



Integrating refugees and other immigrants into the labour market

Key findings from OECD work

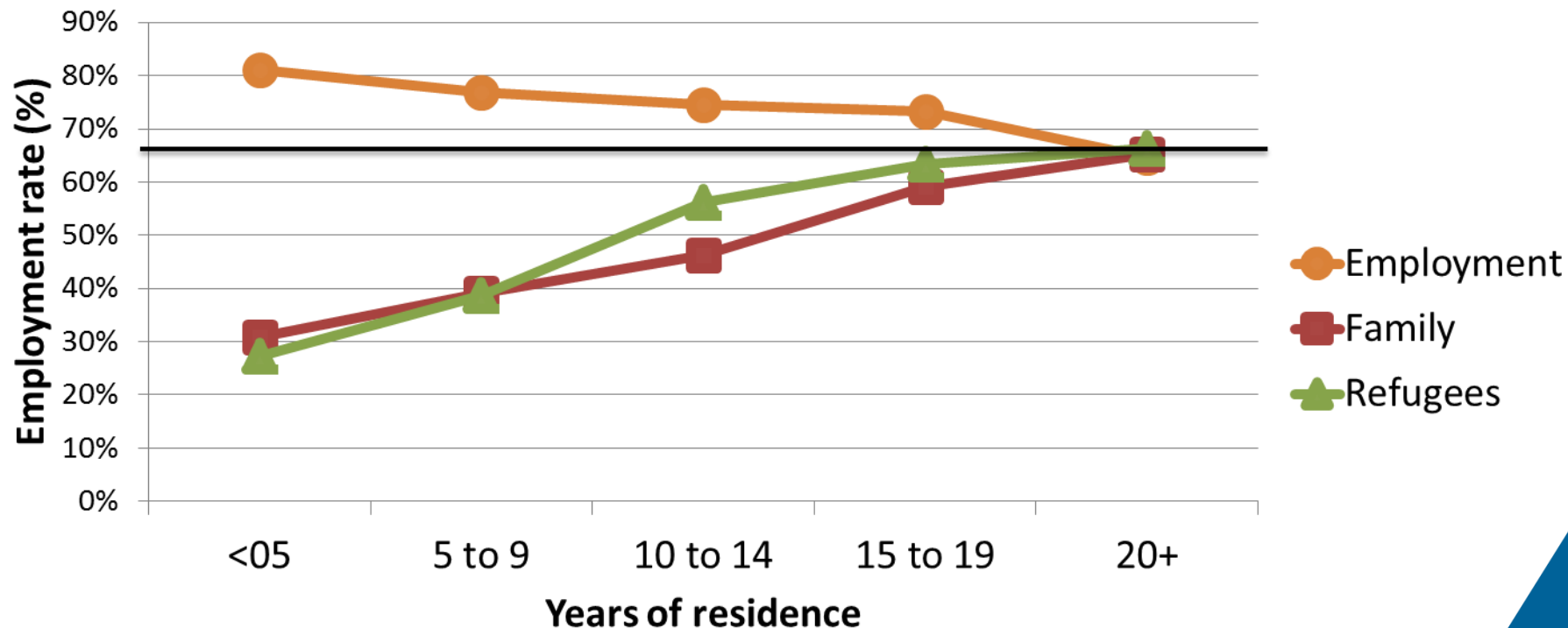
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Labour market integration of refugees takes time and requires active support

Employment rate by immigrant categories and duration of stay in European OECD countries, 2014

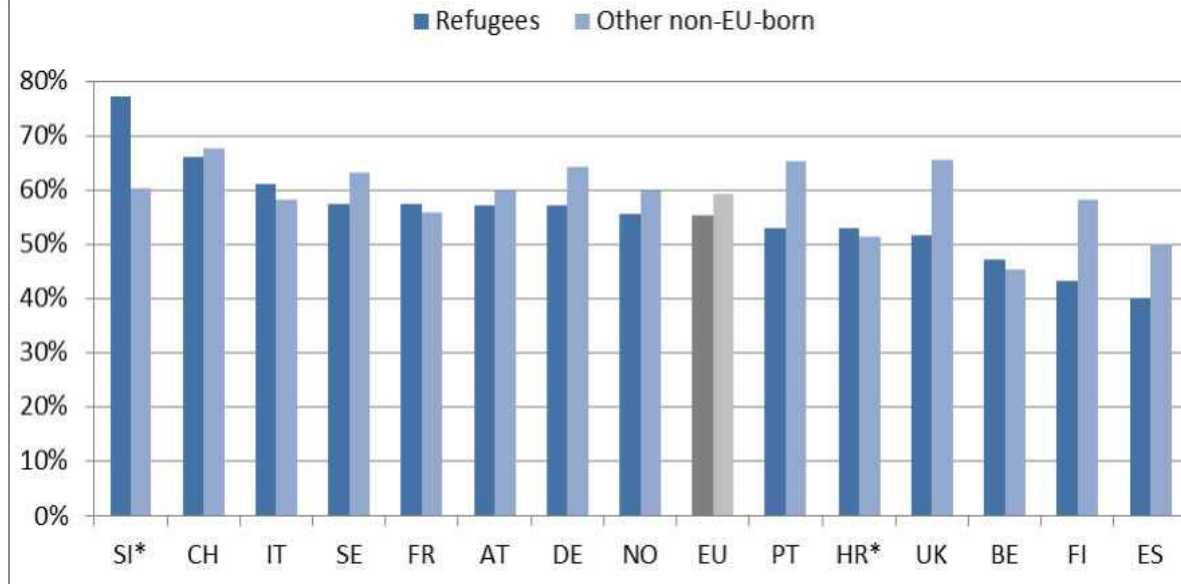
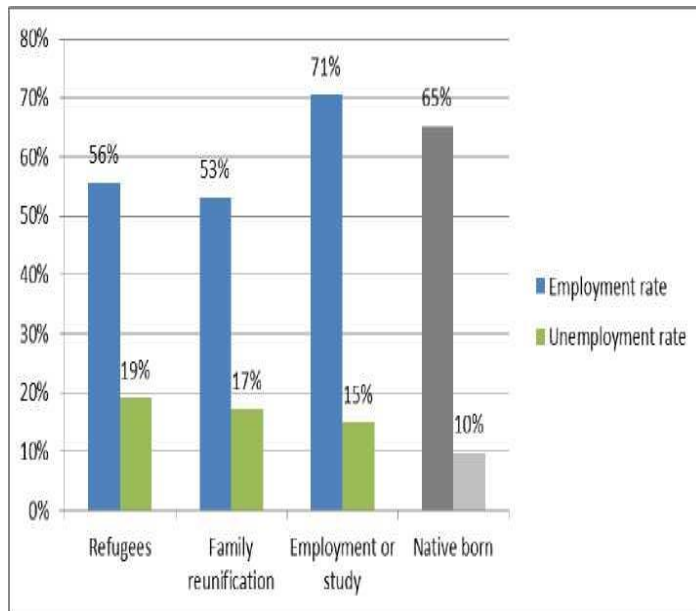


Source : EU-OECD (2016), *How are refugees faring on the labour market in Europe? A first evaluation based on the 2014 EU labour force survey ad hoc module*, DG EMPL Working Paper 1/2016.



Refugees have low labour market outcomes compared to other migrant groups

Employment rate of refugees, other non-EU born and native-born in the European Union, 2014

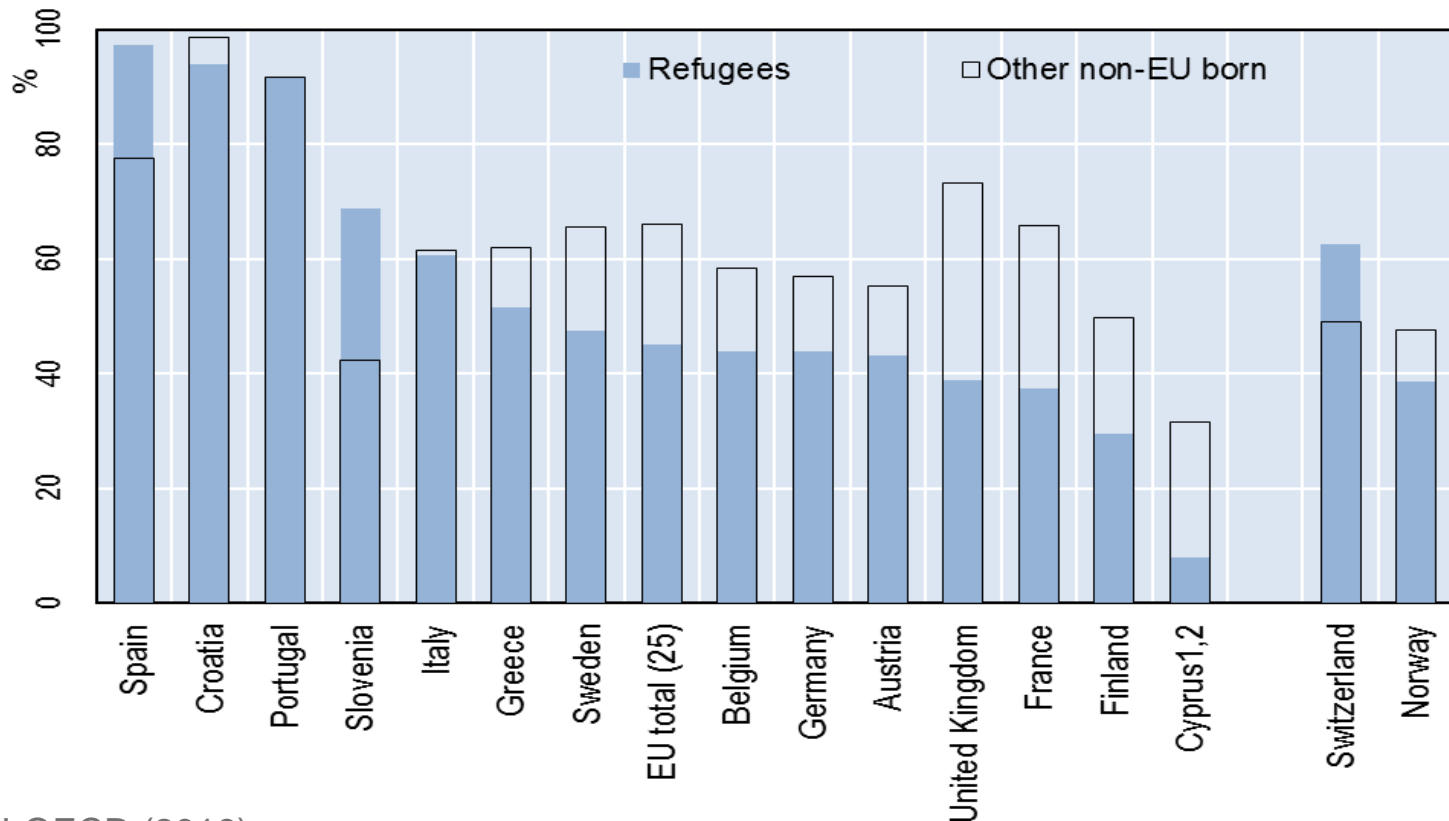


Source : EU-OECD (2016).



This holds also for language acquisition

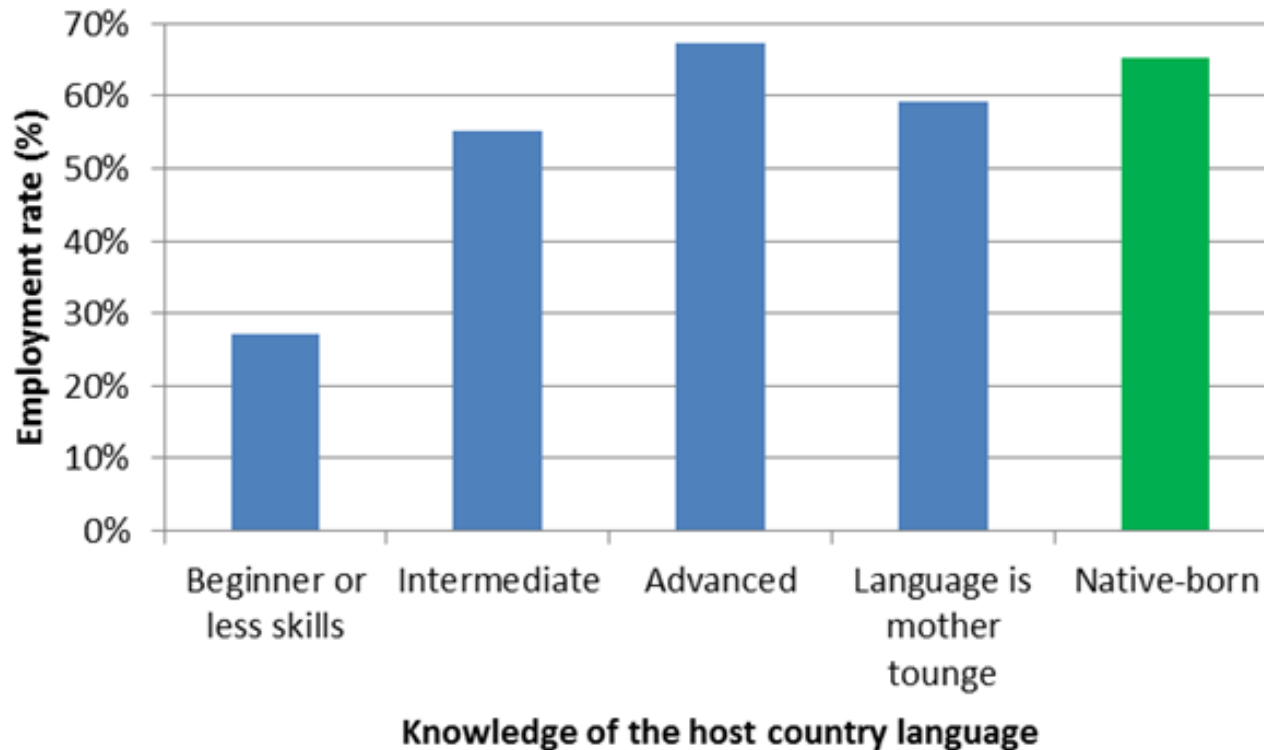
Share of refugees and other non-EU born who report having at least advanced knowledge of the host-country language, 15-64, 2014



Source : EU-OECD (2016).



Intermediate language skills give a big boost to employment chances of refugees...



Source : EU-OECD (2016), *How are refugees faring on the labour market in Europe? A first evaluation based on the 2014 EU labour force survey ad hoc module*, DG EMPL Working Paper 1/2016.



«Making integration work» for refugees:

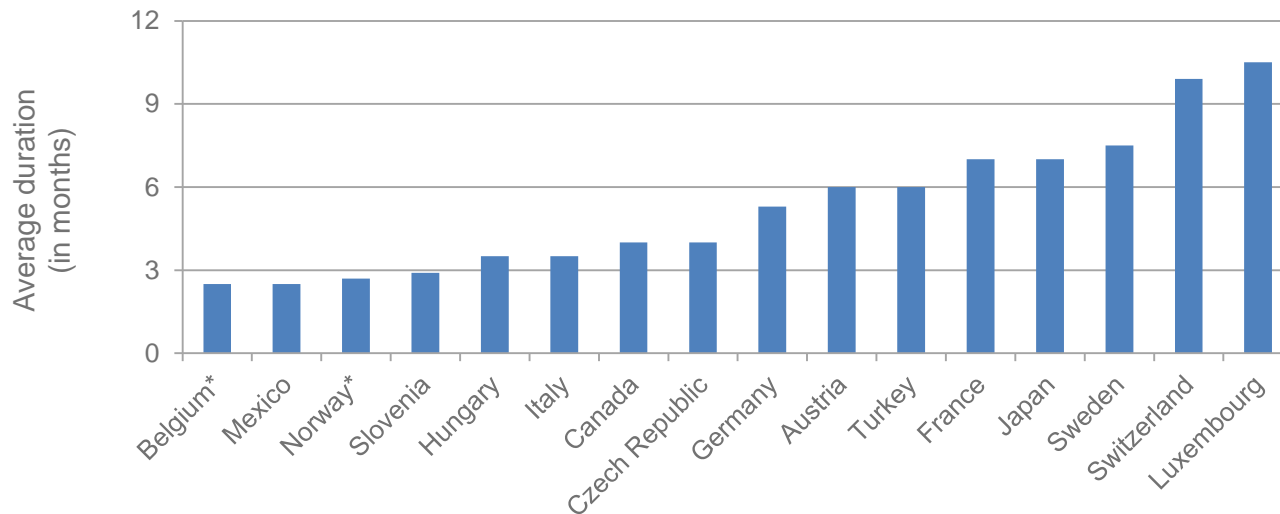
Key lessons from OECD country reviews



Begin activation and integration services as soon as possible for humanitarian migrants and asylum seekers with high prospects to remain

- Early intervention is crucial for future integration outcomes
- Where asylum procedures are lengthy, groups with high probability to remain may benefit from up-front support – including language and job-preparation training, and skills assessment

Average duration of the asylum procedure until first instance decision, selected OECD countries, 2015 or latest available year



* For certain groups

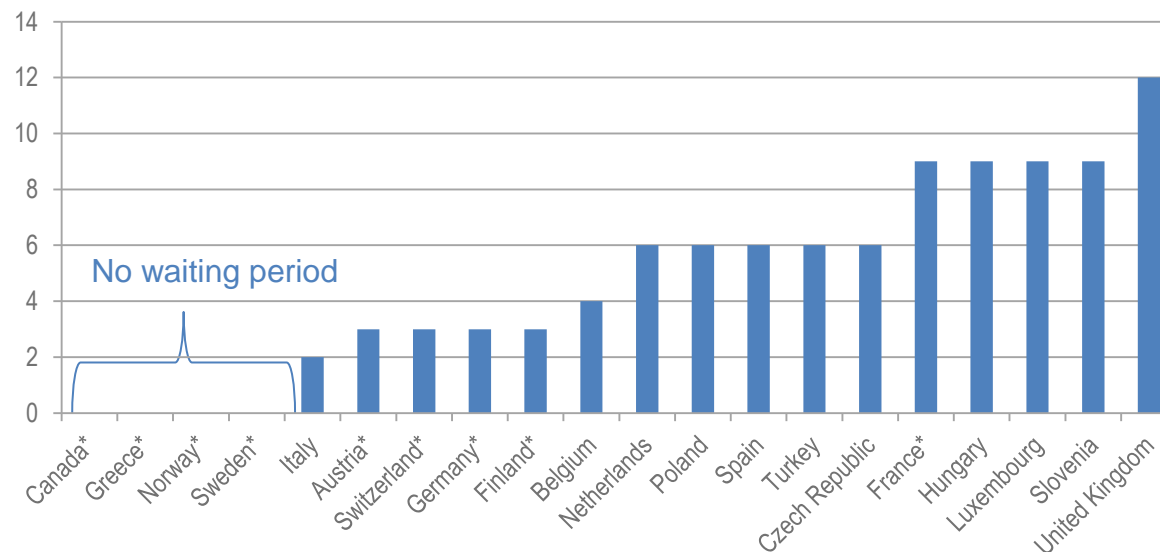
Sources: Processing times: OECD Questionnaire on the Integration of Humanitarian Migrants 2015; Swedish Migration Board



Facilitate labour market access for asylum seekers with high prospects to remain

- Early labour market entry is a key predictor for integration outcomes in the long-run
- Making labour market access subject to a waiting period and certain conditions helps preventing abuse of the asylum channel

Most favorable waiting periods for labour market access for asylum seekers in selected OECD countries, 2015 (in months)



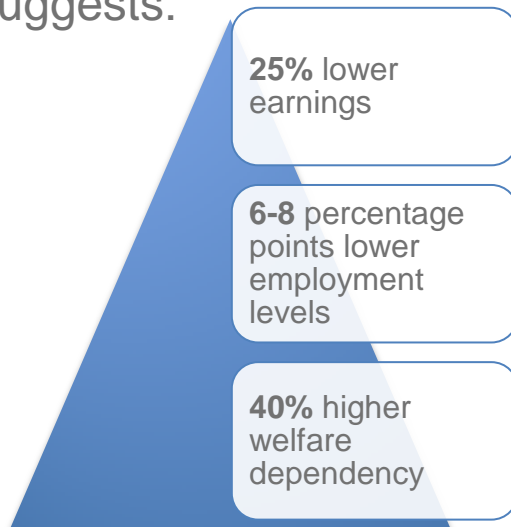
* Under certain conditions

Source: OECD Questionnaire on the Integration of Humanitarian Migrants, 2015



Factor employment prospects into dispersal policies

- Where humanitarian migrants cannot choose their place of residence, policies usually aim at an *equal 'dispersal' across the country* – often paying little attention to employment
- But the costs for neglecting employment-related aspects are high
- Evidence from Sweden suggests:



To be effective, dispersal policies ideally should consider:

- ✓ skills profile of refugees
- ✓ local job vacancies
- ✓ local labour market conditions
- ✓ specific shortages
- ✓ avoid segregation

... eight years after dispersal for refugees subject to a housing-led dispersal policy (Edin et al. 2004)



Record and assess humanitarian migrants' foreign qualifications, work experience and skills; provide for alternative assessment methods where documentation is missing

- Refugees' qualifications and skills are often undervalued due to
 - Different education and training contexts in origin countries
 - Lack of documentation
 - No access to / awareness about existing recognition mechanisms
 - Vocational skills acquired through non-formal learning
- Several countries assess refugees' skills, but few do so for asylum seekers
- Need for systematic assessment and adjusted recognition procedures

Norway



- Academic skills of refugees without verifiable documentation of their qualifications are assessed through expert committees.
- Municipalities use a three-level skills grid to assign refugees to language training.

The Netherlands



- The Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum seekers maps refugees' skills as soon as they have obtained a residence permit. Alternative assessment for persons without documentation is done jointly with competent authorities, refugee organisations and business communities.

Germany

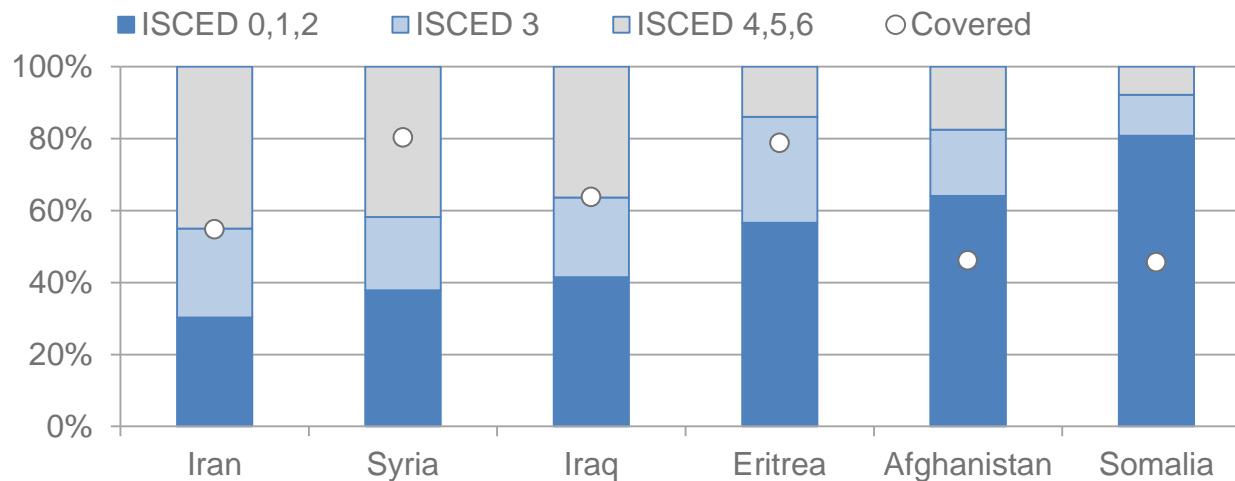


- Case workers systematically assess skills of asylum seekers in reception facilities under the 'Early Intervention' programme
- Skills of humanitarian migrants with no or insufficient documentation of qualifications are assessed through 'qualification analysis' on the basis of work samples.



Account for the large skills diversity of humanitarian migrants and develop tailor-made approaches

Education level of new immigrants aged 16-74 in Sweden by latest country of residence, 2015



Source: Statistics Sweden, 2016

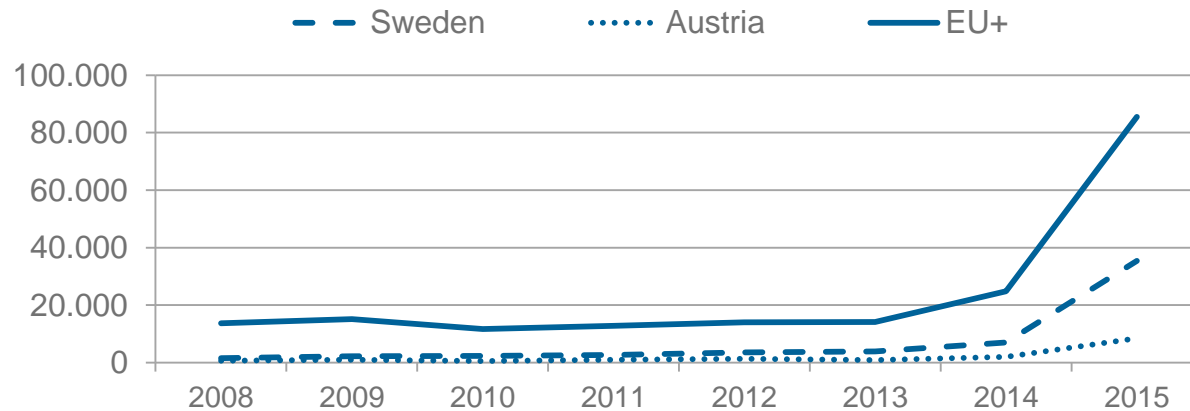
- Tailor-made integration programmes ideally include:

- *Flexible* durations of integration programmes
- *Modular* language training
- *Targeted* courses for specific groups like illiterate, high educated and mothers
- *On-the-job* training



Develop support programs specific to unaccompanied minors who arrive past the age of compulsory schooling

Evolution of the number of unaccompanied minors in Austria, EU and Sweden



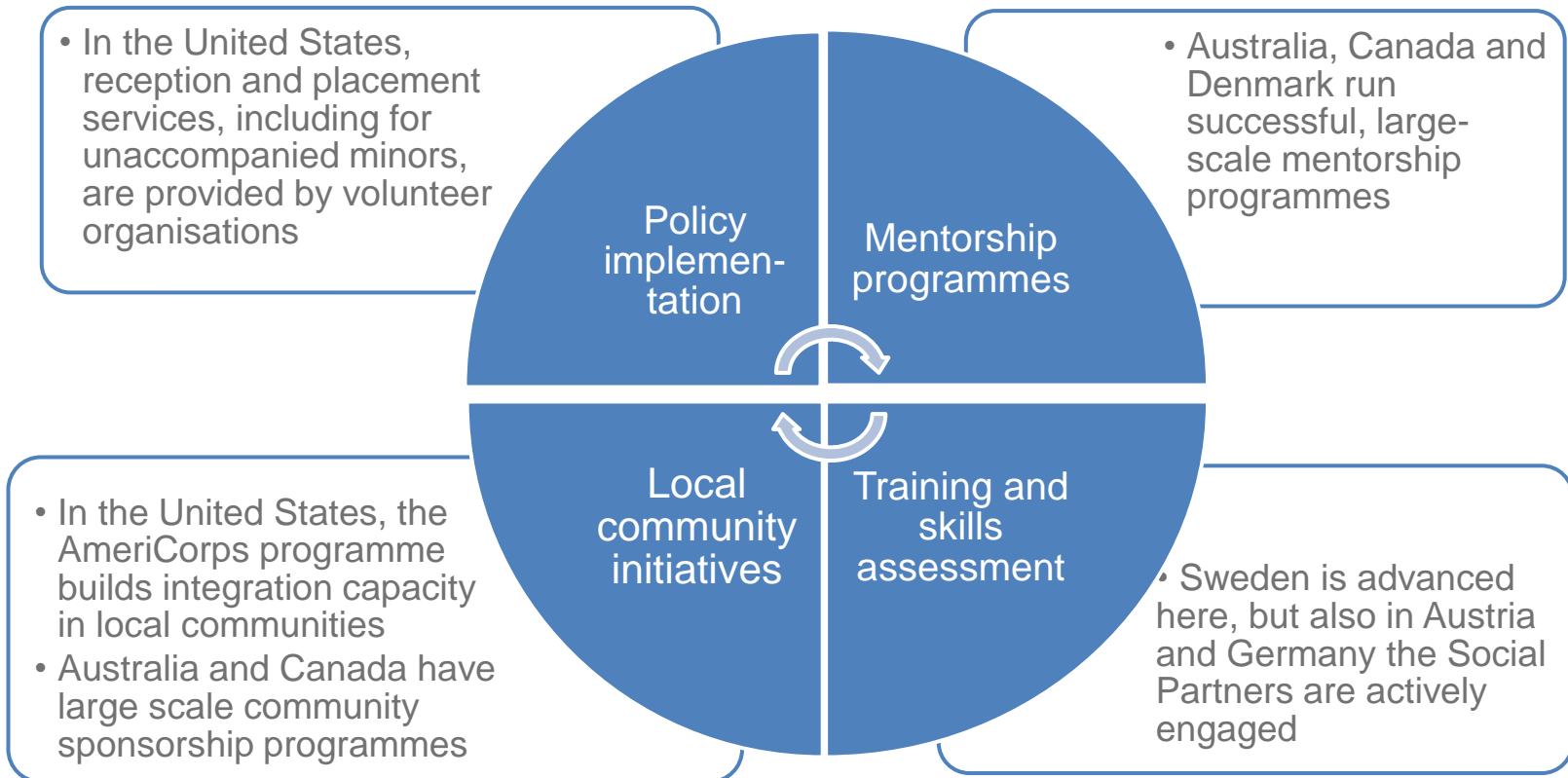
Sources: Statistics Sweden ; Austrian Ministry of the Interior; Eurostat

- Vulnerable group requiring specific (and often expensive) support
- Many arrive with little prior tuition at the end of obligatory schooling but are eager to enter the labour market immediately
- Schools should offer targeted catch-up programmes and language support preparing UAMs for further education or labour market entry; ideally complemented by case workers (e.g. SchlauSchule in Munich or Thor Heyerdahl School in Norway)



Build on civil society to integrate humanitarian migrants

- Civil society creates the conditions conducive to the social and labour market integration of refugees
- It steps in where public policy does not tread or cannot be upscaled sufficiently or quickly enough.





Promote equal access to integration services to humanitarian migrants across the country

- Integration primarily takes place at the local level
- Where standards are uneven, integration prospects depend not only on the refugee's characteristics but also on the area of settlement rather than
- To limit differences, countries should

- *build and exchange* expertise in municipalities

- *provide* adequate financial support and set incentives right

- *pool* resources

- *allow* for some specialisation

- *implement* minimum standards

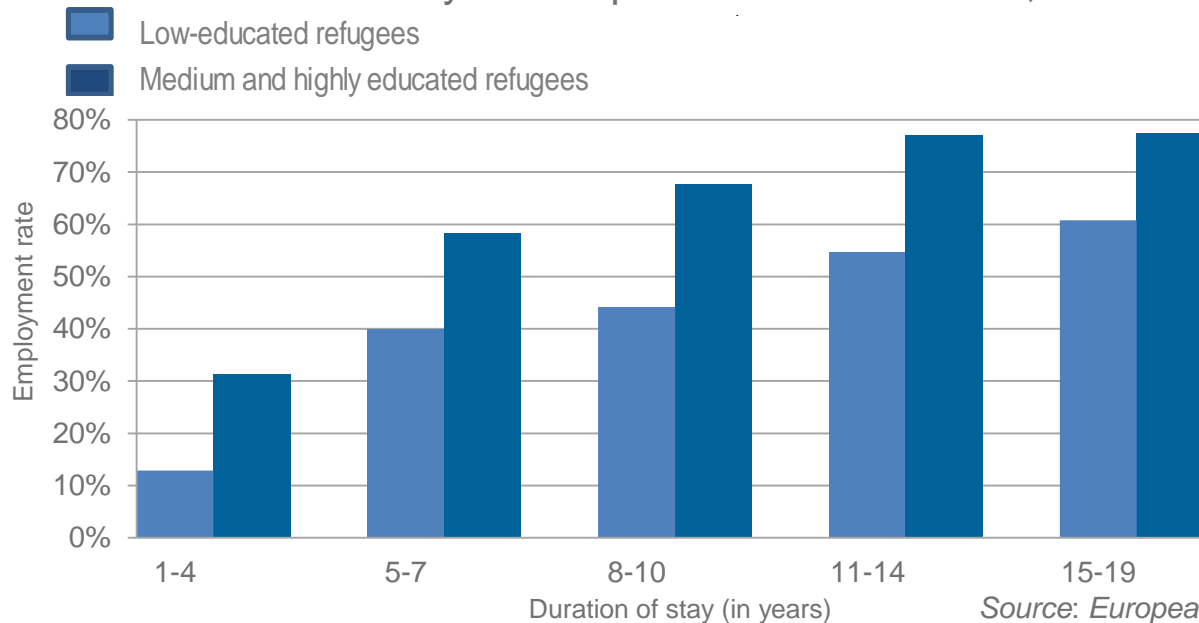
- *monitor* how municipalities live up to these

- Denmark developed a benchmarking system to monitor the effectiveness municipal integration measures; Switzerland has a binding federal framework with cantonal adaptations



Acknowledge that integration of very low educated humanitarian migrants requires long-term training and support

Employment rate of humanitarian migrants by level of education and duration of stay in European OECD countries, 2008



- Reaching the minimum standards of what is needed to be employable may take several years - but this investment will pay off in the long run
 - Australia, Denmark and Norway have longer introduction programmes for very low-educated refugees
- Support needs to extend beyond training to help refugees enter employment



Conclusion:

Labour market integration as an investment

- Although the majority of refugees are in employment, much potential remains unused
- Especially for low-educated refugees, ensuring long-term employability and integration often entails large costs
 - and here integration must be viewed as an investment:
 - *Focus on early intervention (for new arrivals and for children)*
 - *Pursue policies where the pay-off is not immediate (unemployed or inactive; women with children; very low-educated refugees)*
 - *Make access to integration offers dependent on settlement prospects and needs*



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