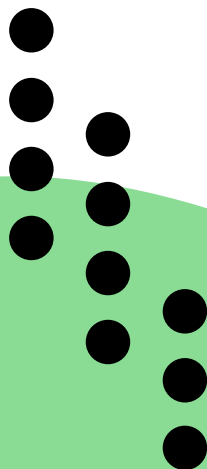


VULNERABLE REFUGEES

– *Training exercises
based on true stories*

Written and edited by

Márton BISZTRAI – Katalin BOGNÁR – Zsuzsa LÁSZLÓ



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– Training exercises based on true stories

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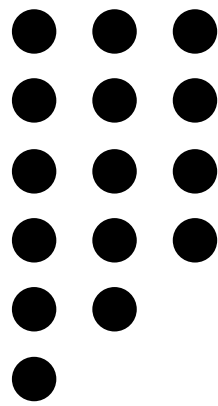
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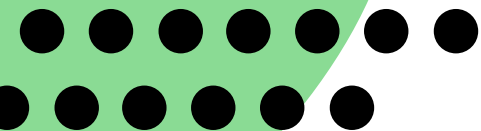
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INTRODUCTION



Dear Reader! Feel free to read and use this collection of exercises and profiles of refugees and their stories. You are holding a publication that is the essence of our most recent research (2019-2021) on refugees in vulnerable situations in Hungary.

This is a practical handbook with refugee “profiles” and training exercises linked to them. The exercises will also show you in which situations you could use them and what results you can expect. In our publication, we present detailed “profiles” of refugees, based on anonymised summaries of real-life stories and life situations, and vulnerability contexts.



“RAISD” and vulnerability

One of the main objectives of the project titled “*Reshaping Attention and Inclusion Strategies for Distinctively vulnerable people among the forcibly displaced* (RAISD)” was to gain a deeper understanding of the situations of potential vulnerability and the root causes of refugee situations. We have translated our research findings into training exercises, thus offering a practical set of tasks that, based on real-life stories, focuses on the vulnerability of refugees living in Hungary.

In this workbook, *vulnerability* is described as a situation in which there is an increased risk that an individual will suffer harm and social or legal disadvantage that seriously affects his or her living conditions. It is a long-standing circumstance that restricts the fulfilment of basic needs and access to human rights or threatens their identity. Another characteristic of *vulnerability* is that the person in this situation needs special care, support or protection.

The description of a vulnerable condition in manuals for helpers is mostly generalised for ease of use and understanding. Based on this, a *vulnerable person* may be a refugee, a survivor of sexual violence, a traumatised person, a pregnant woman, a child, an elderly person, a person with a disability, etc.

The aim of the research component of the RAISD project was to broaden this categorical approach and to understand, from the perspective of individuals, how, why and when someone becomes *vulnerable*, as well as what the components of this *vulnerability* might be. First, we interviewed refugees about the circumstances of their flight, their journey to Hungary, their arrival and the process of their integration. We then asked professionals working in the field (social workers, psychologists, legal advisors) and civil society volunteers for whom an important part of their work was to identify and address *vulnerability*, to write complex narrative stories about refugees they had worked with over a long period. In both approaches, it is clear that *vulnerability* is implicit in the simplified categories but cannot be precisely identified. It also brings us closer to understanding, identifying, preventing and addressing *vulnerability* if it is considered as a combination of various situations, conditions and circumstances.

For this reason, *vulnerability* is **contextualised** in our approach. The context that surrounds the individual and in which they become vulnerable. Our research has shown that vulnerable contexts can have recurring patterns and that they are almost always interlinked. With these in mind, however, it is always necessary to approach the interpretation of vulnerability from the perspective of the individual. For example, living as a single person or as part of a family can be a determinant of a vulnerable life situation, but it can also be protective, depending on the individual's current needs, circumstances and context. In mapping the vulnerable context, we look at various sub-areas that can be interpreted separately, yet they may create vulnerable contexts together.

- **Personality, adaptive strategies** that can influence the vulnerable situation in different directions, even deepening other elements of the context. For example, if someone has low adaptability, it deepens a vulnerable situation, while the opposite can help them cope more quickly and effectively.
- The size and quality of the **interpersonal and social network of relationships** have a major impact on whether vulnerability deepens and develops into a lasting crisis. For example, if someone is facing long-term unemployment, this is a negative factor.

- The individual's short- or long-term **life situation** may imply the potential existence of a vulnerability context. Some examples of these categories often used in the asylum terminology: unaccompanied minor, single parent, person with disability, survivor of trauma, victim of sexual abuse, a person living in persistent poverty.
- **The regulatory environment and the functioning of the social care system** around us. In Hungary, (too), a key issue in analysing the context of refugee vulnerability is the situation created by the legislation and the response of the social care system.

This training manual includes exercises that illustrate the complex vulnerable contexts described above by simulating real-life or imagined situations.

...

The RAISD project

The title of the RAISD project is *"Reshaping Attention and Inclusion Strategies for Distinctively vulnerable people among the forcibly displaced."*

The project was implemented between 2019 and 2022 and was financed by the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 822688. In addition to Menedék Association, the project involved partner organisations from Finland, Jordan, Lebanon, Italy, Spain and Turkey, and was led by Complutense University of Madrid.

The results of the project are available at www.raisd-h2020.eu.

The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Refugees can be and are dealt with by many people and from many different perspectives. But not everyone has the opportunity to meet and talk to the people concerned. In our experience, descriptions and training exercises on “refugee situations” are often stereotypical, simplistic and not based on the experience of personal encounters. We need to have real stories to be able to think about a social problem in a sensitive, meaningful and contextual way.

At the Menedék Association we have been working with refugees for more than twenty-five years. We have seen both success stories and failures. We realise that behind the many different stories there are similarities: resources, life paths, obstacles, different coping strategies, lucky encounters and dramatic coincidences. We also know and experience that the “host” environment is often not really supportive, and even creates barriers.



Who is this publication for?

Do you teach human rights courses in secondary schools? Do you teach social work at university? Are there an increasing number of refugees in your environment? Have you been asked to provide training on the practice of psychosocial support? Do you want to demonstrate the situation of a refugee family in an interactive exercise? Are you looking to renew your sociodrama sessions? Do you want your awareness-raising events to give refugees a credible voice? Then this publication is for you too!

But you can also read it if you are interested in the fates of the most vulnerable refugees and their life context. As well as being practical, it can also be useful if you are a trainer, teacher or professional developer who likes to use (or would like to try) interactive, situational games in your topics for real-life-based learning/training. It is also for you if you are not working in the field of asylum, but you think it is important to include this issue in your training agenda, or if you want to impart knowledge in a specific field to professionals working with refugees.

For the printable worksheets of the training manual, you may visit Menedék's website www.tudastar.menedek.hu.

Who are refugees?

In the words of the 1951 Geneva Convention: any person who owing to a well-founded fear of 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.

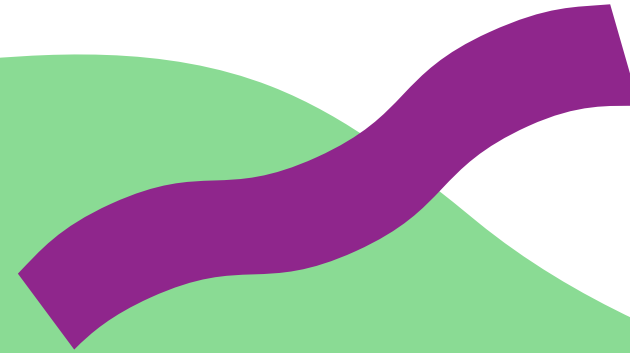
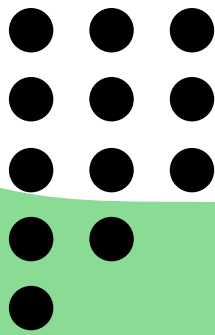
Persecution in asylum law refers to some blatantly serious violation, such as torture, inhuman or degrading treatment, slavery, servitude, threats of death and physical or sexual violence. But these grievances often add up to serious and persistent discrimination that affects different areas of life. A particular social group usually refers to a group defined by a ‘protected’ (i.e. innate or otherwise immutable characteristic closely linked to human dignity) characteristic. This could be gender identity, sexual orientation, family background, a trait based on an “irreversible” past event, or a vocation. Refugees in Hungary are granted a status very similar to that of Hungarian citizens, with the state issuing them a travel document, if necessary.

What is it like to arrive in Hungary as a refugee?

It all sounds very simple: those who are eligible for protection can have a chance to start a new life in Hungary, in safety. Unfortunately, refugees today face several difficulties. Due to the tightening of the asylum procedure and the fence at the border, refugees today have virtually no access to a fair procedure and therefore, they are not granted protection in Hungary. A detailed explanation of the procedure is beyond the scope of this publication, so we “only” want to draw attention to the fact that the dysfunctional or, in some areas, non-functional public care system itself contributes significantly to the fact that people, after a long and often very tough journey, find themselves in a new situation that increases their vulnerability. The analysis of refugee stories has made it clear that the attitude of the authorities and legal and existential uncertainty make it difficult for people who come to Hungary seeking protection to find a new home.

01

exercise



WORD CLOUD

**Number of participants**

8-12 persons

**Time frame**

30 minutes

**Who is it recommended for?**

For experts in this field and interested people alike, whatever their profession.

**Tools needed**

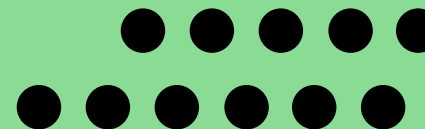
- Post-it notes
- Marker
- Surface suitable to stick a post-it on (flipchart blackboard, wall surface, etc.)

**The aim of the exercise**

To clarify the concepts of migration and refugee for participants and any misunderstandings that may exist. In the exercise, we will look at the definitions or projections of “migrants” and “refugees” that may “restrict” us. What we think about or associate with these two concepts can be objectively descriptive or stigmatising. The former approach may draw attention to the vulnerability of the individual, the latter may be an element of the vulnerable context.

**Tips for trainers**

The trainer himself/herself must be aware of the concepts of refugee and/or migrant, as well as the sociological and legal background of the concepts.



Description

Participants are asked questions, which they answer individually, writing their answers on post-it notes. Only one word/term per post-it. After everyone has written something, participants stick their post-it notes on a large surface (paper, blackboard, etc.) This creates a word cloud based on which the trainer can talk about concepts and further questions.



Sample questions

What comes to your mind about the word 'MIGRANT'? Write down your associations on one post-it each (you can use more than one)

100%

Migrants can be people who move from one country to another for work, study or simply for relationship reasons, but persons who leave their country of origin out of necessity are also migrants.

What comes to your mind about the word 'REFUGEE'? Write down your associations on one post-it each (you can use more than one)

1

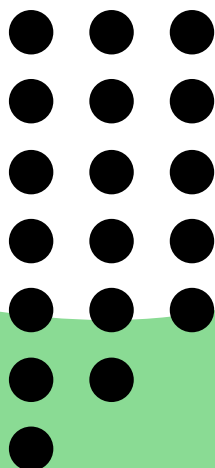
A refugee is a person who is fleeing torture or humiliation and is unable to avail himself of the protection of his own country.

NOTES

[illegible]

02

exercise



HIDDEN DIMENSIONS



Number of participants

8-20 persons



Time frame

15 minutes



Who is it recommended for?

For experts in this field and interested people alike, whatever their profession.



Tools needed

- An open area, suitable for movement
- Questions (see description)



The aim of the exercise

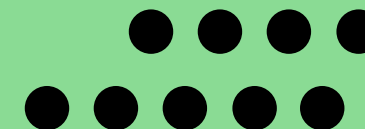
It's a warm-up exercise to realise how many similarities we have with people with whom we never would have imagined we had anything in common. We can also experience what it is like to be in a minority in a given situation. During the exercise, participants will get to know each other better and understand that our situation can change from one moment to the next and that we can just as well belong to either a minority or a majority group.

Some qualities/characteristics are clearly part of our identity: we categorise ourselves and are categorised by others based on gender, language and culture. Based on these, we think about ourselves and the "Others". We rarely consider how we can define ourselves and are defined by other dimensions besides our conscious, daily life identities. Belonging to a particular group can help us not to feel alone, but sometimes a strong group identity can also hinder integration and increase vulnerability.



Tips for trainers

It is important not to ask questions about characteristics or habits related to physical attributes (short or tall, sporty or not sporty, etc.) or about anything that could be offensive to anyone.



Description

The trainer will ask pre-defined questions that categorise people into different groups (e.g. vegetarian-meat-eater, early riser-late riser). After the question has been asked, the trainer marks where the participants should stand for each answer. For example, if the question is whether participants are vegetarian or eat meat, the trainer will assign vegetarians to one side of the room and meat-eaters to the other. If the trainer gives more than one option, he/she marks several spots in the space (e.g. there can be two groups for meat-eaters, or even three, for example, for people who only eat meat infrequently). The trainer then asks the participants to stand at the pre-determined spots in the pre-determined group of their choice. When each participant is standing in a spot, the trainer asks the respondents about the characteristics of their own group and then what they think about the other groups. (For example: what do you think about meat-eaters or vegetarians? What do you think about people who go to bed late or get up late?)

It is worth moving from the lighter topics to the more divisive ones so that after the warm-up you can work on real groups and inter-group dynamics.



Processing

Experiencing belonging to one's own group and saying words and phrases used to describe another group helps us to discuss how quickly we identify with members of our own group and how easily we make judgments about members of groups different from our own.



Sample questions

What do you drink first thing in the morning?

GROUPS

- Coffee
- Tea
- Something else

Do you like cooking?

GROUPS

- Yes, I do
- No, I don't
- I cook if I have to

**Lark or owl?
Are you an early riser
or a late riser?**

GROUPS

- I am a night person (owl)
- I am a morning person (lark)

**Which direction do you open
a banana from?**

GROUPS

- From the stem
- From the tip
- It varies

Do you eat meat?

GROUPS

- I am a vegetarian
- I eat meat
- (I am a flexitarian:
sometimes I eat meat)

**Can you solve
a Rubik's cube?**

GROUPS

- I can
- I can't
- Partially

03

exercise

DEBATING CORNER



Number of participants

8-20 persons



Time frame

15-30 minutes



Who is it recommended for?

For experts in this field and interested people alike, whatever their profession.



Tools needed

- Open space, suitable for movement
- Set of statements (see description)



The aim of the exercise

Exercises such as “debates”, “opinion lines” or “discussion groups” are designed to give the participants perspectives on their own established opinions and possibly to nuance them. There is no right or wrong answer, the aim is to initiate conversations.

Dialogue, the confrontation of points of view, is essential for a helper to be able to express his/her professional opinion with confidence. In this exercise, we have collected statements related to refugees. We formulated statements that are ambiguous and sometimes divisive.



Tips for trainers

It is worth not offering more than 3-4 statements for discussion at a time, as participants can easily get tired and the discussion may turn into a pointless debate. The leader of this exercise needs to be knowledgeable about the topic!

Description

The trainer marks two areas in the room where he/she writes “I agree” and on the opposite side “I disagree”. He then explains to the participants that he will read out statements and that after each statement, they should stand on the side that best reflects their opinion. So, after the statements are made, participants stand at the I agree/ I disagree signs at opposite ends of the room. The groups with opposing views then reflect on each other, in alternating order. First the group on the “I agree” side gives reasons for their opinion, and then the “I disagree” group responds. This continues for a few rounds, with the possibility for participants to change their position. Each “discussion round” will last 3-4 minutes.



Sample sentences

The problems of refugees must be solved locally.

Refugees should always be protected.

Every person has the right to live wherever they want.

Cultural differences make integration more difficult.

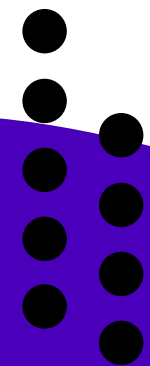
Most people set off in the hope of a better life.

Every refugee is traumatised.

All vulnerable groups need special help.



NOTES

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

04

exercise

REFUGEE
PROFILES**Number
of participants**

8-20 persons

**Time frame**

90 minutes

**Who is it
recommended for?**

For experts in this field and interested people alike, whatever their profession.

**Tools needed**

- Life stories printed on paper (see annexe)
- Refugee life path "guideline"
- Flipchart papers
- Colourful newspapers, scissors, glue, markers

**The aim of the exercise**

The purpose of this exercise is to enable the participants to put themselves in the shoes of a refugee and to find as many perspectives as possible on a life story. The exercise helps to identify the factors that create barriers to a person's successful integration and points at the resources on which to build. A systematic approach helps to identify the dimensions that may be determinants for the experience of a vulnerable life situation.

**Tips for trainers**

The trainer needs to have at least a minimum level of understanding of the context (political, sociological, economic, etc.) to be able to answer the questions raised. In case of uncertainty, the task could be scheduled for the end of the training day, so that the trainer or the participants can prepare for any questions that may arise. For longer training, experts on the subject could be invited.

Description

As a first step, the trainer will form small groups (max. 5 people) according to the number of “profiles” selected, and then tell them that they will work on life stories with the help of a “guideline”, using creative tools. The life path map produced by the group provides a visual representation of each stage of a person's journey.

The second step is for the trainer to hand out the life stories. It is important to stress that stories do not contain all relevant information (this is also the case during the support work processes: often little is known at first, and certain details are only revealed in the course of longer cooperation).

The trainer places the tools needed to make a collage in the middle and then distributes the guideline. The groups are asked to present the life story they have been given on a flipchart paper using the tools while formulating questions with the help of the guideline. Making a collage is a time-consuming exercise, but it's well worth it. The creative process is an important experience and helps to formulate questions.

The trainer should instruct the participants in his own words. The following example could be also used word by word: ***Try to place yourself in the story of the refugee below and draw a diagram of the process of escape. Draw the journey he/she is taking so that as many aspects and dimensions of it as possible are shown on the diagram/map.***



For a deep understanding of a refugee's life story it is vital to understand the broader, and even more individual context. However, it is not realistic to expect to have all circumstances be brought to light during

the support process. Yet it is important to keep in mind how much their life at home, the decision to leave and the circumstances of the journey and arrival can influence their future and their coping strategies.

Guideline (refugee life story)

Divide the migration process into 4 main phases



For each phase, indicate:

- What are the significant milestones and turning points?
- What internal processes are going on inside the person?
- Who does he/she meet and how do they treat him/her?
- Who does he/she meet and how do they treat him/her?

At the different phases/milestones, indicate:

- What resources are available to him/her?
- What obstacles and difficulties does he/she encounter?



The attached story is only the basis for your illustrations, so please don't just show what is described, but try to think about the details and what else might have happened before and during the story.

For each phase (HOME - JOURNEY - ARRIVAL – PRESENT), also record separately what other information you need.

Write these questions separately on a large piece of paper so that we can discuss them together at the end!

Divide the questions into 4 categories and mark them with different colours:

- Legal considerations (e.g. status, right of residence) – BLUE
- Psychological considerations (e.g. the individual's coping capacity, trauma) – GREEN
- Cultural considerations (e.g. customs, religion) – RED
- Sociological considerations (e.g. social structure) – BLACK



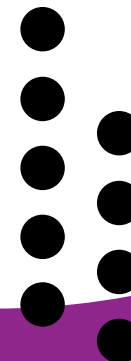
Processing

Of course, there will be questions on the papers that even the leader of the exercise will not know the answer to. In this case, it is worth pointing out where to look up specific questions, ask for expert help or decide who is covering a particular topic in the next session.



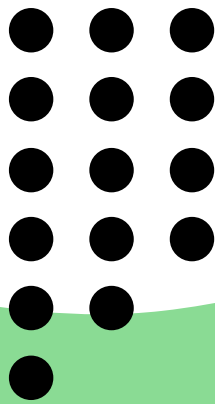
NOTES





05

exercise



TAKE A STEP FORWARD



Number of participants

8-20 persons



Time frame

30-40 minutes



Who is it recommended for?

For people who meet or may meet refugees through their work.



Tools needed

- Open area suitable for movement (see description)
- Role cards



The aim of the exercise

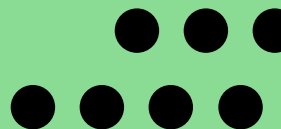
This practice refines our perception of refugees. The exercise will give participants first-hand experience of the many dimensions in which a person can become vulnerable.

If we are not thoroughly familiar with a situation or phenomenon, it is natural that our stereotypes will guide us. We often think simplistically because of a lack of personal experience and knowledge. Knowing and recognising our own preconceptions is very important to avoid creating new contexts of vulnerability through our work and to make efforts to reduce them. If we not only have stereotypical thinking, but also have prejudices against a particular group, and we fail to consciously address this (take concrete steps to change our prejudiced attitudes), we are likely to be actively contributing to creating new contexts of vulnerability.



Tips for trainers

Participants must not receive any role cards that affect them deeply or, if they do, that they must have the option to exchange them. It is also crucial that the trainer “takes” the players out of their roles after the processing (saying their real name, throwing out the role card, etc.) The exercise may affect the participants deeply, so it is important that they can express how they felt in the role, but then they should be able to distance themselves from it.



Description

To carry out this exercise, you need an empty space (space without furniture, etc.) suitable for at least the size of the group, so that the participants can stand in a line next to each other and walk at least 20 “chicken steps” in front of each other. The number of steps corresponds to the number of questions, so if you ask 20 questions, you’ll need 20 chicken steps of space.

In the first round, the participants line up in a row, loosely next to each other, with the space in front of them in which direction they will take steps. The trainer will randomly distribute role cards to the participants with a short life story (see annex) and then “place” the participants in their roles following the instructions below.

In the second round, the trainer explains to the participants that he/she will make statements, and if the statement is true for their role, the participant should take a step forward, if it is not true, the participant should stay in his/her place.

...

Close your eyes and, based on your role card, imagine

- What your life would be like?
- What your childhood was like?
- Who your parents are?
- What your living conditions are?
- What kind of house you live in?
- What you work/study?
- What you do in your spare time?
- What your outlook is, how you see your future?
- What your fears are, what are the things that upset you?

Now get in line. I am going to say statements that occur in your lives. If you feel that the statement is true for you (the character you are playing), take a step forward, if not, stay where you are.



Statements (refugee specific)

- You have never been in a difficult financial situation in your life.
- Your housing conditions are good enough.
- You have a mobile phone.
- You feel that your mother tongue, religion and culture are accepted in the society in which you live.
- You are not afraid of being arrested by the police.
- You know where to go for advice and help when you need it.
- You have never felt discriminated against because of your background.
- You receive social support and health care that meets your needs.
- You can go on holiday once a year.
- You can invite your friends to your home for dinner.
- Your life is interesting and you are optimistic about your future.
- You are not afraid of being intimidated or attacked on the street.
- You can vote in national elections.
- You can vote in local elections.
- You can celebrate major religious holidays with relatives and close friends.
- You can fall in love with the person you choose.
- You feel that your expertise is recognised and accepted in the society in which you live.
- You have no sleep problems, or nightmares.

- You are not worried that you will be sent back to your country of origin.
- You speak the language of the country where you live, well.
- You can concentrate, focus and learn easily.



Questions for processing 01

(right away, before roles are revealed)

Look around! What happened?

**How did those who took a lot of steps forward feel?
And those who did not?**

**If you were able to quickly move forward, when did you notice
that others were not moving as fast as you?**

**How does it feel to be in the front? For those who stayed behind, how do
you feel standing there?**

Did you think about what roles the others played?



Questions for processing 02

(after roles have been revealed)

It is important to get rid of roles (tear them up, throw them away, return them, etc.) before starting the conversation.

How easy or difficult was it to play your roles?

**What did you imagine the person you were playing to be
like? Do you know people like him/her?**

**Where did you think you got your knowledge and ideas
about the person from?**

**Could the person you are playing move forward?
Why or why not?**

How did this feel?

**Does what happened in the exercise resemble reality?
In what way? In what ways did this exercise reflect society?**

**What is the reason why some people have more
opportunities in life than others?**

What else would you like to tell us?

PROFILES

#1 Farid

From the child's point of view: You are ten years old, born in Sudan. You were six when your family (your parents and younger brother) were forced to flee. You were separated, you stayed with your dad, but you didn't see your brother and mother until two years later in Hungary. In school, in a children's community, you learned Hungarian very quickly. By the age of nine, you were the family's interpreter (your parents can't read or write), so, you are the first to learn about many things that are bad for your mental health. You often have nightmares and have thought of suicide. A conscientious school psychologist works with you.

#2 Turdush

You are 31 years old, you arrived in Hungary in February 2018 and your husband and daughter arrived two months later with a family reunification residence permit. You came to Hungary because a relative bought a flat in your name. Since then you have also had a baby boy. Your husband's salary is your family's only income, but since he has had several accidents at work, you have no money for medicine or food. As you have a residence permit, which requires you to have housing, a livelihood and health insurance, you are not entitled to any family or social support, nor to financial assistance from organisations that work with refugees. However, you do not want refugee status because you fear that this could have negative consequences for your relatives back in China. Often you do not heat your homes because you cannot afford the bills. You are getting into an increasingly poor mental state.

#3 Than

You are a 35-year-old single, divorced woman who was recognised as a refugee in Hungary in 2017. You were forced to leave your country because of political persecution. Your twin children are being raised by your mother in Bangladesh. Many people are there to help you: professional helpers, lay helpers, some employers are also open, but from time to time you get into a very poor mental state. One such time you ended up in hospital. Doctors say you have paranoid schizophrenia. You have no relatives in Hungary. For a while, you worked in a wok restaurant, but you were made redundant. In Budapest, you shared a flat with a couple, but things got bad and you had to leave. Your job opportunities are limited, you are always fighting with employers. Sometimes you feel that it would be good to get psychiatric treatment, but then you don't take advantage of the support services offered. You currently live in a workers' hostel. You plan to return to Bangladesh to bring your children back.

#4 Jahida

As a Sunni Afghan woman living in Iran, you and your family lived in a situation of constant financial and legal insecurity and hopelessness. You arrived at the Hungarian-Serbian border in 2019 with your husband and your seven-year-old daughter. You were detained for months in the "transit zone" in Röszke, and then lived in reception centres in the countryside. The other asylum seekers' cases were usually successful, but your application was rejected several times by the authorities. You are constantly disappointed, instead of living the better life you were hoping for. You realise there is no hope for a positive decision. Your husband is emotionally broken and can't get up in the morning, your daughter doesn't understand what's going on, her behaviour changes and she becomes depressed and aggressive. You have no choice, so you have borrowed money from people you know, just enough to get to Austria to try to seek asylum there.

#5 Miriam

You are a 30-year-old Palestinian refugee woman from Lebanon. Your eldest daughter is 14 years old and you have been on the move constantly since she was born, living in some kind of transitional situation. Since part of your family lives in Denmark, you are trying your luck, applying for refugee status there too, with a long waiting period, your second child is already born there. After two years of waiting, you were sent back to Hungary. You are forced to live in Hungary because of the application for refugee status, but as in the meantime more children are born into the family, you are drifting further and further away from self-sufficiency. From being someone who loves being around people, you're increasingly locking yourself in at your one-room flat of convenience. You're finding it hard to find your place, and your husband's not doing well either. At the moment, with the help of an NGO, you live in a one-room apartment, the children have learned Hungarian well and are having a good time. Yet your husband decides to leave Hungary. Your situation is so hopeless that you leave again for Denmark, to see if things will be better there.

#6 Jalil

You've been living in Hungary for two years, you came from Afghanistan with a Hungarian state scholarship, but you weren't motivated by university, so you gave up your studies and didn't graduate. You work odd jobs, though your family thinks that you are still a student. You fear losing your residence permit, as it is linked to your student visa. During your stay in Hungary, you became aware of your sexual orientation and you found your first partner through an LGBTQ online community. It is becoming increasingly clear that you cannot return to your country of origin. If you were known to be attracted to your own sex, you would not only be putting yourself in danger but your family as well. It's also a cultural taboo to talk about sexuality, and you have to keep it a secret from your fellow countrymen in Hungary. The possibility of applying for refugee status in Hungary is raised, but this is not feasible under the current rules. You feel helpless.

#7 Férrnan

You fled Cuba with your family in 2014. You arrived in Hungary with only one daughter, and your wife and other child came after you years later through family reunification. During this period, you had no information about each other's whereabouts for almost a year and finally found each other through an international organisation. When your wife arrived, you had to get to know her again: getting used to each other, adapting to the new circumstances. Your life that you got used to, has changed. You feel that you are exploited as an employee (because you have difficulty communicating and you haven't learned Hungarian), you are only registered for a few hours a week and there are many misunderstandings at work. You take out loans to buy a hairdressing salon, but you can't run it without the necessary paperwork and you can only get out of it at very bad terms. You are unstable, you change jobs often, as you have to support your family. You're increasingly annoyed with your family, you're often irritable with the kids. You feel that Hungarians are always meddling in other people's business: you think it's none of their business how you raise your children. Children are becoming naughty with you, even though others praise them very much for their behaviour. You don't like it when your wife is out of the house.

#8 Baha

You are a 31-year-old woman, married to a Canadian citizen. You are a refugee living in Hungary. You and your husband are members of the same Christian church. You too took up Christianity, which your family did not look kindly on, and you fled for fear of reprisals. You have no contact with any member of your family. Your husband supports you financially, and you would like to move to him as soon as possible, but this is not possible due to bureaucratic difficulties and Hungarian law. Unfortunately, you are in a very bad mental state and, although you have the opportunity to continue your studies, you are not very focused. You're trying to find a job, but you have no experience: you find a job in a hostel, but you only work there for a short time because the work is too demanding and you feel the work environment is not welcoming.

#9 Dua

As a Kosovar woman, you were a victim of human trafficking, and you were forced into prostitution. This stigmatised you in your village. Even though your children are still there, you can't go home. You will only be recognised as a refugee by the Hungarian authorities after years of legal proceedings. Even though you are surrounded by several civil and professional helpers, you live in a constant state of insecurity. Your integration in Hungary is not helped by the fact that you are often perceived as being of Roma origin. If you have a baby in Hungary, you are therefore out of the labour market and completely dependent on helpers, with no chance of managing your own housing.

#10 Joye

You've graduated from university in your home country, you're Christian and of majority ethnicity in your country, your family has a thriving business, where you also work. Yet one day you are forced to flee. You don't tell anyone the reason why. You don't even want to tell the social worker who supports you, even though you have a very good relationship. You are afraid that the reason for your flight could be dangerous for you in Hungary, too. Despite your good educational background and excellent English, you cannot find work and often have to go without. Even though your family is wealthy, you have had to cut off all contact with them, you cannot rely on them. You persistently look for work, your network widens, and you finally get a job in a multinational company in Budapest that matches your qualifications. Because of your „skin colour” and your poor Hungarian language skills, you have encountered prejudice, which is why you integrated into the English-speaking international community in Budapest, where you found understanding and friends. You didn't think you could do it, but to your surprise, you managed to get Hungarian citizenship. You are more and more in control of your life.

#11 Hamuda

You were born in Yemen, but family and tribal conflicts forced you to flee. When you arrived in Hungary, a wound to your temple from being hit with a stock of a rifle had not yet healed. You didn't know anybody, you didn't understand the papers written in Hungarian that the police and the Immigration Office staff handed you. The first thing you insisted on was to be able to go from the refugee camp to Budapest every day for Hungarian lessons. You had no money, just a free travel pass, which quickly caught the attention of Hungarian aid workers and social workers. The first thing you insisted on was to be able to go from the refugee camp to Budapest every day for Hungarian lessons. You quickly caught the attention of Hungarian aid workers and social workers. You had no money, but you got a free travel pass.

Even though you were only 17 years old, they did not recognise this and treated you as an adult. When you were recognised as a refugee, you had one month to move out of the camp. You had nowhere to go, and at the time there was no housing programme running. You met an elderly couple living in Budapest through volunteer helpers. You ended up living with them for two years. You felt safe there and your nightmares started to fade away. You weren't forced to work, so you had time to learn Hungarian, and after finishing 8th grade you became a full-time high school student. You're lucky because people tend to perceive you as Italian or Spanish because of your features. You are already renting a flat with Hungarian friends and are studying to be a car mechanic. You're also starting to get on the right track financially.

06

exercise

AWARENESS- RAISING STORYTELLING

**Number
of participants**

8-20 persons

**Time frame**

40-90 minutes

**Who is it
recommended for?**

For people who meet or may meet refugees through their work. This exercise may be particularly relevant for helping professionals working in individual case management.

**Tools needed**

- Each section of the case study on a separate sheet or projector

**The aim of the exercise**

Based on a concrete case study, participants will experience different aspects of the support work process and thus become more aware of potential vulnerability contexts.

**Tips for trainers**

It may be useful to form small groups so that participants with different experiences are put together. Always start the feedback round with a different group. If the exercise becomes sluggish, some sections can be left out, either by having the trainer summarise what happened or by having the participants read it.

Description

The trainer will form small groups and tell them that they will work on a case study and he/she will give them information gradually. There are several ways to lead this exercise. The aim is to move from one section of the case study to the next as described below. You can also use the individual sections separately.

It is useful if participants first think about the questions individually and then share their thoughts in small groups. After discussing their experiences and impressions in a group, after each section, a spokesperson from the group summarises their conclusions.



Case studies

1. Case study section (to be distributed or projected)

Turdush (31) is the first of her family to arrive in Hungary as the owner of an apartment still under construction. Her husband (37) and daughter (9) arrived afterwards and they have a residence permit for family reunification. Their residence permit was arranged by a lawyer friend. They contact the NGO where you work because the little girl needs help at school.



Questions for the case study section

- What will you do?
- What information do you need to determine the next step?
- Who can you rely on? (institutions, people)

2. Case study section (to be distributed or projected)

The social worker is looking for a volunteer to support the little girl in her schoolwork on a weekly basis, while Turdush attends the NGO's women's club until she becomes pregnant. The volunteer will develop a good relationship with the family. Meanwhile, the caseworker changes jobs and hands over the case, saying that there is nothing to do but to "check-in" on the mentoring process from time to time. Turdush unexpectedly comes to her new caseworker with the request that they are in a housing crisis and need urgent help.



Questions for the case study section

- When faced with this situation, what is the first thing you do?
- What information do you need to help effectively?
- What do you agree a contract with Turdush for?/should you sign a new contract?

3. Case study section (to be distributed or projected)

The social worker believes that international protection (refugee status or subsidiary protection) would bring them closer to solving the problems they are facing, which he or she repeatedly tells the family. The family would be eligible for international protection because of their Uyghur (persecuted Chinese minority) origin, but they are reluctant to apply because they are hoping to be granted permanent residence. It later emerges that a close relative of Turdush's refuses to allow her to apply for asylum because he fears that doing so would jeopardise his business investment.



Questions for the case study section

- What interventions options are there?
What do you do as a helper?
- What information do you need to make the right decision?
- Who do you rely on?

4. Case study section (to be distributed or projected)

The social worker offers a meeting with the organisation's legal adviser to clarify the situation, but this is also refused. Meanwhile, another organisation also gets in contact with the family. The father's salary is the family's only income. Since he has suffered several accidents at work, they have no money for medicine or food. First, they contact the organisation for housing support. To address the immediate crisis, one month's rent is paid by the organisation. Later, they also help the family with school supplies, food, nappies and medicines. The little girl is supported by volunteer helpers. It turns out that neither the children nor the parents have health insurance and the development of the baby - already born in Hungary – is lagging behind.



Questions for the case study section

- What will you do?
- What information do you need to make the right decision?
- Who do you rely on?

5. Case study section (to be distributed or projected)

Turdush is only asking for help with her husband's medical care, to support her daughter's education and with their housing difficulties. Nonetheless, the social worker identifies several other issues, drawing Turdush's attention to the need to deal with them, too. Turdush does not see them as a problem. The family is more cooperative with the organisation that provides both financial support and material donations. They only meet the social worker when he/she calls them in for an appointment. Over time, the trust between the social worker and Turdush develops. Nevertheless, the family does not disclose certain information. The family is surrounded by many other helpers, and the conflicting information from different sources makes it difficult to work together. Turdush always takes the easiest option and follows the advice that suits her best. It is difficult to make them active in their affairs.

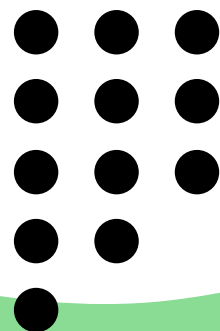


Questions for the case study section

- How can the work done with the family be made more effective?
- What can be the difficulty of having so many helpers around the family?
- What would you do to make parents more motivated to manage their own affairs?

07

exercise



SAFE FRAMEWORKS



Number of participants

4-20 persons



Time frame

30-60 minutes



Who is it recommended for?

In particular, for people who can be directly or indirectly in a support role because of their work. For example, social workers, career counsellors, teachers, legal representatives, mentors and peer helpers.



Tools needed

- Space where pairs can sit down out of earshot of other pairs.
- Role cards (see task description)



The aim of the exercise

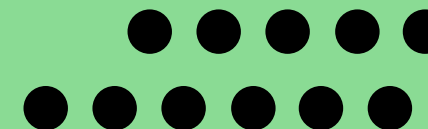
Demonstrating that the underlying situation that catalyses vulnerability often does not manifest itself directly. The helper tries to use various verbal, non-verbal tools and cultural knowledge to create a safe environment. Role-playing also provides an opportunity for deeper self-reflection.

Helpers also “work with their personalities”. We need to be aware of this instrument as an element of a vulnerability context, which can have a positive or a negative impact on the situation. This is what the helper can control and influence the most.



Tips for trainers

When processing the role-play, the exercise leader must make sure not to leave a sense of failure in those who fail to complete the game. There is a high chance of involvement, so emphasis must be put on closing the game and stepping out of roles.



Description

The following description is intended for the person running the exercise only. This information will not be shared with the participants, so as not to reveal details that they would need to discover during the game.

The aim of the exercise is for the person in the helper role to test in a situational exercise how he/she can create a safe and confidential environment with questions and sentences so that the person he/she is talking to feels comfortable enough to tell him/her about his/her homosexual identity. The exercise can also be carried out with the indirect aim of giving participants a more accurate picture of the situation of a “hidden” and highly vulnerable group (foreign students with gay identity).

- The game is played in same-sex pairs whenever possible.
- The player playing the role of the helper starts “blind”, not knowing exactly what situation he/she is dealing with. The idea is to play the role in such a way that the co-player reaches a point where he/she dares to say that he/she is gay. The exercise leader must not reveal this detail when initially explaining the exercise!

- The pairs should talk to each other out of earshot of other pairs. (Background music helps if only a small space is available.)

It is important to stress that this role-play has two basic situations.

- First a phone call, then a face-to-face meeting. Draw the attention of the pairs to this. In a phone conversation, it is enough for them to discuss the meeting and then they can skip to the face-to-face meeting situation.
- There are two different role cards for each pair

The first step is to divide the group into helpers and those who are being supported, and then briefly(!) explain the introduction to the exercise. The following instruction can also be used word by word. The two groups are handed out the role cards and given 5-6 minutes to familiarise themselves with the role, adjusted to the group dynamics. The exercise is carried out in pairs. Allow 10 minutes for role-playing and then process the experience together.

In the next role-playing exercise, you will be playing in pairs. One of you will play the role of the helper and your partner will play the role of the person seeking help. You must play according to the role card, so read it carefully several times and follow the instructions. The role card only defines the initial position, beyond that, feel free to adapt your roles as you see fit. One aim of the exercise is for the helper to create a safe environment.

...



Questions to help processing

What was it like to play this role?

Have you ever been in a similar situation? (Your questions had an important effect / it was difficult to ask for help.)

Did you have a helper's preconception of the problem?

What was the point that made it easier for you to talk about your gay identity?

Were you able to identify areas where cross-cultural differences influenced your questions/answers?

Descriptions for role play

THE HELPER (role description)

You are in the role of the helper. You can be a classmate, a colleague, a social worker or a teacher. You've known Jalil for a year, he's asked you for help with small things (official paperwork), and you've been to community events together. Here is what you know about him: he's 23 years old, he came to Hungary from Afghanistan, a province where fighting between the allies and the Taliban is ongoing. The power supply is cut off, the allies can bomb at any time, and life in the city is controlled by repressive Islamists. Jalil has grown up with this, for him it is "normality". He loves his country and misses his family, but he knows he never wants to return - once you have been able to leave, you never go back. He is studying to be a programmer at a university in Budapest. Although he studies in English, he is also becoming increasingly fluent in Hungarian. He recently had a paid internship at a well-known Hungarian startup, but he didn't get a permanent job. You've spoken several times about how he doesn't want to return home after his studies and plans a future in Hungary. You have told him many times that he should start working on a way to stay here at least six months before his study permit expires.

This is where the role-playing starts: he calls you on the phone, saying he wants to meet you in person because he has something to tell you and wants your help. In this case, the default position is to make an appointment during working hours, with an Arabic interpreter, if necessary.

Your first task is to set up a meeting with Jalil. Once this is done, you can have a face-to-face meeting to discuss the specific situation. Your task is to ask him questions that will make it easier for him to tell you about his situation with confidence so that you can help him effectively.

THE PERSON SEEKING HELP (role description)

Your name is Jalil. You've known XY for a year. You trust him, you have asked him for help with small administrative paperwork before and you have participated in several community events he has organised. He knows that you are 23 years old, you came to Hungary from Afghanistan a year ago, from a region where fighting regularly flares up. The electricity supply is cut off, the allies can bomb at any time, and life in your city is controlled by repressive Islamists. You have grown up with this, for you it is "normality". You love your country and miss your family, but you never want to return - once you have been able to leave, you never go back. You are studying to be a programmer at a university in Budapest, with a student visa. Although you study in English, you are also becoming more fluent in Hungarian. You recently had a paid internship at a well-known Hungarian startup but didn't get a permanent job. Important: XY only knows the information above, about you.

In role-play, XY doesn't know that you're in trouble and you don't know what to do. For the past six months, you've been neglecting your university studies and haven't even sat your exams. As you have not completed the required number of credits, you have received a notification from the University's Department of Studies that your scholarship has been terminated and that if you wish to retain your student status, you will have to pay your own tuition fees and other costs. This is absolutely impossible for you.

At the bottom of it all is that you are a homosexual. You have known this for a long time, but you have not dared to tell anyone in your country because you would almost certainly be killed. Of course, your Arab friends and fellow students in Hungary don't know this either. They mustn't know! Learning about your gay identity has been a priority for you recently. It has been on your mind and in all your thoughts, as much as your internship. For you, the university scholarship was an "escape route" from Afghanistan. You are not really interested in programming either. You know that for XY to be able to help you with your crisis at the University, you need to open up to him that you are gay. Nobody else knows it except your Hungarian gay friends and your partner that you moved in with when you had to leave your dormitory.

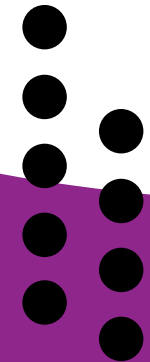
In the first part of the role play, you call XY to ask for a personal meeting. XY has Arab friends and colleagues, so you want to meet him in a place where others will not hear you.

In the next part of the role-play, you are in an open-air location, away from prying ears. You come to this meeting being honest about your situation because you trust XY and need help. But... You tell him that you've been "kicked out" of university, and you go on blabbering. One might sense that there is something in the background that you just can't say. You're vulnerable, searching for words, feeling insecure. You try to tell him, but you keep stopping. You need XY to ask the right questions, to create an intimate, liberating atmosphere with his questions. When you feel that this is established, you share with him that you are gay.



NOTES





08

exercise

VULNERABILITY IN THE COURSE OF A LIFE



Number of participants

3-10 persons



Time frame

60 minutes



Who is it recommended for?

For professional support workers and anyone interested. The realistic objectives and outcomes of the exercise may vary depending on the group.



Tools needed

- Chairs placed in a circle
- Post-it notes
- Markers
- Role cards (p 66)



The aim of the exercise

A more complex insight into the life of a refugee woman, a “simple” acquisition of knowledge. Realising the complexity and spiral-like functioning of vulnerability, demonstrating different potential vulnerability contexts. Identifying possible interventions. Launching a professional debate in the context of a specific case.

One of the important intersections of our research and case studies was the realization that in Hungary, a context of vulnerability is almost never an independent phenomenon, but rather an interconnected web of factors that intertwine the life situations of refugees. These are rarely, or even almost never seen in a single, unified picture.



Tips for trainers

It takes time to read, interpret and process. The text can be approached from many dimensions, and the trainer should pay particular attention to keeping the allocated time frames. It is necessary to discuss the concept of vulnerability context before or after the exercise to develop a common set of concepts.

Description

We interviewed Noor at length about the circumstances of her flight, her time on the road, her family, her aspirations and how her integration in Hungary is progressing. The following text is edited, all facts have been anonymised so that Noor is not identifiable. Furthermore, questions, repetitions, misunderstood sentences were removed as well as the parts when Noor cried and her words became unintelligible from the ambiguous text. This is in fact an “interpretation” of the interview, so that the reader can only read and concentrate on the hard facts. In a face-to-face conversation, there are many other factors that can help or, less often, hinder understanding. However, her story, its chronology and the gravity of the events show the real life of a refugee woman living in Hungary.

The text or parts of it can be used freely for other exercises, or to inspire new exercises but it can also be an important body of knowledge in its own right.

Collect all situations in Noor’s life where a vulnerable context is detected. Participants are invited to explain what type of vulnerable context they encounter in their current position as a helper, and what is the situation in Noor’s life where they could reduce or even eliminate the vulnerable context. They should also list other conditions crucial for eliminating and reducing the vulnerable context.

First of all, I would like to ask you to introduce yourself. Who are you and what do you do for a living?

I come from Iraq, Mosul, and I have been living in Hungary since 2010. I have three children who are still living with me. My eldest son is eighteen and my little daughter is eight. I work in the kitchen and at the cashier’s desk in a pizzeria owned by an Arab businessman.

It’s very hard to do this job because I start early and work long hours. There is no one to accompany my children instead of me, and since my daughter and toddler are still small, I have to take them to school and kindergarten. My workplace is in District XI, very far from where we live.

In the evening, when we get home, I just have the energy to go to sleep with my children. I would need more time in the morning to take care of the important things. This situation has been very difficult for me lately.

At home in Mosul, I was a journalist, a photojournalist. At the beginning, in Hungary, I worked as a cleaning lady in a restaurant. Now I speak a little Hungarian, so I was promoted, so I already work in the kitchen, as I said. It is difficult to live in Hungary. I keep in touch with the school and the kindergarten. But I’m alone with my children, I can’t save up money and they don’t help me. I pay for my meals at school, and if there are occasional programmes, I pay for those too, and I also for the kindergarten. I often can’t afford it.

I left home in 2007. That was a very difficult year in Mosul. The year before, the

local Islamists had strengthened again, and the situation for women journalists had become very difficult in many ways, especially for female photojournalists. It was not good to be a woman, the Islamist activists didn’t like a woman being independent and working for men – or I don’t know – international, American, European news agencies.

They say that these people are not Muslims, but kafirs, that is, infidels. I got my salary from Reuters, and the Islamists said it was haram, sinful money. Two or three times I woke up in the morning in my own apartment to find a threatening letter on my desk. Not in the mailbox, but inside the house, on my desk. They said that if I want to stay alive, and if I want my children to stay alive, I should stop working for foreigners.

I was overwhelmed with fear, I wouldn’t let my children go anywhere but to school and straight home again. Every morning when they left, I thought they might never come home again.

I was thirty-six at the time, supporting my mother and father, so I didn’t have much money or savings. I took my youngest son, Ali, who was eight years old, and escaped from Mosul. The older children stayed with my parents, waiting for me.

I arrived in Europe in 2007 and was granted refugee status in Hungary in 2010. Then, I applied for family reunification for my children who had stayed at home to come after me. It was successful. Since then, the older ones have left and moved to Austria, leaving only my youngest with me, who I left home with.

The children were in the refugee camp in Bicske the whole time after they were allowed to come after me, and they couldn't go to school. They had a lot of bad experiences in Bicske about what life in Hungary would be like for them. When they turned eighteen, they left the country.

Do you keep in touch with them?

We only keep in touch by phone, I can't visit them. In the past six years I have only been able to visit them once, very briefly, for two days. One of them was getting married, and I couldn't be there. I asked my boss for time off, but he said it was a busy time, and if I left I wouldn't be able to work there anymore. I couldn't go to the wedding. The same happened when the other one became ill and I wanted to visit him. At least making phone calls is not expensive, I can pay for that, so, we can talk whenever we want. Luckily my parents are safe now, they were scared too, but we managed to get them out of Iraq.

I spent about a year in Turkey and seven months in Bulgaria waiting to come here. I was alone with my son, we didn't know anyone. It was very difficult sometimes, but at least we were together. When we left Bulgaria, we were in a large group and we were led by human traffickers. I was the only woman and there were a lot of Pakistanis, Afghans and Africans, all men. And these people helped carry my little boy all the way. It was a long journey, lots and lots of walking, long days. Hiding in the woods, waiting. I first met

police officers in Hungary, for example. Until then, we only walked at night and hid in the woods during the day. This lasted for at least two months. I do not even know whether we crossed the border from Romania or Serbia. Our group split up and the police caught me and a few other people and took us to Debrecen first. I wasn't beaten up, but there was a man who was kicked several times by the police. They were very angry, they handcuffed everyone, they shouted at us.

I cried a lot and asked them to let me go, I didn't want to stay in Hungary. But they forced me to let them take my fingerprints, so I was put into the system. Then I spent three months in Debrecen. I had a piece of paper with my name on it and a stamp, I didn't even know what it said. I had to use it everywhere; if I wanted to leave the camp, if I wanted to have lunch in the canteen or if I wanted to send a message from the internet room. My child was supposed to go to school, but I didn't even get any promises as to when that would be. I didn't like it here, so I moved on to Sweden. I had been living there for two years when I received a letter saying that Hungary wanted me, that my immigration papers were all clear and that I should return with my family.

But we had a good life, I was able to go to university to study languages, and my son was soon enrolled in school and learned not only Swedish but English as well. We lived in a normal house, we had two rooms, and yet after two years, we were deported to Hungary.

After I came back, I waited for two more years for the Hungarian authorities to decide, during which time I was in Debrecen. The first response from the immigration office was that I did not need protection and that I would be sent back to Iraq. I was told that they would contact the Iraqi consulate and they would make me a passport and give me a ticket and I would go back to Mosul. All I could say was okay, I'll wait for the ticket and the passport and I don't know, ...I'll go back to Iraq, then, I was really tired of all this. I had lived in Sweden for two years in a very good situation. After this I thought it was better to die at home than to stay here. At the same time, my children who stayed at home kept asking me "Mum, when will you get your status, when can we come to you?". I didn't know what to tell them when I found out that my application had been rejected and they wanted to send me back. In my desperation, it seemed worse to stay here. I only had one child with me at the time, but he couldn't go to school either. I wondered what would happen if three more children came and stayed with me in the camp. I was waiting for my passport and plane ticket when I was told that I had been granted full refugee status after all.

I didn't know whether to be happy or sad at the time. I just remember crying. I got in touch with two very good people, a lawyer and a social worker, and they offered to help me bring my children here. It worked, but it was also a very difficult time for me.

They moved us to Bicske and we waited

there for a very long time until the family reunification and the legal procedure for my children was completed. This took two years, we were in Bicske the whole time.

At that time I was in the camp in Bicske, and we continued living there for a long time. My children did not go to school during this period. There were only four or five children in the camp, and a woman visited them and they played all day long, and they said "this is school". The big ones understood the situation, they said that in Mosul they had moved up a grade in a year, and here it was all games. No school, no learning and no classmates. The children said that they had no future, and they went on to Austria with other people. You just eat, sleep, get up, eat, and time goes by. They didn't like it here. I now think that if I had gone with my children at that time, it would have been better. But I didn't go, I stayed, because I thought the work here was no different from any other country. I can see now that that was a bad idea.

I was working when my daughter was only three months old. I washed dishes in the refugee camp. I have been working since 2011, I don't have a day off, I work all the time. My family, my brother, and another uncle who live in Belgium, told me that if I worked like this there, I would be a millionaire.

After I was granted status and my application for family reunification was accepted, my children arrived and their case was completed, we could no longer

stay in Bicske. I asked them where I should go with my two small children, then? They said that the Reformed Church Mission could help with grants and housing. I thought it would be best to move to Budapest because it would mean better job opportunities and school for my son. Soon a team from the Reformed Church Mission came to Bicske and interviewed me. I was told to wait. After two or three months they came back and I was allowed to move out. By then Ali was thirteen. And little Sarah, she was already born here in Hungary, just before my refugee status was granted.

Sarah was conceived in Sweden. Long before that, I had divorced my husband in Mosul and fled as a single mother. I haven't told you this yet, but when I arrived in Sweden, I became ill on the street, fainted and woke up in hospital. All the worrying had done something to my stomach. In the hospital I met an elderly woman, her family was also Iraqi. She told me that she had a nephew and would be happy if we got to know each other and if we liked each other we could get married. I didn't think about things like that at all at the time. I was not ready to say yes or no. All I said was that I would talk to my family in Iraq and if my children and my father said it was OK, then we could meet. You need the consent of your parents' for such things. When I spoke to my father, he told me that my application had not yet been accepted in Sweden and that I might have to go back to Hungary, so I had better not get married. I think it's good that I

talked to my father and to the children about it. They also warned me that this man's application has not been accepted yet in Sweden. But he said that if I had to go back, he would come with me. I was tired and I felt alone, and this man was there for me and helped me with everything. I spoke to my father again, I told him that if I had to go back to Hungary, he would come with me. Then I 'wouldn't be a woman all alone. My father replied that he was not in my position and would leave the decision to me. If I thought it would be better for me, he would agree to the relationship.

A few months later we got married there in Sweden, but we only lived together for six months because I lost him. He had an accident; he fell off a scaffold and died. I was two months pregnant at the time, the police and doctors said that if I didn't want to keep the baby, they could help me. I spoke to my parents again and they said that the baby is already a human being because it has a heart. Shortly after my husband's death, I received the paperwork to return to Hungary. Sarah was already born here.

In 2017, I got married to another Arab man. I met him at work and we worked together. It's very difficult alone. It was difficult for him too, we both needed someone. He is Sami, the father of my youngest child. So we live together, my son, with whom I fled Iraq, my daughter Sarah, whose father died, and Sami.

I have almost no contact with other people, with friends. I have a friend, but I can't meet her in person. We can't go out or anything, we only talk on the phone

because I don't have time for anything else. I have no time, I'm always working. I can only work with you now because it's a holiday and the restaurant is closed. Saturday or Monday? I work every day and I have no time for friends and family. My life is just work, sleep, work, sleep. If I don't work so much, I simply can't support my children. My husband helps me, but he doesn't give me all the money he earns. The children are my children, not his children, he does not take responsibility for the other children.

And what was your relationship like with your first husband back in Iraq?

My husband was not a bad man, but his family was bad. They were always trying to interfere in our lives. They didn't like my work, my independence, that I earned more than my husband. They said I was a disgrace to the family. We lived together in separate parts of a big house, and when my husband wasn't home his father and his brother would come to me and say these things, and sometimes they would hit me. When I told my husband, he said that I was right, but he didn't stand up to his family. So I couldn't stay with him. The divorce was very difficult, but I was strong, I went to court, I told them I was beaten and I went through with it. It was the only reason the kids could stay with me.

Can I ask you about your religion? Are you religious?

I don't know. My mother and father told me that I was a Muslim. It doesn't matter to me if you are Muslim or Christian.

There are just human beings, and if I help other people and don't bother anyone, I'm a good person. I believe there is one God who wants peace and people to help each other. That's all I know, I don't know what religion is.

Do you pray?

No. I don't think I'm a Muslim. I see many "Muslims" who live in an inhumane way. I see people of other religions who are like that, too. I think religion is in the heart and the heart is God. If somebody asks me what my religion is, I don't know, I don't know, maybe nothing.

In Iraq, I had two choices: leave or die. I might not have died, I don't know. It's hard to think about it, because if I had stayed at home and stayed alive, everything would be much better now. My son is eighteen now, if we were at home he could be at university. Here he spent three years in Bicske and did not go to school. Then he was enrolled in the fourth grade, but he was too big for that. Everyone was younger than him, he didn't like going to school. He only made it to sixth grade and hasn't been to school since. He keeps asking why I didn't stay in Sweden, it would have been different there.


In the meantime, he has taught himself to assemble computers and speaks four languages. He told me he was thinking about his future and wanted to become a doctor or an engineer. But definitely not a waiter. He said, "Mom, what do you think?" I told him that being a waiter is better than nothing.

My older daughter was seventeen when she left for Germany. She was on her own. It is not good for an Iraqi girl to be alone in a refugee camp. There was a family there who said they had a very good son and would marry my daughter so she wouldn't be alone in the camp. If the son had waited and I had been there, my daughter might have gone to school and then to university, but she was alone, so she got married. This little girl got married. She's twenty now and has been married for three years, but maybe she's better off than I am in Hungary. My husband is sometimes not normal, he doesn't think about me, he doesn't think about the children, our child. He doesn't help us, he neglects us and everything is left to me. And I just work and work. You come from a certain level and you arrive at a very different level. You work a lot, but you stay in one place. All that's left is fatigue, and we don't even have the money to save up for a trip.


And is there someone you can talk to about your problems? Do you have siblings, sisters or brothers?

There are there, but they can't help. I can only talk to God. With God... (starts crying). I was able to enrol my younger daughter in school on time. She's a very bright child, a quick learner, but she didn't do well in school. She still had to repeat a year because she was told that she was "a refugee, she doesn't know enough Hungarian". But that was not the problem ... I had to pay for the lunch money, the sports clothes, the extra dance,

the zoo pass, the extra English. It didn't work, but Sarah didn't know what was wrong, she just felt that the other kids were going to places, but she couldn't go. I don't want her to end up like my son. It's not right. I applied for citizenship, that's probably the only way out, but they don't like the fact that I'm Iraqi these days. Maybe my children could go to a better school, maybe it would change my life a little bit. I don't know. I pay very little tax because my salary is low, and the lawyer says I might be refused citizenship. I have no other plans, I don't want anything else from the future. That's all I can think about now, so that I can at least give my children citizenship so that they can be free.



NOTES



09

exercise

PROFILES OF VULNERABLE REFUGEES

Vulnerability can arise in a myriad of contexts. The individual's basic situation, coping strategies and the quality of his or her social network of relationships may provide specific contexts for vulnerability. The areas where they are given additional frameworks are primarily needs-based. The multi-facade contexts of vulnerability are most evident in areas such as legal status, housing, employment, mental health, access to health care and communication.

These areas are closely interlinked, and if one factor develops positively - for example if employment is resolved in a sustainable and long-term way - it can trigger positive changes in other areas. Respect in the workplace, a more secure financial situation can affect housing, legal status and access to health care, and can ease anxiety and stress. In the interlinking of vulnerability contexts, this logic is also true in reverse. If the different key factors in one area create vulnerability, it is likely to have a negative impact on the other areas as well. Unemployed refugees, for example, will live in constant anxiety and insecurity until their housing is resolved. This psychological burden can also block their social integration, relationship building and language learning. This makes their chances of a self-sustaining lifestyle even slimmer, and their dependence on support services more permanent and deeper. Therefore, in the following, stripped-down profiles of people from refugee backgrounds are presented, focusing on legal status, employment, housing, health status, mental health, communication and family environment. In addition, we also share two profiles of successful life journeys. After all, "refugee status and legal status" easily create a context of vulnerability (the first element in the negative spiral), yet there are people who successfully coped with this circumstance on their own and with external help.

#1 Akbar and his family

Akbar is a middle-aged Muslim man. He and his son Farid fled South Sudan in 2014 and were on the move for about a year before arriving in Hungary. Meanwhile, his wife and younger son are waiting in Egypt to join them.

LEGAL BACKGROUND

They are first recognised as beneficiaries of subsidiary protection by the Hungarian authorities, however, as only refugee status would entitle them to family reunification, they appeal. It takes two years for them to succeed and become recognised as refugees. It takes another year until the other half of the family can join them.

WORK

Akbar cannot read or write because he has never gone to school. He used to work as a waiter in a food stall, but he has no other work experience. In Hungary, he finds only casual work and works as an unregistered dishwasher in a hospital kitchen for very low pay. He settles in quickly and is well-liked by his colleagues and boss. They are flexible with his working hours, often letting him go if he has something he needs to get done.

HOUSING

The family lived in a Family Temporary Housing Facility for a year and a half, and since moving out they have been experiencing ongoing housing difficulties. They have to move several times within a few months. The frequent moves and the instability is very stressful for the family.

MENTAL HEALTH

Akbar was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress syndrome. The two-year legal asylum “hassle” has disrupted the family’s life, and they have lived in great uncertainty and distance from each other. Farid often has nightmares, wakes up regularly at night and has suicidal thoughts. A school psychologist started working with him regularly.

HEALTH STATUS

Akbar’s health is poor and deteriorating. He has a neurological condition that causes frequent pain in his legs and would require surgery. He attends physiotherapy on a weekly basis but refuses surgery because of the long recovery time.

COMMUNICATION

Farid often finds himself in the role of an interpreter (translating between his parents and the outside world), which puts him under enormous stress and makes him aware of information that he finds difficult to process as a child. Akbar’s contact with the social worker is exclusively focused on current affairs (finding a job, going to the doctor, dealing with paperwork). This is due to language barriers, as they cannot communicate without an interpreter.

INDIVIDUAL LIFE JOURNEY

Akbar’s personal abilities and his mental and physical illnesses kept him in a state of prolonged vulnerability within the conditions of the Hungarian social system. There was no break-out point from this complex context. After his wife and younger son arrived in Hungary, they were still unable to secure housing, employment, education and other areas of integration. So they went to Germany, which they believed would reduce their vulnerability to the social welfare system and make it easier for them to manage their lives as part of a larger, stronger local Sudanese diaspora.

#2 Turdush and his family

Turdush is a 31-year-old Uyghur woman from China who arrived in Hungary in 2018 with an “other” category residence permit as the owner of an apartment under construction. Her husband and daughter arrived later with a family reunification residence permit.

LEGAL BACKGROUND

The family will be deported if their residence permit is not renewed. With their current status, they are not entitled to any family or social support, or even financial assistance from refugee organisations. As foreigners, they must cover all the costs of their stay in Hungary. As they are unable to cover their expenses on their own, they are encouraged to consider applying for refugee status, but the family rejects this option.

WORK

Turdush's husband works in a food stall without a registration and work permit. The husband's salary is the family's only income. However, since he suffered several accidents at work, they 'didn't have enough money for basic expenses (food, medicine, rent). The husband refuses to allow Turdush to try to find a job during his recovery.

HOUSING

The family faces a housing crisis that leaves them in urgent need of help. They live in a spacious rented flat that they can't afford (rent and utilities) but don't want to move to a cheaper rental. The family continues to hope for the completion of the “on paper” Turdush-owned apartment. The legal circumstances of this property are unclear. A relative of Turdush is handling the case, but as part of state discrimination against Uyghurs in China, his bank account has been frozen, preventing him from paying the money needed to complete the construction.

MENTAL HEALTH

Turdush suffers from depression. She is often distracted, moody and doesn't really like to go out.

HEALTH STATUS

Turdush's husband suffered several accidents at work, but due to a lack of health insurance, he does not receive medical care. They try to relieve his pain with “home” remedies. Health problems also arise with the baby boy born in Hungary. A Hungarian doctor friend of the family diagnosed him with developmental disorders and possible epilepsy. In the absence of health insurance, a proper check-up only took place later, when the boy started to be looked after by an early childhood development professional.

COMMUNICATION

Turdush communicates well in English. Trust is built up between the social worker and Turdush over time, but the family does not disclose some information. The family is assisted by several support organisations and individual helpers, so it is often difficult to work together with the family because of the conflicting information coming from different sources.

INDIVIDUAL LIFE JOURNEY

The family's affairs are complicated by the fact that Turdush's relative is the one deciding the legal status of the family. The lack of cooperation on this issue is crucial. As there is no change in this, support organisations can no longer support the family. Even the competent family support service can only support the children's development with occasional donations.

#3 Than

Than is a single Muslim woman from Myanmar in her thirties who was forced to leave her country in 2015 because of political persecution and attacks on the Rohingya.

LEGAL BACKGROUND

She is recognised as a refugee by the Hungarian authorities, but after obtaining the status she travels to France. The legal consequence is that she loses the possibility of preferential family reunification to bring her two young children to Hungary. On her own, she cannot afford to cover the travel cost of children stranded in Bangladesh to Hungary.

WORK

Despite the language barrier, Than soon finds a job in a wok restaurant, where her employer is initially satisfied with her, but later Than becomes unreliable. This is a recurring problem. Generally speaking, she is well-liked at first and does a good job, but she is not able to keep her job in the long term. This is due to her psychiatric illness.

HOUSING

Than initially moves into a small shared flat, where she lives with a refugee couple. Because of the significant lifestyle differences, tensions between them are common. Eventually, Than moves out, which results in continued housing insecurity. She lives for a few months in a workers' hostel, where she is soon threatened with eviction because of the debt she accumulated.

MENTAL HEALTH

Than is believed to suffer from paranoid schizophrenia. Her doctor says she has no knowledge of her illness, which makes her unwilling to undergo long-term treatment. The constant uncertainty and the onset of post-traumatic stress symptoms (nightmares, memory intrusions, headaches) also worsen the underlying condition. Before her marriage, during her time in a refugee camp in Serbia, Than was a victim of sexual violence.

HEALTH STATUS

Than is repeatedly admitted to the closed ward of the psychotherapy clinic, where she is prematurely discharged due to lack of space. The system does not have the capacity for longer-term treatment and observation, although, according to her doctor, she needs it.

COMMUNICATION

Than speaks Burmese, English and German, although she does not use the latter two languages. She needs the help of an interpreter. Despite her lack of Hungarian, she manages well for a while. She has attended Hungarian classes several times, but she does not speak Hungarian beyond a few sentences. Her language integration stalls and she only manages with the help of others.

INDIVIDUAL LIFE JOURNEY

Than spends several years in Serbia before she manages to enter Hungary. We also know from her that in the Serbian camp, refugees have created a list among themselves, which allows people who have signed up to go to Hungary on a first-come, first-served basis. An illegal organisation is behind the list. Whoever pays can jump the queue. The experience among the applicants is that families and married couples can move on sooner, so Than married a man significantly younger than her to make it easier to get the permits she needs to move on. In 2019, she returns to Hungary from France as a divorced woman.

#4 Jahida and her family

Jahida is an Iranian woman of Afghan origin who fled Iran with her husband and their seven-year-old daughter. They arrived in Hungary in 2019, initially waiting for months in a transit zone at the Hungarian-Serbian border.

LEGAL BACKGROUND

The family applied for asylum in 2019 in Röszke. During their asylum interview, the family does not present any grounds on which they would be eligible for protection. Their lawyer appeals for subsidiary protection status on the grounds of the husband's mental health. However, a support worker presents faulty documents at the hearing due to negligence, and the court terminates the proceedings. The family is not granted international protection in Hungary.

WORK

After being transferred from the transit zone to an open reception centre, Jahida's only job opportunity is to work as an "internal employee", i.e. as a cleaner. Her husband cannot work due to his serious medical and mental health problems.

HOUSING

At first, they live in a container in the transit zone, which they perceived as detention. In the second half of the asylum procedure, they are moved to a reception centre, and after a few months to another camp. In both cases they live in cramped, poor and vulnerable conditions.

MENTAL HEALTH

While still in Afghanistan, Jahida's husband lived through a bomb attack that leaves him suffering from post-traumatic stress syndrome and is now unable to take care of himself. In addition to his constant pain, he is addicted to medication. Their little girl is also very badly affected by her father's mental health, and she is the only child in the camp, where she must cope with the absence of other children and the long, monotonous waiting and boredom. She is seen by a child psychologist once a week.

HEALTH STATUS

Jahida's husband has constant pain and eating problems. He also needs dental treatment, but this is not possible due to his drug addiction.

COMMUNICATION

Communication between the family and the social worker is facilitated by an interpreter. During individual sessions, the psychologist works with the daughter without an interpreter. The lack of a common language creates barriers, so they only do activities and games that do not require verbal communication. This further increases the family's isolation.

SCHOOLING

The family's social worker failed to enrol the little girl in school after three months of active searching and administration efforts. The nearest educational institutions refused to accept her application, justifying it by capacity constraints. The family cannot take the child to the catchment school, so their daughter cannot study with Hungarian children while they are living in a camp in Hungary.

INDIVIDUAL LIFE JOURNEY

In this hopeless legal and social situation, the already broken family becomes even more exhausted. When they realise that their situation in Hungary will not improve, they continue their journey towards Western Europe.

#5 Miriam and her family

The story of Miriam and her family goes back a long way; old events evoke vulnerably contexts repeatedly. First (in 2008) the father was recognised as a refugee by the Hungarian authorities, then Miriam and their then only child arrive through family reunification. However, they soon move on and apply for asylum in the Netherlands again. Their second child, a boy, is born there. Their application is unsuccessful and the family returns to Lebanon. A few years later, they flee again and return to Hungary.

LEGAL BACKGROUND

During the second asylum procedure in Hungary, they are granted subsidiary protection status – but as they returned to Lebanon voluntarily, the authorities do not grant them refugee status. Five years later, their status is reviewed and, as the security situation in parts of Palestine changes, the immigration authorities order the family's deportation. The family appeals the decision, but the court closes the case.

WORK

Miriam's husband cannot find a job in the formal labour market. He later finds a job in a transport company through his own contacts, but only 2-3 times a month. The family, which has now grown to three children, lives in constant financial insecurity.

HOUSING

They are first placed in a Family Temporary Housing Facility, where the whole family lives in one room and must share the common rooms with others. The housing transition programme is not successful; when they have to move out, they are still unable to afford to rent their own flat. They are admitted to the homeless shelter run by a church organisation, where they are allowed to stay for one month. They end up living in this tiny one-room apartment for over a year.

MENTAL HEALTH

Miriam's mental health is constantly deteriorating. For a while, she is motivated to learn the language and work, but the difficulties and uncertainties get her down, and after a while she becomes completely isolated.

HEALTH STATUS

Miriam's husband has joint problems that cannot be treated properly. This makes it difficult for him to look for a job because he cannot apply for physical work (for which he would not need Hungarian language skills).

COMMUNICATION

Miriam's husband does not learn Hungarian either, and they typically ask their older daughter to interpret for them. Miriam starts to learn Hungarian, but after the birth of another child, she gives up again.

INDIVIDUAL LIFE JOURNEY

The family is socially vulnerable. Since they went to the Netherlands and then returned to Hungary, they are not eligible for integration cash benefits when they return. They have not been able to make progress with their integration over the years. While the family is growing, they cannot even meet their primary needs and live in permanent poverty. Even after several years, they still need support from aid organisations for housing, work and language learning. At the end of the first wave of the COVID pandemic, they leave Hungary again and seek asylum in another EU Member State.

#6 Jalil

Jalil is 23 years old and comes to Hungary from Afghanistan on a scholarship for a 'master's degree. Studying is his only legal "escape". He comes from a wealthy family with good political and social connections, but if his sexual orientation were to come to light, his life would be in danger.

LEGAL BACKGROUND

Jalil loses his scholarship and therefore cannot renew his residence permit. He cannot apply for asylum in Hungary due to the changes in the law during Covid-19 and is forced to apply in another EU country.

WORK

Jalil has an internship in addition to his university studies. This will end when his scholarship is withdrawn. Later, he tries to find a full-time job to be able to extend his visa, but only finds a student job as a stock boy in a shopping centre with the help of his partner. He soon loses this job due to Covid-19.

HOUSING

He initially lives in a dormitory but has to leave due to the termination of his scholarship. Later, he lives in a rented flat with his partner and his brother and cousin.

MENTAL STATUS

Jalil is very sad to leave Hungary and his partner he met here.

COMMUNICATION

Jalil speaks excellent English, and his Hungarian is also improving well and he speaks at a conversational level when he has to leave the country.

INDIVIDUAL LIFE JOURNEY

He begins to discover his sexual identity for the first time in Hungary. He already knew at home that he was attracted to his own sex, but he could never experience it because it would have put not only him but also his family in danger. In Budapest, he manages to stay in touch with his own cultural roots and at the same time secretly develop a stable relationship. Jalil's partner is the only person he can turn to with full openness about his sexual identity and his crisis. This creates a very difficult context because gay identity is not acceptable among people from his own cultural circle.

AFTER HUNGARY

Jalil can only apply for asylum in another EU country. He does not have to return to Hungary, he rents his own apartment, works full-time and plans to continue his studies. The vulnerability contexts in which he lived his last months in Hungary have disappeared.

#7 Férnán and his family

Férnán fled Cuba with his family in 2014, but during their journey the family separated. Mirana, the older daughter, remains with the father. Jenifer, the younger daughter, and the mother are stranded in Honduras.

LEGAL BACKGROUND

Férnán and Mirana are granted subsidiary protection status in 2017, but they appeal against the decision and are eventually recognised as refugees. After Férnán arrives in Hungary, he starts looking for his wife and younger daughter Jenifer, who had been missing for almost a year, with the help of UNHCR. Finally, in 2018, the other half of the family arrives in Hungary.

WORK

Férnán tries to find work in Budapest, but he doesn't manage to stay anywhere for long. He works for a year as a warehouse worker in a transport company but quits because of the very low pay and the demanding work. Later, he borrows money from friends to buy a small hairdressing salon, but he doesn't have a licence to run it, so unfortunately he goes bankrupt. Eventually, he gets a legal job in a company that scraps used electronic devices, where his work is very much appreciated. His wife also manages to get a part-time job as a laundry assistant.

HOUSING

At first, when they were granted subsidiary protection status, they had to leave their previous accommodation, the refugee camp, within three months. With great difficulty, they managed to find a flat they could rent, where they lived for about a year. When the rest of the family arrives, they move to a temporary home for families in Budapest for more than a year. Later, the family participates in another housing programme; a small apartment is rented for them, for which they do not have to pay any own contribution. By the end of the programme, the housing problem becomes acute again. They are still unable to finance their housing with their own funds. Eventually, as a favour, a Hungarian friend helps them find a place to live.

MENTAL HEALTH

Separation and prolonged family reunification are exhausting for them. Mirana missed her mother very much, cried a lot and woke up at night. Férnán has been seeing a psychiatrist for years and needs medication.

HEALTH STATUS

For his wife's gynaecological problems, it is difficult to find a suitable specialist because of the lack of language skills and an interpreter. Even with a female interpreter, it would be difficult for her to see a gynaecologist because the situation brings back bad memories.

COMMUNICATION

Férnán and his wife do not speak Hungarian, except for a few sentences. The children quickly took on the role of interpreters, especially Mirana, the older girl. This means that she has to interpret in situations that do not have a good impact on her.

#8 Baha

She is 31 when she has to flee. She openly espouses a worldview that goes against the norms of mainstream society and, despite strict prohibitions, is baptised, abandoning her Hindu roots. Her family does not accept this and Baha, fearing reprisals, flees and has been living in Hungary since 2015.

LEGAL BACKGROUND

Her asylum procedure is completed without complications in six months and she is recognised as a refugee by the Hungarian authorities. She is afraid that her family might find her here, so she wants to change her name. She faces constant legal hurdles and years of frustrating administration.

WORK

Baha was out of work for a very long time and did not ask social workers for help in finding work. Later, with the help of a friend, she is hired as a maid in a hotel. She only stays there for a short time because the work is too physically demanding and she feels that the work environment is not welcoming.

HOUSING

Baha's fiancé financially supports her by renting an apartment.

MENTAL HEALTH

Baha has anxiety because of her escape story and does not feel safe. She finds it difficult to trust new people and refuses to see a psychologist. She repeatedly talks about being depressed, not feeling well and not being able to talk honestly with anyone.

COMMUNICATION

However, after a while, her mental health caused her to stop learning. The lack of Hungarian is not a problem for her, as she speaks excellent English and can manage in everyday life.

INDIVIDUAL LIFE JOURNEY

Baha's fiancé is an Indian transgender man of Canadian nationality, who was born a woman but is now officially and legally a man. He also changed his name in Canada, but the birth certificate still indicates a female name. They wanted to get married in Hungary, but after repeated attempts, they couldn't. They eventually got married in the Netherlands.

#9 Dua

Dua arrives in Hungary a few months before the 2015 refugee wave but travels on to Italy, where she also applies for asylum. As she was fingerprinted in Hungary, she is deported back from Italy to continue her asylum procedure here.

LEGAL BACKGROUND

Her asylum application is difficult because Dua comes from Kosovo, which is considered a safe country. Furthermore, in their Hungarian application, they identify themselves as a married couple with a man in order to be able to stay in the same place. This causes a lot of problems later, because Dua's credibility is shaken in the eyes of the authorities. She was waiting as an asylum seeker in various camps for more than two and a half years because the authorities kept rejecting her application.

WORK

Dua manages to get a job as a factory worker. She works honestly and diligently. She continues to work throughout her pregnancy, but in the last month, she has to stop work, leaving her vulnerable and needing help from others.

HOUSING

Dua is first transferred to the Shelter in Cserkepuszta, and then to the Viharosi Reception Centre. Here she is placed in one room of a two-room flat. She spends little time there, as she is taken into the home of a Hungarian family. Later, in Budapest, she shares a two-room apartment in the city centre, where her rent is paid by a charity for a year. When this support expires, she is placed in a temporary home. She can never become self-sufficient.

MENTAL HEALTH

Sending Dua back to Hungary is very difficult for her. The camp conditions also have a negative impact on her plight and she suffers from a deep depression which prevents her from engaging in community activities. She is blocked, mute and frightened when dealing with authorities and needs the help of social workers to handle official matters. She is overwhelmed by the uncertainty and rejections in connection with her legal status.

HEALTH STATUS

Dua is giving birth in Hungary and a volunteer and a social worker are with her in the hospital during and after the birth.

COMMUNICATION

Dua communicates with the helpers in English. After moving out of the camp, she was given the opportunity to learn Hungarian, but she does not plan to stay in Hungary for the long term, so she is not motivated to learn the language.

INDIVIDUAL LIFE JOURNEY

Dua's life is extremely complex, often difficult to follow, even for the professionals helping her. She also has children left in Kosovo whom she would like to bring to Hungary through family reunification. It's a complicated case, with many administrative difficulties, for which Dua needs very strong support. The children at home do not speak any language other than Albanian and live in very poor conditions with friends. It is questionable how Dua could support them in Hungary.

#10 Joye

Joye is a young Christian man from the majority ethnic group in Nigeria. He is part of a wealthy trading family but has no connection to them. He won't talk about it, but presumably he had to flee from them for some reason.

LEGAL BACKGROUND

Although most asylum seekers from Nigeria are rejected by the Hungarian authorities, Joye is recognised as a refugee at his first application. After four years, he applies for Hungarian citizenship, and although he can barely speak Hungarian, he succeeds, so, his legal situation is sorted out in the long run.

WORK

Joye is successful in legal matters but was stuck in employment integration for years. He has a university degree in his home country, speaks excellent English and has international work experience, but he is still unable to find a job. He was always ambitious in his job search, yet he never succeeded. Thus he is forced to try to make a living as a casual cleaner or kitchen assistant, often going hungry. After three years of persistent job application, he finally finds a full-time job in an international company and his financial situation is settled.

HOUSING

He usually lives with someone he knows and is usually taken in on a courtesy basis for a few months. Since he has had a stable job, he has been renting a two-room apartment with another person.

MENTAL HEALTH

Joye rarely opens up to the support workers, trying to give the impression of a "foreign expat" and not to emphasize his refugee identity(?). It can be assumed that isolation, the lack of Hungarian language skills, the exclusion from his family and the prolonged financial insecurity are also psychologically stressful. However, these are only assumptions. His social worker believes that with humour and perseverance, he handles even the most difficult situations with confidence, without losing his patience.

HEALTH STATUS

He was infected in the first wave of Covid and was unsure for days what to do, where and how to be in quarantine, and who to turn to for help if his condition worsened. During this period, too, his primary concern was not to lose his job because of a long illness.

COMMUNICATION

He speaks very little Hungarian but speaks English at mother-tongue level. His social relations are also developed accordingly. He has no Hungarian friends or acquaintances but feels at home in expat communities.

INDIVIDUAL LIFE JOURNEY

When applying for Hungarian citizenship, he is partly motivated by the fact that he can legally work in the EU with a Hungarian passport, which may help him with his financial situation. Since he has been able to secure a stable financial situation in Hungary, he is thinking more and more about living here in the long term and integrating even more.

#11 Hamuda

Hamuda lived in a small mountain town and even as a teenager he wanted to have his own shop, but the town's ruling tribe did not take kindly to this. Because Hamudah would not listen to them, he was kidnapped and beaten, and after a few days, he could only be freed for ransom. Once he had recovered somewhat from his injuries, he fled Yemen.

LEGAL BACKGROUND

Hamuda arrives in Hungary in 2015, he is still under eighteen, but he has no papers. The Hungarian authorities do not acknowledge that he is a minor. He is treated as an adult and is placed in an adult reception centre. He is first recognised as a protected person but appeals with the help of a lawyer. The asylum authority admits its mistake before the trial and recognises Hamuda as a refugee.

WORK

As, surprisingly, Hamuda's housing is resolved, he is not forced to start work immediately, so he has the time and opportunity to study, especially Hungarian. After finishing the eighth grade, he continues his studies full-time and works as a pizza delivery boy when time allows. Later, he postpones his studies for his school leaving certificate and studies a trade. He becomes a car mechanic and soon finds a job at a reputable Mercedes garage.

HOUSING

As the day of his discharge from the camp approaches, he is less and less sure where he would be able to live. There are no housing programmes in place at this time, but, through a volunteer, an elderly Hungarian couple takes him in their guest room for a few months. He ends up living there for two years, does not have to pay rent, and the elderly couple support Hamuda in many ways. He later lives in a dormitory for a while and then rents an apartment with his Hungarian friends.

MENTAL HEALTH

For a long time, he had memory intrusions with images of his abduction, sometimes he felt he was being followed in the street, but he did not seek help from a psychologist.

HEALTH STATUS

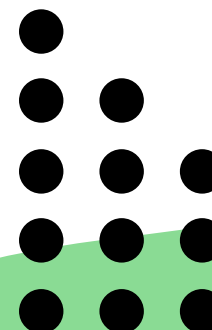
Hamuda is in good health, although the deep wounds from the beating needed medical attention for a long time and a school doctor helped him.

COMMUNICATION

As an asylum seeker, Hamuda fights to be given permission to attend a language preparation course at a school in Budapest. He goes there four times a week from the reception centre. Two years later, he is one of the best students in his class in a Hungarian-language secondary school. He speaks Arabic as a native speaker and communicates well in English.

INDIVIDUAL LIFE JOURNEY

Hamuda is always looking for opportunities. Most of all, he wants to learn, so he does everything he can to be able to learn. He did not have to deal with any constraints in his housing or in his employment, so, he could just focus on learning.

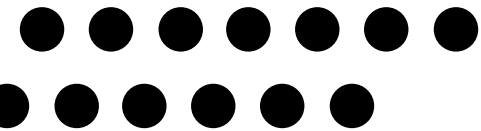


For more than two decades, Menedék – Hungarian Association for Migrants has been working to promote the social integration of Hungarian and foreign citizens migrating to and from Hungary through its social, educational and cultural programmes.

The research and development activities of the RAISD project have contributed to learning more about the context of refugee vulnerability in general and about the situation in Hungary in particular.

Through our work, we have helped and continue to help thousands of refugees and other foreigners find a new home in Hungary or return home. Through individual and group counselling, language training and community programmes, we help migrants learn about and accept Hungarian culture and customs, find employment and housing, and navigate the maze of bureaucratic procedures. The results of the RAISD project have helped us to carry out our work in a more differentiated way, being more sensitive to specific vulnerabilities and with professional self-reflection.

We believe it is important to share the expertise needed to meet the specific needs of the most vulnerable refugees with all our partners who provide support. We hope that our publication will contribute to achieving these objectives.





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