

EMERGENCY TRACKING SOUTHERN BORDER MONITORING IN THE CONTEXT OF COVID-19

CHIAPAS AND TABASCO, MÉXICO

REPORT #2, JULY 2020



HIGHLIGHTS



13%

has decreased the migration flow in land internment points



53%

of the organizations interviewed are operating normally at the border



28%

of the people requesting services are Honduran



42%

of key informants identified that migrants arrived at the border during the second half of July

METHODOLOGY

This report is a baseline assessment for the month of July of official Points of Entry (PoE) and service delivery for migrants on Mexico's southern border, specifically in Tapachula in the State of Chiapas, and Tenosique and Villahermosa in Tabasco. The information on PoE is derived from the efforts of IOM Mexico in evaluating the official PoEs at the national level. The evaluation of service delivery for migrants is done through the identification of organizations and institutions in the field, based on the sector-wide approaches set out in the IOM Operational Framework for Emergency Migration Situations. The information in this report is collected by IOM Mexico staff in Chiapas and Tabasco through interviews with 21 key institutional informants working in the municipalities mentioned above. These institutions include the: National Institute of Migration, Jesuit Refugee Service, Guatemalan

Consulate in Ciudad Hidalgo, Tapachula Migrant Assistance Office, Iniciativas para el Desarrollo Humano A.C., Albergue Jesús El Buen Pastor, Por la Superación de la Mujer A.C., Honduran Consulate in Tapachula, Asylum Access, Una Mano Amiga en la Lucha contra el SIDA A.C., Médicos del Mundo, Guatemalan Consulate in Tapachula, Albergue DIF Viva México, United Nations Children's Fund, Office of the Public Prosecutor for Immigrants, Mexican Commission for Aid to Refugees, Albergue Belén, Save the Children, National Human Rights Commission, Regional Office of the Procurator for the Rights of Children and Adolescents, State Human Rights Commission, Centre for Comprehensive Care in Chiapas and National System for Comprehensive Development of the Family.

CONTEXT OF THE SITUATION

On 11 March 2020, due to the alarming levels of spread and severity of the COVID-19 virus, the World Health Organization declared a state of pandemic. In this situation, on 23 March 2020 the General Health Council of the Ministry of Interior of the United Mexican States recognized the epidemic as a serious disease of priority in the national territory.

The federal government applied the "Sana Distancia" campaign from 23 March to 31 May, promoting isolation at home, applying basic measures to prevent contagion, and instructing the closure of non-essential establishments for emergency health care, including businesses, schools, and institutions at all three levels of government. In the case of the governments of Chiapas and Tabasco, they also began the "Sana Distancia" campaign in parallel with the federal government, applying the same recommendations on the suspension of activities, including procedures, applications and legal proceedings. On 1 June, the campaign "El Semáforo de Riesgo Epidemiológico" (Epidemiological Risk Traffic Light) launched as a weekly monitoring system to monitor and grade the use of public space according to the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

During the month of July, the Epidemiological Risk Traffic Light categorized most of Mexico as red (highest risk) and continued to call for the restriction of non-essential economic activities. The state of Tabasco remained in this category with 22,994 accumulated cases and 2,094 deaths as of 31st July and remained as one of the states with the greatest hospital occupation. The municipality of Centro, where the city of Villahermosa is located, is where most of the cases in the state have occurred with 10,546 accumulated cases and 872 deaths, while Tenosique reported 711 cases and 48 deaths.

Likewise, some states went to the intermediate warning light (orange), which allowed the reactivation of some economic activities. Such is the case in Chiapas, which acquired this category in the second half of July. Chiapas reported 983 deaths and 5,836 accumulated cases as of July 31, of which 911 cases and 172 deaths were in the municipality of Tapachula.

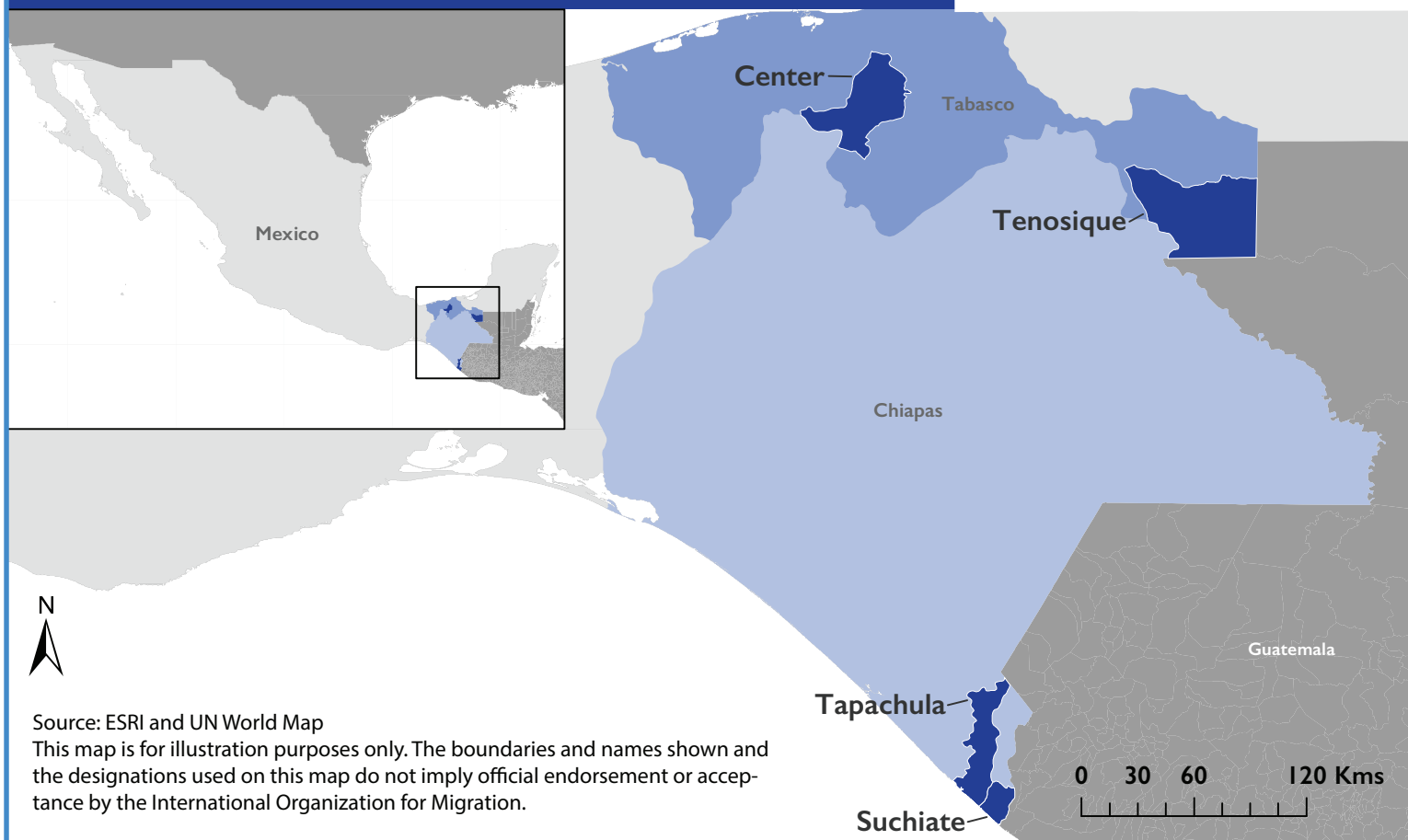


The Mexican government has registered 310 positive cases of migrants at the national level in July, mainly from Honduras, the United States of America, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Cuba, El Salvador, and Guatemala, among others. Fourteen deaths of migrants from El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Haiti, Canada, Chile, Cuba, Spain and the United States of America were reported. In the southeast, eight positive cases were recorded among the migrant population, of which four occurred in Tabasco, two in Chiapas and two in Oaxaca.

The Mexican Institute of Social Security reported the loss of 181,000 formal jobs during the month of July, reaching the loss of more than a million jobs since the declaration of the health emergency. By September, it is expected that the companies and businesses that resisted the first stage of confinement by COVID-19 will terminate their employees, reaching a rate of 358,000 formal jobs lost in that month.

LOCATION

Location map



Source: ESRI and UN World Map
This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

OFFICIAL POINTS OF ENTRY EVALUATION

The border posts in Mexico have not closed for migrant crossing during the period of the since declaration of the pandemic, but transit has been closed for cross-border trade.

In general, the Tapachula PoEs present the greatest activity in the migration flow, especially the Tapachula International Airport, despite not having returned to normal operation. Health authorities are present at all border posts and apply health protocols to travelers.

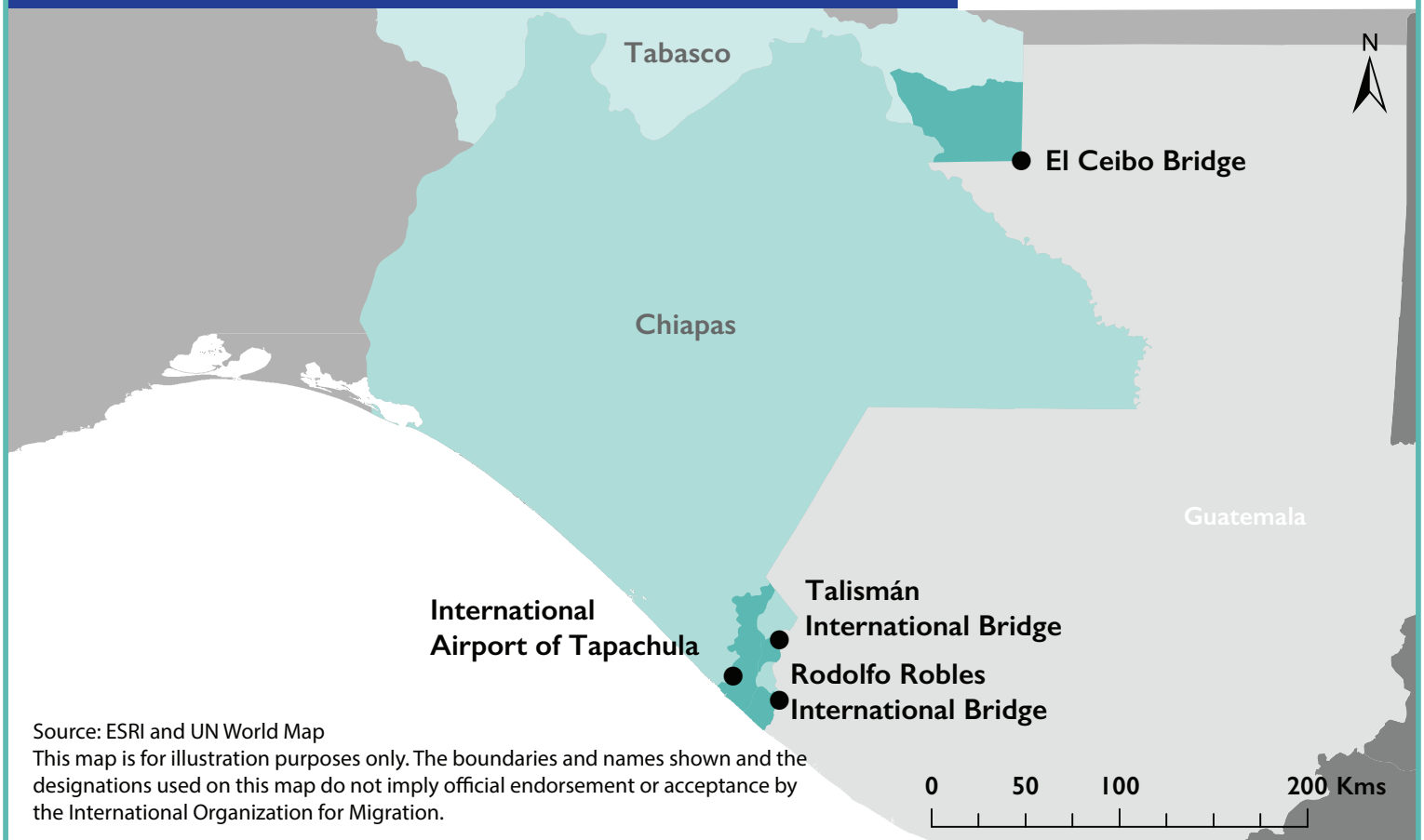


1
By air



3
By land

Location of the points of terrestrial internment and airports considered



Source: ESRI and UN World Map
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INS AND OUTS

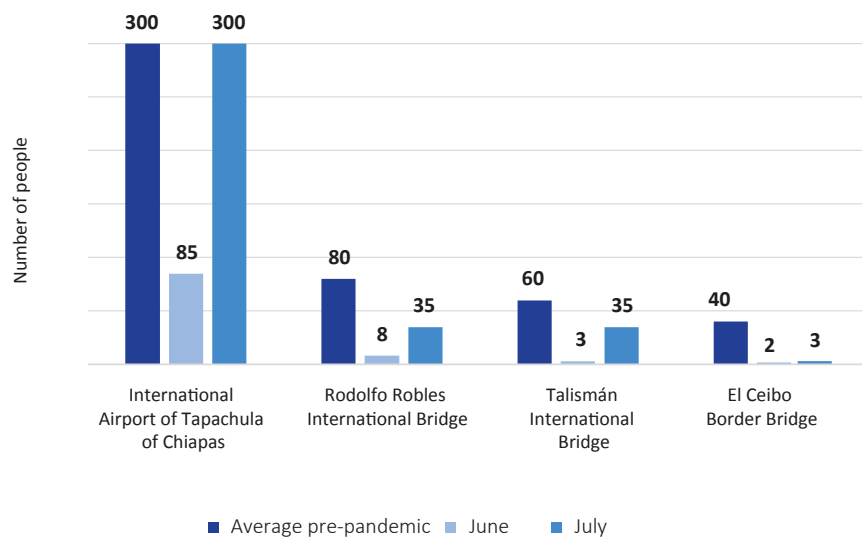
Tapachula International Airport is the point with the greatest migrant flow. During the month of July, an average flow of travellers was again identified with respect to the dynamics before the pandemic, (approximately 300 people per day between ins and outs).

On the other hand, the migration flow at the land points of entry during the month of July has increased by an average of 13% and it is estimated that only thirty-five people enter daily, with the Talisman International Bridge showing the greatest growth in movement, the bridge is located

between Talisman (Mexico) and El Carmen (Guatemala).

Most of the people passing through these points are cross-border migrant workers and returnees. However, migration flows have been equalized both on the border in Ciudad Hidalgo and in Talisman. At the same time, it is important to note that the border on the Guatemalan side continues to be closed, causing only cross-border workers to be allowed to pass through and complications in the entry of Guatemalan migrant returnees.

Daily ins and outs of people by points of entry



■ Average pre-pandemic ■ June ■ July

AFFECTED POPULATIONS

		International Airport of Tapachula of Chiapas	Rodolfo Robles International Bridge	Talismán International Bridge	El Ceibo Border Bridge
People affected by mobility restriction	Nationals				
	Regular travelers				●
	Returnees		●	●	●
	Refugees				●
	Migrant workers		●	●	

● Affected people

PUBLIC HEALTH

The PoEs generally comply with the provisions of the IOM standard procedures for operation and health assessment of migrants. Border personnel are trained by the Mexican Ministry of Health, and in the case of Tapachula, efforts have been reinforced with support from institutions such as the Chiapas State Workers' Social Security Institute (ISSTECH).

In addition, there are specialized medical personnel from the same institutions for care and referral of cases, and availability of informational material such as pamphlets and posters on the prevention of the spread of the virus.

It is important to note that, as part of the safety protocol, temperatures are taken with digital thermometers, antibacterial gel is provided, and a Health Declaration Form is requested from the traveler.

The Talismán International Bridge and the Rodolfo Robles International Bridge have the greatest limitations for the prevention of the spread of the virus, related to the promotion of hygiene and the prevention of infection when suspected cases are identified. However, in the case of Tenosique there is a permanent team of the Sanitation Jurisdiction that allows the identification of cases in the municipality and follows up on them in the health sector, even in other states.

		International Airport of Tapachula of Chiapas	Rodolfo Robles International Bridge	Talismán International Bridge	El Ceibo Border Bridge
Standard Operating Procedures	Presence of health authorities	●	●	●	●
	Application for handling the migration flow, occupational health and safety of staff, detection, registration, notificación and referral of sick passengers	●	●	●	●
	Has trained staff	●	●	●	●
	Information about COVID-19 is provided on the site	●	●	●	●

● Meets the standard

		International Airport of Tapachula of Chiapas	Rodolfo Robles International Bridge	Talismán International Bridge	El Ceibo Border Bridge
Prevention and control	Presence of hand washing stations	●	●		●
	Hand washing stations equipped	●	●		●
Health evaluation	Application of a health evaluation protocol	●	●	●	●
	Temperature recording	●	●	●	●
	Filling in the declaration health form	●	●	●	●
	Infrastructure for crowd control and safety of screeners		●		●

● Meets the standard

		International Airport of Tapachula of Chiapas	Rodolfo Robles International Bridge	Talismán International Bridge	El Ceibo Border Bridge
Protective equipment	For staff and other workers on site	●	●		●
	Mouthguards available for suspicious cases	●			●
	Availability of an isolated space for evaluation of suspicious cases	●			●
Reference system	Implementation of a referral system for suspicious cases	●	●	●	●
	Efficient reference system	●	●	●	●

● Meets the standard

SERVICE DELIVERY EVALUATION

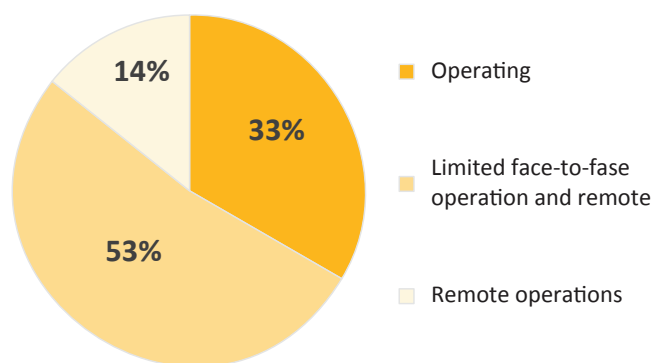
The evaluation was conducted with 21 organizations present in Tapachula, Villahermosa and Tenosique. Among the main findings, it was identified that the magnitude of migration flows is not related with the demand for services. The demand for services are the current needs of migrants following the impacts of the pandemic.

The majority of the organizations that continue to operate are from civil society (52%) and are mainly responsible for providing services related to the protection of vulnerable populations (victims of gender-based violence, mental health, migrant children, among others), inter-institutional coordination, physical and mental health and psychosocial support, access to justice, and shelter.

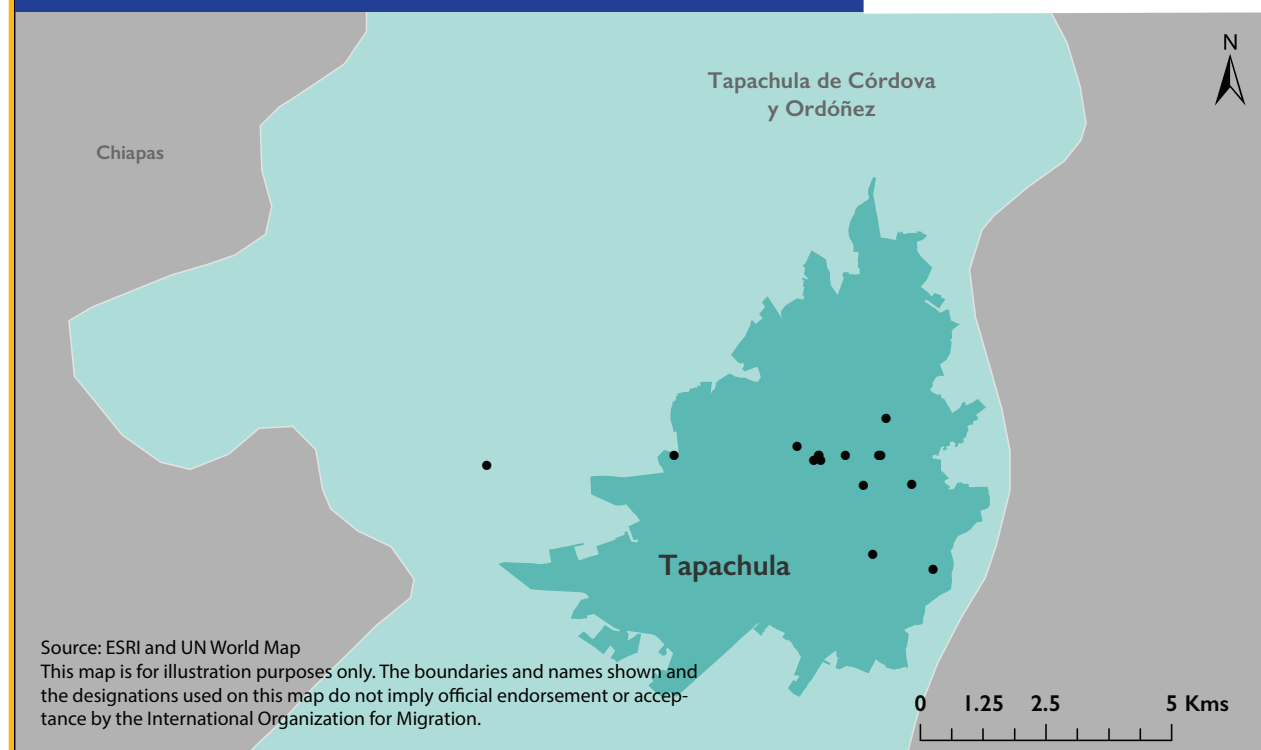
Forty-five per cent of the organizations and institutions that provide limited face-to-face care indicate that they have an appointment system to attend to their clients. While those that provide services remotely, 50 per cent do so through telephone assistance exclusively and 43 per cent use telephone assistance, email, and social networks to provide services.

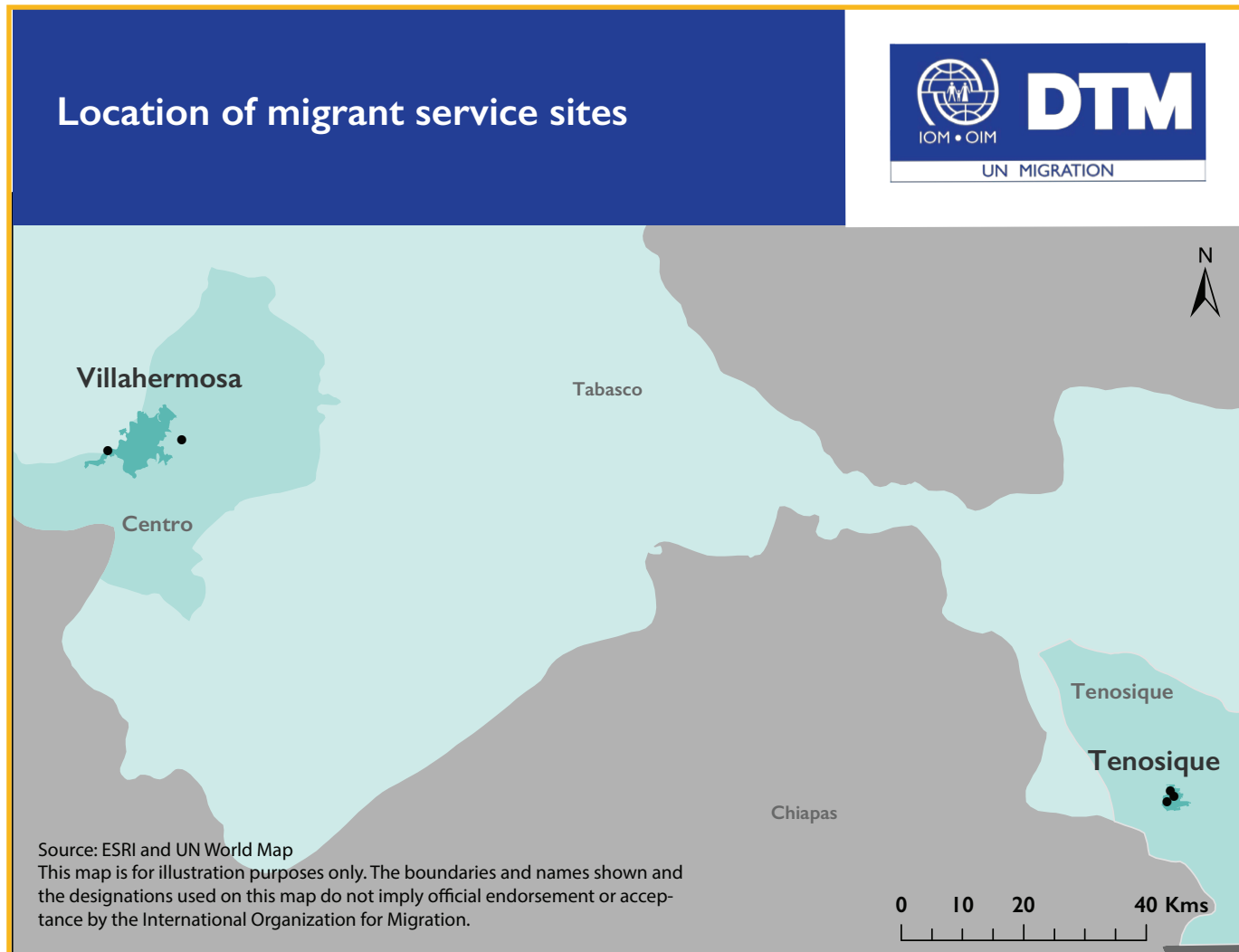
Institutions that provide services through social networks such as WhatsApp have had challenges in collecting data for the development of a registry of people assisted.

Current operation status of institutions and organizations



Location of migrant service sites

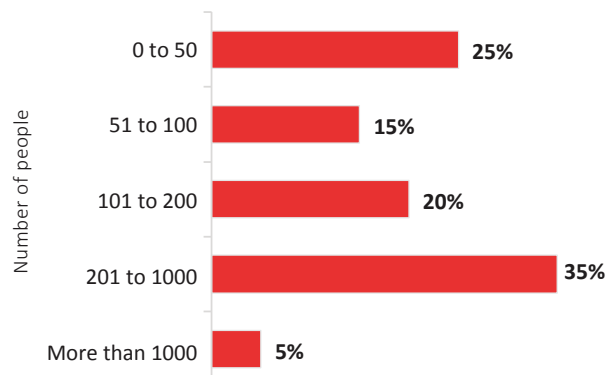




Organizations and institutions have attended at least 10,000 people during the month. 48 per cent (10 institutions and organizations) indicate that they have attended more people than in the previous month. It should be noted that these institutions and organizations are consulates, government shelters and NGOs that are responsible for providing protection to migrants.

On the other hand, 52 per cent (11 institutions and organizations) stated that they have attended fewer people as compared to June should be noted that all of these institutions and organizations continue to provide remote assistance.

Assistance capacity of organizations and institutions during July



PROFILE OF MIGRANTS ACCESSING SERVICES

Gender and age groups

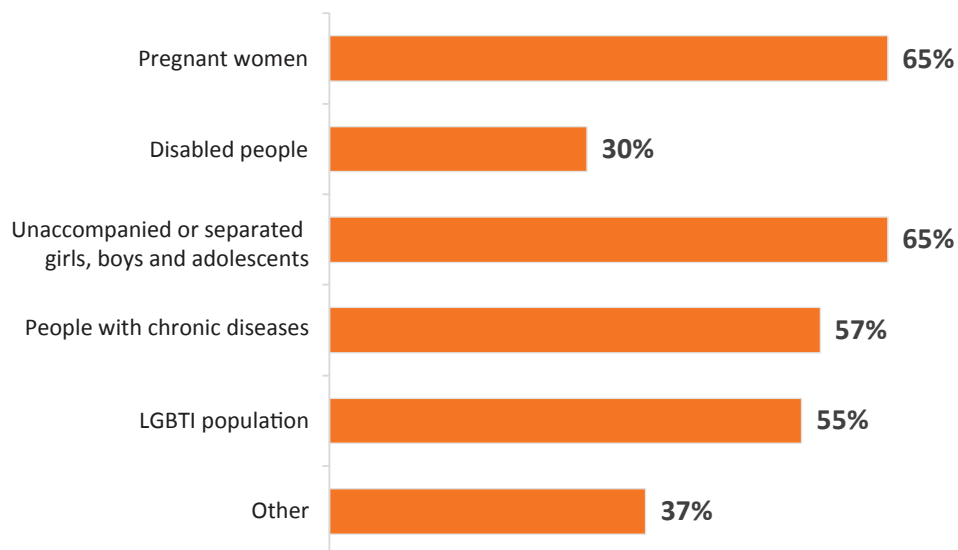


Highlighted nationalities attended to in the last month



“Others” includes nationalities from African and Asian countries.

Percentage of organizations and institutions serving people in vulnerable conditions



'Others' include homeless people, survivors of sexual violence, and migrant women in the company of their minor children.

SERVICES DURING THE PANDEMIC

MONTHLY ATTENDANTS

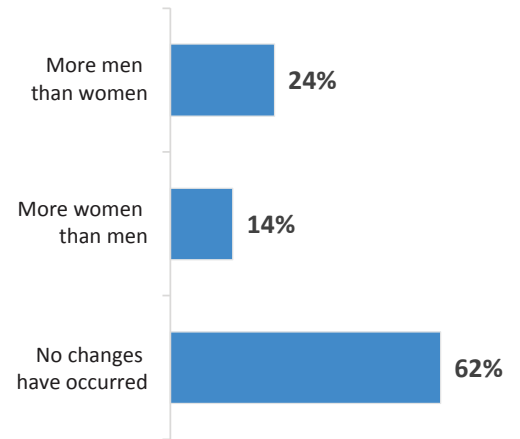
There is no pattern of people with a certain profile. 62 per cent of the key informants indicated that during the month of July, there was no variation with respect to the sex of the people served; only 24 per cent (three organizations) served more men than women, especially in areas such as protection, shelters and physical and mental health. The main nationalities in this case are people from Northern Central America and Cuba.

On the other hand, 14 per cent indicated that more women than men were assisted in the month in areas of protection of people in vulnerable conditions, especially people from Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico and some from African countries.

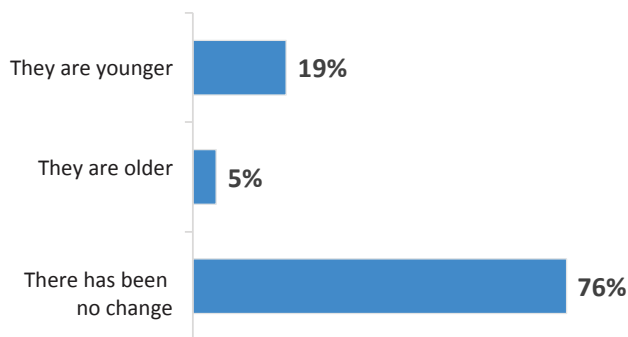
It has been identified that different civil society organizations are concentrating on the care of minors, primarily because of the vulnerability that these people represent.

Nineteen per cent of the informants indicated that they have attended to people of other nationalities during the month. In relation to those typically attended to, people from Cuba, Colombia, India, and others not specified but belonging to the Middle East region stand out.

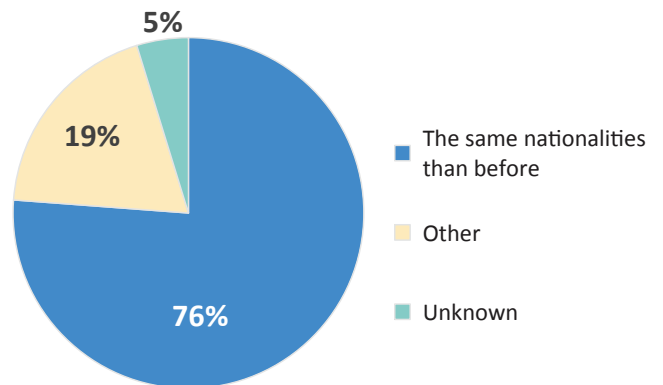
Has the number of men or women changed?



Has there been any change in the age range of applicants?



Has the nationality of the applicants changed?



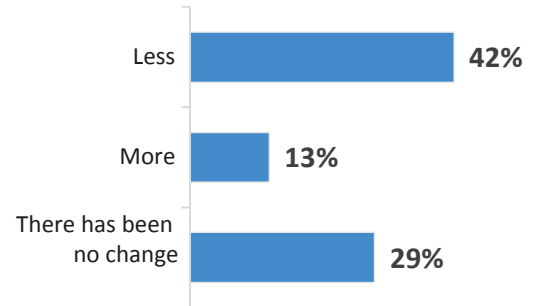
SERVICES DURING THE PANDEMIC

CHANGES IN THE PROFILE OF
THE MIGRANT POPULATION IN
A VULNERABLE CONDITION

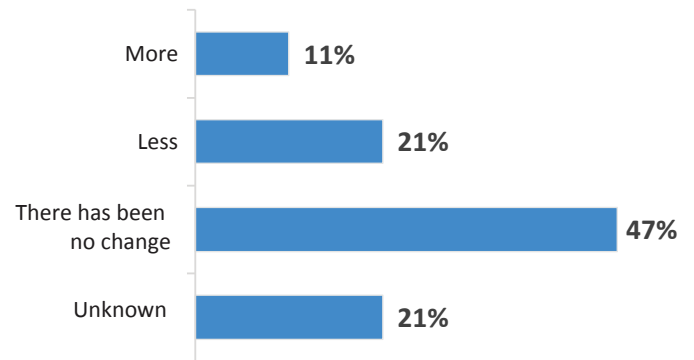
During the month of July, the trend of women victims of gender violence continued. The Immigrant Prosecutor's Office in Tapachula has received more complaints related to family violence, which are closely related to gender violence.

On the other hand, the number of people intending to seek refuge in Mexico has decreased. However, people who are already seeking refuge have stated that their needs for food, shelter, and basic services have increased.

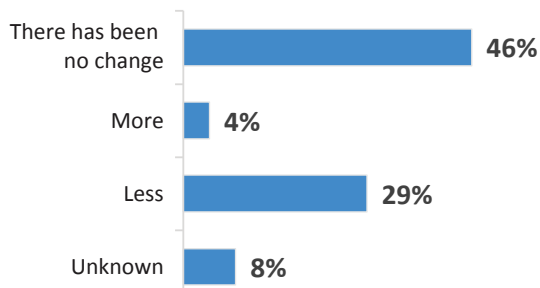
Has the presence of
older adults changed?



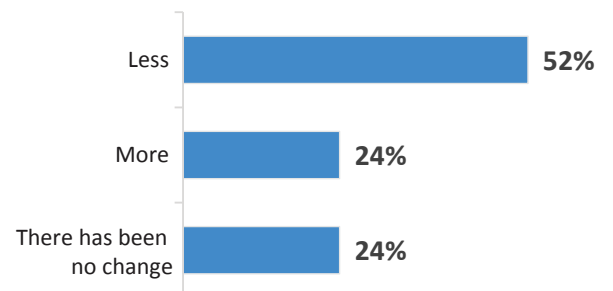
Has the number of
pregnant women changed?



Has the presence of the LGBTI
population changed?



Has the presence of children
and adolescents changed?



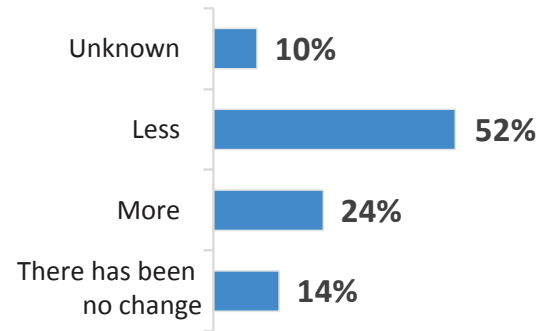
SERVICES DURING THE PANDEMIC

CHANGES IN THE PROFILE OF
THE MIGRANT POPULATION
BY MIGRATION STATUS

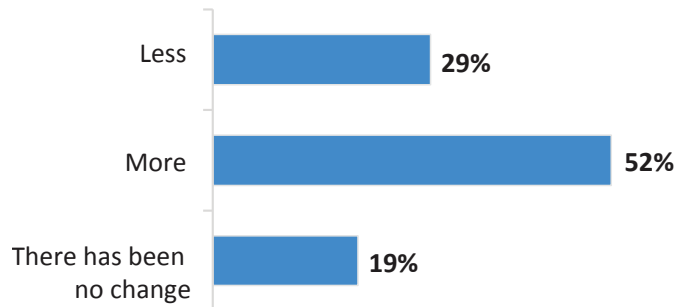
Among the main findings identified, it is worth noting that in the last two weeks of July, migrants have arrived, mainly because there has been an increase of migrants in street conditions, especially in Tapachula.

However, key informants consider that since April 2020, with the closing of borders, migrants continue to enter Tapachula and Tenosique through unofficial PoEs such as Suchiate and El Naranjo Rivers respectively, although in smaller quantities.

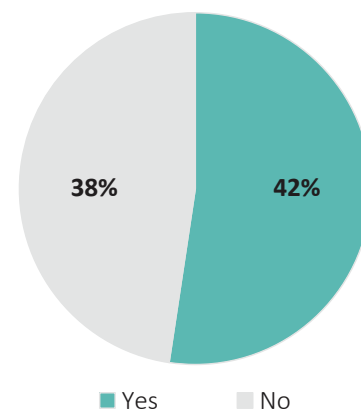
Have you noticed any changes in the presence
of people with regular migration status?



Have you noticed any change in the presence
of people in an irregular migratory situation?



Have you identified whether the time of arrival
of migrants to Mexico has been recent
(last 2 weeks)?



SERVICES DURING THE PANDEMIC

CHANGING DEMANDS BY SERVICES

On a general level, the trend is marked by an increase in the number of humanitarian services demanded by migrants who seek out institutions and organizations, which shows that migrant's needs continue to grow. However, fewer people are approaching organizations to request services. 52 per cent of key informants stated that the number of migrants requesting services has decreased, but that during the month of July there was a slight increase in their needs compared to June.

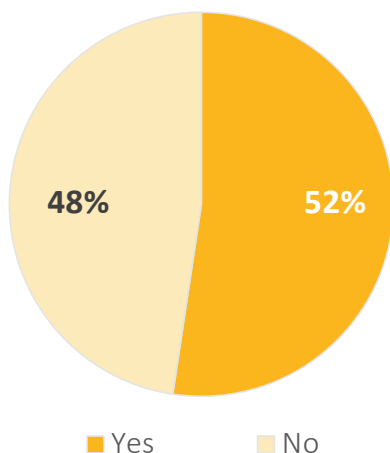
The organizations and institutions consulted focus mainly on providing services related to psychosocial care, protection of people in vulnerable conditions and protection of victims of gender-based violence. These services cover medical attention, mental health, temporary shelter, and legal support if the victim requests it.

To a lesser extent, they focus on the provision of services related to transportation, shelter or clothing, hygiene products and labor referrals.

Particularly in terms of labor referral, it was identified that it has not been possible to continue with ongoing processes at the government level due to the closure of offices following the impacts of the pandemic.

Some shelters with people staying at their facilities stated that they are providing training in various trades related to cosmetology, cooking, and crafts, among others, while services are being opened. Agreements are in place with government institutions to provide formal certification of acquired skills.

Has there been any change in the number of migrants requesting your organization's services due to the pandemic?



Those organizations that have attended to people who are applying for shelter have also identified that the processes have been delayed by the closure of government offices. As a result, many migrants are uncertain about how to follow up and resolve their applications.

SERVICES



INFORMATION ON ACCESS TO PHYSICAL HEALTH SERVICES

Higher demand in six organizations and institutions (33%) out of 18



INFORMATION ON ACCESS TO TESTING FOR COVID-19

There were no requests for services from nine organizations and institutions (56%) out of 16



MEDICATION

Higher demand in ten organizations and institutions (59%) out of 17



PSYCHOSOCIAL CARE SERVICES

Higher demand in nine organizations and institutions (45%) out of 20 that provide the service



HYGIENE PRODUCTS

Higher demand in 11 (85%) organizations out of 12 that provided the service



PROTECTION TO PEOPLE IN A VULNERABLE CONDITION

Higher demand in 12 (60%) organizations out of 20



FAMILY REUNIFICATION

No change in demand (downward trend) in nine (43%) organizations out of 15 that provided the service



FOOD

Higher demand in 11 (73%) organizations out of 15 that provided the service



TRANSPORTATION

Higher demand in five (24%) of ten organizations offering the service



CLOTHING

Higher demand in four (33%) organizations out of 11 that provided the service



ACCESS TO LEGAL SERVICES

Higher demand in six organizations and institutions (35%) out of 17



SHELTER

Higher demand in seven (58%) organizations out of 12 that provided the service



LABOR REFERRALS

Higher demand in four organizations (31%) out of 13



**VOLUNTARY RETURN
INFORMATION**

Higher demand at six organizations and institutions (43%) out of 14



**ORIENTATION FOR FUNERAL
SERVICES AND REPATRIATION
OF BODIES**

Higher demand at five organizations and institutions (36%) out of 14



**APPLICATION FOR REFUGEE OR
INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION**

Lower demand at seven organizations and institutions (39%) out of 18



LEGAL ADVICE

Higher demand at seven organizations (41%) out of 17



**REPORTING HUMAN
TRAFFICKING CASES**

There were no requests for services from eight institutions and organizations (47%) out of 17



**MIGRATION REGULATION
AND PROCEDURES**

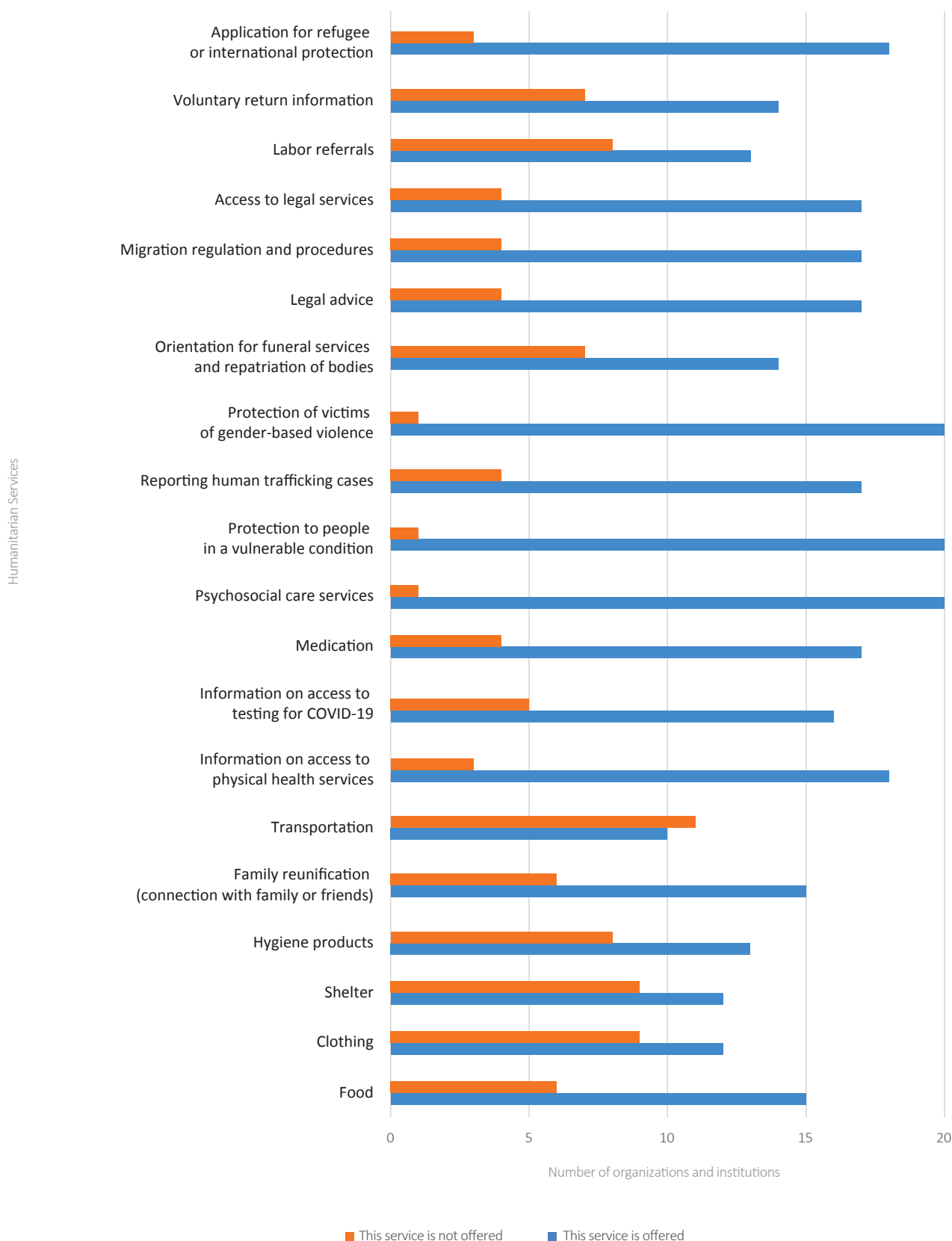
Higher demand in 11 organizations and institutions (65%) out of 17



**PROTECTION OF VICTIMS OF
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**

Higher demand from six (30%) organizations and institutions out of 20

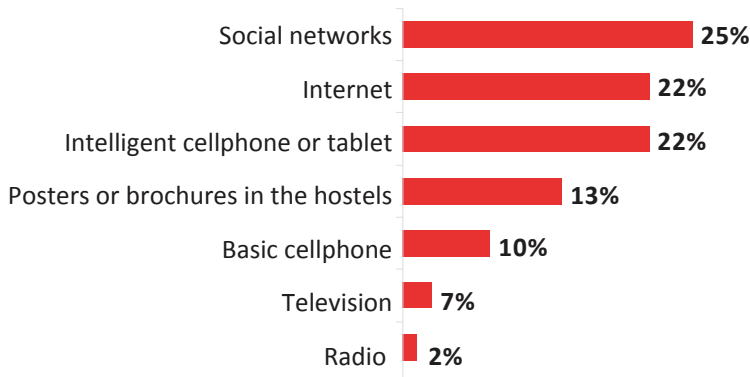
Offer of humanitarian services according to the number of organizations and institutions



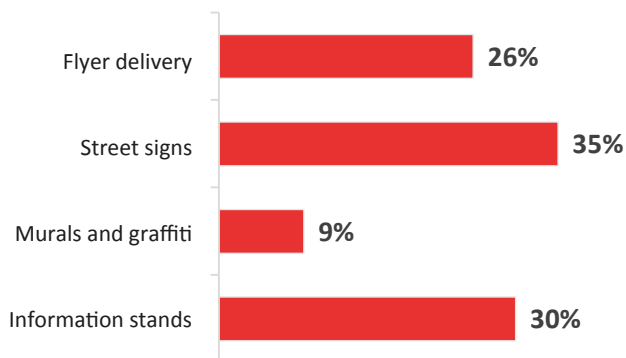
ACCESS TO INFORMATION

81 per cent of key informants indicated that they are aware of the means most used by migrants to get information. In terms of internet use, 48 per cent indicated that some people can access the internet and 48 per cent said that migrants access the internet through smartphones that they share with family and friends. 42 per cent indicated that migrants use WhatsApp to inform themselves; 34 per cent said that migrants use Facebook to interact with others.

What are the means of communication most used by migrants?



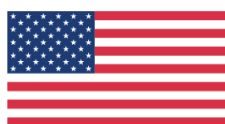
Face-to-face communication: which are most effective in informing migrants?



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