



# The economic lives of Syrian refugees in Europe

# Foreword

Over the past two years, the Syrian refugee crisis in Europe has significantly tested traditional modes of humanitarian support. Governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and businesses have come together in an effort to provide assistance to these refugees, but many significant challenges remain.

This report is the result of a collaboration between Deloitte and the Refugee Studies Centre (RSC) at the University of Oxford. It examines the lives of Syrian refugees in three host countries – Austria, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom – and the opportunities they have to obtain employment and contribute to the local economy.

The report offers insight into the challenges that refugees face as they seek work in their host countries, and also examines how businesses in these countries view the hiring of refugees. We hope it may provide practical guidance to public and private actors on how to support refugees' socio-economic participation across Europe.



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*The Refugee Studies Centre was created in 1982 at the University of Oxford to engage in research, teaching, and outreach relating to all aspects of forced migration.*

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# Executive summary

Conflict and civil unrest in Syria has caused more than 5 million refugees to flee their homes. While a relatively small proportion of these individuals have settled in Europe, there is a high level of public awareness and concern around the support being offered to these refugees.

To contribute to this discussion, Deloitte and the Refugee Studies Centre (RSC) at the University of Oxford have collaborated on an exploratory survey of refugees in three European countries – Austria, the Netherlands, and the UK. This survey studied a small sample of refugees and businesses aiming to enhance understanding of the economic lives of Syrian refugees in Europe with a particular focus on employment. The study seeks to contribute to the conversation on the challenges facing refugees as they seek work, and how to best support them as they settle in their host countries. More research and better understanding of these challenges can help target the assistance and support that businesses, government, and NGOs are providing for the refugees in Europe.

This report is based on a survey of 305 refugees in Austria, the Netherlands, and the UK, and is supplemented by qualitative interviews with refugees and businesses. The data collected were subject to a number of methodological considerations; notably that research was not based on random sampling. These constraints are discussed in detail in order

to make limitations transparent and to offer guidance on future research.

The trends noted in this report suggest that there are a number of drivers behind the low level of refugee employment. Perhaps most significant is the overwhelming barrier for refugees who settle in a host country where they do not know the local

“Our aim is to enhance understanding of the economic lives of Syrian refugees in Europe with a particular focus on employment.”

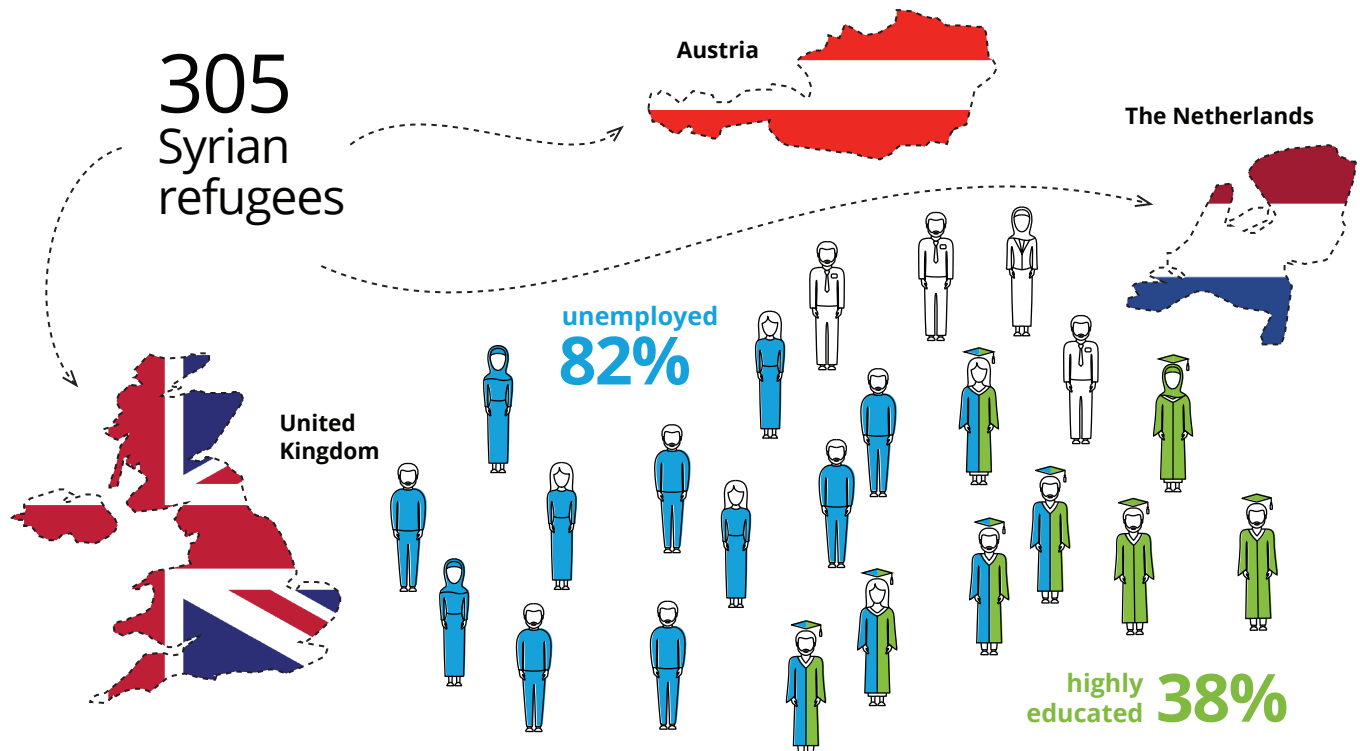
language. There is also evidence that many work-eligible refugees lack adequate assistance to find work. They are often worried about forfeiting government support, lack the training opportunities needed to encourage movement across sectors, or lack confidence in how to navigate the labor market.

Drawing on qualitative evidence from businesses operating in the three countries studied, this report also suggests that businesses seek legal and regulatory guidance around employing refugees. There is also significant misunderstanding over what transferable skills and educational backgrounds refugees possess.

The report includes a number of findings on how refugees access employment and economic opportunities. In particular, the refugees surveyed point to the importance of their social networks in their host countries. This is significant, as these social networks have played a key role in identifying employment opportunities for those refugees who have

jobs. The report also finds that refugees have access to email and smartphones, which suggests that technology might have a role to play in helping to find work and supporting social integration.

This report seeks to offer insights that may be of relevance to refugees, businesses, governments, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). We hope this report may enable both public and private actors to better identify and understand the opportunities and barriers relating to refugees' economic participation.



### Highlights of the report include the following:

- The economic lives<sup>1</sup> of Syrian refugees in Europe are characterised by a paradox: many are highly educated (38% have a university education), and yet unemployment is very high (82%) and of those who are unemployed, nearly all rely mainly on government support.
- There are significant differences in the economic profile of Syrian refugees based on their mode of arrival: notably whether they arrive “spontaneously” or through “resettlement” schemes. Those arriving spontaneously appear more likely to be male, younger, single, childless, educated, in better mental and physical health, and to have arrived directly from their homes in Syria, in comparison to those arriving through organized resettlement schemes.
- The data suggest that although some refugees are entrepreneurial, greater support is needed for both employment and self-employment. Despite 32% of all refugees surveyed having owned their own business or worked in a family business in Syria, only 1.5% of interviewees had started their own business since arriving in Europe and of those, just a single business had existed for longer than one year. Only 12% of interviewees indicated that they would like to run their own business. Meanwhile, the informal economy appears to offer very little alternative income source for refugees.
- One of the greatest reported barriers to employment is language. 84% report their lack of ability to speak the local language as a barrier to employment. Government provision of classes varies considerably, and the self-reported attainment of the host country’s language is low, with just 46% saying they can speak the language well or very well.
- 97% of refugees report owning a smartphone, but only 30% of respondents say they have used an app to find a job. Social networks and the government are identified as the main sources of information on employment opportunities, although refugees sometimes lack confidence in these sources. 43% of those who have jobs found them through friends or relatives.
- Many refugees have concerns about seeking employment in sectors that do not relate directly to their existing skills and qualifications. When asked what type of employment they prefer, 63% say that they would like to find work which fits their existing skills and just 11% are willing to accept any kind of work. Their concerns include a belief that doing so may result in the loss of government assistance, and that there may not be sufficient retraining opportunities available.
- Interestingly, most Syrian refugees in the survey report high life satisfaction despite high levels of unemployment and their previous often traumatic experiences. These outcomes appear to be due to factors unrelated to employment, such as family life, showing that employment is just one aspect of human wellbeing.
- Businesses appear interested in employing refugees and there are examples of positive experiences. However, many businesses have misperceptions about refugees or lack information relating to their potential as prospective employees. Many seek legal and regulatory guidance around employing refugees.

# Background

In 2015, Europe faced an unprecedented influx of refugees from outside the region, the most significant proportion of whom fled war-torn Syria.

Most were forced to embark on dangerous journeys with smugglers, across the Aegean Sea and via the Balkan route, and thousands lost their lives trying to reach Europe. Today, there are around one million Syrian refugees living in Europe,<sup>2</sup> many of whom have not been able to fulfil their economic potential and contribute fully to the communities in which they now live. The influx to Europe became widely referred to as “the refugee crisis,” even though the arrivals were unevenly distributed among European countries and the total number coming to Europe was low relative to the approximately five million Syrian refugees hosted by neighbouring countries, such as Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan.

The influx raised public awareness and the political profile of the refugee issue, contributing to both increased solidarity with the refugee cause and growing populist nationalism. In addition to those who arrived spontaneously, several European countries provided organized resettlement to allow a limited number of the most vulnerable Syrian refugees to be relocated directly from camps and cities in the Middle East. The number of Syrians arriving in Europe declined rapidly from early 2016, partly as a result of European countries collaborating with Turkey and the Balkan states to close migration routes. However, the so-called crisis leaves a significant legacy: the challenge of integrating Syrian refugees into European societies.

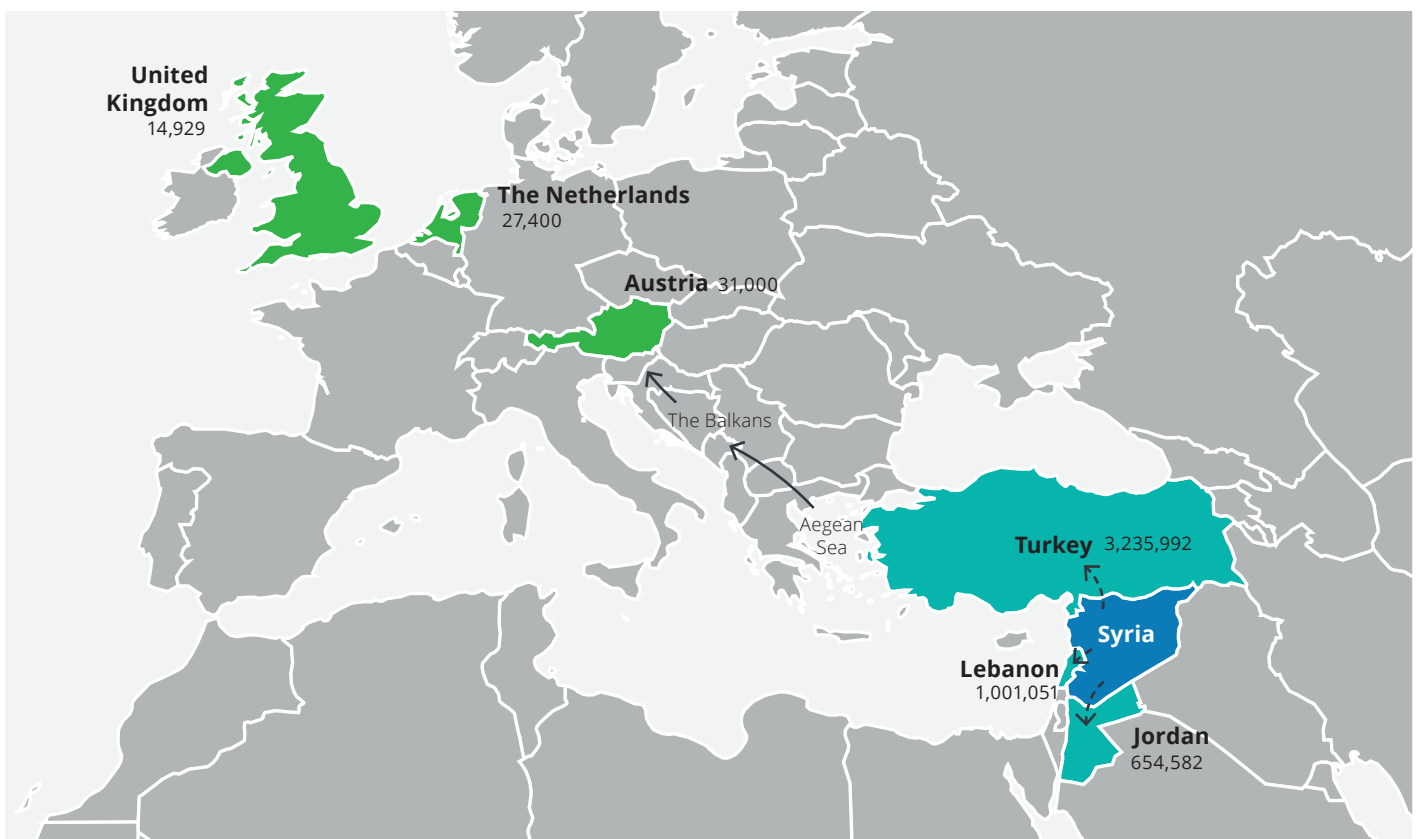
Reports from several European countries document that many of the Syrian refugees in Europe are highly educated, but are widely unemployed. This suggests a lost opportunity to empower refugees to help themselves and contribute to their host societies, irrespective of whether they ultimately stay in Europe or return to Syria.

There is a lack of systematic research on the economic lives of all refugees, and in particular on Syrian refugees in Europe. Such research on economic outcomes for refugees has the potential to enhance opportunities for refugees, businesses, governments, and NGOs. This type of research could enable both public and private actors to better identify

and understand the opportunities and barriers relating to refugee employment, entrepreneurship, and community participation.

The idea for this report and collaboration between Deloitte and RSC began in 2015, as the scale of the refugee crisis grew across the Middle East and Europe. In response, Deloitte professionals and leaders in the region committed to take action to support the refugees. Following consultations with humanitarian subject matter experts, Deloitte and RSC decided to work together to help uncover the economic potential of refugees and support refugees to access skills and job opportunities in Europe.

“Today, there are around one million Syrian refugees living in Europe, many of whom have not been able to fulfil their economic potential and contribute fully to the communities in which they now live.”



All of the figures in the map represent number of Syrian refugees. Data sources for Syrian refugee numbers in Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan from UNHCR, 2017; Austria and the Netherlands from UNHCR, 2016; and, the United Kingdom from the UK Home Office, 2017

Deloitte and RSC developed a two-pronged strategy. The first part is this research into understanding the skills and aspirations of refugees, as well as the challenges they face as they seek to work and live in European society. The second is the development of a technology platform to connect refugees with skills training, job, and entrepreneurship opportunities.

This is a small-scale study, based mainly on a survey with supplementary qualitative research. Data were drawn from three host countries: Austria, the Netherlands and the UK. Due to the limited scope of this study, the report has significant methodological limitations, all of which we elaborate below. Most notably, it cannot be taken to be representative of all Syrians in Europe or even of Syrians

in the host countries studied. Nevertheless, the survey – supplemented with qualitative observations – may offer some valuable insights on which to build subsequent future research, as well as suggest ideas for practical interventions.



# Research methods

This report is the outcome of a research collaboration between Deloitte and RSC. RSC focused primarily on research design and data analysis, and professionals in local Deloitte offices undertook data collection at the field level with guidance from RSC staff and in collaboration with NGOs and local authorities.

The country selection for the research is based on two primary criteria. First, the support particular Deloitte member firms could provide for the collaboration. Second, an aim to research countries with different regulations on asylum seekers' waiting periods for accessing the labor market.<sup>3</sup>

RSC undertook the initial research design, providing guidance and training to Deloitte practitioners relating to: a) documentation and preparation (for example, on preparing a desk study, mapping, and ethical considerations); b) qualitative research (for example, on conducting semi-structured interviews and focus groups); and c) quantitative research design (for example, on questionnaire design, sampling and survey training).

In addition to designing the survey for Syrian refugees in the three countries, RSC also offered guidance on the ideal quantitative research design. The ideal design is a sampling strategy that aims to elicit randomised sampling in order to have representative data.

The objective of the sampling strategy is to draw a sample which is representative of a population. Three options were

theoretically available for sampling the Syrian refugee population: the first-best sampling strategy is to obtain a list of names and addresses of the population of interest, and to randomly draw a sample from this list. The second-best strategy is to implement a two-stage cluster sampling strategy. Instead of randomly selecting individuals from a "national" list of refugees, the idea is to randomly draw a sample of sub-national entities (municipalities for example) using proportional sampling, and then randomly select a sample of refugees within each of the selected municipalities. This second-best option is more realistic when there are budget and institutional constraints. The snowball sampling and other non-probability sampling techniques: these methods do not provide guarantees of representativeness and should only be used if the other methods cannot be used.

In practice, the first two options proved difficult. This is because there were no pre-existing sample frames for the entire Syrian refugee population nor from sub-national entities. Consequently, we relied upon the third-best option of snowball sampling.

Survey participants were accessed through national NGO partners. This enhanced access and may have improved trust

between the interviewers and respondents. However, it introduced biases to the data because the sample is disproportionately made up of Syrians who are in touch with these organizations. Many prospective national NGO partners reported "over-saturation" of research due to lack of capacity or were not working directly with Syrian refugees, so we relied upon a relatively small number of partners in each country.

In Austria, access was through a series of small NGOs, and most data were collected in Vienna, where two-thirds of the country's Syrian refugees live. In the Netherlands, International Organization for Migration (IOM) and WarChild provided support and recommended additional partners, including Refugee Start Force and the employment agency Randstad. Access partners for the UK included the IOM, the British Refugee Council, and World Jewish Relief, and 152 observations were recorded in ten City and County councils, including: Argyll and Bute County Council, Ashford Borough Council, Horton Housing Association in Bradford, Bristol City Council, Herefordshire Council, and Stirling Council..





The biases introduced by working through NGO networks were partly mitigated by acquiring overall population data from national governments. This allowed an assessment of the degree to which the sample population represented the broader in-country demographics of Syrian refugees. These were obtained from Statistik Austria and Public Employment Service Austria (AMS), Statistics Netherlands, and the UK Home Office. Furthermore, the survey was supplemented by qualitative insights, including through semi-structured interviews and interviewers' observations.

Nevertheless, there are two particular methodological problems with the dataset.

First, it is based on non-probabilistic sampling. The difficulties in identifying and accessing Syrian refugees and partner NGOs means that our sample is not random. In Austria, interviews were mainly in Vienna. In the Netherlands, a small number of the interviews were done in collaboration with an employment agency (biasing the sample towards the employed). In the UK, almost all interviewees, 86%, were part of an organized resettlement program whereas the total refugee population is closer to 50% resettlement, 50% spontaneous.

Second, it is based on a small sample size. To provide meaningful insights on any one country is difficult given the low number of observations. By country, only the UK has a reasonable number of observations. The number of observations for the Netherlands is especially small. However, it is possible to compare those who arrived spontaneously with those who arrived via organized resettlement programs,<sup>4</sup> as these groups are roughly evenly split in our sample. As resettled refugees are selected by their host countries, there are significant differences between the two groups, which is explained in Section 4.

All of the surveys were based on in-person interviews. In every survey, additional space was allotted to enable refugees to provide any additional observations or comments that may have fallen outside the scope of the survey questions.

# Basic demographics

Syrian refugees in Europe are predominantly young and male. They also present a paradox: despite many being skilled and highly educated, they are disproportionately likely to be unemployed.

Our survey sample is based on 305 interviews (n=305): 111 for Austria, 42 for the Netherlands, and 152 for the UK. Of these, 158 arrived spontaneously and 147 through resettlement schemes. Across the whole sample, 72% are men, 59% are married, just under half have children, the mean age is 33, and the mean years of education is just under 13.

There are substantial differences between the refugees surveyed in Austria and the Netherlands, on the one hand, and the UK, on the other hand. These differences appear to be largely due to the fact that those surveyed in Austria

and the Netherlands were primarily spontaneous arrivals, whereas those surveyed in the UK were mainly resettled. Those arriving spontaneously appear more likely to be male, younger, single, childless, and more educated in comparison to those arriving through organized resettlement schemes.

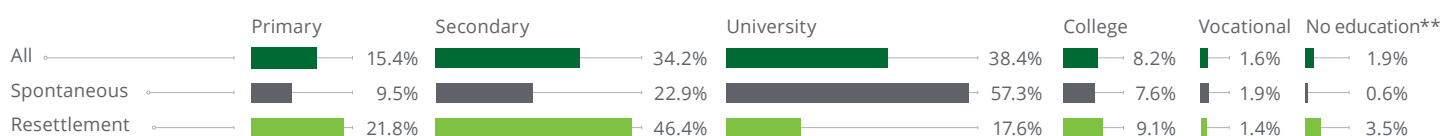
It is worth noting that although there are more men than women in the survey sample, this appears to be representative of the broader Syrian refugee population in Europe. Indeed, the actual Syrian refugee population within each country is broadly speaking two-thirds male, one-third female.

In terms of the overall economic profile within the survey, there is extremely high unemployment – around 82% in the three countries. Of those who are unemployed, 97% rely on government support as their main source of income. Despite this, a significant portion of the population is highly educated with 38% having a university education.

Nearly all of the refugees came to Europe after 2014 and most arrived in 2015. They report mixed motives for choosing to come to Europe: 38% say they chose Europe because it was the “only available safe place,” while 30% identify “better economic opportunities,” and 14% cite “joining family and friends”. Those in Europe are also predominantly from urban areas in Syria and most identify as having had average to above-average wealth levels prior to displacement. However, only 18% self-identify as coming from an elite background.

	Austria	Netherlands	UK	Total
Interviewees	111	42	152	305
% Male	70%	90%	68%	72%
Median age	29	31	35	31
Mean age	30.6	31.9	35.6	33.3
% Arrived with or joined family	70%	50%	90%	77%
% Married	43%	45%	74%	59%
% With children	33%	36%	64%	49%
Median years of education	14	15	12	12
Mean years of education	13.6	14.2	11.4	12.6

**Chart 01. Highest level of education attended\***



\*Because of rounding, numbers may not tally with the total throughout this report.

\*\*For the purpose of this report, college will refer to a two-year tertiary educational degree. University will refer to a four-year tertiary educational degree.

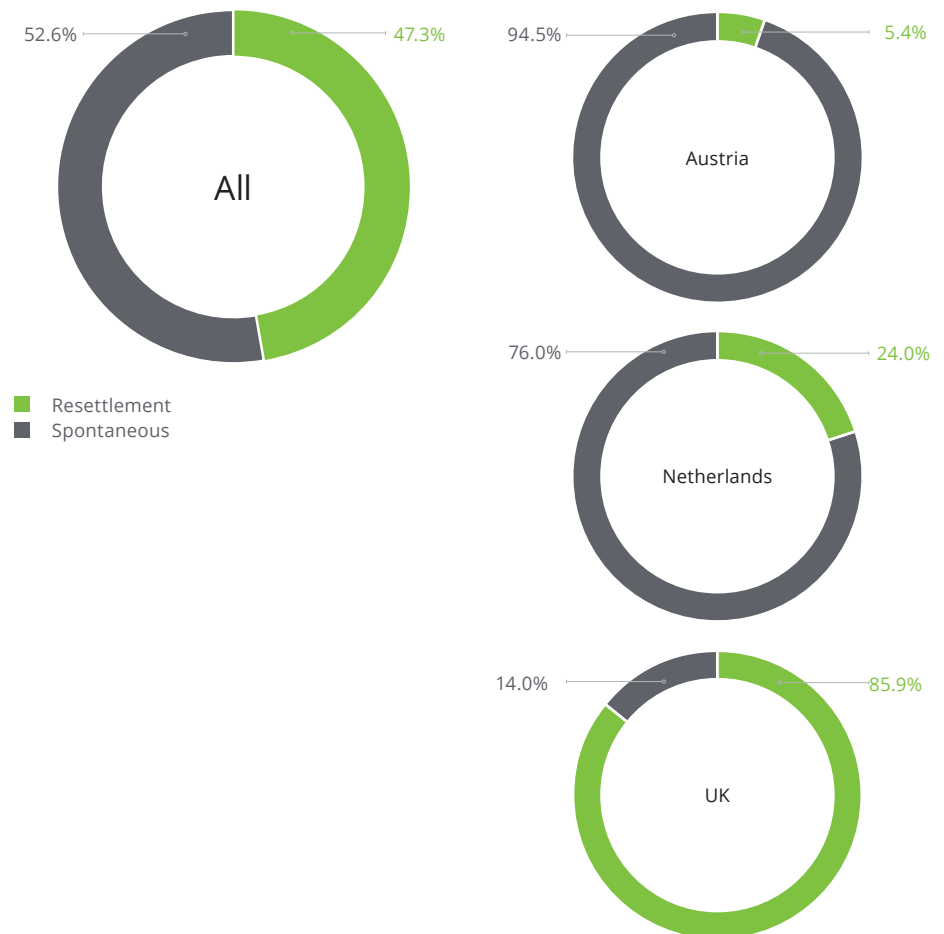
# Mode of arrival matters

How refugees arrived in Europe makes a difference to their economic profile. Those arriving spontaneously are in quite a different situation than those who arrive through organized resettlement schemes – they are more likely to be male, single, younger, in better health, and better educated.

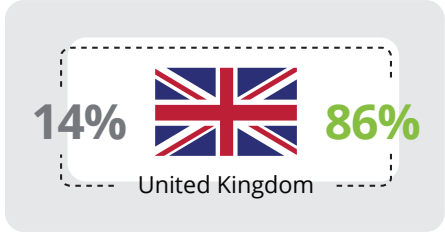
One of the most striking findings from the data are the differences in demography based on mode of arrival in Europe. In the sample, 53% arrived spontaneously and 47% arrived through resettlement schemes. Those who arrive spontaneously, choose to make the journey to Europe and have had the willingness and ability to do so by themselves. Those who are resettled were selected by government or NGO programs based on their vulnerability. There are great differences in profile and economic outcome between the two groups. See Annex 1 for summary regression results to establish correlations between variables.

Resettled refugees are directly selected by the host country's government. For example, the UK's Vulnerable Person's Relocation Scheme: "prioritizes those who cannot be supported effectively in their region of origin: women and children at risk, people in severe need of medical care and survivors of torture and violence amongst others"<sup>5</sup>. In contrast, spontaneous refugees self-select on the basis of being better able to cope with obstacles they may face during their journey to Europe, including the ability to pay the smugglers for their journey, which is estimated to be several thousand dollars.

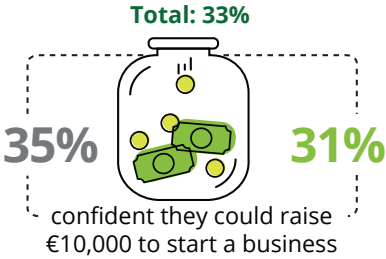
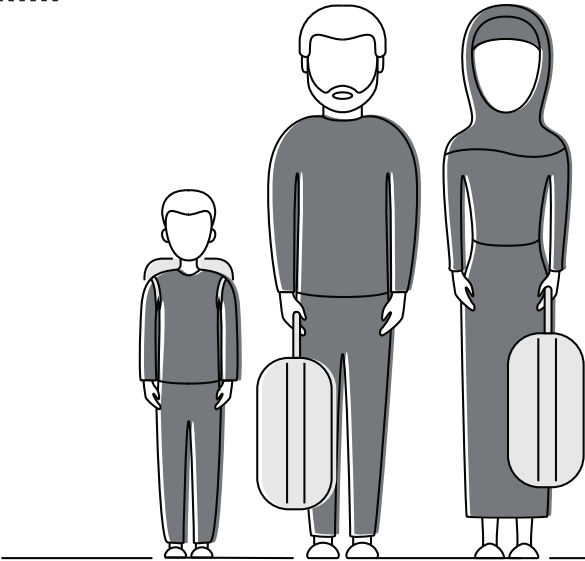
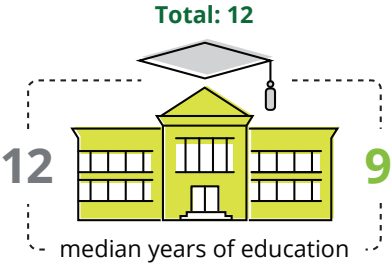
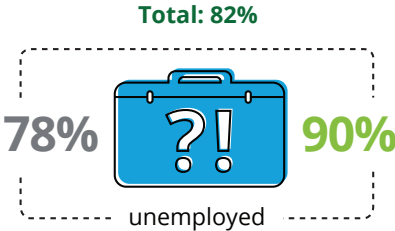
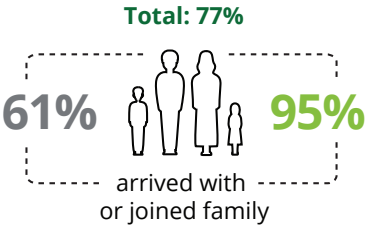
**Chart 02. Mode of arrival**



305  
Total  
interviewees




158  
spontaneous  
arrivals

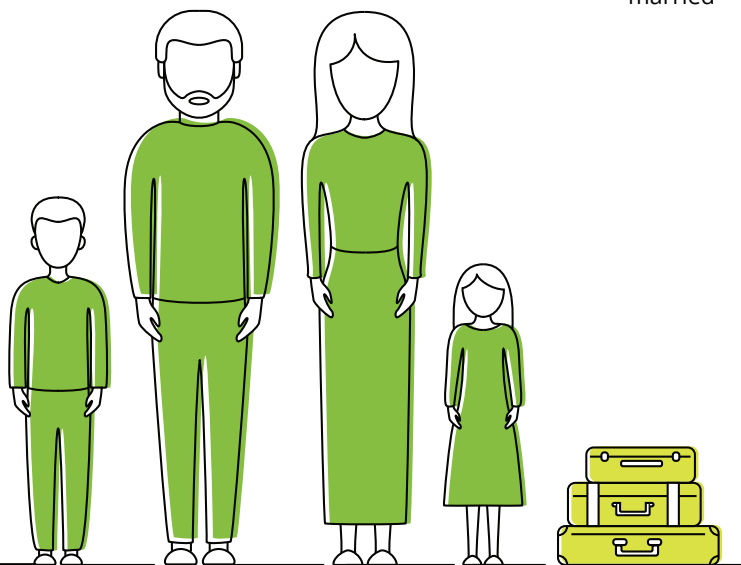


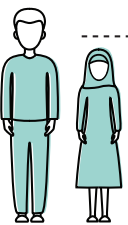
76%  24%  
The Netherlands


95%  5%  
Austria


147  
resettled  
refugees


Total: 59%  
46%  73%  
married



Total: 49%  
45%  65%  
with children

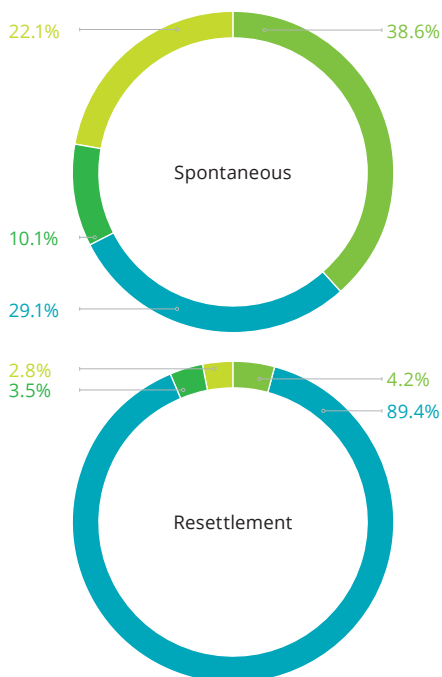
Total: 72%  
76%  67%  
male

Total: 31  
30  34  
median age

Total: 86%  
94%  69%  
self-reported to be  
in good physical health

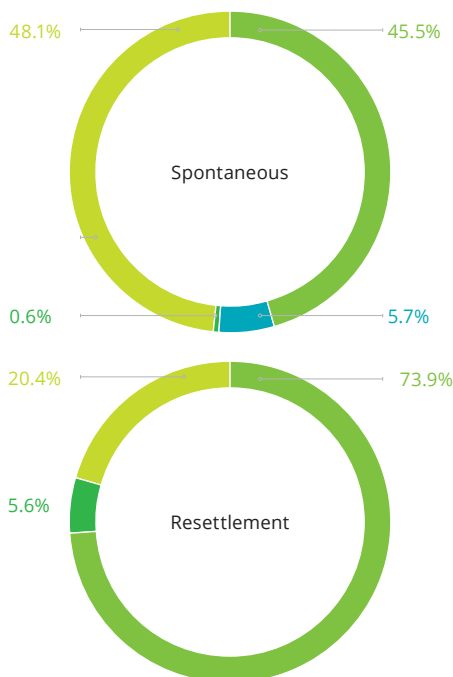
 Resettlement  
 Spontaneous

Chart 03. Persons arrived with



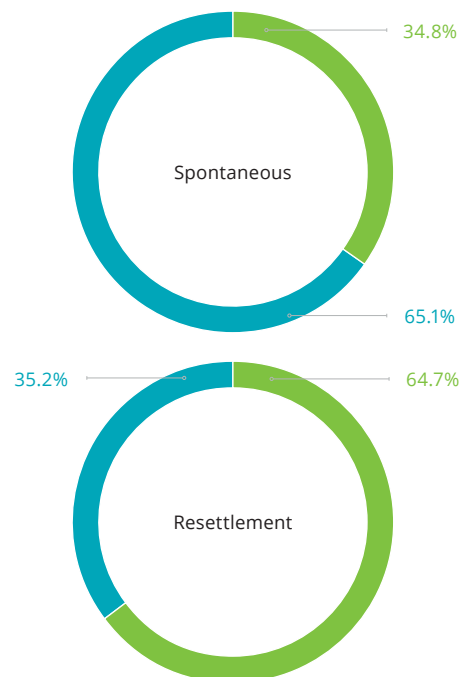
- Alone
- Arrived with family
- Joined family already in the country
- Joined by family after arrival

Chart 04. Marital status



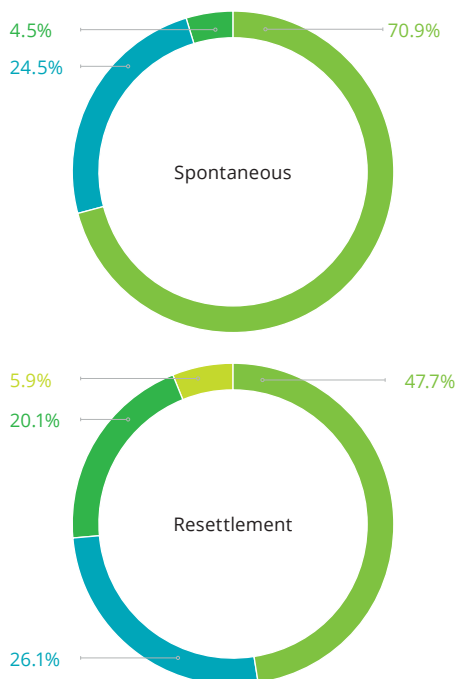
- Married or living together
- Divorced/separated
- Widowed
- Never married/lived together

Chart 05. Have children under 18



- Yes
- No

Chart 06. In good physical health



- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Regression analysis confirms, for instance, that spontaneous arrivals are, on average, less likely to be married, more likely to have fewer children, more likely to be more highly educated, and more likely to be in better physical and mental health.

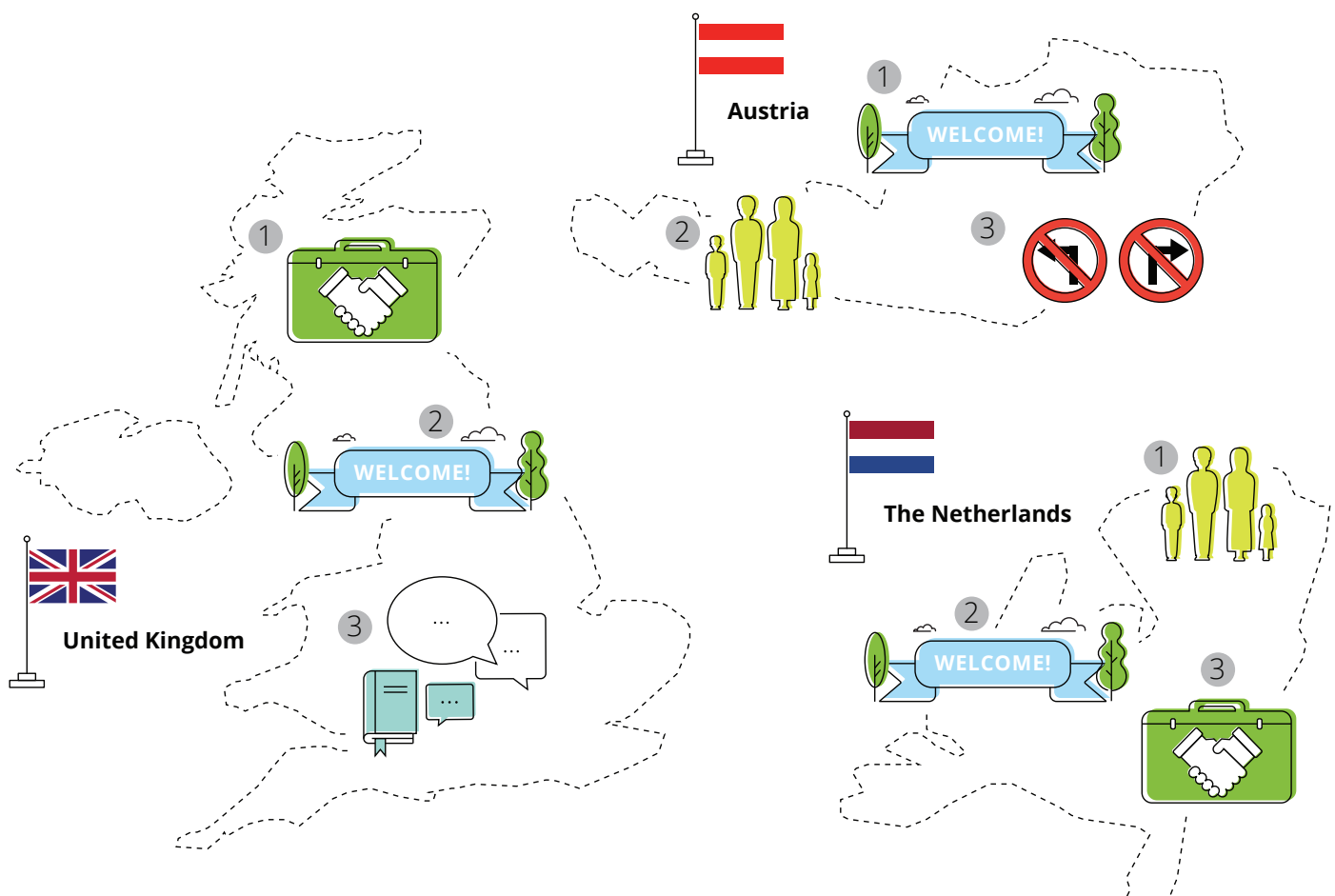
However, crucially, the mode of arrival itself appears to have little direct effect on the economic outcomes for refugees once the underlying selection characteristics (e.g., age, sex, marital status, and years of education) are taken into account. Whether we look at employment outcomes, life satisfaction, income, or wealth, there is no discernible direct impact of the mode of arrival, other than through these underlying characteristics. This means that if there were two individuals with identical characteristics – one who arrived spontaneously and one who arrived via a resettlement program – we would expect them to have the same income and life satisfaction in Europe and we would expect them to have the same probability of having a job.

It appears that there is a clear correlation between variables relating to the duration of the journey to Europe and mode of arrival, even when taking personal characteristics into account. Refugees who arrive via resettlement are more likely to have left their home in Syria earlier, and to have arrived in Europe later, meaning that they spent longer as an internally displaced person (IDP) or spent more time as a refugee in the region. This means that government resettlement programs are, according to our data, successful in targeting the most vulnerable refugees insofar as they target people who have been “trapped” in limbo for long periods of time, either as IDPs or refugees.



The descriptive statistics also reveal insights into why refugees selected their particular country destinations:

- For Austria, the motives are:
  01. reputation for welcoming refugees;
  02. family and friends;
  03. it was not my choice.
- For the Netherlands, the motives are:
  01. family and friends;
  02. reputation for welcoming refugees;
  03. better economic opportunities.
- For those moving to the UK, the motives are:
  01. better economic opportunity;
  02. reputation for welcoming refugees;
  03. language.



It should, however, be made very clear that none of these motives is in any way inconsistent with being “genuine” refugees, in the sense of having fled a well-founded

fear of persecution in Syria. The data simply gives as a broader picture of why some refugees seek asylum within particular destination countries.



# Towards a model of causal relationship

The survey was designed to investigate and explore the relationship between four different aspects of a refugee's experience:

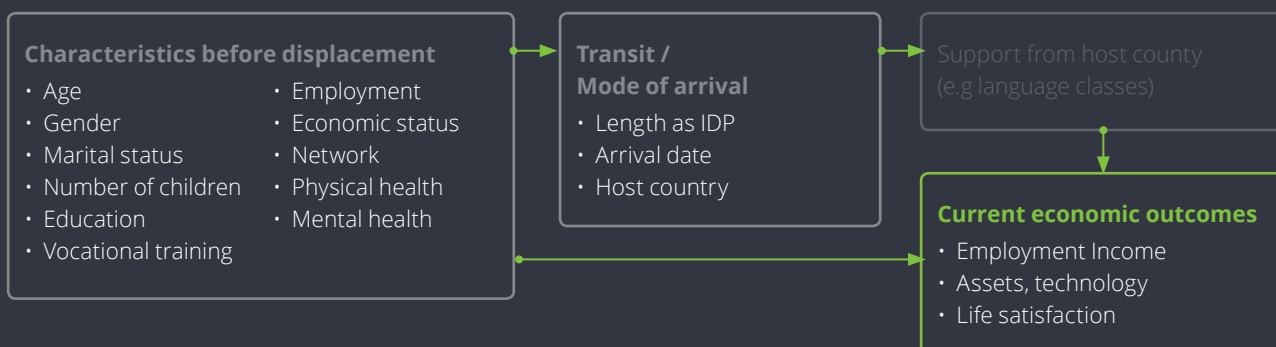
- Personal characteristics;
- The displacement experience (including mode of arrival and journey);
- Support received in the host country (from NGOs as well as government); and
- Current economic outcomes in the host country.

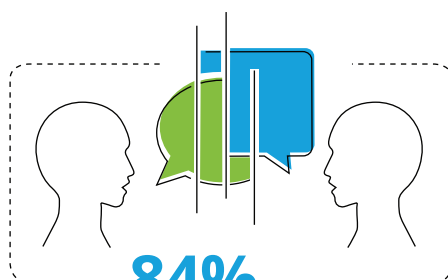
As with any economic analysis, one of the great challenges is to unpack the often complex relationships between particular variables. For instance, does the mode of arrival causally affect economic outcomes in the destination country? Or, alternatively, is it in fact the underlying characteristics of a person prior to departure that determine both the mode of arrival and economic outcomes in the destination country?

Interestingly, a model explaining the relationships between the main variables in the study shows that similar underlying pre-displacement characteristics influence

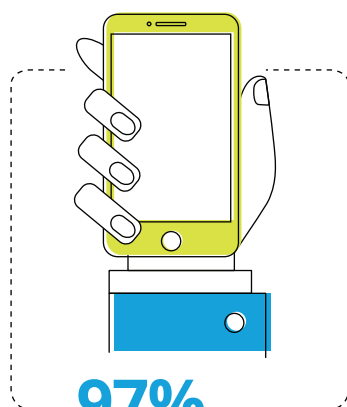
both the mode of arrival and economic outcomes after arrival. The mode of arrival also influences the support refugees receive in the host country. Current economic outcomes are influenced by the support a refugee receives, however they are not influenced directly by the mode of arrival once the underlying characteristics and the level of support are taken into account.

Personal characteristics and the support refugees receive after arriving in the host country are thus important for determining the economic outcomes they experience.





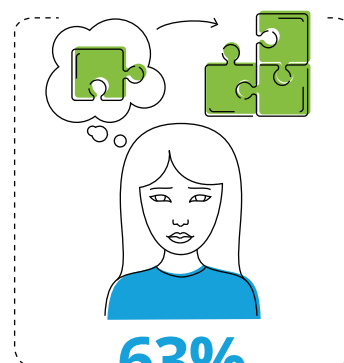
**84%** report  
language ability as a barrier  
to employment



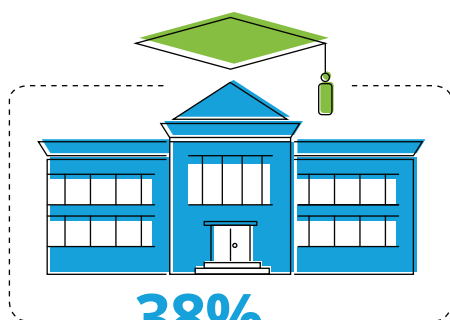
**97%** report  
owning a **smartphone**



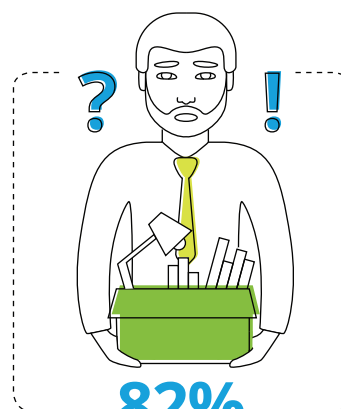
**72%** are either  
"satisfied" or "very satisfied"  
with their life as a whole these days



**63%**  
prefer work which  
fits their existing skills



**38%** have  
a **university education**



**82%**  
**unemployed**

# The role of entrepreneurship

Contrary to claims about the prevalence of refugee entrepreneurship, only a very small number of the Syrian refugees surveyed run their own businesses, whether in the formal or informal sector. This is despite a high number having been entrepreneurs in their country of origin.

There has been a growing trend for media outlets to portray Syrian refugees as upstart entrepreneurs bringing new small businesses to Europe,<sup>6</sup> and perhaps engaging in entrepreneurial activity in the informal sector. Nonetheless, despite 32% of all refugees surveyed having owned their own business or worked in a family business in Syria, only five interviewees had started their own business since arriving in Europe. Of those, just a single business had existed for longer than a year and only one (a different business) pays taxes. All five of these businesses interacted mainly with citizens of the host country rather than specifically with refugees. Only 12% of interviewees indicated an ambition to run their own business.

## Hasan

“When you want to start your business, there are a lot of papers you need to fill in and most importantly you need to communicate with people.”

Hasan came to the Netherlands in 2015. Previously, he owned three shoe shops in Syria.

Despite the challenges he faced from learning a new language and the intricacies of starting a business, he has recently opened his own shoe shop in Utrecht with financial backing from his brother, and friends helping him to communicate.

His dream is for his shop to be a famous part of the Dutch market, and for customers to visit it purely for its reputation.



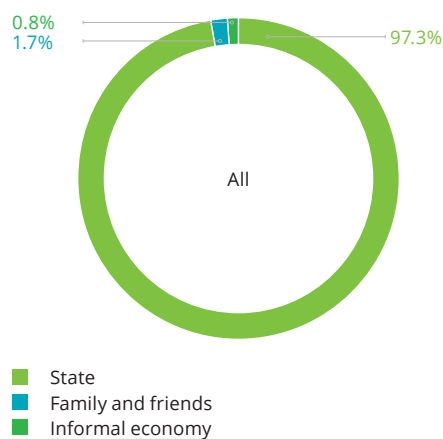
“Do not give up. Yes, it is difficult to start again. It is difficult to build up again, but it is not impossible.”

There have been popular examples of success stories of Syrian refugees who have started businesses in Europe and prospered. Our data suggest that in general these are outliers, and are not representative of a sample in which over 80% are unemployed, and only 12% of interviewees indicated that they would like to run their own business. The data also challenge the commonly held idea that refugee entrepreneurship takes place in the informal economy. Of those who are unemployed, only two respondents (0.88%) indicated that their main source of income came from the informal economy.

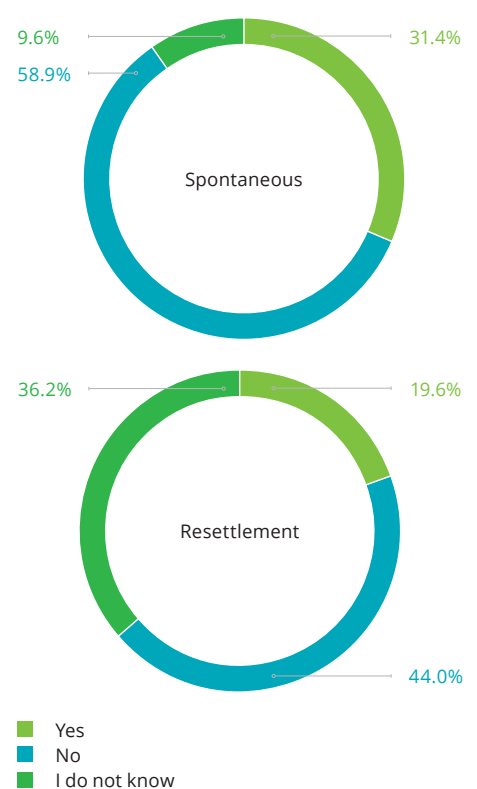
However, it is also important to note that nearly all of the Syrians in our survey arrived after 2014. Consequently, they have had little time to start and build new businesses. Therefore, we should not dismiss the potential for entrepreneurship within the community. Indeed, the number of refugees with an entrepreneurial background suggests significant potential.

Furthermore, there is some confidence among the refugees surveyed about their ability to raise €10,000 in order to start a business. The channels through which they would do so vary. While 21% would go to friends or family and 21% would go to a government agency, only 23% of refugees suggested they would approach a bank for a business loan. Those who arrived spontaneously were more confident to be able to mobilize capital, whereas those who were resettled were less sure about whether they would be able to.

**Chart 07. Main source of income for the unemployed**



**Chart 08. Ability to mobilize €10,000**



# Barriers to employment

Syrian refugees appear to face high levels of unemployment for several reasons, including limited institutional incentives to seek work, a lack of opportunity to retrain and move across employment categories, and inadequate language training.

## a) Language

When asked what they perceive to be the main barriers to finding employment, the overwhelming majority of respondents cite language barriers. Among the refugees who say they can speak the language in the host country either a bit or not at all, 84% report language as a barrier to employment.

Only 46% of those surveyed said that they could speak the language “well or very well.” Surprisingly though, 70% of those who report they can speak their host language “well or very well” still report language as a barrier. Language attainment is, generally speaking, higher amongst those who have arrived spontaneously, the young, and refugees with higher levels of education.

However, from our data we only know how well the interviewee could speak and understand the language overall, without noting whether there had been an improvement since arriving in Europe. We therefore cannot draw any conclusions on the efficacy of language programs. Many refugees indicated that interactions with neighbors and local friends are very helpful in gaining a higher level of language proficiency and confidence in their skills.

## Majed

Majed, a 33-year-old banker, arrived in Austria in 2014, where he started to learn German before he knew whether he would be granted asylum. When he was allowed to stay after six months, he was able to totally immerse himself in the Austrian language and culture. “I studied German every day for at least 4-5 hours on top of an intensive language course I attended. I was learning all the time – on the bus, on the subway, everywhere by using all kinds of formats, including YouTube videos, quality newspapers, TV news shows, and live discussions. It was incredibly tough.” Despite his previous work experience, he had to start completely anew. As a result of his sustained efforts, he ultimately got the opportunity to intern at the Austrian Integration Fund.

With a foot in the door, he was able to demonstrate his abilities which were quickly recognized and by the time his internship had ended, Majed was able to secure a job offer. He will not rest on his laurels and is always thinking ahead, that’s why he is currently also enrolled in a Master’s Degree.



“I have received so much, I want to give something back to society and contribute.”

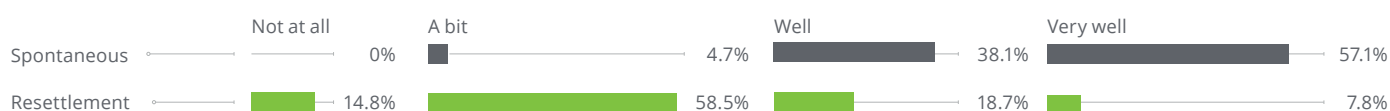
They also seemed happier and experience a greater level of belonging, according to qualitative interviews. These interactions were especially prevalent in smaller towns and villages where refugees reported a better ability to get to know the local community, rather than in the larger cities.

Of those who speak the host language either not at all or a bit, three-quarters receive language classes. For those who

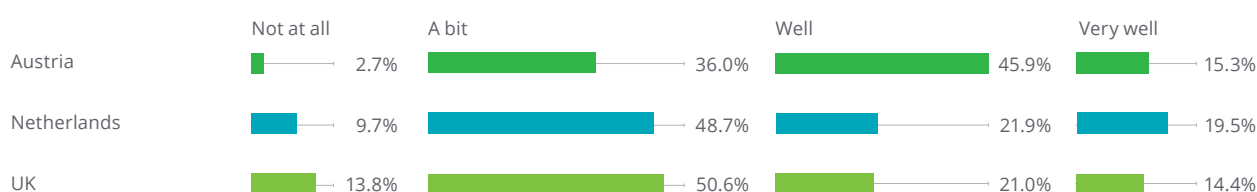
speak the language either “well or very well,” about half still receive classes. However, those enrolled in classes often are not fully satisfied with the standards of the materials they receive and/or about the few hours of classes available to them. The demand for more immersive and intensive language classes was especially substantial among the newly arrived and the unemployed.

Surprisingly, however, it does not follow that better command of the host language increases the probability of being employed. This is also true for education, where more years of study do not translate into a higher chance of finding employment. The factors that seem positively correlated with employment are being male, being in good physical health and having had strong social networks in Syria.

**Chart 09. English language skill level**



**Chart 10. Host country language skill level**



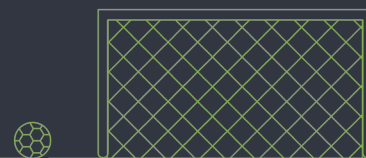
That higher language attainment does not increase one's probability of finding employment should be interpreted with caution. It is for instance possible that refugees, even those with good language skills, overestimate the language skills needed to find employment. They therefore do not even start looking for work at their current skill level, even though they could find employment if they did. Additionally, it may be the case that those refugees with better language skills, who are generally better educated, are trying to find employment in more competitive industries or require retraining or transference of qualifications. They therefore need both a much higher level of language attainment and to familiarize themselves with technical and specialized language before they can compete in the job market.

## Ahmad

Ahmad grew up in Hassakeh, a city in the far north-eastern corner of Syria. Ahmad had to drop out of secondary school to flee to Iraq with his family in 2013. In the early months of 2016, the family was selected for resettlement to the UK.

When he arrived, Ahmad focused on learning English. As he was under 19, Ahmad was lucky to be enrolled in intensive ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) courses, but speaking English with his friends also helped him to learn the language quickly. Ahmad is actively involved in the city's football scene. He trained and played with Sheffield United Academy until he was over their age limit and moved to a Sunday league team. He plays as a "forward, often in a right winger position," he adds with a big smile. He has grown an extensive network through the club, which helped him find a job at the local branch of Greencore, in their factory. As his ESOL classes will be cut to just six hours a week, he will soon be able to work

more hours, giving him more financial autonomy. Ahmad would like to go back to university and perhaps run his own business someday, but for the time being he is happy in Sheffield.



"Believe in yourself, make friends and seize every opportunity to practise your English, even if you don't know the words or think you don't know."



### b) Institutional disincentives

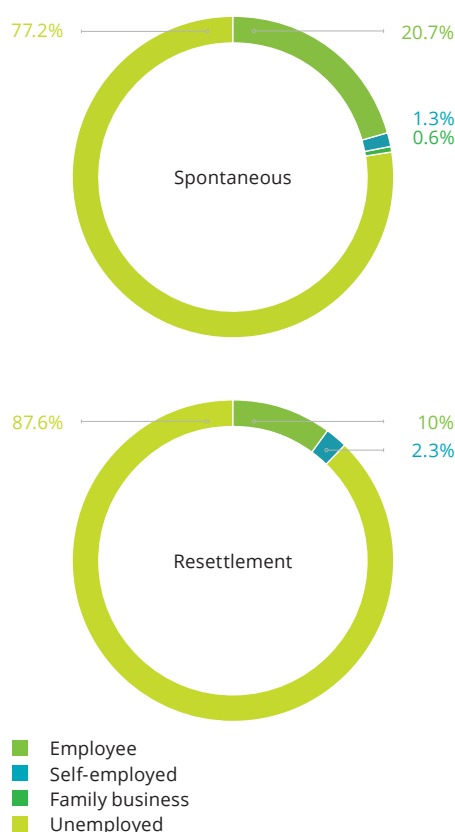
The level of unemployment in the data is quite striking. Overall, 82% of respondents are not in employment; 77% for those who arrived spontaneously and 87% for those who were resettled. As discussed in the previous section, only a few people are self-employed, meaning that only 16% of respondents have a job. Within this group, partial employment is fairly common, with 55% working part-time.

89% of respondents surveyed currently receive financial or material support from NGOs or the host government. On top of that, 82% have also received in kind support, psychological support, job support, or language classes. Those respondents who have a job see a significant drop in the assistance they receive from the government. Though this is hardly surprising, it may underscore that employment programs are a good investment for governments.

Several interviews highlight that many refugees lack adequate employability assistance and are concerned about losing government support if they take up any kind of work unrelated to their skills and experience.

Those surveyed see the support from the government they currently receive as providing an adequate standard of living. Many want to further develop their language skills and understand the job market before taking up any kind of work, which would potentially offer

**Chart 11. Employment status in Europe**



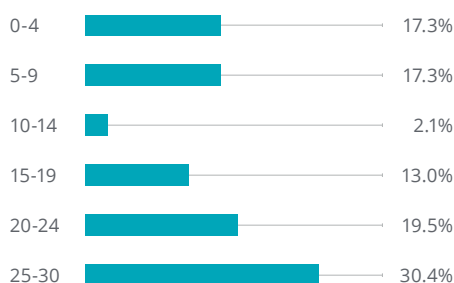
only marginally higher (and for some, potentially lower) income. This is especially true for apprenticeships and training schemes. Though this is a problem in many government-sponsored work programs, the issue is particularly pressing for refugees as it prevents them from even getting a foothold in the job market of their host country.

### c) Skills

The third reason why many refugees are unwilling to actively look for employment is the fear that they might get stuck in low-wage unskilled work. As 38% have a university education and another 10% a college degree or vocational training, the refugees in our sample are generally highly skilled. The fields they studied are varied, with many having studied either business and management, or natural and physical sciences. There is a high skill level in the sample: a third of respondents had been employed in either skilled work or the professional service industry in Syria.

Furthermore, a quarter of interviewees have undertaken some form of vocational training. The three largest areas in which training was undertaken are education, construction, and business.

**Chart 12. Days worked last month**



## Hassan

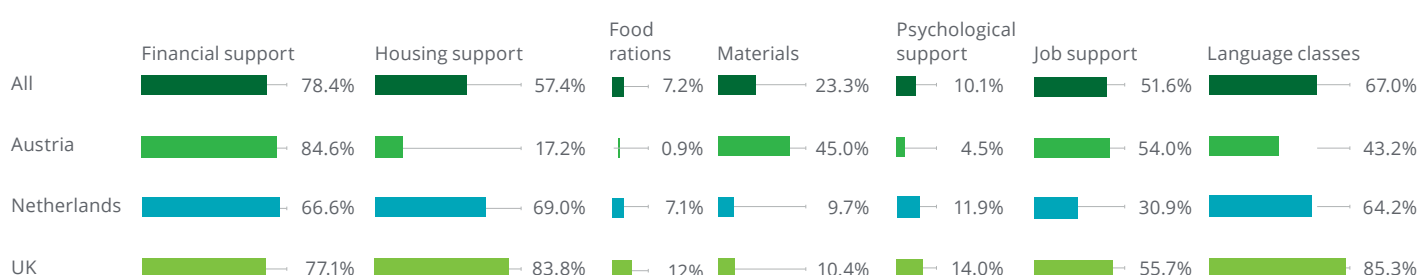
“I can put this project together — I just need the opportunity.”

Hassan was working as an agricultural engineer for a large industrial farming company in the Kurdish part of Syria when he had to flee to Turkey with his family. There, he strengthened his human rights activism and became a human rights coach and trained over 5,000 people working with NGOs. Hassan and his family were amongst the first 250 Syrians to be selected to come to the UK under the Syrian resettlement scheme. Sadly, his daughter did not receive sufficient medical attention in Turkey and died from heart failure only days before she could come to the UK, where she might have been able to receive treatment. The family was welcomed to Coventry and his two sons started school, a great source of pride for Hassan. He tells us that the elder speaks five languages and is top of his class. Hassan's wife developed serious medical conditions soon after their arrival making it difficult for Hassan to seek full-time employment. In any case, he wants to learn the language before finding a job. Hassan is enrolled in English classes and is very grateful for the support received



from local families. He feels integrated in British society and calls the UK his home, his country. Hassan has taken on a number of volunteering activities, both to practice his English and to put his skills and activism to use in service of the community. Once a week, Hassan volunteers at a drop-in for homeless people and he recently passed his DBS so that he could start volunteering with the Red Cross. Hassan dreams of running an organic farming business in the UK. After volunteering to look after the Bishop's House garden, Hassan received an allotment from the Council for him to farm crops. He started growing organic vegetables at large scale, added chicken runs to his allotment, and recently enrolled in a training program for honey bee farming. “I have skills to offer”, he says, “I just need the land”. His organic farming would have a doubly ethical nature as he would offer the work to those who need it, amongst the refugee and homeless community.



**Chart 13. Percentage receiving support from host country's institutions or NGOs**

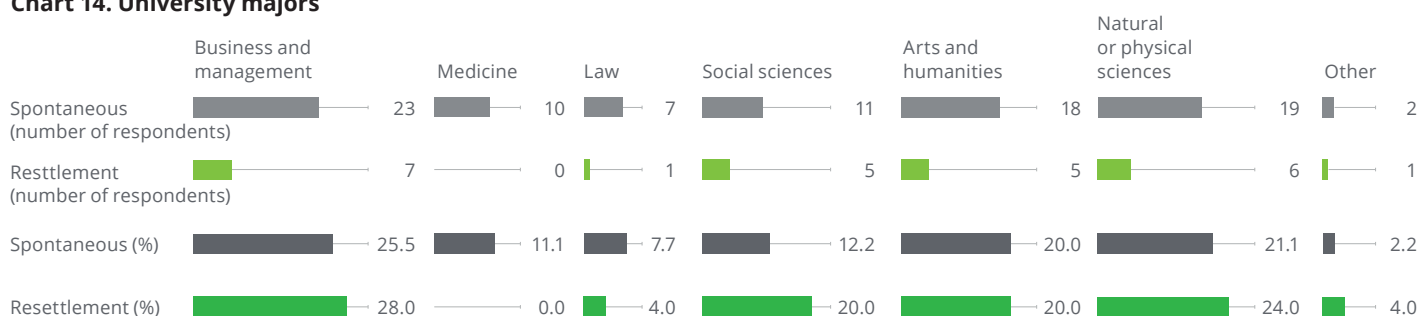
Taken together, the data on education and employment levels in Syria strongly suggest that the individuals in our sample are well educated and should be highly employable in their host countries.

Unfortunately, this is not borne out by the data on current employment. Of the 15% who are employed, 60% work in unskilled or manual work (e.g., as taxi drivers, restaurant staff, construction workers or factory workers). 15% work in skilled work (mostly IT and office work) and the final 25% work in professional services, mostly as translators.

#### d) Other barriers

Another barrier to employment that was mentioned specifically in the UK was inadequate transportation. This is partially due to the bias in our sample, with almost all respondents in Austria and the Netherlands living in cities. However, many in the UK mention inadequate public transport connections and high associated costs. Since only 8% own a car or motorcycle, and only 33% have a bike, public transport is vital for refugees' mobility, which is especially pressing for those looking for employment.

It is notable that barriers that are commonly assumed to affect refugees in finding employment, such as discrimination, having their qualifications not recognized and market access are each mentioned by less than 10% of the unemployed respondents. Though as we shall see in Section 9, some of these issues are cited directly by employers as being a hindrance to recruiting refugees.

**Chart 14. University majors**

# Understanding of the job market

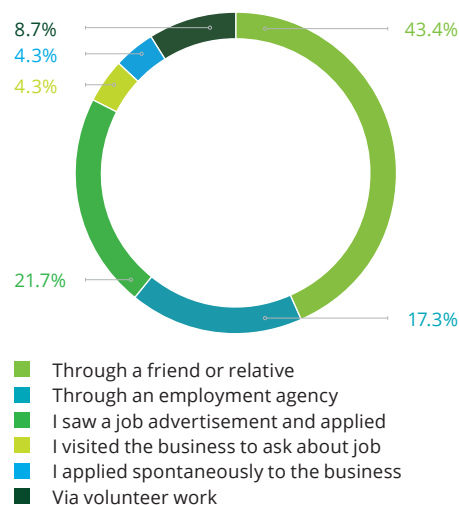
Refugees often lack a good understanding of how to find employment. They frequently rely on their own social networks or government services for access to employment. Despite nearly all having smartphones, few use the internet to seek work.

Many refugees have taken a fairly informal approach to finding employment, with 43% of those who are employed having found their job through friends or relatives. Another 17% found employment through employment agencies. 31% found employment through job advertisements or by directly applying to firms. The remaining 9% became employed when an organization for which they were volunteering offered them a job. This shows that encouraging newly settled refugees to engage in voluntary and community work is not only valuable in and of itself, but that it could also lead to employment opportunities. In our sample however, just 25% are members of a community organization, of which a third are active in organizations aimed specifically at working with other refugees.

About two-thirds of respondents disagreed with the statement that it is easy to find a job, and over a third would not know how to find a job. When asked who they would ask for help in finding a job, 45% would look to the government, including employment agencies. Almost as many would turn to their private networks, with 29% turning to (Syrian) friends and relatives, and 10% to local friends. Just 5% felt like they could approach employers directly to find a job. 11% would ask an NGO for help. The Internet was mentioned by just 10% as a place they would look, despite the high level of technological literacy among refugees.

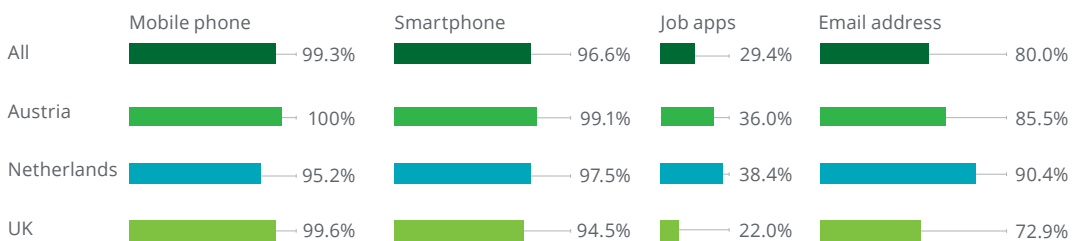
Mobile phones are ubiquitous in our sample, where over 99% report having a phone and of those almost 97% have a smartphone. Most respondents report using email, Facebook and WhatsApp, with a substantial number of people also using translation and/or language apps. When it comes to finding employment however, only 30% of respondents say they have used an app to find a job.

**Chart 15. How did you find this job**





© UNHCR/Gerhard Westrich

**Chart 16. Percentage with access to technology**

Even though a large number of those surveyed would turn to the government for help, many complained about the support that government employment agencies provide, especially in the UK. Some refugees felt that job centers struggled to take their unique circumstances into account. With a lack of both language skills and knowledge of the labor market, they were scared to get stuck in low skilled jobs where speaking English is less important. This fear led some to drop the job search altogether.

One of the barriers to finding employment that became apparent in the survey is a general lack of understanding of the labor market in the host countries. Especially when compared to the informal parts of the Syrian labor market, these markets are structured to a much greater extent by rules and formal processes.

# Flexibility across employment categories

Despite high levels of unemployment, most Syrians would much prefer to work in sectors that fit their skills and professional background, and there is a general lack of mobility across sectors.

To get a clearer picture of the changes in employment from Syria to the three host countries, we classified the jobs in our sample according to their required skill level. For this analysis, we mainly looked at the 10% of the sample that was employed both in Syria and Europe. 60% of refugees who found employment had jobs in the same sector in the host country as in Syria. Another 7% found employment, which requires a higher skill level. The remaining 33% seem to be underemployed, as their current job needs fewer skills than did their job in Syria. Though overall, the unemployment rate in Europe is much higher than it was in Syria for our sample. 13% of those who were unemployed (or studying) in Syria have found employment in Europe.

## Dima

Dima, 32 years old, worked at a bank in Damascus, where she was quickly rising through the ranks. When the brutality of ISIS struck many people close to her, she flew to Turkey with her sister, continuing to Austria on foot for 20 days. Though she did not have access to official language courses during her asylum process, she organized training materials herself and used every free minute to improve her German. With help from their new Austrian friends they were able to find a flat in Vienna as soon as they were granted the right to stay in Austria.

Dima found an internship at Deloitte, where she works in the Financial Advisory practice for banks. The Austrian banking system is quite different from that in Syria, but her previous job experience is still very helpful in her current work. "The language and the specific wording in banking are especially hard for me," says Dima, which is why she attends a business language course. She plans to take classes in accounting and bookkeeping as well, hoping that this will help her to secure a permanent position. "I work hard to make my

dreams come true," she underlines. Outside the professional sphere, Dima has one wish for the future: "I hope the media will stop being that aggressive regarding refugees and start reporting unbiased, without prejudices. It really hurts when all the refugees are considered criminals, prospective terrorists, etc."



"I hope the media will stop being that aggressive regarding refugees and start reporting unbiased, without prejudices."



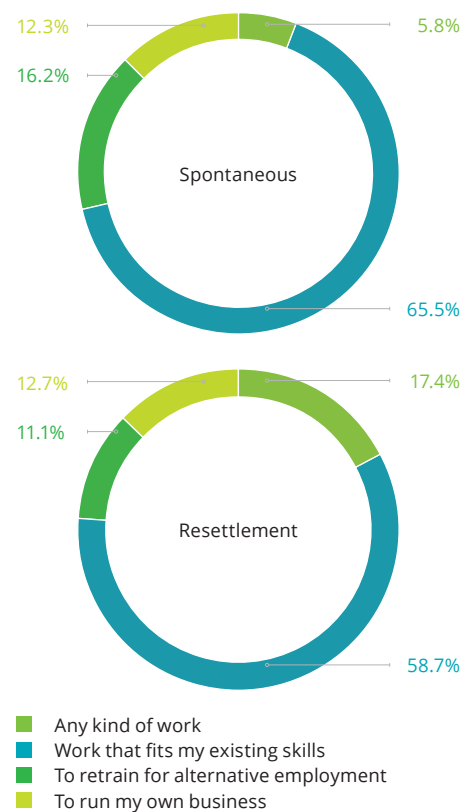
When asked what type of employment they prefer, 63% say that they would like to find work which fits their existing skills and just 11% are willing to accept any kind of work. 14% would prefer to be retrained for a different kind of employment than they did before. The remaining 12% would like to start their own business, which is explained in the analysis in Section 5 on the need for labor market policies to focus on employment and not just rely upon self-employment.

However, some of the qualitative responses from refugees reveal that this apparent lack of flexibility may be addressed through better institutional support systems. Several refugees reported that their concerns relate to factors such as fear of losing benefits, the absence of retraining opportunities, as well as a lack of accurate information about both job opportunities and available governmental support.

**Chart 17. Movement in employment**



**Chart 18. Employment preferences**



Unskilled work includes employment sectors such as agriculture, food-related businesses, and transportation. Construction workers, electricians, and mechanics are classified as manual workers. Skilled workers are employed as engineers, at utilities or office clerks. Professional services include teachers, translators, doctors, and architects, among others.



# The life satisfaction paradox

Despite their difficulties in the labor market, many Syrian refugees surveyed report high levels of life satisfaction, usually for reasons more related to family life than to work. This shows that employment is just one element of human wellbeing.

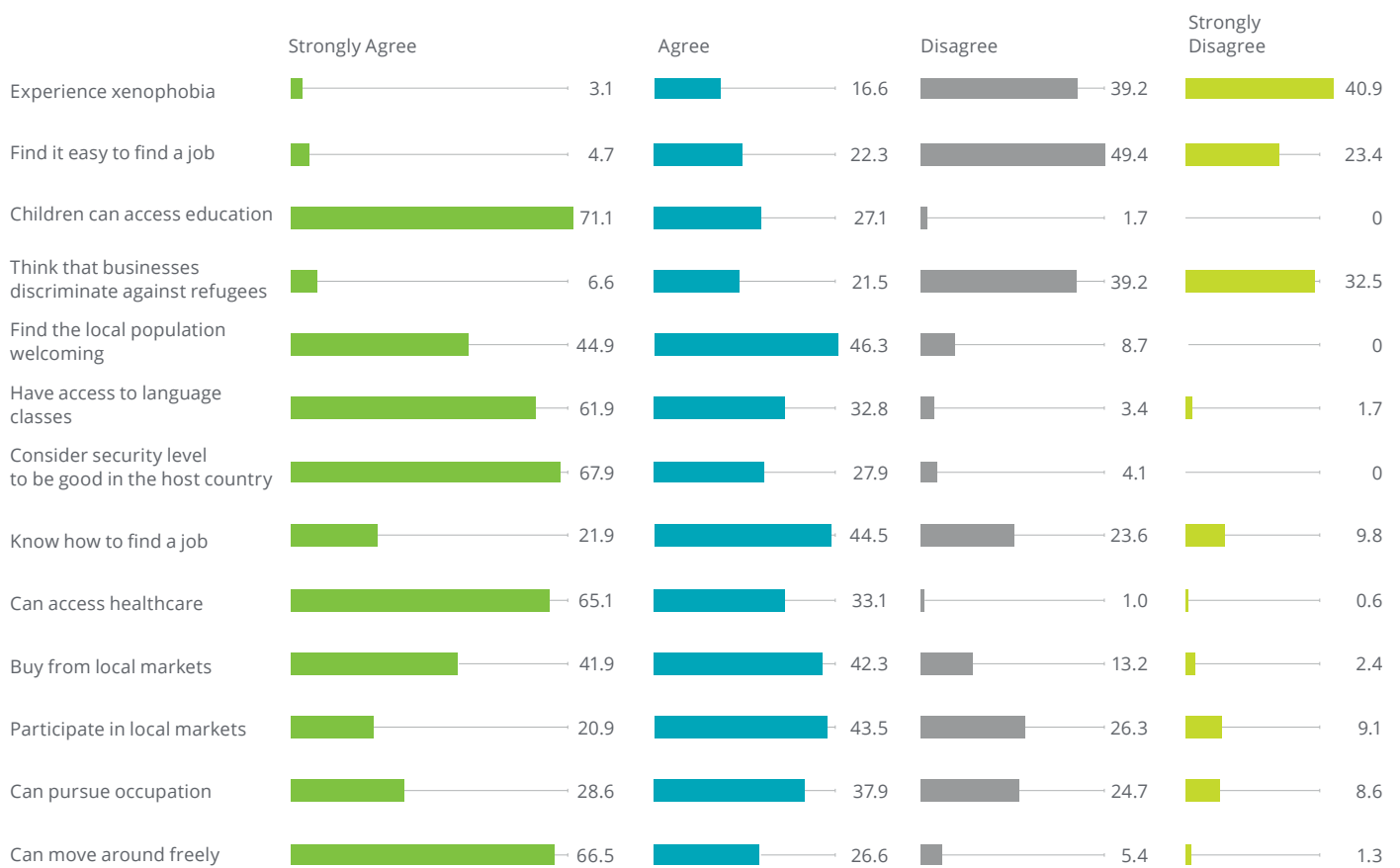
Life satisfaction was measured by asking the question “all things considered, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days?” 72% of interviewees responded either “rather satisfied” or “very satisfied”, and 18% were “neither satisfied nor unsatisfied”. There is no large variation in this proportion, neither by country nor by mode of arrival.

The only characteristic found to be consistently related to variation in life satisfaction was the number of children a respondent had, with each additional child increasing the probability of being rather or very satisfied by around 5%. This effect is constant whether the interviewee arrived with their family, joined family

already in the country, or was joined by their family later. Other characteristics that we might expect to contribute to personal happiness, such as age, employment status, health status, language skills, and host country, did not appear to be correlated to life satisfaction.

Furthermore, in the three surveyed countries, most refugees reported relatively good experiences accessing government support, including education and healthcare. They also experience a good level of security and ability to move around. Notably, there is little experience of xenophobia, with over 91% of interviewees agreeing that the local population is welcoming to refugees.

On the whole, respondents have positive perceptions of refugees’ contributions to life in their host country. For example, most agree that refugees in Europe have generated employment and have increased economic opportunities for host populations. Of those who did agree with the statement “refugees contribute to insecurity”, many Syrian refugees noted they did so only because they saw refugees from other countries as contributing to insecurity, a view especially widespread in the Netherlands.

**Chart 19. Experience of environment (percentage of respondents) - all**

# Businesses needs guidance

Many businesses are taking the pioneering step of actively recruiting refugees. But some still struggle with misconceptions and a lack of information about the regulatory framework relating to refugee employment.

Alongside the interviews conducted with Syrian refugees, qualitative interviews and several case studies were completed with businesses in Austria, the Netherlands, and the UK, regarding their experiences of recruiting, training, and employing refugees.<sup>7</sup>

Most of the businesses interviewed were enthusiastic about the prospect of employing refugees. Of those who employed Syrian refugees, many had arranged this through partnerships with organizations specifically designed to match refugees with employers or to support refugees in training, such as Transitions in the UK and the Foundation for Refugee Students UAF in the Netherlands. The main reason for hiring refugees was to make a social contribution, though some organizations hired a refugee simply because he/she was the most qualified candidate. Though a majority of the organizations interviewed do not currently employ refugees, most are open to the idea of doing so. The three main barriers to hiring refugees for these organizations are: 1) refugees' lack of skills; 2) regulation; and 3) lack of information/awareness of how to access the refugee community. The first and third barrier might be addressed by a matching platform specifically aimed at refugees. This is because it might help to clarify what skills

refugees have and make that information more widely available. A majority of businesses interviewed would consider using such a platform if it were available.

Of those organizations that had employed refugees, all but one were positive about the refugees' contributions to their business and especially about the effects on the organizations' people and culture.

However, there were several problems that employers in the host countries encountered.

There is a lack of knowledge about the legalities of hiring refugees. Employers who did not have experience of working with refugees were worried that refugees would not have the right to work (RTW) and so did not want to go to the effort of recruiting them for fear of being in violation of RTW regulations.

In many cases, educational and vocational qualifications are transferable between Syria and Europe. However, there is often a lack of awareness amongst employers, for example, about the equivalence of professional qualifications (e.g., "charterships" in accountancy and engineering), which in some cases led to organizations being discouraged from employing refugees.

Several of the businesses interviewed had set up training schemes or apprenticeships in which refugees could participate to gain skills either before continuing into employment there or elsewhere in the industry. However, both in the Netherlands and in the UK, the benefits system often precluded refugees from participating in these schemes without substantially lowering their income from the government. The organizations interviewed suggested that greater financial support from governments was needed to allow refugees to spend longer periods in training, which could ultimately lead them into jobs requiring higher skills and paying higher wages.

Organizations highlighted the need to be conscious of cultural differences. Some suggested that additional support for refugees is sometimes necessary at the start of employment or training. Nonetheless, these were not seen as significant barriers and in many cases the differences in experience and points of view had a positive impact on organizational culture and productivity.



### Business case study: ICT Company "X" (anonymity requested)

Company X provides secure and reliable IT and network services for enterprises, from advice and design to implementation. The company employs approximately 150 individuals, including one Syrian refugee.

As part of their contribution to society, Company X wanted to employ refugees. Company X regularly hires by word of mouth as it has connections throughout the industry, and this was also how it came into contact with Eyad, a refugee. Eyad was offered an apprenticeship as he had great skills to offer and was the most qualified for the position.

While Eyad had done similar work in Syria, his new position challenged him. In the Netherlands his work was with larger clients and on more complex projects, in addition, Eyad had been out of the fast-moving industry for two years. Despite these obstacles he has adapted quickly and is performing in his job well.

Company X would like to be able to reward Eyad properly for his work; however, the government would deduct any wage payments from his benefits. Thus even though Company X would like to show its appreciation to Eyad, and give him a greater sense of participation in the company and society, it is currently unable to do so.

In Company X's view, refugees can make a meaningful contribution to the economy if given the chance to work.



### Business case study: Network Rail

Network Rail operates most of the rail network in the UK. Working with Transitions, a social enterprise employment service, Network Rail piloted an unpaid placement for three months for a refugee to work in its human resources department, covering costs for their travel and lunch expenses.

There were a number of challenges associated with the placement. When Network Rail started the work placement, it was unable to do so for more than two days a week without impacting the refugees' access to state benefits. Another challenge was that there were only small organizations like Transitions supporting refugees to look for employment, which could not offer the large-scale recruitment that national companies like Network Rail needed.

Nonetheless, the outcome has been positive, refugee has found full-time employment and Network Rail is now supporting refugees by sharing its experiences with other businesses. What's more, the placement has built a sense of pride and broken down myths about refugees among its staff and more broadly, it has enhanced Network Rail's reputation as an employer.



### Business case study: Ben & Jerry's and TERN

The ice-cream maker Ben & Jerry's has just started a program in the UK together with The Entrepreneurial Refugee Network (TERN) to support refugees in its aspiration to become entrepreneurs. The project has only just started, and its scale is intentionally small to find out what works, but if successful, Ben & Jerry's may set up similar projects in other locations.

The program has two elements; the first provides eight participants a job in a mobile selling for Ben & Jerry's – an opportunity to practice their English and learn about what it's like to work for an organization in the UK. Each week the participants will also receive four hours of enterprise training when they will be able to test their business idea, receive business advice, and learn about the UK market. This opportunity will also give them work experience with a well-known brand for their CV and references. The program will run for four months and the hope is that at the end of the program they will have gained sufficient experience to go into TERN's incubator program or to start their own business. For others, although there is no guarantee of further employment, they will decide that they would prefer to pursue employment in another business.

In addition, this year the Ben & Jerry's Foundation will donate US\$220,000 to UK grassroots organizations focused on campaigning for better policies to support refugees.

# Practical implications

It is worth repeating that all of the ideas presented in this report need to be interpreted in the context of the data limitations explained in Section 2, Research methods.

Most notably, the absence of random sampling means we cannot claim that the data are representative of the wider Syrian refugee population within the selected countries, and we have no basis on which to be able to claim that the three countries are representative of the socio-economic experiences of Syrian refugees in other parts of Europe. To undertake a survey based

on random sampling or two-stage cluster sampling, with sufficient observations, would take considerably more resources – in terms of time and money – than were available for this exploratory study.

Nevertheless, the study offers insights into how more representative research could be conducted in future and why it is potentially so relevant to policy and practice. Furthermore, the data collected in the study offer a series of insights into the kinds of practical interventions that might enhance the economic participation of Syrian refugees within Europe.



## a) Unlocking untapped potential

Syrian refugees in Europe are often highly educated. And yet, despite this, unemployment levels among the population are extremely high. This basic paradox reveals an untapped opportunity for employers and host societies.



## b) Closing the language training gap

Language is one of refugees' greatest barriers in finding work. Although nearly all are offered classes in the language of the host country, the quality appears inadequate to provide Syrian refugees with the levels of proficiency needed to find employment.



## c) Supporting greater flexibility

Many refugee respondents report a strong desire to find employment in sectors that fit their existing skills and qualifications. In part this limited labor mobility across sectors appears to stem from fears of losing government support and the absence of retraining opportunities. Improved information provision and better access to training may encourage greater mobility.



#### d) Exploring labor market matching

Syrian refugees often struggle to access information about employment opportunities and labour markets. Meanwhile, some businesses reported a lack of information as among the barriers to refugee employment. This suggests that programs and platforms that facilitate matching refugee employees with business employers may offer a mutually beneficial service.



#### e) Recognizing technology as an opportunity

The survey data reveal almost universal access to smartphones among Syrian refugees. This implies that such technologies have the potential to be used to address some of the barriers to refugee employment, especially those relating to accessing relevant information, use of labor market matching platforms, and language skill development.



#### f) Nuancing responses based on mode of arrival

One of the most striking differences among the Syrian refugee population in the host countries appears to be based on how refugees came to Europe. "Spontaneous arrival refugees" and "resettled refugees" have different economic profiles. This implies that different socio-economic integration strategies may be needed in order to meet the needs of these different population groups.

So what next? Our data suggest that Syrian refugees in Europe have skills, talents, and aspirations. Many are highly educated. However, they face significant barriers to employment. With the right kind of support, in terms of language, training, and information, many of these obstacles may be overcome. Business, government, civil society – and refugees themselves – all have an important role to play. By working collectively, everyone can benefit from the greater economic participation of refugees.



# Appendix

## Regression results

### Life satisfaction

	Overall satisfied with life	Overall satisfied with life	Overall satisfied with life	Overall satisfied with life	Overall satisfied with life
Age	-0.00 (0.809)	0.00 (0.946)	0.00 (0.945)	0.00 (0.919)	0.00 (0.833)
Male	-0.11* (0.095)	-0.11* (0.093)	-0.11* (0.088)	-0.10 (0.111)	-0.09 (0.199)
Married	0.03 (0.613)	0.04 (0.576)	0.04 (0.540)	0.05 (0.489)	0.04 (0.519)
Number of children	0.05** (0.018)	0.05** (0.022)	0.05** (0.020)	0.05** (0.019)	0.05** (0.033)
Years of education	-0.00 (0.705)	-0.00 (0.542)	-0.01 (0.473)	-0.01 (0.481)	-0.01 (0.262)
Completed vocational training	-0.13 (0.551)	-0.15 (0.520)	-0.14 (0.540)	-0.15 (0.512)	-0.09 (0.716)
Was employed in syria	-0.00 (0.999)	0.00 (0.990)	-0.00 (0.999)	-0.01 (0.930)	-0.03 (0.714)
Poorer than average in syria	-0.08 (0.312)	-0.08 (0.304)	-0.08 (0.301)	-0.08 (0.296)	-0.11 (0.216)
Strong social network	-0.06 (0.369)	-0.06 (0.346)	-0.06 (0.360)	-0.05 (0.432)	-0.06 (0.430)
Good physical health		0.01 (0.941)	-0.00 (0.971)	-0.01 (0.930)	0.04 (0.684)
Good mental health		0.14 (0.136)	0.13 (0.156)	0.13 (0.161)	0.10 (0.321)
Spontaneous			0.03 (0.614)	-0.02 (0.830)	-0.07 (0.470)
Austria				0.08 (0.396)	0.08 (0.535)
Netherlands				0.04 (0.712)	0.14 (0.238)
Speaking english well					0.07 (0.334)
Speaking german well					0.01 (0.955)
Speaking dutch well					-0.14 (0.324)
Received financial support					0.04 (0.593)
Received housing support					0.09 (0.243)
Received food support					-0.24** (0.041)
Received material support					0.18** (0.021)
Received psychological support					-0.02 (0.836)
Received job advice					0.07 (0.261)
Received/attended classes					0.02 (0.741)
Constant	0.81*** (0.000)	0.67*** (0.000)	0.68*** (0.000)	0.67*** (0.000)	0.55*** (0.010)
Observations	286	286	286	286	268
R <sup>2</sup>	0.057	0.066	0.067	0.070	0.122



## Regression results

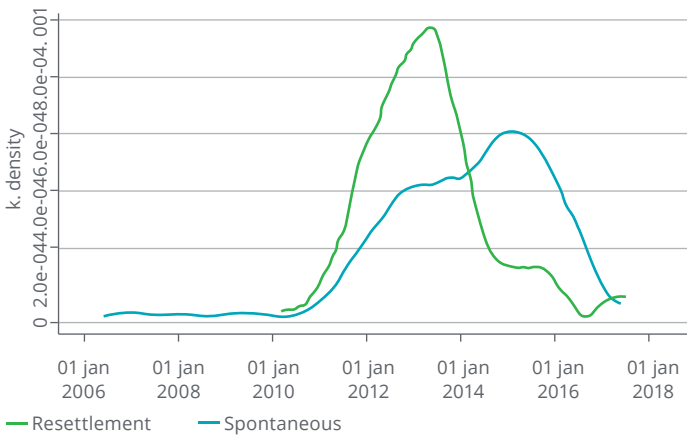
### Arrival

	(1) Spontaneous	(2) Spontaneous
Age	-0.01* (0.079)	-0.00 (0.965)
Male	0.06 (0.347)	0.07 (0.266)
Married	-0.12* (0.067)	-0.12* (0.056)
Number of children	-0.04 (0.118)	-0.04** (0.046)
Years of education	0.04*** (0.000)	0.03*** (0.000)
Completed vocational training	-0.17 (0.463)	-0.20 (0.358)
Was employed in syria	0.06 (0.406)	0.03 (0.642)
Poorer than average in Syria	0.03 (0.751)	0.02 (0.774)
Strong social network	-0.05 (0.481)	-0.05 (0.431)
Good physical health		0.30*** (0.000)
Good mental health		0.18** (0.048)
Constant	0.24 (0.139)	-0.23 (0.187)
Observations	286	286
R <sup>2</sup>	0.203	0.275

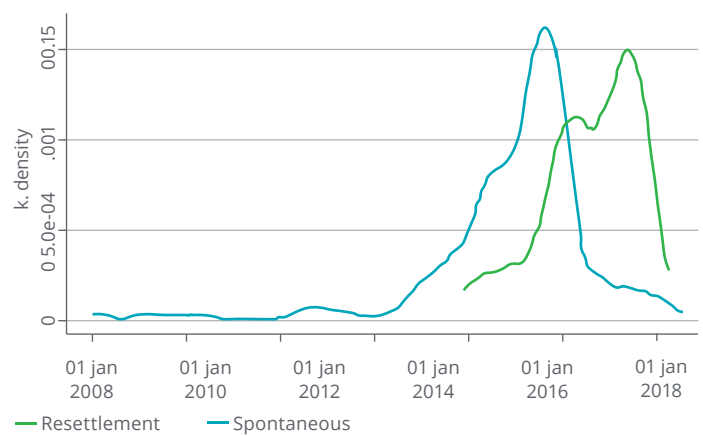
p-values in parentheses

\* p &lt; 0.10, \*\* p &lt; 0.05, \*\*\* p &lt; 0.01

### Date last slept at home



### Date arrived in host country



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# Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> By “economic lives” we are referring to refugees’ activities relating to employment, entrepreneurship, production, and consumption, for instance. In this report, our primary focus is employment.

<sup>2</sup> According to Eurostat, there have been 870,455 asylum applications by Syrians in the European Union between 2014 and 2017. However, it is possible that more may have arrived and bypassed the formal asylum system.

<sup>3</sup> Kingsley, Patrick. “Asylum seekers in UK “face longest wait for work permit in Europe”.” The Guardian, Guardian News and Media, September 29, 2016, [www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/sep/29/uk-asylum-seekers-face-longest-wait-for-work-permit-in-europe](http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/sep/29/uk-asylum-seekers-face-longest-wait-for-work-permit-in-europe).

<sup>4</sup> “Resettlement” represents the planned relocation of refugees usually from the region of origin to a third country. In contrast, “spontaneous arrival” implies that refugees travel by their own means to a particular destination country.

<sup>5</sup> Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS): Guidance for local authorities and partners, United Kingdom Home Office, July 2017, [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/631369/170711\\_Syrian\\_Resettlement\\_Updated\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_final.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/631369/170711_Syrian_Resettlement_Updated_Fact_Sheet_final.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> Kirby, Arthur. “Syrian refugee now runs award-Winning dairy business.” CNNMoney, Cable News Network, June 27, 2017, [money.cnn.com/2017/06/27/smallbusiness/syria-refugee-dama-cheese-razan-alsous/index.html](http://money.cnn.com/2017/06/27/smallbusiness/syria-refugee-dama-cheese-razan-alsous/index.html).

<sup>7</sup> In the UK 11 qualitative interviews were conducted; four with corporations and seven with social enterprises. In the Netherlands three corporations and one social enterprise participated in qualitative interviews. In Austria 29 quantitative surveys were taken; 25 corporations and four (semi) governmental organizations. The participating organizations were not randomly selected and the results mentioned in this section can thus not be taken as representative for any of the three countries.



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