



Employment and Integration

The Role of the Private Sector in Refugees' New Lives in Bulgaria

17 November 2021
Sofia

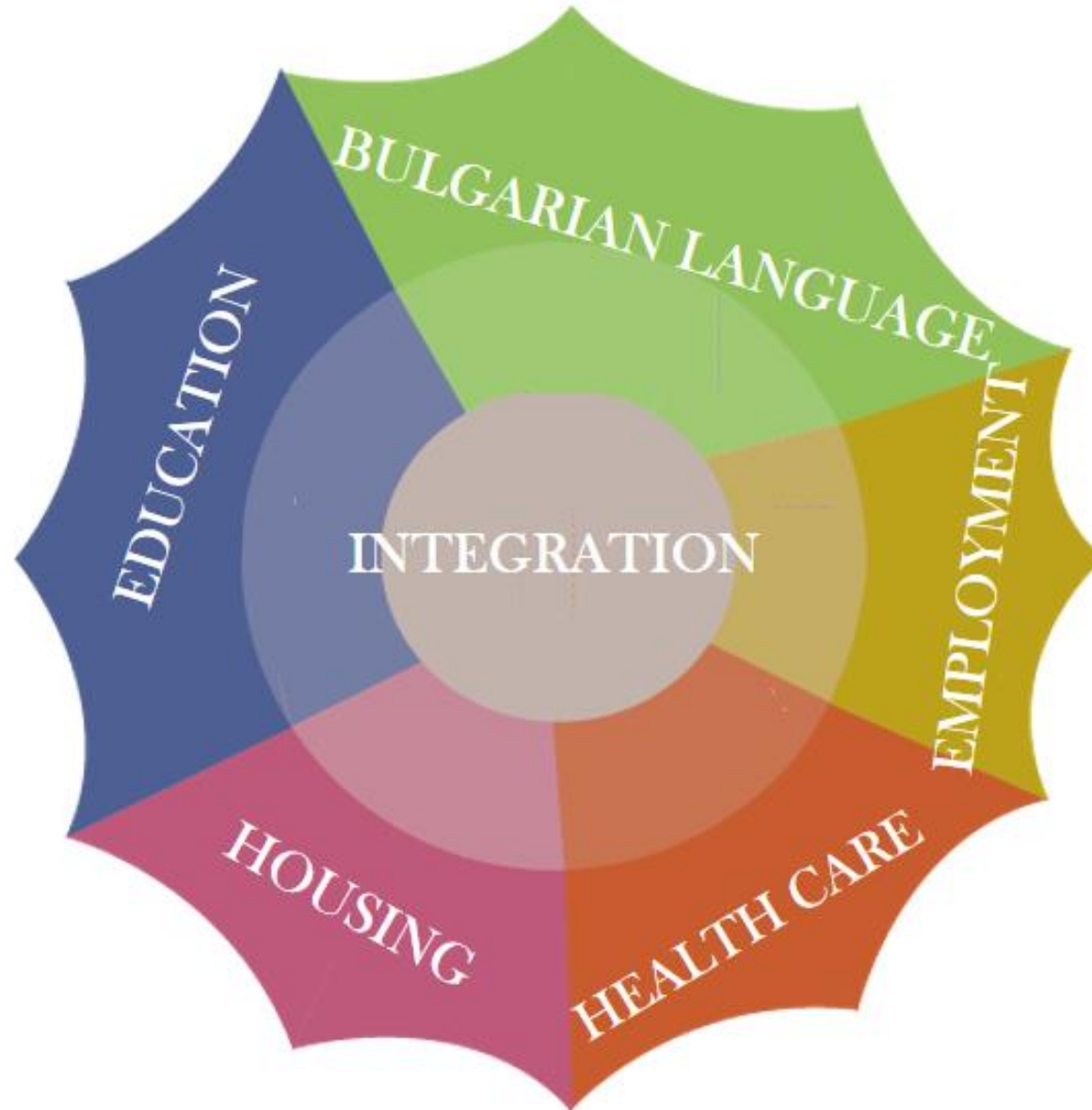
What is Integration?



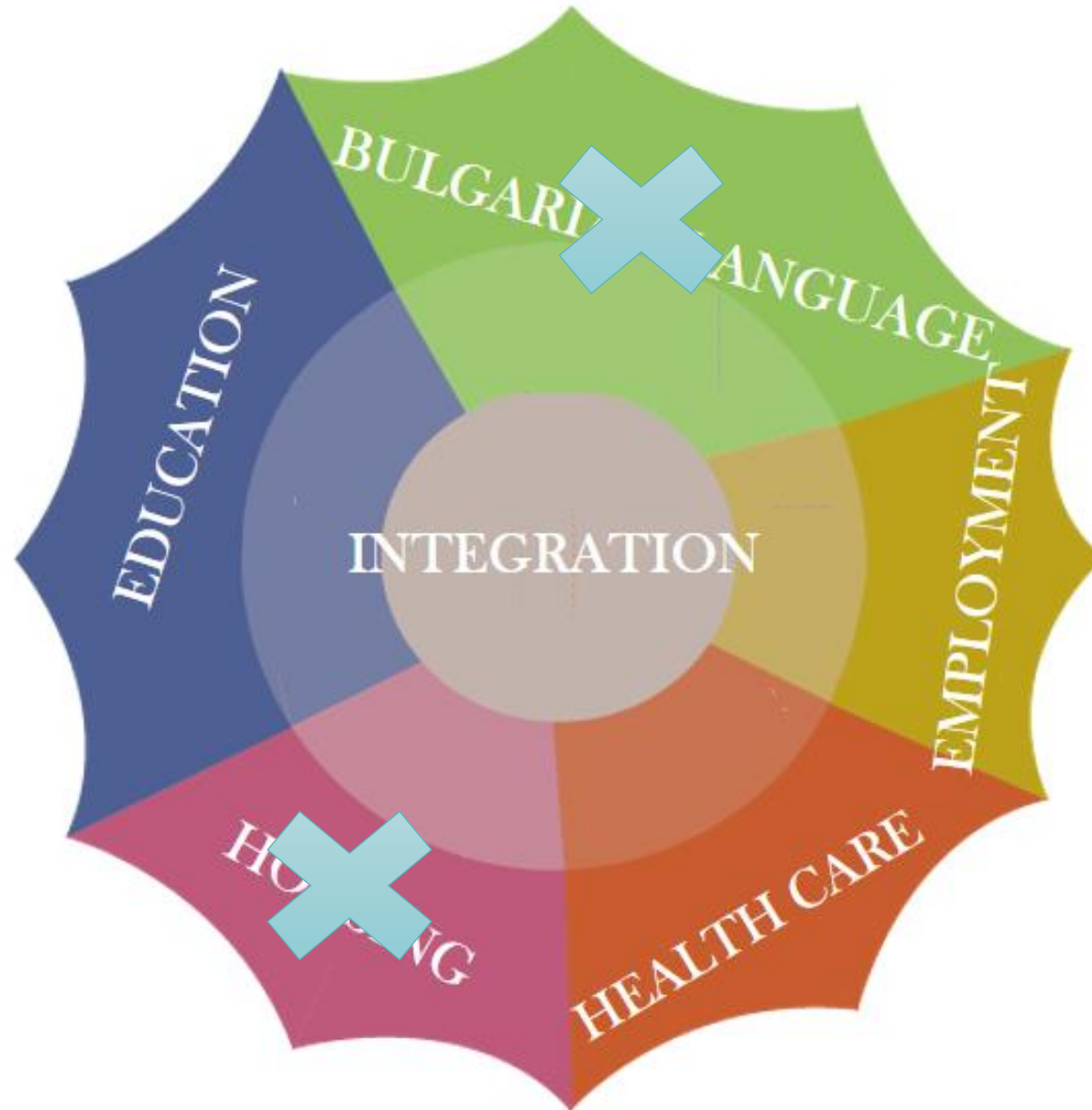
“The simple feeling that I am home, and I can achieve anything”.

Man, Syria, 56 years old

Employment as part of the Integration System



Employment instead of the Integration System



Limited Implementation of the Ordinance on Integration Agreement (2017) due to:

- Lack of coordination
- Lack of funding
- Lack of interest on the part of municipalities

Employment and Refugees: Opportunities



- **Liberal Legal Framework:** short timeframe for access to the job market and no special permits required
- General lack of labour force in Bulgaria
- Motivation of refugees
- Excellent cooperation among various stakeholders
- Readiness on the part of refugees to work in traditional sectors of Bulgarian economy
- More and more socially responsible enterprises

Some achievements by NGOs since 2017

OVER 200 REFUGEES

Assisted in job placement
annually

**OVER 70 COMPANIES
FROM MORE THAN 15
SECTORS**

Are actively involved in job matching
and coaching services

6 JOB FAIRS

4 in Sofia and 2 in Harmanli

350 REFUGEES

Have participated

30% OF THEM

Have been hired

1800 REFUGEES

trained in Bulgarian language in the
last five years



Rank	Economic sector with potential for refugee employment	Regional/Sectoral/Job specifics according to their potential for refugee employment
1	Processing industry	Mainly textile industry, food and beverage production, mechatronics and electrical components
2	Agriculture	Mainly in North-Eastern and North-Western regions of Bulgaria
3	Construction	Positions requiring lower level of technical expertise
4	Accommodation & food services	Requiring also a variety of language skills
5	BPO/outsourcing sector	Making use of the specific and rare language skills of the refugees
6	Human health and social services	Lower qualified positions in hospitals
7	Real estate services	Mainly in the property and facility management
8	Transportation and storage	Positions such as drivers, warehouse workers

Empowering Business Community

The role of the private sector

Make a positive impact on the life of refugees

Employment and corporate volunteering in support of refugee integration in hosting communities.

Create value for the local society

Refugees have the potential to make a positive contribution to the hosting societies if they are given the chance to live in dignity.

Build brand reputation based on diversity and inclusion

through employee engagement in initiatives that would make a positive impact on the life of people in need.

Fuel creativity and innovation

by harnessing the power of human difference.

Increase publicity on local and global level

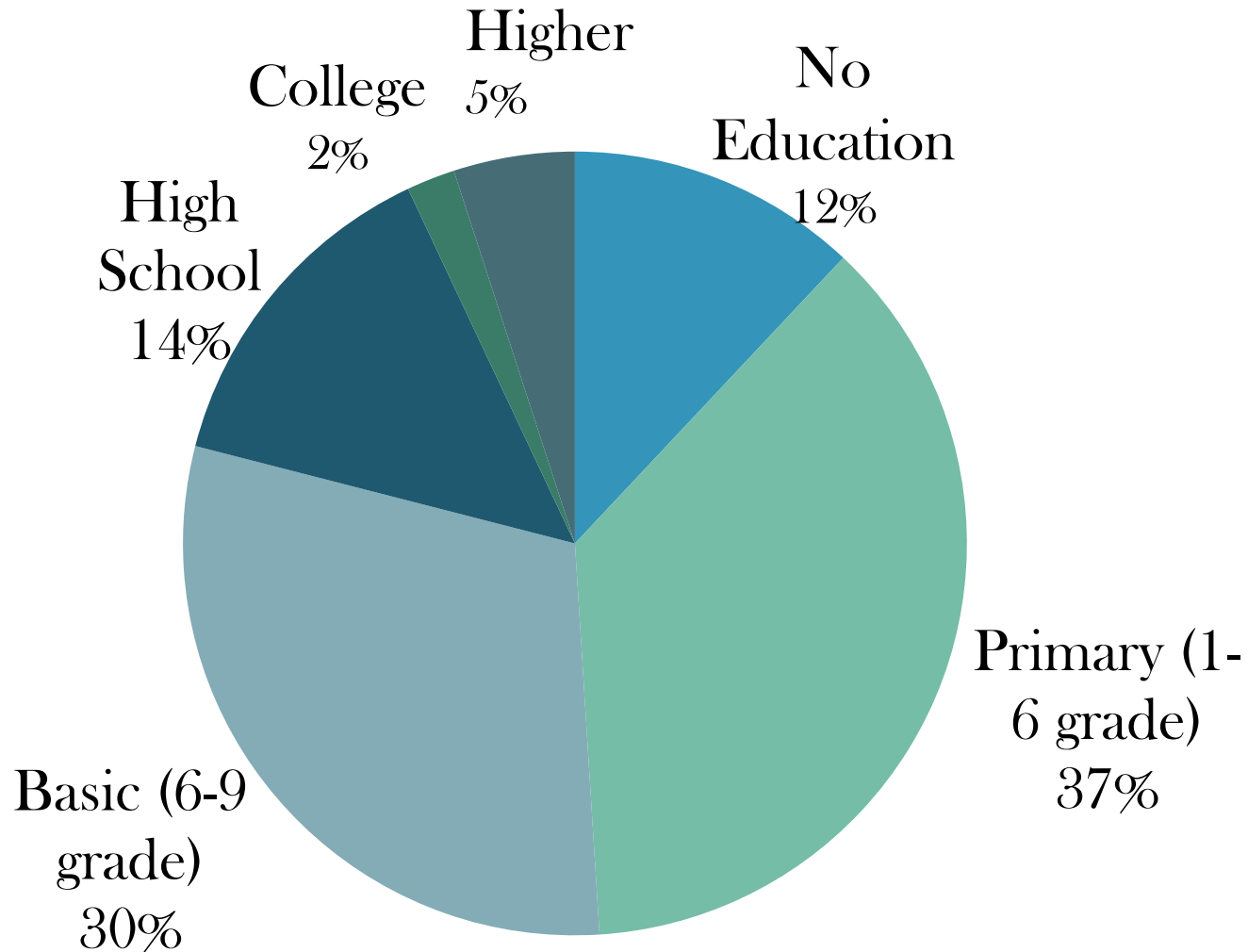
through the support of an international organization such as the UN Refugee Agency.

CATRO



Challenges

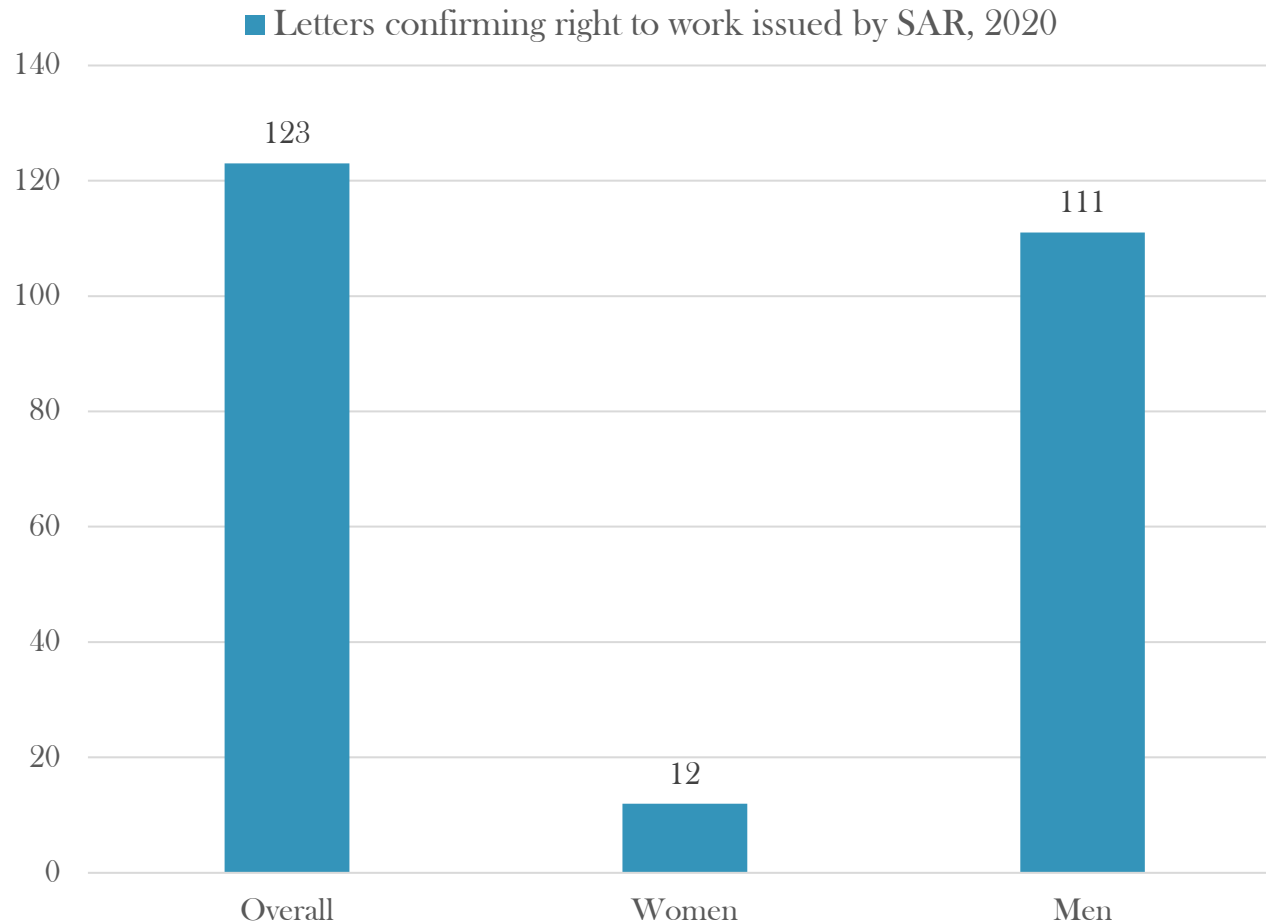
Mismatch: refugee skills vs. refugee needs



Challenges

- Contact between asylum-seekers and employers
 - Engaging women in employment
 - Access to bank accounts and financial services
 - Limited recognition of education and previous skills
 - Lack of job opportunities in smaller towns
 - Limited role of the Labour Bureaux
 - Cultural differences
- ✓ Low-skilled sector
 - ✓ Unregulated work
 - ✓ Short-term employment
 - ✓ Inappropriate positions

Job Matching Services of the State



Persons registered in Labour Bureaux	2019	2020
Mediation Services	13	31
Included in vocational training	7	0
Included in Employment and Training of Refugees Programme	2	0
Started Work	7	12

UNHCR Research of Refugee Needs 2021

228 responders

Main professions

Construction workers (15)

Farmers (17)

Sellers in family business (11)

Hairdressing, barber and cosmetics (8)

Car mechanics (8)

General workers (6)

Teachers (6)

Drivers (6)

Cooks (5)



Out of 54 adults with the right to work

- *Available information for 48 persons*
- *13 are employed, 22 search for jobs*
- *6 have labour contracts*
- *1 has his own company*
- *2 are women*

Crane operator

Topographer

Doctor

Judo teacher

Doner kebab, cafes,
construction, general
workers, factories, truck
drivers

Latest Developments

- Sharing of job vacancies with the State Agency for Refugees on a weekly basis
- Bulgarian language courses by the Employment Agency
- Enhanced entrepreneurship trainings
- Access to microfunding for start-ups
- Diversity Charter
- Advocacy for Legal Amendments with regard to access to bank accounts



“We don't want you to fish for us and put the fish In our plates. Help us hold the rod correctly.”

Man, Afghanistan, Svishtov, 2018

“What would make us stay? A roof over your head and a stable job to support our children.

Man, Syria, 28 yo, Harmanli, 2016

“We are ordinary people, and life confronts us with the need to be extraordinarily brave and start all over again: work, home, friendships.

Man, Syria, 51 yo, Ovcha Kupel, 2017

“There are all kinds of people everywhere. Some are waiting. But few of us are like that. We all had business in Syria, no one was sitting idle. We did not want and will not ask for alms.”

Man, Syria, 42 yo, Ovcha Kupel, 2017

Thank you!

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