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# ECONOMIC INTEGRATION OF SYRIAN ARMENIANS IN ARMENIA

## Needs Assessment Report



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**Yerevan, Armenia 2017**

# ECONOMIC INTEGRATION OF SYRIAN ARMENIANS IN ARMENIA NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT

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This report was elaborated and published within the framework of the project “Economic Integration of Syrian Refugees in Armenia” within “Private Sector Development South Caucasus” programme implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

**The opinions and conclusions expressed in the Report belong to the authors and do not necessarily coincide with the official views or positions of GIZ. GIZ is the publisher of the report.**

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## Preface

*Of over 22,000 persons, primarily of Armenian background, who have fled to Armenia due to the conflict in Syria since 2012 about 15,000 remain in the country, while others have resettled elsewhere. This constitutes a significant challenge for Armenia considering the size of its population and its economic situation. The arrival of displaced population from Syria does, however, also offer important opportunities, not least given the generally good education, work and service culture and entrepreneurial experience of many among the displaced. If the potential of the displaced population is recognised and duly utilised through the establishment of an enabling environment and offering opportunities, the arrival of displaced population can valuably contribute to the future development of the Armenian society, culture and economy.*

*While a significant number of the displaced would still like to keep the return option open and a rather marginal number of the displaced have already returned, the majority of the displaced families, who presently remain in the country, see their future in Armenia and aim at a durable solution by way of local integration.*

*Integration of refugees and other displaced populations is a gradual, two-way and multi-dimensional process, requiring openness, patience and creativity on both sides, the receiving society as well as among the displaced population. The different dimensions of the integration process, namely the legal (status and documentation related) dimension, the socio-economic and the cultural dimensions are closely interlinked. Access to legal status and documentation is crucial and often a pre-condition for meaningful engagement in economic integration, assessment of progress on which the focus of the present study.*

*Integration does not require assimilation, but mutual understanding and respect for the laws of the host community. Integration of refugees and other displaced population aims at offering the displaced a new home, a new homeland, a home away from home a new place where they will be able, in a gradual process, to feel at home. Integration aims at offering a self-reliant and dignified future. The German philosopher Carl Jaspers proposes a helpful definition of “home” (“Heimat”) which can also offer guidance for this “new home-finding”, this integration process: “Home is where I understand and where I am understood”. Economic integration requires understanding of the host country's economic environment, its tax, market and job placement system and familiarity with local business practices and legislation governing entrepreneurial activities and trade. The host society must be familiarised with the potential, the quality and the comparative advantages of the displaced labour force and the products and services offered by displaced entrepreneurs.*

*The many dimensions and the size of the integration challenge requires engagement of many actors: the state authorities at central and local level, international and regional organisations, international and regional financial institutions, humanitarian and development actors, civil society, including diaspora and faith-based organisation, each of them bringing particular expertise and resources. In 2015, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development commissioned the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH to engage in a project serving the economic integration in Armenia of displaced population from Syria, which was prepared in close consultation with UNHCR. The project could build on earlier projects and complemented ongoing efforts of the authorities, UNHCR and other actors. Moreover, it brought in the broad development experience of the GIZ and in particular the experience gained in earlier projects in the field of sustainable economic development serving small and medium-size enterprise development*

*and employment promotion in Armenia. The cooperation of UNHCR and GIZ are an example for common efforts and complementarity in the sense of transition from humanitarian response to sustainable development solutions.*

*The project “Economic Integration of Syrian Refugees in Armenia” (EISRA) (more information available on [www.syrarbi.am](http://www.syrarbi.am)) is aimed at improving preconditions for income generation for Syrian refugees in Armenia through (i) coordination of dialogue among partners, (ii) facilitation of the target group’s access to markets and finance through business trainings and coachings, promotion of their products and services during local and international exhibitions and (iii) vocational qualification and skills development measures for employment opportunities.. The EISRA project is part of the programme “Private Sector Development in South Caucasus” implemented by GIZ on behalf of the German government.*

*As one of many support interventions by EISRA and in order to provide improved assistance for Syrian Armenians’ economic integration it was decided with partners to develop a database of around 1500 SA entrepreneurs and employment seekers to identify and access their needs for tailored support measures. In addition, a database of potential employers for Syrian Armenians has been elaborated to contribute to job match-making efforts.*

*The database as well as the corresponding needs assessment and its recommendations shall help to thoroughly inform the various stakeholders involved in the field of Syrian Armenian economic integration, who are interacting through a multi-stakeholder working group established and facilitated by EISRA, to take well-informed decisions on possible interventions and to implement measures in a structured and coordinated way.*

*Common efforts yielded impact. During the first half of 2017 many families made significant progress towards their integration into the Armenian society and achievement of self-reliance. Factors contributing to an improved environment serving economic integration are (i) increased efforts of the Government to promote small and medium enterprises, (ii) the 2016 tax reform reducing tax burden and simplifying procedures for family enterprises, (iii) explicit acknowledgement of the new Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia of the value and potential of the displaced population in the economic development of the country (iv) the continued engagement of development actors in the economic integration of refugees including by way of development of value chains and export promotion projects and (v) significant increase of tourism in the first half of 2017, including by tourists of middle and lower income level (i.e. next to traditional upper wealth level diaspora tourists also including a significant number of middle class tourists from Iran, Arab countries and the Philippines), who make use also of the lower price range restaurants and cafes operated by displaced entrepreneurs and purchase some handicrafts and jewellery produced by refugees.*

*However, despite the progress made there are still significant challenges, as are well identified and substantiated in this research. In particular those who came to Armenia more recently, often in destitute conditions and severely traumatised, elderly displaced, single headed households or displaced households who have family members with special needs, are still in need of assistance. It is now crucial to consolidate the integration process, to make progress achieved sustainable and to continue addressing remaining shortcomings, challenges and needs, and to help those who are still walking on the sometimes steep and rocky slopes of integration. As the UN Sustainable Development Goals emphasise: “No one should be left behind.*

*The present research will assist in gaining an improved and more refined understanding of the present situation as to the economic integration of persons displaced due to the conflict in Syria seeking protection in Armenia. It takes an effort in better quantifying more general observations shared above and thereby offers crucial base-line information helping to identify remaining gaps and to design future projects aiming at facilitation of economic integration and achievement of self-reliance. UNHCR and GIZ appreciate the work of the independent research team. Even if some observations might become subject to some controversial debate on how these findings should be interpreted, they serve their purpose of igniting a more thorough and substantiated debate on the best avenues to be taken to further promote, facilitate and ultimately successfully conclude the integration process. We wish the report a broad, genuinely interested and receptive audience and the many stakeholders who continue engaging in the still needed integration support to succeed for the benefit of Syrian Armenians and the prosperity and diversity of Armenia (and its friends).*

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## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The reported needs assessment aims at enriching the knowledge as regards the admission and integration of refugees in Armenia, with specific focus on Syrian Armenians (SAs), and complementing the set of information produced by leading international organisations.

The needs assessment draws on secondary sources of information and the survey commissioned by GIZ, within the frame of its database development activity specifically designed to assess the SAs' needs, identify key obstacles they face and measure the level of their economic integration and associated specific needs. The survey was built on the self-assessment principle and served as means for generating a comprehensive view on SAs and addressing the information gaps identified in the initial desk review. A rich set of data on SAs needs (not available previously) was produced based on 1505 valid individual observations (out of planned 1500), thereby providing a snapshot of the SAs' current socio-economic status, needs and employability.

An online survey of companies was conducted as supplementary to the SAs' needs assessment exercise. Based on responses received from 100 companies (out of 1000 companies approached), a separate dataset was produced.

Findings presented in this report signal several important aspects of the economic integration and employability of the SAs, relevant for broader group of stakeholders. The analysis confirmed the importance of designing and implementing the initial humanitarian response to a displacement crisis in a way keeping in mind from the outset early recovery and durable solutions. Development of clear selection criteria for different forms of assistance and effective eligibility assessments, as well as mechanisms serving, as early as, possible is crucial. The identification of particular vulnerabilities as well as the particular potential and skills among the displaced population is also vital. **Beyond immediate support, the most important challenge in the integration of refugees is the provision of and access to quality housing, health services, education, and employment.**

The report reflects on the reality as seen by the SAs and endeavours to provide an encompassing snapshot of their needs for economic integration and wider context in which the integration occurs or may occur. The report proposes a set of policy recommendations and identifies directions for further activities and research. It consists of “Introduction” section, that summarizes the terms of references, aims and objectives of the assessment, the “Methodology” section that details the methods used and activities performed towards the assessment, the “Key Findings” section that reflects on the demographic characteristics of the SAs included in the sample, their status in the labour market and employability.

Data received from the SAs in the framework of the assessment was carefully archived and stored in the database (SyAD).

The needs assessment showed that the employment rate among SAs was quite high taking into

account the low absorption capacity of the Armenian labour market, and it was in line with that among the locals. However, the employment rate among men was significantly higher than among women. The findings showed that over time the SA population became more economically integrated. Notably, those SAs who stayed more than one but less than 5 years in Armenia (the first wave of SAs arrived in 2011) demonstrated an employment rate above the Armenian national average.

**However, the needs assessment also revealed that relatively good employment rate was accompanied by a significant mismatch between the skills possessed by SAs and the jobs they performed in Armenia, pointing to human capital loss for both the migrants and the job market.**

Having prior work experience in Syria before migrating to Armenia was positively associated with being employed in Armenia. It was anticipated that people with secondary (and vocational) education would report a better economic situation as compared to others with higher or lower education. Our findings also pointed to the importance of professional and higher education.

SAs were actively searching for jobs in Armenia, and many were interested in finding employment in wholesale and retail trade, accommodation and food services. **It should be noted that the network of friends and relatives was by far the most frequently used channel in job search endeavors.**

The needs assessment indicated that SAs demonstrated propensity for entrepreneurial activities. Many of those who had businesses in Syria would like to establish one in Armenia as well, but are facing a different reality. In this regard, trainings and coaching for tax legislation in Armenia, as well as on writing a business plan and applying for a loan would be beneficial. Additionally, the needs assessment revealed that many needed to be consulted and trained in the fields of business, finance and credits, legal issues, job searching, and in the health sector.

Indeed, displaced people from Syria as well as other refugees are not subject to legal limitations restricting access to labour markets. SAs often “bring” high-level skills set and business culture, multiple languages and excellent vocational skills including traditional arts and crafts well preserved through generations. **However, informed policy collaboration among various stakeholders involved in promoting SAs’ economic integration is crucial.**

The report concludes with the “Conclusions and recommendations” section which provides a rich overview of the assessment findings and lists relevant recommendations.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

### 2.1. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Since 2015, “Economic Integration of Syrian Refugees in Armenia (EISRA)” project has been tackling challenges related to Syrian refugees of ethnic Armenian background that immigrated to Armenia in recent years due to the civil war in Syria. The project is commissioned by the “German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)” and is implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH within the “Private Sector Development in South Caucasus (PSD SC)” programme and its country component in Armenia.

In order to support the economic integration of Syrian refugees in Armenia, EISRA has been supporting the economic dialogue and coordination of relevant stakeholders, introducing measures to improve the access to and the adaptation of employment and qualification programs as well as the integration of Syrian Armenians (SA) into existing business networks. It has comprised three main intervention fields:

1. Public-private-dialogue and participation
2. Integration in value chains and business networks
3. Vocational qualification and skills development

The quite heterogeneous and diverse group of SAs, in terms of professional background, business culture, education, skills, and experiences, has arrived in Armenia. The following combination offers excellent pre-conditions to tap into economic opportunities: (i) SA enthusiasm, broad skills, experience, especially in the Middle East and Mediterranean and service-orientated field, (ii) Armenia’s declared interest in and commitment to their integration supported by the international community.

This combination can possibly help Armenia’s economy to innovate and grow and open new markets. However, the economic integration of the SAs is interlinked with serious challenges.

The Republic of Armenia has introduced a number of measures assisting people displaced from Syria to settle in Armenia by offering them support and protection options such as: (i) simplified acquisition of citizenship, (ii) accelerated asylum procedures, (iii) privileged granting of short, mid-term or long-term residence permits, (iv) support in economic integration such as vocational training, organisation of exhibitions and other.

Since 2016, the Ministry of Diaspora of the Republic of Armenia (RA), UNHCR Armenia, Galouste Gulbenkian Foundation, and Armenian General Benevolent Union have highlighted that thematic

working groups should be established to coordinate among relevant active stakeholders in the process of integrating SAs in Armenia. As a result, the RA Ministry of Economy, RA Ministry of Diaspora, RA Ministry of Finance, RA Ministry of Education and Science, Small and Medium Entrepreneurship Development National Centre, State Employment Agency, Central Bank of Armenia, and RA Chamber of Commerce and Industry have established collaboration with civil society, as well as with international organisations.

In the framework of EIRSA activities and beyond, all stakeholders active in the field of economic integration of SAs have been struggling with identifying the human resource capacities of the target group, as well as their specific needs in terms of entrepreneurship and employability. Encountered challenges of economic integration of SAs were mainly due to the fact that not every representative of the quite heterogeneous and diverse (in terms of entrepreneurship and employment) group of SAs has been officially registered (in terms of having a business or employment). Many of the SAs worked informally, and the number of working age population fluctuated over time.

GIZ stressed the need of having a comprehensive dataset on SAs. It commissioned the CRRC-Armenia, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, to create a comprehensive and user-friendly dataset on the economic integration needs of individual SAs. As the CRRC-Armenia succeeded in creation of the database for SAs (SyAD), it should be passed to a local body for further maintenance.

## **2.2. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

In cooperation with stakeholders, the first comprehensive database of around 1500 SA entrepreneurs, jobseekers, and start-ups was to be developed to identify and assess the needs of SAs for development of tailored support measures. In addition, a database of potential employers for SAs had to be compiled to contribute to job match-making.

Based on the request of GIZ, CRRC-Armenia's task was to design a new database for 1500 SAs that should be well-structured, holistic, comprehensive, precise, easy to read/analyse/present/filter (for quick retrieval of statistics) and user-friendly to be continuously updated by the stakeholders.

Needs assessment served as a means for updating the information and data previously provided by GIZ. The needs assessment assured gathering of new data vital to the EIRSA undertakings and follow-up activities.

Additionally, data from 1000 companies was planned to be collected through an online employer survey aimed at enriching the available information and facilitating matchmaking potential. Data from 100 companies was received.

It is anticipated that the database and the needs assessment report, as well as the information provided by the 100 companies, are to serve the abovementioned aims and inform the client and other stakeholders/service providers on the needs of SAs in Armenia.

### 2.3. METHODS USED IN THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The needs assessment and database creation actions were assumed to be predominantly based on self-assessment by SAs. Different members of SA households who had economic integration needs were approached. The SAs completed the self-assessment by filling in the tablet form, with support of CRRC-Armenia interviewers. The assessment accentuated individual observations. Hence, it was essential for the interviewers to create an atmosphere where the SAs could self-reflect.

In addition, an employer survey was conducted through an online questionnaire (google-based form), and responses from 100 employers were collected. Data received from the companies were stored separately as a supplementary dataset.

Detailed description of the methodology of the assessment is provided in [Chapter 4: Methodology](#).

When referring to Syrian refugees in the scope of this needs assessment and database creation exercise, SAs are meant, since the vast majority of incomers were of Armenian nationality with only few exceptions (i.e. SA family members - wife, husband, etc.).

### 2.4. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

***International Experience:*** In recent years, drastic increase in the number of migrants worldwide has been in the focus of policy makers dealing with economic integration of migrants in host societies. As a result of enhanced attention to the topic, numerous reports and publications were produced providing methodological guidance for evaluating the performance of migrants in key dimensions of general relevance; i.e. (i) Employment, (ii) Education, (iii) Social inclusion.

Strong empirical evidence suggests that employment rate among refugees globally is lower than the one observed in other migrant categories. In this respect, the reports produced by the organisations dealing with admission and integration of migrants are an important source of information.

UNHCR has provided an extensive review of current knowledge regarding labour market integration of resettled refugees in various countries, identifying promising practices and factors favouring labour market integration in host countries. UNHCR has proposed a set of integration indicators.

In Armenia, criteria governing the UNHCR rental subsidy and other cash based assistance schemes to SAs were paired with regular review of cases. This is tracked by way of household based needs assessments through social workers, aiming at prevention of dependency on assistance. However, not all humanitarian actors pursue such a differentiated, yet very important, approach.

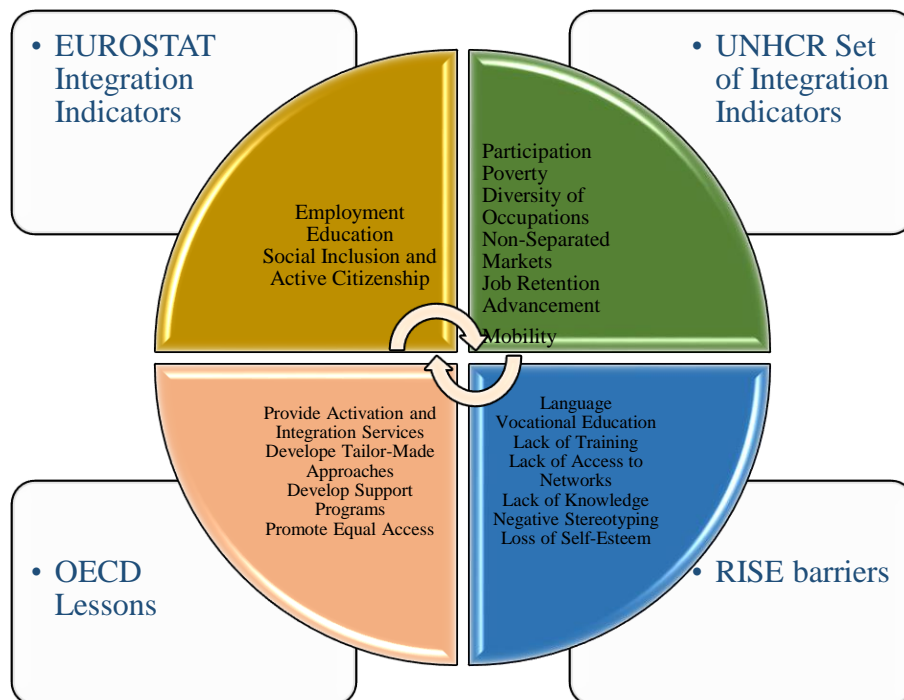
OECD was the pioneer in publishing the “Making Integration Work” series, summarizing the experiences of OECD countries in integration of migrants. Each volume presents a set of recommendations, specifically, “ten lessons” to remove main barriers and accelerate the sustainable integration of humanitarian migrants.

The European Union funded, two-year “Refugee Interactive Skills for Employment” (RISE) life-long learning initiative summarised the major barriers faced by the refugees.

When designing the needs assessment, the team has critically taken account of the key dimensions to evaluate the performance of migrants in the international context (*See scheme 1*).

*For more information on international experience see Appendix 1.*

**Figure 1: Key Dimensions to Evaluate the Performance of Migrants in the International Context**



**Armenian Experience:** Since 2011, Armenia started hosting displaced Syrians seeking asylum in Armenia, with the vast majority of them being of Armenian ethnicity. In 2011-2016, about 22,000 Syrian refugees arrived in Armenia. Figures provided by the Ministry of Diaspora of the Republic

of Armenia indicate that due to the Syrian conflict, the Armenian community in Syria decreased from 80,000 to around 20,000.

Since the start of the influx, the Government of Armenia has been extending various assistance schemes to the Syrian refugees. In reference to the reception by the Government of Armenia of persons displaced from Syria, the President of Armenia has appointed the Minister of Diaspora to lead the coordination. There is an inter-agency Commission on Coordination of Syrian Armenian Issues that meets monthly to review relevant programmes. The aim of inter-agency meetings is to coordinate actions undertaken by stakeholder organisations to improve the stance of the target group. Among other relevant issues, the Commission has discussed the challenges the Armenian communities face in Syria and has examined the information about those SAs who acquired Armenian citizenship and residency status. The Commission regularly addresses existing sector-specific problems and identifies future actions.

According to the data provided by the Police, a total of 15,465 people displaced from Syria were granted Armenian citizenship between 2012 and June 2015.

UNHCR has taken a flexible approach addressing the most challenging issues of the displaced Syrian population seeking protection in Armenia. Mission Armenia has activated its medical referral services for the displaced Syrian population enabling many of them to get lifesaving medicine as well as medical treatment at designated hospitals in Yerevan.

Another important area of concern for the displaced population is the access to work or self-employment, which is essential for laying a ground conducive to their integration, including having durable housing.

*More information on the local background information of Syrian refugees in Armenia is provided in Chapter3: Syrian Refugees: Background Information.*

**GIZ Experience<sup>1</sup>:** In November 2015, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) commissioned GIZ with the project “Economic Integration of Syrian Refugees in Armenia” (EISRA, see [www.syarabi.am](http://www.syarabi.am) for more information and a photo booklet on entrepreneurial success stories). The project is implemented under the umbrella of “Private Sector Development in South Caucasus” (PSD SC) regional programme which fosters economic development in all three South Caucasus countries - Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan. The needs assessment and database creation activity reported herein is a part of this project.

Through various activities - starting from facilitation of public-private dialogue via a working group, the provision of trainings, coaching and business counselling up to the support for participation in

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<sup>1</sup> The summary on GIZ experience is retrieved from an interview given by Anne Dorit Kempa to Devex.

local and international exhibitions – the project has helped around 2750 Syrian Armenians to improve their technical and entrepreneurial skills to access financial resources and new markets.

The group of SAs targeted by GIZ is quite heterogeneous – these are both female and male Syrian Armenians of all age groups belonging to the labour market who need to adjust to the new reality which is quite different from the life they led in Syria.

GIZ and MoEDI are co-chairing a working group representing international organisations and governmental and non-governmental agencies.

The goal of this working group is to support the identification, harmonisation, consolidation and coordination of activities related to the economic integration of Syrian Armenians in Armenia, in order to better understand their needs and develop tailored solutions and activities.

Following EIRSA initial needs assessment in 2015, the needs assessment reported herein is the first sound study of the SAs' economic integration in Armenia that has taken into consideration the overall policy arena and focused on the contextual factors of integration. This report examines the specific context of Armenia pertaining to the target group of SAs.



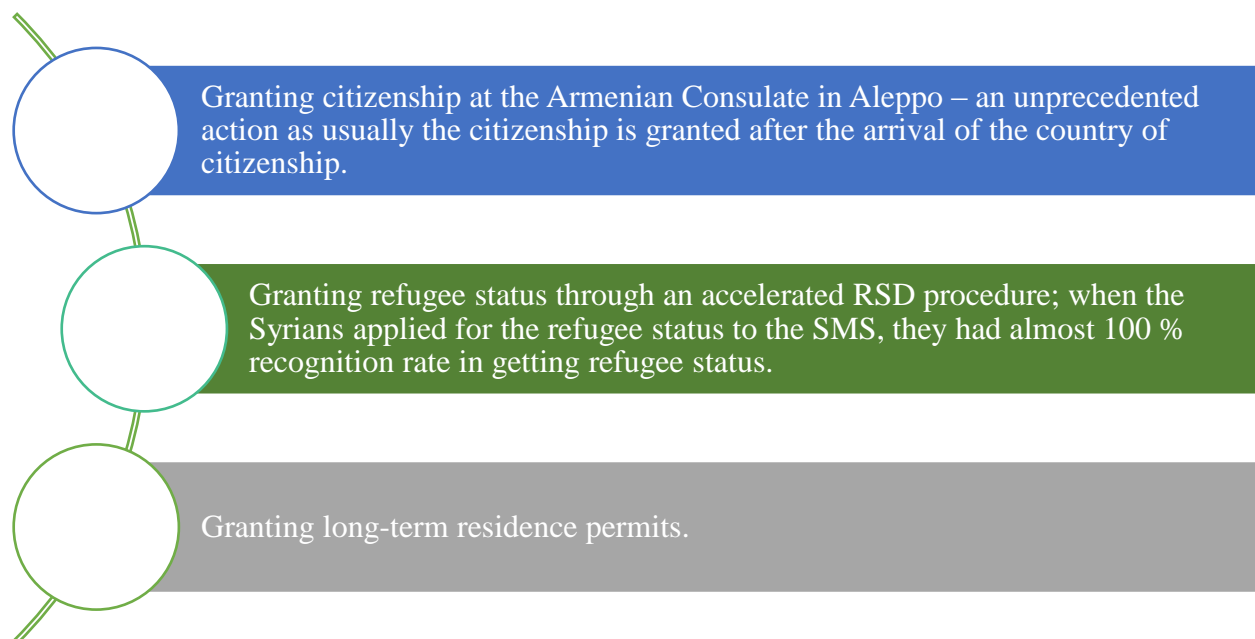
### 3. SYRIAN REFUGEES: BACKGROUND SITUATION IN ARMENIA

The joint statement on Syria made by the UN high officials in Davos, Switzerland, on Monday January 16, 2017 says, - “In Syria today, there are 15 besieged areas where up to 700,000 people, including an estimated 300,000 children, still remain trapped. Nearly five million people, including more than two million children, live in areas that are extremely difficult to reach with humanitarian assistance due to fighting, insecurity and restricted access”<sup>2</sup>.

Since 2011, Armenia started hosting displaced Syrians seeking asylum in Armenia, with the vast majority of them being of Armenian ethnicity. In 2011-2016, about 22,000 Syrian refugees arrived in Armenia.<sup>3</sup> The Government of Armenia has taken the approach of offering different protection options to the displaced Syrian population.

*See Figure 2 below for the summary of some of the Government of Armenia approaches.*

**Figure 2: Protection Options Offered by the RA Government**



It was challenging to register all of the displaced Syrian persons as they came to Armenia using different options to enter the country<sup>4</sup>. However, since the start of the influx the Government of Armenia has extended various assistance schemes. Particularly, the Government, through amending national laws/decisions/procedures, allowed the Syrians to bring in their vehicles without any import tax and to use the Syrian license plate numbers in Armenia as well as refrained from collecting entry

<sup>2</sup> See more at: UN in Armenia (2017) Joint Statement on Syria [Online] Available at: <http://un.am/en/news/541> [Accessed March 3, 2017].

<sup>3</sup> Follow the link for more information: [http://www.un.am/up/library/hbm\\_report\\_eng.pdf](http://www.un.am/up/library/hbm_report_eng.pdf) [Accessed on May 23, 2017].

<sup>4</sup> Follow the link for more information: <http://un.am/en/agency/UNHCR> [Accessed on March 3, 2017].

visa fees from Syrians of ethnic Armenian origin. UNHCR was among the first agencies that based on Government request established schemes through partners to provide humanitarian assistance.

Figures provided by the Ministry of Diaspora indicate that as a result of the Syrian conflict, the Armenian community of Syria decreased from 80,000 to around 20,000.<sup>5</sup> Despite their Armenian ethnicity, it was the first time for most of the SAs to come to Armenia, and they immediately faced language and cultural challenges.

The Centre for Coordination of Syrian-Armenian Issues (CCSAI) NGO was established with support and encouragement of the Ministry of Diaspora to ensure that international agencies have an NGO partner composed of SAs to collaborate with. The NGO that represents the SA community in Armenia was hosted at the premises of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU). CCSAI received its first funds of USD 100,000 from the State of Kuwait to provide humanitarian assistance to displaced Syrians. In-kind contributions were provided to CCSAI by many diaspora actors and private donors.

The World Council of Churches Armenia Inter-Church Charitable Round Table Foundation (ART) has initiated its first emergency preparedness project through which it provided food packages to 1000 Syrian families and ensured food security of around 4000 individuals.

As many SAs first came to Armenia with an intention to remain until the conflict ends and then to return home, the Ministry of Education supported to establish “Cilician” school at the premises of a local school in Yerevan to host SA students. The school functioned for a year using Syrian school curriculum. With the conflict in Syria lasting longer and influx from Syria reaching its peak, it was decided to distribute the pupils to local schools close to their residences and thus support further integration.

Many young people left Syria, thus leaving their education at tertiary institutions. In Armenia, they planned to continue their studies or start attending tertiary education institutions. Through CCSAI, with funding from AGBU and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 75 percent of tuition fees for around 400 SA students were and are still being subsidised to ensure their access to tertiary education.

In 2013, based on a Government decree and a decision of the municipality of Ashtarak town, a land plot of 4.5 acres was granted to CCSAI to establish a new district called New Aleppo, which, if realised, would have hosted around 600 families. It was a rather ambitious project that required around 25 million USD investment. The project did not materialise in view of increasing number of influx of SAs, which were more deprived, and there was a lack of motivation among the SAs to buy apartments in “New Aleppo” and move from the capital city of Yerevan to Ashtarak.

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<sup>5</sup> Follow the link for more information: [http://www.un.am/up/library/hbm\\_report\\_eng.pdf](http://www.un.am/up/library/hbm_report_eng.pdf) [Accessed on May 23, 2017].

Armenian passports have been used for onward migration to Europe and Gulf States. According to the data provided by the Police, between 2012 and June 2015 a total of 15,465 people displaced from Syria were granted Armenian citizenship.

UNHCR has taken a flexible approach addressing the most challenging issues of the displaced Syrian population seeking protection in Armenia. Thus, the humanitarian responses provided by the UNHCR through partners (State Migration Service of the Ministry of Territorial Administration, Mission Armenia NGO, Armenian Red Cross Society, KASA Swiss Humanitarian Foundation, Save the Children International NGO, Center for Coordination of Syrian Armenian Issues, Small and Medium Entrepreneurship Development National Center) targeted vulnerable Syrians without considering their status in the Republic of Armenia. Thus, regardless of whether they had Armenian citizenship, a Convention Travel Document (CTD – often known as Nansen passport or refugee passport) or a special resident permit was granted to Syrians to benefit from services offered by the above listed governmental and non-governmental organisations.

The most pressing issue for Syrians in Armenia has always been housing, followed by healthcare and economic hardship. The Syrians, among other displaced persons, face the challenge of exercising their rights, when it comes to accessing state funded healthcare and social schemes. Although the national legislation defines the same rights for refugees as those for Armenian citizens, there are many impediments and obstacles to exercising those. For example, displaced persons with disability faced significant challenges, as the documents issued by medical institutions in Syria were not automatically recognised in Armenia. Hence, these traumatised persons had to undergo through the Armenian system of disability-level granting in order to benefit from the disability scheme. The same applies to access to state funded social schemes.

Mission Armenia has activated its medical referral services for the displaced Syrian population through which many were able to get lifesaving medicine as well as medical treatment at designated hospitals in Yerevan.

Social networks play a significant role in small homogeneous countries like Armenia, and they are of significant importance when seeking access to state funded schemes of social and healthcare assistance. It has to be noted that there were a few cases when the Prime Minister had to intervene to propose symptomatic solutions for SAs' issues, such as requesting to freeze loan interest rates or negotiating an immediate heart surgery. While trying to find long-term, durable solutions, from time to time high-level government officials intervene to speed up or smoothly solve the issues faced by SAs, showing high-level engagement of public officials.

Another important area of concern for the displaced population is the access to work or self-employment, which is essential for laying a ground conducive to their integration, including having durable housing. The Armenian labour market is small for its own working population and is heavily dependent on the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) markets, with Russia<sup>6</sup> being the major

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<sup>6</sup> Follow the link for more information: <http://www.smsmta.am/upload/migrantrdarm.pdf> [Accessed 28 March 2017].

destination for most labour migrants. The heavy political influence of Russia and Armenia's accession to the EEU contributed to a situation where the Russian language is an important prerequisite for accessing local labour markets, including the banking sector.

Meanwhile, the State Employment Agency (SEA – previously called State Employment Service Agency) of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MLSA) has, through UNHCR funding, implemented vocational education and training (VET) and job placement projects, inter alia, engaging private employment agencies, such as “Tanger”, through provision of vouchers which basically incentivised the employers to hire SAs. Job fairs were organised<sup>7</sup> to set up meeting points for SAs and employers.

Despite the fact, that in the beginning the project proved to be successful in employing the majority of SAs, in the long run, observations showed that they were disengaged from employment. This was mainly due to low salaries, followed by language and cultural barriers. Salaries were reported to be inadequate to pay the housing rent. As a measure to prevent homelessness and excessive camping in a situation of increased need for housing, the UNHCR has operationalized a rental subsidy instrument through its partner Mission Armenia NGO, creating a condition where SAs would have their housing rents partly subsidized to allow them seek employment and integrate into the labour market. The rental subsidy instrument is still in place to prevent homelessness and assist the most vulnerable layers of the displaced population. Later other actors, such as, OXFAM and the Armenian Redwood Project, the Armenian Missionary Association of America, and others also contributed to these developments.

Displaced people from Syria, as well as other refugees are not subject to legal limitations restricting their access to labour markets. Moreover, SAs often “bring” high-level skill sets and business culture, multiple languages and excellent vocational skills, including traditional arts and crafts well preserved through generations. Armenia benefitted from the SAs' business connections in the Middle East and a well-advanced service culture, which they bring to the country and which could potentially contribute to the development of the Armenian economy.

However, economic integration is even more difficult as immigrants are facing the challenging economic situation in Armenia, with around 30 percent of the population<sup>8</sup> living below the national poverty line<sup>9</sup>, a constrained market, small purchasing power and limited job opportunities. UNHCR's projects offer language, life-skills and vocational trainings, and courses on business development implemented jointly with SME DNC, Sparkassenstiftung<sup>10</sup> and GIZ EISRA project. Training courses offered by KASA and Sparkassenstiftung provided the successful trainees with some basic income generation skills (e.g. hair dressing). Since 2014, more ambitious entrepreneurs

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<sup>7</sup> Follow the link for more information: <https://armenpress.am/arm/news/733598/> [Accessed 28 March 2017].

<sup>8</sup> Follow the link for more information: <https://www.adb.org/countries/armenia/poverty> [Accessed 28 March 2017].

<sup>9</sup> Follow the link for more information: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2015/11/23/social-snapshot-and-poverty-in-armenia-main-outcomes-of-2014-HH-integrated-living-conditions-survey> [Accessed 28 March 2017].

<sup>10</sup> Follow the link for more information: <http://www.sparkassenstiftung.de/en/world-savings-day/armenien.html> [Accessed 28 March 2017].

could benefit from micro-credits of up to 10,000 USD offered by the SME-DNC at a preferential 4 percent interest rate<sup>11</sup>.

From 2013 onwards, “Rossotrudnichestvo”, Federal Agency for CIS issues, was contacted to provide Russian language classes to assist those who wish to enter the banking sector. Since there is high inflow of remittances from the Armenian labour migrants working in the Russian Federation, bank employees are required to have adequate proficiency in Russian.

Many of other factors hampering the economic integration of Syrian refugees in Armenia are not necessarily displacement-specific, but are rather linked to the economic and market environment in Armenia. Expertise and high-level engagement of development actors are required to tackle such challenges.

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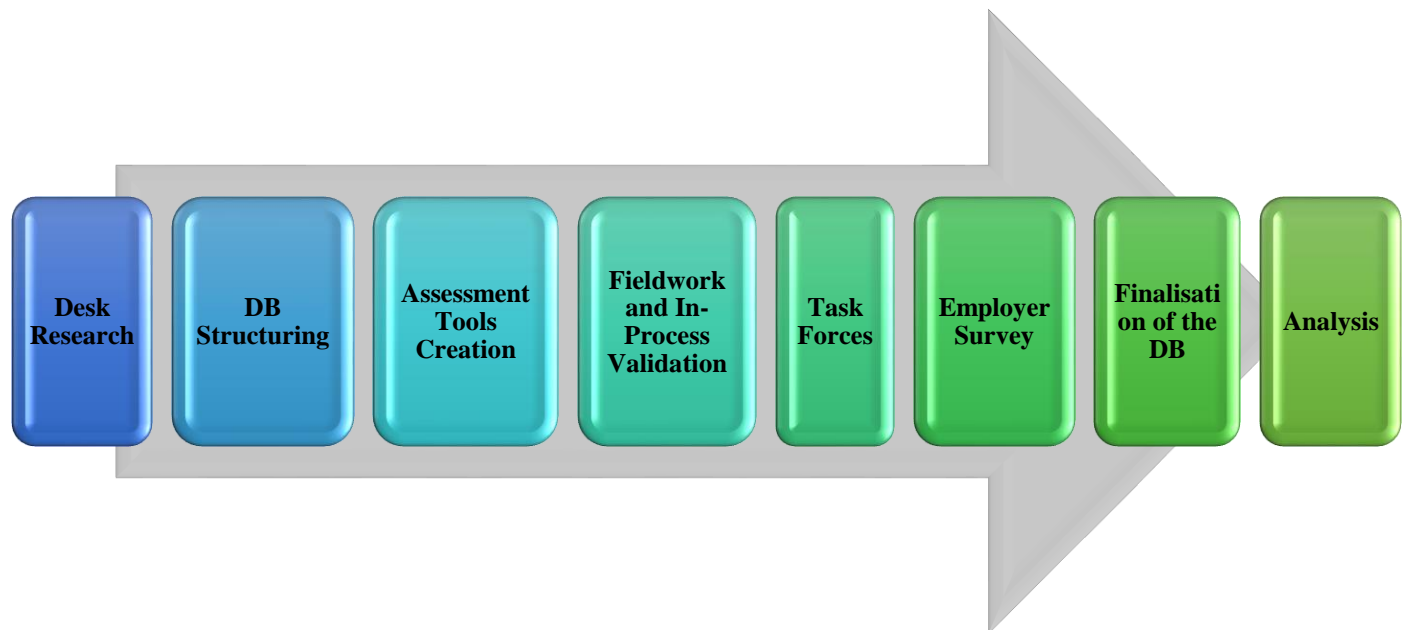
<sup>11</sup> According to ArmStat, the average interest rate in Armenian banks was 17.19% as of January 2017, see [http://www.armstat.am/file/article/sv\\_01\\_17r\\_310.pdf](http://www.armstat.am/file/article/sv_01_17r_310.pdf), page 3. [Accessed 5 March 2017].

## 4. METHODOLOGY OF THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

A complex methodology was applied to assess the needs of SAs and to create the database. Key steps of needs assessment study are given in Figure 3 below. The first step to commence was the desk research. In this regard, one of the most important and challenging tasks was to validate the existing data. Afterwards, upon creation of the assessment tools and approval by GIZ, the fieldwork was launched.

The task force set up by GIZ was relevant in terms of gathering feedback from the EIRSA project team and relevant stakeholders. The employer online survey was conducted and a supplementary data bank (DB), in line with the one for the SAs, was created. Upon finalization of the SyAD and the data from employers, the analytical work began.

Figure 3: Methodology of the Needs Assessment



**Desk Research:** The desk research included following activities:

- Review of international experience
- Review of local experience
- Review of existing research tools (questionnaires, evaluation forms etc.)

Review of international and local experience focused on issues of economic integration of refugees and the success tracked. The existing exemplary techniques of database creation and maintenance were taken into consideration.

**DB Structuring:** It was essential to agree on the envisaged structure of the SyAD. To that end, the existing data on SAs provided by GIZ were discussed and reconsidered. SyAD structuring included following activities:

- Examining the dataset on 826 SAs provided by GIZ
- Identifying the gaps in the existing data and defining the information needed
- Designing the new structure of the SyAD
- Approving the SyAD structure.

**Assessment Tools Creation:** To carry out the fieldwork, two assessment tools were created, namely:

- ✓ **SA self-assessment form**
- ✓ **Employer survey questionnaire.**

Although the method applied is called ‘self-assessment’, it was important for the interviewers to work with SAs and not to leave the respondents to complete the form in solitude. All of the questions in the assessment form required respondents’ self-reflection on own needs. The interviewers had to assure full engagement of the SAs approached to complete the assessment forms in a participatory manner.

The assessment accentuated individual observations. Hence, different members of SA households who had economic integration needs were approached.

The SA self-assessment form was composed of six blocks covering 48 questions. The blocks were as follows:

1. Demographics
2. Socio-economic situation
3. Business related information
4. Exhibitions and trainings
5. Intentions and future plans
6. Background information

*See Appendix 1 for the needs assessment form.*

The needs of already employed and unemployed SAs were categorised both for the design of the assessment forms and for further organisation of the data.

An online questionnaire for employers was designed. The employer questionnaire was shorter and comprised three basic blocks, namely:

1. Perceptions of prospective SA employees
2. Skills required from SAs
3. Information about the company.

Both forms were widely discussed with EIRSA project stakeholders, and the feedback was duly taken account of. Feedback from the State Employment Agency was especially important for finalisation of the employer questionnaire.

The method of back-translation of research tools was applied: the source instrument was designed in English, translated into Eastern and Western Armenian, and translated back into English to ensure accuracy. All designed tools were pretested.

The final version of the self-assessment form was a tablet form, while the employer online survey questionnaire was a google-based doc.

***Fieldwork and In-Process Validation:*** The contact list of 826 SAs provided by GIZ was used as a point of departure. The initial stage of the fieldwork included validation of these 826 contacts. Furthermore, these contacts were revised based on this validation exercise (*see Table 1 for non-response reasons*). Following activities were conducted during the fieldwork and in-process validation phase, specifically:

- Conducting the training of interviewers
- Filling out the self-assessment forms
- In-process validation of 826 contact points provided by GIZ
- Incorporation of 1500 contact points in the prospective SyAD, using the snowball technique
- Conducting the employer survey.

The interviewers for the fieldwork were selected from among the pool of CRRC-Armenia interviewers, as well as from recommended SA candidates. Previous experience of working with SAs was an important factor in the hiring process. Total of 22 interviewers, including two SA interviewers, and a field work coordinator were contracted. Before commencing the fieldwork, they received a comprehensive training on how to conduct the assessment. Moreover, information on the present state of SAs, organizations currently supporting them, as well as booklets and books with relevant orientation were provided to the trainees. The aim was to prepare the interviewers to the dialogue with and possible questions from the respondents. All interviewers who undertook participation in the fieldworks non-disclosure agreements and received the SA contact list.

The responsibility of the fieldwork coordinator was to accompany the interviewers, when needed, and randomly check their work during the fieldwork. In addition, CRRC-Armenia randomly sampled



five percent of the contact points after the assessment forms were completed and employed back checks via phone. Back visits were paid where necessary. ‘Back checking’ is a process whereby CRRC-Armenia representative assured that the respondents were duly approached by the interviewers.

When encountered with problematic cases, the CRRC-Armenia verified with additional contact points. The fieldwork evidenced a high degree of cultural sensitivity in the survey works performed (*see Chapter 5: Data Collection Challenges*).

To ensure smooth communication with and understanding of the culture of the respondents, the CRRC-Armenia sought to recruit SA interviewers for the fieldwork. However, after the recruitment interviews, and because of time constraints, only two SAs joined the fieldwork team, providing excellent contribution to the output. As most SAs speak Western Armenian, engagement of the SA interviewers was highly relevant. Moreover, one of SA interviewers kindly provided the translation of the assessment form into Western Armenian for other interviewers and respondents who might have linguistic barrier.

High non-response rate throughout the in-process validation of the 826 contact points provided by GIZ (*see Table 1*) made it apparent that a representative sample would not be possible to draw. To bridge the information gap, the CRRC-Armenia contacted major organisations focusing on SAs issues. However, since the requested data was personal and private, the initial list could not be replenished. It was decided that the snowball technique was to be applied.

The snowball sampling procedure enacted as an additional means to replenish the information so that the targeted number of 1500 individual observations was achieved. Additionally, a convenience sampling technique was used to approach SAs at public spaces through qualitative case selection.

**Table 1: Reasons for Non-Response from the Initial List of SAs**

<b>Reason</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>% of total</b>
Phone number did not exist/phone number was not reachable	305	60.8
Refused to answer due to the lack of time	74	4.8
Refused to answer/not interested	65	4.2
The respondent was not a member of the target group	40	2.6
The respondent was outside of Armenia	12	2.4
Other	6	1.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>502</b>	<b>100</b>

To avoid duplications, all interviewers were instructed to send the list of new contacts of SAs (obtained during the fieldwork) to the fieldwork coordinator, who would then check the list and assign interviewers to survey those who were not contacted yet.

In some cases, however, it was not possible to avoid duplications, since the names and surnames of SAs were pronounced in one way, but written differently (e.g. Hakob, Hakop, Hagob, Hagop, etc.). It was difficult to identify whether such persons had already been contacted or not. To solve this problem, all interviewers were instructed to show the names (in written form) to SAs to verify the accuracy of the spelling.

CRRC-Armenia's ethical research guidelines were applied. In particular, leaflets were distributed to all participants of the survey, and informed consent forms were collected (by ticking the agreement boxes on online tablet forms, and the online survey/inquiry platform for the employer survey).

**Task Forces:** Here 'task force' is defined as an ad hoc group of stakeholders set up to perform a specific mission (broad) or a task (concrete), to solve a problem that requires multi-dimensional approach. The task force organised by GIZ involved representatives of five stakeholder organisations (the State Employment Agency, Red Cross, Ministry of Diaspora, CRRC-Armenia and GIZ), and it was vital in terms of achieving agreement on the vision for the assessment concerned.

The questions included in the forms were designed in line with the logic of the envisaged structure of the database (agreed with relevant stakeholders during task force meetings organised by GIZ for development and approval of the assessment forms). Further task forces enacted as means for discussion and approval of the needs assessment activities upon the development of the SyAD. The task forces organised by GIZ assumed discussion meetings. Prior to the meetings, GIZ was responsible for sending out the materials for discussion and collecting feedback.

With regard to the needs assessment, the stakeholders provided feedback specifically on the structure of the DB, self-assessment form, employer questionnaire, and the preliminary findings along with the progression of the in-process validation.

**Employer survey:** An online survey method was used to reach the entrepreneurs. Given that CRRC-Armenia had already created a dataset of around 1000 entrepreneurs in Armenia, the emails of these businesses were used to send the online questionnaire. Initially, the questionnaire was sent to 1035 entrepreneurs. Based on the response rates, a targeted sample was identified, and this sample was reached through phone calls encouraging the employers to respond online. The online questionnaire (easy to fill out) was designed to reveal the needs of the employers in regard to prospective SA employees.

Following activities were performed:

1. The online questionnaire was distributed to the company contacts previously sampled by CRRC-Armenia
2. Phone calls were made to the companies encouraging them to respond (as the response rate was low)

3. Additional contacts of the employers were acquired from the Republican Union of Employers of Armenia (RUEA), and the online questionnaire was sent to this additional sample of employers.

*See Appendix 3 for the online survey questionnaire (form).*

Response from a sample of 100 companies was achieved.

**Finalisation of the DB:** After the fieldwork, 1529 completed forms were submitted, out of which 24 were identified as duplicates and withdrawn from the database. The SyAD was finalised based on 1505 individual observations.

Overall, two datasets were generated based on the needs assessment results:

- (i) SyAD was created based on 1505 individual observations
- (ii) Data from 100 companies were stored as a supplementary database.

Following activities were performed to finalise the DB:

- Data archiving and cleaning
- Creation of the SyAD interface
- Approval of the SyAD by GIZ
- Planning of the SyAD updates.

The above activities were supplemented by creation of a separate DB with the inputs from the employer survey.

The needs assessment provided crucial data on the employability of the SAs, specifically, relevant characteristics like past/current occupations, qualifications acquired previously, and qualifications needed for future desirable employment. Specific needs and opportunities for development (through vocational and other training) were identified. For purposes of this study “employability” means job searching, employment and entrepreneurial potential. The data collected from the employers pointed to the improvement of competitive advantages of Syrians on the Armenian labour market.

Thus, the data received through the needs assessment can be further used by the Client and relevant stakeholders/ service providers.

In the near future CRRC-Armenia will make updates to the SA dataset mainly via phone calls. Hence, this report does not entirely conclude the work done in regard to the reported needs assessment, but reflects main data collected so far.

*Analysis of the data:* SPSS and STATA software packages were used for meta-analytical purposes. The final versions of the dataset were made available in CSV format (for easy transferability to any other quantitative data management software).

The analysis of the results of the self-assessment was based on a dataset of 1505 valid cases. The analysis was performed as follows:

- Subtopics of the needs assessment form were used for grouping the received data
- The data was first explored through descriptive statistics
- Major findings, worth attention, were highlighted
- The findings were grouped under conceptual frames for reporting proposes.

Findings presented in the “Major findings” section of the report are grouped in accordance with the subheadings identified to illustrate the conceptual frames.

In the analytical section of the report attempts were made to make use of all data collected.

## 5. DATA COLLECTION CHALLENGES

There were several important challenges faced by the team of researchers and interviewers in the fieldwork, of which the most demanding were:

- Linguistic barriers
- Snowball sampling
- Cultural differences
- Previous fieldworks
- Cultural sensitivity
- Identification of long-term needs
- Reaching out the employers.

**Linguistic barriers:** Despite the fact that the questionnaires were available both in Eastern and Western Armenian, the linguistic barrier was persistent. The interviewers had to read the same question with the respondents several times so that the content was clear. In general, interpersonal communication was a challenge making the interviews last longer than anticipated. This surely had positive aspects: some of the interviewers reported to have learnt more Western Armenian. Under “linguistic barriers”, the sociocultural context also has to be taken account of. The interviewers reported about openness and hospitality of SAs. A quote from one of the interviewers’ report states: “I was amazed, they (the SAs) were meeting me as if they have known me for years, they were very welcoming”.

**Snowball Sampling:** The next challenge after the linguistic barrier was that names of some respondents were listed several times with different spelling (based on how the interviewers made notes). This created a situation where the same respondent was approached a number of times, thereby leading to waste of both interviewer’s and respondent’s time.

The snowball sampling technique was relatively new to the interviewers who were used to working with probability samples<sup>12</sup>. Moreover, as the vast majority of the respondents were concentrated in Yerevan, a very thorough coordination was needed in assuring the interconnectedness of the interviewers, which was quite hard to achieve. One lesson that can be learnt from this experience is that the survey coordinators should prompt an in-process dialogue between the interviewers.

**Cultural Differences:** In some cases, the SAs were so hospitable that they would not reject any interviewer and patiently spoke to each one who approached them without mentioning the previous

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<sup>12</sup> A probability sample is a method based on the theory of probability (random process) assuring the likelihood of any unit to be selected and included in the sample. For this kind of sampling, however, knowledge on the distribution of the total population is crucial.

interviews. This resulted in an undesirable duplication of interviews which was later detected and taken into account during the data cleaning process.

The interviewers reported that it was hard for them to see the SAs in difficult life situations, to maintain emotional robustness and handle the fieldwork situations which lengthened the time spent in the field. Some of them still have issues of “leaving the field” and keep in contact with the respondents through Facebook.

*See Appendix 4 for an excerpt from an interviewer report.*

***Previous Fieldworks:*** The previous experience of SAs with other researchers and interviewers or representatives of other organisations dealing with SA issues affected their attitude towards the survey. In general, the interviewers reported that SAs demonstrated scepticism in that their situation may get better (and that surveys can have tangible impact) and, as a result, were reluctant to invest time in the interviews. Supposedly, as they were frequently approached by organisations providing humanitarian aid they might have expected the interviewers to provide aid or financial assistance.

***Identification of Long-Term Needs:*** The interviewers reported that in some cases the respondents were in such difficult economic situations that they could not think of any needs except immediate ones like having a job, paying the rent and bills, or having food for their family. It was hard for these persons to reflect on long-term needs.

***Reaching Out to the Employers:*** It was very challenging to achieve responses from the employers. Firstly, the companies, especially the decision-makers, who the interviewers aimed to approach are usually hard to reach. Secondly, the online survey method has its advantages and disadvantages, such as the low response rate. To overcome the challenges, the CRRC-Armenia had to use phone calls and send the online questionnaire (for a second round) to an additional sample of employers.

## 6. MAJOR FINDINGS

### 6.1. DEMOGRAPHIC SITUATION

Initially, the demographic situation of the respondents was analysed to produce important facts and figures on following:

- Gender
- Age
- Birthplace
- Marital status
- Residential status
- Household (HH) characteristics.

**Gender:** The sample of SAs interviewed was gender balanced: 50.6 percent were men and 49.6 percent were women.

**Age:** Usually, this type of survey targets only the adult population (+18). However, respondents over 16 years were also included in the sample for two reasons:

- a) The Armenian Labour Code allows teenagers to work and they can benefit from labour market integration measures.
- b) At the time of completion of EISRA project (in 2 years), those currently over 16 years old would be adults.

Individuals below 18 years accounted for 3 percent (n=50) of the surveyed respondents. Six out of these fifty were working, all in the service industry (as a waiter, hairdresser, etc.).

The average and median ages of the respondents were both around 40.

**Birthplace:** The overwhelming majority of the respondents mentioned Syria as their birthplace. The second and third most frequent birthplaces of the respondents were Kuwait and Armenia, respectively. Reportedly, those born in Kuwait moved to Syria during the war with Iraq and were hence facing the second displacement in their life. Those born in Armenia had, as a rule, moved to Syria for marriage and returned to the country afterwards.

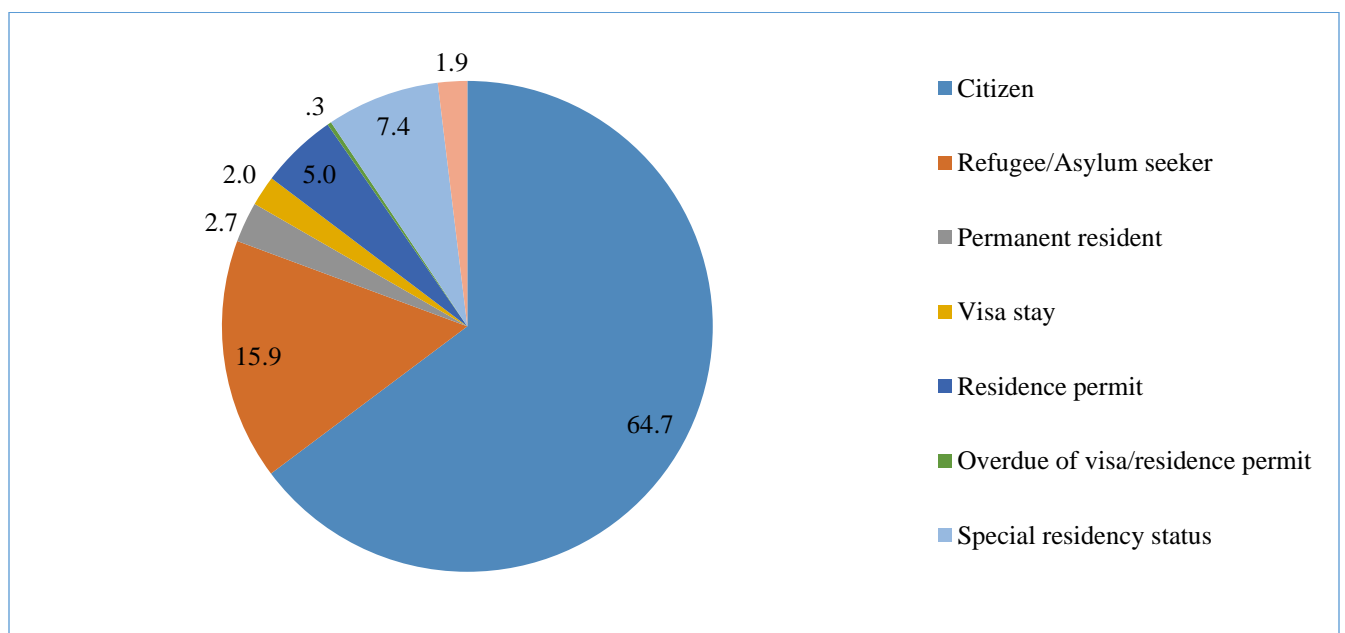
**Marital Status:** Fifty-nine percent (59%) of the respondents were married, 34.9 percent were never married, 4.4 percent were widows, and a small share were either divorced/separated or cohabiting without civil or religious marriage. For those who had children, the average number of children per family was around 2.15.

**Residential Status:** More than half of the surveyed SAs (64.7%) had already acquired Armenian citizenship. The majority of them had dual citizenship as they kept Syrian citizenship along with the Armenian. The second largest proportion (16.9%) was comprised of those who still had refugee status in Armenia (Chart 1).

On average, respondents had been staying in Armenia for about 3.2 years, and half of them arrived in Armenia more than 3 years ago.

The vast majority (1466) of SAs included in the sample lived in Yerevan (97.2%), and only 49 out of those 1505 surveyed lived in other urban areas or villages.

**Chart 1: Residential Status in Armenia, %**



**Note:** “Refugee/Asylum seeker” means people having a white card, who can potentially be both refugees and asylum seekers. For ease of response, these two categories were merged, given that the share of asylum seekers is low. In addition, the respondents had the “Other” option to choose, if they needed to differentiate.

**Household (HH) Characteristics:** Several HH characteristics were important in terms of the economic situation of the respondents, e.g.:

- Number of years in Armenia
- Marital status
- HH headed by male or female
- Number of children under 21.

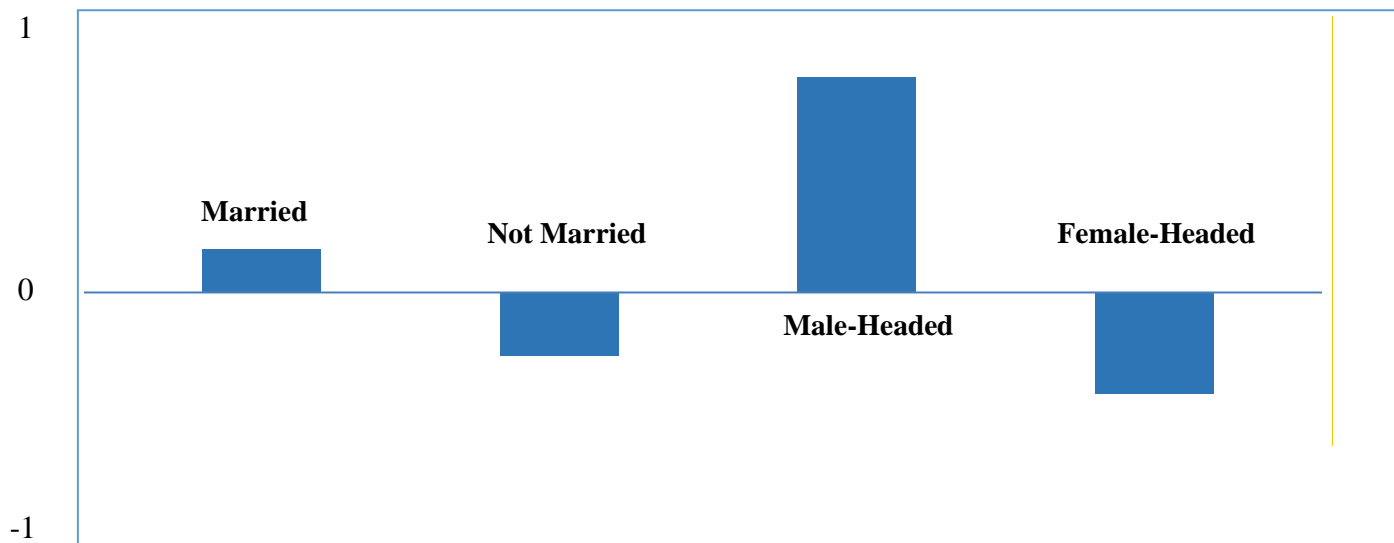
There was a significantly weak positive correlation between HH economic situation and the number of years SAs were in Armenia, which means that the longer the SAs stayed in Armenia, the better



their current economic situation was. Furthermore, the self-reported HH economic situation differed among respondents who were married and those who were not married (including those who lived separately, were divorced or just cohabiting without civil or religious marriage). As shown in Chart 2, those who were married exhibited a better self-reported HH economic situation. However, this difference was not statistically significant.

Meanwhile, the male-headed HHs reported better economic situation and the difference was marginally significant (based on a T-Test). A T-Test assumes an analysis of two population means through statistical examination. Those who indicated that the person who mostly covered the costs of their HH were parents, children, relatives, or the state were not included in this analysis as it was impossible to identify male or female HHs.

**Chart 2: Differences of HH Economic Situation**



There was also a negative, but not significant correlation between self-reported HH economic situation and the number of children under 21 which were considered to be dependents for the HH, meaning that those who had more children under 21 were in a less favourable economic situation.

## 6.2. LABOUR MARKET INTEGRATION

This section analyses several important characteristics of the occupation and employment of the respondents highlighting their potential for labour market integration. The section reflects on following:

- Employment rates
- Sphere of main occupation
- Occupational mismatch.

**Employment Rates:** For many Syrians who arrived in Armenia, the move was not a planned event but was rather induced by unexpected circumstances. Many respondents were therefore unable to transfer their accumulated wealth (in regards to real estate, business, cars or other valuable belongings, etc.) to Armenia or sell their assets and therefore acquire necessary funds needed to obtain a house and establish their new lives in Armenia.

For many respondents, there was little certainty regarding the duration of their stay outside of Syria. Initially, many thought that the situation in Syria would improve quickly and they would be able to return. However, as time passed, SAs increasingly tried to settle down and find employment in Armenia.

Successful integration of refugees largely depends on labour market conditions (absorption capacity, salaries, unionisation, etc.) of the host economy. The Armenian labour market is characterised by high unemployment, which makes the absorption of the SAs by domestic labour market challenging. For the period of 2011-2017, the unemployment rate oscillated around 19.0 percent, demonstrating an increasing trend for the last 5 years.<sup>13</sup> For April 2017, the average salary was estimated at AMD 189 148.<sup>14</sup>

Given the continued uncertainty vis-a-vis the situation in Syria, many SAs were trying to settle and find employment in Armenia. According to the self-reported information provided by the surveyed SAs, approximately one quarter of all respondents were in some way involved in entrepreneurship; 232 individuals had a business (61 unregistered), while 115 wanted to open one. Approximately 28 percent of the respondents considered themselves to be employed, 27 percent were job-seekers, and 6 percent were students<sup>15</sup> (*see Table 2*).

There were 13 employed individuals in the database who were above the working age (66+). Seven of these 13 SAs were self-employed (5 had registered businesses and 2 had not registered their businesses), the others were working in the private sector.

**Table 2: Occupation and Employment**

	<b>Total Sample</b>	<b>Working Age Individuals</b>
Have Business – Registered	177	171
Have Business - Not Registered	63	61
Want to open a business	124	115
Employed	421	417

<sup>13</sup> National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia. Unemployment rate. Labor Force Survey. [Online]. Available at: [http://www.armstat.am/file/article/sv\\_05\\_17a\\_141.pdf](http://www.armstat.am/file/article/sv_05_17a_141.pdf) . Last accessed July 14, 2017.

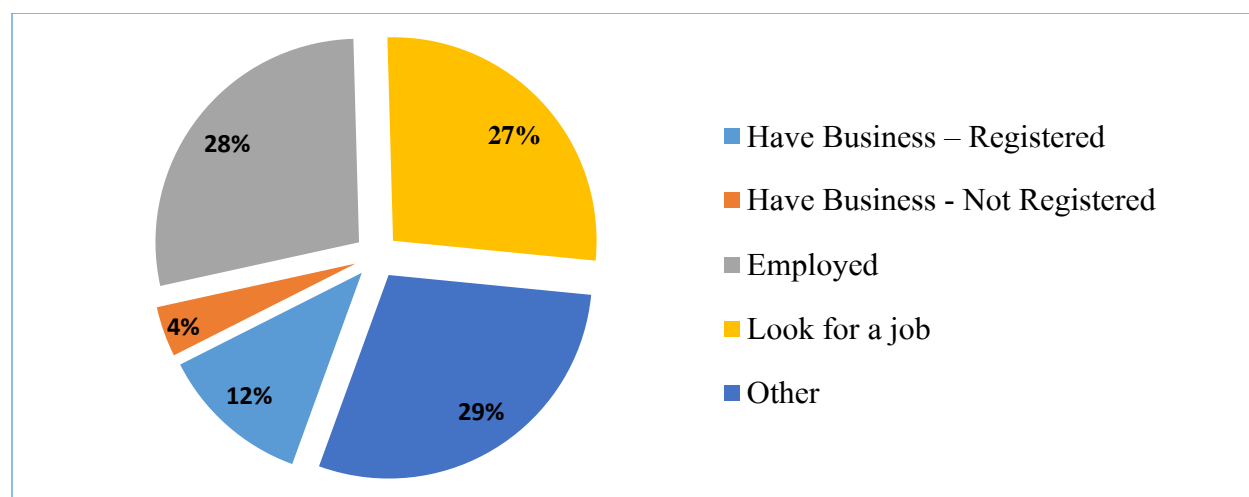
<sup>14</sup> National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia. Average monthly nominal wages, drams / 2016. [Online]. Available at [http://www.armstat.am/file/article/sv\\_05\\_17a\\_142.pdf](http://www.armstat.am/file/article/sv_05_17a_142.pdf) . Last accessed July 14, 2017.

<sup>15</sup> There are less students represented here than in other questions. This is because many of the surveyed students were working, or had business, etc. and for this question they mentioned their business status.

Look for a job	400	384
Housewife (unpaid labour)	66	65
Students	84	84
Age Pensioner	21	2
Refuse to Answer/Did not answer	149	133
<b>Total</b>	<b>1505</b>	<b>1432</b>

*Note: The working age is defined as 16 to 66.*

**Chart 3: Occupation and Employment**



*Note: The category of ‘employed’ was defined as those persons who had paid employment and were at work during the reference period, who performed some work for wage or salary, in cash or in kind. For more details, see the definition of ‘employed’ by ILO (2002).*

More than 50 percent of the working age individuals in the sample were employed. Table 3 provides information regarding the employment status of individuals in the sample, categorising respondents by sex, age and education level. It shows that the employment rate among men is significantly higher than among women: 68 versus 29 percent.<sup>16</sup> Also, the employment rate is the highest among younger and middle age individuals: 60.9 percent versus 56 percent of those in the 26-35 and 36-45 age groups were employed respectively. The employment rate amongst the 46-55 age group was in line with the employment rate of the whole sample. Individuals in the older age group (56 and above), excluding those not of working age, were the most disadvantaged as only 37 percent of them were employed.

The survey results demonstrate that level of education is an important factor defining the labour market outcome of SAs in the Armenian labour market. The employment rate was the highest among those with vocational education (74.1%) and the lowest among those with no primary education (11.1%).<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Value for the Pearson Chi-Square < .001, which means that employment status was statistically significantly associated with gender.

<sup>17</sup> In both cases the sample did not contain enough observations to obtain reliable estimates.

**Table 3: Employment Rate by Gender and Age Groups**

	Not Employed (N)	Employed <sup>18</sup> (N)	Employment rate (%)
<b><i>By Gender</i></b>			
Male	241	520	68.3
Female	520	224	28.9
<b><i>By age groups</i></b>			
16-17	44	6	12.0
18-25	134	142	51.4
26-35	109	170	60.9
36-45	132	168	56.0
46-55	158	166	51.2
56-65	126	74	37.0
66+	58	15	20.5
<b><i>By level of education</i></b>			
No primary education	8	1	11.1
Primary education	88	95	51.9
Incomplete secondary education	202	181	47.3
Completed secondary education	210	176	45.6
Secondary technical education	63	49	43.8
Vocational education	7	20	74.1
Incomplete higher education	71	54	43.2
Completed higher education	112	164	59.4
Post-graduate degree	0	4	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>761</b>	<b>744</b>	<b>1505</b>

*Note: There are 3 interviewers' errors in the age group variable.*

A useful benchmark against which the labour market integration of SAs can be evaluated is the performance of refugees in the European countries. Table 4 presents the dynamics of employment rate of refugees entering the European host countries over time. National employment rates reported in the column “National” allows accounting for the absorption capacity of the host labour markets.

The information presented in Table 4 indicates that SAs demonstrate labour market performance (in terms of employment) in line with the one reported for refugees in Europe. Moreover, taking into account the national employment rate, the SAs in fact performed better than the refugees in most of European destinations, as shown in Table 4. The relative performance indicator (the employment rate of refugees with respect to natives) calculated as the ratio of the employment rate of refugees over the national one shows that SAs were quite well-positioned.

For comparison, in Austria and Sweden, which were major destinations for the Syrians, corresponding figures are 0.85 (53.3/62.6) percent and 0.78 (58.2/74.9) percent, respectively. Those

<sup>18</sup> Students, who have reported that they work along with studying, were considered as employed.

who stayed more than one but less than 5 years in Armenia demonstrated an employment rate above the Armenian national one. The subsample of those staying in Armenia for more than five years had an employment rate close to 63.6 percent.<sup>19</sup>

**Table 4: Statistical Information on Employment Rate by Country, %**

	<b>By time spent in destination (for humanitarian migrants)</b>				Total	National	Relative
	Less than 1 year	From 1 to 5 years	From 6 to 9 years	10 years or over			
Belgium	X	29.7	46.5	56.6	47.1	61.9	0.76
Spain	X	X	X	41.3	40.6	56	0.73
France	X	X	X	64.5	58.4	63.8	0.92
Croatia	X	X	X	52.9	52.9	54.6	0.97
Italy	X	X	X	69.7	61.3	55.7	1.10
Austria	X	X	X	70.5	60.2	71.1	0.85
Portugal	X	X	X	X	53.0	62.6	0.85
Slovenia	X	X	X	73.2	74.1	63.9	1.16
Finland	X	X	X	59.6	43.4	68.7	0.63
Sweden	X	44.5	30.7	68.9	58.2	74.9	0.78
UK	X	X	36.5	57.8	51.8	71.9	0.72
Norway	X	30.9	54.6	64.9	56.4	75.2	0.75
Switz.	X	65.4	83.5	89.4	78.1	79.8	0.98
<b>Armenia</b>	<b>55.36</b>	<b>49.50</b>	<b>63.64 *</b>	<b>50.00 *</b>	<b>50.87</b>	<b>50.90</b>	<b>1.00</b>

Source: Eurostat, National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia. Own elaborations.

*Note: Figures for European countries refer to 2014. Employment rate for Armenia refers to 2015. The estimates of Employment rate for Syrian refugees in Armenia are sample estimates.*

**\* Based on less than 30 observations only.**

**Sphere of Main Occupation:** Most of the unemployed women (70%) had children, but most of them (51.3%) were planning to find employment in the near future or open their own business (5.4 %). 58.8 percent of unemployed women had not previously worked in Syria. Interestingly, 45.5 percent of employed women had not worked in Syria, either.

Table 5 illustrates that most of the employed SA women worked in more “feminine” areas, such as food services, art or education. During the needs assessment, the team did not meet any women involved in industries, such as transportation and storage or electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply.

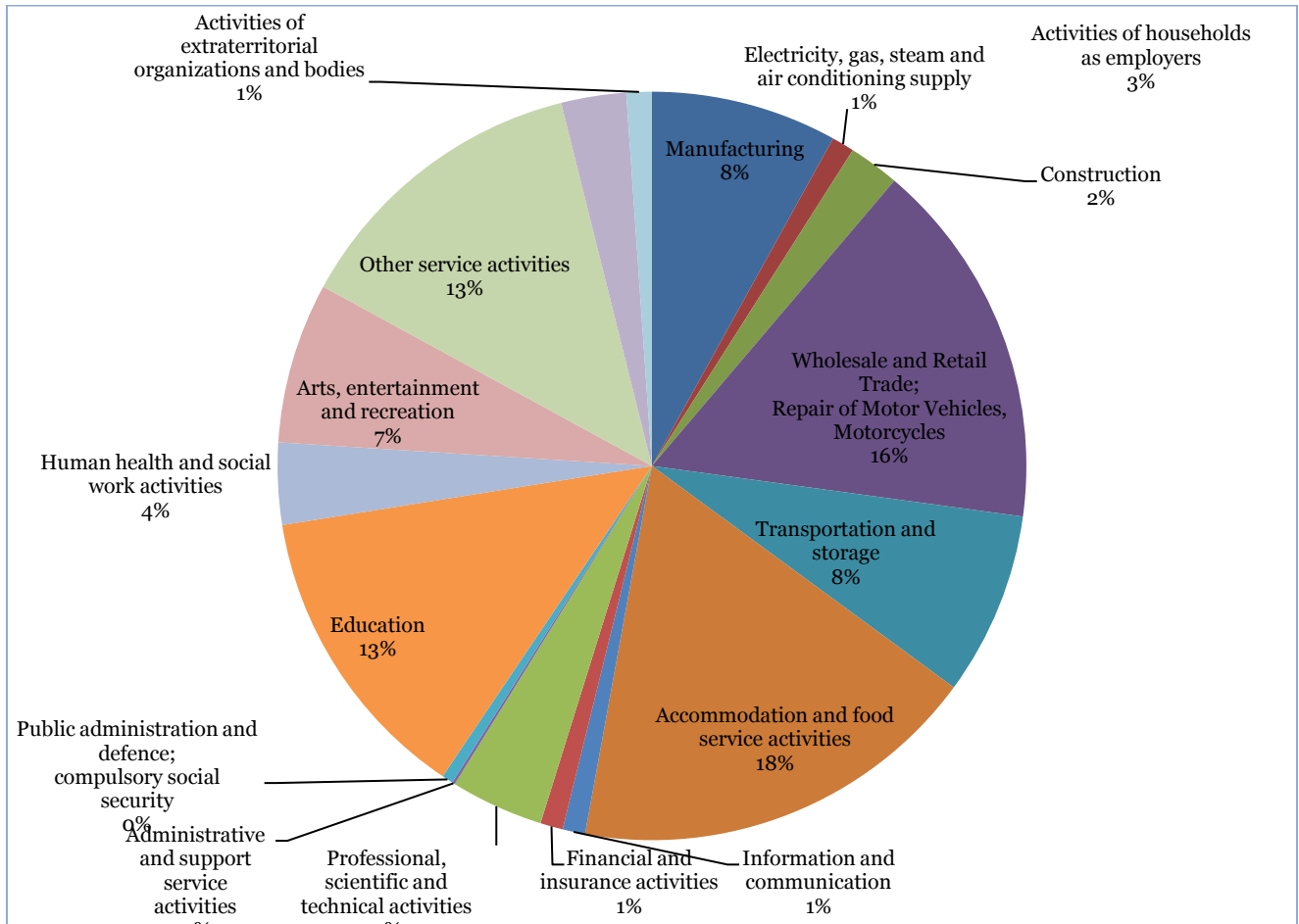
<sup>19</sup> Unfortunately, the samples of those subgroups are too small to obtain consistent estimates.

**Table 5: Sphere of Main Occupation by Gender**

<b>Spheres</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
Service / sales worker [including personal care workers, e.g. baby sitters]	187	100	287
Craft and related trades worker [e.g. electrical workers; building workers; metal or machinery workers]	160	34	194
Professional [in the fields of science, health, education, business, law, culture, etc.]	50	26	76
Technician / Associate professional [e.g. information and communication technicians etc.]	28	17	45
Manager [e.g. chief executives, senior officials]	24	9	33
Plant and machine operator / assembler [e.g. assemblers, drivers, other machine operators]	20	2	22
Clerical support worker [including customer service clerks, numerical and material recording clerks, keyboard clerks]	16	8	24
Student	15	16	31
Elementary occupation [e.g. helpers, cleaners, labourers (including agricultural labourers), street workers]	13	9	22
Skilled agricultural / forestry / fishery worker [including farmers, fishers, hunters, pickers]	6	3	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>519</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>743</b>

*Note: Only for those who were employed (one person refused to mention the sphere of current occupation)*

**Chart 4: Distribution of Employed across Sphere/Sector**



Despite relatively good performance in terms of employment, the survey demonstrated that SAs faced issues related to over-qualification and job skill mismatch, pointing to human capital losses for the migrants, as well as for Armenia in general.<sup>20</sup> The share of those with at least tertiary education working in elementary jobs was 47.8 percent.

While 30 percent of the interviewed individuals considered their field of study as completely relevant and 15 percent considered it to be only partially relevant to their current job, 33.9 percent considered their education to be completely irrelevant to their current job.

Most of those in the latter category mentioned that they were involved in the service industry (accommodation and food services, etc.) or transportation or repair of motor vehicles at the moment of reporting. It is important to mention that many of those who considered their educational

<sup>20</sup> Over-qualification rate is defined as share of the population with high educational level (i.e. having completed tertiary education, ISCED 5 or 6), and having low- or medium-skilled jobs (ISCO occupation levels 4 to 9) among employed persons having attained a high educational level.

background and skills irrelevant to their job in Armenia had been doing the same job back in Syria. For 16.8 percent, their job reportedly did not require any particular skills/education. These respondents were working as salespersons in various shops, as well as waiters, auto mechanics, cooks, etc.

Forty percent of those (who answered to question 3.9) whose job was not closely related to their field of study/qualification stated that it was the only job they could find. Thirty percent of these respondents had some level of higher education. Approximately 7 percent mentioned having taking their current job as a temporary stepping stone, and 8 percent cited the relatively high salary being the reason for choosing a job that did not correspond to the field of their study/qualification.

**Table 6: Occupation: Current (primary) versus Previous**

	Current occupation			Previous occupation		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Elementary occupation	13	9	22	8	15	23
Plant and machine operator/ assembler	20	2	22	37	2	39
Craft and related trades worker	160	34	194	249	34	283
Skilled agricultural/ forestry/ fishery	6	3	9	17	5	22
Service/ sales worker	187	100	287	135	94	229
Clerical support worker	16	8	24	13	27	40
Technician / Associate professional	28	17	45	18	30	48
Professional	50	26	76	62	91	153
Manager	24	9	33	33	8	41
Student	63	64	127	58	66	124
Not employed	193	472	665	68	323	391
Other				63	49	112
<b>Total</b>	<b>760</b>	<b>744</b>	<b>1504</b>	<b>761</b>	<b>744</b>	<b>1505</b>

*Note: One respondent did not mention current occupation.*

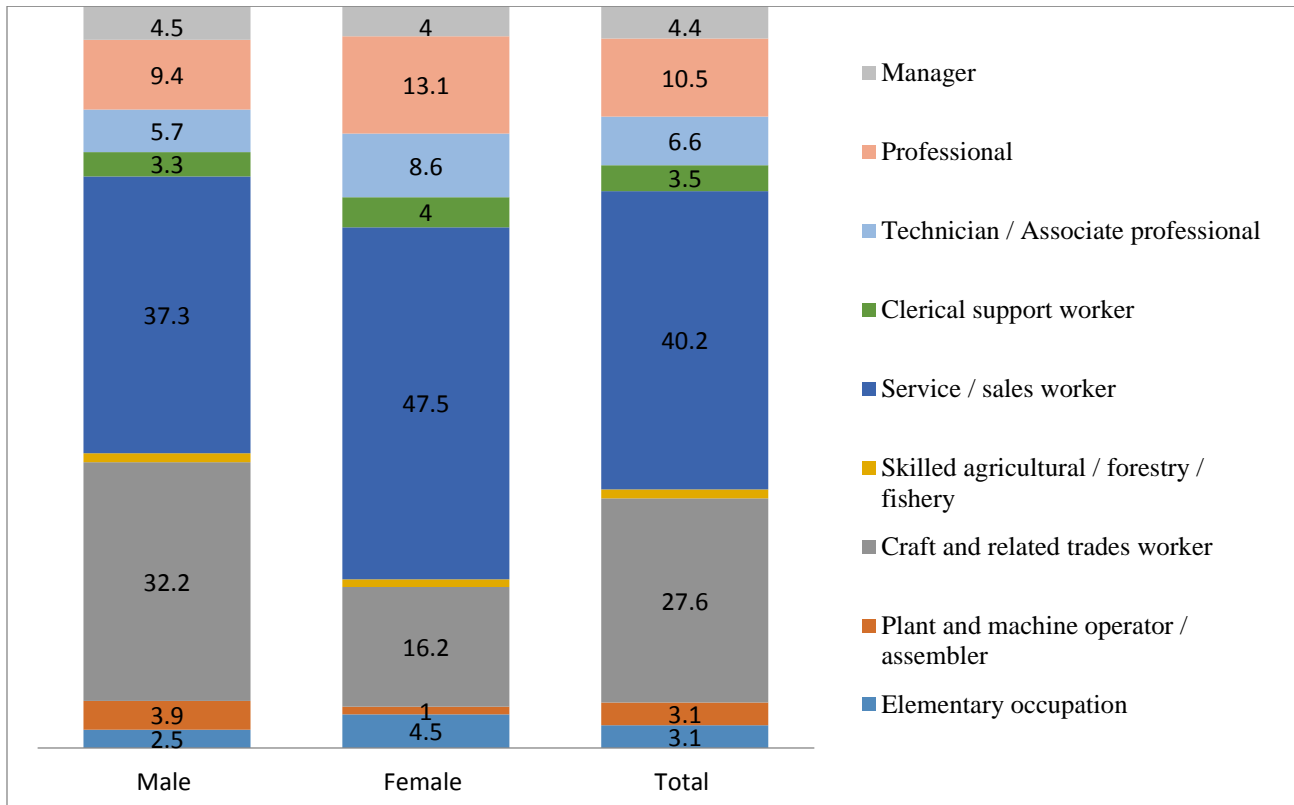
In regard to the occupational distribution of the employed respondents (*see Table 6*), the vast majority (70 percent of men and 63.8 percent of women) were either “Service/sales worker[s]” or “Craft and related trades worker[s]”. One-fifth of the respondents were in higher occupation groups (ISCO 1-3). Only 1 percent of the employed were in “Skilled agricultural/forestry/fishery work” which was not surprising, as the majority of respondents came from urban areas and settled in the capital city.

Almost half of those employed (47 %) were occupied in the service sector; 16 percent were in the “Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles, Motorcycles,” and 18% in the



“Accommodation and Food Services”. The “Education” sector employed more women (22%), while more men (11%) were occupied in “Manufacturing.”

**Chart 5: Distribution of the Employed across the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) Occupational Groups, %**



**Occupational Mismatch:** Table 7 presents a matrix whereby occupational mismatch is revealed. The rows show current occupation, while the columns show previous occupation. The matrix demonstrates that occupational mismatch is pervasive amongst SAs; few respondents work in the same occupation group in Armenia as the one they worked in Syria.

Those working as “Craft and related trades worker[s]” had the highest rate of overlap (50.2 %). 46.8 percent of “Service/Sale Workers” worked in the same sector as before and 45.9 percent of “Managers” had the same occupation as before. The situation was different for those previously employed in “Skilled agricultural/forestry/fishery” (with 12.5% of these respondents continuing work in this sector) and as “Technician[s]/associate professional[s]” (19.6% overlap). Those respondents “Not employed” in Armenia tended to previously hold “Clerical support worker, Technician/Associate professional” and “Professional” positions.

**Table 7: Distribution of Current versus Previous Occupation, %**

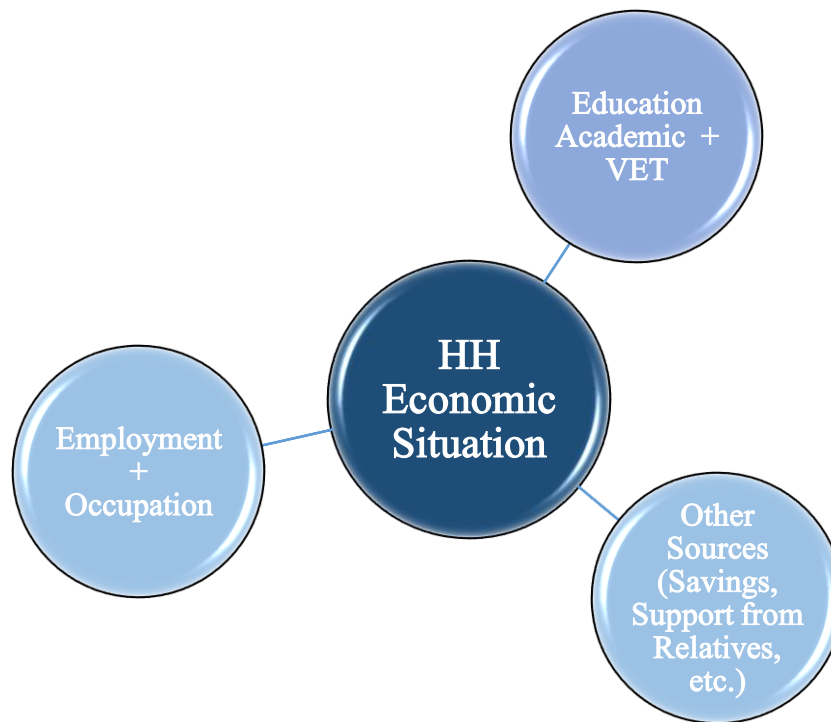
<b>Current (primary) vs Previous occupation</b>	<b>Elementary occupation</b>	<b>Plant and machine operator / assembler</b>	<b>Craft and related trades worker</b>	<b>Skilled agricultural / forestry / fishery</b>	<b>Service / sales worker</b>	<b>Clerical support worker</b>	<b>Technician / Associate professional</b>	<b>Professional</b>	<b>Manager</b>	<b>Student</b>	<b>Not employed</b>	<b>Other</b>
Elementary occupation	<b>22.7</b>	0.0	1.5	6.3	1.8	0.0	4.3	0.0	0.0	0.8	1.1	1.0
Plant and machine operator / assembler	0.0	<b>22.9</b>	1.5	0.0	0.9	2.6	0.0	0.7	2.7	0.0	0.8	1.0
Craft and related trades worker	9.1	20.0	<b>50.2</b>	0.0	4.5	5.1	2.2	2.8	8.1	2.5	3.8	5.7
Skilled agricultural / forestry / fishery	0.0	0.0	0.0	<b>12.5</b>	0.5	2.6	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.0
Service / sales worker	27.3	20.0	13.5	43.8	<b>46.8</b>	7.7	17.4	9.2	16.2	20.5	12.0	21.9
Clerical support worker	0.0	2.9	0.0	12.5	0.9	<b>23.1</b>	0.0	2.1	0.0	2.5	0.3	2.9
Technician / Associate professional	0.0	2.9	1.5	0.0	1.4	7.7	<b>19.6</b>	2.8	2.7	0.8	1.9	11.4
Professional	0.0	5.7	1.1	6.3	2.3	2.6	4.3	<b>27.0</b>	0.0	5.7	1.9	5.7
Manager	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.1	<b>45.9</b>	0.0	1.1	5.7
Student	9.1	0.0	1.1	0.0	9.0	5.1	4.3	2.8	0.0	<b>45.9</b>	9.0	3.8
Not employed	31.8	25.7	29.8	18.8	32.0	43.6	47.8	49.6	24.3	21.3	<b>67.4</b>	41.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

### 6.3. HOUSEHOLD (HH) ECONOMIC SITUATION

The analysis in the following sections evidences interrelation between education (both academic and VET), employment and occupation, as well as other sources of income (savings, support from relatives, social benefits etc.) as constituting the self-reported HH economic situation of the SAs (Figure 4).

The findings show that professional academic education plays an important role. The analysis reflects on the employment and occupational features of the SAs showing some important aspects of the HH economic situation.

Figure 4: **Interrelated Factors for HH Economic Situation**



### 6.3.1. Education and Employability

Following subsection provides an analysis of the impact of education (academic and VET) on the HH economic situation of the respondents is. It summarises and discusses several important findings in regards to following:

- Level of education
- Impact of education
- Effects of employability conditions

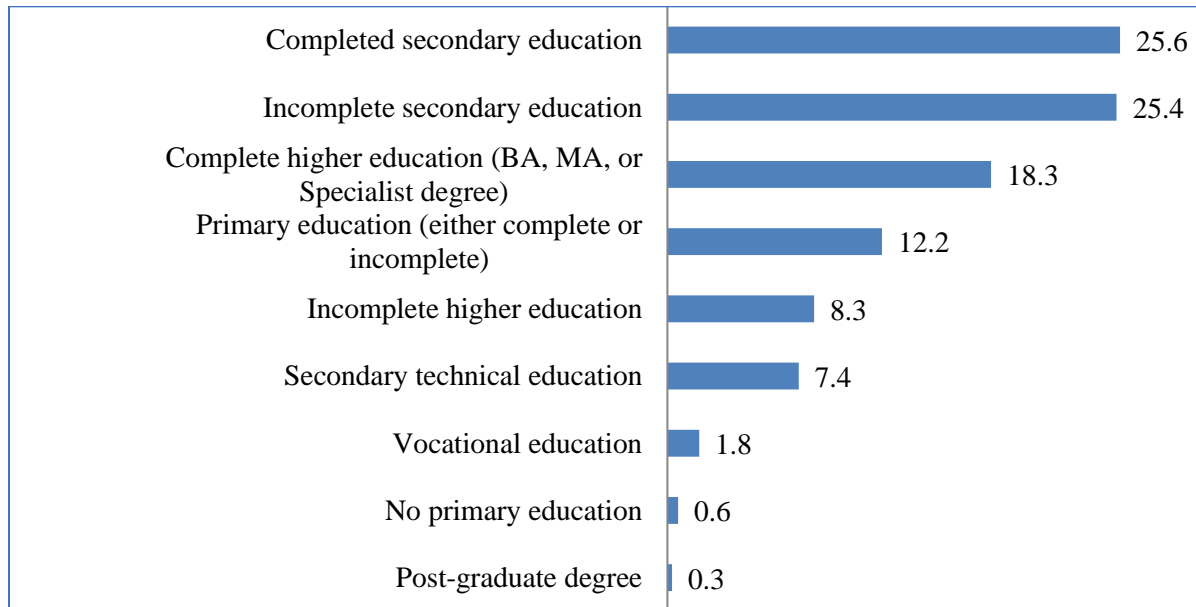
Under “employability conditions” subcategory several broad contextual factors were taken into account, among which were:

- Intention to stay in the country
- Current occupation
- Urgent support needed
- Payment of housing rent

➤ Main source of income

**Level of Education:** With regard to the educational background of respondents (*see Chart 6*), only 18.3 percent indicated having obtained a level of higher education equivalent to that of a university/bachelor's degree or higher, while another 8.3 percent mentioned having received some level of higher education not leading to a university degree, of which 30 percent were current students (Chart 6).

**Chart 6: Level of Education, %**



**Effects of Education and Employability:** A hierarchical multiple regression was run to determine if the educational and then employability-related variables predicted the self-reported HH economic situation. All of the assumptions of the analytical method have been met, and in this respect two outlier cases/observations were excluded from the analysis.

It has to be well noted that the model cannot be generalised to the overall population of SAs in Armenia, but refers to those who have participated in needs assessment survey.

The numbers suggest that those respondents beyond the majority groups (those with secondary education and current occupation in crafts and sales) reported different economic position. This merits further research and draws attention on the effect that education and growth of professionalism may have on the economic integration of SAs in Armenia.

To predict HH economic situation following categories of education/training model were applied:

- Academic (higher education) and other education as compared to the baseline group/that represents the majority of the respondents having VET or secondary education
- Skills matching the current job (yes/no)
- Desired change in education (yes/no)
- Participation in exhibitions (yes/no)
- Participation in trainings (yes/no)
- Knowledge of English (yes/no)
- Knowledge of Russian (yes/no).

Following employability conditions were considered (*see Box 1 for full details on each regression model*):

- Intention to migrate or stay in the country
- Current occupation (the baseline group of crafts and sales workers as compared to the group of professionals and other occupations)
- Support needed (financial and other)
- Housing status (i.e. renting)
- Main source of income (support from government or friends/relatives versus own business and salary as sources of income).

It was hypothesised that those with secondary education (specifically, with more specialised hands-on vocational training) would report a better economic situation in contrast to other under-represented minority groups with higher and other education. However, the model revealed different results pointing to the fact that in contrast to the majority of respondents with secondary education, those with higher education reported somewhat better situation.

The prediction for the first model was a better economic situation among those with higher education. And, as confirmed by the survey, those in professional occupation, compared to the crafts and sales workers (being the majority in the sample), were in somewhat better position. This meant, that self-reported higher education and professional occupation actually did matter in terms of better HH economic situation of SA families, and this suggested that even those who have secondary education and are in sales and crafts (as the majority of the respondents did) would be better off if they would pursue higher or professional education and training.

Participation in exhibitions (considered to be an educational activity in a broad sense, meaning participants receive networking skills and knowledge of the market economy) had negative association with the reported HH economic situation of the respondents' families. This may be due to the fact that those already in worse situation have higher intention to participate.

It has to be noted that the estimation was marginally significant and may just lead to a hypothetical suggestion that the exhibition organisers pay attention to those SAs who might be in better economic

situation rather than to those who have participated in these events so far. This may change the representation of the participants and provide wider range of experiences bringing together those who are economically better situated (and presumably integrated) with those who are in the urgent need of economic integration.

Participation in training had a positive impact on the HH economic situation meaning that the trainings did bring change.

Intention to stay in the country or leave had negative impact on the reported HH economic situation, suggesting that those with intention to leave were in worse conditions. At first sight this sounds straightforward. Perhaps, some did have initiatives for integration, something failed and they were seeking better business and working environment in another country.

On the other hand, given that this survey focuses on the needs of SAs, those who were more comfortable within the reality of Armenia and faster to integrate, reported a better economic position of their HHs. In a sense, this may suggest that intention to leave constrains the social and economic activity of the SAs during their stay in Armenia. One good message to SAs will be, giving credit to the freedom of choice of the country they want to live in, that time spent in Armenia may work ‘for’ their families if during their stay they do not highlight and prioritise their intention to leave.

## Box 1: Impact of Education and Employability Conditions on HH Economic Situation

Block 1: Education	Model 1				Model 2			
	B	SE	$\beta$	p	B	SE	$\beta$	p
(Constant)	0.188	0.319		*	1.63	0.414		***
Education: higher (secondary as baseline)	0.45	0.1	0.195	***	0.25	0.103	0.106	**
Education: other (secondary as baseline)	-0.171	0.125	-0.057		-0.19	0.12	-0.06	
Skills matching the job (yes/no)	-0.089	0.085	-0.041		-0.01	0.084	-0	
Desired change in education (yes/no)	-0.021	0.093	-0.009		0.03	0.09	0.011	
Participation in exhibitions (yes/no)	-0.195	0.099	-0.082	*	-0.18	0.095	-0.08	*
Participation in trainings (yes/no)	0.216	0.105	0.086	*	0.22	0.101	0.086	*
Knowledge of English (yes/no)	0.107	0.116	0.038		0.14	0.112	0.05	
Knowledge of Russian (yes/no)	-0.043	0.143	-0.012		-0.1	0.138	-0.03	
<b>Block 2: Employability</b>								
Intention to stay in the country (potential stayers/leavers)					-0.37	0.125	-0.11	***
Current occupation: professional (crafts&sales workers as baseline)					0.39	0.152	0.111	**
Current occupation: other (crafts&sales workers as baseline)					0.18	0.096	0.073	
Urgent support needed (financial/other)					0.09	0.084	0.04	*
Renting a house (yes/no)					-0.76	0.119	-0.25	***
Main source of Income (support/other)					0.03	0.192	0.006	
<i>R squared</i>	0.06				0.15			
<i>F</i>	5.3***				7.8***			
$\Delta R squared$	0.05				0.13			
$\Delta F$	5.3***				10.5***			

**Note: The model does not aim at generalisations; it relates to the observed sample only. N=633; \*p< .05; \*\*p< .01; \*\*\*p< .001**

**Constant may be described as the mean response value when all predictor variables are set to zero.**

**SE = Standard Error**

**B = Standardised betta coefficient**

**$\beta$  = non- standardised betta coefficient**

**The outcome variable or the HH economic situation was z-scored and treated as scale variable**

**The numbers for the R squared are low and this is not surprising given the absence of probability sampling and overrepresentation and underrepresentation of some groups of SAs due to the employed snowball technique.**

**The first model appeared to be significant ( $R^2 = .06$ ,  $F(8, 624) = 5.3$ ,  $p < .001$ ).**

**Addition of employability characteristics to the prediction reached to a statistically significant increase in  $R^2$  of .13,  $F(7, 617) = 7.8$ ,  $p < .001$ .**

### 6.3.2. Employment and Occupation

The subsection below describes the employment and occupation of the respondents in the context of socio-economic conditions. It provides information on following:

- Economic conditions by employments status
- Major source of income for the employed and not employed
- Support from different organisations
- Job searching by employment status and channels.

***Economic Conditions by Employments Status:*** The survey results indicate that the absolute majority of interviewed individuals (98%) experienced financial difficulties (*see Table 8*). Around one third of the individuals in the sample had difficulties in affording food, one third could afford food but not clothes, and one fifth could afford food and clothes, but not durables such as housing appliances.

Only 6 percent of those surveyed could afford paying rent and utilities which, given the fact that 1275 (84.7%) individuals in the sample were renting pointed to financial difficulties. Note, that this 6 percent are the people who afford paying rent solely from own funds, i.e. without rental subsidies by UNHCR (provided through Mission Armenia) or through other humanitarian actors engaged in provision of rental subsidies. It should be highlighted that when mentioning the organisation that provided support (support in general, including for rent), Mission Armenia was the most mentioned organization with 47% of cases. The findings confirm the importance of continued rental subsidy support.

In 2015, the poverty rate in Armenia was 29.8 percent indicating that every third person in the country was below upper poverty line of 41,698 AMD<sup>21</sup>. The poverty rate was lower in Yerevan (25%) and higher in rural areas (30.4%) and the highest figure was estimated for urban areas other than the capital (34.4%). The reported economic situation depended on the employment status of the individuals. While 43 percent of those not employed did not have enough financial resources to pay for food, only 26 percent of those employed were in similar situation. While 25 percent of those employed had “money enough for food and clothes, but not enough for expensive durables”, only 16 percent of those not employed reported similar economic situation (Chart 5 and Table 8).

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<sup>21</sup> Social Snapshot and Poverty in Armenia, 2016. [Online]. Available at: [http://www.armstat.am/file/article/poverty\\_2016\\_eng\\_2.pdf](http://www.armstat.am/file/article/poverty_2016_eng_2.pdf). [Accessed February 24, 2017].



Chart 7: HH Economic Condition by Labour Market Status

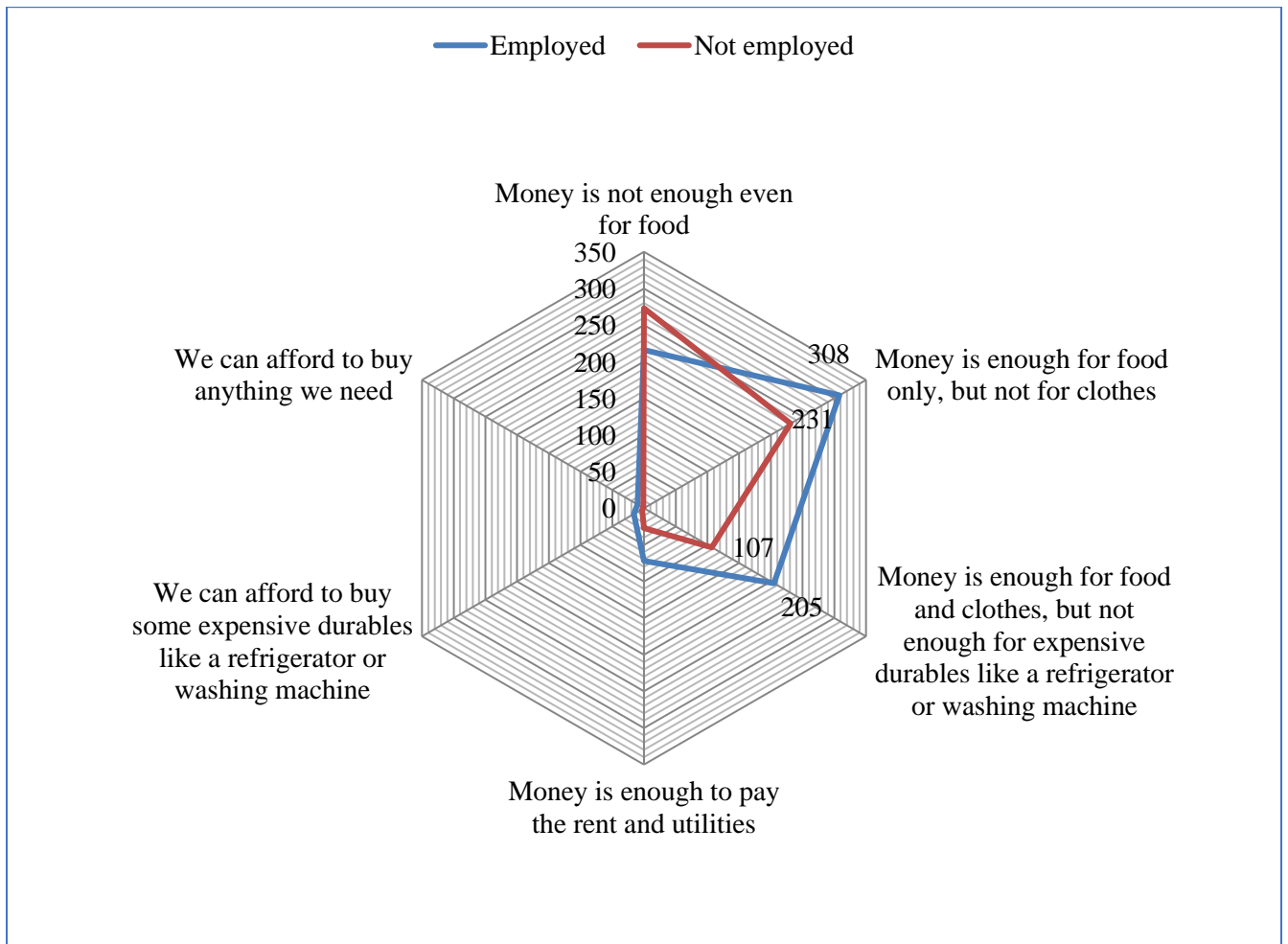


Table 8: Economic Conditions by Employments Status

	Employed	Not employed	Total
Money is not enough even for food	195	294	489
Money is enough for food only, but not for clothes	270	269	539
Money is enough for food and clothes, but not enough for expensive durables like a refrigerator or washing machine	186	126	312
Money is enough to pay the rent and utilities	62	37	99
We can afford buying some expensive durables like a refrigerator or washing machine	15	4	19
We can afford buying anything we need	10	1	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>738</b>	<b>731</b>	<b>1469</b>

*Note: 36 respondents refused to mention the economic situation of the family*

**Major Source of Income for the Employed and Not Employed:** Salary was the main source of income for 39.9 percent of the interviewed individuals, while 12.8 percent reported business in Armenia as main source of income (see Table 9).

**Table 9: Major Source of Income for Employed, Number and Share of Total, %**

	N	%
<b>Salary</b>	601	39.9
Support from family members/relative(s)	451	30.0
Business in Armenia	192	12.8
Savings	169	11.2
Pension	11	0.7
Support from NGOs	10	0.7
Support from Government	9	0.6
Business in other country	8	0.5
Refused to answer	54	3.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>1505</b>	<b>100.0</b>

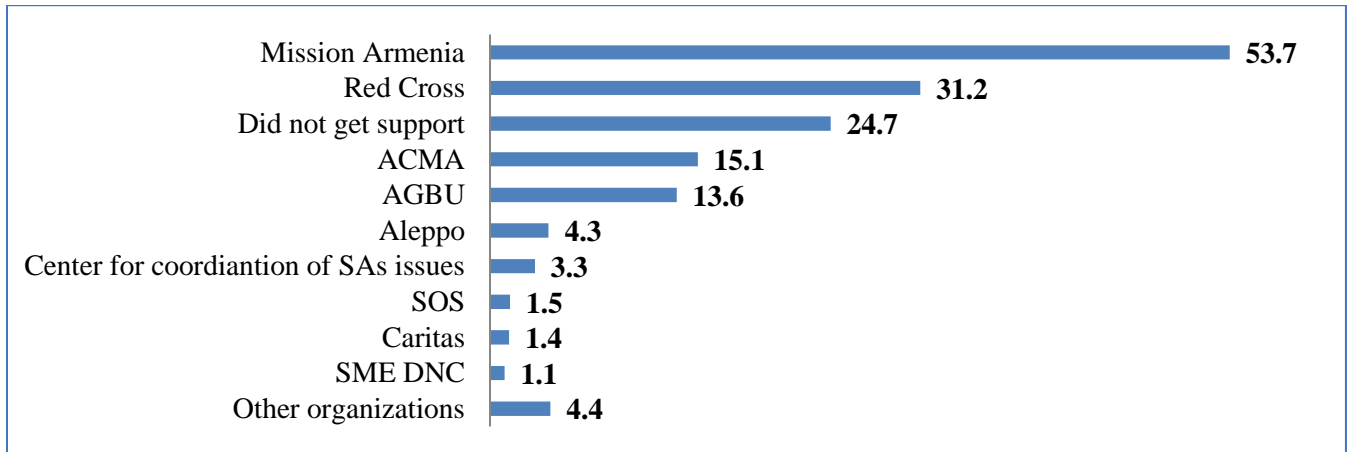
*Note:* Among those running business in Armenia only 17 percent (39 individuals) have own space for business while the rest (191 individuals) are renting a space for business. The term “pension” in the table is used in a narrow sense being indicative for those elderly respondents at pension age.

**Support from Different Organisations:** 1,184 individuals who constituted 75.3 percent of the sample reported that they were receiving aid. Chart 8 reports the organisations from which they received support. Most of the surveyed SAs mentioned that they received support from Mission Armenia (53.7%), followed by the Red Cross (32.2%) and ACMA (15.1%). More than 20 organizations were clustered under “Other organisations” (4.4%) and were mentioned by less than one percent of the respondents.

It is worth mentioning that only 6 respondents out of 1505 SAs mentioned UNHCR as the supporting organisation, though almost all of the frequently mentioned organisations (Mission Armenia, Armenian Red Cross Society, KASA, Save the Children, SME DNC) were implementing partners of the UNHCR. Additionally, the Government of Armenia and the GIZ were active in organising exhibitions for SAs and promoting networking opportunities; however, this was not mentioned either.

The interviewers were not allowed to remind the interviewees of any organisation. In the future, during updating the database such questions have to be clarified through formulation of new questions.

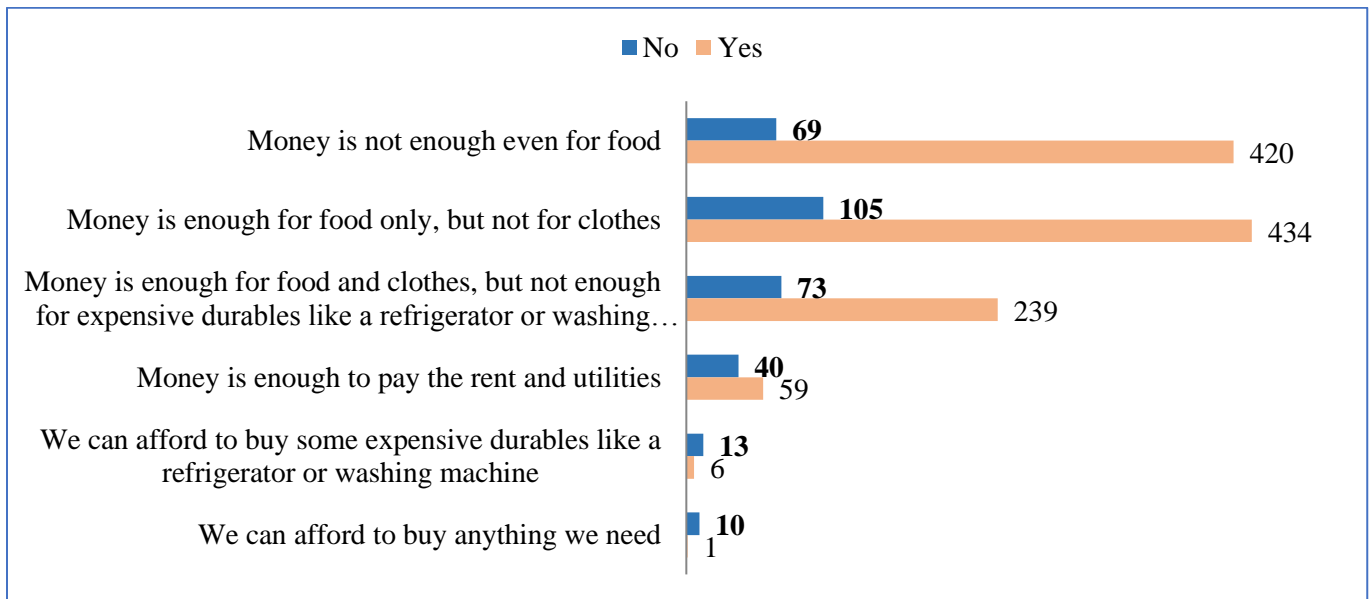
**Chart 8: Support from Different Organisations, %**



*Note: The respondent could choose more than one option and all choices are taken into account. Those organisations mentioned on less than 1% occasions, were clustered as “other organizations”.*

Chart 9 illustrates the distribution of reported economic situation between those who received aid and those who did not and points to important differences between the two groups. The figure indicates that though the aid was probably provided to the most vulnerable ones it failed/was inadequate (unlike the employment) to meet the economic needs of the population.

**Chart 9: HH Economic Situation, Aid Recipients (No) versus Non-Recipients (Yes)**



*Job search by employment status and channels:* The survey demonstrated that more than half (68.1%) of working age individuals in the sample were searching for job. Among those who were not searching for job, 36.6 percent were not employed (*see Table 10*).

**Table 10: Searching for Job by Employment Status**

	Not employed		Employed		Total
	N	%	N	%	
<b>Searching</b>					
<b>Yes</b>	452	68.1	212	31.9	664
<b>No</b>	307	36.6	531	63.4	838
<b>Refused to Answer</b>	2		1		3
<b>Total</b>	761		744		1427

*Note: 78 values are missing as the respondents preferred not to answer the question at all.*

In regards to the channels through which respondents were looking for employment, by far the most popular channel was “Contacting friends or relatives”, which was followed by “Contacting employer directly”, and 36 respondents “Looked at ads”. Only 10 persons “Contacted public employment service or private employment agency” and 33 sent out resumes or filled out applications. Only 15 people attended job trainings or courses.

Table 11 below presents the summary of frequencies of channels used by the respondents while searching for job.

**Table 11: Channels Used to Find Work by Gender and Employment**

	Employed		
	No	Yes	Total
Contacted friends or relatives	287	122	126
Contacted employer directly/interview	100	30	43
Nothing	82	45	40
Looked at ads	59	36	393
Sent out resumes/filled out applications	39	33	72
Attended job training programs/courses.	35	15	17
Contacted the public employment service	33	10	93
Other	28	6	45
Contacted a private employment agency	24	16	33
Placed or answered ads	12	5	120
<b>Total</b>	<b>699</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>1017</b>

*Note: The respondent could choose more than one option. All possible answers were accepted, 488 respondents did not mention a channel*

To get an overview of the desired fields of employment, the respondents were given the chance to indicate the sectors they would be willing to work in. Table 12 summarises the results broken by employment status. A significant portion of respondents pointed to following fields:

- (a) Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles, motorcycles (22.2%)
- (b) Accommodation and food services (18%) and
- (c) Other services (hairdresser, make-up and manicure, etc.) (18.4%)

**Table 12: Number of Individuals Interested in Working in a Particular Sector  
(by employment status)**

The sectors preferred by SAs for employment	Employed		
	No	Yes	%
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	5	2	0.7
Mining and Quarrying	1	0	0.1
Manufacturing	18	10	2.7
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	4	5	0.9
Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	2	0	0.2
Construction	12	8	2.0
Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles, Motorcycles	100	60	15.5
Transportation and storage	29	18	4.5
Accommodation and food service activities	109	54	15.9
Information and communication	18	12	2.9
Financial and insurance activities	15	14	2.84
Real Estate Activities	2	7	0.9
Professional, scientific and technical activities	42	53	9.3
Administrative and support service activities	7	5	1.2
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	3	6	0.9
Education	43	22	6.3
Human health and social work activities	21	23	4.2
Arts, entertainment and recreation	33	38	6.9
Other service activities	139	59	19.1
Activities of HHs as employers	19	4	2.2
Activities of extraterritorial organisations and bodies	6	4	1.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>628</b>	<b>404</b>	<b>100</b>

*Note: One respondent could mention up to three desirable sectors*

## 6.4. INTENTIONS AND FUTURE PLANS

This section analyses employability variables that were used to roughly categorise the respondents’

- Skills (soft, hard, technical, transferable, etc.)
- Engagement in targeted learning and professional development (vocational and other trainings)
- Training needs
- Urgent needs for economic integration

The need for such information was highlighted given the international context of migration programmes for the SAs. In particular, recently (December 2016 onwards) Canada began welcoming Syrian refugees in larger numbers after the newly elected federal Liberal government declared that its promise to resettle 25,000 Syrian refugees by the new year would be a “national project.”<sup>22</sup>

### Box 2: Important numbers (November 2015 onwards) in regards to the SAs and Canada

In reference to Europe in general, it has to be highlighted that since 2009, Germany decided to admit 2,501 vulnerable Iraqi refugees who could no longer remain in Syria or Jordan. Since then, IOM has assisted Germany in resettling or admitting on humanitarian grounds more than 8,200 particularly vulnerable refugees and vulnerable migrants under different German humanitarian admission and resettlement programs<sup>23</sup>.

*Syrian refugees who have arrived in Canada since November, 2015: 35,147*  
*Government-assisted: 18,433*  
*Privately sponsored: 13,138*  
*Blended (selected by government, partly funded by private sponsors): 3,576*  
*Refugees approved who haven't yet travelled to Canada: 4,135*  
*Applications in progress: 20,096*

According to Orchard and Miller (2014, p. 36) European countries received high numbers of asylum applications, with the highest numbers in Germany (109,580), France (60,100), Sweden (54,260), and the UK (29,190)<sup>24</sup>.

Given this situation, it was of great importance to learn the SAs current state of engagement in Armenia with emphasis on the skills (obtained, as well as desired) and their future plans, carefully accounting for their plans to stay in Armenia.

<sup>22</sup> See the link for more details: <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/syrian-refugees-in-canada-by-the-numbers/article33120934/>.

<sup>23</sup> See the link for more details: <http://germany.iom.int/en/syrian-refugees>.

<sup>24</sup> See University of Oxford, Oxford Department of International Development, Refugee Studies Centre report at the following link: <https://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/files/files-1/pn-protection-europe-refugees-syria-2014.pdf>.

**Skills and Engagement:** It is worth mentioning that 42.5 percent of the unemployed SAs surveyed did not work in Syria either, and 45.6 percent of those are job seekers at present. To be of benefit to SAs and improve the process of economic integration, various organisations (DVW, Red Cross, KAZA, Save the Children, AGBU, SAM DNC, Ministry of Diaspora etc.) held exhibitions and trainings over past several years.

Only 25 percent of the surveyed SAs had attended exhibitions organised specifically for SAs (59.4% of those as visitors and 40.6% as participants) and 4.1 percent had never heard of such exhibitions (see Table 13). Participation in the trainings highly depended on the age group of the respondent, which was a statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ) predictor of participation.

**Table 13: Training Attendance**

Age group	Participation in training(s)			Total Number
	Yes	No	Never heard of training	
16-17	5	43	2	50
18-25	69	188	19	276
26-35	80	192	7	279
36-45	108	186	6	300
46-55	91	223	10	324
56-65	43	144	13	200
66+	4	62	7	73
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>1038</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>1502</b>

*Note: Three answers are missing due to interviewer error.*

Correspondingly, only 26.6 percent of surveyed SAs had participated in the trainings organised for them and 4.3 percent had never heard about the trainings. With regard to training participation, both age and gender were statistically significant predictors of participation. Female respondents were more likely to attend trainings than male respondents. Surprisingly, people under 25 demonstrated indifference towards the trainings; more than 77 percent of this age group were aware of the trainings but had never participated.

The vast majority of those who participated in trainings were satisfied with the quality. Some of the respondents (about 16%) were not satisfied with the Russian language trainings organised by the Red Cross and KAZA. Others (about 20%), did not like the training on business development/SME development organised by SME DNC, etc. However, quite often (more than 50% of cases), the same trainings for which a minority of respondents expressed dissatisfaction, received highest overall scores (6 and 7).

In general, surveyed SAs had participated in trainings on:

- ❖ Languages (Russian and English);
- ❖ Business development;

- ❖ Manicure, makeup and hairdressing;
- ❖ Banking;
- ❖ Cooking/baking;
- ❖ Tourism;
- ❖ Handicraft;
- ❖ Computer programs/programming;
- ❖ Accounting;
- ❖ Project management; etc.

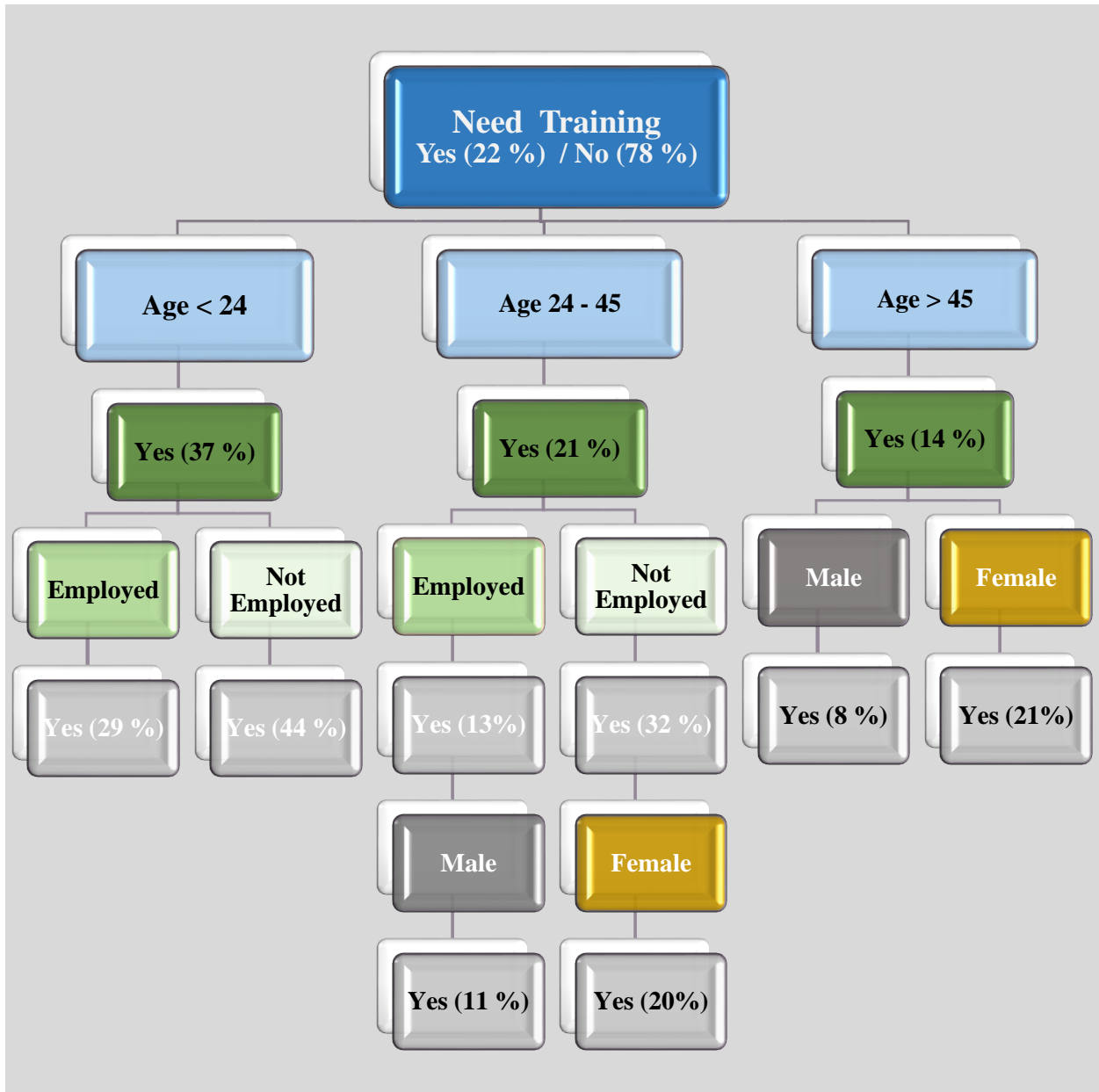
**Training Needs:** While analysing the patterns of training needs among SAs, a model was utilised which automatically omitted the variables which were not significant. The remaining independent variables were arranged in a shape of a three with those best explaining the dependent variable (need for training) appearing at upper levels (*Chart 9*).

The model suggests that age was the most significant predictor of whether a person had training needs or not. Those under 24 were most likely to have training needs (37%), while only 21 and 14 percent of people aged between 24 and 45 or above 45 respectively indicated having any training needs. Not surprisingly, almost half of the younger respondents in the sample (aged under 25) who were not currently employed reported having training needs.

Meanwhile, a relatively smaller number (32%) of people aged between 24 and 45 who were currently not employed reported having training needs. Amongst the employed SAs of the same age group, women were twice as likely to have training needs than men. This was similarly the case for women and men in the oldest age group. Employment status did not play any significant role in this case. Marital status, education, previous and current work experience were included as input variables when building the model, but they were not significant predictors of training needs among respondents.



Figure 5: Need for Training by Age, Employment Status and Gender

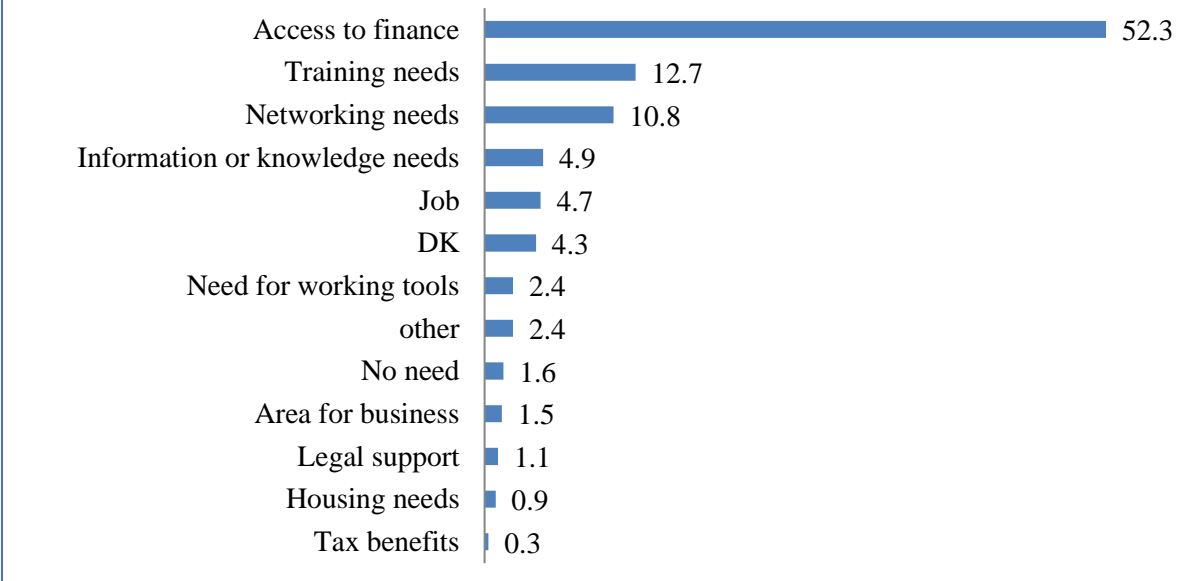


**Note:** The scheme is based on a decision tree model. For those aged above 45, the major significant factor of having training needs was gender. Hence, the employment status figures were automatically excluded from the model. For the group aged under 24 gender factor was automatically excluded from the model. For the group aged 24-45 both factors of employment status and gender were significant.

Based on feedback from SAs, the team built a hypothesis that on top of training, SAs also required some consultancy services. However, final results showed that most of SAs surveyed did not have a need for consultancy. Those who did mention the need for additional consultancy expressed interest in consultancy focused on tax legislation, business sector and judicial system.

**Urgent needs for economic integration:** To understand the SAs economic situation and main obstacles for economic integration, we asked respondents to tell about their most urgent needs for economic stability and integration with regard to business development or employment (see Chart 10).

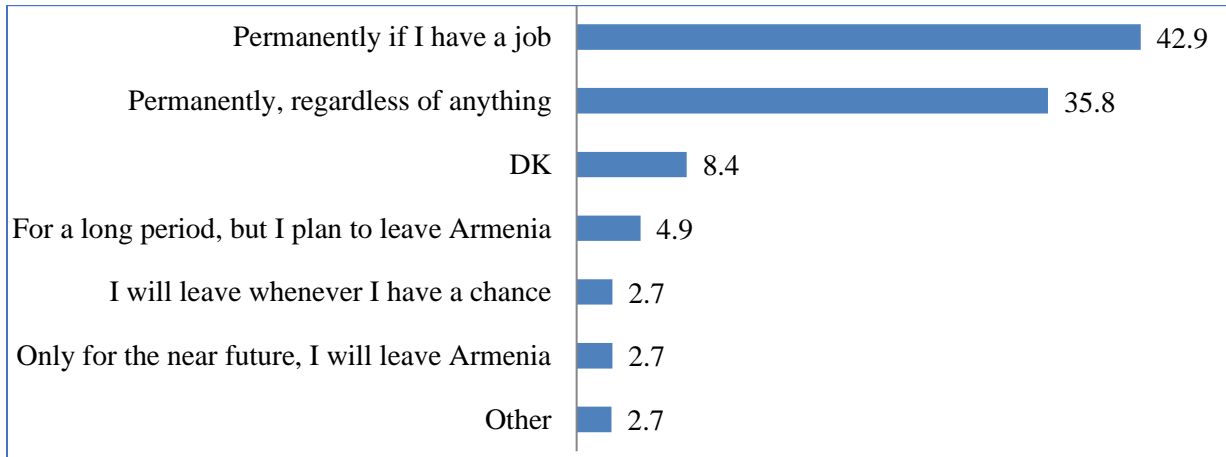
**Chart 10: Most Urgent Need for Economic Stability and Integration, %**



The most urgent need was related to lack of finances. The majority of those who mentioned training or another need as the most urgent indicated access to finance as the second most urgent need. In the “other” option (chosen by 2.4% of the respondents), SAs mentioned needs such as “free time”, “good attitude of the locals”, “culture”, “customers”; etc. Under the heading “access to finance” the interviewers mean the need for more income both cash and credit (for making investments). Each respondent defined the propose individually and there was a variety of formulations. In general, access to finance was mentioned as a basic need for following proposes: (i) purchase of durable housing, (ii) development of business and (iii) improvement of the quality of life.

To be able to assess the employability of SAs, it was important to know whether they plan to stay in or leave Armenia.

Chart 11: Plan to Stay in Armenia, %



As shown in Chart 11, most SAs (78.7%) planned to stay in Armenia permanently. Logically, those who were employed or seeking a job were more likely to stay in Armenia compared to those who were in a more unstable economic situation.

In regard to employment status in Armenia, men were more than twice likely to get a job than women (a tree based multivariate model was utilised for this finding). While 69 percent of all male respondents were employed, this was the case for 30 percent of female respondents only. Male respondents aged between 24 and 45 reported highest employment rate. 87 percent of male SAs aged 20 to 24 and more than 70 percent of male SAs aged 45 to 54 were employed, respectively.

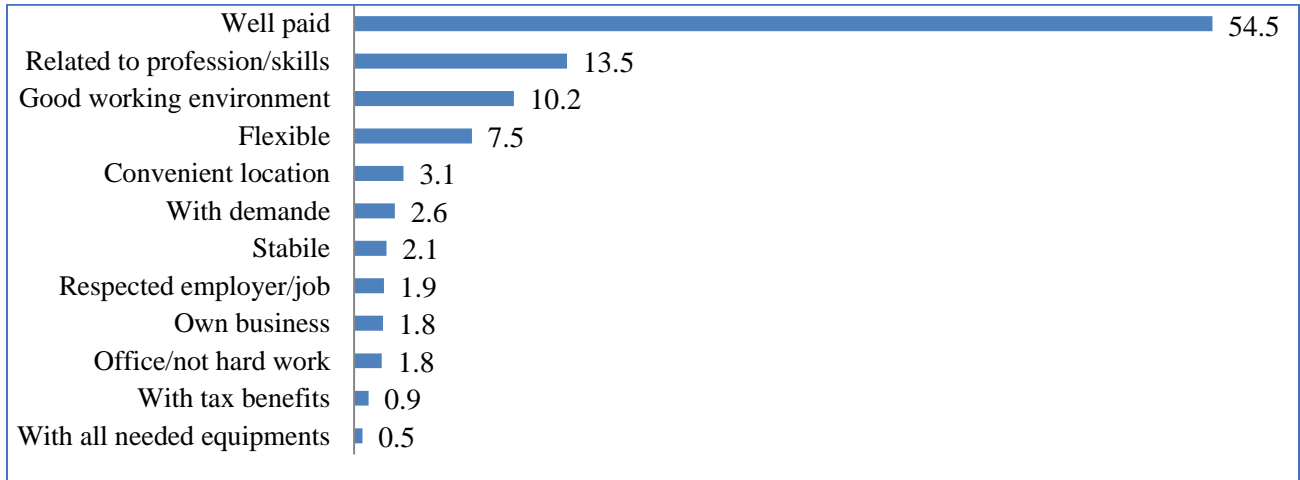
As for the employability of female SAs, age was not as strong of a predictor as it was for men. Rather, previous work experience in Syria was the strongest predictor of employability of SA women in Armenia. Those women who had any work experience in Syria were more likely to find employment in Armenia than those who did not. Level of education was also a statistically significant predictor of employment amongst female SAs in Armenia. Almost half of women who had no work experience in Syria but had higher education were employed in Armenia.

On the other hand, the overwhelming majority (91%) of female respondents who did not have work experience in Syria and did not complete their primary or full secondary education were not employed in Armenia.

Most of the interviewed SAs were looking for a good or better job, even if they were currently employed. Respondents identified a good job as one with a high salary, good working environment, flexibility, good location, and relevance to their profession, interests, and skills (Chart 12). With regard to the respondents' desired income, some SAs cited a minimum amount of 150,000 AMD and an average amount of 300,000 AMD as an appropriate monthly salary.

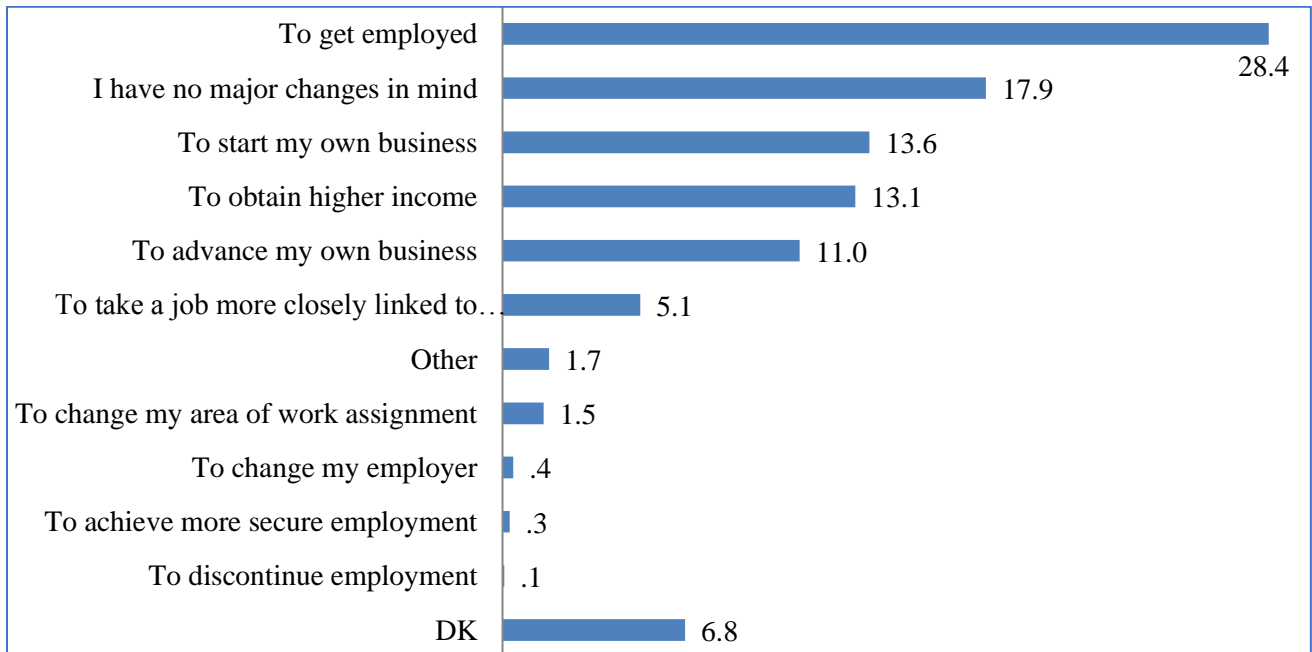
A good working environment was considered to be one that is calm, free of conflict inflicting atmosphere and has an intelligent leader. Most of the SAs complained about the working regime in Armenia: they would prefer to have more flexibility (in working hours) in their work.

**Chart 12: Main Characteristics of a Good Job According to SAs Surveyed, %**



In terms of upcoming plans, 51 percent of the unemployed SAs stated about their wish to get a job and 11 percent – to start their own business. Chart 13 illustrates SAs’ plans for the next three years. About 40 percent of those who had no plans for major changes were either employed or self-employed/owned business, 10 percent were students, and about 48 percent were unemployed.

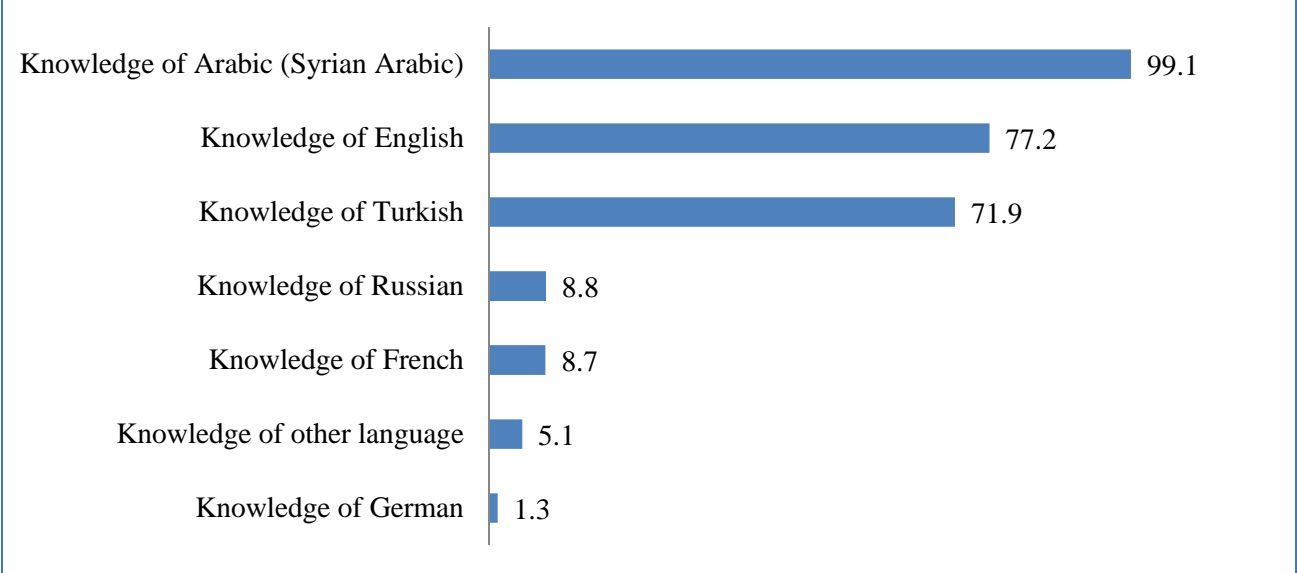
**Chart 13: Plans for Upcoming Years, %**



The vast majority of SAs fluently spoke and understood Arabic (99%), English (77.2%), and Turkish (71%) (*see Chart 14*). Only 8.8 percent reported that they understood and could use Russian, which

was another obstacle for finding employment in Armenia. Most of the respondents mentioned that knowledge of the Russian language was a necessity in Armenia and that lack of knowledge of Russian made daily life more challenging.

Chart 14: Knowledge of Foreign Language(s), %



## 6.5. EMPLOYER SURVEY: OVERVIEW OF THE RESULTS

With the inflow of Syrian refugees in Armenia since 2011 many potential employers have shown interest in hiring them. However, the integration of SAs into the labour market depends on many factors, including availability of jobs, employability of SAs and attitude of employers towards integrating them in their personnel. To better understand the challenges of employment and economic integration of Syrian refugees, an online survey was conducted with 100 employers (*see Chart 15 for the distribution of employers by sector of activity*) in Armenia. Based on the purpose of the online survey, this section reports on the following:

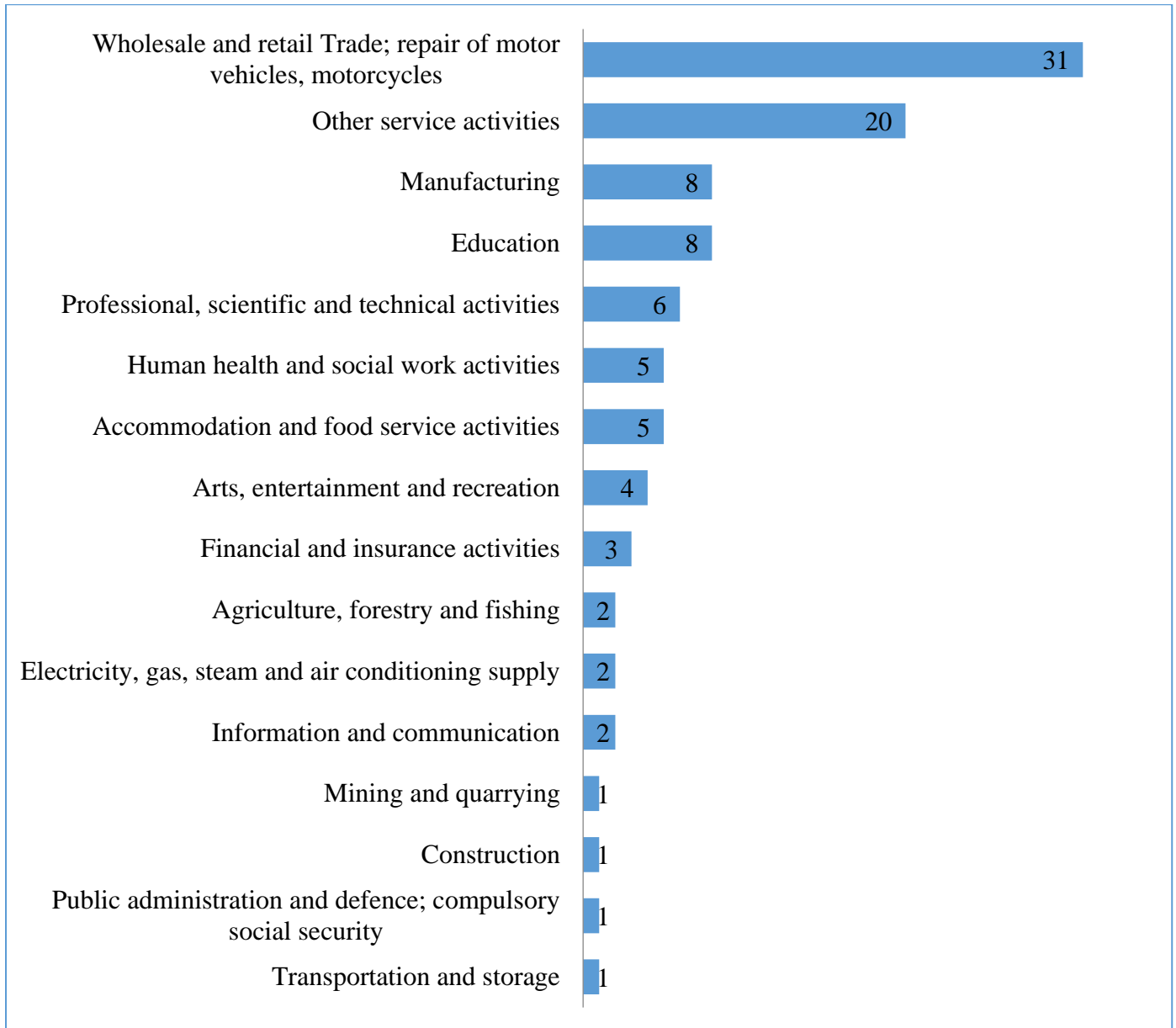
- Needs of prospective employers
- Required skills.

The online questionnaire was offered to 1000 entrepreneurs and included 26 questions, both open and closed. To perform the 100 interviews extra efforts were invested, specifically, 300 more enterprises from the network of the Republican Union of Entrepreneurs of Armenia were added and follow-up phone calls were made. The State Employment Agency offered support and assistance as well. The basic challenge of gathering the information was convincing the business representatives to respond.

The composition of respondents was as follows:

- 86 percent were heads of businesses operating both in urban and rural areas of Armenia;
- 52 percent of surveyed employers indicated operating in Yerevan, with 42 and 14 percent in other urban and rural areas of Armenia, respectively;
- 62 percent of surveyed businesses reported having less than 5 employees, another 8 percent - more than 100 employees, and just one - 7000 employees;
- 46 percent of the companies were established more than 10 years ago, 41 percent operated between 4 to 10 years, and only 13 percent were relatively newly established ones.
- 51 percent of the surveyed businesses represented the service sector (*see Chart 15*).

Chart 15: **Interviewed Employers by Sector, %**



12 percent of the companies had at least one SA employee and all of them tended to hire a SA employee again.

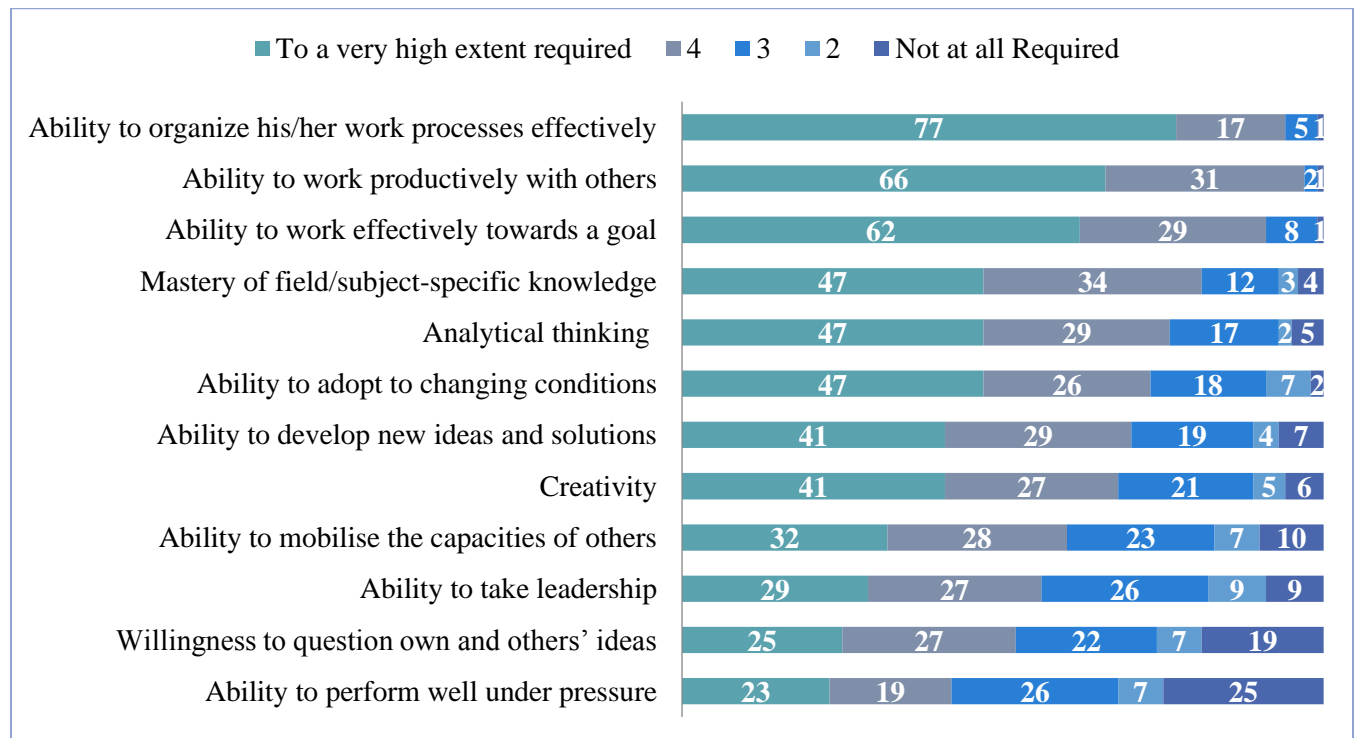
*Needs of prospective employers:* 93 percent of the respondents indicated that in case of having a vacant position, they would hire a SA. However, when asked a different question (when they had to indicate a choice between a local and a Syrian Armenian employee), 33 percent of the employers showed preference to hire a local Armenian while choosing between a local and Syrian Armenian with the same qualifications. While explaining their intentions when hiring SAs, 36 percent of employers expressed a desire to support SAs, another 17 percent highlighted SAs' traits (such as

sense of responsibility, trustworthiness and frankness) and just 3 and 5 percent respectively spoke about professional qualifications and new approaches that SAs may bring into their company.

At the same time, language proficiency and familiarity with the environment were the most important reasons for preferring to hire a local employee over a SA. 21 percent of the respondents answered that there was no difference between hiring a local Armenian or a SA if they had the same qualifications. There was no statistically significant dependency between employer’s preferences of mental or physical skills and intention to hire a SA or a local Armenian. Trade, education, accommodation and food services proved to be the sectors where SA employees were relatively preferred.

*Required skills:* The most valuable skill demanded by employers (97%) appeared to be the ability of SAs to effectively cooperate with team members. The second highest importance (more than 90%) was attached to efficient performance towards reaching a goal. Interestingly enough, 7 percent of employers did not pay attention to field-specific knowledge. There was less interest in ability to perform well under pressure (42%). Other competencies assessed by the employers are given in Chart 16 below.

**Chart 16: Skills Required, %**



The responses of those who have ever had a SA employee to the questions about sufficient language skills and the ability to integrate with other employees and interact with customers revealed that they have had mainly positive experience with SAs.



The survey revealed the overall positive attitude of local Armenian entrepreneurs towards prospective SA employees.

## 7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Previous studies have provided a methodological framework to evaluate the performance of migrants in key dimensions (such as employment, education, social inclusion, and active citizenship that were taken into account in this needs assessment). However, the needs assessment of SAs in Armenia provided the opportunity to take into consideration the country-specific context and policy arena and to focus on local contextual factors of economic integration.

Several important factors preventing /facilitating the economic integration of SAs in Armenia were studied and presented. The report reflected on the reality as seen by the SAs and endeavoured to provide an encompassing snapshot of their current socio-economic situation.

The desk review conducted during the needs assessment revealed gaps in the existent data on SAs. The self-assessment of the SAs served as a means to obtain a comprehensive view on the economically active SAs who arrived in Armenia.

The snowball sampling technique was applied to identify 1500 SAs. Findings signalled several crucial aspects of economic integration and employability of SAs. Taking this into account, the findings may well inform policy makers and merit further research. Moreover, the data on 1505 valid individual observations collected through the needs assessment is available to relevant stakeholders.

One important general recommendation refers to the importance of encouraging stakeholders and implementing institutions to share information with the beneficiaries across the projects. This will be highly beneficial for the SAs in terms of addressing the needs assessed. This would provide more reliable picture regarding the number of individuals in need of assistance, beneficiaries (eliminate double counting), and the type of needs (health, housing, employment, schooling, etc.) to be addressed.

In the international practice, there is a tendency to develop universal ‘one-size-fits-all’ approaches with standardisation of implemented measures aiming at integration of humanitarian migrants. Despite its advantages (e.g. established and verified practices, standard evaluation fiches) such an approach might lead to overlooking some important contextual factors and could lead to inefficiency or even failure of implemented measures. The needs assessment reported herein came to prove this.

Key facts and figures reported were as follows:

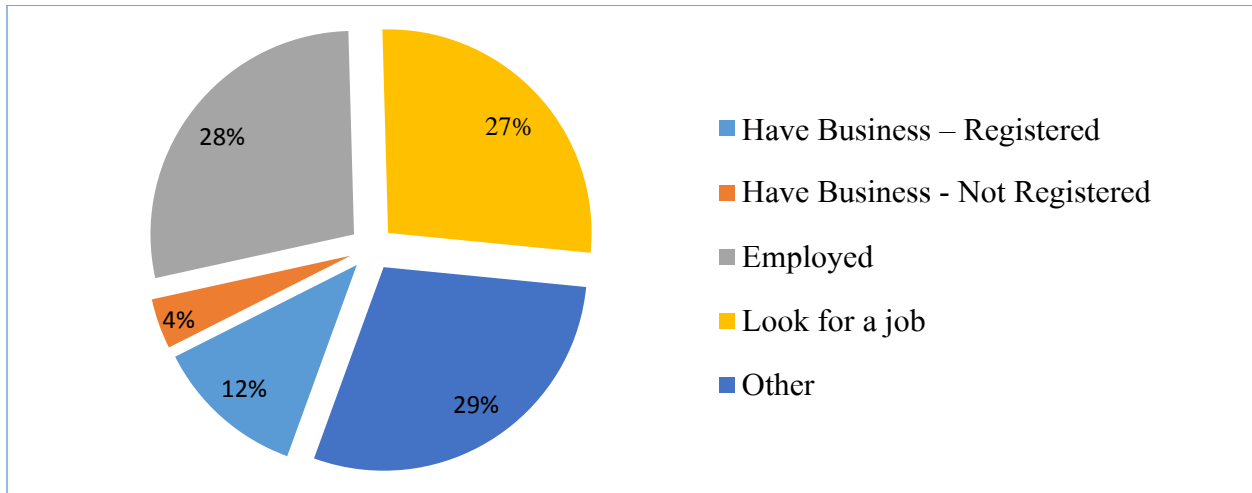
- The vast majority (97.2%) of SAs included in the sample lived in Yerevan.
- A relatively small proportion (28.4%) had higher education.
- Fifty-nine percent (59%) of the respondents were married.

- The most pressing issue for the SAs was (and still is) housing.
- The employment rate among men was significantly higher than among women (68.3 % versus 28.9 %).
- The primary income earners of most families were male (476 males versus 100 female).
- Those SAs who stayed for more than one but less than 5 years in Armenia demonstrated employment rate above the Armenian national one.
- The subsample of those staying in Armenia for more than five years demonstrated employment rate close to 63.4 percent.
- The absolute majority of interviewed individuals (98%) were experiencing financial difficulties.
- As compared to the majority of the respondents with secondary education, those with higher education reported a somewhat better economic situation of their HHs.
- Participation in any training was positively associated with the HH economic situation of SAs meaning that the trainings did bring change.
- Families with main earners being parents and/or children had lower self-reported HH income levels.
- Several sections of the report drew attention to the importance of skills of the SAs to match the job they were doing.
- In respect to the channels through which respondents were looking for a job, contacting friends or relatives accounted for approximately 40 percent of the cases.
- Work experience was a positive significant predictor of employability.
- Knowledge of Russian language has to be regarded as a precondition not for the improvement of the economic situation, but rather for social and cultural integration.
- Though the majority (70%) of interviewed individuals reported excellent knowledge of Armenian, it frequently referred to Western Armenian
- Thirty-three (33%) percent of employers showed preference to hire a local Armenian while choosing between a local and a SA with the same qualifications because, as mentioned, the locals would be more effective in communicating with the team.
- The responses of employers who have ever had a SA employee to the questions about sufficient language skills, ability to integrate with other employees and interact with customers revealed that they have had mainly positive experiences

Most of the important charts, tables and figures that illustrated the above mentioned and other compelling findings can be found in the main text of the report.

Some of the significant illustrations are provided below to exemplify several considerable facts and figures.

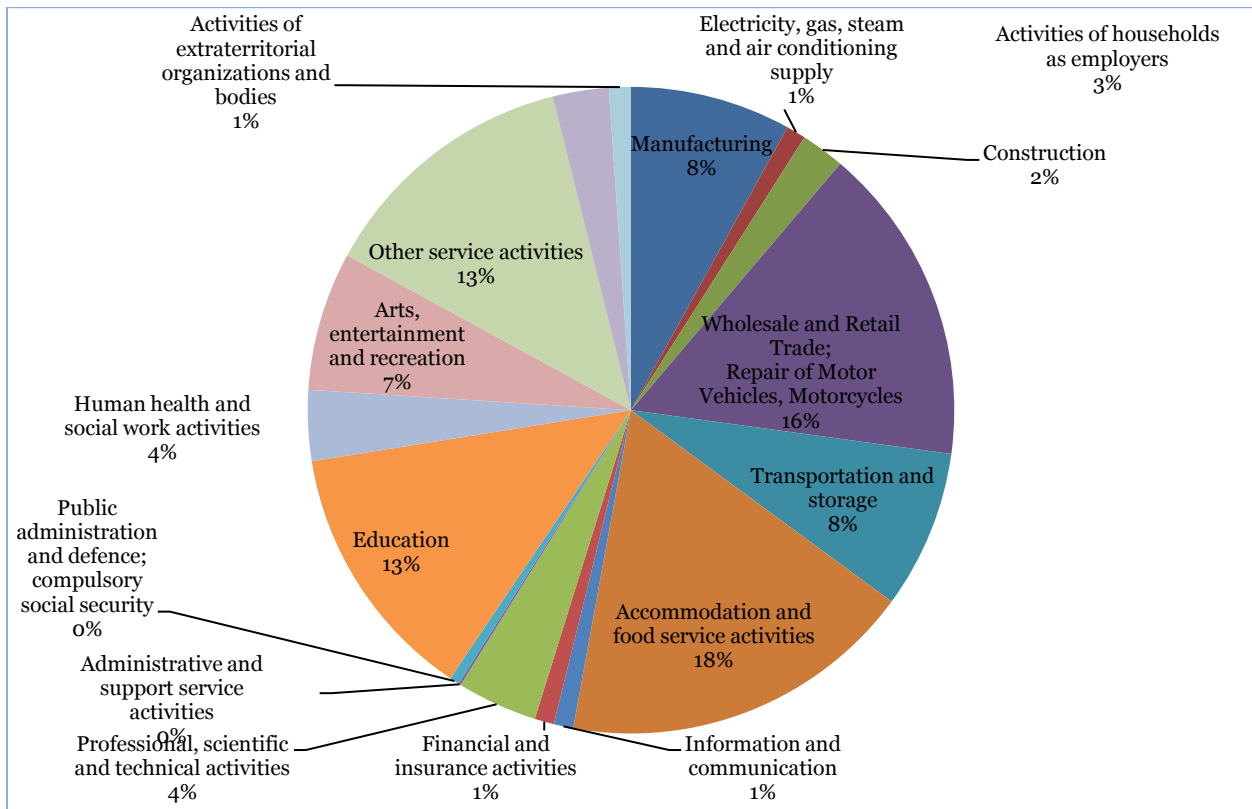
**Chart 3: Occupation and Employment**



**Table 6: Occupation: Current (primary) versus Previous**

	Current occupation			Previous occupation		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Elementary occupation	13	9	22	8	15	23
Plant and machine operator/ assembler	20	2	22	37	2	39
Craft and related trades worker	160	34	194	249	34	283
Skilled agricultural/ forestry/ fishery	6	3	9	17	5	22
Service/ sales worker	187	100	287	135	94	229
Clerical support worker	16	8	24	13	27	40
Technician / Associate professional	28	17	45	18	30	48
Professional	50	26	76	62	91	153
Manager	24	9	33	33	8	41
Student	63	64	127	58	66	124
Not employed	193	472	665	68	323	391
Other				63	49	112
<b>Total</b>	<b>760</b>	<b>744</b>	<b>1504</b>	<b>761</b>	<b>744</b>	<b>1505</b>

**Chart 4: Distribution of Employed across Sphere/Sector**



**Table 9: Major Source of Income for Employed, Number and Share of Total, %**

	N	%
<b>Salary</b>	601	39.9
Support from family members/relative(s)	451	30.0
Business in Armenia	192	12.8
Savings	169	11.2
Pension	11	0.7
Support from NGOs	10	0.7
Support from Government	9	0.6
Business in other country	8	0.5
Refused to answer	54	3.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>1505</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 14: Identified Topics, Findings and Recommendations

FINDINGS	RECOMMENDATIONS
<b>Topic 1: Promotion of a Holistic/Multidimensional Integration Approach</b>	
<p>The economic integration of SAs was preconditioned by contextual factors, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The pressing issue of housing.</b></li> <li>• <b>Employment rate higher for men than for women.</b></li> <li>• <b>Working regime and inflexible working environment in Armenia.</b></li> <li>• <b>Linguistic barriers in sociocultural, as well as business integration.</b></li> <li>• <b>Many SAs experienced difficulty in obtaining relevant information in various fields (legal, financial, fiscal, business, health, education, job search etc.).</b></li> </ul>	<p>Although economic integration is considered fundamental, it must be acknowledged that SAs are not economic migrants. Their move was driven by displacement, and the economic/labour market integration should be imbedded in the wider framework, which includes psychological, health, legal and other support.</p> <p>Focused consultations through “one-window” principle could help navigate SAs in the new environment.</p> <p>A designated service institutionalized within a public agency, such as municipality, would serve as a reference point and guide SAs in resolving the issues they face in Armenia.</p> <p>Development of tailor-made measures with account of the local context (e.g. common language shared with native population and the Russian language barrier) and characteristics of targeted population (gender, age, skills structure) is important.</p> <p>Introducing small but efficient economic integration packages by the local municipalities to promote disurbanisation of Syrian refugees and other PoCs in line with the Propotionate Regional Development Strategy of the Government of Armenia.</p>
<b>Topic 2: Skill Assessment, Recognition and Development</b>	
<p>SAs with higher education reported a somewhat better HH economic situation.</p> <p>Those with professional occupation, compared to the crafts and sales workers (being the majority in the sample) were in a better economic situation.</p> <p>Participation in any training was positively associated with the HH economic situation of the SAs meaning that the trainings did produce change.</p> <p>The surveyed individuals demonstrated propensity for entrepreneurial activities (many had unregistered business or wanted to start a business).</p>	<p>It is of primary importance to profile those not employed and (re)activate them in the labour market.</p> <p>Mechanisms facilitating the recognition of formal foreign qualifications, and schemes enabling validation of skills should be put in place or strengthened to ensure that the qualifications and skills obtained abroad are properly recognised.</p> <p>A local certification commission should license/certify certain skillsets, experience and education.</p> <p>A mechanism for retrieving lost diplomas/certificates/licenses should be established.</p>

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Many SAs needed to be consulted/trained in the fields of business (35 cases), finance and credits (23 cases), legal issues (47 cases), job search (58 cases), and health (28 cases)

The involvement of the organisations representing ENIC – NARIC network in Armenia or European Training Foundation could speed up the recognition of foreign qualifications.

Opportunities for continuing education should be provided.

In any scenario, significant importance should be extended to higher education and professional training. In this respect, the Ministry of Education and Science of Armenia in collaboration with the Ministry of Diaspora of Armenia could provide advisory service (also printed and electronic brochures) on available options for higher education and VET in the country.

The trainings being organized should be tailor-made and demand-driven. They should reflect the preferences of potential participants (IT, languages, catering, crafts are among the most demanded) and take into account their characteristics (age, gender, qualifications).

Trainings on tax legislation (as well as on writing a business plan and applying for a loan) might be beneficial.

Participation of SAs in trainings should be encouraged and awareness on their positive impact on the economic/employment opportunities should be raised.

Organisations delivering or aiming to deliver trainings to SAs should target mainly the youth and disseminate the finding that such participation positively changed self-reported economic situation of the SAs, who benefitted from any kind of training. A balance between the supply of and demand for the trainings should be established.

In regards to any training, exhibition and/or community mobilisation initiatives, means for effective communication for Syrian communities should be explored and extensively used to convey messages, transfer information to ensure timely and efficient participation in the events.

Establishment of networks between SAs and local businesses (exporters, potential customers), employers, and financial organisations is important.

### **Topic 3: Facilitation of the Labour Market Integration/Job Intermediation**

The extent to which the skills of the respondents matched their current job was positively associated with the variation in the years of the work experience they had in Armenia.

The importance of skills of the SAs to match the job they were doing was emphasised.

Skills matching initiatives are needed. Significant work has been done by many organisations worldwide on the issues of skills matching and this experience has to be mirrored in the case of SAs in Armenia.

Employment agencies should promote employment opportunities and job matching as they are more responsive to the local labour market needs and are quick to address those needs.

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Findings suggest the need for alternative working conditions and innovative management, as well as more stability at work for SAs.

The data collected was alarming on important differences in employment rate between SA men and women and the gender gap in income.

The more frequent assessment and prognosis of the labour market needs would be an effective tool to design VETs for the SAs to make their skills demanded in the labour market.

Integration of projects into already established State Employment Agency activities as the scope of measures/projects addressing the skills and employment of SAs can be considered as active labour market policies (ALMP) with a special focus. This could improve the overall efficiency through utilisation of already existing capacities (including human resources), better coordination, lower running costs and increased sustainability of measures implemented.

Career guidance instruments, such as mentoring or coaching, should be developed. Professional mentorship projects should be promoted through projects and SEA particularly to ensure smooth access of SAs into the Armenian labour market. Mentors should be selected from local Armenians or vice versa the SAs can mentor the locals so that people who have various levels of education and skills would support their protégés in gaining skills and techniques required for the initial entry into the labour market.

Gender gap in employment rate and income assumes a direct call for gender sensitive policies and initiatives.

#### **Topic 4: Promotion of Entrepreneurship**

A large share of interviewed SAs is either already involved or would like to be involved in entrepreneurial activities. However, they lack local knowledge and need certain guidance and support (financial as well) for successful realisation of their business plans.

Significant number of interviewed run a business which is not registered.

The assessment indicated that the SAs experienced difficulties in communication with tax authorities.

Further research is needed to study the exposure of SAs in an undeclared labour market and the shadow economy and its effects on their integration. The study would help to identify the causes of such cases and potential ways to bring those activities into the legal field.

Expansion loans/grant schemes offered to start-ups at privileged rates would be a valuable asset given that the survey has revealed interest among the SAs to start up a new business (8 percent of respondents wanted to open a business).

Economic and market opportunities within the countries of the EEU should be further studied and explored.

Tailor-made coaching for individual businesses should be sought to offer the possibility to develop individual supply chain.

Exhibitions for less and more experienced SAs in business (those starting and having an established business) should target a more diversified community. The organisers should make sure that the events are widely advertised to attract both SAs and locals (entrepreneurs, potential customers and employers).

Establish a council to lobby the interests of SAs (like AMCham); or provide assistance in sorting out court cases (with tax authorities). An advanced

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tax/business environment would be beneficial for the SAs. The economic zones underway of development are predicted to positively affect the situation.

### **Topic 5: Promotion of Social Integration, and Closer Interaction with the Local Communities as well as Pro-Activeness and Self-Organisation Among SAs**

The assessment suggested that stimulating social interaction between the locals and SAs through coaching programs or joint vocational trainings (locals and SAs together) is important to enhance their network and increase employment (and other) opportunities.

The survey results pointed that the channel of looking for a job was more frequently through “Contacting friends or relatives” which accounted for approximately 40 percent of cases.

Measures to encourage active social interaction between SAs and locals should be designed. Integration Unit of the State Migration Service could employ and implement “Adopt a family” project to liaise local families with displaced SA families for 3-6 months, which will promote local integration and strengthen the ties with local communities.

Local municipalities should be consulted and negotiated with in regard to developing opportunities for the SAs, for instance, offering free of charge spots (at least for some time) for them to sell arts and crafts. This, in return, will help the development of local economy and promotion of tourism, thereby contributing to the proportionate development of the regions, as committed in the Government of Armenia strategy for economic development.

Stimulating social interaction between the locals and SAs through joint vocational training courses (locals and SAs together) to enhance their network and increase employment opportunities of those searching for a job, as well as to promote social integration in general.

Voluntary decentralisation of SAs (given the precondition of job opportunities is satisfied) may be useful to promote their integration into smaller local communities in the vicinity of Yerevan, such as Abovyan, Ashtarak, Artashat, Echmiadzin and many others.

Establishment of a small fund for SA communities to preserve/present their culture to the host communities.

Language training should be incorporated in the cultural orientation programmes.

### **Topic 6: Retention of Skills and Talents of SAs in Armenia**

It was revealed that the intention to stay in Armenia or leave the country was negatively associated with the reported HH economic situation, suggesting that those intending to leave were in worse conditions.

The survey results demonstrated that owning a home was positively associated with the intention to permanently

More attention should be paid to the SAs intending to leave Armenia, since their intention to do so may constrain their economic activity and lead to missed opportunities.

Banks may be helpful in this situation by developing special financial products, having in mind that there are tangible and intangible (know-how, skills, knowledge and expertise) assets that displaced Syrians bring with



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stay in Armenia pointing to the key role that housing subsidies and tailored mortgage provision programs could play in retaining SAs in Armenia.

them. Social collaterals schemes may be developed to facilitate access to business loans.

### **Topic 7: Promoting Collaboration Between Various Stakeholders**

Findings pointed to lack of information on aid provided by state and non-governmental organisations. The need for informed collaboration among stakeholders was vivid.

Steps should be taken to ensure maximum transparency and publicity of the state funded schemes, such as social benefits, medical benefits.

Important further steps would be to assess the gaps and weaknesses of SA NGOs (CCSAI, Aleppo, SAU) and provide targeted capacity building, followed by enhancing the advocacy and development of relevant strategy, whereby they would be able to jointly voice the concerns of SA community and advocate for certain issues.

Consolidated mechanism for regular and systematic coordination is needed to enable further exchange of information (and collaboration) among the stakeholders (state actors, implementing organisations, social partners) regarding completed and ongoing measures/projects, as well as the best practices identified. This platform can be both virtual and through face to face meetings or “crowd-funded newsletters”.

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## APPENDIX 1: International Experience

Overview of international practice provided information on several important aspects of economic integration of refugees globally. It was based on previous research findings and summarised major outcomes and lessons learnt from the activities of international agencies and highlighted important policy aspects. It looked at the existing knowledge regarding economic integration of refugees coming from studies focused on migrants in the Northern American and Northern European countries<sup>25</sup>.

The sharp increase in the number of migrants in recent years gained the attention of policy makers dealing with their economic integration in hosting societies which resulted in numerous reports and publications produced by international organisations such as “Indicators of Immigrant Integration: A Pilot Study” (EUROSTAT, 2011) and “Settling In: OECD Indicators of Immigrant Integration 2012” (OECD, 2012b)<sup>26</sup>. These studies provide a methodological framework to evaluate the performance of migrants in general key dimensions being:

- (i) Employment,
- (ii) Education,
- (iii) Social inclusion and active citizenship.

These dimensions were taken into account by us when designing the needs assessment.

There is strong empirical evidence that employment rate of refugees is lower than of those representing other migrant categories (OECD, 2015). In this respect, the reports produced by the organisations dealing with admission and integration of humanitarian migrants are an important source of information, e.g. ECRE and Caritas Europe (2007), IOM (2013), UNHCR (2013a, b, c).

UNHCR (2013c) has provided with an extensive review of current knowledge regarding labour market integration of resettled refugees in various countries identifying promising practices and factors favouring labour market integration in host countries. OECD (2016) was the first of the “Making Integration Work” series, which summarised the OECD countries experiences in the integration of humanitarian migrants.

The methodological framework developed by Ager and Strang (2008) designed to examine and measure the access and achievement of migrants and refugees within employment has been adapted and used by policy makers in several countries. UNHCR (2013c) came up with a set of integration indicators which include the following ones:

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<sup>25</sup> Studies on labour market integration of migrants in general provide with important insights applicable for humanitarian migrants as well.

<sup>26</sup> For more detailed discussion regarding labour market integration of migrants in several European countries see the “Job for Immigrants” by OECD (OECD, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2012a, 2014a).

- (i) Labour market participation and employment rates,
- (ii) Earnings,
- (iii) Poverty,
- (iv) Occupational status,
- (v) Employment commensurate with experience and qualifications,
- (vi) Diversity of occupations and non-separated labour markets,
- (vii) Job retention; job advancement and occupational mobility,
- (viii) Employment contracts and/or benefits, employment satisfaction,
- (iv) Factors preventing/facilitating economic integration of humanitarian migrants.

Through the needs assessment of SAs we tried to address the abovementioned integration indicators translating them into general language of the respondents and allowing them to reflect on their current situation. The respondents were provided space for reflection upon the barriers of their economic integration in Armenia.

The following barriers faced by refugees summarised by RISE (2013) were critically taken into consideration<sup>27</sup>:

- (i) The language (including literacy),
- (ii) The vocational (major priority) education,
- (iii) The lack of work experience in host country,
- (iv) The lack of host country references,
- (v) The lack of appropriate training or unrecognised educational and professional qualifications,
- (vi) The lack of access to networks which would strengthen employment prospects and knowledge of recruitment methods,
- (vii) The lack of knowledge/awareness of fitting current experience to appropriate roles,
- (viii) The lack of understanding of host country employment culture and job application procedures,
- (ix) The cross-cultural misunderstandings causing suspicion or hostility,
- (x) The lack of awareness of cultural nuances and etiquette of the host country; racism and negative stereotyping,
- (xi) The uncertainty (caused by a lack of life and work perspectives),
- (xii) A boredom and frustration leading to loss of self-esteem (caused by the lack of meaningful occupation, especially work)<sup>28</sup>.

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<sup>27</sup> The study provides with a detailed analysis of the situation of asylum seekers and refugees in three European countries (the UK, Ireland and Germany).

<sup>28</sup> We looked through the questionnaires developed by the ETF (2016) for operationalisation of needs assessment questions on the possible lack of appropriate training or unrecognised educational and professional qualifications.

Discrimination was proven to be an important obstacle preventing integration of migrants in the destination countries (Krause, Rinne and Zimmermann, 2011). In the framework of the reported needs assessment, we tried to address this issue when designing the employer online survey questionnaire.

While designing policies on admission and integration of humanitarian migrants, the authorities should be aware of “welfare traps” as a result of interaction of social benefits and the tax system which can prevent labour market participation, especially of low skilled migrants (IMF, 2016).

OECD (2016) provides with a set of recommendations, “ten lessons”, to remove the main barrier and accelerate the sustainable integration of humanitarian migrants: provide activation and integration services as soon as possible for humanitarian migrants and asylum seekers with high prospects; factor employment prospects into dispersal policies; take into account the growing diversity of humanitarian migrants and develop tailor-made approaches; develop support programs specific to unaccompanied minors who arrive past the age of compulsory schooling; promote equal access to integration services to humanitarian migrants across the country; record and assess humanitarian migrants’ foreign qualifications, work experience and skills; identify mental and physical health issues early and provide adequate support; build on civil society to integrate humanitarian migrants; acknowledge that the integration of very poorly educated humanitarian migrants requires a long-term training and support.

Martin et al (2016a) when identifying and analysing “Labour Market Integration Support Measures for Asylum Seekers and Refugees (REFMISMES)” in nine European countries point to emergence of “standard” package in the field composed of the following four key elements:

- (i) Early skills assessment,
- (ii) “Introduction” program including general cultural orientation, but sometimes also socio-professional orientation and even some training,
- (iii) Intensive language courses,
- (iv) Access to general job intermediation services<sup>29</sup>.

Economic integration of humanitarian migrants and SAs requires special efforts from the hosting communities as their attitude towards the labour market participation is different from the one of labour migrants. Unlike labour migrants or family unifiers, whose move is usually a result of a rational decision based on the expected opportunities available in the origin and destination countries, humanitarian migrants are displaced due to political distress they face in the country of origin. Arrival to a new non-familiar reality of destination country is often combined with the psychological trauma related to experiencing a military conflict in the country of origin.

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<sup>29</sup> The study identifies and maps 94 REFMISMES which are presented in the Appendix 10 of Martin et al. (2016b). [Online]. Available at: <http://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/43505>. [Accessed February 26, 2017].

The results of meta-analysis (UNHCR, 2013c) indicate the labour market performance gap between the resettled refugees and other immigrant groups (and natives) in the short term. Unlike labour migrants who start working almost immediately after arrival, humanitarian immigrants for whom employment is not the primary reason for moving to a new country need more time to become part of the host country labour market (OECD 2014b).

Frequently, they do not have certainty regarding the duration of their stay in the destination as it depends on the evolution of the situation. The international experience indicates that approximately half of the humanitarian migrants settle in the destination countries, while early access to the labour market contributes to faster economic integration and increases chances of positive net fiscal impact on the hosting economy (IMF, 2016; European Parliament, 2015).

Achilli et al. (2017) provide with an insightful review of policies towards Syrian refugees in the neighbouring countries (Jordan Lebanon and Turkey). It was emphasised that mismanaged short-term solutions in the provision of mostly humanitarian aid resulted in large negative and potentially irreversible impact fallen on the Syrian refugees' livelihood and well-being. The authors highlighted the importance of clear management mechanisms to recognise those most vulnerable and, beyond immediate humanitarian aid, the most important challenge was the provision of and access to quality housing, health services, education, and employment.

The deterioration of the political situation in Syria caused the inflow of SAs into Armenia creating a new and complex migration situation for major policy makers in the country.

**Economic Integration of Syrian Armenians**  
**Self-Evaluation Form**

Interviewer's code: |\_\_|\_\_|

Respondent's id: |\_\_|\_\_|\_\_|

Assessment Date: |\_\_|\_\_| |\_\_|\_\_| |\_\_|\_\_|

The interviewer assists the person approached in the evaluation procedure assuring that he/she feels free in assessing the needs. The interviewer assures full engagement of the person approached in filling in of the form. It is important to keep in mind that the evaluation strongly refers to economic conditions and integration.

Name and surname (*check the DB info and correct if needed*)

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Gender

1. Male
2. Female

Age (*if the respondent is 16 or 17 years old, ask for parent's permission to participate in the assessment*)

|\_\_|\_\_|

Contacts (*check the DB info and correct if needed*)

Phone 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Assessment start time: |\_\_|\_\_|

Settlement type (Capital, urban, rural)

Yerevan	1
Other city/town	2

Village	3
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Address

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### **Part I: Information sheet**

Hello, my name is **[insert your name]**. I am collecting data for the Economic Integration of Syrian Armenians project. The project is implemented by the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ) in collaboration with the Armenian Government. On request of the Ministry of Economic Development and Investments (MoEDI), a comprehensive database has to be established for the successful economic integration of the Syrian Armenians. This project aims at addressing the needs of the Syrian Armenians in the Republic of Armenia in regards to their economic integration. I am representing a research organisation, CRRC-Armenia, which is responsible for this assessment and is to duly assure the confidentiality of the data that you are to provide. The information you provide is strictly confidential. The data is gathered with the aim of informing policies.

You were approached as a person who has previously been involved in initiatives aiming at the economic integration of the Syrian Armenians and we strongly rely on your further collaboration in the identification of the basic needs that you may have and in assisting us to approach other Syrian Armenians that may have economic integration needs.

**I agree to participate in the assessment (please select your age group)**

1.1 *(if the respondent is 16 or 17 years old, ask for parent's permission to participate in the assessment)*

**Parent agrees**

**Parent does not agree** *(finish the interview if parent does not agree)*

## Part II: Socio-Economic situation

You are to provide information on your current social and economic condition. You will be asked to answer several questions on your profession, past and current occupation, years of work experience etc. Please follow the guidance and ask the interviewer for clarifications whenever needed.

2.1 Your Profession (*if the respondent has more than one profession, please write all of them*)

No profession

2.2 Current (primary) occupation (select from card 1).

*(If the answer is “12” or “-2”, please skip the questions “2.3”, “2.4”, “3.5”, “3.6”, “3.7”, “3.8”, “3.9”)*

2.3 Sphere of current (primary) occupation (select from card 3)

2.4 If employed, your company name (write)

2.5 Previous occupation and where (select from the card 1).

2.6 And, overall, how many years of work experience (excluding education) do you have (write)?

Country	Number of years
Syria	
Armenia	
Other [specify]	
I have no experience	

2.7 Do you have any membership in organisations?

1. Yes, specify the name(s) and location(s) of the organisation(s): \_\_\_\_\_

2. No

2.8 Please, describe your Household’s economic situation (select from card 2)

2.9 Could you please answer, who is the person mostly covering your household expenses, please select

1. Myself

2. My wife/husband

3. My parent(s)

4. My children

5. Other [specify] \_\_\_\_\_

2.10 Please, specify your major source of income:

1. Business in Armenia

2. Business in other country



3. Salary
4. Support from relative(s) or friends
5. Savings
6. Support from the Government [specify]\_\_\_\_\_
7. Other [specify] \_\_\_\_\_

-1. DA

-2. RA

2.11 Have you received support (material/non-material) from any organisation(s)?

1. Yes [specify name(s) of organisation(s) and type of support]\_\_\_\_\_

2. No

2.12 Could you please clarify if you own or are renting a house?

1. I live in my (or family's/relative's) own house/do not pay rent

2. I am renting a house

-2. RA

2.13 Could you please clarify if you own or are renting a space for your business (if any)

1. I have own space for business/do not pay for rent

2. I am renting a space for business

3. I don't have a business

-2. RA

*If the respondent does not pay rent, please skip the question "2.14"*

2.14 If you pay rent, please inform us on the difficulties that you experience in the payment of rent.\_\_\_\_\_

As we are interested in the economic stability and integration of the Syrian Armenians, let us move to the following section in regards to business activities:

**Part III: Business related information**

3.1 Could you please describe the situation that suits you the most?

1. Have Business - Registered
2. Have Business - Not Registered
3. Want to open a business
4. Member of Business Network(s)
5. Employed
6. Other [specify] \_\_\_\_\_

-1. DA

-2. RA

3.2 Are you currently searching for a [another] job?

1. Yes
2. No (skip questions “3.3” and “3.4”)

-1. DA

-2. RA

3.3 What are the things you have done to find work during the last month? (Accept all possible answers)

1. Contacted employer directly/interview
2. Contacted the public employment service
3. Contacted a private employment agency
4. Contacted friends or relatives
5. Sent out resumes/filled out applications
6. Placed or answered ads [specify where, if possible] \_\_\_\_\_
7. Looked at ads [specify where, if possible] \_\_\_\_\_
8. Attended job training programs/courses.
9. Other [specify]\_\_\_\_\_

10. Nothing

-2. RA

3.4 Please specify the sector which best describes the sphere you would like to work in.

*Interviewer: show card 3 for sectors.*

3.5 Please, in a few words, describe your job (job description)

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3.6 What type of employer do you work for?

1. Public/government

2. Private

3. Self-Employed

4. Non-governmental organisation (NGO)

5. International and diplomatic

6. Other [specify]\_\_\_\_\_

-1. DA

-2. RA

Now let us think of the relationship between your field of study, knowledge/skills and employment.

3.7 To what extent is the knowledge and skills you acquired during your studies utilised in your current job?

<b><i>1</i></b>	<b><i>2</i></b>	<b><i>3</i></b>	<b><i>4</i></b>	<b><i>5</i></b>	<b><i>6</i></b>	<b><i>7</i></b>	<b><i>-1</i></b>
<b><i>Not at all utilised</i></b>						<b><i>Completely utilised</i></b>	<b><i>DA</i></b>

3.8 In your opinion, is your field of study (skills) relevant for/corresponding with your current job?

1. Completely relevant (skip question “3.9”)

2. Partially relevant (skip question “3.9”)

3. Completely irrelevant

4. No particular education/skills are required

-1. DA

3.9 If your job is not closely related to your field of study/qualifications, why did you choose this job?

1. My current job is only a temporary stepping-stone, I am still searching for professional orientation
2. I receive a higher salary at my current job
3. My current job offers more security
4. My interests have changed
5. My current job allows a flexible time schedule
6. My current job allows me to work in a favoured geographical place
7. My current job allows me to take into consideration the interests of my family/children
8. This was the only job I could find
9. My formal qualifications are not recognised in Armenia, which prevents me from finding a job corresponding with my qualifications
10. Other [specify]\_\_\_\_\_

-1. DA

*Thank you; let us move to the next section where you can provide information on exhibitions and training that you might have attended.*

#### **Part IV: Exhibitions and Trainings**

4.1 Several exhibitions have been organised to benefit the Syrian Armenians. Have you attended any of them?

1. Yes
2. No [skip question “4.3”]
3. I have never heard of any exhibition [skip question “4.3”]

-1. DA [skip question “4.3”]

4.2 Have you attended exhibitions as a visitor or as a participant?

1. Visitor
2. Participant

4.3 Several trainings have been organized to benefit the Syrian Armenians. Have you participated in any of them?

1. Yes
2. No [skip question “4.5”]
3. I have never heard of any training [skip question “4.5”]
- 1. DA [skip question “4.5”]

4.4 Please specify the training(s) and organising institution(s). Using card 4, please assess your satisfaction with the training(s).

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*Interviewer: Show card 4 for the satisfaction scores*

4.5 Except for training(s), do you have a need for consultancy?

1. Yes
2. No [skip question “4.6”]
- 1. DA [skip question “4.6”]

4.6 What kind of (sphere) consultancy do you need?

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**Part V: Intentions and future plans**

5.1 Could you please tell us what are your most (up to three, please classify and specify) urgent needs for economic stability or integration in terms of business development and/or employment?

*Interviewer: Help classify the needs. Show Card 6 for needs.*

*Needs, Classifications and Specifications:*

<b>Needs</b>	<b>Classification</b>	<b>Specification</b>
Training needs		
Financial needs		
Judicial support needs		
Networking needs		
Information or knowledge needs		
Other (write)		

5.2 How long do you plan to stay in Armenia?

1. Permanently, regardless of anything
2. Permanently if I have a job

3. For a long period, but I plan to leave Armenia

4. Only for the near future, I will leave Armenia

5. I will leave whenever I have a chance

6. Other

-1. DA

5.3 Which are the main characteristics of a good job for You? (Accept no more than 3 answers)

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

-1. DA

-2. RA

5.4 What change(s) in employment and further education/training do you plan to achieve within the next three years? Multiple answers are possible in both columns.

Change in Employment	Change in education/training
1 To change my employer	1 To restart full-time study
1 To obtain higher income	2 To study part-time
2 To change my area of work assignment	3 To make better use of my knowledge
3 To start my own business	4 To obtain a better chance of pursuing continuous learning
4 To advance my own business	5 I have no major changes in mind
5 To get employed	6 Other [specify]
6 To discontinue employment	-1 DA
7 To achieve more secure employment	
8 To take a job more closely linked to my study/qualification	
9 I have no major changes in mind	
10 Other [specify]	
-1 DA	

## Part VI: Background information

6.1 Your birthplace

\_\_\_\_\_

6.2 How many people are currently living in your household?

\_\_\_\_\_

6.3 Your marital Status:

1. Never married
2. Married
3. Cohabiting without civil or religious marriage
4. Divorced
5. Separated
6. Widow / Widower
- 2. Refuse to answer

6.4 Do you have children?

1. No
2. Yes (How many, specify their age \_\_\_\_\_)

6.5 Please clarify your residential status in Armenia

1. Citizen
2. Refugee / Asylum seeker
3. Permanent resident
4. Other [please specify] \_\_\_\_\_

6.6 The date of arrival to Armenia (write)

|\_|\_|\_| |\_|\_|\_| |\_|\_|\_|

6.7 Your Education:

*Interviewer: See the education map and provide support.*

1. No primary education
2. Primary education (either complete or incomplete)
3. Incomplete secondary education
4. Completed secondary education
5. Secondary technical education
6. Vocational education, please [specify] \_\_\_\_\_
7. Incomplete higher education

8. Completed higher education (BA, MA, or Specialist degree)
9. Post-graduate degree

6.8 Do you know any foreign language(s)?

1. Armenian
2. Arabic (Syrian Arabic)
3. English
4. Russian
5. French
6. German
7. Turkish
8. Other [other]

6.9 Could you please assess the level of knowledge each language you know?

1. Excellent
2. Good
3. Satisfactory

**Thank you!**

Assessment end time: |\_\_|\_\_|



## APPENDIX 3: Employer Survey Questionnaire

### Economic Integration of Syrian Armenians Employer Online Survey Questionnaire

Hello, the CRRC-Armenia on behalf of the GIZ "Economic Integration for Syrian Refugees in Armenia (EISRA)" project commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) develops a database for potential employers for the Syrian Armenians in Armenia. This project aims at addressing the needs of the Syrian Armenians in the Republic of Armenia in regards to their economic integration. On request of the GIZ EISRA's political partner in Armenia, the Ministry of Economic Development and Investments (MoEDI), a comprehensive database has to be established for supporting the successful economic integration of the Syrian Armenians. The opinion and information provided by the employers in terms of their needs is hence of great importance. CRRC-Armenia is responsible for this survey and is to duly assure the confidentiality of the collected data. Your enterprise was randomly selected among 1000 other enterprises.

**We strongly rely on the employers' (and your) further collaboration in the identification of the basic employment needs and requirements that you may have. Please, provide answers based on the policies and procedures of your company.**

#### **Part I: General Information about Organisation**

##### **1. Your company name**

##### **2. Your position (if you do not hold one of the positions mentioned below, please re-direct the questionnaire to the person who holds one of these positions)**

Head/CEO/director/Board member	1
Director of a subfield or a subdivision- Financial Director/Commercial Director/Production Director etc.	2
Head of HR Department/HR Officer	3
Head of PR Communication Department/Responsible for PR and Communication	4

##### **3. In what sector does your company/business operate?**

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	1
Mining and Quarrying	2
Manufacturing	3
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	4
Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	5
Construction	6
Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles, Motorcycles	7
Transportation and storage	8
Accommodation and food service activities	9
Information and communication	10
Financial and insurance activities	11

Real Estate Activities	12
Professional, scientific and technical activities	13
Administrative and support service activities	14
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	15
Education	16
Human health and social work activities	17
Arts, entertainment and recreation	18
Other service activities	19
Activities of extraterritorial organisations and bodies	20

**4. Could you please describe the activity of your organisation**

\_\_\_\_\_

**5. When was your company established?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**6. The average number of staff**

\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Location of the company (multiple answers possible)**

Yerevan	1
Other Urban	2
Rural	3

**8. Please specify the name of the city/town (if it is in Yerevan, specify the district)**

\_\_\_\_\_

**9. Skills mostly needed at workplace**

Manual/physical	1
Non manual/mental	2
Both	3

**10. Do you have any open vacancies at the moment?**

Yes	1
No	2 [ <i>skip 11, 12 and 13 questions</i> ]

**11. Please specify the required level of qualification of your employees?**

Highly qualified	1
Medium qualified	2
Low qualified	3
No qualification is needed	4

**12. If you have any vacant positions available, would you like to employ Syrian Armenian(s)?**

Yes	1
No	2

13. Why would you employ / not employ Syrian Armenian(s)?

\_\_\_\_\_

14. What kind of job would you offer?

\_\_\_\_\_

**PART II: Assessment of skills/competencies required at workplace**

15. To what extent are the following skills/competences required from your current employees?

Skills/Competences	1 - Not at all Required	2	3	4	5 - To a very high extent required
Mastery of field/subject-specific knowledge	1	2	3	4	5
Ability to develop new ideas and solutions	1	2	3	4	5
Ability to take leadership	1	2	3	4	5
Ability to adopt to changing conditions	1	2	3	4	5
Ability to mobilise the capacities of others	1	2	3	4	5
Analytical thinking	1	2	3	4	5
Willingness to question own and others' ideas	1	2	3	4	5
Ability to work effectively towards a goal	1	2	3	4	5
Ability to organise his/her work processes affectively	1	2	3	4	5
Ability to work productively with others	1	2	3	4	5
Ability to perform well under pressure	1	2	3	4	5
Creativity	1	2	3	4	5

**PART III: Selection of employee**

16. Assume that you are about to hire a person for a job. You are about to choose between one local Armenian and a Syrian Armenian Both have equivalent/similar education and qualifications. Whom is it more likely you would hire for the job?

Local Armenian	1
Syrian Armenian	2

16a. Please, explain your answer.

\_\_\_\_\_

**PART IV: Prior experience of employing Syrian Armenians**

19. How many Syrian Armenian employees do you have at present?

\_\_\_\_\_

20. How many Syrian Armenian employees have worked for you during the last 5 years?

\_\_\_\_\_

[Questions 21-24 should be answered only if you have or have had Syrian Armenian(s) employed]

21. How productive have the Syrian Armenian(s) been?

Very productive	1
Rather productive	2
Rather not productive	3
Not productive at all	4

22. Please explain your answer to Question 21

\_\_\_\_\_

23. Please answer the set of questions provided below. As previously, ‘1’ means ‘Disagree fully’ and ‘5’ ‘Agree fully’ in responding to the following statements.

Skills/Competences	1 - Not agree at all	2	3	4	5 – Completely agree
We had to spend more resources on the Syrian Armenian(s) prior to hiring than we do for Armenian applicants for similar jobs.	1	2	3	4	5
Our experiences from employing Syrian Armenian(s) are mainly positive.	1	2	3	4	5
The Syrian Armenian’s language skills were adequate to do a good job.	1	2	3	4	5
The Syrian Armenian(s) have been hard to integrate with other employees so that co-operation has not worked to full satisfaction.	1	2	3	4	5
Customers enjoyed the job-related contacts with Syrian Armenian employees	1	2	3	4	5

The Syrian Armenian's knowledge of the Syrian/Arabic language and culture has been beneficial for our contacts with Syria or other Syrian Armenians.	1	2	3	4	5
--	---	---	---	---	---

**24. Are you willing to employ Syrian Armenian (s) again?**

Yes	1
No	2

**25. Please, explain your answer to Question 24.**

---

**26. Is there a possibility to work part-time at the organisation you work for?**

---

**27. As an employer, please equip us with any relevant information (related to the topics discussed in this questionnaire) that would benefit the Syrian Armenians in finding a job at your company or in Armenia in general.**

---

**THANK YOU!**

#### APPENDIX 4: Excerpt from an Interviewer Report

*The 15 days of the research were contradictory and full of different emotions: the first two days were very difficult to make connections with SAs and one important burden was the field before us because people have approached SAs giving a lot of promises of support and then did not provide it. As a result, each interview was filled in with unbelief towards any positive change. For instance, I remember during the first days of the fieldwork I approached a woman respondent and she said approximately this, - “SAs are means in the hands of the state to say that they do their job, but nothing really happens. Some other organisation conduct surveys showing that they want to help us but what really happen is that they earn money”. Having this in mind I sometimes regret that we did not do in-depth interviews and could not record this kind of feedback. However, the situation changed after a while which was in my opinion preconditioned by the good work done by other interviewers who had impressed the interviewees with professional attitude and the respondents would encourage each other to respond and participate, especially when giving any contacts to me the interviewees would ring their relatives/friends up saying that they give their contacts to me and I was to approach them next.*

*In broad, contacting those who have given their agreement to participate at an interview was easy. Even the linguistic barriers were overcome over time let alone some wording that needed explanations, in these situations English was of help and this was unexpected for me. I have identified generally difficult wording in the questionnaire and was attentive to these. Some words were already understandable for me in Western Armenian.*

*In my opinion, it was a bit awkward when I was calling a respondent explaining the aim of the interviews via phone and just after this asked for their address. However, the SAs were very welcoming. I was astonished with the high level of trust some of them could have towards a stranger. I remember a door was blocked and one respondent threw the keys from the window to me trusting that I was a good person. I suspect that a local would do this.*

*Even though most of the SAs lived in the city centre, there were quite a lot of difficult-to-reach addresses and this gave a good interviewer experience to me.*

*Emotionally, this was a difficult project. I was happy to see people who left the worrisome memories behind and were feeling good in Yerevan and it was hard to see some in complex situations.*

*One of the most remembered things was after two days of finishing the fieldwork: I got a call from a young man. He stated, - “They said I can ask you for a job”. It turned out that when I was sitting in a café doing an interview, an old man happened to sit next to me, he asked what we (me and the interviewee) were doing, I explained that this was an interview and said if he knew a person/relative that was economically active (e.g. has a business, searches for a job) we could approach and left my contact. In the end, he found the youngster looking for a job and passed my contact saying that I might help in finding a job without giving a holistic idea on the actual matter of an interview. I hope that someday this young man will have a good job.*

*I do anticipate that our interviews will result in a sound analysis and there will be more SAs with solutions to their problems in the near future.*

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## Abbreviations

ACMA	Armenian Christian Medical Association
AGBU	Armenian General Benevolent Union
ArmStat	National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia
ART	Armenia Inter-Church Charitable Round Table Foundation
CCSAI	Centre for Coordination of Syrian-Armenian Issues
CRRC-Armenia	Caucasus Research Resource Centre-Armenia Foundation
CSV	Comma Separated Values
DK	Don't Know
DWV	German Business Association
ECRE	European Council on Refugees and Exiles
EEU	Eurasian Economic Union
EISRA	Economic Integration of Syrian Refugees in Armenia
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
GIZ	German Society for International Cooperation
HH	Household
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	International Organization of Migration
ISCO	International Standard Classification of Occupations
KASA	Komitas Action Suisse-Arménie
MIPEX	Migrant Integration Policy Index
MLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
MPI	Migration Policy Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OXFAM	Oxford Committee for Famine Relief
PSD SC	Private Sector Development South Caucasus
RA	Refuse to Answer
RISE	Refugee Interactive Skills for Employment
SA	Syrian Armenian
SBFIC	Savings Banks Foundation for International Cooperation
SEA	State Employment Agency
SME DNC	Small and Medium Entrepreneurship Development National Centre
SPSS	Statistical Package For Social Sciences
STATA	Statistics and Data
SyAD	Syrian Armenian Dataset
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
VET	Vocational Education Training

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