 22.6%.
- ❑ The focus group discussions revealed that refugee youth had experienced alleged discrimination related to their lack of knowledge of the Georgian language. Some participants indicated that people in Georgia were less friendly towards those who do not speak Georgian.
- ❑ Only 12% of refugee youth who had faced alleged discrimination had reported it to law enforcement agencies. The main reason given for that was that the relevant respondents did not consider it necessary.
- ❑ Regarding physical violence, very few respondents reported having experienced it in Georgia, with only 3% indicating that they had suffered physical violence.
- ❑ Compared to alleged discrimination, incidents of physical violence were more frequently reported to law enforcement agencies (84% of refugee youth who had experienced physical violence had reported it). However, dissatisfaction with the service provided by such agencies was notable, with 44% of respondents who had reported such incidents expressing dissatisfaction therewith.
- ❑ Only 29% of respondents indicated they were very aware or fully aware of their rights in terms of protection. In this regard, awareness levels were higher in the 18-29 age group (32%) compared to the 14-17 age group (21%).

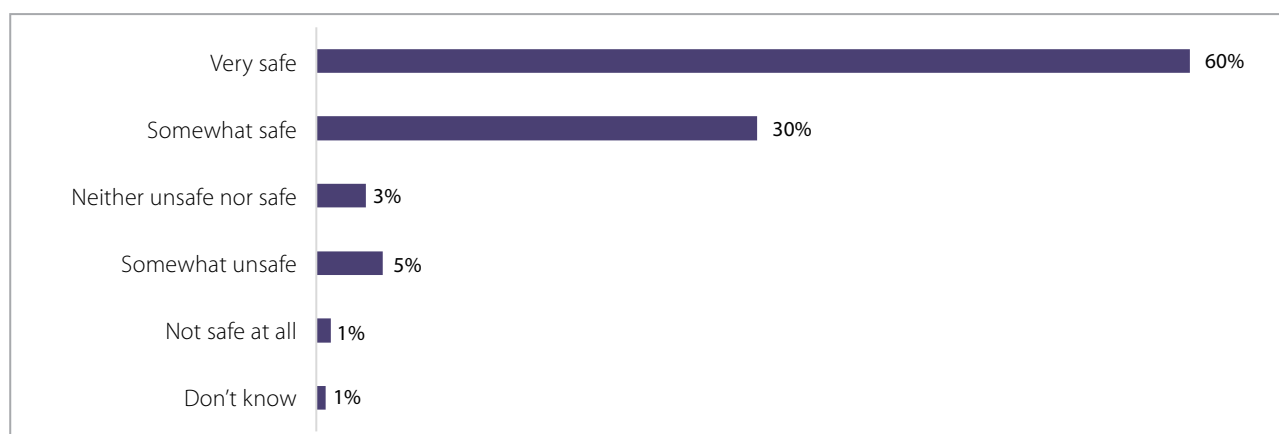
Perceptions of level of safety

The survey results indicated that, overall, refugee youth feel safe in Georgia. For instance, 90% of respondents indicated that they feel very safe (60%) or somewhat safe (30%) in the country. Notably, there was no noticeable difference between age groups, and the level of safety perceived by the 14-17 and 18-29 age groups was largely similar. Moreover, no correlation was detected between perceived level of safety and gender or location of current residence.

However, differences were noticeable when examining the respondents' country of origin. Significantly, survey respondents from Ukraine indicated the highest perceived level of safety compared to those from other countries. For instance, 92.6% of surveyed Ukrainians said they felt somewhat safe or very safe, while among those from other countries, the same indicator was 86.7%.

Likewise, a difference was also observable with regard to the legal status of survey respondents. For instance, 75.8% of surveyed asylum seekers indicated feeling safe or somewhat safe. In contrast, this indicator for respondents with other legal statuses (refugees and humanitarian status-holders, Ukrainians who have not yet applied for asylum) stood at more than 90%. The lower perceived level of safety among asylum seekers could be connected to their feelings of uncertainty regarding their status.

Figure 1: Perceptions of level of safety among refugee youth in Georgia



Source: PMC RC's survey

Apart from the survey results, in the focus groups discussions Ukrainian participants assessed the people in Georgia as friendly and reported feeling safe in the country. In particular, one of the focus group participants (in the 14-17 age category) on the question of how safe they felt in Georgia, mentioned: "In general, it is like 100 percent safe, because supposedly everyone welcomes us, and no one stands against us," while another from the same age category added: "People are friendly, welcoming and the atmosphere is pleasant."

Meanwhile, focus group participants from other countries generally assessed Georgia as a safe place. One respondent from the 18-29 age category noted: "I feel safe. I live in Tbilisi, my door is always open, so I feel very safe here," while another from the same age category added: "I am also feeling safe here, regardless of the dogs [laughter]."

Cases of alleged discrimination

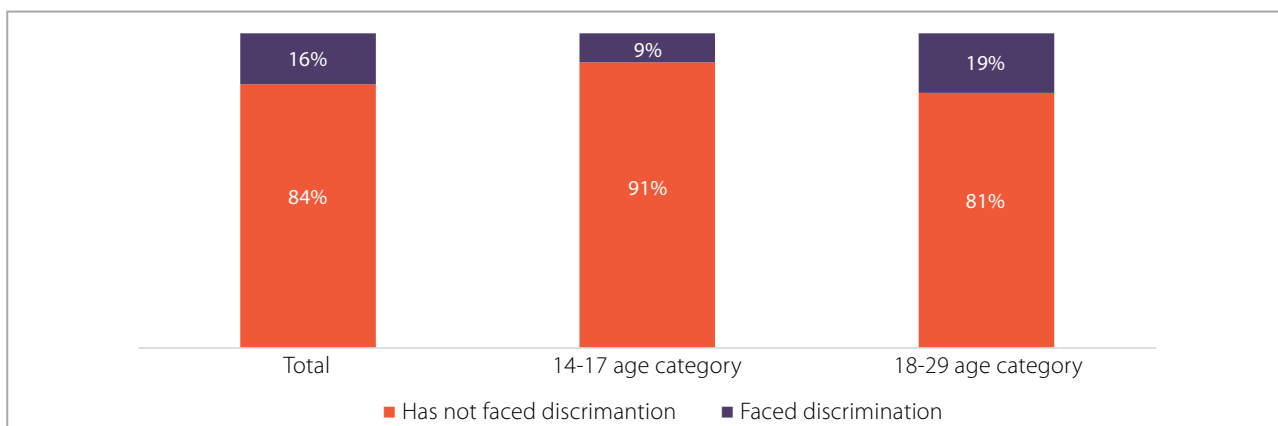
While assessing the safety of refugee youth, the "overall protection" part of the study also included indicators to explore whether the respondents had faced alleged discrimination during their stay in Georgia. During the interview process, the interviewers explained discrimination to the refugee youth as any unjust treatment due to their education level, economic conditions, religious affiliation, ethnicity, gender, and/or age. Moreover, the questions were constructed in a way that enabled respondents to indicate the frequency with which they had faced alleged discrimination.

Considering that most refugee youth feel safe in Georgia, it is unsurprising that most respondents reported not having faced alleged discrimination (83.8%). However, the remaining 16.2% indicated that they had experienced alleged discrimination on various grounds in Georgia. Among the age groups, there was a notable difference in this regard. More specifically, in the 14-17 age group, only 9.3% of respondents indicated that they had witnessed some form of alleged discrimination, while among the 18-29 age group this stood at 19.4%. There was also a slight difference between male and female respondents. Notably, 18% of male respondents indicated that they had witnessed alleged discrimination, while 15% of female respondents said the same.

Looking through the location of current residence of refugee youth, the share of respondents stating that they had experienced cases of alleged discrimination was highest for Tbilisi (20%) and lowest for Batumi (5%). The same indicator was 15% for municipalities other than Tbilisi and Batumi.

Furthermore, in terms of legal status, according to the survey results, the share of respondents stating that they had encountered cases of alleged discrimination was lowest among Ukrainians without any status (12.3%). For other groups (asylum seekers, and refugees and humanitarian status holders), the share of respondents who had faced alleged discrimination in Georgia ranged from 20% to 22%.

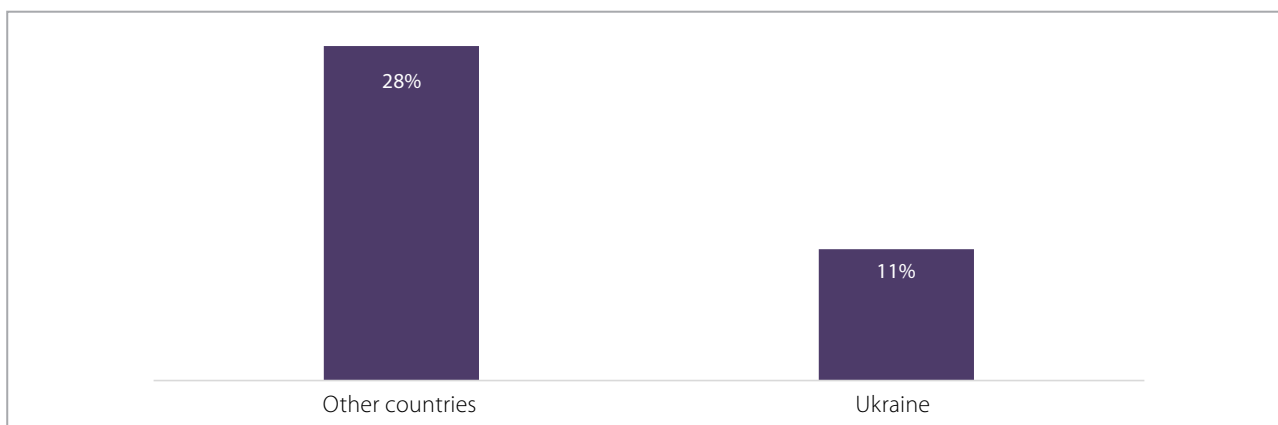
Figure 2: Self-reported cases of alleged discrimination against refugee youth in Georgia



Source: PMC RC's survey

It is worth noting here that the rates of cases of alleged discrimination refugee youth face differed according to the respondents' country of origin. For instance, 11.1% of surveyed Ukrainians recorded having faced alleged discrimination in Georgia, while this figure among refugee youth from other countries was much higher (28.1%).

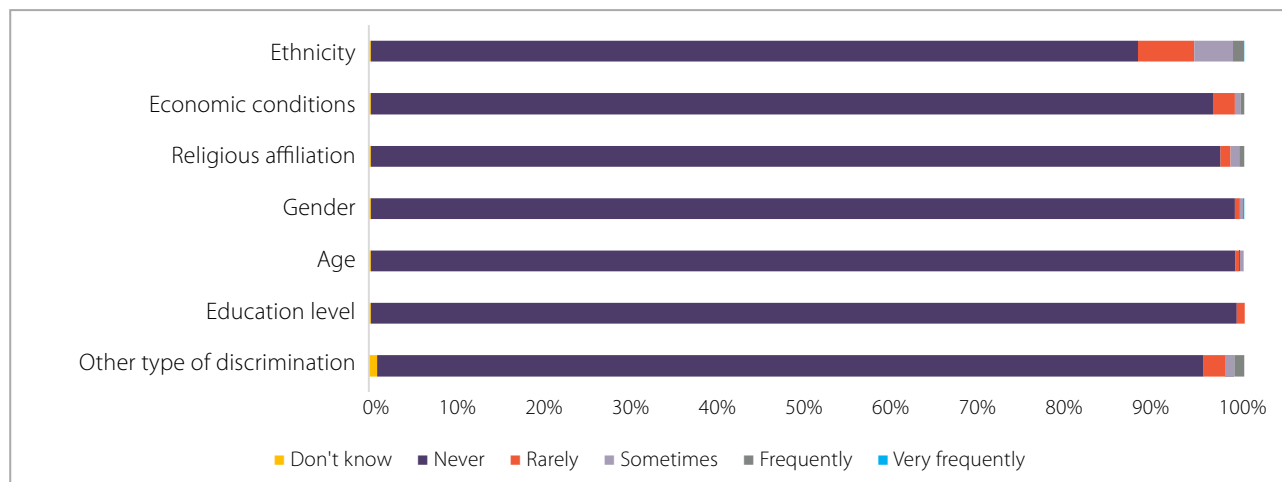
Figure 3: Cases of alleged discrimination against refugee youth by country of origin in Georgia



Source: PMC RC's survey

Looking at the different grounds on which refugee youth faced alleged discrimination in Georgia, ethnicity was the most commonly cited ground. In particular, 12.2% of surveyed refugee youth indicated that they had experienced cases of alleged discrimination on grounds of ethnicity in Georgia. Notably, of the surveyed refugee youth who had faced alleged discrimination because of their ethnicity, only 1.3% indicated that such cases happened frequently or very frequently.

Figure 4: Alleged discrimination on different grounds in Georgia



Source: PMC RC's survey

With regard to country of origin, the lowest share of refugee youth to indicate that they had faced alleged discrimination on grounds of their ethnicity (7.1%) was Ukrainians. In contrast, the combined figure for those from other countries was 22.6%.

To supplement the survey results, some focus group discussion participants also discussed cases of alleged discrimination. Specifically, some 14-17-year-old Ukrainians noted that because most Ukrainians in Georgia are from eastern Ukraine and tend to use Russian to communicate with Georgians, some had experienced unpleasant situations. Such instances had mainly happened because the Georgians thought they were Russian. Most participants described these situations as misunderstandings and did not consider them acts of discrimination. For instance, one focus group discussion participant mentioned: *"I personally do not, but some of my friends experienced, well, for example, in the bank, when they come, at first some kind of biased attitude, but after they show their passport, everything is fine."* Another participant added that due to speaking the Russian language, he had experienced some difficulties, recalling: *"It was probably three times, there was a bunch of complaints and then some tricky questions. And then I either just showed my passport, or ignored in some cases, because I did not know what to say, what to answer."*

Some focus group discussion participants from other countries mentioned that speaking the English language had caused them unpleasant situations in Georgia. They generally thought this happened primarily because of their ethnicity. One noted: *"Georgian people ignore me when I do not speak the "Kartuli" [Georgian] language. When I speak with them in English, they get angry."* Another added: *"They know how to speak in English, but they do not like to speak in English. They are like "in my country, you should speak in my language" but it is not easy to learn."* Meanwhile, one focus group discussion participant said he found communicating with Georgians difficult. He stated: *"When I walk in the street and ask someone for directions, they ignore me. And in the market, when they ask me if I want a bag, I say yes, and they say "Kartuli! Kartuli!"* In addition, some focus group discussion participants alleged that taxi drivers increased their prices for them because they are foreigners. Apart from cases of alleged discrimination due to speaking in another language, one focus group discussion participant who speaks Georgian mentioned that she faced alleged discrimination from

her classmates at school because of her country of origin (Afghanistan). She added that despite informing her teachers of this several times, no support was provided.

Notably, among the surveyed refugee youth who reported having faced alleged discrimination, only 12.1% had informed law enforcement agencies (e.g. the police). The majority of surveyed refugee youth (91.4%) stated that they did not notify such agencies because they did not consider it necessary to do so. The low level of referrals here might be explained by the fact that most respondents who had faced alleged discrimination indicated that such cases had been rare.

During the focus group discussions, some Ukrainians from the 14-17 age category mentioned they would not inform law enforcement agencies in the event of verbal discrimination because they believed it would be difficult to prove and understood that, in Georgia, people did not routinely report such issues.

Apart from Ukrainians, some focus group discussion participants from other countries mentioned that if there was a case of alleged discrimination against them, they would try to solve the problem through dialogue. Meanwhile, others said they simply ignore such situations.

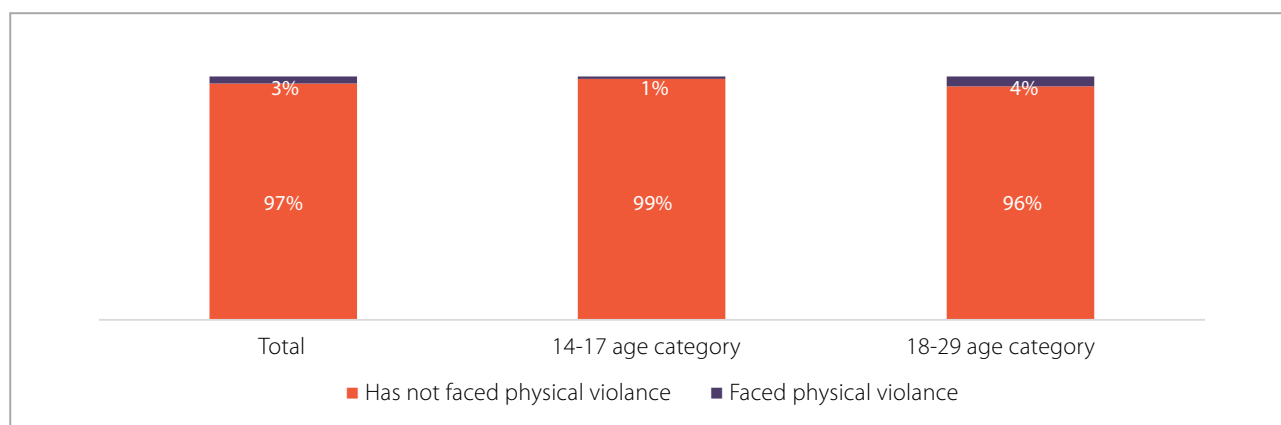
Of those surveyed refugee youth who had informed law enforcement agencies about a case of alleged discrimination, 66.7% were dissatisfied with the services provided to them. Notably, none of these surveyed refugee youth had received either victim status or psychosocial support from the state. Strikingly, 84.4% of those to have reported such a case indicated that they needed psychosocial support.

Cases of physical violence

Compared to discrimination, fewer respondents indicated having faced cases of physical violence (97.1% reported having never experienced such cases). There were slight differences between age groups in this regard. In particular, in the 14-17 age category, only 1.3% of respondents recorded experiencing cases of physical violence, whereas in the 18-29 age category this stood at 3.9%. Observing differences between gender, it was revealed that male refugee youth (5%) faced cases of physical violence more than women (1.1%). Meanwhile, according to location of current residence, the highest share of refugee youth to record cases of physical violence against them was in Tbilisi (3.6%).

Similar to cases of alleged discrimination, the lowest share of surveyed refugee youth to report having faced physical violence was from Ukraine (0.7%), while for respondents from other countries, the corresponding figure was 7.6%.

Figure 5: Cases of physical violence against refugee youth



Source: PMCRC's survey

Unlike cases of alleged discrimination, most respondents who had faced physical violence had informed law enforcement agencies (84%), and 30.4% received victim status or expected to receive it. It should be noted that none of the surveyed refugee youth who had faced physical violence against them reported having received psychosocial and/or medical support from the state.

Compared to cases of alleged discrimination, for cases of physical violence, the share of surveyed refugee youth who were satisfied with the quality of services provided by the police was higher but still relatively low, standing at 28.4%. In addition, 43.9% of refugee youth who informed law enforcement agencies about having suffered physical violence said they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the services provided to them.

Cases of physical violence were also covered during the focus group discussions. None of the respondents mentioned having encountered physical violence in Georgia, and almost all participants claimed they would inform the law enforcement agencies in the event of physical violence. One said: *"If it were verbal, I would not go for it 100 percent, but I would for a physical one. However, it seems to me that I would not be understood well here, maybe."*

Awareness of rights in terms of protection

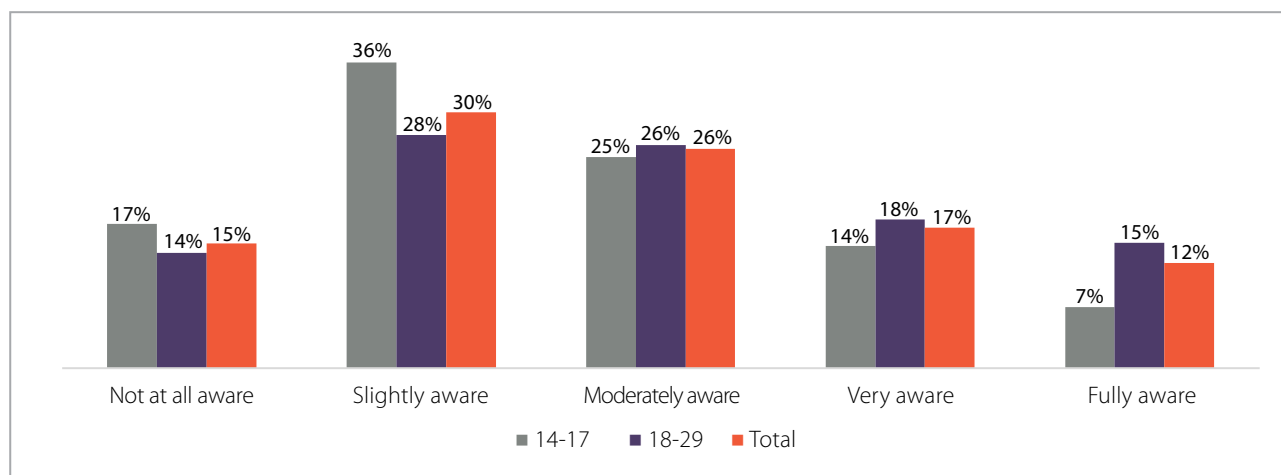
To get a more comprehensive picture of the protection of refugee youth, it is essential to evaluate respondents' awareness of their legal rights in terms of protection in Georgia.

According to the survey results, 45% of surveyed refugee youth were unaware or slightly aware of their legal rights in terms of protection. Moreover, only 29.1% of respondents indicated they were fully aware or very aware of their rights in this regard.

Differences in awareness levels were observable among age groups, as refugee youth in the 18-29 age category were more aware of their rights in terms of protection compared to those in the 14-17 age category. Remarkably, among the 14-17 age category, only 21.7% of respondents considered that they were fully aware or very aware of their legal rights in terms of protection in Georgia, whereas, among the 18-29 age category, the corresponding figure was 32.4%. A difference was also observable with respect to gender. For instance, 31.9% of female respondents thought that they were fully aware or very aware of their legal rights, while the same applied for 25.7% of male respondents.

Notably, respondents' awareness of their legal rights in terms of protection differed by country of origin. Respondents from Ukraine indicated a lower level of awareness (26.9% indicated being fully aware or very aware) compared to respondents from other countries (33.3%).

Figure 6: Refugee youth's awareness of their legal rights by age group



Source: PMC RC's survey

During the focus group discussions, participants were asked about asylum procedures and the granting of refugee or humanitarian status. While applying for international protection, most focus group discussion participants who applied for international protection recorded that they had received information about their rights and obligations provided by the “Law on International Protection.” In addition, they received the service of an interpreter free of charge and were given temporary identification cards on time. They were satisfied with the provided information and services.

However, only one focus group discussion respondent mentioned that while he had received information about his rights and was provided with an interpreter free of charge, he neither received correct information nor all the services available. He noted: *“They said that language courses and a refugee shelter is provided for those under 18 years old. The problem was that we could not survive in this way. We did not have a job. We asked for the language course again, and they said no, and after asking several times, they finally gave us a language course.”*

Regarding monthly allowance, three (focus group discussion participant) asylum seekers mentioned that they had received a monthly allowance only two or three times and did not know the reason why. They stated that non-governmental organizations financially supported them, while other participants did not report any such problems.

Regarding the agencies/organizations with which the refugee youth recorded facing problems, only the Social Service Agency was mentioned and this was exclusively in relation to the monthly allowance.

Two focus group discussion participants (both refugee and humanitarian status-holders) mentioned that they had only been able to obtain up to a one-year temporary residence permit, and they needed to renew this every year. That represented additional financial and time costs for them.

3.2. HEALTHCARE

This chapter explores refugee youth's level of knowledge and awareness regarding their rights and available services with respect to healthcare (including psychosocial services) in Georgia. It analyzes refugee youth's access to healthcare services, affordability, and satisfaction with the received services.

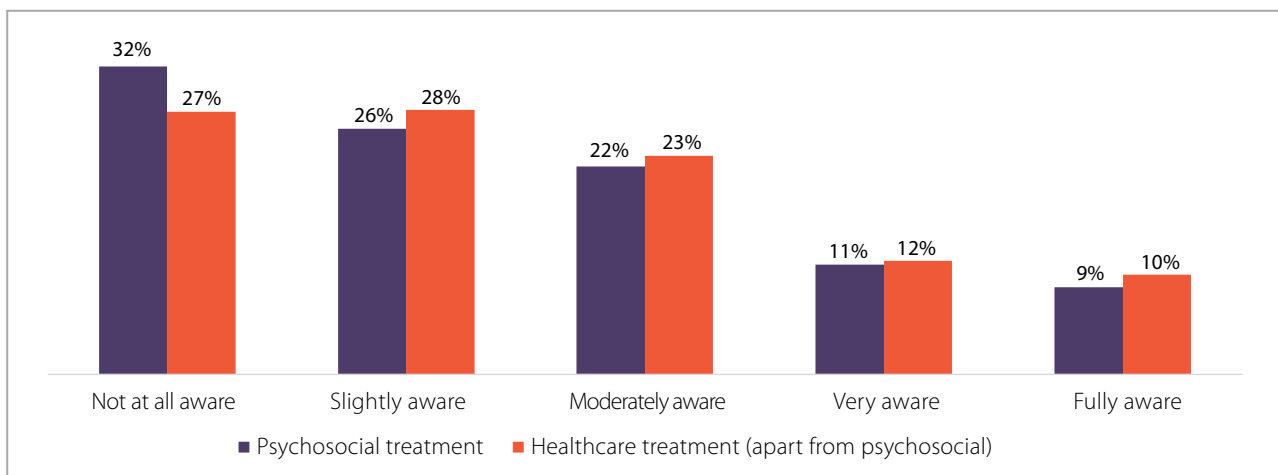
Main findings

- ❑ According to the study results, most refugee youth have limited awareness about their rights and existing services regarding healthcare treatment in Georgia.
- ❑ In terms of age groups, the study indicates that refugee youth aged 14-17 are less aware of their rights and available healthcare services than those aged 18-29. Furthermore, the location of current residence was found to play a role in the level of awareness of refugee youth. Notably, respondents from Batumi were more aware of their rights and services with regard to healthcare than elsewhere. In addition, the results differed according to respondents' different countries of origin. For instance, in Georgia, Ukrainians were the least aware of their rights to receive healthcare treatment.
- ❑ The study results also indicate that healthcare services are not affordable for most refugee youth. For instance, 43.3% of the respondents indicated that the healthcare services (excluding psychosocial services) were unaffordable, and 39.4% indicated that the psychosocial services were not affordable. As for medicine affordability, 42.7% of respondents indicated that medicines were unaffordable.
- ❑ Regarding the satisfaction of received healthcare services, most refugee youth who had received any sort of healthcare service were satisfied with the quality of services received in Georgia. More specifically, the share of respondents who stated that they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied amounted to only 4.3%.
- ❑ The majority (51%) of surveyed refugee youth agreed they could afford high-quality medical treatment in Georgia. In comparison, 68% stated they were treated and cared for as respectfully as locals while receiving healthcare services in Georgia.
- ❑ Receiving high-quality and respectful medical treatment was highly dependent on the country of origin of the refugee youth. The highest shares of respondents to agree with the statements "while accessing health services in Georgia, I was treated and cared for as respectfully as the local population would have been" and "I feel that doctors and medical personnel treat and care for me as respectfully as they treat and care for the local population" were of Ukrainians. In contrast, the corresponding figure for the respondents from other countries were lower.

Awareness of rights and services with respect to healthcare

According to the survey results, most refugee youth have limited knowledge about their rights and available services with respect to healthcare treatment in Georgia. Specifically, 54.9% of the respondents were either not aware or slightly aware of their rights to receive healthcare treatment (excluding psychosocial services). The corresponding figure regarding rights to receive psychosocial services was 57.7%.

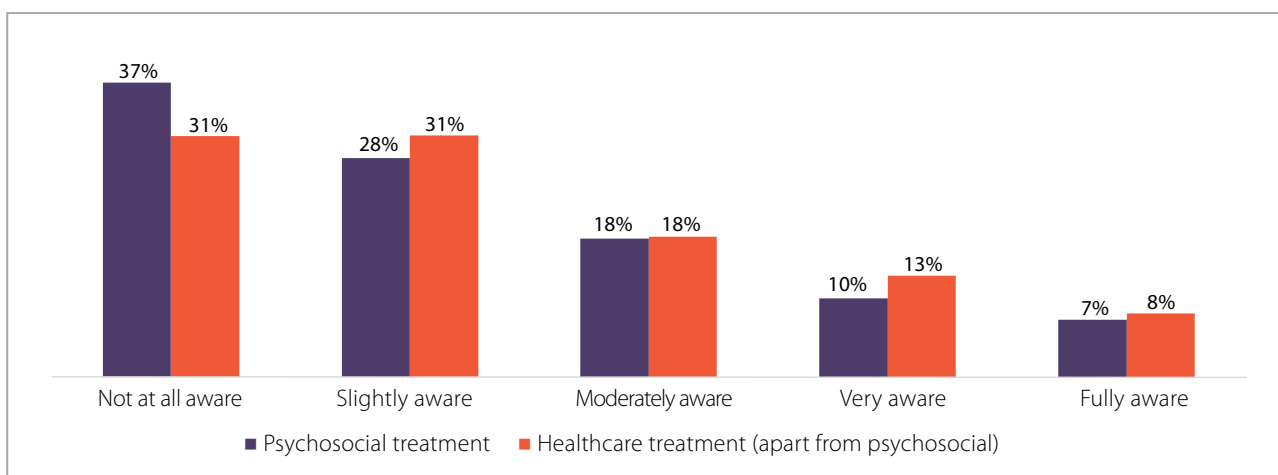
Figure 7: Refugee youth's awareness of rights with respect to healthcare in Georgia



Source: PMC RC's survey

In addition, 61.3% of refugee youth were either unaware or slightly aware of the available healthcare services (apart from psychosocial). At the same time, 65.2% were unaware or slightly aware of available psychosocial services.

Figure 8: Refugee youth's awareness of available healthcare services in Georgia



Source: PMC RC's survey

There was a noticeable difference in awareness between different age groups. As the study reveals, refugee youth aged 14-17 were less aware of their rights and available healthcare services than those aged 18-29⁷. Meanwhile, gender did not appear to be a significant factor, albeit slight differences were noted. In particular, females were slightly more aware of their rights and services with respect to healthcare.

The location of current residence was found to play a role in the level of awareness of refugee youth in this regard. Notably, respondents from Batumi were more aware of their rights and services with respect to healthcare than those residing elsewhere. In particular, the percentage of respondents who were moderately aware, very aware, or fully aware of their rights with respect to healthcare (apart from psychosocial) was 52.7% in Batumi, 42.5% in Tbilisi, and 42.6% in other municipalities. Regarding psychosocial services, this indicator stood at 50% in Batumi, 39.2% in Tbilisi, and 41.8% in other municipalities.

⁷ 49.5% of refugee youth aged 18-29 and 34.9% of those aged 14-17 recorded that they are moderately, very, or fully aware of their rights in receiving healthcare treatment (apart from psychosocial). The same situation was recorded regarding rights in receiving psychosocial treatment (45% for 18-29 and 35.9% for 14-17). In the direction of receiving services, the percentage of respondents who were either unaware or slightly aware of available healthcare services (apart from psychosocial) amounted to 66.4% in the age group of 14-17 and 58.9% in the age group 18-29.

Furthermore, the results differed according to respondents' countries of origin. For instance, Ukrainians were the least aware (42.2% indicated being moderately aware, very aware, or fully aware) of their rights to receive healthcare treatment (apart from psychosocial). By comparison, 50.6% of the respondents from other countries had some degree of awareness of their rights. The same situation was recorded in the case of psychosocial services.

During the focus group discussions, Ukrainian participants discussed their access to information about their rights and available services. For instance, an 18-29-year-old participant from Ukraine mentioned experiencing difficulty in accessing information about available free services for Ukrainians. Meanwhile, respondents from other countries also noted problems in accessing complete information about their rights and available services in Georgia.

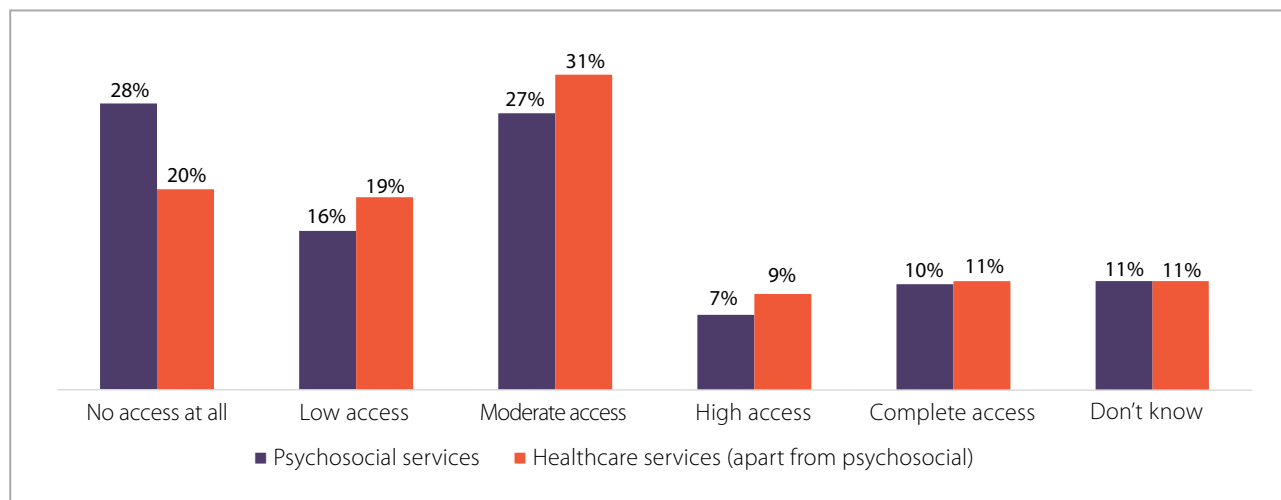
Likewise, differences were also observable while looking at the legal status of surveyed respondents. The study shows that asylum seekers were most aware of their rights and services with respect to healthcare treatment, while refugees and humanitarian status-holders were less aware. More specifically, the share of respondents who were moderately aware, very aware, or fully aware of their rights with regard to receiving healthcare treatment (apart from psychosocial) was 52.4% for asylum seekers. By comparison, the corresponding figure for refugees and humanitarian status-holders was 42.5%. Meanwhile, 44.4% of respondents with the legal status of asylum seeker were either moderately aware, very aware, or fully aware of available healthcare services (apart from psychosocial). For comparison, the corresponding figure for respondents with the legal status of refugee and humanitarian status-holder was 35.4%.

Access to healthcare services

In the study, refugee youth's perceptions regarding access to healthcare services in Georgia were also examined. Based on the survey results, 20% of refugee youth recorded having no access at all to healthcare services (apart from psychosocial), while only 11% believed they had complete access. However, more than half of the respondents (50.9%) stated that they had had some degree of access (moderate, high, or complete) to available healthcare services (apart from psychosocial).

According to the study, refugee youth have relatively low access to available psychosocial services, as only 44.8% of respondents stated that they had either moderate, high, or complete access.

Figure 9: Refugee youth's access to available healthcare services in Georgia



Source: PMC RC's survey

Differences were observed in access levels between age groups, with the 18-29 age group considering themselves to have higher access to healthcare than the 14-17 age group⁸. Distribution across genders showed that females felt they had greater access to available healthcare services than males⁹. That could potentially be linked to females generally being more aware of their rights and available healthcare services.

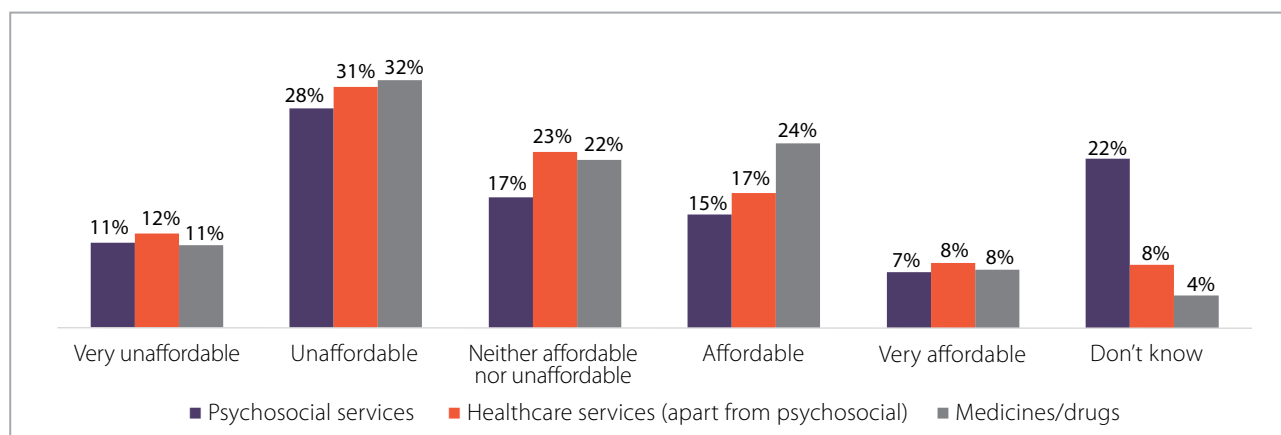
The study also revealed that access levels to healthcare services (apart from psychosocial) did not vary among refugee youth from different countries. Specifically, 51.2% of the respondents from Ukraine recorded having moderate, high, or complete access, while the corresponding percentage of respondents from other countries amounted to 50%.

Regarding access to available psychosocial services, the respondents from Ukraine indicated having the highest access (46.3%), while the corresponding number of respondents from other countries equated to 42.1%.

Affordability of healthcare

The study results indicate that healthcare services are not affordable for most refugee youth. For instance, 43.3% of the respondents indicated that healthcare services (apart from psychosocial) were unaffordable (either very unaffordable or unaffordable). Regarding psychosocial services, 39.4% of respondents indicated that these services were not affordable. As for medicine affordability, 42.7% of respondents indicated that medicines were unaffordable.

Figure 10: Affordability of healthcare services for refugee youth in Georgia



Source: PMC RC's survey

The study results indicate that affordability levels vary across locations of current residence. The respondents living in Tbilisi noted the highest affordability, which could be linked to better employment opportunities and salaries being available in the capital.

The issue of affordability was also discussed during the focus group discussions. Almost all 18-29-year-old focus group discussion participants mentioned they faced challenges in buying medicine in Georgia due to price. One participant from this age group noted: "I worked for three months, and I spent almost one month's salary on medication, so I think they should make some kind of discount on medicine. It is very expensive." In addition, 14-17-year-old focus group discussion participants talked about affordability issues, with one of them mentioning: "About the payment, the doctors are good, but sometimes things are overpriced."

⁸ 55% of respondents from the age group 18-29 recorded having moderate, high, or complete access to available healthcare services (apart from psychosocial), while the corresponding number for the age group 14-17 was 42.1%. The results are similar to the psychosocial services, though the difference between the age groups is relatively small.

⁹ Most female respondents (52.9%) stated that they had moderate, high, or complete access to available healthcare services (apart from psychosocial), while the corresponding number for males was 48.6%. The results are similar to the psychosocial services, though the difference between the genders is relatively significant.

Refugee youth also face problems regarding the affordability of insurance. None of the focus group discussion participants recorded having insurance. They either mentioned that they had no insurance or no information on that issue. One of them mentioned: *“I tried to apply for health insurance. I asked my old friend if they had insurance, and they said it is costly, and they do not provide you with everything. I was trying to find an insurance company, but I do not know where to find them. I do not know how much it is or what they will provide. I lack information.”* Meanwhile, another respondent mentioned: *“I once asked for TBC and PSP insurance. They were very expensive, and I could not afford it.”*

Satisfaction with the quality of healthcare services received in Georgia

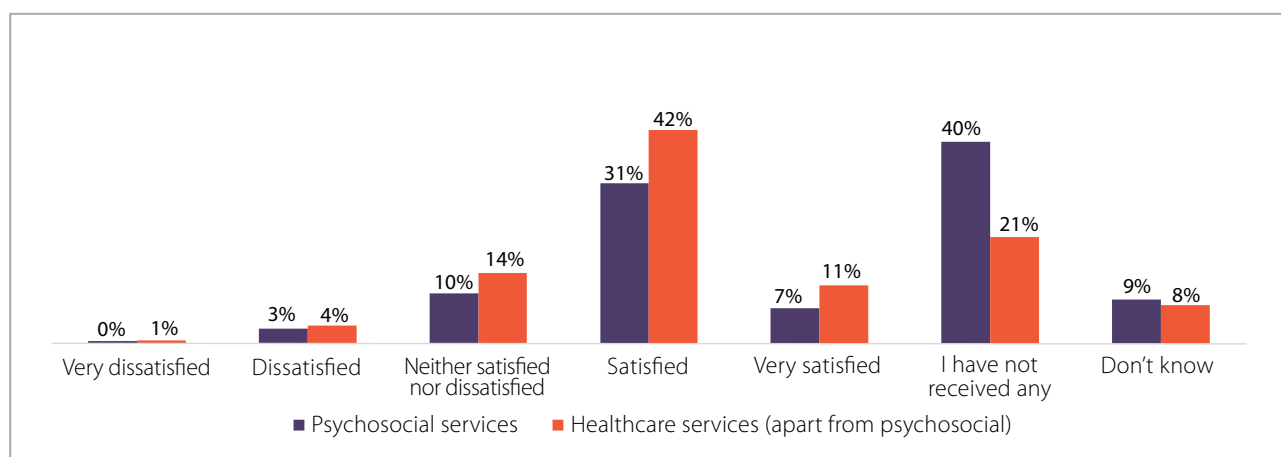
The study results indicate that 21% of refugee youth in Georgia had never received any healthcare services (apart from psychosocial), while 40% had never received any psychosocial services.

Most refugee youth who had received any healthcare services were satisfied with the quality of services received in Georgia. More specifically, the share of respondents who stated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of healthcare services received (apart from psychosocial) amounted to 53.3%. In contrast, those stating they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied accounted for only 4.3%.

A similar situation was depicted during the focus group discussions. The refugee youth who had received any healthcare services were satisfied with them, and none of them expressed dissatisfaction with the services they received in Georgia. For instance, one mentioned: *“The healthcare is good because I got sick a few times and the service was very good. When I called the ambulance, it took them less than 10 minutes to come. They saw that the injury was serious and took me to the nearest hospital. I can say that their treatment is really good.”* Another participant added: *“When I was sick, I stayed in the hospital for a few days. They kept checking on me and asking how I was, so the service was really good, and I was satisfied.”*

As for psychosocial services, as most of the respondents had never received such services while living in Georgia, they could not indicate their level of satisfaction. Of those who had received such services, only 3.4% were dissatisfied with the quality of the psychosocial services they had received.

Figure 11: Refugee youth's level of satisfaction with healthcare services received in Georgia

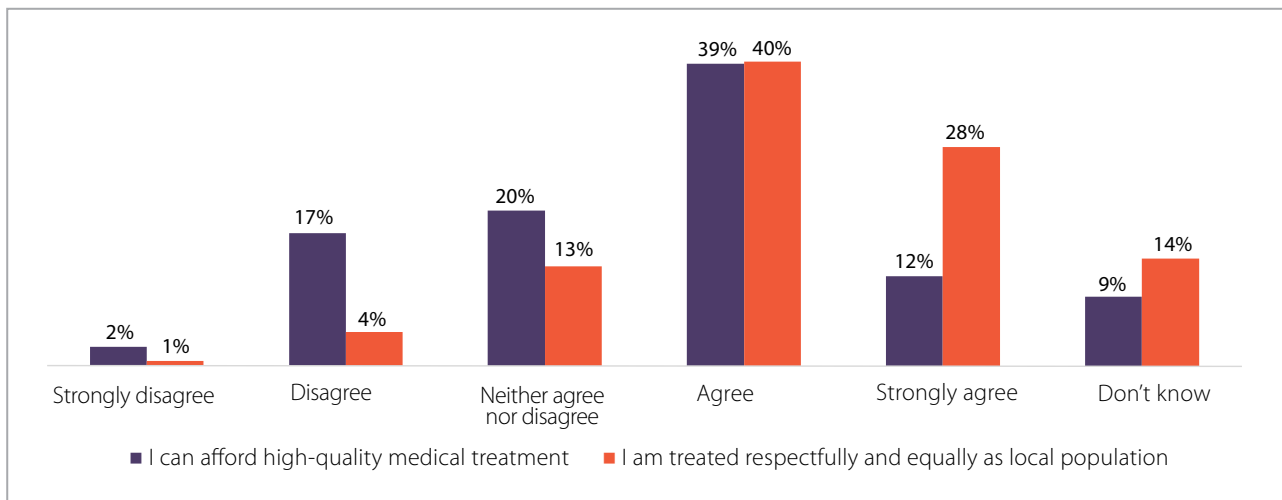


Source: PMC RC's survey

Apart from assessing the healthcare services they had received, the respondents were asked to assess the extent to which they agreed with the following statements during the survey: 1. “In Georgia, I can afford high-quality medical treatment”; and 2. “While accessing healthcare services in Georgia, I feel that doctors and medical personnel treat and care for me as respectfully as they would the local population.”

The majority (51%) of respondents agreed they could afford high-quality medical treatment in Georgia. By comparison, 68% stated they were treated and cared for as respectfully as they would treat and care for locals while receiving healthcare services in Georgia.

Figure 12: Quality of received medical treatment in Georgia



Source: PMC RC's survey

The study's results regarding receiving respectful treatment were highly dependent on the country of origin of the refugee youth. Of respondents from Ukraine, 73.8% agreed (agreed or strongly agreed) with the statement "while accessing healthcare services in Georgia, I was treated and cared for as respectfully as the local population would have been treated and cared for.". In contrast, the corresponding figure for respondents from other countries was 56.3%. Furthermore, regarding affording high-quality medical treatment, 55.8% of respondents from Ukraine agreed or strongly agreed with the relevant statement. For comparison, the indicator for respondents from other countries was 40.6%.

3.3. EDUCATION AND LEARNING

This chapter analyzes refugee youth's knowledge and awareness regarding their rights and available services with respect to education and learning in Georgia. It examines their access to education services and their level of engagement in the educational process.

Main findings

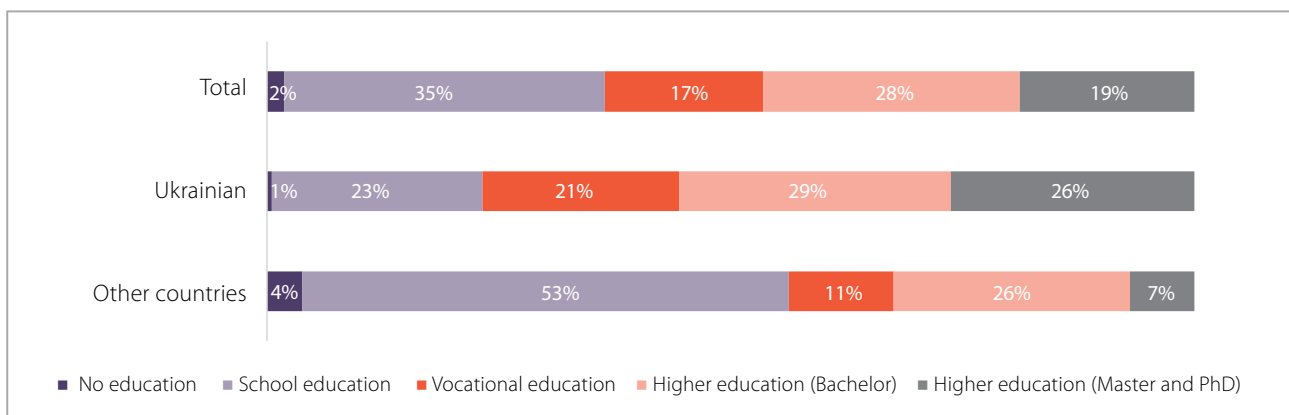
- ❑ The study results indicate that 98% of refugee youth aged 18-29 had attained some level of education. Specifically, 47% had completed higher education, and only 2% had no level of educational attainment. However, the picture differs according to country of origin. In particular, the share of refugee youth aged 18-29 with no level of educational attainment was higher among refugee youth from other countries (4%) than among Ukrainian refugee youth (1%). Moreover, the share of refugee youth with only school education was highest among respondents from other countries (53%).
- ❑ Most refugee youth aged 18-29 were not currently studying in Georgia (88.8%), with this figure especially high among respondents from Ukraine (96.5%).
- ❑ A significant share of refugee youth aged 14-17 are not currently studying in Georgia (43.4%). Among refugee youth from Ukraine aged 14-17, this share amounted to 46%, while among refugee youth from other countries it was 29%. The low share of 14-17-year-old Ukrainians not studying in Georgian schools could be related to the fact that some of them attend online classes organized by Ukrainian schools.
- ❑ Most refugee youth have limited knowledge or are not aware of their rights and available services with respect to education and learning in Georgia. Specifically, 56.2% of respondents were either unaware or slightly aware of their rights with regard to education and learning. The same indicator for education services was 56.5%. The awareness of rights and available services is lower among the refugee youth living in neither Tbilisi nor Batumi.
- ❑ Some refugee youth aged 18-29 mentioned the need for more information about available English-language educational programs in Georgia and the rules for entry. Moreover, some referred to the need for complete information on available Georgian-language courses.
- ❑ Generally, 14-17-year-old Ukrainians lack information on available informal education services in Georgia (painting, singing, sport, etc.), which hinders their access to such services.
- ❑ Based on the survey results, 27.1% of refugee youth recorded having no access to education services, while only 16.9% believed they had complete access. However, more than half of the respondents (50.5%) stated that they had some degree of access (moderate, high, or complete) to available education and learning services in Georgia.
- ❑ Refugee youth's perceptions of their low level of accessibility are mainly linked to the following factors: lack of information on available educational opportunities in Georgia; lack of foreign-language educational programs; language barriers; and affordability.
- ❑ Refugee youth living in neither Batumi nor Tbilisi have less access to education and learning services. The difference in accessibility could be attributed to there being fewer educational opportunities outside Tbilisi and Batumi, including fewer educational programs being available in foreign languages.
- ❑ The language barrier is the most hindering factor for refugee youth aged 14-17 when it comes to accessing high-quality school education in Georgia.

- While the language barrier is the greatest hindrance, according to the study results, most of the surveyed refugee youth (89%) have never actually applied for Georgian-language classes for asylum seekers or internationally protected persons in Georgia. Meanwhile, 8% had applied but had not yet received it.

Level of educational attainment among refugee youth aged 18-29

The study results indicate that 98% of refugee youth aged 18-29 have attained some level of education. Overall, 47% had attained the level of higher education, and only 2% had attained no level of education. However, the picture differs when observing refugee youth from Ukraine and other countries. Specifically, the share of refugee youth aged 18-29 to have attained no level of education is higher among refugee youth from other countries (4%) than among Ukrainian refugee youth (1%). Moreover, the share of refugee youth with only school education is highest among the respondents from other countries (53%).

Figure 13: Distribution of refugee youth aged 18-29 by level of educational attainment



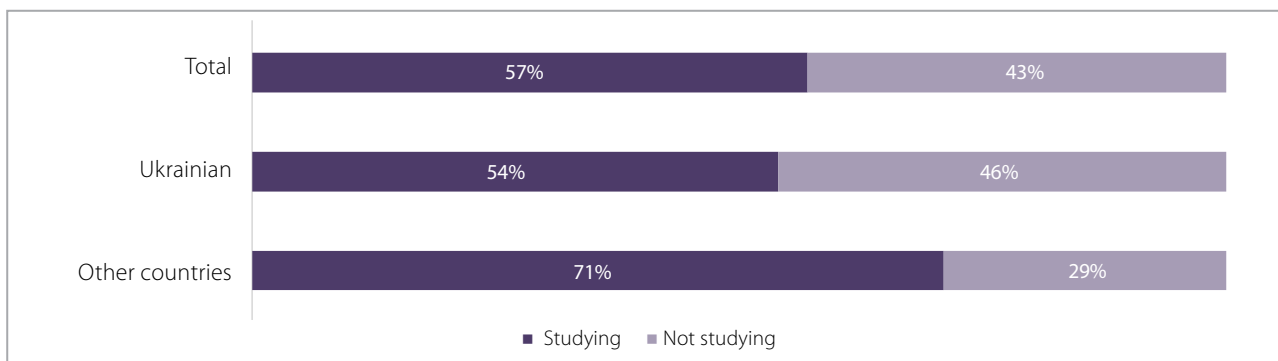
Source: PMC RC's survey

Currently studying in Georgia

According to the survey results, just over one in every four (25.5%) refugee youth aged 14-29 was currently studying in Georgia, while the rest (74.5%) were not pursuing any education in the country. Furthermore, the study found that a significant share of refugee youth aged 14-17 are not currently studying in Georgia (43.4%). Among refugee youth from Ukraine aged 14-17, this share amounted to 46%, while among refugee youth from other countries this figure stood at 29%.

The low share of 14-17-year-old Ukrainians studying in Georgian schools could be related to the fact that some of them attend online classes organized by Ukrainian schools. Two out of four focus group discussion participants, both 14-17-year-old Ukrainians, mentioned that they studied online with their Ukrainian schools. It must be mentioned here that both of them had studied in Georgian schools initially after arriving in Georgia but then opted to attend online classes in Ukraine instead. One of them noted: "I had a problem because my online school and my Georgian school were at the same time. Because of this, I had to choose between the two, and I chose my online classes because I liked them more." Some focus group discussion participants, who were 14-17-year-old Ukrainians, mentioned that Ukrainian schoolchildren did not always need to attend online classes organized by Ukrainian schools, but still had to submit assignments to these schools on time.

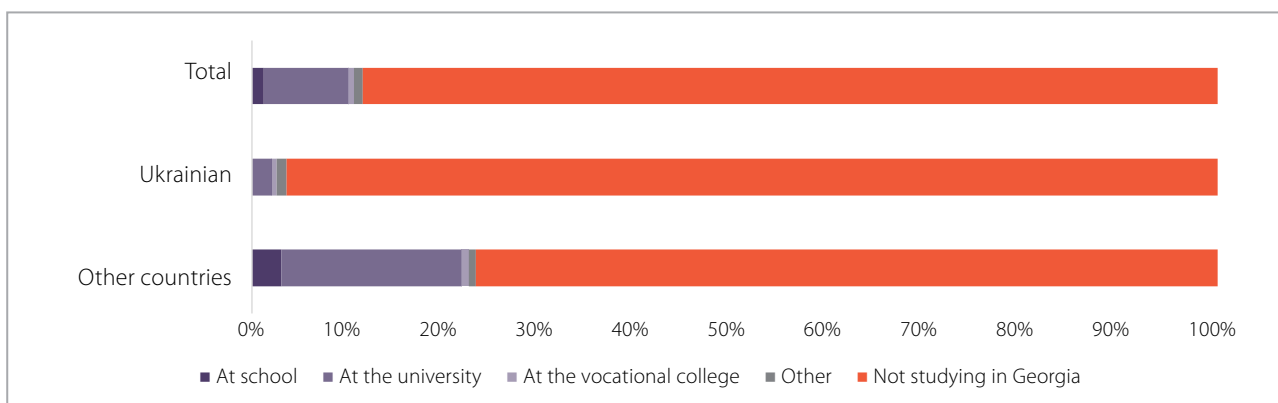
Figure 14: Distribution of refugee youth aged 14-17 by studying status in Georgia



Source: PMC RC's survey

Most refugee youth aged 18-29 were not currently studying in Georgia (88.8%), with this especially common among respondents from Ukraine (96.5%). In contrast, the corresponding figure among refugee youth from other countries is 76.8%. Meanwhile, 19% of refugee youth aged 18-29 were studying at the university in Georgia.

Figure 15: Distribution of refugee youth aged 18-29 by studying status in Georgia

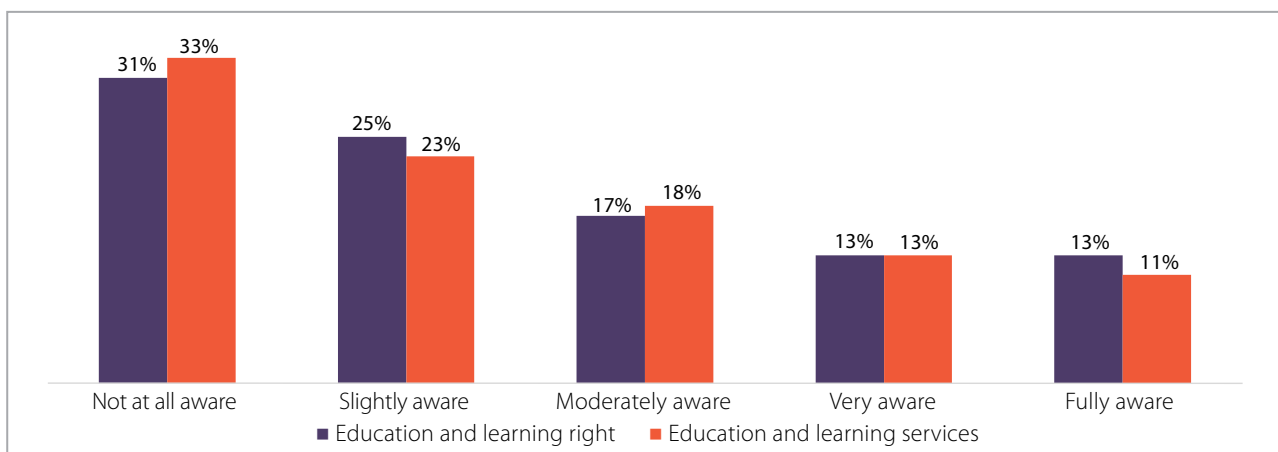


Source: PMC RC's survey

Awareness of rights and services with respect to education and learning

According to the survey results, most of the surveyed refugee youth have limited awareness about their rights and available services with respect to education and learning in Georgia. Specifically, 56.2% of respondents were either unaware or slightly aware of their rights with respect to education and learning, while 56.5% were either unaware or slightly aware when it came to services.

Figure 16: Refugee youth's awareness of rights and available services with respect to education and learning in Georgia



Source: PMC RC's survey

As identified, the refugee youth aged 14-17 were more aware of their rights and available services with respect to education and learning than the respondents aged 18-29¹⁰. The issue of rights and services awareness was discussed during the focus group discussions, where some 18-29-year-old focus group discussion participants mentioned that they were aware of their rights, but lacked information on available education services. For instance, some mentioned the need for more information about available English-language educational programs in Georgia and the rules for entry. Moreover, some mentioned they needed information on available Georgian-language courses (mainly offline).

Furthermore, most 14-17-year-old focus group discussion participants from Ukraine mentioned that they knew about Ukrainian-language and Russian-language offerings in some Georgian schools, and some attended the relevant schools. However, some mentioned that they lacked information on informal education services like painting, music, and sport, which hindered them from accessing such services. Apart from Ukrainians, some refugee youth from other countries aged 14-17 recorded wanting to pursue informal education activities. However, many had limited information on such activities, or the services they knew of were not affordable.

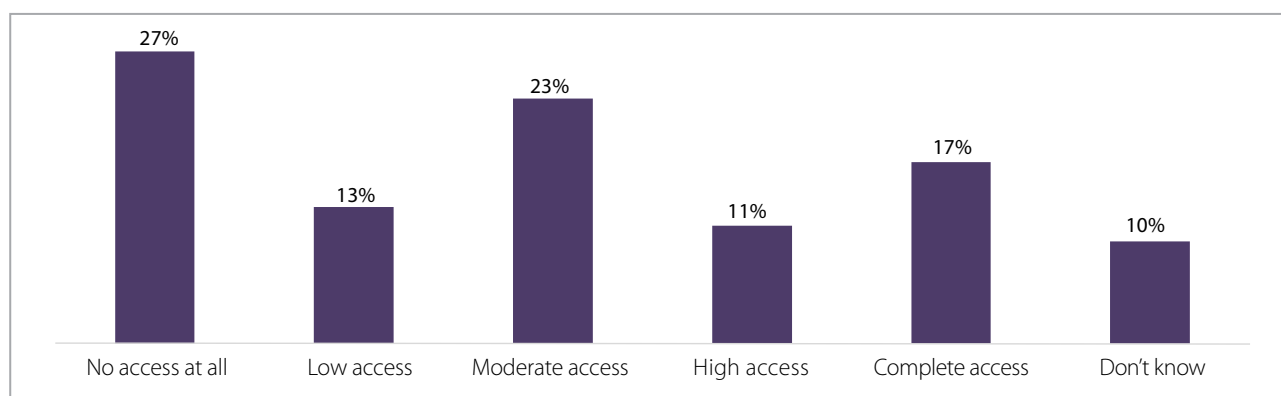
The study results did not differ significantly across gender¹¹. However, females were slightly more aware of their rights and services with regard to receiving education.

Furthermore, the location of current residence was found to play a significant role in the awareness of refugee youth, as respondents from Batumi were more aware of their rights and available services with respect to education and learning than those residing elsewhere. Specifically, the percentage of respondents who were moderately aware, very aware, or fully aware of their rights amounted to 62.4% in Batumi, 40.1% in Tbilisi, and 28.4% in other regions. Regarding awareness of available services, in Batumi, 55% of respondents were moderately aware, very aware, or fully aware, while in Tbilisi this stood at 42.6%, and in other regions it was 25%.

Access to education and learning services

In the study, refugee youth’s perceptions regarding accessing public education and learning services in Georgia were studied. Based on the survey results, 27.1% of refugee youth reported having no access to education services, while only 16.9% believed they had complete access. However, more than half of respondents (50.5%) stated that they had some degree of access (moderate, high, or complete) to available education and learning services in Georgia.

Figure 17: Refugee youth’s access to available education and learning services in Georgia



Source: PMC RC's survey

¹⁰ 49.7% of refugee youth aged 14-17 recorded that they are moderately, very, or fully aware of their rights in education and learning. The corresponding number for respondents aged 18-29 was – 40.8%. The same indicator in the direction of services was 46.7% for the 14-17 age group and 40.8% for the 18-29 age group.

¹¹ The share of respondents who were moderately, very, or fully aware of their rights in the direction of education and learning amounted to 44.6% for males and 42.9% for females. Regarding services, the same indicator was 41.2% for males and 44.2% for females.

There were significant differences in access levels between age groups, with the 14-17 age group considering themselves to have higher access to education and learning services than the 18-29 age group. According to the study results, 62.7% of respondents from the 14-17 age group reported having either moderate, high, or complete access to available education and learning services, while the corresponding number for the 18-29 age group amounted to 45%.

Differences across the genders were not significant. However, it was found that females considered themselves to have greater access to available education and learning services than males¹². That could be linked to females generally being more aware of their rights and available services with respect to education.

The study results varied among refugee youth according to location of current residence. The respondents residing in Batumi and Tbilisi recorded having greater access to education services. For instance, 57.3% of respondents from Batumi and 50.7% from Tbilisi stated that they had either moderate, high, or complete access to available education and learning services. For comparison, the corresponding percentage of respondents from other regions amounted to only 38.2%. This difference in accessibility could be attributed to the more extensive availability of educational opportunities in Tbilisi and Batumi, including Ukrainian-language offerings being available only in Tbilisi and Batumi. Meanwhile, the access levels do not vary in accordance with either country of origin or legal status.

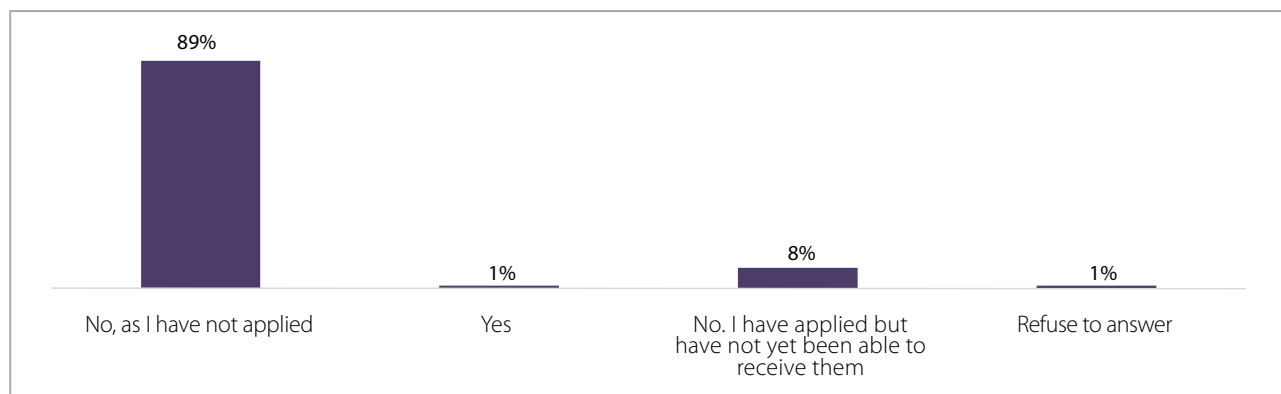
Refugee youth's perceptions of their low level of accessibility were mainly linked to the following factors: lack of information on available educational opportunities in Georgia; lack of foreign educational courses; language barriers; and affordability. During the focus group discussions, English-speaking participants mentioned that they did not have sufficient information on available courses and educational programs in the English language. Some participants mentioned that most educational programs and courses were only available in Georgian and English languages, and were not affordable for them.

Georgian-language classes for asylum seekers or internationally protected persons

According to the results, most of the surveyed refugee youth (89%) had never applied for state-provided Georgian-language classes for asylum seekers or internationally protected persons in Georgia. Meanwhile, 8% had applied but had not yet been able to receive them.

Of those who applied to receive state-provided Georgian-language courses, 59.4% were satisfied (satisfied or very satisfied) with the quality, 26.9% were very dissatisfied, and 13.8% could not assess it.

Figure 18: Distribution of refugee youth utilizing Georgian-language classes for asylum seekers or internationally protected persons



Source: PMC RC's survey

¹² Most female respondents (53.1%) stated they had moderate, high, or complete access to available education and learning services, while the corresponding number of males accounted for 47.1%.

Almost all participants in the focus group discussions cited the importance of knowing the Georgian language. However, some participants did not have information on the available Georgian-language courses.

Some participants mentioned attending Georgian-language courses in the past, while two in particular mentioned that the courses were not sufficiently convenient for them. One of them mentioned: *"I had a language course, but the problem is that the duration is one year, and another problem is the timing of the course is very bad. It was in the middle of the day. And the hours of my job mean this was not very good."* The other added: *"It was online, and I had technical issues. It would be better to be in a class, like in school. When you have technical problems you miss the whole class, you can't ask questions normally, and you can't hear very well from the headphones. You must hear very cleanly too because the Georgian language has many difficult pronunciations."*

Most focus group discussion participants who had attended Georgian-language courses found the Georgian language difficult to learn. One participant from Afghanistan noted: *"As I said, Georgian is very difficult for me. I know a little bit, and when I go out, I can understand what people want, and if they don't understand what I want I try to talk with them in English, and thankfully they know English, so I am happy."*

Some focus group discussion participants mentioned that they could not attend Georgian-language courses because of the location. One participant mentioned: *"To be honest, I do not know. I used to study, but they moved to another place, so it is not easy for me to get there."*

Furthermore, some of the focus group discussion participants aged 14-17 studying in Georgian schools mentioned that the language was their main barrier. They could not understand the lessons properly and felt disappointed. One participant claimed: *"I do not understand Georgian, and with my homework and stuff, teachers do not help me."* Another participant added: *"For me, the most difficult are geography and physics. Teachers explain it in Georgian, and I cannot completely understand. Our geography teacher cannot speak in English and cannot understand what I am saying, and most of the time yells at me. And history, I can do writing homework but talking about history is a bit hard because I often cannot completely understand what the words say and their meanings. I am doing pretty well in mathematics, but I have problems in other subjects."* Both of these focus group discussion participants admitted they had not approached the school administration to inform them about these issues and/or to ask them for support.

3.4. TRANSITION TO WORK

This chapter analyzes refugee youth's knowledge and awareness regarding their rights and available state support services with regard to the labor market. It analyzes their overall engagement in the labor market, and outlines the obstacles to their establishment thereon.

Main findings

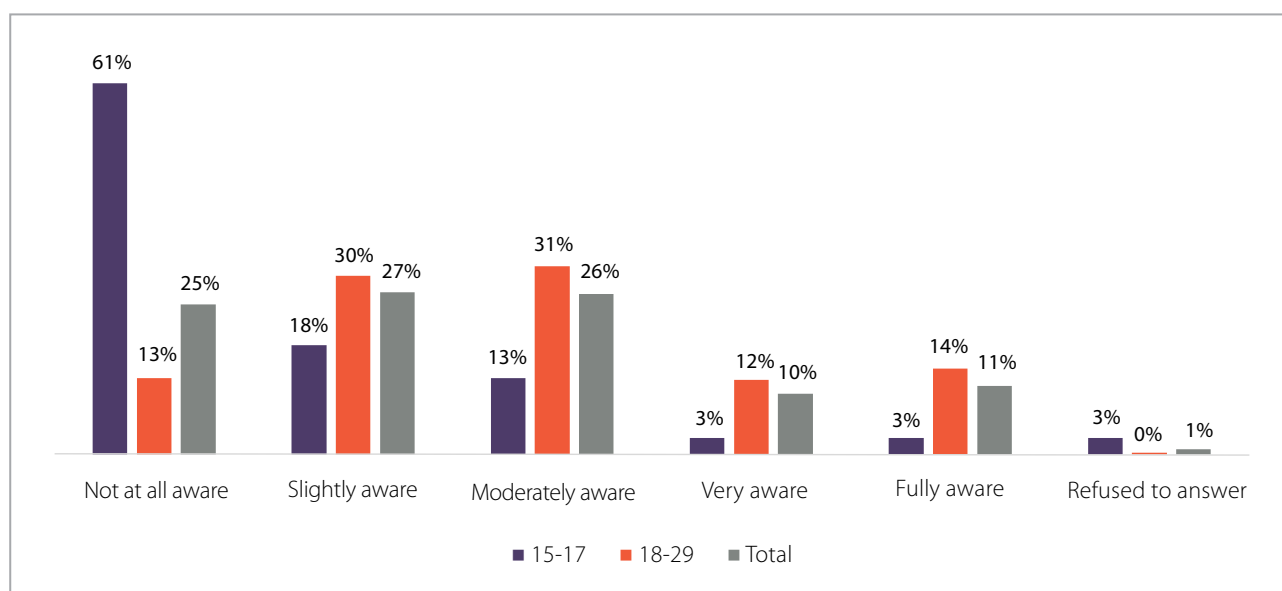
- ❑ The overall awareness of refugee youth aged 15-29 of their rights and available state support services with respect to the labor market in Georgia is low. Only 21% of respondents indicated they were very aware or fully aware of their rights, and 16.8% indicated they were very aware or fully aware of the available state support services.
- ❑ The uptake of labor market services is low, with only 2.6% of respondents indicating that they had received services from the State Employment Support Agency, and 1.6% of them stating they had obtained such services from the Skills Agency.
- ❑ Refugee youth's access to the Georgian labor market is low, with 30.6% of respondents reporting to have had no access at all to the Georgian labor market, while only 15.6% believing they had high or complete access. Notably, the level of access to the Georgian labor market is much lower for refugee youth living in neither Batumi nor Tbilisi. Moreover, access to the Georgian labor market is much lower for women refugee youth compared to men.
- ❑ Nearly half of the refugee youth respondents in the 15-29 age category were not in education, employment, or training (NEET) in Georgia (46.3%). Notably, the NEET share in Georgia's 15-29 age category is approximately 12 percentage points less than among refugee youth.
- ❑ Overall, 52.3% of refugee youth respondents aged 18-29 were not working in Georgia. Moreover, 39% of respondents aged 18-29 who were not working had been looking for a job for the last 12 months but without success. The average duration of unemployment for the surveyed refugee youth aged 18-29 currently not working was 6.7 months.
- ❑ The labor market integration level was lower for female refugee youth than for males. For instance, 59.4% of male respondents aged 18-29 were employed, while only 38.3% of females aged 18-29 were employed.
- ❑ The share of discouraged workers (i.e. not working and not looking for a job) was higher among females than males. Among male respondents who were not working, 72.7% were looking for a job. Meanwhile, among females, of the respondents who were not working, only 38.1% indicated they were motivated to find a job.
- ❑ The share of refugee youth aged 18-29 not working was much higher in Batumi (62.3% not working) and other regions (i.e. those other than Batumi or Tbilisi) (69%) compared to Tbilisi (45.7%).
- ❑ A significant determinant of the employment status of refugee youth is the duration of their stay in Georgia. The employment rate was higher for those who had been in Georgia longer.
- ❑ Lack of knowledge of the Georgian language, unmet salary expectations, and a lack of working experience are the major barriers hindering refugee youth's integration into the Georgian labor market, according to the responses of those who had tried to start working in Georgia without success.
- ❑ Among the refugee youth respondents who were not working and not searching for a job, the main reasons cited were family conditions (41.2%), followed by a lack of knowledge of the Georgian language (27.6%), and the low salaries offered in the Georgian labor market (21.4%).

Awareness of rights and services with respect to the labor market

The survey results suggest¹³ that the overall awareness of refugee youth aged 15-29 of their rights with respect to the labor market in Georgia is low. Only 21% of respondents indicated they were very aware or fully aware of their rights. Notably, a difference was observed regarding awareness between age groups. Among the 18-29 age category, 26% of respondents indicated that they were aware of their legal rights in this regard, whereas the corresponding figure for the 15-17 age category was just 6%. The difference is not unexpected, considering that most respondents from the 15-17 age group are engaged in studying at school.

It is worth noting here that no difference was detected in the awareness of labor market rights by gender. However, the awareness level did vary according to location of current residence and country of origin. In terms of the former, respondents living in Batumi indicated the highest level of awareness of their legal rights (33% were very aware or fully aware), while in Tbilisi, the same indicator stood at 17.1%, while for those living in other regions, this figure was 20.6%. From a country of origin perspective, refugee youth from Ukraine were less aware of their rights (28.7% were not at all aware) compared to those from other countries (17.3% were not at all aware).

Figure 19: Refugee youth's awareness of rights with respect to the labor market in Georgia

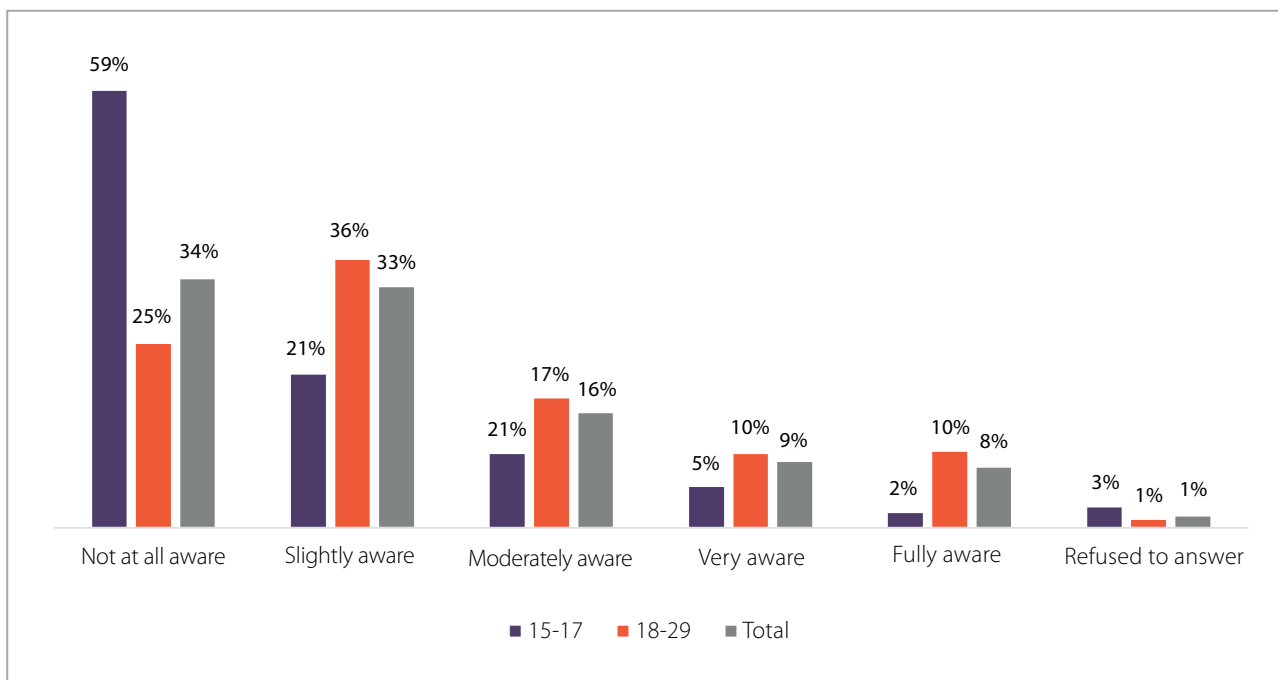


Source: PMC RC's survey

Specifically, refugee youth respondents indicated a low level of awareness of the available state support services with regard to the labor market in Georgia. Only 16.8% of respondents indicated they were very aware or fully aware of such services. The difference between age group regarding the awareness of available state services is similar to the awareness level of their legal rights in this regard. Indeed, 20.2% of respondents aged 18-29 reported they were very aware or fully aware of the available state services with regard to the labor market, and the same was true for 7.2% in the 15-17 age category.

¹³ The questions regarding the labor market were asked only to refugee youth aged 15-29.

Figure 20: Refugee youth's awareness of available state support services with regard to the labor market in Georgia



Source: PMC RC's survey

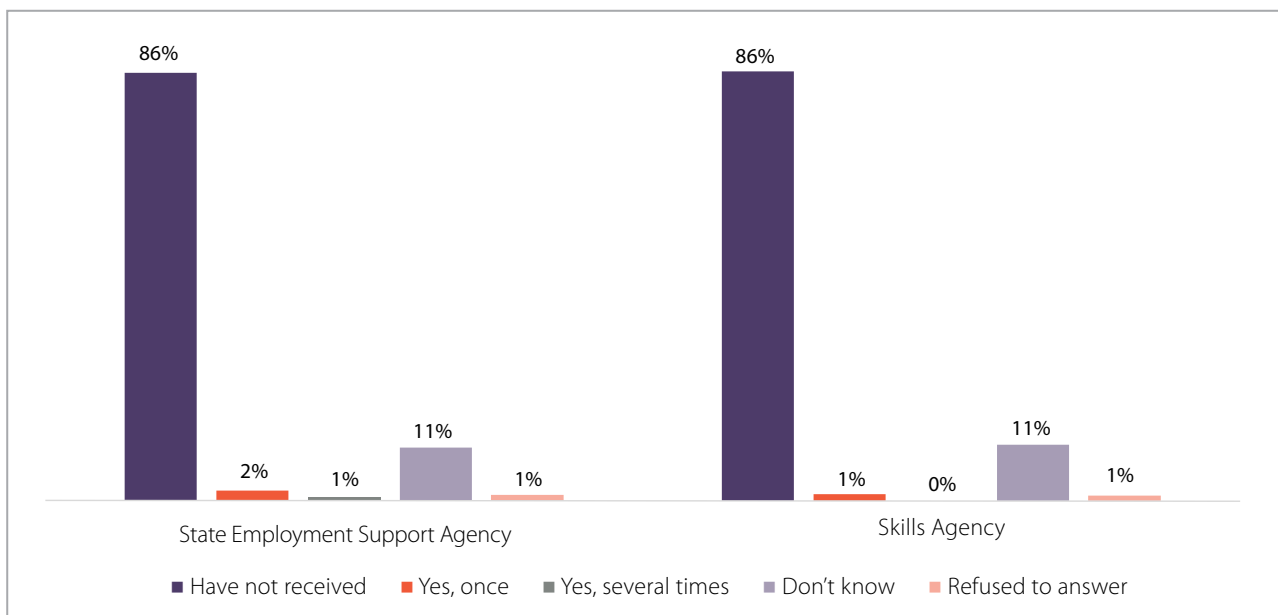
The awareness of available state support services with respect to the labor market among different groups was largely similar to their awareness of legal rights. For instance, the awareness levels did not differ by gender, while, in terms of location of current residence, the refugee youth living in Batumi indicated the highest awareness level (26.3% very aware or fully aware), while those living in Tbilisi indicated the lowest awareness level (13.9%).

The survey results were reflected in the focus group discussions. In particular, participants cited that they lacked understanding of their rights with respect to the labor market. For instance, one participant noted that he did not have the information he needed to have in place a contract and could not do anything against his employer if and when he was not paid. Furthermore, some participants mentioned they did not know whom to apply to when their rights were violated, with a similar lack of knowledge regarding vacation rights and overtime pay. In summary, refugee youth in Georgia need to increase their understanding of their rights and responsibilities within the Georgian labor market.

Usage of available state support services

Considering that respondents' awareness of the available programs was deficient, predictably only a few respondents indicated that they had received state support services in this area. Specifically, only 2.6% of respondents indicated having received services from the State Employment Support Agency, and only 1.6% from the Skills Agency. Notably, there were no differences recorded regarding the receiving of state support services by age group.

Figure 21: Refugee youth's usage of state support services with respect to the labor market in Georgia



Source: PMC RC's survey

Regarding satisfaction with state services received, 56.2% of respondents who had received services from the State Employment Support Agency were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of them. Meanwhile, the corresponding figure for respondents who had acquired services from the Skills Agency was 61.5%.

For the refugee youth who had not received any state services, the following two reasons were prevalent: they had no information about such services (54%); and/or they felt they did not need such services (42.1%).

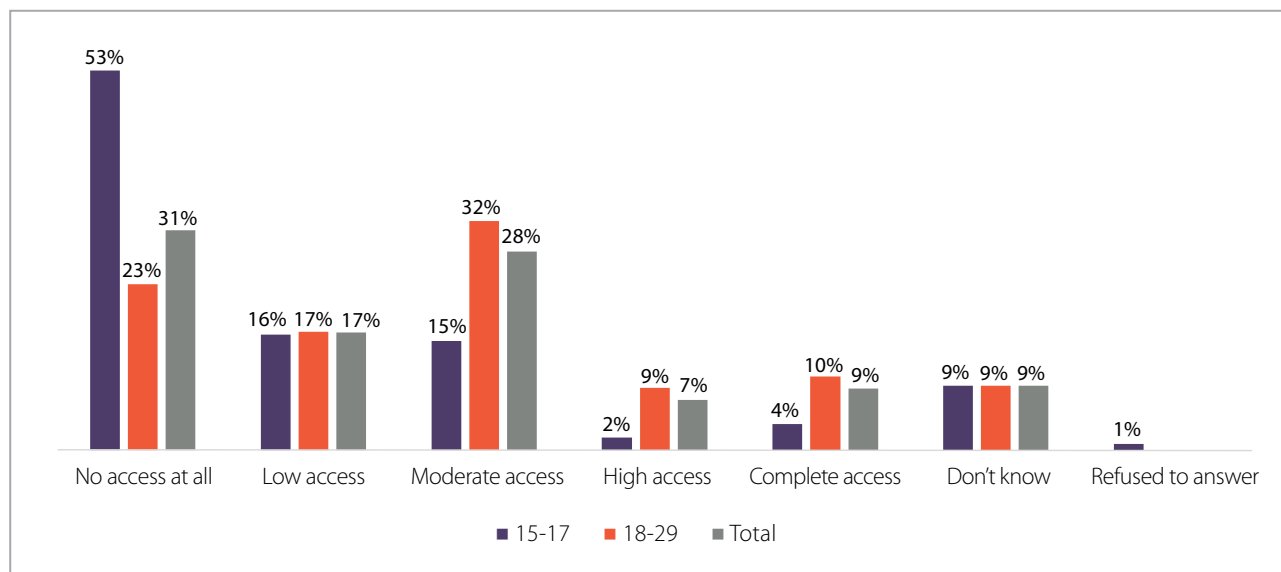
A very similar scenario was depicted during the focus group discussions regarding awareness and usage of state services. In particular, many participants reported that they did not have information on available public employment consultancy services and, accordingly, had not used them. At the same time, the majority of participants mentioned that they thought such services would be beneficial to them.

Access to the Georgian labor market

In the course of this study, refugee youth's perceptions regarding access to the Georgian labor market were also examined. Based on the survey results, 30.6% of refugee youth claimed to have no access at all to the Georgian labor market, while only 15.6% believed they had high or complete access.

A notable difference by age group was observed regarding access to the Georgian labor market. Specifically, 5.4% of respondents from the 15-17 age group believed they had high or complete access to the labor market in Georgia, while the same view was held by 19% of the 18-29 age group.

Figure 22: Refugee youth's access to the Georgian labor market



Source: PMC RC's survey

Views also varied significantly by gender as 21.8% of men believed they had had high or complete access to the labor market, while the corresponding figure for women was 10.6%. Notable differences were also detected according to location of current residence. Among respondents living in Batumi, 18.2% believed they had high or complete access to the Georgian labor market, while for those in Tbilisi the corresponding figure was 16.1%, and for other regions it was 11.1%.

It is noteworthy that the perspectives also varied according to country of origin. For instance, only 10.4% of refugee youth respondents from Ukraine thought that they had high or complete access to the Georgian labor market, while for those from other countries the corresponding figure was 25%.

Employment status

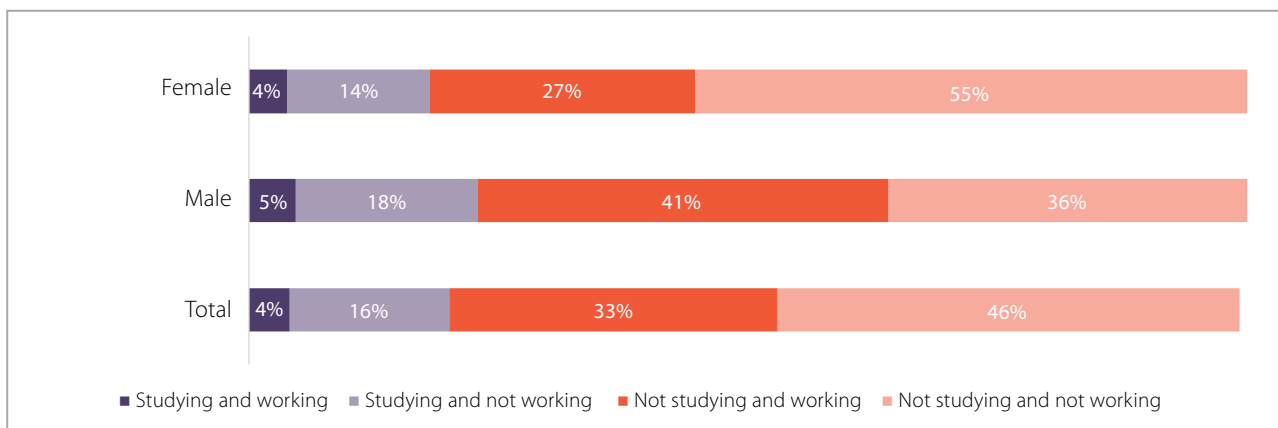
The survey revealed that nearly half of the refugee youth in the 15-29 age category were not in education, employment, or training (NEET) in Georgia (46.3%). Notably, the NEET share among the 15-29 age category for Georgia as a whole is approximately 12 percentage points lower than among refugee youth¹⁴. Strikingly, more than half of the female refugee youth fall into the NEET bracket.

The share of the NEET category is significantly higher among Ukrainian refugee youth compared to those from other countries. For instance, among Ukrainians, 55.5% were not engaged in study or work, while for other countries the share was 28.4%. The relatively high prevalence of Ukrainian refugee youth being categorized as NEET can be derived from the fact that most Ukrainian school-children living in Georgia have been taking online classes arranged by Ukrainian schools.

Finally, an analysis of the employment and education status of refugee youth living in Georgia illustrated that the lowest NEET share was among those in Tbilisi (38.7%), whereas for those in Batumi and other regions, the corresponding figures were 60% and 57.1%, respectively.

¹⁴ Source: The National Statistics Office of Georgia and PMC RC calculations. In Georgia, in 2021, the NEET share was 34.3%.

Figure 23: Employment and education status of refugee youth aged 15-29 in Georgia

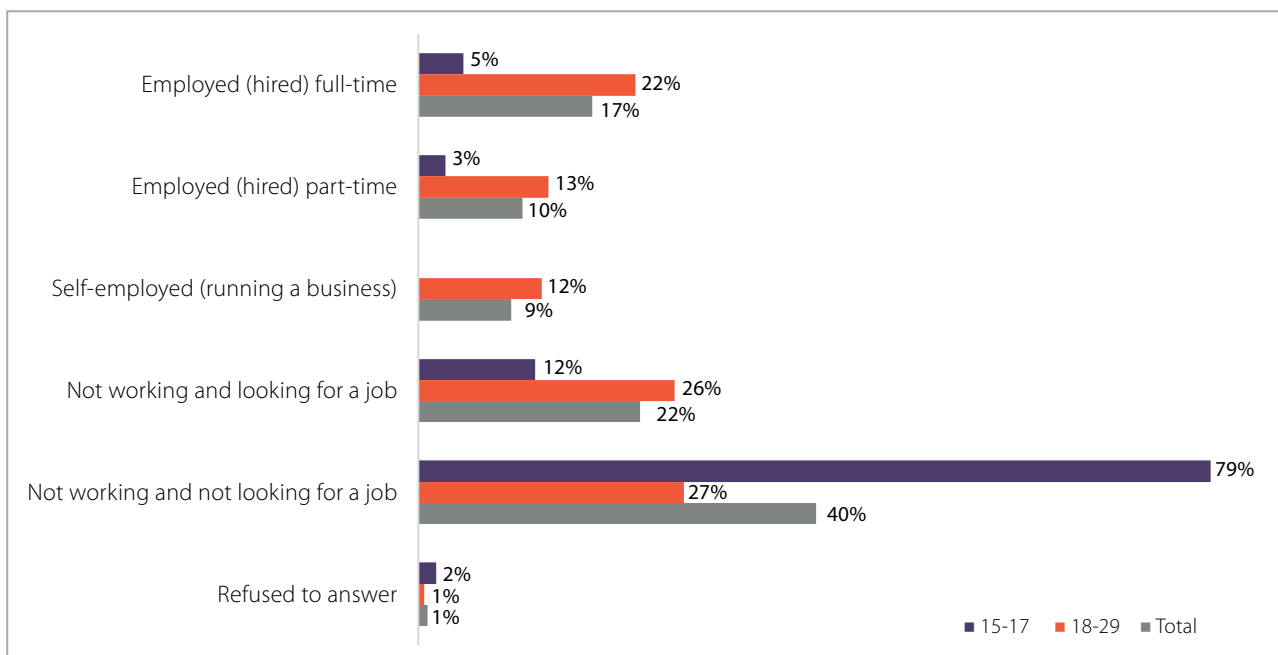


Source: PMC RC's survey

The analysis shows that refugee youth face difficulty when it comes to integrating into the Georgian labor market, as most are not working (62%). Moreover, of those not working, 39.8% were not looking for a job, while 22.2% were looking for a job. Meanwhile, 17.4% of the refugee youth were in full-time employment, 10.4% were employed part-time, and 9.3% were self-employed, meaning a total of 37.2% were in some form of employment.

Unsurprisingly, between age groups, there is a significant difference in terms of employment status. In the 15-17 age category, only 7.2% were employed, whereas in the 18-29 age category, this figure was 47.1%.

Figure 24: Employment status of refugee youth aged 15-29 in Georgia



Source: PMC RC's survey

18-29 age category

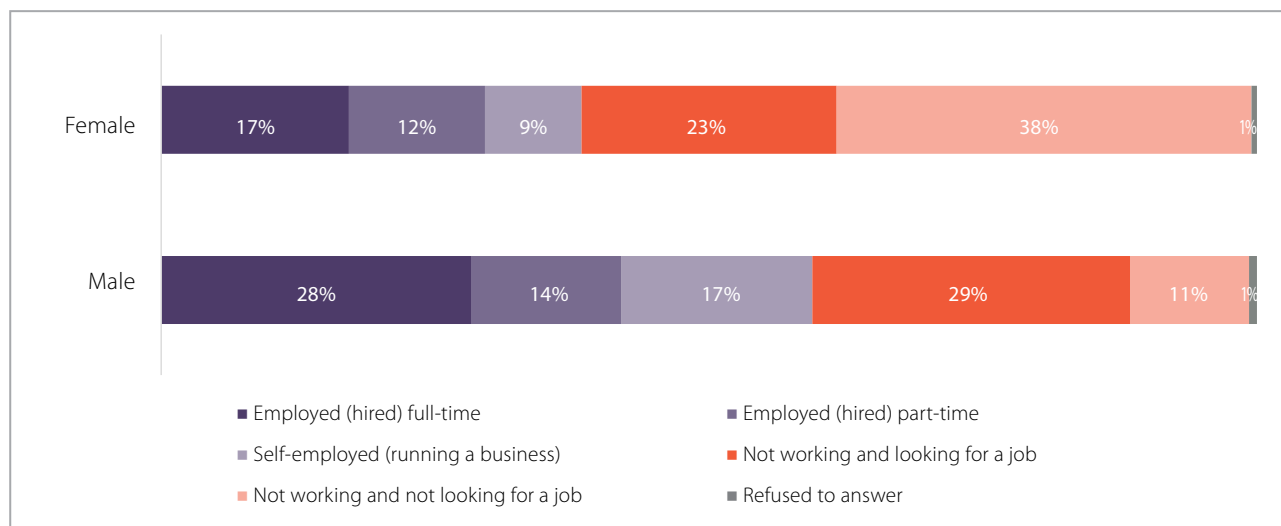
In the 15-17 age category, most refugee youths are school students, and thus it would be relatively futile to explore the situation further for this group. Accordingly, the distribution of respondents by employment status in different categories (gender, country of origin, and location of current residence) is analyzed only for the 18-29 age group.

In the 18-29 age category, 47.1% of refugee youth were employed, while 52.3% were not working. Furthermore, the gender distribution of 18-29-year-old respondents' employment status illustrat-

ed significant differences, with labor market integration less common for females. For instance, 59.4% of male respondents were employed¹⁵, while only 38.3% of females were employed¹⁶.

The share of discouraged workers¹⁷ was higher among females than males as well. Of male respondents who were not working, 72.7% were looking for a job. Meanwhile, among females, for respondents who were not working, only 38.1% indicated having motivation to find a job. This difference could stem from the uneven distribution of female respondents across the group. For instance, 45% of female respondents are Ukrainians, with the lowest number of employed respondents recorded.

Figure 25: Employment status of refugee youth aged 18-29 by gender



Source: PMC RC's survey

A difference was also observable while exploring the current location of residence of the refugee youth. In total, 53.9% of the refugee youth living in Tbilisi were employed, while for those in Batumi and other regions, the corresponding figures were 36.2% and 31%, respectively. Generally, refugee youth who were not employed were more motivated to find a job in Tbilisi (among the respondents living in the capital who were not working, 58% were looking for a job). By comparison, the corresponding figure for those in Batumi was 32.6%, and for those in other regions it was 41.4%.

The figures also differed by country of origin. For instance, only 39.8% of Ukrainians were employed, while among the refugee youth from other countries, this figure stood at 57.8%. In particular, among those not working, 42% of Ukrainians had motivation to start, and among those from other countries, the corresponding figure was 64.3%.

The low level of motivation to start working among Ukrainian refugee youth in Georgia could be related to the high degree of uncertainty about their future. Many Ukrainians are uncertain about when they will leave Georgia, which affects their motivation levels and decisions with regard to engaging in the labor market in Georgia or not. During the focus group discussions, some participants from Ukraine said they planned to return to Ukraine once the war ends. One of them said: *"Honestly, I do not consider working or anything here. Well, when the war is over, then I will just go back to my city, and that's it."*

Another significant determinant of the employment status of refugee youth is the duration of their stay in Georgia. The lowest share of employed respondents is observable among those who had lived in Georgia for less than a year (39.9%). As their length of stay increases, the share of employed refugee youth rises too. For instance, among the refugee youth who had lived in Georgia for 1-5

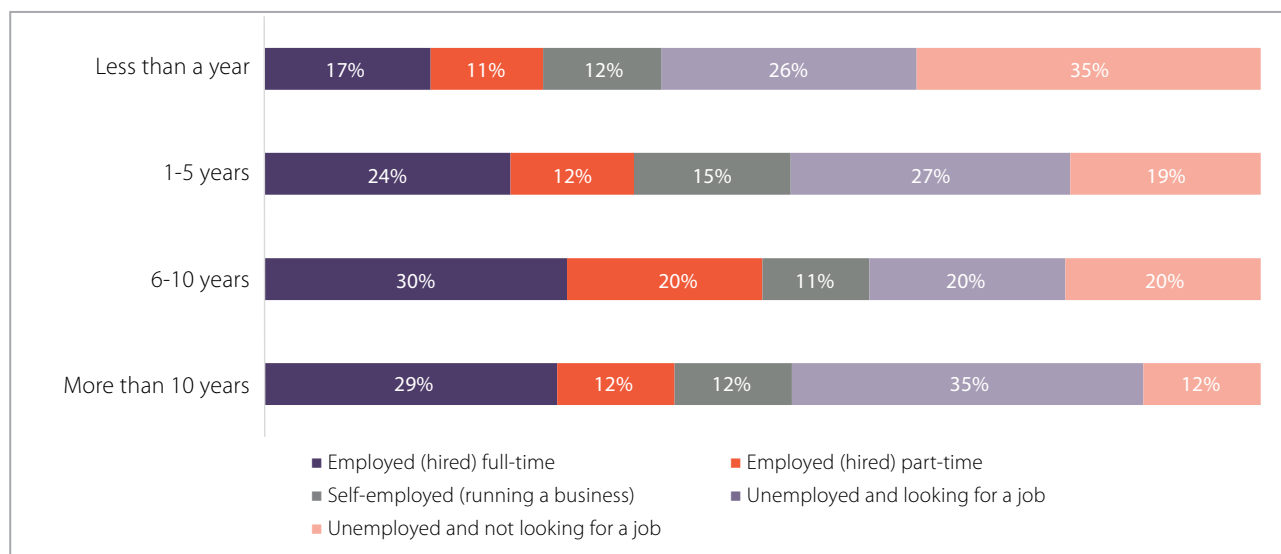
¹⁵ 28.3% were full-time, 13.8% were part-time, and 17.4% were self-employed.

¹⁶ 17.1% were full-time, 12.4% were part-time, and 8.8% were self-employed.

¹⁷ Unemployed and not looking for a job. Calculated among respondents not working.

years, the share of those employed was 51.6%, while for those in the 6-10 years category the share was 60.7%. Meanwhile, it should be noted that for those who had lived in Georgia for more than 10 years, the corresponding figure was lower compared to the 6-10 years category (52.9%).

Figure 26: Employment status of refugee youth aged 18-29 by duration of stay in Georgia

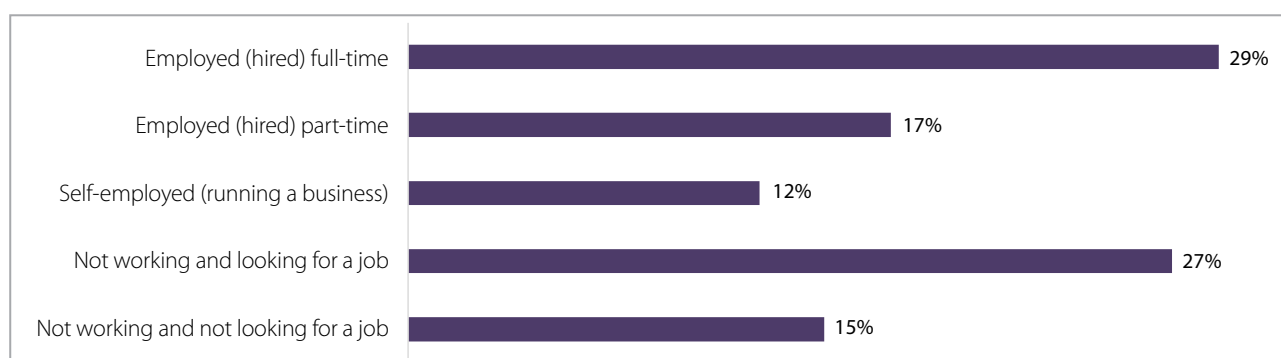


Source: PMC RC's survey

Observing respondents by duration of stay, it is evident that a significant proportion of respondents who have lived in Georgia for less than a year were Ukrainian, and without any legal status. Therefore, the employment figures change significantly that group is removed from an examination of respondents in the 18-29 age category.

For instance, without them, 53.5% of refugee youth were employed, while when Ukrainians without status were included, the proportion of employed respondents dropped to 47.1%. Moreover, taking the same approach, the proportion of those not working and not looking for a job decreased from 25.7% to 18%.

Figure 27: Employment status of refugee youth aged 18-29 in Georgia excluding Ukrainians without status



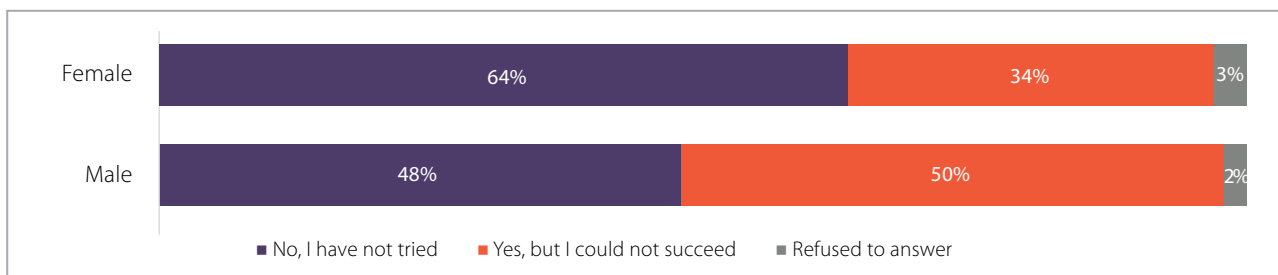
Source: PMC RC's survey

The average duration of unemployment for the surveyed refugee youth aged 18-29¹⁸ who were not working was 6.7 months.

Notably, 59.3% of respondents who were not working stated that they had not been looking for a job for the last 12 months, while 39% mentioned that they had tried to get a job in Georgia but without succeeding. Meanwhile, a significant gender difference was noted here. For instance, the share of male refugee youth who were not working and had tried to find a job during the last 12 months was 50%, while for females it was 33.9%.

¹⁸ Including Ukrainians.

Figure 28: Refugee youth aged 18-29 who were not working - During the last 12 months, have you tried to get a job in Georgia?



Source: PMC RC's survey

In addition, examining the situation by country of origin, in the last 12 months, 33.3% of refugee youth respondents from Ukraine had tried to start working, while for those from other countries the figure stood at 50.9%

The factors hindering refugee youth aged 18-29 from integrating into the Georgian labor market

Of the refugee youth who had tried to find a job in Georgia in the last 12 months but had not succeeded, many mentioned knowledge of the Georgian language as the primary barrier (59.3%), followed by unmet salary expectations (25.8%) and lack of working experience (18.6%). The least commonly cited reasons hindering refugee youth from starting to work in Georgia were indicated as ethnicity (1.3%) and some form of disability (1.5%).

This topic was also covered during the focus group discussions, where the language barrier was cited as the major challenge hindering participants from integrating into the Georgian labor market. Regarding salaries in Georgia, many respondents considered these to be meager. In addition, many claimed to find it challenging to live from month to month, especially since the accommodation prices increased significantly in Georgia.

Some focus group discussion participants also mentioned cases where they had not been paid for work, and could not recover their earnings due to the absence of a contract of employment. One participant raised the following issue regarding contracts: "They do not want to give you a contract, every time I go to some job I ask for a contract, and they say "no, I will not give you a contract, and after that, they do not pay salaries."

Figure 29: Reasons for not getting a job in Georgia for refugee youth aged 18-29 (among only those who had tried to do so but had not succeeded)



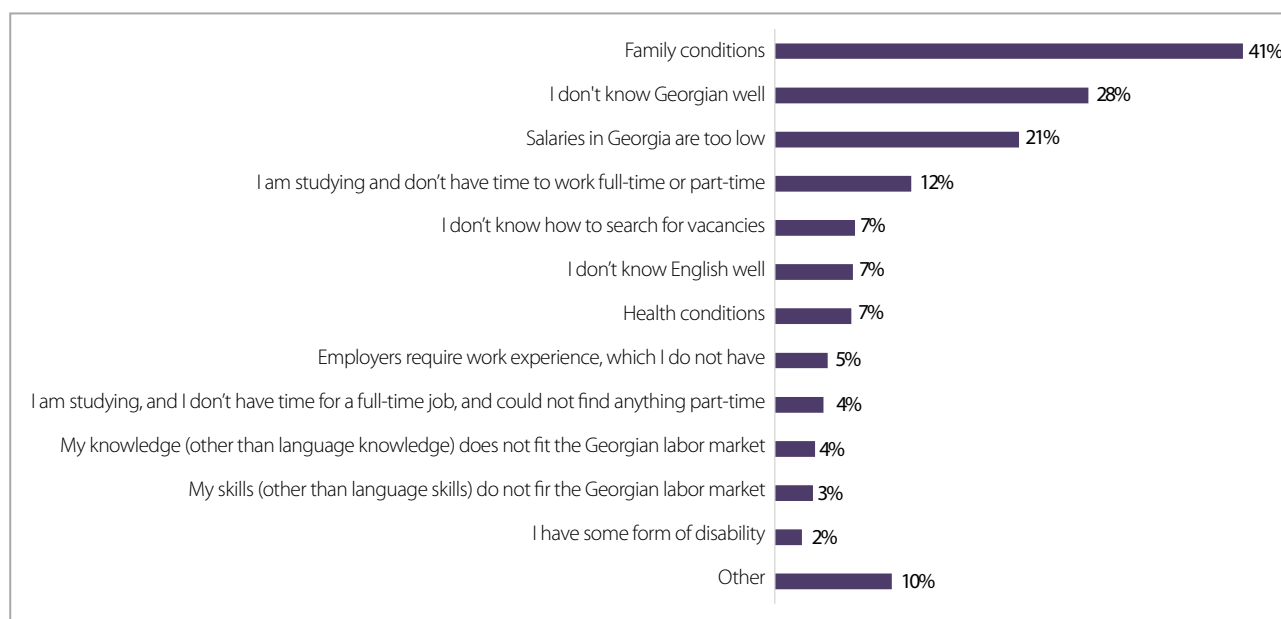
Source: PMC RC's survey

It is worth noting that the distribution of obstacles encountered differed by gender, albeit lack of Georgian language knowledge was the main obstacle for both genders (67% of women, and 48.3% of men). The next two most commonly cited obstacles for men were a lack of skills (other than language skills) (20.4%) and a lack of working experience (32.2%). Meanwhile, women more frequently indicated unmet salary expectations (36.6%) and the ability only to work part-time as they were studying (22%).

Analyzing these obstacles by country of origin illustrated that a lack of Georgian language knowledge was the most prominent for both refugee youth from Ukraine and those from other countries. However, Georgian language knowledge was as a more prevalent problem among Ukrainian refugee youth (70.3%) compared to those from other countries (43.8%). Other major issues for Ukrainians in this regard were low salaries (33.4%) and a lack of working experience (22.7%). Meanwhile, respondents from other countries, other than Georgian language, also indicated a lack of time due to their studies (19.3%) and a lack of professional skills (16.6%).

The study also identified factors behind some refugee youth not working and not trying to find a job. The main reason cited by such respondents was family conditions (41.2%), followed by a lack of knowledge of the Georgian language (27.6%) and the low salaries in the Georgian labor market (21.4%). The least prominently cited problems indicated in this regard were physical disability (2.4%), lack of skills (3.3%), and lack of professional knowledge (3.5%).

Figure 30: Reasons for not searching for a job among refugee youth aged 18-29 (for not working and not trying to find a job)



Source: PMC RC's survey

Gender distribution of the reasons behind not starting to search for a job revealed that among both male and female respondents some of the most-cited reasons were similar, namely lack of Georgian language knowledge (20.6% among men, and 30.1% among women) and the low salaries on the Georgian labor market (17.5% among men, and 22.9% among women). However, for men the issue of a lack of knowledge of how to search for vacancies was more common (26.5%), while over half of female respondents cited family conditions (55%).

The distribution of obstacles by country of origin was more varied. For respondents from Ukraine, the top three obstacles hindering their search for a job were family conditions (53.6%), lack of Georgian language knowledge (33.8%), and low salaries in the Georgian labor market (25.7%). Meanwhile, for respondents from other countries, lack of time due to study (18.1%), lack of knowledge about searching for vacancies (12.7%), and health conditions (11.5%) were the most commonly mentioned hindrances.

3.5. PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT

This chapter provides insights into the level of participation and engagement of refugee youth in public life in Georgia and in decision-making processes. Furthermore, it overviews refugee youth's networks of friends and relatives in Georgia, as well as their coping mechanisms and future plans.

Main findings

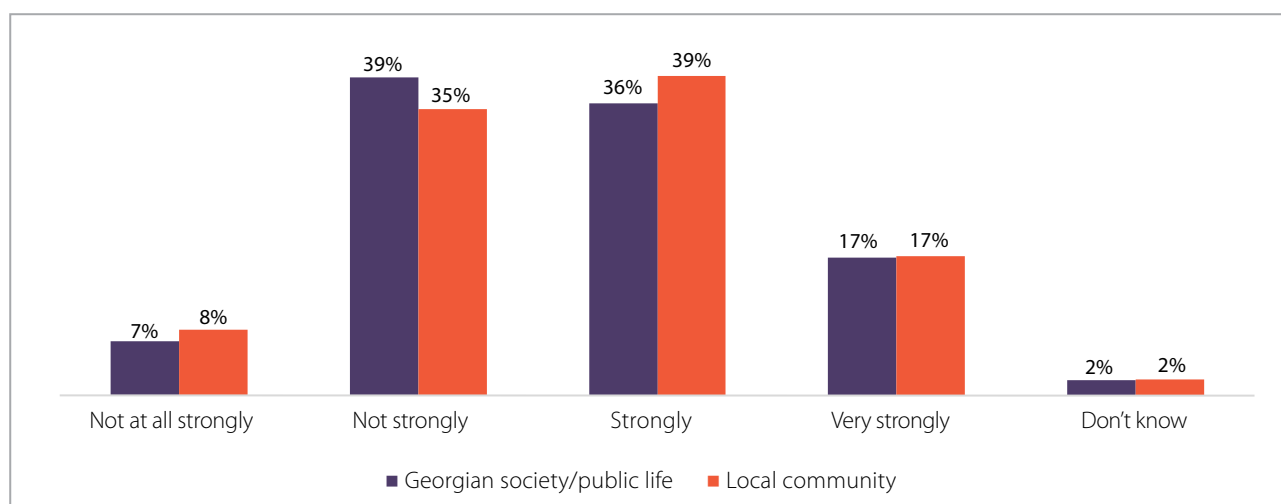
- ❑ The share of refugee youth who feel part of Georgian society and public life either strongly or very strongly amounted to 52.5%. However, the share of those who do not (45.4% stated not strongly or not strongly at all) is relatively high.
- ❑ Largely, the refugee youth not feeling part of Georgian society are Ukrainians (56.3% indicated not strongly feeling part of Georgian society). Meanwhile, 74.8% of the refugee youth from other countries indicated strongly feeling part of Georgian society.
- ❑ The study indicates that the longer their stay in Georgia, the more integrated the refugee youth feel. In particular, the share of refugees that feel part of Georgian society and public life tends to rise as they spend more time in the country.
- ❑ The study results reveal that most refugee youth (67%) were unaware of forms of civic participation in the decision-making process at the local level and were not engaged in the decision-making process in their municipality (75.7%).
- ❑ While most refugee youth were not involved in decision-making processes, according to the study results, most of them (50.2%) did not want to be involved in activities that would contribute to solving problems in the local community and society.
- ❑ The desire to be involved in activities that contribute to solving problems in the local community and society as a whole significantly differs across countries of origin. In particular, refugee youth from Ukraine reported the least desire (16.4%), while 49.7% of refugee youth from other countries expressed a desire to be involved in activities that contribute to solving problems in their local community.
- ❑ According to the study results, most refugee youth were unaware of the social events happening in their local community, with the share of respondents who were aware (moderately aware, very aware, or fully aware) amounting to only 35.6%.
- ❑ According to the study, most refugee youth have a strong network of friends in their local community on which they can rely for social support in difficult times, with the share of participants noting that their network of friends was either strong or very strong amounting to 55.9%.
- ❑ According to the study, fewer respondents could rely on a network of relatives in their local community for social support in difficult times, as 41% of respondents did not have any relatives within their local community. Nevertheless, 41.9% of refugee youth did consider themselves to have a strong or very strong network of relatives in their local community on which they can rely for social support in difficult times.
- ❑ The share of refugee youth not to have had stress related to migration and mental health problems amounted to only 20.1%, meaning around four in every five refugee youth have suffered from stress and mental health issues during their time in Georgia. To cope with migration-related stress, only 3% had sought support from mental health services.
- ❑ The study reveals that refugee youth aged 14-17 are more stressed than those aged 18-29. Specifically, the share of refugee youth who had not suffered from stress and mental health problems accounted for 9.9% of refugees aged 14-17, while the corresponding figure was 24.8% for those aged 18-29.

- Overall, 37% of the surveyed refugee youth in Georgia intended to obtain Georgian citizenship. The results here were heavily dependent on the country of origin of the refugee youth. Notably, only 14.2% of refugees from Ukraine had the intention of obtaining Georgian citizenship, while the corresponding share of refugees from other countries was significantly higher, at 83%.

Feeling part of Georgian society and public life

The share of respondents who felt part of Georgian society and public life (either strongly or very strongly) amounted to 52.5%, while when asked if they felt part of their local community, the share rose slightly to 55.6%. However, still, the share of those who do not feel to be part of Georgian society (45.4% recorded not strongly and not strongly at all) and local community (42.4%) is high. The study's results do not vary across gender or location of current residence.

Figure 31: How strongly do refugee youth feel part of Georgian society/public life and their local community



Source: PMC RC's survey

The percentage of respondents feeling part of Georgian society and public life either strongly or very strongly amounted to 40.1% among refugee youth aged 14-17, while the corresponding share for those aged 18-29 was higher, at 58.4%. In terms of feeling part of their local community, the share for the 14-17 age group amounted to 41.8%, while for the 18-29 age group it was 61.9%.

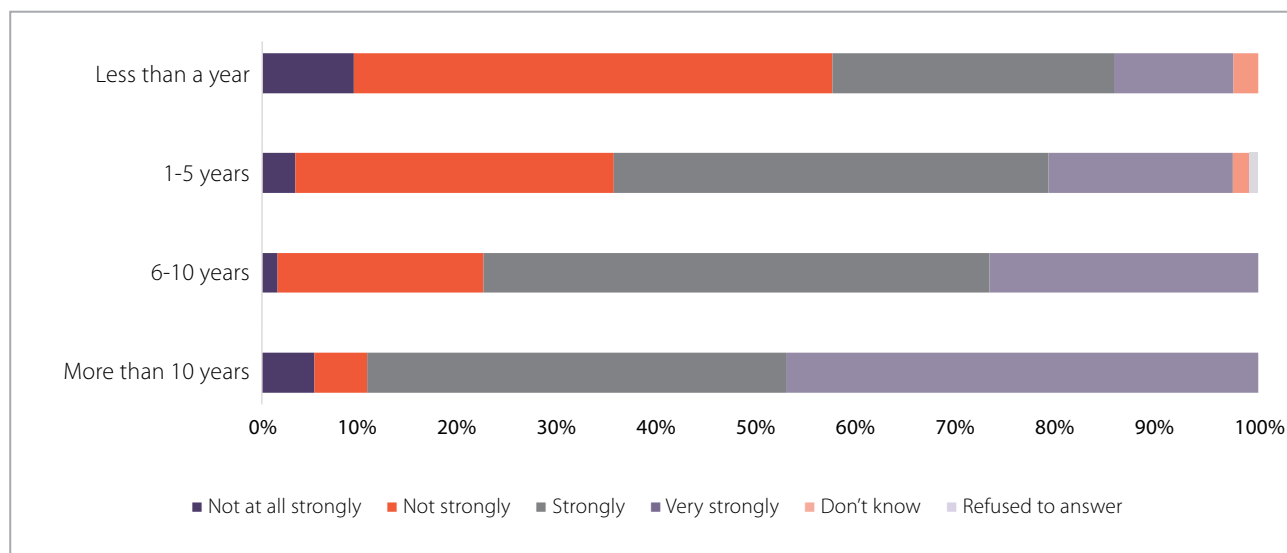
Among the refugee youth who were not feeling part of Georgian society and public life and their local community, this highest share was among Ukrainians (56.3% indicated not strongly feeling part of Georgian society). Meanwhile, the corresponding share of refugee youth from other countries is significantly lower (only 23% of this group indicated not strongly feeling part of Georgian society).

According to the study results, those categorized as refugees and humanitarian status-holders are the most integrated into Georgian society (68.9% strongly feel part of Georgian society). Meanwhile, Ukrainians without status felt the least integrated (38.9%).

Notably, the study indicates that the longer refugee youth reside in Georgia, the more integrated they feel. In particular, the share of refugees feeling part of Georgian society and public life either strongly or very strongly tends to rise as they spend more time in the country¹⁹.

¹⁹ The share of respondents feeling part of Georgian society and public life either strongly or very strongly amounted to 40.1% of refugee youth who had been living in Georgia for less than a year, while the corresponding share for those to have lived in Georgia for more than 10 years was 58.4%.

Figure 32: How strongly do refugee youth feel part of Georgian society and public life, by length of stay in Georgia



Source: PMC RC's survey

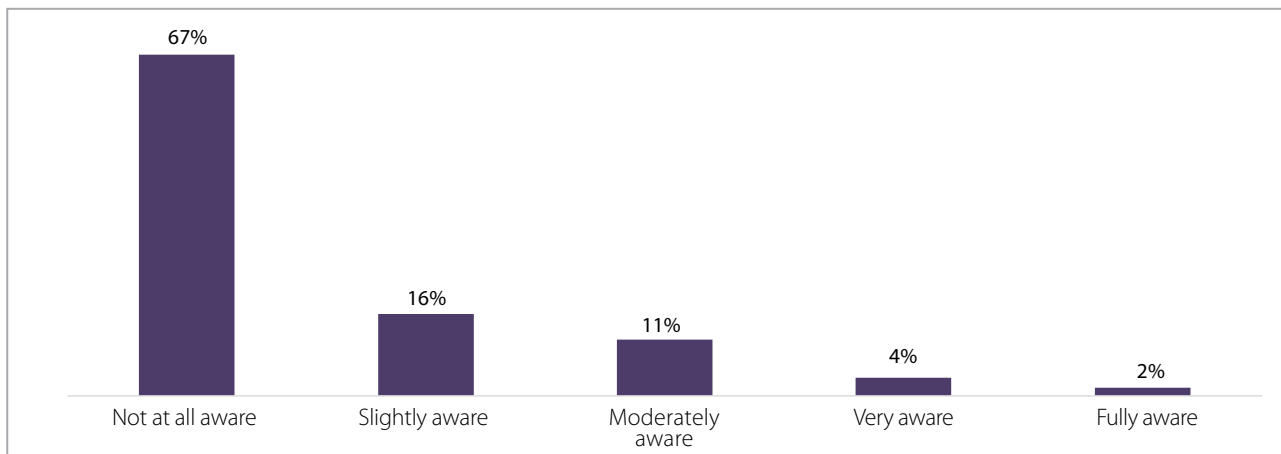
During the focus group discussions, many Ukrainians mentioned they consider themselves part of their local community as they live and study in Georgia. But mainly they think not to be part of the Georgian community but to be part of Ukrainian community in Georgia. However, several Ukrainians face challenges integrating in Georgia due to the language barrier. One participant mentioned: *“Well, integration, honestly, will not happen in any way because of the language barrier. People who only speak Georgian and people who speak Russian - it separates them too much. That is a huge problem, but I know a couple of phrases in Georgian, so I use them often. But if communicating with Georgians on various topics, then yes, it’s problematic.”*

Regarding refugee youth from other countries, some focus group discussion participants who knew some Georgian and communicated with local people in the Georgian language claimed they had integrated into Georgia more successfully. In addition, they said they have Georgian friends and feel more of a part of society than people who do not know Georgian. One participant mentioned: *“I feel part of society. First, I feel safe. Nobody treats us badly. Sometimes I cannot talk very well in Georgian, but they do not ignore me, and they appreciate that I speak Georgian.”* Meanwhile, another participant who did not know the Georgian language noted: *“I just had one Georgian friend. But it is not a friend really, it’s like a language exchange with a Georgian girl. She wanted to learn Arabic, and she teaches me Georgian. She is the only Georgian I have spoken with.”*

Awareness of forms of civic participation in the decision-making process at the local level and overall engagement in decision-making processes in their local community

During the study, the refugee youth’s awareness of forms of civic participation in the decision-making process at the local level was studied. The study results reveal that most refugee youth (67%) were unaware of forms of civic participation in the decision-making process at the local level. By comparison, only 16.2% were aware to some degree (moderately aware, very aware, or fully aware). Notably, the study’s results do not vary much across gender and location of current residence of the refugee youth. Furthermore, none of the focus group discussion participants were aware of forms of civic participation in the decision-making process at the local level.

Figure 33: Refugee youth's awareness of forms of civic participation in the decision-making process at the local level in Georgia

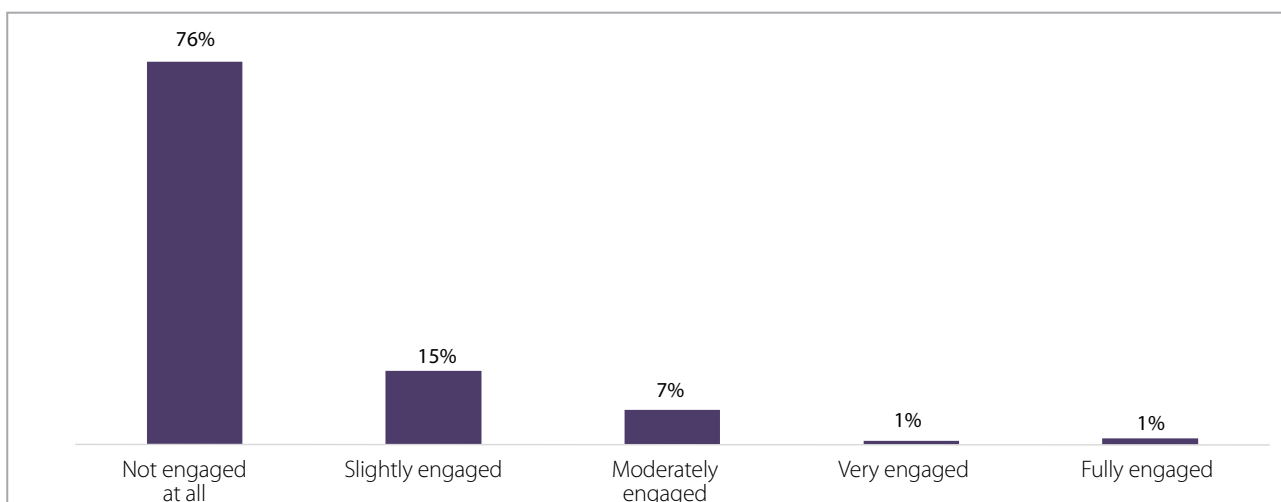


Source: PMC RC's survey

The results of the study somewhat differ based on age groups. Specifically, refugee youth in the 14-17 age group were less aware of forms of civic participation in the decision-making process at the local level than those aged 18-29²⁰. Country of origin proved a determining factor, as refugee youth from Ukraine (11.5% were moderately aware, very aware, or fully aware) were less aware of forms of civic participation in the decision-making process at the local level, compared to those from other countries (25.2%).

The study results show that most refugee youths were not engaged in the decision-making process in their municipality (75.7%). In contrast, the rest were engaged to some degree, but only either slightly (14.6%) or moderately (6.9%).

Figure 34: Refugee youth's overall engagement in the decision-making process in their local community

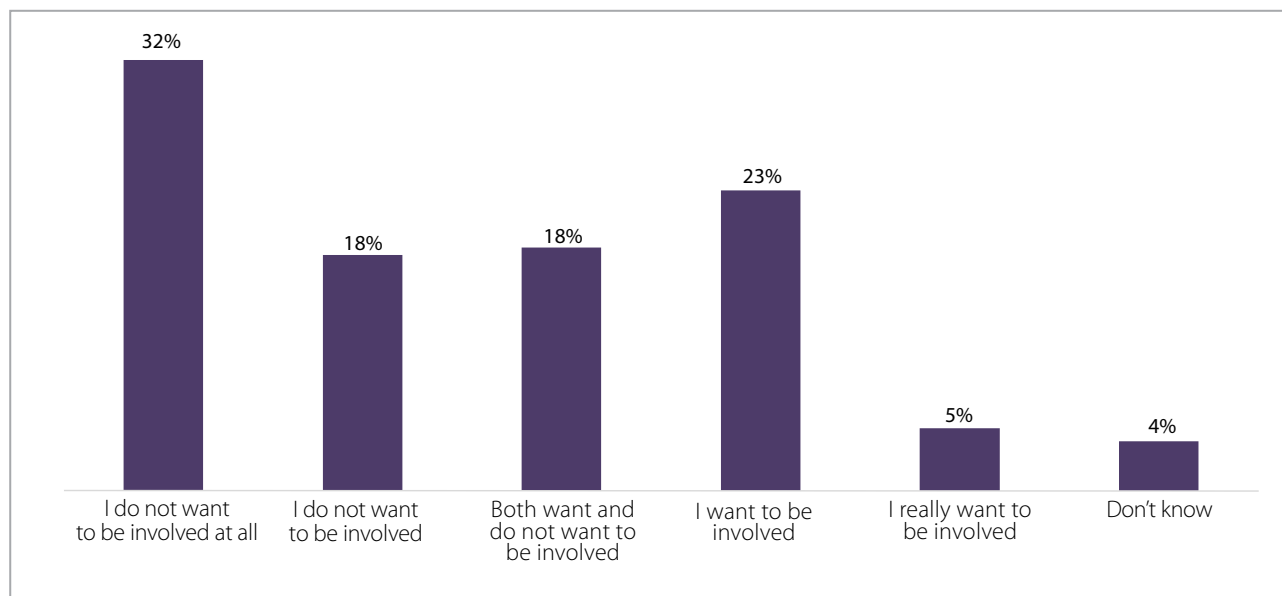


Source: PMC RC's survey

While most refugee youth were not involved in the decision-making process in their community, according to the study results, most (50.2%) did not want to be involved in activities that would contribute to solving problems affecting their local community and Georgian society as a whole. In contrast, the share of respondents wanting to be involved (i.e. those who wanted or really wanted to be involved) amounted to only 27.3%.

²⁰ The share of respondents aged 14-17 who were either moderately aware, very aware, or fully aware of forms of civic participation in the decision-making process at the local level amounted to 13.2%, while the corresponding share for those aged 18-29 was 17.5%.

Figure 35: Desire to be involved in activities that would contribute to solving problems affecting their local community and Georgian society as a whole



Source: PMC RC's survey

The study results indicate that the desire to be involved in activities that would contribute to solving problems to affect their local community and society did not vary much across age groups. Notably, the desire to be involved is somewhat higher in refugees aged 18-29 (28.6%) than in those aged 14-17 (24.2%).

Furthermore, the study shows that the desire to be involved in activities that would contribute to solving problems affecting the local community and society also varies across genders. Significantly, the desire to be involved in such activities is stronger among males (34.5%) than females (21.5%).

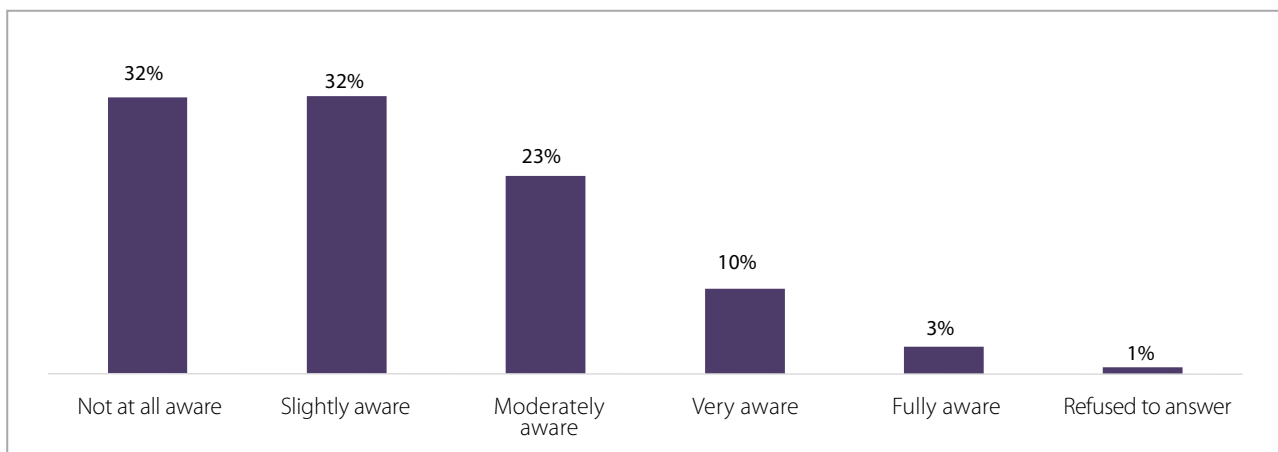
As the study reveals, location of current residence plays an essential role in the refugee youth's desire to be involved in activities that would contribute to solving problems affecting the local community and society, as the share of refugees who wanted to be involved in such activities was highest in Tbilisi (34.9%). In contrast, the lowest such figure was for refugee youth in Batumi (10%).

The study also indicates that the desire to be involved in activities that would contribute to solving problems in the local community and society significantly differs according to country of origin. In particular, refugee youth from Ukraine expressed the lowest level of desire (16.4%), while 49.7% of refugee youth from other countries stated a desire to be involved in activities that would contribute to solving the aforementioned problems.

Awareness of social events happening in their local community

According to the study results, most refugee youths were unaware of social events happening in their local community. The share of respondents who were aware (moderately aware, very aware, or fully aware) amounted to only 35.6%. It is also worth noting that the results are nearly identical across age groups.

Figure 36: Refugee youth's awareness of social events happening in their local community



Source: PMC RC's survey

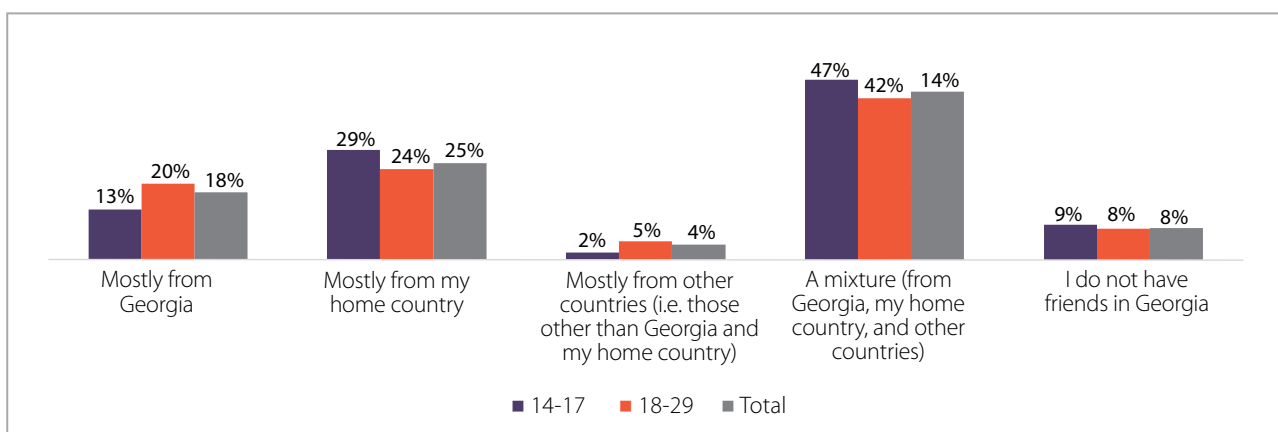
Notably, the study results reveal that refugee youth from both age groups (those aged 14-17, and those aged 18-29) were almost equally aware of the social events happening in their local community²¹. However, the results did vary across genders, as males were more aware of social events happening in their local community than females. More specifically, the share of respondents who were either moderately aware, very aware, or fully aware of social events happening in their local community amounted to 41.7% among males and 30.3% among females.

In terms of location of current residence, refugee youth from Tbilisi (41.2%) were most aware of the social events happening in their local community, while refugees from other regions were the least aware (20.9%). The study results were also different based on the legal status of the refugee youth, with refugees and humanitarian status-holders having the highest awareness (39.8%), and Ukrainians who had not yet applied for asylum having the lowest (35.3%).

Networks of friends in Georgia

According to the study, most refugee youth have friends in Georgia. In particular, 17.7% of respondents noted that most of their friends in Georgia were Georgian, while 43.8% said their friends in Georgia were a mixture of Georgians and those from their home country and other countries.

Figure 37: Refugee youth's friends in Georgia – Where are your friends in Georgia from?

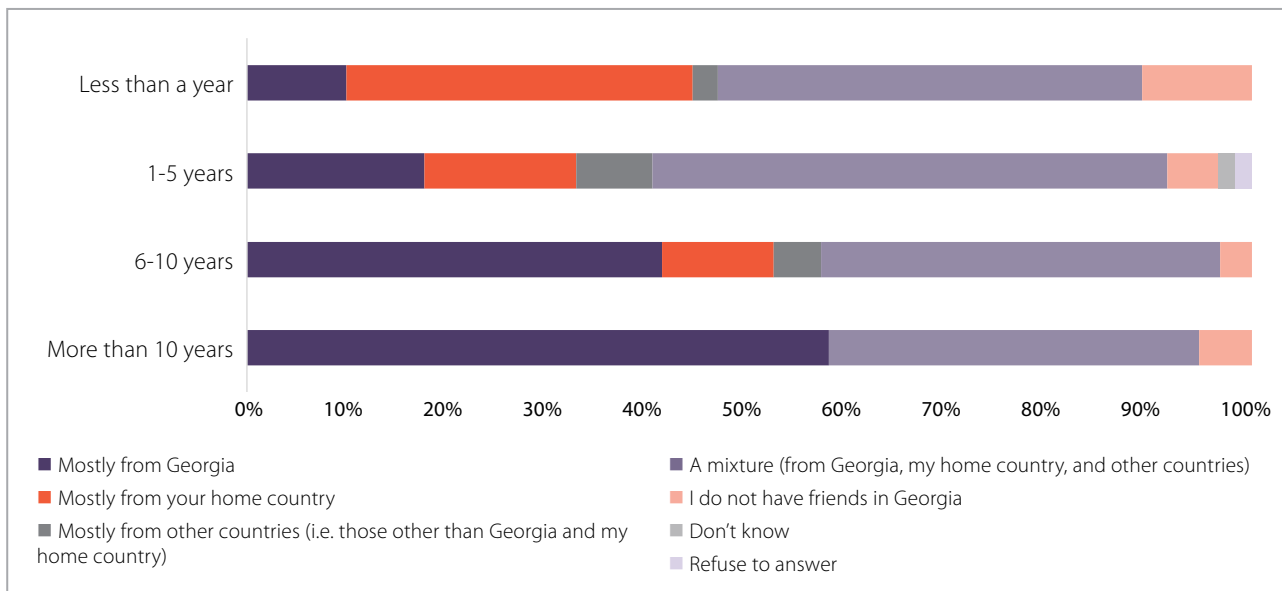


Source: PMC RC's survey

²¹ The share of respondents who were either moderately aware, very aware, or fully aware amounted to 36.2% in the 14-17 age group and equated to 35.2% in the 18-29 age group.

The study indicates that the longer refugee youth reside in Georgia, the more Georgian friends they have. In particular, the share of refugees whose friends in Georgia are mainly Georgian tends to rise as they spend more time in the country. Specifically, the share of refugee youth whose friends are mostly Georgian amounted to 9.9% of the refugees who had been living in Georgia for less than a year. In contrast, the corresponding share for those to have lived in Georgia for more than ten years was 57.9%.

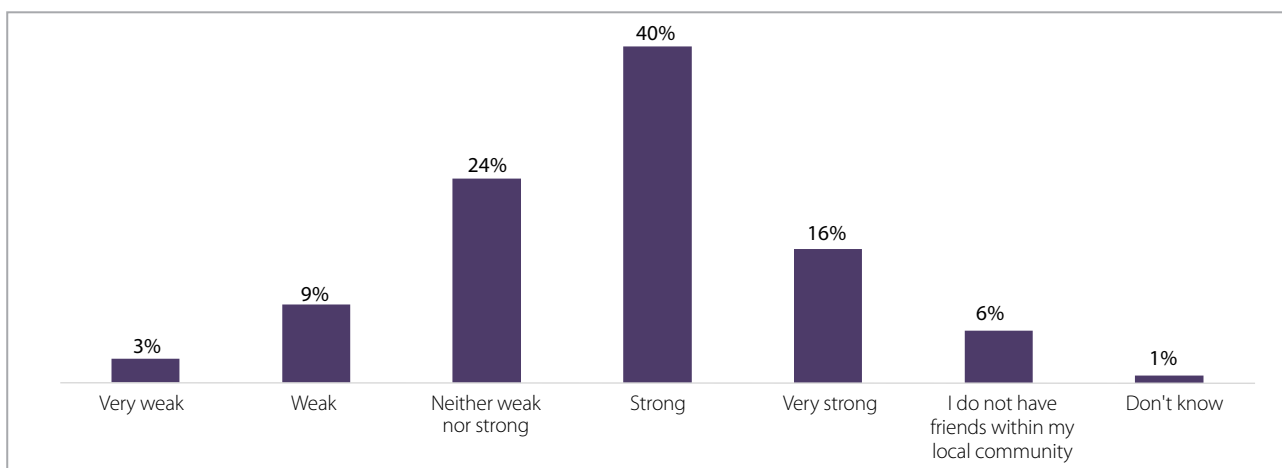
Figure 38: Refugee youth's friends in Georgia, by length of stay in Georgia



Source: PMC RC's survey

According to the study, most of the refugee youth have a strong network of friends in their local community on which they can rely for social support in difficult times, with the share of participants stating that their network of friends was either strong or very strong amounting to 55.9%. It is also worth noting that the results do not vary substantially across different genders, locations of current residence, countries of origin, and legal statuses of refugee youth.

Figure 39: Networks of friends in their local community on which refugee youth can rely for social support in difficult times



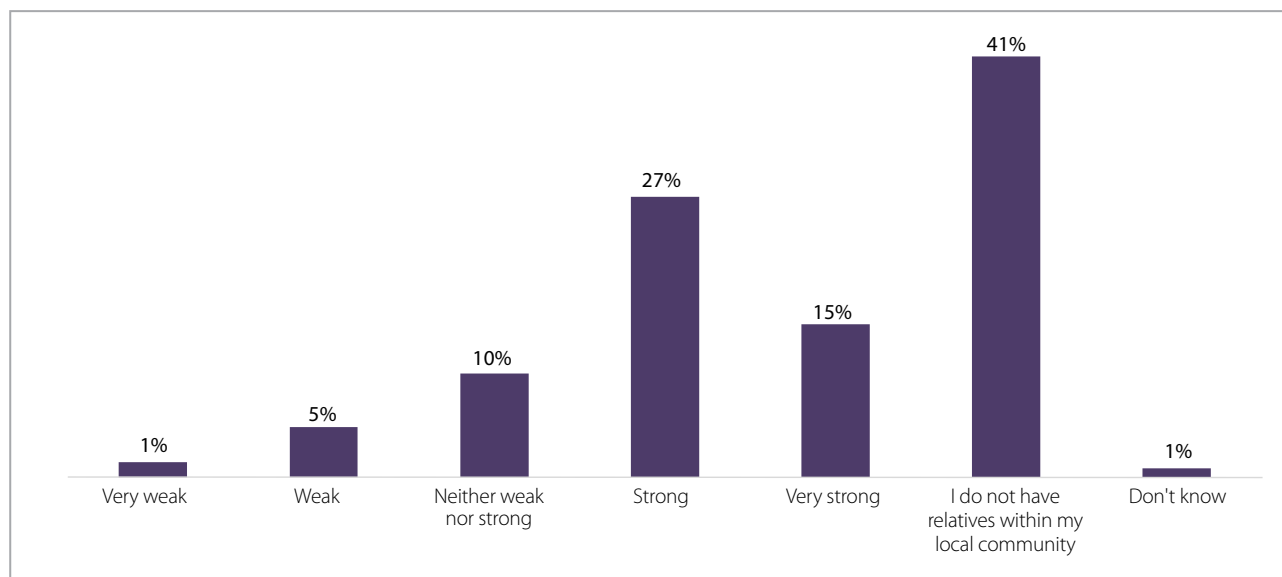
Source: PMC RC's survey

The study indicates that the share of refugee youth with a strong network of friends in their local community on which they can rely for social support in difficult times was higher in the 18-29 age group than in the 14-17 age group. Specifically, the share of refugee youth with a strong or very strong network of friends in their local community amounted to 45.1% in the 14-17 age group, while it was 60.7% for the 18-29 age group.

Network of relatives in Georgia

According to the study, compared to networks of friends, networks of relatives in their local community on which refugee youth can rely for social support in difficult times were less common. Indeed, 41% did not have any relatives within their local community. Nevertheless, 41.9% of refugee youth considered themselves to have a strong or very strong network of relatives in their local community on which they can rely for social support in difficult times.

Figure 40: Networks of relatives in their local community on which refugee youth can rely for social support in difficult times



Source: PMC RC's survey

The study revealed that the share of refugee youth with a strong network of relatives varied across the location of current residence. The highest share of refugee youth to indicate having a strong or very strong network was among those in Tbilisi (47.7%). In contrast, only 26.1% of refugee youth in Batumi indicated having a strong or very strong network of relatives in their local community.

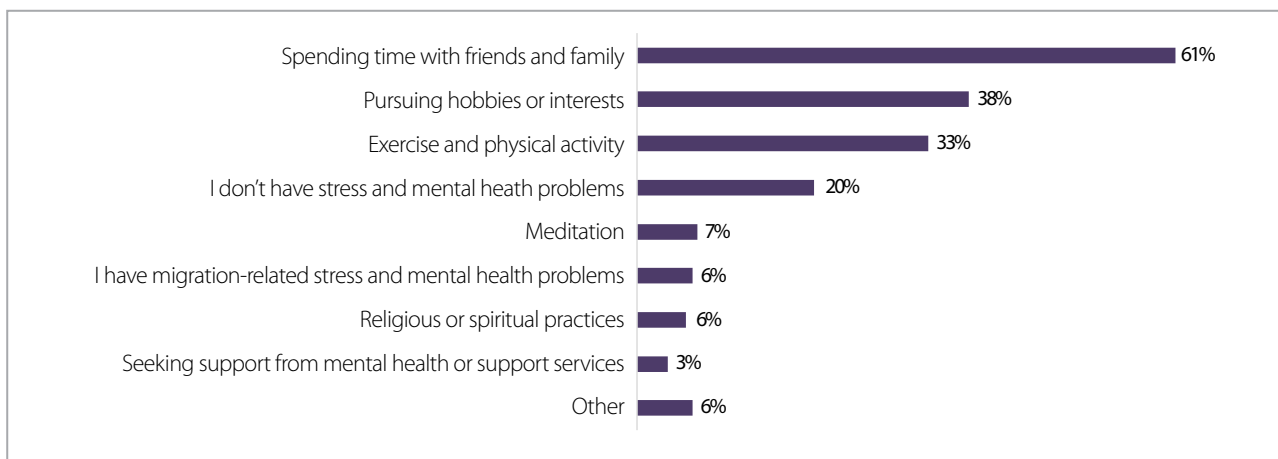
The study's results also vary according to the legal status of refugee youth. Specifically, 49.7% of those categorized as refugees and humanitarian status-holders indicated having a strong network of relatives. In contrast, only 32.4% of Ukrainians without status recorded having a strong network of relatives.

The focus group discussion participants claimed to maintain relationships with their home country and relatives through different communication channels (e.g. social networks). For some Ukrainians, communication with relatives who are living in occupied territories is complicated as some of their relatives think doing so is unsafe and they may be recorded. One participant mentioned: "They are sometimes afraid because they think they can be tapped, their calls. Well, I think this is nonsense. I explained that this is almost impossible in applications like Viber or WhatsApp, but they still think it."

Migration-related stress and coping mechanisms

The share of refugee youth who had not experienced stress and mental health problems in Georgia amounted to only 20.1%, meaning four in every five refugee youth have suffered from stress and mental health issues in their time in Georgia. To cope with migration-related stress, refugee youth reported trying different methods. Specifically, most tried to spend time with friends and family as a coping mechanism (61.2%), but only 3% had sought support from mental health services.

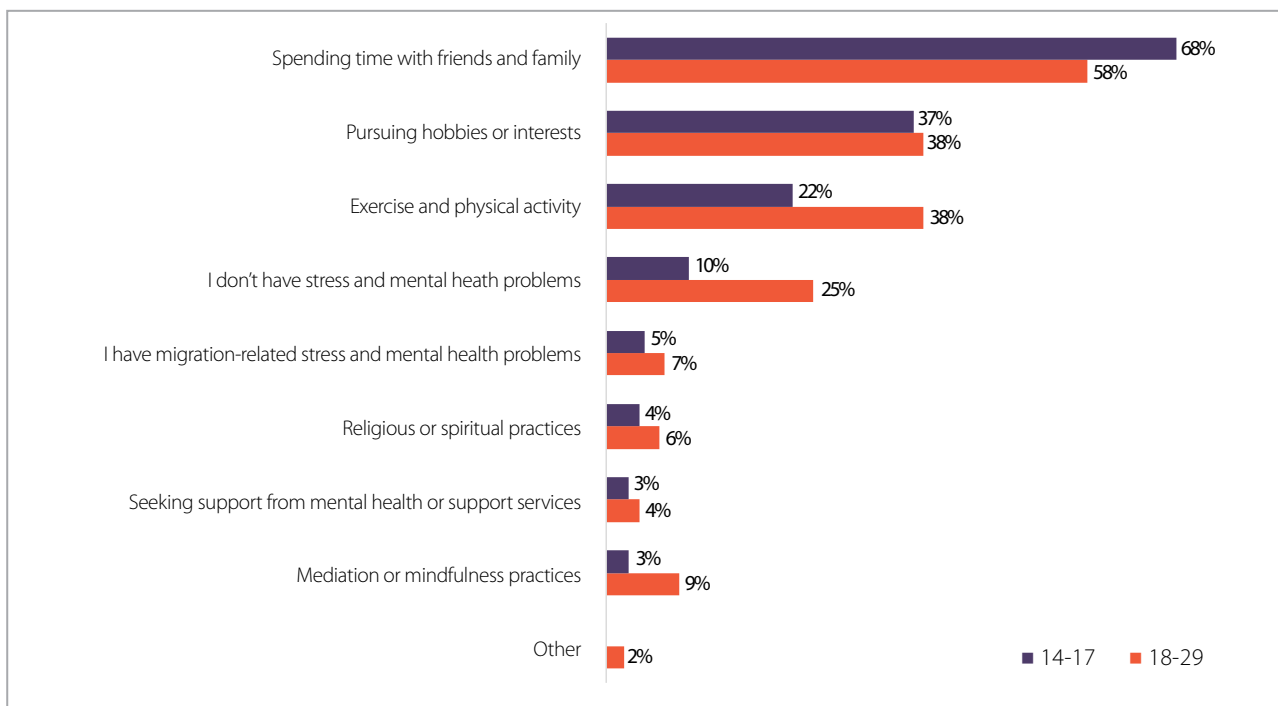
Figure 41: Coping mechanisms for migration-related stress and mental health problems



Source: PMC RC's survey

The study reveals that refugee youth aged 14-17 suffer from stress more than those aged 18-29. Specifically, the share of refugee youth claiming not to have had stress and mental health problems accounted for 9.9% among those aged 14-17, while it was 24.8% for those aged 18-29.

Figure 42: Migration-related stress-coping activities to maintain mental health, by age group



Source: PMC RC's survey

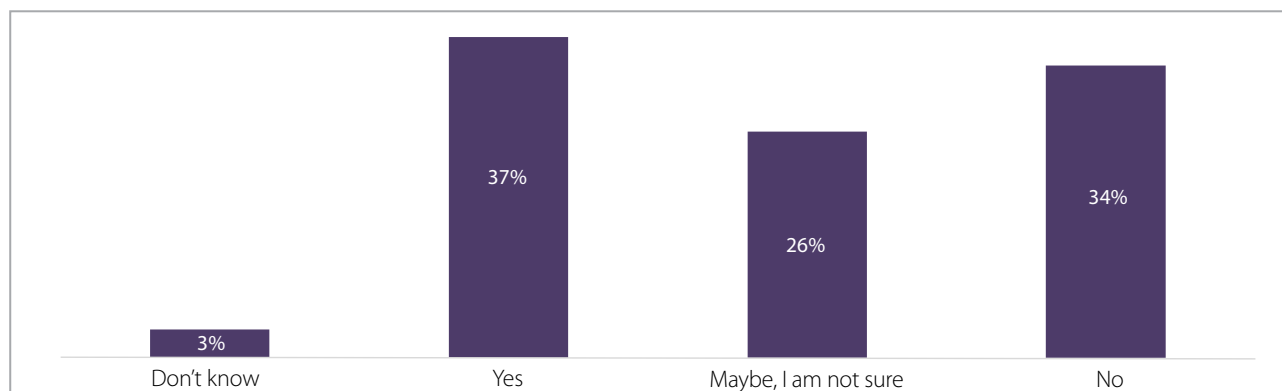
Migration-related stress was also discussed during the focus group discussions. While all participants experienced stress associated with migration, they had not referred to psychosocial services to deal with it. One participant mentioned that she had tried to avoid reading or listening to everything related to the war and protected herself in that way. Another noted: *“Well, just accepting the current situation, that’s all.”*

Regarding pursuing hobbies, a challenge mentioned by most participants was price. Meanwhile, the specific hobbies they wanted to pursue were mostly swimming, going to the gym, music, and studying foreign languages.

Plans of refugee youth

The study reveals that 37% of the surveyed refugee youth in Georgia intended to obtain Georgian citizenship. However, 33.7% of refugee youth did not have any desire to obtain Georgian citizenship (33.7%). The study also indicated that the results varied significantly across different refugee youth groups.

Figure 43: Refugee youth's intention to obtain Georgian citizenship



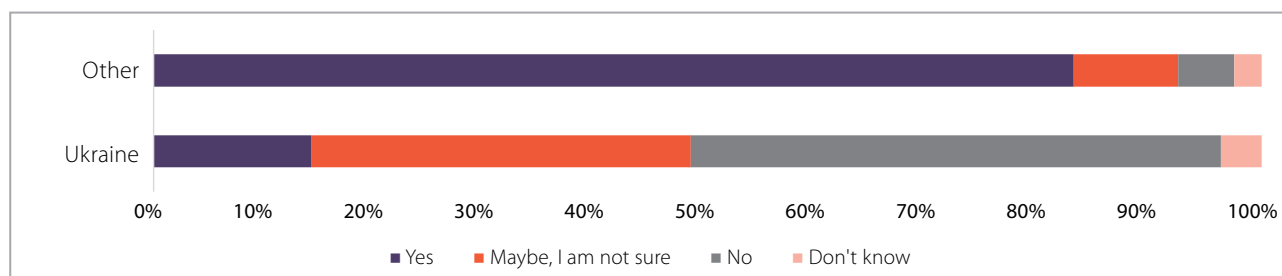
Source: PMC RC's survey

According to the study, refugee youth aged 18-29 were more inclined to seek to obtain Georgian citizenship than those aged 14-17. In particular, the share of refugee youth with an intention to obtain Georgian citizenship amounted to 43.8% among those aged 18-29, which was almost double the equivalent figure for those aged 14-17 (22.4%).

The study also revealed that the intention to obtain Georgian citizenship varied across genders, as the share of male refugees with such intentions (49.8%) was significantly higher than the corresponding share of female refugees (26.1%).

The study results in this regard were most affected by the country of origin of the refugee youth. Notably, only 14.2% of refugee youth from Ukraine had the intention to obtain Georgian citizenship, while the corresponding share of refugees from other countries was significantly higher, at 83%.

Figure 44: Refugee youth's intention to obtain Georgian citizenship, by country of origin



Source: PMC RC's survey

During the focus group discussions, almost all Ukrainian respondents mentioned that they would return to Ukraine after the war ends. One noted: *"I guess in summer, we are going back to Ukraine, so, yes. So, we are not staying here for our whole life."*

Most of the respondents from other countries reported intending to stay in Georgia. In particular, some refugee youth categorized as asylum seekers mentioned being afraid of not being granted status and, therefore, being forced to leave Georgia. In the event of being granted status, many stated they would like to stay in Georgia and start working there. One mentioned: *"If my case is approved, I am planning to work very hard, and maybe I can open a school. That is what I always wanted to open - a school - and to be a manager there, this is my dream, and this is my goal."* Focus group discussion participants, some 14–17-year-old refugee youth from other countries besides Ukraine mentioned that they were going to stay in Georgia and continue studying there.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

As part of the study, the following recommendations have been developed to address the needs of refugee youth, and to support an increase in their awareness regarding their rights, available services, and their access to the following: overall protection; healthcare; education and learning; transition to work; and participation and engagement.

OVERALL PROTECTION

Increase the awareness of refugee youth about their rights with regard to protection - The study revealed that the awareness level of refugee youth about their rights in terms of protection was low (only 29% indicated that they were fully aware or very aware of their rights). Therefore, refugee youth should be given comprehensive information on their rights and available support services, and information should be directly and easily accessible for them.

Support refugee youth to reduce rates of alleged discrimination and violence against them - Even though, according to the survey, most refugee youth had not faced discrimination and physical violence, it is essential to acknowledge that some respondents stated discrimination was still a problem. While the existence of discrimination cannot be confirmed without further evidence, the survey and focus group discussions revealed that some participants believed they faced alleged discrimination regarding their ethnicity, even at school. To combat alleged discrimination, it is recommended to increase the awareness of refugee youth on how to act when faced with such situations. Moreover, awareness of teachers and school administrations should be increased regarding how to act and what measures should be taken to protect students from discrimination.

Increase refugee youth's access to Georgian-language courses - The issue of protection is strongly connected to refugee youth's integration level. With that in mind, good access to Georgian-language courses would help foster the integration process and avoid discrimination regarding refugee youth's lack of Georgian language knowledge. Moreover, it would help refugees to become more integrated into the Georgian labor market and education system, thereby strengthening their position in Georgian society.

HEALTHCARE

Increasing the awareness of refugee youth about their rights and available healthcare services in Georgia - According to the survey, most refugee youth have limited knowledge about their rights and available healthcare services in Georgia, which hinders their access to such services. Therefore, it is recommended that materials in the appropriate language about their rights and available healthcare services be spread among refugee youth more actively. Moreover, it would be beneficial to collaborate with community-based organizations, like local CSOs working on migration issues, schools, etc., to increase the awareness of refugee youth by distributing information and holding workshops. In addition, informational videos in different languages could be recorded, explaining all of the needed information for refugee youth, and spread among refugee youth communities.

Increase the access of refugee youth to mental health services - The study shows that many refugee youth suffer from migration-related stress and are in need of psychosocial assistance and support. Accordingly, psychosocial services need to be treated with more importance by stakeholders to support refugee youth in overcoming traumas and helping them to become more integrated. Moreover, it is recommended that the stakeholders inform refugee youth more actively about the significance of such services and existing service providers.

Strengthen capacity of local NGOs – It is essential to support the capacity development of local NGOs to deliver psychosocial healthcare services and raise awareness among refugee youth accordingly by providing them with training, technical assistance, and financial support.

Increase access to insurance for refugee youth - Many refugee youth need to become more familiar with insurance options available to them in Georgia. Therefore, it is recommended that they be provided information on such options, including public and private insurance plans. Moreover, refugee youth face problems regarding the affordability of private insurance packages due to financial constraints. Thus, offering financial assistance to cover the whole or part of the insurance costs would be beneficial for them to increase their access to healthcare services.

EDUCATION

Capacity development of schools where refugee youth are studying - It is recommended to support the capacity development of schools where refugee youth are studying to encourage a more inclusive school climate, which promotes student well-being and protects refugee schoolchildren against discrimination, bullying, and exclusion. That can be achieved by providing targeted support through additional funds, programs, and guidance to administrators and teachers.

Increase the enrollment of refugee youth aged 14-17 into school education in Georgia – As the study indicates, 43.4% of refugee youth aged 14-17 were not currently studying in Georgia. This trend is especially common among Ukrainians (46%) (many Ukrainians attend online classes arranged by their home school). However, among refugee youth from other countries, the share of children not studying in Georgia was still high (29%). As identified during the focus group discussions, some Ukrainian schoolchildren attending school online face challenges regarding internet access. Moreover, in some Ukrainian schools, attendance is optional, which can lead to a lower quality of education. Therefore, ensuring increased access to school education services for refugee schoolchildren from Ukraine and other countries in Georgia is critical.

Provide special support to refugee schoolchildren - As identified in the study, due to a language barrier, refugee schoolchildren often find it difficult to understand the study materials being explained by their teacher during class. That could lead to a lower quality of education being attained. Therefore, it is recommended that private teachers support refugee schoolchildren who would prepare them in different subjects.

Create a joint volunteer tutoring project with Georgian universities to assist refugee youth – It is recommended to create volunteering projects in which students from different universities would volunteer to tutor refugee youth on various subjects²². The project would help the refugee youth to overcome their struggles in certain school subjects and promote cultural understanding, as well as offering additional language practice.

Increasing awareness of the available education and learning services in Georgia – As refugee youth have a low level of awareness about educational opportunities in Georgia, providing them information in an easily accessible format and several languages is critical. Therefore, it is recommended to develop a one-stop educational portal for refugee youth in Georgia and make available easily accessible information on the Georgian education system, including admission procedures, educational organizations and programs by language, and funding opportunities. Besides, guidance services could also play an essential role in the direct provision of information. It would also be advisable to organize workshops and information sessions that provide information about education services available for refugee youth in Georgia. Furthermore, targeting regions outside Batumi and Tbilisi is also essential to address the low awareness levels there.

²² The project model could be taken from the KHIDI project, in which ISET students have weekly online sessions with school students from Pankisi to teach math and English.

Support refugee youth to cover tuition fees – The high costs of educational programs are among the most critical limitations preventing refugee youth from accessing higher education. Therefore, offering refugee youth who are unable to pay higher education costs to cover tuition fees would increase their access to education.

Increase awareness of refugee youth about the importance of knowing the Georgian language and increase access to Georgian-language courses - The study identified a language barrier to be the biggest hindrance for refugee youth with respect to their access to education and employment opportunities and this prevents their engagement in Georgian society. Therefore, increasing awareness of refugee youth in that regard and enhancing their access to Georgian-language courses is recommended.

Increase access of refugee youth to informal educational services – It is recommended to ensure increased awareness about informal educational opportunities (such as sports, painting, and music) among refugee youth and to create such opportunities for refugee youth.

TRANSITION TO WORK

Increase awareness of refugee youth about their legal rights with regard to working in Georgia - The study revealed that only 21% of respondents were fully aware or very aware of their rights with regard to labor market engagement. Such low awareness could lead to unfair employment relations for refugee youth. Moreover, it might be an obstacle to engagement in the labor market. Therefore, it is recommended to increase refugee youth's understanding of their rights within the Georgian labor market such as the importance of contracts, whom to apply to when their rights are violated, vacation rights, and overtime pay. That could be accomplished by conducting awareness-raising sessions, training, and developing guidelines in the appropriate languages.

Increase refugee youth's awareness of available state support services - Given that only 16.8% of respondents indicated being aware of available state support services, it is necessary to promote these services better among refugee youth. Accordingly, the Government and other relevant stakeholders may wish to consider launching awareness-raising campaigns in different languages and formats to inform refugee youth about the available services. Moreover, it is recommended that this information be made easily accessible to refugees through different channels.

Increase awareness of refugee youth about searching for suitable vacancies - Given that some refugee youth do not know about job websites and how to find vacancies in Georgia (7% of refugee youth who were not working and had not tried to find a job mentioned this as the main reason for them not looking for a job), it would be beneficial if information provision sessions were provided for those willing to work in Georgia.

Increase the skills and knowledge of refugee youth – Overall, 19% of refugee youth who had not started to work in Georgia cited a lack of skills and knowledge (other than language skills) as the main hindering factor. Meanwhile, 59% recorded a lack of knowledge of the Georgian language as a hindering factor, and 14% mentioned a lack of knowledge of the English language. In addition, delivering education and training programs to refugee youth could give them the skills and knowledge required to find employment. Such programs should focus on academic and vocational skills, such as language, computer, and job-specific training.

Support refugee youth through mentorship - Mentorship programs could assist refugee youth in connecting with professionals in their field of interest, obtaining guidance and advice, and building networks to find employment.

Provide refugee youth with work experience programs – In total, 19% of refugee youth noted a lack of work experience as a hindering factor in their entry into the labor market in Georgia. Therefore, it is recommended that work experience programs be created, such as internships or apprenticeships to support refugee youth in gaining practical experience in their field(s) of interest and developing the skills and networks needed to start employment.

Support refugee youth to start their own businesses - Entrepreneurship programs could provide refugee youth with the skills and knowledge required to start their own businesses and become self-employed, in turn creating job opportunities for other refugee youth in their community.

PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Support refugee youth's integration process in Georgia - Encouraging refugee youth to participate in community events and activities would help them to feel more of a connection to their new environment and would also provide opportunities for them to meet new people and develop relationships with local community members.

Organize community events - Community events represent an excellent opportunity for refugee youth to interact with people from their host community. Indeed, organizing such events (e.g. cultural festivals, sports events, and music concerts) can create a welcoming environment and encourage interaction between refugee youth and their host community.

Support refugee youth to pursue their hobbies - Most focus group discussion participants mentioned that they could not pursue their hobbies due to a lack of information and/or affordability. Therefore, it is recommended to increase refugee youth's access to information about different activities and to connect them with local organizations relevant to their hobbies (for instance, linking a refugee youth interested in playing music with a local music club or society).

ANNEX 1 – INFORMATION ABOUT SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

DATABASE OF REFUGEE YOUTH

The database of refugee youth provided by UNHCR includes information on their country of origin, legal status, municipality of current residence, age, and gender.

Table 3: Variables used for stratification and distribution of refugee youth according to the database provided by UNHCR

Variables	Groups	Number
Country of origin	Ukraine	772
	Other countries ²³	411
Legal status	Ukrainian who has not yet applied for asylum	763
	Asylum seeker	239
	Refugee/humanitarian status-holder	178
	Other	3
Municipality of current residence	Tbilisi	739
	Batumi	255
	Other ²⁴	176
	Not identified	13
Age	18-29	813
	14-17	367
	Not identified	3
Gender	Female	602
	Male	511
	Not identified	70

SURVEYED REFUGEE YOUTH

The number of refugee youth surveyed was 483, comprising 175 in the 14-17 age group and 308 in the 18-29 age group. In addition, 60.5% of the respondents (292) were female, while 39.5% (191) were male. The distributions of respondents by different groups are presented in the tables below.

Table 4: Distribution of respondents by country of origin

Country of origin	Number	Share
Ukraine	359	74.3%
Other countries	124	25.7%

²³ Other countries include: Iraq, Iran, Yemen, Afghanistan, Russia, Egypt, Syria, Eritrea, Bangladesh, Lebanon, Pakistan, Somalia, India, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Tajikistan, Palestine, Turkey, Algeria, Cameroon, Congo, Myanmar, Nigeria, Sudan, Turkmenistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Ghana, Morocco, South Africa, UAE.

²⁴ Other municipalities include: Kutaisi, Rustavi, Zugdidi, Kobuleti, Martkopi, Poti, Akhaltsikhe, Gardabani, Marneuli, Akhmeta, Ambrolauri, Chkhorotsku, Dmanisi, Gudauri, Kaspi, Khashuri, Mtskheta, and Sighnaghi.

Table 5: Distribution of respondents by current legal status

Current legal status	Number	Share
Ukrainian who has not yet applied for asylum	234	48.4%
Refugee and humanitarian status-holder	162	33.5%
Asylum seeker	50	10.4%
Other	9	1.9%
Don't know	28	5.8%

Table 6: Distribution of respondents by the municipality of current residence

Municipality of current residence	Number	Share
Tbilisi	270	55.9%
Batumi	150	31.1%
Other	63	13%

Table 7: Distribution of respondents by length of stay in Georgia

Length of stay in Georgia	Number	Share
Less than a year	314	65%
1-5 years	106	21.9%
6-10 years	48	10%
More than 10 years	15	3.1%

ANNEX 2 – INFORMATION ABOUT FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION PARTICIPANTS

The distribution of focus group discussion participants by sex, status, age, and country of origin is provided in the table below.

Table 8: Focus group participants

Participant	Sex	Status	Age	Country of origin
Participant 1	Female	Ukrainian	18-29	Ukraine
Participant 2	Male	Ukrainian	18-29	Ukraine
Participant 3	Male	Asylum Seeker	18-29	Saudi Arabia
Participant 4	Male	Asylum Seeker	18-29	Pakistan
Participant 5	Female	Asylum Seeker	18-29	Afghanistan
Participant 6	Female	Ukrainian	14-17	Ukraine
Participant 7	Male	Ukrainian	14-17	Ukraine
Participant 8	Male	Ukrainian	14-17	Ukraine
Participant 9	Male	Refugee/humanitarian status-holder	14-17	Ukraine
Participant 10	Male	Refugee/humanitarian status-holder	14-17	Egypt
Participant 11	Male	Refugee/humanitarian status-holder	14-17	Iran
Participant 12	Male	Refugee/humanitarian status-holder	14-17	Iran
Participant 13	Female	Refugee/humanitarian status-holder	14-17	Afghanistan
Participant 14	Female	Ukrainian	14-17	Ukraine



Research