

SOEFIE

Support for empowerment and integration of refugee families

Guidelines for Best Practice of Inclusion based on Needs Analysis of Refugee Families

 *Austria National Report*

support-refugees.eu



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1. Introduction

With the increase in the number of refugees and migrants in Europe, the European Union set as a priority the integration of refugees and migrants that reach Europe. It acknowledged on one hand the challenges that third-country nationals (TCNs) face in the education system, on the labour market and in accessing decent housing, and on the other hand the positive impact that TCNs can have on the local economies when they are well integrated (European Commission, 2016). In 2016 the EU adopted the Action Plan on the Integration of Third-Country Nationals (European Commission, 2016) setting key policy priorities in the areas of pre-departure / pre-arrival; education; labour market and vocational training; and access to basic services (European Commission, 2016). The Action Plan highlights that education and training, especially learning of the local language, are among the most powerful tools for integration. The combination of language learning with the acquisition of other skills and competences is a gateway to integration, employment and social inclusion. Finally, the Action Plan recognized that women face extra challenges in their integration and proposed that a special effort should be made to ensure that such programmes reach both women and men (European Commission, 2016).

This research is part of SOFIE¹, a European project funded by Erasmus+, which aims to contribute to the social inclusion of refugees by provision of educational trainings targeting women and children on the one hand, and on the other hand by training trainers and volunteers in order to better prepare them for the needs of the refugee families. SOFIE is implemented by a consortium of five civil society organisations, Verein Multikulturell from Austria, CESIE from Italy, CARDET from Cyprus, Mozaik from Turkey and Folksuniversitetet from Sweden.

In order to be able to develop and deliver training material and tools targeted to the needs of refugees and volunteers, the first phase of the project consists of a research and needs analysis. This report presents the results of the national research conducted in Austria. It identified the needs and challenges that refugee families face, especially in terms of integration and training support, best practices on the integration of refugee families as well as the training needs of volunteers.

2. Methodology

The aim of this research is to identify and understand the needs and challenges of refugee families in European countries, the training needs of persons volunteering with refugees as well as best practices on the integration of refugee families. The research is the first part of the European project SOFIE and it will inform the development and delivery of training tools that will be tailor made on the specific needs of the target groups. This report presents the research results for Austria.

The methodology adopted to produce this report consists of a 5-step process with the use of different qualitative and quantitative research tools, implemented from November 2017 to February 2018:

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1. Desktop research and literature review on the needs of refugee families, existing tools and best practices for empowerment and integration support to refugee families.
2. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with at least 15 refugees or asylum seekers to identify the needs and challenges of refugee families, especially in terms of integration and training support. Special attention was given to have a representative sample of refugees with different nationalities and ensure the inclusion of refugee women.
3. Interviews with representatives of five organisations working with refugees, to identify the needs of refugee families from an experts' viewpoint.
4. Collection of qualitative and quantitative data on the experiences and training needs of volunteers with the use of a questionnaire. The goal of the questionnaire was twofold: i) to identify needs of refugee families, especially in terms of integration and training support. ii) to gain an understanding on the experience of volunteers, especially to identify any specific challenges they face while supporting / engaging refugees and their training needs.

CARDET, the lead partner of this research, developed detailed guidelines and research tools. The guidelines consisted of a description of each task, specific instructions on how to deliver all the research activities by all partners, as well as templates such as consent form, instructions and interview guides.

The FGDs and interviews were semi-structured with the use of a research guide and open questions, in order to allow participants to expand on the issues they felt were most important. At the same time, this approach enabled the researcher to investigate in more depth on the key issues. The set of questions included two types: demographic questions and main questions directly related to the subject of the research. The aim of the initial questions was to make a comfortable atmosphere and help the participants to start a discussion as well as to collect demographic information on the sample. The main questions explored the daily life of refugees and their needs, their views around learning the local language, the knowledge of their rights, access to information and access to services and finally, their training needs both in terms of learning information about to support their integration as well as other trainings needs they may have. The questions were flexible could be reviewed and modified by the researcher to meet the situation during the focus group / interview session.

2 FGDs were conducted in Austria, with a total of 14 participants, from Syria, Iraq and Egypt. [mention nationalities of participants]. These included 11 refugee women. One refugee was directly interviewed. Furthermore, 7 interviews were conducted with representatives of the official coordination center for refugees in Tyrol, an NGO and a youth center.

All the FGDs and interviews were audio-taped to ensure the quality and validity of the data. The data were transcribed and a qualitative analysis was done.

During the interviews and especially the FGDs, strict ethical considerations were followed. At the beginning of each session the researcher introduced himself, his organization and the SOFIE project and to give participants an overview of the project's aim. He further explained ethical considerations and their rights as participants, including that their participation is voluntary; they can answer only the questions they are comfortable with; they can leave any time if they don't feel comfortable anymore and that this will not affect in any way their asylum or refugee status. He also

explained that the discussion is recorded and notes are taken strictly for the purpose of this research and will be treated with confidentiality.

The volunteers' questionnaire included both structured and open questions and was distributed in electronic form. The online tool surveymonkey was used for the collection of data and their analysis. In total, 50 questionnaires were filled in Austria.

As a result of the analyses, categories were developed indicating the challenges and need of refugees and volunteers, and best practices on integration were identified. Specific national level recommendations were proposed, related to refugee integration and training needs.

3. Literature review

Information and statistics on refugees in Austria

According to the UNHCR, the global population of forcibly displaced people has risen to 65.6 million in 2016. The Syrian conflict was mainly the reason for this increase. However, conflicts in Iraq, Yemen, and sub-Saharan Africa contributed as well to the rising number of displaced people, the number being at a record high (UNHCR, 2017).

During and after the refugee movement in 2015, Austria played a key role, not least because Austria is considered a transit country. Compared to previous years, asylum application figures have been falling since 2016 as a result of specific measures such as the annual maximum of 37,500 refugees and the closure of the Balkan route. The statistics on the following pages give a brief overview of the recent situation in Austria.

Asylums granted in 2017²

	male	female	sum		männlich	weiblich	Summe
	männlich	weiblich	Summe				
Afghanistan	2.073	1.958	4.031	Libyen	9	8	17
Ägypten	14	13	27	Marokko	2		2
Albanien	1		1	Mazedonien	1	1	2
Algerien		1	1	Moldau		1	1
Angola		1	1	Mongolei	2	5	7
Armenien	9	13	22	Myanmar	2		2
Aserbaidshan	9	9	18	Nepal	3	1	4
Äthiopien	19	12	31	Nigeria	7	8	15
Bangladesch	23	15	38	Pakistan	24	10	34
Belarus		2	2	Philippinen	2	1	3
Bosnien-Herzegowina	3		3	Russische Föderation	262	233	495
China Rep. (Taiwan)		1	1	Saudi Arabien	1		1
China Volksrepublik	37	27	64	Senegal	1	1	2
Cote d'Ivoire	2	3	5	Serbien	5	2	7
Eritrea	35	25	60	Somalia	339	354	693
Gambia	8	8	16	Sri Lanka	9	5	14
Georgien	3	2	5	Südafrika		1	1
Ghana	2	1	3	Sudan	19	8	27
Guatemala	1		1	Syrien	5.692	5.863	11.555
Gulnea	4	6	10	Tadschikistan	8	7	15
Irak	596	539	1.135	Togo	1		1
Iran	811	437	1.248	Tunesien		1	1
Israel	1		1	Türkei	23	7	30
Jemen	21	5	26	Turkmenistan	1		1
Jordanien	4	15	19	Uganda	1	7	8
Kamerun	14	6	20	Ukraine	4	3	7
Kanada		1	1	unbekannt	648	612	1.260
Kasachstan	5	5	10	USA		1	1
Kirgisistan	3	1	4				
Kongo	9	6	15				
Kongo Demokr. Rep.	17	21	38				
Kosovo	3	1	4				
Libanon	4	8	12				
				Summe	10.797	10.282	21.079

Figure 1: Asylum granted per country and sex. Data from 2017 (Vorläufige ASYLSTATISTIK Dezember 2017, n.d.).

² According to the website of the Federal Ministry of the Interior, the latest statistics date back to December 2017.

Applications for asylum

2016

Difference

	2017	Vorjahr	Differenz
Jänner	2.220	5.916	-62,47%
Februar	2.082	5.129	-59,41%
März	2.178	3.355	-35,08%
April	1.908	4.162	-54,16%
Mai	2.132	3.857	-44,72%
Juni	1.970	3.249	-39,37%
Juli	2.137	3.125	-31,62%
August	2.468	3.321	-25,69%
September	1.978	2.643	-25,16%
Oktober	2.057	2.638	-22,02%
November	1.609	2.418	-33,46%
Dezember	1.557	2.472	-37,01%
Gesamt	24.296	42.285	-42,54%

Figure 2: Applications per month in 2017 and 2016. Numbers of applications are decreasing (Vorläufige ASYLSTATISTIK Dezember 2017, n.d.).

	male		female		sum
	Männlich	%	Weiblich	%	Summe:
Jänner	1.447	65,18%	773	34,82%	2.220
Februar	1.288	61,86%	794	38,14%	2.082
März	1.289	59,18%	889	40,82%	2.178
April	1.051	55,08%	857	44,92%	1.908
Mai	1.203	56,43%	929	43,57%	2.132
Juni	1.221	61,98%	749	38,02%	1.970
Juli	1.264	59,15%	873	40,85%	2.137
August	1.536	62,24%	932	37,76%	2.468
September	1.217	61,53%	761	38,47%	1.978
Oktober	1.267	61,59%	790	38,41%	2.057
November	997	61,96%	612	38,04%	1.609
Dezember	943	60,57%	614	39,43%	1.557
Summe:	14.723	60,60%	9.573	39,40%	24.296

Figure 3: Applications per month and sex in 2017 (Vorläufige ASYLSTATISTIK Dezember 2017, n.d.).

Main countries of citizenship of asylum seekers

In total, 24,296 asylum applications were registered in 2017. Most of the asylum seekers came from Syria, followed by Afghan nationals. Pakistan ranked third in terms of asylum-seeking nations.

Citizenship	Applications	Pos. Decision	Neg. Decision	Other Decisions
Staatsangehörigkeit	Anträge	Rk. pos. Ent.	Rk. neg. Ent.	sonst. Ent.
Syrien	7.375	11.555	436	527
Afghanistan	3.676	4.031	2.835	1.908
Pakistan	1.541	34	1.199	880
Irak	1.389	1.135	1.409	959
Nigeria	1.382	15	1.565	238
Russische Föderation	1.351	495	817	202
Iran	972	1.248	295	374
unbekannt unknown	689	1.260	138	83
Somalia	688	693	593	129
Ukraine	484	7	321	183

Figure 4: (Main) Countries of citizenship of asylum seekers in 2017. The table highlights the total number of applications per country as well as the percentage of positive and negative asylum decisions (Vorläufige ASYLSTATISTIK Dezember 2017, n.d.).

The rights of refugees in Austria

Basic care

Asylum seekers in Austria have the right to basic care that includes health insurance, food, pocket money, and money for clothing and accommodation. Responsibilities for basic care are shared among federal authorities and provincial authorities depending on the stage of the asylum procedure (Caritas.at, 2018).

Access to education

School attendance is an obligation for all children living in Austria on a permanent basis until they have finished 9 classes (usually completed at the age of 15). Once the application of asylum seeking children has been accepted, they are obliged to attend primary and secondary school. Usually they are taught in so-called “preparatory classes” together with other children lacking host country language skills (Neuhauser, 2015).

Problems arise when asylum seekers are over the age of 15, as schooling is not mandatory anymore. Many children who do not have access to the education system due to this reason, usually face difficulties to pursue education even though special courses are offered (free of charge for unaccompanied children, not free of charge for children accompanied by family).

A law was passed in 2016, saying that people under 18 years of age who have done the mandatory 9-year schooling and who reside permanently in Austria are obligated to continue with education

or training. This law is heavily debated as it is not applied to asylum seekers (Asylumineurope.org, 2018).

Health Care

The conduction of an initial medical examination of asylum seekers is done within 24 hours after admission to one of the reception centers. If necessary, they have the right to see specialists or staff at hospitals. People receiving Basic Care are automatically entitled to health insurance. However, certain treatments or private doctors are not covered and must be paid. If asylum seekers are not entitled anymore to Basic Care (e.g. due to violent behavior, absence from initial reception center for more than two days), they can still make use of emergency care and essential treatment. In reality however, the Basic Care provision is not easy to put into use.

For victims of torture and traumatized asylum seekers, one NGO in every federal province offers treatment. However, the capacity of these services is not sufficient. (Asylumineurope.org, 2018).

Labour Market

Asylum seekers are not allowed to work during the first three months of the procedure. Later they are entitled to do very limited work. Non-profit activities or community service (for minor wages) for federal, provincial or community authorities are possible (Caritas.at, 2018). The amount of this remuneration was heavily debated, however. Examples of such jobs are: “administrative messenger or office assistance, translation services, support for parks and sports facilities, playgrounds, care for the elderly, assistance in nursery schools, school attendance services, assistance in animal shelters, or support for minor resettlements in the municipality” (Asylumineurope.org, 2018). Work permits are rarely issued and if, they underlie strict criteria (Caritas.at, 2018).

Access to the labour market is only possible via a labour market test: Proof is necessary that a job cannot be done by a citizen of Austria or the EU or a legally residing third-country national with access to the labour market (long-time resident status holder, family member etc.). The submission of the application for an employment must be done by the employer via the regional Labour Market Service (AMS) office that has the final say.

An annual quota for each federal province limits the offer of seasonal jobs (in the fields of tourism, agriculture, forestry) for asylum seekers. Moreover, the maximum working period is limited to 6 months. The income of these workers however causes problems with the regulation in the Basic Care Act that foresees a contribution to Basic Care once asylum seekers generate income (Asylumineurope.org, 2018).

Another issue is that asylum seekers do not get any help from the Public Employment Service as they are not registered as unemployed. Consequently, they cannot attend vocational trainings offered by the Public Employment Service. The lack of money for travelling to job interviews is another obstacle most asylum seekers have to face (AMS, n.d.).

Housing

Asylum seekers entitled to Basic Care which means that they are accommodated in boarding houses, inns, reception centers of NGOs or of federal provinces, or to a rent subsidy in case he/she wants to rent a flat for him/herself.

Once people are not entitled to basic care anymore, support is poor. Financial resources are not given which makes house hunting very difficult if not to say impossible as private accommodation

is very expensive. Refugees can apply for social housing, but waiting lists are long (Asylumineurope.org, 2018).

The system of support and integration for refugees in Austria

The concept of integration

Austria's National Action Plan (NAP) forms the basis of integration which centers mutual appreciation and respect on the one hand, and which sets clear rules that guarantee social cohesion and peace on the other. Successful integration is equivalent to good German skills not only for employment, but also for education, further training and for interaction with public institutions. According to the NAP, "[i]ntegration aims at participation in economic, social, political and cultural processes as well as compliance with related obligations". Hence, seven the focus is on the following seven policy areas: language, education/work, employment, rule of law/values, health/social issues, intercultural dialogue, sports/recreation, housing and the regional dimension of integration (UNHCR, 2013).

Austrian Integration Support

According to the law, foreign nationals who have asylum status or who are entitled to settle in Austria can be granted integration support. This support includes:

- Language courses
- Education and training courses
- Events on the introduction to the Austrian culture and history
- Joint events with Austrian citizens for mutual understanding
- Information provision on housing
- Activities of the Austrian Integration Fund (Koppenberg, n.d.)

Targeted Integration Measures

The refugee influx of 2015 has sparked off debates about integration policies. Consequently, funding was provided, action points were decided and quite a number of integration support measures have been launched (see table below). Since 2016, asylum seekers are obliged to attend courses about "Values and Orientation" to learn about fundamental rights, Austrian society, and everyday life (Koppenberg, n.d.).

Date	Designation
July 2015	Expert Paper on the Integration of Persons Granted Asylum and Beneficiaries of Subsidiary Protection
September 2015	Integration Package
November 2015	50-Point Plan for the Integration of Persons Granted Asylum and Beneficiaries of Subsidiary Protection in Austria
June 2016	Amendment of the Asylum Act: After being granted their residence status, beneficiaries of international protection have to visit an integration centre of the Austrian Integration Fund (Art. 67 para 1 Asylum Act).

Problems and integration needs of refugee families

Labour market

Among the most influencing factors on labour market integration figure “education, non-acceptance of formal education, non-formal qualifications acquired in home country, employment below skills level and consequent loss of social position”.

Moreover, missing documents (i.e. lack of proof of qualifications) – as refugees face difficulties obtaining documents from the home country - make the integration into the labour market even harder.

Employers often lack knowledge with validity of qualifications acquired abroad or with the legal status of asylum seekers/refugees. Moreover, the length of the asylum procedure also hinders integration into the labour market. The lack of language classes and the inability to work results in deskilling (Sator, 2016). As mentioned earlier, asylum seekers older than 15 years face difficulties with their educational career – for them, finding apprenticeships is especially hard (UNHCR, 2013).

Other issues:

- Culture, i.e. attitude towards employment
- Traumatic experiences may reduce ability to work under pressure
- Employers do not know about the rights of refugees
- Racism, xenophobia (UNHCR, 2013)

Housing

Some of the major points influencing the housing integration are: “the length of the asylum procedure; social assistance; availability of social counselling; affordable housing; lack of sheltered accommodation; time pressure (four months after status was granted) to find private accommodation after the housing originally provided for refugees ends as well as bail and fee for real estate agents”.

For people with a migrant background, accommodation costs are higher and they are more likely to live in substandard housing. In Austria, the majority of the population with a migration background lives in larger cities (UNHCR, 2013).

Other issues:

- lack of housing offers by the authorities,
- overpriced private housing,
- prejudices, racism - many private property owners refuse to rent to foreigners,
- situation is particularly difficult for unemployed persons and families with many children (apartments in necessary sizes either do not exist or are not affordable for refugees),
- lack of (secure) employment > difficulties to obtain rent contract,
- many immigrants live in precarious situations > influence integration process (UNHCR, 2013).

Education and language

Within the field of education, the focus lies on language proficiency as it is the basis for social and structural areas, and enhances social security and belonging. However, access to German classes is not guaranteed which results in difficulties once asylum seekers receive refugee status.

Many asylum seekers study the language on their own as German classes are scarce. Consequently, their knowledge of grammar is poor, not least because they communicate most of the time within their communities (Sterkl, 2017).

To be independent, to participate in public life and to deal with the new culture/environment, language skills are indispensable. Other issues related to language acquisition:

- heavy trauma;
- the necessity for some refugees to overcome illiteracy or learn a new script;
- teaching design and teacher training (special needs) (Sterkl, 2017).;
- patriarchal family structures (sometimes women are forbidden to attend courses).
- Children learn faster: restructuring of family relationships, conflicts and confusions of roles. Cultural and linguistic translation is among children's responsibilities (role shift).
- Language barriers lead to social exclusion (UNHCR, 2013).

Women's reasons for not attending a language course were manifold: "lack of time due to work and caring for the family; organizational reasons; physical problems; lack of motivation and psychological problems, such as concentration and memory difficulties, nervousness, uneasiness, sleep disorders and fears".

Health

Communication with healthcare providers is difficult due to language barriers. False diagnoses, misunderstandings and wrong medication are the consequences. Children are often used as interpreters. Often, a bad state of health, inaccessible information, inadequate care and insufficient prevention result from language barriers (UNHCR, 2013).

Challenges underlying refugee's integration

The main influencing factors are "cultural issues and language, experiences of flight and loss of status, simultaneous issues confronted with once status is granted, discrimination, refugees' expectations and experiences of the asylum procedure". Moreover, "education, employment, housing, health as well as social interaction and institutional participation" play a central role (UNHCR, 2013).

Language acquisition and recognition of first language

Refugees often have difficulties in learning the language because they never attended a "completely functioning school system". Women are likely to have never been to school and to lack basic education. Since they have never been in touch with formal learning skills and because they are illiterate in their own mother tongue, they have difficulties with language acquisition.

Some refugees outlined the non-homogeneity of participants (age, needs) in language classes resulting in slow progress and not enough attention paid to the learning pace. Since courses are unavailable, long waiting periods are common.

Other challenges:

- Illiteracy among migrant women who have lived in Austria for many years is quite common (they have the tendency not to leave the house);
- Refugee women often are underrepresented in higher language courses;
- The desire to learn German is often secondary, as refugees have a strong desire and need to access the labour market.
- Understanding dialect - dialect is not addressed in language classes
- Monolingualism in education, little attention is paid to the resource of native languages (UNHCR, 2013).

Employment

Main challenges:

- Impact of time spent in the asylum procedure;
- Support provided upon recognition as well as lack of information for refugees and employers;
- German language skills;
- Living conditions and housing situation;
- Discrimination and reluctance to hire certain profiles;
- Social/professional networks;
- Ability of refugees to provide documentation of skills as well as recognition of their qualifications (UNHCR, 2013).

Housing

For most refugees, the biggest issue is to find adequate accommodation. Issues can be:

- difficult access to private housing as well as assistance,
- shortage of social housing,
- relative urgency refugees are confronted with post-recognition of status,
- lack of secure income,
- rural to urban migration,
- social stigma and discrimination,
- lack of information and network,
- social housing and segregation (UNHCR, 2013).

Volunteering

Reasons why people start volunteering:

- to fill “emptiness” when retired,
- to give something back to society,
- to give refugees the feeling of being at home,
- personal enrichment,
- to exchange, to build bridges between cultures.

Volunteers are confronted with

- financial issues (work is unpaid),
- loss of some friends who do not understand their engagement,
- mental stress, they feel psychologically overstrained when they do not have previous training and support (UNHCR, 2013).

Tools and initiatives for empowerment and integration of refugee families

Language courses for refugees and migrants

Various institutions offer German language classes for refugees and migrants across Austria. The Austrian Integration Fund (ÖIF) offers language courses tailored to the needs of immigrants. An online language portal gives an overview of all language classes offered (www.sprachportal.at). This platform provides also German language skills test for free and study material to prepare for tests. In each federal provinces, ÖIF-consulting centres provide personal information on course formats, dates, and registration information (Integrationsfonds.at, 2018).

ÖIF	https://www.integrationsfonds.at/sprache
Tyrolean Regional Government	On the website of the Tyrolean Regional Government a list (with links) of institutions offering German classes is provided. https://www.tirol.gv.at/gesellschaft-soziales/integration/angebote-zur-integration-von-fluechtlingen-in-tirol/deutsch

Other integration tools & initiatives (in the province of Tyrol)

Education and employment

Verein Multikulturell	Verein Multikulturell is the only institution in Tyrol where career guidance for adolescent migrants (between the age of 15 and 25) is done by specially trained counsellors. Moreover, the service is free of charge. The focus of the individual counselling service lies on information about career paths and related requirements, basic information on the Austrian school system, as well as on the situation on the labour market.	http://www.migration.cc/index.php/beratung/berufsorientierung
Mentoring für Migrantinnen und Migranten (Mentoring for migrant women/men)	In Tyrol, the project " Mentoring für MigrantInnen " supports labour market integration of qualified migrant women/men (mentees) by bringing them together with mentors. Moreover, they promote the internationalisation of Austrian businesses (Wko.at, 2018).	https://www.wko.at/site/mentoring/mentoring.html
Tyrolean Regional Government	A full list of all initiatives is provided by the Tyrolean Regional Government.	https://www.tirol.gv.at/gesellschaft-soziales/integration/angebote-zur-integration-von-fluechtlingen-in-tirol/bildung-und-arbeit/

Housing

Red Cross, project yo!vita	Stationary housing group and transitional residential group for young refugees (18 or younger): support towards self-employment for adolescents during or after asylum procedure (Rotes Kreuz, 2018).	http://www.roteskreuz.at/tirol/migration-suchdienst/yovita-perspektiven-fuer-unbegleitete-minderjaehrige-fluechtlinge
Tyrolean Regional Government	A full list of all initiatives is provided by the Tyrolean Regional Government.	https://www.tirol.gv.at/gesellschaft-soziales/integration/angebote-

		zur-integration-von-fluechtlingen-in-tirol/wohnen
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Health and social welfare

TIGRA	Counseling for victims and witnesses of racial discrimination and abuses; documentation of incidents and the publication of the Tyrolean racism report; education work (Tigra.cc, 2018).	http://www.tigra.cc
Tyrolean Regional Government	A full list of all initiatives is provided by the Tyrolean Regional Government.	https://www.tirol.gv.at/gesellschaft-soziales/integration/angebote-zur-integration-von-fluechtlingen-in-tirol/gesundheit-und-soziales

Intercultural dialogue and coexistence

Diakonie – Integrationsstationen Tirol	Start-up aid for the integration of clients in order to enable active participation in social life in the new communities and to lay the foundations for equal rights in legal, social, economic and cultural terms (Diakonie Flüchtlingsdienst, 2018).	https://fluechtlingsdienst.diakonie.at/einrichtungen
Tyrolean Regional Government	A full list of all initiatives is provided by the Tyrolean Regional Government.	https://www.tirol.gv.at/gesellschaft-soziales/integration/angebote-zur-integration-von-fluechtlingen-in-tirol/begegnung-und-zusammenleben

Trans-sectoral initiatives

Province of Tyrol	Brochure “Tyrol for Beginners – Information for migrants, for a better understanding of the social framework in Tyrol” in 9 languages - print and online (Landesregierung, 2018).	https://www.tirol.gv.at/gesellschaft-soziales/integration/unterlagen-materialien/tirol-fuer-anfaengerinnen
TIK	Tiroler Integrationskompass (TIK) is a tool that provides orientation and motivation for the refugees, facilitates individual counseling and support, and contributes to faster integration into the labor market and into our society. It helps to better master the challenges of integration and to benefit from the opportunities of immigration. The TIK can be submitted to authorities or in job interviews and thus also serves as proof of the distance already covered on the way to integration (Landesregierung, 2018).	https://www.tirol.gv.at/gesellschaft-soziales/integration/angebote-zur-integration-von-fluechtlingen-in-tirol/tiroler-integrationskompass-tik
Tyrolean Regional Government	A full list of all initiatives is provided by the Tyrolean Regional Government.	https://www.tirol.gv.at/gesellschaft-soziales/integration/angebote-zur-integration-von-fluechtlingen-in-tirol/bereichsuebergreifende-angebote

Initiatives for women

Province of Tyrol	The tandem project should not only make life easier for newly-arrived women, but also provide an opportunity for exchange with local women (Freiwilligenzentren-tirol.at, 2018).	https://www.freiwilligenzentren-tirol.at/projektveranstaltungen/projekte/detail/projekt/marjam-patinnen-fuer-gefluechtete-frauen
Tyrolean Regional Government	A full list of all initiatives is provided by the Tyrolean Regional Government.	https://www.tirol.gv.at/gesellschaft-soziales/integration/angebote-zur-integration-von-fluechtlingen-in-tirol/angebote-fuer-frauen

Examples of EU funded projects

CoRE project	The CoRE project is meant to support the implementation of innovative approaches and methods in integration work. With this project, the City of Vienna will build upon existing services to allow for the even faster and more needs-oriented integration of refugees. The project focuses on close cooperation with partner organizations and, most	http://www.uia-initiative.eu/en/uia-cities/vienna
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	<p>importantly, with the very people who are trying to make a new home in Vienna.</p> <p>CoRE allows us to explore new paths together with the European Union, and to promote positive examples of successful integration (CoRE - Centre of Refugee Empowerment, 2018).</p>	
LSE project	<p>The LIFE SKILLS FOR EUROPE project aims to improve basic skills provision in Europe by explaining, further developing and upscaling the life skills approach. The project final beneficiaries are people from a disadvantaged background, refugees and people resistant to 'foreigners' and intercultural exchange.</p>	<p>http://www.eaea.org/en/projects/eaea-coordinated-projects/lse.html</p>

Examples of best practices

Treffpunkt Deutsch	<p>The challenge: Due to the recent influx of refugees in Austria, the demand for German language designed for this target group is high.</p> <p>The project: Language skills are the basic prerequisites to have access to education, employment or social events. With the project "Treffpunkt Deutsch", the ÖIF has created an offer that enables learners, i.e. refugees or immigrants, to work quickly and free of charge on their language practice.</p> <p>Details: At Treffpunkt Deutsch, volunteers run German-speaking groups with a maximum of 14 participants and practice speaking, reading and writing (once a week, about two hours). It's not only about grammar, but also about everyday communication. The atmosphere is informal, because Treffpunkt Deutsch is not a traditional language course, but a complementary offer. Learners deepen what they have already learned, practice conversation or prepare to enter a German language course. Those who are already attending a course can get help with homework. Treffpunkt Deutsch also promotes the exchange between locals and people living in Austria who are central to successful integration. Treffpunkt Deutsch started in August 2015 with the first learning groups in Vienna and was rolled out to all integration centers of the ÖIF within three months. More than 110 volunteers were already active by the end of 2015, among them mainly active or retired teachers as well as students of German language studies, pedagogy or communication sciences (Integration vor Ort - 50 Anregungen aus der Praxis, 2016).</p>	<p>http://www.uki.or.at/site/unserearbeit/frauen/articel/article/62.html</p>
Interkultureller Sprachgarten	<p>The challenge: Low language skills do not only complicate the linguistical exchange, but also the social integration of refugees and immigrants in Austria. Refugees need integration initiatives that are designed for them.</p> <p>The project: The Interkulturelle Sprachgarten (Intercultural Language Garden) in Admont, Styria, is managed by locals and refugees. Not only a wide variety of fruit and vegetable plants are growing, but also the vocabulary and acquaintances of the refugees.</p> <p>Details: It is a place where different cultures meet, where refugees have the possibility to learn German and learn about plants. Gardening is a welcome change for the refugees and a good opportunity to talk to gardener colleagues as well as interested locals who drop by. They communicate in German - a conscious decision to promote conversations about new plant projects, but also about everyday topics to push the German language skills of refugees. Each gardener can grow plants for his own use. The products are given away against donations, the returns are invested in new seedlings or garden tools. The project has already helped some locals to open up to new cultures. Even a high school class grows plants in the garden - so the young people deal with topics such as integration and flight (Integration vor Ort - 50 Anregungen aus der Praxis, 2016).</p>	<p>https://stmk.volkshilfe.at</p>

4. Support and integration needs of refugee families

Two focus group discussions were implemented in January 2018 to highlight the support and integration needs of refugee families. In total, fourteen participants attended the discussion. The fifteenth person cancelled the appointment but accepted the invitation to do an interview instead. Ethical considerations were clarified beforehand. We must mention that refugees sometimes do not know their legal status. As we are not an authority that can ask for proof, we have to rely on their personal statements where they underline that they are refugees.

Participants' characteristics

Among the 14 participants were three men and eleven women, originally coming from Syria, Iraq and Egypt. Women were aged between 24 to 48, men between 19 to 33. The length of their stay in Austria varies between 7 months to 6 years. Almost all are married and have kids; however, one is married, but no kids and another is still single. Two women are very well educated (university degree), three graduated from secondary school and nine stopped their educational career after primary school. Among the participants, all but one is not employed (one is working with her husband in his restaurant). Furthermore, seven participants have already received an official language certificate (German). Eleven persons live in private housing, three are still accommodated in refugee homes.

Challenges of refugee families in their daily life

Since **thirteen participants face unemployment, the biggest challenges are their routines and boredom** (besides the unemployment itself). The undertaken daily tasks are basically limited to domestic obligations, sometimes to education and things relevant for the participants' personal life. A mother of five, married, says, "We wake up in the morning, attend the German language courses, then go back to the house. We clean and cook, we do our homework. This is our life in a nutshell". Another married woman, living with her husband, mentions that she does not attend any German language course. She adds, "I take care of my five children. They are at school, I stay at home and do the cooking, cleaning. I am waiting for them to come home".

One man explicitly highlighted the **unemployment** as his biggest challenge. While he is at home with his daughter and looking for a job, his wife is attending a language course. Participants acknowledged that the biggest and the most important problem to find work are language barriers. The recognition of certificates obtained abroad is a huge challenge if one wants to access the labour market.

Once a refugee has found a job, he faces new challenges related to the **labour law**. Social and rent subsidies are reduced or cut for instance. Moreover, some employed refugees suffer from high taxes which makes them refuse extra hours. The same problem occurs if they accept a second job to improve the income – the benefit is low.

Refugees reported that the AMS (national job centre in Austria) does not want to help to find a job. In terms of **language acquisition**, participants mentioned that courses are not tailored to their needs (please refer to section below for details). The language taught in class is not useful in their daily lives. One woman helps her husband in the restaurant as his German is not good enough for

managing the work alone (despite the German courses). As courses are scarce, especially the ones including childcare, women use the internet and books at home to teach themselves the language. They also learn the language thanks to their children who attend schools.

Language difficulties are also a challenge for school children as they do not have any help for their homework at home. Unfinished homework leads to problems at school with teachers. Even pupils who attend evening study schools have these issues as staff do not consider themselves responsible for teaching.

The **educational system** itself is not understood by refugee families as it differs for instance greatly with the system in Arab countries. This lack of knowledge creates new challenges.

Refugees suffer from the **lack of comfortable housing**. First of all, it is difficult to find housing for rent, especially for families with children. The apartments being within the scope of social assistance are not suitable for the family members. Comfortable apartments cannot be rented, because landlords generally ask for the working papers and the income papers. Normally, these papers are not available to refugees because they have not received the asylum papers yet. Refugees suffer from the small size of rooms in their homes. The small room size does not allow children to study well. The focus group participants underlined the importance to have access to a study room in refugee homes, such as a library, where children can study well.

Analysis of the specific needs of families

Participants highlighted the specific need to access information. They underlined that **information** on legal and social issues is not accessible. Whether one is in the asylum process or one has obtained residency, there is always a lack of information. Information should be made more accessible.

In terms of **language acquisition**, they said that in language classes the focus is on grammar and not on conversation. According to them, this is not helpful as conversation is needed in everyday life. Their daily activities depend on spoken and not on written language. They agree that grammar is of importance, but conversation is more important. An example was given by one woman who said that when she had had an appointment at the hospital (gynecologist) she had had to hire an interpreter for 40.- Euro per hour because her conversational skills were too bad.

Another prevailing topic was **education**. Participants discussed that the current education system is not tailored to the needs of refugee children as it does not take into consideration the situation of new students with different backgrounds. Teachers at school do not consider potential difficulties that may arise due to language barriers or because students cannot keep pace with the curriculum. The participants underline the necessity of either a teacher who is bilingual or an interpreter who translates accordingly. With such an approach, the subject would be easily and correctly understood.

Participants underlined that if they had a job, they could not only make a living, but also learn the language at the same time.

Specific challenges of refugee women

Women's challenges can be divided into three main categories.

The first main challenge is the **language acquisition**. They consider German skills as very essential because it is the most valuable tool for integration. However, the learning environment – their

homes – is suboptimal, as women do not find enough time to study. Taking care of the family and doing household chores are time consuming and sap women's energy.

Integration is another challenge for the women. They say they find it very difficult to integrate in Austrian society, as they are not able to communicate properly, they do not know neither the Austrian way of life nor the school system nor the health system (partly because of lacking information). More information would help to facilitate integration.

The third challenge is to **balance household chores and building relationships**. A well-managed household and relationships outside their homes are essential if they want the family to be happy and have an easy life.

Specific challenges of refugee children

The discussion among participants was focused on **education**, as the education system does not take into consideration the difficulties of **language acquisition** among refugee children. The children's disadvantage is that their parents cannot help them at school since they do not speak the language themselves. Problems are inevitable. A mother explained that her son who is in primary school had a psychological breakdown due to language acquisition difficulties. The teacher did not speak English well, so the communication between the teacher and the child was difficult - if not to say impossible – resulting in the previously mentioned breakdown. The boy would need help so that he can communicate properly.

Access to information on their rights and to public services

As mentioned earlier, access to information is among the main challenges of refugees. Participants agreed that information on Austrian **rights and laws** are hardly accessible – sources where to find them are unknown.

Also, participants highlighted the **inability to deal with the electronic information system** linked with the language barrier. If they manage to look something up on a search engine, they are mostly not able to judge the quality of the results nor distinguish the content of the pages also because topics are often very complex.

Generally, there is a lack of knowledge where to find information sources (such as electronic newspapers, online job search). Many refugees do not have a lot of experience with IT or electronic devices because IT knowledge was not a precondition when working in the country of origin. Hence, most refugees prefer information given on paper or receive information face-to-face.

Unemployment is also due to the fact because they do not know where to find relevant web sites. Appointments in the health sector are problematic, since participants do not know how to find the right doctor or where to look up specific information.

Identification on education/training needs for refugees

Participants agreed on the following training needs:

- How and where to make appointments with doctors (focus on pediatricians),
- communication training,

- how to use public transport (tickets, manners on the bus “not to speak too loud”, riding a bus with a child, ...),
- where to do inexpensive shopping,
- how to look for jobs online.

5. Mapping the needs of refugee families and existing best practices

Participants' characteristics and experience working with refugees

Verein Multikulturell interviewed in total 7 people whose daily working experience with refugees provides important answers to the questions raised. Among the 7 interviewees were 5 women and 2 men, aged between 24 and 50, whereby 5 of them are working for the TSD (Tiroler Soziale Dienste), the official coordination center for refugees. The TSD is responsible for the securing of the basic care for all asylum-seeking persons in the Province of Tyrol. All 5 interviewed persons have been working for this institution since its founding in 2015, 3 of them have had previous working experiences with the target group. Among these 5 people, 1 has got a senior management position responsible for the coordination of the basic care as well as of all refugee homes in Tyrol, 3 interviewed people are counselors in refugee homes and are in direct contact with the target group responsible for the support and supervision, networking, conflict management and organizational tasks. 1 person is the manager of a refugee home where families are stationed, responsible for administration/organization, staff management, support for counselors.

1 interviewee is employed by the diocese as a youth leader working in a youth center where he is also responsible for the mentoring and support of unaccompanied minor refugees. 1 interviewee is working in a supervised residential group for houseless women, where also refugee women are stationed who did not find accommodation. The person is responsible for the psycho-social support of the clients.

All interviewees as well as participants of the focus group discussion did not see the necessity to sign the consent form as they argued that their consent was given thanks to their participation and willingness to be recorded.

Identification of the specific needs and challenges of refugee families

Refugee families face numerous challenges that go hand in hand with specific needs. The following points were highlighted during the interviews.

1. Language barrier

All interviewees mentioned language barriers as the main challenge for the target group as language acquisition is considered crucial for successful integration. Not knowing the local language conveys the feeling of alienation and makes orientation difficult (doctor's appointments, city life, ...).

It is true that asylum seekers are offered free German classes, but since these courses are crowded, people face excessive waiting times. Once they attend, they have the tendency to drop-out because

of the crowded classes where concentration is almost impossible. Interviewees underline that there are far more language classes for refugees.

Many interviewees agreed that more men are attending language classes. This may have two reasons: Women bearing the responsibility of children stay at home and/or their absence is due to cultural issues (often classes are male dominated).

Although children usually learn the language of the host country very quickly, they find it difficult to connect to the school system due to the parents' lack of language skills. The parents are hardly helpful in the homework, cannot participate in the parents' day, because the general understanding is very difficult and also because they do not know the school system.

2. Trauma and stress

Trauma and stress were mentioned by three interviewees as big challenges. Traumatic experiences, loss of family members, experiences of displacement and/or war hinder successful integration.

Two out of seven interviewees underlined the refugees' housing situation as one of the most challenging (and stressful) issues. In homes for refugees, there is minimal opportunity for privacy and retreat – a family of 4 may live in a room built for 3 people which is stressful for the parents' relationship as well as for the children. Residents who suffer from different stress disorders and traumata have already severe difficulties in everyday life, but the living situation adds to the stress (resulting in insomnia, attention deficit disorder). Some refugee families cope with this accommodation issue better than others. Within some families, the aggravated stress leads to changes in relationships between family members which hence often leads to complicated conflicts.

3. Length of asylum procedure

Interviewees agreed that stress disorders are aggravated not only by the housing situation, but also by the (partly) excessive length of asylum procedures.

4 interviewed persons see the length of asylum procedures as one of the biggest issues in everyday life. The waiting during and the uncertainty of the procedure - paired with the unsatisfying living situation - have a serious impact on everyday life. Refugees without asylum status have to kill time because they do not have a work permit. In order to use this time reasonably and not to get off the track, they are allowed to pursue certain (very regulated) volunteer activities.

4. Public life

Two interviewees mention that refugees are often subject to **prejudice and discrimination**, especially when dealing with bureaucratic procedures or in everyday situations. Some institutions – including healthcare providers – refuse to provide information in English and/or do not assign appointments.

One interviewee underlines difficulties linked to everyday practices that need to be learned, such as the use of public transport, road safety, shopping for food, etc.

5. Targeted offers and measures for families

Two interviewees criticize the lack of offers for families. While children are relatively well integrated and have a structured daily routine by attending schools and day care centers, there are little to no leisure time facilities for their parents and comparatively few subsidies. In some families, this constellation leads to envy, but also to role shifts: as the children have a good understanding of

language and of culture, they often act as interpreters and cultural mediators. Most projects that involve the entire family are mostly implemented by volunteers, not by the city or municipality.

6. Access to information

In general, access to information for refugees and migrants is difficult. Information is partially not available, resources for interpreters are scarce. The general lack of information is not only due to the language barrier, but also to the fact that topics that are relevant to refugees are often very complex. It is also important to mention that when a refugee is transferred to another province, the environment and thus the information access change – a fact which is often not thought of.

The city of Innsbruck distributes information on various topics that are relevant to the target group. In most cases however, refugees and their families learn about their rights, the education and health system, social assistance, and the labor market through the refugee homes or their assigned buddies. Those interviewees who do not work for the TSD underline that the information sharing in the homes is not sufficient. So-called information sheets are mostly full with text without any visualization. These are handed out without talking directly to the person concerned.

However, the biggest lack of information prevails as soon as the authority's decision is negative. Different questions arise: How should one react? Which authority is responsible for the follow-up procedure? How do I get a lawyer? How much does the lawyer cost? The required contact points of relevant institutions are hardly present among refugees, the exact processes to solve these problems are unknown.

Generally, the lack of knowledge about the systems in the host country makes refugees even more vulnerable. In terms of the health system, they face difficulties because they do not know when to call an ambulance, when to contact a GP, when to go to the emergency department or when to see a private physician. In terms of the education system, parents cannot influence their children's career as they are not informed about training opportunities, apprenticeships and/or further education. Interviewees agree that most questions are related to the asylum procedure: What are the responsibilities of the BFA (Bundesamt für Fremdenwesen und Asyl)? What rights do I have during the asylum procedure? Where does the interview take place and what happens afterwards? How long can the duration of the asylum procedure be?

Those interviewees working with the TSD agree that the directorate does not provide a standard procedure to share information. The type and extent of care and support are and remain with the responsible supervisor. Even if a counsellor makes an effort to transfer the information, it is always difficult, because every refugee has a different level of knowledge.

Challenges for women

1. Language acquisition

4 interviewees highlighted that women face different challenges than men in terms of the language acquisition due to cultural factors that clearly define gender roles. In many families, the man goes to work, the woman stays at home - this also represents a great challenge for integration. Counsellors often need to do a lot of persuading in individual conversations with women to teach them the importance of language training.

Women are assigned the role of the mother, which is often the reason that women cannot attend language courses. Sometimes women want to learn German, but there is a lack of childcare during classes. There are a few institutions offering language classes with childcare – these courses are

very popular. One interviewee said that the older children are, the more likely the mother is willing to register for a language acquisition class.

Moreover, some women do not attend language courses in which the majority of participants is male. But those women who are registered are more persistent and more reliable - unlike the men who tend to neglect the course.

2. Stress and traumatic experiences

Traumatic experiences and stress have an impact on everyday life of refugees. Women, however, are facing greater challenges as women's feelings of guilt and shame are greater. Moreover, they have to live with circumcision, forced marriage and are often rape victims. One interviewed person mentioned that it is difficult to bring female refugees to therapy because the biggest distress is to find safe housing (after leaving the refugee home). Since refugee women usually stay more at home than men, the living situation is central for their well-being.

3. Cultural differences

As mentioned earlier, cultural differences can hinder integration in host societies that follow different norms and rules. The healthcare sector, for example, faces major challenges, as women are likely to not make use of services due to a lack of knowledge, and if so, they only consult female doctors where appointments are very rare.

Female refugees tend to stay in small groups in the homes and pursue their hobbies (cooking, sewing, ...). For refugee women, it is quite a challenge to attend events/activities that do not take place directly in the refugee homes. This has to do with cultural factors, but also because there are more integration offers and measures for men than for women. As a result, it is more difficult for women to leave home and to interact with the host society.

Life in the new society also brings new responsibilities for women. For example, a woman was given a debit card, and for the first time in her life she was responsible for cash-withdrawal. On the one hand, this filled the woman with pride and brought her empowerment, but at the same time unsettled her as she was caught between two worlds and wondered what rights she now has in Austria. Refugee women experience their new rights in everyday life. They often want to be like Austrians, but the question is: how. Often, they cannot pursue this desire because men do not follow suit. Empowerment does not only have advantages, but can cause trouble within a family. The discussion about taking part in a German language course (while children being at home) is a good example. When the woman attends the class and the husband stays at home, it brings unrest into a pre-established family dynamic that comes from a culture setting where structures are much more predetermined than ours. With the participation of the woman in the language course an empowerment takes place which should not be underestimated.

4. Access to information

Many of the challenges listed above are also reasons why women have less access to information than men. Since refugee women are more likely to be analphabets and often lack independence, information does not reach them. Individual support service is important for women and is well received. However, there is a risk that dependences increase.

Identification of education/training needs of refugees

Training should definitely include topics that are relevant and interesting to women but should not be limited to mother-child issues. For the participants as well as for their children, it is important to learn in a playful and visual way. The following needs were identified by the interviewees:

1. Education

- **German classes, basic education**

All interviewed people agreed that a strong focus on German classes must be given (language classes twice a week is not sufficient). One participant underlined the importance of basic education, one highlighted the necessity to offer further trainings designed for women. These points are essential for a better orientation in the new culture.

2. Trainings

- **Labor market**

2 interviewees mentioned that it is important to bring refugees closer to the education system at an early stage even though they are not allowed to work. To be successfully integrated into the labor market, one needs to know about occupations that are most in demand, about educational and job possibilities.

- **Everyday life**

Many interviewees mentioned different practices that are essential in everyday life but need to be learned first. The knowledge of values and norms, which are often seen and lived differently in the host society, helps families to better cope with everyday life. One interviewee highlighted an example of intercultural communication that could have led to a momentous misunderstanding. A refugee addressed a policeman with "Why, my friend?". Due to the lack of intercultural knowledge, the police officer was unable to correctly classify the statement and got very angry; the refugee was also unaware that in the Austrian context such a verbal statement is absolutely not suitable.

- **Health sector**
- **Bureaucracy**
- **Education system** (focus on kindergarten, school)
- **Mother tongue** (bilingual education, mother tongue often neglected)

Identification of training needs for volunteers

All interviewees agreed that integration without civil or voluntary commitment is not possible. Volunteering creates solidarity, acceptance, closeness to the population and dispels fears.

Families who are accompanied by a so-called "buddy" (= volunteer) are quicker and better integrated (admission to school, registration for German classes, accommodation, etc.). The interviewees agree, however, that many volunteers are unable to cope with the load of responsibilities and are involved in sectors where they do not have the necessary resources or

training, do not know the system, and consequently despair of the situation. Consequently, because they are unable to cope with the situation, they harm themselves. Some are even close to a burn-out. Thus, volunteering is often synonymous with over-commitment. On the other hand, there are also some volunteers who lose motivation and suffer from great frustration, because refugees have a different understanding of time (appointments are often cancelled) or do not want to be part of certain activities (sometimes they suffer from over-provision of activities organized by volunteers). Consequently, volunteers use generalizations such as "everyone is so ungrateful".

The understanding of volunteer work is often misinterpreted by volunteers. They often see themselves in the role of the helper and are caught up in it. Some even go for volunteer work because, "I want to help to help myself, and I help for public perception."

The interviewees underlined that due to lack of knowledge about different systems, volunteers unintentionally spread misinformation and thus create problems for counsellors who have to take the blame: "Volunteers are considered heroes and we are always seen as scapegoats who say no to everything. This leads to tensions and trust is lost". Volunteers often go beyond their limits and take on tasks that are actually meant to be done by counsellors.

Identification of best practices

Almost all interviewees agreed that projects or activities in which Austrians are involved and people interact as equals. Programs tailored to refugees mostly do not include Austrians and thus automatically exclude parts of society. With such programs, we create biotopes for refugees and integration becomes even more difficult. In other words, projects and initiatives are successful when their focus is not on the refugees' countries of origin.

The buddy system, where (mostly Austrian) volunteer accompany refugees, works very well as it directly addresses the needs. This direct approach focusses on interpersonal aspects and creates participation.

Refugees are allowed to carry out community work. Their participation in non-profit activities is highly important and fosters integration. However, these jobs are scarce and are restricted to certain criteria.

Other best practice examples include a hotel in Vienna and a coffee house in Innsbruck, which allow asylum seekers to gain work experience.

Successful integration involves two sides, not just one. It is important to build bridges between the refugee as an individual and the host society. Austrians too must open up and let opportunities for integration happen.

The answers given in the online questionnaire underline above mentioned best practices.

5. Mapping Volunteers' Experience

Participants' characteristics

50 people working as volunteers answered the bilingual (German/English) questionnaire (30 women, 20 men). Most participants ranged in age from 36-50 (42%) and from 26 to 35 (34%).

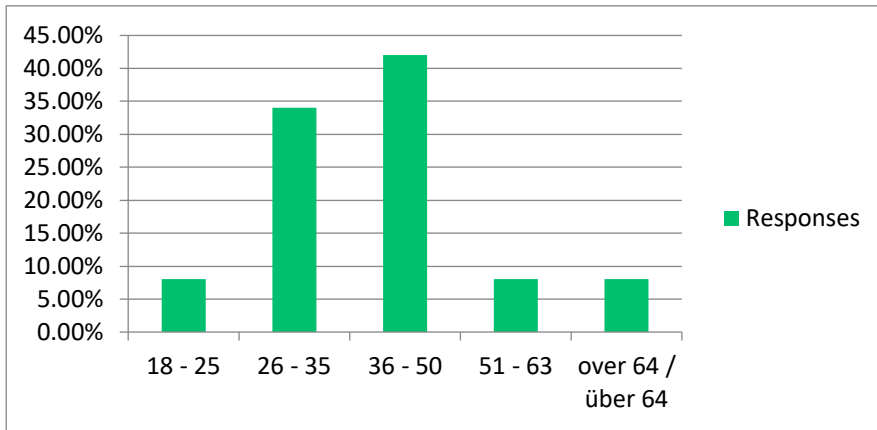


Figure 5: Age groups of participants.

Among the 50 answers, the following nationalities were stated (1 participant did not mention his/her nationality, 1 gave an invalid answer): Austrian (36x), German (4x), Turkish (3x), Bosnian (1x), Syrian (1x), Iraqi (1x), Serbian (1x), Spanish (1x).

11 participants (clearly) indicated the number of years they have been living in Austria. Years ranged between 3 to 25 years. As figure 6 shows, the majority of respondents (58%) lives in a small town, 30% live in a village and only 12% live in a big city. However, it has to be mentioned that the definition of “small town” and “big city” was not given in the questionnaire. In terms of the highest level of education, 58% hold a university degree, 30% have finished secondary school, 8% are postgraduates and 4% completed elementary school. 46 people named their occupation, however answers are broad ranging. The following two main categories can be summarized: 10 answers can be classified as social workers, 9 occupations are linked with the educational sector, 7 people described themselves as “salaried employees”, 4 declared to be employed in office/administration. The remaining answers are scattered.

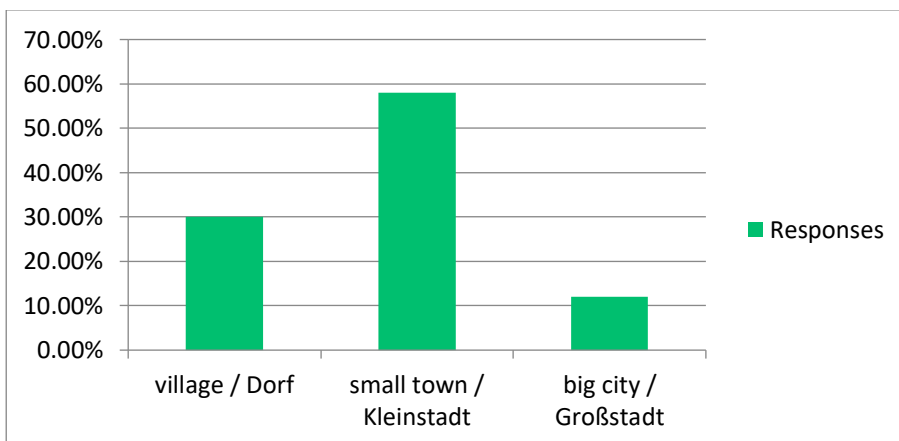


Figure 6: Diagram indicating the place of living.

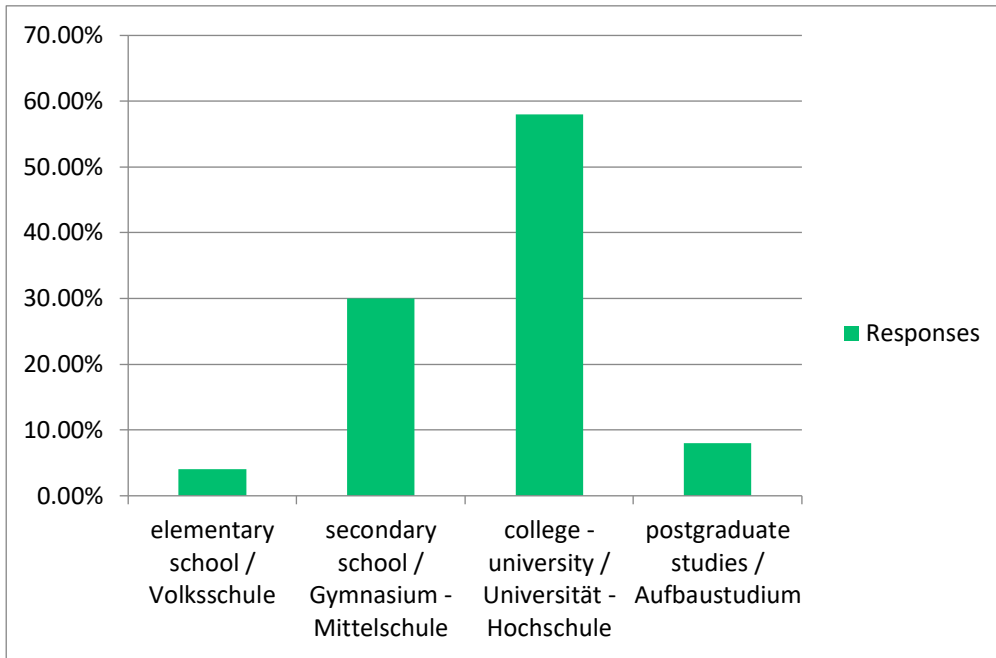


Figure 7: Percentage of highest level of education.

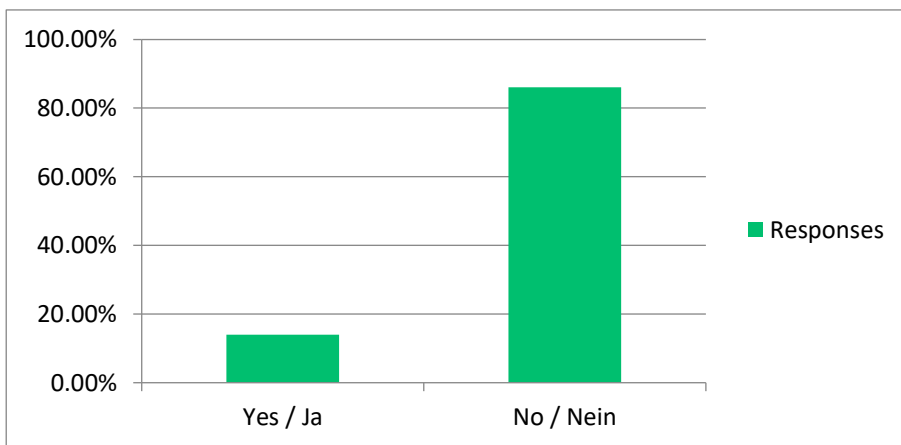


Figure 8: 7 people (i.e. 14%) are either refugees, internally displaced persons (IDP), or come from a refugee or IDP family.

While 60% have never been a migrant, 40% (20 people) of all respondents do consider themselves migrants as they lived outside their home country. Figure 9 highlights that 36% (18 people out of 50) sporadically volunteer with refugees. The four main categories of volunteer work with refugees are: collect material (42%), assist to find housing (38%), assist to find employment (32%), accompany refugees in government offices and other services (30%); for more details please refer to figure 10.

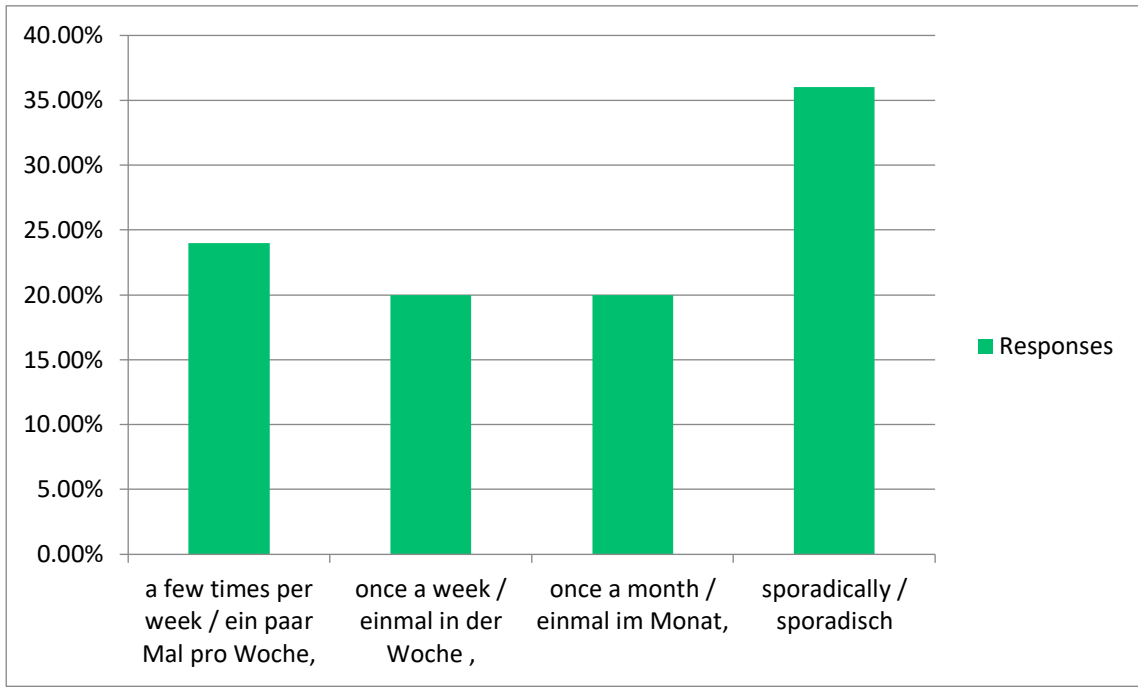


Figure 9: Frequency of volunteer work.

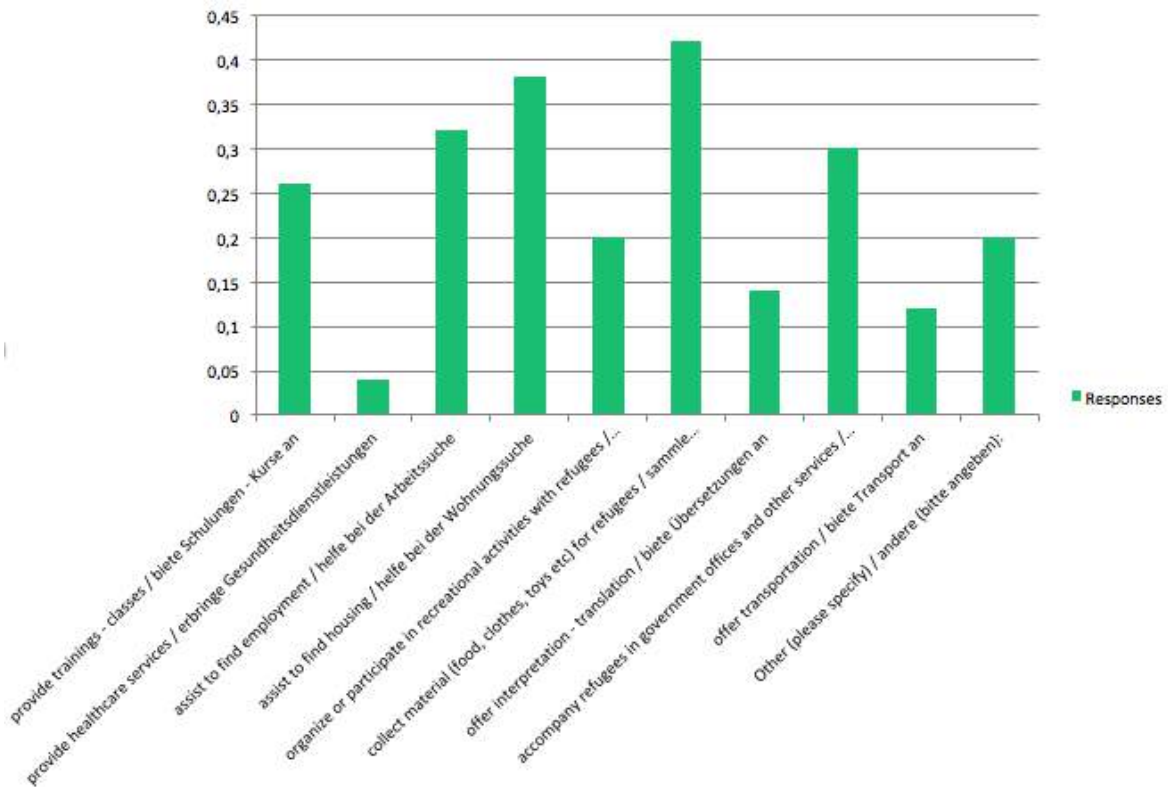


Figure 10: Types of voluntary work with refugees.

While 34 persons out of 50 do not want to be more involved in voluntary work, only 35 people named reasons (15 respondents skipped the question):

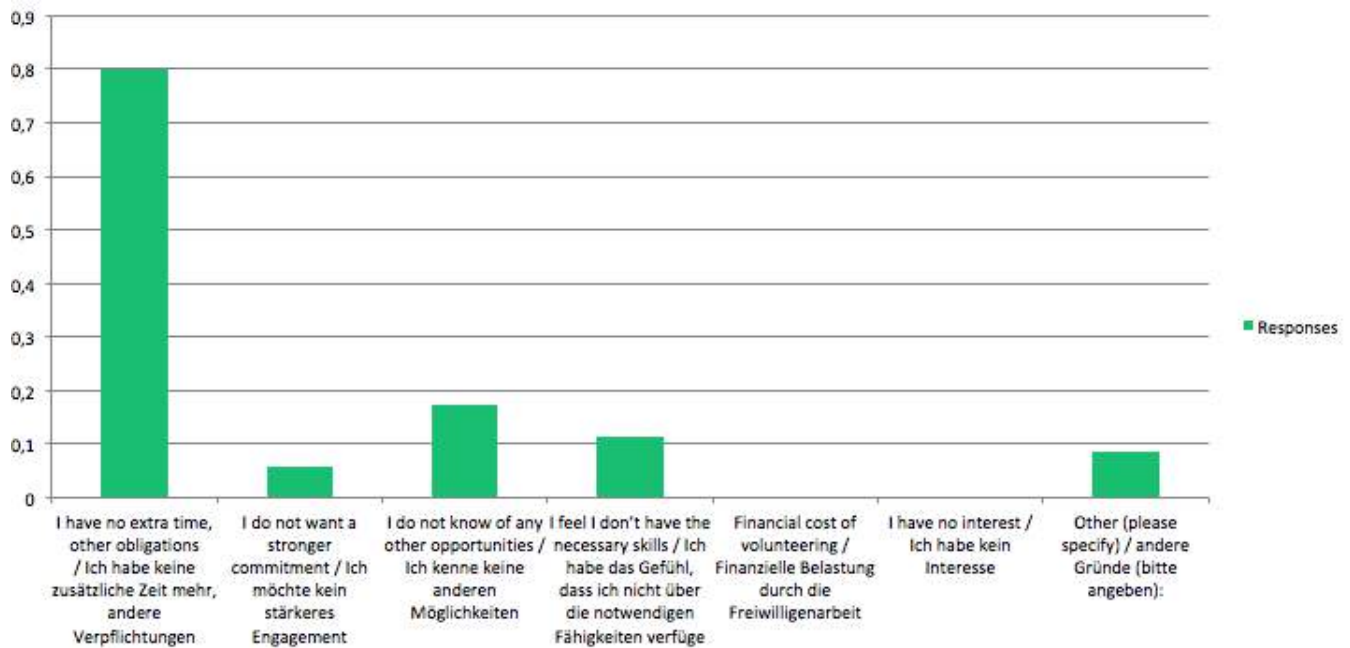


Figure 11: Reasons preventing respondents to do voluntary work.

While the diagram speaks for itself, people also mentioned the following reasons: frustration related to the willingness of politicians, health issues.

Identification of education/training needs of refugees

According to answers from 50 respondents, the main challenges lie in language acquisition (very dominant), permission to work (dominant), cultural issues and integration (dominant), authorities, contact to Austrians (dominant), housing, access to education, discrimination/racism. The education and training needs of refugees can be deduced. The trainings should address the challenges described above. Please also refer to the recommendations given below.

Challenges volunteers face

16 persons (32%) have encountered challenges in their voluntary work. The main challenges can be classified as follows (only 17 people answered this question, 33 skipped it): language barriers and misunderstandings (7x), dealing with prejudice and disrespect (3x) working with people having traumatic experiences (2x), dealing with authorities/acceptance of authorities (2x), no support of relevant institutions (1x) and of other villagers (1x), reliability of buddy (1x), personal distance (1x).

Identification of training needs for volunteers

Volunteer training sessions have not been attended by 84% of respondents. 7 people who have had trainings gave vague answers to the question which kind of training they had attended earlier: workshop that helped to understand cultural differences, a Red Cross workshop related to the topic empathy, GemNova for language education (not really helpful, material not useful), basic education (more or less helpful), networking (learned through experiences from others), volunteer work (less helpful), intercultural training (very helpful).

Even though quite a big number of volunteers have not attended training sessions, 52% would be interested to attend a training course.

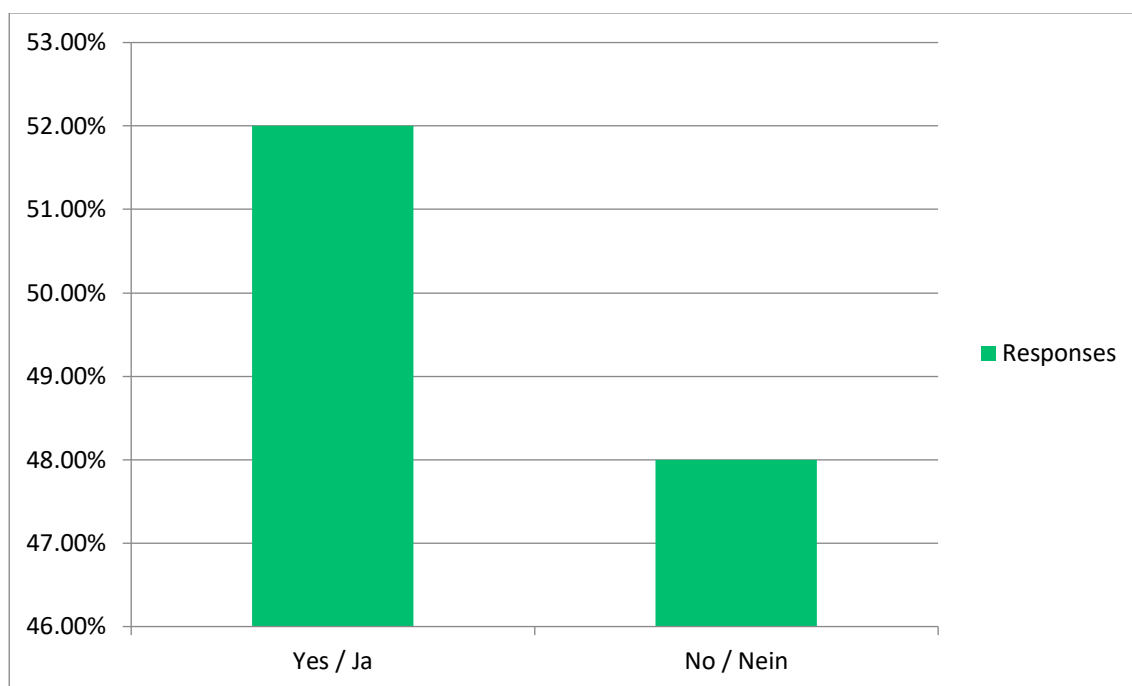


Figure 12: Interest in training course relevant for volunteers.

The trainings should address the challenges described above. Please also refer to the recommendations given below.

Identification of education/training needs of refugees

Only 13 people mentioned subjects on which they would like to be trained. The four main categories can be classified: Intercultural training, legal training, language acquisition, psychological training (dealing with traumatized people).

Analysis of current initiatives to train/educate volunteers

There are training opportunities for volunteers on various topics, however a more detailed research needs to be done in order to give a proper analysis as respondents of the questionnaire did not give enough answers. The few replies related to the attendance of trainings implied a more negative association with the trainings offered to volunteers (see above).

6. National Level Recommendations

Recommendation in terms of needs of refugee families

We can conclude that integration is harder for families because they have their own social network in the home. Networking with the host society is not as necessary as for single men, for example, who have to build new relationships (which also happens outside their homes). Hence, it would be important to consider the following needs:

- More offers/measures for refugee families and women, especially during the asylum procedure

- Need to keep family structures so that children do not have to take over parents' responsibilities (interpreters)
- More language classes, especially with childcare
- More individual support, especially for refugee women so that they have more options to integrate
- More information for refugees on associations working for/with migrants/refugees, on offers/measures targeting refugees
- More support/information related to educational/legal/health sector
- Employ multilingual staff in offices/among authorities
- Bilingual therapy to overcome stress and traumatic experiences
- More support in house-hunting
- Strengthened exchange/networking among system partners
- More tolerance

The answers given in the online questionnaire underline these needs.

On the whole, refugees must be provided a useful informational basis. However, a certain willingness of the host society must also be given. It is also important to mitigate and at best eliminate uncertainties among system partners and institutions working with refugees. Of course, uncertainties among refugees must be reduced as well. To strengthen these two parties, it is accordingly important to include both in this discourse.

In their daily work, counsellors should not only treat refugees as individuals, but should also consider the positive and potentially negative consequences of actions / activities / measures / projects implemented for/with refugees.

Recommendation in terms of training needs for refugees

As mentioned earlier, the focus should be on conversational German classes, trainings related to orientation in everyday life with a lot of visualization and also a bilingual trainer. Topics to be included in the trainings related to the national context could be

- social manners
- gender roles (focus on gender equality among boys and girls)
- rights (women's and children's rights, focus on domestic violence) and duties
- house hunting (focus on how to deal with landlords)
- independence in everyday life (in order not to be dependent on one's own community, (inexpensive) shopping, use of public transport, orientation outside the home, etc.)
- everyday conversations (to go up to people)
- cultural understanding and intercultural communication

In order to foster integration and to give refugees the possibility to be in direct, regular contact with the host society, Austrians should take part in some of the trainings.

Recommendation in terms of training needs for volunteers

In order to offer a sustainable and interesting training course for volunteers, the following topics were suggested for the Austrian context:

- Intercultural sensitivity, including knowledge about countries of origin
- Dealing with traumatized persons
- Language teaching (volunteers often do not have experience in language teaching)
- Reflexive competences (to be able to set clear boundaries > to protect themselves, to strengthen frustration tolerance)
- Expertise in asylum system / procedure
- Rights and laws in Austria to avoid false information
- Knowledge about existing networks / platforms
- Knowledge about education / work for asylum seekers
- Knowledge about authorities

Trainings for refugees as well as for volunteers should consider a holistic, direct approach. Moreover, the trainings' contents should be closely related to practice and covered a wide range of useful contents for the target groups.

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