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3 **ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS A TOOL**  
5 **FOR A NEW BEGINNING –**  
7 **ENTREPRENEURSHIP TRAINING**  
9 **FOR REFUGEES IN A NEW**  
11 **HOMELAND**

13 **Katrin Marchand and Josette Dijkhuizen**  
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17  
19 **ABSTRACT**

21 *One way to support the livelihoods of refugees and their families is to support*  
23 *them in regard to labour market integration, including as entrepreneurs,*  
25 *through which they in turn can contribute to the society and economy of their*  
27 *host country. As they may lack specific knowledge of and information about*  
29 *the respective business and regulatory environment, effective and targeted busi-*  
31 *ness support schemes have an important role to play in this process. This chap-*  
33 *ter is the result of qualitative research on the pilot phase of such a programme*  
35 *in the Netherlands called ENPower. Based on semi-structured interviews, the*  
37 *participants and triangulation of findings with observations of key stakeholders,*  
39 *the results show that this programme managed to achieve its goal of supporting*  
41 *refugees to develop a viable business plan. Moreover, participation reinforced*  
43 *the refugees' personal development and empowerment, showing the potential of*  
45 *such support to contribute to the fulfilment of SDG 8.*

33 **Keywords:** Entrepreneurship; refugees; business plan development;  
35 personal development; support programme; SDG 8

## INTRODUCTION

Sustainable development goal (SDG) 8 defines the ‘promotion of inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all’ as one of the priorities for development across the world until 2030. Encouraging entrepreneurship is seen as one important tool towards achieving this goal. Entrepreneurs play a fundamental role in the economic development of countries across the world as important contributors to job creation, innovation and the shaping of communities (Acs, 2006; Naudé, 2010). Different countries therefore put effort in stimulating entrepreneurship through, for example, start-up programmes, incubators and competitions. Besides, being an entrepreneur can be of great value in the personal life of people as a tool for income generation, achieving autonomy and independence, as well as receiving intrinsic rewards such as personal growth and satisfaction (Kuratko, Hornsby, & Naffziger, 1997; van Gelderen & Jansen, 2006).

One of the more invisible groups in society, for which the tool of entrepreneurship can be valuable, are refugees. They often face challenges gaining an income in their new homeland due to difficulties with labour market integration (Raijman & Tienda, 2003). Having their own business can therefore be an important source of income for them and, at the same time, lead to social integration and other intrinsic rewards as well as contributions to the hosting society. When refugees decide that they want to open their own business, they often lack knowledge of the respective business and regulatory environment. Furthermore, administrative and socio-cultural difficulties may hamper the potential of refugees and impact the sustainability and growth potential of the businesses they set up. As a consequence, effective and targeted entrepreneurship training has a potentially important role to play in supporting such refugees and in improving their living situation.

In this case study from the Netherlands, we study the effects of an entrepreneurship programme for refugees that provides insights into the very timely topic of refugee entrepreneurship and mechanisms of support. In general, the number of entrepreneurship education and training programmes for diverse groups of beneficiaries across the world has expanded (Valerio, Parton, & Robb, 2014). Case studies on the specific group of refugee entrepreneurs are, however, very hard to find. In the light of SDG 8, it is important to look at both the business and personal development sides when talking about vulnerable groups and their access to entrepreneurship. To add to the existing knowledge base, this chapter therefore addresses the following research question: ‘In what ways does entrepreneurship training help refugees with accessing the Dutch labour market and what is the influence of the training on the personal development of the participants?’ In order to analyse this question, interviews were conducted with participants of the entrepreneurship training programme ENPower (‘Krachtbedrijf’ in Dutch), which serves as the case study for this chapter.

The rest of this chapter is structured as follows. The next section will provide a brief overview of the current state of knowledge on refugee entrepreneurship with a focus on support interventions and the impacts on personal development.

1 The third section will then provide the context of this specific case study. This  
3 includes both information on refugees, their rights and challenges in the  
5 Netherlands, as well as a description of the ENPower programme. Following  
7 that, the methodology used to collect and analyse the data for this chapter as  
9 well as information about the research participants will be presented, before the  
11 fifth section presents the findings regarding both the business, but also the per-  
13 sonal development of the participants. Finally, the chapter closes with a con-  
15 cluding discussion.

## 11 REFUGEE ENTREPRENEURSHIP

12 The displacement of people because of wars, conflict, natural disasters and per-  
13 secution has always been a feature of the movement of people around the world  
15 (Castles, de Haas, & Miller, 2014). According to UNHCR estimates, the num-  
17 ber of forcefully displaced people increased to over 60 million for the first time  
19 in history in 2015. While the majority of those displaced across borders find re-  
21 fuge in neighbouring countries (UNHCR, 2016), the number of asylum applica-  
23 tions in Europe has increased significantly in the past years to more than  
25 1 million in 2016. Accordingly, the number of asylum seekers also rose in the  
27 Netherlands, where close to 130,000 first time applicants were registered between  
29 2010 and 2016 (EuroStat, 2017).

30 This movement of refugees to Europe, and the Netherlands specifically, has  
31 led to a multitude of responses among citizens in the hosting countries. While  
33 some have opposed the arrival of refugees, others have organised ways to aid  
35 and accommodate refugees. The integration of refugees into the country of asy-  
37 lum is often perceived to be difficult, by both the refugees themselves as well as  
39 by the native population (Wauters & Lambrecht, 2008). Striving for economic  
41 independence in the new society has proven problematic as finding an appropri-  
43 ate job is often troublesome, for reasons such as a lack of qualifications or dis-  
45 crimination in the labour market, but also the rights refugees have to access the  
labour market in the respective country (Gonzales, Forrest, & Balos, 2013;  
Kupferberg, 2003; Pécoud, 2003). For some refugees this leads to the idea of set-  
ting up their own business as a way to get out of a state of economic uncertainty  
(Kloosterman & Van Der Leun, 1999). Others choose this path as they prefer  
being their own boss due to prior experiences. With regard to these entrepre-  
neurial activities of refugees, scientific studies are lacking (Wauters &  
Lambrecht, 2008). There is a rich body of research into immigrant businesses,  
but less so on refugees (Kloosterman, Van Der Leun, & Rath, 1999; Rajman &  
Tienda, 2003; Rath & Kloosterman, 1998; Schunck & Windzio, 2009). In the  
light of SDG 8, a better understanding of refugee entrepreneurship is valuable.

41 In the available studies on refugee entrepreneurship, the main focus is on the  
43 challenges faced by these nascent entrepreneurs (Fong, Busch, Armour,  
45 Heffron, & Chanmugam, 2007; Potocky-Tripodi, 2004; Wauters & Lambrecht,  
2008). Although refugees can reflect a strong entrepreneurial mind-set, they  
often struggle with understanding the local market and the language, access to  
financial resources, and building up valuable networks (Fong et al., 2007;

1 Wauters & Lambrecht, 2008). Especially for entrepreneurs it is essential to  
2 understand the national culture and the way financial and regulatory institutions  
3 work, in order to be able to start a sustainable business. Without the know-how,  
4 network and language skills it is almost impossible to be successful in business  
5 in an unfamiliar context. One way to support such newcomers with overcoming  
6 the obstacles mentioned is therefore to offer them training programs, suiting  
7 their specific needs, such as literacy and financial trainings or (specific) business  
8 development trainings (Fong et al., 2007; Gonzales et al., 2013). These type of  
9 trainings are already executed globally, but according to a review of Byrne,  
10 Fayolle, and Toutain (2015) lack legitimate research and theorising. In these  
11 kinds of training the focus is on the business side of enterprising, not so much  
12 the personal aspects. This individual side of entrepreneurship is often neglected,  
13 but of utmost importance as the enterprise is run by a person who needs the  
14 right skills, competences, passion and work engagement in order to perform well  
15 (Dijkhuizen, Gorgievski, van Veldhoven, & Schalk, 2014; Gorgievski,  
16 Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2010; Rauch & Frese, 2007). A recent study among female  
17 Syrian refugees in Jordan, for example, shows that the participants in a voca-  
18 tional training programme felt that their self-confidence and self-esteem were  
19 increased by joining the programme (Jabbar & Zaza, 2015). Strengthening these  
20 personal resources is important as they are positively related to entrepreneurial  
21 performance (Bullough, de Luque, Abdelzaher, & Heim, 2015; Rauch & Frese,  
22 2007). Self-confidence is closely linked to self-efficacy as the latter is defined as a  
23 task-specific self-confidence (Bandura, 1997). Generalised, self-efficacy is the  
24 belief in one's capability (Bandura, 1997), and is a major contributor to business  
25 success (Baum & Locke, 2004). Business owners who have faith in their own  
26 capabilities to perform various tasks in uncertain situations have higher hopes  
27 for success and take on more challenging opportunities (Baum & Locke, 2004).  
28 On the other hand, perceived self-efficacy is an important attribute in overcom-  
29 ing a wide variety of traumatic experiences (Benight & Bandura, 2004), such as  
30 leaving an unsafe home country (Wauters & Lambrecht, 2008). If a person  
31 believes in his or her capability, this seems to be an important factor in posttrau-  
32 matic resilience. So, we can assume that there is an overlap in the people that  
33 are likely to overcome traumatic adversity and people that are likely to succeed  
34 as entrepreneurs. In this case study of the entrepreneurship programme of  
35 ENPower self-efficacy is considered as an important parameter for assessing the  
36 personal development of the participants.

39

### THE DUTCH CONTEXT

41 The Netherlands currently hosts around 200,000–250,000 refugees and in 2015  
42 alone, 43,093 people, mainly from Syria and Albania, requested asylum in the  
43 Netherlands (VuchtelingenWerk, 2017). As of May 29, 2017, 23,029 people were  
44 still living in reception centres spread across the country (COA, 2017). These  
45 numbers highlight the importance of finding ways to integrate refugees into the  
society, an important aspect of which is access to the Dutch labour market.

1 Dutch regulations make a clear distinction in labour market rights between  
2 asylum seekers and refugees, where the difference between the two is that the  
3 asylum application of the latter has been approved, while the former is still  
4 awaiting this decision. As a consequence, there is no integration support for asy-  
5 lum seekers, while refugees are required to follow an integration process. This  
6 includes language training as well as obtaining knowledge of Dutch society and  
7 customs. Refugees who want to become self-employed can apply for a permit  
8 after having been in the asylum process for a minimum of six months (van der  
9 Meer & Bax, 2016). Despite the regulations being in place, potential refugee  
10 entrepreneurs often face more practical challenges in developing a business plan  
11 and starting their business. This is where entrepreneurship training, such as  
12 ENPower, can be helpful by supporting refugees with starting a business in the  
13 Netherlands and to integrate into the society more generally.

14 ENPower was started in 2013 with pilot projects for women and men living  
15 in shelter homes for victims of domestic violence. A pilot for refugees, who were  
16 thinking about the possibility of setting up their own business in the  
17 Netherlands, started in February 2016. The programme helps these potential  
18 entrepreneurs to develop a bankable business plan. The pilot phase concluded in  
19 November 2016 and offers a unique opportunity to conduct research on the par-  
20 ticipants, their business and personal development.

21 ENPower combines a number of different support measures as graphically  
22 illustrated in Fig. 1. The process starts with an information session after which  
23 interested refugees have an interview. From this point onward, the selected par-  
24 ticipants are supported in the process of developing a business plan through  
25 workshops, company visits, coaching and consultations. Different relevant  
26 topics such as book-keeping, marketing and social media are covered in a more  
27 theoretical way in group workshops, which can be followed up by the partici-  
28 pants through individual mentoring. After completing the programme, the partici-  
29 pants have their own business plan which they then discuss with the social  
30 service from which they receive their benefit and whose approval is needed to  
31 start the business. When the participant decides to start the business, there is a  
32 buddy system in which the alumni is accompanied by a buddy that provides sup-  
33 ports throughout the start-up process free of charge.

## 35 36 37 **METHODOLOGY**

38 In order to gain an understanding of the role of entrepreneurship training in the  
39 access to decent work for refugees as well as their personal development, the  
40 ENPower Programme, specifically the participants of the pilot for refugees, was  
41 chosen as a single case study. Case study approaches serve well when attempting  
42 to develop an understanding of a complex, real-life phenomenon (Yin, 2011).  
43 The main research question guiding the research on the importance of ENPower  
44 for its participants is 'In what ways does entrepreneurship training help refugees  
45 with accessing the Dutch labour market and what is the influence of the training  
on the personal development of the participants?' In order to analyse this

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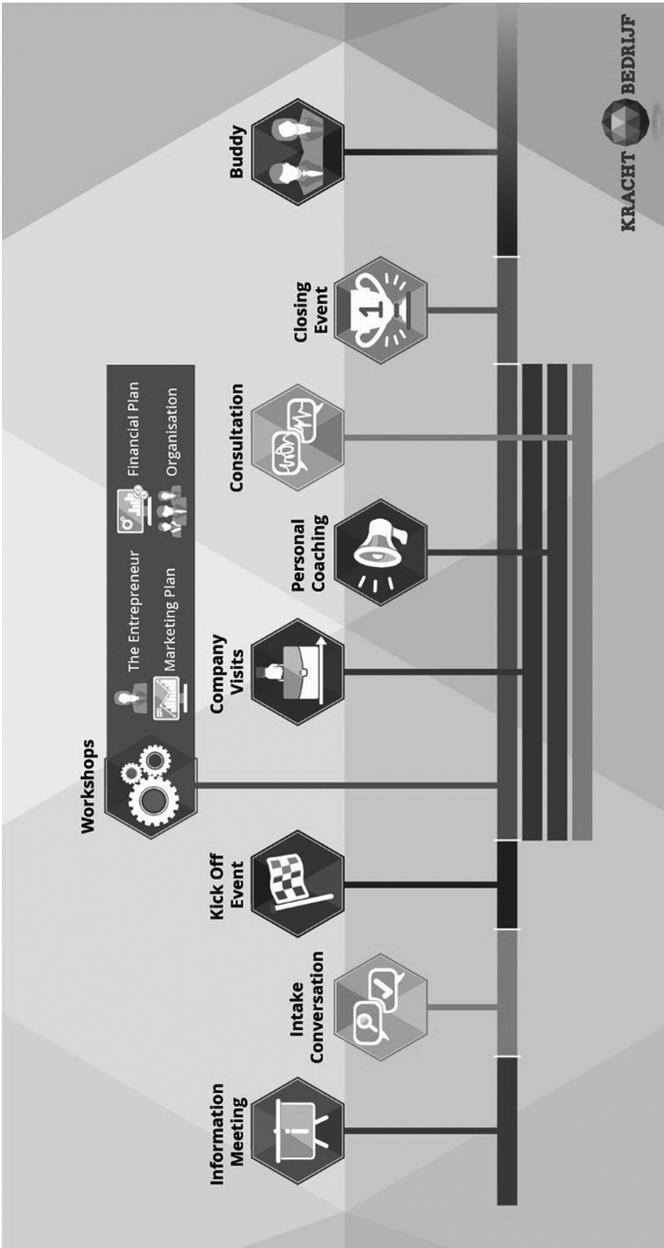


Fig. 1. Timeline of the ENPower Programme. Source: Krachtbedrijf (2017).

**Table 1.** Characteristics of the Research Participants.

Gender	Age	Origin	Arrival in the Netherlands	Business Idea
Male	43	Syria	2014	Trading company
Male	28	Syria	2015	ICT company
Male	40	Iran	2013	ICT company
Male	36	Syria	2014	Social cooperation
Male	41	Syria	2015	Trading company
Female	39	Iran	2006	Artist
Male	42	Syria	2015	ICT company
Male	32	Syria	2015	Dental laboratory

question, a researcher accompanied the refugees throughout their participation in ENPower.

Interviews were conducted with all eight refugees that participated in the pilot phase of ENPower. Table 1 summarises some key characteristics of this group. At the start of the programme these refugees had been in the Netherlands between 10 years and 6 months, with the majority having been in the country one to two years. Six of the participants are from Syria and two from Iran. The majority of participants are in the Netherlands with their families, often including children. In this case they all indicated that the family fully supported their decision to aspire and open their own business. At the point where they entered the programme, the participants were largely moved out of the asylum centres and living in their own flat or house.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants at three points in time:

- (1) **Baseline:** These interviews were conducted before the official start of the programme. The purpose of these interviews was mainly to learn about the background of each individual, about their plans as well as expectations for the programme and how they could benefit from it.
- (2) **Midterm:** After about three months of the programme, a second round of interviews was conducted in order to collect some first information on progress with the business plan and access to the labour market as well as in personal development.
- (3) **Final:** After the programme was completed, the third and final round of interviews took place. In these interviews, the status of the business plan at the end of the programme was assessed as well as personal development, the future plans and attitudes of the participants.

All interviews were conducted using a structured interview guide, but in general the sequence of the questions was flexible, in order to be able to adjust to the individual situation during each interview. Most of the interviews were conducted in person. A few interviews were also completed over the phone or Skype, when participants were not able to meet in person. All interviews were

1 conducted one on one between the respective participant and the researcher and  
2 were recorded with the prior permission of the participants. In total, 23 inter-  
3 views were conducted due to one participant not being available for a final inter-  
4 view. After each round of interviews the initial observations and themes were  
5 discussed between the researcher and the coaches, who were able to reflect on  
6 the experiences of working with the participants and assessing their development  
7 from the practical perspective.

8 One limitation of this case study that should be acknowledged is that gener-  
9 ally it is clear that the participants are extremely grateful to the ENPower team  
10 for offering this programme to them. It was therefore very clear that they were  
11 very hesitant to say anything negative or critical about the programme. The  
12 assessment of the development of the participants can therefore not simply be  
13 based on the feedback of the participants, but had to be triangulated with the  
14 experience of the coaches (Flick, 2009). The findings of this research are there-  
15 fore complimented by observations and informal conversations with these  
16 actors, which serve to validate the participants' answers and relevance of the  
17 emerging themes.

18 All of the information that was gathered from the refugees and the coaches  
19 was subsequently transcribed to prepare for the analysis. Analysis was done the-  
20 matically using an inductive coding scheme to identify both common and unique  
21 narratives of the development of the business plan and access to the labour mar-  
22 ket more generally as well as the personal development of the refugee participat-  
23 ing in entrepreneurship training in the Netherlands.

24

## 25 FINDINGS

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### 27 *Business Development and Access to the Labour Market*

28

29 It is important to understand that the majority of the participants had experi-  
30 ence as an entrepreneur prior to arriving in the Netherlands. Many of them suc-  
31 cessfully ran their own business in their home country for a number of years.  
32 Sectors in which they were active were for example ICT or trade. They stressed  
33 that they started with nothing back in their home country as well and that they  
34 want to do it again in the Netherlands as such showing high potential and ambi-  
35 tion from the start. However, they also realised that entrepreneurship in the  
36 home country was a less regulated domain with much less bureaucracy involved  
37 in establishing a business and they therefore realised the need for help in the  
38 new context.

39

40 Irrespective of whether they have had prior experience as entrepreneurs or  
41 not, the factor that is common to all ENPower participants is that they all have  
42 the desire to do something productive with their life again. And for the majority  
43 of the participants this is the passion to set up an enterprise that reflects their  
44 respective skills, abilities and dreams. They clearly expressed that they do not  
45 seek other employment, but want to have their own company as this is what  
they have always done or wanted to do. Others would also be happy to find a  
job, but have not had success in this regard and therefore opted to find out more

1 about opportunities and conditions of starting their own business in the  
2 Netherlands, indicating that the lack of access to employment may drive refu-  
3 gees into creating their own jobs.

4 The business ideas of the participants covered a wide range of possible ven-  
5 tures, among which were for example ICT services or an import/export com-  
6 pany. The ideas were in all cases strongly related to the businesses and other  
7 jobs that the participants had in their home country. However, the idea of this  
8 section is not to go into details on the individual business ideas of the partici-  
9 pants, but rather to assess how the programme contributed to the ability of the  
10 participants to work on their business plan and potentially the business itself.

11 At the point of the midterm interviews, almost all of the participants had not  
12 made significant progress working on their business plan. Some were already  
13 working on specific parts, such as a SWOT analysis of their proposed business,  
14 while others had not started at all. The reason for this was generally that other  
15 things at this stage were more important to the individuals. Learning Dutch and  
16 taking care of a place to live were two reasons that were given for not having  
17 time to work on the business plan so far.

18 Participants also stated that it is not as easy as they thought to write their  
19 business plan. For example, one participant stated the following:

20 I'm trying hard to do something, but it is not easy to put it on the paper. I'm always searching  
21 on the internet and finding out things. But of course I have to study everything - prices, the  
22 materials themselves and so much more<sup>1</sup>

23 This quote also points to something that a number of participants mentioned,  
24 which is the fact that they have to start all over. While many do have prior expe-  
25 rience, they are realising through the programme that things work differently in  
26 the Netherlands. The business plan being one of them. The participants  
27 highlighted that due to the workshops they understand the importance of the  
28 business plan as it is essential for starting their business here.

29 At the end of the programme, the participants can be grouped into three dif-  
30 ferent groups regarding the status of their business plan: those that have finished  
31 it, those that are still working on it and those that decided that the business is  
32 not the right step for them at this precise moment. One of the participants was  
33 not interviewed for the final time, so this participant cannot be reflected here  
34 and the following is based on the remaining seven participants.

35 One of the participants started his business beginning of 2017 and another is  
36 still working on getting the permission from the municipality to start while keep-  
37 ing the social grant. These two participants were from the beginning those that  
38 stressed the most how their previous experience would be helpful for them in  
39 starting their business here. It was also extremely important to them that they  
40 would be able to do something productive again as soon as possible. It is there-  
41 fore not surprising that they move ahead as soon as they had the chance. Both  
42 of them highlighted that all they really needed was the information on the  
43 Dutch context and they were then able to directly take this information and,  
44 with the support of the coaches, apply it to their own business plan. While they  
45 are at this stage still facing some challenges, like the need for a bigger building

1 and getting governmental permission, they are confident that when they can  
3 they have done before.

5 The second group of participants was working hard on their business plan at  
7 the end of the programme and also close to finishing. This also applies to two of  
9 the participants. They are also quite experienced from before and therefore  
11 knew that business is exactly what they want to do. However, from the begin-  
13 ning in their answers they were a bit more hesitant than the previous two. For  
15 example, instead of saying 'I can do this', they would more likely say 'I hope  
17 I can do this'. Nonetheless, they were motivated and they made significant prog-  
19 ress with their business plan by the end of the programme. Both of them indi-  
21 cated that they needed to fix a few things and work on their financial plan. They  
23 considered this to be a big challenge, but were confident that they can do it,  
especially because they still have the help of the buddy.

15 The remaining three participants decided that this is not the moment for  
17 them to start their own business. For all of them this was a conscious choice,  
19 because the programme helped them realise that other things are currently more  
21 important or timely. This is on the one hand further education (one of the parti-  
23 cipants received a scholarship for a post-graduate degree at a Dutch university,  
also facilitated through ENPower) or experience, but also personal issues, all of  
which hinder the ability to invest the time and effort needed to finish the busi-  
ness plan at this stage. But business is still something that they see in their  
future.

25 Throughout the programme all of the participants naturally adjusted their  
27 business idea to different extents. Many had a bigger idea first and then realised  
29 or were made aware that they need to be more specific and focused, at least for  
the first steps. So in essence, while the idea is the same the way that the partici-  
pants go about developing and implementing it has changed significantly.

29 In terms of challenges, one of the most often cited is that of financing. Some  
31 of the participants still have a network abroad and believe they are able to bring  
33 together the necessary funding through those sources. One other participant was  
able to find partners in the Netherlands, which made access to financing easier.  
For the rest, however, financing is really the main issue.

35 Related to that the rules concerning starting your business and receiving  
37 social assistance did not seem to be clear to the participants. While they were  
39 sure that once the business started they would be fine and not have to rely on  
any assistance anymore, the transition period did worry some participants. They  
were not sure if they would be able to still receive assistance during this period.  
In addition, it was unclear to them what would happen if their business did not  
work out as planned:

41 If anything happens that can be a very big problem. Maybe in Syria that wouldn't have been  
43 such a big problem because you have a lot of friends and family that will help you, but here a  
small mistake with social services, taxes or something like that, this could stop your uitkering  
45 [Dutch social benefit] and you don't have any income at that moment. And that could be dan-  
gerous for your life and your children's life. And this is the big fear of me probably most of  
the group.

1 In the light of SDG 8, it is also interesting that the participants of ENPower  
3 saw benefits of participating in the programme beyond the training. And one  
5 participant pointed out, ENPower can not only help with self-employment, but  
7 possibly also with finding job opportunities:

9 I added the participation in the ENPower programme to my LinkedIn profile. Only because  
11 of this small change I got a lot of offers from different companies to send them my CV for a  
13 job. So it could be a good opportunity to also look for a job.

### 9 *Personal Development*

11 As stated above, the participants of ENPower largely had a large preference for  
13 self-employment over wage-employment. In combination with their previous  
15 experience, it is clear that they largely have a very entrepreneurial mind-set. The  
17 most common motivations that they named for wanting to be an entrepreneur  
19 rather than an employee were experience, independence, autonomy and the feel-  
21 ing of achievement. These motivations did not really change throughout the  
23 project. What did, however, change was the perception of risk, which is another  
25 quality often associated with entrepreneurs. In the beginning the risks that were  
27 cited had much to do with things such as being a foreigner, not knowing the  
market and not understanding the people. At the final stage, the risks identified  
were much more specific and often regarded financing and a lack of a network  
in the Netherlands.

29 One participant highlighted that really the programme is not just about start-  
31 ing your business, but about defining oneself. It provides a chance for every sin-  
33 gle participant to figure out whether he or she is an entrepreneur or not and  
35 whether starting the business is right or not. He further elaborated:

37 During the workshops you had an insight into how it would go and what you can do and can-  
39 not do. So I think it really helped to decide whether to start your business, whether it is wise  
41 now to start your business or maybe it's better to skip it now, maybe delay it or maybe you  
43 say it's not something that I want to do here.

45 And all of these are legitimate decisions, also in the eyes of the ENPower  
team. The goal of the project is not that at the end of the programme there are  
eight refugees with a business. It is much more important to provide this chance  
to the eight to figure out what they want to do. One participant reflected on the  
programme regarding this aspect as follows:

The benefit of the programme is not only the decision whether you are going to start your  
business or not. [...] It helps you to network and socialize, widen your network. And I think  
that is as important as creating your business plan. Because then you have more potential  
partners, more potential customers. It's very nice. Especially with the way ENPower did it,  
active workshops inviting a lot of people during the sessions, giving us the opportunity to  
meet each other in different situations with different experts. That widens your network in a  
good way. And that is a good outcome.

A second dimension of personal development which ENPower clearly con-  
tributed to is that of empowerment and self-efficacy. The programme enabled  
the participants to make informed choice, as described above when discussing

1 changes in business ideas, and gave them the confidence they needed to make  
 3 the step towards starting their business, therefore increasing their self-efficacy.  
 5 Participants also mentioned being a lot more structured and just having more  
 7 energy overall. Many of the participants in the early stages talked about hoping  
 9 to be able to set up their own business. As they got more information and sup-  
 11 port through the programme, they were able to see what they needed to do in  
 13 order to avoid making any mistake. The programme taught them that believing  
 15 in themselves and their abilities is key to their success.

17 This increase in confidence particular showed when the participants were  
 19 asked about their plans for the future. During the baseline and the final inter-  
 21 views they were asked about where they want to be in five years' time. Clear dif-  
 23 ferences between the kinds of answers that were given could be identified. At the  
 25 start of the programme many of the participants gave very vague answers, indi-  
 27 cating that they hoped that their situation could improve in this timeframe, but  
 29 it did not seem like they had a concrete plan about how this could and will hap-  
 31 pen. One participant for example stated:

17 I will work hard to build a future for myself and my daughter here in the Netherlands.

19 This was a common statement at the outset of the programme. During the  
 21 final interview the same person that said this had a much clearer vision for the  
 23 future:

23 After 5 years if everything is well can I expand my business step by step. My plan is to start  
 25 with repairing and then selling. I made five or six steps for myself in the business plan and  
 27 I want to achieve them all in these five years.

29 Others that were equally insecure about what they could achieve at the outset  
 31 stated even bigger ambitions now and did so with a confidence that was not seen  
 33 at the onset of the programme. And also those that in the end decided that the  
 35 business is not the right step for them right now were much clearer on what their  
 37 future should look like. The decision that a business was not right for them at  
 39 this stage came with the decision and action on alternative income-generating  
 41 activity or further education as an investment in the future career.

43 Overall, it became clear in the interviews that the programme largely contrib-  
 45 uted to the personal development of the participants by giving them back some  
 47 of the self-confidence that they lost during the hard times they faced. As such  
 49 the ENPower programme has a much wider scope than practical business sup-  
 51 port in contributing to refugees' psychological well-being.

39

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

41 This chapter shows that entrepreneurship training has the potential to contribute  
 43 to the access of refugees to the labour market in the Dutch case as well as to  
 45 their personal development. While it is too early to talk about the impact of the  
 47 ENPower programme on the economy and society, it is clear that its value for  
 49 the participants goes beyond the number of created businesses and that it made  
 51 a significant difference for the participants in more than one way. This is

1 important to highlight especially in the light of SDG 8, which aims to promote,  
3 among others, inclusive employment and decent work for all. This includes vul-  
5 nerable groups such as refugees that are often more limited in their opportunities  
7 to access employment opportunities and support for such groups is therefore  
9 particularly important.

11 The present case study of ENPower participants highlights that such an inter-  
13 vention has the potential to make a contribution to this SDG. Before starting  
15 the programme, the participants were unemployed, living on social benefits and  
17 generally unhappy with this situation. Upon conclusion of the programme, three  
19 refugees either had their own business or were getting ready to set it up. Others  
21 were working or studying and only one was still inactive due to personal issues.  
23 All participants were convinced that they would have not been able to achieve  
25 these steps had it not been for participating in ENPower, or at least not as  
27 quickly. In addition, the majority of participants talked about the importance of  
29 the programme in giving them a new sense of self-confidence, strength and/or  
31 motivation to do something. Overall, the ENPower programme therefore man-  
33 aged to achieve its goal of supporting refugees in their development and integra-  
35 tion as well as in developing a bankable business plan, which all brings them  
37 one step closer to participating in the economy of the country that has provided  
39 them safety and giving back to the society.

41 In conclusion, this chapter contributes to the growing literature on refugee  
43 entrepreneurship by analysing the role of entrepreneurship training on business  
45 development, but also personal development of refugees. The single case study  
approach does limit the generalisability of the findings presented here, but does  
highlight that more research in this area is important, especially in current times  
where discussions about the potential benefits that refugees can bring to host  
countries are being held at the international level (Cali, 2015). Particularly fur-  
ther research into the specific aspects of training that make a difference for refu-  
gees and other vulnerable groups to empower them and ultimately help them to  
be able to make positive contributions is needed to make such trainings as effec-  
tive as possible for the benefit of all.

## NOTE

1. The quotes used throughout this chapter have been modified for readability pur-  
poses only.

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