

Profiles and needs of caregivers and children on the move in Sudan

Sudan hosts over 1.1 million refugees and asylum seekers¹ and over 500,000 migrants,² many of whom are travelling and/or living with children under their care.³ This snapshot sheds light on the profiles of refugee and migrant caregivers⁴ in Sudan; the parental or other relationships and care arrangements with the children under their care; their level of access to, and needs for, assistance and services related to the children under their care; as well as their perception of the protection risks faced by children on the move. This snapshot is produced as part of a research partnership with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and focusing on children and youth on the move along the Central Mediterranean Route.

Key findings

- 63% of caregivers were travelling and/or living with four or more children under their care.
- 86% of respondents reported being the sole caregiver to the children.
- 42% of the respondents had a source of income, underscoring the vulnerability of caregivers and their children.
- 47% of caregivers were travelling with at least one child who was not their son/daughter.
- Informal caretaker arrangements (caregivers who were not parents, grandparents, stepparents or legal guardians) were often temporary and confined to their stay in the current city/country (30/43).
- 73% of caregivers indicated that children under their care were not accessing any form of education or early childcare services. This was the case for all (47) South Sudanese respondents.

- Caregivers most often identified education (71%) and healthcare (62%) as current needs for their children.
- Boys are reported to be more at risk of discrimination and detention in Sudan, while girls are more at risk of insults, harassment and sexual violence.

Data and profiles

This snapshot draws on 106 4Mi surveys conducted remotely with adult refugees and migrants in Sudan in 2022, who were travelling or living with children under their care at the time of interview. The majority of respondents (also referred to as caregivers) were interviewed in Khartoum (82%), while some were in Kassala (14%), Wad Sharife (3%) or White Nile State (1%). As per 4Mi's targeting strategy, all respondents had arrived in Sudan less than two years prior to interview. Specifically, 37% had been in Sudan for less than 6 months, 30% between 6 and 12 months and 33% between one and two years.

53% of respondents were women and 47% were men. 7% of respondents were aged between 18 and 24, almost half (48%) were aged between 25 and 34 and 44% were aged 35 or older. Respondents' countries of nationality included South Sudan (44%), Eritrea (36%), Ethiopia (14%), Chad (3%), Central African Republic (2%) and Niger (1%). While all South Sudanese respondents (47/47) reported intending to stay in Sudan, among other nationalities, most (39/59) indicated that they had not reached the end of their journeys, suggesting plans of onward movement from Sudan. Preferred destinations included Canada (24), Europe (8), Australia (7) or other destinations (4). 12% of respondents reported that they would have chosen another destination if they were not travelling with children.

1 UNHCR, 2022. [UNHCR Sudan Data Portal](#)

2 IOM, 2022. [DTM Sudan](#)

3 Among 1,493 4Mi respondents interviewed in Sudan between February 2021 and May 2022, 32% were travelling or living with children under their care.

4 A caregiver is someone who provides daily care, protection and supervision of a child. This does not necessarily imply legal responsibility or a biological relationship.

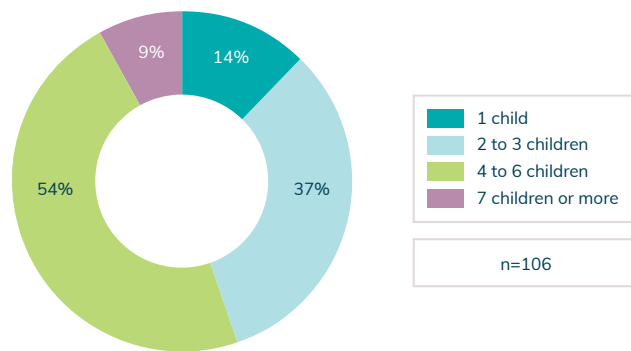
The majority of respondents were sole caregivers and fewer than half had a source of income in Sudan

86% of respondents were sole caregivers, of which half were women (51%), and just 42% (n=45) had a source of income at the time of interview, underscoring the vulnerability of caregivers and their children along the route. Among those with a source of income, most (31) were working and 17 indicated that relatives either in the country of origin or from the diaspora were sending them money (3 respondents were both working and receiving money).

Almost two-thirds of caregivers were travelling/living with four or more children

The majority (86%) of interviewed refugee and migrant caregivers were travelling/living with more than one child (Figure 1). In fact, 63% were travelling/living with four or more children. While the majority of caregivers interviewed were women, it was more common for men to be travelling/living with four or more children (40/50) than it was for women (27/56). This finding is irrespective of whether a respondent reported being the sole caregiver. Close to all South Sudanese respondents were caregivers to four or more children (45/47).

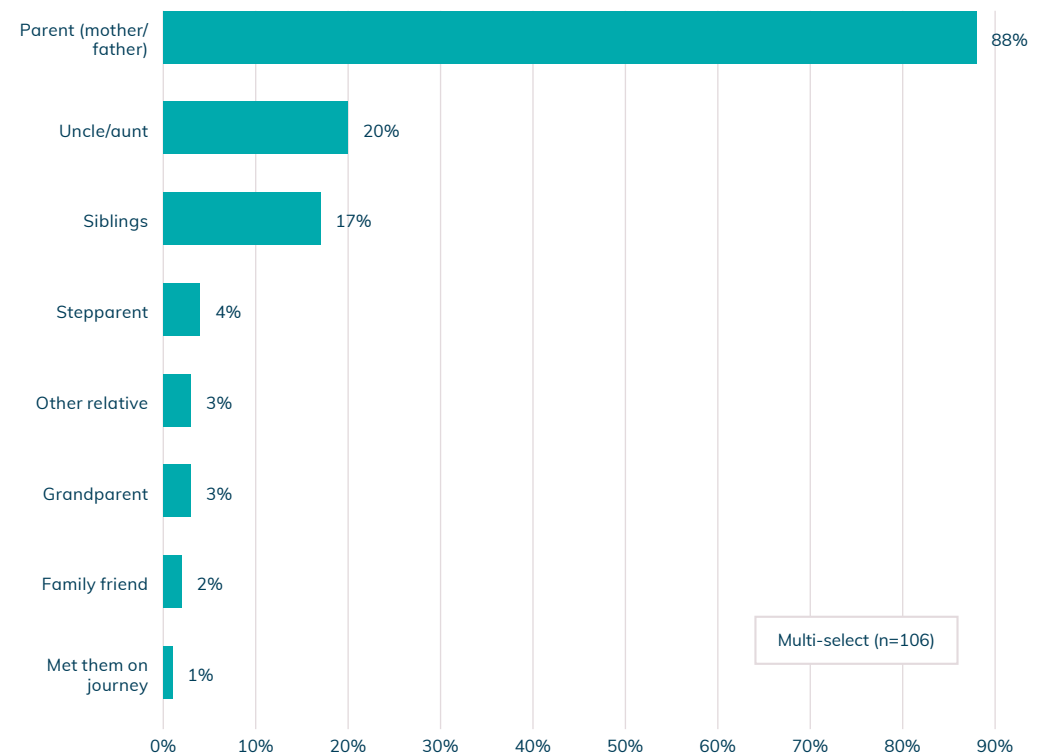
Figure 1. How many children are currently under your care?



Almost half of respondents were travelling with at least one child that was not their son/daughter

In most cases (88%), caregivers were the parents of at least one child with whom they were travelling/living.⁵ Nevertheless, 47% of respondents described themselves as uncles/aunts (20%), siblings (17%), stepparents (4%), grandparents (3%), other relatives (3%), family friends (2%) or someone they had met on the journey (1%) of at least one child under their care. Men and women indicated similar care relationships, although most respondents travelling with younger siblings were men (13/18).

Figure 2. What is your relationship with these children? (n=106; multiselect)



⁵ Relationships were self-reported by respondents and the research team did not ask respondents to qualify whether any self-identified family ties were biological.

Some care arrangements develop along the route and are temporary in nature

The majority (92%) of interviewed caregivers had started their journeys with the children under their care, while some had taken responsibility for children: after arrival in Sudan (4%), during the journey (2%) and/or after they were born during the journey (4%). Among the 43 respondents who were not parents, stepparents, grandparents or legal guardians, 30 indicated that the current care arrangements were temporary and intended to last for as long as they were in the current city/country. Others indicated the arrangement was going to last until the end of the journey/reaching of the intended destination (4), until the legal guardian of the children took them back (3) or did not know (6).

Financial constraints prevent South Sudanese children's access to education or early childcare

27% of caregivers reported that the children under their care were attending some sort of education or early childcare service in the location of interview in Sudan. Among these respondents (n=29), some indicated their children were attending formal primary/secondary school (21), formal daycare (12) or informal daycare (2). None of the 47 South Sudanese caregivers reported that their children were accessing education or early childcare services. Among Ethiopian and Eritrean respondents, access to education was more frequently indicated, particularly among Ethiopians (12/15 and 16/38, respectively).

Most respondents who reported not accessing education or early childcare services explained this was due to a lack of financial resources (54/77), while others outlined a lack of knowledge/information about available services (12), not wanting their children to use these services (12) or the short duration of stay in the location (7). Close to all (46/47) South Sudanese respondents indicated a lack of financial resources as the reason for the lack of access, while Eritreans often stated they did not want the children to use the services (12/22) or that their stay in the location was too short and they intended to move onward (7). These Eritreans respondents explained that because schooling was expensive, they rather save their funds for the next phase of the journey, either for onward movement or the hope of being resettled, than pay for school fees.

Education and healthcare were most commonly identified as the greatest needs for children

In line with the reported low access to education and early childcare services, 71% of respondents said that their children's greatest need was education. Caregivers also frequently mentioned healthcare (62%), vocational training (55%), daycare (47%), shelter (41%) and food (37%). Needs varied by nationality. Among South Sudanese, all (47) respondents identified the need for education and vocational training and 38 identified healthcare. Among Ethiopians, food (15/15), shelter (14) and healthcare (14) were the most commonly reported needs. Eritrean respondents identified a wider array of needs, including food (14/38), education (13) and socio-educational activities (11).

Figure 3. What type of assistance or service do the children in your care need the most?

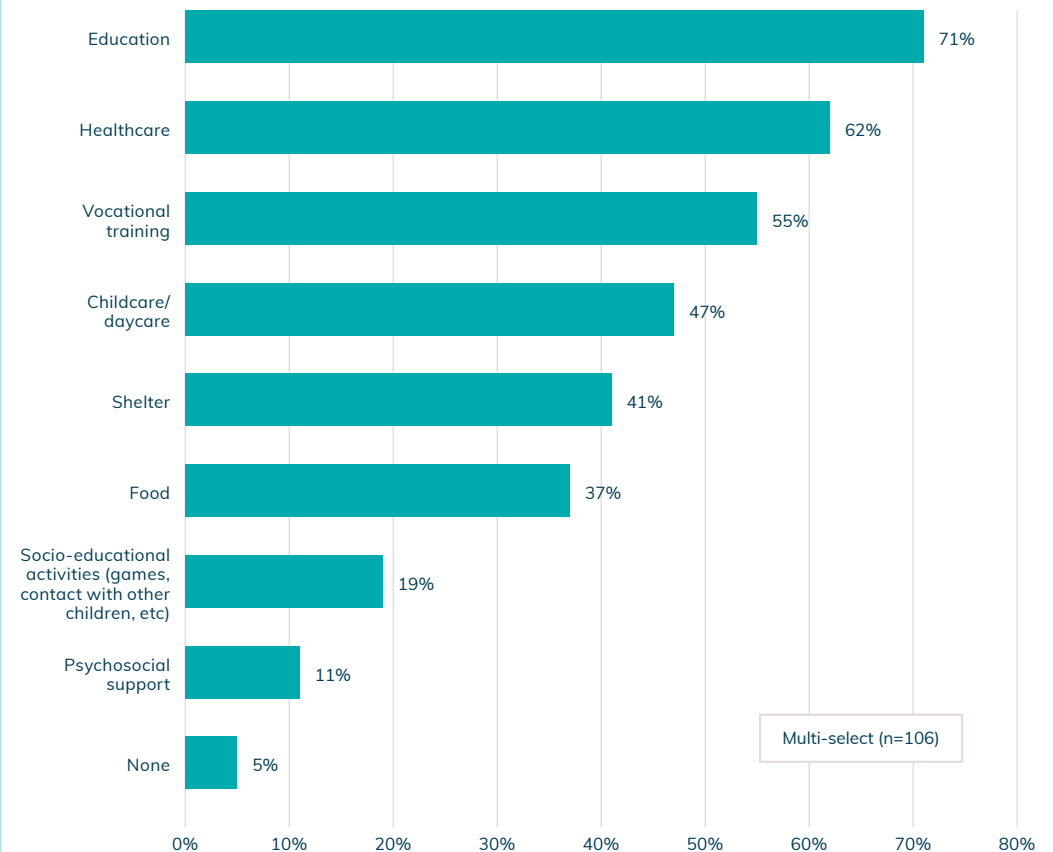
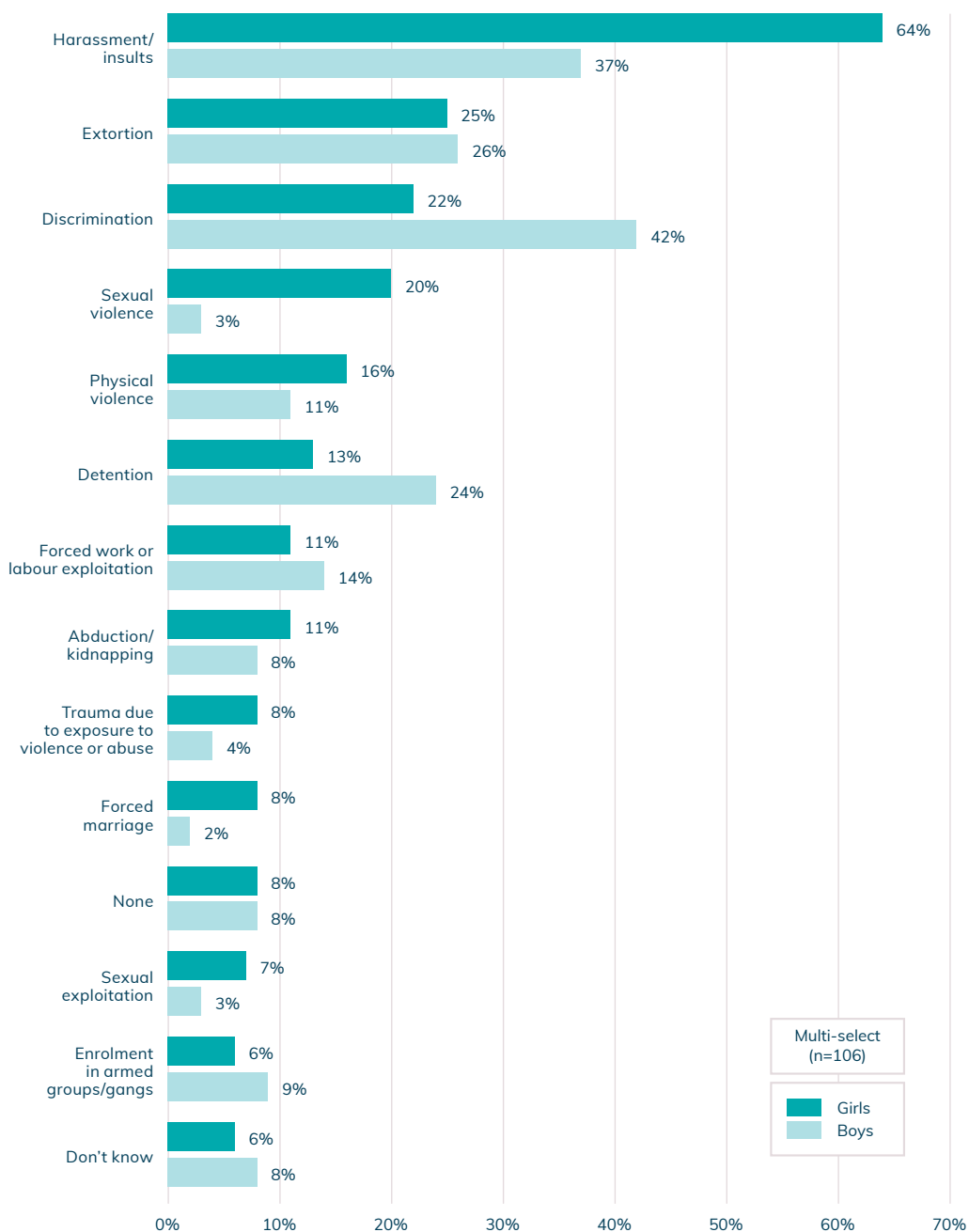


Figure 4. What risks do girl/boy refugees and migrants face in your current location?



Boys perceived to be more at risk of discrimination and detention; girls more at risk of harassment and sexual violence

The most common risks that caregivers identified for girls in Sudan were harassment/insults (64%), extortion (25%), discrimination (22%) and sexual violence (20%). Caregivers perceived boys to be most at risk of discrimination (42%), followed by harassment/insults (37%), extortion (26%) and detention (24%). Eritrean respondents more frequently cited discrimination as a risk for both girls (16/38) and boys (15/38) and detention for boys (11/38) than did respondents of other nationalities. South Sudanese respondents, on the other hand, more frequently identified extortion as a risk for girls (16/47) and forced work or labour exploitation for boys (21/47).



4Mi data collection

[4Mi](#) is the Mixed Migration Centre's flagship primary data collection system, an innovative approach that helps fill knowledge gaps, and inform policy and response regarding the nature of mixed migratory movements and the protection risks for refugees and migrants on the move. 4Mi field enumerators are currently collecting data through direct interviews with refugees and migrants in East and Southern Africa, North Africa, West Africa, Europe, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean.

Note that the sampling approach means that the findings derived from the surveyed sample provide rich insights, but the figures cannot be used to make inferences about the total population. See more 4Mi analysis and details on methodology at:

www.mixedmigration.org/4mi