DTM AFGHANISTAN
RETURNEE LONGITUDINAL SURVEY (RLS)

DTM IOM DISPLACEMENT TRACKING MATRIX

Funded by
the European Union

ROUND 8 (October 2022)

The RLS is a tool developed under the European Union (EU) funded project "Displacement Tracking Matrix Regional Evidence for Migration Analysis and Policy (DTM REMAP)" to improve understanding of returnees' profiles, living conditions, and reintegration processes both in the short and long term. To this end, data is collected over the course of several years at regular intervals.

This report provides a snapshot of the eighth round of RLS data collection, which took place from 03 to 19 October 2022 among Afghan migrants who had returned from Türkiye or the EU between January 2018 and July 2021. A total of 563 returnees (489 from Türkiye and 74 from the EU) were interviewed over the phone across 94 districts in 16 provinces.

The key finding of the RLS Round 8 is that returnees continue to experience significant economic and food-related challenges. Most of the respondents (96%) indicated that their household monthly income was not enough to provide for their family's basic needs and all respondents reduced the quantity and quality of their food intake sometimes, often, or very often because of its cost.

The largest share of respondents reported that they were unemployed (44%) followed by those who were working for daily wages (40%). It should be noted that daily wages cannot be considered as a stable source of employment as most returnees are not able to work for daily wages on a regular basis. Especially in rural areas, daily wage workers are mostly dependent on seasonal work from the agricultural sector, resulting in fewer job opportunities during the less intense agricultural seasons. Respondents who reported working for daily wages worked, on average, 16 days per month.
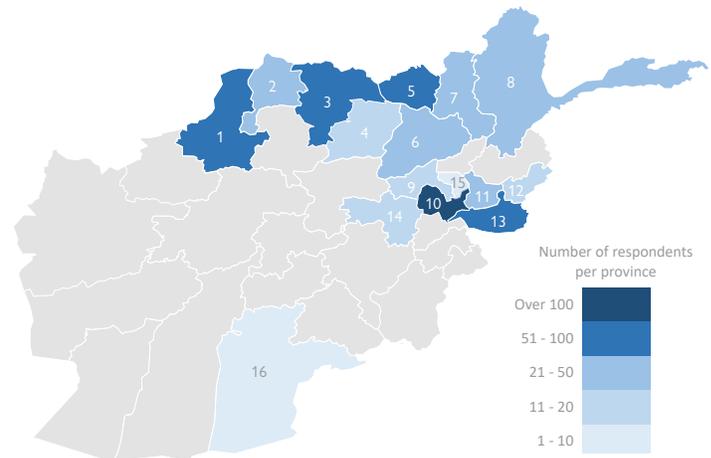
Fourteen per cent of participants reported having children in the household who worked. Among the children who were working, 36 per cent engaged in street vending, 28 per cent worked in agriculture, 13 per cent worked in shops or restaurants and 16 per cent participated in any type of work that was offered to them.

KEY FIGURES

563
Total respondents

489
Respondents who returned from Türkiye

74
Respondents who returned from the EU

TARGET PROVINCES

Number of respondents per province

Over 100
51 - 100
21 - 50
11 - 20
1 - 10

1. Faryab
2. Jawzjan
3. Balkh
4. Samangan
5. Kunduz
6. Baghlan
7. Takhar
8. Badakhshan
9. Parwan
10. Kabul
11. Laghman
12. Kunar
13. Nangarhar
14. Wardak
15. Kapisa
16. Kandahar

EMPLOYMENT STATUS

What is your current employment status?

Unemployed	Daily wages	Self-employed	Contractor	Other
44%	40%	9%	2%	5%
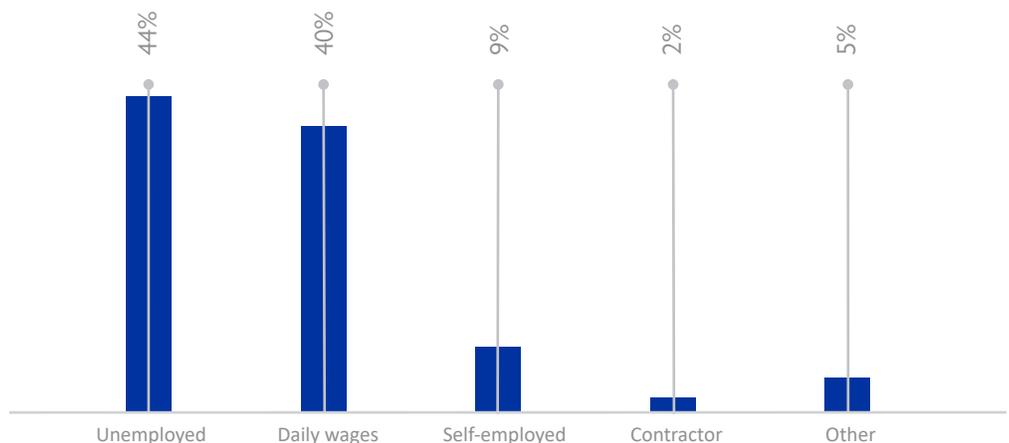
If you have children (<18 years old) in your household, are they working?

YES 14%
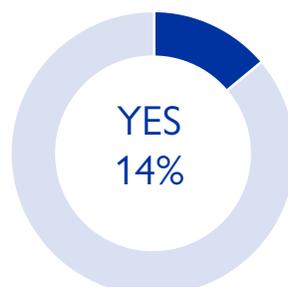
If yes, what type of work do they do?
(Top 4 answers)

1. Street vending 36%
2. Agriculture 28%
3. Any type of work 16%
4. Shop or restaurant 13%

At the time of the interview, 83 per cent at the personal level and 81 per cent at the household level reported that their economic situation had worsened since the last interview (Round 7: August - September 2022).

Similarly, to previous rounds, participants in the RLS remained situated in low-income brackets. Thirty-five per cent of respondents earned no income at the personal level. Fifty-nine per cent of respondents said that their monthly household income was situated between USD 1-57[1]. Fifty-two per cent also reported their personal income being in this range.
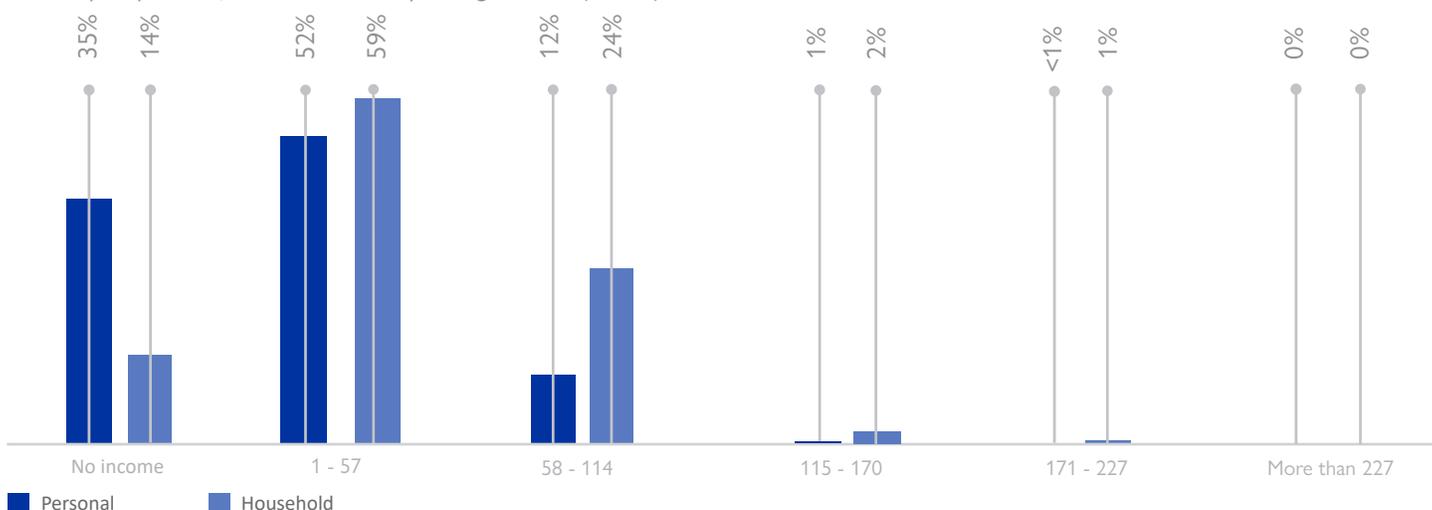
PERSONAL AND HOUSEHOLD ECONOMIC SITUATION

Has your personal/household economic situation improved since the last interview?

Personal: 3% / 14% / 83%
Household: 2% / 17% / 81%

■ Yes, improved   ■ Remained the same   ■ No, worsened
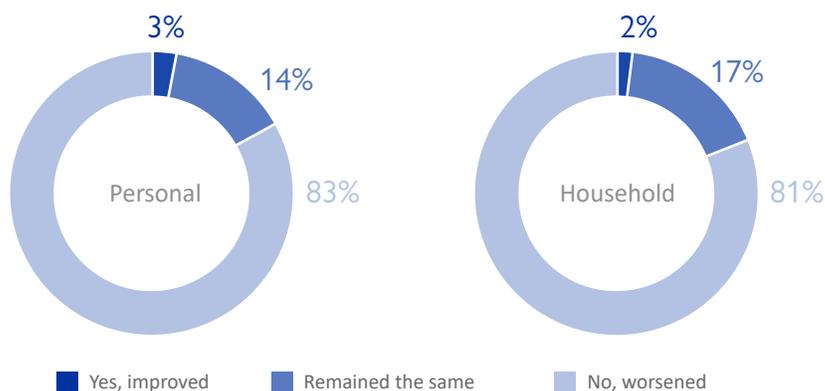
PERSONAL AND HOUSEHOLD INCOME

What is your personal/household monthly average income (in USD)[1]?

	No income	1 - 57	58 - 114	115 - 170	171 - 227	More than 227
Personal	35%	52%	12%	1%	<1%	0%
Household	14%	59%	24%	2%	1%	0%

■ Personal   ■ Household

HOUSEHOLD INCOME SITUATION

Is the household's monthly income enough to provide for your family's basic needs?

No
96%
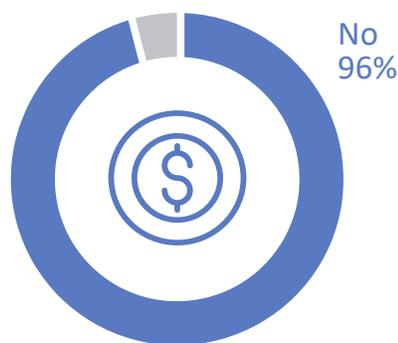
If the household income is not enough, how do you cover for expenditures?
(Top 5 answers, select multiple)

Borrow money from friends/relatives	96%
Reduce expenditures on food (reduce quality/quantity of food, etc.)	91%
Reduce expenditures on health and non-food items	28%
Humanitarian assistance and donations	13%
Selling productive asset or means of transport	13%

Most respondents (96%) reported that their household income was not enough to cover their basic needs. Common coping mechanisms for insufficient income include borrowing money from friends or relatives (96%), reducing food expenditures (91%), reducing expenditures on health and non-food items (28%), relying on humanitarian assistance and donations (13%) and selling productive assets or means of transportation (13%).

[1] Data was originally collected in Afghani. The exchange rate was 88.18 AFN to 1 USD during round 8 of data collection (14th October 2022) according to the UN Operational Rates of Exchange.

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Have you received any humanitarian assistance since the last interview?

Yes 10%

If yes, what type of assistance did you receive?

1 Food assistance 84%
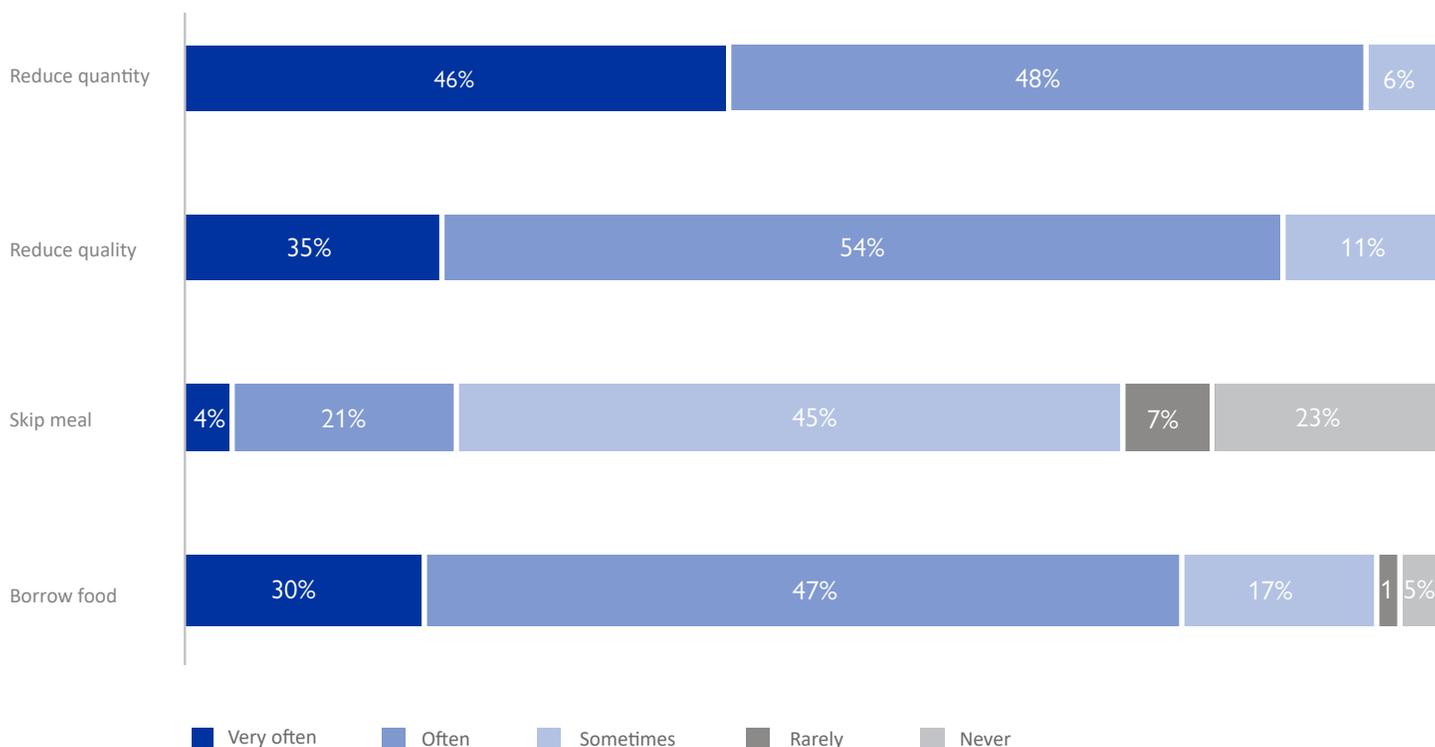
2 Financial assistance 16%

Participants were asked if they had received any humanitarian assistance. Ten per cent had received humanitarian assistance since the last interview (Round 7) either from an international organization, the United Nations (UN), or personal sources. Ninety per cent of respondents had not received any humanitarian assistance.

Of those who had received humanitarian assistance, a large majority indicated they had received food assistance (84%) and 16 per cent received financial assistance (cash).
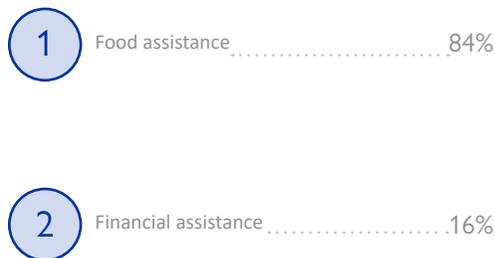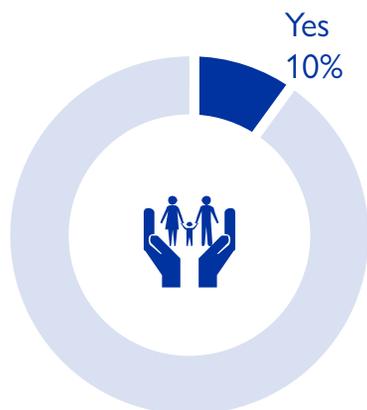
FOOD INSECURITY

Since the last interview, how often did you have to reduce the quantity/quality of your food, skip meals or borrow food because of the cost of food?

	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Reduce quantity	46%	48%	6%		
Reduce quality	35%	54%	11%		
Skip meal	4%	21%	45%	7%	23%
Borrow food	30%	47%	17%	1%	5%

Legend: ■ Very often ■ Often ■ Sometimes ■ Rarely ■ Never

Participants were asked about coping mechanisms in response to food insecurity. Reducing food quantity and quality and borrowing food were the coping mechanisms used most frequently by the respondents. Thirty per cent of the respondents reported borrowing food very often and 47 per cent often. Furthermore, a large majority of participants reduced the quantity and quality of their food often or very often (94% and 89%, respectively). One-fourth of all participants reported skipping meals often or very often to cope with food insecurity (25%).

Community safety ratings among participants were generally positive, with 57 per cent of respondents reporting that the safety situation in their community was good or very good at the personal level and at the household level. Thirty-four per cent of participants at the personal level and 35 per cent at the household level, however, rated safety levels as poor or very poor in their communities.

Sixty-four per cent of interviewees said they felt they were able to continue to stay and live in Afghanistan. Among these participants, people who had returned from the EU (24%) were less likely to respond that they could stay in Afghanistan compared to people who had returned from Türkiye (70%).

Participants were also asked if they had the intention to migrate abroad in the next six months. Forty-seven per cent of respondents indicated that they would like to re-migrate in the next six months, this increased from 36 per cent in Round 7. Respondents who had returned from the EU (76%) were more likely to have intentions to re-migrate compared to respondents who had returned from Türkiye (43%).

PERSONAL AND HOUSEHOLD SAFETY

How would you rate the safety level inside your community for **yourself**?

Very good	16%
Good	41%
Fair	8%
Poor	24%
Very Poor	10%
Non-existent	1%

How would you rate the safety level inside your community for your **household**?

Very good	16%
Good	41%
Fair	7%
Poor	25%
Very Poor	10%
Non-existent	1%

RE-MIGRATION INTENTIONS

Do you feel you are able to stay and live in Afghanistan (Total respondents and by country of return)?

Total — Yes 64%

Türkiye — Yes 70%

The EU — Yes 24%

Do you have any intention to migrate again during the next six months (Total respondents and by country of return)?

Total — Yes 47%

Türkiye — Yes 43%

The EU — Yes 76%