

Refugee Women's Needs: The Athens Case

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Abstract

Medicins sans Frontiers estimates that twenty-five per cent of new asylum-seeking arrivals in Athens in 2016 were women [1]. Despite the sizable number of women asylum seekers arriving in Athens, women's voices are often excluded from research on refugee needs. This research sought to understand the needs of women asylum seekers in Athens through the collection of qualitative data on their needs and experiences upon arriving in Athens. Twelve women from Syria, Afghanistan and other countries (background withheld for confidentiality) participated. The sampled women demonstrated an acute understanding of their own needs and the needs of their communities. While many of the women expressed that their own greatest needs at the time of the interviews related to self-sufficiency, they also reflected on their past experiences and daily observations to inform their understandings of the needs of their communities. Although perceived community needs varied based on whether women perceived their communities as permanent or transitory in Athens, unmet basic needs, especially housing, were a theme across women's responses. The study's findings also indicate that it would be beneficial for refugee support ecosystems in Greece to shift from a needs-based approach to refugee support to a rights-based approach and that further research into the needs of women refugees in Athens may help shed light on durable solutions for this population.

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Introduction

Medicins sans Frontiers estimates that twenty-five percent of new asylum-seeking arrivals in Athens in 2016 were women [1]. These women arrived from diverse countries, including Afghanistan, China, Iran, Iraq, Syria and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Every woman brought unique experiences and, accordingly, had unique needs upon her arrival in Greece. The study of women's needs is particularly important in the Athens context as men and women tend to have distinct roles in the societies from which most of the asylum-seekers originate, and therefore may have different needs upon arrival [2].

Despite the sizable number of women asylum seekers arriving in Athens, women's voices are often excluded from research on refugee needs. This is partially due to perceptions that refugee women may be unable to give informed consent to participate in research due to their perceived vulnerability [3, 4]. This perception of refugee women's vulnerability contributes to researchers' reluctance to engage in research on refugee women both due to perceptions that women refugees are the most vulnerable of the vulnerable, as well understandings that link vulnerability with incapacity and an inability to make informed decisions about one's own well-being [5, 6]. Although often framed by well-intentioned researchers as a protective consideration, the exclusion of refugee women's voices from research processes can have tangible negative effects on the support to which they have access and on their well-being [4, 7].

This study seeks to understand the needs of women refugees in Athens in 2017 and the degree to which these needs are

being met, with the end goal of shedding light on new potential pathways to durable solutions for women refugees in Greece.

Methods

The research was conducted in Athens, Greece between May 10th and June 15th, 2017. Qualitative data was gathered through a series of structured interviews, unstructured conversations, and participant observations relating to the experiences of twelve refugee women living in Athens, Greece. The term "refugee" refers to either individuals who have been granted asylum in Greece and are in possession of formal documentation verifying their asylum status, or those who were residing in Greece and awaiting relocation through family reunification or the EU relocation scheme at the time this research was conducted. All individuals who agreed to participate in the study completed the study.

This mixed method study design was used to gain a comprehensive understanding of these women's needs and experiences. Questions related to the top needs of women from each research participant's country of origin now living in Athens and the degree to which participants believed these needs were met by existing support structures. Participants were also asked about their journeys to Greece, including the route they took and their date of arrival. These questions were asked in order to develop a holistic understanding of each participants' experiences, and how these experiences shaped

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Table 1 Types of Needs Identified by Refugee Women in Athens

Immediate Needs	Self-Sufficiency Needs	Values-Based Needs
Accommodation	Employment	Safety
Financial Support	Greek Language Lessons	Human Rights
Childcare	Education	Respect
Medical Care	Relationships with Greeks	
Access to Information	Access to Information	

their needs and their perceptions of the needs of others at the time of the interview. Half of the interviews were conducted in English, while the other half were conducted with the assistance of trained interpreters who were employees, volunteers and participants at the organization where the research was conducted.

Refugee women at a women's center in Athens were invited to participate in interviews about the experiences and needs of women from their national backgrounds who are residing in Greece. All participants signed consent forms that confirmed their voluntary participation in the study and their understanding that there was neither compensation for participation in the research, nor was there a penalty for abstaining from the study. A written consent form was offered in English and was interpreted verbally into the participants' native languages by trained interpreters. Participants were given the opportunity to ask questions related to the parameters of the consent form to ensure their full comprehension and agreement [4]. Because the researcher was also conducting trainings at the organization as a volunteer, it was underscored that participation in the study or lack thereof, would in no way affect women's ability to participate in these training courses. Although some researchers argue that participation in the community where the research takes place can compromise a researcher's objectivity, others highlight that community participation allows researchers to gain deeper insights into the experiences of individuals in the community and to build trust prior to conducting research [3, 8, 9]. In this situation, the researcher determined that the benefits of community participation outweighed the potential drawbacks. Most women who took part in training courses led by the researcher declined to participate in the study, indicating that participants did not feel coerced to take part in the interviews.

The twelve participants completed 20-30-minute transcribed interviews about the needs and experiences of individuals from their national communities in Athens. This data was coupled with information collected through informal conversations with research participants as well as observations that were recorded by the researcher in a field journal [9]. This qualitative approach was selected to best allow for the collection of data that accounts for the complex and multi-faceted nature of women's refugee experiences [10]. Because this research involved direct interactions between the researcher and research participants, the intersectional identities of the researcher, in this case, a woman and United States citizen with a high level of formal education, were inextricable from the research itself [11, 12].

Results

Despite this study's small sample size, with twelve participants consenting to and completing the study, patterns emerged regarding the experiences and needs of women refugees in Athens. These patterns offer valuable insights for future research

into supports that can offer women refugees in Greece effective pathways to durable solutions. Through interviews with four Afghan women, three Syrian women, an Iraqi woman and four women from other backgrounds whose individual information is withheld due to concerns about confidentiality, the effects of the support available to refugee women on their pursuit of durable solutions was studied. Three key findings emerged relating to: 1) Women's perceptions about their communities' top needs upon arrival in Athens, 2) Available supports and their effects on refugee women's lives, and 3) The relationship between the extent to which women's basic needs are met and their affinity for Athens and desire to integrate.

Women's perceptions about their communities' top needs upon arrival in Athens

In order to develop an understanding of the needs of different refugee communities in Athens, participants were asked about the top needs of others from their communities. For example, "After arriving in Athens, what are the top three needs of women from the community you come from?" and "To what degree do you think that women from the community you come from have these needs met upon their arrival in Athens?" Questions were open-ended and respondents often used personal anecdotes to justify their answers. The respondents identified three types of needs in their communities: immediate needs, self-sufficiency needs and values-based needs. Immediate needs are basic survival needs that focus on the distribution of material items and provision of direct services. Self-sufficiency needs focus on equipping individuals with the skills to support themselves, and values-based needs are less tangible needs that relate to feelings participants thought members of their communities needed to have or ways that they needed to be treated. **Table 1** categorizes the needs highlighted in participant interviews.

In addition to affirming Christopoulou and Leontsini's (2017) finding that the needs of migrant women in Greece differed by country of origin, a trend emerged that indicated that women who perceived Athens as a transit city for their communities tended to identify short-term immediate needs (e.g., accommodation and financial support) among the top needs for their community members. While women who viewed Athens as the final destination for women from their communities largely identified needs oriented toward long-term self-sufficiency, such as education, employment and Greek language lessons. Women's perceptions of Greece as a transit or destination country were determined by their responses to questions about their plans to stay in Greece as well as the framing of their responses about their communities. For example, a 22-year-old female said,

"I am waiting to go to Sweden to join my sister and brothers there. I am trying to go through family reunification but there have been some problems because I am over 18. As Syrians, we can get relocation, but we can't say where we will go. If I can't go [through reunification] I will find

Table 2 Perceived Needs of other Women Refugees in Greece (by Nationality)

Need	Afghans	Syrians	Iraqis	Other	Total
Accommodation	4	3	1	1	9
Financial Support	1	3	1	0	5
Employment	1	0	0	3	4
Greek Language	1	0	1	2	4
Safety	0	3	0	0	3
Education	2	0	0	0	2
Relationships with Greeks	1	0	0	1	2
Human Rights	0	0	0	2	2
Respect	0	0	0	2	2
Childcare	1	0	0	0	1
Medical Care	1	0	0	0	1
Access to Information	0	1	0	0	1

another way to get to Sweden.”

The other Syrians and the Iraqi in the sample also highlighted that Greece was generally a transit country for members of their communities, even though one of the Syrian participants planned to stay in Greece permanently.

“I will stay in Greece. I was selected for relocation by Estonia, but then they interviewed us and told us that Estonia doesn’t want us anymore.”

On the other hand, all of the Afghans in the sample acknowledged that they would stay in Greece and that for people from their community, Greece was usually the final destination. All women sampled from other countries saw Greece as the final destination for members of their communities, even if they personally planned to move to another country for family reunification. A 19-year-old who registered as 17 on her legal documents in order to be eligible for family reunification said:

“I have to go to Germany [for family reunification]. I am just waiting for my ticket. My sister is there. She is 22 and married. She is in Germany and my brother and I will travel there to join her. Most [people from my country] come here because they have a big problem with the government or something. They come to Greece so that they can live here and have freedom.”

A 34-year-old female also noted that Greece was a destination for members of her community:

“I traveled here from my country on a visa for tourism. When I arrived, I applied for asylum and stayed. This is what everyone from my community does. It’s not safe to be Christian in [my country], but it’s easy to get a visa to Greece, so we come here to practice our religion safely.”

Despite the aforementioned trends, the correlation (.526) between participants’ identification of Athens as the final destination for their community members and an emphasis on self-sufficiency needs when asked about the top needs for members of their communities was not found to be statistically significant.

Table 2 shows the variation in perceived needs of women

refugees in Greece by nationality. As documented, needs included accommodation, financial support, employment and Greek language lessons. Variations of need were observed between refugees of Iraqi, Syrian, Afghan and other nationalities. Although a greater prioritization of self-sufficiency needs among women who viewed Athens as the final destination for members of their communities was evident, respondents identified some universal needs. Specifically, a strong emphasis was placed on the need for accommodation support.

For women of all backgrounds, accommodation was identified as a top need and a persistent challenge to find and maintain. One 17-year-old respondent from Afghanistan stated:

“In other countries [refugees] stay in a camp for a while then go to a house, but here, they stay in a camp for a while then go to the street when they close the camp.”

The same week that many of the interviews were conducted, the Elliniko camp at the old Athens airport was evacuated and shut down [13]. That week, some of the Afghan respondents found themselves homeless. These respondents reported that they were not offered support or guidance for securing new accommodation after the closure of the camp, and that the other camps in the city were already full.

Still, other respondents, including a 22-year-old female, never had the option of going to a camp upon arrival in Athens.

“I came to Athens in July 2016 and the camp was full, so I was walking in the street and I met a Syrian woman. She told me that she was living at this hotel and that I could go ask to stay there...At first they said we don’t have a place so I asked them about finding another place. They gave me an address but I couldn’t find another place to stay so I went back and they told me that I could stay there until I found another solution...But I still need accommodation because this place is not stable. It’s a squat. It’s safe but any minute the police can come and tell people to go out.”

Respondents also noted that ironically, individuals who were leaving Greece through the EU relocation program had access to the best accommodation support:

“We get a house now until we get resettled. It’s safe here. I

Table 3 Refugee Women's Self-Assessed Top Needs

Need	Afghans	Syrians	Iraqis	Other	Total
Employment	0	2	0	2	4
Language Support	1	0	0	1	2
Education	0	0	1	0	1
Legal Support	0	1	0	0	1
Medical Care	1	0	0	0	1
Childcare Support	1	0	0	0	1
Not Answered	1	0	0	1	2

can walk outside alone and go to my classes alone.”

However, if asylum-seekers are rejected by their country of relocation and forced to stay in Greece, they lose the accommodation provided by the relocation program.

“There is nothing here, no future. There is no work, no house...When we take a residence permit in Greece we have to leave the house because the relocation program owns the house. We were registered for relocation to Estonia, but Estonia refused us later so we applied for asylum in Greece.”

Overall, respondents who intended to stay in Greece reported that they, and members of their communities, were left to secure housing on their own.

“The Syrians are lucky. They get housing help from organizations and then go to another country. We are on our own. I share a small apartment with eight people. I brought 4,000 Euros when I came here from my country and worked for a short time to make 4,000 more, but now the money is running out and I can't find a job. The organizations don't help people from [my country]. We have asylum and now we are on our own.”

While those who lived in the camp acknowledged that they were fortunate to have a place to stay, they aspired to leave the camps due to the camps' unhygienic conditions. One respondent noted,

“In my camp, I have one room with my husband. We share a bathroom with another family and the bathroom is always dirty. I clean it every day, but it never stays clean. We can't eat the camp food because it is terrible and will make us sick so we use the money from my job to buy food. We are trying to save up some money to rent a house, but we are nervous about leaving the camp. If we leave, we can't come back, so we need to make sure that we always have enough money to rent the house.”

Gender also played a role in women's ability to secure housing, with women widely seen as being in greater need of accommodation support than men. One woman shared:

“[When I came to Athens] I was with my sister and a friend of mine who I met on [Hios] island. We all came to Athens together, but because he was a guy, he couldn't find a place to stay, because when people see girls they prefer to protect them.”

Despite one woman's perceived vulnerability as a woman, she failed to secure permanent accommodation due to her relatively reduced vulnerability as an individual of majority age without

children. In fact, two refugee housing organizations rejected her because they only supported women with children and one organization rejected her because she was not a minor. Furthermore, although the perception of single mothers' vulnerability was seen as beneficial by some women who were able to find housing at shelters for single mothers, this delineation of vulnerability served to the disadvantage of those who had husbands. She said,

“I want to leave my husband, but I can't because I won't have a place to live. I went to two organizations to ask for help because I need food for my baby and want to leave my husband, but they told me that they couldn't help me because I had a husband. They told me that my husband should work to feed my baby and give me a house, but my husband refuses to work, borrows money from his friends and spends it on alcohol. When I told them this, they didn't care. They said, if you have a husband, it's his job to give you a house and we can't help you.”

All but one of the women interviewed reported that securing accommodation had been a struggle at some point after their arrival to Athens. While a few of the women had managed to secure stable housing through a support program, usually through the EU relocation program, most of them were left on their own to find housing using their, often limited, personal financial resources.

Available Supports and their Effects on Refugee Women's Lives

Respondents were asked directly about their own top need at the time of the interview, as well as the supports that were most beneficial to them during their time in Athens. Notably, **Table 3** shows that most of the top needs of women interviewed were related to self-sufficiency, such as employment, Greek language support and higher education. While there were clear distinctions between the needs perceptions of women who viewed Greece as a transit versus a final destination for their communities, no such differentiation emerged when women were asked about their own top needs, and even women who eventually planned to relocate identified self-sufficiency needs among their priorities.

Although most of the women identified immediate needs as top needs for women from their communities, when asked about their own needs, women tended to seek sustainable solutions that would promote their integration into the Greek community. One 17-year-old from Afghanistan who arrived in Greece in June 2016 said:

“I wish I had more support to learn the language so that I can go to university and get a job.”

Similarly, others expressed their desires for sustainable solutions to the challenges they face as refugees:

“I want help to find a job for my husband so that we can find a house to stay in. He is a chef. I also need to find a school for my children.”

Even women whose time in Greece was temporary due to anticipated relocation sought supports that would enable them to be self-sufficient:

“I want help finding a job and more support to learn English. Even when I go to another country this will help me because I will put the job on my CV and use English there.”

While a significant number of women in this sample identified self-sufficiency needs as their top need, the context of these interviews must not be overlooked. All research participants attended a women’s center that provided them with a network of support, inaccessible to most refugee women in the city. Because of the support provided by this center, that serves approximately 200 women in the community, participants have access to advocacy and support that assists in addressing issues that arise in their lives.

“[This center] is the most helpful thing I have in Athens because they teach many things and I get to meet people from everywhere. I like this. They help me with everything. Even when they can’t help me, they help me just by showing me that they care about me.”

Although not all the women in the sample have their basic needs met, almost all the women noted that the moral support offered by the women’s center allowed them to think about self-sufficiency solutions for themselves, even when they were struggling to address their immediate needs. In fact, nine out of twelve women mentioned the center in their interviews as one of the supports that has been valuable to them. Three participants independently stated, “This place is like a home to me. Everyone here is my family.” Still, when asked about the most beneficial support they had received since arriving in Athens, only two participants identified the center as the most beneficial. Four participants said that no support had been particularly beneficial to them, commenting that they had found everything that they viewed as beneficial on their own.

“Nothing was helpful for us. We had to do everything by ourselves. A home, a school, everything.”

“They didn’t help us. I came here because I needed medical care for my son. It’s the only reason I came to Greece. We were in Elliniko camp for two months and the cancer was all over his body, but they didn’t do anything. They didn’t give us money or a house. Nobody gets what they need.”

Three individuals noted that psychological support, provided by a hospital, a non-governmental organization (NGO), and the women’s center, had been particularly beneficial to them. One 32-year-old who escaped her country after receiving death threats said:

“[The women’s center and an NGO] helped me with my depression through psychological support and medicine.”

Another woman, a 27-year-old from Iraq, also stated that counseling had been the most beneficial support she received in Athens.

“I got psychological support from a doctor at the hospital. In Iraq, there was a big bomb and I was three meters away. Two men died and one man broke his leg and everyone was screaming. The doctor helps me with this.”

Research participant-identified needs fell within three categories: immediate needs, self-sufficiency needs, and values-based needs. Yet, they did not necessarily view the supports available for these needs as beneficial. This was often due to the complicated processes for procuring these supports or due to the low quality of the support provided. For example, one woman stated:

“The place where I am staying now, it’s a good place, but I found this place. Nobody gave me this place or helped me find it.”

Two women both commented on the substandard quality of some of the support provided, specifically for housing:

“They say we have a place to live and we should be happy. But this is not a proper place to live when we don’t have human rights. How is this a place to live if they let my son die by refusing to give us medical care? This place is not a home for humans; it is a place for animals.”

“Now that we are going to another country [through relocation], we are okay, but before, when we lived in the camp, I can’t even tell you how bad it was. It wasn’t a camp really. It was a building near Thessaloniki and we had one room for our family. But we had to go outside to the toilets and they only gave us very bad food to eat once a day. Sometimes, all we ate were packaged croissants for weeks at a time until we were sick. Some of my friends live in a school in Athens. They live in a classroom with three other families. When we ask for help, organizations tell us we are getting help. But this is not help when we can barely survive.”

However, some participants did not see their most valuable supports as things provided by organizations, but as social support from their networks. When asked about the most beneficial support she had received, one said:

“The best things for me have been language lessons and being surrounded by a Christian community. Here when I meet people, I can tell them that I’m Christian and it’s okay. I still don’t tell other people from my country that I am Christian when I meet them here, because I am afraid that they would hurt me for my religion, but when I met other Christians I can tell them and know that they support me.”

Another participant agreed that social support was particularly valuable during her time in Athens:

“Having my sister to love me and talk to me for support has made a big difference. I want to be reunited with her.”

Relationship between the extent to which women’s basic needs are met and their affinity for Athens and

desire to integrate

The study revealed that individuals who expressed that their basic needs were met at the time of the interview communicated more positive outlooks toward Greece and the Greek community than did those whose basic needs were unmet. For the purpose of this study, whether or not an individual had their basic needs met was determined by whether they listed an immediate need or a self-sufficiency need as their top need in the interview. Individuals who expressed their top need as a self-sufficiency need were considered to have their basic needs met, while those whose top need was an immediate need were considered to have their basic needs unmet. Positive perceptions of Greece were displayed through direct statements of satisfaction about one's life in Greece (e.g. "I am happy here. I have everything I need") as well as an expressed desire to integrate into Greek society (e.g. "I meet many migrants and volunteers, but I want to meet more Greek people.").

The three individuals whose basic needs were unmet expressed negativity and dissatisfaction with Greece as well as a lack of desire to integrate with the Greek community.

"I feel so sad and angry. Even when I come [to the women's center], I can only think about how sad I am. Hearing the stories of other women from Afghanistan who are happy makes me angry because their stories worked out and mine did not. I know that we have the same pain, and I feel pain at their pain and pain that my story did not work out. I need formula for my baby. Really, I need someone to take my baby until I can get an education and take care of her...I don't want to learn Greek. I'm learning English. This country has nothing for me."

"[The Greek authorities] told me I had an interview one day, but then I went to the interview and they told me I had to wait six more months. Every time they tell me something different. I don't feel like I can trust anyone here anymore."

Beyond questions of agency and autonomy, the potential for research to do harm by surfacing trauma must be considered. Women who have experienced forced displacement are often survivors of trauma, and questions relating to an individual's lived experiences may risk triggering trauma responses (4). As a precaution against inflicting trauma through research interviews, participants were asked questions about the needs of people from their communities (e.g., What do you think are the top three needs of Syrian women when they arrive in Athens? To what extent do you believe these needs are met?). However, most participants responded to the questions by conveying their personal experiences and perceptions of their own needs among their thoughts about the needs of individuals from their backgrounds.

Conclusions

The sampled women demonstrated an acute understanding of their own needs and the needs of their communities. While many of the women expressed that their own greatest needs at the time of the interviews related to self-sufficiency, they also reflected on their past experiences and daily observations to inform their understandings of the needs of their communities. Although perceived community needs varied based on whether women perceived their communities as permanent or transitory in Athens, unmet basic needs, especially housing, were a theme across women's responses.

The needs that research participants identified for themselves often differed from the needs they identified for their communities. However, as women described their communities' needs, they often used personal stories to justify their selections, indicating that, they too, either were, or had been in a position since their arrival to Greece where their communities' needs had also been their top needs. Notably, many of the women expressed that, at the time of the interviews, their own top needs were related to self-sufficiency, indicating that they had found ways to meet their basic needs despite the systemic challenges they identified. The women who had found ways to meet their basic needs expressed positive perceptions of the Greek community and a desire to integrate, while those whose basic needs were unmet expressed a negative outlook toward Greece and the Greek community and did not convey a desire to integrate.

These findings demonstrate that there is still progress to be made in providing support to refugee women in Athens that meets their basic needs and their self-sufficiency needs. They also suggest that existing services do not always respond to women's needs and that criteria for access may prevent women who need certain services from finding support. However, these findings also indicate that, when basic needs are met, women are able to consider and work toward durable solutions for themselves and their families that allow them to support themselves, contribute and integrate into the community.

The study's findings also indicate that it would be beneficial for refugee support ecosystems in Greece to shift from a needs-based approach to refugee support to a rights-based approach. By pairing basic needs support with self-sufficiency supports such as language lessons and employment support, the Greek community would benefit from the integration of and contributions of refugees, and refugee women may be able to achieve durable solutions for their families without getting stuck in cycles of vulnerability. Although the perceived needs of communities of refugee women in Athens vary based on whether they view Greece as a transit country or final destination for their communities, the need for greater accommodation support emerged across nationalities. While women whose basic needs were met expressed a desire to attain self-sufficiency and to integrate into the local community, women whose needs were unmet expressed negative perceptions of Greece and a focus on meeting immediate needs. These challenges may be solved through a shift from a needs-based approach to a rights-based approach to support for refugee women, enabling women to become self-sufficient without having to experience severe suffering before receiving support. The study also indicated some degree of misalignment between the services available to refugee women in Athens and the services they sought to access. In order to support women refugees in their pursuit of durable solutions, further research into women's understandings of their own needs and the barriers they face when attempting to meet these needs is essential.

The challenges faced by refugees attempting to access durable solutions are complex and multi-faceted. While ambiguous and inconsistent legal frameworks lead to variances in the pathways for protection and support for self-sufficiency from one country to the next, the use of vulnerability as a determining factor for support can disincentivize self-sufficiency. This can trap refugees in cycles of vulnerability, in which strides toward self-sufficiency lead to a revocation of existing supports, posing

roadblocks on their paths to durable solutions. These challenges are especially pervasive in the lives of women refugees whose intersectional identities can lead to the dismissal of their voices and perspectives, both in the name of protection and out of the belief that they may be too vulnerable to understand their own best interests.

Nonetheless, women refugees have an acute awareness of their own needs, the needs of their community members and the degree to which these needs are being met through existing refugee support systems. In this case study on Athens, women refugees from all backgrounds identified adequate housing as an unmet need in their communities. While women whose community members typically transit through Athens to continue their journeys identified immediate needs as top priorities for their communities, women whose community members primarily plan to stay in Athens identified their communities' needs for self-sufficiency supports in order to attain durable solutions for themselves and their families and to integrate into the Athens community. They identified that within the current support system, many members of their communities have these needs unmet and that vulnerability criteria, under-resourcing of services and a misalignment of existing services with refugee women's actual needs contribute to the levels of unmet needs.

Furthermore, women who had their basic needs met communicated a greater desire to integrate into and contribute to the Athens community. This has significant implications for systems of service provision in Athens. Given that the majority of refugees in Athens will be staying in Greece for the foreseeable future, supporting refugees in the procurement of durable solutions will benefit both refugees themselves and the Greek community by creating pathways for refugee contributions and reducing reliance on direct service provision.

There are a number of limitations to this study in addition to the small sample size. Although all interpreters were familiarized with the research questions and asked about their relationship with the individual being interviewed, to ensure that it was positive the use of interpreters (as well as limitations in English for those who chose to complete their interviews in English) may have influenced the way certain questions were asked and understood by research participants. Given the trauma of the resettlement events, stress may have influenced recall of events and interactions during and after resettlement. The researcher's identity as a woman may have created a point of relatability for the researcher and participants, but the researcher's citizenship served as a point of differentiation, which may have contributed to power dynamics that influenced how individuals told their stories. The influence of the researcher's level of education also likely varied from one interview to the next, depending on the research participant's own educational background, which, in this study, ranged from no formal education and literacy skills to Bachelor's degrees. Furthermore, this research may be biased by the participating sample. Because participation was voluntary, some individuals may have chosen not to participate or to censor the information shared for reasons including fear, emotional triggers, language barriers and lack of desire to share their stories. At the same time, some participants may have chosen to share information that they would not share in other contexts due to their strong associations of the center at which the research was conducted with safety, support and community

[11, 14]. However, clear trends emerged that highlight the importance of the inclusion of women refugees' voices in discourses about their futures.

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