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**Article**

## Ukrainian refugees: Nearly half intend to stay in Germany for the longer term

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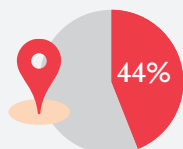
AT A GLANCE

## Ukrainian refugees: Nearly half intend to stay in Germany for the longer term

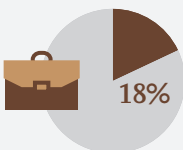
By Herbert Brücker, Andreas Ette, Markus M. Grabka, Yuliya Kosyakova, Wenke Niehues, Nina Rother, C. Katharina Spieß, Sabine Zinn, Martin Bujard, Jean Philippe Décieux, Amrei Maddox, Sophia Schmitz, Silvia Schwanhäuser, Manuel Siegert, and Hans Walter Steinhauer

- Results of the second survey wave of the IAB-BiB/FReDA-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Ukrainian Refugees in Germany study in early 2023
- Increasing share of Ukrainian refugees intend to stay in Germany longer term; around three quarters have found private accommodation
- Around one fifth are employed, but a much higher share aspire to work in the near future; so far, refugees have still been completing integration and language courses
- Only around six out of ten refugee children from three to six years old are in daycare
- Childcare options should be expanded to make it easier for mothers to attend language courses and pursue employment; a quick decision on extending residency rights is also needed

### Nearly half of the Ukrainian refugees who came to Germany intend to stay longer term



intend on **staying in Germany** "forever" or "a couple more years"

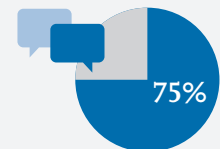


are already employed

Since the beginning of the war in Ukraine in February 2022, over **one million people** have come to Germany.



Selected results of the **second survey** of Ukrainian refugees: **January to March 2023**



are attending a **German course** or have completed one



of three to six year olds are **attending daycare**

Source: IAB-BiB/FReDA-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Ukrainian Refugees in Germany, second wave.

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### FROM THE AUTHORS

*"The results of the second survey of Ukrainian refugees are encouraging. They have recently made significant progress in their societal participation. However, they need to know how and if they will be able to stay in Germany beyond March 2024 so they can plan their lives here."*

— **Markus M. Grabka** —

### MEDIA



**Audio Interview** with Markus M. Grabka (in German)  
[www.diw.de/mediathek](http://www.diw.de/mediathek)

# Ukrainian refugees: Nearly half intend to stay in Germany for the longer term

By Herbert Brücker, Andreas Ette, Markus M. Grabka, Yuliya Kosyakova, Wenke Niehues, Nina Rother, C. Katharina Spieß, Sabine Zinn, Martin Bujard, Jean Philippe Décieux, Amrei Maddox, Sophia Schmitz, Silvia Schwanhäuser, Manuel Siegert, and Hans Walter Steinhauer

## ABSTRACT

Millions of Ukrainians have been displaced by the Russian war on Ukraine, with over one million alone coming to Germany since the beginning of the war. Data from the second survey wave of the IAB-BiB/FReDA-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Ukrainian Refugees in Germany study show that as of the beginning of 2023, an increasing share of Ukrainian refugees plan on staying in Germany for the longer term. Around three quarters have found private accommodation and a similarly large share have already attended or are currently attending German language courses. Eighteen percent of the 18 to 64 year olds are employed; of the rest, over two thirds intend to start working immediately or within the next year. While almost all refugee children and adolescents of school age are attending a general or vocational school in Germany, only six out of ten children between three and six years old are attending daycare. To increase refugees' social participation and, in light of the high share of mothers among them, childcare options should be improved. This would facilitate participation in integration and language courses as well as the path to employment. In addition, it is crucial to quickly decide on the extension of Ukrainian refugees' right of residence, which is currently limited until March 2024, thus making their legal status more certain and planning possible.

The Russian war on Ukraine has caused one of the greatest displacements in the post-war period. Around one million people have fled Ukraine to come to Germany since February 2022. The goal of this study is to investigate the arrival of refugees in Germany and various aspects of their social, economic, and societal participation. Therefore, various dimensions such as the refugees' intention to stay in Germany, German language acquisition, labor market integration, and the living conditions of children and adolescents are analyzed. The data used is from the IAB-BiB/FReDA-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Ukrainian Refugees in Germany study, a joint project of the Institute for Employment Research (*Institut für Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung*, IAB), the Federal Institute for Population Research (*Bundesinstitut für Bevölkerungsforschung*, BiB), the Research Centre of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (*Forschungszentrum des Bundesamtes für Migration und Flüchtlinge*, BAMF-FZ) and the Socio-Economic Panel (*Sozio-oekonomisches Panel*, SOEP) at DIW Berlin. The cooperating partners drew and interviewed a large, representative random sample of Ukrainian refugees in late summer 2022. The survey is designed as a longitudinal study, meaning the respondents are surveyed multiple times. This Weekly Report presents the results of the second survey wave from the beginning of 2023 (Box).<sup>1</sup>

## Only a small share of refugees have returned to Ukraine so far

The survey contains respondents who fled to Germany in the first months of the Russian war on Ukraine, i.e., between February 24, 2022, and the beginning of June 2022. In this period, around 811,000 Ukrainians, i.e., 80 percent of the Ukrainian refugees who have come to Germany since the outbreak of the war, sought protection in Germany.<sup>2</sup> Since the war is still ongoing, only a small share of the refugees have left Germany, mostly for Ukraine. Data from the

<sup>1</sup> For more on the findings from the first wave, see Herbert Brücker et al., "Geflüchtete aus der Ukraine in Deutschland: Ergebnisse der ersten Welle der IAB-BiB/FReDA-BAMF-SOEP-Befragung," *IAB Forschungsbericht*, no. 2 (2023) (in German; available online. Accessed on July 3, 2023. This applies to all other online sources in this report unless stated otherwise).

<sup>2</sup> In total, around one million Ukrainians fled to Germany in 2022, with over 80 percent of them coming in the first months until June 2022. Cf. UNHCR, *Operational Data Portal: Ukraine Refugee Situation* (2023) (available online).

Box

**The IAB-BiB/FReDA-BAMF-SOEP survey**

The results presented here are based on the IAB-BiB/FReDA-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Ukrainian Refugees in Germany study, which was first conducted in 2022. In the study, Ukrainian refugees between 18 and 70 years old who arrived in Germany between February 24 and June 8, 2022, and were registered at the registration offices were surveyed. A total of 11,225 Ukrainian refugees from 100 municipalities in all of Germany participated in the first survey wave during late August to early October 2022. In the second wave, which took place from mid-January to early March 2023, 6,754 Ukrainians were surveyed again, 6,581 of whom were still living in Germany. Both surveys were conducted by ifas – Institute for Applied Social Science. The survey was made available online and in paper form in Ukrainian and Russian. Over 80 percent of the participants of the second survey filled it out online and two thirds in Ukrainian. Of the respondents, slightly more than 80 percent were women in both waves; the average age was just under 40. By weighting, the data is representative of the population of Ukrainian refugees still living in Germany at the time of the survey.

Central Register of Foreigners (*Ausländerzentralregister*, AZR) show that of the 18- to 70-year-old Ukrainians who came to Germany in this period, around 93 percent were still registered in Germany as of the end of February 2023. At the same time, refugees’ intention to remain in Germany for the longer term can change due to changes in personal life circumstances or the situation in their home country. To plan and implement suitable integration measures, as well as—should the situation in Ukraine ease—to facilitate returns, it is crucial to know if Ukrainian refugees intend on staying.

**Nearly half of Ukrainian refugees intend to stay in Germany for the longer term**

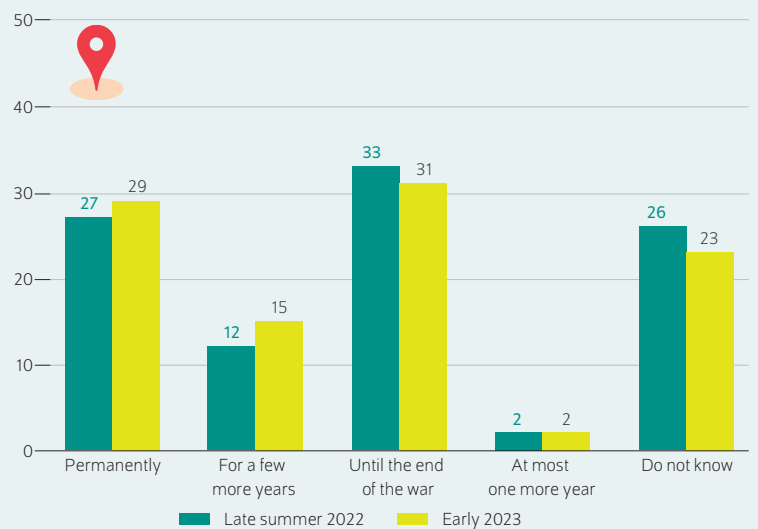
The share of refugees who want to stay in Germany for the longer term—that is, for another few years or permanently—increased by five percentage points between the two survey waves to 44 percent (Figure 1). In contrast, the shares of those who would like to stay in Germany until the end of the war or who are uncertain decreased slightly from 33 to 31 percent and from 26 to 23 percent, respectively.

**Significant interest in transnational lifestyles**

Refugees who do not intend on staying in Germany permanently were asked about their future plans. Although a large share of these refugees (38 percent) plan to return to Ukraine eventually, a similarly large group (30 percent) intends on maintaining close contact with Germany in the future, living there intermittently. Twenty-nine percent are still unsure and three percent intend to move to another country. Such

Figure 1

**Ukrainian refugees’ intention to stay in Germany**  
Shares in percent



Note: The sample contains 6,310 respondents. Weighted values.

Source: IAB-BiB/FReDA-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Ukrainian Refugees in Germany, first (late summer 2022) and second waves (early 2023).

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The share of refugees who want to stay in Germany longer term has increased.

transnational lifestyles, where people live in more than one country, are also known from other migrant groups.<sup>3</sup>

**Close correlation between intention to stay and familial situation as well as social integration**

Intentions to stay and return vary greatly among Ukrainian refugees. The results of a regression analysis show that the familial situation plays an important role in deciding whether to stay in Germany (Figure 2).<sup>4</sup> Refugees with a partner living in another country are eleven percentage points less likely than single refugees to want to stay in Germany forever. Children seem to have no significant influence on the intention to remain in Germany. Compared to men, women are 11 percentage points less likely to want to stay in Germany permanently.

There are also clear associations between the intention to stay and the current or expected living situation as well as the level of social integration in the receiving country, as

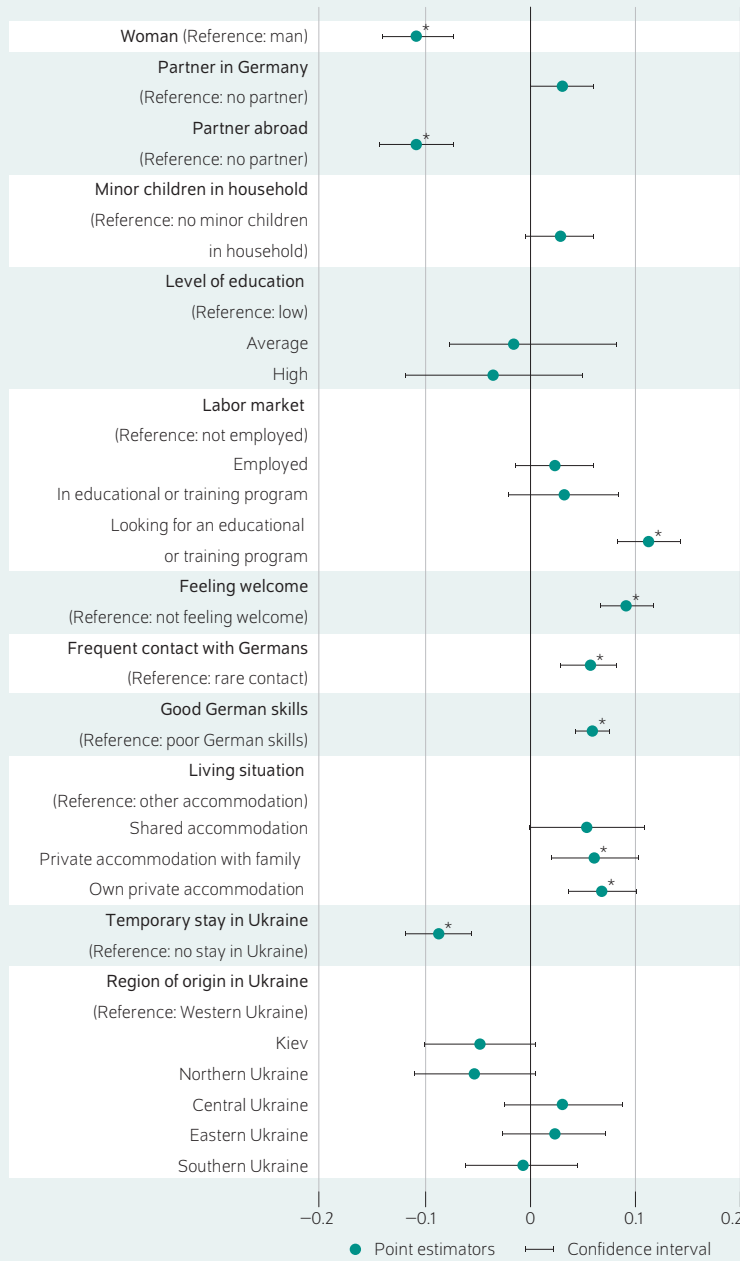
<sup>3</sup> Peggy Levitt and B. Nadya Jaworsky, "Transnational Migration Studies: Past Developments and Future Trends," *Annual Review of Sociology* 33 (2007): 129–156; Thomas Faist, Margit Fauser, and Eveline Reisenauer, *Transnational Migration* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013).

<sup>4</sup> Brücker et al., "Geflüchtete aus der Ukraine in Deutschland;" Agnès Bouché and Jonna Rock, "Geflüchtete Frauen aus der Ukraine Zwischen Rückkehr und Ankommen," *DeZIMinutes*, no. 9 (2022) (in German); Tetyana Panchenko, "Anpassungsstrategien der Geflüchteten aus der Ukraine in Deutschland. Ergebnisse einer qualitativen Studie," *ifo Schnelldienst* 75 (2022): 58–62 (in German). It should be noted that regression results only describe descriptive associations and cannot be causally interpreted.

Figure 2

**Correlation between Ukrainian refugees' intention to stay<sup>1</sup> and selected characteristics**

Average marginal effects in percentage points



<sup>1</sup> This refers to respondents who want to stay in Germany "forever."

Notes: Binary logistical regression model. Further control variables are age, interview mode, length of stay in Germany, the date of the interview, and the federal state. \* indicates statistical significance at the five-percent level. The horizontal lines indicate the 95 percent confidence interval. This means that the actual value lies within this interval in 95 percent of cases. The smaller the interval, the more exact the estimated value. The sample includes 5,929 respondents. Weighted values.

Legend: Women have an 11-percentage-point lower probability of wanting to remain in Germany permanently than men.

Source: IAB-BiB/FReDA-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Ukrainian Refugees in Germany, second wave (early 2023).

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Refugees' living situation and their social integration play a major role in their intention to stay.

is also known from other migrant groups.<sup>5</sup> Refugees seeking education or training are 11 percentage points more likely to want to stay in Germany permanently than those not employed. Better German language skills are also positively correlated with the intention to stay in Germany permanently. While good German language skills could motivate a person to stay long term, it is also plausible that people who intend to remain long term invest more time in learning German and thus have stronger language skills. Furthermore, there is a positive correlation between time spent with Germans as well as how welcomed one feels and the intention to remain in Germany. Differences also exist with regard to housing: Refugees currently living in private accommodation are more likely to want to stay long term than people in other types of accommodation, such as hotels or guesthouses. Compared to the survey results from late summer 2022,<sup>6</sup> nearly one year after leaving Ukraine, there is little correlation between the intention to stay and the region of origin in Ukraine. However, individuals who have also spent time in Ukraine since arriving in Germany are significantly less likely to intend on staying in Germany permanently.

**High relocation mobility within Germany**

Accommodating refugees can pose major challenges for municipalities. Therefore, information on the current housing situation and moves is highly relevant for housing and integration policies. In the roughly six months between the first and second survey waves, almost one fifth (19 percent) of the refugees from Ukraine moved within Germany.

The overwhelming majority (90 percent) moved within the same city or municipality, while only around ten percent moved to another city or municipality. About half of the respondents (52 percent) say they moved because they found a more suitable accommodation. Fourteen percent cite assignments by authorities as a reason for moving.<sup>7</sup>

**An increasing majority lives in private accommodations**

At the time of the first survey wave, a significant majority was already living in private apartments or houses (74 percent). Around one fifth (17 percent) of the refugees lived in another type of accommodation (such as hotels or guesthouses) and only nearly every tenth (nine percent) lived in a shared accommodation.<sup>8</sup> Refugees in shared and other types of accommodation have since moved more frequently. As a result, the share of refugees living in private apartments or

<sup>5</sup> Thomas de Vroome and Frank van Tubergen, "Settlement Intentions of Recently Arrived Immigrants and Refugees in the Netherlands," *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies* 12, no. 1 (2014): 47–66; Nawras Al Husein and Natascha Wagner, "Determinants of Intended Return Migration among Refugees: A Comparison of Syrian Refugees in Germany and Turkey," *International Migration Review* (2023).

<sup>6</sup> Brücker et al., "Geflüchtete aus der Ukraine in Deutschland;" UNHCR, "Lives on Hold: Intentions and Perspectives of Refugees from Ukraine," *Regional Intentions Report*, no. 3 (2023).

<sup>7</sup> The remaining share are refugees who gave other unspecified reasons (28 percent).

<sup>8</sup> Brücker et al., "Geflüchtete aus der Ukraine in Deutschland," 54.

houses increased to 79 percent. The share of refugees living in shared (eight percent) or other accommodations (13 percent) decreased accordingly.

### Three fourths of Ukrainian refugees attended German language courses

German language skills are crucial for establishing a life in Germany, making social contacts, and gaining easier access to the job or training market.<sup>9</sup> Like other refugees, Ukrainian refugees did not have time to learn German before fleeing to Germany. Thus, the share with good or very good German skills at the time of arrival was very low.<sup>10</sup> Attending language classes is an important way of learning German. During the fall 2022 survey, half of the respondents (51 percent) were attending German classes or had already completed at least one course. By the beginning of 2023, this share had increased to three quarters; 65 percent of the refugees are attending a language course at this point in time and a further ten percent have finished a language course. The majority (59 percent) of refugees are attending or have completed one language course, while a further 11 percent completed two language courses, and five percent three or more language courses. Most frequently, the refugees took part in integration courses (*Integrationskurs*, 87 percent), followed by other language courses (12 percent), initial orientation courses (*Erstorientierungskurs*, eight percent), vocational language courses (*Berufssprachkurs*, three percent), and MiA courses (*Migrantinnen einfach stark im Alltag-Kurs*, the strong female migrants in everyday life course, one percent).<sup>11</sup> The overall high attendance rate of integration courses is not surprising, as these courses were opened to Ukrainian refugees already in March 2022. If Ukrainian refugees receive benefits under Social Code II (*SGB II*), they may also be required to participate in courses.

### Integration course participation relates to many factors

Bivariate analyses show differences in the attendance of integration courses by age group, gender, familial situation, employment, and intention to stay in Germany (Figure 3). In particular, people aged 65 and older attend integration courses less frequently than younger refugees. This may be related to, among other things, a lower participation requirement rate for older refugees. Gender and the

<sup>9</sup> Yuliya Kosyakova et al., "Arbeitsmarktintegration in Deutschland: Geflüchtete Frauen müssen viele Hindernisse überwinden," *IAB-Kurzbericht*, no. 8 (2021) (in German; available online); Wenke Niehues, Nina Rother, and Manuel Siegert, "Fourth wave of the IAB-BAMF-SOEP-Survey of Refugees. Refugees Progress in Language Acquisition and Social Contacts," *BAMF Brief Analysis*, no. 4 (available online).

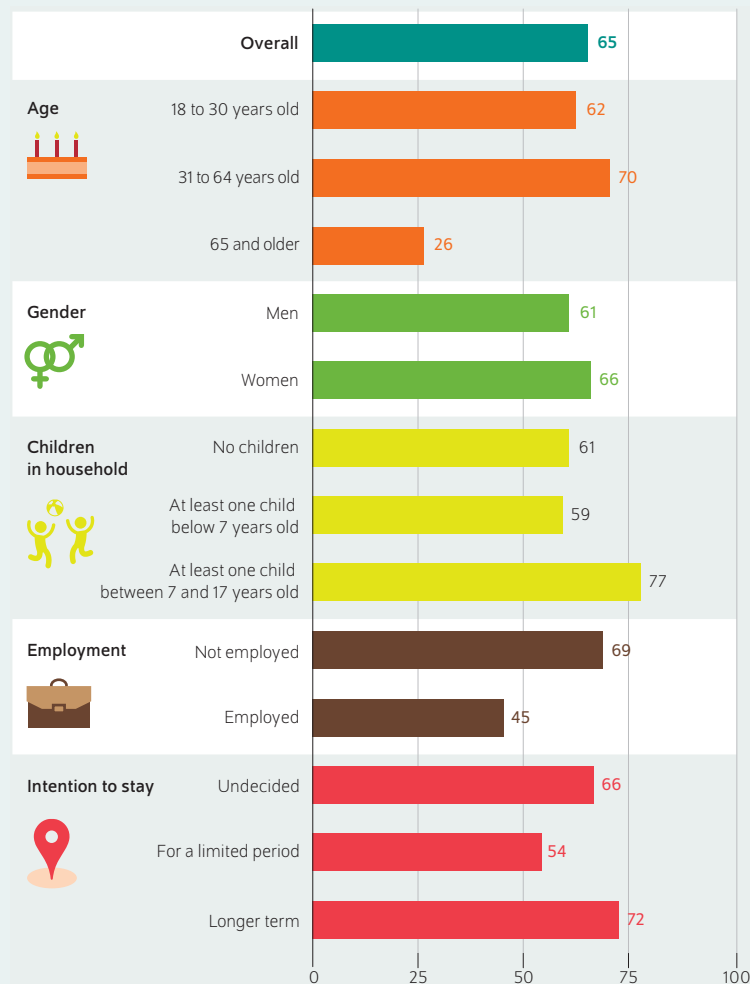
<sup>10</sup> Niehues et al., "Vierte Welle der IAB-BAMF-SOEP-Befragung von Geflüchteten," Brücker et al., "Geflüchtete aus der Ukraine in Deutschland."

<sup>11</sup> Multiple responses possible. Integration courses teach basic German skills (target level B1 of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)) in usually 600 teaching units. In vocational language courses, job-related German skills with the target levels B1 to C2 CEFR can be acquired. In initial orientation courses, participants learn the necessary information for living in Germany as well as German language skills. The MiA courses focus on empowering women refugees. In addition to these four course formats, there are a number of further courses that are summarized in the "other language course" category.

Figure 3

### Ukrainian refugees' participation in integration courses up to early 2023

Shares in percent



Note: Weighted values.

Source: IAB-BiB/FRoDA-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Ukrainian Refugees in Germany, second wave (early 2023).

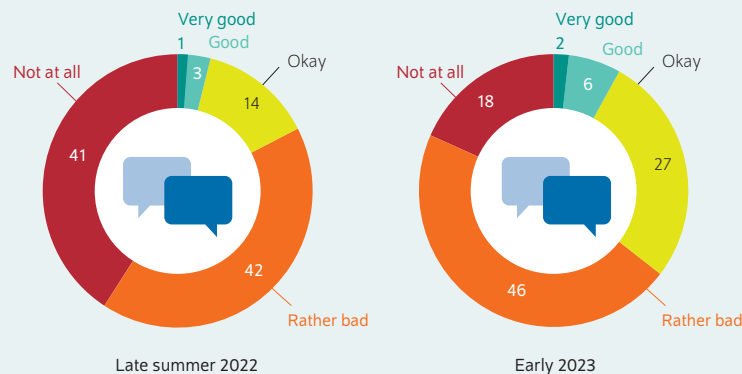
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People 65 and older attend integration courses markedly less frequently than younger refugees.

familial situation are also important: Up until the beginning of 2023, Ukrainian refugees living with children between seven and 17 years old participated in such courses more frequently than refugees with younger children (up to six years old) or without children. Possible explanations are that refugees without minor children are more frequently no longer of working age (12 percent of the people without minor children in the household are over 64 years old) and people with younger children in particular have childcare duties. Employment-related time constraints can also make it more difficult to attend an integration course, resulting in non-employed refugees attending more frequently than employed refugees. As of the beginning of 2023, it appears that refugees who want to stay longer term ("a few more

Figure 4

**Ukrainian refugees' self-assessed German language skills**  
Shares in percent



Notes: Weighted values. The sum of all shares deviates slightly from 100 due to rounding.  
Source: IAB-BiB/FReDA-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Ukrainian Refugees in Germany, first (late summer 2022) and second (early 2023) waves.

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The self-assessed German skills of many refugees have improved since late summer 2022.

years”/“forever”) or who are uncertain about their stay have attended an integration course more frequently than those who do not intend on staying longer term (“until the end of the war”/“one more year at most”) and who may also have less incentive to learn German.

**Language skills progress, but good German skills are still rare**

From late summer 2022 to the beginning of 2023, refugees’ self-assessed German skills<sup>12</sup> improved (Figure 4). For example, the share of refugees who state that they “do not speak German at all” has more than halved by 23 percentage points to 18 percent. In contrast, the share with “rather bad” German skills increased by four percentage points and those with average skills (“okay”) increased by 13 percentage points. At eight percent, the share of Ukrainian refugees with “good” to “very good” skills remains quite low. It is quite possible that many refugees will strive to further improve their German skills, for example in language courses. Due to Ukrainian refugees’ strong intention to work and the large share of refugees who have not yet completed an integration course as of the beginning of 2023 (88 percent of all integration course participants), it can be assumed that vocational language course attendance will increase in the future. At the same time, the language skills of many refugees can also be improved by participating in daily (work) life in Germany.

<sup>12</sup> Refugees were asked to estimate their German skills in three areas (speaking, reading, and writing) using a five-point scale. The scale comprises of “1 = not at all,” “2 = rather bad,” “3 = okay,” “4 = good,” and “5 = very good.” For the descriptive analyses, the sum of the three areas is divided by the number of items and rounded, again resulting in a five-point scale. For the multivariate analyses, the sum of the three competencies was used with a scale ranging from zero to twelve points. Higher values reflect better self-assessed German skills.

**Differences in German language skills by group still exist**

The factors that correlate with the level of self-assessed German skills are very similar in both surveys and show that not all Ukrainian refugees are learning German at the same pace.<sup>13</sup> Currently, refugees who have attended a language course, rate their health more positively, are more highly educated (with an university degree), and are younger, continue to report better German skills (Figure 5). The decline in German language skills weakens with increasing age. A higher level of education and being younger may be associated with stronger studying habits, so younger and better educated people may be able to benefit more from the language courses. Good health can have a positive impact on language acquisition via more regular course attendance as well as learning opportunities.

In line with previous research on foreign language acquisition, women assess their language skills higher than men.<sup>14</sup> However, the familial situation plays a role in learning German: Refugees living with young children (under the age of seven) assess their language skills more poorly than refugees without minor children or with older children (seven to 17 years old). One reason for this could be less time to learn due to childcare duties. In addition to employment, contact with Germans is positively correlated with German skills. This association might go in both directions: On the one hand, people with better German skills have an easier time finding work and engaging with Germans. On the other hand, refugees have more opportunities to speak German when they are employed. The intention to stay is also relevant: Compared to refugees who are uncertain if they want to stay, refugees who intend on staying temporarily rate their German skills poorer and those who want to stay permanently better. This suggests that the latter group might be willing to learn German because they believe it will be worth it. However, it is also conceivable that people with better German skills would want to stay in Germany longer because the language barrier is lower for them.

**Eighteen percent of refugees of working age are currently in gainful employment**

Compared to other migrant groups, refugees have less favorable starting positions for successfully integrating into the labor market. Upon their arrival, they often lack important resources relevant to the labor market, such as language skills, personal networks, and information about the labor market. Legal obstacles such as employment restrictions, uncertainty regarding asylum and long-term residence

<sup>13</sup> A multivariate regression is used to investigate the association between various factors and self-assessed German skills.

<sup>14</sup> Frans W. P. van der Slik, Roeland W. N. M. van Hout, and Job J. Schepens, “The gender gap in second language acquisition: Gender differences in the acquisition of Dutch among immigrants from 88 countries with 49 mother tongues,” *PLoS ONE* 10, no. 11 (2015).

status,<sup>15</sup> residence requirements (*Wohnsitzauflagen*),<sup>16</sup> and psychological stress due to traumatic experiences also make labor market integration more challenging for refugees. On average, their labor market integration is slower than the integration of migrants who come to Germany specifically to work.<sup>17</sup>

Compared to other refugees, however, the legal conditions for Ukrainians who were granted temporary protection are more favorable: They received an immediate work permit and a residence permit initially valid until March 2024. By being integrated into the basic social security system under Social Code II (instead of the benefits system under the Asylum Seekers' Benefits Act), they have direct access to support from the Job Centers and receive higher benefits.<sup>18</sup> However, the high degree of uncertainty about the course of the war and thus the prospects for staying in Germany could have a negative impact on the investments in language skills, education, networks, and similar factors that are necessary for integrating successfully.<sup>19</sup> At the beginning of 2023, 18 percent of Ukrainian refugees of working age (18 to 64 years old) were employed in Germany.<sup>20</sup> Of these, 39 percent work full time, 37 percent part time, and 18 percent are marginally employed. A further five percent are currently in training and two percent are completing an internship. Of the non-employed refugees, 93 percent indicate they would definitely (69 percent) or probably (24 percent) take up employment. Of the refugees who intend on working, 71 percent want to work as soon as possible or within the next year, while a further 19 percent plan to work in the coming two to five years or later.

### Substantial differences between employment of mothers and fathers

About half of the working-age women from Ukraine who fled to Germany live together with minor children, often of preschool age.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, their household situation is frequently characterized by a geographical separation from their partners. These specific familial constellations make labor market integration more difficult for Ukrainian refugee women.

At the beginning of 2023, 22 percent of Ukrainian refugee men and 17 percent of Ukrainian refugee women were

<sup>15</sup> Yuliya Kosyakova and Hanna Brenzel, "The role of length of asylum procedure and legal status in the labour market integration of refugees in Germany," *Soziale Welt* 71, no. 1–2 (2020): 123–159.

<sup>16</sup> Herbert Brücker, Andreas Hauptmann, and Philipp Jaschke, "Beschränkungen der Wohnortwahl für anerkannte Geflüchtete: Wohnsitzauflagen reduzieren die Chancen auf Arbeitsmarktintegration," *IAB-Kurzbericht* 3 (2020) (in German; available online).

<sup>17</sup> Yuliya Kosyakova and Irena Kogan, "Labor market situation of refugees in Europe: The role of individual and contextual factors," *Frontiers in Political Science* 4 (2022): 1–14.

<sup>18</sup> Herbert Brücker et al., "Die Folgen des Ukraine-Kriegs für Migration und Integration: Eine erste Einschätzung," *IAB-Forschungsbericht*, no. 2 (in German; available online).

<sup>19</sup> Brücker et al., "Geflüchtete aus der Ukraine in Deutschland."

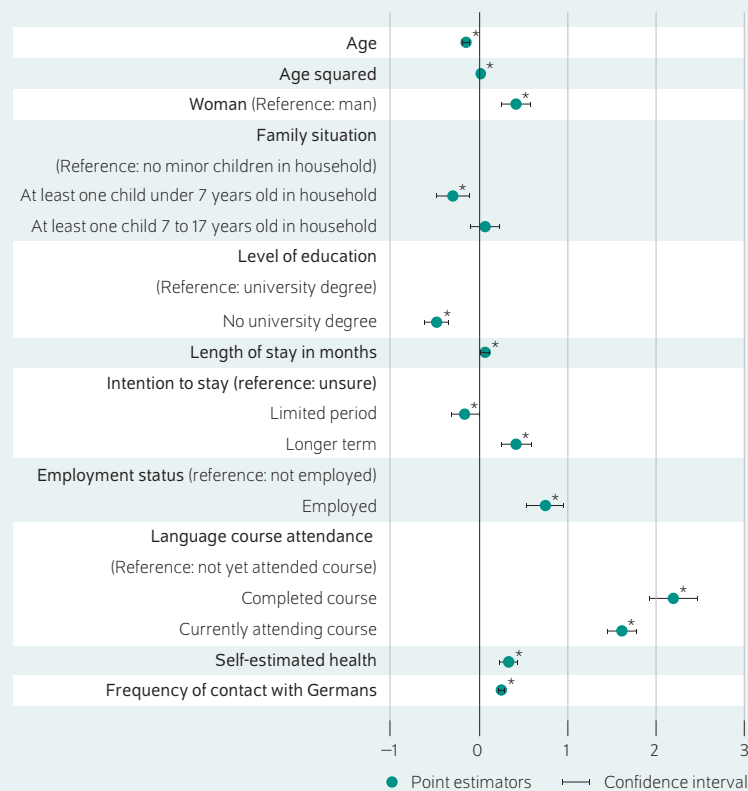
<sup>20</sup> This includes people working full time or part time, trainees, interns, the marginally employed, and the self-employed.

<sup>21</sup> Brücker et al., "Geflüchtete aus der Ukraine in Deutschland."

Figure 5

### Correlation between self-assessed German skills and selected characteristics of Ukrainian refugees

Regression coefficients



Notes: Multivariate regression analysis. A further control variable is the interview mode. \* indicates statistical significance at the five-percent level. The horizontal lines indicate the 95 percent confidence interval. This means that the actual value lies within this interval in 95 percent of cases. The smaller the interval, the more exact the estimated value. The sample includes 6,080 respondents. Weighted values.

Legend: People living with at least one child under seven in the household estimate—all other factors remaining the same and on a scale of zero to 12—rate their German skills as 0.3 points worse than a person without minor children in the household.

Source: IAB-BiB/FRoDA-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Ukrainian Refugees in Germany, second wave (early 2023).

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Refugees who attend a language course or have already completed one attest to significantly better German language skills.

employed (Figure 6). In particular, refugee women with small children are only gainfully employed to a limited extent (three percent); they are usually in Germany without a partner. In contrast, the labor force participation rate of fathers of young children—most of whom are in Germany with a partner—is significantly higher at 23 percent. The employment rate of women and men without children in the household are, in contrast, nearly the same at 20 and 22 percent, respectively.

### Good German skills go hand in hand with higher labor force participation

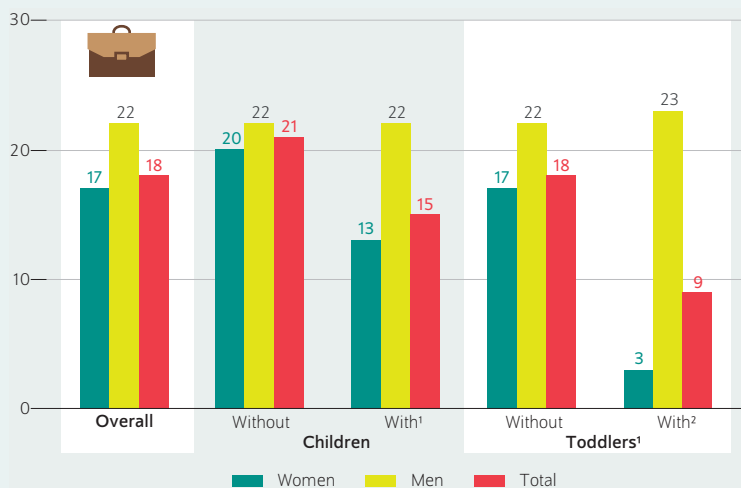
In the following section, multivariate regression models are used to analyze the influence of various factors on the probability of employment. The gender gap in employment



Figure 6

### Employment rate of Ukrainian refugees by gender and children in the household

Share of 18- to 64-year-old respondents, in percent



1 Only respondents who have at least one minor child living with them in the household.  
 2 Only respondents with at least one child two years old or younger living in the household.

Notes: Employment is defined as exercising employed or self-employed activity. The sample includes 6,037 respondents. Weighted values.

Source: IAB-BiB/FReDA-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Ukrainian Refugees in Germany, second wave (early 2023).

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Nearly one fifth of Ukrainian refugees were employed in early 2023.

remains substantial: When other explanatory factors are considered, women are five percentage points less likely to be employed than men (Figure 7). The probability of employment is also related to the presence of children in the household as well as their age: Refugees with (at least) one child six years old or younger have a lower probability of employment than those without children or with older children. The employment probability increases if their partner also lives in Germany.

There is a positive correlation between being employed and the length of stay in Germany, having a university degree, having employment experience prior to arrival, and living in a private accommodation.

The association between refugees' participation in language courses and employment is equivocal. On the one hand, there are lock-in effects, meaning refugees who are currently attending a language course have lower chances of being simultaneously employed. On the other hand, refugees who have not attended language courses are more often employed than those who have completed at least one language course. German language skills are positively correlated with the probability of being employed: Refugees with good to very good German language skills are 18 percentage points more likely to be employed than Ukrainian refugees with poor German language skills. There is no significant

correlation between refugees' intention to stay and their probability of being employed.

### Net household incomes tend to be low

As the majority of Ukrainian refugees is currently not available to the labor market due to participation in integration and language courses, a low household income can be expected. In the survey, respondents were asked about their current net household income, which mainly consists of earned income and government transfers minus direct taxes and social security payments. To account for the economies of scale in the households, needs weighting that considers household size is applied.<sup>22</sup>

At the time of the survey, the equivalized net household income of Ukrainian refugees was nearly 850 euros per month on average, while the median was somewhat lower at 750 euros (Table). In comparison, the median net household income in Germany in 2021 was 1,909 euros.<sup>23</sup> The income of Ukrainian refugees is thus less than half that of the population in Germany as a whole.

A distinction by employment status<sup>24</sup> shows that employment, especially full-time, improves refugees' financial situation. For example, the net household income at the beginning of 2023 was an average of 1,730 euros for full-time employees and nearly 1,000 euros for part-time employees. For those unemployed or in a training program, net household income was lower at 775 euros.<sup>25</sup>

### Children and adolescents: Nearly 60 percent of refugee children from three to six are attending daycare

Children and adolescents comprise a significant share of the Ukrainian refugees who fled to Germany; almost every second Ukrainian refugee came with at least one minor child, and nearly every second child (49 percent) is younger than ten. With the second wave of the survey, for the first time, information is available on the three youngest children of the refugees; in the first survey this information was only collected at the family level.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>22</sup> The square root of the household size was used as the weight, which corresponds to the modified OECD scale. This scale is used to describe the financial situation of private households. Cf. Markus M. Grabka, "Löhne, Renten und Haushaltseinkommen sind in den vergangenen 25 Jahre real gestiegen," *DIW Wochenbericht* no. 23, 329–337 (in German; available online).

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Statistisches Bundesamt, *A.7 Mediane und Armutsgefährdungsschwellen (2023)* (in German; available online).

<sup>24</sup> Only the employment status of the respondent is considered, without taking into account possible employment of other household members.

<sup>25</sup> Overall, 86 percent of Ukrainian refugees report that at least one household members currently is receiving *Bürgergeld* (welfare benefits). This figure is reduced to 22 percent among the Ukrainian refugees employed fulltime.

<sup>26</sup> The share of refugees with more than three children is very low. The following analyses refer to children and adolescents in Germany who live in a household with the parent interviewed. Children who moved back to Ukraine or another country with their respondent parents are not the focus of this section.

Table

**Monthly net household income of Ukrainian refugees**  
In euros (nominal), needs weighted

Percentile	Euro	Employment status	Average in euros
10th percentile	380	Full time	1,730
25th percentile	530	Part time/marginal	972
Median	750	Not employed/in training	775
Average	848		
75th percentile	1,039		
90th percentile	1,341		

Notes: Equalized: square root of the household size. Only respondents with valid information on income and household size (71 percent of all respondents). The sample includes 4,560 respondents. Weighted values.

Source: IAB-BiB/FReDA-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Ukrainian Refugees in Germany, second wave (early 2023).

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At the beginning of 2023, about every second refugee child up to six years old was attending daycare in Germany, with marked differences depending on the age of the child. While 16 percent of two year olds attend daycare, the share of six year olds is around 73 percent (Figure 8).<sup>27</sup> Compared to the first survey wave, the daycare attendance rate for families with one child up to six years old increased by around seven percentage points.

Daycare usage is related to parents' employment and participation in language courses, especially the mothers'. The place of residence is also relevant: For example, around 66 percent of refugee children up to six years old attend daycare in eastern Germany, while only around 46 percent do so in western Germany. The daycare attendance rate of children whose respondent parent is participating or participated in a language course or is currently employed or in training is 28 and 18 percentage points higher, respectively, than for children whose parents are not.

The multivariate regression results confirm the positive correlation between attending daycare and parental employment and language course attendance (Figure 9). These differences are more pronounced for mothers (no figure). Thus, daycare attendance seems to be an important prerequisite for the (labor market) integration of refugee women with young children. Moreover, research shows that daycare attendance plays a key role in children's integration and education.<sup>28</sup>

Of the refugee children and adolescents of school age, nearly all (97 percent) were attending a general or vocational school in Germany (no figure), which is to be expected considering

<sup>27</sup> The usage rate is thus significantly below the national averages in the respective age groups, cf. Statistisches Bundesamt, *Kindertagesbetreuung: Betreuungsquote von Kindern unter 6 Jahren nach Bundesländern* (2022) (in German; available online).

<sup>28</sup> Martin Bujard et al., "Geflüchtete, Familien und ihre Kinder. Warum der Blick auf die Familien und die Kindertagesbetreuung entscheidend ist," *Sozialer Fortschritt* 69, no. 8–9 (2020): 561–577 (in German).

Figure 7

**Correlation between employment and selected characteristics of Ukrainian refugees**  
Average effects in percentage points



Notes: Linear regression model. Further control variables are age, interview mode, and indicator variables for missing values. \* indicates statistical significance at the five-percent level. The horizontal lines indicate the 95 percent confidence interval. This means that the actual value lies within this interval in 95 percent of cases. The smaller the interval, the more exact the estimated value. The sample includes 5,949 respondents. Weighted values.

Legend: The probability of being employed for women is five percentage points lower than for men. The difference is statistically significant at the five percent level.

Source: IAB-BiB/FReDA-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Ukrainian Refugees in Germany, second wave (early 2023).

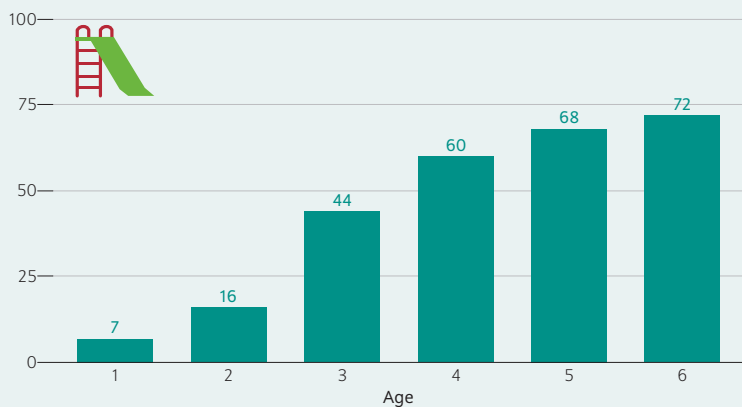
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The younger their children, the lower the probability of employment of Ukrainian refugees.

Figure 8

### Daycare attendance rate by the age of the children of Ukrainian refugees

Shares in percent



Notes: The sample includes 1,229 children up to six of respondents. Weighted values.

Source: IAB-BiB/FReDA-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Ukrainian Refugees in Germany, second wave (early 2023).

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The older the child, the more frequently they attend daycare.

the compulsory schooling requirement in Germany. 27 percent of children and adolescents in this age group are also using additional online offers from Ukrainian schools.

### Psychological well-being of refugee children and adolescents is improving slightly

Experiencing war, fleeing one's home country, losing a familiar social environment, and being separated from family members can negatively impact the health of children and adolescents.<sup>29</sup> To capture the health status of refugee children and adolescents, their parents were asked to assess their child(ren)'s general health. Furthermore, they were asked to evaluate the psychological well-being of their child(ren) over the past weeks using an established scale (the KINDL<sup>R</sup> scale<sup>30</sup>).

As of the beginning of 2023, the general health status of children and adolescents is good to very good. The general health status of four out of five children and adolescents, according to their parents' estimation, is good (55 percent) or very good (24 percent) (Figure 10). Compared to the late summer 2022 survey, the psychological well-being of the refugee children and adolescents has slightly improved for all age groups by an average of two scale points. However, it is still below the representative reference and normative values of

children and adolescents in Germany.<sup>31</sup> Overall, the share of children and adolescents in good or very good general health is markedly higher among younger children (83 and 82 percent, respectively) compared to eleven to 17 year olds (74 percent). A similar age-pattern can be found for the psychological well-being of the refugee children and adolescents. Whether the partner of the interviewed parent also lives in Germany has a clearly positive association with the subjective general state of health and the psychological well-being of children and adolescents: If both parents live in Germany, the psychological well-being of the children and adolescents is about five scale points higher than that of other children and adolescents from Ukraine. In addition, significant differences can be identified in subjective general health—although not in psychological well-being—according to the educational level of the parents.<sup>32</sup>

### Conclusion: Participation progresses, but requires planning security

Since the beginning of the Russian war on Ukraine on February 24, 2022, around one million people have fled Ukraine for Germany, the majority in the initial months after the war began. Based on a longitudinal survey with two waves (August to October 2022 and January to March 2023), findings are now available on this group of refugees in Germany, in particular on their arrival process and the development of their societal participation. Generally, it can be seen that their living conditions and opportunities to participate in society have improved in various dimensions in the roughly six months between the two survey waves.

Ukrainian refugee children up to six years old are increasingly attending daycare. Refugee children and adolescents are in a good general state of health and also appear to be somewhat more stable psychologically. The psychological well-being of all age groups has improved compared to the late summer 2022 survey, but the values still remain well below the average values of children and adolescents in Germany. Ukrainian refugees' intention to stay in Germany have stabilized in the context of the ongoing war, with slight increases among those who want to stay in Germany permanently (29 percent) or for a few more years (15 percent). Only few of the Ukrainian refugees have left Germany, and the living situation of those who have remained in Germany has improved overall.

There are clear signs of progress, particularly with regard to German language acquisition and language course attendance: At the beginning of 2023, three out of four Ukrainian refugees had already attended or completed one or more German courses, most frequently an integration course.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. for example Ständige Wissenschaftliche Kommission der Kultusministerkonferenz, *Stellungnahme zur Unterstützung geflüchteter ukrainischer Kinder und Jugendlicher – Integration in das Bildungssystem* (2022) (in German).

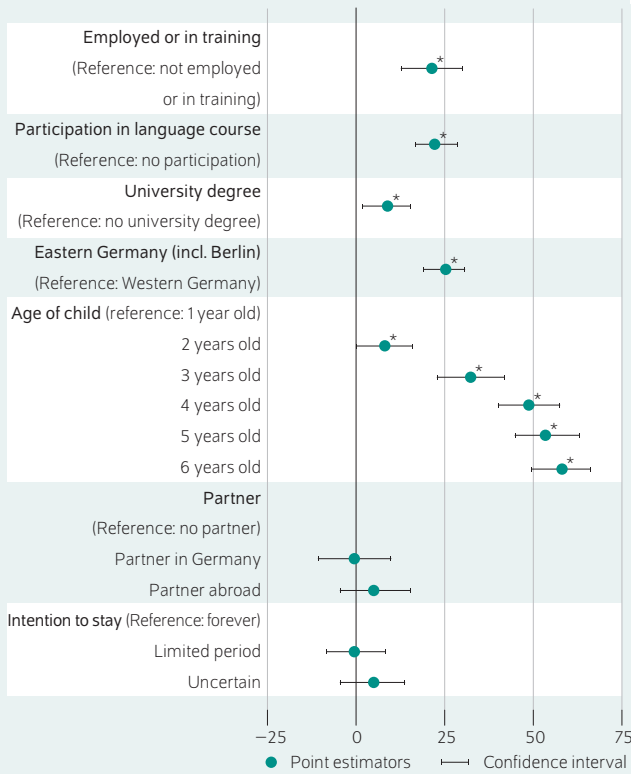
<sup>30</sup> Ulrike Ravens-Sieberer and Monika Bullinger, "Assessing health related quality of life in chronically ill children with the German KINDL: first psychometric and content-analytical results," *Quality of Life Research* 7, no. 5 (1998): 399–407.

<sup>31</sup> This is true when considering families with only one child; for other families, a corresponding comparison over time is not possible without additional assumptions. Ulrike Ravens-Sieberer et al., "Health-related quality of life in children and adolescents in Germany: results of the BELLA study," *European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry* 17 (2008): 148–156

<sup>32</sup> All of the aforementioned differences also persist in multivariate regression models when considering the other characteristics respectively as well as the gender and age of the parent interviewed, although they lose some of their significance.

Figure 9

**Correlation between daycare use and selected characteristics of Ukrainian refugees**  
Regression coefficients



Notes: Linear probability model. Further control variables are age and the gender of the respondent parent. \* indicates statistical significance at the five-percent level. The horizontal lines indicate the 95 percent confidence interval. This means that the actual value lies within this interval in 95 percent of cases. The smaller the interval, the more exact the estimated value. The sample includes 1,219 children up to six years old. Weighted values.

Legend: The probability of being employed for women is five percentage points lower than for men. The difference is thus statistically significant at the five percent level.

Source: IAB-BiB/FReDA-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Ukrainian Refugees in Germany, second wave (early 2023).

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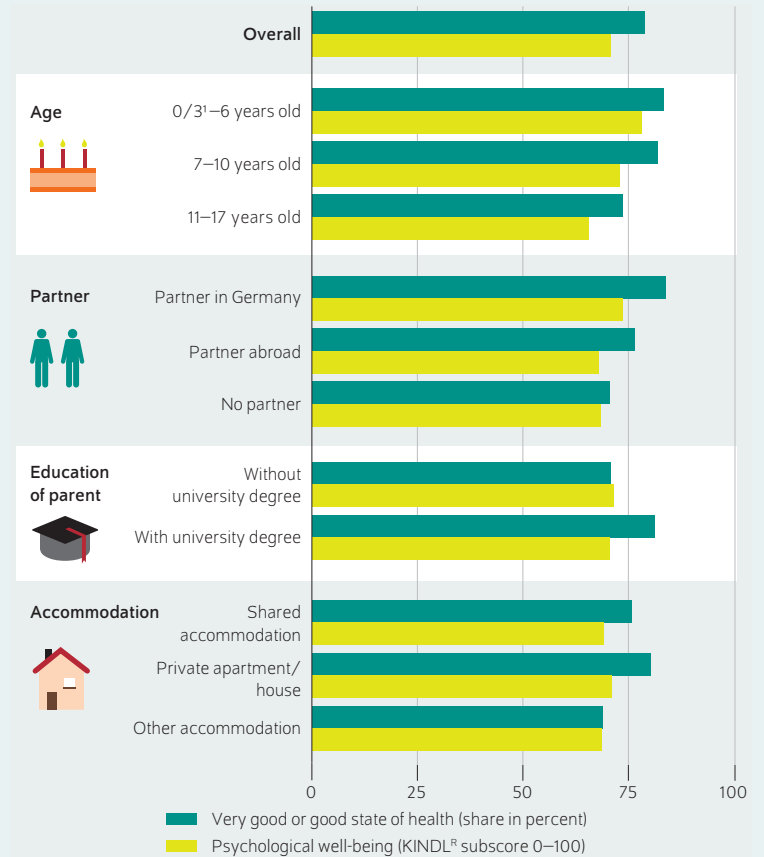
If parents are working or attending a language course, their children more frequently attend daycare.

At this time, around two thirds were still participating in a language course. Even if completing language courses and improving German skills have middle- and long-term positive effects on the employment opportunities of refugees, they are also related to short-term lock-in effects. This could be one of the reasons why the employment rate only increased slightly between the two survey waves. At the same time, Ukrainian refugees have a pronounced intention to work. The relatively low employment rate of Ukrainian refugees is also associated with significantly lower net household incomes compared to the German population.

However, the processes of arriving and participating in German society are not the same for all refugees; there are

Figure 10

**Subjective health status as well as psychological well-being of children and adolescents**  
Parental answers in percent on a scale of 0 to 100



1 Data for zero to six year olds refer to the children's health status. Data on psychological well-being refer to the age group of three to six years.

Notes: Psychological well-being (KINDLE scale) on a scale of 0 to 100 by aggregating the individual items, with higher scores corresponding to better psychological well-being. Sample includes 4,302 to 4,313 minor children of respondents up to and including age six. Weighted values.

Source: IAB-BiB/FReDA-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Ukrainian Refugees in Germany, second wave (early 2023).

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Nearly four out of five refugee children and adolescents are in a good or very good state of health according to their parents.

clear group differences. The partnership situation and social integration are particularly significant for individual intentions to stay in Germany permanently. When it comes to learning German, attending language courses, and taking up gainful employment, the familial situation in particular plays an important role, along with other factors. Refugee mothers with young children have poorer German skills, have attended language courses less often, and are less likely to be employed. In addition, the intention to stay also plays a role in language acquisition.

Three recommendations can be derived for policymakers based on these analyses: First, for the refugees' social, economic, and societal participation—of the large group of

Ukrainian mothers in particular—available childcare opportunities are of key importance so that the refugees, mothers especially, may attend language courses and take up gainful employment.

Second, it is already becoming apparent that the question of regulating the stay of Ukrainian refugees beyond March 2024 will arise, especially for the group of who intend to stay in Germany for the longer term. Here, the German government, together with its European partners, is called upon to quickly

decide on extending temporary protection or creating another longer-term perspective for staying. This is crucial, considering that a large share of Ukrainian refugees intends to stay in Germany longer term. For refugees to invest in integration and employment, they require legal and planning certainty and reliable residence prospects.

Third, federal, state, and municipal governments should continue to supply sufficient funds for integration programs, education, training, and childcare.

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## LEGAL AND EDITORIAL DETAILS

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