



BAMF-Brief Analysis

Edition 01|2021 of the Brief Analyses by the Research Centre for Migration, Integration and Asylum at the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees

1 | 2021

Life situations of young adults with a refugee experience

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AT A GLANCE

- The life situations of young refugee men and women differ. Young refugee men, who were between the age of 18 and 25 when they arrived in Germany, are focused on employment whereas young refugee women are mainly family-oriented. In principle, these orientations are similar to those observed for older refugees.
- In 2018, the majority of young refugee men were single whereas the majority of young refugee women were married and/or had a young child living with them in their household. On average, young refugee women started a family at a younger age than their peers who were born in Germany.
- With regard to the transition to the German labour market, a young age seems to be an advantage for male refugees. From 2016 to 2018, proportionately, young refugee men more quickly transitioned to the German labour market than older male refugees.
- In 2016, 2017 and 2018, more than four out of five young refugee women were not employed and devoted an increased amount of their time to caring for family members. In households with children, women who were not employed spent an average of 7.5 hours a day and women who were employed spent 4.2 hours a day looking after children in 2018.
- Until 2018, only a limited number of young refugees was able to catch up on educational and vocational qualifications in Germany. In 2018, 16 % of young refugees were in education.
- When they arrived in Germany, 60 % of young refugees had a school-leaving certificate and 9 % had a vocational qualification. Thus, a large proportion of young refugees had no formal educational qualifications when they arrived in Germany. However, young Syrians are an exception; they tended to have a higher level of formal education than young refugees from other countries when they arrived in Germany.

Introduction

The persons who have sought protection in Germany in recent years were on average younger than other persons living in Germany (Metzing et al. 2020). When the influx of asylum seekers reached its peak in 2015 and 2016, almost a quarter of asylum seekers were between the age of 18 and 25 (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees 2016; 2017).

A young age can be both an advantage and a challenge for refugees¹. On the one hand, younger refugees might find it easier than older refugees to adapt to living conditions in Germany and to learn German, for instance. On the other hand, it is also possible that younger refugees find it particularly difficult to access the labour market and the education system. If they are no longer subject to compulsory education when they arrive in Germany, they may have difficulties in accessing a secondary school, finding an apprenticeship or beginning a university degree in Germany. Further, vocational qualifications are usually a prerequisite for taking up skilled employment in Germany (Wiedner et al. 2018). Additionally, direct entry into the German labour market can be challenging if refugees do not have any former vocational or professional experience (Rother/Morris-Lange 2020). Thus, for young refugees it might be more challenging to establish an independent livelihood in Germany than for older refugees who, due to their age, were more likely to gain labour market-relevant resources in the form of vocational qualifications or work experience before they arrived in Germany.

As there is little information available, the life situation of young adult refugees in Germany will be examined primarily on the basis of data gathered from the IAB-BAMF-SOEP Refugee Survey (Kroh et al. 2016; Infobox). The analysis begins with an identification of the main countries of origin and the gender ratio. It then focuses on the question with whom the young refugees came to Germany as well as on their level of education. Afterwards, the development of the asylum status, family and housing situation as well as the main activities between 2016 and 2018 of young refugees will be analysed. In order to gain insights into the everyday life of young refugees, this analysis concludes by examining how young refugees spend their days. The results can contribute to a better understanding of the living conditions of young refugees and thus pro-

vide information on how integration support measures might be geared more specifically towards specific target groups.

Data

For the analyses, data of the first three waves of the IAB-BAMF-SOEP Refugee Survey in 2016, 2017 and 2018 (Kroh et al. 2016; Infobox) were used. Data from persons who participated in at least one of the three waves of the survey and who arrived in Germany during the peak phase of the influx of asylum seekers in 2015 and 2016 were taken into account. The young refugees considered were between the age of 18 and 25 when they arrived and applied for asylum in Germany. These restrictions in terms of year and age make it possible to specifically examine young adults who had been residing in Germany for a similar length of time when the last survey was conducted in 2018 and who had encountered similar legal and integration conditions in Germany during this time. To better grasp the findings on the young refugees, these findings are either compared to older refugees or to German-born peers. The comparison with older refugees who also participated in the IAB-BAMF-SOEP Refugee Survey and who were over the age of 25 at the time of arrival in Germany is primarily drawn when migration-specific aspects are analysed (such as the conditions of the flight). When the focus is placed on the age-specific organization of the various stages of life (e.g. starting a family, transitioning to employment), a comparison is primarily made with German-born peers as their life courses have not been interrupted by migration. The German-born peers were also between the age of 18 and 25 in 2015 and 2016 and participated in the main SOEP² survey in 2016, 2017 and/or 2018.

¹ The term “refugees” is not used here in the legal sense, but as a collective term for persons who have filed an asylum application in Germany, regardless of whether or how the application was decided (for a detailed description of the population considered here, see: Kroh et al. 2016; Infobox).

² The SOEP main survey is a representative longitudinal study which has interviewed approximately 19,000 households and their household members every year since 1984 (Goebel et al. 2019).

INFOBOX: IAB-BAMF-SOEP REFUGEE SURVEY

The IAB-BAMF-SOEP Refugee Survey has been conducted since 2016 and is a nationwide longitudinal survey of persons who came to Germany between 1 January 2013 and 31 December 2016, irrespective of the course and outcome of the asylum procedure. Thus, the survey includes persons who are seeking asylum (asylum seekers) as well as persons who had already been granted asylum. It also includes persons whose asylum application had been rejected but whose departure or deportation had been suspended for various reasons, most of whom had therefore been granted a suspension of deportation (Kroh et al. 2016). In addition, the household members of these persons are interviewed. The Central Register of Foreigners (*Ausländerzentralregister*, AZR) provided the basis for the sampling. Using statistical weighting procedures, the results obtained on the basis of the data are representative of the

households of the population defined above (for a detailed description of the sampling procedure: Kroh et al. 2016; Jacobsen et al. 2019).

The extensive survey programme (Kroh et al. 2016) allows for a comprehensive analysis of the refugees' living conditions. It is therefore possible to include a large number of relevant characteristics in the analyses, such as time of arrival, gender, age, country of origin, level of education and residence status.

The survey is conducted annually therefore the number of participants fluctuates over the years due to changes in response behaviour, household constellations, arrivals or changes in the questionnaire. All data relies on self-assessments of the surveyed refugees.

Young adults with refugee experience in Germany

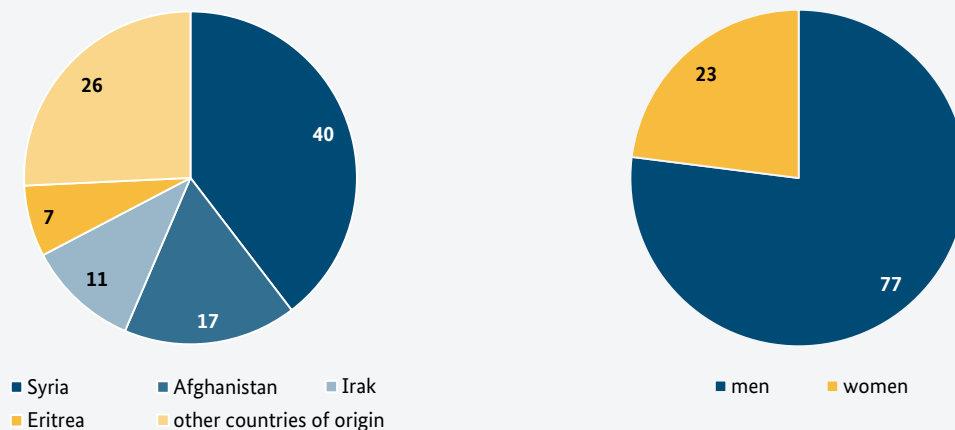
Origin, gender and age of young refugees

At 40 %, the majority of young adults³ came from Syria, followed by young adults from Afghanistan (17 %), Iraq (11 %) and Eritrea (7 %) (Figure 1). It is already known that at 67 %, men were generally over-represented

among asylum seekers in 2015 and 2016 (Federal Office 2016; 2017). Among the young refugees from these years, the proportion of men is even higher at around 77 % (Figure 1). The young refugees were on average 21.2 years old when they entered Germany.

³ In order to obtain the largest possible number of cases and to be able to use cross-sectional weights, the analysis of characteristics on arrival in Germany considers persons who took part in the survey in 2017, as this allows to consider respondents from the samples M3 to M5.

Figure 1: Young refugees by country of origin and gender in the survey year 2017 (in percent)



Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Refugee Survey 2017.

Basis: 1,300 young refugees who were between the age of 18 and 25 when they entered Germany in 2015 and 2016; data weighted.

Arrival in Germany

With whom did the young adults enter Germany?

In the case of older refugees who were over the age of 25 when they entered Germany, a similar number of men entered Germany with their family (46 %) or by themselves (46 %). Of the older women, however, 87 % fled their country of origin together with family members. The gender difference is even more pronounced among young refugees: young men predominantly came to Germany alone (65 %) and young women came with members of their families (82 %) (Figure 2). Only one in four (25 %) young male adults fled together with their families. In contrast, only 15 % of young women fled alone.

What school education and vocational qualifications did they bring with them?

War, forced migration and unfavourable situations in the countries of origin and transit may have prevented young refugees from completing or even starting their educational and professional biographies (Brücker et al. 2016). It is already known that upon arrival in Germany in recent years⁴, 42 % of refugees did not have a school leaving certificate whereas more than half possessed such a certificate (Brücker et al. 2020). This bipolar distribution of education can also be seen among young refugees: 40 % of the young refugees did not have a school-leaving certificate when they arrived in Germany, whereas the majority (60%) of young refugees possessed one (Figure 3). Young refugees from Syria are an exception; they often had a higher level of

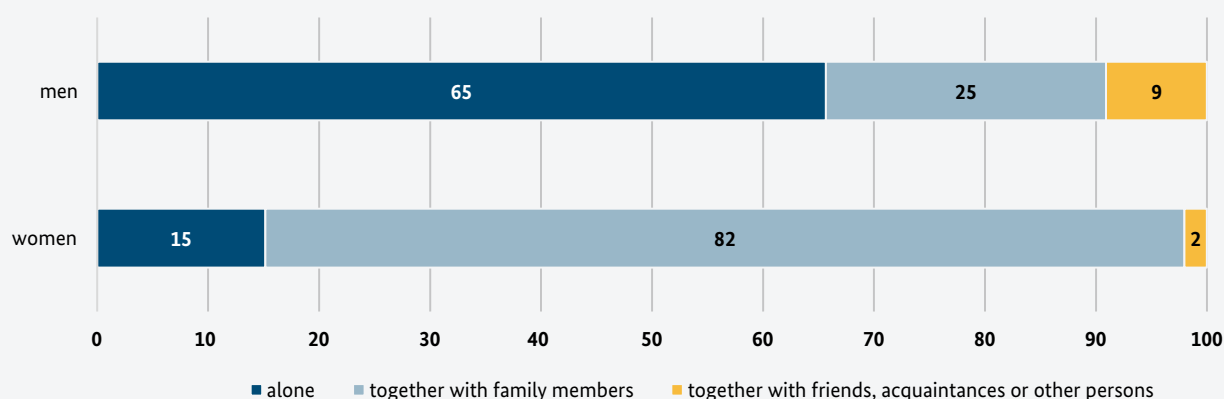
education than young adults from other countries of origin. Only 3 % of young Syrians have never attended school. A further 23 % attended school before arriving in Germany but left without a school-leaving certificate, and three-quarters (74%) of young Syrians have successfully completed school with a certificate. Among the young refugees from all other countries of origin, half (51 %) had a school-leaving certificate upon arrival in Germany, a good third (35 %) finished school without a certificate and a further 14 % of young refugees had never attended school. The high proportion of persons who left educational institutions without a certificate indicates that many young refugees have unfinished educational biographies.

Depending on the country of origin, the extent to which the educational pathways of young men and women are similar or different from each other varies. Young Syrian men and women have a similarly positive educational profile (Figure 3). However, the number of women from Iraq, Eritrea or Afghanistan who did not attend school was significantly higher than the number of men from the same countries. A high proportion of the latter, however, had to leave school without any certificates. Nevertheless, young men from Iraq, Eritrea and Afghanistan are more likely to have a school-leaving certificate upon arrival in Germany than women from the respective countries.

If young refugees want to start an apprenticeship or a university degree in Germany they mostly need the required educational qualifications (Brenzel et al. 2019). However, young refugees who were unable to successfully complete their schooling in their countries of origin or transit are also unlikely to have obtained formal vocational qualifications in these countries. Accordingly, 80 % of young refugees stated that they had

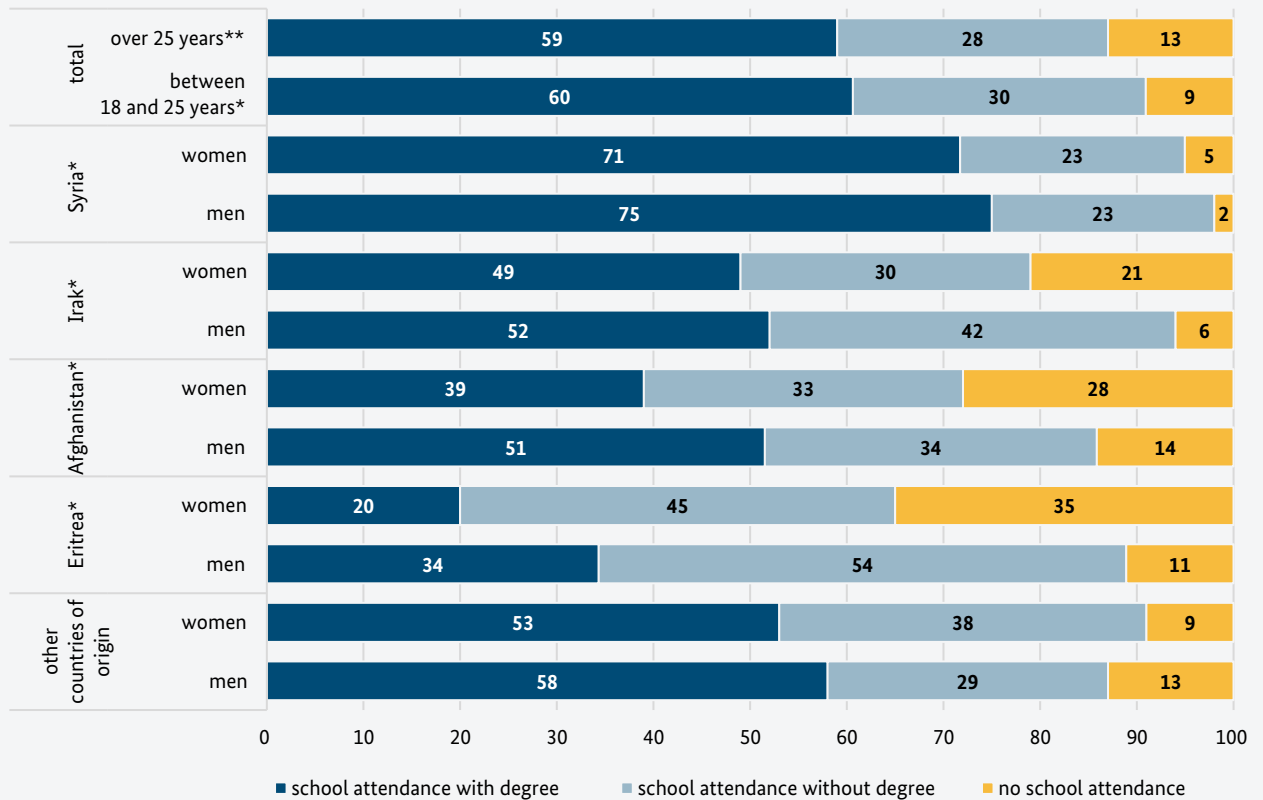
⁴ This group comprises mainly refugees between the age of 18 and 64 who arrived in Germany between 2013 and 2016.

Figure 2: Persons accompanying young refugee men and women entering Germany in the survey year 2017 (in percent)



Source: IAB-BAMF -SOEP Refugee Survey 2017.

Basis: 1,299 young refugees who were between the age of 18 and 25 when they arrived in Germany in 2015 and 2016; data weighted.

Figure 3: School-leaving certificates of (young) refugees who arrived in Germany in the survey year 2017 (in percent)

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Refugee Survey 2017.

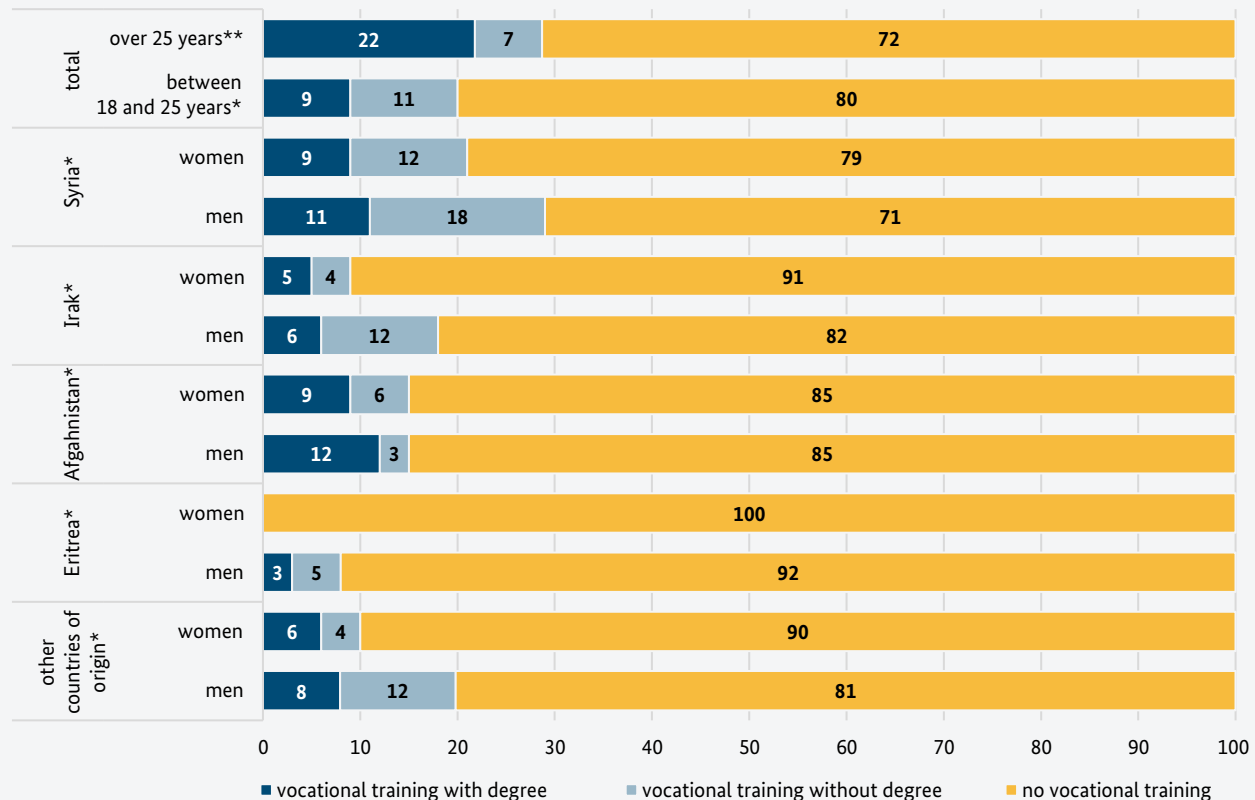
Basis: *1,217 young refugees who were between the age of 18 and 25 when they arrived in Germany in 2015 and 2016; **2,736 older refugees who were above the age of 25 when they arrived in Germany in 2015 and 2016; data weighted.

never commenced professional (third-level) education, and a further 11 % had finished their professional education without a degree (Figure 4). As a result, just under one in ten young refugees (9 %) had a vocational degree when they entered Germany. In this regard, young refugees differ considerably from older refugees, of whom 22 % hold a formal vocational degree when they arrived in Germany.

Similar to the school-leaving certificates, young refugees from Syria also have higher vocational training (Figure 4). That is, young men and women from Syria were more likely to begin or successfully complete vocational education and training than persons from all other countries of origin. This is also confirmed by further analyses⁵: Syrian men and women are more likely to have a school-leaving certificate (24 percentage points higher probability) and to have at least begun vocational training (13 percentage points higher probability) when they arrived in Germany than young refugees from all other countries of origin.

Once young people have left the education system, they can become employed and thus acquire or expand professional qualifications through “on-the-job-training”. This practical experience can represent valuable vocational qualifications especially in countries where manual, technical and commercial occupations are usually performed without requiring formal educational degrees (Brücker et al. 2016; Council of Experts of German Foundations for Integration and Migration (Sachverständigenrat deutscher Stiftungen für Integration und Migration, SVR) 2020). Whether young refugees were already working in their country of origin or in a transit country depends in particular on their gender and, in respect of women, on their country of origin. Almost two out of three young men (64 %) were employed before their entry into Germany. Among the young women, only one in four women (26 %) had ever worked for a living before arriving in Germany. Women from other countries of origin (34 %) or Eritrea (30 %) were particularly likely to have worked in their country of origin or transit, whereas young women from Afghanistan (24 %), Syria (23 %) or Iraq (16 %) were less likely to have been employed. In comparison, young refugees were significantly less likely to have been employed before their entry into Germany than older

5 With the help of two logistic regressions, the probabilities of having a) a school-leaving certificate and b) a vocational qualification upon arrival in Germany was calculated.

Figure 4: Vocational qualifications of (young) refugees upon arrival in Germany in the survey year 2017 (in percent)

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Refugee Survey 2017.

Basis: *1,288 young refugees who were between the age of 18 and 25 when they arrived in Germany in 2015 and 2016; **2,896 older refugees who were above the age of 25 when they arrived in Germany in 2015 and 2016; data weighted.

refugee men (87 %) and women (44 %). Overall, the results show that young refugee women in particular had no experience of employment before they arrived in Germany.

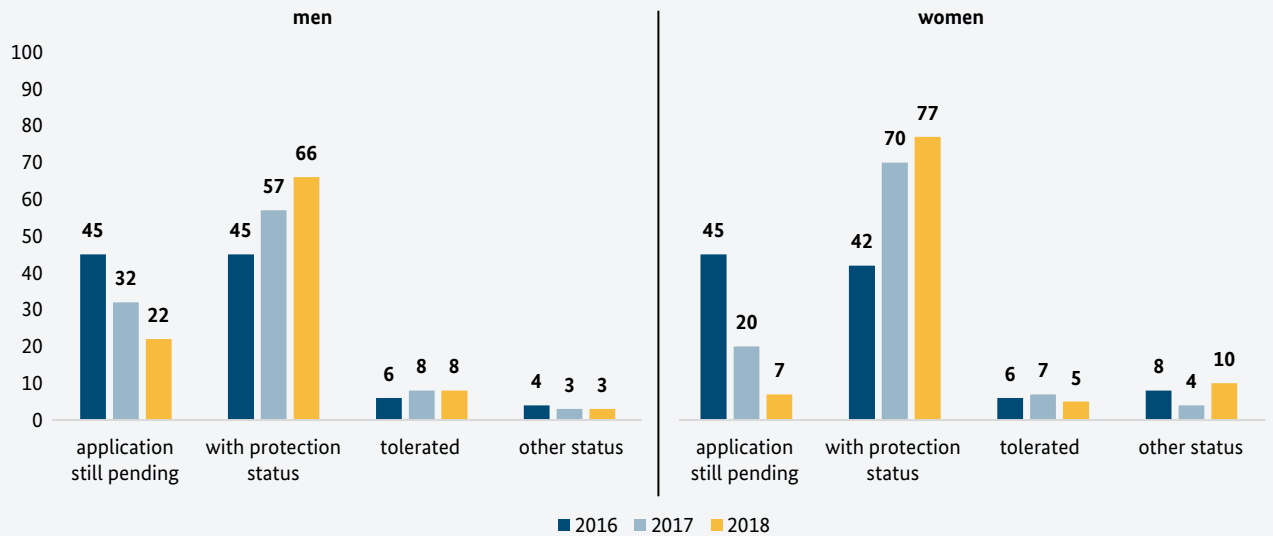
Settling into life in Germany

When the last survey was conducted in 2018, three-quarters of the young refugees considered in this analysis had been living in Germany for three years (76 %) and one-quarter for two years (24 %). During this time, the young refugees had time to settle into life in Germany, to find a school, an apprenticeship, a job or to start or enlarge a family. Since the residence and family situation can play a role in determining whether and to what extent young refugees become employed or can catch up on educational qualifications in Germany (Brenzel et al. 2019), first, the development over the years 2016 to 2018 of the status of the asylum procedure, second, the housing and, third, the family situation of young refugees will be examined.

Trends in the status of asylum procedures

In the available data, all respondents applied for asylum after their arrival in Germany. Over the years 2016 to 2018, the proportion of those whose asylum application was still being processed decreased by more than half (2016: 45 %; 2017: 29 %; 2018: 18 %). In contrast, the proportion of persons granted protection⁶ in particular increased between 2016 (44 %) and 2017 (60 %), so that in 2018 the majority of young refugees (69 %) either had refugee status, asylum or subsidiary protection. In this respect, the situation of young refugee men differed from that of young refugee women. In the period from 2016 to 2018, the number of asylum procedures concluded increased, especially for young women. The number of women granted protec-

⁶ The category "protection status" includes, in particular, persons entitled to asylum (residence permit pursuant to Section 25 subsection 1 of the Residence Act (Aufenthaltsgesetz (AufenthG)), persons who have been granted refugee status (residence permit pursuant to Section 25 subsection 2 of the Residence Act), who have been granted a settlement permit (pursuant to Section 26 subsection 3 of the Residence Act) or who have been admitted within the framework of admission programmes (residence permit pursuant to Section 22 or Section 23 of the Residence Act).

Figure 5: Trend in the status of asylum procedures from 2016 to 2018 for young refugee men and women (in percent)

Source: IAB -BAMF-SOEP Refugee Survey 2016 - 2018.

Basis: 1,703 young refugees between the age of 18 and 25 who arrived in Germany in 2015 and 2016; data weighted.

tion status increased (Figure 5). The number of persons with a different status or whose application had been rejected and whose departure had been suspended (i.e. persons whose deportation had been suspended) remained comparatively constant over the years for both young men and women. Whether young men were already married or still single was not related to the status of the asylum procedure in 2018.

Trends in the family and housing situation

Two to three years after their arrival in Germany, particularly young refugee women have already started or expanded their families. In 2016, the majority of young refugee women were already living in a household with their partner (53 %) and/or were married (57 %). By 2018, the proportion of young women living with their partner rose to 64 % and that of married women to 65 %. The proportion of women living with young children (under the age of 4) also increased continuously from 2016 to 2018, so that by 2018 the majority (56 %) of young refugee women were living with young children in their household (2016: 44 %; 2017: 57 %). Since families were able to leave the shared accommodation - which many refugees had moved into at the beginning of their stay in Germany - earlier than single persons (Baier/Siegert, 2018), it is not surprising that by 2016, already more than two-thirds of the young women (66 %) were living in private accommodation and that this proportion had risen to 86 % by 2018.

Even two to three years after their entry into Germany, young refugee men remained predominantly single. Thus, men who were married and living with a partner

or a young child remained in the minority until 2018, even though their number increased over the years (married - 2016: 9 %, 2017: 12 %, 2018: 17 %; living with their partner in one household- 2016: 4 %, 2017: 9 %, 2018: 14 %; living with a child in their household - 2016 3 %, 2017: 6 %, 2018: 6 %). Although the proportion of young men who moved into private accommodation over the years also increased (2016: 35 %, 2017: 47 %, 2018: 59 %), this occurred less frequently than among young refugee women (difference between young refugee men and women - 2016: 31 percentage points, 2017: 25 percentage points, 2018: 27 percentage points).

The comparison with young adults of the same age who have lived in Germany since birth shows that non-migrant young adults in Germany are much less likely to start a family at the same age. By 2018, 16 % of young men and 27 % of young women without migration experience were also living with their partner. However, far fewer young men and women without migration experience were married (men: 4 %; women: 10 %) or living with a young child (men: 3 %; women: 8 %). These findings illustrate differences in family planning between young adults with and without experience of forced migration in Germany, particularly among young women. Young refugee women were more likely to start a family early.

Developments in the main activities

The German labour market is heavily regulated by formal qualifications and relevant professional experience. However, if refugees possess qualifications and certificates, those can lose value through migration, for instance if the qualifications and experiences are not or only partially recognized in Germany (Brenzel et al. 2019). In addition, German employers may find it difficult to adequately assess foreign qualifications and certificates (Brenzel et al. 2019). In order to gain access to skilled and thus, in the long term, usually better paid jobs in Germany, it can therefore be advantageous for young refugees to catch up on their education and vocational qualifications in Germany (Wiedner et al. 2018). If refugees who are no longer subject to compulsory schooling want to catch up on educational qualifications, they usually have to overcome a number of challenges (for instance, develop a sufficient command of the German language, meet residence requirements) (Brenzel et al. 2019; SVR 2020). It is already known from asylum seekers in recent years that especially young refugees between the age of 18 and 25, refugees who have already lived in Germany for a longer period of time, who have taken part in a language course and/or who have availed themselves of counselling services offered by the Federal Employment Agency and who do not have a young child living in their household, are more likely to continue their educational pathways in Germany (Brenzel et al. 2019). However, whether refugees who arrived in Germany in recent years invest in formal education was not related to the status of their asylum procedure and only partly related to their gender: Women with young children in particular are less likely to take up formal education in Germany.

Apart from the aim of gaining educational qualifications in Germany, young refugees may also be keen to work in Germany (as soon as possible) in order to provide financial support for family members, pay the costs of their forced migration or earn a living for themselves and their families (Wiedner et al. 2018). In general, the following factors have proven to be beneficial for the integration of refugees into the German labour market in recent years: good knowledge of German language upon arrival in Germany, recognised professional qualifications and protection status, information about the German labour market from members of their own ethnic network, participation in language courses (including integration courses) and availing themselves of labour market counselling provided by the Federal Employment Agency (Brenzel et al. 2019). In this context, refugee women were significantly less likely to be employed than refugee men,

especially if they were living with underage children or young children in their household (Brenzel et al. 2019). These findings highlight the strong family orientation among the refugee women in recent years.

Considering the main activities of young refugees over the years 2016 to 2018, it becomes apparent that pronounced gender differences exist. For this reason, in the following, the development in young refugees' main activities will be examined separately for men and women.

Main activities of young refugee men

The proportion of young refugee men who were not employed decreased by almost 50 % from 82 % in 2016 to 45 % in 2018 (Table 1). The decline in the number of men not employed over the years has been accompanied by a sharp rise in the number of men in employment from 7 % in 2016 to 37 % in 2018. The share of men in irregular employment decreased by 4 percentage points between 2017 and 2018 and in full-time employment by 16 percentage points, so that by 2018 the vast majority of employed young refugee men were employed full-time (71 %). The strong aspiration among young refugee men to find employment is also backed by the finding that the majority of men who were not employed (52 %) in 2018 indicated that they had been actively looking for a job the previous week.

Education and training are only an attractive alternative for a limited group of young men. The proportion of young refugee men in education rose continuously from 2016 to 2018; however, the increase was moderate, from 12 % in 2016 to 18 % in 2018. The majority of young refugee men in education opted for vocational training. The proportion of young men who attended secondary school or undertook other education in the form of further training, retraining, an internship or work experience decreased over the years. By 2018, 69 % of the young refugee men in education had completed vocational training, a further 15 % were attending university, followed by 9 % attending secondary school. As the young men had only been living in Germany for 2.81 years on average, only a few managed to complete their formal education in Germany yet. Later surveys and analyses can show the extent to which young refugee men succeed in completing the formal education they began in Germany.

Examining the year-to-year likelihood of young refugee men to remain in or to transition between unemployment, employment and education, we find that once they became employed, 62 % of young men remained in employment. Men who were unemployed

Table 1: Trend in the main activities of young refugees from 2016 to 2018 by gender (in percent)

	men			women		
	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018
unemployed	82	65	45	94	93	82
of whom were on						
maternity leave/parental leave	.. ^a	0	0	.. ^a	11	35
number of respondents	439	591	268	221	439	285
in education/training	12	15	18	3	5	12
of whom in						
school	27	20	9	.. ^b	.. ^b	.. ^b
vocational training	34	46	69	.. ^b	.. ^b	.. ^b
university	13	10	15	.. ^b	.. ^b	.. ^b
further education/retraining/internship/ work experience	26	24	7	.. ^b	.. ^b	.. ^b
number of respondents	59	109	100	9	25	35
employed	7	21	37	3	2	6
of whom						
irregular	.. ^b	17	13	.. ^b	.. ^b	.. ^b
part-time	.. ^b	28	16	.. ^b	.. ^b	.. ^b
full-time	.. ^b	55	71	.. ^b	.. ^b	.. ^b
number of respondents	28	127	202	3	9	20
total number of refugees	526	827	570	233	473	340

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Refugee Survey 2016 - 2018.

Basis: Depending on the survey year, between 759 and 1,300 young refugees between the age of 18 and 25 who arrived in Germany in 2015 and 2016; data weighted.

Note: a This question was not asked this year; b cell occupancy or number of cases too small to provide reliable information on subcategories.

and left this status were more likely to move into employment (29 %) than into education (15 %).

When the trends among the younger refugee men are compared with those of older refugee men, a more positive trend becomes apparent for the younger generation. By 2018, and hence two to three years after their arrival in Germany, a larger proportion of young refugee men compared to older refugee men had successfully made the transition to the labour market and the German education system (older refugees: employment - 2016: 7 %, 2017: 16 %, 2018: 30 %; in education - 2016: 6 %; 2017: 8 %; 2018: 12 %). Accordingly, from 2016 to 2018, the proportion of older refugee men who were unemployed was higher than that of younger refugee men (older refugees - 2016: 87 %; 2017: 76 %; 2018: 58 %). These trends reflect earlier findings that refugees between the age of 18 and 25 manage to make the transition to the German labour market faster (Brenzel et al., 2019). This indicates that the young age of refugees arriving in Germany is more of an advantage than a disadvantage in establishing an independent livelihood.

In order to better understand which young refugee men are more likely to be able to take up employment or education as opposed to being unemployed, a multinomial logistical analysis method is used. The advantage of this method is that a wide range of characteristics can be taken into account in the calculations. This makes it possible to show which characteristics contribute significantly to the respective status, also taking other factors and personal characteristics (such as the status of the asylum procedure or country of origin) into account. However, the analytical method only shows correlations and does not provide causal reasons. The analyses (Table 2) illustrate that in 2018, young refugee men with a better command of German were more likely to be in education than unemployed, and young men from Eritrea were less likely (than young men from Syria) to be in education than unemployed. For instance, young men who stated in 2018 that they had a “very good” knowledge of German on average were 38 percentage points more likely to attend an educational institution than young men who reported “no” knowledge of German language in 2018. However, young men from Eritrea were 12 percentage points less likely to participate in education in 2018 than Syrian men. The status of the asylum procedure,

the length of stay, living in a household with young children, professional experience in the country of origin, educational qualifications, the pursuit of vocational training in Germany and the state of health of young refugee men had no significant bearing on their probability of being in education as opposed to being unemployed in 2018.

Furthermore, the estimates show that the probability of refugees of being employed increases by 13 percentage points with each year of residence in Germany and decreases by 22 percentage points when the deportation has been suspended (compared to persons granted protection). The country of origin, language, living in a household with young children, work experience in the country of origin, educational qualifications, the pursuit of vocational training in Germany and the state of health had no significant bearing on the probability of becoming employed as opposed to

being unemployed in 2018. These results illustrate that two to three years after arrival in Germany, suspension of deportation in particular can make the transition to employment more difficult for young refugee men and that young men from Eritrea are less inclined to catch up on formal education in Germany. In addition, having a better command of German language goes hand in hand with attendance at educational institutions or courses. This is an important finding, as further studies have already shown the importance of good German skills for the integration process in different spheres of life (Beier/Kroneberg 2013; Esser 2006; Dustmann/von Soest 2002).

A comparison of trends in the main activities of young refugees with their peers who have no migration experience shows that young German-born men increasingly use this phase of their lives to advance or complete their formal education before moving

Table 2: Estimation of the correlation between the main activity and selected factors among young refugee men in the 2018 survey year (average effect in percentage points)

	Probability of (Reference: unemployed) ^a	
	education	employed
age	-0.77	1.09
years since arrival	6.38	12.55*
young child(ren) in the household	-3.37	-6.42
employment experience prior to arrival	-7.38	4.12
highest level of education	3.90	-2.93
vocational qualification pursued	-2.59	-5.03
country of origin (reference: Syria)		
Iraq	-1.53	-2.55
Afghanistan	7.73	-13.18
Eritrea	-12.38*	13.20
other country of origin	6.06	-10.09
residence permit (reference: with protection status)		
application still pending	2.92	2.68
tolerated	1.46	-22.29*
other status	1.97	24.00
command of German	12.32***	-4.15
health status	0.79	7.67
estimated percentage in each status	17	37
case numbers	552	

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Refugee Survey 2018.

Basis: 552 young refugee men between the age of 18 and 25 who arrived in Germany in 2015 and 2016; data weighted.

Note: * p<0,05, ** p<0,01, *** p<0,001.

^a Dependent variable in the multivariate logistic regression is an indicator variable with the 3 characteristics “unemployed“, “in education” and “employed”.

Legend: Young refugee men whose deportation was suspended in 2018 are 22 percentage points less likely to be employed than men who are unemployed but had a recognised protection status in 2018 - if all other factors in the model are equal.

into the labour market. Thus, the majority (55 %) of young men without migration experience were still in education in 2016. This number, however, decreased over the years (2017: 49 %, 2018: 37 %), so that in 2018 the majority (53 %) of young men who did not migrate themselves were employed (2016: 33 %, 2017: 41 %). In 2016, 12 % of young men born in Germany were unemployed, 11 % in 2017 and 10 % in 2018. Moreover, the transition and residence probabilities underline a higher stability in the career paths of young men who did not migrate themselves compared to young refugee men. Between 2016 and 2018, 70 % of young men who did not migrate themselves remained in education and 84 % in employment if they obtained the respective status in the year before. By contrast, the probability of transition to education (34 %) and to employment (25 %) is higher for young men without migration experience than for young refugee men. This illustrates that young men who are unemployed and have no experience of migration are more likely to take up employment or education in Germany than young men who are refugees.

Main activities of young refugee women

The majority of young refugee women were unemployed in 2016 (94 %), 2017 (93 %) and 2018 (82 %) (Table 1). Among the unemployed women, 35 % were on maternity or parental leave in 2018 and a further 30 % reported that they were living with a young child (under the age of 4). Therefore, it can be assumed that two-thirds of the young refugee women spent their days looking after children. While in 2016 only 3 % of young refugee women were in education, their proportion had risen to 12 % by 2018. The proportion of women in employment also increased over the years but remained at a low level overall. The probabilities of remaining in and transitioning to the labour market underline the fact that young refugee women often remained in unemployment (90 %) between 2016 and 2018. When young refugee women left unemployment, 6 % of them went into education and 4 % went into employment. Due to the low number of young refugee women who had entered education (12 %) or employment (6 %) by 2018, it is not possible to conduct any further reliable analyses of these women. Moreover, there is little difference between the trends in main activities between younger and older refugee women⁷, so that a high degree of family orientation can be assumed for both groups.

However, the trends in the main activities of young refugee women between 2016 and 2018 deviate (so far) more strongly from the trends of women of the same age born in Germany. Similar to young non-migrant men, the majority of young women who did not migrate themselves were in education in 2016 (56 %), and this proportion decreased over the years (2017: 47 %, 2018: 39 %). Additionally, the proportion of young women without migration experience who are employed increased over the years (2016: 30 %, 2017: 40 %, 2018: 48 %). The share of young women without migration experience who were not employed remained relatively constant over the years, similar to that of young men without migration experience (2016: 14 %, 2017: 13 %, 2018: 13 %) although it was slightly higher than that of young men without migration experience and significantly lower than that of young refugee women. Similar to the findings for young men, this illustrates that young women without migration experience are significantly less likely to be unemployed, more likely to be in education and more likely to make the transition to the labour market than young refugee women at this stage of their biography.

Everyday activities

The current analyses show that in 2018 a large proportion of young refugee women, but also of refugee men, were unemployed. For this group of persons in particular, the question arises as to how they organise their everyday life. On an average working day, how much time do young refugee women and men spend shopping or running errands, attending appointments with public authorities, learning the German language, engaging in sports, hanging around waiting with no meaningful activity, or childcare? The gender-specific differences in relation to starting a family and main activities may reflect on how young refugee men and women spend their days. For this reason, the analyses on everyday activities are also carried out separately for men and women (Figure 6).

Of the activities considered (childcare, learning German, shopping or running errands, hanging around waiting, engaging in sporting activities, attending appointments with public authorities), young refugee women spent most of their time looking after children (women unemployed: 6.28 hours, women employed: 2.72 hours). If they were living in a household with underage children, the time they spent looking after children increased to 7.48 hours for unemployed women and to 4.20 hours for employed women. Young refugee men living with underage children spent significantly less time looking after the children (unemployed men: 2.63 hours, employed men: 1.68

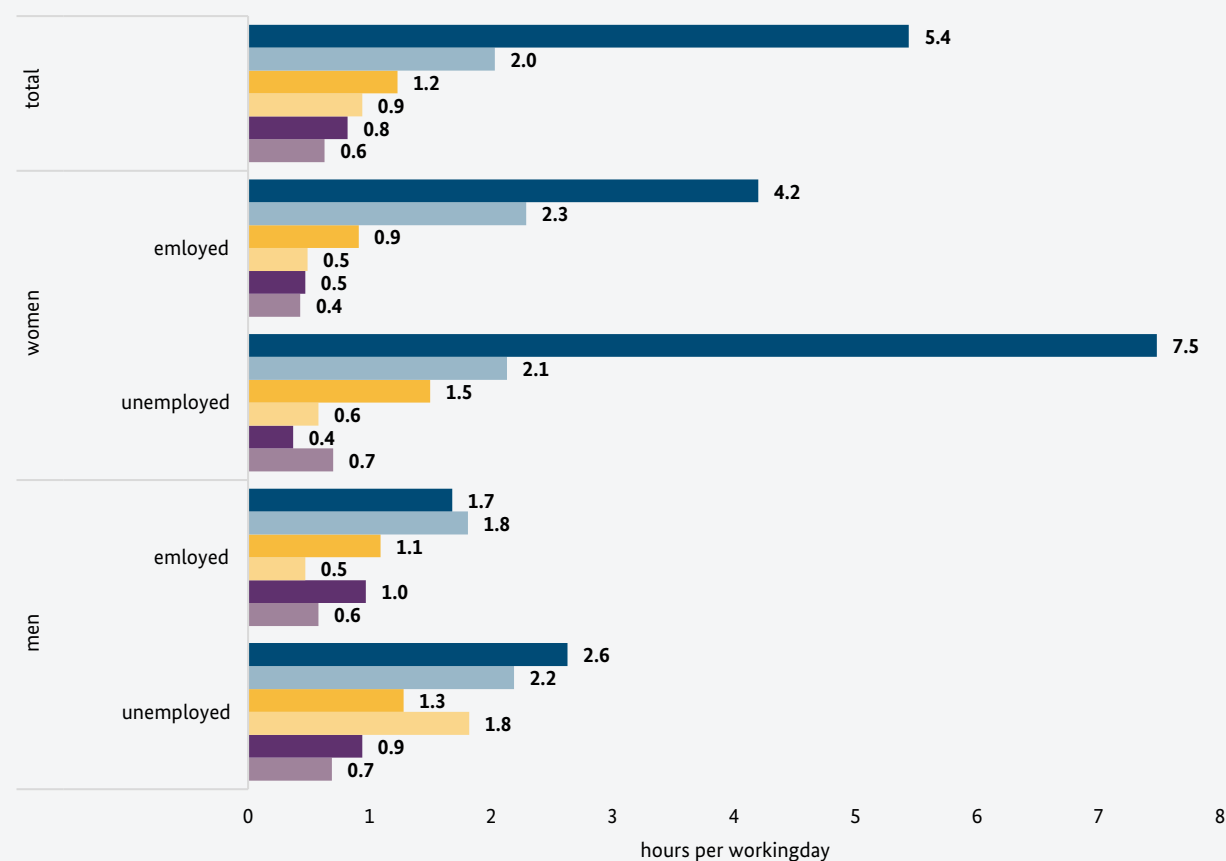
⁷ Trends in the main activities of older refugee women who were over the age of 25 when they entered the country in 2015 or 2016: unemployed in 2016: 95 %, 2017: 92 %, 2018: 85 %; in education or training in 2016: 3 %, 2017: 5 %, 2018: 8 %; employed in 2016: 3 %, 2017: 3 %, 2018: 7 %.

hours) than women. In addition, more young refugee men (1.06 hours) than women (0.56 hours) reported that they spent their time hanging around waiting without a meaningful activity, especially if they were not working. Furthermore, young men spent more time engaging in sports at an average of 0.96 hours per day than young refugee women (0.38 hours). On an average working day, young refugee men spent a similar amount of time shopping and running errands, attending appointments with public authorities and learning German. The most time was spent on learning German (2.03 hours), followed by shopping and running errands (1.23 hours) and attending appointments with public authorities (0.63 hours). This means that even two to three years after their arrival in Germany, young refugee men and women spend an average of 2 hours on an ordinary working day learning the Ger-

man language. Thus, they spent more time practising and learning German in everyday life than on sporting activities, shopping or running errands.

In terms of the activities considered here, there is no fundamental difference between young and older refugees, with three exceptions regarding childcare and sporting activities: Young refugee men were less involved in childcare and more involved in sports than older refugee men. This could be related to the fact that the majority of young men were single. In line with the high proportion of young refugee women who have young children living with them, young refugee women spent on average more time caring for children than older refugee women did. Conversely, this means that younger and older refugee women as well as younger and older refugee men spent a similar

Figure 6: Everyday activities of young refugees differentiated by gender and employment status in the 2018 survey year (mean values of hours per working day)



On an average workingday, how many hours do you spend with ...

- child care, if a child lives in the household
- learning German
- shopping and running errands
- frustrating waiting without any meaningful engagement
- sports
- attending authorities

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Refugee Survey 2018.

Basis: Depending on the question, between 847 and 901 young refugees who were between the age of 18 and 25 when they arrived in Germany in 2015 and 2016; data weighted.

amount of time in everyday life learning the German language, doing shopping and running errands, attending appointments at public authorities or waiting.

Summary and conclusion

The analyses provide an insight into the life situations of young refugees who were between the age of 18 and 25 when they arrived in Germany in 2015 and 2016. The data was obtained from the IAB-BAMF-SOEP Refugee Survey.

The analyses focus on the gender differences in terms of the conditions of the flight, the existing educational and vocational qualifications of the young refugees, the development of their residence status, the housing and family situation as well as the (main) activities of the young refugees. In this respect, young refugee men are much more employment-oriented whereas young refugee women are more family-oriented. In this gendered orientations, young refugees do not essentially differ from older refugees.

At 77 %, men were clearly over-represented among young adult refugees. Two-thirds of the young refugee men had fled to Germany alone. Additionally, young refugee men had completed their schooling or vocational training upon arrival in Germany more often than women and almost two-thirds had already been employed before they arrived in Germany. Between 2016 and 2018, the proportion of young men who were unemployed in Germany decreased by almost 50 %. Seven out of ten young men who were employed in 2018 were in full-time employment. In 2018, young refugee men who had been residing in Germany for a longer period of time were more likely to find employment in Germany whereas young refugee men whose deportation had been suspended (compared to persons with recognised protection status) were less likely to be employed in Germany. In addition, almost one in five young refugee men were in education in 2018. Among these, the majority of young men opted for an apprenticeship. Young refugee men with a better command of German were more likely to be in education.

In their career aspirations, young refugee men do not differ significantly from older refugee men who were above the age of 25 when they arrived in Germany. Measured in terms of the proportions from 2016 to 2018, the transition to employment and education was faster for young refugee men than for older refugee men during this period. Thus, the young age upon arrival in Germany seems to be an advantage for es-

tablishing an independent living in Germany. However, as this analyses does not take into account the quality of work or professional career, this is a preliminary result. If, for instance, more and more young refugees take up unskilled employment involving precarious conditions, as analyses conducted by Kosyakova (2020) and Brücker et al. (2020) suggest, this could have a negative impact on their career paths in the long term (as, for instance, seen during the Coronavirus pandemic). Additionally, the development in the main activities of young refugee men differ from those of their German-born peers. Whereas the trajectories of German-born peers are mainly as expected, with a likely transition from compulsory schooling to vocational training and to the labour market, the trajectories of young refugee men are interrupted. Only a limited number of young refugee men have managed to catch up on formal education in Germany. As the German labour market is heavily regulated by formal qualifications, encouraging more young refugee men to undergo vocational training may be beneficial for their long-term career paths. Furthermore, a higher level of education can help them both to participate in other areas of society (for instance in children's school education, in political and social life; (Authoring Group, Report on Education (Autorengruppe Bildungsberichterstattung) 2016) as well as to promote individual well-being (Metzing et al. 2020).

By contrast, young refugee women are much more family-oriented than young refugee men. The majority of young women fled to Germany accompanied by family members, which might have been their own parents, partners, children or other relatives. Furthermore, in 2018, the majority of young refugee women were married or living with a partner and/or a young child in their household. In addition, four out of five young refugee women were unemployed in 2018. Among the young unemployed refugee women, two-thirds were on maternity leave, parental leave or living with a young child in their household and (probably) taking care of their young child or children. Young refugee women who left the status of unemployment in 2018, were more likely to transition into education than into employment. This means that unlike young refugee men and German-born men and women, young refugee women were starting a family already at an early stage of their lives.

The different life situations of young refugee men and women indicate gender-specific life trajectories. This can have implications for the effectiveness of integration support measures for refugees. The more measures are able to address specific life situations, the greater the likelihood of their success. As such, it

needs to be taken into account that many young refugee women have family ties, although this does not apply to all (young) refugee women. It is also possible that as soon as children are well cared for in childcare facilities and schools, young refugee women will be more inclined to focus on education and becoming employed.

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IMPRINT

Published by

Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge
Forschungszentrum Migration, Integration und Asyl
90461 Nürnberg

Version

01/2021

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Suggested citation

Niehues, Wenke (2021): Life situations of young adults with a refugee experience. Edition 01|2021 of the Brief Analyses of the Migration, Integration and Asylum Research Centre at the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, Nuremberg.

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