



UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG

# **Communication between Syrian refugees and Swedish governmental agencies:**

**A study of the information transfer and  
content communicated to refugees for  
resettlement support**

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## **Abstract**

The Syrian war that began in 2011 has led to a refugee crisis which has caused an influx of Syrian refugees seeking asylum in many European countries, including Sweden. Swedish authorities have accepted thousands of Syrian refugees leading to intercultural communication between Syrian refugees and the employees they meet from different Swedish governmental agencies that are helping them resettle. The study aims at reaching out to both sides to understand and assess the information transfer, and the content of information communicated to Syrian refugees that is helping them resettle, and subsequently integrate. Qualitative data was collected through sixteen in-depth interviews with Syrian refugees and Swedish employees, giving an insight to their experiences, opinions, and evaluations. Analysis of the data was done using a hypothetical deductive approach to discuss several themes identified in the results in reference to the theories presented in the study.

The results of the study show that Syrian refugees are responsive and understand the information they receive from Swedish agencies, but reveal that there are several problems regarding the content of information they are receiving. The study also presents the information that Swedish employees believe will help facilitate the integration of Syrian refugees into Swedish society.

*Key words: Sweden, Swedish agencies, Syria, refugees, communication, resettlement, integration*

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## **1.0 Introduction**

The first section of this study presents the problematic field of research in regards to the Syrian refugees' influx into Sweden and the eventual process of their resettlement there. Based on the problem statement, two research questions were formulated and are presented followed by a description of the objective and relevance of this study. Finally, the first section concludes with a disposition that includes the structure and content of the seven sections of this study.

### **1.1 Problem statement**

According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) “1,103,496 migrants, including asylum seekers are reported to have arrived to Europe by land and seas routes” since January 2015. Of this large number of migrants, around 48.3 % of them are Syrian refugees fleeing the war in Syria that began in mid 2011 and has been escalating ever since (IOM, 2016). The migration crisis in Europe has caused a state of distress and division amongst the countries of the EU because of the different policies that have emerged to cope with this influx. Sweden has been amongst the top countries in Europe to receive asylum seekers, and according to the Swedish Migration Agency statistics, in 2015 alone they have received 162, 877 asylum applications of which the highest number of citizenship applicants are Syrians (31.5% of the total applicants) (Migrationsverket Statistics, 2016). The Swedish Migration Agency assesses these applications, and although not all asylum seekers are granted asylum, a large percentage of them do. But with the case of Syrian asylum seeking applications for 2015, the Migration agency decisions have so far granted an overwhelming majority of 90% of applicants asylum (Migrationsverket Statistics, 2016).

As Swedish authorities grant asylum seekers many rights including housing, economic support, children's rights to attend schools, and medical assistance, this consequently means that thousands of Syrian refugees are being resettled in the different municipalities of Sweden. Hence there is at large intercultural communication interactions occurring between Syrian refugees and employees they meet from different Swedish governmental agencies such as the Migration Agency, medical institutes, and employment offices. The Swedish agencies are helping in the resettlement of Syrian refugees, and have been seeking to make their integration into Swedish society an easy and smooth process, but the question is, have they really been able to do so? The focus of this study is to reach out to both parties in an attempt to assess the information transfer process occurring during the communication between Syrian refugees and Swedish employees in different governmental agencies. Furthermore, the aim of the study is to understand and assess the content of information communicated to Syrian refugees about resettling, and if/how it has helped in easing their integration process, while evaluating the current information and furthermore discovering the type of information each party wants the other to know, in order to facilitate the integration process.

## 1.2 Research questions

Based on the problem statement, two research questions were formulated, the first focuses on the Syrian point of view, while the second focuses on the Swedish point of view. Furthermore, each research question was divided into (a) and (b), with (a) focusing on the transfer of information during communication, while (b) focuses on the content of information being transferred.

(1)

*a. How do Syrian refugees perceive the effectiveness of the information transfer occurring during their communication with employees at the Swedish agencies which are helping them resettle in Sweden?*

*b. Do Syrian refugees feel they are satisfied with the information they receive from those Swedish agencies? [part 1] What information do they want to know that will help them integrate? [part 2]*

(2)

*a. How do Swedish employees perceive the effectiveness of the communication that occurs during their interaction with Syrian refugees?*

*b. What information do Swedish employees want Syrian refugees to have in order to help them integrate better in accordance to both, their own needs and the needs of Swedish society?*

## 1.3 Objective of study and relevance:

The aim of this study is to better understand how Syrian refugees perceive the effectiveness of the communication that occurs between them and Swedish employees at governmental agencies that are meant to provide them with the necessary information needed for their resettlement in Sweden. Furthermore, the study will attempt to fairly understand the Syrian mindset and the extent to which they comprehend and are satisfied with the information they receive. While also exploring what/if there is any information missing that they want to know about resettling in Sweden that can eventually make their integration process easier. The study also aims at discovering the potential intercultural communication challenges that can arise in the interactions between Syrian refugees and Swedish employees, while also understanding how the intercultural communication competence of Swedish employees plays an important role in the success of these interactions. Furthermore, the study will attempt to fairly discover from the Swedish employees' perspective, the Swedish mindset and what information they want to give about resettling in Sweden in order to help Syrians integrate better, in accordance with their own needs (Syrians) and also the needs of Swedish society. And last, understand what Syrian refugees can themselves do to facilitate their integration into Swedish society.

This study has the prospect of being relevant and even beneficial for many stakeholders. Starting with Swedish agencies, this study can help bridge a gap by creating an understanding, derived from the perspectives of both sides, on what can help make the resettlement, and consequently the integration process, easier for Syrian refugees. By comprehending what Syrian refugees really need and want to understand about Sweden, authorities can better assist them and adapt to their needs explicitly. Furthermore, this study can be of interest to

international organizations related to migration and refugee work, since Syrian refugees are seeking asylum in many different countries, so by possibly understanding the Syrian mindset better this can/will help governmental institutes and NGO's worldwide to better assist Syrian refugees in their resettlement. Last but not least, this study could be of relevance to the academic world of intercultural communication as it will add more in-depth value on the subject of immigrants and refugee integration in new cultures.

## **1.4 Disposition**

This study is divided into seven sections, that each contain one or two levels of subsections. The first section is an introduction of the study that presents the problem statement, research questions, and the objective and relevance of this study. The second section presents the theoretical framework of this study through presenting different theories and research that will help in a hypothetical deductive analysis of the study's data. The third section presents the methodological framework of the study through presenting the methods of data collection, methods of analyzing the data, information about the participants in this study, and last the limitations of the chosen method of data collection and the ethical considerations that were taken into account. The fourth section presents the results of the data collected which are presented in the form of tables, quotes, and summaries of answers. The fifth section presents the discussion of results through six identified topics in relation to the theoretical background presented in the second section of the study. The sixth and last section presents the conclusion of the study through answering the research questions, and presenting suggestions for future research that could build on this study.

## **2.0 Relevant Theories and Research**

The second section presents the theoretical framework of this study. This section starts with a sub-section that defines and distinguishes what a refugee immigrant is, presents a summary of the Syrian refugee crisis, and presents a brief background on the Swedish approach to receiving Syrian refugees. Furthermore, based on the research questions of this study, the second subsection presents the potential intercultural communication challenges that can arise for refugee immigrants or immigrants in general, during interactions with the employees of governmental agencies of the host country. The last subsection of this section will review literature that discusses the kind of information given to refugees for integration support in Sweden, as well as in different countries.

### **2.1 Refugees**

This section presents a brief discussion distinguishing between what a refugee immigrant is, and how their situation differs from other kinds of immigrants. Furthermore, a brief background is given about the Syrian refugee crisis, and how Swedish authorities have reacted to asylum seeking Syrian refugees.

#### **2.1.1 Defining refugee**

For the relevance of this study it is important to first define what the word "refugee" means and to characterize the circumstances that makes a person a refugee. There are numerous definitions that try to capture what it means to be a refugee, however the definition of the UNCHR could be considered the most relevant as it's the "only global legal instrument



dealing with the status and rights of refugees” (UNCHR, 2010, p.7). According to the 1951 Convention (followed by the 1967 Protocols) relating to the status of refugees, a refugee was defined as a person “who is outside his or her country of nationality or habitual residence; has a well-founded fear of being persecuted because of his or her race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion; and is unable or unwilling to avail him or herself of the protection of that country, or return there, for fear of persecution”. Consequently, any person who falls under this definition is “entitled to the rights and bound by the duties contained in the 1951 Convention” given to refugees (UNCHR, 2010, P.5). Refugees are by definition forced to leave their countries for fears of persecution while all other types of immigrants leave their countries, more or less, willingly, for various purposes such as labor, family reunification, study, or the prospects of better future lives. Intercultural research has generally shown that resettling and integrating into a new culture can often times be a very challenging process for any kind of immigrant, but a refugees’ challenges can be even more heightened by their emotional and physical traumatic experiences. Hence, authorities that are generally dealing with the resettling of immigrants, are in a more sensitive situation when dealing with refugees, as it means dealing with people who have suffered from traumatic and life-threatening conditions.

The 1951 Convention preserves certain rights for refugees, such as “the right to work, the right to housing, the right to education, and the right to public relief and assistance” to be granted from the country they have sought asylum to (UNCHR, 2010, p.7). In order for a refugee to receive these rights, they have to interact with the country’s different agencies that are responsible for each of the above-mentioned aspects: housing, employment, and education. Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to focus on both, the transfer of information, and the content of information that is communicated to refugees during their interactions with government employees which are helping them access their abovementioned preserved rights.

### **2.1.2 Syrian refugee crisis**

The focus of this study is on Syrian refugees in specific and their resettlement in Sweden. Hence, briefly understanding the Syrian situation can clarify the extent of their global refugee crisis that has accordingly led to their influx into many countries, including Sweden. The Syrian civil war began in mid-March, 2011, which started as pro-democracy protests calling for the outset of President Bashar Al Assad. However, these pro-democracy protests quickly turned into a full armed civil war as government oppositions took up arms and started defending themselves against security forces. The fighting quickly spread across Syria which has resulted in over 250,000 Syrian civilians being killed, more than one million injured, around 6.6 million internally displaced, while the UNCHR has registered more than 4.8 million Syrians as refugees (OCHA, 2016). These horrific numbers make Syria “the largest displacement crisis globally” today (OCHA, 2016). Although the strain of receiving these massive amounts of Syrian refugees has been mainly on neighboring countries where the UNCHR registers that Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon have received the most numbers, the UNCHR has registered 897, 645 thousand Syrian asylum applications in Europe between April, 2011 and December, 2015 (UNCHR, 2016).

Sweden has been amongst the top countries in Europe, in relation to population size, to receive Syrian refugees (Ostrand, 2015). According to the Swedish Migration Agency, “Sweden is one of 30 countries in the world that takes quota of refugees each year” and has the largest quota within Europe (Migrationsverket Asylum Regulations, 2016). However, in

response to the Syrian crisis, of the standard quota, the Swedish government has decided to prioritize Syrian citizens, or Palestinians from Syria, granting one third of all quota for their resettlement (Migrationsverket, 2016). Statistics show that an overwhelming majority of the decisions made on the Syrian asylum applicants grant them asylum (2012: 88%), (2013: 87%), (2014, 90 %) and (2015: 90%). However, statistics also show that out of the asylum applications a remarkable number have not received any decisions yet (2014: 40 %), and (2015: 60%), which is a situation that also requires attention. Nonetheless, this means that since 2012 until 2015 more than 50 thousand Syrian refugees have resettled in the different municipalities of Sweden. Hence, this gives rise to an interest in studying how Swedish agencies have been able deal with the resettling of these large numbers of refugees from one country in such a short period of time.

## **2.2 Intercultural communication challenges of refugee immigrants**

The focus of this section is on the transfer of information aspect of communication, where it will present, in relation to the research questions, some of the possible communication challenges that can arise during the transfer of information that happens during the interaction between refugee immigrants and employees at governmental agencies of the country they have sought asylum in.

### **2.2.1 Intercultural misunderstanding/lack of understanding**

First, we need to define the word communication, which is the main key word of this study, in order to give context to what has been written so far, and for the upcoming sections of this study. According to Allwood (2013b), communication is “sharing of information, cognitive content or understanding with varying degrees of awareness and intentionality, often interactive involving information exchange, often conventionally regulated” (p.34). So the context of communication in this study is used to refer to the process of sharing of information, and the content of information being exchanged in the interaction between Syrian refugees and Swedish employees at governmental agencies. But in a more precise sense, this interaction can be defined as an “intercultural” communication, since it is occurring between individuals from two (or more) different cultural communities in an interactive situation (Toomey, 2005).

Moving on to the discussion of possible communication challenges, intercultural misunderstanding or lack of understanding is a challenge that can emerge during communication between refugee immigrants and employees at governmental agencies. According to Allwood & Abelar (1984), “understanding consists of the process that connects received information with already stored information and thereby places the incoming information in a meaningful context” (p.1, cited from Allwood, 1976). An emphasis is put on the importance of having stored information which is what allows a person to make sense of the incoming information, so what happens then if a person is unable to find any stored information to make sense of what is being said? This is referred to as lack of understanding, and can arise from two ways, first “where relevant information is missing”; for example a refugee coming from an underdeveloped country may not know what an Establishment Unit is since they have no similar entity in their country of origin. The second way is “when a relevant strategy for connecting incoming information with stored information is missing; for example, knowing what a bed is but having no strategy for connecting the Swedish word *säng* (bed) with this information” (Allwood & Abelar, 1984, p.2). A misunderstanding on the other hand, arises when a “receiver actually connects incoming information with stored information

but where the resulting meaningful connection must be viewed as inadequate or incorrect” (Allwood & Abelar, 1984, p.2). Both lack of understanding and misunderstanding are interrelated through how lack of understating, combined with the below states can lead to misunderstanding :

- “(i) an individual has strong expectations about the content of what is being said or done
- (ii) the individual is not conscious of his lack of understanding or
- (iii) the individual is strongly motivated to interpret and understand” (Allwood, 1984, p.2)

In an intercultural communication setting, such as that which occurs between refugee immigrants and governmental employees, “differences in background information can give rise to misunderstanding” in regards to differences in for example, art, music, history, geography, and political systems (Allwood & Abelar, 1984, p.6). Although Hinnenkamp (1977) argues against this, claiming that he has not seen research indicating that any out of the ordinary misunderstandings occur between people with different cultural, ethnic or linguistic backgrounds, the data results presented by Allwood & Abelar (1984) show differently. Allwood & Abelar (1984) examined audio and video recordings of Spanish speaking Latin American people learning Swedish, where they noticed that background differences in things such as food, clothing, habitation, health, values gave rise to misunderstandings (p.6). However, it is important to mention that these culture based misunderstandings rose when Spanish speaking people attempted to speak Swedish. Assuming that newly arrived refugees have not yet learned to speak the language of the country they have sought asylum in, the communication with government employees must therefore occur in a language native to neither sides (most likely English), or an interpreter is provided to the refugee. In case of using the first option, the chance of misunderstanding or lack of understanding can be very high since neither sides are natives to the language that is being used. In the case of the second option, providing an interpreter will depend on factors such as the policy of the country, availability of interpreters that speaks the native language of the refugee, and affordability (if the refugee has to pay for an interpreter themselves). Yet, as it will be discussed in the next subsection, the use of an interpreter does still not totally eradicate the chances of lack of understanding or misunderstanding to occur. Refugees arrive in a new country taking with them their values and beliefs from their cultures, ethnic groups and religions, and as Allwood & Abelar (1984) argue, all persons try to interpret information in a way that is meaningful to them which is determined by how their world had previously functioned. Hence, when refugees are being explained to by government employees how this the system of the host country functions, differences in views and methods on things such as, obligatory child education, freedom of religion and speech, method of booking an appointment to a doctor, can all give rise to lack of understanding or misunderstanding. Respectively, a refugee will try to interpret the information in a way that makes sense to them, and as mentioned above, this happens through connecting received information with already stored information (which can be missing) to place it in a meaningful context. And as this study will reach out to both Syrian refugees and governmental Swedish employees, it will attempt to discover if/how any of the two parties have experienced lack of understanding or misunderstanding during interactions with each other whether interaction occurred in a non-native language to both sides, or through an interpreter.

### **2.2.2 Use of interpreters**

Another challenging aspect to information transfer during communication, which as discussed in the previous sub-section can also be related to intercultural lack of understanding or

misunderstanding, is the notion of using interpreters as medium between refugee immigrants and governmental employees. However, the accessibility to an interpreter during such interactions will largely depend on the availability and policy of the country the refugee has sought asylum in. An interpreter should function as an impartial, credible and neutral medium between both sides, and should “try to produce an equivalent translation of the source language to the target language” (Krupic et al., 2016, p.2). And in order to do so, it is essential that the interpreter is competent and that he/she have received the necessary training to allow them to do their job. Furthermore, in accordance with the general ethical guidelines of an interpreter, they should not take over the role of either parties he/she is translating between, nor project feelings or advocate in favor of the interests of either sides (Wiking et al., 2009; Eklof et al., 2015). However, in addition to producing an equivalent translation of the content, sometimes interpreters are expected to function as “culture brokers”. Meaning, a professional interpreter is not only necessary for a successful communication in verbal interpretation, but also in cultural interpretation (Eklof et al., 2015; Wiking et al., 2009). However, Wiking et al. (2009) stresses that it’s not just the interpreters job to do cultural interpretations, but that it is also the employees’ job; for example, a physician in a medical center should “understand the meaning of behaviors and ideas, including patients’ conceptions of health and illness-within their cultural concept” (p.6). So when an employee has a deep understanding of the emotional and psychological factors surrounding an immigrant, he/she can be more sensitive to the culturally related nuances that are easily missed in interpretation (further discussed in section 2.2.3) (Wiking et al., 2009).

Several studies which have researched the use of interpreters between immigrants and governmental employees, have agreed upon the importance of using a professional interpreter as it has a positive effect on communication, reduces error and increases comprehension. A lack of a professional interpreter or the use of unprofessional persons such as a family member or a relative can lead to miscommunication, conflicts, and serious consequences in, for example, a medical context (Krupic et al., 2016; Wiking et al., 2009; Eklof et al., 2015). But there are several points that need to be considered in order for an interpretation instance between all three parties (the interpreter, and the two parties being interpreted to and from) to be communicatively successful. Although the studies mentioned here are focusing on a medical context, these conditions can be generalized in interpretation instances between employees and immigrants occurring at most governmental facilities such as an employment office, or a migration agency. Essentially, it is key that communication is centered around the subject being interpreted to, and from, (the immigrant), and that their expectations and needs are met. For example, “assigning the interpreter based on the patients’ mother tongue, rather than the patient’s citizenship, is one way to minimize communication misunderstanding between the patient and the health care provider” (Fatahi et al., 2010b, cited in Krupic et al., 2016, p.2). And even when an interpreter is assigned with the same mother tongue, there still needs to be consideration of the diversity of dialects within the same language to guarantee an even better outcome that minimizes misunderstandings (Krupic et al., 2016). However, in a rare language, or in a city or country with limited access to interpreters, such a condition might not be applicable or practical hence leaving room for unavoidable misunderstandings or miscommunication.

The results of the studies made by Krupic et al. (2016), Wiking et al. (2009), and Eklof et al. (2015) also showed the negative side or complications in using interpreters. Krupic et al. (2009) which studied how immigrants in Sweden viewed clinical encounters through interpreters, discussed how although immigrants were in general satisfied with the health care system, the majority highlighted their dissatisfaction with the interpreter service. Their

reasons included problems such as the interpreter's tardiness to appointments, which lead to anxiety, lack of professionalism, such as interpreters showing clear disinterest during the interaction or being aggressive or irritable, and last, lack of knowledge in medical terminology. Furthermore, the study made by Wiking et al. (2009), which was also about immigrant clinical encounters in Sweden through interpreters, showed that from the interpreter's point of view misunderstandings occurred between the patients and physicians due to differences in the "patients 'and physicians' ideas about health problems, expectations regarding the clinical encounters, and verbal and non-verbal communication styles" (p.2). Furthermore, general problems with the use of an interpreter can be due to "technical problems, lack of consultation time, difficulties expressing the patients' problems or explain medical terms, or relation problems between the patient, interpreter and GP" such as the patients having mistrust towards either the interpreter or physician (Wiking, p. 5). Hence, one can conclude that even though offering immigrants interpreters during their encounters with employees can have a generally positive effect on the communication outcome in regards to better comprehensions and reduction or misunderstandings, there are still problems that can present themselves at such encounters. Hence, an important aspect of studying communication transfer, is to understand how the use of interpreters has/can effect the communication process, and understand from Syrian refugees and Swedish employees how they each view the effects of these encounters.

### **2.2.3 Intercultural communication competence**

Building on what was said on the previous sub-section, Wiking (2009) argued that when an employee has an understanding of the emotional and psychological factors surrounding an immigrant he/she can then be more sensitive to the culturally related nuances that are easily missed in interpretation. This notion can fall under the larger umbrella of assuming that an employee has intercultural communication competence (ICC competence).

There are several definitions present in research about ICC, but they can be summarized in explaining that a person who is competent in ICC has the ability to communicate successively with individuals from different cultures by understanding the culture rules and the forces that drive them. By having this understanding, an individual is able to adjust their communication in a way that shows respect to individuals from different cultures (Chen & Starosta, 1998). Situations where governmental agencies deal with immigrant refugees, are some of the settings where ICC happens at daily bases, hence making it important that employees working there have ICC competence. Therefore, ICC trainings play an essential role in enabling individuals to understand culture differences and to expand their worldview on different attitudes, values, opinions and believes in order to act and have ICC competence (Chen & Starosta, 1998). There are several models which an ICC training can be based on, and choosing the right model can depend on factors such as the job of trainees or the circumstances they are expecting to face. Chen & Starosta (1998) present some models created by researchers throughout the years, a summary of two of the most significant models is presented below:

- A) The Culture Awareness Model: this model focuses on teaching participants cultural knowledge, and it assumes that in order for a successful interaction with other cultures to occur, a participant needs to understand their own and the other's cultures values, norms, customs, and social systems.

- B) The Interaction Model: this model focuses on requiring participants to directly interact with members of other cultures, assuming that after experiencing face-to-face interactions with other cultures this will make participants more comfortable in dealing with different cultures.

An ICC training based on either of these models, can use many different training techniques to ensure a successful outcome. Chen & Starosta (1998) also present some relevant techniques generally used in ICC trainings such as role playing, where certain problem-solving situations based on real life are presented and participants are assigned a role and asked to simulate real-life behavior. Another technique is the use of case studies, where “realistic descriptions of complex cultural events are presented and participants are asked to analyze, discuss, diagnose and resolve these problems” (Chen & Starosta, 1998, p. 268). As with choosing the ICC training model, choosing the training technique of ICC training will also depend on the job nature or purpose of training of the participants. Governmental employees working with refugee immigrants are expecting to interact with refugees from all around the world, hence the assumption that the content of any ICC training they receive will have to be culture-general, not specific, as opposed to an employee who will for example be sent to a business trip or as a temporary expedite in a specific country.

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012), Hall (1981), and Hofstede (1980) are some of the researches who have presented the world of intercultural communication with taxonomies of cultural patterns which are “shared beliefs, values and norms that are stable over time and that lead to roughly similar behaviors across similar situations” (Lustig & Koester, 2010). These researches each presented certain cultural patterns that they identified such as Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner’s (2012) individualism vs. communitarism, Hall’s (1981) low context vs. high context, and Hofstede’s (1981) low power distance vs high power distance. Each of these cultural taxonomies included certain characteristics, such as low context cultures being straightforward in communication, and tending to be more individualistic while high context cultures are seen as having more indirect communication, and tending to be more collectivistic. These researchers believe that each culture tends to be closer to one end of the scale of these patterns, which would consequently explain why when a person from a culture that is high context interacts with a person from a culture that is low context, intercultural miscommunication may happen. These cultural patterns can be used, to some extent, in ICC trainings to make governmental employee aware of some of the possible culture differences of refugee immigrants that can be due to differences on where they are on the scale of cultural patterns. For example, when a governmental employee understands that this refugee comes from a culture with a high power distance between individuals, it might clarify why he/she is showing over exaggerated respect to the employee. Another aspect of this study is then to see if Swedish employees have received any kind of ICC trainings, and to analyze the results to see how this has possibly positively/negatively affected the communication process between them and Syrian refugees.

### **2.3 Information for refugee resettlement/integration**

This section is focused on the content aspect of communication, by discussing the type of information being communicated to refugees in order to help them resettle, and consequently integrate into the host country. It furthermore presents some of the critical aspects hindering refugee integration, and the causes behind these problems. The motive for discussing integration difficulties is to try to understand the importance of the content of information communicated to refugees, and how lack of proper information can cause problems in

integration or how availability of sufficient information can hinder these problems. Last, a brief background is given about integration in Sweden, while also discussing some of the critical aspects that hinder integration in Sweden for the same motive mentioned above.

### **2.3.1 Defining integration**

According to Allwood et al. (2006), an integrated society can be defined as “as society where it is possible for individuals in all groups of society to both have access to and be actively engaged in all public and private activities and services” (p.56). This means, that the society allows individuals to keep their first language, cultural values and norms, while also being able to interact and have active contact with the dominant society (Allwood et al., 2006). But in order for such integration to happen, the dominant society has to be multicultural, open, and tolerant (Berry, 1997; Allwood, 2006). According to Berry (1997) the dominant society must provide certain psychological pre-conditions in order for the “non-dominant” group to be able “freely” choose integration (p.11). These pre-conditions include “widespread acceptance of the value to a society of cultural diversity (i.e. the presence of a positive “multicultural ideology”); relatively low levels of prejudice (i.e. minimal ethnocentrism, racism, and discrimination); positive mutual attitudes among cultural groups (i.e. no specific intergroup hatreds); and a sense of attachment to, or identification with, the larger society by all groups” (Berry, 1997, p.11). Furthermore, it is important to see integration as an on-going and multidimensional process where immigrant/refugees, institutions and the society all have a role in making it work (Cheung & Phillimore, 2014). Being an ongoing process that takes time, support for integration also needs to be constant but furthermore the kind of information that is communicated to refugees on how to resettle becomes the most vital tool in either easing their integration or hindering it.

### **2.3.2 Refugee integration**

In the case of refugee integration, a major part of the research agrees upon how this process is an essential and complex one to this group of immigrants, in comparison to other types of immigrants, due to the sensitivity of their situation (Olwig, 2011; Sorgen, 2015; Valenta & Bunar, 2010; Cheng & Phillimore, 2014; Eastmond, 2011). There are several essential pillars of integration that need to function in order for integration to successfully start, such as employment, housing, education, language learning, health, cultural knowledge, and knowledge about the rights of refugees (Cheung & Phillimore, 2014; Mulvey, 2005). The host country then becomes responsible for providing help, support and most importantly provide the needed information about each of these pillars to help refugees establish and settle their new lives, and consequently integrate into the host society.

This assistance for integration can be done in many ways, and on many levels, depending on the host country. In Pittaway et al. (2009), a study about refugee integration in Australia, the authors discuss integration services provided by the government for refugees. The Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy (IHSS) in Australia “provides initial settlement support and orientation to newly arrived entrants for a period of six months. These services include on-arrival reception and assistance; accommodation services; case coordination, information, and referrals; short-term torture and trauma counselling; and emergency medical needs” (p.134). In the U.K, special programs are also made for refugees where support in relation to employment and housing are given, and similarly in Norway where special introductory programs for refugees have been created that include information and support about housing, employment, language learning, and culture learning (Mulvey, 2005; Valenta & Bunar, 2010).

### **2.3.3 Difficulties/obstacles in integration**

Nonetheless, these integrations programs have proven to not always be sufficient in eradicating or hindering the rise of difficulties in the integration process of refugees. The reasons behind this can stem from different causes. In the case of the study made about Australia, Pittaway et al. (2005) argue that the difficulties facing refugees have included “trauma; separation of family members; lack of adequate on-arrival information and support; difficulties with language acquisition; lack of access to appropriate and affordable housing; lack of education support; and discrimination in the work force;” (p.136). Furthermore, in Mulvey (2005), a study about refugee integration in the UK, the author argues that the level of support provided in each of these programs was never enough to address the disproportionate disadvantage facing refugees. Furthermore, the UK government only allows refugees to take part of these integration programs only after they have been recognized as refugees, which could take several months, making asylum seekers lag behind in integration. This lack of information and support that is supposed to facilitate integration, according to Sorgen (2005), can result in refugees feeling excluded from society.

The next part will present some of the most essential requirements of integration, and present difficulties that can arise when refugees are not able to access these requirements while also discussing how these difficulties can partly stem from the lack of sufficient information communicated to refugees.

#### **Language**

According to Sorgen (2005), “On a sociocultural level, language is an entry point into the new culture where performing the fundamental tasks of daily living becomes accessible” while “from a psychological perspective, linguistic ability helps create a sense of belonging and feeling that one is part of a larger community” (p.243-244). This shows how language learning is imperative to facilitate integration. In studies made about refugee integration in the UK and Australia, language competency was seen as an essential qualification in finding employment, gaining access to services necessary for resettlement, and creating social networks in the new country (Cheung & Phillimore, 2014; Mulvey, 2015; Pittaway et al., 2009). Furthermore, linguistic proficiency can be seen as “a gateway into both the ‘hard’ (i.e. practical, skill oriented) and ‘soft’ (i.e. emotional, well-being oriented) aspects of integration, which appropriately positions this learning as a “vital first step in the resettlement pathway” (UNHCR, 2001, p.128, cited in Sorgen, 2005, p.244). Furthermore, language proficiency can affect the identities of refugees by giving them the feeling of being heard, as their minority language tends to be seen as of less value (Pierce, 1995, cited in Sorgen, 2015). Hence, a lack of proficiency in the host country’s language can often lead to a sense of alienation, and create barriers in social, psychological and cultural integration and can eventually mean social exclusion for newly arrived refugees (Sorgen, 2005).

#### **Employment**

Employment can be seen as another essential requirement of integration, as it is “one of the key elements of successful settlement, allowing economic independence, which is known to have mental health effects, aiding language learning and creating contacts or bridges with the host society” (Mulvey, 2005, p.362). Furthermore, employment strongly affects the identity, status and feeling of value of a refugee. But although most introductory programs for refugees



offer support in finding employment, it still remains one of the largest difficulties facing refugees. Mulvey (2005) argues that in the UK, high levels of unemployment amongst refugees is seen to be partly due to the “tendency to place emphasis on human capital rather than on the structural, physical and psycho-social factors, inequalities and discrimination related to race and immigration status, low levels of English language proficiency and non-recognition of professional qualifications and employment experience acquired outside the UK” (p.366). On the notion of non-recognition of the foreign qualification of refugees, Mulvey (2005) and Pittaway et al. (2009) argue that well educated or skilled refugees get their qualifications converted into a low level, or even in some cases go unrecognized, leaving them to choose either to upgrade their qualifications, which might take many years, or forego past skills and education and turn to low-paid, low-skill employment. This concludes that the employment crisis seems to be universal even between refugees with varied backgrounds in experience, education, and language proficiency (Sorgen, 2005).

## **Housing**

According to Phillimore & Goodson (2008), “For those seeking refuge, it could be argued that the importance of finding a home is particularly symbolic as it marks the end of a journey and the point at which refugees can start to consider their wider needs’ (p.316 cited in Mulvey, 2006, p.362). But once again despite the support given in introductory programs for refugees in finding homes, a housing crisis situation in the big cities of many countries makes it extremely difficult for refugees to find homes. In Australia, according to Pittaway et al. (2009), this has led to exceptionally high rents which has forced many refugee families to share overcrowded accommodations and be in constant fear that their landlords will find out how many people are sharing a home, which makes them live in constant fear of being evicted. This obviously has a high risk of re-traumatization for refugees, because it can mean that they “have lost everything all over again” (p.138.) Similarly, the housing crisis in the UK has also made it difficult for refugees to find homes, and according to the study made by Mulvey (2005), when asked about their accommodation, a third of refugee participants responded that they had been living in their accommodations for a year or less because of “a lack of knowledge of the options they had available to them, a lack of understanding of the different localities in the city and a desire to take anything in order to get out of temporary accommodation” (p. 366). These housing problems has led many countries to try to implement policies that dispersed refugees from big cities into smaller ones, but it has not proven very successful in many cases because refugees insist on residing in big cities where they might have relatives, or contact with their ethnic or national groups (Sorgen, 2005).

It is evident that problems within these requirements have an extremely negative effect on refugees, and it is hence important to point out the causes behind those predicaments in order for a long term solution to be applied. It is important to critically think about what could cause language learning difficulty for refugees, or why there are high rates of unemployment within immigrant groups, or why there seems to be a universal housing problem for refugees, and last why there is a lack of cultural knowledge within refugees even though many integration programs include cultural learning? Of course the answers to these questions can stem from different reasons, often overlapping, such as political (governmental policies) economic (insufficient funds for refugee support), or social (discrimination against immigrants). But for the purpose of this study, which is centered around communication, these problems in integration will be looked upon from a communicative perspective. Hence, a possible answer for the above-mentioned questions could be that these difficulties arise, partly, because of lack of sufficient information that is communicated to refugee upon their

arrival, and throughout the first couple of years of their resettling in a host country. Have these integration programs, or governmental agencies provided enough information, or the correct information to refugees in order to give them the knowledge needed to enter the labor market, find a house, learn the host country's language, and understand their culture? The results of this study will attempt to shed light on this issue in relation to Sweden, and the information granted to Syrian refugees by Swedish agencies.

#### **2.3.4 Refugee integration in Sweden**

It is important to also specifically shed light on Swedish integration programs, and see what some research has so far concluded about the efficiency of these programs. Prior to the 1970's Sweden had no concrete or official integration policies, but with the sudden rise of immigrants and refugees entering the country, integration policies had to consequently be formulated (Olwig, 2011). These policies were based on multiculturalism, that claimed to celebrate cultural diversity, while being based on principles such as "equity (the same rights as the indigenous population); freedom of choice by the individual (whether someone wishes to adopt the Swedish culture or not); and cooperation, meaning the importance of social bridges and social links," (Olwig, 2011, p.6). In essence, "the point of departure for the Swedish integration policy is that all individuals shall have equal rights, possibilities and obligations" (Allwood et al., 2006, p.56).

In the case of refugees, Sweden has developed state sponsored integration programs that are based heavily on providing information that should assist refugees in housing, employment, and Swedish language learning (Valenta & Bunar, 2010). Eastmond (2011) summarizes the aim of these programs stating that:

*At municipal level, the social services are mostly those responsible for refugee reception and integration, facilitating a programme of introduction which is financed by the government. The programme includes courses in Swedish and about Swedish society, and other complementary education or re-training seen as needed in order to prepare an adult person for entering the labour market. The first years of introduction normally also involve close contact with a range of other local agencies, such as the employment office, adult education and health services. A person who is not self supportive at the end of the introduction will remain the responsibility of social services, as the introductory grant converts into a welfare cheque. (p.281)*

But what has that research said so far about the success of these programs, and the extent to which they have actually given enough support and information to refugees to integrate into Swedish society? There have been mixed findings; some statistics have shown that a large number of refugees started working or studying after completing the introduction program, yet on the other hand, findings also show that there is an evident gap between the native population and immigrants/refugees in the standard of living, participation in the labor market, housing quality, health and education (Valenta & Bunar, 2010). Furthermore, Eastmond (2011) argues that in the case of entering the Swedish labor market, having programs aimed at re-training rather than supporting whatever personal skills and resources refugees have has delayed them from finding jobs. Furthermore, Olwig (2011) argues that:

*Another problem arising from the welfare societies' integration programmes concerns their insistence on the need to learn the local language, social norms and cultural values and traditions before seeking employment in the receiving societies.*

*While the introductory programmes undoubtedly impart useful knowledge to the newly arrived, their strong focus on local socio-cultural skills that must be mastered before it is possible to manage in society has had the unfortunate consequence that they have tended to treat newcomers in terms of what they are lacking, rather than what they can offer to the receiving society. Furthermore, since there is no set definition of what is needed to be culturally competent, social workers and other key staff in the welfare institutions have had a great say in determining what sort of cultural competence is deemed necessary for the refugees to be part of the receiving society. The employment agency staff interviewed by Eastmond, for example, were of the opinion that the problems that many newcomers experienced in finding employment, even after the introductory period, had to do with their insufficient social and cultural competence, views often reflecting the preferences of local employers. (p.9)*

This difficulty faced by refugees in finding employment explains why unemployment has become one of the immigrants' /refugees' biggest problems in Sweden making their rate of unemployment three times higher compared to the native population (Allwood et al., 2006; Valenta & Bunar 2010).

As previously mentioned, from a communicative perspective, this study will attempt to see if Swedish agencies have communicated sufficient information to hinder obstacles in integration, and also understand what information is missing that could possibly be part of the cause in integration difficulties. Results of this study will not only provide a contrast to what kind of information Swedish agencies communicate to refugees in comparison to other countries, but also provide a comparison to previous studies made about Swedish integration to see if/what changes have occurred.

### **3. Methodological Framework**

This section presents the methodological framework of the study, and begins with the method of data collection, motives for using it, and a detailed explanation of the process of data collection. The method of data analysis is then discussed followed by the method of data presentation. Subsequently, participants of this study are presented through tables with reference to how they were chosen. Last, this section presents the limitations that were faced with using the chosen method and the ethical considerations that were taken into account during the study.

#### **3.1 Data collection**

The focus of this study is divided into two parts, the first is to assess the information transfer process occurring during the communication between Syrian refugees and Swedish employees at different governmental agencies. And the second part is to understand and assess the content of information communicated to Syrian refugees that is supposed to help them resettle and integrate, while evaluating the current information, and also exploring the type of information about integration each party wants the other to know. Hence, the purpose of this study is of an interpretive nature, which according to Burrell & Morgan (1979/89) is an approach where theorists try to understand the world as it is while being concerned with an individual's consciousness and experiences. As individuals play an essential role in interpretive studies, detailed and deep information from both parties that are being

investigated in this study is necessary in order to understand and gain a clear perception of the opinions, experiences, and views of both sides. A qualitative approach was seen as the most suitable approach for gaining a descriptive and detailed understanding, while it would also allow the researcher to engage with the respondents more actively for an insider's point of view on the topic at hand. In-depth interviews were chosen as the method of data collection as they allow one to explore finely shaded human issues, while giving room to the interviewee to share rich descriptions of the phenomena (Wilson, 2012; DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). However, although the primary approach for data collection is qualitative, hence making most questions of a semi-structured nature, fully structured questions were also created to allow a collection of some quantitative data, as it enables researchers to access different facets of the same social phenomenon while also allowing for more distinguishable comparisons between the respondents' answers (Olsen, 2004).

Two sets of interview questions were developed for each group, one for the Syrian refugees and one for the Swedish employees, and consisted of a mixture between descriptive, contrast, and scale questions. As the researcher of this study is trilingual and speaks Arabic, English and Swedish, this advantage was used for the purpose of the study. Each set of questions were translated; for Syrian refugees the questions were translated into Arabic, and for Swedish employees, questions were translated into Swedish (see appendix). Accordingly, interviews were conducted in the mother tongue for each of the groups, rather than in English, which highly increased chances of clarity in understanding questions, ability of respondents to express themselves better, and was a good way to make participants more at ease during interviews. To ensure the accuracy and precision of the translation, the translated questions were revised by a native Swedish speaking professor, and a native Arabic speaking licensed interpreter.

The interview questions for the Syrian refugees were divided into four categories:

- (1) Personal information about the interviewees and some general questions about their immigration background.
- (2) General questions about their evaluation of the communication interaction with Swedish governmental agencies.
- (3) Detailed questions about four specific Swedish governmental agencies (the same four agencies in which the Swedish employee participants work at)
- (4) Closing questions about their integration in Swedish society and their opinions on helpful information to ease the process.

The interview questions for the Swedish employees were also divided into four categories:

- (1) Personal information, such as job description and length of employment at agency.
- (2) General questions about intercultural training received, and preparation methods of the information given to refugees.
- (3) Specific questions about the communication process with Syrian refugees, in contrast to other refugees, and evaluations of their responsiveness to information.
- (4) Closing questions about helpful information for Syrian refugees' integration into Swedish society.

The interviews were conducted with sixteen participants, eight Syrian refugees, and eight Swedish governmental employees during the period between April 4<sup>th</sup> and June 20<sup>th</sup>. All sixteen interviews were conducted face-to-face, while using a phone as an audio recording

device and simultaneously taking hand-written notes as a back-up resource. Interviews were conducted in several places such as the offices of the employees, the Gothenburg City library, and the Syrian center in Gothenburg. The time and place for an interview was booked largely in accordance to the preference and suitability of the participants. The total time of recordings was 439 minutes (7 hours and 31 minutes), with a mean duration of 27 minutes per interview.

### **3.2 Data analysis**

The data was collected through audio recordings, while using hand-written notes as a backup resource. The data analysis of this study was based on a hypothetical deductive approach, which means working from theory, gathering data, and then testing the theory. In section 2.2 and 2.3 several theories are presented regarding possible intercultural communication challenges and integration difficulties that can face refugee immigrants. The study's aim is to explore whether these challenges were also present in the communication between Syrian refugees and Swedish governmental employees. Accordingly, this approach was chosen as a means to test how the data is either in congruence with the theories presented or it refuted them. The data analysis process went as following; each interview was re-listened to separately, translated to English (from Arabic or Swedish), and the participants' response to each interview question was then summarized and written into a document, leaving at the end sixteen documents each including the summarized answers of every interviewee to every question. The extraction of content from the interviewees' answers to create the summaries was based on the information that the researcher deemed most relevant to the the research questions of the study. Through analyzing the responses of each interview question by each participant, themes or categories were extracted, in order to categorize information according to similarities in the responses. Tables based on the categorization of responses for some interview questions were then produced, while displaying through the participants' code (e.g., SR1) what each participant answered. In some cases, tables were followed by quotes from participants that were seen to specifically add certain value to the results, whether by emphasizing or clarifying a certain aspect of the question. For some questions, where no categorization of responses was possible, a summary of what respondents said was then presented.

### **3.3 Participants**

As mentioned in sub-section 3.1, interviews were conducted with sixteen participants. Eight of the participants were Syrian refugees and the criteria for selecting them was based on: having to (1) be interested and willing to participate in an interview and share opinions and experiences, (2) be over the age of 18, in order to guarantee validity of answers, understanding of topic, and to ensure they had direct contact with Swedish governmental agencies, and last (3) have resided in Sweden for at least 6 months to guarantee familiarity and contact with different Swedish governmental agencies. Furthermore, to insure diversity of answers and insights, it was predetermined that the eight participants should consist of half males and half females, and be of different age ranges. According to these criteria, participants were sought out through several different means that included, contact with a representative from the Syrian Center in Gothenburg, and direct contact with Syrian acquaintances who were asked to participate. A snow-ball method for finding a sample was also used, where the acquaintances were asked to recommend and spread the word to other Syrian refugees who would be interested to partake in the study.

Table 1 presents relevant personal information about the Syrian refugee participants, in the order of interviews carried out. For reasons of anonymity and for an easier method of tracing results to participants, each participant is given a code (SR) which stands for Syrian refugee, followed by a number between 1 to 8, e.g. (SR1)

*Table 1*

<b>№</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Religion</b>	<b>Educational Level</b>	<b>Period of Residence in Sweden</b>	<b>Previous Occupation in Syria</b>	<b>Current Occupation in Sweden</b>
<b>1</b>	SR1	M	29	Muslim	BA in English literature	2.8 years	Customer service agent at a telecommunication company	Studying to become interpreter, traffic informative at Göteborgs Spårvagnar, teacher assistant at a school
<b>2</b>	SR2	F	26	Muslim	Uncompleted BA in Arabic Literature	2.4 years	Student	Studying Swedish for immigrants (SFI)
<b>3</b>	SR3	F	19	Muslim	High School	8 months	Student	Studying Swedish as Second Language (SAS) and English
<b>4</b>	SR4	F	31	Muslim	Diploma in Feminine Arts	3.4 years	Teacher at Institute for Feminine Arts	Studying Swedish as Second Language (SAS)
<b>5</b>	SR5	F	46	Muslim	BA in Economics	1.2 years	Manager of home services at a hotel	Studying Swedish as Second Language (SAS)
<b>6</b>	SR6	M	48	Muslim	BA in Arabic Literature	3.5 years	Arabic teacher at a School	Studying at Gothenburg University to become a licensed Arabic teacher

7	SR7	M	46	Muslim	BA in Dentistry	1.4 years	Dentist at privately owned clinic	Dentist at a private sector clinic in Gothenburg
8	SR8	M	26	Muslim	Secondary School	2.2 years	Worked in Clothes Manufacturing	Studying Swedish for immigrants (SFI)

As for the eight Swedish employees, the selection began by first choosing four Swedish governmental agencies that dealt with refugees. The selection was based on an attempt to choose four agencies that dealt with diverse aspects of the resettlement process of refugees, hence the following four agencies were chosen: (1) the Migration Agency (2) the Employment Office for Establishment (3) the Establishment Unit (4) the Refugee Medical Center. Contact was then made with each of these agencies, where the supervisors of each of these agencies in Gothenburg was sent an overview of the study, and a request for interviews with two of their employees. The overview sent included the purpose of the study, the research questions, and the method of data collection of the study. The supervisors were requested to choose two employees with the criteria: (1) they be interested to share their opinions and experiences (2) have specifically dealt/are currently dealing with Syrian refugees as part of their job. Each supervisor then contacted two employees based on this criteria, who were asked to contact the researcher of the study via phone or email to book a time and place for the interview, and were also given a chance to ask for any clarifications regarding the study such as what to expect the interview questions to be about.

Table 2 presents relevant personal information about the the Swedish employees, in the order of interviews carried out. For reasons of anonymity and for an easier method of tracing results to participants, each participant is given a code (SE) which stands for Swedish employee, followed by a number between 1 to 8, e.g. (SE1)

*Table 2*

<b>№</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Employment at governmental Agency</b>	<b>Occupation at Agency</b>	<b>Period of Employment at Agency</b>
1	SE1	F	27	Establishment Unit	Social secretary	4 years
2	SE2	F	43	Establishment Unit	Housing secretary	1.6 years
3	SE3	F	50	Refugee Medical Center	Medical Counselor	4 years
4	SE4	M	68	Refugee Medical Center	Physician	4 years
5	SE5	M	60	Employment Office for Establishment	Employment agent	6 years

6	SE6	F	42	Employment Office for Establishment	Employment agent	1.2 years*
7	SE7	F	30	Migration Agency - asylum application unit	Counselor	0.5 years
8	SE8	M	59	Migration Agency- reception unit	Supervisor	16 years

\*SE6 previously worked at a different employment office for 15 years.

A brief background about the mission of each of the selected Swedish governmental agencies for this study is presented below:

### **(1) The Migration Agency (Migrationsverket):**

A person who wants to receive protection in Sweden must submit an application for asylum at one of the Migration Agency application units, or with the border police when entering Sweden. The person must explain why he/she needs asylum in Sweden and he/she is offered help with an interpreter and legal assistance from a public counsel if necessary. During the waiting period, the Swedish Migration Agency offers the applicant somewhere to stay, and gives a daily economic compensation for food, and extra economic compensation for clothing or other needed personal items. During the continued examination of the asylum application, the applicant, together with his/her public counsel, presents the facts and the material which he /she considers as evidence to support his/her application for asylum, to a representative from the Migration Agency that handles their case.

When the Swedish Migration Agency has received a complete application from the applicant, they summon a meeting with the applicant and counsel. Following the meeting – where any uncertainties can be sorted out – the Agency decides on the asylum case. If the asylum seeker is allowed to stay, he/she is given a residence permit, if they are refused, they must return home or to another country willing to accept them (Migrationsverket, 2016).

### **(2) Employment Office for Establishment (Arbetsförmedlingen Etablering):**

The Employment Office for Establishment (EOE) is required by law to provide help for persons who are between 20 and 64 years old (or persons between 18 and 20 years and have no parents in Sweden) and have a residence permit as a refugee, quota refugee, subsidiary protection or relative of any of these, a chance to partake in a 24 months' establishment program that includes introductory activities. The purpose of this establishment program is to allow newly arrived refugees in Sweden to be able to quickly get into the Swedish job market or continue with higher education. By meeting these newly arrived refugees at an early stage, the EOE can quickly identify the experiences, skills and professional ambitions to match with localities and employers where these skills are in demand. In addition to helping newly arrived refugees with employment matters, the establishment program discusses with each refugee issues such as schools, child care, housing, family, and health situations. Each refugee is assigned an employment officer from the EOE whom together with the refugee creates a full time plan for next 24 months of the refugees' life. The plan includes administrating them to a school to study Swedish for Immigrants (SFI), administrating them to take part of a six months Social Orientation Course, help them find a home, which may include moving to any municipality in Sweden, and giving economic compensation, as long as the refugee continues to partake in the establishment plan, where they can receive 308 SEK per day, five days a



week. The office also offers language support to people who have limited knowledge of the Swedish language, which usually is to use an interpreter, while also offering a customer service that provides telephone service in five languages besides Swedish: Arabic, Persian, Russian, Somali and Tigrinya (Arbetsförmedlingen Etablering, 2016).

### **(3) The Establishment Unit (Etableringsenheten) :**

The Establishment Unit works with newly arrived refugees in Gothenburg who have received a residence permit within the last two years and are participating in the establishment program, through the EOE. Together with other social organizations, they ensure that refugees get the support they are entitled to in terms of personal and family matters. Furthermore, they also provide information, advice and support to other organizations that work with refugees.

They mainly work with investigating and deciding on additional financial assistance (on top of that given by the EOE), and along with the EOE, medical care and other organizations, they make sure that if a refugee is in need of rehabilitation (physical or mental), they receive it. Furthermore, they are critical on ensuring that the needs of newly arrived children and young people are met. This may involve that children as soon as possible can begin in preschool / school or get help to get in contact with health services as needed (Etableringsenheten, 2016).

### **(4) The Refugee Medical Center (Fyktingmedicinsk Mottagning):**

The Refugee Medical Center is a general medical facility staffed by a doctor, social worker, nurse and secretary. The unit receives newly arrived refugees involved in the introduction / establishment programs within the EOE or introduction programs within the Establishment Units in the City of Gothenburg and have unclear physical and / or mental health problems. These refugees are remitted to the center by their administrators in the EOE or the Establishment Unit. Furthermore, the Refugee Medical Center offers sessions about health in Sweden, and also voluntarily full medical check up on newly arrived asylum seekers (Fyktingmedicinsk Mottagning, 2016).

## **3.4 Limitations of the method and ethical considerations**

There were several limitations that emerged during the collection of data through in-depth interviews. As there were no pilot interviews conducted due to time and availability constraints, the interview questions were not tested beforehand, hence there were some obstacles that arose during the first interviews with a Syrian refugee and a Swedish employee. Such obstacles included clarity of certain terms and order of questions that affected aspects such as repetition of answers. However, these complications were then corrected in proceeding interviews, but still affected the quality of the first two interviews. Furthermore, although a criterion was set for choosing employees for interviews at Swedish governmental agencies, the choice of interviewees was solely based on the supervisors' choice hence it could not be determined if the chosen interviewees were the best possible candidates. Additionally, although the idea of having unified interview questions for all Swedish governmental employees was to guarantee easiness of data analysis and comparison, this in some instances affected the quality of information as some questions were seen as less suitable for a certain agency or employee compared to another. However, for the Syrian interviews, having unified questions for all participants didn't pose as a problem under any

interview. But an obstacle that arose during the interviews with the Syrian refugees is that not all participants had been in contact with all of the four chosen Swedish agencies which might have caused an information gap. Additionally, a limitation of the study concerns the diversity of Syrian participants; participants were diverse in regards of age, gender, and education, but in regards to religious beliefs, all eight participants were Muslim. A diversity in religious beliefs could have possibly added a different perspective to the study. Furthermore, another limitation of the study that prolonged the length of the work period, was the difficulty in reaching the supervisors and heads of Swedish governmental agencies and receiving responses from them.

There were several ethical considerations to be taken into account during the interviews, mainly the sensitivity towards any possible emotional distress these interviews might cause to Syrian refugees. Although there were no questions that directly asked participants to re-call any war-related memories or give accounts on their immigration journey to Sweden, questions such as the reason for immigration, or choosing Sweden specifically for asylum sometimes lead certain interviewees to recall war-related and immigration journey experiences, which caused some sensed distress during the interviews. Last, although it can't be validated, there was a large possibility that Swedish governmental employees were not able to share all their thoughts or experiences due to their work ethics of professional secrecy, which could consequently mean missing out on some rich and relevant information.

## 4. Results

The data of this study will be presented through the following method; this section includes two results sub-sections, one for Syrian refugees and one for Swedish employees. Each sub-section includes the responses of the twelve interview questions that were asked to each party. Through analyzing the responses of each participant for every interview question, themes or categories were extracted, in order to categorize information according to similarities in the responses. Tables based on the categorization of responses for each interview question were then produced, while displaying through the participants' code (e.g., SR1) what each participant answered. In some cases, tables were followed by quotes from participants that were seen to specifically add certain value to the results whether by emphasizing or clarifying a certain aspect of the question. For some questions, where no categorization of responses was possible, a summary of what respondents said was then presented.

### 4.1 Syrian refugees interview results

#### 1. Immigration

##### Reason for leaving Syria:

Some participants gave more than one reason; hence some participants' codes are placed in more than one response category.

Response	Participants
Political opposition to regime	SR3, SR4, SR7
War	SR2, SR3, SR4, SR6, SR8

Lost everything	SR1, SR3, SR5,
-----------------	----------------

**Reason for seeking asylum in Sweden:**

Some participants gave more than one reason; hence some participants' codes are placed in more than one response category.

Response	Participants
Relatives residing in Sweden	SR1, SR4
Reputation of Sweden being a country with strong human/refugee rights	SR2, SR3, SR6, SR7, SR8
Ability to gain citizenship after 5 years of residency	SR2, SR4, SR5, SR8
Good country for building a future in	SR3, SR7

**How long did it take for you to gain permanent residence:**

Participants	Response
SR1	1.5 months
SR2	9 months
SR3	Still pending
SR4	3 months
SR5	11 months
SR6	2 month
SR7	7 months
SR8	1.10 months

**2. From a scale to 1-10 how do you evaluate how well Swedish agencies have helped you resettle in Sweden? (1 being least, and 10 being highest)**

Response	Participants
1	-
2	-
3	-
4	-
5	SR5
6	-
7	SR3
8	SR1
9	SR4, SR5
10	SR6, SR 8
Average	8

\*Excluding response of participant SR7

Participant SR7 gave two different numbers on the scale explaining that:

*I would give them a 9 for their really hard effort to help us, but a 2 regarding the appliance and practicality of their methods.*

**3. During your visits to different Swedish agencies, were you offered an interpreter? And if yes, how do you feel about the experience of having an interpreter?**

**Participants offered an interpreter:**

Response	Participants	Total
Yes	SR1, SR3, SR4, SR6, SR7, SR8	8
No	SR3	1*

\*Participant SR3 stated that she spoke fluent English, so she was also offered an interpreter, but declined and chose to speak English with Swedish employees instead.

**Experience on having an interpreter:**

Participant SR1 stated that it was a very convenient thing to have an interpreter, but had some concerns regarding the interpreters themselves:

*I felt that some, not all, are not performing their job in the best way possible. Especially now that I myself am studying to become an interpreter, I am learning the work ethics, and I can see that some of the actions of the interpreters that I met during my appointments didn't follow the work ethics properly, like for example by having limited patience, or by showing clear disinterest in the conversation.*

Participant SR2 stated that:

*When you express yourself with your own voice and way it reaches the person better. However, my experience with interpreters so far has been good, I mean I don't understand what they are saying in Swedish, but I can tell that they have correctly translated what I said from the follow up question that I receive from the Swedish employee. But of course I would still prefer if I myself could directly speak to the Swedish employee and say what I want.*

Participants SR7, and SR8 agreed that it was a good experience to be able to have an interpreter in virtually all appointments with Swedish agencies but they also had some critique regarding the interpreters:

*I felt some of them [the interpreters] were very not competent. I mean yes they are licensed interpreters and all, but I didn't always feel like they were getting my emotions through. I mean they would interpret what I was saying, but it was really emotionless, and sounded more like Google translate. So I felt that yes maybe they got the general idea through, but not the details. (SR7)*

*As I mentioned previously, I think the biggest problem was that with the dialect. You tell them you want an Arabic interpreter, but they can get you an interpreter from North African countries like Algeria, and I don't understand their dialect. Also sometimes the way an interpreter delivered what I was saying was done in a bad way, like he would use an aggressive tone, even though I didn't, so then the Swedish employee might think that I am rude or aggressive, which I wasn't. This happened several time, and it caused problems for me, because the Swedish employee might get angry with me. (SR8)*

**4. How clear do you feel Swedish employees were when they were delivering information to you? (e.g., use of language, way of delivery (pamphlets, session, one-on-one appointments)..etc.)**

Response	Participants	Total
Very clear	SR1, SR2 , SR3, SR 4, SR 5, SR6, SR7, SR8	8
Somewhat clear	-	-
Not clear	-	-

Participants further explained that:

*They try their best to make sure you understand correctly what is needed from you, they understand that there is a big difference in a lot of things between us and them so they always repeat and explain as much as possible to make sure you got what they are saying. (SR2)*

*They keep explaining the same thing several times, and in the simplest way possible in order for you to understand the information. They have a lot of patience. (SR4)*

Participant SR8, explained that although information by Swedish employees was usually very clear, interpreters sometime caused an obstacle:

*I felt that information was usually very clear, but the problem was when I got an interpreter who spoke a different Arabic dialect, or who at times wasn't competent enough to interpret. This sometimes lead that I would have to ask for another appointment in order to get an interpreter who I can understand properly.*

**5. Were you satisfied with the information they provided to you? What information did you want that you did not get?**

Response	Participants	Total
Satisfied	SR 1, SR4, SR5, SR 6, SR7	5
Somewhat satisfied	SR3, SR8	2
Not satisfied	SR 2	1

Although participant SR7 stated that he was satisfied with the information he received he added that:

*I got very good information and from very well experienced people. But I think this is luck because I have friends who are in the exact same situation [here in Sweden] who didn't get what I got. So I think it has a lot to do with how experienced the employee is. I am not saying that the recent or newly employed employees are not doing their job, but they are simply not as experienced as the older ones. I mean my wife got a really young woman as an agent at the Employment Office for Establishment, and she was really bad. And I had an old and experienced officer who was excellent, who could answer all my questions very thoroughly and right away.*

Participant SR2, who was the only one to state that she was not satisfied, and participant SR3, who was also quite dissatisfied, both explained that their dissatisfaction was mainly with the Migration Agency explaining that :

*When you go and ask about something, they never ever give you a clear answer. They tell you things like “we have pressure, or you have to wait”. They never give you an answer that gives you peace of mind. For example, when I would go to ask about my residence permit application at the Migration Agency, they would just say “these things take time”. My counselor on the personal level at the Migration Agency was very kind, but whenever I would ask about my permit she would always just give me the same unsatisfying answer. Also now when I go to ask about the family reunion case now, they have not once given me clear information. They always tell me you have to wait, that there is nothing new. I would tell them at least give a maximum time for waiting, and they would just say these things can take from 1-2 years. And that made me feel like they were really insensitive. They don't know that I have already spent a year waiting for my own permit, on top of the long time I spent on my difficult journey before I arrived here [to Sweden]. I have not seen my family or husband for more than a year. And they just tell me there is nothing we can do for you, you just have to wait.*

*I am currently waiting for my permit, and I keep contacting the Migration agency but nobody answers, which is really making me feel unstable. I mean my life is kind of functioning, but there is a lot I still can't do without a permit such as applying to the university. (SR3)*

So in the case of participant SR2 and SR3, the information they wanted but did not get seems to be the length of wait regarding their own or their family's' residency permit acquisition.

**6. Did you often feel like you didn't understand what you were being told? Or felt that there was information missing (if yes, what was missing)?**

Response	Participants	Total
Yes	-	-
No	SR1, SR2, SR3, SR6, SR7	5
Sometimes	SR4, S5, SR8	3

Participant SR2 who stated that she had always understood what was being told added that:

*They try to repeat, even more than once, the information they gave you. And they even make you repeat what they said in order to make sure that you have understood and comprehended what you have to do.*

Participants SR4, SR5, SR8 who sometimes felt they didn't understand things explained that:

*Sometimes there were things I wouldn't understand when I was on a phone call with an employee, without an interpreter. But they would always try to help me by explaining better or re-explaining in a much simpler way. And in the worst case scenario they would call for an interpreter on the phone, or book me an appointment so I could come and ask whatever questions I have. (SR4)*

*Yes, there were instances that I didn't feel so [understand what I was being told] I think it was usually my fault, that I didn't ask the right questions. But I don't think there was any information missing. In every step of the way, like starting Swedish language classes, or the establishment program, they would tell you everything, what your rights are, what you would get, what would happen when you are absent. (SR5)*

*There are a lot of things in the Swedish system that really differ from how things were back in Syria. So even when I got information through an interpreter, it still took me time to get the hang of things, to understand how laws are. (SR8)*

None of the participants stated that they felt any information was missing.

**7. Do you feel you were able to ask, and receive answers for follow up questions you had?**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Total</b>
Yes	SR1, SR3, SR4, SR 5, SR 7, SR8	6
No	-	-
Depends	SR2, SR 6	2

Participant SR1 added that:

*The internet usage of government agencies in Sweden is very good. They webpages of governmental agencies always had new and updated information available. So I would often go there and find answers for my questions. Information was usually available in English, but now I read it in Swedish. I noticed that the Migration Agency had their webpage available in Arabic also, which was great.*

Participant SR4 added on her deep satisfaction of the responsiveness of Swedish employees saying that:

*I was actually impressed with Swedes and the patience they have and how much they are willing to bear with you no matter how small or stupid your question might seem.*

Participant SR2 who stated that there were some problems she faced explained that:

*In a lot of cases when I go to agencies, I just keep praying that I am given a good administrator. A lot of it depends on the administrator. I mean I could have a friend with the same case, but she gets helped totally different. Some of the employees are very strict, and some are really understandable. So I feel like it's sheer luck.*

Participant SR6 who had stated that he had sometimes faced a problem explained that:

*You always wish to find someone who would give you a fulfilling answer. I would often receive very short answers, that were not 100% certain. I felt that this reflected a bit of irresponsibility from employees. An employee at a certain position should be able to give a proper answer, and sometimes their answers were very poor, unfulfilling, indirect or unclear.*

### **8. How would you rate your experience dealing with these agencies:**

1. Migrationsverket (Migration agency)
2. Arbetsförmedlingen (Employment office)
3. Etableringsenheten (Establishment Unit)
4. Flyktingmedicinsk mottagning (Refugee Medical Center)

In terms of how well:

- a. they delivered information,
- b. gave you the information you needed,
- c. responsive to your questions and inquiries,
- e. accessible (contact via telephone, email..etc)
- f. and how do you think each of these agencies could have helped you better.

\*Some participants didn't deal with one or more of these agencies, this was marked below as e.g. "N/A for SR1" which stands for "not applicable". Answers to questions "f" are not included in the table, but written separately further below.

#### **Migrationsverket (Migration Agency)**

	<b>Delivery of information</b>	<b>Giving information needed</b>	<b>Responsiveness to questions and inquiries</b>	<b>Accessible</b>
Good	SR1, SR2, SR3, SR4, SR6, SR 7, SR8	SR1, SR2, SR4, SR7, SR8	SR1, SR7, SR8	SR1, SR3, SR8
Average	-	-	SR4, SR 2	SR2, SR7
Bad	-	SR3	SR3	-

\*N/A for participant SR5 as she came to Sweden through family reunification via her husband, and didn't directly deal with the Migration Agency.



Participant SR1, believes that his experience with the Migration Agency was very good because he came in the beginning of the Syrian refuge crisis and there wasn't as much pressure on the Migration Agency yet. He believes that this accounts for the smooth and short process of attaining a permanent residence permit. But many of his acquaintances who came in the past 1-2 years have been struggling very hard with waiting time.

In regards to how well the Migration Agency delivered the information needed, and was responsive to questions and inquires, participants SR2 added that:

*If I had a specific question, like about my application then they don't give you a specific answer. Even my counselor admitted that she didn't have a lot of experience with family reunification cases, so she would give very basic information. And also the quality of answers to my question depended a lot on the employee. Some employees were very keen on helping me and giving me as much information as possible, while others would barely answer my question.*

Participant SR4 shared her opinion regarding accessibility to reach the Migration Agency stating that:

*Since I didn't speak Swedish in the beginning, I had to have my neighbor help me every time I wanted to call them. And that was of course a bit frustrating. But nowadays I heard from some friends that they have added an option to be able to call and speak Arabic via an interpreter.*

Regarding the delivery of information participants SR4 stated that:

*The letters for booked appointments that we received were very simple and easy to understand. Like they would write in bold or highlight the time, and date, and place, to make it very clear, basically the most important information. So even if you don't understand what the appointment is for, you just go to the address on the time and date written. (SR4)*

Participant SR7 stated that the Migration Agency were generally very considerate adding that:

*They even asked me if I wanted a male or female interpreter, and if I chose a female interpreter, if she had to be veiled [wearing an Islamic headscarf]. Also the counselor herself asked me if I was comfortable with meeting her again, or if I wanted to change counselor.*

### **How could the Migration agency have helped you better?**

Participants SR2, and SR3 shared a similar opinion, stating that there needs to be improvement regarding the information on waiting time for residence permits:

*It would really help if they could give more details about which stage your application is on. Like when a counselor actually takes your case and looks at it, they don't tell you that, so you don't know if your application is still in the waiting line or is being assessed. I went the same week twice to ask about my case, and the first time the employee said she can't tell me anything, and the second time I went to another employee who told me that a counselor had taken my case last week and it's now*

*being assessed. So it felt like it depended on the mood of the employee whether to answer my questions properly or not. I mean they really have to understand that we just sit at home waiting for anything to happen on the application, it's our life, our families we haven't seen in a long time. I never knew that waiting was this difficult until I applied for the family reunification. (SR2)*

*I understand that there is a lot of pressure because of the large amount of refugees coming in, but if they could at least give you an approximate time to when you will receive an answer, like a maximum time. But not giving you a time at all makes you feel like you don't know where your life is going. Like on the website it said it should approximately take 2-5 months, but it's taking much longer than that. (SR3)*

Participant SR4 had a concern regarding the Migration agency's policies on refugee's rights to learning Swedish:

*They could have really helped me that if they could have given me the right to study Swedish while I lived at the asylum homes [which belong to the Migration Agency]. I really regret the eight months that I just wasted of my life. I could have by now started studying at the university and gotten my life started much quicker. This was their policy I guess, I couldn't register at the establishment program and begin learning Swedish (SFI), as long as I lived at an asylum home, and at the same time it was extremely hard to find an apartment anywhere. While I stayed there I couldn't learn Swedish, and meet Swedish people, I was totally cut out of the world, there wasn't even internet. And we asked them several times to please let us attend SFI at school, which was really close, but they would say no, you first have to enter the establishment plan, and you can't do that until you find a home. But from what I heard this policy has now changed. (SR 4)*

Participants SR7 and RS8 had concerns regarding the bureaucracy of the Migration Agency, and participant SR7 also had concerns regarding maintenance of contact between them and refugees:

*They need to employ more people so they can manage to finish faster, because there are a lot of applicants. They also need to stay more in contact with the asylum seeker, not just neglect them for 6-7 months, and just tell them to go get their economic compensation from the ICA supermarket and that's it. And when I needed clothes for the winter, I went to the receptionist at the Migration Agency who helped, but my counselor didn't stay in contact with me. (SR7)*

*I got my residency permit in a short time, but the problem was when I applied for family reunification to bring my mother. I had to do it through writing a letter, and I don't speak Swedish, so I had to use an interpreter to write what I wanted to say. I wish I could have gotten an appointment and explained to them face to face why I needed my mother to come. (SR8)*

Participant SR1 and SR6 stated that there was nothing the Migration Agency could have done to help them better.

**Arbetsförmedlingen Etablering (Employment office for Establishment, EOE)**

	<b>Delivery of information</b>	<b>Giving information needed</b>	<b>Responsiveness to questions and inquires</b>	<b>Accessible</b>
Good	SR1, SR2, SR4, SR4, SR5, SR7, SR8	SR1, SR2, SR 4, SR8	SR2, SR5, SR6, SR7, SR8	SR5, SR6, SR7, SR8
Average	-	SR5, SR6, SR 7	-	-
Bad	-	-	SR1	SR1, SR2

\*N/A for SR3 because she has not received her residence permit yet and is also under the age of 20 hence not eligible to take part of the establishment program.

Participant SR1 had a bad experience with the EOE regarding responsiveness to questions and inquires, and accessibility to reach them:

*In the beginning I had an employment agent, but then got assigned to another agent after 6 months. In the remaining one and a half years of the establishment program I did not once see my agent. He didn't even try to contact me, and was always busy, and never answered my emails. I really felt that he neglected me and didn't do his job as my agent.*

Participant SR2 had a hard time accessing the EOE through the phone, but explained that going to the office was a much better option when she needed information:

*I would instead go to the office, and I felt that the people at the reception have a lot of knowledge, and give you really good answers. Unless it's something very specific, then they tell you need to contact your employment agent directly.*

Regarding receiving information that they needed, participant SR4 added that:

*Whenever any change happened, and there was something we needed to know like a new law or policy, they would always make an appointment to let us know about these changes and how they could affect us.*

Participants SR6, SR7 and SR8 thought that on the general level they gave good information, however, they had some critique stating that:

*They give you the information you need in accordance to what they know, and what your qualifications are. But in helping you get a job, I felt that they have no power. (SR6)*

*The new generation of employees are not very good. The older generation have a lot experience and good contacts that can help you in your job search. (SR7)*

*I am having some problems with my employment agent because of my handicap situation. I have a lot of medical appointments, which lead to a lot of absences in my SFI classes. And I feel that he [his employment agent] is mixing between my medical excuses, and my discipline to attend. I don't feel he is satisfied with me, but I have a difficult medical situation, and I feel like he thinks I am making things up. I don't know he just wont comprehend that I seriously have so many appointments all the time. (SR8)*

### **How could the EOE have helped you better?**

*I know that its hard for a new immigrant to find a job right away, however, I didn't feel that my agent was concerned with my case. He should be in contact with me, ask me what I have accomplished. I finished SFI and SAS very quickly and started searching for a job right away. And for 6 months I kept applying for many different jobs, all on my way own. But none of the employers answered me. Then I discovered that I had been making some mistakes concerning my CV, and I felt that if from the beginning my agent had been there to help, he could have guided me better on how to apply for a job, but I did everything on my own, from start to end. The EOE only gave me the economic compensation, and that was the only good thing. (SR1)*

*There was one thing that I wish they could have helped me with me, but they told me it would be legally impossible. The SFI school I went to was not very good, but it belonged to the district I lived in. I only got a total of 3 hours of Swedish class a week, and that was not enough by any means to help me learn Swedish quickly, I would go home and study on my own. I live in a district right outside Gothenburg, but SFI schools in Gothenburg are much better. They get many more hours of Swedish learning. So I asked to be moved to another one, inside the Gothenburg district, but they told me it's impossible to attend a school outside of your district. And I felt that was too strict, especially that I felt I was not receiving quality education, and I really wanted to learn Swedish as fast as possible to start feeling like a part of society. (SR4)*

*They deliver their plan, with their method and way of thinking. Like for example, they tell you "you are studying Swedish, and you need to do an internship". But there was no correlation between the internship they gave me, which was working at a daycare, and with my educational background in economics. So I felt that there was no coordination there. I mean I wanted to finish my SFI class first and then do an internship, because I would come home from the internship tired and not have energy to study. But they insisted that it had to be that way. I still finished SFI in 2 months, which was really fast because I was working hard. I felt that they had no long term plans for each person, that they were just applying their establishment program very systematically. (SR5)*

*[They could have helped us better] to find us jobs. I think they really need to change some policies, employers are not taking in enough refugees, and when they actually do, because the policies aren't strict enough, they can just let them go after 6 months and get new ones. It's because the benefits these employers receive from the state for employing refugees, I feel that they are taking advantage of it, and the state isn't strict enough about the policies these employers need to follow. (SR 6)*

*The establishment plan itself needs to be improved, they need to have a much better long perspective plan tailored for each individual in accordance to their competence and skills. And also the SFI schools were of very bad quality, the teachers weren't competent enough. I learned Swedish from the streets and localities, but not from the school. I honestly just went to SFI so I could receive my economic compensation. (SR7)*

*Well in relation to the actual establishment program, I have a problem with the SFI classes. They can send you to a class, which is not your level, just because all other classes are full. Or when you do actually join your level, they would already be three months into the course, and then expect you to make up for that which they have already studied. This has happened to me, and to my friends. There needs to be better collaboration between the EOE and SFI schools. I also just wish they would appreciate my medical situation, and that I am really suffering from it. (SR8)*

Participant SR2 stated there was nothing the EOE could have done to help her better.

**Etableringsenheten (Establishment Unit)**

	<b>Delivery of information</b>	<b>Information needed</b>	<b>Responsiveness to questions and inquires</b>	<b>Accessible</b>
Good	SR7,	SR7	SR7	SR7
Average	-	-	-	-
Bad	SR8	SR8	SR8	SR8

\*N/A for: SR1, SR2, SR3, SR4, SR5, SR 6

Participant RS8 explained his bad experience at the Establishment Unit was due to his administrator:

*She was very unhelpful, and didn't provide me with the information I needed, specially in relation to my rights as a handicap and the benefits I can get. I felt that she was kind of racist, and I asked to change administrator, and they did. She really didn't help me properly. The new administrator I got was much better.*

**How could the Establishment Unit have helped you better?**

Participant SR7 stated that there was nothing the Establishment Unit could have done to help him better.

Participant SR8 felt that after he received a new administrator things became better, and he received all the help he needed.

## Flyktingmedicinsk mottagning (Refugee Medical Center)

	Delivery of information	Information needed	Responsiveness to questions and inquires	Accessibility to reach
Good	SR3	SR3	SR3	SR3
Average	-	-	-	-
Bad	-	-	-	-

\*N/A for: SR1, SR2, SR4, SR5, SR 6, SR7, SR8

Participant SR 3 was the only one to deal with the Refugee Medical Center, and she was very satisfied stating that:

*They explained everything very clearly to me every step of the way. Whenever they did a test or any kind of examination they would explain why they were doing it.*

However, some contact from the Refugee Medical Center was made with SR2 and SR7:

*They contacted me, and offered for me to go to speak to the psychiatrist after my father passed away, but I declined because I didn't feel that I wanted to talk about it, and I worried that if I spoke about it it would make it harder for me. (SR2)*

*They sent me and my wife a letter right away when we arrived, and offered us to come for a total medical check up. However, when we tried to call the number written in the letter several times, the number didn't go through, so we just let it pass. (SR 7)*

Although participants SR4 and SR8 said they had expected to receive a letter with an appointment for a total medical check up upon arrival, as they heard was the common procedure from their acquaintances who lived in Sweden, neither of them were contacted by the Refugee Medical Center.

### 9. What has been your biggest obstacle in resettling in Sweden?

Some participants gave more than one reason; hence some participants' codes are placed in more than one response category.

Response	Participants
Finding a home	SR 1, SR2, SR 6, SR 7, SR8
Finding a job	SR 1, SR 6
Swedish Language learning	SR 3, SR 4, SR 7, SR6

Participant SR1 and SR8 stated that:

*Maybe I had an obstacle regarding work in the beginning, it was hard to find, but I know compared to other refugees, I have been very lucky and things have been easy for me. But housing was a real challenge, no one expected it to be that hard to find a house in Sweden. I applied on my own through Boplats [Swedish website for applying*

for homes] after I got a job, and that's when I was able to get an apartment. The Migration Agency either offers you to stay at an asylum home, or they help you find a home somewhere in Sweden in any municipality, it could be all the way in the north or south, and the last option is for you find a home on your own. (SR1)

*In the beginning I was living with some friends, who had an apartment suitable for my situation [sitting on a wheelchair]. There were no stairs. But then they got kicked out because of some problems, and I had a really hard time finding an apartment because of my wheelchair. And I became totally lost and didn't know where to go, when I went to the Migration Agency they told me they were no longer responsible for me because I had received my permit, and the social services weren't convinced that I was on the verge of being homeless. When I finally convinced them with proof that I seriously had nowhere to go, then they fixed an apartment for me. (SR8)*

Participant SR2 also stated that housing was a big obstacle for her, but added that:

*The hardest thing on a personal level was being away from my family, my husband isn't with me, and I don't feel settled without them. And on practical level it has been housing. It feels like it's the hardest thing in Sweden and nobody helps you with that, you have to search on your own. And a lot of Syrian refugees have now been hesitant to come here because they have heard about how difficult it is to try to find a home in the big cities.*

On top of having difficulty with finding a job, participant SR 7 added that a big obstacle he feels he faces is:

*To gain society's trust, it's a serious challenge to gain the Swedish society's trust. I don't know maybe it's because some of the bad experiences they have faced with some immigrants and refugees, but I feel that being looked at as an immigrant by society really makes it hard for them to trust me in things like giving me a job.*

Participant SR 6 had an obstacle regarding Swedish language learning stating that:

*There is no direct contact between the teacher and the student, like where he/she sits down with me personally if I have any questions, or clarifications about the homework. And I think this lack of contact is bad, because language learning has a lot to do with contact. I mean if you get an illiterate person but put him in a society where there is a lot of contact with native language speakers, he will learn the language. And you can have a person who is well educated, but with the no direct contact method, they won't learn a lot. Contact is the most important. I mean language is not just learning, it has to be practiced.*

**10. What information do you feel Swedish agencies could have provided you that could have helped make this obstacle easier for you to deal with?**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Participants</b>
Housing	SR1, SR2, SR8
Change of employment policies	SR6, SR7

Other	SR3, SR4, SR5
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*Well regarding housing, I think they should have studied better the cases of families. For example, I have two aunts living in Borås and we asked them so many times to help us find a home there but they didn't. And like there are many families who live there [in Borås] for no specific reasons other than chance, and if they had studied the cases better, or listened to our requests, they could situate people better. (SR2)*

Participant SR6 and SR7 shared similar opinions regarding what could be done to ease the obstacle of finding employment:

*Well I think they need to change a lot of their policies, regarding employment. It needs to be much easier for a refugee or an immigrant to find a job. (SR6)*

*They really need to improve the SFI school, invest in getting more competent teachers for example. As for finding work, I think the employment office needs to force employers to at least take people from the EOE as a trial. I mean these employers are already getting paid from the EOE to take people from the EOE, but they are so reluctant to do so, so stricter policies, like having to take a certain quota of refugees for example. (SR7)*

Participants SR4 stated that:

*Well I think they need to change their policies about where you can study SFI. It's too strict to be only allowed to study within your district. Also as I said previously, I wish the Migration Agency could have given me the chance to study Swedish earlier. (SR 4)*

**11. After living (blank) this amount of time in Sweden, what things do you wish you would have been told directly upon your arrival?**

Participants	Period of residence in Sweden
SR1	2.8 years
SR2	2.4 years
SR3	8 months
SR4	3.4 years
SR5	1.2 years
SR6	3.5 years
SR7	1.4 years
SR8	2.2 years

Response	Participants
Information about difficulty in finding employment	SR3, SR4
Information about difficulty in housing	SR2, SR5
Nothing	SR1, SR6, SR7, SR8

Participants SR3 and SR4 shared similar opinions regarding difficulty in employment:



*That it would take time in order to be able to apply to university, and find a job. They both turned out to be really hard. I was unfortunately told that it was easy, so I was shocked when I came. (SR3)*

*That it would take this much time to find a job. I used to hear that it was easy to get a job, and in general that things were so easy, but the reality was very different. Until now I have not been able to find a job. There are so many requirements and qualifications needed, even for things such as a pre-school teacher, where back in Syria it wouldn't have required that many qualifications, but in Sweden it does. It's really difficult, you need to know so many laws, and even study at university just to become a pre-school teacher. (SR4)*

Participants SR2 and SR 5 shared similar opinions about wishing to have known about housing difficulties:

*I wish I would have known from the beginning not to come to Gothenburg before finding a home. I only understood that it was hard to find a first hand contract, but I didn't imagine that even a second hand contract would be that difficult. I almost got scammed twice while trying to rent an apartment via a second hand contract, I was so desperate that I didn't think it through. (SR2)*

*I wish I knew about the housing problem. We keep moving out, or get kicked out from apartments and it's a serious problem for me and my family. There are no houses, and some people take advantage of us and raise rent because they know we are desperate. It's impossible to find any first hand contracts. The EOE can't help us, and we are doing everything on our own. And the housing companies are reluctant to give refugees first hand contracts because most of us don't have stable jobs. And at the same time we can't work until we are done with our establishment plan, but even then it's hard to find a job. So yes, I wish I had known all that. (SR5)*

Participants SR1, SR6, SR7 and SR8 stated that they felt they had gotten all information necessary, but participant SR7 added that:

*I think they gave the most important information upon our arrival, it just depends if we applied it or not. But I mean in Sweden, I think it will take at least 10-20 years before I really understand how everything works.*

## **12. Is there anything else you think you yourself can do help your integration in Sweden?**

Some participants gave more than one answer; hence some participants' codes are placed in more than one response category.

<b>Response</b>	<b>Participants</b>
Learn Swedish	SR1, SR2, SR5, SR4, SR8
Interact with Swedish people	SR1, SR3, SR4, SR 7
Attend integration activities	SR6, SR7, SR4
Employment	SR2

Participant SR1 added that on top of learning Swedish and making Swedish friends he stated that:

*I think it also has a lot to do with how flexible the person who has newly come to Sweden is about learning the Swedish way of life, and understanding how to deal with them, and accept their way of life.*

Regarding language learning participants SR2, SR4, SR5 and SR8 stated that:

*The first thing I need to do is learn their language, because I feel by learning their language I learn more about their culture and even their history. And of course work, working will help me integrate. However, I like to integrate in the aspects of Swedish society that suit me. I don't like to be forced to adopt certain Swedish values that are against my religion with the excuse that this is how society is. There is a red line when it comes to things concerning my religion. (SR2)*

*[...] and of course learning the language. Before I learnt Swedish I couldn't interact with anyone and I felt extremely cut from the society. Language is the most essential thing in a new country. It enables you to know your rights and to be able to function, like book a doctor's appointment for example. Until you learn it, you are bound to an interpreter, and it's very constraining, (SR 4)*

*The language. The language is the key for the country. this is why I really want to study Swedish, not just to work but to feel that I am not an outcast and distant from Swedish society. So I can speak with them, and wherever I go I can interact and handle things on my own. (SR5)*

*I feel that when I learn the language, and then continue with my education, I can integrate. Until then, as long as they don't understand me and I don't understand them, I can never be a part of them [Swedish society] (SR8)*

Participants SR3, SR4, SR7 had some interesting insights regarding interaction with Swedish people:

*Doing internships, as it allows me to interact with Swedish people, and hear Swedish around me. I am currently doing an internship on how to become a tour guide in Gothenburg, I don't see myself as ever becoming tour guide, but I am doing this internship do give myself a tour and try to learn about Gothenburg. It makes me feel that I understand their culture and history more, which will help me integrate better into this society. Its very educational for me, and I am getting to know Swedish people. (SR3)*

*To interact with Swedish people. Where I live, the women from several churches volunteer every two weeks to have a gathering with immigrant women, for around two hours to help us practice our Swedish, and we do fika [Swedish coffee and cake time]. We bring food from our countries and we also tell them about our culture and food. They sometimes bring us activities where we can practice our Swedish, like crosswords. (SR4)*

*To find a way to gain the Swedish society's trust. I feel that there is a wall between Swedes and refugees. I mean they let us into their country, but they don't really*

*interact with us. They need more programs and activities that can allow interaction between Swedes and refugees. And I think that refugees need to prove themselves as effective members of society in order for Swedes to trust them. I mean the “Refugee guide” integration program is good, but it’s just a start. We meet a Swedish family, maybe once a week or every two weeks and do something together, but that’s not enough. (SR7)*

Participant SR6 stated that there was nothing more he could personally do, and felt that it was the duty of society to help in integration:

*I think the society itself needs to take initiative to create more programs for integration. Like for example getting pensioners to interact with refugees. This happens at the SFI school once a week, but that’s not enough. I think they need to create centers, like language centers where pensioner can come, or they can employ Swedish people, where refugees can go to practice what they learn in school. And also they need to teach us more about Swedish culture and norms. At school we don’t learn that much. Also we should learn about what Swedish slang expressions mean. These things you only learn by practicing with a Swedish native speaker, you don’t learn it at school. The “people’s” language is different from the classic language learning we get at school. And you learn the “people’s” language only through contact with native Swedes. I mean there are things such as language cafes, but they are personal efforts of people, not given through the government. And I think the government offices need to do these activities in order to make it more formal. Because honestly, on everyday basis, like with neighbors they are not keen to meet us and come over and speak. But maybe through a more serious center, they would be more keen. (SR6)*

## 4.2 Swedish employees interview results

### 1. Do you feel your institution does all it can to help refugees? (in the purpose it serves, e.g. employment, medical care...etc)?

#### Employees at the Establishment Unit

SE1: Social secretary

SE2: Housing secretary

Response	Participants
Yes	SE1, SE2
No	-

Participant SE1 added that:

*We work with a target group that knows very little, to be an asylum seeker is very different, it entails many rights but also many duties. So I think since the founding of this office, which was around 5 years ago, we have worked really hard with making available the needed information for asylum seekers and refugees and even translate it into their languages.*

#### Employees at the Refugee Medical Center

SE3: Medical Counselor

SE4: Physician

Response	Participants
Yes	SE3, SE4
No	-

Both participants SE3 and SE4 believed that their agency was doing the best it could, with regards to the resources and capabilities they have, but participant SE3 stated that there is always room for improvement.

### **Employees at the Employment Office for Establishment (EOE)**

SE5: Employment agent

SE6: Employment agent

Response	Participants
Yes	SE5
No	SE6

Participant SE6 who was the only employee to believe that her agency was not doing the best it could in helping refugees explained that:

*I think we have an ambition to do so, but to say that “we do all that we can”, maybe we haven’t reached that yet. There are many reasons for that, for example, we are expanding, which means that there a lot of new employees that are starting to work here, and it takes time for them to get the hang of things. Also the activities that we offer for applicants [refugees] in their establishment program, are not always the best or most effective activities, I think we need different activities for applicants that will build on their competences.*

### **Employees at the Migration Agency**

SE7: Administrator

SE8: Administrator

Response	Participants
Yes	SE7, SE8
No	-

Even though both participants SE7 and SE8 felt that their agency was doing the best it could they added that:

*There is always room to do better, but I think with the budget we have, and the number of employees that work here, we are doing the best we can. (SE7)*

*With the capacity we have, and the influx of refugees, I think we are doing the best we can, but of course it’s resulting in long waiting times for application decisions. (SE8)*

- 2. Before you started working at your agency, were you given any sort of training on how to deal with refugees? Or any specific trainings on the different cultures of the refugees?**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Total Yes/No</b>
Yes	SE5, SE7, SE8	3
No	SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4, SE6	5

The majority of participants stated that they were not required to attend any courses or training prior to their employment at their agencies, however most of them stated that they are offered to attend seminars and lectures throughout their employment:

*There is an integration center that offers a lot of seminars and lecture about different cultures for employees here at the Establishment Unit, it started around 2-3 years ago. In the beginning there were a lot of sessions around Somalia because there was a temporary opening for their quota, and a lot of Somalian refugees came in. There was a seminar regarding their culture, what is happening there [in Somalia], and a lot about their way of thinking. And now with Syrians, we also have seminars that bring in professors, professional workers, and actual refugees to speak. They [the refugees] get to speak about about their experience and how they were received by Swedish authorities, and things they wish could have changed. But yea, there is no concrete training. (SE1)*

At the Refugee Medical Center, SE2 and SE3 stated that there were no formal trainings and added that:

*Yes, there are seminars and lectures from time to time, but there is no obligation for the employees who work here to attend something special, they are expected to have experience and knowledge prior to their employment here. But there is no concrete training or course that we have to attend. (SE3)*

Participants SE5 who works at the EOE, stated that:

*We have some activities and seminars from time to time. For example, we just recently had an event called “World in the world” where all employees got the chance to attend. It was half a day and included seminars about different parts of the world, there were lectures by experienced speakers, music playing from different parts of the world such as Africa and the Middle East. It was very interesting. Also we [the employment agents] that work with refugees in the establishment program get a special course about culture, and cultural conflicts.*

However, participant SE6, who also works at the EOE stated the contrary saying:

*Well there are no specific courses that we have to attend, but I know there has been different seminars about different countries such as Afghanistan and Syria. But there is no mandatory course that we who work here have to attend.*

Participant SE8 said that employees were required to attend an obligatory program when they started working at the Migration Agency, SE7 elaborated more on this stating that:

*They [the courses] were about how to give a good reception, about avoiding being critical of other people’s norms, also we learned about interview methods, and they*

were obligatory. But there were no culture specific courses, we do have information reports about different countries on our information system, so if I have an interview with a person or a family from a country that I don't know much about I go in on the system and read about it before the appointment.

**3. What are usually the three main important pieces of information that you want to deliver to a refugee when you first meet them?**

<b>Response of SE1</b>
Information about how to find a home
Information about economic compensation
Clearly state that it's not our job to find them homes.

<b>Response of SE2</b>
Information on how to find a home
Make clear that it's their responsibility to find a home
Important factors to consider when searching for a home

Participants SE1 and SE2 both emphasized the necessity of mentioning information related to housing, SE1 further explained that:

*It doesn't matter if it's a family or an individual, housing is something that we always start with. We tell them it's their responsibility, and they must solve their situation. All refugees have gotten the offer from the Migration Agency to help them in finding a house, but many of them don't take up on that offer because it could entail moving to any part of Sweden, and they want to stay here in Gothenburg. Many asylum seekers who come here [Sweden] live with their relatives and then get kicked out after a while and are faced with housing problems, Most Syrians have lived in Damascus and big cities, so they want to live in a big city here too because they are used to that. But they don't have a long term perspective that it takes time to become established in a new country, and learn it's language, and get their children into school, and that it won't be easier to do that in a big city. But we have the obligation to house families with children who have been kicked out or are homeless for some reason, and sometimes we have to put them in hotels because there is nowhere else. And unfortunately this has spread around and many families try to take advantage of that, so we always try to clarify, from the first meeting, that this only occurs in emergency situations.*

<b>Response of SE3</b>
Ask them what they need help with
Tell them to always speak their mind
Let them know I will give them my full attention in listening

<b>Response of SE4</b>
Ask the interpreter to introduce themselves
Present myself through the interpreter
Tell them shortly about what the medical center does.

<b>Response of SE5</b>
Inform them about their rights
Inform them about their obligations
Explain to them about the importance of the establishment program in helping them resettle

<b>Response of SE6</b>
Learning Swedish is the most important thing they have to do
Inform them about the importance of the establishment program to help them find a job, or continue with education.

<b>Response of SE7</b>
Present who I am and what I do
Tell them I have professional secrecy
Inform them about the bank cards they will receive their economic compensation through

<b>Response of SE8</b>
Oral and written information about health care, schooling, and housing
What happens when they receive a decision from the Migration Agency regarding their asylum application
How to work under the asylum application with the necessary documents.

#### **4. How are the pamphlets, information sessions, appointments ...etc. prepared for refugees (What do you consider, when writing the content and delivering it?)**

Some participants gave more than one answer; hence some participants' codes are placed in more than one response category.

<b>Response</b>	<b>Participants</b>
Simplicity of language	SE1, S32, SE8
Summarize information	SE1,SE2
Clear information	SE1,SE2, SE6
Translated into different languages	SE3, SE5, SE7, SE8
Use of an interpreter	SE1, SE5

Participants furthermore added that:

*We always try to summarize information because there is so much for them to take in, so we try to summarize the material and make it as relevant as possible. And we kind of know the sort of information this target group usually seeks. (SE1)*

*Whenever I am giving them information, about for example how the renting process of a home goes, or the economic aid for rent that a person can receive I try to avoid as much as possible complicated and legal terms; I try to use good communicative language. (SE2)*

Participant SE4, who works as a physician in the Refugee Medical Center, gave a relatively different answer to other employees stating that:



*Well I don't really make any special consideration for a refugee, compared to my other patients. When I am telling a refugee about their medical condition, it's the same way I do with any other patient, maybe that it is just through an interpreter. I simply try to find out what's wrong, and help them. (SE4)*

Participants SE5 and SE6 who work in the EOE added that:

*We have all the information pamphlets and brochures that we offer in different languages, such as Arabic, Persian, Somalian, Tigrinya and English, and lately we even added "simple" Swedish. Even the letters we send out to the refugees we send it in their mother language. The content itself is central in all Sweden, it's available for all EOE offices in Sweden. (SE5)*

*I have personally worked for a really long time, so a lot of the information I know by heart. I always try to tell them practical things, like for example how long the waiting list for the SFI classes are, and that they can't choose the school. I also always try to think that the things that we take for granted and are easy for us to understand, are not the same for them. For example, like the purpose of a certain course or activity they need to do, I have to explain very clearly why they have to take it, for example that's it a way complement their SFI classes. (SE6)*

- 5. Are there always interpreters present during your interactions with Syrian refugees? How do you feel the presence of interpreters affects the communication process? (do you feel information might be left out, emotions are not correctly delivered, do you fear misunderstanding or incorrect translation...etc.)**

**Presence of interpreters:**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Total</b>
Yes (during booked appointments)	SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4, SE5	5
No	-	-
Depends	SE6 , SE7, SE8	3

Participants SE8 who, works at the Migrations Agency reception unit stated that:

*We mostly use telephone interpreters, not face-to-face interpreters, unless it's a large family, or an elderly person that might not be able to understand how telephone interpretations goes through, or if a person explicitly requests that they want a face-to-face interpreter. It's really expensive with face-to-face interpreters, and also with the refugee influx that has happened in the past year, there are so many agencies and institutes that require interpreters, so we almost fight over them. So telephone interpreters are usually more accessible. (SE8)*



## **Effect of interpreters:**

Most participants agreed that the competence of the interpreter, getting to know the interpreter, and the interpreters' familiarity with the agency are all factors that play an integral role in the success of the communication process:

*Now that I have worked for 4 years with interpreters, I can tell right away when things aren't working well. Some interpreters just come and sit down and translate what is being said with a monotone, and that's not always effective. I think it also has a lot to do also with getting to know the interpreter, we have some interpreters that come here often and they get to know us, and understand our techniques, for example when I am using a soft tone, they interpret with a soft tone, when I am upset, they get upset. When you have a good interpreter that understands our agency and what we do, and our terms, then it's best. (SE1)*

*It doesn't always work out 100 percent well. Mainly because when we sit with a refugee and speak through an interpreter, we don't know their [the interpreter's] competence is enough when. For example, an employment agent has said two words, but a long sentence is instead being interpreted, then I become a bit suspicious that it's not working and then I have to double check, and ask control questions. For example, we can turn the question around, and have the applicant say what we said, that way we make sure that the correct information was transferred to the applicant. We also have colleagues at the office who speak the same languages as some of the applicants, so they sometimes speak to applicants in their mother tongue. (SE5)*

*[...] but even with a good interpreter it can sometimes be difficult, if the applicant has a low education, or is not familiar with agencies and their function. (SE6)*

*Sometimes there is tension that rises between the interpreter and the applicant, so we have to change interpreters. I also feel that it's much harder to communicate with phone interpreters, having face-to-face interpreters usually gives better results. (SE7)*

Participant SE1 added some positive aspects of having an interpreter:

*[...] also sometimes when the client gets angry at me for some reason then they choose to speak to the interpreter and ignore me, which would have not been possible had there not be an interpreter. But it can be good, because sometimes clients can tell me things through the interpreter which they wouldn't have wanted to say directly to me had we spoken the same language. But the best thing with having an interpreter for me is having time to think about formulating what I want to say, while the interpreter is speaking.*

Participants SE2, SE4, and SE3 shared some of the negative aspects of having an interpreter expressing that generally the communication process itself is poorer with an interpreter:

*I would have wished I didn't need to use an interpreter, I mean emotions transfer and the communication itself, the dialogue, would have been better. But we have no other way, so we try to our best to do the best with it. Something that I think about with using interpreters, is that sometimes I take for granted that the expressions and terms I am using will be understood, even if directly translated. I mean I have to*

*consider that these people from Syria, or Somalia or whatever country or culture might not have the same expressions, or agencies. so I need think more about that when I am speaking, so what I say gets understood in the right way. (SE2)*

*I think interpreters are always a hinder for good communication. There is a lot of research that shows that information gets lost through an interpreter, depending on the interpreter's skill and ability. (SE4)*

*To work via a interpreter is a very complex thing, its not that easy. I think I do it well, I have many years' experience with it, but there is a lot of different levels of interpreters. Some are quite unprofessional, they start giving their personal opinions, and that's not allowed. Some are over helpful, like they see that the patient is sad, so they get up and get a tissue, which is not their job description, they should only interpret what I say and what the patient says, they need to be a neutral medium. (SE3)*

Participant SE8 had a different opinion from other participants stating that:

*We always get licensed interpreters to work with, so they are qualified. What I have noticed is that if a problem arises it's usually that the applicant and the interpreter don't understand each other, because of dialect issues. But I would say that getting an incompetent interpreter happens maybe 2% of the time.*

**6. On a scale between 1-10 how much do you think you are able to get the content of information through to a refugee? (1 being lowest, and 10 highest)**

Response	Participants
1	-
2	-
3	-
4	-
5	-
6	SE7
7	-
8	SE2, SE4
9	-
10	-
Depends	SE1, SE3, SE5, SE6, SE8

Even though participant SE7 gave a rating she added:

*Some things are hard to explain, especially when it's complicated laws or policies, I feel it doesn't always go through. Also some terms simply don't exist in other languages, and interpreters for example tell us, this word does not exist in Somalian. But I think it had a lot to do with the country of the refugee, with Syrians it's usually easier because they have a lot of agencies similar to ours. (SE7)*

Participants SE1, SE3, SE5, were not able to give definite numbers on the scale as they believe that such a rating depends on the situation and the refugee as an individual:

*When I am sitting in a meeting I can't tell whether the client comprehends what I am saying or not, and what they take home with them. For example, in the first two years of working here, I noticed that in the follow up meetings there were always a lot of questions, and during that time they only got information orally, so they would take home with them the most important and relevant information at the moment from the meeting. Now with these brochures and information papers for example, things have really improved. (SE1)*

*I can't give a number. Sometimes it goes well, sometimes there are misunderstandings, sometimes I have to repeat what I said. It really depends on the person, the interpreter and even me, I have my bad days when I can't formulate myself at the very best. (SE3)*

*It's hard, it depends on the person. Those who have higher education, then maybe it's a 9-10 but the lower educated people who have not worked before or back in the country have not been active in society then it becomes a 5-6. (SE5)*

Participants SE2, SE6, and SE8 believe that being receptive to information depends a lot on the mental state of the refugee:

*It has a lot to do with the situation. I mean if a person comes here with an emergency situation, they might not be able to comprehend everything that is being said to them because of how stressed they are, like with a housing or financial problem, and then I feel that I am not able to get information through to them properly. Or if a person comes with a specific wish about something, and we can't make it happen, it feels that they sort of unconsciously refuse to take in the information we are trying to get through because they are just so focused on getting their demand met. (SE2)*

*It's very very individualistic. It's a big difference between someone who is well educated, and someone who is low educated. Also how the psychologically feel, some of them are not mentally there, because they are still stuck in their trauma, or the rest of their family have not come yet. (SE6)*

*I think it depends on the situation, many asylum applicants have gone through traumatic experiences whether back in their countries or on their way here. And I feel that they are not very receptive to information, they sort have a mental blockage. So in many instances we have to re-book an appointment for them to repeat the same information. But more or less we try to adjust ourselves and the way we give information depending on the target group or person, bearing in mind their education level, or their age. For example, young applicants want information about youth institutes that can help them, while elderly for example we give them information about retirement funds, and such. (SE8)*

**7. Have you dealt with Syrian refugees specifically? Have there been any noticeable differences between them and other refugees?**

\*Although it was a criterion for the employee to have worked with Syrian refugees in order to be chosen as an interview subject, the first part of question 7 was still asked as an assurance method, and as a preface to the second part of the question.

Dealt with Syrian refugees:  
All participants had dealt with Syrian refugees.

Differences between them and other refugees:

Response	Participants
Educational level of Syrians is very high	SE1, SE2, SE4, SE5, SE6, SE7
Large international and national media coverage of Syrian war	SE3, SE4

Participant SE1 discussed a lot of differences between Syrian refugees and Somalian refugees stating that:

*When I worked here starting in 2012 it was mostly Somalian refugees that came, and also the Syrians, and you can see the biggest difference between the two groups is the enormous difference in educational level, and how much they understand, and the difference between the communities which they had lived in. Many Somalian people have a really hard time understanding for example what the EOE is, or the Social Insurance (Försäkringskassan) is and what role they have. They can go to all agencies and ask for the same thing because they don't understand what each one is about. While with Syrians you just explain one time, and they get it. So that's the biggest difference. They [Syrians] have lived in a developed society, and compared to a Somalian family, Syrians comprehend in a very different way. Also a well educated person, such as a Syrian, handles a situation better, like a Somalian will most likely get upset and angry in like 3 seconds, while a more educated person sits and has a discussion about the situation. But people with lower education have a hard time accepting certain situations, and even after a 45 min discussion explaining why things are the way they are, they say "well I am not planning to leave here until I get an apartment", they shutdown when they don't accept. But we see this difference, with well educated Syrians when we say no we can't help you with that, they say ok then we will have to find a way to solve it ourselves, but the less educated become desperate, and they get hopeless, and give up.*

Participant SE3 added that:

*They have an ongoing war, their situation is internationally well known, its in our media a lot. It was a well functioning country that crashed. Also, although this is general to most refugees, but a lot of Syrians had so many high expectations of Sweden and they were not met, such as finding a house, the waiting time for a family reunion application, and finding employment. Some of the patients I get here have been so depressed, that they even consider going back. It takes times to find their place in Sweden, they face many more obstacles than they had expected, but a lot of them are still very are thankful. (SE3)*

Participant SE8 added a different answer stating that the main difference he sees between Syrians refugees and other refugee groups is how well informed they are about some Swedish polices even before their arrival:

*Most Syrian refugees know what it entails when they get to Sweden, that they will receive a permanent residence right away, and that they can ask for family reunification. For example, not to go far off, but with Iraqi refugees, they know that they might not get a permanent residence so they become unsure whether they will stay here, they might be sent back to safe areas in Iraq such as Bagdad. But Syrians come here with a full confidence that they can establish their lives here, and bring their families, so they come with many future plans.*

**8. Have you received any special instructions from any government agency in regards to Syrian refugees and how to deal with their situation?**

Response	Participants	Total Yes/No
Yes	SE7, SE8	2
No	SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4, SE5, SE6	6

Participant SE7, and SE8 explained that:

*All asylum applications are divided into different categories, Syrian and Eritrean applicants fall together in a special division, their cases are easily determined, basically they don't need personal reasons to seek asylum, it's enough they are from these countries because they have an ongoing war. (SE7)*

*Yes, the government has decided since 2013 that the Migration Agency should grant all Syrian refugees permanent residence. (SE8)*

**9. Do you feel that Syrian refugees are responsive to the information they receive? do they apply it and act on it?)**

Response	Participants	Total Yes/No
Yes	SE 1, SE2, SE3,SE4,SE5,SE6, SE7	8
No	-	

*I think it depends on the individual, so we shouldn't make generalizations. But generally we see better results with Syrians, we are satisfied with their outcome after the establishment program, it's been almost 5 years since they have started coming. So compared to other immigrants, we see better results with Syrians. (SE4)*

Participants SE2, and SE4 and SE6 believe that their responsiveness to information they receive has to do with their general high level of education:

*Well yea I guess it has to do with if you are well educated, and were well established in a previous society, then it's easier to comprehend and be responsive to the information you get, form the experience you have. They recognize to a big extent the system, even if its not exactly the same. (SE2)*

*Well, in general any person who has higher education is more receptive of information. (SE4)*

*Yes, most of them are, if it's a Syrian refugee with education. Many of them have worked in Saudi Arabia, or Dubai, or have worked internationally, many can speak English. They have a large capability to take in information, in comparison to someone who comes from Afghanistan who has lived in a village and never been to a school. But even them[Syrians], when there is a lot of strain in their lives like finding a home, and reuniting with their family, information intake can be a bit less. (SE6)*

## **10. What are the biggest challenges you face with Syrian refugees?**

Participant SE2 from the Establishment Unite stated that finding Syrian refugees has been the hardest challenge, while SE1 added that:

*That we get a lot of really well educated people with a lot of competences, and we don't take enough care of them in the right way. We are met with such a frustration from Syrian clients. They are really driven, and they want to skip all the war, and all the hardships, and just get into the labor market and return to their old lives, with their jobs, cars, and house. And you want to tell them that it will happen really soon, but the truth is it won't happen that easily. But I mean it's easier for Syrians because they have competences, so they can validate to become a physician here. But people who worked as jurists in Syria, I mean it's a great job there, but here their bachelor isn't worth a thing, we work with a totally different law book, and they would need to learn everything all over again. (SE1)*

Participant SE3, who is a counselor, and participant SE4 who is a physician at the Refugee Medical center stated that:

*It's that I sit with my hands tied behind my back, I can't do much about their problems, such as speeding the process of family reunification, many haven't seen their families in 1-2 years. They come with hope, and then get disappointed when they hear that I can't write a special report to speed up their family application in the Migration Agency. They tell me that their wife is crying on the phone, and their children are screaming and calling for them, and they feel helpless and they come seek my help, and I can't help them help their families. (SE3)*

*They are people who have left a chaotic land full of war and gotten separated from their family. They need a good and respectful reception from us, a friendly reception. They have a lot of experience of being badly treated from the military, ISIS and on their journey to here [Sweden]. So the biggest challenge is to give them a good reception, if you don't do that then often their first impression of Sweden becomes really negative, and that's not something we want. (SE4)*

Participants SE5, and SE6 from the EOE expressed that:

*We need more activities for them. We are supposed to keep them busy with 40 hours of activities a week, but these activities should also lead to a job. These activities should*

*help them into the labor market or to continue with higher education. So we need good activities, and I feel that we aren't 100 percent successful with the activities we already have. (SE5)*

*It's actually the whole mission. Because even if they are well educated they see that it's a long way for them to be able to work, even if they used to be a physician back in Syria. And on the other side even if the person is not well educated, but has worked with manual labor, they still have to sit at a school bench [in Sweden] and learn. Also, it's important to early on know what their competences are, to see if they can validate them here in Sweden. Because a person who has worked in the construction business, well that's different in Syria compared to here. Also, here in Sweden it's not a very hierarchal country, so Syrians who have been previously physicians and come here, well the status thing really differs, it's a cultural difference. I think in the beginning many of them are set on learning Swedish and then continuing with whatever profession they had back in Syria, but when they start to realize that it's a long way, then they might settle for driving a buss, or taxi. But I mean not all of them settle for any job, it has to do with age. A man who is 50 years or plus, realizes it's not going to work. But with 30 years plus there is more motivation, more hope. (SE6)*

Participant SE7, and SE8 who work at the Migration Agency stated that:

*It's always difficult to meet people who have been in a traumatic experience. Most of them have come here through an extremely difficult journey, via Turkey or Greece, it's a horrible experience, and they come here [at the application unit] basically the second day after their arrival to Sweden and it's challenging to give a proper reception for their situation. (SE7)*

*Housing, there aren't enough homes for this large group of refugees. Also that many are so eager to start their new lives, they want to work and learn Swedish, but things take time. (SE8)*

**11. What information do you think will help Syrian refugees integrate into Swedish society better?**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Participants</b>
Information about housing	SE2, SE3, SE4
Information about Swedish labor market requirements	SE5, SE2
Information about how Swedish society functions	SE6, SE7, SE8

Participant SE1 believed integration activities could help Syrian refugees integrate better:

*I think there needs to more natural meeting points. Like for a normal Swede, why would they get out of their normal social life to go to a meeting point? I mean a lot of refugees would be interested to go such meeting points, but then it becomes mostly just refugees that go to such things. It might be thought that it's a refugee's job to take initiative to integrate, but its actually an effort that needs to be done from both sides. The "Flykting Guide" Refugee Guide program, is a good example, but there are so many refugees that are on the waiting list, because from the Swedish side, people*



*already have their social network and their family, so there isn't much initiative from that side. (SE1)*

Participants SE2 believed that information about housing could help Syrian refugees integrate better:

*That you clearly deliver to them the information that it's not easy at all to find a house, and that it's not guaranteed that when they settle in a municipality that they will get an apartment. There needs to be clear information about the Swedish housing market, and what can happen if you move to a big city without having it thought through, the long term effect. Having a house is an essential stability pillar, and when that need is met, then the pressure and stress of finding a home is gone, and they can have time and the motive to go things such as integration activities. (SE2)*

Participants SE5, who believed information about the Swedish labor market could help Syrian refugees integrate stated that:

*Information about the Swedish labor market, how it really differs from other countries. The most important thing is to know how the labor market works in Sweden. And it's important for them to know that they need education in any career they will seek. They need to get legitimation, certification, and education in any job branch, their experience in a certain branch is not enough for the Swedish labor market, Sweden has requirements for these jobs. We feel that they expect to start working within their previous career once they come here, like a physician who has worked for 10 years in Syria, has to wait maybe 5 years to be able to work again [in Sweden]. It doesn't feel good, but it's the law that states that, and we have to focus on telling them this. (SE5)*

Participants SE8, SE7, SE8 believed that information about how Swedish society functions and what is expected of them is essential for integration:

*We need to becomes clearer on what is expected of a person in Sweden. That they are expected to be economically independent, pay taxes, and these things. And what it takes to reach that. I mean to give them a long sighted view of it. Some might become satisfied with working at a grocery store in Angered [immigrant majority neighborhood], but it usually becomes temporary, but they need a a job now because they are financially responsible for their family, and relatives who aren't here [in Sweden]. But at the same time, we try to give them a long sighted view, what will you do in 5 or 10 years? (SE6)*

*I myself come from a country where for example, it's normal to hit children that misbehave, here in Sweden it's illegal. This kind of information is important to know, generally information about the Swedish culture, and norms. It doesn't mean that they have to live as a Swede, but they should respect the culture and polices of this country. I mean there are a lot of difference between their culture and here, so it's good that from the start they get an idea on how things are here. (SE8)*

## **12. How do you think Syrians can help make their integration process easier?**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Participants</b>
Move to smaller cities	SE 1, SE2



Participants SE1, and SE2 believed if Syrians refugees moved into smaller cities, this would ease their integration process much more:

*They can stop settling in Gothenburg. It ruins so much, the difficulty caused by the housing situation. I have many clients that have been kicked out of SFI because they aren't making any progress, because they are moving day after day between different houses. And it makes the whole establishment program pointless. Stability is really important. I mean when this moving happens, and they don't know where they will end up next, their children feel like crap, and we get calls from their teachers and school counselors who are really worried. Many don't like the asylum homes, but we want them to meet people who chose to leave and are now moving around in an unstable life. Like we know it's not the best [the asylum homes], but it gives security and stability. (SE1)*

*To be open to moving to smaller cities, there is a kind of fear of these small cities and what they have to offer like schools, childcare, and etc. and I think it's actually easier to integrate into a smaller community where there isn't a hard climate and much competition, children get a better chance for a calmer school. (SE2)*

Participants SE3, SE4, SE5, and SE6, and SE8 stated that Swedish language learning is essential for integration:

*To learn Swedish. It's the key to society. It's good for everyone, especially for those who are still suffering from trauma, because it's important to get going with life, or else you just sit and let yourself sink into the negative thoughts and it becomes an evil spiral. And the best way to get over this is to go out into society and do something, see different things. (SE3)*

*Learning the language is essential, without language there is no communication. (SE4)*

*To try and use Swedish language to actually get in contact with the Swedish part of society. Like to get in contact with a Swedish family, and get to know Swedish society and culture. To not just stay up in immigrant neighborhoods, and go shopping there, work there, and not want to even take the tram downtown. Many want to get into touch with society, but it's not very easy. But I think these activities of integration are needed. I know they are hard, there lot of refugees who want, but not many Swedes who want to volunteer. But a refugee can't do much about that. I think the problem is that lot of Swedes have a preconception that it will be very challenging. (SE6)*

Participant SE7 believed that by trying to get a job, Syrian refugees can start integrating into Swedish society:

*To get a job, even during the process of their asylum application. If they give us their id's, we can produce a temporary work permit for them so they can work or do an internship during their asylum investigation time, even before they receive a residence*

*permit. And I think working or doing an internship is a great way for them to start integrating into society.*

## **5. Discussion**

The sixth section includes an analysis of the results from the interviews in relation to the theoretical framework of the study. Six topics are identified and discussed; they are: general evaluation of Swedish agencies, comprehension of information, use of interpreters, intercultural communication competence, evaluation of information received from Swedish agencies, obstacles faced by both parties, and needed information for integration support. The following discussion is the foundation which will help in the explicit answering of the research questions of the study presented in section 6.0.

### **5.1 General evaluation of Swedish agencies**

In regards to how Syrian refugees (SR) evaluated the help of Swedish agencies on a scale between 1-10 (1 being lowest, and 10 highest), the average of the evaluations was an 8, which is quite high. In accordance to this high evaluation, when Swedish employees (SE) were asked how well they felt their agency was doing in regards to helping refugees, the majority of employees stated that they believed their agency was doing the best it could, in relation to the resources and capabilities it had. Hence, there seems to be an agreement from both sides that Swedish agencies, in general, are judged to be doing a good job in the reception and help of refugees.

### **5.2 Comprehension of information**

In analyzing the transfer of information that occurs between SR and SE, much emphasis was put on evaluating how SR perceived the effectiveness of the communication while also examining their level of comprehension of the information they received. Furthermore, the study looked at the SEs' perspective on how they evaluated the information transfer process between them and refugees. Results show that the majority of SR reported that they understood the information they received from SE, where all eight SR participants stated that the delivery of information, in regards to language, and style were very clear. Several of the SR participants also emphasized how repetition of information, and having detailed information, were factors that helped in understanding the information clearly. Furthermore, the majority of SR stated that they were able to ask, and receive responses to their inquiries, while several of them also highlighted how SE showed patience in regards to answering all kinds of questions, and also generally repeated information, as a means to ensure it had gone through. This high evaluation from SR of SE's ability to communicate information well, can be explained by what SE stated when asked what they considered when preparing information sessions, brochures, or pamphlets for refugees. The majority of SE stated that simplicity of language, summarizing of information, and also having information translated into the language of refugees were all important factors that were put into consideration when content is written and delivered to refugees. The responses of SR can therefore confirm that much effort and consideration is done by SE to make communicate information in a way that ensures it is understood by refugees.

The results from the SE regarding their perspective on refugees' comprehension of information, can add more insight into explaining why responses of SR reflected their understanding and comprehension of information well. The majority of SE believed that in

general, getting information through to any refugee depended largely on the situation, but more importantly on the refugee as an individual. There were several suggested factors that were believed to play a role in a refugee's comprehension of information such as: their psychological and mental state, their emotional state, their level of education and familiarity with complicated policies, laws and government systems and, method of information delivery (oral or written). When SE were specifically asked about the responsiveness of SR to information, in regards to applying it and acting on it, all eight SE agreed that SR had the ability to comprehend and respond to information very well. This general agreement was further elaborated on through the responses given by SE regarding noticeable differences between SR and other groups of refugees. The majority of SE stated that the main difference they had noticed between SR and other groups of refugees, was their general high level of education, which several of them went on to attribute as a main cause to the easiness of communication with them, and their perceived ability to comprehend information. Another cause which some SE participants stated as a factor which explains SRs' high level of comprehension of information, was the similarity between governmental agencies in Syria and Sweden.

What can be concluded from these results is that there is coordination between responses from both sides, showing that SR were generally not susceptible to experience misunderstandings or lack of understanding of the information they received. According to theory, misunderstandings in such intercultural settings, can be due to differences in background information, and how each party from a different country or culture views things such as history, political systems, and geography in different ways (Allwood & Abelar, 1984). But based on the responses from both sides, neither SR nor SE experienced any kind of misunderstandings during their communication interactions. However, according to Allwood & Abelar (1984) the background information had to also be relevant to what is being communicated. So perhaps a possible explanation to why no misunderstanding was reported to occur is that differences in cultural background between SR and SE didn't affect the content being communicated during their interactions.

Similarly, on the notion of lack of understanding, results from both sides show that generally no lack of understanding was reported to occur. This was believed to be due to, as the majority of SE stated, SRs' general high level of education and similarity in governmental institutes and agencies between Syria and Sweden. In correlation to what the theory stated about lack of understanding, Allwood & Abelar (1984) argued that in order for an individual to understand what is being told, they must have stored information which allows them to make sense of the incoming information. Some of the SE believed that Syria, in comparison to other countries such as Somalia, and Afghanistan, were many refugees in Sweden come from, was a well functioning country with a societal system similar in many aspects to Sweden. Therefore, one can conclude, that because SR had similar governmental agencies and institutes back in Syria, they had stored information about similar systems that helped them make sense of the information they received and hence reduced chances of lack of understanding occurring. Results also showed an interesting notion, which is how SE believed that level of education played an essential role in understanding and comprehending of information. Several of the SE believed that in general a highly educated person will most likely comprehend information better for reasons such as, ability to understand how a society functions (e.g., understanding there is waiting time for a doctor's appointment), being able to discuss different options in how an agency can support them, and understanding that realistically not all their demands can be met (in regards to receiving aid and benefits from the government). The majority of SR participants in this study have received some kind of higher

education, and have been working as active members of society; this can therefore be used to prove that the SE hypotheses about assuming that highly educated people comprehend information better, is relevant.

### **5.3 Use of interpreters**

The theory presented in this study argued that although the use of interpreters could improve information transfer, it could also give rise to several challenges during communication between refugees and governmental employees. Results are in agreement to theory, were most of the discussed obstacles and complications in previous studies, seem to also occur during communication between SR and SE. According to the Swedish law, access to a professional and qualified interpreter is a democratic right to residents in Sweden, where all residents have the right to equally access social services and health care (Tolkformedlingen Vast, 2016). Accordingly, results of the study showed that the use of interpreters was extremely common where both SE and SR stated that interpreters were present in almost all interactions and appointments. This frequent contact with interpreters from both parties helped in giving a rich and detailed insight on the effect of interpreters on communication.

Results from the SE participants revealed that the majority of them view the use of interpreters in a negative light, claiming that even though their presences was of course essential to make interactions with refugees possible, it still made the communication challenging in many aspects. According to Ekolf et al. (2015), Wiking et al. (2015), and Kurpic et al. (2016) having a professional and competent interpreters was not only seen as essential for a successful verbal and cultural interpretation, but it was also a means to ensure reduced errors and increased comprehension. Similarly, the majority of SE participants agreed that a successful communication interaction with a refugee who didn't speak Swedish depended first and foremost on having competent interpreters. However, this was something many of the SE participants faced a challenge with, stating that in many instances they were sent incompetent interpreters that didn't know enough Swedish, were unfamiliar with complicated terms, or were not able to translate accurately, (which could be detected by comparing the length of what was being said by the SE (perhaps a long sentence), with what the interpreter was telling the SR (two words)). Furthermore, Krupic et al. (2016) had argued that an essential characteristic of an interpreter was to be an impartial and neutral medium between both sides. However, the response of one of the SE participants showed that she had faced some instances with interpreters who were unprofessional by crossing their job description and becoming involved on a personal level (e.g., getting up to get a tissue for a refugee who had started crying). Another challenge that one of the SE participants discussed, was the relationship between the interpreter and the refugee. Wiking et al. (2015) had argued that mistrust of a patient towards the interpreter or the physician could cause difficulties in communication, accordingly, participant SE8 stated that sometimes tension would rise between the refugee and the interpreter, requiring the appointment to be cut short, and be re-booked with a different interpreter.

Furthermore, SE participants discussed several suggestions that were believed to make the use of interpreters more successful. The majority agreed that the competence of the interpreter, getting to know the interpreter, and the interpreters' familiarity with the agency were all factors that play an integral role in the success of the communication process. Some participants argued that when they built a relationship with an interpreter, interpretation instances were improved as the interpreter became more familiar with the SEs' body language and tone, which allowed them to interpret more accurately. Also an interpreter's familiarity

with an agency, and extensively understanding the mission they serve, allows them to become more familiar with the terms of the agency, and this consequently eases the interpretation as they accordingly interpret the same information several times in different appointments. Furthermore, it was important when suspicions arose that the interpretation was going bad, whether due to the incompetence of the interpreter, or because a problem in difference in dialects, that control questions were asked. These question could include directly asking the refugee if they understood what was being said, or by re-formulating the questions, asking the refugee to repeat through the interpreter the information they had just received. These control question were seen as an essential means to control that the correct information had been transferred. Furthermore, it was also suggested that having consideration of the terms and expressions an SE uses was really important, as they have to bear in mind that these terms and expressions might not exist in the refugee's language. Only one of the SE participants mentioned a positive aspect of using an interpreter claiming that it allowed refugees to sometimes say things that they would have otherwise not wanted to say directly to her, and that also the use of interpreters gave her time to sometimes formulate her answer or the information she was about to deliver next.

Results from the SR participants revealed that they in general believed it was very convenient to have an interpreter that allowed them to express themselves. However, most of the participants still claimed that they would have preferred to have been able to speak directly for themselves and express their thoughts, emotions and ideas. Eventually the SR participants who now spoke Swedish, even if not fluently, chose to attend appointments with SE without an interpreter, which made them feel much better. There were several obstacles that SR faced with the use of interpreters, which are in agreement with the theory discussed in this study. Fatahi et al. (2010b) argue that it is important to assign an interpreter based on the subject's mother tongue, which is a way to minimize misunderstanding in communication, while Krupic et al. (2016), add that also consideration of dialect is essential as one language could have several dialects that greatly vary and can consequently affect the understanding between the subject and interpreter. In accordance, one of the SR participants complained that he sometimes was sent Arabic speaking interpreters that were from North African countries such as Algeria, who speak a very different Arabic dialect than that of Syrians. This affected the understanding to an extent that the appointment had to be cut short and re-booked. Similarly, one of the SE participants, who works at the Migration Agency, also stated that the biggest challenge they face with interpreters is the difference in dialects in some languages such as Arabic, that can lead to the same consequence: having to re-book the appointment with a new interpreter.

Moreover, results of the previous studies mentioned in the theoretical part of this study concluded that immigrants' dissatisfaction with interpreters included the interpreters' tardiness to appointments (which lead to anxiety), and lack of professionalism (such as interpreters showing clear disinterest during the interaction or being aggressive or irritable) (Krupic et al., 2016, Wiking et al., 2009, and Eklof et al., 2015). Three of the SR participants spoke about facing such problems where SR1 felt that in many instances interpreters showed clear disinterest in the conversation, and also had limited patience. While SR8 encountered a problem where interpreters would interpret what he had said but with an aggressive tone, which caused a faulty impression on his behalf. On the other side, participant SR7 faced a problem with interpreters which he claimed as a total lack of emotions, arguing that it often sounded like "Google translate". Last, several of the SR participants also claimed that after they had now learned Swedish to a good extent, they could tell that some of what they had said was not accurately interpreted. One can conclude from these results, that generally the

use of interpreters is not very favored by both parties. The insights given by SE and SR on the obstacles and challenges that arose from using interpreters were similar to those of previous studies, suggesting that such problems can be general, no matter the country, or the language of the subjects.

#### **5.4 Intercultural communication competence**

According to results the majority of SE participants did not receive any intercultural communication trainings or courses prior to their employment at their agency. However, many of them stated that there were often seminars and lectures during their employment that they were offered to attend, but nothing that was obligatory or concrete. The theory presented in this study argued that intercultural communication competence allowed individuals to successfully communicate with people from different cultures, by understanding the cultural rules, norms, and beliefs. Intercultural communication training can help individuals show understanding and be able to adjust their communication in a way that shows respect to individuals from different cultures (Chen and Starosta, 1998). Although, it can't be claimed that there is total negligence in Swedish agencies regarding exposing their employees to intercultural communication seminar and lectures, results show that there is not much emphasis on the matter. According to SE participants these seminars and lectures included culture general information about respecting cultural norms, beliefs, and also some culture specific information about certain countries such as Somalia and Syria. The three participants who had stated that they had received some sort of intercultural communication course prior to their employment (two from the Migration Agency, and one from the EOE) stated that they included things such as how to give refugees a good reception, managing cultural conflicts, and leaning to respect other cultural norms and beliefs. This indicates that generally courses, seminars and lectures, given prior to or during employment at Swedish agencies, seem to follow the Culture Awareness Model, where participants are gaining cultural knowledge, and learning about other cultures' values, norms and beliefs (Chen and Starosta, 1998). However, according to what SE participants stated, there seems to be a lack of interactive training methods, where none of the participants spoke about having role playing, simulations, or problem-solving assignments related to intercultural settings. Results also showed that SE receive a mixture between culture general and culture specific knowledge, where the latter seemed to depend on where the current influx of refugees is from (for example, seminars and lectures are currently focused around Syrian refugees).

In the theoretical framework part of this study, it was suggested that the use of cultural patterns, ("shared beliefs, values and norms that are stable over time and that lead to roughly similar behaviors across similar situations") can be useful in intercultural communication training to make governmental employees aware of some of the possible culture differences of refugee immigrants that can be due to differences in cultural patterns such as how they perceive time, or view power distance (Lustig & Koester, 2010). However, according to the statements of SE participants, these cultural patterns seemed to lack from the seminars, courses, and lectures they attended. In conclusion, results were able to give an insight on what kind of intercultural communication trainings SE receive, but also revealed that the majority of SE didn't receive any formal kind of intercultural communication trainings prior to their employment. These results are not enough to allow for a hypothesis correlating the general lack of intercultural communication training to a decreased efficiency of the intercultural communication competence of SE nor how it has/could positively/negatively affect the communication process between them and SR. However, it does give room for suggesting that perhaps Swedish agencies could consider introducing pre-employment

comprehensive intercultural communication training by studying the positive effects such training could have in increasing the intercultural communication competence of their employees.

## **5.5 Evaluation of information received from Swedish agencies**

Part of the study was to evaluate the current information SR received from Swedish agencies, hence SR participants were asked to evaluate four Swedish agencies, chosen by the researcher in regards to how well: they delivered information, gave them the information they needed, were responsive to their questions and inquires, accessible (contact via telephone, email..etc.), and how they could have helped them better. Results gave an interesting insight concerning the positive experience, but also concerning the negative experience SR participants had during their interactions with these agencies. The first agency SR participants were asked to evaluate was the Migration Agency; results were generally good, especially in the aspects of delivering information and giving needed information. However, the main problem that seemed to arise was the ambiguity regarding waiting time for a residence permit or family reunification cases. Several of the SR participants were very aware that the Migration Agency was overloaded because of the refugee influx, but they still believed that more effort could be put into at least giving clearer information regarding the status of the application, and the maximum waiting times. This could be correlated to what was mentioned in the theoretical part of the study, where data had showed that of the the asylum applications given to the Migration Agency, a remarkable number have not received any decisions yet (2014: 40 %), and (2015: 60%). Meaning, that there seems to be a general problem within the Migration Agency regarding managing of applications. However, this was argued by one of the SE participants who worked at the Migration Agency to not be a problem of too few employees, but rather that too many refugees had arrived in such a short time, (around double the numbers of refugees prior to 2012) which the Migration Agency does not have the capacity to handle.

The second agency SR participants evaluated was the Employment Office for Establishment (EOE), which was the agency most participants gave an extensive opinion about. Their evaluation of the EOE was quite mixed, were most participants gave long responses regarding the things that EOE could have done to help them better. Problems seemed to mainly arise from the efficiency of the employment agent they were assigned, where many had personal problems with agents ranging from negligence of the employment in making contact with them, to lack of consideration of a medical situation. Furthermore, even though the establishment program is in essence the same for all refugees, the internships or activities assigned to each refugee varies depending on their field of education, or previous employment. And many of the SR participants had a problem regarding the efficiency of the establishment program itself stating that it was not properly tailored for them, for example by having no coordination between the internship they were assigned, and their field of education. Furthermore, some SR participants felt that there was a lack of long-term perspective from the employment agents in helping them get into the labor market. In addition, in regards to evaluating the information they were given, and responsiveness to questions and inquires, this seemed to largely depend on the employment agent a SR was assigned, which many referred to as a case of “luck”. In accordance to what SR participants have stated about the EOE and the difficulties they faced with them, the two SE participants who worked at the EOE seemed to share similar views admitting to feeling that the kind and amount of activities that they offered refugees in the establishment programs were not always enough, suitable, or built on their competences. Furthermore, one of the SE participants

mentioned that the current expansion of the EOE entailed hiring new employees who took time to get the hang of things. This problem was detected by some SR participants who claimed that some employment agents were not very competent, and lacked experience. Some of the other problems mentioned are that employment agents are sometimes too systematic in applying the establishment problem, and don't give enough time to really study the competence, education, or work experience of the refugee to create for them a relevant plan that will lead to them finding employment or continuing education in the area of their interest and education. Furthermore, some SR participants argued that the EOE needs to have more power and better policies that force employers to hire refugees, as they believe that Swedish employers are reluctant to employ refugees, even though they are given benefits from the state explicitly to take in refugees for employment or internships.

The third agency evaluated was the Establishment Unit, but results here were very limited as only two of the eight SR participants had been in contact with them. The two evaluations were in contrast to one another, as one of the SR participants had stated that they received excellent support and assistance, while the other participants had an extremely bad experience. The latter attributed his bad experience to what he perceived as racist behavior from the administrator that was responsible for his case, claiming that she withheld important information from him, such as his right to certain support because of his handicap. However, after requesting for change of administrator, things became much better henceforth. The fourth and last agency evaluated was the Refugee Medical Center, where results were also extremely limited, as only one of the participants had actually interacted with them. The one SR participant who had interacted with them gave an overwhelming positive evaluation in all aspects such as their service, support, and information they gave her while she underwent the medical examination. The fact that only two participants had been in contact with the Establishment Unit can be excused as refugees only seek them when they need extra support and extra financial assistance. However, the limited contact of SR participants with the Refugee Medical Center seemed to stem from poor communication, as each refugee is supposed to receive a summoning letter for a voluntary total medical check up, but most SR participants stated that they hadn't received any letters, nor got contacted by any means.

## **5.6 Obstacles faced by both parties**

The study aimed at exploring some of the information SR received from Swedish agencies that is supposed to help them resettle, and consequently integrate into Swedish society. The theoretical framework of this study discussed some aspects that could be considered "requirements" for integration which included: language learning, employment, and housing. According to the studies made by Cheung & Phillimore (2014), Mulvey (2015), Pittaway et al. (2009), about refugee integration, language competency was seen as an essential qualification in finding employment and gaining access to services necessary for resettlement, and creating social networks in the new country. Furthermore, Mulvey (2005) argued that finding employment is one of the key elements of successful settlement as it allows for economic independence and creating contacts or bridges with the host society. According to Phillimore and Goodson (2008), the importance of finding a home for refugees is seen as particularly symbolic as it marks the end of their journey and a start to consider their wider needs. The question is, are SR receiving enough or the correct information about these integration requirements? Results of this study reveal that the same obstacles and challenges as discussed in previous studies, seem to also be facing SR. According to the SR participants, the three biggest obstacles they faced in Sweden were finding homes, employment, and learning Swedish.



According to SR participants finding a home was one of their biggest challenges, as many of the participants argued that they hadn't expected that such a difficulty would arise, and had never imagined that it would be this challenging and mentally restraining to try and find a home. Some participants also complained that they didn't receive enough help or support from Swedish agencies, claiming that Swedish agencies were extremely passive regarding this matter, or had poor planning regarding placing families in different districts. Furthermore, many of the participants had a challenge with finding employment, attributing it to several reasons such as employer's reluctance to give jobs to refugees, or the extremely demanding requirements of the job market. In regards to Swedish language learning, several of the participants had problems with Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) schools, ranging from the quality of teachers, the kind of material they studied, to where and when they were allowed to start studying, and how they were placed in the correct class level.

When asked what information Swedish agencies could have given them to ease these obstacles, half of the SR participants actually stated that there was nothing more they could have been told. The other half of participants stated two things, two of the participants stated that they wish they had gotten information about the difficulty of finding homes, especially in big cities, while also wishing to have received more assistance and support in searching for a home. In regards to employment, the other two SR participants stated that it would have really helped had they known from the beginning that it would take such a long time to be able to get a job. Part of it had to do with relying on the word of mouth of other Syrians who had claimed that things were really easy in Sweden, but then SR participants realizing upon their arrival and resettlement that this was not the case. Results from SE participants, regarding their answer to what was usually the most important information they delivered to a refugee upon meeting them, made it clear that there was a certain gap between the two parties. For example, the two SE who worked at the Establishment Unit claimed that they always gave information about housing, such as how to find a home, clarifying that it was the refugees' responsibility to search for a home, and important factors to consider when they are applying for a home. The question then becomes; why do many SR participants claim that they did not receive enough support or information about housing? Results regarding SR participants' comprehension of information showed that they are very responsive, hence allowing us to eliminate that this could be caused by their lack of understanding. Therefore, this question could be answered by two possibilities, the first being that as mentioned in the previous subsection, only two out of the eight SR participants had been in contact with the Establishment Unit, which seemed to be the only agency that focused a lot on housing support, hence they missed out on such information. The second possibility is that perhaps other agencies don't prioritize giving sufficient information about housing, either by relying on that the Establishment Unit will do that job, or by simply not giving enough attention to the matter. Similarly, with the employment problem, the two SE participants who worked at the EOE had stated how SR need to understand that Sweden has certain requirements regarding job application, and that it was not easy to validate their previous professions and find a job right away. However, this kind of information didn't seem to reach the SR participants who had complained about not knowing the difficulties of finding a job. A speculation can also be made regarding the cause behind that, which is that not all employment agents seem to explicitly state these obstacles to SR.

On the notion of non-recognition of the foreign qualification of refugees, Mulvey (2005) and Pittaway et al. (2009) argue that well educated or skilled refugees get their qualifications converted into a low level, or even in some cases go unrecognized, leaving them to choose to

either to upgrade their qualifications, which might take many years, or forego past skills and education and turn to low-paid, low-skill work employment. This is extremely relevant to what SE participants said regarding the obstacle they faced with SR which was making them understand the difficulty in finding employment. Several SE participants argued that SR, in comparison to other refugees, were extremely eager to start their new lives, and continue on the same steps as they had previously in Syria. This means being keen on returning to having a stable job, owning a home, possessions, and so on. However, what SE participants perceived as a challenge was explaining that the process of getting their old lives back here in Sweden is a complicated one. Only very few refugees are able to easily validate their education or professions, allowing them to work right away. However, most refugees need to first learn Swedish, then study at the university, or do vocational training (if for example they used to work as a baker back in Syria), and then be able to seek a job. However, some professions become even more complicated to validate, such as those who used to work as lawyers back in Syria, where it would basically require having to study all over again as Sweden has different laws. These processes, which often time take several years, can according to SE participants cause SR a type of de-motivation or negativity in comprehending that it will be really difficult, and can take several years for them to get their old lives back. What can be concluded from understanding the obstacles of both parties, is that certain information, especially regarding housing and employment need to be made more clear to SR. Results showed that SE participants are aware of the challenges and obstacles that SR face, but the predicament seems to lie in that the sufficient information, especially in regards to housing and employment, does not always reach SR.

## **5.7 Needed information for integration support**

By reaching out to both sides, interview results reveal the obstacles faced by SR and SE, as discussed in the previous sub-section, but also reveal what both SE and SR perceived as important and needed information that could help facilitate the integration process of SR. From the SE participants' perspective, information about housing, Swedish labor requirements, and how Swedish society functions, were seen as the most helpful information to facilitate integration for SR refugees. This type of information is similar to the information which SR participants had actually wished to have known upon their arrival to Sweden, which can then give Swedish agencies a clear picture on the information their employees need to focus on delivering. Several of the SE participants believed that clear and proper information about housing, and the housing situation could really help refugees. This was motivated by the belief that when SR refugees understand for example the difficulty of finding homes in big cities such as Gothenburg and Stockholm, they can make better decisions regarding where they choose to settle, which in turn will allow them to choose cities or districts which have available homes. Furthermore, several SE participants stated that information about Swedish labor markets requirements will allow SR refugees to understand what employers are looking for, and that perhaps their previous jobs in Syria make take a little longer time to validate here. Last, SE participants argued that giving information about how Swedish society functions could really help SR integrate better, as it will allow them to understand and respect the cultural norms around them, and also understand what will be expected of them as citizens of the Swedish society, in regards to for example having to become economically independent, and pay taxes. SE participants were also asked to state what they believed SR could themselves do to facilitate their integration process. The majority of participants believed that learning Swedish was the most imperative thing a SR can do, followed by also SR being open to moving to smaller cities. In regards to Swedish language learning SE

participants believed that it was the key to society, and would allow them to get in contact with the Swedish part of society, as well as find employment.

In accordance with SE responses, when SR were asked what they themselves could do to facilitate their integration into Swedish society, the majority also believed that learning Swedish was their key to Swedish society. It would allow them to be functional members of society, independent, and be able to interact with Swedish people. Hence, this shows that both parties believe that language learning is the most essential key to society. However, according to results mentioned in section 5.6 several SR participants seemed to be critical of the Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) schools learning systems. This is perhaps an essential point for Swedish agencies to consider, as there seems to be a problem within the efficiency and quality of language learning, which was deemed by both sides as the most essential requirement for integration.

SR Participants also believed that interacting with Swedish people and attending integration activities could help them integrate better, as it allows them to understand Swedish culture and norms better, practice their Swedish language, and get into contact with Swedish people. However, several of them believed that initiatives need to be taken from the Swedish side of society in regards to integration program, stating that it's mostly refugees who sign up for activities such as the "Refugee Guide" that is supposed to pair a refugee with a Swedish family. Furthermore, one of the SR participants believed that more integration programs were needed, and believed that the Swedish government should invest in creating more integration programs, such as language centers, where refugees could practice their Swedish with perhaps pensioners. This concern was also acknowledged by two SE participant, admitting that refugees are taking initiative, but that Swedish people seem to be less interested and reluctant to take part of these program, causing a long waiting list of refugees anticipating to take part in integration programs. This gives room to suggest that Swedish agencies need to reconsider the kind and amount of integration programs they create for refugees, and also consider new ways to market these programs for Swedish people to attract them to join in so there could be a balance in the participation of both sides.

Furthermore, results also showed that here seems to be an evident lack of information regarding health in Sweden, where as previously mentioned, the Refugee Medical center seemed to have poor communication with refugees, while also several SR participants claimed that they had not received any information about Swedish health systems upon their arrival, and just contacted a health clinic when they weren't feeling well. However, one of the SE participant working at the Migration Agency claimed that all refugees were offered to attend a group information session in their language, that talk about different aspects of Swedish society such as health, schooling, and housing etc. but as these sessions weren't mandatory, show up rates were quite low. Hence, this could perhaps be another essential point that need to be considered by Swedish agencies; to perhaps make such information sessions obligatory to ensure that the needed information, about for example, health, is delivered to refugees.

In regards to what was discussed in the theoretical framework of this study concerning previous studies about refugee and immigrant integration into Swedish society, Valenta and Bunar (2010) argue that findings show a gap in the employment rate, housing quality, health and education between immigrants/refugees and the native Swedish population. Results of this study show that the same problems seem to prevail with SR, especially in regards to employment and housing difficulties. Of course, as mentioned in subsection 2.3.3, the

researcher is aware that these difficulties can also stem from other reasons, often overlapping, such as political (governmental policies) economic (insufficient funds for refugee support), or social (discrimination against immigrants). However, as the focus of the study is communication, it aimed at exploring, and revealing, as shown in the discussion, how these difficulties can be partly attributed to what seems to be a lack of certain sufficient information communicated to SR. While furthermore providing suggestions of the kind of missing information that Swedish agencies can give to refugees.

## 6. Conclusions and Suggestions for Future Research

The sixth section consists of a brief conclusion that aims at showing how the results and discussion were able to answer the research questions of the study. There were two research questions, the first focused on the Syrian point of view, while the second focused on the Swedish point of view. Furthermore, each research question was divided into (a) and (b), with (a) focusing on the transfer of information during communication, while (b) focused on the content of information being transferred.

### (1)

*a. How do Syrian refugees perceive the effectiveness of information transfer occurring during their communication with employees at the Swedish agencies which are helping them resettle in Sweden?*

*b. Do Syrian refugees feel they are satisfied with the information they receive from those Swedish agencies? [part 1] What information do they want to know that will help them integrate? [part 2]*

### (2)

*a. How do Swedish employees perceive the effectiveness of the communication that occurs during their interaction with Syrian refugees?*

*b. What information do Swedish employees want Syrian refugees to have in order to help them integrate better in accordance to both, their own needs and the needs of Swedish society?*

In regards to question 1 (a) the majority of Syrian refugees evaluated information transfer during their interactions with Swedish employees as very effective and viewed the delivery of information, in regards to language, and style as very clear. Furthermore, Syrian refugees stated that the information they received was very detailed and often repeated several times, to ensure understanding, while there was also a general high level of responsiveness from Swedish employees in regards to answering questions and inquires. However, the use of interpreters, which the majority of Syrian refugee participants had experienced, showed that although convenient and needed during the first period of their arrival, it still gave rise to several obstacles and challenges to the effectiveness of communication between them and Swedish employees. The answer to the first part of question 1 (b) showed that in regards to the four agencies that were chosen for the study, Syrian refugees had a mixed evaluation regarding their satisfaction of the information they received, revealing that in many instances, the competence and quality of the Swedish employee played an integral role in the quality and type of information they received. The answer to the second part of question 1 (b) showed that Syrian refugees are in need of more and clearer information in regards to finding housing

and employment, while also expressing the need for improvement of the SFI school, that would allow them to learn better Swedish and integrate better into society.

In regards to question 2 (a), Swedish employees perceived the effectiveness of the communication with Syrian refugees in a very positive light, where the majority believed that this group of refugees were extremely responsive, and comprehended the information they received very well. This was attributed to two causes, the first was that there were similarities between the two societal systems (Syrian and Swedish), and second was that the general high level of education of Syrian refugees made them responsive and receptive to the information they received. However, in regards to the use of interpreters during communication, it was seen, as with Syrian refugees, to give rise to many obstacles and difficulties, and hence even though deemed as necessary, was not favored. As for the intercultural communication competence of Swedish employees, it was revealed that not much emphasis is put from Swedish agencies on training their employees prior to their employment, but results could not conclude if this affected the effectiveness of their intercultural communication competence. Last, the answer to question 2 (b) showed that Swedish employees believed that information about housing, Swedish labor requirements, and how Swedish society functions, could be the most helpful information to facilitate integration for Syrian refugees. Furthermore, Syrian refugees focusing on Swedish language learning was seen as essential by Swedish employees, as they argued it to be the key to society that would facilitate Syrian refugees' integration to society.

The data analysis of the study was based on a hypothetical deductive approach, which means working from theory, gathering data, and then testing the theory. And as results were in accordance with the theories presented, this allows us to use abductive reasoning (an inference to the best explanation) and tentatively generalize the concluding results of the study. According to results, we can conclude that Syrian refugees in general receive clear, and understandable information from Swedish governmental employees, but have certain criticism regarding the content of the information that seems to largely depend on the competence and quality of the Swedish employee as an individual. Furthermore, in general, Swedish employees believe that Syrian refugees as a group are responsive and comprehend the information they receive, mainly due to their high level of education, and because of some similarities between the Syrian and Swedish societal systems. The study also concludes that Swedish employees think that information about housing, Swedish labor market requirements, and how Swedish society functions could facilitate Syrian refugee integration into Swedish society. And last, the study concludes that Swedish language learning, is believed by both parties, to be the key to Swedish society.

It is suggested that this study could be further developed by expanding the interview scope to include Syrian refugees from other cities than Gothenburg, while also expanding to conduct interviews with more Swedish agencies or institutes, such as SFI school, the Social Insurance agency, and Social services. Furthermore, results of this study can be used as a base to further and more explicitly investigate notions such as use of interpreters with refugees in Sweden, effects of educational level on comprehending of information amongst immigrants/refugees, and the effects of intercultural communication training on employees working with refugees. Furthermore, it is suggested that further investigation and research could be done to try to validate the speculations made in this study in explaining the phenomena of why although Swedish employees seem to be aware of the obstacles that SR face in resettling and integration, and also seem to know the needed information that could ease these obstacles, this information does not always seem to reach Syrian refugees.

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## Appendix 1. Interview questions in Arabic

### ١. بيانات شخصية:

النوع (ذكر / أنثى):

السن:

الديانة:

المستوي التعليمي:

المهنة السابقة في سوريا:

المهنة الحالية في السويد:

### ٢. الهجرة:

سبب الهجرة من سوريا:



سبب طلب اللجوء إلى السويد:  
مدة الإقامة في السويد:  
الفترة التي استغرقتها الحصول على الإقامة والإقامة الدائمة:

٣. كيف تقيّم الجهات السويديه (على مقياس من ١ إلى ١٠) في معاونتهم لك في إعادته التوطين في السويد؟
٤. خلال زيارتك للجهات السويديه هل كانت توفر لك مترجم؟ لو كانت الإجابة بنعم، ما هو انطباعك عن تجربة التعامل من خلال مترجم؟
٥. كيف تقيّم الوضوح في نقل المعلومات إليك من قبل الموظفين السويديين (من حيث استخدام اللغة، كيفية نقل المعلومه (منشورات/كتيبات، محاضرات، مقابلات خاصه)؟
٦. هل أنت راضي عن المعلومات التي قدمت إليك؟ ما هي المعلومات التي كنت تريدها ولم تحصل عليها؟
٧. هل كنت تشعر أحيانا أنك لا تفهم ما كان يقال لك؟ أو أن هناك معلومات تفتقدها؟ (لو كانت الإجابة بنعم فما هي؟)
٨. هل كنت تشعر أنه كان بمقدورك أن تسأل و تتلقي إجابته على الأسئلة الخاصه بك؟
٩. كيف تقيّم تجربتك بالتعامل مع هذه الجهات من حيث مدي جدارتهم في:
  - أ. نقل المعلومات إليك
  - ب. إعطائك المعلومات التي أنت في حاجه اليها
  - ت. التجاوب مع أسئلتك و استفساراتك
  - ث. السهوله في التواصل معهم
  - ج. هل تري أنه كان من الممكن ان تساعدك إحدى هذه الجهات بطريقة أفضل؟

مصلحة الهجرة Migrationsverket  
مكتب العمل للتريخ Arbetsförmedlingen Etablering  
وحدة التريخ Etableringsenheten  
المستوصف الطبي للاجئين Flyktingmedicinsk mottagning

١٠. ما هو أصعب تحدي واجهته في إعادته التوطين في السويد؟
١١. ما هي المعلومات التي كان من الممكن أن تعطيهها لك الجهات السويديه لجعل هذا التحدي أسهل؟
١٢. بعد الاقامه في السويد لتلك الفترة ( ) ما هي الاشياء التي كنت تتمني لو أنها قبيلت لك عقب وصولك للسويد؟
١٣. هل هناك شيء آخر تري أنه بإمكانك فعله لتساعد وتسهل علي نفسك الاندماج في المجتمع السويدي؟

## Appendix 2. Interview questions in Swedish

### Information om den intervjuade

Kön:

Ålder:

Sysselsättning på myndigheten:

Hur länge du har arbetat där:

1. Känner du att din myndighet hjälper flyktingar på allra bästa sätt (t.ex. gällande arbete, vård, skola)?

2. Får ni någon sorts träning om hur man hanterar interaktioner med flyktingar? Får ni någon specifik träning om gällande olika flyktingars kulturer?
3. Vad brukar vara de viktigaste/första tre typerna av information som ni ger till en flykting när ni först träffar honom/henne?
  4. Hur förbereds eventuella broschyrer, informationsmöten, bokade tider osv.? (vad tar ni hänsyn till, gällande själva informationen och sättet att tillhandahålla informationen)
4. Brukar det alltid finnas tolk tillgänglig när ni träffar syriska flyktingar? Hur tycker/tror du att närvaron av tolk påverkar kommunikationen mellan dig och flyktingen. (känner du, till exempel, att kanske inte all information överförs, att känslor inte blir överförda på rätt sätt, är du rädd att missförstånd eller feltolkning kan äga rum)?
5. På en skala från 1-10 , hur mycket anser du att ni kan överföra informationsinnehåll till flyktingar? Hur mycket av informationen känner du att dom verkligen förstår?
6. Har du jobbat med just syriska flyktingar speciellt? Har det funnits några märkbara skillnader mellan dom och andra flyktingar?
7. Har ni fått särskilda instruktioner från någon myndighet gällande syriska flyktingar och hur ni ska hantera deras situation?
8. Känner du att Syriska flyktingar är mottagliga för informationen de får (har de förmågan att applicera den och att handla utifrån den?)
9. Vad är den största utmaningen när det gäller syriska flyktingar?
10. Vilken information tror du bäst skulle hjälpa Syriska flyktingar att integreras i det svenska samhället bättre? Nämn gärna flera saker.
11. Vad tycker du att Syriska flyktingar själva kan göra för att underlätta sin integration?]