



INSTITUT FÜR ARBEITSMARKT- UND  
BERUFSFORSCHUNG  
Die Forschungseinrichtung der Bundesagentur für Arbeit

# IAB-RESEARCH REPORT

Results from the project work of the IAB

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## **5|2025en** Living Conditions and Participation of Ukrainian Refugees in Germany: Findings from the IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees

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ISSN 2195-2655



# Living Conditions and Participation of Ukrainian Refugees in Germany: Findings from the IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees

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The IAB Research Reports series publishes large-scale empirical analyses and project reports, often with a strong focus on data and methods.

The IAB Research Reports (IAB-Forschungsberichte) series publishes larger-scale empirical analyses and project reports, often with heavily data- and method-related content.

## In brief

- Since February 24, 2022, the Russian invasion of Ukraine has triggered a massive exodus of refugees, mainly women and children, to European countries, including Germany. Around one million people from Ukraine now live in this country.
- The IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees is a joint project of the Institute for Employment Research (IAB), the Research Center of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF-FZ) and the Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP) at DIW Berlin. As an annual panel household survey, it includes Ukrainian refugees since 2023, thus creating the basis for an empirically sound analysis of the realities of their lives. The observation of two arrival cohorts (arrivals between February and May 2022 and arrivals starting in June 2022) also allows the analysis of changes in the composition of the group of Ukrainian refugees. A total of 3,403 people from 2,219 households were surveyed between July 2023 and the beginning of January 2024.

### Main Findings

- In the second half of 2023, the group of Ukrainian refugees was still heavily dominated by women, who make up three quarters of adult refugees. The number of single women aged 20 to 49 fell from 46 percent (2022) to 30 percent (2023) in the first arrival cohort and is around 20 percent in the second arrival cohort, partly because more men and families have moved in during this period. Two thirds of adult refugees live in stable partnerships.
- The institutional childcare rate increases with the length of stay of Ukrainian children in Germany, but there is still a need, especially for children under the age of three.
- In the second half of 2023, 60 percent of 11 to 17-year-olds were fully integrated into mainstream classes, while 24 percent attended a mainstream class with additional supportive teaching and 16 percent only attended special welcome or preparatory classes. Ukrainian children are more likely to attend lower or middle schools compared to the overall student body, which points towards problems with choosing the right school.
- 97 percent of adult refugees have a secondary school diploma, 75 percent have vocational qualifications or university degrees, and 90 percent have professional experience. Only 20 percent have had their qualifications recognized so far. The majority of applications for recognition of professional qualifications relate to regulated professions.
- Despite high educational aspirations, only 16 percent are in formal education or further training due to language barriers and childcare problems.
- More than half plan to stay in Germany permanently, especially those who moved here later (69 percent). Plans to return depend heavily on the end of the war (90 percent) and the economic situation in Ukraine (60 percent).
- The vast majority (83 percent) of refugees will be living in private properties housing in the second half of 2023 and are satisfied with their own housing situation. In contrast, refugees who are still living in shared accommodation are less satisfied.

- Access to the healthcare system is generally good, but there are barriers such as long waiting times. Mental health disorders, especially symptoms of depression and anxiety disorder, are more common than in the general population, yet those affected often do not perceive the need for treatment.
- The participation rate in integration courses was 70 percent in the second half of 2023. However, there are barriers to course participation for women with small children, refugees with health restrictions and older refugees.
- German language skills are positively related to participation in language courses, especially integration courses, and an increasing length of stay. : 52 percent rate their German language skills as at least "sufficient". 40 percent also have an average to good command of English.
- In the second half of 2023, an average of 22 percent of Ukrainian refugees of working age (18 to 64 years) in Germany are gainfully employed. The employment rates of Ukrainian refugees increase with the length of stay: For people with a shorter period of residence in Germany (maximum 13 months), they amount to 17 percent, and to 31 percent 22 to 23 months after immigration.
- There are clear differences between men and women: While around 26 percent of Ukrainian refugees will be employed in the second half of 2023, the employment rate for Ukrainian women is 21 percent. These gender differences are highly dependent on family constellation, which differs greatly between the sexes.
- Personal social networks play a crucial role in job placement: 51 percent of employed refugees found out about their job from friends and acquaintances - often of German origin. In contrast, public or private job agencies only led to a job for 7 percent of refugees.
- Refugees often have high qualifications and professional experience, but are often employed in jobs below their original qualification level (dequalification). At 2,600 euros, the average gross monthly earnings of full-time Ukrainian refugees are far below the average earnings of all full-time employees in Germany (4,479 euros).
- Completion of German courses, good German and English language skills, social contacts with Germans and recognition of qualifications acquired abroad have a positive impact on the employment opportunities of Ukrainian refugees.
- The living situation of refugees continues to be characterized by considerable uncertainty, particularly due to the precarious situation in Ukraine, which is also reflected in the polarized distribution of intentions to stay.
- Despite significant progress in the living situation and participation of Ukrainian refugees in the second half of 2023, there is still a need for ongoing support in various areas.

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# Summary

## **Background to the study and data basis**

- Since February 24, 2022, the Russian invasion of Ukraine has triggered a massive exodus of refugees, mainly women and children, to European countries, including Germany. Around one million people from Ukraine now live in Germany.
- A robust database is essential for accurately capturing the living situation of these people in a differentiated and well-founded manner. High-quality, reliable data based on a carefully developed survey design are crucial to adequately analyze the challenges and needs of refugees and derive evidence-based measures.
- The IAB-BAMF-SOEP survey meets these high requirements. As an annual panel household survey, it has also included Ukrainian refugees since 2023 and thus creates the basis for an empirically sound analysis of their living conditions and experiences. The observation of two arrival cohorts (February–May 2022 and June 2022 onward) also allows the analysis of changes in the composition of the group of Ukrainian refugees.
- The survey, conducted between July 2023 and the beginning of January 2024, relied mainly on face-to-face interviews (77.2 percent of interviews), supplemented by computer-assisted self-interviews (15.4 percent) and online surveys (computer-assisted web interviews, 7.4 percent). A total of 3,403 people from 2,219 households were interviewed.
- The data include information at both household and individual level on living conditions, language, employment situation, integration and intentions to stay. First-time interviewees also answered a CV questionnaire.
- Sampling and weighting procedures based on the Central Register of Foreigners (AZR) ensure the representativeness of the data for Ukrainian refugees during the survey period.
- The IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees is a joint project of the Institute for Employment Research (IAB), the Research Center of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF-FZ) and the Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP) at DIW Berlin.

## **Family structures, childcare and school attendance**

- In the second half of 2023, the group of Ukrainian refugees was still heavily dominated by women, who make up three quarters of adult refugees.
- The number of single women aged 20 to 49 fell from 46 percent (2022) to 30 percent (2023) in the first arrival cohort and is around 20 percent in the second arrival cohort, partly because more men and families moved in during this period. Two thirds of adult refugees live in stable partnerships. Women with long-term plans to stay in Germany are more likely to plan to bring their partners to Germany.
- The childcare rate for children aged three to six will rise from 60 percent percent to 76 percent between 2022 and 2023, but will remain below the German average of 91 percent. At 23 percent percent, the rate for children under the age of three is also 14 percentage points lower than the German average (37 percent). At the same time, the childcare rate in eastern



Germany is higher than in western Germany. Children of parents with a high level of education and of working parents are more likely to go to institutional care than children of less educated parents and of parents who are not in employment.

- Over 210,000 Ukrainian children and young people attended German schools in the second half of 2023. 60 percent of 11 to 17-year-olds are fully integrated into mainstream classes, while 24 percent attended a mainstream class with additional supportive teaching and 16 percent only attended special welcome or preparatory classes. Compared with the overall student body, Ukrainian children are more likely to attend Hauptschule or Mittelschule, suggesting problems with choosing the right school.
- Half of Ukrainian students also participate in Ukrainian online lessons.

#### **Educational qualifications, recognition of vocational and educational qualifications, training aspirations and educational attainment**

- 97 percent of refugees hold a Ukrainian secondary school diploma: almost two thirds have a secondary school leaving certificate (comparable to a grammar school or a technical secondary school) and one third a middle school leaving certificate (comparable to a lower secondary or intermediate secondary school leaving certificate in Germany).
- Three quarters of Ukrainian refugees have a vocational qualification or a university degree, and nearly 90 percent possess extensive professional experience from Ukraine.
- So far, around one fifth of refugees have applied for recognition of a qualification have applied to have their qualifications recognised. The majority of applications for recognition of professional qualifications relate to regulated professions. University graduates and refugees who intend to stay permanently are particularly keen to have their qualifications recognized. Most applications concern regulated professions, and university graduates – and those planning to stay permanently – are especially eager to gain official recognition.
- Educational aspirations are highest for vocational training and higher education, especially among younger refugees and people who have not completed vocational training. However, only a small share are currently in formal education or further training.
- The high level of educational aspirations contrasts with the low level of participation in education in Germany: Only around 16 percent percent of refugees from Ukraine were in education, training or further education when surveyed. This discrepancy is presumably due to language barriers and problems with childcare.

### **Between integration and return: Ukrainian refugees' wishes to stay in Germany**

- More than half of Ukrainian refugees plan to stay in Germany permanently – 69 percent among later arrivals versus 59 percent among earlier arrivals.
- Beyond developments in Ukraine, intentions to remain are tied to living conditions in Germany. Strong German language skills, employment or a high willingness to work, cohabiting with immediate family in Germany and the feeling of being welcome are more frequently associated with the intention to stay in Germany.
- The willingness of Ukrainian refugees to return depends heavily on developments in Ukraine: 90 percent of respondents see the end of the war as a prerequisite for return, while 60 percent cite an improvement in the economic situation. Aspects such as a change of government (23 percent) or free elections (15 percent) were mentioned much less frequently.

### **Housing situation of Ukrainian refugees**

- In the second half of 2023, 83 percent of refugees lived in private housing and reported satisfaction, whereas those in shared accommodation were less satisfied.
- Later arrivals, single people, people without tertiary education or people without contact to Germans, appear to have greater difficulty finding private housing than the respective reference groups.
- Most Ukrainian refugees found their private housing through friends or acquaintances: 41 percent of earlier arrivals versus 35 percent of later arrivals – highlighting the role of social networks, underlining the importance of social networks for finding accommodation.
- In terms of their place of residence, 88 percent of Ukrainian refugees prefer medium-sized cities, followed by large cities (70 percent). In contrast, only around one in three people (34 percent) can imagine living in the countryside.

### **Health situation**

- The general need for medical care among Ukrainian refugees is similar to that of the general population in Germany.
- Contact with the German healthcare system is generally good. However, there are also barriers to accessing healthcare services, e.g. difficulties in navigating the healthcare system.
- Compared to the general population, symptoms of depression and anxiety disorder are more frequent among Ukrainian refugees. People without regular social contacts and with self-reported experiences of discrimination are particularly affected. However, more than one-third of those mentally distressed do not perceive a need for treatment and thus remain unsupported.

### **Participation in German courses and language skills**

- In the second half of 2023, the share of Ukrainian refugees taking part in an integration course since their arrival is 70 percent. However, refugees arriving later experienced a slight delay before their first course. For women with small children, refugees with health restrictions and older refugees, the barriers to course participation are higher.

- 11 percent of Ukrainian refugees have taken part in another German course, either alongside or instead of integration courses. 6 percent of Ukrainian refugees have taken part in vocational language courses.
- Increasing participation in language courses, especially integration courses, and an increasing length of stay are also accompanied by an improvement in German language skills. In the second half of 2023, 52 percent of refugees described their German language skills as "very good", "good" or "okay".
- 40 percent of Ukrainian refugees also have an intermediate to good level of English, which can facilitate labor-market entry.

### **Job search, scope and quality of employment**

- In the second half of 2023, an average of 22 percent of Ukrainian refugees of working age (18 to 64 years) in Germany were in gainful employment.
- The employment rates of Ukrainian refugees increase with the length of stay: For people with a shorter period of residence in Germany (maximum 13 months after immigration), they amount to 17 percent, 22 to 23 months after immigration to 31 percent.
- Gender gaps are evident: While around 26 percent of Ukrainian refugees were employed in the second half of 2023, the employment rate for Ukrainian women was 21 percent.
- This is consistent with the finding that the transition to their first job in Germany is significantly faster for refugee men than for women: At around 22 months after arriving, 25 percent of women and 33 percent of men have entered the labor market.
- The gender differences depend very much on the family constellation, which differs greatly between the sexes. Women with pre-school children are less likely to be in employment than men in comparable family constellations or than women without children or with older children. Single mothers are also less likely to be in employment than women living in a partnership.
- Personal social networks play a key role in job placement: 51 percent of employed refugees learned of their job from friends and acquaintances - often of German origin. By contrast, only 7 percent found jobs via public or private placement services.
- Refugees often have high qualifications and professional experience in areas such as business organization, accounting, law and administration as well as in the health and education sector, but are often employed in jobs below their original qualification level (dequalification). Men are affected 50 percent of the time, women 57 percent. Most jobs are in occupations such as cleaning, food preparation, education and social work, including curative education.
- In full-time employment, Ukrainian refugees earn an average gross €2,600 per month, well below the German full-time average of €4,479. Completing German courses, strong German and English language skills, social contacts with Germans and recognition of qualifications acquired abroad have a positive effect on the employment opportunities of Ukrainian refugees.
- Over a third of unemployed Ukrainian refugees are in further training. Many Ukrainian refugees see a need for support in finding a job and learning German.

## Conclusion

- The results of the IAB-BAMF-SOEP survey illustrate both the numerous advances and the challenges that Ukrainian refugees in Germany face with regard to their living situation and social participation.
- The living situation of refugees continues to be characterized by considerable uncertainty, particularly due to the precarious situation in Ukraine, which is also reflected in the polarized distribution of intentions to stay.
- Despite significant progress in the living situation and participation of Ukrainian refugees in the second half of 2023, continued support is still needed in various areas.

## Zusammenfassung

### Hintergrund der Studie und Datengrundlage

- Die russische Invasion der Ukraine hat seit dem 24. Februar 2022 eine massive Fluchtbewegung ausgelöst, bei der überwiegend Frauen und Kinder in europäische Länder, einschließlich Deutschland, geflüchtet sind. Rund eine Million Menschen aus der Ukraine leben inzwischen in Deutschland.
- Um die Lebenssituation dieser Menschen differenziert und fundiert erfassen zu können, ist eine robuste Datenbasis unerlässlich. Hochwertige, belastbare Daten, die auf einem sorgfältig entwickelten Erhebungsdesign beruhen, sind entscheidend, um die Herausforderungen und Bedarfe der geflüchteten Menschen adäquat zu analysieren und evidenzbasierte Maßnahmen ableiten zu können.
- Die IAB-BAMF-SOEP-Befragung erfüllt diese hohen Anforderungen. Als jährliche Panel-Haushaltsbefragung umfasst sie seit 2023 auch ukrainische Geflüchtete und schafft damit die Grundlage für eine empirisch fundierte Analyse ihrer Lebensrealitäten. Die Betrachtung zweier Zuzugskohorten (Zuzug von Februar bis Ende Mai 2022 und Zuzug ab Juni 2022) erlaubt zudem die Analyse von Veränderungen in der Zusammensetzung der Gruppe ukrainischer Geflüchteter.
- Die Befragung, die zwischen Juli 2023 und Anfang Januar 2024 stattfand, erfolgte primär durch persönlich-mündliche Interviews (77,2 Prozent der Interviews), ergänzt durch rechnergestützte Selbstinterviews (computer assisted self interview, 15,4 Prozent) und Online-Befragungen (computer assisted web interview, 7,4 Prozent). Insgesamt wurden 3.403 Personen aus 2.219 Haushalten befragt.
- Die Daten umfassen sowohl die Haushalts- als auch Personenebene mit Inhalten zu Lebenssituation, Sprache, Erwerbssituation, Integration und Bleibeabsichten. Erstbefragte beantworteten zusätzlich einen Lebenslauffragebogen.
- Stichproben- und Gewichtungungsverfahren auf der Grundlage des Ausländerzentralregisters (AZR) stellen die Repräsentativität der Daten für ukrainische Geflüchtete im Erhebungszeitraum sicher.

- Die IAB-BAMF-SOEP-Befragung von Geflüchteten ist ein gemeinsames Projekt des Instituts für Arbeitsmarkt und Berufsforschung (IAB), des Forschungszentrums des Bundesamtes für Migration und Flüchtlinge (BAMF-FZ) und des Sozio-oekonomischen Panels (SOEP) am DIW Berlin.

### **Familienstrukturen, Kinderbetreuung und Schulbesuch**

- In der zweiten Jahreshälfte 2023 wird die Gruppe der ukrainischen Geflüchteten weiterhin stark von Frauen dominiert, die drei Viertel der erwachsenen Geflüchteten ausmachen.
- Die Anzahl alleinerziehender 20- bis 49-jähriger Frauen sank in der ersten Zuzugskohorte von 46 Prozent (2022) auf 30 Prozent (2023) und liegt in der zweiten Zuzugskohorte bei rund 20 Prozent, unter anderem deswegen, weil in diesem Zeitraum mehr Männer und Familien nachgezogen sind. Zwei Drittel der erwachsenen Geflüchteten leben in festen Partnerschaften. Frauen mit langfristigen Bleibeabsichten in Deutschland planen häufiger, ihre Partner nachzuholen.
- Die Betreuungsquote für Kinder im Alter von drei bis sechs Jahren steigt zwischen 2022 und 2023 von 60 auf 76 Prozent, bleibt jedoch unter dem deutschen Durchschnitt von 91 Prozent. Auch bei Kindern unter drei Jahren liegt die Quote mit 23 Prozent im Vergleich zum deutschen Durchschnitt (37 Prozent) um 14 Prozentpunkte zurück. Zugleich ist die Betreuungsquote in Ostdeutschland höher als in Westdeutschland. Kinder von Eltern mit einem hohen Bildungsniveau und von berufstätigen Eltern gehen häufiger in institutionelle Betreuung als Kinder niedrig gebildeter Eltern und von Eltern, die nicht erwerbstätig sind.
- Über 210.000 ukrainische Kinder und Jugendliche besuchten in der zweiten Jahreshälfte 2023 deutsche Schulen. 60 Prozent der 11- bis 17-Jährigen sind vollständig in Regelklassen integriert, während 24 Prozent eine Regelklasse mit unterstützendem Zusatzunterricht besuchten und 16 Prozent ausschließlich an speziellen Willkommens- oder Vorbereitungsklassen teilnahmen. Ukrainische Kinder besuchen im Vergleich zur gesamten Schülerschaft häufiger Haupt- oder Mittelschulen, was auf Probleme bei der richtigen Schulwahl hinweist.
- Die Hälfte der ukrainischen Schülerinnen und Schüler nimmt parallel noch an ukrainischem Online-Unterricht teil.

### **Mitgebrachte Bildungsabschlüsse, Anerkennung von Berufs- und Bildungsabschlüssen, Ausbildungsaspirationen und Bildungserwerb**

- 97 Prozent der Geflüchteten verfügen einen schulischen Abschluss in der Ukraine, davon knapp zwei Drittel über einen Abschluss einer weiterführenden Schule (vergleichbar mit dem Abschluss eines Gymnasiums oder einer Fachoberschule) und ein Drittel einer Mittelschule (vergleichbar mit dem Abschluss einer Haupt- oder Realschule in Deutschland).
- Drei Viertel der ukrainischen Geflüchteten verfügen über einen beruflichen Abschluss oder einen Hochschulabschluss und fast 90 Prozent bringen umfangreiche Berufserfahrungen aus der Ukraine mit.
- Bislang hat etwa ein Fünftel der Geflüchteten einen Antrag auf Anerkennung eines Abschlusses gestellt. Die Mehrheit der Anträge auf Anerkennung der Berufsabschlüsse

betrifft reglementierte Berufe. Insbesondere Hochschulabsolventen und Geflüchtete mit dauerhafter Bleibeabsicht sind bestrebt, ihre Abschlüsse anerkennen zu lassen.

- Die Bildungsaspirationen sind insbesondere im Bereich beruflicher Bildung und Studium hoch, besonders bei jüngeren Geflüchteten und Personen ohne abgeschlossene Berufsausbildung. Derzeit befindet sich jedoch nur ein geringer Anteil in formaler Bildung oder Weiterbildung.
- Den hohen Bildungsaspirationen steht noch eine niedrige Bildungsbeteiligung in Deutschland gegenüber: Rund 16 Prozent der Geflüchteten aus der Ukraine befanden sich zum Befragungszeitpunkt in Bildung, Ausbildung oder Weiterbildung. Diese Diskrepanz ergibt sich vermutlich insbesondere aus noch bestehenden sprachlichen Hürden und Problemen mit der Kinderbetreuung.

### **Zwischen Integration und Rückkehr: Die Bleibewünsche ukrainischer Geflüchteter in Deutschland**

- Mehr als die Hälfte der ukrainischen Geflüchteten plant einen dauerhaften Verbleib in Deutschland. Dies ist bei später eingereisten Personen (69 Prozent) noch stärker der Fall als bei früher Eingereisten (59 Prozent).
- Neben der Situation in der Ukraine hängt die Absicht, für immer zu bleiben, auch mit den Lebensumständen in Deutschland zusammen. Gute Deutschkenntnisse, eine Erwerbstätigkeit oder hohe Erwerbsneigung, das Zusammenleben mit der Kernfamilie in Deutschland sowie das Gefühl, willkommen zu sein, gehen häufiger mit der Absicht einher, in Deutschland zu bleiben.
- Die Rückkehrbereitschaft ukrainischer Geflüchteter hängt stark von den Entwicklungen in der Ukraine ab: 90 Prozent der Befragten sehen das Ende des Krieges als Voraussetzung für eine Rückkehr, während 60 Prozent eine Verbesserung der wirtschaftlichen Lage nennen. Aspekte wie ein Regierungswechsel (23 Prozent) oder freie Wahlen (15 Prozent) wurden deutlich seltener genannt.

### **Wohnsituation ukrainischer Geflüchteter**

- Die große Mehrheit (83 Prozent) der Geflüchteten wohnt in der zweiten Jahreshälfte 2023 in privaten Immobilien und ist mit der eigenen Wohnsituation zufrieden. Wenig zufrieden sind demgegenüber insbesondere Geflüchtete, die noch in einer Gemeinschaftsunterkunft wohnen.
- Bestimmte Gruppen, etwa später Zugezogene, Alleinstehende, Personen mit nicht-tertiärem Bildungsabschluss oder Personen ohne Kontakte zu Deutschen scheinen größere Schwierigkeiten zu haben, privaten Wohnraum zu finden, als die jeweiligen Referenzgruppen.
- Die Mehrheit der ukrainischen Geflüchteten hat ihre private Unterkunft durch Freunde oder Bekannte gefunden. Dies ist bei früher Zugezogenen (41 Prozent) noch stärker der Fall als bei später Zugezogenen (35 Prozent). Dies unterstreicht die Bedeutung von sozialen Netzwerken für die Wohnungssuche.

- Hinsichtlich ihres Wohnortes präferieren 88 Prozent der ukrainischen Geflüchteten mittlere Städte, gefolgt von Großstädten (70 Prozent). Auf dem Land zu leben kann sich hingegen nur rund jede dritte Person vorstellen (34 Prozent).

### **Gesundheitliche Situation**

- Der allgemeine Bedarf an medizinischer Versorgung ist unter den ukrainischen Geflüchteten ähnlich verteilt wie in der Allgemeinbevölkerung in Deutschland.
- Der Kontakt zum deutschen Gesundheitssystem ist im Allgemeinen gut. Jedoch zeichnen sich auch Hürden bei der Inanspruchnahme gesundheitlicher Leistungen ab, z. B. durch Schwierigkeiten, sich im Gesundheitssystem zurecht zu finden.
- Im Vergleich zur Gesamtbevölkerung zeigen sich bei ukrainischen Geflüchteten Unterschiede in Bezug auf die psychische Gesundheit, denn Depressionen und Angststörungen treten gehäuft auf. Besonders stark betroffen sind Personen ohne regelmäßige soziale Kontakte und mit selbstberichteten Diskriminierungserfahrungen. Gleichzeitig sieht jedoch mehr als ein Drittel der psychisch belasteten Geflüchteten selbst keinen Behandlungsbedarf und erhält somit auch keine Unterstützung.

### **Teilnahme an Deutschkursen und Sprachkenntnisse**

- Der Anteil der ukrainischen Geflüchteten, die seit ihrer Einreise an einem Integrationskurs teilgenommen haben, liegt im zweiten Halbjahr 2023 bei 70 Prozent. Jedoch zeigt sich bei später zugezogenen Geflüchteten eine leichte zeitliche Verzögerung der ersten Kursteilnahme. Bei Frauen mit kleinen Kindern, Geflüchteten mit gesundheitlichen Einschränkungen und älteren Geflüchteten sind die Hürden bezüglich einer Kursteilnahme höher.
- 11 Prozent der ukrainischen Geflüchteten haben zusätzlich oder alternativ zum Integrationskurs an einem anderen Deutschkurs teilgenommen. An Berufssprachkursen haben 6 Prozent der ukrainischen Geflüchteten teilgenommen.
- Mit einer zunehmenden Teilnahme an Sprachkursen, insbesondere an Integrationskursen, und einer zunehmenden Aufenthaltsdauer geht auch eine Verbesserung der Deutschkenntnisse einher. 52 Prozent der Geflüchteten beschreiben in der zweiten Jahreshälfte 2023 ihre Deutschkenntnisse mit „sehr gut“, „gut“ oder „es geht“.
- 40 Prozent der ukrainischen Geflüchteten verfügen zudem über mittlere bis gute Englischkenntnisse, die ebenfalls als eine Brücke in den Arbeitsmarkt dienen können.

### **Stellensuche, Umfang und Qualität der Erwerbstätigkeit**

- In der zweiten Jahreshälfte 2023 gingen im Durchschnitt 22 Prozent der ukrainischen Geflüchteten im erwerbsfähigen Alter (18 bis 64 Jahre) in Deutschland einer Erwerbstätigkeit nach.
- Mit der Aufenthaltsdauer steigen die Erwerbstätigenquoten der ukrainischen Geflüchteten: Bei Menschen mit kürzerer Aufenthaltsdauer in Deutschland (maximal 13 Monate nach dem Zuzug) belaufen sie sich auf 17 Prozent, 22 bis 23 Monate nach dem Zuzug auf 31 Prozent.
- Es zeigen sich deutliche Unterschiede zwischen Männern und Frauen: Während etwa 26 Prozent der geflüchteten Ukrainer in der zweiten Jahreshälfte 2023 erwerbstätig waren, lag die Erwerbstätigenquote der Ukrainerinnen bei 21 Prozent.

- Dies deckt sich mit dem Ergebnis, dass der Übergang zur ersten Arbeitsstelle in Deutschland bei geflüchteten Männern deutlich schneller erfolgt als bei den Frauen: Nach rund 22 Monaten seit dem Zuzug haben 25 Prozent der Frauen und 33 Prozent der Männer ihren Arbeitsmarkteintritt vollzogen.
- Die Geschlechterunterschiede hängen sehr stark von der Familienkonstellation ab, die sich stark zwischen den Geschlechtern unterscheidet. Frauen mit Vorschulkindern sind seltener erwerbstätig als Männer in vergleichbaren Familienkonstellationen oder als Frauen ohne Kinder beziehungsweise mit älteren Kindern. Auch gehen alleinerziehende Frauen seltener einer Erwerbstätigkeit nach als Frauen, die in einer Partnerschaft leben.
- Persönliche soziale Netzwerke spielen eine zentrale Rolle bei der Stellenvermittlung: 51 Prozent der erwerbstätigen Geflüchteten haben von Freunden und Bekannten – häufig deutscher Herkunft – von ihrer Stelle erfahren. Die staatliche Stellenvermittlung, zum Beispiel über die Agentur für Arbeit, sowie private Stellenvermittlungen führten dagegen nur für 7 Prozent der Geflüchteten zur Jobaufnahme.
- Geflüchtete bringen häufig hohe Qualifikationen und Berufserfahrung in den Bereichen wie Unternehmensorganisation, Buchhaltung, Recht und Verwaltung sowie im Gesundheits- und Bildungssektor mit, sind jedoch oft in Berufen unterhalb ihres ursprünglichen Qualifikationsniveaus tätig (Dequalifizierung). Männer sind zu 50 Prozent, Frauen zu 57 Prozent davon betroffen. Die meisten Arbeitsaufnahmen erfolgen in Berufen wie Reinigung, Speisenzubereitung sowie Erziehung und Sozialarbeit, einschließlich der Heilerziehungspflege.
- Die mittleren Bruttomonatsverdienste der vollzeitbeschäftigten ukrainischen Geflüchteten liegen mit 2.600 Euro unter dem Durchschnittsverdienst aller Vollzeitbeschäftigten in Deutschland (4.479 Euro). Der Abschluss von Deutschkursen, gute Deutsch- und Englischkenntnisse, soziale Kontakte zu Deutschen sowie die Anerkennung der im Ausland erworbenen Qualifikationen wirken sich positiv auf die Beschäftigungschancen ukrainischer Geflüchteter aus.
- Über ein Drittel der noch nicht erwerbstätigen ukrainischen Geflüchteten befindet sich in Weiterbildungsmaßnahmen. Viele ukrainische Geflüchtete sehen Unterstützungsbedarf bei der Arbeitssuche und beim Erlernen der deutschen Sprache.

## **Fazit**

- Die Ergebnisse der IAB-BAMF-SOEP-Befragung verdeutlichen sowohl die zahlreichen Fortschritte als auch die Herausforderungen, mit denen ukrainische Geflüchtete in Deutschland in Bezug auf ihre Lebenssituation und ihre gesellschaftliche Teilhabe konfrontiert sind.
- Die Lebenssituation der Geflüchteten ist insbesondere aufgrund der prekären Lage in der Ukraine weiterhin von erheblicher Unsicherheit geprägt, was sich auch in der polarisierten Verteilung der Bleibeabsichten widerspiegelt.
- Trotz deutlicher Fortschritte bei der Lebenssituation und Teilhabe der ukrainischen Geflüchteten in der zweiten Jahreshälfte 2023 besteht somit weiterhin die Notwendigkeit einer kontinuierlichen Unterstützung in verschiedenen Bereichen.



## Acknowledgments

We would like to thank everyone who took part in the survey. We would also like to thank infas (Institut für angewandte Sozialwissenschaft GmbH) for carrying out the fieldwork and the survey coordinators at IAB, BAMF-FZ and DIW. The authors would like to thank the Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI), the Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (BMAS), the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), the Institute for Employment Research (IAB), the Federal Employment Agency (BA), the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) and the German Institute for Economic Research (DIW) for their support. Kosyakova, Gatskova and Schwanhäuser gratefully acknowledge the support of the German Research Foundation (DFG) as part of the project "Longitudinal Study of Ukrainian Refugees (SUARE). Refugee migration and Labor Market Integration" (project number - 519020285). Zinn, Sommer, Biddle, Marchitto, Cumming and Büsche gratefully acknowledge the support of the DFG as part of the project "Longitudinal Study of Ukrainian Refugees (SUARE). Data Infrastructure, Health and Discrimination" (project number - 518967487). We would also like to thank Cornelia Kristen for her valuable comments and suggestions for changes, Olha Danylchuk (IAB), Jennifer Marksteder (IAB), Daniela Centemero (DIW), Hanne Oldenhof (BAMF-FZ) and Jana Burmeister (BAMF-FZ) for layout and Claudia Brose (BAMF-FZ) for proofreading.

# 1 Introduction

*Yuliya Kosyakova, Nina Rother, Sabine Zinn*

The Russian war of aggression against Ukraine on February 24, 2022 triggered one of the largest refugee movements in Europe since the Second World War and had far-reaching consequences for host countries such as Germany. The number of Ukrainian nationals in Germany rose from 156,000 to 1,245,000 by September 2024 (DESTATIS 2025). Given the uncertain outcome and duration of the war, the intentions and prospects of these people to stay are uncertain. However, the longer they stay, the more Ukrainians plan to extend their stay or settle permanently (Brücker et al. 2023b; Kosyakova et al. 2023a). Beyond the humanitarian imperative, the question of their integration into the labor market and society is gaining urgency.

Ukrainian refugees - like other refugee groups - face major challenges. The war and the circumstances of their flight often lead to psychological stress and make it difficult to establish social networks (Brücker et al. 2019, 2023c; Ambrosetti et al. 2021). When they arrive, many have neither sufficient knowledge of German nor a social or professional environment that could offer them guidance (Kosyakova and Kogan 2022; Kosyakova and Brücker 2024). At the same time, they benefit from the activation of the EU Temporary Protection Directive on March 4, 2022, which grants Ukrainian refugees the right to a residence permit in accordance with Section 24 of the Residence Act, and the entry into force of the Ukraine Residence Regulation on March 7, 2022, which gives them quick access to social benefits, education and medical care - bypassing standard asylum procedures. (Fendel et al. 2023; Kosyakova and Brücker 2024). However, the unclear duration of the war and the temporary protection status make long-term planning and prospects difficult. Women in particular who have fled to Germany alone with their children face additional burdens due to separation from partners and a lack of family support networks (Brücker et al. 2023a; Kosyakova and Schwanhäuser 2024).

The dynamics and complexity of refugee migration from Ukraine make sound scientific monitoring indispensable to better understand the challenges and potential and to further develop integration policy measures in a targeted manner. The IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees (Brücker et al. 2017), a joint project of the Institute for Employment Research (IAB), the Research Center of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF-FZ) and the Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP) at the German Institute for Economic Research (DIW), provides a central data basis for this. Between July 2023 and January 2024, 3,662 Ukrainian refugees were surveyed for this study. In 2023, the sample was refreshed to include, for the first time, households that arrived in Germany between February 24 and August 31, 2022.

The majority of Ukrainian refugees came to Germany in the first months of the war. Immigration peaked between February and June 2022, before declining significantly from the summer onwards and settling at a stable level of around 15,000 net migrants per month (DESTATIS 2025). Around 80 percent of the Ukrainian refugees included in the IAB-BAMF-SOEP survey belong to the first arrival cohort, which arrived by the end of May 2022, while 20 percent form the second arrival cohort with entry from June 2022. At the time of the survey in the second half of 2023, many Ukrainian refugees had already been living in Germany for 17 to 20 months. This duration

allows us to examine initial adjustment processes and longer-term developments in the areas of integration, living situation and social participation in detail.

This report is divided into ten chapters covering family structures, education, German language skills, social integration, health and housing-related issues. Chapter 2 explains the methodological basis of the IAB-BAMF-SOEP survey, or the most recent refreshment sample of Ukrainian refugees comprising 2,381 households and 3,662 individuals. It describes the design and implementation of the sample as well as the data collection methods, weighting procedures and survey content. Chapter 3 analyzes the family and household structures of Ukrainian refugees in Germany and paints a differentiated picture of the changes that occurred between the first months after the start of the war and the second half of 2023. It shows how the composition of households has changed - including through family reunions and a reduction in the spatial separation of family members. Particular attention is paid to the situation of children and young people, especially their access to education and care. Chapter 4 explores the educational and professional qualifications of adult Ukrainian refugees and the recognition of foreign qualifications in Germany. It examines which qualifications were acquired before fleeing and the extent to which these can be integrated into the German labor market. It also looks at the extent to which Ukrainian refugees invest in educational measures to improve their career prospects. The question of Ukrainian refugees' intentions to stay is the focus of the Chapter 5. It shows how these intentions change over time and which factors - from the security situation in Ukraine to living conditions in Germany - play a role in this. Chapter 6 deals with the housing situation of Ukrainian refugees. It shows how many of the refugees already live in private housing and which factors have made access to the housing market easier or more difficult. Chapter 7 addresses the health situation of Ukrainian refugees, focusing on both physical and mental health. Particular attention is paid to possible barriers of healthcare utilisation. Chapter 8 is dedicated to language acquisition as a key to integration. It examines how Ukrainian refugees participate in German language and integration courses, what progress they make and what factors influence their learning success. In addition to German language skills, their knowledge of English is also examined. Chapter 9 analyzes the labor market integration of Ukrainian refugees. It shows how quickly and through which channels they find employment, what professional qualifications they bring with them and how these could be used in Germany. The chapter contents also highlight gender-specific differences, the challenges posed by the lack of recognition of qualifications and the effects of caring responsibilities on labor market participation. Finally, Chapter 10 summarizes the key findings and provides an outlook on existing and future challenges and fields of action.

The report therefore provides a comprehensive basis for understanding the realities of life for Ukrainian refugees in Germany. At the same time, it provides valuable insights for the further development of integration policy measures and for overcoming the long-term social challenges posed by refugee migration. The aim is to support political decision-makers, researchers and the public with well-founded data and analyses in order to successfully shape the integration of this population group.

## 2 Study design and data basis

*Felix Süttmann and Elena Sommer*

### 2.1 Introduction

The IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees has been conducted annually since 2016, with regular refreshment samples to capture changes in refugee arrivals. The last refreshment in 2023 (M9) therefore also included refugees from Ukraine. The sample of Ukrainian refugees in the IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees represents the population of households of Ukrainian refugees in Germany arriving between February 24 and August 31, 2022. Data were collected from July 2023 to early January 2024. This chapter provides an overview of the survey design and the main methodological principles. It covers sampling, data-collection methods, the data basis and weighting.

### 2.2 Survey design

The design and content of the IAB-BAMF SOEP survey of refugees accommodate refugees from diverse origin contexts. (see Brücker et al. 2017; Kroh et al. 2016). The IAB-BAMF SOEP survey of refugees has several overlaps with the SOEP main survey (SOEP-CORE) of the general population in Germany, which also contains a migration sample (IAB-SOEP-MIG). This allows comparisons to be made between refugees from different countries and between refugees and people without or with a different migration background.

The IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees is an annual panel household survey that is conducted for the respondents under the name "Living in Germany". We invite selected households by post, then interviewers arrange face-to-face interviews. The multilingual cover letter contains information relevant to the study as well as information on data protection and the announcement that the adult respondents will receive an incentive of 20 euros after participating.

The IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees is primarily designed as a CAPI survey, i.e. the data is primarily collected in face-to-face mode using multilingual, trained interviewers. Like the cover letters, the survey materials are offered in several languages. At the individual level, 68.2 percent of the interviews with Ukrainian households in the IAB-BAMF SOEP survey of refugees from 2023 were conducted in Russian, 19.5 percent in Ukrainian, 11.5 percent in German and around 0.7 percent in English. In order to reduce the interview time in a household and avoid overburdening respondents, there are two options for respondents to complete the personal questionnaires in self-administered form. Other household members can complete the questionnaire on a tablet (CASI) while the interviewer speaks with others in the home. On the other hand, people who belong to the same household can complete the questionnaire online at a later date (CAWI-Switch). In the Ukrainian households of the IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees from 2023, 77.2 percent of the interviews are conducted at the person level by the interviewees (CAPI), 15.4 percent are self-administered on a tablet by the interviewees (CASI) and 7.4 percent are completed online (CAWI). The average survey time at the person level is approx. 88 minutes.

## 2.3 Sampling basis

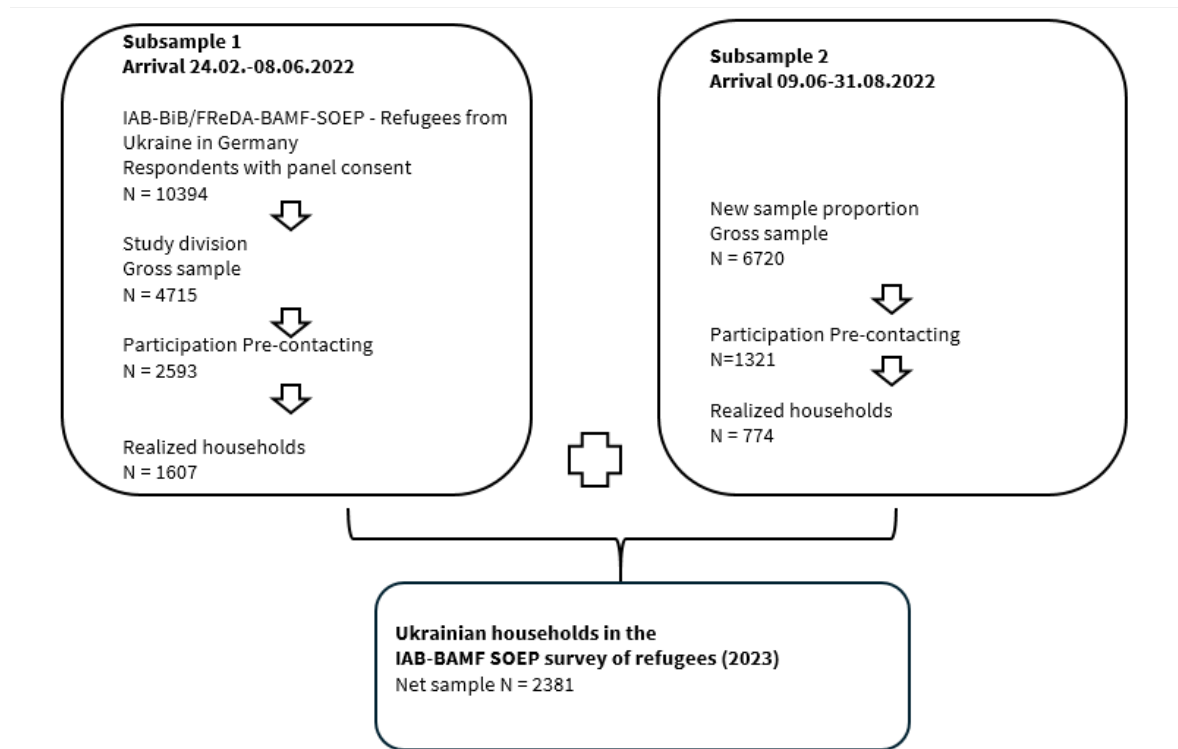
The sample of Ukrainian households in the IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees consists of two subsamples (see Figure 2-1 ). Subsample 1 includes households with at least one member previously interviewed online or by post as part of the study "IAB-BiB/FReDA-BAMF-SOEP - Refugees from Ukraine in Germany" in late summer/autumn 2022 or early 2023. The sample of the self-administered personal survey "IAB-BiB/FReDA-BAMF-SOEP - Refugees from Ukraine in Germany" consists of 18- to 70-year-olds who moved to Germany from Ukraine between February 24, 2022 and June 8, 2022 (see Brücker et al. 2023b; Steinhauer et al. 2024). Sub-sample 2, on the other hand, includes first-time interviews with arrivals from June 9 to August 31, 2022.

The two-stage sampling procedure for the survey "IAB-BiB/FReDA-BAMF-SOEP - Refugees from Ukraine in Germany" (Brücker et al. 2023b), which forms the basis for subsample 1, is described in detail in Steinhauer et al. (2024). After completion of the study "IAB-BiB/FReDA-BAMF-SOEP - Refugees from Ukraine in Germany", the panel sample was split. One half was transferred to the Family Demographic Panel (FReDA) of the Federal Institute for Population Research (BiB). The other half will continue to be surveyed here as part of the IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees from summer 2023. The starting point for the breakdown is all persons from the first survey wave who have given their panel consent (Figure 2-1 ), whereby all respondents who have left Germany were assigned to FReDa. After deducting respondents who had left the panel, a gross total of 4,715 individuals were included in subsample 1. The households of these individuals were then contacted in advance by the survey institute infas – Institute for Applied Social Sciences GmbH, with a request to complete a short contact questionnaire, either online or on paper. This pre-contacting approach is used to increase the contact rate and reduce selective bias due to non-contact in the face-to-face interviews, which are subject to limited interviewer capacity (Müller et al. 2024). The share of undelivered letters (postal returns) is 14 percent. Of the 2,593 households that took part in the pre-contacting (Weitz et al. 2024) and received an invitation to a face-to-face interview, 1,607 households with 2,422 personal interviews were realized (Figure 2-1).

Subsample 2 includes people with Ukrainian citizenship who entered Germany between June 9 and August 31, 2022, as well as their household members. For this subsample, persons with Ukrainian citizenship were randomly selected from the Central Register of Foreigners (AZR) in regional groups, whose addresses were then obtained from the relevant immigration authorities. The gross sample comprises 6,720 households that were contacted by the survey institute in advance by post. Around a quarter (26 percent) of the letters were returned by post. In total, 1,321 households took part in the preliminary contact (Weitz et al. 2024). These households form the gross deployment sample for the further survey. Of these, 774 households with 1,240 personal interviews were realized (Figure 2-1).

A detailed overview of the contact methods used and the response rates at household and individual level by subsample can be found in the SOEP Methods Report 2023 (Weitz et al. 2024).

**Figure 2-1 : Composition of the sample of Ukrainian households in the IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees**



Source: Own representation.

## 2.4 Contents of the survey

Each interview begins with the creation of a household matrix based on information provided by the head of the household. The interviewers record the basic information (gender, year of birth, nationality, date of moving in) for each household member and the relationships between the household members. The household questionnaire is then completed, which is also based on information provided by the head of household and provides information on the following topics:

- Questions about private and shared accommodation
- Housing situation in general
- State benefits
- Need for care in the household
- Questions for every child born in 2006 or later

All adults in the household are then asked to complete a personal questionnaire. In 2023, the following questions were asked as part of the personal questionnaire:

- Life satisfaction and personal characteristics
- Everyday activities

- Language skills and language use
- Intention to stay
- Discrimination
- Employment situation, income and transfer income
- State of health and use of medical services
- Opinions and attitudes
- Worries
- Residence preferences

In addition, first-time interviewees (this applies to all Ukrainian refugees interviewed for this study in 2023, as this is their first survey wave as part of the IAB-BAMF-SOEP survey) receive a CV questionnaire. The CV questionnaire covers the following time-constant content:

- Origin (nationality, place of birth, childhood)
- Leaving and moving to Germany
- Residential history
- Integration and language courses in Germany
- Employment and professional status before moving to Germany
- Education, qualifications and their recognition
- Family and plans for family reunification

## 2.5 Weighting

We weight the sample using the IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees procedure (Siegers et al. 2022). This consists of design weights with an adjustment of the probability of participation and a marginal adjustment using information from the AZR (age, gender, federal state and time of arrival as a quarter). For the households in subsample 1, we carried forward the prior survey weight as a longitudinal weight by multiplying it with the participation-probability adjustment. Although the sampling periods of the two samples do not overlap, it is possible that individual members of a household may have moved in during the other period. For this reason, both samples are integrated in the final step and subjected to a joint marginal adjustment.

A new feature of this study is that the households surveyed are contacted in advance. Therefore, in addition to the probability of being reachable and willing to participate, the probability of participating in the precontact is also modeled. A further methodological challenge lies in the fact that not all respondents answer a CV questionnaire. The CV questionnaire is missing for around 7 percent of respondents. However, as this is used to record the time of moving in, assumptions must be made for the weighting. When at least one member's CV is available, this move-in date is assumed for all household members. A zero weight is assigned to households for which not a single CV is available.

Table 2-1 shows a comparison of the distribution of key demographic characteristics (gender, age, federal state) in the population from the AZR and in the net sample of Ukrainian refugees (weighted and unweighted). Although the respondents are only adults aged 18 and over, the

household matrix can also identify people under the age of 18 in the same household, provided the information is available from the household questionnaire. The distribution comparison in the Table 2-1 refers to all age groups including children.

**Table 2-1 : Distribution comparison of the net sample with the Central Register of Foreigners (AZR)**

Shares in percent

Empty cell	Basic population (AZR)	Net sample unweighted	Net sample weighted
<b>Gender</b>			
Women	65.0	61.0	65.0
Men	35.0	39.0	35.0
<b>Age groups</b>			
0-17	35.5	29.9	35.5
18-29	12.4	13.6	12.4
30-39	16.6	17.2	16.6
40-49	15.1	17.5	15.1
50-59	7.7	9.9	7.7
60+	12.5	11.9	12.5

Source: Central Register of Foreigners (AZR) and IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees.

Using these weights, the results generalize to Ukrainians who fled to Germany between 24 February and 31 August 2022.

## 2.6 Data basis for the report and access to the data

This report uses data collected up to October 18, 2024. The results are based on the data evaluation of 2,219 households and 3,403 persons with both a personal and a CV questionnaire. In addition, the household questionnaire data for 1,719 children up to and including the age of 16 is evaluated for the analysis of childcare needs and the integration of schoolchildren.

The analyses in this report provide differentiated results for two arrival cohorts of Ukrainian refugees. The first cohort includes people who fled from Ukraine to Germany between February 24, 2022 and May 31, 2022. The second arrival cohort includes Ukrainians who moved to Germany after June 1, 2022. This distinction is made because Ukrainian refugees in need of assistance in Germany have been treated in the same way as recognized asylum seekers since 1 June 2022 with the change of legal status and are therefore entitled to social benefits (e.g. assistance with living expenses; basic security in old age or for jobseekers) under SGB II and XII, whereas they were previously entitled to social benefits under the Asylum Seekers Benefits Act. By differentiating between the arrival cohorts, it is possible to use the data to take into account the changes in the group of Ukrainian refugees in Germany in terms of socio-demographic composition and different support needs.

Table 2 shows the weighted distribution of both arrival cohorts by gender, age and education (people aged 18 and over). There is a higher share of men and people with a low level of education in the later arrival cohort than in the earlier arrival cohort. In the following chapters of this report, the other differences between these two arrival cohorts are discussed in detail.



**Table 2-2: Arrival cohorts by gender and age**

Shares in percent

Empty cell	Arrival cohort 1 (24.02 - 31.05.2022)	Arrival cohort 2 (from 01.06.2022)	Total
<b>Gender</b>			
Women	77.5	62.9	74.6
Men	22.5	37.1	25.4
<b>Age groups</b>			
18-25	11.4	10.8	11.2
26-35	18.9	21.4	19.4
36-45	29.9	26.1	29.2
46-59	19.7	22.8	20.4
60+	20.0	18.8	19.8
Average	43.8 (years)	43.9 (years)	43.8 (years)
<b>Education</b>			
Low	10.8	16.1	11.8
Medium	34.4	38.4	35.2
High	54.8	45.5	53.0

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 2,298 arrival cohort 1 and 1,070 arrival cohort 2.

The survey data is expected to be made available to national and international research as a scientific use file via the SOEP and IAB research data centers (FDZ) in summer 2025.

## 3 Family structures, childcare and school attendance

*Sabine Zinn, Elena Sommer, Andrea Marchitto, Philippa Cumming, Matteo Jacques Büsche*

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the family and household structure of Ukrainian refugees in Germany in the second half of 2023 and compares it with the initial situation in the first months of the war. It also looks at the situation of Ukrainian children and young people with regard to their care and school attendance.

### 3.2 Refugee families

Results of the first wave of the IAB-BiB/FReDA-BAMF-SOEP survey of refugees from Ukraine in Germany (Brücker et al. 2023a) show the group of Ukrainian refugees differ sharply from Ukraine's population by gender, marital status, education and age. The family and household structure of Ukrainian refugees in Germany results from the specific circumstances of flight caused by the war. Since male Ukrainian citizens of military age (18-60 years) are only allowed to

leave Ukraine with considerable restrictions, many refugee families experienced spatial separation between the spouses/life partners as well as the children and their parents.

### 3.2.1 Gender differences

In the first months of the war, it was predominantly Ukrainian women of working age with children who fled to Germany (Brücker et al. 2023a; Panchenko 2023). Among those arriving between February 24 and August 31, 2022 (including family members), we see: In the second year of the war, the share of adult female Ukrainian refugees in Germany remains very high at 75 percent, but the share of adult male refugees from Ukraine has risen slightly overall from 22 percent in 2022 (Brücker et al. 2023a) to 25 percent in the second half of 2023. The increasing refugee migration of Ukrainian men is also observed in other EU countries (Eurostat 2024). A comparison of the two Ukrainian arrival cohorts (arrival cohort 1: Arrival at Germany between February 24, 2022 and May 30, 2022 vs. Arrival cohort 2: Arrival from June 1, 2022; see Süttmann and Sommer, Chapter 2) reveals clear differences in the gender distribution. In the earlier arrival cohort, the share of adult men is 23 percent. Of these, around a quarter (26 percent) are at least 60 years old. In the later arrival cohort, the share of male refugees is significantly higher at 37 percent. At 13 percent, the share of men over 60 is significantly lower than in the earlier cohort.

In the earlier arrival cohort, only 14 percent of refugees from Ukraine came to Germany alone. In the later cohort, the share of adults arriving on their own rose to 24 percent, with the share of men arriving alone (37 percent) being almost twice as high as the share of women arriving alone (20 percent). 79 percent of men from the later arrival cohort who arrived alone stated that they came to Germany because their family members were already living in Germany (several reasons could be given for this question), indicating that they only followed their families to Germany at a later date.

### 3.2.2 Marital status and partner reunification

Among adult refugees from Ukraine who fled to Germany by the end of August 2022 and their family members, 56 percent are married in the second half of 2023, 21 percent are single, 15 percent are divorced and 7 percent are widowed. Other marital status categories (e.g. registered same-sex partnership) add up to less than 1 percent. There are differences between men and women in terms of marital status: Ukrainian refugee men in Germany have higher marital (men 70 percent; women 51 percent) and less often divorced (men 4 percent; women 19 percent) or widowhood rates (men 3 percent; women 8 percent). In contrast, the share of single people is roughly the same for Ukrainian men and women (men 22 percent; women 21 percent). In the later arrival cohort, the share of married persons is slightly higher than in the earlier arrival cohort (59 percent vs. 55 percent). In general, however, there are no significant differences between the two cohorts in terms of marital status.

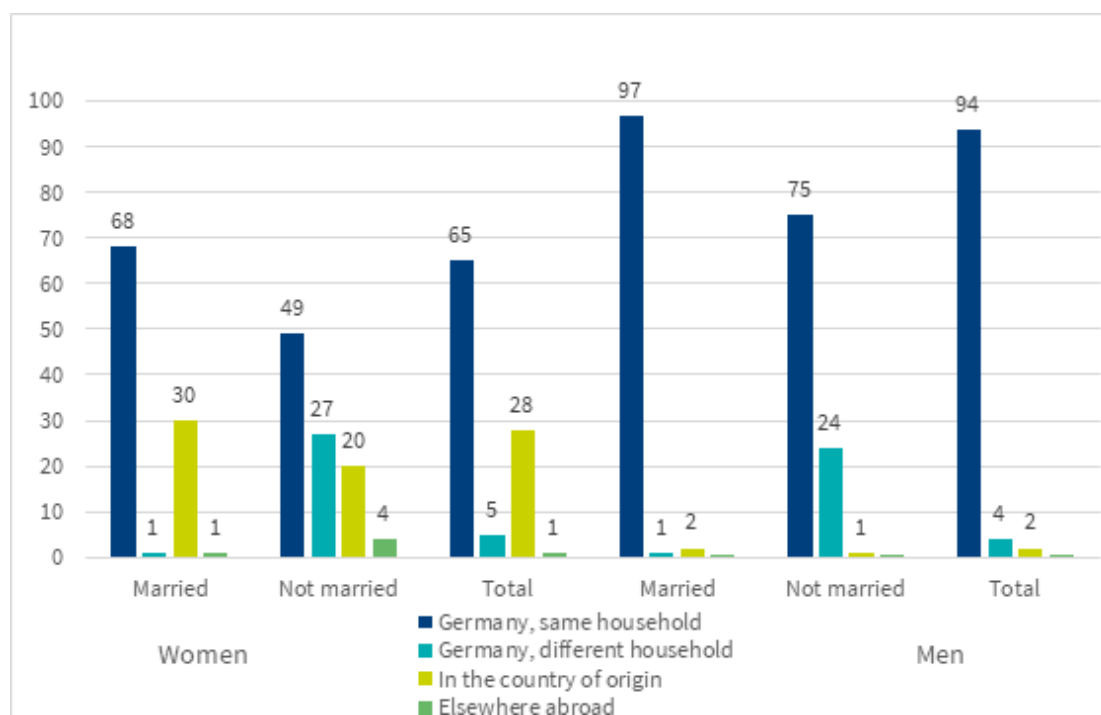
Two thirds (66 percent) of adult refugees from Ukraine are in a stable partnership in the second half of 2023, i.e. they are either married or have a partner. At 78 percent, the share of men in partnerships in Germany is significantly higher than that of women (42 percent). Overall, just over half (52 percent) of refugees from Ukraine have a partner in Germany. 14 percent of Ukrainian refugees have a partner abroad and 34 percent have no partner. In the earlier arrival cohort, the share of people with a partner abroad is higher than in the later arrival cohort (15 percent vs. 9

percent). The share of women with a partner in Germany increased significantly in the second half of 2023 compared to 2022. While in the first IAB-BiB/FReDA-BAMF-SOEP survey in late summer 2022, only 22 percent of refugee women from Ukraine aged 20 to 49 had their partner in Germany (Brücker et al. 2023a), in the IAB-BAMF-SOEP survey of Ukrainian refugees in the second half of 2023, this figure was already 45 percent for the same cohort. In the later arrival cohort, the share of women with a partner in Germany in the 20 to 49 age group is even 10 percentage points higher (55 percent). This indicates that it is more common for partners to have fled to Germany together in the second arrival cohort and therefore less spatial separation than in the first arrival cohort.

Despite a decline from 34 percent (Brücker et al. 2023a) to 18 percent, the share of female Ukrainian refugees who have a partner abroad remains relatively high among all Ukrainian women in the second half of 2023 (arrival cohort 1: 19 percent vs. arrival cohort 2: 14 percent). The share of male Ukrainian refugees with a partner abroad is very low in comparison and amounts to around 2 percent (in the 20-49 age group even less than 1 percent). The share of men without a partner is significantly lower than that of women (men 19 percent; women 39 percent). This is a further indication that male Ukrainians mainly come to Germany with or to their spouses/life partners.

**Figure 3-1 Place of residence of spouses/life partners among married and unmarried Ukrainian refugees**

Figures in percent



Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 1,968 married persons and 304 non-married persons in partnership.

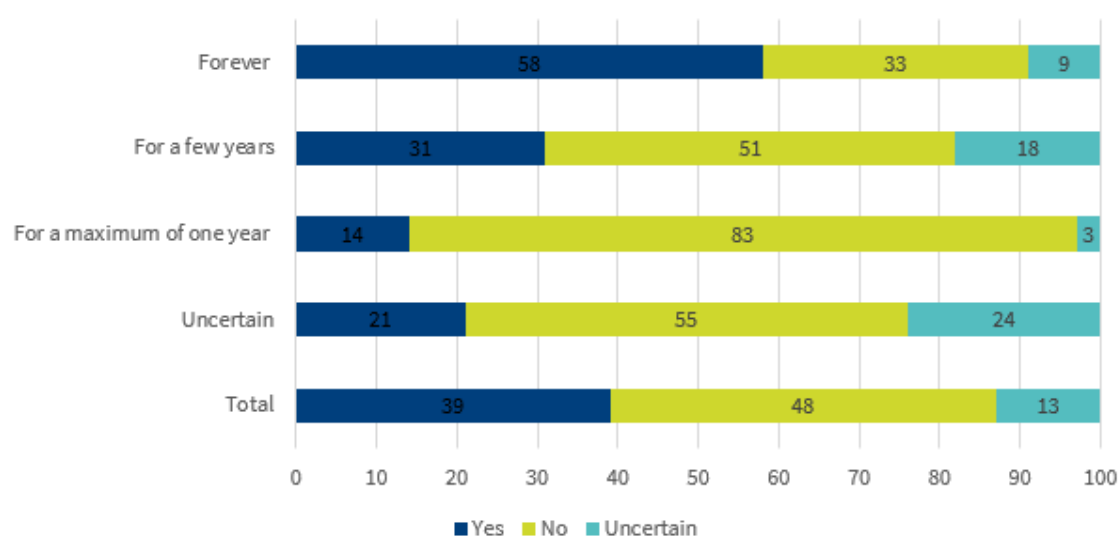
If we now only look at people in a partnership, we can see (Figure 3-1 ) that married couples in Germany predominantly live in the same household. Of those who are not married, around a

quarter have a partner in another household in Germany. Partnerships with people abroad are almost exclusively partners in Ukraine.

For 28 percent of female Ukrainian refugees who are in a partnership, their spouse/life partner lives abroad. Overall, 39 percent of these women plan for their partner to come to Germany. Women's plans for partner reunification hinge on their age and their long-term intention to stay in Germany. 58 percent of women with a partner abroad who want to stay in Germany forever have plans to bring their partner to Germany (Figure 3-2). Among women who want to stay in Germany for a maximum of one year, only 14 percent plan to bring their partner to Germany. There is a high share of "unsure" respondents (14 percent and 13 percent respectively) who were unable to answer these questions with regard to both their intention to stay and their plans to bring their partner to Germany. In general, both the intention to bring a partner and the long-term intention to stay are more common in the younger age groups than among older women (see Siegert and Kosyakova, Chapter 5).

**Figure 3-2 : Plans for partner reunification among female Ukrainian refugees with a partner abroad by intention to stay**

Figures in percent



Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 430 women with a partner abroad.

### 3.2.3 Family structures

Three quarters (76 percent) of refugees from Ukraine have children. This figure refers to children of all ages, regardless of their place of residence. 22 percent of women and 28 percent of men have no children. The average number of children of all ages is 1.8 children. At 2.0 children, the average number of children for men is slightly higher than for women (1.7 children). In the earlier arrival cohort (before June 2022), the share of men with three or more children is twice as high as for women: Men 26 percent vs. women 13 percent. Among other things, this is likely to be related to the exit criteria, as the exit ban for Ukrainian men of military age does not apply to fathers of three or more children. This clear difference no longer exists in the later arrival cohort: 14 percent of men and 12 percent of women from Ukraine who fled to Germany from June 2022 on have three or more children.

Regardless of their partnership status and age, 43 percent of adult women and 41 percent of adult men will have at least one minor child (under 18) in Germany in the second half of 2023. Table 3-1 shows the partnership structure of 20- to 49-year-old Ukrainian refugees in Germany with regard to the presence and place of residence of underage children. On the one hand, this age group is characterized by a high share of underage children. On the other hand, it is a militarily relevant age group in which there is often a spatial family separation. Two points in time (late summer 2022 and the second half of 2023) and the two arrival cohorts are compared with each other. In the second half of 2023, the share of people with underage children in the earlier arrival cohort (column 2: women 62 percent, men 57 percent) is similar to the previous year (column 3: women 62 percent, men 58 percent). However, differences compared to late summer 2022 can be seen in the earlier cohort with regard to the partner's place of residence. For example, there was a decrease from 30 percent to 15 percent among 20 to 49-year-old mothers of underage children whose partner lives abroad, and a simultaneous increase from 16 percent to 33 percent among 20 to 49-year-old mothers with underage children and a partner in Germany. In the second half of 2023, the figures for the later arrival cohort are similar to those for the earlier arrival cohort. Here too, 54 percent of men and 38 percent of women aged between 20 and 49 live in Germany with underage children and a partner Cohort 2 closely mirrors Cohort 1: 54 percent of men and 38 percent of women aged 20–49 live in Germany with a partner and minor children. These changes in the partnership structure of refugees from Ukraine are related to the family reunification of Ukrainian men, the return of Ukrainian women with partners abroad, the more frequent entry of couples in the later arrival cohort and the emergence of new partnerships in Germany.

The share of single fathers (living in Germany) between the ages of 20 and 49 with underage children in Germany is low and stands at 2 percent across both arrival cohorts. The share of single mothers aged 20 to 49 (living in Germany) has in turn fallen in the previous arrival cohort from 46 percent in the previous year to around 30 percent at the end of 2023 due to the influx of Ukrainian men. Around half of these single mothers have a spouse/life partner living abroad. The other half are unpartnered. Among women who fled to Germany from June 2022 on, the share of single mothers in the 20 to 49 age group is lower and amounts to 21 percent (Table 3-1).

Further analyses show (without table) that the share of Ukrainian refugees with underage children abroad is very low, at 1 percent. Overall, however, 21 percent of Ukrainian women and 23 percent of Ukrainian men who have fled to Germany have at least one child abroad in the second half of 2023. In the over-50 age group, around half of respondents (men 52 percent; women 50 percent) even have children abroad. These are likely to be mainly adult children.

The weighted distribution by household size shows that around one in five households (21 percent) consists of one person and around one in three households (31 percent) of two people. The share of households with three people is around a quarter (24 percent). Approximately one in seven households (14 percent) has four people; and one in ten households (10 percent) has more than four people. The average household size is 2.7 people. Around a quarter (23 percent) of underage children in the households of Ukrainian refugees in Germany are not yet of school age, i.e. under 6 years old. 30 percent of the children are between 6 and 10 years old and almost half (47 percent) are between 11 and 17 years old.

**Table 3-1: Partnership and family structure of 20- to 49-year-old refugees from Ukraine**  
Shares in percent

Empty cell	Arrival cohort 2 (from June 2022 2023		Arrival cohort 1 (before June 2022 2023		Arrival cohort 1 (before June 2022 2022 <sup>1)</sup>	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Spouse or life partner in Germany	55	81	45	80	22	74
...of which with underage children in Germany	38	54	33	54	16	54
...of which without minor children in Germany	5	6	2	6	1	4
...of which childless	13	21	10	21	5	17
Spouse or partner abroad	16	<1	20	<1	39	5
...of which with underage children in Germany (= temporary single parent)	11	-	15	-	30	3
...of which without minor children in Germany	2	-	3	-	2	1
...of which childless	3	-	2	-	6	1
Without partnership	29	19	36	19	38	19
...of which with underage children in Germany (=single parents)	10	2	15	2	16	1
...of which without minor children in Germany	7	1	4	2	3	1
...of which childless	12	17	17	14	19	17
Total with underage children in Germany	58	56	62	57	62	58

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 3,403. <sup>1)</sup>Values for 2022 taken from Brücker et al. 2023a: 82

### 3.3 Childcare and school attendance

#### 3.3.1 Childcare

The majority of Ukrainian refugees at the time of the survey in the second half of 2023 are women (75 percent), many of them with underage children (43 percent). For these families, children's access to institutional childcare and educational facilities is of great importance - it supports integration into the labor market, cultural activities and social life. In Ukraine, the rate of institutional childcare is traditionally high, as in many post-socialist countries (84 percent of 1-6-year-olds in 2013, Putcha et al. 2018). It can therefore be assumed that Ukrainian mothers have a high demand for childcare places. However, the results of the IAB-BiB/FReDA-BAMF-SOEP study from late summer 2022 show that access to crèches and nurseries is not a matter of course for refugee children (Brücker et al. 2023a). Only 22 percent of children under the age of three and 60 percent of 3- to 6-year-olds attended a nursery at the time. Since then, various support programs have been introduced at municipal and state level to improve access (e.g. Boll et al. 2023; Köller et al. 2022).

In fact, in the second half of 2023, there was a significant increase in the childcare rate for children of kindergarten age (3 to 6 years): 76 percent of children are now cared for in institutional facilities, which corresponds to an increase of 16 percentage points. Nevertheless, this rate is still 15 percentage points below the German average, which was 91 percent in the first quarter of 2024 (Federal Statistical Office 2024a). For younger children aged 0 to 2 years, the

childcare rate increased only slightly to 23 percent, which corresponds to an increase of just 1 percentage point. This age group therefore remains 14 percentage points behind the German average, which was 37 percent in 2023 (Federal Statistical Office 2024c).

Regional differences between eastern and western Germany are also reflected in the number of refugees: in eastern Germany, 40 percent of children aged 0 to 2 years will attend a childcare facility in the second half of 2023, compared to 19 percent in western Germany. For children aged 3 to 6, the figure is 87 percent in eastern Germany and 73 percent in western Germany.

In terms of family constellation, there are hardly any differences in the childcare rate between children aged 0 to 6 who live with both parents and those who live with their parents and other relatives; the average rate in the second half of 2023 is 60 percent. However, the rate is significantly lower for children who only live with one parent, at around 38 percent.

The educational level of parents also influences access to childcare: for parents with a tertiary education, i.e. parents who have completed a university degree, the childcare rate for 0 to 6-year-old children is around 64 percent, compared to 55 percent for parents with an intermediate level of education and 45 percent for those with a lower level of education.

There is also a clear correlation between the employment of local parents and the childcare rate: children of working parents attend a childcare facility far more often (70 percent) than children of unemployed parents. Here, the childcare rate is 59 percent.

Overall, children who came to Germany before June 2022 are more likely to be in childcare than those who came later (62 percent versus 55 percent among 0 to 6-year-olds).

### 3.3.2 School attendance

In Germany, compulsory schooling for children begins in the school year in which they turn 7 and lasts until they turn 18. Students attend full-time school for nine or ten years – depending on the federal state – then complete three years of mandatory vocational training, unless they remain at a secondary school (e.g., Gymnasium). With a few exceptions, this regulation also applies to refugee children and young people from Ukraine, who are required to attend school upon arrival (following the regulations in place at federal state level, Heiermann and Atanisev 2024). At the end of 2023, over 210,000 Ukrainian school-age children were attending German schools (KMK 2023).

Since 2022, there have been nationwide programs, including language support and mentoring projects, to support Ukrainian children, for example German classes independent of school type and school-specific language support programs in Bavaria or support for teachers in municipal integration centers and collaboration with Ukrainian teachers at schools in North Rhine-Westphalia. In addition, special classes or accompanying lessons for Ukrainian refugee children have also been set up at schools, as was the case during the refugee crisis in 2015/16. The establishment and design of such classroom or school-based support services was carried out on a state-specific basis (e.g. in the form of preparatory classes, such as the Berlin welcome classes, or bridge classes in Bavaria) and also at individual school level. There are no nationwide guidelines on how refugee children and young people should be taught in Germany, as educational issues are the responsibility of the federal states. The primary aim of the preparatory and welcome classes is to enable the children to learn German quickly, whereby they could

benefit from the fact that German is taught as a foreign language alongside English in Ukraine. As soon as the children have learned enough German, they are supposed to switch to regular classes. In some federal states, however, the children remain in the preparatory classes for up to one school year before being integrated into regular classes. However, it remains to be seen to what extent the respective models achieve their goal. Initial empirical studies on preparatory classes in 2015/2016 reveal essential problems. For example, it was found that refugee children of primary school age in Hamburg had significantly lower chances of attending a grammar school compared to refugee children who were integrated directly into mainstream classes (Höckel and Schilling 2022).

A look at the data from the second half of 2023 on the school education of Ukrainian children shows (Figure 3-3) that only 7 percent of 7 to 10-year-olds attend a pure welcome, preparatory or bridge class without further instruction in a regular class, while the share of 11 to 17-year-olds is 21 percent. In the second half of 2023, 18 percent of younger children and 27 percent of older children will attend a mainstream class with additional support classes for Ukrainian children, while 60 percent of all school-age Ukrainian children will only attend mainstream classes. This means that only a total of 16 percent of Ukrainian children and young people are taught in special classes, a significantly lower share than in 2015/16, when around 40 percent of refugee children were taught in such classes (KMK 2016). There is hardly any difference between children who came to Germany before or from June 2022 in the share of those who only attend preparatory, welcome or bridge classes (16 percent compared to 17 percent). However, children who arrived later are more likely to attend regular classes with additional remedial teaching (29 percent compared to 23 percent).

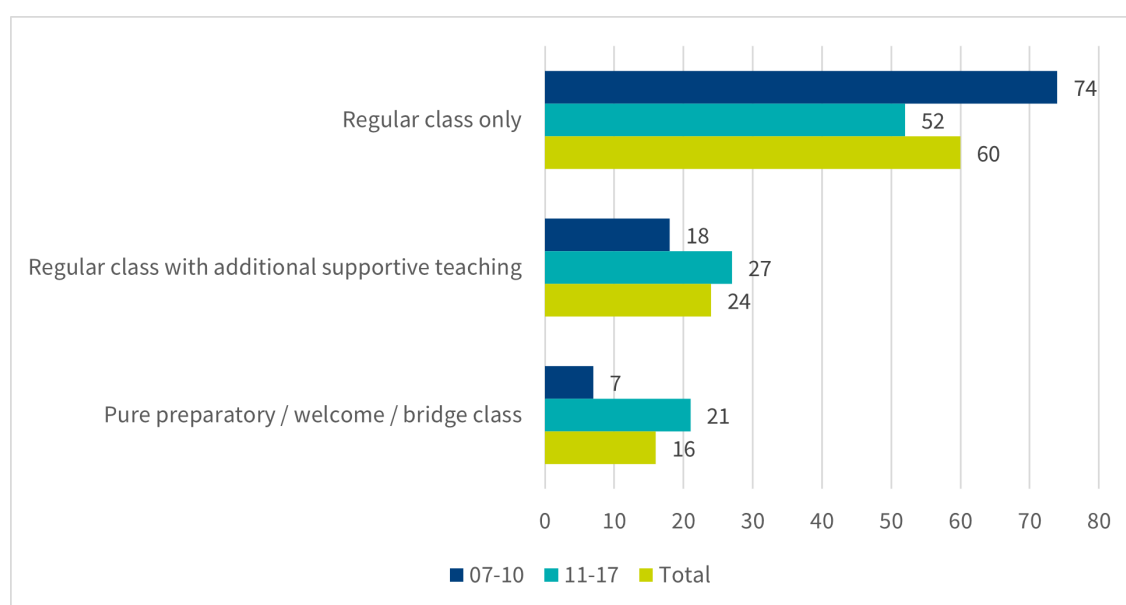
With the political goal of integrating Ukrainian refugee children and young people into the German school system as quickly as possible after their arrival (KMK 2022), it remains unclear to what extent it was possible to assign them to school types according to the criteria applicable in the respective federal states. The most important basis for allocation to school types in Germany is an assessment of the level of competence and knowledge, whether on the basis of grades or other forms of performance assessment. Given the circumstances under which the Ukrainian children came to Germany, both seem rather unlikely to be feasible. On the one hand, due to war and flight, it is unlikely that every child had a current report card from Ukraine and, at the same time, assessment tests were rarely carried out due to limited time and personnel capacities. On the other hand, there are significant differences between the Ukrainian and German education systems - both in the structure of the school types and in the grading system (Anders 2022): In Ukraine, all children learn in a standardized school system from grade 1 to at least grade 9. The primary level comprises grades 1 to 4, the lower secondary level grades 5 to 9. Those aiming for the Abitur, the degree enabling university admission, attend the upper secondary level up to the 11th grade. There is no separation into different types of school after elementary school, as is common in Germany. The Ukrainian grading system ranges from 12 to 1, with 12 to 10 being rated as very good, 9 to 7 as good, 6 to 4 as satisfactory and 3 to 1 as unsatisfactory. There is no validated, tested key for converting these grades into the German system with grades from 1 (very good) to 6 (unsatisfactory). Therefore, school placement likely reflected proximity to home, social contacts and family educational goals more than children's abilities and knowledge. The different education systems of the federal states may also have influenced access to school



types: School systems can be divided into more liberal and more traditional types. In the more liberal federal states, parents have a greater influence on the choice of secondary school, regardless of academic performance or teacher recommendations. In liberal federal states, access to the Abitur is also possible via alternative school types (e.g. comprehensive school) and not just via the Gymnasium. In these federal states, a six-year elementary school or elementary school with subsequent orientation level is intended to promote social mixing. In more traditional systems, grades and teacher recommendations carry more weight, the Abitur is mainly acquired at the Gymnasium and elementary school ends after year 4.

**Figure 3-3: Distribution of Ukrainian pupils (age groups 7-10, 11-17, 7-17 years) in the 2022/23 school year by attendance of pure preparatory, welcome or bridge classes, supportive additional lessons and regular lessons only**

Shares in percent



Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 1,122.

This report examines which types of lower and upper secondary school Ukrainian children aged 11 to 17 attend and compares this distribution with that of all children of the same age who attended public schools in Germany in the 2022/2023 school year. Children aged 7 to 10 are not included here because this age group mainly attends elementary school. Children who attend a pure welcome, bridge or preparatory class are included here, i.e. the parents of all these children also indicated a regular school type that their child attends in the survey. It also analyzes how the distribution of Ukrainian children across different types of schools in the federal school system differs in relation to their parents' education.

As the age structure of the refugee Ukrainian children and adolescents is similar to the age structure of all children and adolescents in Germany and is almost equally distributed between the age groups 11 to 17, and there is no evidence of selective migration in terms of the children's skills or level of knowledge, the comparison offers the opportunity to assess whether the type of school chosen is appropriate for their level of performance. Deviations in the distribution of school types could indicate that this is not always guaranteed.

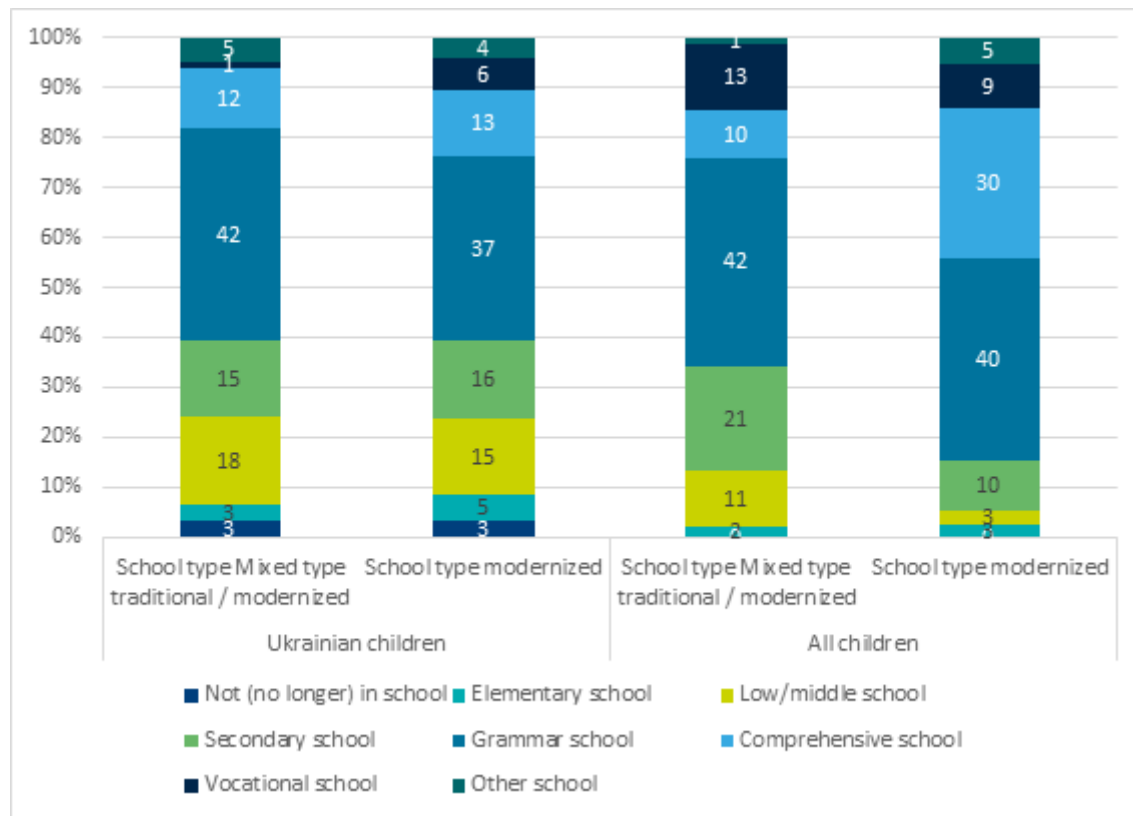
For the analysis, the federal school systems were divided into two types (Helbig and Nikolai 2015): *modernized* and *traditional-modernized* mixed types. The federal states of Berlin, Brandenburg, Bremen, Hamburg, Hesse, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, North Rhine-Westphalia, Rhineland-Palatinate, Saarland and Schleswig-Holstein have *modernized*, liberal structures. In Lower Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, Thuringia, Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria and Saxony, there is a mixed type with partly traditional and partly *modernized* structures.

Overall, 39 percent of Ukrainian children aged 11 to 17 attend a grammar school, 13 percent a comprehensive school, 15 percent a secondary school, 16 percent a lower or middle school and 4 percent an elementary school. A further 5 percent either attend another school (e.g. a Waldorf or Montessori school) or are not (or no longer) in school (3 percent). In federal states with *modernized* school systems, the share of grammar school pupils is 37 percent, while in more traditional systems it is 42 percent (Figure 3-4 ). There are only minor differences between the two school systems for comprehensive schools, secondary modern schools, lower and intermediate secondary schools and elementary school. However, more Ukrainian children attend a vocational school in *modernized* systems than in traditional ones (6 percent compared to 1 percent).

Compared to all pupils in Germany in the 2022/2023 school year, there are clear differences in the shares in certain types of school. Ukrainian children and young people aged 11 to 17 are less likely to attend a comprehensive school (13 percent compared to 20 percent) or a vocational school (4 percent compared to 11 percent). At the same time, the share of lower secondary school pupils among Ukrainian children and young people is higher (16 percent compared to 7 percent). The share of secondary school pupils, on the other hand, is identical at 15 percent. A closer look at the school systems shows that in more traditional systems, only 1 percent of Ukrainian children attend a vocational school, compared to 13 percent of all children. In *modernized* systems, the share of Ukrainian children in comprehensive schools (13 percent) is significantly lower than for all children (30 percent). The differences in attendance at secondary and lower secondary schools in *modernized* systems are also striking. Here, 16 percent of Ukrainian children are secondary school pupils, compared to 10 percent of all children, while the share of lower secondary or middle school pupils is 15 percent, significantly higher than for all pupils (3 percent).

**Figure 3-4 : Distribution of Ukrainian refugee children in the various German school types compared with all children for the age group 11-17 years and for the school year 2022/23.**

In percent



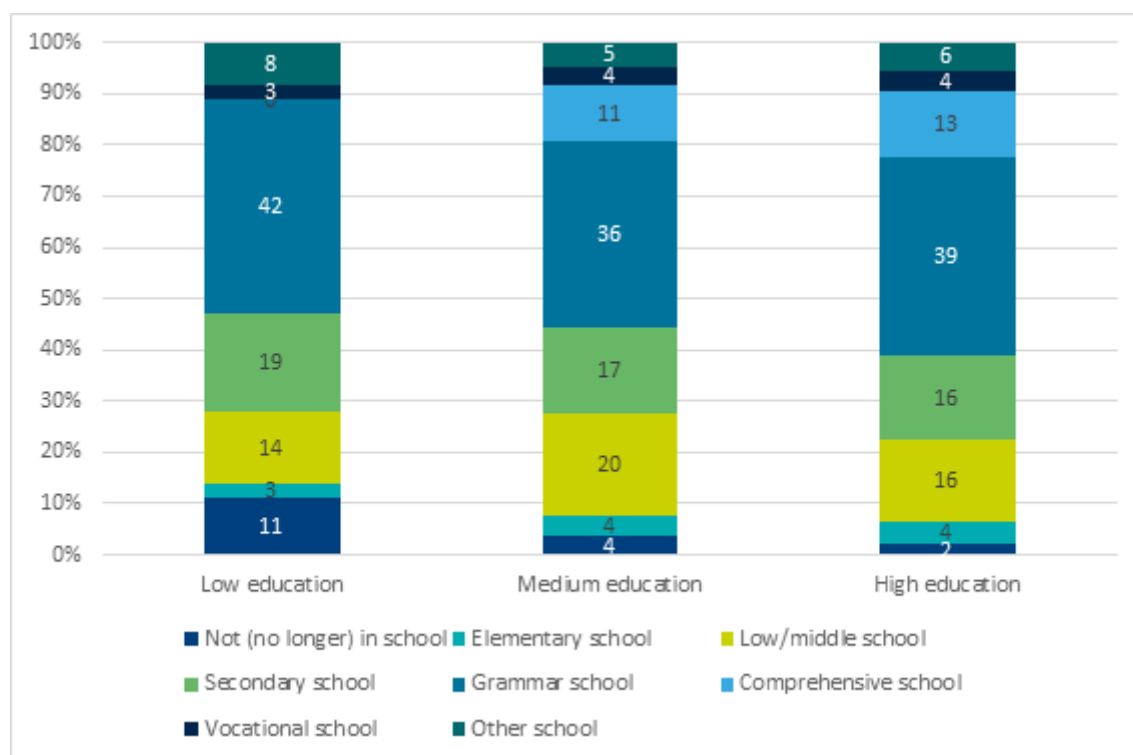
Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 754.

A comparison between the level of parental education and the distribution of school types among children aged 11-17 (Figure 3-5) shows differences in the share of grammar school pupils with regard to their parents' educational background. For example, 42 percent of all children of parents with a low level of education attend a grammar school and 39 percent of those with a high level of education. In contrast, only 36 percent of children of parents with a medium level of education do so. There are also striking differences among children who are no longer in the school system. This share is 11 percent for children with a low level of parental education, compared to 4 percent and 2 percent for children with a medium and high level of parental education respectively. There are also clear differences for children who attend a comprehensive school. While 11 percent and 13 percent of children of parents with a medium and high level of education respectively attend this type of school, the share of children with a low level of parental education is less than 1 percent. There are also discrepancies in other types of schools that are not the above-mentioned mainstream schools, such as Waldorf or Montessori schools: 8 percent of children with parents with a low level of education attend this type of school, compared to 5 percent and 6 percent of children with parents with a medium and high level of education respectively. There are also striking differences among children who are not (or no longer) in the school system. At 11 percent, this share is particularly high among children and young people with parents with a low level of education and among 16 and 17-year-olds, meaning that it appears to mainly affect school leavers. The share of primary school pupils is low

in all groups at 3 percent and 4 percent respectively. With regard to the time of arrival before or from June 2022, there are no meaningful differences in the distribution of Ukrainian children across the different types of school.

**Figure 3-5: Distribution of Ukrainian refugee children aged 11-17 by type of school according to parents' highest level of education.**

In percent

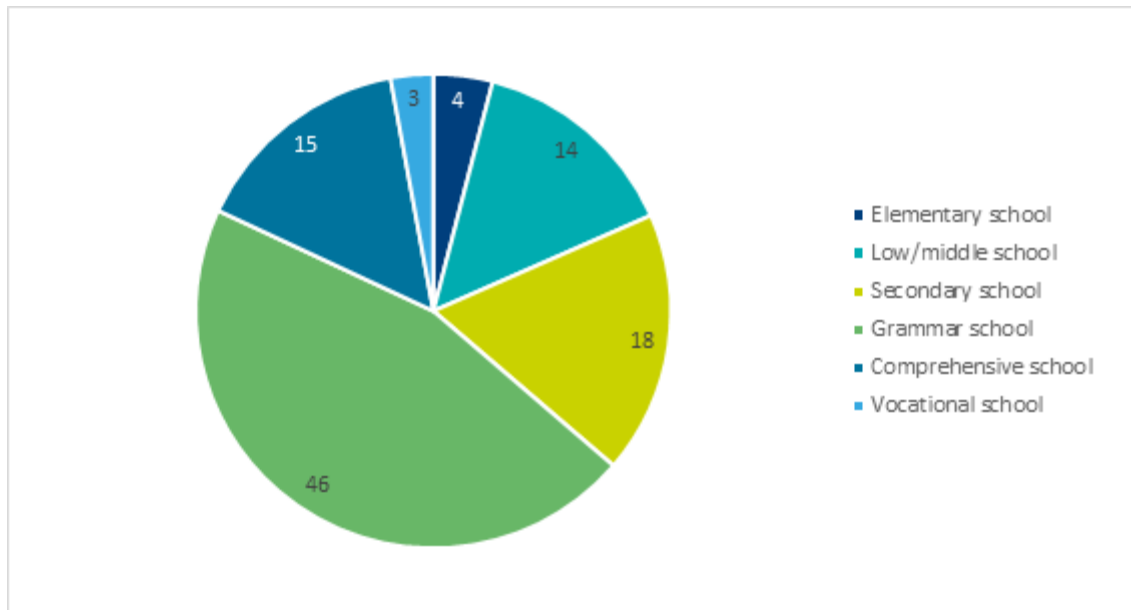


Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 696.

Many Ukrainian children and young people take part in online lessons at Ukrainian schools in addition to their regular school attendance. Overall, this applies to 50 percent of 7 to 17-year-olds, although the share varies depending on the age group and type of school (Figure 3-6). The figure is 46 percent for 7 to 10-year-olds and 52 percent for 11 to 17-year-olds. Almost all online students (86 percent) aged 7 to 10 attend elementary school in Germany, while 46 percent of children aged 11 to 17 attend grammar schools, 18 percent secondary schools, 15 percent comprehensive schools, 14 percent lower or middle schools, 4 percent elementary school and 3 percent vocational schools. Participation in online lessons more or less reflects the school distribution of Ukrainian children in Germany, with a slightly higher rate among grammar school pupils. In relation to the time of arrival, there are no significant differences in participation in additional online lessons among 11 to 17-year-olds. Among 7 to 10-year-olds, however, children who came to Germany from June 2022 onwards are significantly more likely to participate (55 percent) than those who have been in Germany for longer (44 percent). The share of children who only take part in Ukrainian online lessons at without attending a German school is negligible.

**Figure 3-6: Distribution of Ukrainian refugees aged 11 to 17 who take part in online lessons at a Ukrainian school in addition to school in Germany.**

In percent



Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 360.

### 3.4 Conclusion

Flight migration from Ukraine to Germany is strongly influenced by the conditions caused by the war. In the first few months after the start of the war, it was mainly women of working age with children who came to Germany, while in later phases an increasing number of men arrived, often as part of family reunification. The share of male refugees rose from 22 percent in 2022 to 25 percent in the second half of 2023, with the share of men in later arrival cohorts being significantly higher at 37 percent. At the same time, the spatial separation of families decreased, which led to a decline in single women with underage children. Two thirds of adult refugees are in stable partnerships, with men living together with their partners in Germany more often than women. These changes illustrate the dynamics of family reunification and the different trajectories of flight between the arrival cohorts.

The integration of Ukrainian children and young people into the German education and childcare system is making progress, but remains challenging. While access to daycare centers for children aged 3 to 6 has increased significantly from 60 percent in 2022 to 76 percent in the second half of 2023, the care rate for children under 3 remains low at 23 percent. This indicates a continuing need for action, especially in comparison to German children. Regional differences are clearly visible: childcare rates are higher in eastern Germany than in the west. In addition, factors such as parents' level of education and employment influence access to childcare, with children of working and more highly educated parents being looked after significantly more often.

At the end of 2023, over 210,000 Ukrainian children and young people were attending German schools, with specific support programs such as preparatory classes or additional language lessons being implemented on a state-specific basis. While 60 percent of children and young people were fully integrated into mainstream classes in the second half of 2023, 16 percent took

part in special welcome or preparatory classes. Children and young people who arrived later are more likely to receive additional support in addition to regular classes, which indicates an improved integration structure. However, the allocation to school types remains complex. War, flight and a lack of certificates make classification based on performance standards difficult. Differences between the Ukrainian and German education systems, such as the lack of separation of school types in Ukraine and the complex federally regulated school system in Germany, also influence the process. Many Ukrainian children and young people attend Hauptschulen or Realschulen, while the share of comprehensive schools and vocational schools is lower than the German average. This finding suggests that not all Ukrainian children and young people attend a type of school that is appropriate to their level of performance and knowledge, probably also because their parents have difficulties navigating the German school system. Parallel Ukrainian online lessons remain an important anchor to Ukraine: 50 percent of 7 to 17-year-old children and young people take part in them in addition to attending German schools. Older children and young people (aged 11 to 17) in particular take part in it (52 percent), while among 7 to 10-year-olds, it is mainly children who moved to Ukraine from June 2022 onwards who take part in Ukrainian online lessons more frequently.

## 4 Educational qualifications, recognition, training aspirations and educational attainment

*Yuliya Kosyakova, Kseniia Gatskova, Silvia Schwanhäuser, Theresa Koch*

### 4.1 Introduction

Access to the German labor market is heavily dependent on educational and professional qualifications (Müller and Shavit 1998). Studies show that migrants in Germany receive lower returns (e.g. in the form of higher salaries) for their education and vocational qualifications compared to natives (Kogan 2007, 2016). This is often due to the fact that German employers see the quality of education as an indicator of the potential performance of applicants. However, foreign qualifications often do not receive the necessary recognition, as insufficient information and uncertainties about the equivalence of qualifications make assessment difficult (Kogan 2016). As a result, migrants often gain access to job offers that do not correspond to their actual level of qualification (Friedberg 2000; Chiswick and Miller 2009; Miller and Chiswick 2009). In addition, certain professions in Germany can only be practiced with a recognized German or equivalent foreign qualification, for example in regulated professions such as medicine or nursing (Federal Ministry of Education and Research 2012).

Against this background, this chapter first examines the educational and professional qualifications that Ukrainian refugees bring with them and what professional experience they have already gained before moving to Germany. Secondly, it analyzes the extent to which they

have their qualifications recognized. Thirdly, we look at whether and how they invest or would like to invest in educational measures in Germany.

## 4.2 Education in the country of origin

### 4.2.1 Formal education and vocational training

The data from the IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees enables a detailed look at the educational biographies of Ukrainian refugees: The majority of these refugees who have arrived since February 2022 have educational experience and qualifications. For example, 97 percent of refugees have obtained a school-leaving qualification in Ukraine (see Table 4-1). Women are more likely to have higher school qualifications than men. Two thirds of women and 60 percent of men have a qualification from an upper secondary school (Gymnasium or Fachoberschule). A third of men and 30 percent of women have completed a secondary school - similar to a Hauptschule or Realschule in Germany. Only just under 1 percent of refugees have no school-leaving qualifications. In 2022, 48 percent of the German-born population of the same age had completed a secondary school, a further 49 percent had completed an upper secondary school and 2 percent had not completed any schooling (own calculations based on SOEP v39). Compared to the population in Germany, refugees therefore have a significantly lower share in the middle and a higher share at the upper end of the qualification spectrum.

**Table 4-1: Education and vocational training before immigration by gender**

Percentage of 18-64-year-olds and average years in vocational and higher education

School type	Share of 18-64-year-olds, in percent			Average number of years of education		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Secondary school	34.1	29.5	30.7	9.6	9.8	9.7
Upper secondary school	59.9	66.3	64.7	10.3	10.2	10.2
Other school (e.g. polytechnical school)	3.2	3.1	3.2	10.8	10.1	10.3
No school leaving certificate	2.8	1.0	1.4	4.6	3.1	3.9
Total	100	100	100	10.0	10.0	10.0
Training type	Share of 18-64-year-olds, in percent			Average number of years of education		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Vocational training institution/dual education	19.3	18.0	18.3	3.6	3.0	3.2
Technical college/university, doctorate	51.9	57.6	56.2	6.1	5.3	5.5
No professional or university degree acquired	8.1	5.8	6.4	4.2	3.7	3.9
Did not attend a vocational college or university	20.7	18.5	19.1	-	-	-
Total	100	100	100	4.2	3.8	3.9

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 2,871 for school type and 2,806 for training type.

Gender differences are also evident in vocational training and higher education. 52 percent of men and 58 percent of women have a degree from a university of applied sciences or university

or a doctorate. Professional qualifications are less common: Around 19 percent of men and 18 percent of women have such a degree, while 8 percent of men and 6 percent of women have attended, but not completed, vocational training or higher education. A fifth of respondents (21 percent of men and 19 percent of women) have not completed any vocational training.

Overall, refugee women and men with a school-leaving qualification have completed an average of ten years of schooling, while those without a school-leaving qualification have spent around four years at school. In terms of vocational training, it takes men an average of four years to complete a vocational training course and six years to complete a vocational qualification, university degree or doctorate. It took women one year less than men to obtain a vocational qualification or a university degree or doctorate. Men and women who completed vocational training or university studies without a degree attended these educational institutions for an average of just under four years.

**Table 4-2 : Education and vocational training before immigration by arrival cohort**  
Percentage of 18-64-year-olds

School type	Moved in between February and May 2022	Moved in from June 2022
Secondary school	28.5	39.5
Upper secondary school	66.9	56.0
Other school (e.g. polytechnical school)	3.1	3.2
No school leaving certificate	1.4	1.4
Total	100.00	100.00
Training type	Moved in between February and May 2022	Moved in from June 2022
Vocational training institution/dual education	17.4	22.2
Technical college/university, doctorate	58.1	48.3
No professional or university degree acquired	6.1	7.5
Did not attend a vocational college or university	18.3	22.0
Total	100.00	100.00

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 2,871 for school type and 2,806 for training type.

The results on the educational level of Ukrainian refugees differ in part from earlier findings (see Brücker et al. 2023a), according to which 72 percent of refugees have a tertiary degree (51 percent with a Master's degree, 13 percent with a Bachelor's degree, 4 percent with a doctorate and a further 4 percent with other tertiary degrees). These differences can be attributed to two factors: Firstly, different classifications of educational qualifications were used in each of the surveys. In contrast to Brücker et al. (2023a), school and vocational education are considered separately here, with vocational qualifications being recorded and coded in a similar way to German qualifications. Secondly, there are differences in the socio-demographic composition between the earlier and later arrival cohorts. The IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees also considers Ukrainian refugees who arrived from June 2022 on, whose level of education may differ from that of those who arrived in Germany before June 2022. This assumption is confirmed by



the data: The share of those with a secondary school leaving certificate is 11 percentage points higher among refugees who arrived before June 2022 (see Table 4-2). Similarly, the share of those with a technical or university degree or doctorate is 10 percentage points higher in this group. Return and onward migration are also likely to play a role in the average level of education of refugees, with more highly educated people being more likely to emigrate again (Dustmann and Weiss 2007).

#### 4.2.2 Work experience

In addition to formal education, many Ukrainian refugees have work experience that can complement formal education. As there is no traditional vocational training system in Ukraine, informally acquired qualifications play an important role in the human capital of refugees. Data from the educational biographies of refugees allow an assessment of the amount of work experience that refugees acquired before arriving in Germany.

Over 92 percent of the men and 95 percent of the women surveyed had already gained professional experience before moving to Germany. This experience was mainly gained in full-time jobs: Men and women had been working full-time for an average of 13 years and part-time for less than one year (see Table 4-3). These results show that Ukrainian refugees have significant work experience they bring to Germany, which can be seen as an advantage for potential integration into the labor market.

**Table 4-3: Work experience before entering Germany by gender**  
Percentage of 18-64-year-olds and average years in employment

Empty cell	Men	Women	In total
Employed before coming to (in percent)	92	95	95
Average length of service (in years)			
Full-time	13.4	13.1	13.2
Part-time	0.8	0.8	0.8
Total	15.3	14.6	14.7

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 2,928.

### 4.3 Recognition of school and vocational training

The existence of vocational training acquired abroad is often not sufficient for successful integration into the labor market in Germany. Particularly in the case of regulated professions<sup>1</sup> (e.g. in the medical field), recognition of foreign qualifications is essential in order to be able to take up employment that is commensurate with the training. According to empirical studies, the recognition of foreign professional qualifications is crucial for improving the employment and

<sup>1</sup> The practice of certain professions in Germany is subject to recognition of professional qualifications. These professions are called regulated professions. Regulated professions include the medical professions, legal professions, teaching at state schools and professions in the public sector. They also include subjects that are a prerequisite for practicing an academic and regulated profession. Professional qualifications acquired abroad require recognition, which is regulated by federal or state laws or administrative regulations. Most professions in Germany are not regulated (Federal Employment Agency, 2024a).

income prospects of migrants in Germany (Kogan 2012; Tibajev and Hellgren 2019; Brücker et al. 2021). On average, the recognition of such qualifications increases the probability of employment by around 25 percentage points and income by around 20 percent (Brücker et al. 2021).

#### 4.3.1 Application for recognition: general quotas

On average, around 21 percent of refugees who have either completed vocational training or have a university degree have applied for recognition of their training. This rate is higher for refugees who arrived before June 2022, at 24 percent, while it is 16 percent for those who arrived in June 2022 or later.

Compared to refugees with a vocational qualification, refugees with a university degree are significantly more likely to apply for recognition of their education (see Table 4-4). Gender plays a less important role here: men are slightly more likely to apply for recognition of vocational qualifications (men: 14 percent, women: 11 percent) or recognition of university degrees with a practical focus (men: 10 percent, women: 8 percent). Women, on the other hand, have slightly higher recognition rates for university degrees with a theoretical focus (men: 12 percent, women: 15 percent). However, the differences between the genders are not statistically significant.

**Table 4-4: Applications for recognition of training, by type of training and by gender**

In percent

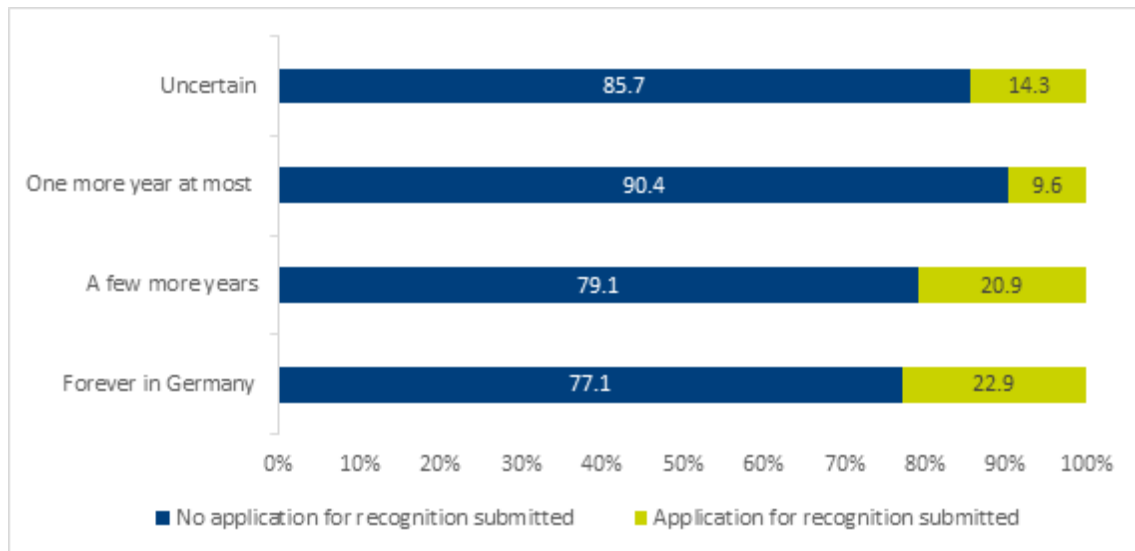
Application submitted for:	Empty cell	Men	Women	Together
Professional qualification	In total	13.7	10.7	11.5
University degree	University with a practical focus	9.9	8.1	8.5
	University with a theoretical focus	12.2	15.1	14.4
	Doctoral studies	a)	1.0	1.0
	In total	23.3	24.1	23.9
Total <sup>b)</sup>	Empty cell	19.8	20.5	20.4

Notes: a) Calculations relate to fewer than 10 observations and are not shown. b) As several applications can be submitted per person, this line does not add up to the others. Degree from a university with a practical focus would be, for example, a degree in social work from a university of applied sciences. A university degree with a theoretical focus would be, for example, a university degree in mathematics or literature.

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 1,705.

Furthermore, it can be assumed that a longer-term perspective to stay in Germany is positively related to the application rate. As can be seen in Figure 4-1, a longer-term perspective to stay doubles the application rates: Only 10 percent of those who want to stay in Germany for a maximum of one year have submitted applications for recognition, compared to 21 to 23 percent of refugees who want to stay in Germany forever or for a few more years. Uncertainty about their own plans to stay also reduces the likelihood of an application for recognition of educational qualifications. This indicates that refugees are more willing to invest in the recognition of their vocational qualification if they hope to benefit from it in the long term.

**Figure 4-1: Applications for recognition of training, by intention to stay**  
In percent



Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 2,283.

#### 4.3.2 Regulated and non-regulated professions

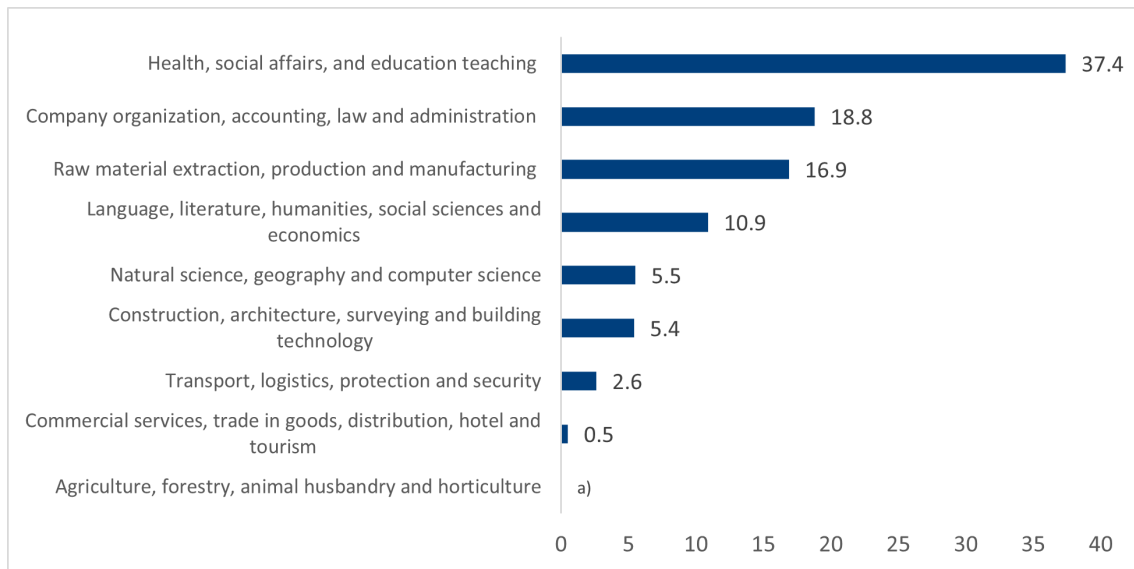
Given Germany's looming shortages in some professions, we need to identify the professions for which refugees seek qualification recognition. As expected, the majority of applications relate to regulated professions (60 percent). However, 22 percent of respondents are unsure if the occupation they're seeking to have recognised is regulated. This indicates a lack of information about the German labor market, which could be remedied by improved information services, for example through job centers or digital formats.

In Figure 4-2, the occupations are grouped according to the 2010 Classification of Occupations (KldB 2010). It can be seen that most applications for recognition are submitted for occupations in the fields of health, social work, teaching and education (37 percent), followed by occupations in business organization, accounting, law and administration (19 percent) and occupations in raw materials extraction, production and manufacturing (17 percent).

There are pronounced gender differences: two thirds of applications for recognition from female refugees are for professions in the fields of health, social work, teaching and education (42 percent) and business organization, accounting, law and administration (21 percent). Among male refugees, most applications for recognition were submitted for occupations in raw materials extraction, production and manufacturing (38 percent) and in health, social services, teaching and education (21 percent).

A comparison of these occupations with the list of bottleneck occupations from the Federal Employment Agency's skilled worker bottleneck analysis (2024a) shows that nine percent of applications for recognition relate to bottleneck occupations. The gender difference is very pronounced here: For men, 18 percent of applications for recognition concern bottleneck occupations, compared to just 7 percent for women.

**Figure 4-2: For which occupational group was recognition applied for?**  
In percent



Notes: a) Calculations refer to less than 10 observations and are therefore not shown.

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 368.

### 4.3.3 Reasons for not applying for recognition

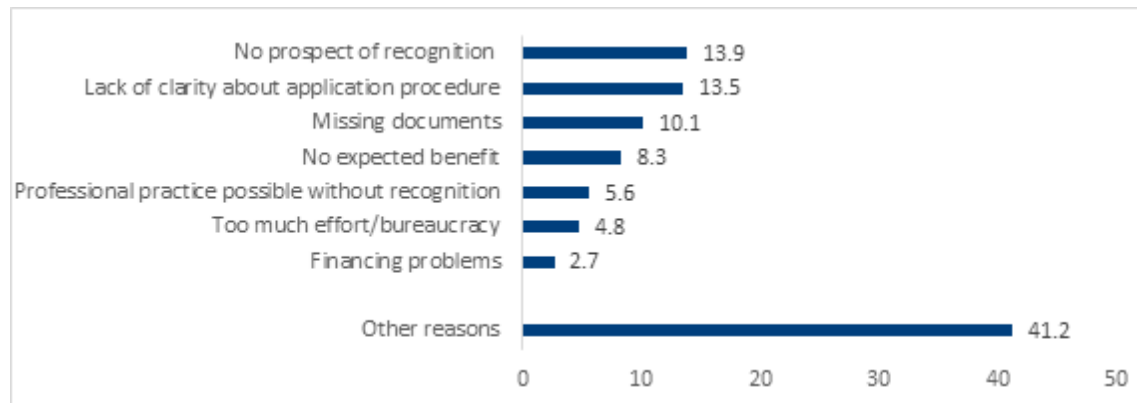
People who have obtained a qualification abroad but have not yet applied for recognition were asked about the reasons for not applying. The results are shown in Figure 4-3. Among the suggested answer options, most respondents stated that they had no prospect of having their qualification recognized (14 percent) or that they lacked information about the administrative procedure (13 percent). Other significant factors are missing documents (10 percent) and the assessment that the recognition of their educational qualification is not relevant to their professional success (8 percent). A further 8 percent cited excessive effort, bureaucracy and funding problems as reasons for not applying for recognition. It is also worth noting that more than 40 percent of respondents cited "other reasons".

These results indicate that there is still potential to increase the recognition of foreign professional qualifications through improved communication with refugees. It is important to provide more information about the process itself and the benefits of recognized qualifications on the German labor market.

The fact that many refugees need more information and support in the recognition process is also supported by the survey data: 73 percent of those who responded to questions about the recognition of their qualifications see a need for support in this area. People who have not applied for recognition also state that they need support in this area: It is particularly striking that such a need is reported in particular by refugees who cite funding problems (93 percent), lack of clarity about the application process (89 percent), high procedural costs (86 percent) and missing documents (76 percent) as reasons for not applying.

**Figure 4-3: Why was no recognition requested?**

In percent



Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 1,766.

#### 4.3.4 Duration and outcome of recognition procedures

At the time of the survey, 24 percent of applications had been finally processed. However, the majority of applications (76 percent of applications) had not yet been completed at the time of the survey. The duration of the recognition procedures varies greatly. On average, the procedures that had already been completed at the time of the survey took four months. However, ten percent of respondents had to wait more than ten months to be notified of the result. Overall, 18 percent of qualifications were fully recognized and 5 percent of qualifications were partially recognized; less than one percent of applications were not recognized.

### 4.4 Educational aspirations and participation in education among adults in Germany

Immigration to Germany does not necessarily mean the end of the educational biography. On the contrary: it can be assumed that younger refugees in particular will continue their educational biographies in Germany. It is conceivable that they will obtain a general school-leaving certificate as well as a vocational qualification or a university degree. Vocational qualifications and university degrees are particularly important for successful integration into the labor market, as educational certificates control access to the German labor market to a large extent and promote long-term and successful labor market integration (Damelang et al. 2019; Damelang and Kosyakova 2021).

#### 4.4.1 Educational aspirations

On average, only a few refugees from Ukraine have educational aspirations, with 3 percent definitely and a further 6 percent possibly considering a school-leaving qualification in Germany. In contrast, 61 percent are still aiming for vocational training or studies in Germany (31 percent definitely; 30 percent maybe). However, there are strong group differences (see Table 4-5).

**Table 4-5: Educational aspiration according to selected characteristics**  
In percent

	School-leaving certificate		Professional and university degree	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
<b>Gender</b>				
Men	12.9	87.1	64.0	36.0
Women	8.1	91.9	60.7	39.3
<b>Age at the time of the survey</b>				
18-25 years	27.5	72.5	87.5	12.5
26-35 years	11.0	89.0	71.8	28.2
36+ years	5.0	95.0	52.5	47.5
<b>School-leaving certificate abroad</b>				
Secondary school	10.9	89.1	57.6	42.4
Upper secondary school	7.9	92.1	63.0	37.0
Other school (e.g. polytechnical school)	9.6	90.4	67.6	32.4
No school leaving certificate	28.1	71.9	63.5	36.5
<b>Vocational training abroad</b>				
Vocational training institution/dual education	7.3	92.7	56.8	43.2
Technical college/university, doctorate	5.3	94.7	61.3	38.7
No professional or university degree acquired	17.8	82.2	75.4	24.6
Did not attend a vocational college or university	17.3	82.7	59.4	40.6
<b>Arrival cohort</b>				
Between February and May 2022	8.1	91.9	61.3	38.7
Since June 2022	14.0	86.0	62.7	37.3
<b>Intention to stay</b>				
Forever in Germany	12.1	87.9	68.1	31.9
A few more years	6.8	93.2	59.3	40.7
One more year at most	a)	94.7	35.4	64.6
Uncertain	2.1	97.9	48.8	51.2

Notes: a) Calculations refer to less than 10 observations and are therefore not shown.

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 2,947.

Around 13 percent of men are at least possibly aiming for a school-leaving qualification in Germany; this figure is lower for women at around 8 percent (see Table 4-5). The share of women who are still aiming for vocational training or a degree in Germany is also slightly lower than that of men (men: 64 percent; women: 61 percent).

The generally lower average values for educational aspirations may have various causes. On the one hand, significantly more refugees have already obtained a school-leaving qualification in their country of origin, meaning that the demand is lower. On the other hand, only people aged 18 and over are considered here and therefore do not belong to the traditional target group for school-leaving qualifications. A differentiation by age group confirms this picture: with increasing age, the tendency of both genders to obtain school-leaving qualifications or vocational

qualifications and university degrees decreases. Younger people from Ukraine in particular plan to invest in a degree in Germany. While only 5 percent of over 36-year-olds are aiming to obtain a school-leaving qualification in Germany, the figure among 18 to 25-year-olds is much higher at around 28 percent (Table 4-5). The differences are even more pronounced when it comes to vocational training or studying in Germany. While around 53 percent of over 36-year-olds are considering completing vocational training or a degree course, around 88 percent of 18 to 25-year-olds are planning to do so.

The same applies to the level of education already achieved when moving to Germany: Over a quarter of refugees without a school-leaving qualification are aiming to obtain a further school-leaving qualification in Germany, while only 5 percent of those with a bachelor's, master's or doctoral degree intend to do so. The interest in acquiring a further vocational and/or higher education qualification in Germany is most pronounced among those who have not completed vocational training or a degree (75 percent).

Significant differences can be observed with regard to the arrival cohort and intentions to stay. Among those arriving since June 2022, the share seeking a German educational qualification doubles to 14 percent, compared with 8 percent of arrivals from February to May 2022. However, the differences in terms of vocational training aspirations are less pronounced. On the other hand, people with a longer-term wish to stay in Germany have above-average educational aspirations.

#### 4.4.2 Educational attainment in Germany

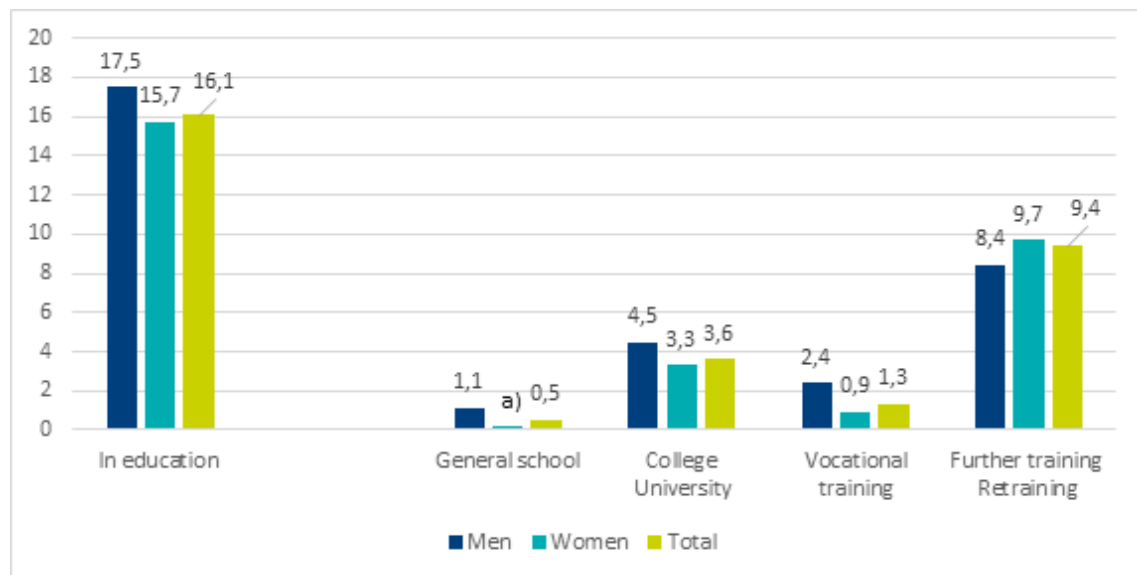
Around 16 percent of refugees from Ukraine were in education, training or further education at the time of the survey<sup>2</sup> (see Figure 4-4). Although the share of women is slightly lower than that of men, the difference is not statistically significant.

A breakdown of the different types of formal education shows that around one percent attend a general school, four percent a college or university, one percent vocational training and around nine percent participate in further education or retraining. Men are more likely to take part in vocational training or university studies, while women are more likely to take part in further training or retraining. Overall, the share of refugees who have attended formal education and training institutions in Germany is still low. This may be due, among other things, to the language requirements needed for vocational training or university studies.

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<sup>2</sup> These include: General education school (incl. welcome class, preparatory class or transition class), college/university, vocational training (incl. basic vocational training year, vocational preparation year) as well as further education and retraining.

**Figure 4-4: Formal educational attainment in Germany**  
In percent



Notes: a) Calculations refer to less than 10 observations and are therefore not shown.

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 2,922.

As with educational aspirations, investment in education can depend on various factors. It can be assumed that younger, less educated people, those who have been in Germany for longer, people with longer-term intentions to stay and people with an advanced knowledge of German have a higher level of participation in education than other groups. Table 4-6 shows the formal educational attainment according to these characteristics.

As expected, formal educational attainment declines with increasing age, which can be explained by the shorter time horizon in which older refugees could benefit from their newly acquired educational qualifications. On the other hand, refugees' intentions to stay are less relevant for the decision to acquire (further) education, with the exception of lower participation in education among people who are affected by uncertainty about their future. Refugees who have arrived since June 2022 have a higher level of educational participation than the previous cohort. This difference also exists when controlling for other characteristics such as age, gender, education, German language skills and length of stay.

Investment in formal educational qualifications decreases with higher school-leaving qualifications and is most pronounced among people without school-leaving qualifications, but also among those with qualifications that are not transferable to Germany. In contrast, the acquisition of education is most pronounced among people without completed vocational and/or higher education qualifications. This indicates that people with interrupted educational biographies in particular are increasingly seeking formal qualifications in Germany. As expected, investment in formal education increases with better knowledge of German.



**Table 4-6: Educational attainment according to selected characteristics**  
In percent

Empty cell	Educational attainment at the time of the survey	
	Yes	No
<b>Age at the time of the survey</b>		
18-25 years	34.3	65.7
26-35 years	12.9	87.1
36+ years	13.6	86.4
<b>School-leaving certificate abroad</b>		
Secondary school	19.0	81.0
Upper secondary school	14.1	85.9
Other school (e.g. polytechnical school)	26.7	73.3
No school leaving certificate	21.0	79.0
<b>Vocational training abroad</b>		
Vocational training institution/dual education	14.8	85.2
Technical college/university. doctorate	12.4	87.6
No professional or university degree acquired	38.4	61.6
Did not attend a vocational college or university	17.0	83.0
<b>German language skills</b>		
Bad	13.7	86.3
Medium	16.5	83.5
Good	21.6	78.4
<b>Arrival cohort</b>		
Between February and May 2022	15.1	84.9
Since June 2022	20.5	79.5
<b>Intention to stay</b>		
Forever in Germany	16.7	83.3
A few more years	16.3	83.7
One more year at most	17.2	82.8
Uncertain	12.6	87.4

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 2,922.

## 4.5 Conclusion

The available analyses show that Ukrainian refugees bring a high level of education and extensive professional experience with them to Germany. Almost 97 percent have a school-leaving qualification, with two thirds of refugees having completed secondary school. More than half have a degree from a university of applied sciences or university, and just under another fifth have a vocational qualification. The gender differences are small; women have a slightly higher share of higher school and university qualifications than men. Over 90 percent of refugees have professional experience from Ukraine, mostly full-time, which further increases their potential for the German labor market.

Despite this high level of education, only around a fifth of refugees have so far applied for recognition of their qualifications obtained abroad. Refugees with university degrees in particular are more likely to submit an application than those with vocational qualifications. The willingness to submit an application for recognition is closely linked to the prospects of remaining in Germany: Refugees who want to stay in Germany long-term are significantly more likely to submit applications than those with short-term intentions to stay or uncertain plans for the future. This underlines the importance of planning security for investing in one's own professional integration.

The majority of applications for recognition relate to regulated professions, particularly in the fields of health, social work, teaching and education. However, many refugees are unsure whether their profession is regulated in Germany. The main reasons given for not applying for recognition are a lack of information about the procedure, a lack of prospects for recognition and a lack of documents. There is still a considerable need for support and advice: 73 percent of refugees would like support in this area, particularly with regard to financial matters, clarity about the application process and help with obtaining the necessary documents. The duration of recognition procedures varies greatly. While some procedures are completed within four months, other refugees wait over ten months for a decision. At the time of the survey, the majority of applications had not yet been completed. Together, these results indicate a considerable need for information and support as well as the urgency of more efficient processes in order to make better use of refugees' potential.

The educational aspirations of refugees are particularly high in the area of vocational training and studies, especially among younger people and those who have not completed vocational training. Nevertheless, actual participation in education is comparatively low, which may be due to language barriers, among other things.

Overall, the results show that Ukrainian refugees have a high potential for successful integration into the German labor market. In order to fully exploit this potential, targeted measures are required to improve the flow of information, facilitate recognition procedures and make educational opportunities more accessible. Particular attention should be paid to people with incomplete educational biographies. It is also important to support women in the potential acquisition of education in order to reduce gender inequalities and promote comprehensive integration. By removing the identified barriers, the employability of refugees can be increased and an important contribution can be made to meeting the demand for skilled workers in Germany.

# 5 Between integration and return: Ukrainian refugees' wishes to stay in Germany

*Manuel Siegert and Yuliya Kosyakova*

## 5.1 Introduction

Since the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, numerous Ukrainians have found protection in Germany. The question of how long Ukrainian refugees want to stay is of great importance for politics and society. It not only influences the provision of housing and educational opportunities, but also the design of integration measures. In addition, refugees' intentions to stay have an impact on integration-related decisions. For example, Eckhard, Chapter 8 (see Figure 8-4), shows that refugees who want to stay in Germany permanently attend an integration course more quickly than those who want to return to Ukraine.

However, the intentions to stay are not unchangeable, but can change over time, which is why it is advisable to regularly survey and analyze the intentions. It can be assumed that plans regarding the length of stay are influenced in particular by the situation in Ukraine and individual living conditions in Germany: The general situation in Ukraine has not fundamentally improved in the survey year 2023, fighting and the associated dangers for the civilian population persist. In addition, the Ukrainian economy is being increasingly affected (Liadze et al. 2023). At the same time, Ukrainian refugees are increasingly gaining a foothold here in Germany: their German language skills are steadily improving (see Eckhard, Chapter 8), as are their housing conditions (see Tanis, Chapter 6) and their employment situation (see Gatskova et al., Chapter 9). In addition, Ukrainian children and young people attend kindergarten or school in Germany and thus grow into German society (cf. Zinn et al., Chapter 3). Together, these developments are likely to contribute to an increase in the share of Ukrainian refugees who are considering living in Germany in the long term.

In fact, this is exactly what previous results suggest: While around 39 percent of Ukrainian refugees were still planning to stay in Germany for a few years or permanently in late summer 2022 (Brücker et al. 2023a), this share was already around 44 percent at the beginning of 2023 (Brücker et al. 2023c) and in summer 2023 around 52 percent said they intended to stay for longer (Ette et al. 2023).

Against this backdrop, this chapter examines what the Ukrainian refugees want to stay in the second half of 2023, what factors are associated with this desire and what conditions must be met for those affected to consider returning to Ukraine.

## 5.2 Ukrainian refugees' plans for the duration of their stay

In the second half of 2023, around 59 percent of Ukrainian refugees who moved to Germany between the end of February and the end of May 2022 (arrival cohort 1) plan to stay permanently (see Table 5-1). The approximately 41 percent of this arrival cohort who do not wish to stay permanently are made up of around 25 percent who want to stay for a few more years, around 9

percent who want to stay for a maximum of one more year and around 7 percent, who did not provide any specific information on their planned length of stay.

**Table 5-1: Duration for which Ukrainian refugees still want to stay in Germany**

In percent

	Arrival cohort 1 Arrival between end of February and end of May 2022	Arrival cohort 2 Arrival from the beginning of June 2022
<b>Forever</b>		
Yes	59	69
No	41	31
<b>Of which</b>		
A few more years	25	17
1 year at most	9	8
No indication of duration	7	6

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 3,145.

Of those who came to Germany from June 2022 onwards (arrival cohort 2), around 69 percent would even like to stay permanently, i.e. 10 percentage points more than in arrival cohort 1 (Table 5-1). On the other hand, the share of those who would like to stay for a few more years is lower among those who arrived later (around 17 percent compared to around 25 percent). The share of those who only want to stay in Germany for a comparatively short time, i.e. one year at most, hardly differs between the two groups.

The question arises as to why the refugees from Ukraine who arrived later express the desire to stay in Germany permanently more often. Part of the difference is probably due to the slightly different socio-demographic composition of the two arrival cohorts. In the cohort that arrived later, both the share of men and the share of those living in Germany with a partner are higher (see Table 3-1 in Chapter 3). The reason for this is that a large share of the second arrival cohort consists of men who have joined their families already living in Germany. However, previous studies show that refugee Ukrainian men are more likely to want to stay in Germany long-term or permanently than Ukrainian refugee woman, and refugees whose partners live outside Germany are less likely to want to stay long-term (Brücker et al. 2023c).

Other aspects that are often also associated with the intentions of refugees and migrants in general to stay (e.g. Carling and Pettersen 2014; Hannafi and Marouani 2023; Chabé-Ferret et al. 2018; Jensen and Pedersen 2007; de Vroome and van Tubergen 2014) and differ between the two arrival cohorts are the level of education (see Kosyakova et al., Chapter 4), the labor market situation before and after moving to Germany (cf. Gatskova et al., Chapter 9), the type of accommodation in which the persons concerned currently live (cf. Tanis, Chapter 6), German language skills (cf. Eckhard, Chapter 8) and the children's place of residence (cf. Zinn et al., Chapter 3). The following multivariate analysis examines whether these aspects also contribute to the differences in the desire to stay in the present case of Ukrainian refugees. As the refugees in the second arrival cohort were directly exposed to the war in Ukraine and its effects for longer than those in the first arrival cohort, the causes of flight cited by the refugees, their reasons for

choosing Germany, their self-assessed health and the frequency of psychological complaints<sup>3</sup> as well as their feeling of welcome are also taken into account.

### 5.3 Correlations with the desire to stay

The multivariate analysis indicates that people whose integration has already progressed are more likely to want to stay in Germany permanently (Figure 5-1). For example, people who are employed or who aspire to employment are significantly more likely to plan to stay permanently than people who do not intend to work. The better the self-assessed German language skills, the greater the desire to stay here. Furthermore, refugees who live in a private apartment are also more likely to want to stay permanently than those who live in shared or other accommodation.

With regard to the family situation, it can be seen that single refugees or those whose partners live in Germany are more likely to want to stay in Germany forever than those whose partners are not in Germany. If it is planned that the partner living abroad will also come to Germany, the desire to stay also increases. In addition, refugees with children in Germany are more likely to want to stay here permanently than those without children or those with at least one child outside Germany.

With regard to the causes of flight, it is apparent that Ukrainian refugees who fled due to persecution and discrimination or for economic reasons (general economic situation or poor personal living conditions in Ukraine) are more likely to want to stay forever than those who did not state these causes of flight. The latter in particular is reflected in the result that those who chose Germany (also) for economic reasons (including the general economic situation, state and social welfare or the German education system) are more likely to want to stay forever than those for whom this aspect did not play a role.<sup>4</sup>

The health-related aspects show that refugees with mental health problems are less likely to want to stay. In addition, those who feel welcome are more likely to want to stay in Germany permanently than those who do not.

However, even after taking these different aspects into account, the finding that refugees who arrived later want to stay in Germany forever more often than those who arrived between the end of February and the end of May remains. Although the difference is slightly smaller, it remains substantial at 7 percentage points. This suggests that important differences between the two arrival cohorts were not taken into account at this point. Possible missing aspects are different experiences and assessments resulting from the fact that the refugees in the second arrival cohort were exposed to the war and its effects for longer than those in the first cohort.

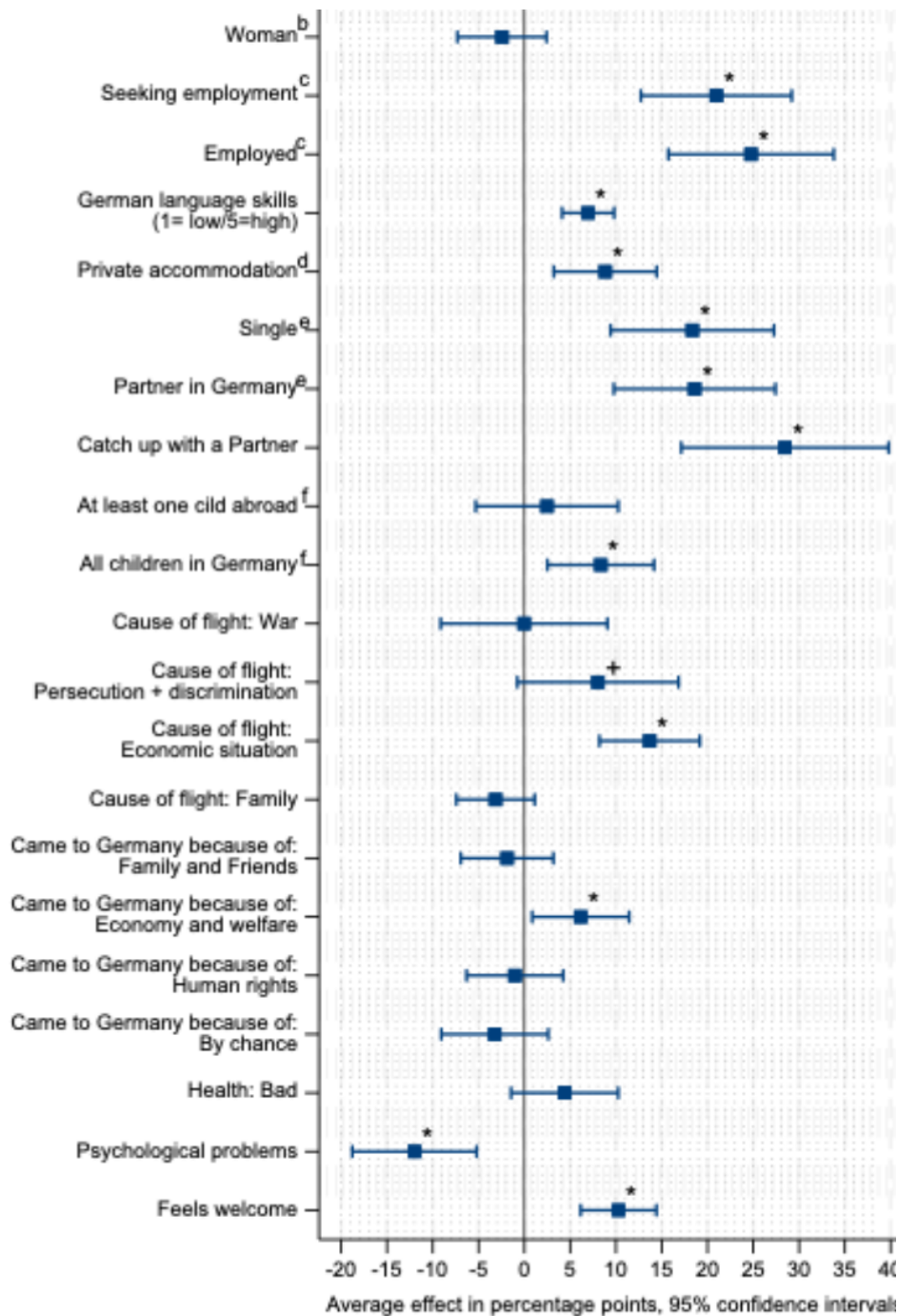
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<sup>3</sup> The index is based on how often the following complaints occur on a scale from 1 "not at all" to 4 "(almost) every day": little interest or pleasure in activities; depression, melancholy or hopelessness; nervousness, anxiety or tension and the inability to stop or control worries.

<sup>4</sup> The economic situation in Germany was mentioned by around 10 percent of refugees, the German education system by 12 percent and the German welfare system by 22 percent (multiple answers were possible) (Brücker et al. 2023a, p. 27). In comparison: 60 percent cited the fact that family members and friends already live in Germany as a decisive reason and 29 percent cited respect for human rights in Germany.

**Figure 5-1: Correlation between the desire to stay in Germany forever and selected characteristics of Ukrainian refugees**

Average marginal effects



Notes: Significances = \*at least at the 5 percent level, +at least at the 10 percent level. Multivariate regression results with Huber/White sandwich estimator of standard errors. The average marginal effects of the variables were calculated following a binary logistic regression. The regressions controlled for other variables whose coefficients were not shown separately in the figure: Age, education level, region of origin in Ukraine and interview mode. Reference categories: a cohort 1, b male, c not employed and not seeking employment, d shared or other accommodation, e partner abroad, f no children.

Legend: Compared to refugees who are not employed and do not report such an orientation, refugees who are employed - all other factors remaining constant - are around 25 percentage points more likely to want to stay in Germany forever.

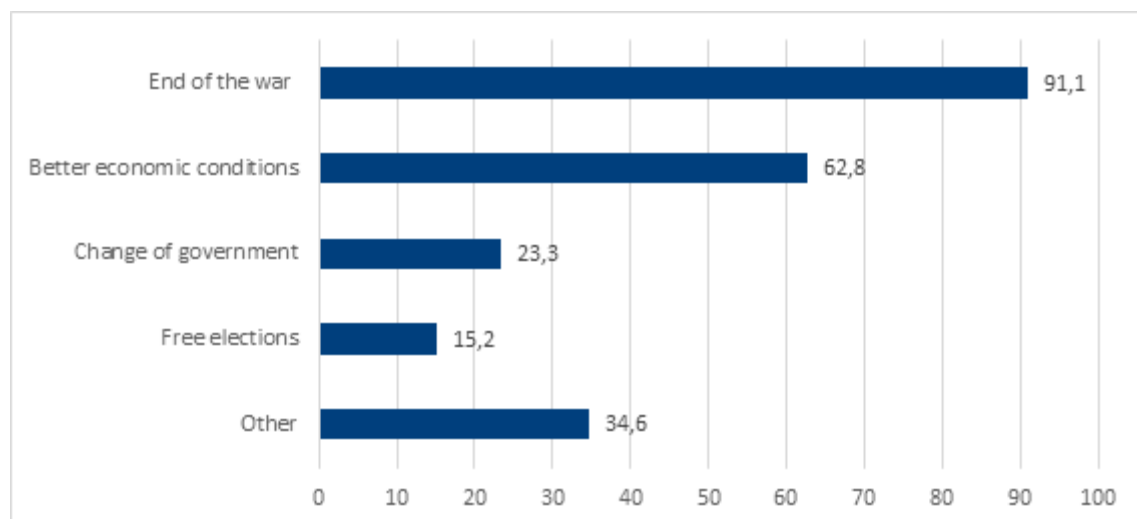
Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 2,885.

## 5.4 Conditions for returning

As briefly discussed at the beginning, the desire to stay is probably also linked to the development of living conditions in Ukraine. The ongoing fighting and the associated risks to life and limb as well as the increasing economic difficulties dampen the desire to return as soon as possible. The fact that an end to the fighting and an improvement in economic conditions actually play an important role in the refugees' considerations can also be seen from the available data. After all, nine out of ten refugees state that the war would have to end before a return to Ukraine would be possible (Figure 5-2). The improvement of economic conditions is another key prerequisite for six out of ten refugees. Other, but much less frequently cited, prerequisites are a change of government (around 23 percent) and free elections (around 15 percent). Just over a third mention other important factors without specifying them in more detail.

**Figure 5-2 : Conditions for returning to Ukraine**

Shares in percent



Notes: Multiple answers were possible, which means that the sum of the responses is greater than 100 percent

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 3,255.

## 5.5 Conclusion

In summary, the data indicates that the desire of Ukrainian refugees to stay in Germany permanently has increased further: Slightly more than half plan to stay permanently. The reasons for this are both the developments in Ukraine and the increasing integration in Germany. The ongoing fighting and the tense economic situation make it difficult to return soon. At the same time, the refugees are building a new life here: Good German language skills, gainful employment or the aspiration to gainful employment, living together with the nuclear family, psychological well-being and the feeling of being welcome encourage the desire to stay in Germany permanently.

# 6 Housing situation of Ukrainian refugees

Kerstin Tanis

## 6.1 Introduction

The housing situation has a major impact on people's individual quality of life and social participation (e.g. UNHCR 2013). According to initial findings, Ukrainian refugees who arrived between February and the beginning of June 2022 are already comparatively well established on the German housing market. In late summer 2022, around three quarters (74 percent) of refugees stated that they were already living in private housing. In spring 2023, the share increased to 79 percent (Brücker et al. 2023a; Brücker et al. 2023c; Siegert et al. 2023). Possible explanations include the great willingness of the population to help, which led to the activation of housing that would not have been available under other circumstances, as well as the use of existing networks in Germany that helped in the search for housing. In addition to the housing situation in the second half of 2023, the following sections also examine the housing history of Ukrainian refugees since their arrival. All subsequent analyses are carried out at household level and refer to information provided by the head of the household.

## 6.2 Correlation between arrival period and occupied initial housing

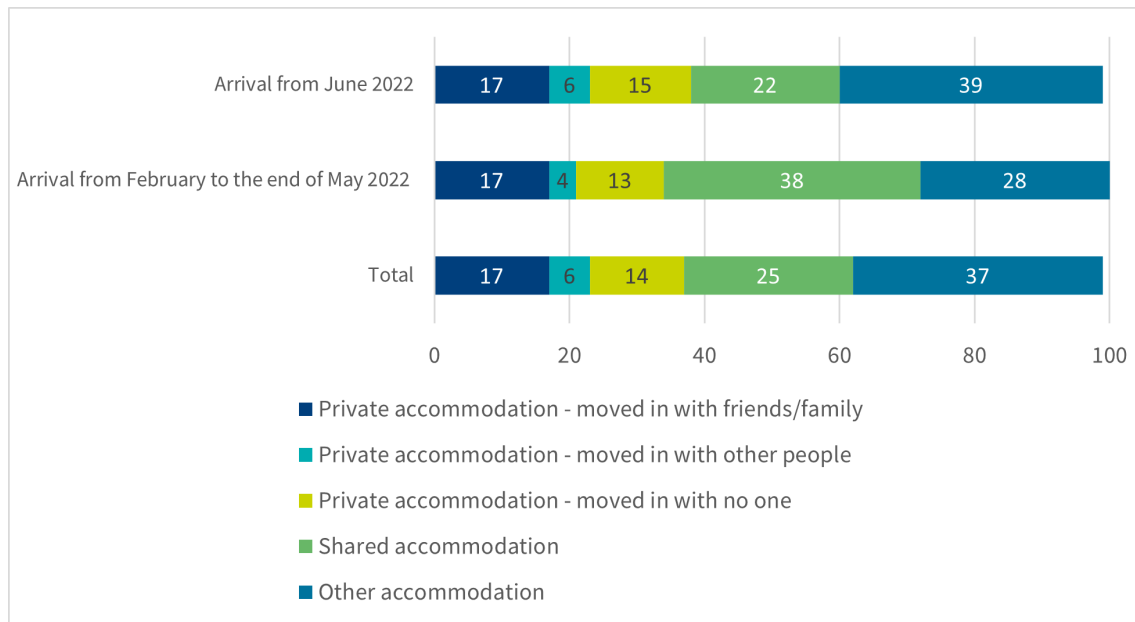
The large number of people seeking protection from Ukraine in spring 2022 had raised concerns, particularly in the municipalities, about how to accommodate them. Figure 6-1 shows the type of *first* accommodation overall and differentiated according to the arrival cohort. It can be seen that around 38 percent of refugees moved into their own private accommodation (17 percent) or into an existing household (21 percent) *directly after their arrival*. Around the same number moved into other accommodation (e.g. hotel, guesthouse, hostel) (37 percent) and around a quarter (26 percent) moved into shared accommodation.<sup>5</sup> The share of those who were accommodated in shared accommodation differs significantly when differentiated according to arrival cohort: Around 39 percent of refugees who sought protection in Germany from June 2022 onwards stated that they were initially accommodated in shared accommodation (those who arrived before June 2022: 22 percent). In contrast, those who arrived earlier were comparatively often accommodated in other accommodation (+11 percentage points) and slightly more frequently in existing households (+2 percentage points). This result indicates that a kind of "hidden reserve" of housing was activated at short notice after the start of the war that would otherwise not be available on the housing market (Haller et al. 2022), e.g. vacant/unrented apartments or granny apartments. An increase in the capacity of shared accommodation in the wake of the continuing influx of refugees with a simultaneous deactivation of the "hidden reserve" could explain why more people who arrived later are initially living in shared accommodation.

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<sup>5</sup> The shares shown here differ from the shares shown in Brücker et al. (2023a), as the *first* type of accommodation after arrival was explicitly recorded here. In contrast, Brücker et al. (2023a) asked about the accommodation occupied in late summer 2022.



**Figure 6-1: Type of first inhabited accommodation after arrival, differentiated by arrival cohort**  
Shares in percent



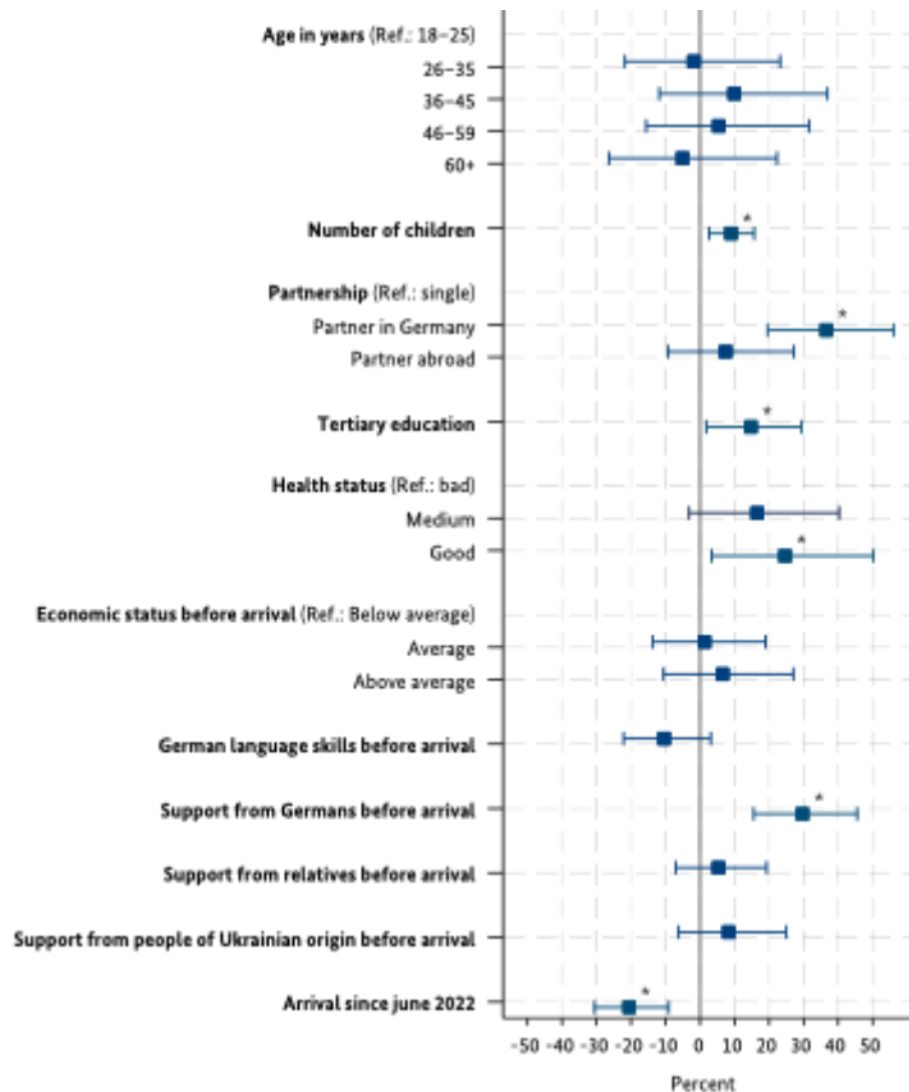
Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 2,140 households.

### 6.3 Determinants of the time until moving into private accommodation

Many Ukrainian refugees express the wish to stay in Germany long-term (see Siegert and Kosyakova, Chapter 5). However, the accommodation that is occupied immediately after arrival is often a temporary solution before moving permanently into private apartments or houses. On average, Ukrainian refugees move into their own private accommodation within the first two months (mean: 4; min: 1, max: 20).

Further analyses of the time until Ukrainian refugees moved into a private apartment or house for the first time after their arrival show a heterogeneous picture. In order to understand which household and personal characteristics correlate with the length of time, a survival analysis (Cox regression) is used (Figure 6-2 ). When selecting the explanatory variables, a special focus was placed on resources brought along that could be related to the length of time until moving into private accommodation. The results describe the statistical chance ("transition rate") that an event will occur at time  $t$ , provided that it has not yet occurred by then. In this context, the results therefore provide information on the extent to which Ukrainian refugees (here: heads of household) moved into their own private apartment or house for the first time within  $x$  month of arriving in Germany without joining an existing household. This transition rate is significantly higher for people whose partner is also living in Germany than for people who are single (37 percent).

**Figure 6-2: Determinants of the time until moving into private accommodation**  
Average marginal effects, in percent



Note: \* significant at the 5 percent level. Survival analysis (Cox regression); the values in this figure indicate the ratio in which a characteristic increases or decreases the length of time until moving into a private apartment/house compared to a comparison group. A positive value means greater chances of moving into private accommodation in the xth month, a negative value means lower chances. Dependent variable: Time until moving into first private accommodation (without moving into an existing household). Further control variables that are not shown: Federal states.

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 2,057 households.

Furthermore, the transition rate of moving into private accommodation increases if they have received support from German people before the move (30 percent). Support from people of Ukrainian or other origin who were already living in Germany, on the other hand, had no significant influence on the transition rate. This one again highlights the importance of social contacts for the arrival and integration process (cf. Siegert et al. 2023), in this case particularly from members of the host society. Resources associated with a tertiary education degree (15 percent) or good health (25 percent) also significantly increase the transition rate. Furthermore, the transition rate appears to increase by 9 percent with each additional child in the household.

On the other hand, there is a negative correlation with the arrival cohort: the transition rate of people who have moved to Germany since June 2022 is around 21 percent lower than that of people who arrived before June 2022, which underlines the findings of the previous subchapter. When interpreting the results, however, it must be taken into account, particularly in the case of the time-varying explanatory variables (here: number of children, partnership and state of health), that the time of moving into a private home (the event occurred between arrival and the time of the survey) and the time of the survey of the explanatory variables (survey in the second half of 2023) differ. It is therefore possible that the direction of the correlations may also change. For example, it is conceivable that the state of health can have an impact on the search for housing, but the type of accommodation lived in can also have an impact on the state of health (Ambrosetti et al. 2021). However, since the population studied comprises war refugees, so it is assumed that the state of health is largely determined by events or incidents experienced in Ukraine (e.g. anxiety, see Bartig et al., Chapter 7). Since the observation period in the present analysis is a maximum of 23 months, it is assumed that the number of children and partnerships is constant for the vast majority of people (cf. Zinn et al, Chapter 3).

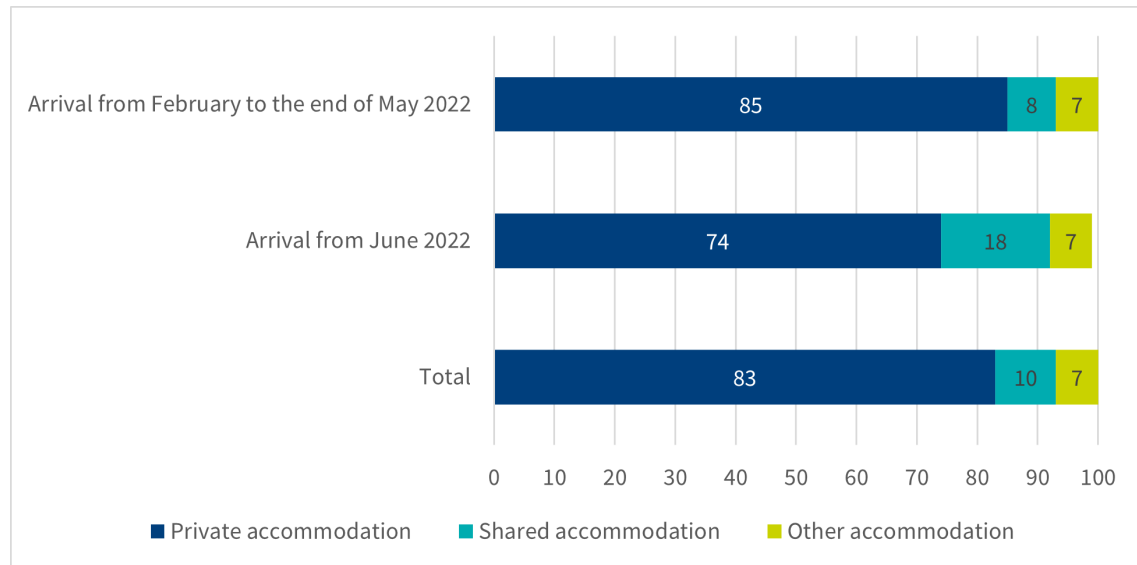
## 6.4 Type of accommodation, quality of housing and housing preferences at the time of the survey

In addition to the residential history, detailed information on the *current* accommodation was collected in the second half of 2023. According to this, around 83 percent of Ukrainian refugees stated that they were living in private accommodation at the time of the survey (Figure 6-3). Among those who arrived before June 2022, the share is around 85 percent, while among those who arrived from June on, it is around 74 percent. Every tenth person lives in shared accommodation. A breakdown by cohort shows a significantly higher share among those, who arrived later (18 percent; those who arrived earlier: 8 percent). At around 7 percent, other accommodation is the least common type of accommodation at the time of the survey, both among those who arrived earlier and those who arrived later.

If Ukrainian refugees live in private accommodation, they have an average of 25 m<sup>2</sup> per person (median: 23 m<sup>2</sup>; min: 4 m<sup>2</sup>; max: 150 m<sup>2</sup>). While no differences can be observed between the arrival cohorts, households with children have fewer square meters per person available (households with children, mean: 21 m<sup>2</sup>; households without children, mean: 31 m<sup>2</sup>). The average rent per square meter is around EUR 12.10 (median: EUR 11.30). Another important indicator of the quality of living in private accommodation in this context is the number of rooms available. In simple terms, an apartment is defined as overcrowded if the number of household members exceeds the number of available rooms (OECD 2024). Overall, the average number of occupied rooms per person is 1 (min: 0.2; max: 8). If it is also taken into account whether children live in the household, the average number of rooms available per person is reduced to less than one room (average: 0.8; households without children: 1.2).

**Figure 6-3 : Type of accommodation occupied at the time of the survey, differentiated by arrival cohort**

Shares in percent

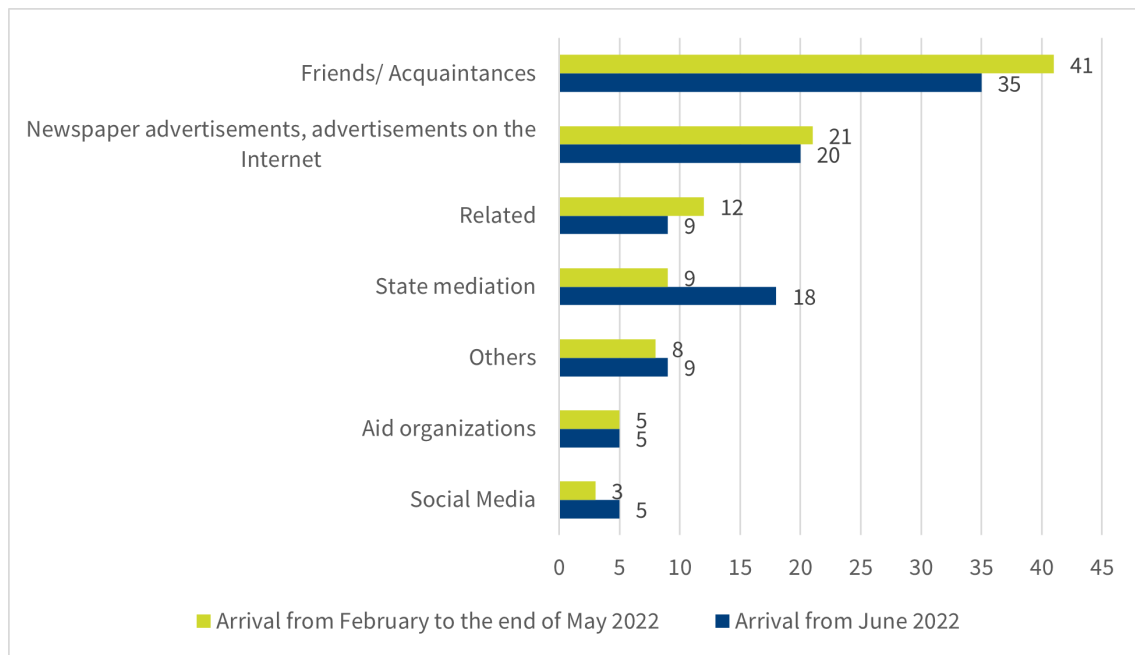


Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 2,159 households.

When asked how the private accommodation they were living in at the time of the survey was found, Ukrainian refugees most frequently mentioned "through friends and acquaintances" (40 percent). This is followed by advertisements in newspapers or on the internet (21 percent), relatives (12 percent) and government agencies (11 percent). Aid organizations and social networks on the Internet, on the other hand, are rarely mentioned (in the low single-digit range). A separate analysis by arrival cohort shows that referrals via friends were mentioned significantly more frequently by those who arrived before June 2022 (41 percent, Figure 6-4) than by those who arrived later (35 percent). Those who arrived later, on the other hand, mentioned state mediation comparatively more frequently (18 percent vs. 9 percent). This suggests that formal or state support services were initially less available or less well known and therefore informal support from friends was used more frequently. The strong use of informal channels after the start of the war may in turn be related to the activation of housing that is otherwise not available on the housing market.

**Figure 6-4 : Sources through which the private accommodation was found, differentiated by arrival cohort**

Shares in percent

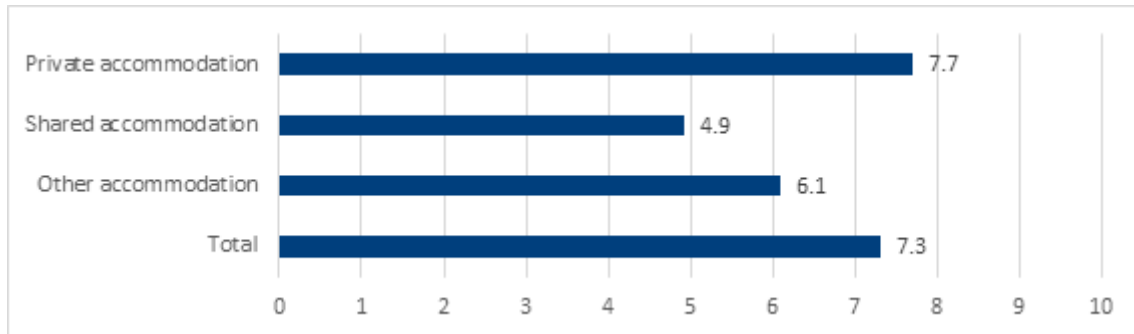


Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees, preliminary data v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 1,779 households.

The average satisfaction with the housing situation is 7.3 points on a scale from 0 "completely dissatisfied" to 10 "completely satisfied" - regardless of the type of accommodation occupied (median: 8; min:0; max:10; Figure 6-5). While no cohort differences can be observed by time of arrival, people in shared accommodation in particular (mean: 4.9 points), followed by people in other types of accommodation (mean: 6.1 points) are comparatively dissatisfied with their housing situation.

Overall, around 23 percent of Ukrainian refugees were looking for accommodation at the time of the survey. The lower level of satisfaction among those not living in private accommodation is reflected in the higher share of people who are currently looking for accommodation: While the majority of people living in shared (67 percent) or other accommodation (52 percent) at the time of the survey stated that they were looking for accommodation, this figure was only around 15 percent among those in private accommodation.

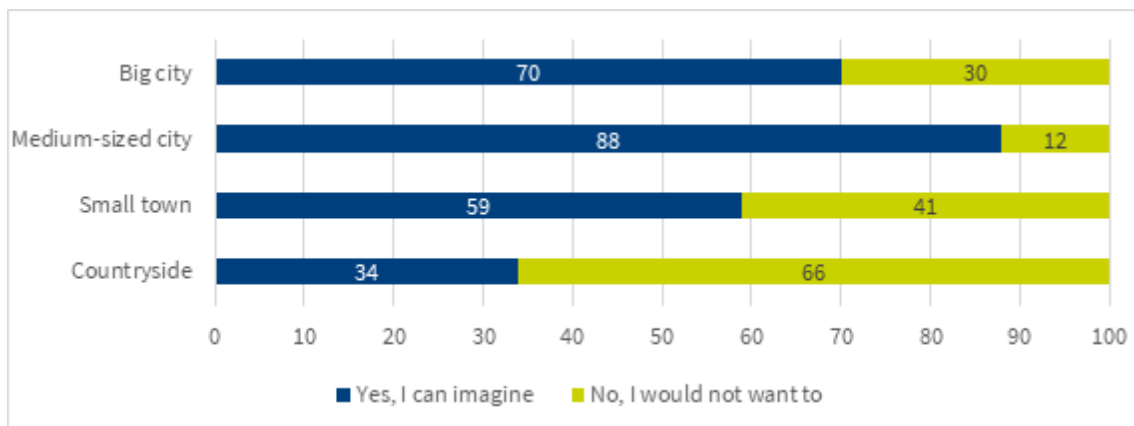
**Figure 6-5 : Satisfaction with the housing situation, differentiated by type of accommodation**  
Mean values



Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 2,157 households.

When Ukrainian refugees are asked which place of residence (large city, medium-sized city, small town, country) they prefer, it is clear that medium-sized cities are favoured (Figure 6-6). 88 percent of all Ukrainian refugees can imagine living there, while around one in ten (12 percent) refuse to do so. 70 percent of refugees can imagine living in large cities, 59 percent in a small town. Around one in three people could imagine living in the countryside (34 percent).

**Figure 6-6: Residence preferences**  
Shares in percent



Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 2,148, 2,147, 2,143 and 2,135 households respectively.

If the information on the type of region (city / countryside) in which refugees lived before moving to Germany is taken into account, there is also a clear trend towards medium-sized cities in Germany (85 percent) among refugees who lived in the countryside in Ukraine, followed by small towns (73 percent), the countryside (59 percent) and large cities (44 percent). Among refugees who lived in a city in Ukraine, the following order of preference emerged for their place of residence in Germany: medium-sized city (88 percent), large city (71 percent), small town (59 percent) and countryside (33 percent). Accordingly, Ukrainian refugees - regardless of the type of

region they live in Ukraine - generally seem to prefer medium-sized cities in Germany. However, it is also clear that people who previously lived in the countryside are also more likely to imagine living in Germany in the countryside than those who lived in cities before moving here.

Looking at the type of region inhabited in Germany in the second half of 2023, the vast majority of Ukrainian refugees stated that they lived in large cities (68 percent), followed by urban districts (19 percent), rural districts with densely populated areas (9 percent) and sparsely populated rural districts (5 percent). Against the backdrop of tight housing markets (with high rent burdens and housing shortages), which mostly affect medium-sized and large cities (BBSR 2020), this result must be taken into account when interpreting the findings on the current housing situation and its future development.

## 6.5 Conclusion

In summary, the positive trend in the housing situation of Ukrainian refugees continues. The vast majority have found private accommodation, are satisfied with their housing situation and are not currently looking for alternative housing. However, it appears that certain groups, such as those who arrived later, single persons, people with non-tertiary education or people without contact to Germans, have to overcome higher hurdles to find private housing than their respective reference groups. Therefore, the development of the housing situation of these groups of people should not be lost sight of. With further immigration of people seeking protection, which also has an impact on the availability of housing, and the preference for living in urban areas, developments should be closely monitored, particularly in cities. This allows us to take early action to sustain the positive housing trend for Ukrainian refugees.

# 7 Health and utilisation of healthcare services in Germany

*Susanne Bartig, Adriana Cardozo Silva, Louise Biddle*

## 7.1 Introduction

Health is an important requirement for participation in various areas of life and is closely linked to life phases and situations, such as age, socio-economic status or living and working conditions. The health situation of people with a history of migration is also influenced by various factors before, during and after migration (e.g. WHO 2022). Refugees are particularly exposed to health risks both before and during forced migration due to traumatic experiences and physical stress (e.g. Walther et al. 2020). In addition to the circumstances of migration and experiences related to the migration process itself, several studies emphasize the significant relevance of post-migration factors. For example, unemployment, housing in shared accommodation, uncertainties regarding the legal status, separation from family members and experiences of discrimination and exclusion can influence the health and well-being of refugees in Germany (e.g. Jaschke and Kosyakova 2021; Nutsch and Bozorgmehr 2020).

Another factor in the post-migration phase is access to the healthcare system, including adequate medical treatment. Refugees from Ukraine, in contrast to refugees from other countries of origin, are fully entitled to healthcare immediately after their arrival as part of the activation of the EU Directive on Temporary Protection ("Mass Influx Directive") and the change of legal status on June 1, 2022. Accordingly, Ukrainian refugees are not subject to the Asylum Seekers' Benefits Act (AsylbLG, in particular §§ 4 and 6), which restricts access to healthcare and the scope of services for refugees from other countries (Biddle 2024). Nevertheless, they may face barriers in accessing medical services. The services of the German healthcare system are often not tailored to the diversity and linguistic variety of the population living in Germany (e.g. Bartig et al. 2021).

Previous studies on the health of Ukrainian refugees in other European host countries indicate a high prevalence of mental disorders (Boiko et al. 2024; Guerrero et al. 2023; Kordel et al. 2024). In addition, Ukrainians have a high burden of chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disorders (Murphy et al. 2023). However, no reliable information on the health of Ukrainian refugees is yet available for Germany. This is essential in order to identify potential gaps in accessing adequate healthcare services and to ensure needs-based care.

Accordingly, this chapter examines the health situation of Ukrainian refugees, with a particular focus on mental health, as well as their utilisation of healthcare services based on various sociodemographic and migration-related characteristics. Furthermore, it offers a detailed analysis of healthcare utilisation and potential barriers to medical care.

#### **Infobox: Health indicators**

Subjective health is an important predictor of chronic diseases, the utilisation of healthcare services and the risk of mortality (e.g. Lorem et al. 2020). In the IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees, subjective health was measured with the question: "How would you describe your current state of health?" For the analysis, the response options "very good" and "good" are summarised and compared with the proportion of participants who rated their health as "satisfactory", "less good" or "poor".

To describe mental health, the presence of symptoms of depression and anxiety disorder in the last two weeks is selected, measured by the Patient Health Questionnaire-4 (PHQ-4). This short screening instrument captures symptoms of major depression through a questionnaire according to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (American Psychiatric Association 1994). Using two items each, the core symptoms of depression (PHQ-2: "little interest or pleasure in doing things", "feeling down, depressed or hopeless") and generalized anxiety disorder (GAD-2: "feeling nervous, anxious, or on edge", "unable to stop or control worrying") are assessed by self-reports of participants rating the frequency of these symptoms on a 4-point Likert scale with "not at all" (0), "on some days" (1), "on more than half the days" (2) and "(almost) every day" (3). The presence of depressive symptoms and anxiety disorder is assumed from a scale sum score of three (Staples et al. 2019).

## **7.2 Subjective health**

Overall, 44 percent of Ukrainian refugees rate their general health as good or very good at the time of the survey (end of 2023) (see Table 7-1). There are comparable gender, age and



educational differences in self-rated health, which are also evident in studies on the adult general population and among people with a history of migration (e.g. Bartig et al. 2023; Heidemann et al. 2021). Men are more likely to rate their health as good or very good compared to women (52 percent versus 41 percent). The proportion of those who assess their health as (very) good decreases with age: While 59 percent of the younger age group (18 to 29 years) rate their health as (very) good, the proportion among Ukrainian refugees aged 50 and over is more than half lower at 21 percent. This age effect results from the natural rise in chronic diseases and functional limitations with increasing age. In addition to the gender- and age-specific differences, the proportion of those with a (very) good health increases with higher levels of education.

Furthermore, subjective health varies with employment status and type of accommodation: Ukrainian refugees who are employed or who live in private accommodation rate their health more frequently as (very) good compared to those who are not employed or who live in shared accommodation (see Table 7-1). With regard to the family situation, the bivariate analyses indicate that both a partnership - regardless of whether the person lives in Germany or Ukraine - and children (under 18) in the household are associated with better general health. There are no differences in subjective health with regard to the arrival cohort (arrival before June 2022 vs. arrival since June 2022).

### 7.3 Mental health

Depressive symptoms (PHQ-2) in the last two weeks are reported by 19 percent of the Ukrainian refugees; the prevalence of anxiety disorders based on the GAD-2 is 14 percent. Therefore, Ukrainian refugees are more often affected by symptoms of depression and anxiety disorder than people in German private households, whose prevalence rates according to SOEP data are 10 percent (2017/2019) and 12 percent (2021) for depressive symptoms and 7 percent (2017/2019) and 8 percent (2021) for anxiety disorders (Hettich et al. 2022). When interpreting the data, it is important to consider that the age and gender structure of Ukrainian refugees living in Germany differs from that of the general population: A higher proportion of Ukrainian refugees are female and, on average, significantly younger than non-migrants.

To investigate which factors are associated with mental health, average marginal effects (AME) were estimated using logistic regressions. The multivariate analyses indicate the high importance of social integration among Ukrainian refugees (Figure 7-1). Participants who report visiting neighbors, friends or acquaintances at least once a week are less likely to be affected by depressive symptoms and anxiety disorders than participants without social integration. The family situation can also represent a form of social integration or isolation. Here, the results show that single respondents are almost 4 percentage points more likely to report an anxiety disorder than those who live in a household with their partner. Furthermore, respondents without children are more likely to report depressive symptoms than those who have children and live with them in the same household. International studies also show that indicators of social integration - such as loneliness or social support - have a significant influence on the mental health of Ukrainian refugees (Boiko et al. 2024; Kordel et al. 2024). Furthermore, in line with studies on the mental health of people with a history of migration (e.g. Blume et al. 2024, Schouler-Ocak and Moran 2023), self-reported experiences of discrimination in everyday life are associated with mental disorders: Respondents who report experiences of discrimination are

almost 10 and 12 percentage points more likely to be affected by depressive symptoms and anxiety disorder compared to those without experiences of discrimination. In addition, respondents who are highly satisfied with their personal income report symptoms of depression and anxiety disorder less frequently than those who are not satisfied. In addition to social integration and subjective experiences of exclusion, the financial situation is therefore also a key determinant of mental health.

**Table 7-1: Proportions of Ukrainian refugees with a (very) good self-rated health by various sociodemographic characteristics**

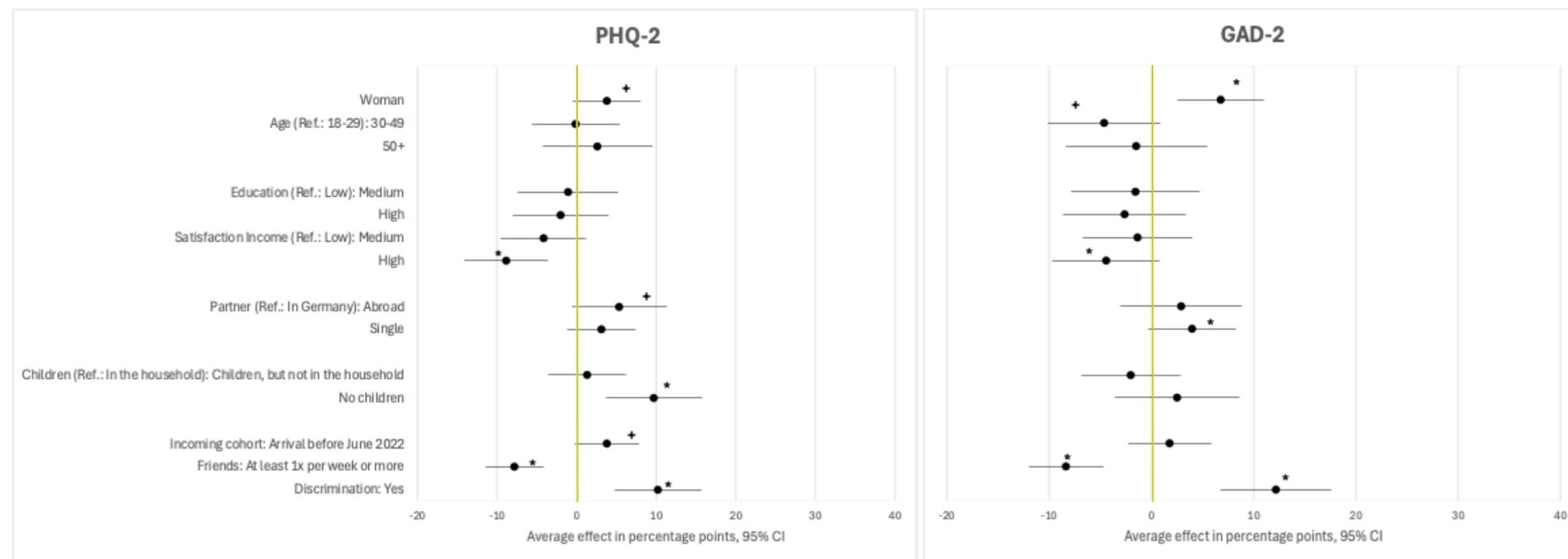
Proportions in percent

	Self-rated current state of health Good to very good
Total	44.1
<b>Gender</b>	
Men	51.8
Women	41.4
<b>Age groups</b>	
18-29 years	59.4
30-49 years	53.7
From 50 years	20.8
<b>Education</b>	
Low	37.5
Medium	39.0
High	49.0
<b>Gainful employment</b>	
Employed	51.6
Not gainfully employed	42.6
<b>Accommodation</b>	
Private accommodation	45.0
Other types of accommodation	38.0
<b>Partner</b>	
In Germany	46.7
In Ukraine	45.8
Single	39.2
<b>Children in the household</b>	
Yes	50.0
No	24.0
No children	54.4
<b>Arrival cohort</b>	
Before June 2022	43.6
Since June 2022	45.8

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted.

**Figure 7-1: Factors associated with depressive symptoms (PHQ-2) and anxiety disorder (GAD-2) among Ukrainian refugees**

Average marginal effects



Notes: \*, + significant at the 5 and 10 percent level. Multivariate regression results with delta estimator of the standard errors. The average marginal effects of the variables were calculated following a binary logistic regression. The regressions controlled for other variables that are not shown in the figure: Municipality size, employment, and type of accommodation. Legend: Negative average marginal effects (to the left of the reference line (0)) indicate a lower probability of having depressive symptoms or generalized anxiety disorder compared to a comparison group. A positive effect indicates a higher probability. Values that do not cross the reference line (0) are statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). Accordingly, female refugees from Ukraine are around 7 percentage points more likely to have a generalized anxiety disorder than male refugees.

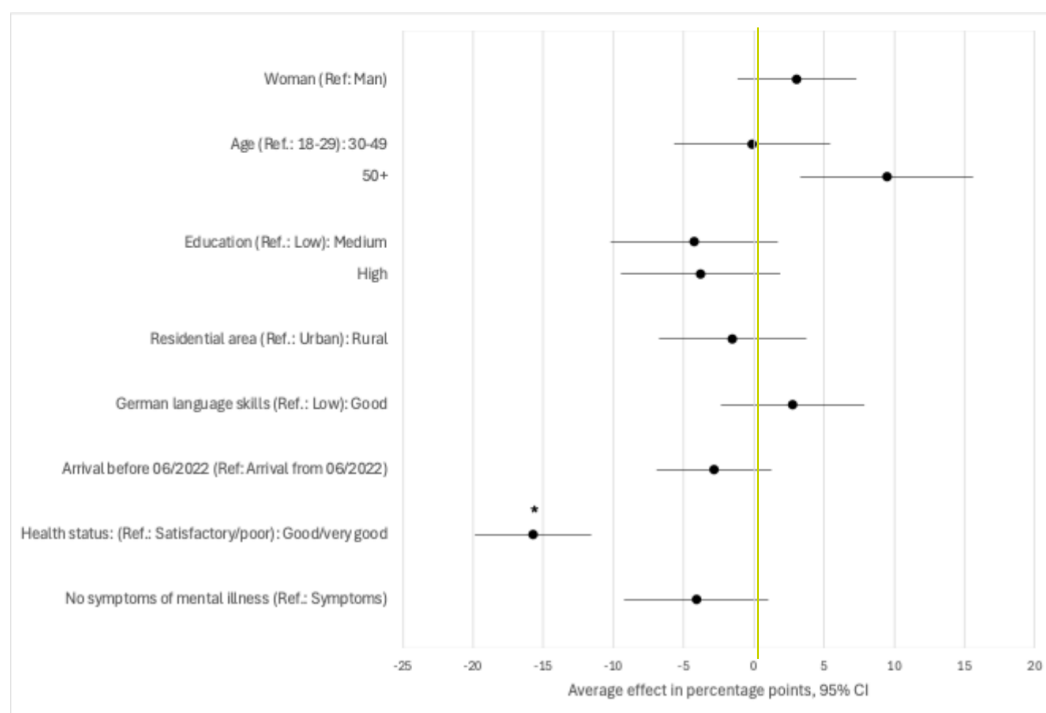
Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 2,841 PHQ-2, 2,832 GAD-2.

In addition, women are almost 7 percentage points more likely to be affected by an anxiety disorder than men. With regard to arrival in Germany, there are no differences in either depressive symptoms or anxiety disorders between respondents who immigrated before June 2022 and those who came to Germany later.

## 7.4 Utilisation of medical care

In order to assess the needs-based medical care of Ukrainian refugees in Germany, the reported utilisation of healthcare services and potential barriers to care are examined below.

**Figure 7-2: Factors associated with the utilisation of medical care among Ukrainian refugees**  
Average marginal effects



Notes: \*, + significant at the 5 and 10 percent level. Multivariate regression results with delta estimator of standard errors. The average marginal effects of the variables were calculated following a binary logistic regression.

Legend: Negative average marginal effects (to the left of the reference line) indicate a lower probability of using medical care compared to a comparison group. A positive effect indicates a higher probability. Values that do not cross the reference line (0) are statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). Accordingly, refugees from Ukraine with good or very good health are around 16 percentage points less likely to seek medical care than those with satisfactory to poor health.

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 3,166.

Overall, 70 percent of Ukrainians report having seen a doctor in the last three months. More than half (53 percent) state that they had visited a dentist in the last three months. There are differences in the utilisation of medical care depending on the group of people: a bivariate analysis shows higher utilisation among women (71 percent) and people over 50 years (80 percent) (not shown). These utilisation patterns can also be found in the German-speaking population (Prütz et al. 2021). They can be explained by different needs, among other things.

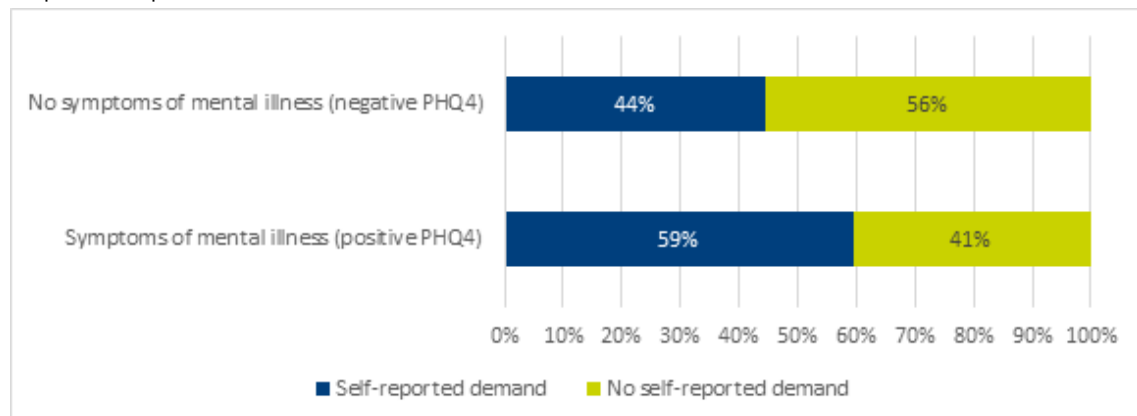
In order to investigate which factors are associated with utilisation, average marginal effects (AME) were estimated using logistic regressions. In addition to sociodemographic factors,

differences in self-rated general health and symptoms of psychological disorders (measured using the PHQ-4, see info box) were also taken into account as part of the multivariate analysis. The multivariate analysis reveals only minor differences between the studied groups of people (Figure 7-2). Only people aged 50 years and older show a higher likelihood of utilisation compared to younger respondents. People who rate their health as (very) good are less likely to use medical services than those with a poorer self-rated health. This is positive in the sense that the utilisation of medical care is not based on sociodemographic characteristics (such as higher education or place of residence), but on actual need. No differences in healthcare utilisation are observed regarding the arrival cohort (arrival before June 2022 vs. arrival since June 2022).

However, it is striking that there is no higher utilisation of medical care among people with symptoms of mental disorders (Figure 7-2). The utilisation of psychological or psychotherapeutic care is not specifically surveyed. However, respondents are asked to assess their need for an examination or treatment of mental health disorders within the last 12 months. Overall, 47 percent of the participants reported that they had such a need. At around 60 percent, this is significantly higher among people with symptoms of mental disorders (PHQ-4, see info box) than among those without symptoms (44 percent, Figure 7-3 ). Nevertheless, around 41 percent of respondents with a positive PHQ-4 - which indicates a clinical need for psychological or psychotherapeutic care - state that they have no need for an examination or treatment of mental health disorders. Together, these results indicate a possible underuse in the area of mental health, as well as a low awareness of the need for psychological or psychotherapeutic care.

**Figure 7-3: Self-reported need for examination or treatment of mental health disorders in the last 12 months among people with and without symptoms of mental illness**

Proportions in percent



Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted.

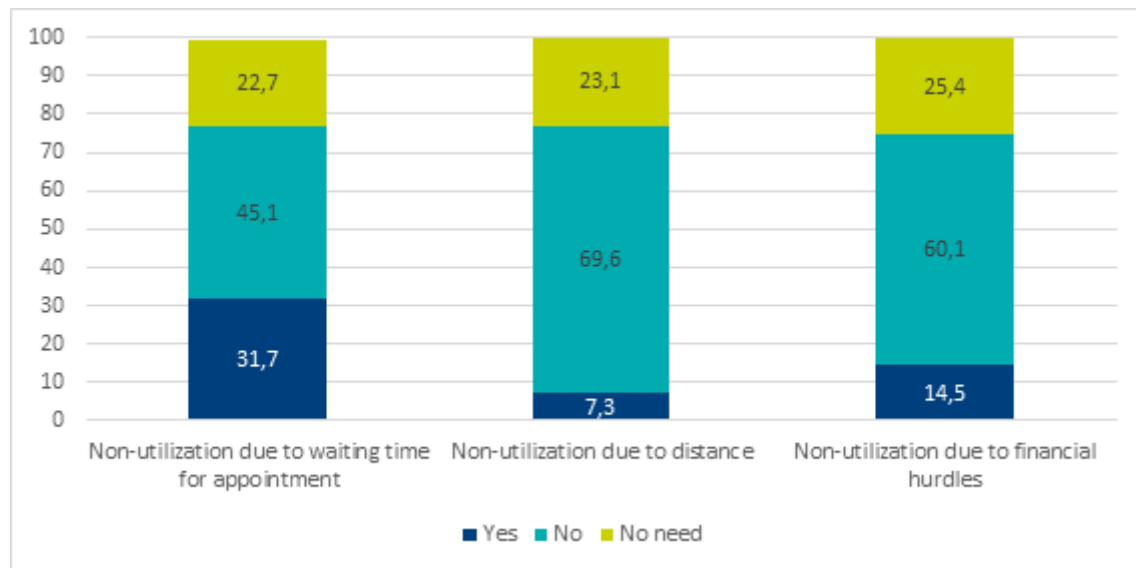
## 7.5 Barriers to utilisation

In the IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees, reasons for non-utilisation of medical services are also recorded in order to analyze possible obstacles to needs-based care. Almost a third (32 percent) of respondents state that treatment or an examination was delayed because of long waiting times for an appointment (Figure 7-4). In addition, the geographical distance to doctors and financial reasons are reported as barriers to utilisation, but were significantly lower at 7 percent and 15 percent respectively (Figure 7-4). In an international comparison, Germany performs well

in terms of waiting times (Finkenstädt 2017) and patient surveys also indicate sufficient satisfaction with waiting times in the German healthcare system (Achstetter et al. 2022). The perception of waiting times by Ukrainian refugees may be explained by differences in the healthcare systems: In the largely privatized Ukrainian healthcare system, patients perceive the waiting time for a specialist appointment to be shorter than in Germany (Rolke et al. 2024).

**Figure 7-4 : Reported delay in medical care in the last 12 months due to waiting times, distance and financial barriers for Ukrainian refugees**

Shares in percent



Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted.

With regard to language skills, there are no differences in the utilisation of medical care (Figure 7-2). However, 24 percent of Ukrainian refugees report that they need help in accessing medical care, which indicates challenges in navigating the German healthcare system (not shown). A further, often neglected barrier to (re-)seeking medical care is the experience of discrimination; 11 percent of Ukrainian refugees report discrimination when seeking medical care (not shown).

## 7.6 Conclusion

Ukrainian refugees in Germany have diverse health needs, which vary according to age, gender and level of education. The general need for care is similarly distributed as in the general population in Germany. However, there are clear differences in the area of mental health, where the prevalence of depressive symptoms and anxiety disorders is higher than in German private households. People without regular social contacts and with self-reported experiences of discrimination are particularly affected.

At the same time, more than a third of Ukrainian refugees with symptoms of mental illness state that they do not need an examination or treatment for mental health problems. These findings are in line with those of a study on the health of Ukrainian refugees in the Czech Republic (Guerrero et al. 2023). According to this study, Ukrainian refugees are often unaware of their own

need for psychotherapeutic treatment. This is partly due to the fact that mental illness is often stigmatized and existing personal or health problems are not attributed to mental illness.

Beyond mental illness, Ukrainian refugees' contact with the German healthcare system is generally good, but there is also evidence of barriers to accessing the system. The high share of Ukrainian refugees reporting treatment delays due to waiting times and the need for help with medical care indicates challenges in navigating the German healthcare system. This reflects the increasing complexity of the German healthcare system, which is not only a challenge for new arrivals to navigate (Sachverständigenrat zur Begutachtung der Entwicklung im Gesundheitswesen 2018).

## 8 Participation in German courses and language skills

*Jan Eckhard*

People who have to flee their country of origin usually have no opportunity to prepare for the country of refuge before fleeing. Accordingly, knowledge of the language of the country of immigration is very rare among refugees at the time of entry (e.g. Kosyakova et al. 2022). Refugees from Ukraine are no exception (Brücker et al. 2022). However, mastering the language of the host country is one of the most important factors in the integration process. Language skills help people to cope with everyday life, make it easier to build social relationships and increase their chances of participating in the labor market (e.g. Brücker et al. 2019; Kanas and Kosyakova 2022; Siegert 2019). To support language acquisition, the Federal Republic of Germany has therefore offered a nationwide system of integration courses since 2005, in which German language skills are taught. The integration courses are also aimed at asylum seekers and refugees from Ukraine. Participation usually is mandatory when social benefits (German Residence Act section 44 - § 44 AufenthG) are received. Against this background, the following chapter deals with participation in the integration courses and the development of the language skills of Ukrainian refugees.

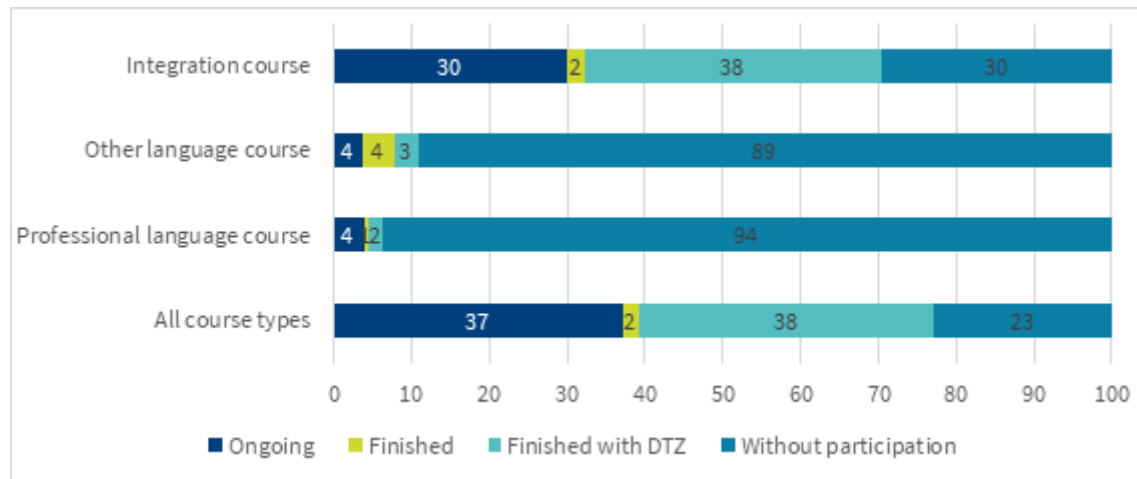
### 8.1 Participation in integration and other language courses

As can be seen from Figure 8-1, in the second half of 2023, a total of 70 percent of refugees from Ukraine have either already completed an integration course (40 percent) or at least started one (30 percent). The vast majority of those who have completed the integration course have also taken a German test at the end of the course.<sup>6</sup> The share of all Ukrainian refugees who have completed the test is 38 percent. In terms of those who have completed an integration course, this is 95 percent.

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<sup>6</sup> The German test for immigrants (DTZ) takes place at the end of the language course section of the integration courses. Based on the test result, participants are issued a certificate attesting to language proficiency at either level B1 or level A2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). If the test results are below level A2, no certificate will be issued. On the DTZ, see also Perlmann-Balme et al. (2009).

**Figure 8-1: Participation in German courses by Ukrainian refugees**  
Shares in percent



Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 3,389.

11 percent had taken part in another German course in addition to or as an alternative to the integration course, whereby the course in question was still ongoing for 4 percent at the time of the survey and had already been completed for a further 7 percent. A total of 6 percent of Ukrainian refugees have taken part in vocational language courses.<sup>7</sup> Vocational language courses are generally only completed after the integration courses, as they build on these. Of the participants in vocational language courses, 98 percent had previously attended an integration course and 91 percent had completed it. Taking all types of courses into account, a total of 77 percent has either started (37 percent) or already completed (40 percent) a German course.

Only a minority (2 percent) have completed a language course without taking a final test. It is also worth noting that the vast majority passed the final tests with a result of at least A2 level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which corresponds to the ability to communicate in common everyday situations using simple language. 30 percent of refugees who have completed a language course reach A2 level (not shown). A further 63 percent reach B1 level, which includes the ability to use the language at an advanced level, and a further 5 percent reach the even higher CEFR language levels B2, C1 or C2.

Of those who have only completed an integration course, 28 percent reach the A2 level and 59 percent the B1 level, which is the highest certificate level in the integration course. Of those who have completed a vocational language course in addition to the integration course, 49 percent achieve an even higher language level. If they attended both an integration course and another German course, the percentages are 26 percent for the A2 level, 56 percent for the B1 level and 11 percent for higher language levels. For those who have only completed another German course, the percentages are significantly lower at 10 percent for A2, 12 percent for B1 and 10 percent for higher language levels. Figure 8-2 shows the cumulative rate of transition to the (first) integration course. The rate reflects the extent (i.e. the statistical chance) to which Ukrainian refugees have

<sup>7</sup> Vocational language courses are aimed at people who are registered as jobseekers, are in training or are undergoing a recognition procedure for their vocational qualification.



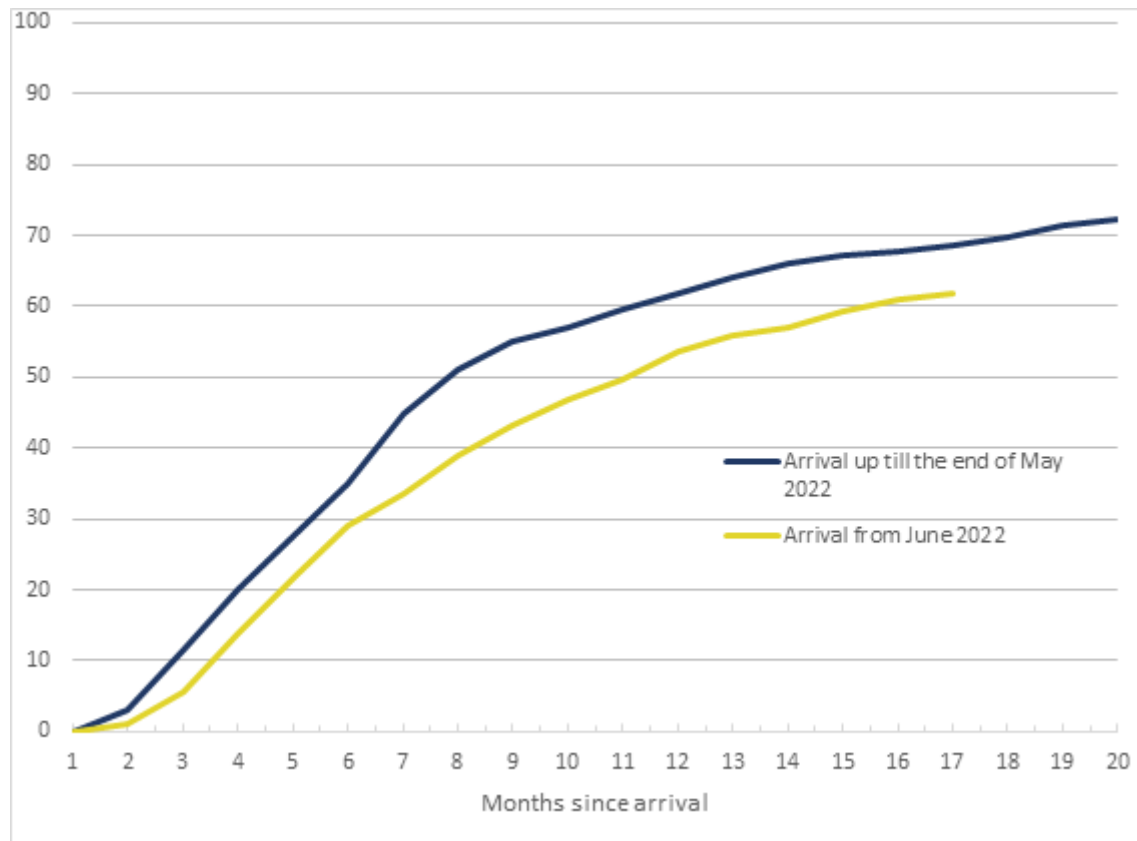
already taken part in integration courses by the xth month after arriving in Germany. A distinction is made here between refugees from Ukraine who arrived up to the end of May and those who arrived from June 2022 onwards. Of the Ukrainian refugees who arrived by the end of May 2022, 62 percent had started an integration course within the first 12 months of arrival. After 18 months, the figure is 70 percent. After 20 months, 73 percent have started an integration course, which conversely means that the remaining 27 percent have not started an integration course after more than a year and a half in Germany.

Increases in the participation rate of between 5 and 10 percentage points per month of stay can be observed for refugees who arrived from June 2022 onwards, particularly between the third and eighth month. The curve then flattens out, but the participation rate continues to rise until the twentieth month of residence.

A comparison between refugees who arrived by the end of May 2022 and those who arrived after this date shows a delay in the start of integration and language courses for refugees who arrived later, although this is only very slight and only amounts to a few weeks. The rate of refugees who arrived later rises somewhat less sharply within the first three months and also flattens out somewhat earlier. As a result, after twelve months since arriving, just over half of the refugees who arrived from June 2022 onwards have started an integration course. After 17 months, the figure is around 62 percent.

**Figure 8-2: Participation in integration courses of Ukrainian refugees by length of stay - cumulative transition rates**

Shares in percent



Note: Inverted Kaplan-Meier estimate. Legend: By the end of the second month after arrival, 3 percent of refugees from Ukraine who arrived up to and including May 2022 had started an integration course.

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 3,314.

The main reason for the differences between the arrival cohorts can be assumed to be that the refugees who arrived earlier encountered more favorable conditions in terms of waiting times at authorities and offices and also with regard to the availability of free course places. Entitlements and obligations to attend integration courses could be certified relatively quickly and free course places could be offered promptly. On the other hand, in the case of later entry, the capacities of the offices and authorities as well as the availability of free course places were already heavily exhausted, resulting in longer waiting times.<sup>8</sup>

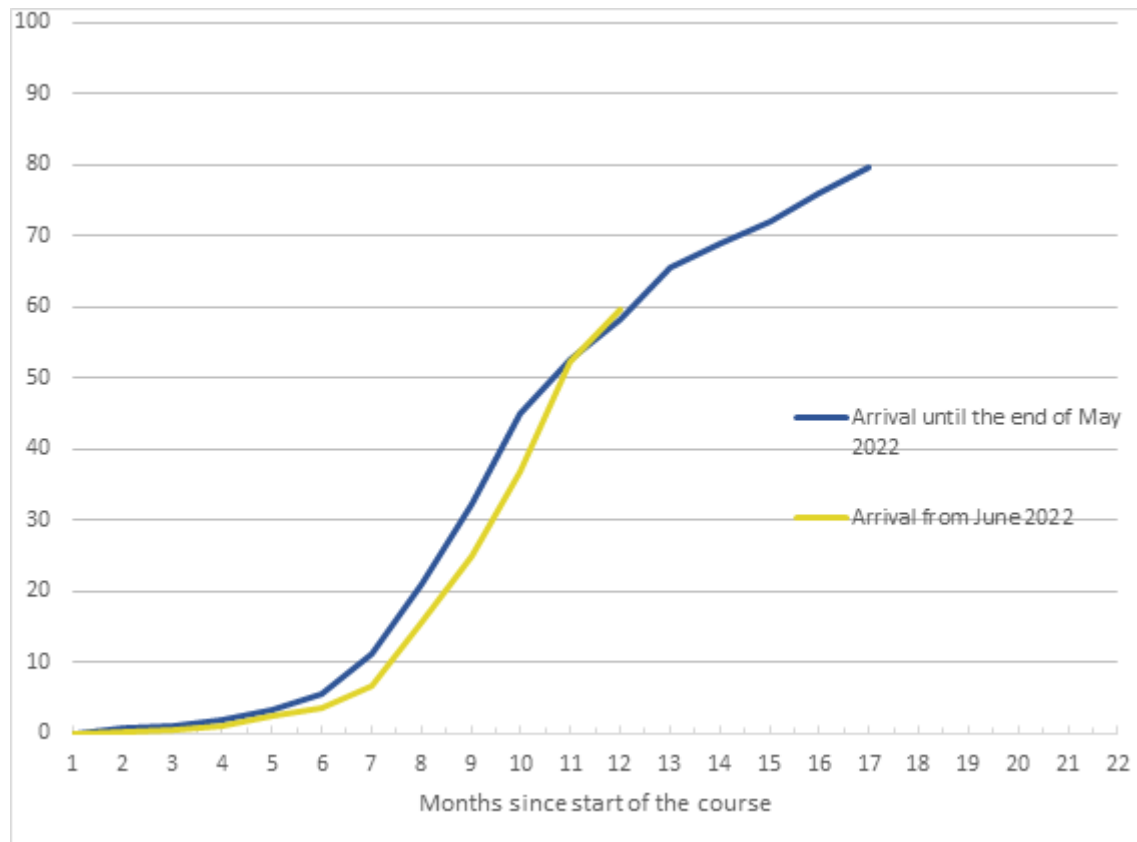
Figure 8-3 shows the rate of completed final tests in the integration course with a result of at least A2 level. According to this, final tests are predominantly taken between the seventh and

<sup>8</sup> This reasoning is supported by the fact that (as can be seen from supplementary analyses not shown), the later the entry took place, the longer the average time until the first course participation within the two arrival cohorts shown in Figure 8-2. An effect of the legal changes in force since June 2022 is contradicted by the fact that a delay can already be observed among refugees who arrived from April 2022 compared to those who arrived in February or March 2022. In addition, the differences between those who arrived in April or May 2022 and those who arrived from June to August 2022 are comparatively small. The fact that the difference between the entry cohorts is due to different distributions of individual characteristics in the two groups is contradicted by the fact that (as Figure 8-4 shows, see below) there is a significant difference between the entry cohorts even when controlling for various individual characteristics (gender, age, education, employment, housing and family situation as well as health, intention to stay, German language skills).

tenth month after the start of the integration course. There are only minor differences between the entry cohorts with regard to the rate of passed final tests.

**Figure 8-3: Completed final tests with result A2 or B1 (CEFR level) of Ukrainian refugees in integration courses by duration since course start - cumulative transition rates**

Shares in percent



Note: Inverted Kaplan-Meier estimate. Legend: Of those who started a course, 45.0 percent (earlier entry cohort) or 36.9 percent (later entry cohort) completed the course with at least CEFR language level A2 by the tenth month after starting the course.

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 3,314.

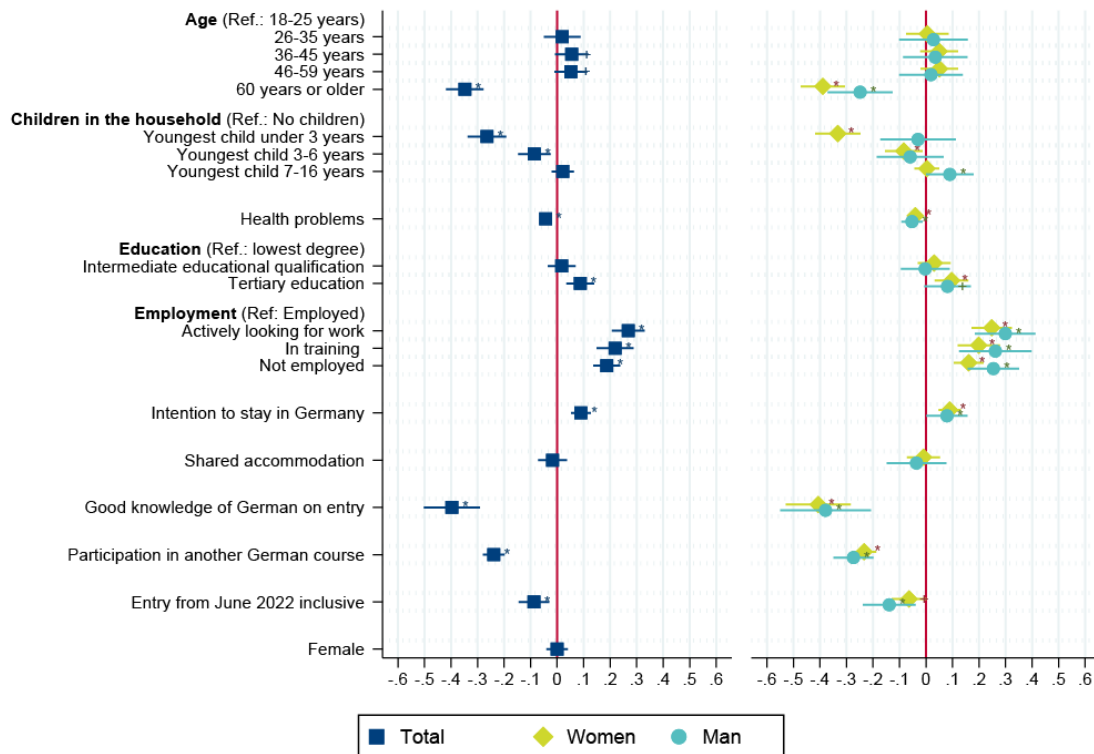
## 8.2 Relationships between course participation and personal characteristics

In addition to the period of entry, participation in German courses is related to other framework conditions and sometimes also to personal characteristics. Figure 8-4 shows the results of logistic regression analyses. Among other things, there is a lower participation rate among refugees over the age of 60 and among refugees with younger children. However, the correlation between living with younger children and course participation can only be observed for the group of female refugees, but not for male refugees. This reflects the fact that women with younger children often face the difficulty of reconciling childcare responsibilities and integration course participation (e.g. Tissot 2021). It should also be noted that people who receive social benefits can be exempted from compulsory labor market integration measures during the first three years of their children's lives in accordance with Book II of the German Social Code (SGB II) if there is no possibility of caring for the children in a childcare facility (Section 10 (1) No. 3 SGB

II). Ukrainian women who do not live in Germany with children do not differ from men in terms of attending integration courses.

**Figure 8-4: Correlations between Ukrainian refugees' participation in integration courses and personal characteristics, overall and by gender**

Average marginal effects



Notes: \*, +: Significant at least at the 5 or 10 percent level. Multivariate regression results with Huber/White sandwich estimator of the standard errors. The average marginal effects of the variables were calculated following a binary logistic regression. In addition to the constant, the regressions controlled for other variables whose coefficients were not shown separately in the figure: Region of origin in Ukraine, interview mode and number of months elapsed since entering Germany. Health problems are shown on a 5-point scale.

Legend: Refugees over the age of 60 are around 30 percentage points less likely to have taken part in an integration course compared to refugees aged between 18 and 25 - all other factors being equal. The difference is around 39 percentage points for female refugees and around 24 percentage points for male refugees.

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 2,864.

A tertiary education and the intention to stay in Germany forever are associated with an increased probability of participation. It can also be seen that the probability of participation is higher if they have not yet entered employment in Germany. This applies both to job-seeking refugees and refugees in a training phase as well as to refugees who are not gainfully employed. One reason for this is that the receipt of social benefits is usually linked to an obligation to attend integration courses. In addition, there are greater incentives for people with very uncertain career prospects to improve their job prospects by learning the language.

Health problems are associated with a reduced participation rate. Living in a shared accommodation, on the other hand, does not correlate with course participation.

Good or very good German language skills prior to entry also correlate negatively with the participation rate, as there is no obligation to participate in integration courses if German language skills are sufficient. Refugees can also take part in other German courses - either as an alternative to the integration course or as a supplement. If participation in another German course precedes participation in the integration course, this can lead to a delay in the start of the first integration course. If the result of the other German course is sufficient, there is also no need to participate in an integration course. Accordingly, Figure 8-4 also shows a negative effect of participation in other German courses.

### 8.3 Development of German language skills

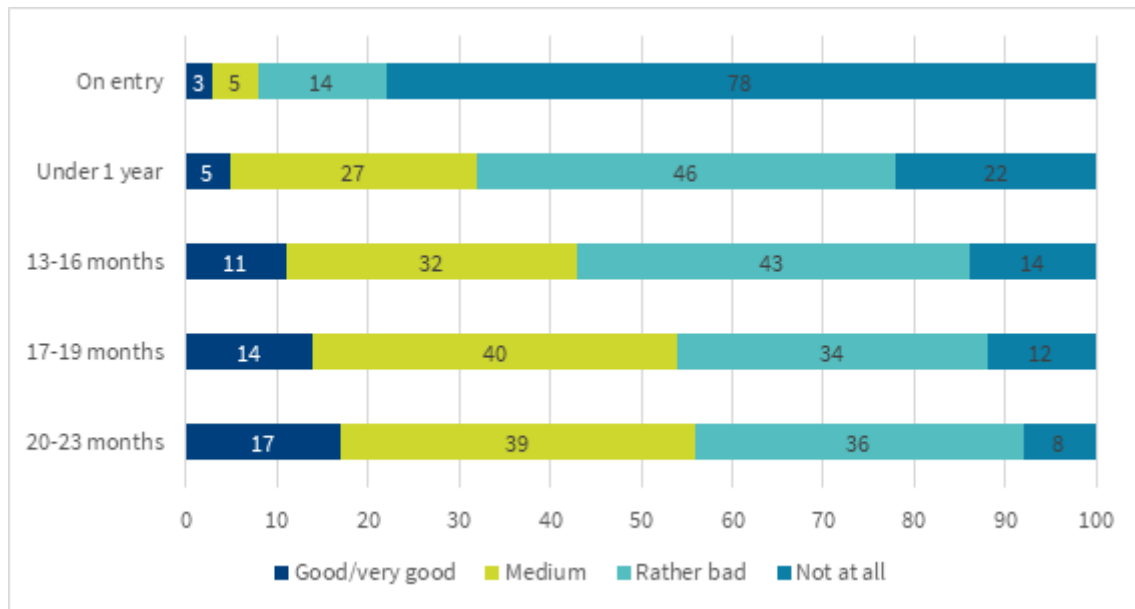
At the time of arrival in Germany, German language skills are quite rare among Ukrainian refugees. Only a very small share say they can speak German very well (1 percent), well (2 percent) or moderately ("I can"; 5 percent) while the vast majority cannot communicate in German at all (78 percent) or only poorly (14 percent) (Figure 8-5). However, the longer the stay in Germany, the greater the improvement in German language skills. This can be seen in the self-assessments of the German language skills of Ukrainian refugees with different lengths of stay. The share without any knowledge of German is declining sharply. Whereas this is still over 20 percent among Ukrainian refugees who came to Germany less than a year ago, it is only 12 percent for refugees with a length of stay of 17 to 19 months and 8 percent for those with a length of stay of 20 to 23 months. The share of refugees who rate their German language skills as "rather poor" is also declining. With a length of stay of less than one year, this still applies to 46 percent, with a length of stay of 20 to 23 months only around 36 percent. On the other hand, the share of those who describe their German language skills as "very good", "good" or "okay" increases with increasing length of stay, from 32 percent (length of stay of less than one year) to 56 percent (length of stay of 20 to 23 months).<sup>9</sup>

With reference to all Ukrainian refugees, the share with good or very good German language skills in the second half of 2023 is 14 percent. A further 38 percent say they have an average knowledge of German and another 36 percent say they have only a poor knowledge of German. 12 percent say they have no knowledge of German.

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<sup>9</sup> A study by the Federal Institute for Population Research (Ette et al. 2023, p. 11) also shows a significant improvement in the German language skills of Ukrainian refugees.

**Figure 8-5: Self-assessed German language skills of Ukrainian refugees, by length of stay**  
Shares in percent



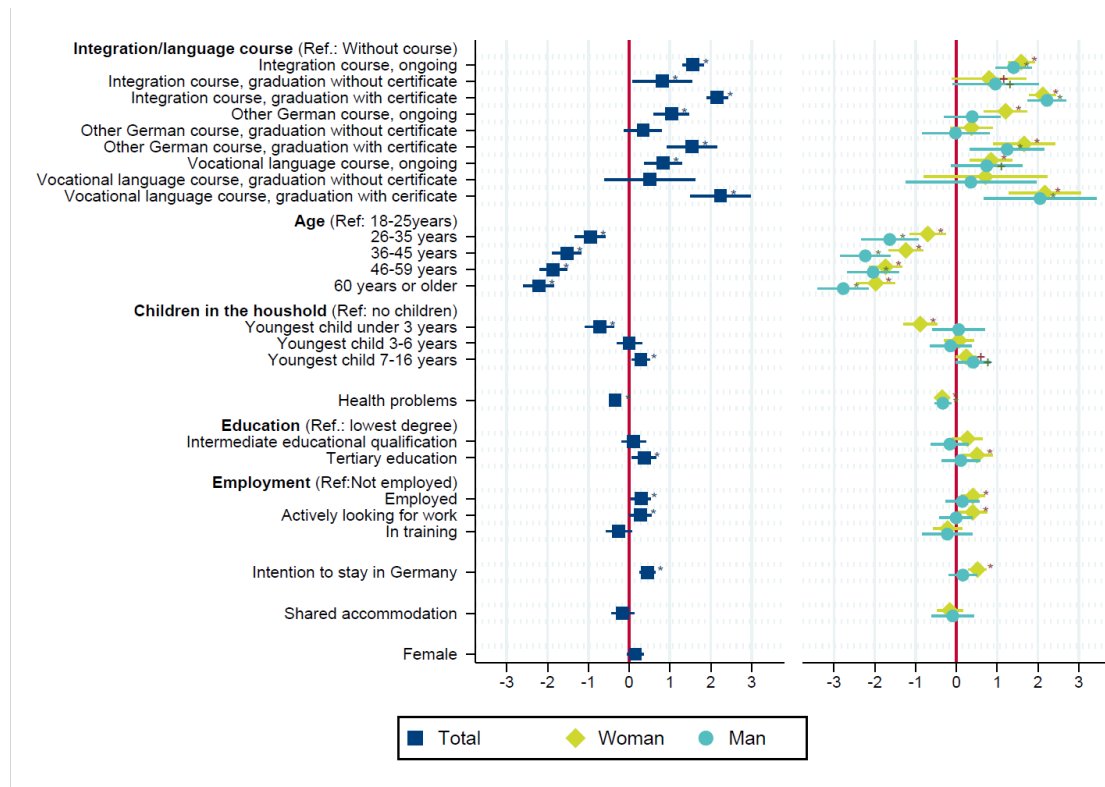
Note: The percentages are based on the rounded mean values for the areas of speaking, reading and writing.  
Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 3,400.

## 8.4 Correlations between German language skills and personal characteristics

Not all refugees succeed in acquiring German language skills at the same rate. Instead, German skills of refugees are related to various personal characteristics. Figure 8-6 shows the results of a linear regression of self-assessed German language skills. The self-assessed German language skills are plotted on a 12-point scale and result from separate assessments of the three language areas of speaking, reading and writing.

**Figure 8-6: Correlations between the German language skills of Ukrainian refugees and personal characteristics, overall and by gender**

Average marginal effects



Notes: \*, +: Significant at least at the 5 or 10 percent level. Multivariate regression results with Huber/White sandwich estimator of the standard errors. The self-assessed German language skills are plotted on a 12-point scale. In addition to the constant, other variables were controlled for in the regressions, the coefficients of which are not shown separately in the figure: Region of origin in Ukraine, interview mode, duration since arrival in Germany and German language skills prior to arrival. Health problems are shown on a 5-point scale. Legend: Refugees aged 60 and over have a self-assessment of their German language skills that is on average 2.3 points lower than that of refugees aged between 18 and 25 - all other factors being equal. The difference is around 2.1 points for female refugees and around 2.9 points for male refugees.

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 2,808.

Figure 8-6 illustrates the importance of integration and language courses, among other things. An ongoing participation in an integration course correlates positively with German language skills for both genders. An even stronger correlation can be observed for passing the final test of an integration course and the associated acquisition of a language certificate at least at A2 level. The same can also be seen for other German courses or vocational language courses, although the relevant effects are somewhat weaker compared to the effects of integration course participation and are not statistically significant in some cases. One reason for the weaker effect of other German courses could be that not all German courses perceived by the refugees are subject to the same quality standards as the integration courses and that the respondents sometimes also reported participating in courses with lower learning objectives, e.g. short-term online courses. With regard to vocational language courses, it should be noted that these are generally only started after the integration course and that an advanced level of German is a prerequisite for participation. Compared to integration courses and other German courses, which are aimed at people with no prior knowledge of German, there is therefore less scope for gaining additional German language skills in the vocational language courses.

In addition to the language course effects, Figure 8-6 illustrates a correlation of German language skills to age of living: The older the refugees, the lower their average German language skills. This correlation is also evident for both genders, although it is somewhat clearer for female refugees than for male refugees.

For female refugees, there is also a negative correlation between German language skills and living with children under the age of 3. This reflects the fact that the time available for language learning is also limited by family responsibilities. Especially for the group of Ukrainian women who have come to Germany alone with small children, the more difficult conditions for language acquisition must be taken into account.

Another obstacle to learning German quickly is the refugees' health problems. For both genders, there is a clear correlation between German language skills and health status, with poorer assessments of one's own health going hand in hand with lower German language skills.<sup>10</sup>

After controlling for participation in integration and German courses, age, living with children and health situation, only weak correlations with German language skills were found for other personal characteristics. There are positive correlations between German language skills and the possession of a tertiary educational qualification, employment in Germany or an active job search and the intention to stay in Germany in the long term. However, the respective effect sizes are only weakly pronounced and only found in relation to female refugees.

## 8.5 Knowledge of English

German language skills play a particularly important role in the opportunities for social participation and integration into the labor market in Germany. However, a good command of English can also be important, as it provides a bridge to facilitate access to various social and professional opportunities during an initial period in which German language skills are not yet very advanced. 19 percent of Ukrainian refugees say they have a good or very good command of English, while a further 22 percent say they have an intermediate level of English (Figure 8-7).

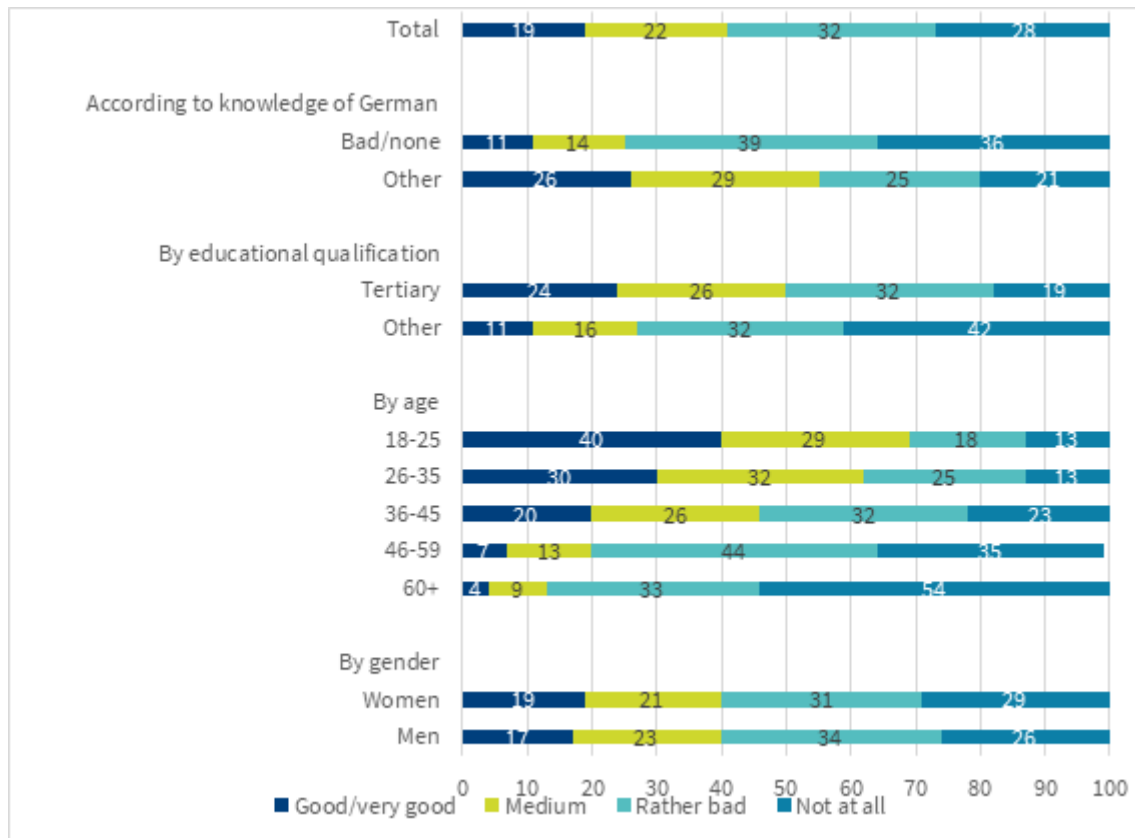
Those with a good command of English are particularly likely to also report a very good, good or at least average command of German in the survey from the second half of 2023. In this group, the share with a good or very good command of English is around 26 percent and the share with an average command of English is around 29 percent. However, even among those with little or no knowledge of German, a significant share can communicate in English. In this group, 11 percent consider themselves to have good or very good English skills and a further 14 percent have intermediate English skills.

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<sup>10</sup> The state of health was assessed on a 5-point scale. German language skills are therefore rated around 0.3 points lower for each level on the health scale.



**Figure 8-7: Self-assessed English language skills of Ukrainian refugees**  
In percent



Note: The percentages are based on the rounded mean values for the areas of speaking, reading and writing.  
Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 3,400.

English language skills are above average among refugees with higher educational qualifications. Around one in two refugees with a tertiary education can communicate in English, while only around one in four refugees with other educational qualifications can attest to having at least an intermediate level of English. There is also a strong age dependency in English skills. For example, around 70 percent of 18 to 25-year-olds, around 60 percent of 26 to 35-year-olds and around 45 percent of 35 to 45-year-olds have very good, good or intermediate knowledge of English. This only applies to around 20 percent of 45 to 59-year-olds and less than 15 percent of refugees over the age of 60. There are no significant differences between the genders in terms of English language skills.

## 8.6 Conclusion

In summary, there is a high level of participation in integration courses among Ukrainian refugees, accompanied by a gradual improvement in their German language skills. Overall, over 70 percent of Ukrainian refugees had already started an integration course by the second half of 2023. As the length of their stay in Germany increases, a growing number of Ukrainian refugees rate their own German language skills as good, very good or at least sufficient.

In this context, participation in an integration course proves to be one of the most influential positive factors in the acquisition of German language skills, which in turn are of great

importance for labor market integration (see Chapter 9) and are also associated with increased educational participation of refugees (see Chapter 4).

The targeted promotion of language acquisition as part of the integration course program thus shows positive results, although there is also room for improvement. The groups that show both a comparatively low rate of integration course participation and lower progress in language acquisition include older refugees, women with small children and refugees with health problems. With regard to these groups, measures aimed at improving participation opportunities and learning conditions are therefore desirable.

It is worth noting that many Ukrainian refugees also have knowledge of English. In some cases, this also applies to refugees who have only had a limited knowledge of German to date.

Knowledge of English could form a valuable bridge for these refugees by facilitating access to social contacts and expanding their professional opportunities.

## 9 Challenges and progress in labor market integration: Job search, scope and quality of employment

*Kseniia Gatskova, Yuliya Kosyakova, Silvia Schwanhäuser*

### 9.1 Introduction

The labor market integration of refugees in Germany is associated with many challenges (Brücker et al. 2024). Women in particular face various obstacles when taking up employment (Kosyakova et al. 2023b; Kosyakova et al. 2021). On the one hand, a large share of them worked in regulated professions such as medical health professions or teaching and educational professions before fleeing. If these women wish to continue practising their professions in Germany, they often have to go through lengthy recognition procedures in order to prove a certain level of qualification; in some cases, the transfer of human capital acquired in their countries of origin is difficult or impossible (van Riemsdijk and Axelsson 2021). Secondly, women are more likely than refugee men to live with (young) children in the household, which, in conjunction with the unequal distribution of care work and inadequate childcare provision, makes participation in language and other integration programs, education and training and ultimately integration into the labor market considerably more difficult (Kosyakova et al. 2021).

There are also a number of other factors that can influence the speed of labor market integration. For example, health impairments such as mental illness can hinder the integration process (Kosyakova et al. 2023b). On the other hand, the expansion of personal networks and contacts with the German population, the acquisition of German and participation in training and further education opportunities as well as the recognition of professional qualifications and diplomas can promote labor market integration (Fendel and Yildiz 2020; Kosyakova and Kulic 2022; Hartmann and Steinmann 2021; Kosyakova and Kogan 2022).

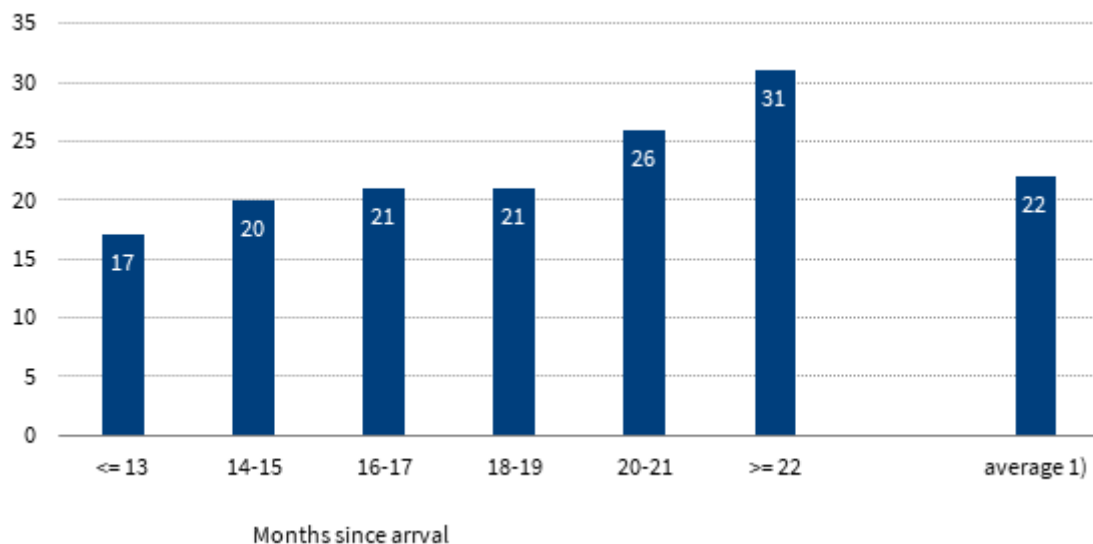
Against this background, this chapter first examines the development of the employment rate of Ukrainian refugees in the period from July 2023 to January 2024 by gender and family constellation. In addition, it analyzes through which channels and how quickly the refugees find their first job in Germany, in which economic sectors and occupations refugee women and men worked in Ukraine and which jobs they pursue after moving to Germany. Finally, the income and benefits received by Ukrainian refugees and the factors that influence their integration into the labor market are analyzed.

## 9.2 Employment rate of refugees over time

The employment rate of Ukrainian refugees in Germany has risen steadily since the outbreak of war in February 2022 (Kosyakova et al. 2023a; Ette et al. 2024). In the second half of 2023, an average of 22 percent of Ukrainian refugees of working age (18 to 64 years) in Germany were in paid employment (Figure 9-1). This represents an increase of four percentage points compared to the first quarter of 2023, when the employment rate was still 18 percent (Kosyakova et al. 2023a).

**Figure 9-1 Employment rate of Ukrainian refugees over time**

Share of people of working age (18-64 years), in percent



Note; Average employment rate of refugees at the time of the survey in the second half of 2023. Employment is defined as paid employment or self-employment.

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 2,922.

The average employment rate of all Ukrainian nationals in October 2023 - i.e. at the mean time of the IAB-BAMF-SOEP survey - was 24.8 percent (see BA - Statistics 2024c). This means that the average employment rate of Ukrainian refugees in the survey is slightly below the average employment rate of Ukrainian nationals in the employment statistics of the Federal Employment Agency (BA). This difference is due to the fact that the employment statistics include all Ukrainian nationals, including those who were already living in Germany before the outbreak of the war. Their employment rate in February 2022 was 52 percent (BA - Statistics 2023), so this higher value slightly increases the average employment rate of the total population in the BA statistics

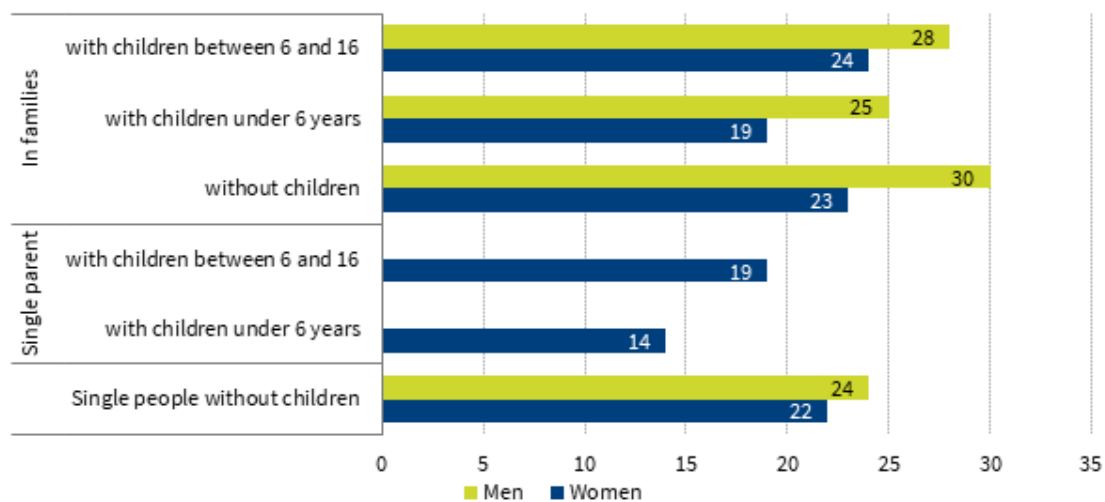
compared to our sample. This effect decreases over time because Ukrainian nationals living in Germany before the outbreak of the war make up an even smaller share of the total population. In addition, the BA's employment statistics also include recently arrived refugees from Ukraine, who have below-average employment rates at the beginning of their stay but are not yet included in the survey. In October 2024, the average employment rate of Ukrainian nationals was already 31.4 percent, which corresponds to an increase of 6.6 percentage points compared to the previous year. Due to the continued strong influx of Ukrainian nationals, it can be assumed that the employment rates of the population covered by the survey have probably exceeded this figure.

This is also supported by the fact that the employment rates of Ukrainian refugees increase significantly with the length of stay: 13 or fewer months after arriving, 17 percent of refugees from Ukraine were employed. After 14 to 19 months, this share rose to 20 to 21 percent, after 20 to 21 months to 26 percent, and 22 to 23 months after arrival, 31 percent of Ukrainian refugees were already employed (Figure 9-1).

There are differences between men and women: While around 26 percent of Ukrainian refugees were employed in the second half of 2023, the employment rate for Ukrainian women was 21 percent (not shown). These gender differences depend very much on the family constellation, which differs greatly between the genders (see Zinn et al., Chapter 3). For example, more than half of refugee women of working age live with at least one minor child in the household (53 percent). In addition, their situation is still often characterized by physical separation from their partner: 51 percent of refugee women of working age with children live in Germany without a partner in the household. In contrast, around 49 percent of refugee men live with children in the household, and only five percent are single parents without a partner. These family circumstances have a significant impact on the employment opportunities of refugee women, as they are de facto single parents abroad. In combination with a lack of family networks and inadequate childcare - especially for pre-school children - this makes it difficult for them to participate in integration measures and the labor market (Gambaro et al. 2021). Accordingly, the employment rates of women with young children (0 to 6 years) are significantly lower than for other groups (see Figure 9-2).

**Figure 9-2 Employment rate of Ukrainian refugees**

Share of Ukrainian refugees Persons of working age (18-64 years) who are employed or self-employed, by household constellation, in percent



Note: Calculations for single men relate to fewer than 20 observations and are therefore not shown.

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 2,926.

In families with children, men have a higher employment rate overall than women. The group of single parents consists almost exclusively of women. Only 14 percent of single mothers with children aged between 0 and 6 and of mothers of children aged between 6 and 16 were in employment in the second half of 2023. In families with a partner, the employment rates for women are slightly higher: 19 percent (with a child under 6 years) and 24 percent (with a child between 7 and 16 years). However, the highest employment rates are found among childless men who live with a female partner in the household (30 percent).

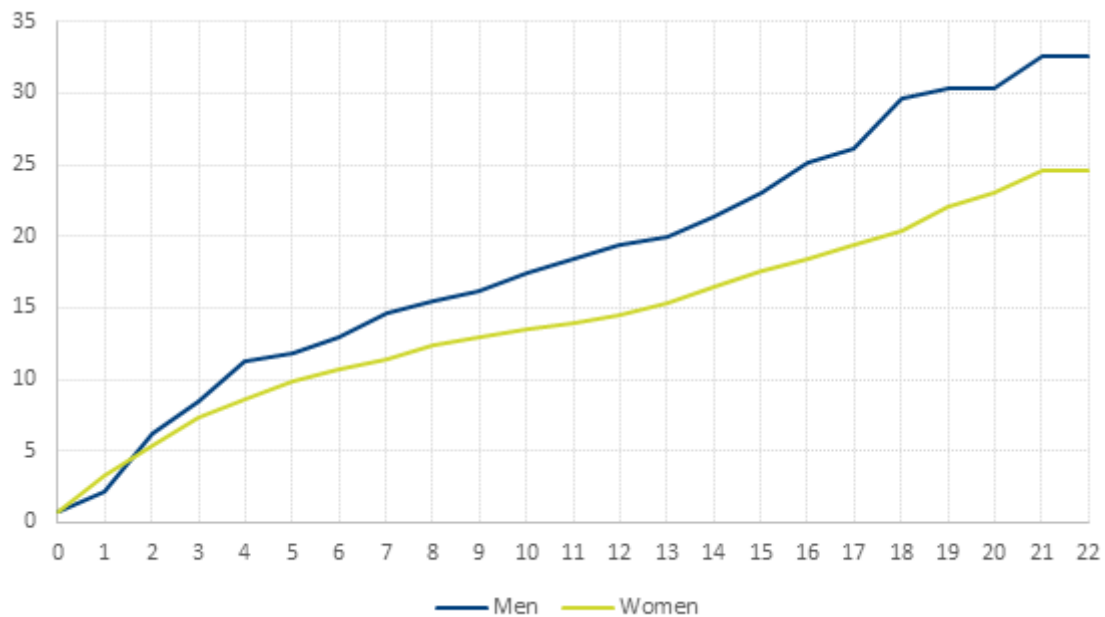
Family obligations have a negative impact on women in particular when it comes to taking up employment. For this reason, refugee mothers with children in particular appear to face major challenges in reconciling paid work and childcare responsibilities. However, as children get older, the employment rates of women also increase.

### 9.3 Looking for work: The first job in Germany

Figure 9-3 shows the probability of Ukrainian refugee men and women taking up gainful employment in Germany for the first time within 23 months of their arrival. The first differences in the transition to employment can already be seen from the first few months of residence, with the gap between men and women increasing steadily over time. For example, six months after arriving in Germany, 11 percent of female Ukrainian refugees and 13 percent of male Ukrainian refugees had taken up their first job. After around 22 months, the gap between the sexes continues to widen: 25 percent of women and 33 percent of men have entered the labor market. This means that the transition to their first job in Germany is significantly faster for refugee men than for women. This reflects a general trend on the labor market: women with a migration background generally face greater hurdles to labor market integration. A clear gender gap can also be observed in other refugee groups (Brücker et al. 2024).

**Figure 9-3 Ukrainian refugees taking up their first job by gender and arrival cohorts**

Percentage of 18-64-year-olds who have taken up their first job, by month since arrival



Note: Inverted Kaplan-Meier estimate. Legend: 21 months after moving to Germany, 23% of women and 30% of men have taken up their first job in Germany.

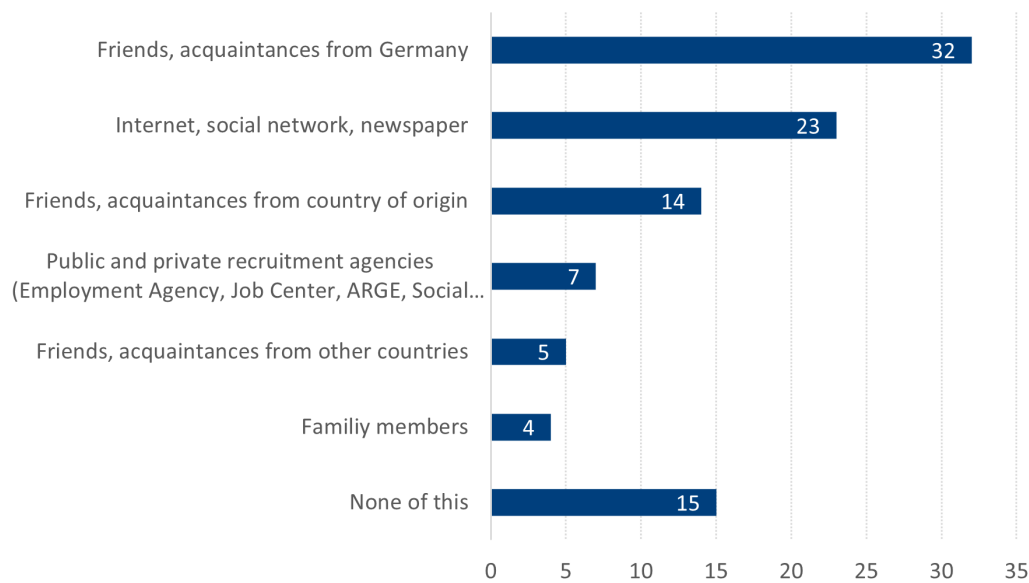
Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 2,769.

Personal social networks play a central role in job placement: 51 percent of employed refugees found out about their job from friends and acquaintances (Figure 9-4). It is noteworthy that around two thirds of this group stated that the most important person for the job placement was a person of German origin. These results confirm the importance of social contacts with Germans, not only for intensifying language integration in everyday life, but also for providing information that is crucial for successfully taking up initial employment after immigration (Kosyakova and Kogan 2024).

Around one in five jobs was found via a job advertisement in the newspaper or on the internet (including social networks such as Facebook, Twitter or XING). Official job placements, for example via the employment agency, and private job placements, on the other hand, only led to a job for 7 percent of refugees.

**Figure 9-4 Channels of job placement for Ukrainian refugees in Germany**

Share of people in employment, in percent



Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 402.

## 9.4 Activities before and after the move

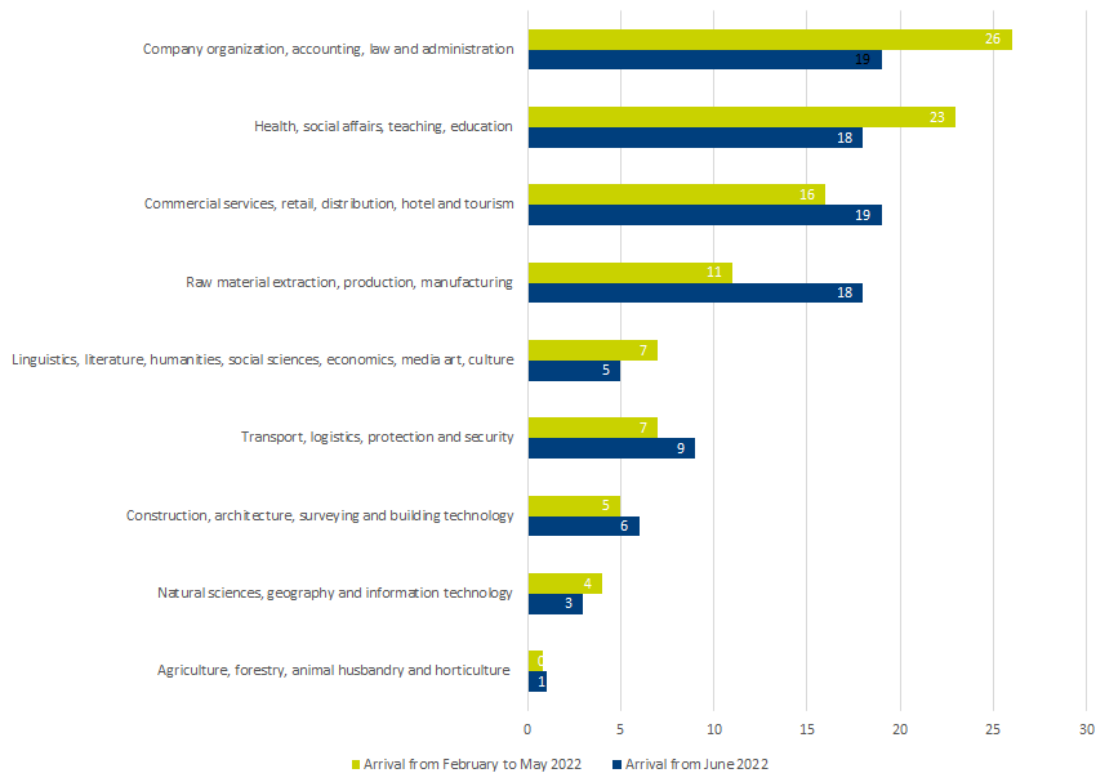
### 9.4.1 Qualifications and professional experience

Refugees' access to the labor market in Germany is largely determined by their existing human capital. Work experience prior to immigration is one of the important factors that increase both the probability of employment and the future employment intentions of refugees in the host country (Kosyakova et al. 2023a). Accordingly, the group of Ukrainian refugees has a high labor market potential, as almost all Ukrainian refugees of working age were previously employed in Ukraine (95 percent cf. Kosyakova et al., Chapter 4). In addition, existing educational and professional qualifications are decisive for taking up employment. Depending on the qualifications acquired abroad, the transfer of skills can be easier or more difficult for people with a migrant background. For example, a carpenter can easily use their manual skills in the host country, while a lawyer can no longer use their knowledge after migration due to the different legal systems and different requirements for practicing their profession.

The majority of Ukrainian refugees who arrived between February and May 2022 worked in the fields of business organization, accounting, law and administration as well as in the health and education sector before moving to Ukraine (Figure 9-5). The refugees who arrived since June 2022 also worked in these two sectors in particular, but also in the commercial services sector and in industry.

**Figure 9-5 Economic sectors in which refugees were employed before immigration, by arrival cohorts**

Share of people in employment before immigration, in percent



Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 2922.

Gender-specific segregation on the labor market in Ukraine is pronounced (Gatskova 2021), which is why Ukrainian refugees are represented in different occupations. Before moving to Ukraine, men were particularly employed in industry (27 percent), while women were more likely to work in the healthcare sector (13 percent) or in the education sector (12 percent) (not shown).

If we take a closer look at the ten most common occupational groups before moving to Germany, women most frequently worked as accountants, sales assistants, secondary school teachers, managing directors, employees in the insurance and financial services sector and as healthcare and nursing staff (see Table 9-1). Men were often employed in occupational groups such as management, technical production planning and control, construction planning and supervision, architecture and structural engineering, vehicle management, construction electrics and in mechanical and industrial engineering.

According to the Federal Employment Agency's 2023 skilled labor shortage analysis, the occupations with the highest employment bottlenecks included nursing and healthcare professions, occupations in the skilled trades and in professional road transport (Federal Employment Agency 2024b). There were also shortages in catering occupations. Accordingly, many Ukrainian refugees have qualifications that are particularly in demand on the German labor market.



**Table 9-1 The ten most common occupational groups of Ukrainian refugees in 2023 by gender**  
Share of people in employment before immigration, in percent

Code	Job title according to KldB10, 3-digit	Percentage frequency	Cumulative percentages
<b>Women</b>			
621	Sales (without product specialization)	8	8
722	Accounting, controlling and auditing	7	15
841	Teaching at general education schools	6	21
711	Management and Executive Board	5	26
721	Insurance and financial services	4	30
813	Healthcare and nursing, emergency services and obstetrics	4	34
831	Education, social work, curative education	3	37
921	Advertising and marketing	3	40
714	Office and secretariat	3	43
814	Human medicine and dentistry	3	46
<b>Men</b>			
711	Management and Executive Board	9	9
273	Technical production planning and control	6	15
311	Construction planning and supervision, architecture	4	19
321	Building construction	4	23
521	Vehicle guidance in road traffic	4	27
251	Mechanical engineering and operating technology	4	31
531	Property, personal and fire protection, occupational safety	3	34
814	Human medicine and dentistry	3	38
621	Sales (without product specialization)	3	41
611	Purchasing and sales	3	44

Note: Calculated on the basis of the 2010 Classification of Occupations (KldB) of the Federal Employment Agency. Only persons employed before immigration.

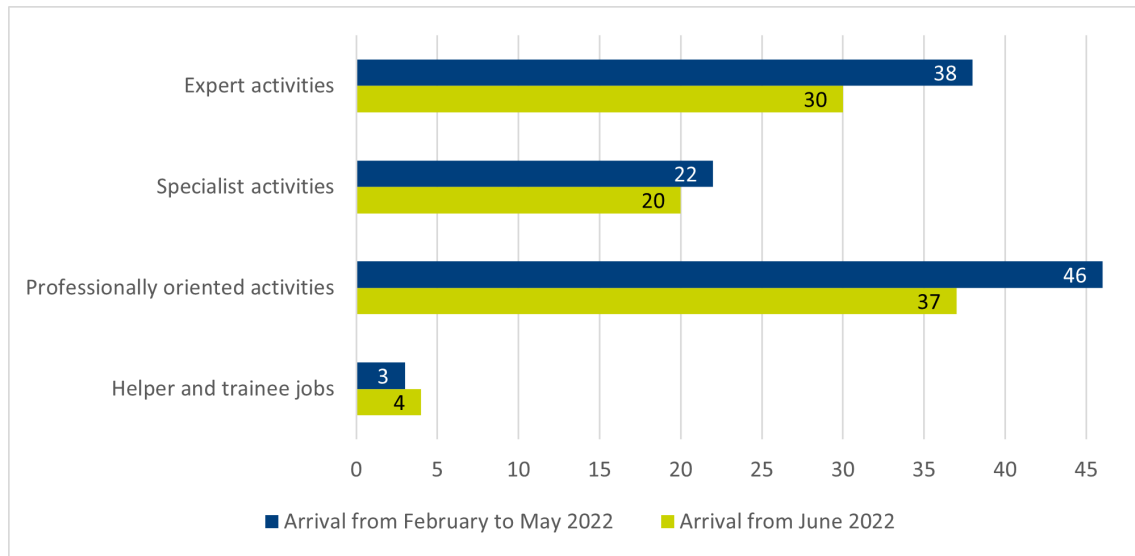
Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 1,779 women and 698 men.

Before fleeing Ukraine, most refugees were employed (65 percent in the arrival cohort of refugees who arrived between February and May 2022 and 56 percent in the arrival cohort of refugees who arrived from June 2022; not shown). The share of self-employed persons was around 14 percent in both arrival cohorts. Those who arrived from June onwards also had a higher share of blue-collar workers (15 percent) compared to the cohort of refugees who arrived between February and May (8 percent). A further 8 percent of the first and 9 percent of the second cohort of refugees were employed as civil servants.

More than half of Ukrainian refugees worked in complex or highly complex specialist and expert jobs before moving to Ukraine (Figure 9-6). A further 40 percent were skilled workers. The data indicates that Ukrainian refugees, especially those who came to Germany immediately after the outbreak of war, have specialist and expert knowledge and had an above-average professional status in their home country: 60 percent of refugees who arrived between February and May 2022 worked as specialists or experts, compared to only 50 percent of the arrival cohort who arrived

from June onwards. Only a very small share of refugees were employed in low-skilled jobs before moving to Germany (3 percent). There are hardly any differences between men and women here.

**Figure 9-6 Activity level of Ukrainian refugees before immigration by arrival cohort**  
Share of people in employment before immigration, in percent

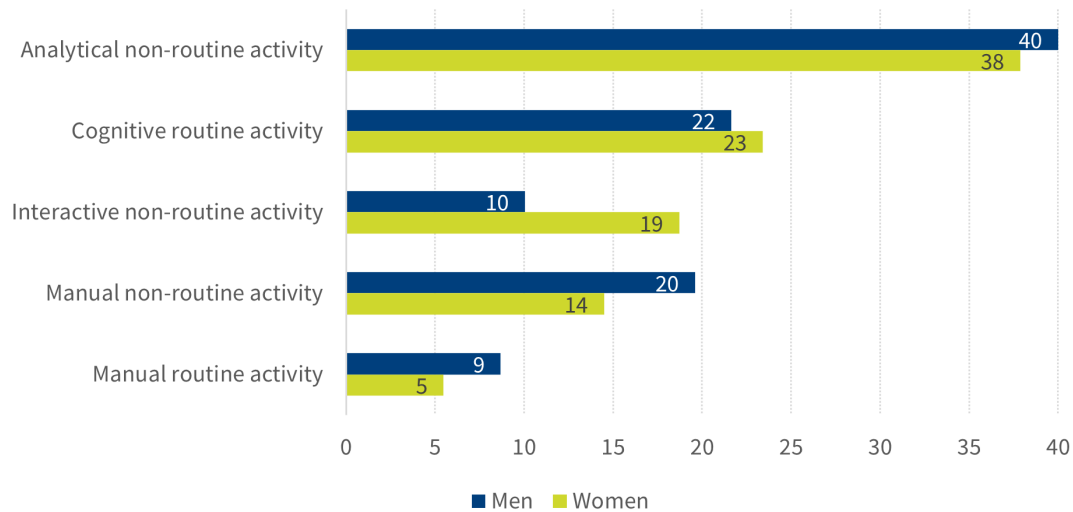


Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 2,477.

If the task structure is divided into analytical or cognitive, interactive and manual as well as routine and non-routine activities, 40 percent of men and 38 percent of women performed analytical non-routine activities such as planning tasks, research or programming before moving to Germany (Figure 9-7). A further 23 percent of women and 22 percent of men carried out routine cognitive activities, such as office and administrative work or accounting and bookkeeping. Interactive non-routine activities such as personnel management, training, teaching or selling were slightly more common among women (19 percent) than among men (10 percent). In contrast, refugee men (20 percent vs. 14 percent among women) were more likely to carry out manual non-routine activities such as carpentry or repairs. The smallest share, around 5 percent of women and 9 percent of men, carried out routine manual tasks, for example operating and checking machines or working in warehouses.

**Figure 9-7 Type of activities of refugees before immigration by gender**

Share of people in employment before immigration, in percent



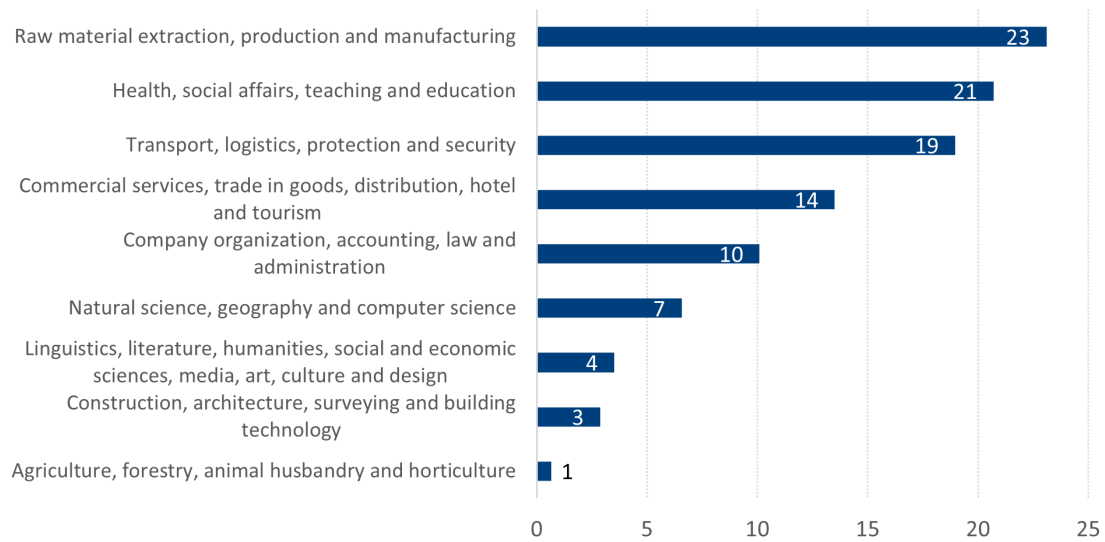
Note: The classification of activities was based on the content of the activities by Dengler et al. (2014) on the basis of KldB 2020. For the approach of classifying occupations according to the content of the activity performed, see Autor (2013).

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 2,472.

#### 9.4.2 Activities of refugees after arrival

The three most important economic sectors in which refugees are employed after moving to Germany are (1) raw materials extraction, production and manufacturing, (2) health, social services, teaching and education, and (3) transport, logistics, protection and security. These sectors employ 63 percent of employed Ukrainian refugees (Figure 9-8). The raw materials extraction, production and manufacturing sector was in fourth place in the ranking of employment sectors before the influx. The health, social, teaching and education sector, on the other hand, was in second place both before and after the influx. This means that many refugees continue to work in the same sector as before their arrival.

**Figure 9-8 Economic sectors in which refugees are employed after immigration**  
Share of people in employment, in percent



Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 560.

After moving to Ukraine, Ukrainian refugees are particularly active in the occupational groups of cleaning, food preparation, education and social work, including curative education (see Table 9-2). Refugees are also frequently found in the occupational fields of mechanical and industrial engineering, warehousing, postal and delivery services and goods handling. Although the jobs are often in similar sectors to those before their arrival, Ukrainian refugees often work in different jobs than before they fled. A significant share of refugees are employed in sectors with a pronounced shortage of skilled workers, particularly in nursing and healthcare professions and in the catering sector.

**Table 9-2 The ten most common occupational groups of Ukrainian refugees in Germany in the second half of 2023**

Share of people in employment, in percent

Code	Job title according to KldB10, 3-digit	Percentage frequency	Cumulative percentages
541	Cleaning	11	11
293	Food preparation	7	17
831	Education, social work, curative education	6	23
251	Mechanical engineering and operating technology	5	28
513	Warehousing, mail and delivery, goods handling	5	33
633	Gastronomy	4	37
813	Healthcare and nursing, emergency services and obstetrics	3	40
632	Hotel industry	3	43
714	Office and secretariat	3	46
621	Sales (without product specialization)	3	49

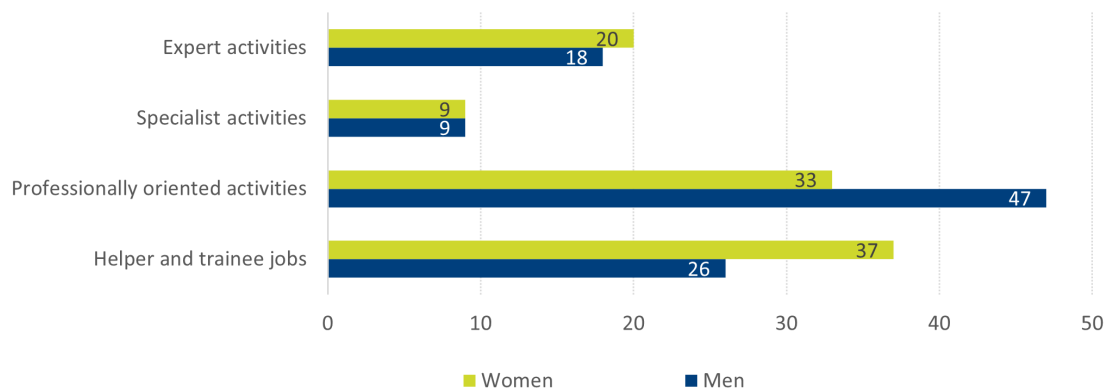
Note: Calculated on the basis of the 2010 Classification of Occupations (KldB) of the Federal Employment Agency. Employed persons only. Data in cells with less than 10 persons are only of limited informative value and are shown in italics.

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 372 women and 180 men.

Although more than half of the refugees worked at expert and specialist level before moving to Germany (Figure 9-6), the share of Ukrainian refugees who are employed at this level in Germany is significantly lower: 29 percent of employed women and 27 percent of men work at specialist or expert level (Figure 9-9). A further 47 percent of employed men and 33 percent of women work as specialists. The share of women and 26 percent of men working in unskilled jobs is 37 percent and 26 percent respectively. Accordingly, the transition to gainful employment at the beginning of the integration process very often takes place in simple jobs for women, while men most frequently work as specialists.

**Figure 9-9 Activity level of Ukrainian refugees in Germany by gender**

Share of people in employment, in percent



Note: Calculated on the basis of the 2010 Classification of Occupations (KldB) of the Federal Employment Agency. Only employed persons, age 18-64.

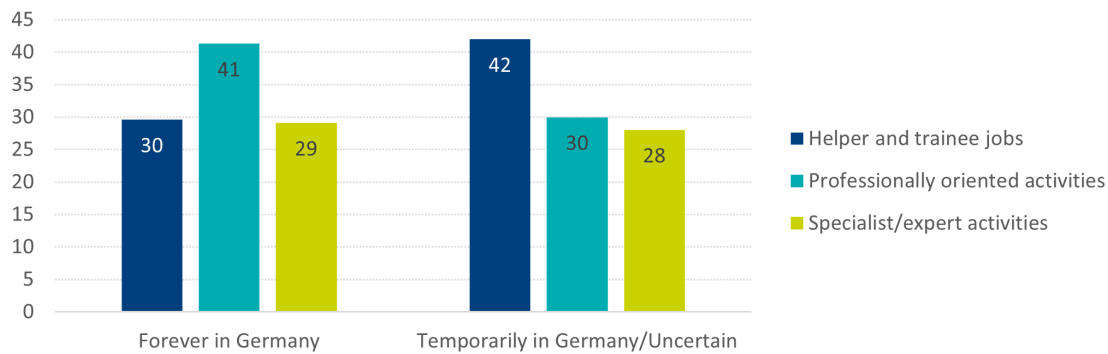
Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 552.

Another key factor that can affect the employment of refugees is their intention to stay. International studies point to significant differences between the integration processes of people with long-term and short-term residence plans. People who want to stay longer in the host country invest more in language skills (Kosyakova et al. 2022) as well as in education (Damelang and Kosyakova 2021) and other skills relevant to the local labor market, which improves their employment prospects (Auer 2018) and income in the long term (Adda et al. 2022). In contrast, people who invest less in these areas are more likely to work in low-skilled jobs. The survey results confirm these differences in activity levels depending on the intention to stay (Figure 9-10): Among those who want to stay in Germany permanently, 30 percent work in unskilled jobs, compared to 42 percent of those who are staying temporarily. Specialist and expert occupations, on the other hand, are more common among people with long-term intentions to stay.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> However, the directional effect remains open: Do people with lower intentions to stay select themselves into jobs of lower quality, or are their intentions to stay lower because they work in such jobs. However, an additional analysis refutes the selection hypothesis: there is no statistically significant correlation between the level of employment prior to immigration and the intention to stay. According to this, qualifications brought along do not influence the intention to stay, which supports the assumption that people with a lower intention to stay select themselves into low-skilled jobs.

**Figure 9-10 Activity level of Ukrainian refugees in Germany by intention to stay**

Share of people in employment, in percent

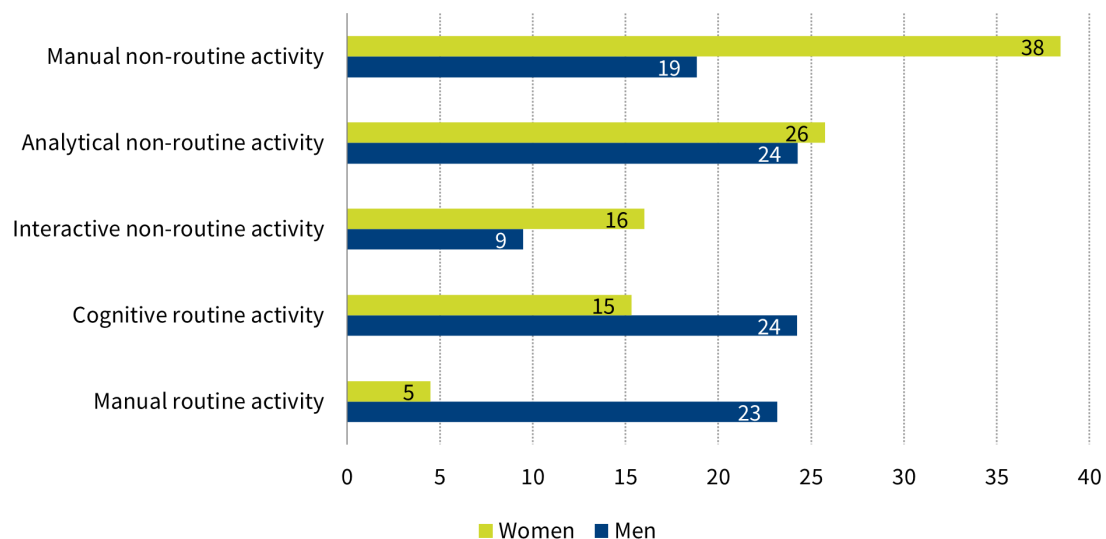


Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 552.

The task structure that employed refugees perform in Germany at the time of the survey (see Figure 9-11) differs greatly from the task structures they performed before moving to Ukraine (see Figure 9-7). In Germany, for example, 38 percent of refugee women perform non-routine manual tasks, which also include employment in the cleaning sector. At the same time, the group of employed women is heterogeneous, and the second largest group of employed refugee women is engaged in analytical non-routine activities (26 percent). The activities of refugee men are distributed across the various groups: Employed men engage in cognitive routine activities (24 percent), analytical non-routine activities (24 percent) and manual routine activities (23 percent) in almost equal shares, again indicating dequalification tendencies.

**Figure 9-11 Type of activities of refugees, by gender**

Share of people in employment, in percent



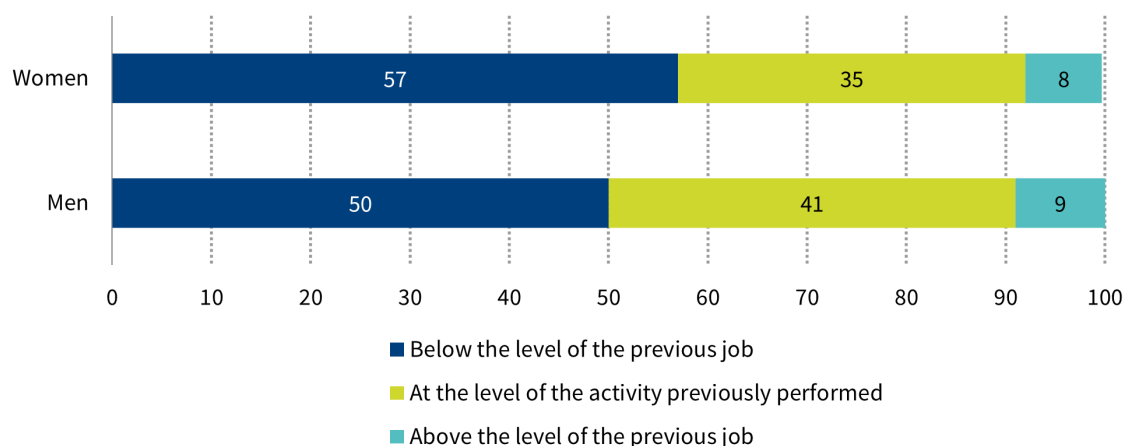
Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 552.

A temporary devaluation of the human capital acquired abroad is quite common in the phase immediately after migration. Accordingly, many working refugees in Germany are affected by

dequalification. Specifically, 50 percent of employed Ukrainian men are employed in occupations below the level of their previous occupation (Figure 9-12). Female Ukrainian refugees are even more affected by dequalification: 57 percent of women are employed in a profession that is below the level of their previous profession.

**Figure 9-12 Match between the level of requirements of the professional activity and the level of the activity performed before immigration**

Share of people in employment, in percent



Note: The qualification data was determined using the classification of occupations (KldB) of the IAB and the Federal Employment Agency for 2010.

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 329 women and 156 men.

In addition to the level of activity, another indicator of the quality of employment is the type of employment contract. As fixed-term contracts are common at the beginning of working life, only the group of employees aged 25 and over is considered for the analysis of employment relationships. Among employed Ukrainian refugees aged 25 and over, 38 percent had a fixed-term employment contract, whereas in 2023 only 7.5 percent of employees aged 25 and over in Germany had a fixed-term employment contract (Federal Statistical Office 2024d). This means that refugees, like other precariously employed people, are significantly more affected by insecurity on the labor market and belong to vulnerable groups that are at a higher risk of unemployment, especially in times of crisis. The share of temporary workers in the workforce amounted to 41 percent.

## 9.5 Earnings and receipt of benefits

The average (median) gross monthly earnings of employed Ukrainian refugees have remained almost unchanged over time: While men in full-time employment earned an average of EUR 2,650 gross in spring 2023 (Kosyakova et al. 2023a), their average (median) gross monthly wage in the second half of 2023 was EUR 2,600 (see Table 9-3). The average wages for full-time working refugee women remained at the same level of EUR 2,500 in the second half of the year. However, the earnings of Ukrainian refugees are significantly lower than the average gross monthly earnings of all full-time employees in Germany in 2023 (EUR 4,479, cf. Federal Statistical Office 2024b).



**Table 9-3 Earnings and benefit receipt of Ukrainian refugee women and men in Germany in the second half of 2023**

People of working age (18-64 years)

	In total	Women	Men
<b>Merits:</b>	<b>Median gross earnings in euros</b>		
Total	1.318	1.066	1.886
Observations	418	273	145
Full-time employees	2.500	2.500	2.600
Observations	187	99	88
Gross hourly wage <sup>1</sup>	13	13	13
Observations	324	210	114
Gross hourly wage of full-time employees	17	16	17
Observations	163	89	74
<b>Benefit receipt<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Percentage of the population</b>		
Share of benefit recipients	61	62	60
Observations	2.866	2.028	838
	<b>Percentage of the workforce</b>		
Share of benefit recipients	43	46	37
Observations	626	422	204

Notes: 1) Calculated on the basis of contractually agreed working hours, excluding people in paid training, paid internships and the self-employed. 2) Persons receiving citizen's allowance (incl. to cover accommodation costs) or social benefit.

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted.

As labor force participation increases, the share of refugees dependent on citizens' benefits decreases accordingly. In the second half of 2023, 61 percent of Ukrainian refugees received social benefits (in the form of citizen's allowance, social benefit or accommodation costs). When interpreting these figures, it should be noted that the citizen's allowance is not based on the individual principle, but on the household principle. In other words, the share means that 61 percent of refugees live in a household that receives benefits, not necessarily that these people would not be able to support themselves through gainful employment if they were single. In the second half of 2023, 43 percent of employed refugees received supplementary social benefits.

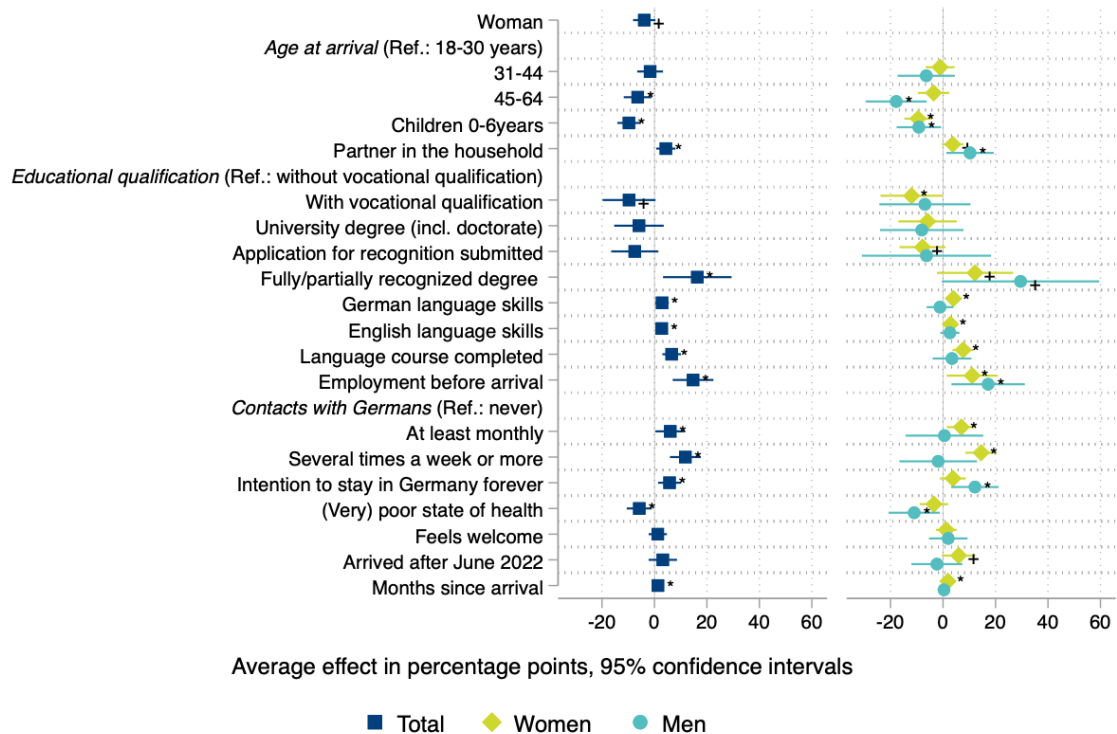
A gender gap can also be observed in the receipt of benefits: In the second half of 2023, 46 percent of working women and 37 percent of working men received benefits (see Table 9-3). This is not only due to the lower earnings and more frequent part-time work of women, but also to the different household structures: while men are more likely to live in single households, women are more likely to live in larger households with children, where the risks of receiving benefits are higher.

## 9.6 Multivariate analyses of labor market integration

Figure 9-13 uses multivariate regression models to show the influence of various factors on the probability of employment. The estimated results are to be interpreted as statistical correlations and not as proof of causality.

**Figure 9-13 Correlation between the probability of employment and individual factors. Dependent variable: paid employment, by gender**

Average marginal effects with 95% confidence intervals, in percentage points



Notes: \*, + significant at the 5 and 10 percent level. Robust standard errors. The figure shows the estimated results of a multivariate regression analysis using the ordinary least squares (OLS) method. The dependent variable is 0 for non-employment and 1 for employment overall (left panel) and by gender (right panel). The regression coefficients shown for the variables contacts with Germans were estimated in separate models and also control for the other variables shown in the figure. All models additionally control for current or previous participation (without completion) in a language course as well as missing values in control variables.

Legend: Refugees from Ukraine who arrived in Germany before moving to the country are around 22 percentage points more likely to be employed in Germany than refugees who were not employed, all other factors being equal.

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 2,044 women and 845 men.

The results in Figure 9-13 show that women are generally less likely to be employed than men (statistically significant at 10 percent). In addition, various factors have a different impact on men and women. For example, people between the ages of 45 and 65 are less likely to be employed compared to other age groups, although this correlation is only statistically significant for men. Accordingly, approaching retirement age reduces the chances of finding a job.

Refugees with children of pre-school age also have fewer opportunities to be employed. This is in line with previous research findings which show that care responsibilities and caring for children inhibit the labor market participation of refugee women (see Kosyakova et al. 2023b). The presence of a pre-school child (0 to 6 years) in the household reduces the probability of being employed by 10 percentage points.

In contrast, the presence of a partner in the household has a positive effect on the chances of being employed. In addition, previous work experience promotes employment opportunities in

Germany. Refugees who were employed before moving to Germany are therefore more likely to find a job.

The labor market integration of refugees with a vocational qualification is associated with considerable challenges: They are less likely to be employed at this early stage of the integration process compared to people without a vocational qualification. This is likely due to the fact that it is easier to enter simpler jobs than professions that require higher levels of specialist and language skills. In contrast, the recognition of qualifications acquired abroad has a positive effect on the employment opportunities of Ukrainian refugees. This positive correlation can already be seen in the early phase of the integration process, although most applications for recognition are still being processed and the number of people with recognized qualifications is still low (see Kosyakova et al., Chapter 4). The latter illustrates the complexity and length of recognition procedures in Germany.

Structured and early language support is crucial for sustainable integration (Wood and Lens 2024). It enables refugees to build viable careers with planning security, adequate income and fair working conditions and to achieve a higher professional status (De Vroome and Van Tubergen 2010). The estimates show that both German and English language skills play an important role in gaining employment. Refugees who state that they have better language skills have a higher chance of gainful employment. Completing a German course is also associated with a higher probability of being employed. Previous studies show that German language skills are among the factors that have the strongest positive impact on long-term employment trajectories (Bähr et al. 2019; Kosyakova et al. 2023a). Although participation in language courses can initially delay the transition to working life, it is of central importance for taking up jobs that are commensurate with qualifications (Bloemen 2023).

Social contacts also play an important role in taking up employment. People who have no contact with Germans are significantly less likely to be employed than those who have frequent contact with Germans.

In addition, long-term intentions to stay have a positive influence on the probability of being employed. Furthermore, the likelihood of taking up employment increases with the length of stay. This is not unusual, as refugees are usually busy with humanitarian and bureaucratic matters (e.g. registering at their place of residence, applying for a residence permit and health insurance, translating and notarizing documents, opening a bank account, finding an apartment and possibly a childcare facility) in the first few months after arriving. Only then can refugees actively devote themselves to investing in their human capital (e.g. language courses, training), having their qualifications recognized and finding a job.

Most of the effects described are independent of gender. Nevertheless, there are gender differences in individual aspects. For example, women from the later cohort (who moved in from June 2022) tend to take up employment faster than women who moved in between February and May 2022. This could be explained, among other things, by the fact that a higher share of women who moved in later work in occupations with low qualification requirements.

Although the presence of children of pre-school age has a negative impact on the likelihood of both parents taking up employment, the presence of the partner in the household has a positive effect on women's chances of gainful employment.

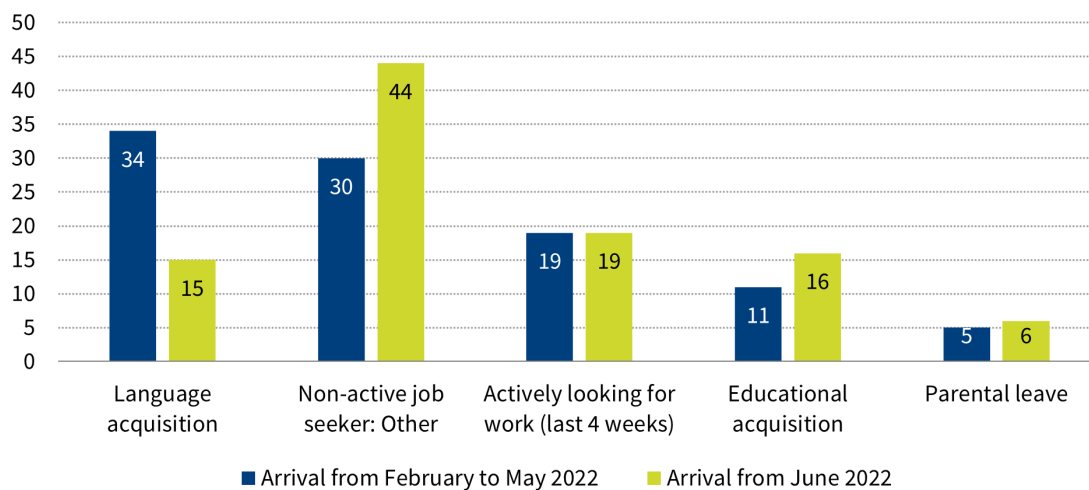
The labor market integration of men is generally faster than that of women, but older men and men in poor health are less likely to take up employment. The influencing factors that are particularly relevant for women include the frequency of contact with Germans, language skills and completion of an integration course. These factors significantly improve their chances of finding work.

## 9.7 Non-employed refugees

Over a third of refugees who were not yet employed in the second half of 2023 were taking part in various further training measures. At the time of the survey, 24 percent were taking part in language courses and a further 10 percent in further education and training measures. In addition, 15 percent are actively looking for work, 4 percent are on parental leave and 26 percent are not actively looking for work for other reasons, such as health restrictions, lack of childcare or waiting times for language courses (not shown).

**Figure 9-14 Employment status of refugees by arrival cohort in the second half of 2023**

Share of people of working age (18-64 years), in percent



Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted. Observations: 2,272.

In particular, there are considerable differences in participation in language courses between people who arrived between February and May 2022 and those who arrived after June 2022 (see Figure 9-14): People who moved to Germany after June 2022 were much less likely to take part in language courses at the time of the survey (15 percent) than those who came to Germany in the first few months after the outbreak of war (34 percent). This could be due to the fact that the waiting times for participation in an integration course are generally longer in the second cohort of immigrants than in the first (see Eckhard, Chapter 8) or that childcare had not yet been secured, which could prevent participation in language courses (see Zinn et al., Chapter 3). Accordingly, the share of people who are not actively looking for work is higher in the cohort that moved in later (44 percent compared to 30 percent in the cohort that moved in between February and May 2022).

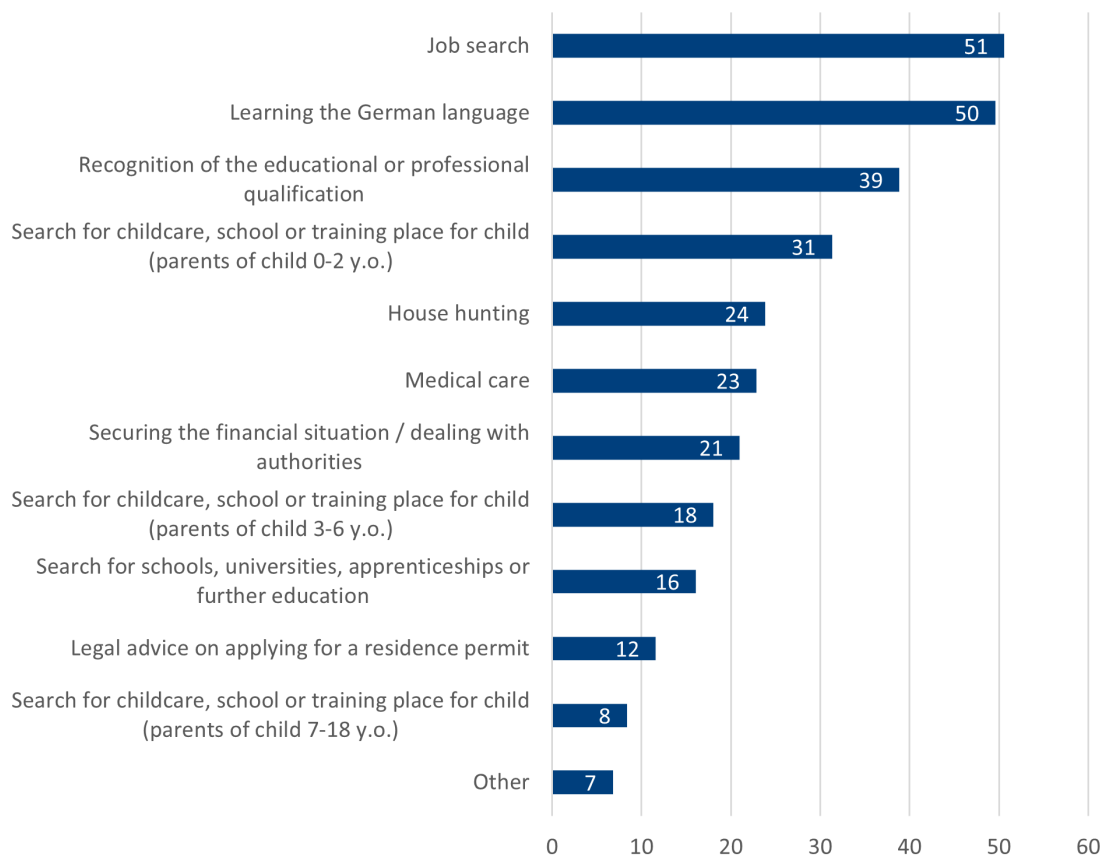
Ukrainian refugees who are not yet employed in Germany continue to have high work aspirations: 94 percent of those of working age who are not yet employed stated that they would definitely (78 percent) or probably (16 percent) like to take up work in Germany. There are no significant differences between the refugee cohorts. Men appear to have slightly more pronounced work aspirations: Among male refugees from Ukraine, 84 percent of respondents stated that they definitely want to work in Germany in the future, compared to 76 percent of women who chose this response category. The vast majority - regardless of gender - would like to work full-time.

In the second half of 2023, 21 percent of refugee men and 13 percent of refugee women were actively looking for work (not shown). One third of job-seeking refugees only use one specific channel to obtain information about job advertisements, while the other two thirds search for jobs in various ways. Of these, 51 percent search through their contacts (friends, acquaintances, family members), 48 percent state that they use the services of the employment agency, the job center or private job agencies for their job search, and 26 percent read job advertisements in newspapers, on the Internet or on social media. Men appear to be more active than women in using all of these job search channels.

Refugees who were not yet in employment were asked about their support needs in order to better understand the specific hurdles to labor market integration for this group. Accordingly, Figure 9-15 shows the most frequently mentioned support needs of non-employed refugees. It is noticeable that around half of the refugees who are not (yet) employed need support in finding a job (51 percent) and learning German (50 percent). Other frequently mentioned support needs include help with the recognition of qualifications and help with finding childcare for parents with small children (0-2 years old). These issues reflect the key challenges that Ukrainian refugees face when integrating into the German labor market and society.

**Figure 9-15 Support needs of non-employed Ukrainian refugees in the second half of 2023, multiple answers possible**

Share of economically inactive persons of working age (18-64 years), in percent



Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees v40 (2023), weighted.

## 9.8 Conclusion

Overall, there has been a positive trend in the employment rates of Ukrainian refugees since the outbreak of war. In the second half of 2023, the employment rate was 22 percent. However, the employment rate has risen to 31 percent in just under two years since the influx. Men enter the labor market faster than women.

Before moving to Germany, most of the refugees who arrived between February and May 2022 worked in the fields of business organization, accounting, law, administration and in the health and education sector. Refugees who arrived later increasingly worked in the commercial services sector and in industry. After arriving in Germany, they are predominantly employed in occupational groups such as cleaning, food preparation, education and social work, including curative education. Despite their previous jobs at specialist and expert level in Ukraine, Ukrainian refugees in Germany are often employed at helper and skilled worker level, which indicates a trend towards dequalification. Around 50 percent of employed men are employed in occupations below the level of their previous job. Female refugees are even more affected by dequalification: 57 percent of women are employed in a job that is below the level of their previous occupation. A temporary devaluation of the human capital acquired abroad is common in the phase

immediately after migration. However, the quality of employment for refugees is likely to improve over time and as their language skills improve.

On average, Ukrainian refugees have only been living in Germany for 18 months. This length of stay is rather short for comprehensive labor market integration - especially given the long waiting times for integration courses, the average integration course duration of 6-9 months and the lengthy recognition process for qualifications acquired abroad. This is particularly true because the majority of refugees have a high level of qualifications. Most transitions into the labor market during this period concern low-skilled occupations in which the barriers to entry are relatively low (e.g. there are no high requirements for German language skills or recognition of professional qualifications). Most refugees are still attending language courses, other training and further education courses or are not actively looking for work for other reasons (often due to waiting for language courses to start, lack of childcare, health reasons).

As Ukrainian refugees in Germany are predominantly women, many of them single mothers, they face particular challenges on the labor market due to care work and childcare. In this respect, improving the childcare situation, accelerating access to language training and, in particular, reconciling childcare, language training and employment play a key role. More intensive interaction with the population living in Germany and the expansion of contacts with Germans would also be of great importance, as they not only support language acquisition, but also act as an important channel for job placement.

## 10 Overall conclusion

*Yuliya Kosyakova, Nina Rother, Sabine Zinn*

The Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 triggered one of the largest refugee movements in Europe since the Second World War. Millions of people, mainly women and children, sought protection in European countries, including Germany. The IAB-BAMF- SOEP survey of refugees provides comprehensive insights into the living situation of Ukrainian refugees and examines key aspects of their living situation in Germany in the second half of 2023. The analyses relate to two arrival cohorts: On the one hand, Ukrainian refugees who arrived between February 24 and May 31, 2022, and on the other hand, those who arrived in Germany from June 1, 2022. The distinction between arrival cohorts allows changes in the composition of the group of Ukrainian refugees to be analyzed. The database thus enables differentiated insights into the development of the integration and living situation of this group in a variety of relevant areas.

The analysis of **family structures** shows that the group of Ukrainian refugees in the second half of 2023 is still predominantly made up of women, who now account for three quarters of adult refugees (Zinn et al., Chapter 3). Compared to the first few months after the start of the war, family structures changed during the second year of the war: The share of women with a partner in Germany almost doubled, while the number of single mothers fell from 36 to 30 percent in the first arrival cohort and stood at 21 percent in the second cohort. This development, which in turn is likely to have a positive impact on integration efforts and successes, could be due to the following factors: Family reunification from men to women, return of women with partners

abroad and increased joint entry of couples in the later arrival cohort. Of the Ukrainian women who have fled, around one in five has a partner abroad, and two fifths of these women have plans for their partner to join them. The plans for reunification correlate with the longer-term intentions to stay, which indicates that migration and family constellations will continue to develop dynamically, depending on further developments in Ukraine.

In the area of **childcare**, there is an increase in the childcare rate as the length of stay of Ukrainian children in Germany increases (Zinn et al., Chapter 3). Nevertheless, there is still a need, which could lead to distribution conflicts, particularly in view of the overall shortage of childcare resources. Alternative care models could be promoted and more transparent criteria for allocating places developed in order to utilise the existing potential and improve access opportunities. Public-private partnerships as well as non-profit and voluntary initiatives could also contribute to the optimal use of existing resources. Dialogue platforms between refugee and local families could strengthen mutual understanding and reduce social tensions.

The analyses on the **school integration** of Ukrainian children indicate that in some cases there are barriers that prevent children from attending a suitable type of school according to their level of performance and knowledge (Zinn et al., Chapter 3). Possible causes include the complexity of the German school system as well as situational and contextual school assignments, for example due to geographical proximity or the desire to place children with known peers. Compared to the overall student body, there are significantly more Ukrainian children in *Hauptschulen* or *Mittelschulen*. The difference is greater in *modernized* school systems than in *traditional* systems. On the other hand, far fewer Ukrainian children attend a comprehensive school in the *modernized* systems than all children in Germany. An inappropriate allocation can lead to over- or underachievement at school, which can impair learning success and lead to a change of school type. This type of break in the educational career can have a negative impact on long-term educational success (Gasper et al. 2012). It is worth noting that half of Ukrainian pupils take part in Ukrainian online lessons at the same time. On the one hand, this means a high time burden for the children, but it also reflects the complexity of the families' anticipated future options and their plans to return.

With regard to the **qualifications brought along by** adult Ukrainian refugees, a high level of education and training is evident, which has not yet been sufficiently utilised for the German labor market (Kosyakova et al., Chapter 4). Although around 75 percent have a vocational or university degree and almost 90 percent have extensive professional experience, only around a fifth have applied for **recognition of** their qualifications. The willingness to do so is higher among university graduates than among people with vocational qualifications and correlates strongly with the intention to stay. This underlines the importance of planning security for investing in one's own professional integration. The high existing need for support and advice (73 percent of refugees would like this) should be met by an improved range of information, for example through increased advice at job centers or more targeted information campaigns. In view of the widely varying duration of the procedure, ranging from four to over ten months, it would also appear necessary to optimize the recognition processes.

**The educational aspirations** of refugees are particularly high in the area of vocational training and studies, especially among younger people and those who have not completed vocational training (Kosyakova et al., Chapter 4). Nevertheless, actual **participation in education** is



comparatively low, which could be due to language barriers, among other things. Further promotion of language skills through targeted investment in (high-quality) language courses and the provision of comprehensive and targeted information services can help to better tap into the potential of well-educated Ukrainian refugees and sustainably promote their integration into the German labor market.

With regard to the **intentions** of Ukrainian refugees **to remain in** Germany, it can be stated that slightly more than half of Ukrainian refugees plan to stay in Germany permanently (Siegert and Kosyakova, Chapter 5). Among refugees who arrived later, these intentions are even more pronounced than among the earlier arrival cohort, probably also due to their somewhat different family structure. In addition, both the ongoing situation in Ukraine and the increasing integration in Germany are likely to have an influence on the intention to stay. For example, the ongoing fighting and the tense economic situation in Ukraine make it difficult to return soon. At the same time, factors such as improved German language skills, employment or corresponding aspirations, living together with the nuclear family as well as psychological well-being and a feeling of welcome encourage the desire to stay permanently.

The **housing situation** of Ukrainian refugees in the second half of 2023 is generally positive (Tanis, Chapter 6). The vast majority have found accommodation in private apartments and houses and are satisfied with their housing situation. However, it is becoming apparent, that certain groups, such as people who have moved to Germany later, single people or people without contact to Germans, are facing greater challenges in finding suitable housing. These developments should continue to be monitored and, if necessary, the authorities should provide even more support.

In the field of **health**, there are clear differences compared to the general population in Germany, especially in terms of mental health (Bartig et al., Chapter 7). Depressive symptoms and anxiety disorders are particularly prevalent among individuals without regular social contact and those who report having experienced discrimination. One notable finding is that more than one third of refugees with psychological symptoms do not perceive any need for treatment, which could indicate a lack of awareness of the problem or fear of stigmatization. In order to improve the healthcare situation, more emphasis should be placed on migration-sensitive and multilingual psychotherapeutic services, for example by integrating the expertise of psychosocial centers for refugees and victims of torture. Psychotherapeutic services should also include low-threshold offers that enable a general social exchange, including problem solving, without explicitly focusing on potentially stigmatized diagnoses. Group-based approaches and peer concepts have proven to be effective in this context (BAfF 2019). Beyond mental health, contact and access to the German healthcare system for Ukrainian refugees can be considered to be generally good. However, there are barriers to accessing and navigating the system, presumably due to its complexity in particular. In order to ensure needs-based care, initiatives to strengthen health literacy should be expanded. This could empower refugees to make more self-determined decisions about their healthcare. Systemic barriers, such as complex communication channels between service providers, could be reduced through the implementation of community health navigators (German Council of Economic Experts 2018).

With regard to the acquisition of **German language skills**, the data shows a generally high participation rate in integration courses (Eckhard, Chapter 8). For refugees who arrived later,

however, the somewhat delayed entry times indicate bottlenecks in the course system. Participation in integration courses proves to be one of the most important factors influencing German language skills and thus points to the relevance of the course or course attendance. Accordingly, the strong participation of Ukrainian refugees in integration courses is also reflected in the positive development of their German language skills. Many Ukrainian refugees also have a good command of English. This knowledge could play a bridging role in labor market integration if English is spoken in the working environment. However, it is clear that both the labor market and everyday life in Germany are more strongly influenced by the national language than in other countries (Kosyakova et al. 2024a), which underlines the importance of learning German. This is all the more true as certain groups have not yet been sufficiently reached by the course system: The expansion of childcare facilities could reduce the compatibility problems for women with young children. For refugees with health restrictions, the access thresholds should be lowered and specific offers, e.g. courses with slower progression, should be expanded. For refugees in employment, it is important to prevent them from neglecting their German language skills in favor of possible employment as helpers. Flexible course offerings such as the job-related vocational language courses, which are designed to be taken alongside work and are even more geared towards the workplace and employer, could serve as a model here.

Despite an increasing employment rate, there is still clear potential for development in the area of **labor market integration** (Gatskova et al., Chapter 9). The frequent employment below qualification level points to dequalification tendencies and structural barriers to integration. Greater willingness and flexibility on the part of employers, e.g. through more flexible contracts, part-time employment opportunities or entry-level internships, as well as increased efforts in the recognition of foreign professional qualifications could make better use of the existing potential. A reduction in bureaucracy and improved cooperation between authorities as well as simplified access to official services - supported by digitalization - would also support the integration process. As the majority of refugees are women - many of them with children - the compatibility of family and career is particularly important. An expanded range of childcare services with childcare hours adapted to full-time jobs as well as more flexible or childcare-integrated integration courses could significantly promote the labor market integration of this group by adapting course times to childcare. In addition, language acquisition is a key factor in gaining employment, which is why intensifying and accelerating language support through early access to language courses could significantly facilitate the integration of refugees. In addition, the existing English language skills of many refugees should be used more as a bridge to labor market integration. Promoting more intensive contact with the local population (e.g. through internships, mentoring programs, club activities or regional initiatives) could not only support language acquisition, but also open up informal job placement channels. The further promotion of employment for people seeking protection from Ukraine therefore remains an important goal, even if the economic situation in Germany appears to be deteriorating. Successful integration into the labor market can make an important contribution to alleviating the shortage of skilled workers in various sectors and offers those affected greater security and more predictable future prospects.

**Overall**, the analyses of the living situation of Ukrainian refugees in Germany in the second half of 2023 show progress in integration in many areas since their arrival, but also highlight the need

for further action. More than half of the refugees are now planning to stay in Germany permanently - a trend that is not only reinforced by the ongoing fighting in Ukraine, but is also encouraged by their increasing integration and rootedness in Germany. In view of demographic change and the need for skilled workers in Germany, the high level of education that Ukrainian refugees bring with them and their pronounced willingness to integrate represent an opportunity for both sides.

In principle, however, the living situation of Ukrainian refugees in Germany remains characterized by considerable uncertainty despite significant progress in integration, which is also reflected in the polarized distribution of intentions to stay. On the one hand, the uncertainty concerns the further development of the legal residence situation in Germany, while at the same time more and more Ukrainian refugees are finding a home in Germany as the war continues and their integration and social participation in Germany is progressing. On the other hand, the current situation in Ukraine and its further development creates great uncertainty regarding the intention to stay and the feasibility of any plans to return. This uncertainty could intensify in light of current geopolitical developments, particularly with regard to the change of government in the USA in January 2025 and its potential impact on international support for Ukraine. At the same time, other refugee constellations show that the political discussion about the prospects of staying and returning can change over time and it may not be possible to realize the desire to stay.

As long as the war continues, political decision-makers are therefore called upon to create framework conditions that offer refugees secure prospects for their lives and enable them to realize their individual life plans. The extension of temporary protection until March 2026 offers refugees a certain degree of security under residence law. This should be used to further address the identified challenges in a targeted manner. Priority areas of action include improving access to childcare and education, simplifying recognition procedures for foreign qualifications, acquiring further qualifications and promoting labor market integration that is appropriate to the qualifications, in particular through target group-specific language and integration offers.

How the legal residence situation will develop after a possible end to the war and to what extent this will change and realize individual intentions to stay and return remains uncertain at present. This depends largely on the duration and outcome of the war, the political and economic situation in Ukraine and the extent to which skills and experience acquired in Germany can be used profitably to stabilize and rebuild Ukraine. Living conditions and individual decisions play a central role here. Ultimately, a decision to stay and return is always an individual matter in addition to the legal framework and should be respected accordingly and - as far as possible - supported in order to enable the refugees to shape their lives for the future both in Germany and in Ukraine.

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# Imprint

## **IAB Research Report 5|2025en**

### **Publication date**

August 4, 2025

### **Publisher**

Institute for Employment Research  
of the Federal Employment Agency  
Regensburger Street 104  
90478 Nuremberg

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### **Website**

<https://iab.de>

### **ISSN**

2195-2655

### **DOI**

[10.48720/IAB.FB.2505en](https://doi.org/10.48720/IAB.FB.2505en)

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