

A Descriptive Study of the Influence of Information Campaigns and Counselling on the Knowledge, Attitudes and Intentions (KAIs) of Potential Migrants in Iraq

Survey Results
July 2022

Funded by the European Union
Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF)

Funded By

Implemented by



 **Bundesministerium
Inneres**

**ICMPD**
International Centre for
Migration Policy Development



Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	3
Executive Summary	4
I. Introduction.....	4
I.1. Iraq's Migration Profile.....	7
I.2. ICMPD's Migrant Resource Centre in Iraq.....	8
II. Research Study and Design	9
II.1. About this study.....	9
II.2. Research Methodology and Fieldwork	10
II.2.1. Sample target groups	10
II.2.2. Data Collection and Sampling.....	10
II.2.3. Limitations of this study.....	11
III. Results.....	11
III.1. Key characteristics of respondents.....	12
III.2. Information Channels/MRC Engagement	15
III.2.1. Information needs	15
III.2.2. MRC Engagement.....	16
III.3. Knowledge levels, perceptions and attitudes concerning migration	18
III.3.1. Risks during the journey abroad.....	18
III.3.2. Access to services abroad.....	21
III.3.3. Employment without a work visa	22
III.3.4. Attitudes and perceptions concerning emigration	23
III.3.5. Perceptions related to the riskiness of irregular migration	26
III.4. Intentions concerning migration	27
III. 4.1. Migration intent	27
III.4.2. Preparing for migration.....	29
III.4.3. Drivers underlying migration intentions.....	30
IV. Conclusion	31
References:.....	32
Annex 1: Survey Methodology.....	33
Survey instrument and fieldwork:.....	33
Data collection, cleaning and analysis:	34



Acknowledgements

This report was prepared by IRFAD. IRFAD administered the survey instrument, analysed resulting data and presented data findings used in the report. IRFAD's efforts were supplemented by administrative support from officials of the Migrant Resource Centre in Iraq, including Hussein Al-Barazanje, Farah Mahmood and Atyaf Mehzir. The report benefitted from the review of ICMPD staff members, Audrey Misquith, Dr Jacqueline Berman and Isabelle Wolfsgruber.

For more information, please contact:

Audrey Misquith (MEL Officer, Strategy, Knowledge, Evaluation and Impact)

Dr Jacqueline Berman (Head, Strategy, Knowledge, Evaluation and Impact)

Isabelle Wolfsgruber (Project Coordinator, IKAM)

International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)

Gonzagagasse 1, 5th floor

1010 Vienna, Austria

Tel: +43 1 504 46 77 2327

Email: skei@icmpd.org

ICMPD 2022. All rights reserved. This project was funded by the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior and the European Union (AMIF) and implemented by the ICMPD. The views expressed in the publication are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the ICMPD, the European Union or the Federal Ministry of the Interior.



Executive Summary

Background. The decision to migrate out of one's country is influenced by a confluence of factors, both push and pull, but also by available information (or lack thereof) on when, how and where to migrate (Dao et al., 2018; Begović et al., 2020; Hiskey et al., 2014). In Iraq, a country with two million emigrants, official information on migration is hard to locate (IOM, 2020). Iraq continues to face political and economic instability, which can be key factors driving emigration. At the same time, there appears to be a lack of coherent and consistent information available to potential migrants about safe, legal pathways to emigration (IRFAD, 2020). To inform their decision-making, most potential migrants must rely on their informal networks of family and friends at home and abroad for information on options for emigration.

It is in this environment that Iraqis might undertake hazardous, irregular migration journeys often towards Europe, often arriving irregularly and without the requisite legal documents. This type of journey can expose migrants to a diversity of risks, including but not limited to, theft, extortion, smuggling and human trafficking (Galos et al., 2017; UNHCR, 2018). Irregular migration can also involve a substantial loss of resources, for example, paying considerable sums to actors working in illegal networks to facilitate irregular movement across borders. Irregular movement also exposes migrants to unstable conditions upon arrival where their irregular status can preclude access to regular residency and work, expose them to further threats and exploitation, and in some cases driving their return to Iraq and further adding to the high costs of migration (Ghosh, 2010).

Migrant Resource Centre, Iraq. ICMPD's 'Information measures and capacity building on asylum, legal and irregular migration in Afghanistan, Iraq and the Western Balkans (IKAM)' project aims to supply accurate information on migration to Iraqis interested in moving and working abroad. To deliver this information, ICMPD set up a Migrant Resource Centre (MRC) in Baghdad in early 2020. MRC Iraq has provided a series of information campaigns, group informational sessions and one-on-one counselling to potential migrants through a myriad of strategic channels across Iraq.¹ Through these formats, MRC Iraq staff have offered reliable, relevant information to potential migrants on such key topics as (1) the dangers and consequences of irregular migration, (2) pathways and channels for legal migration, and (3) legal, social and economic realities of migrant life in Europe including migrant rights and finding legal employment. This information was aimed at influencing potential migrants' attitudes, intentions and ultimately, behaviors related to migration and movement. In early 2022, ICMPD contracted IRFAD, a local research firm in Iraq, to assess the potential influences of IKAM's information campaigns and services on the knowledge, attitudes and intentions (KAIs) of potential migrants. This study aimed to explore if and how IKAM's information campaigns and services can inform migrants' decisions about their migration pathways. The study surveyed 262 potential migrants who had attended events organised by the MRC and its partners or sought in-person, hotline or social media-based counselling from the MRC.

¹ MRC Iraq delivered the information campaigns via a range of channels such as TV, SMS, social media and community outreach events and trusted, credible messengers to target both prospective migrants and their key influencers (for example, family members and community elders).



Results. Analysis of study data provided descriptive evidence in three key areas: (1) Information needs, reach and channels, (2) MRC influence on their knowledge and attitudes, and (3) MRC influence on their intentions and plans to emigrate.

Potential Migrant Information Needs, Reach and Channels. Study data indicated that migrants had clear informational needs that differed by demographic group.

- **Information needs.** Most of the sample group had either sought information about living or working abroad in the past (56 per cent) or plans to do so in the future (37 per cent).
- **Target groups.** A younger, working age population (18-35 years of age) made up the largest group (79 per cent) seeking information on migration. Over two thirds of this group (68 per cent) were male.
- **Channels.** *Popular channels for accessing information on migration included the MRC (especially its social media channels and community outreach sessions), other social media sources, and networks of family and friends.* Older youth (18-25 years of age) used or preferred to use internet resources (distinct from social media) or relied on family and friends in-country and abroad.
- Of those contacting the MRC for counselling services via Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp, the majority (67 per cent) were aged 18-25 years. *Men were more likely to use WhatsApp, social media and the MRC hotline while women were more likely to use walk-in services.*

Knowledge and Attitudes. *Early study data indicate that potential migrants experienced changes in their levels of awareness, knowledge and attitudes towards irregular and safe, legal migration in the period following contact with the MRC Iraq.* This does not suggest that the initiative caused these changes but rather that the changes occurred after contact with MRC-provided information. This suggests that MRC-provided information appears to have contributed to these key changes in awareness, knowledge and attitudes.

Specific changes observed in the sub-sample that attended MRC events included:

- A **102 per cent increase in awareness** of the potential risks of a journey abroad
- A **34 per cent increase in knowledge** about the lack of basic services such as healthcare or housing for migrants without legal documentation
- A **62 per cent decrease** in those willing to accept an employment offer tied to a visit visa (instead of a work visa).

Study respondents also demonstrated changes in attitudes in relation to (1) the risks associated with migrating without legal paperwork; (2) the ease of travelling to and finding work in Europe; and (3) the costs of migrating with the help of agents. For example, majority of respondents in the overall sample either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statements, 'It is easy to go/travel to Europe'; 'It is easy to



find work in Europe’; and *‘Migrating with the help of an agent is cheaper than migrating through other means’*. The data show that the proportion of respondents disagreeing with the above statements increased after MRC events.

Migration Intentions: The primary plan of potential migrants is, of course, to emigrate. ***Two-thirds of the study sample indicated a desire to emigrate from Iraq.*** Within this group, younger respondents, male respondents and respondents from the Kurdistan region of Iraq (KRI) were more likely to indicate a desire to emigrate.

Following an MRC event, some 76 per cent reported a decrease in their desire to move by “a fair amount” while another 23 per cent reported a decrease of “a little bit.” Among those that planned to migrate ‘a lot’, there was no change to this desire after the MRC event.

Separate from the ‘desire’ to migrate is the intention to migrate. ***About one quarter (24 per cent) of the full sample indicated that they will move out of Iraq in the next two years.*** This also group reported taking preliminary steps towards preparing for emigration, including talking to family and friends and searching for information online. Of those intending to move, some 60 per cent indicated ‘finding work abroad’ as the primary reason they planned to emigrate. In this group, ***younger, male respondents (26-35 years of age) and those from the KRI region were more likely to report their intention to emigrate.***

Conclusion

The results of this study provide initial descriptive evidence about which channels and messages resonate with the MRC’s target audiences, with social media and the MRC’s community outreach sessions appearing particularly promising. By contrast, potential migrants’ preferred information and channels tended to vary more widely, as did how they received and interpreted information on migration. These data provide MRC Iraq staff with information they can use to tailor their campaigns and messages, increase their reach and resonance and promote safe, orderly and regular migration.



I. Introduction

1.1. Iraq's Migration Profile

Since 2003, Iraq has witnessed large-scale migration both within its borders and outside. The [International Organization for Migration \(IOM\)'s migration data portal](#) estimates that 2 million Iraqis emigrated as of mid-year 2020, representing nearly 5 per cent of Iraq's population. According to the [Global Report on Internal Displacement \(GRID\)](#), 68,200 Iraqis were internally displaced due to conflicts and disasters in 2020. For those that migrate internationally, including refugees, asylum seekers, and economic migrants looking for better income-earning prospects, Europe has been a significant destination since 2014. According to the European Commission's 2017 Migration Profile for Iraq, 27.3 per cent of people migrating out of Iraq were headed to the European Union (EU) (EC Iraq Migration Profile, 2017).

Emigration from Iraq has largely been driven by the political and security situation in the country. While this is a push factor, Iraqis are also drawn to higher-earning prospects as well as better social support systems abroad. Others seek to reunite with their family and friends (IRFAD, 2020). The decision to emigrate therefore, is influenced by a confluence of push and pull factors, as well as gathering of information related to when, where and how to migrate (Dao et al., 2018; Begović et al., 2020; Hiskey et al., 2014).

Access to accurate and reliable information on emigration in Iraq however, is not without difficulties. Due to the unpredictable nature of Iraq's political climate as well as gaps in infrastructure, there appears to be no coherent and consistent information on emigration available for potential migrants in general, including options for safe migration and the dangers and consequences of undertaking irregular migration (IRFAD, 2020). Official sources are especially limited in providing information and outreach to Iraqis seeking support on migration. Most migrants therefore, rely on their informal networks composed of family and friends abroad as well as at home for information on emigration (IRFAD, 2020).

Given this, many Iraqis undertake hazardous journeys and attempt to arrive in Europe irregularly, that is without the requisite documents. According to a report commissioned by the UK government, 91,769 Iraqis migrated to Europe irregularly in 2015, a drastic jump from the 1,023 Iraqis that migrated to Europe irregularly the previous year². In 2021, a considerable number of Iraqis- 7,500-8,000 from the Kurdistan region of Iraq alone- lured by the possibility of finding work or settlement in Europe, attempted to migrate irregularly into Europe via the Belarus border³.

The lack of adequate and accurate information on emigration might impede informed decision-making, exposing migrants to a diversity of risks, including but not limited to theft/extortion, migrant smuggling and human trafficking (Galos et al., 2017; Mixed Migration Centre, 2018; UNHCR, 2018). It also results in a substantial loss of time and resources. For example, irregular migrants may pay a considerable sum of money in illegal costs. Further, due to their irregular status, these migrants may not be able to continue staying on in destination countries, eventually having to return to Iraq, thus further adding to the high costs of migration (Ghosh, 2010).

² REACH 2017. Iraqi migration to Europe in 2016: Profiles, Drivers and Return. UK Aid

³ Pulkinnen, Viola 2021. Notes from a country of origin: Iraq's position in the EU-Belarus Border Crisis'. Institute for Security and Development Policy.



1.2. ICMPD's Migrant Resource Centre in Iraq

ICMPD's 'Information measures and capacity building on asylum, legal and irregular migration in Afghanistan, Iraq and the Western Balkans (IKAM)' project was conceived as a response to the lack of adequate and accurate information on migration in Iraq. ICMPD set up a Migrant Resource Centre (MRC) in Baghdad in early 2020 and through a series of public and social media information campaigns as well as group sessions and one-on-one counselling, the MRC aimed to educate potential migrants in Iraq about the dangers and consequences of irregular migration, the pathways and channels for legal migration and on the legal, social and economic realities of migrant life in Europe. These campaigns used a range of channels such as TV, SMS, social media and community outreach events and trusted, credible messengers to target both prospective migrants and their key influencers (for example, community elders, family members etc.) to provide information on these topics. This information is aimed, in turn, at influencing potential migrants' attitudes, intentions and ultimately, behaviours related to migration and movement.

The campaigns also conveyed information regarding the MRC hotline and other contact information to facilitate access to additional information and resources for potential migrants. In addition, the broader IKAM project aimed to build the capacities of diasporic communities and local stakeholders including government officials, civil society organizations and other community members to disseminate accurate information and participate in community activities to increase accurate information available about the dangers of irregular migration and safe, legal pathways for migration from Iraq.



II. Research Study and Design

II.1. *About this study*

As noted, the objective of the MRC in Iraq via the IKAM project was to promote safe migration behaviours among potential migrants by raising awareness on the risks of irregular migration and hazardous journeys, as well as options for safe, legal migration. Through adequate and accurate information on these key topics, the MRC in Iraq intended (and as long as it continues, intends) to influence the knowledge, attitudes and intentions (KAIs) of potential migrants regarding migration. According to behavioural theories, most notably the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), intentions to perform behaviours are influenced by attitudes towards the behaviour in question as well as a host of other factors such as subjective norms and perceived behavioural control⁴. As such, gathering data on KAIs can allow ICMPD to understand if and how its information campaigns and services are helping potential migrants to make informed choices about irregular and safe migration that ultimately, influence their behaviours⁵.

To assess the influence of the information campaigns and services provided, ICMPD contracted IRFAD, a local research firm in Iraq, to conduct a descriptive study of the effects of MRC campaigns on the knowledge, attitudes, and intentions (KAIs) of potential migrants. This included addressing the following research questions:

Reach:

- Which channels have reached which target groups? (disaggregated by channels and target groups)
- Which messages have reached which target groups? (disaggregated by messages and target groups)

Behaviors Following Reach:

- Which target groups have engaged with the MRCs further?
- Which target groups have attended in-person, group MRC information sessions?
- Which target groups have sought direct one-on-one counseling?

Knowledge, Attitudes and Intentions:

- Have MRC clients' knowledge about irregular migration changed?
- Have MRC clients' attitudes towards irregular migration changed?
- Have MRC clients' intentions to engage in irregular migration changed?
 - If so, for which target groups?
 - If so, in what ways?
 - If so, by how much?
- Have MRC clients' knowledge about legal migration changed?
- Have MRC clients' attitudes about legal migration changed?
- Have MRC clients' intentions to engage in legal migration changed?
 - If so, for which target groups?
 - If so, in what ways?
 - If so, by how much?

⁴ The Theory of Planned Behaviour, propounded by Azjen in 1985 is supported by empirical evidence. The theory states that intentions to perform behaviors of different kinds can be predicted with high accuracy from attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control; and these intentions, together with perceptions of behavioral control, account for considerable variance in actual behavior.



II.2. Research Methodology and Fieldwork

II.2.1. Sample target groups

The study sought to answer the research questions noted above by collecting KAI data from three key target groups: (1) potential migrants attending events organised by the MRC and its partners, (2) potential migrants who attended events but for whom there are only post-event responses, and (3) potential migrants that sought personal counselling from the MRC via the MRC hotline, WhatsApp, social media and walk-in services.

Table 1 describes the sample group composition, size, and data collection schedule.

Table 1: Sample groups, size, and data collection schedule

Target group	Sampling method	Type of data	Data collection schedule	Sample size	# of interviews
Potential migrants attending group events	Purposive (based on IKAM's group event schedule)	KAI pre and post	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before event • After event 	64	128
		KAI pre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before event only 	22	22
		KAI post	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After event only 	96	96
Potential migrants seeking counselling via MRC hotline, WhatsApp and walk-in services	All counselled clients that consented to being contacted	KAI post	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After counselling 	80	80
Total				262	326

Data was collected between 12 April and 2 May 2022.

II.2.2. Data Collection and Sampling

Potential migrants attending MRC partner events: The MRC organised events in association with two local NGOs in Iraq: CDO and Tajdid. These events were held in Basra, Diyala, Mosul, Baghdad, Sulaimaniyah and Erbil. IRFAD, the research firm contracted for this study, covered a total of 4 events, interviewing 64 potential migrants before and after these events, thus completing a total of 128 interviews. In addition, 22 attendees were interviewed pre-event only whereas 96 attendees were interviewed post-event only. The 22 pre-event attendees did not consent to being interviewed post-event. As such, no post-event responses are available for this group. In relation to the 96 post-event only responses, the corresponding events were conducted prior to 12 April when IRFAD, for various reasons, could not access an adequate number of attendees before events.

Of the migrants that attended MRC events, there are 24 Kurdish-speaking respondents from the Kurdistan region of Iraq (KRI) and 40 Arabic speakers from Central/Southern Iraq. All pre-event interviews were conducted in person and all post-event interviews were conducted by phone.

The two contracted NGOs provided IRFAD with a full event schedule. A two-stage purposive sampling procedure was followed, whereby IRFAD purposively selected 4 events - 2 conducted by CDO in Sulaymaniyah and 1 each conducted by Tajdid in Basra and Diyala. Respondents were then chosen



randomly for in-person interviews at the events. Those that consented to be interviewed further were interviewed post-event by phone 2-4 days later.

Here, it is important to highlight that for various logistical reasons, IRFAD could not sample events prior to 12 April. However, IRFAD created a pool of attendees who attended events that occurred before 12 April and randomly selected 96 attendees to be interviewed post-event by phone. Of those 96 respondents, 60 attendees attended the events conducted by Tajdid held in Central/Southern Iraq and 36 attendees attended events conducted by CDO in the KRI region.

Potential migrants seeking counselling from the MRC: The MRC Iraq has an established hotline as well as other channels such as WhatsApp, social media, and walk-in services through which potential migrants can seek counselling services and information concerning migration in general. The MRC shared a list of counselled clients with IRFAD every fortnight between Feb 2022 and April 2022. These clients were filtered on the basis of (1) their consent to be interviewed and (2) type of migration enquiry. Eighty counselled clients were interviewed by IRFAD via phone.

Other related information on the survey methodology is reported in Annex 1.

II.2.3. Limitations of this study

As with any descriptive study, there are several limitations to the findings. This study is descriptive and therefore, does not make causal claims. Specifically, the sampling method used is neither random nor representative, and as such, the results of this study are not generalisable to all Iraqi potential migrants. The sampling method did not include the construction of a control group, as such, the results cannot be attributed to MRC interventions. However, the information collected on KAIs is useful for the MRC Iraq to examine which messages and channels might be resonating with its target audiences, and whether and how their KAIs concerning irregular and safe, legal migration might be influenced.

In addition to methodological limitations, there were challenges with data collection, especially with regard to collecting both pre and post response data from study participants. While IRFAD had access to information concerning the events, details about participants such as their names and contact information were largely unknown. As such, researchers could not recruit participants for the study beforehand. Second, the study originally included time and resources for follow-up surveys 1-2 months after the first round of data collection. Due to logistical challenges, and IKAM's short project duration, the research team was unable to collect any follow-up data.

III. Results

This section describes findings related to (1) the key characteristics of respondents seeking information on migration (2) the information channels used by respondents, (3) their level of engagement with the MRC Iraq, (4) their knowledge levels, perceptions and attitudes concerning irregular migration, (4) their knowledge levels, perceptions and attitudes regarding safe, legal migration, and (5) intentions concerning emigration.

Results for information channels and level of engagement with the MRC are presented for the full sample. Results for knowledge levels, perceptions, attitudes and intentions concerning irregular and regular migration are presented for three sample groups:

- Respondents who attended MRC partner-led events and for whom there are both pre-event and post-event matched responses,



- Respondents who attended events but for whom there are only post-event responses, and
- Respondents that sought personal counselling from the MRC via the MRC hotline, WhatsApp, social media and walk-in services.

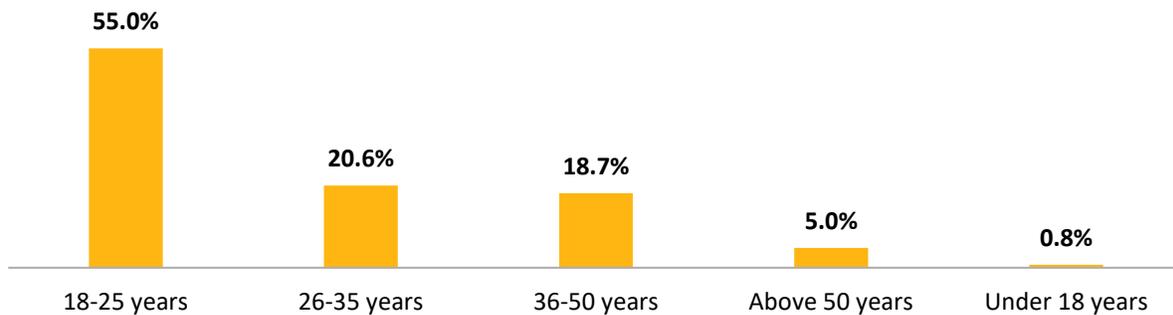
III.1. Key characteristics of respondents

A key research question in this study was related to examining the demographic characteristics of potential migrants seeking information on migration. Key characteristics analysed include age, gender, marital status, educational qualifications, employment profile, previous migration history and migration contacts.

Age profile of respondents:

In the sample of respondents interviewed, 76 per cent was 35 years or younger, followed by 19 per cent that was aged between 36 and 50 years (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Age profile of Respondents (N=262)



Respondents under 18 years and over 50 years constituted a minority in the sample.

Gender and Marital Status

In terms of gender composition, 59 per cent of the sample was male and 41 per cent was female (Figure 2). In terms of marital status, majority of the sample – 65 per cent- was single, followed by 31 per cent who are married (Figure 3).

Figure 2: Gender of Respondents (N=262)

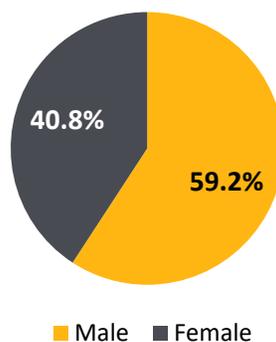
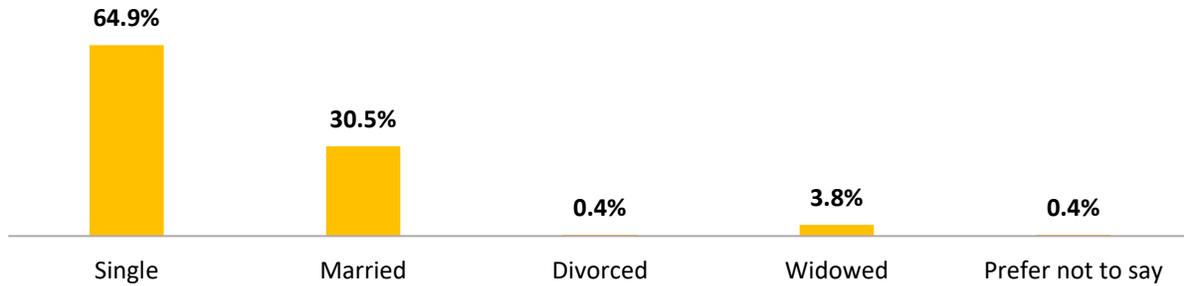




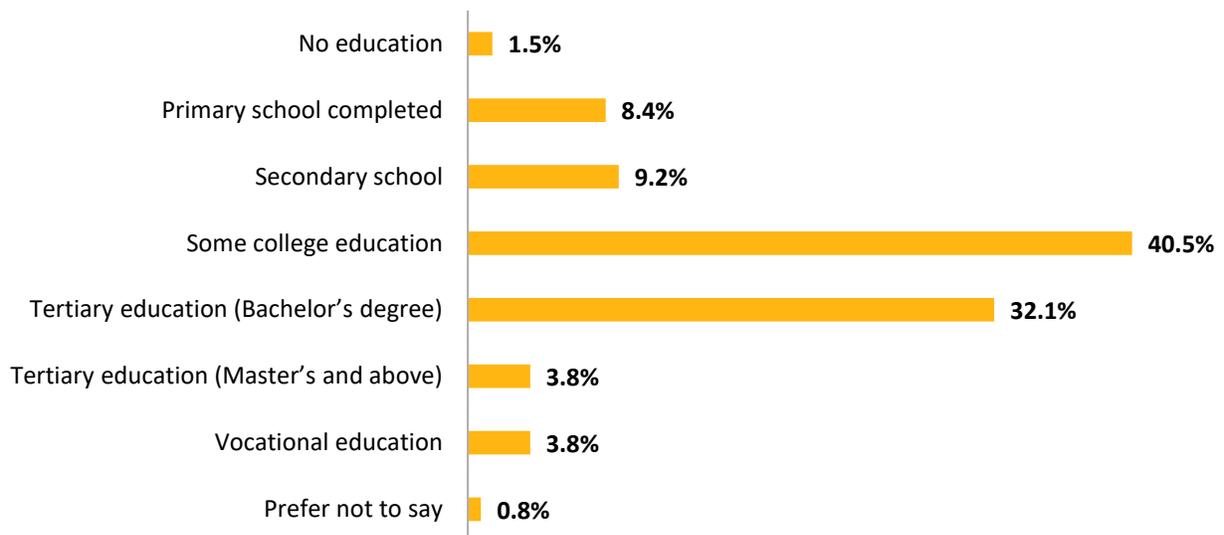
Figure 3: Marital Status of Respondents (N=262)



Education of Respondents

The education status of respondents in the sample was varied (Figure 4). The majority- 41 per cent- have had some college education, followed by 32 per cent who had a Bachelor’s degree. Less than one tenth of the sample has each completed primary school and secondary school education.

Figure 4: Education Level of Respondents (N=262)



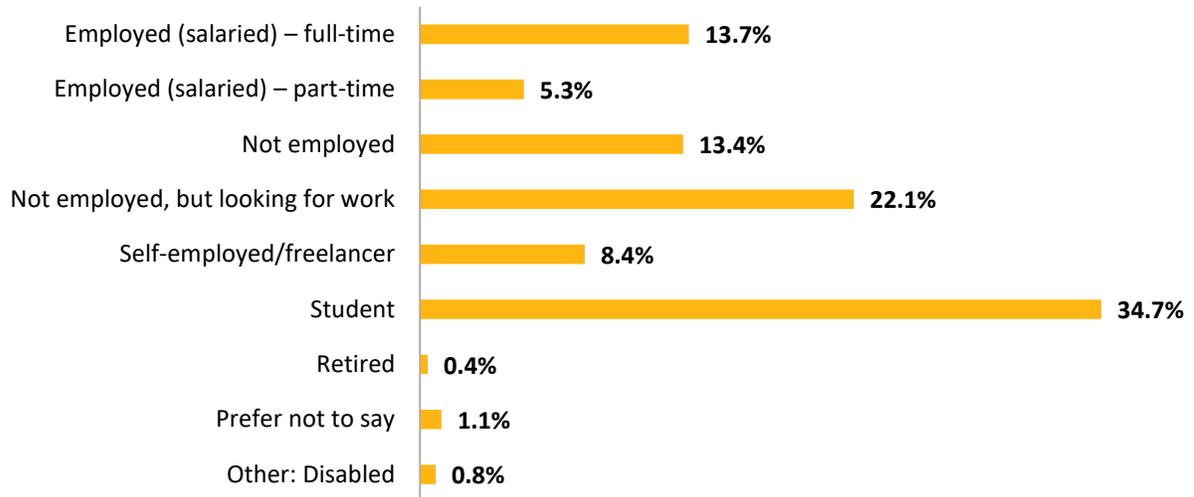
Further, approximately, 4 per cent of the sample has each completed tertiary education and some kind of vocational education.

Employment Status

The employment profile of the sample was somewhat mixed (Figure 5). A little over a third of the sample consisted of students and another 36 per cent comprised unemployed people, including those unemployed but looking for work.



Figure 5: Employment Status of Respondents (N=262)



Nineteen per cent of the sample was employed either full-time or part-time in a salaried job and some 8 per cent was self-employed.

Migration history and contacts

The survey contained questions regarding respondents’ previous migration history as well as their close connections abroad. Slightly over three-fourths of the sample respondents indicated that they had not lived in a country other than their own for more than three months. This suggests that most of the sample was made up of potential first-time migrants (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Have you ever lived in a country other than your own for more than 3 months? (N=262)

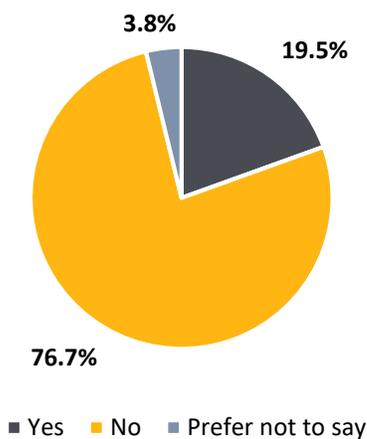
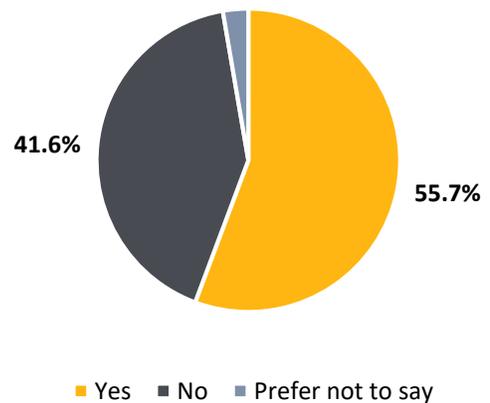


Figure 7: Do you have family members or close friends currently living in a country other than their own? (N=262)



The majority (approximately 56 per cent) of the sample had family and close friends living abroad, while some 42 per cent did not (Figure 7).



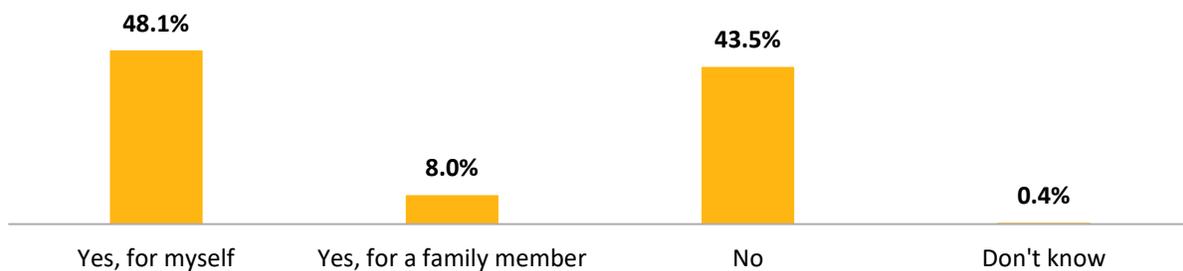
III.2. Information Channels/MRC Engagement

The study sought to gather data on the information needs of respondents, including the various channels they used or preferred to use in relation to information about emigration. Respondents were also asked about their level of engagement with the MRC, if at all.

III.2.1. Information needs

Respondents were asked about whether they had sought or plan to seek information on living, studying, or working abroad (Figure 8). Approximately **48 per cent of all respondents** indicated that **they sought information for themselves**, whereas 8 per cent stated that they had done so for a family member. Another 44 per cent indicated that had not sought any information in the past. This group was also asked if they planned to seek information in the future, of which 31 per cent indicated that they plan to do so for themselves, 6 per cent stated that they plan to do so for a family member, and 59 per cent indicated that they do not intend to seek any further information.

Figure 8: In the past 12 months, have you sought information about living/working/studying in another country (other than your own)? (N=262)



Of the group that sought information in the past for themselves or for family members, **the majority (79 per cent) were 18-35 years old**. Sixty-eight per cent of this group were male, indicating a wide gender difference in those seeking information related to migration.

Respondents were surveyed about the **channels they used to access information about living, working, or studying abroad**. The results show that for the group that either sought information in the past or plans to in the future, **the Migrant Resource Centre (MRC) is a popular source of information (17 per cent), followed by social media (17 per cent) and the Internet (16 per cent)**. Here, the majority (22 per cent) chose not to answer this question.

Age and gender differences in channel preferences were noticed. While the age breakdown in relation to channel preferences mimics the age spread in the sample, a **high proportion of those in the age range of 18-25 years either used or preferred to use the Internet (distinct from social media) and/or rely on family and friends in country and abroad**. A higher proportion of this group also reached out to the MRC compared to others in the sample (Table 2).



Table 2: Age breakdown vis-à-vis channel preferences among the group that sought information in the past and/or plans to seek information in the future (N=191)

<i>Channel</i>	<i>Age range: 18-25 years</i>	<i>Age range: 26-35 years</i>	<i>Age range: 36-50 years</i>
<i>Migrant Resource Centre</i>	45%	36%	15%
<i>Social Media</i>	34%	31%	28%
<i>Internet (news, government sites etc.,)</i>	80%	17%	3%
<i>Family and friends abroad</i>	59%	29%	12%
<i>Family and friends in country</i>	71%	21%	7%

In terms of gender, men were more likely to have sought information or planned to seek information in the future relative to women (Table 3). A higher proportion of men preferred MRCs and family and friends abroad and in country compared to women. This finding is in contrast to the gender differences observed in the use of social media and the Internet, whereby the gender breakdown was closer to the gender spread in the sample.

Table 3: Gender breakdown vis-à-vis channel preferences among the group that sought information in the past and/or plans to seek information in the future (N=191)

<i>Channel</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
<i>Migrant Resource Centre</i>	70%	30%
<i>Social Media</i>	59%	41%
<i>Internet (news, government sites etc.,)</i>	60%	40%
<i>Family and friends abroad</i>	65%	35%
<i>Family and friends in country</i>	71%	29%

III.2.2. MRC Engagement

The survey asked respondents about whether they were aware of the MRC, and if so, by what means. The majority (85 per cent) indicated that they had heard about the MRC. Among this group, **most respondents (48 per cent) stated that they had heard about the MRC via social media, followed by 26 per cent who had heard about the MRC through community outreach sessions**, and 7 per cent via family and friends within Iraq (Figure 10). Further, 52 per cent in this group were aged 18-25 years and 58 per cent were male.

Figure 9: Have you heard about the Migrant Resource Centre Iraq? (N=262)

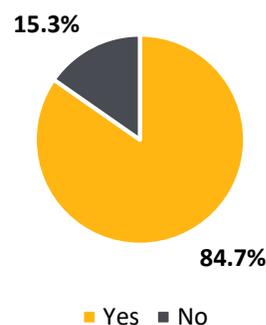
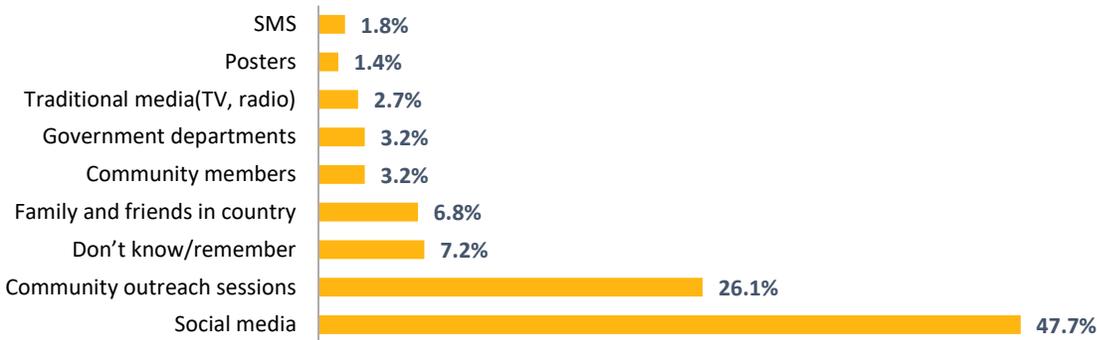


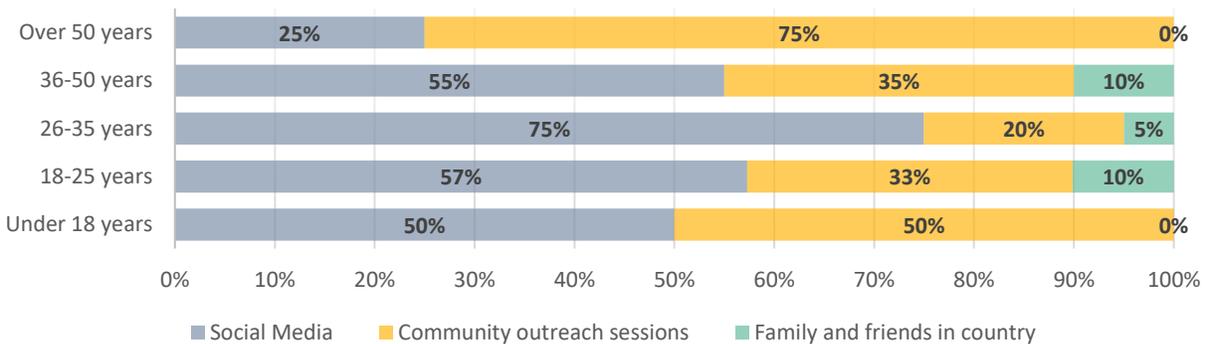


Figure 10: How did you hear about the Migrant Resource Centre Iraq? (N=262)



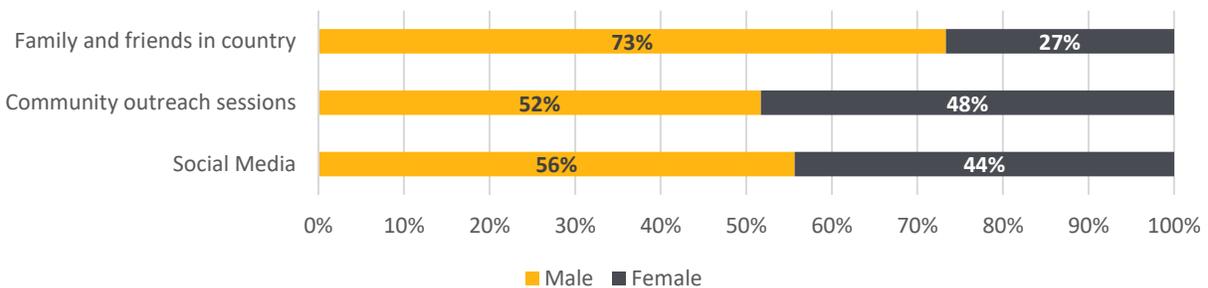
Age and gender differences were noticed among the group of respondents who had heard about the MRC via social media, community outreach sessions and family and friends in country. **A high proportion of those aged 26-35 years had heard about the MRC via social media (75 per cent)**. In this age group, a smaller proportion had heard about the MRC via community outreach sessions relative to other age groups (Figure 11).

Figure 11: Age breakdown for top 3 channels (N=179)



In terms of gender, of those that had heard about the MRC via family and friends, the majority was male. Among those that had heard about the MRC via social media and community outreach sessions, the proportion of male and female respondents is nearly equivalent to the gender breakdown in the sample (Figure 12).

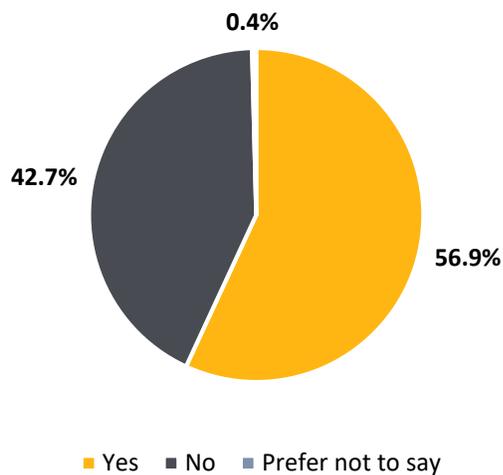
Figure 12: Gender breakdown for top 3 channels (N=179)





Respondents were asked about whether they had contacted the MRC over the past six months. The majority (57 per cent) indicated that they had contacted the MRC for counselling or to seek information. Majority of those that had contacted the MRC were aged 18-25 years (52 per cent), followed by those aged 26-35 years (25 per cent). Sixty-four percent of this group is male compared to 36 per cent female.

Figure 13: During the last 6 months, have you contacted the Migrant Resource Centre Iraq? (N=262)



Of those that contacted the MRC, the majority used WhatsApp (58 per cent), followed by social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram (14 per cent) and the MRC hotline (11 per cent). Here too, some age and gender differences were noticed. For example, of those that reached out to the MRC via social media (Facebook, Instagram), the majority (67 per cent) were aged 18-25 years. Among those that reached out via WhatsApp, 52 per cent were aged 18-25 years followed by 21 per cent who were aged 26-35 years and 19 per cent who were aged 36-50 years. In terms of gender, the majority of callers who reached out via WhatsApp (63 per cent), social media (71 per cent) and the MRC hotline (69 per cent) were male. **A higher proportion of female respondents used walk-in services relative to men (67 per cent female compared to 33 per cent male).**

III.3. Knowledge levels, perceptions and attitudes concerning migration

A key objective of the KAI survey was to test the knowledge levels, perceptions, and attitudes of potential migrants concerning irregular and legal migration. Findings are separated by three sample groups: (1) a 'matched' sample of those that attended MRC events and for whom there are both pre and post-event responses, (2) those that attended events but for whom there are only post-event responses, and (3) those that contacted the MRC for counselling/personalised services and for whom there are only post-counselling data.

III.3.1. Risks during the journey abroad

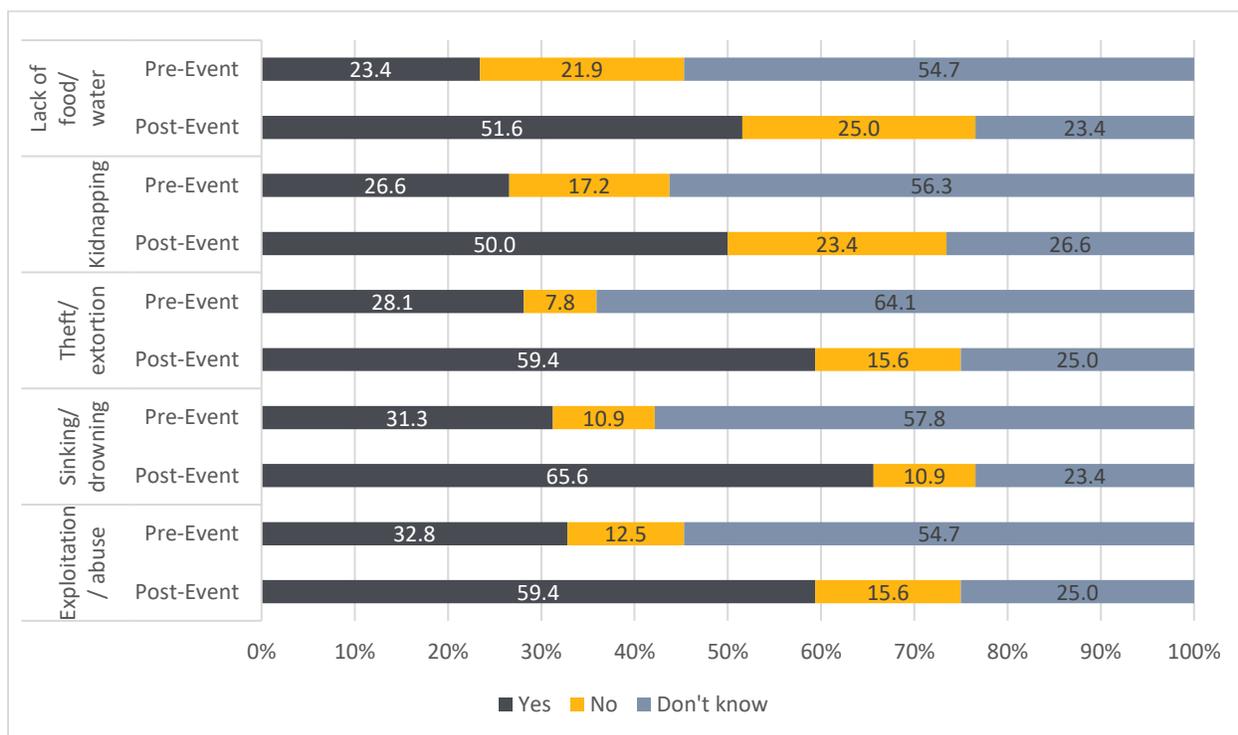
One key message that the MRC Iraq sought to disseminate via its information campaigns focused on the risks potential migrants might encounter if they attempt to migrate abroad without legal permission. These included, among others, theft and extortion, exploitation and abuse, lack of food and water, kidnapping, and sinking/drowning (when attempting to cross irregularly by sea). For the first sample group, the results showed an overall increase in knowledge levels concerning the likelihood of these risks occurring during an emigration journey (Figure 14).

On average, less than a third of respondents demonstrated awareness of the risks related to emigration prior to attending a MRC event. After the MRC event, more than half of the sample were aware of the occurrence of these risks, indicating an average increase of 102 per cent across all risks. Also, while more than half the sample group indicated that they 'did not know' about the likelihood of these risks occurring before the event, approximately a quarter indicated that they 'did not know' if these risks were likely to happen after the event. **These data appear to suggest, on average, that participants who had**



no prior knowledge of risks related to emigrating abroad demonstrated increases in this knowledge after attending a MRC event.

Figure 14: According to what you know, what are some of the risks that are likely to happen during your journey abroad? (Sample group 1; N=64)



There were some age and gender-specific differences in the perception of these risks before and after events. Those aged 18-25 years were more likely to say ‘yes’ to the occurrence of risks before an event relative to other age groups. **Those in the age range of 26-35 years demonstrated the highest knowledge differences among all categories ‘yes’, ‘no’ and ‘don’t know’ and across all risks before and after events.** Older respondents i.e., those in the age range of 36-50 years demonstrated the lowest differences in the ‘don’t know’ option before and after events (Table 4).

Table 4: According to what you know, what are some of the risks that are likely to happen during your journey abroad? By age (Sample group 1; N=64)

Risk	Occurrence of risks	18-25 years			26-35 years			36-50 years		
		Pre	Post	Diff	Pre	Post	Diff	Pre	Post	Diff
LACK OF FOOD/WATER	Yes	32%	73%	128%	9%	45%	400%	11%	24%	118%
	No	18%	13%	-28%	18%	45%	150%	39%	29%	-26%
	Don't know	50%	13%	-74%	73%	9%	-88%	50%	47%	-6%
KIDNAPPING	Yes	39%	60%	54%	9%	55%	511%	28%	29%	4%
	No	14%	20%	43%	27%	36%	33%	17%	24%	41%
	Don't know	46%	20%	-57%	64%	9%	-86%	56%	47%	-16%

<i>THEFT/ EXTORTION</i>	Yes	50%	73%	46%	9%	55%	511%	17%	41%	141%
	No	0%	10%		9%	36%	300%	17%	12%	-29%
	Don't know	50%	17%	-66%	82%	9%	-89%	67%	47%	-30%
<i>SINKING/ DROWNING</i>	Yes	43%	77%	79%	36%	55%	53%	17%	53%	212%
	No	7%	10%	43%	9%	36%	300%	17%	0%	-100%
	Don't know	50%	13%	-74%	55%	9%	-84%	67%	47%	-30%
<i>EXPLOITATION/ ABUSE</i>	Yes	57%	80%	40%	18%	55%	206%	17%	35%	106%
	No	7%	3%	-57%	9%	36%	300%	22%	18%	-18%
	Don't know	36%	17%	-53%	73%	9%	-88%	61%	47%	-23%

In terms of gender, a higher proportion of female respondents chose the 'don't know' option before an event relative to men, suggesting low awareness levels among women compared to men in the sample. **After an event, a higher proportion of female respondents, on average, indicated that a risk was likely to occur compared to male respondents.**

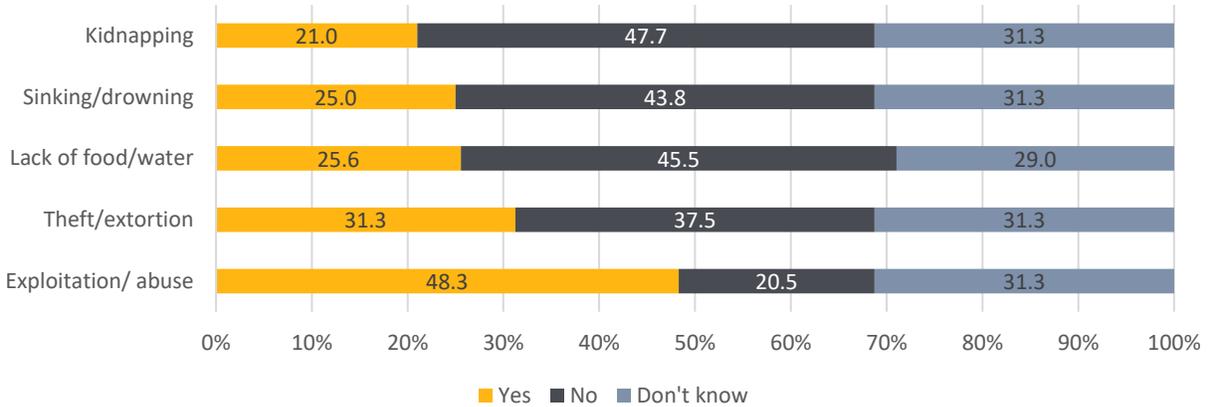
Table 5: According to what you know, what are some of the risks that are likely to happen during your journey abroad? By gender (Sample group 1; N=64)

<i>Risk</i>	<i>Occurrence of risks</i>	<i>Male</i>			<i>Female</i>		
		<i>Pre</i>	<i>Post</i>	<i>Diff</i>	<i>Pre</i>	<i>Post</i>	<i>Diff</i>
<i>LACK OF FOOD/WATER</i>	Yes	27%	60%	125%	17%	33%	92%
	No	32%	23%	-27%	4%	29%	557%
	Don't know	41%	16%	-61%	78%	38%	-51%
<i>KIDNAPPING</i>	Yes	32%	53%	69%	17%	43%	146%
	No	24%	26%	5%	4%	19%	338%
	Don't know	44%	21%	-52%	78%	38%	-51%
<i>THEFT/EXTORTION</i>	Yes	37%	60%	65%	13%	57%	338%
	No	10%	21%	115%	4%	5%	10%
	Don't know	54%	19%	-65%	83%	38%	-54%
<i>SINKING/DROWNING</i>	Yes	37%	67%	84%	22%	62%	185%
	No	15%	16%	11%	4%	0%	-100%
	Don't know	49%	16%	-67%	74%	38%	-48%
<i>EXPLOITATION/ ABUSE</i>	Yes	37%	65%	78%	26%	48%	83%
	No	17%	16%	-5%	4%	14%	229%
	Don't know	46%	19%	-60%	70%	38%	-45%

Among the sample of post-event and post-counselled respondents, on average, **a quarter of respondents indicated that the said risks were likely to occur** except for the risk, 'exploitation or abuse'. Nearly half of the respondents reported that the risk, 'exploitation or abuse' was likely to occur on their journeys abroad (Figure 15).



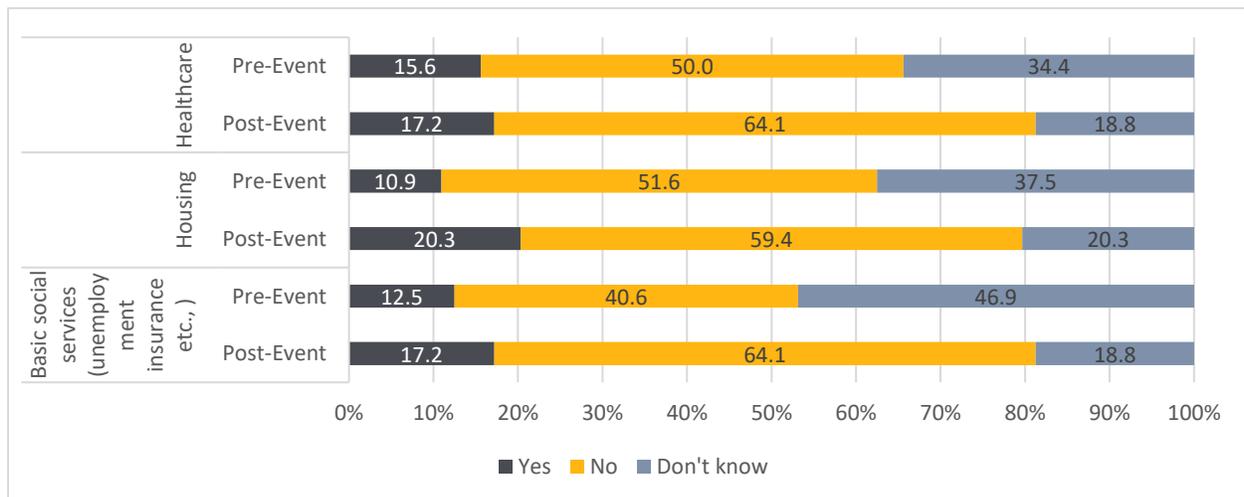
Figure 15: According to what you know, what are some of the risks that are likely to happen during your journey abroad? (Sample group 2; N=176)



III.3.2. Access to services abroad

Another key message in the MRC Iraq’s campaigns focused on life as a migrant abroad and the rights and services a migrant may have access to in destination countries, particularly if emigration occurred without legal permission. The MRC hypothesised that migrants may be idealising their lives abroad, expecting to have access to better social services regardless of their migration status (i.e., irregular or legal). The survey included a question to test this hypothesis i.e., whether respondents expected to have access to services such as healthcare and housing in destination countries if emigration occurred without the requisite legal paperwork. **In the first sample group, there was an average increase of 34 per cent in the proportion of respondents who indicated that a particular service was not accessible to them before and after the event** (Figure 16). An average decrease was observed in those choosing the ‘don’t know’ option.

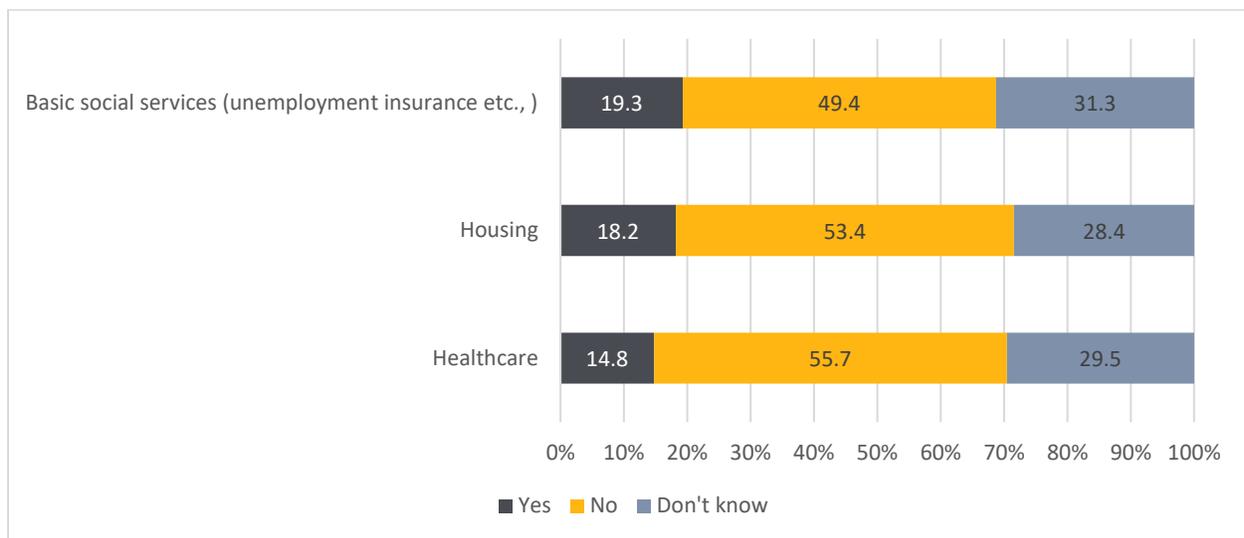
Figure 16: Do you think migrants travelling without legal documents have access to healthcare, housing and basic social services in the destination country? (Sample group 1; N=64)





In the sample of post-event and post-counselled respondents, more than half the sample, on average, indicated that healthcare, housing and other social services were not available for migrants if emigration occurred without the requisite legal paperwork (Figure 17).

Figure 17: Do you think migrants travelling without legal documents have access to healthcare, housing and basic social services in the destination country? (Sample group 2; N=176))



III.3.3. Employment without a work visa

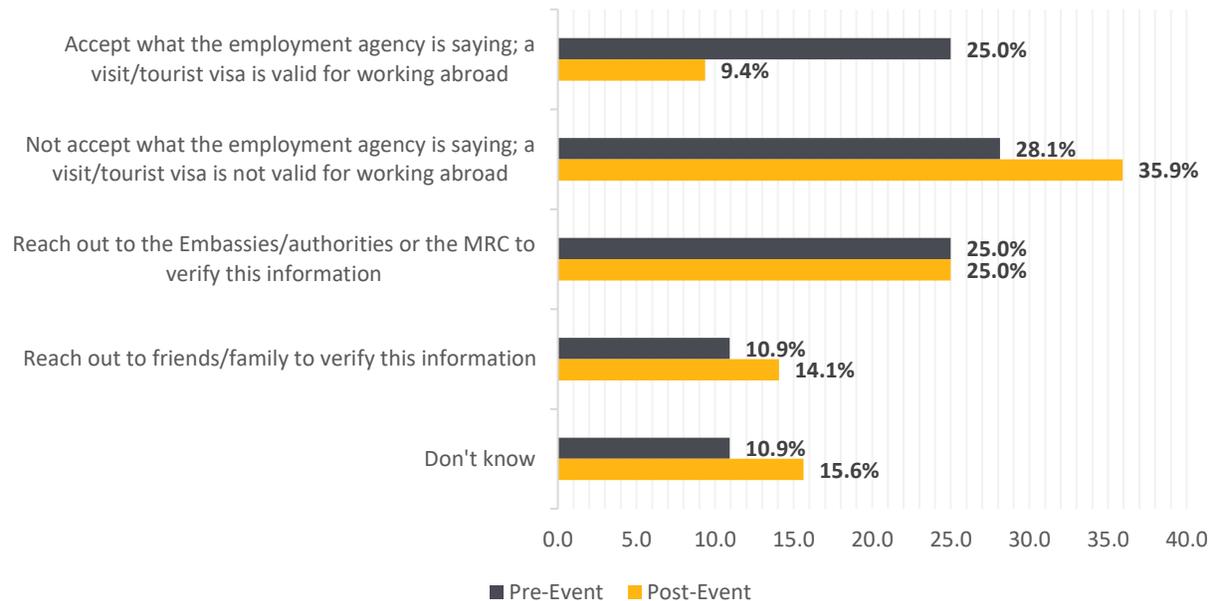
As noted, many Iraqis migrate out of Iraq for economic reasons. This has led to a proliferation of employment agencies and agents in Iraq that appear to help migrants find employment abroad (IRFAD, 2020). With respect to finding employment abroad, the MRC Iraq developed a focused message to alert migrants about not accepting employment abroad without the associated legal paperwork such as a work visa. The survey included a question to this effect; respondents were asked to respond to a situation whereby an employment agency offers them a visit visa for employment abroad. Respondents could either accept what the agency was offering, reject their offering, contact embassies and the MRC for verification of this information and/or contact family and friends. A 'don't know' option was also included.

Sample data suggest a decrease in the proportion of respondents that indicated that they would accept the employment agency's offer, after the event (Figure 18). **While a quarter of them said yes to the offer before the event, only 9 per cent did so after the event, indicating a decrease of 62 per cent.**

Approximately 36 per cent indicated that they would not accept the offer after the event, compared to 28 per cent before the event. A slightly higher proportion of respondents (16 per cent) chose the 'don't know' option after the event compared to before the event (11 per cent).



Figure 18: Let's say that an employment agency tells you about an employment opportunity abroad. They state that you can start this new job/employment with a visit or tourist visa. How would you respond to this situation? (Sample group 1; N=64; figures in per cent)



In the sample group of post-event and post-counselled clients (N=176), the majority chose to respond either by not accepting the employment agency's offer (29 per cent), by contacting the embassies and/or the MRC (32 per cent) or by contacting family and friends (23 per cent). **Respondents aged 26-35 years were more likely to indicate that they would accept the offer (28 per cent).** In terms of gender, **men were slightly more likely to accept the offer (13 per cent) compared to women (6 per cent).**

III.3.4. Attitudes and perceptions concerning emigration

The survey included questions related to the attitudes and perceptions of respondents towards irregular and legal migration. These questions are different from knowledge questions in that they attempt to capture underlying feelings and emotions that together with knowledge, contribute to migrants' intentions and ultimately, behaviours concerning migration.

To that end, respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with four statements (Likert scale): (1) it is easy to go/travel to Europe; (2) it is easy to find work in Europe ;(3) my family wants me to go live and work in another country and (4) migrating with the help of an agent is cheaper than migrating through other means.

For the statements **'it is easy to go/travel to Europe'** and **'it is easy to find work in Europe'**, the majority of respondents in all three sample groups either disagreed or strongly disagreed with said statements (Figures 19-22). In the first sample group, high differences in disagreement before and after the events were observed. In both sample groups, older respondents, particularly those aged 36-50 years were more sceptical about both statements relative to younger respondents. Gender differences in the level of



disagreement related to travelling to Europe were not observed, however, women were more likely to believe that it is not easy to find work in Europe relative to men.

Figure 19: 'It is easy to go/travel to Europe' (Sample group 1; N=64)

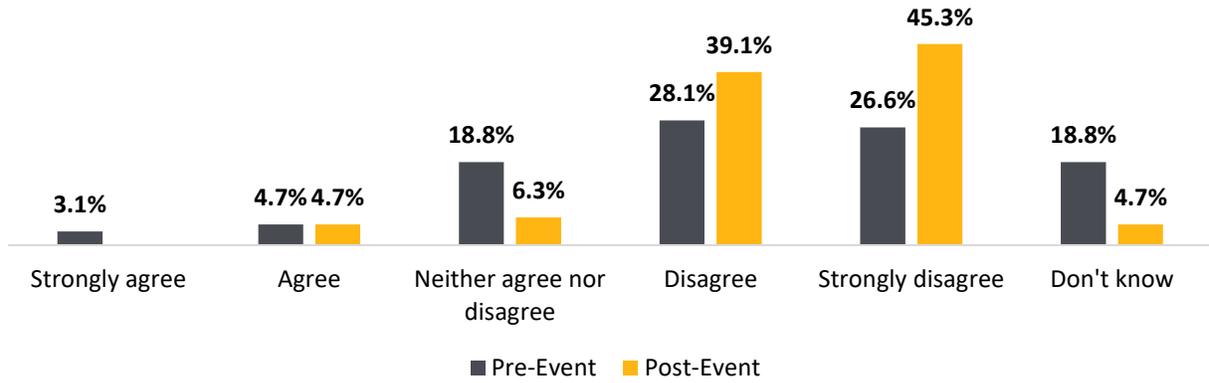


Figure 20: 'It is easy to go/travel to Europe' (Sample group 2; N=176)

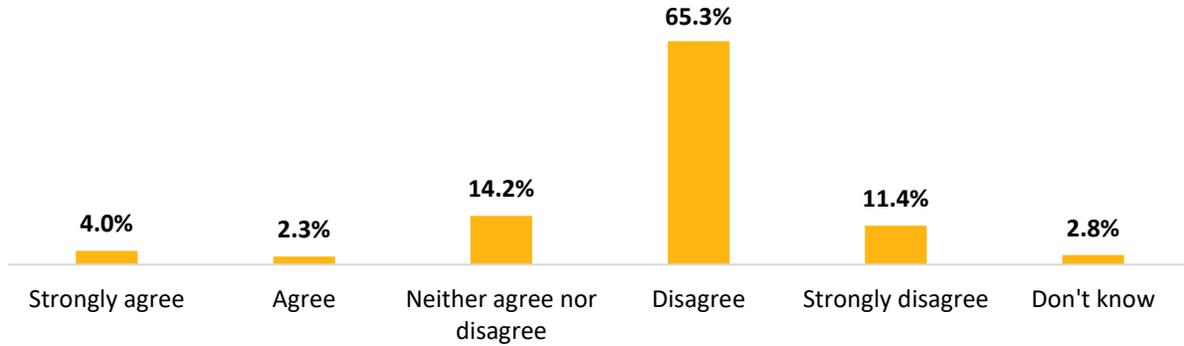


Figure 21: 'It is easy to find work in Europe' (Sample group 1; N=64)

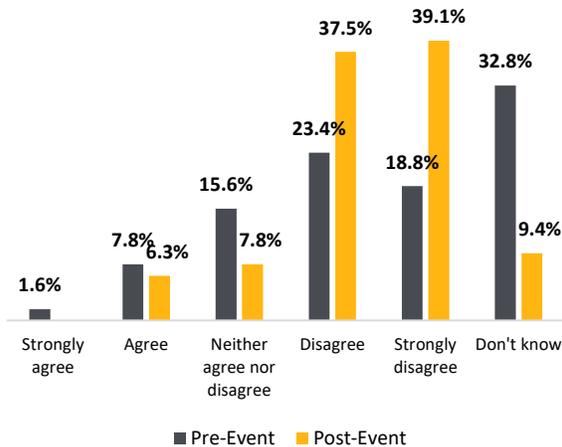
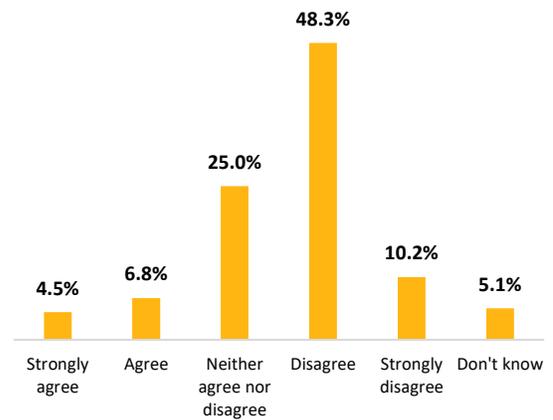


Figure 22: 'It is easy to find work in Europe' (Sample group 2; N=176)





For the third statement i.e., ‘**My family wants me to go live or work in another country**’, the data show that on average, the majority disagreed with this statement in all sample groups (Figures 23-24). In the first sample group, an increase in the level of disagreement after an event was observed, with approximately 63 per cent of the respondents indicating their strong disagreement after an event compared to approximately 44 per cent of the respondents before an event.

Older respondents (36-50 years) were more likely to disagree or strongly disagree with this statement relative to younger respondents. Similarly, male respondents were more likely to disagree or strongly disagree (70%) relative to female respondents (59%).

Figure 23: ‘My family wants me to go live or work in another country’ (Sample group 1; N=64)

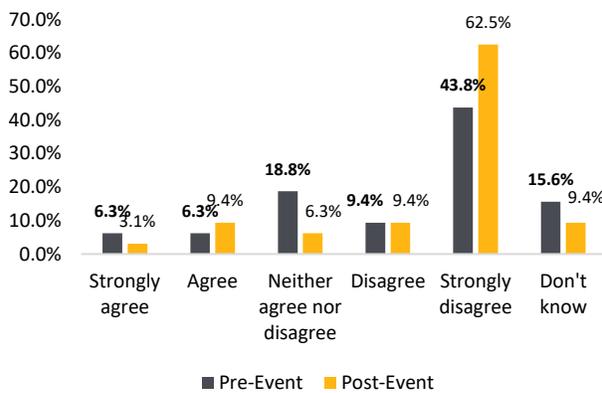
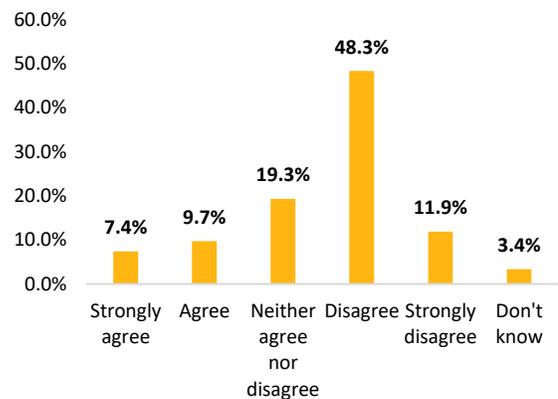
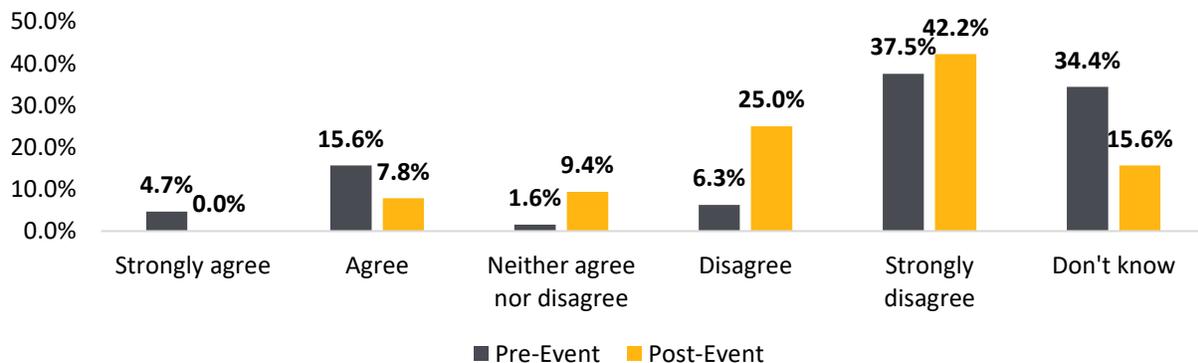


Figure 24: ‘My family wants me to go live or work in another country’ (Sample group 2; N=176)



For the final statement i.e., ‘**migrating with the help of an agent is cheaper than migrating through other means**’, the results show that the majority disagreed with this statement in all sample groups (Figures 25-26). The level of disagreement increased after events and the proportion of people stating the ‘don't know’ option decreased.

Figure 25: ‘Migrating with the help of an agent is cheaper than migrating through other mean’ (Sample group 1; N=64)

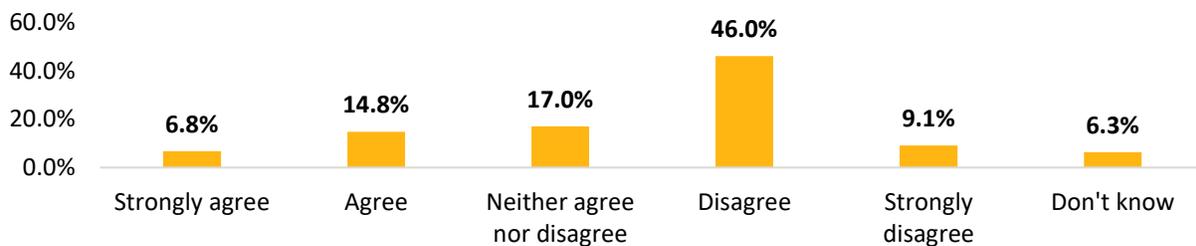


There were gender and location-specific differences in all sample groups. Male respondents were more likely to agree with this statement (21 per cent) than female respondents (15 per cent). The geographic



differences were more profound. Forty-five per cent of respondents from the KRI region indicated that they agreed with this statement compared to only 6 per cent of respondents from Central and Southern Iraq. Further research is needed to examine the drivers contributing to these perceptual differences.

Figure 26: 'Migrating with the help of an agent is cheaper than migrating through other means' (Sample group 2; N=176)

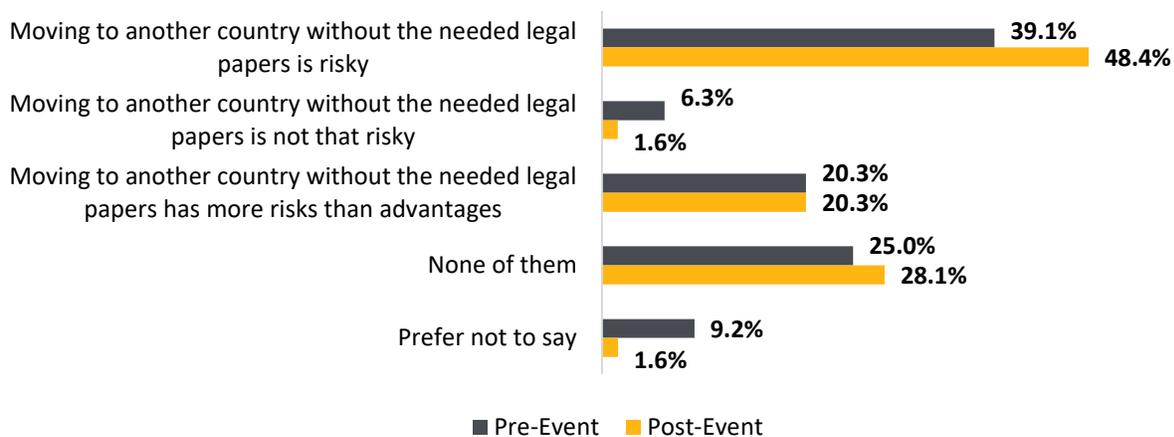


III.3.5. Perceptions related to the riskiness of irregular migration

The survey included a question on migrants' perceptions concerning the risks involved in migrating without legal paperwork. To that end, respondents were asked to choose a statement from a list that was closest to their point of view. These statements were: (1) Moving to another country without the needed legal papers is risky (2) Moving to another country without the needed legal papers is not that risky and (3) Moving to another country without the needed legal papers has more risks than advantages.

After an event, there was an average **increase in the proportion of respondents indicating that migrating without legal papers was risky (an increase of 9 per cent)** (Figure 27). There was a 5 per cent decrease in the number of respondents indicating that migrating without legal papers was not that risky. However, about 20 per cent of the group indicated that migrating without legal papers has more risks than advantages both before and after an event. A quarter of this sample indicated that none of the statements is closest to their point of view.

Figure 27: Which of the following statements is/are closest to your point of view? (Sample group 1; N=64)

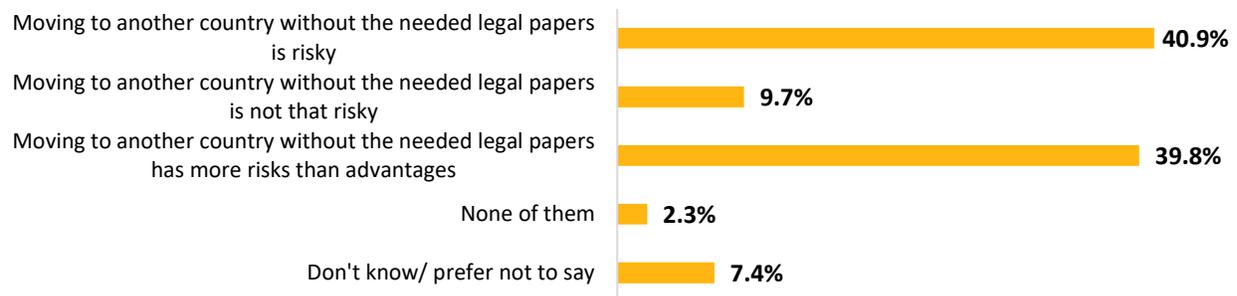


In the sample of post-event and post-counselled respondents, 41 per cent of the sample was of the opinion that moving to another country without the needed legal documents is risky whereas 10 per cent



believed that it is not that risky (Figure 28). A further 40 per cent indicated that migrating without legal papers has more risks than advantages. A smaller percentage of respondents (2.3 per cent) indicated that none of the statements aligns with their opinion.

Figure 28: Which of the following statements is/are closest to your point of view? [Sample group 2; N=176]



III.4. Intentions concerning migration

The last section of the KAI survey examined the intentions of respondents with respect to emigration. The survey included questions on respondents' wishes or desires to migrate, whether they thought they would actually migrate in two years, the plans they had made or the steps they had taken to facilitate their movement if at all, and the reasons for their migration.

As noted earlier, this survey does not contain 'direct' questions on intentions to migrate irregularly. Since irregular migration is a sensitive topic, posing direct questions is highly unlikely to yield high-quality, accurate responses. A common bias at work when responses are elicited to sensitive questions is the 'social desirability' bias. This bias reflects the fact that respondents are more likely to respond to sensitive questions with socially desirable responses or responses that the researcher wants to hear rather than report accurate responses. This then affects the quality of data collected, which in turn, affects the quality of research findings.

To address this issue, researchers often turn to robust survey design. This could mean asking validation questions throughout the survey, posing proxy questions with respect to the research variable of interest and/or using proxy response categories. In this survey for example, validation questions related to migration intentions were included, separate questions on pull and push factors that underlie migration were added, and various response categories were included to examine the steps people take to facilitate their migration. These questions could serve as proxies to ascertaining respondent propensities to migrate irregularly.

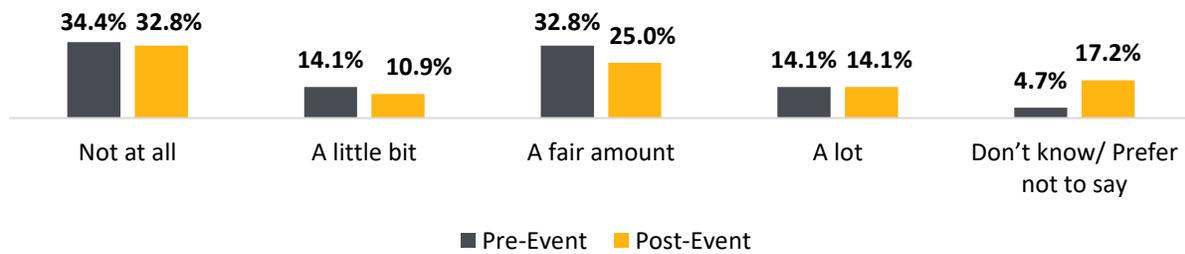
III. 4.1. Migration intent

Respondents were surveyed about the extent to which they wish to move to/ live in another country. This question sought to elicit responses on respondents' wishes or desires concerning migration (in contrast to whether they think they will actually move). In the first sample group, there was a slight decrease (2 per cent) in the proportion of respondents who indicated that they do not wish to migrate at all, after attending a MRC event (Figure 29). There were substantial decreases in the proportion of respondents



that indicated that they wished to move ‘a little bit’ (23 per cent) and ‘a fair amount’ (76 %). Among those that stated that they wished to migrate ‘a lot’, the data showed no differences in these intentions before and after the events.

Figure 29: How much, if at all, would you like to move to another country to live? (Sample group 1; N=64)

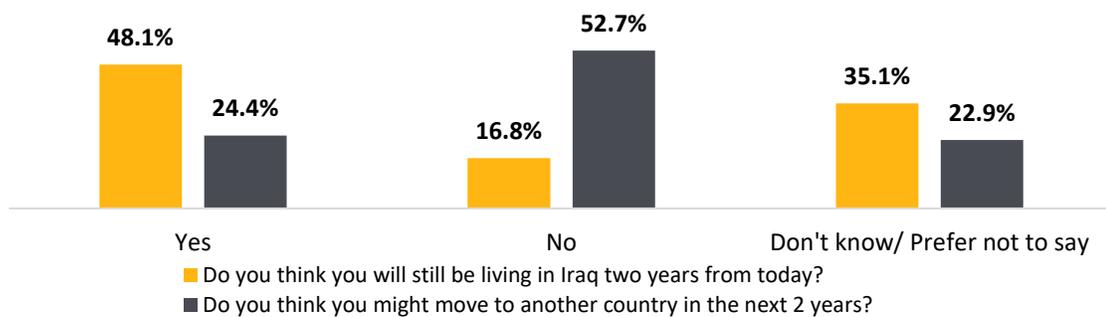


In the sample of post-event and post-counselling respondents, 27 per cent indicated that do not wish to move at all; 24 per cent indicated that they wish to move ‘a lot’, followed by 21 per cent who stated ‘a fair amount’ and 11 per cent who stated ‘a little bit’.

Younger respondents i.e., those aged below 36 years, were more likely to indicate a desire to migrate relative to older respondents. Similarly, **respondents from the KRI region were more likely to indicate a desire to migrate (80 per cent) compared to respondents from Central/Southern Iraq (46 per cent).** In terms of gender, a higher proportion of female respondents indicated no desire to migrate at all (33 %) relative to male respondents (24 %).

Respondents were asked questions about whether they think they would migrate out of Iraq in the next two years. They were asked two questions that were not consecutively placed - one serving as a validation question to the other. The first question, ‘do you think you will still be living in Iraq in the next 2 years?’ was followed by “do you think you might move to another country in the next 2 years?”. Some 48 per cent of the overall sample indicated that they would still be living in Iraq two years, and 53 per cent stated that they do not think they might move to another country in the next two years (Figure 30).

Figure 30: Do you think you might move to another country in the next 2 years? AND Do you think you will still be living in Iraq two years from today? (Full sample; N=262)



Respondents aged 26-35 years were more likely to indicate an intention to migrate out of Iraq compared to other age groups. Also, male respondents were more likely to indicate an intention to migrate out of Iraq.



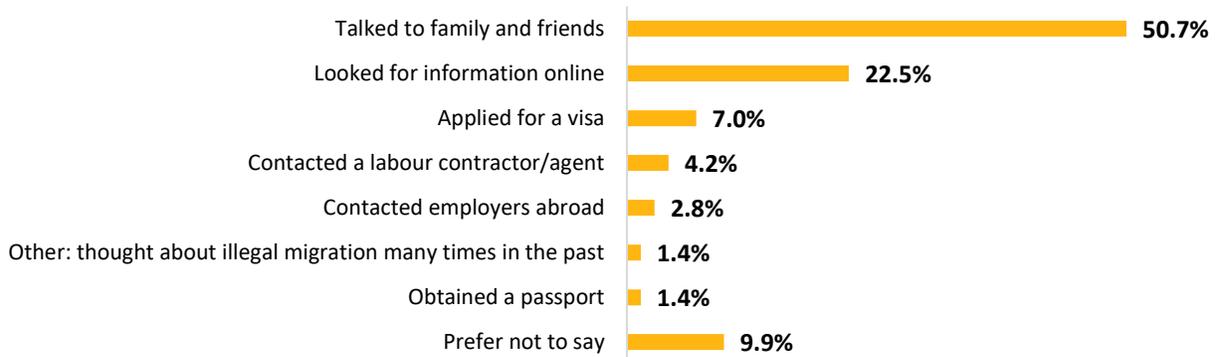
In addition, those with a previous migration history were more likely to report that they plan to choose migration again. For example, 33 per cent of those who had lived outside of Iraq for more than three months indicated that they planned to move to another country in two years, compared to 21 per cent of those that had never lived abroad.

III.4.2. Preparing for migration

Respondents were asked about any plans they had made to go live or work in another country. **In the overall sample, 27 per cent of respondents indicated that they had made plans or were preparing for migration.** This group was then asked about the plans they had made; the majority indicated that they had talked to family and friends (51 per cent), followed by 23 per cent who indicated that they had looked for information online. **Only 8 per cent of respondents stated that they had applied for a passport or a visa** (Figure 31).

Male respondents were more likely to look for information online while female respondents were more likely to speak with their family or friends. Further, respondents from Central/Southern Iraq were more likely to search for information online (30 per cent) and to speak with their family members or friends (61 per cent) compared to **respondents from KRI who were more likely to have applied for a visa (18 per cent), and contacted a labor contractor or an agent (11 per cent).**

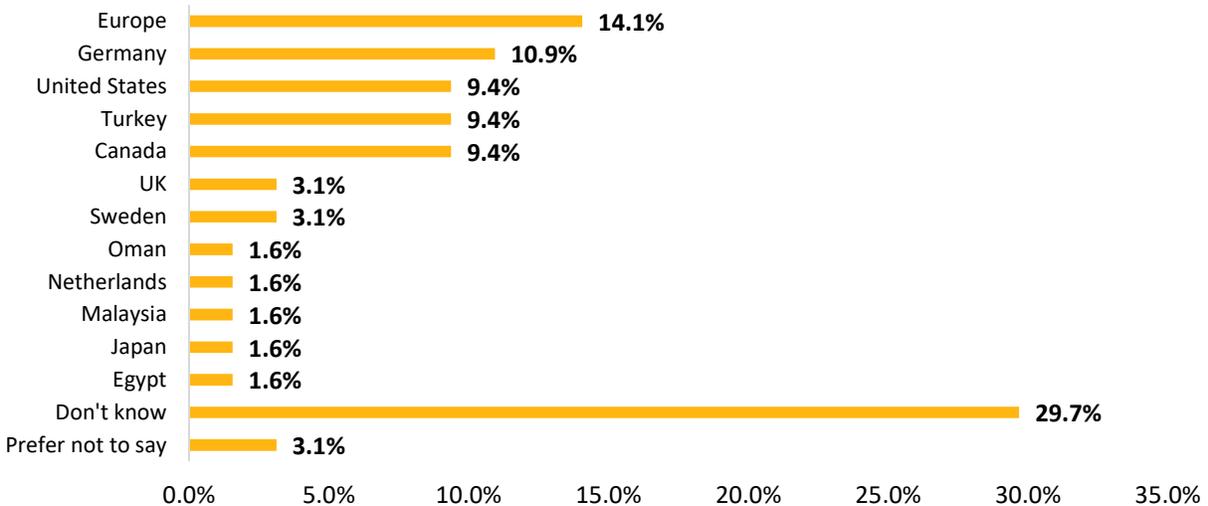
Figure 31: What sort of plans have you made? (N=71; those who indicated that they made plans to move to another country)



Respondents were also asked to indicate where they might move to. **The majority (14 per cent) indicated Europe in general, followed by 11 per cent of respondents who specifically indicated Germany.** An identical percentage of respondents (9 per cent) indicated that they would move to the United States, Turkey, and Canada; 30 per cent of them noted that they did not know at this point and another 3 per cent preferred not to say (Figure 32).



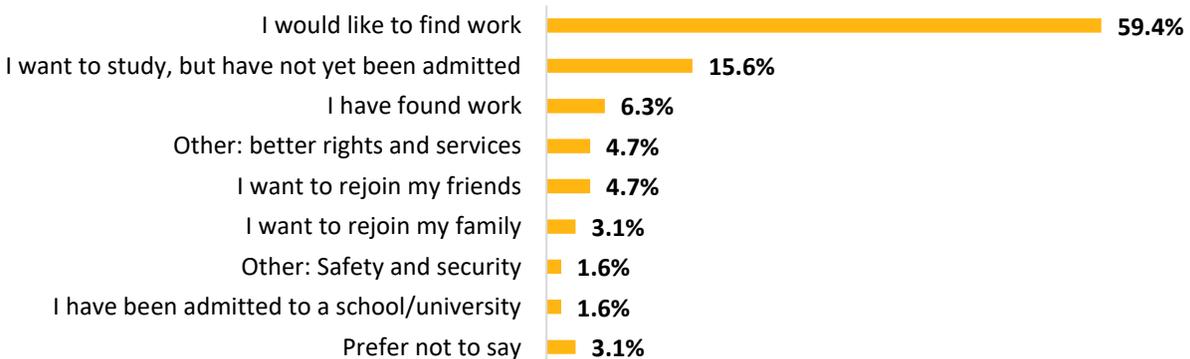
Figure 32: If so, where do you think you might go? (N=64; those who indicated that they might move to another country)



III.4.3. Drivers underlying migration intentions

Respondents who indicated that they might move to another country were further asked to identify reasons for migration. **The majority (59 per cent) indicated that they would like to find work compared to 6 per cent who stated that they have found work already, followed by 16 per cent who stated that they would like to study but have not yet been admitted into universities or programmes** (Figure 33). Of those indicating that they would like to find work, the majority are in the age range of 18-35 years (92 per cent).

Figure 33: Why would you like to move to the country mentioned? (N=64; those who indicated that they might move to another country)



Respondents were surveyed about their reasons to leave Iraq (push factors). The majority (42 per cent) indicated better opportunities abroad and lack of jobs at home as reasons to migrate. A further 13 per cent reported better social services abroad. Thirteen per cent stated that they didn't know and 15 per cent preferred not to say.



IV. Conclusion

This descriptive study aimed to collect data from potential migrants that were exposed to information campaigns conducted by the MRC Iraq. It sought to examine several outcomes related to migrants' understanding of irregular and legal migration, specifically, potential migrants' knowledge levels, attitudes, perceptions and intentions concerning migration. The study targeted migrants attending MRC community events and migrants contacting the MRC for counselling and other support.

The results of the study point to knowledge increases as well as changes in attitudes concerning irregular and legal migration among the sampled group of migrants attending MRC events. Similarly, the majority in the sampled group contacting the MRC for counselling and other support also report accurate knowledge and suitable attitudes concerning irregular/regular migration. However, age, gender and location differences were observed, suggesting that these findings must be interpreted in line with demographic and other contextual factors.

With respect to information needs, the majority in the sample had either sought information related to emigration or plans to in the future. Approximately three-fourths of the sample were aware of the MRC, with the majority having heard about the MRC via social media followed by community outreach sessions. Preliminary data thus suggest that these two channels – social media and community outreach sessions – appear promising with respect to gaining wider outreach.

In terms of intentions concerning migration, the study finds that less than a quarter of the sample has specific intentions to migrate in 2 years, though these intentions seem aspirational. A little over a quarter of the sample has taken steps towards preparing for migration, either by talking to family and friends or by searching for information online.

While this study generates early findings on the influence of MRC information campaigns on the knowledge, attitudes and intentions of potential migrants, it is a descriptive study, and therefore, the findings/results are neither attributable to the MRC campaign nor generalisable to the Iraqi potential migrant population. That said, the findings generate early evidence on migrants' knowledge, perceptions, attitudes and intentions concerning irregular and legal migration and whether and how they shift when exposed to information campaigns. For future research however, a more rigorous design is needed to attribute KAI changes to MRC campaigns. Additionally, panel data should be collected to assess if KAI changes sustain over time.



References:

- Begović, Selena, Lejla Lazović-Pita, Velma Pijalović & Bojan Baskot (2020) An investigation of determinants of youth propensity to emigrate from Bosnia and Herzegovina, *Economic Research Ekonomska Istraživanja*, 33:1, 2574-2590
- Dao, T.H., F. Docquier, C. Parsons, Giovanni Peri 2018. Migration and development: Dissecting the anatomy of the mobility transition, *Journal of Development Economics*, 132: 88-101
- European Commission, Knowledge Centre on Migration and Demography 2017. Iraq Migration Profile, End 2017.
Accessed at <https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC115079> on 29 July 2022
- Galos, E., L.Bartolini, H.Cook, N.Grant 2017. Migrant vulnerability to human trafficking and exploitation: Evidence from the Central and Eastern Mediterranean migration routes. International Organisation for Migration. Geneva.
- Ghosh, Bimal 2010. The Global Economic Crisis and Migration: Where do we go from here? International Organisation for Migration.
- Global Report on Internal Displacement 2021. Accessed at <https://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2021/> on 29 July 2022
- Hiskey, J., J.D. Montalvo and D. Orcés 2014. Democracy, Governance, and Emigration Intentions in Latin America and the Caribbean, *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 49: 89-111
- International Organisation for Migration. 2020. Migration Data Portal. Accessed at https://www.migrationdataportal.org/international-data?i=stock_abs_&t=2020&cm49=368 on 3 August 2022
- IRFAD 2020. Needs Assessment study on migration information in Iraq. International Centre for Migration Policy Development. Report.
- Mixed Migration Centre 2018. Fraught with Risk- Protection concerns of people on the move across West Africa and Libya. Research Paper. Geneva.
- Pulkinnen, Viola 2021. Notes from a country of origin: Iraq's position in the EU-Belarus Border Crisis'. Institute for Security and Development Policy.
- REACH 2017. Iraqi migration to Europe in 2016: Profiles, Drivers and Return. UK Aid.
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) 2018. Desperate journeys: Refugees and migrants arriving in Europe and at Europe's borders, January-December 2018. Geneva.



Annex 1: Survey Methodology

Survey instrument and fieldwork:

ICMPD's Strategy, Knowledge, Evaluation and Impact (SKEI) team developed a KAI survey in English, which contained questions on the socio-demographic profile of respondents, information needs of respondents, their level of engagement with the MRC, their knowledge levels, perceptions and attitudes concerning irregular and legal migration and their intentions related to irregular and legal migration. Since the survey touches on the sensitive topic of irregular migration, it does not contain 'direct' questions on intentions to migrate irregularly, as this is highly unlikely to yield high-quality, accurate responses. A common bias at work when responses are elicited to sensitive questions is the 'social desirability' bias. This bias reflects the fact that respondents are more likely to respond to sensitive questions with socially desirable responses or responses that the researchers want to hear rather than report accurate responses. This then affects the quality of data collected, which, in turn, affects the quality of research findings.

To address this issue, the team turned to robust survey design. This included asking validation questions throughout the survey, designing proxy questions to the research variable of interest and using proxy response categories. These questions could serve as proxies to ascertaining respondent propensities to migrate irregularly. The survey included an elaborate introductory and confidentiality statement that stated the study's intent to preserve the anonymity of responses and use the collected data for research purposes alone. It also sought the informed consent of respondents, giving them the option to withdraw at any time during the survey interview.

IRFAD provided valuable input to this survey by considering the wording of questions, their relevance to the local context as well as the sensitive nature of some of the questions. The survey was translated into Arabic and Kurdish.

IRFAD then proceeded to training its team of nine enumerators on (1) the survey objectives, (2) description of each question in the survey, and (3) wording and terminologies. The training included guidance on the interview protocol and guidelines to abide by IRFAD's research ethics policy. Enumerators were allowed to ask questions and become fully familiar with the survey objectives, survey questions, skip patterns and interviewing techniques. Enumerators were also encouraged to conduct one mock interview each.

Enumerator training included sessions on mitigating 'social desirability' bias referenced earlier. As noted, the survey addressed this bias pre-emptively in a number of ways. For example, the SKEI team ensured that no questions were asked in a leading manner, that ample context was provided to questions of a sensitive nature, and that the sequence of questions was carefully ordered. (relegating sensitive questions to the end). Additionally, enumerators were advised to reiterate that there are no right or wrong answers, as reflected in the introduction and confidentiality statement included in the survey.

IRFAD then pilot-tested the Arabic version of the survey by conducting 12 pilot interviews. The pilot respondents were chosen from the list of counselled clients shared by the MRC as well as a list of attendees shared by Tajdid. Six respondents from each list were randomly selected for pilot interviews.

Data from pilot-testing was reviewed by IRFAD's data analyst to assess if questions were understood by all respondents in the same way, if the wording resonated with respondents, as well as other factors such as the average time taken to complete a survey. Based on a discussion with ICMPD, a question on monthly household income was removed as most respondents chose to skip this question, indicating its sensitive



nature, and a question on intentions to migrate to another country was slightly reworded to reflect a reasonable timeline for migration.

Data collection, cleaning and analysis:

IRFAD's enumerators conducted survey interviews on a daily basis, both in-person and by phone. Completed interview transcripts were reviewed by the supervisor and data analyst to check for inconsistencies in responses or missing and/or duplicate information. To validate inconsistent responses, the analyst contacted enumerators who in turn, reached out to respondents for clarifications. No missing responses were found as enumerators were trained to obtain comprehensive and relevant information from each respondent.

Data was descriptively analysed using the IBM SPSS Statistics software. The data analyst created frequency tables and used cross-tabulation by age, gender, location and other parameters as needed, to analyse the data. Data was grouped to analyse two sample groups separately. The first group consists of respondents who attended MRC partner-led events and for whom there are both pre-event and post-event matched responses. Responses were matched on the basis of phone numbers, dates, and case IDs produced by the analyst. This helped IRFAD understand the influence of the event itself on respondents' KAIs. Data from all other respondents i.e., those that attended events but for whom there are only post-event responses and all counselled clients that engaged with the MRC via its hotline and other channels were analysed as part of the second and third sample groups.