



MASTER'S FINAL THESIS

Young Refugees' Integration Experiences in Barcelona

Author:

AHMAD RASHID ATA

Supervisor:

RAFAEL MERINO

July 5, 2019



Universitat
Pompeu Fabra
Barcelona



UNIVERSITAT ROVIRA I VIRGILI



UNIVERSITAT DE
BARCELONA

UAB
Universitat Autònoma
de Barcelona

Acknowledgment

I would like to express my gratitude to everyone who supported me throughout the course of MIJS. I am thankful to my supervisor Dr. Rafael Merino for his constant support and kind supervision during my master thesis, Dr. Pere Soler Maso to encourage and to provide me the opportunity to do this master course.

My parents, who have always supported me with love and understanding. Without them, I could never have reached this level.

Finally, a special thanks to all of my classmates, especially Cindy Heredia Silva, Pablo Cortez, Patricia Bagan, María José Vera, and Merlí García for being wonderful friends and helping me throughout this course.

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
1.1. Problem Statement.....	1
1.2. Spain’s Response to the World Refugee Crisis.....	2
1.3. Objective & Research Questions	3
2. Literature Review	4
2.1. Defining Refugee	4
2.2. Defining Youth.....	5
2.3. Laws & Policies for Refugees.....	5
1. International Laws.....	5
2. Laws in Spain.....	6
2.4. Defining Integration	7
2.5. Integration Policy in Spain.....	8
2.6. Young Refugees & Asylum Seekers	11
3. Methodology.....	13
3.1. Research Method	13
3.2. Limitations	13
3.3. Questionnaire Construction.....	14
3.4. Participants	14
1. Jamal	15
2. Max	17
3. Zaid.....	18
4. Sarah	19
3.5. Data Collection & Data Analysis.....	21
4. Findings.....	24
4.1. The First Few Months of Arrival	24

4.2. Barriers to Access the Social Services.....	26
4.3. Education, Employment & Housing.....	28
4.4. Social Connection	30
4.5. Expectations & Hopes	31
4.6. Social Assistance	33
4.6.1. The UB Solidarity Foundation.....	33
4.6.2. ACATHI	34
5. Conclusions & Recommendations	35
5.6. Suggestions for future research	38
References	39
Appendix	44
Interviews	44
1. Jamal	44
2. Max	48
3. Zaid.....	51
4. Sarah	56

Introduction

1.1. Problem Statement

Since 2013, war, conflict and human rights violations have one of the main factors to the displacement of millions of people from one place to another place. For many people, European Union has been the first preferred destinations as a location to seek a better and peaceful life, a rapid increase in the number of migrants and asylum seekers entering Europe by the end of 2014. In 2015, more than two million asylum applications were lodged in 38 European countries, nearly three times as many as in 2014, which was 709,800 (UNHCR 2016). Since then issues concerning migrants, refugees and asylum seekers have become a very critical and sensitive topic among the governments and among the researchers to come up with a wider understanding for the issues, including an effective solution for the process of their adoption in the host country, because a refugee, regardless of a location or internal or external causes, have some certain struggles to adjust and adapt to new surroundings and circumstances (Paludan, 1981).

In Spain, specifically in Barcelona, for asylum seekers, the challenges and difficulties in terms of integration are quite more than those who have already been granted refugee status, but still the range of experiences that newcomers, asylum seekers, and refugees experience are very similar and have the same lasting impact on their cognitive, physical and psychosocial development. In most cases, for them the thoughts of not being able to go back home, be with their friends and other family members, and the worst, to face an uncertain future act as a traumatic event. The main problem that this study found is that refugees and asylum seekers are having difficulties to access to information that could lead them to a faster integration into society. As a result, for refugees the first few months of their arrival in Barcelona are the are very stressful, but with a little hope and effort, they seek for a positive outcome, because for them, this is more like gambling on their lives which can bring a very positive change

for them and their families, and at the same time it can lead to a negative impact on their lives.

1.2. Spain's Response to the World Refugee Crisis

According to UNHCR (2018) report in 2018, almost 70.8 million individuals were forcibly displaced worldwide as a result of persecution, conflict, violence, or human rights violations, which alone within 2018, there were 1.7 million new claims submitted by asylum-seekers.

For the same year, in 2018, according to CEAR (Spanish Refugee Aid Commission), the number of asylum applications rose to 54,065, almost twice the number of applicants in 2017. Among 54,065 applicants, 31,010 were men and 23,055 were women, while the same as the year 2017, in 2018, again most of the applicants (19,280) were from Venezuela. In second are Colombian applicants (8,650) and third place Syrians (2,775) respectively (Figure 1).

At the same time, a study by the Pew Research Center (figure 2) shows that majority of people in European countries support the idea of taking in refugees who are forced to leave their home due to violence and war. Notably, Spain has the highest rate of welcoming refugees, making Spain the top country among the other

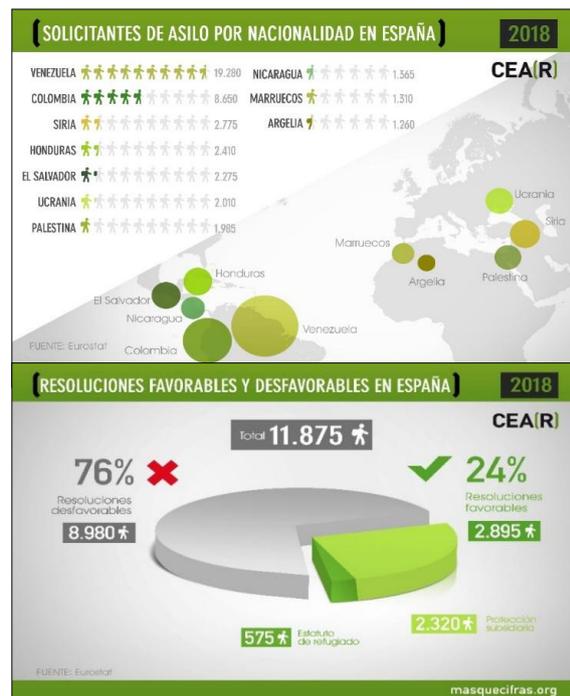


Figure 1: Main nationalities of asylum seekers in Spain in 2018. Infographic of the CEAR study 'More than figures'.

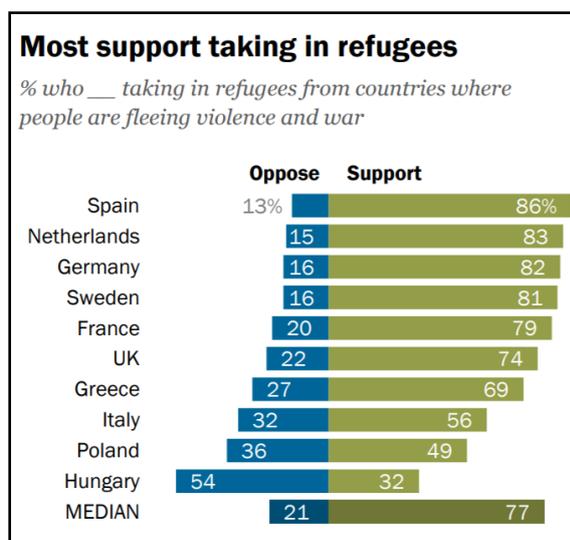


Figure 2: PEW Spring 2018 Global Attitudes Survey. Q53a

nations to show willingness to find humanitarian solutions to the refugee crisis, and in 2018 in response to the migratory challenges faced by Spain, the European Union Commission awarded 25.5 million was awarded to Spain's Ministry of Employment and Social Security, Ministry of interior and the Spanish Red Cross to provide healthcare, food, and shelter for the refugees and migrants, but this doesn't mean that there has been an increase in acceptance of asylum applications than before, because according to CEAR, in 2018 among 54,065, the numbers of decisions on asylum applications were 11,875, which only 575 of them were granted the refugee status, 8,980 of the applicants got a negative reply, and 2,320 of the applicants were able to attain subsidiary protection (Figure 4). Compare to 2017, the percentage of favorably resolved petitions still is still low, and only one in four is accepted, and it's a long procedure that involves many steps and procedures until the decision for the asylum applications is taken.

1.3. Objective & Research Questions

The objective of this study is to bring out the experiences of some of the refugees and asylum seekers in Barcelona and the results are found through the usage of the in-depth interviews with the young refugees and asylum seekers, ages ranged from 23 - 27 years old aiming to seek answers for the following questions:

What are some of the young refugees' integration experiences in Barcelona?

In addition to research, this study provides a brief detail about some of the social assistance available for refugees and asylum seekers in Barcelona, including the asylum application procedure which this information was gathered from talking with two social workers.

2. Literature Review

After having introduced the objective and the research questions of the study, this chapter aims provide a general overview of some of the recent reports by CEAR (Spanish Refugee Aid Commission) and SAIER (Service for Assistance to Immigrants, Migrants and Refugees), which CEAR is a non-governmental organization that works in national level to take necessary action to make the process of refugee integration effective through access to education, employment, and health, and make legal regulations such as the regulation of the Asylum Law or the law that regulates the condition of stateless persons.

In addition, SAIER (Service for Assistance to Immigrants, Migrants, and Refugees) a service provided by Municipality of Barcelona to offer information and advice on immigration, refuge, emigration and voluntary return to any citizen who lives in Barcelona. Since one of the main focus this study the refugee integration process, then it can be a support factor to mention about the existing international and Spain national laws and policies concerning Social Rights of the Refugees and Asylum-seekers. Furthermore, this chapter also includes seeking what refugee, youth and especially what does integration mean in the Spanish context. Thus, in order to extract the definition of integration, the researcher focused on the studies done by Ager and Strang (2008), and Castles, Korac, Vasta, and Vertovec (2001) on the definition of integration.

2.1. Defining Refugee

Though, many scholars agree that there is no definition of refugee under international law except that given in the Refugee Convention (William, 2011). As well, it seems there is a big debate going on who is a refugee because the refugee label blends many categories of everyday usage, law, and social science (Hamlin 2017). Thus, the dynamic way that the UNHCR Refugee Convention (1951) interpreted refugee and is appropriate for defining a refugee in this study, as quoted below:

"A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee his or her country for being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it".

2.2. Defining Youth

The concept of youth has been a bit complex for the academics to define as it covers different areas such as during the period of youth, individuals adapt to different identities. These identities have an impact on academics understanding of the youth. At this paper the researcher, our focus on young refugees will be based on the definition that youth can be defined in two ways: the first definition is that youth is best understood as a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood's independence.

The second definition based on Eurostat (2015) which is mainly for statistical purposes, that youth are those people between the ages of 15 and 29 years with the acknowledgment that it overlaps the legal definition which differentiates adults and non-adults in many countries because the age period of youth is different in some countries and depends on circumstances, especially with a country's demographic,, economic and socio-cultural situation.

2.3. Laws & Policies for Refugees

1. International Laws

The rights of refugees, migrants, and asylum-seekers are laid down by the Refugee Convention (1951), along together with the New York Protocol (1967). These are considered as the main source in clarifying the rights of refugees and the obligations of the 148 States to protection for the people, and taking into notice that the articles 1[A]2 and 1[F] of the Refugee Convention (1951) are

specifically stated for the protection of refugee children and migrant children. As they are especially vulnerable to xenophobia, abuse, sexual exploitation, and lack of access to social services. All of these laws operate with international human rights law, starting with the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and with international humanitarian law as listed below;

- The UN Refugee Convention (1951), which protects refugees from being returned to countries where they risk being persecuted and sets out the rights of individuals who are granted asylum and the responsibilities of nations that grant asylum.
- The UN General Assembly (1948), Universal Declaration of Human Rights [Article 14], which states that each individual has the right to seek and enjoy asylum from persecution and conflict in other countries.
- The Migrant Workers Convention (1990), sets the rights of all migrant workers and members of their families.
- Regional Refugee law instruments (including 1969 OAU Convention, 1984 Cartagena Declaration, Common European Asylum System and Dublin Regulation) are legal instruments governing refugee protection and build an international scope of the refugee problem and the importance of international solidarity and cooperation in trying to resolve them.

2. Laws in Spain

In Spain, the Spanish Constitution provides that the terms under which citizens from other countries and stateless persons may enjoy the right to asylum or refugee in Spain will be determined by law. Through its Law of Asylum (Law 12/2009) and this law states the rights for refugees to not to be expelled, to receive information, to obtain work and residence permission, to get an ID, to have access to employment, education and health public services, to get training, to have freedom of movement, to take part in social integration programs and to family reunification. The Law applies to those who are qualified

as refugees under the definition provided by the 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol.

2.4. Defining Integration

There is significant research on the term “integration” that recently has been greatly used in the literature concerning the refugees (Castles et al, 2001; Phillimore, 2011; Moreira & Baeninger, 2010). It is commonly understood as a long-term and two-way process of adaption, and in some cases, the definition of “integration” or how it should be processed can be very different from one country to another. One research has identified this process is being influenced by the institutional structure that is consist of rules and requirements of the receiving society, and at the same time, it depends on the personal capacities of the refugees to adapt to new surroundings and move towards independence and self-sufficiency (Valtonen, 2004).

However, there are two main publications about the definition of refugee integration one written by Ager and Strang (2008) and the other is Castles, Korac, Vasta, and Vertovec (2002).

Ager and Strang see housing; employment; education; and health as the main domains that are widely recognized as critical factors of integration process (figure 3), while rights and citizenship refers to the normative principles which define what is expected from the host country and from other members of communities, and these are the ground principles of integration process



Figure 3: Ager and Strang Indicators of Integration Framework (2004)

because they determine the conditions under which refugees can be allowed to naturalize.

Castles, Korac, Vasta, and Vertovec (2002) definition of integration is developed based on their project “Integration: Mapping the Field,” which was designed to provide an overview of researches in the area of immigrant and refugee integration in the UK that can be used for policy development. Castles et al. (2002) argue that “Integration is a two-way process: it requires adaptation on the part of the newcomer but also by the host society.” (p. 113). They also say that “Successful integration can only take place if the host society provides access to jobs and services and acceptance of the immigrants in social interaction.”

2.5. Integration Policy in Spain

The Organic Law 4/2000, of the 11th of January, the Rights and Liberties of Foreigners (Immigrants & Refugees) is the first legal measure that introduced immigrant and refugee integration into the political agenda in Spain, and it refers to a duty of the public authorities to promote the participation of reunited family members in sociocultural and linguistic integration programs, where paragraph 1 of article 3 is specifically established as general interpretive criteria that foreign nationals are granted to exercise the right that it recognizes them this Law under conditions of equality with the Spaniards.

Then, the Law 2/2009 (Title IV, reforming Law 4/2000) was introduced as a framework of multi-level governance of migration based on cooperation between central administration institutions, local governments, and civil society, and in this law a Strategic Plan for Citizenship on Citizenship and Integration 2011-2014 was represented as the main political tool to strengthen social cohesion, based on the consensus of all the main actors implicated in integration management in Spain.

In 2018, the Spanish Secretary of State for Migration, Consuelo Rumí, and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, together with the Basque

Government, have agreed to implement a pilot project on Community Sponsorship for the Reception and Integration of Refugees in the first half of 2019. This program will give individuals, groups or organizations the opportunity to provide financial, emotional and integration support to people fleeing war and persecution, will strengthen Spain's response to the global refugee crisis, which can be said that in Spanish policy, integration is viewed as Castles et al. (2002) sees integration is a two-way process: it requires adaptation on the part of the newcomer but also by the host society (p. 113). However, these policies don't really guarantee a positive response on migrants, refugees and asylum seekers acceptance procedure. There are many other major issues such as economic crisis, the rise of unemployment and the cultural threat that lead to political debates on policies for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. It doesn't mean that Spain had been the same as some of the European countries where the backlash against migrants, refugees and asylum seekers are completely shifting to the right. Many reports show that Spain had carried out a generous policy when granting social rights for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in the past, but recently, there has been a tension arising over the migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, and their integration in Spain. As in June 2018, the United Nations reported that June 2018 was a record month for illegal migration to Spain, which in total, 17,781 illegal migrants arrived in Spain during the first six months of 2018, as a result, it caused a worrying trend at government, and despite that, Spain still has offered its humanitarian support by rescuing the NGO boat carrying 629 migrants was blocked from docking in Italy and Malta (DW, 2018). Within that year, nearly 800 people have died while trying to cross the Mediterranean, according to the International Organization for Migration. Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said to a newspaper, "There cannot be a unilateral response. With the Aquarius, we made a gesture of solidarity but a humanitarian crisis is one thing and migration policy another. And that migration policy must have a joint, European response," He also defended diversity and immigration in his speech at the global summit September 2018, in New York by using New York as an example, describing it as "a city that saw millions of human beings arrive here, fleeing poverty and ideological or religious

persecution, most of them, Europeans. Today, a veil of collective amnesia extends over the memory of what we are: pure diversity.” And also by saying, “Spain has suffered the blows of the economic crisis like few other countries in Europe. Yet despite this, the vast majority of Spanish society has never turned its back on the dramatic reality of immigration”(El Pais, 2018). Then in response to sudden flow of migration in Spain, the European Commission offered financial, operational and technical support: 195 people, two ships, one airplane, and one helicopter, Coast Guard Agency to be at the borders day and night, and agreed in providing €692 million in long-term funding for migration, border and security management between 2018 and 2020, the Commission also granted Spain nearly €30 million in emergency funds to handle the increase in arrivals (European Commission, 2018). While, Spain’s opposition leader, Pablo Casado, committed to bring the topic of immigration at the heart of the nation’s political debate, and he said, it was not possible for Spain “to absorb millions of Africans who want to come to Europe in search of a better future”.

However, one of the key factors in here that whether migrants or refugees, both end up being beneficial to society is the main objective of integration policy, where in Spain, there are many actors that directly or indirectly have influence and access on integration policies on migrants and refugee’s integration, as one of them could be the civil organizations, even though organized civil society has no formal access to decision-making forums, but in Spain, civil society organizations have brought integration policy to fruition, both informally and at the operative level because the policies at the national level has tended to be more on immigration, rather than integration (Callejo, Mascareñas, Alegret, Penninx and Vieytez 2018). In the recent years with the rise of in the number of migrants and refugees, has opened up opportunities for social organizations to generate a number of integration-related initiatives which is believed that coordination among the stakeholders, civil society and social organizations could have a potential impact on policymaking over the migrants and refugee’s integration.

2.6. Young Refugees & Asylum Seekers

According to Eurostat, four in five (79 %) of the first-time asylum seekers in 2018 were less than 35 years old (Figure 4); those in the age range 18–34 years accounted for slightly less than half (48 %) of the total number of applicants, while nearly one third (31 %) of the total number of first-time applicants were minors aged less than 18 years which shows that asylum

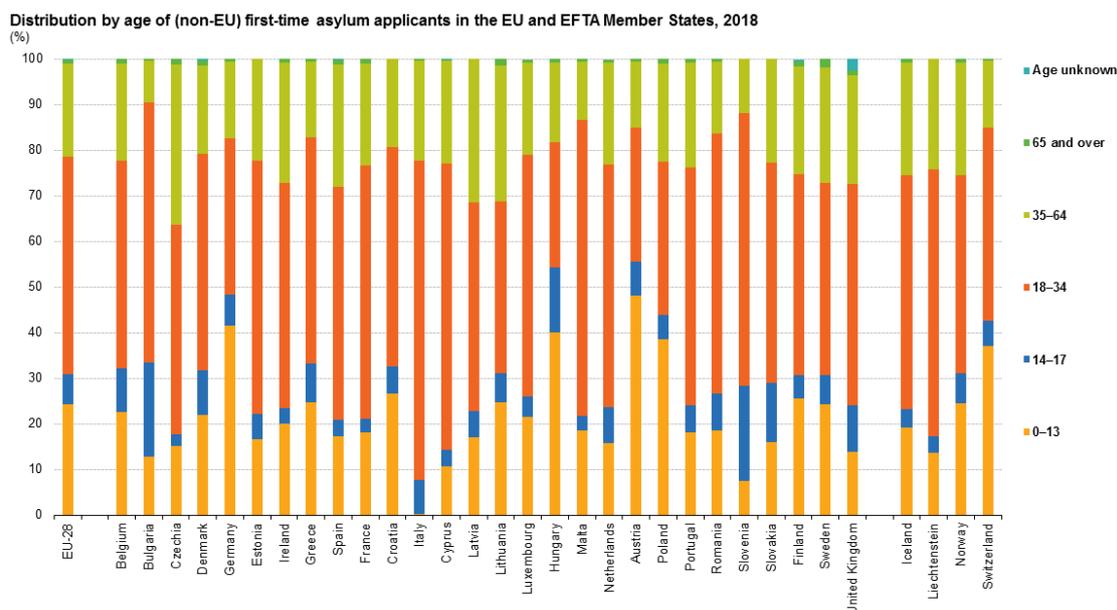


Figure 4: Distribution by age of first-time asylum applicants in the EU and EFTA Member States, 2018 (%) seekers and refugees tend to be younger than other immigrant groups. In Spain, back in 2018 over 20% of all applicants were children (Table 1).

Table 1: Eurostat: Gender/age breakdown of the total number of applicants: 2018

	Number	Percentage
Total Number of Applicants	54,050	-
Men	31,005	57.4%
Women	23,045	42.6%
Children	11,270	20.9%
Unaccompanied Children	:	:

War affects refugee children and youth in all different ways and the war effects on them are varied. According to a report by the Save the Children Foundation, it states that over 420 million children and adolescents are living in a conflict zone, and evidence shows that many of those young individuals were abducted, injured and sexually abused. Despite, there hasn't been much research on the factors that influence the successful integration of refugee children and youth in Spain or how they have been reacting to trauma, separation, and loss of their family members and relatives.

However, in describing the concept of the young people, if stepping aside from the differences in language, background or nationality. Young people have some common qualities and needs that could be referred to the following: the feeling of belonging to society, having education, responsibility, ethical virtues, and employment an. However, to help young refugees and asylum seekers to be successful in the integration process, this study suggests that we need to nurture the perspectives of young refugees and asylum seekers. There is always an emotional aspect of this situation because one of the ways to help young refugees and asylum seekers to feel together and united with the society is when they could be touched emotionally. For this, talking with them, helping them to learn the language, the culture, assist them to have access to useful information and recognizing the trauma of past experiences and the particular challenges they may face in their host society are necessary, including finding ways to strengthen their confidence and their skills, the talents they have that could contribute to the social and economic future of their host countries.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Method

The researcher, while doing his internship in one of the community-based nonprofit organizations in Barcelona, he had the opportunity to have a conversation with many young refugees and asylum seekers. These conversations and the stories of those individuals became one of the main inspirations to explore the integration experiences of young refugees and asylum seekers in Barcelona and then, to build a better understanding of their situation. Since, this study surrounds on some of those individuals' experiences, opinions, options and expectations, a qualitative approach seemed to be a very appropriate method for conducting this study.

As Silverman (2005, p.112) says, "There are no right or wrong methods. There are only methods that are appropriate for your research topic and the model with which you are working." Of course, the qualitative approach contains different meanings and understandings, used and combined many methods and approaches such as interviews, participant observation, and visual methods. (Denzin & Lincoln 1994 a&b). For this study, the researcher chose to interview the participants based on semi-structured interviewing, referring to a range of data collection that uses purposive sampling and open-ended interviews (Kvale 1996). As well, this method of interviewing consist of several key questions that help to define the areas to be explored, and also allows the interviewer or interviewee to diverge in order to pursue an idea or response in more detail (Britten 199). Thus, this study does not contain an experiment by which a certain hypothesis is being tested. Instead, this study seeks to understand a group of individuals and create a better understanding of their integration experience in Barcelona.

3.2. Limitations

Although the study has reached its objective to point out about the challenges and the difficulties the young refugees and asylum seekers face in terms of

integration, as well to explore some of the services available for them, and what do they hope and expect from the future, but still there were two unavoidable limitations. First one, which relates to the time limit that the researcher had a chance only to interview four refugees and two professional in the field refugee work. The other limitation of this study would be the complete understanding of the integration process because the concepts, theories on the integration process are very complex which require a great amount of time to study and investigate.

3.3. Questionnaire Construction

Majority of the questions for young refugees and asylum seekers, and including for those two organizations' representatives were the open-ended type of questions. These types of questions were chosen in order to gather information based on the interviewee experiences. At the same time, utilizing these types of questions in refugee experiences of integration in Barcelona ensures data is collected and analyzed through the perspective of the young refugees and asylum seekers, with result seeking to build a better understanding of their experiences of integration in Barcelona.

In young refugees and asylum seekers case, the interview was divided into two phases; the first part consisted of a series of questions about their education, career and occupational aspirations (before and after arrival in Barcelona). The second phase of were designed specifically for the purposes of examining the adequacy of services provided for those individuals who have already been accepted as a refugee and those who have just applied for asylum, because of the different possibility of the integration process between those two groups. Then, for the organizations' representatives, the questions about their opinions towards the integration of refugees in Barcelona and what they say when it comes to the availability of social support and opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers in Barcelona.

3.4. Participants

As Creswell (2014), in his book says that choosing participants in qualitative research does not necessarily suggest random sampling or selection of a large number of participants, as typically found in quantitative research, but rather the idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants that will best help the researcher to understand the problem, the research question and to help with gathering of data. By considering that point and the willingness of the participants to be open about their experiences, the researcher chose a group of four young individuals. Three of them were young refugees who have been in Barcelona for more than three years, while the fourth participant is only an asylum seeker, waiting for an initial decision on her asylum claim.

1. Jamal

Jamal is 24 years old from Pakistan. It has been four years that he is living in Barcelona. During this period of time, he has been able to achieve a good level of the Spanish language. Now, he is enrolled in one of the universities in Barcelona and he is studying Information Technology. Besides perusing his studies, he is also working in a grocery store in order to cover some of his daily expenses.

However, when it comes to his experiences in the past or how and why he left his home country contains lots of difficulties and challenges that in a way or another might relate to many other refugees. When he was asked about his childhood and family, he said:

“I think I did have a good childhood. I used to have lots of friends and every afternoon, we were spending hours playing cricket. It was really fun those days.” And, “yes, actually we are quite a big family. I have two brothers and two sisters. I am in the middle. Then my father, my mother and my grandparents.”

Back when he was in his home country, he was able to graduate from high school, but life-threatening difficulties and persecution he couldn't pursue his studies, and even he was asked to not go come to work just because of the problems he was facing.

“I really wanted to study computer science, but I couldn’t go to university because of the situation back at that time. I always wanted to do computer science, do software programming and design applications. I wanted to become a software developer.”

He was being discriminated and persecuted because of his religion (Christianity) in Pakistan. In fact, this problem has a long story in Pakistan.¹ Then the situation got worse for him and started to receive more threatening by some anonymous people, he found no other option, but to leave his home country and travel a long dangerous journey to reach Europe. And when he was asked if he could share about his journey, he said,

“Yes, those time I and two of my friends who were experiencing the same situation. We talked with a smuggler to take us to Turkey. He then took us to Quetta and from there, we went to Iran. In Iran, we stayed in place for a week without going outside. It was like a house in a dessert, but still, we were strictly not to go outside. Sometimes, there was a person who was bringing us food and sometimes there was no food. We are too many people there.”

“Then after a week, we found another smuggler who agreed to take us to Turkey. On the way, we had to keep walking for long hours without stopping. We also had to hide from the police borders. When we got to Istanbul. Then it seemed a bit better, but we had no money to buy food or stay somewhere. So the smuggler told us to ask for more from our families because we need it. We need to stay here until he managed to find someone else who could take to Italy. We stayed in Istanbul for about a month, hiding from the police, from other people. We were all very scared. Finally, the guy came and told us to pay him because the other smuggler who will take us to Italy asks for more money. It took us around 7 days to reach to Italy. It was very tiring and very hard. Then after staying in Italy in a camp for more than two months, we decided to go to Spain.”

2. Max

Max is 27 years old from Syria. He also arrived in Spain in 2016, the same year as Jamal. He also has a good level of the Spanish language, but currently, he is only working in a restaurant in Barcelona. When he was asked about his childhood and his family, he responded that he did have a good childhood. He was doing many things, but the only thing he did not have an interest in, was studying.

“I didn’t like studying too much. My father was always angry on for me not focusing on my studies, but it was a good memory.”

In his family, there are his parents and four of his brothers. His parents and two of his brothers are still in Syria, but in 2015, two of his brothers along with him were able to leave when the war started. Before the war, they had a bakery shop which was just beside their house. It was like a family business for them. He was enjoying working there. They had a good and happy life, but the war took everything from them.

“We really had a good life. We were very happy. But when the war started. Slowly everything got destroyed. There were also army people taking people to war to fight, but people didn’t want that.”

He then to run away from the war or from being killed in the war, They managed to find someone to take them to Turkey, but they were tricked. The smuggler took their money and never showed up. So, they decided to find another smuggler that took them to Turkey where they were introduced to another smuggler, promising that he will take them to Italy, but the journey to Italy and then being in Italy became an experience that he didn’t want to experience again.

“Every time I remember, I just feel depressed. So, after all those bad experiences. I came to Barcelona.”

3. Zaid

Zaid, 26 years old is from Afghanistan. Around three years ago, he was doing some volunteer work in Greece, and through the volunteering, he was able to build some good connection with some people that later on, they helped him to receive a scholarship to study in one of the universities in Barcelona. Currently, he has reached a good level of Spanish and Catalan and he is a university student major in economics.

When asked about her childhood, he said that he was very nimble. He loved hanging out with his friends to play football and some other traditional games. He also mentioned that he loved studying and he was very good at drawing, reading and writing.

“I was studying at school and I was very good with drawing, reading and writing but not with mathematic, I love my childhood and will never forget those days.”

Then talking about his family, Zaid said that he is the second youngest child among his other siblings, and he has seven of sisters and one brother. Back in Afghanistan, his father along with his eldest sibling, including him were working in order to cover the expenses. Later on, when the situation got worse day by day due to security reasons, he found out that it’s not possible to have a good future in a situation like that. So, he decided to leave behind his studies and everything in order to not be a victim of an unstable situation.

“One of the main reasons was to have a life in a peace country.”

In discussing his journey to Europe, he explained that it was a life risk-taking situation on the way going from Iran to Turkey. Because, the journey from Afghanistan to Iran was much easier due to having a visa and everything, but after a week staying in Iran, they decided to find a smuggler to take them to Turkish borders. Then after walking for more than 14 hours, they were able to enter Turkey.

“Around 2:30 am we started to walk to Turkey and end up walking at 5:00 pm, was the most difficult way to cross the border and enter to Turkey, with us there were family and was so hard for them to walk that much and reach Turkey, but on the way no one cares about you but it was something clear that if I couldn’t continue walking. They would continue the journey without me and leave me alone. The most dangerous border was between Turkey and Greece, the smuggler never treat you the same as you talk with them for the first time, when you are on your way to cross the border they even don’t answer you and treat you right.”

When he arrived in Greece, he thought that he could help other refugees by assisting some of the refugee workers which lucky, through his good intentions to help others, he was offered a scholarship to pursue his studies.

“In Greece I made some Spanish friends where I was working as a volunteer to help other refugees, so every late night we were sitting and talking, suddenly one night, they asked me what I was doing in my country, I explained everything and they asked me if I would like to continue my studying in Barcelona, I said, yes that’s what I really wish and hope to continue my studies. So they found me a scholarship in one of the best cities, BARCELONA!”

4. Sarah

Sarah is 23 years old from Syria. She arrived in Spain in 2018. Currently, she is study Spanish and waiting to get the decision on her case. They are four in family, her father, her mother, her younger brother and her. They a furniture store where her father was working, her mother was at home and was helping her and his younger brother with their studies and housework.

“I miss her so much! My brother, he is very naughty. He was always making my mother be angry because he always wanted to go outside and play with his friends.”

This was something all before the war started, because the war changed everything for them, starting from their safety, education and the worst, she lost

her younger brother. She was hoping to go to university and study medicine to become a doctor. That still remains a dream for her to achieve.

“I always loved studying. I had many friends in school and we used to study together. I wanted to become a doctor, so I could take care of others. But when the war happened, I couldn’t go to school for three years. Then somehow I was able to go to a school. But there weren’t enough books; most of the classrooms were destroyed. The teachers were very few.”

Then they decided to run away and go to Turkey, but on the way, the smuggler put them in two different cars. She said that it was ok because she was with one of her friend and her friend’s parents. After paying lots of money smugglers money to take us to Istanbul while on the way to Turkey, many times they encountered ISIS and rebels army too. They took money from them to let them go. After a month, they finally reached Mersin, where they stayed two nights, but the sad thing for her was that she couldn’t find her parents, and because of the situation and circumstances. She agreed to join her friend on the journey of going to Istanbul.

“It took us around two days go to Istanbul. On the way, we hide from the police and it was very scary during the night.”

In Istanbul, she remained to stay with her friend and her friend’s parents. They found a smuggler to take them to Italy or Romania, but it was too hard for them to trust the smugglers, not just because the smugglers were asking too much money, but also there are many cases that they smugglers sold girls to mafias and etc. As Freedman (2016) says that mostly, woman refugees experience sexual and gender-based violence during their journey and/or on arrival in a destination country.

“It’s hard to trust them because sometimes they take you to a place and kill you or sell you.”

After a long struggle, they were finally able to find a smuggler whom they paid to take them to Italy. Still, they were tricked like many the rest of people who were in the same boat.

“He said the ships are good and big. But it wasn’t. It was a small ship and very old. There was not enough food, water and in that small ship. There were lots of people. It was very scary. I think none can imagine unless you have been in that ship. There were families, children. I felt so bad, so sad for those children. There were lots of problems, difficulties for them.”

Then the time when they arrived in Italy, they were lead by the police to a refugee camp. The situation of the refugee camp wasn’t good, and they decided to go to France because they were told in France they will be treated better. After paying around 1000 Euros to someone, they were able to travel to France, hidden in a car. Even though she (Sarah) seemed to go to Germany but because she was alone, and she thought that she would be much safer if she remains to be with her my friend’s parents.

“They (my friend’s parents) were saying that France is better. So I had no choice but to just follow them. Because I had no one else. As a girl, it’s very hard.”

In France, she was able to find a relative of her and she agreed with them to come to Spain to seek asylum.

3.5. Data Collection & Data Analysis

All of the interviews were done through an open dialogue by using semi-structured interviews as the main method for data collection which allowed the interviews to be more open as compared to structured interviews, this type of interview allows the interviewer and the interviewee to divert, if an idea is to be pursued in more detail (Smith & Osborn, 2003). As according to Dörnyei (2007), a ‘good’ qualitative interview should have two key features: “(a) it should flow naturally, and (b) it should be rich in detail” (p. 140). For achieving those two features, the data collection for this study was done in a way which allowed the

researcher to maintain more concentration on the interview, itself, rather than putting too much focus on taking notes, which can act as a distraction to both the interviewee and the interviewer who is asking the questions. This distraction can also lead to a disjointed interview where the key information can be overlooked, forgotten or missed.

As a result, in order to prevent any loss of information during the interview, all of the interviews were recorded, while recording the interviews can also allow the interviewee and interviewer to develop a better conversation during the proceedings, which can lead to the interviewee disclosing more detailed and in-depth information (Boyce & Naele, 2006). The researcher met the interviewees a couple of times to have a cope of coffee or to have a simple conversation before the time of conducting the interviews which helped a lot to create a more relaxed atmosphere during the interview. Then at the time of interviewing, all of the interviewees were met according to their availability at the location of their desire. Mostly the locations were going to a place of their selection. Of course, avoiding cafe shops or restaurants where, in these locations could lack, having enough privacy or any kind of noise, could make it difficult to record the interviews. All of the interviewees were notified in advance about the nature of the interview and provided them full information before data collection began through the interview, including letting them be aware that any data collected would be kept completely confidential. As Frankfort- Nachmias and Nachmias say (1992), “the obligation to protect the anonymity of research participants and to keep research data confidential is all-inclusive. It should be fulfilled at all costs unless arrangements to the contrary are made with the participants in advance” (quoted in Cohen et. al 2000, 61). The interviewees chose to use fictitious names in order to protect their identity. The names which were chosen are Jamal, Sarah, Max and Zaid. The interviews were all conducted in English and all of the interviewees were asked the same open-ended questions, lasted between 30 to 45 minutes.

So, the transcriptions of interviews with two social workers have been used to reach one side of the objective of this study to explain and to understand the

refugees' integration in Barcelona from a professional perspective with exploring the opportunities available for refugees in Barcelona. Then, the transcriptions of the interviews with the three refugees and one asylum seeker have been coded and categorized by themes to help inform a structured analysis.

4. Findings

This chapter will talk upon the main themes and the findings which arose out of the interviewing the participants. At the first step, the table below this paragraph was developed to show the demographic information of the research participants. Then the key themes revealed through the participants' responses were; their experiences during the first few months of arrival, barriers to access to services and opportunities, and their hope and expectations for the future. In this chapter, the researcher seeks to explain the characteristics of those themes in detail.

Table 2: Demographic Information of Research Participant

Fictitious Name	Nationality	Gender	Age	Marital Status	Legal Status	Length of Stay in Barcelona	Education from Home Country	Current Occupation
Jamal	Pakistani	Male	24	Single	Refugee	5 years	High School Diploma	Student & Shop Assistant
Max	Syrian	Male	27	Single	Refugee	4 years	High School Diploma	Server at a restaurant
Zaid	Afghan	Male	26	Single	Refugee	3 years	University Diploma	Student
Sarah	Syrian	Female	23	Single	Asylum	6 months	High School Diploma	None

4.1. The First Few Months of Arrival

During this period, refugees experience mix feelings, and they will be confronted by the reality of what has been lost. From a high occupational and social status at home, they will plunge downward in their new land-from professional to menial, from elite to an impoverished minority (Weiermair, 1971). As Jamal described this through having mixture feelings, one side he was feeling and peaceful, there is no longer something that threatens his life, but at the other side, he was feeling lonely and stressed that he had to leave his loved one in Pakistan:

“I felt peaceful. I was happy that I will no longer have to run away or be threatened or feel fear, but also, it wasn’t easy because I left my family, friends, and everything behind. It was a very hard and lonely time for me. There were a lot of problems and thoughts that were making me feel very tired emotionally.”

In Max’s case beside feeling loneliness and being worried about his family and friends, one of the other major obstacles he pointed is about the lack of resources for newcomers in terms of housing and food which affects the integration experience:

“Just I was feeling pity on myself and refugee people like me to live like this, far away from families. I know that there is no other choice. But when I just arrived in Barcelona. Those days, I was always worrying about my family so much. I didn’t know any people here to talk to and to ask for help because many nights I slept in front of some stores. I had a small blanket and I was using my bag as a pillow. This wasn’t the real problem. The real difficulty was to find food because there were many times, I didn’t have anything to eat. I was feeling weak and stressed. I started to keep talking with myself that this is the reality now. Its ok. I should be happy that I am alive and safe, but it is impossible to not to worry about family, future, life and everything.”

In Sarah’s case, she explained she is feeling emotional and physically tired. She has already submitted her application and she was told to wait for a period of eight months to examine the request while she also has to wait until she gets an appointment to request for any kind of social service:

“It is not easy. I am already tired emotionally and physically. I don’t know how to explain this feeling. I only think there is not much that I can do or even they can do for me here.”

Zaid’s explained his experience and his feelings by appreciating the family that supported him and build new connection and learning the languages, as he said:

“I very glad that I made it to Barcelona. I felt very happy. Even though for a while there were many challenges, but when I met a Catalan family in Barcelona. They treated me like their own. They helped me as much as they could and still they are helping. I do have lots of respect and love for them, not only because they are helping me, but because of their love for me. They are really a great family. I learned about the culture from them, many good vibes, attitude and much more. Thanks to them.”

4.2. Barriers to Access the Social Services

In Barcelona, the refugees can be divided into two parts, one, those who come from Spanish-speaking countries in Central and South America which makes their integration into Barcelona is much easier than those who come from the countries where they speak other languages. These individuals need to learn Spanish and Catalan in order to have access to better opportunities, not only because of getting engaged in the labor market, as well to build social connection, like; handling the daily situations, building friendships, feeling of belonging to a group and being close to other people, and so on.

The need for the language knowledge comes at the moment when an individual is asked to present a formal application to authorities in order to seek international protection in Barcelona, and basically, this is how the challenges with the language barrier starts, because, for the newcomers, there is always someone needed to help with interpretation, documentation and even making appointment to seek social assistance or anything. Max described that what were the obstacles he was facing and how he was able to find help when he was new in Barcelona:

“There were many, many problems that I had to handle when I arrived. First, I didn’t know the language. I didn’t how to ask someone for help. Later, another refugee told me about an organization. They are helping refugees with translating, preparing documents like translating them in Spanish. Even with their help, I was still going to go from one place to another place for papers, for

appointments. Many days, I had to wait for very days and until I find someone to help me. It was a very tiring moment, but I had no choice.”

Furthermore, the barriers arise from this for refugees and asylum seekers are being unable to access information that can help them to access social services and assistance; which programs, agencies, and universities provide for refugees, because in Barcelona, there can be found many programs similar to the Support Programme of the University of Barcelona for Refugees and People from Conflict Areas by the UB Solidarity Foundation that aims to support refugees, but due to the language barrier causes the refugees don't get the right information to access to services.

Sarah had the following to say when she was asked regarding this:

“I cannot speak the language, so sometimes the people working at offices act different. I was told many times why I don't speak Spanish. I just arrived here, you know. I love to learn Spanish, but it has been only six months. I still haven't got a chance to learn Spanish. Sometimes, I study by my own, but to be honest, in my mind I always think about my parents and where they are. Beside that, I feel that everything is very complicated here. Sometimes, they tell to go there for documents and then go to another place. It has kept going on. There is an organization that helps me with papers.”

Zaid's case seemed to be a bit different from the rest of the participants. He started talking about the time of his arrival in Barcelona somehow had a positive impact on accessing social services for him. Within a week, he was assigned a lawyer that helped him to process his application and have his first interview after 6 months. This was 3 years ago, but at this time, as an example, for Sarah, the first interview is made after 8 months. However, having the first interview a couple of months earlier doesn't mean it will help them shorten to evaluate their application and to a decision earlier. All of the three participants who currently have refugee status had to wait 2 years or even more than 2 years in order to get a decision.

“I arrived in a good time, so in a week I got a lawyer, in 6 month my first interview, I was preparing my files, during this period my lawyer helped me bring the date of interview earlier and in a month I did the first interview, I got a Persian translator, after the interview they got my fingerprints, Passport and my Afghan ID (Tazkera) so after the interview I waited 2 years to get the asylum, it was not so difficult to apply for asylum but it needs lot of patience to wait. I was afraid of being rejected. At first, I kept trying to receive some assistance from the Red Cross, but application process is very slow there. It took them very long time to response and then helped me only for 6 months. After that, I seeked assistance from a private NGO with hosing and food.” ~ Zaid

4.3. Education, Employment & Housing

Education, employment and housing, these are considered as one of the main objectives of every integration policy whether it be for refugees or for migrants because for refugees having access to these services in the host country are important as a way to help them to integrate in their new lives faster.

Education as a starting point, it clearly provides the skills and competences in support of accessing employment and enabling the refugees to become more constructive and active members of society, then housing has a well-established effect on the ability for refugees to have the feeling of being at home, and as well, it has a huge effect on refugees' overall physical and emotional wellbeing, as well as on their ability to feel 'at home', is well established (Glover et al. 2001; Dutch Refugee Council/ECRE 2001).

However, the data collected from the participants shows that there were some certain barriers through reaching these services one by one, as one of the participants (Jamal) mentioned that the lack of proper information and guidance caused him to wait more than a year to find a way to pursue his university, after two years when he was granted the refugee status.

“After when I was able to speak Spanish better, someone offered to help me to get to university. I was very excited at first, but then I found that there are not

accepting my school credentials from Pakistan. I contacted many places, but that time I didn't find any way that could guide me to solve this matter. It was very stressful and sad because the problem was lack of guidance and information. When I already waited one more year, then someone showed me a way to start processing my documents and then send them to Madrid for evaluation. It was already late." ~ Jamal

Talking about other significant barriers for the newcomers is lack of support on the right time and for refugees, its lack of training and opportunities in the labor market because mostly, the refugee face difficulty in recognition of the skills and education from their home country. Two of the participants mentioned that being unemployed can leave a person feel very powerless because some of the employers don't feel to hire refugees or test their skills. This was causing, those two participants to feel depressed because they were constantly being reminded to find a job because the financial support for them will end soon.

"I was feeling very unlucky and powerless. I was going to many restaurants or bars to ask for job, but all of them were not feeling to give me a job, even though after facing lots of problem to get the permission to work. Still, I felt hopeless. ~ Jamal

"Those days I was very sad and depressed because everything seemed to go wrong. I was searching for work, but no one was answering. They were telling me to wait and be patient. It's hard to wait and be patient because they (authorities) were always telling me, have I found a job or not yet because soon the financial support will finish for me. I was feeling the situation is getting bad day by day for me because everyday there were problems waiting for me on my door. At first I was full of hopes to start to my life, but slowly, slowly my hopes run away." ~ Max

Zaid before arriving in Barcelona, he was in Greece where was doing some volunteer works. This attitude of volunteering helped him to make new connections with people who later on helped me to get a scholarship and come to Barcelona to pursue his studies.

“I was stocking in Greece and made Spanish friends where I was working as a volunteer, so every late night we were setting and talking, suddenly they asked me what I was doing in my country, I explained everything and they asked me if I would like to continue my studying in Barcelona, I said that’s what I want to do where ever I reach, so they found me a scholarship and I decided to come in the best city BARCELONA.” ~ Zaid

As far, the housing is concern, all of the participants had to go through SAIER in order to receive social assistance from the Red Cross, and be instructed to a temporary lodging with a time period of six months stay at those places. However, currently, those participants were granted refugee status, no longer receive any social assistance from the Red Cross, and they mentioned that they live in apartment, shared with some other individuals.

“Now, I am in an apartment with three people. It’s difficult because the rent is high, but I have no choice because it is very hard to find a place to rent if you are alone. ~ Jamal

“I am living in an apartment now with some other people. They are also from Syria. They also work and one of them study. And it’s a far but it’s ok because at least we have a place to live. So, we share the rent and everything, otherwise it’s very expensive to live by yourself in Barcelona.” ~ Max *me a scholarship and I decided to come in the best city BARCELONA.*” ~ Zaid

4.4. Social Connection

The concept of social connection for the participants, played an important role in the integration experiences of all the participants because for the social connection meant more than just social bridging and social links, rather it appeared that it was a way for them to find work. Max described how his connections helped him to get a job:

“The only hoped left for me was the people who I knew, some of them were also refugees and some of them were other people. Then, after a long time waiting, one day one of my friends who is also a refugee called me if I wanted to work in

the restaurant to wash the dishes and clean. I felt very happy. I quickly said, yes! Yes, I want.” ~ Max

In Jamal's case, his connection to his ethnic community seemed to play an important role in helping him to build more connection with other individuals from Pakistan. Including, helping him to find a job in a store which is owned by someone from Pakistan, and Jamal considered him as his family in Barcelona.

“Finding a work was like a miracle for me! When I look back at the first days, I thought people would never help me to find a job, but I am grateful to this family who I met. They are also from Pakistan. They have stores in Barcelona. I was buying from them and one time, while talking with the person who was working in that store. I found out they need a worker in one of their stores. So, I asked if he could give me the owner's number. When I got a number, then I messaged many times, but after awhile, I called. He answered my call and I started explaining about my situation that I really need the job because soon I will not support. Later that day he invited me at store and explained the work for me. I am grateful that I met them. Now, I feel they are like my family.”

Zaid emphasized his connection with one Spanish family and some of his friends that helped him to create a sense of belonging and assist with linguistic needs. These connections led him to have some short-term works.

“It has been very challenging to find a job in Barcelona. Till now, I have had worked in many places as temporary and I was recommended to those jobs by my friends. I am thankful to them. Now, I am only studying but I wish to have a stable job for long term that I could gain more experience.”

4.5. Expectations & Hopes

When the participants were asked about their goals, it appeared there three major sub-themes that each of the participants values more, which are family, education, and work. As a starting point for better integration, all of them agreed on having a strong aspiration to pursue their studies.

“When I got in Barcelona I kept tried and putting lots of effort until I was able to enter the university in Barcelona to continue my studies. Now I successfully finished the second year, and I do hope that I my family and I all gather together and we live together. I also hope and I am doing my best pursue a career as a manager or a professor.” ~ Zaid

“First of all, I want to finish my studies successfully. I also want to learn Catalan. I mean learn it perfectly because now I understand a little bit, but it is not that good. Then of course, I want to do volunteer for some organization in Spain to return what this country has given me. And then I hopefully could get a job to support my family or even support some of the activities of local organizations because I got many help from a couple of organizations when I was new in Barcelona.” ~ Jamal

“I really want to continue my studies, but for that I don’t know who should I ask or will Barcelona government help me. In case if they helped then I will study. Then I want to work because I want to be independent and don’t wait for someone else to help me.” ~ Sarah

Then only in Max’s case, the response to the question regarding his goals and expectation was a bit in contrast to Jamal’s and Sarah’s cases. Jamal and Sarah, both of them seemed very interested to continue their studies as Jamal explained that he wishes to return the favor that this country provided for him by supporting of the local organizations because he has gotten lots of help from some organization. Sarah’s reason was more about believing that education can provide her better access to career opportunities and to become independent. However, in Max’s case, he seemed more interested in having a job and working more than studying.

“To be honest, I don’t know what to do. I just want to work and support my family, since my parents are not working. Maybe in the future if I had a chance. I will study business.” ~ Max

4.6. Social Assistance

In Spain (figure 5), like the rest of European countries, the system of refugee asylum applications involves several procedures until an asylum seeker be able to access to social assistance. The data collected from the participants shows that participants receive different supports from the civil society organizations in Barcelona to help them in integrating into society at the local level.

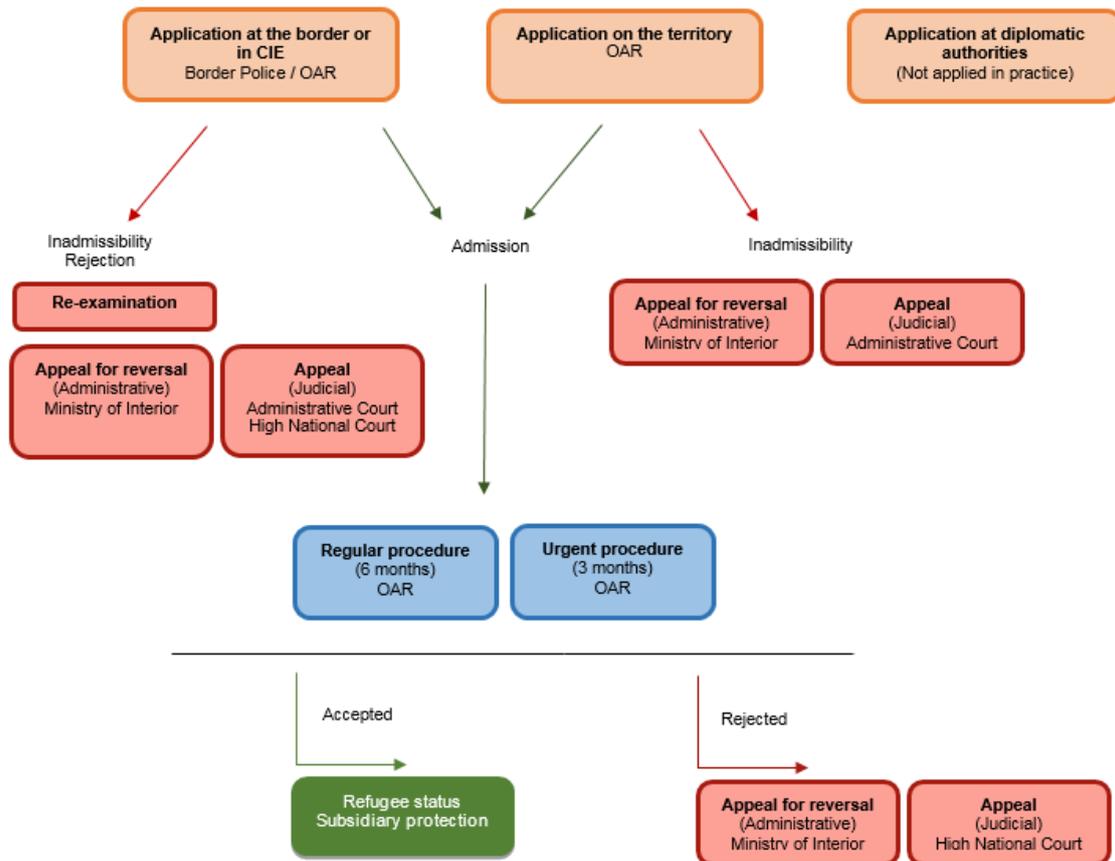


Figure 5: Asylum Application Procedure in Spain. Source: Asylum Information Database Flow Chart Spain

4.6.1. The UB Solidarity Foundation

Which was founded in 1996 with the aim to support and carry out various initiatives, such as projects and programs, aimed at expanding and strengthening development cooperation, in the field of interuniversity relations, however, the interview with the representative from this foundation was done in order to talk over their programs which are to support refugees and people from

areas in conflict. As a result, the diagram below is developed in order to provide an abstract idea about this program:

ACADEMIC AND EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT

- Scholarships that cover all tuition fees. With the support of the City Council of Barcelona, the course of transition to the University is developed

ACCOMMODATION

- Housing for students in one the university residences

SOCIAL INCLUSION SUPPORT

- Opportunity to attend courses in culture and language (Catalan and Spanish).

LEGAL ADVICE AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSISTANCE

- Assistance in terms of application procedure and documentation

4.6.2. ACATHI

Which is an association established in 2002 that currently provides services a diverse collection of identities as migrants, refugees and individuals from the LGBT community in terms of:

RECEPTION AND INFORMATION

- To provide necessary guidance to address administrative processes at each step.

LEGAL ASSISTANCE

- To provide assistance of legal professionals to advise on the multiple legal situations

EMPLOYMENT

- To provide assistance with individual interviews, CV reviews, focus on improvements to professional profiles, support toward business objectives etc.

LANGUAGE COURSES

- To provide basic conversation classes in Catalan and Castilian to make communication a little easier for refugees

5. Conclusions & Recommendations

In this study, the experiences of some of the young refugees and asylum seekers in Barcelona, the availability of social services for them and their journey to access those services are explored. A qualitative approach based on semi-structured interviewing was used to seek answers for the main objective and the research questions of this study. The main data were gathered by interviewing three young refugees, one asylum seeker, and two professionals in the field of refugee works. Then the data were categorized into five themes; the first few months of arrival, barriers to access the social services, education and employment, social connection, and expectations and hopes.

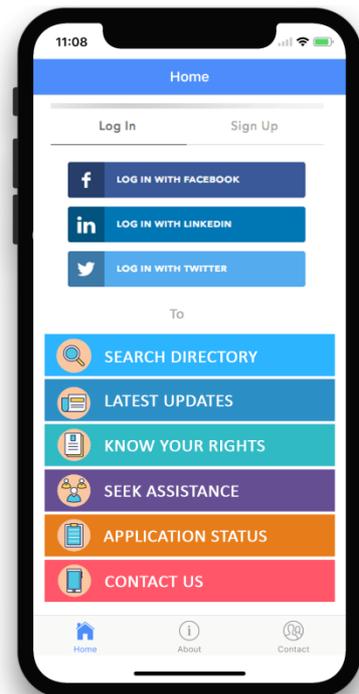
The themes as results indicate that the pathway to successful integration for young refugees in Barcelona covers many topics such as the feeling, the experience and the ability of the young refugees and asylum seekers to learn the language and adapt with the culture, as well as the supports and services available for them. This exactly supports what Castles et al. (2002) argues, that integration is a two-way process: it requires adaptation on the part of the newcomer but also by the host society, and it can only be successful when the host society provides access to jobs and services and acceptance of the immigrants in social interaction.”

Through this study, it was found that there are a strong desire and willingness among the young refugees in Barcelona to adapt and move towards independence and self-sufficiency, and they are keen to embrace any opportunity to improve life for themselves, their families and their new communities. Most of the participants are experiencing a good integration, in terms of language, education and social connection, which, learning the language and social connection were seen as the main keys to a successful integration among those participants, because for them acquiring good language skills didn't only helped them to integrate into society and building new connections with the locals, as well; it played an important role to help them in finding employment.

However, this study also found that there is a crucial need of programs for well-being of young refugees in Barcelona, because even though participants indicated that they felt safe and peaceful when they arrived in Barcelona, but it can't be ignored that their experiences from the journey to the host country are consist of many bad and horrifying memories, while the struggles and challenges on their first few months of arrival in Barcelona brought another set of mix feelings combined with stress, hopelessness, and anxiety. As Weiermair (1971; Rogg, 1974) says that during this first period of arrival, refugees experience mix feelings, and they will be confronted by the reality of what has been lost. From a high occupational and social status at home, they will plunge downward in their new land-from professional to menial, from elite to an impoverished minority. Experiencing these feelings directly or indirectly will have a negative impact on refugees' psychological and emotional well-being. Thus, this study recommends that providing and promoting psychosocial programs for asylum seekers during the time period that they have to wait to receive a decision on their application (which is between 1 – 2 years) can help them to ameliorate the impact of the anxiety and resettlement stressors on those individuals (The NSW Ministry of Health 2018).

In relation to access to social services, the study found that most of the participants lacked the information that could lead them to social services and opportunities, on the time when they need the most. At the first place, only one out four participants had a basic knowledge of asylum application procedure which helped him have access to social services, while the other three participants had no clue when it comes about accessing lawyers, application preparations, interviews or where to contact. They had to wait and struggle for a long time until they received the instruction to facilities and services. For example, "Jamal", one of the participants, despite having his all of school credentials from his home country. He still had to wait for more than a year in order for him to find a way to go to university. This was, after when he was granted refugee status, two years after his arrival in Barcelona. Then, Sarah, she had to go through a lot of struggles until she found an organization to assist her with her asylum application. A simple solution for this could be a mobile

app, as nowadays people turn to apps to ease their daily grind. And they're more likely to use them if they serve a "specific purpose". Thus build a strategy guide that could be used as a directory to find the details of civil society organizations, like the services they offer for refugees, or what are the application procedure, know their application status. It could be away to connect refugees with the services and support available for them, while it could also be an easy way on the convenience of access on-demand to information & solutions.



Next, the increase in a number of people dealt with by Barcelona's Care Service for Immigrants, Emigrants and Refugees (SAIER) in relation to refugee has increased in past three years, and lack of vocational training and employment can have a negative impact of on long term integration of young refugees into Barcelona. This could be a considerable challenge; although there can be seen a lot of motivation among the young refugees to be flexible and open to new opportunities for successful integration, but to maintain this motivation among them requires support and opportunities. This could be more challenging than the rest of the issues, because unemployment relates to many factors in Barcelona. Regarding the civil society in Barcelona, it can be understood that they are trying to do some programs and put their resources together to young support refugees and asylum seekers, but for a long term successful integration of young refugees in Barcelona, but for long term solution, the attention of government is need over this matter. This study has two recommendation for this, first that the government could provide asylum seekers the rights and the documents to have a temporary work until they get a decision on their application, which this could help asylum seekers to not to depend on social welfare, as well, it will prevent engagement of asylum seekers in illegal works in Barcelona. Second, providing support to employers and encouraging them to support refugees through accessing to internships,

voluntary work and post-employment could help the long term integration of young refugees in Barcelona.

5.6. Suggestions for future research

This study represents a small tip of a huge iceberg and there are many other topics relating to the experiences of young refugees that cannot be answered with the data collected in this study. Thus, for future study, one of the topics that this study would suggest could be to do a research about the transition experience of young refugees in Barcelona from the world of education to the world of employment. This could help in three ways, one it could provide a deeper understanding of the significant challenges young refugees face during this transition. Second, it could provide information on the ways in which young graduate refugees engage with employability development opportunities provided by institutions in Barcelona. Lastly, it could be used as a guide for future graduated refugee students to have a smooth transition to the employment world.

References

UNHCR - Global Trends Forced Displacement (2016), p. 35. Produced and printed by UNHCR Available link: <https://www.unhcr.org/5943e8a34.pdf>

Paludan, Anne (1981), "Refugees in Europe," International Migration Review, XV. Available link: <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0197918381015001-209>

Council of Europe (2013), The intercultural city step by step. Practical guide for applying the urban model of intercultural integration: 9, Available link: <http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/culture/cities/ICCstepbystepAugust2012.pdf>

CEAR – Informe (2019), Las personas refugiadas en España y Europa. Available Link: https://www.cear.es/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/INFORME_CEAR_2019.pdf

UNHCR - Global Trends Forced Displacement (2018), Produced and printed by UNHCR Available link: <https://www.unhcr.org/5d08d7ee7.pdf>

Pew Research Center (2019), Europeans Credit EU with promoting peace and prosperity, but say Brussels is out of touch with its citizens, pg. 18, Available link: https://www.pewresearch.org/global/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/03/Pew-Research-Center_Views-of-EU-Report_2019-03-19.pdf

Eurostat (2017), Being young in Europe today - demographic trends Link: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Being_young_in_Europe_today_-_demographic_trends

Eurostat (2015), Being young in Europe today - 2015 edition ISBN: 978-92-79-43243-9 Link: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3217494/6776245/KS-05-14-031-EN-N.pdf/18bee6f0-c181-457d-ba82-d77b314456b9>

Basements and crawl spaces. (2002, June 23). Retrieved from <http://www.hud.gov/offices/hsg/sfh/ref/sfhp1-25.cfm>

Ager and Strang (2008), Understanding Integration: A Conceptual Framework, *Journal of Refugee Studies*, Volume 21, Issue 2. Link: <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fen016>

Castles, S., Korac, M., Vasta, E. and Vertovec, S. (2001) 'Integration: Mapping the Field.' Report of a project carried out by the Centre for Migration and Policy Research and Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford

William Thomas Worster, (2011) the Evolving Definition of the Refugee in contemporary International Law, *Berkeley Journal of International Law*. Link: <https://works.bepress.com/William-Worster/2/download/>

Hamlin R. (2017), *Migrant Categories in Crisis: Refugees' Conference*, Center for the Study of International Migration, University of California, Los Angeles

UNHCR, the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, Article 1A(2), Link: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3b20a3914.html>

New York Protocol (1967), Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, In Accordance With article VIII, United Nations. Link: <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/protocolrefugees.pdf>

The UN General Assembly (1948), Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Link: http://www.claiminghumanrights.org/udhr_article_14.html

Migrant Workers Convention (1990), International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. Link: <https://www.unhcr.org/496323780.pdf>

Constitución Española (1978). Link: <https://www.boe.es/legislacion/documentos/ConstitucionCASTELLANO.pdf>

Phillimore Jenny (2011), Refugees, Acculturation Strategies, Stress and Integration Volume 40, Issue 3 Link: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047279410000929>

Jane Freedman (2016), Reproductive Health Matters, Vol. 24, No. 47, Violence: a barrier to sexual and reproductive health and rights, Journal Article Link: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26495887>

Moreira & Baeninger (2010), Local integration is a complex economic, political, social and cultural process. Link: <https://www.fmreview.org/disability/moreira-baeninger>

Valtonen (2004), From the Margin to the Mainstream: Conceptualizing Refugee Settlement Processes, Journal of Refugee Studies, Volume 17, Issue 1, March 2004, Pages 70–96. Link: <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/17.1.70>

Santiago Sae (2018), Is Spain facing a new wave of xenophobia over migrants? Link: <https://p.dw.com/p/32Ubu>

DW (2018), Aquarius migrant rescue ship docks in Spain following rejection by Italy. Link: <https://p.dw.com/p/2zfSn>

El Pais (2018), Sánchez at UN: Spain has “not let itself be radicalized by xenophobia” Link: https://elpais.com/elpais/2018/09/28/inenglish/1538119539_673171.html

European Commission (2018) Press release, Migration: Commission steps up emergency assistance to Spain and Greece. Link: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-18-4342_en.pdf

Callejo, Mascareñas, Alegret, Penninx and Vieytez (2018), Immigration and Integration Policymaking in Spain Working Paper No. 21 Link: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/254897033_Immigration_and_integration_policymaking_in_Spain

David Silverman (2005), *Doing Qualitative Research Fifth Edition*, ISBN: 9781526441614

Denzin & Lincoln (2005), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, ISBN: 9780761927570

Kvale S. (1996), *Interviews*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications

Britten N. (1999) Qualitative interviews in healthcare. In Pope C, Mays N (eds) *Qualitative research in health care*. 2nd ed. pp 11–19. London: BMJ Books

Smith, J. A., & Osborn, M. (2003). Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. In J. A. Smith (Ed.), *Qualitative Psychology: A Practical Guide to Methods* (pp. 53-80). London: Sage.

Zoltan Dornyei (2007), *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics: Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Methodologies* (Oxford Applied Linguistics)

Carolyn Boyce, Palena Neale (2006), *Conducting In-Depth Interviews: A Guide For Designing And Conducting In-Depth Interviews For Evaluation Input*. PATHFINDER INTERNATIONAL

Frankfort- Nachmias and Nachmias (1992), *Research Methods in the Social Sciences, Volume 1*. St. Martin's Press

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison K. (2000). *Research Methods in Education* (5th Edition). London: Routledge Falmer

Weiermair, K. 1971 "Economic Adjustment of Refugees in Canada: A Case Study," *International Migration*, 9.

Rogg, E.M. 1974 *The Assimilation of Cuban Exiles: The Role of Community and Class*. New York: Aberdeen Press.

The NSW Ministry of Health (2018), Evidence Check- Community-Based Mental Health & Wellbeing Support For Refugees. Link: <https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2018/11/apo-nid225466-1339271.pdf>

Appendix

Interviews

1. Jamal

Interviewer: So let's start by talking about your childhood and your family?

Jamal: Yes, I think I did have a good childhood. I used to have lots of friends and every afternoon, we were spending hours playing cricket. It was really fun those days.

Interviewer: How about your family? Can you tell me about that?

Jamal: Yes, actually we are quite a big family. I have two brothers and two sisters. I am in the middle. Then my father, my mother and my grandparents.

Interviewer: What did your parents do back when you were in your country?

Jamal: My mother was just taking care of us and the home, but my father was working in a store and my elder was also with him.

Interviewer: How about school and education? Like what were you study before?

Jamal: I finished my high school, but I couldn't continue studying. I really wanted to study computer science, but I couldn't go to the university because of the situation back at that time. I always studied computer science, do software programming and design applications. I wanted to become software developer.

Interviewer: Were you working also?

Jamal: Yes, beside my studies, I was also working in an internet cafe shop. I enjoyed the work, but I wasn't able to work for long because some people started to harass and engage in fight with me. I couldn't do anything. The store belonged to someone else. I was just a worker. So, the owner told me not to come to work

anymore because his business was getting damaged by those people who had problem with me.

Interviewer: What was the main reason you left?

Jamal: The problem or discrimination towards people from my religion in Pakistan has a long history. I did experience it even when I was very young, but later when I start working in that internet cafe shop. It became worse. There were people who wanted to fight with me and many times they beat me. And some of them threaten me that they will kill me and my family if I didn't leave that place. So, I had no choice, but to leave and travel a long dangerous journey to reach Europe.

Interviewer: Can you tell us about the journey? How did you manage to get here?

Jamal: Yes, those time I and two of my friends who were experiencing the same situation. We talked with smuggler to take us to Turkey. He then took us to Quetta and from there, we went to Iran. In Iran we stayed in place for a week without going outside. It was like a house in a dessert, but still we were strictly not to go outside. Sometimes, there was a person who was bring us food and sometimes there was no food. We are too many people there. Then after a week, they found another smuggler who agreed to take us to Turkey. On the way, we had to keep walking for long hours without stopping. We also had to hide from the police borders. When we got to Istanbul. Then it seemed a bit better, but we had no money to buy food or stay somewhere. So the smuggler told us to ask for more from our families because we need it. We need to stay here until he mange to find someone else who could take to Italy. We stayed in Istanbul about a month, hiding from police, from other people. We were all very scared. Finally, the guy came and told us to pay him because the other smuggler who will take us to Italy asks for more money. It took us

around 7 days to reach to Italy. It was very tiring and very hard. Then after staying in Italy in a camp for more than two months, we decided to go to Spain.

Interviewer: Can you tell us about your experience when you arrived here?

Jamal: Well, to be honest, it wasn't easy. It was very hard. I didn't know the language and I had no place to stay for a long time and money to buy food. There were many days that I didn't eat. Until, I got the right instruction by someone who took me to SAIER. Where I also had to wait for a long time until they gave me a place at a hostel. Things got a bit better, but psychologically I was so down and depressed. I was very tired.

Interviewer: How about other opportunities, like health care, going to doctor or getting medical assistance?

Jamal: Not really, sometimes after a long waiting and requesting. I was able to have an appointment with a doctor. He asked me a lot of questions, but he didn't give me any medicine. He just asked me to that I should talk with more people. Learn Spanish and try to make new friends.

Interviewer: So how about Spanish and Catalan language courses?

Jamal: Yes, I was offered to join a language course. I think it was a program by the city hall and the teachers were from some university. This program helped me a lot to learn the language. It took some time, but I am glad that now I can talk in Spanish.

Interviewer: So what made you to apply for asylum in Spain?

Jamal: I was offered to join a course with other refugees. There I was able to learn a little bit, but that class wasn't very serious. We used to speak English sometimes. I tried to study by myself. I think everyone knows Spanish is very difficult and very confusing [Laugh]. So I tried a bit a bit every day. Later on, I was offered to join another class where I learned many things from there.

Interviewer: Beside language course, what kind of educational opportunities have you had? Or what kinds of opportunities you would like to have?

Jamal: At first, nothing much, just practice my Spanish, walk around Barcelona. Sometimes I used to enter libraries. I didn't know any people here. It was a bit lonely. I think it's a bit hard to be in a place where you don't know people or your family isn't with you. However, I was able to get support to start studying again and now it has been a while that I am working in this grocery store. I am happy but I hope after finishing my studies I could the job that I desire.

Interviewer: What are the places where you feel most connected/accepted in Barcelona?

Jamal: This is a difficult question! There are lots times that I as a refugee can feel that I am alone, but most of the time I try to keep myself busy. So I don't get time to think about how I feel.

Interviewer: Do you think refugees get along well in Barcelona with others?

Jamal: I think, yes! People in Spain are more welcoming than many other European countries. They are social and very talkative. I have a couple of good Spanish friends. They are really kind. I personally, haven't had problem till now with anyone. Just sometimes when it comes to getting a document from somewhere or something, some people act a bit different, but I don't mind.

Interviewer: Do you think Barcelona is a good place to live?

Jamal: Yes, I think it is. Barcelona is a beautiful place!

Interviewer: How about your accommodation? Do you live alone or other people? How were you able to get?

Jamal: Now, I am in an apartment with three people. It's difficult because the rent is high, but I have no choice because it is very hard to find a place to rent if you are alone.

Interviewer: And what are your goals in life? What do you expect and want to do?

Jamal: First of all, I want to finish my studies successfully. I also want to learn Catalan. I mean learn it perfectly because now I understand a little bit, but it is not that good. Then of course, I want to do volunteer for some organization in Spain or maybe somewhere else. But I really want in Spain because I want to return what this country has given me. And then I hopefully could get a job to support my family or even support some of the activities of local organizations because I got many help from a couple of organizations when I was new in Barcelona.

Interviewer: At the end, what do you suggest or how can the services for refugee people can improve?

Jamal: It's hard to say, but the only thing I would suggest is they could help those who don't have a place to stay because during the winter it becomes very difficult. I have seen some people getting very sick while sleeping on the street.

2. Max

Interviewer: So let's start by talking about your childhood and your family?

Max: I think I had a good childhood. I was doing many things, but I didn't like studying too much. My father was always angry on for me not focusing on my studies, but it was a good memory.

Interviewer: How about your family? Can you tell me about that?

Max: I have a big family because we are five brothers and my dad and my mom. My parents are still Syria, but my two brothers with me, we were able to run away when the war started.

Interviewer: What did your parents do back when you were in your country?

Max: We had a shop, a bread shop. It was beside our house. My mother, my father and one of my brothers were cooking, but two

of my other brothers were at the shop, talking with the people and selling. I was depend. Sometimes, in shop and sometimes in the kitchen.

Interviewer: How about school and education? Like what were you study before?

Max: I didn't like studying much. I liked working at the shop. But because of my parents, I only finished high school and I had plan to go to university, but when the war started. I didn't go.

Interviewer: Were you working also?

Max: Yes, in our shop.

Interviewer: What was the main reason you left?

Max: Of course, because of war. We really had a good life. We were very happy. But when the war started. Slowly everything got destroyed. There was also army people taking people to war to fight, but people didn't want that.

Interviewer: Can you tell us about the journey? How did you manage to get here?

Max: We paid some money to a person to take us to Turkey, but he was a bad person. He took the money and run away. We couldn't find him. So we found another person. He brought us to Turkey and he introduced another people who promised us to take us to Italy, but on the way, many bad things happened. Every time I remember, I just feel depressed. So, after all those bad experiences. I came to Barcelona.

Interviewer: So what made you to apply for asylum in Spain?

Max: Some people told me that Spain is nice with refugees and they are helpful. Because in Germany it's very difficult now. I thought maybe Barcelona is a place I could live easily.

Interviewer: Can you tell us about your experience when you arrived here?

Max: I didn't have an easy experience. There were many many problems. I didn't know the language. I had to go from one place to other place for papers for many days and had to wait for very long hours and days. I think its because there were also lots of refugees and not many people are working to solve those problems.

Interviewer: How about other opportunities, like health care, going to doctor or getting medical assistance?

Max: A few times, I went to a doctor because of stressing too much. There is an office, Red Cross, they helped me to go to doctor which was nice.

Interviewer: So how about Spanish and Catalan language courses?

Max: It was very hard to learn Spanish. I was always feeling tried. But I realized to work in Spain, I need to learn Spanish. So I learned it.

Interviewer: Beside language course, what kind of educational opportunities have you had? Or what kinds of opportunities you would like to have?

Max: I don't know too much. They only told me about the course. Spanish language.

Interviewer: What are the places where you feel most connected/accepted in Barcelona?

Max: I feel ok at my work, but sometimes I miss my family, and the times when I was playing in the school and working in our shop. In Barcelona, it is nice, but I don't feel to be connect.

Interviewer: Do you think refugees get along well in Barcelona with others?

Max: I have some friends who are also refugee. We had problem for a while, but now they are friend with me. Sometimes we go for a drink and go around. So I think maybe yes.

Interviewer: Do you think Barcelona is a good place to live?

Max: Yes, it is a good place. I love Barcelona. I think everyone love this city. Its beautiful, but to live, I think it is very hard. There is not many work for people like me. I always think what will happen to me if I lose my job or will I have another good job or not.

Interviewer: How about your accommodation now? Do you live alone or there are other people with you in your place?

Max: I am living in an apartment now with some other people. They are also from Syria. They also work and one of them study. And it's a far but it's ok because at least we have a place to live. So, we share the rent and everything, otherwise it's very expensive to live by yourself in Barcelona.

Interviewer: And what are your goals in life? What do you expect and want to do?

Max: To be honest, I don't know what to do. I just want to work and support my family, since my parents are not working. Maybe in the future if I had a chance. I will study business.

Interviewer: At the end, what do you suggest or how can the services for refugee people can improve?

Max: I think it would be very nice if they help refugees to have more time to stay in the places the government give because I know some people who were asked to leave lots of times. They didn't have work and they had very difficulties. Oh one more thing if they allow us to work when we come, at least some low work for the people who need to wait until they get support from the government.

3. Zaid

Interviewer: So let's start by talking about your childhood?

Zaid: I was very nimble and loved to kite and were doing for almost more than 3 hours every day and Friday was the best day of

week, honestly I was bothering our neighbour because of kite, apart from that I was hanging out with friends to play football or some traditional games and the same time I was studying at school and were very good with drawing, reading and writing but not with mathematic, I love my childhood and will never forget it.

Interviewer: How about your family? Can you tell us about that?

Zaid: We are a big family, seven sisters and one brother, so with my parents we were 11 persons; I am the second one from youngest and my parents love me the most of them without any reasons, my mother passed away since years ago and I made just one time my grandmother, now they are seven persons leaving together in my family which are my Father, small sister, brother with his wife and 3 children, we have a good relationship and talking every week.

Interviewer: What did your parents do back when you were in your country?

Zaid: My Father was working in Town hall as a manager and my Mother was housewife, my sisters were studying but the eldest ones were working and helping my father to improve the necessities and of course I was working and helping somehow my dad and with my sister in house.

Interviewer: Tell us about your school and your studies when you were back in your country?

Zaid: I remember I loved the first class teacher, she was so kind with everyone, I studied 9 years in the same school with good and bad memories and I changed my school and finished in another one, so to sum up I studied in three different schools and continued in a private university, the most subject I loved was drawing and mathematic but now I not that good at mathematic even though I study Economy how ever since my childhood I start university

wanted to be a lawyer but now I changed, I would like to be a professor or a great manager.

Interviewer: Were you working also?

Zaid: Yes, I start to work when I had 15 years old, I worked free for almost 2 years than I become a graphic designer and had a good salary as well, was so happy to work and study in the same time.

Interviewer: What was the main reason you left?

Zaid: Since I hear and saw people are leaving the country for deferent reasons still I was sure that I will be in my country but the situation was getting whores and more whores, so my brother explained me his experiences of being in Europa for more than 5 years and was interesting and match able with what situation I wanted to be, so I decided to leave and luckily I got it, let me to say that the main reason was, having my own rights in a peace country.

Interviewer: Can you tell us about the journey? How did you manage to get here?

Zaid: First of all I came here with my sister so it's really difficult way to go from Afghanistan to Iran with smuggler so we decided to go to Iran by Visa, it was expensive but we did, we were in Iran for a week than we went to the border of Turkey by car, at 2:30am we started to walk to Turkey and end up walking at 5:00 pm, was the most difficult way to cross the border and enter to Turkey, with us there were family and was so hard for them to walk that much and reach Turkey, in the way no one cares about you but you, to be clear, If I couldn't walk they would continue the journey without me and leave me alone were I take rest and the most dangerous border was between Turkey and Greece, the smuggler never treat you the same as you talk them for first time, when you are on your way to cross the border even they don't answer you.

Interviewer: Tell us about the reasons for deciding to apply for asylum in Spain?

Zaid: It's a long story to explain but would like to say some, "In Greece I made some Spanish friends where I was working as a volunteer to help other refugees, so every late night we were sitting and talking, suddenly one night, they asked me what I was doing in my country, I explained everything and they asked me if I would like to continue my studying in Barcelona, I said, yes that's what I really wish and hope to continue my studies. So they found me a scholarship in one of the best cities, BARCELONA!"

Interviewer: Can you tell us about first one-year experience of your staying in Barcelona?

Zaid: I very glad who I made, I made a Catalan Family in Barcelona and they helped me as much as they could and still doing, I just love them not for being helping me but as a great family I ever meet, I learn the culture from them, many good vibes, attitude and much more, thanks to them, after a month I asked for help from a private NGO, the government or let's say Red Cross who present they government help are so slow and just make people wait for long time and now it's whores.

Interviewer: How was your asylum application procedure?

Zaid: I arrived in a good time, so in a week I got a lawyer, in 6 month my first interview, I was preparing my case, during this period my lawyer changed the date of interview and in a month I did the interview, I got a Persian translator, after the interview they got my fingerprints, Passport and my Afghan ID (Tazkera) so after the interview I waited 2 years to get the asylum, it was not so difficult to apply for asylum but yes, I was afraid of rejecting, during year and a half I had help from a private NGO and for 6 month from Red Cross.

Interviewer: How about other opportunities, like health care, going to doctor or getting medical assistance?

Zaid: As I said, for awhile Red Cross gave me a place to stay, but that was only for 6 months, but later there is an NGO which was supporting, I had a room, a small amount of money, food and health care when I needed so.

Interviewer: So how about Spanish and Catalan language courses? How were you able to learn the language?

Zaid: Actually, it was the only way to enter to university that I had to learn the languages or at least one of them. So I had to wait around 3 months until I was able to find a language course, so I started the course and they found the course for me. I had no idea how it will be. So, the first day of class was a bit surprising because the professor said that we will study both languages (Catalan and Spanish, and it will help us to differentiate the languages easily and it happened as she said, so we were studying oneday Catalan, next day Spanish and the teacher was so kind with us, she is expert of languages and the class was so fun.

Interviewer: Beside language course, what were the other activities you were busy with?

Zaid: The first year in Barcelona was great and I made many good friends, some become like my family and some like my best friends..., during the language course I was also visiting new places, some sports, hanging out with friends and sometimes I was busy editing photos or designing.

Interviewer: Do you miss your family, your friends? home?

Zaid: Obviously I do, I was so happy in my homeland, was working, going to picnics with my best friends and studying, I miss my family so much and will try to go back someday for holidays.

Interviewer: Do you think they can also leave and some day visit you?

Zaid: It's hard for families to cross borders illegally and arrive to Europa and and it's so expensive to come legally which my family can't afford to pay that much, as I said I will be back to visit them someday, hopefully.

Interviewer: And now what are your goals in life? What do you expect and want to do?

Zaid: When I got in Barcelona I was trying hard to enter to university and continue my studies and now I feel grateful that the struggles I had at first about entering to university finished. Now I already finished the second year of my degree and hoping to graduate successfully because it's my dream to become a manager or a professor.

Interviewer: At the end, what do you suggest or how can government agencies like CEAR, Red Cross, City hall or any local organization can help newcomers to adopt easily with the society in Barcelona)

Zaid: I have no information about how exactly things are going or how they are helping others nowadays, but I think it would be great to find them family or a society where they can feel connection, learn about the culture fast and also learn the languages. So, finding them a right place like that could be a good starting.

4. Sarah

Interviewer: So let's start by talking about your childhood and your family?

Sarah: Ok! I was born in Homs, Syria. It was a beautiful place, but now because of war. It isn't a good place anymore.

Interviewer: How about your family? Can you tell me about that?

Sarah: Our family is a bit small compare than other Syrian families. In my family, there is my father, my mother, my brother and me. We are four. I am the first child and my brother is the smallest.

Interviewer: What did your parents do back when you were in your country?

Sarah: My father had a store selling furniture, carpets and some house things. He is really a kind person. People around his store really loved him and respected him. My mother was at home. She was helping us with our school studies, homework and look after us. I miss her so much! My brother, he is very naughty. He was always making my mother be angry because he always wanted to go outside and play with his friends. This was all before the war started, because when the war started. Everything got changed. We weren't to go to school or even go outside to buy food from the market or do anything.

Interviewer: How about school and education? Like what were you study before?

Sarah: I always loved studying. I had many friends in the school and we used to study together. I wanted to become a doctor, so I could take care of others. But when the war happened, I couldn't go to school for three years. Then somehow I was able to go to a school. But there wasn't enough books, most of the classrooms were destroyed. The teachers were very few.

Interviewer: Were you working also?

Sarah: No, I was only studying and helping my mother at home.

Interviewer: What was the main reason you left?

Sarah: It's all because of the war, killing of people. I lost my brother and I don't where my parents are now. We came together to Turkey together but on the way the smuggler put us in two different cars. I was afraid, but its good, I was with my friend and her parents.

Interviewer: Can you tell us about the journey? How did you manage to get here?

Sarah: We left Syria around two years ago. Like most of the people, we paid money smugglers money to take us to Istanbul. On the way,

there were many times ISIS shoot on us and rebels army too. They took money from us to let us go. It took us more than a month to reach Mersin. We stayed there for two nights and I tried to find my parents but I couldn't. So they told me that we need to leave Mersin and go to Istanbul. It took us around two days go to Istanbul. On the way, we hide from the police and it was very scary during the night. When we arrived to Istanbul, my friends parents decided to talk to a smuggler to take us to Italy or Romania, but they (the smugglers) were asking us a lot of money. It's hard to trust them because sometimes to take you to a place and kill you or sell you. Finally, a smuggler agreed to take us to Italy. He said the ships are good and big. But it wasn't. It was small ships and very old. There was not enough food, water and in that small ship. There were lots of people. It was very scary. I think none can imagine unless you have been in that ship. There were families, children. I felt so bad, so sad for those children. There were lots of problem, difficulties for them. Then we finally arrived at the Italy. The police in Italy found us and took us to a camp, but the camp was full of people and it was a scary place. The rooms were full of people. It wasn't safe at all. So we decided to go to France, because they said France is a good place. So we talked to a smuggler there and we paid around 1000 Euros to take us to France. On the way, my friend was so sick. She was had high fever. Everyone was scared about her condition. Somehow he got better. I asked them why we want to go to France. Germany is also a good place, but my friend's parents were saying that France is better. So I had no choice but to just follow them. Because I had no one else. As a girl, it's very hard.

Interviewer: So what made you to apply for asylum in Spain?

Sarah: France is a good place, but I was harassed many times by people there. I wasn't feeling safe. So, I found a relative mine who wanted

to come to Spain and apply here for asylum. I thought its better if I go with them and maybe they help me to find my parents also.

Interviewer: Can you tell us about your experience when you arrived here?

Sarah: It is not easy. I am already tired emotionally and physically. I feel there is not much that they can do for me here. I can not speak the language, so sometimes the people working at offices acts different. I was told many times that why I don't speak Spanish. I just arrived here, you know. I love to learn Spanish, but it has been only six months. I still haven't got a chance where I go to learn Spanish. Sometimes, I study by my own, but to be honest, in my mind I always think about my parents and where they are. Beside that, I feel that everything is very complicated here. Sometimes, they tell to go there for papers and then go to another place. It has kept going on. There is an organization that helps us with papers. But most of the times, they can't do anything and they seem very sad for us. They want to do but they can't. It's something at the upper place, that isn't working.

Interviewer: How about other opportunities, like health care, going to doctor or getting medical assistance?

Sarah: I haven't been sick since I have been here in Barcelona and I haven't asked for those things yet. I feel if I ask, they might get angry and tell me to wait or go to somewhere else.

Interviewer: So how about Spanish and Catalan language courses?

Sarah: I haven't been to a class. They say there are places for refugees to learn Spanish, but in my case, they said that I have to wait until they take decision about my case.

Interviewer: Beside language course, what kind of educational opportunities have you had? Or what kinds of opportunities you would like to have?

Sarah: Until now, I don't have any, but I only hope if I could be allowed to study at a university and also learn the languages.

Interviewer: What are the places where you feel most connected/accepted in Barcelona?

Sarah: I haven't been to many places in Barcelona. But I like being with some of my friends.

Interviewer: Do you think refugees get along well in Barcelona with others?

Sarah: Some of them are nice and some of them are a bit mean also. Depends on each person, I think.

Interviewer: Do you think Barcelona is a good place to live?

Sarah: Yes, Barcelona is a beautiful place to live. I love the University of Barcelona. I have visited many times and I think it must feel good to study there.

Interviewer: How about your accommodation now? Do you live alone or there are other people with you in your place?

Sarah: No, I don't live alone. There are two more girls. We live in the same room.

Interviewer: And what are your goals in life? What do you expect and want to do?

Sarah: I really want to continue my studies, but for that I don't know who should I ask or will Barcelona government help me. In case if they helped then I will study. Then I want to work because they always tell me that the government cannot support for longer.

Interviewer: At the end, what do you suggest or how can the services for refugee people can improve?

Sarah: I don't know if what I will say makes any difference, but just if they could guide us well and help us to learn Spanish and Catalan. I personally love these languages.