

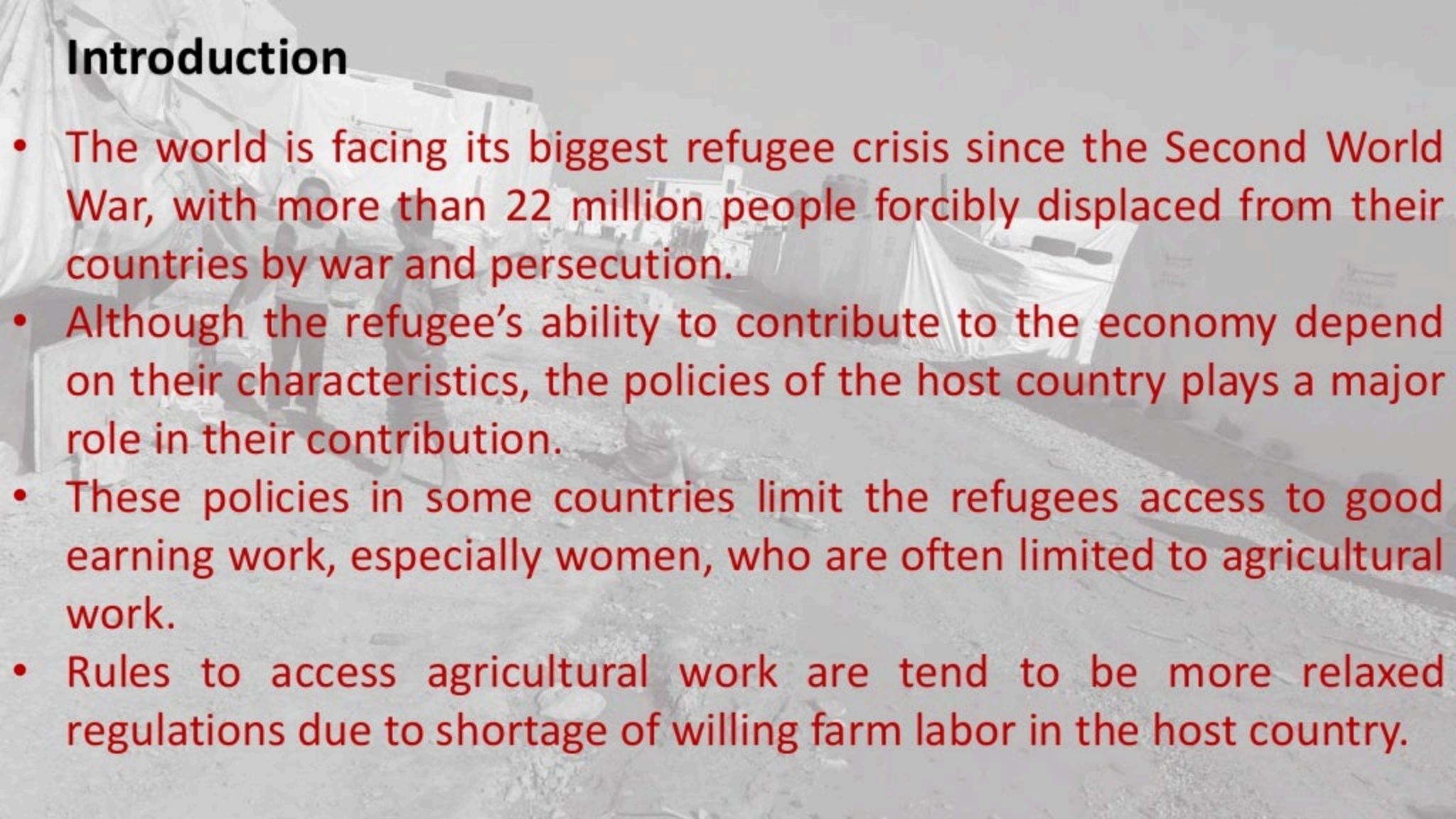
# The Constraints of Women Refugees in Accessing Work: The Case of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon

Saja Taha Al Zoubi, Ph.D.

Livelihood and Gender



## Introduction



- The world is facing its biggest refugee crisis since the Second World War, with more than 22 million people forcibly displaced from their countries by war and persecution.
- Although the refugee's ability to contribute to the economy depend on their characteristics, the policies of the host country plays a major role in their contribution.
- These policies in some countries limit the refugees access to good earning work, especially women, who are often limited to agricultural work.
- Rules to access agricultural work are tend to be more relaxed regulations due to shortage of willing farm labor in the host country.



## Problem Statement:

Women refugees face more constraints to access work in host countries and are mainly limited to agricultural work without protection. This affects the livelihoods of refugee families and opens abuses from unscrupulous employers and labor bosses. Lack of income forces families to adopt negative coping measures including giving away under age girls for marriage.

## The Study Aim:

This study aims to identify the most important constraints and challenges preventing refugee women from accessing good earning work, and consequent working conditions of lack of work permit to female refugees. This results of the study will help to develop proper interventions that enhances work opportunities of female refugees.



## The Methodology:

The study was conducted in the Syrian refugee camps in Bekaa province, Lebanon, with a field survey carried out between 2016-2017 through face-to-face interviews of 69 female refugee workers and 112 male workers, in addition to 12 focus groups and two workshops (women, men, and women and men). The analysis compared women's and men's work opportunities and constraints they face using descriptive statistics and econometric tools.



## Hypothesis:

The hypothesis of the study is that women refugees have much greater access to agricultural work than men, mainly because of relaxed rules in agriculture, however this opens more gender-based biases in working conditions.



## Work Conditions-1:

Wages 4-8\$/day

Average number of working days is 72 days / year

Gender wages gap 6 \$ / day

97% workers in Agriculture

Women constitute 45% of the population

8-60 years

53.3% of agricultural labor

39% of work labor

28% of work labor is child labor  
66% of the agricultural child labor is female

3% workers in the plants

- The agriculture work is performed largely by women, in all activities (production, harvest, processing) except the carrying heavy loads and irrigation which are done by men.
- Processing activities as cutting, sorting, packaging are exclusively done by women.



## Work Conditions-2:

No contracts

No breaks

Payment Denials 29%

Abuse 100%

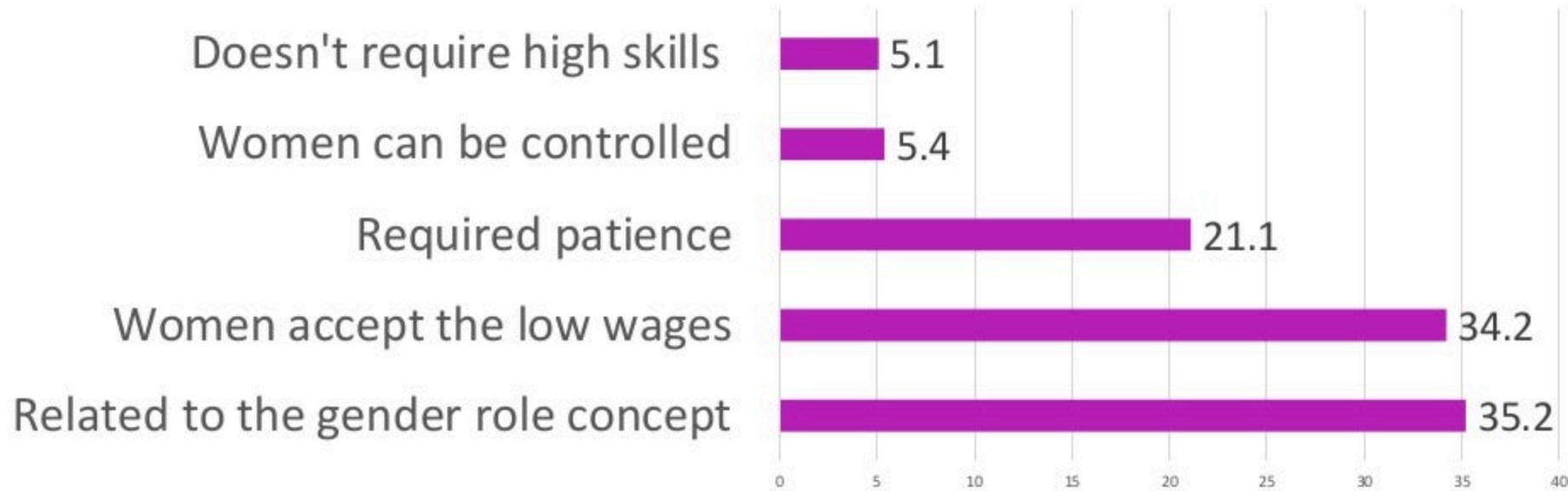
Low wages

No health insurance

Verbal Harassment 100%

Sexual Harassment 6%

## Why More female refugee workers are demanded for Agriculture work ?!



## Determinants of work opportunities:

Worker characteristics



The less skilled  
(security and legal  
issues 2% have  
some skills)

The less educated  
and skilled (40%  
of the women are  
illiterate )

Labor market  
demand

Traditions

Host community  
attitudes-  
competition

Security and  
legal issues

Policies

The econometric analysis for 181 workers( women and men ) shows that there are significant differences in employment options (Agricultural=0, Nonagricultural=1 ), determined by sex and other variables.

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Sex (M=1, F=0)	2.349	.714	10.817	1	.001	10.478
Age (8-60 years)	.071	.024	8.731	1	.003	1.074
Education (illiterate =0, literate =1)	1.054	.579	3.313	1	.069	2.870
Health (Not healthy=0, Healthy=1)	1.352	.608	4.946	1	.026	3.867
Registered (Not registered at UN=0, Registered=1)	-.527	.618	.727	1	.394	.590
The way of finding work (Through acquaintances=1, Others=0)	2.943	.555	28.102	1	.000	18.963
Period in Lebanon (years)	-.205	.186	1.209	1	.272	.815
Constant	-6.513	1.531	18.091	1	.000	.001

## Recommendations:

- ✓ Bring national (Lebanese) polices towards refugees in line with international laws of protecting refugees and provide them with basic protection and access to work.
- ✓ Enhance women's capacities (for both refugees and host community) through vocational training and cooperative micro enterprises matched with income generating activities based on the study of the local market and its needs.
- ✓ Copen markets for local manufactured products by refugees that can play important role to improve the work skills and conditions, and that can improve the livelihood of their families.

Refugee women need a better life with your help.....

**THANK YOU**

Saja al Zoubi [s.alzoubi@yahoo.com](mailto:s.alzoubi@yahoo.com)



All pictures are from the field survey