



About the project

What is the goal of this project?

The SYREALITY project wants to learn about the outlook of people from Syria in Europe, specifically about their life plans, their experiences in Europe and challenges they have faced. SYREALITY collects survey data in Austria, Germany, the Netherlands and Greece and in-depth interviews in Vienna, Berlin, Amsterdam and Athens. As part of the in-depth interviews, participants are also invited to draw maps about their daily life and their displacement trajectories.

Which countries are included?

SYREALITY covers Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, and Greece. These countries were chosen because they all have seen large numbers of Syrians arriving since 2011 with different conditions regarding living conditions and the asylum procedure. This makes them highly relevant cases to study the relations between people's assessment of their life and their aspirations to settle down in a country. The study has a focus on cities as more than half of the world's displaced people live in urban areas.

Who is funding this research?

The study is funded by the Austrian Science Fund.

Who has reviewed this research project?

This project has been reviewed by the Austrian Science Fund and by external reviewers. The project was also reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of the University for Continuing Education Krems, Austria.

Who is leading this research?

The SYREALITY project is led by Dr. Lea Müller-Funk of the University for Continuing Education Krems and supported by several research assistants. For information on all team members see here: <https://syreality.com/the-team/>.

Your involvement

What will you do with my data/answers?

We will use the data to write academic publications, blogs, and policy briefs. From the survey, we will only use aggregate data such as averages (for example "refugees who are often in touch with their family back home, more often remit money to their family members"). We will use the in-depth interviews to understand individual situations in more depth and cite parts of the stories in our writings. We will make sure that these excerpts do not reveal the identity of the speaker by citing short snippets.

Can I stop my participation in the study if I don't want to participate anymore?

You can stop your participation until the end of the project (2026).

Will I be compensated for taking part?

You will not receive any payment or compensation for your time.

Data protection and confidentiality

Will my participation in the study be confidential?

Your participation will be kept confidential.

Who will have access to the data?

Your answers will be stored in a dataset on a secure server that meets requirement of data protection laws. Only the project lead and researchers working in the project under the supervision of the project lead will have access to the datasets. These datasets will not contain your name or contact details. The project ends in 2026. After the end of the project, the datasets will be deposited in a 'data archive' for scientific data but access will remain restricted.

What information will you collect about me in the survey?

In addition to the answers you give to the survey, the survey software automatically collects your IP address. This is a unique number belonging to your internet connection. We will use the IP address only to check for irregularities (for example the same address being connected to multiple surveys, bots, or addresses linked to countries not included in our project). After this check, the IP address will be deleted from the datafiles.

What information will you collect about me in the in-depth interviews?

The in-depth interviews will cover the story of your whole life.

Can I access my personal study data?

You can only access the data of the in-depth interviews and the maps since the survey data will be completely anonymized. Please contact Dr. Lea Müller-Funk (lea.mueller-funk@donau-uni.ac.at) and you will be able to access the transcript of your in-depth interview and a scan of your maps.

I've indicated I'm willing to be contacted about a second round of the survey or a follow-up in-depth interview and entered my email address for this purpose. How will you store and use my email address?

Email addresses are stored in a file together with an ID number. The file with email addresses is separate from the dataset with answers to the survey questions and is only accessible to the project leader. All datafiles will be held on a secure server that meet data protection requirements regulations.

The email addresses will only be used to send out a second survey and invite you for a qualitative interview. We will use the ID number to connect answers from the first and second survey. The file with email addresses will not be shared with anyone.

I've indicated I'm willing to be contacted about a second round of the survey and entered my email address. I have changed my mind. Can you remove my address from the file?

Yes we can. Please contact Dr. Lea Müller-Funk (lea.mueller-funk@donau-uni.ac.at) and your email address will be removed.

Who can I contact with questions or concerns?

You can contact Dr. Lea Müller-Funk (lea.mueller-funk@donau-uni.ac.at) or the head of the Ethics Committee of the University for Continuing Education Krems (ethikkommission@donau-uni.ac.at).