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Comparative Skills Profiling Surveys and Assessment of Skills Recognition Opportunities Facilitating Refugees and Asylum Seekers' Access to the Labour Market in South Africa and Zambia

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACQF	African Continental Qualifications Framework
AQVN	African Qualifications Verification Network
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
CHE	Council for Higher Education (South Africa)
CFR	Commissioner for Refugees
CRRF	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
DHET	Department of higher Education and Training (South Africa)
ECZ	Examinations Council of Zambia
ESCO	European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations
EU	European Union
HEA	Higher Education Authority (Zambia)
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
ISCO	International Standard of Occupations
LBTC	Lusaka Business and Technical College
NOKUT	Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NQF	National Qualifications Framework (South Africa)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PoC	Persons of Concern (Includes: refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons, returnees)
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (South Africa)
REC	Regional Economic Community
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
RQF	Regional Qualifications Framework
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADCQF	SADC Qualifications Framework
SANQF	South African National Qualifications Framework
SAMM	Southern Africa Migration Management
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SME	Small and Micro Enterprise
Stats SA	Statistics South Africa
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
TEVET	Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training (Zambia)
TEVETA	Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority (Zambia)
Umalusi	Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UQP	UNESCO Qualifications Passport
UNCHR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
ZQA	Zambia Qualification Authority

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CHAPTER

1

INTRODUCTION



Introduction

This report forms part of the consultancy *Comparative skills profiling surveys and assessment of skills recognition opportunities facilitating refugees and asylum seekers' access to the labour market in South Africa and Zambia*. JET Education Services was commissioned by the ILO and the UNHCR to undertake this consultancy, which forms part of the Southern Africa Migration Management (SAMM) project. The SAMM Project is funded by the EU and implemented by the ILO, the IOM, the UNODC and the UNHCR. Its overall objective is to improve migration management in the Southern Africa and Indian Ocean region and to contribute to achieving the 2030 Development Agenda¹.

By the end of 2020, Southern Africa hosted more than one million refugees and asylum-seekers (UNHCR, 2021). The majority originate from the SADC Member States, while the balance hails mainly from other African countries. Conflict and humanitarian crises are major drivers of displacement in and to the region. Local integration is one of the three durable solutions for refugees that end protracted displacement and a downward spiral of fragility². Refugee and asylum seekers' integration into the labour market through decent work opportunities bolsters their self-reliance and resilience, lessens the burden on host countries, aids local integration and social cohesion and may fill critical skills gaps that spur development. The shortfall in access to skills recognition opportunities is one of the factors that hamper the refugees and asylum-seekers³ access to the labour market in the formal economy, which may exacerbate their vulnerability and exposure to

1 https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---africa/---ro-abidjan/---ilo-pretoria/documents/vacancynotice/wcms_818913.pdf

2 <https://www.hrw.org/reports/1999/tanzania/>

3 POCs include a range of categories, such as refugees, returnees, stateless people, internally displaced people (IDPs) and asylum seekers. This study focuses specifically on refugees and asylum seekers.

exploitative working conditions. Moreover, it may lead to their deskilling, erode their resilience and result in deepening poverty.

South Africa hosts 75,511 refugees and 167,477 asylum seekers⁴, while Zambia hosts 74,716 refugees and 6,842 asylum seekers (UNHCR, 2022a). Comparative analysis of the labour market access of asylum seekers and refugees in South Africa and Zambia and how skills recognition opportunities in these countries facilitate their access to their respective labour markets, can help to identify mechanisms to enhance the labour market integration of asylum seekers and refugees.



The specific objectives of this research were to:

- ▶ Conduct a comparative skills profiling survey between Zambia and South Africa;
- ▶ Collect information on practical existing recognition and portability mechanisms available to refugees where they are based;
- ▶ Assess skills recognition opportunities facilitating asylum seekers and refugee's access to the labour market, and to identify entry points for inclusion of refugees into existing recognition and portability mechanisms and expected challenges, whether policy or institutional;
- ▶ Briefly include background information as well as a comparison of the legal environment affecting asylum seekers' and refugees' and their access to the labour market well as a comparison of the skills recognition frameworks in the two countries; and
- ▶ Collect information on coping mechanisms where there is no skills recognition available.

The first stage involved key informant interviews and focus group discussions to support understanding of the environment in South Africa and Zambia, and to inform the design of the quantitative approach including designing data collection tools and data analysis plan. The second stage involved the skills profiling survey.

This report identifies existing skills recognition and portability mechanisms available to asylum seekers and refugees (urban or rural) in South Africa and Zambia, including Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) mechanisms and their reach; as well as entry points for inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers into existing recognition and portability mechanisms and expected policy and/or institutional challenges. In addition, an overview of the legal frameworks governing asylum seekers and refugees' access to the labour market in these two countries is provided. Coping mechanisms, where skills recognition opportunities are lacking or inaccessible, as well as the "cost" of lost wages for refugees, asylum seekers and host governments are outlined. Moreover, other barriers to decent work opportunities for asylum seekers and refugees are mapped. Finally, the skills recognition opportunities and other key factors that aid or hamper the integration of refugees

⁴ The UNHCR reported in 2022, using South African Department of Home Affairs (DHA) data, that the number of refugees in South Africa was 75,511, and the number of asylum seekers (or pending cases) was 167,477.

and asylum seekers into the formal economy in South Africa and Zambia are analysed. Based on these findings, recommendations for actions, initiatives and policy changes that could enhance the portability of skills of refugees and asylum seekers and their access to decent work are proposed.

Conceptual framework

This study provided an important opportunity to explore how similar and different skills profiling and recognition mechanisms function in different labour market and migration environments. A critical concern driving this research was how underdeveloped systems of recognition of qualifications, skills and experience are impeding asylum seekers' and refugees' labour market access and integration. If countries all shared the same or similar occupational profile for an occupation, then certificates or qualifications based on that profile would be recognised or accepted across national borders. What this means is that a group of countries, such as a regional economic community (REC), may have a common interest in facilitating intraregional labour mobility of migrant workers and refugees through sharing the same occupational profiles for certain occupations. However, the current situation in a REC may be that member states have their own unique occupational profile for an occupation, or their national qualification authority may not yet have developed occupational profiles.

The motivation of a country of origin for advancing its system of skills recognition and recognition of prior learning, is to enable migrants and refugees to participate economically through productive employment. Consequently, migrants and refugees contribute positively to domestic economic productivity and growth. If their qualifications are recognised by employers, they will be able to work in jobs where their skills can be properly exploited instead of being relegated to working in low skill low pay jobs if their skills were not recognised. Consequently, migrants and refugees will be less dependent on the destination country's social support systems. An additional necessary condition to generate full benefit from refugee's qualifications is that they obtain employment in the formal economy rather than the informal economy. Employment in the informal economy is characterised by limited recognition of formal skills or qualifications, low wages and high insecurity that are inimical to decent work.

On the African continent systems of skills recognition and recognition of prior learning (RPL) are unevenly developed. Countries differ in their internal advancement of domestic skills recognition systems and RPL and partly because of this, recognition of skills between countries is developing slowly. Consequently, skilled and qualified refugee and asylum seeker populations must accept informal jobs to make ends meet. Ideally RECs should facilitate labour mobility of migrant and refugee populations, which would require functioning systems of recognition in each country that are harmonised across all countries. Support for countries towards this goal would involve collaborating with a country's national qualification framework authorities, education institutions,

A critical concern driving this research was how underdeveloped systems of recognition of qualifications, skills and experience are impeding asylum seekers' and refugees' labour market access and integration.

social partners, and other bodies. Regional qualification authorities, examination bodies and others would be involved as well. Progress towards facilitating migrant and refugee occupational mobility at structural levels needs to be complemented by current skills recognition initiatives that address the urgent need to develop methodologies and capacities so that responsible agencies can undertake pilot skills recognition and recognition of prior learning at local levels.

This research specifically explored skills recognition methodologies for application in migrant and refugee contexts as a vehicle through which skills recognition as a concept and as a practice that can be introduced in local labour markets. This approach is based on applying three forms of skills recognition and RPL according to the local level of advancement in recognition processes. These forms of skills recognition may correspond to varying levels of formality with which countries have advanced occupational profiling for their labour market:

1. **Conducting RPL:** Conducting RPL is the most advanced form of skills recognition that can be conducted in relation to defined skills and levels; criteria; achievement/outcomes; and context. These specifications can be applied uniformly within and between countries. A migrant or refugee could be tested and accredited accordingly in the country of destination.
2. **Analysing occupational profiles:** In a situation where a migrant or refugee with an occupational qualification is residing in a country of destination and wishes to apply for a job. If there is an official occupational profile available in both country of origin and destination these documents can be compared for similarities/differences. The migrant/refugee is credited where the occupational profiles have the same tasks or competencies. Or an overall assessment can be made as to whether the profiles are sufficiently alike and warrant credit for part or the whole qualification.
3. **Developing occupational profiles:** In this situation, either one or both countries will not have developed an occupational profile for the occupational qualification in question. In this case, either one or both country's relevant authority may each initiate a process for developing a profile for the qualification in question. The regional qualification body may propose a standardised approach and format according to which the profiles may be developed.
4. **Exploring occupational profiles from evidence of refugee workers:** Neither destination nor origin countries have developed an occupational profile. Nor, to the knowledge of the local authority, is any related qualification offered in one or either country. In this situation, one or more refugees claiming the same occupational background or skills can be interviewed to elicit from them the features of the occupation to create a draft/temporary occupational profile. From this, gaps in the draft profile could be identified by local employers. This procedure could be piloted in a local labour market, to assess whether employers, refugees and UNHCR/ILO officers could collaboratively develop profiles for selected occupations.

Figure 1: Skills recognition methodologies appropriate to levels of occupational profiling and formality of refugee status (ILO 2023)

Status of refugee or asylum seeker dictates access to formal economy employment	High formality refugee status	Develop occupational profiles	Conduct RPL
	Low formality asylum seeker status	Explore practitioner understandings of occupational features	Analyse occupational profiles
		Informal frameworks (among employers and/or practitioners)	Formal framework (by state agency)
		Level of formality to which occupations have been formally incorporated with individual profiles published recognised	

The conceptual model set out above has value for understanding how skills recognition and recognition of prior learning are currently applied from an occupational perspective. In each country, certain occupations and practitioners of those occupations will benefit through earlier development of occupational profiles and skills recognition, and recognition of prior learning than others, such as in Zambia and South Africa. This is because they have in place functioning higher education sectors with developed qualifications described and qualification recognition mechanisms. This means that we can use the occupational table to show how the above framework can be applied across occupational and or skills levels, as illustrated below.

Figure 2: Mapping of ISCO-08 major groups to skill levels

Broad Skill Levels	Occupational Categories (ISCO-08)
Skill levels 3 and 4 (high)	1. Managers
	2. Professionals
	3. Technicians and associate professionals
Skill level 2 (medium)	4. Clerical support workers
	5. Service and sales workers
	6. Skilled agricultural forestry and fishery workers
	7. Craft and related trades workers
Skill level 1 (low)	8. Plant and machine operators and assemblers
	9. Elementary occupations

Source: ILO (2012) *International Standard Classification of Occupations ISCO-08, Volume 1: Structure, Group Definitions and Correspondence Tables*, p.14

Figure 3: Application to country level systems of skills recognition available

Occupational skills category	Occupational categories and the profiling of occupational profiles (in different forms)	High income country	Low income country
High skills Levels 3 and 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Professional Associations and Bodies rely on international recognition structures ▶ Higher education institutions have flexibility and autonomy to adopt articulation agreements 	Established frameworks and processes	Level of higher education development and recognition is progress but can be supported by professional structures e.g., teachers
Medium Skills Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Skills for technicians etc 	Highly developed with use of international Codes ISCO etc. Well developed by industry	Limited development as manufacturing and large companies mostly in primary industry
Low Skills Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Skills use and job complexity can be based on employer specific needs and on contextual and specific knowledge (e.g., maize farmer, basket maker) 	Limited development and low skills workers in the minority	More limited development as most of these workers are in informal self-employment, agricultural sector, and or unwaged employed in the household

Identifying the occupational distribution of refugees was necessary as occupational types and skills pose different requirements on the type of skills recognition needed. The aim was to identify the occupational category for each respondent. It was decided to code the occupation category per respondent as far as the two-digit level (major and sub-major groups), using the ISCO system (ILO 2012,66-67). This was because the time restriction on survey interviews did not permit a series of questions and responses that are used to establish with optimum accuracy at 3, or 4-digit level. Categorising low skill categories of occupation could present some difficulties in naming conventions that may differ by language and by common usage in local labour markets.



Figure 4: ILOSTAT (2022)

Broad skills level	ISCO-08	ISCO-88
Skill levels 3 and 4	1. Managers	1. Legislators, senior officials and managers
	2. Professionals	2. Professionals
	3. Technicians and associate professionals	3. Technicians and associate professionals
Skill level 2	4. Clerical support workers	4. Clerical support workers
	5. Service and sale workers	5. Service and shop and market sale workers
	6. Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	6. Skilled agricultural and fishery workers
	7. Craft and related trade workers	7. Craft and related trade workers
	8. Plant and machine operators, assemblers	8. Plant and machine operators and assemblers
Skill level 1	9. Elementary occupations	9. Elementary occupations
Armed forces	0. Armed forces	0. Armed forces
Not elsewhere classified	x. Not elsewhere classified	x. Not elsewhere classified

The ISCO-08 is structured according to broad band single digit occupational categories arranged from low to high skills levels. This structure is replicated at the 2-digit sub-major group. However, between workers there can be differences in skills levels in the same occupational category based on experience structure and seniority. Skills levels may be more distinct in occupations governed by national qualifications. To simulate the 2-digit ISCO codes in fieldwork settings, notably in remote contexts during interviews with refugees, the nine proxy tasks listed below were formulated.

Figure 5: Proxy tasks used in fieldwork to simulate ISCO codes (Authors)

	Novice	Advanced beginner	Competent	Proficient Expert
C6.1 Work with your hands	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C6.2 Work with a tool(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C6.3 Work/with machines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C6.4 Work with people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C6.5 Sell things	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C6.6 Work with cash	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C6.7 Have customers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C6.8 Grow produce	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C6.9 Make things	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Methodology

A mixed methods design was employed for this research. The research commenced with a literature review, which examined, in the two countries: practical existing recognition and portability mechanisms available to asylum seekers and refugees (urban or rural), including RPL mechanisms

and their reach; entry points for inclusion of refugees into existing recognition and portability mechanisms and expected challenges, whether policy or institutional; and the impact of legal frameworks on asylum seekers' and refugees' access to the formal labour market, as well as other factors that help or hinder their access to decent work.

Key informant interviews

The next phase of the research focussed on semi-structured key informant interviews with skills recognition stakeholders in each country and local and international NGOs that aid asylum seekers and refugees. Semi-structured interview questionnaires were developed and approved by the ILO and the UNHCR and used to conduct the interviews in South Africa and Zambia. The interviews served to gather data on:

- ▶ How government regulations in the two countries facilitate or constrain access to employment. other factors that help or hinder asylum seekers' and refugees' integration into the respective labour markets;
- ▶ Opportunities for enrolment in education and training available in each country;
- ▶ Skills recognition opportunities and access available to asylum seekers and refugees;
- ▶ Changes to be made to existing legal processes to increase effectiveness of RPL and access for refugees and asylum seekers;
- ▶ How skills recognition methods contribute to facilitating both recognition and certification of skills for refugees and asylum seekers;
- ▶ How limited access to skills recognition for refugees has affected their opportunities to access employment and decent living standards;
- ▶ The coping mechanisms of asylum seekers and refugees in the face of limited access to formal employment; and,
- ▶ Assistance provided by NGOs and other actors to asylum seekers and refugees to aid their access to training, skills recognition and decent work.

A total of eight key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted in South Africa with informants from the government including SAQA and with NGOs working with refugees. In Zambia, nine KIIs were conducted with TEVETA, Commission for Refugees, UNESCO, ZAQA and training institutions. Key informants were asked to respond to questions around what government regulations exist to facilitate refugees and asylum seekers access to education and employment opportunities. Also, respondents gave their views on existing structures for identifying skills and competencies for refugees and how well recognition of prior learning programs support refugee mobility. Finally, respondents provided feedback on how limited access to skills recognition affects refugees and asylum seekers opportunities to access employment and decent living standards. The information gathered through the interviews informed a better understanding of the practical and legal challenges and opportunities that impact on the labour market integration of asylum seekers and refugees. It also informed the development of the survey questionnaires, which took place in the third phase of the research.

Survey-based interviews

The third phase of the research consisted of a survey aimed to achieve 200 refugees in each country. The questionnaire which was developed to conduct the survey was reviewed and approved by the ILO and the UNHCR. The survey gathered data on refugees' skills, skills recognition awareness and opportunities, access to decent work and coping mechanisms in the absence of access to the formal labour market. This survey refugees and asylum seekers⁵ was undertaken by two teams of fieldworkers in September 2022 in Zambia for one week (in Lusaka and Meheba), and in South Africa for over a month in Johannesburg (Gauteng province), Durban (KwaZulu-Natal province), and Port Elizabeth (Eastern Cape province). The survey succeeded in reaching 416 refugees and asylum seekers, comprising 195 in South Africa and 221 in Zambia. Ethical protocols regarding confidentiality, anonymity and requesting consent to participate, were carefully adhered to.

Figure 6: Number of interview participants by country of origin where this information was given

Country		Congo	Burundi	Somalia	Angola	Nigeria	Ethiopia	Zimbabwe	Rwanda	Uganda	South Africa	Bangladesh	Cameroon	Eritrea	Kenya	Malawi	Mozambique	South Sudan	Tanzania	Zambia	Total	
Zambia	No	135	40	6	22	0	0	0	5	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	211
	%	64,0	19,0	2,8	10,4	0	0	0	2,4	0,9	0,5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	100
South Africa	No	68	14	47	1	17	15	8	1	4	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	184
	%	37,0	7,6	25,5	0,5	9,2	8,2	4,3	0,5	2,2	0,0	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5	100
Total	No	203	54	53	23	17	15	8	6	6	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	395
	%	51,4	13,7	13,4	5,8	4,3	3,8	2,0	1,5	1,5	0,3	0,3	0,3	0,3	0,3	0,3	0,3	0,3	0,3	0,3	0,3	100

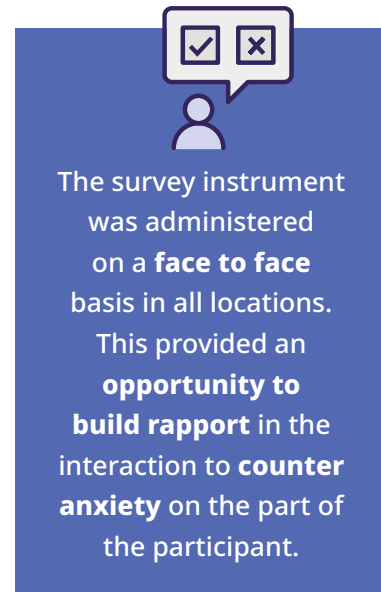
The country of origin recorded for participants in the survey in Zambia and South Africa (in the Tables above) accords with the estimated asylum seeker and refugee presence in Southern Africa by country of origin and which in order of magnitude included: Congo/DRC (101,302), Zimbabwe (46,708), Somalia (39,014), Burundi (11,142), Ethiopia (17,919), Rwanda (11,918), Guinea (9150), Côte d'Ivoire (5,975) Mozambique (5,608), and Eritrea (2,063). Also, the national origin of a large proportion of asylum seekers is unknown which can compromise accurate sampling by nationality (World Bank, 2018,18).

5 For ease of reading, this Chapter uses 'refugee' to refer collectively to several categories used in Zambia and South Africa including former refugee, asylum seeker, refugee, and persons of concern (refugee).

Survey instrument

Language use

The survey instrument was administered on a face to face basis in all locations. This provided an opportunity to build rapport in the interaction to counter anxiety on the part of the participant. As indicated full ethical protocols regarding confidentiality, consent, and the right to end the interview at any stage were applied. Nevertheless, reservations on the part of the participant could not be ruled out. Substantial proportions of the refugee participants were conversant in various indigenous and official languages in their country of origin including French in the case of the largest national group from the DRC together with Burundian refugees who made up over 60% of participants. Refugees from Somalia and Ethiopia comprising 15% of participants in the survey, shared Arabic in common and indigenous languages such as Somali and Amharic. Consequently, these interviews needed to be held in translation. Arrangements were made in Zambia to employ refugee nationals with mother tongue French and indigenous languages. In South Africa, fieldwork was conducted in English by a South African researcher with support from DRC nationals and Somali nationals who provided translation.



Clarity of occupational naming and identification during the interviews

The above arrangements though effective could not render interactions related to identifying refugee's occupations completely transparent. For some occupations clarity of shared understanding was acceptable (e.g., teaching, engineering, technical occupations), however for some occupations there was considerable variation in how a participant could explain their occupational roles and activities (e.g. many types of farming, and many differences between how small traders conduct their business). This needed to be resolved in the coding phase.

A further constraint experienced in the pilot of this survey was that the intention to complement occupational descriptions through reference to the nine proxy tasks listed in the Inception Report could not be implemented without allowing the survey to take longer than the maximum target duration. The length of time in doing this task could not be predicted. This option had to be ruled out to avoid overly long interviews.

Coding of occupations

The coding of occupations was extended up to 4 digits where required. All the coding was undertaken by the same member of the team to optimise accuracy and consistency. The coding was undertaken with reference to ISCO 08–88 Index⁶. Many refugees were business owners, which required the coder to consult further reference material on the classification of forms of enterprise ownership which was necessitated because of the substantial proportion of refugees who were owners of their own businesses: Classification of owner-operators of corporations by status in employment.⁷

6 <https://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/stat/isco/isco08/>

7 https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---stat/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_636043.pdf

Fieldwork: South Africa

South Africa's current legislation governing asylum seekers and refugees in South Africa are the Refugees Act No. 130 of 1998, as amended, and the Refugee Regulations, 2018. The Refugee Regulations of 2018 and the Refugees Amendment Acts of 2008, 2011 and 2017 (known as the Refugees Amendment Act, 2017) entered into force on 1 January 2020. The amendments introduced to the Refugees Act (Refugees Amendment Act, 2017) entered into force in 2020 and removed the automatic right to work and study for asylum seekers. In March 2022, the South African Ministry of Employment and Labour (Ministry of Employment and Labour, 2022) introduced a draft National Labour Migration Policy and Employment Services Amendment Bill that proposes to "introduce quotas on the total number of documented foreign nationals with work visas that can be employed in major economic sectors such as agriculture, hospitality and tourism, construction" (Independent Online, 2022b). These changes form part of an increasingly restrictive approach to managing migration, aimed at limiting economic migration to South Africa and protecting the national labour market.

Asylum seekers and refugees have also faced challenges in accessing services and social protection rights, which is partly due to variation in interpretation and implementation of the Act. In addition, the asylum system faces a massive backlog in South Africa which causes asylum seekers to be on temporary asylum permits for multiple years before their refugee status determination process is completed. The renewal of asylum documents and refugee permits is also delayed, and without the necessary valid documentation they struggle to access their rights.

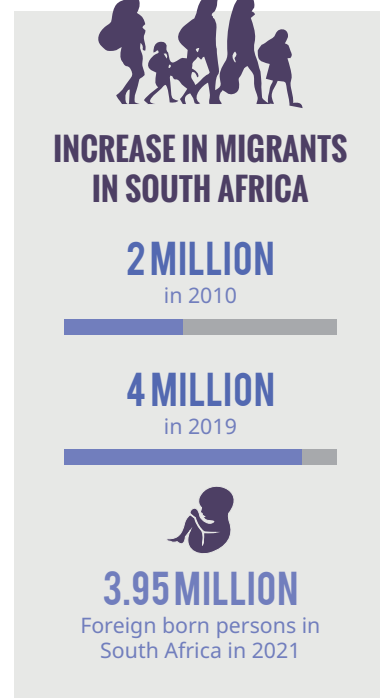
Asylum seekers and refugees have also faced challenges in accessing services and social protection rights

It is reported that: "In recent years, South Africa's asylum system has faced problems that have led to the claims of over 153 000 asylum-seekers becoming stuck in the system, some for as long as a decade" (IOL, 2022). In March 2022 a bilateral meeting of the South African Department of Home Affairs and the UNHCR led to joint agreement to address these matters having received the support of Cabinet to increase technical assistance and resources; modernise laws to reflect current circumstances and realities; and overhaul the management of the asylum system (SANews, 2022).

The outcome of the events described above that is most relevant to this project is that the administrative, management and resourcing difficulties experienced in the system also over time contributed to degradation in the functioning of the Department of Home Affairs ability to maintain data and information systems and databases related to refugees and asylum seekers. These conditions have been exacerbated by the impact of COVID-19 on accessibility of physical Home Affairs offices and limited accessibility and functionality of a new online system that was launched in April 2021 (City Press, 2022). As asylum seekers and refugees enjoy freedom of movement there is limited data on where they live and their occupations. Without availability of administrative datasets, this project had to resort to fieldwork methodologies to identify and contact refugee and asylum-seeker respondents.

In the past two decades, high volumes of migration to South Africa have taken place. The number of international migrant **numbers** in South Africa rose from about 2 million in 2010 to around 4 million in 2019. In this period South Africa has — in numbers — become the most significant destination country in Africa for immigration (IOM, 2020, 57,62). The UNHCR reported in 2022 that the number of refugees in South Africa was 75,511, and the number of asylum seekers (or pending cases) was 167,477, which brought this total number to 242,988 (UNHCR, 2022).

There has also been incorrect reporting in the media about the high numbers of undocumented migrants in South Africa. In August 2021 Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) reported that there are 3.95 million foreign born persons in South Africa, which includes documented and undocumented migrants. It did so to correct erroneous statements in the media that there were 4 million undocumented migrants in South Africa (Stats SA, 2021).



The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) is the authority that recognizes foreign qualifications in South Africa and evaluates about 25,000 foreign qualifications annually. Applicants are required to provide comprehensive documentation which for refugees may not be possible. Refugees that fled their home country may not have been able to take their qualification documents with them. Institutions affected by conflict may have shut down, limiting opportunity for verification. Contacting institutions in the country of origin may also put asylum seekers and refugees at risk. Moreover, the cost of obtaining documentation of qualifications from the institutions in the country of origin (that in some cases charge as much as USD 150 per qualification), as well as the cost of its official translation and the cost of lodging an application with SAQUA are obstacles faced by asylum seekers and refugees to have their qualifications recognised.

In response to these challenges of incomplete documentation, SAQA formulated an addendum that allows for dispensation to recognise the qualifications of refugees and asylum seekers that have incomplete documentation. In January 2022 it initiated a pilot of alternative means to verify/evaluate qualifications while retaining stringent checks. A further hurdle faced in entering the labour market is registration with a relevant professional council. These councils tend to have offices in Gauteng only, with their own requirements and service costs.

As noted above, in South Africa during 2022 the population of asylum seekers and refugees was 242,988 people (UNHCR, 2022) distributed in all provinces in the country. South Africa has a large land mass, so three provinces were selected for conducting the survey. These were selected according to population size and volume of internal migration as a guide. Refugee populations in the Western Cape province were deemed to have been subject to high levels of research in the recent past, so that province was excluded from provincial selection. The Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape provinces were selected as large provinces with large urban centres that attract refugee and migrant populations. The Gauteng province had a sizeable net in-migration rate, whereas the Eastern Cape had a net outmigration rate. Accordingly, quotas for the three provinces were set at Gauteng (110), KwaZulu-Natal (50), and Eastern Cape (40).

Table 1: Estimated provincial migration streams, 2016–2021⁸

Province in 2016	Province in 2021											
	Eastern Cape	Free State	Gauteng	KwaZulu-Natal	Limpopo	Mpumalanga	Northern Cape	North West	Western Cape	Out-migrants	In-migrants	Net migration
EC	0	18 261	149 867	100 226	13 840	16 522	7 930	37 014	172 603	516 264	192 412	-323 851
FS	8 108	0	84 158	8 177	6 817	10 565	9 217	23 676	12 690	163 408	147 666	-15 742
GP	50 121	43 685	0	75 771	85 884	82 704	12 638	99 311	98 341	548 456	1 596 896	1 048 440
KZN	23 396	12 185	239 905	0	8 346	33 228	2 825	11 159	35 105	366 150	307 547	-58 602
LIM	4 589	5 950	304 317	7 650	0	45 628	2 387	30 197	11 550	412 269	279 755	-132 513
MP	4 889	5 549	133 937	13 434	24 949	0	2 469	16 472	10 417	212 116	286 154	74 038
NC	4 487	9 061	18 432	5 814	2 709	4 444	0	13 031	18 533	76 512	83 000	6 489
NW	5 448	12 373	118 045	6 421	20 945	12 507	24 786	0	9 572	210 096	317 830	107 733
WC	53 052	8 338	64 675	14 168	5 826	7 566	13 286	8 703	0	175 613	486 617	311 004



Given the **sensitivity** of research studies of refugees and asylum seekers the approach was to work through **intermediary organisations** to get into contact with refugee networks and to always utilise **neutral and safe places**.

8 https://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=1854&PPN=P0302&SCH=7362

Given the sensitivity of research studies of refugees and asylum seekers the approach was to work through intermediary organisations to get into contact with refugee networks and to always utilise neutral and safe places for interacting with refugees. Various social networks were approached including foreign national operated business associations and self-help organisations. Faith based organisations as well as NPOs supporting refugee rights and interests were contacted. Arrangements were made with permission of the Home Affairs Offices in Pretoria to conduct interviews with refugees in a safe space in the locality. These initiatives were undertaken during a period of increased anti-foreigner and xenophobic sentiments expressed in the Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Western Cape and Limpopo provinces. The 'Operation Dudula' movement had grown in Alexandra, Dobsonville, and Soweto in Gauteng, as well as the eThekweni-Pietermaritzburg areas of KwaZulu-Natal province.

In Gauteng, the bulk of interviews were undertaken in Johannesburg in the suburb of Mayfair with the assistance and support of community members, and at the Catholic church in the suburb of Doornfontein. A small number of interviews were held near the Home Affairs Office in Marabastad, Pretoria. In KwaZulu-Natal, interviews were held at the Diakonia Centre, the Dennis Hurley Centre, Lawyers for Human Rights and at the Home Affairs Reception Office. In the Eastern Cape, interviews were held at the Legal Clinic of Nelson Mandela University and at the Home Affairs Department Reception Office. The Gauteng fieldwork team of three researchers, the KZN fieldwork team of four researchers, and the Eastern Cape team of two researchers together completed all South African interviews.

The sampling methods used in each location in South Africa and Zambia was partly contingent on information elicited during the key informant interviews. It was also influenced by interactions with gatekeepers in the collaborating institutions and strongly influenced by conditions on site.

Fieldwork: Zambia

The Zambian policy and legal framework has a number of reservations with regards to freedom of movement, education and employment. The Refugee Act No. 1 of 2017 states that only a recognised refugee (one who has successfully been granted asylum after the refugee status determination process) lawfully living in Zambia issued with a work permit or study permit has access to gainful employment. The foregoing excludes asylum seekers. The New York Declaration of the United Nations, set out Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) of which the Republic of Zambia is signatory. The country's president committed the country to move towards a settlement approach and to improve economic productivity in refugee-hosting areas. The establishment of these areas reflect involvement of Zambia in refugee support for a long time. The allocation of these large rural land areas provided an opportunity for refugees to take up agriculture as a livelihood, some managing subsistence and others farming for income in the market. The Zambian settlement policy provided for refugees to adopt 'self-settlement' in the urban areas, which has been adopted by one in five refugees.

This governance and administrative arrangement made it possible for the refugee population to be provided for. Together with the support of the UNHCR an information system is in place that enables provision of various services to refugees which range from immediate care upon transit/

arrival to interventions that encourage empowerment and self-reliance including skills training and support to access sustainable employment and decent work. The number of refugees and asylum seekers nearly doubled from 53 972 in 2016 to 102 127 in 2021. By January 2022, Zambia was host to 105 190 PoCs (75 867 refugees, 4 448 asylum-seekers and 24 875 former Angolan and Rwandan refugees) altogether comprising some 30 835 households.

The fieldwork in Zambia was conducted in Lusaka where 140 surveys were completed, and in Meheba where 87 surveys were completed. In Lusaka the following areas were covered: Lusaka, Chaisa, Cipata, Chawama, Comesa, Gardens, Kanyama, Kaunda Square, Matero, Makeni, Mandevu and Mutendere. The Lusaka interviews also included a group of students sponsored by the DAFI Scholarship program. The Zambian fieldwork team was jointly led by a senior Zambian national and project coordinator from JET Education Services. Five refugees with social science research skills were recruited, selected, and trained as fieldworkers. The advantage was that these personnel had French and other indigenous languages from the DRC. The national encampment policy potentially simplified the selection of locations and the sampling process; however, much coordination was needed with government organisations. Government and other key informant organisations' (intermediary organisations) support was helpful for identifying potential respondents and research assistants in each location. KI interviews pointed at organisations and individuals in Meheba and Lusaka, that could facilitate access to refugees.

To support the research objectives, prime considerations were to ensure interviews obtained reasonable representation across occupational categories and, to identify participants with some exposure to RPL. Other considerations include gaining reasonable participation from different nationalities and if possible proportional representation of refugees and asylum seekers, bearing in mind also representation by age and gender. In Zambia, it was necessary to balance interviews between Lusaka and Meheba. Meheba's economy is primarily informal and agricultural. It was anticipated that most jobs in Meheba would be low-skilled with less occupational variation. To draw a sample that represented the full range of skills-levels of refugees and asylum seekers, greater representation from Lusaka was needed. Lusaka's economy was expected to support a much higher-skilled and professional set of occupations, as well as a greater range in skill level and skill specialization. Thus, it is more likely to attract a greater diversity of refugee skill profiles.

INCREASE IN NUMBER OF REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS IN ZAMBIA

53 972

in 2016

102 127

in 2021

PERSONS OF CONCERN (January 2022)

105 190

- ▶ 75 867 refugees
- ▶ 4 448 asylum-seekers
- ▶ 24 875 former Angolan and Rwandan refugees



30 835

Total number of households

CHAPTER

2

THE LABOUR MARKET INTEGRATION OF REFUGEES IN SOUTH AFRICA AND ZAMBIA



Introduction

The ILO highlights that asylum seekers and refugees can fill shortages in labour and skills, gaps in local markets and bring increased taxes benefitting both refugees and host communities through diversification and growth (ILO, 2020). By building micro, small and medium sized enterprises through entrepreneurship, refugees also create job opportunities within their host communities and improve the stability and safety of these communities thereby reducing reliance on welfare assistance. Additionally, if refugees have access to employment in the formal economy, the risk of resorting to negative coping strategies such as sex work and child labour may be reduced. Working also increases the interaction between refugees and their host communities and may therefore contribute to a climate of trust and peaceful coexistence between them (UNHCR, 2014).

Access to work for refugees has also been found to extend labour market participation beyond the period of displacement. Decent work opportunities during and after displacement has been found to be a driving factor behind successful voluntary repatriation of refugees. This is because increased skills, resources and networks among refugees have been found to facilitate their socio-economic reintegration (Harild, Christensen and Zetter, 2015; ILO, 2020). It is noted that (Betts and Collier, 2017, cited in ILO, 2020, pp. 11):

... following voluntary return, employment promotion can equally facilitate sustainable reintegration, as the impact of return on receiving communities is similar to the impact of forced displacement in host communities during ongoing displacement.

Additionally, the participation of refugees and asylum seekers in their host communities can also help to change the host perceptions around displacement (ILO, 2020). Research conducted by the ILO, UNDP and the World Bank in fragile contexts where refugees frequently live and work, found

that there are three main drivers of conflict: (1) limited contact between host communities and POCs; (2) a lack of economic opportunity, and (3) the existence of grievances and a sense of injustice towards the host community (Brück et al 2016).

There are numerous constraints that limit refugees' access to the labour market in host countries. Research conducted by the UNHCR and the ILO in 2015 showed that one major constraint to access to the labour market for refugees is the lack of awareness among employers of the legal frameworks governing refugee and asylum seeker's right to work. It was found that employers believe that employing refugees would be expensive or lead to negative legal repercussions (Nutz, 2017). The OECD (2016), in their report on making integration work, highlights that on top of employer perceptions limiting employment, restrictions to labour market access in certain sectors, also present a challenge. It is highlighted that countries will limit refugee's access to sectors such as agriculture, where the negative impact on local workers is more likely. Hence, where access is limited to employment in low-skilled, low-paid sectors, refugees' access to formal employment in any sector of the value chain is limited (OECD, 2016). It is recommended that interventions should include ways to address these constraints.

In order to try and improve refugee integration into labour markets, Nutz (2017) argues that value chains should be scanned and rated according to their potential for employment creation for refugees. Demand for a certain product or service is important for determining the potential for employment creation, where if demand is high there is a high potential for job creation (Nutz and Sievers, 2015; Nutz, 2017; GIZ and ILO, 2015). Additionally, scanning labour markets for their relevance to the target groups is also crucial. When assessing whether a sector is relevant for refugees, assessing potential barriers to entry is important (GIZ and ILO, 2015). Also, assessing the feasibility of interventions is advised in determining whether refugees can access labour markets. For instance, in sectors that are heavily regulated by Governments or opposition from trade unions, such as the health sector in South Africa, interventions to increase access for refugees may not be feasible (Nutz and Sievers, 2015; Nutz, 2017).

Another consideration to be made in determining refugee and asylum seeker access to labour markets, is the host countries labour market conditions. It is noted that in countries like Zambia that have a bigger informal sector than the formal sector, refugees' access to the formal sector will be low even if they have the legal right to work (Ruaudel and Zetter, 2018). The informal economy in destination countries offers both opportunities and disadvantages for refugees seeking employment. The large presence of refugees usually leads to an expansion of the informal sector which has lower barriers to entry than the formal sector (Ruaudel and Zetter, 2016) but jobs in the informal economy are often characterised by low wages, poor working conditions, less protection and risk of exploitation.

3 MAIN DRIVERS OF CONFLICT IN HOST COMMUNITIES:



- 1 Limited contact between host communities and POCs
- 2 Lack of economic opportunity
- 3 Existence of grievances and a sense of injustice towards the host community

The locations where refugees reside may also limit their employment opportunities. Remote locations have been found to be challenging for both the local community and for refugees. However, refugees may be unable to afford relocating to places that seem to offer better labour market opportunities. They may also be prohibited from moving to these areas due to encampment or other government policies. It is also important to consider macro and microeconomic conditions as barriers to refugees' access to labour markets. Low- and middle-income countries have been found to challenge refugees' right to work and access the labour markets compared to more developed economies (Ruaudel and Zetter, 2018). Conditions found in some countries that may include low capacity to absorb employment, limited occupational diversity, limited access to post school training and development, and high levels of employment in the informal economy place political pressure on government's capacity to generate decent work opportunities for citizens. Consequently, they may express reluctance to provide rights to work or to fund employment and livelihood opportunities for refugees. Without access to the labour market, refugees struggle to secure sustainable livelihoods which increases their vulnerabilities and dependency (Zetter and Ruaudel, 2016; 2018).

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Remote locations have been found to be challenging for both the local community and for refugees.

Various international conventions have been drafted and ratified to protect the rights of migrant workers and refugees. Specifically of relevance to this study are the 1951 Refugee Convention, its 1967 Protocol, and the Organisation of African Unity's 1969 Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa. The 1951 Convention protects their rights to work and their rights at work in their country of residence, including the right to join and form associations and join trade unions and the right to engage in wage-earning employment (Articles 15 and 17), as well as treatment that is not less favourable than that accorded people in the same circumstances in terms of the right to self-employment (Article 18). However, although the 1951 Convention provides for the right to wage earning employment for refugees that has been ratified by many signatory countries (ILO, 2020), some countries have registered reservations regarding this provision and therefore do not implement it. Also, host governments are swayed by citizens' opposition to refugees' rights to work (Ruaudel and Zetter, 2018). This study considers refugees and their integration into labour markets in South Africa and Zambia, countries that have both ratified the 1951 Convention on Refugees.

There have, however, been positive policy steps towards improving refugees' access to labour markets adopted globally. In the 2012 International Labour Conference, member states adopted the 'Employment and Decent work for Peace and resilience Recommendation (No. 205), which emphasises the importance of employment and decent work for promoting peace, preventing crisis situations arising from conflicts and disasters, and fostering recovery and building resilience (ILO, 2020). The same recommendations also call for member states to establish employment services or to strengthen existing services to support refugees' access to the labour market. One of the ways proposed to do this, is to support the recognition, certification, accreditation and use of skills and qualifications of refugees through appropriate mechanisms (ILO, 2020). This Report presents a picture at country level on what opportunities and challenges may hinder the implementation of this recommendation (No. 205).



Additionally, according to the ILO (2020), skill-recognition mechanisms can promote refugee communities' access to middle- or higher-skilled occupations. Refugee's skills and prior learning are often neglected, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation by employers for cheaper labour. Also, this results in many overqualified, frustrated refugee workers. The lack of recognition of refugees' prior skills and qualifications results in economic inefficiencies because there is often demand for semi-skilled workers in sectors where citizens are reluctant to work or high-skilled occupations such as medical doctors, where labour shortages exist in host countries (ILO, 2020). Many refugees find it challenging to obtain recognition of their skills and experience, certifications, and professional degrees — in part because they no longer possess required documentation which may have been forgotten or lost during the process of forced displacement or because of language barriers.

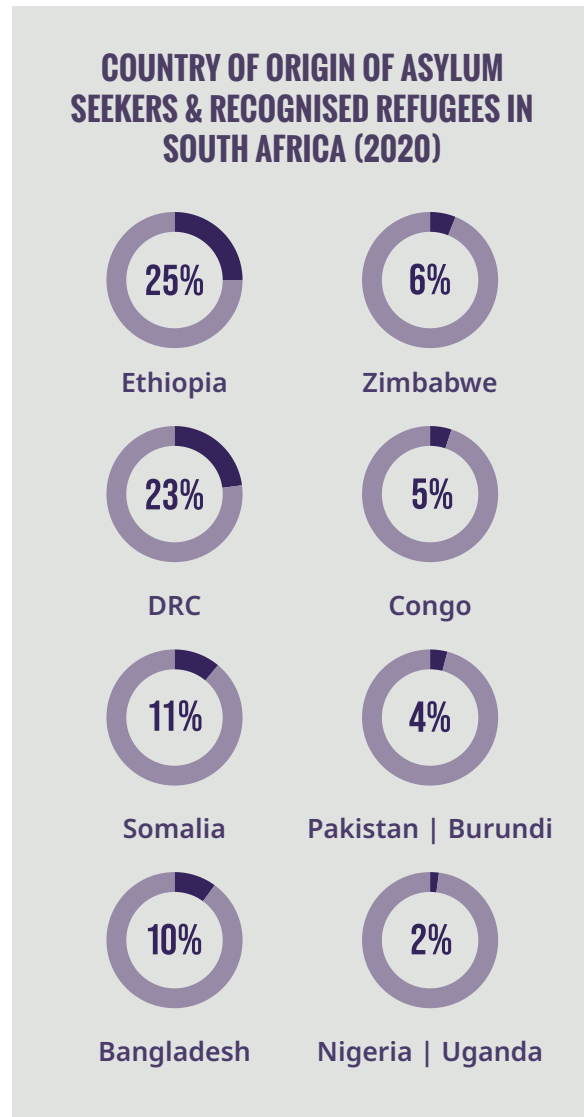
South Africa and Zambia participate in current SADC initiatives oriented towards mutual recognition and transferability of skills and qualifications across the region. South Africa and Zambia are among six countries actively participating in a project to implement the Southern African Development Community Qualification Framework (SADCQF) with the expected outcome of aligning the National Qualification Frameworks (NQFs) of Member States with the SADCQF as well as the mutual recognition and transferability of skills and qualifications across the region.

Refugee's skills and prior learning are often neglected, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation by employers for cheaper labour. Also, this results in many overqualified, frustrated refugee workers.

South Africa

Overview of the country context and asylum system in South Africa

South Africa is a major destination country for migrants and refugees from the Horn of Africa, the Great Lakes region, and even Asian countries that often travel in mixed migration flows. The flows include refugees that seek international protection and migrants that are in search of better economic and social opportunities (Zetter and Ruaudel, 2016; OECD and ILO, 2018; Department of employment and Labour Republic of South Africa, 2022). Moreover, South Africa has attracted migrants and refugees from Southern Africa (traditionally from Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe) and more widely from the continent including Burundi, Congo, DRC, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Rwanda, and Somalia. In 2020, most asylum seekers and recognised refugees in South Africa came from Ethiopia (25%), followed by the DRC (23%), Somalia (11%), Bangladesh (10%), Zimbabwe (6%), Congo (5%), Burundi (4%), Pakistan (4%), Nigeria (2%) and Uganda (2%) (Moyo, 2021).



The UNHCR reported in 2022, using South African Department of Home Affairs (DHA) data, that the number of refugees in South Africa was 75,511, and the number of asylum seekers (or pending cases) was 167,477, which brought this total number to 242,988 (UNHCR, 2022). This data released by the DHA in April 2022 is the most recent data available. However, it does not reflect approximately 50 thousand new arrivals during the period when the DHA offices were closed due to COVID 19 related regulations.

South Africa upholds the international principle of 'inclusion before exclusion' when dealing with refugees. All applicants are in principle processed without discrimination and have an opportunity to seek judicial review should they not be satisfied with the outcomes of the status determination process. Due to the high volume of applicants and the time it takes to process a claim until a final decision has been made, South Africa often fails to identify applicants who need special protection and immediate assistance:

For instance, a woman who has been a victim of war crimes and requires immediate psycho-social and medical assistance will not be identified upon arrival with the current system. This system may be inclusive, but it is not able to maximise the protection and assistance that some asylum applicants require (DHA, 2017).



South Africa adopted a **progressive refugee policy** when it became a democracy. Recognised refugees in South Africa are entitled to **full legal protection** and the rights set out in the Bill of Rights of South Africa's Constitution.

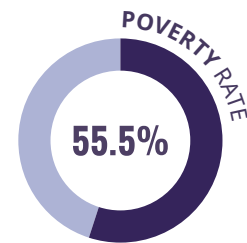
South Africa adopted a progressive refugee policy when it became a democracy. South African policies relating to refugees and asylum seekers were informed mainly by the Refugee Act of 1998 (South Africa, 1998) and South Africa's 1996 Constitution and Bill of Rights (Bill of Rights, 1996). Recognised refugees in South Africa are entitled to full legal protection and the rights set out in the Bill of Rights of South Africa's Constitution. They have the right to remain in South Africa and seek permanent residence after continuously living in South Africa for ten years.⁹ They are allowed to seek employment and access the same basic health services and primary education as nationals (UNHCR, date unknown).

Refugees in South Africa are not confined to camps, and with the appropriate identification and permits they are generally free to move across the country and to settle wherever they choose. The South African Constitution's Bill of Rights guarantees freedom of movement to all persons and the Refugees Act affirms that this applies to refugees. The Act does not specifically apply this freedom to asylum seekers, but in practice, South Africa generally respects this right. The Refugees Act, 2017, prohibits asylum seekers from travelling outside of South Africa without DHA approval.

As the most industrialised country in Africa, South Africa attracts the largest number of African migrants (IOM GMDAC, 2021). As there are limited regular pathways for low-skilled economic migration to South Africa, many migrants resort to seeking asylum (Zetter and Ruadel, 2016). The asylum system is being exploited by distressed economic migrants and over 90% of asylum claims are rejected. The fairness and efficiency of South Africa's refugee status determination process are impeded by the number of asylum seekers and the backlog of asylum applications from previous years. In March 2021 the Government and the UNHCR launched the Appeals Backlog Project to support the Refugee Appeals Authority of South Africa to clear the backlog of around 150,000 appeals and roll out measures to prevent future backlogs from taking place (UNHCR, 2022b).

⁹ The recent legal changes to South Africa's refugee law extended the period required for a refugee to continuously live in South Africa before being allowed to apply for permanent residence from five to ten years.

South Africa battles high unemployment (34.5%) and poverty (around 55.5%), and as frustrations over the standards of living in the country continue, refugees and migrants have been exposed to xenophobic attacks (Stats SA, 2022; Dewa, 2022). Migrants and refugees are blamed for stealing jobs from nationals, which has led to tension, violence, and the destruction of their businesses (Dewa, 2022; Matiashe, 2022). Since 2011, the government has been tightening the immigration and asylum system (Zetter and Ruaudel, 2016). In March 2022, the South African Ministry of Employment and Labour introduced a draft National Labour Migration Policy and Employment Services Amendment Bill that proposes to:



... introduce quotas on the total number of documented foreign nationals with work visas that can be employed in major economic sectors such as agriculture, hospitality and tourism, construction” (Independent Online, 2022b).

Moreover, recent legislation removes asylum seekers' automatic right to work and study in South Africa. Asylum seekers may need to undergo an assessment prior to any endorsement or non-endorsement of their right to work, though exercising this provision will prove administratively burdensome.

Existing skills recognition methodologies in South Africa

In South Africa, the Post School Education and Training (PSET) sector is under the ambit of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). The PSET sector consists of public universities and private higher education institutions, public and private TVET colleges, trades and occupational qualifications, community education and training (CET) colleges, and adult education centres. The TVET sector in South Africa offers vocational, occupational and artisan education and training, and the sector is considered a strategic site of education that can contribute to improvements in the matching between skills demand and supply and social mobility (JET, 2020) There are several stakeholders involved in the PSET sector as outlined below (JET, 2020):

- ▶ The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) is mandated to advance the objectives of the South African National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and oversee the further development and implementation of the NQF as well as coordinate the NQF sub-frameworks.
- ▶ The Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) is a Quality Council mandated with the design, development and quality assurance of occupational standards and qualifications, which are submitted to SAQA for registration on the NQF.

The NQF has been in place since 1998, with SAQA being its custodian (JET, 2020). The NQF is a ten-level framework spanning basic education, TVET, trades and occupations and higher education (JET 2020a). The framework is intended to allow for access, redress, articulation and progression, quality and transparency within and across all the sectors that it transcends (*ibid.*). Under the broad umbrella of the NQF, three NQF sub-frameworks were established, namely the General and

Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-Framework (GFETQSF) at NQF levels 1-4, the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF) at levels 5-10, and the Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF) at levels 1-8 (JET, 2020). Three Quality Councils manage each sub framework and are responsible for developing qualifications, setting standards and quality assurance functions (JET 2020b).

Information about RPL activities in South Africa

Availability of data about RPL programs is crucial for understanding the take up of RPL and the degree to which the capacity of government agencies and NPOs to offer RPL is growing in a country. This information can contribute to assessing the capacity of the system to support South Africans as well as refugees. In South Africa, the government realised the importance of obtaining data and made submission of RPL data to SAQA mandatory which required initiatives to make stakeholders aware of the importance of uploading RPL data to the National Learners' Records Database (NLRD). At the time of writing her report Castel-Branco (2022: 21) reported that the "number of learners who had achieved one or more part-qualifications via RPL was 87 915, with the records of achievements of part-qualifications via RPL numbering 610 956." It is acknowledged that these records do not reflect the actual number of successful RPL cases as many remain unrecorded — making it an underestimate. On a positive note, submission of RPL cases is increasing over time. Mapping the types of occupations and skills that are the target of RPL activities, such as by occupational category, skills level, and industry can help to identify the current emphases of RPL efforts. A profile of existing RPL opportunities could then be compared to the occupational profile and RPL needs of refugees to improve access to such opportunities.

The shape of RPL access is informed by policy — among other factors — and deserves a closer look. Looking more closely at how policy and implementation plans of the government are prioritising RPL within the education and training system, a recent Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) (2020) Annual Performance Plan reveals increased prioritisation of RPL in the post-school sector. This is reflected in performance indicators published in the Department's performance plan.



The TVET sector in South Africa offers vocational, occupational and artisan education and training, and the sector is considered a **strategic site of education** that can contribute to improvements in the **matching between skills demand and supply** and social mobility.

The DHET has signalled its intention to improve RPL coordination in PSET through conducting consultation with stakeholders and producing a report that proposes amendments to the RPL policy, and creation of an indicator that focused on creating conditions that enable students at TVET Colleges to transition into related university qualifications. These envisaged transitions would have to be informed by articulation implementation plans put forward by universities.

Overview of the legal framework governing asylum seekers' and refugees' access to the labour market in South Africa

South Africa is party to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, that are the key global legally binding frameworks that outline the rights of refugees and the legal obligations of states to protect them. It is also a party to the Organisation of African Unity's 1969 Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa. The legislation governing asylum seekers and refugees in South Africa are the Refugees Act No. 130 of 1998, as amended, and the Refugee Regulations, 2018. The Refugee Regulations of 2018 and the Refugees Amendment Acts of 2008, 2011 and 2017 (known as the Refugees Amendment Act, 2017) entered into force on 1 January 2020 (Scalabrini Centre of Cape Town, 2020). The Refugees Act, 1998 grants officially recognised refugees the right to seek employment. It is to be noted that the Private Security Industry Regulation Act prohibits refugees from working in the private security industry (Zetter and Ruaudel, 2016).

The Refugee Amendment Act, 2017 removes the automatic right to work or study for asylum seekers, while they are waiting for the outcome of their asylum application. Asylum seekers need to be authorised to work and study (beyond primary education). A Standing Committee determines the period and conditions in which an asylum seeker may work or study, which will be endorsed on their asylum seeker document. In terms of the right to work, the Standing Committee, inter alia, assesses whether the asylum seeker is able to sustain her/himself and whether s/he benefits from support from the UNHCR or other charitable organisations. In these cases, the asylum seeker may not be granted the right to work.

Moreover, the right to work can be revoked if the asylum seeker fails to prove that s/he is employed within six months after having been granted this right. In addition, an employer of an asylum seeker is obligated to provide a letter of employment in the prescribed format within 14 days of the asylum seeker having taken up employment. An employer who fails to do so or issues a fraudulent letter can be fined up to R20,000. The Refugee Regulations state in section 5 that the Standing Committee will determine *the conditions under which qualifying asylum seekers may be employed*, as well as the sectors within which an asylum seeker may not work, and these sectors may be published from time to time in the Gazette.



The Refugee Amendment Act, 2017 **removes the automatic right to work or study.** Asylum seekers need to be **authorised to work and study.**

Labour market barriers and opportunities for asylum seekers and refugees in South Africa

South Africa's February 2022 draft National Labour Migration Policy (NLMP) recognises that in the absence of specific income grants, the integration of refugees and asylum seekers into the labour market is considered international best practice. It also recognises that the 1951 Refugee Convention, which South Africa ratified, recommends access to gainful employment. However, the draft NLMP outlines several impediments to asylum seekers' and refugees' integration into the labour market, namely: challenges related to the recognition of their qualifications and experience; challenges in obtaining banking services due to lack of awareness among banking operatives; and lack of awareness among employers of their labour rights and documentation.

Refugees and asylum seekers indicate that South African employers are reluctant to hire them and recognise their right to work, even when their documents indicate their right to work. Obtaining a license to operate a business can require start-up capital and is unaffordable for many asylum seekers and refugees (Zetter and Ruaudel, 2016). A further challenge is the backlog in the asylum system and the amount of time it can take to obtain legal documents and permits — it can take years for refugee status to be granted. In addition, asylum seekers often hold insecure jobs and may risk losing their jobs when taking time off from work to renew their documents. In April 2021 an online renewal system was introduced to respect COVID-19 distancing rules, but it is not clear whether this system will remain in place. Moreover, xenophobia against foreigners affects the opportunities of asylum seekers and refugees to access decent work, as it leads to discrimination, exploitation, and abuse, including violence against business owners (Zetter and Ruaudel, 2016). At times the police and local authorities have also failed to recognize permits and refugee identity cards, which may lead to refugees and asylum seekers engaging in hazardous economic activities (Zetter and Ruaudel, 2016).

Social capital and networking have been found to be important for refugees and asylum seekers to access labour markets and different types of work (Harild, Christensen and Zetter, 2015; Zetter and Ruaudel, 2016). In the face of employment policies that give priority to nationals, such networks reduce the time refugees spend in securing their first employment. Refugees may draw on ethnic and religious affiliations to establish and set up work partnerships with hosts; for example, in South Africa, some Somali refugees work for South African Muslim businesses (Zetter and Ruaudel, 2016). Refugees lacking social capital tend to be more vulnerable as discussed earlier (Harild, Christensen and Zetter, 2015; Bevelander, 2016; Zetter and Ruaudel, 2016).

South Africa could maximise the fiscal contribution of foreign-born individuals by creating more opportunities in formal employment and by strengthening tax and contribution payments received from the informal sector (OECD, 2016). A possible increase in income or value-added taxation could affect the contribution of immigrants to public finance as these are the two largest revenue components when considering immigrants' total per-capita revenue contribution (OECD and ILO, 2018). The government's 2017 White Paper on International Migration acknowledges the positive contribution immigration can make to the South African economy and introduces a range of policy and strategic interventions (DHA, 2017).

Zambia

Country context and asylum system

Zambia's history as a host of refugees dates to World War II, when it hosted Polish refugees escaping the holocaust (Zetter and Ruaudel, 2016). Moreover, it has received refugees from neighbouring countries, the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa for more than 5 decades, which included refugees escaping conflict, as well as refugees fighting to overthrow colonial regimes (Nyamazana, Koyi, Funjika and Chibwili, 2018; Zetter and Ruaudel, 2016). As of 31 July 2022, Zambia hosted 74,716 refugees and 6,842 asylum seekers. Most refugees originate from the DRC (83.2%), followed by Burundi (10.4%), Somalia (4.5%) and Rwanda (1%) (UNHCR, 2022a).

Refugees live in designated refugee settlements, namely Mantapala, Meheba and Mayukwayukwa, as well as in urban centres mainly in Lusaka, and Zambia's third largest city, Ndola (UNHCR, 2022c; UNHCR, 2020). While Zambia ceded to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, it has registered reservations to certain articles, namely: *the right to employment (Art. 17.2)*¹⁰, *education (Art. 22.1)*, *freedom of movement (Art. 26) and travel documents (Art. 28)* (UNHCR, 2012). Thus, the Government of Zambia retains the right to determine places for refugee settlement (Zetter and Ruaudel, 2016). Refugees require time-limited movement passes to move around the country legally (UNHCR, 2019a).

To be granted exemption from encampment, a refugee must meet at least one of the following five criteria, agreed upon by the government and the UNHCR: (1) have a permit, issued by the Department of Immigration, for employment, self-employment or investment, or study; (2) require medical care not accessible in the settlements or the district; (3) show an established family connection with a refugee already in an urban area; (4) face a specific security or protection problem; or (5) be awaiting final steps of resettlement to a third country. Article 31 of the Immigration and Deportation Act 2010 provides that any refugee found in any place other than a refugee settlement without a valid pass or permit is considered to have committed an offence (Immigration and Deportation Act, 2010).

ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES IN ZAMBIA (JULY 2022)

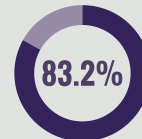
74,716

Refugees

6,842

Asylum Seekers

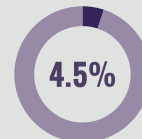
REFUGEES' COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN



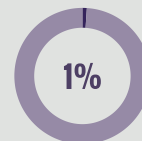
DRC



Burundi



Somalia

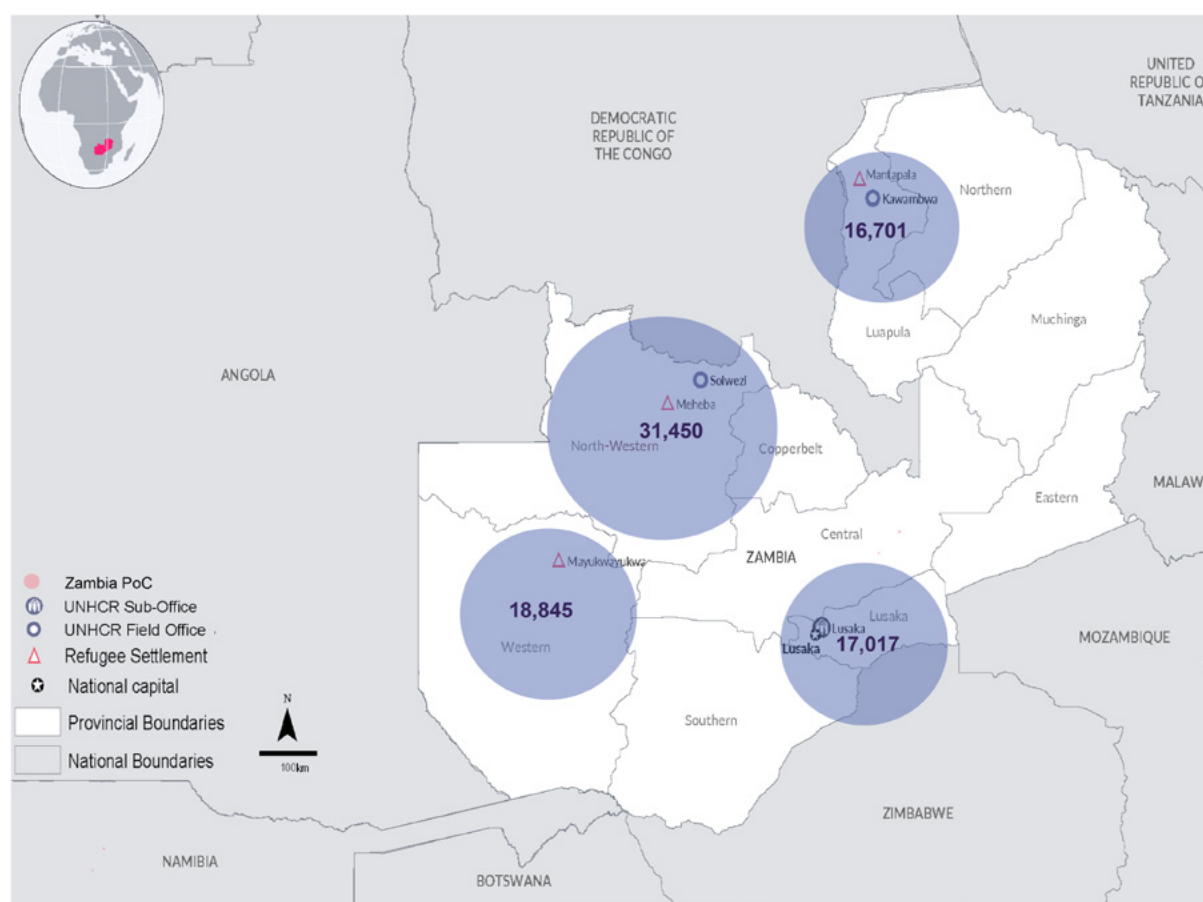


Rwanda

¹⁰ Only those granted asylum after the refugee status determination process have the right to employment, this therefore excludes asylum seekers.

In 2017 Zambia experienced an influx of new arrivals from the DRC and introduced the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) approach (GOZ, 2020). The CRRF is a whole of society approach which aims to bolster the self-reliance of refugees, enhance measures for refugees to access work and engage in income generating activities of their choice, proposed the relaxing the encampment policy, and ensuring access to education for refugee children (UNHCR, 2019a). The Zambian government designed a national roadmap for applying the CRRF. In April 2019, UNHCR validated its multi-year, multi-partner, protection and solutions strategy complementing the national Roadmap. A National Refugee Forum led by the Cabinet Secretary, held in February 2020, reviewed the implementation of comprehensive refugee response and the implementation of pledges made by the Government of Zambia at the Global Refugee Forum in Geneva in December 2019 (GOZ, 2020).

Figure 7: Zambia refugee and asylum-seekers



Source: UNHCR PRIMES, Regional Bureau for Southern Africa, 2021

The Zambian economy has experienced a serious recession in recent years with average growth rate declining from 7.4% between 2004–2014 to 1.4% in 2019. The already distressed economic situation has further been compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic. Wholesale, retail, tourism, and entertainment sectors are in a downturn. The informal sector is hardest hit with most small and medium enterprises (SME's) either downsizing or closing. The situation is even more critical for enterprises run by vulnerable populations including refugees and asylum seekers.

Existing skills recognition methodologies in Zambia

The Zambian Education System provides opportunities for learning through the academic and skills training pathways. The academic pathway leads to the attainment of an academic qualification while the vocational pathway leads to the acquisition of skills and competences. The TEVET qualifications range from level 3 (trade test) to level 6 (diploma) in accordance with the Zambia qualifications framework (ZQF). The TEVET system in Zambia comprises the formal, informal, and non-formal learning which enrolls learners from the school system, including dropouts and those who have never been to school.

The system also provides for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), including Life-Long Learning (LLL) and Work Based Learning (WBL). Currently, vocational career progression is hindered by not having a route that encourages learners in TEVET to acquire higher learning qualifications in specified fields. As a result of this, learners prefer the academic pathway for their career progression. The TEVET system represents an alternative stream to the academic pathway offered by university education and other colleges, (Zambia National Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training Policy, 2020). According to the National Qualification Framework (NQF) here are two systems governed by the TEVET Act and the Apprenticeship Act that produce skills. However, there are additional policies and laws governing skills development and access to the labour market in Zambia, which are also cited below.

The TEVET Act establishes the Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training Authority (referred to as TEVETA) currently under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education (MoE). National Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training (TEVET) Policy of 2020 and the TEVET Act No. 13 of 1998 as amended by Act No. 11 of 2005. The TEVET Policy covers a full range of four occupational levels, including: trade test, craft, technician; and technologist. The main characteristics of the qualification levels include the need for progression, i.e., allowing for individuals to move through the levels of the Framework; flexibility which allows for multiple entry and exit points, with trainees being able to enter and exit at any time of the four levels; and coherence, ensuring that the system has a consistent system of qualifications, i.e., certification. The Employment Code Act No. 3 of 2019 regulates employment and establishes the Skills Advisory Committee (SAC). The functions of this committee include advising the Minister on issues related to employment of citizens and expatriates; carrying out surveys and research in expatriate skills required in Zambia; and preparing periodic lists of critical skills required in Zambia. The SAC, therefore, provides an opportunity for addressing skills recognition for refugees and asylum seekers.

The Zambia Qualifications Authority Act (2011) provides for the development and implementation of a Zambia Qualifications Framework (ZQF). The Zambia Qualifications Authority (ZAQA) provides for the registration and accreditation of qualifications and '... for measures to ensure that standards and registered qualifications are internationally comparable.' ZAQA has developed a RPL Framework' to incorporate alternative qualification strategies that may be considered by institutions. In terms of skills recognition, at higher education level the Higher Education Act No. 4 refers to 'quality assurance' and 'quality promotion' that may be interpreted to encompass skills recognition. ZAQA is also the custodian of all Zambian and non-Zambian qualifications. All qualifications are registered on the NQF which includes 10 levels from primary education to a doctorate. Each level has specific learning outcomes for students, facilitated by training institutions.

To recognise refugees skills and qualifications, the UNESCO Qualifications Passport, which is a pilot initiative by UNESCO and UNHCR, facilitates the mobility and integration of refugees and other vulnerable migrants into higher education systems. It also contributes to the societies in which they live by increasing the pool of available skills. The Qualification Passport includes information on educational level of the holder; relevant work experience; and language proficiency based on an interview by experienced credential evaluators. The project is modelled on the Council of Europe's European Qualification Passport for Refugees. Refugee candidates in Zambia received their UNESCO Qualification Passports from Zambia Qualifications Authorities and UNHCR in 2019 (UNHCR, 2019). The project is ongoing.

Overview of the legal framework governing asylum seekers' and refugees' access to the labour market in Zambia

Like South Africa, Zambia is party to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, its 1967 Protocol, and the Organisation of African Unity Refugee Convention Protocol, which accord refugees the right to work, among other refugee protection provisions. Zambia is one of the state parties to the Refugee Convention that have declared reservations to the right to work. Consequently refugees, like other foreigners, need a work permit to access employment in the formal labour market in Zambia. Refugees have the same access to procedures for the recognition of foreign qualifications and skills as nationals but can face long delays to complete these processes (Zetter and Ruaudel, 2016). Key legislation in Zambia governing access to work for refugees and asylum seekers includes the Refugees Act No.1 of 2017; Immigration and Deportation Act of 2010; and the Employment Code No.3 of 2019. Zambia is currently developing its national migration policy, which addresses issues on the right to work for refugees and asylum seekers, as provided for by existing national laws.

The Refugees Act, No.1 of 2017 restricts refugees' freedom of movement and access to employment. The Act provides for employment and study permits; self-employment; and the practice of a profession. As stated earlier, only those granted asylum after the refugee status determination process have the right to employment, this therefore excludes asylum seekers. The Refugees Act refers to the Immigration and Deportation Act of 2010, which requires all foreigners, including refugees, to obtain permits to work, do business, or study at institutions. Failing to do so may lead to arrest, detention, and prosecution. Section 41 of the Refugees Act provides for the issuance of work or study permits for refugees with an identity card, in accordance with the Immigration and Deportation Act of 2010. Asylum seekers in Zambia are according to the Refugees Act of 2017, required to apply for refugee status within 7 days of arriving in Zambia. Section 11 of the act points out the process for asylum seekers to apply for status as refugees as well as how to go about appealing a negative outcome.

The law requires refugees to apply for and obtain a job offer from an employer before they can receive a work permit. Application and renewal of permits is costly¹¹ and issuance (maximum five years duration) is dependent on the refugee having a sufficient level of education, qualifications,

11 Zambia Department of Immigration. <https://www.zambiaimmigration.gov.zm/for-residents/pricing-page/>

skills, and financial resources, and that no Zambian is qualified and available to fill the position.¹² The permits may specify conditions regarding the area in which the permit holders may work and the type of work they may do (Zetter and Ruadel, 2016).

Section 42 of the Refugees Act covers the right to self-employment according to which recognised refugees may establish commercial and industrial companies as per the Immigration and Deportation Act of 2010 and other relevant laws, and engage in self-employment in agriculture, industry, handicrafts, commerce, and other activities. Section 43 of the Refugees Act provides for the right to practise a profession, whereby refugees with an educational qualification recognized by a relevant competent authority have the right to choose a trade, occupation, or profession, which is conditional on limitations imposed by other laws. However, applications for a self-employment permit, called an "investor's permit,"¹³ are prohibitive to most refugees and asylum seekers (Zetter and Ruadel, 2016).

Labour market barriers and opportunities for asylum seekers and refugees in Zambia

A number of challenges affect access to work for refugees including:

- ▶ The requirement for refugee status determination for access to employment (exempts asylum seekers' access to employment)
- ▶ The perception of employers that they are forbidden from hiring refugees
- ▶ Costly and administratively burdensome processes for acquiring work permits and/or residence permit;
- ▶ The need for a job offer from an employer before obtaining a work permit;
- ▶ Indirect limitations on refugees' entrepreneurship and ability to accumulate capital due to the high fees required for refugee business start-ups; and
- ▶ Limited access to jobs in the formal sector (Zetter and Ruadel, 2016).

Due to these barriers to accessing employment in the formal labour market, most refugees work in the informal sector, constituting over 80 percent of the economy. These jobs may be hazardous, lead to limited livelihood sustainability, marginal wages, forced labour and other forms of exploitation.

Half of economically active refugees in the settlements are engaged in farming as their main source of livelihood (UNHCR, 2020). Host populations in Mantapala settlement rely on cassava subsistence farming and goat rearing. Most rural areas of the refugee hosting Districts are not connected to the national grid. (UNHCR, nd). Other livelihood activities include petty trading and business ownership, and many engage in casual and piece work. Charcoal production is a source

12 Zambia Department of Immigration (n.d). Guide on Immigration Permits, Visa Requirements and Fees. <https://zamimmigration.azurewebsites.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Guide-on-Immigration-Permits-Visas.pdf>

13 An Investor's Permit is issued to a foreigner (above the age of 18 years) intending to establish a business or invest in Zambia or who has established or invested in a business in Zambia, or is joining an already existing company. <https://www.zambiaimmigration.gov.zm/permit-types/#1551252939434-6acd31c6-6af4> <https://www.zambiaimmigration.gov.zm/for-residents/pricing-page>

of livelihood common in the forested settlements and surrounding host communities where refugees are located (Zetter and Ruaudel, 2016).

The COVID-19 pandemic has had devastating impacts on such sources of income, particularly non-agricultural strategies. Refugees from rural areas may find urban environments harsh because they lack the skills for and experience of urban employment. The bulk of the refugees found in the Zambian capital, Lusaka, resided and worked in cities in their countries of origin and had no incentive or skills to live in refugee settlements as subsistence farmers (Zetter and Ruaudel, 2016). Measures aimed at improving financial inclusion of refugees through account opening, saving and remittance services but access to credit facilities remains a key barrier. Despite these challenges, Government of Zambia continues to demonstrate its commitment to sustainable approaches to refugee situations.

Caritas Czech Republic (CCR) in Zambia in partnership with government ministries, the UNHCR, and the Czech Republic implemented the Vocational and Entrepreneurship Sponsorship Program (VETSP) between 2014 and 2020 in Refugee Resettlements and Lusaka. The VETSP was aimed at supporting youths (both refugees and Zambian) to acquire vocational skills through sponsorship at TEVETA institutions.

The overall objective of the VETSP was to:

1. Support youths from refugee settlement and its host community to acquire vocational skills through sponsorship at certified vocational institutions,
2. Support refugees as well as the host community toward their path to self-reliance, and
3. Enhance access to employment and self-employment.

VETSP worked with 355 beneficiaries across all four locations. An evaluation of the VETSP program found changes in social-economic status of beneficiaries and their households. As a result of the VETSP program, there was also a change in sources of monthly income for the beneficiaries from being unemployed to self-employed or doing business which represented a 60% increase. Overall, the vulnerability of the beneficiaries was reduced as more beneficiaries became confident, took business initiatives, and developed more viable and realistic business plans; thus, the social-economic status and value of these youths increased within their communities.

To assess the labour market integration of refugees, detailed data and statistical information relating to refugees is important. This data, however, is not always accessible because some countries record limited data on refugees (Bevelander, 2016). This study offers a unique opportunity for comparative analysis of the skills profile and access to RPL among refugees and asylum seekers in Zambia and South Africa.

CHAPTER

3

PERSPECTIVES FROM INTERVIEWS



The discussion in this chapter, based on a series of interviews with stakeholders involved in activities concerning recognition, utilisation and value-adding to refugee and asylum seeker skills is intended to present experiences and perspectives from their involvement. Accordingly, the chapter generates further insights into treatment of refugees and attempts to improve validation of qualifications and recognition of skills possessed by refugees and asylum seekers. The names of key informants and organisations have been anonymised where necessary. References to information in the public domain have not been anonymised.

South Africa

Documentation and government administration

The legal provisions for refugees and asylum seekers in South Africa are different. Feedback from interviewees indicated that asylum seekers face unique challenges that are not always shared by refugees. One interviewee from an NGO noted that many of the asylum seekers who have been in the country 5 to 15 years without getting their refugee status face unique challenges. The stakeholder adds that those individuals that have documentation as well as skills generally have higher access to the labour market. Interviewees also discussed what factors enable refugee and asylum seekers access to these services.

Most interviewees observed that the government moves slowly to support refugees with documentation and services associated with documentation. It was observed that political will to address issues around refugees and asylum seekers in South Africa is limited with one NGO interviewee adding:

| They want to show on paper that they are liberally dealing with refugees but in reality, it is not working.

To support refugees, interviewees stated that there are many organisations that exist that offer skills recognition services. These organisations then connect refugees to government departments such as Home Affairs to increase the recognition and legitimacy of their documentation (Faith-based Organisation)

Qualifications of refugees and asylum seekers arriving in South Africa

The preconceived understanding of many people in the destination country is that asylum seekers and refugees generally have the bare minimum of skills. In contrast most of the respondents interviewed felt that significant numbers of the refugees coming into South Africa are highly skilled. A high proportion of refugees are in the health sector working as nurses and doctors, and in education, IT and business. As the respondent from SAQA pointed out:

In reality, we are actually talking about skilled people coming into the country and the question is what can be done with their skills or what use can be made with the skills. Some of them have critical skills such as doctors, nurses, engineers, management, not taking anybody's job but making use of their skills.

The same respondent observes that there are limited opportunities available for skilled refugees and limited access to low skills occupational work that they can find:

In Cape Town, the people we met who were highly skilled were delivery men, uber drivers, parking attendants, these are people who were highly skilled in their country but had to run away because of political instability, highly skilled and now met with this disconnect (SAQA).

The problem starts immediately on arrival in the view of a respondent from the National Refugee Association who observes that skills profiling activities are not included at reception points into South Africa for refugees and asylum seekers. Questions on why they fled their countries are seen as more of a priority than skills recognition (National Refugee Association). This is a necessary process for decision making about the status of new arrivals, but more attention needs to be paid to capacities and skills of refugees at an earlier stage.

One stakeholder goes on to note that many highly skilled refugees come into the country without any documentation or proof of their qualifications. This proves to be a significant and wasteful barrier to utilising the professional skills of refugees. As a result, they are forced to begin all over again in trying to gain some sort of formal qualifications and training (Faith-based Organisation). Many of the initiatives around validation and skills recognition that will be discussed here are intended to facilitate refugee movement into occupations that are relevant and appropriate to their skills. This is necessary because the official South African formal asylum seeker processes and skills recognition processes are difficult to negotiate:

The process exists, but it doesn't happen at a practical level. Many people who start the process fail to get through it. Somewhere along the way people get lost and lose hope in the process (Faith-based Organisation).

The South African Qualifications Authority

An interview with an actor from SAQA sheds light on some of the key qualification frameworks and policies that exist in South Africa for evaluating qualifications. The stakeholder notes that SAQA provides recognition of qualifications services for people who come to South Africa to work or to study. SAQA provides a certificate of evaluation which recognises and equates qualifications obtained abroad. South Africans, migrants and refugees that have obtained qualifications abroad and wish to work in their specific profession in South Africa need to have their foreign qualifications evaluated and recognised by SAQA.

Refugees do not require a work permit but need to have their qualifications recognised to access employment in skilled professions, such as teaching, engineering and medical professions. In addition, their skills and qualifications also need to be recognised by the relevant Professional Body. It was mentioned that the SAQA evaluation processes are stringent which make it difficult for asylum seekers and refugees to access them. From 2013, a slow increase in the number of asylum seekers and refugees coming to SAQA for the evaluation certificate was recorded. The actor from SAQA notes that refugees have unique challenges that SAQA is not always equipped to deal with. They may have incomplete documentation and obtaining the necessary documentation from the institution in their country of origin could be unaffordable and put their security at risk.

One of the faith-based actors interviewed, stated that their organisation supports refugees with access to documentation and evaluating their documents by sponsoring SAQA evaluations. The organisation notes that SAQA communicates with home country tertiary institutions in the process of evaluating qualifications in order to verify refugees' qualifications. However, for SAQA, as has been previously stated, many challenges are involved in verifying documentation with home countries, especially for refugees and for people who have fled to seek asylum.

Refugees and asylum seekers are also required to pay SAQA's fees and incur further expenses on required official translations of their documentation where this documentation is in a foreign language. Moreover, for refugees and migrants the SAQA applications need to be made online in an official language that they may not be conversant with. Additionally, when refugees with formal professional qualifications seek to have their qualifications verified, they may also be required to register with the relevant professional council to practice in the specific profession:

If it's a qualification that requires them to be registered with a relevant professional council, they still need to do that which is financially implicative and there are a lot of difficulties. They might (also) need to write a board exam which also requires them to be fluent in English (SAQA).

All the respondents agree that the time it takes to process documentation for refugees and asylum seekers is an important area that needs to be reformed. It was noted that there is a big disconnect in the value chain working in the sector as many government institutions and civil society groups work in silos. Therefore, fostering better cooperation and partnerships would go a long way in improving services for refugees and asylum seekers (SAQA).

Employment, validation of qualifications and skills recognition

The COVID-19 pandemic presented unique challenges for refugees and asylum seekers. During the pandemic, many industries did not recognise the online process of renewing work permits. As a result, many refugees and asylum seekers needed active advocacy on the part of NGOs to convince employers that their documentation was valid (Faith-based Organisation). Misrepresentation of foreign qualifications is another common problem, which generates distrust among employers which prevents individuals from obtaining the necessary recognition. SAQA is collaborating with the UNHCR and a faith-based organisation to address these challenges. Respondents also highlighted the importance of making sure employers understand the rights of refugees and asylum seekers as well as making sure that the latter categories also understand their rights and the services available to them.

These factors limit refugee and asylum seekers' choice of sector, and they will have to compete for work opportunities in these few sectors. For the majority, the last resort is the informal economy where employers opt to hire refugees and asylum seekers as they consider them to be better skilled with a good work ethic. Due to the desperation of these individuals, they are often at risk of abuse by employers. One stakeholder notes "Many are not unionised so their rights in the employment act are not recognised" (Faith-based Organisation). This is because unions have a very limited foothold in the informal economy.

Furthermore, employment contracts in the sector are for the most part verbal, leaving limited legal recourse for refugees or asylum seekers. In addition, the informal sector employs foreign nationals without contractual agreements and as a result, there are fewer formal processes of hiring and firing refugees and asylum seekers:

Many hired and fired at the whim of employers seeking a gap for cheap labour. It's one of the problems with foreign national employment. In most of the restaurants in most major cities, the workers from kitchen to waitresses and waiters are foreign nationals. They are punctual, communicate well, good in relationships, and work beyond the call of duty because many come from places where employment is scarce, and economics are fragile (Faith-based Organisation).



There is also evidence that many employers do not know the difference between refugees, asylum seekers or migrants and they are therefore unaware of their legal rights to study and work. This observation was shared by respondents from a National Refugee Association and from an NGO:

Many employers are unaware of the legal framework differentiating migrant workers from refugees and they treat them as foreigners. The lack of awareness contributes to a tendency for avoiding inconveniences "The second that some employers see that people are refugees or asylum seekers, they don't bother to offer them jobs".

On the other hand, with high-skilled refugees, employers are willing to make the effort as mentioned by one respondent: "there is reduced red tape and the process moves faster for individuals seeking access to high demand jobs (Faith-based Organisation)." Other regulations impacting on employer's hiring practices with respect to refugees include the broad-based black economic empowerment (B-BBEE) policies in South Africa also. B-BBEE was raised as an employment challenge for refugees and employment seekers because foreign nationals do not score BEE points, which means there is less incentive for employers to hire refugees (Faith-Based Organisation & NGO). A proposal to set a quota system has been proposed for the amendment of South Africa's draft National Labour Migration Policy, which if passed will limit employment of foreign workers in certain sectors:

The quota and employment services bill restrict the number of foreign nationals in certain sectors such as in hospitality and construction (Faith-Based Organisation).

In giving recommendations on how the relationships between employers and refugee and asylum seekers, respondents state the importance of ensuring employers understand the rights of refugees and asylum seekers, and that refugees also understand their rights and the services available to them (NGO and Faith-based Organisation).

When asked what changes to existing legal frameworks they thought would improve refugee and asylum seekers experiences in South Africa, respondents did not point to any macro level legal frameworks but rather, many of the respondents spoke out against the effects of xenophobia in South Africa:

Xenophobia is another challenge, the mindset from government, employers and the public and how they view the role of refugees and asylum seekers in the country needs to change. I think education and awareness is big in addressing this and changing stereotypes (Faith-based Organisation).

A highly relevant perspective encourages stakeholders to consider what refugees and asylum seekers can provide the education and labour market in South Africa rather than what the system can provide them:

We should consider the opportunities that refugees offer the education system, rather than the opportunities available to them. Their diversity of experience, background, and language are potential ways these people strengthen the SA system (Faith-based Organisation)

Opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers to enrol in education and training

Various institutions including TVET colleges and universities provide training opportunities for refugees. The University of KZN, the University of Pretoria and the University of Cape Town are specified as championing spaces for refugees (National Refugee Association). However, obtaining access to higher education remains far from guaranteed. Hurdles also apply to refugee children and school leavers, particularly in obtaining school leaving certificates or equivalents such as the matric examination. It is difficult for refugees to access tertiary education as they often lack the necessary documentation:

While schools are obligated to give education to all individuals in SA regardless of status, and they largely seem to do so, there are also bureaucratic obstacles particularly in awarding certification or matriculation documentation. There are rights before the law that no one should be denied from, particularly, primary and secondary school, for opportunities to learn. Particularly in Soweto, schools have taken in these students from Grade 1–12 but if they aren't documented there are issues with matriculation documentation. There is corruption and incompetence in the Home Affairs office when it comes to awarding documentation for matriculation (Faith-based Organisation).

The children of refugees and asylum seekers in South Africa face challenges accessing basic education opportunities even though this is a legal right for all children in the country:

School governing bodies and principals tend to deny children access to education because they lack paperwork or education. (Its) very difficult to place children when they don't have documentation even though all children have legal rights to access education...sometimes (refugee children) get a lot of resistance from school governing bodies that misinterpret the constitution. So, the issue has to be escalated to the district level. (Faith-based Organisation).

These scenarios demonstrate that significant hurdles face not only refugee adults but also their children's access.

Non-formal training for refugees and asylum seekers

Outside of formal education institutions, NGOs offer refugees and asylum seekers education opportunities such as life skills, language and entrepreneurial training:

We provide life skills training and certificates for attendance as well as offer entrepreneurial skills training and we provide intense training for people who are already running a business. We used to provide English language training and Zulu language training but because we are not accredited to do so, we don't do that anymore (NGO).

Nevertheless, refugees taking non-formal programs should not hold high hopes that these could provide alternative routes into further or higher education. The SAQA respondent stated that SAQA does not evaluate short courses, part time courses or qualifications that are not considered in the

formal system which limits the certifications opportunities available to refugees. Also, financial constraints were highlighted by numerous interviewees as a significant barrier to refugees and asylum seekers' access to education in South Africa.

Recognition of prior learning

This research sets out to address recognition of prior learning opportunities for refugees and the viability of these routes for formal academic advancement. For one Faith-Based Organisation, and an NGO working with refugees in Cape Town, there is a lack of uniformity in the implementation of the legal frameworks allowing refugees access to the labour market:

... it is difficult for people to understand the structures for skills recognition making access difficult and each professional body has different criteria they use for skills recognition, there is a lack of uniformity, for instance some provide for asylum seekers and others do not (Faith-Based Organisation).

Further challenges include gaps in the chain of steps in the process of obtaining validation for a foreign qualification or recognition of prior learning. In the sector, as it has been stated earlier, there are many government institutions and civil society groups working in silos. Hence, fostering better cooperation and partnerships would go a long way in improving services for refugees and asylum seekers (SAQA). Providing organisations such as NGOs with the capabilities to recognise prior learning and accredit qualifications for refugees and asylum seekers was also discussed as one way to improve access (Faith-based Organisation).

Also, providing organisations such as NGOs with the capabilities to recognise prior learning and accredit qualifications for refugees and asylum seekers was also discussed as one way to improve access (Faith-based Organisation).

Coping mechanisms

On what coping mechanisms refugees and asylum seekers look to when faced with limited opportunities to make a livelihood, there were varying responses. It was argued that refugees and asylum seekers resort to criminal activities and a large number want to return to their homes or to seek opportunities in other countries (NGO).

Additionally, the respondent from a National Refugee Association argued that there is a risk of losing a whole generation of people:

Lack of resources and recognition of refugee skills makes life harder for them. What they spent their life working hard for in their country is thrown in the trash when they arrive here forcing them to survive on the streets. The refugee experience is about resilience. They do all they can to make ends meet, which includes working low pay jobs such as working in a parking lot (National Refugee Association).

Another coping mechanism discussed was looking to faith and services offered through religious institutions as well as social support services from organisations such as NGOs (Faith-based Organisation). For Faith-Based Organisations, their experience with refugees and asylum seekers is that many set out to improve themselves and to achieve more, so they seek more education opportunities as another coping mechanism.

Zambia

Regulations and documentation

According to an NGO respondent if refugees obey the laws for refugees in Zambia as given in the Refugee act of 2017 and the Immigration and Deportation act, then opportunities are available to them. A respondent from a training organisation observed that some refugees do get deported:

Supposedly they (refugees) should remain protected in the country where they seek asylum, but there are cases of deportation or detainment. These were primarily those that were in the country illegally and not asylum seekers.

The challenge with documentation for refugees was raised by numerous respondents. It was observed that refugees need employment permits or if they want to start their own business, they need an investor permit. The cost of obtaining this documentation limits refugees from going into self-employment. Zambian employers may also be discouraged from hiring refugees because of the high costs of documentation:

The host countries have a shortage of employment opportunities, and this presents stiff challenges because there are limited opportunities. Also, granting a work permit is another challenge: they (refugees) cannot look for work without being granted the permits (ZAQA).

Without documentation, refugees usually opt to tap into the informal labour market. The CARITAS respondent stated that refugees without documentation access the informal market and particularly refugees who do not have a permit to work in an urban area. Working without documentation can become complicated as reflected in the quote below:

Those without documentation open small shops or trade in public spaces but they often get arrested. The urban permit might be given to a family member needing access to the urban centre. However, when the urban permit expires, they get the “white card” and they have to go to (the) office of the Commissioner of Refugees (CFR) and immigration both under Home Affairs to renew their permit. Sometimes, they can’t renew their permit because if the employment permit has expired or another document has expired, they end up in a (vicious) circle where they have to go back and forth between two government bodies to obtain the documentation (International NGO).

Settlements and urban areas influence employment prospects

Government provides the circumstances for refugees to engage in agricultural work and income opportunities in the rural settlements, but this presents challenges for refugees who aspire to find employment in non-agricultural industries:

The government gives a portion of land to refugees once they are transferred to a settlement. This is good for them but not all refugees want to work agriculturally. (INGO)

Challenges of living in settlements include limited labour market access, as described by a participant as follows: fewer opportunities in rural areas, mismatch of skills in rural locations lacking the right jobs for the skills available, (and) difficulties in accessing appropriate labour markets (International NGO).” The stakeholder from the International NGO argues that:

The encampment policy means from any point of entrance, once recognized as a refugee they are transferred to a settlement in very remote areas; access to the labour markets from remote areas is difficult and they have little chance to move.

In addition to challenges accessing the labour market resulting from lack of documentation, the UNESCO and a training provider raised the issue of freedom of movement, stating:

Refugees don't have freedom of movement, and therefore, they have difficulty entering the labour market. The labour market requires them to have work permits, which is difficult to acquire. Without permits they can't work outside of the camps. Most refugees flee their countries without any documents, which makes it hard to identify their qualifications or identity.

To address these challenges, it was pointed out that the Ministry of Home Affairs is assisting refugees through advocacy:

A body under the Ministry of Home Affairs Office for Commission of Refugees is trying to overcome these types of challenges through advocacy with immigration offices and involvement with the general ministry of Home Affairs (International NGO).

NGOs have also provided support to refugees in various ways on their inward journey to the settlements. One INGO respondent noted that there is a transit centre in Lusaka where asylum seekers and refugees stay before they are taken to an established settlement.

Access to the labour market and employer attitudes towards refugees and asylum seekers

In discussing refugees' access to the labour market in Zambia, another INGO interviewee stated that the government provides a portion of land to refugees. This land is offered to them to cultivate and to make a living. However, many refugees lack the skills to farm the land (INGO). Also, even though refugees in Zambia have access to the labour market, they are required to document any

job opportunity with the UNHCR in order to get clearance (before getting permission to accept the job) (Training provider).

Similar to the perceptions of some of the South African interviewees, citizen perceptions of refugees taking their jobs is a challenge and limits refugee's access to employment opportunities in Zambia (Training provider). Also, there is a lingering perception of refugees as foreigners despite the fact that many were born in Zambia. It was noted that the Law in Zambia does not provide citizenship based on the place of birth but rather based on the family, meaning that many individuals born in Zambia to refugee parents, still retain their status as refugees.

Contrary to this view, it was acknowledged that refugees often have unique skills that are of high quality. As a result, employers may prefer to hire refugees over locals because of their quality of work (TEVETA). However, despite having quality skills, refugees suffer restricted access to job opportunities as a result of being confined to camps (Training provider). For an International NGO, their role is to assist refugees with the transition and offer training in mostly low skill agriculture or skills for 'self-employment' skills in the rural environment:

All refugees must start off in a settlement. Once skill sets are recognized, the organizations work to help get them employed within legal limits. It's a challenge working with refugees who already have high level skills because they want employment not further training. (International NGO)

Even when training is offered, it was observed that NGOs are not always committed to monitoring refugees to establish whether training has resulted in employment opportunities which could feed into improvements or adaptation of programs.

A strong argument was made that refugees could benefit from start-up capital, or assimilation into more technical trades combined with training in entrepreneurship skills (International NGO). However, it is observed that financing refugee business start-ups is costly, while equipping refugees with higher level skills creates the need to find work in an urban labour market. Furthermore, in rural communities, many residents and refugees have no basic education, meaning that skills development must come first to facilitate employment opportunities (International NGO).

Another major challenge limiting access to the labour market despite having qualifications, is that employers have to show that there was no Zambian with the skills for the job to justify employing a foreigner and even a refugee (International NGO). A further complication is that the rural settlements differ in the variety of employment opportunities offered.

School and adult basic education access

At the basic education level, access to primary and secondary education for school age refugees has been increased by building more schools in settlements and integrating refugees with their local communities. It is expected that increasing access in this way will enable refugees and nationals in rural communities to build a better primary schooling network (International NGO). Despite these strides however, one respondent stated that local public schools still prefer to give access to Zambians first. As a result, government schools give priority to Zambian applicants, and it is difficult for refugees to get enrolled in government schools. Where there is not enough

room, refugees turn to private schools, but this can be prohibitive in cost. UNHCR and other NGOs however provide some education sponsorships at primary, secondary and tertiary level to try and address these challenges (INGO).

Similar to the policies in South Africa, refugees in Zambia have the same rights as citizens to access formal education institutions including schools, vocational training institutions and universities and do not need permits to access free primary and secondary education. However, the reality may not be as simple: refugees may face challenges in accessing tertiary education as permits are still required for this. Notably:

On a formal level, they have the same rights to access educational institutions, and also those that are more vocational oriented or the TEVETA certified institution that gives certificates for TVET. But of course, the issue is still the same, for instance getting a study permit for tertiary. (International NGO)

Furthermore, it is argued that refugee access to tertiary education is limited because of the cost (INGO). Partnerships between stakeholders have introduced a change to the dispensation to play a key role in increasing access to education for refugees. It was noted that:

Strides have been made along with partnerships and MOUs that have been signed between UNHCR and universities. Refugees are able to enrol in university due to these developments and the UNHCR has played a big role in making this functional (International NGO).

Skills development and training for refugees

A critical area that requires expansion is the provision of all forms of occupational skills development and training to refugees. The work of NGOs in Zambia has focused on ensuring access to training for refugees. Collaboration between these organisations takes place as reflected in the following quote with the respondent from a training provider stating that:

We have another organization that helps to identify the skills of refugees before they are referred to us. We then admit everyone at level three for skills training.

For some time, development organisations have been offering skills development not only to refugees but also to citizens and additional support for this is offered by NGOs. The training provider states:

Refugees have opportunities in their camps. Camps are not only made up of refugees, but also local citizens. So, they have the same access to education and health services in their camp.

The training provider is also working on setting up a skills training centre at the camp.

The respondent from a training provider, provided further insight into the support offered to refugees by NGOs. The respondent noted that UNHCR works with an International NGO, and

they sponsor refugees for various training programs. Once they are trained, refugees are offered start-up capital to advance their entrepreneurship opportunities. Under the UNHCR, refugees are offered a recommendation letter that allows them to work without which they require a work permit.

Skills development training has broadened to identify language barriers that limit adult refugee's access to education. The respondent from the training provider, observed that adult refugees often struggle with both English and Zambian languages which greatly limits their access to education and also access to relevant information on how to access education opportunities. Refugees with very basic skills in English for example can be excluded from a program because the most viable population needs to be recruited for the program to succeed:

We have a programme which is called the Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training Sponsorship Programme (VETSP), which is sponsoring youth from refugee and host communities to an institution for vocational training. To access these services, we require that individuals are able to speak English and that they have numeracy skills. (International NGO).

Despite being able to access skills training and education opportunities, refugees still struggle as a result of limited opportunities to get hired once they have achieved their qualifications. As a result, many refugees still opt to start small businesses because they cannot find jobs (International NGO). This example demonstrates the importance of labour market demand to grow employment.

Recognition of prior learning

It emerged that various RPL initiatives in Zambia provide refugees opportunities for accreditation of prior learning. For refugees who come into Zambia with qualifications, their skills are certified by ZAQA the certification body that compares foreign qualifications to those offered by TEVETA in Zambia. The TEVETA respondent highlighted that many refugees could get information on RPL from immigration offices and that they have found that demand for RPL is high. However, most refugees with skills that need validation do not have the funds to go to the capital Lusaka, to access RPL services. This reflects a need to provide services in every region (TEVETA).

According to the ZAQA respondent, a partnership between UNESCO, UNHCR and ZAQA in 2019, launched a pilot RPL project targeted at POCs. The programme aimed to provide services for refugees without documentation to substantiate their level of qualification based on qualifications from their country of departure. Successful candidates are given the UNESCO qualifications passport (UQP) which opens access to employment opportunities or higher education. A key success of the pilot was the award of roughly 40 qualification passports to refugees. It was expected that:

The next phase of the programme will bring in the labour market and employers that are willing to take on board refugees with these skills. So far, I am not aware (yet) of one of the beneficiaries who has received an opportunity in the labour market. One successful story, however, is that one of the recipients of the UQP has received a scholarship to study in Italy (ZAQA).

NGOs also participate in supporting refugees to get their previous qualifications recognised. A participant from an International NGO observed that these organisations “do assessments called vulnerability and viability assessment, for understanding the level of skills of refugees but this doesn't occur with new arrivals”.

NGOs in Zambia have also been found to add additional support to refugees to access RPL. According to the respondent from a training provider, NGOs support refugees by taking the results of their schooling to a training provider to convert and match to the Zambian school system. The training provider then refers applications to ZAQA to verify any foreign diplomas. The process is seen as effective but suffers from high costs of application and delays in verification from universities and institutions in countries of origin.

Despite the progress made towards ensuring RPL for refugees, several claims are put forward by a respondent from a training provider to the effect that:

No system exists for recognition nor labour market support. The biggest challenge is support for refugees. They need professionals to support refugees and identify their skills and qualifications when they enter the country.

A respondent draws attention to the certification process itself, warning notably that the process could unfairly certify refugees at levels lower than their actual capabilities. As a result, this will affect their income and they will be paid less than they should (TEVETA). Clearly this is a complex process, and many more lessons will be learned on the path towards extending quality effective RPL to refugees and citizens alike.

Coping mechanisms

In Zambia, when faced with limited access to the formal labour market, refugees set up small businesses, more so in urban Lusaka than in settlements and these have been found to provide major opportunities for refugees in Lusaka. Refugees particularly have also been found to work as traders in clothing and fish, in urban areas, whereas in rural settlements agriculture is the primary form of livelihood (INGO). ZAQA adds that opportunities in the agri-related business include pottery and piggery because of the availability of land and markets (ZAQA).



CHAPTER

4

SURVEY FINDINGS



Introduction

This chapter presents an empirically based skills profile of refugees surveyed in Zambia and South Africa. Accordingly, this comprehensive analysis addresses respondent's demographic characteristics; their education and training background, their job-seeking and employment experience is analysed through comparing employment in the countries of origin and destination. Further analysis is undertaken on workplace formality, workplace relationships and personal safety in the society of the destination country.

Demographic and biographical information

The first section of this survey presents analysis of demographic information for each respondent including age, gender, marital status, as well as household characteristics and official status as a refugee in each country. These variables provide a foundation for exploring the dynamics of refugee status by gender, age and other characteristics. Table 1 shows the age of respondents from a range of 15–60+ years. Overall, the highest proportions of respondents were between the ages of 18–25 (18.8%), 26–35 (38.6%) and 36–49 (27.5%).

Table 2: Age of respondents

Age	Number	Proportion
15–17	3	0.7%
18–25	78	18.8%
26–35	160	38.6%
36–49	114	27.5%

Age	Number	Proportion
50-59	41	9.9%
60+	15	3.6%
Other	3	0.7%
Total	414	100%

Age differed across countries with 45% of respondents in South Africa falling in the age group 26-35 compared to 33% in Zambia. Zambia has the highest proportion of older respondents with 14% falling between the ages of 50-59 compared to 5.3% in South Africa and 6.3% falling within the age of 60+ compared to 0.5% in South Africa. The distribution of older refugees in Zambia can be attributed to earlier waves of refugees from Angola for instance. However, overall, the age distribution draws attention to the relatively high concentration of youth aged 18-25 who would at this stage of their lives be negotiating their initial path through post-secondary school education and training or into the labour market and would be highly vulnerable during this transition phase. It is important to think about the age groups as having different needs. The much larger 26-35 group would likely include recent arrivals together with others who having arrived earlier, have been exposed to job seeking or accessing further education with mixed success.

Table 3: Age of respondents by country

Country	AGE												Total	
	15 - 17		18 - 25		26 - 35		36 - 49		50 - 59		60+			
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion
Zambia	2	0.9%	41	18.6%	73	33.0%	60	27.1%	31	14.0%	14	6.3%	221	100%
South Africa	1	0.5%	37	19.5%	87	45.8%	54	28.4%	10	5.3%	1	0.5%	190	100%
Total	3	0.7%	78	19.0%	160	38.9%	114	27.7%	41	10.0%	15	3.6%	411	100%

Table 4 shows that overall, 56.1% of respondents were male whereas 43.9% were women. At the country level, the gender proportion of respondents was similar with 57.7% being male in Zambia compared to 54.3% in South Africa, and 42.3% being female in Zambia and 45.7% being female in South Africa. This ratio reflects a stronger male presence which is prevalent among refugee populations.

Table 4: Gender of respondents

Gender	Number	Proportion
Male	229	56.1%
Female	179	43.9%
Total	408	100%

Table 5: Gender of respondents by country

Country	GENDER				Total	
	Male		Female		Number	Proportion
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion		
Zambia	127	57.70%	93	42.30%	220	100.00%
South Africa	102	54.30%	86	45.70%	188	100.00%
Total	229	56.10%	179	43.90%	408	100.00%

Restrictions on freedom of movement

Respondents reported on whether they live in a settlement camp or in a community in an urban or peri-urban setting. Table 5 shows that across all survey respondents, a high proportion of 73.3% live in a community in an urban or peri-urban setting whereas 26.7% live in a settlement camp. The juxtaposition of refugee households with local labour markets is an important consideration, especially whether such labour markets are rural or urban. The concentration and variety of work opportunities can be more restricted in rural areas, being related to agricultural or extractive activities. Without restrictions the general tendency is for refugees to gravitate to urban areas to maximise opportunities for employment and earnings.

Table 6: Location of respondents

Location	Number	Proportion
A settlement camp	103	26.70%
A community in an urban or peri-urban setting	283	73.30%
Total	386	100.00%

Comparatively, 47.4% of respondents in Zambia live in settlement camps compared to 0.60% in South Africa, whereas 52.6% of those in Zambia compared to 99.4% in South Africa, live in a community in an urban or peri-urban setting. The higher proportion of refugees indicating that they live in settlement camps in Zambia compared to those in South Africa, can be attributed to the existence of settlement camps in Zambia and the absence of these institutional forms, in South Africa. The single instance recorded for South Africa likely refers to a temporary arrangement. Refugees in urban or peri-urban areas would have opportunities to access a wider range of sectors and occupations associated with urban forms of economic activity.

Table 7: Location of respondents by country

Country	Location				Total	
	A settlement camp		Community in an urban or peri-urban setting		Number	Proportion
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion		
Zambia	102	47.4%	113	52.6%	215	100%
South Africa	1	0.6%	170	99.4%	171	100%
Total	103	26.7%	283	73.3%	386	100%

Marital status

Marital status could affect the skills, employability, and access to the labour market of female refugees affiliated with cultural or religious beliefs or practices that proscribe female participation. Refugees with dependents could find that their residential location restricts their job selection, or that financial constraints restrict their job-seeking or study intentions. Table 8 shows that across all survey respondents, the highest proportions of 49.3% are married, 39.3% are single and a small proportion are either divorced at 21% or widowed at 26%.

Table 8: Marital status of respondents

Marital status	Number	Proportion
Divorced	21	5.10%
Married	203	49.30%
Single	162	39.30%
Widowed	26	6.30%
Total	412	100.00%

At the country level, the highest proportion of refugees across both countries are married, at 50% in Zambia and at 48.4% in South Africa. There are many more respondents who reported themselves as single in South Africa at 46.9% compared to Zambia at 32.7%. However, there were more divorced respondents in Zambia who accounted for 7.3% compared to South Africa at 2.6% and more widowed respondents in Zambia accounting for 10% of respondents compared to South Africa at 2.1%. Researchers noted that need for social approval could have affected this distribution, masking a higher proportion of single female parents/caregivers.

Table 9: Marital status of respondents by country

Country	Marital status								Total	
	Divorced		Married		Single		Widowed		Number	Proportion
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion		
Zambia	16	7.30%	110	50.00%	72	32.70%	22	10.00%	220	100.00%
South Africa	5	2.60%	93	48.40%	90	46.90%	4	2.10%	192	100.00%
Total	21	5.10%	203	49.30%	162	39.30%	26	6.30%	412	100.00%

Number of residents in the household where the respondent is living

Respondents were asked how many people live in their household. The intention was to establish the size of households into which respondent's would be contributing a part of their wages. However, a high proportion of respondents lived in single rented rooms with a small number of companions or family members. Half of the households consisted of four people or less. Table 10 shows that

overall, the majority of respondents at 15.4%, indicated that 4 people live in their household, 13.9% of survey respondents indicated that 5 people lived in their household and 11.4% indicated that 6 people lived in their household.

Table 10: Number of residents in the household where the respondent is living

Number of residents in the household where the respondent is living	Number of responses	Proportion
1	42	10.6%
2	46	11.6%
3	50	12.6%
4	61	15.4%
5	55	13.9%
6	45	11.4%
7	32	8.1%
8	23	5.8%
9	14	3.5%
10	12	3.0%
11	8	2.0%
12	1	0.3%
13	2	0.5%
14	1	0.3%
15	1	0.3%
16	1	0.3%
22	1	0.3%
30	1	0.3%
Total	396	100%

At country level, there were similar percentages of households with four or five members in Zambia and South Africa. For instance, 14.2% of respondents in Zambia and 16.8% of respondents in South Africa indicated that 4 people lived in their household and similarly for five-person households. In contrast, more survey respondents in South Africa at 17.9%, indicated 3 people live in the household compared to 8% of respondents in Zambia indicating that three people lived in their household.

In Zambia there was a greater preponderance of bigger households in Zambia compared to South Africa. In Zambia, 9.4% of respondents indicated that there are 7 people living in the household compared to 6.5% of respondents in South Africa. Similarly in Zambia, 8% of survey respondents indicated that 8 people live in the household compared to 3.3% in South Africa, and 5.7% of respondents in Zambia compared to 1.1% in South Africa, indicated that 9 people lived in their household. From this data, it is assumed that the living conditions in South Africa are less congested than those in Zambia which could relate to house prices and earnings capacity of refugees in their contexts.

Home ownership status

Table 11 indicates that the majority of survey respondents, 72.6%, in both Zambia and South Africa indicated that they do not own their homes.

Table 11: Home ownership status

Self-ownership of home	Number	Proportion
Yes	69	17.00%
No	294	72.60%
Other	42	10.40%
Total	405	100.00%

Comparatively, 31.5% of the respondents in Zambia compared to a very small number of 0.5% in South Africa, indicated that they owned their homes.¹⁴ This is because former refugees from Angola who settled in Zambia four decades ago own homes. Some more recent refugees reported themselves as home owners. More survey respondents in South Africa at 81% compared to 65.3% in Zambia indicated that they did not own their homes. Secure home ownership of refugees in Zambia may have provided more secure premises from which to conduct household-based business activities such as preparation of food and manufacture of items for sale.

Table 12: Home ownership status by country

Country	Self-ownership of home						Total	
	Yes		No		Other		Number	Proportion
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion		
Zambia	68	31.5%	141	65.3%	7	3.2%	216	100%
South Africa	1	0.5%	153	81.0%	35	18.5%	189	100%
Total	69	17.0%	294	72.6%	42	10.4%	405	100%

Migration status

Table 13 indicates the migration status of survey respondents showcasing that 62.8% of respondents had refugee status, while 27.1% of respondents identified as asylum seekers, and 5.9% stated they were former refugees¹⁵ while 4.2% indicated that they are stateless.

14 In Zambia recognised refugees are entitled to own property. Republic of Zambia (2017) The Refugees Act, 2017 Section 39(1) p.27.

15 Former refugees refer to 2nd and 3rd generation family of Angolan refugees who settled in Zambia four decades ago. These families are integrated into Zambian society. Similarly, Zambia also committed to integrate 4000 former Rwandese refugees. Accord (2016) Angolan refugees in Zambia. <https://www.accord.org.za/publication/angolan-refugees-zambia/>

Table 13: Migration status

Migration status	Number	Proportion
A former refugee	24	5.9%
A refugee	257	62.8%
An asylum seeker	111	27.1%
Stateless	17	4.2%
Total	409	100%

Comparatively, there were more respondents identifying as having refugee status in Zambia at 81.4% compared to 41.3% in South Africa. More respondents identified as asylum seekers in South Africa at 47.1% compared to 10% in Zambia. The self-identification by more respondents as refugees in Zambia than in South Africa, could be on account of higher difficulties with the process of obtaining documentation in South Africa as compared to in Zambia. The literature review highlighted that although refugees receive support from the UNHCR and from other NGOs to get documentation in Zambia, in South Africa especially post-COVID pandemic significant challenges and backlogs at the office of Home Affairs are evident. More survey respondents in Zambia at 8.6%, indicated that they were former refugees compared to 2.6% in South Africa, indicative of the different policy approach and longer period over which the former has accommodated refugees. Refugee status in South Africa confers refugees' various rights. Most pertinent to this research is the right to work. Consequently, the lower proportions of refugees with legal access to employment would constrain their opportunities specifically in the formal economy.

No respondents in Zambia stated that they were stateless compared to South Africa where 9% of respondents identified themselves as 'stateless'.

Table 14: Refugee and asylum seeker status by country

Country	Status								Total	
	A former refugee		A refugee		An asylum seeker		Stateless			
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion
Zambia	19	8.6%	179	81.4%	22	10.0%	0	0.0%	220	100%
South Africa	5	2.6%	78	41.3%	89	47.1%	17	9.0%	189	100%
Total	24	5.9%	257	62.8%	111	27.1%	17	4.2%	409	100%

Education and training

This section covers the education and training background of refugee populations in each country. This profiling is of refugees currently residing in the respective countries and includes recent and long-term refugees.

Highest level of education

With reference to the highest level of education, survey respondents who had completed their secondary education was the largest single group (34%). More than half of respondents (58.3%) had completed primary, secondary or some secondary education, while one third of had completed their university/tertiary education (16.7%) or some university/tertiary education (16.3%). The proportion of respondents indicating that they had not attained any education was 8.7%.

Table 15: Highest level of formal education

Highest level of formal education	Number	Proportion
None	36	8.7%
Primary	58	14.1%
Secondary	140	34.0%
Some secondary	42	10.2%
Some tertiary/university	67	16.3%
Tertiary/university	69	16.7%
Total	412	100%

The formal education profile of refugees differs between the two countries in the following respects. First, the proportion of respondents indicating no education was higher in South Africa (12.5%) than in Zambia (5.5%). Second, the proportion of refugees with some schooling was quite similar between South Africa (57.9%) and Zambia (58.7%). However, the big difference was that 43.8% of refugees in South Africa had completed secondary schooling as compared to 25.5% in Zambia. Moreover, Zambia had greater proportions of refugees with primary or some secondary schooling (33.2%) as compared to South Africa (14.1%). Based on formal education background as a proxy, all other things being equal, the refugee population in South Africa seems to be better positioned to benefit refugees and the country through employment, skills development, and skills recognition.

At the tertiary level, 23.6% of refugees have a completed tertiary/university education while 12.30% have partial tertiary/university qualifications. In contrast, a much smaller proportion of refugees at 8.90% have a completed tertiary/university education in South Africa and there is a much higher proportion of refugees with a partial tertiary/university education at 23.8%. The survey data indicates that 45.90% of refugees in Zambia have whole or part tertiary level qualifications as compared to South Africa with 29.70% of refugees. These differences could justify country specific strategies for qualification validation and skills recognition.

Table 16: Highest level of formal education by country

Country	Highest level of formal education												Total	
	None		Primary		Secondary		Some secondary		Some tertiary/ university		Tertiary/ university			
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion
Zambia	12	5.5%	44	20.0%	56	25.5%	29	13.2%	27	12.3%	52	23.6%	220	100%
South Africa	24	12.5%	14	7.3%	84	43.8%	13	6.8%	40	20.8%	17	8.9%	192	100%
Total	36	8.7%	58	14.1%	140	34.0%	42	10.2%	67	16.3%	69	16.7%	412	100%

As Table 17 indicates, when asked whether they had any diplomas or degrees from their indicated highest level of education, 38.4% of respondents indicated that they did whereas 61.6% highlighted that they did not. The proportion of respondents in Zambia and in South Africa that indicated that they had degrees or diplomas from their highest level of education did not differ significantly, with 37.4% in Zambia and 38.6% in South Africa. The high proportion of refugees who had not completed their degree or diploma would reflect a proportion in current progress, yet also calls attention to the potential role of skills recognition in contributing to completion of refugee degrees or diplomas.

Table 17: Completion of degrees or diplomas

Completion of degrees or diplomas	Number	Proportion
Yes	154	38.4%
No	247	61.0%
Total	401	100%

Table 18: Completion of degrees or diplomas by country

Country	Completion of degrees or diplomas				Total	
	Yes		No			
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion
Zambia	80	37.4%	134	62.6%	214	100%
South Africa	74	39.6%	113	60.4%	187	100%
Total	154	38.4%	247	61.6%	401	100%

TVET education undertaken

On whether respondents had done any TVET, TEVET or technical education, about a quarter (24.3%) reported that they had done some TVET education. This proportion accords more or less with the tendency of TVET availability in African countries to be relatively limited in comparison with traditional education forms.

Table 19: Completion of TVET

Completion of TEVET/TVET/technical education	Number	Proportion
Yes	99	24.3%
No	308	75.7%
Total	407	100%

Comparatively, more respondents in Zambia (29.5%) indicated having done some TVET education compared to South Africa (18.2%). The somewhat higher proportion of refugees in Zambia having TVET education, could reflect higher access to TVET in the originating countries.

Table 20: Completion of TVET by country

Country	Completion of TEVET/TVET/technical education				Total	
	Yes		No		Number	Proportion
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion		
Zambia	65	29.5%	155	70.5%	220	100%
South Africa	34	18.2%	153	81.8%	187	100%
Total	99	24.3%	308	75.7%	407	100%

For those survey respondents who affirmed that they had done some TVET education, a high proportion of respondents similar in magnitude to higher education at 60%, had not validated this education in their country of destination.

Table 21: Validation of TVET education in country of origin

TVET education validated in country of origin	Number	Proportion
No	48	60.0%
Yes	32	40.0%
Total	80	100%

At the country level, a higher proportion of respondents indicated that their TVET education was validated in Zambia at 44.3% while a smaller proportion was validated in South Africa at 26.3%. This difference may simply reflect the larger proportion of TVET students in Zambia. Also, interpretations from a small number of occurrences must be treated with caution. Improved opportunity to validation for refugees with TVET qualifications could be most productive in the interest of individuals and the labour market.

Table 22: Validation of TVET education in country of origin by country

Country	TVET education validated in country of origin				Total	
	No		Yes		Number	Proportion
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion		
Zambia	34	55.7%	27	44.3%	61	100%
South Africa	14	73.7%	5	26.3%	19	100%
Total	48	60.0%	32	40.0%	80	100%

As indicated in Table 23, when asked whether they had undergone an informal apprenticeship, a high proportion of 79.6% of survey respondents indicated that they had not, with only 20.4% stating that they had. Although this data may reflect the broad trends, it is likely that some misunderstandings of the term and interviews in translation may have elicited a number of incorrect responses.

Table 23: Completion of informal apprenticeship

Completion of informal apprenticeship	Number	Proportion
Yes	82	20.4%
No	320	79.6%
Total	402	100%

In Zambia, the proportion of respondents who had received an informal apprenticeship is higher at 25.5% than in South Africa at 14.5%. However, in both countries the majority of respondents indicated that they had not received informal apprenticeship with the proportion in Zambia being 74.5% and in South Africa 85.5%.

Table 24: Completion of informal apprenticeship by country

Country	Completion of informal apprenticeship				Total	
	Yes		No		Number	Proportion
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion		
Zambia	55	25.5%	161	74.5%	216	100%
South Africa	27	14.5%	159	85.5%	186	100%
Total	82	20.4%	320	79.6%	402	100%

Survey respondents were also asked whether their informal apprenticeship had been validated in the destination country. As indicated in Table 25, the majority of respondents at 68.3% indicated that their apprenticeship was not validated. As indicated above, further interventions in this area could prove productive.

Table 25: Validation of informal apprenticeship

Informal apprenticeship education validated in country of origin	Number	Proportion
No	41	68.3%
Yes	19	31.7%
Total	60	100%

At a country level, the proportion of respondents that claimed their informal apprenticeship had been validated was slightly higher in Zambia at 33.3% compared to South Africa at 25%. Given the small number of observations, this is a limited opportunity for interpretation.

Table 26: Validation of informal apprenticeship by country

Country	Informal apprenticeship education validated in country of origin				Total	
	No		Yes		Number	Proportion
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion		
Zambia	32	66.7%	16	33.3%	48	100%
South Africa	9	75.0%	3	25.0%	12	100%
Total	41	68.3%	19	31.7%	60	100%

Recognition of prior learning

There is increasing interest in how to design and implement recognition of prior learning for refugees, as a point from which candidates can be launched into further skills development and training opportunities or into employment. Of immediate interest is to establish to what extent members of the recipient population may be aware of RPL. That is to consider awareness among refugees of the concept or technique or of practical applications of RPL either in their country of origin or destination.

Awareness levels provide an indication of potential demand. Awareness levels might also reflect current availability of RPL facilities. If awareness is low, this implies that there are few RPL facilities that refugees or asylum seekers have encounter. Awareness seems somewhat higher in Zambia. Actual mapping of sites that offer RPL opportunities would be very useful. Analysis of awareness levels is highly relevant.

Table 27: Has heard about RPL/VAE

Has heard about RPL/VAE	Number	Proportion
No	54	13,30
Yes	353	86,70
Total	407	100,00

Table 28: Has heard about RPL/VAE by country

Country	Awareness of RPL/VAR					
	Yes		No		Total	
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion
Zambia	33	15,30	182	84,70	215	100%
South Africa	21	10,90	171	89,10	192	100%
Total	54	13,30	353	86,70	407	100%

Participants were invited to provide further detail about their knowledge. In Zambia, from 29 responses to an open-ended question, 12 participants referred to the UNESCO Passport, two participants referred to CARITAS, one referred to 'World Vision', and two to the Zambia Centre for Accountancy Studies (ZCAS) as organisations advocating and/or using RPL approaches. In South Africa from 11 responses in all, there were three references to SAQA accreditation. This information suggests that awareness is slightly higher in Zambia and centres around the UNESCO passport that is of interest to refugees who are in higher education or graduates. In South Africa the SAQA is mentioned in a small number of cases. For both countries, most responses indicated limited knowledge of RPL with statements like "I don't know much about it" or "I heard about something similar from a cousin in South Africa ...", or "can't remember the details" of opportunities.

Looking beyond awareness among refugees about RPL, towards whether refugees have conducted validation of their own skills could give an indication of how strongly refugees have engaged in recognition or validation processes. The proportion of survey respondents that claimed that they had tried to validate any of their skills or education in their country of settlement, was 15.4%.

Table 29: Attempt to validate any skills or education in country of settlement

Attempt to validate any skills or education in country of settlement	Number	Proportion
Yes	62	15.4%
No	340	84.6%
Total	402	100%

This scenario is also apparent at the country level. However, somewhat more respondents in Zambia, at 21.6% indicated that they had tried to validate their skills or education compared to 8.5% in South Africa.

Table 30: Attempt to validate any skills or education in country of settlement by country

Country	Attempt to validate any skills or education in country of settlement					
	Yes		No		Total	
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion
Zambia	46	21.6%	167	78.4%	213	100%
South Africa	16	8.5%	173	91.5%	189	100%
Total	62	15.4%	340	84.6%	402	100%

When respondents were asked whether they were successful in validating their skills or education, 30% of those who stated that they had tried the validation process, declared themselves successful, whereas 45.5% indicated that they were not. At the country level, there were more respondents in Zambia who stated that they were successful in validating their skills or education at 59.5%, compared to those in South Africa at 38.5%. This outcome may reflect on the nature of the processes, but also on the higher proportion of refugees with formal education qualifications in Zambia.

Table 31: Success in validating skills or education in country of settlement

Success in validating skills or education in country of settlement	Number	Proportion
No	25	45.5%
Yes	30	54.5%
Total	55	100%

Table 32: Success in validating skills or education in country of settlement by country

Country	Success in validating skills or education in country of settlement					
	No		Yes		Total	
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion
Zambia	17	40.5%	25	59.5%	42	100%
South Africa	8	61.5%	5	38.5%	13	100%
Total	25	45.5%	30	54.5%	55	100%

Employment and occupational categories of refugees in their country of origin and country of destination

This research project is focused on improving the prospects for refugees to find decent work in their country of destination. The probability of a refugee obtaining decent work at the country of destination can be strongly influenced by the nature of their skills, knowledge and occupational practise obtained in their country of origin. This survey was designed to gather data on a refugee's work experience and skills development in both the country of origin and country of destination.

Refugee work experience in the country of origin is summarised in the table below showing refugee responses to the question: "Were you employed in the country of origin before becoming a refugee/asylum seeker?" Nearly half of the participants 49% indicated that they were employed whereas 51% indicated that they were not employed.

Table 33: Employment status in country of origin

Country	Yes		No		Total	
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion
Zambia	98	45,4%	118	54,6%	216	100%
South Africa	98	53,3%	86	46,7%	184	100%
Total	196	49,0%	204	51,0%	400	100%

The analysis to follow therefore develops an occupational profile of refugees based largely on the 196 who associate their activities with work mainly in the formal economy and some forms of work in the informal economy. The table also shows that 204 refugees in Zambia and South Africa who participated in the survey stated they were unemployed. It is certain that a proportion of this group were unemployed in their country of origin and correctly stated so. It is also highly likely that a number of refugees in this group, discounted their own work experience because they perceive work as: salaried, regular, and undertaken daily in a designated workplace. This may have included those who worked as unpaid contributing family workers, or as members of rural non-farm household enterprises, or doing casual piecework with farmers in the neighbourhood, or who were working informally from time to time as street vendors or providing other informal services. As a result, the balance of 204 refugees believing they were 'unemployed' did not provide full information about their work activities. This is reflected in the table below.

Table 35: Availability of occupational information based on employment status in country of origin

Country	Employed		Unemployed		Total
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	
Zambia	98	45,4%	118	54,6%	
South Africa	98	53,3%	86	46,7%	
Total	196	49,0%	204	51,0%	
	196		204		400
	with occupational information		without occupational information		

Consequently, the analysis presented should be understood to provide an underestimation of the full range of informal types of work at the intermediate to low skills and low wage occupations of refugees. It is also not possible to gauge the size of the unemployed refugee population aged 15 to 64. Nevertheless, the data and analysis of how refugees have secured a foothold in many formal occupations is a welcome contribution.

Occupations of refugees employed in their country of origin

The occupation of refugees who were employed in their country of origin is an important reference point for identifying the occupational range, skill levels and work experience that they arrive within the destination country. Knowledge of these characteristics can inform short, medium, and long-term strategies aimed to improve refugee chances of obtaining decent work. The information reported by employed participants was coded for the purpose of creating an occupational profile of refugees upon arrival, to track their occupational pathways thereafter. The survey approach and coding that generated this information is described in the Methodology chapter of this report. This data is presented below in tables per county. The first two tables immediately below summarise occupations held by refugees in their country of origin by skill level and aggregate groups. The following two tables show the detailed breakdown of occupation category by category.

In South Africa the largest occupational groups of employed refugees were Clerical Service and Sales workers (48,8%) followed by Managers Professionals and Technicians (28,6%). There were lower proportions of Skilled Trades, and Plant and Machine Operators, and Elementary workers. Among refugees in Zambia, similarly the largest occupational groups of employed refugees were Managers, Professionals and Technicians (39,6%) and Clerical Service and Sales workers (29,7%). There were lower proportions of Skilled Trades, and Plant and Machine Operators and Elementary workers. A reason for the pattern of low elementary worker numbers is probably that as observed earlier in this report, the likelihood is high of an unknown number of low skill low wage casual and informal workers who had indicated themselves as unemployed.

Table 36: Refugees employed in South Africa by occupational group and skills level in country of origin

ILOSTAT occupation groups and levels					ISCO-08		
Skill	Skill level	Aggregate		Aggregate group	%	n	ISCO group
		%	n				
High	Skill levels 3 and 4	28,6	24	Managers, professionals, and technicians	8,3	7	Managers
					13,1	11	Professionals
					7,1	6	Technicians and Associate Professionals
Medium	Skill level 2	48,8	41	Clerical, service and sales workers	9,5	8	Clerical Support Workers
					39,3	33	Services and Sales Workers
				Skilled agricultural and trades workers	1,2	1	Skilled Agricultural, Forestry and Fishery Workers
					10,7	9	Craft and Related Trades Workers
					6,0	5	Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers
Low	Skill level 1	4,8	4	Elementary occupations	4,8	4	Elementary Occupations
Totals		100	84		100	84	

Table 37: Refugees employed in Zambia by occupational group and skills level in country of origin

ILOSTAT occupation groups and levels				ISCO-08					
Skill	Skill level	Aggregate		Aggregate group	%	n	ISCO group		
		%	n						
High	Skill levels 3 and 4	39,6	40	Managers, professionals, and technicians	3,0	3	Managers		
					28,7	29	Professionals		
					7,9	8	Technicians and Associate Professionals		
Medium	Skill level 2	29,7	30	Clerical, service and sales workers	4,0	4	Clerical Support Workers		
					25,7	26	Services and Sales Workers		
				16,8	17	Skilled agricultural and trades workers	5,0	5	Skilled Agricultural, Forestry and Fishery Workers
							11,9	12	Craft and Related Trades Workers
7,9	8	Plant and machine operators, and assemblers	7,9	8	Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers				
Low	Skill level 1	5,9	6	Elementary occupations	5,9	6	Elementary Occupations		
Totals		100	101		100	101			

The following two tables describe the distribution of refugee occupations by occupation category broken down to a two-digit level and four-digit where applicable. Here the aim was to find out which single occupational groups were more prominent among refugee workers. The column on the left hand side in the tables below provides totals that are carried up into the summary tables above.

Among refugees in Zambia the largest occupational categories were teachers (19%), followed by shop keepers (14%), drivers (8%), sales assistants (7%), tailors (6%), doctors (5%), nurses (5%), and farmers (5%). Among South African refugees the largest occupational categories were shopkeepers (15%) and teachers (9%) followed by drivers (7%), and tailors (6%). The information at occupational level shows that both countries are destinations for relatively high proportions of education and medical professionals of public sector origin, particularly Zambia, and high proportions of trade and sales workers particularly South Africa. In both countries, tailors and drivers are relatively prominent.

The prominence of refugees in trade and sales occupations in South Africa relative to Zambia could reflect how refugees have freedom of movement to find markets in larger South African cities whereas movement of refugees in Zambia is somewhat restricted to designated settlements. Drivers could be characterised as mobile workers with responsible jobs who drive vehicles owned usually by citizens. Tailors meet the needs of customers who might be both citizens and refugees, where demand continues to grow especially in urban and middle-class areas. In DRC for instance having bespoke clothing made is still a frequent practise despite cheap clothing imports.

Table 38: Refugees employed in South Africa by occupational group and skills level in country of origin

Occupational Group Total	Number	Refugee description of their occupation	Occupational category: ISCO-08
7	1	Marketing	13 Production and Specialized Services Managers (Transport sector)
	6	Manager	(Restaurant, factory bakery, cosmetics, import export, logistics)
11	1	Civil engineer	21 Science and Engineering Professionals
	9	Teacher	23 Teaching Professionals (Primary, secondary, English tutoring, grade R)
	1	Singer	2652 Singer, nightclub, Singer, street
6	1	Journalist	34 Legal, Social and Cultural Professionals
	3	Administrator	3341 Business and Administration Associate Professionals 43 Numerical and Material Recording Clerks (Car sales, insurance firm, engineering)
	1	Pastor	3413 Worker, religious
	1	Football player	3421 Footballer
	x	Secretary/PA	3343 Secretary, administrative 3342 Secretary, legal
8	x		4120 Secretary, word processing
	1	Library assistant	4411 Assistant, library
	6	Reception, front desk	4226 Receptionist (Bank, govt, small company, big company, restaurant)
	1	Municipal worker	Would likely be a Clerical Support Worker (Occupation 4) or a Services and Sales Workers (Occupation 5)
29	1	Chef	5122 Chef
	1	Cashier	5230 Cashier, cash desk, check-out: self-service store, Cashier, office, restaurant, service station
	15	Shopkeeper	5332 Shop market, tuck shop spaza (Clothing, airtime, fruit, vegetables, snacks, groceries, other products)
	3	Sales assistant	5223 Assistant, sales: shop 5211 Assistant, sales: street stall (clothing, bakery, airtime/data sales, computers)
	1	Waiter	5131 Waiter
	4	Hairdresser	5141 Hairdresser or Barber
	2	Care giver	5322 Aide, home care, 5311 Nurse-maid, Elderly care giver or child minder
2	Security guard	5414 Guard, security	
1	1	Farmer	6121 Farmer, cattle: market production 6320 Farmer, cattle: subsistence
9	1	Carpenter	71 Building and Related Trades Workers (excluding Electricians) (Shopfitter Installing cupboards)
	3	Motor mechanic	72 Metal, Machinery and Related Trades Workers
	5	Tailor	7531 Food Processing, Woodworking, Garment and Other Craft and Related Trades Workers (Sewing, tailoring, fashion)

Occupational Group Total	Number	Refugee description of their occupation	Occupational category: ISCO-08
5	2	Taxi driver	8322 Driver, taxi
	3	Driver	8332 Driver, truck
8	2	Domestic worker	9111 Cleaner, domestic
	4	Shop assistant	9334 Assistant, stock control/filling display
	1	Factory worker	9329 Hand, factory (Milk, Bakery)
	-	Street food vendor	
	1	Casual workers	9622 Labourer, odd job

⚠ **Note 1:** The column on the left hand side is carried up in to the summary tables above.

⚠ **Note 2:** Rows with no number "0" refer to occupational categories common to both lists but with no entry for that country

Table 39: Refugees employed in Zambia by occupational group and skills level in country of origin

Occupational Group Total	Number	Refugee description	Occupational category: ISCO-08
3	2	Manager	14 Hospitality, Retail and Other Services Managers
	1	Accountant	2411 Accountant
29	5	Doctor	2211 Doctor medical: general 2212 Doctor medical: general
	5	Nurse	32 Health Associate Professionals
	19	Teacher	23 Teaching Professionals (Primary, secondary, English tutoring, grade R)
8	1	Journalist	34 Legal, Social and Cultural Professionals
	3	Administrator	33 Business and Administration Associate Professionals
	1	Secretary	3343 Secretary, administrative; 4120 Secretary, word processing
	3	Community Services Worker	3412 Community services
4	1	Reception	4226 Receptionist, Front desk
	3	Clerical support worker	44 Clerical Support Worker (Municipality)
26	1	Cashier	5230 Cashier, cash desk, check-out: self-service store, restaurant, service station
	14	Shop keeper	5212 Vendor, street/pavement/communal area/market: food sweets, drinks, snacks, vegetables fruit
			5332 Shop keeper; pavement market, tuck shop spaza (Clothing, airtime, sweets, drinks, snacks, fruit, vegetables, groceries, other products)
	7	Sales assistant	5223 Assistant, sales: shop 5211 Assistant, sales: street stall; market
	1	Pharmacy aide	5329 Aide, pharmacy
	1	Hairdresser	5141 Hairdresser or Barber
	2	Security guard	5414 Guard, security
5	5	Farmer	6330 Farmer, subsistence; 6130 Mixed, market

Occupational Group Total	Number	Refugee description	Occupational category: ISCO-08	
12	2	Carpenter	71	Building and Related Trades Workers (excluding Electricians)
	3	Motor mechanic	72	Metal, Machinery and Related Trades Workers
	1	Welder	7212	Welder
	6	Tailor	7531	Tailor
8	1	Taxi driver	8322	Driver, taxi
	7	Driver	8332	Driver, truck delivery
6	1	Domestic worker	9111	Cleaner, domestic
	0	Sales assistant	9334	Assistant, sales: stock control or filling shelf
	2	Factory worker	9329	Hand, factory
	2	Vendor non food	9520	Vendor, street: non-food products
	1	Cleaner	9112	Cleaner, restaurant

⚠ **Note 1:** The column on the left hand side is carried up in to the summary tables above.

⚠ **Note 2:** Rows with no number “0” refer to occupational categories common to both lists but with no entry for that country

Analysis of the profile of employed refugees will support identification of occupational groups that may benefit from interventions, for involving accreditation of their qualifications in the destination country, or RPL interventions. Conducting such a profile contributes towards identifying larger, more concentrated and networked occupational groups of refugees who could then be supported through RPL programs at a lower cost per beneficiary.

Employment of refugees in their country of destination

This section covers the current employment status of refugees in the country of destination. Across all survey respondents in both countries, 38,3% reported that they were currently in formal or informal employment, leaving 61,7% unemployed. Concerning high proportions of unemployment remain a priority for development of mechanisms to integrate greater numbers of refugees into decent employment opportunities or further education or skills development.

The phrasing of a question enquiring into refugee employment in their country of destination also exhibits potential bias. The language of the question is complex through reference to “formally/ informally employed” This may have contributed to reduced numbers of respondents (156) replying in the affirmative. The result is an artificial boost in the proportion of respondents replying “no” (251) to the question because they were not sure of their occupational status.

Table 40: Current employment (formally or informally) in the country of destination

Current employment (formal or informal) in country of destination	Number	Proportion
Yes	156	38,3%
No	251	61,7%
Total	407	100%

Employment status proportions differed between countries, where nearly one third of refugees in Zambia (33.8%) declared themselves employed, in comparison, a higher proportion of 43.6% claiming themselves to be employed in South Africa.

The factors contributing to this outcome could include characteristics of the refugee population but also the relative size of the respective country economies, labour market opportunities and policy on refugee freedom of movement.

Table 41: Current employment (formal or informal) in the country of destination

Country	Current employment (formal or informal) in country of destination					
	Yes		No		Total	
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion
Zambia	74	33,8%	145	66,2%	219	100%
South Africa	82	43,6%	106	56,4%	188	100%
Total	156	38,3%	251	61,7%	407	100%

Two thirds of refugee respondents were actively seeking work if they were unemployed or seeking more work if they were employed. The percentage of respondents seeking work, at 67.7% is higher than the 61.7% of unemployed discussed above. This seems to indicate that a proportion of employed refugees needed further employment (side-job) to increase their income or were looking for alternative prospects.

Table 42: Currently seeking work in country of destination

Currently seeking (more) work in country of destination in the country of destination the country of destination	Number	Proportion
Yes	270	67,7%
No	129	32,3%
Total	399	100%

Table 43: Currently seeking work in country of destination

Country	Currently seeking (more) work in country of destination					
	Yes		No		Total	
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion
Zambia	148	68,8%	67	31,2%	215	100%
South Africa	122	66,3%	62	33,7%	184	100%
Total	270	67,7%	129	32,3%	399	100%

A comparison between asking if the refugee was employed in their country of origin and asking if a refugee is currently employed in the destination country, is of particular interest. Comparison of the responses reveals whether refugees are better or worse off in employment terms than they were in their country of origin. The data shows that of the refugees in Zambia, 45.4% had been employed in their country of origin whereas a lower proportion of 33.8% had become employed

in Zambia. Of the refugees in South Africa, 53.3% had been employed in their country of origin, but only 43.6% had become employed in South Africa. Aggregate employment of refugees in Zambia had declined 11.6%, meaning that refugee status had contributed to increased joblessness or transition into the informal sector. The employment situation for refugees living in South Africa had declined by a similar magnitude of 9.7%.

Though the decline in employment was of a similar quantum for refugees in either country, it is important to note that a higher proportion of refugees in South Africa (53.3%) had benefited from employment in their country of origin than was the case in Zambia where 45.4% had been employed in their country of origin. Put differently, this means that 7.9% more refugees in South Africa had acquired previous working experience than in Zambia. This difference could be ascribed to refugee populations in Zambia and South Africa originating from countries of origin with different employment rates, or from communities within originating countries with different employment rates (e.g., rural-urban, religious groups). Though the difference in percentage is admittedly not very large, it does indicate how refugee populations with lower prior employment experience could place a greater burden on the destination country's ability to absorb refugees.

Table 44: Employment in the country of origin before becoming a refugee

Employment status before becoming a refugee	Number	Proportion
Yes	196	49,0%
No	204	51,0%
Total	400	100%

Table 45: Employment in the country of origin before becoming a refugee by country

Country	Employment status before becoming a refugee					
	Yes		No		Total	
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion
Zambia	98	45,4%	118	54,6%	216	100%
South Africa	98	53,3%	86	46,7%	184	100%
Total	196	49,0%	204	51,0%	400	100%

The assessment elicited whether respondent's current employment in the country of destination was in the formal or the informal economy. Responses indicated that of the employed, on aggregate about two thirds found work in the informal economy as compared to one third formal economy.

Table 46: Formal or informal employment in the destination country

Type of employment	Number	Proportion
Formal	119	36,4%
Informal	208	63,6%
Total	327	100%

Once disaggregated at the country level, the data indicates that a higher proportion of refugees in Zambia found employment in the formal sector (42,7%) than did refugees in South Africa (30,1%). Though on aggregate, refugees fared better in Zambia than South Africa with respect to finding access in the formal sector, the contributing factors are perhaps worth consideration, which include pressure of numbers of refugees, structures, and processes in place in the country of destination, openness of formal employers, and the mix of skills and qualifications in the possession of refugees.

Table 47: Type of employment in the destination country

Country	Type of employment in destination country					
	Formal		Informal		Total	
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion
Zambia	70	42,7%	94	57,3%	164	100%
South Africa	49	30,1%	114	69,9%	163	100%
Total	119	36,4%	208	63,6%	327	100%

On the job training is the most utilised and cost effective means of increasing employee skills, proficiency and raising productivity especially when relative to their actual occupational role and can take place from induction through the career. Likelihood of training by employers would probably be higher in formal economy workplaces and increasing skills levels. Refugees could conceivably be involved in any of these.

Table 48: Requirement for on-the-job training

Requirement for on-the-job training	Number	Proportion
No	154	46,1%
Yes	180	53,9%
Total	334	100%

Nearly ten percent more refugees residing in Zambia reported experiencing on the job training than in South Africa (9.7%). This difference could be attributed in part to the higher percentage of formal economy workers in Zambia, as well as relatively high levels of support for refugee skilling by a number of NGO and multi-lateral agencies in that country.

Table 49: Requirement for on-the-job training by country

Country	Requirement for on-the-job training					
	No		Yes		Total	
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion
Zambia	68	41,2%	97	58,8%	165	100%
South Africa	86	50,9%	83	49,1%	169	100%
Total	154	46,1%	180	53,9%	334	100%

A common experience for refugees is to be offered employment at lower skills levels than they had achieved in their country of origin. In a small proportion of cases this status is temporary, whereas for a large proportion of refugees it becomes permanent or takes many years for a refugee to regain parity of employment and/or income level. In the country of destination employer's indifferent attitudes to foreigners, distrust of internationally acquired qualifications and skills, and their inclination to exploit the weak labour market position of unemployed refugees can reinforce these conditions. Data from this survey confirms that nearly two-thirds of refugees in Zambia and South Africa were not currently employed in or performing in their highest skill employment. Just over one third (35.20%) of refugees employed in South Africa and Zambia were likely to be currently working in these destination countries in an equivalent post to the highest skilled employment experienced previously.

Table 50: Performance at highest skilled employment

Performance at highest skilled employment	Number	Proportion
No	208	64.8%
Yes	113	35.2%
Total	321	100%

Data disaggregated by country indicates that a slightly higher proportion of refugees in Zambia were working in jobs that were not equivalent to their previous highest skilled employment.

Table 51: Performance at highest skilled employment by country

Country	Performance at highest skilled employment					
	No		Yes		Total	
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion
Zambia	126	66.70%	63	33.30%	189	100.00%
South Africa	82	62.10%	50	37.90%	132	100.00%
Total	208	64.80%	113	35.20%	321	100.00%

Proportion of refugees working in the informal economy

The large proportions of refugees in the informal economy of many national labour markets are a key strategic challenge for enabling refugees to straddle the divide and enter the formal economy to find decent work. The consolidated data reveals that practically eighty percent (78.8%) of refugees who were employed found work in the informal economy.

Table 52: Type of economy in which work is found

Type of economy in which work is found	Number	Proportion
Informal economy	130	78.8%
Formal economy	35	21.2%
Total	165	100%

The proportion of refugees disaggregated by country reveals a similar distribution between Zambia and South Africa with a ratio of 1 to 5 between the formal and informal economy.

Table 53: Type of economy in which work is found by country

Country	Type of economy in which work is found					
	Informal economy		Formal economy		Total	
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion
Zambia	97	79.5%	25	20.5%	122	100%
South Africa	33	76.7%	10	23.3%	43	100%
Total	130	78.8%	35	21.2%	165	100%

It is encouraging that most refugees reported that they consider their work full time at 60% followed by those who consider their work part-time at 17%. Only 9% of refugees indicated that they worked seasonally. It should be noted that categories are not totally exclusive; the results therefore included a small number of respondents that checked more than one category, and these are identified separately.

Table 54: Work duration

Work duration	Number	Proportion
Casual	33	10.5%
Full-time	189	60.4%
Part-time	54	17.3%
Seasonal	27	8.6%
Shift work	3	1.0%
Total	313	100%
Multiple categories (checked from 2 to 4 different categories checked)	7	

Overall, most the refugees worked without a contract in place with only 20% having one, while 80% worked without one. When the numbers were disaggregated by country Zambia and South Africa have similar proportions with 80% of refugees not having a contract and only 20% having one. These numbers can be associated with large proportions of refugees finding informal sector work and reluctance of employers to work within the legislative framework governing employment relations, and perhaps acquiescence of refugees feeling disempowered to counter this treatment.

Table 55: Work contracting status

Formal contract for work	Number	Proportion
Yes	62	19,7%
No	253	80,3%
Total	315	100%

Table 56: Work contracting status by country

Country	Formal contract for work					
	Yes		No		Total	
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion
Zambia	30	19,4%	125	80,6%	155	100%
South Africa	32	20,0%	128	80,0%	160	100%
Total	62	19,7%	253	80,3%	315	100%

Refugees who stated that they had contracts for their employment were asked whether they understood the terms of the contract and the language used. Most of the refugees indicated that they understood the contract representing about 90% as opposed to only 10% indicating that they did not. At the country level, in Zambia, the proportion of those that indicated “yes” was 93% and in South Africa about 87%. This reflects a higher proportion of compliance than might have been expected, while the shape of compliance is comparatively similar between countries. Comparative data on citizens employed with similar enterprises would provide a means of benchmarking this outcome.

Table 57: Understanding of contract

Understanding of contract	Number	Proportion
Yes	53	89,8%
No	6	10,2%
Total	59	100%

Table 58: Understanding of contract by country

Country	Understanding of contract				Total	
	Yes		No		Number	Proportion
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion		
Zambia	27	93,1%	2	6,9%	29	100%
South Africa	26	86,7%	4	13,3%	30	100%
Total	53	89,8%	6	10,2%	59	100%

The following question aimed to elicit whether refugees believed that they were required to perform tasks that were not specified in the contract. Four in every 10 refugees (41%), indicated that they did indeed perform tasks that were outside of the contract terms. At a country level, for Zambia, the proportion at 40% who observed having to do tasks outside of the contract was slightly lower than South Africa at 42%. Comparison of this data with employer expectations of citizen employees could prove useful. Specification of the nature of the tasks could also prove useful.

Table 59: Performing tasks outside of contract terms

Performing tasks outside of contract terms	Number	Proportion
Yes	23	41,1%
No	33	58,9%
Total	56	100%

Table 60: Performing tasks outside of contract terms by country

Country	Performing tasks outside of contract terms					
	Yes		No		Total	
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion
Zambia	12	40,0%	18	60,0%	30	100%
South Africa	11	42,3%	15	57,7%	26	100%
Total	23	41,1%	33	58,9%	56	100%

With regards to whether refugees “frequently worked” overtime, in aggregate terms half of participants attest that they work overtime “more frequently” whereas the others do not. Disaggregating these numbers by country reveals that slightly more refugees worked overtime in South Africa (52%) than in Zambia (48%). The incidence of overtime is dependent on the type of occupation, business conditions and compliance of employers with labour prescripts on the matter.

Table 61: Frequency of overtime work

Frequency of overtime work	Number	Proportion
Yes	155	49,8%
No	156	50,2%
Total	311	100%

Table 62: Frequency of overtime work by country

Country	Frequency of overtime work					
	Yes		No		Total	
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion
Zambia	73	47,7%	80	52,3%	153	100%
South Africa	82	51,9%	76	48,1%	158	100%
Total	155	49,8%	156	50,2%	311	100%

The survey included an item on whether refugee workers worked on a fixed wage. This type of guaranteed package at regular intervals generates conditions that enable the worker to plan and household finances sustainably with reduced risk. Overall, 63% of refugees did not receive a fixed wage, whereas nearly four in ten did not. Refugees in South Africa worked on a more stable basis with 45% receiving as compared to a lower proportion of 29% in Zambia.

Table 63: Fixed wage

Fixed wage/incentive	Number	Proportion
Yes	111	37,2%
No	187	62,8%
Total	298	100%

Table 64: Fixed wage by country

Country	Fixed wage/incentive					
	Yes		No		Total	
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion
Zambia	43	29,10%	105	70,90%	148	100,00%
South Africa	68	45,30%	82	54,70%	150	100,00%
Total	111	37,20%	187	62,80%	298	100,00%

Safety and treatment by the community

Safety of the working and lived environment for all refugee, and especially those with family or children is of major concern considering the menace of intolerance and xenophobia present in many societies or localities. The study included items on how the destination country workplace is experienced by the refugees, firstly relating to the presence of other non-nationals there. Nearly 60% of all participants (58.5%) were aware of the presence of other non-nationals, while a slightly higher proportion of 63% of refugees in South Africa than Zambia (55%) claimed to work in the same workplace as other non-nationals.

Table 65: Awareness of other non-national co-workers

Awareness of other non-national co-workers	Number	Proportion
No	113	41,5%
Yes	159	58,5%
Total	272	100%

Table 66: Awareness of other non-national co-workers by country

Country	Awareness of other non-national co-workers					
	No		Yes		Total	
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion
Zambia	67	45,3%	81	54,7%	148	100%
South Africa	46	37,1%	78	62,9%	124	100%
Total	113	41,5%	159	58,5%	272	100%

A key issue is whether refugees perceive that they are treated 'differently' by other co-workers of unspecified origin (non-nationals and other migrants or refugees). At the end of the continuum of responses, nearly 60% of participants indicated they 'never' received different treatment, whereas 13% stated that this happened "often". However, at a country level more refugees living in South Africa (69%) than in Zambia (49%) stated that they 'never' received different treatment.

Table 67: Different treatment by co-workers

Different treatment by co-workers	Number	Proportion
Never	97	55,7%
Often	23	13,2%
Rarely	11	6,3%
Sometimes	43	24,7%
Total	174	100%

Table 68: Different treatment by co-workers by country

Country	Different treatment by co-workers									
	Never		Often		Rarely		Sometimes		Total	
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion
Zambia	51	47,7%	14	13,1%	6	5,6%	36	33,6%	107	100%
South Africa	46	68,7%	9	13,4%	5	7,5%	7	10,4%	67	100%
Total	97	55,7%	23	13,2%	11	6,3%	43	24,7%	174	100%

Across the two countries, 106 out of 156 or 67.94% of respondents working formally or informally reported that they worked for an employer. A substantial balance of 32.06% were self-employed. This proportion is material to an item in the instrument that explores refugee perceptions of employer treatment.

Relationships between employers and workers in the workplace should be governed according to equality of treatment within a rights-based legislative framework. Nonetheless day to day treatment of employed refugees is subject to the decision making of employers that may involve differentiating treatment between nationals and refugees. Different and unfair treatment of refugees can result in antagonistic relationships, psychological stress, and impairment of refugees' performance in the workplace.

Overall, 55.7% of respondents reported that their employer 'never' treated them differently than nationals. There was a remarkably large difference in worker perceptions of employer treatment between Zambia where 30.20% and in South Africa 73.00% state that employers 'never' treat them differently. Much higher proportions of refugee workers in South Africa believe that they are not discriminated against by their employer. Higher proportions of refugees in Zambia (18.60%) attest

that employers often treat them differently whereas in South Africa this indicator drops to 7.90%. The intermediate descriptors 'Rarely' and 'Sometimes' are more difficult to interpret with confidence.

Table 69: Different treatment by employers

Different treatment by employers	Number	Proportion
Never	59	55,7%
Often	13	12,3%
Rarely	6	5,7%
Sometimes	28	26,4%
Total	106	100%

Table 70: Different treatment by employers by country

Country	Different treatment by employers									
	Never		Often		Rarely		Sometimes		Total	
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion
Zambia	13	30,2%	8	18,6%	4	9,3%	18	41,9%	43	100%
South Africa	46	73,0%	5	7,9%	2	3,2%	10	15,9%	63	100%
Total	59	55,7%	13	12,3%	6	5,7%	28	26,4%	106	100%

Safety in the community

The lifestyle of refugees and their perceptions of personal safety in the community are vitally important for good quality of life. The overall numbers revealed that a sizeable proportion (32%) of refugees never feel safe in the communities that they live in whereas just over a third (35%) often feel safe. At a country level, the numbers are the same for both South Africa and Zambia at 32% for those that chose 'never' feeling safe. The proportion of refugees that "Often" felt safe were 34% for Zambia and 37% for South Africa reflecting parity at the margins.

Table 71: Safety in community as a refugee

Safety in community as a refugee	Number	Proportion
Never	105	31,8%
Often	116	35,2%
Rarely	15	4,5%
Sometimes	94	28,5%
Total		100%

Table 72: Safety in community as a refugee by country

Country	Safety in community as a refugee									
	Never		Often		Rarely		Sometimes		Total	
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion
Zambia	57	32,0%	60	33,7%	6	3,4%	55	30,9%	178	100%
South Africa	48	31,6%	56	36,8%	9	5,9%	39	25,7%	152	100%
Total	105	31,8%	116	35,2%	15	4,5%	94	28,5%	330	100%

Employment and attitudes to employment

This section of the analysis considers refugee attitudes to employment and to the utility of having skills and qualifications or improving these towards the prospect of finding employment. It therefore provides an opportunity to better understand refugee beliefs about and attitudes to skills/qualifications in the destination country labour market. Discussion of skills recognition and RPL is more frequently debated from a supply side position, while this analysis opens up understanding of the demand side reflected in the inclination of refugees in Zambia and South Africa to apply their resources in pursuit of skills and qualifications and by implication skills recognition and RPL pathways.

A question required refugees to consider whether their status as a current or former refugee has impacted on efforts to find work. A very high percentage — of 90% of respondents — observed that ‘refugee’ status made it difficult to find work. This sentiment could be referred to as a ‘deal-breaker’ because refugees seem to experience a ‘refugee identity’ as imposed on them in the destination country as a foremost if not the primary identification that colours all public interactions be these personal, social, or economic interactions. To a greater or lesser extent this identity is likely to overshadow self-identification as individuals with various skills, qualification, education, and experience in the world of work. The refugee experience of an identification imposed on their self by others, and with no control over that reality and limited means to counter the identification will likely have a strong dampening effect on their motivation to improve their own or support collective employment and skills improvement for refugees. This experience must therefore be accounted for in developing strategies for skills recognition and RPL. At the outset the data indicates that nine in every ten refugees hold the view that being a ‘refugee’ creates difficulty for them to find work.

Table 73: Difficulty in finding work as a refugee

Difficulty in finding work as a refugee	Number	Proportion
No	38	10,0%
Yes	341	90,0%
Total	379	100%

Disaggregation of responses by country shows that refugees reported strikingly similar levels of difficulty in South Africa and Zambia. The contributing factors reinforcing this experience are many, including un-documented refugee/asylum status, without documented proof of qualifications or service, bureaucracy, or cost barriers to validating qualifications in the destination country, insufficient resources to support job search, hand-to-mouth pressure for daily income. This does mean that improving the treatment of refugees by government departments and by employers and also countering public perceptions of refugees should go a long way to improve refugee motivation to contest for work opportunities in the labour market.

Table 74: Difficulty in finding work as a refugee by country

Country	Difficulty in finding work as a refugee					
	No		Yes		Total	
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion
Zambia	19	9,1%	190	90,9%	209	100%
South Africa	19	11,2%	151	88,8%	170	100%
Total	38	10,0%	341	90,0%	379	100%

Employers interest in workers with skills: refugee perspective

A next question enquired whether employers are interested in employing workers with skills. This question is posed in general about workers with skills whether they are citizens, migrants or refugees. Note also that this question refers to skills and not specifically to qualifications. It is assumed for this discussion that refugee opinions of employer interest are informed by personal experience and awareness of other’s treatment.

The broader picture across Zambia and South Africa shows that only a small proportion of refugees perceive employers as not interested in workers with skills (13.8%) It is possible that respondents in the ‘Not sure’ have doubts grounded on the following experiences: being employed in low skill, low wage work in the informal sector; being employed as refugees without employer recognition of skills or qualifications they might hold. The majority approaching half (46.2%) assert that employers are indeed interested in workers with skills. It is inferred that this group of refugees will be more likely to engage in actively improving their skills. In contrast refugees in the ‘No’ and ‘Not sure’ categories are perhaps less likely to try to improve their skills.

Table 75: Employers interest in workers with skills

Employers interest in workers with skills	Number	Proportion
No	52	13,8%
Not sure	151	40,1%
Yes	174	46,2%
Total	377	100%

Table 76: Employers interest in workers with skills by country

Country	Employers interest in workers with skills							
	No		Not sure		Yes		Total	
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion
Zambia	17	8,2%	80	38,5%	111	53,4%	208	100%
South Africa	35	20,7%	71	42,0%	63	37,3%	169	100%
Total	52	13,8%	151	40,1%	174	46,2%	377	100%

In the aggregate across both countries, two thirds (64.5%) of refugees consider that qualifications do not assist them in getting jobs, whereas another third (35.5%) have an affirmative view. Substantial proportions of the population hold opposing views that we must assume can have an influence on their decision making and option taking. In the context of this study, the possible impact of these views on refugee take-up of skills recognition and RPL forms must be considered. It is likely that refugees with a negative view on the value of qualifications would express limited interest in skills recognition and RPL opportunities.

Table 77: Qualifications needed to find a job

Qualifications needed to find a job	Number	Proportion
No	243	64,5%
Yes	134	35,5%
Total	377	100%

The difference in attitudes between refugees in South Africa and Zambia on this question is worthy of further consideration. Roughly seven in every ten refugees in Zambia (72,10%) and half of refugees in South Africa (53,80%) have a view that qualifications are un-useful to their cause. That a higher proportion of refugees in Zambia have a pessimistic view of qualifications as a stepping stone, requires consideration especially as there is a visible and growing presence of RPL initiatives in that country. It is necessary to ask what conditions in refugee communities or work environment contribute to this pessimistic balance of opinion.

Table 78: Qualifications needed to find a job by country

Country	Qualifications needed to find a job					
	No		Yes		Total	
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion
Zambia	158	72,1%	61	27,9%	219	100%
South Africa	85	53,8%	73	46,2%	158	100%
Total	243	64,5%	134	35,5%	377	100%

There is a high need to develop opportunities that could support refugees to access employment in both countries. The creation and accessibility of support opportunities for refugees has to be brought to the attention of the refugee populations in need that may be located in specific areas or dispersed over a wide area. Noting particularly the importance of refugees accessing opportunities to improve employment prospects including skills recognition, skills development opportunities, better information access and employment services. The responses of refugees reflect a very low awareness of opportunities in their environment of just over one in every ten respondents. This finding suggests that assistance where it does exist is localised in reach, and that refugee knowledge about such facilities can be limited within language, faith based or cultural communities.

Table 79: Awareness of opportunities that help refugees to get employment

Awareness of opportunities that help refugees to get employment	Number	Proportion
No	343	87,5%
Yes	49	12,5%
Total	392	100%

The low distribution of awareness is strikingly similar between refugees in Zambia and South Africa with the implication that refugees have to depend on their own limited resources to initiate interaction with the domestic labour market. This means also that in the absence of such opportunities, refugees must fall back mainly on personal referrals within their own communities.

Table 80: Awareness of opportunities that help refugees to get employment by country

Country	Awareness of opportunities that help refugees to get employment					
	No		Yes		Total	
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion
Zambia	191	87,2%	28	12,8%	219	100%
South Africa	152	87,9%	21	12,1%	173	100%
Total	343	87,5%	49	12,5%	392	100%

Coping strategies

Coping strategies refer to “constantly changing cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands which are assessed as challenging or exceeding the resources of an individual” (Pahud et al.,2009,2 citing Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). How humans cope with adversity is a multi-layered process involving many financial and non-financial variables. To explore this space, refugees were asked how they coped in financially constrained circumstances involving reduced income into their household.

South African and Zambian refugees face difficulties in finding viable livelihoods and sustaining their households. They experience conditions that are similar in some respects and different in other dimensions. Refugees reported being dependent on “borrowing money” and “loans” from sources

in their communities or networks. They looked for supplementary income through “side-jobs” or working overtime. Some with no alternatives resort to “begging”. Some refugees do not have access to full information about government support that they qualify for. A refugee claimed incorrectly that refugees are not eligible for SASSA (South African Social Security Agency) government grants.

The main advantage that refugees in Zambia have is recourse to land that can be farmed as a means of subsistence and income generation. As part of the ‘settlement approach’ to meeting the needs of refugees, the Zambian Government allocates a unit of land to refugee households¹⁶ living in designated ‘settlement’ areas for residential and livelihood use, which encourages agricultural activity. Recourse to working land resources is the main economic differentiator between refugees in Zambia and South Africa. Government intervention in Zambia with respect to securing the basic amenities available to refugees offers some relief to households.

Coping measures mentioned by refugees in Zambia also included reducing budgeted expenditure where possible, reducing consumption of some household inputs, and looking for ‘piecemeal’ to augment income. The option of cutting down on expenditures was not mentioned by refugees in South Africa. Without access to land to fall back on refugees in South Africa lack the layer of resources that come from land access. Interviews of refugees in South Africa indicated that individuals and households had limited coping strategies reflected in following participant responses: “you take what you get”, “we do nothing”, “(we must have) patience”, “we don’t have a choice” or “we suffer”. Some are helped by their employer “extra help from (our) employer in kind”, whereas others with “no other support” or “no other means” live from “hand to mouth”, “survive on little that I have”, “make it work” or resort to “begging”.

The information elicited from refugees in South Africa and Zambia, indicates that refugees have limited resources and limited reserves accumulated to cope in difficult times. This is accentuated by limited additional income opportunities, and limited support from employers or government agencies which increases dependency on humanitarian, development and social service organizations. A substantial proportion of refugees indicated that they take recourse to ‘Family support in this country’ and ‘Other forms of income’ but tended not to elaborate on the latter. Remittances were not specifically mentioned. Further investigation would be useful on how refugee communities contribute internally to supporting community members and mobilising resources, but also on how refugees themselves desire and seek empowerment (Gladden, 2012, Merits Partnership, 2015). In the current environment it could be argued that refugee communities are experiencing circumstances where RPL is practically unavailable, especially where accessing RPL requires funds from the household. To engage in discussion on the cost of lack of skills recognition would require improvements to and development of common understanding of the concepts and practical applications in refugee communities.

16 To the knowledge of the authors, this does not apply to asylum seekers.

Profile of refugee employment status between country of origin and country of destination

For each refugee this survey sources their employment status in the country of origin labour market, and in the destination country labour market. An assumption of this analysis is that the occupational skills, knowledge, and experience of refugees should be preserved and also capitalised on as far as possible through employment. This principle might apply more strongly in particular age groups of refugees who might have accumulated more relevant skills knowledge and experience and may not apply as strongly to younger or older refugees who may be in their early or late career stages. Optimal utilisation of refugee skills could improve by targeting refugees employed in the country of origin achieve employment in the country of destination. Ideally the employed status of this group should be as high a proportion as possible.



The summary data is presented below showing that 52,4% of the refugees who moved to Zambia were employed in their country of origin, while a lower proportion of 47.6% of refugees who moved to South Africa were employed in their country of origin. Of the refugees who moved to Zambia, 48.2% found employment in Zambia as their country of destination, whereas 51.8% of refugees who moved to South Africa found employment in that country of destination. In this transition, on aggregate the success with which refugees in Zambia found employment declined relative to their country of origin, whereas on aggregate the refugees in South Africa experienced slightly higher success than in their countries of origin. The data indicates that in Zambia the proportion of refugees who were employed at origin and destination was 28,7% while the corresponding proportion of refugees in South Africa was higher at 42,7%.

Table 81: Refugee employment at country of origin at country of destination and in both countries' labour markets

	Employed at country of origin		Employed at country of destination		Employed in country of origin and destination	
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion
Employed in Zambia	65	52,4%	41	48,2%	33	28,7%
Employed in South Africa	59	47,6%	44	51,8%	38	42,7%
Number of responses	124	100%	85	100%	71	34,8%

This analysis draws attention to exploring how refugees may experience the following basic employment scenarios:

Table 82: Employment scenarios for refugees

Employment status between origin and destination country	Stability or change in employment status	Country of origin	Country of destination
Employed in both countries	Same employed status	Yes	Yes
Unemployed in both countries	Same unemployed status	No	No
Employed in country of origination but unemployed in destination	Refugee status associated with unemployment	Yes	No
Unemployed in country of origination but employed in destination	Refugee status associated with employment	No	Yes

This framework may provide a point of departure for considering whether skills recognition initiatives and complementary activities might be designed according to the particular labour market status of refugees. These statuses are better illustrative of formal economy work environments because employment/unemployment status in informal economy workplaces can be fluid and change quickly within a short period of time. The quality of refugee employment between the country of origin and the country of destination is of particular relevance to this study, with reference to formality and informality. The data suggests that the shift from employment at the country of origin is associated with a substantial swing towards increased informality. This observation seems to accord with the often reported observation that refugees must accept employment at lower skill grades and rates of pay than they had received before becoming refugees.

Table 83: Refugee employment formality and informality at country of origin, and at country of destination

Employment environment	Employed at country of origin		Employed at country of destination	
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion
Formal	63	50,8%	20	23,5%
Informal	48	38,7%	57	67,1%
Not indicated	13	10,5%	8	9,4%
Totals	124	100%	85	100%

Profile of refugee employment by gender

The following discussion focuses on the role of gender during the transition of refugees between country of origin and country of destination labour markets. This is an important transition not least of all for women themselves but also for their dependents under circumstances where women take responsibility for a household unit without a male presence. This analysis by gender focuses on two important questions relating to the working experience of female refugees which are:

- ▶ What vocational training have they received?
- ▶ Has their employment status changed before and after their displacement?

In addressing these questions, the data is broken down by country of departure so that the experience of refugee women in Zambia and South Africa respectively can be explored. First a view of refugee women's exposure to technical and vocational training. This provides an indication of their education and training background before looking at their employment circumstances. Among refugee females resident in Zambia, at 20.4% or one in five had benefited from exposure to some technical or vocational training. A higher proportion of the male counterparts at 35.7% or one in three had obtained some technical or vocational learning, which reveals a substantial gender gap.

Prior exposure to technical and vocational education of refugees in South Africa for females was 14.5% whereas for males the proportion was higher at 21.2%. The differential between males and females in access to technical or vocational education is evident in both refugee populations. A second obvious feature of the data is that the reported levels of exposure to technical and vocational education differs between the refugee groups in Zambia and South Africa. For this purpose, the most important feature affecting employment differentials between women and men in the case study countries is likely to be different exposure to technical and vocational education.

Table 84: Refugees in Zambia who had undertaken any TEVET/TVET/technical education

Gender	Yes		No		Total	
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion
Male	45	35.7%	81	64.3%	126	100%
Female	19	20.4%	74	79.6%	93	100%
Missing	1	100%	0	0%	1	100%
Total	65	29.5%	155	70.5%	220	100%

Table 85: Refugees in South Africa who had undertaken any TEVET/TVET/technical education

Gender	Yes		No		Total	
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion
Male	21	21.2%	78	78.8%	99	100%
Female	12	14.5%	71	85.5%	83	100%
Missing	1	20.0%	4	80.0%	5	100%
Total	34	18.2%	153	81.8%	187	100%

The following tables explore the employment status of refugees through two questions, first whether he or she was employed in the country of origin before becoming a refugee, and second whether he or she is currently employed in the country of destination. In these questions the distinction between formal and informal economy employment is not made. Among refugee resident in Zambia, over half of male refugees, or 55.3% reported being employed in the country of origin compared with about one third, or 31.9% of females. This reflects a high differential in favour of males which might be expected to privilege male employment opportunities in their country of origin.

Table 86: Refugees in Zambia who were employed in their country of origin before becoming a refugee

Gender	Yes		No		Total	
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion
Male	68	55.3%	55	44.7%	123	100%
Female	29	31.9%	62	68.1%	91	100%
Missing	1	100%	0	0%	1	100%
Total	98	45.6%	117	54.4%	215	100%

Among refugees resident in South Africa, over half of male refugees, or 54.1% reported being employed in their country of origin compared with about one third, or 31.9% of females. This reflects a limited differential in favour of males. Clearly there is a substantial difference in employment experience of refugees arriving in Zambia and South Africa. This difference would be related to refugees from different countries within which countries differ according to which women are included in work activity based on traditional or other labour market considerations.

The following question brings attention to the actual employment circumstances of refugee women and men in the destination country labour market. In the case of refugees resident in Zambia, 35.4% of males and 30.4% of females are currently employed. Comparing current employment in the country of destination with previous employment in the country of origin, the levels reported by males Zambia are substantially lower, declining by 20%, whereas the decline in female refugee employment between origin and destination is relatively slight.

Table 87: Refugees in South Africa who were employed in their country of origin before becoming a refugee

Gender	Yes		No		Total	
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion
Male	53	54.1%	45	45.9%	98	100%
Female	42	51.9%	39	48.1%	81	100%
Missing	3	60.0%	2	40.0%	5	100%
Total	98	53.3%	86	46.7%	184	100%

These preliminary insights require further analysis since the changes in employment levels across gender, between destination and origin country, and in relation to education and skills are complex and interrelated. Analysis must also consider, amongst others, cultural and income differences in deployment of male and female labour within refugee households, differences in labour market wage and employment levels in the destination country and in hiring practices based on gender language and culture in the destination country.

CHAPTER

5

OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUDING COMMENTS



Introduction

This research set out to conduct a comparative skills profiling and an assessment of skills recognition opportunities facilitating asylum seekers and refugees' access to the labour market in South Africa and Zambia. The research contributes specifically to advancing the following two objectives in the SAMM Project Workplan:

- ▶ Enhance the portability of skills of migrant workers and refugees, including through alignment of qualifications with existing regional qualifications frameworks and/or the implementation of other recognition mechanisms; and
- ▶ Conduct comparative skills profiling surveys and assess skills recognition opportunities facilitating refugees and asylum seekers' access to the labour market in South Africa and Zambia.

The specific objectives of this research were to:

- ▶ Conduct a comparative skills profiling survey between Zambia and South Africa;
- ▶ Collect information on practical existing recognition and portability mechanisms available to refugees where they are based;
- ▶ Assess skills recognition opportunities facilitating asylum seekers and refugees access to the labour market, and to identify entry points for inclusion of refugees into existing recognition and portability mechanisms and expected challenges, whether policy or institutional;
- ▶ Briefly include background information as well as a comparison of the legal environment affecting asylum seekers' and refugees' and access to the labour market well as a comparison of the skills recognition frameworks in the two countries; and
- ▶ Collect information on coping mechanisms where there is no skills recognition available.

Following a mixed methods approach, the research included a literature review (Chapter 2), eight key informant interviews¹⁷ (Chapter 3) and a comprehensive set of 395 survey-based interviews with refugees and asylum seekers in the two countries (Chapter 4). The research generated a substantive amount of empirical data that was analysed and presented using a conceptual framework that has its origins in two earlier ILO studies both which are due for publication in 2023, namely a study on the barriers to effective labour mobility in the African leather industry (covering Kenya and South Africa) (ILO 2023a), and a feasibility study on skills recognition mechanisms for selected occupational profiles of migrant workers (covering Ethiopia, Kenya and South Africa) (ILO 2023b). The skills profiling surveys were supported by an analysis of practical existing skills recognition mechanisms and their reach in South Africa and Zambia around the specific region and setting (urban or rural) where refugees are based.

This final chapter elaborates on the cross-cutting observations and key findings from the study structured according to the key dimensions of the study and includes some methodological implications and suggestions for further work in this important nexus between refugee status and skills recognition approaches in African countries.

High-level overview

The juxta positioning of South Africa and Zambia in this study has been helpful to identify similarities and differences in the skills recognition mechanisms available to refugees and asylum seekers within and beyond the two countries.

South Africa is a destination country for refugees and migrants from Africa and to some extent, also Asia, Europe and other regions of the world. While South Africa adopted a progressive stance to refugee policy in the 1990s, more recent policies (e.g., the Refugee Amendment Act of 2017 and the Draft National Labour Migration Policy of 2022) have gradually become more restrictive and in general refugees and asylum seekers struggle to navigate and benefit from the available skills recognition mechanisms. Refugees in South Africa are not confined to camps with the largest estimated net migration in the provinces of Gauteng, Western Cape, and the Eastern Cape (see Table 1 in Chapter 1). The South African NQF has been in place since 1998, and through SAQA and related structures, it provides the anchor mechanism for skills recognition and portability available to the broader population. RPL practices have developed over many years and options are available in many sectors, but by-and-large remain opaque and inaccessible to refugees and asylum seekers. The need for improved coordination between government agencies, such as SAQA and DHA, professional bodies and civil society is widely acknowledged. In 2019 SAQA took forward an amendment to its current policy for evaluation foreign qualifications to better provide for refugees and asylum seekers (SAQA, 2019). This process is supported through a pilot project currently underway.¹⁸ This responds particularly to refugees and asylum seekers who are not in possession of complete documents. SAQA compiled an addendum to provide for a special

17 KII per country were South Africa 6 and Zambia 8

18 https://www.saqa.org.za/media/multimedia/videos/critical-skills-documentary?language_content_entity=en

dispensation that allow for “alternative means of verifying and evaluating qualifications whilst allowing for stringent checks.” (Scalabrini, n.d.)

Zambia has offered refuge to refugees and asylum seekers since the 1940s. Refugees in Zambia mostly live in designated settlement areas, with some also present in urban areas: Meheba, Mayukwaykwa, Mantapala and Lusaka and Ndola. Zambia’s policy stance on refugees and asylum seekers is broadly aligned to international conventions, save for the strong emphasis on the geographical limitations managed through a permit system and the fact that refugees require a work permit to access the labour market.¹⁹ A roadmap for a more comprehensive refugee response was initiated in 2018, for implementation of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, and steady progress has been made in partnership with the UNHCR and the National Refugee Forum, as well as an identification document to access selected services improving financial inclusion of refugees. Zambia has had a strong TEVET system in place for many years and has also moved towards the establishment of an NQF, and ZAQA is the agency overseeing it. With the Zambian NQF, a progressive stance has been taken to develop RPL guidelines and new occupational standards. The UNESCO Qualifications Passport (with support from UNESCO and UNHCR) stands out as a concrete current initiative that aims to facilitate the mobility and integration of refugees and other vulnerable migrants into higher education in Zambia.

The table below provides a high-level overview of the similarities and differences in the skills recognition mechanisms available to refugees in South Africa and Zambia. The overview draws on the literature review and key informant interviews, while quantitative data draws mainly on the surveys conducted in the two countries.

Table 88: High-level overview of survey findings

	South Africa	Zambia
Refugee profile	~300k (2018 and 2019 data)	~100k (2022 data)
Refugees as % of national population	0,005%	0,005%
Most representative age groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 26-35y (45,8%) ▶ 36-49y (28,4%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 26-35y (33,0%) ▶ 36-49y (27,1%)
Refugee location	Distributed with urban concentrations Highest in Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and Western Cape	Designated settlements Mainly Mantapala, Meheba and Mayukwayukwa, as well as in urban centres such as Lusaka
% Refugees based in settlements	0,6%	47,4%
% Refugees based in urban/peri-urban settings	99,4%	52,6%
Home ownership by refugees	0,5%	31,5%
Formal skills recognition mechanism	NQF with RPL options (since 1998) overseen by SAQA and three Quality Councils (CHE, QCTO and Umalusi)	NQF with RPL options (since 2011), strong TEVET (since 1998) overseen by ZAQA (with TEVETA, HEA and ECZ)

19 To the knowledge of the authors asylum seekers in Zambia are not eligible to obtain a work permit.

	South Africa	Zambia
Employment in the formal sector in destination country	30,1%	42,7%
Employment in the formal sector in country of origin	53,3%	45,4%
Main occupational groups of employed refugees	Clerical Service and Sales workers (48,8%) Managers professionals and technicians (28,6%)	Managers, Professionals and Technicians (39,6%) Clerical Service and Sales workers (29,7%).
Main occupations of employed refugees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Shopkeepers (15%) ▶ Teachers (9%) ▶ Drivers (7%) ▶ Tailors (6%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Teachers (19%) ▶ Shopkeepers (14%) ▶ Drivers (8%) ▶ Sales assistants (7%) ▶ Tailors (6%)
Highest level of qualifications of refugees	Degrees or diplomas (38,5%)	Degrees or diplomas (37,4%)
Proportion of refugees holding part or whole tertiary level qualification	29,7%	45,9%
Proportion of refugees having completed some TVET education	18,2%	29,5%
Proportion of refugees indicating that their TVET education was validated in the host country	26,3%	44,3%
Proportion of refugees indicating that they were successful in validating their skills or education in the host country	38,5%	59,5%
Access to skills recognition mechanisms: main issues raised and implications	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SAQA does not evaluate short courses, part time courses or qualifications that are not considered in the formal school system ▶ <i>limits the education opportunities and certifications available to refugees.</i> 2. Lack of uniformity in implementation of the legal frameworks (relating to permits, citizenship, employment rights) ▶ <i>limits refugee's access to the labour market.</i> 3. Disconnect in the value chain working in the sector with many government institutions and civil society groups working in silos. 4. Limited regular pathways for low-skilled economic migration ▶ <i>refugees (and migrants) resort to seeking asylum.</i> 5. Huge number of asylum seekers and backlog applications from previous years ▶ <i>lack of fairness and efficiency of processes.</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fewer employment opportunities in rural areas limited occupational diversity at intermediate to high skills ▶ <i>mismatch of skills in rural locations and, restrictions in accessing urban labour markets.</i> 2. Cost to attain this documentation ▶ <i>limits access to employment as well as discourages employers from hiring refugees because of the high costs of documentation.</i> 3. Camp confinement ▶ <i>despite having quality skills, refugees may still suffer.</i> 4. Certification process certifies refugees at levels lower than their actual capabilities ▶ <i>affects their income and they are paid less than they should. This process is not applicable to asylum seekers.</i>
Problematic narratives prevalent	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Many of the refugees coming into South Africa are highly skilled (nurses and doctors, education, IT and in business). 2. Migrants and refugees in South Africa are stealing jobs from nationals, which has led to tension, violence, and the destruction of their businesses. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Refugees in Zambia are taking the jobs of citizens is a challenge and limits refugee's access to employment opportunities. More intense in urban areas.

Observations and key findings

#1 Formal skills recognition opportunities for refugees in South Africa and Zambia are limited

The research has clearly demonstrated that refugees and asylum seekers have limited opportunity to access formal skills recognition opportunities in both countries. In turn, this means that the potential economic benefit to Zambia and South Africa is without any doubt reduced. It is also evident that there is limited political appetite to correct this state of affairs — this is clearly the case in South Africa, while the situation may be more nuanced in Zambia.

In the case of South Africa, the existing formal system managed by SAQA, and that has been in place for several decades, is overburdened by the influx of applications, and further exacerbated by the diminished capacity at SAQA due to budget cuts in recent years. The more forward-looking work by SAQA through the revisioning of its own policies and the current pilot is a step in the right direction, but this process appears to be slow, and impacts on a small number of refugees and asylum seekers.

In the case of Zambia, ZAQA is a relatively new agency and there are several positive signs of it being willing to embrace new thinking and approaches in line with international developments in this area. The work with UNESCO and the UNCHR on the Qualifications Passport is a good example of an initiative that bodes well for the country, and for opening access to a much larger group of refugees. Unfortunately, this type of approach tends to assist higher skilled migrants and may be less suited to low skilled refugees. This tension should be kept in mind and measures be put in place to mitigate the risk.

Entry points for inclusion of refugees into these existing recognition and portability mechanisms, in both countries, will have to be made much more visible to the target grouping. Ideally, such guidance should be provided at both formal entry points (for migrants with the necessary documentation) as well as the non-formal routes traversed by asylum seekers and refugees (through NGOs and civil society organisations). Strengthening the interrelationships between state actors, such as SAQA and ZAQA, the relevant ministries, professional bodies, NGOs and civil society can make a huge difference to the visibility of the services, and in turn, the equitable access to these services by refugees. The challenge in convening such a grouping of key actors is that the political will by the relevant governments may be lacking. This is starkly evident in the case of South Africa, where the rise of xenophobia from the public has been met by a government response with more restrictive policies, less impetus for improved coordination, and generally a move towards “citizens first” strategies in the public discourse.

The research has clearly demonstrated that refugees and asylum seekers have limited opportunity to access formal skills recognition opportunities in both countries.

#2 The formal employment of refugees remained similar to their employment status in the countries where they came from

An interesting trend from the surveyed population is that in both countries the percentage of refugees with formal employment did not change significantly between the sending and receiving countries. For South Africa the proportion of refugees that gained formal employment was 30,1%, while 53,3% reported being employed in their countries of origin. For Zambia, the proportions are 42,7% and 45,4% respectively. This does suggest a smaller impact in the case of Zambia, with a more substantive decline for South Africa, but several factors need to be considered, including the relatively small sample of refugees included in the overall study. The occupational groups and occupations do not differ greatly between the two countries with teachers, shopkeepers, and drivers in the top three for both countries, albeit in a slightly different order. Similarly, the most represented age groupings of the sample refugees were between 26 and 49 years, but with a slightly younger representation in South Africa. This is a cumulative profile over the years. A targeted survey of recent arrivals across a defined period could provide an indication of the demographics of new arrivals.

Some reduction in formal employment status between the host country and country of origin is to be expected, perhaps closer to what the South African data is showing. What is of interest here is that the Zambia data seems to go against the expected trend, remaining largely the same. While taking the necessary cautions based on the small sample, some contributing factors that may be worth noting is the benefits of a more structured settlement process that can be more centrally coordinated, as well as the positive sentiments related to ZAQA through enhanced visibility and the piloting of the new recognition modalities through the Qualifications Passport. Of course, one would hasten to add that the designated settlements policy is contested and is also associated with negative perceptions and consequences.²⁰ In the case of SAQA, the pilot project underway could also form a basis for a wider process to enhance visibility and access.



20 The fact that refugees in Zambia need a work permit to access the labour market which hampers access as discussed in Chapters 3 and 4 The time duration of asylum seekers permit is a month which is quite short Because refugee status is swiftly obtained or denied it not seem to offer any benefits.

#3 Skills validation success tend to match certification levels and leaves lower skilled refugees without options

While the point stands that the majority of refugees reported having very limited opportunity to access formal skills recognition opportunities in South Africa and Zambia, a third or more reported that they were successful in having their skills, education or TVET education validated. An important distinction must be made here between access to services, and success for those that are able to access services. Even so, this a positive finding and correlates well with the fact that most of these refugees held a part of whole tertiary degree (29,7% in South Africa and 45,9% in Zambia) and some TVET education (18,2% in South Africa and 29,5% in Zambia).

A more structured and publicly endorsed process, accessible also through informal means, such as civil society organisations, could easily increase these numbers for refugees that hold formal certifications. More effort will however be required to support lower skilled refugees that may not hold formal certifications. As illustrated in the conceptual framing that underpins this study (see Figure 1 in Chapter 1), there are some options available to policymakers:

1. In cases where the **refugee status is relatively formalised, but the occupations are not formalised, occupational profiles can be developed** — from the evidence presented, neither South Africa nor Zambia fall into this category.
2. In extreme cases where both the refugee status and occupations are not formalised, **specific work is required to develop specific occupations through practitioner-led processes** — again from the evidence presented, neither South Africa nor Zambia fall into this category.
3. In the next scenario the refugee status is weakly formalised, but the occupations are formalised, **existing occupational profiles can be used to validate skills of refugees that may not be certified** — this is also not a good fit for Zambia and South Africa.
4. In cases where the refugee status is relatively formalised, and the occupations are also formalised, usually through and NQF and some form of occupational classification system, RPL provides a useful approach — from the evidence presented, both **South Africa and Zambia could do well in strengthening their RPL practices further** to focus specifically on refugees and asylum seekers.

Some suggestions to consider strengthening RPL for refugees could be explored based on the assumption that incremental improvements in the level of formal education held by a refugee can provide a useful structure through which employers can value RPL credits. In both Zambia and South Africa, most respondents indicated limited knowledge of RPL with statements like “I don’t know much about it”. Awareness will be a critical element of broadening buy-in. In a country like Zambia that has comparatively high proportions of refugees with part or incomplete qualifications, this can justify validation and recognition programs to enable refugees to convert their qualifications. It must however be borne in mind that the costs to individuals or households of preparing for, attending, and completing RPL opportunities could exclude certain groups. Among survey respondents, confidence about TVET education validation opportunities in Zambia is higher than in South Africa. It would be useful to explore how such views are communicated. An option could be to design and target RPL interventions to skills needs among particular age groups of refugees.

#4 Regional and continental skills recognition initiatives are starting to show potential

The entry points for inclusion of refugees into recognition and portability mechanisms are not only national, or at least in theory, they should be national. Several regional initiatives have gained momentum in recent years, notably influenced by adoption of the Addis Convention in 2014, and its entering into force in 2019 after the necessary number of countries ratified the Convention. The development of the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF)²¹ has also progressed, with a second phase of activities nearing finalisation. The establishment of the African Qualifications Verification Network (AQVN) in 2016 was also a significant step towards greater collaboration between African member states on matters of skills recognition. Collectively these continental initiatives have the potential to support member states on technical levels, while not interfering with sovereignty. Refugees and asylum seekers stand to benefit the most from more standardised systems that are agreed continentally, and by implication, become more accessible to all Africans including refugees and asylum seekers in Africa.

#5 Conceptual framing and methodological considerations

The hermeneutic framework applied in this study (see Figure 1) is helpful to provide greater clarity on the interface between migrant status and levels of formality in the skills and occupations in a specific country. The framework also has limitations and is not intended to be used in isolation from other inputs, notably, also several contextual factors that may be unique to a specific country. The framework has not been developed and refined through three successive studies (see Chapter 1), and a more fine-grained approach to doing a first level assessment of the skills of refugees is certainly worth exploring. Such an assessment could be more accessible and cost effective than a formal RPL process, while also funnelling refugees and asylum seekers to receive the most appropriate skills recognition support to access the labour market within the shortest time. In Chapter 1 we provide an overview of how ISCO-08 informed the list of proxy tasks that were used during the survey. On reflection this worked well, but more time and effort would be required to refine this approach. We would also propose aligning such a process with the work being conducted in the ACQF context, and in close collaboration with the AQVN. The possibility of developing an African version of ISCO is also something worth considering.



The possibility of developing an African version of ISCO is also something worth considering.

21 <https://acqf.africa/>

Methodological considerations

On a methodologic level, the sampling approach employed in this study is worth looking at in more detail. While there is no claim being made that the 200 refugees per country are representative of the broader refugee populations in each country, we did find good saturation along key thematic strands.

The survey of refugees in Zambia and South Africa provides a new perspective on the occupational structure of refugees within a comparative methodology. The data set has the following characteristics and some limitations. The value of this work is that it obtains 'before' and 'after' data on the occupational status of refugees in the country of origin and then in the country of destination. This structure makes it possible to view the effects of forced movement of refugees on their employment chances. In future it would be useful to consider similar methodology with an age cohort longitudinal design so that changes in employment status can be compared over time. The current study samples from refugees without age selection and therefore offers a generalised picture of refugee employment of ages 15+ – 65. Nevertheless, this study still offers important insights. Since this study is based on a small sized sample of just over 400 refugees split between Zambia and South Africa, generalisability is limited. The value of this work lies in generating insights that might inform ongoing study of refugee access to decent work, and the prospects of skills recognition supporting their efforts.

The selection of Zambia and South Africa sets up a comparison between the labour market and occupational progress of refugees exposed in the former case to a supportive but simultaneously restrictive settlement regime that limits full mobility of refugee work seekers. South Africa on the other hand cedes refugees the opportunity to seek work where they best can, leading probably to higher concentrations of refugees in or near urban centres. In the rural refugee settlements in Zambia where refugees are located with limited freedom of movement that precludes being outside of the settlements for more than one day, local rural economic activities offer limited opportunities for people with technical/intermediate and high skills. This spatial structuring of the refugee labour force will restrict their occupation choices.

The core aim of this research is to consider more closely the potential impact of skills recognition interventions on refugee access to labour markets and occupations in Zambia and South Africa. The field of skill recognition and RPL on the African continent continues to progress in three dimensions. First, at regional and global levels the architectures of skills recognition have matured, still at the macro level national systems are in progress with variations in progress between countries. Second, considerable progress has been achieved in developing qualification recognition and accreditation systems in technical and higher education that facilitate labour market mobility particularly of holders of higher education skills at the national level. Skills recognition methods supporting workers in medium/low skills jobs have also emerged most clearly in multilateral efforts to support occupational migration of between developing and developed countries. Third, a groundswell of relatively small-scale initiatives has emerged in countries at local levels involving mainly international development agencies, and local non-profit organisations and funders.

There is a data and analytic gap between level 2 and level 3 activities that can be addressed through research such as undertaken for this project. The information from this kind of survey

can contribute information about the current endowment of occupational skills and background of refugees that can inform more confident decision making on investment towards improving refugee access to occupational accreditation and thereby to competing more equitably in the labour market. For example:

- ▶ Decisions about prioritising refugee groups for support with skills recognition or RPL can be made with greater confidence.
- ▶ If the size of occupational groups as a proportion of refugees can be estimated with a degree of confidence, then skills recognition and RPL programs can be targeted so that the programs can be operated with greater efficiency.
- ▶ Data on refugee skills can be compared with occupational data of nationals to assess where RPL and skills recognition is more likely to complement supply.
- ▶ A profiling approach which takes in key employment/occupational dimensions/granularity such as: formal/informal sector, gender, age supports better alignment of the intervention to refugee needs.

The information obtained in this way is almost certainly unavailable from government or stakeholder sources.

Policy clarity and refugee and asylum seeker rights in South Africa and Zambia

There are a lot of misconceptions and misunderstanding regarding who is a migrant, asylum seeker and refugee and what their rights are in South Africa. The public, employers, the private sector and government service providers often fail to understand the difference between a foreigner, who may be in South Africa documented or undocumented, and a refugee. Consequently, it is often assumed that refugees are migrants, and they are treated by employers and public and private entities as migrants, and not according to the Refugee Act which affords them various rights. Recognized refugees do not need work permits and are allowed to seek employment. Yet employers often demand work permits, as they fail to understand that refugees are a unique category of persons covered by the Refugee Act which grants them the right to seek employment. This problem is so acute that even civil society organizations that work with refugees in South Africa sometimes wrongly think that refugees require work permits to access employment, which is reflected in some of the KI interviews that were conducted for this study.

Refugees also have the right to be self-employed. A Refugee ID (which can be applied for once refugee status has been obtained) is needed to register a business with the Companies and Intellectual Properties Commission (CIPC) in South Africa. An asylum document cannot be used to register a business with the CIPC and therefore asylum seekers can only operate informal businesses in South Africa. The recent legal changes to South Africa's refugee law, that entered into force in 2020, mean that asylum seekers no longer have the automatic right to work. Both the right to work and the right to study need to be authorized on their asylum document.

In terms of the 1996 Constitution of South Africa's Bill of Rights all persons in South Africa, regardless of their migration status, have the right to receive basic education, basic health care and no one

may be refused emergency health care. Although asylum seekers and refugees are entitled to these rights, provision of these services to them, free of charge, is inconsistent across South Africa. For example, in some cases they have been refused healthcare, and in others required to pay. Research and discussions with KIs and refugees indicate that lack of service provision to asylum seekers and refugees is partly due to lack of understanding of the law and their status, and partly due to institutionalized xenophobia towards foreigners.

Awareness raising with the public, employers, government service providers and the private sector on the rights of asylum seekers and refugees is greatly needed and is being undertaken by various organisations in Zambia and South Africa that work to promote and protect their rights. This is not a once off process and needs to take place continuously in public and private entities as this knowledge often fails to become engrained in the society. It is also especially important considering the xenophobic rhetoric of the media and strands of society in South Africa.

Improving cohesion, access to skills recognition and labour market inclusion for refugees in South Africa and Zambia

Particularly in the labour market it is important to promote horizontal cohesion amongst refugees and nationals to demystify negative misconceptions about refugees access to labour market opportunities through sensitization on the benefits of integrating refugees via skills transfer. This requires reciprocal increased awareness amongst employers on policy and legislative provisions for employing refugees, and growing increased awareness among refugees on existing RPL mechanisms. In both countries, resources could be usefully directed towards: transitioning from pilot RPL mechanisms by instituting lessons learned and scaling up best practices for wider positive impacts. Further benefits could flow from implementing provisions of existing regional qualification frameworks that Zambia has aligned to ensure efficient, standardized and harmonized RPL mechanisms.

It is recommended that progressive validation of prior learning and RPL mechanisms should have a comprehensive focus and include all three areas of learning. First, formal learning accessed through the formal education system with certification, second, non-formal learning or training not leading to an award of certification, and third, informal learning obtained through experience. In fundamentally addressing the skills and employment needs of refugees and asylum seekers it is necessary to use a whole of society approach to identify the skills required (e.g. national occupational skills) to achieve development goals by leveraging on government's current local economic development policies and facilitating deliberate policies for inclusion of refugees in access to employment in these localities

Concluding comments

This study provided an important opportunity to investigate the skills recognition methodologies available to refugees in South Africa and Zambia. The findings were largely expected: refugees have limited access to recognition opportunities; there are some promising continental initiatives on the horizon, but they are still far from being realised on national levels; and that there are

strong misconceptions that refugees are stealing jobs from citizens. There were also some less expected findings: formal employment of refugees in South Africa and Zambia remains similar to their employment status in the countries where they came from; skills validation success tends to match certification levels and leaves lower skilled refugees without options; and that refugees have mid-level skills, rather than only high or very low skills. We encourage entities like SAQA and ZAQA to do more of the good work they have been doing by taking pilots to scale, and by sharing findings, also failures, within the broader skills ecosystem in Africa that has formed through the ACQF process. As Africans we have the technical knowledge and the collaborative culture to advance much quicker than many may expect.

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ANNEXURE: SURVEY INSTRUMENT

This instrument is designed as a structured guide for an interview to be conducted with respondents who are refugees and asylum seekers in Zambia and South Africa. At the start of the interview, relay the information below to the respondent.

Purpose and Background

JET Education Services (JET) has been appointed by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to assess skills, job searching and working experience of refugees and asylum seekers. The aim of this research is to assess skills recognition opportunities facilitating asylum seekers and refugees access to the labour market in Zambia and South Africa.

No risks have been identified with participation in this study. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this interview or the research, feel free to raise them with me now, or you can contact:

The senior investigator in South Africa

Andrew Paterson

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Participation in the interview is **voluntary**, and you may stop the interview or withdraw consent at any time.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

Please feel free to speak openly and honestly. Information that you provide during the interview will be treated as confidential and will not be shared beyond the research team. Names will not be used and any other identifying information such as the name of the business or organisation you work for will be removed when reporting. You may consider this interview as a safe environment for you to share your experiences.

➔ Do you have any questions?

.....

.....

.....

.....

Consent Request and Response

Are you willing to participate in this interview?

Consent granted? Yes

No Reason: _____

A1 Interview number: _____ A2 Date: _____

A3 Interviewer: _____ A4 Country: South Africa Zambia

SECTION A

Biographical Information

A5	What are your first, second, and third languages?	A5.1 1st:
		A5.2 2nd:
		A5.3 3rd:
A6	What is your country of nationality?	
A7	What is your age?	<input type="checkbox"/> 15-17 <input type="checkbox"/> 26-35 <input type="checkbox"/> 50-59 <input type="checkbox"/> 18-25 <input type="checkbox"/> 43-49 <input type="checkbox"/> 60+
A8	(Observe gender)	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Other
A9	Do you live in ... ?	<input type="checkbox"/> a settlement camp <input type="checkbox"/> a community in an urban or peri-urban setting
A10	What is the name of your settlement/ residential area?	
A11	What is your marital status?	<input type="checkbox"/> Married <input type="checkbox"/> Single <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced <input type="checkbox"/> Widowed
A12	How many live in your household?	
A13	Do you own your home?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other
A14	Are you ... ?	<input type="checkbox"/> a refugee <input type="checkbox"/> a former refugee <input type="checkbox"/> an asylum seeker <input type="checkbox"/> stateless
A15	How long have you been a refugee/ asylum seeker/stateless in this country?	

SECTION B

Education, Training, and Recognition


B1	What is the highest level of formal education you have completed?	<input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Some Tertiary/University <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary <input type="checkbox"/> Some secondary <input type="checkbox"/> Primary <input type="checkbox"/> Tertiary	
		Do you have any degrees or diplomas from this education? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
B2	(If yes) What are they? (3 highest)	B2.1 validated	B2.1.1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes
	B2.x.1 (If yes) Are they validated in this country?	B2.2 validated	B2.2.1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes
		B2.3 validated	B2.3.1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes


SECTION B (Continued)**Education, Training, and Recognition**

	Have you done any TEVET/TVET/technical education?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
B3	B3.1 (If yes) Describe.		
	B3.2 (If yes) Is this education validated in this country?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
	Have you had an informal apprenticeship?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
B4	B4.1 (If yes) Describe		
	B4.2 (If yes) Is this education validated in this country?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
B5	Do you have any other skills training experiences (including language)?		
B6	What challenges do you face accessing training/education opportunities?		
B7	Have you heard about:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ "Recognition of prior learning" ▶ "Accreditation of prior experience learning" ▶ Any digital certification platforms ▶ (French only) "Validation des acquis de l'expérience" 		
	B7.1 (If yes) Describe.		
	Have you tried to validate any skills or education in this country?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
	B8.1 (If yes) Were you successful?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
	B8.1.1 (If yes B8.1) What institution validated your skills?		
B8	B8.2 (If yes B8) What kinds of difficulties did you encounter?	<input type="checkbox"/> Expensive process <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of information <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Difficult administrative procedures <input type="checkbox"/> Difficult to access institutions
	B8.3 (If no B8) Why have you not tried?	<input type="checkbox"/> Expensive process <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of information <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Difficult administrative procedures <input type="checkbox"/> Difficult to access institutions

SECTION C**Skills Profile**

C1	Are you currently <i>formally/informally</i> employed?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
	C1.1 (If no) How long have you been unemployed?		
C2	Are you currently seeking (more) work?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
C3	Were you employed before becoming a refugee/asylum seeker?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
	C3.1 (If yes) What was your employment before becoming a refugee?		
C4	What employment have you had in this country? (Include up to 3)	C4.1	
		C4.2	
		C4.3	
C5	What do you consider to be your highest-skilled employment? (either employed or trained in)		

SECTION C (Continued)		
Skills Profile		
 <i>The following questions are about the highest-skilled employment in C5.</i>		
C6	How long did you do this work?	
C7	Is the employment in the formal (<i>registered company/organisation</i>) or informal sector?	<input type="checkbox"/> Formal <input type="checkbox"/> Informal
C8	Describe the most important activities or duties you performed. (Include up to 3)	C8.1
		C8.2
		C8.3
C9	In what task do you consider yourself the most skilled?	
C10	What levels are the minimum qualifications for employment in this position? (<i>Select all that apply</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/> No minimum <input type="checkbox"/> University diploma (2-year) <input type="checkbox"/> Job-specific Training <input type="checkbox"/> University degree (4-year) <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary diploma <input type="checkbox"/> Post-graduate qualification <input type="checkbox"/> Other, specify:
	C10.1 (<i>Unless no minimum</i>) What are the minimum qualifications?	
C11	Did this work require any on-the-job training?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	C11.1 (<i>If yes</i>) Describe the training	

SECTION D		
Current/Most Recent Work (<i>If Different Than C</i>)		
D1	Are you currently performing your highest skilled employment (from C4)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	D1.1 (<i>If no</i>) Why not? (<i>Select all that apply</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/> Preference for nationals <input type="checkbox"/> Legal obstacles <input type="checkbox"/> Qualification level <input type="checkbox"/> Other: <input type="checkbox"/> Qualification unrecognised
 NOTE: Ask if the current employment is different from the highest skilled job. Otherwise skip to Section E.		
D2	What is your current or most recent primary job?	
D3	How long have you performed this employment?	
D4	Is the work in the formal (by a registered company/organisation) or informal sector?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
D5	Describe the most important activities or duties you perform in doing this job.	D5.1
		D5.2
		D5.3

SECTION E**Recent Workplace Formality**

▲ NOTE: Pertaining to the most recent employment

E1	Do you consider your work ... ? (Select all that apply)	<input type="checkbox"/> Full-time <input type="checkbox"/> Seasonal	<input type="checkbox"/> Part-time <input type="checkbox"/> Casual	<input type="checkbox"/> Shift work
E2	Do you have a formal contract for this work?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
	E2.1 (If yes E2) Do you understand the contract's terms and language?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
	E2.2 (If yes E.2) Do you perform tasks outside of the contract's terms?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
E3	Do you regularly work overtime?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
E4	Do you work on a fixed wage/incentive?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
E5	Are your wages sufficient for your needs?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> No wages
	F5.2 (If no/no wages) How do you cope? (Select all that apply)	<input type="checkbox"/> Other forms of income <input type="checkbox"/> Government support <input type="checkbox"/> Family support in this country	<input type="checkbox"/> Organisation support <input type="checkbox"/> Remittances <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	

SECTION F**Recent Workplace Environment**

F1	How many people work with you?	
F2	Do you know of any non-nationals working with you?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
F3	▲ (Don't read the options) How is your relationship with co-workers? (Select all that apply)	<input type="checkbox"/> Good/Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Negative, safety concerns <input type="checkbox"/> Negative, don't get along <input type="checkbox"/> Negative, xenophobic <input type="checkbox"/> Negative, work disagreements <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
	F3.1 Do workers treat you differently than other nationals?	<input type="checkbox"/> Often <input type="checkbox"/> Rarely <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> Never
F4	Do you have an employer or supervisor?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	▲ (Don't read the options) F4.1 (If yes) How is your relationship with them? (Select all that apply)	<input type="checkbox"/> Good/Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Negative, safety concerns <input type="checkbox"/> Negative, don't get along <input type="checkbox"/> Negative, xenophobic <input type="checkbox"/> Negative, work disagreements <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
	F4.2 (If yes) Does the employer treat you differently than nationals?	<input type="checkbox"/> Often <input type="checkbox"/> Rarely <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> Never
	▲ (Don't read the options to the respondent) F4.3 (If yes F4.2) How so? (Select all that apply)	<input type="checkbox"/> I am given better work opportunities than nationals <input type="checkbox"/> I am given worse work opportunities than nationals <input type="checkbox"/> My skills are better recognized by employer <input type="checkbox"/> My skills are worse recognized by employer <input type="checkbox"/> Other, specify:

SECTION F (Continued)**Recent Workplace Environment**

F5	Do you feel safe in the community as a (former) refugee/asylum seeker?	<input type="checkbox"/> Often	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely
		<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/> Never
	F.5 Describe.		

SECTION G**Job Seeking**

G1	What are the main ways you look for jobs? (Select all that apply)	<input type="checkbox"/> Personal connections	<input type="checkbox"/> Advertising	<input type="checkbox"/> Digital platforms	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:
	G1.1 (If advertising) Specify platform:				
	G1.2 (If digital) Specify platform:				
G2	Does being a (former) refugee/asylum seeker make it difficult to find work?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No		
	G2.1 (If yes) How?(Select all that apply)	<input type="checkbox"/> Communication with employers	<input type="checkbox"/> Skills or qualification	<input type="checkbox"/> Digital literacy	<input type="checkbox"/> Preference for nationals
		<input type="checkbox"/> Legal obstacles	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:		
G3	Are employers interested in workers with skills?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not sure	
	G3.1 Describe				
G4	Does having a qualification help refugees and asylum seekers get jobs in this country?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No		
	G4.1 Describe				
G5	Are you aware of opportunities that help refugees/asylum seekers get employment?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No		
	G5.1 (If yes) Describe				

SECTION H**Mobility and Recognition of Prior Learning**

H1	What kind of work would you like to do?	
H2	What would you need to attain this desired employment? (Select all that apply)	<input type="checkbox"/> Nothing additional needed
		<input type="checkbox"/> Funding
		<input type="checkbox"/> Legal documentation/protection
		<input type="checkbox"/> Training
		<input type="checkbox"/> Qualification
		<input type="checkbox"/> Other:
H3	Do you have anything to add?	

GLOSSARY

Skills: Skills are defined as the ability to carry out the tasks and duties of a given job (Branca,2016)

Level of skill: determined by skill level and skill specialization:

- ▶ “Skill level is defined as a function of the complexity and range of tasks and duties to be performed in an occupation” considering the nature of the tasks, level of formal education, and amount of informal experience required to competently perform the tasks and duties (ILO, 2012)
- ▶ “Skill specialization is considered in terms of” the field of knowledge required; the tools and machinery used; the materials worked on or with; and the kinds of good and service produced (ILO, 2012)

Informal economy refers to all economic activities by workers and economic units that are — in law or in practice — not covered or insufficiently covered by formal arrangements.

Skills recognition: The task of skills recognition is to make such uncertified skills visible. Its potential contribution is as a means of enhancing employability

Recognition of prior learning (RPL): RPL is a process that “relies on an assessment of learning outcomes to formally recognize competencies. Through RPL, learning outcomes are assessed, not the learning itself (or where or how it took place)” (ILO, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Learning Package, 2018,9)

Recognition of qualifications: procedures for the evaluation of foreign professional or vocational qualifications that opens up such procedures to target groups and improves mobility

Portability of skills is defined along the following two dimensions:

- ▶ Employable skills which can be used productively in different jobs, occupations, industries; and;
- ▶ Certification and recognition of skills within national and international labour markets.

Skills profiles: An instrument that may be used to develop an occupational profile in a particular context



International
Labour
Organization



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency



Funded by the
European Union