



Summary of the first Delphi-round

The Delphi panel study is being held amongst 24 people from 11 European countries and various backgrounds. They receive three questionnaires concerning the position of older refugees. The three rounds of questionnaires have a different character:

- The first round concerns experiences, notions and personal opinions.
- The second round is meant to explore the given arguments and findings more deeply.
- In the third round the investigated problems and conclusions will be connected to organisations and institutions on a national and, if possible, European level.

The participants to the study will receive a summary of the answers given after each round. To guarantee freedom of answering the data are processed anonymously.

The countries involved in this study are:

Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Germany, Spain, Finland, Greece, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Slovenia, The United Kingdom. In most countries one person is taking part in the study. In five countries, with relatively many older refugees, the number of participants is higher (Austria 4, Belgium 3, Germany 4, Spain 3, the United Kingdom 4).

The respondents can be divided in the following categories:

University	2
Organisation for refugees	5
Centre for torture victims	2
Reception centre for Newcomers	1
Health Centre for migration	1
Ministry / state representative	2
Social centre	1
Red Cross	2
Organisation for elderly people	2
Women's organisation	1
Organisation for intercultural relations	2
Centre for a specific group of refugees	3

They are asked to answer 13 questions. Most of them open questions, which the respondents could answer according to their own understanding. In the processing of this summary answers that are quite similar are positioned next to each other. Each section of answers has received a proper title. In some cases respondents have given more than one answer. Because of this the total sum of answers to some questions exceeds the number of respondents. In this report there is not yet made an analysis of differences between the participating countries. This might be done in the report of the second round.

In blue you short summaries of the answers given to a specific question. These summaries are meant as a guide to read the answers in grey, which stay as close tot the original answers as possible. The report concludes with a summary of the first round as a whole.

The answers

General information

Questions 1 and 2

The refugees in the 11 countries participating originate from various backgrounds. Most striking difference is that respondents from Austria, Germany, The Czech Republic, Slovenia, Belgium and the Netherlands tell us that there are many refugees from former Yugoslavia and the former Soviet Union, while these groups are hardly mentioned by respondents from Spain and the United Kingdom.

Refugees from Afghanistan, Iraq and to a lesser extent Iran, are according to the participants, found in Austria, Belgium, Germany, Finland, Greece, The Netherlands, Slovakia, and The United Kingdom.

While people from Africa (Nigeria, Somalia, Congo a.o.) can be found in Austria, Belgium, Spain, Finland, Greece, The Netherlands, and The United Kingdom.

Latin Americans, especially people from Columbia and Chile are mostly named by respondents from Spain, the United Kingdom and The Netherlands.

All respondents have personal contacts with refugees. From 5 to 10 up to several hundreds per year.

Question 3

When is a refugee old?

When asked to name a specific age above which refugees can be regarded as old, various ages, from 40 up to 65 are mentioned:

age	
40+	1x
45+ (becoming older)	4x
50	2x
50+ (ECRE definition)	7x
55+	2x
60+	4x
relative 40+ - 60 cultural diversity	2x
65 (retirement)	2x
no difference refugees / natives	1x

When asked about the factors that play a part in defining when a refugee can be considered old or older 18 different factors are mentioned. Many of the answers given can be divided in three main categories:

1. participation/labour market,
2. health
3. circumstances in the home country.

1. Participation/labour market

In the first category respondents make a connection to the labour market, language skills and opportunity to integrate. Refugees are considered old when they cannot participate in the host society. This type of answer is given 18 times:

- too old to enter the labour market / termination of work / not allowed to work / not being "productive". (10 x)
- too old to learn the language properly / no re-education opportunities / lack of language skills (5x)
- Older might differ in populations. Difference if a refugee was young or old when he or she fled (focus on the labour market or not) (1x)
- less opportunity to integrate themselves (1x)
- feeling of loneliness / lack of contact to the community (1x)

2. Health

The second category of answers refers to physical and psychological condition of the refugees. Answers referring to this situation are given 12 times:

- traumatization / physical and psychological trauma due to reasons of persecution and migration process (6x)
- age conditioned physical defects, increased need of medical / any fragile, disable or sick person (40+) (6x)

3. Circumstances home country

The third category refers to cultural and other factors within the home countries. This type of answers is given 8 times.

- senior position in the family system / "being old" in the cultural context of the home countries / dependent on one's social position / take the old persons role when he/she gets the first grandchild (7x)
- life expectancy rates in their country of origin (1x)

Apart from these three main categories there are some answers named by one to four respondents.

Own perception

subjective perception / personal autonomy / personal experience (4x)

Services

- access to health care, social services whether they receive enough social welfare to make a living / dependence on foreign support provided by institutions (and according to this, lack of autonomy (2x)
- whether care services have enough intercultural abilities and qualifications (1x)

Age in different meanings

- age of their children (1x)
- life age / biological (1x)
- age of retirement (65) (1x)
- life expectancy rates in their country of origin (1x)

Legal status

- 10 years without any permanent staying permit (status) (nothing to do with age) (1x)
- documents that are inaccurate, so reliance on chronological age is not helpful / self definition is the only practical option (1x)

Question 4

Are there differences in perception between refugees that entered the country at a later age and refugees who arrived at an earlier stage and are now getting old?

The general tendency in the answers to this question is that refugees who came at a later age find way more difficulties in integration and as a result of that face dependency, isolation and a reduction of living standards. In the comparison between the two groups there appears quite a white-black situation in which the ones who came young seem to have all the opportunities while the ones who came at a later age seem to experience only disadvantages.

Summarised and classified the answers give the following image. Note that the answers left and right are not always mentioned by the same persons.

earlier age		later age	
no specific place for refugees not so difficult		no specific place for refugees difficult	
might have a diverse circle of friends and a higher social capital / ability to create a new network	2x	difficulties in building up new personal networks	
easier to integrate / more flexible / 'integration' into the life, society and culture of a new country, is a long-term process	9x	integration more difficult - into the society - into own community	3x
more interactive in the social environment / able to find their way in the different structures of our country / natural contact	4x	difficulty orienting themselves in general	
easier to get a job / are working	3x	the access to the labour market is more difficult / no high expectations on getting a job	4x
less language problems	3x	learning language difficult	4x
		it is assumed that they need care	2x
		security is more important	
		loneliness of the new generations is bigger / alone, without family support, difficulties increase The stress, traumatic experiences, loneliness and so on means that they feel themselves older than they are	3x
depended on the informal network		apprehended by integration programs	
integration plans are considered and executed but the discrimination towards elder activity and integration (as professionals or independent) limits its effects		plans of social integration, despite linguistic, cultural, physical or legal limitations, they cannot realise a proper and planned social intervention for their professional integration	
		need a lot of direct help	
earn pension		dependent on a social welfare system / no pensions / bigger	2x

		difficulties to obtain social benefits	
social status		social disintegration	
		Unaccompanied elderly persons have drastic reductions of living standard	
more familiar with lifestyle country		has to cope with adapting to their aging in exile	
more plans and hopes about their future (in regard to education, profession what are important keys to a living in society)			
more able to be accepted by society		Society tends to see older refugees as danger to their social welfare system and to what they think to be their own cultural standards.	
better chance to accommodate and prepare for the process of getting older.		difficult because it takes many years to get permanent residence rights. Uncertain circumstances, fear and restricted social care. The ability to integrate into the receiving country after this process is very low, often all the power has been used up by this long-term insecure situation.	
adapt and learn in the new society	3x	more difficulties to "adapt" to a new life / An older refugee can often be reluctant to changes and less adaptable due to his/her age	2x
Have got children in this country / Raising your children in a new country brings a lot of challenges to integration as well.	2x		
		Problems in leaving their country behind.	
		Are received very nice, with a lot of respect.	
I think that a lot of people in my country think that young to middle age people (mostly single men) come to our country just because they want to find a better job (economical reasons).			
Refugees who arrived at an earlier age never think they are going to get old until they reach the age of 40 and 50.		Those who arrived at a later age are very conscious about their age.	
Have integrated.		Many more problems accessing statutory services, language and cultural issues, live on low income and are socially excluded.	

One person from the UK, a country with relatively much knowledge about older refugees, notes that "it is very hard to know about differences in perception between refugees, as there is a big knowledge gap in this area. There is very limited information/research on refugees' experiences in the UK. It is generally understood that older refugees are vulnerable, they have not received as much attention as children, women and traumatised refugees. Refugee-assisting organisations tend to have less knowledge about older refugees' needs than about other refugee groups. Older refugees therefore remain relatively invisible, and their specific experiences, perspectives, needs and concerns remain unheard and, in many cases, unrecognised."

Question 5

When do older refugees regard themselves as old? Are there differences on this point between the various groups?

The first part of the questions leads to four different categories of answers which seem to complete each other. Older refugees are thought to see themselves as old, because they feel old, because they have no jobs or activities, due to experiences in their home country, because of their mental condition.

1. Feeling old

Many older refugees regard themselves older than native older people do in the same age.

Older refugees easily regard themselves as old and also as useless.

From 50 years on the feel old, are traumatized, do not feel that they can positively contribute to the society.

They regard themselves as old at a relatively early age if they are not able to see a future perspective for themselves and their families due to the necessity of having to flee an area.

The refugees which went through torture or suffer from the posttraumatic stress, does not see a bright future and usually have a problem with integration. They put themselves in the category of old people although they are not in this category (50+).

2. No job or activities

Difficulty to get integrated in the labour market / being rejected due to his age.

They guess they cannot get a job. They feel isolated.

This may also correlate to the degree of activity a refugee is maintaining when being forced to survive.

3. Experience in native country

Differences considering the professional qualification and experience in his native country.

A refugee with social and human rights defender background might find more difficulties in the integration and adaptation.

4. Mental condition

It depends of the physical and cultural factor, of their expectations in the country of arrival and if they are alone or family linked, being in those cases, dependent to their relatives.

Depends on aspects such as physical and mental condition, formation level, the support group they count with in Spain, the degree of dependence upon the family, etc

Refugees who regard themselves not only as victims tend much less to feel themselves as old.

Other answers

We do not have a full enough picture to know about refugees perceptions especially older refugees' perception of ageing.

The second part of the question shows that the experiences between ethnic groups may vary, although some respondents don't see any differences. It is remarkable that at least three respondents notice that elderly people from Latin America don't want to be old. And don't want to be seen as old. This in contrast with people from other ethnic groups. It is special that in this section respondents also give a few positive connotations about the perception of older refugees, for instance the quote that older people with a Muslim background are treated with respect in their own communities.

Differences between ethnic groups
Much differences for the various ethnic groups
Differences between European and non-European refugees.
Culture plays a role for example, refugees from Latin America are less sensible than those from Afghanistan, the Latin have a lot of events, Afghans do not have so many, they are very sensible, less used to dance and enjoying events.
Elder people from Africa, have showed with their attitude regarding their expectations in the country of arrival. South American elder people has shown to have the same expectative in the search of resources despite a previous working search. Migrants who have moved from other European countries or from USA are in equal position. They have same type of thinking of ageing.
In former Soviet Union the official retirement age was in the age of 50 or 55. When they moved to Finland they get information that they still are belonging to the working category. They were asked to register themselves on labour office even if the never were offered jobs. Anyhow some of them were very sad for this. They wanted to be treated like other retired persons
Muslims - the eldest (grandfather) are seen as sort of a library, teacher, social adviser, organiser and the leader of the family. He is a source of information regarding e.g. the history of family. Some Kurds have said that a man is old if he cannot get married and a woman if she cannot have children anymore.
Older people with a Muslim background become elders within their own communities and people treat them with respect. However, people from Latin America never want to be old and many of them are reluctant to attend the Day Centre because they believe they are not old.
There are differences between men and women depending their role in their native country and cultural aspects.
No differences
I don't see much differences between the various ethnic groups
It is individually, not connected with different ethnic groups. Younger are very nice and polite to the older people - who become even natural leaders. It is the same in any ethnic group. The older people have even better conditions than the others
Those refugees who came in the 1970 and 1980 and have worked since than consider themselves as old when they retire as anybody else in this country.

Question 6

The answers to the question how the respondents would like to deal with the possible difference in the perception on the question when someone is old, can be divided in two main categories: the answers that focus on the personal situation and capacities of the older refugees themselves, and the answers that focus on society and the possibilities to lift barriers. These main categories can be divided in various subcategories. Note that some respondents have given answers in both categories.

Personal attitude and capacities of older refugees themselves

1. Personal attitude

I do not see a big problem in it. Everyone knows that there are also among Finnish people big individual differences. Although older refugees seem older than according to their age.

Most people sometimes feel terrible old and sometimes appreciate being old.

For me refugees in the age 55 to 60+ are elderly. But not all elderly are old.

perception of ageing is a very complex question.

openness to other cultures, physical-age conditioned impairments
"Soft facts" as appearance (intangible).

2. Personal ambitions and need for empowerment

It is important to get an idea of what refugees still want to achieve in their lives

Develop other abilities in order to participate in and benefit from the possibilities of the receiving country.

We would point them to possibilities they have for which age is not relevant. Try to find out the personal possibility of the client together with him/her.

Motivate especially elderly refugees to learn the language.

Focus should be on the potential and capacities every individual has, regardless of age, nationality etc.

Improvements in the quality of their life, empowerment.

Provide the necessary tools for his independence and orientation and information of the social resources available.

Provide them social intervention through trainings and workshops for integration.

Role of society

1. Equality

Improvements in equality and justice.

all barriers should be lifted or removed.

Dealing with issues of discrimination and inequalities on the labour market.

2. Awareness and information

There is a need for greater awareness, understanding and recognition of the experience of refugees who have both arrived in Britain as older refugees or asylum-seekers– to be reunited with other family members from, e.g. Somalia, Afghanistan or Iraq – and those who arrived some time ago as refugees who have grown old in Britain, e.g. Ugandan Asians, Vietnamese, Latin American/Chileans.

give access to information and awareness of services available to them and should not be isolated or stigmatise because of there age or status.

It is important to show older refugees which are the possibilities offered to them in our country.

3. Facilities and opportunities for integration
They should be given more facilities to find jobs and professional training.
"Hard facts" as job market, qualifications, language.
Change the preconditions for the integration, there is almost no possibility to integrate for older refugees and migrants. Funding for activities of organisations for the older refugees/migrants is not available, they should integrate into the (/national) organisations of retired persons or attend their activities.
offer them the opportunity to get in contact with the population. May be a monitoring family in order to help the to integrate in the locality.
Access to creative, meaningful activities in order to increase awareness and participation in the local community. By organizing activities, entertainment, parties and various classes within an informal structure.
Any educational programme on the care for elderly people should include the issue of cultural and religious diversity and, hence, the culturally bounded different perceptions on age. This goes along with a process of implementing diversity strategies with regard to the delivery of care services.
There is a need for more co-ordination and collaboration between agencies working with refugee and asylum-seeker communities and those working with older people, in the provision of understanding and gathering information about older refugee perception of ageing.
Other answers
In an inquiry, I would incorporate it in the design.
The questions are in fact positive for the older, because people do not perceive them as "economic refugees" but those who really HAD to leave their own country and WERE in danger for sure and as such are taken very serious.

Question 7

Asked if they think that older refugees have a specific position within their own community, the respondents emphasise the respectful position they have, although they realize that this is not always the case. Some point to the differences between the various communities, others note that in Western society older refugees face a loss of position, which has a great influence on their lives.

General remarks
In traditional countries older people have another position in society than in western achievement-oriented countries.
Obviously they have specific role in their own community. They are recognized and considered as elders in their own community.
Generally, it belongs to the traditional understanding of life to give elderly a specific role they can fulfil - in this case in a refugee society.
Differs
This depends on the (refugee or ethnic) group.
Some of the older refugees are in the position of elders and are highly respected, others just have the same position as elderly people in the native society - more or less a burden.
In some community (Iraq, Chechen..) elderly person has respect in others they don't (Ukraine and Georgia).

E.g.: Vietnamese family nobody in the family respected the grandfather. The key person was grandmother, after her death the grandfather was totally ignored by his family members.
It depends on each situation.
Respected position
It depends on their origin. African older people receive a lot of respect from other Africans.
Older refugees are more or less respected depending on their cultural backgrounds.
Older refugees stemming from Muslim countries are shown a great deal of respect.
It is usual than a older refugee has a bigger prestige in their own community in their country of origin.
The elder refugees had a specific position within their community, being, in many occasions, "role" models for their community, or had certain capacity of representation.
We believe that they are usually respected and protected by their families with less expectations to contribute to the family income.
Yes, in certain communities they become elders (authority). Within the Latin American community they are respected and consulted on important issues.
Depending on qualifications
Depending on qualification and education.
Depending on the persons background (education, religion, language skills).
Communicator between the shelter social workers and the rest of their refugees community.
Loss of position in Europe
Depends upon the circumstances they live in, they don't profit from it, because they lost contact to their country of origin and their community.
They certainly feel that they did have a special position within their own communities, but many feel that this has been lost, and/or is being eroded since their arrival and settlement in the UK.
Traditionally within the Armenian community older people are held in high esteem. Unfortunately in Western society their role and position has been diminished.
Older refugees have more respect and understanding in their country and they are known as a family leaders in some community but they lose this identity while they are in-exile.
Dependent / in need of help.
Older refugees are helped by their own community.
These persons have a strong role and dependent to their communities, cultural, social or family linked.
No specific position
No specific position.

Question 8

The question "Do you think that older refugees have a special position outside their own community", leads to different answers. Some note that older refugees are treated with more compassion and respect than younger refugees. Yet older refugees are also seen as a rather invisible group. There are also some respondents who don't see much difference in the treatment of older refugees and older persons in general.

Invisible group

They become invisible and do not exist. There is also a perception that they are useless because they are foreigners.

Outside their community they are sparsely been seen or recognized. In contrast to migrant groups from the so-called 'guest-worker-countries' like Turkey or Italy, there are only few specific offers for elderly refugees.

They are a relatively 'invisible' group in our society. I think that people probably think of 'refugees' as one large group, and 'older people' as another large, and possibly fairly homogeneous, group of people in our society.
No specific position / isolation
No, the difficulties for the integration, the lack of recognition of the qualifications and skills, the difficulties in the access to the labour market and language difficulties. That provokes that an old refugee has small possibilities to build up his role in the new society.
In most cases they have no special role due to lack of education and lack of skills.
Refugees who arrive in the host country at a high age are more likely to face social isolation.
They feel social disintegration. They are not able to integrate so fast as young refugees, mainly because of language skills and lack of special programs for elderly refugees. Moreover, if they do not have connections with community or family, they are usually isolated.
Treated the same as other older people
I don't think so.
In Austria there is hardly a difference of perception on elderly from different countries.
Yes but with the same difference as older people's position is in our community.
I do not think that older refugees are treated otherwise than older people in general in this country. I do not think that they are shown great respect as they have not possibility to earn their own living. Hence, they are dependent on social welfare which usually is the populist argument against any further reception of refugees in general and older refugees in specific.
Especially in care institutions (refugee council, health services, elderly care) a different attitude towards different cultures is more adapted, since they have the qualifications to work with these differences.
Treated more respectful
As the perception of older persons in other societies is, that of highly respected persons elderly refugees might be treated more respectfully than younger ones.
In general attitude regarding the old people is respectful in Finland. The youngster are still taught to be polite with elder people. Unfortunately this attitude is getting changing.
In general this positive attitude in some way protects the older refugees when they are out of their homes. They are not facing racism in the same scale as younger refugees do. Old people (Finns or refugees) are afraid to move outside in the evenings and this fact protects them as well.
Today the society is not friendly to refugees, and this includes also older refugees, even though there may be a certain compassion-effect ...
Higher status in own community
From the moment they arrive our country, these people, who had a specific position within their community, no longer have it, but for the community, in spite of being abroad , they maintain the position. In some occasions they even acquire a higher "status" in their community.
Outside their communities, their situation still being special, affecting them strongly and specially in the access to social resources.
Other answers
They are not made welcome, looked down with contempt as they are unable to communicate and articulate their views/life experiences.
This depends on the social surrounding outside their community and how they behave, whether they accept or reject the conditions and their capacity to take the offered possibilities.
Yes, but that might be another position.
I do not know.
No information on this.

There is very limited information and knowledge about experiences of the older refugees in the UK and their role in the society.

Question 9

The relation between older refugees and their children is a topic of great concern for many of the respondents. The answers to the question were quite long and detailed. Many think this relation to be full of conflicts and problems. The relationship is often qualified as upside down, where children take over (some of) the role of the parents. Reading the answers it is not always clear whether the respondents speak from own experiences with older refugees and their children, or from a more general theoretical background.

Full of conflicts / problematic

It's quite common that responsibilities and needs of the members of the family are not separated and the parents are unable or unwilling to see their children as individuals with their own needs. An example is that children are often used as translators in all kinds of contacts with the society, regardless of age or maturity.

Physical punishment and verbal threats are still used in some refugee families as a way to discipline children.

Yes, I have met a lot of families with children, who came to mental health services. They are not the majority but present some of the problems.

Secondary traumatisation is one, emancipation of women and children is also a topic. Next to traumatic stress and acculturation problems.

In Vietnam, there is more inter-support between family members. Here the adult child often works long hours, 7 days a week and neglects or doesn't have time to spend with older members of the family. There is also more geographical and home separation; you don't find three generations living under the same roof. The group complained that the younger generation has no manners and is undisciplined. This creates conflict between men and women. Women now have more control over their finances. A higher rate of divorce has been observed, even of 30-year long marriages.' (from Older Refugees Programme - Report of a London Listening Event' November 2006, Age Concern & Refugee Council).

Polarisation takes place as the identities of parents and children change. Eventually children reject their parents/language/traditions in an effort to become "accepted" by the more cosmopolitan host society they live in.

Usually there is a cultural clash because children tend to adapt quicker to the way of life of a second country whereas for parents it takes longer.

There is also the issue about religion. Children brought to this country at an early age may decide to embrace the new culture, change religion and adopt a different attitude in life.

By integrating in a new society the traditional relations with family are broken. The parents hang on the traditional relation in the family, but children, who start integration in the new society, have tendency to change those relations.

The role of family and community networks has traditionally been seen as wholly positive. They are a central aspect of older refugees' lives, but the scope and roles of these networks cannot be generalised.

More recent studies have highlighted problem issues including intergenerational conflict, changing family roles and structures, and gender based oppression with a particular impact on older women. Messages were given by older refugees through ORP's (Office for Refugee Policy) Listening events indicated that cultural alienation and the replacement of collective with individual values lead to instances of intra-family conflict. Generational conflict can also be particularly pronounced, as a result of the generations speaking different languages

and/or using language differently. There are often conflicting expectations between generations, which in some cases can lead to abuse of older people by younger family members. Some studies argue that older refugees lacked English skills they had to rely on younger people, leading to a loss of respect. It has been noted that most older Turkish asylum seekers came as dependants with their family and were required to rely on younger family members to access support. This meant that the needs of younger family members were addressed first.

Relationships between parents and children are often driven by a strong wish for social mobility. Families that manage to reach this country have a dream for a better life. Many invest as much as they can in the education of their children. However, high barriers on the labour market and in the educational system, have led to a sense of frustration amongst many refugee families. Parents cannot fulfil their role as role models and breadwinners. This causes conflict within families and often leads to problems in the identity formation of especially young male refugees e.g. from Arabic descent. Hence, there is a gap between the aspirations of parents and the social reality of the families.

Situation of refugee families is often very difficult and bad, housing conditions with several family members in one room causes conflicts. Housing conditions play an important role with the well-being and psychic situation. It would be better to have offers for integration more decentralized so that people have to move out.

Upside down

In most refugee families the relationship between children and parents is upside down. The children have to deal with many questions of every day life. They know the language better than their parents and have to translate for them. Many second generation refugees have a feeling of responsibility for their parents.

Relationships between parents and their children are partly extremely conflict-riddled and burdened with the experiences of having to flee an area and being persecuted. Frequently, family roles are shifted in the way that children take over parental roles (called parentification), since children often are better able to adapt to the receiving country.

The integration process is more easier for children than for their parents. Children go to day care or to school and adopt very easily the Finnish way of thinking, values, language, get friends etc. In many cases the children are balancing between the home values and the values from Finnish society. It is very easy to understand that there will come some conflicts. Children are the ones who are operating as interpreters when their parents are in contact with authorities. Finland is a country where you get a lot of information in written form. If you can not Finnish language you will have many problems Children are surely interpreting / translating / making reservation to doctors etc. They are as well needed when translating or filling different types of papers. I mean the refugee children must do such kind of duties what their Finnish friends never do.

Many refugee families have a lot of children and maybe the father is missing - either he has died or he has left the family. Even if the father is present so he has no longer the position as the head of the family has lost his. Children are functioning as leaders.

Two sides

No general answer possible, my experiences with elderly refugees and refugee families confirm the observation in migration sociology about the irrelevance and the key role of the migrant family. The family is the most important (survival) resource for refugees in their attempt to overcome their difficult situation. This solidarity and socio-emotional bondage can also be a source for tension and conflict.

In patriarchal cultures parents determine what children are supposed to do. On the other hand it is to be recognized that children and young persons, due to the education they learn a new language more easily. Thus they are frequently used as interpreter for various interests, and thereby they are loaded with a responsibility which they can hardly bear.

In some cases, children when entering their host country with their family turn out to be much more competent in coping with their challenges of life. Usually, they speak the language of their host country earlier. This correlates to a certain kind of disillusion regarding the elderly.

In discussing 'Inter-generational Issues', participants in the Workshop on 'Family and Community Networks' commented on the following: 'Support of family members is lost - which can lead to inter-generational conflict and conflict between spouses. In the UK we emphasise the importance of living independently and self-reliance. The drawback is that it destroys the close-knit family unit. It is not suited to close communities: older people lose benefits and can't look after themselves.

Both groups agreed that children are more obedient in the country of origin; here they think they are more independent. More rights are available to them in this different society. The younger generation have had a higher education and know the system better here. In some instances, they use this knowledge of the society to abuse and/or take advantage of the elderly - for example, getting them to sign forms and take over their homes, or to put them into care homes. It is a different social culture - there is no common interest between generations and so they do not spend much time together.

Normal relation.

In general, there is normal relation between parents and children.

The relationship between parents and sons, is quite similar. Sons have elder people (grand parents) as a reference that give them support and respect in every moment. The family decisions must count on their opinion.

We always have considered as essential, their role in the society despite the difficulties in their social integration due to their importance in the family institution.

It is hard to say because there are just a few older refugees or families in my country. But probably children look upon their parents with respect and at the same time they feel a bit of pressure that they need to help their parents.

Other answers

What is strange for us is the way of leaving own children with other people in the community - even for a whole day without any hesitation.

Access to nursery school and elementary school is essential for both children and parents. Some of the advantages we can mention are: stability in every day life, language-skills, increased contact with local community, awareness of issues concerning children.

From our experience in dealing with refugees we can not answer this question.

Question 10

About the question how the social life of older refugees is arranged, there is a lot of agreement. Family structures and the own community are named as most important. Some respondents mention that there is a lack of special arrangements and programmes for older refugees, so there is no choice but to rely on family and own community, or live in isolation. In quit a few countries older refugees have access to the normal social system.

Depending on the family

If they are embedded in kinship structures, the life of older refugees is arranged within them. If not, there is a high risk of social isolation.

I think they live in a rather isolated way. Often they depend on the social relationships their children have been able to establish. Family ties stay very close.

If their adult children are in Belgium, they are often living with them and taken on charge by

them.
It is mostly organised within the families. I suppose Refugees less often than Germans seek by own initiative institutional support. It is seen as a sense of loose family solidarity.
It seems to be more connected to the family and in comparison to the countries of their origin more restricted.
Dependent on their family members.
We believe that the social life of older refugees is limited by the traditions and social activities of the family and that they are not expected to make arrangements as individuals.
In most cases older refugees social life is depending on their original family. Most of the time the older refugees are staying in their homes having their only contact with family members. Authorities are not arranging any Finnish language courses to persons who are over 65 years old. NGOs and their various projects (not only for the migrants) are the nearly the only ones to offer activities to older refugees - language courses, information about Finnish society, meeting points, recreation etc. These activities are very much depending on the NGOs activities and their well-will. Finland's problem is that we have few older refugees and they are presenting various nationalities or religion backgrounds. Even if there is a will to arrange some courses, the older refugees do not want to participate because of various reasons.
The Social life of Armenian older refugees revolves around their families/relations and their community.
Own community
Generally, the social life is limited and subscribed in activities and actions in his own community. There is no an important exchange and contact with the reception communities. The economical society is also an important limitation.
Older refugees who are alone often receive help from compatriots.
In various ways, but generally speaking older refugees rely heavily on family members, or local community associations or RCO's (Refugee Community Organisations), or - in some cases older people's groups which cater specifically for ethnic minority communities - to help them to maintain their social networks and social interaction with others. It is in the absence of either supportive family members, or local community associations or groups, that older refugees are more likely to become particularly socially isolated. The role of religious and faith organisations can also be key to maintaining social contact for older refugees.
Within their own communities. In this country we get help from the local authority and charitable trusts to keep the community together. They give us money to run community or day centres where they can come together, be happy and celebrate their own culture. This is applicable to the young and the old.
No special arrangements / isolation
In Austria there are no special arrangements for elderly refugees or migrants until now.
In the case of Spain, the social life of the elder refugees is very deficient, there is a complete absence of specific programs, even though the suitable thing to do, I think, would be to include these people in the general system of the host country, which in the reality is't happening, since that in these cases, the identity topic is basic so to develop in this age range, social relationships and as far as I know, there are no programs or social interventions aiming to provide and make possible a social life with both people of their same country and native population.
We often experience elderly refugees to be socially isolated. In most instances families have been separated during the flight, accordingly family members live in different places far-scattered all over the country. In daily life the cruising radius of elderly refugees often is extremely limited to paying visits to doctors or food shopping. Social contacts are poor due to the lack of German language knowledge. As a result of lacking (linguistic and spatial) integration the environmental orientation and participation in offers of the receiving country often is poorly as well.
At present, in the context of the basic care, there is no special treatment for older refugees.

Outside contact with the official services they have very difficult contacts with the local population.
Dependant on the social resources available.
Many are registered at the agency for work and receive social assistance, others get social benefits. They are often clients of doctors and psychologists/therapists
There are no special programmes for older refugees in my country and they are not entitled to pension. After three years living in the country they do not get any extra financial help and must apply for financial help every three months. Their financial situation causes a lot of problems: social exclusiveness, limited chances for normal life, etc.
In urgent cases of need (people with multiple illnesses) can get home assistance (support in the household, care) e.g. medical care.
Not different from the others, we suppose they would not even want to have their lives arranged differently.
Unaccompanied elderly refugees who are able to take care of themselves, usually get their own flats, social benefits and health insurance Elderly persons, who are not able to take care of themselves, are accommodated in retirements homes or similar houses, receiving pocket money and medical care.
Other answers
There is a large variety of options which differ in every individual case. I don't know.
Many live in community flats.

Question 11

Do you think, in general, that older refugees are in need of participation in the society in your country, or that they are mainly oriented on their country of origin?
Almost all respondents are convinced that older refugees have a strong orientation on their country of origin. The idea of going back to their country and homesickness are mentioned to explain this orientation. Difficulties with integration and the new language are named as obstacles for participation in the host country. Yet many are convinced that older refugees are in some way in need of participation. From the answers given one can detect different views on the meaning of the concept "participation". For some respondents participation means having access to social services, for others it means developing relations with nationals and participating in social and cultural activities.

Orientation on the country of origin
Even though they live in a new country and society, their inner life is oriented on the past and the country of origin. I think the main reason of this is lack of special integration programs and ability to learn language.
They want to participate in the society of the host country but they also follow the developments in their country of origin the later more than younger refugees. Older dream more often to go back to their home country.
I guess orientation towards the home country is big. Especially for those that arrived lately.
The idea of going back to the country of origin is always present for the refugee. Because of the difficulties in his integration, this desire is increased. Also in many cases, the participation in the new society is linked with their revindications in the country of origin.
Normally, the older refugees have more difficulties to adapt to a new life situation; at these ages the feeling of "homesickness" and the process of "mourning" is much more complex due to a lack or scarce expectations for the future. This makes them "stay longer in their native countries" and to not feel the need of starting out new relationships. If they do start

<p>out relationships they usually are from their same country. and their closest environment, but participate very little in the society of our country. No one facilitates or provides them with optimum conditions for it, nor alternatives that are adjusted to their needs or expectations.</p>
<p>Armenian older refugees have multiple identities depending very much which country they originate from. For example they are mainly oriented on the country of origin such as Iraq for example as well as what is happening in Armenia which became independent only in 1991.</p>
<p>My opinion is that specially the older refugees are mainly oriented on their country of origin. The most ones are staying in their home and the only activity might be either watching the TV or going to the mosques. Many refugee families have satellite antennas and by them they are following what is happening in their ex home countries. Lack of language skills in Finnish do that very few of them are watching /following Finnish news or programmes on TV. The problem got even bigger this autumn when Finland got in to the new digi box -system. It means that you have to buy a special box to be able to watch ordinary Finnish programmes. Very few migrants / refugees have not wasted their money on these boxes while they have their parabolic / satellite antennas. Even if the should want to follow the Finnish programme every now and then so they have no possibilities without buy this digi box.</p>
<p>Very old refugees are mainly oriented on their relatives or friends from their own country in our country.</p>
<p>Need to participate</p>
<p>Both</p>
<p>I think both</p>
<p>However, whether their stay in the UK is likely to be relatively short-term or longer-term, I think that it's important for older people's general well-being to be able to participate in activities in the host country, even if, as is often the case, they may spend the majority of their time with fellow refugees from the same country. Being able to share the experience of being a refugee and to be able to draw on support from people who understand intimately the cultural, social and political context from which people have had to flee, is an immensely important source of support for older refugees, and can help them enormously in being able to 'find their feet' and start the long process of 'settling' and, perhaps eventually 'integrating' into UK society.</p>
<p>However, possibilities for participation in this country should be increased. Be it within the community of fellow country people or within the host society. I think programmes for elderly care have to take into account that more and more "customers" have a refugee or migration history. Programmes have to be adapted to this demographic development.</p>
<p>There is a very strong need of participation, independent from the refugee's orientation on their country of origin.</p>
<p>They need support to prevent isolation in our country. Because of lack of offers, they frequently are oriented on their country of origin.</p>
<p>They are in need of participation, because they are in need of social services here in Austria.</p>
<p>Particularly for those refugees whose asylum proceedings are positively decided, requires measures for integration in the social and vocational field. Contacts and offers of their own community are wished by (older) refugees; and they wish an appropriate infrastructure for this.</p>
<p>Yes they need to participate in the society of this country and they are not oriented to their countries of origin.</p>
<p>Yes I think that 'young' older people (between 50 and 60?) would be helped if participation in the society in our country would be stimulated.</p>
<p>I still thinking about the necessity of the social integration in the host country, with a social support through a follow up intervention.</p>
<p>They are in need of participation. They are afraid not to be recognised in their identity. Often</p>

they "hide" their culture inside their homes. They are afraid we would laugh about them. Due to language they are looking for contact with people of their own country.
Successful integration means active and equal participation in the society of the host country while maintaining traditions and customs of the country of origin.
Yes, I think it is very important for older refugees to have support and opportunities to participate in the society in the 'host' country, in this case the UK. Of course, in many cases, older refugees will retain a strong attachment to their country of origin, and in some cases (depending on circumstances and context in country of origin) will harbour strong aspirations to return to their country of origin.
Other answers
Most elderly refugees loose contacts to their home country. Due to lacking of financial resources or residence rights as well as poor health conditions, they don't have the chance to visit their countries of origin. Moreover, social contacts with other elderly people from their community in the receiving country don't function well. In contrast to communities of guest worker countries, communities of refugees often are not organised well and thus don't offer a variety of possibilities to come together. Frequently, integration into the receiving country hasn't worked out despite the deep interest in it. Integration most often fails because of lacking opportunities/abilities of language learning. As a result, elderly refugees loose their contact to their home countries with its cultural and social benefits and (as a prolonging of the vicious cycle) no sufficient integration into the receiving country takes place.
I do not know the answer but I think that in fact the society of our country is not very much in need of their participation.....when it comes to the "moment of the truth" they will not easily be given the asylum, only as members of a family who will receive the asylum.
Probably they would participate more in some social activities but they do not have a chance (financial problems, social differences, etc.)

Question 12

<p>Asked about important issues in relation to the social position of older refugees, the need to fight isolation and create opportunities to participate in local networks and to develop social contacts are mentioned most. In relation to this, vocational training, education and learning the language are often named. Access to labour or voluntary work is also considered is also in this category, as well as access to (medical) care and social support.</p> <p>Social acceptance (no discrimination and racism), housing difficulties and financial needs are in the middle category of mentioned issues, while issues as access to legal services, cultural activities and faith/religion, are mentioned only one time.</p>
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Most mentioned issues	
isolation / social contacts / local networks / loneliness	15x
vocational training / education / language learning	13x
access labour / voluntary work / employment	12x
(medical) care / (access to) social support	10x
social acceptance / discrimination / racism / stigma / marginalization	8x
housing difficulties	8x
Average mentioned issues	
poverty / financial needs / dependence of social welfare	7x
psychological problems / depression / traumatic experience / mental health	6x
naturalization / getting citizenship / legal status / entitlement barriers	4x

Less mentioned issues	
capabilities (recognition) / validation professional	3x
insecurity / uncertainty / vulnerable	2x
cultural activities	1x
faith / religion	1x
access to legal and social advise	1x
women	1x
lack of community union	1x
funding	1x
disabled refugees	1x

Question 13

From the answers given before, one could easily get the impression that older refugees are just a vulnerable group, living in isolation and deplorable circumstances. Asked about the power of older refugees, respondents give a impressive list of personal qualities and roles of older refugees, that can be of use in developing new programmes to promote their social participation.

Life experience / wisdom / personal competences
knowledge, wisdom and skills (5x)
survival competence (4x)
facilitator / mediator in conflicts (4x)
Adaptability (3 x)
incredible resilience through their whole life experience (2 x)
experience of leaving home and beginning a new life somewhere else
ability to reflect life
They might help others to deal with the experience of living in exile
experience and expertise
resourcefulness
optimism
dignity
ability to switch between different societies.
experience of political struggle
their languages – could be a potential fir the entrepreneurs
initiative
Cultural role
culture protector / reminders of their common identity, repository of home/national culture, keeper of traditions and family values (5x)
important / historical memory (2x)
authority person in the culture area
transmitters of their values and culture
bridge to their culture of origin
position in intercultural and intergenerational dialog
Go between
the knowledge about the different countries
they bring a new traditions and cultures to a hosting countries

Outer glance onto their country of origin as well as onto their receiving country
They can contrast both national or political system and evaluate them from their point of view.
They can tell us at which points our social system is deficient mirror to society.
They can see thing from another perspective and make a positive contribution to society
From a different view make us understand the process of getting older of the population in the receiving country
Family role
decision maker
They are important social supporters of younger generations and amongst each other within their community in the receiving country
Support and in some cases role model of the family unit
support the vulnerable family significantly
some influence on younger refugee
Other answers
the participation in social and political activism
raising public awareness about the situation of refugees
Feel integrated in the society and their contributions are valued
many scientists, successful business people, inventors, etc. came from a refugee background
They are overlooked in research, their voices are hardly heard
The older refugees deserve respect and more empathy and e.g. in Slovakia they get it

Question 14

Are there any other points you want to draw attention to?

- Organisations that care for refugees should have more capacities in regard of human resources and offers for refugees.
- The number of senior refugees/immigrants is growing, therefore this case should be reviewed. These groups needs special care with skilled and qualified workers because of their culture and religion backgrounds.
- Whatever we want to organise for older refugees we should keep in mind that they should want it themselves and that we don't turn our well mend efforts into disturbing obligations. Some of the older refugees are still dynamic and should receive possibilities but others are tired and only want a peaceful life.
- We underestimate the huge efforts refugees in general have made to reach this country. We should work on a culture of respect for their efforts, as they are a source of creativity and enrichment for this society.
- Every point we were talking about depends on law, on society.
- In our opinion the questions are not accurate, or somewhat superficial.
- We experience elderly refugees often to be extremely depressive about their current way of living. By loosing their most important references to life via the experience of war, persecution and the necessity to flee, they thereby also lost their power and courage to

face life. Working with elderly refugees as well as the 'empowerment' itself in most cases do require an intensive psychological effort to stabilize them and to open up future- and present-driven life perspectives for them.

- The refugees have the necessity to obtain specific guarantees in the host society that could facilitate their participation and social and personal stability in the host society.
- The asylum system in Slovakia is not sufficient and we will have to work on it
- Slovenian situation is very different from those in other EU countries, because there are just a few refugees in our country (around 120). But nevertheless we should have some programmes for older refugees. they should get some financial and social help, they should have a word in our society which they are part of, etc.
- Importance of empowering older refugees, giving them a voice and resourcing them to improve the quality of their lives.

Final summary

Analysing the answers given, the following picture arises:

The refugees in the countries participating in the Delphi survey come from many countries. According to the respondents, refugees from the former Soviet Union and former Yugoslavia live mainly in central and western Europe. The ones from Africa are spread over all parts of Europe, whereas refugees from Latin America are mostly found in Spain, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands.

Some respondents consider refugees old when they are from 40 plus, others when their age is above 65. The respondents name three main factors which are of influence on the question when a refugee can be considered as old.:

1. No participation in the labour market
2. A bad health condition
3. Factors related to the situation in the home countries.

Older refugees are thought to regard themselves as old, because they feel old, have no jobs or activities, due to experiences in their home countries and because of their mental condition.

The respondents see rather big differences in the position of those who came at an earlier age and those who came when they were already older. The first group is seen well integrated, with good language skills. A better financial position and social status and more perspectives for the future, whilst the latter group appears to be a vulnerable, isolated group, with little rights, a weak social and financial position and are rather depended of their family.

The respondents are aware there can be differences between the various ethnic groups. Older refugees from Africa and Muslim countries have a respected position within their own communities, while Latin American refugees don't want to be seen as old. Some respondents see no differences between older refugees, other than on an individual level.

To deal with differences in the perception when someone is old, two main categories of answers are given. One category focuses on the personal situation and capacities of older refugees themselves (need for empowerment), the other category focuses on the need to lift barriers in society (law and social services) with a high attention to creating faculties and

opportunities for integration.

Older refugees have a respectful position within their own communities, although there might be differences. Most respondents note that older refugees face a loss of position in the host country, because of language problems and poor changes at the labour market. Outside their own communities older refugees can, in many cases, count on a more respectful treatment than younger refugees, but on the whole they are seen as a rather invisible group, with a high risk of isolation. A substantial category of respondents thinks there are no differences between older refugees and old people in general.

The relationship between older refugees and their children is seen as rather difficult and full of conflicts, with the children, to a certain extent, taking over the role of the parents. Yet many older refugees are depending on their families.

Almost all respondents think that older refugees have a strong orientation on their country of origin, they suffer from home sickness, are longing to go back, and have difficulties with participation in the host society. Despite these facts, most respondents are convinced that older refugees are in need of participation. The meaning of the concept participation differs however. For some respondents it means having access to social services, for others it means developing relations with nationals and participating in social and cultural activities. Asked about main issues in relation to the social position of older refugees, most respondents say that it is important to fight isolation, and create opportunities to participate in local networks and to develop social contacts. In relation to this, vocational training, education and learning the language are often named. Access to labour or voluntary work is also considered important as well as access to (medical) care and social support.

Although older refugees are seen as a vulnerable group, living in isolation, the respondents name quite a few personal qualities and roles, that can be of use in developing new programmes to promote their social participation. Life experience, wisdom, resilience and mediator in conflicts are personal qualities often named. Older refugees can also operate as protectors of a common identity and keepers of traditions. They can be a mirror to the host society on subjects like the social system and the process of getting older and, last but not least can support younger generations.

Many respondents find it important to support older refugees in different ways, give them a voice and resource them to improve the qualities of their lives.