



# Refugees as Experts Young Voices of Ukraine



**YEP Youth Report**  
Vienna, December 2022



# REFUGEES AS EXPERTS

## Young Voices of Ukraine

The situation of Ukrainian refugees is still precarious today. That is why we have taken on the structural problem. Through the project "Refugees as Expert: Young Voices of Ukraine" we want to listen to the voice of young refugees and support their needs as refugees in Austria. The purpose of this project is to offer humanitarian organizations and political stakeholders an evidence based decision-making-tool, so they can improve their decisions and support offers for this target group.



YEP is an independent organization and social enterprise. It creates new opportunities for youth participation and enable companies, institutions and organisations to set up impactful participation processes, to make it easy to let those most affected by the decisions have a say. We act as partner for inclusive and innovative participation processes.

[www.yep-austria.org](http://www.yep-austria.org)



The project "Refugees as Experts: Young Voices of Ukraine" is co-financed by the means of the European Commission, through the European Year of Youth.

# REFUGEES AS EXPERTS: YOUNG VOICES OF UKRAINE

## If it's about them, don't do it without them.

More than nine months have passed since the war on Ukraine started. In February and March 2022, when most refugees arrived, the issue of integrating and supporting Ukrainian refugees became a focus for news, activists, politicians, and aid organizations. As a result, a number of projects, programs, and platforms were founded to address the needs of these refugees. This YEP Youth Report (=participatory study) aims to investigate the **needs of young refugees from Ukraine**, specifically asking whether young refugees between the ages of 13 and 25 have unique needs that require special offers. If so, the YEP Youth Report will identify these needs and offer recommendations for how they can be best supported. It aims to provide insight into the challenges and opportunities facing young refugees from Ukraine and to offer guidance to decision-makers.

## YEP Participation Method:

Young people are the experts of the reality of their lives. Therefore, if you want to create a strategy or program for them, you should let them have a say, have a say and help shape it, since they themselves know best about their challenges and needs.

Participation can make a major contribution to more equal opportunities, because the feeling "My vote counts" or "My opinion is important" is relevant for strengthening young people's self-efficacy. That is why the proven YEP method focuses on inclusion and diversity to give all young people a voice.

## Participation Process:

The YEP method consists of an inclusive, very low-threshold participation design, which combines intertwined qualitative and quantitative elements in different online and offline phases in order to deliver holistic results. Young people are clearly involved in every step of the implementation and take ownership. The expertise of decision-makers from aid organizations and civil society was also obtained for this report.

This participatory youth report is to be understood as a powerful tool to make the independent voice of youth loud and to bring it into the discourse and was co-financed in 2022 by the European Year of the youth.

### Open Speech

Young Refugees (13-24 years)

### Qualitative Interviews

Young refugees

### Co Creation Event

Experts from aid organizations

### Survey

Refugees as Experts

### Presentation and discussion of results

## DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE PARTICIPANTS:

### 210 young people actively participated

qualitative data collection:

30 participants

quantitative data collection:

180 participants

### Age:

12 - 27 years

72% between 13 and 24 years

*"I wish there would be more psychological support and help with bureaucratic issues for us, noone really knows what's going on..."*

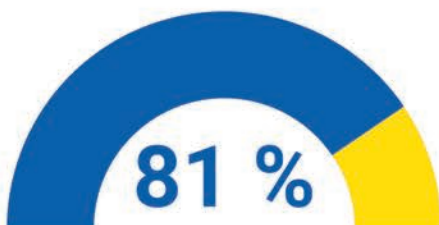
## OFFERS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Based on the survey results, it appears that 90% of respondents want to see more special offers for young refugees in the areas of information, education, leisure time, and psychological support. It may be worthwhile for organizations and institutions to consider offering more programs and services that are tailored to the unique needs and challenges faced by young refugees.



**90% want more special offers for young refugees (information, education, leisure time, psychological)**

## RESPONSIBILITY IN THE FAMILY



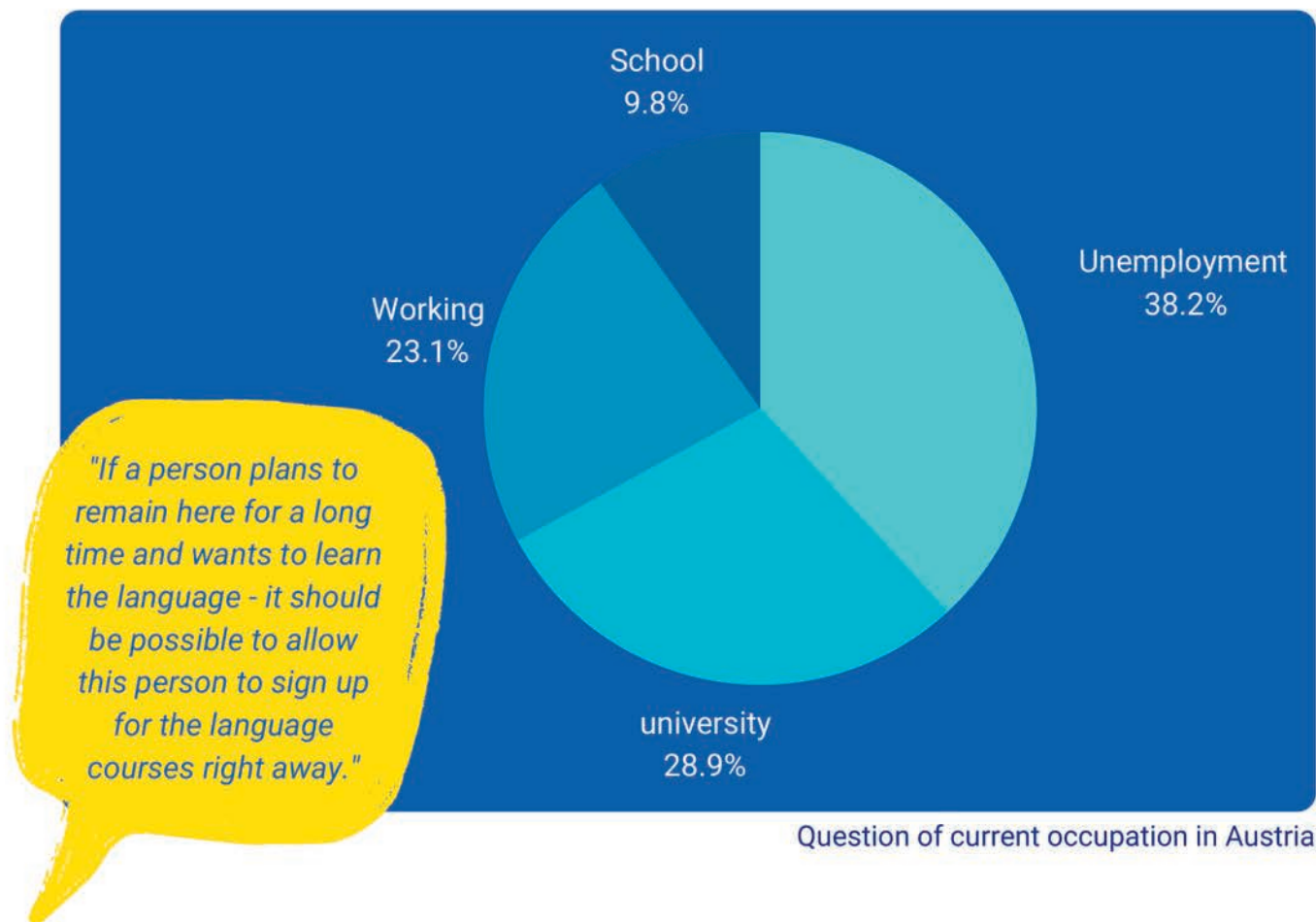
**81% are taking more responsibility in their family than before the war**

The survey results show that a large majority of participants (81%) are taking on more responsibility in their families compared to before the war. This suggests that many young refugees have had to adapt to new roles and responsibilities due to the challenges and disruptions caused by the war.

**Especially young women and girls where forced to take over more responsibility in their families, 60% reported an increase, while only 46% of males questioned said so.\***

\*alpha value of 0.05

# OCCUPATION



Only three out of ten participants (31%) were able to continue with what they were doing the majority of the polled people are not doing the same, as they did in their homecountry.



Four out of ten participants (42%), who studied in Ukraine, are not able to do so in Austria.

## EMPLOYMENT

- 87% of those who are unemployed now, weren't unemployed in Ukraine
- 69% of those who now work in Austria (have a job), did something different before (e.g. studying, school, unemployment)

## BIGGEST STRUGGLES



Top-Answers to the question: What did you struggle with most, on arrival in Austria?

The survey looked at the biggest challenges that participants faced upon arriving in Austria. The most common challenges were related to housing (19%), finding a job (16%), making friends (13%), and finding a German or language course (13%). This suggests that support and resources in these areas may be particularly important for helping young refugees to successfully integrate into their new communities.

## BIGGEST SUPPORT



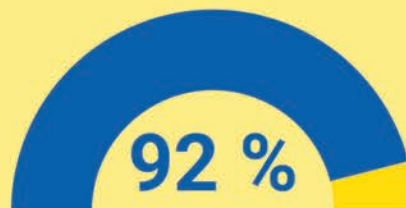
When asked about the biggest support the participants had received since arriving in Austria, the majority of participants (50%) cited acquaintances and friends. Followed with a vast gap by other sources of support included aid organizations (4.2%), NGO's in Austria (5%), and NGO's in Ukraine or the church (3.5%). 18% of questioned youth didn't know how to answer the question.

This result suggests that personal connections and relationships may be a very important source of support for young refugees in Austria, and that there may be a need for more formal support networks and organizations to help fill the gap.

## FUTURE PLANS



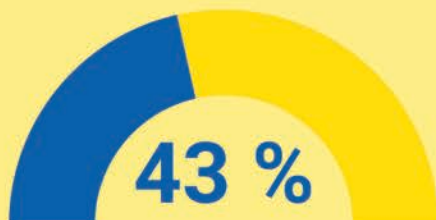
**70% would like to stay in Austria**



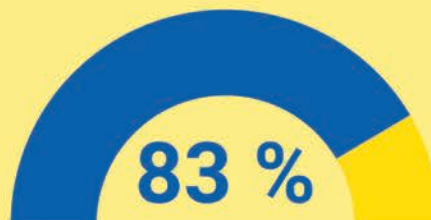
**92% would like to be financially independent of the state**

When asked about their plans for the future, 70% of participants said they would like to stay in Austria, while 30% said they would like to leave or return to their home country. A large majority (92%) of those who planned to stay in Austria expressed a desire to be financially independent of the state. This suggests that many refugees see self-sufficiency as an important goal and that they are eager to contribute to their new communities by supporting themselves without relying on government assistance.

## GERMAN COURSES



**43% say it was (rather) difficult to access a German course**

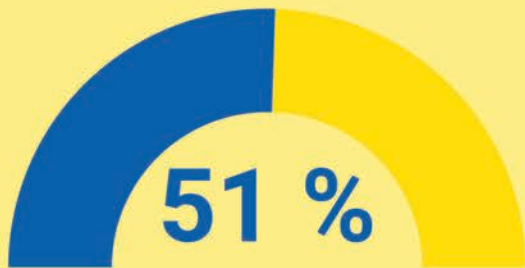


**83% would like to learn German / attend a German course**

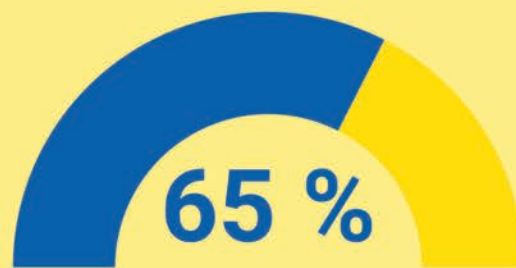
According to the survey, 43% of respondents said that it was difficult to access a German course. Despite this, a large majority of 83% said that they would like to learn German or attend a German course. For those who did attend a German course, there was a significant increase in their ability to make friends in Austria.\* These results suggest that there is a strong desire to learn German, but access to courses may be a barrier for some people. It may be important for organizations and institutions to provide more accessible and affordable German courses to help meet the high demand and support refugees in their language learning efforts.

\*alpha value of 0.051

## INFORMATION QUALITY & ACCESS



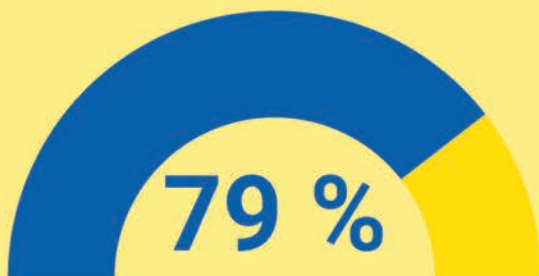
51% are (rather) not satisfied with the amount of information about job/education in Austria



65% are (rather) not satisfied with the quality & accessibility of information for young refugees

These findings suggest that there may be gaps in the information available to young Ukrainian refugees in Austria, particularly when it comes to information about education and employment, which could be causing problems for them finding their way into education and employment.

## FINDING FRIENDS



79 % find it (rather) difficult to find friends in Austria

*"It would be important to have a space where you can gather and get to know each other, restore lost social capital in Ukraine."*

Finding friends and establishing social connections can be a crucial aspect of the integration process for refugees, as it can provide them with a sense of belonging and support in their new country. Without a strong social network, refugees may face increased isolation and loneliness, which can have negative effects on their mental health and well-being. Especially in the qualitative research of the project the majority of the young people wished for a place to connect, for Ukrainian communities but also intercultural exchange with Austrians, as a big factor for integration, language development and overall happiness.





**EUROPEAN  
YEAR OF  
YOUTH**



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**YOUTH  
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PARTICIPATION**

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