

2009 - 2011 *Vocational Rehabilitation of Refugees*

Project leader, funded by Tiroler Wissenschaftsfonds

The project aimed at testing a series of hypotheses with respect to factors promoting or hindering vocational rehabilitation of refugees.

We expected that a lower degree of collectivist values, a lower degree of clinical and especially post-traumatic symptoms, a lower age, a higher level of education and knowledge of German would go along with improved chances for vocational rehabilitation in refugees. Moreover we expected that a higher amount of perceived social support and self-efficacy as well as a longer duration of stay in Austria would have beneficial effects. In addition, a number of socio-demographic variables were tested as possible predictors.

We collected questionnaires from a total of N = 83 refugees in Austria (41 men and 34 women, eight without stating their gender) with an average age of 34.01 years (s = 10.04, range 17 to 50 years). Forty-two refugees were recruited from educational institutions, 41 others (who did not take part in courses) from social security offices. The sample comprised 34 persons from Chechnya, 16 from Afghanistan, ten from African states, ten from former communist countries apart from Chechnya and 13 persons from other countries.

By binary logistic regression we tested a model which comprised the socio-demographic variables "taking part in a course" vs. not doing so, age, gender, duration of stay in Austria, country of origin, years of schooling and duration of working experience in Austria as independent variables and job status as the dependent variable. The variables

- **taking part in a course** vs. not doing so
- a **shorter duration of stay** in Austria, and
- a **longer duration of work experience** in Austria

were significant predictors of having a job, whereas **the other variables did not contribute significantly to the prediction**. In a second binary logistic regression model, the **test scores** obtained by questionnaires were tested as possible predictors of job status, but, contrary to expectations, were **not significant**.

This result confirms **the importance of courses and comparable educational activities for refugees' vocational rehabilitation**. It also points to the **importance of gaining work experience** in the host country. If necessary, this should be supported by job-creation schemes financed by public funding.

The sample cannot be considered as "representative" for the entire Austrian refugee population, as it only comprised participants who (at the start of the study) were out of employment, many of them since long periods of time. The results can be considered as meaningful, however, for other unemployed refugees in Austria.