

Abstract

This thesis deals with the possibilities of employment of Asylum seekers on the labour market in the Czech Republic. I analyse this issue from the perspective of the workers of the Organisation for Aid to Refugee (hereinafter referred to as the OAR), whose task is to assist Asylum seekers on the labour market.

I set three research questions, one main and two secondary. They focus on the overall perspective of the participants, the OAR workers, on the issue of employment of the Asylum seekers, to identify the barriers perceived by the participants in their efforts to integrate their clients into the labour market. I was also interested in their suggestions for possible changes that would improve the chances of the target group in the labour market.

This thesis includes a qualitative research inquiry, which is conducted in the form of semi-structured interviews with participants. The results of the interviews are subsequently processed using the method of thematic analysis in order to provide answers to the research questions. The eight participants I selected from the OAR have personal experience with the target group of Asylum seekers. They are four lawyers and four social workers.

The first chapter of the thesis describes the terms for different residence possibilities of foreigners in the Czech Republic. The second chapter deals with the asylum and migration policy of the Czech Republic, European and global conventions concerning refugees. The third and fourth chapters, which are the core theoretical chapters, describe the social work with the Asylum seekers, the process of obtaining work permits and present the employment of the Asylum seekers as a key element of their social integration. In chapter five, I describe the chosen methodology of the qualitative research inquiry, its objectives, ethics and limitations, and comment on the characteristics of the participants and the interviews conducted. Chapter six contains transcripts of the interviews with OAR workers and partial analyses of each interview. Chapter seven summarizes the outcomes of all interviews – the agreements and disagreements between participants, the named barriers to labour market for Asylum seekers that participants claim, and suggestions for possible changes. The last chapter is devoted to a discussion and my own evaluation and commentary on the interview outputs.

Through the research inquiry I have found that the participants perceive the employment opportunities for Asylum seekers as not very good. The barriers are both from the side of employers (reluctance to employ foreigners and lack of information about the status of the Asylum seeker), as well as Asylum seekers (lack of knowledge of the language) and the state (complexity of the process of obtaining a work permit). I have anticipated these barriers and named them as entry prerequisites. Other barriers mentioned by participants were, for example, problems with the nostrification of diplomas and the short validity of the Asylum seeker identification card.

Participants gave specific suggestions for possible changes that would improve the situation. For example, they suggested the creation of a platform of employers who would be willing to employ this target group and at the same time be well informed about the process of obtaining a work permit for Asylum seekers. Other proposed changes included the abolition or simplification of work permits, shortening the period after which Asylum seekers can start working legally, and the introduction of Czech language courses for them. Thus, interviews with the participants gave me answers to my research questions.

The main finding from the research inquiry is the existence of a large number of barriers as well as the need for changes in the approach of employers and state authorities. From this I conclude that this is a topic that deserves further investigation. The opportunities for the employment of Asylum seekers on the labour market in the Czech Republic are limited and

there is certainly room for improvement. This paper has mapped the problems and possible solutions, but it would be worthwhile to focus further on whether the proposed changes and measures are feasible and how to convey this information and proposals for change to representatives of the state administration and political representation.