# Challenges Faced by Young Female Refugees in Austria: a qualitative study on the role of NGOs in labour market integration of this target group

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AFFIDAVIT

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ABSTRACT

One of the main topics at the heart of social and political debates is immigration of refugees. The year 2015, was a decisive time in Austria's refugee policy, when the country underwent a substantial inflow of refugees. Within this population, young refugees are an important group, who arrived in Austria either unaccompanied or accompanied by their families. Labour market integration of this target group, in particular young female refugees, who are becoming a valuable part of the population; could drive the society towards a fairer structure, which not only supports with the transition towards social sustainability, but also allows this target group to contribute to an economy that is in need of labour force.

Indeed, on their journey towards labour market integration, these young women, are faced with different barriers that are not only related to the labour market in general, but also to their personal lives in particular. Here, 'governance' plays an important role and within the governance actors, non-governmental organisations are important facilitators in addressing the challenges faced by this target group. Based on a case study analysis of an NGO in Austria, called Lobby 16, and the interviews conducted with young female refugees, this thesis comes to the conclusion that there is a need for more initiatives like Lobby 16 within the society; while at the same time it is crucial for the Austrian companies to look at the values, skills set and cultural intelligence that this target group brings with them into the host community, to see their employability and to consider them as potentially valuable members of the society.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AMS   Arbeitsmarktservice - Public Employment Service Austria

BMEIA   Bundesministerium Europäische und Internationale Angelegenheiten - Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs

BMI   Bundesministerium für Inneres - Federal Ministry of Internal Affairs

CEO   Chief Executive Officer

CV   Curriculum vitae

ESF   European Social Fund

EU   European Union

NGO   Non-Governmental Organisation

OUA   Organisation of African Unity

ÖBB   Österreichische Bundesbahnen

SOS   Save Our Ship

SSÖ   Soziale Survey Österreich - Social Survey Austria

UN   United Nations

UNHCR   United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Summary of refugee influx in Europe and Austria

Nowadays, one of the main topics at the heart of social and political debates is immigration of refugees. The current refugee crises remain to be one of the major global concerns that needs to be addressed without delay. By the end of 2021, the number of forcibly displaced individuals globally, has reached a new record of 89.3 million, surpassing the former record of 82.4 million people in 2020 (UNHCR, 2021). This displacement is mainly a consequence of conflict, contravention of human rights, persecution and violence (UNHCR, 2021). The immensity of the refugee influx has resulted in substantial crisis in some of the host countries around the world such as Turkey; which is the host to the biggest refugee population in the world (World Bank, 2021), and Lebanon; which is hosting the biggest number of refugees per capita in the world (UNHCR, 2021).

In Europe, the refugee crisis started in 2015, where more than one million individuals travelled across the Mediterranean and reached the borders of the European Union in pursuit of refuge, (UNHCR, 2016). Europe was faced with a sudden increase in refugee arrivals with the larger number of them being in need of international protection from war, brutality and oppression, coming mainly from Afghanistan, Syria and Iraq (Verwiebe et al., 2018). As time went by throughout the year, at the Mediterranean southern shores alone, this number continuously rose from 5,500 in January to a peak of 221,000 in October. In a short time, this extensive rise reached to the point of being described as a crisis for the national politics of many European Union member states, striving for long-lasting solutions (Greussing and Boomgaarden, 2017). In the beginning of the refugee movement, the larger part of the migrant groups was composed of men, with women contributing to only 28% in 2015. This number, however, had moved up to 30% in 2021 (Eurostat, 2021). The larger part of female refugees appeared in the case of family migration (Liebig et al. 2018; Schiestl et al., 2021).

Austria, throughout the past three decades, has turned out to be "an important target country for refugees" (Verwiebe et al., 2018, p. 1404). Amid other reasons being the Balkan Wars in the 1990s, which has been one of the biggest intra-European refugee relocations after World War ll. Since 2010, like many other countries in Europe, due to the armed conflicts in Afghanistan, Syria and Iraq, the number of refugees' asylum requests in Austria started to rise again (Verwiebe et al., 2018).

The year 2015, was a decisive time in Austria's refugee policy, where the forced migration in the country peaked (Verwiebe et al., 2018). During this year, Austria alongside Germany and Sweden underwent a substantial inflow of refugees resulting in it becoming "one of the three economies

that absorbed the largest numbers of asylum seekers per capita" (Landesmann and Leitner, 2019, p. 1), with Austria receiving 219,000 refugees between the years 2010 to 2016 (Verwiebe et al., 2018).

While 28,064 asylum seekers were registered in Austria in 2014, this number increased to 89,098 in 2015 (BMI, 2015). On a per capita basis, the country encountered 10 asylum applications per 1,000 inhabitants in 2015 (Landesmann and Leitner, 2019). The larger number of these refugees came from Afghanistan and Syria, followed by Iraq, Pakistan, Iran and Russia (Verwiebe et al., 2018). After this year, there has been a sharp decrease in the yearly number of applications from asylum seekers, due to introduction of new and more restricted measures and asylum policies, as well as the 2016 EU-Turkey deal (BMI, 2020; Besic et al., 2021). In 2019, about 12,000 asylum seekers set foot on Austria (34% of them being women), out of which about 6,000 were admitted to receive a refugee status (Eurostat, 2021). However, the integration of refugees continues to be a significant social issue within the country, where refugees are confronted with many obstacles in order to be made an integrated part of the society (Verwiebe et al., 2018).

According to Bundesministerium Inneres (2019), female applicants have had higher positive application results in Austria (64% in 2019), in comparison to male applicants (40% in 2019) (BMI, 2019). This is a trend that has been continuing for some years (Schiestl et al., 2021). In spite of the fact that issues regarding female refugee population have been looked at in an increasing number of studies, this target group is still under investigated, specifically with regards to labour market integration (Schiestl et al., 2021). Although with regards to integration objectives, gaining employment for newly arrived female refugees is as important as it is for men, labour market integration of women takes place more gradually than that of men, and it is a very arduous process (Liebig et al., 2018; Tervola, 2020).

As of 2019, the number of recognised refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection (for the full definition of these terms please refer to the section 2.2) in Austria, who were registered as unemployed or in training with the Public Employment Service (AMS) corresponds to 30,646, which represents 8.4% of all unemployed people in Austria (Vandor et al., 2021). In 2017, a survey has been conducted by the Social Survey Austria (SSÖ) of more than 1,000 refugees, who have just arrived in Austria. The study has been further expanded by 35 qualitative interviews with the refugees who have been integrated into the labour market within a short time (Wittfeld, 2019). The result of the study shows that 33% of the refugees work in the service sector and 24% work in gastronomy, others work in trade and industry sectors. In spite of having qualifications, numerous refugees work in rather low-skilled and low-paid industries. This is again due to the absence and non-recognition of certificates and qualifications of refugees (Wittfeld, 2019). This is problematic as it results in the target group having less access to qualified jobs and hence lower social and economic capital, personal contentment, etc. (Vandor et al., 2021). According to the study, 55% of respondents wanted to start working as soon as

possible and 21% within a year. Furthermore, it has been confirmed that employment is often obtained through networks: 37% of refugees find a job through friends in Austria and 17% through friends and family from their country of origin. In spite of the fact that 43% applied through AMS, only 15% were successful in finding a job (Wittfeld, 2019). This shows that the access of refugees to the labour market is mostly portrayed by informal networks and it is hardly ever going through established channels such as AMS (Wittfeld, 2019).

In addition to unaccompanied young and minor refugees, who arrived in Austria since 2015, many of the older adult refugees immigrated to the country with their families and children. Some of these children are now young adults or teenagers, who in comparison to older adult refugees, go through an extremely different experience with unique circumstances. Unaccompanied young refugees are in most cases male (95% in 2015) and the young female refugees are for the most part accompanied by their families (Heilmann, 2017).

Although there has been a few studies on unaccompanied young refugees (which are for the most part male) in Austria, with regards to their mental health, accommodation and care system (Heilemann, 2017; Scheibelhofer, 2019; Hynek et al., 2020); the research conducted on this target group in the country has been very limited. Moreover, there are even less studies known about young female refugees, where there is very limited or no research into the lives and experiences of this important target group in general and more specifically in Austria. Young female refugees, in particular are faced with unique challenges, specifically throughout the transitional phases of acculturation and assimilation to the culture of the host country as well as resettlement. Gender related issues, parental control, limited and homogenous social networks, lack of knowledge about the host country and cultural distance, are a few of these barriers to integration of this target group (Brand et al., 2014).

1.2   The need for initiatives by Non-Governmental Organisations

Integration of refugees into the host societies, is one of the crucial challenges of today's world and it remains a crucial challenge for many Western European nations. Attaining this objective necessitates long term innovative approaches (Freudenberg and Halberstadt, 2018; Harima and Freudenberg, 2020). One of the main steps in the integration process of refugees is entry into the labour market, which has turned into a critical subject for scholars and policy makers over the last two decades (Besic et al., 2021). Employment leads to retrieving and repossessing independence, self-sufficiency, and a successful participation in society, which is of greatest significance for both refugees and host societies (Ager & Strang, 2008; Eggenhofer-Rehart et al., 2018; Besic et al., 2021).

In the latest years, there have been many initiatives such as the state, the non-profit sector, non-governmental organisations, religious organisations and individuals who attempted to fill this gap with new propositions and proposals (Freudenberg and Halberstadt, 2018), specifically with

the European Social Fund (ESF) providing extra funding for these types of initiatives (ESF, n.d.). However, the traditional measures of labour market integration are on many occasions not so successful, and it is often difficult to integrate the refugees into the labour market due to the fact that the available resources are neither enough nor satisfactory to attend to the particular needs of refugees (Vandor et al., 2021).

Therefore, there is a need for particular support measures, innovative ideas and solutions to take aim at the situation and to secure the sustainable integration of this target group in the labour market, surpassing what is recognised as just a care and maintenance approach (Chanoff, 2015; Freudenberg and Halberstadt, 2018). A foundational understanding of the concepts that play a part in the successful integration of refugees into the labour market, unwraps the possibilities for utilizing the refugee's potential to participate in the economy and to promote their social integration (Eggenhofer-Rehart et al., 2018).

Since activities done by Non-Governmental Organisations could lead to development and implementation of innovative approaches, NGOs could play a critical role in the field of labour market integration of refugees. A Non-Governmental Organisation is explained as "an organisation that is not sponsored by the government, is entirely voluntary and operates within the confines of the laws of the country in which it operates" (Abiddin et al., 2022, p. 2). In the last decades, there has been an increasing interest in the academic field towards NGOs and many empirical studies have been conducted on NGOs with different focuses. NGOs are adequately operating organisations that attempt to advocate development and reduce human suffering by, among other things, targeting the disadvantaged population (Abiddin et al., 2022). This is specifically relevant to refugees who are in particular a deprived population. Hence, we could argue that NGOs could act as means for integration of minority and disadvantaged groups.

Here, it is important to bear in mind that although some initiatives by NGOs have resulted in substantial social impact, attending to the needs of refugees is specifically a difficult task, mostly due to the following reasons. Firstly, in comparison to other migrants, refugees are an extremely heterogenous group. This would, then, necessitates NGOs to deal with quite various needs (Wauters and Lambrecht, 2008). Secondly, due to informal networks set up by refugees, there is a limited access to and contact with refugees' communities. This would make it harder for NGOs to obtain information from refugee communities and to earn validity within these communities (Miller, 2004). Lastly, refugees encounter many legal, cultural and linguistic barriers in the host country (Harima and Freudenberg, 2020).

In Austria, there have been some initiatives by the private sector and the government to smooth the way for socio-economic integration of refugees in the country (for more details please refer to the section 2.3.3). Non-Governmental Organisations have the prospects to accompany and speed up this procedure through attending to those needs of refugees that big institutional actors have not or maybe cannot address. Yet, it is unclear to what extent NGOs could find

answers to refugees' issues and attend to their needs efficiently. Although there has been increasing research about labour market integration of refugees in the past years, only a few studies on the role and involvement of NGOs in this regard have been conducted and research on these issues is rare, in particular in the context of Austria.

1.3 Research aims and objectives

In general, addressing all of the complex needs and specific issues that the refugees, in particular female refugees are faced with in the society, specifically in terms of labour market, requires a concrete infrastructure. Here, Non-Governmental Organisations play an important part to further facilitate and pave the way for this population in order to get integrated into the labour market. The gaps in the literature demonstrate that although there are research studies specifically with regards to the challenges concerning labour market integration of refugees in Austria, there are very few studies which have specifically a focus on female refugees. Moreover, with regards to young refugees, in spite of the fact that there have been a few studies on unaccompanied young refugees (which are for the most part male) in Austria, with regards to their mental health and care system, there are even less studies known about young female refugees, where there is very limited or no research into the lives and experiences of this important target group in general and more specifically in Austria.

Therefore, future research should further examine and understand the issues and challenges experienced from the perspective of the female refugees in Austria. In addition, the role of NGOs with regards to assisting this target group to get integrated into the labour market should be explored to a greater extent. This is an important issue that needs to be substantially covered and explored from different aspects, angels and research methods, in order to lead into any kind of future policy change.

This thesis seeks to address the challenges and barriers that young female refugees face in Austria. The generation who arrived in the country since the years 2015 and 2016, unaccompanied or accompanied by their families, as teenagers and now are young adults, who could contribute to the economy effectively and valuably. The majority of this target group come from Afghanistan and Syria (World Data, 2021), who bring with them different cultures, values and way of life. In order to get integrated into the labour market and the society, this population goes through different challenges and barriers and it is often a complicated journey for them.

This study seeks to create an awareness about this specific population, namely young female refugees, with regards to their complex needs and issues, for the purpose of better developing support systems for this target group in the future. For this purpose, their life experiences, challenges and barriers are explored in detail and their potentials and capacities are looked further into. The thesis will further explore the role of Non-Governmental Organisations in the labour market integration of young female refugees. The study will further focus on the barriers

and opportunities for NGOs to integrate this target group into the labour market, by representing the perspective of an NGO in Austria called Lobby 16, who is working specifically on the labour market integration of young refugees. For this purpose, a qualitative study is conducted based on a case study analysis of the NGO, derived from semi-structured interviews conducted with the NGO as well as five young female refugees who were assisted by the NGO to find employment.

The thesis will answer the following research questions:

Research Question 1: What are the challenges experienced by young female refugees in Austria?

Research Question 2: What role do Non-Governmental-Organisations play in assisting young female refugees to integrate into the labour market in Austria?

1.4   Structure of thesis

The thesis starts with the literature review chapter, looking in depth into the concepts of social sustainability and its link to social inclusion and integration of refugees, and more specifically young female refugees. For this purpose, the term 'refugee' is defined thoroughly. Further, the concept of integration and more particularly labour market integration of refugees is explored in detail, and its legal frameworks and support measures in the county of Austria are investigated further. In addition, the concept of governance and its link to non-governmental organisations as governance actors are discussed. The governance actors, who could act as facilitators to address the challenges that are faced by young refugees. Additionally, for better demonstrating the concepts within this research, a conceptual framework has been developed.

The methodology chapter, looks in depth into the specific qualitative research method, namely single case study analysis, that has been chosen in order to answer the research questions of this thesis. The research instruments of semi-structured interviews and participant observation are explained further. While discussing the data collection, a brief profile of each interview partner from the refugees' side are discussed. And lastly, the data and coding of the thesis is analysed through a thematic analysis.

The results and discussion chapter, looks in depth into the case of the NGO called Lobby 16, by looking into the background of the NGO and its structure, specifc projects that it focuses on and the challenges that it faces as an NGO. As the focus and target group of the NGO is young refugees, the chapter will continue with an in-depth study of this target group, in particular the young female refugees, and the barriers that these young women have faced and are facing in order to get integrated into the labour market in Austria. Moreover, the contribution that Lobby 16 makes in addressing those challenges are further discussed. Lastly, the thesis concludes by giving a summary of the thesis, the implications for different stakeholders and suggestions for future research.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will look in depth into the literature review of the role of Non-Governmental Organisations in labour market integration of refugees in Austria. For this purpose, the chapter starts by looking at the concept of social sustainability and its link to refugees and more specifically young refugees. Following, an extensive definition of the term refugee is included in this chapter. Moreover, the chapter will look, to a greater extent, at the literature of the concept of refugee integration in host societies, in particular labour market integration of refugees. For further investigation, the concept will be explored in details in Austria. The chapter will go on with defining Governance and Non-Governmental Organisations as governance actors. The chapter will conclude by demonstrating a conceptual framework, for a better view of all the concepts discussed in the thesis.

2.2 Social sustainability

Typically, the comprehension of sustainability is planted within its well-known three-pillar model where its social, environmental and economic features are interlinked. While each of these three aspects has evolved separately, the link and dependence of these three dimensions on each other has not been yet formulated to an adequate degree. And one of these pillars specifically, the social sustainability, appears to be without a transparent and coherent definition (Eizenberg and Jabareen, 2017).

The social aspect of sustainability, as it is drawn up by the United Nations, is concerned with making sure that all individuals have a fair basis of a decent life and the chance to affect their own lives and the communities within which they live in (UN, 2016). Boldermo and Ødegaard (2019) looks at social sustainability as the concept which requires "ethos of compassion and equality, and can embrace a wide range of aspects, from the most general such as social justice and optimising quality of life and well-being for future generations, to more specific goals such as enhancing people's democratic right to participate, take action, and influence their own lives in all institutions they are a part of" (Boldermo and Ødegaard, 2019, p. 3).

Eizenberg and Jabareen (2017), on the other hand, view social sustainability, within the notions of diversity and equity, where all individuals in a society, irrespective of their race, origin, gender, or ethnicity are allowed to take part in the society as equals (Eizenberg and Jabareen, 2017). Moreover, social sustainability deals with cultural, social and political matters in question, which are influencing the lives of individuals within and between countries (Siraj-Blatchford, 2008). As outlined by Boldermo and Ødegaard (2019), in defining social sustainability, substantive notions

including inclusion and incorporation; affiliation and identification; as well as social unity and cohesion are most important.

On the other hand, the aspect of social exclusion could hinder social sustainability and social cohesion. Looking at young and minor refugees, it is important to note that social exclusion could create likely high-risk set of circumstances for refugees and asylum-seeking minors as well as their families. In addition, social exclusion results in enfeebling and debilitating the common sense of belonging, affiliation, identity and individuality; the notions which characterise social cohesion (Vasta, 2013). Therefore, as social sustainability embodies social inclusion and sense of belonging and community, refugees and asylum seekers, who belong to different ethnic and social groups may be subjected to an absence of acknowledgment and recognition, and less chances to take part in the society as equal citizens (Eizenberg and Jabareen, 2017).

With regards to minor refugees, the concept of 'belonging' (Hägglund and Johansson, 2014), is an important aspect to look at when studying social sustainability. When it comes to children and youth, the concept of belonging is "related to their right to be involved, and linked to an identity as citizens, both in the local and the global context as world citizens" (Boldermo and Ødegaard, 2019, p. 4). Research has shown that refugee children and youth can be specifically subjected to social exclusion and "experiences of outside-hood and to be perceived as an outsider of a community which they do not belong" (Kalkman and Clark, 2017, p. 292). Therefore, diversity and multicultural perspectives should be considered in the context of social sustainability, particularly when looking at it from the minor refugee's perspective (Boldermo and Ødegaard, 2019). Therefore, as it is evident, we could argue that social sustainability is directly linked to the concept of refugee integration, and more importantly to the youth refugees.

2.3 The term 'refugee'

The subject of refugee studies is interdisciplinary in its approach and multidisciplinary as a field, and it extends numerous areas of scholarship (Voutira and Doná, 2007). This results in the term having several distinct definitions and overlapping concepts (Lee et al., 2020). One of the most often used definitions of the term is the 1951 UN Geneva Refugee Convention which concentrates in particular on "well-founded fear of persecution" (UNHCR, 1951, p. 14; Lee et al., 2020). As stated by the definition, "the term refugee shall apply to any person who owing to well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it " (UNHCR, 1951, p. 14). Moreover, the 1969 OUA Convention expands the definition to "individuals who fled their home

country because of external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order" (UNHCR, 1969). Despite the fact that there is a discussion specifically about the limited extent of this definition (Robinson, 2012; Freudenberg and Halberstadt, 2018), throughout the last twenty years the UNHCR'S mandate was compelled to develop notably to a more extensive and inclusive interpretation (Milner, 2014; Freudenberg and Halberstadt, 2018).

As mentioned, some scholars, argue that these definitions are incomplete, out of date and limited as they are unsuccessful in taking into account particular circumstances faced by refugees in the present-day global socio-political and environmental conditions, i.e., refugees dislocated due to environmental reasons such as climate change (Doyle, 2009; Moldovan, 2016; Lee et al., 2020). In addition, in spite of acquiring international definitions, different countries formulate extensively differing visa application proceedings and immigration procedures, which leads to various definitions and courses of action in granting protection to refugees (Doyle, 2009; Moldovan, 2016; Lee et al., 2020). These differing definitions, in many cases, indicate the socio-political interests of different nations (Kaabel, 2018). For this purpose, Lee et al. (2020) has gathered an overarching definition of the term refugees as "individuals, regardless of their legal status, who have fled their home country to seek protection and security in another country; and cannot safely return due to a well-founded fear of the prevailing circumstances in their country of origin" (Lee et al., 2020, p. 195).

Here it is important to note that in the media and daily conversations, the term refugee is frequently applied as a substitution for the words "asylum seeker" or "migrant", however there are critical distinctions between the meaning of these words (Freudenberg and Halberstadt, 2018). More so, some scholars such as Joly et al. (1992), have determined five different sorts of refugees in Europe (Joly et al., 1992). In general, the host countries differentiate between "asylum seekers" and "recognised refugees", which refer mainly to the legal status of a person. Recognised refugee refers to an individual whose official application for asylum has been accepted by the authorities, and gets full access to the labour market in the host country (Konle-Seidl, 2018). Asylum seeker, on the other hands, refers to an individual who has officially put in an application for asylum, yet whose request is undecided and not assessed. There are three end results which could come out of the application: a rejection, acknowledgment and acceptance of full Geneva refugee status, or a proposal of some sort of non-permanent humanitarian protection, i.e., "beneficiary of subsidiary protection" (Konle-Seidl, 2018, p. 12).

Subsidiary protection is "the protection given to a third country national or a stateless person, who does not qualify as a refugee but in respect of whom substantial grounds have been shown for believing that the person concerned, if returned to their country of origin, or in the case of a stateless person to their country of former habitual residence, would face a real risk of suffering serious harm and is unable or, owing to such risk, unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of that country" (European Commission, n.d.). In Austria, beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, would obtain a residence permit valid for 12 months. In case the circumstances in their home

country are not notably improved, they are allowed to apply for a renewal of their residence permit (UNHCR, n.d.). In general, in many areas, there is an equal treatment between recognised refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, within the European Union law. However, the differences continue to exist in areas such as the right to family reunification, which is only obtainable for recognised refugees (Radjenovic, 2020).

Migrants, on the other hand, are defined as individuals who "choose to move not because of a direct threat of persecution or death, but mainly to improve their lives by finding work, or in some cases for education, family reunion, or other reasons" (UNHCR, n.d). Here it is important to note that it is very contentious to distinguish between migrants and refugees merely on the basis of forced or voluntary migration (Freudenberg and Halberstadt, 2018). Many scholars argue that although both groups share similarities in the challenges, circumstances and problems that they face; when studying refugees, it is of significant importance to take their differences into account (Cortes, 2004; Wauters and Lambrecht, 2006; Freudenberg and Halberstadt, 2018). These differences are with regard to social, economic, demographic and occupational attributes, i.e., migrants can generally depend on a social network, in contrast to refugees, who have run away from their country and generally have little or no access to the resources that they had before. In addition, due to reasons such as absence of professional skills, or health reasons such as being traumatised, not all refugees are fit to have a paid job. Moreover, as on many occasions, refugees are not aware of which country they will be allowed to arrive at, it is less probable for them to be acquainted with the language spoken in the host country. Hence, the opportunities for integration and participation of refugees could be affected and influenced critically by each of the above-mentioned factors (Verwiebe, et al., 2018; Freudenberg and Halberstadt, 2018).

This thesis aims to focus on the female individuals who set foot on the grounds of Austria, from a third country, for the purpose of seeking asylum. The definition of the term 'refugee' in Austrian law follows the 1951 UN Geneva Refugee Convention (Bundesministerium für Inneres, 2022). Hence, this thesis, will use the same definition as it is determined in the Austrian law. In accordance with the provisions of the law on settlement and the law on residence in Austria, the citizens of third countries, who have been officially recognised as refugees and have been granted asylum may be employed or self-employed similar to Austrian citizens, when they are permitted to be settled in Austria. Hence, they receive equal treatment as nationals (Wirtschaftskammer Österreich, n.d).

2.4 Labour market integration of refugees

2.4.1 Integration

Since the 1930s, there have been continuing policy and academic discussions on migrant integration (Phillimore, 2020). Lately, the research has been more focused on refugees as a

particular classification of migrants (Phillimore, 2020). In general, there are innumerable definitions of integration in the literature and in spite of the enduring attention towards integration of new arrivals, there is no universally and generally agreed model, theory or definition of the term in the literature about what represents a successful integration (Castles et al., 2002; Freudenberg and Halberstadt, 2018).

Throughout the past 50 years, there have been numerous developments on the efforts to theorise integration methods, starting from unidimensional approaches to two-dimensional and ultimately multi-dimensional models. Needless to say, it is difficult to reach to integration outcomes when utilising the unidimensional models of integration and there has been criticism towards unidimensional approaches on the grounds of frequently blaming migrants for their own lack of success and hence exonerating the host societies from responsibilities (Bourhis et al., 1997; Van Hieu, 2008; Phillimore, 2020).

A two-dimensional model proposed by Van Hieu (2008) looks at integration from a social justice and anti-oppressive angle, which necessitates both migrant and native citizens to alter behaviours and norms while focusing on the connections between the two (Van Hieu, 2008). However, the multidimensional characteristic of integration (Castles et al. 2002) suggest that the two-dimensional method, while providing a viable foundation for empirical research is insufficient. This is mainly due to the "accelerating social change and temporariness, transnationalism and increasing diversification" in the host societies (Grzymala-Kazlowska and Phillimore, 2017, p. 186). Hence, there is a need for a more inclusive approach to comprehend integration processes, which fully considers the relational, spatial, cultural, political and temporal factors of integration and recognizes the effects of multiple characteristics of the host countries on integration processes (Phillimore, 2020).

An alternative that will facilitate a more comprehensive apprehension of the integration process and how it manifests at various levels, could be a multidimensional integration model. Penninx and Garcés-Mascareas (2016) further looks at integration from multiple angles involving two parties of receiving society and immigrants, three levels of organisational, institutional and individual, and three structures of socio-economic, legal/political and cultural/religious (Penninx and Garcés-Mascareas, 2016). Nevertheless, so far, this model has not been broadly executed empirically and with the exception of Ager and Strang (2008), it has not been used in the context of refugees (Phillimore, 2020).

Having said that, one of the most well-known conceptual frameworks of integration, which has been used by many scholars in the literature has been developed and proposed by Ager and Strang (2008). This conceptual framework consist of four fundamental domains of integration: 1. Markers and means of entry into the sectors of housing, health, employment and education; 2. Procedures of social connection between and inside groups within the community; these

social connections include social bridges with other communities, social links with the structures of the state, and social bonds with family and co-national, co-religious, co-ethnic or other forms; 3. Constructional barriers to such interrelations connected to cultural and language knowledge as well as safety and stability in the local environment; 4. Applications and assumptions with regards to rights and citizenship (Ager and Strang, 2008).

Moreover, in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted characteristic of integration, it is important to bear in mind that there are numerous other factors that influence the capacity of refugees for integration, which are outside the control of particular refugees or refugee groups. The orientation and attitudes of resettlement countries toward refugees, the immigration and integration policies and practices, and the status of the national and local economy, and the civil society are some of the other variables that could affect the nature of integration. The relative significance of these influences differs, depending on the time and the host country (Phillimore, 2020).

The aim of this thesis is to focus mainly on the first domain of integration adopted by Ager and Stranger (2008), namely markers and means of entry into the sector of employment, in other words, vocational/labour market integration; which has been labelled by many scholars as possibly the most significant element of integration that affects many areas of life (Ager and Strang, 2008; Eggenhofer-Rehart et al., 2018; Vandor et al., 2021).

2.4.2 Labour market integration

One of the main identified elements of integration, which has an effect on numerous pertinent matters is employment. Besides personal welfare and self-development, employment is a principal element for the financial independence and self-sufficiency of refugees. Apart from that, a successful integration into the workforce could affect a great deal of other issues for refugees such as creating chances and right set of circumstances for advancement of language skills, encountering with the host society members and expanding social networks, gaining social identification, reinstating self-respect and self-esteem, etc. (Phillimore and Goodson, 2006; Ager and Strang, 2008; Freudenberg & Halberstadt, 2018). Moreover, refugees' professional integration plays a significant part in the society and the economy as a whole, since increased rate of unemployment for refugees threatens social stability and more importantly human capital continues to be unutilised. Plus, acknowledging the right set of potentials in refugees could lead to ensuring sufficient skilled labour in the host society (Freudenberg and Halberstadt, 2018; Eggenhofer-Rehart, et al., 2018).

Many asylum seekers and refugees who are entering the European Union have skills, expertise, job experience and know-how which need to be identified, encouraged and advanced (Freudenberg and Halberstadt, 2018). However, they face many barriers to enter the labour market as a consequence of their particular needs. In addition to numerous administrative,

labour law and legal obstacles limiting labour market access, these specific challenges of the target group include traumatic and shocking incidents due to war and refugee circumstances, which could affect their physical and mental health and could hinder their capacity to work; absence or non-recognition of qualifications, training certifications, foreign educational degrees and work experiences; absence of language skills of the host country; lack of awareness and familiarity with the customs and standards of labour market in the host society; and limited or no access to pertinent networks, to name but a few (Verwiebe et al., 2018, Vandor et al., 2021; Besic et al., 2021). These obstacles are further expanded by the extensive discrimination of applicants with a refugee background in the labour market (Zschirnt & Ruedin, 2016; Verwiebe et al., 2018; Besic et al., 2021). Moreover, additional studies indicate that on top of everything, a number of these obstacles have been aggravated due to the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Covid-19 pandemic has influenced the labour market sector in similar fashion in Austria as in many countries around the world, with "record unemployment levels and numbers of furloughed workers" (Besic et al., 2021, p. 15). And as it is evident in earlier research, vulnerable groups in the society are more prone to be influenced to a greater extent by these types of economic downturns than other groups (Besic et al., 2021).

In general, compared to other categories of immigrants, refugees are in some cases well educated (Ager and Strang, 2008). Nevertheless, the complications associated with non-acknowledgment and non-acceptance of prior educational attainments, qualifications and job experiences (pre-migration human capital), is one of the main obstacles for the refugees to secure and obtain employment (Ager and Strang, 2008; Eggenhofer-Rehart et al., 2018; Verwiebe et al., 2018; Ortlieb and Weiss, 2020).

Commonly, it is not possible for a large number of refugees to present evidence of eligibility and qualifications and in case they are able to provide a proof, it may not be recognised by the employers (Ager and Strang, 2008; Eggenhofer-Rehart et al., 2018; Verwiebe et al., 2018; Ortlieb and Weiss, 2020). As a result, many refugees encounter 'under-employment' as a common factor in their involvement in the labour market, and are forced to hold a job which does not demand the level of qualifications and skills that they possess, hence them being overqualified for the job (Ager and Strang, 2008; Barraket, 2013; Hosner et al., 2017; Eggenhofer-Rehart et al., 2018; Ortlieb and Weiss, 2020; Jestl et al., 2021). Accordingly, refugees in Austria are three times more probable to have a qualification mismatch, in comparison to the larger part of the population (Hosner et al., 2017; Vandor et al., 2021).

Here, it is important to note that a successful resettlement for refugees also relies on "programmes which allow them to find a place in the new society, for example by converting their skills and qualifications so that they can be used in the new situation" (Duke et al., 1999, p. 106). Hence, further education and vocational training are generally regarded as crucial features of integration to a degree that such initiatives encourage employability by means of

improvement of particular work and language skills. These achievements, in sectors where there is a demand for labour and a capacity for economic growth, could be beneficial to not just the refugees themselves but also to the broader community where they may settle (Ager and Strang, 2008).

The process of refugee employment and workforce integration is often complex and it depends on multiple and multilevel factors. Lee et al. (2020), has divided the factors influencing refugee labour market integration into three different levels, as follows: 1. **Individual level factors** including language, individual demographics, social networks, motivation and psychological responses; 2. **Institutional level factors** including immigration regulations, socio-political climate, qualification accreditation and education; 3. **Organisational level factors** including employers, self-employment and support organisations (see Figure 1).
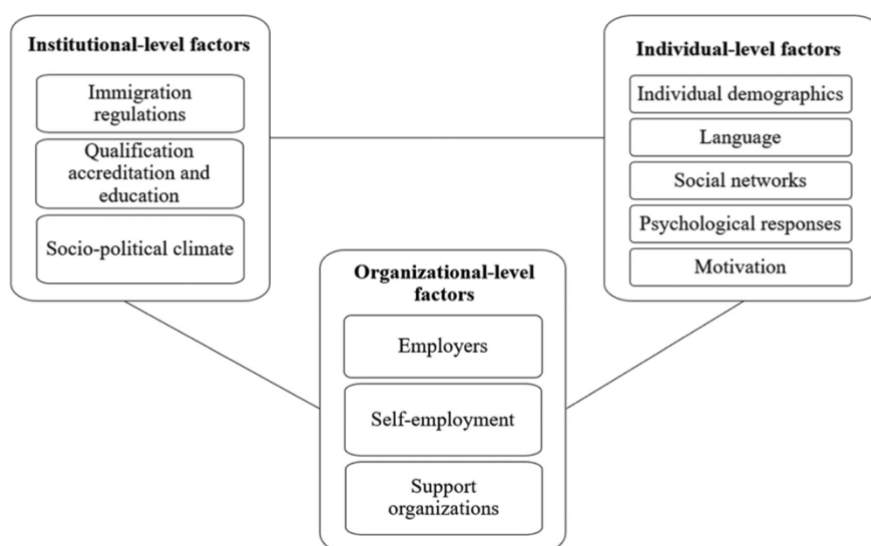
FIGURE 1 - FACTORS INFLUENCING REFUGEE WORKFORCE INTEGRATION (LEE ET AL., 2020)

For the purpose of this thesis the organisational level factors, in particular support organisations will be explored further in detail. Support organisations relate to the organisations whose activities and practices are intended for helping refugees in issues associated with resettlement and labour market integration (Lee et al., 2020). There are various classifications of support organisations, which ranges from government-sponsored or government-contracted organisations and initiatives, social enterprises, to non-governmental and non-profit organisations (Garkisch et al. 2017). In the next section, this thesis will look more in depth at the role of non-governmental organisations in this matter.

Support organisations work towards facilitating refugees to gain access to employment by means of language and skills training, job referrals and counselling, provision of local experiences, cross-cultural training programmes, etc. (Lauer and Yan, 2013). In other words, these organisations are "gatekeepers of resources" particularly with regards to social networks

and information, which is essential for refugees in order to pursue employment (Godin and Renaud, 2002; Lee et al., 2020).

In general, support for employment of refugees is a complex and multi-levelled process. Here, support organisations play a significant part in 'empowerment' of refugees to get integrated and settled in the receiving economy (Lacroix et al., 2015). Nevertheless, the majority of the literature on support organisations is concentrated on the low employment results for refugees and the sometimes unsuccessful and disordered services offered by these organisations, with many researchers indicating a lack of organised assistance programmes (Korac, 2003). Literature indicates that training provided by some organisations to refugees were not only insufficient and resulted in specific ethnically stereotypical jobs, but also channelled some refugee women towards feminised jobs, such as child care services, manicurists, etc. (Nawyn, 2010). In the exact sense of the word, through proposing jobs that are available straightaway, support organisations could restrict career options for refugees and limit their employment chances. Moreover, support organisations are frequently compelled to act out the political agenda of the governments, which designates immediate employment as most important and above factors such as professional development and career planning (Finnan, 1982; Lee et al., 2020).

Moreover, many support organisations have an intermediary role, within which they are mediators between employers and refugees. This intermediary role includes activities such as reducing institutional barriers, support for the rights of refugees and direct facilitation of employment (Garkisch et al. 2017). In many cases, there is an absence of understanding about the needs of refugees, in particular with regards to obtaining and sustaining employment, by institutions in the host societies. As a result of that, there is a need for a mediator to make communication between possible employers and refugee job seekers easier and possible and here support organisations play an important role (Matikainen 2003; Lee et al., 2020).

2.4.3 Legal framework

In Austria, recognised refugees as well as individuals with the status of subsidiary protection have full access to the labour market, where they are authorised to receive the support and services of the Public Employment Service (AMS), and have the opportunity to be attended to on an equal basis with national clients. Conversely, the legal framework for asylum seekers is different, where their access to the labour market is only limited to seasonal works. And this could only happen following a waiting period of three months, beginning from the date of the asylum application, on the condition that no final decision has been made on their asylum application before that date. These seasonal jobs are limited to maximum period of six months, solely in the industries of tourism, forestry and agriculture (Martin et al., 2016). Moreover, this access to the labour market is restricted by a labour market test (Ersatzkraftverfahren), which requires proof that the respective vacancy cannot be filled by an Austrian or EU/EEA citizen or

another integrated third-country national (long-time resident, family member etc.) (Martin et al., 2016).

In addition, recognised refugees and individuals with the status of subsidiary protection, who are younger than 25, can apply for apprenticeships. This also applies to asylum seekers, but only with the condition that apprenticeships should be within shortage occupations. These shortage occupations are registered by the regional AMS branches and may differ depending on the regions in the country, and are again subjected to the mentioned labour-market test (Ersatzkraftverfahren). These apprenticeships are mainly available by bigger corporations such as the Austrian Railway Company (OBB), T-Mobile, PORR (a construction company), etc. (Martin et al., 2016).

2.4.4 Integration support measures

The procedure of integrating refugees in Austria is a "difficult and lengthy process" (Verwiebe et al., 2018, p. 1405). Similar to other European nations, refugees get on with the labour market much worse, compared to other types of immigrants, at least at the beginning (Fasani et al., 2018). The entrance to the labour market for asylum seekers in Austria is restricted prior to the acceptance of their asylum request, causing them a "de facto employment ban", which leads to long term disadvantageous outcomes for labour market integration in the country (Marbach et al., 2018). Nevertheless, a small number of loopholes exist. For instance, if no native candidate was available up to September 2018, there was a permission for refugees, under the age of 25, to apply for apprenticeships. However, this programme was ceased by the next elected government. Moreover, for seasonal employment, there is a possibility of work permits to be admitted on a case-by-case premise. In addition, on the condition that self-employment regulations are observed and abided by, there is a possibility for refugees to become self-employed (Verwiebe et al., 2018).

The foundation for labour market integration in Austria is shaped by the Integration Act and the Labour Market Integration Act, which were both approved in 2017 (BMEIA, 2017). According to these acts, asylum seekers are differentiated by law between three groups of 'refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection', and asylum seekers with a high likelihood of receiving the permission to stay in the country. There is a requirement for the first two groups to sign an integration contract and to take part in a state programme called 'Integration Year', which will be explained further in details (Besic et al., 2021).

In general, to promote and encourage labour market integration of refugees, there is a range of long-term and short-term programmes adopted by different countries. In most cases, these programmes consist of factors including skills evaluation, networking chances, language training, job advice, etc. In Austria, there are a number of integration programmes existing at

the same time. The Austrian public employment service (Arbeits-marktservice: AMS), executes these programmes to a certain extent by itself and in part in collaboration with social aid and welfare organisations including Diakonie, Caritas and Volkshilfe. These programmes are, however, different in terms of subject matter, target groups and length of time. Two of the most extensively implemented programmes in this regard are the Integration Year (Kompetenzcheck) and Skills Assessment (Freiwilliges Integrationsjahr) (Ortlieb et al., 2020).

The Skills Assessment is a short-term programme (between five to seven weeks), which intends for a thorough evaluation of the official qualifications of refugees, their overall expertise, capacities and proficiencies together with their practical work experience. In addition, the programme consists of individual or group counselling services regarding potential vocational trainings, official approval of identification papers or job applications and further education. Moreover, there is an opportunity for refugees to try out their hands-on skills through visiting companies and doing short term internships (Ortlieb et al., 2020).

The Integration Year is a programme (between six to twelve months), that focuses on an internship in a humanitarian organisation. The internship incorporates a minimum of 150 hours of vocational training together with other types of training including culture, job hunting, language, team working, etc. (Ortlieb et al., 2020). This is a type of programme that gathers together different labour market measures that also concentrate on values and orientation (Besic et al., 2021). The programme gives the means to refugees to not only build up and customise their cultural capital to the new field, but also to obtain local work experience, which is of great importance to most of the employers as they consider the overseas work experience to be subordinate (Ortlieb et al., 2020). The programme is funded mainly by the Austrian Integration Fund and the Austrian Public Employment Service, which collaborate with non-governmental organisations to administer labour market integration measures throughout the country. Following the completion of the Integration Year, the doors would get open for the refugees to have a full access to the job market (Besic et al., 2021).

Remarkably, there has been a consecutive reduction in the total number of refugees not only in the Integration Year but also in other support programmes, due to imposing restrictions on migration and asylum policies, which were instituted after 2015. Many of the available supports before 2018, which were particularly for supporting refugees do not exist anymore. Simultaneously, there has been a formation of measures developed in particular for and with the emphasis on refugees and asylum seekers by non-profit, private and public agencies and service providers (Besic et al., 2021). This movement in the direction of mainstreaming labour market integration measures and policies, puts emphasis on the fact that refugees should be fundamentally considered and regarded as jobseekers more than anything else (Besic et al., 2021). As mentioned, one of the most crucial service providers in this regard are NGOs, who

have been actively participating in integration of refugees into the society in Austria, which will be explored in detail in the following section of the thesis.

2.4.5   Integration barriers and challenges

As mentioned, in order to get integrated into the labour market, young female refugees are faced with barriers, ranging from their personal issues to the factors related to the labour market itself. The literature review has revealed that although there are research studies specifically with regards to the challenges concerning labour market integration of refugees in Austria, in general (Verwiebe et al., 2018; Besic et al., 2021; Eggenhofer-Rehart et al, 2018), none of these studies has specifically a focus on female refugees, and more importantly the target group of young female refugees. Although, there are various studies regarding integration of female refugees in general or in other countries; with regards to Austria, there was one study that was specifically focused on female refugees (Schiestl et al., 2021). Below, are some of the barriers faced by female refugees in order to get integrated into the labour market and the society as a whole. Here it is important to note that some of these challenges are not exclusive to women.

2.4.5.1   Language barriers

Evidently, having inadequate language skills of the host country, hampers job search to a considerable amount, as it is almost unfeasible to go through the job application process ranging from reading job offers, to writing a CV, application letters and lastly to have a job interview with an Austrian employer (Verwiebe et al., 2018). Therefore, for refugees, "only after achieving a minimum command of German can they successfully connect to natives to gain social capital, undergo training, do volunteer work to acquire local job experience, or engage in job search" (Eggenhofer-Rehart et al., 2018, p. 41). Moreover, making contact with the natives is very much subjected to communication, which is again an issue of language proficiency (Schiestl et al., 2021). In addition, numerous dialects exist in Austria, which in many cases diverge from the written German. Hence, one could argue that when applying in daily practice of speaking German, the German language skills that are learned from books, German school courses and internet may be subjected to limitations, causing an additional barrier (Schiestl et al., 2021).

2.4.5.2   Socio-cultural barriers

In general, female refugees may encounter particular integration issues as a result of different socio-cultural barriers, including gender-based roles. These barriers include, amongst other aspects, numerous religious ideologies and principles; distinct points of view and ways of thinking, which consequently plays a significant part in hampering particular interactions between the host communities and the refugees (Kainat, 2021).

Moreover, in different cultures, the expectations and duties of 'being a woman' are different. As stated by the literature, female refugees from the Middle East are presumed to first and foremost take responsibility of the household, look after the children, and socialise with the friends and family in the community (Kainat, 2021). In addition, it has become more common for Muslim women who wear hijab or headscarves to be subjected to discrimination with regards to employment (Alessi et al., 2020)

Therefore, when these women relocate to a western society, the definition of 'being a woman' can change to a great degree and in some cases could be shocking for this target group (Crocco et al., 2009). In other words, female refugees suffer more than men because they have more traditional obligations which are difficult to manage in new cultural settings (Phillimore, 2011).

2.4.5.3   Psychological barriers

Indeed, studies have shown that mental health indicators are crucial predictors of refugee labour market results (Brell et al., 2020). In general, refugees are prone to arrive at the host society with lower levels of mental health (Hynek et al., 2020). This, among other factors, is due to the fact that mental health complications and difficulties are well evidenced within the refugee population (Eggenhofer-Rehart et al., 2018). Naturally, going through trauma and emotionally harmful situations, has a great influence on psychological as well as physical health of individuals (Hynek et al., 2020; Brell et al., 2020). In some occasions, "recovery from trauma and continuing distress over the circumstances from which the individual has fled, distracts from integration" (Phillimore, 2011, p. 93). And this could result in specifically "low initial economic fitness and adaptability of refugees" (Brell et al., 2020, p. 111).

To be specific, the occurrence of mental health issues among refugees are presumably higher, as a result of undergoing traumatising and life-threatening events in their country of origin, and hostile circumstances on their journey to the host country or in refugee camps (Hynek et al., 2020). Moreover, there could be circumstances within which refugees are exposed to a potential physical or sexual violence during or after migration (Brell et al., 2020). Furthermore, anxiety and stress as a result of unsureness and lack of certainty about their status in the host country can aggravate these difficulties (Brell et al., 2020). Therefore, we could argue that mental health circumstances could be a significant element, which could hinder the potentiality of refugees to deal with an unknown environment and distort obtaining new skills and setting up new social contacts (Brell et al., 2020).

2.5   Governance and Non-Governmental Organisations

In the transition towards sustainable development and particularly, to achieve social sustainability, one of the most important and crucial notions is 'governance' (Jordan, 2008). In general, governance is a "government's ability to make and enforce rules, and to deliver

services" (Fukuyama, 2013, p. 350). Moreover, governance involves the interactions among processes, structures and actors that determine the ways in which decisions are made and implemented by different stakeholders within the society (Plumptre and Graham, 1999). In other words, governance describes "the patterns that emerge from the governing activities of social, political and administrative actors'' (Jordan, 2008).

In order to grasp the notion of governance, it is of great importance to note that concerns with regards to public issues are not limited to the government (Plumptre and Graham, 1999). During which government, focuses on the institutions and effects of the state, 'governance' provides for the non-state actors to "be brought into any analysis of societal steering" (Jordan, 2008, p. 21). In other words, governance "embraces governmental institutions, but it also subsumes informal, non-governmental mechanisms" (Jordan, 2008, p. 21). Moreover, governance is not bounded by a specific geographical location or time and it is a notion that can function at completely distinct spatial levels of national, international and subnational, across numerous scales (multi-level governance) (Bache and Flinders, 2004).

Indeed, other governance actors, within its three spatial levels of public sector, private sector and the third sector share the interest of addressing the public issues; where each actor makes particular contributions and is responsible for particular roles. Here, the third sector actors refer to the civil society as well as the non-profit sector such as NGOs (Sedlacek, 2014). It is important to note that the involvement of NGOs within the governance structure is very much varied with regards to their spatial scope (local, regional, national and international) in addition to the extent of their assignment (Sedlacek, 2014).

For the aim of sustainable development, the concept of governance, specifically the contribution that various types of organisations make, has grown into an extensive area of research (Sedlacek, 2014). Indeed, within this research, "the role of NGOs as governance actors fostering sustainable development is becoming increasingly relevant" (Sedlacek, 2014, p. 247). Within the governance actors, NGOs have turned out to be significant players as they are "non-state actors that have sufficient influence to impact a decision taken in an intergovernmental body" (Sedlacek, 2014, p. 249). More importantly, the specific attributes of NGOs lead to the support of new forms of governance and different forms of cooperation between the government and the non-government actors (Sedlacek, 2014).

A Non-Governmental Organisation is "a non-profit group or association organised outside of institutionalised political structures to realise particular social objectives or serve particular constituencies" (Saunier and Meganck, 2007, p. 197). Non-governmental organisations are for the most part voluntary organisations that are set up by private individuals, and they run at the local, national or international level (Karns and Mingst, 2004; Sedlacek, 2014). Here it is important to bear in mind that in spite of their independence from the government, a great deal of NGOs obtain financial aid from the state, local, and federal governments by means of

contracts, grants and cooperative agreements (Bloodgood and Tremblay-Boire, 2016). Non-governmental organisations are completely voluntary and they are run within the bounds of the rules and regulations of the country where they operate. The aim of these organisations is to operate in an efficient way for the purpose of reducing human hardship and advancing the development of impoverished countries (Streeten, 1997). This is mainly done by means of different procedures, such as facilitating supply of services and capacity building, funding projects, etc. (Baccaro, 2001).

Stromquist (2002) determines three main roles for NGOs. These roles include (1) giving educational services including institution of educational consciousness and support of critical analysis on different social settings; (2) giving direct assistance on issues such as caring for helpless populations, shelter provision, etc.; (3) supporting and protecting public policy on issues such as campaigning on corruption prevention, non-smoking policy, etc. (Stromquist, 2002). Baccaro (2001) further argues that NGOs can advance the empowerment of disadvantaged populations, specifically women, by means of awareness raising, training and other social services to name a few (Baccaro, 2001). Over time, NGOs try to obtain promotion of sustainable community development by means of empowerment and capacity building activities as well as aiding individuals to grow and develop their abilities through facilitating participatory processes (Abiddin et al., 2022).

Non-Governmental Organisations, were at first concentrated on social welfare. Nevertheless, in the larger part of countries around the world, these organisations, started to be instrumental in politics, during the last twenty years of the twentieth century (Abiddin et al., 2022).

In general, NGOs are determined by four different characteristics. These characteristics include non-partisan, voluntary, non-criminal and non-profit (Abiddin et al., 2022). Salamon and Anheier (1996), further uses seven different characteristics to distinguish and classify NGOs. These characteristics are specifically beneficial distinguishing and determining NGOs from other organisations. These characteristics include 1) they are private, meaning that they have an unconnected organisation from the government; (2) they are formal, meaning that they are authorized and approved in a formal and public way in order to operate; (3) they are self-governing, meaning that they are organised and controlled independently; (4) they are non-profit distributing, meaning that they are dissimilar from the aims of setting up a business organisation; (5) they are non-religious, meaning that they are not inspired and driven by preaching; (6) they are voluntary, meaning that they are operated voluntarily; and (7) they are non-political, meaning that they do not deal with political agendas (Salamon and Anheier, 1996).

Moreover, Willets (2002) categorises NGOs into two wide classifications, which are campaigning and operational. The main aim of campaigning NGOs is to have an effect on a policy making process of a country. On the other hand, the main assignment of operational NGOs is to perform development projects for underserved people and communities including disabled, poor,

persecuted and senior citizens. As expected, for campaigning NGOs to bring their activities into play, they depend on more impalpable and intangible resources, including experiences, skills, practical knowledge, ideas, expertise and time from different people. Whereas, for operational NGOs to perform their programmes and projects, they demand tangible resources such as equipment, financial support, volunteer workers, etc. (Willets, 2002). Therefore. NGOs could be defined as "development actors that can contribute to the strengthening of social relations and cross-networks that can serve as a foundation for collective action and increased democratic participation" (Abiddin et al., 2022, p. 2).

NGOs that are active in the labour market integration of refugees are identified as having an intermediary role by facilitating employment for this target group. Institutions and companies in the host countries, on many occasions, do not have enough comprehension of refugees' requirements to obtain and sustain employment. Here, a mediator could play an important role in smoothing the way for a better communication between potential employers and refugee job seekers. There is a variety of support organisations that could operate and function as intermediaries between employers, refugees and other stakeholders associated with employment. This intermediary role involves direct facilitation of employment, lowering institutional obstacles as well as support for refugees' rights (Garkisch et al. 2017; Lee et al., 2020).

NGOs who are active in the integration sector with an intermediary role offer training and preparation opportunities for refugees and/or offer placement activities, where they connect employers and refugees with each other. These actions are called intermediary concepts, as they are aimed at mediating between possible employers and refugees. These intermediary concepts can be first and foremost viewed in the non-profit sector. Here, it is important to note that the refugees' integration into the labour market would lead to substantial prospects for new social ventures that are providing services including integration and diversity consulting, matching procedures, legal support, etc. and it will allow them to play a part in finding answers to the growing social issues associated with their core business model, that is refugees' employment (Freudenberg and Halberstadt, 2018).

2.6   Conceptual framework
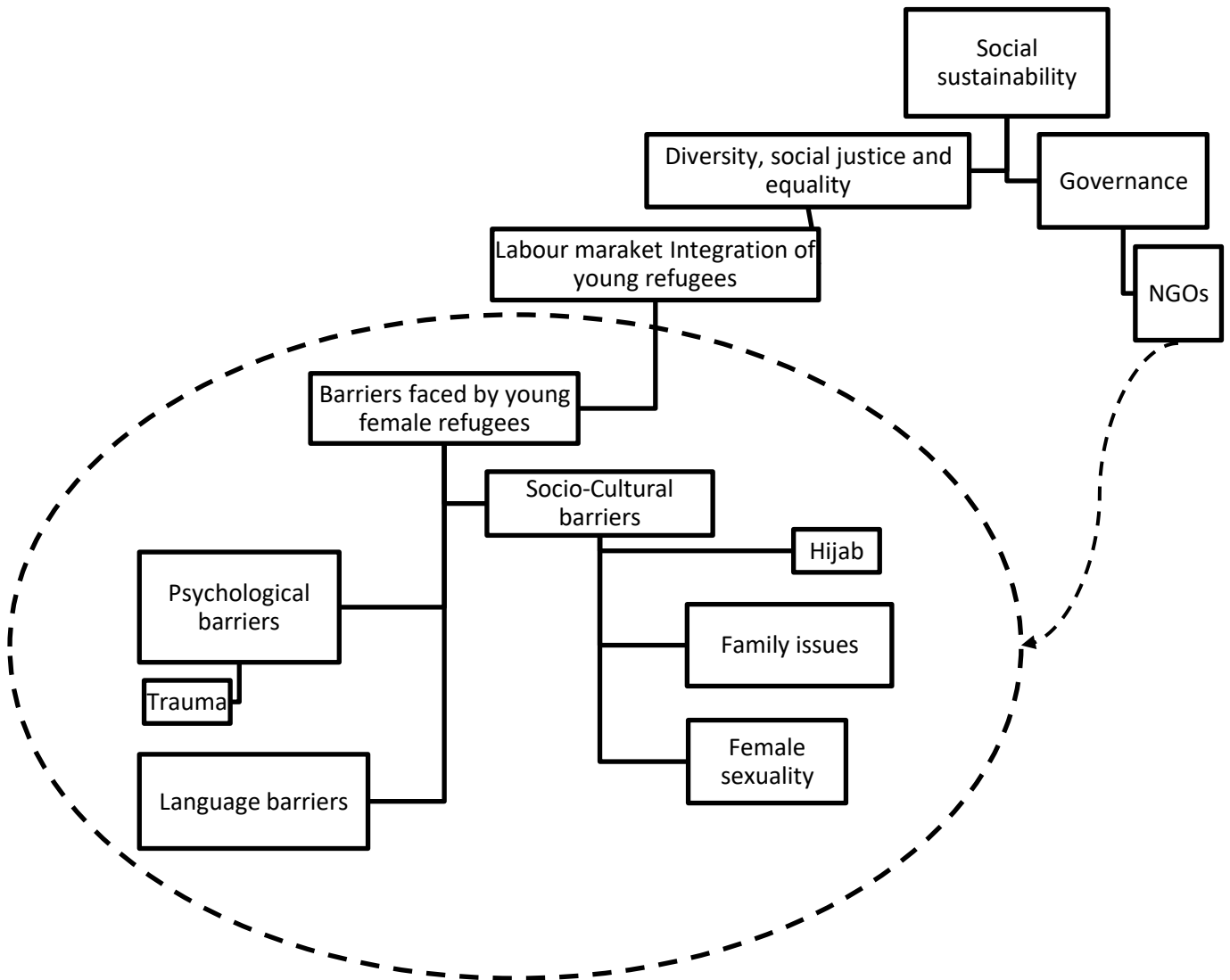
FIGURE 2 - CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

To conclude this chapter, a conceptual framework has been developed (Figure 2), based on the concepts explained within the literature review, as well as the concepts which have been discovered through interviews that has been conducted with the target group (For further details please refer to section 4.3 in the chapter Results and Discussion).

As stated by Jabareen (2009), a conceptual framework is a network of interlinked concepts that together provide a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon. Moreover, a conceptual framework demonstrates how the concepts in research could tell us about the real world (Jabareen, 2009).

As it is shown above, one of the concepts in defining social sustainability is diversity, social justice and equality; where all individuals in a society, irrespective of their race, origin, gender, or

ethnicity are allowed to take part in the society as equals. Integration of young refugees, and more specifically labour market integration of young female refugees, who are becoming a valuable part of the society in Austria, could enable the society towards a more fair structure, based on equality for all of the citizens, which not only leads to achieving social sustainability goals, but also allows this target group to contribute to the economy which is a win-win situation for all.

Indeed, on their way to get integrated into the labour market, these young female refugees, are faced with different barriers and challenges that are not only related to the labour market in general but also to their personal lives in particular. Some of these challenges include language barriers, trauma, cultural issues, hijab, etc.

For the purpose of the transition towards social sustainability, and labour market integration of young female refugees, 'governance' plays an important role. Within the governance actors, non-governmental organisations have turned out to be significant players and facilitators, as they have adequate influence on different forms of cooperation between the government and non-government actors. Therefore, non-governmental organisations play an important role in facilitating labour market integration for young female refugees and tackling and alleviating the challenges and barriers faced by this target group.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at the methodology of the thesis by first talking about the reason for selection of the specific qualitative research method, namely a single case study analysis. After that, the research instruments of interviews and participant observation are further introduced and described extensively. Moreover, the type of sampling procedure is explained in details. In addition, the data collection will be described thoroughly. And lastly, the process of data analysis will be discussed in depth.

3.2 Selection of methodology

As mentioned, this thesis is designed with a qualitative approach, in particular a single case study analysis. By looking at the definition of qualitative research method by Denzin and Lincoln (2011), one could understand how this method is appropriate for answering the research question of this thesis. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) defines the qualitative research method with an inclination towards its effect and influence to change the world and explains the method as "a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p. 3).

Moreover, with regards to the research design, which is the most appropriate to answer the question of this thesis, one could look at Creswell (2013). In his book of Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design, Creswell further brings attention to the design of the research and utilisation of different approaches for investigation, and describes the qualitative method as research which "begins with assumptions and the use of interpretive/theoretical frameworks that inform the study of research problems addressing the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. To study this problem, qualitative researchers use an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that is both inductive and deductive and establishes patterns or themes. The final written report or presentation includes the voices of participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, a complex description and interpretation of the problem, and its contribution to the literature or a call for change" (Creswell, 2013, p. 44).

In addition to the general definition of the qualitative research method, here it is important to look further at the characteristics of the method, which according to Creswell (2013) is as follows.

1)Qualitative research is conducted in a natural setting, i.e., the field, within which participators undergo the matter that is being investigated, where there is a face-to-face contact between the researcher and the participants (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999; Hatch, 2002; Marshall & Rossman, 2010). 2) It depends on the researcher as the main agent of data collection. The data is collected through interviewing the participators using open-ended questions and/or observing their behaviour (Hatch, 2002). 3) It involves using multiple data sources and methods including interviews, documents and observations and then organising them into different themes and categories (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999; Marshall & Rossman, 2010). 4) It entails complex thinking by means of deductive and inductive reasoning. The inductive procedure implies going back and forth between themes and categories in order to set up an inclusive set of themes. Deductive reasoning includes establishing themes that are continually being examined against the data (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999; Hatch, 2002; Marshall & Rossman, 2010). 5) It concentrates on the numerous personal outlooks and opinions of participators, their meanings and perspectives on the specific issue that the research is focused on and not the meaning derived from the literature (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999; Hatch, 2002). 6) It entails a developing, progressing and emerging design as opposed to a firmly predefined design. This means that each of the stages of the research process may get altered or shifted during the data collection phase (Hatch, 2002; Marshall & Rossman, 2010). 7) It is interpretive and reflective, i.e., it is responsive to the social identifications and life stories of the researcher (Marshall & Rossman, 2010). 8) It demonstrates a holistic description and a complex view of the phenomena under study. This entails looking into numerous perspectives and determining different elements included in a situation and outlining a bigger picture that appears (Hatch, 2002; Marshall & Rossman, 2010). 9) It frames human behaviour within a social or cultural context and is situated within the setting of the participants' historical, political and/or social circumstances data (LeCompte & Schensul; Marshall & Rossman, 2010).

For the purpose of this thesis, a qualitative research method was chosen due to the following reasons. Firstly, in order to answer the research question of this thesis, there is a requirement to explore and study a certain population, namely the young female refugees, and to hear silenced voices. This is something that could be conducted solely with a qualitative research method. Instead of only depending on outcomes from other research studies or using the pre-established facts from the literature, there is a need for an exploration of the stated issue under the study. In addition, a detailed and elaborated comprehension of the problem is required. These details could solely be demonstrated through speaking personally and face to face with the population under the study, and giving them space to tell their stories, free of any burden or impediment from what is already in the literature or what it is expected to be found (Merriam

and Tisdell, 2015; Creswell, 2013). Moreover, the qualitative research is chosen in order to empower individuals, i.e., female refugees to hear their voices and to share their stories and to reduce the power connection that frequently occurs between the participants in a study and the researcher. Furthermore, there is a need to apprehend the circumstances or the environment in which the participators in a study talk about an issue (Merriam and Tisdell, 2015; Creswell, 2013).

Here, it is worth to mention that the quantitative research method would not be appropriate for the purpose of this research. Because this approach does not inform the researcher about the processes that individuals undergo, what is the reason that they answered or reacted as they did, the circumstances within which they answered, and their deeper reasonings and way of behaving that had an effect on the way they responded. Moreover, quantitative and statistical measures and analysis merely do not fit the matter in question of this thesis, as the issue is difficult to be captured adequately with existing measures due to the complexity of the problem that is getting examined and the fact that existing quantitative measures may not be responsive to the gender, race, economic status and individual differences of the participants and "to level all individuals to a statistical mean overlooks the uniqueness of individuals in the study" (Creswell, 2013, p. 48).

For conducting this thesis, a case study analysis is chosen. According to Yin (2009), "case study research involves the study of a case within a real-life, contemporary context or setting" (Creswell, 2013, p. 294; Yin, 2009). Some scholars such as Stake (2005), views case study research not as a methodology but "a choice of what is to be studied within a bounded system, bounded by time and/or place" (Creswell, 2013, p. 97; Stake, 2005). The case of this thesis was a bounded system as it was bounded by place (situated on a single non-governmental organisation).

Moreover, Wolcott (1992) views case study analysis as an end-product of field-oriented research (Wolcott, 1992). Creswell (2013), on the other hand looks at case study research as a methodology: a kind of qualitative research design which could be a purpose of study, in addition to a product of investigation and examination (Creswell, 2013). Here, it is worth to mention that there are limitations with regards to case studies such as confusions, where a part of it relates to the fact that the procedure of administrating a case study is combined with both the unit of the research (the case) and the result and outcome of this type of study (Merriam and Tisdell, 2015).

In general, case study research starts with determining a particular case. This case could be a definite entity, for example a group, an individual, a cooperation, or an organisation. If we look at it in a less definite level, it could be a relationship, a particular project, a population or a decision procedure. The crucial thing here is to outline a case that could be enclosed with a determined framework such as a particular place. Usually, researches with case study analysis

focus on real-life present cases that are going on in order to collect correct data that is not lost by time (Yin, 2009).

Case study analysis has different characteristics with regards to its intent that could be devided into three categories; the single instrumental case study, the collective or multiple case study, and the intrinsic case study (Stake, 1995). For the purpose of this thesis, a single instrumental case study analysis is selected.

According to Stake (1995), an instrumental case study concentrates on a particular issue, with the aim of understanding a particular matter, difficulty or concern, where a case or cases are chosen to better comprehend the problem; "The case then becomes a vehicle to better understand the issue" (Creswell, 2013, p. 295; Stake, 1995). A single case study research is a qualitative method, where the unit of analysis is a single case (a within-site study), within which the researcher concentrates on one issue and chooses an actual present-day bounded system (a case) to demonstrate and investigate this specific issue, by means of extensively comprehensive data collection, that entails sources of information such as interviews, observations, etc. (Yin, 2009; Creswell, 2013). A single case study research would result in reporting the overall meaning obtained from the case. These meanings are referred to as "assertions" by Stake (1995) or building "patterns" or "explanations" by Yin (2009). Creswell (2013) looks at these meanings as "general lessons learned from studying the case" (Creswell, 2013, p. 99).

The single instrumental case study analysis was chosen due to the following reasons. Firstly, In order to explore the matters in question for the thesis, a single case study analysis was a feasible strategy in order to identify the factors presenting in the conclusion. Secondly, due to the fact that the study of more than one case could result in diminishing and making the overall analysis weaker, as the more cases are involved in one study, the less the deepness and profoundness of each single case. Thirdly, the single case is chosen here in order to illustrate and understand the specific issue under study, i.e., the role of NGOs in female refugee's employability, and to put together a comprehensive explanation of the setting for this single case (Creswell, 2013). And finally, in order to present an in-depth understanding of the case as we wish to "understand the particular in depth, not to find out what is generally true of the many" (Merriam and Tisdell, 2015, p. 224). Nevertheless, single case study analysis has its limitations. The most important critique to single case study analysis is generalisability, which is the extent to which the findings of a study can be applied to other situations.

The single case study of the thesis is the case of the NGO, named Lobby 16, which is active in the filed of labour market integration of young refugees; in addition to the case of young female refugees, that are directly supported and assisted by the NGO to find employment in Austria and get integrated into the Austrian labour market.

The major part of the methodology is designed through in-depth semi-structured interviews, as well as information retrieved through participant observation. Therefore, the single case study analysis is designed and built around semi-structured, in-depth interviews with female refugees, who have been supported and assisted by the NGO, Lobby 16, to find employment in the Austrian labour market. These interviews have led to a comprehensive and thorough analysis of the barriers and challenges that this target group faces, and therefore answers the 1st research question. Moreover, a semi-structured, in-depth interview was conducted with the NGO, in order to analyse their role in labour market integration of young refugees, in particular female refugees. And to explore how the NGO acts in response to the obstacles that this target group is confronted with. This interview has resulted in an in-depth analysis of the NGO's structure, projects and challenges by being active in the field of refugee integration. The case study develops and further extends to answer the 2nd research question, by looking at the NGO's responses to the particular challenges faced by the target group, which indeed explores the role they play in labour market integration of these young women.

The original intention of the empirical research was to conduct multiple case study analysis with different organisations, who were active in the field of refugee integration in Austria, while looking at the cases from two perspectives; namely the organisations as well as the refugees, specifically the ones who were being directly supported by the organisations themselves. The initial target group of the research was female and youth. The research started with a broader set of organisations and social enterprises. For that, a list of fourteen organisations and social enterprises, who were active in the field was gathered. Emails were sent out, and a few responses were received. The recruitment criteria included the willingness of providing sufficient material, the willingness for a long in-depth interview, the connection to young female refugees, who they were directly working with, time and availability.

Interviews were conducted with two social enterprises, specifically Magdas Hotel and Habibi und Hawara. And one interview was conducted with the NGO, Lobby 16. From the refugees' side, the two social enterprises only arranged for one interview each. Although both interviewees were female, they were not in the age category of the target group of this research. In addition, they did not provide sufficient and enough material for the purpose of the research. Hence, the results of these two interviews made it clear that it would not be helpful to proceed with these organisations, which among other reasons was mainly their disconnection to the target group. On the other hand, the NGO, Lobby 16, was really interested to play a part in the study. And not only contributed to the research through a very long, comprehensive and in-depth interview by one of their experts, but also introduced five young female refugees, that were being directly supported by the NGO, who had already expressed their interest to participate in the study, and were specifically in the category of the target group of the research.

Here, the flexibility of the qualitative method was driven by the necessity to adapt according to the missing link to the target group of young female refugees. Therefore, due to the recruitment criteria, and the fact that other cases in the analysis did not tackle the target group from the perspective of the given research questions; the initial plan did not lead towards answering those specified questions. As a result, although a lot of time and effort have been invested to investigate, contact and interview different organisations, the conscious decision was to adapt the research design to an explorative approach of a single case study, which was very structured. Hence, ultimately, it was more valuable to choose one single case to answer the research questions.

3.3   Case study selection

For the purpose of conducting this thesis, a purposeful sampling approach has been chosen. Purposeful sampling is "based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned" (Merriam and Tisdell, 2015, p. 77). Moreover, in purposeful sampling, the researcher chooses participants or sites for the research in view of the fact that they are able to purposefully communicate a detailed comprehension of the research problem and the main issue under investigation (Creswell, 2013).

The type of purposeful sampling that was chosen in this study is convenience sampling, which as it is suggested by the name, refers to selection of a sample, which for this specific study was based on time and availability of the respondents.   Here, it is important to mention the limitations and boundaries of convenience sampling. In spite of the fact that some aspects of convenience nearly always have a part in the sample selection process, a selection based on this reasoning only is not as credible and it is probable to create less information-rich cases (Merriam and Tisdell, 2015).

To begin the procedure of purposeful sampling, a list of NGOs, who were active in the field of refugee employment in Austria was created. Next, emails were sent to these NGOs, inquiring for an in-depth interview with one or two of the employees of the NGO, as well as minimum five female refugees, who were assisted by these NGOs to get employed. The recruitment and/or inclusion criteria that were established for purposeful sampling of participants were 1) for the NGO employees to be preferably at the management level, and/or employees who were aware of all the operations within the NGO. And 2) for the refugees to be female and within the age range of 18 to 30. As mentioned, the sample size of this study was aimed at five participants from the female refugees' side and one participant from the NGO's side. This number of participants could give enough chances to determine themes for the case study. According to Wolcott (2008), cases more than one weaken the level of details that a researcher can supply (Wolcott, 2008).

Further, the participants of the sample were selected, as mentioned before, based on convenience. Therefore, firstly, based on the availability of the NGO, who was responsive to the email inquiry and was open for interviews and further assistance as soon as possible. Secondly, the remainder of the participants, who were five young female refugees, were introduced by the NGO. These five participants were first approached by the NGO and had given their consent and contact details for getting involved in the study. Following that, each of these five participants were contacted individually and a date and time was scheduled with each to be interviewed.

3.4 Research instrument

The research instruments for collecting data for the purpose of this thesis consist of five semi-structured interviews conducted with five female refugees (Appendix 2, Section 6.2.), one semi-structured interview conducted with one of the NGO's representatives (Appendix 2, Section 6.1) and lastly, gathering field notes through participant observation in a meeting held by the NGO. For further details, please refer to the following section 3.5 – Data collection.

3.5 Data collection

3.5.1 Interviews conducted with female refugees

There were five semi-structured interviews conducted with five female refugees, who were assisted by the NGO to find apprenticeships and employment. These interviews were all face-to-face, in-depth interviews conducted in Farsi and then translated into English. All of the interviews were conducted in public places, i.e., cafes and they were audio-recorded with the permission of the participants (Appendix 1: Consent from). Each interview lasted on average about one hour and half, where it was led by the research questions (Appendix 2, Section 6.2.). Nevertheless, the interviews were sufficiently semi-structured and open-ended to allow interviewees to feel free to share their individual stories, and it resulted in finding new themes and ideas. As the interview proceeded, the interview guide was altered moderately in order to further improve some of the questions that were not bringing out the pre-planned information.

3.5.1.1 Short profiles of the interview partners

Table below shows the details of the participants as follows. For the purpose of protecting the privacy of the interview partners, pseudonyms are used instead of their real name.

Name	Type	Age	Job	In Austria since	Interview Date	Interview Duration

Nasrin	Female Refugee	21	Apprenticeship as a bank clerk in a bank, second year	2017	19.04.2022	1 hour, 23 minutes
Tala	Female Refugee	18	Apprenticeship as a bank clerk in a bank, first year	2016	27.04.2022	1 hours, 42 minutes
Homa	Female Refugee	18	Apprenticeship as a receptionist in a hotel, second year	2016	28.04.2022	1 hour, 13 minutes
Minoo	Female Refugee	20	Apprenticeship as electrotechnician in a railway company, second year	2016	01.05.2022	1 hour, 25 minutes
Leila	Female Refugee	22	Apprenticeship as a pharmacy clerk in a pharmacy, second year	2015	10.05.2022	1 hour, 37 minutes

TABLE 1 - PROFILES OF THE INTERVIEW PARTNERS (FEMALE REFUGEES)

Below is a short profile of each of these interview partners.

Nasrin is 21 years old and she comes from Afghanistan. She arrived in Austria in 2017 at the age of 16. When Nasrin was 10 years old, she moved to Pakistan with her family for a chance of a better life. She lost her mother at the age of 13. After the death of her mother, her father moved to Austria to seek asylum and Nasrin stayed in Pakistan for two years. After the asylum application of her father was accepted in 2015, Nasrin was able to get an asylum through family reunion "Familienzusammenführung" application. Nasrin was the only interview partner who arrived in Austria through air transport, due to the nature of her asylum application (she was under 18 and her father was her guardian). She started by attending German courses, and then she started going to Volkshochschule for one year in order to finish the ninth grade of school, so that she could apply for apprenticeships. Once she finished the Volkshochschule, she applied for Lobby 16 and through Lobby 16 she was able to find an apprenticeship as a bank clerk in a bank. She is now in her second year of apprenticeship at an Austrian Bank.

Tala is 18 years old and she comes from Afghanistan. She arrived in Austria in 2016 at the age of 12. After losing her father, Tala started a one-month journey to Austria with her mother, older

sister and two younger brothers through land transport. After arrival in Austria and getting their asylum application approved, she started attending school (7th grade) in the mornings and German courses in the afternoons/evenings for two years. After that, she attended the Polytechnische Schule for a year (the polytechnic school, is a type of school that bridges the gap between the end of the secondary level in the 8th grade and the end of compulsory education in the 9th grade and it focuses more on vocational training for one year). After being unsuccessful in finding an apprenticeship herself, she applied for Lobby 16 and through Lobby 16 she was able to find an apprenticeship as a bank clerk in a bank. She is now in her second year of apprenticeship at an Austrian Bank.

Homa is 18 years old and she comes from Afghanistan. Until the age of 12, she lived most of her life with her family in Iran. She arrived in Austria in 2016 at the age of 12. It took Homa and her family one month to arrive in Austria through land transport. Although she had finished 6th grade of school in Iran, after arrival in Austria and getting her asylum application approved, she started attending school from the 5th grade, in addition to attending a German course once per week. For the first three years, due to language barriers, she struggled very much to learn at school. However, from the 8th grade, she started seeing improvements in her grades as a result of having a better knowledge of German by the time. Nevertheless, her grades was not high enough that would allow her to attend gymnasium for her 9th grade. Therefore, she did not find a better solution but to attended the Polytechnische Schule for her 9th grade. After multiple failed attempts to find apprenticeships herself, she applied for Lobby 16 and through the NGO, she was able to find the apprenticeship that she was looking for, working in a kitchen at a hotel, with the dream of becoming a chef one day. Unfortunately, due to the heavy work in the kitchen and her lack of body strength, she could not continue her work in the kitchen and now she is continuing her second year of apprenticeship as a receptionist in the same hotel.

Minoo is 20 years old and she comes from Afghanistan. Before she was born, her parents immigrated to Iran. She lived with her family in Iran until the age of 14. In 2016, Minoo and her family began a one-month journey to Austria through land transport. After two failed attempts to get their asylum applications approved as recognised refugees, their third attempt was successful. Due to the delay in their asylum application, Minoo attended school one year later at the age of 15, where she went directly to the 8th grade. After that, she attended the Volkshochschule for one year in order to finish the 9th grade. As her brother was already in Lobby 16, she also applied for the NGO's programme. With the help of Lobby 16, she found an apprenticeship as an electrotechnician in one of the prominent railway companies in Austria, where she is currently completing her second year.

Leila is 22 years old. She was born in Afghanistan and raised in Iran. Leila was the only interview partner that came to Austria as an unaccompanied minor without her parents. In 2015, at the age of 15 she started a one and half month journey with her 18-year-old sister to Austria by means of land transport. As two young teenage girls, who do not speak any other language but

their mother tongue, Leila and her sister went through a very tough journey until they set foot in Austria. After arrival in Austria, she lived in two different refugee camps for 6 years, before she became independent a year ago. For the first two years, Leila and her sister received the status of beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, until they finally succeeded to get their application approved for recognised refugees in 2018. Upon arrival, Leila attended school (7th grade) in addition to German courses twice per week. At the end of the 8th grade, due to failing her German course at school, she had to re-attend the 8th grade twice. She got to know about Lobby 16 through the refugee camp that she was living in and she enrolled for the programme at the NGO. Leila was very much interested to do an apprenticeship in a pharmacy. It took Lobby 16 a long time to find her an apprenticeship in a pharmacy as they had never done that before. Now she is doing her second year of apprenticeship as a pharmacy clerk in a pharmacy in Vienna.

3.5.2 Interviews conducted with the NGO

There was one semi-structured interview conducted with one of the NGO's representatives with the position of coordinator and social worker. This interview was a face-to-face, in-depth interview conducted in English at the office of the NGO and it was audio-recorded with the permission of the interviewee (Appendix 1: Consent from). The interview lasted for two hours and nineteen minutes, where it was guided by the research questions (Appendix 2, Section 6.1.). As for the case of the interviews with female refugees, this interview was open enough to allow the participant to freely talk, and it resulted in finding new themes and ideas. As expected, the interview guide was adjusted slightly, as the interview proceeded, for further advancement of some of the questions that were not bringing out the intended details. Here, it is important to note that the interview with Expert 2 was conducted during a participant observation event (which is explained further in section 3.5.3), and it was more of a conversation rather than a formal interview.

Name	Type	Job	Interview Date	Interview Duration
Expert 1	NGO's representative	Coordinator and social worker	03.05.2022	2 hours, 19 minutes
Expert 2	NGO's representative	Board Member	31.05.2022	15 minutes

TABLE 2 - PROFILES OF THE INTERVIEW PARTNERS (NGO)

3.5.3   Participant observations

The next research instrument was gathering field notes by spending more time as an observer than as a participant. The participant observation was made through attending a meeting which was held by the NGO with 4 of the NGO representatives, 2 scholars/researchers from one of the Austrian universities and 15 company representative who work or are going to work directly with the NGO in order to give apprenticeships to the young refugees from a wide variety of sectors - retail, technology, hotel, healthcare, construction and education, as well as a representative of the Federal Chancellery as one of the sponsors of the NGO. Some of the companies were new to the notion of hiring and giving chances to the refugees and some of the companies were already working with the NGO for some years and had more clear ideas and information about refugee employment, its challenges and benefits. The meeting was held in German and lasted for 2 hours. This meeting was held for the purpose of mutual exchange of ideas and information between the NGO representatives, company representatives and the university researchers.

The meeting started with the NGO representatives giving a presentation about what they do, the benefits of giving chances to the young refugees, and the opportunities that exists for the companies. The meeting was further continued with the two researchers from one of the Austrian universities, who were working on migration studies and were interested to learn more from the company representatives about what they can offer to the young refugees. After that, the companies, who were already working with refugees talked about their experiences, the issues that exists and the possible solutions to further improve the situation. Here, the other companies had the chance to openly ask questions and discuss about their concerns. The meeting was concluded with open discussions between all the participants. After the meeting, conversations were exchanged with some of the participants of the meeting, including the board member of the NGO, one of the researchers as well as a few of the company representatives.

This participation observation has opened my eyes even further about the topic in hand. It has allowed me to listen to the other side of the narrative, namely, the employers who have given/are planning to give chances to the young refugees, their concerns as well as their positive feedbacks about this specific phenomenon. Lastly, it has further enabled me to come up with new ideas and notions for answering the research question.

3.6   Data analysis

The analysis of the data for this thesis, which refers to describing, classifying, and interpreting the data, is done through a thematic analysis. Here, one could argue that although thematic

analysis has been "poorly branded", it has been widely used in qualitative research (Braun and Clarke, 2012).

Thematic analysis is a method for "systematically identifying, organising, and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set" (Braun and Clarke, 2012, p. 57). By concentrating on themes and meanings throughout a whole data set, thematic analysis could provide for the researcher to find coherence in collective and shared experiences and meanings. In other words, thematic analysis is a method of determining what is common within the data set and to make sense of those commonalities. Here, it is very important to bear in mind that what is common is not, as a direct consequence, significant. Rather the "patterns of meaning" that the researcher determines with regards to the specific topic and research question, are important (Braun and Clarke, 2012).

The main reason for using thematic analysis in this thesis is its "accessibility and flexibility", in a way that it can be conducted in quite a few different ways. "Thematic analysis provides a highly flexible approach that can be modified for the needs of many studies, providing a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data" (Nowell et. al, 2017, p.2). In fact, data analysis and coding with thematic analysis is a combination of two approaches, namely deductive and inductive way of coding and analysis. Deductive approach to coding and analysis is a top-down approach, within which topics and ideas are brought into the data by the researcher. Whereas, the inductive approach is a bottom-up approach, within which the coding and analysis is determined by the content of the data itself (Braun and Clarke, 2012). According to Braun and Clarke (2012), there are six phase approach to thematic analysis as follows. Phase 1: getting familiarized with the data, Phase 2: generating initial codes, Phase 3: searching for themes, Phase 4: reviewing potential themes, Phase 5: defining and naming themes, Phase 6: producing the report. Therefore, for the purpose of analysing the data in this thesis the following has been done.

After getting familiar with the data, the analysis was done first through forming initial codes and categories. The type of information that was being coded, was a detailed description of the particular case of the thesis. Hence, themes or categories were developed in order to present an interpretation and explanation of the data while taking into consideration the outlooks and viewpoints in the literature (Creswell, 2013). Therefore, the coding procedure in this thesis entailed forming and grouping the text into small classifications of information, and then appointing a label to each of the codes. Since not all the data is used in the qualitative study and some may be discarded (Wolcott, 1994), Creswell (2013) calls it "winnowing" the data (Creswell, 2013). And for this particular reason, some of the data from the interviews have been removed.

Here, coding was done firstly with a shorter list of categories and labels. This is what Creswell (2013) calls it "lean coding". As the database and texts were reviewed and then re-read again, these categories were then expanded into more categories. And lastly, classification was done, meaning that some of the codes and categories were aggregated and combined in order to

shape a common idea and to create general themes and subthemes for writing the final narrative. One of the limitations here is that it is often hard to compress the data into smaller themes, nevertheless, reducing the data into smaller set of themes make it more manageable for writing the final narrative (Merriam and Tisdell, 2015).

Moreover, with regards to the origin of the titles and names, some of the names were "in vivo codes", meaning that they were the precise words which were used by the research participants. And the other names that were written, appeared to best explain the data and information that was derived during the data collection.

It is important to mention that although the coding process in this thesis started with categories and themes that were emerging as the data was being analyzed, in other words "emergent" categories and codes (Crabtree and Miller, 1992), there were also a few pre-existing codes in the literature that directed the coding process, namely "prefigured" codes or categories (Crabtree and Miller, 1992). One of the disadvantages of "prefigured" categories, however, is that they could restrict the analysis to those specific codes and categories, instead of allowing for the categories to be a reflection of the opinions and outlooks of the participants in a more conventional qualitative way. Hence, it is important to be open to emergent codes throughout the data analysis (Creswell, 2013). Therefore, here the flexibility of thematic analysis for being a combination of inductive and deductive approaches plays an important role. On the other hand, some argue that while thematic analysis is flexible, this flexibility can result in "inconsistency and a lack of coherence when developing themes derived from the research data" (Nowell et. al, 2017, p. 2). Another limitation with regards to thematic analysis is the lack of substantial literature on this method of analysis compared to other qualitative research methods, which could lead to researchers feeling unconfident about conducting a precise and accurate thematic analysis (Nowell et al., 2017).

3.7   Conclusion

As it has been shown in this chapter, to answer the research questions, a qualitative research method was chosen to better explore and study a certain population (young female refugees), and hear their silenced voices for the purpose of better empowering this target group for further research. This is something that could be conducted solely with a qualitative research method, where the details could only be demonstrated through speaking face to face with the target group, and giving them space to share their stories.

As discussed, a single instrumental case study analysis was chosen in order to present an in-depth understanding of the case by illustrating the specific issue of the role of NGOs in female refugees' employability, and to put together a comprehensive explanation of the setting for this single case. Otherwise, the study of more than one case could have resulted in weakening the overall analysis of the case.

However, one could not close their eyes to the limitations of a single case analysis, and that is the issue of generalisability. The research instruments in this thesis consists of semi-structured interviews and gathering field notes through participant observation. For data analysis, a thematic analysis has been chosen, mainly due to its flexibility and accessibility. Here we could argue that although the chosen research method has its limitations, to answer the research questions of this thesis, its strengths outweigh its limitations.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter begins with an in-depth study of the case of the NGO called Lobby 16, by looking at the role that it plays in labour market integration of young female refugees. For this purpose, we explore the case by looking into the background of the NGO and its structure, specifc projects that it focuses on and the challenges that it faces as an NGO.

As the focus and target group of the NGO is young refugees, the chapter will continue with an in-depth study of this target group, in particular the young female refugees, the generation who arrived in Austria at the early stages of their teen years, and are going to settle in the country in the long-run. The chapter will go on by talking about the barriers that these young women have faced and are facing in order to get integrated into the labour market in Austria.

Here, for the purpose of answering the research questions, it has been of great importance to also look at the contribution that Lobby 16 makes in addressing those challenges and the part that the NGO plays in tackling those specific issues. Therefore, under each challenge the response of the NGO to that particular issue and the way in which it addresses each challenge is further explained. Lastly, some successful stories are explained that are worth to mention for the purpose of this study.

4.2 The case of the NGO Lobby 16

4.2.1 Background of the NGO

In 2008, Lobby 16, a non-governmental and non-profit organisation, was established to safeguard the access of young refugees, from the age of 16 to 23, to education and labour market. The idea dates back to 2001, when Veronica Krainz, was working as a sponsor and after that as a project manager for a sponsorship and mentoring project of "connecting people", a project within which it connected volunteers with unaccompanied young refugees, as many young refugees were arriving in Austria unaccompanied and alone without any guardians. During this programme, she began to realise that the first steps of entering the labour market for this target group is very challenging, and it is not enough to be a mentor to them but one also needs a bigger network. As she had good connections with some companies in Austria, she came up with an idea to found an NGO in order to support these young refugees in a bigger sense. An unforeseen start-up fund allowed her to consider self-employment and begin a new pathway, that with the help of right connections and personal experiences, in particular with the problematic educational situation of young male refugees; led to the establishment of Lobby 16 in autumn of 2008.

Expert 1: "… we always saw this challenge that young refugees do not find apprenticeships and they take the first job they get, where there were usually jobs with no qualifications such as supermarkets with low level of salaries and an unsecure position, where they would be the first ones to be dismissed when they were not needed…"

Hence, the idea was to assist these young refugees to become more qualified workers, have more perspectives and better prospects of a good career path, instead of being an unqualified worker in a small company who is somehow endangered to lose their job. The initial target group of the NGO were male refugees as there was no demand from the female side at the time. The main goal of the organisation since the beginning was to give council to young refugees on the subjects of work, education as well as various day-to-day issues that they may encounter in life in order to support them with the first steps of labour market integration. Lobby 16 stands up for an open and diversified society, within which every person is invited with their diversified skills and strengths. The number 16 in the name of the association represents the age of numerous refugees who search for and are still searching for guidance and advice.

4.2.2 Structure of the NGO

4.2.2.1 Human resources

Lobby 16 is a small association comprised of six employees, within which four are advisors/coordinators, one civil servant and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), who is also the co-founder. The board of directors consist of two people, including the co-founder and a volunteer. In addition to the staff, there is a pool of 70 volunteers, working closely with the NGO to ensure the project goes as smoothly as possible for the young refugees.

As mentioned, there are four advisors in the core team, who are all employed as a part time base, and each are responsible for counselling and taking care of ten students. This is specifically very important as it ensures a personal and close relation between the advisors and the students. This relation is close to the extent that each advisor knows about the strengths and weaknesses of each of the students and they could advise them to the best of their abilities in order to find them the appropriate apprenticeship. In addition, the advisors have a close contact with many of their partner companies and they are very well familiar with the companies. This is in particular very helpful as the advisors could match their students appropriately with the most suitable employer.

Expert 1: "…sometimes with some partner companies, it is a very personal matching, thanks to this very close relation we have with them…"

In addition to the staff, there is a pool of 70 volunteers, who are collaborating with Lobby 16 on various topics. The matters that volunteers get involved in, depends on the specific needs of these young refugees. For the most part, the main job of the volunteers is to study with the

target group during their apprenticeships. Performing well at the professional school (Berufsschule) is often quite difficult for many within this target group mainly due to the language barriers and their knowledge level of mathematics. Hence, during the exam period, the volunteers usually sit with the students and study together with them, mainly in the subjects of German, Mathematics, and English but also on other subjects depending on the type of the apprenticeship.

The other major work of the volunteers is the mentoring project, within which some volunteers act as mentors for these young refugees, in assisting them with different matters in their personal and professional life. This could include assisting them with getting more socially integrated into the Austrian society by finding Austrian friends and getting in contact with Austrian families; helping them with finding a flat through apartment visits, writing emails as well as giving donations, i.e., furniture, money, etc. There are occasions within which, they develop a personal relation with these young refugees so much so that they help them in diverse personal matters.

4.2.2.2   Capital structure

In terms of financial structure, one third of the capital, which is the main source of the capital at the NGO comes from the Federal Ministry of Social Security, Generations and Consumer Protection (Bundesministerium für soziale Sicherheit, Generationen und Konsumentenschutz) – in short, the Ministry of Social Affairs in Austria, which is the ministry responsible for social policy and security, family, senior citizens and consumer policy. Every year Lobby 16 has to apply for their main fund at the mentioned Ministry. This is the source of money within which the salaries of the staff as well as other operating costs are paid.

Moreover, Lobby 16 is in cooperation with the Labour Market Service organisation in Austria (Arbeitsmarktservice) – in short AMS, where the other third of the capital comes from. AMS, which is part of the Federal Ministry of Labour in Austria, supports the initiative of job seekers and companies through giving advices, information, qualifications and financial support (AMS, n.d.). This is the source of money within which is paid to the students of Lobby 16, when they attend their courses. For each day that they attend the course they get support from AMS for the amount of 13 Euros.

Lastly, the other third of the capital comes from sponsors, donations and companies. Many companies not only offer the young refugees, apprenticeships but also sponsor Lobby 16 through donating money.

The biggest expenses are the salaries of the staff and the extra costs that are paid for the students. Moreover, there are always costs that cannot be planned in advance, i.e., minor costs related to the students. These costs include all the documents for starting their apprenticeships, the fee for the criminal record from the police that they need for some job applications,

documents that they need to translate, transport tickets that they need to go to their job interviews, etc.

Expert 1: "…we would try to cover some costs for them because we know that even 20 euros for some is a lot of money. These are usually small amounts but it sums up to a bigger amount of money that we need just for these type of costs…"

At the end of the year, if there is any money left, it will be re-invested in the projects of the next year.

4.2.2.3 Partner companies

In general, some companies in Austria, who operate in specific fields, i.e., electro-technical jobs, installations, paintings, etc., struggle to find qualified workers. Therefore, they instead invest more in apprenticeships, as they understand their position to be more secure if they invest in younger generations in order to have qualified workers in their company for the long run.

Expert 1: "…we have a partner company, that operates in the electro-technical field, who finds it very difficult to find qualified workers. So, what they do is that they invest more in apprenticeships. They see it as an investment in their future as in the end their current employees will get retired and it will be more and more difficult to find qualified workers in the future. It is not about how much they pay them it is just that they simply do not find qualified workers. They say to their candidates that they will always have a job and a good salary…"

Overall, there are about 40 different partners who work with Lobby 16 in order to give their students apprenticeships. Since 2019 that the NGO started to work with female refugees as well, the demand for different fields of work has expanded and changed.

Expert 1: "…Before 2019, we had apprenticeships in construction, technical fields and handicrafts. As the girls joined our project, there was a sudden interest in banks, shop assistants, office work, etc. So, it shifted very much to totally different fields…"

The advisors at Lobby 16, continuously work to expand their network and to find more partner companies.

Expert 1: "… we have some reliable partners for many years. Also, for the past years we have built up a good network of new partners and that helps a lot…"

The advisors have built good relations with their partner companies. This is in particular very helpful as it allows them to find apprenticeships for their students in a more established manner, where it usually guarantees them a few places in their apprenticeships every year.

Expert 1: "…We have a good relation with some of the companies, often it is personal contacts, and we know the human resource managers, and/or the ones who are responsible for apprenticeships…"

Normally, three to four of these companies (the bigger firms in particular), offer places to between two to four candidates of Lobby 16, every year. This is specifically beneficial as it would save some time for all the parties involved and it facilitates an easier procedure.

Expert 1: "…It is an unwritten rule but normally our bigger partners say: "send us three of your best candidates or the fitting candidates…"

Moreover, sometimes it happens that Lobby 16 do not have enough candidates to send to some companies.

Expert 1: "…this year we didn't have enough candidates for some companies…"

In addition, there are some motivated companies who are interested in the whole concept of what Lobby 16 is doing and they intend to make a change in their firms' recruitment practices. Therefore, if any place gets available, they would first offer it to Lobby 16 before publishing it anywhere else.

Expert 1: "…some motivated companies specifically want to give chances to young refugees and that is how they understand their position in giving chances to people who until now did not have many chances in their lives …"

Hence, a slight shift could be observed in the recruitment policies of some companies, which is encouraging and promising.

In general, female students at Lobby 16 are employed as office clerks in banks or telecommunication companies, shop assistants, supermarket workers, hairdressers and other jobs in beauty industry, handy crafts, kindergarten teachers, and sometimes in the technical field.

Expert 1: "… if they choose the technical field, we recommend them to select companies, who have supportive programmes for women and/or the companies where they are not the only female worker and there is awareness at least for their topics and specific situations…"

Expert 1: "…companies such as ÖBB are very engaged and happy to receive applications from women and they have a certain project only for their female employees, where there are certain hours in the week reserved for their questions, concerns and specific topics. This is because the company is aware that they are operating in a more male dominated field and it may not be that easy for women…"

4.2.3   The project of the NGO

The contribution of NGOs such as Lobby 16 in labour market integration of refugees is of considerable size. What the NGO is doing is quite important and senseful as the step between school and labour market for teenage refugees in Austria is difficult. As mentioned, the main project of Lobby 16 is to assist young refugees to integrate into the labour market in Austria by means of apprenticeships. Hence, the main objective is to find appropriate apprenticeships for this target group during the one-year programme offered by Lobby 16 and to enable this target group to perform well and finish their apprenticeships for the next three years, in all the possible ways that they can, so that this target group become qualified workers in their host country of Austria.

In the month of August every year, Lobby 16 sends an email to announce that the application process is open. The email is sent to the partner companies, different NGOs, institutions, social workers, personal networks and former participants from the last two years. There has never been any problem with regards to getting enough applications. In general, the applications are very much focused on certain communities of refugees, i.e., from Afghanistan. This is mainly due to the power of word of mouth in the Afghan community in Austria. All the interview partners in the scope of this thesis have heard about the NGO through word of mouth.

Each year Lobby 16 receives between 100 to 120 applications, within which 40 candidates are offered a place. Among these 40 candidates, 40% are female and 60% are male. Before 2019, the target group was only male refugees, mainly due to the fact that there were almost no applications and demand from female refugees and also the fact that unaccompanied young refugees, who were the initial target group of the NGO, were mainly male. However, after 2019, the target group has expanded to young female candidates as well. When the NGO was founded, the majority of the candidates came from Eastern European countries. But after the influx of refugees in 2015, the nationalities of the target group have totally changed. Currently, the vast majority of the candidates come from Afghanistan, which is about 70%, and the rest come from Syria, Somalia and Ethiopia. The NGO is well known within the Afghan community, mainly by word of mouth. All of the five interview partners in the scope of this thesis come from Afghanistan.

The conditions for the refugees to get admitted to the programme are as follows. First, they have to have a refugee background, regardless of when they arrived in Austria, and to have either an asylum status or to be beneficiaries of subsidiary protection. This means that they cannot be 'asylum seekers' as asylum seekers, whose asylum process is still pending, are not allowed to start an apprenticeship in Austria. Secondly, the project is mainly for teenagers and young adults. Therefore, there is an age condition for the candidates to be between 16 and 23 years old. Thirdly, to have a 'Pflichtschulabschluss', which is a compulsory school leaving certificate. This is because in order for the target group to start any apprenticeship they have to

finish 9 years of school attendance. Since this target group have not done their entire school attendance in Austria, they are allowed to do a one-year programme instead at an institution for adult education, called Volkshochschule in German, in order to receive their nine-year school certificate.

After fulfilling all the above criteria, an entry test is taken by the candidates which includes Mathematics, English and German. Moreover, an interview is conducted with the candidates in order to ensure that this programme is right for them. This is mainly due to the fact that some candidates may demand a specific type of apprenticeship and may have certain expectations that may not be possible for Lobby 16 to guarantee. Here, flexibility of the candidates in terms of their job and apprenticeship choices are important and in case they have unrealistic wishes, they may not get admitted to the programme, as the aim is to find apprenticeships for all the 40 candidates by the end of the year. Nevertheless, the NGO tries to have a balance between the candidates that they see it would be easier to find apprenticeships for them, and the candidates who really need their support and without the help of Lobby 16 would not be able to find employment.

Expert 1: "…so, if somebody speaks fluent German and has had already job interviews, we might not take the person because we feel this person can find employment alone and without our support…"

As mentioned, the main focus group of Lobby 16 is to support unaccompanied young refugees, who arrived in Austria without their parents, families or any legal guardian. This target group arrived in Austria either alone or together with their cousins, and/or brothers and/or sisters. However, the number of this target group in Lobby 16 has decreased to 25% in the last years. This is due to the fact that some within the target group have applied for asylum for their families (i.e., one of the interview partners) after they received their own asylum status or simply because they arrived in Austria together with their parents, especially the female refugees.

In order for Lobby 16 to reach their goal, there are different steps to be taken. First, the NGO organises an introductory workshop for the candidates. The main purpose of this workshop is for the candidates to see whether the programme at Lobby 16 really fits them. The workshop includes information on how apprenticeships work, what type of jobs and fields offer apprenticeships in Austria, how to write a motivation letter and CV. In addition, the candidates could find out about their strengths and strong points in order to find the best fitting apprenticeship specifically for them.

After this workshop, a course of study is offered to this target group for 6 months, within which they learn English, German and Mathematics. During these 6 months, there are company tours organised by Lobby 16, where students visit different companies and/or companies visit the office of Lobby 16 to present their apprenticeships to these young refugees. In the next step,

the students will get prepared for the upcoming interviews that they will have for their apprenticeships. In case they would like to take on internships, the advisors would find them internships of their choice (within the scope and ability of the advisors). These internships are normally for two to four weeks, within which the candidates would familiarise themselves with the field and type of job that they could potentially do, and whether or not it would fit with their expectations and interests.

What lobby 16 does is distinctive in a way that they offer their full support to their students until the end of their apprenticeships, which would last for three to four years. Advisors at Lobby 16, understand themselves as going all the way until their students are successfully finished with their apprenticeships.

Expert 1: "… even if they do not contact us, we contact them from time to time…"

Expert 1: "…we try to support and take care of all of our students, who start with us and then begin their apprenticeships for the following three years. So, we support forty times three, which is hundred and twenty students every year…"

Therefore, how Lobby 16 defines itself and what is particular about this NGO is that they try to cover all the topics that appear for their students along the way of doing their apprenticeships. Many of these topics could act as barriers and could hinder them from performing their jobs effectively. Therefore, the advisors of Lobby 16 give their full support since the beginning in order to avoid circumstances within which this target group quit their apprenticeships in the middle of the way, due to being overwhelmed by all the challenges and issues that they face along their way. The advisors build a close relation and contact with their students, which is based on trust and that enables this target group to approach them freely about any issue that they encounter.

Expert 1: "…this is the aim above all, that we try to be there for all the challenges that they may face, to support them and to prevent them from stopping their apprenticeships…"

Expert 1: "…for them we represent the majority of the Austrian society and because of that they would like to ask us questions and our opinions on certain issues…"

This relation that is built between the advisors and target group is very important in so many different levels, resulting in the target group feeling supported even after they are finished with their apprenticeships.

Expert 1: "…Very often even after years of being done with their apprenticeships, if they feel there is a certain challenge in their life and they just want to talk, they contact us. There are many things going on in the life of these young people, such as financial problems, health issues, having their families back in their home country, etc. I feel that this relationship we build up is

so strong that in the end they come back to us, address us and they know if we cannot solve it, we will try to find a way for them…"

Moreover, The NGO tries to organise different workshops based on the request from their students. At the beginning of the semester the advisors sit with the students and ask them about the topics that they would like to know more about. Since two years ago, based on the request of the female students there are workshops organised specifically for this target group, within which different topics are discussed including relationships, female sexuality, marriage, pregnancy, self-defence, etc. For this purpose, they invite experts such as gynaecologists, psychologists, self-defence instructors, etc. in their workshops. In addition, Lobby 16 has a good network of working with other NGOs. Therefore, in case they cannot cover all the topics that their students are interested in, they try to connect them with other NGOs in their network. Sometimes there are visits to other associations, such as associations which help women that are affected by violence.

Expert 1: "… as we started to have more girls every year in our projects, we began to see that there is a need for a separate space in the way of offering things only for the girls to talk about certain topics that they would only discuss in the female space…"

In addition, there are other supports offered by the NGO to the students. These supports include talking to the advisors about any issue that appears in their life. These issues range from the topic of drugs and alcohol addiction to family issues to all sorts of psychological issues.

Expert 1: "…sometimes during our conversations, we feel there are very difficult topics that appear from their past and if we see that there is nothing we can really solve or be there for, we try to connect them to places that they could go to for psychotherapy. We make the first appointment and the rest is their responsibility…"

Furthermore, the NGO support the students with any help that is needed regarding their apprenticeships before they start, i.e., documents, insurance, bureaucratic procedures; purchasing books, formal clothes for their job interviews if needed, train tickets to go and return from their job interviews in case it is outside of Vienna, and other financial supports for exceptional cases.

Expert 1: **"…**One of the girls needed special glasses that were quite expensive and she had problems with her eye sight. The insurance would only cover 150 euros so there were 200 more euros that she could not pay. In these cases, we try to be unbureaucratic, so we talked to our CEO and we paid the whole amount for her glasses. In these moments, we try to support them quickly and without any long process behind…"

Expert 1: "…One of the girls was doing an apprenticeship in a kindergarten and she needed to do a swimming exam, so we paid for and organised her swimming classes…"

In addition, every Wednesday afternoon there are workshops organised, which cover a broad range of different topics. The purpose of these workshops is for the students to get prepared for the next steps of entering the labour market. These workshops are normally instructed by experts who volunteer to do it without getting paid. The topics of the workshops include legal status as a trainee, working regulations in Austria, relevant institutions in Austria, financial management, gender-based issues, racism and discrimination issues, and other topics that the students may face in their professional and personal life.

Moreover, during summers there are always extra courses offered by the NGO, which last for six weeks. These courses are taught by the volunteers and the content of these courses depend on the specific needs of the students on each year, i.e., computer skills, extra Mathematics, English and German. Furthermore, there are cultural and sport activities organised for the students every month, i.e., museums, sight-seeing, hiking, swimming, etc.

Expert 1: "… as most of the apprenticeships start in Autumn and the summer break could be quite long, the idea is that the students do not forget everything. And the summer courses are there to ensure a smooth transition from our course to the apprenticeships. For instance, whoever starts in the technical field we offer them more mathematics, so that they hear some things before they start and that not everything is new for them in September…"

Besides, after the apprenticeships are finalised, the advisors still support the students with any professional questions that they may have, i.e., job applications, CVs, administrative assistance, etc.

Additionally, in case the students want to apply for family reunifications, in order for their families to come to Austria, the advisors connect the students to lawyers or NGOs, who have the expertise in this field. And after their families arrive, the advisors would assist them in any questions that they may have and would try to find quick solutions for them, if possible.

At the end of each year, a final report is sent to the sponsors. Among other things, this report includes the list of companies that the target group have started their apprenticeships with, what is the percentage of the students who found their apprenticeships through Lobby 16, the number of the apprenticeships already started and the number of apprenticeships to be started in the coming month(s). In general, the governmental institutions who fund Lobby 16 are impressed by and satisfied with the results and yearly success rate of the NGO, as 80% of their students find apprenticeships every year.

It is important to bear in mind that with this specific target group, there is a need to spend more time, as this certain target group needs a certain kind of support. And we could argue that in most of the cases, it is not enough to write an application to the AMS, which invests a very short amount of time with each person. Therefore, the importance of NGOs such as Lobby 16 is that they invest much more time with each person and they have a personal connection with them.

This is mainly due to the fact that they have more time and less applicants compared to the AMS. Hence, there is a need for more NGOs such as Lobby 16 to assist refugees with labour market integration. This is something that could be learnt from this case study.

4.2.4   Challenges faced by the NGO

There is no need to mention that NGOs such as Lobby 16 also face many challenges on their way. These challenges are as follows.

4.2.4.1   Bureaucratic procedures and lack of funding

For a small NGO like Lobby 16, money is the biggest challenge. Since the funds received by the NGO is project based, it has to be applied for every year. Hence, each year applications need to be submitted for the next years' funding. These applications are time consuming and they require various types of reports and assessments. In addition, there are long phases of approvals to be considered. Moreover, despite the fact that a lot of time and effort need to be invested yearly, the main issue is that there is no guarantee that the sponsorship from the ministry will be granted every year. Besides, there is not only an uncertainty regarding the receipt of the project's funding for the next year but also a lack of certainty with regards to the amount of the fund that will be received. Evidently, this creates a lot of unsureness and unpredictability, which makes it difficult for the NGO to plan appropriately. Furthermore, after receiving the approval, the fund will be received within six to eight months afterwards. Consequently, the money will be paid from the NGO's own financial resources until they receive the fund half a year later. This could create considerable issues for a small NGO such as Lobby 16, as their financial resources are very limited.

Expert 1: "…This is the case for many small NGOs like us, to be faced with the uncertainty regarding receiving funds. But as we do our job quite successfully, we are optimistic that we will receive the fund next year…"

Furthermore, with regards to other donors and sponsors, there are some who demand new ideas and projects every year. And it is sometimes difficult to get their approval for the same amount of money, each year. Therefore, in addition to having a good network, a lot of talks and discussions are required to able to pay for all the costs the NGO faces every year.

Expert 1: "… they say your project is ten years old, we want to hear about innovative new projects. They have this start-up mentality that we do not have. We simply have a project, which is very successful and works really well but for us it does not make sense to invest in a new project just to please some donors and sponsors…"

Expert 1: "…we have some reliable donors for years but we have to sit with them every year and see if they would still support our projects for the next year…"

4.2.4.2   Expectations

Matching the students to the partner companies are sometimes challenging. There are some partner companies who have certain places for apprenticeships reserved for Lobby 16 every year. Occasionally, it is difficult to find the perfect candidate for these reserved places.

Expert 1: "…this year some of the candidates were accepted by three of our partner companies. Of course, it is not easy from our side to tell the partners that we do not have any candidates for them. Especially that some of the companies really see this as a charity. So, for them it is strange to hear that we do not have any candidates for these reserved places…"

There are also cases, where students are matched with apprenticeships that were not their plan in the first place. In these circumstances, there are sometimes unsuccessful stories where candidates are not satisfied with their apprenticeships, they are unsure about whether to continue with it and every so often they quit within the first three months. Evidently, this could be upsetting for the partner companies.

Expert 1: "…Not all the students who start their apprenticeships they really finish it. Most of them do but there are sometimes issues. For instance, last year four of our trainees quit their apprenticeships as their expectations were different…"

On the other hand, it is also important for the company to see whether or not the candidate fits with their expectations. As in the end the company is investing time, money and offers their candidates education and training for three years. Therefore, they clearly expect to have good results and because of that they really evaluate whether the candidate is suitable for them. And due to the mentioned reasons, the first three months is a trial period, where there is a possibility to terminate the contract for both parties, and the idea is for both sides to examine and see whether they fit with each other's expectations.

Expert 1: "…it has happened in a few occasions that the companies have contacted us and expressed their concern that the candidate is not reliable, lacks motivation, comes to work late and is not punctual, is not fulfilling the tasks and simply is not how they imagined them to be but that has happened in only a few cases…"

In addition, Lobby 16 has a responsibility towards their sponsors to have a certain type of success rate every year, with regards to successfully finding apprenticeships for their students. Hence, on the one hand they would like to respect the wishes of the students, who sometimes have unrealistic requests and on the other hand they have a duty towards their sponsors to deliver a certain positive percentage, otherwise they would jeopardise their fundings, sponsorships and ultimately the continuation of their project.

Expert 1: "… Although we do not want to force anybody to do what they do not wish to do, sometimes we have to motivate our students to take on apprenticeships that they are not totally happy with, because we know for their future it is still a much better perspective than not having anything at all. But sometimes it is hard to communicate this with them as it may be frustrating for them to see their expectations and dreams not being fulfilled in that way…"

One of the solutions here is for the candidates to do an internship in the selected company, which normally lasts for two weeks. This is particularly helpful as it will give the candidates a chance to try out and test the job that they are going to do. In addition, it is good feedback for the companies to see whether the candidate fits with their expectations and how they perform in a daily working routine

Expert 1: "…This is what we always recommend to our students, to go to their selected company and have a week or two of internships. For this time, they are excused from the course so that they can attend the internship in order to see the tasks, the environment, etc…"

However, this opportunity has been overshadowed by the Covid 19 pandemic, due to companies not accepting externals in their premises. Consequently, this has resulted in some unsuccessful stories, where the candidates would quit their apprenticeships within the first three months, as they were not allowed to assess the jobs beforehand

Expert 1: "…Last year it was very hard to find internships because of the pandemic. So, there were few possibilities to try out the jobs before. Some companies were extremely careful with having any externals. And that made it hard in a way that our students had to start their apprenticeship without any internships…"

4.2.4.3   Lack of time and staff

Due to the fact that all four advisors are employed on a part time basis and they all have second jobs besides their job at the NGO, the time and effort that they can invest on the projects at Lobby 16 are limited. Hence, they have to prioritise their tasks based on the number of working hours they have. Therefore, there are always opportunity costs to be considered.

Expert 1: "…We never have enough time and working hours. We could connect with much more NGOs and other associations. And this is what we do not do because we have to think twice if we really want to invest our time in networking even though it may make our work easier afterwards. And for some months we are very tight resource wise…"

4.2.4.4   Not being well known

Despite being in operation for about 14 years, the NGO is still not well known in the refugee communities, except for the Afghan refugee community.

Expert 1: "…we are still a bit unknown and that is a bit sad because sometimes you talk to people and they say why did not we hear from you years ago? I knew this teenage refugee and it would have been a perfect fit…"

4.2.4.5   Working with the target group

As mentioned, the target group of Lobby 16 are teenagers and young adults, coming from a refugee background. It is sometimes not easy to work with this target group. This is due to the fact that it is a certain period of their life, where there are a lot of uncertainties and questions in many different aspects and they are overwhelmed and confused by many topics and decisions in their lives. In addition, coming from a refugee background, they often do not have the right guidance next to them. For this target group, communication is often not easy and this could be sometimes challenging for the staff.

4.3   Challenges of young female refugees

4.3.1   Language barriers

Knowing the local language that is spoken in the host country is one of the foremost and essential factors needed in order to attend school, communicate at different levels, find jobs, and ultimately get integrated socially and professionally into the society. Language barriers are one of the most frequently mentioned challenges by all the interview partners.

Nasrin: "…the main challenge is the language and it is still the main challenge…"

Upon arrival in Austria, due to having no knowledge of German, these young teenage refugees attend the middle school for two years without sitting for any exams. What is offered to them additionally is evening German courses after the school hours is finished. This is in particular a big challenge for the target group, as it is very difficult for them to understand anything during the first two years of their school. Therefore, these young girls, learn very little at school during these two years and they get way behind their classmates in terms of having a proper education.

Minoo: "… every day I was going to school and coming back home without understanding anything. I was feeling as if I was deaf and not hearing anything. It was very frustrating and infuriating…"

In addition, in terms of social contacts, it is very difficult for these young teenagers to find friends, as they cannot speak and communicate with others properly.

Tala: "… I was always alone during the lunch break. There were no foreign students at school but me and I felt so alone…"

Therefore, they find themselves isolated and lonely in an environment, which is very much different to what they have been used to, with different language, culture and norms of life. Consequently, this has a tremendous impact on their mental and psychological health on those early and critical stages of life.

Leila: "… I was suddenly in this whole new environment with new people who do not speak the same language, who look different, think different, have a completely different culture, I was so scared and lost among them…"

In addition, there were incidents of bullying and racism reported by three of the interview partners, where they have been oppressed by one or more classmates. Unfortunately, due to the language barriers, they were not able to defend themselves and/or report it to their teacher. As a result, they would suffer mentally to a very great extent.

Homa: "… the first year that I was at school I was getting bullied by a few classmates and I could not communicate that to my teacher because apart from being very shy, I could not speak any German or English at the time. I suffered a lot for that…"

Tala: "…. I was getting bullied a lot at school for two years and that was a very unpleasant and traumatising experience for me…"

Leila: "… especially during the first year of school, there was one girl, who for some reason that I did not even know would try to intimidate me to get into some sort of a fight with her…"

Moreover, due to language barriers, most of these young refugees are not able to attend secondary school, sit for high school diploma exams and hence university after that. This would evidently limit their career objectives and alternatives. None of the interview partners in this research were able to go to Gymnasium specifically due to this reason, and they have either attended the one year programme at a Polytechnische Schule (which is a type of school that bridges the gap between the end of the secondary level in the 8th grade and the end of compulsory education in the 9th grade and it focuses more on vocational training for one year), or they have attended the Volkshochschule (which is an institution for adult education) in order to receive their nine-year school certificate.

Nevertheless, there are some ambitious female refugees (two out of the interview partners), who are willing to study further and have already started with studying for high school diploma exam (Matura) alongside their apprenticeships, as their aim is to go to university and open more doors for themselves in their career paths. This is in particular difficult as it requires extra time and effort.

Nasrin: "…I just started learning for the high school diploma exam. I attend evening courses after work, it has been very difficult but my aim is to go to university and that is the only way to achieve my goal…"

Here, it is important to note that language barriers do not only make the earlier stages of school and education more difficult, but also at the later stages of finding a job and starting to work, there are many challenges that are rooted in the language barriers. Some of these challenges include not understanding the customers due to different dialects that exists in the German language in Austria, having to ask the customers to repeat what they said, and ultimately getting dismissed from the job.

Nasrin: "… I got dismissed from my job at a telecommunication company because of my German level…"

The response of Lobby 16 to the challenge:

As mentioned before, Lobby 16 responds to the different challenges that are faced by these young refugees. In response to this particular challenge, in addition to the regular German language courses offered to the students, in case of a need for extra languages courses, the advisors at Lobby 16 try to find their students extra classes where they could take German courses for free. Moreover, for additional support, the volunteers at Lobby 16 offer the students free German courses, if required.

4.3.2   Socio-cultural barriers

4.3.2.1   Family issues

Generally, women with refugee background who come from male dominated cultures (i.e., Afghanistan) are often settled in their own communities and they usually live with their own families, where they find themselves in some sort of a family bubble. Although living with their families could create a supportive outlook in their lives, it also creates challenges for them in different ways. Normally, there are certain expectations that comes from their families, which creates different challenges for them. These family expectations could relate to the type of job, working hours, the field and the industry associated with the job, the distance to and from the workplace to their home, etc. Hence, there are often restrictions and limitations coming from the families depending on their specific expectations, which creates a barrier for them and hinders them from finding and entering their desired career path.

Moreover, it is often difficult for the families to allow their daughters to enter the jobs that are more well received as being "male dominated", i.e., jobs in the technical field. Hence, they are often deprived from pursuing a career path that is not in line with their families' expectations.

Tala: "… my mother and father could not comprehend that a girl could also work in the technical field and so they did not allow me to start an apprenticeship as an electrical technician, so I had to choose another career path which is also fine but not the one that I wanted to do…".

As mentioned, the distance to and from work, plays a great role in the parents' decisions. In case, the distance is far from home, especially if it is in another city, there is usually a great resistance and refusal to allow their daughters to pursue the job.

Homa: "… I got accepted for an apprenticeship outside of Vienna and that means that I had to attend the professional school (Berufsschule) for 8 weeks outside of Vienna. My parents did not like the idea of me being in another city without my family for 8 weeks. And because of that they did not allow me to take the apprenticeship…"

In addition, the working hours play a crucial role in this regard. In case there are late working hours, it is almost impossible for the families to allow their daughters to take the job.

Nasrin: "…I got accepted for an apprenticeship at a hotel and because of the late working hours in the evenings, my father did not allow me to take the apprenticeship…"

Moreover, the voices of families are louder and stronger, when it comes to their daughters compared to their sons as they want to protect their daughters in a different way. More often than not, families have specific expectations from their daughters in terms of how they as women should behave in certain ways in the society and how to define and form their identities. Consequently, there are certain rules to be followed by these young women, imposed by their families. These cleared out rules would lead to them having less freedom and flexibility to experience and try out new things in life.

One of the issues that arise here is the topic of marriage. What parents habitually expect from their daughters is for them to get married. They do not see jobs and careers as a main priority for their daughters' lives and they do not see its importance and significance for their daughters' personal development. Hence, there are questions arising on the topic of what the right order of things are for these young women.

Minoo: "… when I wanted to start my apprenticeship, my parents told me that I should get married first, and it took me some time to convince them that I want to work and it is not the time for me to get married…"

In addition, young women with refugee background coming from a country such as Afghanistan often find themselves in a situation, where in terms of having a career, they have less role models, compared to the young men in their culture. Consequently, they have less people that they can look up to as many of them come from male dominated cultures, where their mothers or aunts have not worked outside of their home, and hence there are less professional

background that they can follow. Hence, affected by the surrounding environment that they live in, these young girls are curious to know and learn about the way women in Austria live their professional and personal lives.

Expert 1: "… sometimes they ask us about how women in Austria live their lives professionally and personally, as they do not have female role models to look up to…"

Furthermore, families are not competent enough in different aspects to support and help their children, mainly due to the fact that they are not familiar with the work and educational system in Austria, they have sometimes no or little knowledge of the German language; and in many occasions, it is the other way around, where the parents need the support of their children with translation, administrative and other tasks.

Therefore, due to all the reasons mentioned above, some of these young women are lost in a sense of how they should enter the labour market and what field of work they should choose. This is particularly evident when comparing the male and female students at Lobby 16. Due to the fact that these young men are freer and more flexible when it comes to trying out different jobs, they often have a clearer idea of their career path and field of work.

Expert 1: "…compared to our female students, our male students had more chances to make their own decisions, they had more freedom, flexibility and therefore chances to try out new things and because of that, some have more professional experiences, i.e., internships. As a result, sometimes for them it is clearer what they want and which field of work they would like to enter…"

On the other hand, looking at those young refugees who have arrived in Austria unaccompanied and without their families (one of the interview partners), additional issues and problems arise, depending on many different aspects. In addition to not being allowed to visit their families for many years (until they receive their citizenship), they are often worried about their families back home due to them living in unsafe regions. Moreover, they find themselves in a situation, where they have to learn to be independent, live on their own and take care of themselves at a very young age. This, particularly puts them in a very vulnerable position in terms of mental health issues.

Leila: "… I haven't seen my family for about seven years now. It has been very difficult. And I just had to learn to take care of myself and be independent since I was 15…"

Leila: "…when Taliban took over the country, I was so worried about my family and I felt so helpless because I could not do anything for them. I was not able to sleep and concentrate at my work…"

The response of Lobby 16 to the challenge:

As the NGO expanded their student network from only unaccompanied young male refugees to also young male and female refugees, who arrived in Austria accompanied by their parents, the need to connect to the parents and families and getting in touch with them became more visible. Hence, every year they organise an event with the parents and families for them to get to know each other and to answer their questions and clarify their doubts, worries and uncertainties. Most of the parents are not familiar with the Austrian educational system and the structure of apprenticeships and there are sometimes wrong information circulating in some migrant communities, which are not correct and needs to get cleared out. Hence, there is a need for these families to get clarified on this matter and get familiar with its advantages and benefits for their children. In addition, the advisors believe that they should build trust with the families and make them understand that they are all in this together, they have the same objective of assisting their daughters in choosing the right career and professional path.

Expert 1: "…There are often wrong information circulating in some migrant communities, which are not true and there is nobody to verify this information, so we are very happy when parents address us, talk to us and ask us questions…"

In response to the challenge of not having a female role model, every year lobby 16 organises events where the young women from previous years, who are already working and/or having apprenticeships in different fields meet with the current students. This is specifically a good response to this challenge, as it creates a direct connection between these young women, where they can look up to their peers, with similar background and in the similar age group, who are pursuing a career path that they can as well pursue.

4.3.2.2   Hijab

When it comes to the topic of religion, women face certain challenges that are specific to them. One of the biggest challenges for many female refugees coming from an Islamic religious background is the issue of wearing a hijab. Evidently, hijab is one of the most prominent religious symbols of Muslim women and various female refugees, specifically from Afghanistan and Syria, wear headscarves. Based on the interviews conducted in this research, this target group often feels discriminated and uncomfortable in the eyes of the other people, not only in the workplace and school but also in the society and day-to-day encounters.

Nasrin: "… I remember I could feel that people are looking at me in a strange way at school, as I was the only one with hijab in the classroom, or when I was entering the bus or the train…"

For many companies in Austria, acceptance of female applicants with hijab is still a very big topic and they are often unsure whether or not to hire someone who wears a headscarf. Hence, there is often a strong hesitance among some firms about hiring this target group. Nevertheless, it is important to mention that companies are more flexible in accepting female candidates with hijab, if the job does not require any direct contact with customers. i.e., jobs more related in the

technical field. However, when it comes to direct contact with the customers, companies are more sceptical on whether to hire this target group. i.e., jobs in supermarkets, banks, etc.

As it has been evident in the case of Lobby 16, some companies particularly ask the NGO not to send them the applicants who wear hijab.

Expert 1: "…For instance, there are three companies within our partners' groups who have specifically told us not to send them any applicants who wear hijab…"

There are also occasions, where companies would ask whether it would be possible for the female candidates not to wear hijab during the working hours. However, the fact of the matter is that this is a religious decision that these women have made and for them to remove their hijab for eight hours per day is unrealistic.

Expert 1: "… there were instances where the companies offer these young women a position on the condition that they do not wear hijab during the working hours …"

At the same time, it is important to note that it would be more suitable for this target group not to work in an environment, where they would feel is unfriendly or it would make them uncomfortable. Therefore, even if they were to be accepted, not every company has the suitable environment for this target group.

As a consequence, these young women are often faced with the question of whether or not to include their photo on their CV.

Leila: "… I remember I used to think what if I do not put any photo? Would they ask me for a photo? What if I include my photo and they do not even consider me because of my hijab? …"

As a result of the reasons mentioned above, some of these young women decide to remove their hijab after living in Austria for a while. From the five interviews conducted with this target group, all arrived in Austria with a hijab and all five of them removed their hijab within the first eight months of their arrival in Austria. Even when they decide to remove their hijab, it is often a very unpleasant experience for them in the beginning. Firstly, due to the fact that it is not approved by their families, and therefore they have to hide it from them.

Tala: "… I used to wear my headscarf once I was leaving home and I would remove it on my way to school, because my mother was strongly against it…"

Or in case of not hiding it from their family, they are faced with disagreements and hostile reactions from the side of their parents, which creates a very unpleasant situation for them.

Homa: "…when I removed my hijab my mother was not talking to me for a month. She could not accept the fact that I am not wearing a scarf anymore. It was a very difficult situation for me. On

the one hand I did not want my mother to be upset with me, on the other hand, I did not want to wear the scarf anymore…."

On top of that, these young women find themselves in this situation where they are worried about the perspective of others about them at school or work.

Minoo: "… I remember I was thinking what the others would think about me if I come one day with hijab and the next day without, they would be very confused and it would be very strange for them…"

The response of Lobby 16 to the challenge:

As mentioned, for young women who wear hijab, to find apprenticeships on their own, specifically if they have direct contact with the customers, would be very difficult. However, through lobby 16 and their network of partner companies it would be easier. The advisors at Lobby 16 understand themselves as facilitators whose job is to be present also at these specific moments, where they could help to clear hesitations coming from the companies. They see and understand their position to fight against some anticipations and prejudgements. However, for them it is also sometimes unusual that they have to answer to some odd questions that come from the side of the companies, where they have very little or no understanding of a young refugee's life.

Expert 1: "… I find it sometimes sad that I even have to talk to companies about something as simple as a head scarf. Most of them have no idea about the world a young female refugee lives in…"

Nevertheless, there are some success stories, where these advisors manage, in the end, to convince some companies to accept female candidates with hijab. And eventually, to their surprise, they are satisfied with these candidates.

Expert 1: "…Last year after a long talk with a company, we convinced them to accept a candidate with hijab and they are now very satisfied with her…"

Clearly, these type of success stories and certain experiences with certain candidates, are helpful to the extent that they pave the way for the next year candidates who are in the similar situation. Some companies are gradually arriving at the realisation that the society that they are living in is shifting slightly towards a multicultural environment.

Expert 1: "…This year, with the same company hijab was not even a topic anymore…"

Therefore, there is a gradual development seen in the standpoint of some of the companies, where they are becoming more flexible in accepting female candidates with hijab, as it is evident in the case below.

Expert 1: "… last year, an Austrian company, was very interested in one of our female candidates but at the same time they were hesitant on whether to hire her. They were afraid of racist incidents happening, and that there would be complaints from the customers, resulting in them being not satisfied. There were a lot of talks in the beginning but in the end, they agreed to accept her…"

4.3.2.3 Lifestyle issues

Clearly, challenges that occur in the personal life of this target group would hinder them from performing properly in their professional life. Therefore, we believe that these challenges are as important and they need to be discussed within the scope of this thesis. In general, in terms of cultural and lifestyle issues, there is a gap between the young women and their parents, which is getting bigger throughout time. After living in Austria and attending school for a few years, these young women, who belong to this vulnerable age group of teenagers, find themselves in between different opinions, beliefs, advices, etc., that they receive from their surrounding environment, which among other aspects, it has a lot to do with their cultural standpoints. On the one hand, they are getting impacted by the new society in many different aspects. On the other hand, they deal with a different type of education and cultural viewpoints at home. Consequently, as they get older, this gap gets even bigger, such as the cases below.

Minoo: "… I do not speak with my mother about what I do outside of home, my mother does not understand me at all…"

Nasrin: "… I would like to move in together with my boyfriend but I cannot even ask that from my father because he cannot even imagine that I am in a relationship…"

Furthermore, in this period of life, human beings in general are already troubled with many questions and doubts that they are faced with in life, which makes it already challenging. As a result, this target group often reach to a point, where they are to a certain extent lost in between all the different aspects in their lives. At the same time, they have to find jobs in the same year that they finish school and this situation is very difficult for many of them.

On the other hand, the parents, who came to Austria at a completely different age, evidently do net get integrated into the new society to the same extent as their children do. Mothers (mostly from Afghanistan) usually stay at home; they only connect with their own communities and they often do not speak the German language. Children are in many cases responsible for doing all the translation for their parents, i.e., taking care of the administrative tasks of the household, accompanying their parents for doctor visits, banks, etc., which to a degree hinders them from performing their job and school tasks properly, such as the cases below.

Tala: "…My mother does not speak German and I have to take care of many household things because I'm the oldest child and I speak the language, for paying the bills, bank, doctor visits, etc. and that take some of my time…"

Homa: "…Because my mother does not speak German, I have to help her in different tasks outside of home and that takes time…"

From the parents' perspective, they often feel that they are "losing their children" and they are not able to control them anymore to the scale that they want to and they gradually lose the connection. As these young women get more integrated into the society, the gap between them and their parents gets larger, sometimes to an extent that they do not find any other choice but to break their relation with their family, which is a very distressing experience, such as the cases below.

Tala: "… My older sister does not live with us anymore. She left two years ago because there were a lot of disagreements between her and my mother…"

Expert 1: "… last year, there were three of our female students, who broke their contact with their families due to having extremely different opinions on various aspects in life, and they are trying to build their independent life on their own. Breaking up with your family is a very painful and difficult decision but some of them find it that they have no choice but to go through with it…"

The response of Lobby 16 to the challenge:

For this particular challenge, the NGO supports their students through organising different workshops covering many different topics ranging from personal to professional matters. In addition, for more personal issues, the advisors support the students through one-on-one consultations. Moreover, to tackle the cultural issues resulting from family restrictions, the NGO organises a yearly event with the parents and families in order for them to get to know each other and to answer their questions and clarify their doubts, worries and uncertainties.

4.3.2.4   Female sexuality

When it comes to sexuality, there are different problems that these young women are encountered with, which mostly goes back to their family education and expectations. The issue of women having no sexual relationship until they get married is still a big topic for most of the families. At the same instant, the importance of living a healthy sexual life, which could be equally accepted by their own community is a big issue for most of these young women. It is often very difficult for this target group to communicate about these topics with their families, as these issues are generally perceived as taboo in their culture. Therefore, this puts an extra

pressure on these girls as they cannot be completely themselves at home, such as the cases below.

Expert 1: "… there was a case where a young girl had broken up with her partner, who she had a sexual relationship with and she could not communicate that with her family. They did not even know that she was in a relationship. And this was a very difficult situation for her …"

Expert 1: "… There was another case were one of the young girls was feeling guilty and she was very upset with herself and the decision she made for getting into a relationship. She did not know how and whether she could communicate that with her parents…"

And as mentioned before, there are also occasions that this target group breaks their relation with their family, specifically due to having contrasting beliefs on sensitive matters such as romantic relationships, such as the cases below.

Expert 1: "… there were two of our students who had to break their relation with their families due to having different opinions about relationships in particular. One of them had experienced abuse and violence in her relationship, which was a traumatic experience for her. Nevertheless, her mother could not support and understand her…"

The response of Lobby 16 to the challenge:

In response to this challenge, the NGO supports their students through organising different workshops covering many different topics. In addition, for more personal issues, the advisors support the students through one-on-one consultations. These advisors build a relationship with their students that is very much based on trust and it gives their students the safety and security to talk to them about things that could also be very personal.

4.3.3 Psychological barriers

4.3.3.1 Trauma

The stories of how these young women arrive at Austria are each distinctive in their own way. Within the five interviews conducted with this target group, four of them reached the border of Austria through land transport, and one of them arrived unaccompanied without her parents. These journeys could sometimes be very traumatizing, especially for a young teenage woman. Their dangerous journey of thousands of miles that crosses mountains, rivers, sea, checkpoints and borders starts with paying migrant smugglers, due to lack of other means and in order to reach a safe destination. For these Afghan women who arrived in Austria in 2015 and 2016, their route started with traveling across Pakistan or Iran to Turkey, Greece and into the Balkans and from there to Austria. Although during these journeys, violence is generally more experienced by men than women, due to women being mostly accompanied by their husbands, fathers or brothers; women are not immune from it. These young women have observed violence and

death, they have experienced fear, shock, hunger and injuries. As a consequence of that some are traumatised by what they have experienced and observed during their journey. Below are some examples of the traumas that the interview partners had to endure.

Nasrin: "…When I was 13, I lost my mother, sister and brother in Pakistan. Before I arrive to Austria at the age of 16, I was working as a cleaning lady in Pakistan so that I could survive…"

Leila: "…my sister and I started the journey from Iran to Austria through land transport. I was 15 and my sister was 18. It took us one and half month to arrive in Austria. The whole journey was very traumatising and sometimes dangerous especially the boat trip from Turkey to Greece, where we were much more people than the capacity of the boat and when we set foot in Austria, we could not believe that we were finally there…"

Tala: "…we had to cross the borders at night and when the night watches wouldn't see us. It was very stressful and risky…"

Minoo: "… I injured my ankle on our way in Turkey but we had to go on without any medical attendance…"

Homa: "… It took us one and half months to arrive in Austria from Afghanistan. I still cannot forget what we have seen, done and went through. It was very disturbing, shocking and distressing…"

The response of Lobby 16 to the challenge:

For this particular challenge the advisors at Lobby 16 try to be there for their students to the extent that they can and in rare cases they would refer them to therapists but that happens seldom.

Expert 1: "… in these cases, we try to be there for them but with young women it does not happen so often that we identify that as a need to connect them with therapists…"

Moreover, some of these young refugees who arrived unaccompanied are well connected with SOS Children's Villages, an independent NGO headquartered in Innsbruck, which provides humanitarian and developmental assistance to children in need and protects their interests and rights. Through this NGO, they receive therapies if needed, and they are supported by social workers.

4.3.4 Barriers related to the labour market

Apart from the personal issues, there are obstacles faced by the target group, which are related to the labour market itself.

4.3.4.1 Employer's lack of information about the target group

Generally, there is a lack of information from the side of Austrian companies about this generation of refugees, which came to Austria some years ago, who are here to settle and who are going to be a part of the future of this country. Some companies are sometimes hesitant to accept the young refugees, mainly due to the lack of information that they have about this target group. For these mentioned companies it is sometimes not sensible and reasonable enough to hire a young refugee from a foreign country, where they know nothing about. Especially, due to the fact that for them these are all new experiences and they did not have to deal with these situations before.

Expert 1: "… some of these companies had no contact at all with any person from Afghanistan, Syria, etc. So, for some it is the very first person they ever meet in their lives who is maybe coming from a different region of the world …"

Moreover, there are narratives and viewpoints that exist particularly in media, which are centred on fear of the outsider, based on different aspects including religion, ethnicity and race, language, etc. and these factors could create uncertainty and hesitation for these companies. Hence, once getting contacted by Lobby 16, these companies sometimes raise specific questions, with regards to the candidate's cultural norms, which the advisors of Lobby 16 find odd to answer, such as the case below.

Expert 1: "… once there was a company who asked questions such as: would it be a problem for them if their manager is a woman? Is it ok if we eat ham or drink alcohol in front of them? Do they need a space to pray? … And for me it was strange that I had to answer questions like this…"

However, there have been some successful stories, that after giving chances to this target group, to their surprise, these companies were satisfied in the end, such as the two cases below.

Expert 1: "… there were occasions that after some months, the companies called us and said they are very pleased with the employee and their anticipations were untrue and premature …"

Expert 1: "…there was a case with one of our female students and one of the banks in Austria, where they were really hesitant in the beginning to take her on board as a trainee. They never had any contact with a person from Afghanistan and they had very few or nobody in their trainees' group, who did not speak German as their mother language. So, there was a big and very long process in the beginning. But we managed to get her on board and now they are very satisfied with her. And the years after were much easier because the bank had her as a successful example and for the two years after that they took two more candidates from us…"

Hence, some companies are starting to realise that diversity could also play a great role in their successful outcome. Having employees who speak not just one but different languages, who

come from different cultures, experiences and backgrounds, and stand on their own feet could be beneficial to the companies as well. Therefore, it could be safe to say that in the future, there could be a slight shift in some companies towards a more open-minded enterprise structure.

On the other hand, there are some cases within which companies do not have enough information about the specific issues that this target group may have after being employed. And this lack of information could be problematic for the company after taking this target group on board. It is important to note that there may be topics in the life of a young woman with a refugee background, which are not the typical topics that an Austrian employee may have at that age. Therefore, there are sometimes a gap between what the companies expect and what they actually see after that person is employed. However, this is very specific and stories are very individual from one to another.

Expert 1: "… Some partner companies in the beginning think that they will take a candidate on board, this person will be thankful for being able to do the apprenticeship and education at their company and that's it. But they never think that there may be some topics appearing along the way, due to the specific needs of this target group …"

The response of Lobby 16 to the challenge:

In response to this challenge, the companies who hire the refugees, have Lobby 16 as a support system, in a way that they could contact the NGO with any issues that may arise along the way. Hence, it is not that they would be alone with the new candidates, on the contrary they have Lobby 16 to consult with in case any problem occurs. Hence, they are encountered with candidates that are supported and backed by Lobby 16.

Expert 1: "…sometime the companies contact us and ask if we could have a talk with the trainees due to specific issues, they have encountered with them and we try to solve the issue to the best of our ability…"

4.3.4.2   Refugees' unfamiliarity with customs of job applications

In general, the young refugees face different challenges when applying for different job/apprenticeship positions. Firstly, they do not know how to connect to the companies in Austria in the first place, they do not have enough knowledge on how the application process works in Austria, and how they should present themselves. Such as the cases below.

Minoo: "…I really did not know how the system works here in Austria. How my CV should look like, how I should present myself, etc. …"

Tala: "…in the beginning I was sending a very simple CV to companies. If I knew how to present myself better, I might have had different results…"

Normally, due to being very young, among other reasons, they have not worked before in their home countries and in case some of them have work experiences, it has been a very different system and process. Hence, they send many unsuccessful applications, where they receive close to zero answers.

Nasrin: "…at the start I have sent hundreds of applications but I received no answer…"

Leila: "…I was very unfamiliar with job applications in Austria and nearly most of the applications I was sending were coming back with a negative answer…"

The response of Lobby 16 to the challenge:

As mentioned before, Lobby 16 responds to the different challenges that are faced by these young refugees. In response to this challenge, Lobby 16 supports their students throughout the whole process of job applications. This includes one-on-one consultations as well as different workshops regarding the job applications.

4.3.4.3 Housing

One of the biggest challenges for young refugees is to find accommodations. Housing is a very important aspect and it is very much connected to the professional life of the target group as it has a direct relation to the job performance of these young refugees. The main issue for this target group is money. In general, the income of a person working in apprenticeships low. Therefore, it is often difficult to rent a room with a low salary level, such as the case below.

Nasrin: "… it is really hard to rent a room when the landlord sees your salary is so few…"

The other issue, which plays a big barrier is the regulations related to renting a flat in Austria. In order to rent a flat in Austria, it is required to show the proof of earnings from a job based in Austria and employment status. The employment status includes the current salary slip and the tax information from the previous year. Many of the landlords expect the tenant to be able to prove that they earn three times the amount of the monthly rent. In case the salary is lower than that, there is a need for a guarantor and a letter of guarantee from someone in Austria, such as the case below.

Minoo: "…our salary was too low and we were not able to find a guarantor…"

Leila: "…I lived in a refugee camp for six years. It was very difficult to live there but it was easier for me than finding a place on my own…"

The response of Lobby 16 to the challenge:

As mentioned before, Lobby 16 responds to the different challenges that are faced by these young refugees. However, in terms of housing, Lobby 16 has very limited resources and they can only help their students partly.

Expert 1: "…the housing for us is also a big challenge…"

What they can offer is to advice their students on where they should go in order to get consulted for housing, i.e., other NGOs such as Diakonie, which is a non-governmental organisation providing worldwide support to victims of war, displacement and natural disasters. In addition, they organise small workshops, where they teach their students how to write emails, how to present themselves when they would like to apply for a room in a shared flat, etc. In addition, the advisors ask the volunteers if they know about any families who would rent rooms to their students, such as the case below.

Expert 1: "… last year, we could find for one of our students a flat from one of the volunteers with a very good price, but this is an exception…"

In addition, there are rare occasions where a company who offers the target group an apprenticeship is very engaged and motivated to the extent that they assist them with finding a flat. They understand that with this specific target group, who are often alone in dealing with their life challenges, it is not just the apprenticeship but it is the whole package, where many different topics appear along the way, such as the case below.

Expert 1: "…we have a partner company who helps their young refugees with finding a flat…"

4.4   Successful stories and role models

The following are the examples of some of the successful stories by the young female refugees who have been assisted with the help of Lobby 16 to not only find employment in their desired professions but to climb up the ladder and get themselves promoted. These successful stories could act as role models for the current and future generations of people with refugee background and give them the motivation needed to walk this path and pursue a career in their preferred field.

Expert 1: "… there are many successful stories. Many companies call us and they say they are very satisfied with the candidates as they are very motivated…"

Expert 1: "… we had a successful young student from Somalia, who has finished his apprenticeship with ÖBB and now is responsible for the whole department of one of the train stations in Vienna…"

Expert 1: "… one of our other former students is now a branch manager at one of Spar Supermarkets…"

Some students study for diploma exams on the side of their apprenticeships (two of the interview partners)

Expert 1: "… two of our female students, who started their apprenticeships at ÖBB have been very successful. It was the first time that we sent our female candidates to this technical field and for one of them hijab was a big topic. It was difficult for them in the beginning, as it was a male dominated field. But they were in the same team and they supported each other throughout the whole apprenticeship. They both even took the high school diploma exam and passed it. For the girls coming from these two communities of Somalia and Afghanistan it is a quite unusual path to end up being a female electrical technician in a railway company in Austria but they managed it successfully…"

Expert 1: "…one of our other female candidates, was the first candidate of ours, who ever found an apprenticeship in a bank. The bank had never any contact from someone from Afghanistan. Now the bank is extremely happy with her and we have received extra ordinary feedback from her manager that she is one of the top trainees they have in the whole company. She is always well prepared and works harder than other trainees…"

Expert 1: "…one of our other female candidates, who is doing an apprenticeship in a telecommunication company, being the only female employee in the branch. The branch manager was very satisfied with her and hired her immediately after the apprenticeship…"

Expert 1: "… as they know that there might be issues concerning languages, discrimination, etc., many of them think that they have to work double as hard as other Austrians to be successful…"

4.5   Conclusion

As it has been evident in this chapter, in order to get integrated into the labour market, the young female refugees are faced with different barriers, ranging from personal issues such as psychological barriers of undergoing traumatising experiences; language barriers of not speaking an adequate level of German; socio-cultural barriers that mostly comes from the side of their families, to barriers associated with the labour market itself, such as lack of information from both sides of employers and refugees.

In order to integrate this target group into the labour market, these barriers need to be addressed properly by different actors within the governance system. One of the most important actors here are non-governmental organisations such as Lobby 16, who are working towards this aim and have success stories to tell. It is important that initiatives such as this grows so that more young female refugees could have the chance and opportunity to participate in the society and the economy in Austria.

5 CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary

There is no need to mention that a part of the society should be represented with qualified workers in different firms, companies and organisations. There are many young female individuals with refugee background, who arrived in Austria in the past years, and are going to stay and settle in the country. Hence, it should be in one way or another customary to have this target group as qualified employees within the companies in Austria. Indeed, on their journey towards labour market integration, these young women, are faced with different barriers that are not only related to the labour market in general, but also to their personal lives in particular. These challenges include language barriers; psychological barriers such as trauma, stress and anxiety due to uncertainties with their status in the host country; barriers related to the labour market such as refugees' unfamiliarity with customs of job applications in Austria, as well as employers' lack of information about the target group. And last but not least, the socio-cultural barriers, which is one of the biggest obstacles for these young women, including hijab, family issues, gender related issues, lifestyle issues, female sexuality, etc.

Here, 'governance' plays an important role and within the governance actors, non-governmental organisations are important facilitators in addressing the challenges faced by this target group. The case of the NGO, Lobby 16, shows that they still lack resources to address all the barriers faced by the target group. Nevertheless, they tackle some of those important barriers by attending to those needs of the target group that are within their scope of resources.

To address the language barriers, in addition to the regular German language courses offered to the students, they find their students extra classes, where they could take German courses for free. Moreover, the volunteers at Lobby 16 offer the students free German courses. To address the family issues, they organise events with parents and families for them to get to know each other and to answer their questions and clarify their doubts, worries and uncertainties. In response to the challenge of not having a female role model, they organise events where the young women from previous years, who are already working in different fields meet with the current students. This is specifically a good response to this challenge, as it creates a direct connection between these young women, where they can look up to their peers, with similar background and in the similar age group, who are pursuing a career path that they can as well pursue.

The advisors at Lobby 16 understand themselves as facilitators whose job is to be present also at specific moments, where they could help to clear hesitations coming from the companies, regarding issues such as Hijab. They understand their position to fight against some anticipations and prejudgements. This has resulted in some success stories, where companies have been

convinced to accept female candidates with hijab. Clearly, these type of success stories could pave the way for the next candidates, who are in the similar situation.

To address the lifestyle issues, the NGO supports their students through organising different workshops covering different topics ranging from personal to professional matters, in addition to one-on-one consultations. The advisors build a relationship with their students that is very much based on trust and it gives them the safety and security to talk to them also about personal matters. Nevertheless, with regards to psychological barriers, the NGO does not have enough resources to help the target group, as it is outside of their scope of expertise.

In addition, the study shows that the NGO plays an important role in the labour market integration of the target group by playing an intermediary role between companies and refugees. The companies who hire the refugees, have Lobby 16 as a support system, in a way that they could contact the NGO with any issues that may arise along the way. Hence, they are encountered with candidates that are supported and backed by the NGO. Moreover, Lobby 16 supports their students throughout the whole process of job applications, including one-on-one consultations as well as different workshops. It is important to bear in mind that there is indeed the need and necessity for other future refugee-focused NGOs in Austria, which could act as valuable tools to address the challenges faced by refugees. The project at Lobby 16 is a successful model to be replicated & further developed to address more of those barriers faced by this target group.

Some research occasionally and unintentionally, further victimises refugee populations. Within this field of research, it is important to take a more strengths-based approach. This means rather than viewing this population as victims, which often warrants pity, it is essential to look at the values, skills set, experiences and cultural intelligence that they bring with them into the host societies. It is important to see the employability of this target group and consider them as potentially valuable members of the society. In other words, it is necessary to bear in mind that many individuals, who immigrate to a new country bring with them a somewhat worldliness and cultural intelligence that should be valued and not looked at as something that needs to be changed, in order to fit in. Moreover, this population is limited in the vocational training and job opportunities that they are offered. This is an unfortunate matter, in view of the fact that they have different potentials to offer to the new society in various different ways. Hence, limiting this population to the jobs that are not fully utilising their strengths in a meaningful way, is not only disadvantageous for the target group but also for the host society.

If the governments of the host societies, shift their perspective and look at it with an attitude of 'they are one of us', this would further facilitate them to better support this target group in a more welcoming, positive, and reassuring way. By utilising a more holistic approach, the policy makers could actively make an attempt to integrate this population into the labour market and

the society, instead of viewing them as 'others' and someone to feel sorry for, which only further contributes to the trauma that they are already going through.

For companies in Austria, who are considering hiring refugees, in case they are approached by any candidates and receive any applications, if they really give chances in a true sense of the word, and not just making references about respecting diversity, they could see promising results and outcomes. Many of the refugee candidates are very ambitious and clear about their goals and career objectives. In addition, coming from a refugee background it is clear for them that they have to work harder than a native Austrian in order to be successful. They are used to hardships and difficulties and therefore they are more resilient when it comes to dealing with complex and tough situations at work. And that is something that would distinguish them particularly with other candidates. Hence, companies are often very satisfied with them after they recruit these candidates.

It is important to bear in mind that it is not about how their picture look like, whether they have hijab or not, where the person comes from, what their mother language is. It is rather about their skills and knowhow that they bring with them. It could be in the company's interests if they actually give the person a chance to sit in front of them and talk, or to do even an internship in order to examine the person's potentials and see whether this person fits with their expectations or not. There are many potentials that young refugees could bring into the companies. It is for sure advantageous that an employee in a company speaks different languages, has had maybe a troubled life but she/he has made a lot of decisions until now, took a lot of responsibilities and could, among other things, bring in diversity to the company. In addition, for many companies this is also a possibility to learn about different countries and cultures. And this could in a way, in the best case, fight against prejudice and negative pictures that some people may have toward a certain population such as Afghanistan. There are cases where one single positive and successful experience (i.e., having an employee, who the company is very satisfied with) could be enough to alter the picture and perspective that some people have in their mind towards a specific country, culture, etc.

For the young refugees themselves, going through apprenticeships could give them a good base and a broader perspective of their future professional life. It is an opportunity for them to not end up in low paid jobs, but to earn appropriate qualifications so that they can climb up the ladder of their desired career path and to have better salaries in the long run. Furthermore, to have successful young refugees working in their desired positions as professional role models and pioneers could give the other generations of people with refugee and migrant background the courage, motivation and identification that with effort it is possible to walk this path and climb up the ladder and to also guide other people behind them, no matter where in the world they come from.

For other future refugee-focused NGOs, the project at Lobby 16 is a successful model which could be replicated and further developed in different ways. Many companies search for good candidates for their apprenticeships each year and as mentioned for some companies in certain fields (i.e., electro-technical jobs, installations, paintings, etc.), it is often difficult to find suitable applicants every year. Here, NGOs such as Lobby 16 act as a tool to find appropriate applicants for these firms. Hence, this could be a win-win situation and a good match between these companies and the refugee candidates whom apprenticeship is a good path to start their career in Austria.

5.2 Implications for relevant stakeholders

All the implications listed here are retrieved from one single case study analysis and therefore cannot be generalised to other NGOs active in the field. The single case study analysis of the NGO brought insights into these implications, which could be perceived as vague, since it is only valid for one case study. Therefore, these implications would need to be tested in further research. On the other hand, it is important to bear in mind that this single case study provides an indication that is very relevant. Therefore, this can be a good starting point for future research, to conduct a broader study by including multiple case studies and test these implications, which could also be understood as hypotheses.

Future research could also focus on exploring other facilitating actors such as social businesses, who are focused on refugee employment. In addition, a comparative study could be conducted based on multiple case studies of different refugee focused NGOs. Moreover, further studies should focus on what are the next steps, and what could be done after this target group gets integrated into the labour market in Austria. The study could expand to include target groups in both genders in other age groups. It would also be interesting to conduct a research in 10 years, to see to what extent this target group have been integrated into the labour market in Austria.

5.2.1 Lobby 16

5.2.1.1 To build up a better relation with the families of the target group

In order to target the problems that these young refugees are facing with regards to their families, it would be beneficial to build up a better and more stable relation with their parents and families. This would help the advisors of Lobby 16 to understand better the position of the families and their needs and expectations on one hand and to tackle the issues of the young refugees in a more precise way on the other hand. This could be done through organising more meetings with the parents in order to have more contacts with them and to work closely with them instead of working against each other.

5.2.1.2   To expand the number of their candidates

As the concept of the NGO works in a very organised and competent way and the results have been promising for many years, and also due to the fact that some years they do not have enough candidates for some companies; it would be recommendable for the NGO to open more places and to expand their number of candidates. For instance, from 40 candidates to 60 candidates in the first year and if successful to double it the next year to 80 candidates. Of course, this would depend on the fact that most of their students would find apprenticeships during that year.

5.2.1.3   To expand the number of their staff

Firstly, to employ their staff as a full-time basis instead of part time. This would require the staff to have their full attention to the job and not to have a second job somewhere else. This would mean that they would need to increase the number of their staff and to increase the working hours of their current staff, which signifies the request for more fund from the main donor(s).

5.2.1.4   To offer extra courses for the diploma exam

In addition, they could offer courses for the more ambitious students who are planning to study further and sit for diploma exams.

5.2.1.5   To have an equal number of candidates from both genders

To reach a 50-50 target in their application process, meaning to accept 50% female candidates and 50% male candidates, in order to have more gender equality within their candidate pools.

5.2.1.6   To cover a broader range of age group

Although for getting accepted at apprenticeships there is no age limit, it is hard to find apprenticeships for candidates over the age of 22-23. In Austria, apprenticeships are done normally between the ages of 15 to 19.

Therefore, in order to accept candidates in other age groups (over 23 years of age), the NGO could expand their project beyond finding apprenticeships.

5.2.1.7   To build up a bigger network and long partnerships with different companies in Austria

There is no doubt about the fact that the more long-term partnerships are built with a broader network of companies, the better it is for the future of the NGO and the young refugees who are assisted by Lobby 16. Consequently, the young refugees are faced with a wider range of jobs that they could choose from. On the other hand, more companies could also benefit from this

network and long-term partnership. Bearing in mind that it is important to find the target group a specific education and not just jobs.

5.2.2 Government

5.2.2.1 To finance associations and NGOs in a longer perspective

A lot of time, effort and resources need to be invested every year to write a thirty page of application form to the governmental authorities in order to get funded for the next year's project. Evidently, this is a process that is not efficient and could be avoided. This is a problem faced by numerous NGOs that need to apply for funding each year again and again. Among other things, this could create uncertainty and unpredictability for the employees of the NGO, putting them in a situation within which they are not sure about whether or not they are going to be employed the next year.

5.2.2.2 To Permit asylum seekers to work during the time that their asylum application is being processed.

As mentioned, asylum seekers are not allowed to work until their application process is finalised and it is decided what type of residence permit will be given to them. In some cases, it takes up to five years for some applications to go through. During this time, the target group is only allowed to attend limited hours of German language courses, and to do volunteer work, they do not have much contact within the society, and some start doing illegal jobs as the only alternative of working. This could create a lot of psychological damage for the target group. In addition, there is a lot of potential that could be utilised during this time and for the target group to contribute effectively to the economy but instead it is going to waste.

Hence, issuance of work permit for asylum seekers would prevent this target group from doing illegal jobs. This could be a win-win situation, where it provides for the target group to play a part in the economy until their application process is finalised.

5.3 Limitations

As mentioned before, the original intention of the empirical research; which was a multiple case study analysis of different organisations active in the field of refugee integration, did not lead towards answering the research questions, mainly due to the fact that the target group was not tackled. Although a lot of time and effort were invested with data collection, the flexibility of the qualitative method was driven by the necessity to adapt the study according to the missing link to the target group of young female refugees. Therefore, the conscious decision was to adapt the research design to a single case study.

Indeed, single case study analysis has its limitations. The most important critique to single case study analysis is generalisability or external validity, which is the extent to which the findings of

a study can be applied and generalised to other cases, situations and individuals. And with a single case study, it is difficult to generalise the findings from one case study to other settings. Moreover, there is a risk of bias, as the researcher is only hearing the opinions of one single NGO. In addition, personal opinions and preferences of the single case may influence the research.

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Appendix 1: Consent form

Consent to take part in research

- I.. voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I understand that participation involves answering personal questions.
- I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
- I agree to my interview being audio-recorded.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
- I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.
- I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in the dissertation.
- I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in the position of the student Yasaman Majidi until the exam board confirms the results of her dissertation.
- I understand that a transcript of my interview in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for two years from the date of the exam board.
- I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Signature of research participant

Signature   Date

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Signature of researcher: Yasaman Majidi

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

Signature   Date

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Appendix 2: Interview schedule

6.1   Interview with the NGO

- **General rules**

  - Give a summary and description of the thesis, outline the aim and purpose of the interview
  - Thank them for their time and their willingness to answer the questions
  - Agreement to record the interview: Ask, if you may record the interview
  - Confidential treatment of data: Inform that all data will be used anonymous and that data are treated confidentially
  - Ask them to sign the consent form
  - Ask if they have any further questions

- **Warm up**

  - Can you please tell me who you are and briefly explain what your position and role in the organisation is?
  - What was the initial/original motivation/intention for founding this organisation?
  - What is your general understanding of labour market integration of female refugees?
  - And how would you estimate your organisation's contribution to labour market integration of female refugees in Austria?
  - Why do you think it is important to enable labour market integration for female refugees?
  - What do you think are the factors that promote labour market integration of female refugees?

- **General information about the NGO**

  - How would you describe the main field of the organisation?
  - Since when is the organisation operating? When was it founded?
  - What type of organisation is it?
  - How many employees do you have? Do you have volunteers working for you as well?
  - What is the source of your capital?
  - Who are the targeted recipients of your organisation?

- **Initiatives taken by the company**

- Can you please describe the initiatives taken by your organisation in order to promote the participation of female refugees in the Austrian labour market?
    - What are the efforts/activities/contributions of your organisation to labour market integration of female refugees?
- Do you offer any extra services/supports to your female students? If yes, could you please describe how these supports could help the female refugees to get integrated in the labour market?
- Are you actively promoting your services for female refugees in order to help them get an access to the labour market? Or are female refugees proactively approaching you?
- Are the female refugees you help to be employed overqualified for their jobs? Or do they match with the job criteria? If yes, what do you think is the reason for that?
- What are the types of jobs that female refugees are getting employed at? i.e., shift work, night work, temporary or permanent employment, etc.?

- **Challenges**

- What do you think are the main challenges for female refugees to get integrated into the labour market? How does your organisation work to restrain these challenges?
- What are the main challenges for you as a non-governmental organisation to integrate female refugees into the labour market?
- How do you respond to the mentioned challenges?
- What are the factors that hinder labour market integration of female refugees?

- **Governmental policies**

- How do governmental policies help or hinder your activities as you grew your organisation?
- Do/Have you receive/received government assistance in the form of subsidies, tax breaks, or other measures?
- Which areas of legal legislations/policy reforms should the government of Austria focus on in order to promote labour market integration of female refugees?
- Are there any areas that you think your organisation could have an influence on government's actions?

- **Information about female refugees**
- In what kind of jobs are female refugees employed in Austria? How do these jobs match with their qualifications?
- Apart from their status as a refugee what are the gender related issues that female refugees are facing in order to get integrated?

- **Training**

- What available training opportunities do you have for female refugees?
- Are there any difficulties that you encounter for training?
- How are individual strengths promoted in your organisation?
- In what areas is further training necessary?
- Is there any training regarding cultural differences?
- Is there any language training?

- **Language**

- What is the importance of the German language at your organisation?
- In what language do you mainly speak at your organisation?
- Are there any difficulties to communicate with the refugees due to language barriers?

- **Closing**
- What advice would you give to companies who are considering hiring female refugees?
- Please, add any ideas or thoughts or share any success story regarding the topic we have discussed

6.2 Interview with the female refugees

- **General rules**

- Give a summary and description of the thesis, outline the aim and purpose of the interview
- Thank them for their time and their willingness to answer the questions
- Agreement to record the interview: Ask, if you may record the interview
- Confidential treatment of data: Inform that all data will be used anonymous and that data are treated confidentially
- Ask them to sign the consent form
- Ask if they have any further questions

- **Warm up**

- Can you please tell me who you are and briefly explain what do you do professionally?
- What is your general view on NGO's contribution to labour market integration of female refugees in Austria?
- What is your understanding of labour market integration of female refugees?

- **General information about the interviewee**

- Since when are you living in Austria?

- When was your refugee status confirmed?
- How long did it take for you to find a job after you were legally allowed to work in Austria?
- Since when are you working in this company?
- Would you like to share your story about how you arrived in Austria and how your life has been since then?

- **Personal opinion**

- What do you think is important to enable labour market integration of female refugees?
- What are the factors that would help you to get integrated into the labour market?
- What are the factors that make/has made labour market integration for you difficult?
- Do you need support with anything? If yes, by whom? what kind of support?
- What has Lobby 16 helped you with?
- How do you feel about working at this company? What do you think about the working environment there?

- **Challenges**

- What are the main challenges you face as a female refugee to get integrated into the labour market?
- What are the challenges you face as a woman in your day-to-day life?
- How does the company work to restrain these challenges for you?
- How do you respond yourself to the mentioned challenges?
- Do you think female employees are valued in the same manner as male employees at this company?

- **Social environment**

- Have you made friends here? Austrian/international?
- Do you believe having social contacts has/could helped/help you to integrate better in the society?
- Are there any people working here that come from your country? If yes, what is it like to work with them?

- **Language**

- What is the importance of the German language for working at this company?
- In what language do you mainly speak at work?
- Were the German language courses at Lobby 16 enough for you? Or do you need more courses?

- What is it like to speak with costumers (if applicable)?
- How can your company support you in learning German?

- **Culture**

- What was it like working here for you at the beginning?
- Have you encountered any particular difficulties?
- How is the Austrian culture different from yours?
- How do you deal with the cultural differences?
- Was there once a particular situation due to cultural differences?

- **Work experience**

- Does your job match with your qualifications?
- Do you feel that you are overqualified for your job?
- Have you worked in this sector before?
- Were you able to use previous work experiences?
- Was your previous knowledge recognised by the company?
- What did/do you need more support with?

- **Training**

- What did the training look like when you started working here?
- Where there any particular challenges/difficulties that you encounter? If yes, please explain
- What are the available training opportunities offered by the company?
- In what areas do you think further training opportunities are necessary?
- Is there any training regarding cultural differences?
- Is there any language training?

- **Closing**
- What advice would you give to other companies who are considering hiring female refugees?
- Please, add any ideas or thoughts or share any success story regarding the topic we have discussed