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**Finding your way into employment? Successful job search of refugees in Austria**

Labor market entry poses enormous challenges for recently arrived refugees, ranging from the language barrier, devaluation of human capital, unfamiliarity with customs of the job search process to outright discrimination. How can refugees overcome these challenges and enter gainful employment? In this paper, we draw on interviews with 26 refugees from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran, conducted in 2017 and 2018, who came to Austria in 2015 and 2014 and who are now gainfully employed. We depict the refugees’ own perspectives on and strategies for job entry and integration. Personal agency and a proactive approach of seeking and seizing opportunities are key for overcoming initial barriers and entering upon positive integration pathways. At the same time, social ties to the host society play a crucial role in early labor market integration. For establishing such ties, the refugees’ own agency is essential. Finally, institutions of the Austrian labor market (the “apprenticeship” system) interact with refugees’ agency in very intricate ways, both setting up nearly insurmountable barriers but also providing great possibilities.