

Cross-border Perspectives on Refugee Education

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Abstracts

Opening universities for refugees

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The paper will introduce the activities of an educational initiative called *Opening Universities for Refugees (OUR)* which works closely with the displaced youth in South East Asia region. OUR has been facilitating the creation of new knowledge networks by bringing together interested organisations from diverse global networks. Using an unConference/Open Space Technologies approach it builds new higher education consortia to meet provide higher education opportunities to those who have none. OUR has co-hosted 5 platforms in Malaysia, Indonesia, Hong Kong, New Zealand and Australia by partnering with UNHCR and regional universities since 2016. It currently runs as a program under the newly established *Centre for Asia Pacific Refugee Studies* at University of Auckland.

The importance of host community language acquisition in the process of school integration of refugee children

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As a result of EU regulations and agreements from 2016 onward, Croatia became a destination country for refugees predominantly from Syria, Iran and Iraq. Even though the number of people requesting international protection is not large compared to other EU countries, this was the first time Croatia faced a challenge of refugee integration. One of the key stakeholders in this process is school. Therefore, a qualitative study (FGs and interviews) was conducted within the IRCiS project to explore the challenges faced by refugee children (N=15), their parents (N=5), school staff (N=54) and host-society peers (N=50) in the integration process. Participants highlighted the importance of language. Language was considered to be a barrier in various aspects of school integration, from procedures associated with school enrollment to everyday situations, such as attending (and delivering) classes, writing homework, engaging in social interactions with host-community peers, knowledge testing and school-parent cooperation. Participants also expressed some language-related needs and suggestions in order to improve the process of school integration. Moreover, results from a small-scale follow-up study on schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic lock-down suggest the lack of face-to-face interaction at school prevented refugee children to practice the language and impaired their proficiency.

The support of NGO sector to systematic migrant education – experience from Serbia

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Western Balkans experienced an unprecedented movement of migrants and refugees headed towards the EU in 2015. Although Serbia has mainly been a transit country, number of asylum applications increased in 2016. Lengthy processing of the applications resulted in prolonged stay of children in collective centers and in their educational discontinuity. In response, the UNICEF and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, initiated inclusion of migrant and refugee children in the formal education in Serbia. NGO Centre for Education Policy (CEP) was invited to develop and pilot a model for integration of migrants in formal education in Serbia in 2016/2017. The model included: tailor-made teacher training program, assessment and reporting tools, teaching and learning organization model, and model of external support to schools. Piloting led to system-wide implementation of the model and CEP's role was to monitor and support schools for two school years, and to coordinate other NGOs and institutions in provision of support to the schools, teachers, and children. Until 2018/2019 school year, about 2500 children have been enrolled in over 50 schools at primary and secondary level, more than 1000 teachers received trainings, 8 NGOs have been continuously involved and many more provided ad hoc support. The model, activities, M&E results, challenges and opportunities will be presented in greater detail.

Well-being and inclusion of (refugee) pupils – System, social context and individual factors as influential conditions

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'Refugee and Education' is a practice research project located at the interface of Laborschule Bielefeld and Bielefeld University in Germany. Since 2015, a multi-professional team of school educators and university staff examines factors that contribute to successful inclusion of refugees in schools. The aim is to extract specific factors which promote or inhibit students' well-being and inclusion. Therefore, a diverse group of stakeholders is involved in research. Interviews with teachers, administration staff and social workers are conducted. Furthermore, students with and without refugee background are involved in this research in a creative process. The study discloses several levels of impact for well-being and inclusion of (refugee) pupils. The necessity of adjustments on a systemic level is shown. Furthermore, specific conditions of the students' social contexts are identified as more or less beneficial. Also, certain individual resources of the (refugee) pupils are described as influential. Drawing upon these results, a model for the improvement of inclusive schooling of (refugee) pupils is shown. By critically examining existing structures and having the fundamentally questioning situation due to the COVID-19 pandemic in mind, this contribution offers a basis for discussions about current developments of inclusive schooling of (refugee) pupils.

Creating welcoming (school) culture: Serbian students' attitudes toward immigrant peers

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Since the research showed that receiving-society members' perceptions of immigrants have consequences for the integration process, this research strove to provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between students' perceptions of their school culture and social distance towards immigrants. Three mainstream primary schools that had been nominated to enrol immigrant children in Serbia participated in the study, and 325 seven and eight-graders (50.8% females) filled in the questionnaire prior to the enrolment of immigrant children. Students reported that they were informed on immigrants mostly through television (59.9%) and by parents (35.6%), while teachers were recognized as a source of information only by 11.2% of them, despite preparatory school activities. Almost one third (30.7%) of students showed high social distance towards immigrants. The regression model which includes school culture constructs (respect for diversity on the school level, teacher- and peer support) as predictors explained 13% of variance in social distance towards immigrants. We can conclude that supportive school culture can foster positive students' attitudes towards immigrants; however, the out-of-school sources of information on immigrants seem to be more appealing. Therefore, schools should foster students' ability to critically consider presented information. At the same time more raising awareness activities with parents and local communities should be undertaken.

Refugee education in Croatia from relevant stakeholders' and asylees' perspectives

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The aim of the presentation is to share the insights of the recent study exploring the needs and challenges related to the integration of the asylees in 30 local communities in Croatia. We focus here on the adjustments and challenges of Croatian educational system that were put forward in the interviews and focus groups with: i) relevant educational stakeholders (school staff, representatives of local authorities and organisations responsible for refugee education provision) and ii) asylees themselves. The results reveal the lack of experience in refugee education in most of the selected local communities. Language acquisition, which was recognized as crucial for the successful integration by the stakeholders and by asylees, was often reported to run with obstacles. Several topics emerged as stumbling blocks of school enrolment: lack of (educated) school staff, uncertainty of the procedures and jurisdictions, financial and administrative issues, lack of targeted professional development programmes for school staff and lack of motivation of asylees due to perceiving Croatia as a temporary station on the predetermined path. At the same time, majority of the asylees expressed satisfaction with their or their children's experiences related to education.

Nation-centred policies and transnational refugee trajectories: the role of language of instruction

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In contexts where schooling in national education systems can be envisaged, preparatory courses are often given by national or humanitarian organisations. In such cases, learners' proficiency in the national language is stressed as the most important factor for success. These strategies assume that the refugee learners will remain in a given country, but from the refugees' perspective, this is far from certain. Refugees can expect to move from country to country, suffer repeatedly interrupted schooling, while their chances to settle and integrate are highly dependent on having strong vocational skills and qualifications. Considering the uncertainty of their settlement status, it is a poor investment to spend years learning languages that cannot be used internationally. It can equally be argued that it is a poor investment for NGOs and national programmes in a policy climate that only considers receiving and integrating a small proportion of refugees. As an example of consequences, the presentation will discuss the case of Afghan refugees in Sweden, most of which are unaccompanied minors. The current Swedish policy stipulates that they can be granted temporary residence to complete secondary education or short vocational training, extended if they can find permanent jobs within six months of graduation.

Empowerment throughout digital tools & intergenerational learning. A case study of intervention programme for immigrant youth and older adults in four European countries (Germany, Spain, Sweden, UK).

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The purpose of the presentation is to introduce the innovative method of work with immigrant youth and older adults based on the intergenerational learning approach. The method was developed within community-based intervention programme "ICT Guides" funded by European Union, conducted in 4 European cities, in Madrid (Spain), Berlin (Germany), Gothenburg (Sweden) and in Sheffield (United Kingdom) that targets two mostly socially excluded groups in Europe: young immigrant pupils (12-16 years of age) and older adults (65+). The basic idea of this intervention programme was to empower immigrant youth through letting them to develop and lead, according to own ideas, the ICT training for older people, all living together in the neighborhood. The idea of using digital skills of young people for the purpose of teaching others (seniors), is based on the intergenerational learning approach. In the programme it is assumed that if educational settings can create meaningful structures and content where both immigrant youth and older adults learn from and with each other, they build meaningful youth-adult partnerships, feel being empowered and are more likely to progress within school education through intergenerational learning.

Refugee education: framework and experiences from Greece

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The recent refugee crisis has affected Europe and the Mediterranean region at different levels, with Greece being at the forefront of the crisis. According to UNHCR Greece, an estimated 121,500 people remain in the country since the 2015-2016 flow. Component authorities, in parallel to the efforts to organize the reception and asylum services, paid special focus on the education of the refugee children, who represent almost 36% of the total arrivals. In this process, Greece capitalized its previous experience in the field of refugee education, as it has been implementing relevant programs continuously since the 1990s. However, additional measures were required to address the current needs, so in 2016 special Ministerial decisions were issued and special preparatory classes were introduced. Nowadays, despite some positive developments made, a large number of refugee children, especially those living on the "HotSpot" islands, are not enrolled in schools.

Aim of this paper is to present the current state of affairs of the refugee education in Greece: the framework, the challenges, the obstacles that hamper access, the formal and non-formal environments. Special reference will be made to the impact of the covid-19 pandemic, based on the findings of a survey addressed to educators and front-line professionals.

Accommodating the rights of migrant children in education: comparing experiences in Finland and Norway

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Here and now vs. past and future: Stories of forced migration across Eurasia

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This paper addresses the question of How do narratives of local and migrant youth echo and transform broader societal narratives about inclusion of migrants? We conducted a values analysis of stories and letters written by 94 local and 35 migrant youth. Of the 17 emerging values, a major group of values was shared by both groups, indicating a wide arena of possible mutual understandings that peers, albeit from different origin, language and social situation could build on, integrate, and jointly develop. We also found values expressing the different roles and situations of local and migrant youth in distinctive and complementary ways. The migrant texts were significantly more often stretched in space and time, expressing future plans, awareness of political and social circumstances, and recalling obstacles encountered, while expressions of local youth were focused on here and now, more often emphasizing positive behavior towards migrants, and noticing events of inclusion in everyday activities of the class, school and free time. In addition to policy implications on issues of inclusive education and migration studies, this research embodies a methodological shift that advances beyond the human as isolated individual to relational complex, and interactive systems including institutions and diverse stakeholders.

Human rights education in the shade of refugee crisis: A phenomenological study in Mersin

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In the last three decades, the world witnessed global advancements in human rights education (HRE), as in Turkey. However, HRE becomes more challenging while the world witnesses conflicts, wars, and refugee crises. After the civil war started in Syria in 2011, over 5.6 million people had to flee and over 3.6 million of them are living in Turkey with a population of 1.7 million school-aged children. The aim of this study is to problematize the tension between human rights and the nation-state idea through Hannah Arendt's concept of 'right to have rights' to reveal the understanding of human rights education in Turkey. This is a phenomenological study with an emphasis on discourses. Semi-structured interviews and in-school and in-class observations were conducted to reach the data. The official discourses in the human rights curriculum, their 'echoes' on the daily life discourses of teachers, managers, counselors, and students and the lived experiences of refugee children from 11 primary schools in Mersin are examined together to see the interactions and the general view of human rights education during refugee crises.

Educational inclusion of refugee students – a complex picture

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In this paper we will review some key findings from a number of projects conducted by SIRIUS network in the area of refugee and migrant education. By doing so we will attempt to draw a holistic view of the complex picture of the process of educational inclusion of refugee and migrant students in Europe. This will allow us to present a map with some of the most important (according to our research) dimensions that affect this process. We will then discuss some key themes that describe the current efforts of European Member States to include refugee students in schools and their limitations and gaps. These themes include: the priority that some countries give to language learning; the tension between school inclusion and offer of individualised support; the limited understanding of the students' educational profile and the lack of recognition of prior learning; the recognition of the emotional needs associated with their experiences, the trauma of transition and their enforced identities upon arrival; the interplay of factors that are not in control of the schools and the efforts (and limits) of coordinated, multiagency support. We will conclude our paper with some key recommendations to policy makers and educational practitioners.

UAM scholar integration. The case of France

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UAM (UnAccompanied Migrants) arriving in France are specific migrants mostly male, between 15 and 18 years, from Western and Central Africa, Afghanistan, Iraq, Algeria and Morocco. Whereas the concept of 'unaccompanied minor' does not correspond to a legal category, it deeply forces states to adapt to such a new situation: taking in charge migrating unaccompanied children. As individuals, we have been volunteering for years into a collective fighting for UAM rights in Toulouse (South West of France). Born in 2016 following major changes in French UAM integration politic, it took in charge hardly 400 UAM since the beginning, from the moment they are considered majors by Conseil départemental to the day Child Judge agrees they are minors. This paper will assert the question of UAM schooling, whose right to stay depends on their integration and their academic achievements. We thus describe here UAM complete training journey, from temporary education inside the collective to integration in the national school system. We focus on difficulties both UAM and volunteers have to overcome to make UAM scholar integration possible, related to system structure as to professionals' racial prejudices and social stereotypes. We end highlighting some proposals to better considerate migration path when planning UAM scholar integration.

The dark past and a brighter future - migrant students' academic motivation and experiences of schooling in Serbia

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In 2016 Serbia started integrating migrant children coming from the Middle East into the formal educational system. One of the highlights from previous research of this process is the Serbian teachers' impression of remarkably high levels of migrant students' academic motivation (Kovač Cerović, Grbić, & Vesić, 2017). Our study further explores this topic by approaching it from the perspective of migrant students. We utilized a dynamic storytelling methodology (Daiute, Kovacs-Cerovic, Micic, Sullu, & Vracar, 2020) for looking into discursive practices regarding schooling from a total of 35 migrant students who also answered a question on their motivation to pursue higher levels of education. School-related narrative content, expressed by 26 students (70%), emphasized the importance of being educated and the positive experiences of schooling in Serbia. Special focus was given to four children unwilling to pursue higher levels of education. Their narratives were notably less oriented to the future and focused on the hardship experienced in the country of origin and along the migration route. Although the majority of migrants see knowledge as a way to a better future and are motivated to continue their education, a small percentage of them might still be troubled with the past and in need of additional support.

Daiute, C., Kovács Cerović, T., Mičić, K., Sullu, B., & Vracar, S. (2020). Dynamic values negotiating geo-political narratives across a migration system. *Qualitative Psychology*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1037/qp0000166>

Kovač Cerović, T., Grbić, S., & Vesić, D. (2017). How do schools integrate migrant students: case studies from Serbia. *ECER 2017, Copenhagen*, 22–25.8.2017.

Diversity and social Inclusion within higher education system policy — insides from Poland

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The overall purpose of the presentation is to identify key policy priorities within higher education system in Poland on diversity and social inclusion. The approach taken in our study with regard to the review of literature is to look at not only academic materials, such as books or journal papers, but also practice-based materials found in reports, websites or information articles in relevant educational or development publications. The policy documents will be documents valid at the national level and internal documents setting internal rules and regulations of selected educational institutions (i.e. Higher Education institutions). Our presentation will aim to find out, how diversity and social inclusion is regulated in national educational policies at the level of higher education in Poland, and what are chances and challenges of diversity and social inclusion policies in educational environment in Poland. Presenting findings have been reached under the Master to Educate In Diversity And Social Inclusion (MEDUSA) project conducted as part of the ERASMUS+ programme in 2019-22.