



**THIS  
IS WHO  
WE ARE**

A study of the profile,  
experiences and reasons for  
flight of unaccompanied and  
separated children from  
Afghanistan seeking asylum in  
Sweden in 2015



# Background

- To better understand the profile and background of the group of Afghan UASC applying for asylum in Sweden, a profiling survey was carried out between February/March and 6 May 2016.
- The study aims to provide a greater understanding of the UASC:
  - Who are the Afghan UASCs coming to Sweden?
  - Why are Afghan UASCs leaving their country of residence?
  - What do UASCs experience on the journey?
  - Why are Afghan UASCs choosing Sweden their country of destination?



# Methodology and limitations

- Questionnaire (quantitative) and focus group discussions (qualitative)
- 240 individual face-to-face interviews in three regions
  - Göteborg
  - Malmö
  - Stockholm
- Multi-staged cluster sampling method
- 34 boys took part in focus group discussions
- Dari/Farsi/Pashtu-speaking enumerators hired and trained
- Legal guardians contacted by letter
- Flyer in Dari and Swedish with child-friendly information

# Who are the Afghan UASCs coming to Sweden?



# Age

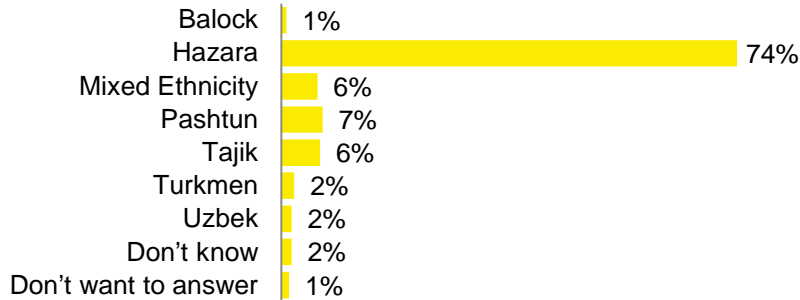
- 8-13 years old: 6%
- 14-15 years old: 34%
- 16-17 years old: 60%





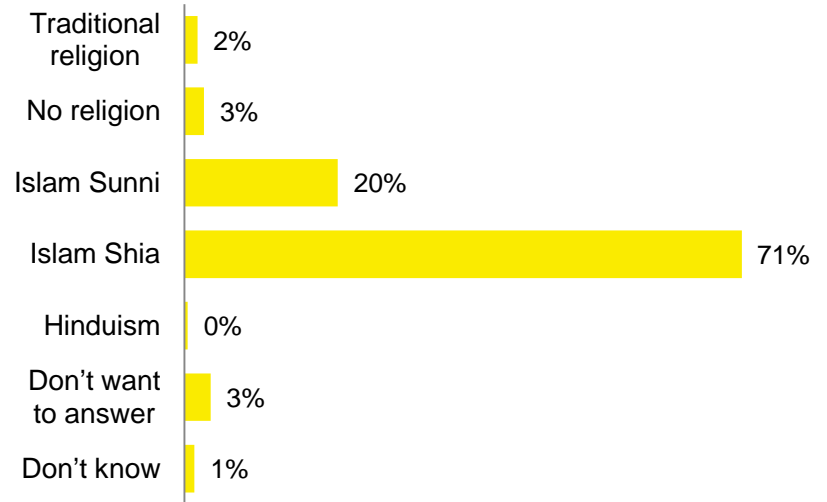
# Ethnicity

- Hazara 74%
- Pashtun 7%
- Tajik 6%
- Mixed ethnicity 6%



# Religion

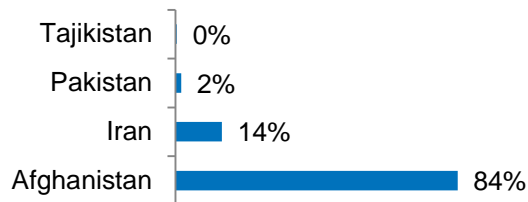
- Shia 71%
- Sunni 20%





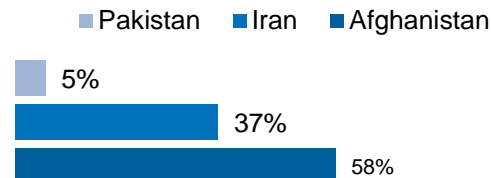
# Country of birth

- Afghanistan 84%
- Iran 14%
- Pakistan 2%



# Country of main residence

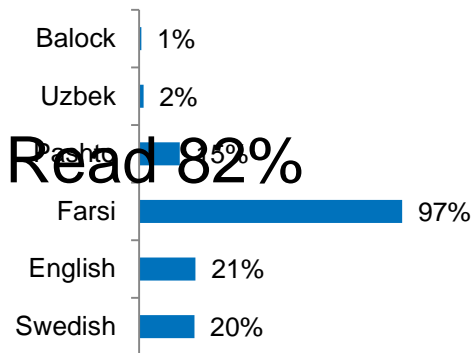
- Iran 37%
- Pakistan 5%



28% had been internally displaced

# Languages

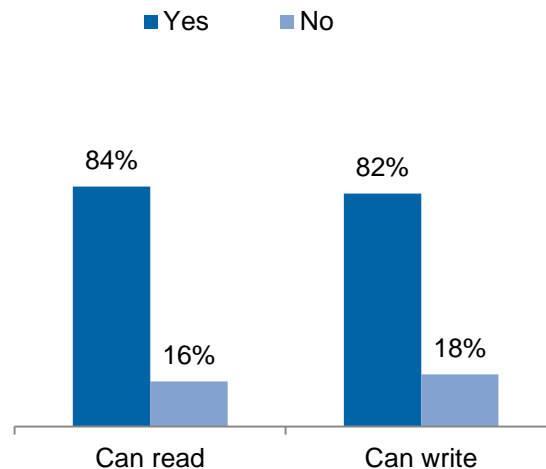
- Dari/Farsi 97%
- Pashto 15%
- English 21%
- Swedish 20%



- Read 82%

# Literacy

- Write 84%







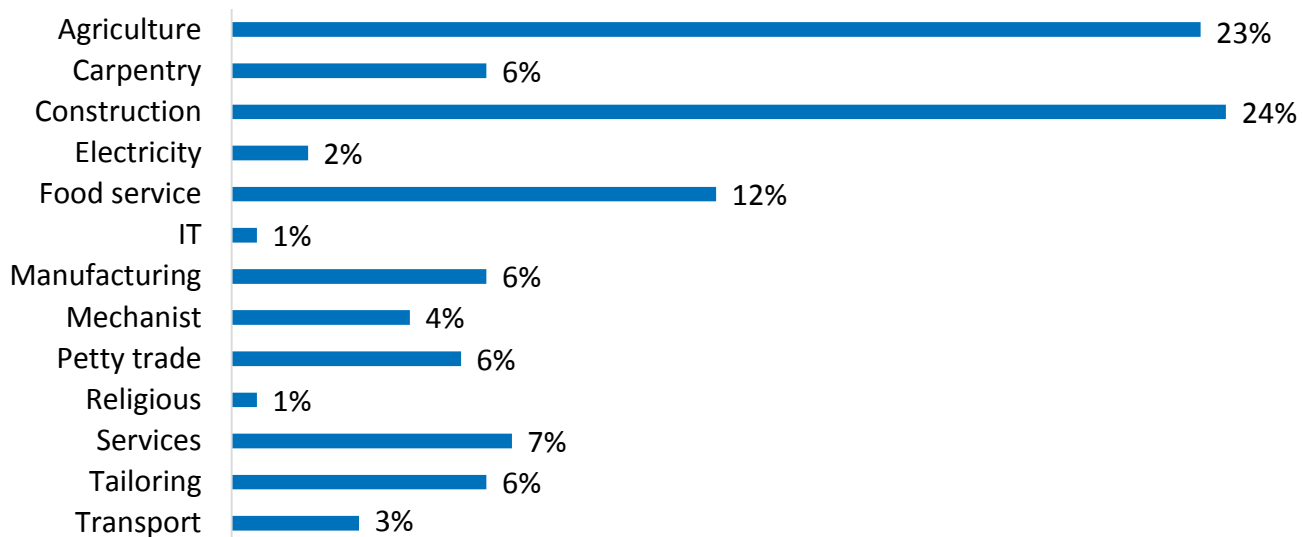
# Level of educational attainment

- Attended school in main place of residence 73%
- Level of educational attainment:
  - Primary 74%
  - Madrasa 19%
  - High school 14%
- 62% reported school was interrupted by the journey
- 38 % reported work had prevented them from attending school



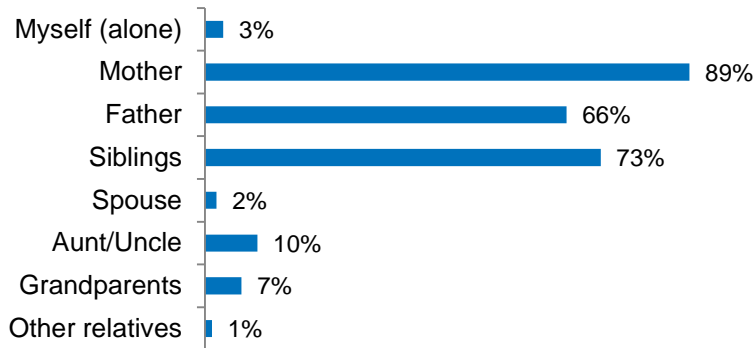
# Areas of work

- 68 % worked for six months or more in the last year

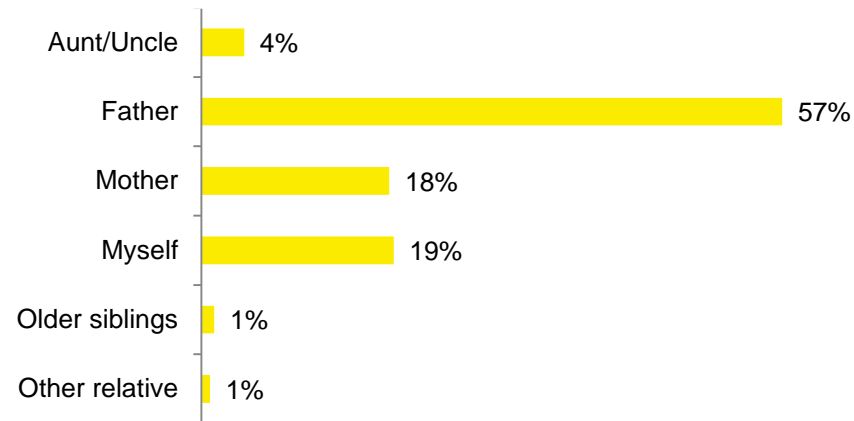


# Situation prior to flight

- Most children live with the nuclear family
  - Both parents 63%
  - Only mother 25%
  - Siblings 73%



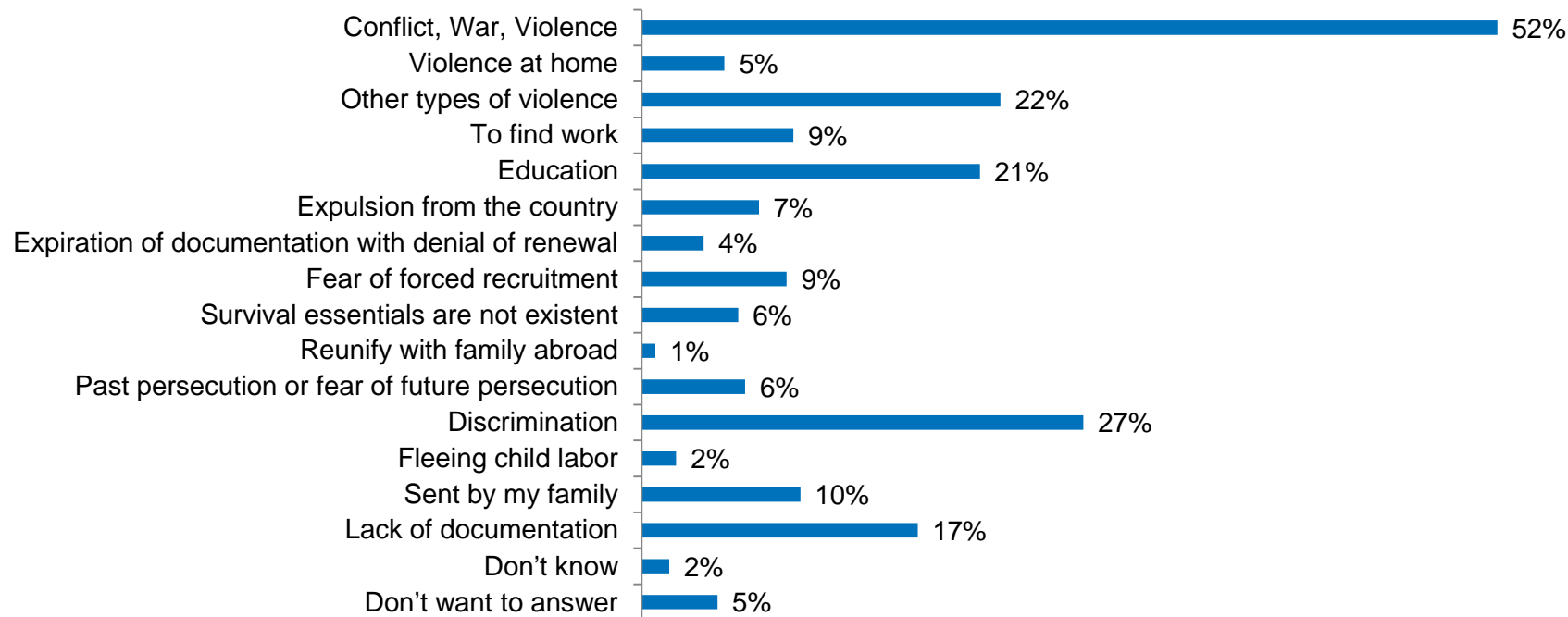
- Main caretaker
  - Father 59%
  - Mother 19%
  - Themselves 18%



# Why are the Afghan UASCs leaving their country of main residence?



# Reasons for leaving country of origin



“If I had only financial problems, I would have stayed there, but security is important to me and I was not secure there. Staff and students are killed there and there is no security. Therefore young people leave the country.”

“When you decide to leave Afghanistan, you must consider the very high risk of dying. For me, life was not so important, I had to leave as I did not have any hope, shelter or future in Afghanistan. It does not make any difference where I die.”

“We had long searched for a possibility to leave our country, and when it became possible, we took the chance.”

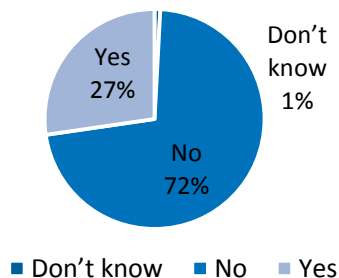
**What have the Afghan UASCs experienced during the journey?**



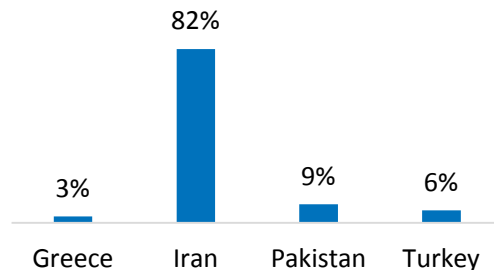
# Travel time

- The average journey takes about half a year

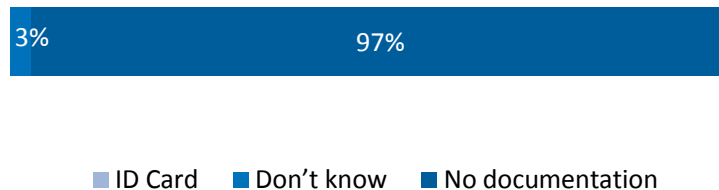
Stayed in transit country over six months



Transit country where stayed over 1 month



Type of documentation in transit country

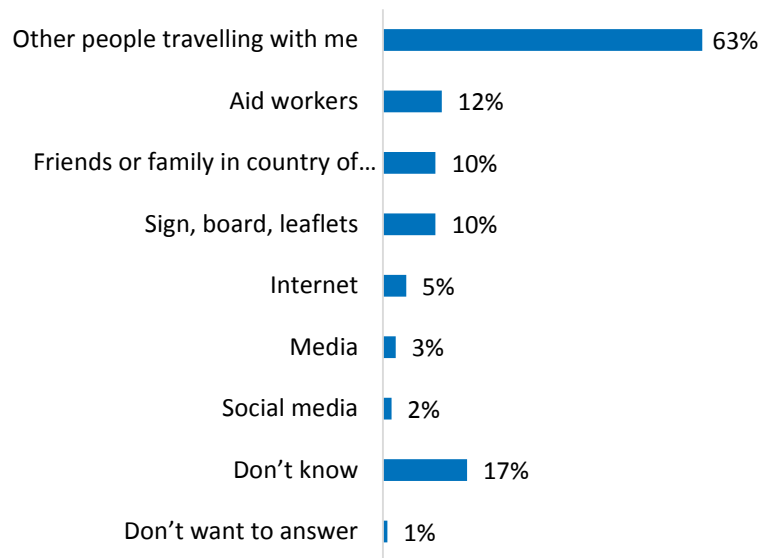




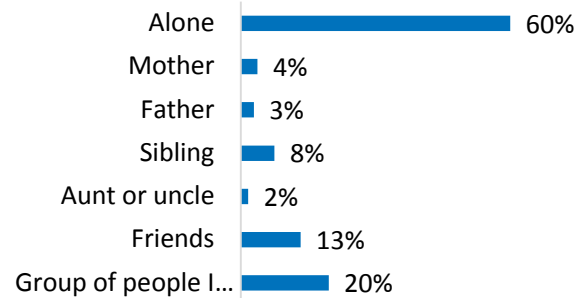


# Information during travel

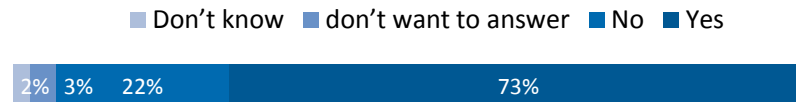
### How did you find information that you needed during the journey?

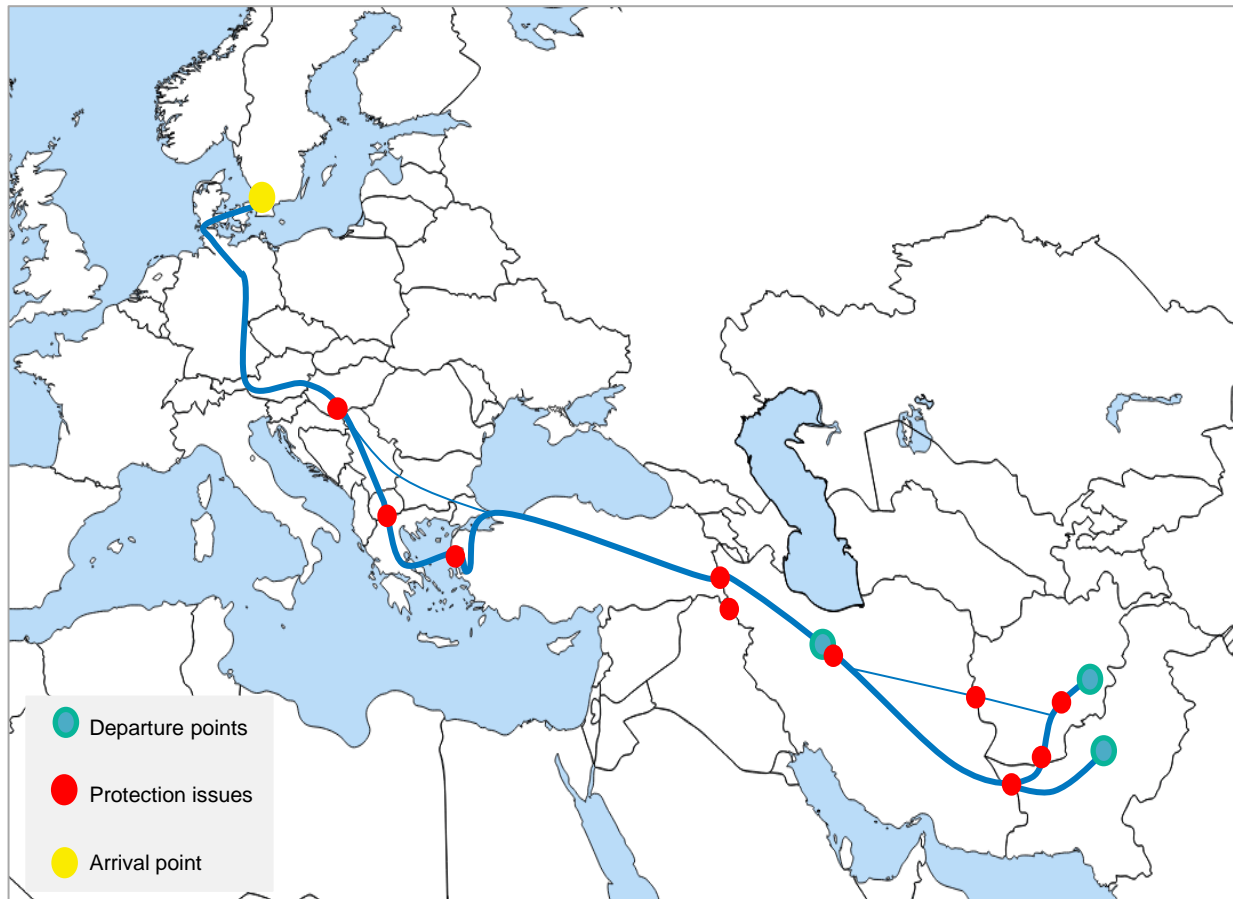


### Travelled with during the journey



### Had a guide during the travel

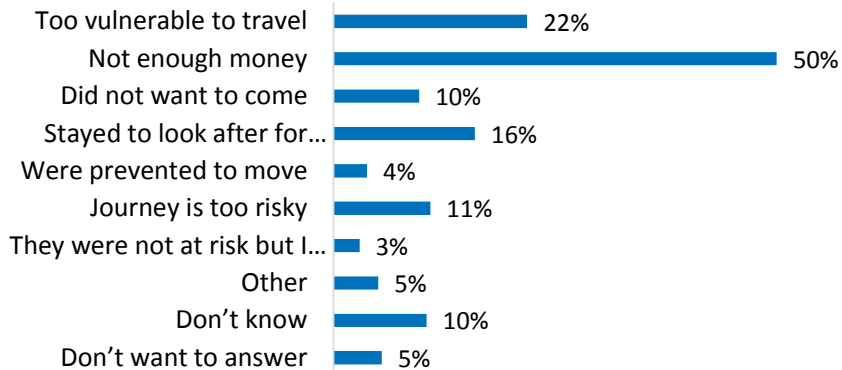






# Financing of journey

Reason why parents/caretaker stay behind

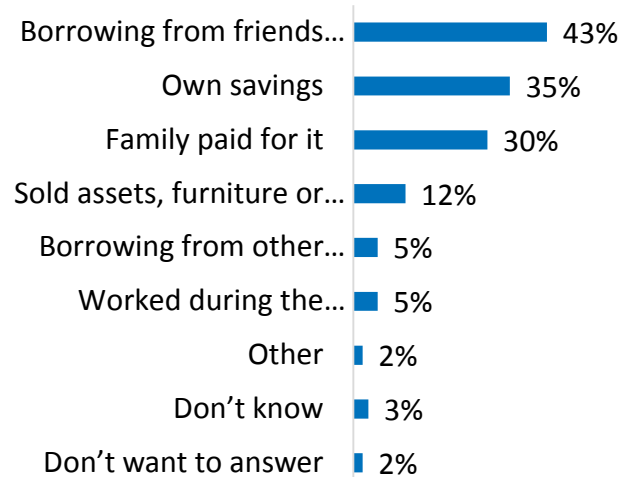


Will money borrowed need to be pay back?

■ Don't know   
 ■ Don't want to answer   
 ■ No   
 ■ Yes



Financing of journey



Average sum payed for the travel to Sweden

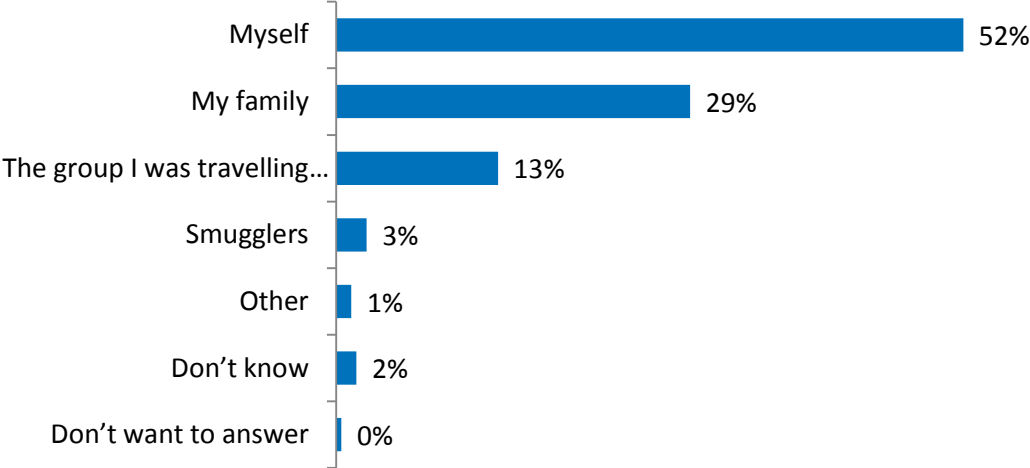
- USD 3.576 for those leaving Afghanistan
- USD 2.192 for those leaving from Iran.

# Why are Afghan UASC choosing Sweden as a destination country?

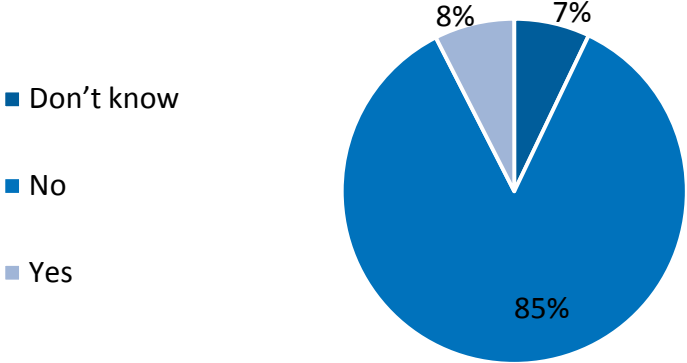


# Decision to come to Sweden

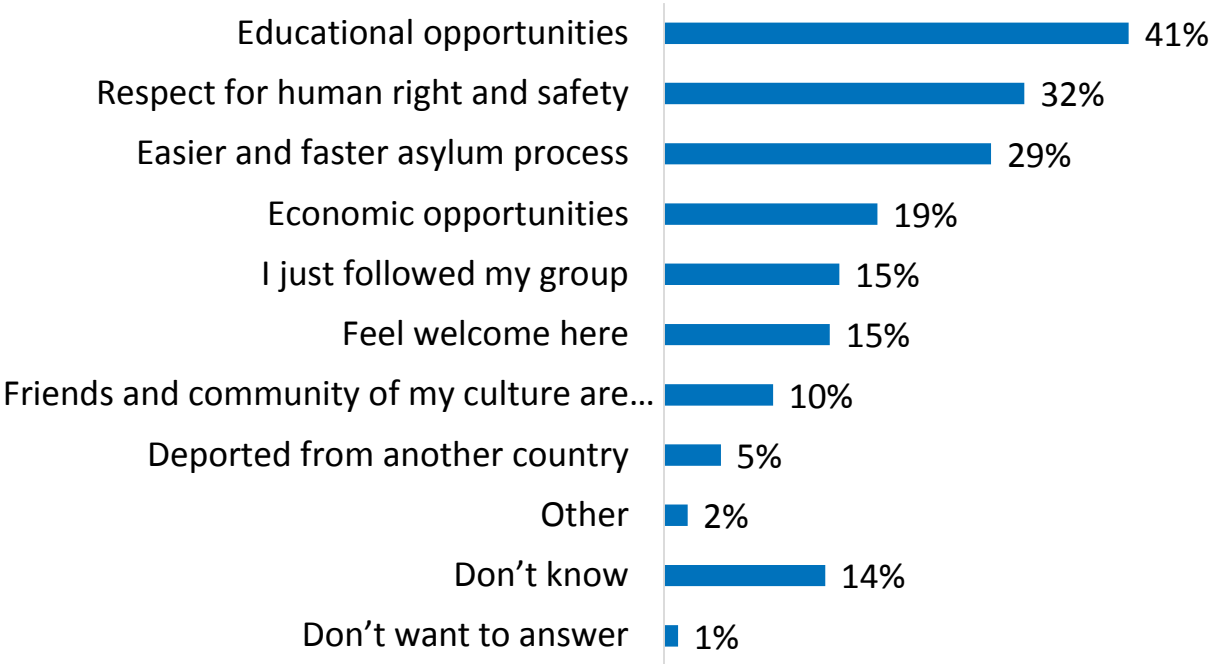
Person who took the decision to go to Sweden



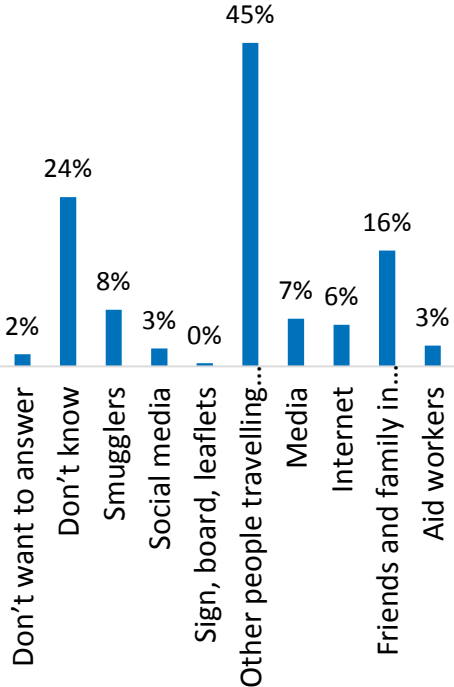
Do you have relatives living in Sweden or in Europe?



# Reason for coming to Sweden



Sources of information on Sweden



# THIS IS WHO WE ARE

## Part 2



Documentation of the secondary findings from the profiling survey of unaccompanied Afghan children arriving to Sweden in 2015

## Secondary findings relating to the reception and protection of Afghan UASC in Sweden



# Best interests assessment

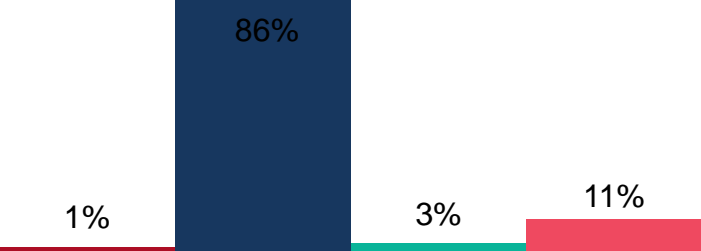
## BIA conducted in Sweden

■ Don't know ■ No ■ Yes



## Person in charge of conducting the BIA in Sweden

■ Don't know ■ Other





# Family tracing

- Majority of interviewed UASC in contact with family.
- SMA shall conduct family tracing as soon as possible – often difficult due to lack of cooperation.
- Key: establishing trust.

# Registration and maintenance of updated records

- A sizeable number of the UASC on the lists not of Afghan nationality.
- UASC registered more than once, sometimes with two different legal guardians.
- The list shared with UNHCR contained several discrepancies with regard to names and addresses of legal guardians and group homes, which were spelled and registered differently.
- Letter did not reach legal guardian.
- Lack of information sharing.



# Access to competent legal guardian

- Central role of legal guardians
- Legal guardians with many children
- No mandatory training
- Oversight mechanisms?

# Access to services

- Access to education in timely manner a problem.
- Access to psychosocial support limited.
- Stable environment in order to benefit from available services.

# Access to child friendly information

- Misunderstandings of information
- Relying on hearsay, friends, people around them
- Cause unnecessary anxiety and stress



# The way forward?

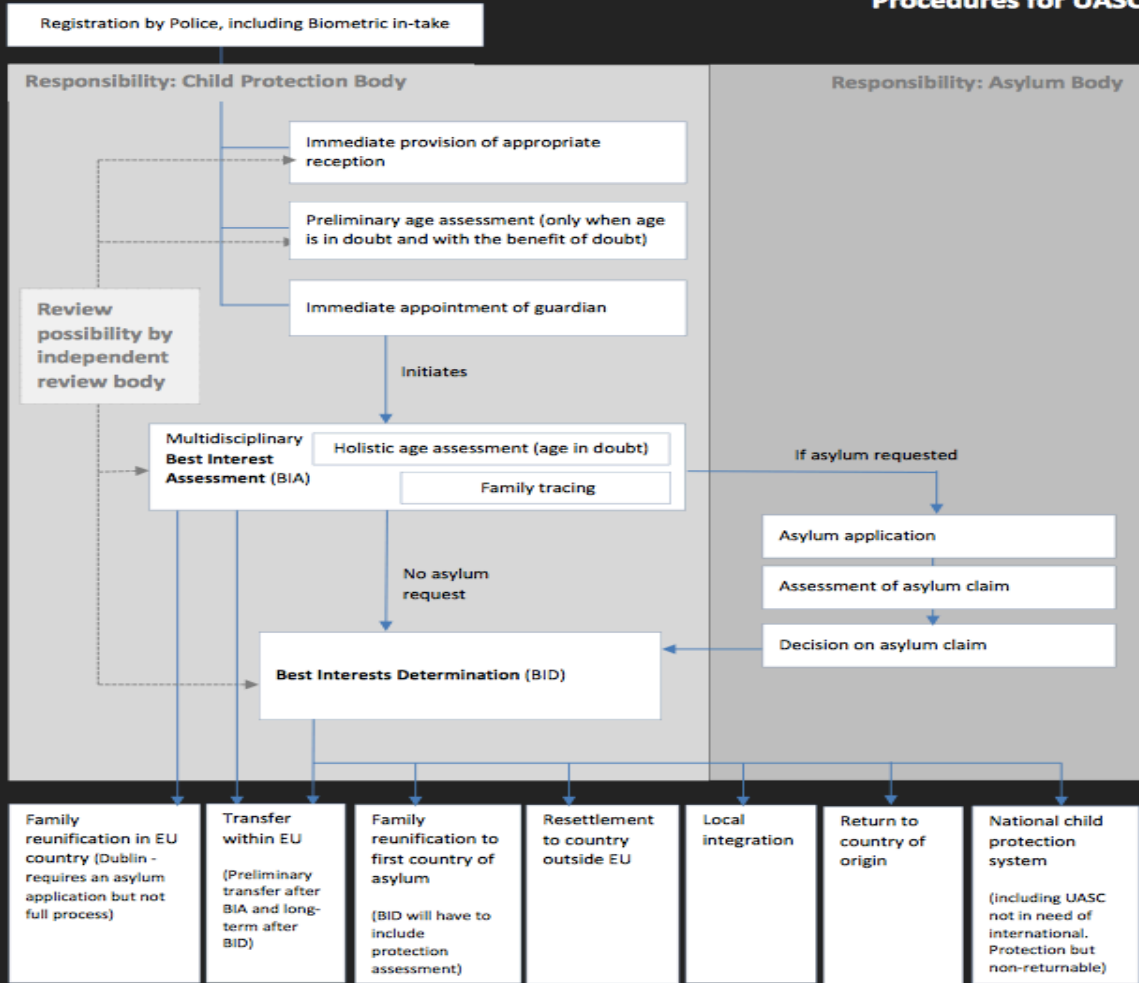
- UNHCR, UNICEF and International Rescue Committee (IRC) consultative process to assist states to operationalise their capacity to protect UASC in Europe.
- Focus on identification, registration, age assessment, guardianship, care arrangements, best interests in the national systems and participation of children.
- Proposals for efficient, lean and harmonized processes in accordance with the best interests of the child.



# Proposals

- Proper identification, registration in a Europe-wide system, and holistic age assessment procedures.
- Establishment of a rapid and effective guardianship system, including the engagement of effective cultural mediators who can form trusting relationships with UASC, facilitate continuous dialogue with communities, and mobilize communities to support effective identification, referrals, and provision of care.
- Strengthened access to age appropriate and safe care arrangements, including the provision of key services, such as psychosocial support.
- Development of procedures linking all relevant actors (national, international, governmental and non-governmental, and communities) for an efficient and effective national procedure.

# Procedures for UASC



Source: UNHCR, UNICEF, IRC



# Tack!

Rapporterna finns tillgängliga på:

<http://www.refworld.org/docid/581b4b684.html>

<http://www.refworld.org/docid/581b4bb74.html>

<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/53109>

Nordeuropa

[swest@unhcr.org](mailto:swest@unhcr.org)

[www.unhcr.org/neu/se/](http://www.unhcr.org/neu/se/)

Twitter: @UNHCR\_NE

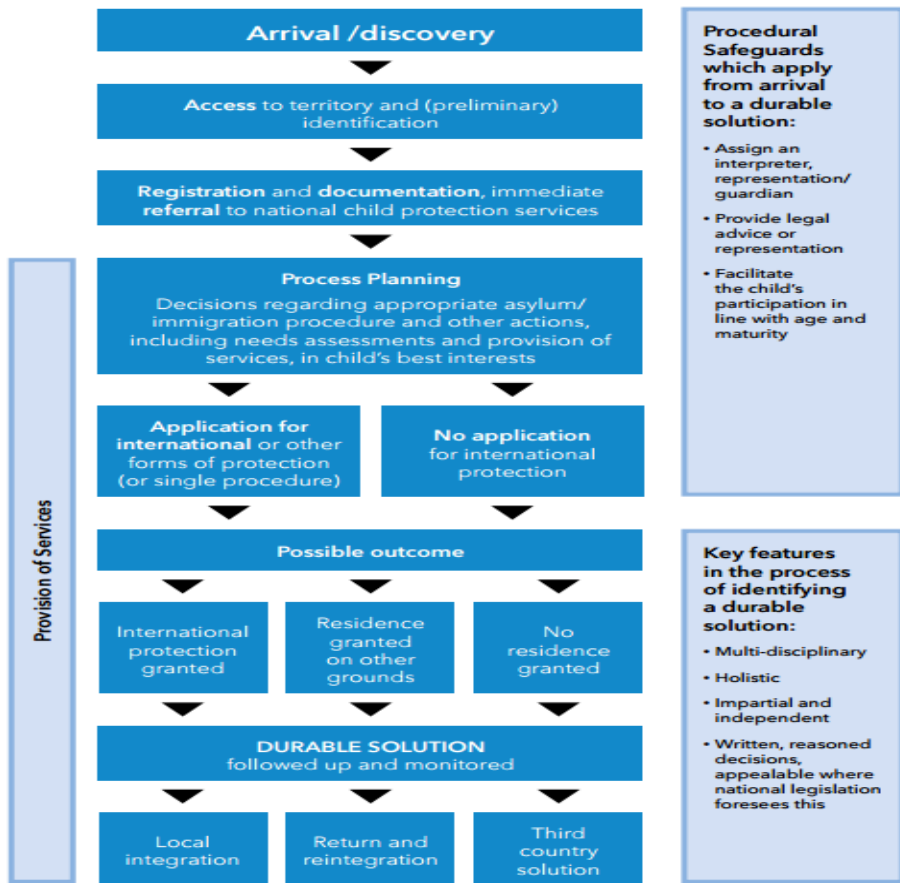
Samarie Wijekoon Löfvendahl

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UNHCRs regionala representation för

# Secondary findings

Figure 2:  
From arrival to a durable solution: applying the best interests principle



- **Data sharing**
- **Applying a holistic approach**
- **Process planning**

# Recommendation:

## Best interests assessment

- UNHCR would recommend the relevant authorities to map how, when and by whom best interests assessments and best interests determinations of UASC arriving to Sweden are conducted today, in order to analyze whether the requirements set out by the Committee on the Rights of the Child are being implemented.
- UNHCR would also recommend that the relevant authorities examines if a system of 'process planning' could be introduced to ensure a more holistic approach to the reception and protection of UASC in Sweden.

# Recommendation: Family tracing

UNHCR would recommend that the relevant authorities review how family tracing could be undertaken more effectively, as soon as possible after the arrival of an UASC in Sweden.

## Recommendations:

### Registration and maintenance of updated records

UNHCR would recommend that the relevant authorities review the procedures for registration and for maintenance of registers, to safeguard that all personal information and contact details of UASC, as well as their legal guardians, are updated. UNHCR notes in this regard that improving the communication between the relevant authorities could assist with timely amendments to registries, as well as facilitate for the relevant authorities to adopt a holistic approach to UASC's protection needs.

# Recommendation:

## Access to competent legal guardian

UNHCR would recommend that the relevant authorities and actors ensure that legal guardians who are assigned to be responsible for UASC are competent and qualified for their role, by for example ensuring that legal guardians undergo relevant training programmes and by ensuring that legal guardians are regularly supervised by the responsible authority.

# Recommendations: Access to services

UNHCR would recommends that the relevant authorities and actors strengthen UASC's access to education and other services, including psychosocial support, in a timely and effective manner, and to ensure that the UASC benefit from a stable environment so that they are able to take advantage of the services provided.

# Recommendations:

## Access to child friendly information

UNHCR would recommend that the relevant authorities ensure that child-friendly information is made available to UASC through different channels. The responsible authorities should also strive to provide services where the UASC can ask individual questions and get correct answers from a reliable source.