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Master Final Dissertation

**Journeys of hope**

**Young refugees in German-speaking Switzerland –  
paths towards inclusion into the host society**

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*Migration broadens the concept of motherland  
beyond the physical and political boundaries,  
making the whole world man's motherland.*

(Giovanni Battista Scalabrini)

*For me homeland consists of people I choose to be responsible for.  
The homeland of the homeless is the other.*

(Vilém Flusser)

With gratitude to my community of Scalabrinian Secular Missionaries,  
to the whole Scalabrinian Family,  
and to all migrants and refugees.



## ABSTRACT

Available data show that in Switzerland refugees and temporarily admitted people are more at risk of social exclusion than the rest of the population due to various obstacles in their process of structural integration. The present dissertation focuses on refugees and temporarily admitted persons who arrived in Switzerland aged between 16 and 25 and have reached a satisfactory social inclusion. The aim is to highlight the institutional, personal and relational resources which supported them, and to analyze the variable interplay of these resources in their processes of social inclusion, in order to evaluate the significance of the relations with the local population. Relying on information gathered from interviews with young refugees and temporarily admitted people, and with integration actors, the present research points out that these young people could find paths of inclusion by actively using their resources and especially by establishing a wide social network within the local population.

**Keywords:** refugees, social inclusion, welfare, human capabilities, social capital

## RESUMEN

Los datos disponibles muestran que en Suiza los refugiados y las personas admitidas temporalmente corren mayor riesgo de exclusión social que el resto de la población debido a diferentes obstáculos en su proceso de integración estructural. El presente trabajo se centra en los refugiados y las personas admitidas temporalmente que llegaron a Suiza entre los 16 y 25 años y han alcanzado una inclusión social satisfactoria. El objetivo es resaltar los recursos institucionales, personales y relacionales que los sostienen y analizar la interacción variable de estos recursos en sus procesos de inclusión social, a fin de evaluar la importancia de las relaciones con la población local. Con base a la información obtenida de entrevistas con jóvenes refugiados y personas temporalmente admitidas, y con diferentes actores de la integración, la presente investigación destaca que estos jóvenes podrían encontrar caminos de inclusión utilizando activamente sus recursos y especialmente estableciendo una amplia red social dentro de la población local.

**Palabras clave:** refugiados, inclusión social, estado del bienestar, capacidades humanas, capital social



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# 1. PART I: General framework

## 1.1. Introduction: purpose and reasons

At the end of 2016, 118,284 people lived in Switzerland under the asylum law, ca. 1.4 % of the total population, which amounts at 8,417,700 inhabitants (including 2,029,527 foreign citizens). Among them 82,681 people had received international protection: 45,804 as recognized refugees, 9,487 as temporarily admitted refugees and 27,390 as temporarily admitted foreigners<sup>1</sup>. The majority of them are from Eritrea, Syria, Turkey, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, and Iraq (Staatssekretariat für Migration SEM, 2017a).

After surviving very dangerous and difficult journeys to flee from persecution and war and obtaining protection in Switzerland, refugees have to start a new “journey” to find paths towards their social inclusion into the new environment. Yet they are not the only actors in this process: also the host country (state, local institutions, civil society, individuals) has “to move” together with the newcomers towards a more inclusive society.

In the last years I have had the possibility to meet young refugees in Switzerland thanks to my work at the Center for Migration Studies (CSERPE)<sup>2</sup>, at the Ecumenical Pastoral Service for Asylum Seekers (OeSA)<sup>3</sup> in Basel as well as at the International Youth Center “G.B. Scalabrini”<sup>4</sup> in Solothurn. In these encounters I was often amazed by young refugees’ capability to fight for their social inclusion, although they have to overcome many obstacles. At the same time I have realized how important the relationships with the local population are for their successful integration. These relationships have a positive impact also on the native people and on institutions, which become more open and inclusive. Such experiences are in contrast with the public discourse of politicians and media, which often present young refugees only as a burden for the welfare institutions.

For these reasons I concentrated my research on refugees (RE) and temporarily admitted persons (TA)<sup>5</sup> who arrived in Switzerland aged between 16 and 25 years and have reached a satisfactory

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<sup>1</sup> Temporary admission is a protection status foreseen by Swiss *Asylum Act*, which is different from subsidiary protection stated by EU asylum legislation (Swiss Refugee Council: <https://www.refugeecouncil.ch/ecre.html>, accessed June 5 2017). According to the data of the Swiss Federal Statistical Office, 90% of the temporarily admitted people remain permanently in Switzerland.

<sup>2</sup> <http://simn-global.org/full.php?id=56&name=Services&link=services.php>.

<sup>3</sup> <http://oesa.ch/>: this ecumenical project, supported by the Christian churches in Basel, offers material and psycho-social support to asylum seekers accommodated in the biggest Federal Reception and Procedure Center for Asylum Seekers.

<sup>4</sup> [www.scala-mss.net/en/menu\\_centri.html](http://www.scala-mss.net/en/menu_centri.html).

<sup>5</sup> Hereafter in my dissertation I will abbreviate “refugees” with RE and “temporarily admitted persons” with TA. In some cases I will refer to them as “people entitled to international protection”.

social inclusion becoming economically independent from welfare benefits or attending a vocational training with good results. I will consider the German-speaking part of Switzerland.

The general objective of my research was to analyze these successful processes of social inclusion identifying the resources which have allowed the young RE and TA reaching their goals. The knowledge gathered through this research could be useful to raise awareness about young people entitled to international protection, by presenting their integration efforts and capabilities, suggesting best practices to improve their social inclusion.

In front of negative attitudes towards refugees in Europe it is important to bear in mind that the success of a society in including all its members, especially the most vulnerable, promoting their own resources and making them active citizens, is one of the highest achievements of a civilization. To welcome refugees may become a chance to build a more equal society, a more developed democracy, and to contribute to the defense of human rights and peace at a global level.

## **1.2. Status of the issue**

Social inclusion is a process that ensures that everyone has the same opportunities and the resources required to fully participate in economic, social and political life and to enjoy basic living conditions. Therefore it consists of several dimensions. However, as regards people entitled to international protection in Switzerland, the research has focused mainly on their structural integration and in particular on their labor market participation.

Between 2008 and 2013, an average of 5,260 young people aged between 16 and 25 applied for asylum in Switzerland each year (total: 37,552). After 3 years only 37% of them are usually still in the country. This depends on the asylum recognition rate and in more recent years the percentage has probably increased (Stutz *et al.*, 2016: 6).

Data concerning social exclusion show that RE and TA are a vulnerable category of foreigners in Switzerland (Liebig *et al.*, 2012: 42-45). For instance, they are insufficiently integrated into the labor market and more often dependent on social benefits (Spadarotto *et. al.*, 2014) in comparison to Swiss citizens and other categories of immigrants. The way out of the welfare dependency often passes through vocational training and employment. Yet, RE and TA aged between 16 and 25 are particularly disadvantaged. They usually lack professional qualification or working experience of their own, are excluded from compulsory education, and have many difficulties to access vocational training (Lubos, 2014; Lubos and Deponti, 2016).

Nonetheless they usually show strong motivation to learn the local language, attend professional education courses and look for an employment. Some of them are able to successfully integrate into

host society despite all obstacles they encounter (UNHCR Büro für die Schweiz und Liechtenstein, 2014). In front of this situation some researches focus on the analysis of the factors which influence RE's and TA's social inclusion or exclusion (Lindenmeyer *et al.*, 2008; Bader and Fibbi, 2012; UNHCR, 2014): structural characteristics of this category of people, quality of the assistance system, knowledge of the local language, contacts with Swiss people or associations. The legal aspects play a central role: a stable permit is a fundamental premise for the inclusion process (Spadarotto *et al.*, 2014). The health and psychological conditions have also been considered (UNHCR, 2014; Schweizerisches Rotes Kreuz, 2016), bearing in mind that the traumatizing experiences made by many RE and TA may have negative consequences on their capability to participate in the labor market.

The research by Lindenmeyer *et al.* tries to highlight the factors that may positively influence RE's and TA's social inclusion, but it takes into consideration only the measures implemented by institutional actors (local authorities) to promote integration. Bader and Fibbi analyze young migrants' and refugees' positive paths towards integration, but they focus above all on those who were born in or came to Switzerland before the age of 16 and could attend the compulsory school. The study by UNHCR (2014) considers the point of view of RE of TA about the topic of integration in the labor market, but the interviewees belong to different age groups and not all of them present a satisfactory level of integration. Successful examples of social inclusion among young RE and TA arrived in Switzerland aged between 16 and 25 have not been specifically investigated by the research yet. In the present dissertation I considered this topic, which has been neglected by the research till now, and I focused on the issue of the interplay between institutional, personal, and relational resources in the process of structural integration.

### **1.3. Theoretical framework**

The theoretical framework of my research is based on the following key-terms:

#### **1.3.1. Integration and social inclusion**

The concept of integration presents a wide range of meanings which makes it difficult to find a commonly agreed definition. Actually it is not a sociological term, but in Europe it has been used as a generic word in the public policies to indicate a goal to be reached in order to foster social cohesion between local population and immigrants; it has various meanings according to the different national identity traditions (Wihtol de Wenden, 2010: 41). For this reason some authors prefer not to use this term. Yet, according to Penninx and Martiniello (*et al.*, 2006) nowadays there

is still no better word to describe the relationship between the immigrant and the host society. These authors define integration as “the process through which one becomes an accepted part of society” (Penninx, Martiniello et al., 2006: 127), underlining that integration is a bidirectional process involving both immigrants and the host society. According to Heckmann (2003) integration has four dimensions: structural, cognitive-cultural, social, and the one related to sense of belonging to the host society.

In the present research I focused especially on the structural and social dimensions, which are related to the conditions that enable the individual to participate in social life, according to the equal opportunities model. I summarized these two dimensions with the term “social inclusion”, which is used especially in the documents of the European Union about migrants’ integration and is preferred by some authors (see Schröer, 2013), because it emphasizes the efforts host society has to make in order to include all its members.

### **1.3.2. Social exclusion**

The concept of social exclusion combines two different interpretations of reality. The first one considers the conditions which allow or prevent the access to fundamental rights (legal, economic, civil, and political) and the safeguard of real equality in the access to the latter (see Cabrera, 1998). The second interpretation deals with the phenomena of social disaffiliation which arise from the failure of traditional mechanisms of social integration, which leads to situations of extreme disadvantage. According to this line of thinking, that involves ideas already set out by Castel (1991), exclusion is a dynamic process that can result from the intersection of the degree of social and relational integration and the level of economic and labor integration. It involves several dimensions (Baud and Pialoux, 2003) such as housing, health, employment, social ties, social integration, deviant behavior, and introduces in the social analysis the issue of social marginality. Social exclusion points out a discontinuity in the social structure separating the group of the insiders from the group of the outsiders. Between inclusion and exclusion lies a wide range of degrees of vulnerability - the higher these degrees are, the closer we are to social exclusion. This concept is especially relevant for the condition of RE and TA, who are particularly at risk of unemployment, poverty, dependence on welfare payments, and lack of social ties.

### **1.3.3. Human capital and human capabilities**

Considering the personal resources used by young RE and TA in their process of inclusion, I applied Amartya Sen’s capabilities approach. According to Sen (1997: 1959) the concepts of “human capital” and “human capabilities” are related but distinct. The former can be defined as the

human qualities - skills, knowledge, or other intangible assets of individuals - that can be employed as “capital” in production, to create economic value for the individuals, their employers, or their community. On the other hand the concept of “human capabilities” has a broader meaning, which covers “the ability of human beings to lead lives they have reason to value and to enhance the substantive choices they have” (Sen, 1997: 1959). This more comprehensive term includes also the concept of human capital, but goes beyond it comprising all personal resources an individual has available to reach self-fulfillment as human being and to be recognized as such by the others.

#### **1.3.4. Social capital**

The concept of “social capital” refers to a relational factor: the network of formal or informal relations existing between individual and collective subjects, which fosters reciprocity and provide cognitive resources (information) or normative resources (trust), affecting individual opportunities. This concept has been developed by Bourdieu (1980), Coleman (1990), Putnam (1993), Fukuyama (1995), while Portes (1998) and Sensenbrenner (1993) specifically applied it to migration studies. In my research I referred to Portes’ and Sensenbrenner’s concept of “social capital” in the analysis of young RE’s and TA’s relational resources which allowed them to reach a satisfactory social inclusion in Switzerland. The two authors consider the importance of the embeddedness of economic actions in the networks of social relations: significant social relations offer migrants useful resources for their structural integration into the host country.

### **1.4. Research objectives and hypotheses**

#### **1.4.1. General objective**

The main objective of this research was to analyze successful processes of social inclusion of people entitled to international protection who arrived in Switzerland aged between 16 and 25 and who live now in German-speaking Cantons. I took into consideration those who were recognized as refugees (RE) or were temporarily admitted (TA).

#### **1.4.2. Specific objectives**

##### ***Specific objective 1***

To identify the resources which have supported the young RE and TA in reaching a satisfactory level of social inclusion in Switzerland, in particular:

- institutional resources (welfare payments, housing, language courses, vocational training...);

- personal resources (education or working experiences before arriving in Switzerland, initiative, motivations, resilience...);
- relational resources of the context (support of family members or ethnic community, relations with the local population: individuals, associations...).

### ***Specific objective 2***

To consider how young RE and TA make use of their personal and relational resources in order to reach an adequate social inclusion.

### ***Specific objective 3***

To analyze the interplay between different kinds of resources in young RE's and TA's processes of social inclusion, in order to evaluate the specific role played by relationships with the local population.

## **1.4.3. Hypotheses**

### ***Hypothesis 1***

*Welfare benefits and integration programs offered by the public institutions to promote young RE's and TA's integration are necessary, but not sufficient for a successful process of social inclusion.*

### ***Hypothesis 2***

*Young RE and TA are not only passive objects of social assistance, but they also make use of their personal and relational resources in order to reach an adequate social inclusion.*

### ***Hypothesis 3***

*Relationships with the local population play a decisive role in their process of social inclusion.*

## **1.5. Methodology**

In the present research I applied a qualitative methodology and implemented triangulation criteria between different kinds of data sources: primary and secondary.

### **1.5.1. Secondary sources**

I collected statistical data and information about asylum procedure and policy in Switzerland, and revised the existing literature on RE's and TA's social inclusion in this country.

## **1.5.2. Primary sources**

### **Semi-structured qualitative interviews with refugees**

I conducted semi-structured interviews with 15 RE and TA who arrived in Switzerland aged between 16 and 25 and were still younger than 30 at the time of my research. The study focused on young people who have reached a good level of social inclusion through employment or participation to vocational training. From these interviews I gathered information about the resources that, according to the interviewees themselves, have supported them in the process of social inclusion, and how they have used them to reach their goals.

### **Semi-structured qualitative interviews with integration actors**

The information gathered from the respondents was compared with the points of view of integration actors involved in assisting young people entitled to international protection in their process of social inclusion: the staff member of a Church organization, a social worker in charge for refugees' integration in a commune, and two employers.

## 2. PART II: Body of the research

### 2.1. Revision of secondary sources

#### 2.1.1. Asylum procedure in Switzerland

Switzerland grants asylum right to persecuted people on the basis of the following legal instruments (Swiss Refugee Council, 2017):

- the *Convention relating to the Status of Refugees*;
- the *European Convention on Human Rights*;
- the *Swiss Asylum Act*.

The ordinary asylum procedure starts with a hearing about asylum seekers' detailed accounts of their grounds for fleeing (Swiss Refugee Council, 2017). Asylum seekers are accommodated in *Reception and Processing Centers* (RPCs) run by the *State Secretariat for Migration* (SEM) for usually a maximum period of 90 days. If in this time the authorities are not able to take a decision about an asylum application, the applicant is assigned to a Canton for the entire duration of processing of his/her application (SEM, 2017b). Persons who have applied for asylum receive the **N-permit**, certifying their legal sojourn in Switzerland while they are waiting for the SEM decision. During this time they are accommodated in cantonal or communal asylum centers and receive welfare payments. In the past, asylum seekers were not allowed to work. Yet, nowadays this prohibition is valid only for the first three months after the lodgment of the asylum application.

The SEM can render the following types of decisions (Swiss Refugee Council, 2017):

- granting of asylum: the SEM recognizes the applicant's refugee status and grants him/her a residence permit (**B-permit**);
- temporary admission as a refugee: refugee status is recognized, but asylum is denied on grounds foreseen by the *Swiss Asylum Act*. Yet, the enforcement of the removal order is impermissible under international law (Art. 33 para. 1 of the *Convention relating to the Status of Refugees*). The person is temporarily admitted to Switzerland as a refugee (**F-permit for refugees**);
- temporary admission of foreigners: the SEM denies the refugee status, but ascertains that the asylum seeker's return to his or her country of origin is not permitted, not reasonable or not possible and the removal order cannot be enforced. The SEM grants the applicant temporary admission (**F-permit for foreigners**);
- rejection: decision against granting asylum with removal order.



After SEM decision, the Canton to which RE and TA were already assigned continues to be responsible for them. In case they are not able to earn their livings they continue to receive welfare payments and housing. The various types of permit (N, B, F refugee, F foreigner) are linked to different rights and welfare standards.

### **2.1.2. Institutional resources for integration: the risk of social exclusion**

On December 31 2016 the employment rate among TA amounted to 30.3% and among RE to 24.0% (SEM 2017a: 6). These figures were quite low in comparison to the employment rate of total population in Switzerland aged between 15 and 64: 81.3% (Trading Economics, 2017). Such disparities could be explained bearing in mind that these statistics comprise also people who have just obtained the residence permit and started the integration process. Yet, according to Spadarotto *et. al.* (2014: 9) also if we consider RE and TA who have been living in Switzerland for ten years, their employment rate (respectively 48.2% and 25.5%) is still far from the rate of the Swiss citizens (88%) and of foreign people living in Switzerland (79%).

In view of the multiple challenges RE and TA have to face in the labor market, it is not surprising that their employment rate is lower than the rate of other population groups. Some of these difficulties are: lack of language competencies and professional training, absence of a social network, failed recognition of the qualification degrees, legal obstacles to access the labor market, and limitations of the possibility to change profession and job (Spadarotto *et al.*, 2014: 46).

Moreover about 50% of all asylum seekers and refugees suffer from diseases (depression, post traumatic disturbs) due to traumatizing experiences made either in the home countries or during their journey to Europe (Schweizerisches Rotes Kreuz, 2016: 1). In some cases traumas determine psychological and health problems which reduce or eliminate the ability to work. Yet, in many cases physical diseases and psychological disturbs arise from the living conditions in Switzerland characterized by uncertainty, unemployment, and lack of prospects (UNHCR, 2014: 51-55).

As Geisen (2016: 113-114) underlines, in Switzerland - as in other European countries - the asylum law grants RE and TA unlimited access to the labor market and integration measures only after the completion of the asylum procedure. Yet employers have to request a special work permit to hire them. These limitations were supported in the past by the idea that many economic migrants applied for asylum because of the lack of other immigration avenues. Switzerland intended to be less attractive for “abusive” asylum seekers. Yet, the temporal delay and administrative barriers in the admission to integration measures and labor market represent a serious problem for RE’s and TA’s social inclusion. With the increase in the number of people entitled to international protection in

recent years, Switzerland has begun to recognize the necessity to accelerate their process of inclusion into the labor market, but not all necessary measures have already been implemented as the Swiss Association of Welfare Organizations<sup>6</sup> points out in a discussion paper (SKOS, 2017: 2).

Another crucial element influencing structural integration in Switzerland is the educational level attained. Formally recognized qualifications have a decisive impact on the performance in the labor market and therefore on the social inclusion of immigrants (Meyer, 2009: 60-81; Mey and Rorato, 2010: 3-5; Liebig, 2012: 5-6). People without post-compulsory education are almost twice as likely to be poor as those with an upper secondary qualification (Federal Statistics Office, 2016: 3).

In Switzerland all children have the right and the duty to attend the compulsory school free of charge till the age of 16. Young asylum seekers who arrive older than 16 are excluded from this possibility, and encounter many obstacles to access school or vocational training, especially when the asylum procedure is still hanging (Lubos, 2014: 17). Moreover, in the case they would like to attend a professional training, they have to apply for an apprenticeship in a company. With N-permit and F-permit this is a very difficult task, because employers consider them too precarious and authorities often do not give the necessary work permit (Lubos and Deponti, 2016: 9).

A study commissioned by SEM (Stutz *et al.*, 2016: v) focuses on access to vocational training of all foreign young people arriving in Switzerland aged between 16 and 25. Concerning the young people in the asylum sector the study recognizes following specific problems: in several cases big educational shortfalls, scarcity of programs for educational orientation, health handicaps and traumas, high psychosocial burden, great cultural adaptation efforts, high financial pressure, limited educational opportunities due to the uncertain legal status, necessity of more time to learn the language. The study recognizes the necessity to increase and improve targeted educational programs and integration measures for this age group.

Moreover we have to take into consideration the Federal structure of all Swiss institutions (Kakpo and Cattacin, 2014: 4-5). Integration measures are under the jurisdiction of the Cantons, which may delegate many tasks to the single communes. Also profit-oriented companies have been contracted by some Cantons to organize reception and integration measures for RE and TA.<sup>7</sup> There are disparities in the standards of reception conditions and inclusion in the local communities especially concerning education after the compulsory school (Stutz *et al.*, 2016: 118-124).

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.skos.ch/>

<sup>7</sup> There are two main for-profit companies working in the asylum sector ([www.ors.ch](http://www.ors.ch), [www.abs-ag.ch](http://www.abs-ag.ch)) on behalf of the Cantons or the communes. Yet the quality of their assistance is put into question.

### 2.1.3. Human capabilities and social capital

The level of education and professional competences of people entitled to international protection are not systematically collected in Switzerland. In a survey carried out in 2013, 423 RE and TA were interviewed about their educational level and skills. About 20% of the respondents had upper secondary or tertiary education, ca. 50% had several years of working experience, but no formal professional qualification, and 30% had neither work experience nor education (Bundesrat, 2015: 13). There are no data about the specific group arrived at the age between 16 and 25. Stutz *et al.* (2016: 127) report that there is probably an increase in the number of young refugees who could not regularly attend school in their countries of origin because of war or generalized violence.

According to the data presented by Spadarotto *et al.* (2014: 30-32) the age at the moment of arrival in Switzerland plays a role in the inclusion into the labor market. In the case of RE, the age group of 18 to 24-year-olds has a constantly higher employment rate than older age groups in the first 10 years of sojourn in Switzerland. The employment rate of this group continues to grow, reaching almost 60% after ten years.

In the case of TA, the age group of 18 to 24-year-olds has a less high employment rate than the group of 25 to 35-year-olds. The trend is positive, but the rate reaches only around 25% after ten years, showing that the uncertain legal status prevents many from accessing the labor market.

In general, belonging to the age group 16-25 at the time of the arrival in Switzerland can be considered a better premise for integration in comparison to older groups of RE and TA. Yet the impossibility to attain compulsory education in Switzerland limits the access to the upper secondary education, whose completion promotes integration in the labor market (Meyer, 2008: 60-81; Federal Statistic Office, 2016: 3). The earlier the immigrant children enter the school system, the more likely they are to enjoy equality of opportunities as native pupils (Bader and Fibbi, 2012: 22).

A very interesting contribution to the debate about inclusion of RE and TA of all age groups is given by a study of the UNHCR Office for Switzerland and Liechtenstein (UNHCR, 2014). It is based on 69 interviews with people entitled to international protection.

First of all, the UNHCR study points out the respondents' wish to lead a "normal life" after the escape from persecution or war. This implies independence and self-determination. In order to reach this goal, the interviewees consider integration into the labor market fundamental. Therefore, RE and TA are very much willing to find a job. At the beginning many of them desire to apply the own education and work experiences in the new context. Yet, by the time the majority of them have to adapt their wishes to the reality: the delay in receiving a permit, the legal limitations, and the new

language are very high barriers (UNHCR 2014: 76). The not recognition of foreign education degrees is a further reason for the loss of a great potential (UNHCR 2014: 78).

RE and TA show motivation to learn the local language, because they know it is essential for social inclusion. Yet, language courses are very expensive and the welfare institutions usually do not pay the courses for those owing N-permit. When in the end asylum-seekers receive their permits, they are often requested by local authorities to find a job as soon as possible in order to become independent from welfare payments. Yet without language proficiency, it is a very difficult task (UNHCR, 2014: 77-78).

Some studies take into consideration various cases of successful integration. They highlight several personal characteristics that facilitate the process of social inclusion: personal initiative (Widmer and Schmutz, 2013: 8), endurance, tenacity, adaptability, and capacity to plan (UNHCR, 2014: 73-74). Moreover resilience, proactive motivation, and reactive motivation are considered important psychosocial resources that help RE and TA to find paths to social inclusion (Bader and Fibbi, 2012: 30-34).

In order to overcome the obstacles in accessing the labor market or professional education, it appears necessary to develop more articulated strategies to reach the own goals. This implies patience, gradual stages, and temporary solutions, but also being active and creative. Mey and Rorato (2010: 3-4) highlight these points referring to young people with migration background at the transition to upper secondary education, when they are faced with the problem of finding an apprenticeship. Véron (2015: 86, 114-119) compares the strategies of inclusion of RE and TA belonging to two ethnic groups: Eritreans and Afghans. She points out that Afghan respondents present a higher level of activity in finding creative paths to integration and this could be an explanation for the higher level of inclusion in comparison to the Eritreans, who seem to react in a more passive way in front of obstacles.

Coming to the issue of social capital, the presence of family members is seen by the interviewees in UNHCR (2014: 80) as a resource, because of the emotional support. When relatives have been living in Switzerland for many years they represent also an important source of information and advices for the newcomers contributing to their social capital. This is confirmed by Mey and Rorato (2010: 4).

UNHCR (2014: 72-74; 79-80) highlights the great importance of building a social network in the hosting society starting from the observation that the majority of the 69 interviewees complained the lack of contacts with the local population and its negative impact on their social inclusion. For

many of them a good social network with Swiss people is necessary to find work. These considerations are confirmed by the cases of successful integration into the labor market presented in the same study. It is evident that social capital played an important role in this positive development, since the possibility to find a job was linked to information or connections created by friends or acquaintances in the local population.

Focusing on young migrants and refugees at the transition from compulsory school to vocational training, also Bader and Fibbi (2012: 24-29) recognize the crucial role played by social capital, which includes wide and variegated relations: older family members, the peer group, institutional actors like teachers, social workers, and voluntary mentors. Social capital fosters a positive transition from school to upper secondary education, because it facilitates the professional choice and the search for an apprenticeship necessary for vocational training. In case of young people that are in Switzerland without their family, the authors underline the necessity for them to build a relational network that may somehow compensate the lack of familiar support. Institutional actors and voluntary mentors are particularly important. In this case the ability and tenacity of the young person to establish contacts and ask for help plays a central role (Bader and Fibbi, 2012: 39-40).

## **2.2. Primary sources: semi-structured qualitative interviews with young RE and TA**

### **2.2.1. Interviewees' profiles**

I interviewed 4 refugees, 6 temporarily admitted refugees and 5 temporarily admitted foreigners from Eritrea (8), Afghanistan (5), Congo Kinshasa (1), and Syria (1). They lived in 4 different German-speaking Cantons. 3 of the interviewees were underage at the moment of the arrival, 2 were 18 and 10 between 20 and 25. 6 of the interviewees were employed and 9 were attending vocational training at the moment of the interview. All of them except E8 were living in private housing. Some of the RE and TA in vocational training receive welfare payments, because trainees have a salary, but it is not sufficient to be economically independent.

**Table 1: Personal data of the interviewees**

| Case | Sex | Age | Country of origin | Age at the arrival in CH | Status                             | Status granted after | Canton <sup>8</sup> of residence | Current occupation                                                      | Social benefits | Housing       |
|------|-----|-----|-------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| C1   | F   | 29  | Congo Kinshasa    | 23                       | Refugee (B)                        | 1 month              | BL                               | Employed (old age home)<br>Next year vocational training                | No              | Private       |
| A1   | M   | 28  | Afghanistan       | 23                       | Temporarily admitted foreigner (F) | 2 years              | BL                               | Employed (restaurant).<br>Next year vocational training                 | No              | Private       |
| E1   | M   | 26  | Eritrea           | 20                       | Refugee (B)                        | 6 months             | SO                               | Vocational training (logistics)                                         | Yes             | Private       |
| E2   | M   | 30  | Eritrea           | 21                       | Temporarily admitted refugee (F)   | 1 year and a half    | SO                               | Employed (factory)                                                      | No              | Private       |
| E3   | F   | 29  | Eritrea           | 22                       | Refugee (B)                        | 1 year and 8 months  | SO                               | Vocational training (nursing assistant)                                 | No              | Private       |
| E4   | M   | 30  | Eritrea           | 21                       | Temporarily admitted refugee (F)   | 1 year and 4 months  | SO                               | Vocational training (mechanic)                                          | Yes             | Private       |
| E5   | M   | 24  | Eritrea           | 17                       | Temporarily admitted refugee (F)   | 9 months             | BS                               | Vocational training (salesperson)                                       | No              | Private       |
| E6   | M   | 29  | Eritrea           | 20                       | Temporarily admitted refugee (F)   | 9 months             | ZH                               | Employed (old age home) after vocational training                       | No              | Private       |
| E7   | F   | 28  | Eritrea           | 23                       | Refugee (B)                        | 2 years              | LU and BS                        | Employed (old age home)                                                 | No              | Private       |
| A2   | M   | 28  | Afghanistan       | 23                       | Temporarily admitted foreigner (F) | 2 years and a half   | BL                               | Vocational training (building maintenance and German course instructor) | No              | Private       |
| A3   | M   | 23  | Afghanistan       | 17                       | Temporarily admitted foreigner (F) | 3 years              | BL                               | Vocational training (electrician)                                       | Yes             | Private       |
| A4   | M   | 25  | Afghanistan       | 18                       | Temporarily admitted foreigner (F) | 3 years              | BL                               | Vocational training (hairdresser)                                       | Yes             | Private       |
| A5   | M   | 26  | Afghanistan       | 21                       | Temporarily admitted refugee (F)   | 3 years              | BL                               | Employed (cook-assistant)                                               | No              | Private       |
| E8   | M   | 23  | Eritrea           | 18                       | Temporarily admitted refugee (F)   | 1 year and a half    | BS                               | Vocational training (cook)                                              | No              | Asylum center |
| S1   | M   | 22  | Syria             | 17                       | Temporarily admitted foreigner (F) | 1 year               | SO                               | Vocational training (cook)                                              | No              | Private       |

<sup>8</sup> BL=Basel-Land, BS=Basel-Stadt, LU=Lucerne, SO=Solothurn, ZH=Zürich.

### 2.2.2. Resources for integration

#### *Institutional resources*

In general all interviewees recognize the effectiveness and importance of the welfare payments at the beginning of their asylum procedure. The Canton of residence pays for housing, health insurance and gives the asylum seekers around 380 francs per month for all the rest. Due to the high living costs this amount allows a very modest standard of life and restricts mobility. Accommodation is granted in asylum centers where people share the sleeping room with others as well as kitchen and bathroom. The interviewees consider these reception conditions acceptable for the beginning, but all of them clearly wanted to become independent as soon as possible. They did not pretend more financial support, but more chances to start a new life.

As a matter of fact, 11 respondents affirm that integration measures alone were not sufficient and they had to find by themselves paths of inclusion. Instead, 4 respondents had a positive experience: advices and support received by the public institutions were sufficient to start a new life. Many factors, however, and their combination contribute to different outcomes. Three aspects are mentioned as the most relevant:

- type of permit;
- Canton or commune of residence;
- age.

As for the legal status, being asylum seeker (N-permit) implies a condition of uncertainty, while the asylum application is processed. The duration of this time can be very different (Table1). Afghans had the longest waiting time. The permit N represents an obstacle to integration. In many Cantons like Basel-Land or Solothurn, asylum seekers are not always entitled to integration measures. The Canton Basel-Stadt is an exception, because also asylum seekers can attend German courses paid by the public institutions.

*“At first when I still had N-permit I could not attend German courses. I lived in an asylum center for 1 year and 4 months. It was run by a company: ORS. I was not happy that I could not attend courses. But I thought that it would last only for a short time.” (S1)*

There are also disparities among communes of the same Canton and in general between cities and small villages:

*“The city Zürich paid me a good German course already before I had got the permit. There are many differences among the communes in the Canton. Some of them help in the integration and others are not so good. In the city Zürich you have better chances.” (E6)*

One of the respondents was underage and could not enjoy his right to education:

*“I waited 3 years for the permit. I attended German courses, but my commune did not want to pay for me the IBK (School for Integration and Professional Choice)<sup>9</sup>. The adviser of a civil society organization helped me a lot and in the end we discovered that the Canton should support me, because I was underage. It is a pity: in the end I had to wait for two years before I could go to school. A young man arrives to Switzerland. If he goes to school he can integrate with the people and the different religions. You know that this teenager will not go back to his country: there is war. Why should he wait for three years before going to school? If he remains at home, he remains with his experiences from the war, perhaps he is an analphabet and he could do bad things...” (A3)*

Some of the interviewees were aware that a vocational training is very important to access the labor market, but due to their age (over 20) they were pressed by their commune to find a job. They criticize for-profit companies in charge of integration:

*“ABS did not want to pay the Red Cross course, which is a good starting point to find a job in old age homes. They put you under pressure. They paid the German courses, but after three months they asked me why I was not able to speak well. I do not say that they should not put people under pressure, but they could speak in another way to motivate you... The man in charge of my case even told me bad words. They absolutely wanted that I find a job without any vocational training.” (C1)*

The F-permit represents an obstacle for integration into labor market and access to housing, because this document contains the word “temporarily” and many employers or house owners do not consider it enough stable. The support given by the institutions is often considered not sufficient when it comes to further steps towards social inclusion. Individual educational and occupational guidance would be necessary, but the staff of the social services has little time and sometimes lack competence.

*“The money was enough for me: it was a help I received without working. I got no help in finding a job or housing. Moreover I had F permit. The people do not understand what F means. I found a room in another commune and I moved there. But when I found a job, the commune did not want to give me the work permit because of F.” (E6)*

*“The support of the social worker was not good: at beginning he had no time to translate in English the letters I received.” (A5)*

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.sba-basel.ch/index.php/92.html>. This school is for young people who are 16 to 20 years old and could not attend the compulsory education in Switzerland. It offers courses of German and other subjects in preparation to vocational training.



The four interviewees who expressed their satisfaction about the public support for integration present particular favorable characteristics. Two of them were underage when they arrived and both were assigned to Canton Basel-Stadt, which invests more in the education of young refugees. The other two were recognized as refugees obtaining B-permit, which entitled them to a wider range of rights. They live in Canton Solothurn.

*“I had luck, because I received the permit F refugee after only 9 months and I was assigned to Basel-Stadt. Here I could immediately attend an integration school IBK, also because I was 17. I was also accompanied by a social adviser of the commune.” (E5)*

All interviewees now live in private rooms or apartments, sometimes sharing the accommodation with another person. E8 is the only one who still lives in an asylum center with other young RE and TA. While the cities usually give better opportunities for education and work, as regards housing they are more exclusive because renting a room is very expensive.

### ***Personal and relational resources***

Considering the personal resources of the interviewees we can refer to Amartya Sen’s capabilities approach. According to it “functionings” are the set of states of being and doing acquired by a person and represent the current and actual dimension of a person’s life. “Capabilities” are potential combinations of functionings a person is able to realize freely; they represent the free potentialities of a person’s being and living, the effective freedom of an individual to choose between different functioning combinations - between different kinds of life - that the person has reason to value (Sen, 1989: 44). According to Sen the real well-being of a person, the social quality of his life depends on both the acquired functionings and the capabilities the person has.

In the case of young RE and TA, the experience of escaping and living now in completely different context, culture and life conditions represents first of all a massive reduction of their capabilities. Starting from their acquired functionings, their potential free choices are quite limited. Nevertheless, they are able to actively create new functionings combinations (capabilities).

**Table 2: Main personal resources of the interviewees at their arrival to Switzerland**

| Case | Educational level reached before coming to Switzerland                                                                                 | Work experiences before coming to Switzerland                                                              | Other personal skills, qualities, attitudes                                                |
|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| C1   | Upper secondary degree in Congo. Attended university (law) for two years without completing it                                         | No                                                                                                         | Courage, motivation, religious faith, self-confidence, to have goals, optimism             |
| A1   | Four years primary school in Afghanistan                                                                                               | Work as mechanic in Afghanistan<br>Work in Iran, Turkey, Greece                                            | Openness, Muslim religion is not an obstacle                                               |
| E1   | Junior secondary degree (also English) in Eritrea                                                                                      | Work as cook assistant in Libya (Arabic)                                                                   | Sport talent, adaptability, courage, patience, flexibility, religious faith                |
| E2   | Upper secondary degree in Eritrea. Last year in military camp, first aid course (also English)                                         | Work in family farm in Eritrea, in a kitchen and at a building site in Sudan (Arabic)                      | Ability to communicate, openness, positive thinking, hope to improve, religious faith      |
| E3   | Upper secondary degree in Eritrea (Italian high school, also English and French)                                                       | Voluntary work in a hospital and among street children. Military service (3 years and a half) in Eritrea   | Religious faith, family education and love                                                 |
| E4   | Upper secondary degree in Eritrea (also English)                                                                                       | Work in Sudan (mechanic)                                                                                   | Will to integrate, motivation to learn the language, the culture, and the people, openness |
| E5   | Junior secondary degree in Eritrea (also English)                                                                                      | Work in Sudan (factory)                                                                                    | Motivation, flexibility, openness towards other cultures and religions                     |
| E6   | Junior secondary degree in Eritrea (also English)                                                                                      | Work experiences: farmer, brick layer, house painter.                                                      | Religious faith, will, self-reliance, motivation                                           |
| E7   | Tertiary degree: mathematics teacher in Eritrea                                                                                        | Military service                                                                                           | Motivation, interest in learning, patience, religious faith                                |
| A2   | Primary school in Iran. Later English and French courses                                                                               | After primary school, work: farmer, brick layer, plasterer...                                              | Ability to work hard, discipline, flexibility, endurance                                   |
| A3   | No school in Afghanistan                                                                                                               | As a child or boy some work in Afghanistan and Iran                                                        | Desire to learn in the school, need to overcome the past                                   |
| A4   | No school in Afghanistan (only one year Coran school) and in Iran. 3 years junior secondary school in Greece (also English and French) | Work in farm in Iran since the age of 10, many work experiences. Work experience as hair dresser in Greece | Cleverness, great capacity to establish relations, solidarity, empathy                     |
| A5   | Upper secondary degree and then police high school in Afghanistan (also English)                                                       | Work as a policeman for a few months in Afghanistan. Job in Greece                                         | Openness, interest for sport, capacity to establish relations                              |
| E8   | Junior secondary degree in Eritrea (also English)                                                                                      | No work experience                                                                                         | Religious faith, moral values                                                              |
| S1   | Junior secondary degree in Syria (also English)                                                                                        | One year work experience in Turkey                                                                         | Patience, adaptability, endurance, religious faith                                         |

As regard educational attainment in the home or transit countries, we have a quite variegated panorama among the 15 interviewees. Two of them completed tertiary education (E7 and A5). All other Eritreans completed either junior or upper secondary education (10<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> class) as well as S1. C1 attended university for two years but could not reach a degree. One Afghan was illiterate and the others attended school only for a few years.

Many Eritreans have a similar educational level, because during the last year of upper secondary education they are forcibly recruited into the army. Only a few people are allowed by the regime to access further education.

In the majority of the cases the journey from the home country to Switzerland was characterized by stop-overs in different transit countries. Education and work experiences were gathered in many cases “on the way”.

Except two cases all the others had quite manifold work experiences at home or in the transit countries, where it was often necessary to earn money in order to survive and to finance the continuation of the journey to Europe. They also learned different languages and the Latin alphabet, necessary to apprehend German.

Formal education attained before arriving in Switzerland could not be directly used to start a new life. Tertiary degrees owned by E7 and A5 were not recognized in Switzerland and they had to start something completely new. E7 works in an old age home and is waiting to start a vocational training in the health sector and A5 is employed as cook assistant. Those owing an upper secondary degree from Eritrea do not access University in Switzerland and could not afford the costs:

*“I would have liked to go to university, but the social worker explained me that now I was a refugee and I could forget it. I said: ok. I tried to learn the language and some work in the employment program.” (E4)*

*“Switzerland does not accept your degrees or professional experience. I had to start from zero. My will to integrate helped me. You have to want it.” (E6)*

Yet, many interviewees look positively at the education and work experiences attained before arriving in Switzerland, because they consider them personal resources that can be applied in the new situation. Education implies having learned how to study, while working experiences are very useful for vocational training. Many of the respondents are successful in the practical part of the training, while the theoretical is more difficult due to the language.

*“My education helped me in Switzerland because I had already an idea how I can organize myself. The system is different, but I could compare and learn. I am good in the German grammar, because I studied French and a little English at home.” (C1)*

*“As a boy I had to work. These work experiences also help me here. I can repair things. This is good for my vocational training in building maintenance.” (A2)*

The past life is considered at the same time a burden or a source of knowledge and wisdom, which helps to live the present situation. The experience of being forced to leave is a deep wound, but also a sort of pushing force that compels the person to look always ahead, because it is impossible to go back. They have started a one-way journey and integration into the host society is its necessary continuation.

*“In Greece I have known a lot of people. I was young and I learned many things about new cultures and work. When I arrived I understood immediately what to do: learn the language... When it was very difficult at the beginning, I called my mother and she told me: ‘You went away not because Europe is nice and open, but because we had a problem here. You have no chance to come back, you have to be patient.’ I also thought I cannot go back... I wanted a normal life, without stress. So I tried to be patient.” (A1)*

*“In Eritrea in military service and on the way to Europe I learnt to communicate with other people and other cultures. You are alone on the journey: you need contacts. Positive thinking is very important in the life. You have to look ahead, not to think about the past and remember. Today is better than yesterday.” (E2)*

Asked about the personal attitudes that helped them to integrate, the respondents mentioned above all: patience and endurance, motivation to reach the own goals, openness to new cultures and mentalities, flexibility and adaptability, desire to learn, courage, hope.

*“I am patient. This helped me in the integration. When you look for an apprenticeship, you have to accept whatever comes: positive or negative answers. Most of them are negative. Many people resign. They say: I wrote 10, 20, 50 applications and they were all negative, now I give up. Yet if you are still patient, you send applications again and again... and in the end you surely receive something.” (S1)*

*“I am friendly with everybody. My colleagues love me. They are all Muslims and I am Christian, but I tell them some words in Arabic or in Turkish... It is almost like a family. A Turkish colleague told me: after the apprenticeship you will remain here to work with us. I will speak with the boss... In the difficulties you have to go on. You have to fight. Life is fighting.” (E5)*

Almost all Christians (9) mentioned religious faith as a fundamental resource to attain the own goals, because it gives hope, courage and self-reliance. Among the other interviewees, who were all Muslims (6), 2 did not speak about religion, 1 said religious faith was a support in the integration, and 3 affirmed that although Islamic religion and mentality are very different from the Swiss culture, they were not an obstacle for their integration.

*“I am Muslim, but I live here normally as all other people. I am open for everything. I listen to music. I make everything. They have a good life here, very peaceful. I like this and I do not want more...” (A1)*

Also traumas and very painful experiences can give raise to amazing examples of resilience, as in the case of E1, who is now a successful athlete and is attending vocational training with very good results, or in the case of A3, who never went to school and in Switzerland learnt to write in German

and in his mother language and is now attending a professional formation to become electrician, although he is still tormented by post-traumatic disturbs.

*“Your effort is very important, you need hope, because you are alone and perhaps you have not forgotten your journey, you had traumas you have to overcome. You could lose your work because of traumas. I had a difficult journey, I lost my brother. You cannot forget, but the life always goes on. Each person has the own time. I cannot think all the time: shit, my brother died on the journey. My brother would not be happy, if he were here. I have to fight for my brother. He is happy that I do something. You have always to look forwards.” (E1)*

*“Now I am doing a vocational training to become electrician. It is difficult because I have never gone to school in Afghanistan. I have to learn, learn, learn... In Afghanistan the Taliban destroy the schools, they compel you to make Ramadan. Ramadan is ok, but a man has to be free to choose. The Taliban come to the village and kill people. I saw many things... People are analphabet and do not understand Coran. Taliban tell them what to do and use religion. Here I have understood many things: to respect people. If you do not go to school, you are blind and the people can tell you to go wherever they want and you go. You cannot always think about your past and become sad. This sadness can make you sick and then you destroy your life. You have to do something. Here the economy is good. If you do not reach anything, you are guilty.” (A3)*

**Table 3: Relational resources of the interviewees**

| Case | Family members in Switzerland | Contacts with the own ethnic community                                               | Contacts with the local population                                                | Contacts with organizations or groups, membership in an association                                 |
|------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.   | No                            | Especially with educated people                                                      | Friends <sup>10</sup> , colleagues, old people in old age home                    | OeSA <sup>11</sup> , church choir                                                                   |
| 2.   | No                            | Not many contacts                                                                    | Swiss and immigrants who speak German: colleagues                                 | OeSA                                                                                                |
| 3.   | Aunt                          | Some friends                                                                         | Swiss people and migrants' children born in Switzerland                           | Sport club, church choir, International Youth Centre "Scalabrini" <sup>12</sup>                     |
| 4.   | Brother, wife, daughter       | At the beginning a few people                                                        | Swiss people and foreigners born in Switzerland                                   | International Youth Centre "Scalabrini", volunteer firemen, Eritrean church                         |
| 5.   | Four sisters and two nieces   | Not many contacts                                                                    | Old people in the old age home, Italian family living in Switzerland, colleagues  | International Youth Centre "Scalabrini"                                                             |
| 6.   | Brother, wife, 3 sons         | Only people of the Eritrean church                                                   | Language teachers, Swiss friends                                                  | International Youth Centre "Scalabrini", Eritrean church                                            |
| 7.   | Brother                       | Not much time to meet people                                                         | Colleagues, friends                                                               | International Youth Centre "Scalabrini", Swiss parish in Basel                                      |
| 8.   | No                            | Many contacts                                                                        | Many contacts                                                                     | Swiss parish in Zürich, Eritrean church                                                             |
| 9.   | Husband, daughter             | A few contacts                                                                       | Many contacts: parish people, women with children in the park                     | Swiss parish in Basel                                                                               |
| 10.  | No                            | Many contacts, friends                                                               | Many contacts, friends                                                            | OeSA and Planet 13 <sup>13</sup> , Elim open Doors <sup>14</sup>                                    |
| 11.  | No                            | A very good friend, with whom he arrived to Switzerland. Many friends (young people) | Swiss university students, legal adviser, teacher, Catholic priest (adult people) | OeSA                                                                                                |
| 12.  | Wife, brother                 | Friends                                                                              | Boss, friends                                                                     | OeSA, protestant church, sport association                                                          |
| 13.  | Several cousins, brother      | Friends                                                                              | University students, other refugees, German girlfriend                            | OeSA, Elim Open Doors, Offener Hörsaal <sup>15</sup> , sport association, Sur le pont <sup>16</sup> |
| 14.  | One brother and one sister    | Friends                                                                              | Migrants' children of the second generation and some Swiss                        | Sport association, Swiss parish, Eritrean Christian community youth group in the parish             |
| 15.  | Parents, brothers and sisters | Only a few friends                                                                   | A Swiss friend and the vocational training teacher                                | International Youth Centre "Scalabrini"                                                             |

<sup>10</sup> If not specified, Swiss citizens and people with migration background born or grown up in Switzerland.

<sup>11</sup> See footnote 3.

<sup>12</sup> See footnote 4.

<sup>13</sup> <https://planet13.ch/>: the project started with an internet café for poor people and developed to an integration place with cultural initiatives, assistance in job searching, German courses.

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.stadtarbeitelim.ch/index.php/opendoors>: humanitarian organization linked to a protestant independent church.

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.offener-hoersaal.ch/indexen.html#contact>. It is a project inside of an existing student auditing program.

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.surlepont.ch/sport.html>: this association brings together native people, migrants and refugees through different activities.

Considering the presence of family members in Switzerland, 5 respondents are completely alone. Only 1 interviewee lives here with his parents, brothers and sisters. 4 got married in Switzerland and 3 of them have children. 7 have at least one brother or one sister, but they do not live together. E1 has an aunt. 5 interviewees live with family members, while 10 are alone (but A5 has a German girlfriend).

As regard the own ethnic community, 9 respondents point out that they do not have many contacts. In many cases this was a deliberate choice, because they did not want to always speak in the mother language, to waste time going around with friends, or to argue about political problems of the home country (in case of Eritreans).

*“I meet not only Eritrean people, but also others in order to learn German. When I meet Eritreans we only speak about politics and the past. We do not speak about the future, but about the past and then we immediately argue. That is why I do not want to meet Eritreans. I do not say: this is right, this is wrong, but I say: there is a dictator and dictator is always bad. When I speak with Swiss people, I speak about the future. I want to look ahead...” (E4)*

6 interviewees have many friends in the own ethnic community. The friends are usually other young refugees (peer group) with whom the respondents spend their free time or, in the case of Eritreans, the religious Christian community which meets for worship in the own language.

*“I meet Eritrean people in the church. It is good to cultivate our language and culture... But it is important not to be only with Eritreans because you have to learn German. You have to fight and to have patience and courage to know Swiss people.” (E1)*

Almost all interviewees have a lot of contacts with the local population, which includes Swiss citizens and people with migration background born or grown up in Switzerland. Usually they are colleagues at the working place or at school, friends met in the parishes, in sport clubs, in humanitarian associations. Some of the respondents mention single adult persons, who have played a particularly important role of support to their integration: teachers, social assistants, legal advisers, private persons, mentors.

### **2.2.3. How young RE and TA make use of their resources**

After considering the institutional, personal and relational resources (functionings) of the 15 interviewees, this paragraph focuses on how, according to the respondents, they were able to actively transform resources into real capabilities, overcoming the obstacles they encountered on their path towards a satisfactory social inclusion.

All interviewees criticize any form of passivity and many express their pride to be independent from the welfare payments. Switzerland offers a lot of opportunities, but one has to make efforts to take chances. The individual choices and initiative are very important. Creativity and tenacity are necessary to bypass barriers which seem at first insuperable. This implies the ability to make use not only of the personal, but also of the relational resources (social capital) they have at disposal. Moreover the interviewees demonstrate their ability to take advantage of the networks of civil society associations, which can supplement the state integration measures.

One strategy against inactivity in the phase of the asylum procedure (N-permit) is attending German courses offered gratis by humanitarian organizations, to know people who speak the language, and to be engaged in voluntary work.

*“Of course you cannot attend the normal school, but you have to do something. I came to OeSA and I worked as a volunteer. They told me about a gratis German course. Then I found another gratis German course. It was organized by volunteers. Than another one very cheap... I have known people with whom I spoke German. I thought it is better to learn now before I get the permit and I start to work. Now I have time. With the permit F I found the job and I went to the commune and told that from now on I do not need welfare payments any longer...” (A1)*

E7 and her husband have learned that in Switzerland there are other ways to finance the own education: *“Basel-Stadt did not pay for my German courses because my husband was already independent from welfare payments. Yet the courses were expensive and we could not afford them. Then we asked a private foundation for financial support and we got it. I looked by myself for internship or job.” (E7)*

A3 had to fight to obtain a vocational training, although he was underage:

*“You have to ask, otherwise you do not obtain anything. I wanted to go to school and I asked all the time because at first my Canton did not want to pay for my training.” (A3)*

C1 uses a metaphor: *“They give you the key, but you have to use it by yourself. You have to open the door by yourself... I have learnt: you can always try. In my home country I had never learnt it. Papa, mama they will do it for me... Now I have learnt: you can always try. You have to do everything by yourself... I am motivated. I want to do something. I could also sit all day... Always try, always try and pray a lot. If you do not believe in yourself, you cannot do it. In the life it is like that. Now I have become strong.” (C1)*

E1 adopted another strategy, observing how important associations are in Switzerland to get in contact with others and participate to social life.



*“I wanted to attend a vocational training, but to find a place for the apprenticeship is difficult at the beginning, because you have to know the language and the people. I thought I have to know Swiss people and decided to find an association. I joined a sport club.” (E1)*

The interviewees point out the necessity to be active in asking, overcoming fear and shyness.

*“I called a windows technique factory and I obtained by myself three months internship. The last week of the internship I asked if I could be employed. The boss told me: you can remain, you work well... You cannot wait; you have to fight, to put questions, to send applications for job.” (E2)*

Some of the older interviewees followed the strategy to find a job and then to attend a professional education in the same field, sometimes paying by themselves and sometimes obtaining the financial support from their employer.

*“My boss told me that I should make a vocational training to work full time in the restaurant. I answered that the school is expensive and the boss decided to pay it for me next year. He told me: we have known you for one year and you are good. We give you a chance.” (A1)*

#### 2.2.4. The role played by the relations with local population

Considering the family members, 10 respondents affirmed that these relationships were not important for social inclusion, either because they do not have relatives in Switzerland (5 interviewees) or because these relatives are also at a very early stage of their integration and cannot help (5): *“My brother and my sister came before me. At the beginning they helped me, but they are new here too. They do not know. It is better to know Swiss people or people born here, in order to learn the language. Family helps you personally, but for the profession you need people from here.”* (E8) In the other cases family members are an emotional support or a source of advices, which can be important to cope with the difficulties. *“My family encouraged me when I was looking for an apprenticeship. They told me: you have to do something.”* (S1)

The relations with the own ethnic community opened the way to find an apartment in 5 cases. It is easier to get a room which was already occupied by a person of the same nationality, who can be mediator with the house owner, reducing prejudices and fears. Nobody was supported by fellow countrymen in finding a job. This is due to the fact that these communities are mainly formed by RE and TA arrived in recent times. They have not established ethnic businesses yet and are all still in a similar condition of initial integration. Friends from the same country are an important source of emotional support and help to cultivate the own culture and faith. In some cases they can give advices and information.

The answers given by the respondents show that the majority of them made a lot of efforts to create a wide network of contacts with the local population, which is composed by Swiss people and people with migration background settled in Switzerland. They are aware of the necessity to cultivate these relationships for their integration.

Civil society organizations working in favor of refugees, play a very important role in the social inclusion of RE and TA. They are places where they can make first experiences of work, learn the language and have precious contacts.

*“I attend the project Offener Hörsaal organized by university students and supported by professors. Refugees can take part to lectures at the University of Basel... I am active in the project Sur le pont: I am involved in the sport activities and I translate for other Afghans, I help in the preparations of the festivals. At the beginning I knew a student at OeSA. He helped me for German language and then through him I knew many other students.”* (A5)

*“I made a lot of efforts to learn the language, to establish contacts with people. I worked in a special project: “Gemeinsam Café” (café together). It was like an internship. There I have known*

*many people and asked all the time for information about jobs or internships in the health sector. A person knew the boss of an old age home and called him. So I got the position.” (E7)*

Sport clubs and religious institutions (parishes) are also places where the respondents had the possibility to establish precious relations.

*“The people you know are like a network. I cannot see everything. But if I tell someone that I would like to work, these relations help. I met my future boss at a Christmas party in a protestant church and she invited me to do a trial in her hair-dresser shop. I could not start the vocational training because of the N permit. A customer was the wife of a politician and wrote a letter to SEM asking why I had to wait so long for a permit.” (A4)*

*“In the sport club I told my trainer that I wanted to do an apprenticeship in logistics. He was boss at Nestlè and he took me to a store. I made a trial week and then he gave me the chance to attend a pre-apprenticeship of one year. Now I attend the full vocational training.” (E1)*

Single adult people play the role of mentors. Sometimes this is their official task, but there are also cases of private people or language teachers who engage themselves for the young RE and TA.

*“Fortunately my Swiss teacher in IBK helped me a lot to find an apprenticeship. She is like my mother! I am lucky to have her. Thanks to her I could integrate a little. She is still helping me, although I am not any longer in the school... The teacher also told me about a sport association to play basketball. Now I have many friends in my basketball team.” (E8)*

Employers who recognize the skills of young RE and TA become very important points of reference for them and engage themselves for their integration.

*“My boss believes in me and encourages me. I can always ask, she says: There are no stupid questions” (C1)*

For young people without family the possibility to have Swiss friends or establish relations can be of great support:

*“When you are hopeless, you are able to do everything in order to forget your sufferings. The internship in the old age home helped me. Normally I would not have done such a work. Yet when I saw these old people who were so curious to know me, with my brown skin... they accepted me very well, I got the courage to go on. They helped me to overcome the wound, the emptiness I felt inside. You cannot go home anymore!” (E3)*

*“Many friends and my girlfriend support me a lot. I have built a new family. At the beginning I thought: when the war is over, I will go back, also when everything is ok in Switzerland. But the situation has not improved. I have to think about my life, to look ahead.” (A5)*

## 2.3. Primary sources: semi-structured qualitative interviews with integration actors

### 2.3.1. Staff member of a civil society organization

In the city of Basel (Canton Basel-Stadt) the Christian Churches have established an Ecumenical Socio-pastoral Service for Asylum Seekers (OeSA) since 1995. The OeSA staff members work inside of and next to a *Reception and Processing Center* (RPC) run by SEM. OeSA staff members and volunteers offer socio-psychological counselling, child care inside of the RPC, distribution of clothes and shoes, and run a coffee bar for asylum seekers. Among the volunteers there are also young RE and TA. OeSA has started the project “First Step”: it is sponsored by a foundation and is aiming at supporting young people to try the entry test for the professional schools and to find an accommodation after receiving the permit. Many young people could make their first work experiences in the OeSA coffee bar.

Astrid Geistert has been the head of OeSA since 2012, but she has been working in the asylum sector since 26 years. Concerning cantonal integration measures she affirms: *“They are not enough, otherwise we would not have so many young people who come to us asking for help.”* She notices disparities of treatment according to the Cantons and the types of permit. Moreover: *“In the communes the social services have no specific knowledge to help RE and TA and are not informed about all school and educational possibilities. In the small communes they accompany a few RE and TA and have no experience. The situation in the cities is better. There are more initiatives and more knowledge. There is also a different political attitude towards refugees”.* OeSA staff accompanies the young people individually and try to find solutions according to their skills and plans. They help them to find internships, apprenticeships, housing: *“This work takes a lot of time and the social services are not always able to do it”.*

As regard RE’s and TA’s resources, Geistert points out: *“The younger people learn the language more quickly and they are very interested in education. In some cases education was the pull factor to come to Switzerland. Educational level is important. There are Eritreans who studied at the University at home and now are continuing here. Those who are more successful have particular characteristics: work experience, good health. They are not blocked by homesickness or worries about the situation of the family in the home country. They have individual skills: being ambitious, capacity to learn and make plans. There are a lot of differences and this is normal for human beings. They are not economic migrants. All have the right to be welcomed and be integrated, although they are not fit for the economy. Yet we have already seen many successful cases. And when I look at these young people: they are precious members of our society. They are often powerful; otherwise they would not have gone so far.”*

According to Geistert young RE and TA have contacts above all with their ethnic community only at the beginning, but by the time, when they start to learn the language, they are able to establish a wide social network within the local population: *“Language is the key. If they speak, you can send them also to employers, who are not social institutions and expect efficiency. Relationships with the local population and organizations are very important for integration. Nowadays there are many more projects also in Church organizations. For example mentors who accompany the young people. When in 2015 so many refugees came to Europe, many people in several countries committed themselves and were open towards them. New projects started in Basel also thanks to Swiss young people. This is good for both: for the native young people and for refugees. They learn from each other. Only the encounter can change you because you see that the other wants the same things you are looking for: work, peace, safety, family, joy, a meaningful life. We learn to be creative: either we open ourselves and see what we can do, or we close ourselves. Yet the people are here.”*

### **2.3.2. Staff member of the office for social services in a commune**

Blerim Ahmeti is social adviser in the office in charge for welfare benefits of the social services in the commune Münchenstein<sup>17</sup> (Canton Basel-Land, 12,160 inhabitants, 26.2% foreign citizens). The main task of this office is to support people in need (Swiss and immigrants) covering basic needs according to the law, and to help them to regain their independency from welfare payments. As regards people entitled to international protection: *“RE in need receive the same amount of money as Swiss citizens, while TA receive only a little more than the half. It is a big difference. Basic needs are the first issue and integration the second one. The language proficiency has to be improved in order to make integration possible. German courses are the first step. In asylum centers people with N-permit can attend courses, but their individual necessities are not considered. After summer we will organize a school in our building. It is cheaper and they know already the place. We do not know whether this project will be successful, in terms of language proficiency.”*

Ahmeti confirms the considerations by Geisen (2016: 113-114): social services are developing new strategies to accelerate the integration process already in the phase of the asylum procedure, taking into consideration those groups of asylum seekers that are likely to receive a positive answer to their asylum application (see point 2.1.2.). In Münchenstein more than 30% of people dependent on welfare payments are RE. This shows the necessity to invest more in their integration.

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<sup>17</sup> [http://www.muenchenstein.ch/de/polver/verwaltung/personenregister/welcome.php?personen\\_id=25032](http://www.muenchenstein.ch/de/polver/verwaltung/personenregister/welcome.php?personen_id=25032), (accessed: June 14 2017).

Ahmeti affirms: *“For the young people between 16 and 25 this attitude is very important: they need prospect. There are projects for young people that can be useful also for RE and TA: individual occupational counselling and the possibility to make vocational training. Not all RE and TA receive a support for vocational training. Each person is different and you have to consider the individual situation... It is worth investing in education because in some years the person can work and become independent. There are also schools (IBK, [Link to profession](#)<sup>18</sup>) for this age group.”*

Considering personal and relational resources of RE and TA, Ahmeti says: *“There are also many people that want to realize something in life, people with plans for the future. The younger people show more motivation and commitment, because they see that in Switzerland they can reach a lot in life, if they work hard. They know people who live here. They are supported by teachers or volunteers. In the short term you have to invest more in this group, but in the long run they are those with more prospects. They know more what they want.”*

According to Ahmeti contacts with the local population are important *“in order to know what you can reach, if you commit yourself. You have good examples. The ethnic community is positive because they feel more comfortable with fellow countrymen, but they need to meet also other people.”*

The social services have a new project in cooperation with the office for integration: people that are already integrated accompany their fellow countrymen and explain many aspects of the life in Münchenstein. There is a good cooperation with civil society organizations. *“RE and TA are very well informed about places where they can be helped. Social services have also an integration program in which the employers are partners. There are internships for people that receive welfare payments in order to see if they can work. The most important actors in integration are RE and TA themselves, but they have not everything in their hands. All actors are important. Employers play a big role, because they give them the chance.”*

### **2.3.3. Employers**

Among integration actors employers play a fundamental role. They are those who can decide to *“give a chance”* to young RE and TA. This is particularly important if we consider the access not only to the labor market, but also to vocational training. In Switzerland the opportunity to attend professional education often depends on the possibility to find a working place in a firm. The employer is often also the person in charge of training the young people. Employers can even decide to financially support the professional education of the own employees.

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<sup>18</sup> *Link zum Beruf:* <https://www.agsbs.ch/ausbildung/weiterbildung/link-zum-beruf>, (accessed: June 14 2017).

4 of the 15 interviewed RE and TA are employed or attend vocational training in old age homes. Here below I present the results of two interviews with Sascha Gelbhaus<sup>19</sup>, manager director of *Läbesgarte*<sup>20</sup> in Biberist (Canton Solothurn), and Jean-Marie Schmidt, care and assistance director in *Marienhaus*<sup>21</sup> (retirement home in Basel).

Both interviewees clearly explain the not easy impact of young RE and TA with the working activity. In some cases, the young people are employed in agreement with the social services of the communes of residence or on request of humanitarian organizations. In other cases, the employees themselves have sent an application. The decision to employ them is linked to the socially oriented approach of both institutions. Usually they start with an internship, to evaluate their capacity to work and then there is the possibility of a normal employment contract or vocational training. The biggest problems are language proficiency and lack of knowledge of the work system in Switzerland: *“Diversity is huge: refugees come from countries with other mentalities. Switzerland goes more and more in the direction of perfection. People come from countries that are very different...”* (Gelbhaus), *“The person had started a vocational training, but she had to stop because of the language. The practical part was good, but she did not understand the theoretical part. Now she is still in the internship in our home because she is a good worker.”* (Schmidt)

According to Gelbhaus those who are successful have their own resources: *“They are ready to adapt themselves to all works, to come down and forget what they were at home, as I did when I came to Switzerland. The past is only a burden. People have education and roots, but readiness to adapt is important. To cross the Mediterranean is not the solution of the problem yet. The problems start just after the arrival. The way across the Mediterranean is an act of strength; integration is a work of precision.”*

For both interviewees motivation and the desire to catch the chance to work are the most important resources of the young RE and TA who are successful in integration. Employers are ready to help, if they see these attitudes.

According to Gelbhaus bureaucratic obstacles in the employment of TA imply additional effort for the employer and this is against integration. Schmidt on the other side describes the very good collaboration with the social worker who is accompanying a young RE in her internship in *Marienhaus*.

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<sup>19</sup> The interview with Gelbhaus was particularly interesting because he was himself a refugee escaped from Bosnia to Switzerland in the 1990s.

<sup>20</sup> [http://www.laebesgarte.ch/content/home/index\\_ger.html](http://www.laebesgarte.ch/content/home/index_ger.html), (accessed: June 10 2017).

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.marienhaus.ch/home/1/>, (accessed: June 10 2017).

*“Personal performance is the most important thing”* says Gelbhaus, who was ready to assume extra work to employ young RE and TA. Schmidt has a similar attitude: *“I do not see the woman as a burden; we offer her a chance and await motivation. Yet we also support her. The goal is that she can become independent. We will accept motivated people also in the future.”*



### 3. PART III: Conclusions

#### 3.1. Confirmation and correction of proposed hypotheses

**Hypothesis 1:** *Welfare benefits and integration programs offered by the public institutions to promote young RE's and TA's integration are necessary, but not sufficient for a successful process of social inclusion.*

Revision of secondary sources confirmed that welfare benefits and public measures for integration are essential for RE and TA in Switzerland. They allow them to lead a safe life, covering their basic needs such as food, housing, and health insurance. Yet these institutional resources are not sufficient for a satisfactory social inclusion of RE and TA in general, comprising the specific group of those arrived in Switzerland aged between 16 and 25. A trend to social exclusion is showed by the high number of RE and TA that remain dependent on the welfare payments after ten years of sojourn in Switzerland.

The interviews with 15 young RE and TA who have reached a satisfactory level of social inclusion also confirm hypothesis 1. The interviewees were grateful for the material support received, but they desired to start a new and independent life in Switzerland. Yet, they encountered high structural obstacles on their paths towards integration. In some cases young people had to wait 1-2 years before accessing language courses or vocational training. Various types of permit and different regulations according to the Canton or even the commune of residence led to disparities of treatment. More individual and personalized guidance would be necessary and, considering RE and TA of the age group 16-25, integration measures should be more oriented to vocational training.

Interviews with integration actors (civil society, public institution, employers) support hypothesis 1. Humanitarian organizations compensate the lack of time, competence in the field of asylum, and individual counselling of some social services in the communes. This is possible thanks to voluntary work and creative projects. Also social services are aware that there are still gaps in RE's and TA's integration. Support to language proficiency and education has to be implemented at an earlier stage. The employers consider themselves also supplementary integration actors, because they consciously accept to assume additional work to accompany young RE and TA in their first work experience in collaboration with social services and humanitarian organizations.

**Hypothesis 2:** *Young RE and TA are not only passive objects of social assistance, but they also make use of their personal and relational resources in order to reach an adequate social inclusion.*

The review of the scientific literature shows that RE and TA try to make use of their personal and relational resources in order to reach an adequate social inclusion. A majority is willing to learn the language and attain the vocational training necessary to access the labor market. Young RE and TA are aware of the crucial role played by formally recognized qualifications for their structural integration. Facing high obstacles in reaching this goal, the outcomes are quite different. Those who are more successful appear to be especially active and creative in front of the integration difficulties. In particular they try to widen their social capital through relations with family members, the ethnic community, and the local population.

The interviews with RE and TA confirm the hypothesis 2 showing that those who have reached a satisfactory level of social inclusion had to actively mobilize their personal and relational resources to find creative strategies of integration, overcoming structural barriers, which could easily relegate the young people into social exclusion. The young people were very active in transforming their functionings into capabilities in the new context.

All interviewed integration actors recognize that the majority of young RE and TA show high motivation, desire to learn and to reach something in life, tenacity in pursuing clear plans. Young age is a positive resource. Of course there is a wide range of situations and conditions, due to the personal characteristics, biographies, and skills. Education and work experiences can be important resources, but adaptability and personal effort are crucial to start a new life. Those who are more successful show these characteristics.

**Hypothesis 3:** *Relationships with the local population play a decisive role in their process of social inclusion.*

Secondary sources point out that the lack of social capital is one of the obstacles in accessing the labor market for RE and TA. On the contrary those who can count on a relational network have more chances. Young RE and TA arrived at the age between 16 and 25 are usually without family. For them it is essential to establish contacts with adults and the peer group belonging to the local population in order to compensate the lack of other relations. Those who are more active in widening their social capital seem to be also more successful in their integration.

According to the interviewed RE and TA, relations with the local population played a decisive role in their process of social inclusion. Relations with the local population are more important for the structural integration than relations with family members and the ethnic community, composed by people that are at the initial stage of integration. The interviewees affirm that they were very active in looking for new relationships, in asking for help, in catching the opportunities. In general the

individual effort seems to be the most important factor for their integration, according to the interviewees.

The interviewed social worker and employers tend to give more importance to the personal performance than to the social capital of RE and TA in the process of social inclusion. Yet they recognize the necessity of a network of actors supporting young people in their integration. Young RE and TA have to do their part, but they start from a very disadvantaged position. OeSA head considers networking a fundamental way to promote social inclusion and sees in the relational resources of RE and TA an important premise for their success.

### **3.2. Proposals for policy-makers and further research**

Starting from the results of this research I believe that following issues should be taken into consideration by researchers and policy-makers:

- Current integration measures should be supplemented by individual mentoring programs in order to identify as soon as possible the most appropriate educational paths for young RE and TA, taking into consideration their specific vulnerability and resources;
- The consequences of traumas due to war and persecution need to be more investigated in order to implement effective interventions to foster resilience and to treat eventual psychological disturbs;
- Integration processes of refugee and temporarily admitted women should be more investigated in order to consider their peculiarities linked to gender issues;
- Considering the results of this study, integration clearly appears as a bidirectional process. On one side RE and TA make efforts to familiarize with the local population, on the other side not only public institutions, but also civil society organizations, employers, private individuals commit themselves “to give a chance” to the newcomers. A significant aspect which should be more studied is the impact that these relationships have on the construction of a more inclusive society;
- In the integration process there are “meeting places” that play an important role in fostering mutual encounter and social inclusion. Researchers and policy-makers should pay more attention to the dynamics of this integration “from below”;
- The presence of refugees has to be more and more considered not only a national migration issue, but an appeal to a worldwide political and economic responsibility, so that nobody may be forced to migrate any longer.

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## Annexes

### I. Semi-structured questionnaire for the interviews with young RE and TA

#### a. Introduction

Explain academic purpose

#### b. Personal data

1. Male/Female
2. How old are you?
3. Where are you from?
4. How old were you when you arrived in Switzerland?
5. Which permit do you have now?
6. How long did it take to receive the permit?
7. In which Canton do you live?
8. Do you work or attend a vocational training?
9. Do you receive financial benefits from the Canton or the commune where you live?
10. Do you live in a refugee center or in a private apartment?

#### c. Specific objective 1

*To identify the institutional, personal, and relational resources which have supported the young RE and TA in reaching a satisfactory level of social inclusion in Switzerland.*

11. Thinking about your first years in Switzerland, how did the Canton or commune where you live support you?
12. Thinking about your experience and the experience of other young refugees do you think that the public benefits and integration programs are necessary to reach a satisfactory integration?
13. Thinking about your experience and the experience of other young refugees do you think that this support is sufficient to reach a satisfactory integration?
14. Which educational level had you reached in your home country or in the countries where you lived before arriving in Switzerland?
15. Has this education been helpful to you in Switzerland?
16. Had you worked in your home country or in the countries where you lived before arriving here?
17. Have these working experiences helped you in Switzerland?



18. Could you mention other personal skills, experiences or qualities which helped you to start a new life here?
19. Do you have family members in Switzerland?
20. Do you have friends or contacts among people of your ethnic community here?
21. Do you have friends or contacts among the local population in Switzerland?
22. Are you member of or do you attend any association, group, organization here? Which one?
23. Have family members, friends, or associations helped you to start a new life here?

**d. Specific objective 2**

*To consider how young RE and TA make use of their personal and relational resources in order to reach an adequate social inclusion.*

24. What has given you strength and motivation to overcome difficulties and start a new life in Switzerland?
25. How and to which extent have you made use of your personal resources like education, skills, and work experiences to start a new life here?
26. How and to which extent have you resorted to the help, advice, or support of family members, friends, or associations to start a new life here?

**e. Specific objective 3**

*To analyze the interplay between different kinds of resources in young RE's and TA's processes of social inclusion, in order to evaluate the specific role played by relationships with the local population.*

27. To which extent have your relations with the local population (individuals and associations) helped you to learn the language?
28. To which extent have your relations with the local population helped you to find a job or to have access to vocational training?
29. To which extent have your relations with the local population helped you to find housing?
30. In comparison to the support you received from the public institutions, from your family, and from your ethnic community, how important have been the relations with the local population and associations for your integration?

## **II. Semi-structured questionnaire for the interview with the staff member of a civil society organization**

### **a. Introduction**

Explain academic purpose

### **b. Personal data**

1. Name
2. Position inside of the civil society organization
3. Experience in the work with refugees

### **c. Information about the civil society organization**

4. Name
5. Website
6. Description of the work with refugees

### **d. Specific objective 1**

*To identify the institutional, personal, and relational resources which have supported the young RE and TA in reaching a satisfactory level of social inclusion in Switzerland.*

7. Considering RE and TA arrived in Switzerland aged between 16 and 25, which are the welfare benefits and programs offered by the public institutions to promote their integration? Are there disparities among the different Cantons? Do you think that this support is sufficient?
8. In your experience how is the integration process of this young people? Do they have specific problems in comparison to younger refugees who can attend the regular school, or in comparison to older refugees?
9. Do they have access to vocational training?
10. Which are the personal resources of these young people? Education, work experience, particular personal characteristics, qualities, skills?
11. Are these resources useful to them?
12. Do they usually have friends or contacts among people of their ethnic community here?
13. Do they usually have friends or contacts among the local population (individuals, associations) in Switzerland?
14. Do you think that these relations help them in their integration process?

**e. Specific objective 2**

*To consider how young RE and TA make use of their personal and relational resources in order to reach an adequate social inclusion.*

15. Do you think that these young RE and TA actively make use of their personal and relational resources in order to reach an adequate social inclusion or are they quite passive?
16. Are there many differences among young RE and TA in terms of integration success?
17. Do those who are more successful have particular resources which the others lack?

**f. Specific objective 3**

*To analyze the interplay between different kinds of resources in young RE's and TA's processes of social inclusion, in order to evaluate the specific role played by relationships with the local population.*

18. Has your organization developed special projects to support the integration of young RE and TA who cannot attend the regular school?
19. Do you think that these projects, but also the contacts that the refugees have with the local population in your organization help them in the process of social inclusion?
20. How important are the personal relationships with the local population for young refugees?
21. Which role can civil society organizations play in fostering their integration process?
22. Do you think that the relationship with RE and TA has an impact also on the local population and institutions (individuals, civil society, and public institutions)?

### **III. Semi-structured questionnaire for the interview with a staff member of the office for social services in a commune**

#### **a. Introduction**

Explain academic purpose

#### **b. Personal data**

1. Name
2. Position inside of the social services

#### **c. Information about the social services**

3. Information about the commune and its social services
4. Which tasks has your institution as regard integration of RE and TA?

#### **d. Specific objective 1**

*To identify the institutional, personal, and relational resources which have supported the young RE and TA in reaching a satisfactory level of social inclusion in Switzerland.*

5. Which kind of welfare payments and integration programs are foreseen for asylum seekers with N-permit? Are they allowed to work? Are there limitations in accessing the labor market? Are these regulations uniform at national or cantonal level?
6. When asylum seekers obtain a permit (F or B), how are the regulations as regards welfare payments? Does the age group 16-25 have different standards?
7. Do you finance German courses or vocational training for young RE and TA?
8. Do you support these young people in the job search?
9. Do you support these young people in the search for a private accommodation?
10. Do you think that the commune could do more for the social inclusion of these young people?
11. In your experience how is the integration process of young RE and TA, who cannot attend compulsory education? Do they have specific problems?
12. Which are the personal resources of these young people? Education, work experience, particular personal characteristics, qualities, skills?
13. Are these resources useful to them?
14. In your opinion are ethnic communities a support for the integration of young RE and TA? Should the commune consider them important partners of dialogue?
15. Do you collaborate with civil society organizations working with RE and TA?

**e. Specific objective 2**

*To consider how young RE and TA make use of their personal and relational resources in order to reach an adequate social inclusion.*

16. Are young RE and TA active in the utilization of integration programs and measures?
17. Do they make efforts for their structural integration?
18. Do you have successful examples of integration among young RE and TA?
19. Do these successful young people have special resources of capabilities?

**f. Specific objective 3**

*To analyze the interplay between different kinds of resources in young RE's and TA's processes of social inclusion, in order to evaluate the specific role played by relationships with the local population.*

20. Are the contacts with the local population an important/indispensable supplement to public support to integration?
21. Has the work with RE and TA changed anything in the social services of the commune?
22. Have you developed new projects?
23. Do you promote the contacts between RE/TA and civil society organizations?
24. Do you maintain contacts with employers who could employ RE and TA?
25. Which role do the different actors play in the integration of young RE and TA?

## **IV. Semi-structured questionnaire for the interviews with employers**

### **a. Introduction**

Explain academic purpose.

### **b. Personal data**

1. Name
2. Position inside of the firm

### **c. Information about the firm**

3. Name
4. Website
5. Description of the work
6. Has your firm employed RE or TA arrived in Switzerland aged between 16 and 25?
7. What kind of contract have you signed with them: internship, apprenticeship, work contract?

### **d. Specific objective 1**

*To identify the institutional, personal, and relational resources which have supported the young RE and TA in reaching a satisfactory level of social inclusion in Switzerland.*

8. How did the RE and TA that work with you get in contact with your firm? How did they know about free positions in your firm? Did social services or other organizations provide these contacts?
9. Have you encountered bureaucratic obstacles to employ RE and TA?
10. Which difficulties do RE and TA encounter at work?
11. Which resources do they have? Professional qualification, work experience, other personal skills?
12. Does someone in the firm support or accompany them in the work?

### **e. Specific objective 2**

*To consider how young refugees make use of their personal and relational resources in order to reach an adequate social inclusion.*

13. Do you think that RE and TA are active in their integration process?
14. Are they motivated and interested in the work?
15. Do you see big differences among them?
16. How are their relations with the colleagues and the customers?

**f. Specific objective 3**

*To analyze the interplay between different kinds of resources in young RE's and TA's processes of social inclusion, in order to evaluate the specific role played by relationships with the local population.*

17. Which factors are more important for RE's and TA's integration at the workplace? Their personal performance, the collaboration with the colleagues, the support of the employer?
18. Do you think that the employment of RE and TA has brought anything new in your firm?